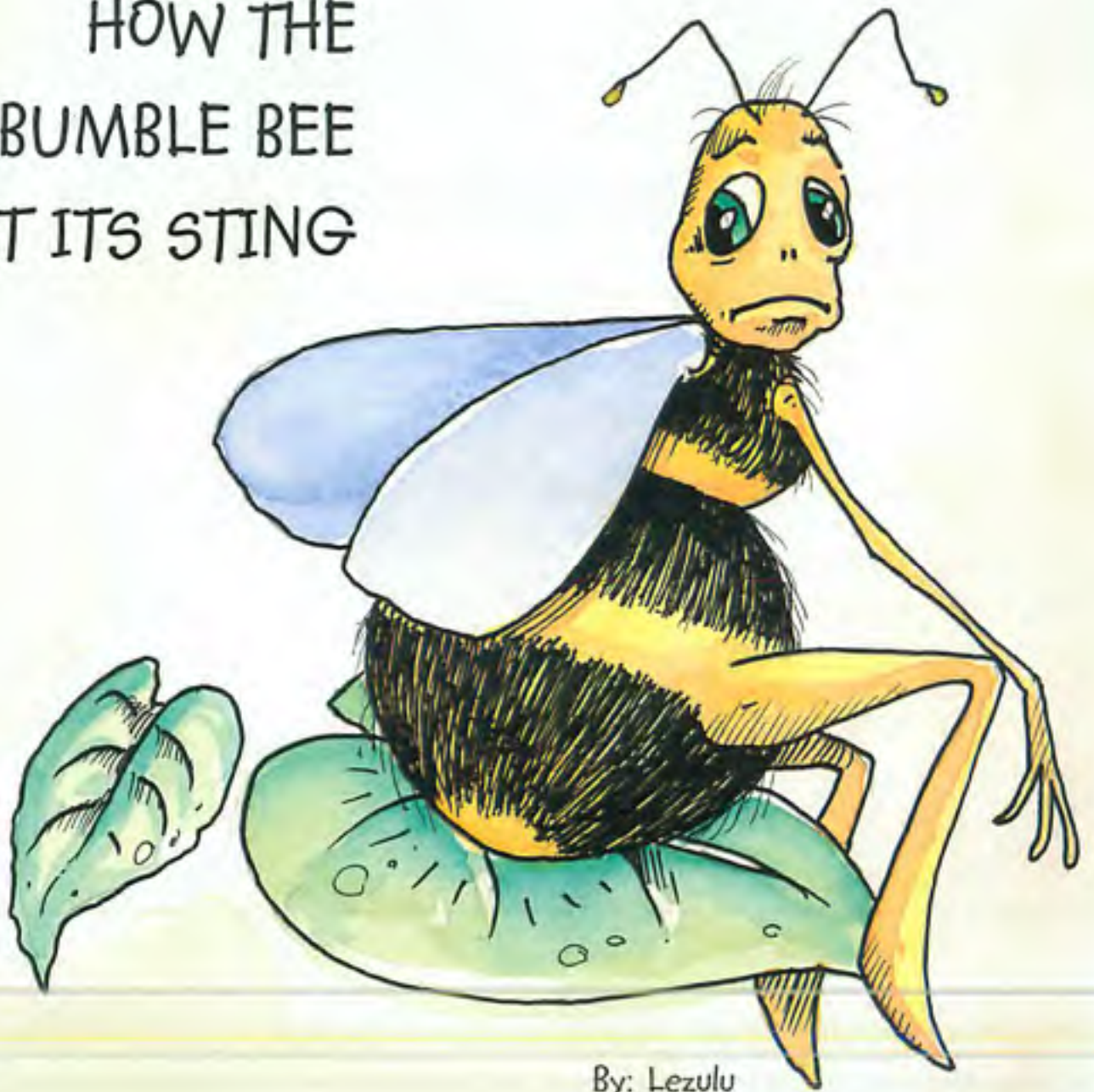
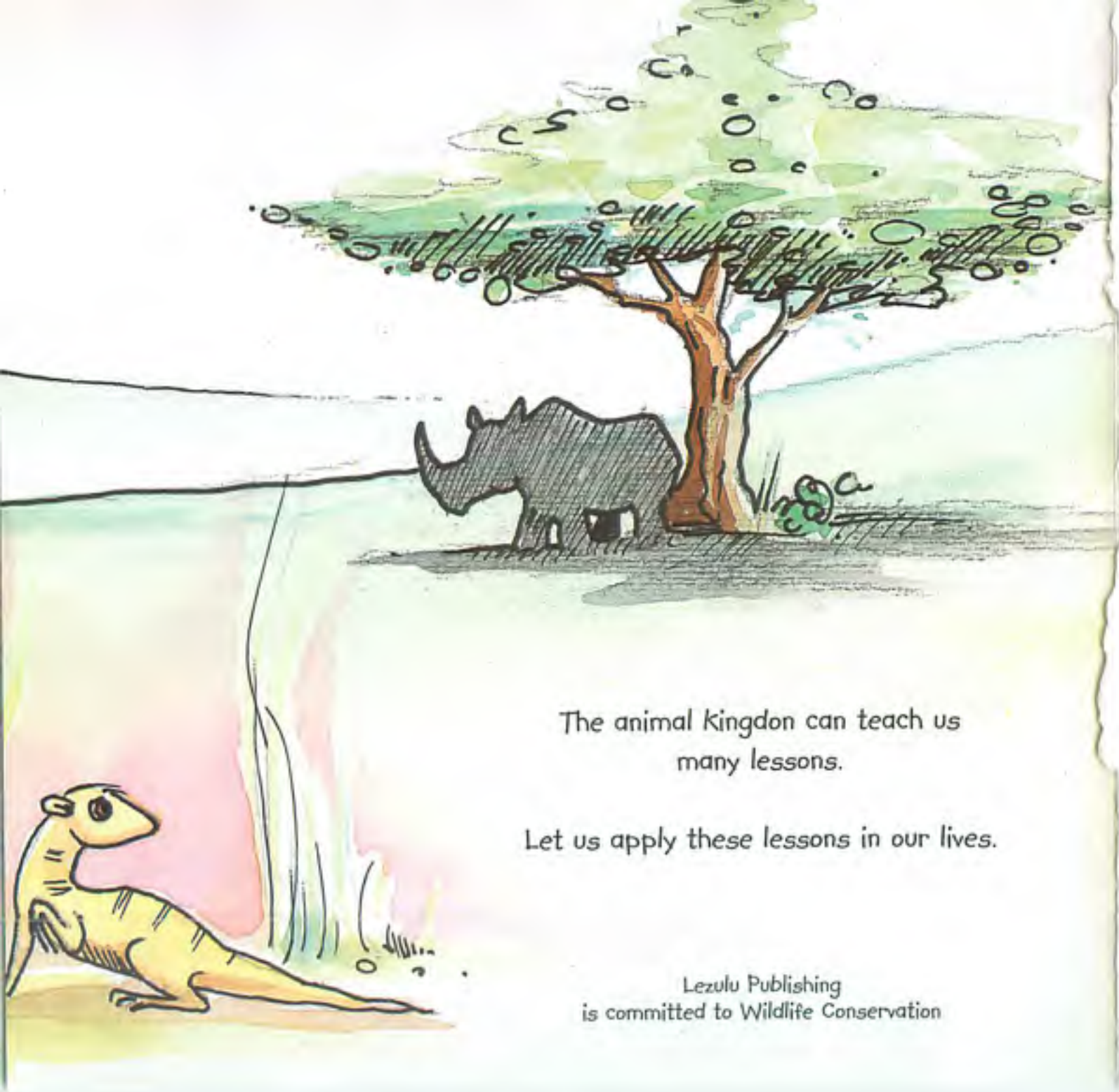


HOW THE
BUMBLE BEE
LOST ITS STING



By: Lezulu

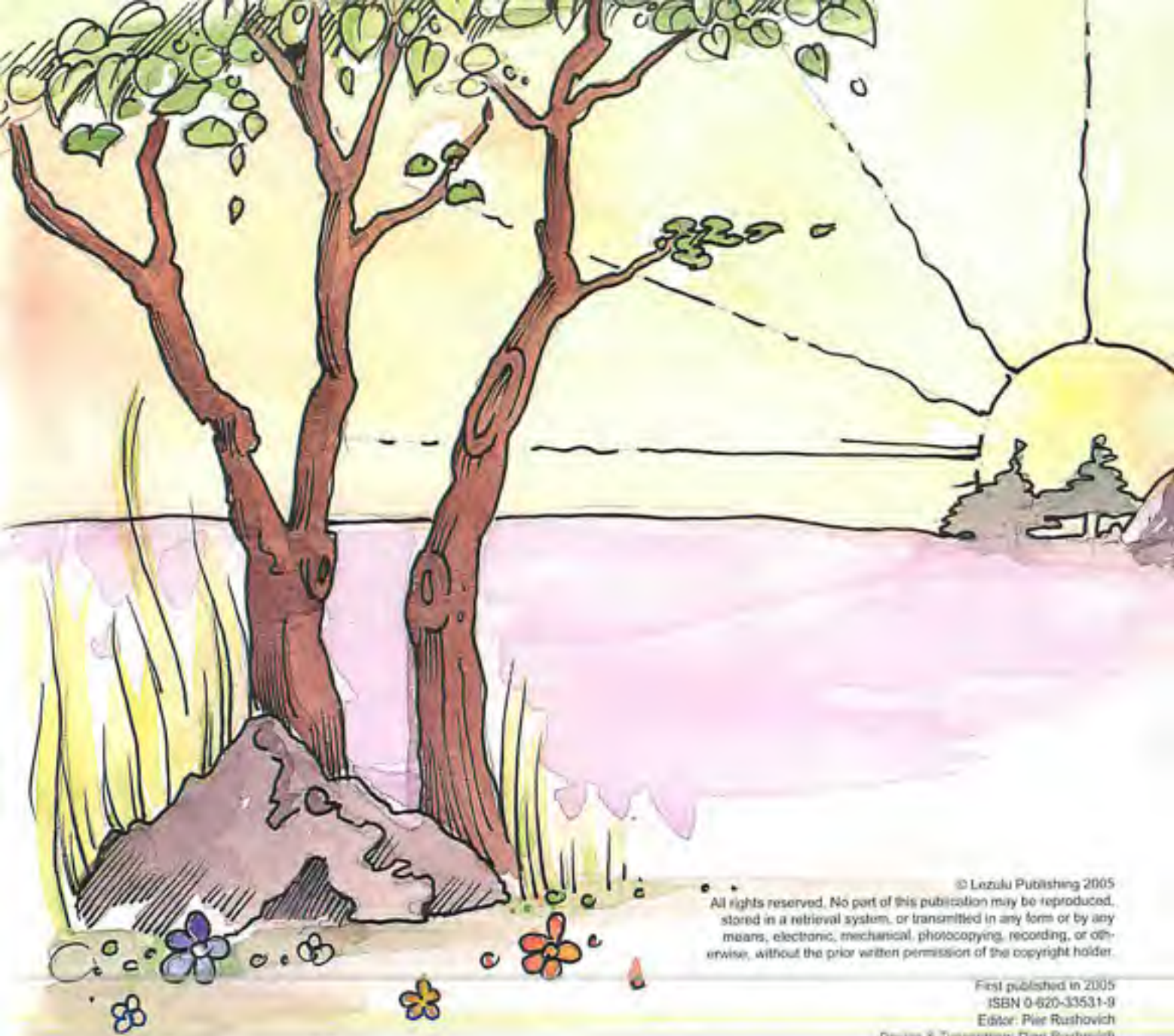
Illustrated by: Louise Hansen



The animal kingdom can teach us
many lessons.

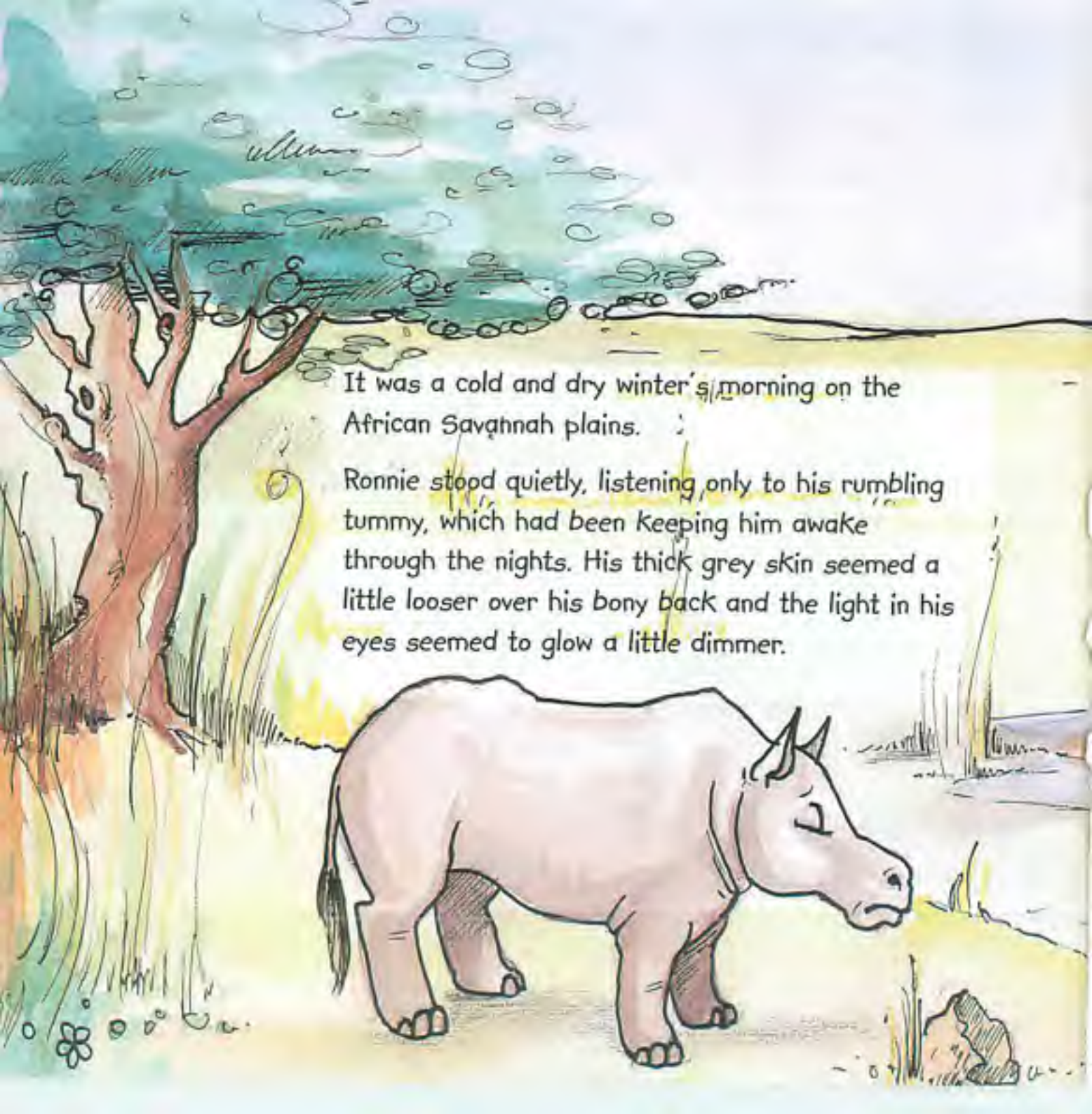
Let us apply these lessons in our lives.

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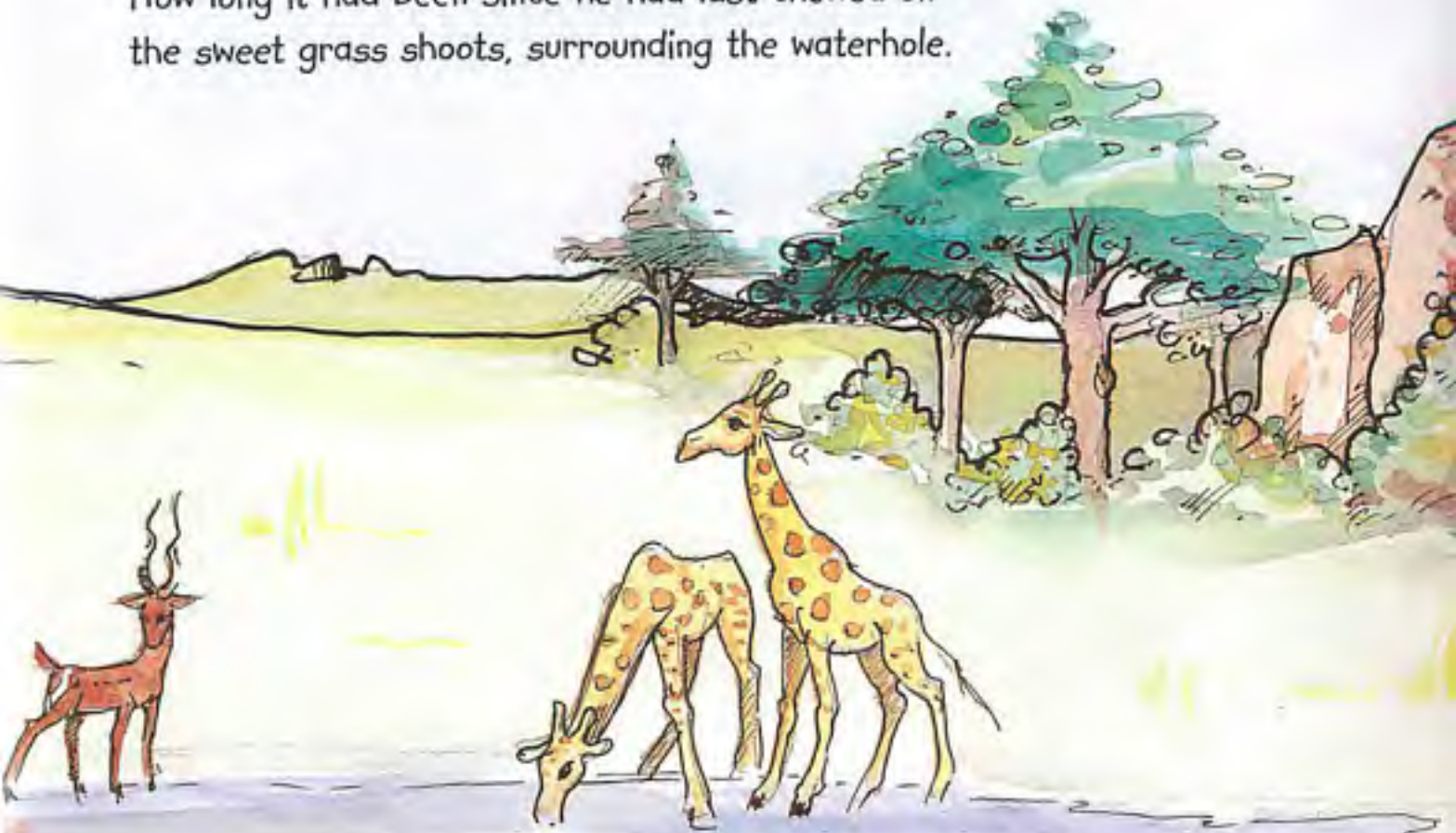
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Illustrated by: Louise Hansen
Author: Lzuzu



It was a cold and dry winter's morning on the African Savannah plains.

Ronnie stood quietly, listening only to his rumbling tummy, which had been keeping him awake through the nights. His thick grey skin seemed a little looser over his bony back and the light in his eyes seemed to glow a little dimmer.

How long it had been since he had last chewed on
the sweet grass shoots, surrounding the waterhole.



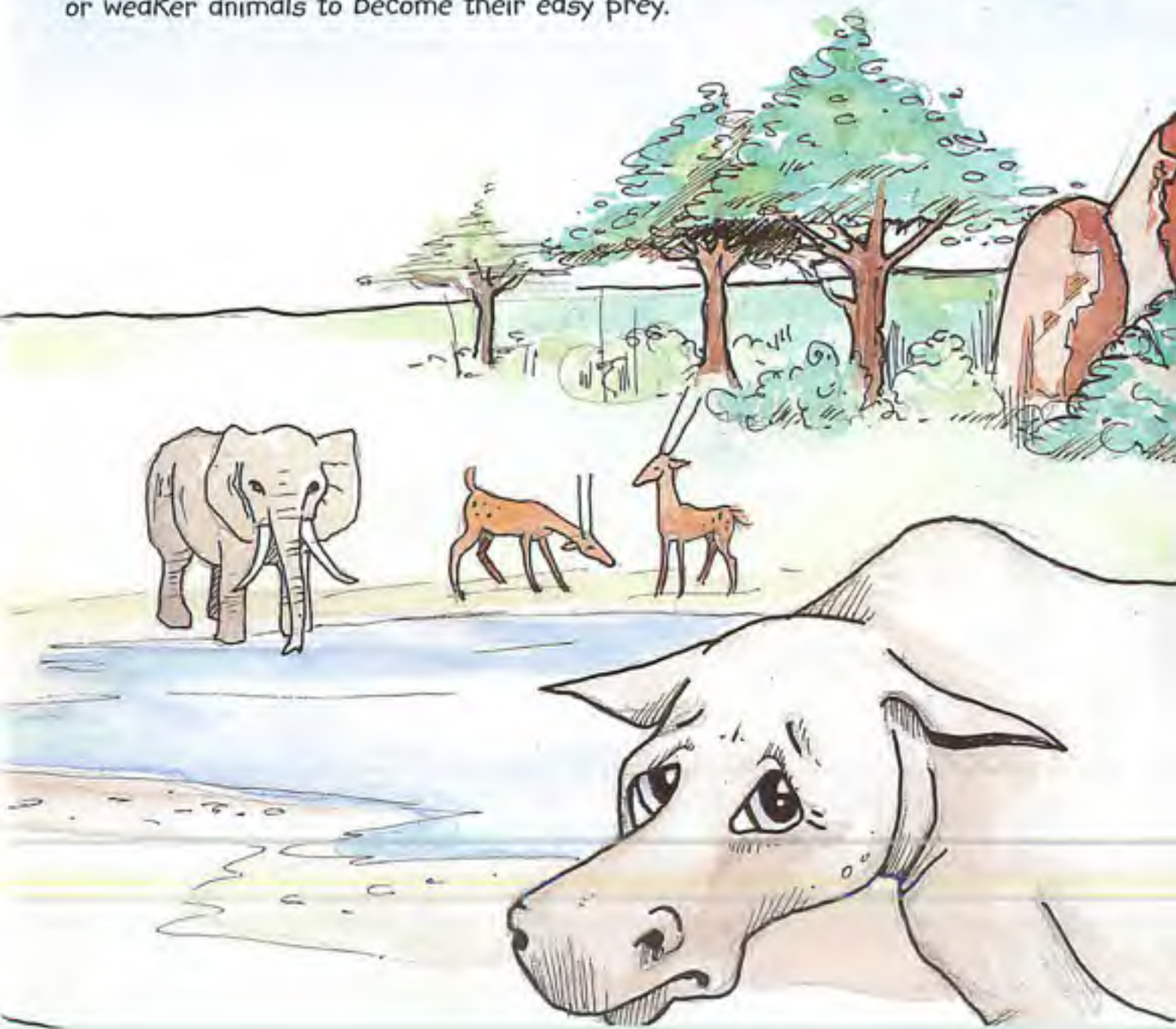
Ronnie knew it had been a while, as he felt how his body
had weakened and how tired he had become.

Rhinos are big animals and they can't run very fast, even when they have had lots of food to make them strong and healthy. Since Ronnie was starving and weak, he was in danger of being hunted by the Lions and Leopards of the Great Plains.

He knew that he must get to feed on the lush grass soon or else he would not last the winter.



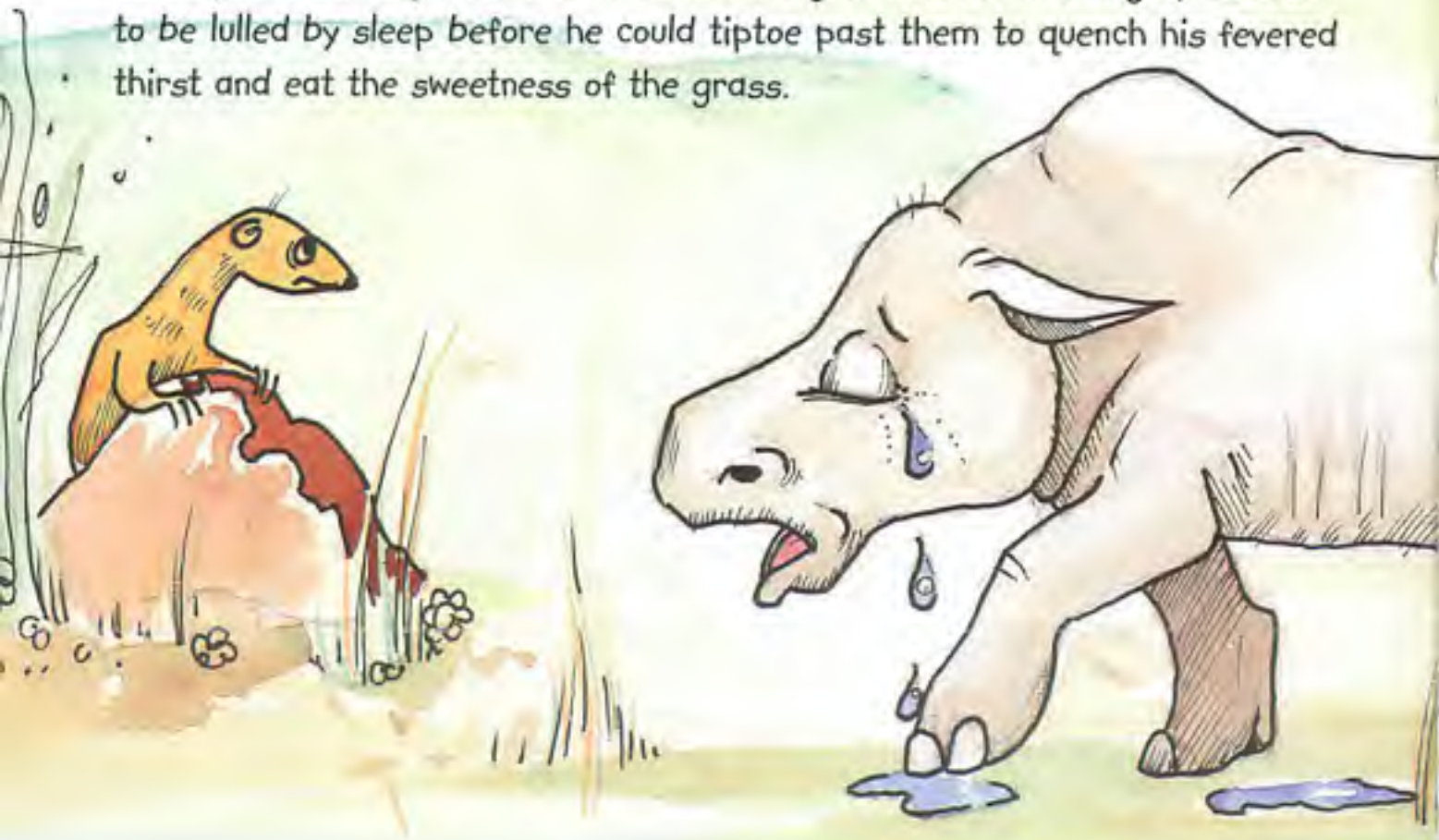
Ronnie was aware that only the bigger and stronger animals of the Savannah grazed near the water's edge. It was there that they lay in wait for the smaller or weaker animals to become their easy prey.



As Ronnie remembered his reflection in the watering hole, he burst into tears thinking about how long ago that had been. A sob erupted from deep within his soul and his heart hurt from the utter sadness that it felt.

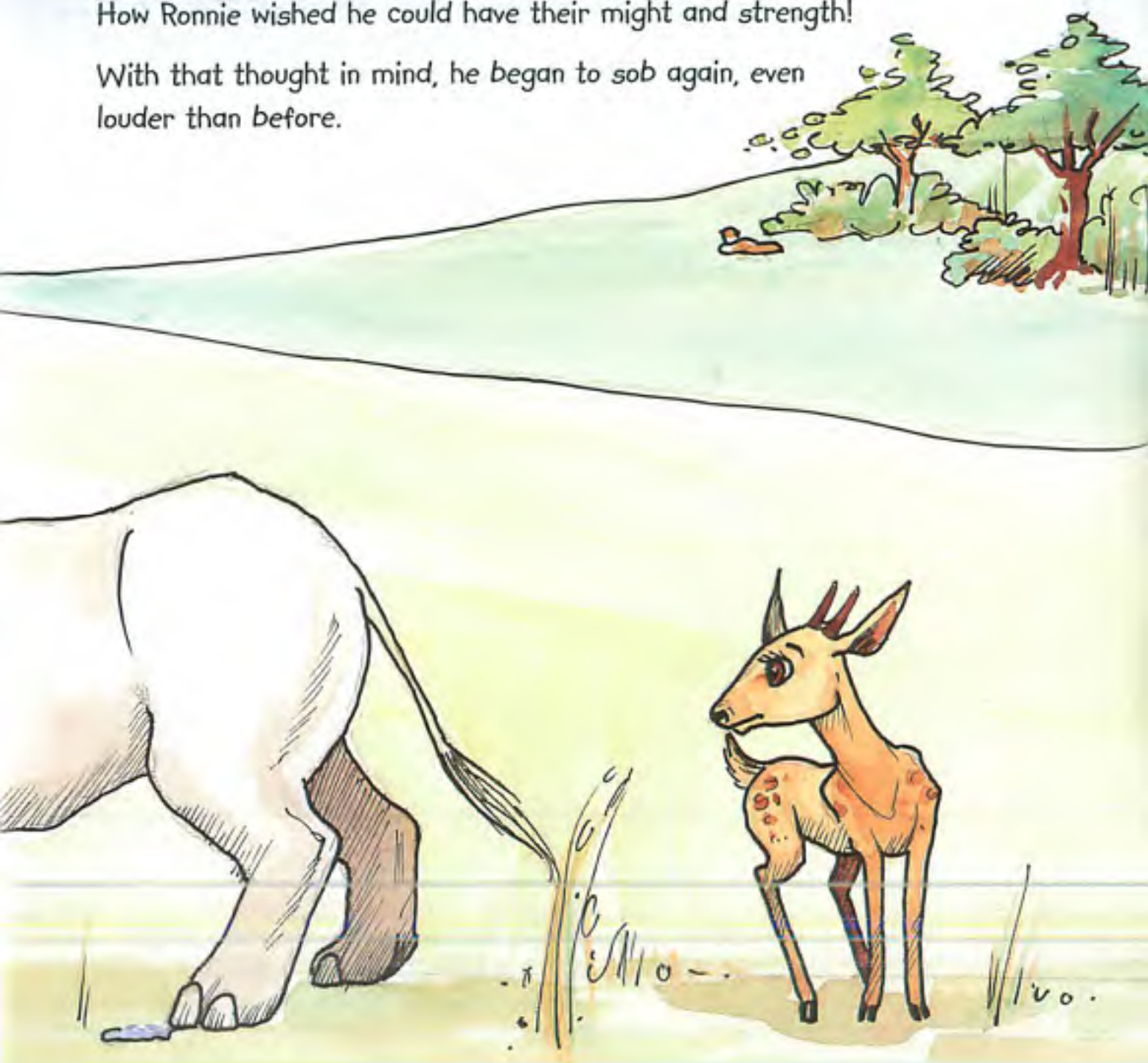
He was so sad and so miserable, and oh so very very hungry.

Each day he had watched the big animals lounge by the waterhole, drinking as they felt the urge. He was tired of having to wait for the mighty beasts to be lulled by sleep before he could tiptoe past them to quench his fevered thirst and eat the sweetness of the grass.



How Ronnie wished he could have their might and strength!

With that thought in mind, he began to sob again, even louder than before.



And Ronnie sobbed.

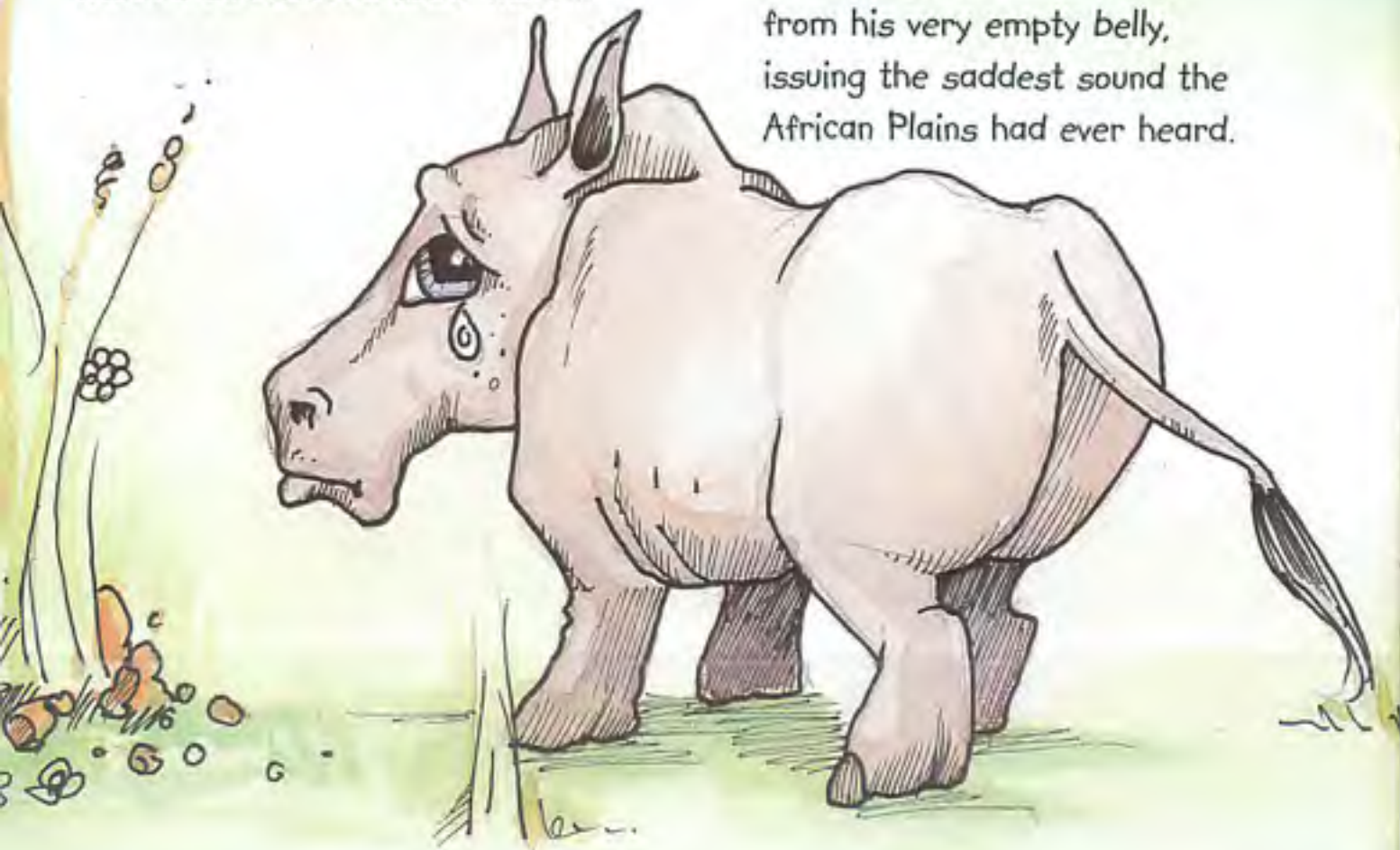
How tired Ronnie was of being bullied and chased by the stronger animals!

Ronnie sobbed some more...

How tired he was of eating leftover weeds and dried out sticks.

Ronnie's heart was breaking as he sobbed and sobbed some more...

Eventually his sobs swelled into a deep and hollow cry from his very empty belly, issuing the saddest sound the African Plains had ever heard.



Billie was an old friend of his, who always tried to comfort Ronnie when his heart was sad and his sobs were loud.

Billie once again offered him his help. "Ronnie, what can I do for you to make you happy and confident again?"

But what could such a small little Bumble Bee like Billie do to help Ronnie, the big Rhinoceros?

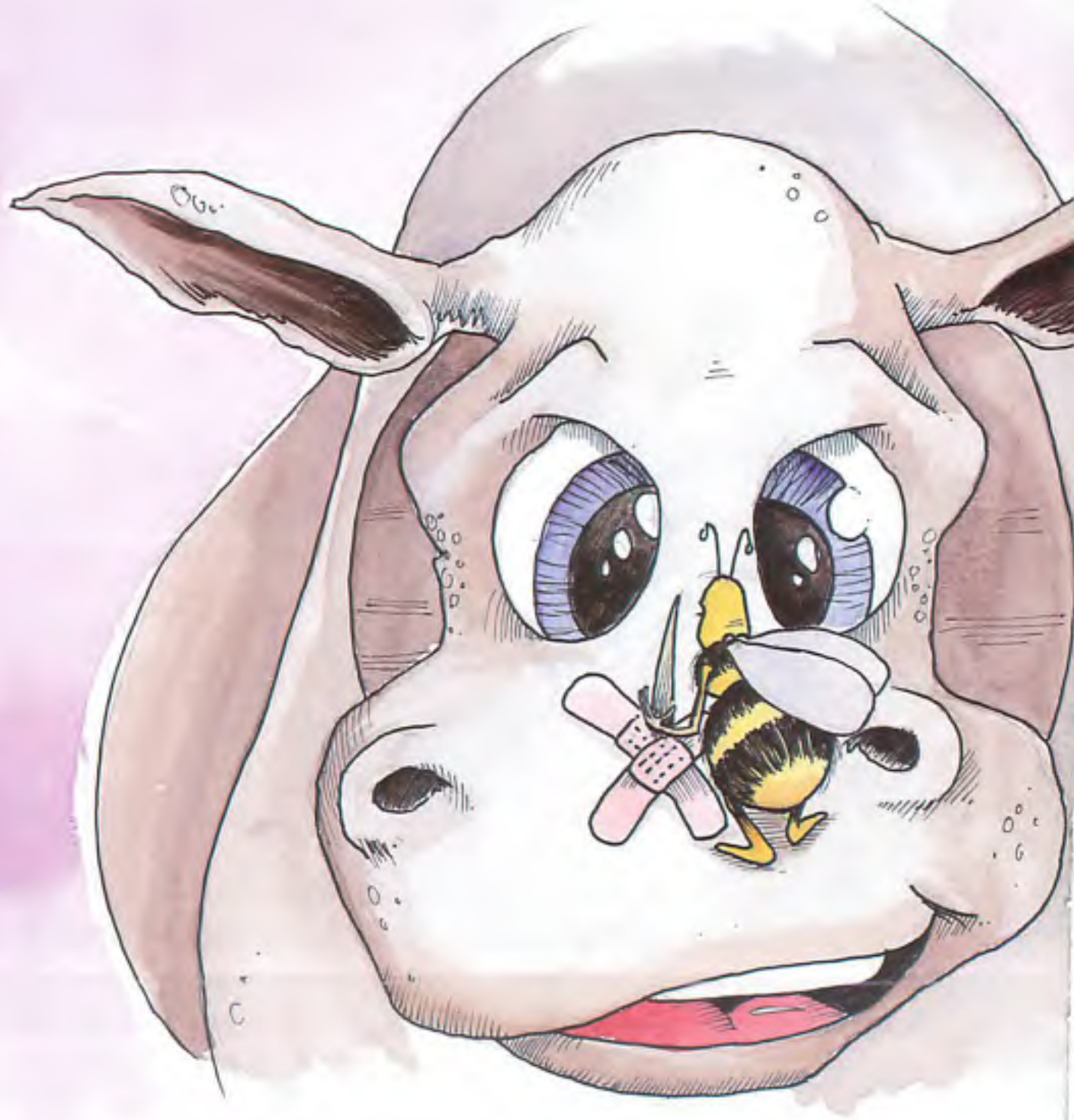



"But let me help you"
pleaded the big-hearted
Bumble Bee again.

As Ronnie stared sadly
at Billie, a clever thought
suddenly began to creep
into his mind.



"Billie, all the animals in the African Kingdom are scared of your sting. If you lend me your very large sting for a few days, the big animals would fear me and respect me. I would then be able to walk up to the watering hole and drink to my heart's content. I will then be able to taste the sweet grass shoots again too," begged Ronnie.





At the sound of Ronnie's excitement and at the thought of making his friend happy again, Billie agreed to lend Ronnie his very large sting.

"You may borrow it Ronnie, but you must return it to me on the third day!" buzzed Billie.

Ronnie was overjoyed! Where would he put it though?

Maybe if he wore the sting on top of his head the animals would be able to see it immediately and would know that Ronnie the Rhino was on his way. "I'm sure that even the Lions and the Leopards will be afraid of me!" shouted Ronnie in glee.

Billie carefully removed his sting, repositioning it on Ronnie's large square head, just between his huge nostrils.

Billie stood back and admired his work. How amazing! It looked as if his sting belonged there!

Billie then made Ronnie promise again that on the third day, they would meet under the thorn bush to transfer the sting back to Billie's bottom.



In all the excitement, Ronnie began to grow tired. He was now so comforted and reassured by his new sting, that a calmness lulled him into a deep deep sleep.



When Ronnie eventually awoke it was the beginning of a new day, and the African sun hung low over the Savannah.

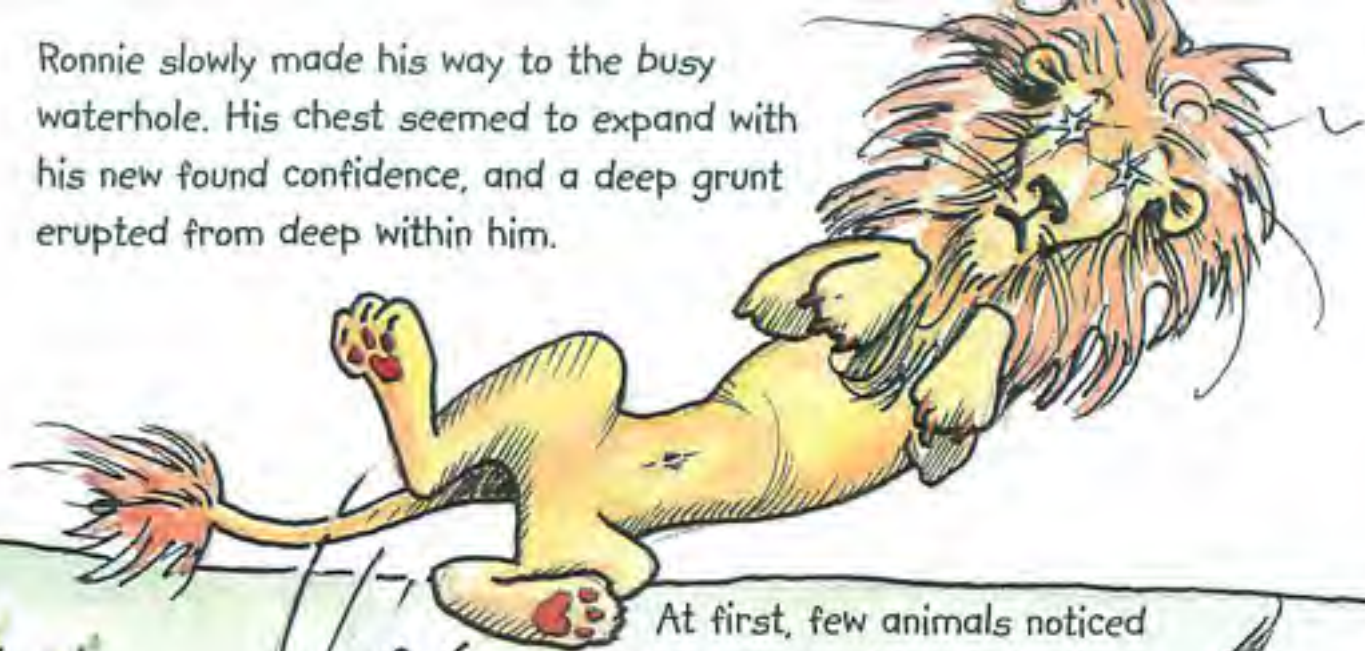


Once Ronnie had *blinked* a few times and cleared his eyes, he was shocked to see that Billie's large sting had grown into a **HUGE** sting overnight.



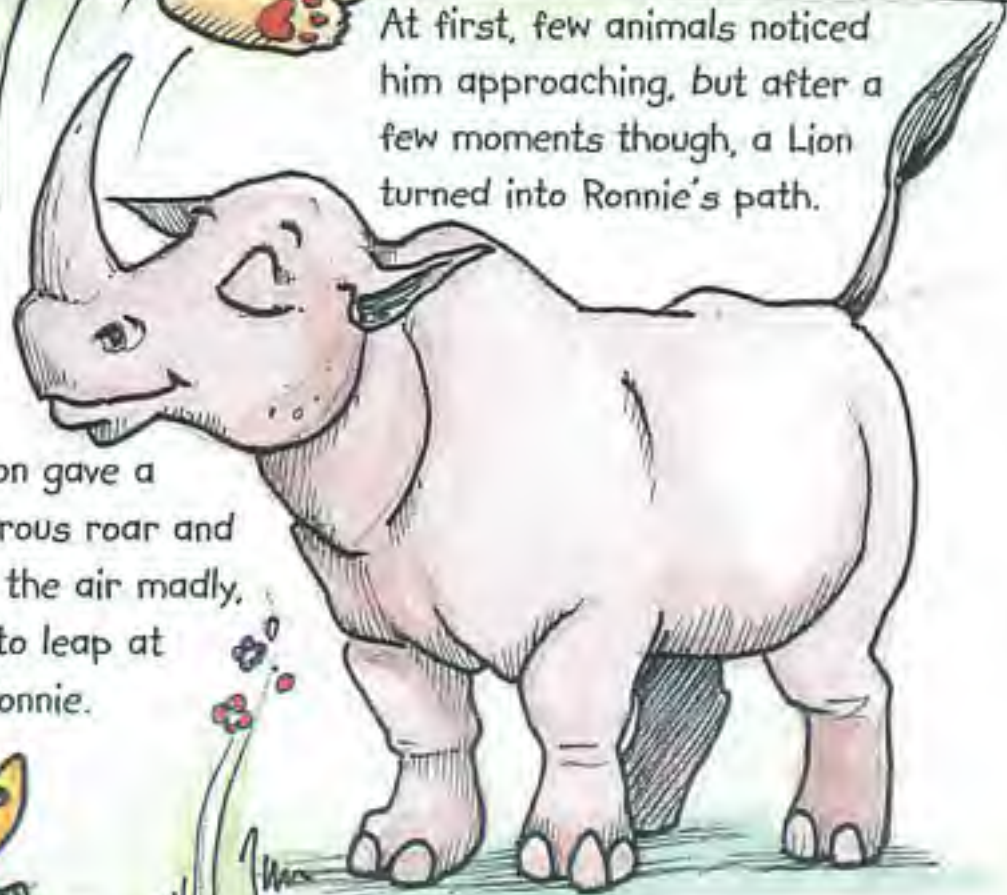
It looked like a gigantic horn!

Ronnie slowly made his way to the busy waterhole. His chest seemed to expand with his new found confidence, and a deep grunt erupted from deep within him.



At first, few animals noticed him approaching, but after a few moments though, a Lion turned into Ronnie's path.

The Lion gave a thunderous roar and pawed the air madly, ready to leap at poor Ronnie.



Ronnie trotted up to the angry Lion, and lowered his head as he approached.

As the Lion lunged at him, he aimed his horn and tossed his head, throwing the Lion high into the African sky.

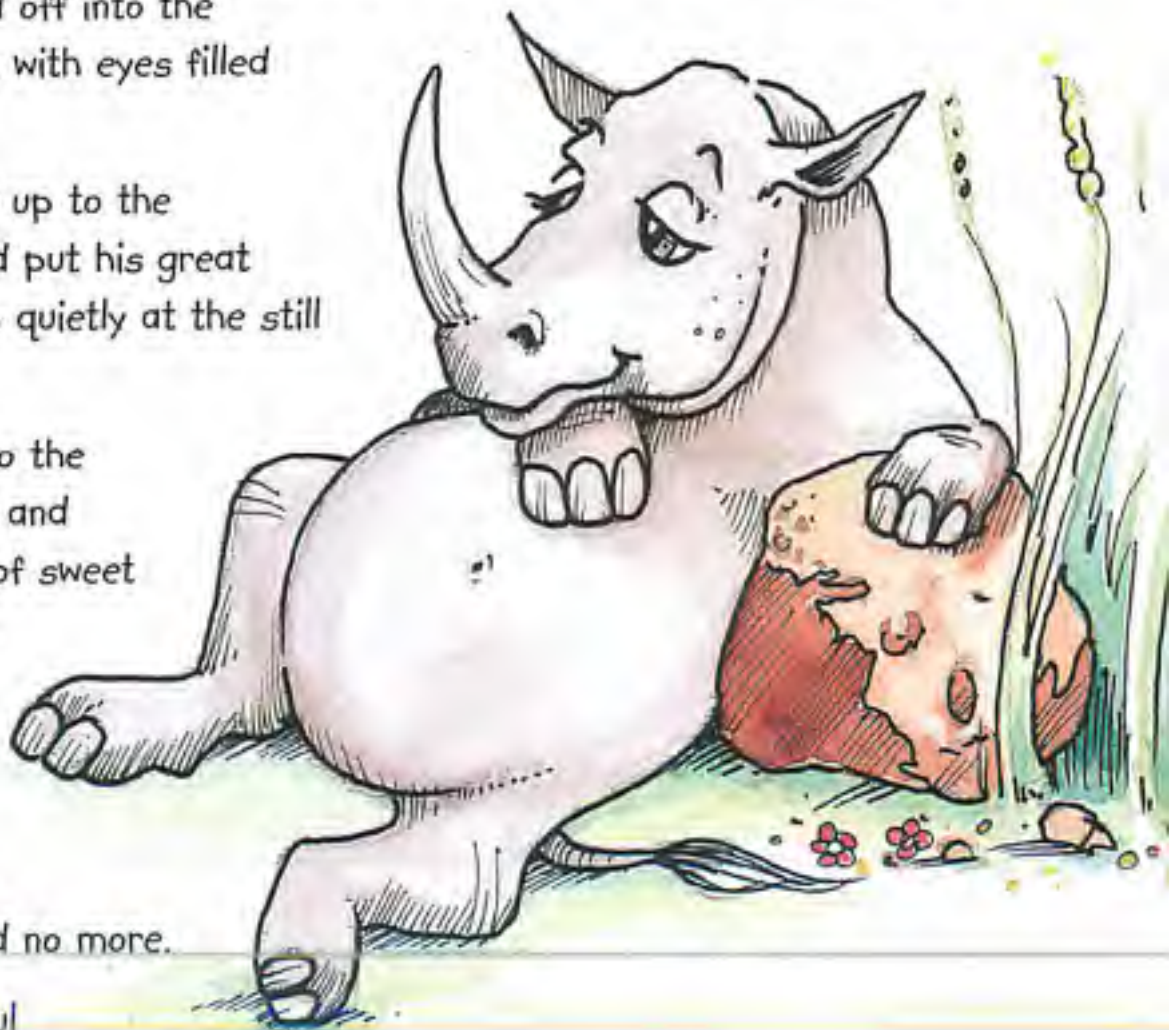
The other animals at the watering hole, whom had all been watching this encounter, darted off into the surrounding bush with eyes filled with fear.

Ronnie sauntered up to the watering hole and put his great head down to lap quietly at the still waters.

He then turned to the green lush grass and tore out chunks of sweet shoots from the moist soil.

He ate and he ate and he ate, until his tummy could hold no more.

What a wonderful feeling it was!



Later, as the warm sun had begun to set, Ronnie strolled over the vast African Plain. He chased off a resting herd of Zebra, claiming their shady tree as his own.



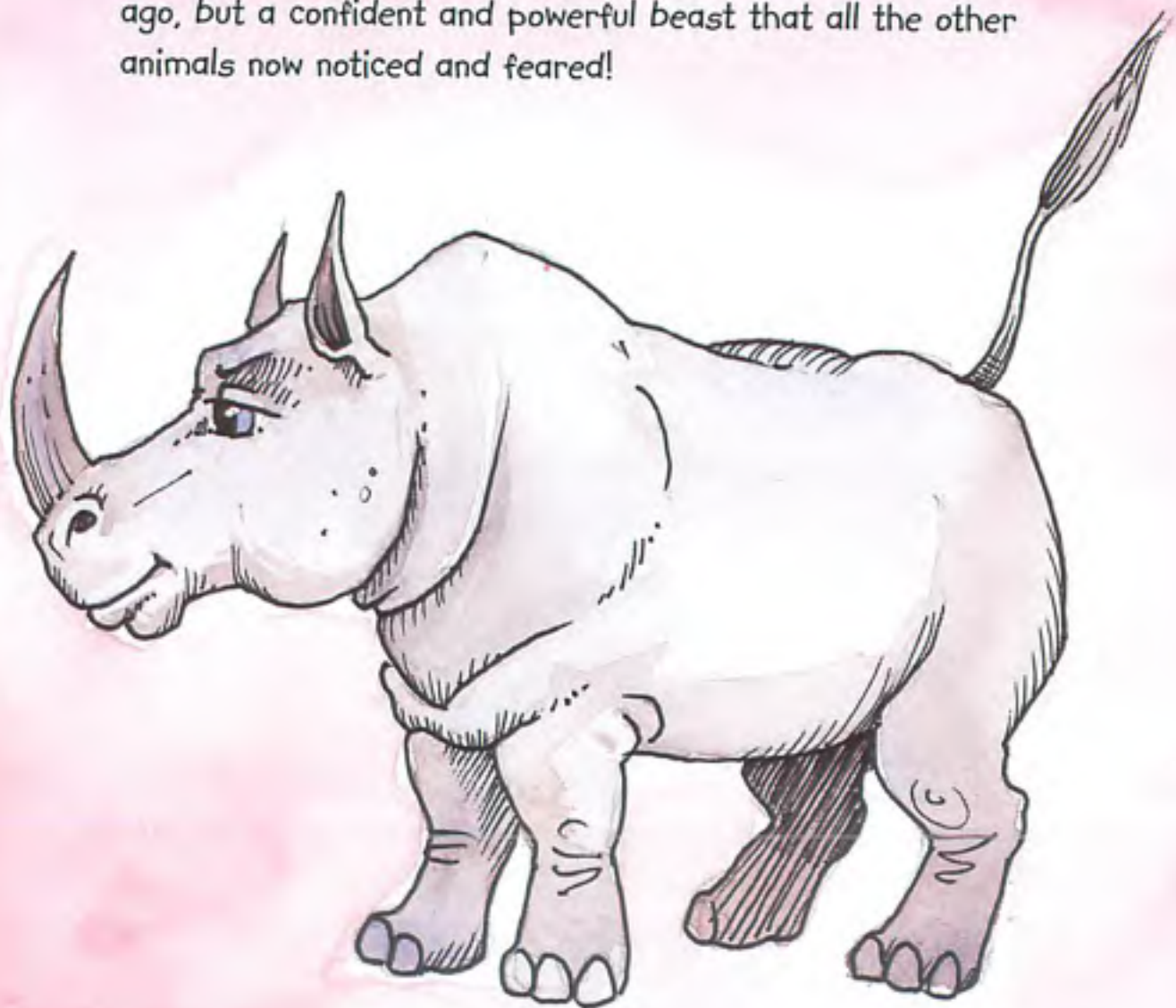


It was here that he rested, in the shade of the largest tree on the vast plain.

Eventually, Ronnie noticed how peace had settled over the Savannah and how the birds could once again be heard.

The next morning, Ronnie awoke to a quiet and still plain.

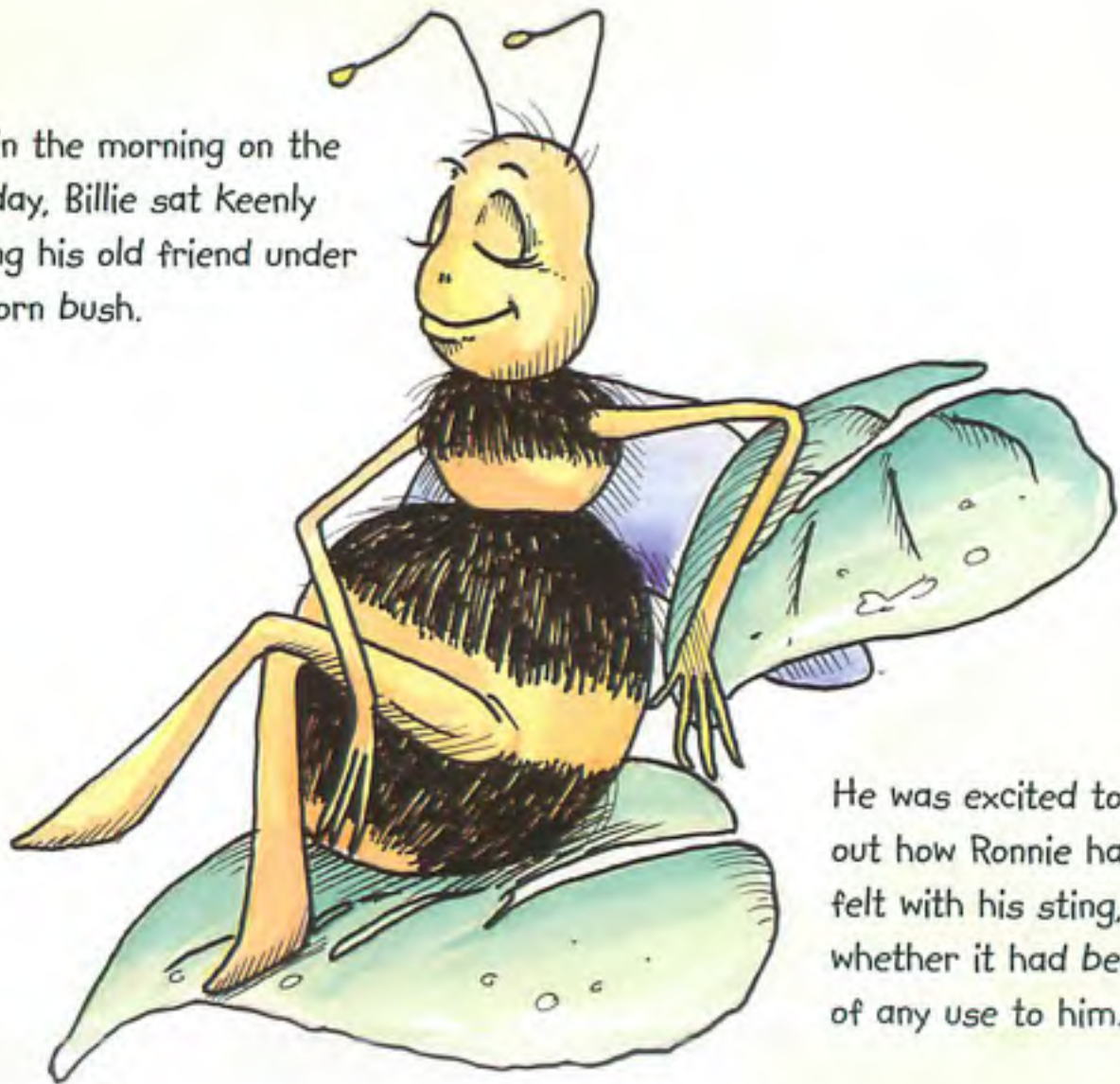
He was now no longer the timid creature from a few days ago, but a confident and powerful beast that all the other animals now noticed and feared!



Ronnie had now been transformed into one of the most unpredictable and powerful animals on the entire planet!

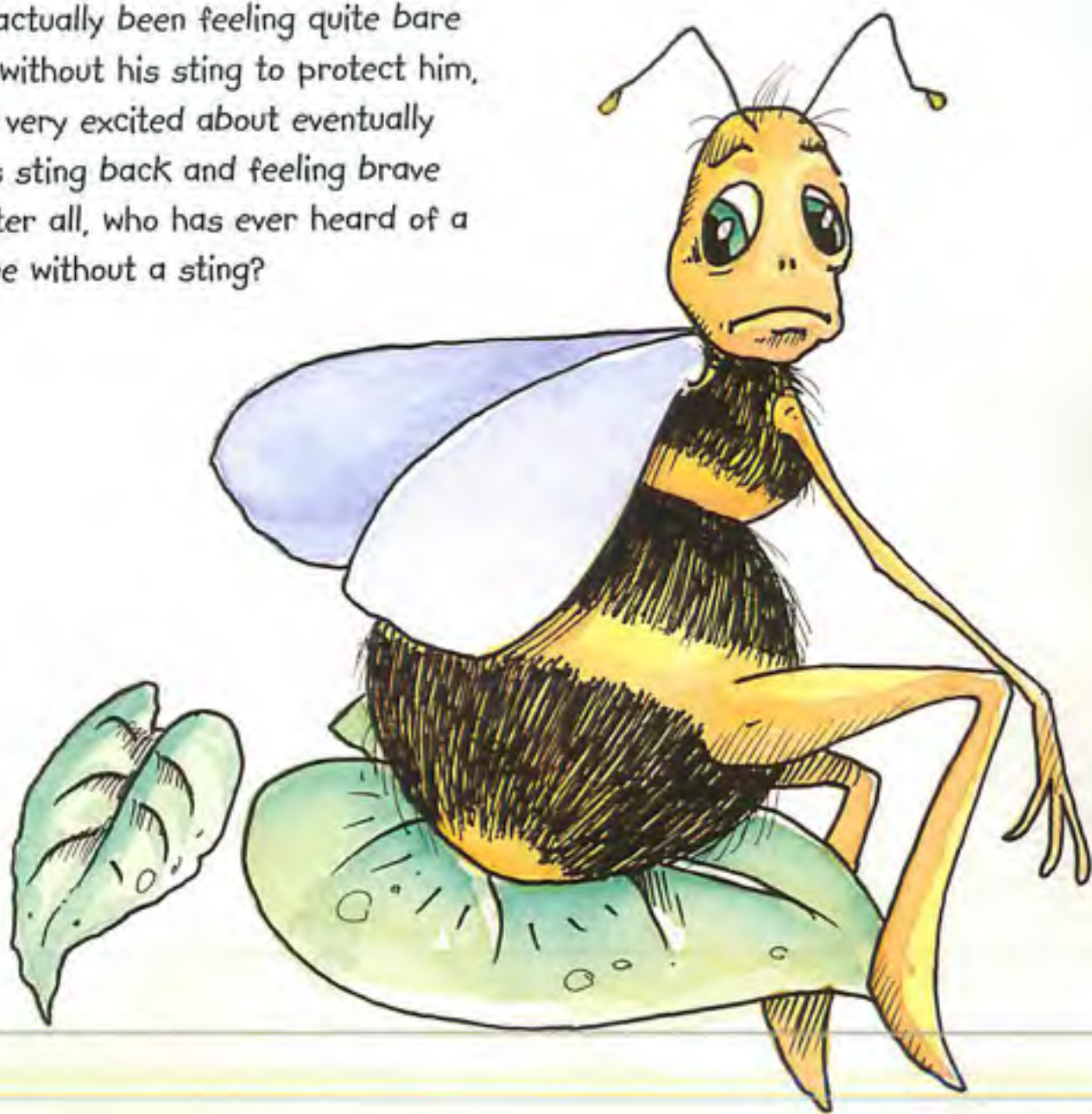


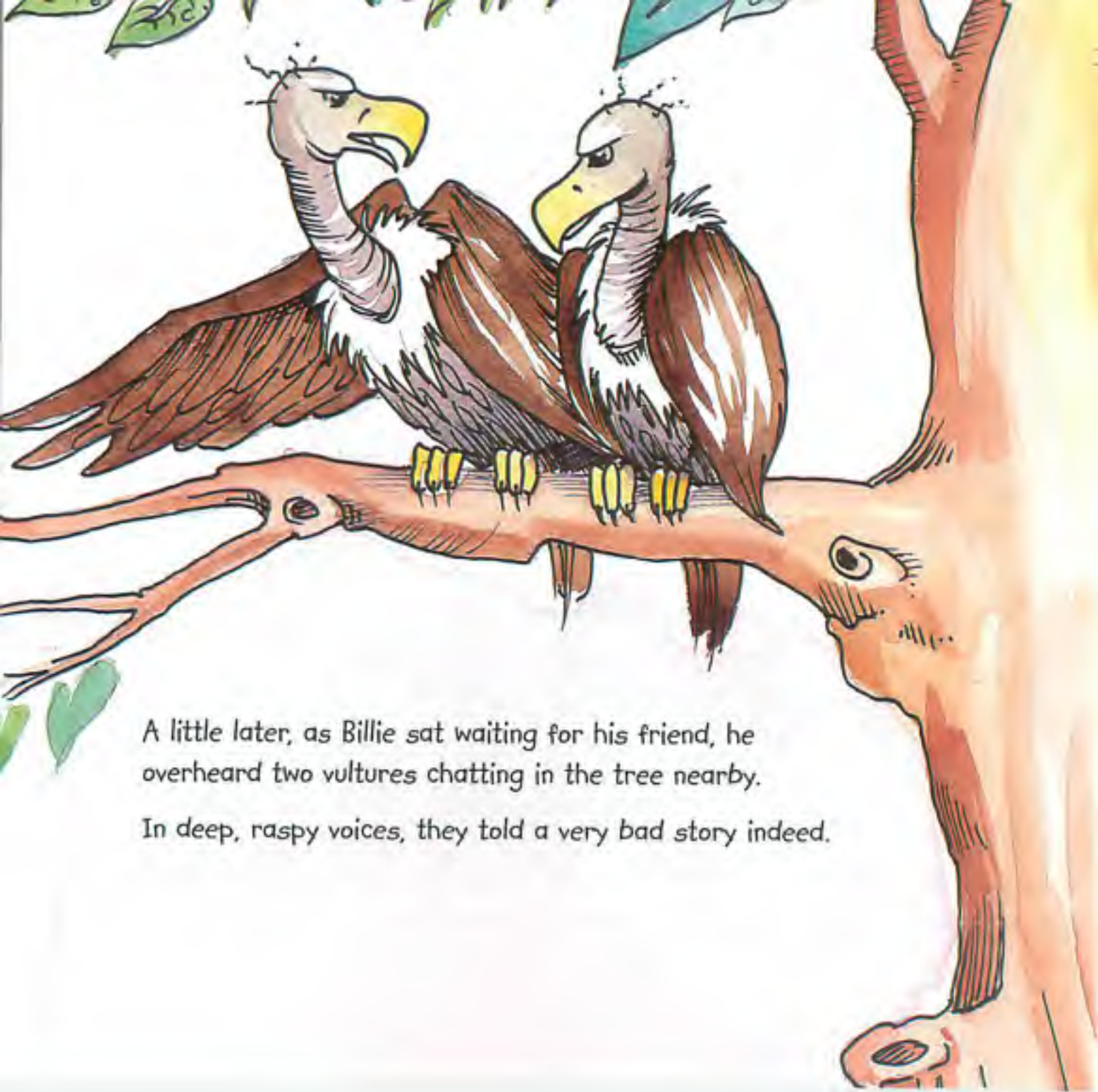
Early in the morning on the third day, Billie sat keenly awaiting his old friend under the thorn bush.



He was excited to find out how Ronnie had felt with his sting, and whether it had been of any use to him.

Billie had actually been feeling quite bare and weak without his sting to protect him, so he was very excited about eventually getting his sting back and feeling brave again. After all, who has ever heard of a Bumble Bee without a sting?



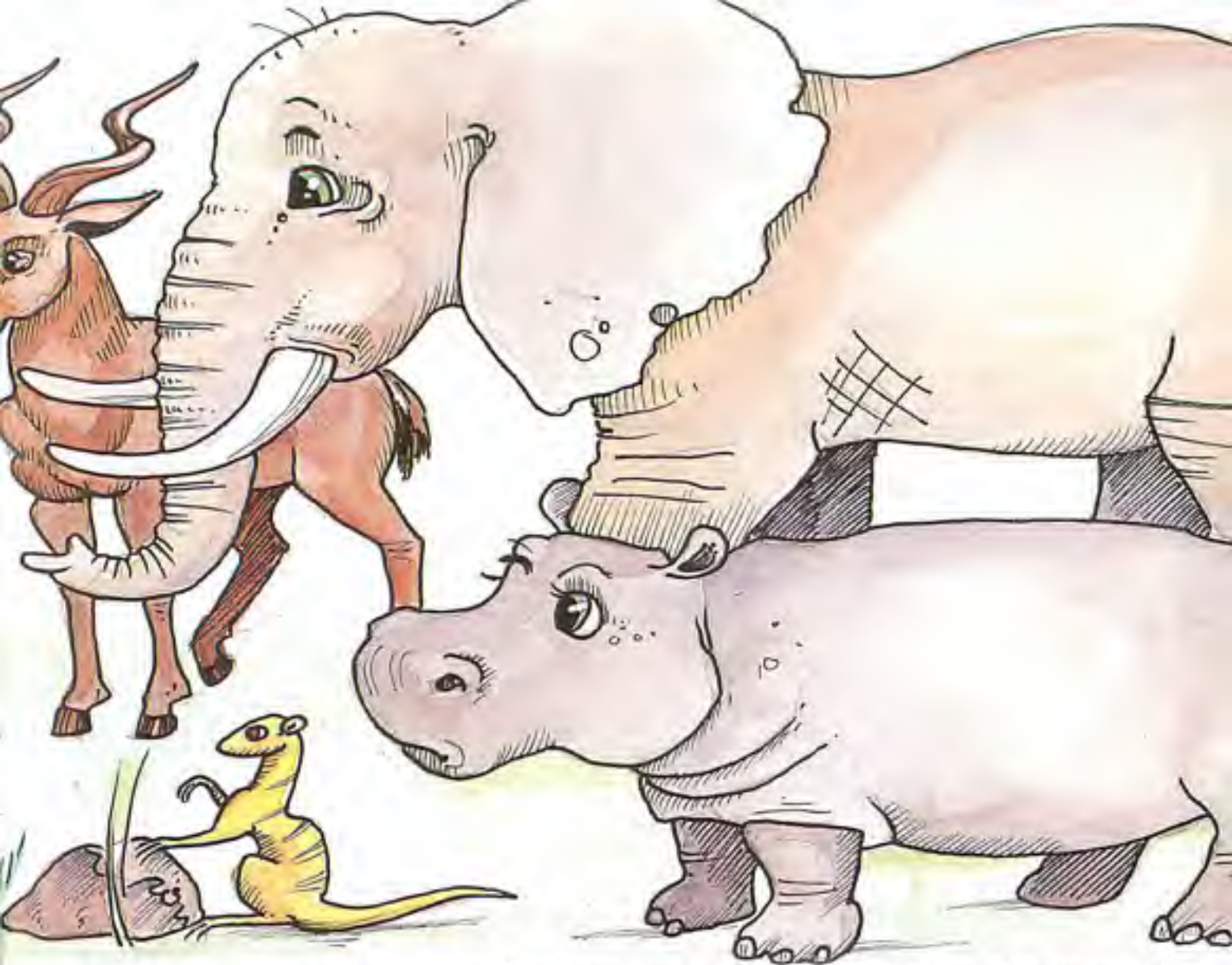


A little later, as Billie sat waiting for his friend, he overheard two vultures chatting in the tree nearby. In deep, raspy voices, they told a very bad story indeed.





Billie heard how the Chief of the Animal Kingdom had met with his aides to discuss Ronnie's angry and unacceptable behaviour over the last three days. The lions had even lodged an official complaint! The Chief and his aides were taking these complaints very seriously and with that, an ultimatum was given to Ronnie.



Ronnie, the Rhino, had to give Billie his sting back immediately, or else he would be thrown out of the Friendship Circle. This would mean that no animal, big or small, would be allowed to be friends with Ronnie ever again, as he had broken his promise to Billie to give his sting back and had turned his back on Billie's kindness and trust.



Poor Billie!

"How could this be?" he whispered in a panic.
"Ronnie would never do that to me. He would
never let me down.

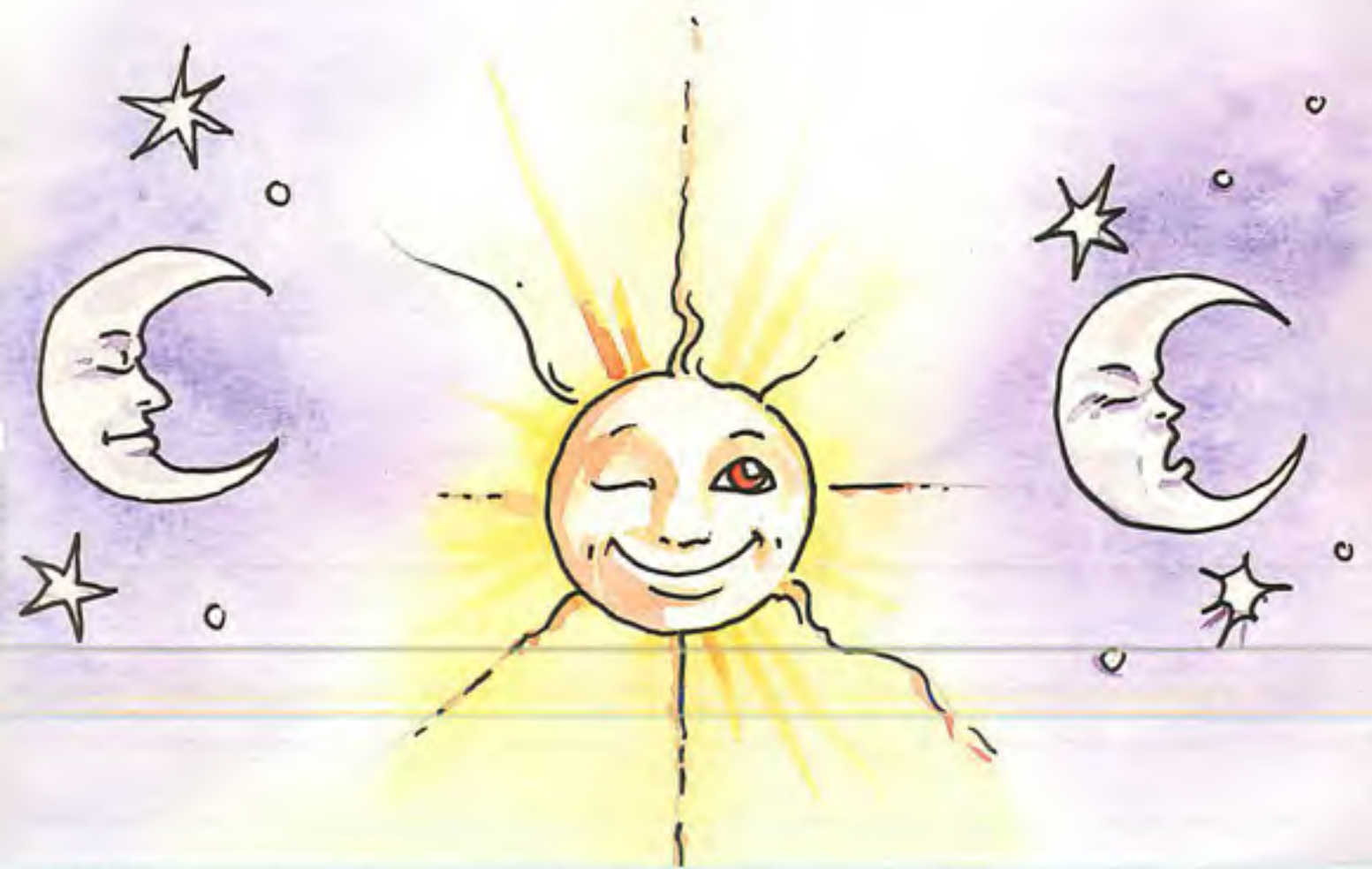
The vultures can't be telling the truth!"



The day passed slowly, the shadows grew longer and as darkness began to creep in, Billie began to wonder whether the vultures had in fact been telling the truth. There had been no sign of Ronnie all day and Billie began to fear the worst!

Days turned in weeks, and still Billie flew to the thorn bush each day.

Eventually, Billie finally realised that Ronnie had in fact abandoned him and that he would never ever return his sting.



Ronnie never did return Billie's sting.

Yes...he did think about doing the right thing, but he really needed Billie's sting in order to be strong and powerful! Never again did Ronnie want to be weak and afraid!

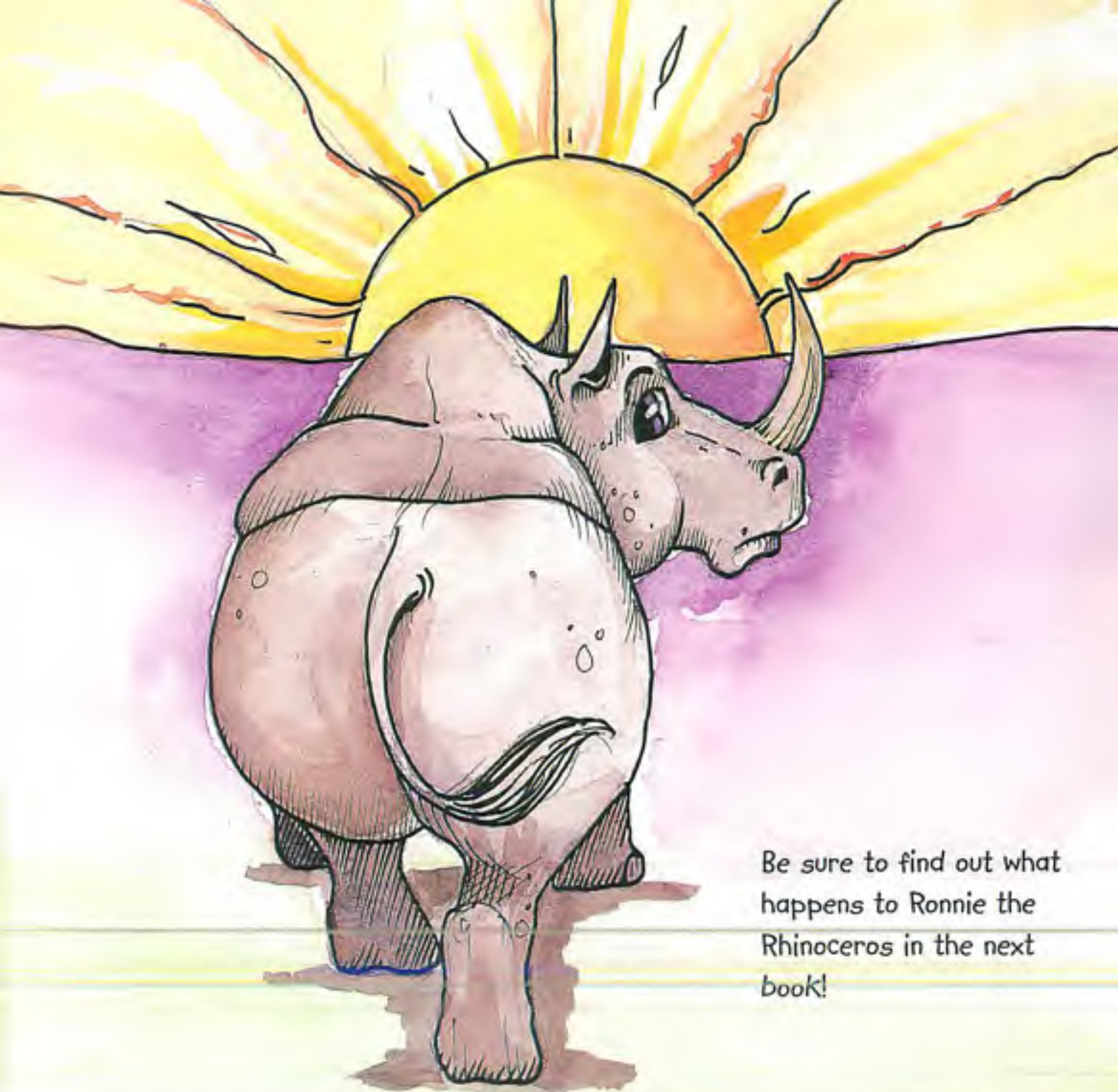
"Anyway," thought Ronnie, "who needs friends? Did Billie really need his sting?"

Thanks to Ronnie, all Rhinos today are grumpy and alone.

They find food alone, sleep alone and even eat alone, living well outside the Friendship Circle.

Will Ronnie have to give account for his actions and behaviour in the future? or can he really be happy and content knowing that he has deceived his best friend ?

Well, now you know why the Bumble Bee has absolutely no sting at all!



Be sure to find out what happens to Ronnie the Rhinoceros in the next book!

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AND
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