

# Angelina's Lost Turtle



*By Patrick Carpen  
Illustrated by Antara*

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Angela was seven years old, and all she wanted for her eighth birthday was a pet turtle.

She bugged her mom and dad, day in, day out, to go to the pet store to buy a turtle.

Angela's father was a bit skeptical at first. Could Angela really care for a turtle? What are some of the things she needed to know before she could own a pet turtle? What does a pet turtle eat ... ?

“All right,” her mother said, “tomorrow is your eighth birthday, and we will go to the pet store and get you a pet turtle.”

Angela had never been so excited in her whole life. She jumped up and down and up and down.



The next day Angela, along with her mother and her father, set out for the pet store. There, Angela's eyes landed on the perfect turtle. It was big and black and pulled its head into its shell.

*That's the turtle!* Angela thought.

She wanted it.

She tugged her mother's dress. "Mommy, mommy," she cried, "there!"

And, pointing to the turtle, she exclaimed, "That's the turtle I want!"

So Angela's mother bought the turtle for her.

# PET STORE



They taught Angela all about turtles. Turtles like lettuce. Turtles like clean water, light, shade, moisture, and sometimes a basking lamp. She may even need to set up a turtle pen outside since turtles often hibernate in the fall. Angela will need to always wash her hands after dealing with her turtle, as turtles may sometimes carry a dangerous type of bacteria called Salmonella . . . . All these things were rehearsed to Angela in the days ahead.

Angela had never felt happier or more excited about a birthday gift before. Everywhere she went, she took her turtle with her. She washed and painted her turtle. She took her turtle to the park, to the candy shop, to the library, to the grocery store . . . . She even took her turtle to school to show her friends and teacher.





Her teacher, Miss Beverly, was very delighted to see Angela's turtle and taught the class a whole hour about turtles.

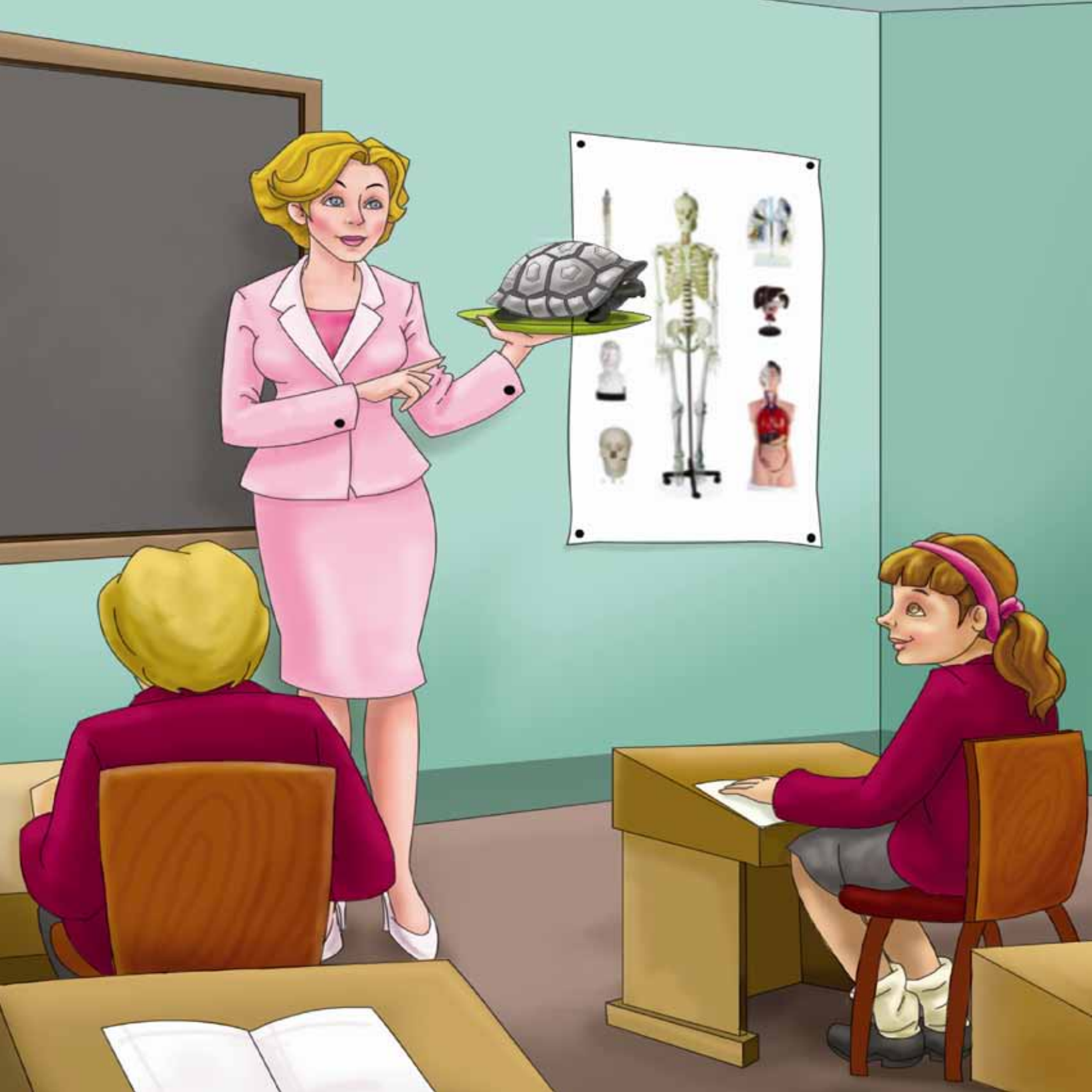
"Turtles," she said, "are reptiles . . . ."

The class gasped in fear, "Reptiles?! Does that mean they bite?"

"No," explained the teacher, "not all reptiles are as dangerous as snakes and alligators. Reptiles are cold-blooded animals, which means that their body temperature changes with their surroundings . . . ."

She explained that reptiles breathe with their lungs and have skin covered with scales.

Then Miss Beverly asked, "Can anyone give me another example of a reptile?"



There was a deafening silence for the next thirty seconds or so, and then, suddenly, Rosemary shot her hand up into the air in perfect zeal.

Rosemary was famous for being the “bright girl” in the class, and the other kids wondered what had taken her so long.

“Yes, Rosemary, go ahead,” said the teacher.

Rosemary stood boldly up and looked at the students all around her.

“Chameleons,” she declared splendidly.

“Thank you, Rosemary,” said the teacher. “Now let’s continue. There are about three hundred species of turtles alive today . . . .”

The class sat and listened eagerly as the teacher told them the wonderful stories about turtles.



Then one day something very sad and frightening happened to Angela's turtle. It was lost! Or...maybe stolen! She had left it in the flowerpot downstairs for a break, and when she returned, her dear little Speedy was gone.

Angela became a bit worried at first, but she was determined to find Speedy, her turtle.

*Where could she have gone?* she wondered.

She looked all around ... back and front ... inside and outside ... but Angela's turtle was nowhere to be found.

Angela became more and more worried, and she began to search more and more frantically. Where could her turtle be? She ran upstairs and phoned her best friend, Robert.

"Robert!" she exclaimed. "My turtle is gone!"

Robert tried to calm her down and comfort her, but Angela became more and more frantic. "Where is she? I have to find her!"

"I'll help you find her," said Robert. "I'll come right over."



So Robert rode his bike around the block to Angela's house. They both began to search the yard, but they couldn't find the turtle.

"She walks pretty fast ..." said Angela, almost crying, "... and likes to hide in holes."

Search as they might, they couldn't find the turtle.

"Where could she be?" demanded Angela.

"Maybe she's gone back," said Robert.

"Gone where?" asked Angela.

"To turtle land," said Robert, "with all the other turtles. Maybe you should just let her go."

"I won't!" cried Angela. "She has to come back. I have to find her."

"Maybe it's better if you let her go," said Robert. "She'll tell all the other turtles about you. How good you were and how wonderful you treated her. Maybe she's happier in turtle land."

"No!" demanded Angela. "I want her back. I don't want her in turtle land."





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