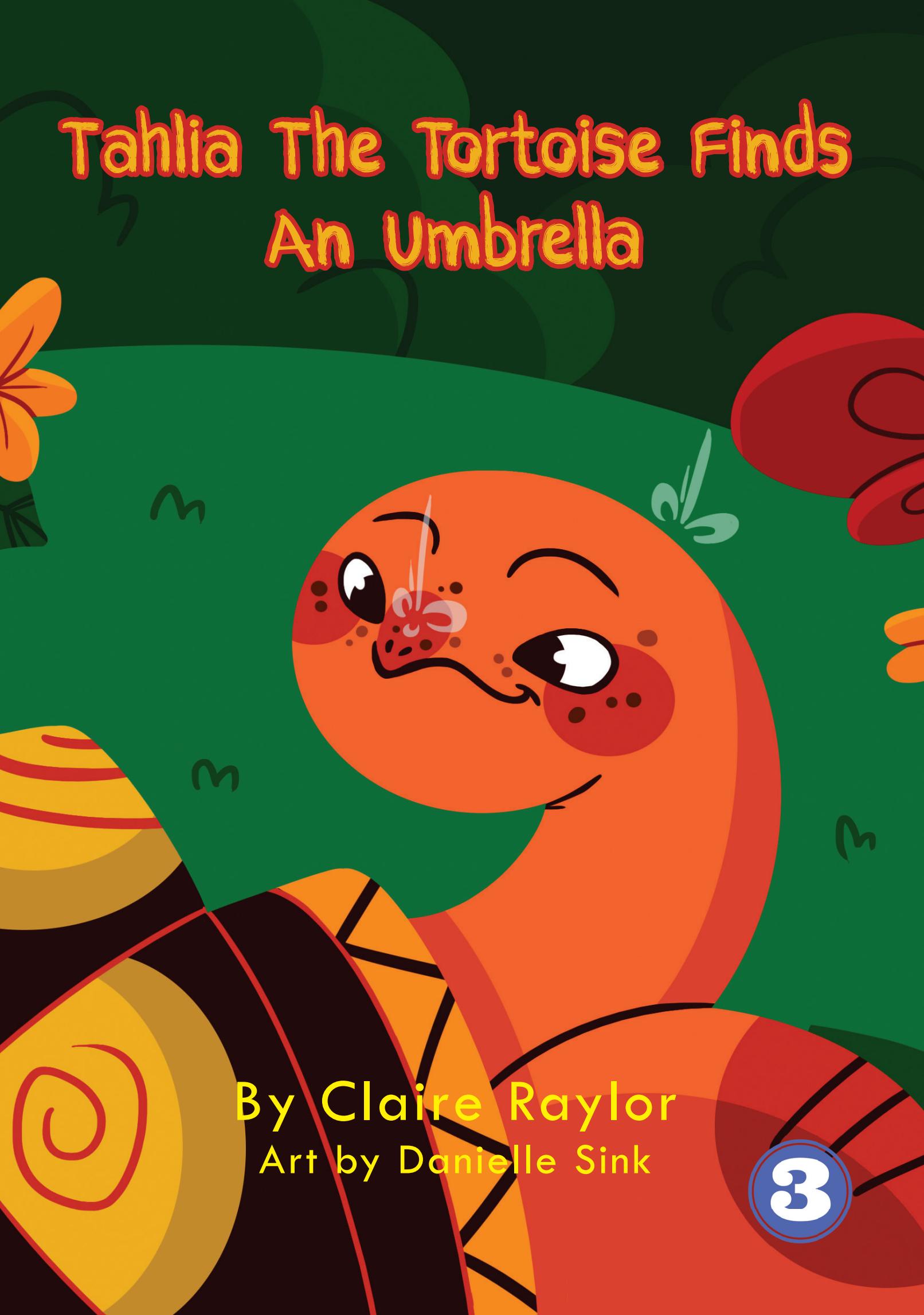


Tahlia The Tortoise Finds An Umbrella



By Claire Raylor
Art by Danielle Sink

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First published 2019

Published by Library For All Ltd
Email: info@libraryforall.org.au
URL: <http://www.libraryforall.org.au>



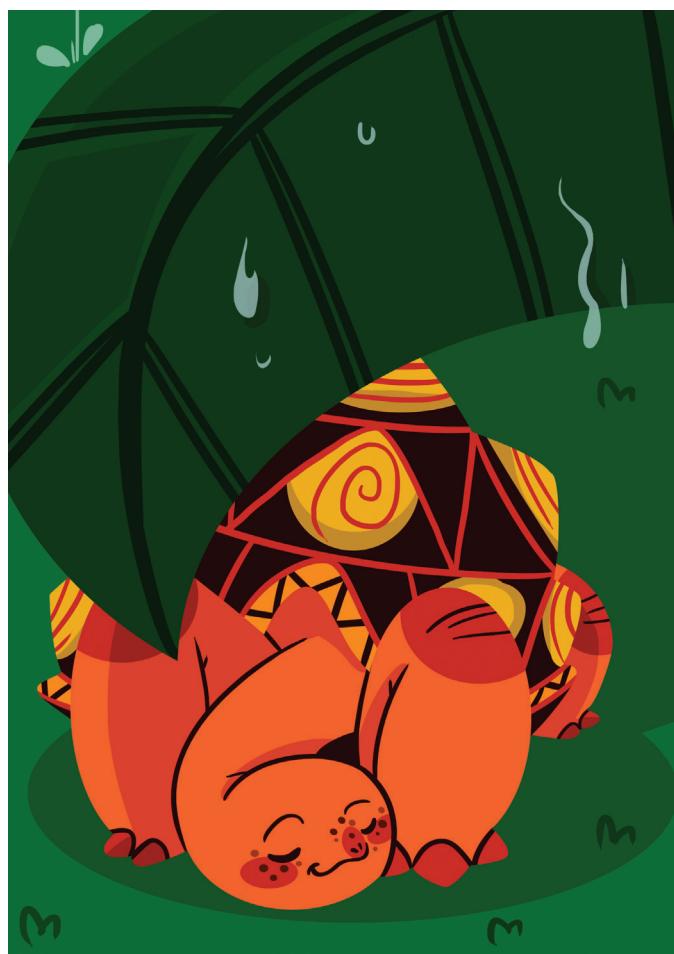
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This book was made possible by the generous support of the English Family Foundation.

Original illustrations by Danielle Sink

Tahlia The Tortoise Finds An Umbrella
Raylor, Claire
ISBN: 978-1-925863-96-3

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Jake put Tahlia in the garden. She was right near her lettuce leaves and water bowl, everything a tortoise could need.

She loved her garden with its big, green plants and colourful flowers. Tahlia thought she could happily explore the garden all day long.



Suddenly, Tahlia heard a noise.
It was a ‘pitter patter’ sound.
Then she felt something cold
splash onto her shell. “What
was that?” she asked herself.



She lifted her nose into the air and sniffed all around her. Following the scent around the garden, she sniffed the grass.

“Yuk!”

She wasn’t sure she liked this new smell. “What is happening?” she thought, as her feet sank a little into the grass.



As the noise continued and the smell grew stronger, the flowers began to glisten. Tahlia thought about the lovely, fresh drink Jake always laid out for her. ‘Water’ she remembered him calling it.



And sometimes Jake had given Tahlia a bath to make sure her shell was clean. “Is it similar stuff to that?” she wondered.

There was a ‘splish’ and a ‘splosh’ as the water dropped onto her lettuce leaves. Tahlia was not sure what to do!



“You need to get under cover,” a voice from nowhere commanded. “Where is your umbrella?”

Tahlia looked under a bush to try and find where the voice was coming from. “Who said that?” she cried.

Big splodges began to tumble onto her shell. “Ohhh, I don’t like this! Help! Someone help!” Tahlia didn’t know which way to turn.



Then she noticed a small creature holding a beautifully striped leaf above its head. “I have an umbrella, but it’s not big enough for both of us,” the caterpillar informed Tahlia. “I’ll help you find your own shelter. Follow me!”



The little creature scuttled away with its many legs scurrying very fast compared to Tahlia's slower stride.



Tahlia reached the edge of the lawn. The little caterpillar pointed to a big green leaf that hung low, nearly touching the grass. Tahlia pushed the leaf out of the way and hurried to stand beneath it.

“Phew!” she gasped in relief. Tahlia took a deep breath, ready to thank the little creature, but it was gone.



“Oh well, I am safe now,” Tahlia yawned. The grass was so soft and cool that Tahlia curled up for a nap.



She awoke as a bright light came peeping through the leaves.

Tahlia stretched and poked her head outside her shell, venturing out from her warm bed. The rays of sun danced on her face.

“Hooray!” Tahlia was happy that the funny stuff had stopped falling from the sky.



Tahlia could now explore her garden once again. All the plants and flowers were shiny and looked so pretty in the sunshine.



As she enjoyed the view she felt a hand tuck underneath her and scoop her up. She looked up into Jake's kind face and smiled.

"Did you get caught up in the rain?" he asked. "I was worried about you. I am so glad that you are alright."



‘Rain’ Jake had called it. Tahlia wondered if she would ever see ‘rain’ again. At least now she knew exactly what an ‘umbrella’ looked like, and how to find one when she needed it.



About The Author

Claire Raylor lives in Brisbane, Australia. She is a registered nurse and has recently ventured into working with children with disabilities. Claire has always been interested in writing and has attended workshops as a hobby. She has previously had some nursing articles published, but to see her early learning books published is a dream come true, especially for such a good cause – a charity changing the lives of others.

A message from the author:

To my good friend Beth Wilkins for all her advice and her generosity with her time in order to help me achieve my goal in having a book published and her encouragement along the way.

And also Michelle Worthington - Author for sharing her knowledge and experience in the Library For All writers' workshop and her advice beyond that day.



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ISBN 978-1-925863-96-3

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