

Book 2

A SALOME & MEREONI

Adventure

Foot Prints on the Empty Beach

BY SERA WHIPPY



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The background features a soft, vintage aesthetic with watercolor-style floral illustrations in shades of peach, orange, and muted green. In the top left corner, there is a faint illustration of a postcard with handwritten text in cursive. The main title is centered and rendered in a large, dark blue, serif font with a slight shadow effect.

CHAPTER

1

*The Beach That Should
Have Been Empty*



CHAPTER 1

THE BEACH THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN EMPTY

The footprints appeared overnight.

And they shouldn't have been there.

That was what made Salome stop so suddenly that Mereoni almost walked straight into her.

"Oof!"

Mereoni stumbled forward.

"What?"

Salome pointed.



The early morning sun had only just begun to rise above the horizon, painting the ocean gold and pink.

The beach stretched before them, smooth and untouched after the night's high tide.

Except for one thing.

Footprints.

A single trail.

Leading across the sand.



No footprints going toward it.

Only footprints going away.

The sisters stared.

The tracks began near the waterline.

Not from the trees.

Not from the village path.

Not from any boat.

From the ocean itself.

Mereoni blinked.

"That's impossible."



Salome nodded slowly.

"Exactly."

The tide had been high during the night.

Grandpa Jo had shown them the tide charts only yesterday.

Any footprints made before dawn should have been washed away.

Yet these looked fresh. Sharp. Clear.

As if someone had stepped directly out of the sea only minutes ago.



A shiver ran down Mereoni's spine.

"Should we follow them?"

Salome looked at the trail.

Then toward the distant mangroves.

Then back at the footprints.

"Absolutely."

CHAPTER 2

The Stranger's Track



The footprints continued along the shoreline.

The sisters followed carefully.

Salome snapped photographs.

Mereoni measured them using a ruler from her backpack.

"You carry a ruler to the beach?"

"Science."



The footprints were unusual.

Too large for a child.
Too small for most adults.

Bare feet. No shoes.

Then Salome noticed something.

"Wait."

She crouched.

The left footprint looked different.

The heel was deeper.
The toes pointed slightly inward.



"Whoever made these is limping."

Mereoni looked impressed.

"How do you know that?"

Salome pointed.

"The weight distribution."



Just then a voice called behind them.

"Good observation."

Aunty Maria stood smiling with a notebook tucked under her arm.

CHAPTER 3

*The Science of
Footprints*





Aunty Maria loved turning mysteries into science lessons.

Sometimes against people's wishes.

"Footprints tell stories," she explained.

"Just like animal tracks."

She showed them:

- stride length
- depth
- pressure points
- walking speed



Soon the girls were examining every print like detectives.

Then Mereoni froze.

"There's another set."

A second trail crossed the first.

Smaller.

Much smaller.

Not human.



CHAPTER 4

*Something Came Out of
the Mangroves*



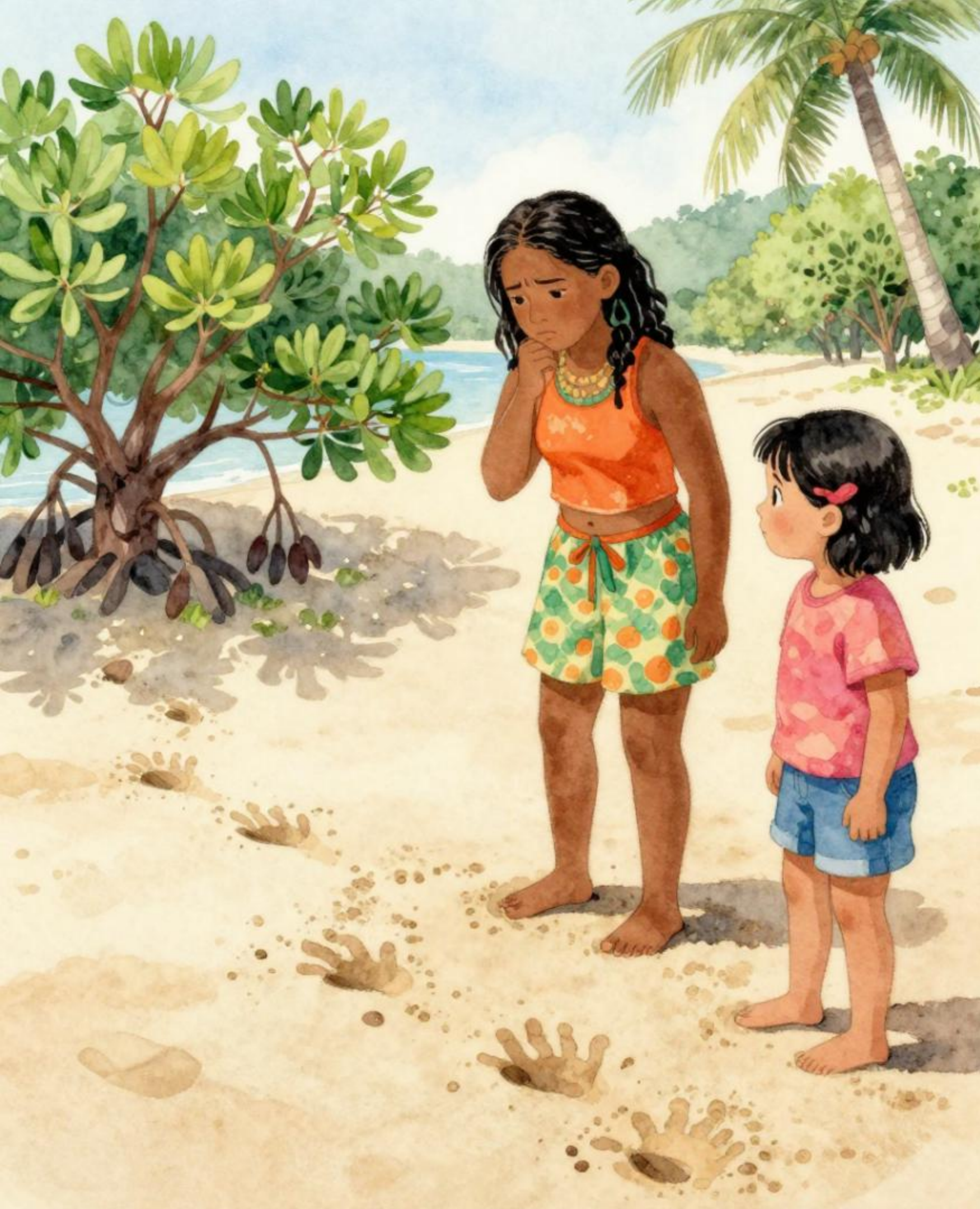
The smaller tracks led toward the mangroves.

The larger footprints continued along the beach.

"What made these?"

Mereoni whispered.

The tracks looked almost hand-shaped.



Aunty Maria frowned.

"Interesting."

That wasn't an answer.

And when scientists said
"interesting" it usually meant:

"I don't know."

The mystery had just gotten
bigger.

CHAPTER 5

Uncle Jope Arrives





By lunchtime, half the village knew about the footprints.

Including Uncle Jope.

The police truck rolled onto the beach.

Uncle Jope climbed out.

"Morning detectives."

"Morning."



He examined the photographs.

Then his expression changed.

Just slightly.

"These aren't the only tracks reported."

The sisters exchanged glances.

"What do you mean?"

"There were footprints on another beach."

"Which beach?"

"Twenty kilometres away."

Silence.

That wasn't possible.

CHAPTER 6

The Tide Problem



That afternoon Grandpa Jo spread charts across the table.

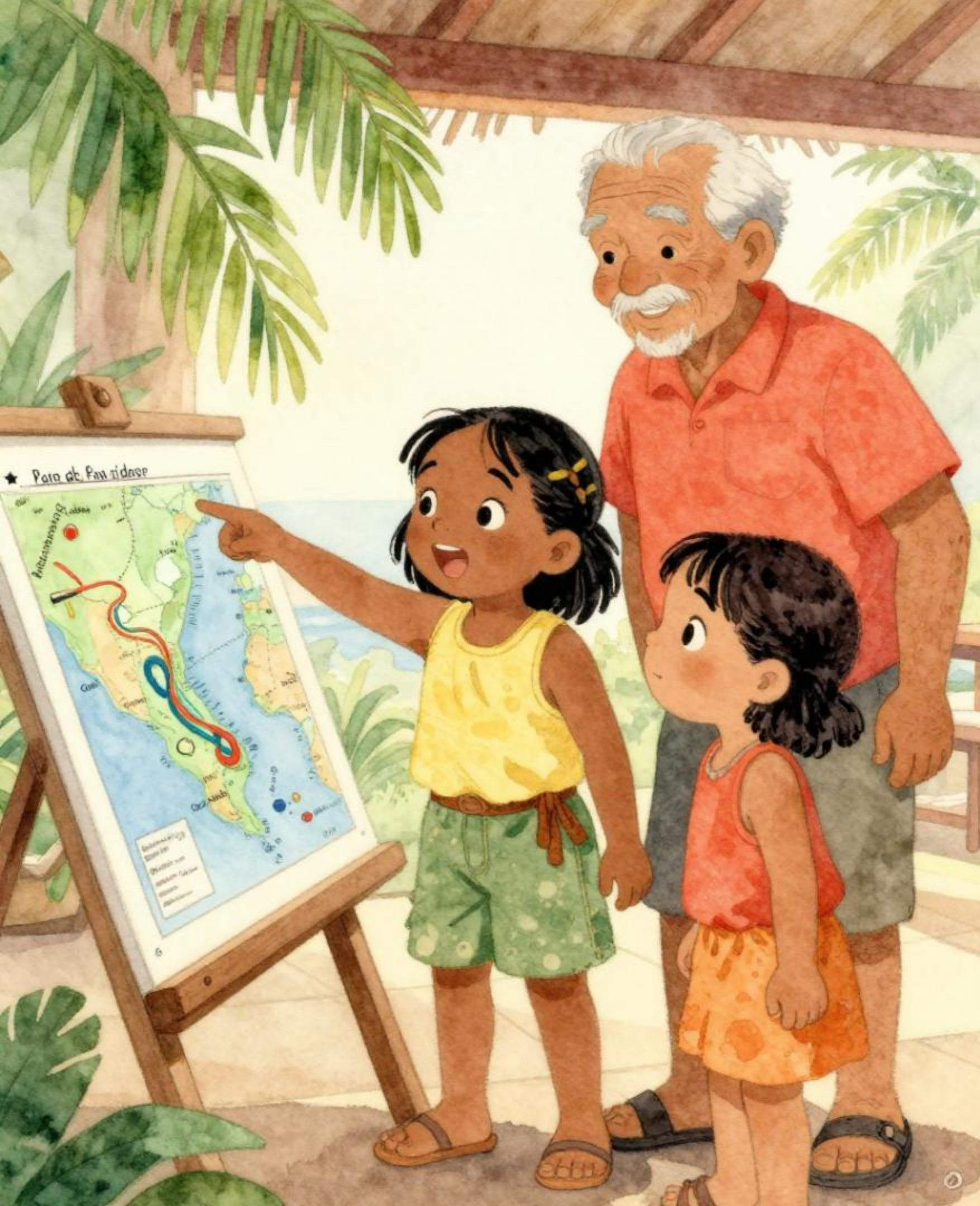
Ocean current maps.

Tide tables.

Moon phases.

"This is how scientists predict the sea."

The sisters studied them carefully.



Then Salome spotted something.

"The current was moving west."

"So?"

"If someone entered the water there..."

She pointed.

"They should have drifted the opposite direction."

Grandpa smiled.

Now they were thinking like investigators.



Winn-Libellella
Grand Canyon

CHAPTER 17

The Hidden Camera



Suli's younger cousin Tiko arrived carrying exciting news.

"The turtle camera!"

Everyone had forgotten about it.

Aunty Maria had installed wildlife cameras near turtle nesting sites.

Maybe they had recorded something.



They rushed to check.

Hours of footage.

Nothing.
Nothing.
Nothing.

Then —

Movement.

At 3:17 a.m.

Something emerged from the water.

The footage was blurry. Dark. Distant.

But definitely human.

CHAPTER 8

The Cave



The camera footage showed one more thing.

The figure had disappeared near Black Rock Point.

A place famous for:

sea caves
nesting birds
dangerous currents

The next morning they headed there.

The tide was low.

Perfect for exploration.



At first they found nothing.

Then Mereoni spotted it.

A narrow opening hidden behind rocks.

"Guys?"

Everyone turned.

The cave entrance looked far too small.

Until they realised it continued underground.

CHAPTER 9

The Secret Inside



The cave opened into a huge chamber.

Cool air drifted through the darkness.

Water dripped somewhere deep inside.

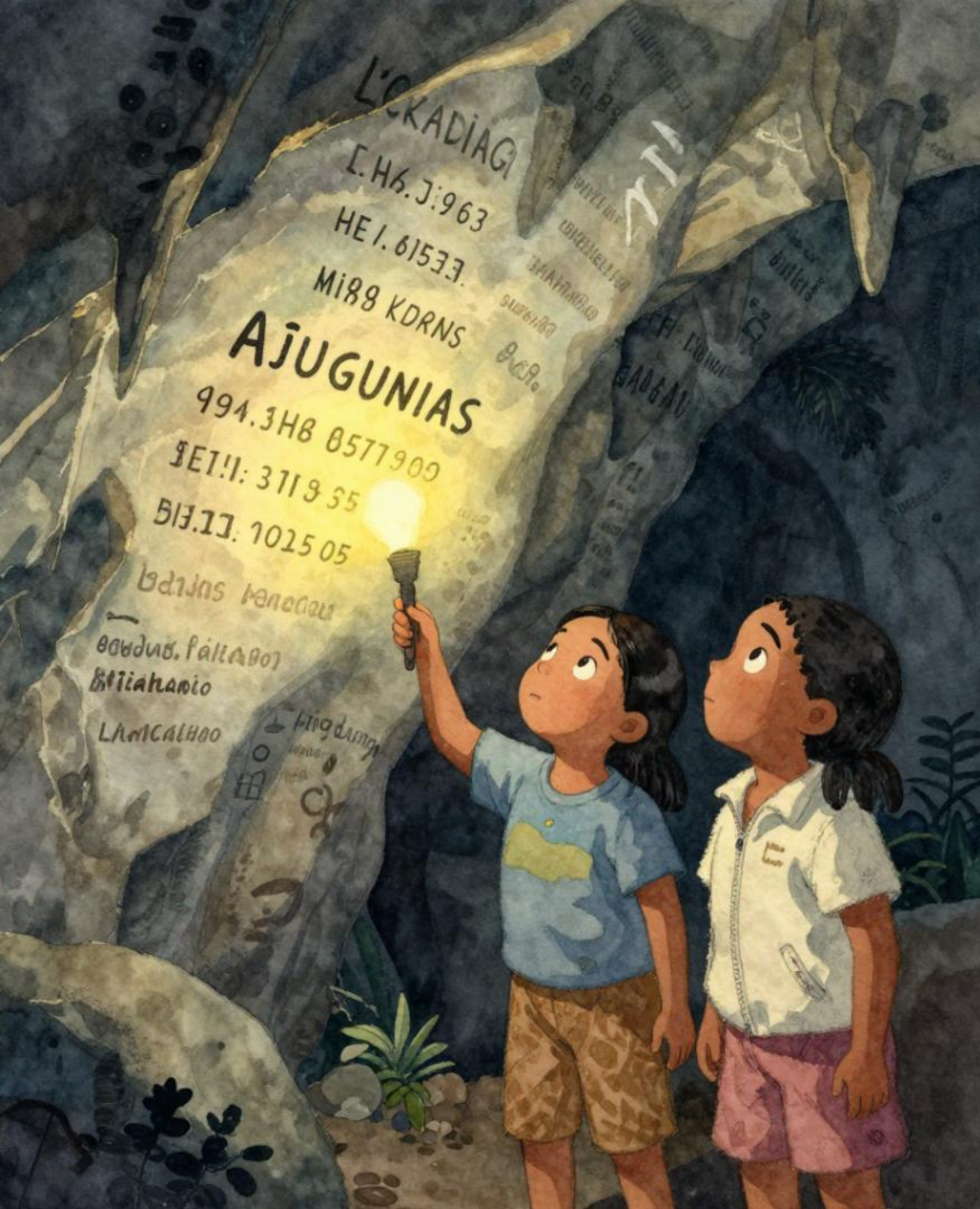
Salome's torch swept across the walls.

Then stopped.

Writing.

Not ancient writing.

Modern writing.



Names.

Dates.

Messages.

One stood out.

"If you're reading this, follow the tide."

The girls stared.

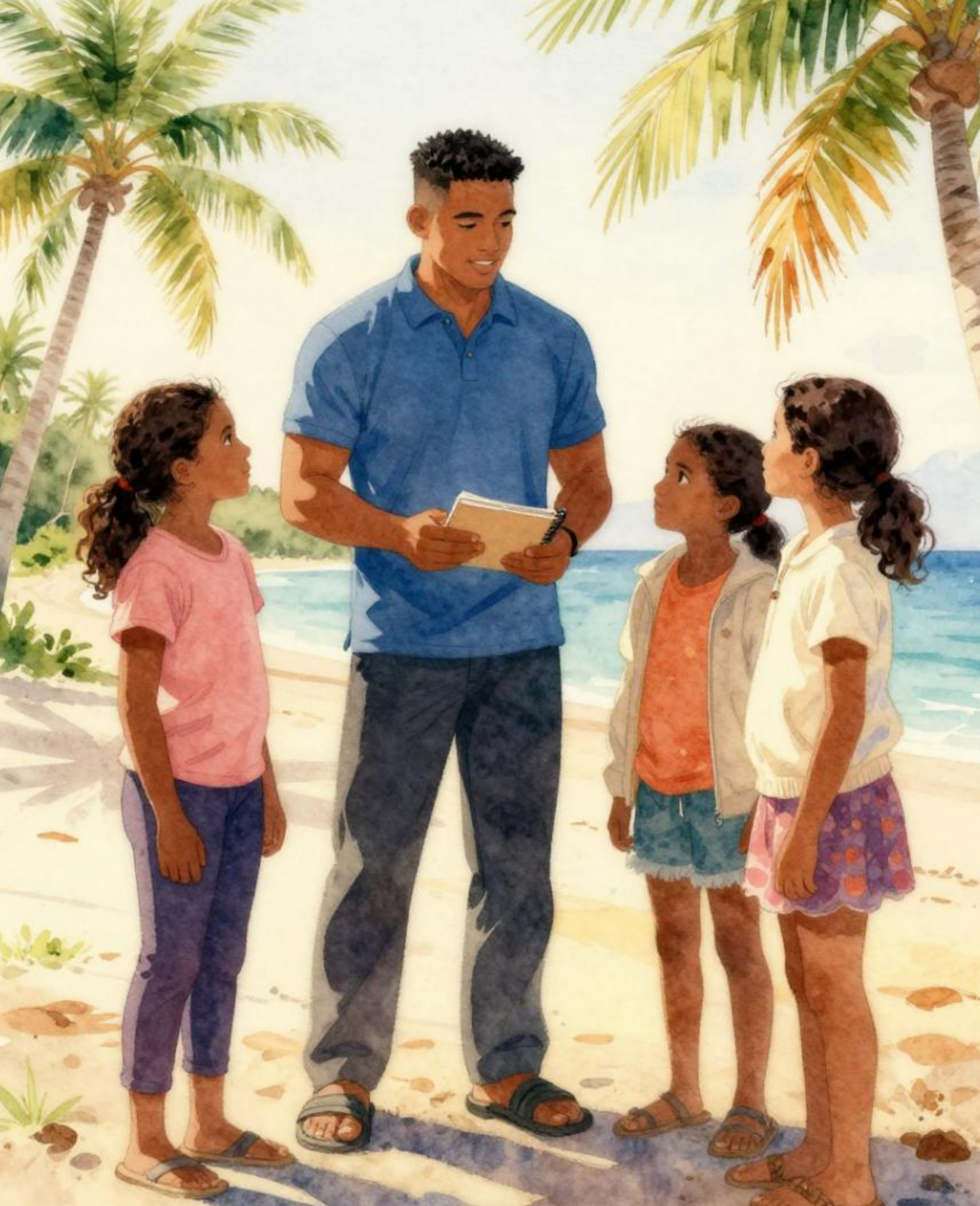
Who wrote that?

And why?

CHAPTER 10

The Real Explanation





The answer came from science.

The footprints belonged to a young backpacker.

His kayak had overturned during the night.

He had drifted with an unusual tidal surge.

After swimming ashore he followed the beach looking for help.

Eventually he discovered the cave.



Uncle Jope arrived with his notebook.

He confirmed the backpacker's story.

The tidal patterns matched perfectly.

The kayak was found two bays over.

"You two did good work," he said.

"Real detective thinking."

Salome smiled. Mereoni beamed.

EPILLOGUE





The next morning was quiet.

No mystery. No clues. No footprints.

Just the sound of waves and the smell of Grandpa Jo's pancakes.

Salome sat on the veranda writing in her notebook.

Mereoni joined her with two cups of milo.

"Think we'll find another mystery?" Mereoni asked.

Salome looked out at the ocean.

The tide was coming in again.

"I think," she said, "mysteries find us."

THE END

Foot Prints on the Empty Beach

Island Guardians - Book 2

WHEN MYSTERIOUS FOOTPRINTS APPEAR ON A REMOTE FIJIAN BEACH, SISTERS SALOME AND MEREONI FOLLOW THE TRAIL INTO A MYSTERY THAT WILL TEST THEIR COURAGE, THEIR CURIOSITY, AND EVERYTHING THEY THOUGHT THEY KNEW ABOUT THEIR ISLAND HOME.

saltychaosfj.com

Written by Sera Whippy