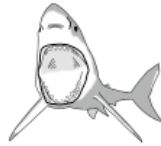


Chapter Two

How Sharkface Got His Name



Many years later, on the other side of Guadalupe Island, a large elephant seal, a descendent of the one who spoke to Eduardo and Gergorio, was swimming just offshore when he came upon a great white shark. As they swam slowly back and forth, they watched each other closely. He wanted very much to return and lie on the sand of his home beach with his friends, but the shark had other ideas; she wanted to eat him. As long as the bull kept his eye on the shark, he could avoid her deadly jaws, but he could not get past her to the safety of the shore. He needed some time to devise a plan.

He thought maybe he could distract her with a story or two of his adventures, and then make a run for the beach. Maybe he could tell her about swimming with the sea snakes in Costa Rica or about helping a turtle who was caught in a net in Hawaii. Surely he would be able to tell the tale in such a way that the shark would become spellbound and he could slip by. But then he remem-

bered, he didn't speak a word of shark, nor could he even hear their chatter. (The language of sharks is a very old and very difficult language. While some sea creatures speak using sounds and some talk with bright colors, sharks use electricity to speak to one another and only sharks can talk to sharks.)

The seal and the shark had been swimming back and forth in front of the beach for a long time. Sometimes he would dive down and try and get around her but she would block him with open jaws. Sometimes she would charge at him but he would get out of the way at the last second. They were both getting very tired of this dashing about, but neither one of them was ready to give up. Finally, as they came face-to-face and looked each other in the eye, he had an idea.

The next time they were both near the surface, he stuck his snorter above the water and took in a deep breath. All the time he was filling his huge lungs he kept an eye on the shark. She was caught off guard by his strange behavior and didn't try to bite him, but looked at him curiously instead. When he brought his snorter back under the water, she was just about to make a lunge with her jaws wide open when he suddenly blew out his air in a gigantic cloud of bubbles, and began to make a dash for the beach. Just as he had planned, the great white shark was surprised and distracted, but the seal was blinded by the bubbles and swam directly into her huge open mouth.

She immediately snapped her jaws together and sunk her sharp teeth deeply into his face. She was just about to start shaking her head back and forth, when he let out his last burst of bubbles. Shocked by the froth inside her mouth, the shark opened her jaws wide and the seal quickly swam for safety trailing a red path of blood all the way to the beach.

She had bitten him so deeply that his left eye was mangled and useless. There was a huge wound from the top of his head through his eyeball and onto his chest. It was just the size and shape of her lower jaw. Where his skin was cut, a thick white layer of blubber was exposed, but the muscles beneath were not damaged.

The injured bull lay on the beach for many days as his wounds healed. They would eventually turn into the scars that would give Sharkface his name. He had survived the attack of a great white shark and, once he was recovered, he was as strong and vigorous as ever, but he had only one eye.

When other bulls saw all the scars on Sharkface's head and the pink flesh where his eye used to be, they said to themselves, "If he could survive all that, he must be about the toughest elephant seal in the whole world." When the females saw all his scars, they thought, "Wow, what a tough guy. I want to get to know him."

After her encounter with Sharkface, the great white shark swam away from Guadalupe Island. Never in her life did she want to see either an elephant seal or a bubble again.

