

6-10
years old

BC Kids Annex planet



Ecosystems and Life: Read and Play

Find ten differences between the two pictures



Daisy and Friends

By: HEND FATHY

Once upon a special morning, Daisy, the small cleaner wrasse, woke up feeling happy and energetic. It was the day her mother had promised to let her take off and go play hide-and-seek with other fish-kiddos in the neighborhood.

Daisy lives with her family on a barrier reef in the ocean. There, her family had established a cleaning station that clients from different fish species visit to clean their bodies from parasites. Fish in the neighborhood were familiar with the family's distinctive, quick dancing movements and their long slender bodies with side strips. Even predator fish would visit their station and leave contented.

Daisy has always thought her family is lucky to own this business that brought free food to their doorstep, with no need to swim in search of it. Still, sometimes, the long working hours leave her tired. She wished she could join the neighborhood children playing hide-and-seek. She used to watch their marvelous camouflage skills from a distance.

The mother said, "Good morning my little Daisy, how do you feel today?"

Daisy answered, "Fun morning mommy! Today is the day. I am ready to show them my fine hiding skills".

The mother replied with, "Mmmm.. Hiding.. Though we do not usually hide, I am sure you have some tricks up your sleeve. I hope you enjoy your time".



Daisy hurried to the agreed place, arriving a bit earlier to allow time to introduce herself to her new friends and get to know them. In a short while came Leaf, the leafy sea dragon, along with Spear, the trumpetfish; then came Rocky, the stonefish; Cub, the lionfish; and finally, Funny, the clownfish.

The clownfish hurried towards Daisy and said: "My name is Funny; I am so happy you came... Finally, another girl joins the gang! Let me introduce you to the other guys".

Cub interrupted, "We know her already from the cleaning station; do not waste our time. All fish take position! Everybody hide, and I will come to find you after I count to ten... One".

Funny commented, "Can you not be nice for once, Cub? Never mind Daisy; sometimes Cub thinks he rules the ocean. He forgets that the lion is the king of the jungle only".

Having got the jitters, Daisy said, "Can I hide with you? I do not know where to go".

"Four," Cub resumed.

Funny answered, "I am afraid the anemone stings would hurt you. I hide inside anemone as my skin protects me against the stings, and they cannot follow me there".

Daisy hurried to Spear, asking if they can hide together far away. He replied, "I cannot go far; I am not a good swimmer.

I will stand vertically among the whip corals and match their colors so that nobody recognizes me".

"Seven," Cub resumed.

Daisy looked around quickly; she saw a rock lying on the sand, with some aquatic plants above. She thought, "That is the perfect hiding spot; let us see how Cub would find me there". As she approached, she heard a sound coming from the plants, "Watch out Daisy! Do not touch the rock! It is Rocky camouflaging; beware his venomous spines".

Daisy said, "Is that you, Leaf? Where are you? I cannot see you". He answered, "I am hiding among the leaves".

"Ten," Cub shouted. "Got you! I told you she cannot keep up with us. She is just a cleaner fish that serves us in return for free food", he said.



Rocky shouted, "This is not nice". Spear added, "You will lose many friends to arrogance". Leaf said, "Insulting others does not make you a better fish". Funny moved slowly towards her sad friend to console her.

Daisy answered, "Thanks guys. Cub, you are no more welcome in our station, and we do not need any of your free food from now on".

Daisy returned home feeling sad. No sooner she saw her mother than she rushed to her, bursting into tears, saying, "Why am I not talented in camouflage like the others? Why am I not special?" Mother hugged her and said, "Everybody is special, Daisy. Someday you will understand how important you are to everybody in the neighborhood".

Days passed and Cub did not visit Daisy's family cleaning station. He started to suffer from the increasing parasites on his body; he could no longer join the gang to play. His friends passed by to check on him one evening and Funny said, "Is not it about time to apologize, Cub?"

With much regret, Cub headed to the cleaning station. Once he saw Daisy, he rushed to her and said, "I am sorry. I was rude and arrogant. We need you as much as you need us.

You are a truly special fish. I hope you would forgive me and join our game tomorrow; we will teach you some hiding tricks".

Daisy hurried to clean poor Cub from parasites. She looked at her mother, who smiled at her with compassion and thought, "Now, I understand, mother. Now, I understand".



Now,
I understand,
mother.

*The story encompasses different marine species that do not necessarily live in the same place in reality. To make the best out of it, find out more about these species on the Internet with one of your parents or siblings.

Help Daisy get to her mother

