

A Read Aloud Story

ALL AT SEA

Tufted Puffin with a fish:
Credit - kuhnmi, C.C.



Dolphin: Credit - istockphotos

Far out in the middle of the ocean, where there was nothing to see but sea, and nothing to feel but wet, Puffin bobbed about on the waves. The sky was grey, the sea was, too. Even Puffin's face and beak were grey. Puffin had been at sea for months.

"This is the life for me!" said Puffin. **"As much sky as you can fly in, as many fish as you can eat, and the rise and fall of the waves to send you to sleep."**

"And don't forget me!" said her friend Dolphin, with a whistle and a click.

"And you," said Puffin. Off they went to catch fish together. Dolphin leapt out of the water and dived under the waves. Puffin dived underwater too, and they swam together after the fish.

One day, Puffin floated on the surface, lost in her thoughts, when Dolphin jumped clean out of water and leapt right over her.

"Hello Puffin, another grand day isn't it?" he said.

"Yes," said Puffin, looking up at the sky. **"The days are getting longer, the storms are fewer and the sky is less grey. Soon it will be time for me to leave."**

"Leave?" said Dolphin. **"But you can't leave!"**

"I must," said Puffin.

Dolphin looked around. All he could see was sea. **"Where is there to go?"**

"Land," said Puffin

"Land?" said Dolphin. **"But why would you go there? You can't swim on land! You can't catch fish on land! What's so good about land?"**

Background Image Triangle Island: Credit - David Shackleton, B.C.

“That’s where I will make my nest and lay my egg,” said Puffin. “But I don’t have to go yet.”

So the pair frolicked in the sea and ate fish together a little longer. But it wasn’t quite the same. Puffin knew she must leave and Dolphin knew she would be going.

One day, Puffin said, “The days are longer, the storms are few and the sky is no longer grey.”

“Neither are you,” said Dolphin, looking at his friend.

Puffin saw her reflection in the sea. Her grey face was turning white and her grey beak was growing more colourful.



Tufted Puffin on nest:
Credit - David Shackleton, B.C.

“Then it is time for me to leave,” said Puffin.

“I’ll never see you again,” said Dolphin, sadly.

“Of course you will,” said Puffin. “I’m only going to lay my egg and raise my baby puffling.”

“On the land!” said Dolphin, “Where I can’t go.”

“On the cliffs, where the land meets the sea,” corrected Puffin. “Besides, I’m only nesting on the cliffs. I still have to come back to the sea to catch fish to eat and feed my puffling.”

“So we can still see each other?” asked Dolphin.

“Every day,” said Puffin

And Puffin was as good as her word.

What’s more, once her puffling was old enough to feed himself, Puffin left the cliffs and returned to the ocean, where there was nothing to see but sea, and nothing to feel but happy because her good friend Dolphin was there with her.

Adapted from Wild Times March-April 2014 by permission of RSPB Wildlife Explorers

Note to Readers: Tufted Puffins are found in the Scott Islands north of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Up to 26,000 pairs nest on one of the islands - Triangle Island. This is an ecological reserve and closed to all except researchers.



Triangle Island: Credit - David Shackleton, B.C.