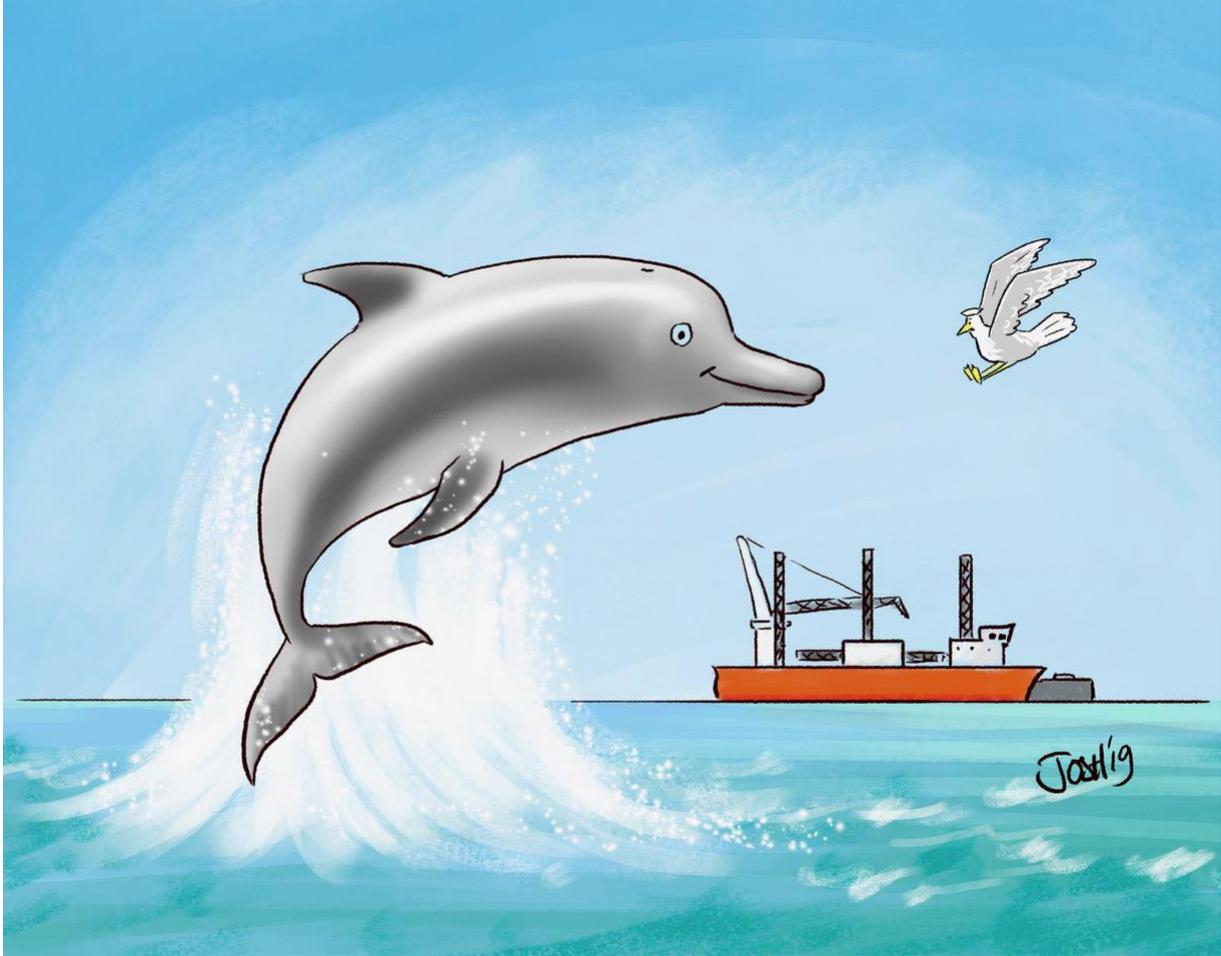


Dixie the Dolphin



Dixie was a happy creature. She played and swam with her friends in the shimmering silvery blue sea. She loved jumping into the air, flicking her tail in pure joy and diving back down to the watery depths.

Life was good, so very good. The seabirds swooped above her and the seals played chase me under the waves. The sea sparkled with life and happiness. Little boats would come out with tourists waving and taking pictures of Dixie and her family.

Dixie would race the boats, disappearing underneath them and then leaping out of the water to shrieks of delight from the people watching her. She felt so strong and powerful. The sea was her home, and nothing could spoil it. Or could it?

One day a big ship came. A huge ship. It wasn't a fishing boat and it didn't have any passengers looking out to point and marvel at Dixie and her antics. It was very strange. It wasn't passing through like most of the ships Dixie had seen. It had a huge arm on it and seemed to be carrying giant tubes. Dixie was puzzled. It was called The Piledriver.

Suddenly a seagull screeched an alarm above Dixie's family. "Swim, swim as fast as you can. Get as far away from here as you can. I have seen these ships before. The sea is going to explode – you need to get away NOW!"

So they swam in a panic. They weren't sure what was about to happen, but the seagull had never made such a warning before, so they believed him.

Dixie tried to stick as close as she could to her mother as her father led their pod through the sea at what seemed an impossible speed. No jumping and playing now. Everywhere she looked Dixie could see fish swimming away too.

The seagull flew above, encouraging them to swim faster to safety – and then it happened....

BOOM! The ocean shook and Dixie was frightened. Then again BOOM! And again, and again

Dixie lost her mother in the chaos. Where was she? She couldn't find her. The sea turned black as the violent waves thundered through the water. She kept swimming. She didn't know where she was or where she was going. She felt so alone in the darkness and very scared. She called out for her father to help her. There was no answer.

The booming noises continued. They were in the distance now, but the shock waves still rattled through the water all around her. She was so frightened. And then suddenly it went quiet and the seas calmed again. She looked around, bewildered and exhausted. She could see the seagull who had warned them floating on the surface. He beckoned her with his wing to follow him.



“Don’t swim that way because it gets too shallow. You will get into trouble and may end up stranded on the beach. I am from the Sea Safe campaign. Call me Gully, all my friends do. We look out for sea folk in distress and alert them if we see danger. We’ve been very busy lately. You are lost. I’ll help you find your family.”

“Are they safe?” Dixie asked, still trying to catch her breath.

“I think so. We’ve had scouts out looking along the shoreline to see if any sea folk are stuck on the beach, but they haven’t reported back with news of any this time,” Gully replied.

“What happened? What were those loud bangs? I have never heard such a thing before. It sort of hurt and I couldn’t hear or think properly. I didn’t know where I was,” said Dixie.

“Wind turbines. Massive wind turbines that are supposed to generate electricity for those on land when the wind blows. The government pays huge sums of money to rich companies to litter our once quiet oceans with them. The booming was the big arm on the ship bashing their bases into the seabed. What we heard was only for one. There will be many more. It isn’t safe to go back. Once the turbines have their whirling blades on there will be vibrations through the water whenever they turn. My mates and I have to avoid the places they put them in case we get hit. We call them the Whirly Wing Choppers.”

Dixie’s eyes were wide with fright. “Don’t the people from the land like us? I thought they wanted to see us jump and play and film us?”

Gully shook his head sadly. “They don’t understand what happens out here. They can’t see what’s going on. They don’t want the turbines near them because of the harm they can do so some say put them out at sea where they can’t hurt anyone.



“The people are told it is important to save our planet but all I see is distress and destruction wherever they are. The government says it knows best, but it listens to the businessmen who just want to make the money. It seems to me they should be the last people to listen to. What I see when I am flying above the oceans is that they are destroying more than they could ever save. Come with me, let us find your family.”

Gully flew in front and Dixie followed him. All around were sea creatures looking lost and confused. Some joined in behind Gully hoping he would know where to go. After a while Dixie could hear calling. It was her father trying to find her and she swam faster and faster until she found him and her relieved mother sheltering in a deep cove a long way from their home.

Gully quickly explained to them what was happening and about the wind turbines and how they could never go back to where they used to live.

“Oh no!” came a chorus of tiny voices. The Pearlstones, a family of oysters with twelve children, looked distressed. “We have just moved here from a place that had turbines. We couldn’t stay there. The terrible vibrations were making us so sick that we had to leave. What are we to do now? Where can we go that is safe and we can live in peace?” they wailed in unison.

Alarmed, the sea folk gathered round Gully and asked what they could do to stop the turbines being put up.

“Nothing. The ship is too big for us. No-one will listen to reason. It’s all about making lots of money and we don’t matter. A developer called Mr McWeasel is in charge of installing the turbines. He has put thousands up all over the land but now he makes much more money putting them out at sea. I have seen him on The Piledriver before. He doesn’t let anybody, or anything, get in the way of him putting these monsters up.”



“What about when they are up and the big ship has gone, can we get rid of them then?” spoke up a gruff deep voice from a rock behind them. All eyes turned and looked at a huge crab with massive pincers. “I mean how are these things fixed to their bases? Can we break them?”

“Bolts. They secure them with big bolts. Who are you?” asked Gully

“Captain Strongclaw from the Crab Core Commandos reporting for duty, sir. There are lots of us and lobsters too. It may take a bit of time, but we could do it. We would need to work on all the turbines at once before this McWeasel character realises what’s going on and comes out to stop us.”

“My mates and I from the Toolbox Team could help,” said Sid the Swordfish. “We’ve got Hammerhead Hugo and Hannah and the electric eels so we can work in the dark.” Slappy the Octopus laughed and waved her eight tentacles. “Don’t forget me; I’ve got four pairs of hands,” she giggled. Soon there were offers of help from every part of the cove.

“Ok, everyone. We need to make a plan,” said Gully “We will lie low until they have finished and then we will show them what happens when they come where they are not wanted. Sea Safers will fly sorties over the site and report back with progress. We will have to do it before the blades turn, otherwise we are not safe to fly near them and the vibrations through the water will badly affect you all and you won’t be able to do it.”

Over the following weeks the sea folk worked out exactly what they were going to do. Gully and the Sea Safers came back each night with a report of how much progress McWeasel had made and tales of swooping down and pinching his lunch out of his hands. “He was so angry he jumped up and down. He was redder than Roxy the Red Snapper,” Gully said, and they all laughed and were excited that soon they would be home.



And then it was time. Under cover of darkness they left the cove and made their way to the turbines. The Sea Safers flew low and led the way and those that didn't swim were given a lift on the backs of those that did. They were astonished at what they saw. What seemed like hundreds of ghostly monuments reared out of the water – so high they could see the tops of them only because of their blinking red lights. The enormous blades were still and the seas around them were calm and lapping gently at the towers. It was eerily quiet.

Dixie swam around the towers wondering why anyone would want to put such ugly things into their beautiful ocean. She dived to the seabed and saw how empty and deserted it was. It used to be colourful and teeming with life and now it was just barren and that made her very sad. She desperately hoped the sea folk could do what they planned to do and that eventually their home could recover.

“We'll have to make good time,” said Gully. “They are coming to switch them on tomorrow.”

The sea folk split into groups. A Sea Safer perched on every turbine keeping watch and they signalled to one another on the progress made by the crabs, lobsters, the Toolbox Team, Slappy and all the other sea creatures willing to help work on the turbines.

The electric eels lit up the dark water as they all set to work. One by one the bolts around the turbines were loosened. It was hard work and they were getting tired. Dawn started to break, and the sun was rising. Gully was on the turbine nearest the shore and he could see the big ship coming with McWeasel standing on the bow as it surged through the water.

“Quick – you must work faster. McWeasel is on his way,” he squawked.



Mr McWeasel admired his work as he got closer. He rubbed his hands with greedy glee. Today was pay day and the money would start to roll in from the government, which had taken it from the people to pay him for his vibrating monsters. He would get paid when they made electricity and even more when they had to be switched off to protect the grid network when there was too much power on it. He just couldn't lose!

Gully swooped down and flapped his wings around McWeasel's head, trying to distract and delay him. McWeasel shouted and waved his fist in the air and hoped that the thieving seagull would soon have a close encounter with one of his rotating beauties.

The big ship was getting closer and closer. Suddenly every Sea Safer on each turbine signalled that they were ready. The final bolt on every turbine was loose and the towers were beginning to tremble on their unsteady bases. All the sea folk retreated to a safe distance except just one crab commando who undid the last holding bolt on each tower. It was a sight to see as the giant turbines swayed and rocked from side to side, back and forth, back and forth. Then, one by one, as if in slow motion, they crashed into the sea and started floating away.

McWeasel watched in horror. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. His money-making turbines had been cut loose and were disappearing over the horizon.

Dixie and her family jumped and leapt out of the water with joy. The Sea Safers did aerobatics in the air and the seabed creatures danced with delight. When McWeasel saw them, he realised what had happened. The sea folk had fought back to protect their homes from those who didn't care about them, only the money that could be made.

His face went red and he shouted in rage at them all. Every single turbine was drifting away and taking with them any chance of raking in all that public money. McWeasel screamed at the ship's captain: "Quickly follow those turbines – we must get them back before they sink."



The captain opened up the engines and with a roar and big puffs of black smoke from the exhaust the ship took off after the bobbing towers. Engulfed in a sooty haze it raced as fast as it could but ...too late ... one at a time the turbines disappeared beneath the waves and into the sea forever.

The sea folk were relieved that their nightmare was finally over. Their watery home wouldn't vibrate, the noise wouldn't scare them and there would be no blades to endanger those who flew in the sky including the Sea Safers, who had warned them against the dangerous turbines and the money grabbing McWeasel.

Dixie jumped high in the air and flicked her tail in defiance in the direction of the big ship.

Against all the odds and by working together they had won a huge battle. They had protected their community and their marine home.

Those of us who love the natural environment owe a big thank you to Dixie and all the sea folk who were so bravely determined to rescue it from those who were intent on plundering and destroying its beauty for their own greedy gain.

As for Mr McWeasel he knew he was beaten. He was ruined. He had lost all his turbines and all his money on this failed windy venture. He returned to the harbour and was never heard of again. His wind developing days were finally over and communities on land and in the sea would never fear his name again.



Dixie the Dolphin

Lyndsey says:

Following the release of Subsidy Sam and Tiny the Turbine the global shift has been to giant off-shore wind turbines speared into our oceans with no real understanding of the potentially horrific impacts on the marine life and sea birds. Not only are there the vibrating monstrosities themselves with their huge and lethal sweeping blades that may well affect the creatures on the seabed, swimming in the oceans and flying in the skies but there are also the many miles of high voltage cables placed on the sea floor to service them.

Out of sight of the general public we can only imagine what is happening out at sea.

In Dixie the Dolphin the sea creatures and their feathered friends find themselves up against the greedy McWeasel, the ruthless wind developer.

Previously he was content to target rural communities onshore but the pesky folk on land had increased their opposition to his windy antics and made getting planning approval a long and expensive business.

He turned his attentions to the subsidy rich off-shore wind industry in the hope that government permission would be easily granted and that no locals would have the resources to fight his intentions.

He didn't expect the marine community to fight back against his plans quite like they did.

Published by SpinFree Publishing

Text copyright © 2020 Lyndsey Ward. All Rights Reserved

Pictures copyright © 2019 Cartoons by Josh. All Rights Reserved

ISBN 978-0-9956367-4-3

For any commercial resale or reuse please contact: Lyndsey Ward
spinfree.publishing@gmail.com