

Saving Billy's Home

By Ashley Benjamin

Illustrated by Denise Le

Billy the Turtle swims home in a rush because he's excited to hang out with his friends today. He is returning from vacation and hasn't seen them in weeks.

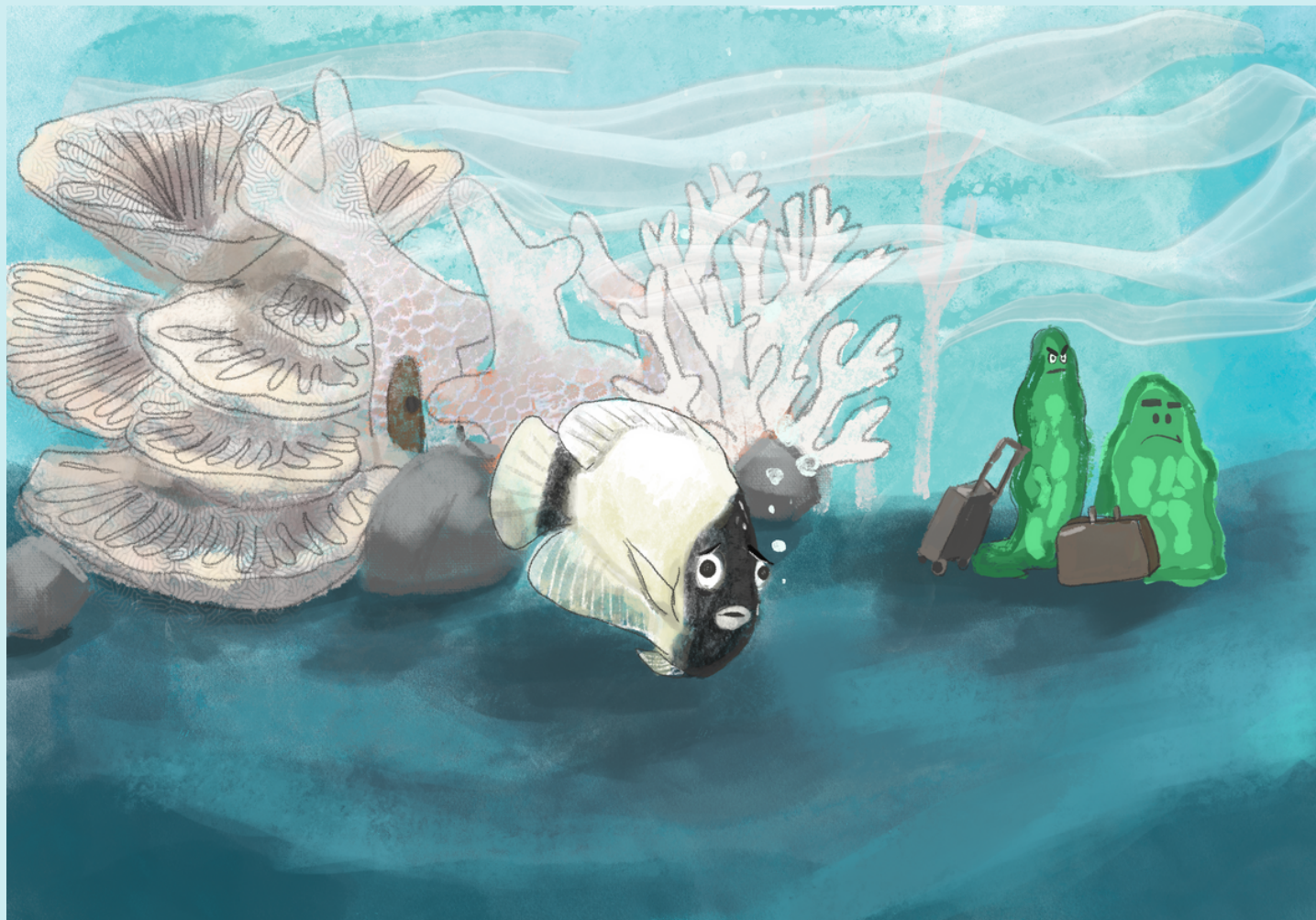
Billy turns to his mom, "I can't wait to see Angel," he shouted. "I love the fun and bright colours of their coral house. I'm going to head over there now."

His mom replies, "Okay, but be back before sunset."

Billy swims to Angel's home but suddenly begins sweating,
"Wow, it's so hot in here."

He approaches Angel's home and was shocked to see that their
once colourful home has turned white.

He sees the algae once living there packing up and leaving.



“Where are you going Mr. Algae?” asked Angel.
“It’s too hot down here so we’re leaving.”

Angel the Fish waves to Billy and says, "I know you were looking forward to playing here, but things changed so much when you were gone. I spoke to Mani and she said that we could play by her today!"

Billy and Angel swim to Mani's home.

"I'm so sorry for the mess!" shouted Mani the Manatee with an embarrassed look on her face. Around her are pieces of plastic items.



"I tried cleaning up before you arrived but more just came in!"
"That's okay Mani. We'll help you out, then we'll play later."

Suddenly, as Billy is cleaning up, he gets stuck in a plastic net and is pulled by a current dragging him away from his friends.

They try to swim to help Billy but he was moving too fast. They can no longer see him since he's gone too far. They swim to Billy's home to tell his parents.

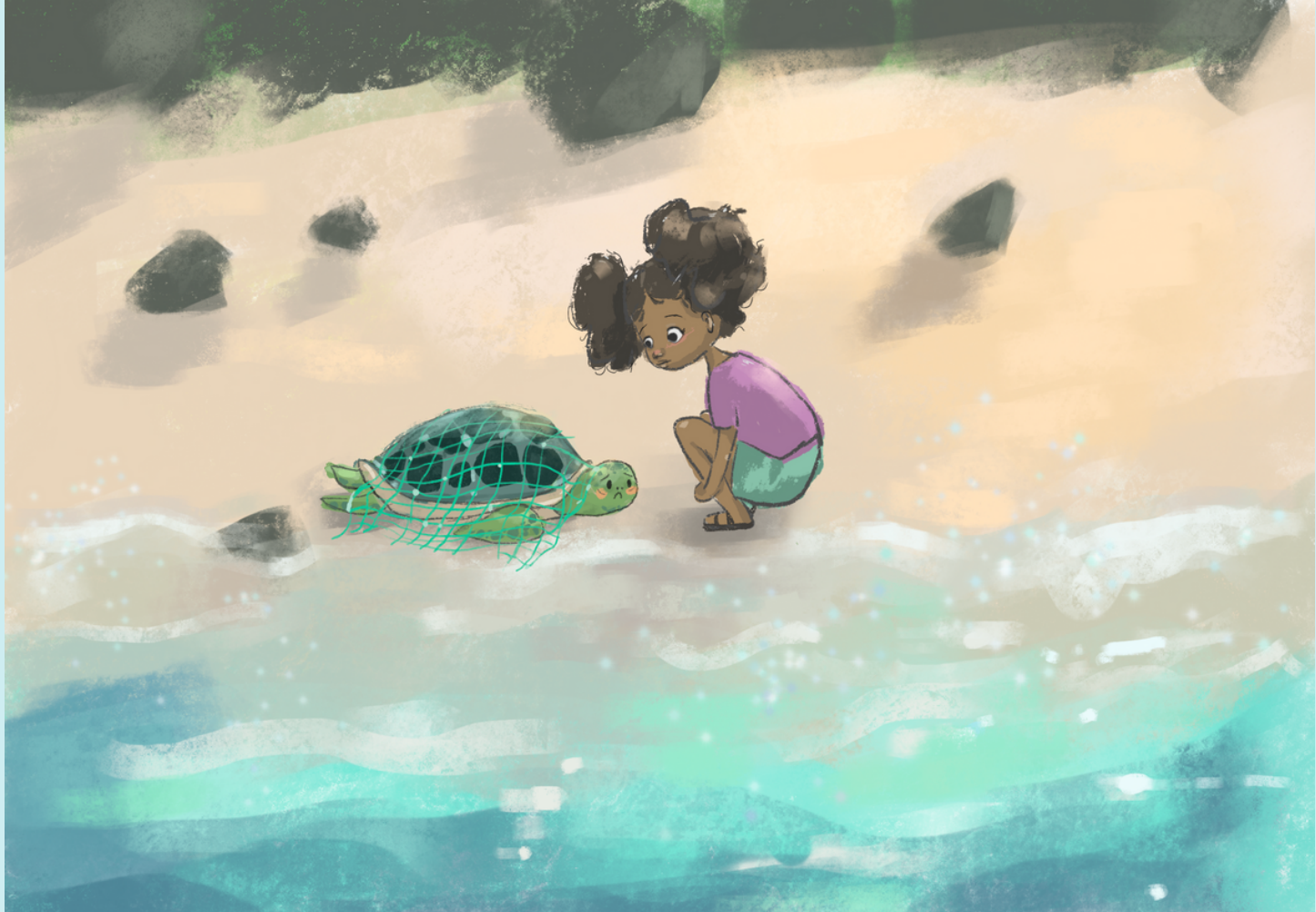
Billy lands on the shore of a beach.

“Hey! Are you okay?” asked Gigi who is a girl on the beach that is picking up some trash.

“I was just in the ocean with my friends and got stuck in this plastic net and now I’m here.”

“Where did that even come from?” asked Gigi.

"When people throw their garbage into the water, then it affects the life in the ocean."



"If it wasn't for that plastic net, then I would be with my friends and family. Now, I really need to get back."

Gigi decides to help Billy and asks her parents. They reach out to a local group that helps the environment called Y-HELP. They came by, removed the net and took him away for a check-up.

Gigi said that she'll see him in a couple of days.

Gigi goes home and thinks to herself how she could help Billy. She starts to look up some ways to help and decides to write a speech.

After a few minutes, she is done and decides that she is going to read it at morning assembly at her school.

The next day, the entire school comes together to listen to Gigi speak during assembly.

She feels nervous and her hands are shaking, but she knows that she has to talk about it. She finds the courage and walks up to do her speech.

“Good morning everyone! I have a very important story to share. Yesterday, I met a really sweet turtle named Billy who was stuck in a plastic net because of the plastic we have been putting in the ocean.”

"There are things we can do to help like a beach clean up, making signs and using bottles that we can reuse."



"I would love your help on working on these ideas!"

Many people were happy to help. They did a beach clean up and sold reusable bottles to raise money to help Billy to go home.

Y-HELP saw the work being done and decided to help also. They worked with the children to get Billy home. They took a boat out to where Billy got lost and placed him in the water.

“I think I can find my way home from here now!” said Billy.

“Thank you so much for your help. Don’t forget that we all need to take care of the environment and what happens on land affects what happens in the sea. So let’s protect where we live!”



Billy, his parents and friends found each other again and hugged.