



# Big Miracle



## Synopsis

Inspired by the incredible true story that touched the world, the rescue adventure *Big Miracle* tells the amazing tale of an animal-loving volunteer (Golden Globe winner Drew Barrymore) and a small-town news reporter (John Krasinski) who are joined by a native Alaskan boy (new-comer Ahmaogak Sweeney) to rally an entire community—and eventually rival world super-powers—to save a family of majestic gray whales trapped by rapidly forming ice in the Arctic Circle.

As the world’s attention turns to the top of the globe for two weeks, saving these endangered animals becomes a shared cause for nations entrenched against one another and leads to an unexpected, momentary thaw in the Cold War.

## Discussion Questions

- What is Rachel’s job? What does Greenpeace do? Thinking about her goals in the film, what do you think are her primary motivations for helping to save the whales?
- What is J.W. McGraw’s job? What are his main goals in running his oil company? What are his motivations for changing his mind and helping to save the whales?
- What is Adam’s job? Why is he so excited, at first, about the story of the whales? Do you think that his motivations change as the film progresses, from only wanting a great story so he can get a better job to actually caring about the animals?
- What is it about the whales that make the people in the film want to help them? Why does Rachel care so much about the animals? Why do people and families across the country become emotionally involved in the outcome of the story? Do you think people would have been so involved if a different kind of animal were trapped in a similar way?
- The importance of media plays a very big role in the movie. What makes the job of the news people so important? How has technology changed between 1988 and today? In what ways has it changed? How does the speed with which information is spread make a difference in a story like this? How would their efforts to save the whales have been different if Rachel and Adam had access to Facebook, Twitter and the Internet to spread the story?

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### Do Your Research

- One of the film's biggest themes is cooperation, particularly between people or organizations that have very different ideals, goals and motivations. For instance, Rachel with Greenpeace and J.W. with the oil company end up working together to save the whales, as do the United States and the U.S.S.R. Why do you think they decided to work together, in the end, to save the whales? Research other instances throughout history when different groups have cooperated in unexpected ways. Hint: look up the Christmas truces of World War I, in which British and German soldiers stopped fighting and exchanged gifts during the war.

### Get Involved

- Can you think of groups that you know that would mutually benefit from cooperating on a project or event together? Are you involved in any groups, such as Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, or an afterschool group or club? Cooperation cannot happen without someone first reaching out. Be the spokesperson for your group and reach out to another local group, perhaps a nursing home or homeless shelter in your community. What are some ways that your group could partner with another group? Think about organizing a concert, a bake sale, or an auction that would benefit both your group and the other group. By cooperating with others, almost anything is possible!



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