

Tales

SAMPLE

From The

Brink



**Search For A Sister:
A Leatherback Sea Turtle Story**

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By Neil Harwood

Florida, Present Day

I swim up to the surface of the sea to breathe. My huge flippers propel me through the dark water. My head breaks through the surface, and in the clear night I see something that I haven't seen for many years.

There is a line of yellow lights on the horizon. They follow the curve of the coastline for several miles and do not move. Although I have not been here for over twenty years, I remember these lights, and the shape of the coast. My journey is almost over. I dive back under the cool, black water, and swim towards the land.

As I swim, I remember other things about this place: the temperature of the water, the features of the sea bed, the animals that live here; all are familiar.

My name is Carrie, and I am a leatherback turtle—a species known for travelling large distances. I am returning from a journey that took me thousands of miles away from this coast.

I am pleased that my journey is almost over, but my return is tinged with sadness. It was here that I used to play with my sister Coria. Together we learned about life in the sea. Together we grew up until we were old enough to leave. And then, together, we set off on a great adventure.

I have returned alone.

Twenty-Five Years Ago

In the middle of the night, a female leatherback turtle crawled out of the sea. She

clambered over the sandy beach until she reached a spot near some bushes.

The turtle dug a hole with her hind flippers, and into it laid over one hundred eggs. She then covered the eggs with sand and hid the nest with leaves.

Her job done, the turtle crawled back over the beach and swam away into the night.

The turtle was my mother.

Two months later, I started pecking at the hard shell that surrounded me. I pecked and pecked, and suddenly, to my surprise, the shell cracked.

Although it was dark, I could see movement and shapes through the crack.

I also felt movement around me, and realised that I was not alone.

I pecked some more and finally the crack was big enough for me to get through. I pulled myself out of the egg with my flippers and scrambled up through the sand. All around me other hatchlings were doing the same. It was hard work but eventually I clambered out of the nest hole.

I looked around me. Before I had only seen the inside of my egg. Now I realised that the world was vast. There were no walls; the world seemed to stretch out forever, in every direction.

But I knew that I must not stop. My flippers were not made for crawling on the sand. I could see small lights twinkling in the sky above me. I liked looking at them, but found that I could not fly. In front of me there were more twinkling lights: more than I could count. They were never still. These were the lights that I should head for.

There were other creatures on the beach. They walked on four legs, and were bigger and faster than the hatchlings. Something told me that I should stay away from these creatures. With horror I saw one of the creatures stop and eat a hatchling. I learned that I should trust my feelings.

I found myself passing another hatchling. She had turned away from the moving lights, and had started to crawl towards a line of yellow lights behind us. The lights behind us

End of sample.

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