



Yes You Can, Kerry

by Jason Max Appelbaum
illustrated by Robert Nicol

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It was the first day of school. Nine young fish were gathered there. Most clustered in a shell waiting for the teacher. Kerry Kipper just wandered around.



🔊 Mrs. Finn raced in. “Good day, class,” she began. “I’m sorry I’m late. We swam into some amazing waves.”



🔊 Mrs. Finn read out the names of the class members. Then she said, “Line up behind me. We will practice swimming in a circle.”

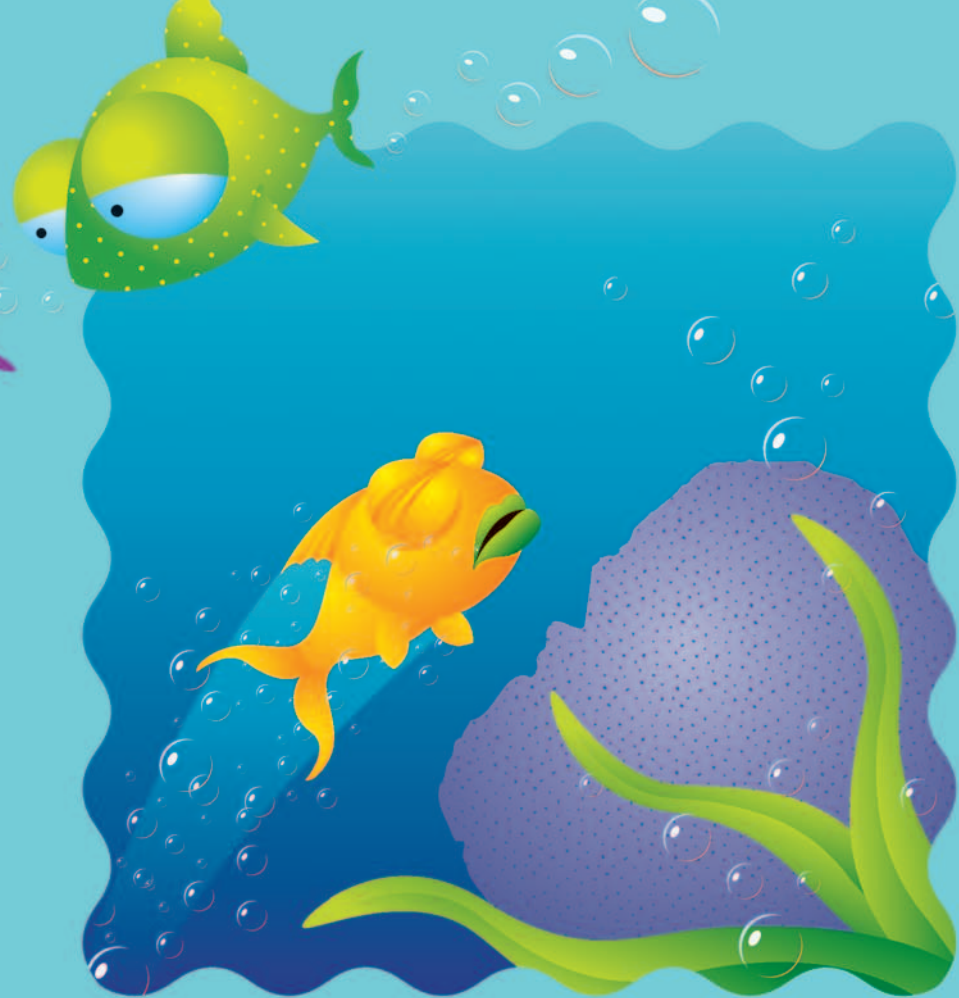


Eight of the fish got into a perfect line.
They raced around a large, flat rock.

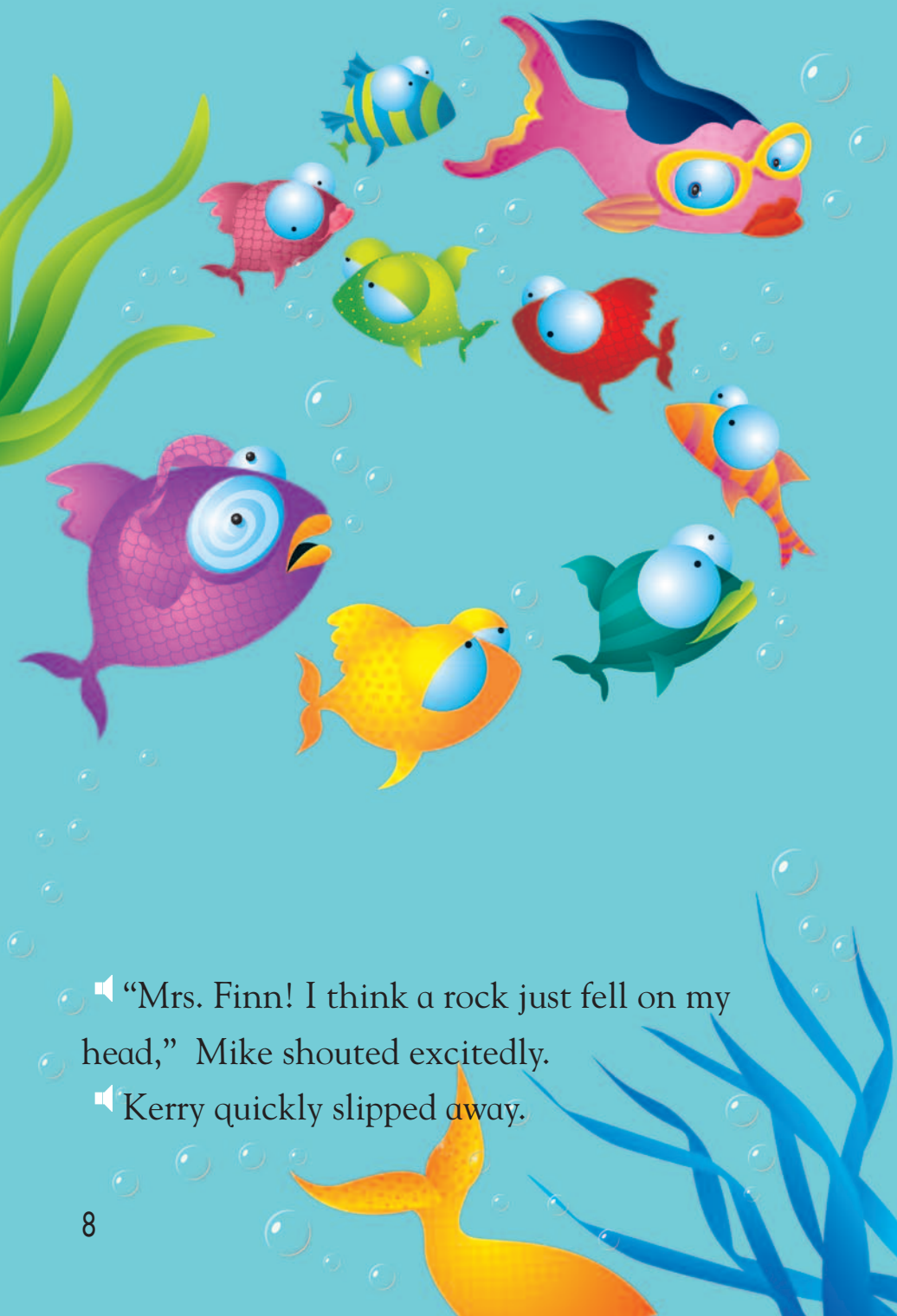
Kerry Kipper, however, swam the other way.
He wandered in and out among his classmates.
Then he bumped into Patty Perch.



- ▶ “Look where you’re going!” Patty snapped.
- ▶ “You made me get out of line.”
- ▶ “I’m sorry,” said Kerry.



▮ He tried to swim behind the others, but it was no use. With just a few flips of his fins, Kerry was out of line again. He crashed right into Mike Mullet.



“Mrs. Finn! I think a rock just fell on my head,” Mike shouted excitedly.

Kerry quickly slipped away.



❏ Kerry was in such a hurry to get away that he didn't look where he was swimming. He found himself nose-to-nose with the biggest, meanest fish in class.

❏ "Move!" shouted Walter Whitefish.



■ The class was now trying to swim in a pattern. Kerry tried to join in, but he didn't know how to start.

■ “Kerry,” said Mrs. Finn, “you are not ready for this. Please practice swimming in circles.”



❏ Kerry blushed. Now all the other fish knew he could not do what they did. He sank down low. He looked at the fish clustered above him.

❏ All of a sudden, he felt a fin brush his back.



“Don’t worry,” whispered Maxie Minnow.

“If you want, I’ll show you the pattern after school.”



🔊 A moment later, Patty Perch was swimming next to him.

🔊 “I wish I could swim like you,” whispered Patty. “You look fast and strong.”



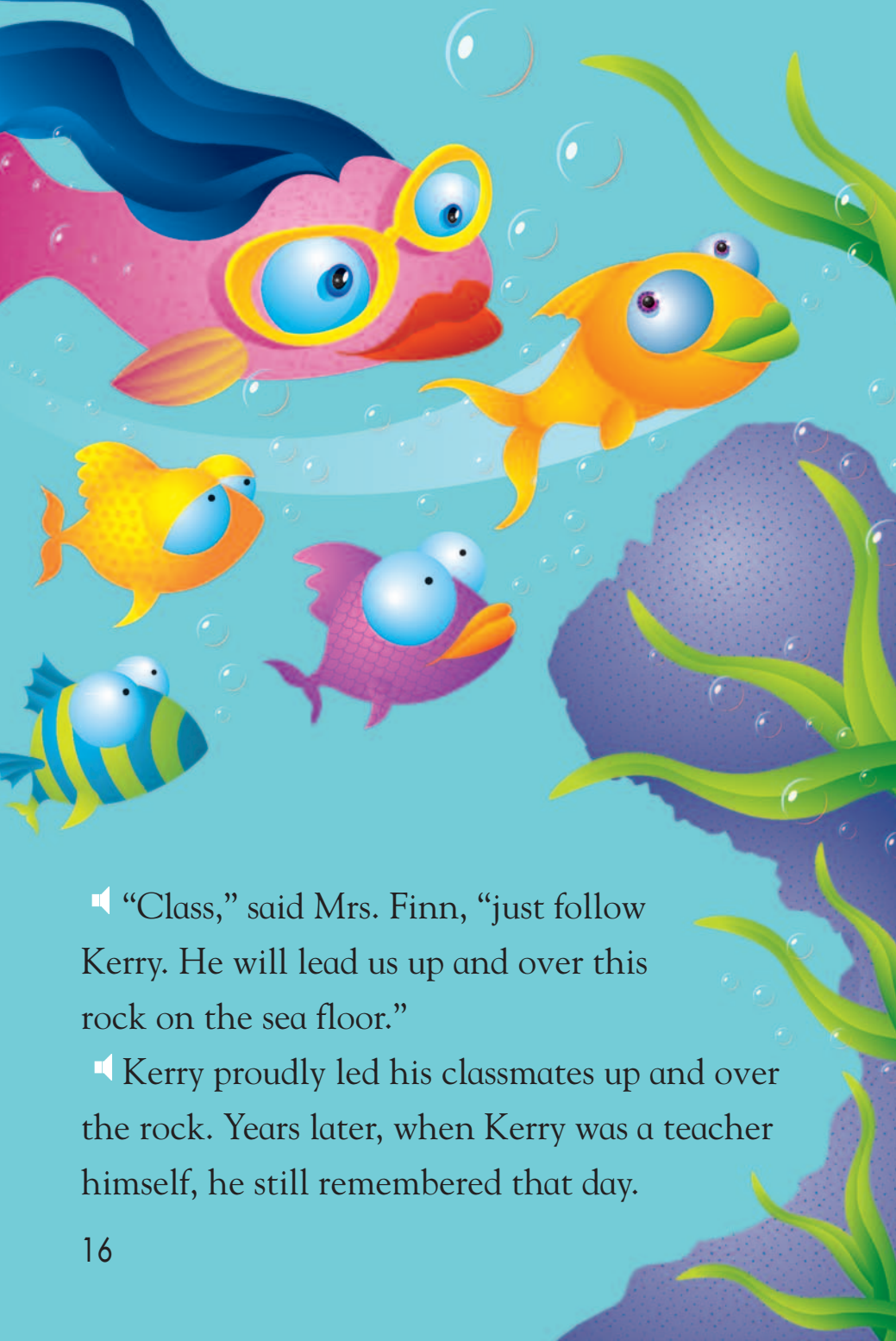
❏ Kerry was so happy, he didn't look where he was going. He smacked right into Walter Whitefish's tail.

❏ "Oops!" Kerry said. Walter snorted bubbles into Kerry's face and swam away.



❏ Kerry had friends now. Before long, he was well liked. Now he wanted to fit in. He tried hard to follow Mrs. Finn. When he tried hard, he got things right.







❏ One day Mrs. Finn realized how well Kerry was doing.



“Class,” said Mrs. Finn, “just follow Kerry. He will lead us up and over this rock on the sea floor.”

Kerry proudly led his classmates up and over the rock. Years later, when Kerry was a teacher himself, he still remembered that day.

Think and Respond

-  **1** What is Kerry's problem?
-  **2** How does Kerry feel about his clumsiness?
-  **3** What is the main idea of the story?
-  **4** How do you know that Kerry is happy at the end of the story?
-  **5** Compare Kerry's feelings at the beginning and at the end of the story.
-  **6** What is something you learned to do at school that you couldn't always do?



Think Tank Study several kinds of fish in a tank. Draw each kind in a chart. Write about each.



School-Home Connection A *school* is a group of fish that swims together. With a family member, list other animal groups names, such as *pack of wolves* and *pod of whales*.