

# Zack's Search for the Manta Ray



## Learn to Read with ALOHA

All of the books in the Hawaiian Cat Tales collection were designed, written, and illustrated by school children, most of whom reside on the Big Island of Hawaii.

**Keiki Classroom**\* teachers, with 50+ years of experience between them, developed the curriculum. These books bring to life aspects of the Hawaiian culture while addressing social and emotional issues. Reluctant readers become excited when identifying with their peers' stories. Each book represents a letter of our alphabet and teaches phonics, parts of speech, homophones, sentence starters for proper grammar and writing, and spelling rules. The intention of the Hawaiian Cat Tales Collection A-Z is to **Learn to Read with ALOHA**. Read with love, joy, and connection.

### **Keiki**

Get ready to go on a treasure hunt! Look for the paw print in each picture. Find the Paw and pause. Reflect on what is happening in the picture. Then, challenge yourself as you read about the adventures of Brotu, Brycen, Bossy Brent, and Bayaku Ban. You will find words that teach you new vocabulary. You will also learn about phonics, parts of speech, homophones, sentence starters for proper grammar and writing, and spelling rules. If you want more information, go to the back of this book and read the words in each section so you can find them in the story. The more you find, the better treasure hunter you are!

\*Keiki Classroom is a Division of Creating Keiki Curriculum, 501(C)(3) Non-Profit

## **Parents**

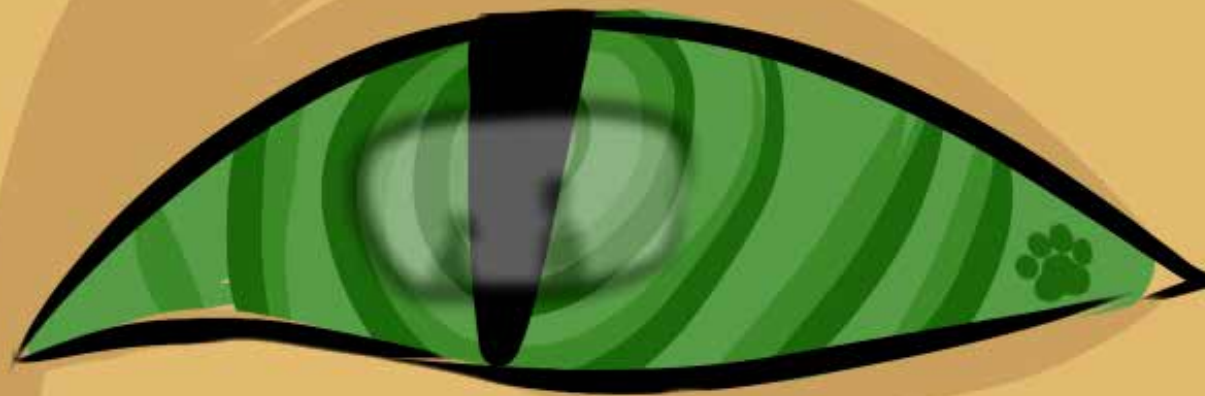
Read the “Teaching Tips” in the back of this book. Each section will guide you so you get the most out of reading with your child. Make connections to the story by asking your child deep-thinking questions such as, “Would you be brave enough to sneak onto Bossy Brent’s boat? How would you react if you saw a little one getting taken out in the surf? What would your three wishes be if you found Byaku Ban’s cave?”

We have also added a few simple ways to improve your child’s reading experience. Be on the lookout for our YouTube channel, Customized Curriculum By Kristen, where experts explain the wisdom of these simple suggestions. Most of all, enjoy the time reading with your child. You bring the fun factor to reading and your child will find joy in reading. Through our work at ***Keiki Classroom***, we hope to instill a lifelong love of reading in your child. Children whose parents read with them behave better in school.

## **Teachers**

There are sections in the back of the book for objectives. You choose the best objective for your students. There is also an enrichment section for lesson plan ideas. Please reach out to us with your feedback as you read these books to your students: **LearningIsFunInKona@Gmail.com**





Zack loved to play video games. He was a lazy bum. He was an orange, fluffy, long-haired cat. who wore a black hoodie, one earring in his left ear, and denim jeans. He wore black Converse shoes. He liked to be bare-pawed unless he went outside (which he didn't do often).

Being an adventurer had always interested him, but, unfortunately, he ended up on his screen most of the time. His screen time zapped all his energy and made his eyes gloss over. The screen hypnotized him! His mom had to call him several times before he would respond. He hadn't stepped outside of his house in months. Sometimes, he would even forget to eat!



One day his mom came in and scolded him for being a gamer because he couldn't unplug from the screen. So his mom intervened, and then he became full of rage.

She reasoned with him, "Zack you must find something else to do or I will take away your video games for a whole year!" Zack's mom was ok with him playing games a few hours a week but his screen time seemed to be taking over his life.

Zack thought and thought, "Oh man, I don't want to get all my video games taken away." Then, after a lot of brainstorming, he asked, "Can I use my computer to find some kind of adventure?"

Mom agreed, "Sure, Zack, that's a good idea."

Zack went online and typed in the word "adventurous" into the search bar. He scrolled through the screen for hours. He finally came across an idea that inspired passion in his heart.

He jumped out of his chair and screamed, "Mom, I found the perfect adventure!" The screen read, Find the Missing Albino Manta Ray. Be the winner! Submit your photograph and claim the Million-dollar Prize.

His mom came running upstairs, looked at his screen, and saw an albino manta ray on it.

"Well, this works because the Albino Manta Adventure starts in Hawai'i next week on the keiki\* research boat! Seeing an albino manta isn't possible in any zoo's aquarium!"

\*Keiki - Hawaiian for "child or children."

Since the adventure was in the Hawaiian Islands, Zack flew from his home in Florida to the Big Island of Hawai'i. He checked into his hotel room at the Nai'a Wai. Then, he found the keiki boat tour, Honu Kai Tour Company, which was searching for the rare albino manta ray. Zack learned that manta rays frequently swam near the buoys. Days went by. Zack joined several tours to find the rare manta ray. During all these tours, he was having so much fun that he didn't even miss playing his video games! Day after day, he'd explore different buoys as he searched for the albino manta.





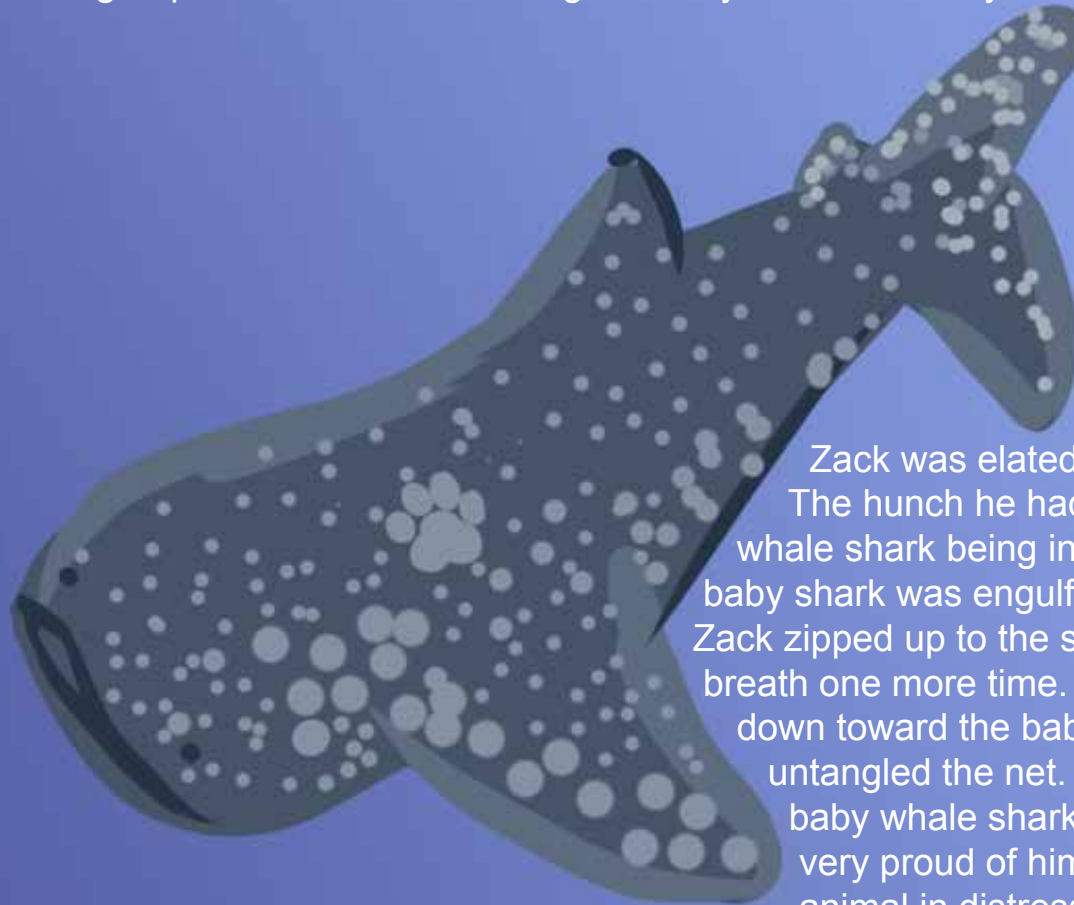
At the beginning of the second week, Zack was still looking for the rare albino manta ray. He was determined and persistent. He didn't want to give up. He realized that this adventure was going to be nothing like the instantaneously rewarding video games he had been playing for years.

Zack had a feeling he'd find something new if he booked with a different tour company. So he followed his intuition and booked with a company called Ocean's Breeze. Zack was excited as he headed out to sea on the new boat. As soon as he entered the water in his dive gear, he spotted a magnificent, graceful whale shark. The whale shark started swimming toward Zack as if he had seen Zack before, as if Zack was his long-lost friend. Unfortunately, the feeling was not mutual. Zack quivered with fear and knew he must stay calm. Coming closer, the whale shark reached Zack, but then quickly disappeared into the deep blue water.

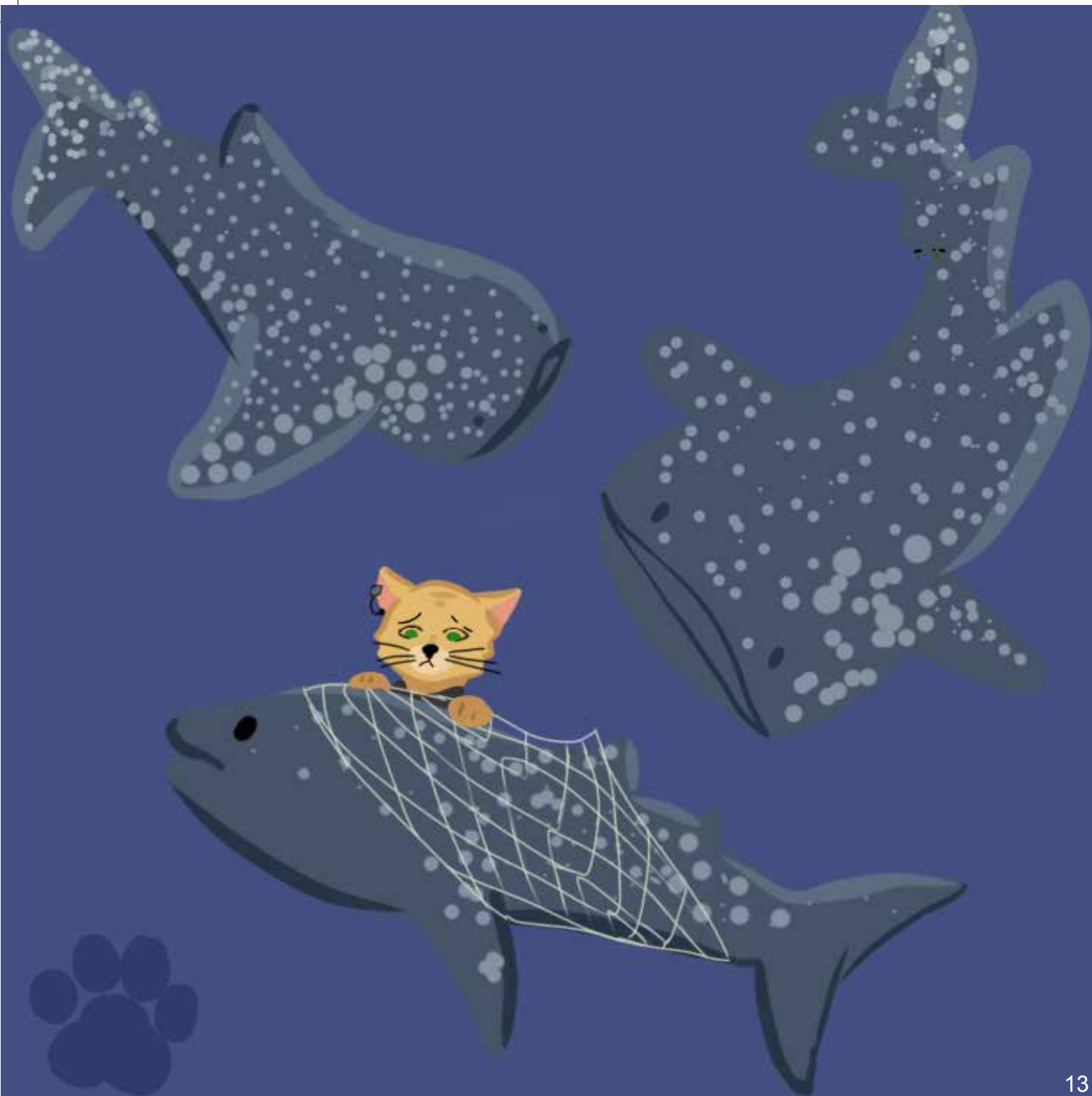
Zack's frantic mind said, "Swim away." However, his heart said, "Be brave, Zack, and follow the whale shark!"



Zack swam deeper and deeper. He felt safe now, and intuitively realized something was wrong. The whale shark was trying to get his help. Zack couldn't hold his breath for that long, so he swam to the surface to get some air. After a few deep-calming breaths, Zack dove straight back down into the dark-blue sea to follow the whale shark, again. He was amazed when he saw a group of whale sharks and figured they were her family.

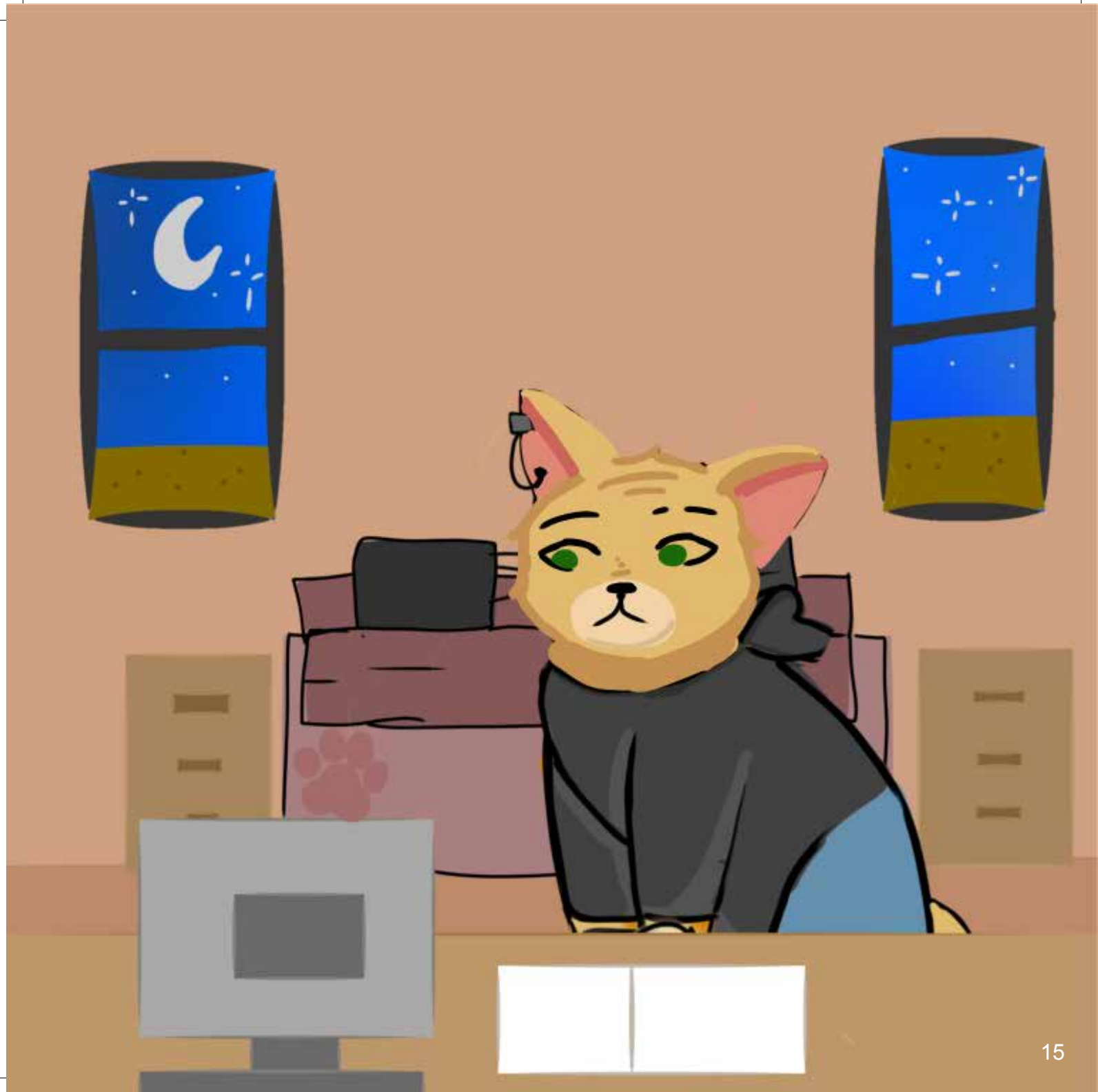


Zack was elated to meet them, The hunch he had earlier about the whale shark being in trouble was right, a baby shark was engulfed in a big net! Zack zipped up to the surface to catch his breath one more time. Then he dove back down toward the baby shark and gently untangled the net. In no time, the baby whale shark was free. Zack felt very proud of himself for helping an animal in distress.



After the baby shark rescue, Zack booked himself a cabin near the ocean so he could hear the calming waves of the sea. He was falling in love with nature more and more.

Still determined to find the albino manta ray, Zack did some research. He learned that they live on the south side of the Big Island of Hawai'i. He also learned that they like to eat plankton. Plankton are tiny organisms found in water that are unable to propel themselves against a current. They are so small they are only seen if you put a light beam in the water at night.







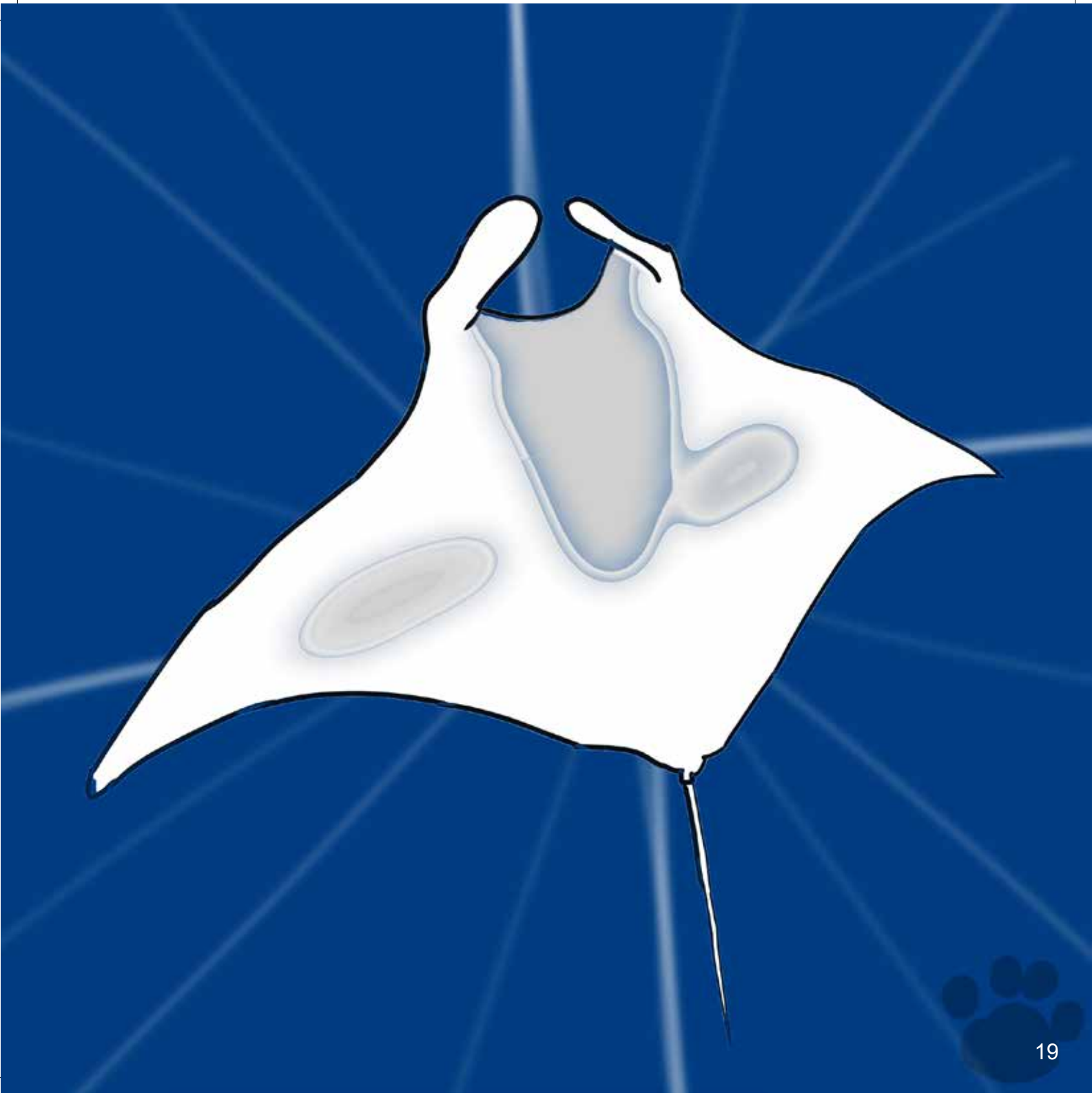


The next day, Zack went to a museum that exhibited sea life. He was inspired to learn more about the sea. He also wanted to see more of the sea! He was curious to find a display about manta rays. The museum had many artifacts and hands-on learning centers. There were also plaques (posted signs) that showed the manta rays' life cycle and environment. While Zack was roaming the halls, he came upon a display that showed a big albino manta ray. He read the sign next to the 3-d model. It said, "These albino mantas are extremely rare because albinism in marine mammals presents several life-threatening changes." Oddly, the rest of the plaque was blank. Confused, Zack wondered why there were not many facts about the albino mantas. He asked some of the marine biologists, "Why don't you have more information about the albino manta ray?" They had no answers. So Zack went back to his cabin and did more research on his computer, but found nothing more. His curiosity grew.

Desperate to find the albino manta ray, Zack hired a third tour company called Hawaiian Coastline Adventure, which specialized in seeing the manta rays at night. When Zack got to the destination to go on the night tour, he met a girl named Zia. She was there to greet people for the manta ray tour. Zia explained the Do's and Don'ts of the tour. The captain of the boat was named BZ Benda. Captain BZ Benda was kind and carefully explained what the voyagers were to do on this nighttime adventure.

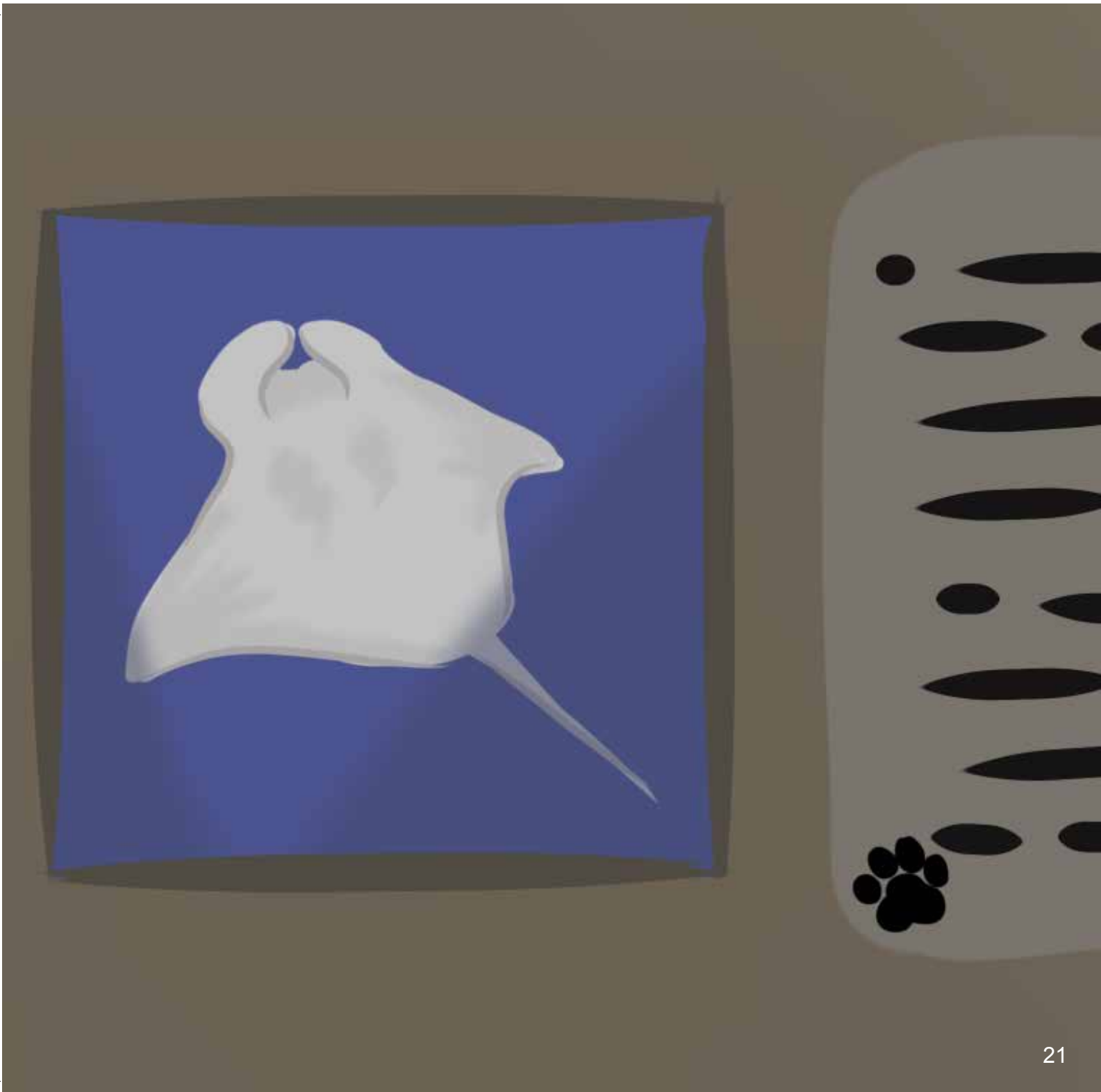
He told the other cats aboard, "You will be hanging onto a surfboard with lights and you will be floating with ankle attachments. An ankle attachment helps you not kick the manta rays. The light beams attract the plankton on which the mantas feed with their toothless mouths. Mantas are harmless to humans even if a swimmer is gently touched."

As soon as Zack got in the water, he saw two big manta rays and recognized their belly markings. It was Lani-ray and Big Bertha-ray! He was shocked to see them, again. Zack was enjoying the entertaining show with the manta rays, but soon after, low and behold, what did he see? A big albino manta ray swimming by! He quickly grabbed his camera and took a photo of its belly so he could enter it into the contest. Zack was amazed at how big the albino manta ray looked. It had a twelve-foot wingspan!



As soon as Zack got back to the cabin he submitted the photo to enter the competition.

The next morning Zack got a phone call from the committee chairperson. She announced, "Hello Zack, you are the first person to take a photo of the missing albino manta ray. In return, you will receive one million dollars for finding the one and only albino manta ray, in the world. We have put the one million dollars in your bank account. We also want to thank you for helping us discover the one and only albino manta ray!"





Absolutely shocked, Zack wanted to check the bank to see if they actually put the money in his account. It was there! He was thrilled! Zack started jumping up and down with excitement. He went back to his cabin to decide what to do with his money.

Going online, Zack found the local marine rescue center and hospital. He noticed how dilapidated it was so he immediately went to their donation website. Zack completed all the paperwork and donated \$700,000 to the marine hospital. He soon had a call from the marine hospital saying that they greatly appreciated the 700,000 dollar donation. Zack continued to help marine life with the money he received. The rest of the contest money went to open up his very own marine hospital on the Big Island of Hawai'i. He named it, *Helping The Animals of the Kai*.\*

**Moral: Spending more time in nature and limiting your screen time makes you healthier and happier.**

\*Kai - Hawaiian for "ocean."

# Parent Tips

A parent, in this context, means anyone in a caregiving role

## Tips to decode a word you don't know:

1. Look for the base word. Is there a prefix or suffix? Is it a compound word? Cover up parts of the word with your finger so the student sees the base word.
2. Sound out the word phonetically. Use your phonogram memory and apply blends.
3. Look for context clues. What words surround the unknown word? Make it a game.
4. Pronounce the first syllable.
5. Keep giving clues: the word has 2 syllables, it starts with a "r", it is in the sky when it rains, it is a compound word. Let the child shout out the word, "RAINBOW". Let the child be successful, as it builds self confidence. Watch the light bulb go on, and celebrate them with Aloha.
6. Ask a friend.

## Tips to create a successful learning environment:



1. Always have a glass of water nearby. Water is as essential as a pencil. Children think better when hydrated. "When children are dehydrated, they lose concentration and focus," according to Carla Hannaford PhD, author of Smart Moves Why Learning is Not All In Your Head, pages 150-156. Dr. Hannaford began her research in Kailua Kona, on the Big Island, and now resides in Montana.



2. Watch the child's eyes. If they continuously struggle when looking at a word. It might be wise to get their eyes checked by a behavioral ophthalmologist. The eyes have to mature to have the capacity to work together to read. This is called eye teaming. If they are not tracking (tracking means following the words in the sentence from left to right, there may be a visual block). One strategy is to



use Brain Gym movements or any physical activity that crosses the midline of a child's body. In Brain Gym these are called Lazy Eights. See our YouTube channel for a quick video. <https://www.youtube.com/@customizedcurriculumbykris3018>

You need three visual abilities to learn to read: the ability for the eyes to work together (eye teaming), the outer muscles of the eyes to move left to right (tracking), and the inner muscles for the eyes to focus from far-sighted to near-sighted (foveal vision).

If you notice a challenge, another easy teaching tip is to use large print. Use one or two sentences on a page (keeping content relevant and on grade level). Schools and libraries have large print books. Also, the text in online books can be enlarged. Use a bookmark blocker so that the student sees one line at a time.



3. Lighting is critical. Use natural light, not fluorescent lighting. Fluorescent lights flicker rapidly and cause agitation, hyperactivity, and aggression. Poor lighting causes distraction between the eye and brain, leading to reading, writing, and behavioral challenges. Lamps with a warm glow are attractive, even in the day-time because they mimic a camp fire. Everyone loves sitting around a campfire.



4. The room needs good-quality airflow, not AC. Overhead fans are fine.



5. Encourage keiki to be barefoot. In our experience over the years, their working memory, body awareness, balance, calmness, and comfort all are enhanced when they are barefoot. It also saves your carpeting.



6. Kids need an average of 10 hours of sleep per night. If they fall asleep when reading let them sleep. If that is not an option use a brain break where their head is lower than their heart.



7. Limit screen time.

We design our lessons to guide keiki to become whole-brain learners. Learning needs to be a joyful experience. Otherwise, students have difficulty integrating information. Integrated means both sides of the brain are optimally working together. When children are happy, they learn better. Their hearts are open, and they **Learn with Aloha**.

# Teacher Tips

by Rex Dubiel Shanahan

Rex has taught on the North Shore of Oahu at Sunset Beach Elementary. She has 37 years, and counting, of experience in Elementary Education.

## Teacher Enrichment Extensions for lessons with Book Z

1. Have the student look at the vocabulary section and write their own sentence using one or all of the words. Another activity is to ask them, "Who wants to find the vocabulary in the story and write down the page number and definition?"
2. Homophone charades- after the kids find the homophones in the book and are familiar with them divide the class into two groups for homophone charades. They must spell the word correctly on a whiteboard to win the point. As a follow-up the students can write the homophone and draw a picture in their journal.
3. Make a chart and divide it into two to eight columns. Label each column with a part of speech. Then find the parts of speech in the story and write them in the proper column. Have the students share their findings with the class.
4. Sentence starters - with a partner, begin your own creative sentence with each one of the eight parts of speech. Use comedy or action in your new sentence.
5. Write a paragraph. What you would wish for if you had found Byaku Ban? You need a topic sentence, three supporting detail sentences, and a closing sentence from the story.
6. Create a diorama of a favorite scene from the book.
7. Build a sculpture with newspaper and masking tape of a favorite cat character.
8. Reading comprehension: make stick puppets for each character and retell the story.

**Phonics:**

The sound for z is a sound students can hold for a long time. It tickles your tongue. Make the sound of a bumblebee - this will help practice the sound of Z.

**Story Word examples:**

Zack  
Lazy  
Memorize  
breeze  
Recognize  
Amaized  
Prize

**Spelling Rules:**

Z, NEVER S, spells /z/ at the beginning of a base word (zoo, zero)  
S makes the "Z" sound. For example: is, was, scissors,

**Homophones:**

Pg 7 - "See more of the Sea"

**Parts of Speech:**

Intonation - words that express feelings  
Zapped  
Zinged