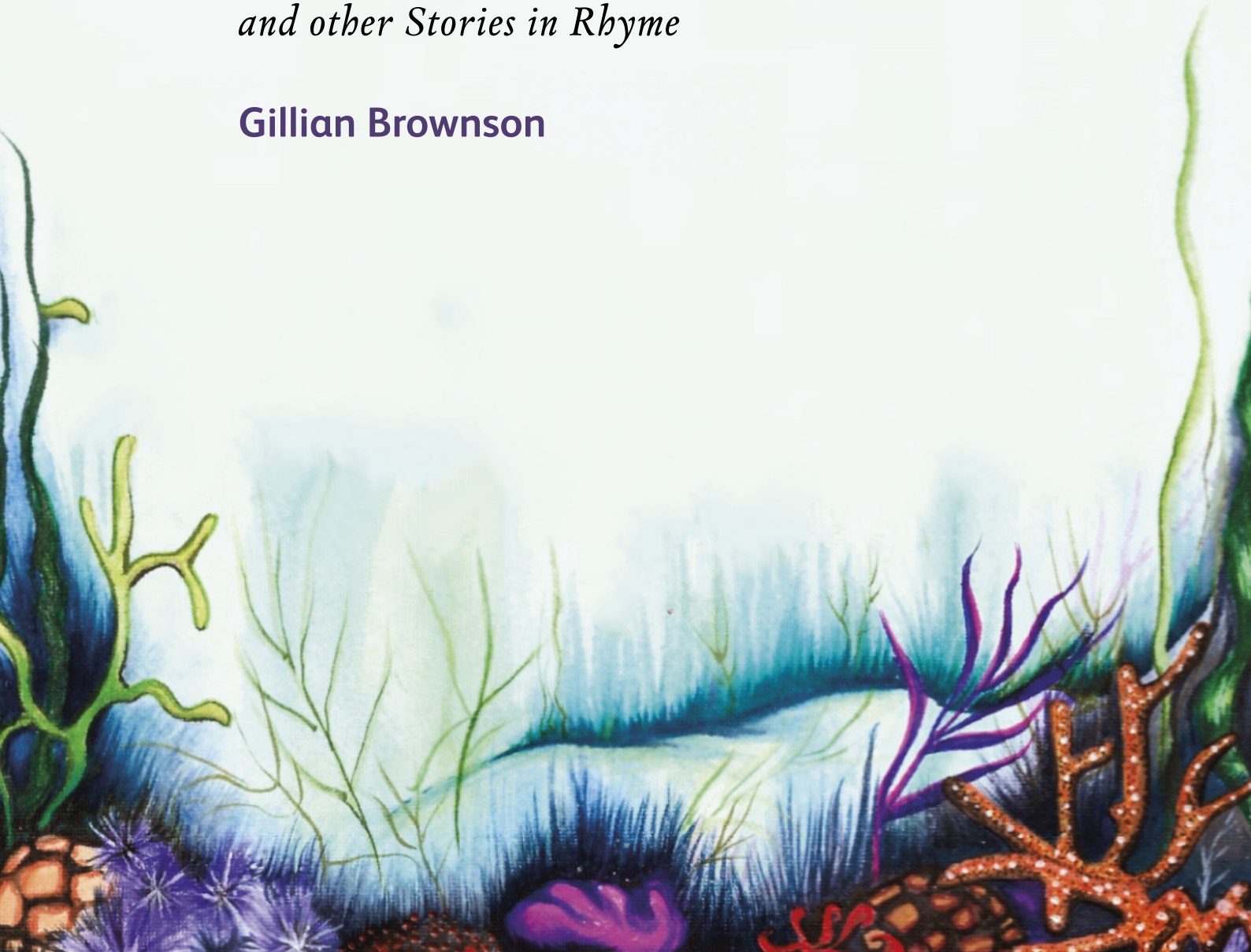


The Mermaid's Purse
and other Stories in Rhyme

Gillian Brownson



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Foreword

Helô. I'm Gill. I live in Caergybi just like you. It's my job to tell stories for all sorts of people, in all sorts of ways. Sometimes I write them, sometimes I draw them, often I tell them, or sing them or film them. This time though, my friends and I have put these Caergybi stories in a book, especially for you – the children who live & learn in Caergybi.

The best thing about these stories is that they happened right here on our little island! Have you ever been to South Stack to see the Lighthouse? Well, Lola the Puffin was swimming all around the Irish Sea, until she found her home there at Ynys Lawd. Salty Tom in 'The Mermaid's Purse' may have lived there too, while he was trying to solve the mystery of the rubbish on the beach. The story of Billy-in-the-Bowl happened in town, down by where the cenotaph is now. You've probably walked there a hundred times!

We live in such an amazing place, with so many beautiful places to walk in and play in. The sea all around us is full of brilliant stories of bravery and magic too. Maybe, the next time you're walking in town or on Newry, or building sandcastles on Porthdafarch, you might see something that makes you want to tell a story too, or draw a picture? I hope so.

I hope too that you like these special stories all about your home, and the pictures I made to go with them. Have a lovely time reading them with someone special, or on your own. Mwynhewch!



Lola

Lola was a puffin,
Soon to have a chick,
She had to find a cosy place,
And had to find one QUICK!

A cosy place to rear her young,
It had to be the best,
Dry and warm, soft and calm,
A luxury five-star nest.



She came across a GIANT WHALE,
And sang out across the blue,
*“Dych chi’n gwybod am le cyfforddus?
Dwi isio nyth clud i’r cyw!”*

The whale frowned: *“O ble ddaethoch chi?
Nofiwch draw i Ynys Enlli.
MORFIL ydw i, does dim lle i ti!
Dwi ’di blino, dwi isio mynd i gysgu!”*

She paddled on to find some land,
The sky was getting dark.
But when she finally found some sand,
It was guarded by a SHARK.

She swallowed hard, and took a breath,
And sang out across the blue,
*“Dych chi’n gwybod am le cyfforddus?
Dwi isio nyth clud i’r cyw!”*

“SIARC ydw i”, he said with sharp teeth,
*“Mae’n amser bwyd, dwi’n siwr.
Mae’r ynys hon yn gynnes braf,
A chyfleus i ti, wrth y dŵr.”*

HMMM....

"O, dim diolch!". She paddled on by.
That island didn't feel right.
She looked and searched for another safe place,
but now it was the middle of the night.

Under the stars, in the cold of the dark,
She saw a GREAT WARM LIGHT.
She paddled quick towards it,
She swam with all her might.

She came upon a rocky place,
A lighthouse on its hill.
She heard an old familiar call,
From another puffin's bill.

"Ble 'ti wedi bod?" said the voice out loud,
"Dwi 'di bod yn aros amdanat ti!"
"STEVE!" cried Lola, *"fy nghymar am oes!*
Rwyt ti yma! A nyth inni!"

He'd built their home already,
On South Stack's grassy cliff.
She cuddled him softly in their nest,
Until their chick came, whose name was...
GRIFF!



The Mermaid's Purse

There's an island in Wales called Anglesey,
Where darkness lurks in caves,
Where the great green sea swirls in and out,
With big, high peaky waves.

There's a small beach there, a pebble shore
And it's completely full of things,
Old tin cans and plastic bottles;
Things that should be in bins.

Every midnight, under the moon,
Something comes ashore,
Bringing old packets and pots and things,
And then it brings some more.

There was so much rubbish,
A lighthouse-keeper, whose name was Salty Tom,
Decided to stay awake one night
To see where it all came from.

So, he pitched up his tent, under twinkling stars
And he made a flask of tea,
He winked at his dog, whose name was Slick,
And whispered, "Let's wait and see."



They waited, and waited,
Just inside the opening of the cosy tent.
They watched and stared
Their eyes grew heavy, so off to sleep they went.

The morning came, salty Tom awoke
“O no! We missed it, we fell asleep!”
Slick ran off and barked out loud,
And splashed out in the deep.

Tom watched him swimming, and scratched his head,
“What’s out there in the silvery sea?”
All this rubbish, it comes from somewhere,
Is it a boat? What could it be?”

And as Slick came running out of the water
Shaking his soaking wet coat,
He suddenly stopped and chewed at something,
And it nearly went down his throat!

The dog was coughing; it was stuck in his jaw!
Tom ran, “Give it here old friend!”
Slick opened his mouth, something fell out
And the coughing soon came to an end.

The thing was black with shiny edges,
A bit like beetle’s back,
It had something rattling around inside,
But it was NOT a doggy-snack.

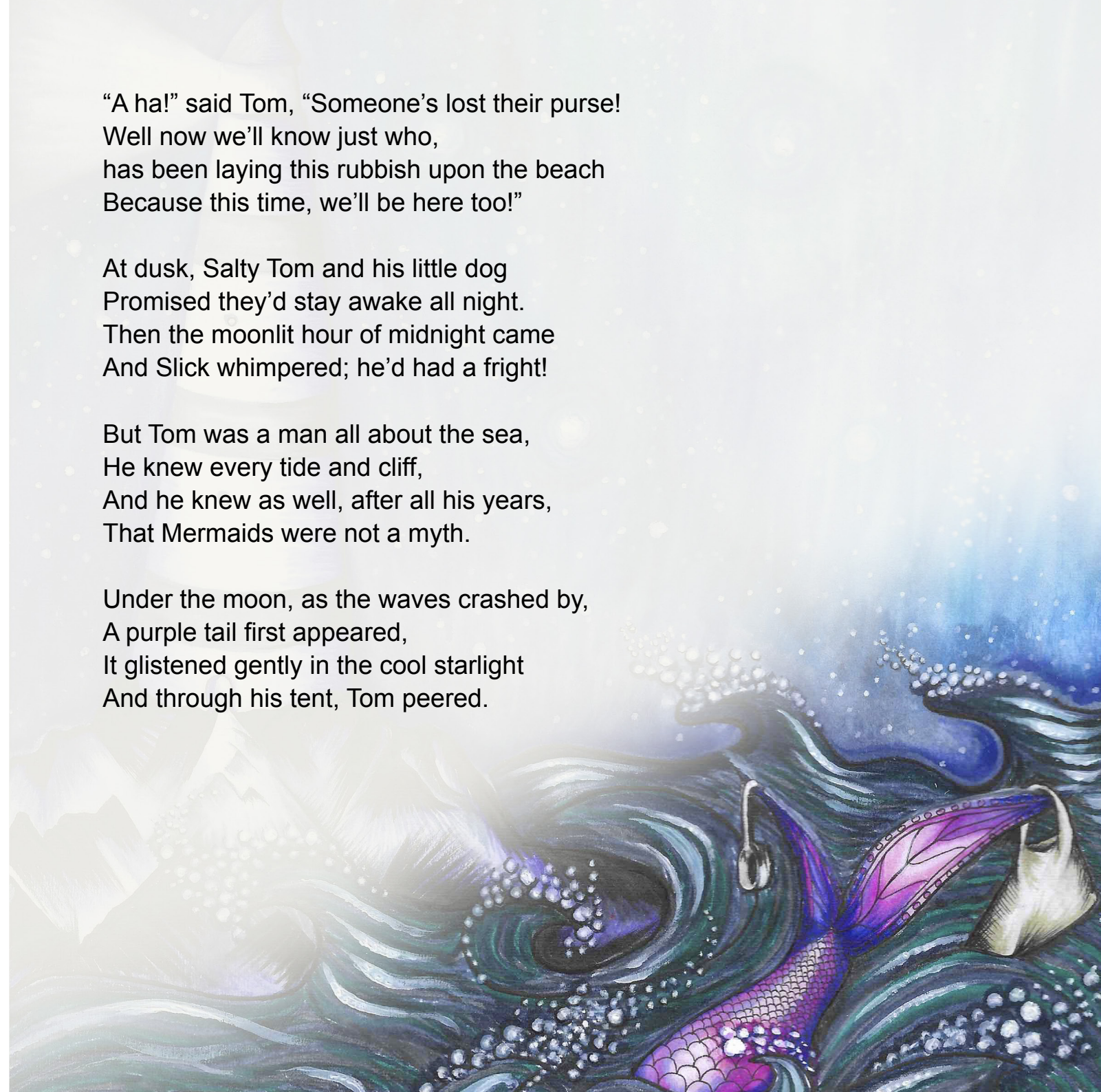


“A ha!” said Tom, “Someone’s lost their purse!
Well now we’ll know just who,
has been laying this rubbish upon the beach
Because this time, we’ll be here too!”

At dusk, Salty Tom and his little dog
Promised they’d stay awake all night.
Then the moonlit hour of midnight came
And Slick whimpered; he’d had a fright!

But Tom was a man all about the sea,
He knew every tide and cliff,
And he knew as well, after all his years,
That Mermaids were not a myth.

Under the moon, as the waves crashed by,
A purple tail first appeared,
It glistened gently in the cool starlight
And through his tent, Tom peered.



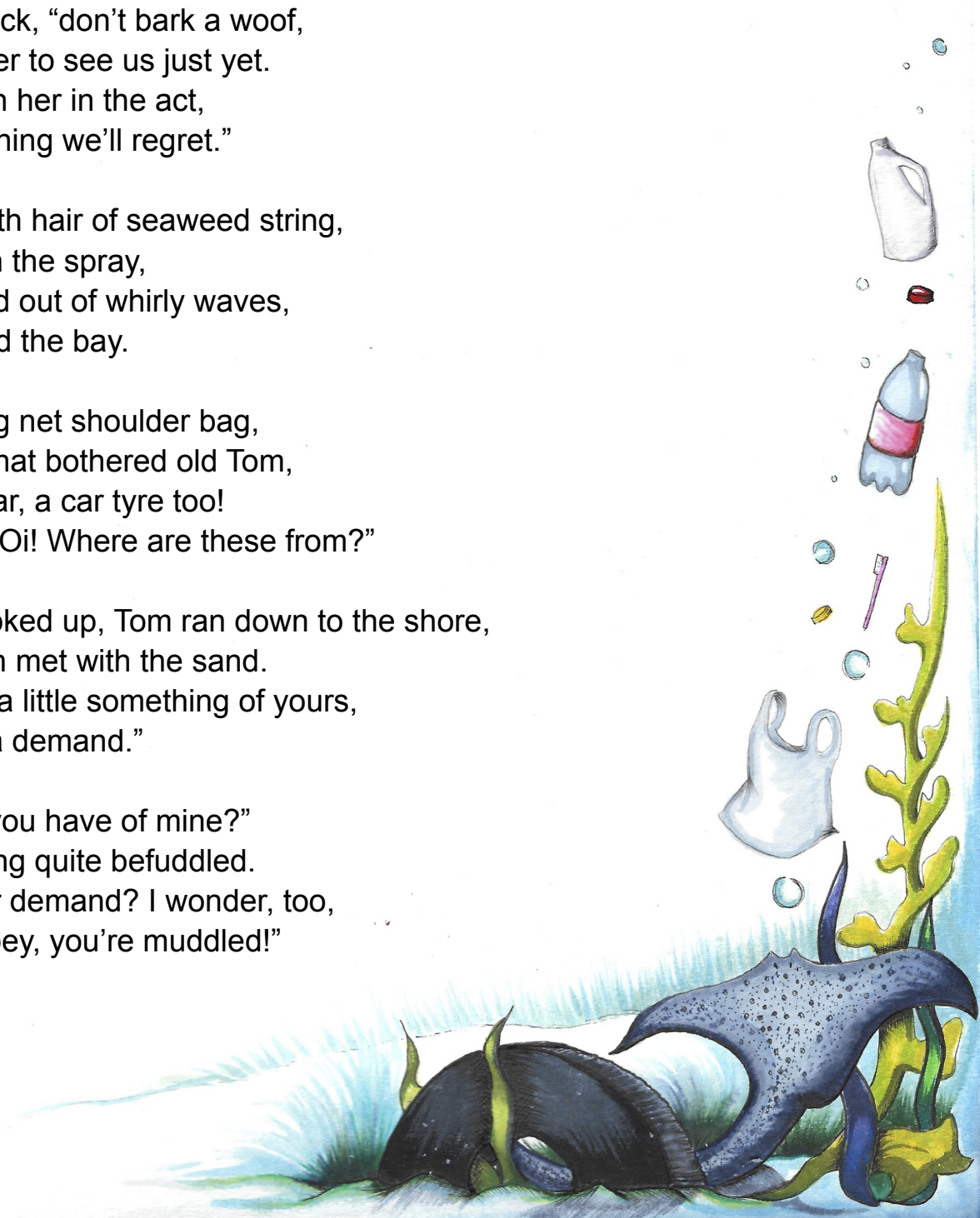
“Shh!” he told Slick, “don’t bark a woof,
We don’t want her to see us just yet.
We want to catch her in the act,
So don’t do anything we’ll regret.”

She splashed with hair of seaweed string,
Blowing gently in the spray,
She glided in and out of whirly waves,
Until she reached the bay.

She had a fishing net shoulder bag,
With the things that bothered old Tom,
A spade, a jam jar, a car tyre too!
So he shouted, “Oi! Where are these from?”

The mermaid looked up, Tom ran down to the shore,
Where the ocean met with the sand.
He said, “I have a little something of yours,
But first, I have a demand.”

“What is it, that you have of mine?”
She asked, feeling quite befuddled.
“And what’s your demand? I wonder, too,
If you think I’ll obey, you’re muddled!”



Tom stamped about and said, “Look at this!
The mess is getting worse,
If you promise you’ll take your rubbish back,
I’ll give you back your purse.”

“My purse?” she said, “Well I’m glad of that,
I’ve been looking all over for it.
But if it’s a choice between that, and this old junk,
You can put it in your pocket!”

Tom said, “You’ll take this stuff away right now!
These pots and old cans of beer,
This rubbish is ruining my beautiful shore,
And I’ve had it up to here!”

The mermaid swished her seaweed hair,
And splashed her lustrous tail,
She laid out more rubbish on the sand,
On top of a crumpled, old sail.

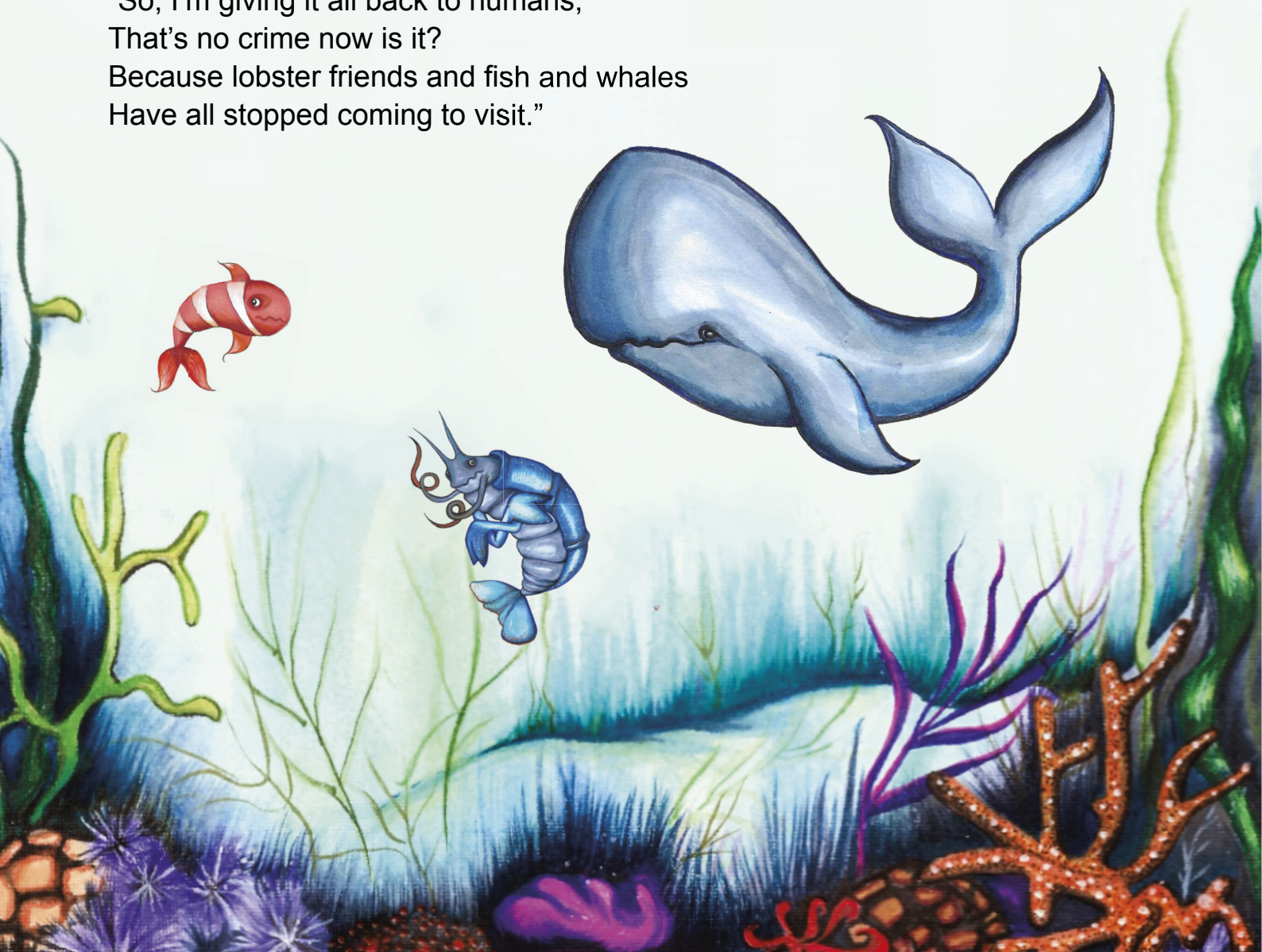
She said...

“A purse doesn’t mean that much to me
But I’ll tell you what makes me fume,
It’s when humans finish with silly old things
And dump them in my living room!”



“I’ve had plastic beads between my fins,
a toaster in my coral reef,
a bike in my bedroom, upon my shell bed
and a ring pull between my teeth!”

“So, I’m giving it all back to humans,
That’s no crime now is it?
Because lobster friends and fish and whales
Have all stopped coming to visit.”

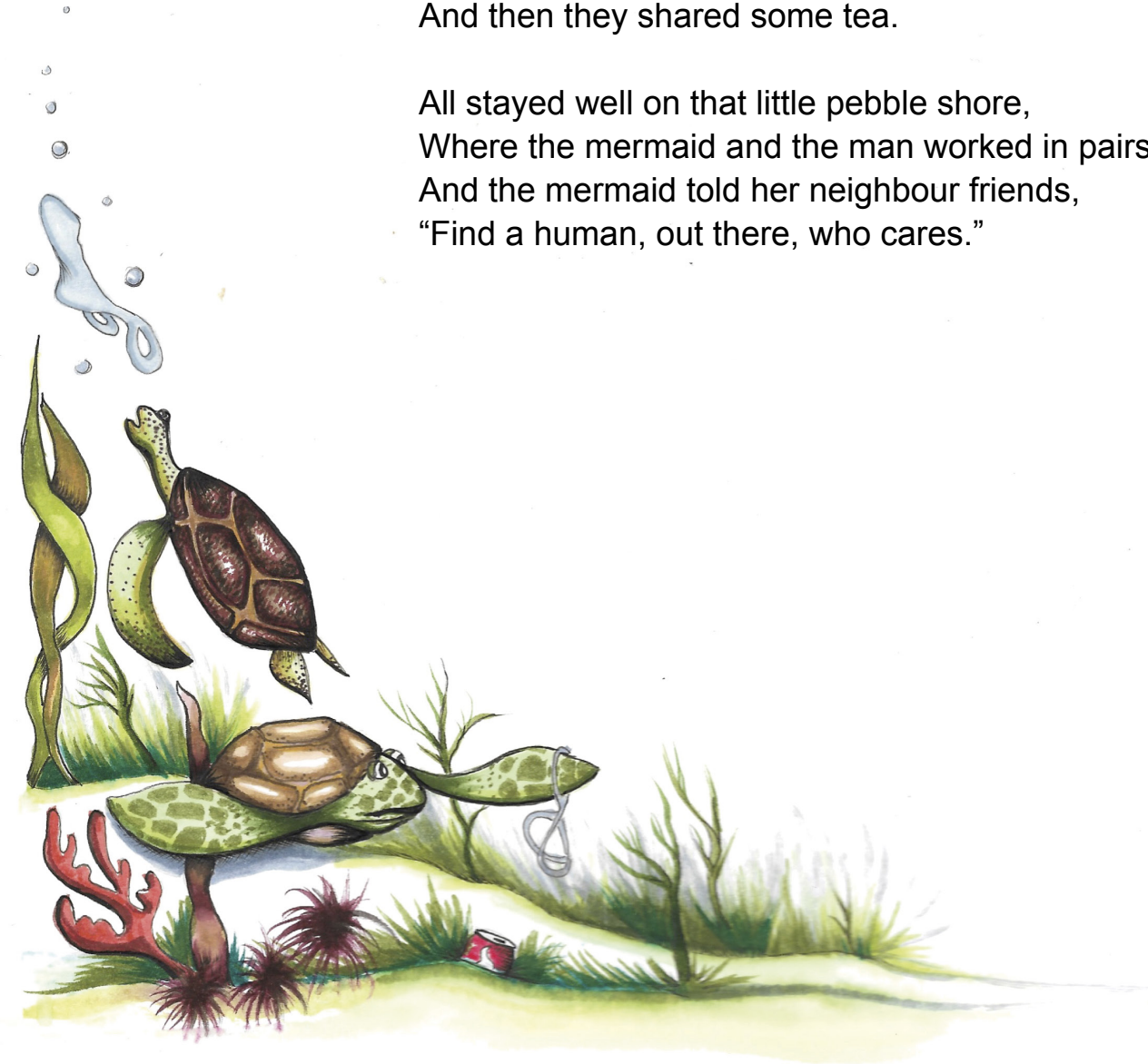


Salty Tom looked at the sea he loved
And Slick barked at him from behind
“You’re right” he sighed, he gave back the purse,
“I’m sorry for being unkind.”

She accepted the purse and apology,
And gave a pearl white smile.
She said, “Will you do something about all of this?”
It’s been going on for a while.”

He got a bin bag and he picked it all up
And he told her, "Bring more, feel free,"
And nightly, he collected the mermaid's stuff
And then they shared some tea.

All stayed well on that little pebble shore,
Where the mermaid and the man worked in pairs,
And the mermaid told her neighbour friends,
"Find a human, out there, who cares."



Billy-in-the-Bowl

There was a man of Holyhead,
Who got round in a bowl,
He had no legs, but his arms were strong,
and his life, it took its toll.

It didn't stop a farmer's daughter,
Who loved him with all her heart,
But her father had no wish for this,
And kept them both apart.

He offered her a fortune,
A handsome wealthy spouse
But Billy lived inside her heart,
She could not get him out!

She told her father, strong and true;
"I will not marry another,
I'll marry Billy, and his bowl,
And I'll be his children's mother!"



This is a riddle about a very famous landmark in Caergybi!
Can you guess what it is?

What climbs up from the land?
Much taller than a tree,
And when there's no fog,
You can see the sea!

Gillian Brownson

Gill lives on the island of Holyhead, next door to the Isle of Anglesey, with her two children Tilly & Molly, her husband, Mark, his drums and their big black cat, Darkness. When Gill is not swimming in the sea, or making the tea, she writes stories, tells stories and draws them too, for children in Wales just like you.

