



Turtie in an Illegal Drum Net!

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and Zoe Barlow

Jerilderie Public School





Enviro-Stories is an environmental education program that has been developed by Peekdesigns.



www.envirostories.com.au

This program provides an education and learning experience for kids through their active engagement with natural resource and catchment management issues. The final product is a published story written about local issues, by local kids, for local kids and future generations.

Turtie in an Illegal Drum Net!

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“Biodiversity of the Murray Catchment” Enviro-Stories Education Program

In 2012, the Creative Catchment Kids program delivered the “Biodiversity of the Murray Catchment” Enviro-Stories Education Program. The project was initiated by the Murray Darling Association and Burrumbuttock Public School. It was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authorities, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and Teys Australia, Wagga. Additional support came from the Wirraminna and Riverina Environmental Education Centres.



**Catchment Management
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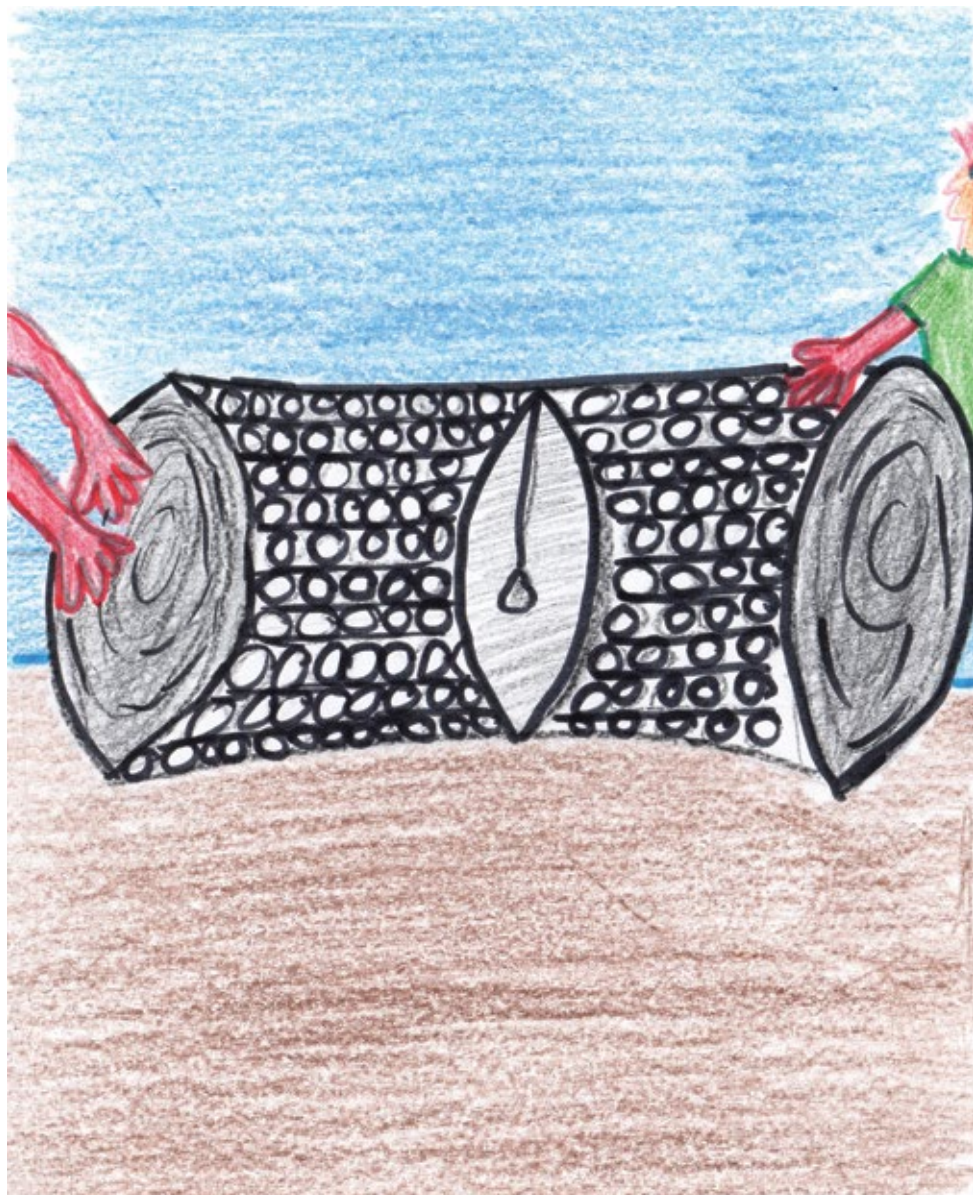


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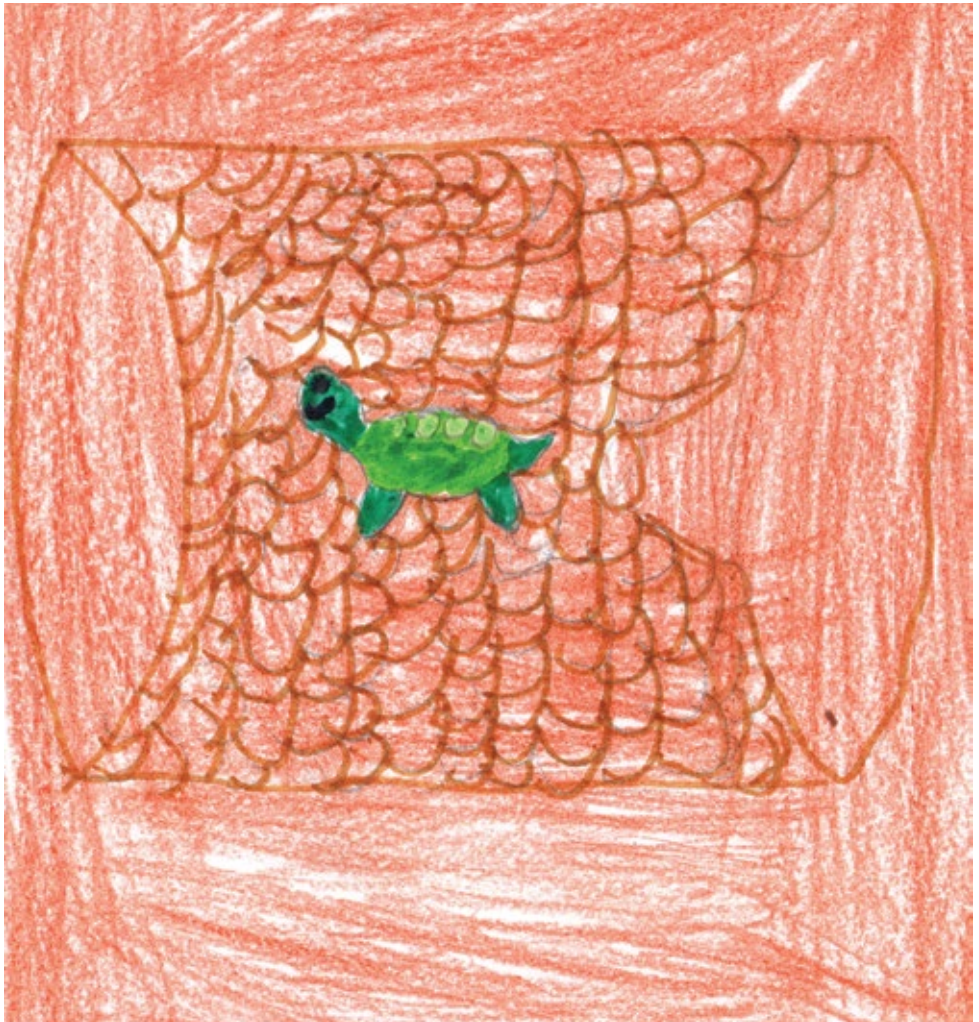
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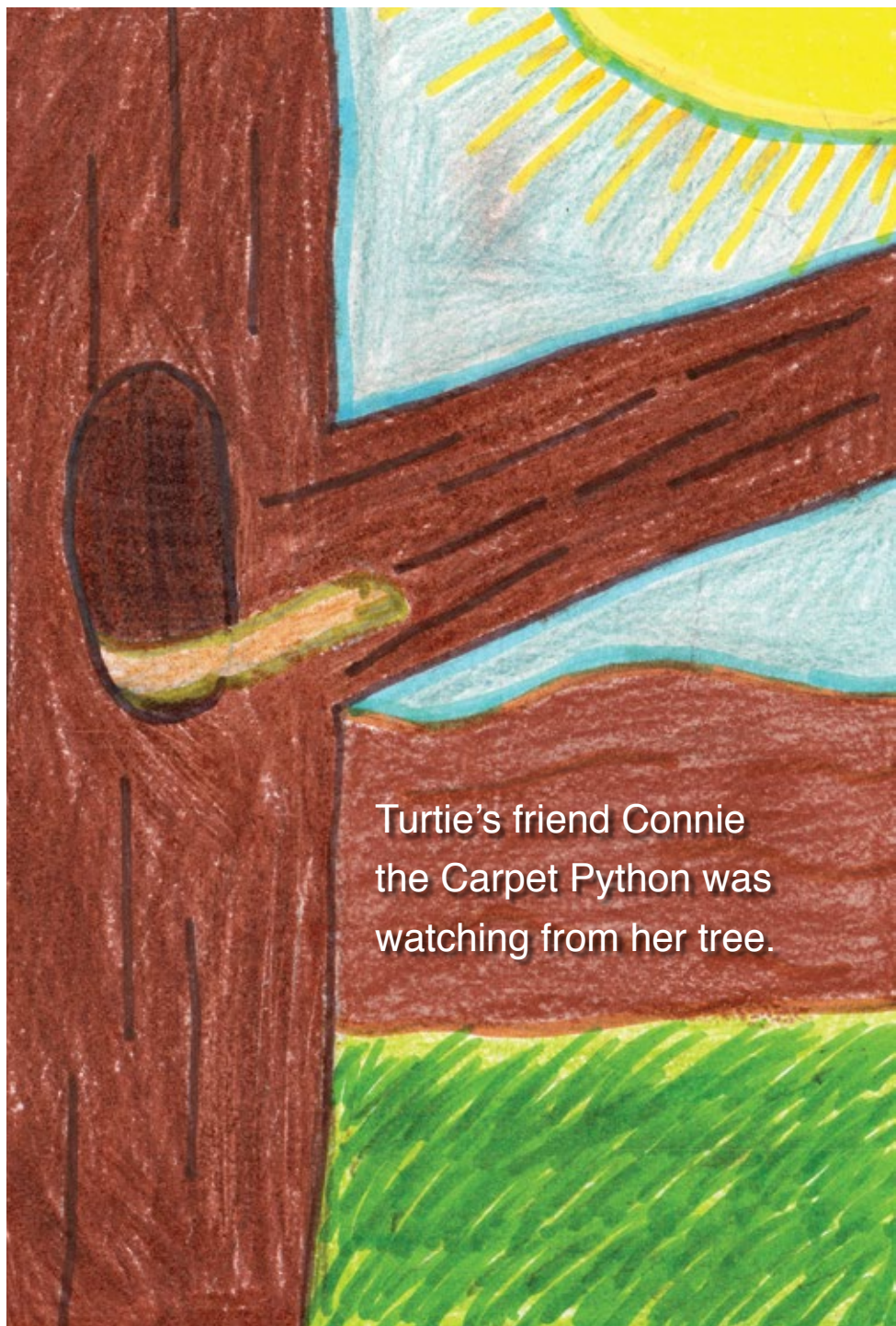
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Early one morning two men were setting a drum net into the Billabong Creek down from their house.

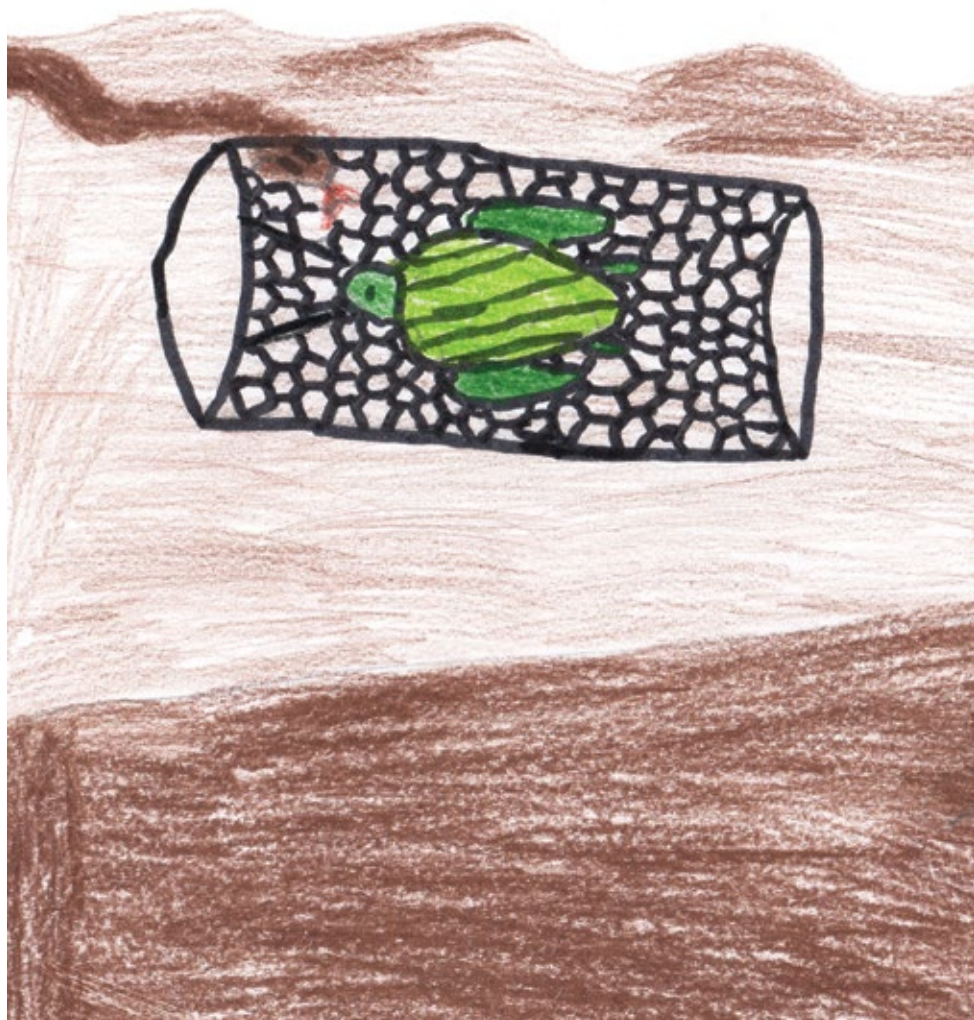
A little long-necked turtle named Turtie was playing around in the water and he accidentally swam into the net. Immediately he started swimming round and round the net trying to find a way out but there was none.

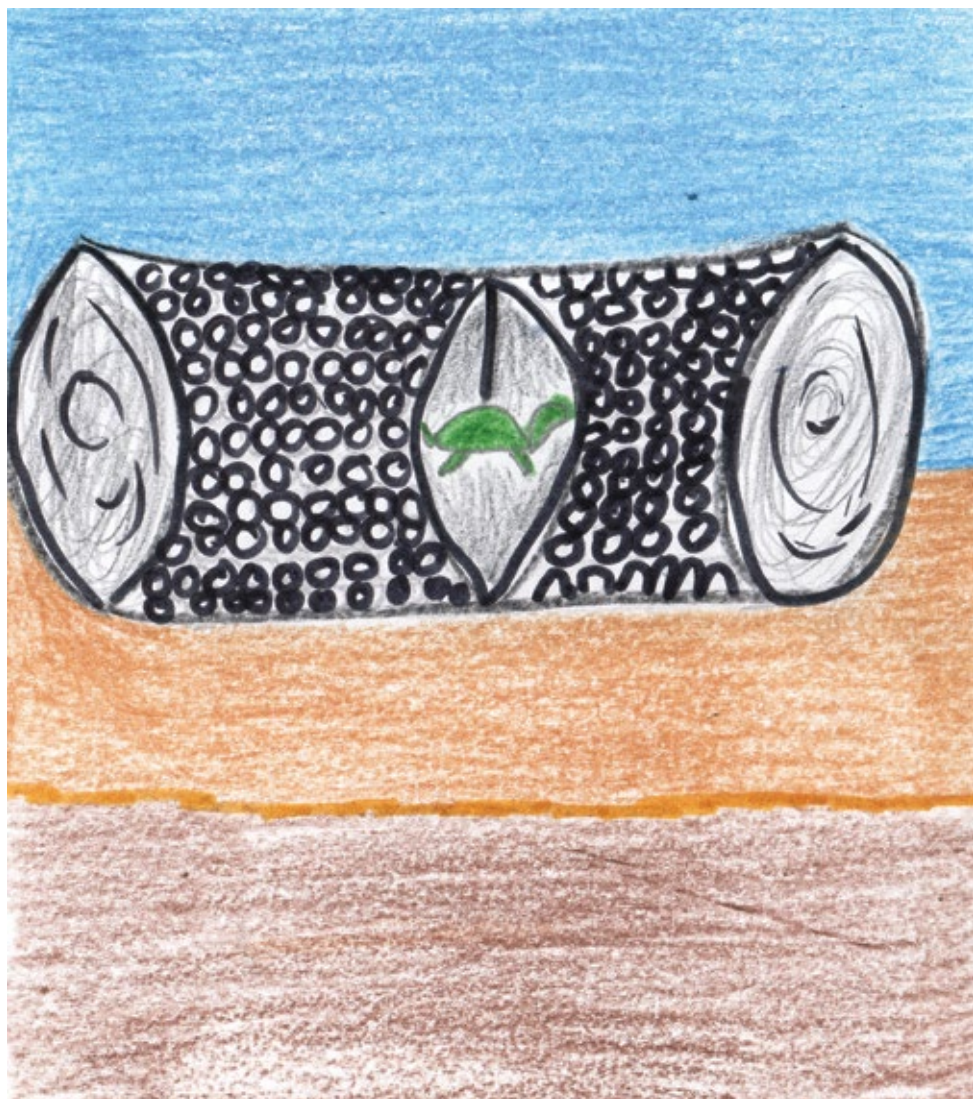




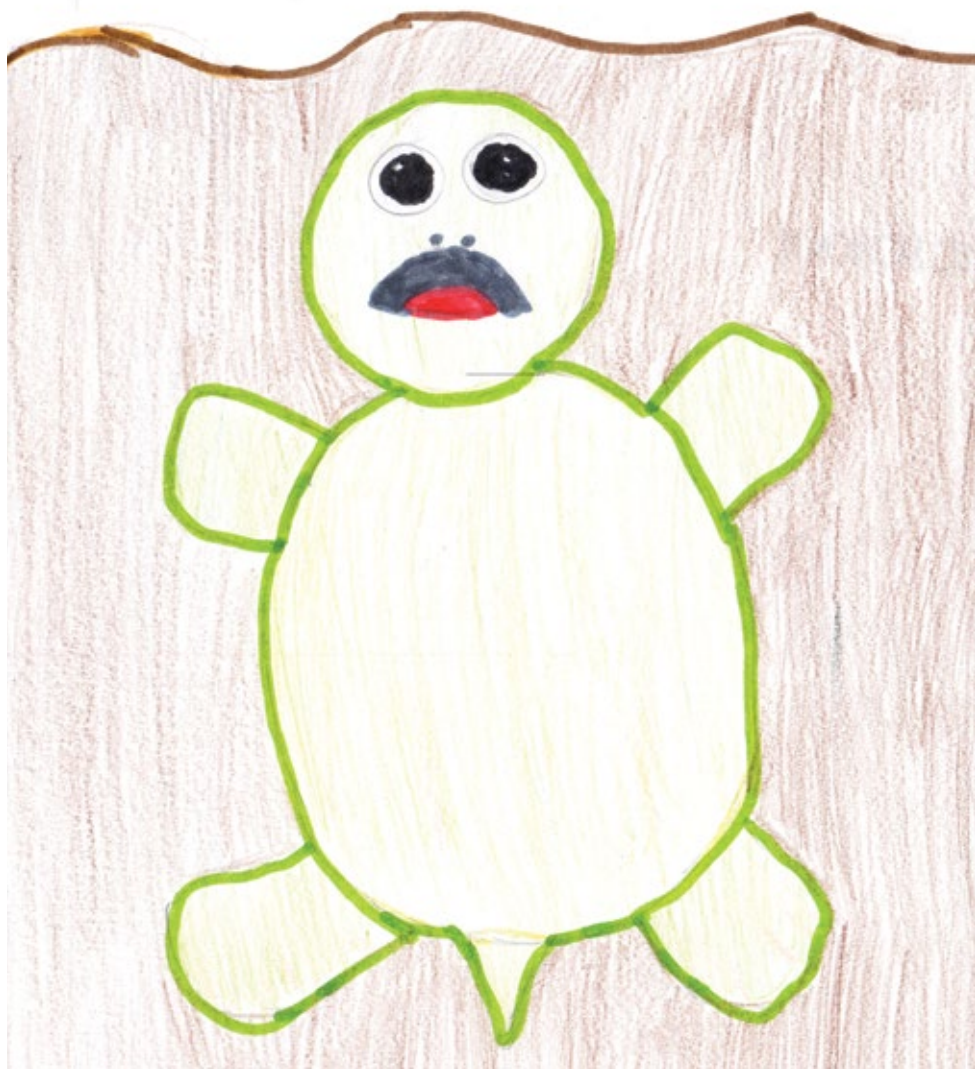
Turtie's friend Connie
the Carpet Python was
watching from her tree.

Even though she hated water Connie swam over to Turtle and tried to open the net, but it just bent around, and she could not get Turtle out, no matter how much she tried.





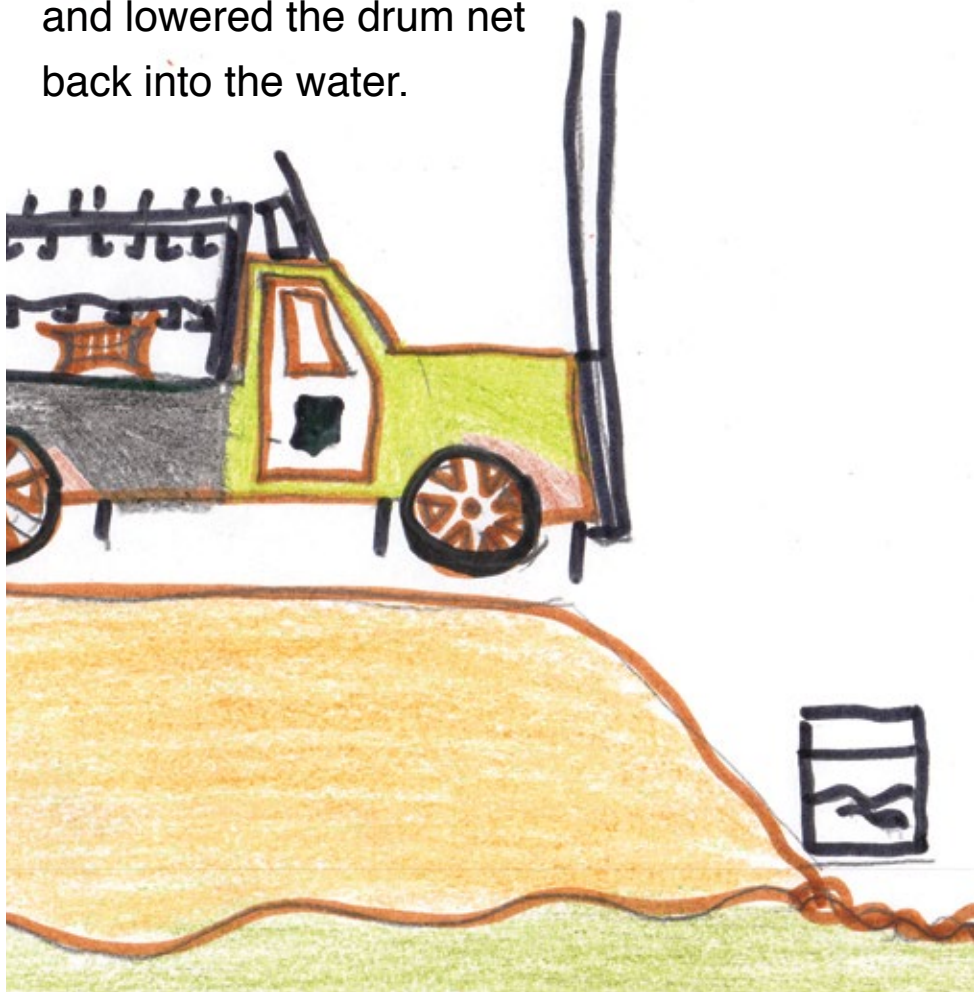
Finally Connie gave up and went back to her tree to think. Meanwhile the men came back to check their drum nets, and were surprised to see Turtie in their net instead of a fish.

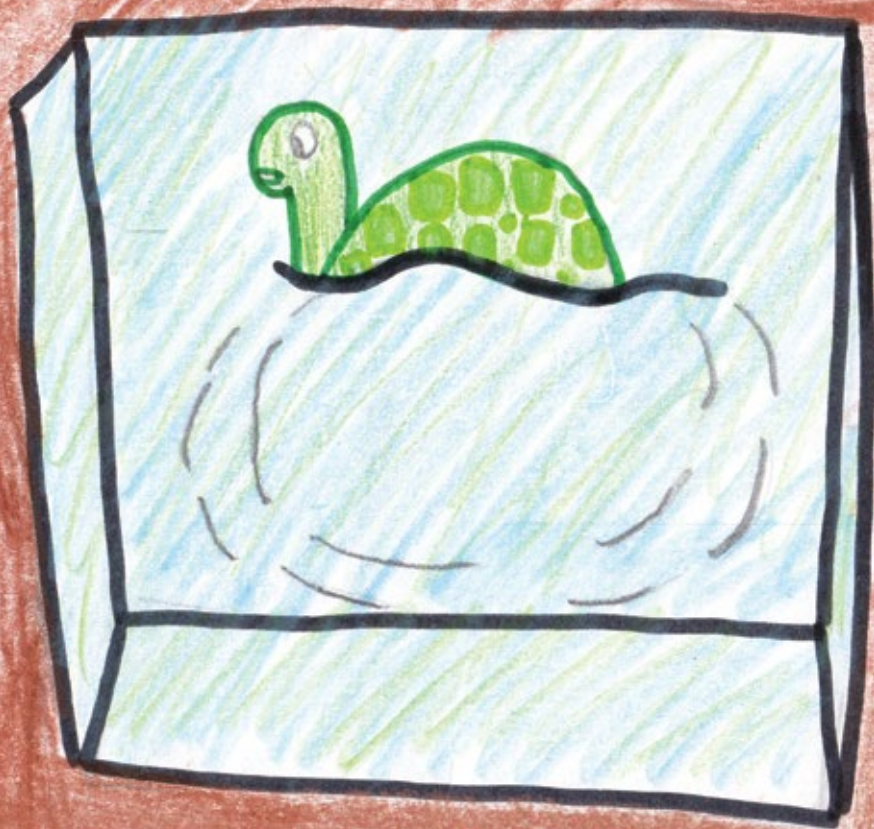


“Well, let’s keep him. My little son would love a turtle for a pet,” said one of the men. So Turtie was put in a container with some water and carried back to the bank.



The men put the container
on the back of their ute
and lowered the drum net
back into the water.

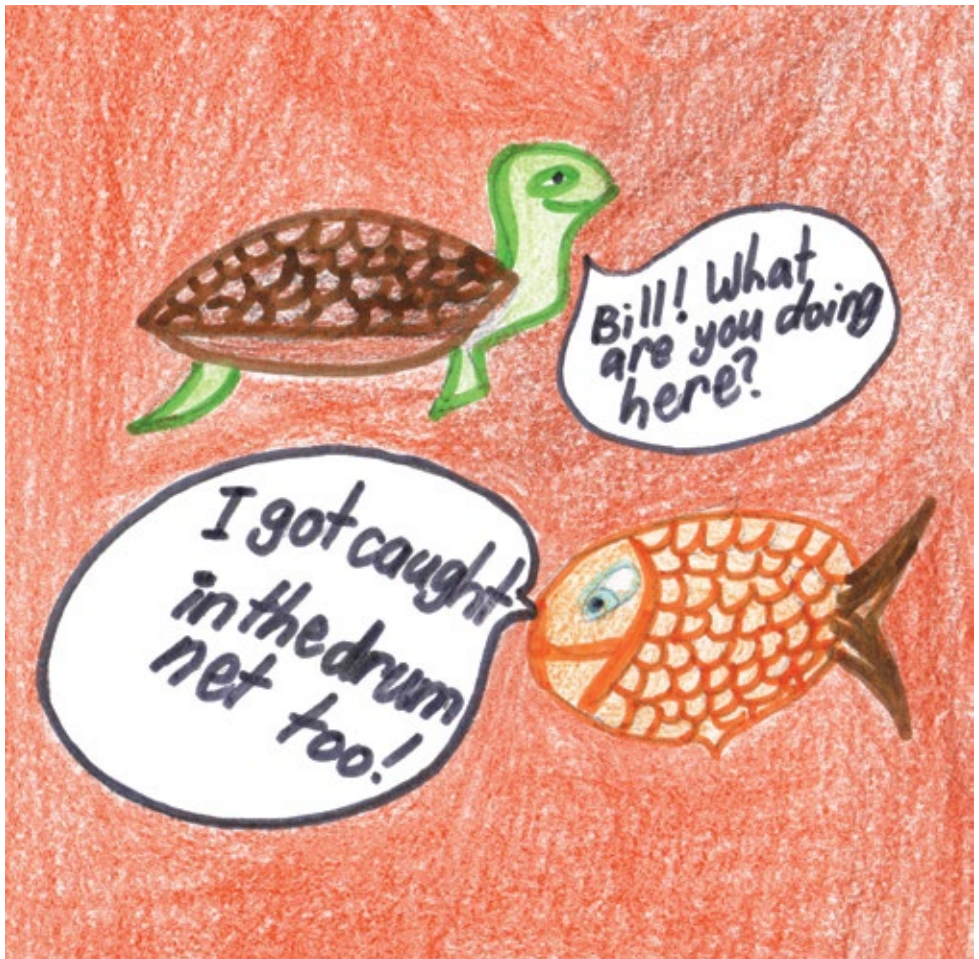




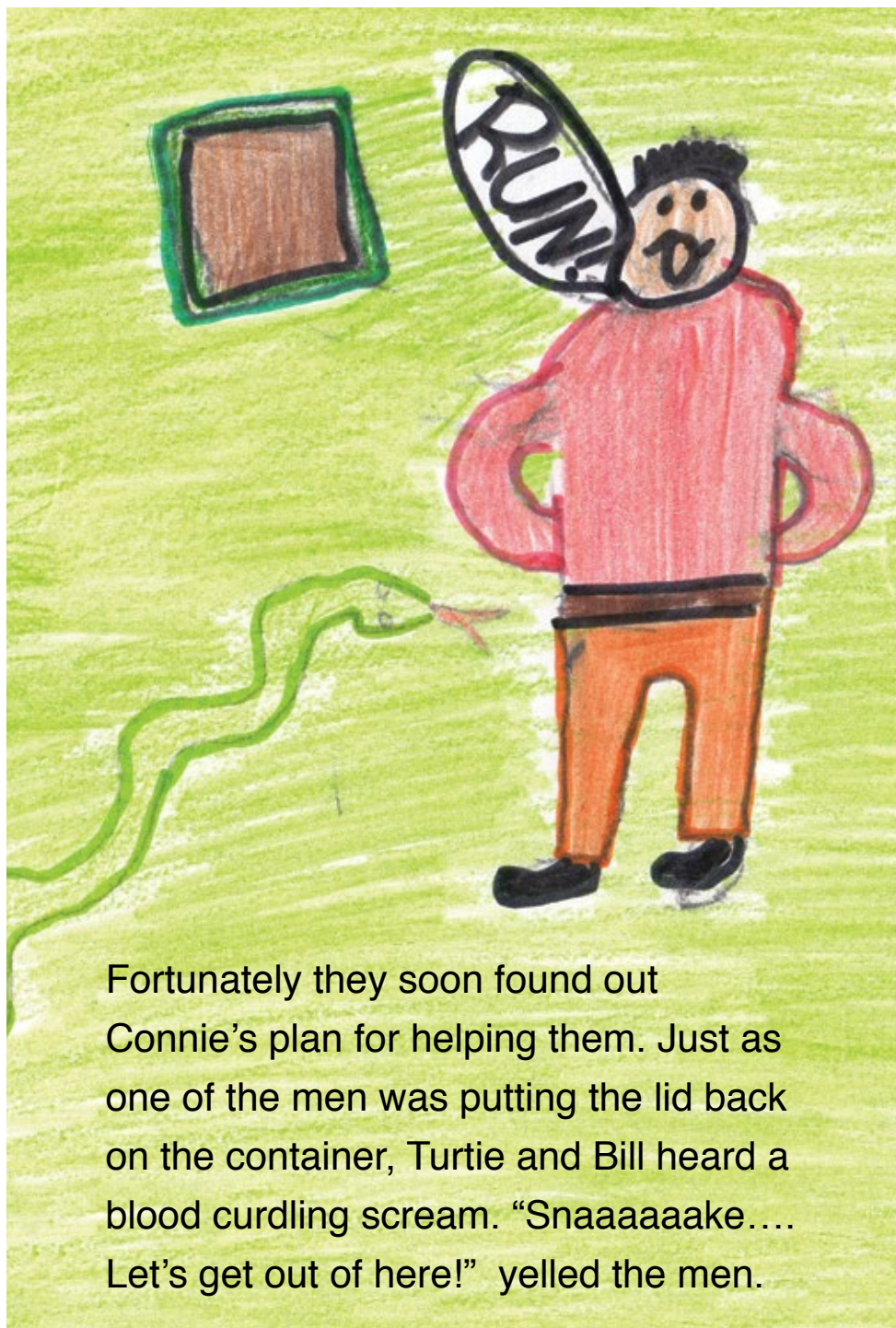
Turtie again swam round and round in circles until he was so exhausted he could not move another muscle.

The day became hot, and Turtie's container warmed up so much he was afraid the hot water would kill him. Just as he thought he would pass out, a big gush of cool water smothered him and a fish landed next to him.

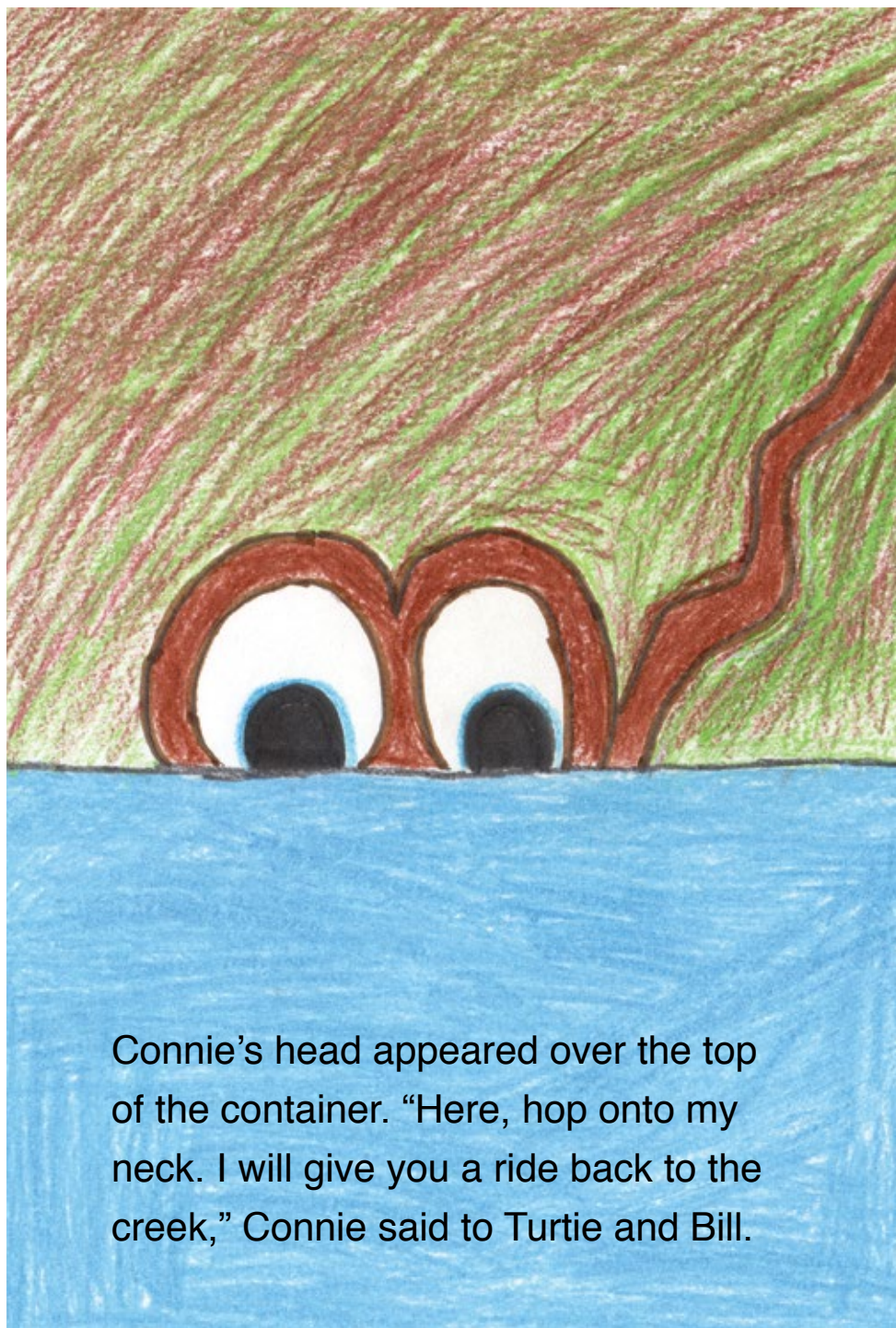




“Bill! What are you doing here?” asked Turtie. Bill the yellow belly explained that he too had been caught in the net. “What are we going to do?” asked Turtie. “I saw Connie giving the men the evil eye, but I don’t know what he can do to help us,” said Bill.



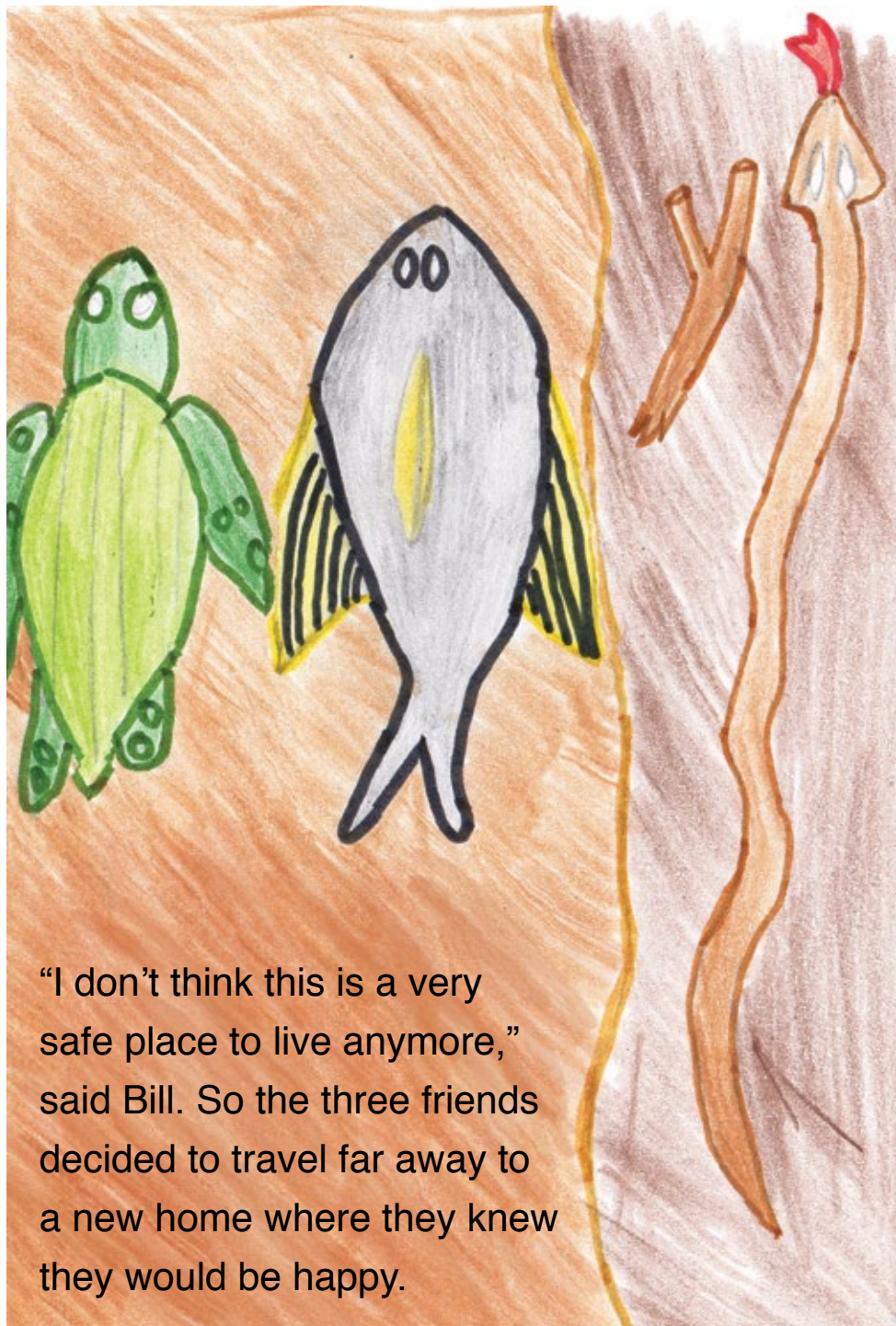
Fortunately they soon found out Connie's plan for helping them. Just as one of the men was putting the lid back on the container, Turtie and Bill heard a blood curdling scream. "Snaaaaaake.... Let's get out of here!" yelled the men.



Connie's head appeared over the top of the container. "Here, hop onto my neck. I will give you a ride back to the creek," Connie said to Turtie and Bill.

So Turtie and Bill climbed onto Connie's slippery neck. Turtie had to stop Bill falling off all the way back to the creek, but finally they made it home.





“I don’t think this is a very safe place to live anymore,” said Bill. So the three friends decided to travel far away to a new home where they knew they would be happy.

WILD FACTS

The **Billabong Creek** is found in the Riverina region of NSW. The creek is part of the Murray-Darling Basin. The creek headwaters are east of Holbrook in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range and from there it flows in a generally westerly direction across the flat Riverina plain. The creek goes through Morven, Culcairn, Walbundrie, Rand, Jerilderie, Conargo and Wanganella and feeds into the Edward River at Deniliquin. Murray cod, Golden perch, Silver perch, European carp, Crayfish and catfish can all be caught in the Billabong Creek.

Drum Nets are simple traps made of wire and netting. They are used in rivers, streams, billabongs and lakes to catch fish moving close to the bank. Cord drum nets are illegal to use in NSW waters.

Turtle's are carnivorous, eating a variety of animals. These include insects, worms, tadpoles, frogs, small fish, crustaceans, and molluscs.

The Eastern long-necked turtle's shell will eventually grow up to 25 cm wide with its neck nearly the same length. The upper shell can vary in colour from a light reddish-brown to almost black.

Yellowbelly are Australian native freshwater fish of the Murray-Darling System. They are carnivores which eat yabbies, shrimp, fish and insect larvae. Yellowbelly are an extremely hardy species.

The **Carpet Python** or Diamond Python is a large snake. Eastern populations are pale or dark brown to olive-green, with irregular dark-edged cream to pale yellowish blotches. Other populations can be grey or reddish with darker blotches. It is mainly a nocturnal species, but is often seen basking during the day. It eats smaller animals such as rats, possums and birds. Smaller snakes prefer lizards. Found in undergrowth or tree branches and hiding amongst leaf litter in tree hollows, logs and rocky crevices.



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