

Smally's Big Journey

A Tale of the Sea and Slow Adventures

traduzione di: Smaly la lentezza e il mare

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Casa editrice: Vivo di Fiabe

1

Once upon a time, there was a little boat, so small it looked like a toy. The other boats traveled the seven seas at great speed, making a noise like thunder.

She, on the other hand, only went: "Pota pot, pota pot, pota pot..." She was small and slow, but she dreamed of going far, out to the open sea where you can no longer see land, and where it doesn't matter how big or fast you are.

One morning, she thought, "I want to go where the sea sparkles, where Azzurra the whale lives. It might take ten, a hundred, or even a thousand years, but I'll get there." And so, she set off!

2

As she traveled slowly, slowly, she suddenly felt herself being lifted. It was Doroteo the octopus, watching her closely. She exclaimed, "Wow, you're amazing!"

He replied, "Thanks, and you're really brave to venture out here alone, being so small." The little boat said very seriously, "When you have a dream, like meeting Azzurra the whale, you have to follow it. And the journey is always full of magical encounters!"

The octopus blushed and said, "Well, I'm a bit of an odd creature with my eight arms and nine brains." "That must be hard to manage," said Smally.

Doroteo replied, "Not really, because I follow my heart... or rather, my three hearts. And now, I'll help you with a little push. When you start chasing your dreams, you always need a little help."

"Thank youuu...!!!" As she sped up, thanks to Doroteo's push, the octopus waved all his arms in goodbye.

3

The little boat noticed something floating in the sea, but unable to slow down, she bumped right into it. She heard, "Ouch! Can't you go slower?"

"Sorry, the octopus pushed me."

Amalia the otter asked in fear, "Who was that? Will he come push me too?"

"No, it was Doroteo, he just helped me to get to Azzurra the whale. I think his super push has made me come loose. I need to go back to shore and fix myself, or I'll sink."

Amalia suggested, "Well, I'm not land, and I'm not still, but I can help." She gently lifted Smally and placed her on her belly. The little boat felt a warm kindness, closed her eyes, and let herself be rocked by the heartbeat. She started fixing her bolts, saying, "Thank you, your way of being in the sea is quite unusual." Amalia proudly replied, "I always float on my back, and my belly is a cradle for my little ones."

Smally exclaimed in surprise, "Wow, that's really amazing!"

The otter thanked her, "And so are you, for being brave enough to go so far."

Smally replied, "Thanks, but today I've learned that when you start chasing your dreams, you always meet friends who lend a hand."

As she set off again, Amalia tied herself to a seaweed, saying, "I think I'll stay here. I wouldn't want to cross paths with a hungry whale."

Smally smiled and continued her journey, thinking, "If I'd been as fast as the other boats, I would have only seen her in passing, without knowing anything about her."

4

The little boat looked back towards the dock and noticed that the land was still very close. Suddenly, she realized she was going... faster and faster.

"Oh no, maybe my engine is going to explode!" she said.

She heard a sweet giggle, and suddenly, she found herself on top of a mountain! But it wasn't a mountain: it was the shell of a turtle who had carried her quite a long way.

"Thanks for the ride, but I don't know if you took me in the right direction," Smally said.

Martaruga replied, "The direction doesn't matter; if you want to get somewhere, eventually you will, as long as you don't stop."

Smally, perplexed, answered, "What a strange theory."

Then she added, "You look like a grandmother; can you tell me what the sea was like when you were young?"

The turtle replied, "It was turquoise and clean, with many peaceful beaches for the mother turtles to lay their eggs, and we little ones feasted on the sea's delicacies."

The little boat asked, "Are there still delicacies now?"

"Now everything tastes like plastic. It's everywhere, even though it's so small you can't see it. We eat it, and it gives us stomach aches. I hope humans stop throwing this tiny trash into the sea. And they throw in big pieces too! I've seen turtles trapped in plastic, at risk of suffocating."

Saddened, Smally replied, "Oh, I'm sorry. Thank you for the ride, now I'll continue my journey. I want to reach where the sparkling begins."

The old turtle revealed a secret, "You know, when you get there, you'll see the sparkle of another part of the sea. The journey toward the light never ends."

The little boat clarified, "I want to meet Azzurra the whale. But maybe I've taken the wrong path."

Martaruga answered, "Sometimes, taking the wrong path is the only way to reach your destination."

Smally thought, "If I had sailed straight toward the whale, I wouldn't have met the turtle who gave me a ride, or the octopus who pushed me, or the otter who helped me without having to turn back."

Then she kissed Martaruga's nose and went on her way, carrying the wise words of the grandmother turtle with her.

5

As Smally happily swam on, she saw the sea turn pink — a color she loved very much — and the waves seemed to cuddle her.

In the midst of all that pink, she noticed an eye watching her.

She became a bit worried; when you meet someone unusual, you're always a little scared, but curiosity helps you make friends!

She called out loudly to be heard, "Hello... eye."

A voice replied, "Hello little boat, I'm Isabella, the pink manta ray."

Smally smiled and said, "What a beautiful color."

Isabella replied, "If you're a flamingo, sure. But when all the other rays are gray and black, it's not fun being so... different."

Smally told her, "It's wonderful to float on top of you; gray would have made me run away."

The little boat pulled a pink ribbon from her drawer and tied it on, saying, "To remember you and your beautiful color when you're far away."

The manta, touched, said, "Oh, thank you."

She dove down gently, creating soft waves that caressed Smally. The sea gradually turned bluer and bluer until it returned to its usual color.

The little boat looked at the ribbon with a bit of nostalgia and continued to sail.

6

It was night, and Smally could only see distant lights. She looked up at the sky, which sparkled with stars like she had never seen before!

On land, there was too much light to see their beauty.

She also saw something glowing in the sea, floating just beneath her.

Amazed, she realized it was a beautiful jellyfish.

The gentle way it swam and its glowing light made her feel so good.

She thought, "What a marvel! If I'd been going as fast as the other boats, I never would have seen her. When I'm sad, I'll close my eyes, and with this memory, I'll breathe in the light of the sea and the stars."

7

At dawn, Smally saw an endless stretch of water.

Looking in every direction, she could no longer see the land.

For a moment, she felt lost, but then she was filled with a sense of freedom.

She thought, "Here, it doesn't matter if you're big like a whale or small like a little boat. It doesn't matter if you're pink, gray, or glowing. It doesn't matter if you've lived more years than you have left, like Martaruga, or if you have strange habits like living upside down in the sea like Amalia, or if you have three hearts like Doroteo.

The sun shines on all of us and rises for every one of us, no matter who we are."

8

At that moment, she heard a strange melody coming from the sea — it was the song of Azzurra the whale.

Enchanted, Smally wanted to enter her belly like Pinocchio and stay inside her forever.

It was peace and harmony, the place she had always dreamed of being.

She heard the voice of the whale say, “Smally, you’ve been searching for me, and those who seek, find.”

Smally replied, “I know those who seek but never find.”

Azzurra replied, “Those who don’t find are simply those who give up too soon.”

Smally said, “I now understand why I wanted to meet you: your song, the stars, and the sea without land.”

A small tear of joy fell into the water.

The little boat added, “I’m almost out of fuel, and I won’t be able to

return home, but that doesn’t matter. Sometimes, to follow your dreams, you have to give up everything.”

9

The whale replied, “Yes, sometimes that’s the only way to achieve them, but...”

She didn’t finish the sentence; she began to sing again as she dove deep.

Smally asked, “But... what?”

Suddenly, Azzurra made a huge splash of water right under Smally, and she flew into the air!!!

The whale finished the sentence, “But discoveries must be shared!”

When the little boat started to see the dock from where she had set off, she realized she was returning home.

She fell and landed under the sea, then resurfaced — she was home.

10

That day, Smally told all the boats about her adventure and the wonderful creatures she had met.

A big boat said, “I’ve sailed the seven seas, but I’ve never seen any of that.”

Smally replied, “You just need to go a little slower, and you’ll meet, learn, and love.”

From that day on, the boats sometimes sailed slowly, slowly, before speeding up again.

Another boat asked, “Smally, now that you’ve experienced super speed and flight, what do you want to do next?”

The little boat replied, “Sleep.”

They all laughed, for once you reach your dreams, you’re left with a weariness to sleep in and dream of other horizons to love.

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A Tale of the Sea and Slow Adventures

Short text

1

Once upon a time, there was a little boat, so tiny it looked like a toy. The other boats were fast and made a noise like a storm!

But she just went: "Pota pot, pota pot, pota pot..." She went slowly, but she dreamed of reaching the middle of the sea to meet Azzurra, the whale. So, off she went!

2

During her journey, she met Doroteo the octopus. They played together, and then he asked her, "Where are you going, Smally?"

She replied, "To see Azzurra, the whale!" Doroteo said, "I'll give you a hand to reach her." And he gave her a big push!

Smally exclaimed, "Thank youuu!" She went super fast, far, far away.

3

The little boat ended up bumping into Amalia the otter, who exclaimed, "Ouch!" Smally said, "Sorry, Doroteo the octopus pushed me to help me reach Azzurra the whale, but I went so fast that I kind of broke."

Amalia replied, "Come onto my belly so you can fix yourself."

The little boat fixed everything up nicely and set off again, saying goodbye to her new friend Amalia: "Thanks, see you soon!"

4

As Smally continued her journey, she felt something underneath her. It was a turtle, who said, "Good morning, little boat, what are you doing in the middle of the sea?"

Smally replied, "I'm going to meet Azzurra the whale."

The turtle said, "I'll take you for a little while."

They played with her life ring, and then the turtle carried her far away. The little boat kissed Martaruga's nose and left, happy to have met her.

5

Smally saw the sea turn pink, and there was an eye watching her.

She said, "Hello... eye."

A voice replied, "Hello little boat, I'm Isabella, the pink manta ray."

Smally smiled and said, "What a beautiful color."

Isabella replied, "I'd rather be like the other mantas: gray and black."

Smally told her, "Oh no! Gray would have made me run away. It's wonderful to float on top of your pink color."

The little boat pulled a pink ribbon from her drawer and tied it on, saying, "To remember you when you're far away."

The manta, touched, said, "Oh, thank you, my friend."

Smally smiled and continued her journey toward Azzurra the whale.

6

It was night, and Smally looked at the stars. Then, in the sea, she saw something glowing: it was a jellyfish.

She thought, "How wonderful, if I had gone as fast as the other boats, I never would have seen it."

And she fell asleep, rocked by the waves of the sea.

7

In the morning, she woke up and couldn't see land anymore; she was right in the middle of the sea!

She thought, "But where could Azzurra the whale be? Will I be able to meet her?"

8

At that moment, she heard someone singing. It was Azzurra! She was enormous.

The whale said, "Good morning, little boat!"

Smally replied, "Hello Azzurra, I traveled a long way to meet you. You're wonderful! I'm so happy to be here with you, even though I won't be able to go back home because I'm out of fuel."

The whale replied, "It's a joy to meet you, dear Smally, you've traveled such a long way."

9

The whale said, "I'll help you get back home."

Azzurra made a huge splash of water, right under Smally, and she flew!

It was beautiful to be up in the sky; it was wonderful to see Azzurra from above, but she was also eager to go home.

10

She arrived close to home, and the ships that had seen her fly asked her about her journey.

Smally said, "I met many friends who helped me reach the whale: Doroteo the octopus, Amalia the otter, Martaruga the turtle, Isabella the manta, and I also saw a glowing jellyfish. And then Azzurra, who made me fly in the sky to help me return home!"

A big ship replied, "What an adventure! I've traveled a lot, but I've never met anyone."

Smally replied, "You just need to go nice and slow!"

From that day on, the boats, every now and then, would go slow, slow, looking for new friends in the sea.

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