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# Teachers' Notes

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## BLUE: DRAGON OF THE SEA

Aleesah Darlison / Tamlyn Teow

**ISBN:** 9781761112706

**Recommended retail:** \$26.99

**Reading level:** 4 to 8

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### BOOK SUMMARY

Meet Blue, a Dragon of the Sea! He's also known as a nudibranch or sea slug.

Blue's fleet roam the ocean, gliding on the currents, and dancing their way through dangerous adventures.

Join Blue and his fellow dragons as they explore the sea!

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## THEMES

Environment • Oceans & Sea Life • Nudibranchs • Science

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**Aleesah Darlison is available for author talks and workshops.  
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

*Blue: Dragon of the Sea Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Aleesah Darlison is an award-winning author, naturalist, and life-long learner. A keen observer of birds and animals, Aleesah enjoys sharing her passion and knowledge for the natural world and the environment. She has also made it her mission to champion the cause of children and loves writing stories that empower, educate, and inspire young readers to celebrate their uniqueness and their strengths.

Aleesah has written over sixty-five books for children including picture books, chapter books, novels, and series. She has won or been shortlisted for numerous awards including the Morning Calm Award (South Korea), the West Australian Young Readers' Book Awards (WAYBRA), the Book Excellence Awards, the Speech Pathology Book of the Year Awards, the Environment Award for Children's Literature, and the Children's Book Council Awards (CBCA). She has also been awarded an Australian Society of Authors Mentorship, received an Australia Day Award from the Sunshine Coast Council, and was nominated for the Queensland Writers Centre Johnno Award.

Her novels include *Grace the Amazing*, the *Super Sloth Series*, the *Space Kids Series*, the *League of Llamas Series*, the *Unicorn Riders Series*, the *Netball Gems Series*, and the *Little Witch Series*. Her picture books include the *Endangered Animal Tales Series*, *Warambi*, *Puggle's Problem*, *Fox & Moonbeam*, *The Dream Bird*, *Our Class Tiger*, *Stripes in the Forest: The Story of the Last Wild Thylacine*, and *Emerald: The Green Turtle's Tale*, *Clara Capybara*, and *Blue: Dragon of the Sea*.

### AUTHOR NOTE

I loved researching all about nudibranchs for this book! There are so many different types, colours, and sizes of nudibranchs, but none as striking as the blue glaucus. Where I live on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, they sometimes wash up on the beach. I'd always wondered what the pretty blue creatures were and how they got there, so I started reading lots of books and watching documentaries about them to find out more. That's when my passion for nudibranchs was ignited and I decided I simply had to write a book about them. Since then, I've continued to learn more about nudibranchs and even spoken to an expert about where and how to find them AND I've also been able to see some up close and touch a non-venomous nudibranch called a 'sea hare'. They are fascinating creatures and I hope you love nudibranchs as much as I do. The ocean holds many wonders and it's up to us to learn as much as we can about these special creatures so we can help preserve them and their precious environments.

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## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Tamlyn is a traditional and digital artist with a Singaporean heritage. In 2013, she left a corporate career to pursue storytelling through art. Tamlyn's passion is to create works that give hope in challenging times, encourage creative thinking and embrace curiosity. In 2017, she completed a Masters in Production Design at the Victorian College of the Arts. Since then, Tamlyn has worked in the art department for various films and TV productions, including *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart, Territory* (Netflix), *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*, *Shang-Chi* (Marvel Studios) and *Legomasters* (US). Other works include designing and art-finishing the David Jones Christmas Windows for MacGyver Models (Sydney 2017-2024) as well as freelance commissions. She has illustrated a number of picture books, including *My Pet Archie* and *The Other side of the Clouds* (2024-2025, Riveted Press), designed book covers and illustrated chapter books. *SoXiety* is her debut as an author/illustrator and is the first instalment for **The Book of Kin**, a collection of picture books for teens and adults.

### ILLUSTRATOR NOTE

The concepts for *Blue: Dragon of the Sea* were done prior to being offered a contract. Once things were signed off, I proceeded to create an archive of reference images, drafted a template for the book and then started on roughs. Humour is a good addition to the educating process as it keeps things light but the learners engaged, so I felt it would be fun to include funny/cheeky side characters throughout the book. After roughs were signed off on, I went on to do the final pencil sketches and line art. I cleaned the sketches up further digitally before printing the outlines on bristol paper. I then used a combination of coloured pencils, markers and watercolour to colour them in. These were then scanned and touched up/edited in Photoshop then sent to the design team to further edit and provide text. It was then sent to print.

I thoroughly enjoyed the research process as I adore nudibranchs (...or the ocean in general)! I think they're endlessly fascinating and the colours, patterns and quirks they have are wonderful. They make for such a fun illustration project and are every photographer/painter's dream! I learned a lot about the blue glaucus, blue bottle jellyfish and had a ton of fun collating an archive imagery of different nudibranch species. This book teaches the reader fun facts about the Blue dragon, so I hope it also becomes a springboard to spark further curiosity, interest and research. Beneath the surface lie themes of friendship, resilience in the face of adversity, cleverness, survival, and having the courage to be oneself. I couldn't be more thankful to have been given the opportunity to work on Blue and I hope readers young and old will enjoy it as much as I did. Thank you to Aleesah, Rochelle and Carmen for entrusting me with this gem of the sea!

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## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

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*Blue: Dragon of the Sea* is a vibrant, fact-filled picture book that introduces young readers to the strange and fascinating world of the blue glaucus—a real-life sea creature also known as a sea slug or sea dragon. Through engaging text by award-winning author Aleesah Darlison and expressive, humorous illustrations by Tamlyn Teow, the book invites curiosity about marine life while blending storytelling with scientific discovery. Teachers can use *Blue: Dragon of the Sea* to explore themes of biodiversity, ecosystems, adaptation, and the importance of environmental stewardship with primary school students.

At its heart, *Blue: Dragon of the Sea* celebrates the wonder of nature and the diversity of life beneath the waves. It encourages children to look closely at the natural world and challenges them to see value in even the smallest or strangest creatures. The story of Blue, a tiny but powerful ocean predator, opens the door to rich discussions about how every organism plays a role in its ecosystem, reinforcing early understandings of food chains, habitats, and interdependence in nature.

The book also supports scientific thinking and inquiry-based learning. Through fascinating facts woven into an engaging narrative, students are introduced to real-world biological concepts such as camouflage, predator-prey relationships, and anatomical adaptations. The text's fun and accessible style helps demystify complex ideas, making it ideal for encouraging curiosity and developing early research skills.

In addition, *Blue: Dragon of the Sea* nurtures environmental awareness and respect for marine ecosystems. Blue's story naturally sparks conversations about the health of our oceans, the impact of pollution, and the importance of conservation. These themes align with sustainability priorities in the curriculum and can lead to meaningful action-based learning projects around caring for the planet.

The book's lively language and striking visuals also make it an excellent resource for developing foundational literacy skills. With its clear structure, rich vocabulary, and informative tone, it provides opportunities to explore nonfiction text features, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension strategies. Students can practice making predictions, asking questions, and connecting new information to what they already know.

With its engaging blend of science, storytelling, and environmental education, *Blue: Dragon of the Sea* is a valuable addition to cross-curricular teaching in primary classrooms. It offers a springboard into units on oceans, animal adaptations, creative expression, and environmental care—while fostering awe, curiosity, and a deeper understanding of the natural world.

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

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### YEAR ONE

#### English, Humanities and Social Science, Science

**AC9E1LE02** - discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences

**AC9E1LY02** - use interaction skills including turn-taking, speaking clearly, using active listening behaviours and responding to the contributions of others, and contributing ideas and questions

**AC9E1LA07** - understand that words can represent people, places and things (nouns, including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs)

**ACELT1584** - discuss features of plot, character and setting in different types of literature and explore some features of characters in different texts

**AC9E1LA03** - explore how texts are organised according to their purpose, such as to recount, narrate, express opinion, inform, report and explain

**AC9E1LY11** - use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant blends and digraphs to write words, and blend these to read one- and two-syllable words

**AC9E1LY05** - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning when listening, viewing and reading to build literal and inferred meaning by drawing on vocabulary and growing knowledge of context and text structures

**AC9E1LA10** - understand that written language uses punctuation such as full stops, question marks and exclamation marks, and uses capital letters for familiar proper nouns

**AC9E1LE01** - discuss how language and images are used to create characters, settings and events in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

**AC9E1LA09** - recognise the vocabulary of learning area topics

**AC9HS1S04** - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

**AC9E1LE05** - orally retell or adapt a familiar story using plot and characters, language features including vocabulary, and structure of a familiar text, through role-play, writing, drawing or digital tools

**AC9S1U01** - identify the basic needs of plants and animals, including air, water, food or shelter, and describe how the places they live meet those needs

**AC9S1H01** - describe how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions

### YEAR TWO

#### English, Humanities and Social Science, Science

**AC9E2LA01** - investigate how interpersonal language choices vary depending on the context, including the different roles taken on in interactions

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**AC9E2LA03** - identify how texts across the curriculum are organised differently and use language features depending on purposes

**AC9E2LE05** - create and edit literary texts by adapting structures and language features of familiar literary texts through drawing, writing, performance and digital tools

**AC9E2LA02** - explore how language can be used for appreciating texts and providing reasons for preferences

**AC9E2LE03** - discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways

**AC9E2LY01** - identify how similar topics and information are presented in different types of texts

**AC9HS2S04** - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

**AC9S2H01** - describe how people use science in their daily lives, including using patterns to make scientific predictions

## YEAR THREE

### English, Humanities and Social Sciences, Science

**AC9E3LE01** - discuss characters, events and settings in different contexts in literature by First Nations Australians, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

**AC9E3LY02** - use interaction skills to contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas

**AC9E3LE02** - discuss connections between personal experiences and character experiences in literary texts and share personal preferences

**AC9HS3S07** - present descriptions and explanations, using ideas from sources and relevant subject-specific terms

**AC9HS3S05** - draw conclusions based on analysis of information

**AC9S3U01** - compare characteristics of living and non-living things and examine the differences between the life cycles of plants and animals

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## TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

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This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 6 primary aged children. Some activities may be applicable to early secondary school students.

## KNOWLEDGE AND LITERAL UNDERSTANDING

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### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Show the cover to the class and ask the students what they think the book might be about.
2. What kind of creature do you think 'Blue' is? Why might it be called a 'dragon of the sea'?
3. Ask the students what environments we might see in the book.
4. Have you heard of nudibranchs before?
5. What do you already know about sea slugs or ocean animals?
6. What do you think life might be like in the open ocean?
7. What kind of challenges do you think a creature like Blue might face in its environment?

### AFTER-READING QUESTIONS

1. What was Blue doing at the beginning of the story?
2. What does Blue want?
3. What are some of Blue's most interesting or surprising features?
4. What makes Blue a predator, and how does it protect itself?
5. What dangers or challenges does Blue face in the ocean?
6. How do Blue's adaptations help it survive?
7. What did you learn about the ocean or sea creatures that you didn't know before?
8. What was your favourite part of the story, and why?
9. What does this story make you curious to learn more about?
10. If you could ask Blue one question, what would it be?
11. Can you find the different names that Blue's species is given in the book?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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### GENERAL

- What makes *Blue: Dragon of the Sea* different from other animal books you've read?
- What did you find the most surprising or interesting about the blue glaucus?
- How do the illustrations help you understand or enjoy the story?
- Why do you think the author chose to write about a sea slug?
- What are some of the unique features of the blue glaucus mentioned in the book?
- How does the blue glaucus protect itself in the ocean?
- What does the blue glaucus eat, and why is that surprising?
- Why do you think the author chose the title *Blue: Dragon of the Sea*?
- What did you learn about nudibranchs that you didn't know before?
- What tone or feeling does the author use to describe the blue glaucus – is it serious, funny, curious, or something else?
- What do you think the author wants readers to feel or do after reading this book?
- If you could ask the author or illustrator one question, what would it be?
- List the ways Blue can camouflage in the ocean.

### ENVIRONMENT

- Why is it important to learn about creatures like the blue glaucus?
- How do you think humans affect the habitats of animals like sea slugs?
- What could happen to ocean life if the environment changes or becomes polluted?
- What message do you think the author is sending about caring for the sea?
- How can young people help protect ocean ecosystems?
- Where do you think all the rubbish in the ocean comes from?
- What can we do to reduce rubbish in the ocean?
- What impact does the storm have on Blue?
- How do you think storms might impact other ocean creatures?

### OCEANS & SEA LIFE

- What are some other animals that live in the same habitat as the blue glaucus?
- How does the blue glaucus stay safe in the ocean?
- What is a Portuguese man-o-war, and why is it important in the blue glaucus's diet? What does it tell us about the food web in the ocean?

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- Why do you think the ocean is home to such unique and strange creatures?
  - How does the blue glaucus's coloring help it survive in the sea?
  - What role does the blue glaucus play in the ocean ecosystem?
  - How might the ecosystem change if nudibranchs like the blue glaucus disappeared?
  - Why is it important to protect all creatures in an ecosystem, even the small or strange ones like nudibranchs?
  - How do predators like the blue glaucus help keep balance in the ocean?

## NUDIBRANCHS

- What is a nudibranch, and what makes them special?
- What are some of the cool or unusual features of the blue glaucus?
- How are nudibranchs different from other sea creatures or slugs?
- How many nudibranch species are there, and why do you think they are so varied?
- What might it be like to watch a 'fleet' of blue glaucus drifting through the water?

## SCIENCE

- How does the blue glaucus float without using fins or flippers?
- What does it mean that the blue glaucus has both male and female parts?
- How does the blue glaucus use the venom it stores from its prey?
- What scientific words or facts did you learn from the book?
- How could you find out more about nudibranchs or other ocean creatures after reading the book?
- Research on the internet to find other types of nudibranchs. Choose a type of nudibranch that's your favourite. Why is this your favourite? Share and discuss within a small group.
- How does the blue glaucus contribute to biodiversity in the ocean?
- In what ways might studying nudibranchs help scientists understand the health of marine ecosystems?
- What adaptations help the blue glaucus survive in its environment, and why are those important for its role in the ecosystem?
- How does storing venom from its prey help the blue glaucus survive, and what does this tell us about survival strategies in nature?
- Why is it important for scientists to study small, lesser-known creatures like nudibranchs when looking at ocean ecosystems?
- What does camouflage mean and why is it important for some animals to be able to do it?
- Do you know other animals that camouflage? List some and describe how they do it.

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## ACTIVITIES

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### CHARACTER PROFILE: 'ALL ABOUT BLUE'

Students create a character profile for Blue, including:

- What Blue looks like
- Where Blue lives
- What Blue eats
- Cool facts (e.g. floats with air bubbles, stores venom)
- Draw a picture of Blue

Alternatively, draw a diagram of a blue glaucus and colour it in. Name the different parts of the nudibranch and draw arrows to those parts.

### 'I WONDER...' CHART

Before reading, students write 3 things they wonder about sea dragons or the ocean. After reading, they check if their questions were answered and add 2 new facts they learned.

### RETELL WITH STORY STONES OR STICK PUPPETS

Students retell the story using painted stones or simple paper puppets of Blue, other sea creatures, and ocean elements.

### FACT VS FICTION SORT

Create cards with factual information (e.g., 'Blue glaucus stores venom') and fictional or silly ideas (e.g., 'Blue can ride a dolphin'). Students sort them into two piles: *Real* and *Made Up*.

### DESIGN A NUDIBRANCH

After learning about the diversity of nudibranchs, students design their own imaginary nudibranch. They label its features and describe how it survives.

### UNDER THE SEA DIORAMA

Using shoeboxes, students create a 3D underwater scene including the blue glaucus, Portuguese man-o-war, and other sea creatures.

### SEA CREATURE MOVEMENT GAME

Students act out how different sea creatures move—jellyfish pulse, Blue drifts with the current, sharks swim fast, crabs scuttle, etc.

### SEA CREATURE MOVEMENT GAME

Do you have a favourite type of ocean creature? Create a short presentation about it and share with the class.

**Further resources can always be found on our website.**

# Design your own nudibranch!

Hundreds of weird and wonderful nudibranchs live in the oceans all over the world! They come in all sorts of shapes, colours and sizes.

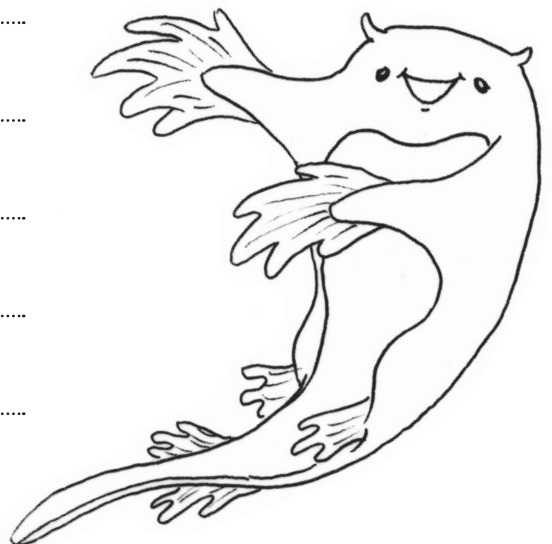
Look up your favourite one, or design your very own nudibranch.

List some of the unique traits your nudibranch has,  
then compare it with your friends.

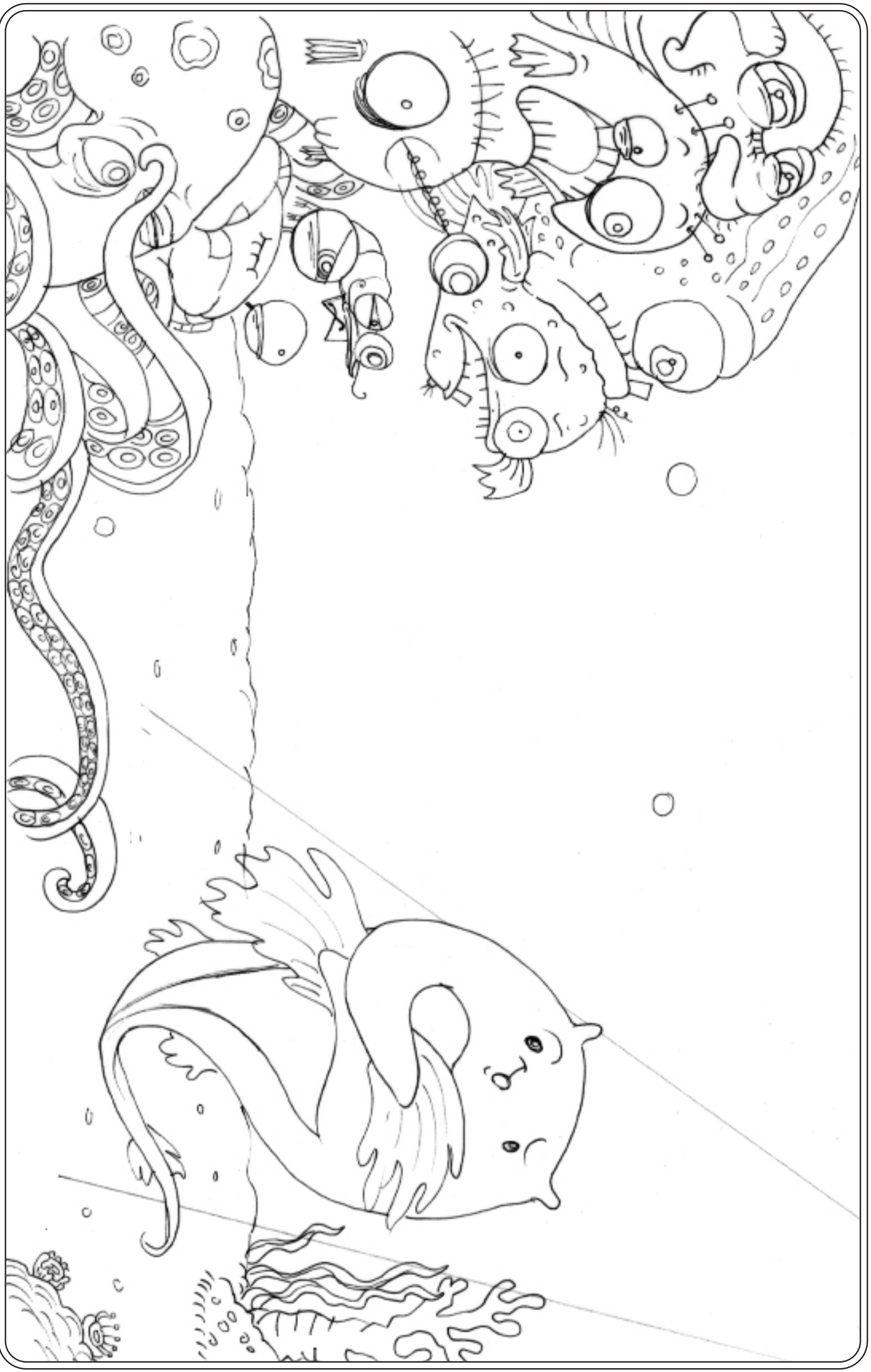
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Special Traits:

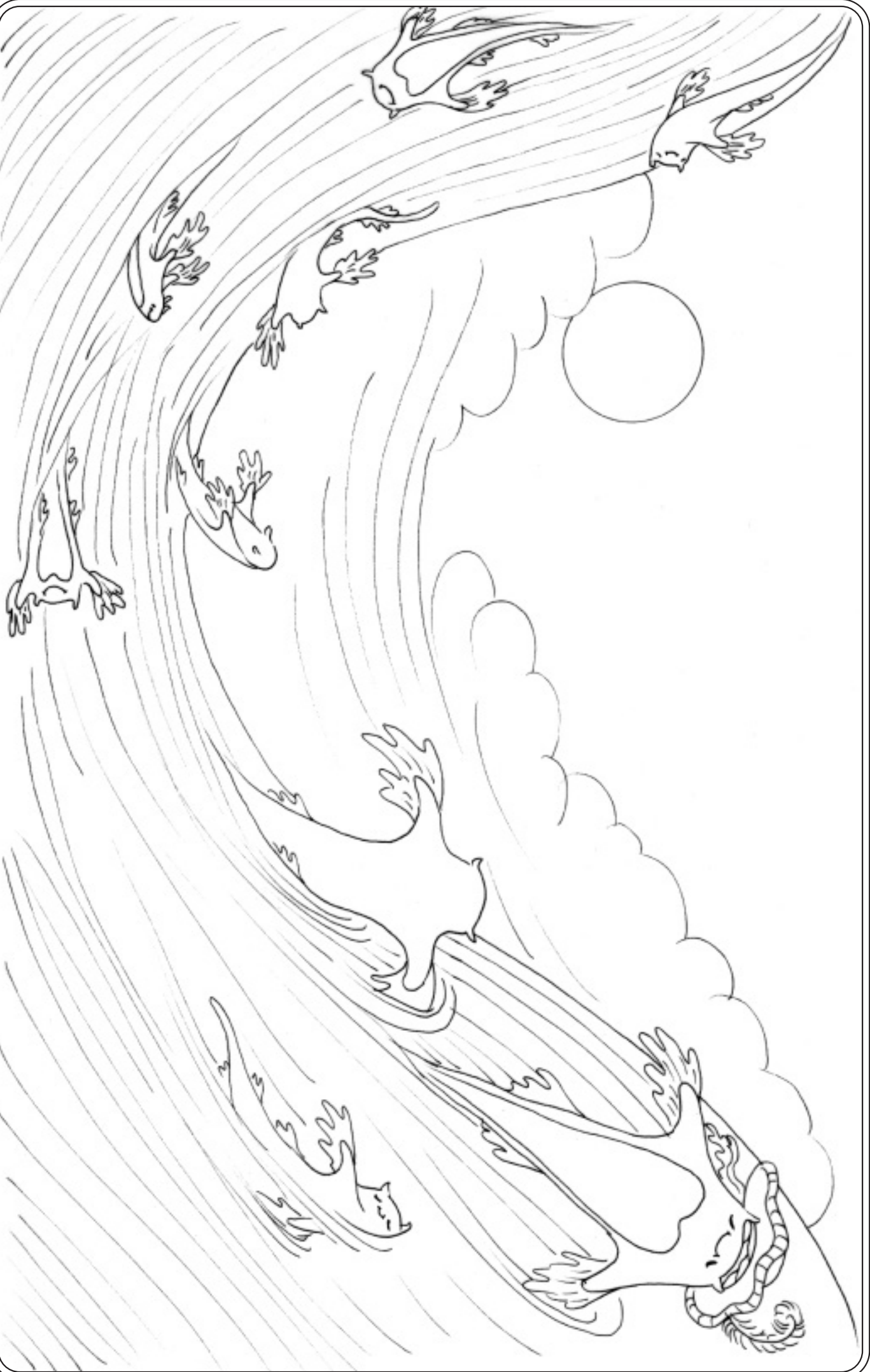
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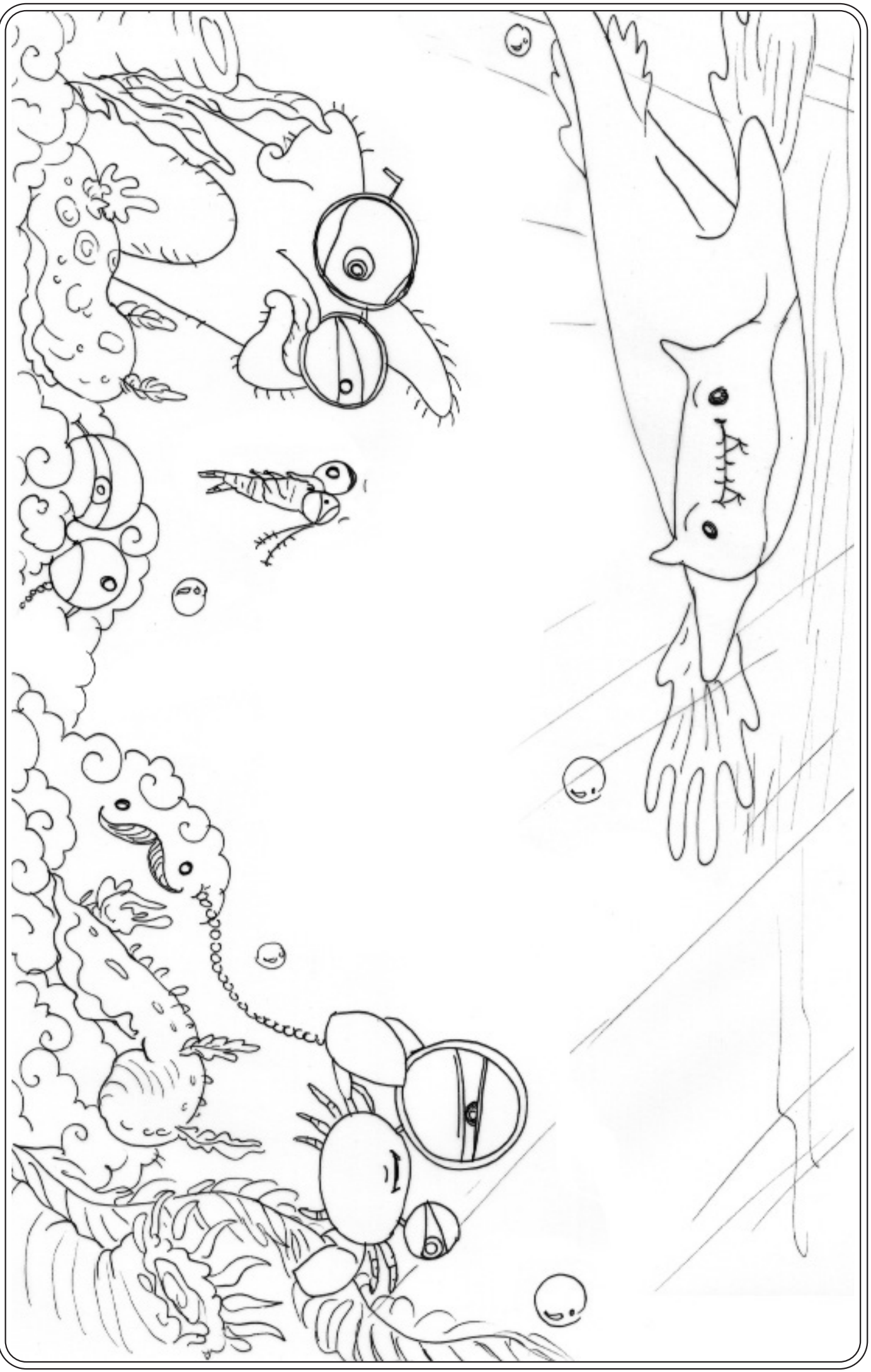






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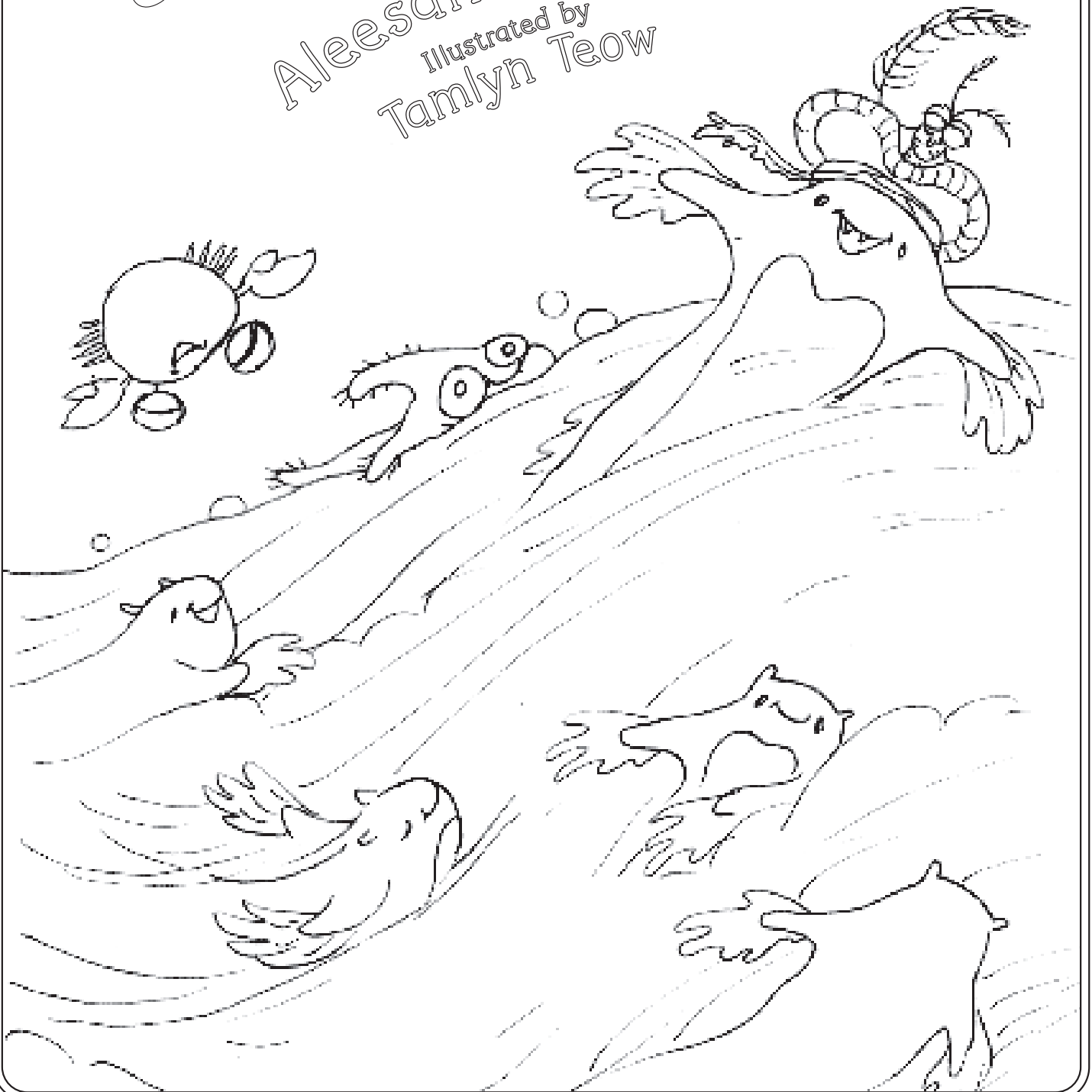
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# Blue

## Dragon of the Sea



Aleesah Darlison  
Illustrated by  
Tamlyn Teow



# Blue Dragon of the Sea

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