

# The Rainbow Seahorse



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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Deep down in the sparkling sea, where sunbeams danced on the coral, lived a little seahorse named Percy. He was small, about the length of a crayon, with a soft turquoise body and coral-pink fins. His large round amber eyes sparkled as he swam through the swaying sea-grass. Percy loved his home, but he had a secret. Whenever he felt something new, his body changed color!



Percy's best friend was Coral, a cheerful seahorse with a warm coral-orange body and a cream belly. She wore a tiny shell necklace on a braided kelp cord. Coral was patient and kind, and she always noticed things. One morning, she saw Percy's turquoise body turn pale blue. "Percy, your color changed," she said gently. "How do you feel?" Percy's tiny snout wiggled. He didn't know what to say.



Percy felt embarrassed. He didn't want to be different. He wished his colors would stay the same. Just then, Finn swam up. Finn was a sunny yellow seahorse with green speckles and a wide friendly grin. He wore a woven seaweed cap between his fins. "Race you to the kelp forest!" Finn cheered. Percy tried to race, but his body turned bright pink with excitement. Finn laughed. "Your colors are like a rainbow!"



Percy's colors kept changing all day. When he met a new fish, he turned shy purple. When he dropped his sea-grass snack, he turned sad gray. Each time, he felt more and more embarrassed. "Why can't I be like everyone else?" he sighed. Coral swam close and said, "Your colors are part of you. Maybe they're trying to tell us something." Percy wasn't sure. He just wanted to hide.



That afternoon, the three friends visited Grandpa Ollie, the wisest seahorse in the reef. Grandpa Ollie was tall and calm, with a deep indigo body streaked with silver. He carried a polished driftwood walking stick. His dark blue eyes twinkled as he saw Percy's troubled face. "Little one," he said softly, "your colors are not a problem. They are feelings, showing on the outside. Naming them out loud is brave."



Percy blinked his big amber eyes. "Brave?" he whispered. Grandpa Ollie nodded. "When you say 'I feel excited' or 'I feel shy,' your friends can understand you better. And you understand yourself." Coral smiled and said, "We want to understand, Percy. We're your friends." Finn nodded. "Yeah! We listen without judging." Percy felt a little flutter of hope in his chest.



The next day, Percy tried to notice his feelings. When Finn surprised him with a game of hide-and-seek, Percy's body turned bright orange with surprise. Instead of hiding, Percy took a deep breath. "I feel surprised!" he said out loud. His voice was small but clear. Finn grinned. "That's okay! I surprised you!" Percy felt proud. He had named a feeling!



Later, Percy was playing with a group of new seahorse friends. One of them swam too close, and Percy's body turned deep purple with shyness. He wanted to swim away, but he remembered Grandpa Ollie's words. "I feel shy," he told Coral. Coral smiled and said, "That's alright. I'll stay with you." Percy felt braver with Coral beside him. His purple faded to a soft blue.



At lunchtime, Percy's sea-grass snack drifted away, and his body turned gray with sadness. Finn saw him and swam over. "What's wrong, Percy?" he asked. "I feel sad," Percy said. "My snack is gone." Finn shared his own sea-grass, and Percy's gray turned to a warm yellow. "Thank you, Finn," Percy said. "You're welcome!" Finn cheered. "Friends share."



Percy began to notice that his colors changed many times a day. When he saw a beautiful shell, he turned pink with delight. When he couldn't find Coral, he turned blue with worry. Each time, he tried to name the feeling. Sometimes it was hard, but his friends always listened. Coral said, "Your colors help us know how to be good friends." Percy began to feel less embarrassed and more curious about his feelings.



One day, Percy's colors changed faster than ever. He was excited to show Grandpa Ollie a new game, but he was also nervous about a big reef party. His body flashed orange, purple, and green. He felt tangled inside. "I don't know what I feel!" he cried. Grandpa Ollie swam close and said, "Take a deep breath. Feelings can mix together. Let's name them one by one."



Percy took a slow breath, the way Grandpa Ollie showed him. "I feel excited about the party," he said. "And I feel nervous about meeting new friends." His colors settled into a soft blend of orange and blue. "That's it," Grandpa Ollie said. "Naming feelings is brave and confident. You did it." Coral and Finn cheered. Percy smiled. He had found his words, and his colors felt like a rainbow, not a problem.



From that day on, Percy shared his feelings with his friends. When he felt happy, his body glowed sunny yellow. When he felt worried, he said, "I feel worried," and his friends helped him. Coral said, "You're a good friend, Percy." Finn added, "And your colors are amazing!" Percy felt proud. He learned that sharing emotions is a brave and confident thing to do.



The reef party arrived, and Percy swam in with a shimmering turquoise body. He met new seahorses and felt a little shy. "I feel shy," he told them, and they smiled kindly. Soon he was playing and laughing. His colors danced like a rainbow, and his friends understood him better. Percy realized that naming feelings helped everyone care for one another with empathy and friendship.



At sunset, Percy sat with Coral and Finn on a soft sponge. "I used to think my colors were embarrassing," Percy said. "Now I know they're my feelings, and sharing them makes me brave." Coral nodded. "We love you just the way you are." Finn grinned. "Rainbow seahorse!" Percy's body turned a happy pink. He felt warm inside, like the sunbeams on the coral.



Grandpa Ollie swam over and rested on his driftwood stick. "You have learned a great lesson, Percy," he said. "Understanding feelings helps us care for one another." Percy looked at his friends and smiled. "Thank you for listening," he said. "Thank you for sharing," they replied. And Percy knew that with friends by his side, every feeling was a gift, and every color was a part of his wonderful self.