

A Whale of a Tale

by Gina Shaw

illustrated by Charles Lehmann



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Mateo rushed into the kitchen. His dad was just starting to bake cookies.

"Papi," Mateo said, "I have to make something out of clay for school tomorrow. Can I work right here in the kitchen?"

"Sure," his dad said.

Mateo covered the kitchen table with paper and placed the tub of clay on it. Then he ran to his room. He came back with paints and brushes, cardboard, and other tools.

"What are you going to make?" his dad asked.

"Today in school we learned about blue whales," Mateo answered. "That's what I want to make."



Mateo and his dad looked for pictures of blue whales. When Mateo found one he liked, he got to work. His dad went back to baking cookies.





First Mateo drew a blue whale on a piece of cardboard. Next he took the clay and made a big ball. Then he rolled out the clay and made it into the shape of a whale with his hands.



At the same time, Mateo's dad rolled out his cookie dough. Then he took a cookie cutter and pressed it into the dough over and over. He carefully placed each shape on a baking pan and put the pan in the oven.



Mateo painted his whale. "Now the paint has to dry," Mateo said.

Mateo's dad took the cookies out of the oven. "Now the cookies have to cool," he said.

The delicious smell of baked cookies filled the air.

"I'm done!" Mateo shouted.

"Me too," his dad said.

When Mateo's whale was dry, he carefully packed it up in a box.

"Do you want to take some cookies to school tomorrow?" his dad asked.

"Yes," Mateo said. "That would be great. Thanks, Papi."

"I'll put some in a bag," his dad said. "But don't open the bag until you pass out the cookies, okay?"

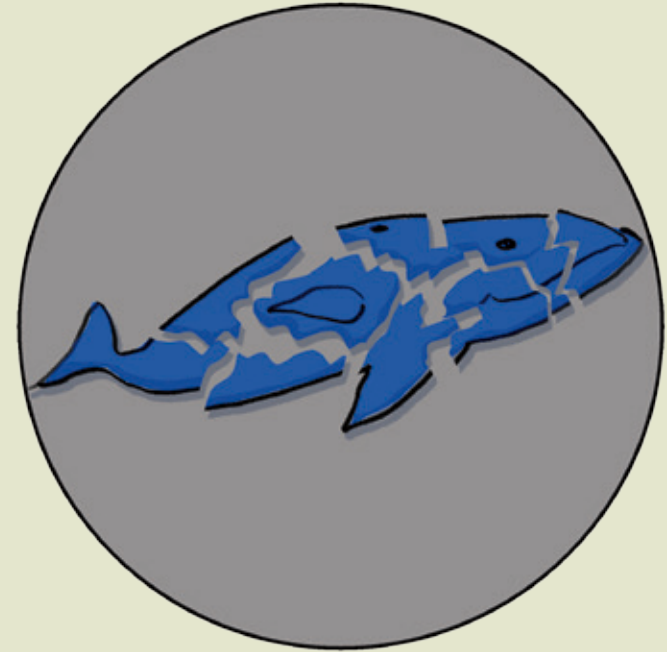
The next morning, Mateo put the bag of cookies in his backpack and carried the box with his whale. He held the box tightly on the way to school. But just as Mateo jumped off the bus, he dropped the box.

"Yikes! I hope nothing happened to my whale," Mateo said to himself. He picked up the box and rushed into school.





When Ms. Williams called on him, Mateo walked to the front of the room and opened his box. Oh no! His whale *had* broken into pieces. *Lots* of pieces. Mateo stood there, frozen in his spot.



"What did you make, Mateo?" Ms. Williams asked.

Mateo took a deep breath. "I made a blue whale," he said. Then he quickly added, "It's... a jigsaw puzzle. And I can show everyone how to put it together."

"Wonderful," his teacher said.

"And my dad sent along some cookies," Mateo said.

Mateo laughed when he saw the bright blue whale cookies. His dad had baked enough whale cookies for everyone, even Ms. Williams.

Mateo passed out the cookies.

"Have a blue whale," he said to each kid.
"And be careful not to break them or we'll have a *lot* of whale puzzles to put together!"

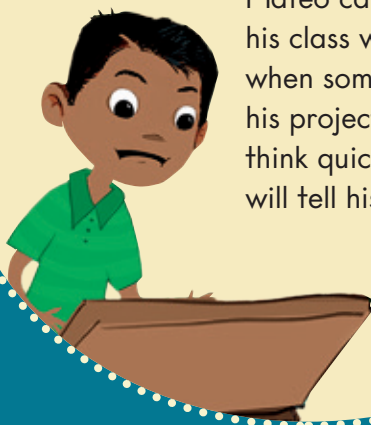


Five Facts About Blue Whales

In this story, Mateo learned about blue whales in school. Here are five facts about blue whales:

1. Blue whales live in all the oceans around the world.
2. Blue whales are the largest living animals in the world.
3. A blue whale's tongue can weigh more than an elephant, and its heart can weigh as much as a small car.
4. Blue whales eat as many as 40 million krill (tiny shrimplike animals) every day.
5. Blue whales look blue underwater, but gray above the water.

Fast Thinking



Mateo can't wait to show his class what he made. But when something happens to his project, Mateo has to think quickly about what he will tell his teacher.

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Fiction: Realistic

510 Total Running Words

Level L

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