

*Thalia was so excited for her first day of
school.*

She could not wait to make new friends.



At recess, the other girls talked about the princesses they wanted to be.

“I want to be Cinderella!” Thalia said.



“You don’t even look like Cinderella!” One of them yelled, “You would be a better Pocahontas or something.”

The girls around her laughed.



When Thalia got home, her father knew something was wrong. When she told him what happened at recess, he decided that they should take a trip.

“Come along, Thalia, and pack your things,” he said, “I am going to take you somewhere.”

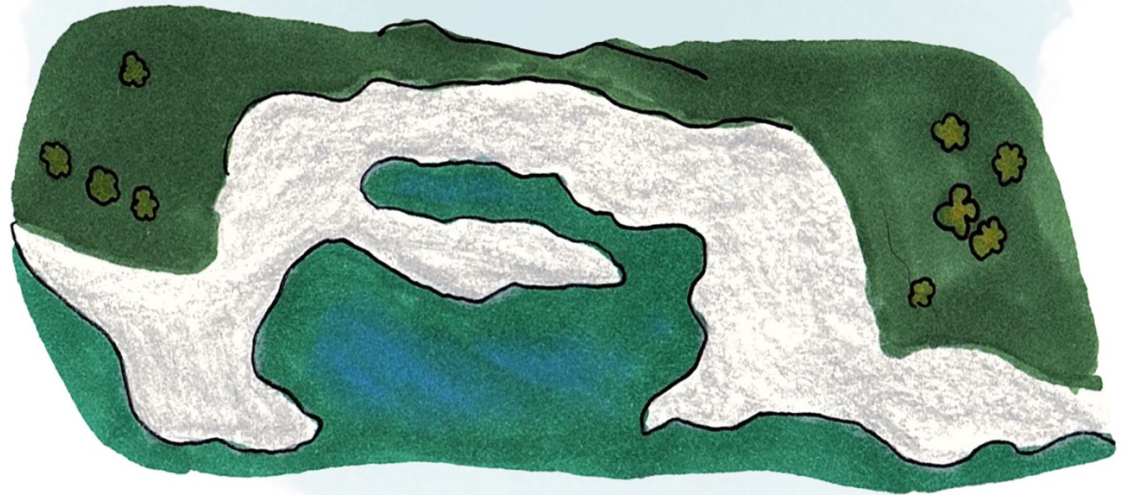


*Thalia packed her things and off they went.
When they arrived at a small marina, Thalia
was overwhelmed with the feeling of the wind
in her hair and the salty air on her skin.*

*Climb in Thalia, we're not there yet!" he says
as he hops into a boat.*



Their destination was a small island. Thalia could see small tide pools as they got closer.



She ran toward the small pools and began to search them.

There were so many more creatures than she had imagined!

It was amazing!



“Thalia, I want you to bring me as many shells as you can, okay?” her father asks.

Thalia nods and starts to put all the shells she sees in a big blue bucket.



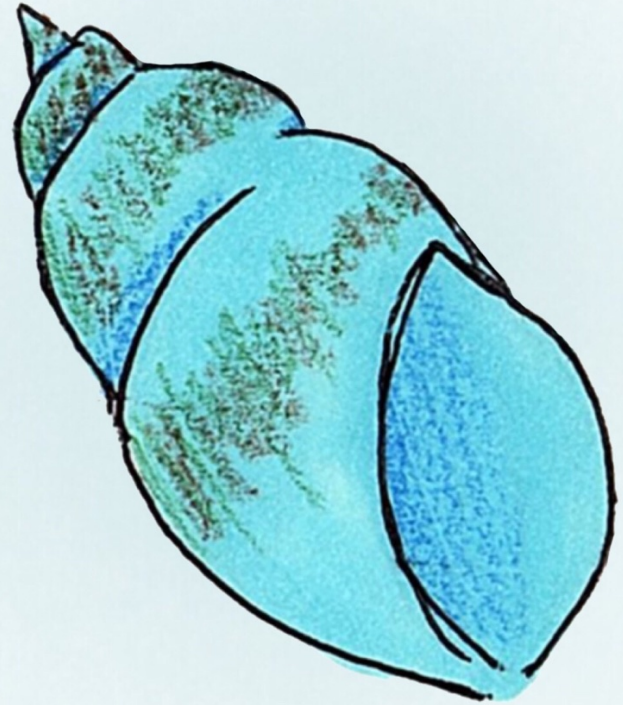
When Thalia was finished, she took the bucket over to her father with a smile.

“Good job, Thalia! I’m so proud of you, sweetheart,” her father says as he looks through the bucket.

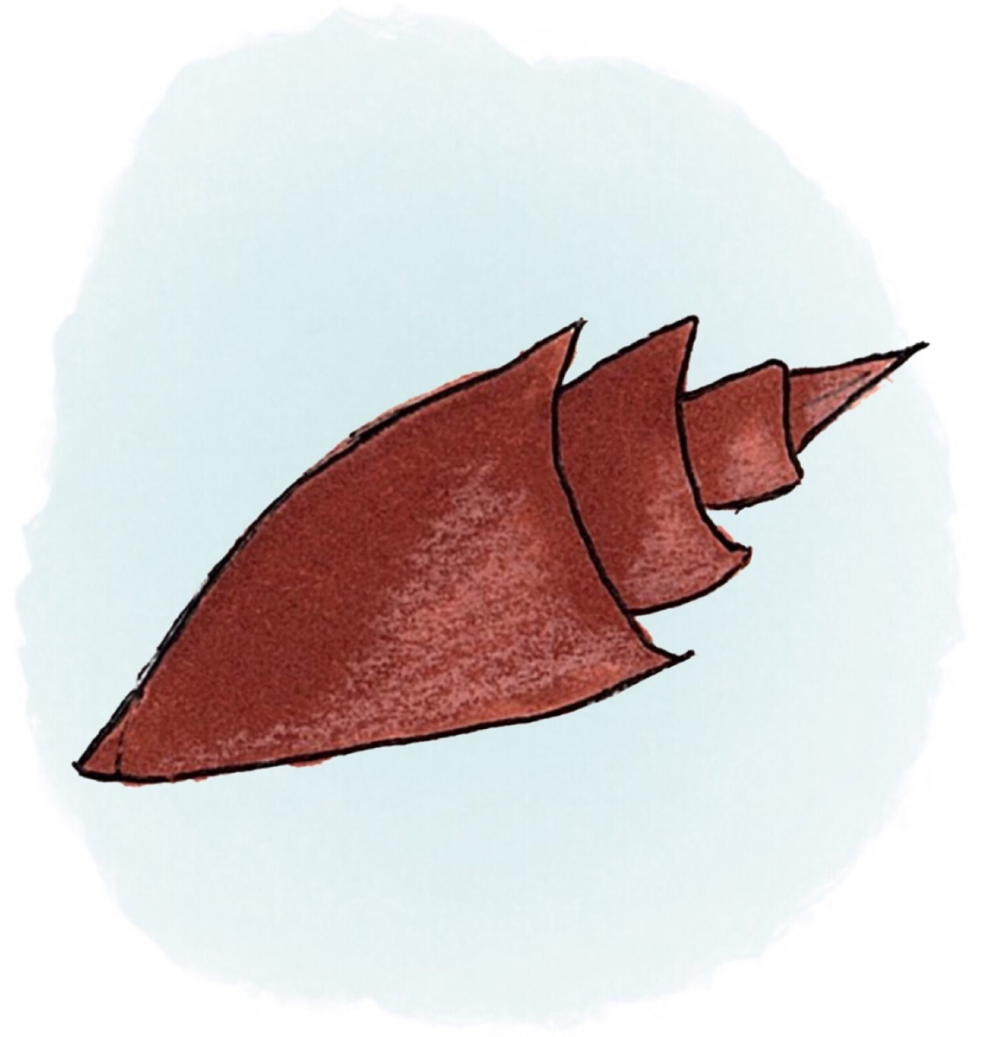


Her father picks up a blue shell and hands it to her.

“Do you know what this is?” he asks. When Thalia shakes her head he continues, “it’s a hermit crab.”



*“And this one? This one is a hermit crab
too,” he says.*



“I want you to look inside all the shells in your bucket and tell me what you see,” he tells her.

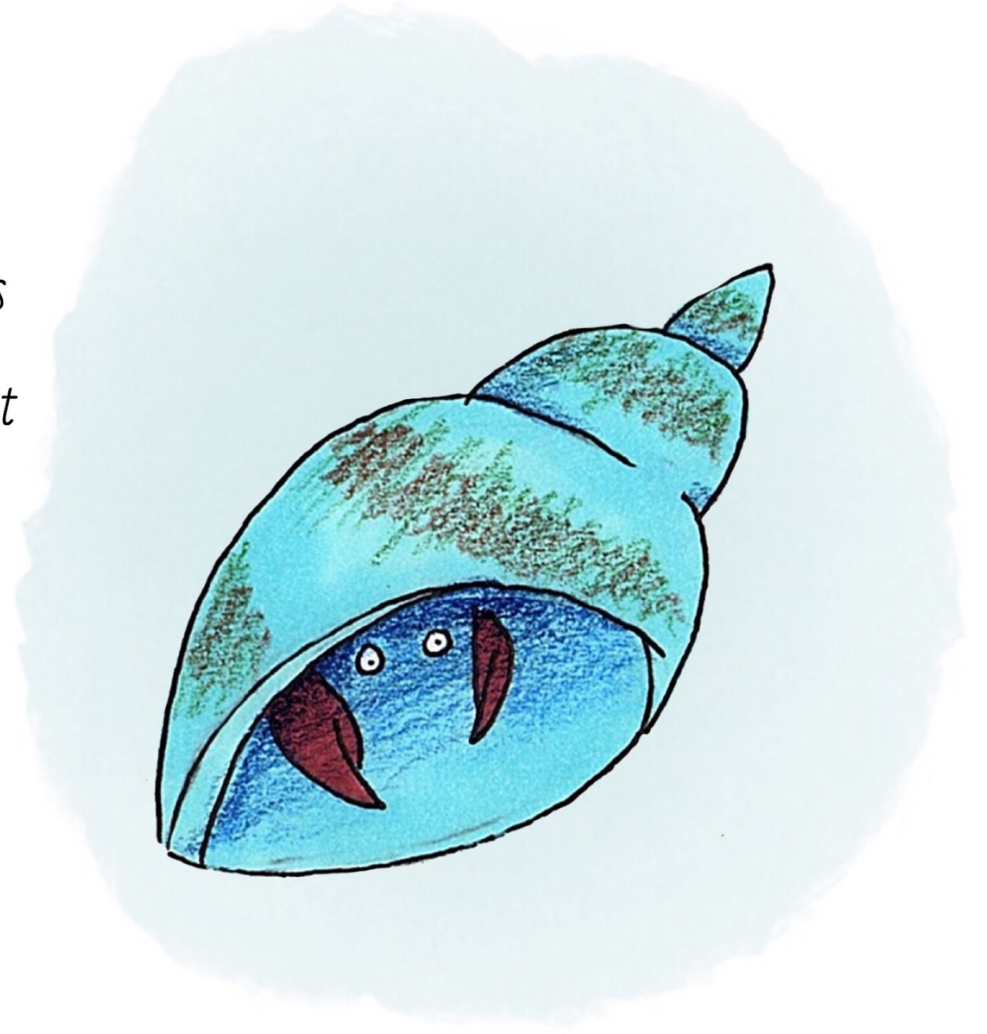


He takes out six more shells, each of different colors and shapes, and sets them on a picnic table.

“These are all hermit crabs,” he says.



*Thalia peeks inside every hermit crab and sees
the same small face and claws staring back at
her.*



“But they are all the same,” Thalia says.

“Of course they are! Each one has a different shell but on the inside they are all the same little creature!” Her father exclaims.



“Don’t ever let anyone tell you that you cannot do something because of what you look like. We are all the same on the inside.”

