



EK BOOKS TEACHER NOTES & RESOURCES

Title: This is NOT a Book!

Author: Kellie Byrnes

Illustrator: Aśka

Publisher: EK Books

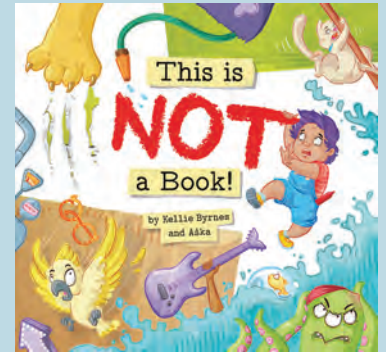
Price: ANZ \$24.99 | USA \$18.99 | CA \$24.99 | UK £10.99

ISBN: 9781925820508

Publication date: June 2021

Audience age: 4-8 years

Key Curriculum Areas: English, Science, The Arts



SYNOPSIS:

In this fun-filled, action-packed picture book, our main character is quite convinced they're not in a book. After all, if this were a book, there'd be pages to turn ... Oops! We've just turned the page. But that's not conclusive proof this is a book. If it were a book, there'd be interesting settings and problems to solve. Hold on! Why is our lead character being chased by a lion? Why are pirates stealing treasure? And are those mermaids playing in a rock band?

This is NOT a Book! is the perfect introduction for kids to how a book is structured and how to tell a good story. It's metafiction made fun!

THEMES:

Storytelling. Imagination. Creativity. Self-Confidence. New Ideas. Identity.

SELLING POINTS:

- A humorous, action-packed story that introduces kids to the structure of a book and elements of good storytelling in an engaging, easy-to-understand way.
- Demonstrates the joy of creativity and imagination.
- A stubborn, strong-willed character hilariously brought to life by the illustrator behind the bestselling *My Storee* and *The Incurable Imagination*.

WRITING STYLE:

The style of this picture book is humorous, light and a little tongue-in-cheek – yet with layers to pick up on with every reading. It's a character-driven meta-fiction story that breaks the fourth wall throughout. It asks readers to ponder the meaning behind both the text and the illustrations, rather than handing them a clear-cut message.

The writing style is intended to be reasonably fast-paced. The main character (if they are one!) investigates who they are and their place in their increasingly mayhem-filled and changing world. The illustrations help bring the continuing developments and action of the story to life, highlighting the fact that both the character and reader aren't ever quite sure what's "real". This is a story designed to have children investigate and analyse.



ILLUSTRATION STYLE:

I created the illustrations digitally, using a computer. I drew with a Wacom pen and tablet, which is very similar to drawing with a pencil on a piece of paper, except the lines I made were captured on the computer screen.

I scanned and photographed various materials such as paper, card and packing boxes, and then used them as textures within the illustrations.

The text of the book looks like it has been created on a typewriter and then glued onto the pages. This makes the character appear to be the author of a makeshift book, something which is further emphasized with the thick red crayon 'NOT'.

The squares of brown and green card seen on half of the pages act like homemade panels within which the musings of our character take place. They are like visual islands for our protagonist to sit against, breaking up the harsh whiteness of the pages below. In contrast, the action scenes are set on fully coloured spreads (two opposing pages), with no white background in sight.

These two visual approaches remind us of the rivalling point of views, one: that the story is a pre-written book, printed with ink on white paper and the other: that it is the character who is in fact living between the pages and is in full control of where the next one will take us.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

This was a story where the title popped into my head one day while walking my dogs (when I'm often at my most creative). Once the title was there, I soon saw the main character in my mind. They seemed so bossy and stubborn right away that I giggled to myself and knew I had to work out what their story was. So far, this is the most fully-formed a character has ever arrived in my head! I really wanted to write their story and find out where it led. I had a lot of fun with it along the way!

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Kellie Byrnes is a children's author, freelance writer, and presenter with a BA degree in Literature. Her first picture book, *Cloud Conductor*, was published in 2018, and two more of her picture books came out in 2020: *Evie is all Ears* and *One Remarkable Reef*. Kellie has other books due for release between 2021-2022 and is constantly coming up with ideas for new stories. Kellie was an Artist-in-Residence at "The Crow's Nest" in Queensland for four months in 2019. Kellie has been a full-time freelance writer for over 7 years, creating a variety of content for clients around the world. Her career experience also includes time working in marketing and PR, bookshops, and the editorial and sales departments of publishers.

Aśka is an award-winning illustrator, artist and scientist, with a passion for visual literacy. As an Arts and Physics graduate, she has lived all over the world but now calls Australia home. She has been telling stories through pictures all of her life and believes it to be a very important skill in the modern world. Through her illustrations, Aśka loves to create energetic characters with a curious streak — the best type of friend to take on an adventure uncovering the wonderfully diverse and inspiring world around us.



INTERVIEW:

AUTHOR

What is the inspiration for this story?

The inspiration for this story started with the title and the character. Once I had those things, I HAD to know where they led. Pretty early on, I realised that this could be a fun metafiction manuscript that explored all the elements of a story from a stubborn character's point of view.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

I'm usually driven by plot more than character, so I loved having a strong character to work with right from the start for this project. I wish they came to me so clearly for every other project!

I enjoyed pulling all the story threads together and the satisfaction of finally making it all work in a cohesive way. Plus, who doesn't like letting loose, having fun, and seeing what kinds of extreme situations they can put their character in, knowing that character also gets a chance to react afterwards?!

Another rewarding factor for me was seeing the amazing illustrations. I couldn't believe how what had been in my head for so long came to life so brilliantly on the page with funny, bright, inventive, fresh artwork. I couldn't stop smiling when I saw it all finished, in colour, almost like a living, breathing world of its own!

It's so important for children to understand stories and how they function. I'm thrilled that this book, combining story, metafiction, artwork, visual literacy, and other elements can help them do that in a fun way. Plus, I think adults will enjoy reading this aloud to young readers!

What was the most challenging part of this project?

The most challenging part of this project was working out how to effectively tie all the different threads of the story together in a funny way that was open to interpretation but not too confusing. It needed to make sense, yet allow readers the chance to bring their own ideas and personalities to every reading.

I also had to ensure there wasn't so much happening on each page that the illustrator couldn't possibly address it all! I did quite a few storyboards (with terrible sketches, I might add!) to try to visualise how it might all work once illustrated. This task helped a lot.

On top, I had to ensure that the character stayed consistent throughout. My story definitely needed simplifying at different stages. Needless to say, I have many earlier versions of this manuscript, on both paper and my computer, that show how much revision I did along the way to get to the final text!



ILLUSTRATOR

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

This was a fantastic project to illustrate. The perpetual building of the character's resolve and the chaos that grows around them quickly created a rhythm and a visual thread in my mind. This helped to make the illustrations for the book come together relatively quickly.

I imagined the protagonist running through the pages of the book in a frenzied race, picking up and dropping various objects and hints as they went, leaving bread-crumbs trails for the readers to find and ponder.

I was able to sustain this energy and joy throughout the project and this made it especially rewarding and fun.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

The most challenging part of the project was visually conveying the two opposing views of the book, planting the seeds of doubt in the young readers' minds.

Is the character in this story a real child, playing in their backyard and making up stories on the fly with cards and crayons? Or are they a protagonist in a real book, carefully planned and written by an author?

The aspect on which I spent the most time was juxtaposing the white page, typed up text and craft materials with the fully coloured picture book illustrations, to find the balance and rhythm of this metafiction.

Why do you illustrate books?

I love to tell stories using images, which is why comics, animations and picture books are so close to my heart.

I believe that being able to read pictures is just as important as reading words. Together, words and pictures are very powerful and can communicate ideas faster and better than any long essay. Our world is full of images, advertising, signs, logos and emojis. These influence the way we feel, what we buy and what we like. So, understanding how visual communication works and what impact it can have on the reader should be part of our learning journey.

In *This is NOT a Book*, the character is the driving force behind the elements of the story, while the settings are ever changing and sometimes abstract. This is why I had to make sure the protagonist was very emotive and expressive.

I also used visual techniques to break down the 'fourth wall' and make the main character aware of their role in the pictures. Carefully chosen elements of layout and design show the protagonist interacting with the book and the materials that it's made from.



TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

Discussion Notes and Activities:

N.B. These questions and activities can be adapted to suit the experience and ability of students.

Before Reading

- Look at the cover of *This is NOT a Book!*. What are some of the things you have noticed? Why do you think the word 'NOT' is written that way?
- How might the child on the cover be feeling? How do you know?
- Considering the title, do you think this is a true story? Is the title trying to trick us? Is this really NOT a book?
- What do you think this story might be about?
- What are some of your favourite books and characters?
- What are some things you know about books and stories?
- What are some elements you need to think about when writing your own story?

During Reading

- What do you think is happening?
- Why does the character think they're not in the book? Do you think they will realise they're in the book?
- Discuss what you can see and think about the stages of the story.

After Reading

- What was the story about?
- What did you learn about the main character? Why do you think they thought they were real and not made-up? Do you think they realised they were a character in a book? When did they realise they had the power to change the narrative?
- How has the author chosen to write the story? Whose point of view is the story from? Do you think the language used suits this character? Who is the character talking to?
- What are the main parts of a story? What did you learn about them?
- Discuss how the story showed different settings, the action that took place, the problems and how the character solved them. What the last thing that happened?
- What do you like about the illustrations?
- What do you notice about the materials the illustrator has used? Do you think these fit with the style of story?
- How has the illustrator used expression to show how the character/s is/are feeling?
- What are some elements seen in the pictures that are not spoken in the words? Do you notice any odd or out-of-place things seen in the different settings?
- What was your favourite part of this story? Why?
- If you were in a book, what action would you choose to feature? What would your problem be, and how would you solve it?
- Are there any other things that make for a good story? What are they?



ACTIVITIES:

ENGLISH

Foundation Curriculum Links

Text structure and organisation: Understand that texts can take many forms, can be very short (for example an exit sign) or quite long (for example an information book or a film) and that stories and informative texts have different purposes ([ACELA1430](#))

Understand that some language in written texts is unlike everyday spoken language ([ACELA1431](#))

Understand that punctuation is a feature of written text different from letters; recognise how capital letters are used for names, and that capital letters and full stops signal the beginning and end of sentences ([ACELA1432](#))

Understand concepts about print and screen, including how books, film and simple digital texts work, and know some features of print, for example directionality ([ACELA1433](#))

Expressing and developing ideas: Recognise that texts are made up of words and groups of words that make meaning ([ACELA1434](#))

Literature and context: Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences ([ACELT1575](#))

Responding to literature: Respond to texts, identifying favourite stories, authors and illustrators ([ACELT1577](#))

Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts ([ACELT1783](#))

Examining literature: Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text ([ACELT1578](#))

Recognise some different types of literary texts and identify some characteristic features of literary texts, for example beginnings and endings of traditional texts and rhyme in poetry ([ACELT1785](#))

Creating literature: Retell familiar literary texts through performance, use of illustrations and images ([ACELT1580](#))

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Identify some differences between imaginative and informative texts ([ACELY1648](#))

Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently ([ACELY1650](#))

Creating texts: Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge ([ACELY1651](#))

Years 1 and 2 Curriculum Links

Language variation and change: Understand that spoken, visual and written forms of language are different modes of communication with different features and their use varies according to the audience, purpose, context and cultural background ([ACELA1460](#))

Text structure and organisation: Understand that the purposes texts serve shape their structure in predictable ways ([ACELA1447](#))

Recognise that different types of punctuation, including full stops, question marks and exclamation marks, signal sentences that make statements, ask questions, express emotion or give commands ([ACELA1449](#))

Understand concepts about print and screen, including how different types of texts are organised using page numbering, tables of content, headings and titles, navigation buttons, bars and links ([ACELA1450](#))

Expressing and developing ideas: Explore differences in words that represent people, places and things (nouns, including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs) ([ACELA1452](#))

Literature and context: Discuss how authors create characters using language and images ([ACELT1581](#))



TEACHER NOTES: This is NOT a Book!

Examining literature: Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways ([ACELT1591](#))

Creating literature: Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication ([ACELT1586](#))

Innovate on familiar texts by experimenting with character, setting or plot ([ACELT1833](#))

Interacting with others: Rehearse and deliver short presentations on familiar and new topics ([ACELY1667](#))

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Describe some differences between imaginative informative and persuasive texts ([ACELY1658](#))

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about key events, ideas and information in texts that they listen to, view and read by drawing on growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features ([ACELY1660](#))

Creating texts: Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements, for example illustrations and diagrams ([ACELY1661](#))

Comprehension - Story Sequencing:

- Thinking about the story, This is NOT a Book!, complete a sequencing activity of the beginning, middle and end. Retell/summarise the story using connectives like first, next and lastly. See the B-M-E Chart on BLM 1.

Story Writing Strategies:

To be used for This is NOT a Book! or your own story.

- Planning: Brainstorm ideas using a mind map or find pictures for inspiration. Write down all the words and phrases that come to mind relating to the given idea.
- Character Profile: Create a character profile to describe the protagonist's appearance, qualities, personality, specific behaviours, likes, dislikes, etc.
- Settings: List or describe your possible setting/s (time and place) – what can you see, feel, hear, touch, taste, or smell? You might like to draw a picture, create a collage or make a diorama of your scene.
- Action: Make dot points about some events that could happen in the story. Writing these on sticky notes could help you work out the order that makes the most sense.
- Problem: What will be the problem in the story? How does this relate to the character's problem? Brainstorm some possible things to go wrong!
- Solution: List or draw a few fun and/or clever ways to solve the problem. Will you trick the reader with something unexpected? How does the character come to this decision?
- Working on Hooks: How will your story begin? What narrative strategies will you use in your story? Some interesting story starters can include: an action to grab the reader's attention, onomatopoeia to bring the reader into the action, a question to get your reader thinking, dialogue to give the reader information about events or characters, or vivid descriptions of a scene, character or event. Find some of these in This is NOT a Book!. Have a go at writing your own example of each of these elements.
- Practising, Revising and Editing:
 - Revising – Complete a 5W+H checklist to determine if your story has included Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. Do you need to add, remove, move or substitute anything?



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- o Editing – Use different colour pens, labelled pop sticks, or sticky tabs to find and correct Capitalisation, Grammar/Understanding, Punctuation and Spelling. You might like to work with a partner to share your writing.
- How many different punctuation marks can you find in This is NOT a Book!?
- Storyboarding: On a storyboard template, or your own, plan out your story across the appropriate number of pages. Consider where you would like page-turns, and what illustrations are needed for each page. See BLM 2.

Creative Writing:

- Narrative/Book Making: Write your own version of This is NOT a Book! with yourself as the main character. Think about the perspective and write in first person. What is your goal? Are you trying to persuade the reader? Will your story be full of dangerous adventures, or will it be funny? Remember to include all the elements of a story – title, character, setting, action, problem, solution and end.
 - o Turn your story into a book with your own amazing illustrations! See Story Writing Strategies above.
- Draw a Story: Mix and match pictures from the book to create your own story page with a title. These can include: a child (character), a pirate ship (setting), a guitar or squirt gun (action), a monster (problem), an exit door (solution).
- Scripts/Readers' Theatre: Create a script from the story, This is NOT a Book! and act out the story as a group. You might like to use props and costumes for the different scenes and characters.

Exploring Text Types:

- Explore the structures of different text types, from fictional narratives to non-fiction texts, lists, procedural or explanation texts, expositions, persuasive writing and recounts.

Thinking Tools:

- Y-Chart: Organise your thoughts about a topic by writing and/or drawing what you would see, hear and feel if you were in one of the scenes from the book. See BLM 3.
- Venn Diagram: Compare the differences and similarities between topics like 'Fiction Books vs. Non-Fiction Books', 'Me vs. Book Character', 'Underwater vs. Outer Space', etc. See BLM 4.
- Concept Map: Organise and represent ideas about books in general or a particular story, such as This is NOT a Book! (title, pages, character, setting, action, problem, solution, end). See BLM 5.



SCIENCE

Foundation to Year 2 Curriculum Links

Earth and space sciences: Observable changes occur in the sky and landscape ([ACSSU019](#))

Physical sciences: The way objects move depends on a variety of factors, including their size and shape ([ACSSU005](#))

A push or a pull affects how an object moves or changes shape ([ACSSU033](#))

Nature and development of science: Science involves observing, asking questions about, and describing changes in, objects and events ([ACSHE013](#))

Questioning and predicting: Pose and respond to questions, and make predictions about familiar objects and events ([ACIS037](#))

Planning and conducting: Participate in guided investigations to explore and answer questions ([ACIS025](#))

Use informal measurements to collect and record observations, using digital technologies as appropriate ([ACIS026](#))

Processing and analysing data and information: Use a range of methods to sort information, including drawings and provided tables and through discussion, compare observations with predictions ([ACIS027](#))

Evaluating: Compare observations with those of others ([ACIS213](#))

Communicating: Represent and communicate observations and ideas in a variety of ways ([ACIS029](#))

Float or sink:

An object floats when the weight force on the object is balanced by the upward push of the water on the object. If the weight force down is larger than the upward push of the water on the object, it will sink.

- Given the underwater scenes in the book, children can learn what kinds of things float and sink. Explore materials of varying weights, shapes and contained air. Try to find items seen in the book, like shells, goggles, plastic toy animals, a boat, a bag of treasure, and so on.

Boats Afloat:

- Following on from the Float or Sink experiment, make a boat that can stay afloat using aluminium foil. What shape works the best? What do you notice about the amount of air within/surrounding your boat?
- Next, experiment with 'treasures' (coins, gems or glass marbles) to see how many can fit on your boat before it starts to sink. Write or discuss what you predict, what you observed and what you learned from the activity. What will you do differently next time?
- Try another boat material, such as playdough or modelling clay.

Investigating Gravity:

"I didn't mean outer space!"

Gravity is what keeps people and objects on the ground and causes objects to fall to the Earth.

- Gravity Drop – Collect several objects of various weights to investigate the force of gravity, such as a balloon, a crayon, a small ball, a piece of crumpled paper, etc. Use prior knowledge, prediction and observation to record your findings of dropping the objects to the ground.



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- Anti-Gravity Water Experiment – How do you fill a glass with water and turn it upside-down without spilling? Explore the STEM behind the forces of air pressure and gravity using card stock, several different-sized glasses and water. Observe the differences between glasses and amounts of water. An explanation of this experiment can be found here: <https://montessorifromtheheart.com/2019/09/09/upside-down-water-glass-trick>
- What does water do when there is no gravity? – When the force of gravity is not present, water will float, sticking together and making bubbles. What does this look like? Have a look at the astronaut videos from the International Space Station to investigate this further.
 - o Water moving in space: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_qPWZbxFl8
 - o Ringing out a washcloth in space: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8TssbmY-GM>

THE ARTS:

MUSIC

Foundation to Year 2 Curriculum Links

Develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion ([ACAMUM080](#))

Sing and play instruments to improvise, practise a repertoire of chants, songs and rhymes, including songs used by cultural groups in the community ([ACAMUM081](#))

Exploring Instruments:

- Gather a range of instruments, including some more obscure ones like seashells, cans or pots, to explore the different sounds they make. Can you tap or blow a beat to a piece of music? Can you determine a high note and a low note?

DRAMA

Foundation to Year 2 Curriculum Links

Explore role and dramatic action in dramatic play, improvisation and process drama ([ACADRM027](#))

Use voice, facial expression, movement and space to imagine and establish role and situation ([ACADRM028](#))

Present drama that communicates ideas, including stories from their community, to an audience ([ACADRM029](#))

Role Play:

- Imagine what you might see, hear, taste, smell, touch and feel in the following scenarios. Use your body and facial expressions. Pretend you are...
 - o Playing in a rock band
 - o Floating in outer space



TEACHER NOTES: This is NOT a Book!

- o Running from a hungry lion
- o A swashbuckling pirate
- o An angry mermaid rescuing a friend
- o Holding back a ferocious monster
- o Inside a candy factory

VISUAL ARTS

Foundation to Year 2 Curriculum Links

Use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks ([ACAVAM107](#))

Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience ([ACAVAM108](#))

Multi-media Collages:

- Using a range of materials, including cardboard, paint and pencil, create your favourite scene from This is NOT a Book!. You might like to paint your whole illustration on the cardboard itself, or cut out shapes to paste onto your paper.

Outer Space or Underwater Watercolour Art:

- Create an outer space or underwater picture with liquid watercolours, droppers, and salt. Paint your watercolour paper with water then use the dropper to splash the liquid watercolours onto it until completely covered. Sprinkle salt over the wet paint for an interesting effect. Once dry, you might like to draw and paste a character or two, and other features, onto your background.
- Collaborate all the pieces of art to create a class book.

BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END

TITLE

PAGE

OF

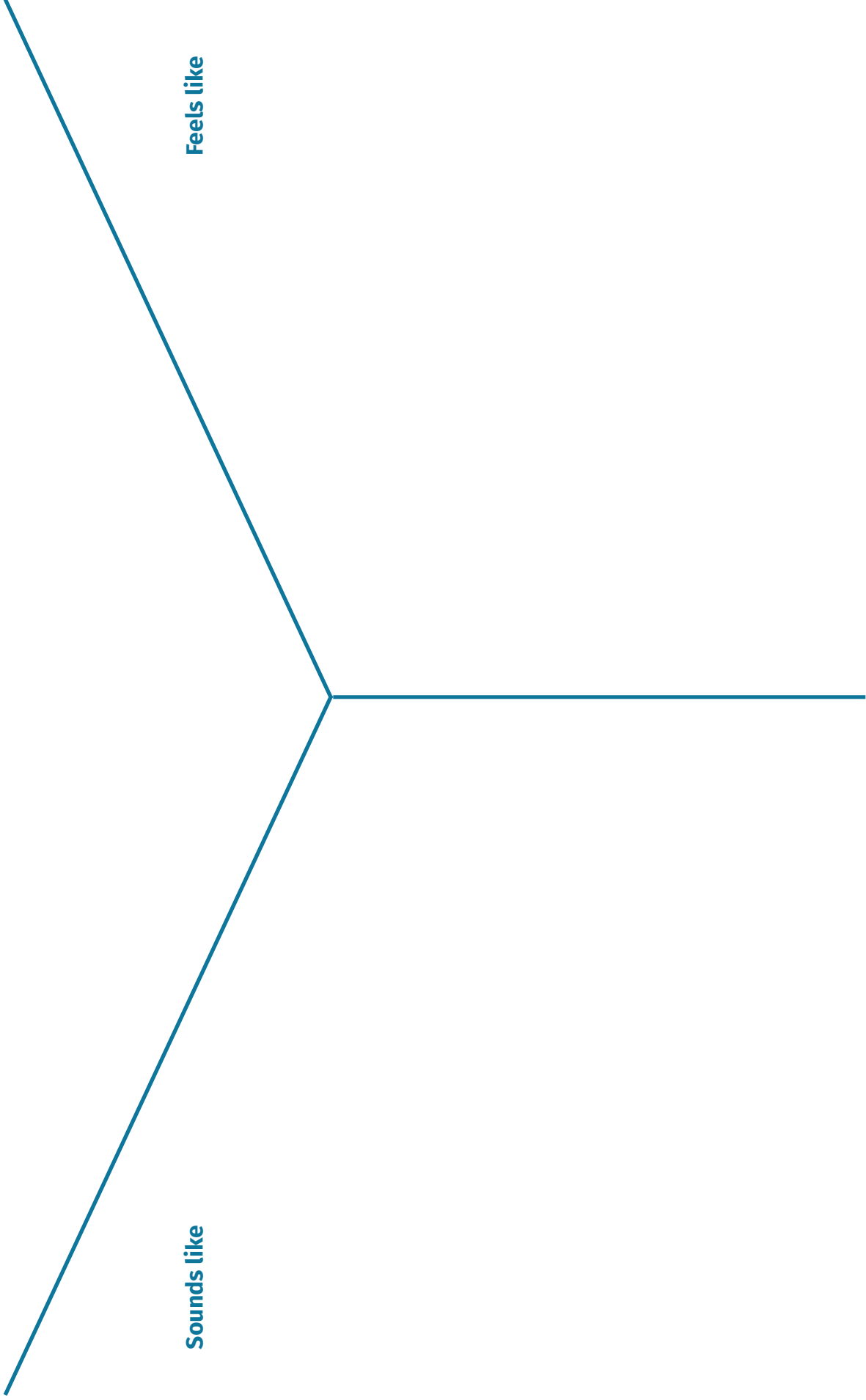
BLM 3

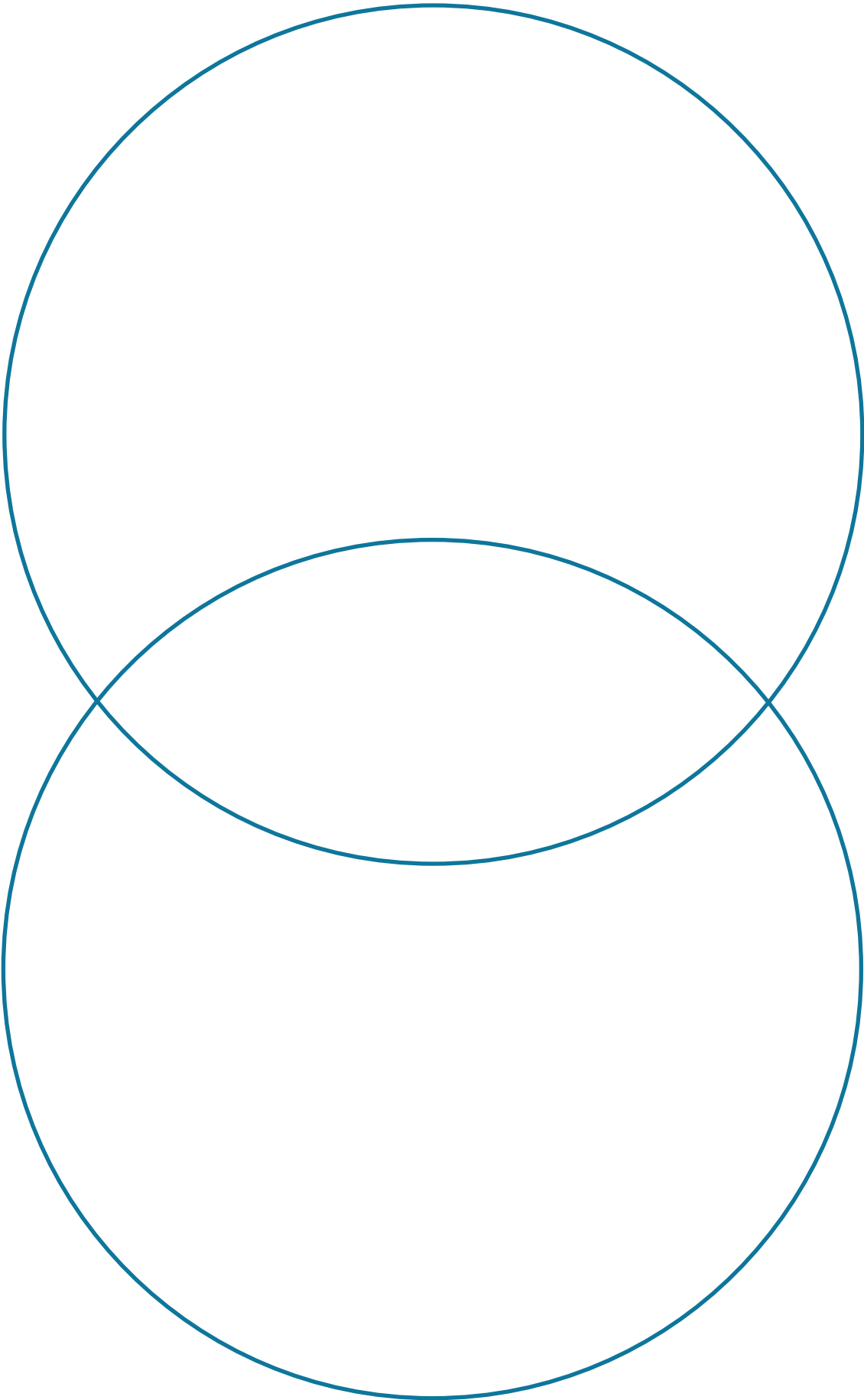
This is NOT a Book! by Kellie Byrnes and Áska

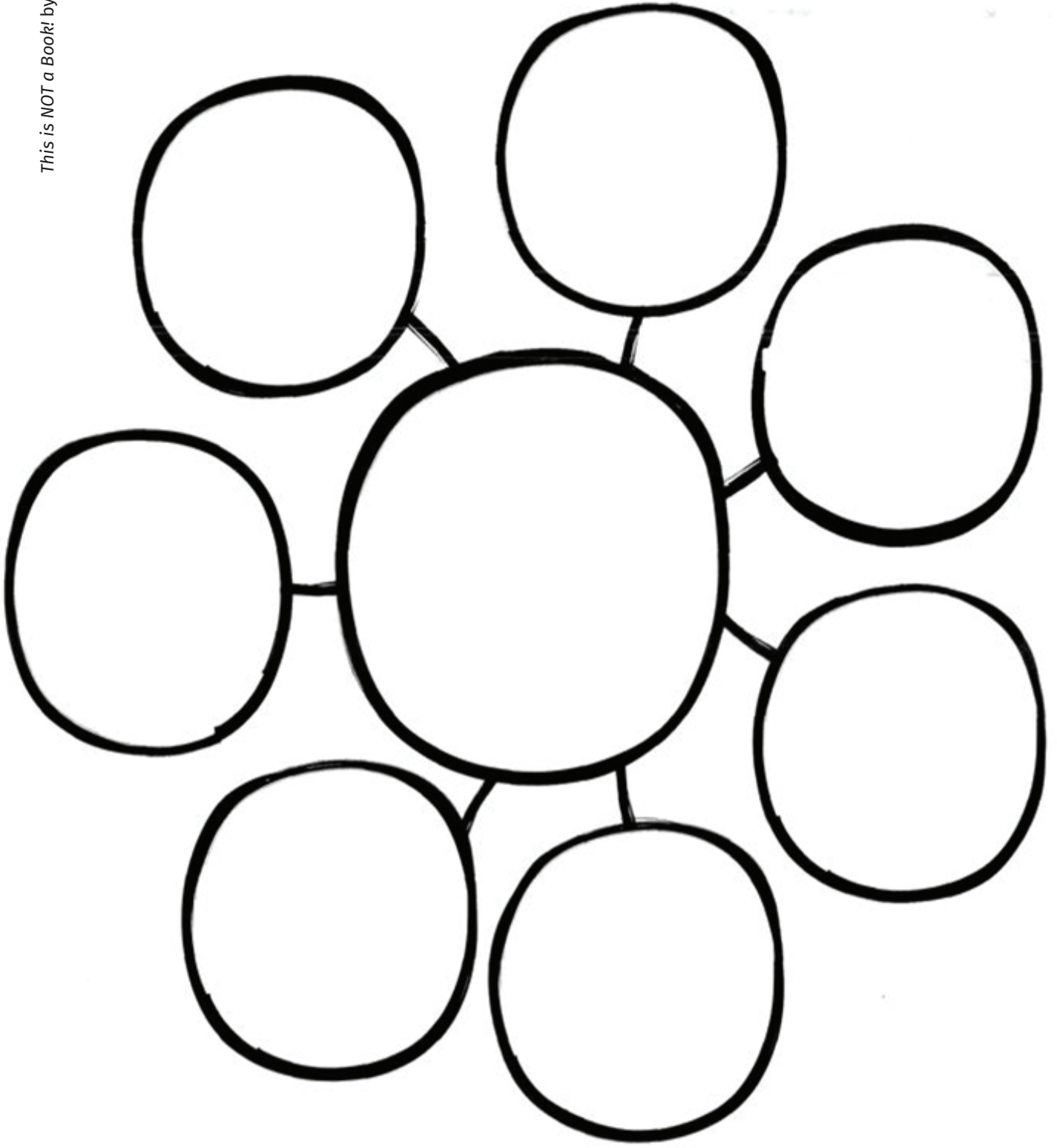
Looks like

Sounds like

Feels like





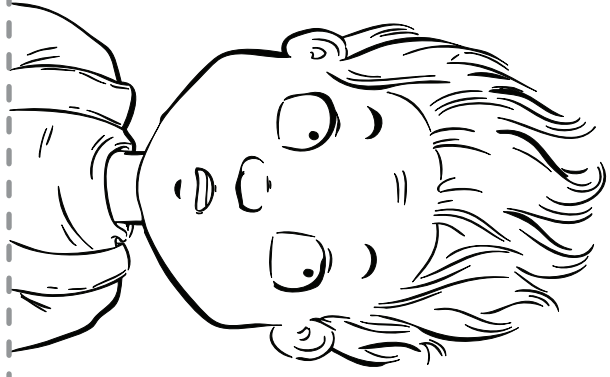
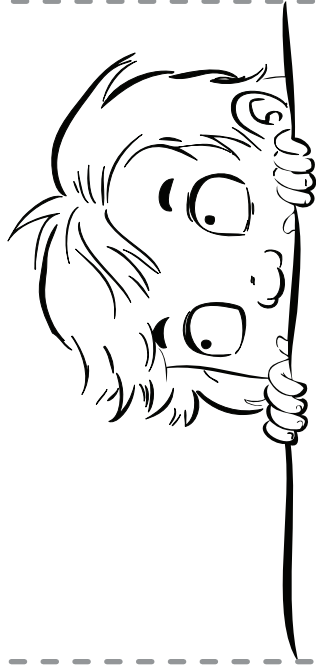


Cut out these 6 panels and order them into a BRAND NEW story.

What is the problem? How will the character solve it? What are they saying?

This is **NOT** a Book!

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and Áska



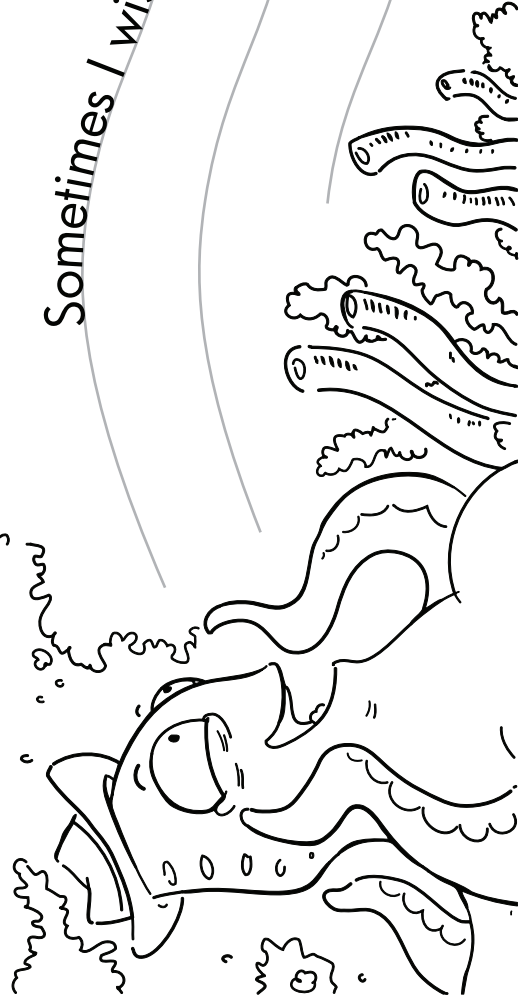
The Mermaids are singing a song.
Can you think of some more lyrics?

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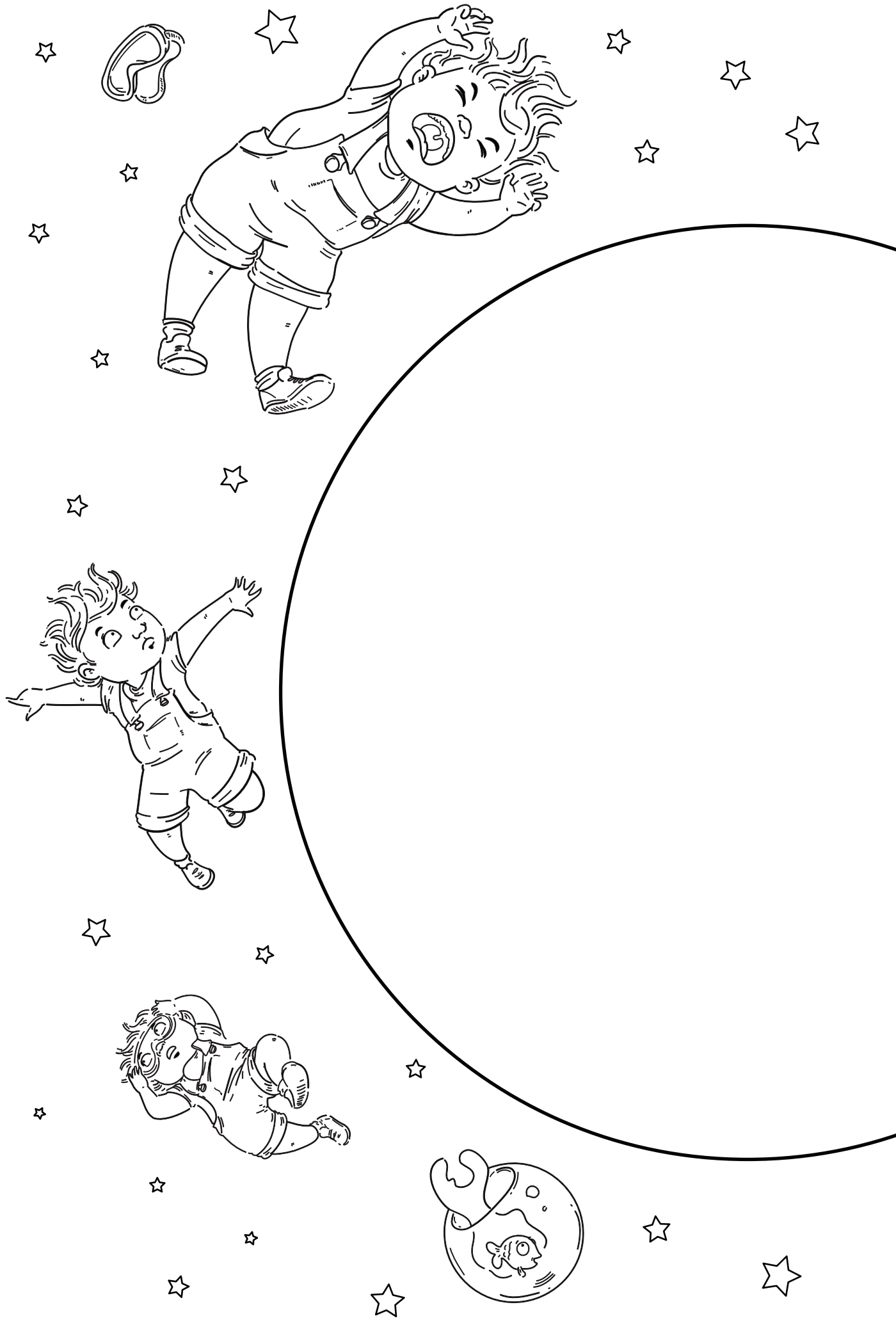
Sometimes I wish I could be a fish.



Our protagonist is orbiting a strange planet.
What is the planet made from? What's on it? Who lives there?

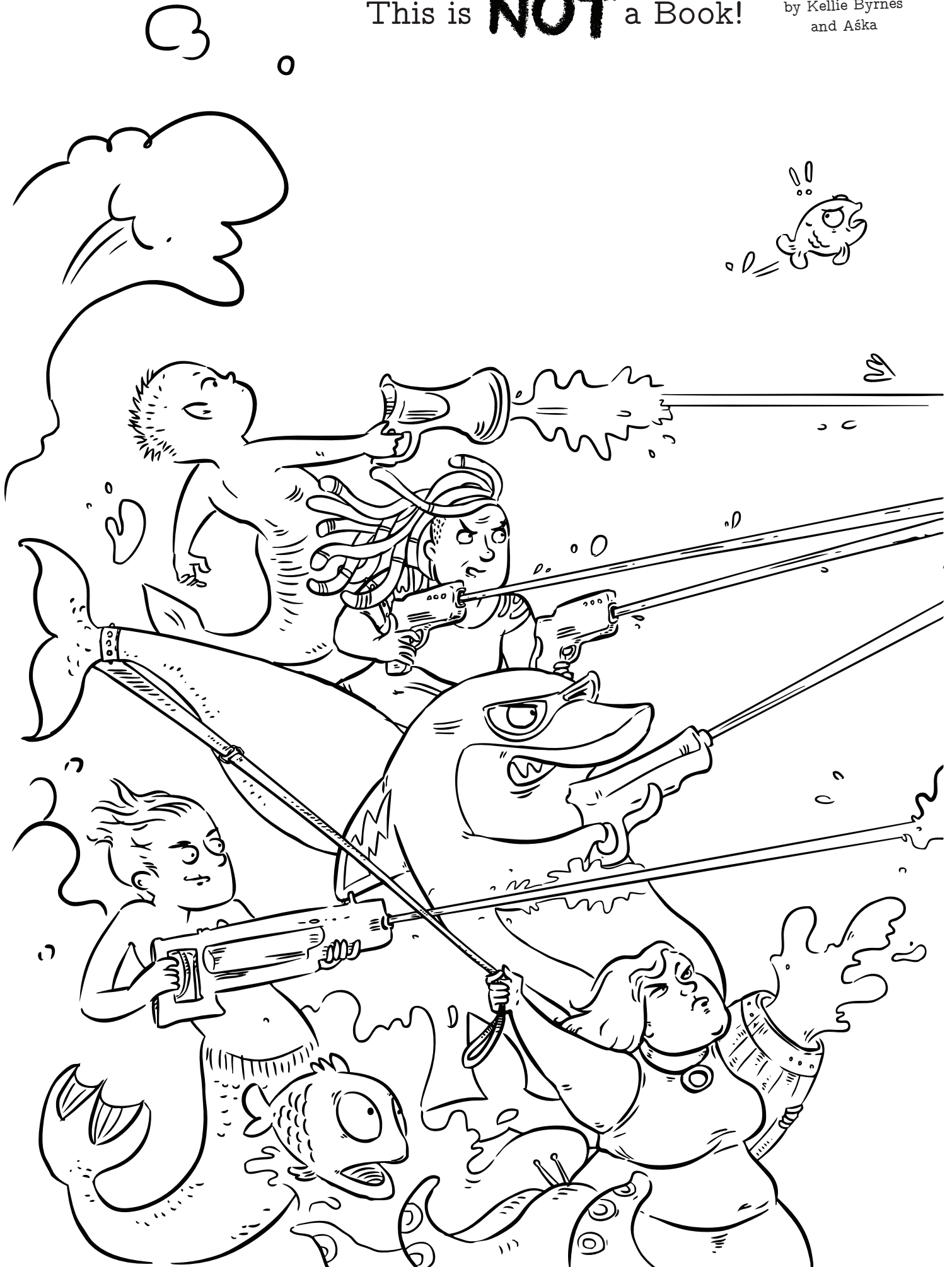
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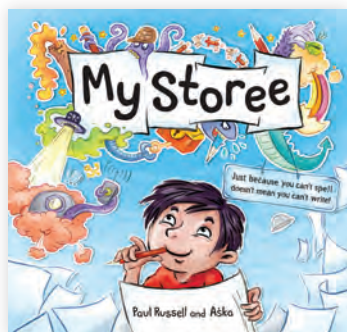


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