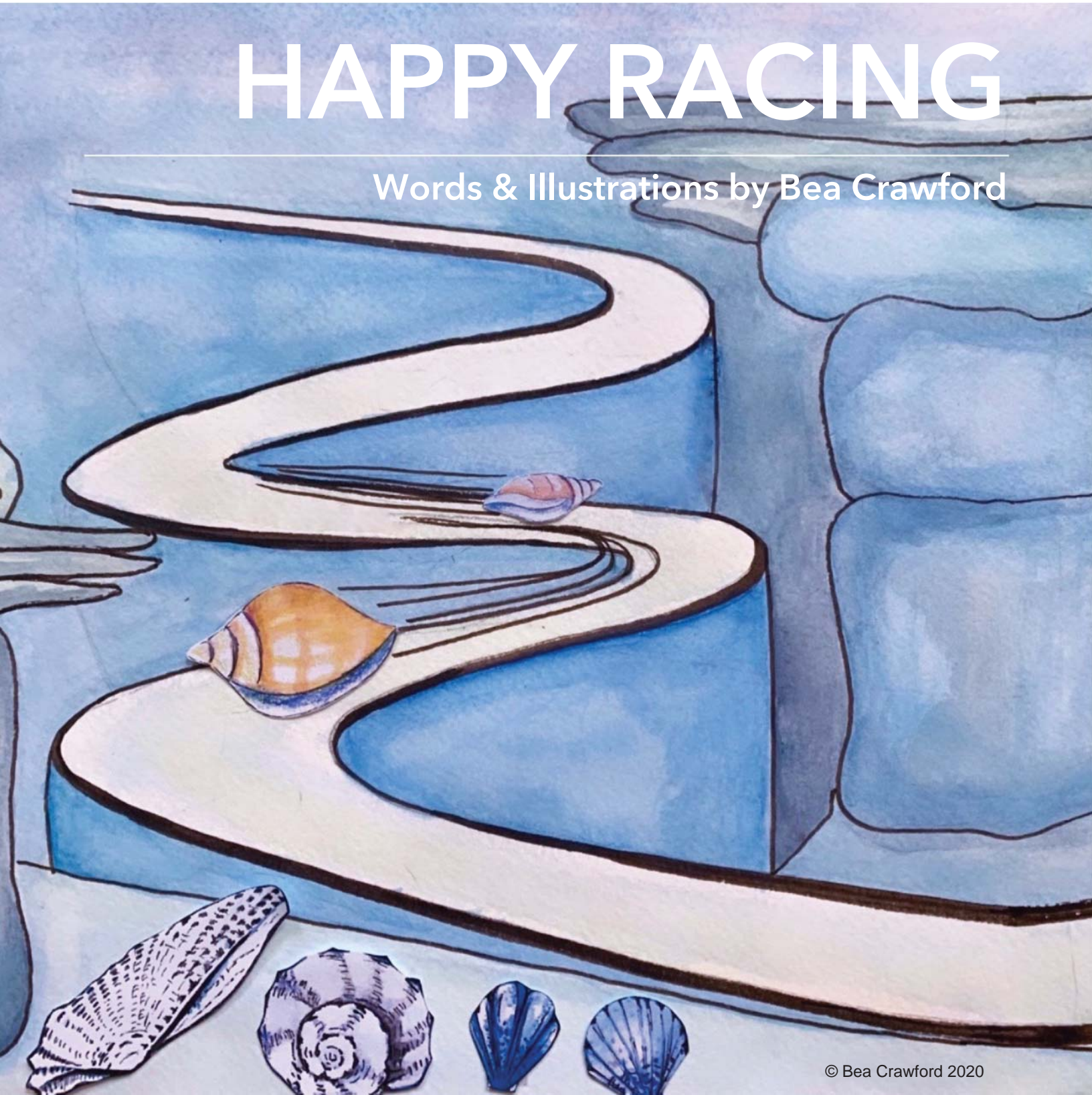


HAPPY RACING

Words & Illustrations by Bea Crawford



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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Summer is here and the shells of Georgica Reef are looking forward to the annual Georgica Reef Race— the biggest race through the reef.

The winning shell receives an oyster pearl as a reward and GG has won twice before. All the shells will practice racing the reeftracks to prepare for the race.

Join GG and her friend George as they prepare to race and discover the opportunities through challenge.



HAPPY RACING

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DEDICATION

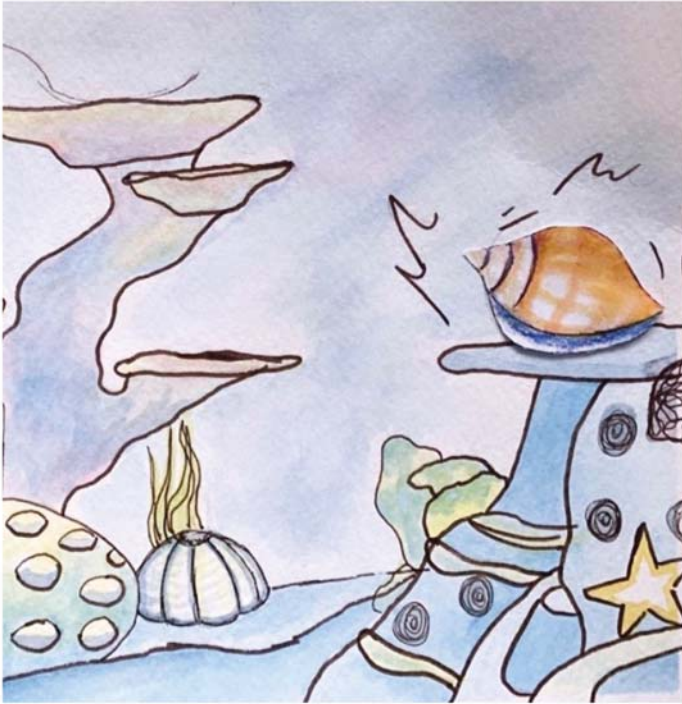
For my grandparents

Marcia & George Gowen,
otherwise known as GG & Chief–

For their encouragement to be
curious about the world around us,
and inclined to random acts of
kindness. Also, their belief in me to
always do my best.

Monie & Carroll Crawford–

For giving us 'roots and wings', and
reminding us to never, ever quit.



GG



George

Meet the shells of Georgica Reef

I'd like to introduce two shells, GG and George, who are preparing for The Georgica Reef Race at the end of the summer. GG wants to win the race, but when she is faced with Barnacle Boulevard, a new challenge, and the hardest track on Georgica Reef, she becomes aware of her own limitations. She is the fastest racer on the reef, but it is hard for GG to race when she is unsure of the outcome. It is even harder for GG to race if there is a possibility of things not working out. GG begins to question her own ability and appreciation for racing.



Summer arrived and the shells began training for the Georgica Reef Race. It was the biggest reef race of the year. The winner received an oyster pearl as a prize.



Every shell practiced their speed, turns and jumps. The shells tried to go fast, but still stay on the track. Some reeftracks were harder than others because of their steep jumps and sharp turns.



Barnacle Boulevard



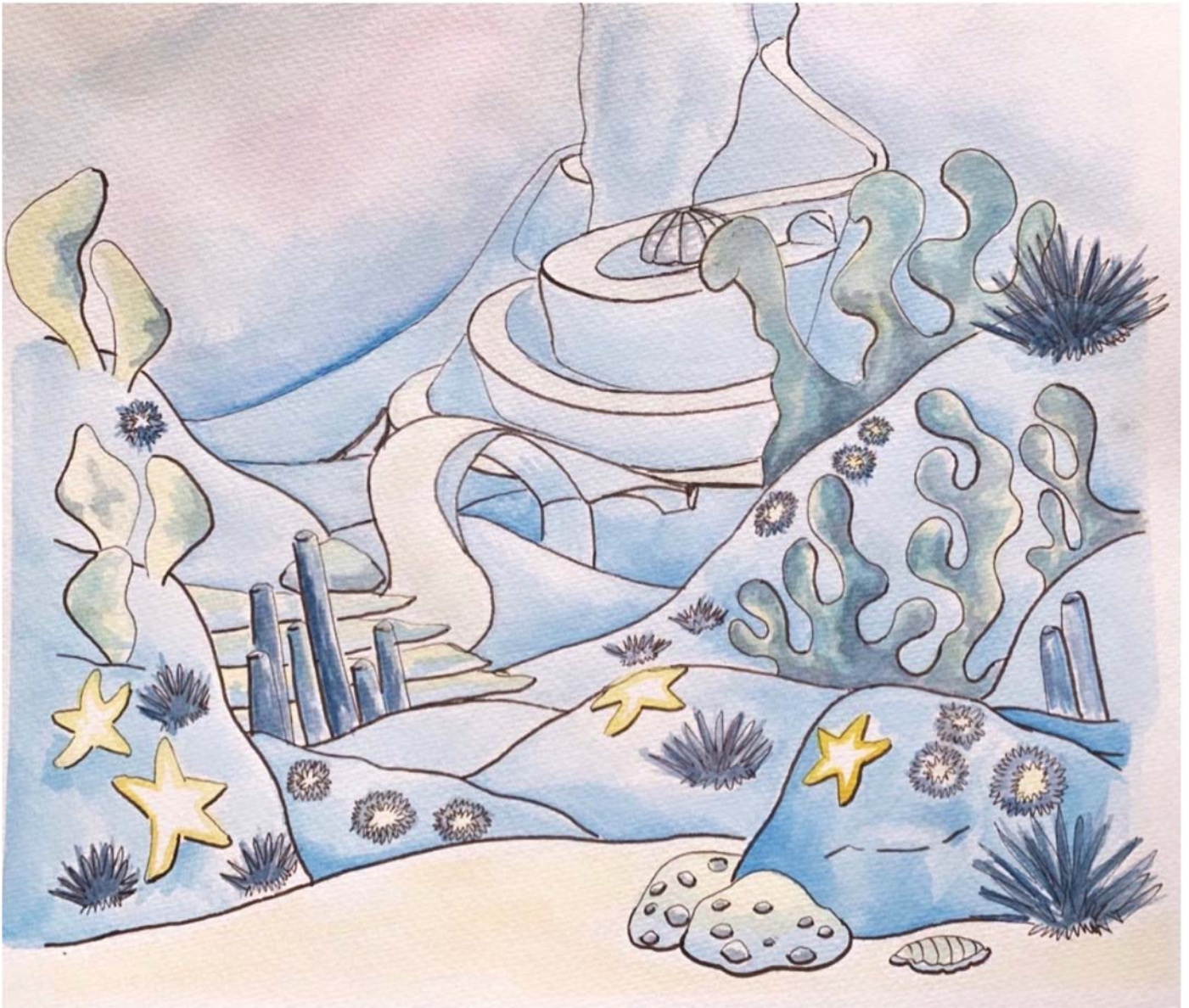
Clam Bar Circle

Barnacle Boulevard was the hardest track on the reef. The water moved in wild ways and made it hard to stay on track. The track was filled with barnacle bumps and jumps. Anything could happen on the way down. **Clam Bar Circle** had lots of wide turns that made it fun for racers. Shells came from all the neighboring reefs to watch the Georgica Reef Race at Clam Bar Circle every summer.

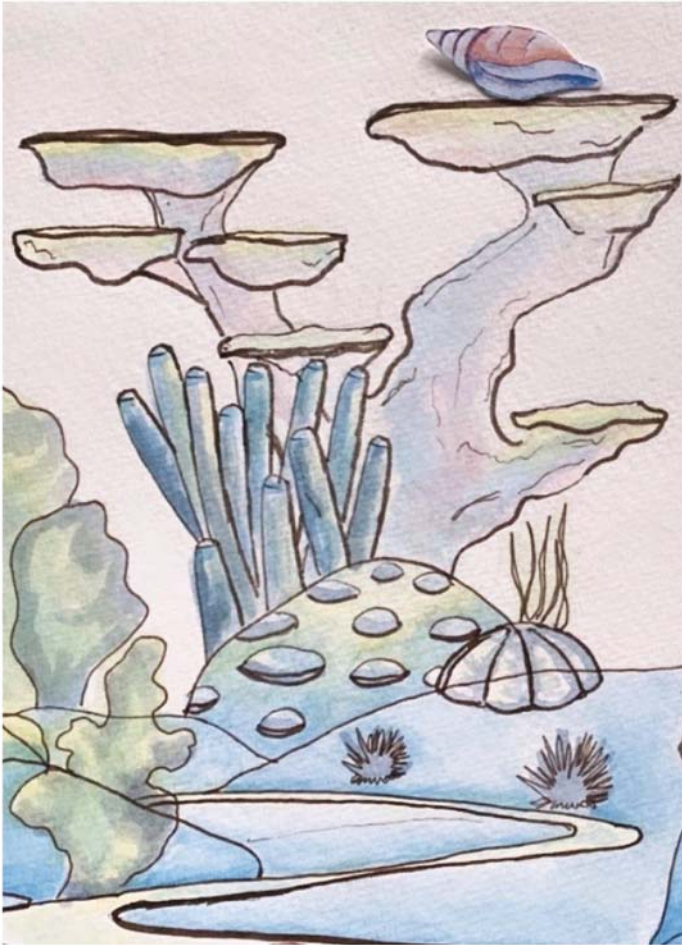


GG was one of the best racers in Georgica Reef. The other shells thought she had natural talent. She would glide down the tracks, faster than all the rest. The shells said GG's speed came from her grandmother, a former Georgica Reef Race winner.

GG loved to hear cheers from her family and friends as she raced by.

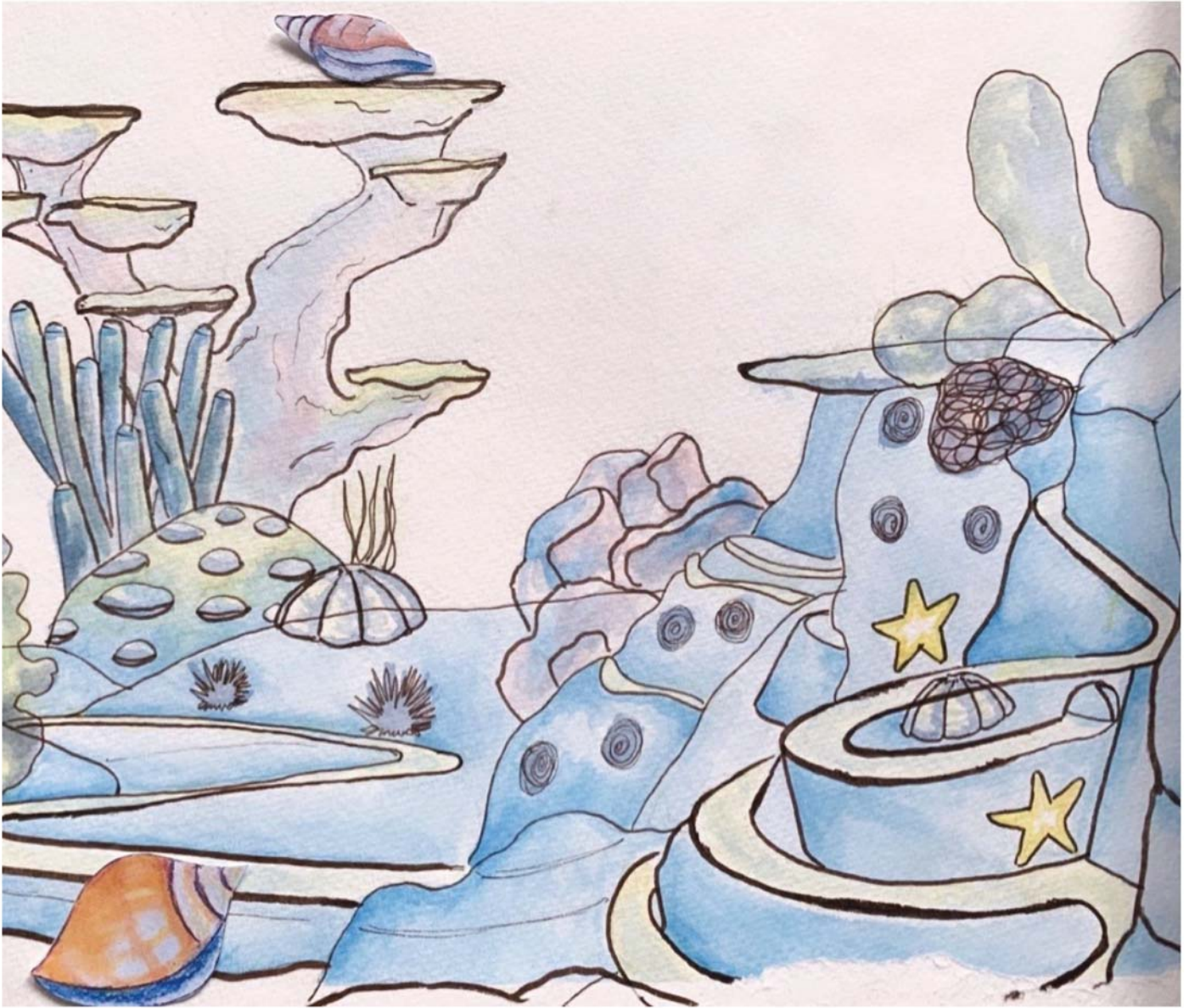


GG decided to sleep in when the racetracks opened in the morning. She was not worried about practicing because she had won the Georgica Reef Race twice before. George had decided to wake up early and get ready for practice.

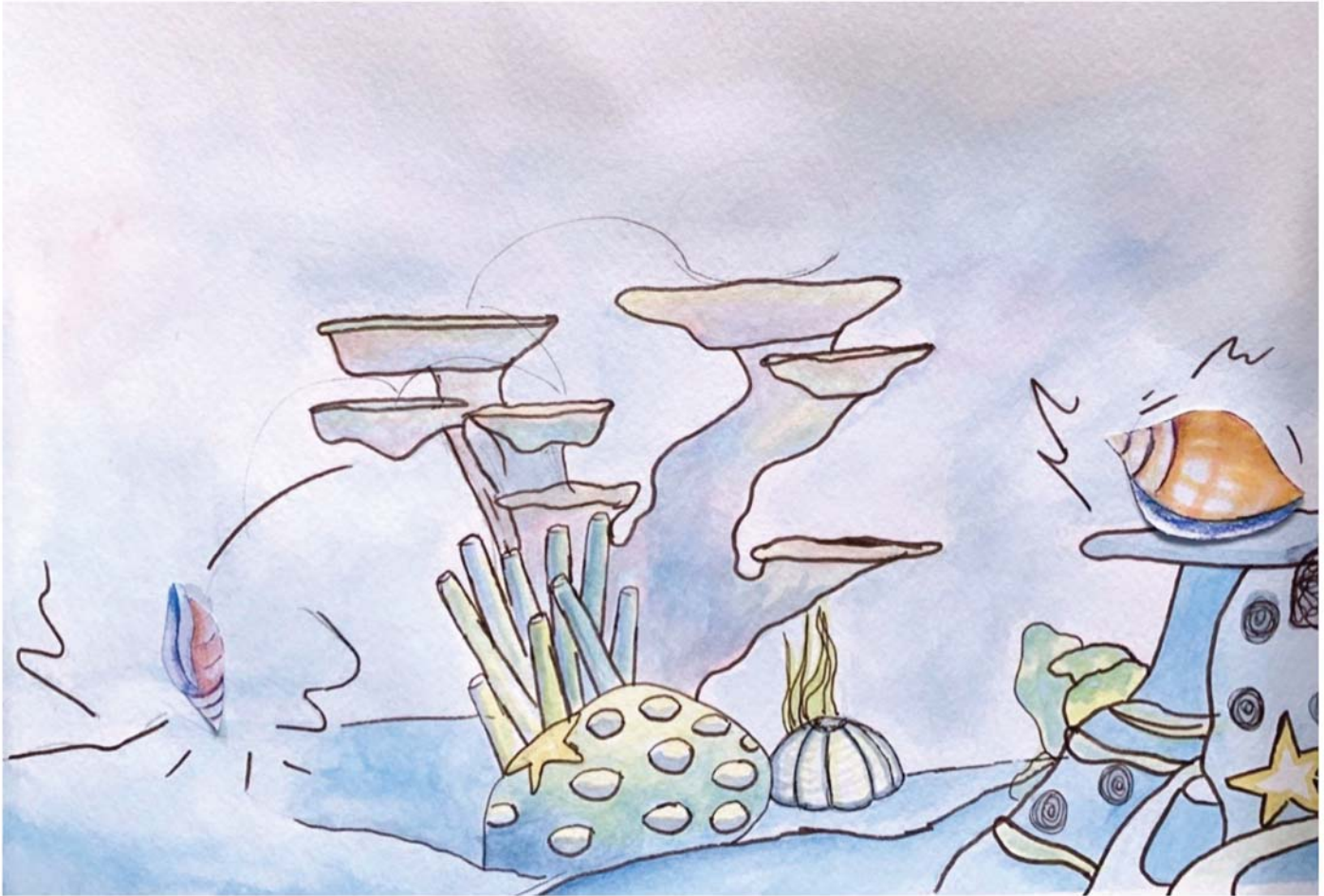


George finished racing all the tracks before GG arrived. Her other friends had already waxed their shells to help them go faster down the tracks. GG was day-dreaming about the Georgica Reef Race coming up at the end of the summer.

George interrupted GG's thoughts by shouting, "I have extra wax if you need some!" "Thanks George!" GG admired George's thoughtfulness. He loved all things about racing, even practice and preparation.



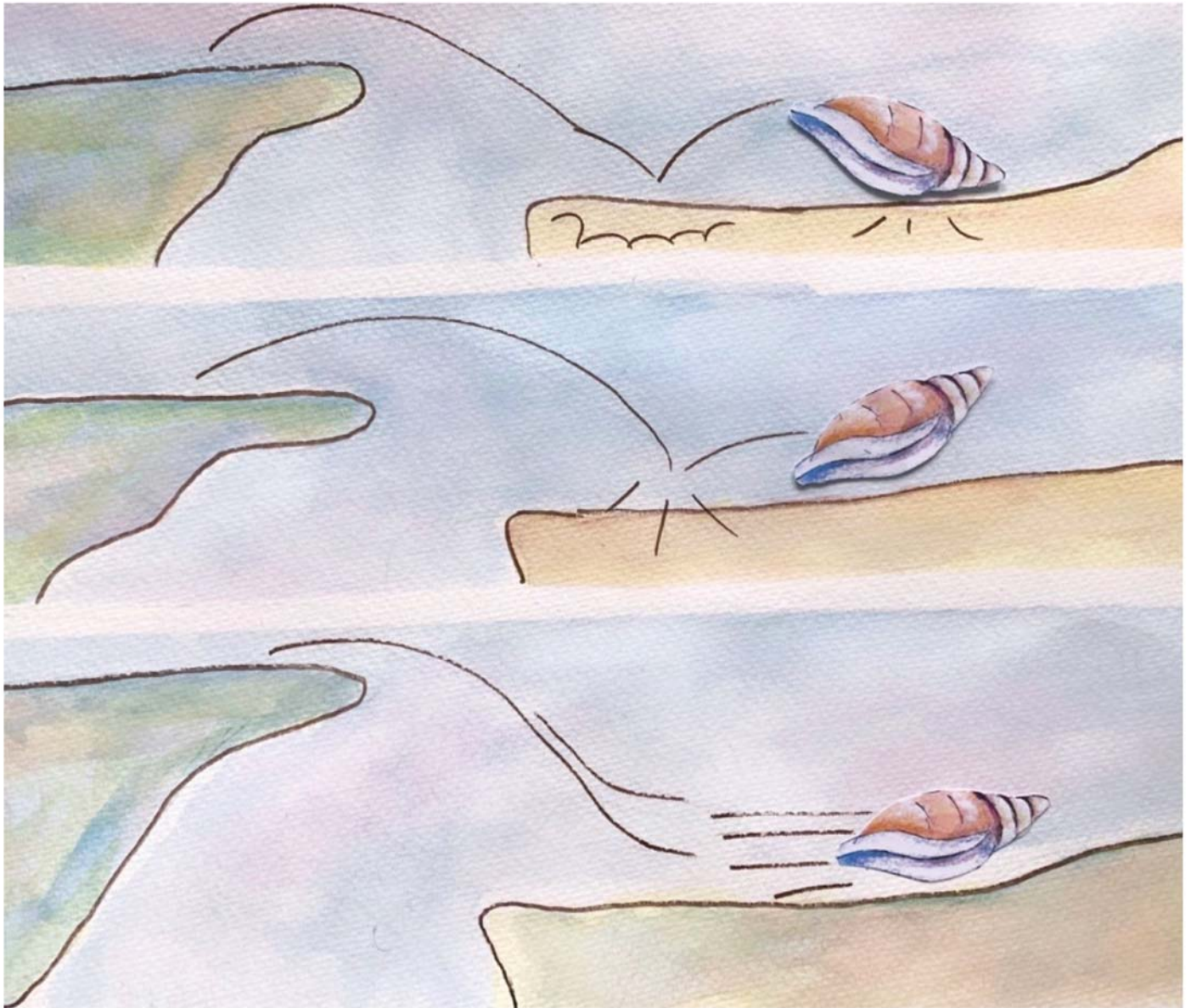
GG noticed George was up at the top of Barnacle Boulevard—the hardest track on the reef!
Her shell filled with bubbles as she imagined the barnacles, bumps and jumps.
She chose to race down Clam Bar Circle instead because it was easier.
GG enjoyed hearing the other shells cheer for her as she zoomed through the turns.



A loud THUD, interrupted GG's racing and the cheering for her stopped. She looked over and saw George had fallen off the track into the sand.

What a nightmare, GG thought. She was embarrassed for George. Only beginner shells fell off the track and GG could not remember the last time she had fallen.

GG watched George shake off the sand and climb back to the top of the track. George looked frustrated, but not embarrassed. He took off racing again.



George raced Barnacle Boulevard again and again, sliding, jumping and crashing. He kept racing, getting better on the barnacles with each try.

Then, George landed all the barnacle jumps and finished the whole track!



The cheering for George surprised GG. The shells enjoyed seeing him get up and get better. One of the shells wished to jump as high as George.

"I felt stronger and more balanced each time," George said.

"I was impressed too," GG told him.



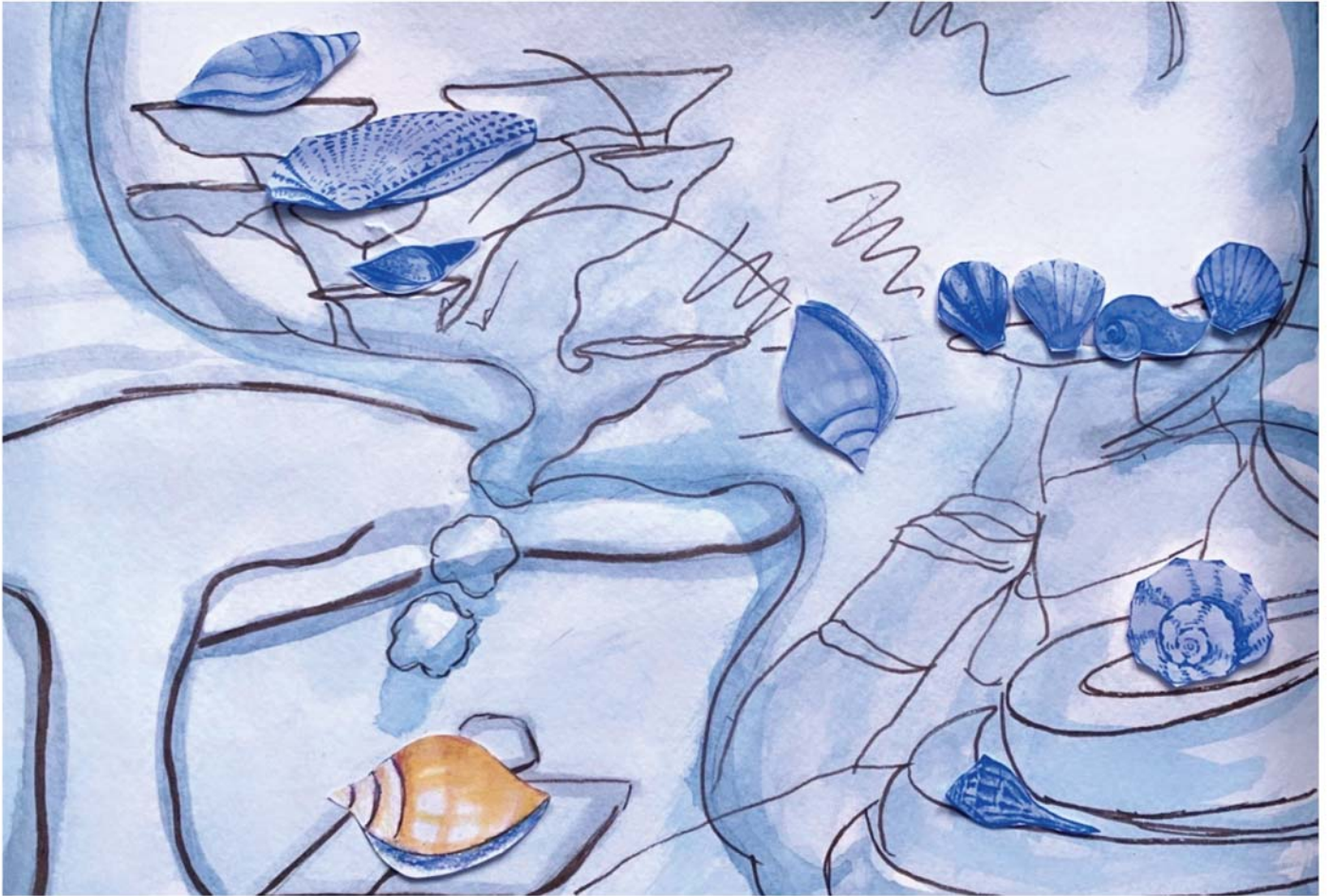
GG went home after practice. Her grandmother asked how her day was, but sensed something was on her mind. GG's grandmother knew a lot about racing.

"George raced Barnacle Boulevard today," GG told her.

"I see," her grandmother said. "Why is that on your mind?" She asked.

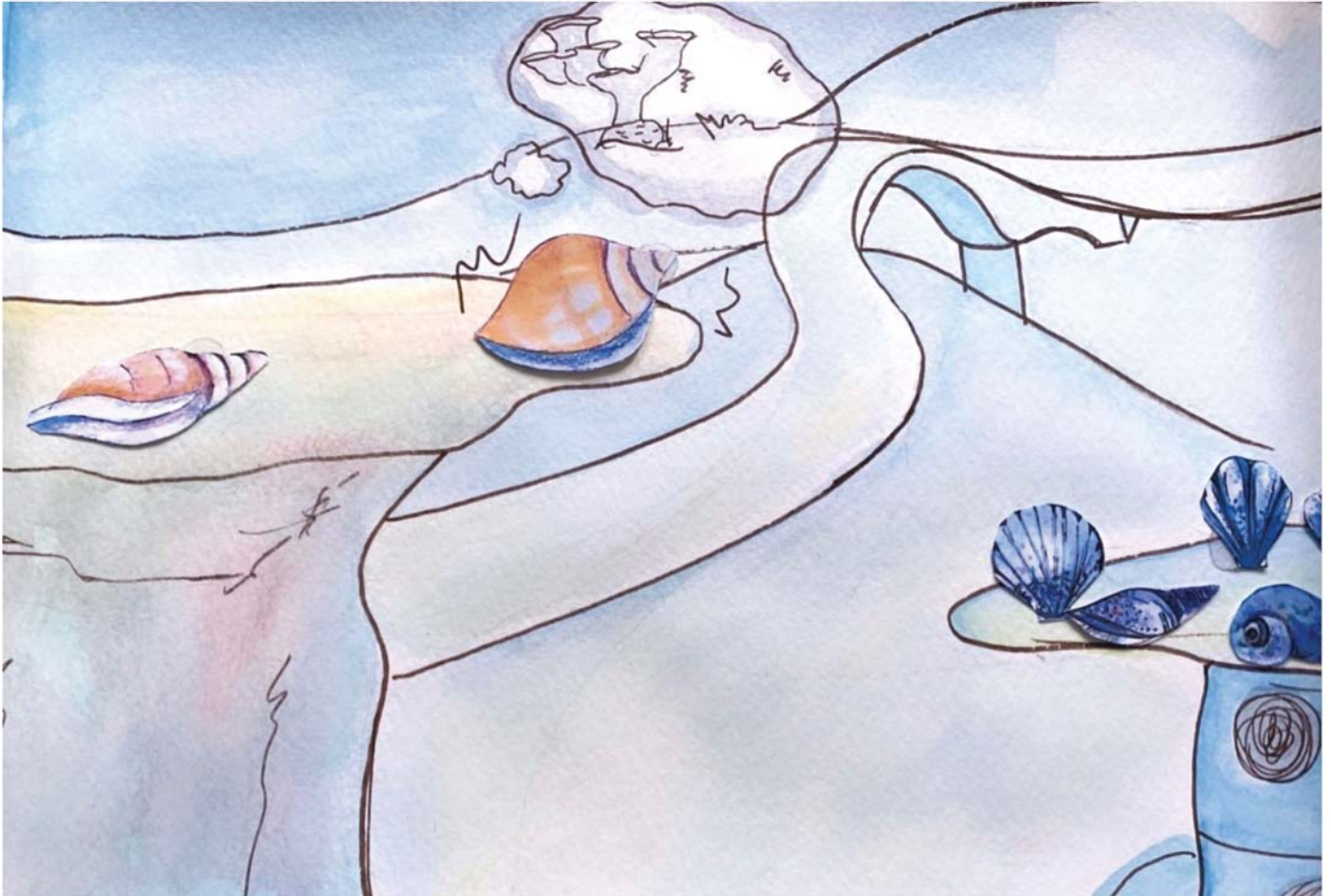
"He fell off the track, like a beginner racer," GG said. "We are too good to fall or not finish." GG added.

"Falling is never easy," her grandmother responded. "But sometimes falling is where we begin in order to get better."



That night GG's dreams were filled with questions and Barnacle Boulevard.

*What if she tried it and wasn't the fastest?
What if she fell?
What if she never finished?
What would the other shells think if she failed?
She could try it, but what would happen?*



The next day, GG headed to the top of Barnacle Boulevard, thinking maybe she would try it. She felt threatened by the possibility of falling. GG looked down at the barnacles, then over at the shells practicing nearby. She wondered if George and her friends were watching her and bubbles filled up in her shell. She decided she did not want an audience.

GG turned away from the track and headed back down.
GG did not want to race for the first time—ever.



George noticed GG leaving the reeftracks and hurried to catch up to her.

"I am as good as I will ever be," GG muttered to him.

"I have felt stuck like that," George answered. "You made it look easy when we first started racing. I thought I'd never be a good racer, or fast like you are. I felt defeated and I had to do something to change that."



"So, I told myself that to be a better racer, I need to race more. To race more, I need more time on the tracks. To get more time on the tracks, I need to get to the tracks earlier. I told myself I would get better by doing it, and then it came true," George told her.

"But you're always having a good time on the tracks," GG said.

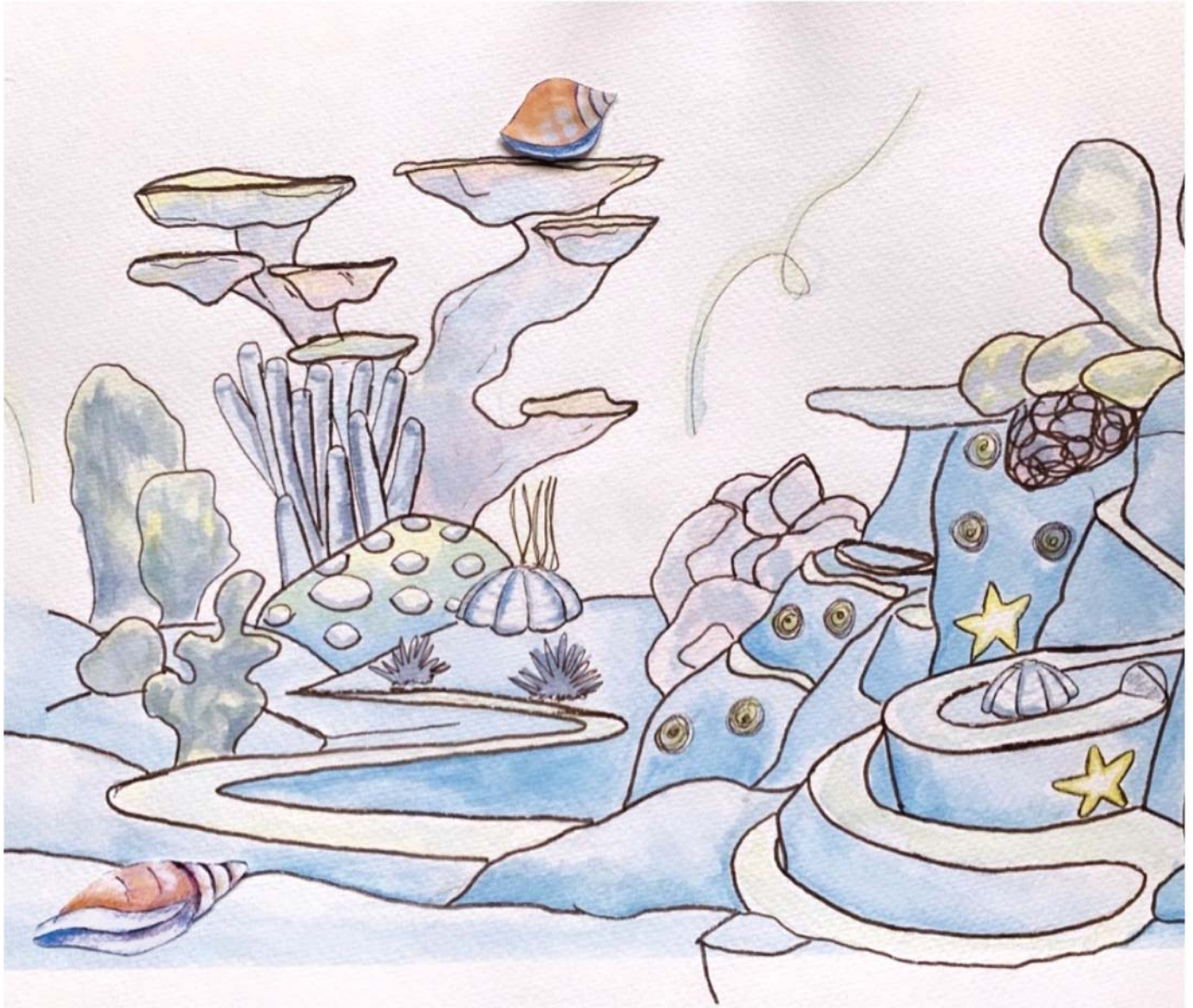
"What if you didn't get better?" she added.



"I'm not always having a good time!" George laughed. "And sometimes I do not get better for a long time. But, if a track is difficult to do, figuring out how to do it is the best feeling—like winning a race for the first time."

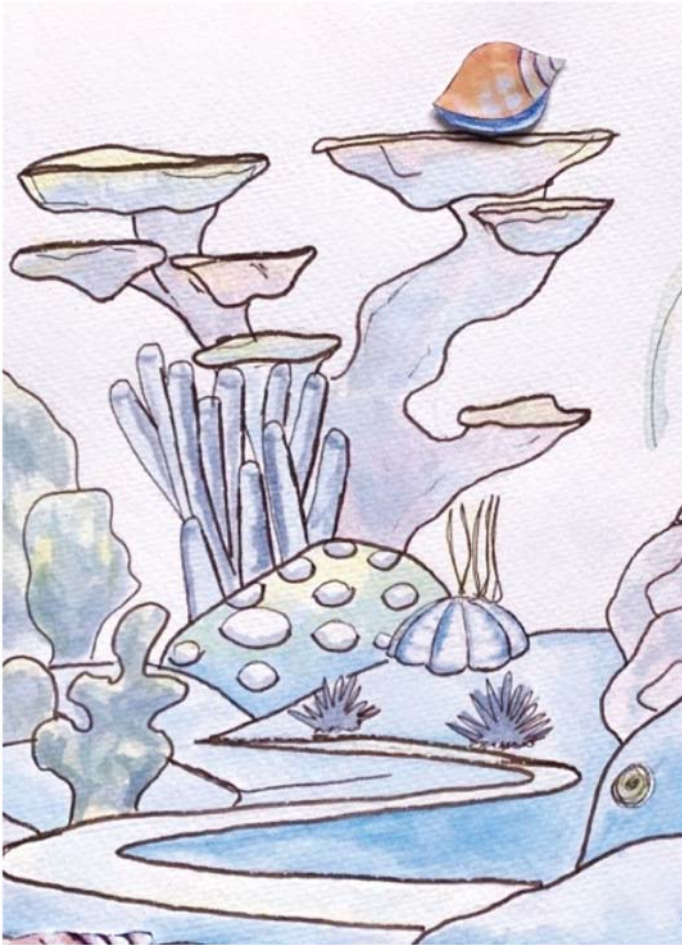
GG nodded. She remembered how proud she felt after her first win.

"Racing would be boring if we knew we would win every time!" George shouted as he turned for home.



The next day was different. GG was up early and at the tracks. She would enjoy a peaceful morning of racing by herself. Waking up and racing, all for herself, already felt better. GG remembered why she loved to race and felt ready to accept the challenge.

GG got to the top of Barnacle Boulevard by the time George arrived.



Bubbles filled her shell as she reached the edge.
It's a long way down, she thought.
GG paused for a moment to let the bubbles settle and pushed off.

She felt excitement fill up her shell, as she landed her first jump.
One down! Two more to go, she told herself.



GG bounced out of the next jump too quickly and the fear shook her confidence. GG flipped off the edge and SMACK—she landed in the sand!

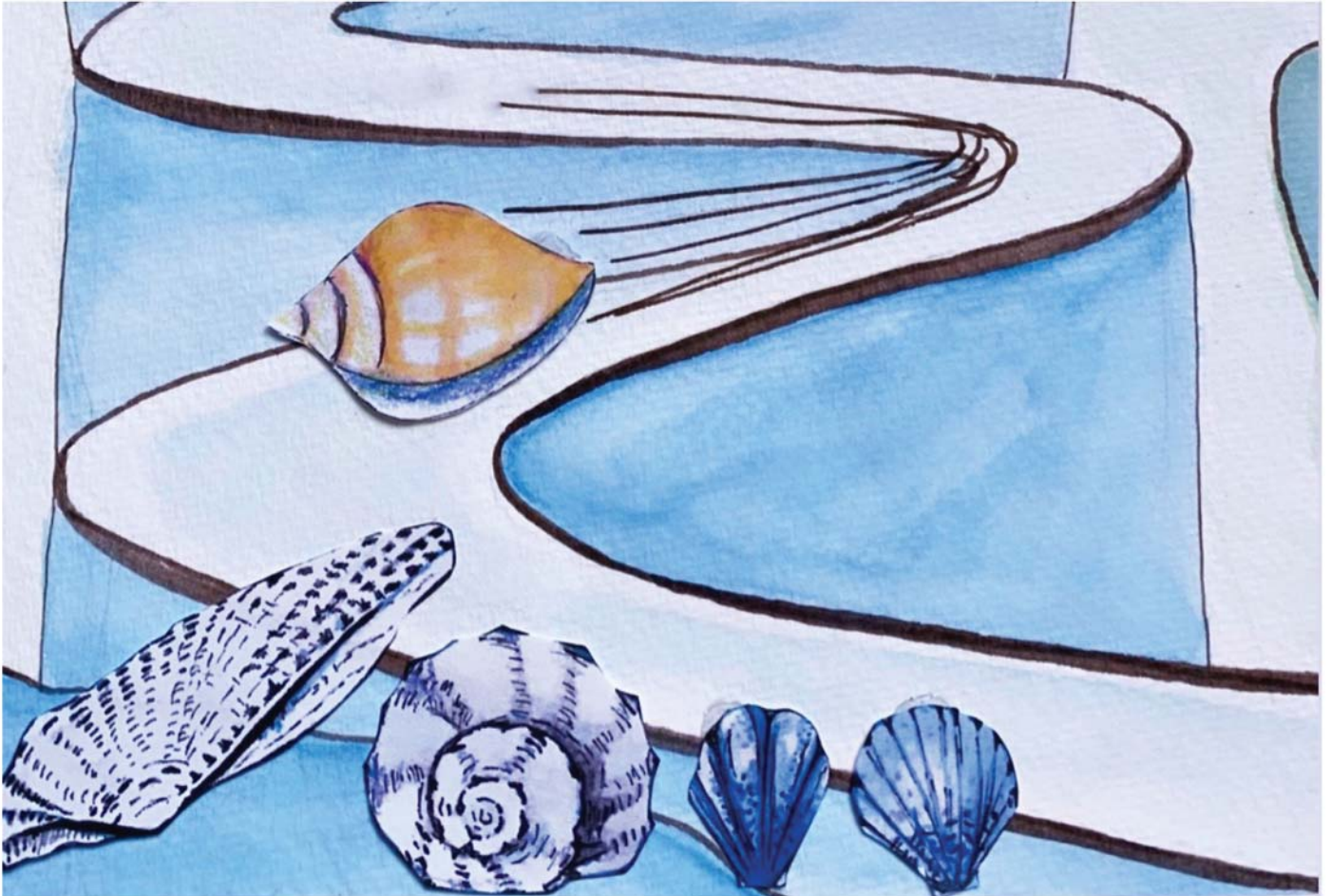
"Are you okay? I've never seen you do anything like that before! How do you feel?" George was both excited and worried for her. He had a lot of questions.



GG shook off the sand. What had she done? Why was George so excited? How could she possibly feel good after falling off the track?

GG thought about how exciting her first jump was on Barnacle Boulevard. She had felt proud—proud, just like she had felt after her first win.

"Barnacle Boulevard is a hard track," GG said. "But," she added, "I guess the first jump and racing down as far as I could were a win for me today."



GG found a new way of thinking. Now, her goals felt different. Sure, winning the Georgica Reef Race was important, but part of winning was figuring out how to race when racing felt easy—and when racing felt hard. If a reeftrack challenged her, the reeftrack was also an opportunity to learn and get better. Her grandmother and George were right: Sometimes falling is how we begin to get better.

So, GG went back to the top of Barnacle Boulevard.
She told herself, *If this were easy, every shell would do it.*
And with that, she sent herself down the reeftrack again.

THOUGHTS BEYOND THE REEF...

If you were a racer on Georgica Reef how would you feel about falling? What makes you say that?

How does GG feel about falling at the beginning of the story?

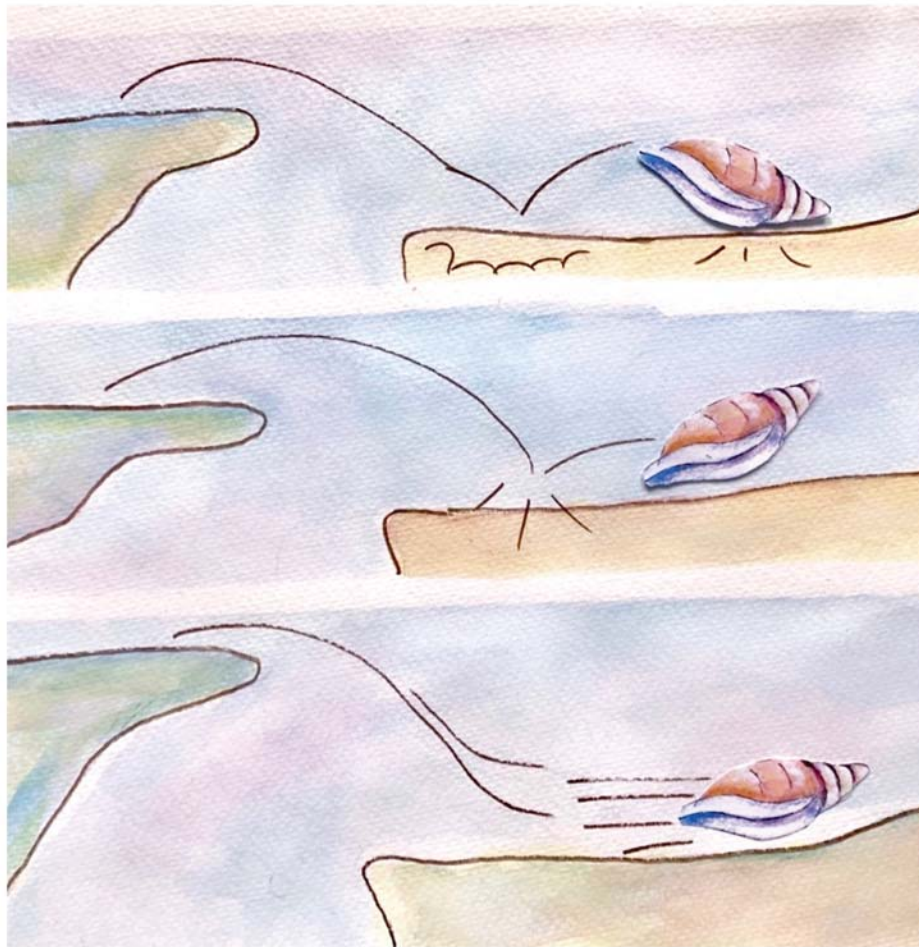
How does GG feel about falling at the end of the story? What makes you say that?

How do you think George feels about falling on the reeftracks?

Why do you think GG decides to race down Barnacle Boulevard?

Who is your favorite character on Georgica Reef and why?

What do you think will happen next to GG, George and the shells of Georgica Reef?



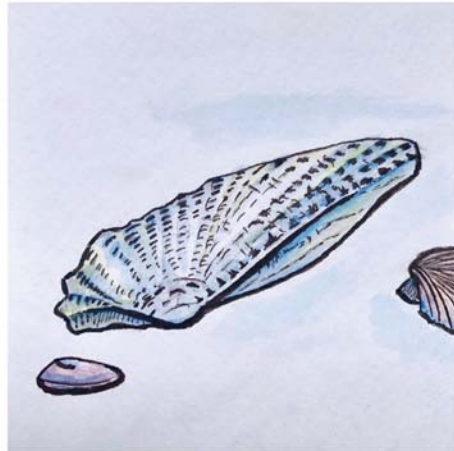




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If you can dream—and not make
dreams your master; If you can
think—and not make thoughts your
aim; If you can meet with Triumph
and Disaster and treat those two
imposters just the same; – RK