

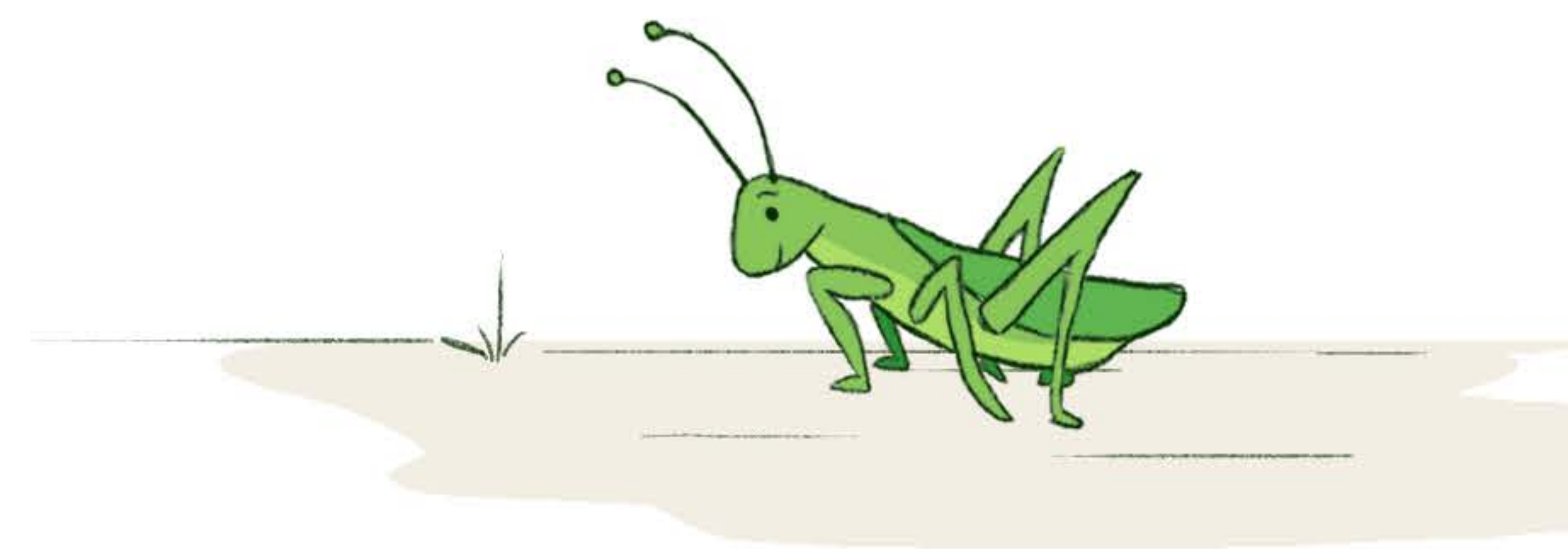
Marshall & Henry are Best Friends



Written by E
Illustrated by A



For J



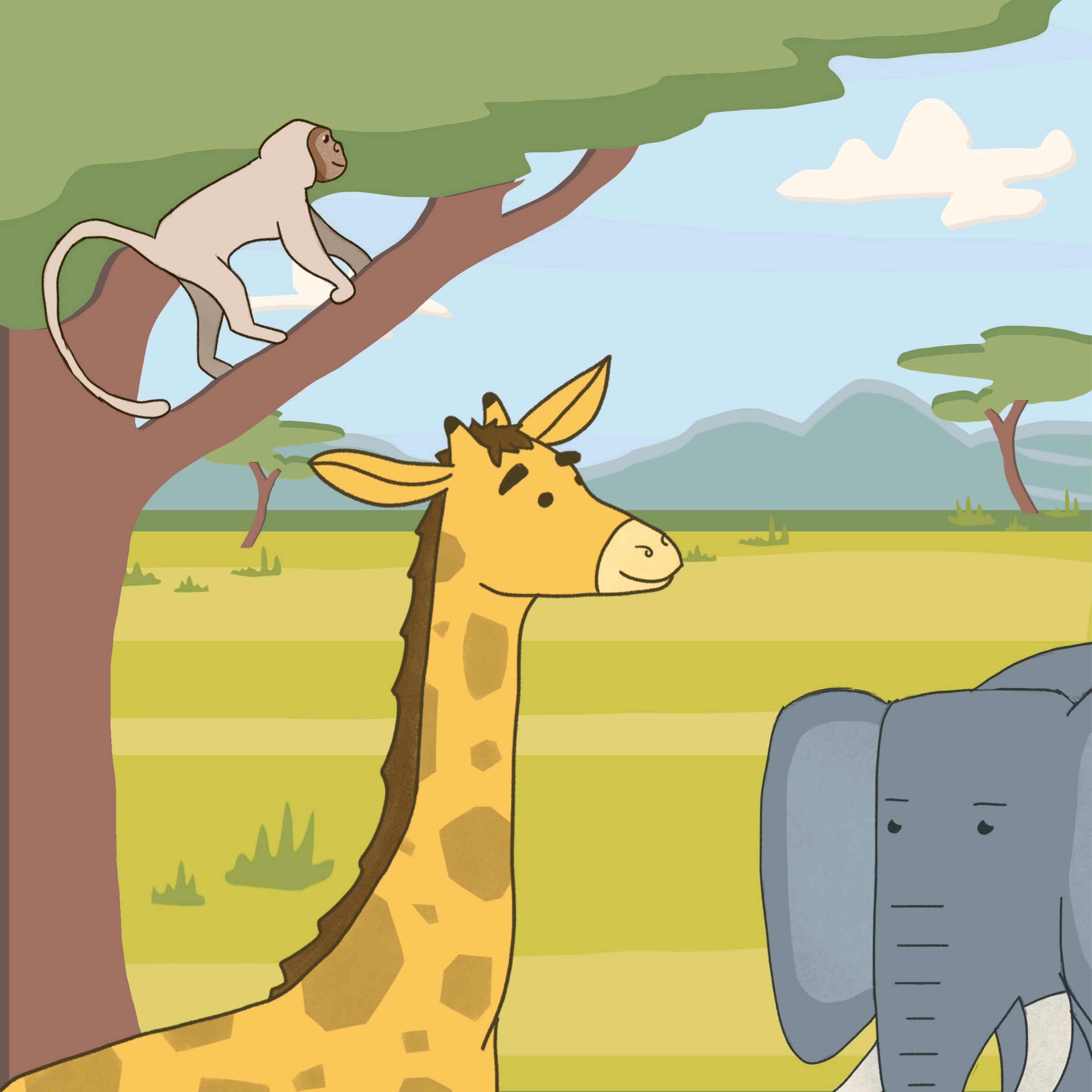


One day, Marshall the meerkat and his friends were playing Hide & Seek in the jungle.

It was Marshall's turn to hide. He was a great hider.

When his friend started counting, Marshall ran into the jungle. He knew a great hiding place just around the bend.





Nearby, Henry the giraffe and his friends were playing their favorite game: I Spy.

Henry loved to play, since he was so tall and could see lots of things.

He was looking around, trying to spy something tricky.

By the time his friend counted to ten, Marshall was almost at his hiding place.

He was moving very quietly, so he wouldn't be found.

Suddenly...



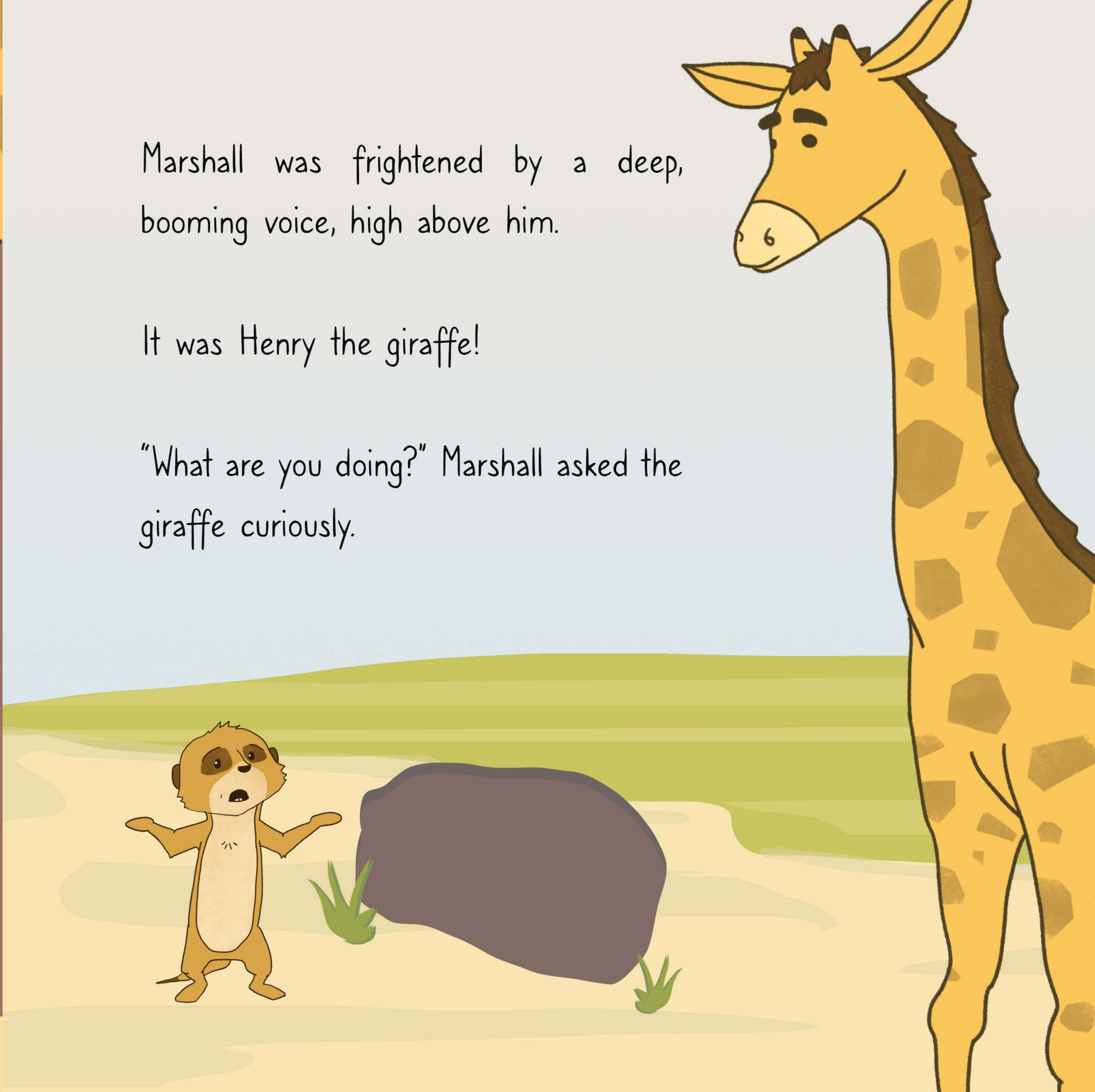
"I SPY SOMETHING
GREEN!"



Marshall was frightened by a deep,
booming voice, high above him.

It was Henry the giraffe!

"What are you doing?" Marshall asked the
giraffe curiously.



"Hello, down there!" Came the voice. "I'm playing I Spy with my friends." Marshall had never heard of that game.

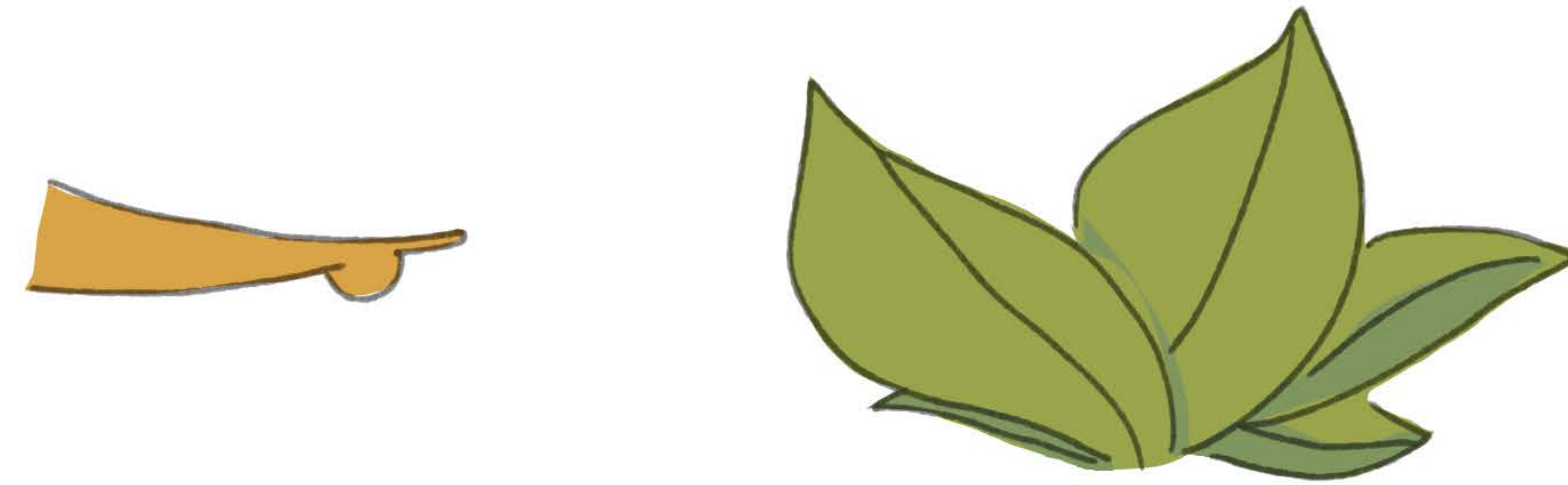
"That sounds fun," he said. "I'd like to try. How do you play?"

"Well, one of us spies something colorful far away, and everyone else has to guess it," explained Henry. "I just spied something green. Can you guess what it is?"

Marshall looked around for something green.



Since he was small, the only things he could see were close to the ground. "Is it this bush?" Marshall offered.



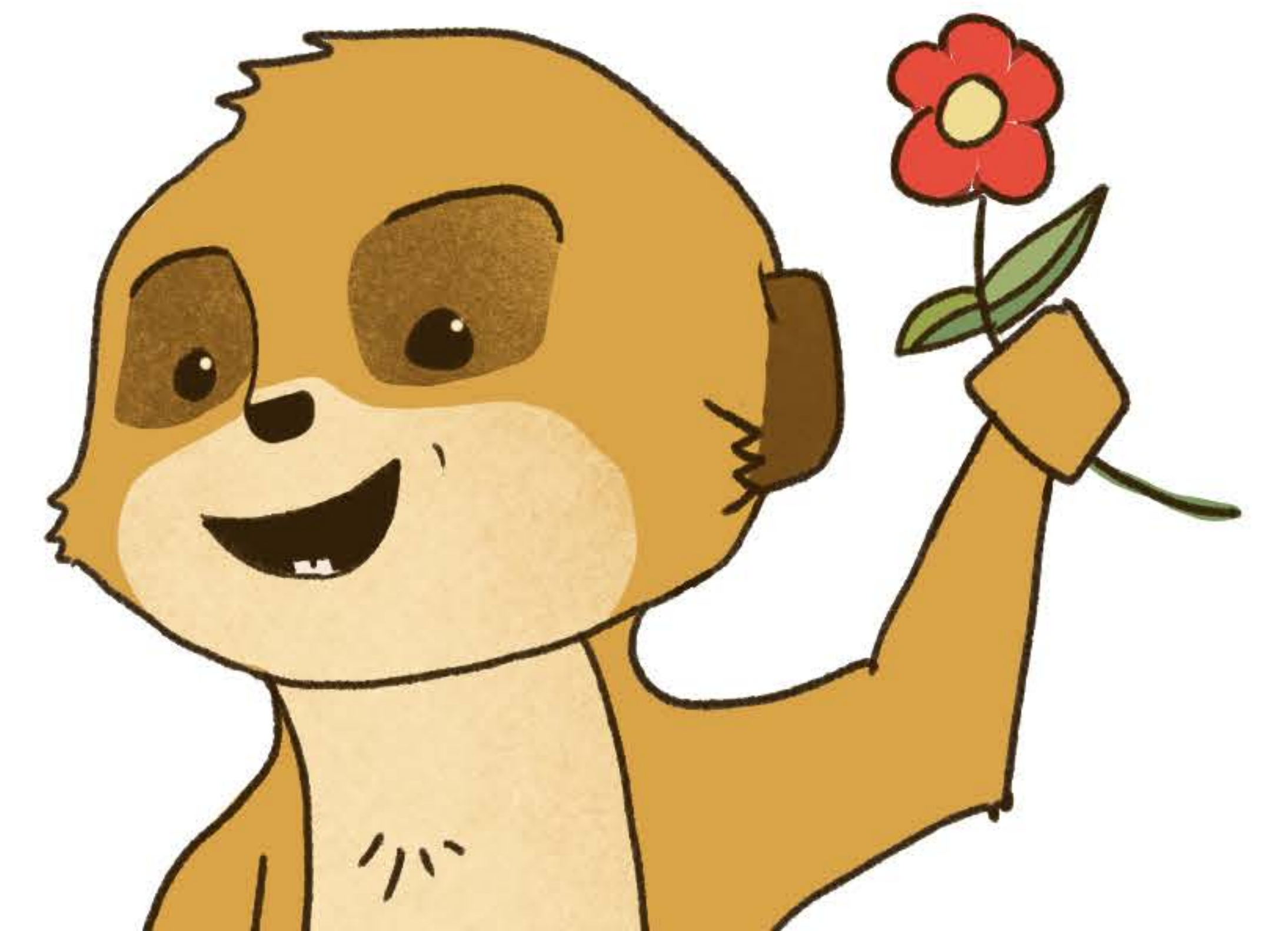
"Nope."

He tried again. "Is it the grass?"



"No. Keep guessing!"

"How about this flower stem? It's green!"
Marshall guessed hopefully.



"Wrong again! It's old Owl's tree, silly meerkat!"
Henry laughed.



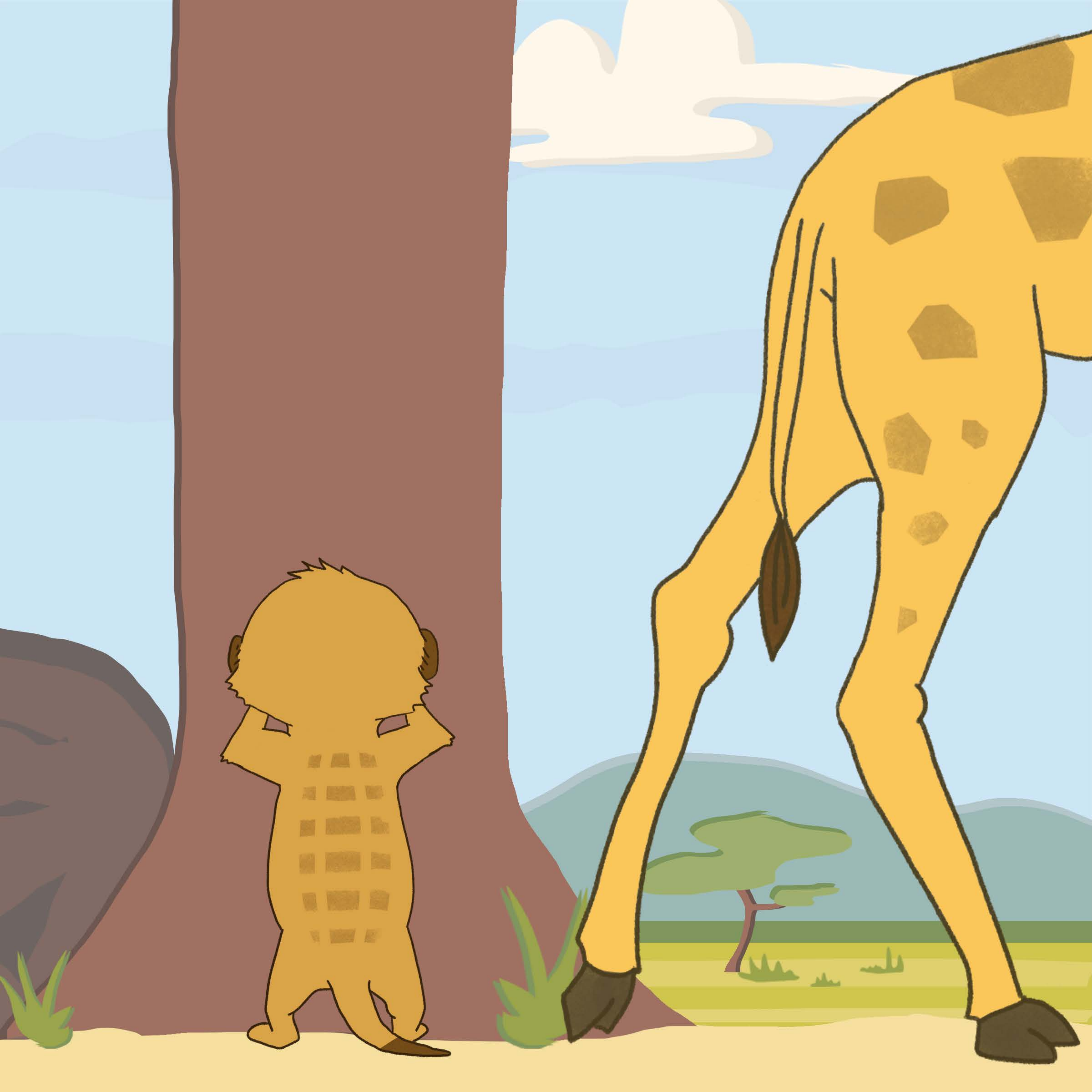
Marshall was upset. "How am I supposed to see that from way down here?" He asked the giraffe accusingly.

"That's not my problem. You're too short to play I Spy." Hearing this frustrated Marshall.

Seeing that he had upset the meerkat, Henry offered, "Maybe I could play your game. How do you play?"

"Well, one of us closes his eyes and counts to ten," began Marshall. "The other one hides nearby. When the Seeker gets to ten, he looks for the Hider. It's called Hide & Seek."

"Sounds fun," said Henry. "Let's play!"



So Marshall the meerkat went to a tree trunk, closed his eyes, and began to count to ten.

"One, two, three..."

The giraffe walked around, looking for somewhere to hide.

"...four, five, six..."

He wandered further into the jungle, trying to tiptoe so Marshall couldn't hear his hooves.

"...seven, eight, nine..."

Just in time, Henry found the perfect spot.

“...TEN!”



“...You’re supposed to hide,” said a very confused Marshall.

Henry remained very still.

“Hey, giraffe. You need to hide!”

Henry was quiet for a moment. Then, “You can see me?”

Now it was Marshall’s turn to laugh, and Henry’s turn to be upset. “How am I supposed to hide when my legs and neck are so long?”

“That’s not my problem. You’re too big to play Hide & Seek.”

Henry the giraffe and Marshall the meerkat were not playing very well together.

Deciding that they were too different to be friends, they went their separate ways.



The next morning, Henry was awoken by a very upset Owl.

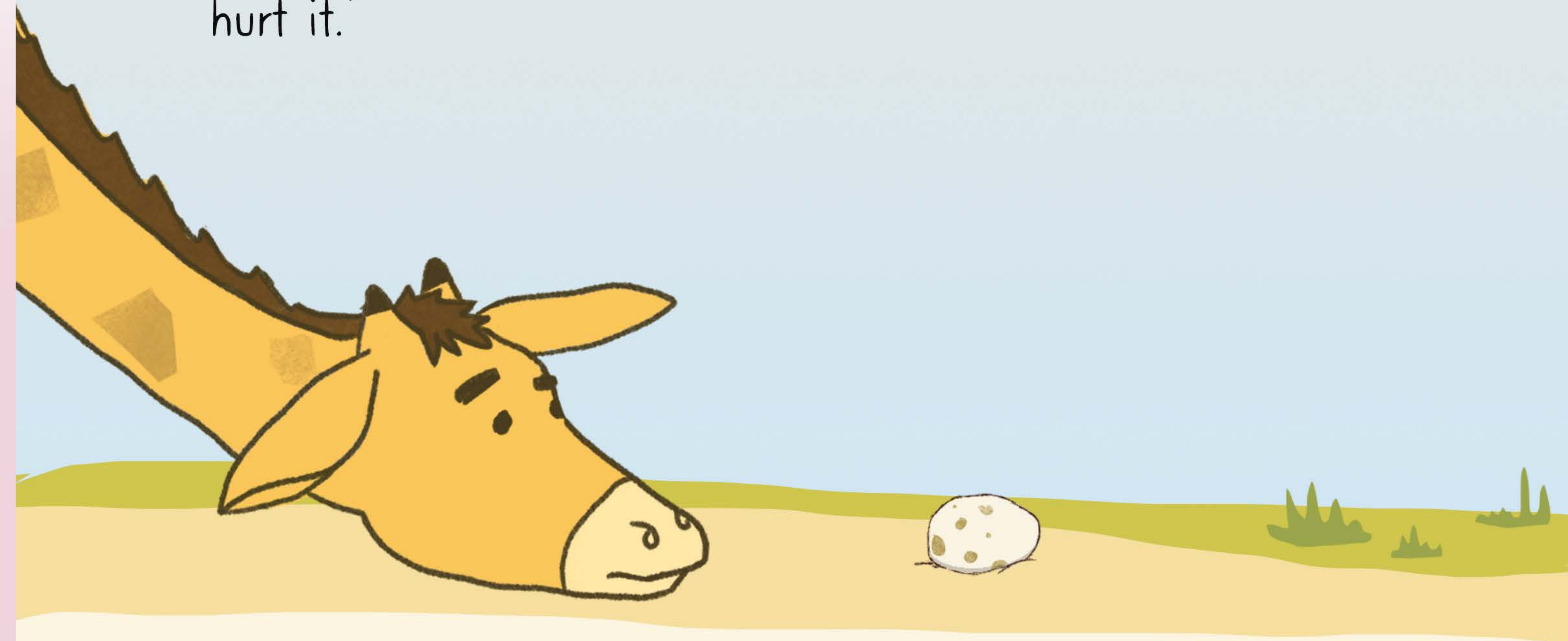
"Henry! Wake up! I need your help!" cried the old Owl. "My egg has fallen from my nest and I need you to put it back. You're the only animal tall enough to reach." Henry agreed to help, and quickly galloped to old Owl's tree.



When they arrived at the tree, Henry saw the fallen egg. He bent his long neck to the ground and tried to pick it up.

"Please hurry!" Prodded old Owl.

"I'm trying, but I can't get a good grip. I'm worried I might hurt it."



"I know just the animal who could help us. Wait here!" And Owl flew off again.



Marshall the meerkat was brushing his teeth in the pond when he saw old Owl swoop overhead.

"Marshall! Your hands are so good for digging -- I need you to help me put my egg back in my nest. Come quickly!"

The young meerkat was confused. "How can I get it up that high? I'm too short!"

"You'll see. Follow me!"

With that, old Owl flew back to his tree, with Marshall right behind him.

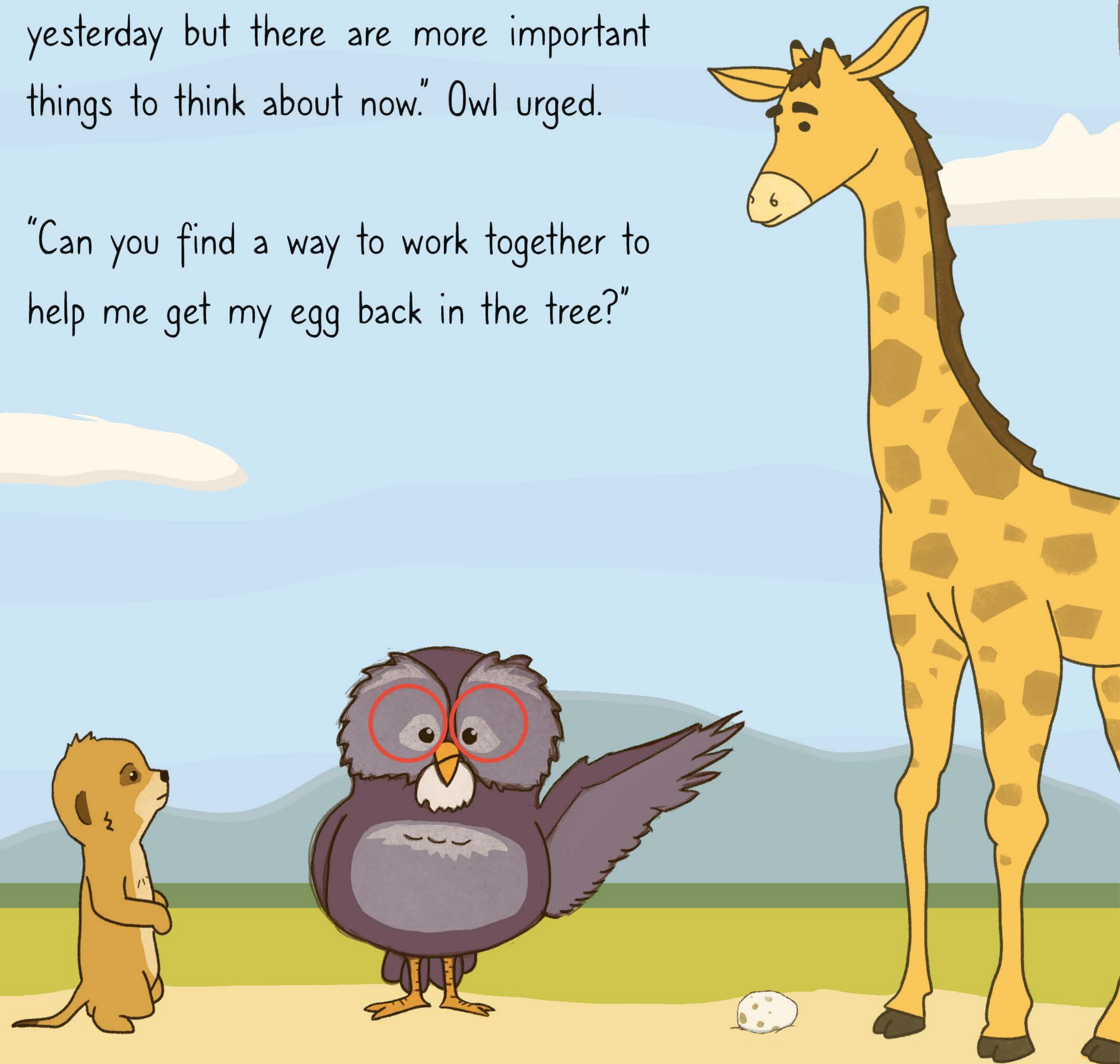
Back at the tree, Henry watched as Owl flew in, followed by a small meerkat he recognized from the day before.

"Oh, it's you," he said coldly.



"Please, I know you two didn't get along yesterday but there are more important things to think about now." Owl urged.

"Can you find a way to work together to help me get my egg back in the tree?"



The meerkat and the giraffe looked at each other and thought for a moment.

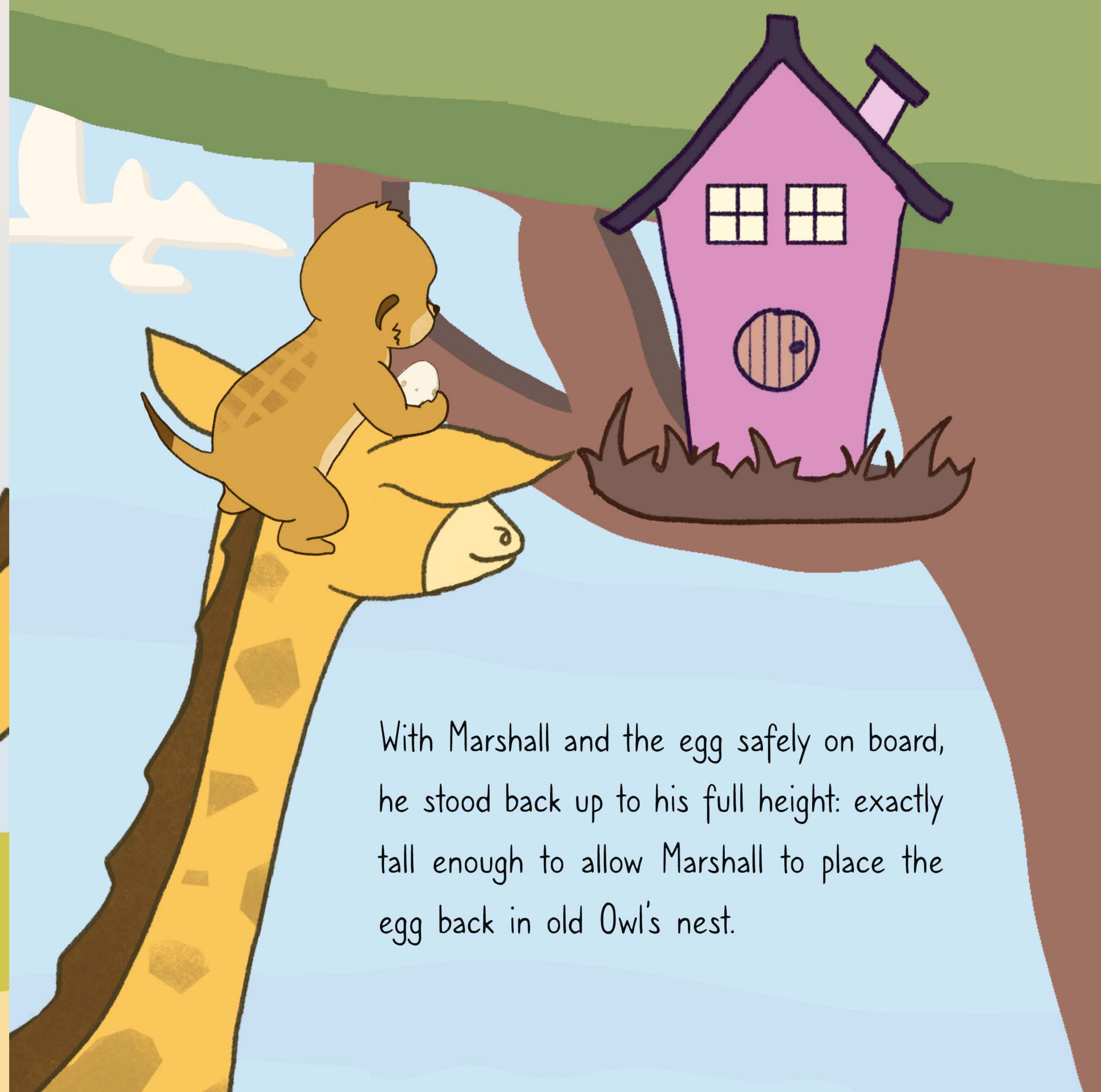
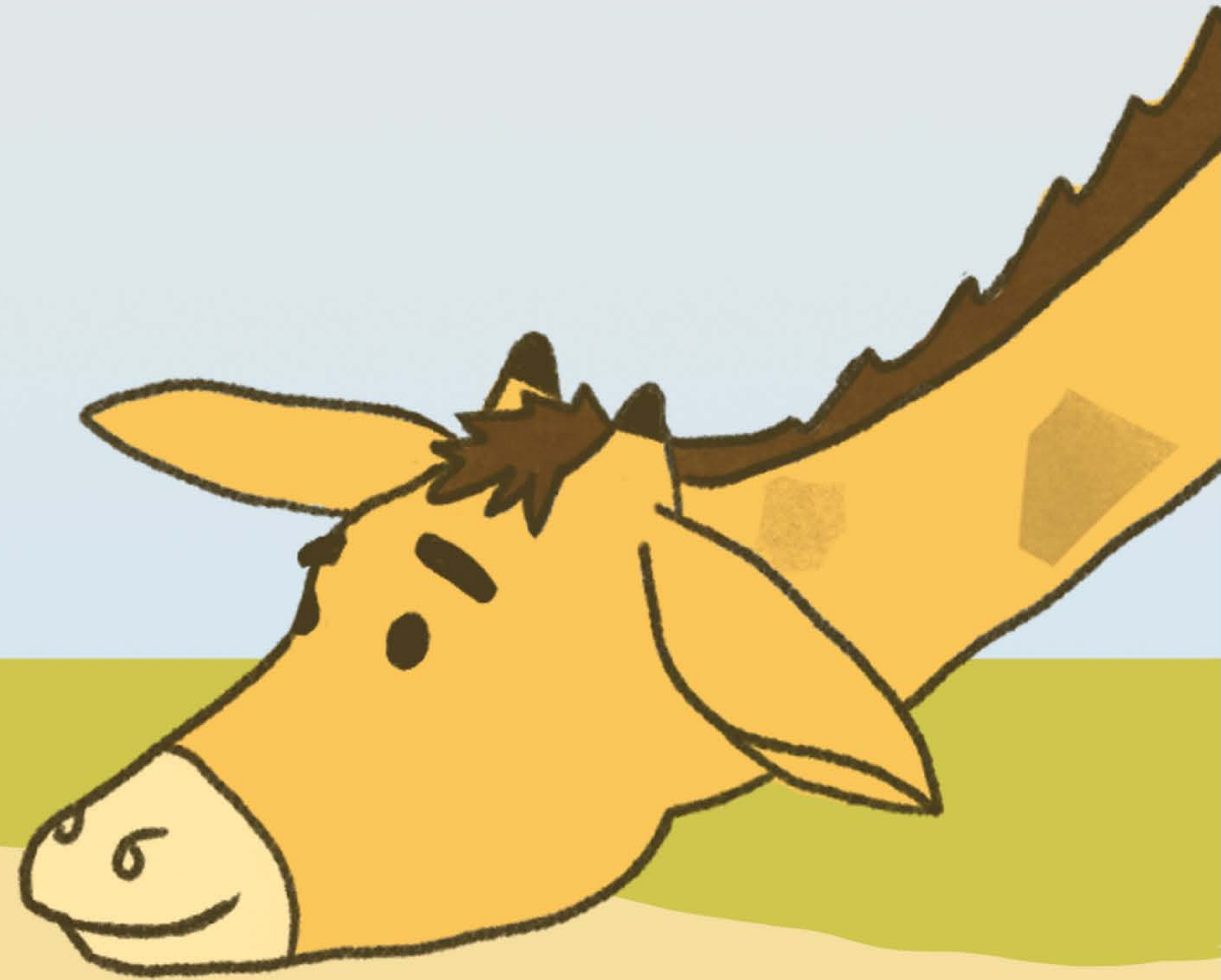
"You are definitely tall enough to reach the nest," Marshall offered.

"And your hands would be able to hold the egg nicely," said Henry.

Just then, both animals realized what they should do.

Marshall walked to the egg and gently picked it up. "Can I get a boost?" he asked the giraffe with a smile.

Henry brought his long neck to the ground, low enough for his small friend to climb on.



With Marshall and the egg safely on board, he stood back up to his full height: exactly tall enough to allow Marshall to place the egg back in old Owl's nest.



"Bravo, you two!" Owl applauded as Marshall was lowered back to the ground. "You worked together brilliantly. Thank you so much for your help!"

Henry nodded and admitted, "I guess we can work together."

"I guess so," the meerkat agreed. He added, "It was actually a lot of fun. I've never been up that high before. I wish there was a game we could play like that!"



Owl spoke up: "I might have an idea.

Have you two ever heard of..."



"...basketball?"



THE END

