



# Animal Sidekicks

## The Vampire Bats and the Pigs



Vampire bats, true to their name, live on the blood of other animals. In the last few thousand years, farm animals have become their favourite food. Bred by humans to be large, slow, and defenceless – and kept all in one handy place – pigs have become the ideal prey for vampire bats. They sneak in at night and steal blood from sleeping hogs.



# I Want to Suck Your Blood!

Well, not exactly. Rather than sucking the blood out of its victims, the vampire bat makes a small cut using its razor-sharp teeth and then uses its tongue to lap the blood up.



## Count Dracula or Robin Hood?

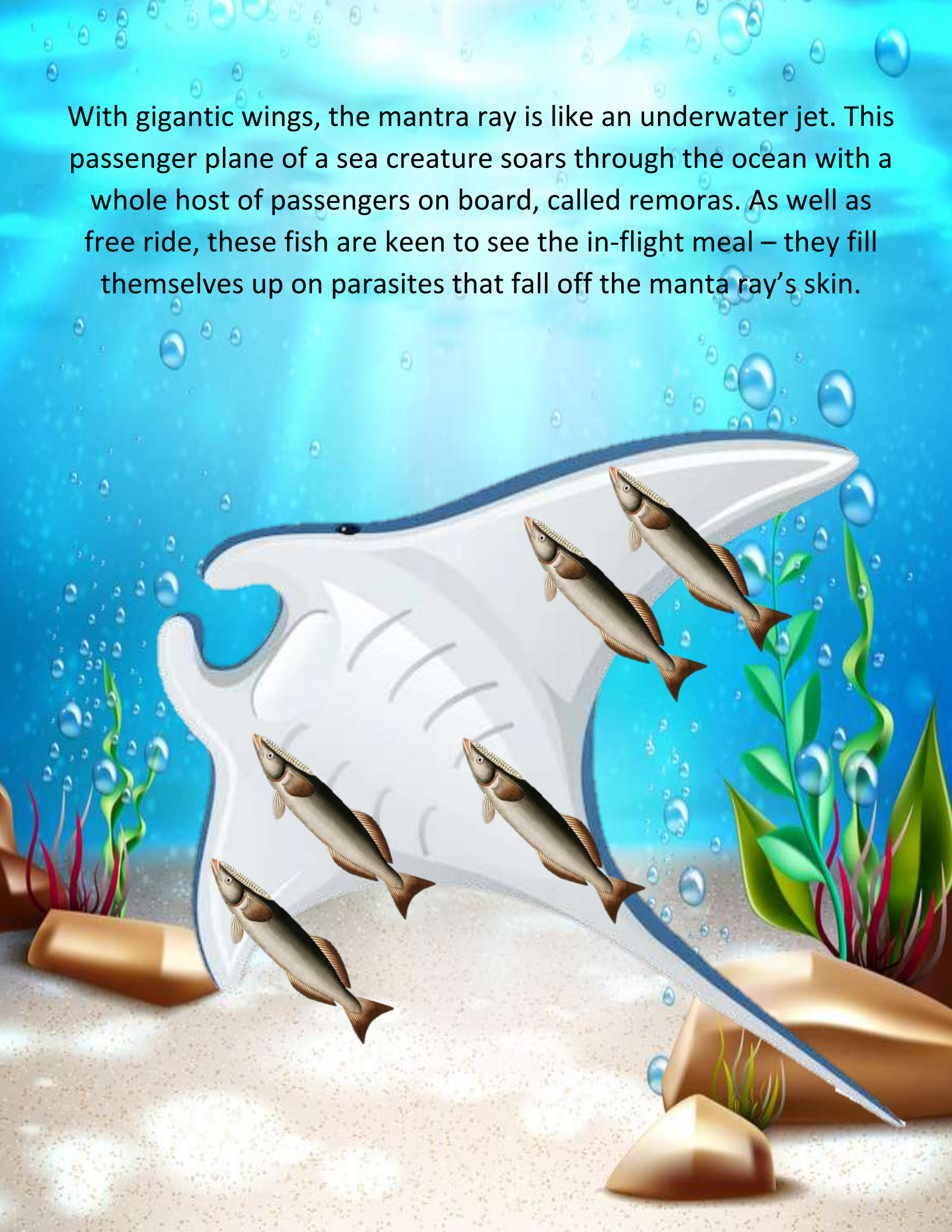
You wouldn't think vampires would be generous, but these ones are! If a vampire bat notices that another is looking a little skinny, it will often regurgitate (bring back up), some blood for its friend.



# The Manta Ray and the Remoras



With gigantic wings, the mantra ray is like an underwater jet. This passenger plane of a sea creature soars through the ocean with a whole host of passengers on board, called remoras. As well as free ride, these fish are keen to see the in-flight meal – they fill themselves up on parasites that fall off the manta ray's skin.



## Fasten Your Seatbelts

The remora's head acts like a suction cup. It presses its flat head against the manta ray, sticking the two together in a similar way to a bath toy that sticks to the side of the tub. Scientists used the remora as inspiration to make a super sticky robot.





**Some scientists think  
mantra rays can  
recognize themselves in  
a mirror.**





# The Birds and the Trees



In the bird world, trees are building sites and construction materials wrapped into one. Most of the world's birds build their nests in trees, using stuff they get from trees. Trees would do just fine without birds, but most bird species rely on their wooden friends.





## Big Birds



Bald eagle nests are big enough for you to sleep in. These stick platforms are often over a 30 m (100 ft) up a tree.



## Woven Home



Baya weavers knit their nests from grass and hang them from branches. The males make these to impress their girlfriends.

## Tiny Nest



If you've read some of the previous stories it probably won't surprise you to find out that the smallest nest in the world is built by the tiniest bird in the world – the bee hummingbird! The nest is only 3 cm (1 in) wide.





## Block of Flats



This is the closest thing in nature to an apartment block. Up to 100 social weaver blocks work together to build a multi-unit nest, divided into two-room homes for each couple.

## Common Tailorbird

The baya weaver likes knitting, but the common tailorbird prefers sewing.

This creature stitches together a leaf nest using spiderwebs as its thread.



# The Wolves and the Hyenas



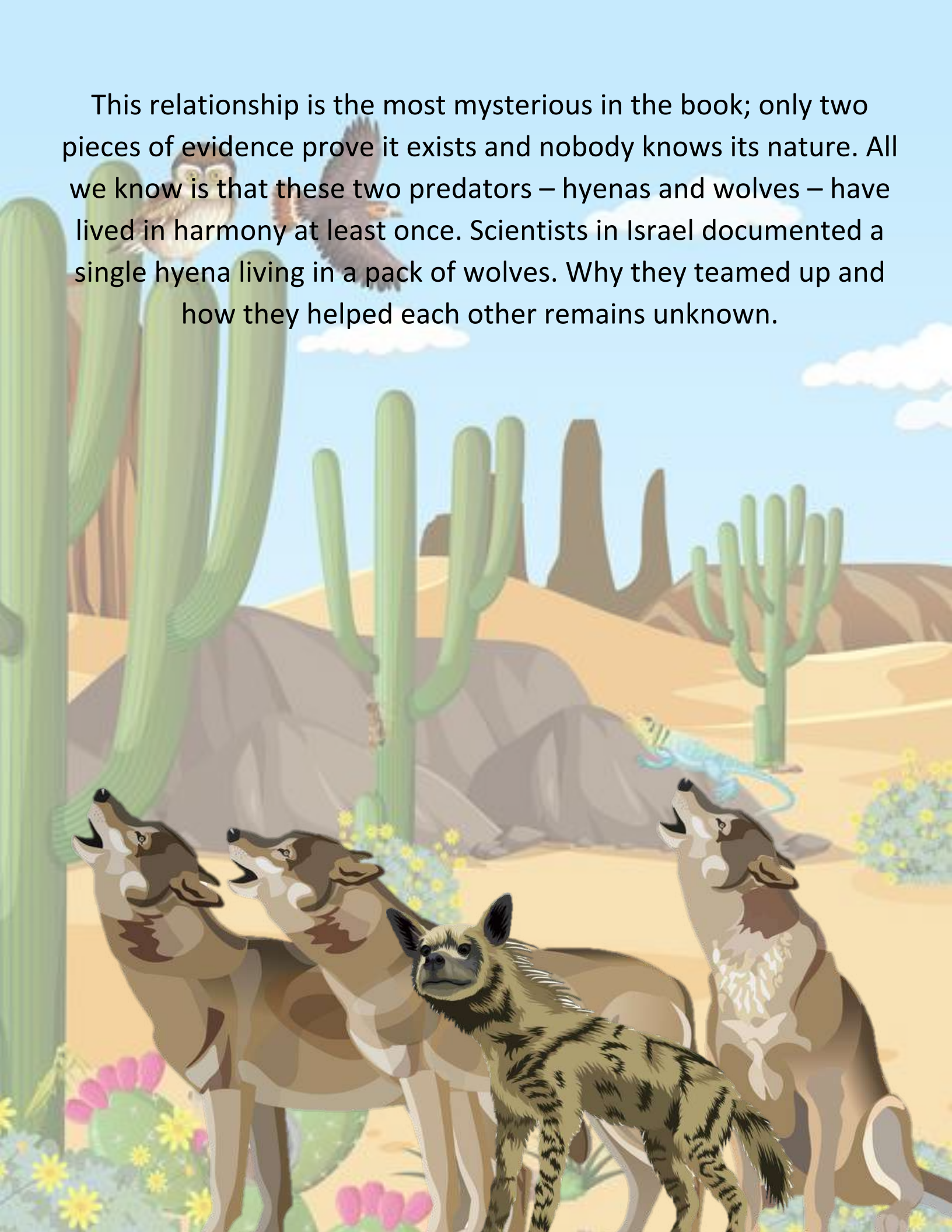


## A Classic Clue

Scientists confirmed this relationship when they found hyena and wolf footprints together. The researchers knew the different species were walking in a pack because the footprints overlapped.



This relationship is the most mysterious in the book; only two pieces of evidence prove it exists and nobody knows its nature. All we know is that these two predators – hyenas and wolves – have lived in harmony at least once. Scientists in Israel documented a single hyena living in a pack of wolves. Why they teamed up and how they helped each other remains unknown.



## One-Time Thing?

This relationship has only been witnessed once. It's possible that the tracks and the sighting are both of the same specific friendship. These two species might never have worked together before, and may never do so again ...





# THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY

