

The Three-Berry Tangle

A STORY BY ARKEDELIC



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It was just a berry.
One little berry.
Round and red.
Nestled under a sunny leaf.
But oh, what trouble it caused.

Danny spotted it first.
“BERRY!” he yelled, leaping like a springy frog.

Zeldon blinked.
“I saw it too!”

“Nope! First dibs!”
Danny tapped it with his toe.

“But I called it in my head before you shouted,”
Zeldon said, puffing his cheeks.

“Then why didn’t your head say it out loud?” Danny huffed.



“It was thinking! My head thinks very quietly.”

“I saw it first!”

“I did!”

They both turned to Milo.

“Well?” Danny asked.

“Who gets it?” Zeldon added.

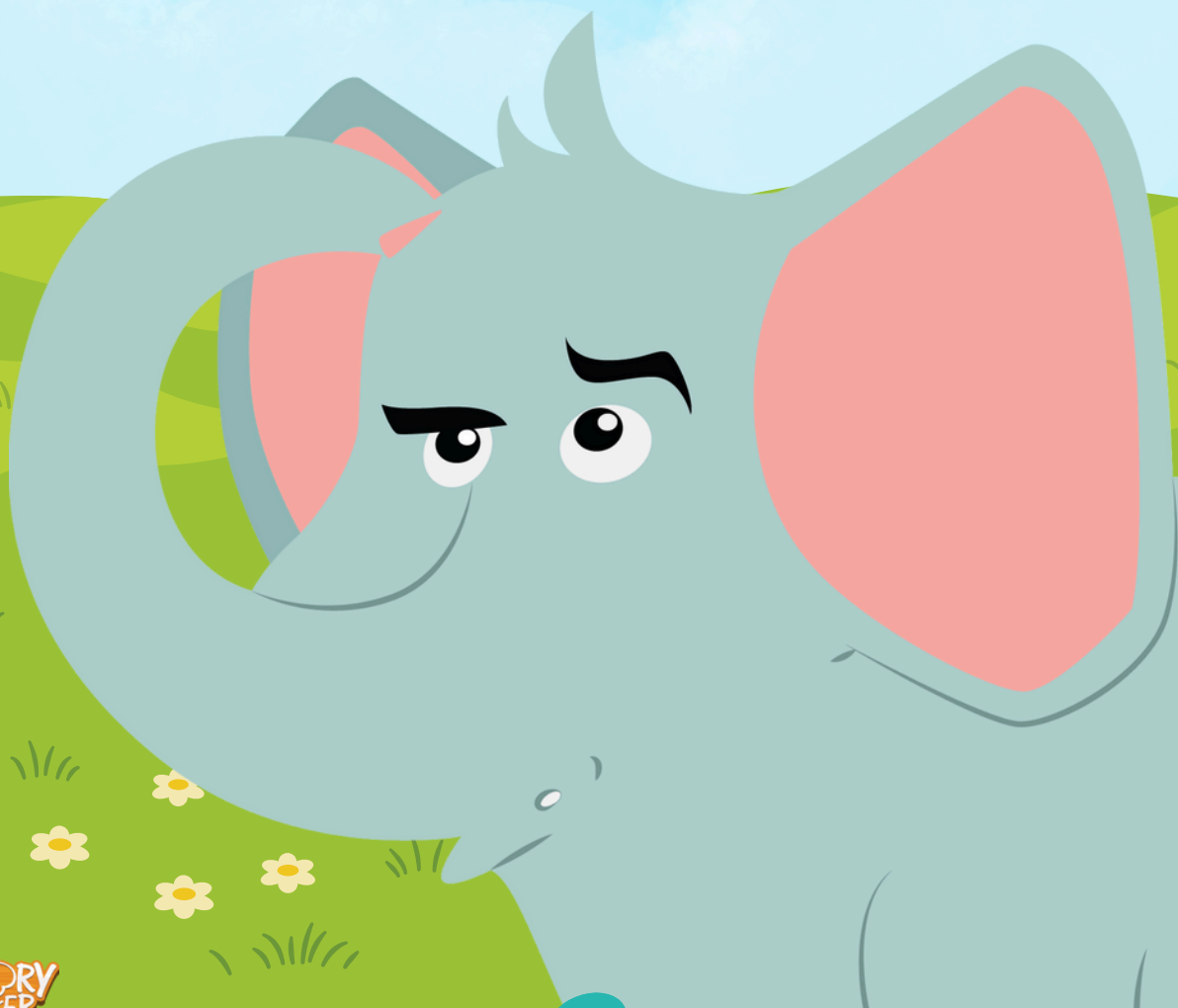
Milo froze.

He liked berries.

He liked Danny.

He liked Zeldon.

But he did not like being in the middle.



“Umm...” Milo kicked at the dirt.

“Maybe... you both...?”

“Nope!” said Danny.

“It has to be fair!” said Zeldon.

Milo’s ears drooped. “I don’t want to choose.”

Danny folded his arms. “You’re my friend, aren’t you?”

Zeldon leaned in. “But I shared my yam bites with you yesterday!”

Milo backed away. “I—I just like berries.”

Danny and Zeldon glared at each other.

Then they both walked off.
In opposite directions.



Milo sat under a log and sighed.

He didn't take the berry.
He didn't want it anymore.

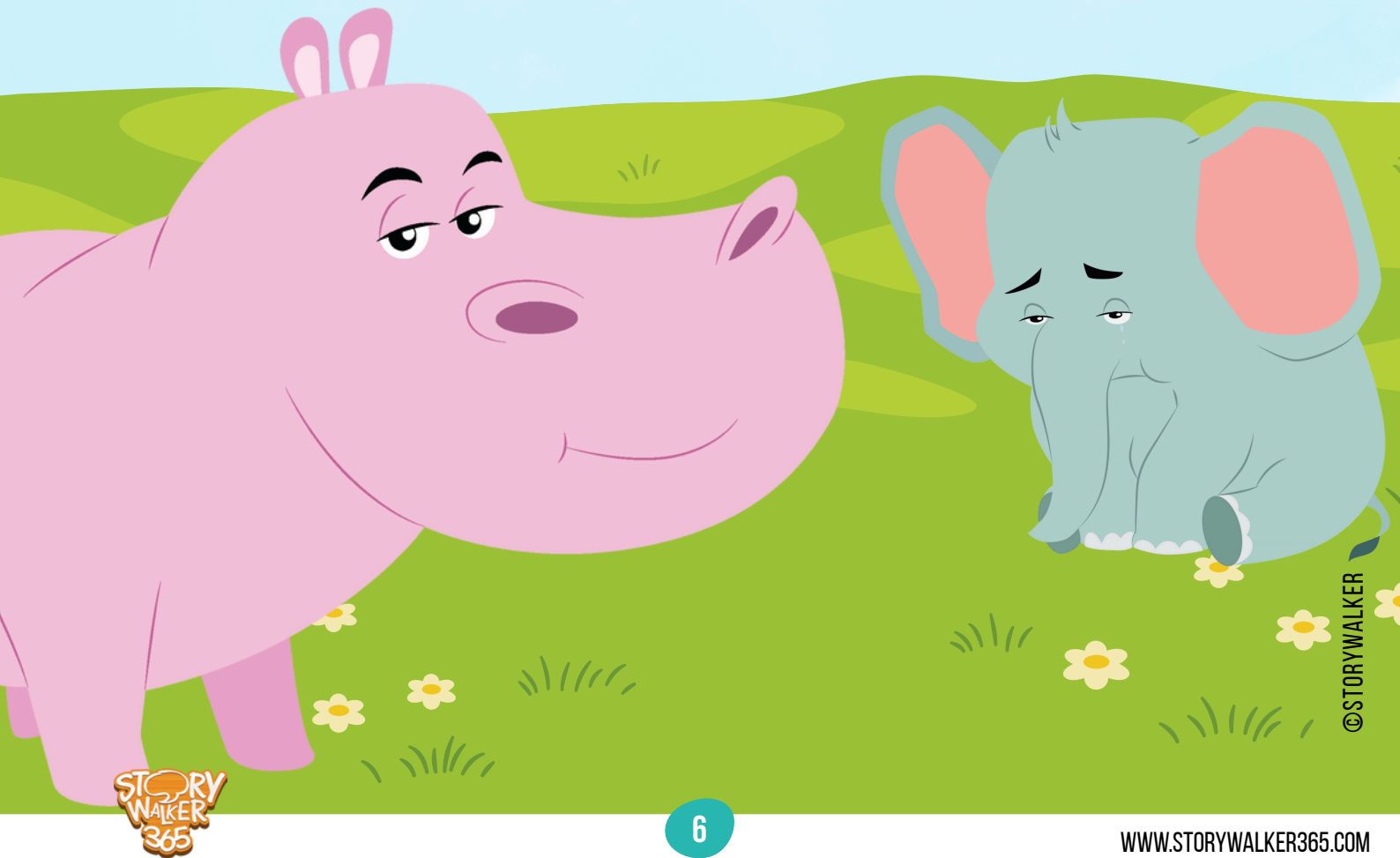
He wanted his friends to stop being grumpy.

Later, Mombino found Milo sitting quiet.

“Why the long face, moon-ears?”

“There was a berry,” Milo mumbled.

“And a fight. And now they both want me to say who's right.”



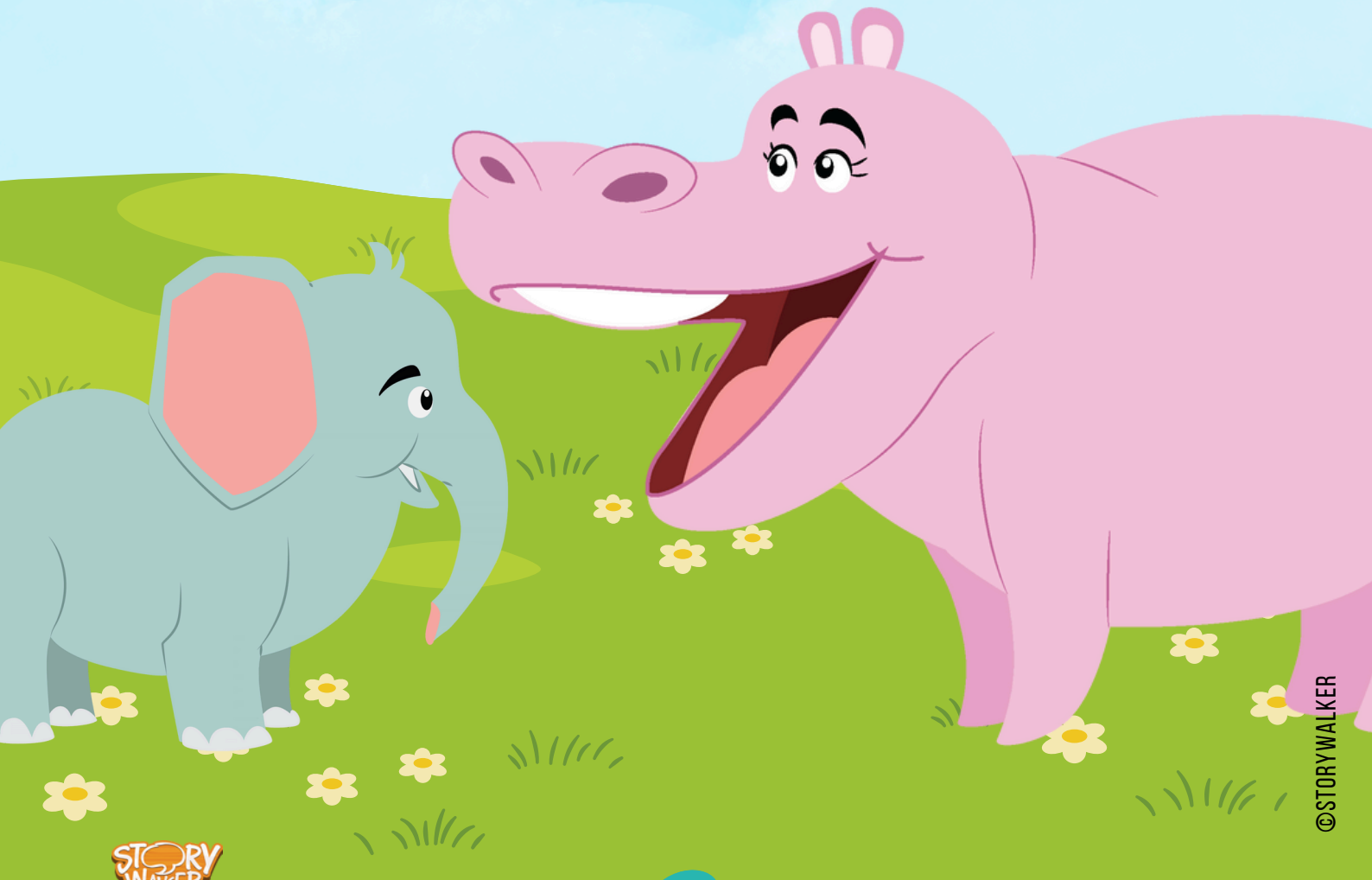
“Ah,” said Mombino.
“The squishiest place to be — stuck in the middle of a tug.”

“What do I do?” Milo whispered.
“Do you want to pick sides?” she asked.
“No.”

“Do you want to say nothing?”
“No...”

Mombino nodded. “Then maybe you speak for something,
not against someone.”

Milo blinked.
“Try telling your friends what matters to you.
Then listen to what matters to them.”

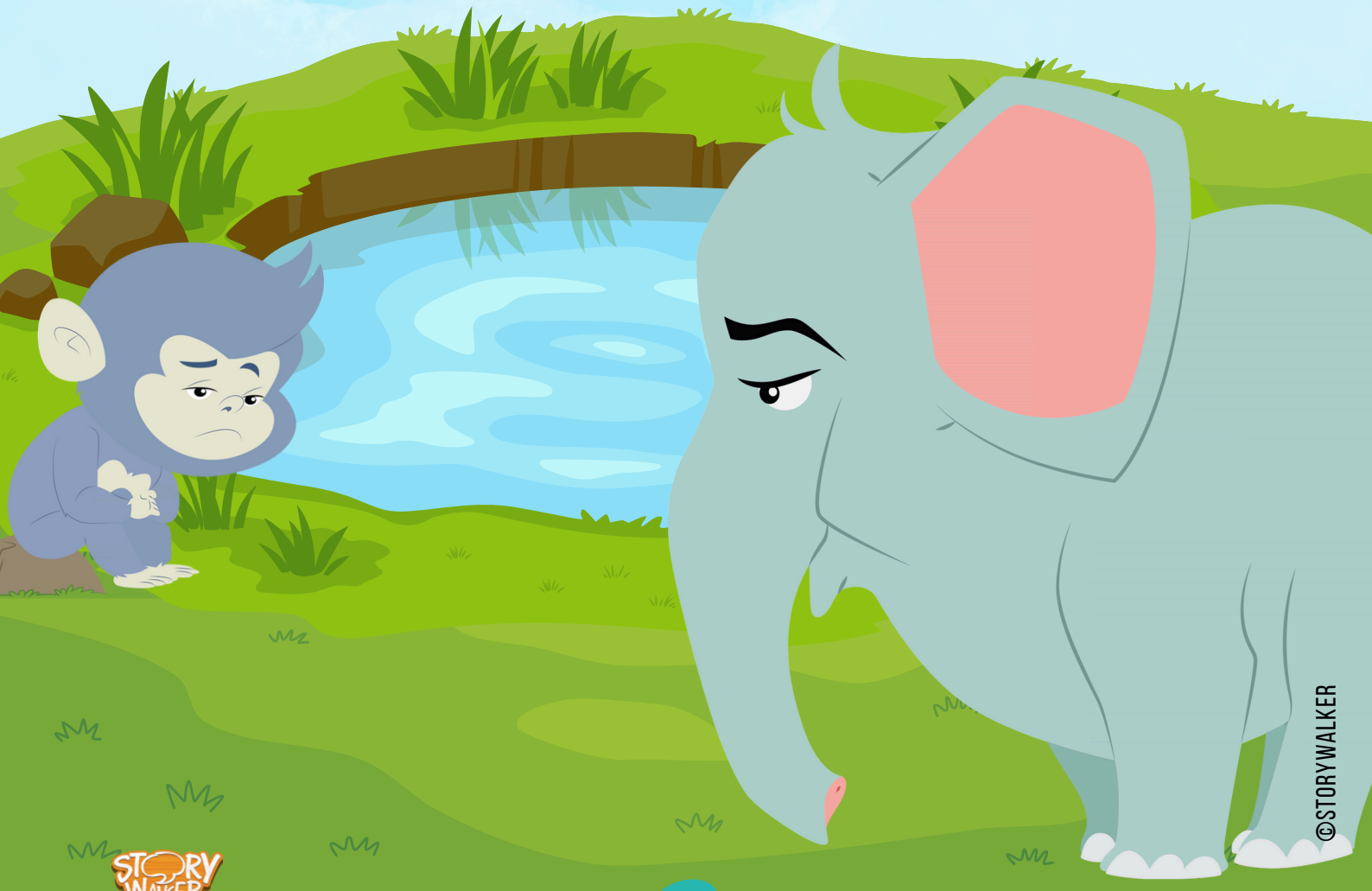


So that's what he did.

Milo found Danny near the puddle patch.

“I don't want to take sides,” he said.
“But I didn't like the way you made me pick.”

Danny looked down. “I just really wanted that berry.”



Then Milo found Zeldon, hiding behind the banana bush.

“I didn’t want to choose between you both,” Milo said.

“But I don’t like when you pull me into it.”

Zeldon sniffed. “Danny always gets the best stuff.”

“But you’re the best jumper,” Milo said.

“And you always share.”

Zeldon smiled. “That’s true.”



The next day, the three met by the berry patch.

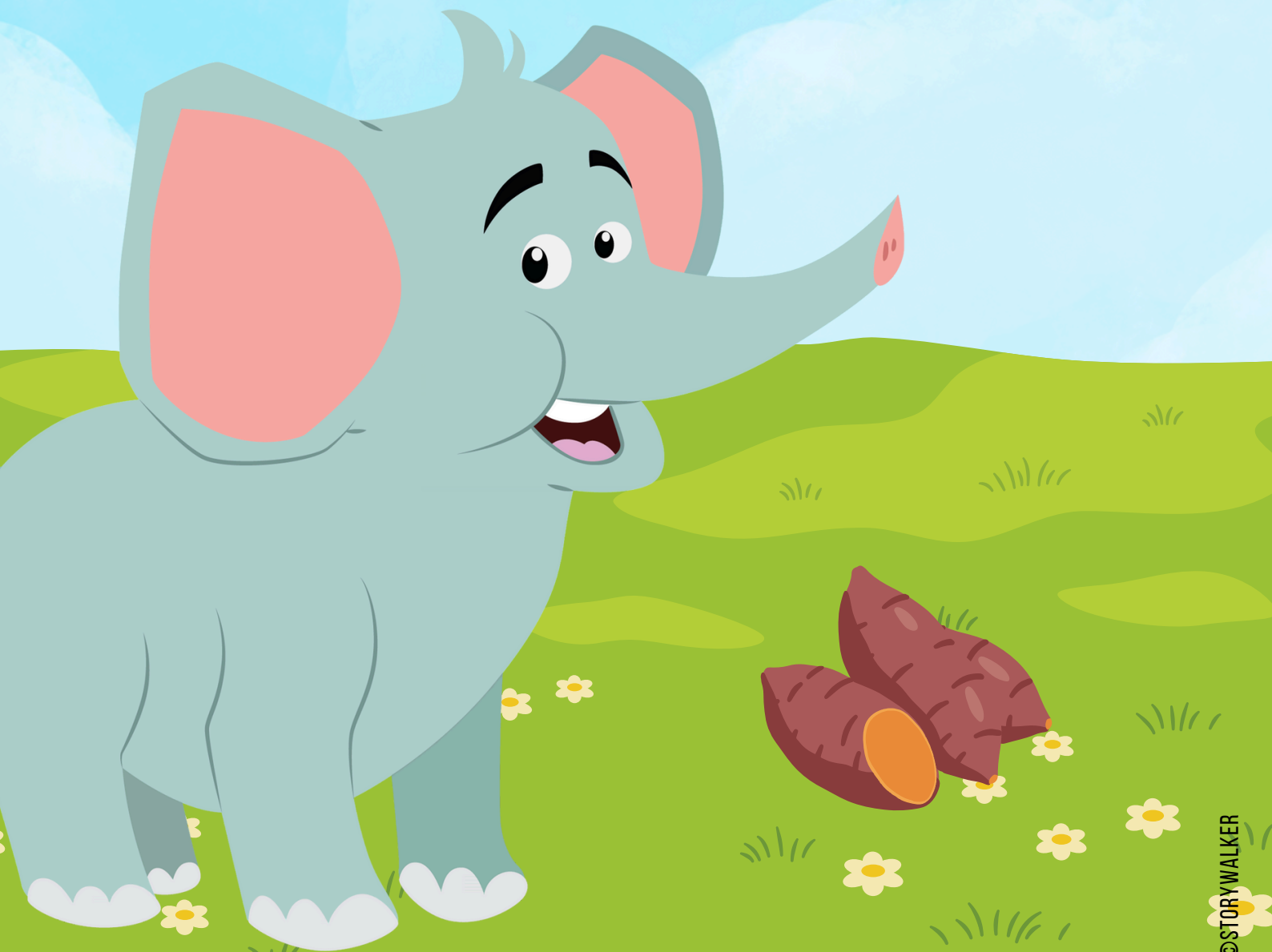
The berry was gone.
But Milo had three yam bites in a leaf bowl.

“One for each of us,” he said.

Danny smiled. “Want to play catch-the-pebble?”

Zeldon grinned. “Bet I can win.”

“Bet I can!” Danny shouted.



Milo rolled his eyes.

“Fine,” he said. “Just don’t make me pick who’s best.
You’re both a bit loopy.”

They all laughed.

And for once... it wasn’t about the berry.
It was about the bounce.
And the bowl.
And the bit of bravery it takes
to stand in the middle — and stay whole.

—THE END—








ACTIVITY

The Middle Voice Game

YOU'LL NEED:

- 3 small objects (like pebbles, toy animals, or bottle caps)
 - A soft ball or beanbag
 - A clear space for playing
 - A sheet of paper and crayons (optional)
- 
- 

HOW TO DO IT:

1. Place the three small objects in a row on the floor — these represent “friends” or “choices.”
 2. Two players stand on either side of the row. One player in the middle is the “Middle Voice.”
 3. The players on each side will each give a different request (e.g., “Pass me the pebble!” or “Kick the ball to me!”).
- 

ACTIVITY

The Middle Voice Game

4. The Middle Voice's job is not to choose a side but to give a fair, kind response that works for everyone (e.g., "Let's roll it to both of you" or "I'll pass each pebble one by one").
5. Rotate roles so each child gets to practise being the Middle Voice.
6. Optional: After the game, draw a picture of what "being fair" looks like to them.

WHAT IT BUILDS:

This activity helps children practise speaking up in a fair, non-blaming way when caught between two friends or choices. It models Milo's approach in the story — finding words that protect relationships on both sides while still being honest and clear.

5 FUN FACTS

About Animal Peacemakers



Dolphin Mediators

Dolphins have been seen swimming between two other dolphins to stop a fight. They use clicks and whistles to distract the troublemakers and calm things down.

Imagine being the lifeguard of the sea — but for dolphin arguments!

Elephant Comforters

When an elephant is upset, other elephants may touch it gently with their trunks or stand close to keep it company. It's their way of saying, "We're here for you."

Imagine your best friends forming a big, warm blanket around you.



Bonobo Peacekeepers

Bonobos, a type of ape, often use play, grooming, or gentle touches to keep the group happy and avoid fights. They'd rather share than shout.

Imagine solving a disagreement with a tickle instead of a tantrum!

5 FUN FACTS

About Animal Peacemakers



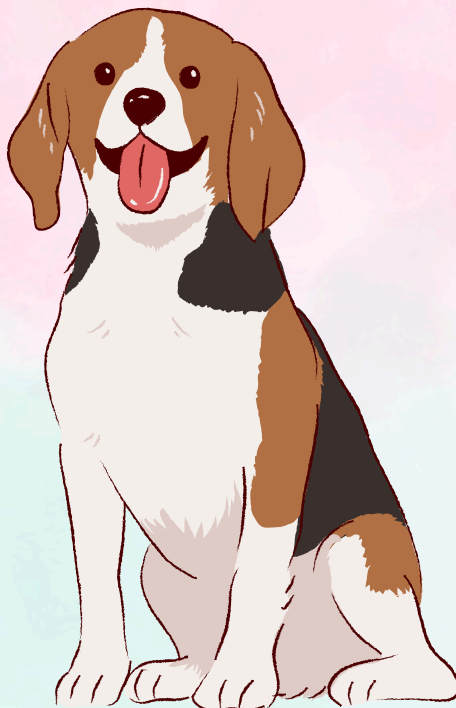
Gorilla Handshakes

Some gorillas use special gestures — like touching hands — after a quarrel to show, “We’re okay now.” It helps them stay friends in the group. Imagine ending an argument with a secret handshake only your friends know.

Dog Play Bows

When dogs want to play and not fight, they lower their front legs and wag their tails. It’s a clear signal that says, “Let’s be friends.”

Imagine starting every game by doing your own happy bow.



The Picnic Blanket Problem

Complete the Story

Luma the little lemur had set up a perfect picnic blanket under the tall jungle tree. She had banana slices, melon cubes, and crunchy nuts all neatly arranged.

Then Tiko the toucan swooped in. “Those nuts are mine! I dropped them earlier,” he said.

“No way,” chattered Miri the marmoset.

“I picked them from the tree myself!”

Luma’s eyes darted between her friends. She didn’t want to upset either one, but she also didn’t want to choose sides without knowing the truth.

Now your child completes the story



- What happens next?
- Does Luma find a way for everyone to share the picnic peacefully?
- Do Tiko and Miri figure out they both contributed to the feast?
- Or does the whole picnic turn into a funny, mixed-up meal where no one keeps score?



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