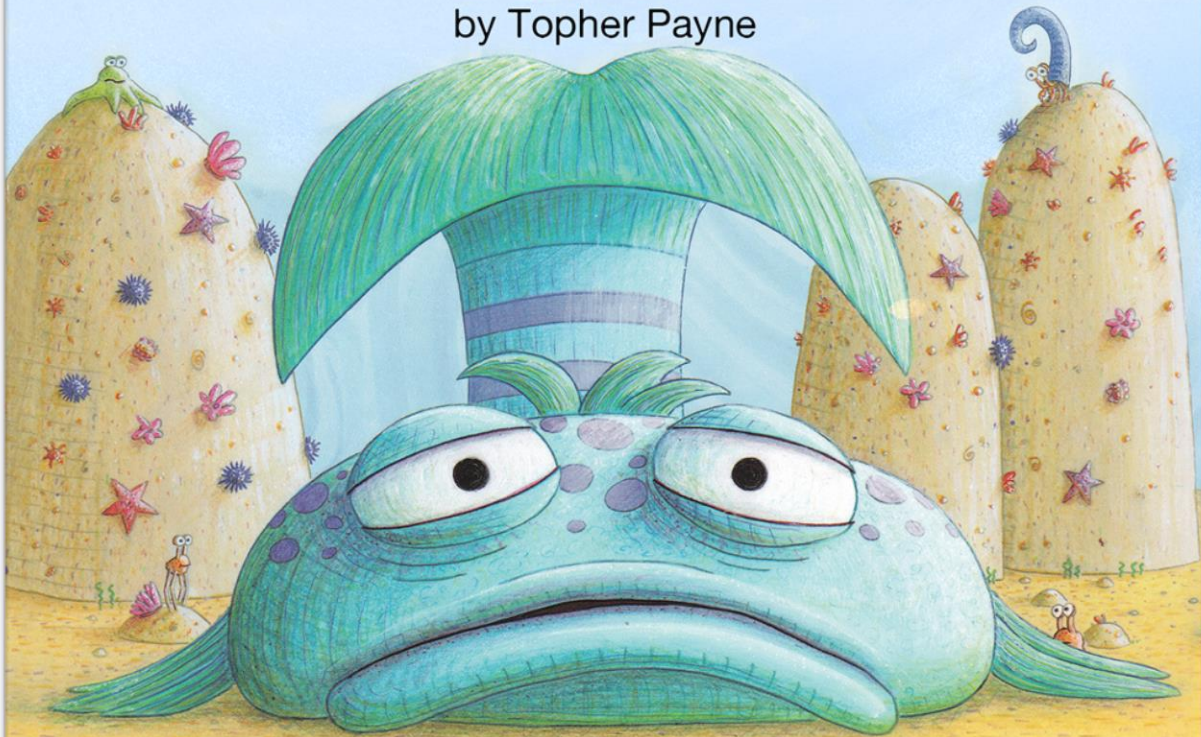


# The Fish Who Isn't Pouting That's Just His Face

by Topher Payne



An alternate ending to Deborah Diesen's *The Pout-Pout Fish*  
Originally illustrated by Dan Hanna

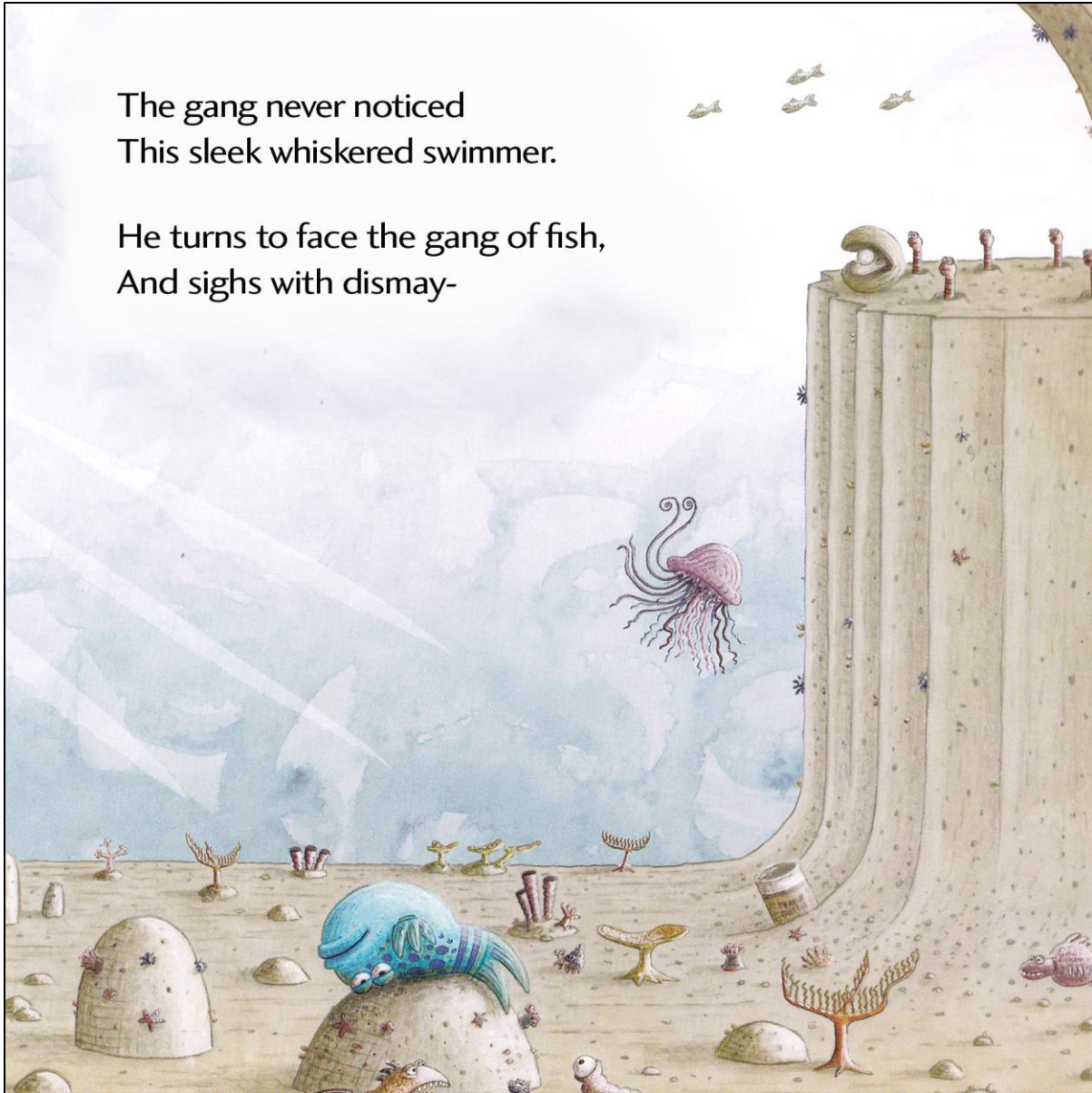
*A parody created in support of The Atlanta Artist's Relief Fund*

Now along comes a fish  
In a sepia shimmer



The gang never noticed  
This sleek whiskered swimmer.

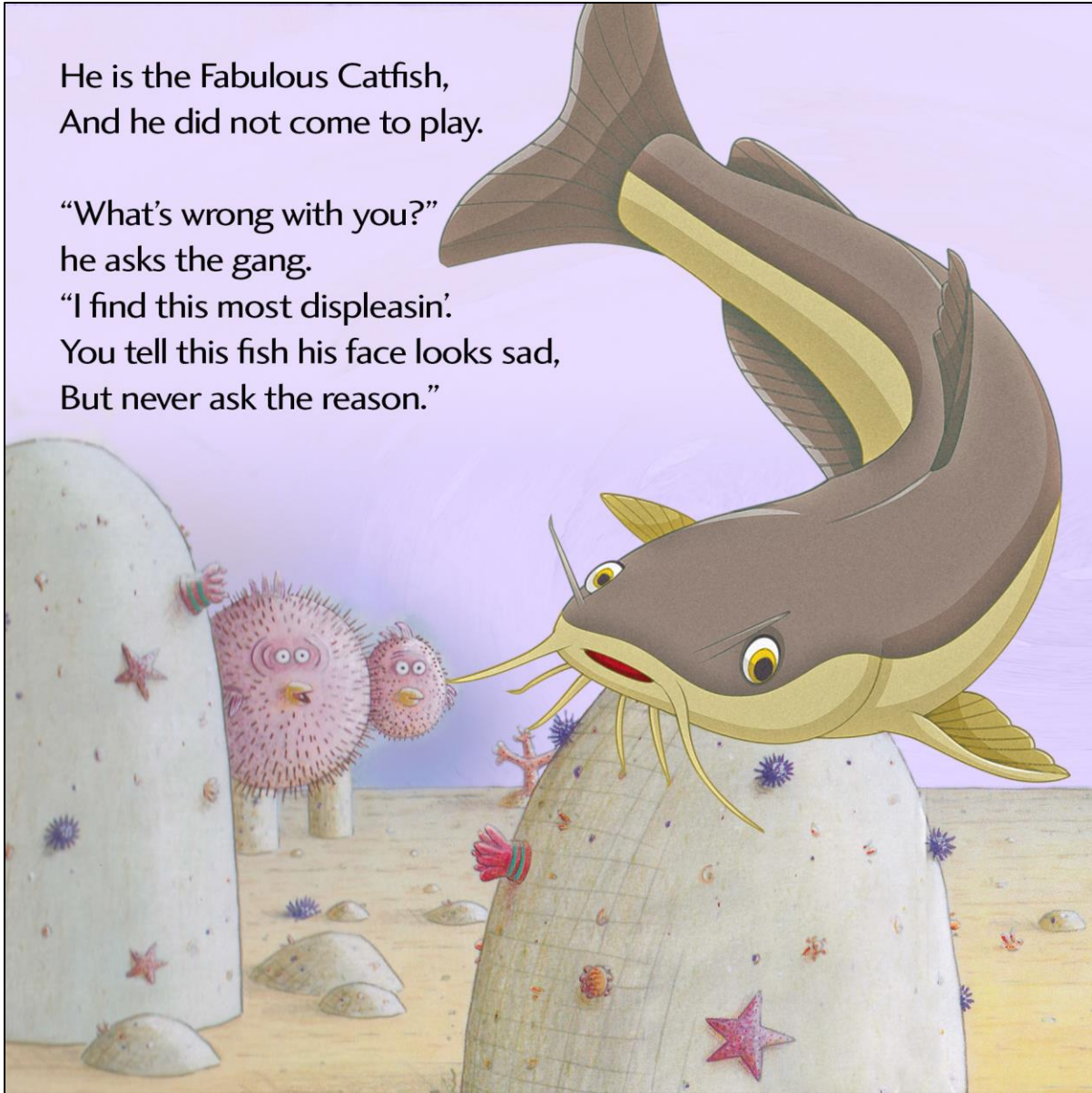
He turns to face the gang of fish,  
And sighs with dismay-



He is the Fabulous Catfish,  
And he did not come to play.

“What’s wrong with you?”  
he asks the gang.

“I find this most displeasin’.  
You tell this fish his face looks sad,  
But never ask the reason.”



“I’d look pouty too  
If every fish on the slope  
Called me unattractive  
And a kaleidoscope of mope.

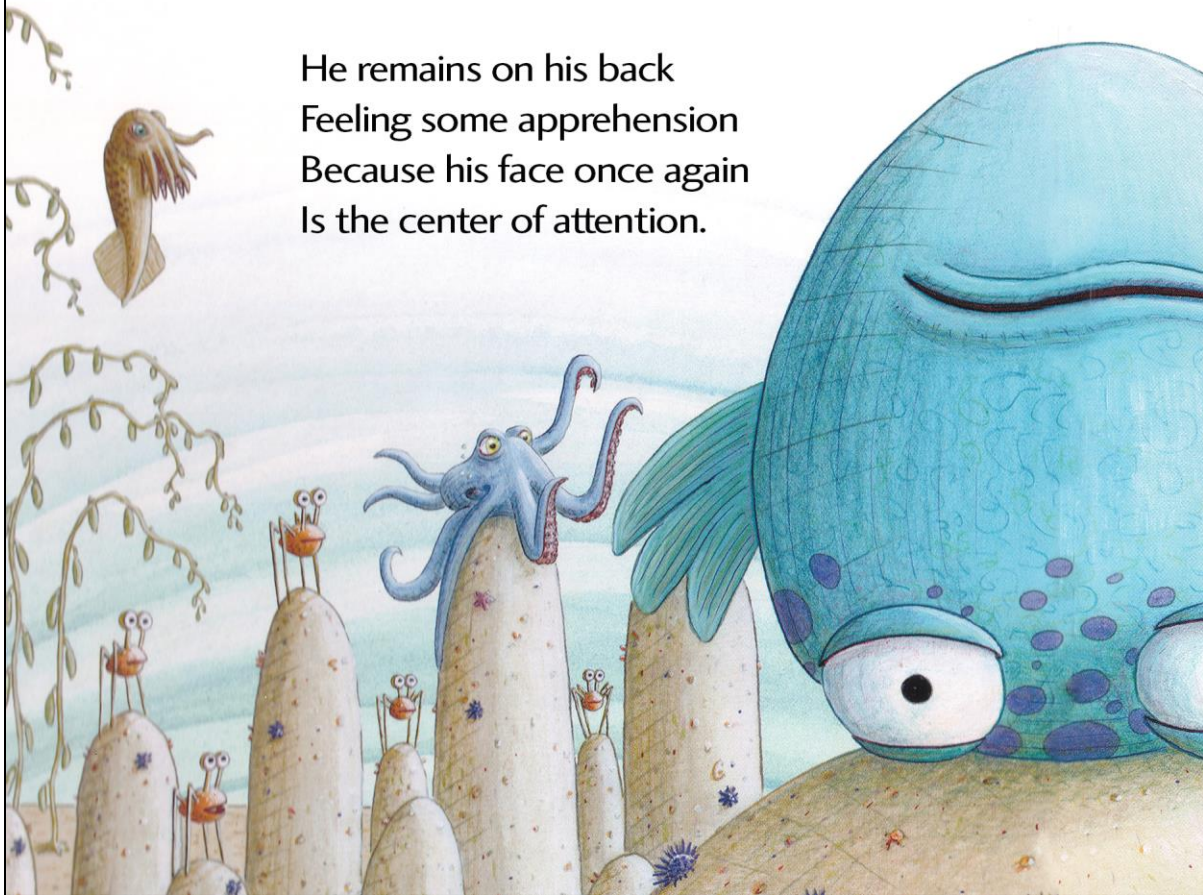
Or maybe he’s not pouting  
And this isn’t depression.  
Some fish in the sea  
Have a neutral expression.”



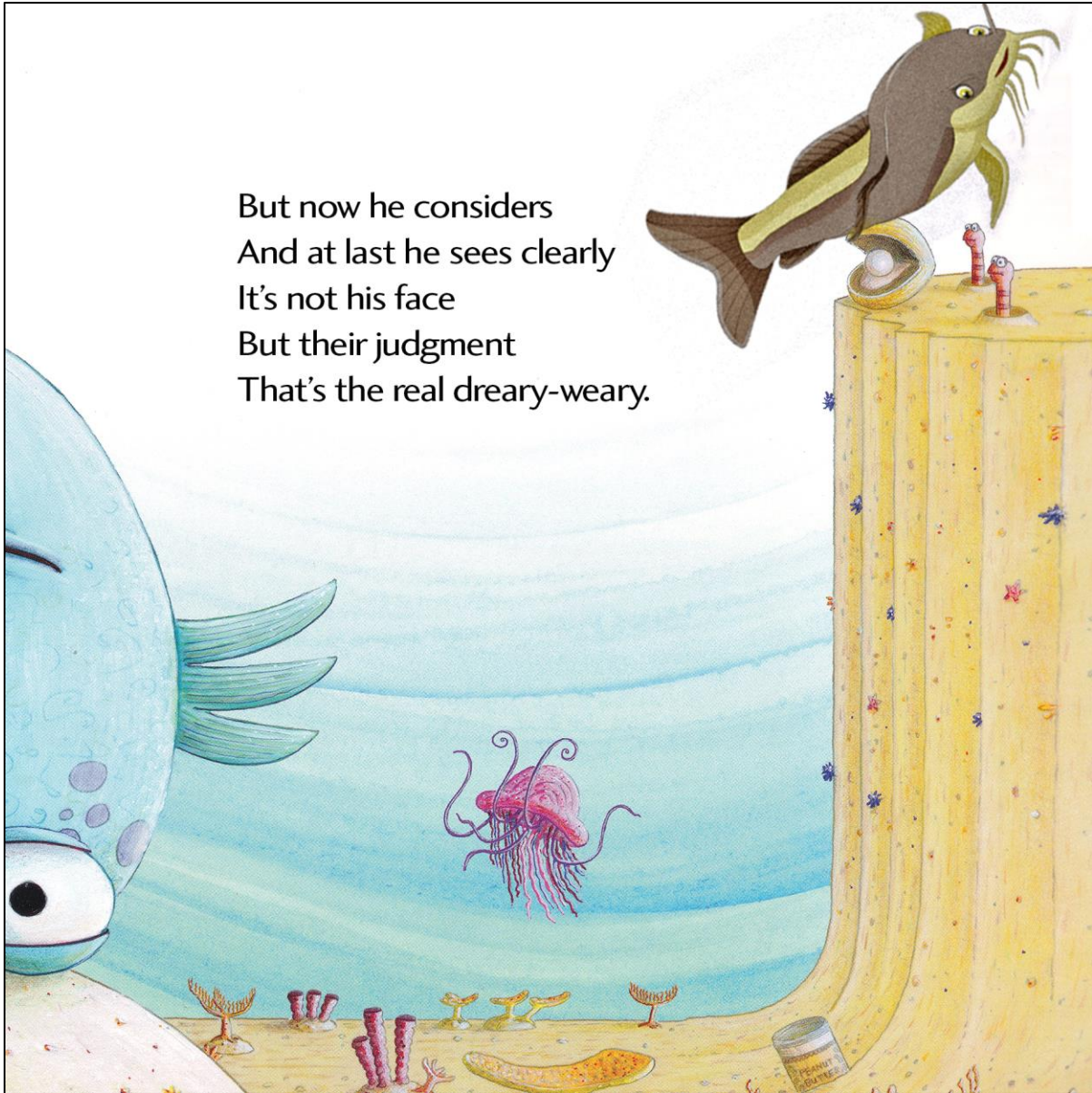
Fabulous Catfish departs  
With a marvelous swish

And the eyes of the gang  
Are on Mr. Fish.

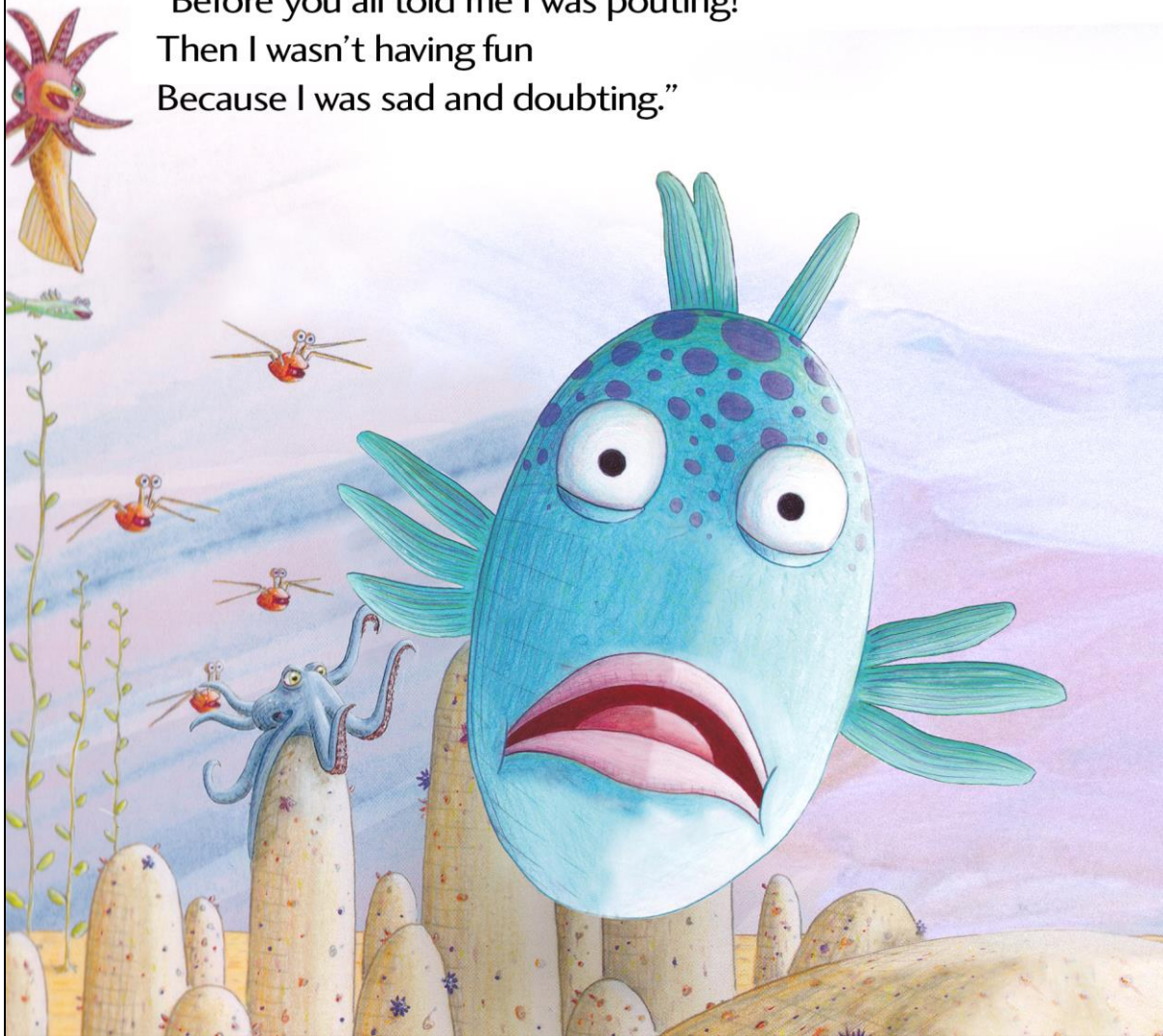
He remains on his back  
Feeling some apprehension  
Because his face once again  
Is the center of attention.



But now he considers  
And at last he sees clearly  
It's not his face  
But their judgment  
That's the real dreary-weary.



“I used to like my face,” he shouts.  
“Before you all told me I was pouting!  
Then I wasn’t having fun  
Because I was sad and doubting.”

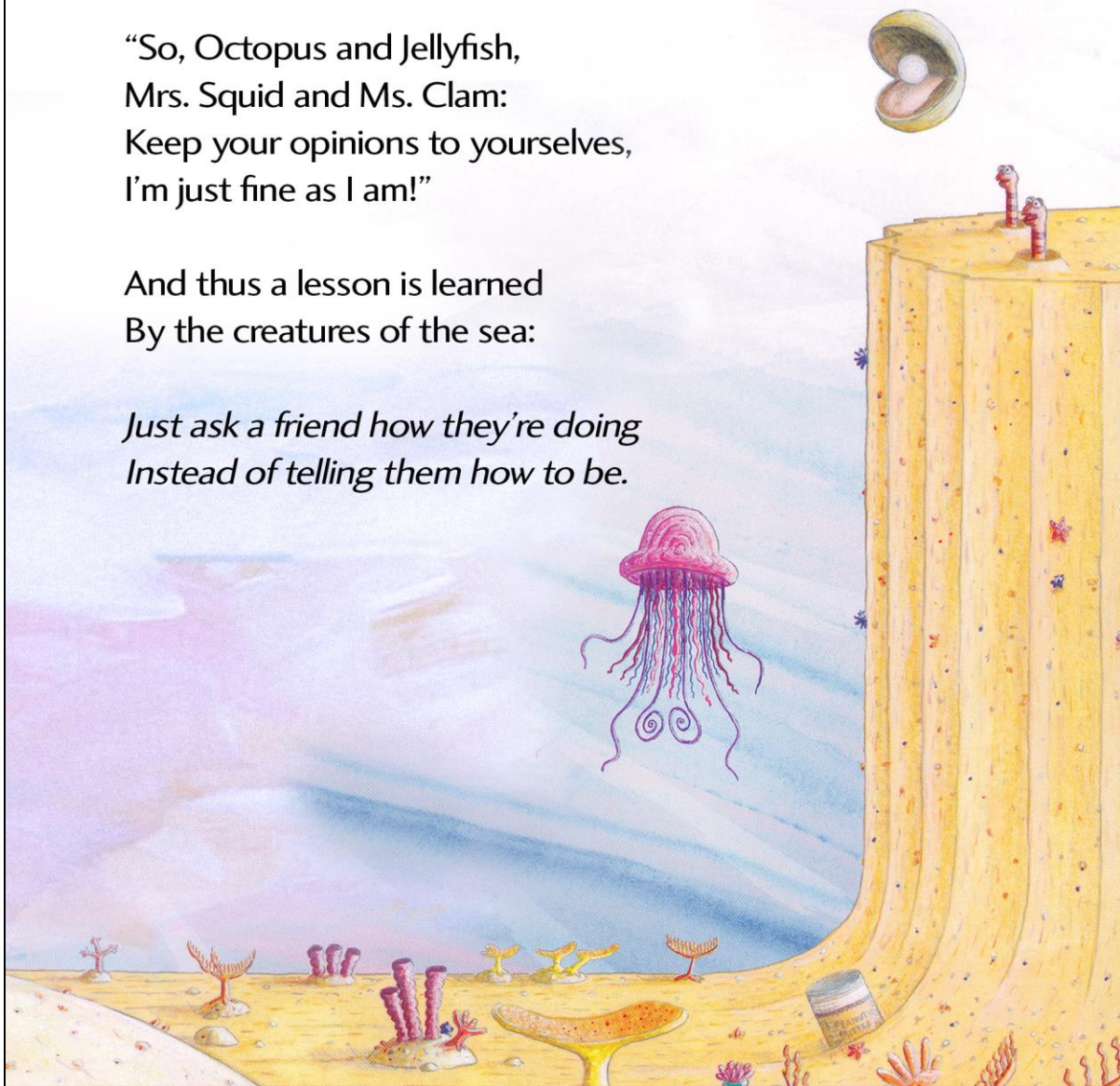


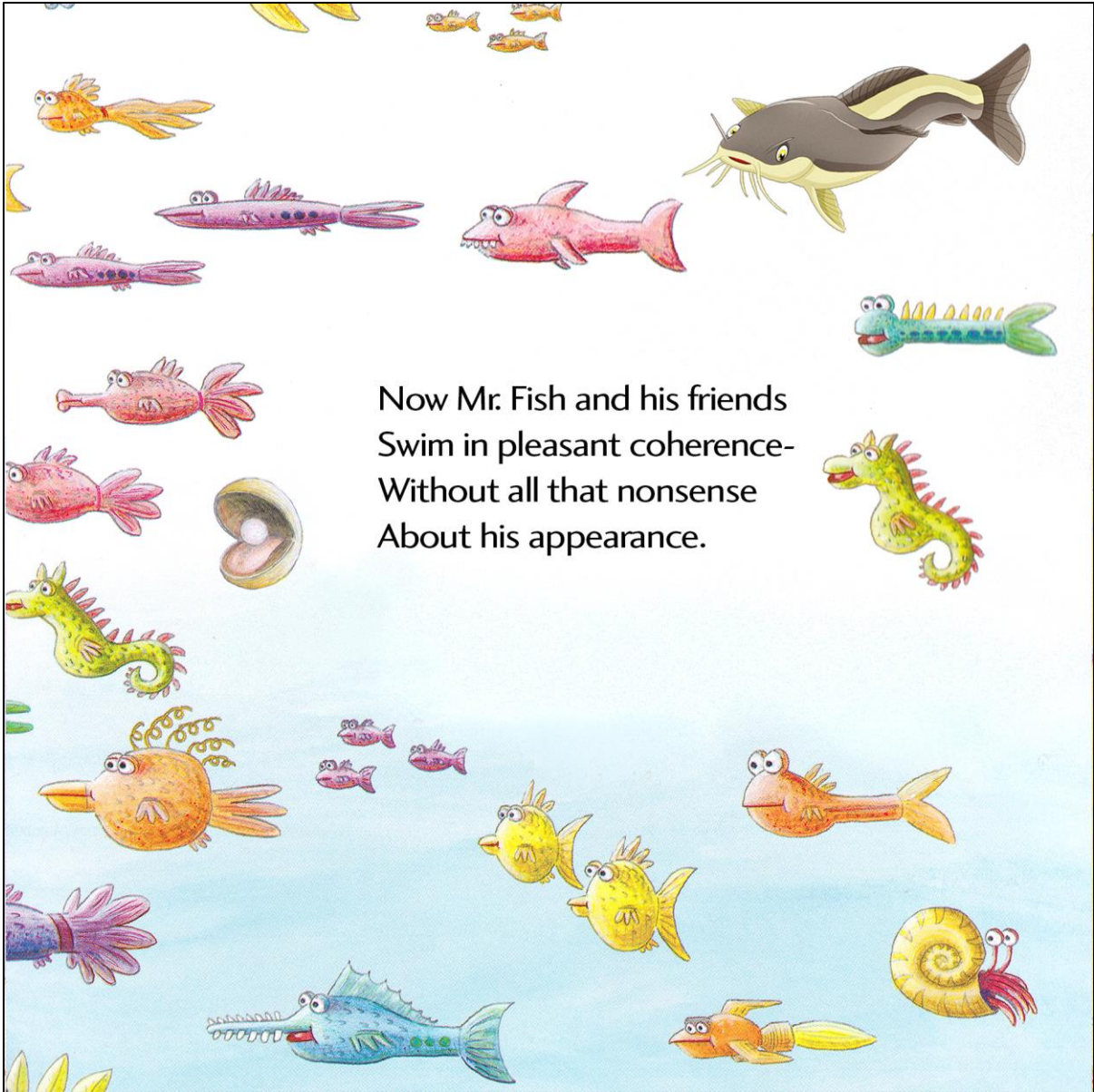


“So, Octopus and Jellyfish,  
Mrs. Squid and Ms. Clam:  
Keep your opinions to yourselves,  
I’m just fine as I am!”

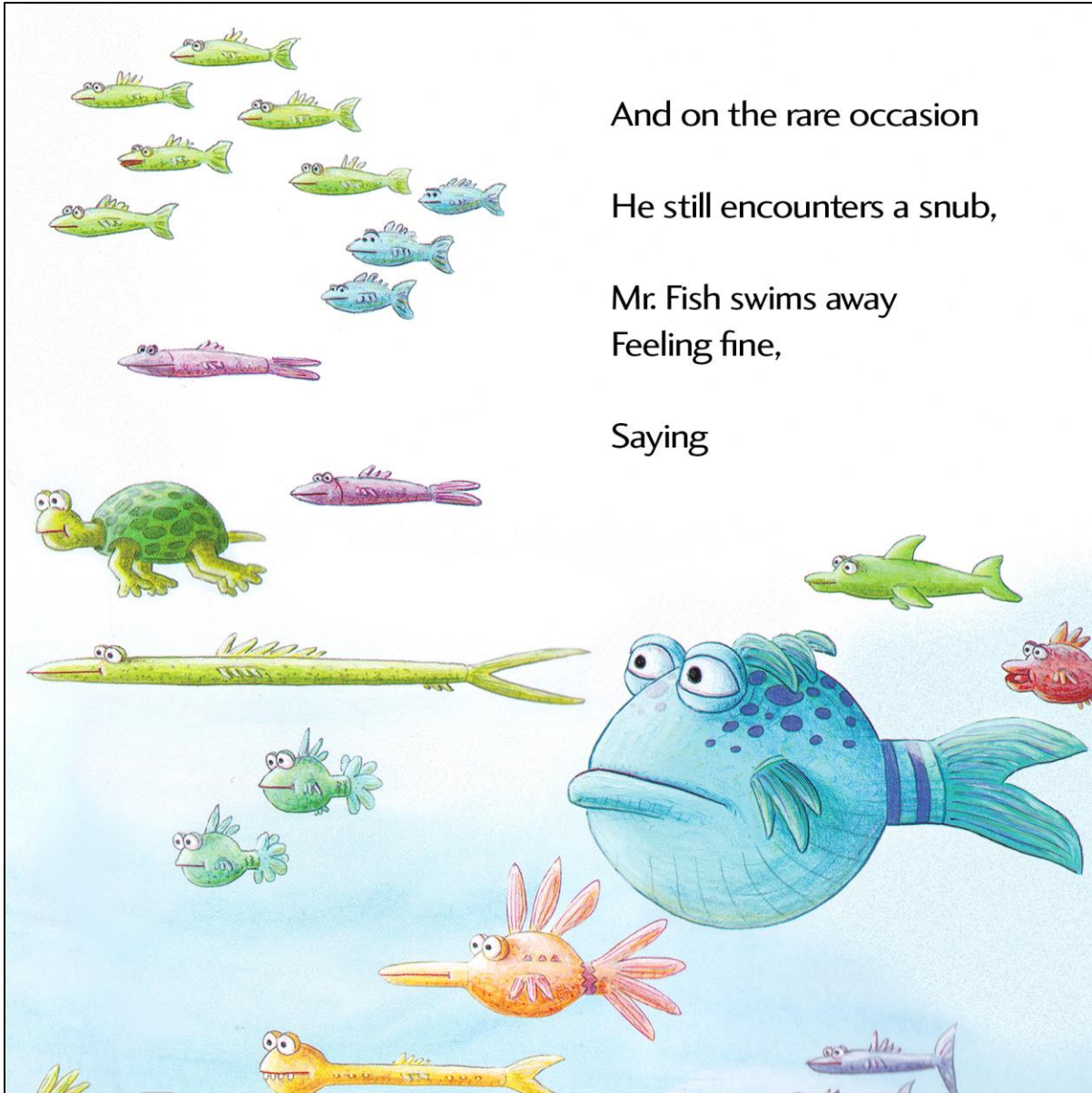
And thus a lesson is learned  
By the creatures of the sea:

*Just ask a friend how they’re doing  
Instead of telling them how to be.*





Now Mr. Fish and his friends  
Swim in pleasant coherence-  
Without all that nonsense  
About his appearance.



And on the rare occasion

He still encounters a snub,

Mr. Fish swims away  
Feeling fine,

Saying



BLUB

BLUUUB

BLUUUUUUB

