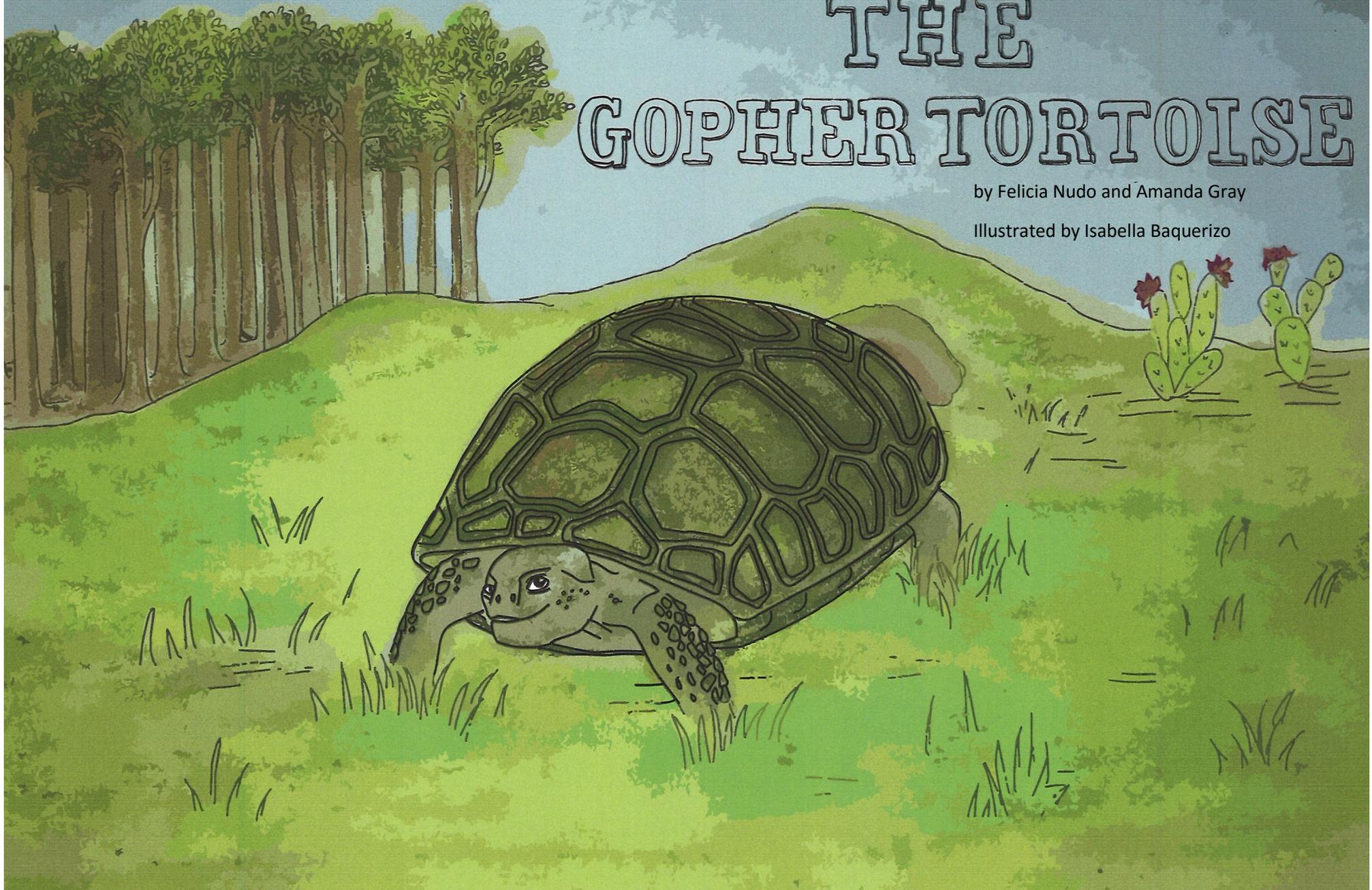


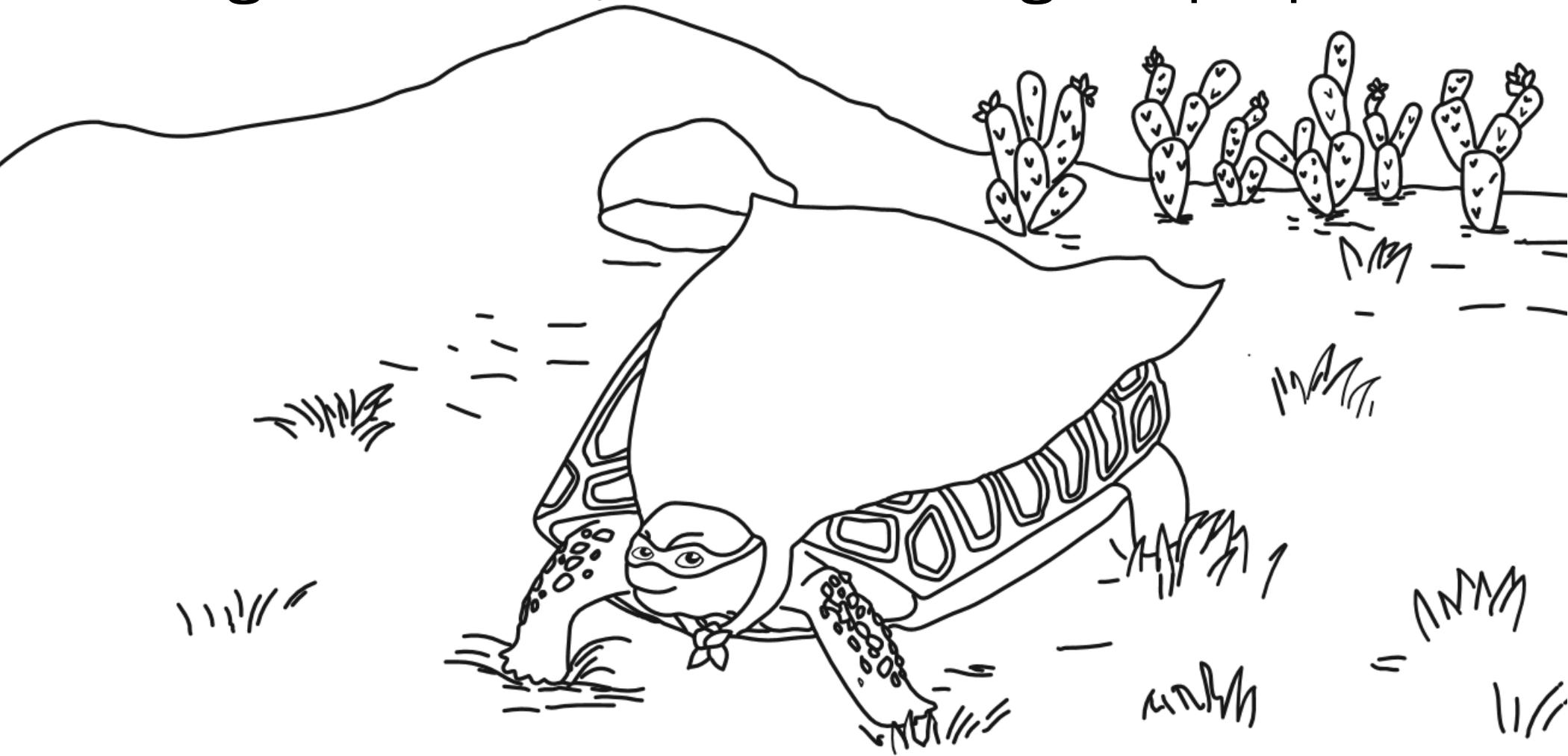
GILBERT THE GOPHER TORTOISE

by Felicia Nudo and Amanda Gray

Illustrated by Isabella Baquerizo



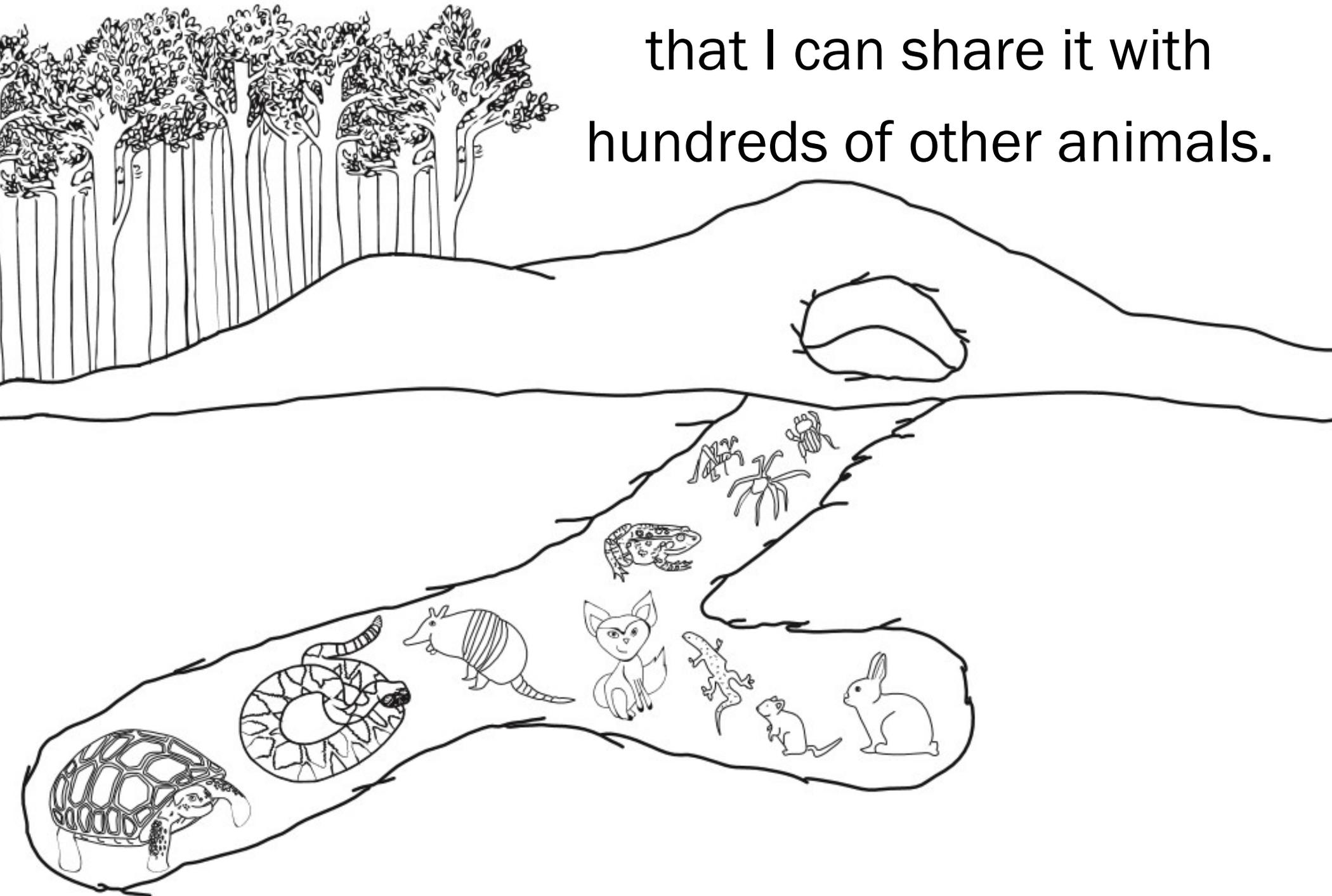
My name is Gilbert and I'm a gopher tortoise.
I might be small, but I serve a giant purpose.



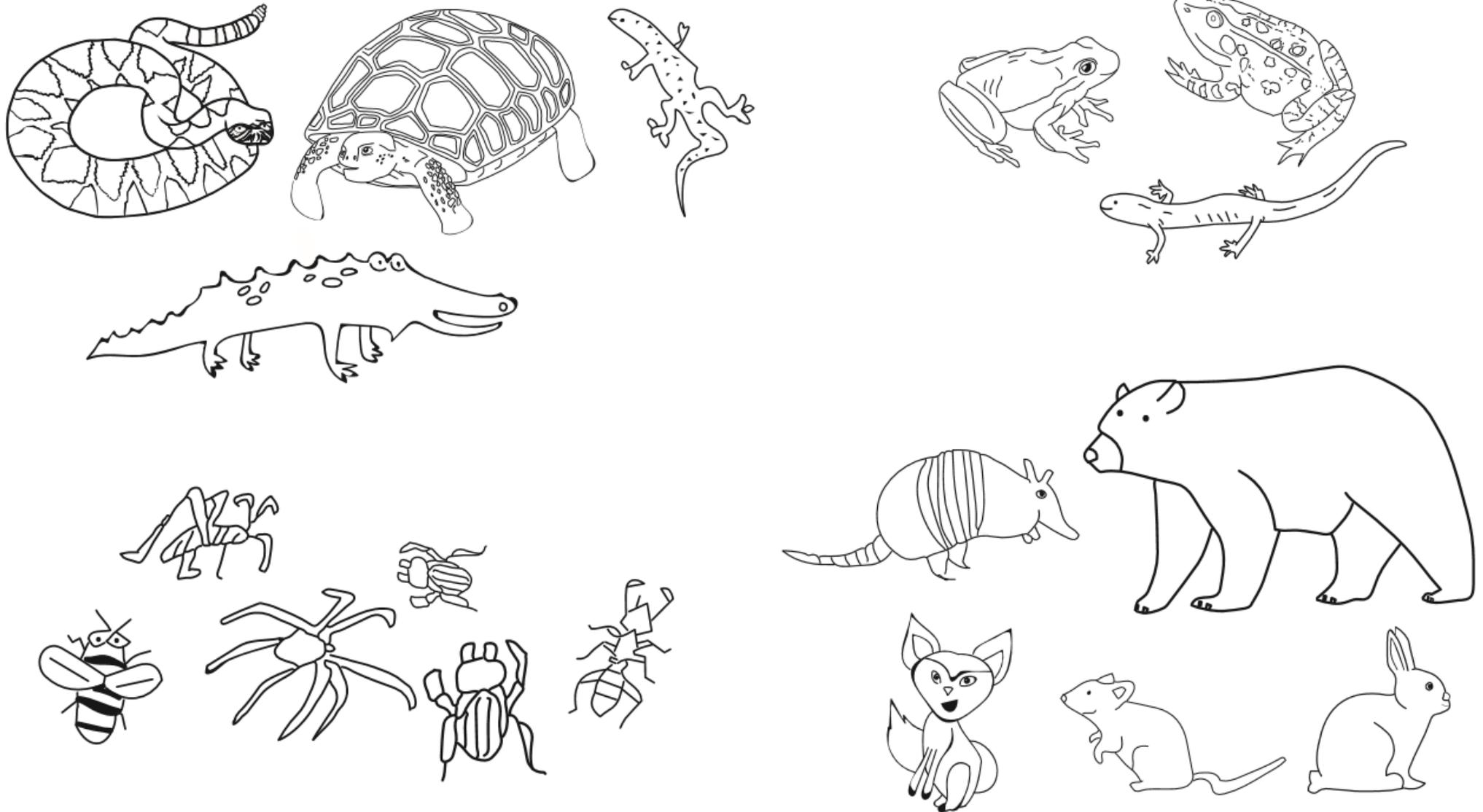
I carry my shell on my back and
my underground home is called a burrow.



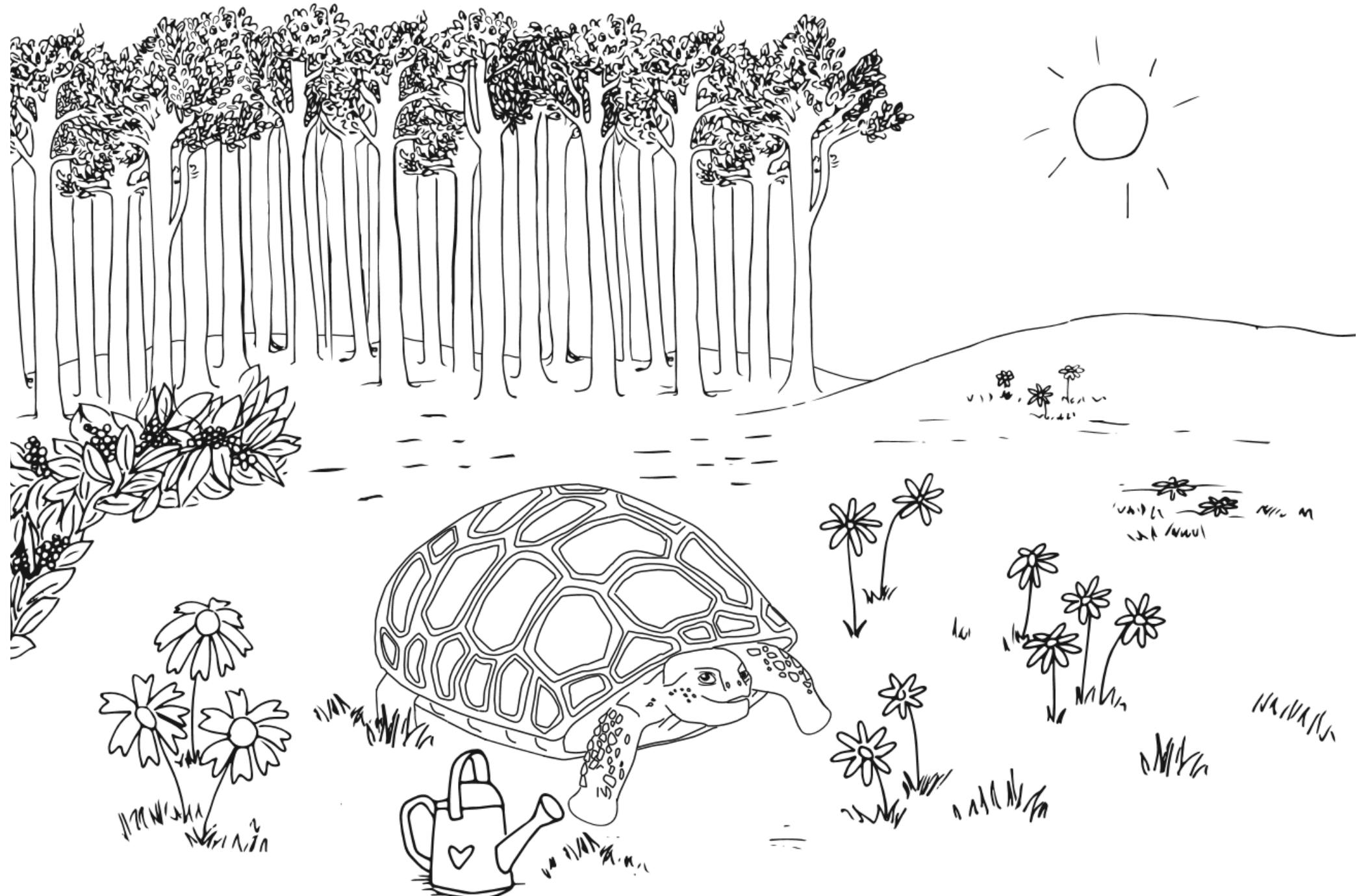
My burrow is so big
that I can share it with
hundreds of other animals.



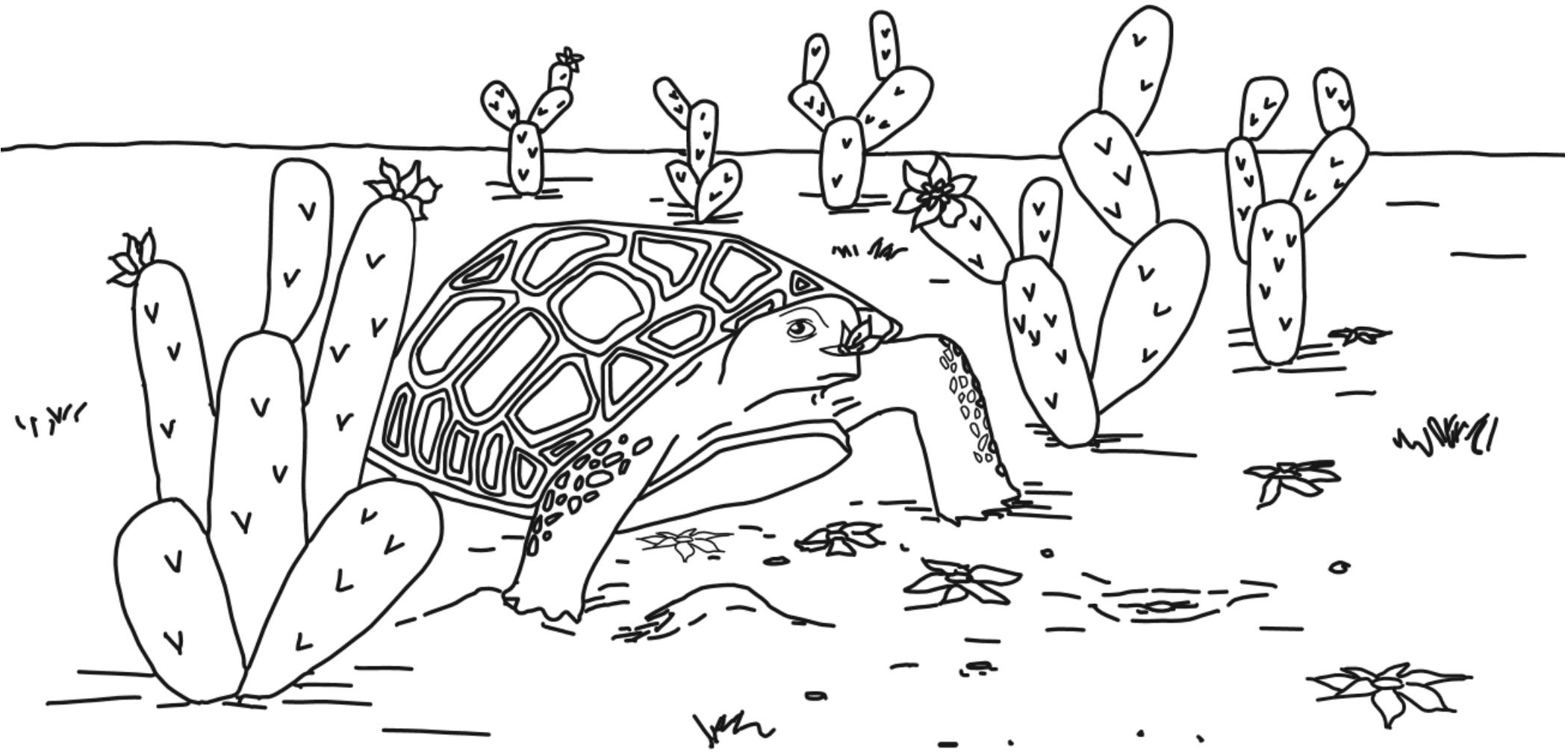
Some of my friends are reptiles,
some are amphibians, some are insects,
and some are mammals.



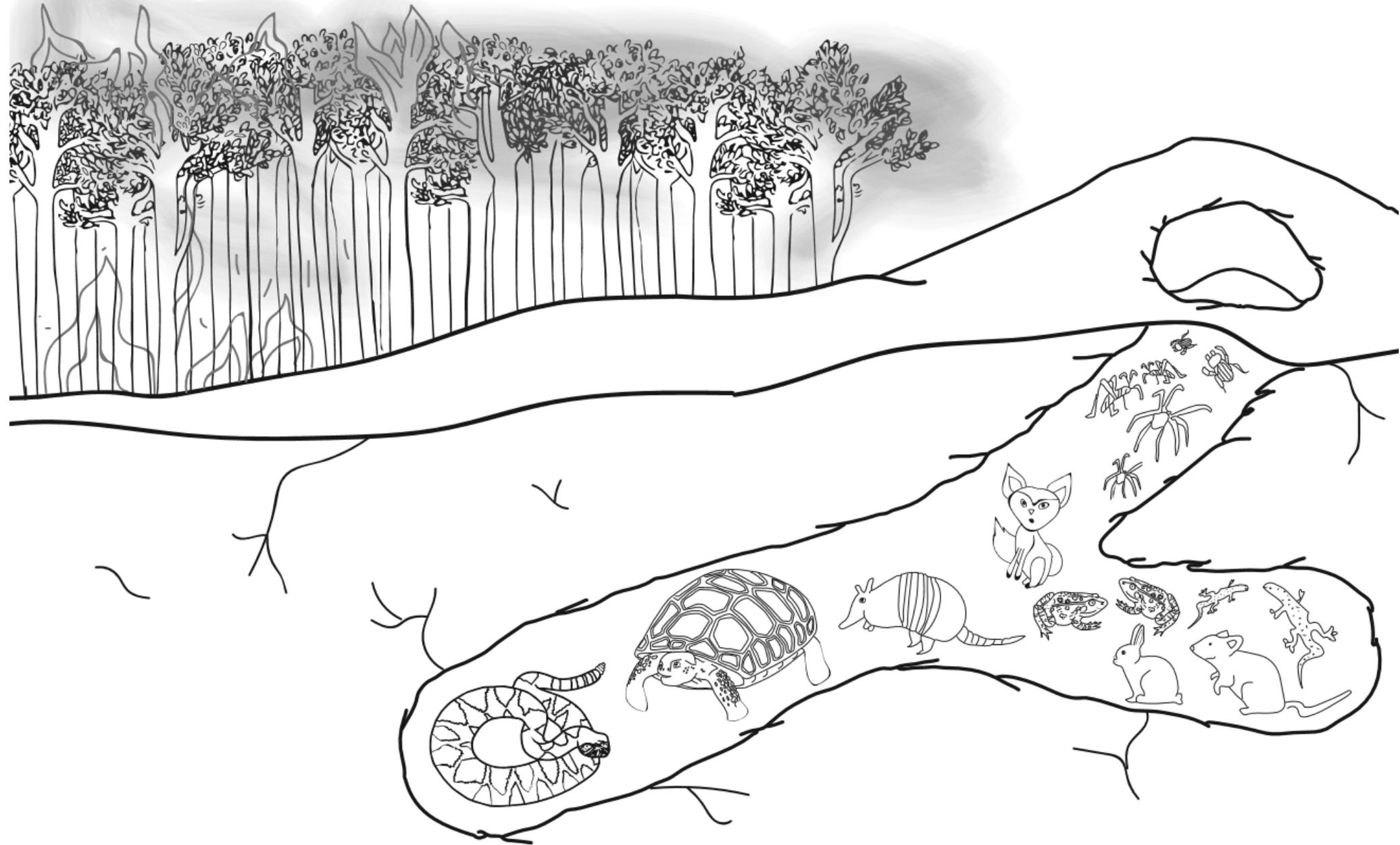
I help the plants with the things they need.



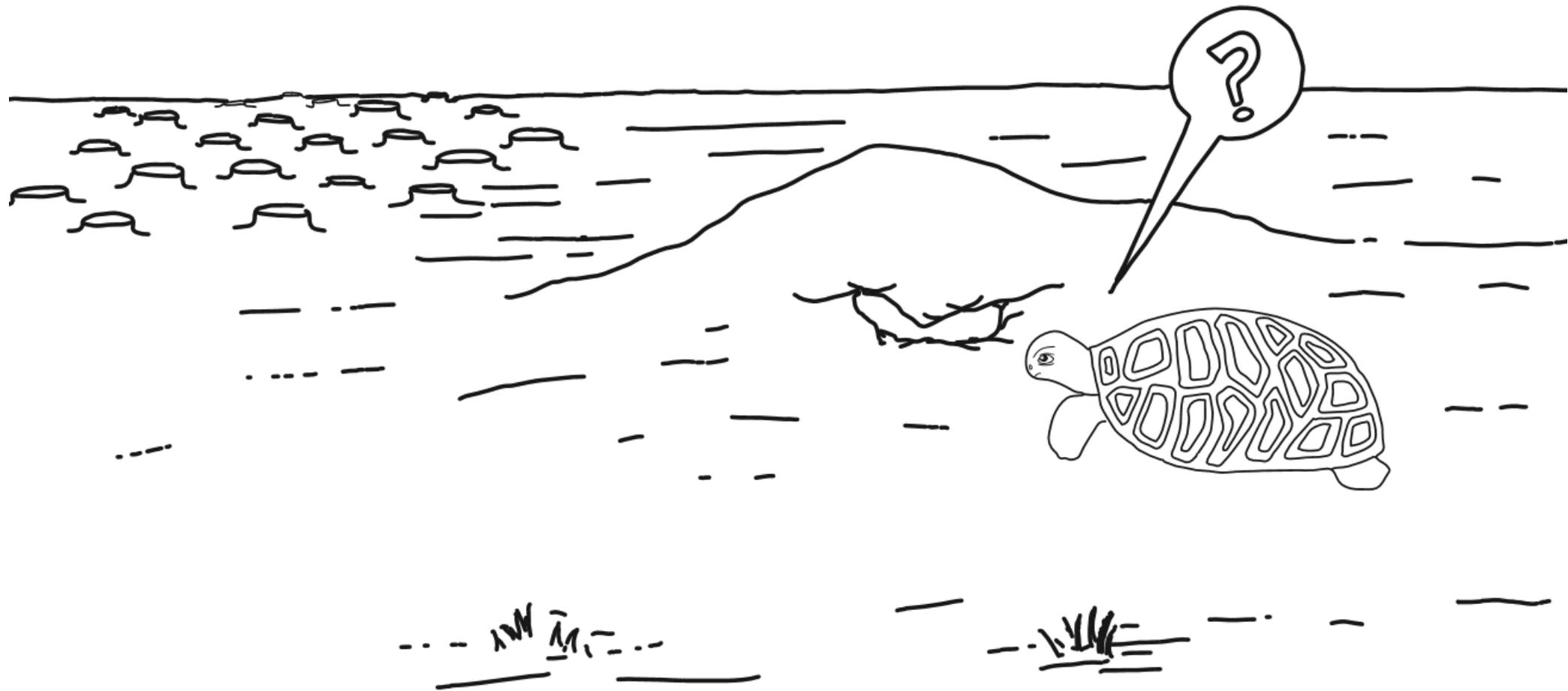
I kick up dirt and spread their seeds.



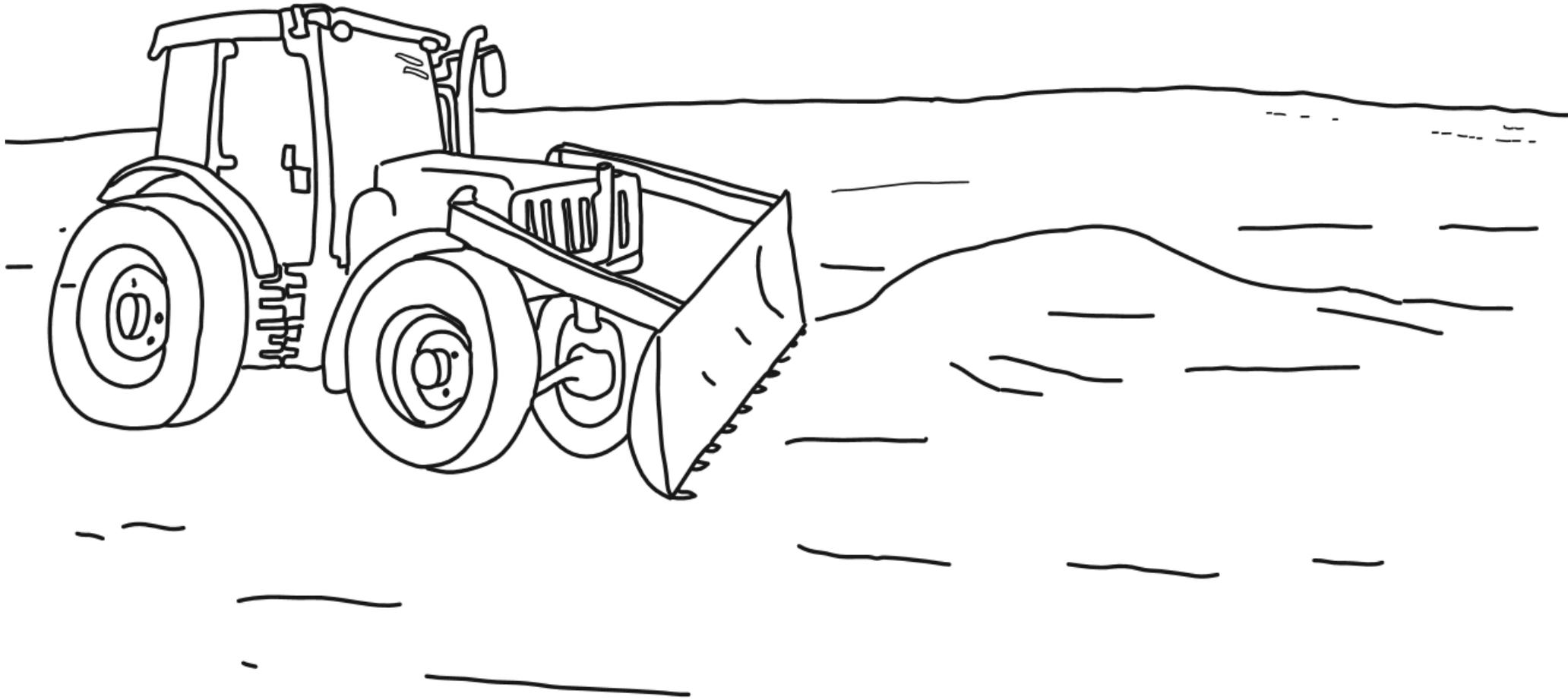
If there is a fire, my burrow provides
me and my friends with safety.



But my home has been disappearing lately.



Humans want to build more houses and malls,
but they don't seem to care about me and
my burrow buddies at all.

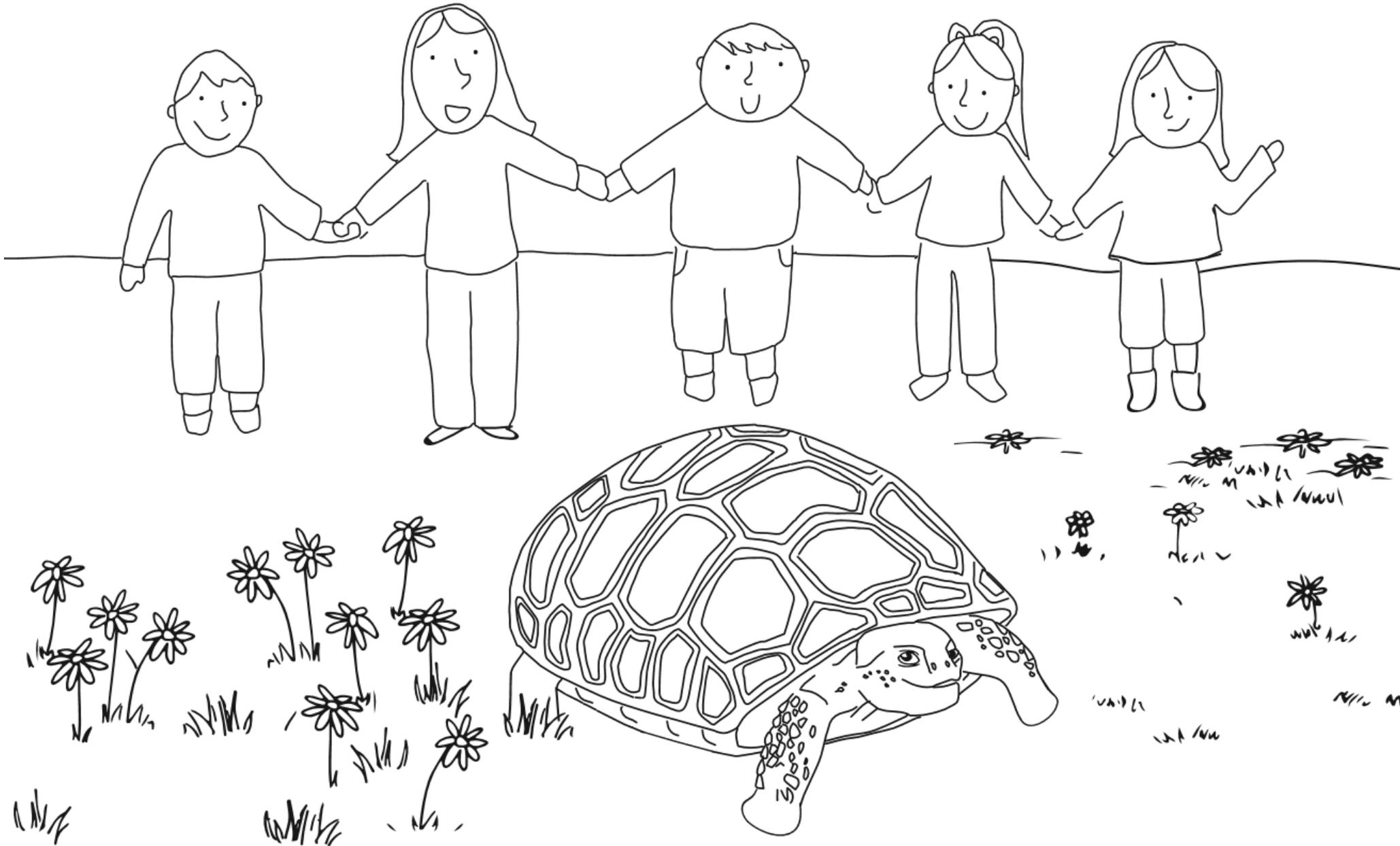


If my home is destroyed,
I won't be able to share my burrow
or help the plants grow.

If my home is ruined,
where will my buddies and I go?



I'm thankful to have kind friends
like you protecting me.



Because of you, my buddies and I
can live peacefully!



About the Authors

Felicia Nudo and Amanda Gray are both Environmental Studies students at Florida Gulf Coast University. They created this children's book to align with their gopher tortoise lesson as part of a curriculum titled, "The Language of the Earth" in which they designed for kindergarten and first grade students. The goal of creating the curriculum is to spark students' interest in the environment at a young age. Felicia and Amanda have successfully taught all 5 lessons of their curriculum to the 4 classes of kindergarten students at Franklin Park Elementary School. They plan to continue their environmental educational project in first grade classes during Franklin Park Elementary School's summer program.

Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation." Both Felicia and Amanda believe that one person can't do everything, but everyone can do something. They have set high expectations for their lessons and strive to serve as positive role models for their community.

About the Illustrator

Isabella Baquerizo (Izzy) is an honor student at Florida Gulf Coast University. She is majoring in Art and minoring in Education. After graduation, Izzy hopes to become an Art teacher, a professional illustrator, and an artist. She likes reading, traveling, and learning new things. Izzy also enjoys oil painting, drawing, and is currently expanding her skills in Illustrator.

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