



"Oh dear, Tristan, your room is very messy," Grandpa Jake said. "I asked you to put away your books before you took out the toys and Lego."

"I wanted to play with my Lego," Tristan answered. "I was bored with reading books."

"I understand that you were bored," said Grandpa Jake, "but you should've obeyed."

"But I wanted to play Lego right away. I was going to clean up the books later."

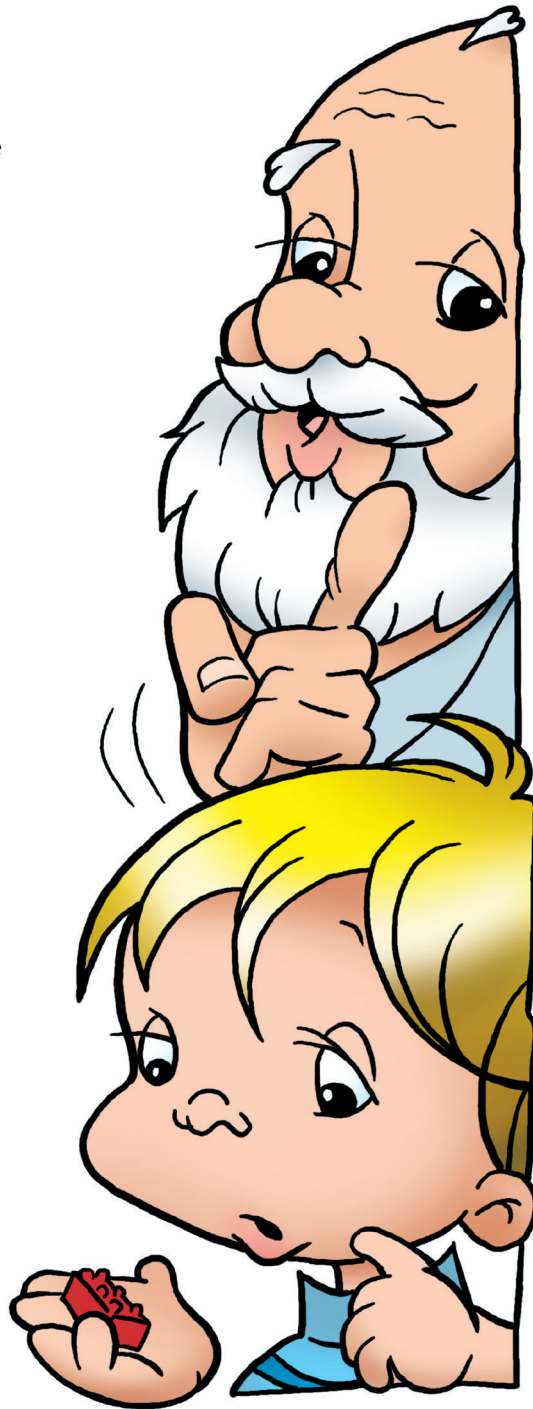
"Being obedient means that you follow through *right* away," explained Grandpa Jake. "It doesn't mean that you'll obey later or when you feel like it, does it?"

"No," Tristan said.

"Do you know why it's important to learn to be obedient?"

Tristan thought for a moment. "Because you like me to be obedient?"

Grandpa Jake chuckled. "That too, but more importantly, it's because there are times when it's very necessary that you obey so that something bad doesn't happen. For example, you know you're supposed to wear a helmet when you ride your bicycle. But what if one day you decide that you don't want to, or that it's not important, and so you don't? What would happen if you then had an accident?"



"I could really hurt my head," Tristan said.

"Exactly! Which reminds me of a story about Shallo, and how he learned the importance of being obedient."

"Please can you tell me the story, Grandpa?"

"How about you work on cleaning up your room," Grandpa Jake said, "and when you're done, I'll tell you Shallo's story. Okay?"

"Okay!" Tristan replied excitedly. "I'm going to do it right away."



It was a beautiful day in the ocean. The sunlight was streaming through the water, making it warm and bright. Shallo yawned as he sat on a rock throwing pebbles.





"I'm bored," Shallo said. "My friends are busy, and I have no one to play with today. I wish there was something fun I could do."



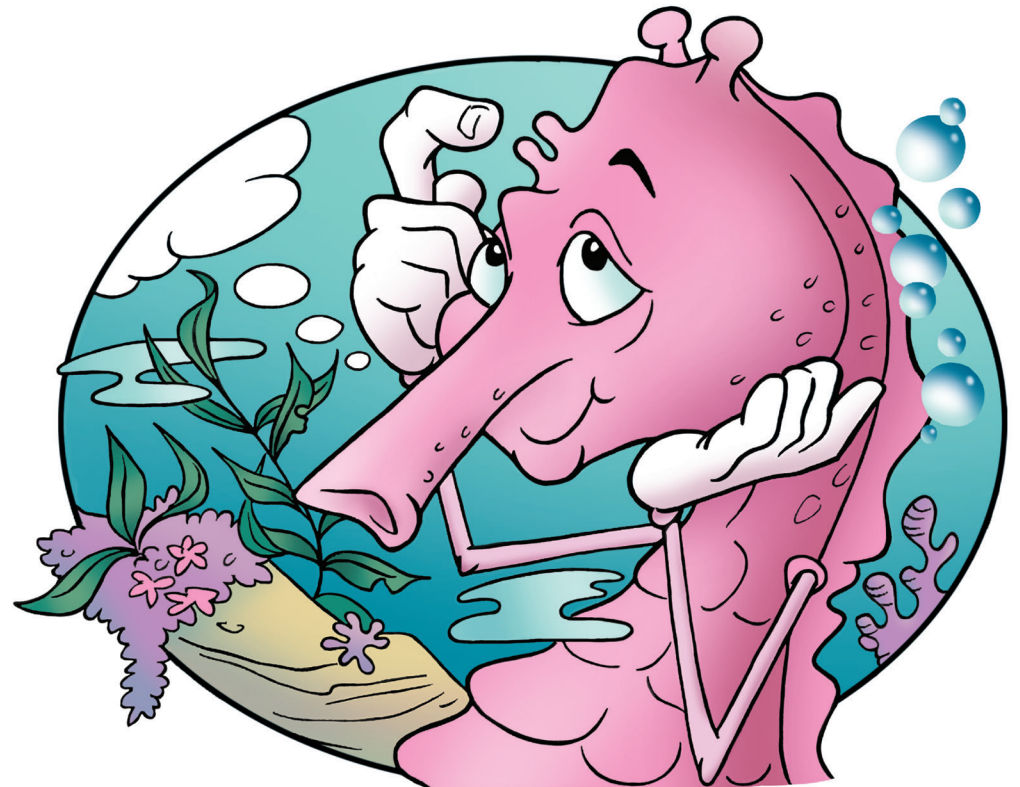
He thought for a moment, then jumped up with an excited smile on his face. "I'll go check out Shadow Point!"

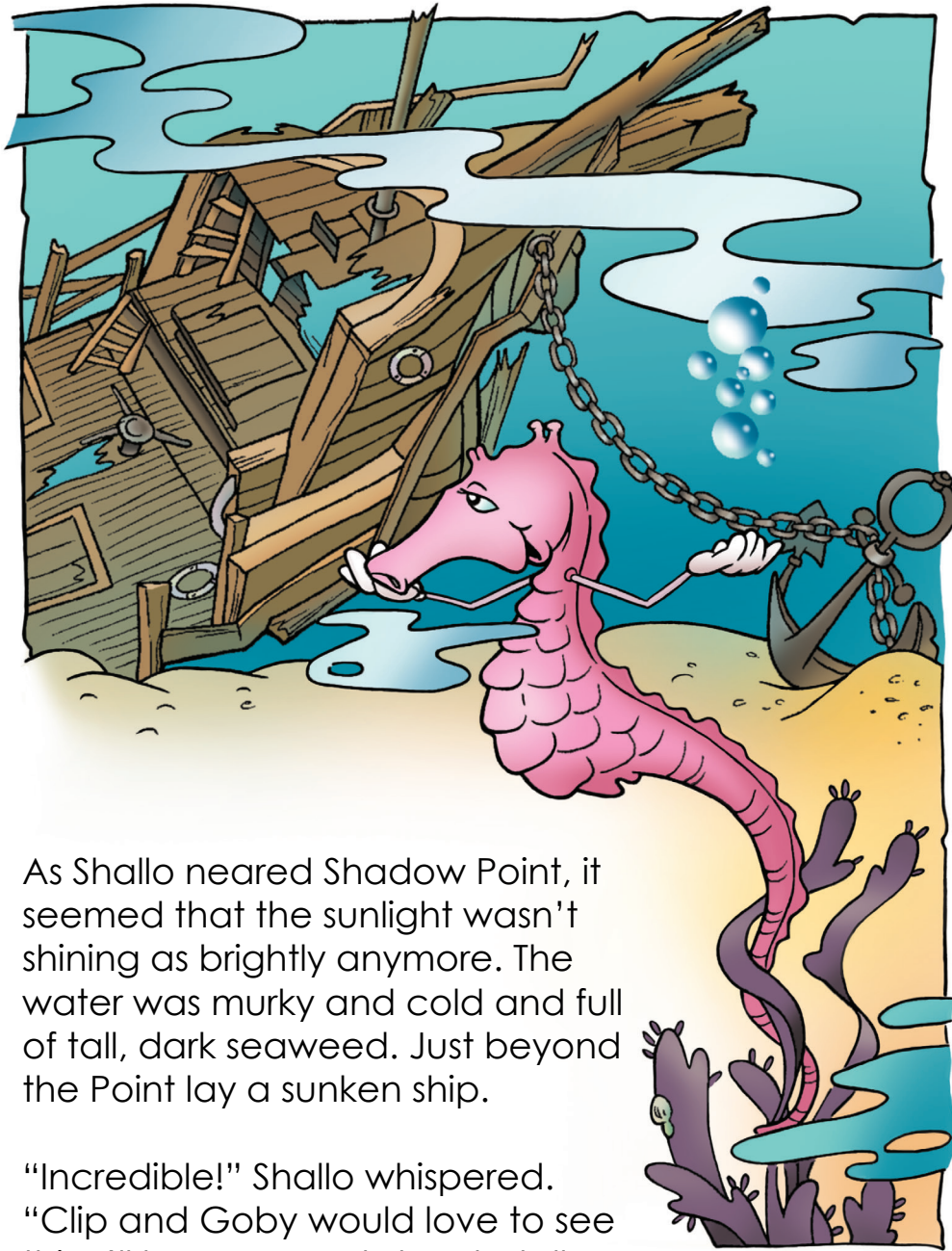
Shadow Point lay on the outskirts of the Kingdom of Shadda. All the mermaids, mermen, and fish stayed away from Shadow Point.

Shallo's parents had told him not to go there. It was a dangerous place.

*I'll bet it's not really that dangerous. They're just trying to scare me, thought Shallo. It'll be fun! I can look around and see what it's like there, and then I can tell my friends about it. They'll be so impressed!*

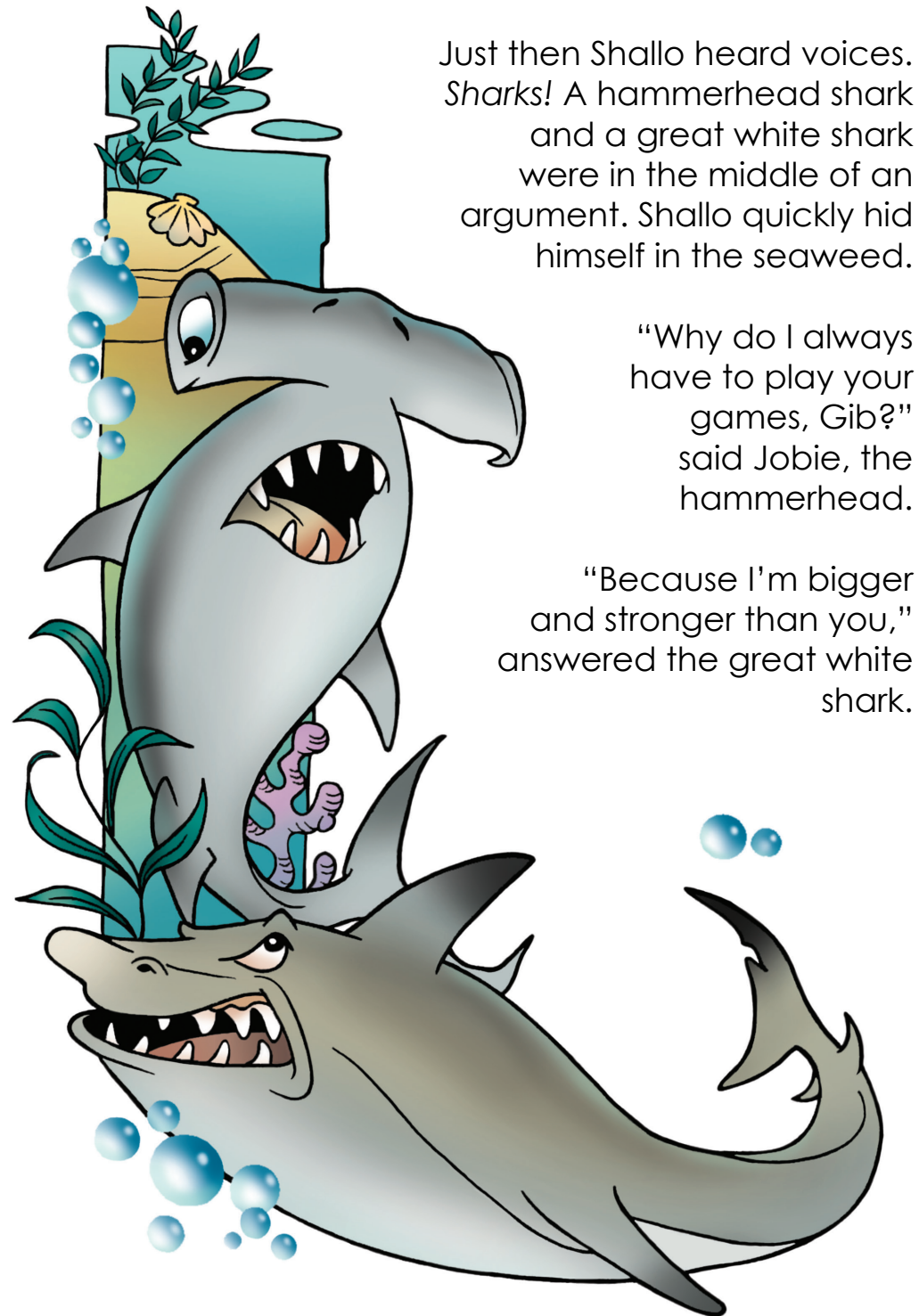
Shallo checked to see if anyone was nearby, then he swam toward Shadow Point. He didn't want anyone to see him.





As Shallo neared Shadow Point, it seemed that the sunlight wasn't shining as brightly anymore. The water was murky and cold and full of tall, dark seaweed. Just beyond the Point lay a sunken ship.

"Incredible!" Shallo whispered. "Clip and Goby would love to see this. I'll have a great story to tell them."



Just then Shallo heard voices. Sharks! A hammerhead shark and a great white shark were in the middle of an argument. Shallo quickly hid himself in the seaweed.

"Why do I always have to play your games, Gib?" said Jobie, the hammerhead.

"Because I'm bigger and stronger than you," answered the great white shark.



"I don't think that's fair!" responded Jobie. "You may be big and strong, but I'm much faster than you."

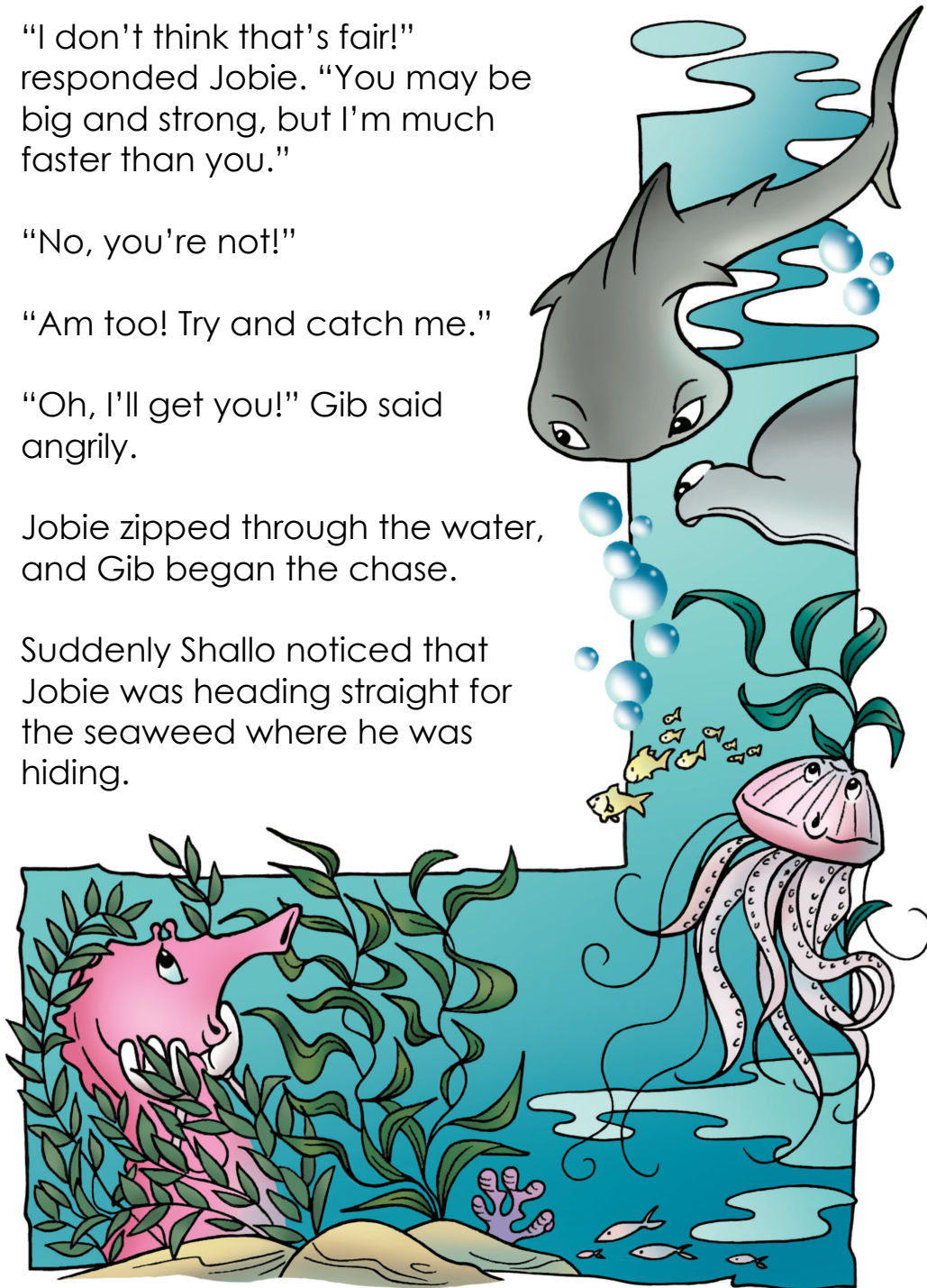
"No, you're not!"

"Am too! Try and catch me."

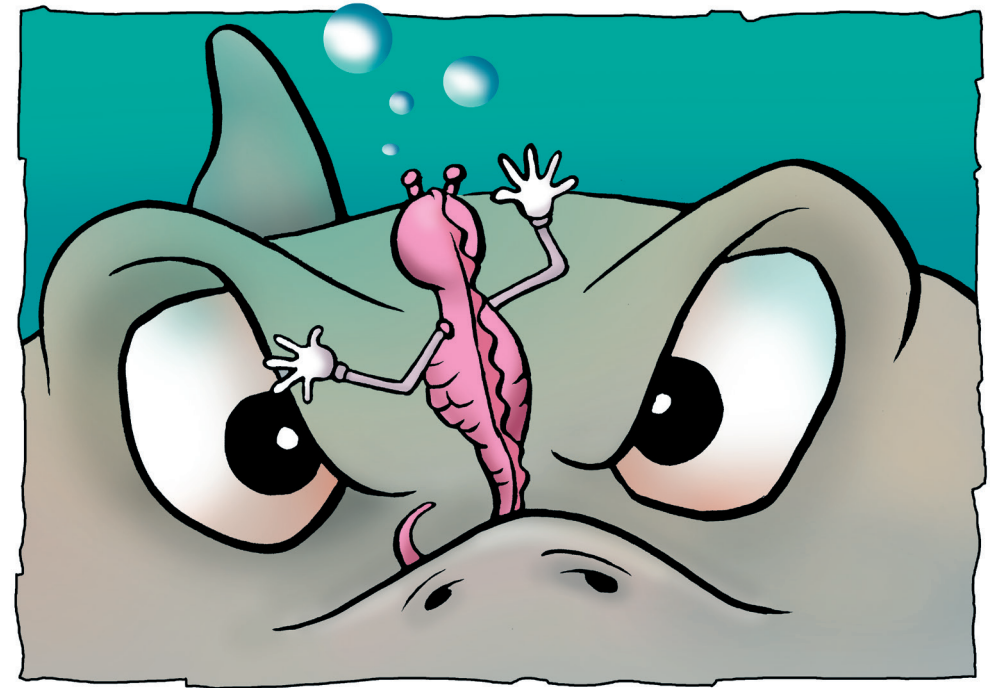
"Oh, I'll get you!" Gib said angrily.

Jobie zipped through the water, and Gib began the chase.

Suddenly Shallo noticed that Jobie was heading straight for the seaweed where he was hiding.



As fast as he could, Shallo climbed up the seaweed. But when Jobie raced through the seaweed, it caused Shallo to lose his balance, and he landed right on Gib's snout.



"What have we here?" he asked. "A lovely little seahorse! Haven't you gone a little too far from home?"

"Didn't your parents ever tell you not to come to Shadow Point?" added Jobie.

Jobie and Gib laughed loudly.

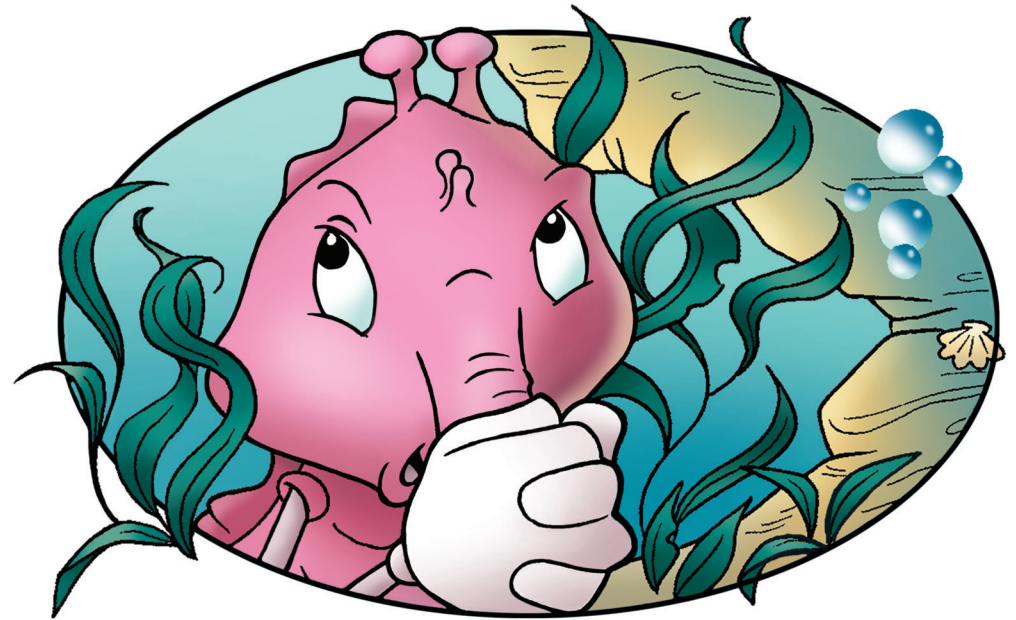
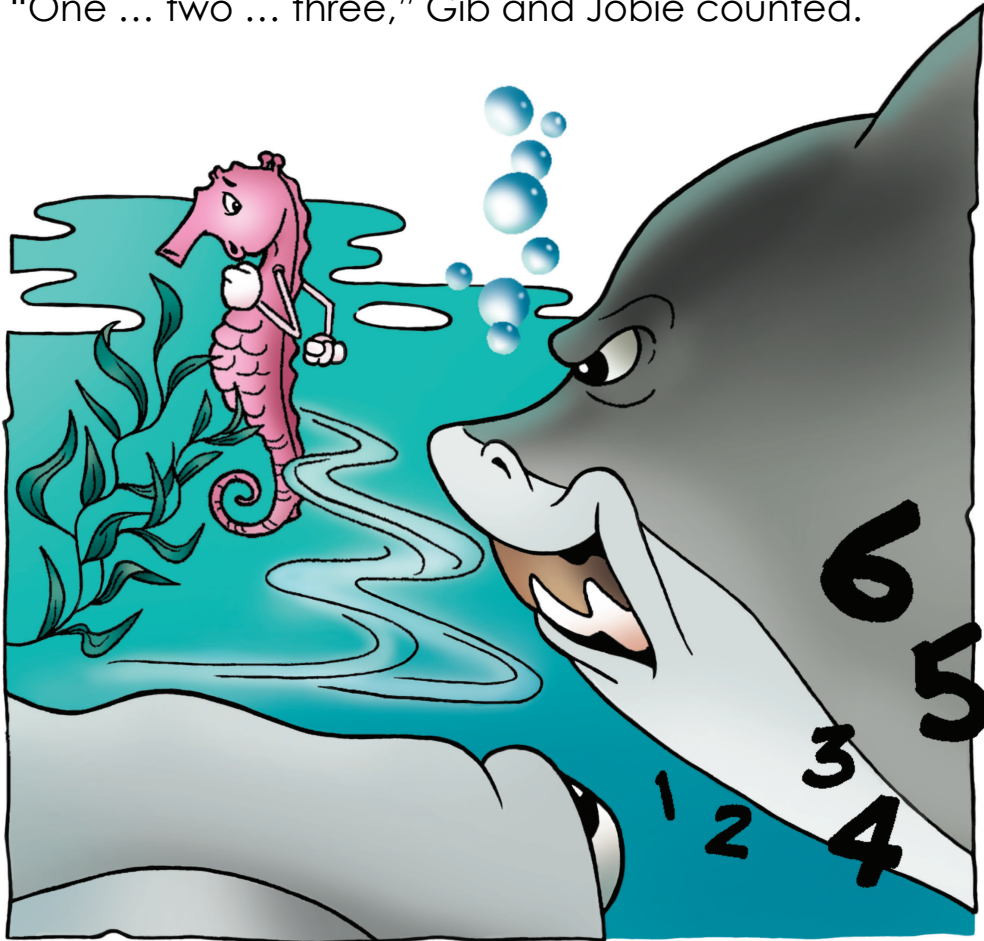
Poor Shallo shook in fear.

"Please don't eat me," Shallo said in a shaky voice.

"I know!" Jobie exclaimed. "Let's play a game with the seahorse. We can let him go, and then we'll count to twenty. While we're counting, the seahorse must hide, and then we'll find him."

"A game ... how fun! Are you ready, little seahorse? Swim your fastest."

"One ... two ... three," Gib and Jobie counted.



Shallo swam as quickly as he could toward a nearby coral reef, hoping to reach it before the sharks caught up with him.

"Nineteen ... twenty! Here we come," chorused Gib and Jobie as they went to find Shallo.

Shallo had just reached the reef. He managed to squeeze himself into a little gap where he hoped the sharks couldn't get him.

Shallo prayed, "I'm so sorry, God, for not listening to my parents when they told me not to come here. Please help me now. Help the sharks not to get me."



Jobie and Gib circled the reef, searching for Shallo. "Oh, seahorse, where are you?" they called.

Shallo sat silently.

After many minutes of searching, neither of the two sharks could find Shallo.

"That's why you don't choose the games. You choose silly games that aren't any fun," Gib said angrily.

"It was a good game!" Jobie shouted. "You're just angry because the seahorse got away."

"Yes, I am. And don't you make me angrier."

The two sharks swam off, arguing as they went.

Shallo heaved a sigh of relief. "Thank You, God, for protecting me. I promise to be more obedient and to listen when my parents tell me things."



Carefully he made his way back home. *I've got a good story to tell the others, he thought. I've sure learned my lesson about obeying what I'm told.*



"Poor Shallo! That was scary!" said Tristan. "I'm glad that the sharks didn't find him."

"Yes, but if he had obeyed in the first place, he wouldn't have found himself in danger," added Grandpa Jake.

"Now I understand why I need to obey more," Tristan said, "even if it's something I don't want to do or don't understand. I'll be happier if I obey."

"And you'll probably keep yourself out of trouble as well," said Grandpa Jake. "By the way, your room looks so nice and tidy. Thank you for being obedient and cleaning it."

Tristan reached over and gave Grandpa Jake a hug.

"I'm glad I made you happy by obeying too."

