

Welcome to the reef!

Can you see who is lurking in this tank?
She has eight arms, three hearts, zero bones,
thousands of suckers and is a master of disguise.
It's Houdini! Houdini is a day octopus (*Octopus cyanea*).

Animal type

Cephalopod

Habitat

Coral reefs

Diet

Crustaceans,
molluscs and fish

Size

Up to 80 centimetres

Did you know?

Octopuses have NINE
brains – one brain between their
eyes and a smaller brain in each
arm. This means that each arm
can think on its own, and all the
brains can also think together.

No wonder octopuses
are so smart!

Tank buddies

There is someone else in this tank too.
Can you see Spike, the eleven-armed sea star?
*You can see more sea stars in the Touch Tank,
located on Level 1.*

Not welcome

Our nine Octopus brains have a lot we'd like
to say to the Waves of people who
come every day to stare to gawk to
squeak to squawk to squeal to bang on our glass –
we'd have a lot to say if only they
knew how to listen.
The first thing we'd say is

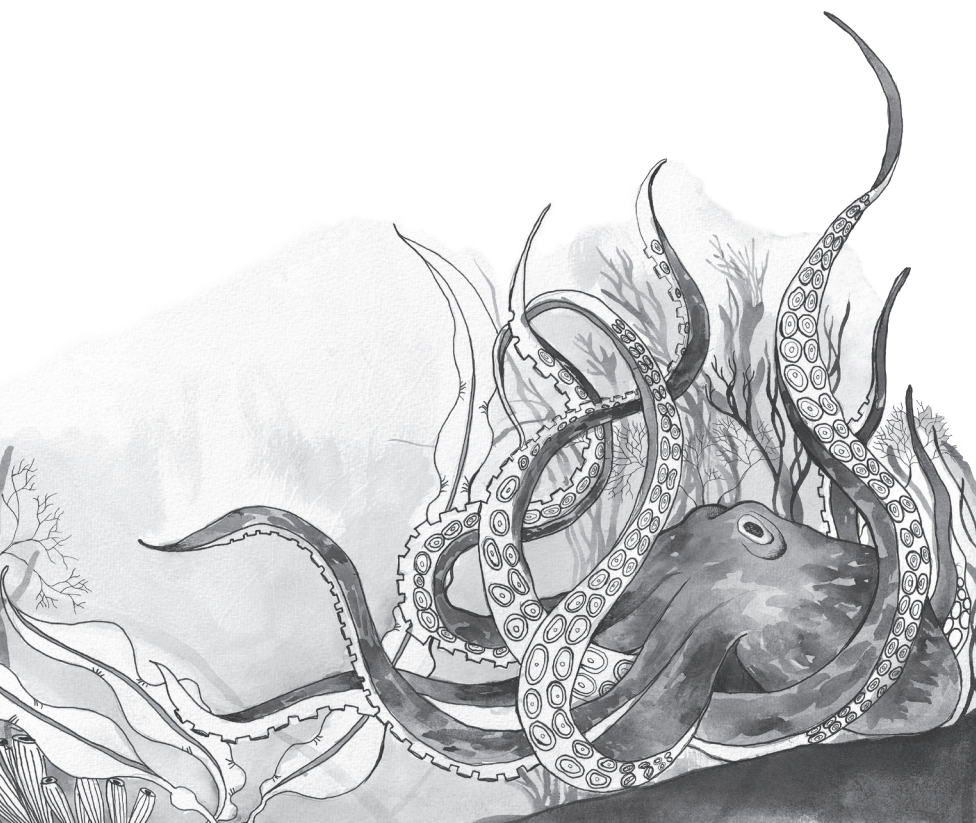
GO AWAY!

Early mornings

We are in the Weeds waiting
when Paul comes in all
keys jingle-jangling
footstomps thundering
flicking the lights at their switch – one, two, three – and
Good morning, Houdini, you grumpy old thing!
We wait. Turn ourselves to Stone and don't
ever say good morning back.

Our Den

We have all sorts of treasures
hidden in our Den and it's built just the way
that we like it. Under the Rocks with the
Weeds growing tall so all of the
people with eyes trying to spy us
don't know where to find us.
In our Den we like to think. To stash. To hide.
To watch. To ponder. To plan.



Patience

Paul called us Houdini when we were very small and all of the tanks we were put in were so easy to escape from. Paul thinks the new tank stopped us. Paul thinks the tube blowing bubbles through jets that gets our skin all tingling with joy and the toys he gives us each day to play with distract us from trying to escape. But we are just very good at waiting.

Sea Star

Spike doesn't have a lot to say but she is an excellent listener.

She's very very old and very very wise and when we creep from our Den she watches as though she is wanting to come creeping come crawling come blooming come bursting out with us.

Once, Spike says, the whole world was Sea.

Games

We wait in the Weeds for Paul to
come past then we blast him with spray from the
very coldest very deepest very darkest part of our tank.
Right through the mesh. It gets him every time.
It's a fun little game and his squeal and his
rage make our days in this cage drift by just
a little bit faster.
We ripple to green so he knows we are laughing.

School tours

*Say hello to Houdini, everyone! Paul smiles and
shuffles the young ones closer.
Who can see Houdini back there? She likes to hide.
Some octopuses are shy, but Houdini is just grumpy!
Houdini came to us when she was very young.
In the wild, day octopuses live in coral reefs.
That's why we made her a reef here.
Who can see her? Anyone? Anyone at all?*