The Stories of Jack and Theo
How to enhance conversation on mental-state terms through language games

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Printing Fronteretro, Milan
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Psychological lexicon and language games: An introduction

Background
This book contains sixteen stories - specially created for preschool and primary school children - about the adventures of two likeable characters called Jack and Theo, a dolphin and a shark who encounter problems and come up with solutions. The stories display one peculiar feature: they have been intentionally enriched with psychological lexicon, or terms describing the world of inner states, whether physiological, perceptive, emotional, related to volition or to moral judgment (Bretherton & Beeghly, 1982; Bartsh & Wellman, 1995). Scholars have proposed a range of taxonomies for these terms, attempting to classify them not only by type, but also on the basis of their conceptual complexity and the stage of children's linguistic development at which they are acquired. Eight such mental state terms are featured particularly prominently in the Jack and Theo stories: getting scared, getting angry, wanting, remembering, knowing, thinking, believing, and deciding. Each of these target words is highlighted twice, in two different stories. Two recent studies conducted by our research group (Ornaghi, Brockmeier & Grazzani, 2011; Grazzani & Ornaghi, 2011) have documented the positive effects that may be obtained from reading the Jack and Theo stories with children, followed by implementation of a conversational procedure termed language games, which we briefly outline in the following section. Such effects include gains in children's emotion understanding, comprehension of metacognitive language and theory of mind. These abilities are all components of what is known as children's social cognition (Hughes, 2011), whose development may be enhanced by specific educational practices on the part of parents and other significant adults.
The conversational procedure
Following a standard protocol, the adult initiates the language game session by repeating a sentence containing the target term to be focused on, drawn from the story that has just been read. This helps the children to relate the activity to a content that they have just heard and therefore to place the language game within a meaningful context. The adult then invites the children to participate in a conversational game, explaining that this “game” consists of using the selected term: “In the sentence I have just read to you, there is the word think. Now we are going to play with this word; so the game involves using the word think. Remember you have to use it. So, if I say think, what does it remind you of? Remember, you have to use this word when you speak, for example using expressions like I think that...or when I think...“.

During the conversation the adult stimulates the children to use the target word as much as possible by means of focused questions or comments, while making every reasonable effort to involve all the participants in the conversation. After about 10-15 minutes of conversation, the adult winds up the session. The aim of the activity is to give all the children in the group, practice in thinking about and using the target mental state term.

By way of illustration, we provide three samples of the type of script with stimulus questions that the adult may follow in order to generate conversation after a story reading.

The first is related to the story “The treasure map” and introduces language games on the mental-state term “getting scared”. The second example refers to the story “Theo’s ball”, focused on the mental-state term ‘getting angry’. Finally, the third example concerns the story “The message in the bottle”, and is designed to stimulate discussion of the term 'believing'.
Sample Scripts

THE TREASURE MAP > Getting scared

The adult repeats a sentence from the story.
"The two friends (Jack and Theo) were scared because it was very dark in the cave [...]"
"Today we are going to play at using the word getting scared (or being frightened).
If I say "getting scared" or "being frightened", what do you think of?

Stimulus Questions
• How come Jack and Theo were scared? What were they afraid of?
• What makes you scared?
• What do you do when you're afraid?
• How do your Mom and Dad know that you are frightened?
• And what do they do to help you feel less scared?

A Sample Training Session (with 3-year-old children)
"If I say the words "getting scared", what does that make you think of?"
G.: I get scared... I'm afraid of the dark.
M.V.: Or of the dark and when it's night-time.
L.: Monsters are scary.
"Remember that the game is about using the words "getting scared". For example:
"I get scared when", or: "I was scared when...""
G.: ... [Unintelligible] of wolves.
"And what do you when you are afraid?"
G.: We run away.
L.: If there is a lot of light we don't get scared.
M.: I run away when I'm scared.
G.: I put my hand over my eyes when I'm afraid.
G.: Being afraid comes from the window.
[...]

THEO'S BALL > Getting angry

The adult repeats a sentence from the story.
"Theo [...] said: - You burst my ball. It's your fault. I am angry with you[...]"
«Today we are going to play at using the word “getting angry”. If I say “getting angry” or “getting mad”, what do you think of?”

Stimulus Questions
• How come Theo got mad?
• What usually makes you angry?
• What do you do when you are angry?
• How can you tell somebody is mad?
• What can we do to help us feel less angry?

A Sample Training Session (with 4-year-old children)
“If I say getting angry or getting mad, what do you think of?”
A.: Getting angry means crying.
“It’s true, sometimes we cry when we’re angry. Do you ever cry when you’re angry about something?
M.: When my cousin […], who is a bit rough, hurts me.
“Remember to use the word angry!”
M.: I cry because I’m angry!
“Very good. Has anybody else got something to tell using the word angry?”
J.: I get angry when my brother hurts me.
A.: I get angry when my mother plays a joke on me. I don’t like jokes.
“What is the joke that your Mom plays on you that makes you so mad?”
A.: She says she’s going to call the wolf…
[…]

THE MESSAGE IN THE BOTTLE > Believing

The adult repeats a sentence from the story.
“The two friends (Jack and Theo), believing that at last they were going to find somebody, swam to the cave as quickly as they could […].”
“Today we are going to play at using the word believing. If I say the word “believe”, what do you think of?”

Stimulus Questions
• What do Jack and Theo believe they are going to find in the cave? How come?
• What things do you believe?
• And what do you not believe?
• If somebody tells a lie, do you believe them?
• If you tell a lie, does your Mom believe you? And how does she know it’s a lie?”
A Sample Training Session (with 5 year-old children)

"What does the word "believe" make you think of?"

M.: Yes. I believe that my Mom is happy this evening.

F.: [seeing that my hand is bandaged] What happened to your hand?

"I hurt it because I didn't believe that the ball was so strong. The ball hit me while I was playing volleyball and it hurt me. I believed that the ball was going more slowly and so I caught it but it hurt me.

M.: When somebody says it's their birthday but really they're joking I believe them.

A.: I believe that I want to play videogames today and if my Mom says I can I believe it.

M.: If my Mum says I have to go and do that (unintelligible), I believe her. Then if my sister says she ate everything at school I believe her.

B.: If I tell M that today is my birthday he believes it. Then maybe one of my friends says "When is your birthday?" and it's in June and he believes it.
References


Once upon a time, deep down at the bottom of the sea, there lived two good friends, a shark called Theo and a dolphin named Jack. One day after school, Jack Dolphin told his friend that he had found a treasure map buried under the sea bed.

They decided to set out together to look for the treasure.
They swam for hours, following the instructions on the map: they swam across wide open spaces, in and out through swarms of jellyfish and around pointy rocks covered in anemones.

At last, just when they were tired out, they reached the place shown on the map.

Jack said: “Theo, I think this is where the treasure is hidden”. Theo replied: “Yes, but now what do we need to do to find it?”.

Jack answered: “I don’t know, let’s look amongst the seaweed”.
The two friends began to swim through the tall thick seaweed that made the seabed such a dark and mysterious place.

Suddenly Theo shouted: “A cave, a cave! Jack, come and see!”. Jack rushed to his friend’s side. Both of them were frightened, because the cave was very dark and they did not know who or what was waiting for them inside it.

“What if a sea monster lives in this cave?”, thought Jack.
The two friends plucked up their courage and, holding fins, went into the cave. It was really dark inside, but luckily Jack remembered that he always carried a torch in his back-pack for emergencies. He took it out and so the two friends were able to continue on their thrilling adventure. The two friends began to swim very slowly and quietly towards the light. Suddenly, a big voice thundered: “Who’s there?”. Jack and Theo were even more afraid and they began to yell, hiding behind a rock.
The giant shadow came towards them, and when it reached them, brought them into a cozy little room. Now Jack and Theo could see that the owner of a cave wasn’t a sea monster as they had thought, but a giant turtle called Shelly, who had a lot of chips on his shell and an enormous pair of glasses perched on the edge of his nose.

Jack and Theo, who had calmed down by now, introduced themselves to the old sea turtle, telling him that they had arrived his cave by following the instructions on an old treasure map. Shelly listened carefully to the two friends’ story and then explained to them that, unfortunately, there was no hidden treasure in his cave.
By now it was getting late and Jack and Theo had to go home. As they swam back they were disappointed that they had not found any treasure, but happy to have found a new friend.
One day Jack and Theo went to the playground together.  
Theo had brought a beautiful blue and red ball that his Grandpa had just given him.
The two friends began to play. Then suddenly Jack hit the ball very hard with his fin, knocking it into the middle of some seaweed.

Jack immediately said: "Oh sorry Theo, I'll get it!". Jack swam towards the spot where the ball had disappeared.
As he got near, he heard a loud bang. Theo, worried and frightened, rushed over to his friend to see what had happened. He found Jack and asked him: “What happened?”. Jack replied: “I think that the ball rolled towards those rocks, banged into that sea anemone over there and burst”.
Theo immediately went to check if his ball had burst. He thought to himself: “Oh no! I wanted that ball so much and now, just when I got it as a gift, it burst!” Theo turned to his friend and shouted: “You burst my ball. It’s all your fault. I’m angry with you!”. When Jack heard this, he was upset and replied: “I’m sorry, but I didn’t know that there was an anemone in the middle of that seaweed”. But the little dolphin hadn’t even finished speaking when Theo Shark swam away angrily. Jack felt sad and swam home too.
When Jack got home, his Mom noticed he was sad and asked him: “What’s wrong?”. The little dolphin told her what had happened and then he said: “You know, Theo had been wanting that ball for a long time and now it’s burst. Think how disappointed and angry he must be!”. Jack’s Mom tried to make Jack feel better by saying: “I think you two will soon make friends again; your friendship is more important than a burst ball and I am sure that Theo will soon realize that it wasn’t your fault".
A little while later, while Jack Dolphin was in his room thinking about what had happened, he remembered that when he was very small a ball of his had burst while he was playing with his Grandpa and he had been very upset. When his Grandpa had seen how sad he was, he had mended the ball for him! “There, that’s what I can do”, thought Jack. “I’ll take Theo’s burst ball to my Grandpa so he can fix it!”.

He rushed out of the house and swam back to the playground as quickly as he could. He tried to remember exactly where the ball had burst. He soon found it and took it to his Grandpa’s house.
When he got there, he rang the bell, but no one came to the door. Jack realized that his Grandpa was not at home and that he was probably out playing bowls with his friends as usual.

Jack was worried and didn’t know what to do. But he didn’t give up. He went to the shed where his Grandpa kept his tools and decided to try to mend Theo’s ball by himself. The little dolphin worked very hard on the ball and in the end, to his great delight, he managed to fix it.

“Tomorrow I’ll take it to Theo and I’m sure he’ll forgive me and we can play together again!”, thought Jack.
The following afternoon the two friends met at the playground as usual. As soon as he saw Theo, Jack swam over to him and asked: “Are you still angry with me? I’m so sorry about your ball; I didn’t burst it on purpose! To make up, I thought I would try to fix it and ... I did fix it!”.

Theo Shark, delighted to have his ball back, soon forgot about what had happened and made friends with Jack again.
The two friends played together all afternoon and did not think about the burst ball any longer.
It was a lovely spring day and there were only two days to go to Jack Dolphin’s birthday. Theo Shark knew that his friend had always wanted a surprise party. So he decided to organize one for him. That afternoon, after tea, he began to telephone some friends to ask them if they would help him get the party ready. He had just finished speaking on the phone with Sara Sea-Turtle, when someone rang the doorbell. Theo thought: “Who could that be?”. Then he remembered that he had promised to go to Seaweed Park with Jack. He opened the door, said hello to his friend Jack and together they set off for the park.
During the walk, the two friends chatted and laughed together. Theo thought: “I've got to be careful not to say anything about the party. Otherwise Jack will find out about it and it won't be a surprise anymore! I've got to make sure he doesn't suspect anything”.

So Theo, after thinking hard about how to make sure his friend didn't guess about the party, said: “You know Jack, I just remembered that two days from now I have got to go to my Grandma's to help her make a cake. Would you like to come with me to my Grandma's that afternoon?”. Jack replied: “Yes, I would love to come to your Grandma’s with you because she’s very nice and she always makes me something yummy to eat”. So the two friends agreed to meet at Theo's house on that day. Meanwhile, the preparations for the surprise party continued in secret.
Two days later, Jack got himself ready and went to Theo’s house. Theo was waiting for him and together they set out for Theo’s Grandma’s. Jack Dolphin did not suspect a thing. He had no idea that his friends had organized a wonderful party for him.
As they were swimming towards Theo’s Grandma’s house, Theo tripped and fell. Jack, worried about his friend, helped him up again. Luckily Theo wasn’t hurt, just a little upset because he had torn his t-shirt. He thought to himself: “Mom won’t be happy about this hole!”. 
When he got to his grandmother’s house, Theo rang the bell.
No one answered. Theo, pretending not to know what was going on, said: “That’s strange, I can’t understand why Grandma hasn’t come to the door. She did invite me to come today!” Then he said: “Perhaps she hasn’t heard the doorbell, let’s go inside”.
The two friends opened the door and went inside together.
Jack immediately felt scared and stopped in his tracks: all the lights were out! It was really dark and scary inside the house!
Then suddenly the lights came on and ...

“SURPRI-I-I-SE! HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JACK!” shouted all his friends.

The little dolphin realized straight away that his friends had organized a surprise party for him and he gave Theo a big hug. “Thank you for preparing a surprise party for my birthday”, he said “I have always wanted one and I was hoping that somebody would remember that. This is the best gift I could possibly had received”.

Theo, Jack and their friends spent the whole afternoon playing, dancing and eating the delicious goodies that Theo’s Grandma had prepared for them.
For Jack Dolphin it was a very important day: it was his Mom’s birthday. Jack’s Mom’s name was Katie. Even though Jack couldn’t remember how old his Mom was, he had decided to get her a very special birthday gift. “This time I want to get a really amazing gift for her!”, Jack thought. He thought and thought, but he couldn’t think of a good idea for a gift. So he decided to ask his friend, Theo Shark, to help him.
He swam as fast as he could to Theo’s house and said to his friend: “Please help me! Today is my Mom’s birthday and I can’t make up my mind what to get her. I would like to find something super-special to make her really happy”.

Theo tried to calm him down by saying: “OK Jack, don’t worry. I’ll get ready straight away and come with you to look for a gift for your Mom. We’ll find a really nice gift – you’ll see!”. 
So the two friends went downtown together to search for a gift in the shops. They saw lots of shop windows full of beautiful things.

Theo got lots of ideas from the shop windows: “Jack, what about giving your Mom that big hat with the yellow flower on it? Or look at that pretty green handbag!!! Or, I was thinking we could go to the bookshop to look for a cookery book! Mommies love cooking!”. But Jack did not like any of these ideas. Each time he turned up his nose and with a doubtful expression said: “Yes, they’re all beautiful gifts, but I want something even more special! Let’s keep looking until we get a better idea!”. 
After a while, it was getting late and the two friends still hadn’t found a suitable birthday gift for Jack’s Mom. Jack was mad with himself for not having started to look for the gift some days earlier. “I would have had more time”, he thought to himself.

Jack said goodbye to Theo and set out for home, feeling very sad because he had not found a special gift for his Mom.
As Jack was on his way home, he suddenly noticed an unusual patch of bright color in a nearby field of seaweed.

Curious to discover what it was, he swam nearer and you cannot imagine how surprised he was to discover that among the seaweed there was a wonderful red flower with a beautiful scent.
As soon as the little dolphin saw it, he remembered that that was his Mom's favorite type of flower. So he thought: “Yes, this is the perfect gift! Mom will be delighted with it”!

Jack was very happy to have found what he was looking for, he pulled the flower up by the roots, taking care not to damage it, wrapped it gently in a piece of paper that he had in his back-pack and took it home.

All the way home, Jack could only think about how happy his Mom was going to be when she got her surprise gift.
As soon as he got home, Jack ran to his Mom, pulled out the parcel and shouted: “Happy birthday, Mom! This is for you!”.

His Mom unwrapped the gift and when she saw the lovely flower she hugged her little boy and said: “This is a beautiful gift. Thank you, Jack. I have always wanted to have a flower like this in our garden. I’ll plant it straight away”.

The birthday celebrations continued for the rest of the day with a cake, gifts and lots of fun. All the guests at Katie’s birthday party had brought nice gifts for her, but she thought that Jack’s flower was the most special gift of all.
One day, Jack Dolphin decided to go to his friend Theo’s house to play with him.

He said goodbye to his Mom who, as usual, said to him: “Remember to come home in time for dinner”. 
Jack set out for Theo Shark’s, but suddenly stopped in his tracks because he remembered that his friend had asked him to bring some toys with him.
So Jack dashed back to the house, and went to his room to pick a toy to bring to Theo’s: “I could bring my cars .... No, that’s not a good idea, we’re always playing with cars. Maybe I should bring something we never play with ... Yes, but what?” Jack wondered to himself.

“Ah, I know”, he thought. “I’ll bring my favorite jigsaw puzzle, so we can make it together.”

But then he remembered that unluckily he had left that jigsaw at his Grandma’s the last time he had been to visit her.

“Bother” said Jack. “I can’t make up my mind what toy to bring to Theo’s.”
So he decided to empty all his toy boxes out onto the carpet, hoping that this would help him to find a good toy to bring to Theo’s. As he was doing so, he spotted a tennis ball… “Ye-e-e-e-s!”, yelled Jack in delight. “We can play tennis. That’s a really good idea; I think that Theo is going to be really happy, I know he hasn’t got tennis stuff”.

So the little dolphin picked up the rackets and ball and headed for Theo's house, *feeling very happy and sure* that he and his friend were going to *have great fun together.*
As he was swimming to Theo's house, he suddenly bumped into a group of jellyfish... Jack knew that when you meet jellyfish you must be very careful not to touch their tentacles, because you could get stung. He took such care to swim around the jellyfish without touching them that he dropped the tennis ball without realizing it. He had lost the ball!
When he got to Theo’s house, his friend was waiting for him in the garden. Jack immediately said: “Look what I brought! I know you like playing tennis but you haven’t got a racket or balls, so I brought them for you”. Theo hugged his friend delightedly and exclaimed: “Thank you. I’m so happy. Come on. Let’s start to play straight away”. So Jack gave one of the rackets to Theo, keeping the other for himself, but when he stuck his fin in his pocket to pull out the ball, he realized that it wasn’t there” “Oh, no!”, he said. “I think I lost the ball on my way here without realizing it. Now how are we going to play?”. Theo immediately made his friend feel better by saying: “Don’t worry. I don’t have tennis rackets, but I do have tennis balls. My Dad often plays tennis and I know that he has a lot of spare balls. I’ll just go in the house and get some. I’ll be right back.”
When Theo Shark came back with the balls, they began to play and they had a wonderful time all afternoon.

When it was beginning to get late, Jack remembered his Mom’s warning and picking up the rackets, said goodbye to Theo and rushed home for dinner.
One day, Theo Shark was swimming quietly along the sea floor, when suddenly he heard loud music. He looked around to see where the music was coming from and he soon realized that it was coming from Coral Valley.
Curious to find out what was going on, he snuck closer through the seaweed. The music was getting louder and louder and Theo felt more and more curious. A moment later, he moved some seaweed out of the way with his fin and what a sight he saw: thousands and thousands of shrimp dancing, making merry and eating party food. Theo was amazed because he had never seen such a lot of shrimp before. He thought: “I wonder why there are so many shrimp here and why they are having a party? I think I’ll go call Jack and together we’ll come back to watch this fantastic party”.
So Theo Shark swam quickly and quietly to his friend Jack Dolphin’s house. He rang the bell. Jack Dolphin, who was reading an adventure story, thought: “Oh bother, why did a visitor have to come just now”? and in a loud voice called out: “Who is it?”

Theo replied: “It’s me, Theo. Jack, hurry up and open the door. I’ve got to tell you about something very interesting that I just discovered”. 
That made Jack feel curious too, so he put down his book and rushed to let his friend Theo in.

Theo told him with great excitement what he had seen and they decided to go back to Coral Valley together to enjoy the rare sight of so many shrimp partying together.
When they got there, they hid amongst the seaweed again so that they could watch what was going on without the shrimp noticing them. When Jack saw the party he said: “I don’t believe I have ever seen anything like this! It’s amazing. Goodness knows what all these shrimp are celebrating for. Then Theo started trying to guess the reason for the party: “Maybe a famous shrimp is getting married and has invited all the shrimp in the sea to the wedding... or maybe today is a big holiday for the shrimp and they all arranged to meet here to party together... Gosh, I don’t know what to think!”.
While Theo and Jack were still thinking about why the shrimps could possibly be celebrating like this, suddenly a loud noise was heard. Then, the music stopped...

Unfortunately, the stereo that the lively music was coming from had broken down and now the poor shrimp had no music for their party. “What now?”, thought Theo.
Meanwhile some of the shrimp noticed Theo and Jack hidden amongst the seaweed and invited them to come out. The two friends, a little worried, came out into the open. The chief shrimp, whose name was Lenny, welcomed them very politely and asked if they could help to solve the problem with the music. Lenny explained to Theo and Jack that it was “Shrimp Day” that day, and all the shrimp in the sea were celebrating together, as they did every year. Lenny was really worried and said to the two friends: Please help us; our stereo is broken, and what kind of a party can we have without music?”. Jack Dolphin immediately thought of a way to fix the problem and he said: “Don’t worry Lenny, I know what to do. Wait for me here and try to stay calm”.
Very soon Jack was back and... with him many of his friends. “Here I am, my idea was to call all my musician friends here to play live music for your party, so that you can go on singing and dancing!” he said. The trumpet fish played the trumpet, the balloon fish played the guitar, Neville Octopus the drum, Diego Seahorse the saxophone and Molly Whale the piano. This wonderful orchestra played such lively and beautiful music that everyone began to dance happily.

So, as a way of saying thank you to Theo and Jack, the shrimp now invite them and all their friends to their big shrimp party every year.
One day, Theo Shark was on his way home from school when he found a glass bottle with a note inside. He started to think and wonder to himself: “What could it be? What could be written on that note?“. He wasn’t sure what to do, but in the end he decided to pick up the bottle.
Straight after lunch, Theo raced to Jack Dolphin's house to show him what he had found, and Jack, after looking carefully at the bottle, said: “I think there’s a message asking for help in this bottle”.

The two friends decided to break the bottle so they could read the note. On the faded yellow paper was written:

“Thank you for opening the bottle. If you really want to help me, come to Seaweed Park as soon as you can!”

Jack Dolphin was a little bit frightened about going to the park without knowing what they were going to find there. But Theo Shark who was very brave, decided to go to Seaweed Park. He really wanted to find out who had written that strange message and to help them.
So Jack Dolphin, even though he was terribly scared, agreed to come on this new adventure with Theo. A little while later, the two friends arrived at the park, and beside a bench, they found another bottle, which looked very like the first one.

At first, the two friends were quite surprised because they had expected to find someone in danger, not another bottle...

Then Jack said: “That’s strange, maybe it’s a joke...”.
Theo felt so curious that he decided to open the new bottle immediately (Figure 48). There was another note inside with a new message:

“It’s great that you’ve found the second bottle. Do you remember where Molly Whale’s cave is? Please come and get me there!”

Theo and Jack, thinking that at last they were going to find somebody, swam to the cave as fast as they could.
But when they got there, they found... another bottle! Now the two friends did not know what to think.

Jack Dolphin, instead of feeling scared was now beginning to feel a bit angry, because he was more convinced than ever that it was a joke. Theo, on the other hand, was getting more and more worried about the person who had left the messages. Once again the two friends opened the bottle and read the note inside, which said:

“Unfortunately, I’ve had to move on again. I couldn’t stay here, but if you swim on really fast, you’ll find me at the coral reef”.

Just then, Theo remembered that there was a short cut to get from there to the coral reef, so he and Jack Dolphin took it, swimming as fast as they possibly could.
When they got to the reef, they started to look amongst the corals, impatient to discover what new surprise was awaiting them. Near a pretty red coral, they found another bottle which was much bigger than the other bottles. By now, Theo just didn’t know what to think but he was really hoping to have arrived in time to help the mystery person. So, with Jack’s encouragement, he opened the bottle and… a note fell out, which the two friends read together:

“Dear friends, Dennis Crab, Mary Starfish, Sarah Sea Turtle and I organized this treasure hunt, because we know that you two are very brave and love adventures. Since we like to have adventurous afternoons too, we have decided to set up an “Adventure Club”. In the bottle you will find two necklaces that we made with lots of seashells. These necklaces will be the emblem of our group of friends. If you decide to wear them, we will be waiting to party with you at Mary’s house.
Signed: Diego Seahorse”
At the bottom of the bottle, Theo and Jack found the two necklaces. They put on the necklaces and went to Mary Starfish’s house for a big party with their new club of friends. While they were enjoying themselves at the party, Jack thought to himself: “It sure is nice to have so many friends and to have fun with them, even though they sometimes play jokes on me”.

One day, Theo Shark was swimming along the bottom of the sea. Suddenly, he heard a voice calling for help and he thought: “Someone is in trouble or in danger”. He looked around and decided to try to find that person and help them.
He tried to *figure out* where the voice was coming from by swimming about in all directions. When he came near some rocks he could hear the voice more strongly. He went right up to the rocks and saw an opening between two of them. He looked in and saw Sara Sea-Turtle who was crying. Theo asked her: “What happened? Why are you crying?”. Sara, *upset* and *frightened*, said: “I was gathering food for my little babies and I saw some delicious shellfish in this hole. I *thought* that my little ones would love them. I *noticed* that the hole was a bit small, but I *decided* to get in anyhow and now I’m stuck inside here and can’t get out. Please help me!”. Theo replied: “Of course, don’t *worry*, stay *calm*. I’ll go and call my friend Jack Dolphin; he’s sure to *know* how to get you out of there”. 
So Theo swum as fast as he could towards Jack’s house. When he got there, he explained the situation to his friend, and Jack immediately had an idea: he decided that they would take a very strong rope with them to pull the sea-turtle out of the hole.
Together, Theo and Jack went back to Sara Sea-Turtle and when she saw them she felt a lot calmer because she knew that two friends would do their best to get her out of the hole.

Theo Shark said: “We’re back, my friend Jack has brought a rope; now you’ve got to hold it tightly between your teeth and we’ll try to pull you out”.

Sara, feeling much better now, said: “OK”. She thought to herself: “I’ve got to try as hard as I can. I really hope it works!”.
Theo and Jack began to pull as strongly as they could, but no matter how hard they tried, they could not get Sara out. “This isn’t working”, said Jack. “She’s too stuck. We won’t be able to get her out on our own.” So they decided to go and ask some other fish to help them. “The more of us there are, the harder we will be able to pull!”, thought Jack.
After a while, Charlie Balloon Fish, Amadeus Hammerhead, Sally Eel and even Diego Seahorse came to help too.

When Sara saw so many other fish coming to help her she felt better straight away and tried even harder to free herself.
They all pulled on the rope as hard as they could, and after a number of attempts, the sea-turtle finally popped out of the hole she had been stuck in. Delighted to be free at last, she thanked Theo, Jack and all the other fish, before rushing home to feed her babies.

From that day onwards, Sara never went through narrow openings again in case she got stuck once more.
One day Jack Dolphin and Theo Shark decided to play hide and seek with some of their friends: Mary Starfish, Dennis Crab and Diego Seahorse. The five friends did “eeny meeny miny moe” to see whose turn it was to be “it” and it was Jack’s.
Jack Dolphin counted while the others hid, and then set out to look for them. First he found Theo Shark, who thought that he could easily hide himself even though he was very big. This time, Theo had hidden behind a sea anemone that was much smaller than he was. He didn’t realize that he wasn’t properly hidden because his fin and tail were sticking out!
After finding his friend Theo, Jack Dolphin found all his other friends. Next it was Theo’s turn to count. “1, 2, 3, 4…”, he counted while the others hid in the best hiding-places they could think of.
Jack Dolphin decided to hide in a place that would be very difficult for Theo to find: a big bush of seaweed, near the coral reef. Unfortunately, Jack did not think about the fact that the bush was too close to the sea surface!

While Theo Shark was still counting, a fishing boat came along. One of the fishermen, whose name was Danny, had always wanted to capture a dolphin to put it in the aquarium in his town.
As soon as Fisherman Danny sighted Jack Dolphin, he began to prepare to catch him with a very large fishing net. But then Danny thought: “If I throw the net suddenly into the water, the dolphin will see me and escape. I’ve got to think of a better idea so it won’t get away on me. So then, Danny decided to get into the water as quietly as possible and show the other fishermen on the boat where exactly to cast the net. Jack Dolphin had his back to the fishing boat and did not realize that he was in danger. Luckily, Diego Seahorse was also hiding nearby and he saw what was going on.
Diego understood what the fisherman was trying to do and, even though he was very scared and afraid of being captured himself, he rushed to ask Theo Shark for help, because Theo was the strongest in their group of friends.

As soon as Theo realized what was going to happen, he rushed straight to the boat, just as the fisherman was about to dive into the water. Fisherman Danny got a terrible fright when he saw the shark and, got back into his boat, empty-handed, disappointed and mad.
Then Theo Shark, who was worried in case the fisherman would change his mind, took Jack to a safe place that only he knew about and told him to stay hidden there for the rest of the afternoon. Jack Dolphin, happy to have been rescued by his friend, thanked Theo Shark saying: “Thank you so much Theo! Today you have proved what a good friend you are by saving my life. Thanks to you, I am still free to swim about the sea”.
One afternoon after school, Jack Dolphin was playing in his room with his sister Dora when someone rang the doorbell.
Jack’s sister rushed to open the door... She was excited because she was expecting a friend to come and play with her.

It was Lory Seal, one of her school-mates.

Dora was very happy and began to play with Lory in her own room, while Jack went to play by himself in his room.
However, after Jack had been playing on his own for a while he got fed up and decided to go into his sister’s room and ask if he could play with Dora and Lory.

“May I play with you?”, asked Jack.

Dora, who wanted to be on her own with Lory, said no and told him to go away.
Jack felt very hurt, sad and mad. Crying he swam to his Mom, who was worried and asked his “What’s wrong, sweetie?”. Sobbing, Jack replied: “I’m angry. Dora and her friend won’t let me play with them. I really want to play with them because I get bored playing on my own”.

His Mom tried to calm him down and explain to him that it wasn’t a good idea to get so mad. After all, Jack and his sister could play together every day.

“You’ll see that when Lory goes home, Dora will want to play with you again”, said Jack’s Mom.
To help Jack feel less mad, his Mom suggested that he telephone one of his friends to invite him round to play: “While your sister is playing with Lory, you could call your friend Theo and ask him if he would like to come round to play with you”.

Jack thought that his Mom had had a wonderful idea and he called his friend Theo straight away.

Unfortunately, nobody answered the telephone… obviously Theo was not at home. So Jack, feeling more and more annoyed said: “Today everything is going wrong. Theo is out, so now what do I do?”.
Jack’s Mom, to make him feel better, offered him a delicious snack. She said: “Come on, Jack. Have a nice snack, relax for a while and then we’ll think of something else for you to do”.

Jack listened to his Mom, and sat down to have a yummy snack with her. He did not feel as sad or mad as before about not having been allowed to play with the others.
Just then, Jack's sister and her friend arrived: they were hungry and wanted a snack too. So the three small ones had tea all together and afterwards Jack's sister said: “Hey Jack, Lory and I want to make a castle with the building blocks. Why don’t you help us? You’re very good at building castles and then... the more the merrier!”.

“May I really come and play with you?”, asked Jack happily.

“Yes, of course. We’ll work together to make the biggest and best castle!”, said Dora.
And so all three children played with the building blocks and made a wonderful enormous castle.

Jack was no longer angry with his sister. On the contrary, he realized that Dora had wanted to spend a little time on her own with her friend Lory, just as Jack himself sometimes invited a friend over to play with and spend time with on his own.
It was nearly Christmas and down at the bottom of the sea, the fish were looking forward to the festivities with joy and excitement. Theo Shark and Jack Dolphin were at the playground, having a fun time rocking back and forth on the swing.
Just then, their chum Arthur, a friendly clown fish, called out to them: “Hey, guys!”, exclaimed Arthur. “I’ve got ask you something very important. Have you already written your letters to the Christmas Fish?”. Theo replied: “No, there’s still plenty of time. There are lots of days left to go to Christmas”. But Arthur said: “No, you’re wrong about that, I know that there only seven days left to Christmas. My Mom told me so this morning. If you two don’t hurry up and send your letters, the Christmas Fish won’t have time to bring you the gifts that you want!”. Jack and Theo were a little upset and together they shouted: “Oh, no! Only a week left? How silly of us, we didn’t realize that Christmas was so close…“.
So Theo suggested going straight to his house to write their letters. Jack agreed and they both swam off towards Theo’s as fast as their fins could carry them.

As they swam, they worried that they would not make it in time to send their letters and that they would not get their Christmas gifts.
When they got to Theo’s, they sat down at his desk, with a pencil and a blank sheet of paper each. Before starting to write, Jack asked his friend: “Do you already know what to write in your letter to the Christmas Fish?”. Theo had thought a lot about what he wanted for Christmas and he immediately replied: “Of course! I know what I want to ask the Christmas Fish for... I really want a big racing track for my cars and I reckon that’s what I’m going to ask for. Why? Don’t you know what to write in your letter?”. 
Jack Dolphin replied: “Yes, of course I know what to write, but the trouble is there are lots of different toys that I would like and I know I can only ask for one. You know, it’s not at all easy to choose”. Theo promised his friend that he would help him to make this difficult choice. Jack began to tell Theo all the things he wanted: an electric train, a new football, a sword, a remote control car, lots of new books to read… and a scooter too. “It’s really too much!”, thought Theo.
As they were talking, Jack realized that Theo had a marvelous scooter in his room and he immediately said: “That’s it, I’d like to have a scooter just like yours. May I try it?” “Of course you may”, replied Theo.
After trying out Theo’s scooter, Jack sat down at the desk again and said: “That’s it, I’ve decided. I know what to ask the Christmas Fish for. I want to have a scooter too, so we can go to the playground together to have fun on our scooters”. Theo was happy for his friend and said: “Well done, Jack, I think that’s a great idea. I think the best gifts are the ones that we can enjoy together with our friends”.
The two friends finished their letters, put them in envelopes and rushed to the letter box to mail them.

Jack and Theo were happy to have written to the Christmas Fish about the gifts they wanted and to have mailed their letters in time.
One day, Theo Shark and Jack Dolphin arranged to meet their friends Mary Starfish, Diego Sea Horse and Penny Jellyfish at the playground after school.

When they got to the playground, Diego proudly showed them his new scarf. He told them that his Dad had given it to him when they had gone to the stadium together to see Diego’s favorite football team. Theo Shark thought: “That’s a really nice scarf; I wish I had one like that”. 
The five friends began to play: first they played ball, then hide-and-seek and then they decided to have a swimming race. Diego Sea Horse, who was still wearing his scarf, felt very hot. He decided to take off his scarf and put it down on a nearby bench.

The friends continued to play and have fun until it was time to go home for dinner. When they said goodbye to one another and left the playground, Diego was so tired that he didn't remember to pick up his scarf.
When he got home, his Mom said: “Hi! Did you have fun at the playground?” Diego, who had really enjoyed the afternoon with his friends, replied: “Yes, I had a wonderful time”.

Then his Mom asked: “Did you show your new scarf to your friends?” At that very moment, Diego remembered with a shock that he had left his scarf at the playground. Feeling worried and upset, he said: “Oh, no! I left it at the playground. Now what will I do? What if it’s lost for ever?”

His Mom told him not to be upset, saying that everybody forgets things sometimes. “Let’s go back to the playground together to look for your scarf. Don’t worry; I’m sure we’ll find it. The most important thing is to remember where you left it” she said. Diego cried “Of course! I
remember putting it down on the bench near the slide. I hope it’s still there”.

And so, Diego and his Mom swam quickly to the playground. When they got there, Diego rushed over to the bench where he had left his scarf. To his great surprise, there was no sign of his beautiful new scarf.

Diego was very sad and upset and his Mom asked him: “Are you sure you left it right here” “Yes!” said Diego. “I remember very well that I put it down on the bench because I didn’t want it to get dirty”.

Then Diego’s Mom had a good idea. She said: “Why don’t we call by your friends’ houses? Maybe one of them has seen your scarf”.

“You’re right, Mom. Let’s try that”, replied Diego hopefully.
Diego and his Mom decided to go to Theo Shark’s house first. When they got to Theo’s house, before Diego had a chance to explain why they had come, his friend Theo said: “Hey, Diego! You know you forgot your scarf at the playground? When I realized that you had left it on the park bench, you had already gone home, so I picked it up thinking that I would give it back to you at school tomorrow”. Diego, relieved and happy, thanked his friend Theo, took his scarf and went home with his Mom.
Theo Shark and Jack Dolphin were swimming along at the bottom of the sea, when suddenly they spotted an animal they had never seen before. It was a big animal with a long tail and a big mouth full of sharp teeth. Theo immediately asked Jack: “Do you know that animal? Do you know what it is?” And Jack replied: “No, I’ve never seen it before”. The two friends didn’t know how to behave: they couldn’t decide whether to go closer to the strange animal or to swim away from it as fast as they could. They knew that it is important to be careful in the sea because there are lots of dangerous animals.
Then, the strange animal realized that he was being watched by Theo and Jack and came towards them. They felt a little frightened and stayed very still. The strange animal stopped right in front of them. It was really big! Then in a big loud voice it said: “Hi! My name is Alexander and I need help. I don’t know where I am. I’m lost and I cannot find my way home. Can you tell me how to get to the marsh?” “The marsh?” asked Jack surprised. “But here we are in the sea, near the coral reef. There are no marshes here and anyhow, excuse me, but what kind of animal are you? We don’t know you and we’ve never seen you before”. “I’m a dragon and I know why you don’t know me. I live in the marsh and I got here by accident. Yesterday I decided to go exploring but I went too far from home and I ended up in the sea. Now I’m trying to go home but I don’t know the way. I’m lost”. 
The two friends wanted to help him find his way home, but they didn’t know which way the marsh was either. Then Theo had an idea: “You know, Jack’s Grandpa lives near here, he’s traveled a lot and explored the seas. He’s sure to know where your marsh is. Let’s go to his house – he’ll be able to help you – you’ll see”.

So Theo, Jack and Alexander set out for Jack’s Grandpa’s house.
When they got there, they found Jack’s Grandpa in the garden planting seaweed. As soon as he saw Alexander, he exclaimed: “Well, well. What’s a little dragon doing around these parts?”. So Alexander told Jack’s Grandpa his story and asked him to help him find his way home.

Jack’s Grandpa, who was famous for all his travels and adventures, knew exactly where the little dragon lived and calmly explained to him how to get there.
Alexander was very happy and thanked Jack’s Grandpa, as well as his two new friends Theo and Jack. He set out towards the open sea and was soon out of sight.

Theo and Jack were happy to have been able to help Alexander and pleased that they had met a new animal. Jack’s Grandpa promised them that he would soon take them on one of his explorations and show them the place where their friend Alexander lived.
One day Theo Shark was lying resting on the sandy sea bed, when suddenly he was woken up by a loud noise. His heart thumped, he felt scared and he couldn't tell where the loud noise was coming from. He looked around, but he couldn't see anyone.
Then he lifted up his nose and... help! A boat was passing right over him. The very loud noise was the engine of the boat. Theo thought that it was better if he stayed still until the boat had gone.
Unfortunately the boat stopped right above him and its anchor was thrown into the water.

Theo didn’t know what to do. He was scared of being seen and caught by the fishermen. He knew that all the fish that lived around there were in great danger and he tried to think how he could warn them to stay safely in their homes.

He began to yell: “Look out, there are fishermen. Run and hide! But no matter how loudly he yelled, not all the fish heard him and a lot of them were caught by the fishermen’s nets or lines.
Theo was scared and also a little angry, and he decided to call his friend, Jack Dolphin. Together they would think of a plan to save their friends and make the fishermen go away.
As soon as Theo got to Jack’s house, he told him what was going on. Jack was stunned by the news. He was terrified too. The two friends tried to make one another feel braver and to think of a plan. Jack thought and thought and thought and at last he had a brilliant idea: “Why don’t we call the whales so they can hit the fishermen’s boat with their enormous tails and frighten them away?”, he said. Theo really liked Jack’s idea and so they both set out immediately for the cave where Molly Whale and her family lived.
When they got there, they found Molly and the other whales playing, knowing nothing about what was happening to the other fish.

Theo and Jack explained how serious the situation was and asked the whales to help them scare off the fishermen.

Jack said: “I believe that when the fishermen feel your tails banging into their boat, they will sail away for fear of being knocked into the sea”.

The whales, who knew that they were the largest creatures in the sea, liked Jack’s idea and immediately swan towards the fishing boat.
When they got there, they saw a net full of their fish friends that was about to be pulled up onto the boat and they immediately began to hit at the boat with their enormous tails. Even Molly, who was the smallest of the whales, swam up quickly and ...BOOM... banged into the side of the boat as hard as she could.

The boat began to rock from side to side and the fishermen, terrified at the idea that the boat might be capsized, pulled in their nets, started up the motor and moved off as fast as they could. Just as Jack had thought!
“Well done, my friend. You were right. Everything went exactly as you said it would”, said Theo to Jack.

That day, Theo, Jack, the whales and all the other fish who had been saved from the fishermen threw a big party to celebrate.
One day, Theo Shark and Jack Dolphin were on their way to school when suddenly they saw a scared-looking little octopus standing in a corner near some rocks.

Theo and Jack decided to go over to him, slowly, because they didn't want to make him even more frightened or make him run away.
When the little octopus realized that they were coming towards him, he immediately sprayed some ink at them to defend himself. Theo and Jack realized that he was very scared. So Jack tried to calm him down by saying: “Don’t worry, we only want to get to know you, we’re good fish.”

The little octopus, thinking that they were playing a trick on him and really wanted to eat him, yelled: “I don’t believe you! Stay away from me or I’ll call my Mom and she’ll trap you in her giant tentacles.”

Theo and Jack did not know how to convince the little octopus that they only wanted to be friends.
Just then Theo saw a crab nearby that was trying to climb over a very high rock but couldn’t because the rock was too slippery. Without thinking twice, Theo Shark rushed to help him. He lifted him up gently with his fin and laid him on the other side of the rock.

The little octopus saw Theo do this and thought to himself: “It must be true then! This shark isn’t fierce and mean, but good and wanting to help people who are in trouble. I would like to make friends with him!”.
So the octopus came over to Theo and Jack and said: “You know, my name is Jamie and I live over there near those caves. I’m sorry if I didn’t believe you at first, but my Mom has taught me to be very careful, especially when I meet big fish like you”.

Theo said: “Don’t worry, our parents have taught us the same thing. My name is Theo and this is my friend Jack. We live near hear too, near the drop-off. We’re on our way to school. What about you? “No, I’m still too small to go to school. What a pity, now that we’ve made friends you’ve got to go …”, said Jamie a little sadly.

Then Theo exclaimed: “If you want, we can meet tomorrow, because it’s Saturday and we don’t have to go to school”.

“Oh, yes!” said Jamie happily.
As he was going home, the little octopus thought about the fun he was going to have the next day with his two new friends and he couldn’t wait to play with them.
One Saturday, Theo Shark and Jack Dolphin were swimming down the big hill into Blue Valley.
After a while, their friend Mary Starfish came along and said to them: “Hi guys, what are you up to?”. Theo replied: “Nothing in particular, we were just trying to decide what game to play”. So Mary said: “I know something adventurous we can do!!!”. Theo and Jack were very curious to know what Mary was thinking of and begged her to tell them.

So Mary explained: “This morning I met Dennis Crab who told me something very exciting. Do you want to know what it is?”. “Yes, go on, tell us!”, said Jack.

So Mary began to tell them: “Dennis said that down at the end of the valley, on the other side of Seaweed Park, there is an old shipwreck. What if we organize an adventurous expedition to go and see it?”.
Jack and Theo agreed to go with Mary Starfish. Theo said: “It is a long way away though! I think we should bring something to eat and drink for the journey”. Jack added: “You’re right, Theo, great idea! I’ll drop home to get some biscuits and fruit juice for all of us. Wait for me here!”. When Jack returned with a back-pack full of delicious things to eat, they set out on their adventure feeling very excited but just a tiny bit scared too: who knew what was lying in wait for them!
When they arrived at the old ship they saw somebody moving near it and, not knowing who it might be, they swam on very cautiously.

They wondered who or what it could be: a deadly and hungry giant shark, or a scuba diver looking for fish to catch... Who could tell? All they knew for certain was that they needed to be very careful.
When they got closer, they realized that the creature thrashing about near the shipwreck was an enormous eel. She seemed very frightened. Straight way Theo, though he was feeling a little afraid, asked her: “Hello, what’s happening? Why are you so upset?”. The eel replied with a sob: “I was swimming near here with my little one, when I noticed this ship and I was curious to see it better so I came over to have a look. While I was checking that there was no danger, my little boy decided to go inside the shipwreck and now I can’t find him. I am very big and I can’t fit in through these small cracks. Please help me to find him. I’m afraid he’ll get himself into trouble. His name is Timmy”. Theo told the mother eel: “Don’t worry, we’ll help you!".
They all began to search for Timmy.
They called him as loudly as they could: “Timmy, Timmy!”. But no answer came.
Then Jack, who was a very intelligent dolphin, had one of his brilliant ideas. He remembered that his friend the trumpet fish lived nearby and he thought: “I’ll ask him to play a song on his trumpet, and then maybe the little eel will hear the music, feel curious and come out of the shipwreck to see where it is coming from!”.
Jack swam as quickly as he could to his friend’s house, hoping to find him at home. Luckily he was at home and together they hurried back to the shipwreck. The trumpet fish began to play a very beautiful melody.
A little while later, they saw the little eel’s head peeping out through a port hole in the side of the ship.

The Mommy eel went over to her baby and gave him a hug. Luckily her little Timmy was fine and from that day he never went off again without telling his Mom first.

They all had a picnic together with the things that Jack had brought in his back-pack. Theo, Jack and Mary Starfish went home feeling tired, but happy with the adventure they had had together.
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