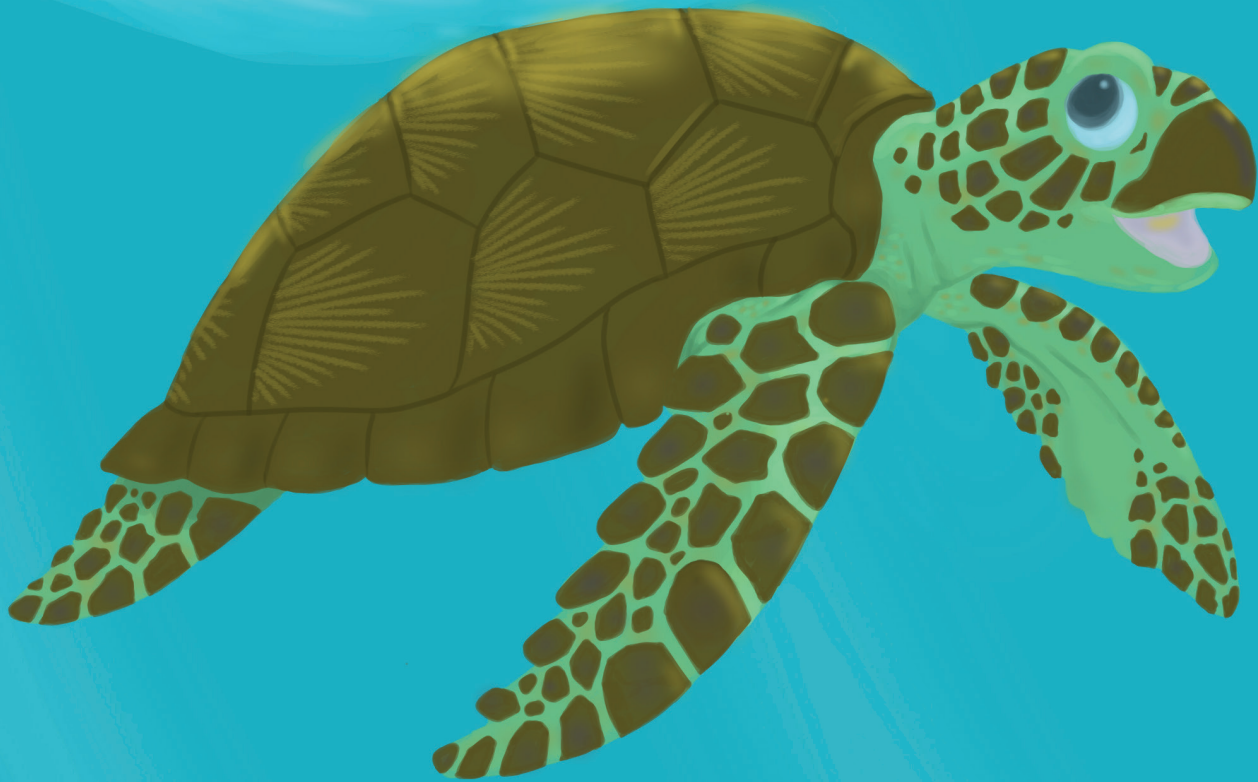


Monie

The Green Sea Turtle



Written and illustrated by Alexandra Paredes

Edited by Patricia Z. R Davis

Translation by Lalarisoa Rakotoarimino

& Mihary Ramiandrisoa

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SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT
OF SMALL-SCALE COASTAL FISHERIES
IN NORTHERN MADAGASCAR

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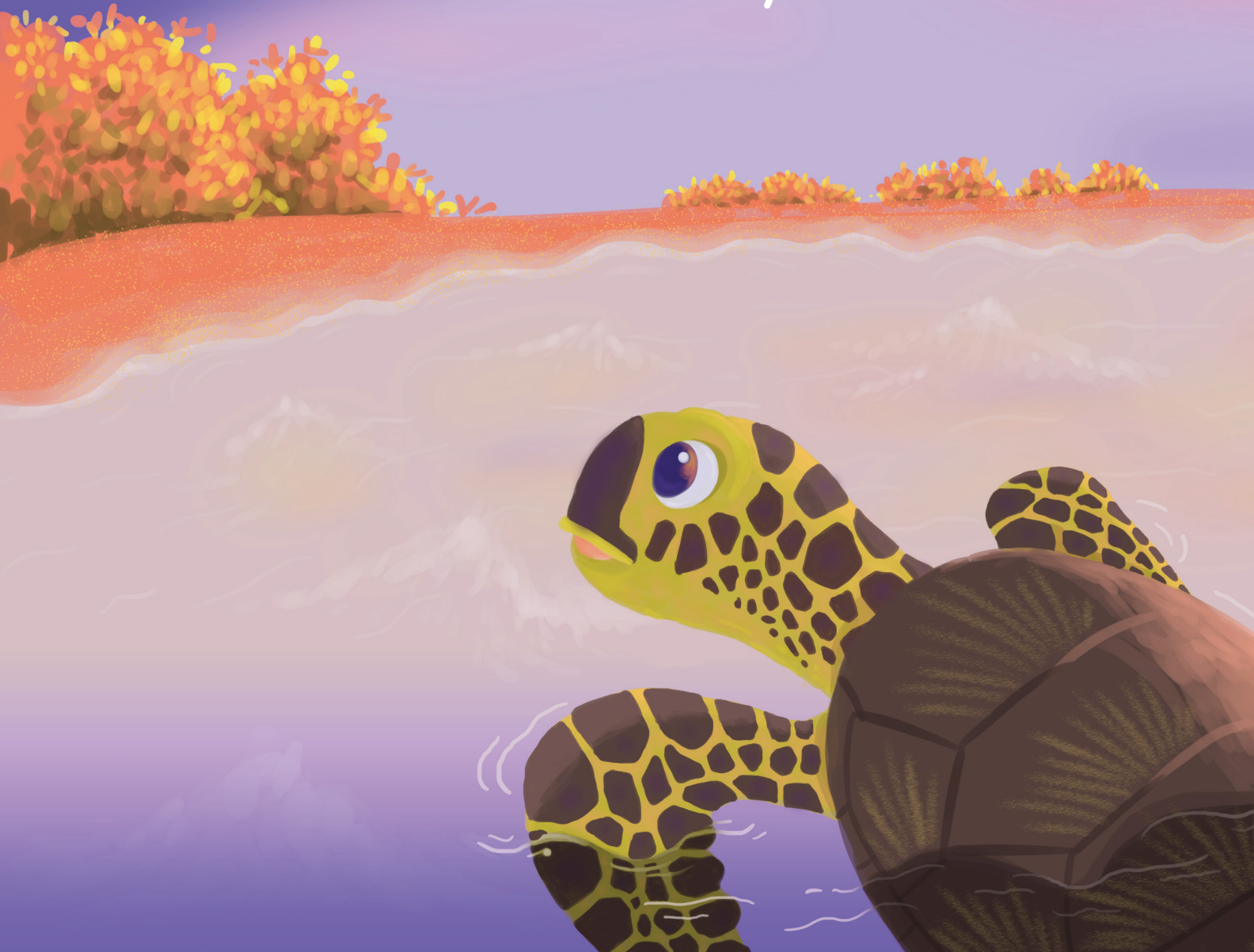
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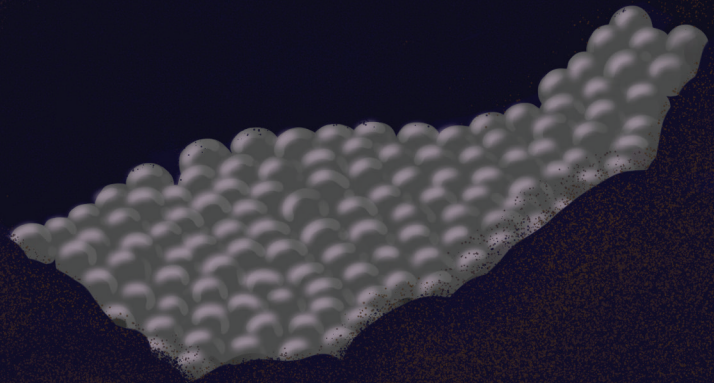
It was late afternoon. The sun was going down, the waves were strong, and Monie the green sea turtle swam from the open sea towards the islands of Nosy Hara.

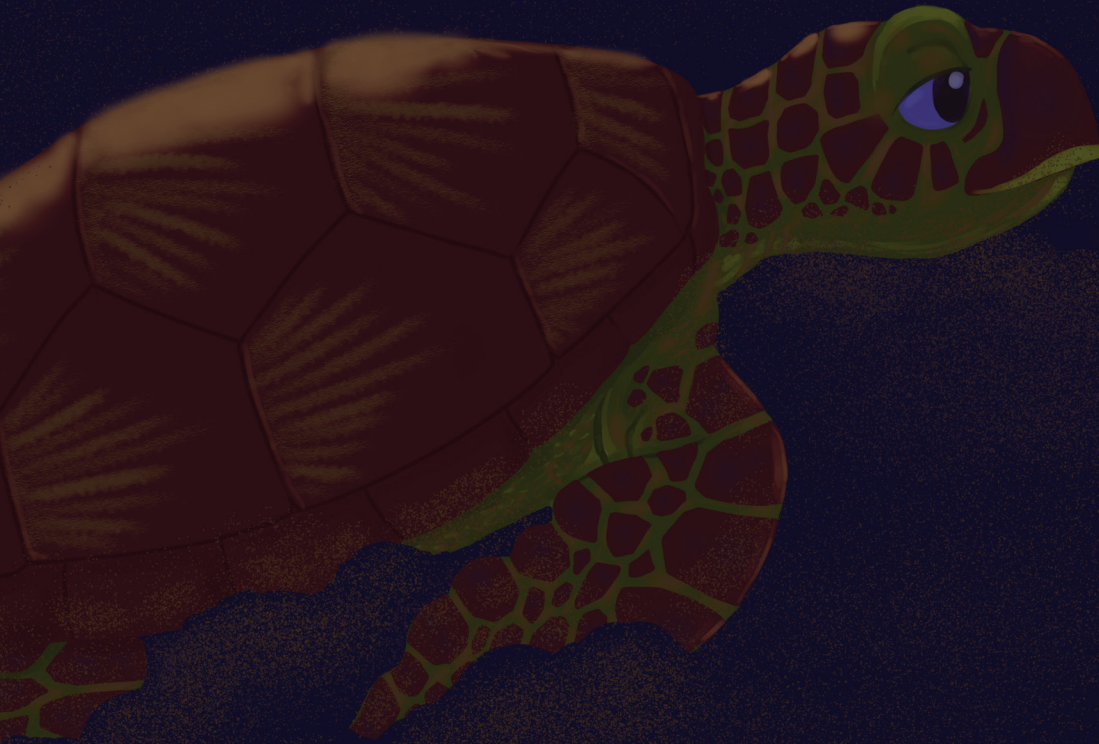


Monie thought, "this is the beach where I was born! And this is where I will lay my own eggs."



Monie dug a hole in the sand and quietly laid 120 eggs in the nighttime. No one disturbed her, and that made her feel happy and safe.

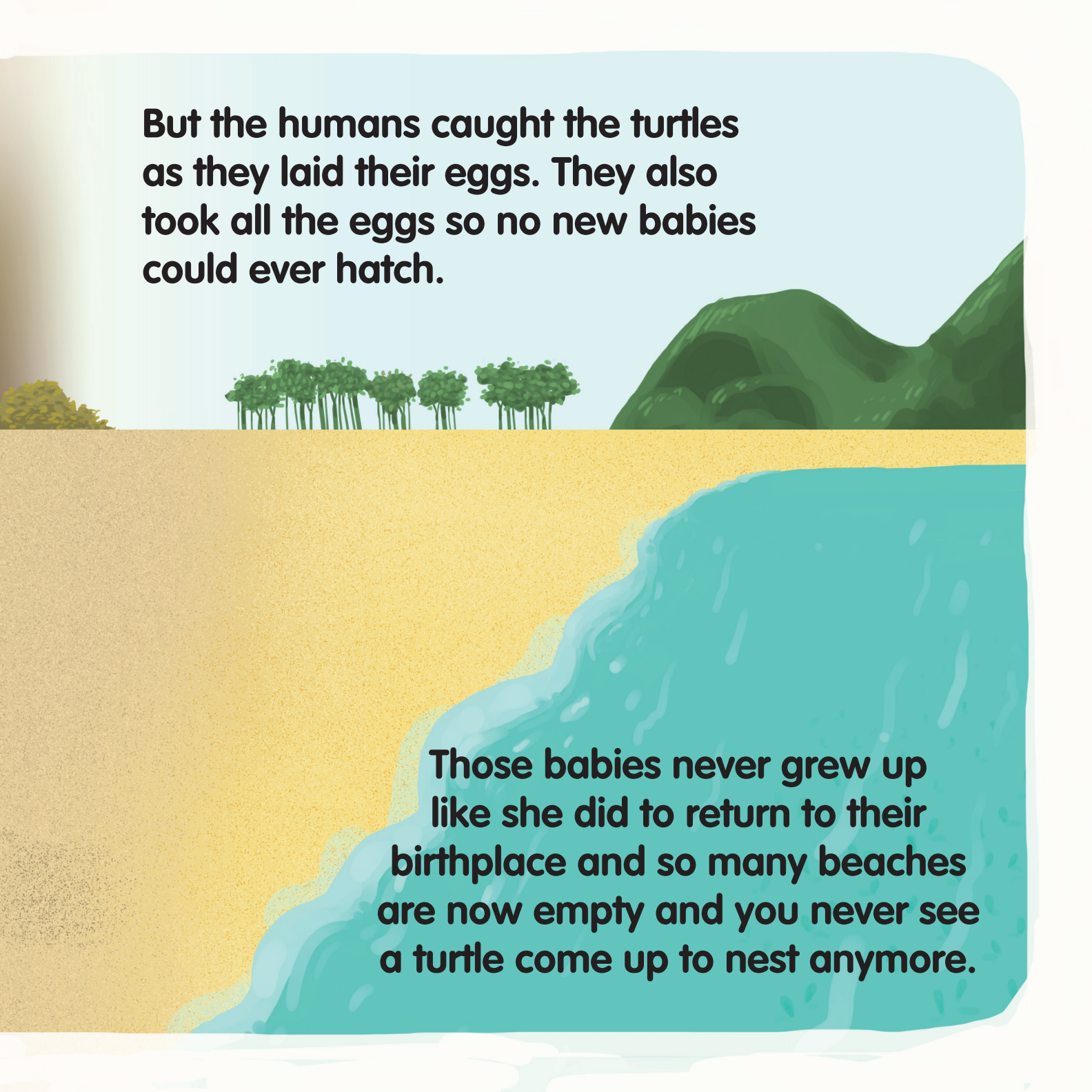





She recalled that a long time ago,
green sea turtles like her nested
near humans.



**But the humans caught the turtles
as they laid their eggs. They also
took all the eggs so no new babies
could ever hatch.**



**Those babies never grew up
like she did to return to their
birthplace and so many beaches
are now empty and you never see
a turtle come up to nest anymore.**

The illustration depicts a coastal scene. The top portion shows a golden-yellow sandy beach with a fine, grainy texture. Below the beach is a shallow body of water, represented by a solid teal color. In the bottom third of the image, there is a dense field of dark green seagrass. Various marine life are scattered throughout the seagrass: two yellow fish with black vertical stripes, several pink and white shrimp, a purple starfish, a pink seashell, a blue seashell, a white seashell, a brown starfish, and a small grey sea urchin. The overall style is simple and colorful, typical of children's educational materials.

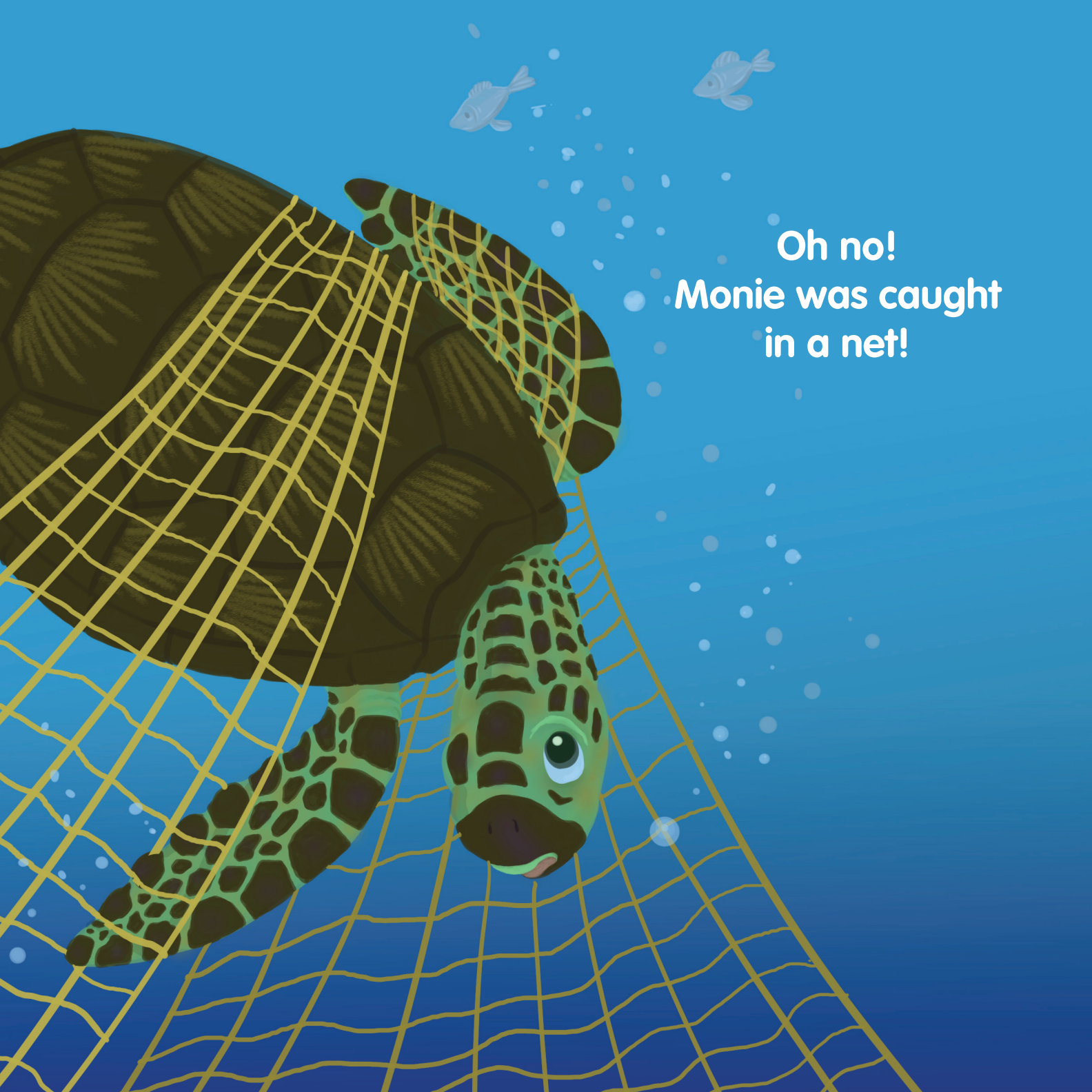
After laying her eggs, Monie covered the nest with sand. Her hard work made her hungry, so she returned to the shallow water at dawn and feasted on her favorite food: seagrass!

The fish, cucumbers, and molluscs in the seagrass loved having green sea turtles like Monie there because she kept their habitat healthy. The seagrass also stopped huge waves washing away the shore.



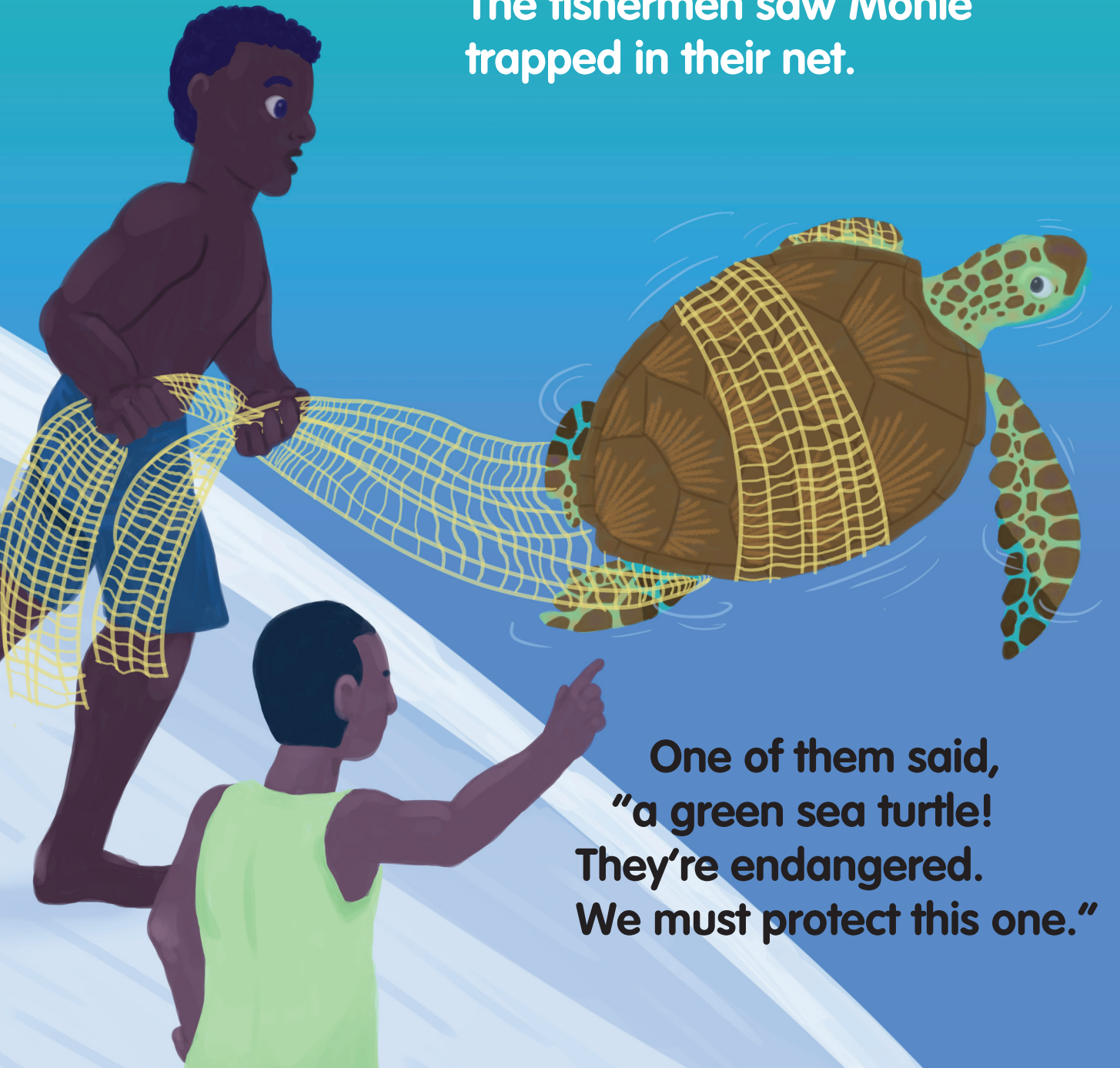
Monie decided to swim out to sea again. But, what's this?





Oh no!
Monie was caught
in a net!

**The fishermen saw Monie
trapped in their net.**



**One of them said,
"a green sea turtle!
They're endangered.
We must protect this one."**

Another fisherman said, “we shouldn’t eat sea turtles, anyway. People die from eating sea turtles, remember? They can contain harmful toxins.”





They released Monie carefully and said goodbye. Monie was thankful and happy to be free once again.

The fishermen felt sure they would have a good day's fishing ahead, after their good deed.



**On the shore, Some children playing
at the beach discovered Monie's nest.**





"We will protect this nest from poachers and predators, because we really want to see the tiny babies when they hatch," they said.

The children know that it's hard
for baby turtles, called hatchlings,
to survive.

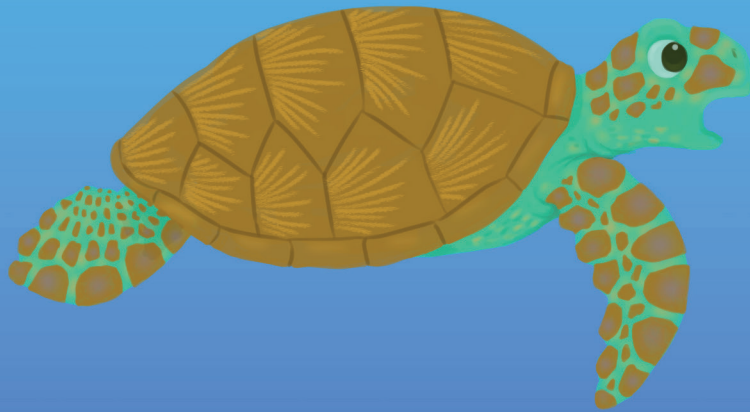


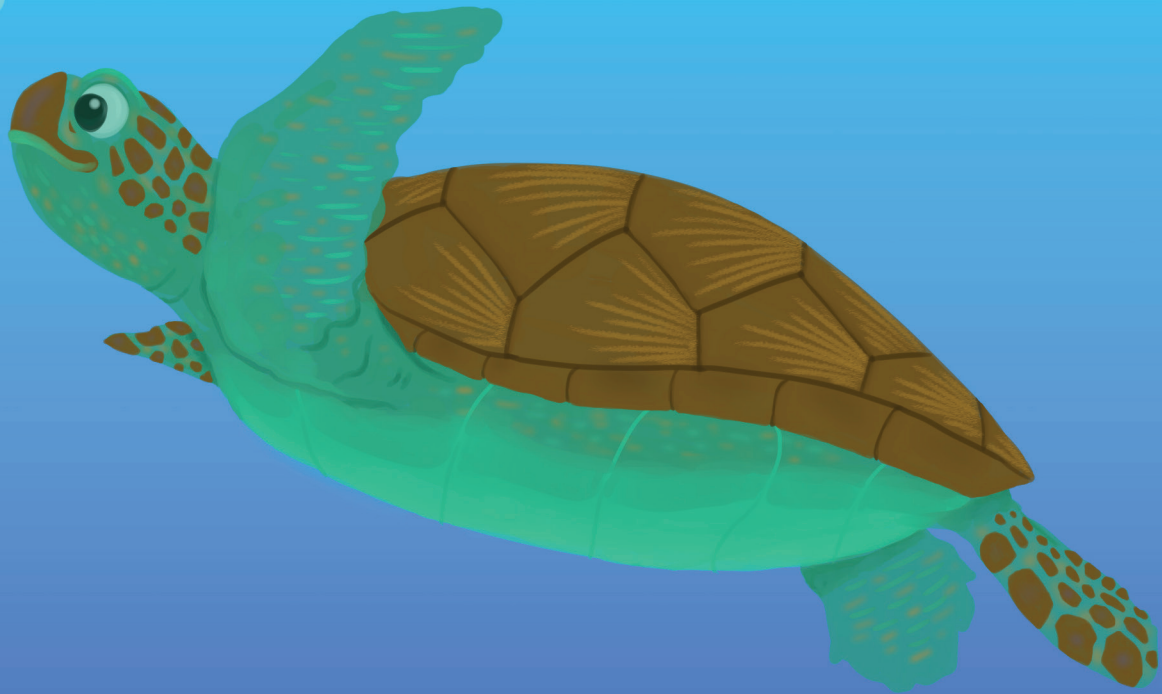
**Eggs and hatchlings have
lots of natural predators.**

**And, of course, poachers want
to steal away the eggs, too.**



Sadly, only one out of one thousand
eggs survives to be an adult sea turtle
in the ocean.

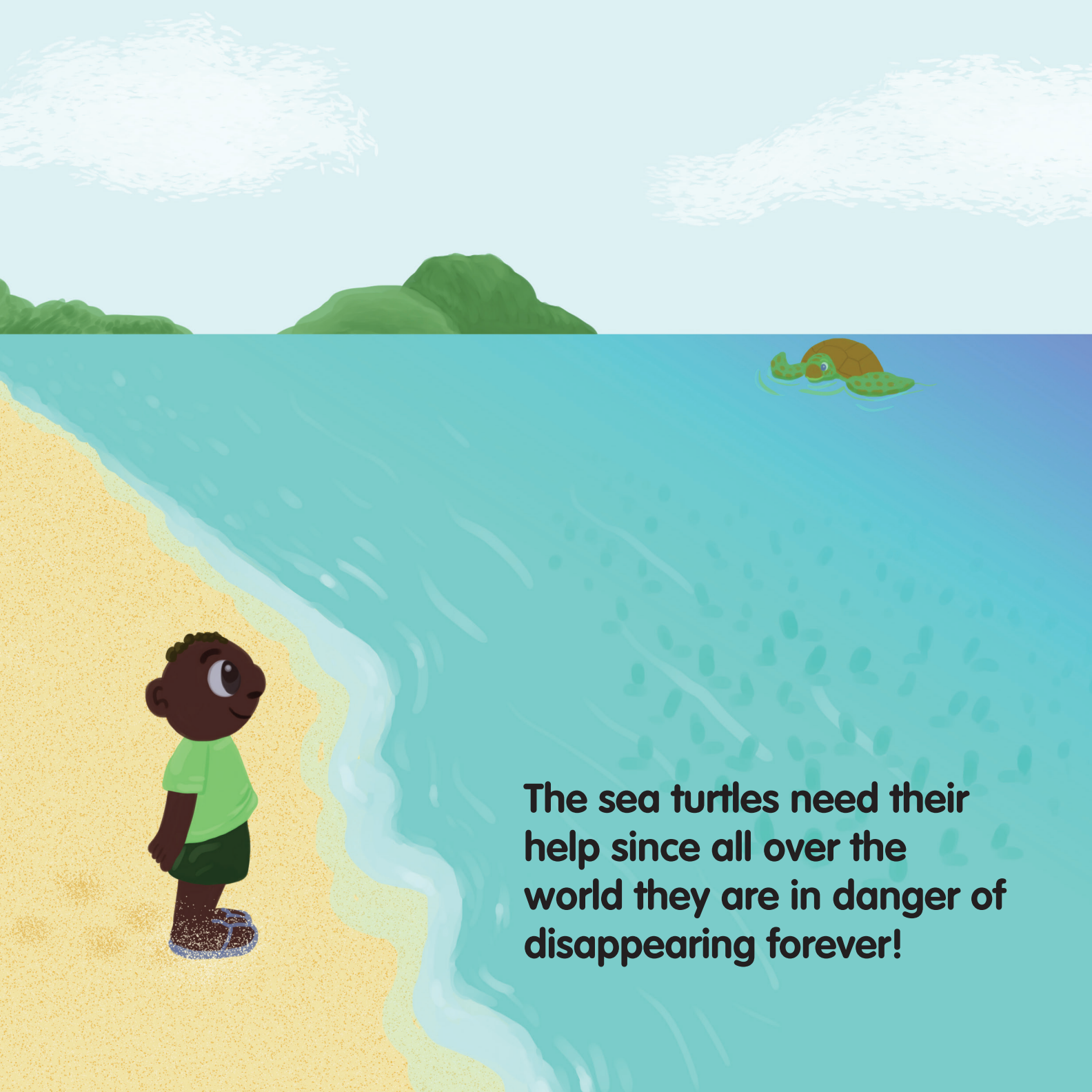




The children also know that it takes at least 25 years for green sea turtles like Monie to grow old enough to lay their own eggs. That's a long time!

**By protecting the nest, the kind
children give Monie's babies
a fighting chance to survive.**





The sea turtles need their help since all over the world they are in danger of disappearing forever!

About Sea Turtles

How many kinds of sea turtles are there?

There are seven kinds of sea turtles in the world: the green sea turtle, the hawksbill sea turtle, the leatherback sea turtle, the loggerhead sea turtle, the olive ridley sea turtle, the Kemp's ridley sea turtle, and the flatback sea turtle. Monie is a green sea turtle.

Why should we protect sea turtles?

Sea turtles are essential to the marine ecosystem. Hawksbill sea turtles eat sponges that crowd coral reefs. Green sea turtles eat seagrass, which keeps the seagrass healthy. Seagrass helps humans by reducing the damage caused by storms and strong waves.

Additionally, sea turtle watching is a way for beach communities to make money.

Are sea turtles affected by climate change?

Yes! Climate change causes rising sea levels, which causes beaches to disappear. The sea turtles will be unable to find the beaches where they must return to lay their eggs.

Climate change also causes rising temperature, which makes beaches warmer. This is a problem because turtle eggs, which are laid in a hole in the sand, rely on temperature to determine whether they will become male or female hatchlings. Colder eggs become males and warmer eggs become females. A warmer beach means more female than male hatchlings, which means it will be harder for them to find mates when they grow up.

Do sea turtles have a role in Malagasy culture?

Every six years, the Antakarana perform a rite where they sacrifice a turtle on a sacred tamarind tree in Vohilava. The turtle is an offering to venerate their ancestors, obtain God's protection while they are at sea while fishing, and God's blessing to catch more fish.

Sea turtle hunting is prohibited by law, but fishers ask permission from the MNP every six years to make this offering.

Can people really die from eating sea turtles?

Yes. for example in 2018, eight children from Antsiranana died of acute food poisoning after eating sea turtle meat. Experts say we should not eat sea turtles, because they consume toxic algae, which is very harmful to humans. Poisoning from eating sea turtle meat is called chelonitoxism.

How rare are sea turtles?

Sea turtles are threatened with extinction all over the world. If an animal is extinct, it means that it will never be seen again on earth. That is why sea turtles need immediate protection.

How can we protect sea turtles?

Help sea turtles by letting others know they are endangered, and that we must protect them! Can you protect nests near where you live with your parents or teachers?

