

DOLPHIN ISLAND



Lost in the Storm

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Storm Warning

Abby Feingold stepped out of the woods into the sheltered cove. The water was calm, ruffled only slightly by the breeze coming off the ocean.

“Anybody here?” Abby called. She took another step toward the rocky shore’s edge. “Dolphins? Yoo-hoo!”

She let out a loud whistle. A second later, a sleek gray head popped into view.

Abby smiled. “Rascal!” she called. “I’m glad the weather report didn’t scare you away.”

A gust of wind blew her wavy brown hair into her

face. Abby pushed it back, squinting out at the dolphin. He was bobbing in the water, watching her with his big, dark eyes. Where were the others?

She got her answer a moment later when five more dolphins popped into sight. One of them, Echo, leaped up and dove back into the water with a splash.

Abby laughed. “Do it again,” she called, pulling her phone out of her pocket. “I told Daddy and Rachel I’d take some photos for the resort’s website.”

Abby lived on Barnaby Key, a small island in the Florida Keys. The island had been a wedding gift from a relative to her father and brand-new stepmother. Now Abby, Daddy, and Rachel lived there full-time and ran Dolphin Island Family Resort. The resort had only been open for a month, but Abby already couldn’t imagine living anywhere else! She especially loved the cove, and the pod of dolphins that came there every day. She and her friend Bella had named all of the dolphins: Rascal, Echo, Domino, Graygirl, Nana, and Neptune.



Abby snapped some photos of the dolphins playing. They dove and jumped, doing flips and twists in the air or skimming along just below the surface. She laughed as Neptune did a loud belly flop. Just then another gust of wind almost blew the phone out of her hand.

“Wow,” she said to Graygirl, who was floating near the shore. “I guess the hurricane must be getting closer.”

She frowned, a little worried. She wasn’t afraid of hurricanes—as a lifelong Florida girl, she had been through several. But she wasn’t sure how a hurricane would affect the island and its wildlife, including the dolphins.

Then she shrugged off her worries. “Oh well,” she murmured. “The forecasters don’t even know if the storm is coming toward us or not.”

Just then the phone buzzed in her hand. It was a text from Rachel:

Guests heading out soon—come back if u want to say bye!

“Oops.” Abby realized she’d lost track of the time. That happened a lot when she was at the cove! “Sorry, guys,” she called to the dolphins. “I have to go.”

Echo let out a soft whistle, as if he understood what she had said. Abby smiled and whistled back. Then she turned and hurried into the woods, following the familiar trail among the palm, gumbo limbo, and buttonwood trees.

A few minutes later, she emerged into a large open area. At the center stood the main house. Six guest bungalows were scattered across the beautiful grounds. Daddy had worked as a landscaper back on the mainland, and he still loved getting his hands dirty planting all sorts of beautiful flowers, vines, and shrubs.

The house faced a sheltered lagoon with crystal-blue water and a white sand beach. At one end of the beach was the dock where Abby’s family kept their motorboat, the *Kismet*. Daddy and Rachel used the boat to take guests back and forth between the resort and Key West,

a large, busy island with an airport and lots of shops and restaurants, which was about three miles away.

At the moment, Daddy was fiddling with the ropes tying the boat to the pilings. The departing guests were waiting to board. Some stood on the dock with their suitcases, while others were taking a few final photos on the beach or beneath the majestic palms.

Rachel and some of the resort employees were there, too, chatting with the guests or helping with the luggage. Abby also spotted Carlos Alvarez, the eight-year-old nephew of Sofia, the resort's head cook. Occasionally, Carlos took the boat out with her from Key West, where they both lived, and spent the day on Barnaby Key.

"Hey, Carlos," Abby said, hurrying over. "Are you leaving already? I was hoping you could help us clean up everything before next week's guests get here."

Carlos tossed his dark hair out of his eyes. "I can't, sorry," he said, though he didn't sound very sorry. "I'm

going back with your dad right now—I have soccer practice this afternoon.”

“Oh, okay,” Abby said. Then she laughed as a bright-eyed two-year-old toddled toward them, clutching a seashell in one hand. “Bye-bye, Tandi,” Abby said, scooping up the girl to give her a hug. “We’ll miss you!”

The girl’s mother stepped forward, smiling. “Don’t worry, Abby,” she said. “I’m sure we’ll be back soon. We had such a lovely time here!”

“Yes.” The woman’s husband joined them, dragging a large suitcase. He squinted at the horizon, where a few ragged gray clouds marred the blue sky. “But don’t expect us next week—we’re from Chicago, you know. We don’t do hurricanes!”

Rachel heard them and chuckled. “Don’t worry, you’ll be back at the mainland well before the hurricane gets here, even if it does come this way,” she assured the couple. “And I do hope you’ll come back. We’ve enjoyed having you.”

Abby's father let out a whistle. "Boat's ready to go!" he called. "We'd better get moving so you'll have plenty of time to make your flights."

The next few minutes passed quickly in a bustle of boarding and loading. The *Kismet* was fairly small, but there was enough room for all twelve guests and their belongings, plus Daddy and Carlos. Soon the boat was chugging off across the lagoon.

Abby waved until she was pretty sure the people on board couldn't see her anymore. Then she walked back toward the house with Rachel, Sofia, and the other employees.

"That was a nice group, wasn't it?" Rachel commented. She glanced at Abby. "The next batch of guests should be here in a few hours. I hear there's a girl around your age."

"Cool!" Abby said. "Where's she from?"

Rachel shrugged. "I'm not sure. I know we have some people from Orlando, Philadelphia, North Carolina, and

even the West Coast in this group, but I don't remember all the details." She smiled. "There are fifteen people this time!"

Abby knew why her stepmother looked happy. The first couple of weeks they'd had only a small number of guests. But the more people heard about the island, with its beautiful beach, fun activities, and friendly pod of dolphins, the more people wanted to come!

"That's great, darling," Sofia spoke up, smiling at Rachel. She called everyone "darling." "But it means we have lots of work to do to get ready for them. Let's get to it!"

"All hands on deck!" Abby exclaimed. That was one of Daddy's favorite sayings. It meant it was time for everyone to help out.

She didn't mind pitching in and working hard. It was worth it to live in such a beautiful place!