

Through the Eyes of the Orcas

Doris Thomas



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Homepage: www.doris-t.de

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Foreword

Even for those who love Nature, there seems too often a barrier that keeps us from fully understanding nature's wild characters. Only through our imagination, can we travel to the other side.

Doris Thomas, through her charming story, *Through the Eyes of the Orcas*, gives us this rare chance to experience, for a time, the world of the orca. Personally, after many years of learning about orcas, their amazing behaviours and wonderful sounds and cultures, we are also acutely aware that the actions of humans have created dangerously precarious conditions, throughout the world's oceans, for all who live within.

Whales, both large and small, are still hunted, their food is disappearing from over fishing and habitat degradation at alarming rates, their world is being poisoned from man-made toxins, the ocean is inundated with industrial noise, and global warming is intensifying the pace of decline. The scariest part of this reality is that all this has happened within just a few lifetimes, before we have any chance to fully explore, experience and understand the ocean realm.

Ms Thomas' book is very timely for it generates and fosters a vital empathy and caring for this alien but wonderful world beyond the edge of land.

By Helena Symonds & Paul Spong

May 2008

Written as a foreword for

Through the Eyes of the Orcas by Doris Thomas

If I...



Dolphin! If I could see with your eyes,
what would I discover?
Grey is your world, colours are alien to you.
Perhaps thus you see things
as they really are.
Would I perceive reality?

Dolphin! If I could hear with your ears,
what would I discern?
Silence is unknown to the sea.
Sounds are everywhere, even coming from you.
The echo shapes an image.
Would I listen to the truth?

Dolphin! If I could talk with your voice,
what would I say?
Each sound has a function.
A multitude of information.
Vital!
Would I be able to lie?

Dolphin! If I could swim with you,
what would I experience?
Weightless. Boundless.
Without home.
Without the burden of possessions.
Would I find the meaning of life?

Map of Vancouver Island



Canada

Coast

Mountains

Port McNell

Vancouver Island

Vancouver

Nanaimo

Victoria

Border

USA

Habitat of the Northern Resident Orcas



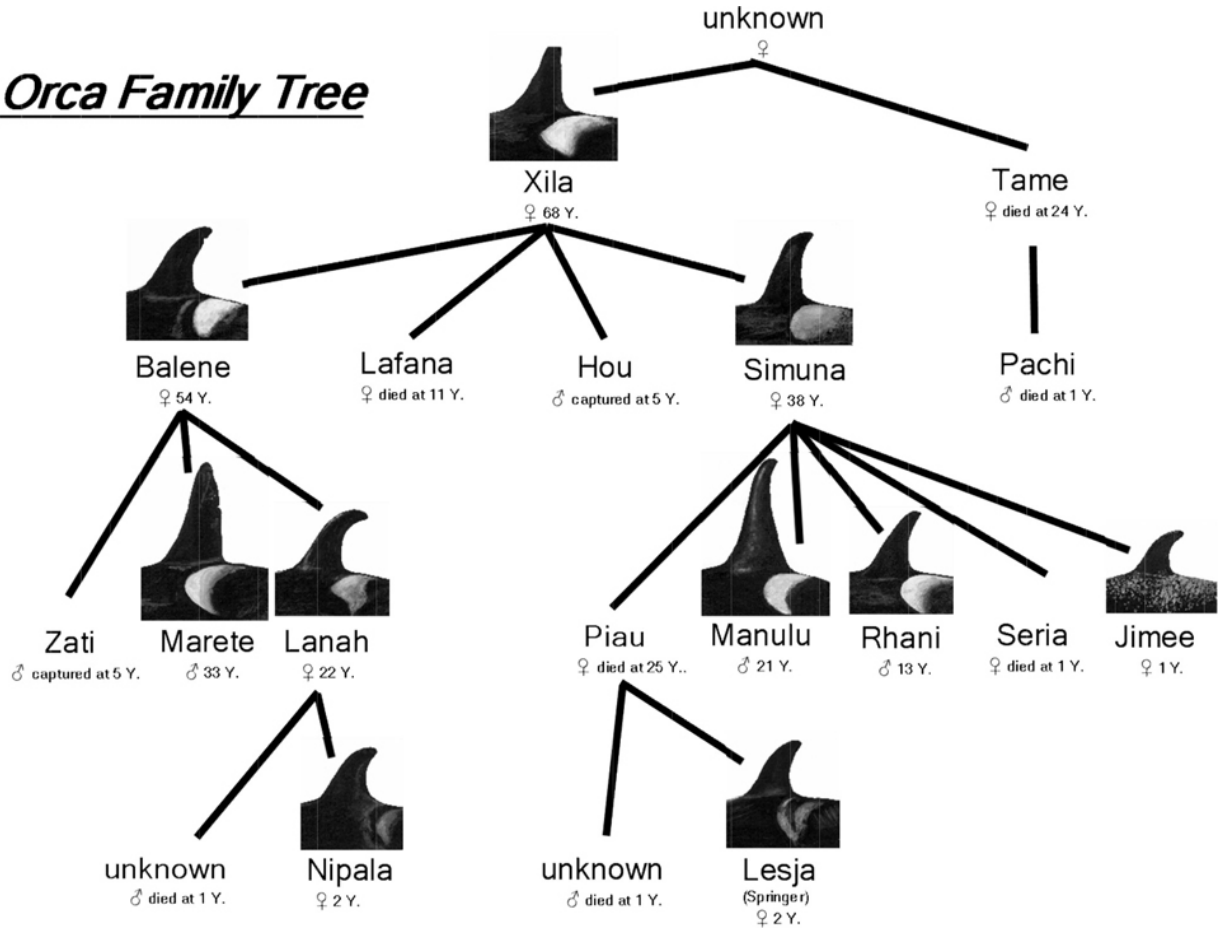
Key to the Map

Key to detailed map

- ① Blackney Passage (Time of Remembrance)
- ② Region of Silence
- ③ Robson Bight (Rubbing Beach)
- ④ Test of Courage
- ⑤ The great Gathering
- ⑥ Lesja
- ⑦ The Tareefans
- ⑧ Savage Hunt
- ⑨ Whale-Watch
- ⑩ Dolphins

Orca Family Tree

Orca Family Tree





Prologue

(After a legend of the Walas of the Mamalilikala clan, a tribe of the Kwakwaka'wakw Indians, by Henry and Helen Hunt, courtesy of U'mista Cultural Society.)

A long time ago, there were some young boys practicing shooting with their bows and arrows. They were paddling in small dugout canoes, out in front of their village called 'Mimkwamlis, known as Village Island. Then, they saw at the point, a pod of killer whales playfully swimming by. The whales were surfacing and spraying water from their blowholes.

The young boys looked at the killer whales and started to discuss shooting at the whales to test their shooting abilities. The boys decided the dorsal fin would be the target and this is what they would aim for. One of the boys shot his bow and arrow and hit his mark, wounding one of the whales.

This made the whale very sad. Then, the family of whales became very angry and swam towards the children. The young boys began to paddle quickly in their small canoes and were dragging them up the beach as fast as they could. One of the killer whales caught up and was right behind the boy who had shot the whale. When he reached the beach he tried to jump off the canoe and run up the beach. As he landed on shore so did the whale. At that moment the whale's dorsal fin turned into a man and caught the boy. The

man grabbed him by his Achilles tendons and said to the boy,

“As long as you live, you will never be able to walk properly and you will always suffer in pain, from the muscle in your heels being pulled out, for I am the Killer Whale”.

From that day forward the boy and his people respected the killer whales because they were human also, and had the spiritual power to transform. The boy’s clan named ‘Walas’ then took the crest of the killer whale and painted it on their house fronts, they also composed songs and dances to honor the whale. Still today, the killer whale is respected and regarded as being the same spirit as man.

(English original)



Killer Whales



End of school. "At last!" Lisa sighed, "I thought today would never end." She swung her heavy schoolbag over her shoulder. Peter also grabbed his backpack. "You're right, but there is still such a lot of work to do. Old Wittberg condemned us to do this presentation, remember? Can you tell me why you volunteered for THIS topic of all things?"

Lisa grinned. "Killer whales? Doesn't it sound cool? What's the problem? I thought things couldn't get bloody enough for you. *Killer* sounds really promising. Hopefully this means that I don't have to do all the work as per usual with our presentations." Peter answered this snide remark with an unmistakeable grunt. Lisa patted his shoulder and laughed: "It's ok. So far we've always managed. And with this crappy weather we have nothing better to do, anyway."

Together they headed for home. Lisa opened her umbrella and Peter pulled the hood of his jacket over his head. The two children attended Junior High School. They lived next door to each other and spent a lot of time together. Whereas their classmates had started avoiding the other sex, this had not occurred to Lisa and Peter. Perhaps this was due to the fact that Peter had never cared particularly about being "cool" and Lisa was not "ladylike".

Together they walked to school and back every day, helped each other with their homework and studied for exams. When two pupils got an assignment it was understood that they would do it together. Once again Lisa had volunteered to do the presentation with Peter, even though she was well aware that he liked to shirk his