

Tiny Turtles Tough Trek To Safety



CRAAAACK!

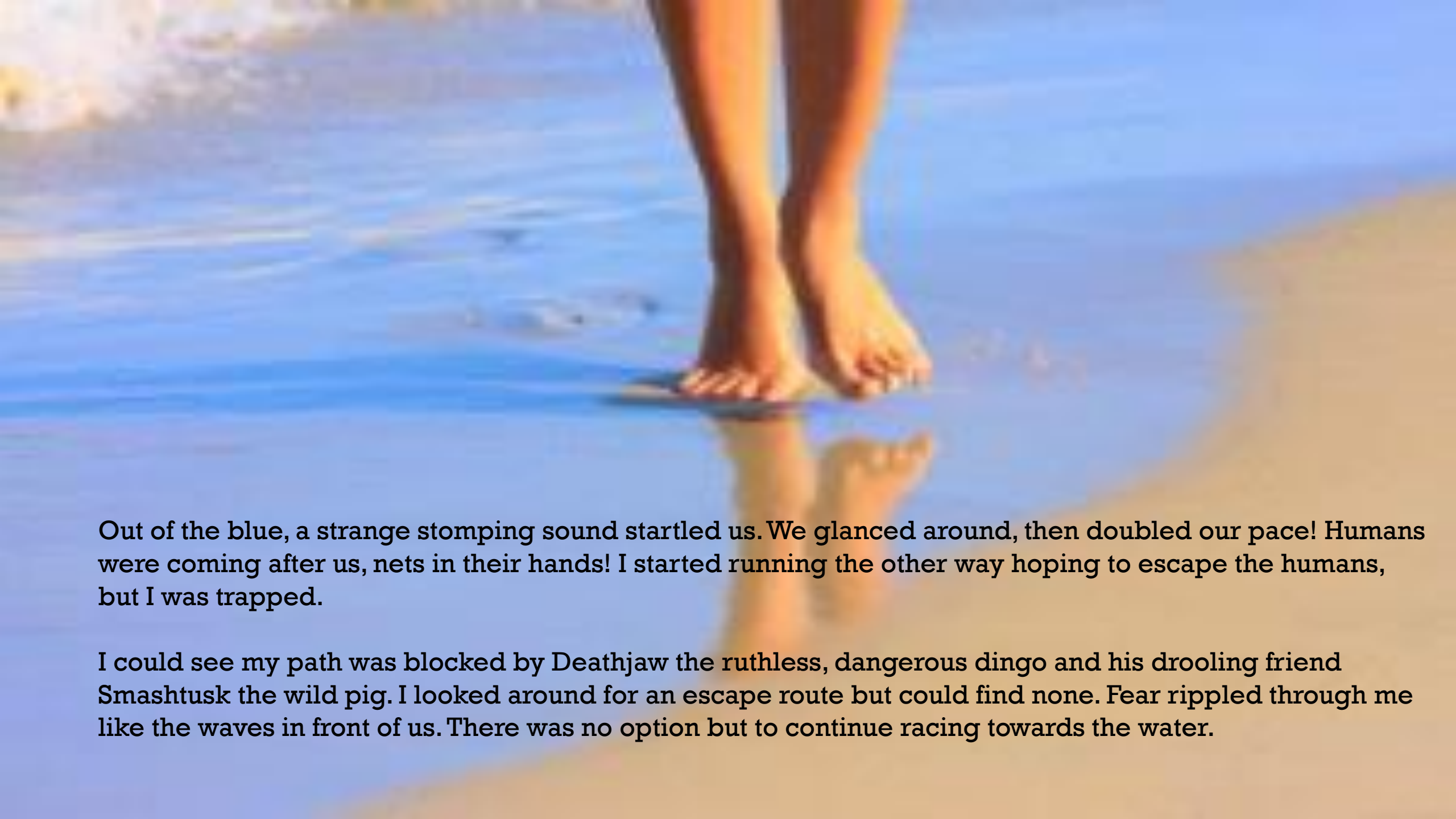
Fragments of eggshell flew around as I slowly crawled out of my home of 10 weeks. I yawned. I had lived in the safety of my shell underneath the glorious Bundaberg beaches.

Around me, other eggs began to hatch, as my 90 brothers and sisters started to dig up, trying to reach the surface.



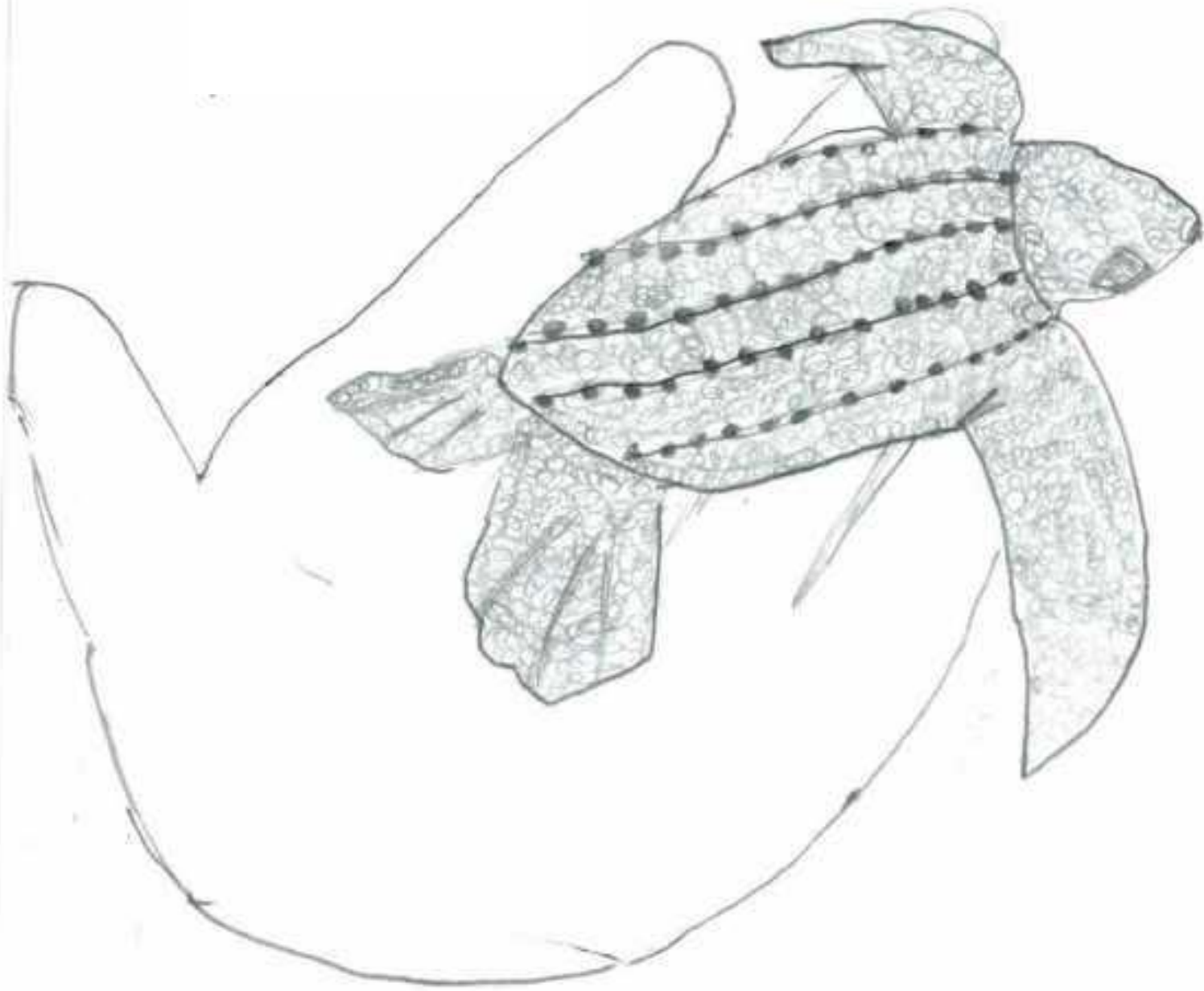
Suddenly, rays of sunlight burst through the sand and we saw..... the ocean!
Clumsily, we scurried along, dreaming of the caressing coolness of the waves
where we would disappear into a different realm.





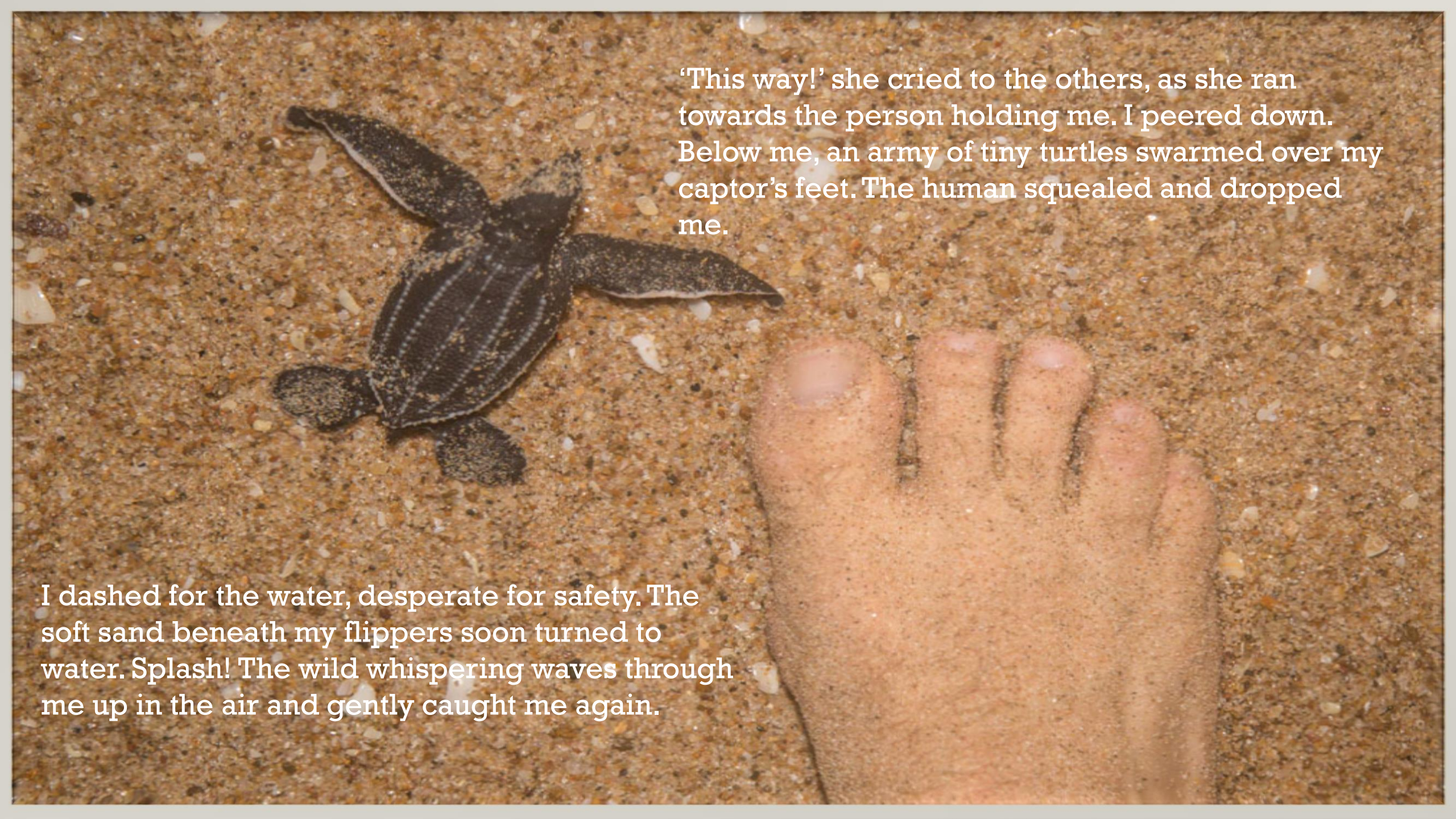
Out of the blue, a strange stomping sound startled us. We glanced around, then doubled our pace! Humans were coming after us, nets in their hands! I started running the other way hoping to escape the humans, but I was trapped.

I could see my path was blocked by Deathjaw the ruthless, dangerous dingo and his drooling friend Smashtusk the wild pig. I looked around for an escape route but could find none. Fear rippled through me like the waves in front of us. There was no option but to continue racing towards the water.



Just as I was getting close, a human came up behind me.

‘Help!’ I cried as I was lifted higher and higher above the ground. One of my sisters looked up.



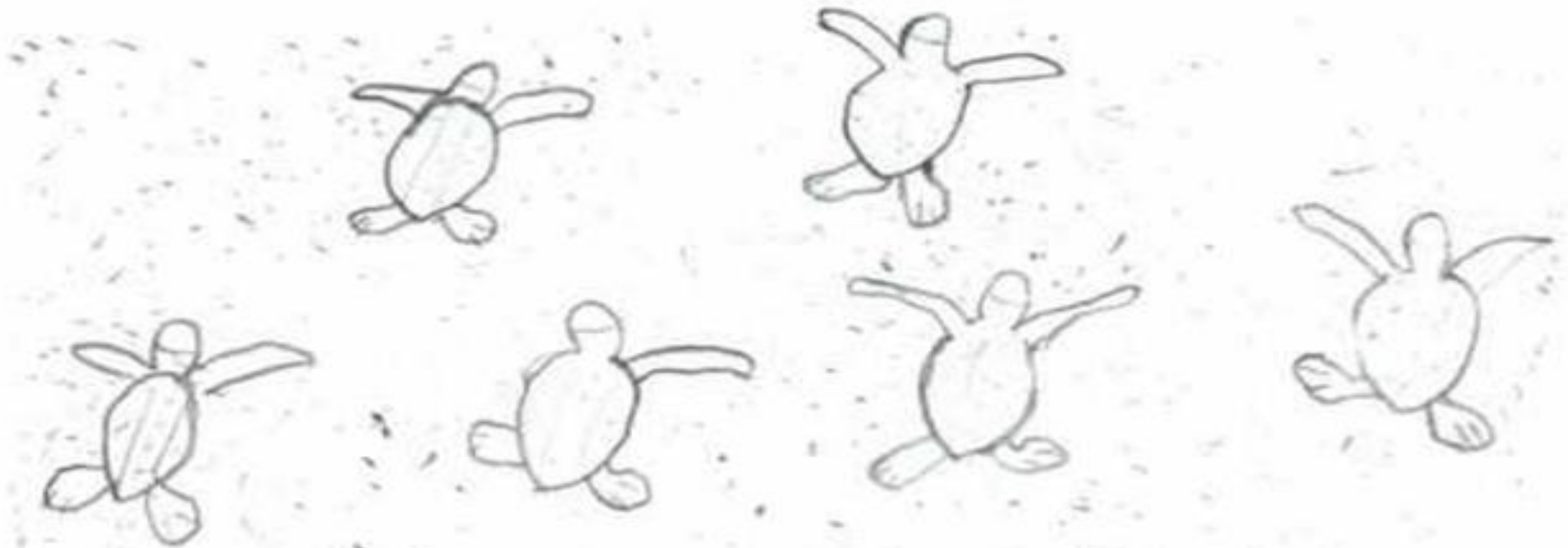
‘This way!’ she cried to the others, as she ran towards the person holding me. I peered down. Below me, an army of tiny turtles swarmed over my captor’s feet. The human squealed and dropped me.

I dashed for the water, desperate for safety. The soft sand beneath my flippers soon turned to water. Splash! The wild whispering waves through me up in the air and gently caught me again.

‘So that’s how you got your name Grandpa,’ my grandchild said. ‘I thought you got it because of your trick where you jump in the air and do a flip before splashing back into the water’.

I chuckled. ‘No Squirt, now let me finish my story’





I turned back around and gaped. Only 20 of my brothers and sisters followed me in the water. The others had been taken.

For years we stuck together, avoiding dangers at all costs. Then we went our separate ways, and only I am left now.

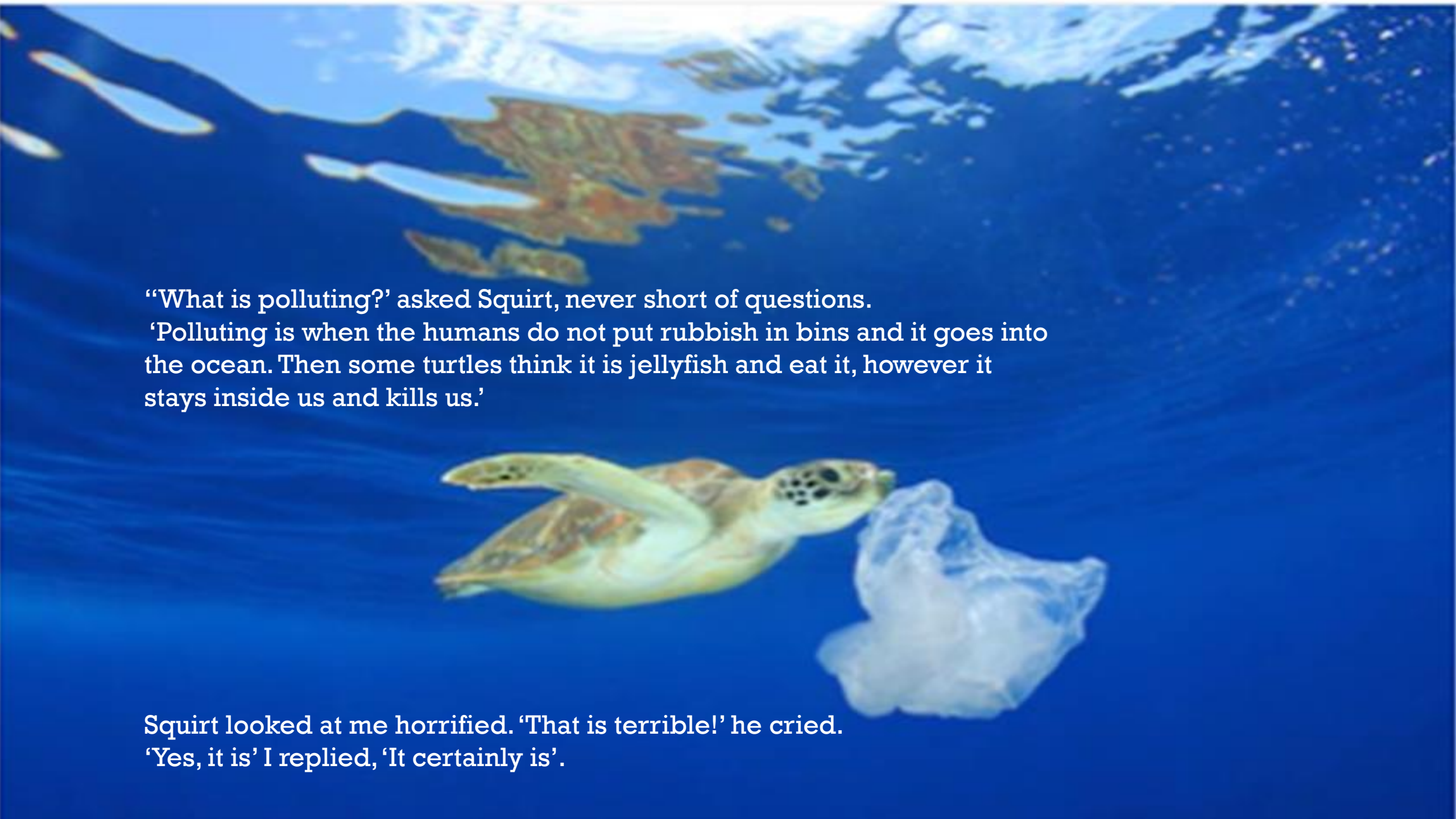




‘Why are you the only one?’ asked Squirt, confused.

‘There are many dangers for our fellow sea turtles’ I sighed, ‘Hatchlings are taken by larger animals like foxes, dingoes, wild pigs, unleashed dogs and crabs and humans take us for pets. Then once we are in the water, larger animal like sharks eat us and humans do something called “polluting”’.



An underwater photograph showing a sea turtle swimming towards a piece of clear plastic trash. The water is deep blue, and the surface with sunlight reflections is visible at the top. The turtle is positioned in the lower center, and the plastic is to its right. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“What is polluting?’ asked Squirt, never short of questions.
‘Polluting is when the humans do not put rubbish in bins and it goes into the ocean. Then some turtles think it is jellyfish and eat it, however it stays inside us and kills us.’

Squirt looked at me horrified. ‘That is terrible!’ he cried.
‘Yes, it is’ I replied, ‘It certainly is’.

As I gazed into my innocent grandchild's eyes, I wondered if our species of turtles would still live long enough for him to tell his grandchildren how to survive in the harsh, developing world of humans.



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