



**W**heet-weet! Weet-weet!” Sandpiper sang out in the sunshine on the shore of the lagoon. Spotting some of the tiny fish she loved to eat, she pecked them out of the water. A wave washed over her feet, and she looked up to see her friend Whale swimming near. “*Tokwe!*” she called.

But Whale was grumpy that day. He was a blue whale, the largest creature on Earth. And he was very hungry. The krill were not as plentiful as usual. He yelled at the little bird, “Get away from the sea and leave those fish alone! The ocean belongs to the whales—and so does everything in it.”

That ruffled Sandpiper’s feathers. She called back, “Don’t be a bully. The sea belongs to *all* of us.”

Whale slapped the water with his great tail and yelled, “No, it belongs to the whales!”

Sandpiper chirped back, “You’re crazy. Besides, there are more sandpipers than whales. If the ocean belongs to anyone, it is *us*.”

“You’re the crazy one, bird,” said Whale. “Listen to me. I am the biggest animal you’ve ever seen. And there are *many* more whales than sandpipers.”

Sandpiper flapped her wings. “Prove it!” she challenged. “You call the whales and I’ll call the sandpipers, and we’ll see who’s right.”

“Silly little bird. We’ll see, indeed.” Whale called

out across the oceans in his low, echoing tones. And from the East, the West, the North, and the South, the whales came. Soon the lagoon was filled with whales of all shapes and sizes—humpbacks, fin whales, gray whales, bowheads, and more.

Then Sandpiper called out, her *weet-weet* carrying through the vast skies. The sound of thousands of flapping wings filled the air. The sandpipers gathered on the beach and in the coconut palms and breadfruit trees.

But which side had more? It was hard to tell.

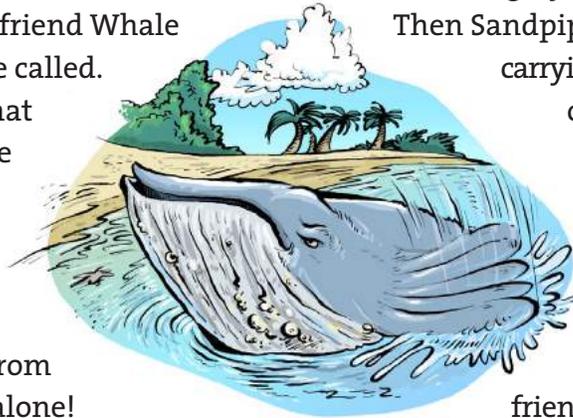
So Whale decided to call his friends—the dolphins, orcas, porpoises, sharks, and fish. From the East, the West, the North, and the South, they crowded into the lagoon.

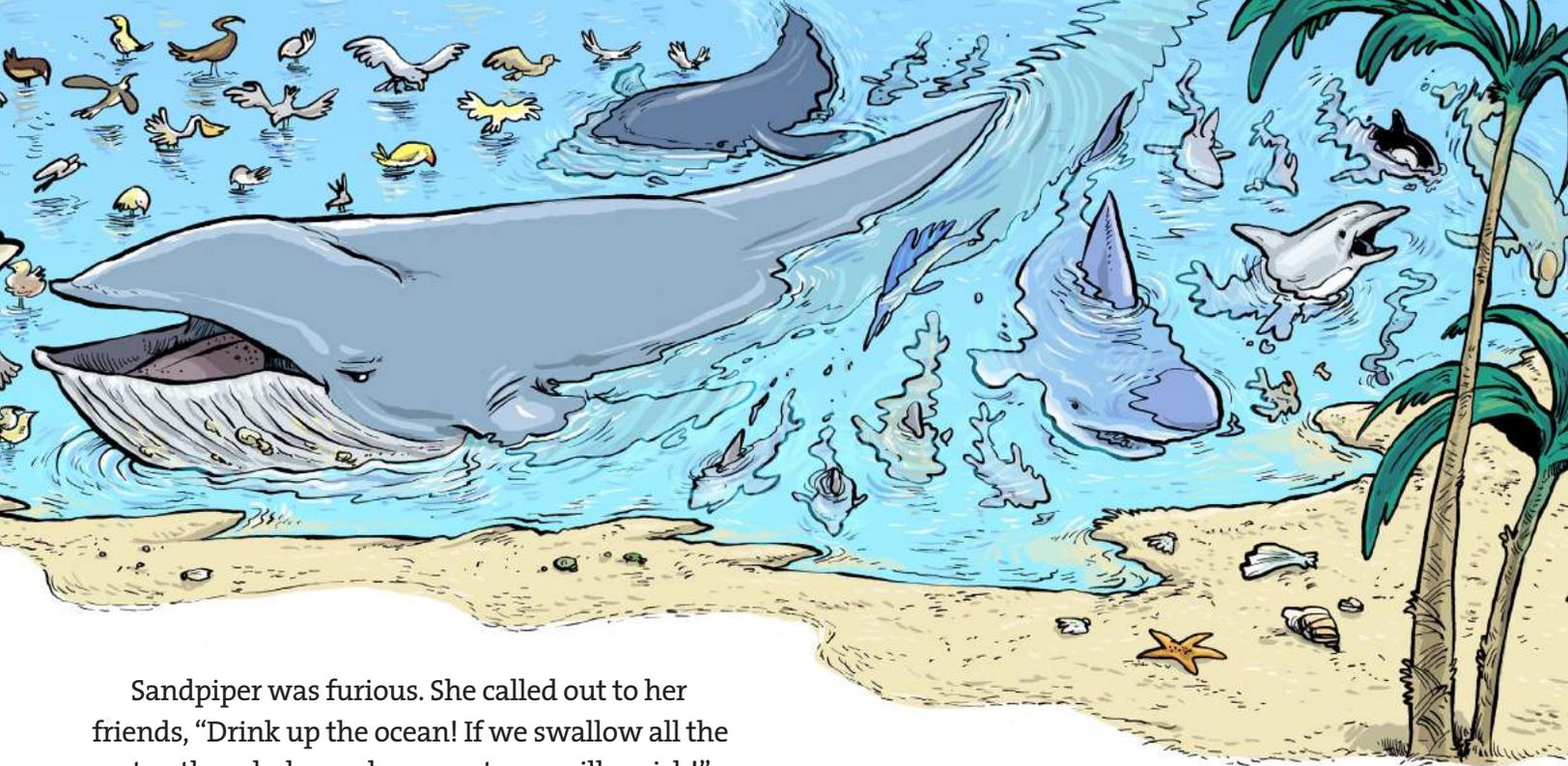
Sandpiper was determined not to be outnumbered. She called *her* friends—the seagulls, herons, cranes, and terns. From the East, the West, the North, and the South, they flew through the skies. Every tree and rock and bit of beach was a flurry of feathers.

Which side had more now? It was impossible to say. The creatures reached beyond the horizon.

Stubbornly, Whale was determined to win. He told his friends, “If we eat up all the beaches, the birds will lose their nests. They can fly, but with nowhere to rest, they’ll get tired and drown!”

He began to gobble up the sandy beach, and the others followed his lead. The birds took flight as the land and trees and nests were devoured.





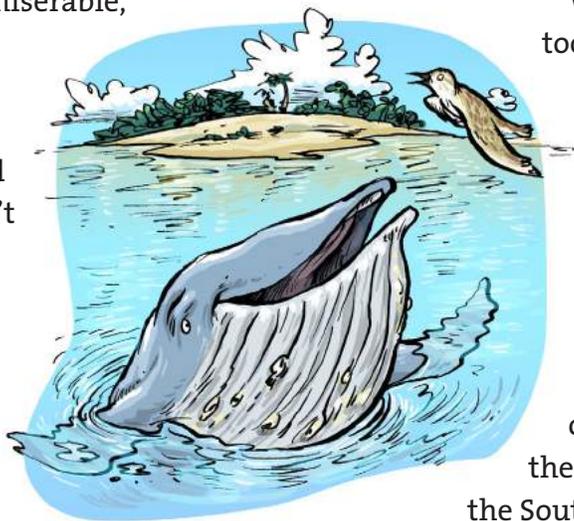
Sandpiper was furious. She called out to her friends, “Drink up the ocean! If we swallow all the water, the whales and sea creatures will perish!”

From bird to bird, the message flew, and they slurped up the sea. The water disappeared. Whale’s eyes grew large with panic as the sharks and fish gasped and grew still. He knew that the whales, dolphins, and porpoises would not survive long without water.

It seemed that the battle was won. The island was destroyed, but Whale and his friends no longer taunted the birds. Then Sandpiper saw the little fish that gave her nourishment flopping on the sandy sea floor. She looked out, and where the shining blue waves had once been, she now saw dry sand and rocks and miserable, dying creatures.

She thought of the mighty blue whale, the graceful dolphins, and others who had been her friends. They weren’t really enemies. How could a silly fight have gone so terribly wrong? She realized that the ocean truly *was* big enough for all to share.

Suddenly she called to the birds, “Spit it back! Spit it back! We can’t do this to our friends. And we need the ocean, too.”



The birds agreed. They spit back the water, and the seabed filled again. Whales and dolphins and sharks and tiny fish swished their tails and flapped their fins. They all swam and leaped happily.

Whale felt grateful. He told his friends, “Spit back the beach! Give the land back to the birds!” Soon the beach was restored. Everyone sighed with relief. The island looked peaceful, and the waves glistened in the sun again.

Sandpiper told Whale, “*Jolok bōd*. It doesn’t matter whether there are more birds or sea creatures. We can all be friends.”

Whale said, “I agree. I’m sorry, too. We’re lucky that the ocean is big enough for us all.”

Whale and Sandpiper never discovered if there were more sea creatures or birds in the world. It didn’t matter. From that day on, they stayed the best of friends. The birds and sea creatures left for their homes in the East, the West, the North, and the South. Along the way, they told every creature about the disastrous war that ended in the strongest friendship.