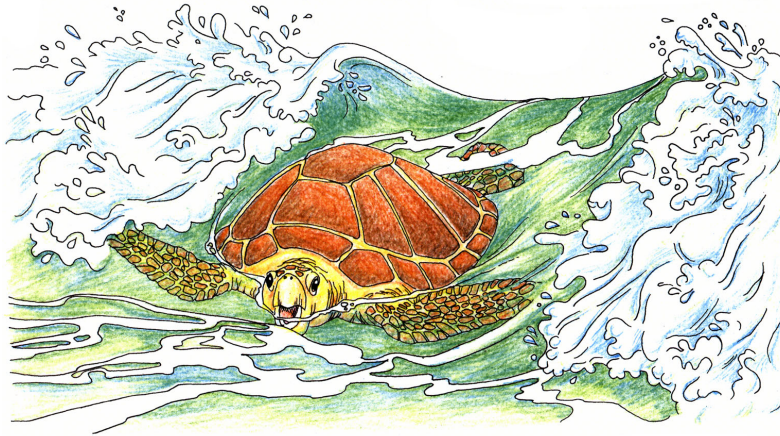


A Sea Turtle Story

By Mary Maden

Illustrated by Vicki Wallace



Chapter One **Pancake**

It was a beautiful summer day. Pancake swam peacefully in the big blue ocean. The sea turtle glided gracefully through the water. Pancake was a female loggerhead turtle. (Loggerheads are called that because of their big heads!) She was a beautiful yellow and reddish-brown color.

Like most sea turtles, Pancake was a solitary creature. She spent her days alone, happily swimming underwater and looking for food. Pancake mostly hunted for crabs, clams and mussels. She would dive down to the bottom of the ocean to find the tasty shellfish.

Although Pancake spent most of her time submerged underwater, she had to come to the surface to breathe. Pancake rose to the surface to take a breath. Unknown to the turtle, a boat was very close to her. It was speeding through the waves. The people in the boat were

having fun and talking. The driver was talking to one of his friends behind him. He didn't see the turtle come up for air.

Suddenly, the boat hit the loggerhead turtle.

Pancake was hurt! Her shell had been cut by the boat's propeller. The people in the boat never even saw the turtle. They sped away, unaware of what they had done. Poor Pancake was all alone with no help in sight! The sea turtle was badly injured. Pancake's injuries made her weak. It was getting harder and harder to swim. The tide was carrying her closer and closer to shore. Pancake couldn't swim against the strong tide. She was too exhausted and weak.

For days, poor Pancake was trapped in the rough surf. She battled against the tide, but it was sweeping her closer and closer to shore. Desperately, the sea turtle struggled in the waves, but she was getting very tired. Things were looking very bad for Pancake!

As the hurt turtle struggled, people were enjoying their day at the beach.

Everyone was busy swimming, surfing and sunbathing. No one noticed the poor sea turtle being tossed around in the surf. Pancake was getting more tired by the minute!

A mom, dad and their two children were having fun swimming and playing at the beach. The boy and his younger sister were boogie-boarding in the waves. The boy paddled out through the surf, then rode the waves back to shore. His little sister stayed closer to the beach, floating on her boogie-board.

The boy paddled out a little farther. He watched the waves to pick just the right one. Suddenly, he spotted something in the surf. The young boy wasn't sure what it was. He could see something moving in and out of the waves.

The boy caught the next wave and rode his boogie-board in. He called to his dad. "Dad, come here!" The boy dragged the boogie-board out of the water and stood on the beach. He stared out at the ocean.

"What is it, son?" his father asked.

"I don't know," the boy replied, "I saw something strange in the water. It looks like some kind of marine animal, but it was just bobbing around in the surf. What do you think it is?"

Immediately, his mom and sister joined them. They all looked out across the waves.

"I think it's a sea turtle," the mom observed. "It looks like it's in trouble!"

Another man heard them and came over. He had some binoculars. "It's a sea turtle, all right," the man agreed, looking through the binoculars at Pancake. "I think it's sick or hurt. Either way, it *is* in trouble."

"We have to get help!" the mom said. She ran back to their beach cottage to call for assistance.

"Hang on, turtle!" the little girl cried.

Once there, the boy's mom wasn't sure whom to call. She knew that there were organizations that helped sea turtles, but she wasn't sure how they were listed. She couldn't waste any time—the poor turtle needed help right away. She decided to call the local police department.

"I called the police," she said, returning. "They're sending rescuers right away."

Soon a crowd gathered on the beach. The kind people were all concerned about the sea turtle. They shouted words of encouragement to her. They anxiously waited for help to arrive.

Pancake was getting swept closer to shore. The surf was stronger the closer in she came. Pancake was almost too exhausted to swim. She was in real danger of drowning or being stranded on the beach. Valiantly, the brave sea turtle struggled, swimming with all her might.

It was apparent to the concerned onlookers that the sea turtle was tiring out fast. It looked as though she could barely swim. She was getting tossed around even more by the waves.

The rescuers were on their way. But would they make it in time to save Pancake?

Coming next... Chapter Two:

The Rescue

Quality Serials by Mary Maden

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