

Tally the Sea Turtle Finds the Darkest Beach



Outer Banks, North Carolina

Forward

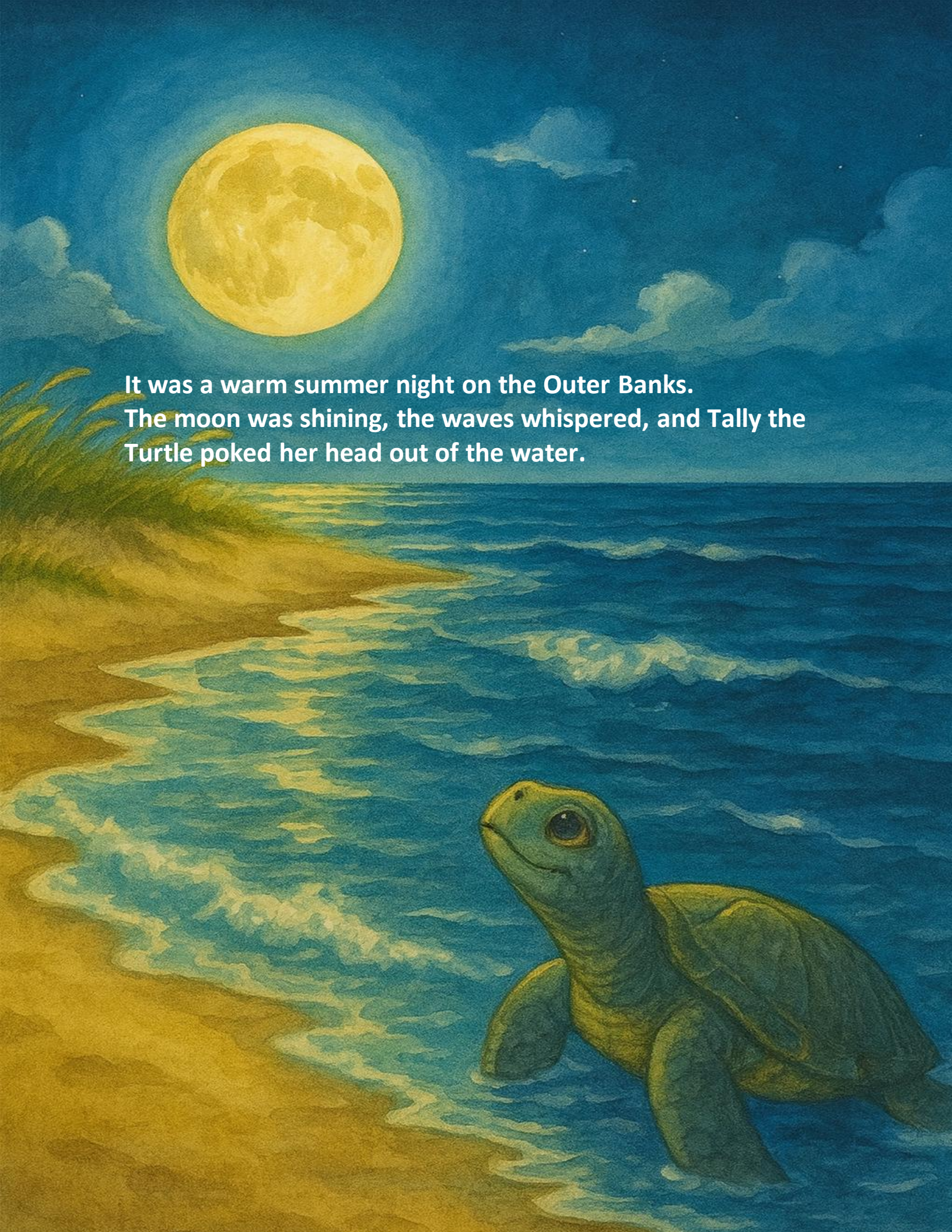
This storybook was created by the Outer Banks Coastal Conservation (OBCC), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster environmental stewardship and a deeper connection to the Outer Banks of North Carolina through outreach, education, and conservation efforts.

We believe that small stories can spark big change. That is why we have made this book available as a free resource for parents, teachers, and community members.

All materials in this book may be freely downloaded, shared, printed and used for educational or nonprofit purposes.

To learn more, access additional resources at: www.theobcc.org.

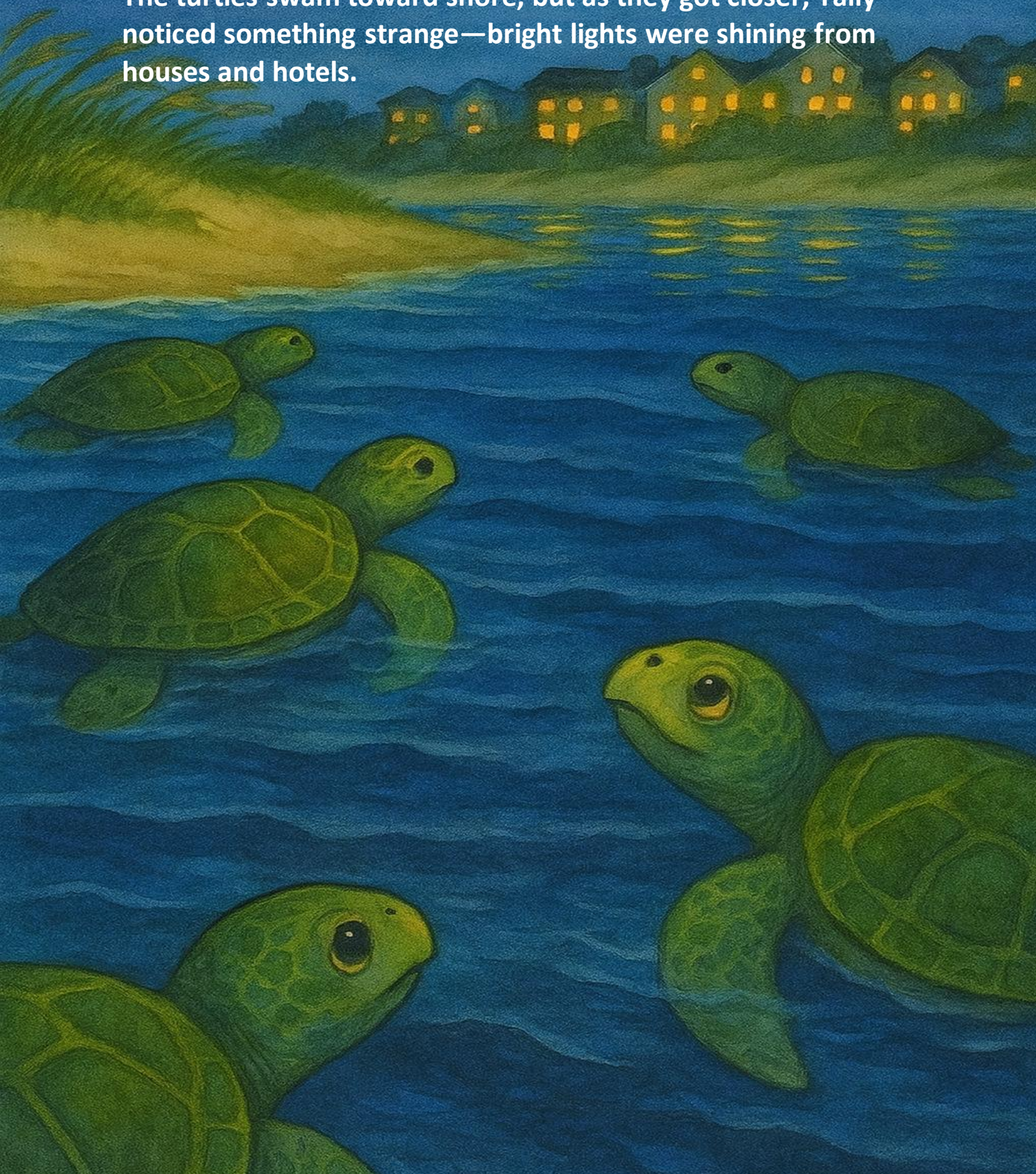


A painting of a sea turtle on a beach at night. The turtle is in the foreground, partially submerged in the water, looking towards the left. The beach is on the left, with some grass. The ocean is in the middle ground, with waves breaking. The sky is dark blue with a large, bright yellow full moon and some clouds. The text is in the upper left quadrant.

It was a warm summer night on the Outer Banks.
The moon was shining, the waves whispered, and Tally the
Turtle poked her head out of the water.

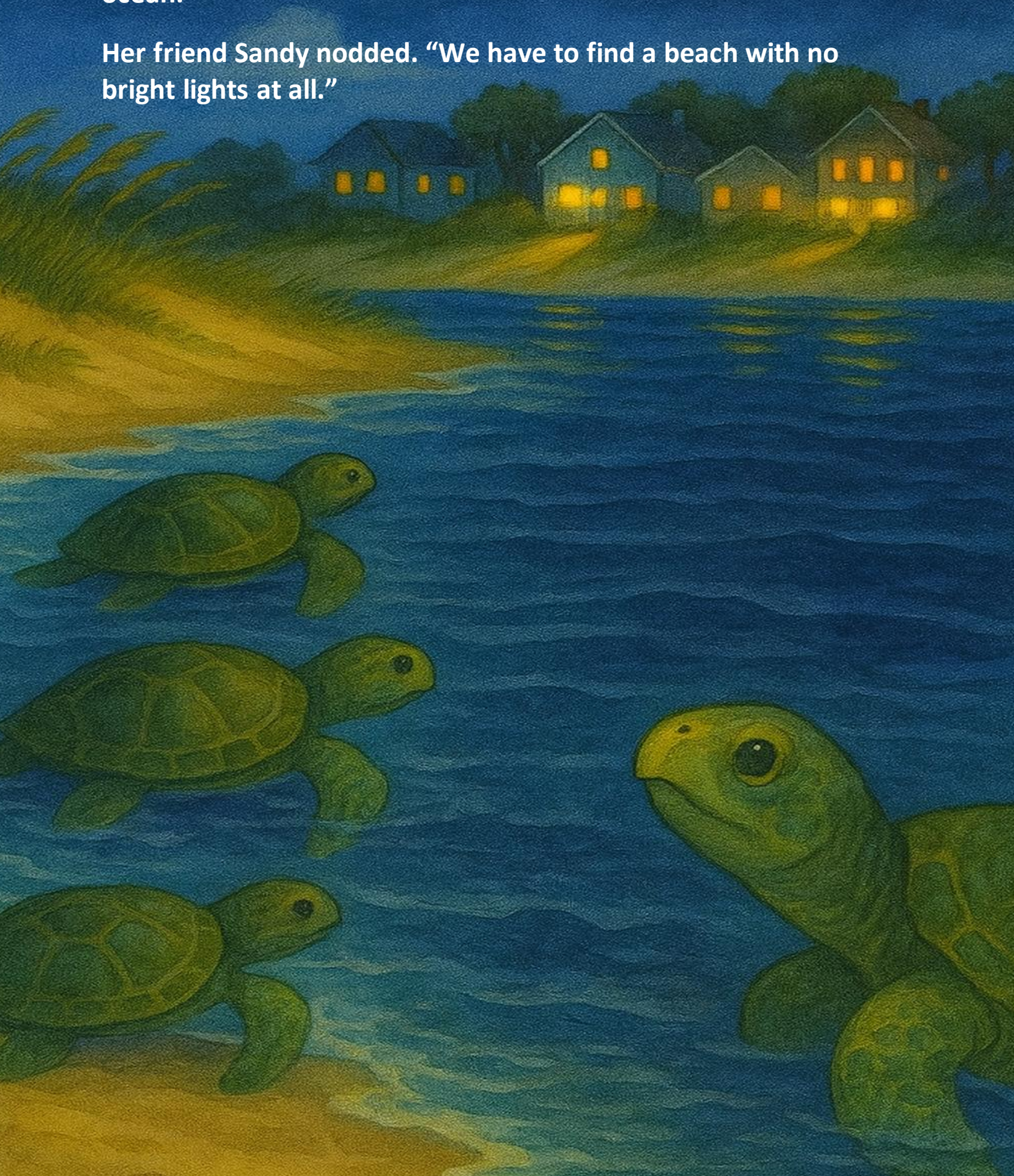
“It’s time!” she told the other turtles. “We have to find a safe, dark beach to lay our eggs.”

The turtles swam toward shore, but as they got closer, Tally noticed something strange—bright lights were shining from houses and hotels.



“Oh no!” she gasped. “Lights can confuse baby turtles! They might crawl the wrong way—toward the lights instead of the ocean.”

Her friend Sandy nodded. “We have to find a beach with no bright lights at all.”



At the second beach, someone was shining a big flashlight.

Tally shook her head. "Too bright. The babies need the moon and stars to guide them to the water."



Finally, they reached a stretch of sand where the only light came from the moon.
“This is it!” Tally whispered. “The perfect dark beach.”



She dug a deep nest and gently laid her eggs.
“Here, my babies will hatch safely,” she said, covering them
with sand.



Weeks later, under the soft moonlight, the eggs began to crack. Dozens of tiny turtles wriggled out and scurried toward the sound of the waves.

Splash! They made it into the ocean, just as Tally had hoped.



From that night on, Tally told everyone she met—humans and turtles alike—

“Keep beaches dark at night. Turn off the lights so sea turtle hatchlings can find their way home.”



Did You Know?

The Outer Banks of North Carolina is home to five kinds of sea turtles—loggerhead, green, Kemp’s ridley, hawksbill, and leatherback! Most nests here belong to loggerhead turtles, and each nest can hold about 100 eggs.

The baby turtles hatch after about 2 months and use their little flippers to scurry to the ocean. Some of these turtles will swim thousands of miles, but many come back to the Outer Banks beaches when they are grown up to lay their own eggs!

In the Outer Banks of North Carolina, sea turtles come to the beach every summer to lay their eggs in the sand! The mama turtle digs a nest at night, lays about 100 eggs, and carefully covers them up. Weeks later, tiny baby turtles hatch and hurry toward the ocean, guided by the light of the moon and stars.

That’s why people in the Outer Banks turn off bright beach lights at night—so the hatchlings don’t get confused and can safely find their way home to the sea!

