


## Dear Reader,

I'm so excited to share *Ali and the Sea Stars* with you.

This book is inspired by my introduction to theater. When I was seven years old, I was on the Jersey Shore and one of the neighborhood kids decided to direct a production of the musical *Annie*. I auditioned and was cast as the lead. Growing up in a wheelchair, I didn't feel very confident and was extremely shy. It wasn't until I got onstage and sang in front of an audience that I began to feel brave. For the first time, I felt like I could take on the world with my head held high.

Using creativity with my





friends was my favorite part of my childhood theater experience. We allowed our imaginations to run wild and without limitations. In that special creative space, leaders were born and stars were made. I learned about the beautiful magic of collaboration. We needed each other and we became family.

With *Ali and the Sea Stars*, I'm reminding young dreamers that you don't need anyone's permission to make art. If you put your imagination and heart into it, anything is possible. We all have the power to find ourselves through creative experiences.

Enjoy reading!!!

**Love,**  
**Ali Stroker**

