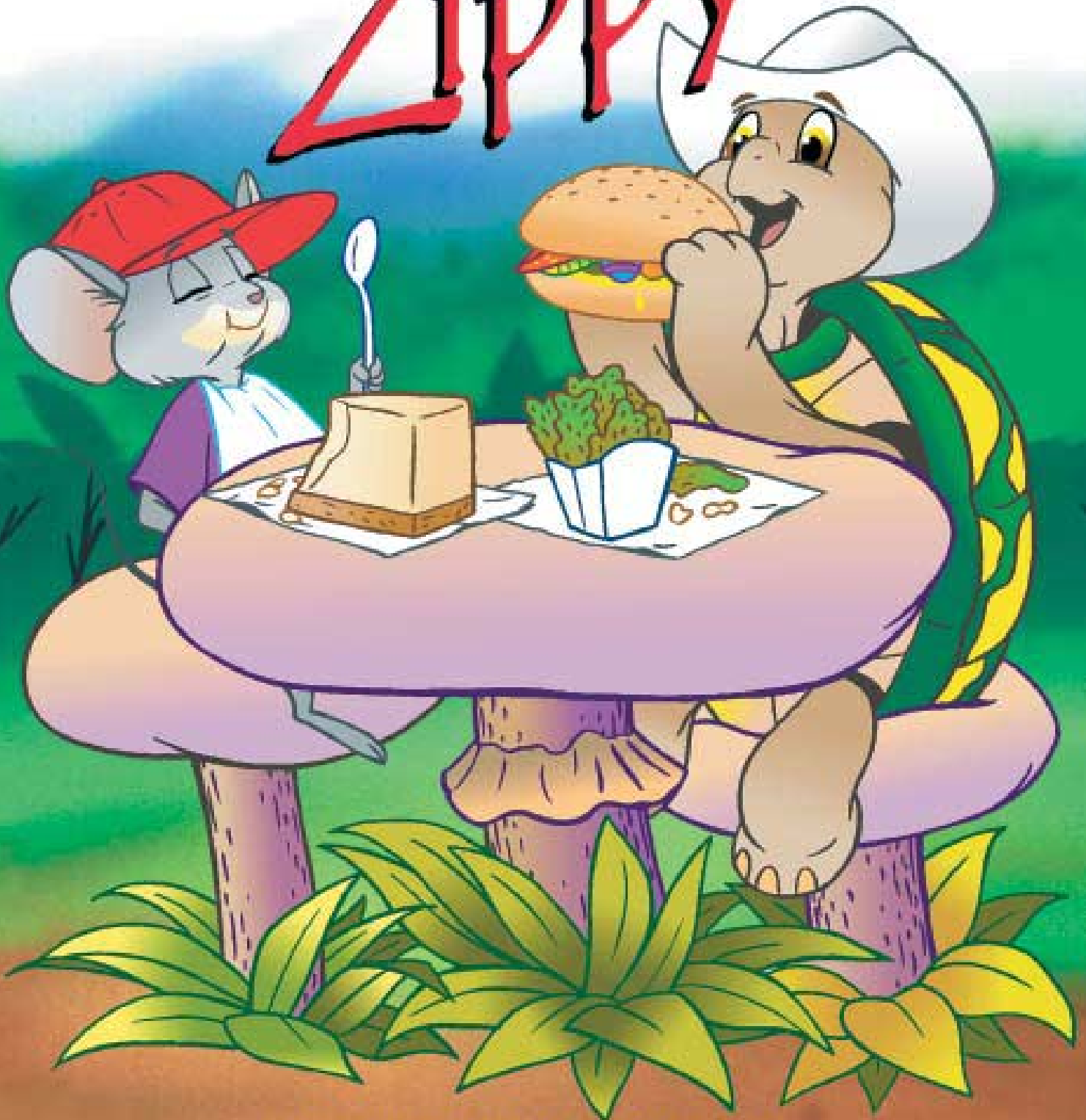


STORIES TO GROW BY

# Trudge AND Zippy



Derek and Michelle Brookes

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Art by Hugo Westphal and Ana Fields

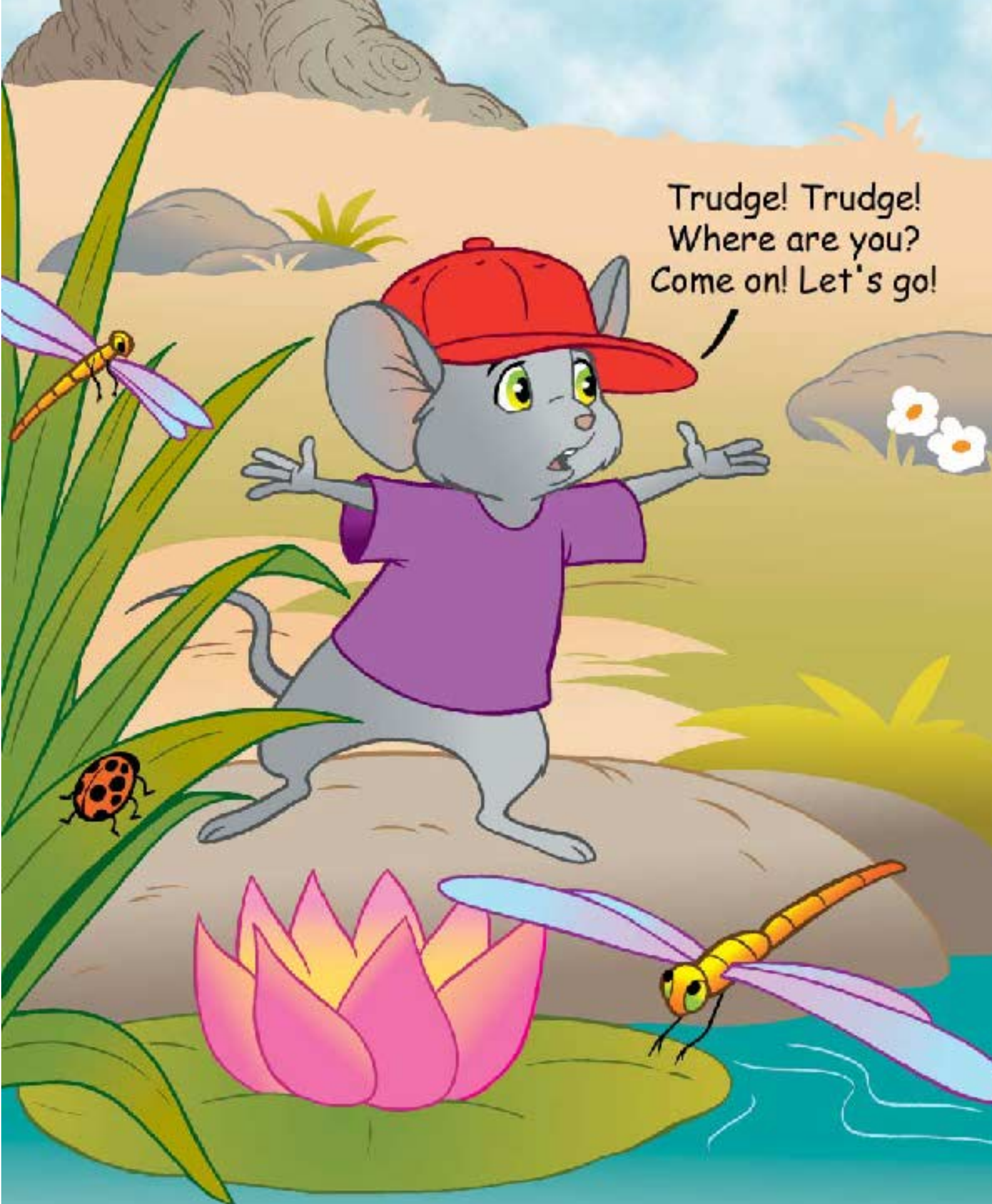
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Trudge! Trudge!  
Where are you?  
Come on! Let's go!

**Z**ippy was getting impatient. It seemed like it had taken for ever for his parents and his brothers and sisters to finally get ready and out of the house. Now they were all waiting up by the road for him and Trudge, but where was Trudge?



He was supposed to be ready, especially today. Today they were going to the carnival together. They had planned to leave early so they could get around to all the rides and amusements by the end of the day—but he couldn't see Trudge anywhere.

Where on earth could he be?



A lily-pad began to move, and a couple of seconds later, Trudge's head popped out from under the water.



“Oh, hi Zippy! Uh-oh!” Trudge saw the expression on Zippy’s face, and suddenly realized that he was supposed to be all ready to go when his friend arrived. “I’m so sorry, Zippy. I was having so much fun taking my morning swim that I forgot what time it was,” he said as he climbed out of the water.

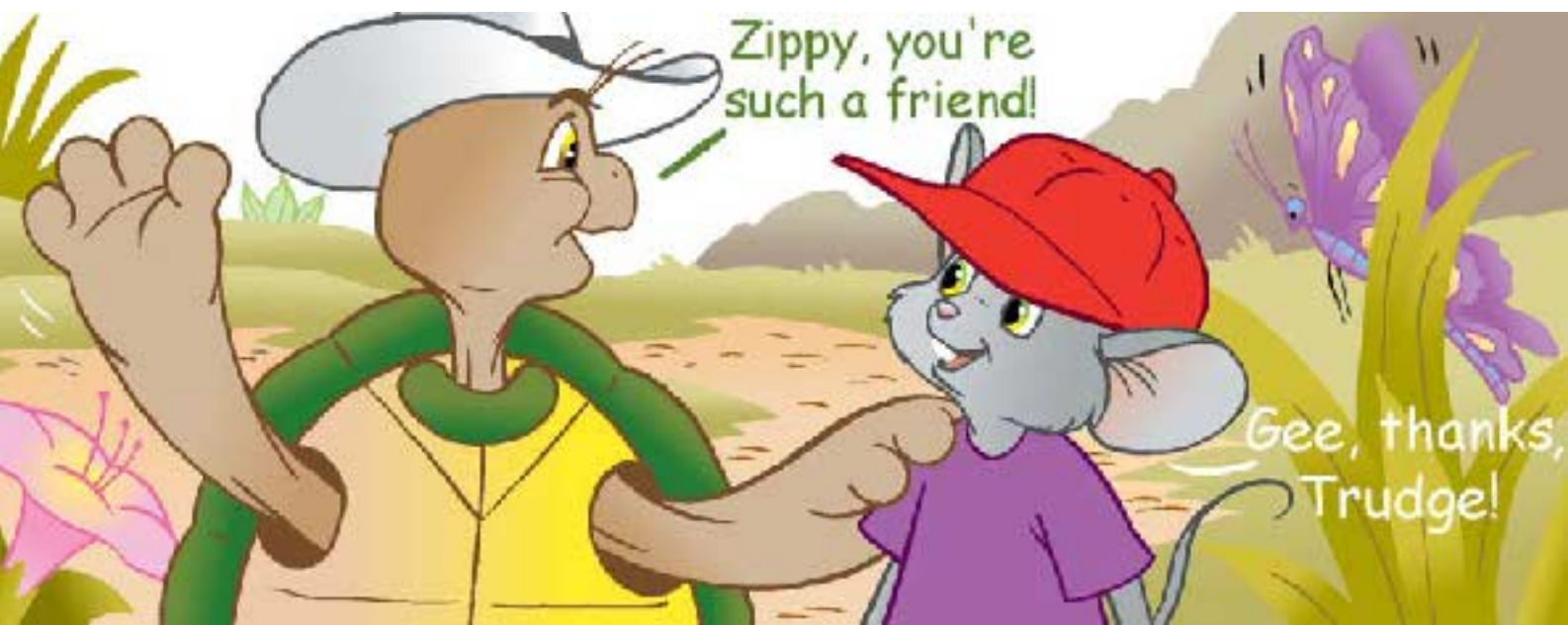
“Oh, that’s all right, Trudge,” Zippy said, trying not to show his impatience. “We all forget sometimes—and there’s still a whole day ahead of us. Come on! Everyone is waiting for us. My dad and mom want to talk to all of us first before we go.”

“Zippy, you’re such a friend. Hey, on the way to the carnival you can hop on my back and I’ll give you a ride there!”

“Gee, thanks, Trudge!”







You see, Trudge had a nice hard back that Zippy could climb up and sit on. Trudge was a turtle. He had a spotted green and yellow shell.

Zippy, his friend, wasn't as bright and colorful as Trudge. Zippy was a dull gray color, with short fur, cute little ears, and a wiry tail. Zippy was a field mouse, and he lived near Trudge's pond. They were best friends and played together every day. Trudge lived with his old grandmother, and the friendly mouse family had sort of adopted him.

"Okay, let's go! I'll go tell the others we're ready!" Zippy turned and hurried back up to the road. Trudge lumbered slowly along behind.





The carnival had come to the great forest. Today was the opening day and the two friends had been looking forward to going for the past week.



Yahoo!







Everyone was excited. The plan was that they would all go there together, but Trudge and Zippy had permission to see the carnival on their own for a while.

“Now listen, children,” Papa Mouse began when Trudge finally reached the road. “The forest and carnival area will be packed with animals today. The rides and amusements are all over the place, so it will be very easy to get turned around and even lost in the crowds and confusion and crisscross of forest trails.



“In case we get separated, let’s agree to meet up again at four o’clock in the main clearing by Shadow Rock. I have drawn out a little map of the forest and carnival grounds for you to have. Mama has written your names and address on a slip of paper, as well as where and when we are to meet, just in case any of you have trouble and need to ask someone for help in finding us.”





Papa Mouse always liked to be sure everyone knew what to do if they ever had any problems when they were out. “One more thing,” he added. “All the animals have agreed to be on their best behavior today and to be kind and considerate during the carnival, but I still want you all to be watchful. Remember Grandpa mouse’s warning, ‘Cats are cats even at carnivals!’”



Trudge was glad he never had to worry much about cats. He had a nice hard shell he could quickly hide in at the first sign of trouble.

“Oh, Papa, don’t frighten the children with too much talk about cats,”

Mama Mouse interrupted.

Papa Mouse agreed, “Okay, let’s go and have fun! Zippy and Trudge, stick together and be careful. I guess you will be behind us. Try to keep up if you can. And remember to be at Shadow Rock at four o’clock! Oh, and if you do get lost or run into a problem, ask one of the red-headed woodpeckers for help. They have agreed to tap out messages and send them back and forth through the forest for any animals in trouble.”





So the merry family of mice, along with one rather slow turtle, set off down the road.





“Hop on!” said Trudge to his small friend. Once Zippy was seated, Trudge set off at what seemed like a jog to him. Plonk, plonk! Plonk, plonk! Plonk, plonk!

Top speed for Trudge was not fast enough for Zippy. “Oh, Trudge! Can’t you walk any faster? I can hardly wait to get there!”



“I know I’m a little slow compared to you, but at least I’m steady and careful. We’ll get there sooner or later, don’t you worry?”

“Well, let’s hope it’s sooner, rather than later,” Zippy said with a chuckle, as he sank down comfortably on Trudge’s back. His family was almost out of sight already.





Zippy liked Trudge a lot, but one thing you need a lot of when your best friend is a turtle is patience, lots and lots of patience.

Zippy lay back and looked up at the fluffy little clouds overhead as he rocked gently back and forth on Trudge's back. He soon fell fast asleep dreaming of a delicious, giant cheesecake.





Zippy awoke to the sounds of shouting, cheers and clapping. They had arrived at the carnival.

“Well, we’re here, Zippy,” Trudge announced.

“OOOOhh! This is soooo exciting—isn’t it,

Trudge?” Zippy said, leaping to the ground. He was so excited, he could hardly wait! He so very much wanted to see all there was to do, and taste all those delicious snacks.





Trudge just stood there gazing at everything there was to be seen.

“Wow! This place is huge!” Trudge exclaimed. “It’ll take us ages to get around.”

“Then let’s get started,” Zippy announced.

“Come on, Trudge. Follow me.”

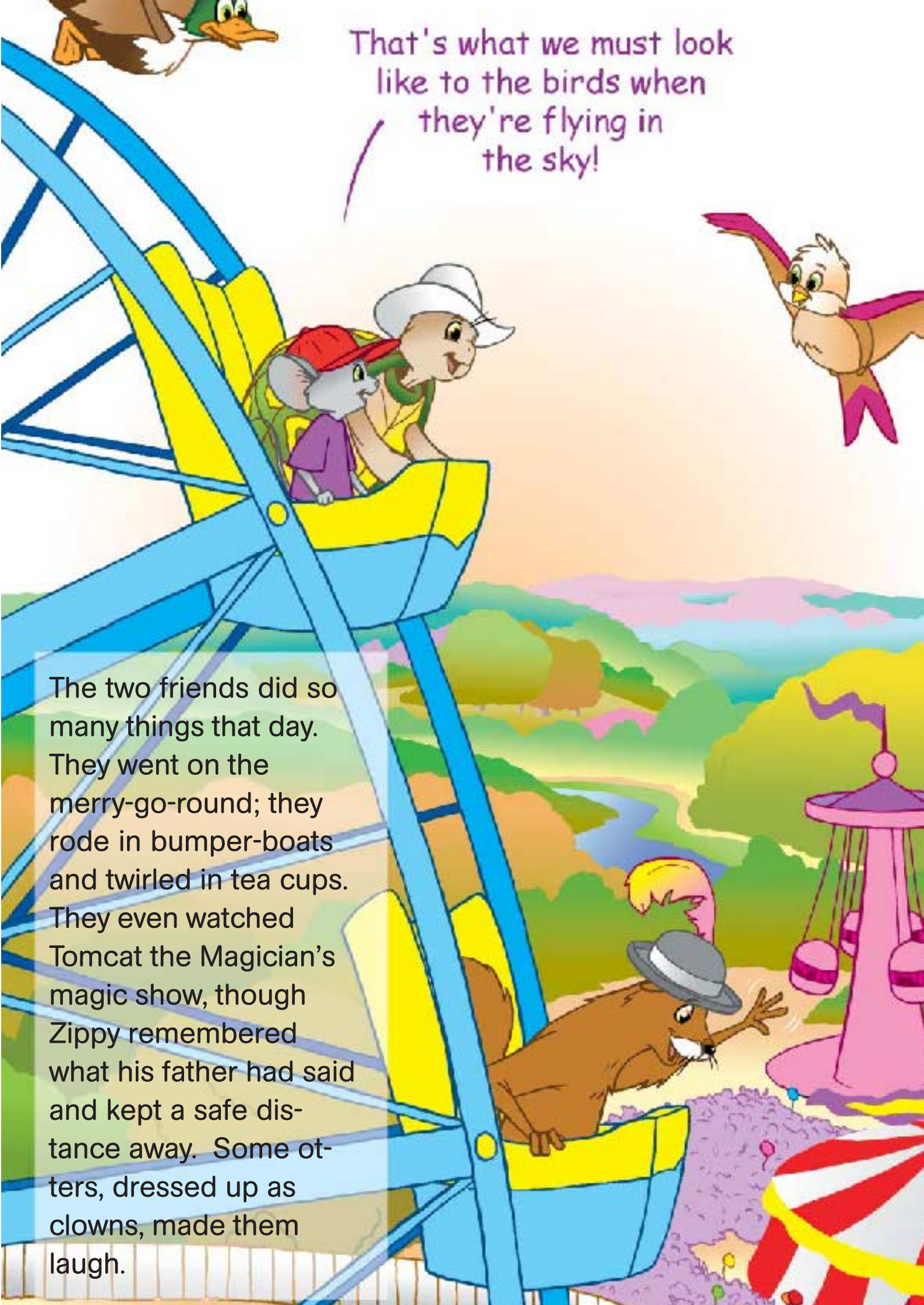
Zippy took off, hardly able to contain himself.

Trudge called out after him, “Hey, Zippy, can’t you slow down? You’re going so fast! I can’t keep up!”

“Okay, Trudge,” Zippy said a little impatiently as he waited for his friend to catch up. “See that huge wheel over there? Let’s go on that!”

“Sure! Looks like fun!” And off they went, following the happy music coming from a big ferris wheel! The ferris wheel took Zippy and Trudge way up high, high, high into the sky. They were even up above the trees. They could see far into the distance, and when they looked down, everyone looked so tiny.





That's what we must look like to the birds when they're flying in the sky!

The two friends did so many things that day. They went on the merry-go-round; they rode in bumper-boats and twirled in tea cups. They even watched Tomcat the Magician's magic show, though Zippy remembered what his father had said and kept a safe distance away. Some others, dressed up as clowns, made them laugh.



Zippy ate cheesecake and popcorn, and Trudge had a giant bug-in-a-bun special with a side order of grilled algae.





What a wonderful time they had! The day came and went all too quickly. The sun had moved well down in the sky, and it was time to head for Shadow Rock. They were about to set off for the big clearing when they noticed one more amusement they had not tried yet. A bright sign over a densely wooded and overgrown part of the forest read, “Tangled Trails.”

A twisted path led off into a dark and spooky-looking thicket.

“Hey Trudge, look! There’s something we haven’t tried yet.”

“I think we need to start making our way towards the clearing...you know it takes me a little longer to get to places than you.”





“If my guess is right the clearing is directly on the other side of this overgrown part of the forest. ‘Tangled Trails’ would be a shortcut to where we want to go.”

“I don’t know,” said Trudge, “what if it isn’t, and we get lost? Let’s look on the map your father gave you.”

Zippy reluctantly reached for his map, but after a thorough search could not find it.

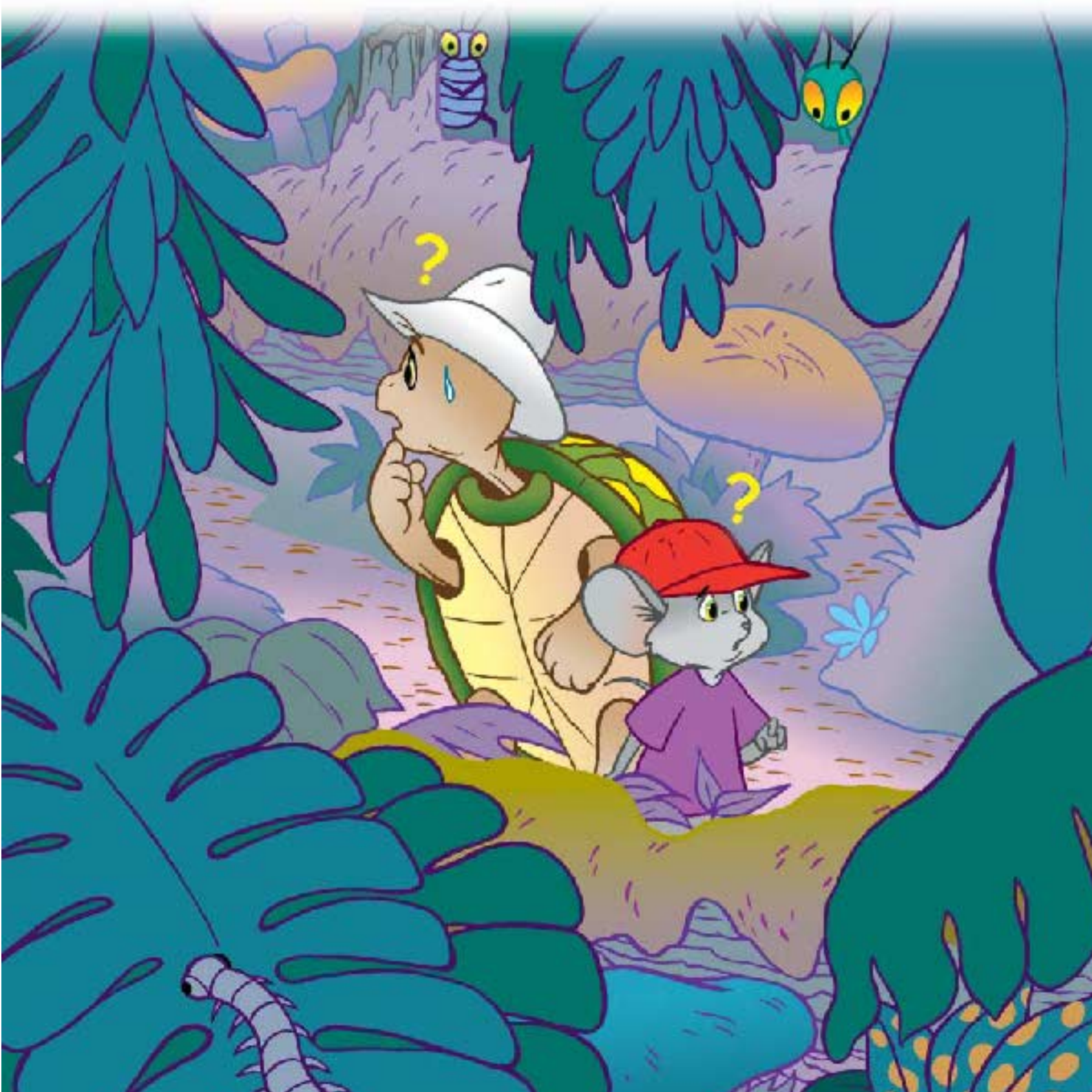
“Oh, well, who needs a map. I’m a mouse, remember! I can find my way around in the dark. Where is your sense of adventure, Trudge?”

It took some serious coaxing, but finally Trudge agreed to try out “Tangled Trails.” Deep into the thicket, the trails became much more complicated and confusing than Zippy had imagined they would be.



It was not long before they realized that they had lost their way!

They were all turned around. Which path or paths would take them back to the opening in the forest? The willows and underbrush grew so thickly all around them, and overhead that they could hardly get a peek at the sky, or see for any distance. How could they get out of there?





“I know! I know!” Zippy said. “Let’s go this way! Quick, quick! Let’s go this way!” Zippy would zip first in this direction, then that way, then another way, peeking here, peeking there, trying to see if there was anything familiar that would help him find the way.

Poor Trudge would turn and would walk and walk and walk and walk, up one trail and then down another, until he was so tired. Still, they could not find their way out.

Finally Trudge stopped his friend and said sadly, “Oh, Zippy—we are lost! I knew we shouldn’t have come this way. It was sort of fun at first, but now it’s scary and it’s getting late and I want to go home.”

“Me too, Trudge! Me, too!”

“What are we going to do?”

“I don’t know, Trudge. I’m sorry I didn’t listen to you. You were right. It was wrong to go on the ‘Tangled Trails’ when it was so late! Now there isn’t even anyone around to ask for help!”



They went over and sat on a moss-covered log. After a few moments, Trudge interrupted the silence. “Yes, there is someone we can ask for help!”

“Who?” Zippy asked.

“Well,” said Trudge, “My mommy used to tell me that if I get in trouble, or have a problem and need help, I should tell Jesus about it.”



“Good idea,” said Zippy. “He for sure knows the way out of here. Let’s pray and ask Him to help us.” “Okay,” said Trudge, “let’s pray.”

Together they bowed their heads and Zippy said, “Dear Jesus, we’re lost and we need some help. Please help us find our way back to the meeting place.”

They stayed silent with their heads bowed for several moments.







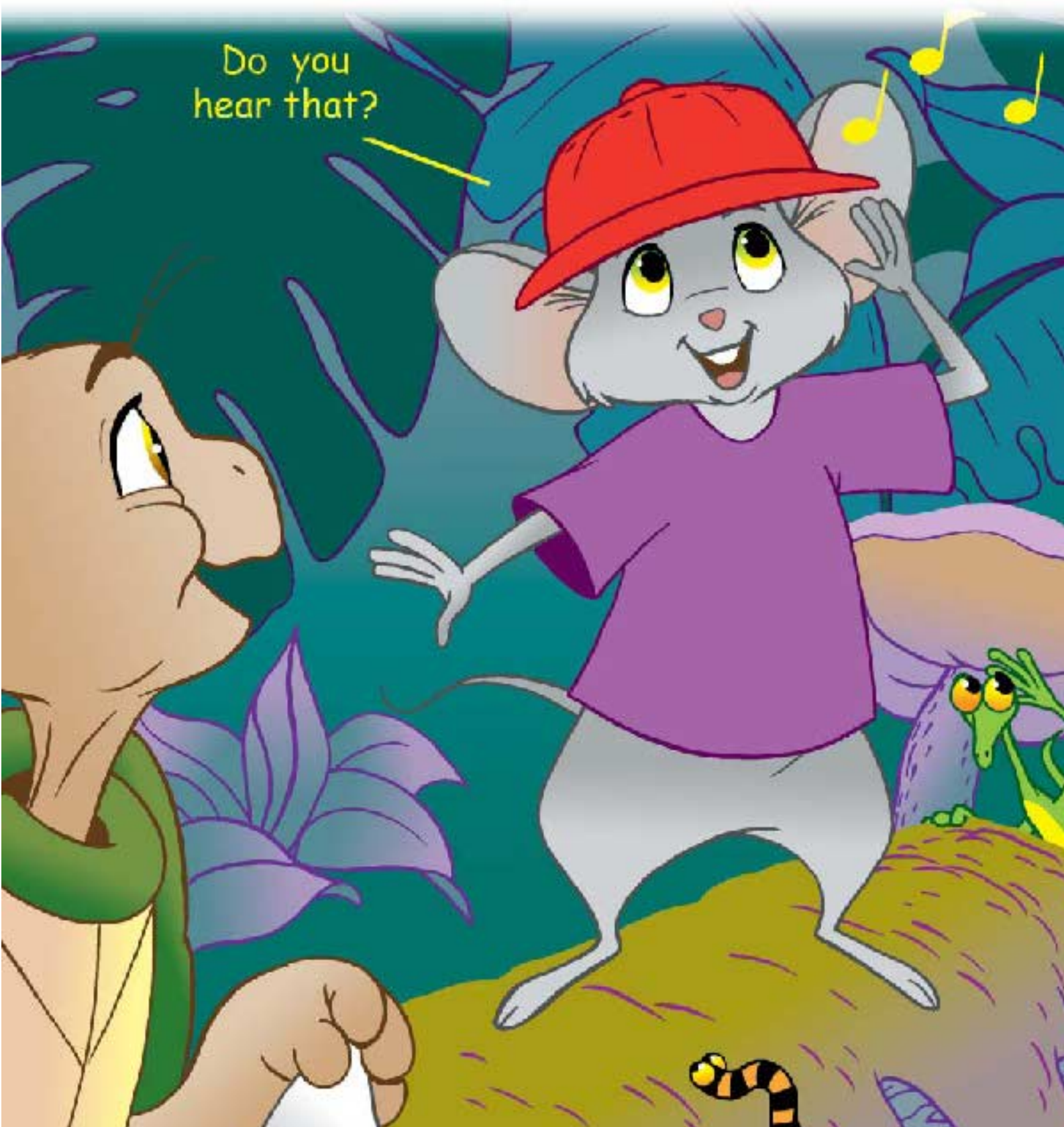
Suddenly Zippy looked up all happy and smiling!

“Do you hear that?”

“Hear what, Zippy?”

“Music! I can hear the music from the ferris wheel coming from that direction. And the ferris wheel is not far from Shadow Rock!”

“Yes, that’s right!”



Do you  
hear that?





“So, if we just head for that music we should soon find the ferris wheel. Then it will be easy to find the big clearing.”

“That’s a good idea.” Stopping every once in awhile to listen and try a new path going in the right direction, the two friends at last came out on a well-beaten forest path.



“Look!” exclaimed Zippy, pointing at something up above the trees. It was the top of the ferris wheel!

Trudge stuck his long neck out and peered up. “Yes, I see it, Zippy!”

Zippy and Trudge were so relieved. Zippy took off running towards the ferris wheel in excitement, and even Trudge managed an amazing speed for a turtle. When they reached the base of the wheel, Zippy exclaimed, “Look, Trudge. There’s the way to the clearing right over there. Jesus helped us to find our way.”





In a few more moments, they were happily reunited with the rest of the mouse family. By this time Mother and Father Mouse had been getting quite concerned, and were about to call on the woodpecker patrol for help.





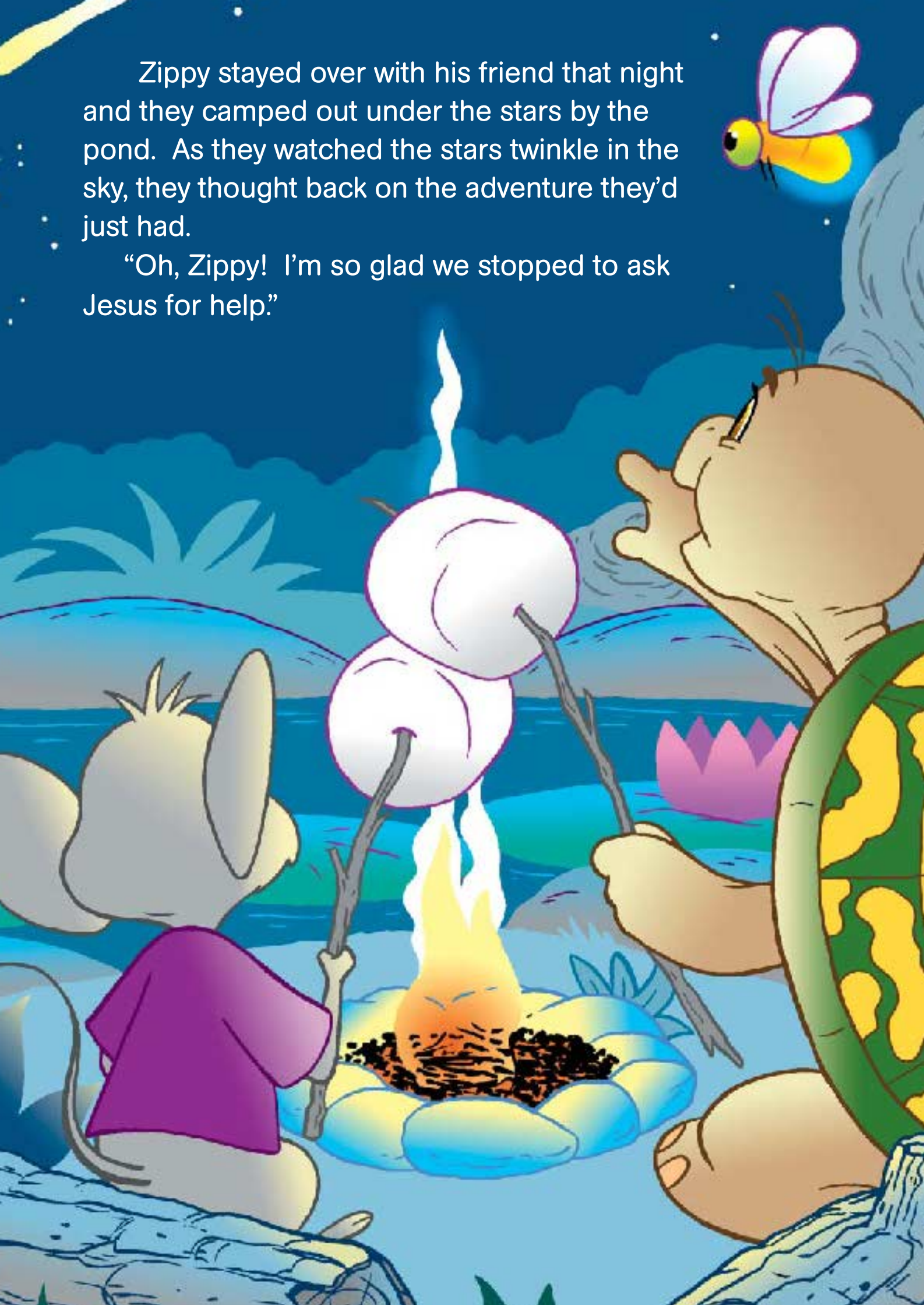


As Trudge and Zippy walked home, they were very happy that everything had turned out okay. They were thankful, too, that they had stopped to pray. It was nice to have Jesus for their friend. He was someone they could talk to any time and He would listen and would help them when they just didn't know what to do.



Zippy stayed over with his friend that night and they camped out under the stars by the pond. As they watched the stars twinkle in the sky, they thought back on the adventure they'd just had.

“Oh, Zippy! I'm so glad we stopped to ask Jesus for help.”

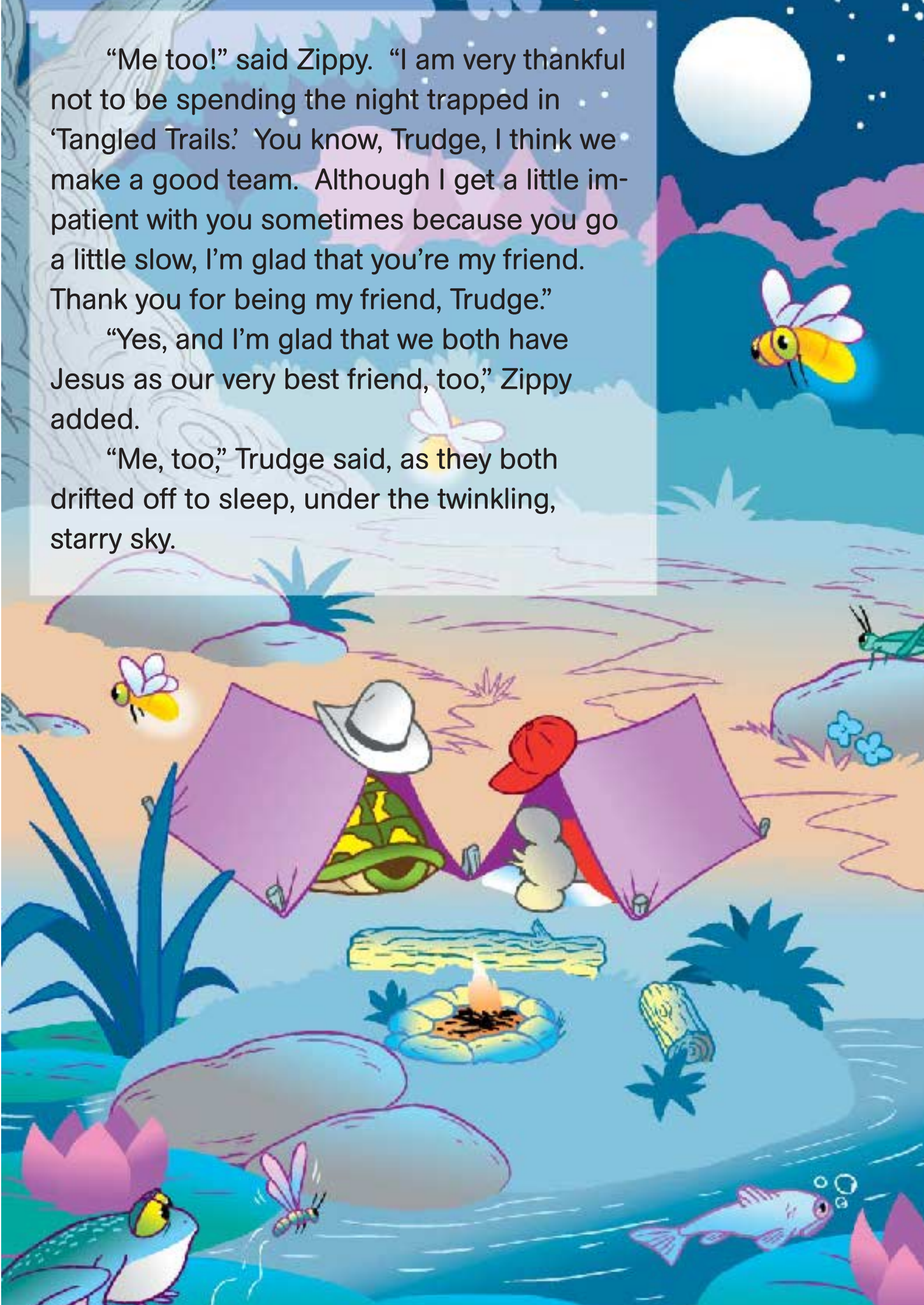




“Me too!” said Zippy. “I am very thankful not to be spending the night trapped in ‘Tangled Trails.’ You know, Trudge, I think we make a good team. Although I get a little impatient with you sometimes because you go a little slow, I’m glad that you’re my friend. Thank you for being my friend, Trudge.”

“Yes, and I’m glad that we both have Jesus as our very best friend, too,” Zippy added.

“Me, too,” Trudge said, as they both drifted off to sleep, under the twinkling, starry sky.





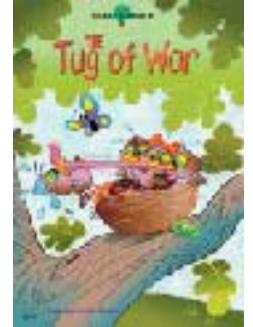
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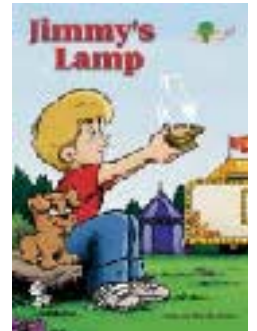
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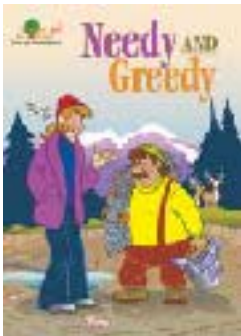
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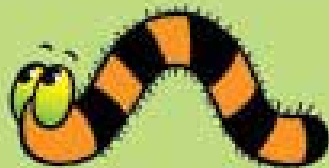


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# Trudge AND Zippy



**Two animal friends with very different characters share a day at the carnival and are brought closer to God and each other through a serious turn of events.**



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