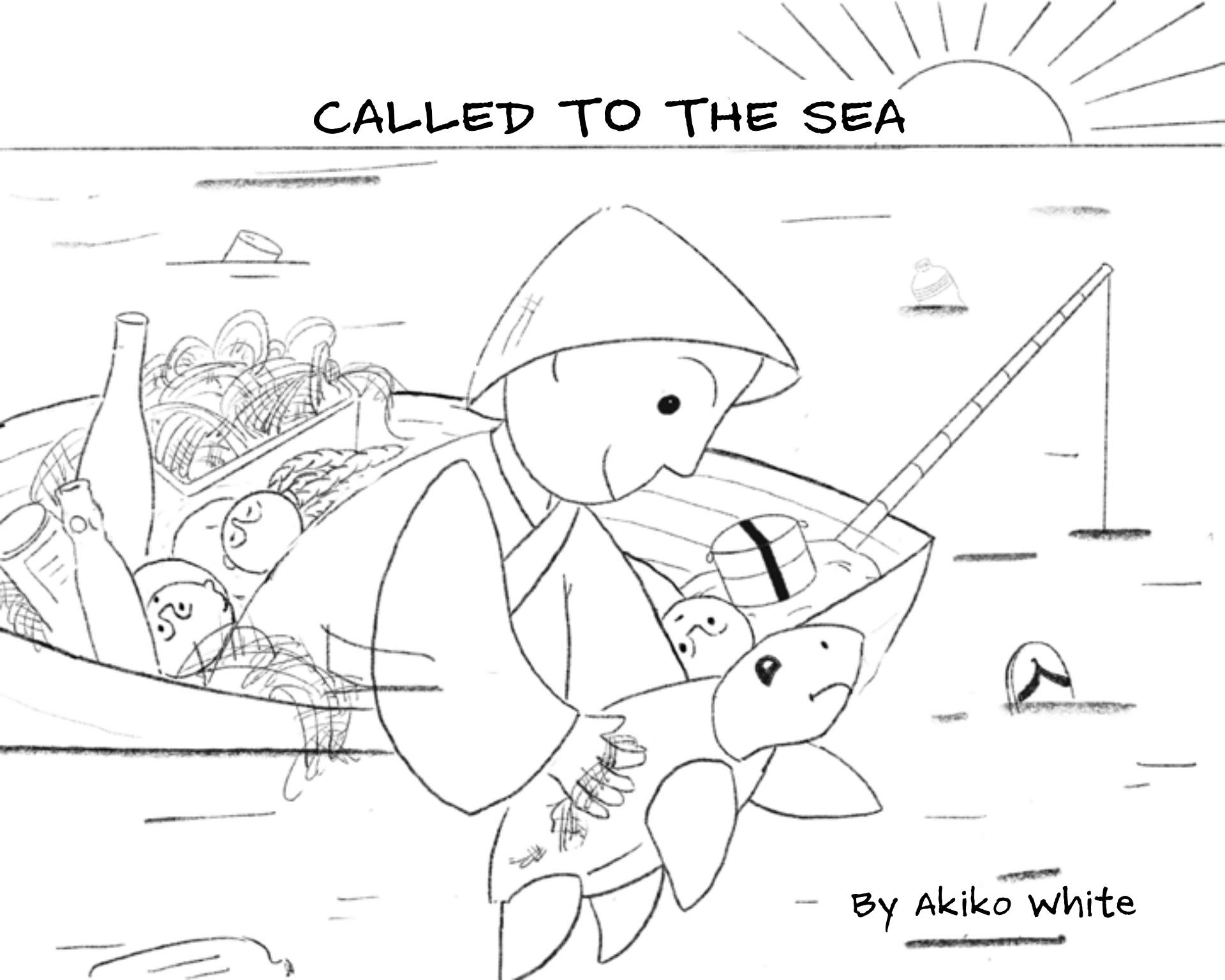


CALLED TO THE SEA



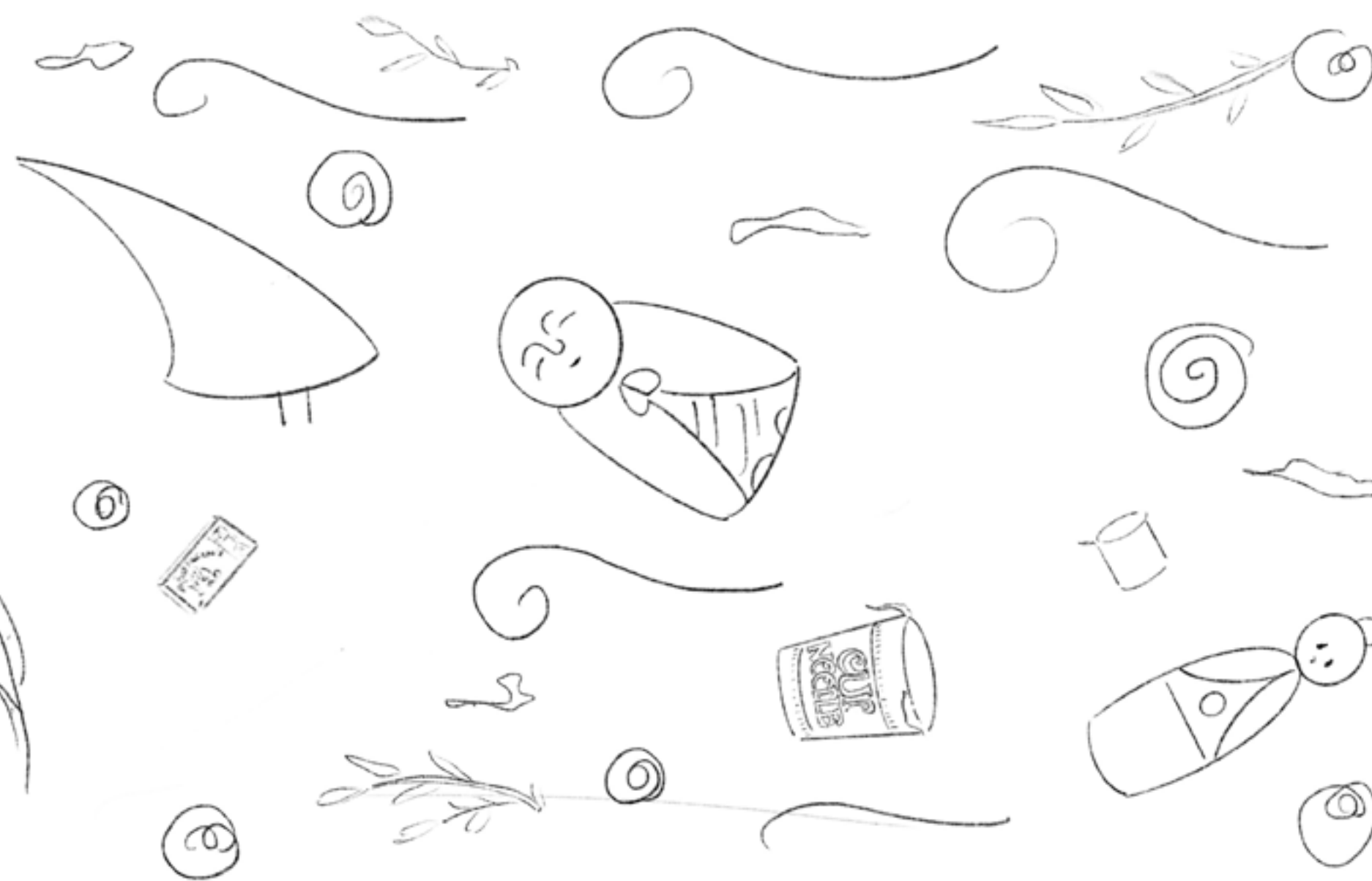
By Akiko White

As a child, Yonezou was called to the sea. The creatures that lived in the sea intrigued him. He lived a life between the land and the sea.



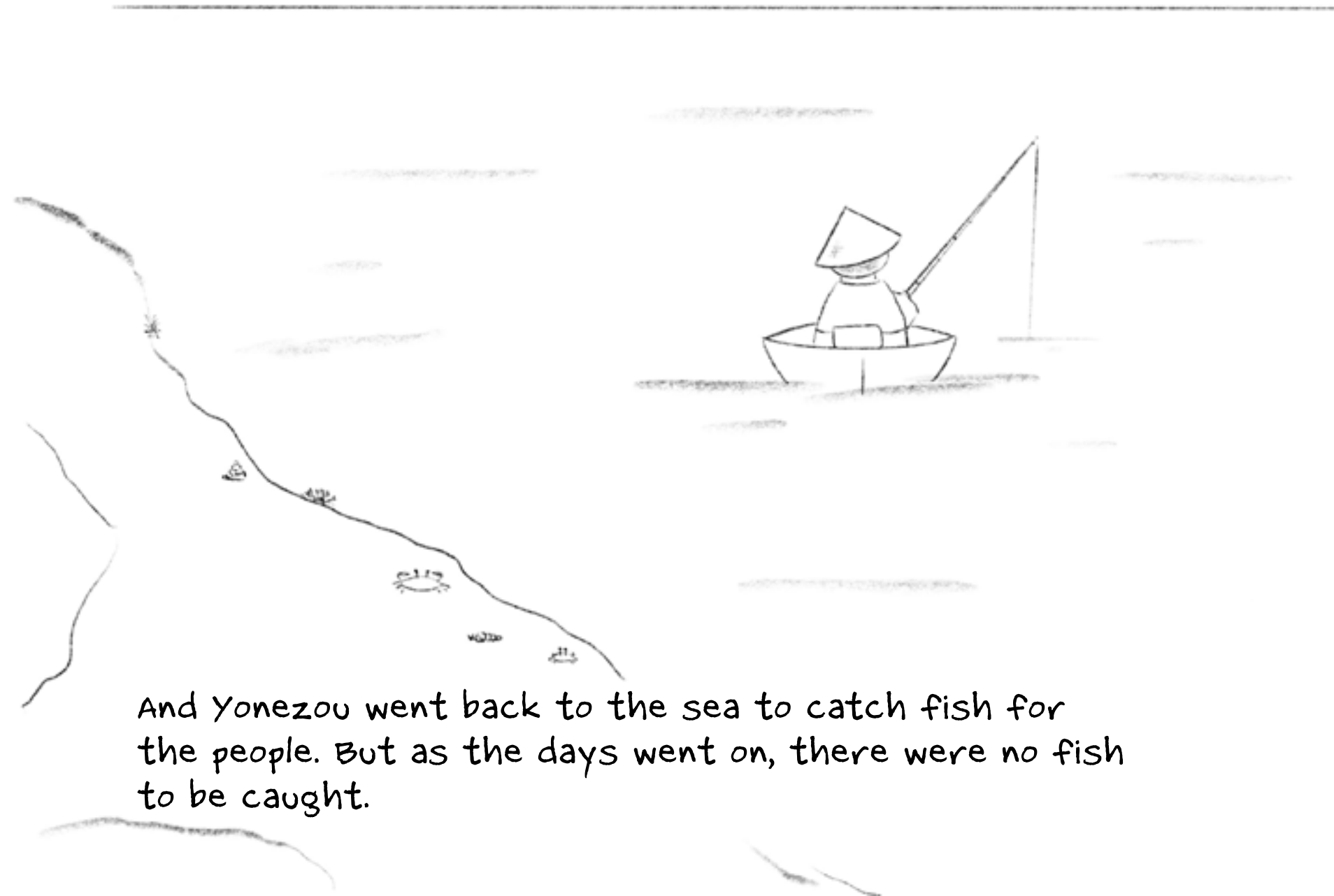
Every morning Yonezou would have tuna on toast smothered in marmalade, for this was his favorite breakfast. Every day he would go in his grandpa's boat with his obento and set out to fish.

many years past and Yonezou became a grown man, he had a large family and he frequently went to the sea to fish along the shore. He collected fish every day for the townspeople. Life was good for Yonezou.



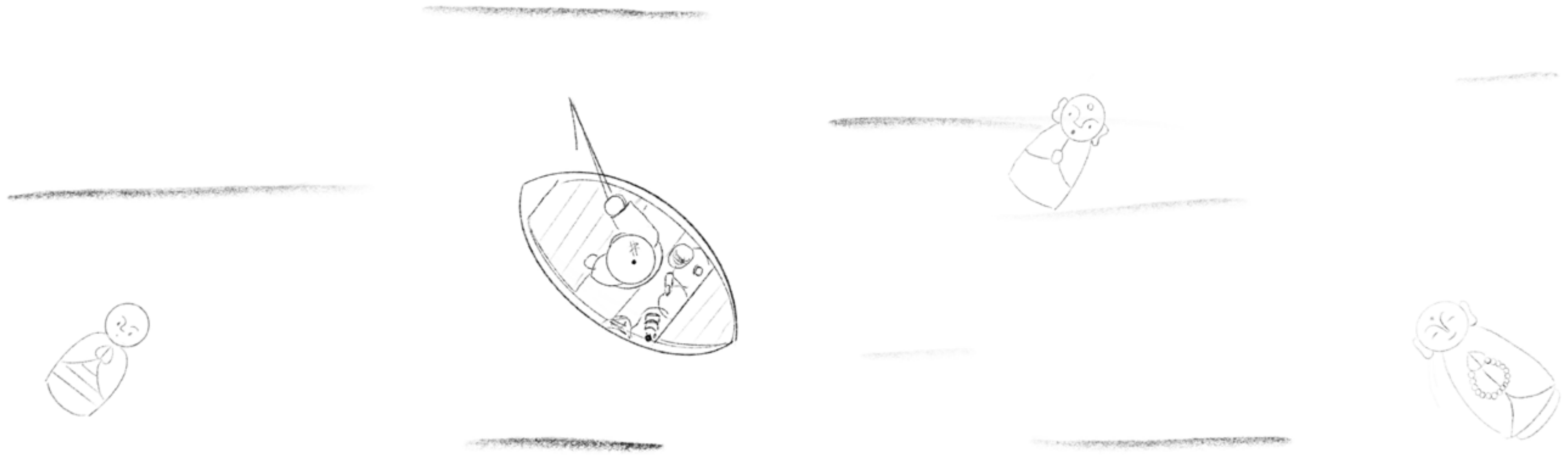
But one day the wind blew from the north and the earth shook the world above it. many temples fell, statues washed away into the ocean and many sea creatures disappeared.

Yonezou along with the townspeople were saddened by the destruction of the storm. But they soon began to rebuild.

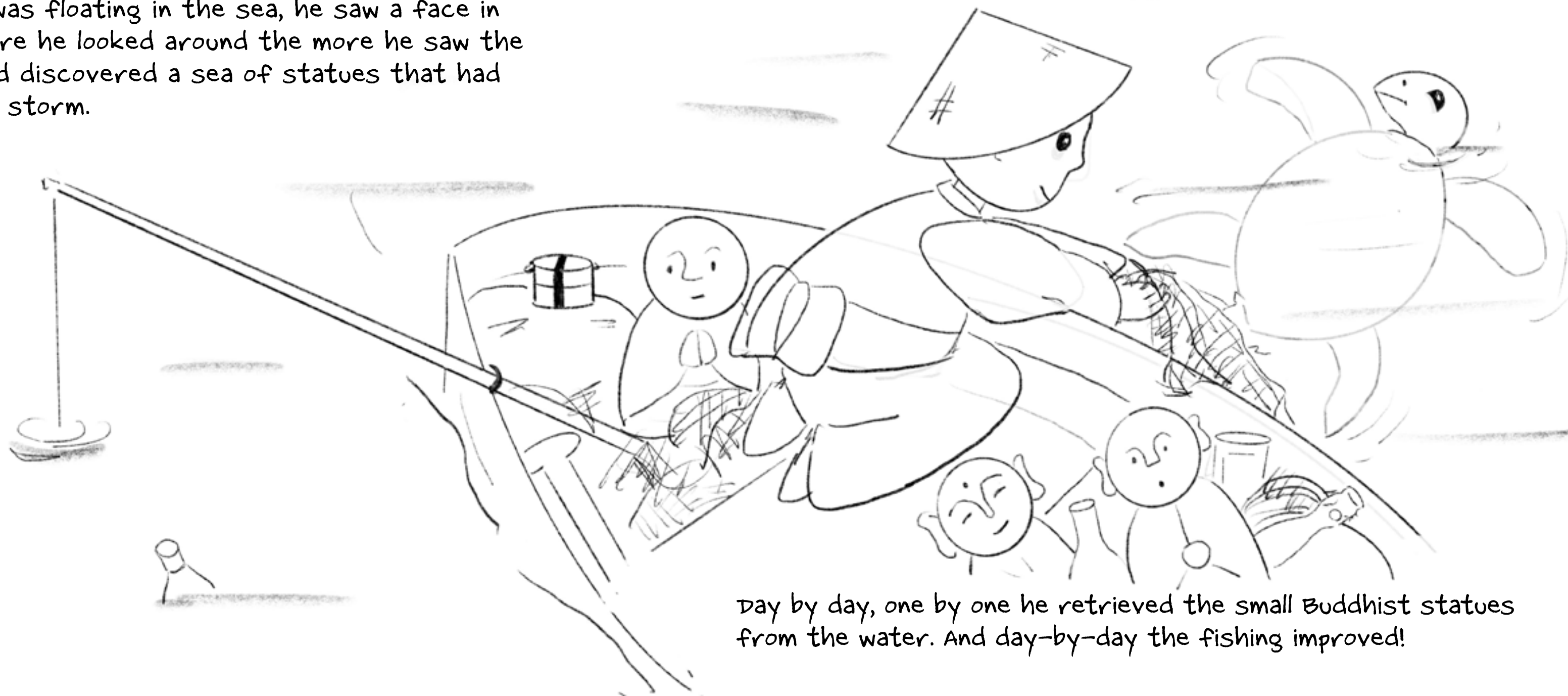


And Yonezou went back to the sea to catch fish for the people. But as the days went on, there were no fish to be caught.

many weeks passed and yonezou would go out daily in hopes that the sea had changed.



One day when he was floating in the sea, he saw a face in the water, the more he looked around the more he saw the faces. Yonezou had discovered a sea of statues that had been taken by the storm.

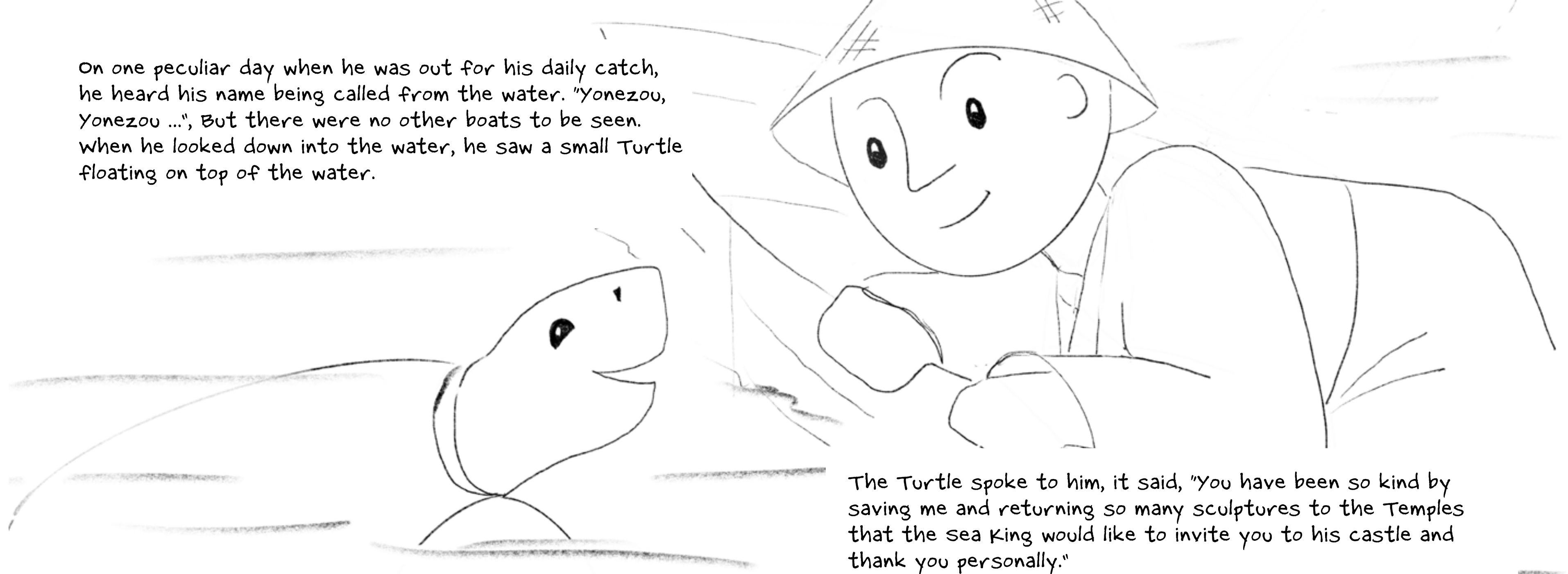


Day by day, one by one he retrieved the small Buddhist statues from the water. And day-by-day the fishing improved!

He had so many fish that he was able to give to the poor.
This made Yonezou very happy.



On one peculiar day when he was out for his daily catch, he heard his name being called from the water. "Yonezou, Yonezou ...", But there were no other boats to be seen. When he looked down into the water, he saw a small Turtle floating on top of the water.



The Turtle spoke to him, it said, "You have been so kind by saving me and returning so many sculptures to the Temples that the sea King would like to invite you to his castle and thank you personally."

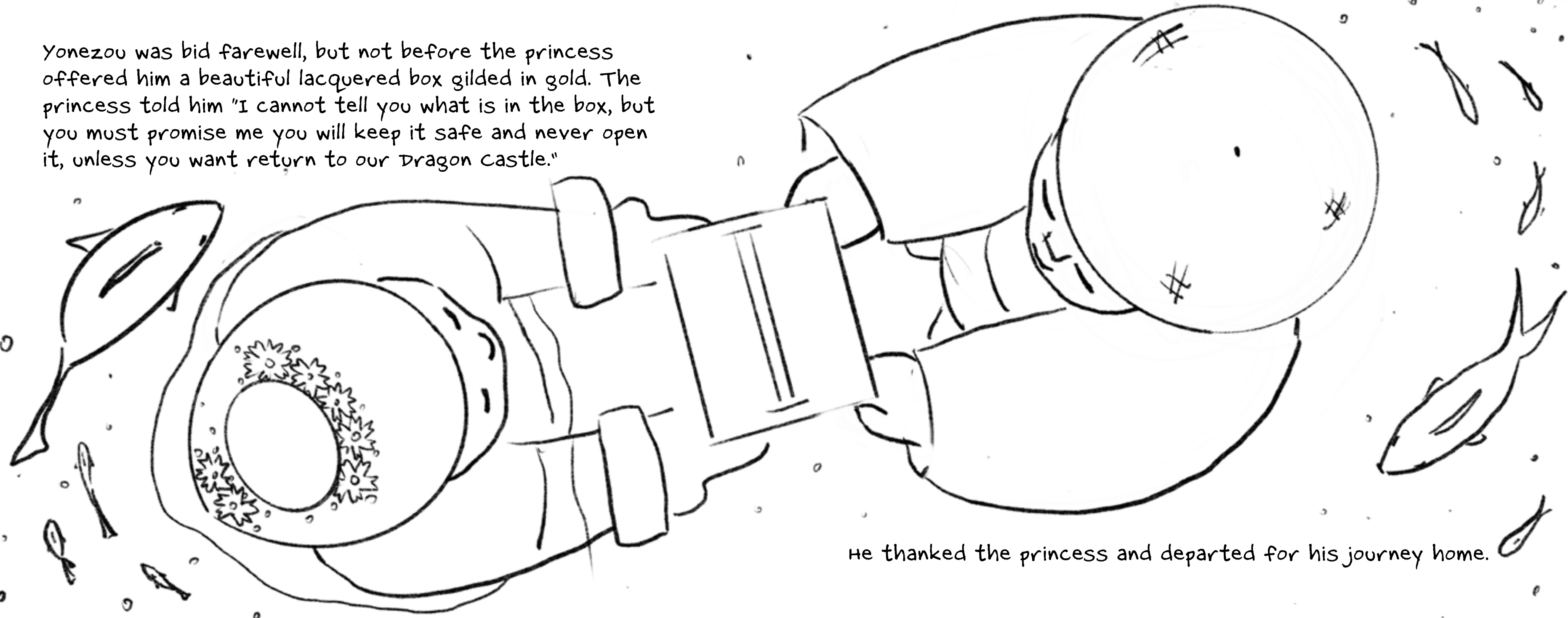
Yonezou, was very curious. So, he went with the turtle to the castle below the sea. Upon his arrival to the castle the guards rang out in song. Golden petals were cast into the ocean and swirled upon him.



The princess presented herself and thanked him for his kindness. The king offered him many riches and invited him to live at the Dragon castle. But after three days had passed Yonezou longed to return to his home.



Yonezou was bid farewell, but not before the princess offered him a beautiful lacquered box gilded in gold. The princess told him "I cannot tell you what is in the box, but you must promise me you will keep it safe and never open it, unless you want return to our Dragon Castle."

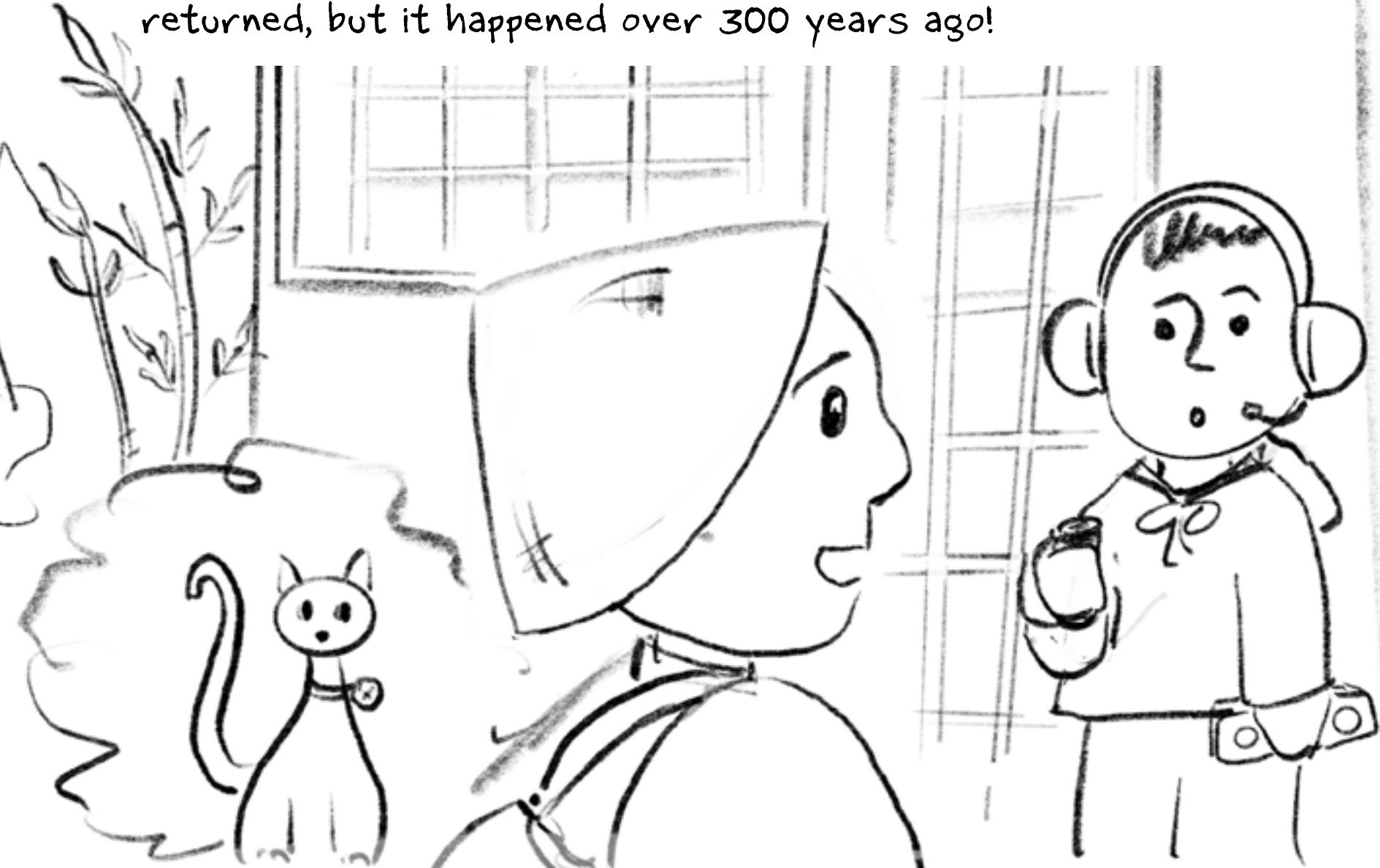


He thanked the princess and departed for his journey home.



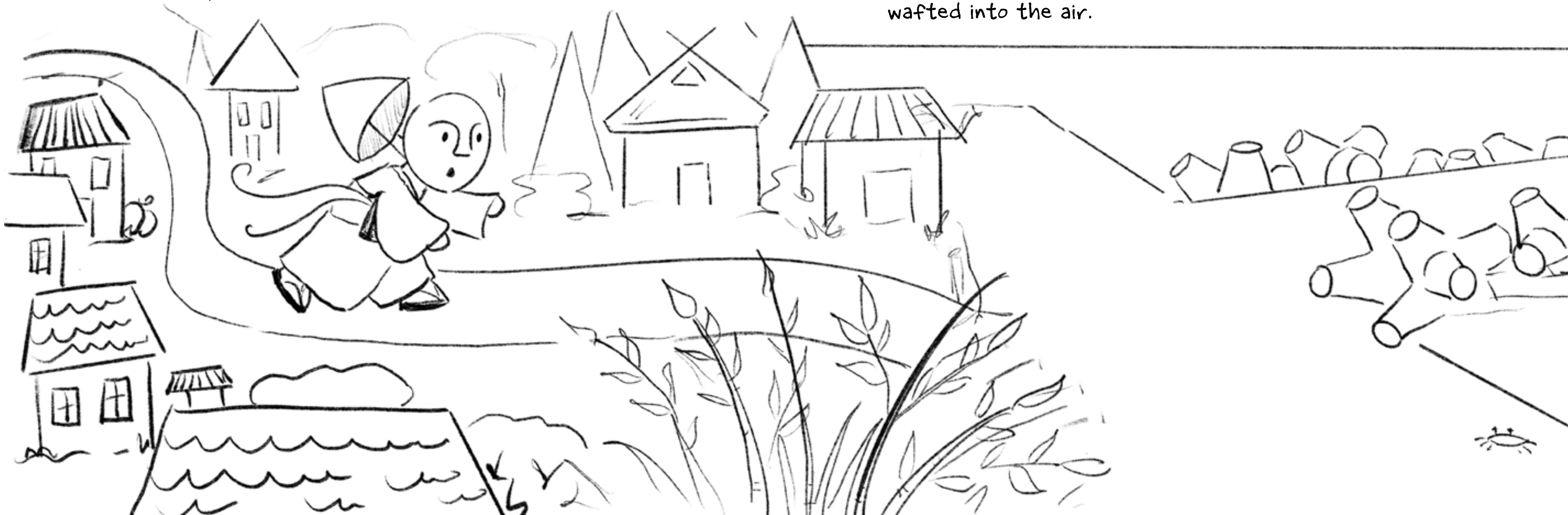
Nothing was as he remembered. The people were dressed strangely, and the buildings looked different. As he approached his home an unfamiliar face came to the door.

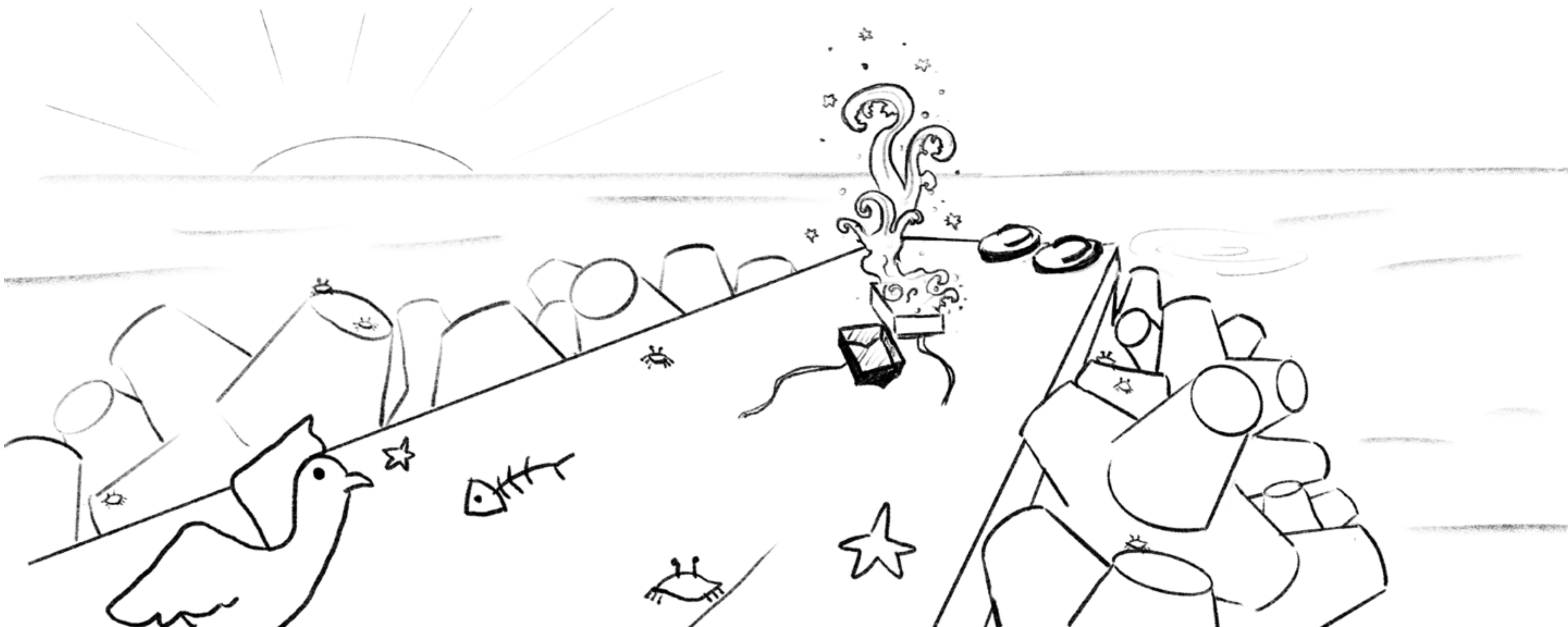
Yonezou introduced himself as the owner of the house and asked where his family was. The child responded that no one lived there with that name, he said that there was a story of a man named Yonezou that went to the ocean and never returned, but it happened over 300 years ago!



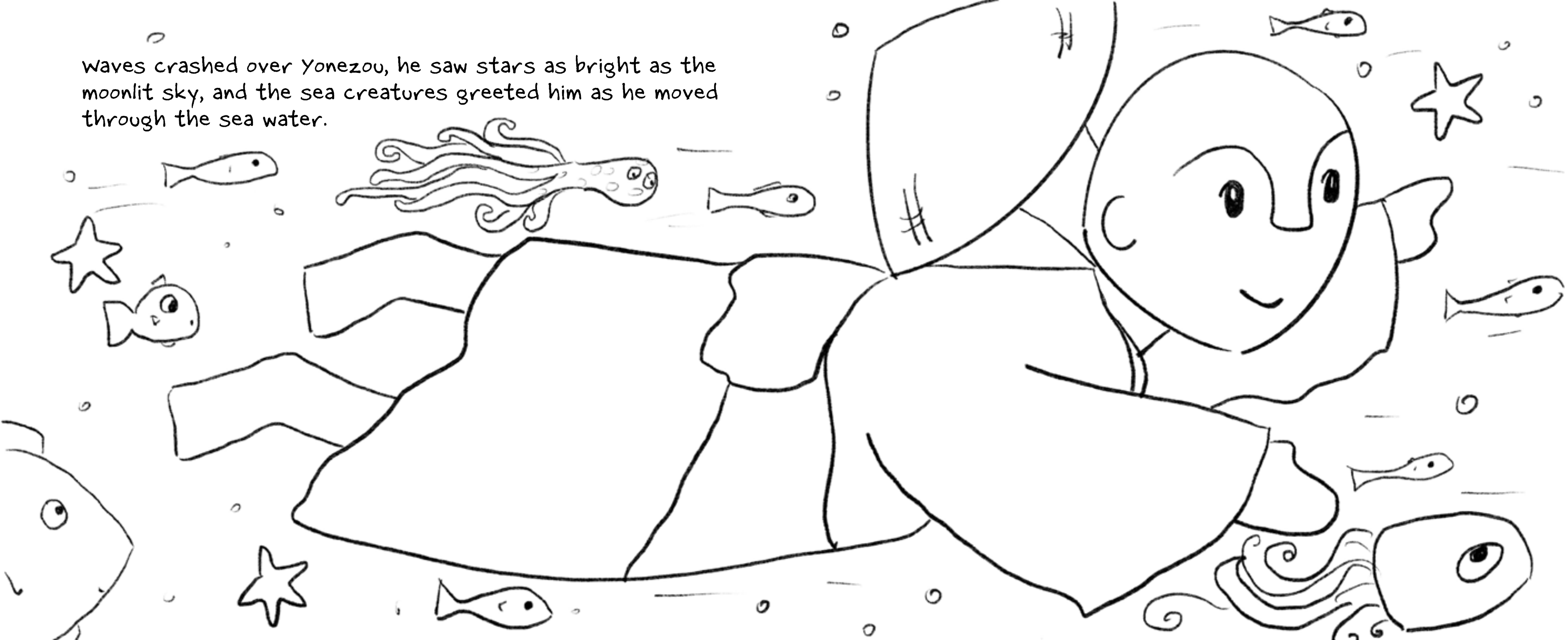
In his haste, Yonezou ran back to the shore. He looked out into the water in wonderment. The sea called to him, and he held tightly to the beautiful lacquered box in his arms.

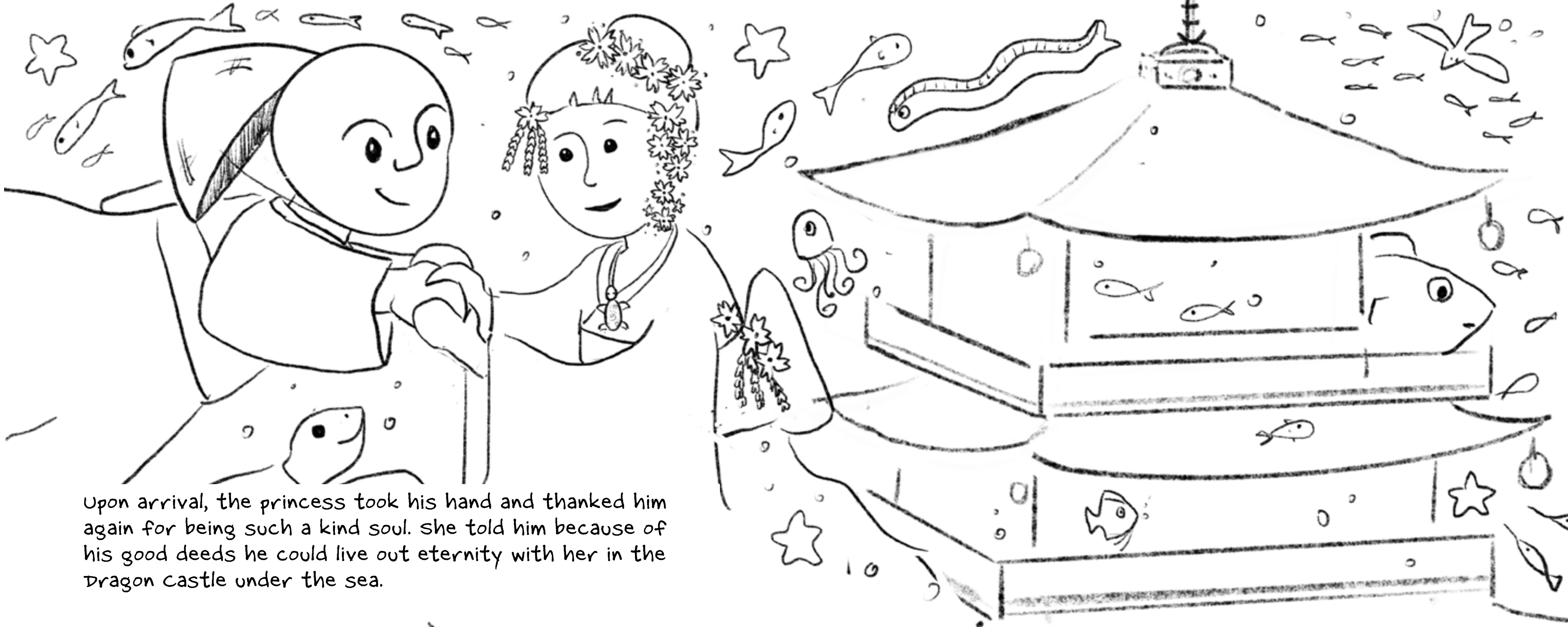
Yonezou thought of his family, he thought about the beautiful castle and the princess. Slowly he untied the ribbon from the box, as he opened it a puff of smoke wafted into the air.





Waves crashed over Yonezou, he saw stars as bright as the moonlit sky, and the sea creatures greeted him as he moved through the sea water.





Upon arrival, the princess took his hand and thanked him again for being such a kind soul. She told him because of his good deeds he could live out eternity with her in the Dragon castle under the sea.

This story is the author's rendition of a Japanese folklore about a benevolent fisherman that rescues a sea turtle and is sent on a journey to find what his true fate will be.

Akiko came up with this story because her grandfather, Yonezu, was an avid fisherman in Kashiwazaki, Japan. He had a very long fulfilled life and was very kind to the townspeople. He retrieved several statues from the sea of Japan after an earthquake shook the town and then returned them to the temples in Kashiwazaki. Some of the statues are in a museum and at the temples today. When he was very old, leaving only his shoes behind, he actually disappeared into the ocean to never be seen again.