Karma & Diamonds

Sneak Previews from

Book 3 - Diamond Revealed

9

Dolphins

This pod stayed with our boat for more than ten minutes. Captain Mike decided that it was time to slow the boat down and see if the pod would stay long enough for us to join them in the water. "Get your masks and fins on," he said. "It's time to go in." The crew gathered at the stern, and lowered two metal ladders that would give us entry into the water. People got into the water one by one.

I was ready, waiting my turn. Despite the heat and breeze, the hairs on my arms were erect with excitement. When scuba diving, I'd had plenty of practice jumping from a boat into the water, so I bypassed the ladder and leapt in, holding my mask in place with one hand.

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Some of the children and teens, once in the water, were uncontrollable with excitement, creating too much splash, flapping with their fins, and making a lot of noise chasing willy-nilly after this dolphin and that. I could see that the dolphins were quick to move away, only to be chased harder. I decided to swim around, looking under the surface to watch out for any dolphins nearby. Several came and went by much too fast, but remained close.

I swam around for a while, vigilant and hoping for any dolphins that might let me join them, but just being in the warm ocean, almost twenty-five to twenty-seven degrees Celsius, I was already on cloud nine. It was as though these waters had a special quality about them.

Then, one huge dolphin appeared from nowhere and glided through the water alongside me, almost taking my breath away. She looked sideways at me and swam past. I was struck by her energy. She seemed boundless and blissful, and the wide curved beam of her mouth gave her a joyous, smiling expression. Then she turned her head somewhat, glancing back at me, and dived ahead so that I could no longer see her. Her vibe was one of friendliness and fun. When she had moved past me, I couldn't help noticing a long dark scar just above her left pectoral fin and another, smaller, mark within two inches of the first. She came and went a

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couple of times more. She and I were getting to know each other. I thought of her as a 'she' because the words '*aanand saagar*' popped up for her in my mind, meaning 'ocean of bliss', in Sanskrit. I started thinking of her as 'Aanandi'.

The same dolphin returned and again swam up to my right, alongside me. I slowed down my breathing and quickly steadied my movement as I didn't want to scare her away. Aanandi continued to swim alongside me, checking me out with her sideways glance. I could have sworn she was smiling at me, or perhaps it was that I couldn't help smiling at her as she checked me out, curious and purposeful. I held back from smiling too much, cautious that too much movement of my facial muscles might cause the waterproof seal of my snorkel mask to leak and steam up my mask. The last thing I wanted was to have to fiddle around with my mask in these precious moments. I looked at her, and realised she was looking directly into my eyes. My heart beat faster from the excitement of this interaction. It felt amazing to be so close to this magnificent dolphin.

I realised that I was now a ways away from the others in the group. I could see some people perhaps as far as sixty feet away. The dolphin then speeded up her pace and pulled ahead of me. I watched her, thinking that she'd had enough of checking me out. But then

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she turned her head, looking at me, and slowed down a little. She was waiting for me to follow and catch her up. My senses perked up so that I was fully in the moment, present, and realised that this dolphin was inviting me to join her, away from the rest of the crowd.

I quickened my pace and followed her. After a while, she slowed down and once again joined alongside of me but, this time, she came so close as to almost touch me. I moved my hand to stroke her, but remembered that Captain Mike had specifically said that we were not to touch the dolphins as it would interfere with the bacteria on their skin and possibly harm them. I pulled back my hand but wished that I could stroke her long, dark scar and wondered how she came to have it. The glistening grey Aanandi glided ahead and dived down, circling beneath and behind me and to my left, then coming back full circle, floating alongside me to my right. I could barely contain my excitement. This creature was play personified, boundless with energy and joy. She came even closer to my horizontal body and deliberately, but gently, bumped into me. *She* wanted contact.

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