

THE GREAT MIGRATION ***(A story in the future)***

(This story is set in Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia. The Ningaloo reef is a fringing coral reef located off the west coast of Australia. Fringing reefs grow in shallow waters along the edge of the shore so that they can get lot of sunlight. Coral reefs are also called rainforest of the sea mainly because they provide protection and shelter for many species in water. They also help in controlling how much carbon dioxide is in the sea water. Ningaloo reef is also shortlisted for the world heritage site to be announced on 22nd November in 2009.)

It was an unusually hot morning and Sally was sitting in her science class listening to Miss Honey tell the class about global warming. " Coral reefs all over the world are in danger because of global warming and humans are destroying our home just to catch more fish," Ms Honey explained. Once Miss Honey had finished her lecture, it was home time and Sally the clown fish, Maddie the trout and Emily the red bass were swimming home while talking about the interesting subject that they had learned.



That night Sally went to bed feeling quite touched about coral reefs getting destroyed. Her parents realised that something was bothering Sally the whole day long so they decided to have a chat with her before sleeping. " I am worried that we may not have a beautiful home to live in future," sighed Sally with tears in her eyes. Her parents were quite aware of the problem themselves but never thought Sally to be mature enough to understand the complex issues. Realising that Sally was ready to understand the problem, they decided to cheer her up by explaining the real situation and that there was still a hope of better future. " In the past, in some parts of the

world, human used to blow up our homes with explosives and then catch all the stunned fish. Thankfully that stopped after many reefs including our Ningaloo reef were listed as a world heritage site. Now one of our main concerns is global warming and rising water temperature," her father explained. "What are we going to do about that?" questioned Sally. "Don't worry dear, we will just have to find another place to live in the Ningaloo Reef where it is not so warm," replied Sally's mum while tucking her into bed.



The next day Sally, Maddie and Emily went to explore around the edge of the shops and park. Sally promised her mother not to go very far. They kept discussing about the previous day's class and were so engrossed in their talks that they didn't realise how far they had wandered from their coral home. Suddenly Sally noticed that coral looked bleached in the surroundings. "I guess, it is true that Ningaloo reef is becoming unhealthier for us to live", thought Sally.

Just then a massive tiger shark swam up to them. Maddie was the first one to notice as the five foot Tiger Shark towered above them, showing its huge, sharp teeth. They swam as fast as they could to get away from it. Soon they reached a deep, narrow valley where the massive tiger shark could only fit his nose through. Once the shark had swum away, Sally, Maddie and Emily came out of their hiding spots. "That was a close one, we could have died," panted Emily. Sally realised that they were in a completely unknown place "Where are we?" inquired Sally. "I don't know," echoed Emily and Maddie together in frustration. "What are we going to do now?" questioned Maddie. All three of them were swimming too close to each other not to let any of them go out of sight.



In a few hours all three of them were confused and exhausted. "I think that we are having a dream," said Maddie. But when the girls pinched themselves they didn't wake up. "Let us have some rest and hope that everything will be all right in the morning"

sighed Sally with a shiver.

The next morning Sally, Maddie and Emily woke up and tried to find a way home. After a few minutes Sally asked "Haven't you guys noticed something strange?". "No" replied Maddie and Emily. "Well, haven't you noticed that the water is a bit colder here", cried Sally. Maddie and Emily thought for a moment. Suddenly their faces lit up and the three friends started jumping around in happiness. "Oh! I thought I was shivering in fear but you are right. THE WATER IS COLD!!! " chuckled Maddie. "I guess we have to try and find a way back home and tell the others about the colder temperatures in this area", cheered Emily.



A little while later, Emily spotted a school of fish and went and had a chat with them. "Excuse me do you know where we could find a place where the water is a bit warmer?" asked Emily. All the fish looked puzzled. "Where exactly in the world are

we?" inquired Maddie who had just joined them. "We're in the south of the reef of course!" murmured one of the fish and with that they swam away. "That's strange we also live in the Ningaloo Reef and we never knew about this place," thought Emily."

"Maybe the Ningaloo reef is larger than we thought, if we live in the north of the Ningaloo Reef and right now we are in the south, then all that we have to do is go north, " said Sally. Suddenly, Sally thought that if she went back home and told everyone about this place, they could migrate down south and all their problems would be solved.

And that's exactly what happened

Sally, Maddie and Emily swam north for two days until they eventually reached home. Their parents were ecstatic to see them and were even more excited when the girls told them about the colder waters down south.

In a few months there was a migration from the north to south of the Ningaloo Reef, which is now known as the *great* migration.

The End ¹

1. The first picture was taken at AQWA and shows Coral Reef formation. The next three pictures are of Ningaloo Reef and were taken through a glass bottom boat in Coral Bay.