

“They’re protecting something.” Paige’s expression turned more serious and she looked out to study the rest of the pod. “Do you have a baby with you?”

Aiden scanned the group as well. What he’d thought was a pod of six had now grown, and he counted at least ten. And that’s when he saw it. It was so precious it could have softened the hardest heart. “Yep. A tiny one, right there next to its mom.”

The tiny dolphin stayed just below the surface. He was hard to spot because he hovered close to the front flipper of the larger dolphin Aiden assumed was his mother.

Both of Paige’s hands went to her heart and she made a muffled cooing sound. “Oh, Aiden, have you ever seen anything so adorable in your whole life?”

As if the mother had heard her, she swam a little closer, showing off the calf. The baby couldn’t have been more than three feet long and had a sort of clumsy newness about him. Aiden wouldn’t have been surprised if he was only a few days old.

“What a treat,” Paige whispered. The mistiness in her eyes glistened and joy glowed around her. Aiden agreed. This moment was a treat. And what was even more surprising was the realization that there wasn’t anyone else he would’ve wanted to share it with.

They sat there like that for at least ten minutes with the waves gently rocking them, encompassed in a bubble of wonder, escorted by a pair of large dolphins while they watched the rest of the pod play in the water next to them.

Finally, Paige turned her attention to their escorts. “What a precious little baby. Thank you for sharing him with us.”

The one in front popped up, smiling right at them as if to acknowledge the compliment, and then both escorts joined the others and the whole pod disappeared into the darker waters.

She reached back and covered his hand with hers. The warmth of her touch flowed through him, which caught him off guard. He

stared at her hand in amazement for a moment before looking up at her. The peaceful expression on her face washed over him, too.

“Dolphins are my favorite animal, and I’ve never been this close to them in the wild. Weren’t they spectacular?”

Aiden shrugged and tried to look humble. “I arranged for them to be here as a thank you for helping me.”

She playfully pushed his hand away and turned her full attention back to where the dolphins had been, breathing out a contented sigh. “It doesn’t get much better than this, does it?”

No. No it didn’t.