Raffy and the Wake-Up Squad

By James Shang | Raffy's Ocean Friends



Raffy was having a wonderful dream. He was sliding down a slope of soft mud towards the biggest puddle he had ever seen.

Down he went, faster and faster.

Here came the jump.

Here came the splash.

"ONE! TWO! ONE! TWO!"

Raffy opened one eye.

"LEFT! RIGHT! LEFT! RIGHT!"

He opened the other.

Three little blue crabs marched past his hollow. One wore an olive-green helmet.

"HALT!" called the crab in the helmet.

Raffy yawned. "Could you march a little farther away? I was nearly at the best bit."

"Morning exercises!" announced the crab in the helmet. "I'm Sarge. These are my recruits."

One recruit stood so straight he nearly tipped over. The other gave a small wave.

"I'm Raffy," said the sleepy mudskipper.

"Just in time to join us!" announced Sarge.

"I've done my exercises," said Raffy. "Opened one eye. Opened the other."

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Sarge pointed across the sand.
"We'll go over there. Around the shell. Over the twig. Through the mud."
"Beside the mud," said Raffy. "That bit's sticky."
"Good strong steps, squad!" called Sarge.
Around the shell.
Over the twig.
Into the mud.
Squelch.
Sarge lifted one leg. Another sank.
He lifted that one. The first went straight back in.
Behind him came another squelch.
"Are we stopping here, Sarge?" asked the eager recruit.
"Briefly."
The quieter recruit waited beside the twig.
"Shall I stay here?"
"Yes," said Sarge. "Good place."
Raffy climbed out of his hollow.
"Would you like some help?"
"Yes, please."

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"There's firmer sand beside those roots," said Raffy. "Watch where I go."

He picked his way along the edge. The quiet recruit followed, testing each step.

"This way's good!" the recruit called back.

Sarge worked his feet free, and the other recruit wriggled after him. Soon all three stood beside the roots, where Sarge straightened his helmet.

"Around the shell. Over the twig. BESIDE the mud."

"Much better," said Raffy.

Sarge gave him a nod. "You know your mud. Thank you."

Raffy turned towards his hollow.

"Then what's that muddy bit for?" asked the eager recruit.

Raffy stopped.

"Sliding."

"Can we see?" asked the eager recruit.

Raffy looked from his comfortable hollow to the slippery slope.

"One slide."

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The crabs watched from the firm sand.

Raffy climbed the little ridge, wriggled into place and pushed off.

Down he went, belly skimming the mud.

Past the shell.

Over the little lump.

SPLASH!

"Again!" called the eager recruit.

Raffy was already climbing back up for another turn. This time he went faster.

Here came the jump.

Here came the splash.

SPLOSH!

"A very respectable landing," said Sarge.

Raffy grinned. "Want to see my longer slide?"

"After breakfast."

Sarge turned towards the shell.

"Squad! FORWARD!"

Raffy looked towards his hollow.

Sarge looked too.

"Oh. Yes. Quite right."

He lowered his voice.

"Squad. Quiet march."

Around the shell. Over the twig. Beside the mud.

The eager recruit lifted a nipper.

"Can we come back?"

"After breakfast," said Raffy.

"One, two," whispered Sarge. "One, two."

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Raffy settled into his hollow, warm in the sunshine, while the water lapped softly against the bank.
He closed one eye.
Then the other.
"Raffy!"
Willa's silvery face appeared at the water's edge.
"There's someone I want you to meet."
Raffy kept his eyes shut.
"Is he quiet?"
From the deeper water came an enormous splash.
SPLOOOOSH!
Raffy opened both eyes.

Our ocean. Our planet. Our friends.
Let's look after them together.

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A little more to share

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A hidden friend: Hermie



Hermie found a quiet place beside a mangrove root. Can you spot him in picture 1?
What colour is his shell?

Oceanese to share

Raffy: "Would you like some help?"
Sarge: "Yes, please."

Ask whether someone would like help with a drawing or a little game. Wait for their answer. They can say yes, say no, point or use their own familiar way to reply.

Raffy and his friends invented Oceanese so different animals could talk to one another. In their make-believe world, they use sounds, movements and expressions, with time for each friend to reply.

Our ocean. Our planet. Our friends. Let's look after them together.

Enjoy watching wildlife with a grown-up. Give animals space, leave their homes undisturbed and take your belongings and rubbish home.

Story and characters by James Shang. Illustrations created with generative AI and developed through author-directed revisions. Raffy's Ocean Friends is a fictional series inspired by Australia's animals and waterways.

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Thank you for reading!

By James Shang | Raffy's Ocean Friends

We hope you enjoyed our story and your reading time together.

Visit raffysoceanfriends.com for songs, games and colouring in. There's more fun to share with Raffy and his friends!



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