
The Big Adventure of Tiny Roach

ONCE UPON A TIME, Tiny Roach lived in the Baltic Sea just off the coast of Finland.

Even for a roach, Tiny Roach was a tiddler, barely eight centimetres long. It had been slower to grow than the others and never caught up with them. That's why he was mocked and called Tiny.

Tiny Roach wasn't particularly nimble either. He couldn't jump high from the water like other roaches or change direction at lightning speed or spurt like a sprinter.

In its shoal, Tiny Roach was a completely different kettle of fish.

At times, it strayed from its shoal and got sidetracked to its own paths. Tiny Roach thought the sea around it was simply mesmerising.

At times, Tiny Roach would be enchanted by the sounds carrying through the water, and he would stop to listen to them, like they were a symphony. It could get distracted by rays of light, coming through the waves to form scenes that change in a heartbeat. Sometimes it would swim in the midst of garlands of seaweed near the shore and surrender to the rhythm of their dancing with the waves. At nights, it swam to the surface to marvel at the starry sky overarching the Baltic Sea. Then it felt even smaller.

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●●● The bigger roaches didn't care for such a strange dreamer. The turns and twists of the silvery shoal's formation swimming required precision and speed, and Tiny Roach wasn't up to it. And if you asked the other roaches: if you didn't like formation swimming, you really weren't a roach at all!

Grandpa Roach, the oldest and wisest roach in the shoal, had evaded many hooks and traps in his time; one time he got frustrated by Tiny roach and said:

"You're one strange roach child! That floating around and staring at waves does no good to anyone. You need to grow up and get into formation swimming, diving, and speed swimming – the others of your age will let you join in."

GUITAR PLAYER ON A ROCK

Tiny Roach was downhearted by Grandpa's comment. Formation swimming, diving, and speed swimming just didn't fire him up.

But there was a fire of sorts in his breast, he just didn't know why and what for. What would he be good at? How would he be known?

Downcast, Tiny Roach drifted towards the shore.

After lolling for a while between the rocks by the beach, he suddenly heard chords from far away. Tiny Roach swam closer to the sound, which became clearer and stronger. When he looked above the waves, the source of the chords was obvious.

There was a man perching on a rock, strumming his guitar and humming.

Tiny Roach had never heard anything so beautiful! It swam even closer and listened to the different melodies and harmonies. It started to sway to the music. Three times to the left, three times to the right, and around! A couple of swerves down, a couple up, and a long glide back to where the guitar player was. Tiny Roach, entranced, made circles right under the player's eyes in the shallow water.

Just as Tiny Roach had leaped out of the water into a pirouette to end its dance, the music stopped, and there was a flash of light. Tiny Roach plopped back into the water. What had happened? When he stopped seeing stars after his fall, he looked at the rock again, but the man had disappeared.

TINY ROACH FINDS HIS PASSION

The next day, Tiny Roach went back to the same place, where he found the man again, playing his guitar. Tiny Roach started his dance and saw the man smiling, waving to him even. This spurred Tiny Roach on to dance to the rhythm of the music.

For many days, they met at the rock. The man played, left at dusk, and Tiny Roach went back to trailing his shoal.

One day something happened that changed Tiny Roach's world. Seeing Tiny Roach again, the guitar player brought his phone close to the water.

Tiny Roach looked at the picture on the phone as best he could. It showed a picture of a fish, rising from the water in a beautiful pirouette, surrounded by lovely colours, designs and chords.

"That's you. A roach whose heart beats for art. I drew a picture from the photo I took of you, by little friend," the man said.

Finally, Tiny Roach understood what is loved – art!

For the little fish, the rays of light coming through the waves, garlands of seaweed swaying in the water, the vast sky of stars above the Baltic Sea, and sweet sounds on its shore – all these were art. Now Tiny Roach had a purpose for its life: his picture would lead people to art.

Tiny Roach was bursting with pride and happiness. Now he had a passion to declare to the world.

And this is how Tiny Roach became the most famous art roach of the Baltic Sea.