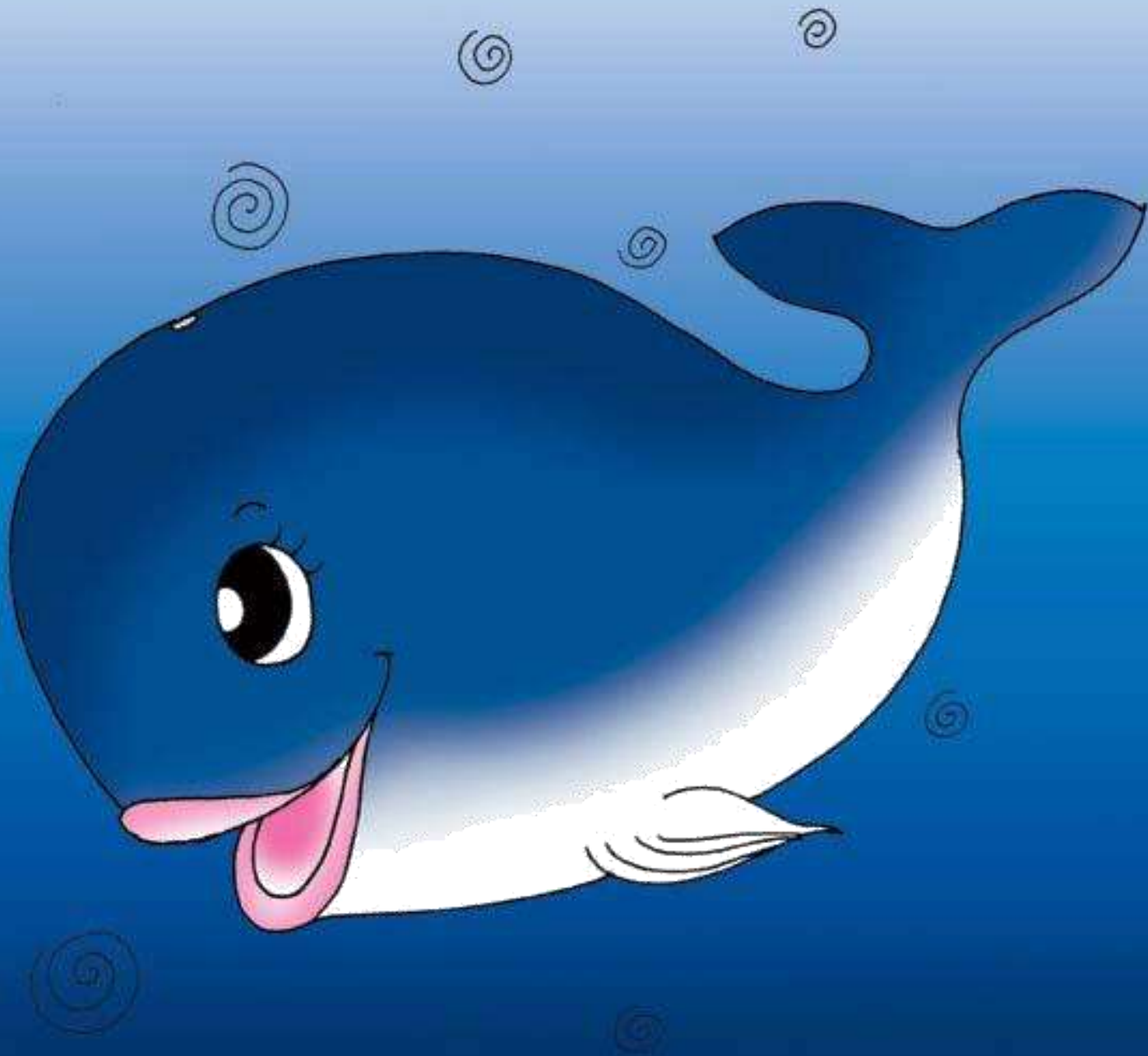


Finbo



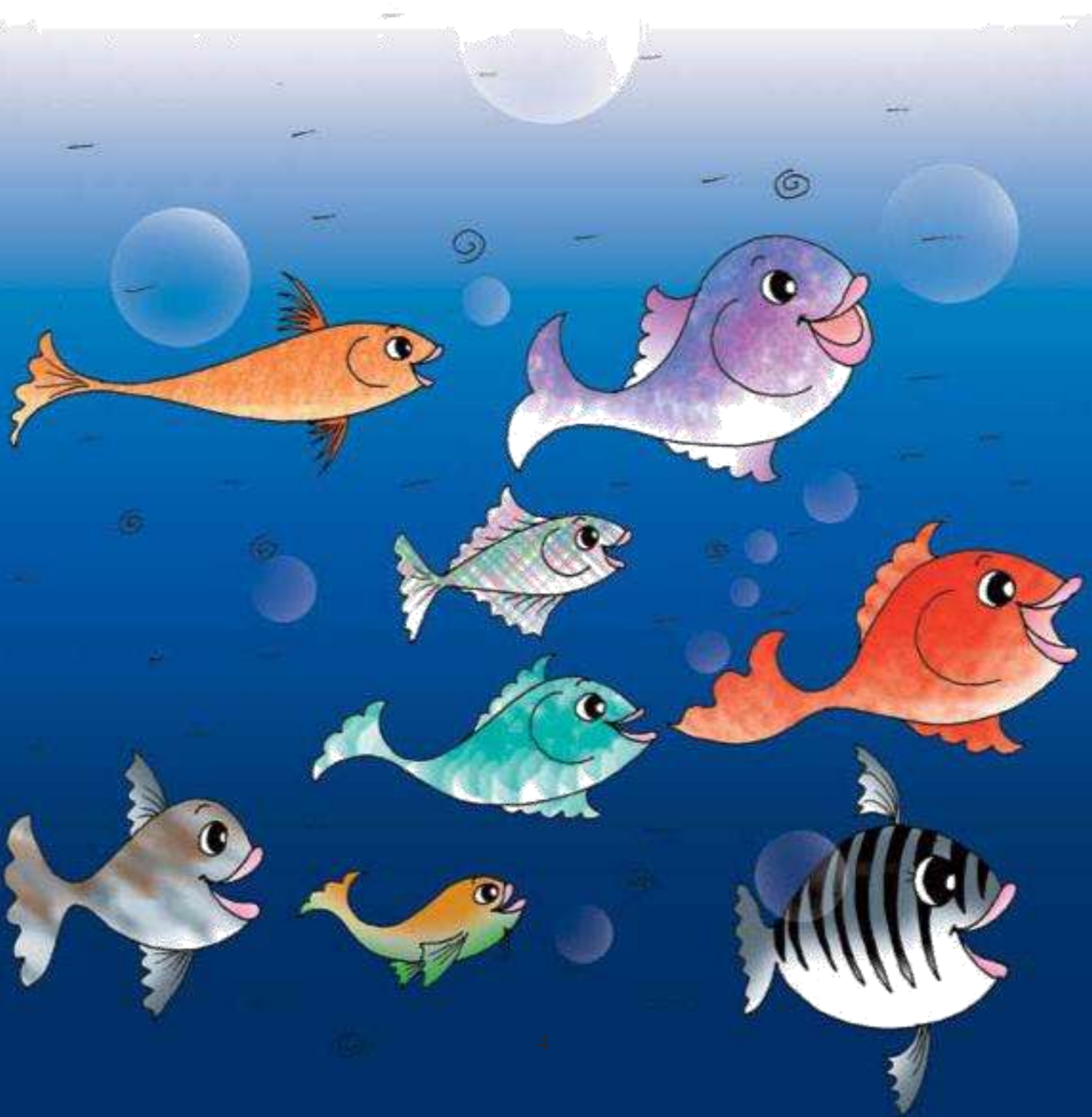
Far away in the deep blue ocean, there lived a little blue whale named Finbo.
Even though he was called little, he was not little by any means.
The baby Finbo was very much bigger than all of his friends.



His favourite pastime was playing “hide and seek” with his friends in and around the rocky areas.

But there was one thing which disappointed him all the time. That was, whenever they played hide and seek, Finbo ended up being on the losing end. No matter how hard he tried to hide, his friends would find him in no time.

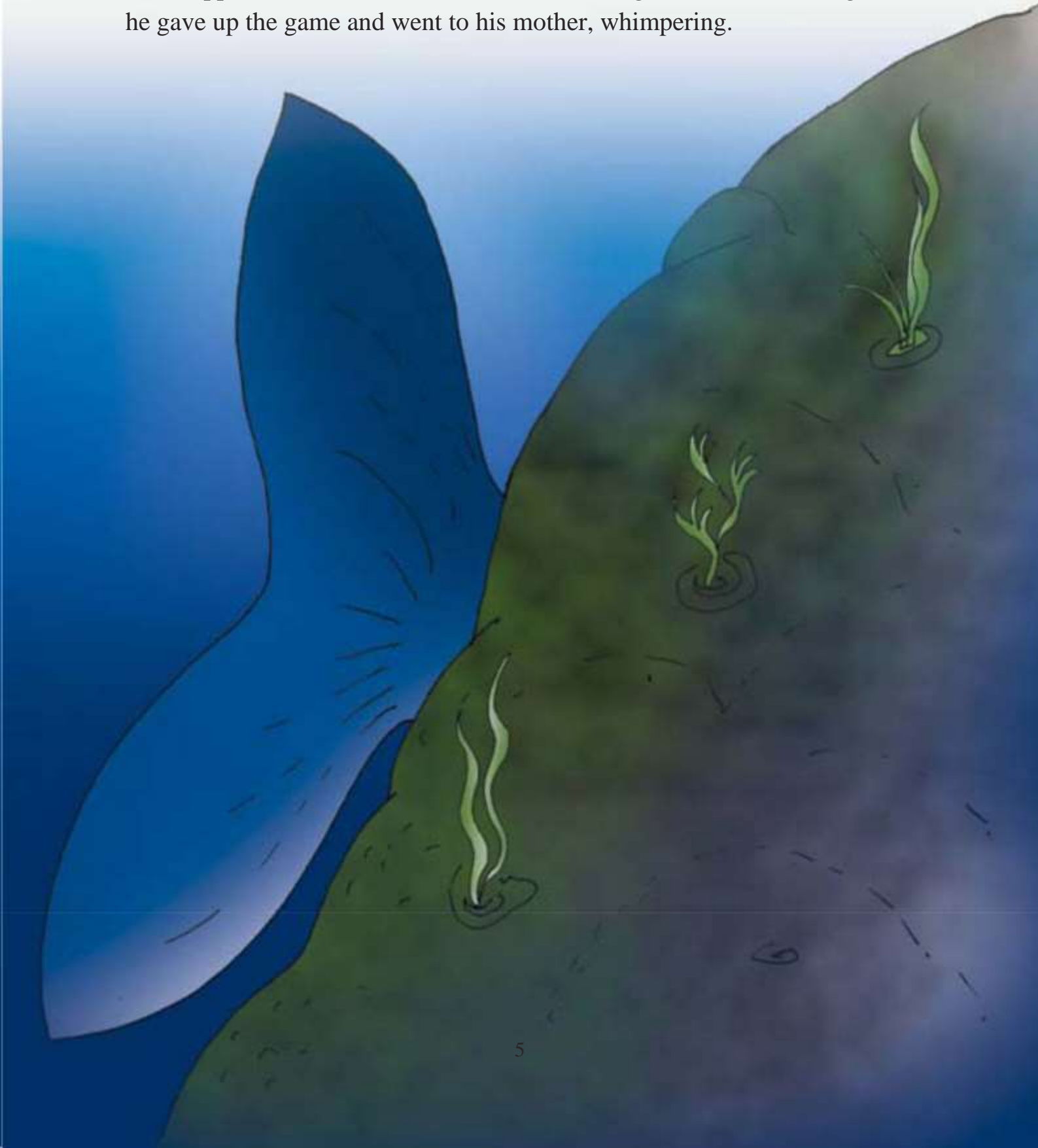
Since Finbo was so big, it was very easy for his friends to find him, because he stuck out from behind wherever he was trying to hide.



And when his turn came Finbo could never find his tiny friends.

They were so tiny that they could hide anywhere. Sometimes they hid behind Finbo's own tail! But, Finbo could never see them, until they came out and showed themselves.

Therefore Finbo had to spend the whole day searching for them. This happened almost all the time. When Finbo got tired of searching, he gave up the game and went to his mother, whimpering.



“Uh...uh...uh....I can’t do this all the time. I can’t stand it any more.....”

Finbo complained.

“Why, my darling, what’s wrong?” his mother asked.

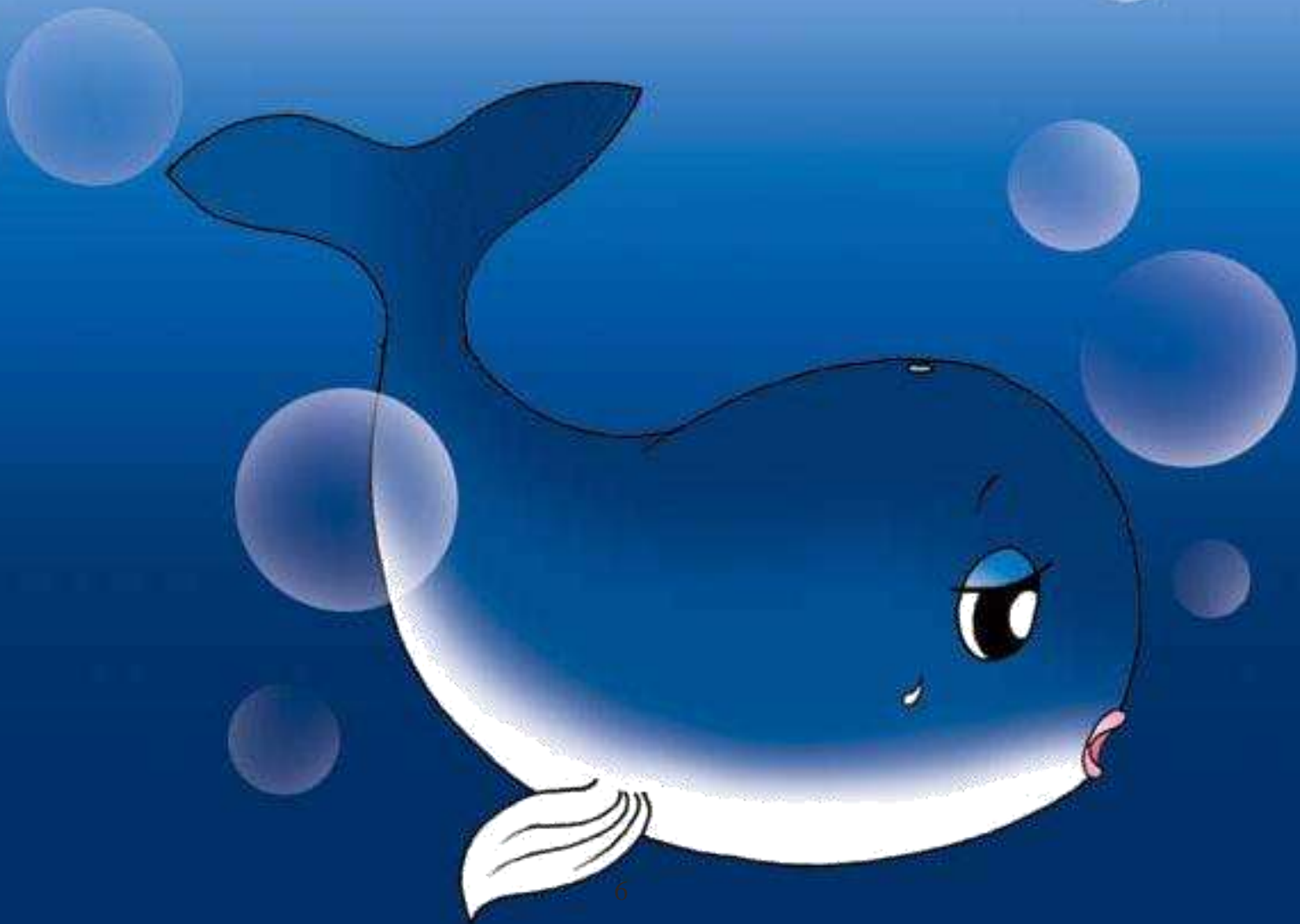
“Mama, whenever I hide, they find me right away. But when ever they hide, I can’t find them even if I search all day long. Why, Mama? Why am I so big?? Why can’t I be tiny, like my friends?” Finbo asked, sadly.

“But, darling, you are a whale. You are different from all the fish in the sea. We are the biggest animals on earth. And don’t forget, you’ll be even bigger when you grow up,” said his mother.

“Even bigger? Oh no, I don’t want to be any bigger. I’m tired of being big,” Finbo said crossly.

“No Finbo, you must be proud of it.” said his mother.

“Proud of what? Being big?” Finbo asked.



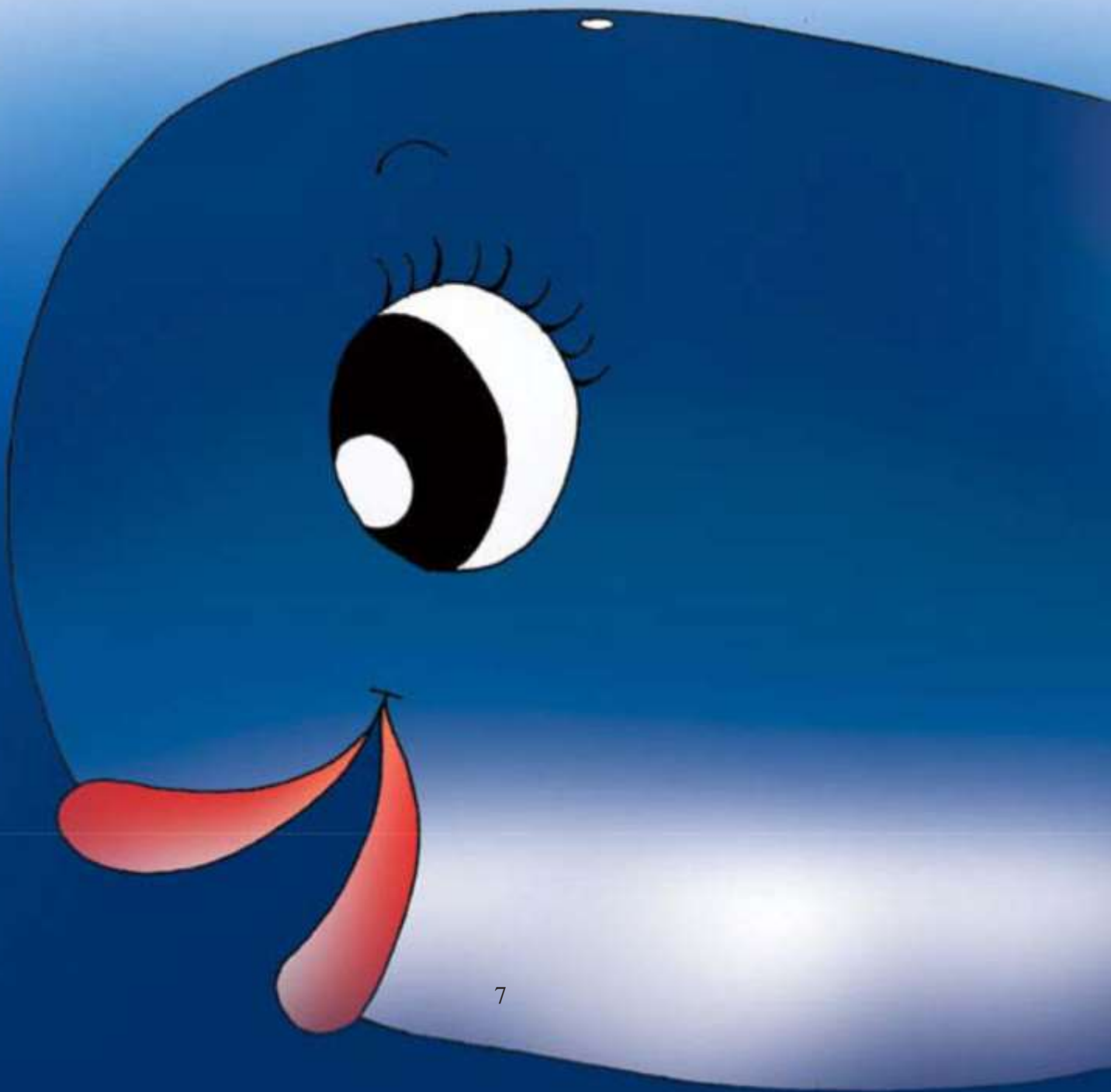
His mother started explaining.

“Finbo, listen to me carefully. We have many things to be proud of. First of all, we are not fish. We are mammals who live in the water. We don’t lay eggs like other fish. You were born like a baby and not hatched from an egg. Baby whales drink milk from their mothers, just like the children on land do....

..... And we have hair on our bodies, too. We are the loudest animals on earth. No one else has a fountain on top of their head like we do. We have no enemies, and all the others are frightened of us. You need not shrink away with fear from anyone and.....”

His mother tried to convince him.

But it was hard for him to understand.



“But... but mama...but...even if all that is true, I still can’t play hide and seek. I don’t want to be big and different any more.” Finbo started whimpering again.

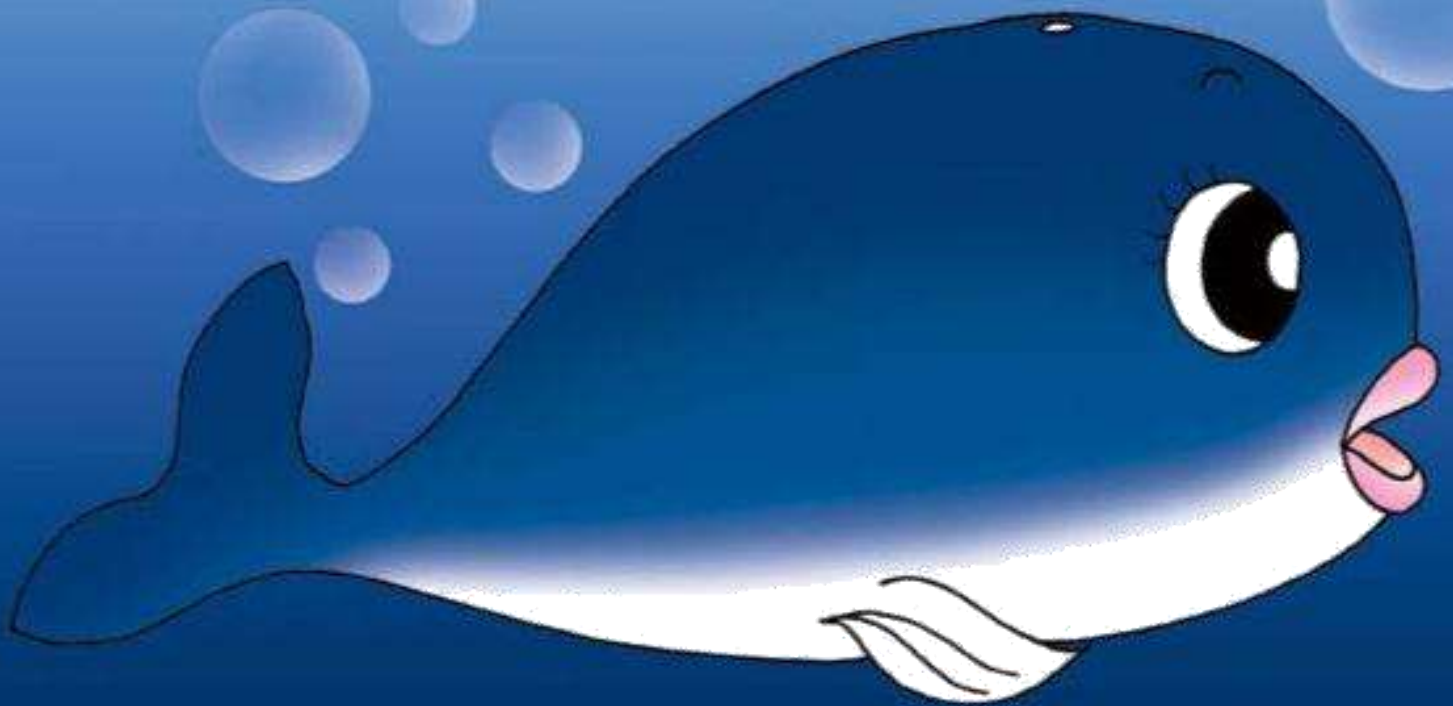
“Uh...uh...uh...”

“Finbo, everyone should be happy about who he is and what he has. You’ll see one day, what would it bring you, being who you are...” said mother blue whale.

On the following day, Finbo and his friends went to the rocky area to play hide and seek.

“Finbo, shall we go far out there, beyond the rocky area?” asked one tiny friend.

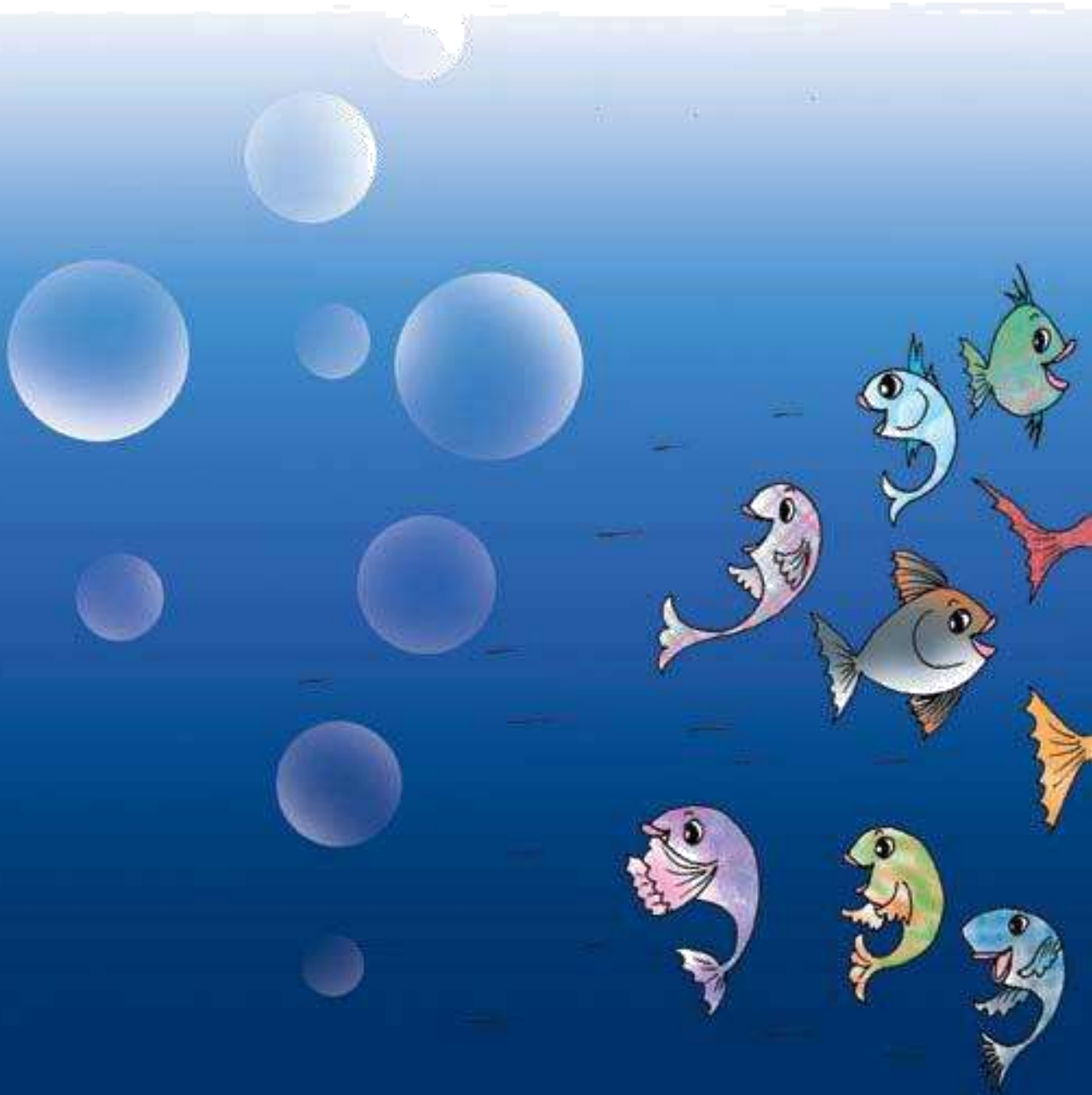
“Far away? Oh no, I won’t go too far,” said Finbo.



“Finbo, are you scared?” they asked.

“No, I’m not scared. But I’m not going, because my mother told me not to. It’s very dangerous out there,” said Finbo calmly.

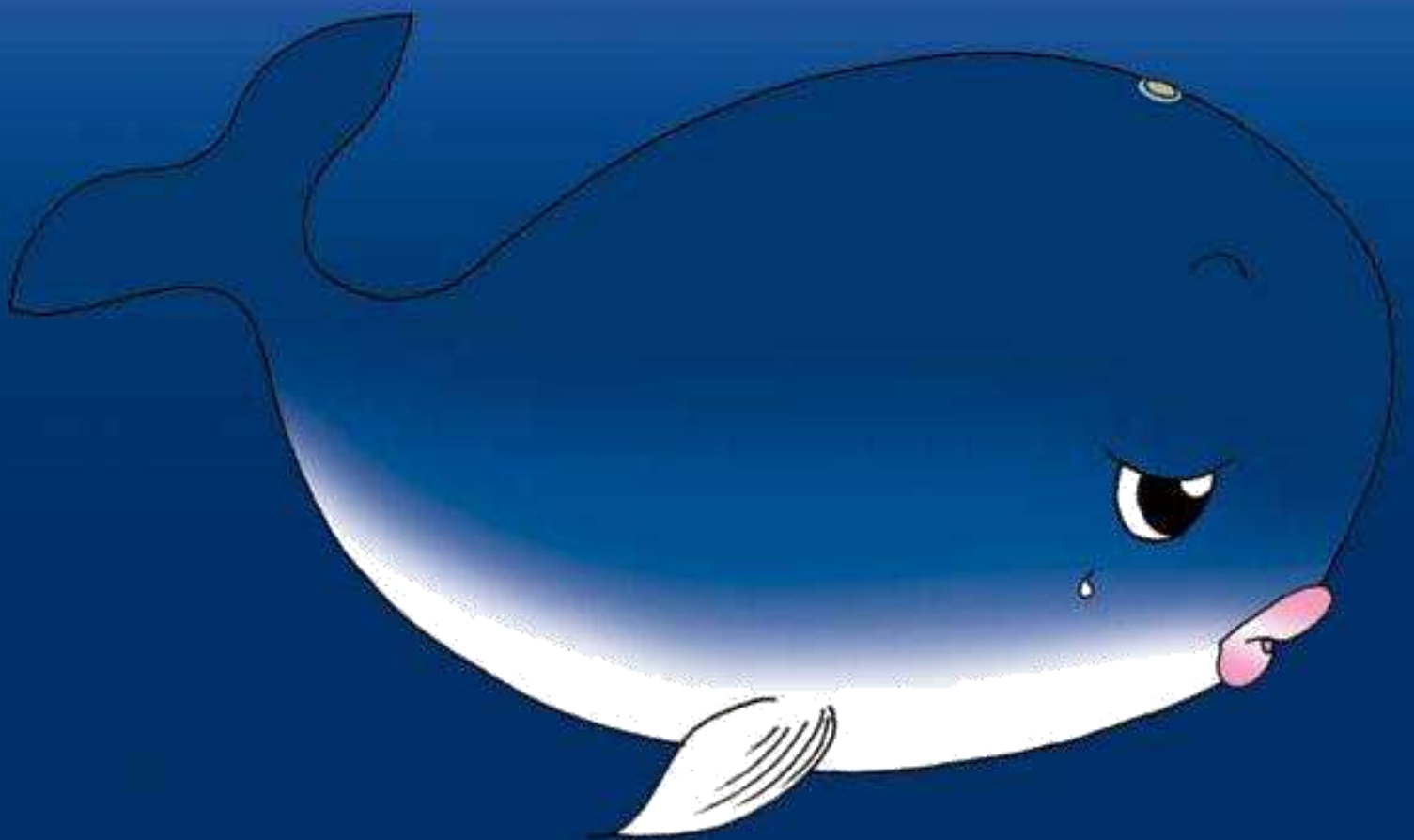
“Hey, Big Finbo is scared it seems. Let’s go there and show him how brave we are,” said all his tiny friends, laughing at Finbo.



“My little friends, as my mother says, being brave doesn’t mean that you go looking for danger. And I’m obedient to my mum,” said Finbo.
“Oh, Finbo, what’s the use of being big...”

Finbo’s friends laughed at him and swam away.

Finbo felt very lonely. No one to talk to, no one to play with.
He wandered around sadly.



But, a little later....

He heard shrieking voices coming through the water.

It sounded very familiar to him.

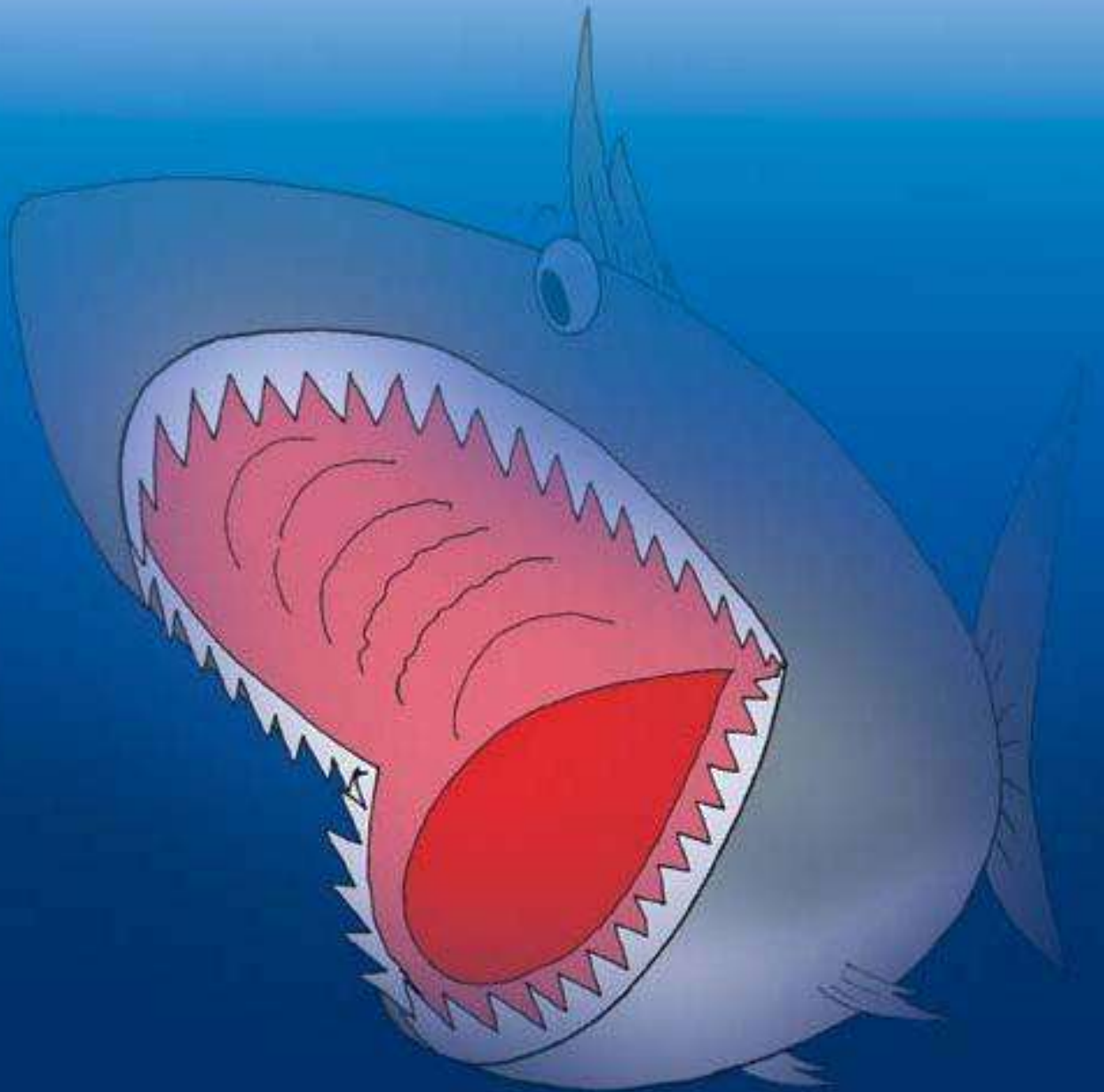
He swam towards the sound, quickly.

It was his tiny little friends, darting through the water, crying out with fear, as if someone was chasing them.



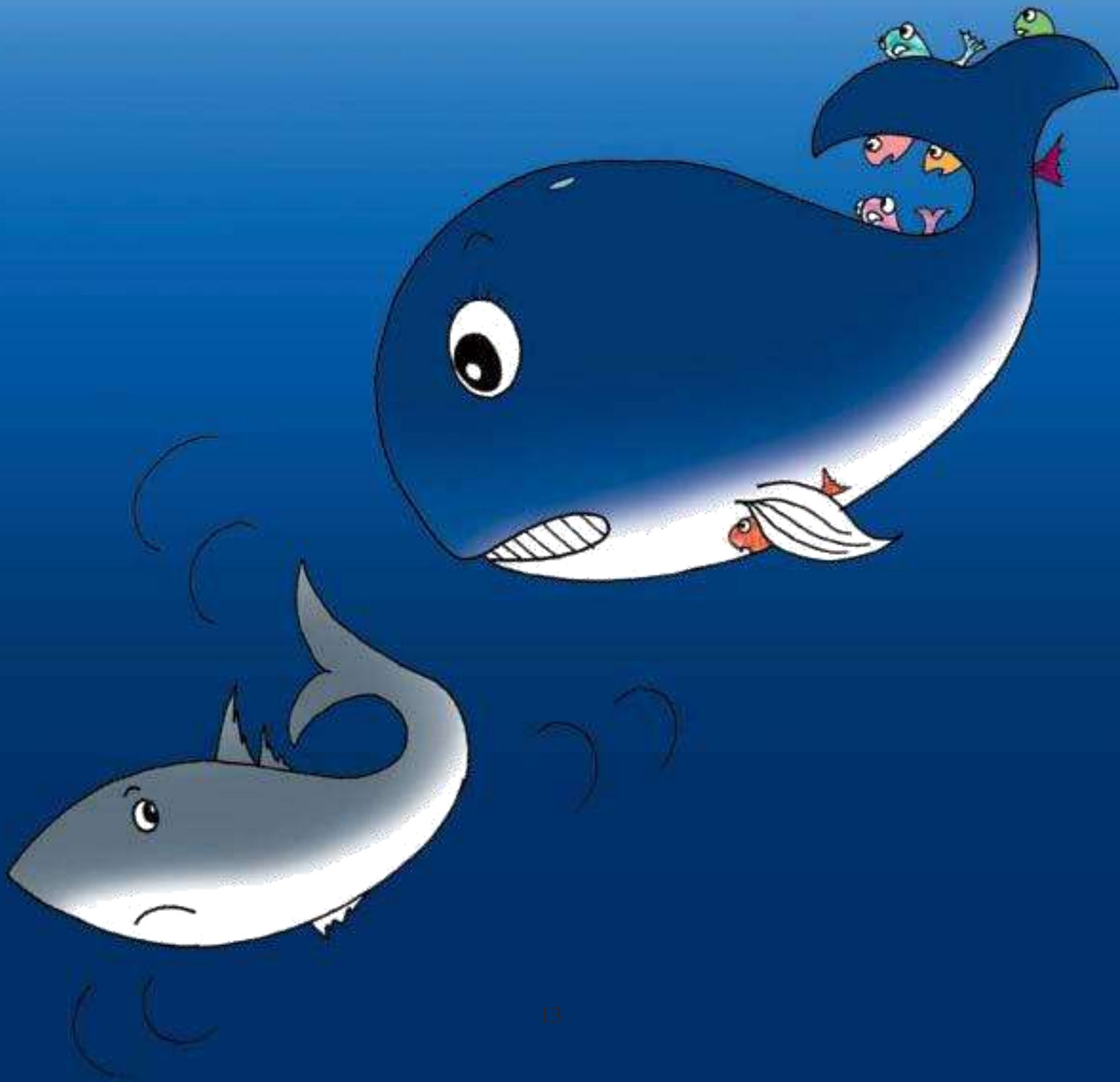
They rushed forward and hid behind Finbo's tail.

The next moment, a big shark raced toward them, with his mouth wide open. The moment he saw Finbo in front of him, his eyes bulged out and his mouth dropped.



Finbo grunted once.

The big, bad shark took one sharp look at Finbo from the corner of his eyes, and vanished at once, in fear.



Finbo's friends, who were peeping from behind his tail, couldn't believe their eyes. They were amazed to see how the big bad shark ran away as he saw their friend, Finbo.



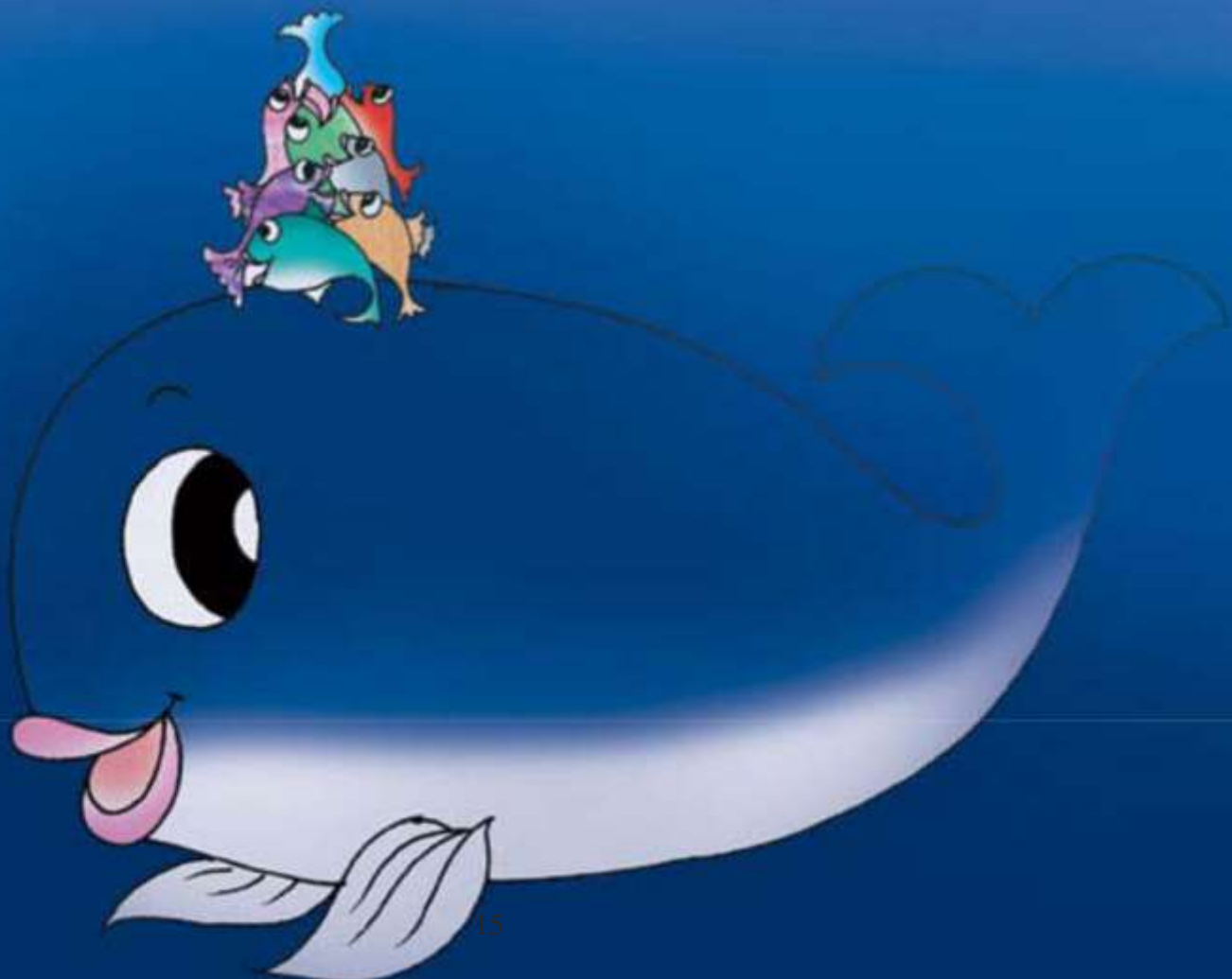
They were very proud of him. All of them came to him and thanked him over and over. They apologized to Finbo for teasing him. Finbo welcomed all the thanks humbly.

“My friends,” said one of the little fishes. “Finbo is wise. He told us not to go into danger. Of course, being brave does not mean running towards danger. We learnt that today. From now on, we should not go so far away to play.” All of them agreed.

“Yes, yes, Finbo is a very good friend. Even though we teased him, he came forward to help us at once, without being angry with us.” they said.

“My friends, you need not go anywhere to play. I’ll take you to show things you have never seen. It would be much more interesting than swimming far away,” said Finbo.

He swam up, close to the surface of the sea, with his friends. And then he asked his friends to sit on his head one by one. And when he spouted his fountain, they were shot out of the water into the beautiful world above. They saw the sky, birds, sun, clouds, ships and far away lands.



They cheered with joy. It was an amazing sight to the little fish who had never seen anything other than the things under the sea. “Finbo, you are such a wonder. And such a good friend too. We love you very much.” They circled around him and hugged him. Finbo was very happy that he was big and different, because he could be of great use to his friends.



