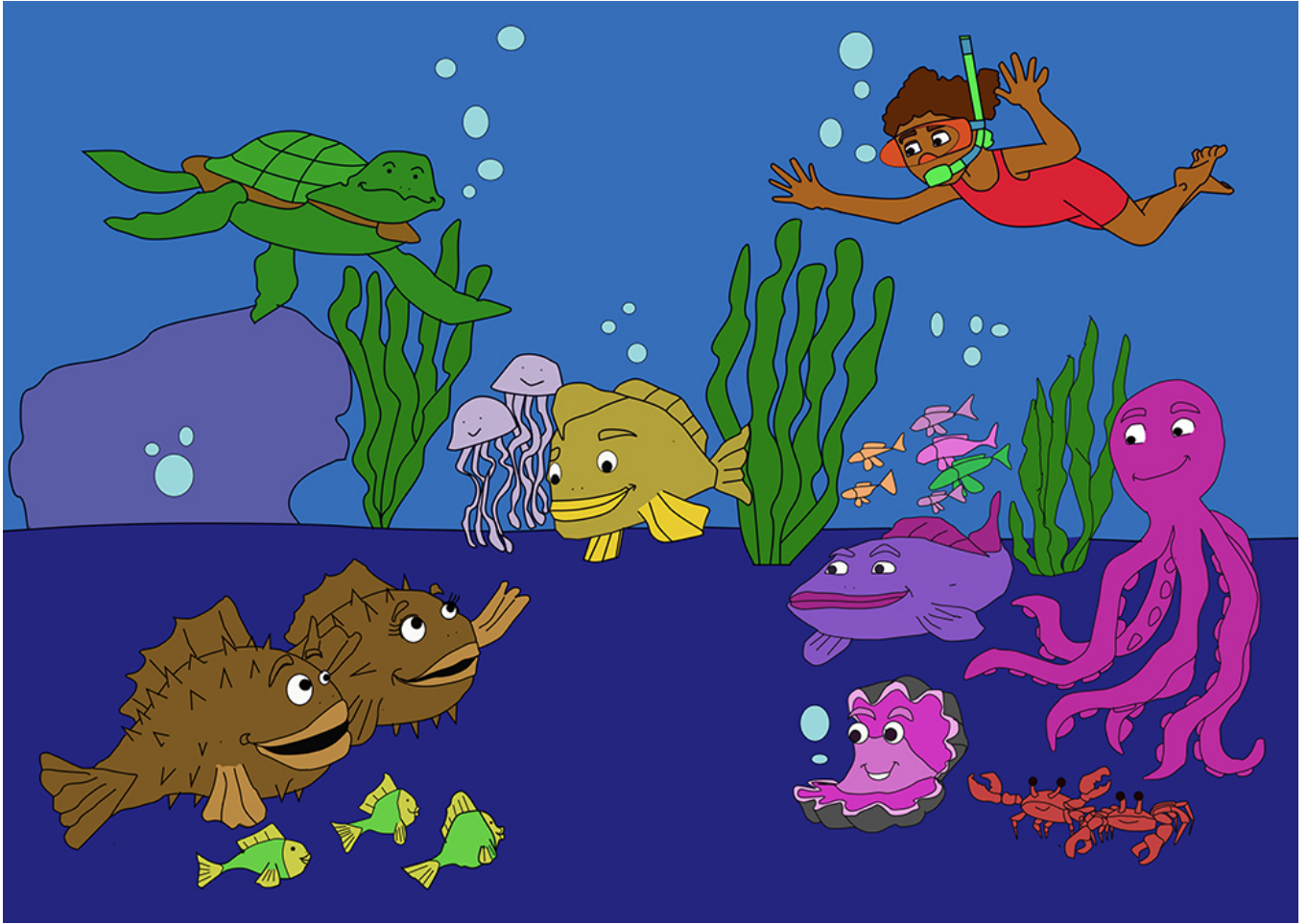


The Great Reef Burn

The Great Reef is warming, and the creatures that live there are being harmed. Can Maria and Hokioki find a way to save it?



The Great Reef Burn
Ariela Zibiah



Let's Read

 **The Asia Foundation**



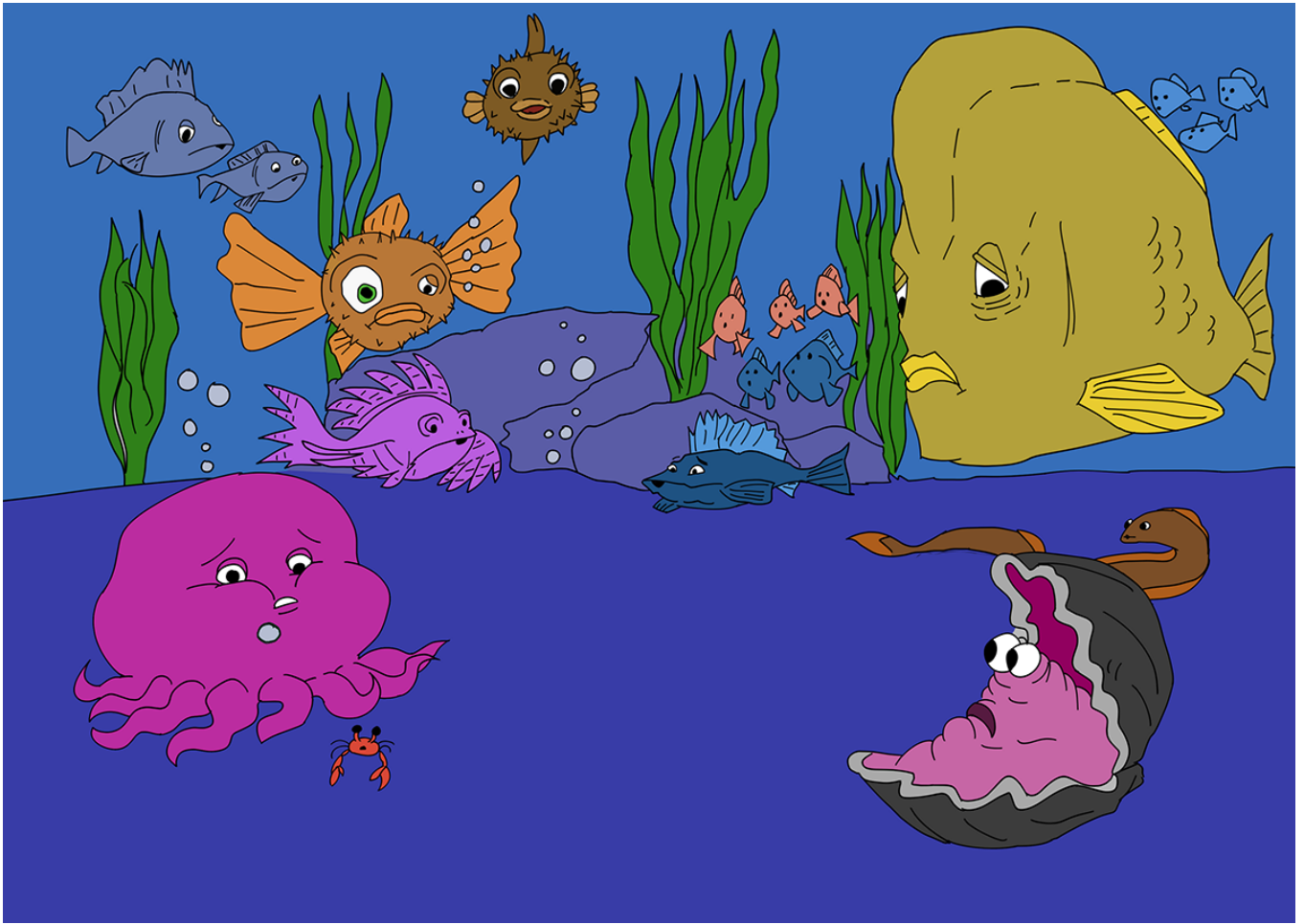
At sunrise, Maria runs along the shore. She looks for her best friend, Hoki-hoki. She sees his head bob out of the water. "Oh, I love high tides," says Maria. "It makes finding you much easier."



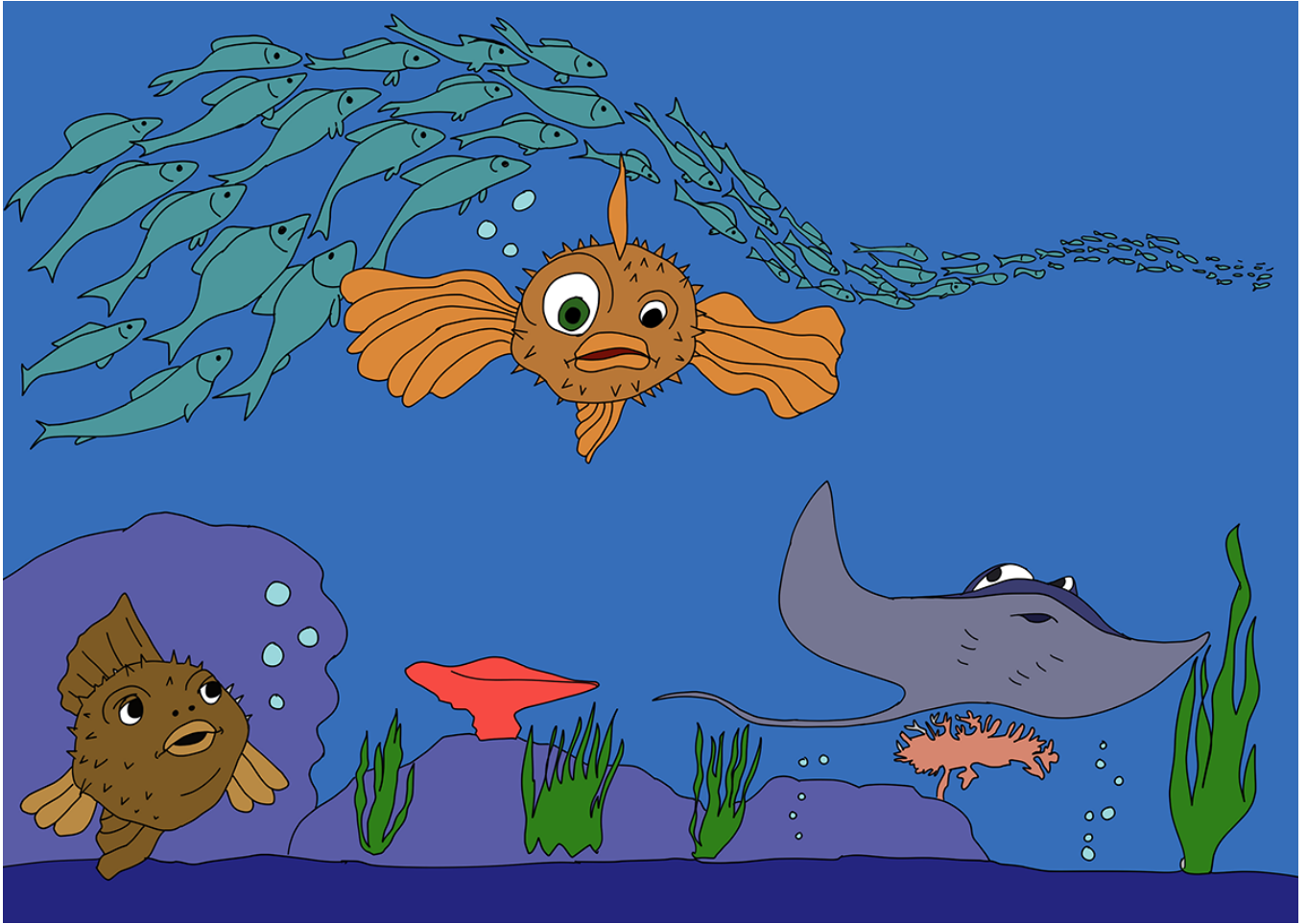
Hokihoki is quiet. "What is wrong?" Maria asks her friend.



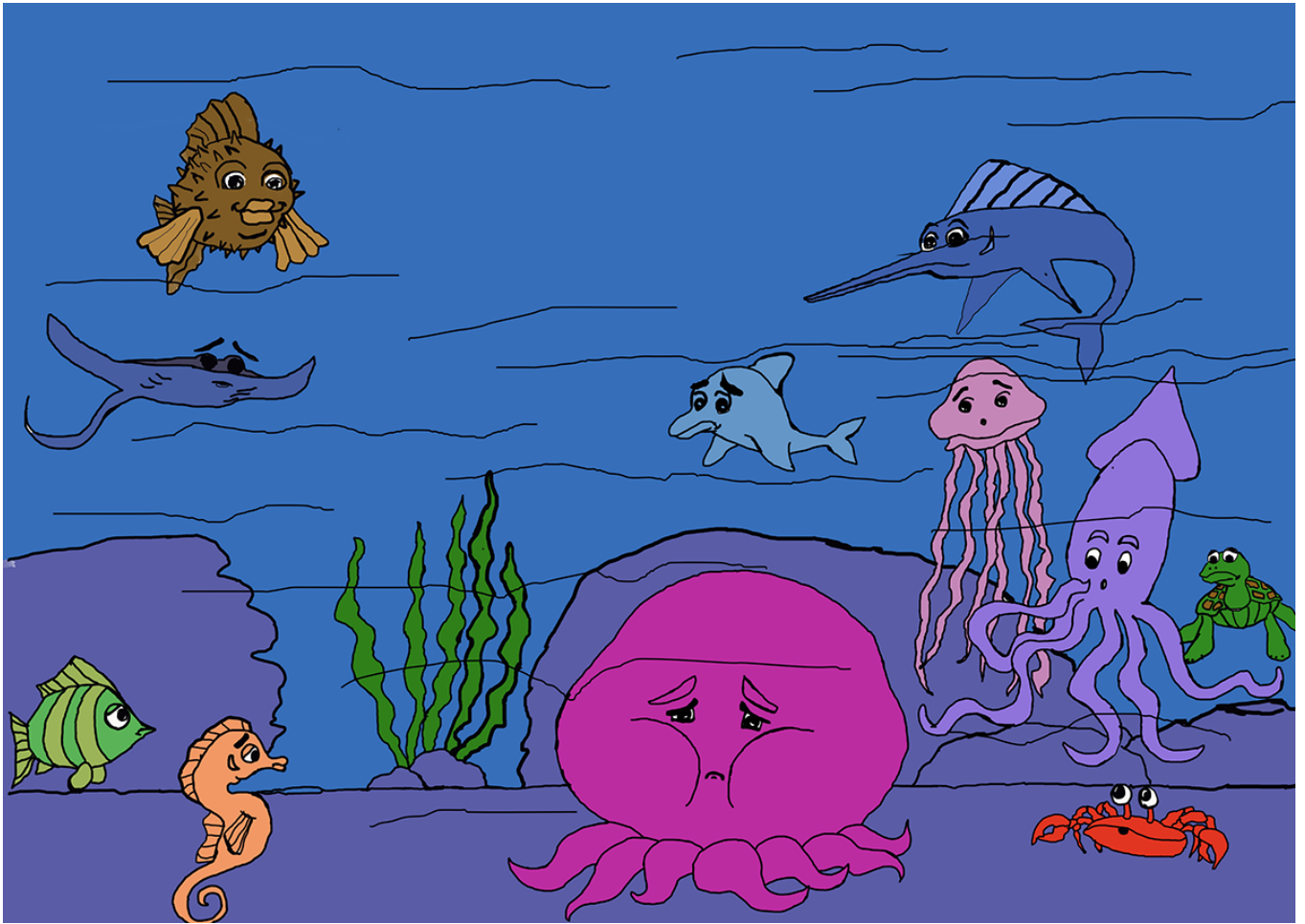
“Oh, Maria, the Elders of the Great Reef met last night. They meet only for big problems. Even the moon listened in.”



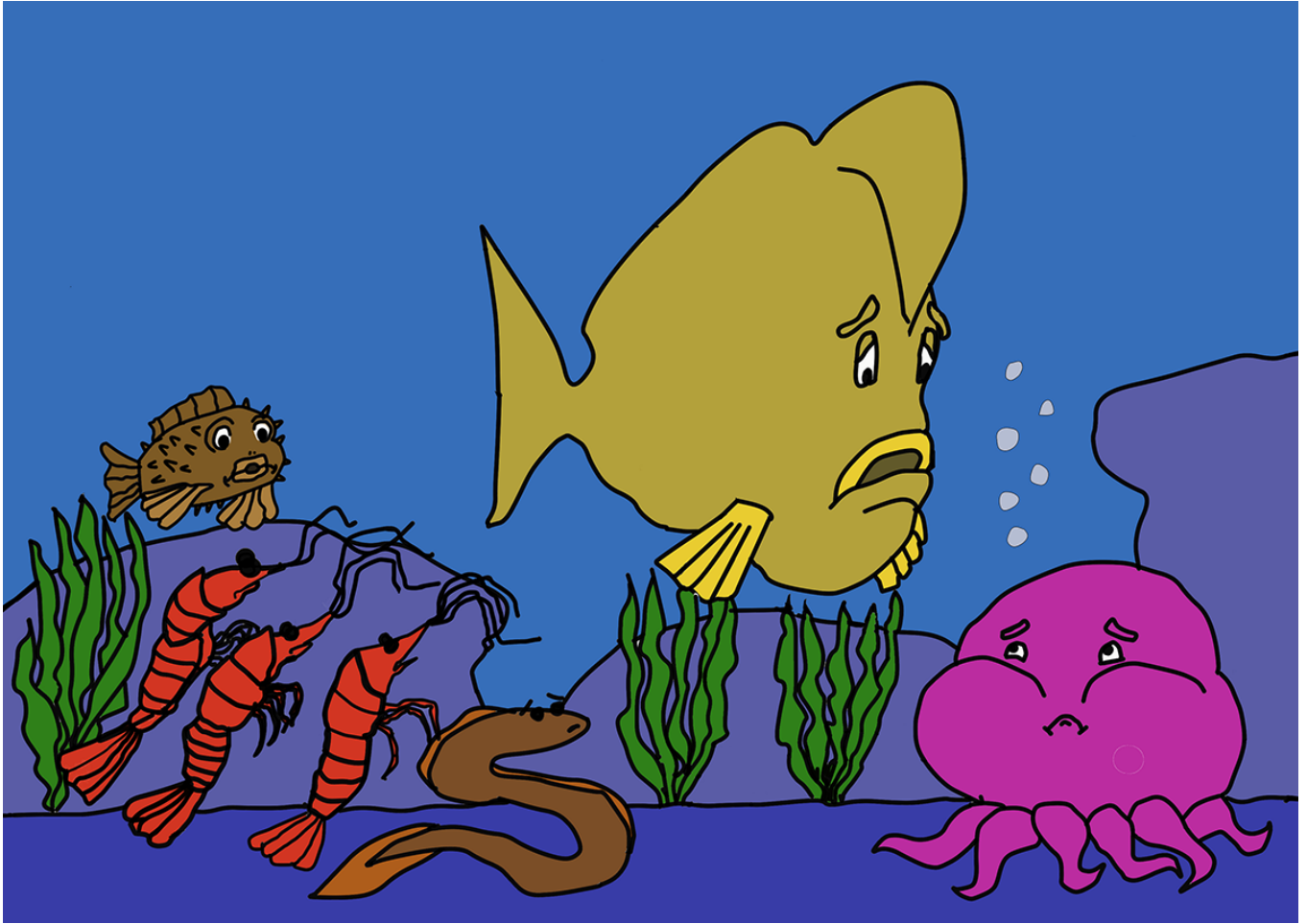
Rani, the centenarian clam, spoke first at the meeting. Rani said, "I've lived for 100 years. Things are changing. The water is much warmer. Fish are smaller. The Great Reef seems weaker. It is harder to find what we need in order to build and fix our shells."



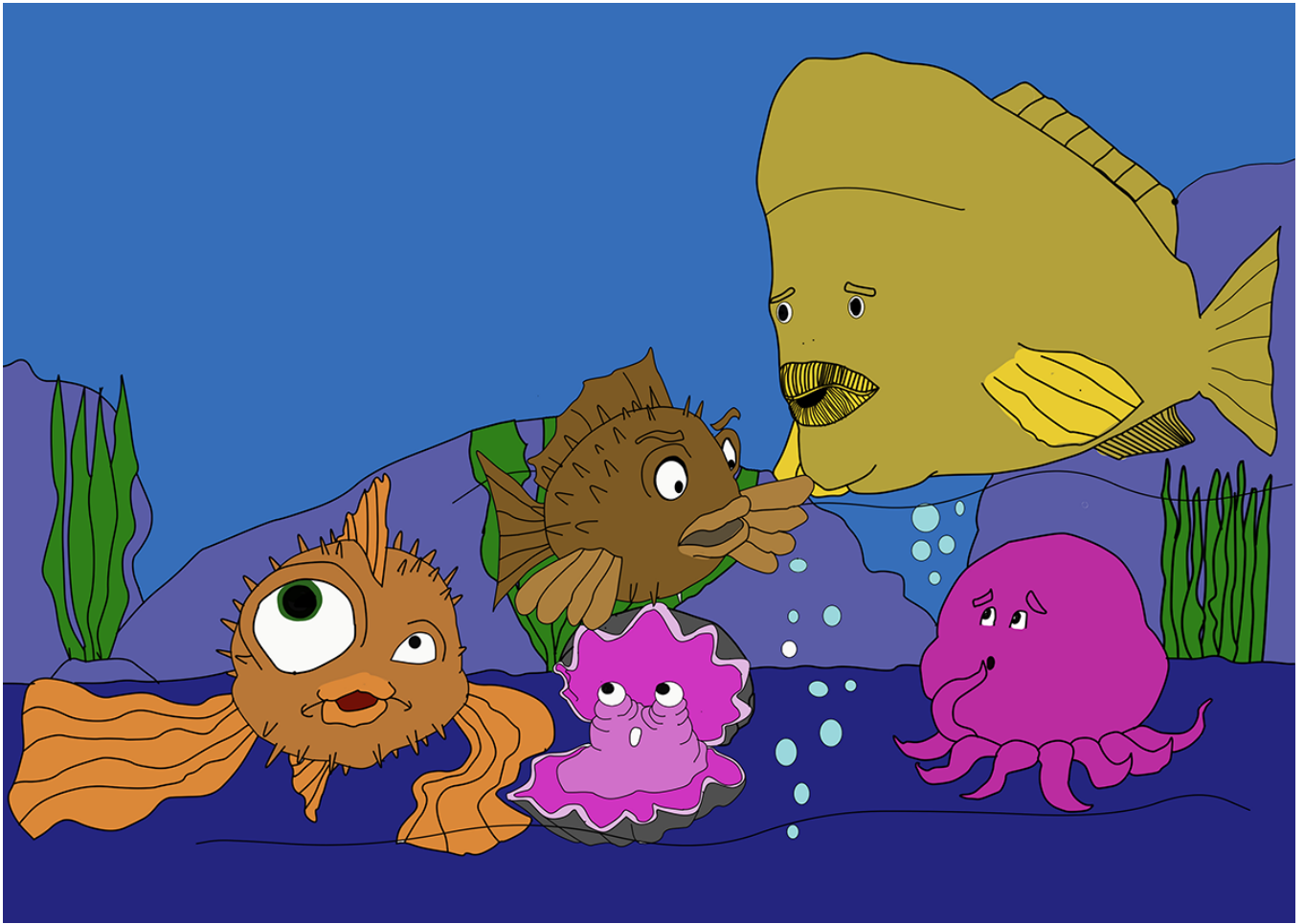
“Some of us can’t hear anymore,” Oti, a puffer fish, said. “Some of us are changing. Like me.”



Raja spoke for the octopus family. "We could eat a whale. We're always hungry."



“The Great Reef is losing a lot of seaweed and coral polyps,” Kali, a parrotfish, cried. “I feel bad using the reef for food, but if we have nothing else to eat, we may have to.”



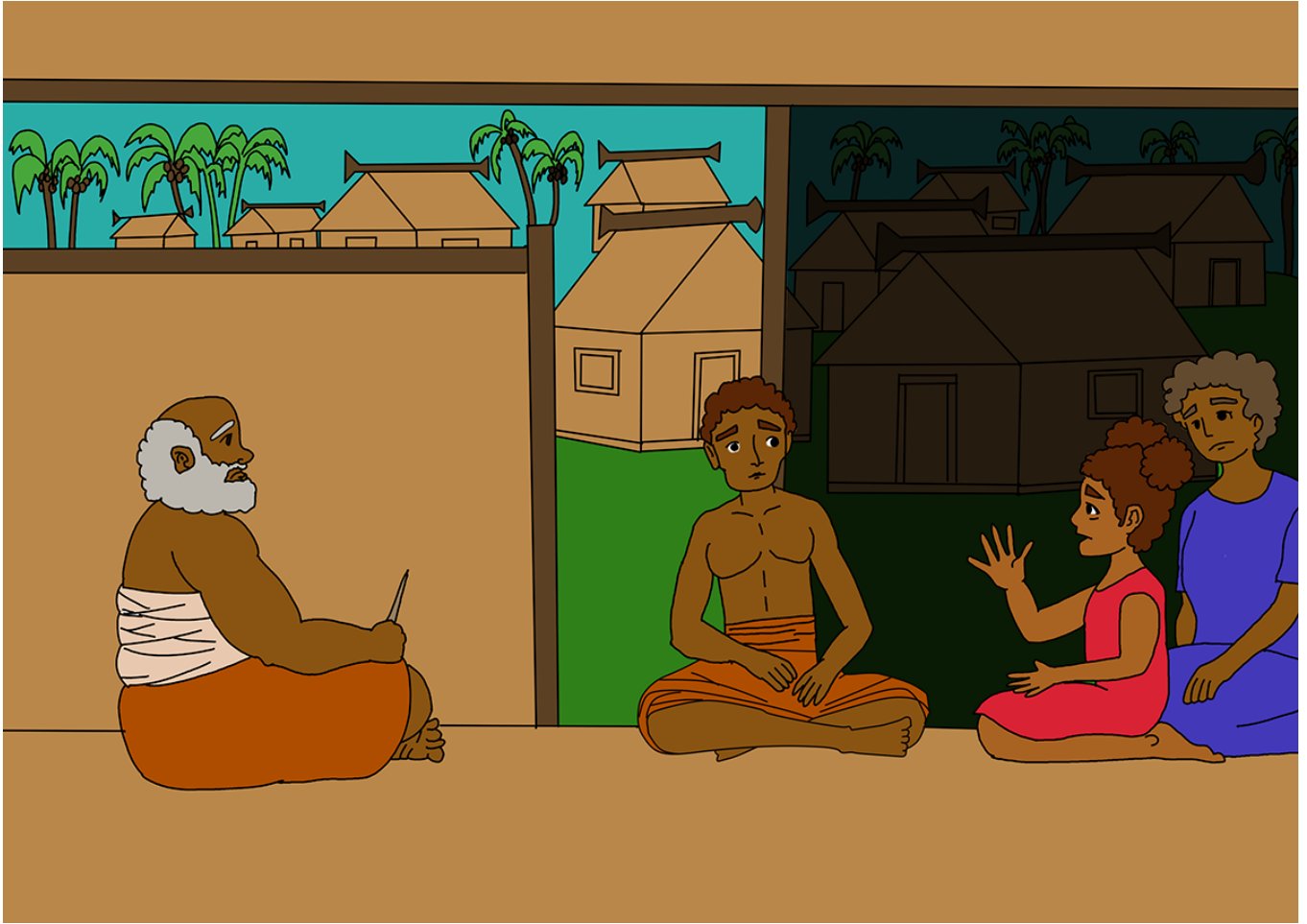
Kali was silenced by a sudden screech. “Then who will make the sand?” Hoki hoki cried. Hoki hoki knows that a parrotfish can make up to 2, 50 0k ilograms of sand a year. The sand comes from the corals they eat. Hoki hoki is afraid of what could happen without the parrotfish. There may be no seashore for Maria to walk on.



“Oh no, Hokihoki! No reef means no sand and no you,” Maria sobs.



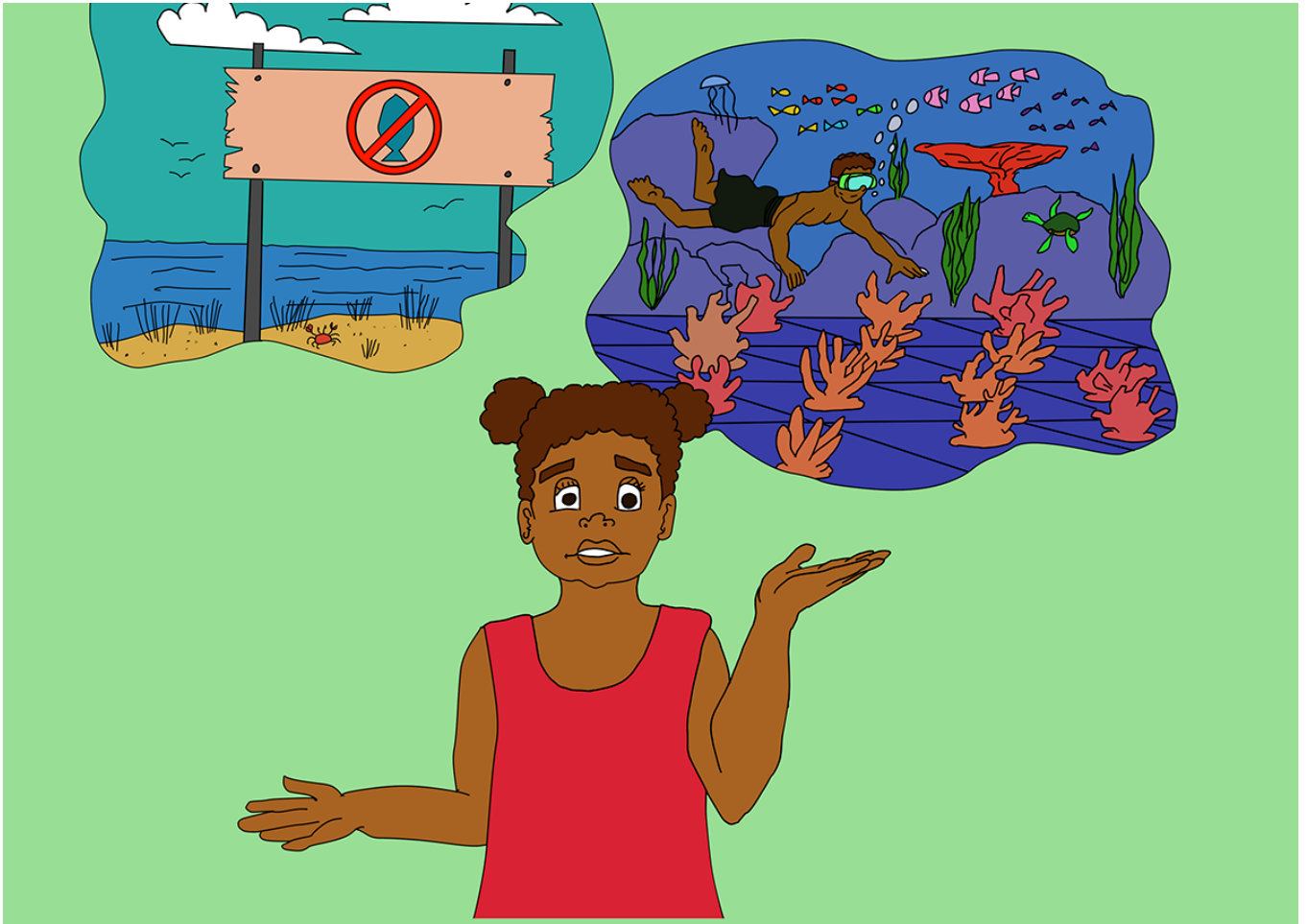
“We have to do something,” says Maria. Maria runs home as fast as her legs can carry her. “Mom! Mom!” she calls. “I might lose my friend Hokioki.”



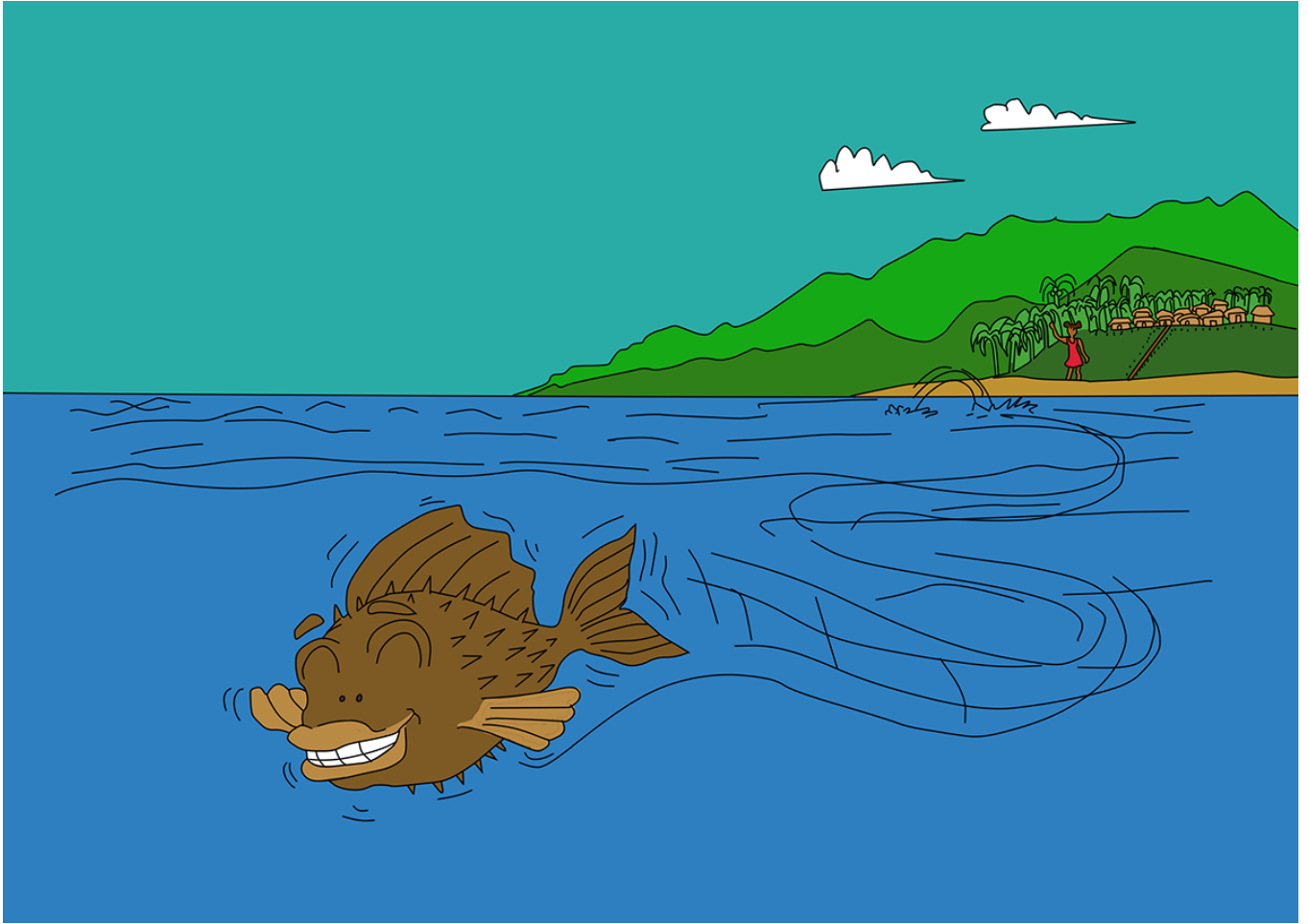
Mom holds Maria close until she calms down. “Let’s go talk to Dad and Grandpa,” Mom says finally. Maria repeats Hokihoki’s story about how the Great Reef is getting warmer. Dad and Grandpa listen quietly. As fishers, they have also seen some changes. They have needed to go to deeper waters for bigger fish.



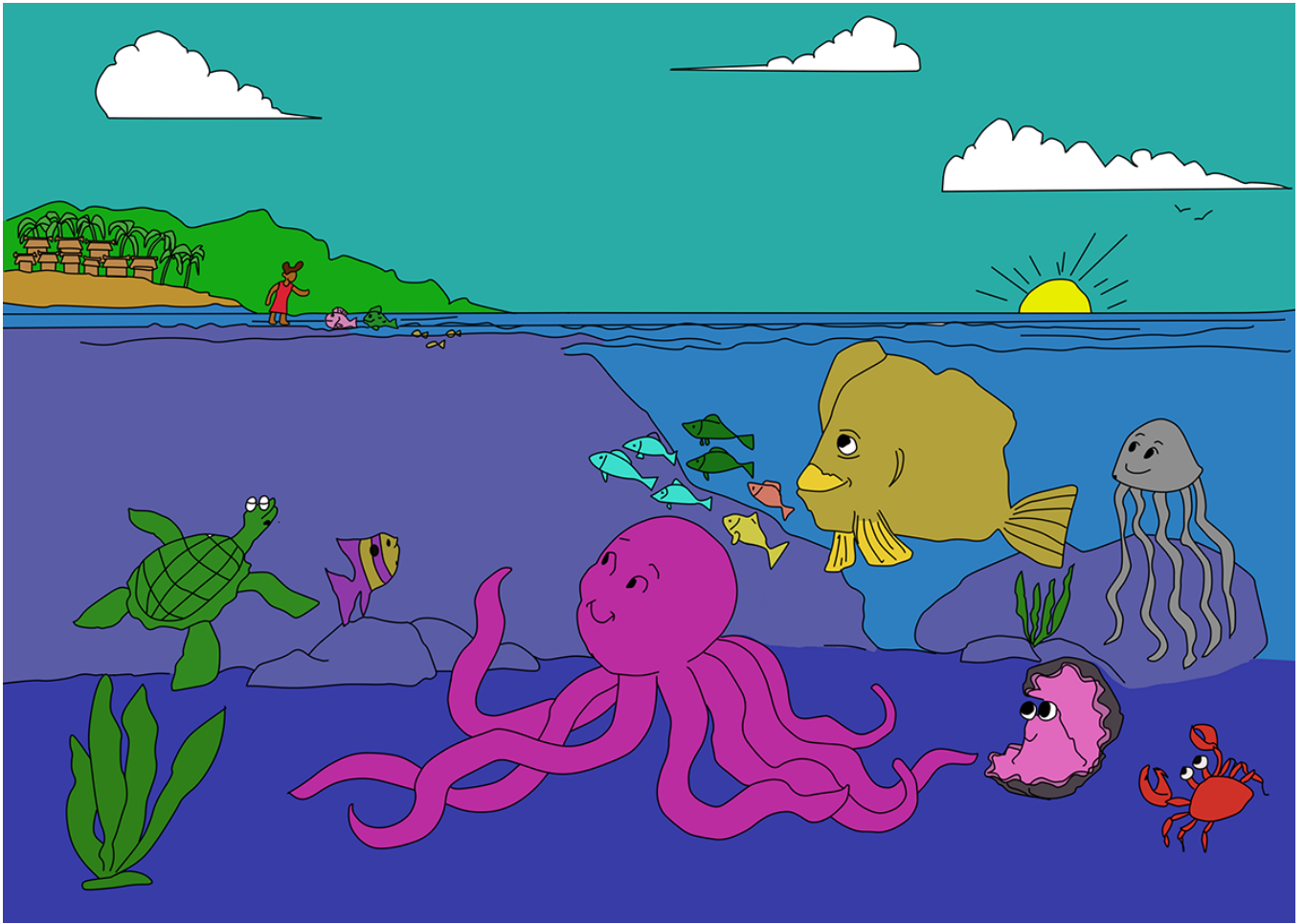
The next day, Grandpa calls a village meeting. The fishers explain what is happening under the sea. People want to help.



The next morning, the two seashore friends meet as usual. “Hokihoki.” “Hello, Maria.” “The families agreed to stop disturbing the Great Reef for one year, Hokihoki!” “Really, Maria? I hope it stops the reef from getting warmer,” Hokihoki says. “We don’t know if it will. But the Great Reef and all of you who live on it have one year now to heal,” Maria says. “We will plant new corals, the sort scientists say will beat the heat. Then we will wait.”



Maria is still talking when Hoki hoki starts swimming away. "I'm going to share the good news with the Reef Elders now!" he says. Hoki hoki swims faster than he has ever swum in his life.



A year later, the friends meet again on the shore. Hokioki now comes to see Maria with his three lively babies in tow. "Remember what it was like, the warming reef last year?" Maria asks Hokioki. He smiles to show how happy he is.



Our Changing Ocean When we use fuels such as coal or gas, another gas called carbon dioxide goes into the air, and some of this gas goes into our oceans. About 200 years of burning gas and coal has raised the amount of carbon dioxide in both the air and in the ocean. In the ocean, the additional carbon dioxide changes the environment for the plants and animals that live there. Sea creatures that have shells or skeletons, such as clams and corals, cannot harden. Coral grows more slowly. Other animals and plants cannot find food and die. People depend on the oceans for many things. For example, without healthy oceans people will not be able to fish. This causes people to lose out on a large food source. We must do more to protect our oceans.

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