

# GO GIRL

A STORYBOOK

OF EPIC NZ WOMEN

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• MERATA MITA • RITA ANGLIA  
JEAN BATTEN • LUCY LAWLESS  
US KO

by Barbara Else



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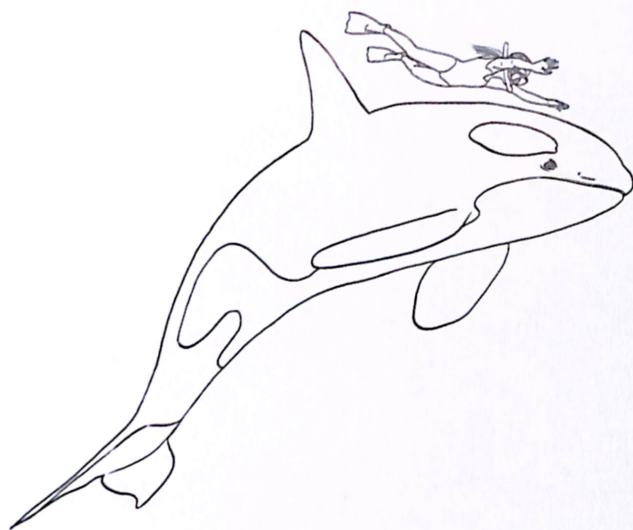
# Ingrid Visser

**Marine biologist**

Born 1966 in Lower Hutt, New Zealand

***PROTECT THE ORCA AND  
WE ALSO PROTECT OUR  
BEAUTIFUL OCEAN.***





Once upon a time, a little girl called Ingrid was born in Lower Hutt. She loved living close to the sea. She especially loved dolphins. Could she ever work with the largest of the dolphin family, the orca?

'The only place you can do that is somewhere like SeaWorld,' people said.

Orca in captivity? Even when she was a child, that didn't seem right to Ingrid.

For a while the family lived on a farm near the sea. Ingrid loved it. Then they moved inland to a bigger farm. She missed the ocean so much it hurt.

They moved again, nearer the ocean. Then, when she was 16, her father said, 'We're sailing a yacht around the world.'

Magical!

The ocean became as familiar to her as the land. Ingrid watched seabirds soar and dive for fish. She saw storms



lash the waves. She saw dolphins and whales play in the ever-changing water. But never did she see orca up close.

When they'd sailed home, Ingrid studied zoology, to learn about animal behaviour and the creatures of the sea.

One day near the university marine station, a colleague shouted, 'Orca! Orca out there!'

As fast as she could, Ingrid pulled on her diving mask, snorkel and fins, and slipped into the water. A female orca approached and eyed her. Then it fetched its calf. The baby circled Ingrid faster and faster, so she felt she was in the middle of a magical game.

Ingrid began a project to get to know orca better, to film them and swim with them.

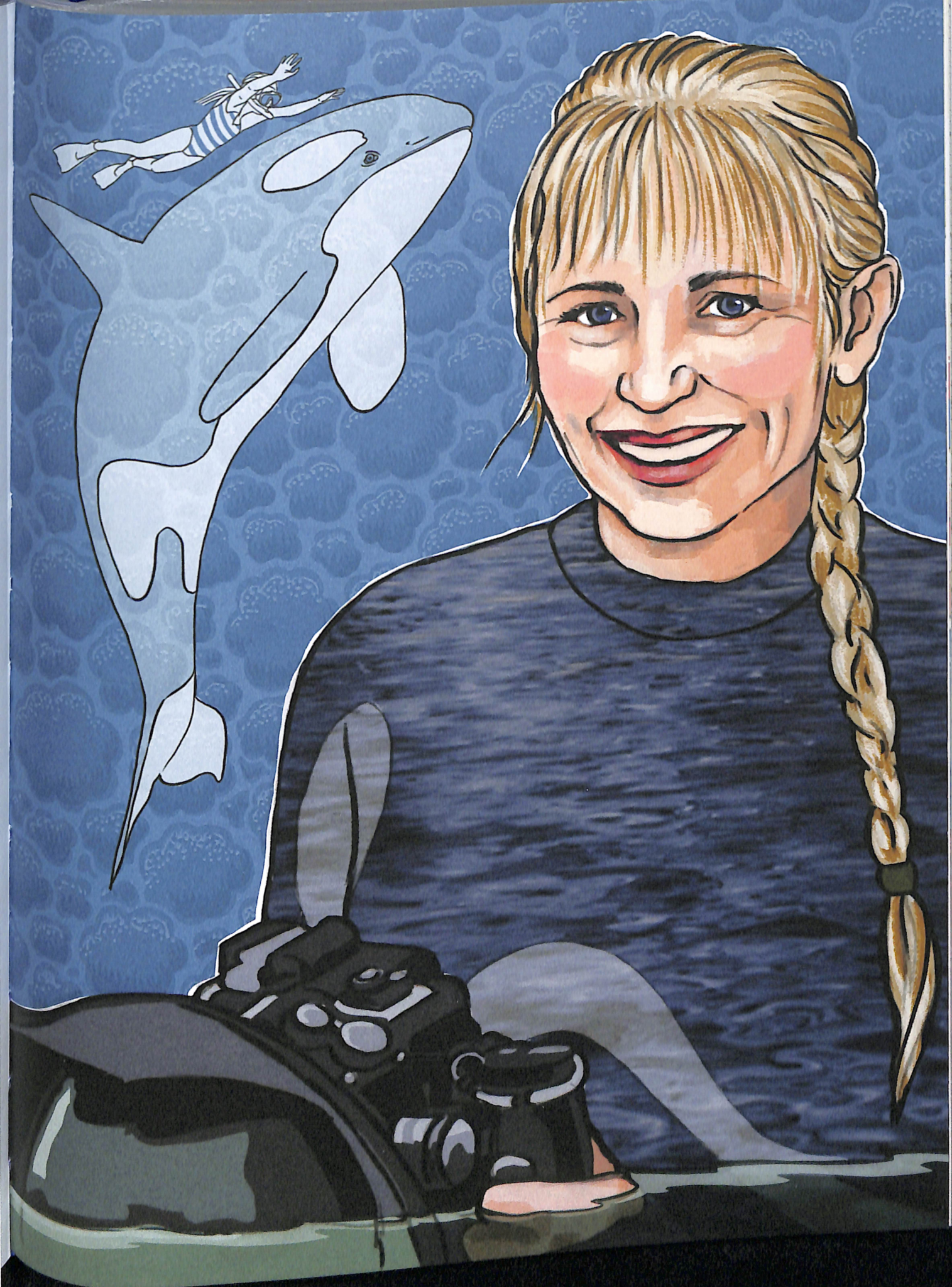
'Don't do it! They're dangerous,' people told her.

'Rubbish,' said Ingrid. 'There's never been a proven account of an orca attacking a human in the ocean. Only in captivity.'

And she couldn't bear the idea of orca trapped in a concrete tank, performing tricks in front of an audience.

She found there were fewer than 200 orca around New Zealand. Now they come to Ingrid for a scratch, to show off and play. She analyses what they eat — sharks and rays — to see what kind of chemicals enter the sea and poison its creatures. 'Protect the orca and we also protect our beautiful ocean,' Ingrid says.







**#GoGIRL**

*Ingrid Visser Marine biologist*

***EVERY GIRL  
CAN BE A  
Go GIRL.***



Now you've read *Go Girl*, you might like to learn more about these heroes and their careers. Ask your local or school librarian — there are some wonderful books written about (or even by) these epic women. You can also look them up online in *Te Ara, the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. It includes the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. [www.teara.govt.nz](http://www.teara.govt.nz).

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Puffin is an imprint of the Penguin Random House group of companies,  
whose addresses can be found at [global.penguinrandomhouse.com](http://global.penguinrandomhouse.com).  
First published by Penguin Random House New Zealand, 2018



Penguin  
Random House  
New Zealand

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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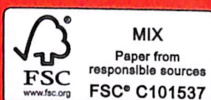
Cover illustration by Vasanti Unka © Penguin Random House New Zealand  
Text design by Rachel Clark © Penguin Random House New Zealand  
Author portrait by Vasanti Unka  
Prepress by Image Centre Group  
Printed and bound in China by RR Donnelley Asia Printing Solutions Ltd

A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of New Zealand.

ISBN 978-0-14-377160-9

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