

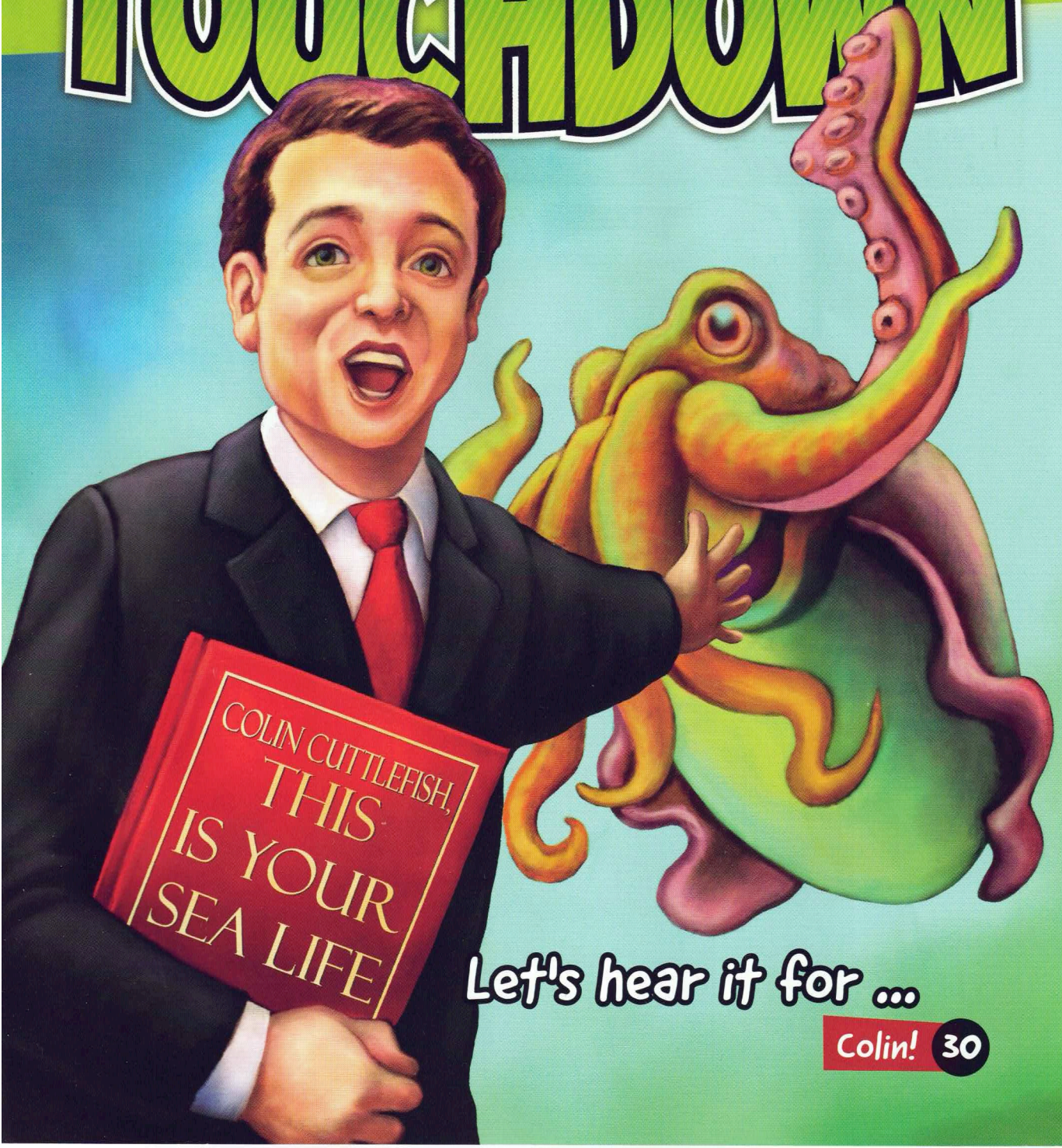


The School Magazine

A world of words since 1916

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# TOUCHDOWN



Let's hear it for ...

Colin!

30



# This Is Your Sea Life

play by Marian McGuinness | illustrated by David Legge



## Characters

TV HOST

COLIN CUTTLEFISH

OLIVE OCTOPUS (Colin's cousin)

SAM SQUID (Colin's cousin)

SQUIZZY SHARK (Colin's enemy)

SNOWY ALBATROSS (Colin's enemy)

DR PEARL (marine scientist)

AUDIENCE (remainder of students  
or class)

CAMERA PERSON

*This is a TV show being recorded in front of an AUDIENCE. The CAMERA PERSON spends the time filming different angles of the guests and host. There are four chairs on stage.*

TV HOST *(holding a book with the cover 'Colin Cuttlefish, This Is Your Sea Life')* Good evening and welcome to THIS IS YOUR SEA LIFE. What has eight arms, two tentacles, a fin and can change colour in a flash? No, it's not an octopus! It's a shapeshifter of the sea, a master of masquerade! Tonight's fascinating guest comes all the way from the shallows of the continental shelf, and for those who don't know where that is, it's the edge of the continent that lies under the ocean. Please give a warm welcome to Colin Cuttlefish!

*(Audience claps. COLIN CUTTLEFISH swims onto the stage waving an arm and rests on a chair.)*

TV HOST First of all, Colin, I must let the audience know that you are not really a fish.

COLIN *(looking startled)* But I must be—it's my name. Colin Cuttlefish!

TV HOST And that's what makes you so interesting, Colin. Let me take you back to the beginning. You were born under a rocky ledge in a hanging bunch of white, grape-shaped eggs that held your brothers and sisters. Before your mum left, she squirted the little egg bunches with her ink to camouflage them, so you didn't get eaten before you hatched.

COLIN Dear old Mum. She did her best. I guess she wasn't a *cuddlefish* but that doesn't explain why I'm not a fish at all. *(Scratches his head with an arm.)* This is so confusing.

TV HOST Well, Colin, you're not a fish but you *are* a cephalopod. A head-foot!



COLIN Oh, it's getting worse! (COLIN *throws up his arms.*) A HEAD-FOOT! What's that supposed to mean?

TV HOST And that's where I'm going to bring in our first guest, marine scientist, Dr Pearl.

(DR PEARL *comes on stage.*)

DR PEARL Oh Colin, I haven't met a cuttlefish out of water before. It's a privilege indeed. But I'm here to explain a little of your life. It's true. You're not a fish. You are a cephalopod. A head-foot. Your arms and tentacles are connected to your head. We humans have a head and we have a body to which our arms and legs are attached. Now fish have a more solid body than your squishy one, and they have scales. They also have a skeleton inside their bodies. That makes them vertebrates like me. But you, Colin, are an invertebrate. You don't have a skeleton.

COLIN (*protesting and prodding his squishy skin*) But I have something inside my body, I can feel it. All this talk is confusing me even more!

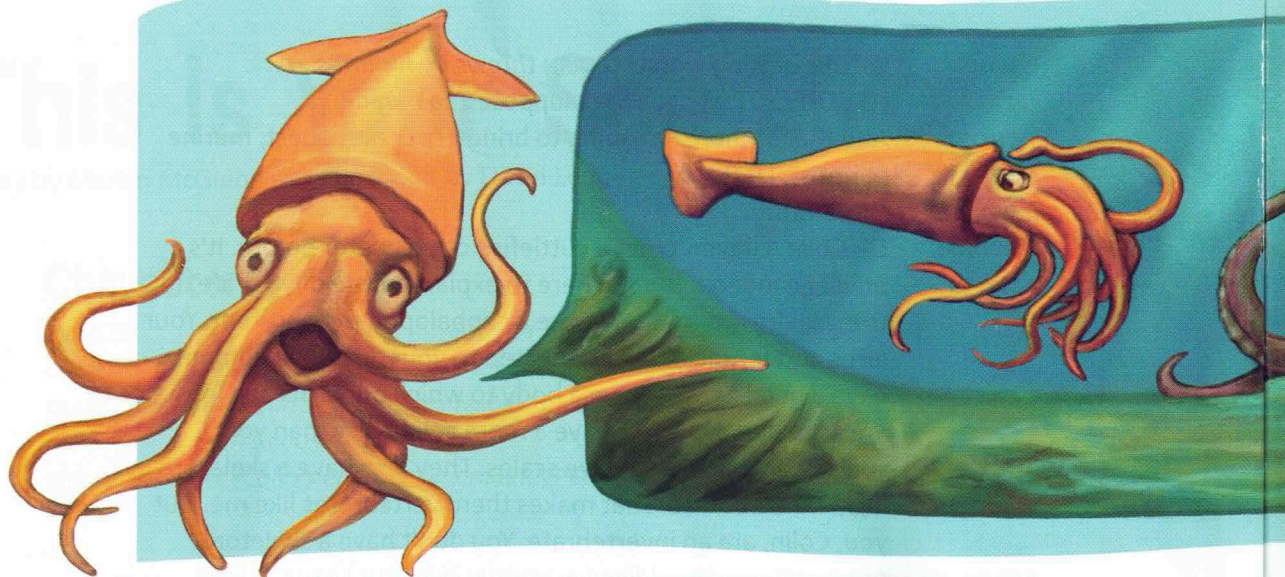
DR PEARL I'll explain. Colin, you don't have a skeleton, but you do have a bone inside you. It wasn't there about 450 million years ago. Your ancestors actually had shells on the outside to protect them.

COLIN You mean like my mates, Larry Lobster and Clarissa Crab? Man, it's not easy for them to live their best lives having to haul those things around all day.

DR PEARL Well, exactly. Your ancestors evolved so they could move more easily as they trawled the oceans. Their shells grew internally and became a light bone. Here, I have a cuttlebone that was washed up on a beach (*holds up a cuttlebone*).







**COLIN** (horrified) That's Auntie Shelley! I wondered what happened to her.

**DR PEARL** Well, you know, Colin, the bone inside you is like a superpower. It has tiny holes that you can fill with air or water. Add more water and you sink. Add more air and you rise. It helps you hover around.

**COLIN** I didn't realise I was so clever! I really am a superstar!

**DR PEARL** And not only that, there are 120 species of cuttlefish in the world and guess who is the biggest?

**COLIN** (flexing his muscles with two of his arms) That's me! Aussie Aussie Aussie, Oi Oi Oi! I am the Australian Giant Cuttlefish!

**TV HOST** Thank you, Dr Pearl. We're certainly finding out what an exceptional sea creature Colin is. (DR PEARL sits on a chair beside COLIN.) And to tell us a little more, please welcome Colin's cephalopod cousins, Olive and Sam.

(AUDIENCE claps as they come on stage.)

**COLIN** (high fives them) Olive! Sam! Haven't seen you for ages. Been travelling around, I guess? (The suckers on COLIN's arms stick to OLIVE and SAM's arms.)

**TV HOST** Now tell us, Olive and Sam, what's so special about Colin?

**OLIVE OCTOPUS** (detaching her suckers from COLIN's with a pop) Well, one thing we all have in common is our blood. It's blue. Although I only have eight arms, Colin is special because as well as his eight arms, he has two tentacles that can shoot out from behind his eyes faster than you can blink! He's never short of a snack!

**SAM SQUID** I have a joke for you. How many tickles does it take to make a cuttlefish laugh?

**TV HOST** I don't know. How many tickles?





**SAM SQUID** Ten tickles. Get it? Ten-tacles! (COLIN *high fives* SAM *but is careful not to get his suckers stuck.*)

**TV HOST** But seriously, Sam, there's something else that makes Colin a superstar.

**SAM SQUID** I guess I'm a little jealous here, but Colin is a master of disguise.

**COLIN** Remember when we used to play hide-and-seek in the seaweed? Those were the days, my friend.

**SAM SQUID** Yeah, but you always won. I never could find you. You see, Mr TV Host, Colin has squillions of cells in his skin, and he can change colour in a flash! One moment he looks like sand; then, hey presto, he looks like seaweed. He's a magician! He can even make his skin go lumpy like rocks. (COLIN *shows off by changing colour.*)

**OLIVE OCTOPUS** But there's one more superpower we all share. We can jet through the water. We're rockets of the sea. Suck in water and shoot it out through our funnel. Off we go!

**COLIN** (*chuckles*) We had the best races! Out to the staghorn coral, round the kelp trees to the anemone tower and back again. The sea slugs and seahorses didn't stand a chance.

**TV HOST** Let's give Olive and Sam a big clap for telling us more of Colin's amazing story. (*The AUDIENCE claps while OLIVE and SAM sit next to DR PEARL.*) That brings us to the end of the show. Colin's been called a shapeshifter of the sea, a superstar and a magician, but there's one more special thing I need to tell the audience about.

(SQUIZZY SHARK and SNOWY ALBATROSS come swimming and flying onto the stage.)

**SQUIZZY SHARK** We seek him here; we seek him there!

**SNOWY ALBATROSS** We swim  
through the sea and  
fly through the air!

**SQUIZZY** and **SNOWY** (together)  
There's our tasty  
cuttlefish sitting on  
that chair!

(They look at all three cephalopods.)

**SQUIZZY** One for you.

**SNOWY ALBATROSS** And one for me.

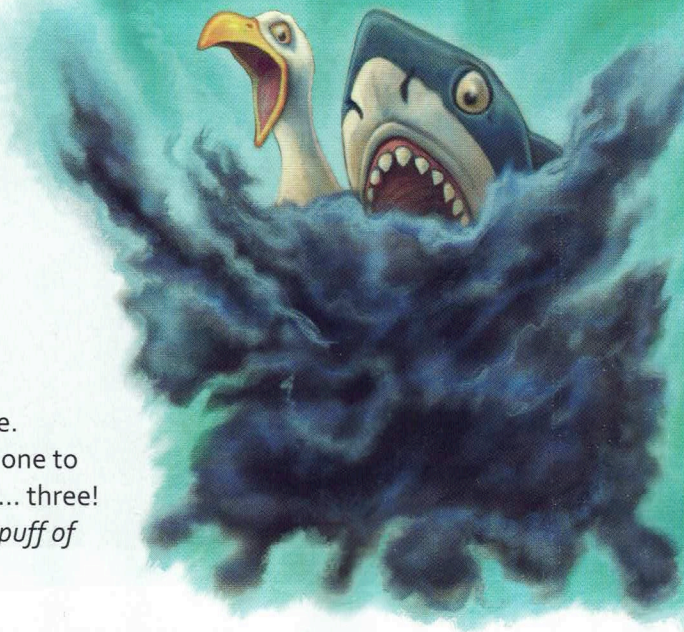
**SQUIZZY** and **SNOWY** (together) And one to  
share, that's one ... two ... three!

(COLIN, OLIVE and SAM disappear in a puff of  
cuttlefish, octopus and squid ink.)

**TV HOST** And that's what I was  
going to tell you, dear  
audience. Colin and  
his friends have an  
almost magic cape.  
They can squirt ink  
to confuse predators  
so that they don't get  
eaten. (Holds up *This  
Is Your Sea Life* book'.)  
Colin Cuttlefish,  
wherever you are ...  
THIS IS YOUR SEA  
LIFE! And I'll send it to  
you by sea mail!

(AUDIENCE claps.)

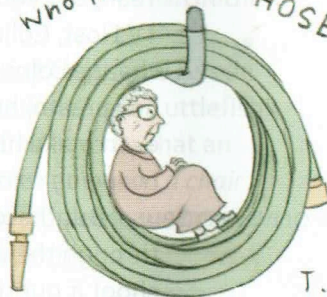
THE END



## THE CARTOON

### The ACCIDENTAL ANAGRAMMER

There was an old woman  
who lived in a HOSE...



T.h.b.

by Toby Riddle