

Sorry Wally

by Troy Mayne

I work on the Great Barrier Reef as an underwater photographer. I swim around photographing passengers as they engage in underwater activities such as SCUBA Diving, Platform Helmet Diving, and snorkeling.

In tow, I have a few work mates, a Naploeian Maori Wrasse named Wally, and a few Turtles, two in Particular, Shelley and Casey. I spend over 3 hours underwater each day with these animals. Wally is very intelligent and the Turtles are well trained so I am able to get these animals to pretty much do anything I want.

After a few months of working with these animals I was perusing my collection of photographs I had taken of these animals together. I was surprised to see a collection of photo's involving these animals in interesting positions.

It didn't take long to realise that the photos had accidentally formed a basic plot. The plot was that of a conflict with Wally at the centre. I came up with an idea for a theme and extended the plot.

After I had came up with the

storyline I had to buy some props, and then plan some photos.

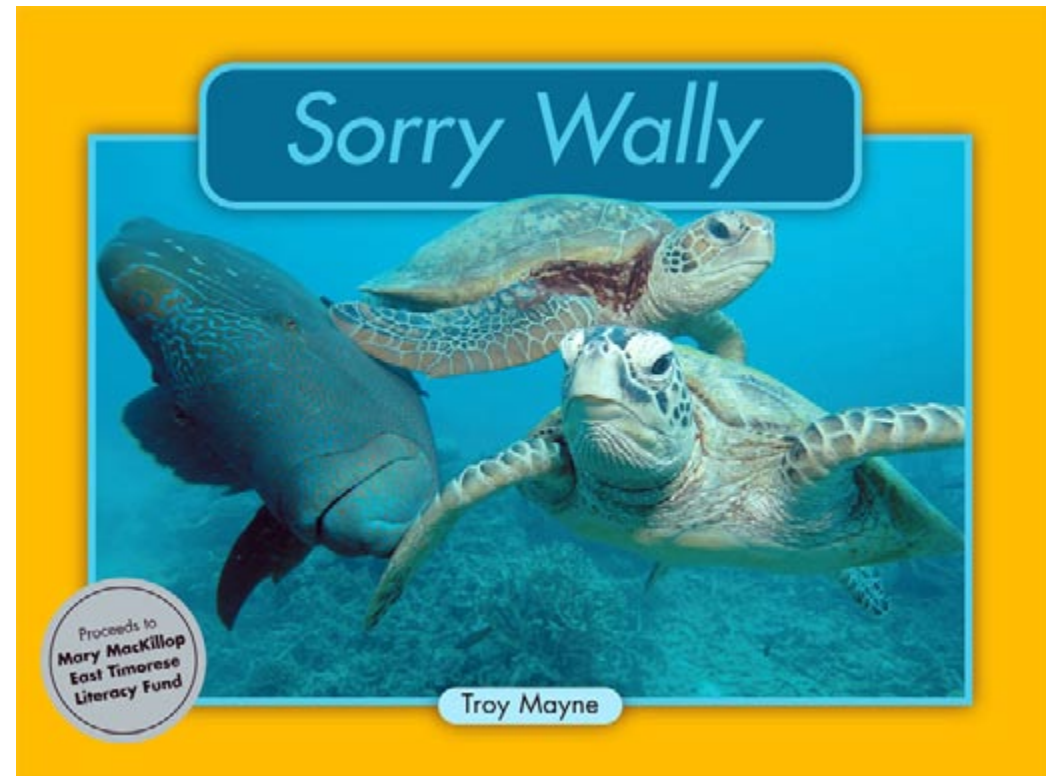
Fortunately these animals are there everyday, unfortunately they are not always there at the same time.

The plot centers on a brother and sister Green turtle named Casey and Shelley, that live and go to school on the Great Barrier Reef. Shelley must escort her younger brother to school each day. One day she encourages her brother to swim by himself against her parents wishes, carrying his new lunchbox.

Enter Wally, the school bully. He follows, and chases Casey down then steals his lunchbox, and hides it in the school ground.

Shelley finds her younger brother crying in the school yard. After comforting her little brother, she learns of the theft. Then they both go in search for the stolen lunchbox.

The search yields no luck, so they separate and roam the reef questioning various reef characters in their travels. The search ends in a physical encounter with Wally. The story ends amicably with Wally apologising and the lunchbox returned to it's owner.



So I had to get photos with these animals and with a lunchbox. I had to balance a camera a luchbox, and food for both Wally and the Turtles whilst setting and composing the photo's.

Looking back I am not even sure how I did it, I remember wishing I was an octopus.

All of the photographs are real, with no modification or superimposition of any of the subjects within the photo's. The project has taken 18 months to gather the photos and write the story.

The characters are real, it is the same turtles in every photo. The plot



Author "at work" with Wally and Casey



Casey swimming to school with his lunchbox, his sister Shelley behind him.

of the story is actually based on a true story. Wally really is a big bully. Wally gets very jealous of the turtles if I pay too much attention to them. He resorts to bullying tactics in order to prevent me from attending to them.

After a lot of research on bullying I decided to focus the plot of the storyline around the issue. Bullying is the number one issue facing children around the world.

I believed I had an opportunity to help address an issue to help children using non biased characters that would also inspire and excite children about our oceans whilst help get the message across about bullying.

The stars of the book, A Napoleon Maori Wrasse and the Green Turtles are listed on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) Red List Of Threatened Species. There is information at the back of the book on both species, and the many other reef animals that are featured within the story.



Wally, the Reef School Bully, steals Casey's lunchbox after sneaking up on him.

Sorry Wally is not only entertaining for children and adults alike, but also educates about the biggest issue facing children in schools today, bullying. I also hope that the photography will inspire children's imagination towards our oceans as well.

Although I have written this book as a children's book, from the reactions I have received from all the adults that have read the book, I think I maybe marketing the book at the wrong age group.

I am also currently working on two other books centered around the same characters as Sorry Wally, each with it's own moral message

Sorry Wally is being translated in Tetun (East Timorese Language) and proceeds from the sale of Sorry Wally goes towards a special print of the book. That edition of Sorry Wally will be introduced into every school in East Timor to try and combat their extremely low literacy rate, which is the lowest in the world.

Purchasing Sorry Wally will not only help to



Wally grabs Shelley by the flipper after she confronts him about stealing her little brother's lunchbox.



Casey asking Adam and Annabelle the Anemonefish, if they had seen Wally and his lunchbox.

educate children about bullying and the ocean but help the children of East Timor to a better life.