



The Children Take Action!

A CLIMATE CHANGE STORY

Illustrated by Kylie Jayne
Story by Seema Deo and Kylie Jayne



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One day Jone saw his grandfather staring out to sea.

"What are you doing Grandpa?" he asked.

"I'm watching the birds, Jone," said Grandpa.
"They are trying to tell us something."

Jone was surprised - birds don't talk!

But Grandpa told Jone that birds are very wise.

People can learn a lot from the birds and other animals.

"Today these birds are showing us where the fish are," said Grandpa.





"Sometimes they can tell us when a storm is coming."

"But the birds are all leaving our island, Grandpa," said Jone sadly.

"So are the fish, Jone," said Grandpa.

"The birds and fish are trying to tell us about climate change."

Jone didn't know what climate change was and asked his grandfather to explain.

Grandpa told Jone that the Earth's temperature is becoming hotter.

"My temperature gets hot when I am unwell," said Jone.

"Yes!" said Grandpa. "The Earth is becoming unwell too. There is less food for the birds and the fish. That is why they are leaving our island."





"What is making the Earth sick?" Jone asked.

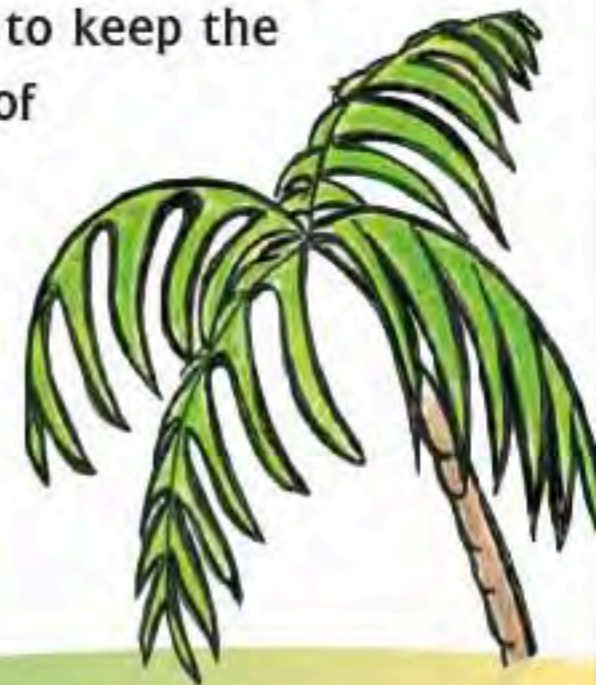
"We are," said Grandpa. "Gases from our cars, buses and factories are making the Earth too hot."

"People are driving more cars and building more factories. So the Earth is getting hotter and hotter."

"Just like putting too many blankets on me!" said Jone.

Grandpa also said that trees and forests were important in helping to keep the Earth cool. Trees take some of the gases out of the air.

"But people are cutting down trees and forests to build homes and factories," he said. "So there are fewer trees to keep the Earth cool."

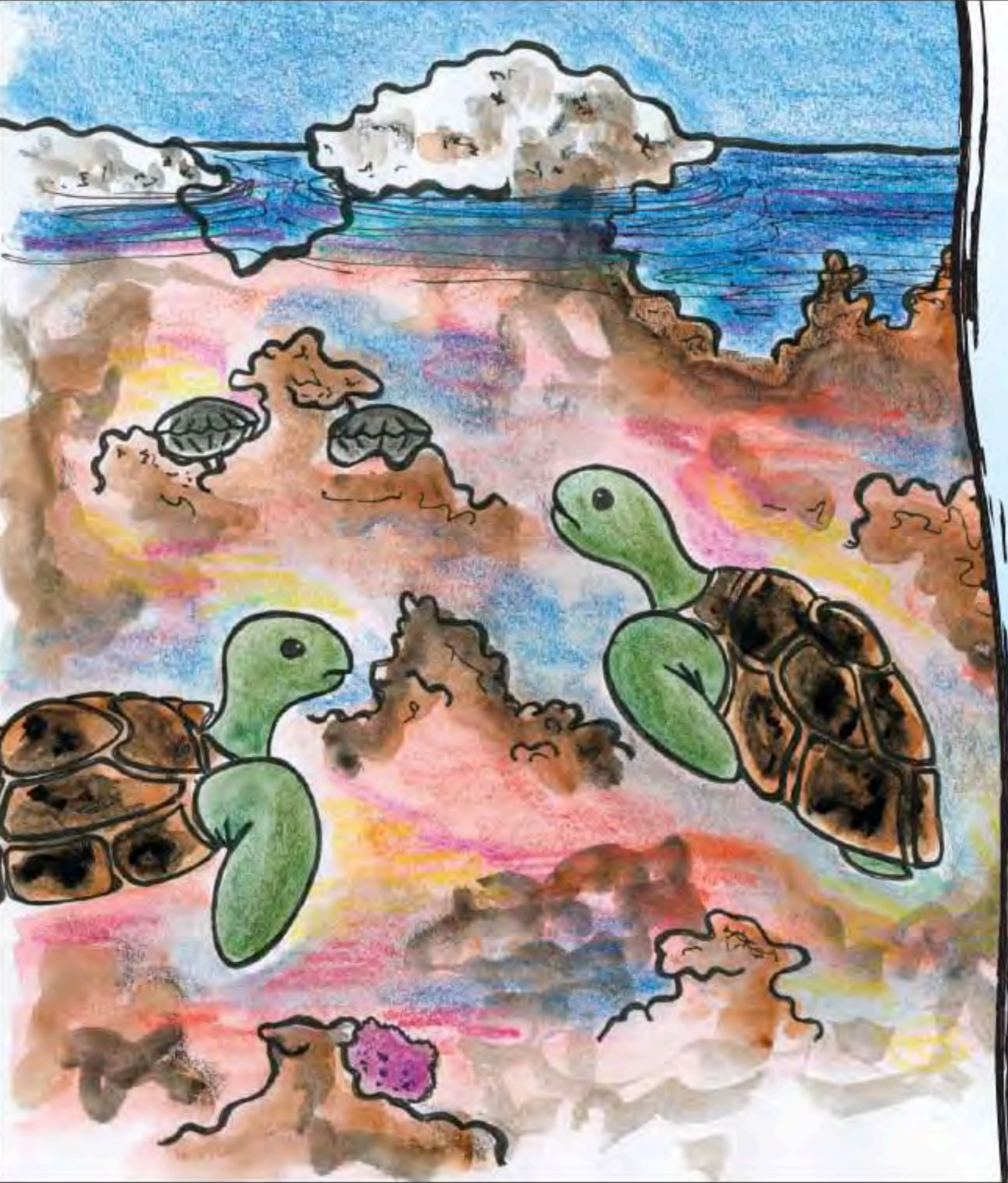


Malia and Sione, Jone's best friends, joined them.

"There are no big fish at all in the lagoon," complained Sione. "We've been there all morning and only caught a few little ones."

"And a lot of the coral is dead," said Malia.





Grandpa said that this was because climate change had warmed the ocean too much. The warmer ocean was killing the coral.

“When the coral reef dies, the fish and other animals have nothing to eat and move away,” he said.

Jone told Malia and Sione all about climate change.

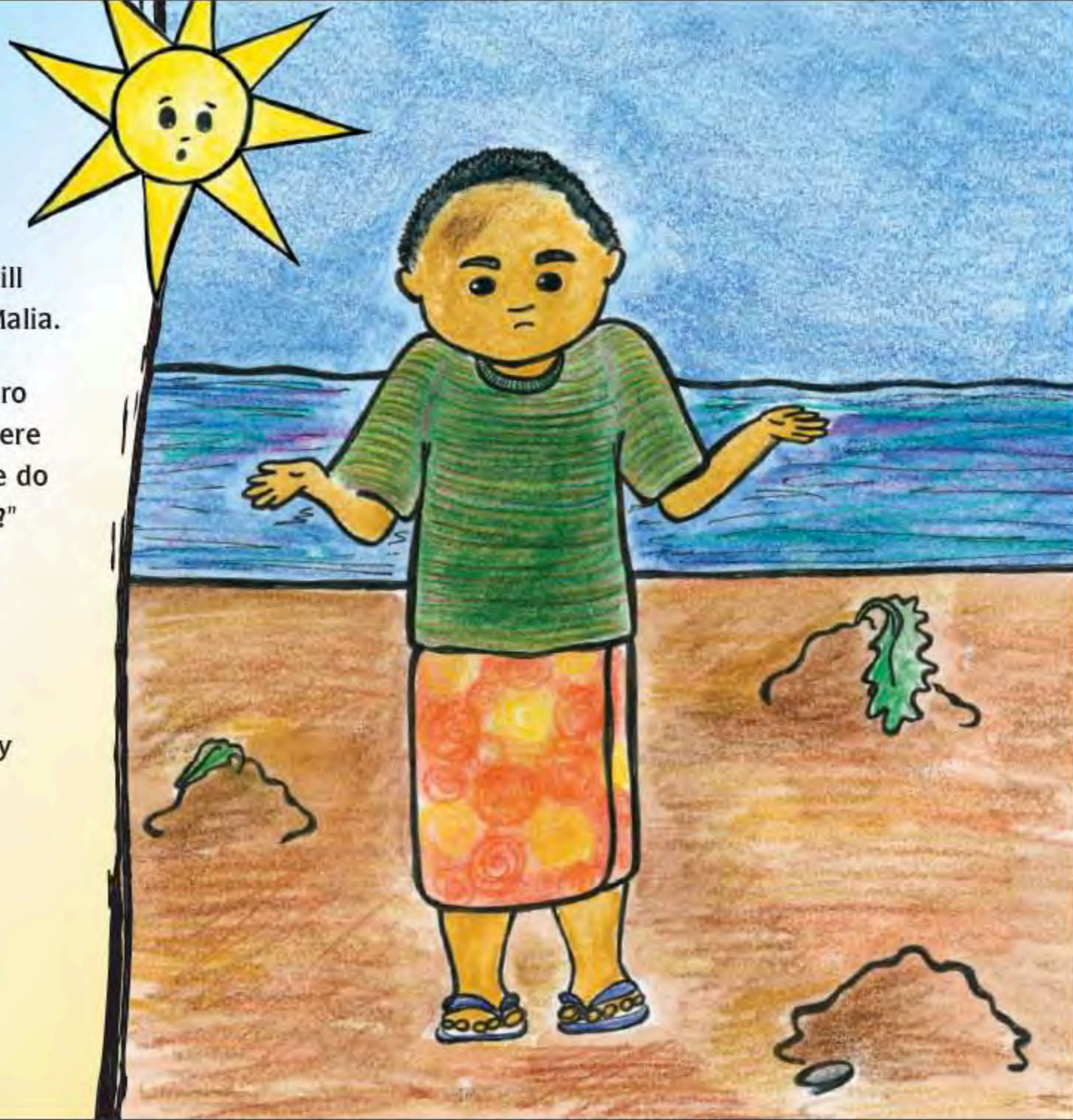
“Climate change sounds like it will cause us many problems,” said Malia.

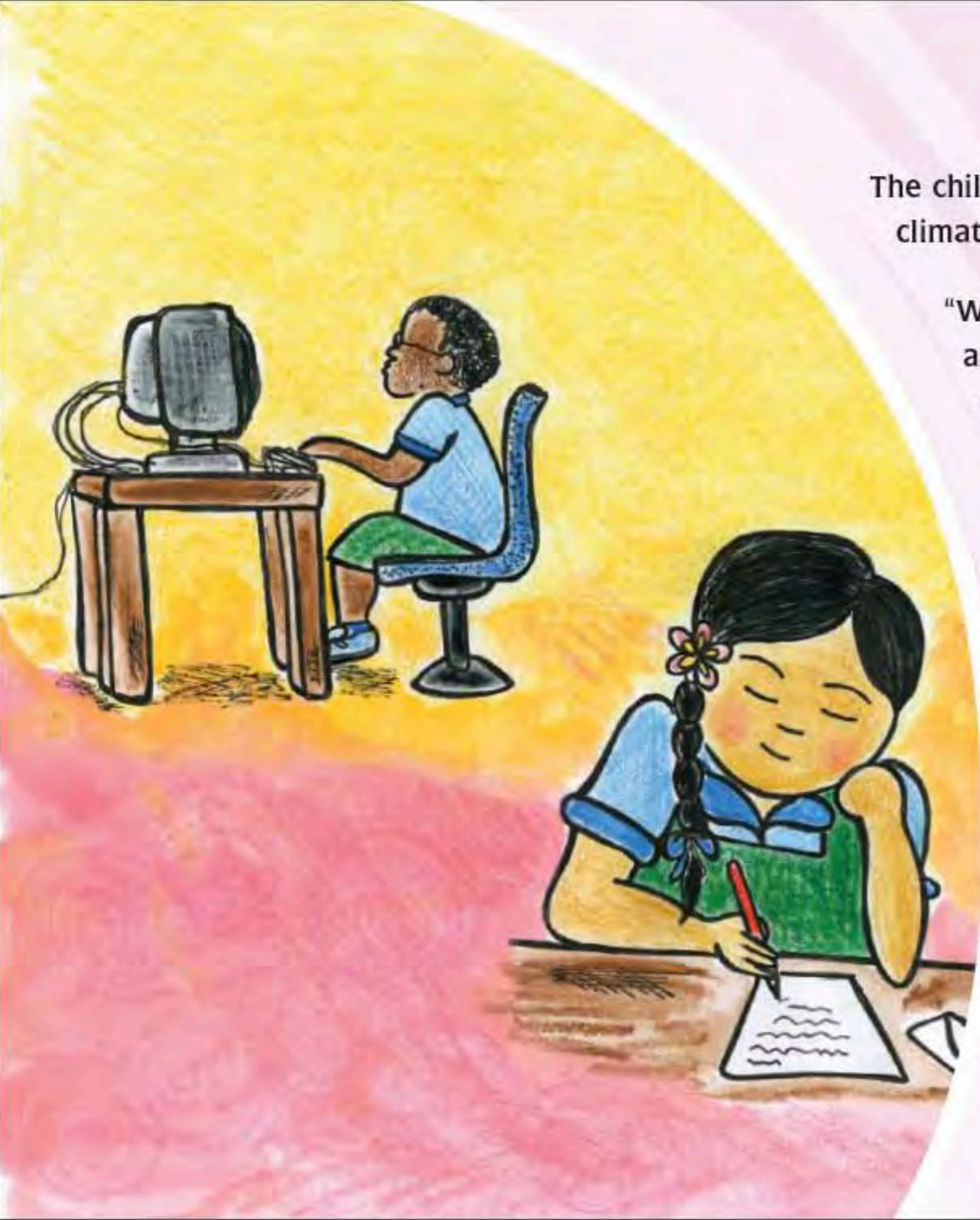
“My father says he can’t grow taro and other vegetables because there is not enough rain. What will we do if we don’t have anything to eat?”

“We’ll have to leave the island,” said Sione.

Nobody liked that idea. Where would they go? This was the only home they knew.

Something had to be done!





The children asked all their friends to help stop climate change. Grandpa and Miss Peta joined them.

“What can we do to stop climate change?” asked Mere. “How can we help to stop the Earth getting hotter?”

“We can't stop climate change by ourselves,” said Miss Peta. “But people who live in bigger countries can help by using their cars less and buying fewer things.”

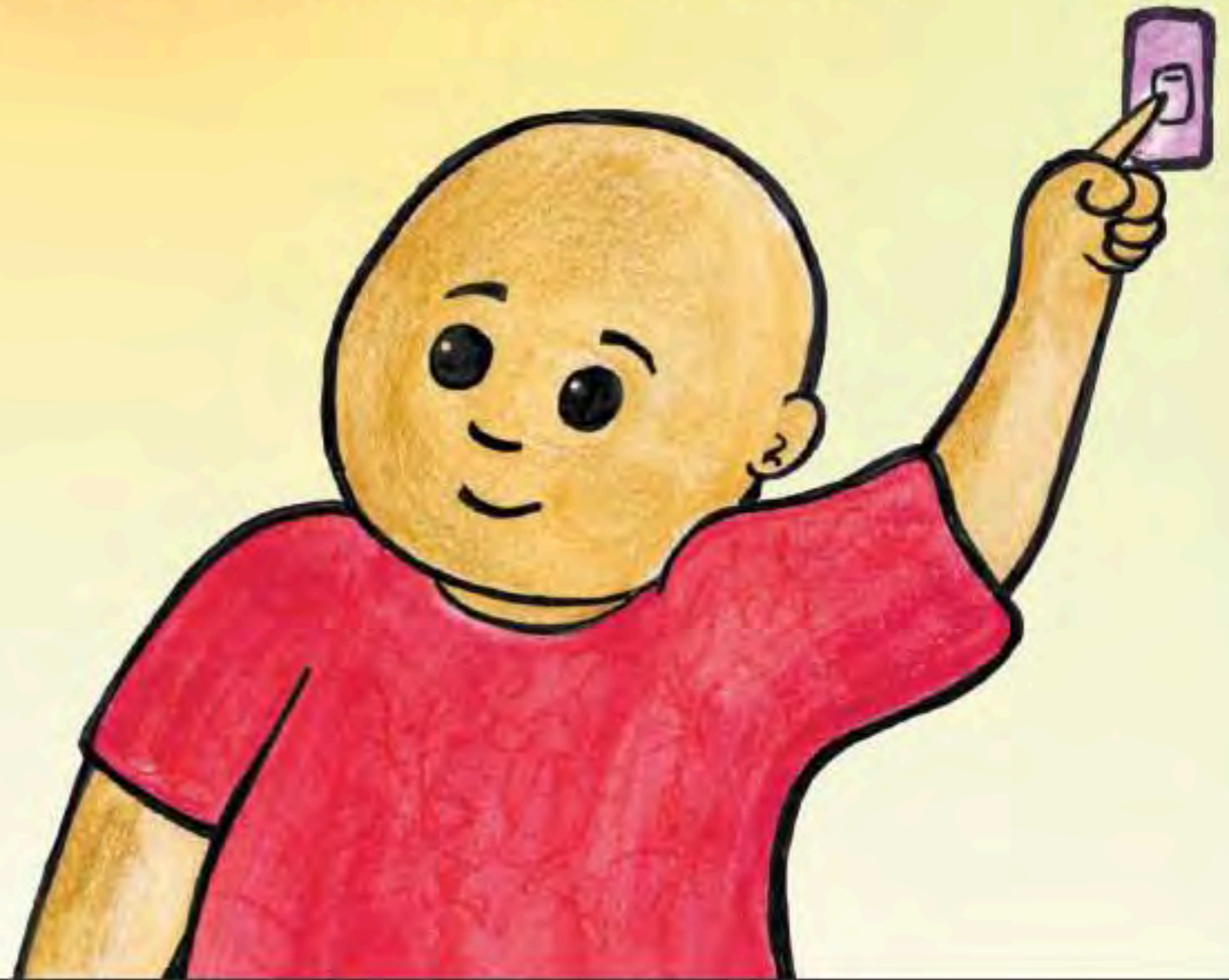
“We could write to children in other countries and ask them to help us,” said Sione.

Everyone liked that idea. They asked Miss Peta to help them write letters and emails to children in other countries.

And that is what they did!



"We could turn off our lights and TV when we are not using them," said Paula.





“We could save water in tanks and fix all our dripping taps,” said Rina. “Then, if there is no rain, we will still have enough.”

And that is what they did!

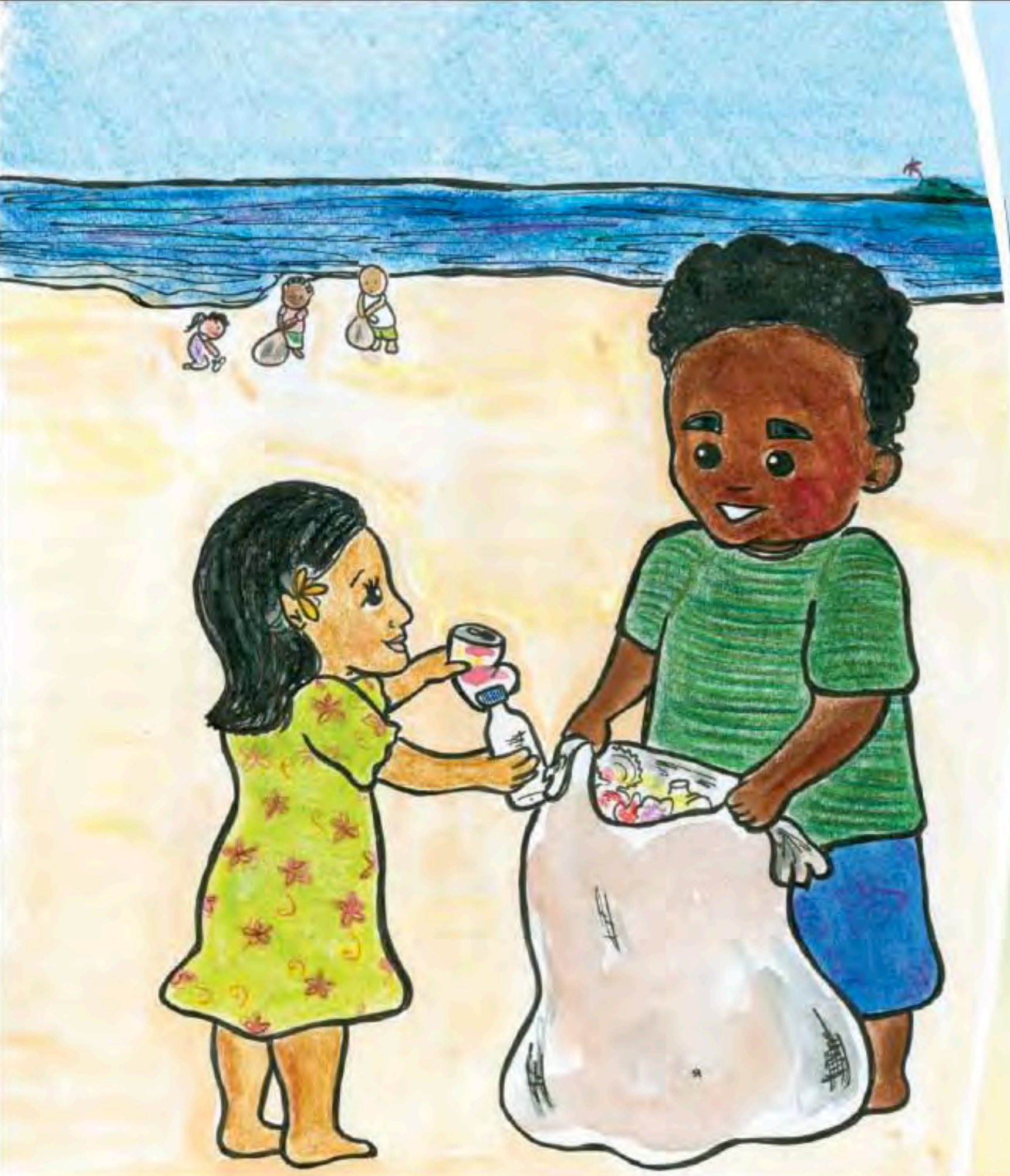


“When I am sick, Mother looks after me,” said Jone. “So if the Earth is sick we should look after the Earth.”

“But how can children look after the Earth?” asked Malia. “The Earth is big and we are so small.”

“We could plant some trees. They help to cool down the Earth,” said Jone.

And that is what they did!

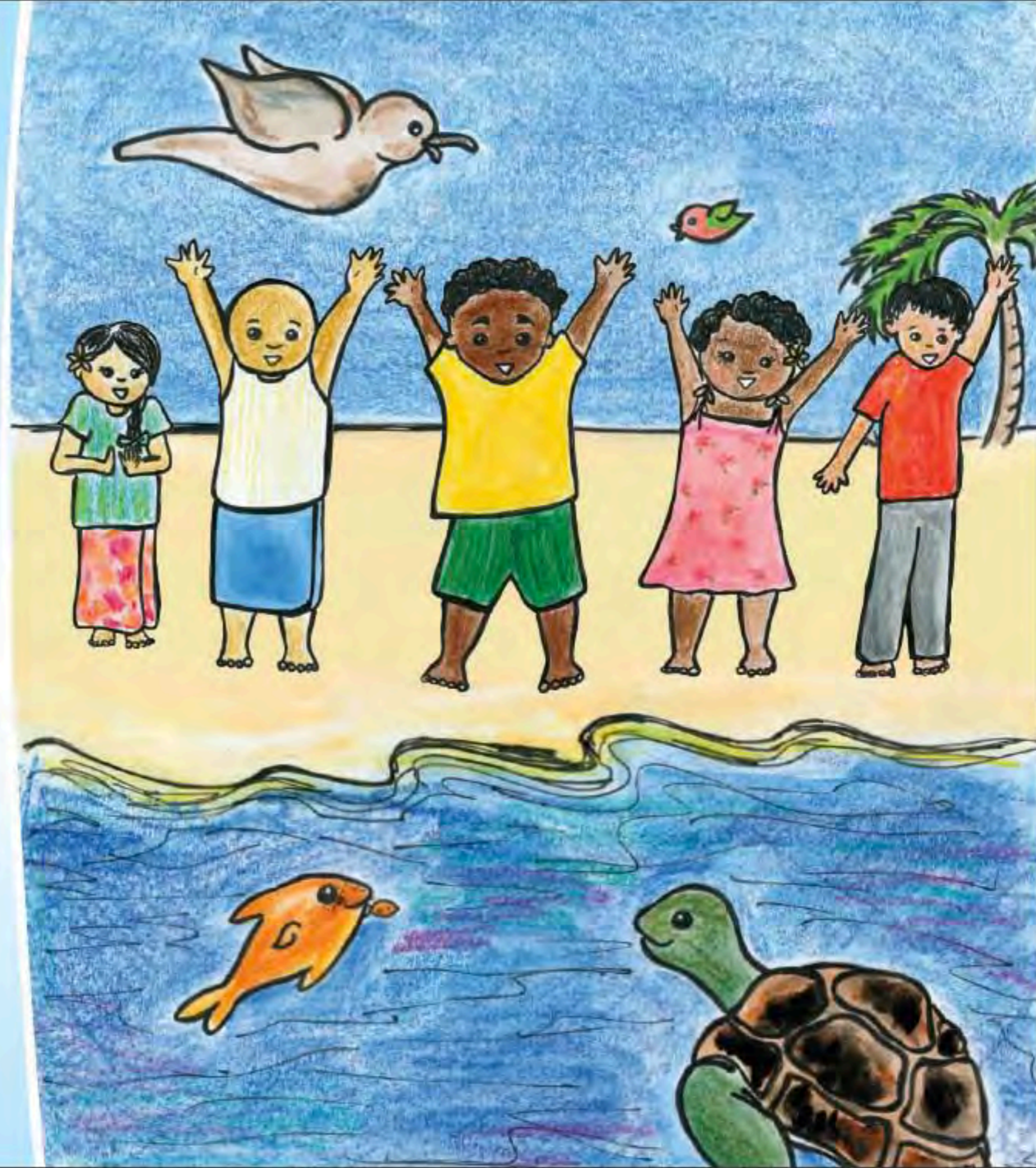


“If we keep the reefs healthy, maybe not all the corals will die and then there will be more fish,” said Mere.

“Let’s clean our beach and take all the rubbish to the dump site.”

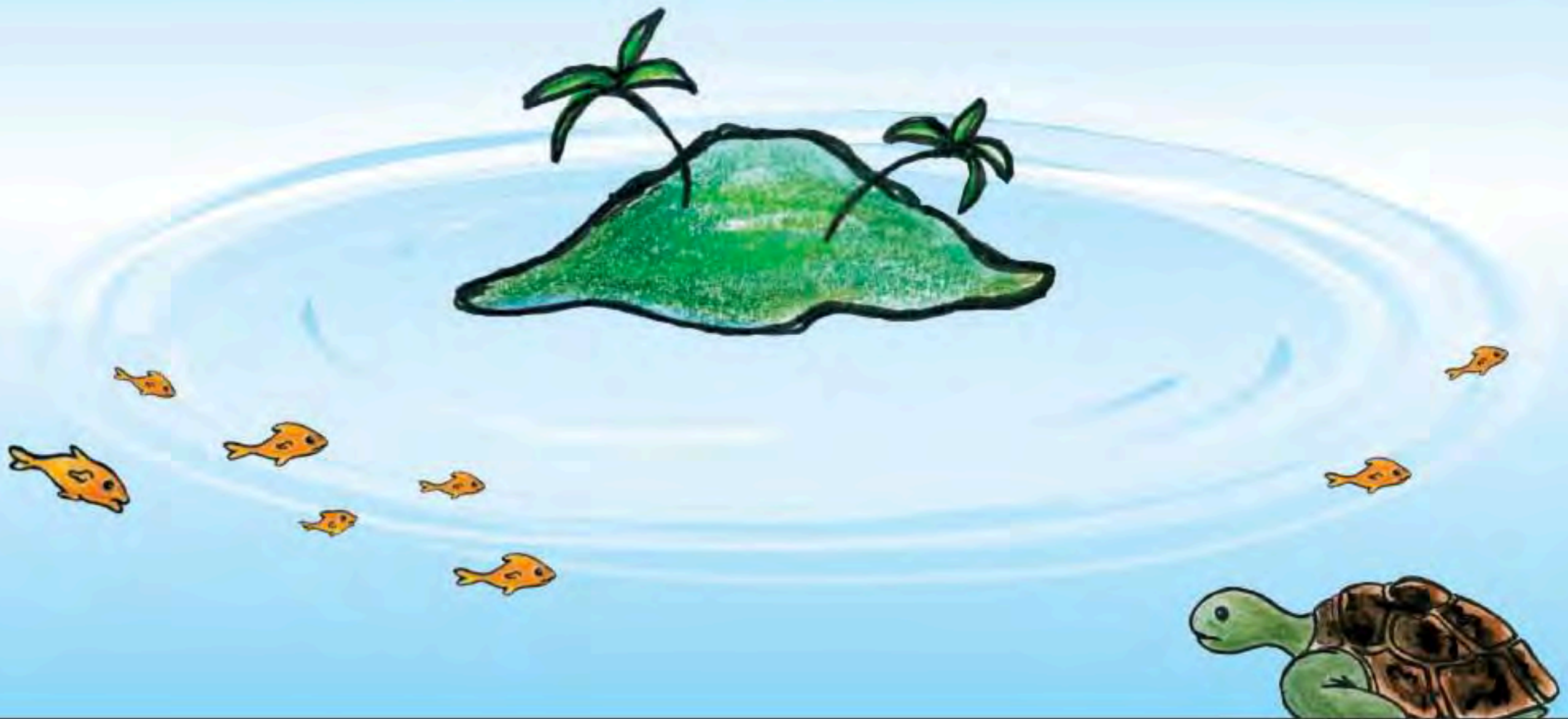
And that is what they did!

The children have made their island home safe for their animal friends and for themselves too.





What will you do to keep your island safe for everyone?



Dear Parent/Teacher

This story cannot address all the complexities of climate change. Its objective is to assist the process of learning about climate and climate change. We hope it will spur you and your young readers on to learn more about the global challenge of climate change and what steps each child can take to deal with a global problem through his or her everyday actions.

We provide here a few notes to help reinforce concepts mentioned in the story.

- 1 Climate change gases are gases in the atmosphere that retain heat and thus warm the planet. Without them Earth would be cold and uninhabitable. There are several gases that are collectively called climate change gases. However, the most talked about and abundant climate change gas is carbon dioxide.
- 2 Carbon dioxide is a naturally occurring gas that is released into the air when humans and other animals eat food and breathe out. It is also released when plants and animals die and rot. The main way in which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere is when plants use it to make food (photosynthesis). Over millions of years, carbon is also stored in the ground or at the bottom of the ocean when plants and animals die and become trapped under layers of rock. This carbon becomes compacted to form coal and oil, which we refer to as fossil fuels. When we burn fossil fuel, we release carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere. This is a simple explanation of the carbon cycle, which keeps the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere balanced.
- 3 Humans have the power to upset the balance of the carbon cycle through our activities. For example, we have removed large tracts of the world's forests while increasing our use of coal, oil and petrol to power our cars, factories and for electricity. Thus, we are releasing far more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than is being removed.
- 4 Climate change is a challenge for humanity to which we do not yet have the answers. So, we must learn by doing. One commonly held view is that we can slow down the processes causing the climate to change by reducing activities that release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. We can also learn to adapt, or build "resilience" to the changes we cannot influence.
- 5 There are many views about the uncertainty of climate change. It is true, we cannot predict with precision the time and place of the next drought or cyclone for a particular country. However, by studying weather patterns over a long period of time, weather and climate change experts are able to give us some indication of what we can expect in the longer term. People of the Pacific Islands have learnt to deal with cyclones, droughts and other extreme events as part of their lives. So, despite the uncertainties, we can plan for extreme events and protect the natural buffers that protect us from the full force of these events. We know, for example, that mangroves and coral reefs protect our coastal areas. Therefore it makes sense to keep these natural resources intact.
- 6 Coping with climate change will be a long term effort. Putting in place good environmental management practices will help Pacific Islanders build resilience to the impending impacts of climate change. We hope you will use this story to encourage children to learn more about living lightly on the planet and develop a life-long respect for nature.

For more information on climate change and sustainable living, contact us at SPREP (sprep@sprep.org) or check out some of these resources:





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