

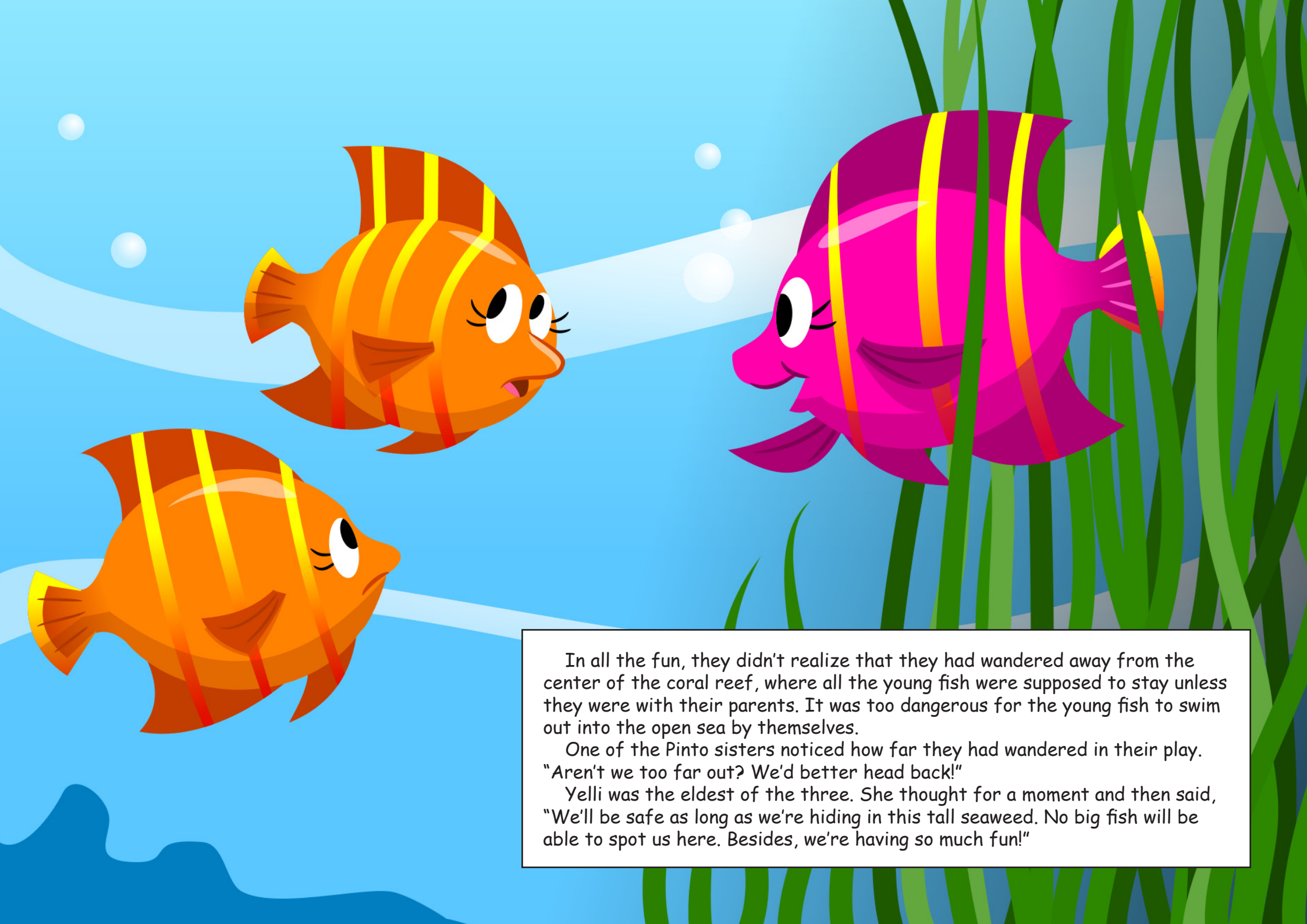
Yelli's Important Lesson



A happy family of angelfish lived in the sea by a large and colorful coral reef. There was Papa, Mama, Yelli, and her brother Ben.

As a family their days were busy, finding food and watching out for big fish and dangerous sea creatures. But there was also plenty of time for Yelli and Benny to play and swim with their friends.

One day, Yelli was playing hide-and-seek with two of her young angelfish friends from the Pinto family. The three angelfish were swimming in and out of the coral reef, hiding behind tall green stalks of seaweed and trying to surprise the others.



In all the fun, they didn't realize that they had wandered away from the center of the coral reef, where all the young fish were supposed to stay unless they were with their parents. It was too dangerous for the young fish to swim out into the open sea by themselves.

One of the Pinto sisters noticed how far they had wandered in their play. "Aren't we too far out? We'd better head back!"

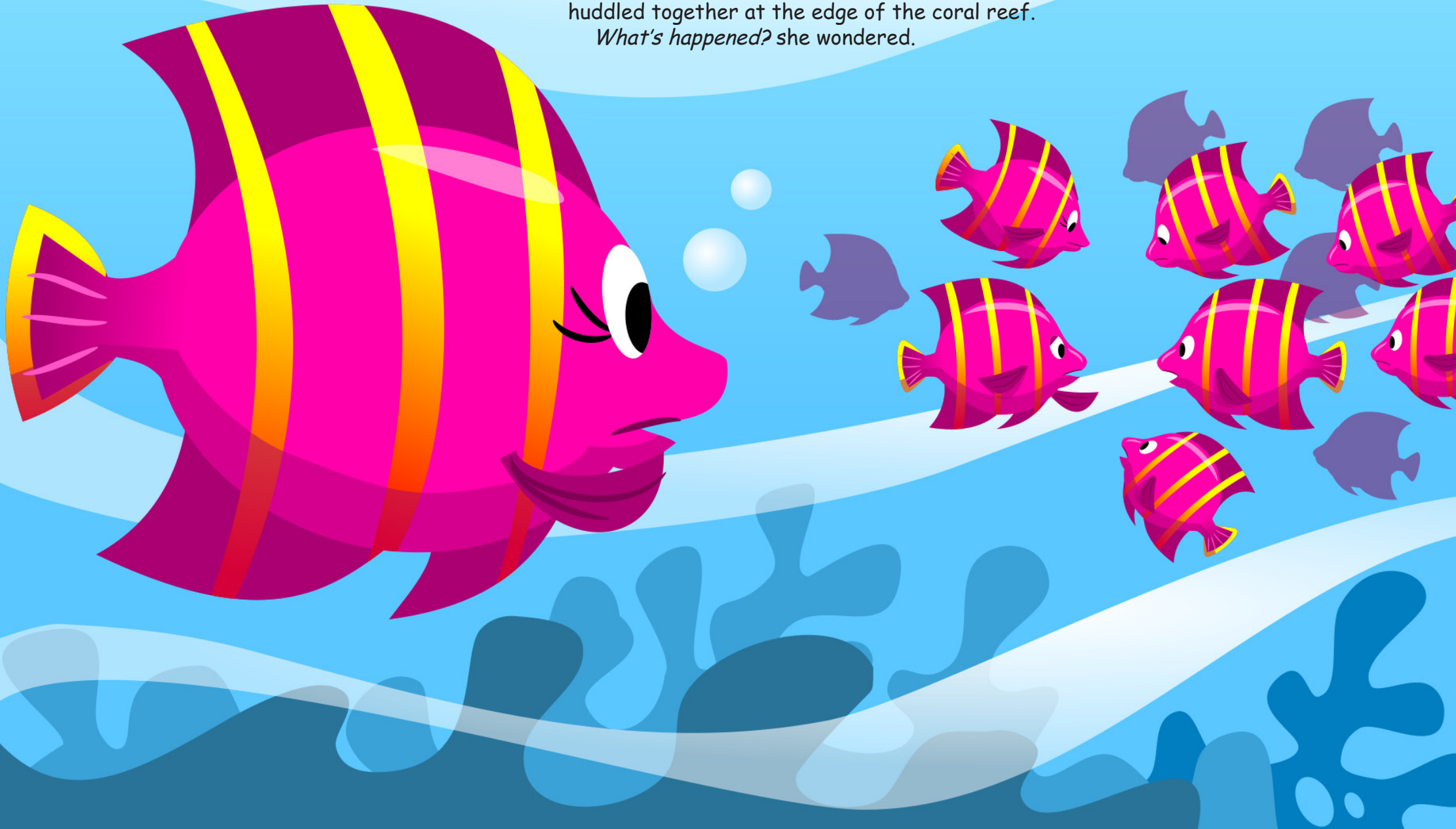
Yelli was the eldest of the three. She thought for a moment and then said, "We'll be safe as long as we're hiding in this tall seaweed. No big fish will be able to spot us here. Besides, we're having so much fun!"

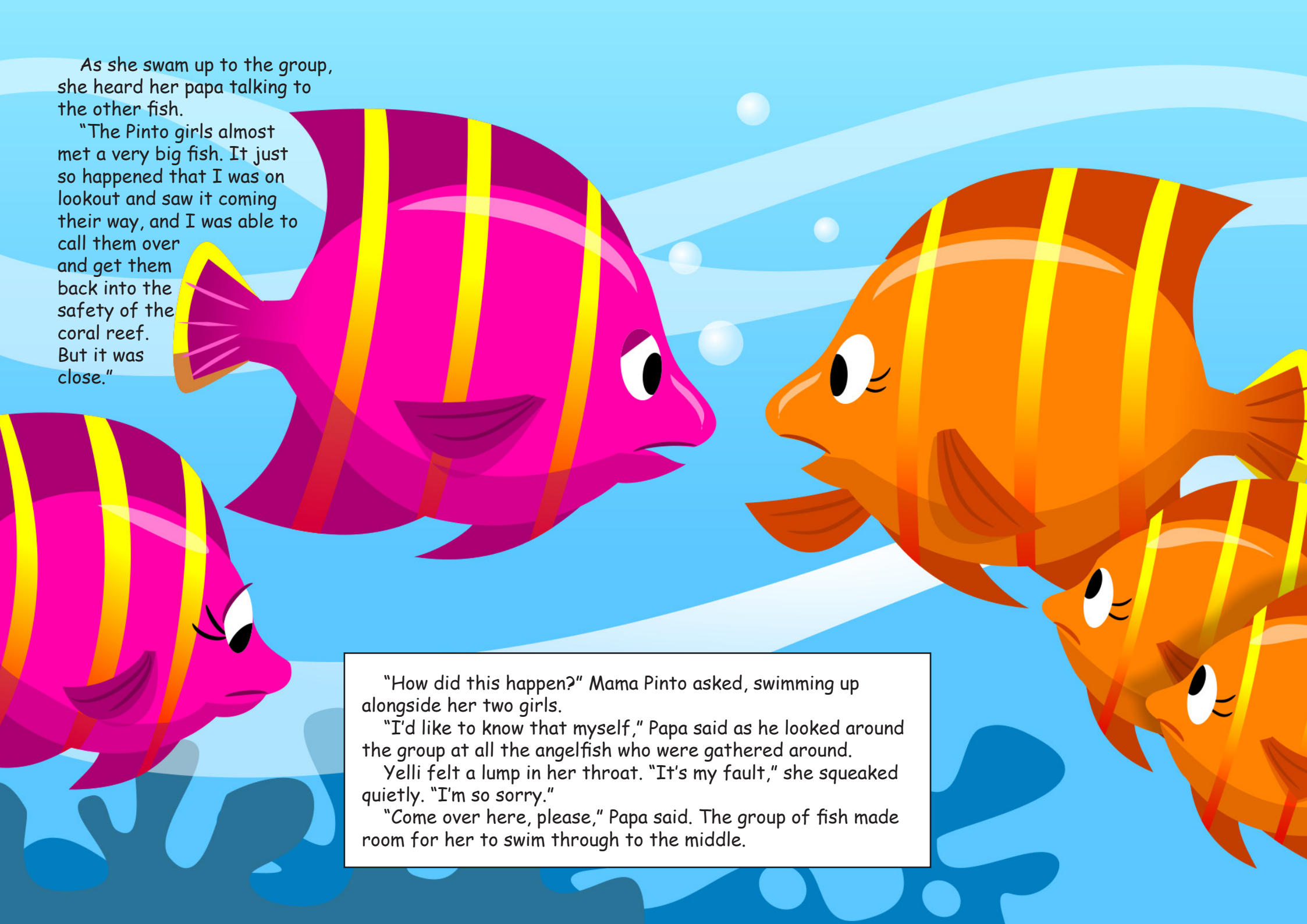
The two younger friends weren't sure about this, but since Yelli was the eldest, they decided to listen to her, and they all kept playing.

Soon they began to get hungry, so they headed for their homes. Yelli wondered if Papa or Mama would realize that she had gone to play further away than she had permission to, but when she got home to her parents, they didn't ask.

The next day, when she swam out into the open, she saw a large group of fish huddled together at the edge of the coral reef.

What's happened? she wondered.





As she swam up to the group, she heard her papa talking to the other fish.

"The Pinto girls almost met a very big fish. It just so happened that I was on lookout and saw it coming their way, and I was able to call them over and get them back into the safety of the coral reef. But it was close."

"How did this happen?" Mama Pinto asked, swimming up alongside her two girls.

"I'd like to know that myself," Papa said as he looked around the group at all the angelfish who were gathered around.

Yelli felt a lump in her throat. "It's my fault," she squeaked quietly. "I'm so sorry."

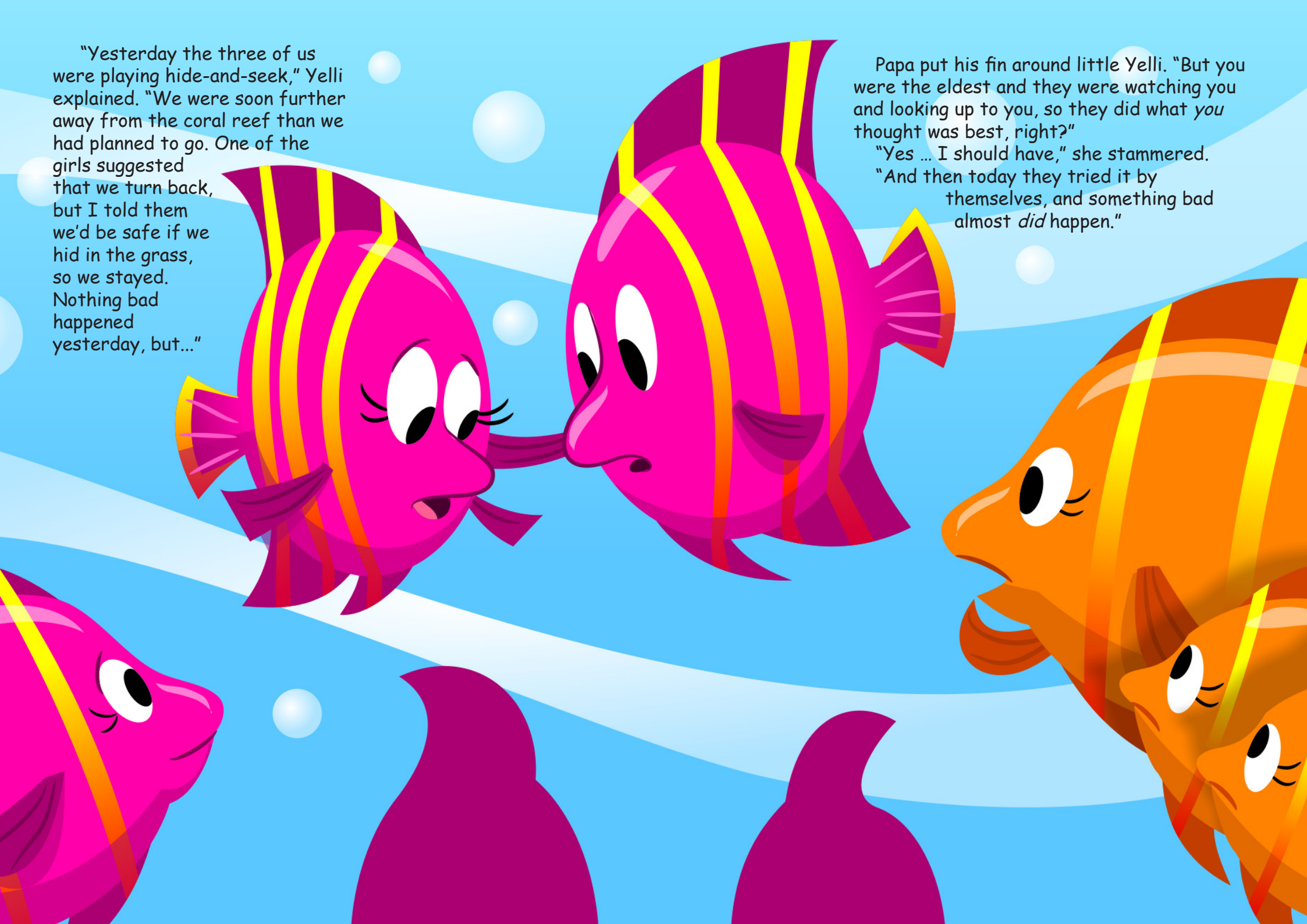
"Come over here, please," Papa said. The group of fish made room for her to swim through to the middle.

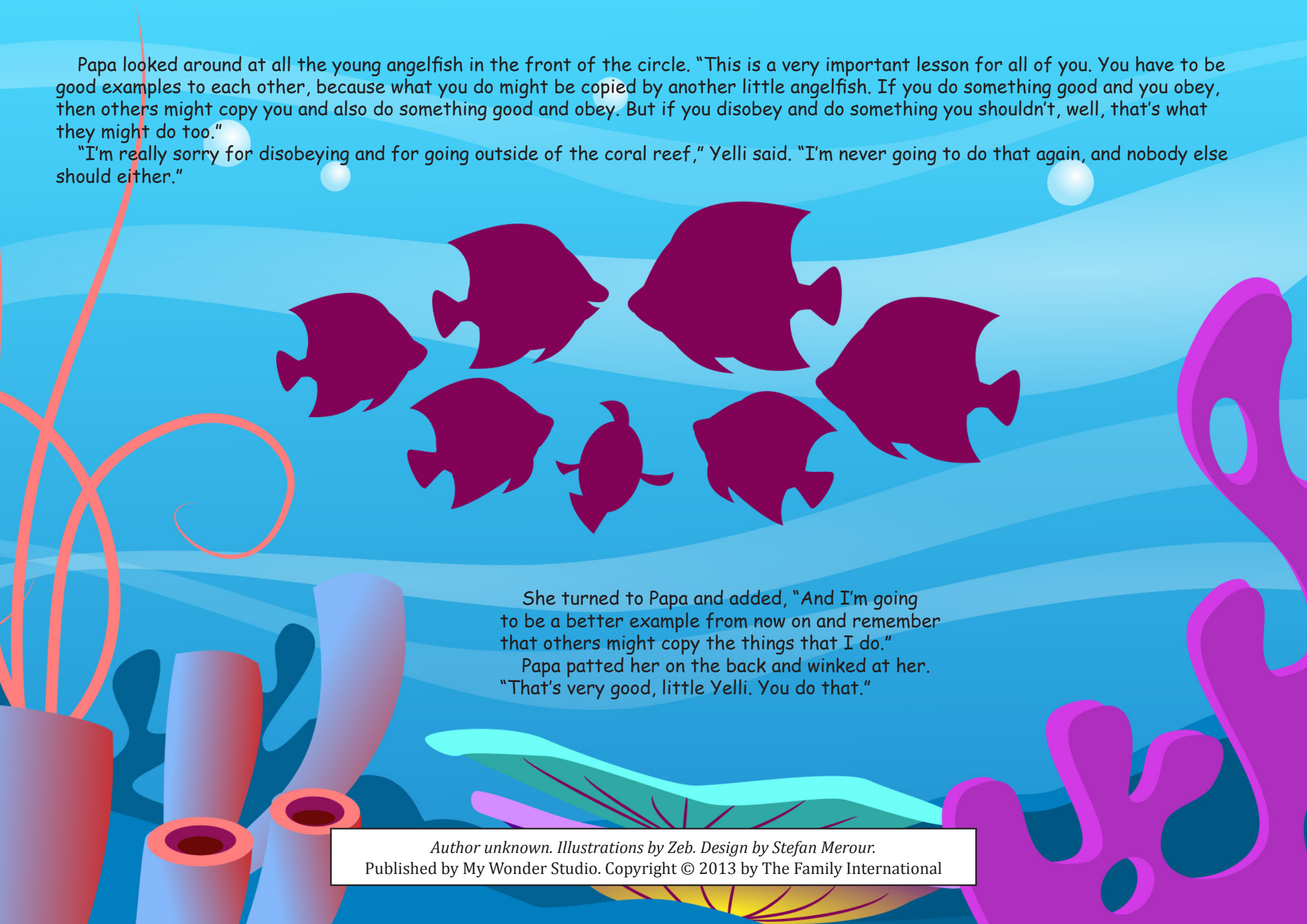
"Yesterday the three of us were playing hide-and-seek," Yelli explained. "We were soon further away from the coral reef than we had planned to go. One of the girls suggested that we turn back, but I told them we'd be safe if we hid in the grass, so we stayed. Nothing bad happened yesterday, but..."

Papa put his fin around little Yelli. "But you were the eldest and they were watching you and looking up to you, so they did what *you* thought was best, right?"

"Yes ... I should have," she stammered.

"And then today they tried it by themselves, and something bad almost *did* happen."





Papa looked around at all the young angelfish in the front of the circle. "This is a very important lesson for all of you. You have to be good examples to each other, because what you do might be copied by another little angelfish. If you do something good and you obey, then others might copy you and also do something good and obey. But if you disobey and do something you shouldn't, well, that's what they might do too."

"I'm really sorry for disobeying and for going outside of the coral reef," Yelli said. "I'm never going to do that again, and nobody else should either."

She turned to Papa and added, "And I'm going to be a better example from now on and remember that others might copy the things that I do."

Papa patted her on the back and winked at her. "That's very good, little Yelli. You do that."