

WHALE OF A TALE
EPISODE: THE LOUDEST SONG

Written by

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Concept:

"You are never too small to make a difference" - Greta Thurnberg, COP24 in 2018

Whale of a Tale dives into the adventures of a crew of Australian researchers following a small pod of humpback whales as they migrate across the Pacific ocean. Penelope (7) and her mother Dr. Skyler study the whales while their Maori friends, siblings Finn (6) and Maia (7) and their grandfather Captain Hau sail the research vessel, an eco-conscious catamaran named Whale of a Tale.

Because of the close bond between the crew kids and the whales Odis, Cici, and calf Macho, the kids are allowed a special privilege not offered to other humans- the ability to breathe underwater by swimming inside giant air bubbles blown from the whales' blowholes. Using their special gift, Penelope, Maia, and Finn help keep the whales safe from the dangers that threaten them along their migration route, like boat traffic, entanglement, pollution, and whalers, as well as learn about the oceanic cultures they encounter and the exciting wonders of the ocean ecosystems.

As they learn to become better stewards of the whales' environment, they learn lessons that help them become better friends, siblings, and helpers in their everyday, amazing life.

Consisting of episodic 22 minute episodes, *Whale of a Tale* is best suited for children in the 5-7 bridge age range. Comparable shows include adventure and nature-centric shows like the *Octonauts*, *The Wild Thornberrys*, *Ridley Jones*, and *Molly of Denali*.

The show uses real-world technology and biology, and the solutions to problems the characters encounter are solved by learning what the ecosystem needs and responding with empathy and teamwork. *Whale of a Tale* is upbeat, action-packed, and hopeful about our future.

EXT. WHALE OF A TALE RESEARCH CATAMARAN - DAY

WHOOSH! PENELOPE (7, science-minded) shoots out of the water on a STREAM OF SPRAY blown from the blowhole of the Humpback pod's giant papa whale, ODIS.

PENELOPE

Cowabunga!

Penelope BOUNCES off the ship's tramp netting to the other side, where she is shot right back up on the spray of the mama humpback, CICI.

MAIA (7, diver/whale expert) and FINN (6, sailor-in-training) wait in the water in their lifejackets for their turn, laughing.

MAIA

Tino pai, Cici! Nice one!

The whales RESPOND IN SONG, loud and long.

FINN

Whoa! I think they're having just as much fun as we are!

Maia climbs on top of Odis' back and is shot into the air.

MAIA

Wowee! Catch me, Cici!

Cici blows another stream and Maia is shot back onto the tramp netting, laughing.

The small-but-spunky calf, MACHO, spyhops.

FINN

I think Macho wants to give it a try!

Finn climbs on top of Macho and barely hovers on a small, weak spray, just strong enough to lightly toss him onto the ship again.

PENELOPE

I think you may need to grow up just a bit more!

Macho responds by SINGING, in a slightly higher pitch than his parents.

MAIA

I wish I could sing like that! Au-OOO! EE-AAHHHHH!

Macho RESPONDS encouragingly.

FINN
He likes it!

Penelope, Finn, and Maia all SING LIKE WHALES.

INT. CATAMARAN NAV STATION - DAY

DR. SKYLER (Penelope's mom, researcher) has maps spread out on the table, a navigation program up on the ship's computer screen. She is trying to talk on the satellite phone, but the SINGING and SPOUT JUMPING from outside is preventing her from hearing.

DR. SKYLER
We'll be cutting South across the port traffic in just a few moments and I wanted to make sure we're taking the best path--

Dr. Skyler covers the mouthpiece and tries to wave down the kids playing outside. They don't see her.

DR. SKYLER (CONT'D)
Yes, sorry I can't quite-- I can't quite hear what you said-- one moment--

Dr. Skyler opens the saloon door and it gets even louder.

PENELOPE
OoHUUODDHH---

MAIA
EEOORRRRUUUGHHH--

FINN
I bet they can't sing this!

Finn turns on THE RADIO. ROCK MUSIC plays--

DR. SKYLER
Kids. Crew! Hey!

They don't hear her. Dr. Skyler puts the phone to her ear again.

DR. SKYLER (CONT'D)
Sorry, the whales are singing-- yes, the whales... no that's exactly what I said. Hold on.

Dr. Skyler waves down CAPTAIN HAU (Maia and Finn's grandfather, Maori, jolly) at the helm. He sees her and nods, picking up a MEGAPHONE. He SHOUTS into it.

CAPTAIN HAU
 AYE, CREW! QUIET ON DECK!

The kids stop singing instantly. Captain Hau turns the MUSIC OFF. Dr. Skyler puts the phone to her ear again and closes the saloon door. The kids press their noses against the saloon glass and watch Dr. Skyler.

DR. SKYLER
 That's better. Ok, as I was saying, we are following a pod of whales on their migratory route. If we cut through on an East tack, then jibe to the west--

EXT. CATAMARAN - CONTINUOUS

The kids look up at Captain Hau.

PENELOPE
 Captain Hau, who is she talking to?

CAPTAIN HAU
 We're about to cross a lot of boat traffic, and she's calling the Coast Guard to make sure we know our way through.

MAIA
 But the whales know which way to go.

CAPTAIN HAU
 True, but we don't want them to accidentally run into any big ships with propellers, do we?

FINN
 Sure don't!

INT. CATAMARAN NAV STATION - MOMENTS LATER

DR. SKYLER
 Right... right... ok great. Thank you!

Dr. Skyler HANGS UP the phone and opens the saloon door.

DR. SKYLER (CONT'D)

Kia ora, my crew! I'm sorry we had to yell, but you were so loud I couldn't hear what the Coast Guard was telling me on the phone.

FINN

Can we play again now that you're done?

DR. SKYLER

Not right now. I'm going to need some peace and quiet to focus and keep my thoughts straight while we go through this busy patch.

MAIA

How busy?

Captain Hau pokes his head in.

CAPTAIN HAU

See for yourself. Look!

The kids run to the BOW WINDOWS. They are suddenly surrounded by SHIPS, from small fishing vessels to giant container ships.

PENELOPE

Whoa! This place is chock-a-block!

MAIA

What if they hit us?!

CAPTAIN HAU

They won't if we follow Dr. Skyler's instructions. Crew. Everybody to your stations!

KIDS

Aye, aye, Captain!

Penelope, Maia, and Finn run outside and clip their lifejackets to ropes to keep them from falling off the boat. Maia and Finn grab the winch handle and wait for a signal. Penelope stands next to Captain Hau, who steers the ship to a new heading.

CAPTAIN HAU

Hoist the mainsail!

Penelope presses a button and the sails start to rise until they are completely unfurled.

CAPTAIN HAU (CONT'D)
What's next, first mate?

FINN
We need to trim the sail!

Maia and Finn grab hold of the mainsail ropes and turn the winch handle until the sails are taut and fill with air.

CAPTAIN HAU
Tino pai! Now we're underway!

INT. CATAMARAN NAV STATION - DAY

Dr. Skyler looks at her maps and speaks to Captain Hau through a WALKIE-TALKIE.

DR. SKYLER
We're right on track. At my signal turn four degrees East.

CAPTAIN HAU
Roger that.

Captain Hau turns the wheel slightly and the kids point as a container ship passes behind them, amazed.

Odis, Cici, and Macho's backs come to the surface and spout. Macho SLAPS the WATER with his flipper.

FINN
He's waving!

PENELOPE
Good on ya, pod!

A fishing vessel comes closer on the starboard side.

DR. SKYLER
Let's add another 4 degrees... now.

Captain Hau turns the wheel again.

CAPTAIN HAU
Four degrees added. We are right on track--

SLAM! The boat is BROADSIDED by something and Penelope, Maia, and Finn go flying, but are yanked back by their harnesses before flying off the boat.

FINN
Wha--ughh!

MAIA
Did we get hit by a boat?

INT. CATAMARAN NAV STATION - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Skyler gets up off the floor, glasses askew, maps scattered everywhere, mug spilled.

DR. SKYLER
That wasn't a boat-- it must have
been--

SLAM! The catamaran is broadsided again, from the other side. The kids fly to the left this time, yanked back to the ship by their harnesses.

FINN
Grandpa! What's going on?!

Maia grips the side of the boat and peers into the water. She sees Odis coming straight for the boat.

MAIA
Uh oh! Hang on everybody!

WHAM! The boat careens again.

MAIA (CONT'D)
It's Odis! He's running into the
boat!

CAPTAIN HAU
Drop the sails!

DR. SKYLER
Are you sure that's safe in the
middle of traffic?

CAPTAIN HAU
It's our only choice.

Finn presses the button and the sails drop slowly and the boat comes to a halt.

Cici gently BONKS up against the boat.

MAIA
Cici! What are you doing?

Cici mournfully sings and clumsily slaps her tale against the ship.

PENELOPE

What's going on? They're acting so strangely.

MAIA

We can't keep going if you don't get your act together!

FINN

Hey, where's Macho?

MAIA

I don't see him anywhere!

PENELOPE

And now Cici's wandering off too!

MAIA

I think we need to do some investigating. Let's go for a swim.

DR. SKYLER

Ok. We'll look out for traffic, but be careful and stay aware!

MAIA

Of course. Come on crew!

Penelope, Maia, and run to the edge of the catamaran, hold their noses and CANNONBALL off the edge. At the same time, Odis SPRAYS from his blowhole and dives.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

As all three kids hit the water, they are encapsulated in a GIANT BUBBLE that grows bigger as Odis expels air from his blowhole into it.

A CACOPHONY OF NOISES forces the kids to slam their hands against their ears.

FINN

What is that noise?

They look around and see the bottoms of boat hulls and find the culprits:

An ENGINE HUMMING.

A PROPELLER WHIRRING.

METAL SCREECHING.

LOW DRONES, HIGH PINGS.

PENELOPE

It's all the ships! They're making
so much noise!

FINN

The engines are so loud!

Odis MOANS and rolls over. The bubble pinches off and the
kids go careening through the sea inside it.

ALL KIDS

Whoaoaoaoahhh!

PENELOPE

Look! Watch Odis!

Odis' eyes rattle back and forth, wandering drunkenly.

MAIA

It's like he's confused.

FINN

Do you see Macho?

PENELOPE

You look that way, I'll look this
way.

The kids all peer in different directions.

MAIA

Nothing here...

PENELOPE

I see something... but I'm not
sure...

FINN

It's Macho! Let's go get him.

The kids ROLL THE BUBBLE through the water like a hamster
wheel and come up alongside Macho, who looks scared and lost.

FINN (CONT'D)

Hey buddy, did you get lost?

MAIA

It's okay! We're here to help!

PENELOPE

Just follow us!

The kids roll the bubble forward, but Macho doesn't follow.

MAIA

No, not that way, this way!

Finn points in the right direction.

FINN

This way! See my arms? This way!

Macho goes further away, moaning softly.

PENELOPE

Why isn't he following us?

Finn GASPS.

FINN

Watch out!

Cici SIDESWIPES the bubble and the kids somersault. Cici bonks into Odis. Maia laughs.

FINN (CONT'D)

Don't laugh, Maia, it's not funny!

MAIA

It's a little funny!

PENELOPE

I didn't even hear her coming!

FINN

I don't think Odis did either.

PENELOPE

Wait. That's it! We have to surface again. Come on.

The kids paddle, swimming up to the catamaran.

EXT. CATAMARAN - OCEAN

The bubble POPS as the kids surface. They climb the ladder onto the boat.

DR. SKYLER

What did you find?

PENELOPE

Mom! Do whales navigate with their song?

DR. SKYLER

Yes, that's exactly right. They have certain songs that help them stay together and go in the right direction.

PENELOPE

So if they can't hear each other, they get lost?

DR. SKYLER

Yes, they'd wander off and lose their way.

FINN

Do you think the noise is too loud for them?

MAIA

And that's why they look so confused?

PENELOPE

Just like when we were loud and my mom couldn't focus on her work.

DR. SKYLER

I think you're right. It's called noise pollution. We won't be able to get out of here together if we can't get them to hear each other.

CAPTAIN HAU

Ok crew, you were down there and know what it was like. We'll follow your orders. What do you reckon we do?

Finn GULPS. Odis bonks into the boat again, and they all stumble.

FINN

Uuhhhh... any ideas folks? Help me out here!

PENELOPE

Well, what did Dr. Skyler tell us to do when we were being loud?

MAIA

She told us to stop singing.

FINN

But that's just the problem. We need the whales to keep singing!

PENELOPE

Captain Hau turned the music off so we could hear my mom...

FINN

That's it! We need to get the other boats to turn off their engines.

DR. SKYLER

We can put out a call on the radio channel-- I'm not sure everyone will do it, but it's worth a shot.

PENELOPE

Let's do it!

INT. CATAMARAN NAV STATION - DAY

Dr. Skyler turns the radio station to the open channel. She lifts the receiver from the nav dash and hands it to the kids.

DR. SKYLER

You make the call, crew. You know how to do it.

The kids hold the receiver together and lean into it.

FINN

PAN-PAN-PAN! (pronounced PAHN)

PENELOPE

This is "Whale of a Tale" research vessel.

FINN

Our location is... what is our location?

DR. SKYLER

Thirty-three fifty-six minus one-nineteen sixty-eight, headed South across harbor traffic.

MAIA

And we have a favor to ask.

PENELOPE

We are following three whales that need to get through so they can keep migrating, but your boats are too loud!

FINN

We need everyone to turn off your engines so our whales can hear each other sing!

MAIA

It's really important, plus... the songs are really pretty and you'll want to take a sec and listen.

PENELOPE

So on the count of three...

MAIA

One...

FINN

Two...

PENELOPE

Three!

The crew all looks at each other, listening.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Did it work?

SLAM! A whale has bonked the side again. The kids deflate.

MAIA

They must not have done it!

FINN

And we asked so nicely!

CAPTAIN HAU

Let's find out for sure.

Captain Hau grabs Maia and Finn's FEET in each hand, and flips them upside down.

MAIA

Where are we going?

CAPTAIN HAU

To take a squiz for ourselves. Plug your noses!

He dunks their heads over the edge of the boat.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Maia and Finn hold their breath and listen. The ocean is still noisy, but there are NO ENGINE SOUNDS.

Captain Hau lifts them out of the water. Upside down, they shake their heads.

FINN

It's quieter! Now only the metal is making noise.

MAIA

So it mostly worked...

CAPTAIN HAU

But the whales are still confused?

Bonk.

DR. SKYLER

That's a yes.

MAIA

What else can we do?

Captain Hau places Finn and Maia right side up on the deck. Penelope spots the megaphone. It sparks an idea.

PENELOPE

I've got it!

FINN

What?

PENELOPE

We can sing the whales' songs *for* them!

FINN

We are basically expert whale singers now.

MAIA

But a whales lungs are like... a gazillion times bigger than ours. Our voices will sound like teeny tiny squeaks.

PENELOPE

Not if we have this.

Penelope picks up the megaphone.

CAPTAIN HAU
It's worth a shot.

Bonk.

DR. SKYLER
Looks like someone's ready to help
you out.

CAPTAIN HAU
I never thought I'd say this, but
kids, sing at the top of your
lungs.

Penelope, Maia, and Finn look at each other.

ALL KIDS
Ready?? Let's go!

As Cici comes up to spout, the kids JUMP into the spray.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

All in the same bubble floating above Cici's back, the kids
listen to Cici's WHALE SONG.

Penelope turns the megaphone on and the kids lean into it
together, repeating back Cici's tune.

ALL KIDS
AHHHHUUUUGGHHHHH!

Cici SINGS again.

ALL KIDS (CONT'D)
EEEEUUUUUAHHHHH!

They hear A WHALE CALL from far in the murky water.

FINN
Did you hear that?

MAIA
That sounded like Odis!

A shadowy large figure emerges in the distance, headed for
them.

PENELOPE
There he is! Now we have to find
Macho.

MAIA
Keep going!

FINN
Lets try the last one again!

ALL KIDS
EEEEUUUUUUAHHHHH!

Odis and Cici both ECHO THE SOUND back.

ALL KIDS (CONT'D)
EEEEUUUUUAHHHHH!

The hull of a GIANT SHIP passes above them, bubbles flying off the propeller blades. The ENGINE SOUND is deafening.

PENELOPE
Oh come on! Did they not get the memo? We're saving whales here!

FINN
Oh no! There's Macho!

They spot Little Macho heading straight toward the giant ship.

MAIA
No! Macho, swim this way!

FINN
He's headed straight for the boat!

PENELOPE
We have to stop the boat or he's never going to hear us. To the surface!

The kids all kick in an upward direction, breaking the bubble and floating to the surface.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - CONTINUOUS

They break the surface right next to the catamaran. They flag down Dr. Skyler.

PENELOPE
Mom! Mom!

MAIA
Dr. Skyler!

FINN

That ship!

Dr. Skyler has her walkie talkie to her mouth.

DR. SKYLER

I see it, I see it!

FINN

Macho's going to get hit!

CAPTAIN HAU

She's already on it.

DR. SKYLER

Mayday! Mayday! "Whale of a Tale"
to "Spitfire"! Turn your engine
off! You have a whale approaching
your stern!

CAPTAIN HAU

They're not listening. We have to
catch someone's attention on that
boat.

MAIA

I know what to do! EEEEEUUURRRGEE!

WHOOSH! Maia flies up in the air on a steady stream of mist
as Cici comes to the surface, then bounces off the catamaran
tramp netting WAVING HER ARMS wildly at the boat.

MAIA (CONT'D)

EEEEUUURRRGEE!

WHOOSH! Finn flies up in the air too, waving his arms.

Penelope is launched off Cici's TAIL as she dives and flips
her up, even higher than the others. As she flies through the
air, she SHOUTS into her megaphone:

PENELOPE

CUT. THAT. ENGINE!

The churning water around the ship's engine suddenly STOPS
and a brief HONK HONK from the ship's horn blasts.

DR. SKYLER

You did it!

FINN

Yay!

PENELOPE

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

CAPTAIN HAU

You're not done yet. Go get your little whale.

MAIA

Back to the bubble, crew!

CAPTAIN HAU

Those boats won't stay still for long. We have to keep moving. Catch up with us on the other side.

FINN

Roger that!

CAPTAIN HAU

Hoist the mailsail!

Dr. Skyler get into position at the winch as Captain Hau presses the mailsail button.

As the sails unfurl and fill with air, the kids run to the edge of the boat and jump off into Cici's spray.

EXT. UNDERWATER - MOMENTS LATER

They are in Cici's BUBBLE, but there is no sign of Macho. Cici CALLS OUT mournfully and the kids echo her call into the megaphone.

ALL KIDS

AAHHHHUUUOOOOO....

Finn starts to worry.

FINN

There's no sign of him... I can't imagine being lost in the middle of all these ships... I bet he's so scared.

MAIA

Don't worry, we'll find him. He probably just wandered to the other side of that ship. I'll bet Odis and Cici are taking us right under it.

PENELOPE

Under it? Or straight into it?

MAIA
Under it... I hope.

FINN
Cause it looks like we're headed
straight for it.

PENELOPE
What if they're still confused and
we all crash?

MAIA
We just have to trust that they
know the way.

PENELOPE
They've been bonking their heads
too much for me to trust them.

The ship gets closer and closer. They're headed straight for
it.

FINN
Oh no, oh no! I don't want to be
shark bait!

PENELOPE
We need to kick up!

MAIA
No time, we need to hold on!

PENELOPE
Brace yourselves!

The kids grab each other and close their eyes, bracing for
impact.

Odis and Cici DIVE STRAIGHT DOWN like a slow roller coaster.

ALL KIDS
Whoaaaa!

The water gets darker and darker as they dive deeper.

MAIA
My ears are popping.

PENELOPE
Look up!

They watch the ships hull pass over them as they float under
it.

FINN

This is the last time I want to see
the bottom of a ship.

MAIA

Going up!

The whales tilt up as they reach the other side. They CALL
OUT again.

PENELOPE

Focus! We still have a job to do.

ALL KIDS

OOOOHHHEEEUUUGGGGHHH!

They wait. Silence. They look around. Suddenly they hear a
TINY WHALE CALL.

FINN

Do you think its...?

PENELOPE

It has to be...

A small whale shadow appears in the distance.

FINN

It's Macho!

ALL KIDS

Yahoo!

Macho MAKES A CALL that sounds exactly like their cheer. They
gasp, surprised, then laugh.

FINN

Now he's copying us!

MAIA

We learned their songs, maybe he's
learning ours!

The whales make EXCITED SOUNDS as Macho comes near. Odis
nuzzles Macho's nose.

FINN

Welcome back Macho!

Cici wraps her flipper around Macho and keeps him under her.

MAIA

Cici's not letting him wander off
anytime soon.

FINN
Speaking of wandering...

PENELOPE
Where's our boat?

They look up and see the bottoms of tons of boats. A red boat. A monohull. A speed boat. A tug boat. None of them match their catamaran.

FINN
Oh great. Now WE'RE lost.

PENELOPE
We can find them... we just have to figure out which direction...

FINN
Dr. Skyler said it on the radio.

PENELOPE
South!

They look around. Blue ocean.

FINN
Uhh... anyone bring a compass?

PENELOPE
We don't need one. The ships are going to shore, so they're facing...

MAIA
East!

PENELOPE
So South is...

FINN
The way the whales are going!

PENELOPE
So our boat should be...

Finn points the right direction.

FINN
Right there!

They spot the light blue, two-hulled bottom of their vessel, coming close to the edge of traffic.

The water starts CHURNING as the boats start turning their engines back on.

PENELOPE

Come on, we need to get back before
all the engines turn back on.

The kids kick off Odis' back and swim inside the bubble together. They float up and forward.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - MOMENTS LATER

The kids break the surface right next to the boat, but since the boat is underway, it continues to move.

DR. SKYLER

There you are! Grab tight!

Dr. Skyler throws them a LIFE PRESERVER tied to a rope and they all hold on as she pulls them toward the boat.

Dr. Skyler helps each of them grab hold of the ladder and climb up.

EXT. CATAMARAN DECK - MOMENTS LATER

The kids lay panting on the deck.

CAPTAIN HAU

Haere mai! Welcome back!

DR. SKYLER

Did you find Macho?

Macho BREACHES right next to the catamaran, his whole body suspended joyfully in the air for a moment, singing "YAHOO!" before crashing back into the water.

CAPTAIN HAU

I'd say they found him.

DR. SKYLER

I could have sworn he said "Yahoo."

The kids laugh.

FINN

We might have taught him a little something.

Odis and Cici breach too, then slap the water with their tails on the way down.

DR. SKYLER
I think they're telling you "thank
you."

FINN
Aw, it was nothin'.

DR. SKYLER
So. Now that we're out of the
traffic, you're welcome to turn on
your music again.

The kids groan.

DR. SKYLER (CONT'D)
What?

PENELOPE
I don't know about the rest of you,
but I sure wouldn't mind a little
peace and quiet around here.

FINN
Same.

MAIA
Same.

Captain Hau looks at Dr. Skyler.

CAPTAIN HAU
Enjoy it while it lasts.

ALL KIDS
Shhh!

Dr. Skyler smiles and nods.

The kids lay out on the deck and close their eyes.

In the distance, a small whale sings, "YAHOO..."

END OF EPISODE