

WHY WAR?
A Marshall Island tale
Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

Setting: The beach on an island by the ocean

Characters:

Narrator

Sandpiper

Whale

Narrator: It was a brisk, sunny morning when little Sandpiper ran with lightening speed into the ocean looking for her breakfast.

Sandpiper: (slurp, slurp) Oh there aren't many little crabs for me this morning. (slurp, slurp) Ahh...gotcha little minnow!

Whale: Ha - rumph! What is that Sandpiper doing in my water? **HEY! YOU! GET OUT OF MY WATER!**

Sandpiper: Stop your shouting. The ocean belongs to me as well as to you. In fact, there are **MORE** Sandpipers than there are Whales. So you have nothing to say about it. Just leave me alone.

Whale: **WHAT!** That's not so. There are more Whales in the ocean than Sandpipers on the land. So **MOVE ON!**

Sandpiper: **NO WAY!** I'll prove there are many more Sandpipers! I'll call my cousins! (calling) Creet, creet, - **CREET, CREET!** Cousin Sandpipers of the North, South, East and West come quickly to this island!

Whale: Ha - rumph! Well, I'll show you.

Narrator: Whale dove deep into the ocean and called to all of his cousins.

Whale: (groaning and trumpeting) Whale cousins of the North, South, East and West, come to this island quickly!

Narrator: The Sandpipers flew in from the north, south, east and west. More and more came until they covered the entire beach and every tree. Then the Whales spouted and came from the north, south, east, and west. But not only did the whales come, but porpoises, sharks and every sea creature came and surrounded the island as far as you could see.

Sandpiper: Oh! There are too many sea creatures. I'm frightened! Creet - Creet! It's time for every bird to come to the island. Creet - Creet!

Narrator: Suddenly, Gulls and Terns, Cormorants and Herons – every kind of bird arrived and landed on the mountains until everything was covered with birds.

Whale: I can't tell if there are more birds than sea creatures. I know what to do.

Narrator: Whale told all the sea creatures to eat up the land so that the birds would drown. As soon as Sandpiper saw the ground being eaten up, she got an idea. Sandpiper told all the birds to drink up all the water and then the whales and sea creatures will die and there will be more sandpipers than whales.

Sandpiper: Ha! This is so easy. (slurp, slurp) Look at the whales working so slowly. We birds are quick and we'll finish in no time! (slurp, slurp, slurp!)

Narrator: And the birds did finish first. But when they looked at the ocean floor with no water to be found, they saw whales and fish and all sea creatures gasping and dying in the sun.

Sandpiper: Oh, no. My cousins, look at these sea creatures. That is our food. If they die...WE die. Quick! Spit out the water. (ptooee – ptooe – ptooe)

Narrator: All the birds returned the water and the sea creatures began to move and swim.

Whale: This was a bad idea. We almost destroyed our home. Let us return the beach. (ptooee – ptooe – ptooe)

Narrator: So, all of the whales and sea creatures spat back the beach. And then the whales and sea creatures swam away. The sandpipers and all of the other birds flew away.

How did this war start? By one simple question: Are there more sandpipers or more whales? Does it really matter?