



Rescued turtle gets book

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Mystic, Conn. — Charlotte the sea turtle is a survivor. Struck by a boat propellor, she was rescued from the Cumberland Islands in Georgia where she was stranded, her wounds covered with barnacles.

After surgery and rehabilitation, Charlotte was flown in a private plane to the Mystic Aquarium in 2008 with two staff members from the Georgia Sea Turtle Center — mode of transportation fit for a star.

And now that the story of her life has been captured in a colorful, illustrated children's book that was released Friday, her star will continue to rise.

Children are captivated by this juvenile green sea turtle that, because of her injury, has gas trapped in her intestine. This causes Charlotte's butt to float upward as she paddles about.

A syndrome

The syndrome is known as "bubblebutt." It is a name that brings about giggles from young children, for whom the book, titled "Bubble Butt! The Challenged Sea Turtle of the Mystic Aquarium," targets.

"The title 'Bubble Butt' is too funny," the author, Kiki Latimer, of Hope, R.I., said. "It makes kids laugh the minute they hear it. Even my 2- and 3-year-old grandsons think it's funny."

Written from the turtle's perspective, the book highlights the determination of the sea turtle to overcome her challenges and create a happy life for herself at the aquarium, Latimer said.

To help create what she feels is a sweet story, Latimer gave human characteristics to Charlotte — which make her a turtle children can relate to.

Before Charlotte is struck by the propellor, she is portrayed as a very smart turtle who can read and wants to become a school teacher.

Although that dream isn't fulfilled because of her accident, she does become a teacher of sorts at the aquarium, where, by example, she teaches people how to persevere (in the book, Bubble Butt sends a resume to the aquarium).

Her story also teaches children about conservation in a fun way, Latimer said.

Becky Giantonio, publicist for the Mystic Aquarium, said the book tells the story of Charlotte in a way children can understand, and also underscores the aquarium's mission to inspire people to care and protect the ocean.

"There's a great line in the book: 'Creatures of the sea may need help from you and me,'" she quoted.

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