

*Like the Shells Upon the Shore: a gentle guide to helping children understand the life stages, the dying process and death of all living things.*

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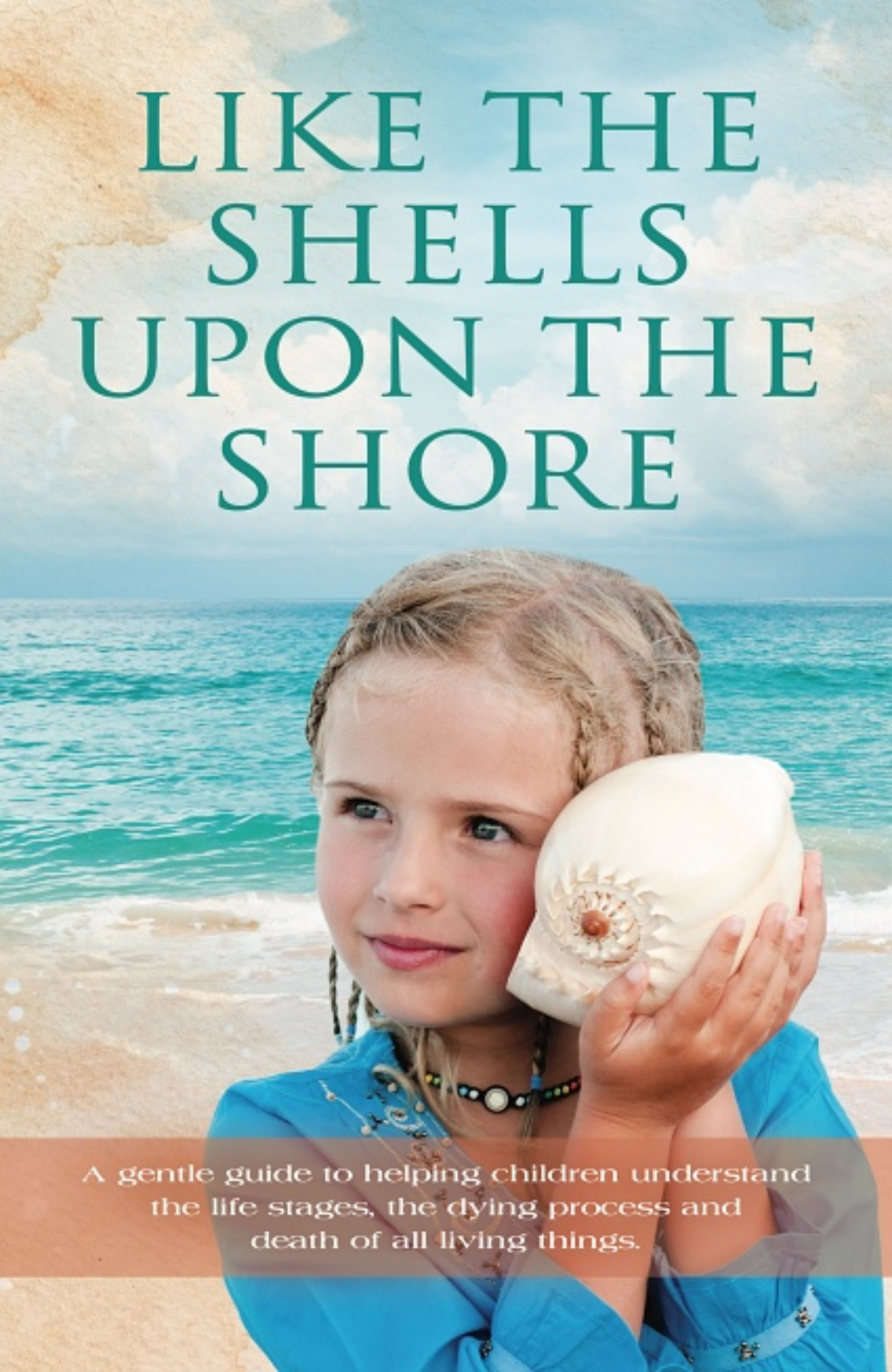
**By Louise Aucoin Mansolf**

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# LIKE THE SHELLS UPON THE SHORE

A young girl with blonde hair in two braids is shown from the chest up. She is holding a large, white, spiral nautilus shell to her right ear. She is wearing a bright blue long-sleeved shirt and a necklace with black, white, and blue beads. The background is a beach scene with turquoise water, white waves, and a sandy shore under a blue sky with light clouds. The title text is overlaid on the top half of the image, and a subtitle is overlaid on a semi-transparent orange band at the bottom.

A gentle guide to helping children understand  
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Photos captured on site by the author in the Caribbean, in her New England backyard, on the shoreline or resourced through DreamsTime.com. Pictured on the previous page is of the author's daughter, Danielle L. Rucci.

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## Foreword

When grown-ups or pets leave us and do not come back, it can impart despair, depression, or sadness. Grown-ups understand this, but it is often difficult for children to understand how and why the end of life---or death---happens. With the intention of helping my daughter gently understand the "leaving," I told her a story about the "shells upon the shore."



At 37, I was unceremoniously introduced to the potential of my own demise and had to think seriously about how to explain the situation and didn't want my daughter to feel frightened or alone if anyone close to her ever passed away or died. I explained to her about

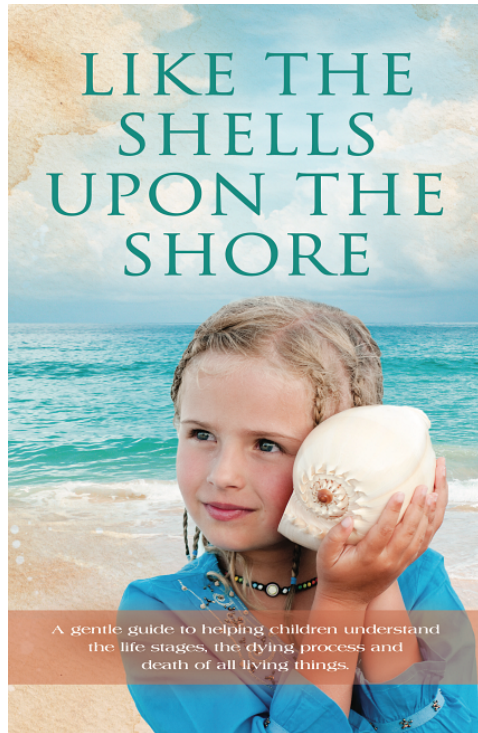
the “leaving” when she was incredibly young. When she was just five, we attended a funeral together. I lovingly explained to her what to expect beforehand and she managed the experience very well. She spoke quietly to the people who were “left behind” and then sat quietly with me. She understood why people were crying and why there were flowers and a special “memory stone” in a park to remember the person who had died.



I hope this book helps parents and caregivers---and children--- understand the life stages and the inevitable having to say goodbye to someone who passes away or “dies.” It is a natural life progression and is part of life for every living thing. Children need to understand that it is normal to be angry, in denial, sad and finally accept a beloved person’s or pet’s leaving. I have authored this

book with the intention of helping children and their families tenderly discuss the eventual conclusions to life and the often-difficult loss that all living things experience.





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