

# TRAGEDY OF THE OCEAN

By

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Once in the oceans of the world were abundant species of fish and mammals roaming free without fear. From one part of the world to another did they move until man came. Without care did he kill many of these abundant animals either accidentally or purposely. Many of these decline in number and in no time became extinct. Breeding grounds were destroyed, lives shortened when they were prematurely caught in nets only to end up in cooking pots. Sadly, some were killed in oil spills. Though some survived, but many had died for no good cause. Here goes the story of a grey whale.

Once in the Atlantic Ocean lived a pod of grey whales. Their leader, an old grey whale saw a calf playfully move near a ship at the surface where danger was looming. With both a surge of fear and rage, the old grey moved to stop the calf from getting to the surface but it was too late as the calf had already poked his head out of the water. With this, he got attacked by harpooners and spearmen while some other whalers attacked with guns. In his desperate need to escape, he called the pod and got himself into a bigger trouble as he moved near the main hunting ship. The pod leader, on realizing this, attacked the ship and capsized it. With this, he succeeded in saving the calf. He sternly warned the members of the pod not to go near such an object again. A member of his pod who saw him move to stop the calf asked how he knew how dangerous moving near the ship was. To answer this, he told his story to the pod. Once, though as a young calf, he had been part of another pod. His father, being the only adult male was the leader of the pod. Like the young calf who was attacked, he had ventured towards a boat, though smaller. Despite being warned by his father not to move near such objects, he turned a deaf ear. He was caught by men with nets and was dragged out of the water. Luckily, he was saved by the pod. Since then, he had sworn never to move near them.

Years later, still a calf, he saw his father killed before his eyes while trying to save his younger brother from a bigger boat. These men used sophisticated weapons to attack. While aiming for his son, the harpooners saw a bigger whale and attacked it. Even though his father succeeded in saving his brother, he died from the injuries he had sustained. Fortunately, his elder brother had become an adult. So without much ado; they had a new pod leader. During their first migration which was due to lack of food, as a result of oil spills, they were attacked by a pod of killer whales thereby losing two of their young ones. They had also lost some young ones and some adults to the oil spills. They were not the only ones affected as there had been many other mammals and fish that died due to the spills. As they migrated further, they saw turtles flee from their breeding grounds. As the turtles were travelling, looking for another abode, they saw another turtle on her way to their breeding spot who inquired how their trip fared, but the answer

came in the negative. Still inquisitive, this turtle wanted to know why the trip yielded a bad result, the turtles answered that man had either built on their breeding spots or had polluted those areas by washing their oil tanks on the beaches where they laid their eggs.

As they forged ahead looking tired, somewhere not far from the beach, they saw jellyfish floating on the surface. Some turtles then attacked them hoping to have a good meal on their long journey. Unfortunately for them, the meal proved fatal as the turtles began to fall off the surface looking as though they were being suffocated and after much struggle, a great number of them died with the exception of one that regurgitated the jellyfish and found out that the 'jellyfish' they had eaten were actually plastic bags used by humans and dumped in the sea. Alas, the meal proved fatal as somehow the turtles began to fall off the surface looking as though they were being suffocated and after much struggle to cough it out died. Finally, only one of managed to regurgitate the jellyfish and then found out that the 'jellyfish' they had eaten were actually plastic bags used by humans and dumped in the sea.

After a long, unsuccessful migration, the pod decided to go home. However, tragedy struck. The pod was cornered and secluded by boats with spearmen and harpooners. Every member of the pod were killed except him. He managed to escape with injuries that almost claimed his life. Ever since then, he swore to protect whatever pod he came across in the future not minding his life.

We can see from this story the impact of the activities of humans on the life of aquatic animals. Though these are only some of the effects of human activities on aquatic animals, there are many other devastating effects which affect aquatic lives. Also, we seem to forget that the ocean is a source of different minerals. Some countries, for example Nigeria, derive some revenue through crude oil from the ocean, rather than repay the debt we owe it, we would rather wash our tanks into the sea, or empty waste products in it. We seem to forget that in the oceans are many endangered animals and by releasing these harmful chemicals, we ignorantly kill animals that we ought to protect.

Why not imagine a future without the ocean, though with the water but with no aquatic animals? Many animals have gone extinct due to man's activities while many others have been listed as endangered - the blue whale and the Caribbean monk seal. Rethink our actions towards the oceans is necessary before we create a disastrous future without them. Imagine the world without the oceans.