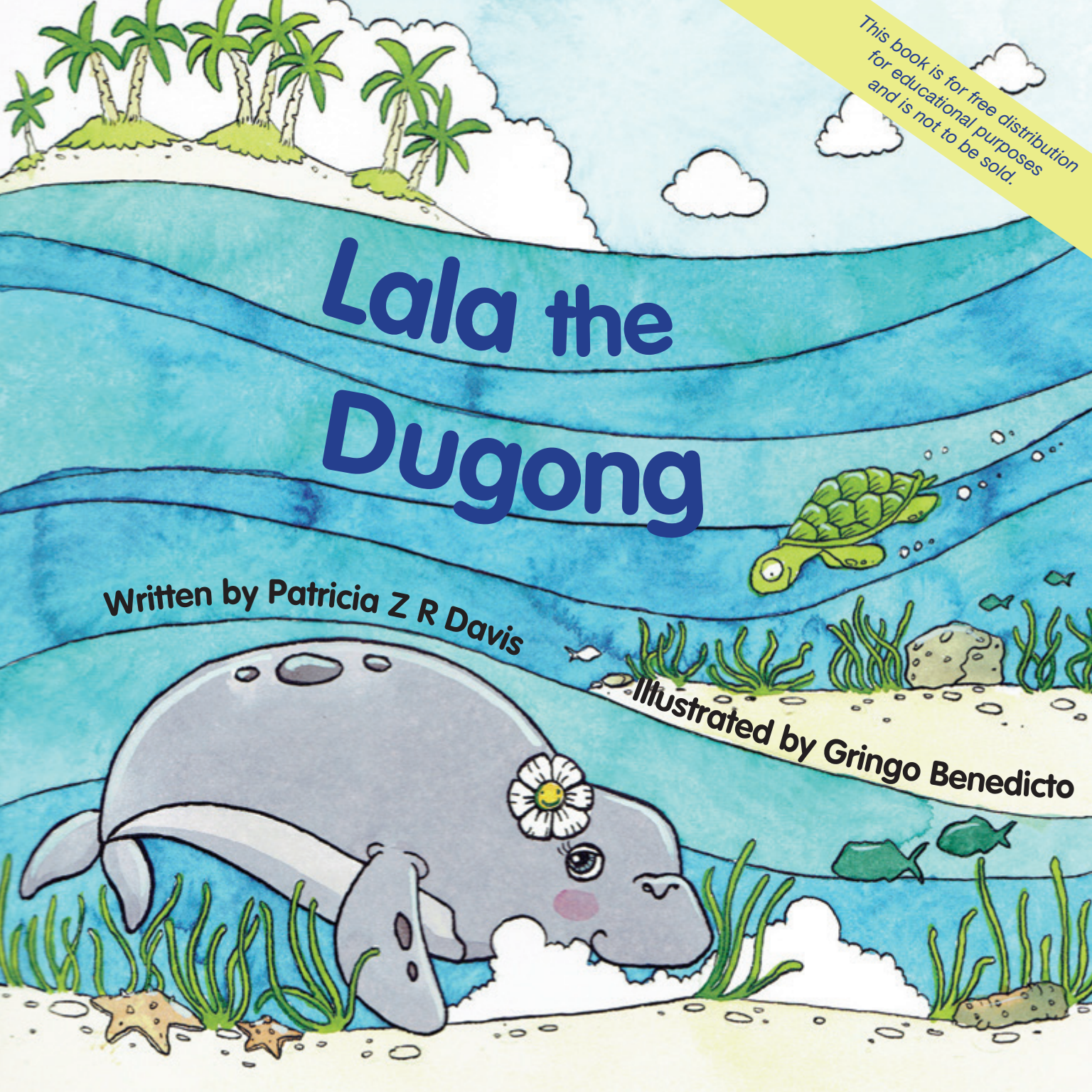


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# Lala the Dugong

Written by Patricia Z R Davis

Illustrated by Gringo Benedicto









# Lala the Dugong

**Written by Patricia Z R Davis**  
**Illustrated by Gringo Benedicto**

**Dedicated to the children of  
Nosy Hara Marine Park, Madagascar**

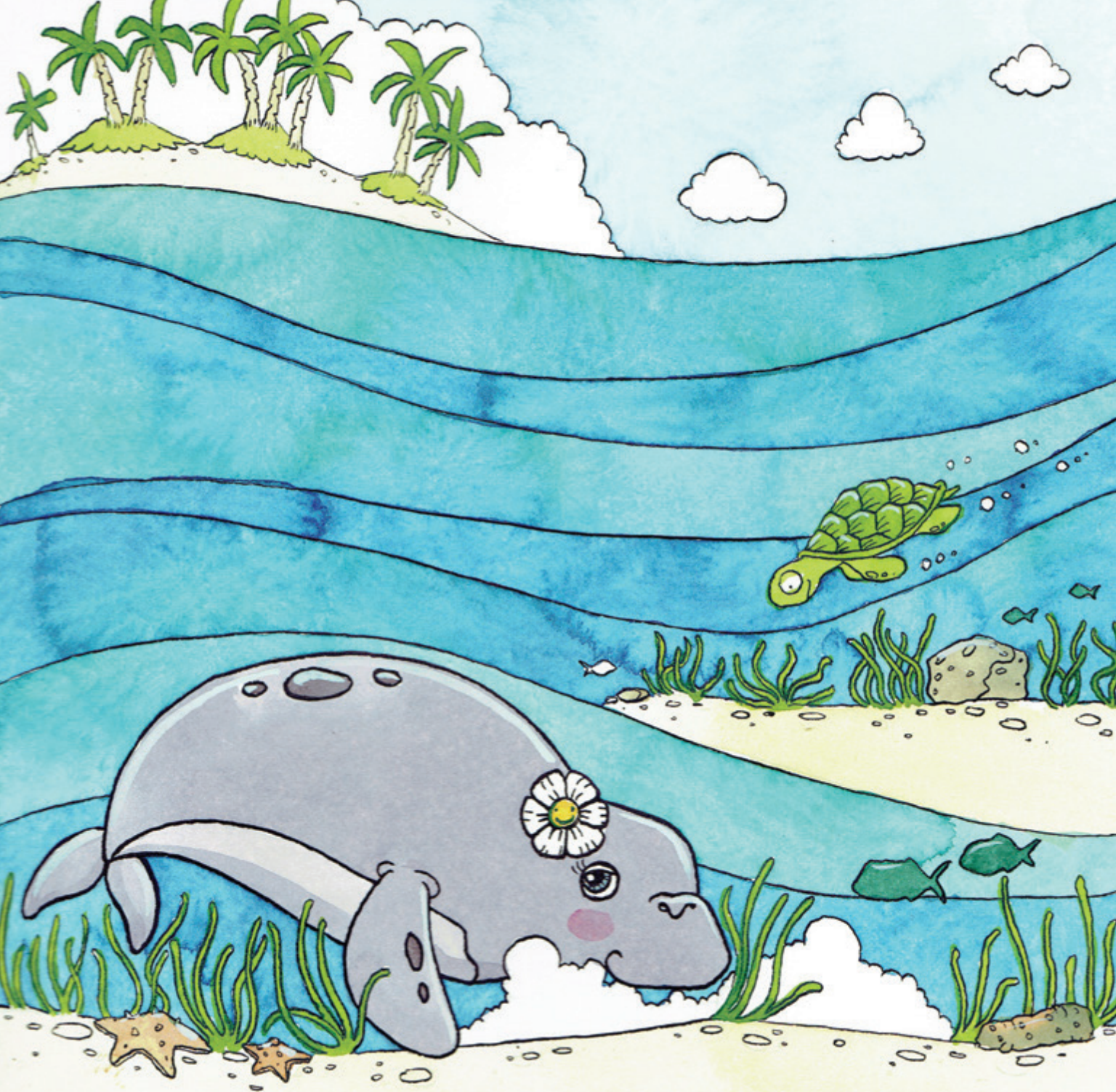
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**Lala is a dugong and lives in the sea here in Madagascar. She is about 3 metres long (twice as long as you!) weighs as much as a zebu and can live for around 70 years.**



**She's a very special gentle animal that spends all day eating seagrass which is grass that grows in the sea. Seagrass provides food and a home for many other animals including fish, turtles and sea cucumbers.**





**Like a zebu she eats grass  
all day long, but she needs  
to come up to the surface  
to breathe because she is a  
mammal like you and me.**





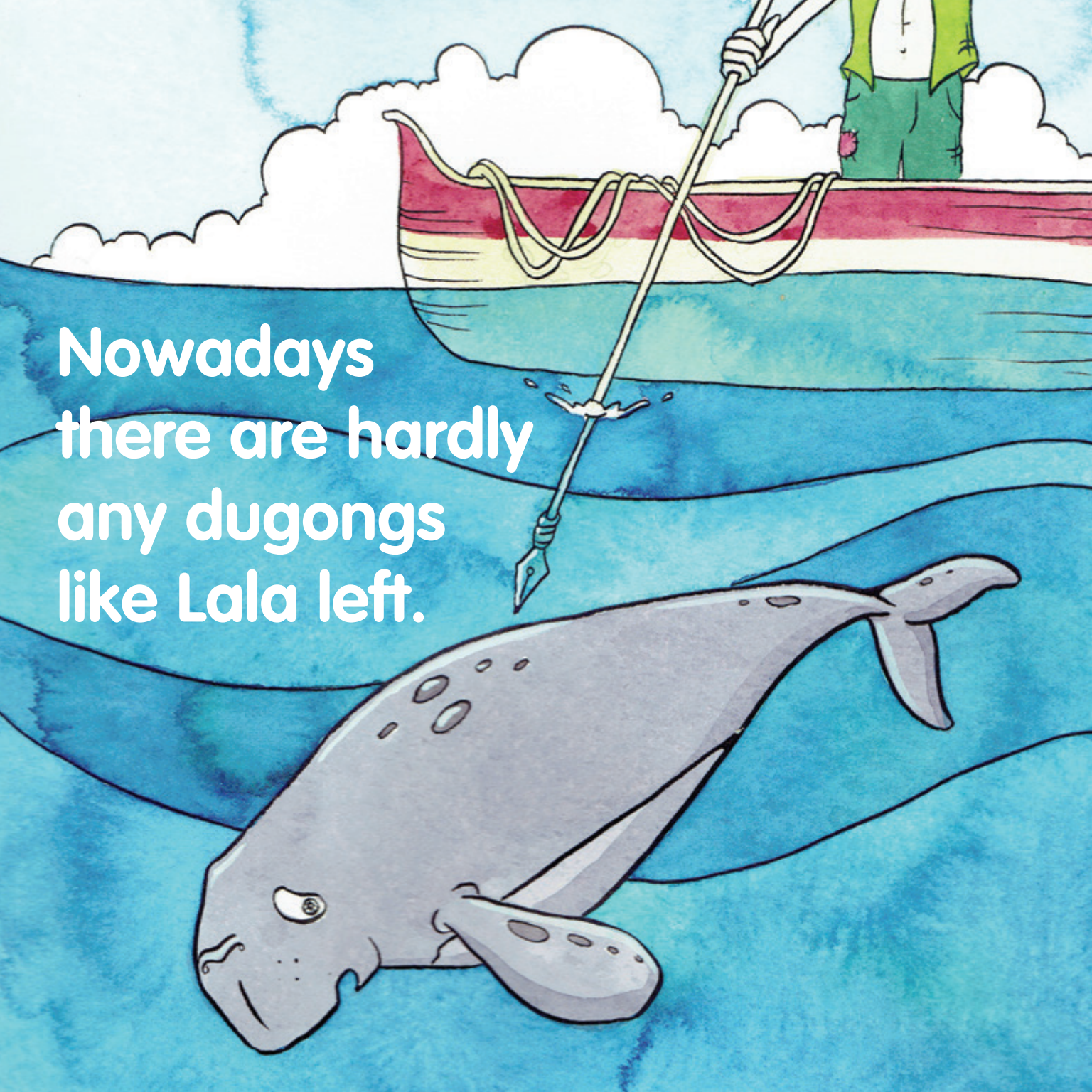
**A long time ago you could  
see Lala and many of her  
friends if you went out on  
a boat.**





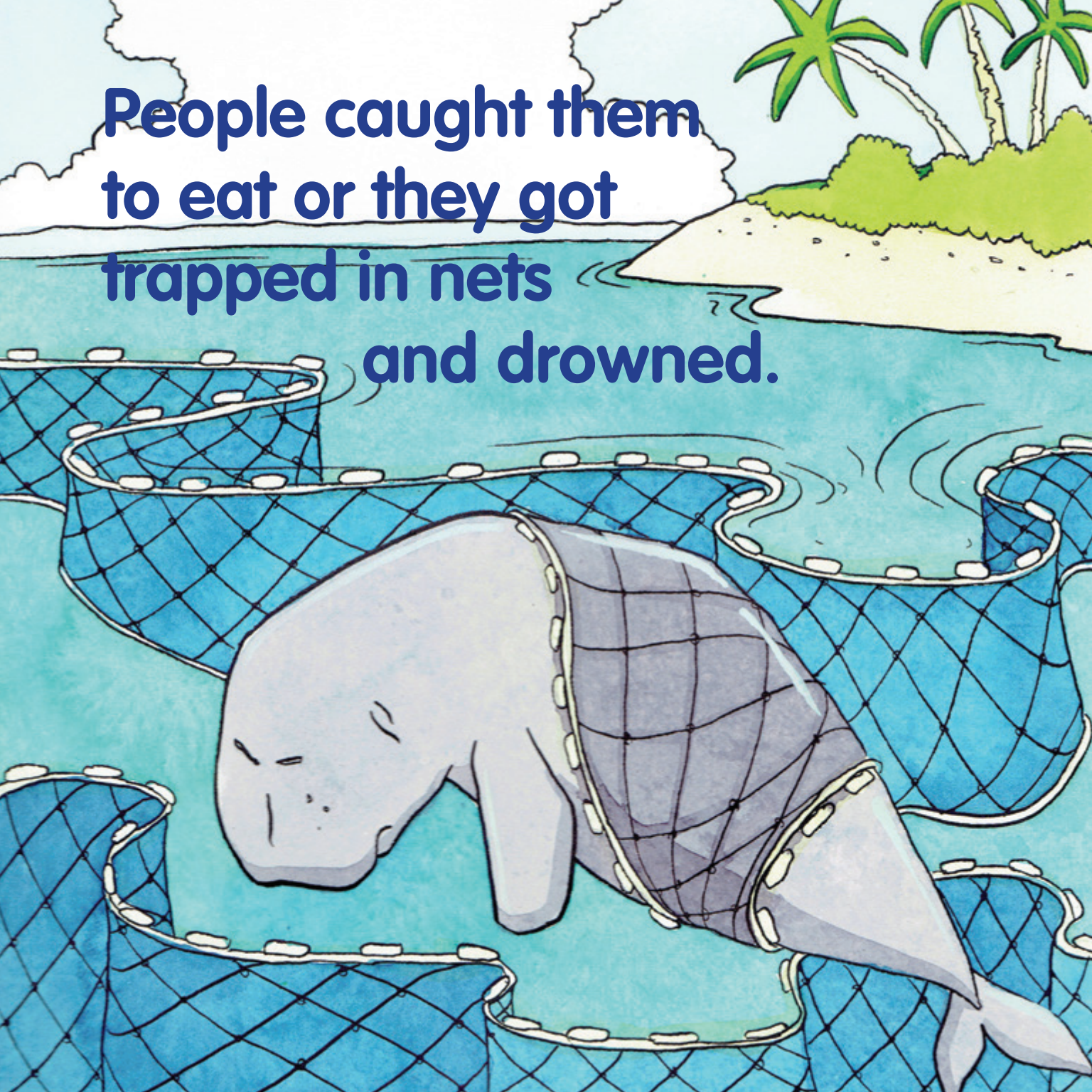


Nowadays  
there are hardly  
any dugongs  
like Lala left.



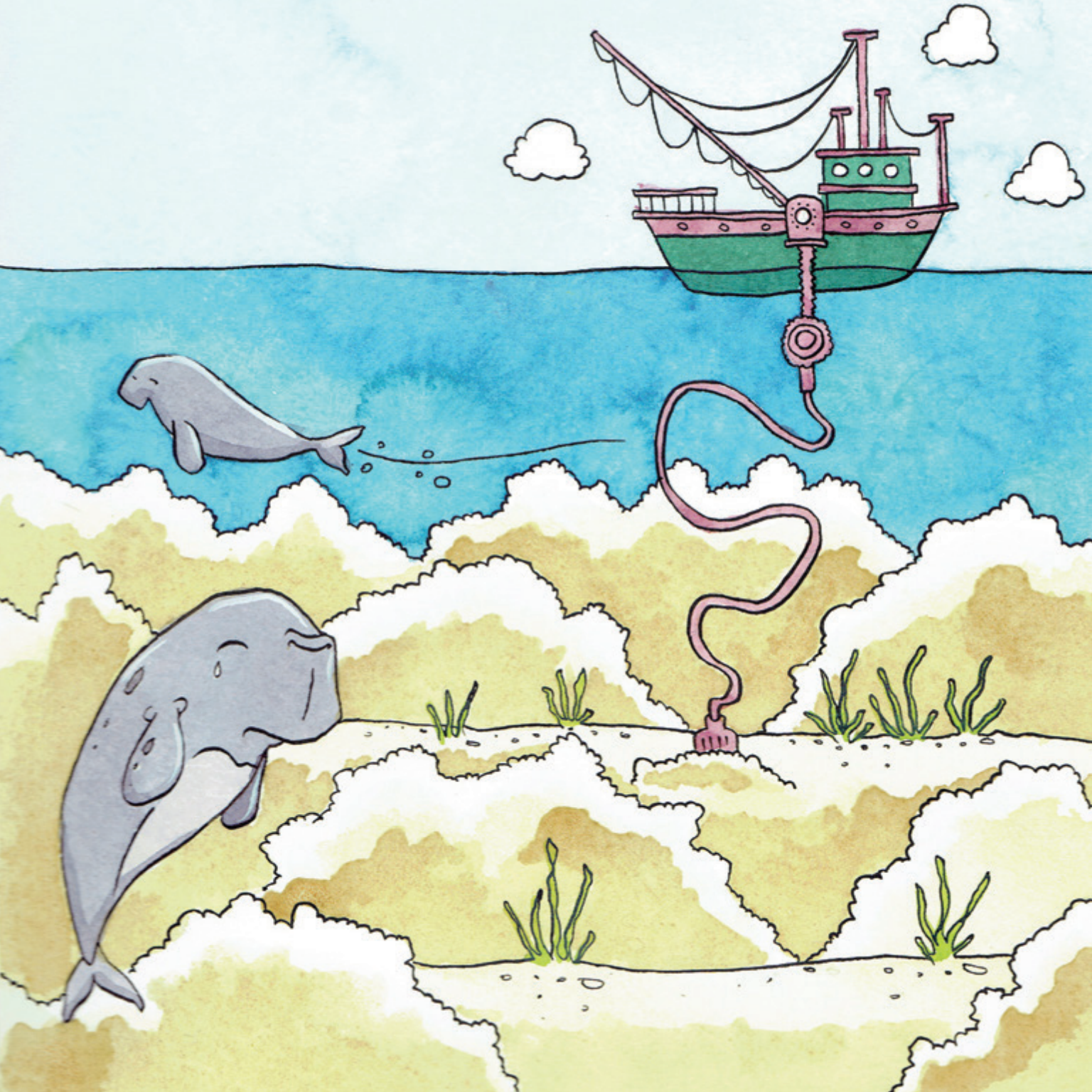


**People caught them  
to eat or they got  
trapped in nets  
and drowned.**



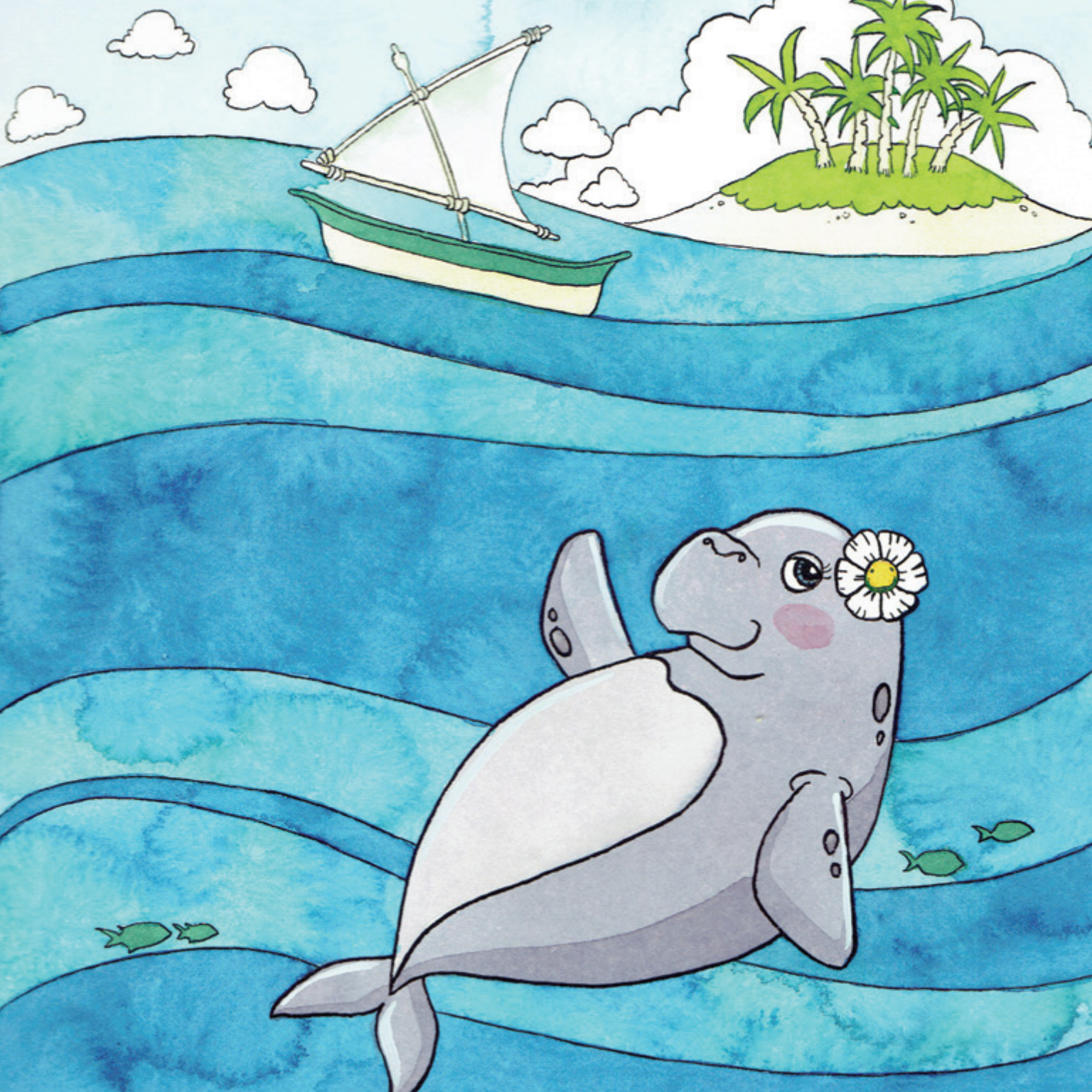
**In some places people have destroyed the seagrass by removing sand or polluting the sea. There is no food for fish or dugongs.**





**Luckily for Lala she lives in  
a special Park full of small  
islands called Nosy Hara  
Marine Park.**







**When fishermen  
see her they feel  
lucky...**



**...and know they will  
have a good day of  
fishing ahead.**





They take care to check their  
nets regularly and not put them

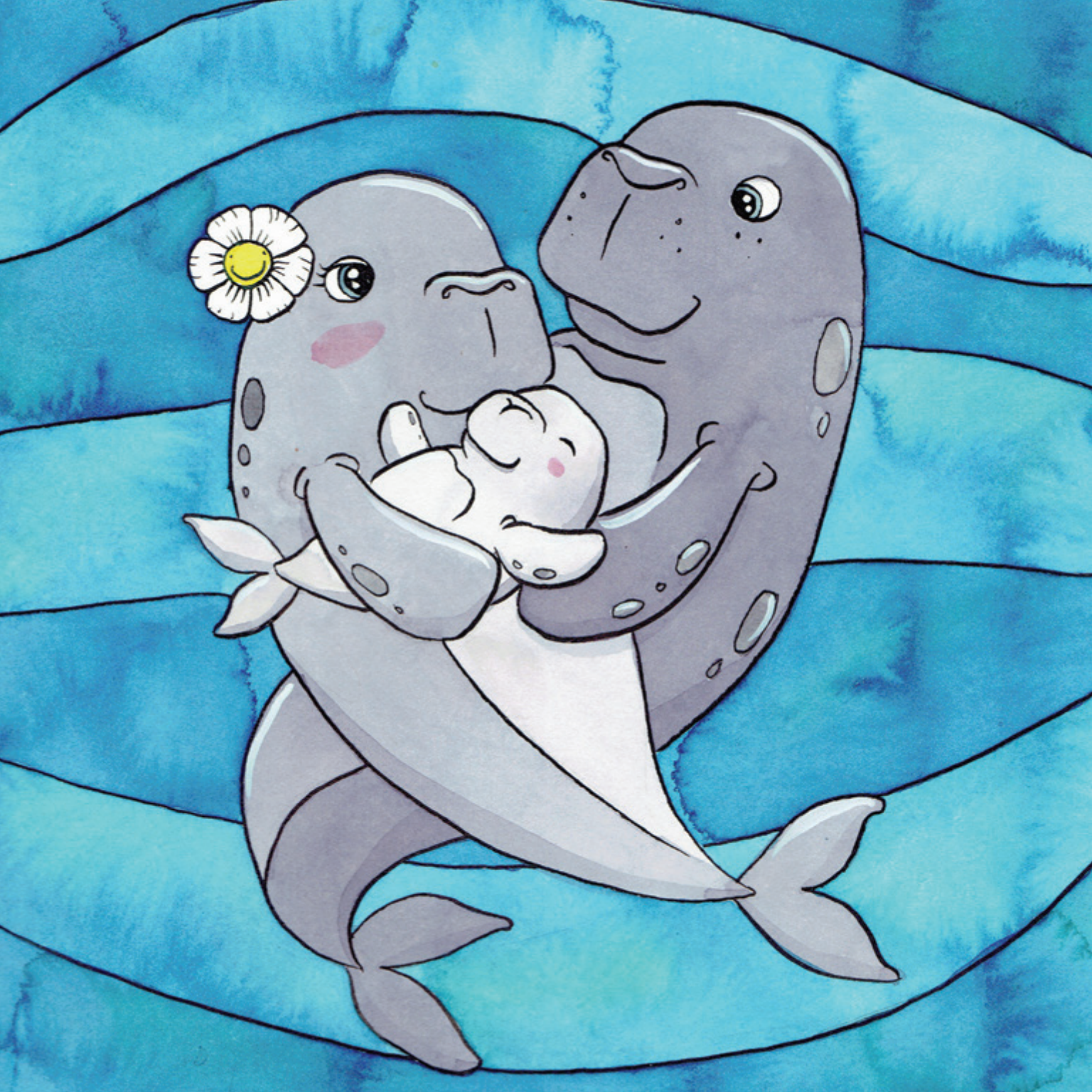
over the seagrass...



...so dugongs don't get caught  
in them.

**One day when Lala grows up she will have her own family here and her baby will drink milk and stay with her for a year and a half.**

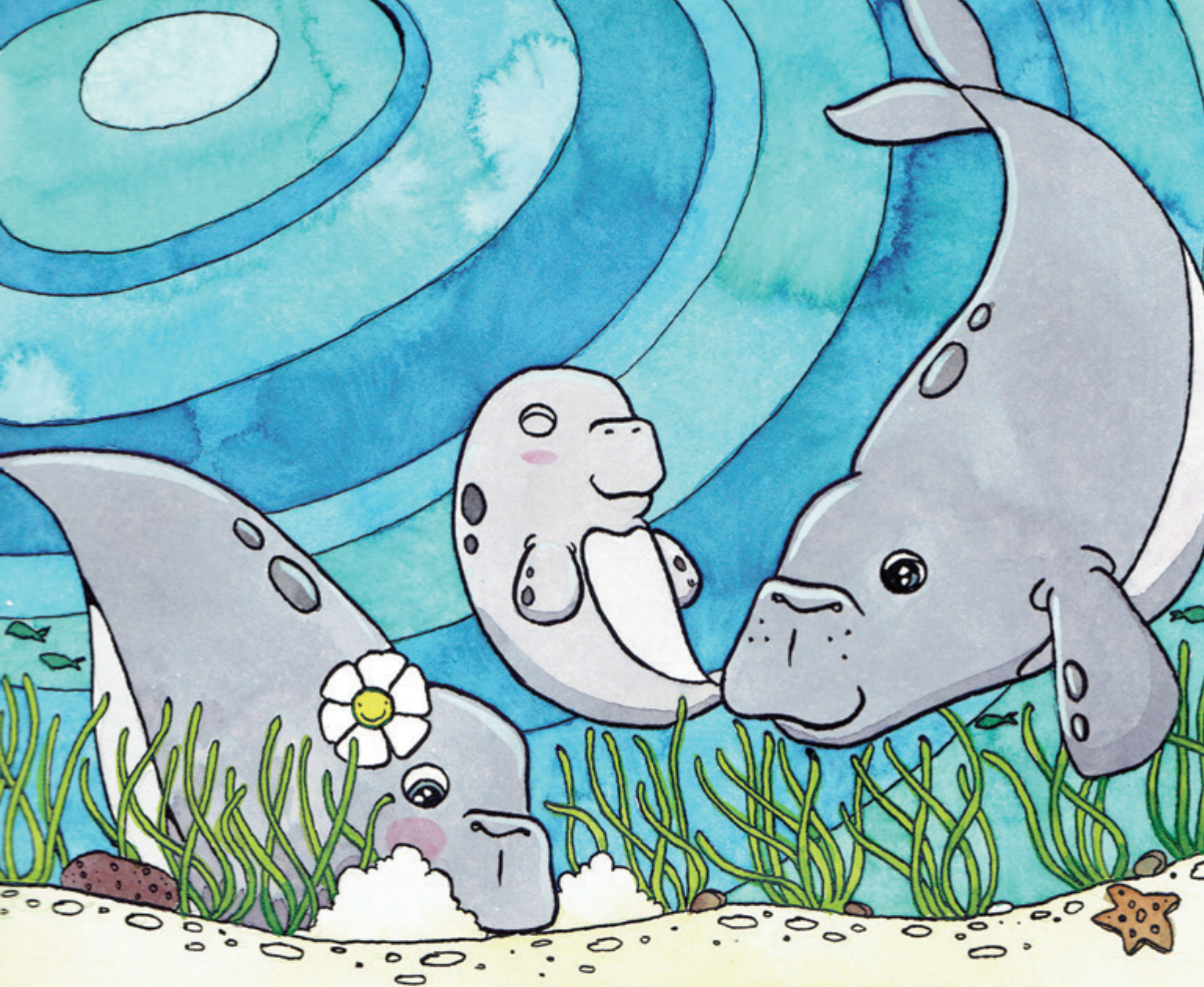




**Here there is plenty of nice seagrass for them to eat.**

**People plant mangrove trees on the coast which keep the sea clean as they stop mud running off the land into the sea.**





**The dugongs are safe  
here because people take  
good care of them. Let's  
all help to protect Lala and  
her family so we have the  
chance of seeing them in  
the future!**







# **DUGONGS & SEAGRASSES**

## **fun facts!**

- **Did you know dugongs can live to 70 years old or more?**
- **Seagrasses are underwater flowering plants that provide a home and food for baby fish, shellfish, sea cucumbers, sea turtles and dugongs.**
- **Seagrasses bind the sand and help protect our villages from damage from strong storms and waves.**
- **Dugongs occur across the world from Kenya in the west to the small Pacific island of Vanuatu in the east.**
- **The biggest dugong population is in Australia (more than 50,000) with the next in the Arabian Gulf (around 5,000). All other populations are very small and threatened with extinction.**
- **In Australia dugongs are often seen in groups of several hundred animals but most places in the world they now only occur in very small groups of 2-10 individuals.**
- **Dugongs communicate by chirping underwater, they use the bristles on their snouts to detect seagrass.**



- The name for dugong is often 'sea pig' or 'sea cow' in other languages, it refers to the way dugongs graze with their strong muzzles. They root in the seagrass and churn up sand as they eat.
- Dugongs can weigh up to 500kg, half a ton!
- A dugong eats around 40kg of seagrass a day!
- Dugongs can hold their breath underwater for 3-12 minutes at a time.
- There are some places in the world such as Egypt and Vanuatu where you can swim with friendly dugongs but in most places they are scared of people because they have been hunted for so many centuries.

To find out more about dugongs, visit the Global Environment Facility's Dugong & Seagrass Project at [www.dugongconservation.org](http://www.dugongconservation.org)

Also visit Community Centred Conservation (C3), a non-profit organisation caring for dugongs worldwide since 2002: [www.c-3.org.uk](http://www.c-3.org.uk)



For more facts about dugongs and how you can help conserve them, please see [www.c-3.org.uk](http://www.c-3.org.uk), contact [info@c-3.org.uk](mailto:info@c-3.org.uk) or telephone C3 Madagascar on [+261 34 96 510 52](tel:+261349651052) or [+261 20 82 927 83](tel:+261208292783).

