



ARDA AND ZEYNEP CHASING THE SMILING FLOWER



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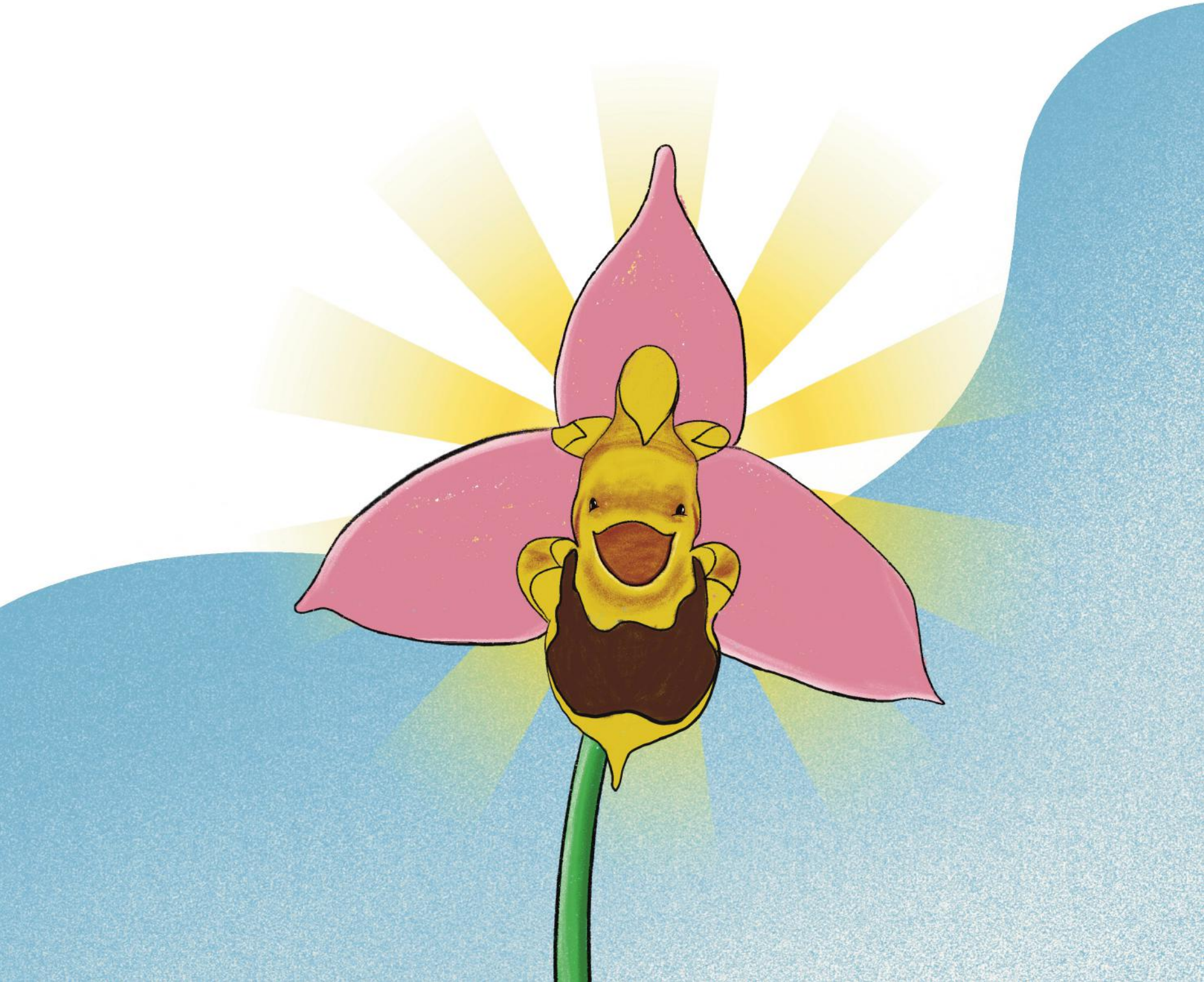
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The sun was shining brightly in the blue sky following a week of rain.

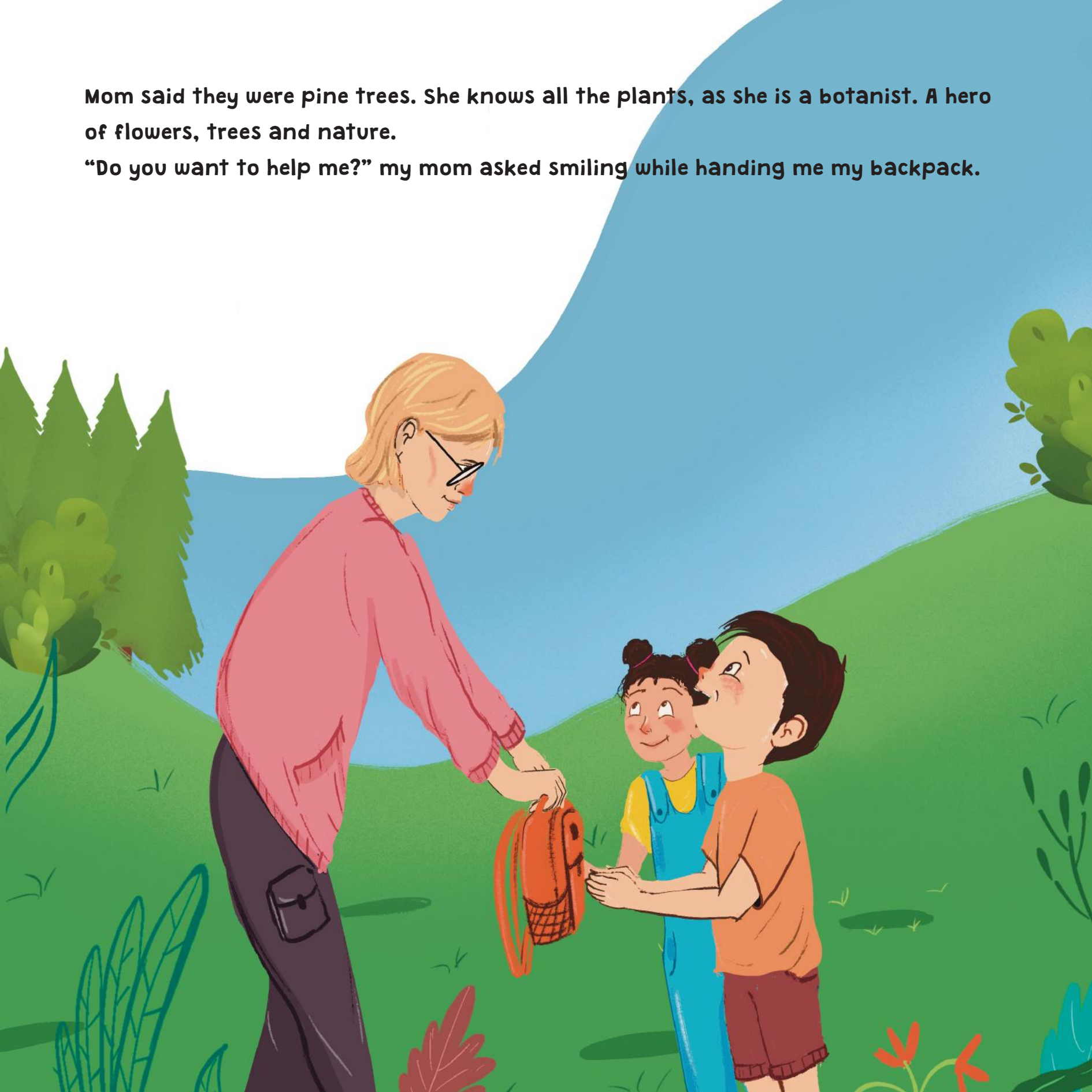
"This is the perfect weather to play with Zeynep!" I thought.

My mom was going to work all day. My best friend Zeynep and I were her guests. As I got out of the car, I looked around me. Trees with long, needle-like leaves were everywhere.



Mom said they were pine trees. She knows all the plants, as she is a botanist. A hero of flowers, trees and nature.

“Do you want to help me?” my mom asked smiling while handing me my backpack.



“Yes!” we exclaimed eagerly, jumping up and down after Zeynep and I looked at each other. A wonderful adventure was waiting for us.



My mother took out a picture of a strange flower that I had never seen before and gave it to Zeynep.
It was strange because this flower was smiling!



“I want to find this lost flower,” my mother said solemnly.

“I must find where it lives and mark it on my map so that we can protect it and its home.”



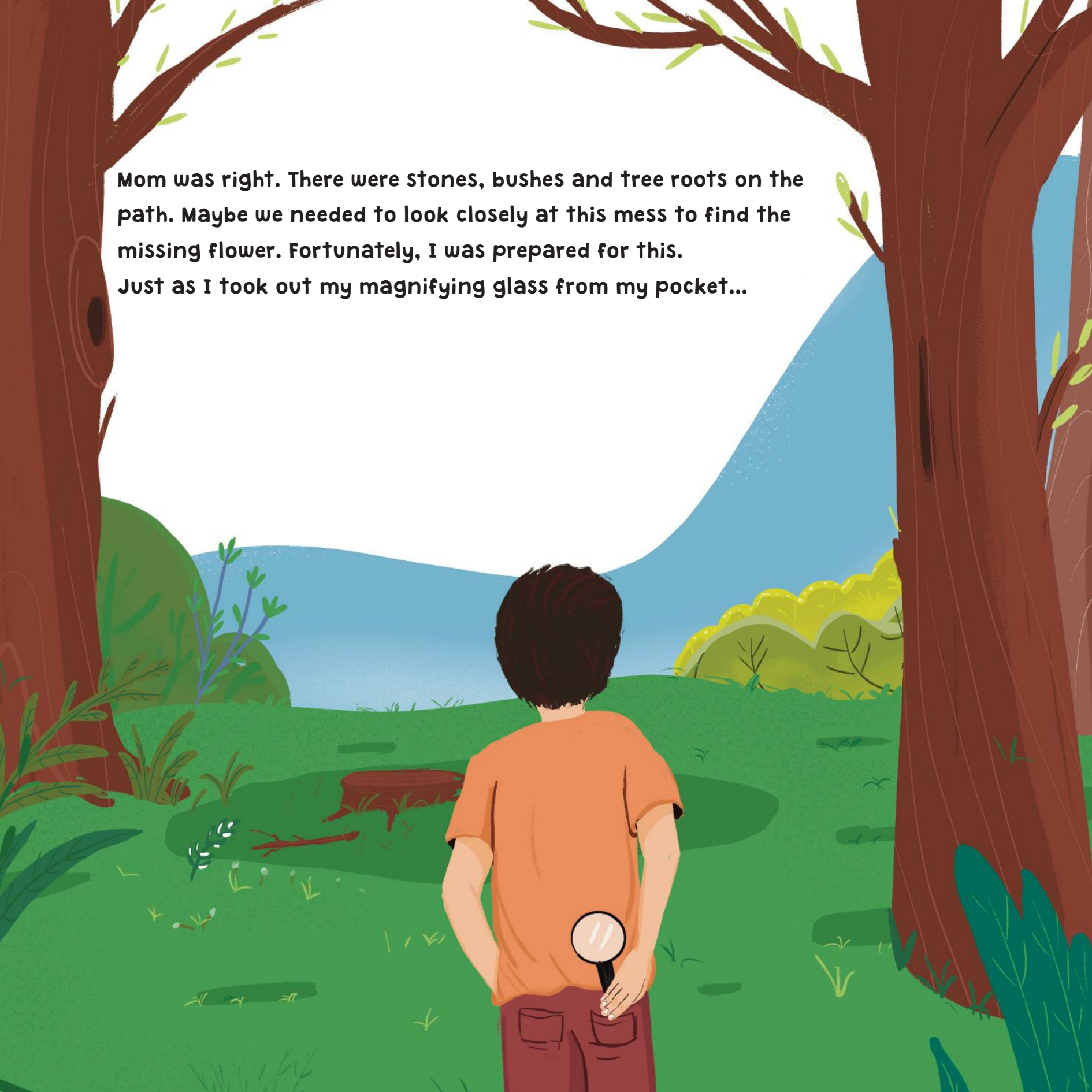
The lost flower had to be found and protected.

"We're the perfect team for this!" I thought.

Zeynep and I started to follow my mother as she headed towards the path between the trees. "Be careful where you step," my mother turned to us and warned, "You might trip and fall."



Mom was right. There were stones, bushes and tree roots on the path. Maybe we needed to look closely at this mess to find the missing flower. Fortunately, I was prepared for this. Just as I took out my magnifying glass from my pocket...



Suddenly we found ourselves among huge rocks, surrounded by tall grasses and roots. Zeynep and I looked at each other in amazement. How could this have happened?



“Don’t worry,” my friend said smiling and pointed around with her arms outstretched. “That way we can find the missing flower more easily.”

Looking around now, I could see mushrooms hidden among the roots and insects crawling over them. It was like we were in a crowded playground!



We had just started walking carefully, looking all around us, when suddenly the tall grass by the path began to shake. Out popped two black antennae, moving up and down! “Help!” we screamed and hugged each other tightly in fear.



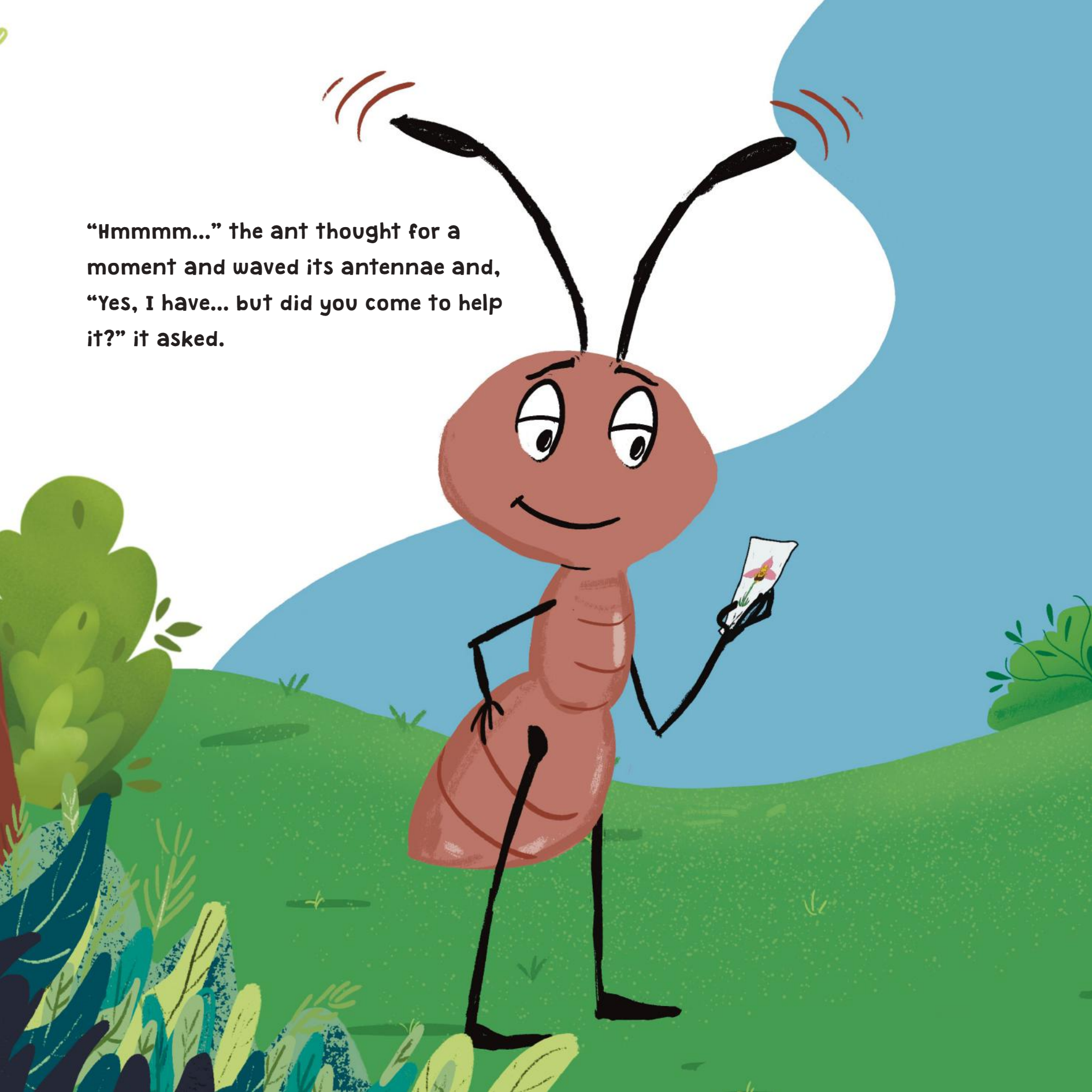
Sticking its head out of the grass was the biggest ant I had ever seen! When it saw how scared we were, it lifted its front legs and said in a strange, clicking voice,
“Wait, wait! Don’t be afraid.” I pointed with my finger and said, “An ant that talks!” The ant replied, “And you’re the smallest humans I’ve ever seen!” Then it added, “What are you doing here?”



My friend and I looked at each other. Could we trust this huge ant?
Zeynep bravely stepped forward and held out the flower picture my mom
had given us. “We’re looking for the Smiling Flower,” she said. “Have you
seen it by any chance?”



“Hmmm...” the ant thought for a moment and waved its antennae and, “Yes, I have... but did you come to help it?” it asked.

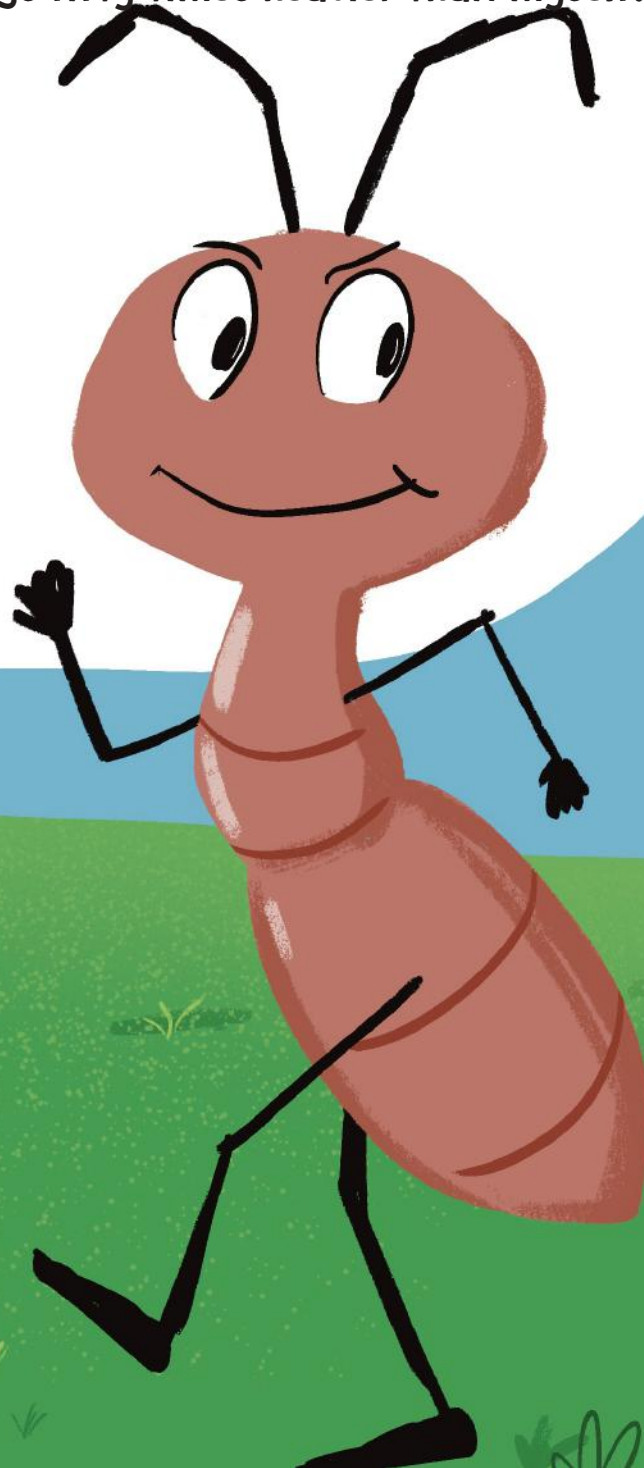


“Yes!” we shouted excitedly.

“In that case,” the ant said, “I suppose I should take you there myself. With those short legs, it might be hard for you to keep up.”



I looked at the ant suspiciously and said,
“You don’t look that strong either. Can you really carry us?”
The ant made a clicking sound that almost sounded like laughter.
“Don’t worry,” it said proudly.
“I can carry things fifty times heavier than myself!”



Our journey on the ant's back had begun.
It was moving swiftly through the grass on its thin legs.
We passed beneath roots bursting from the soil and climbed over small
rocks without stopping for a second. Then, all of a sudden, a soft sound of
crying reached our ears. We were startled. Who could be crying out here?



And when the ant went around a big rock, we saw it in the bushes!
This was the flower we were looking for, but it wasn't smiling, it was
crying all the time. "There," our friend ant said, pointing to it with
his front legs.

"Here is the flower you are looking for."



When we slid down the ant's back, we thanked our new friend for helping us. Without it, we might never have found the flower we were looking for because it was so well hidden in the bushes.

"Hello!" I called out, approaching the flower.

"Why are you crying?" my friend Zeynep asked.



The sniffing flower was quite surprised to see us. "Hello," it said, barely holding back its sobs.

"I am a Bee Orchid. I am crying because the bees passed by without seeing me."

"Are bees that important?" I asked curiously.

"Of course," the flower nodded. "If the bees don't come and take my dust, it won't spread around and there will be no new flowers."

"But that's too bad," my friend Zeynep said sadly.



Suddenly I had a great idea!

“Don’t worry,” I said, puffing out my chest like a hero.

“I know how to get the bees.”



While they were watching me with curious eyes, I pointed with my index finger to the lower branches of the tree next to us and asked my friend the ant:

"Can you get me up on that branch?"

"No problem, but hold on tight when you're on my back," the ant said, looking at the branch swaying in the light breeze. "I don't want to drop you."



Climbing up the jagged trunk of the tree without any difficulty,
I hugged the ant's neck tightly with both arms to avoid
slipping off its back.

"This is great!" I thought as we climbed up,
but I must admit I was a little scared.



I had to quickly execute my plan to get downstairs as soon as possible. I took one of the slices of bread that my mother had packed in my backpack and poured some of the honey she had packed for me to eat in the forest. Mom had told me before that bees could smell honey even from a great distance. Now all I had to do was wait for the wind to carry the smell of honey to the bees.



Just when I started to think that the bees were not coming,
I suddenly heard that sound!
BUZZZZ... BUZZZZ...



A huge, yellow and hairy bee with black stripes was flying right in front of me. Ignoring me, it grabbed the honey bread and started to rise.
“Hey!!!” I shouted. “Can you help me?”
The bee hesitated, though it was clearly undecided.



"I have a lot of work. I have to work hard," it said.

"I have many more flowers to go around."

"There," I said excitedly, "You didn't see my friend, the laughing flower. It is very sad too. She is crying." "Hmmm!!!" the bee said, "Where is your friend Smiling flower now?" "Not far away," I said and pointed with my hand to the flower and my friend Zeynep hiding in the bushes below.



The happily buzzing bee had just started to descend when it turned back to look at me. "But aren't you going to your friends?" It took a quick turn around me and added: "It must be a bit high for you here. And you don't have wings. Do you want me to take you with me?"



“This is incredible, flying on the back of a bee!!!” I nodded eagerly.
This was one of the most amazing things that had ever happened to me in my life.
“Woohoo...”



Everyone looked happy when I flew down on the back of the helpful and hardworking bee. “You did it!” Zeynep said with a smile. We had indeed succeeded, we had found the missing flower and brought the bees back. There was only one thing left for me to do.



I looked at the smiling flower and said, "When we show Mom where you are, she will mark you on her map so that she can always protect you and you will never have to hide again."

"Really?" the flower asked, now smiling as in the picture.



I was about to continue my conversation with the flower when I heard my mother's voice standing behind me. "Arda! Zeynep! You found her. You did a great job."

As my mother marked the flower's location on her map with a red pen, I looked at the bee circling around us and winked at the ant on the tip of my finger. "We had some help, of course," I admitted, and Zeynep and I looked at each other and giggled.







Ela Excellence Resort Belek has taken its commitment to environmentally conscious and sustainable tourism one step further by initiating an important collaboration with ANTOK. This partnership includes a comprehensive effort to protect endemic plant species that are endangered and found within the Beydağları (Olympos) Coastal National Park.

These rare plants, which are vital components of our forest ecosystem, are of great importance not only for nature but also for future generations.

As part of the collaboration, the natural habitats of these species will be mapped, and ecological-based population assessments will be conducted. In this way, the initiative aims to contribute to the conservation of endangered plant species while also integrating this biodiversity into sustainable tourism practices.

Have you ever seen a smiling orchid?

Well, if this flower tears when it should be smiling, what do you do? On a sunny day, Arda goes to the forest with his best friend Zeynep, and when he decides to help his mother, a botanist, find a lost flower, they find themselves in a breathless adventure. Who will help these two friends on their adventurous journey? Will Arda be able to find the flower his mother is looking for?



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