

Raju lived in the city. But every summer, when school was out, he headed straight for his Ajja's house in the village.

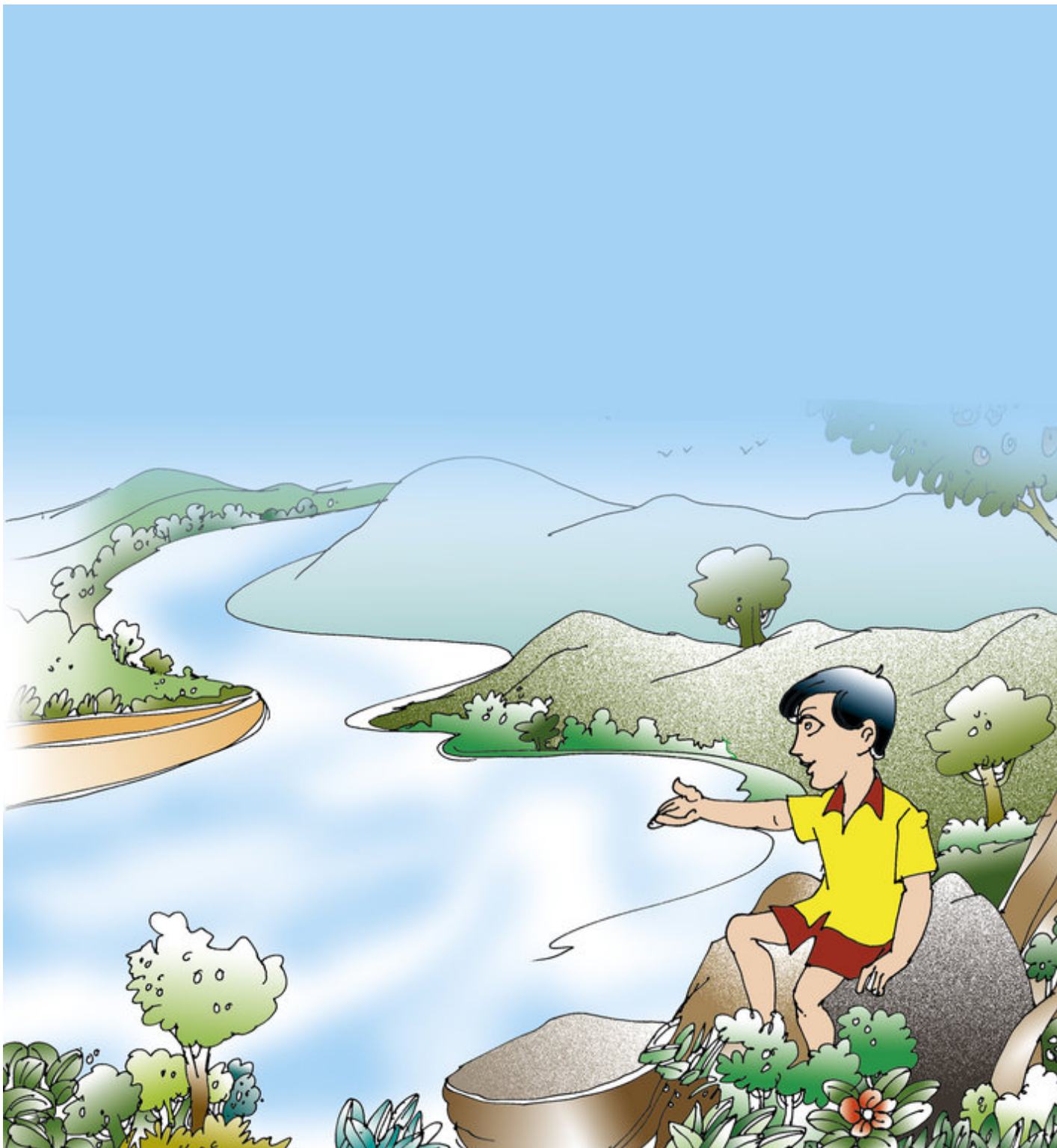
One summer, Raju decided it was time he learnt to swim.

"Ajja, I want to learn to swim," he said to his Ajja.

"Will you teach me?"

"That's wonderful!" said Ajja. "I shall take you down to the river tomorrow, and Mallanna Sir will teach you."



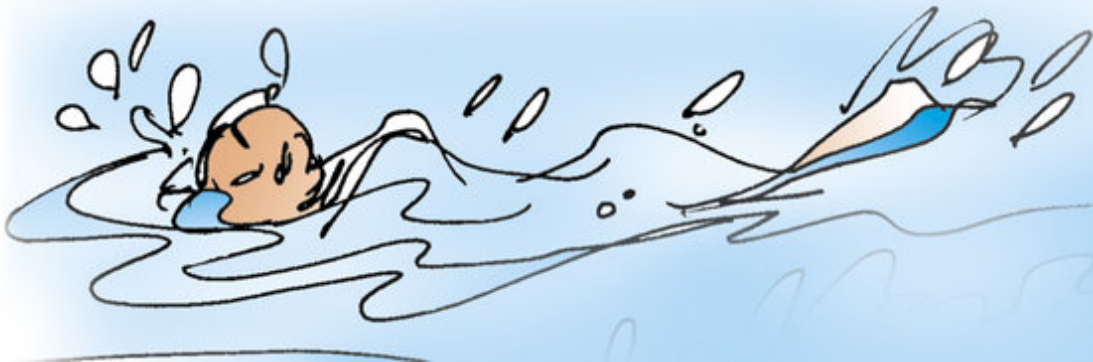


That night, Raju's dreams were full of happy thoughts about learning to swim.

When Raju and Ajja went down to the river the next morning, they saw that the river was full of children learning to swim. "Have you come to join Mallanna Sir's classes?" one of them called out to him.

"Yes," said Raju. "I want to learn to swim like you all. But I'm a little scared, sometimes..."

"Don't be," said the children. "Soon you will be swimming like a fish." Saying this, the children climbed on to the top of a rock and began to leap into the water one after the other. No sooner had they landed than they began swimming strongly.







Raju wasn't ready to jump in yet. He sat on the rock, dangling his feet in the cool water. Then he gave a sudden start: something was tickling his feet!

Looking down into the water, he saw that it was full of little fish - green ones, yellow ones, and brown ones. They all had long thin tails.





As he watched, Raju saw a large rainbow coloured fish swimming quickly up to him. "What are you doing here, Raju?" asked the fish.

"I want to learn to swim like you," answered Raju. "You are all such fabulous swimmers!"

The fish laughed. "We'd better be!" said the rainbow fish.  
"The water is our natural environment. We are very happy here.  
But you humans spoil everything by trapping us in your nets."

"You're right," said Raju. "I have read that fishermen catch fish  
like you and sell them in the market."







"What else have you read?"  
asked the rainbow fish.

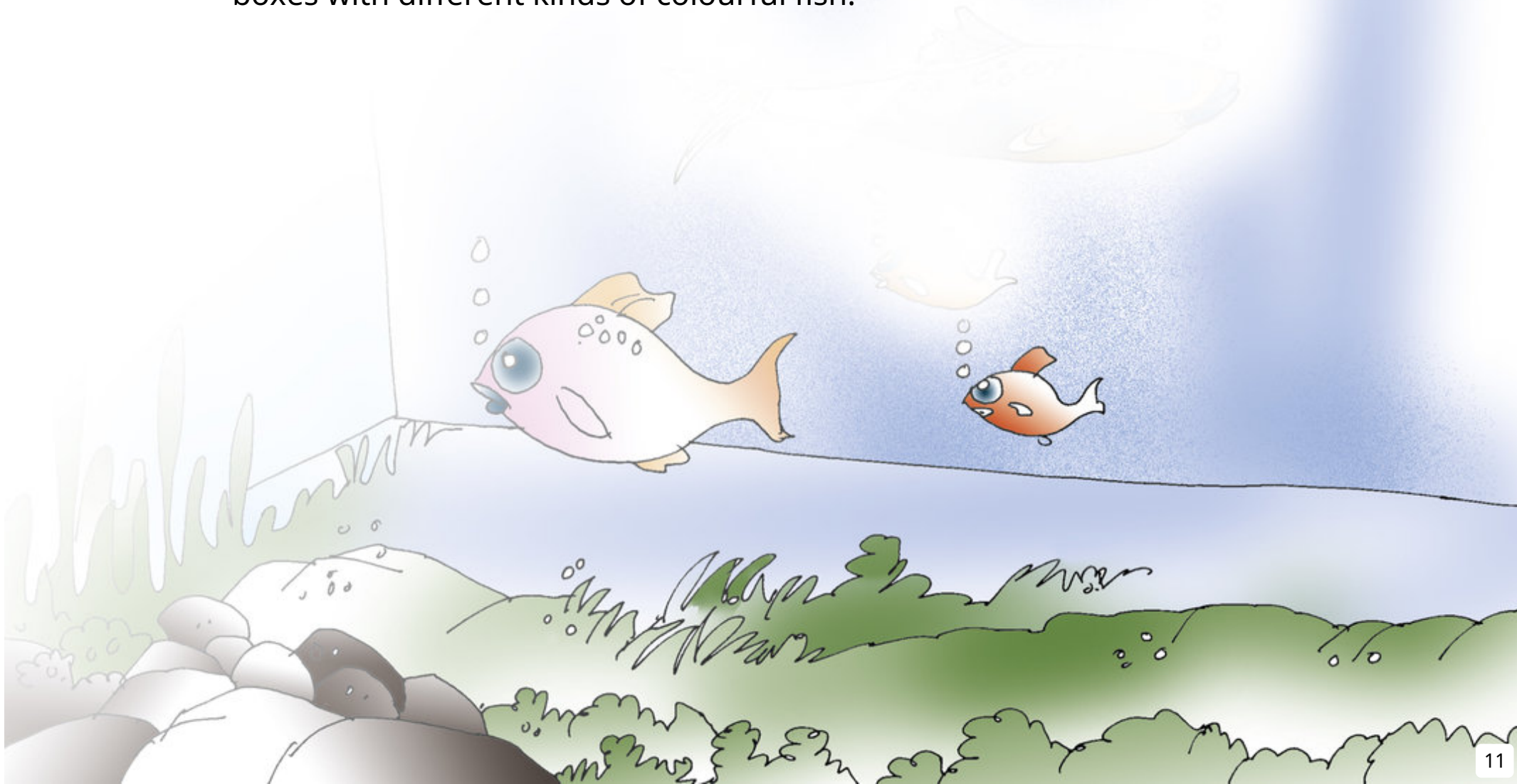
"Do you have any idea how many  
kinds of fish there are in the  
world?"



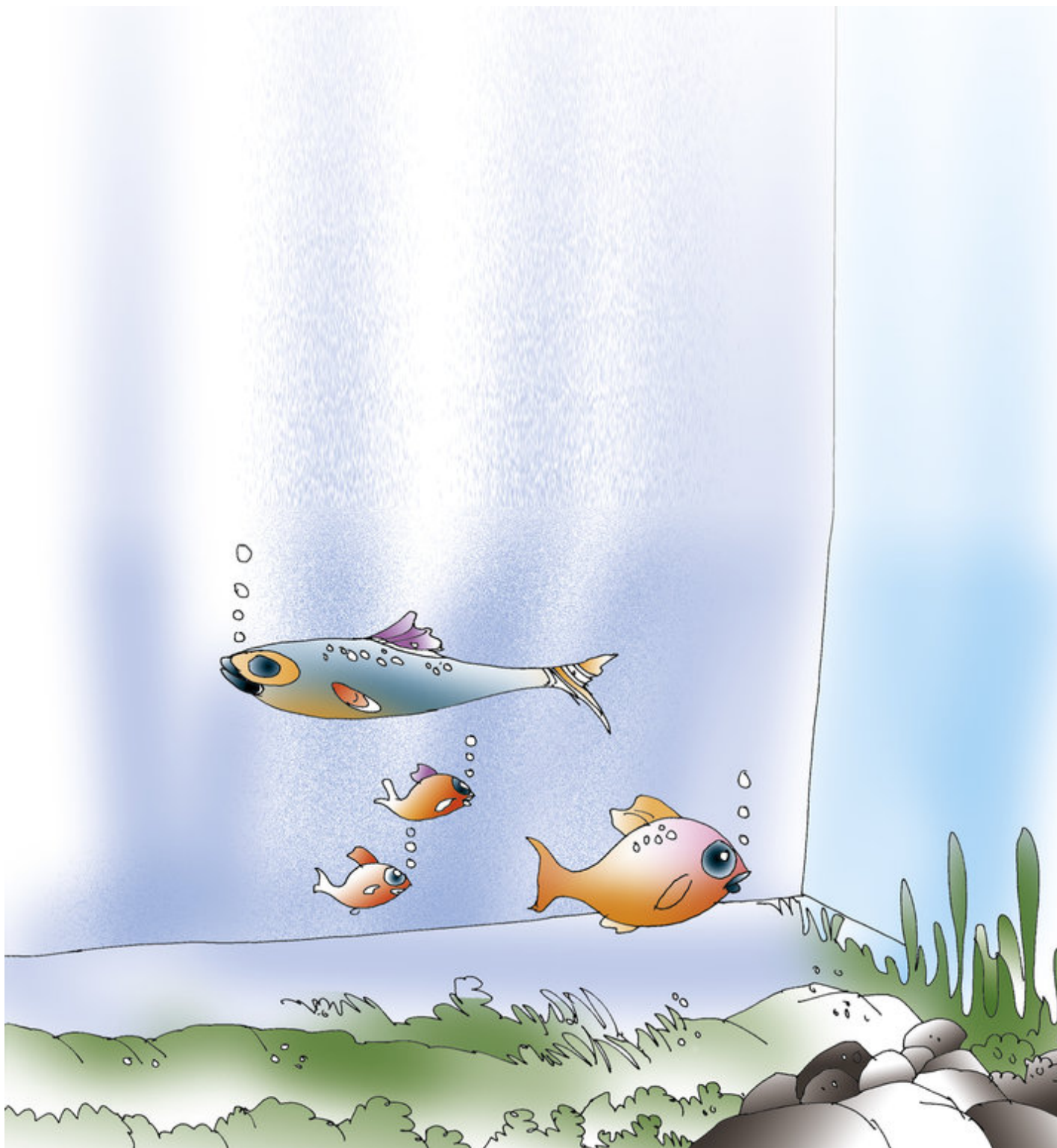
"Sort of," replied Raju. "We have a fat book at school with pictures of hundreds of kinds of fish."

"Then you probably also know of the glass boxes that people imprison us in," said the rainbow fish.

“Do you mean fish tanks?” asked Raju. “Of course I know about them. There is a building called an aquarium in our city that is full of glass boxes with different kinds of colourful fish.

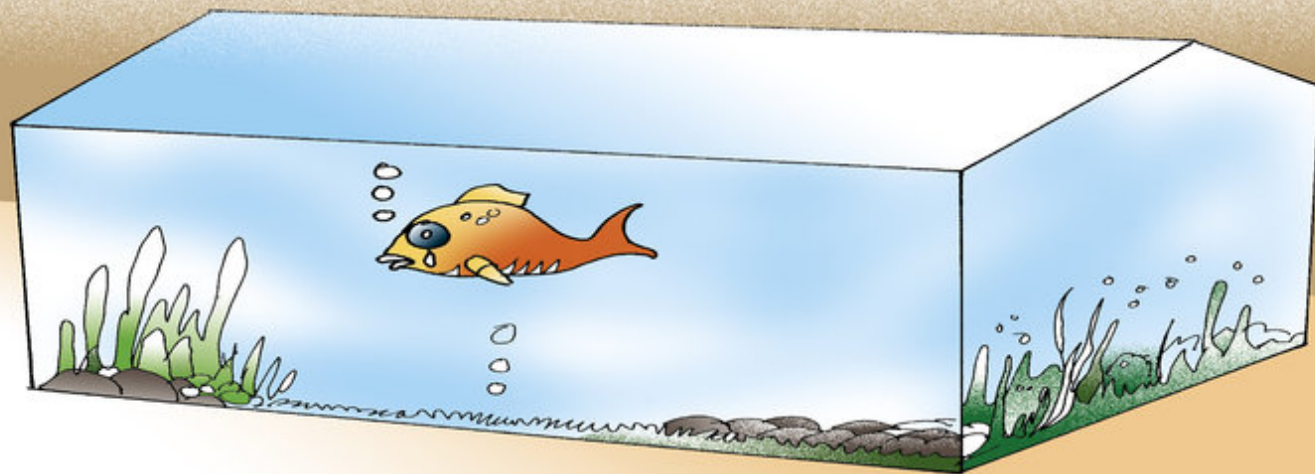




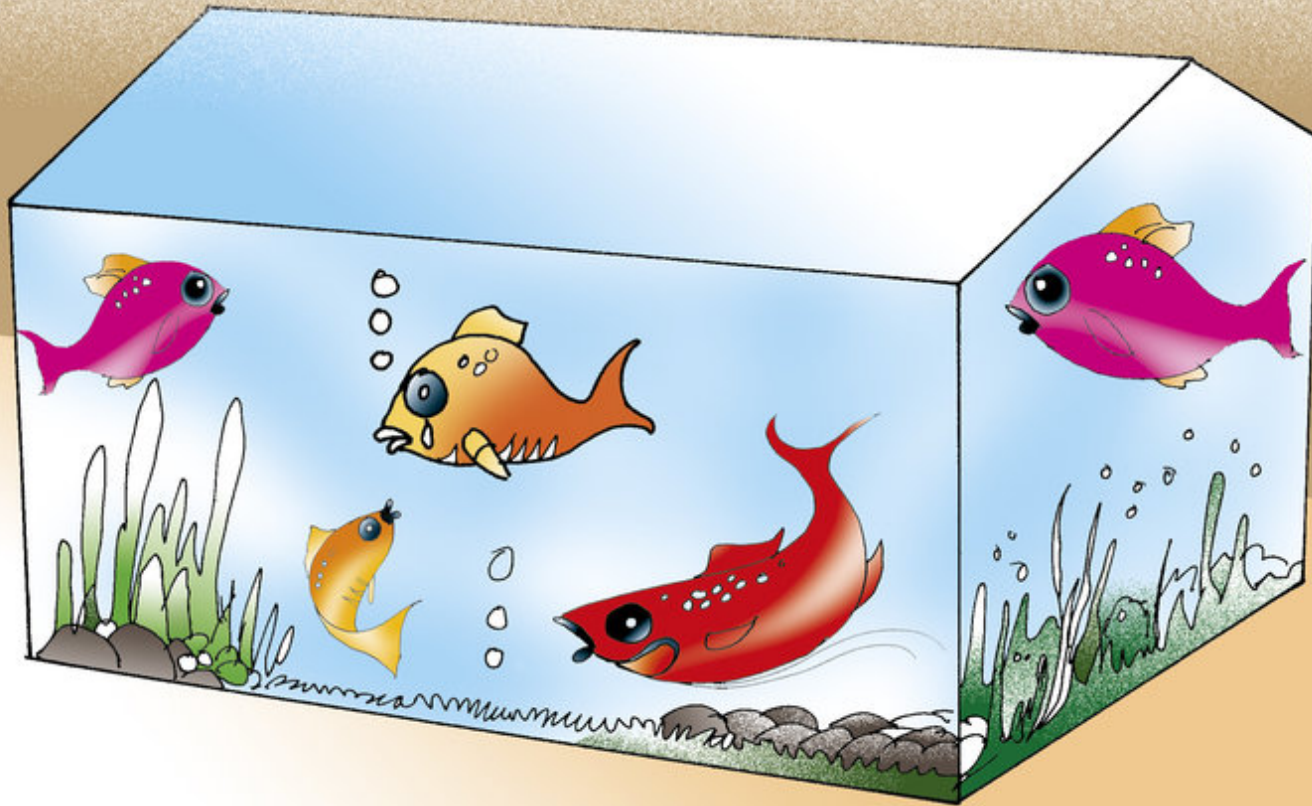


Why, I have a little fish tank in my own house full of the prettiest little fish!"



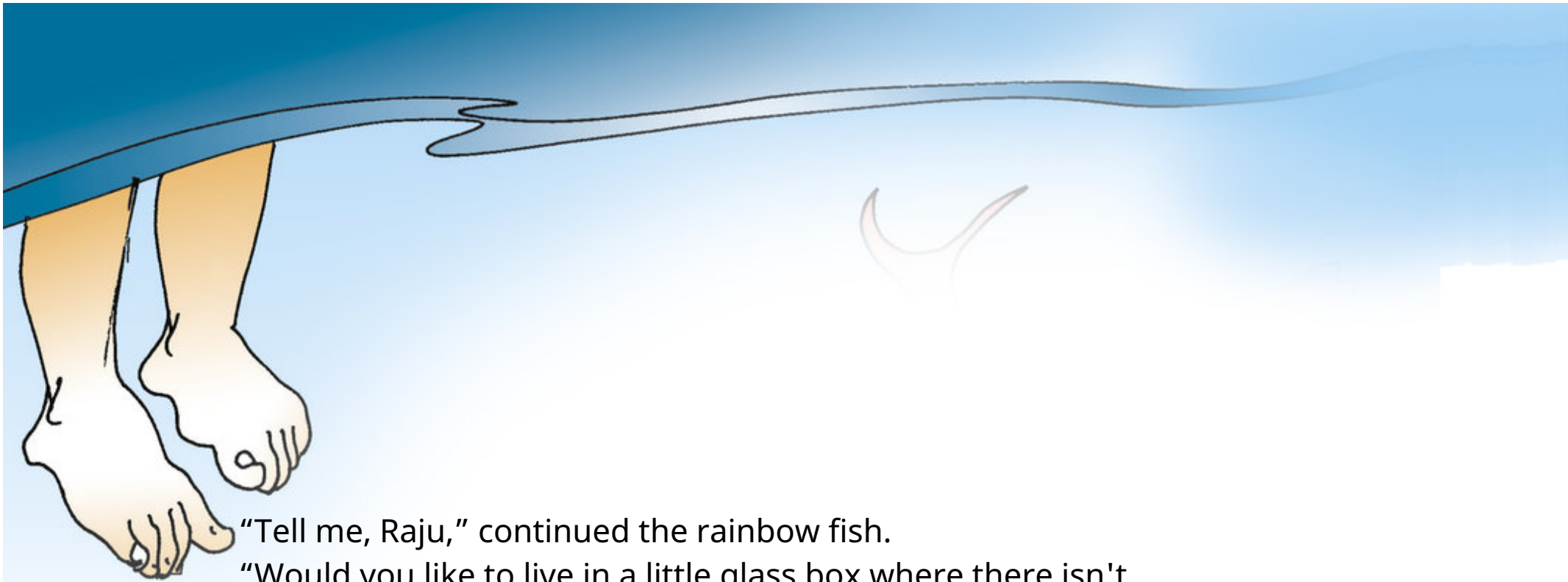


The rainbow fish sighed. "Yes, Raju," he said. "Mother Nature blessed us with bright colours and beautiful shapes. We wish no one any harm. All we want is to be left alone, to enjoy our rivers and lakes and our oceans and seas..."



But you humans simply do not let us live freely and fearlessly."

"You're right, Rainbow Fish," agreed Raju.



"Tell me, Raju," continued the rainbow fish.

"Would you like to live in a little glass box where there isn't enough room to move about, not enough natural food, and no friends or relatives anywhere in sight? We don't. We hate it.

But you humans simply do not understand!"

Raju thought about it. He didn't think he would enjoy being trapped in a glass box at all. It was a terrible thing to imprison any living creature, thought Raju.

He felt very sorry for the rainbow fish and his kin.







Raju turned to the rainbow fish.  
“When I go back to the city, I  
shall let all the fish in my tank  
go,” he promised.

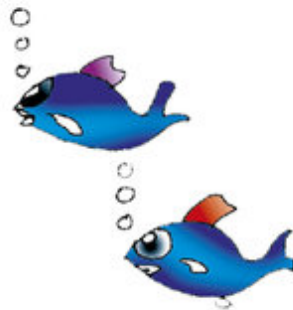
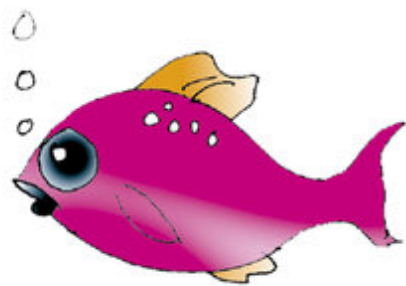
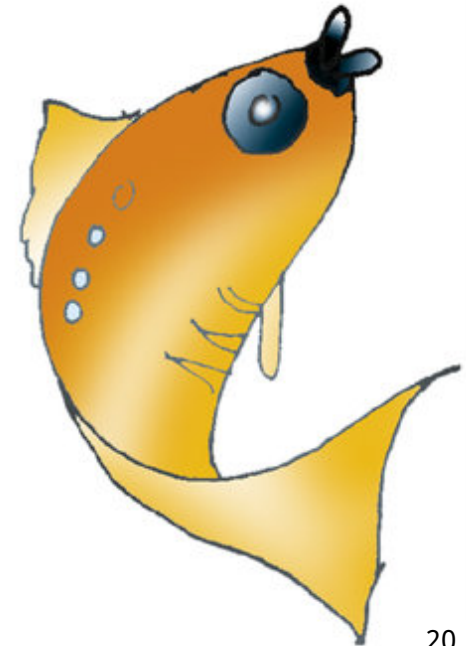
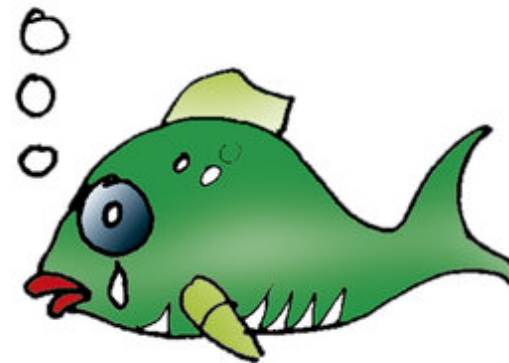
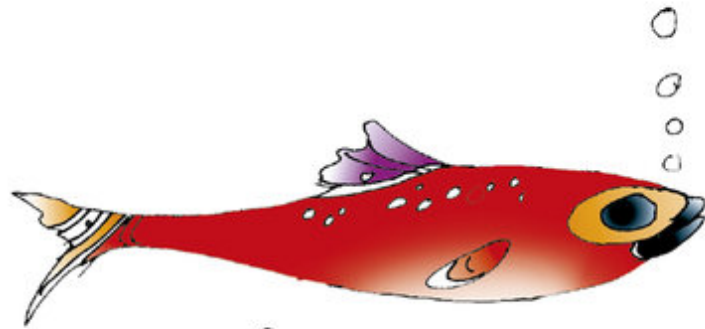
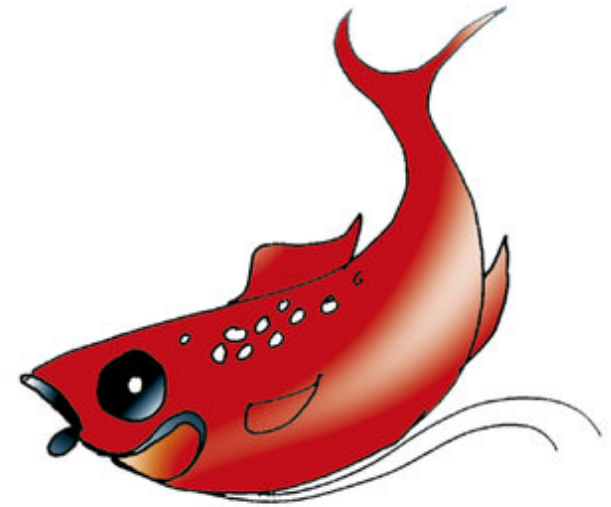
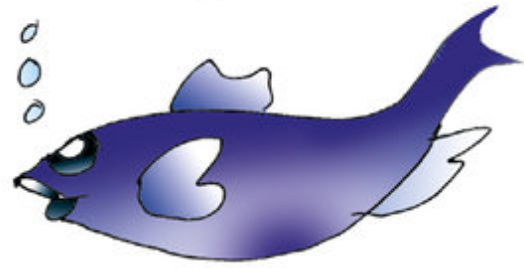
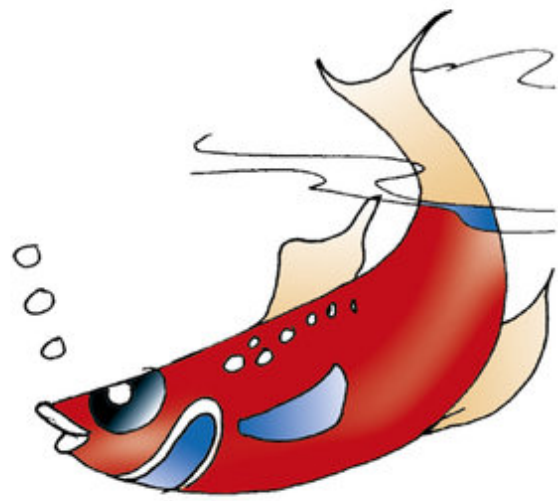
“And I will tell all my friends to do  
the same. Are you happy now,  
Rainbow Fish?”

“Yes, Raju,” smiled the fish. “You are an understanding child, and you have a kind heart. Thank you.”

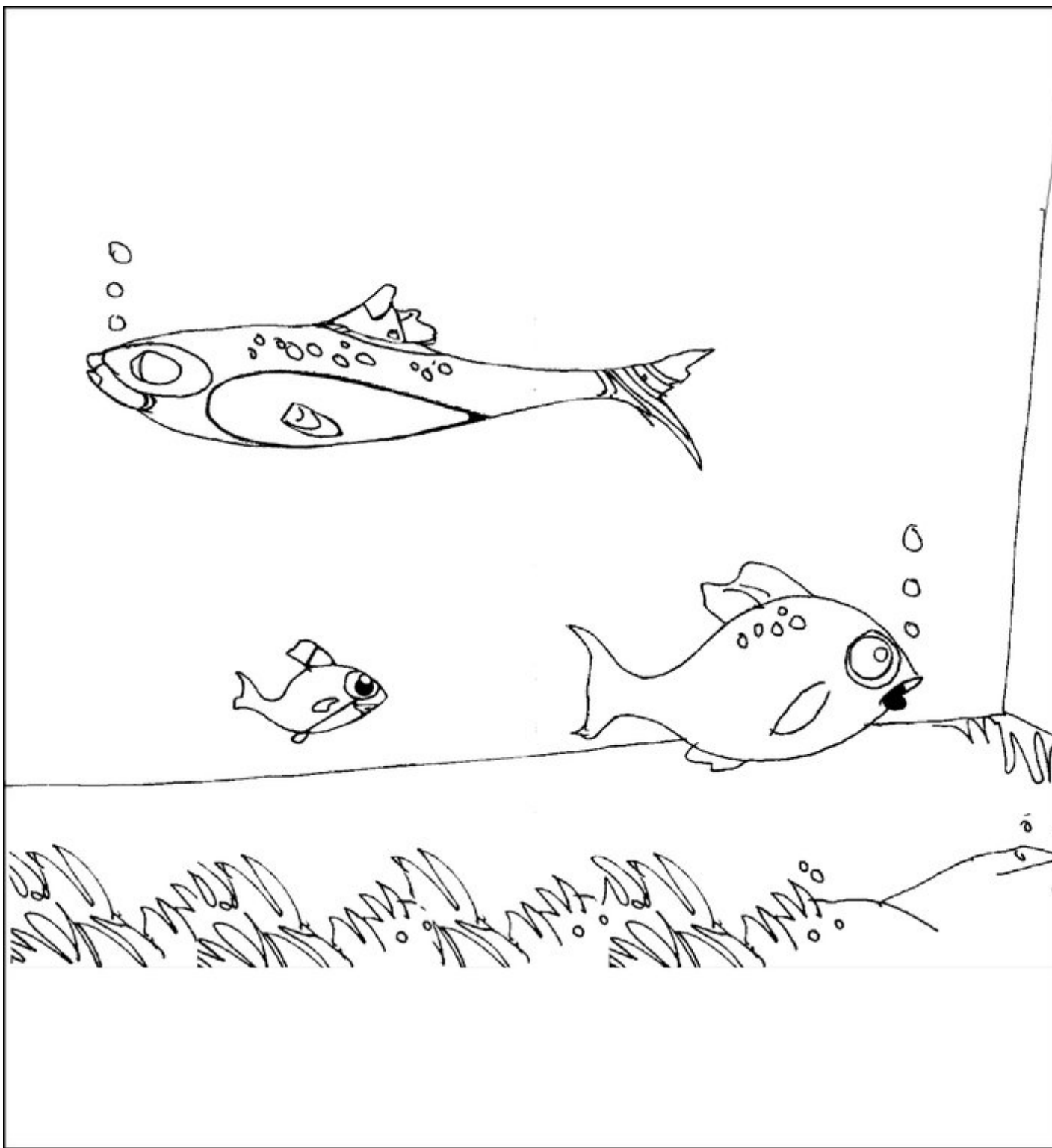
All the fish swam past Raju’s feet, tickling them again in a final goodbye, before they plunged once more into the depths of the river.



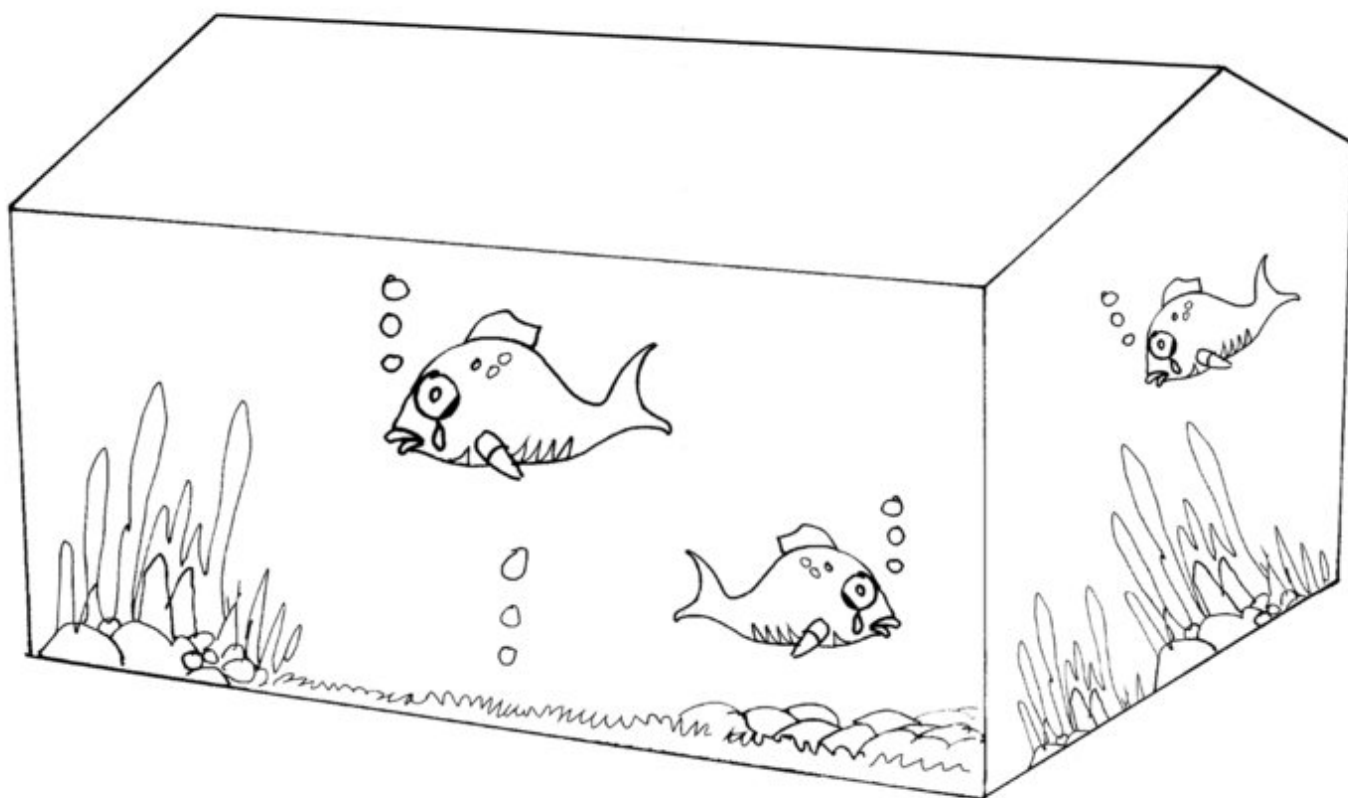








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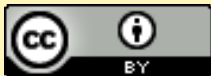
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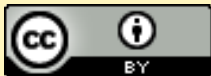


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# The Rainbow Fish

(English)

All of us enjoy watching fish, especially bright and colourful ones, swimming around in tanks that we keep in our homes. But do the fish enjoy it as much? Let's listen in on the conversation Raju and the rainbow fish have in this book, and find out.

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.



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