

Camping Fun

Max was going on a camping trip with the Beavers. He was practising how to set out his sleeping area. This was the final step in getting his camping badge. He had been camping before in Ash Woods. But this time he had to show his Beaver leader that he knew all the skills for camping.





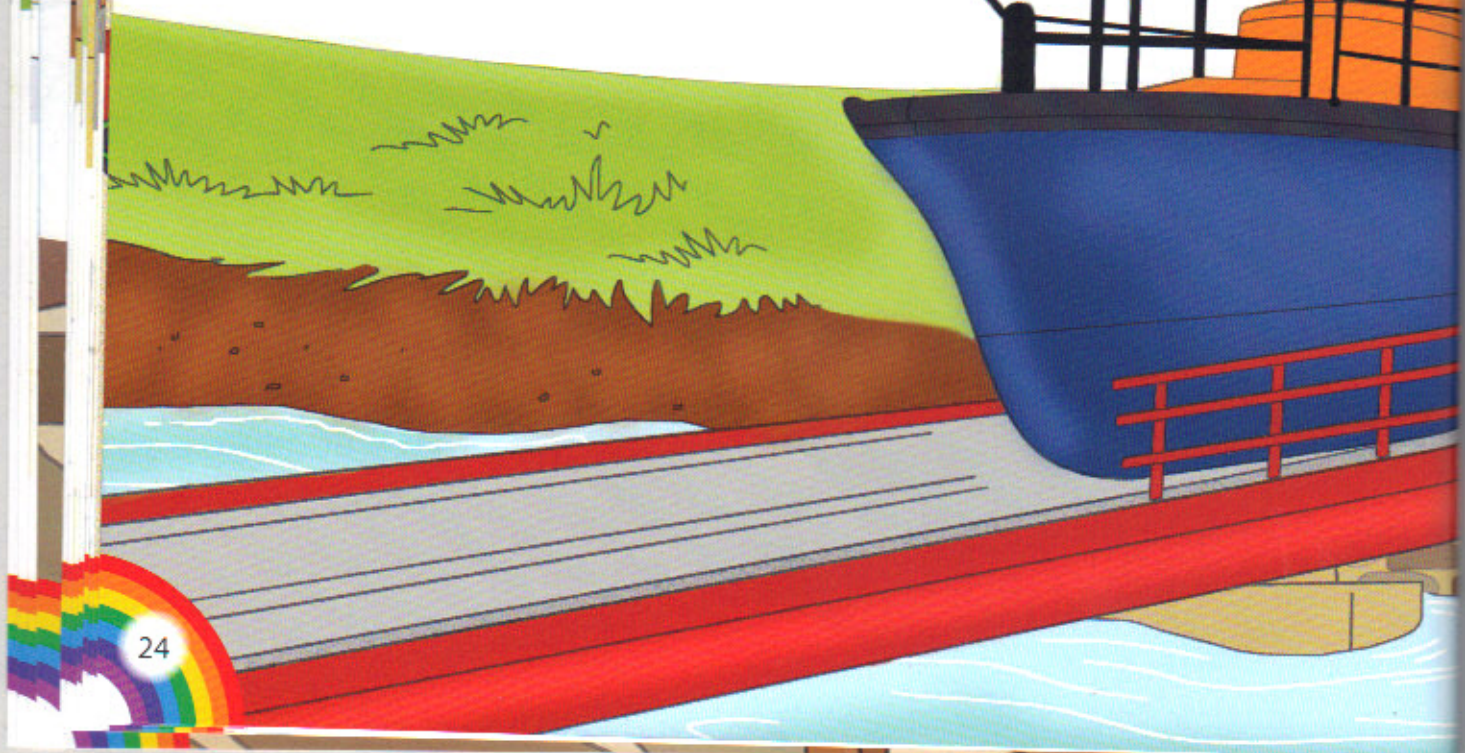
John is a Scout leader. He looks after the Beavers. Max's daddy loved being a Beaver when he was young. He brought Max to join up two years ago. Since then, Max has gained four badges.

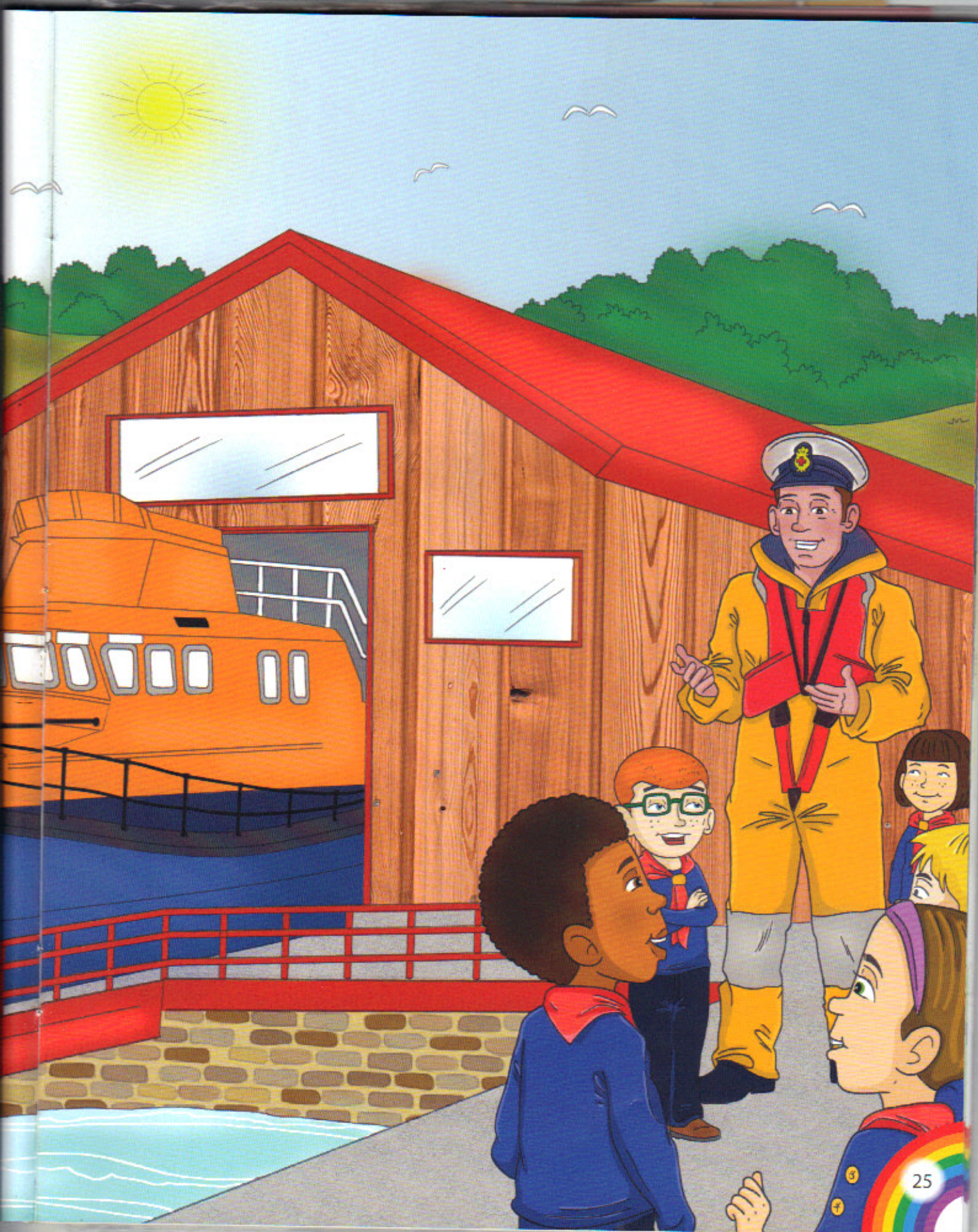
The Scouts and Beavers meet every Wednesday in the Scout Hall from 7pm to 8pm. Max's favourite part is making knots. He also loves when they visit interesting places.

Max loved the day they visited the lifeboat station. He did not know what to expect when he got there. Tom, the captain of the station, brought them on a tour. 'Did you know that we don't just save people? Last year we rescued dogs, sheep, cows, a whale and a dolphin,' Tom said.

Max asked what had happened to the dolphin. Tom told them that the dolphin had become stranded onshore when he swam in too far.

'We checked that he was not injured. Then we brought him back to deeper water. Now we sometimes see him when we are out on rescue missions. He's a friendly fellow!' said Tom.







The following Saturday Max and all the other Beavers got on the bus. They were all very excited as this time they were going camping in an adventure centre. Max waved goodbye to his mammy and sat on the bus beside his friend Ben. This was Ben's first camping trip so Max promised to help him out.



The journey to the adventure centre was one hour by bus. Ben and Max had great fun waving at cars and trucks hoping that the drivers would honk the horn at them. Most people just waved back but one driver of a big truck honked the horn twice. This frightened the bus driver who waved his fist at him.



'Look, Ben, we are nearly there,' said Max as he saw a sign for The Adventure Scout Centre. Max was very excited. Ben looked nervously out the window. It was his first time away from home. He didn't want to admit it to Max but he was already missing his family.

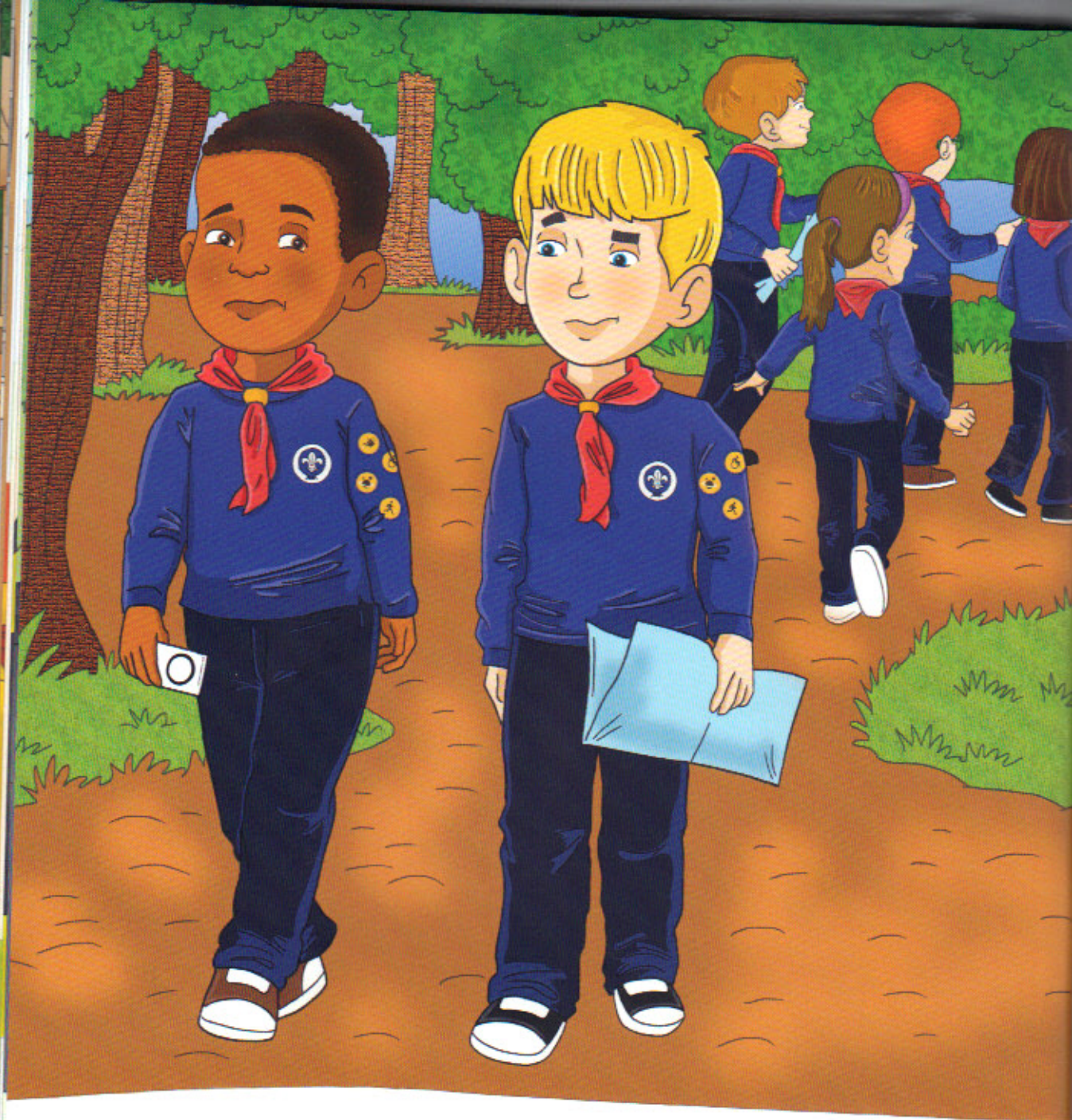
John gathered the children together to tell them about the plan for the day.

'First we will pitch our tents so that we are ready for the evening. The orienteering starts at 12 o'clock. Then, later in the afternoon you will choose two activities to do.'



Max and Ben started to put their tent up. Max was nervous as he knew John was watching him. He hoped to gain his next badge. After a shaky start, they had the tent up.

'Let's hope it's not a windy night,' whispered Max.



At 12 o'clock John gave out the orienteering maps. He also gave them some tips on how to stay safe and on course. All the Beavers went off in pairs. There were six points on the control map for them to find. Ben held the map and off they went. Max held the compass and followed the instructions that Ben gave him.

'Let's go straight and then left,' said Ben.

They walked for what seemed like a long time, but still they could not see the control point. They went back, they went forward. Then they went back again and forward again! Max was starting to become impatient.

'Here, give me the map, Ben. This doesn't seem right.'

'No, I am reading the map correctly,' said Ben as Max peered over his shoulder.

'Ben, you are holding the map upside down!' said Max.

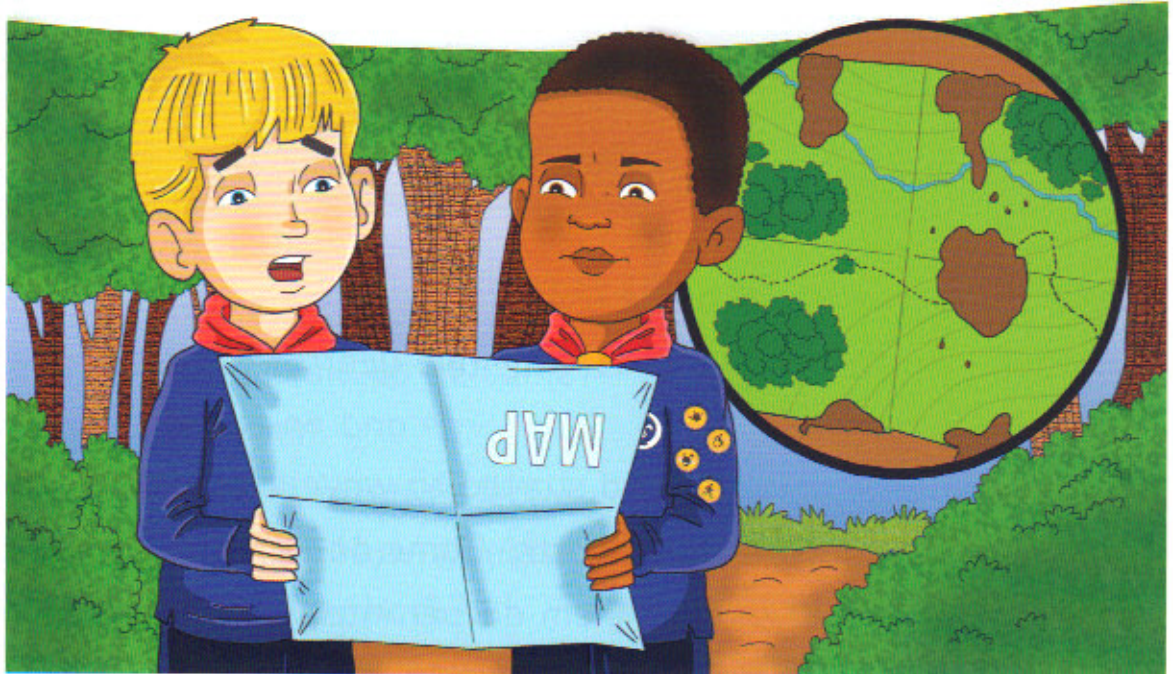
'Oh no,' said Ben.

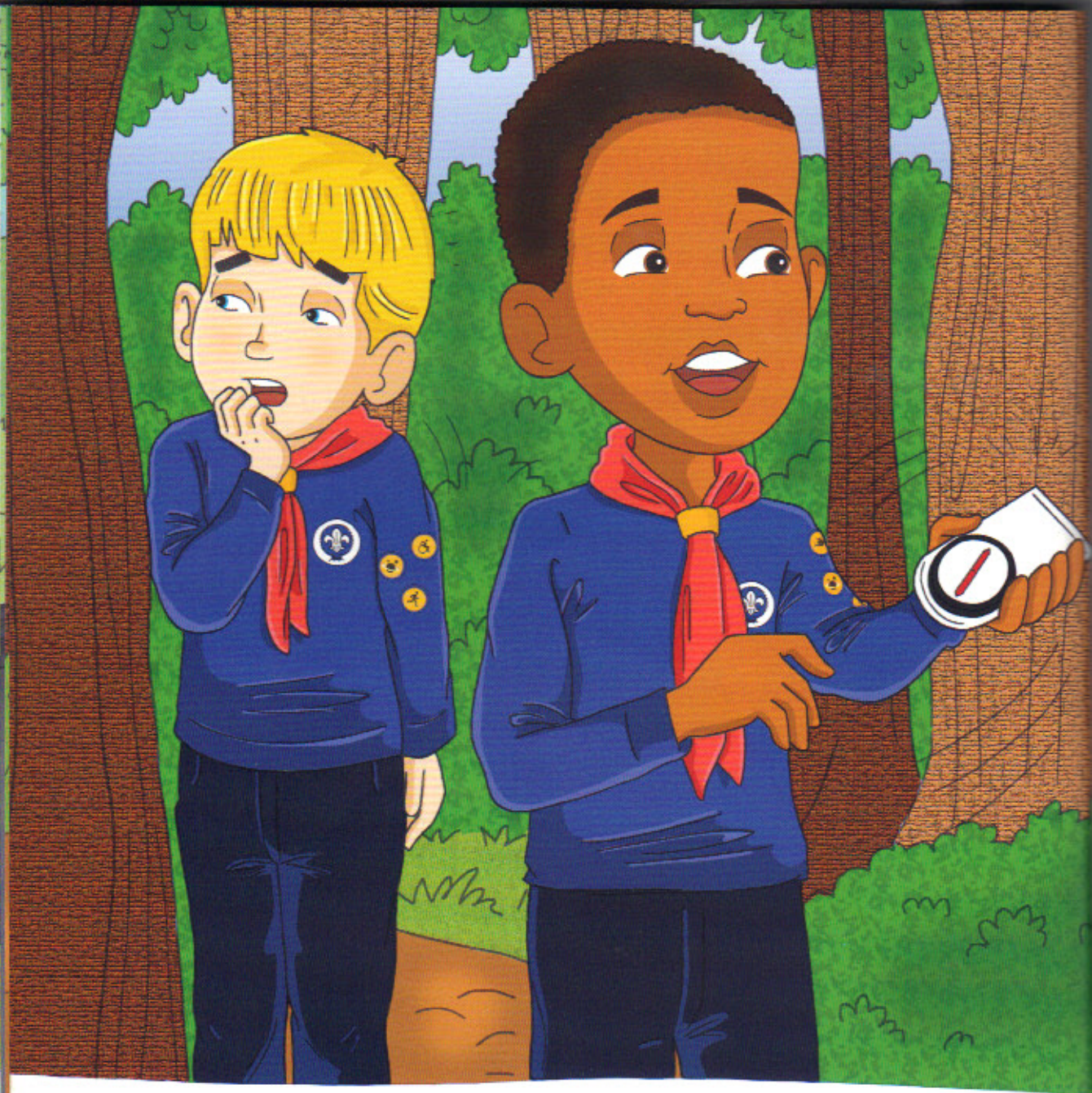
Ben was so disappointed that he dropped the map.

It landed in wet mud! Max tried his best to clean it off.

But it was no use. It was now very hard to read the map.

'What will we do now?' asked Ben.





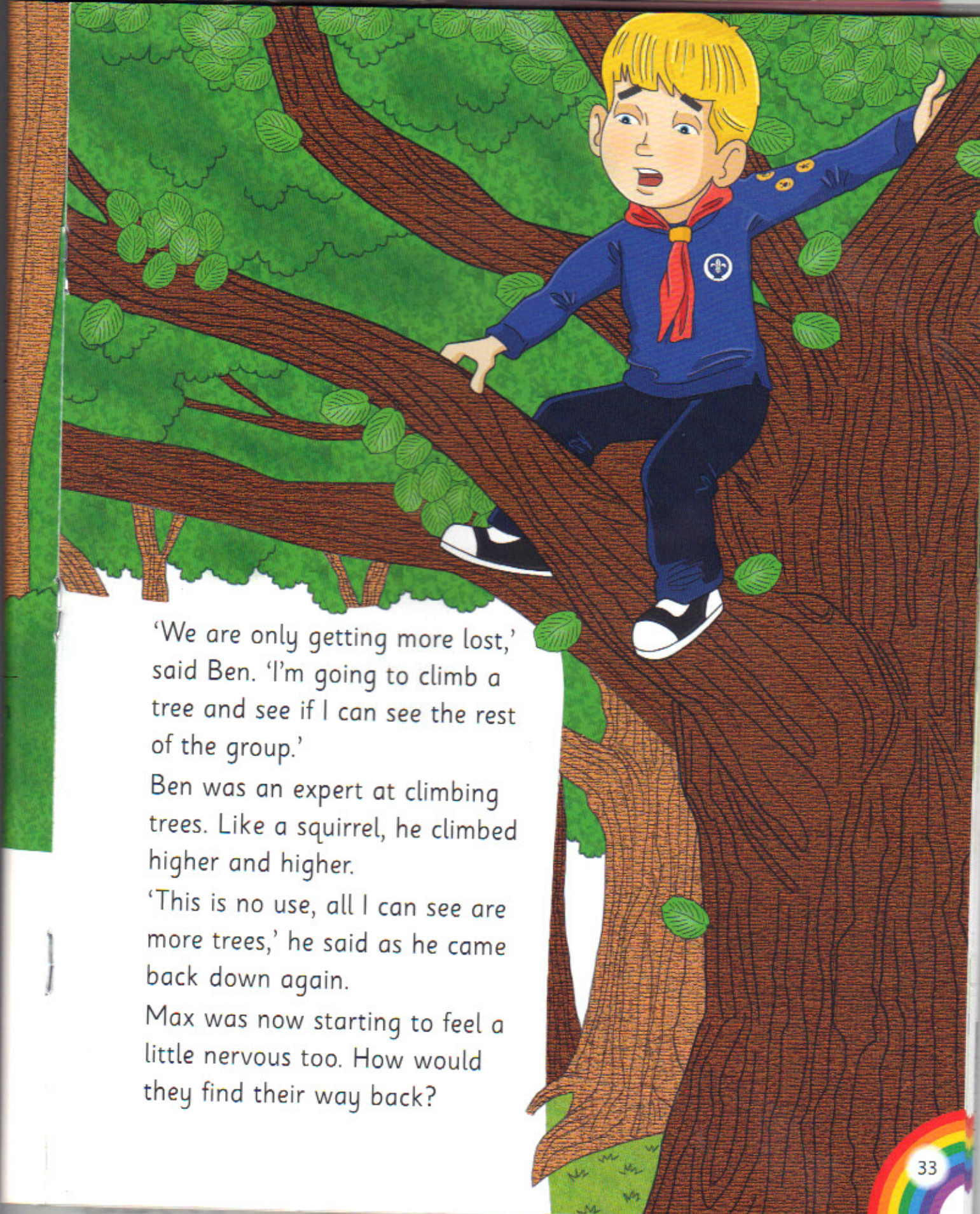
Max knew he had to be brave.

'It's okay, Ben, I've been a Beaver for two years, I can read my compass,' he said.

Max took out the compass and started to wave it about.

'I think that we need to travel north. Come on, let's go.'

But this only seemed to take them deeper into the forest.



‘We are only getting more lost,’ said Ben. ‘I’m going to climb a tree and see if I can see the rest of the group.’

Ben was an expert at climbing trees. Like a squirrel, he climbed higher and higher.

‘This is no use, all I can see are more trees,’ he said as he came back down again.

Max was now starting to feel a little nervous too. How would they find their way back?



Just then Max had an idea.

'This ground is so muddy, we must have left tracks behind us. Maybe we can trace them back,' he said.

Eventually, they found the two sets of footprints they were looking for. As they walked along, they looked forward and back to check that they were on the correct path.



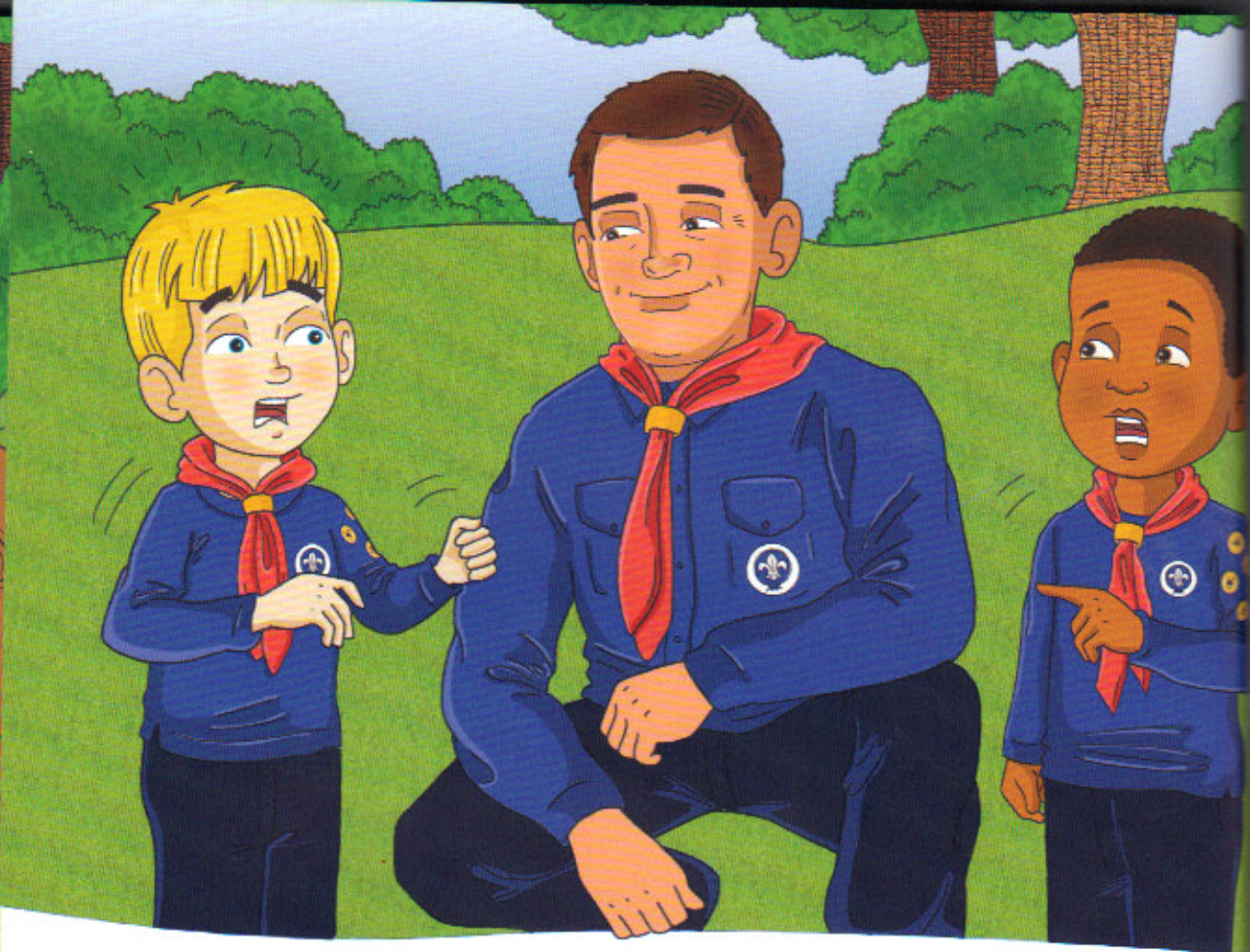
Just then, Ben darted behind a tree.

'Ben, stop messing! What are you hiding there for?' asked Max. Ben whispered to Max, 'Look behind you, there are four sets of footprints. I think someone is following us!'

Max had a look and sure enough there were four sets of footprints on the ground. The two boys were frightened.

They ran away fast, shouting, 'Help, help!'

Eventually, they made it back to camp where they found John.



John calmed the boys down. He listened to their story about the four sets of footprints.

‘So, let me get this straight! On your way back you noticed there were two sets of footprints in front of you and four sets behind you?’

‘Yes, we were being followed,’ said a nervous Max.

John laughed.

‘Boys, the reason there were four sets of footprints on the way back was that you had left two sets of footprints each. You left one set on the way into the forest and the other on the way back. There was no one following you.’

Max and Ben felt glad but a bit silly.





‘You two have had enough excitement for one day,’ said John. ‘Why don’t you help me gather twigs and wood for the campfire tonight?’

This time Max and Ben stayed close to John. They were afraid that they would get lost again. They gathered lots of dry wood and helped John to build the fire. Max hoped that his earlier mistake would not stop him from getting his camping badge. He worked extra hard to help build a good fire.

After a picnic lunch, the Beavers chose their activities for the afternoon. Max joked that he did not want to do the maze as he felt that he had been in a maze already that morning. Instead, himself and Ben chose the obstacle course and the grass sledges.



They easily completed the obstacle course and their team of four won the relay. The grass sledges were great fun. They squealed with delight as they flew down the hill. 'I'm flying!' screamed Ben.



When they got back to the camp, John had the fire lighting and everyone helped him to prepare a campfire dinner. They hungrily munched their food.

‘Why does food always taste so nice when you eat it outside?’ wondered Max.

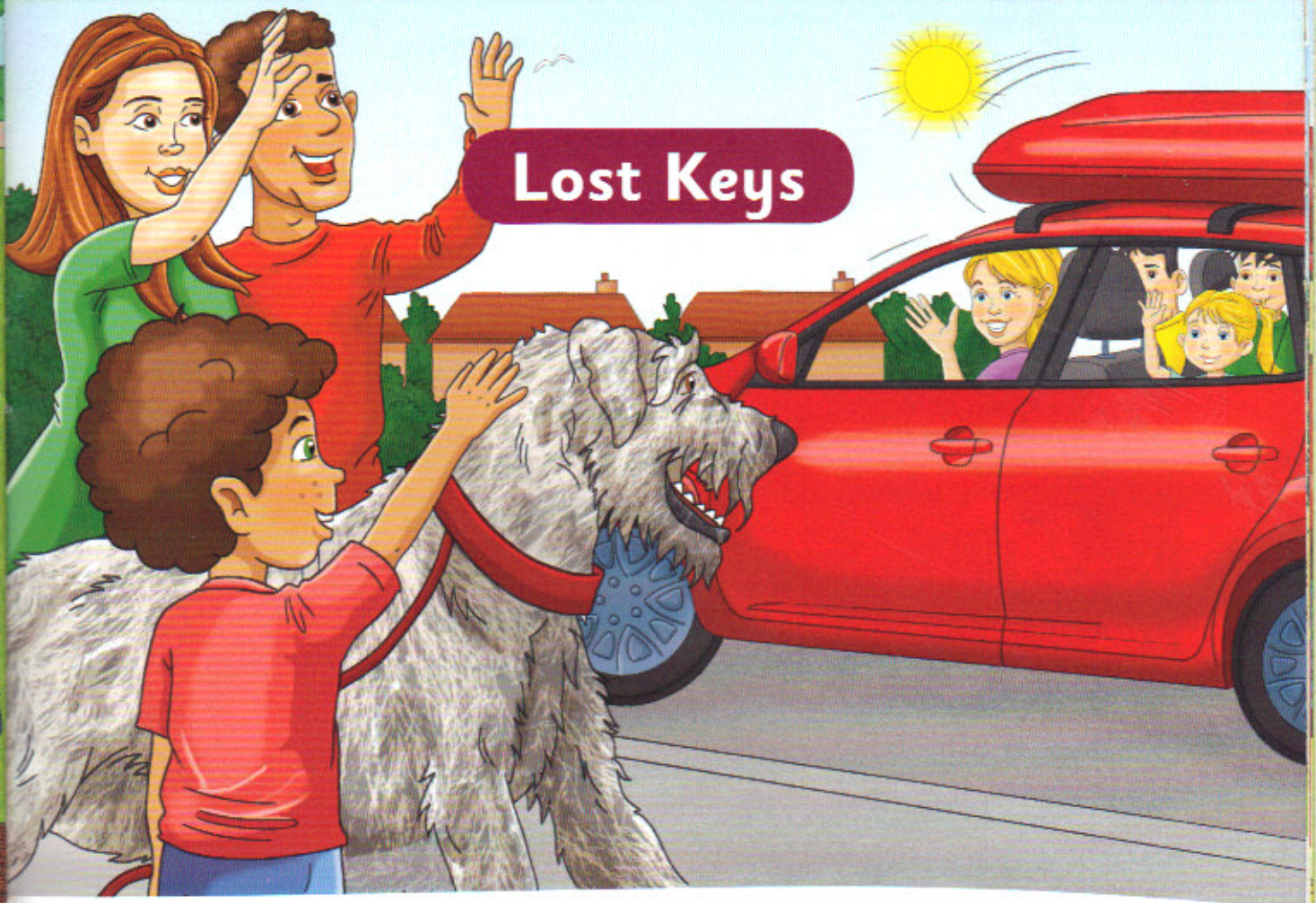
They all helped to clean up after dinner, making sure to pick up all the rubbish. Then they sat around the campfire singing songs and telling stories. No one argued with John when he said it was time for bed. They were all ready to sleep.



Ben and Max woke early the next morning. They were refreshed after a good sleep.

'I didn't think a tent could be so comfortable,' said Ben as he stood and stretched outside. John told them to eat their breakfast and pack their tents quickly as the bus would be leaving at 10 o'clock. After a final check that they had left the woods clean and litter-free, the Beavers boarded the bus for their return journey home. John told Max that he had earned his camping badge and that he was ready to move up to Cubs. Max was so happy. He couldn't wait to tell his daddy the good news.

Lost Keys



When Emma's family went on a holiday to Galway, they left Rags with Luke. Luke was delighted.

'I will take him for a walk every day,' he told Emma.

Rags was delighted too. He wagged his tail and knocked over a vase of flowers. Pip was not pleased, but she was not afraid of Rags anymore.

If he came near her she arched her back and hissed.

Rags was a bit afraid of Pip now!

'Bye, Luke. Bye, Rags,' said Emma as they drove off.

'Bye, Emma,' shouted Luke.

'Woof, woof!' barked Rags.



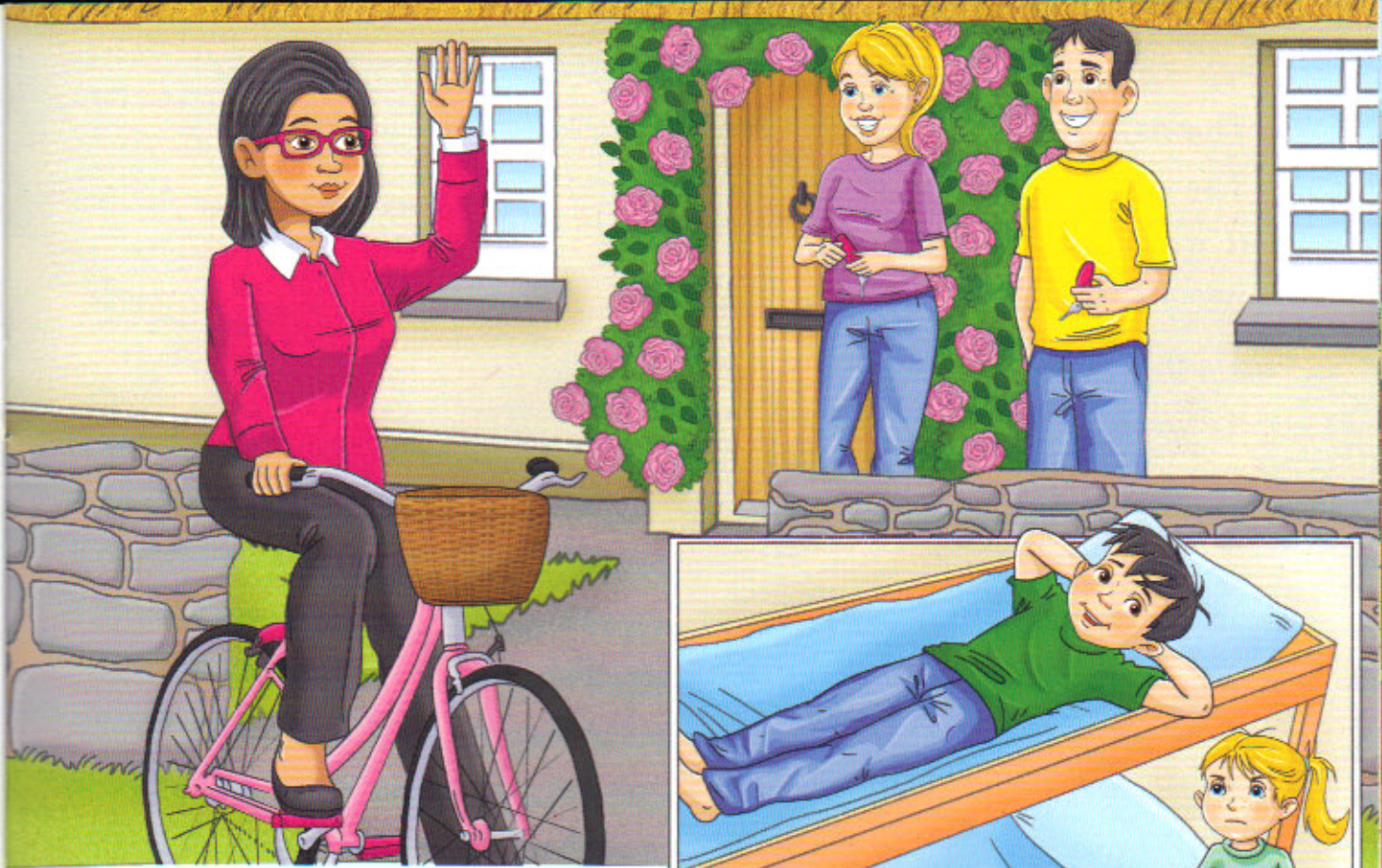
It was a long drive to Galway and it was late when they got there.
The lady who owned the holiday home was waiting for them.



Emma got out of one side of the car and Adam got out of the other side. They were both tired of sitting for so long but they were very excited.

‘Welcome!’ said the lady. ‘Come inside and I’ll show you around.’

The house was very pretty and it had roses growing around the door. It had a thatched roof and a brown front door. It was lovely but it was not very big and so it did not take long to look around.



The lady gave one set of keys to Daddy and a spare set to Mammy.

‘It is only a ten minute walk to the beach,’ she told them.
‘Have a great holiday!’

The lady rode off on her bicycle. There were only two bedrooms in the house so Adam and Emma had to share.

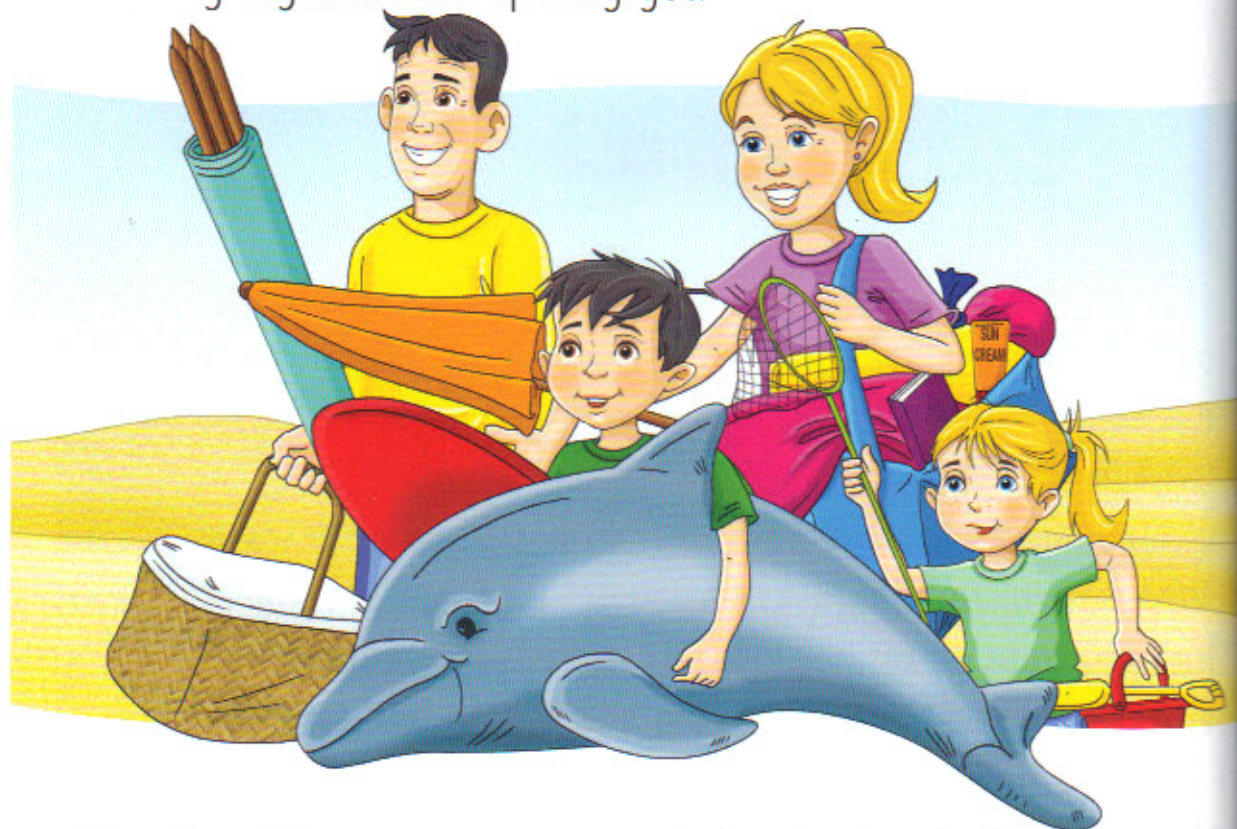
‘I get the top bunk because I am the eldest,’ laughed Adam.
‘That’s not fair!’ complained Emma.

‘Sometimes you sleepwalk,’ Mammy reminded Emma, ‘so it is probably safer if you take the bottom bunk.’

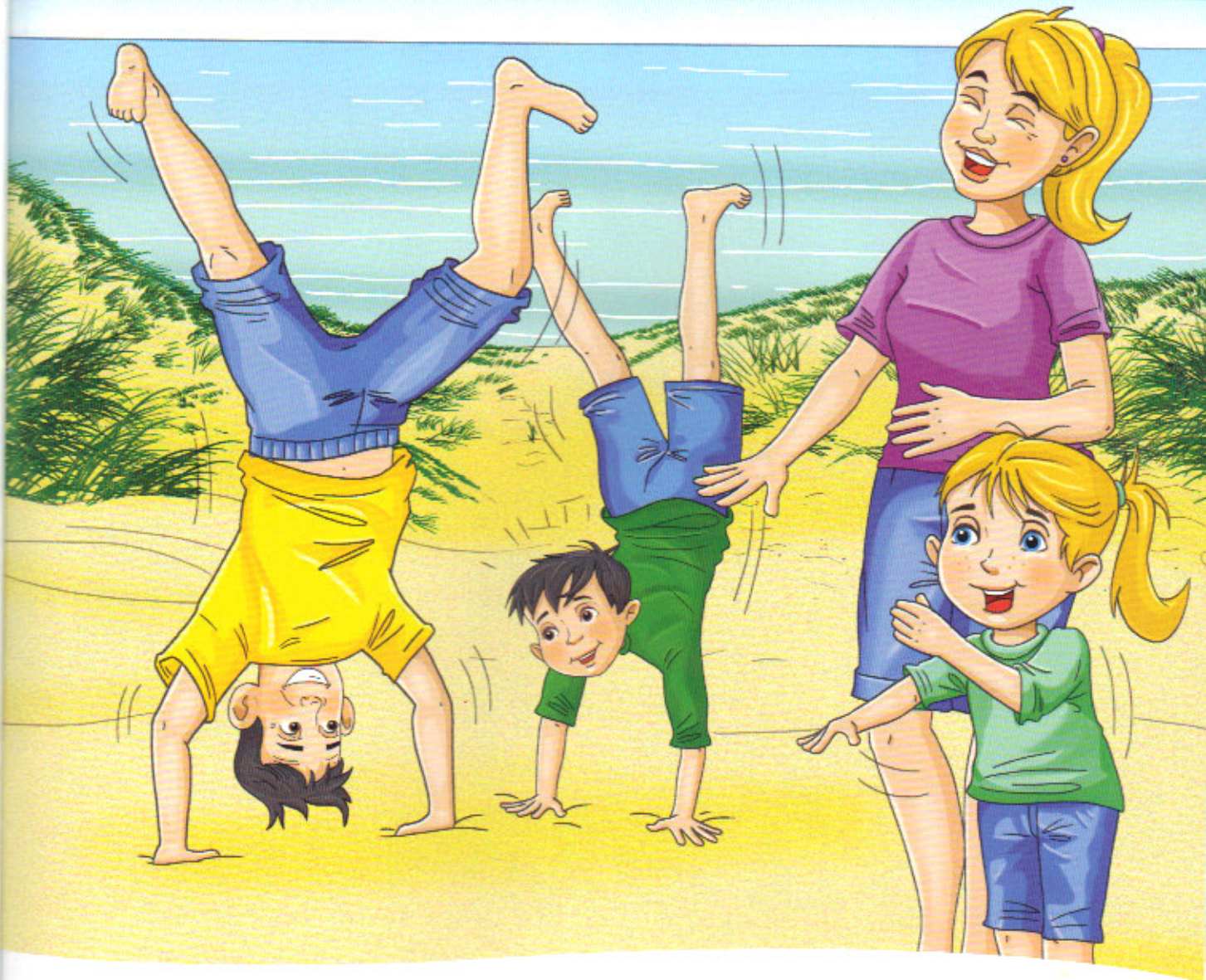
Emma knew that Mammy was right but she still didn’t think that it was fair.

The next day, Emma was awake early. The sun was shining in the window and it was a beautiful morning.

'Wake up, Adam!' she said. 'Let's go!' Then she woke up Mammy and Daddy. 'Get up lazy bones!' she shouted. 'The sun is shining. It's time to hit the beach!' 'Okay, okay!' laughed Daddy and Mammy together and up they got.



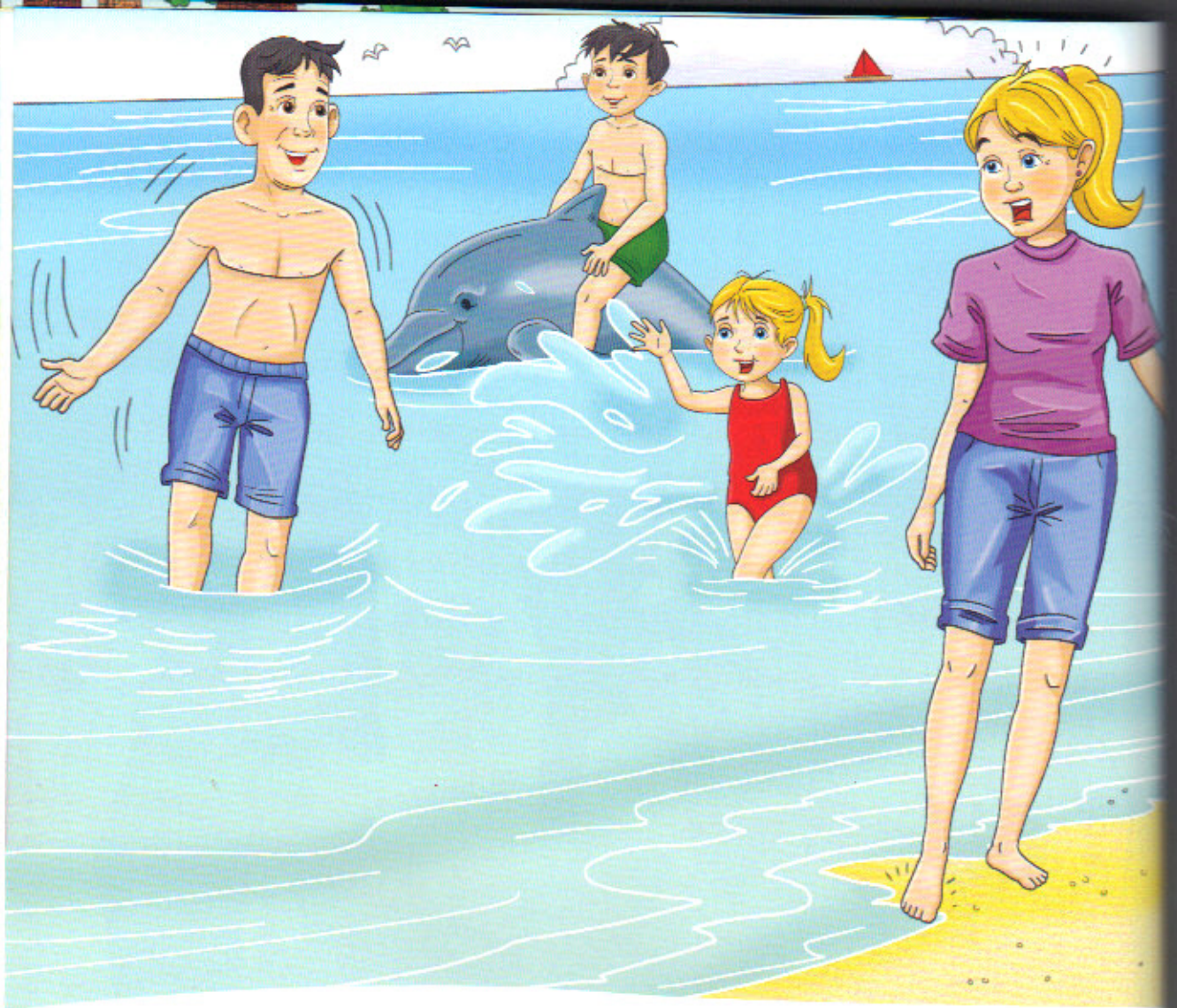
After breakfast everyone got ready for the beach. Daddy packed the picnic, the windbreaker and the parasol. Mammy packed a rug, togs, towels, sun cream and a book. Emma took her bucket, spade and a fishing net. Adam took his bodyboard, frisbee and the dolphin.



'There's too much to carry!' laughed Mammy. 'We'll have to take the car!'

So they threw everything into the car and off they went. There were sand dunes at the top of the beach. Emma was so excited that she did a cartwheel. So did Mammy.

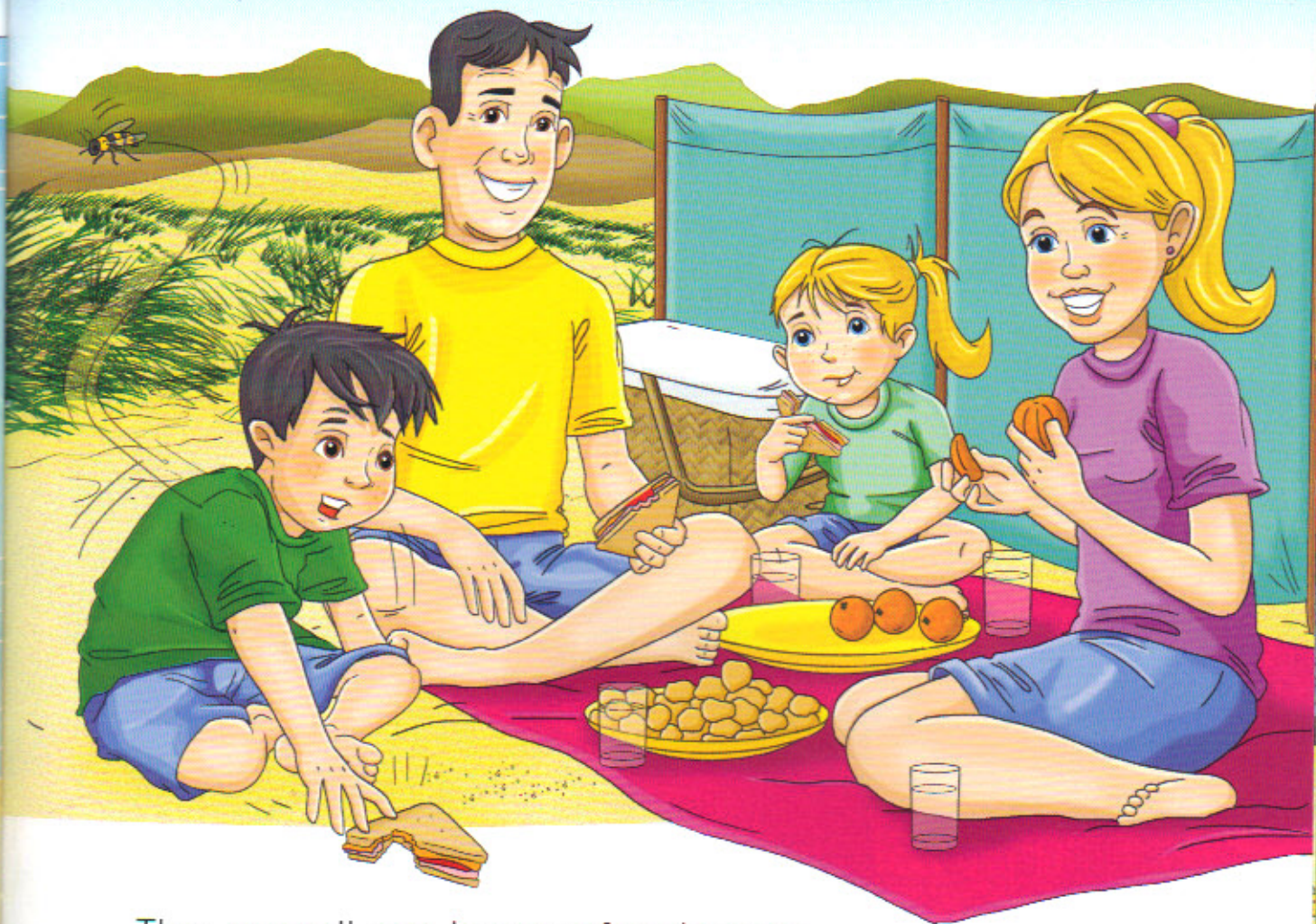
'We can do better than that!' laughed Daddy and he and Adam did handstands. But Daddy's handstand wasn't very good and he fell in a heap on the sand. They all laughed.



Daddy put up the windbreaker and Mammy spread out the picnic rug. Adam and Emma put on their togs and raced down to the sea.

‘Come on in Mammy and Daddy,’ shouted Emma. ‘It’s roasting!’ Mammy did not agree.

‘It’s freezing,’ she said as she dipped her big toe in the water. ‘If you splash me, I’m not coming in,’ said Daddy nervously. But that didn’t stop Emma splashing him, so he splashed her back. Adam floated along happily on his dolphin. Afterwards they had a great swim.



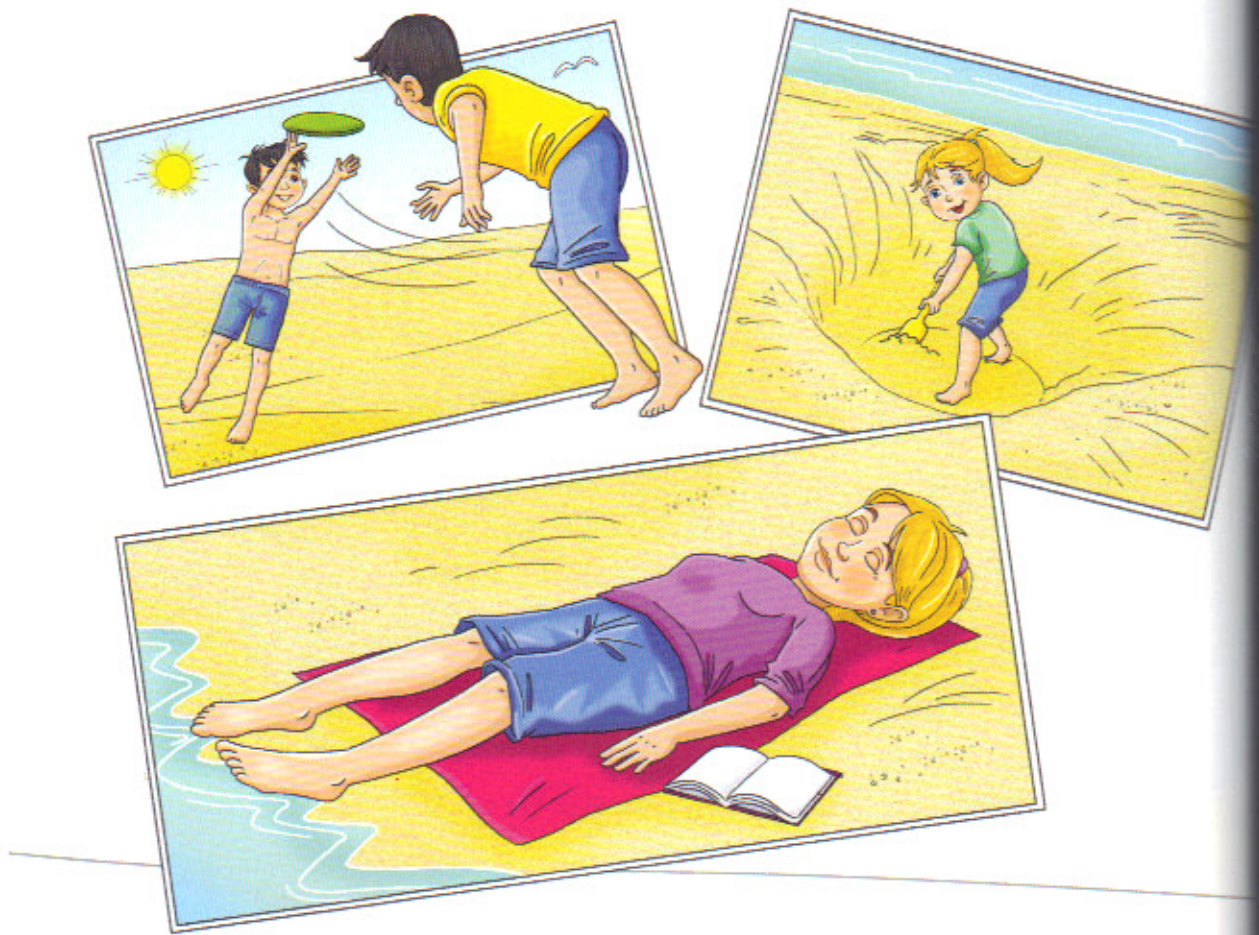
They were all very hungry after the swim.

'Time for the picnic,' said Mammy. She took out sandwiches, drinks and crisps. The sandwiches had tomatoes, cheese and ham in them. Emma had to open her mouth as wide as she could just to take a bite.

A wasp came buzzing by. It wanted some of Adam's sandwich. 'Buzz! Buzz!' it buzzed around Adam. He tried to swipe it with his hand and dropped his sandwich in the sand.

'Ah no!' he groaned, picking up his sandwich. He wasn't a bit pleased.

'That's why it's called a sandwich,' joked Emma, but Adam didn't think she was funny.



After the picnic, Daddy and Adam played with the frisbee. Mammy read her book and sunbathed and Emma tried to dig a hole to China.

'If I dig a hole all the way to China and I jump into it, will I fall out of the sky in China?' she asked Mammy.

However, Mammy didn't answer. She was exhausted and she had fallen fast asleep in the sun.

Mammy had to wake up and move when the tide came in. Adam and Emma dug a dam to try to stop the tide coming in but they could not stop the sea and soon it had swept away their dam.

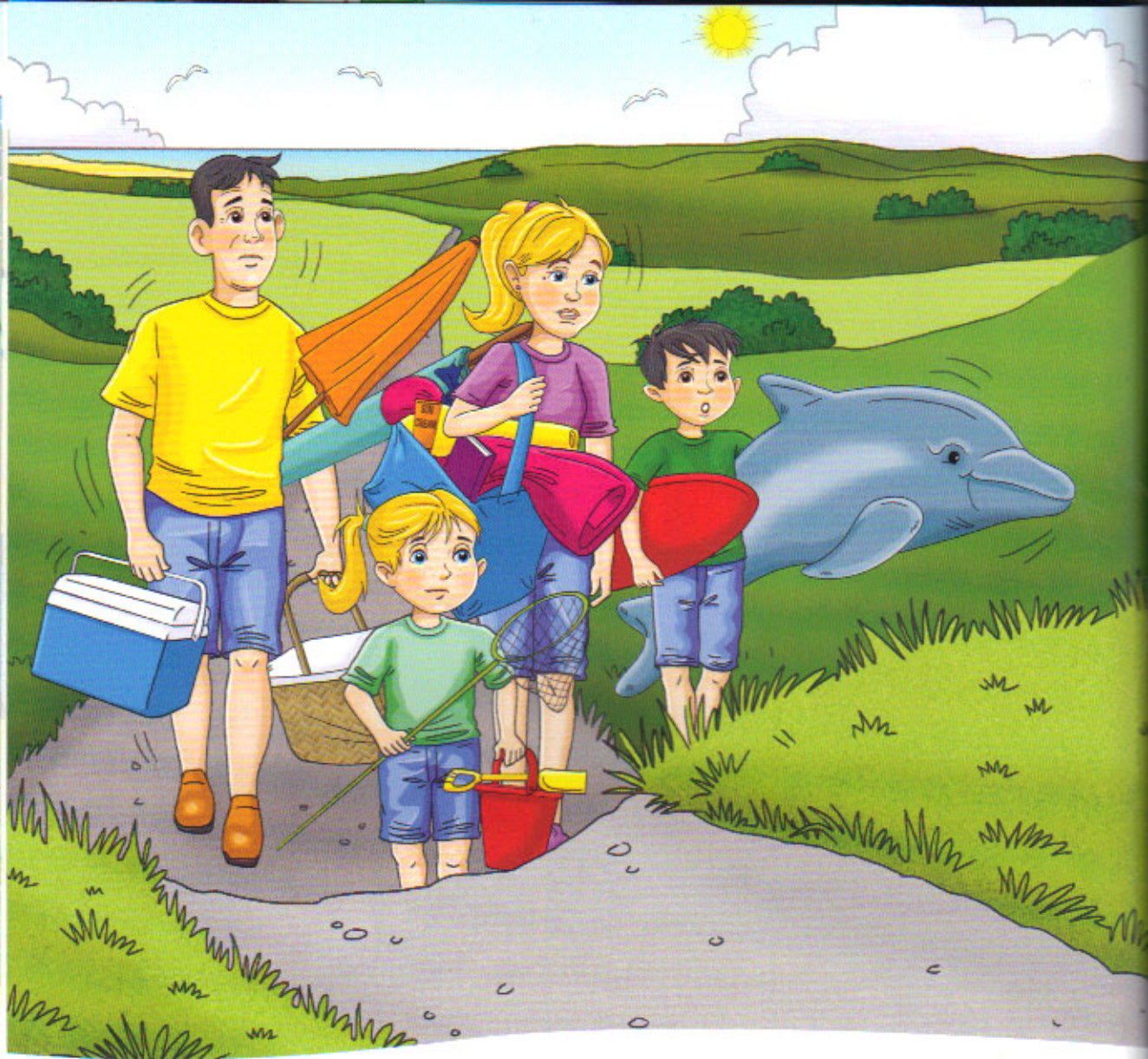


'Time to go home,' said Mammy. Everybody started packing up. Emma was tired after the long day at the beach. So was everyone else.

'I'm glad we brought the car!' said Mammy.

However, when they got back to the car, Daddy could not find the car keys. He looked in all his pockets and Adam searched the picnic bag. Mammy shook out the towels and the rugs and Emma looked in the buckets.

'Don't tell me you lost them in the sand?' sighed Mammy.



They walked back to the beach. However, the tide was fully in now and the sand was covered by the sea. Daddy looked fed up and so did Mammy.

'We'll have to come back in the morning and look for them,' she said crossly.

So they left the car in the car park and walked slowly back to the holiday home. Nobody spoke. With all the items they had to carry, it took a lot longer than ten minutes.



But when they got there, they couldn't get into the holiday home. Daddy couldn't find the door key.

'Don't tell me you put the door key with your car keys?' sighed Mammy.

But Daddy had put the door key on the same key ring as his car keys.

'Don't you have the spare key?' he asked Mammy.

Mammy searched her bag. She turned her pockets inside out but she couldn't find the spare key.

'Don't tell me you left it in the house?' sighed Daddy.

But Mammy had left the spare key inside the house.



'There's a little window open,' said Emma. 'I could climb in and open the door.'

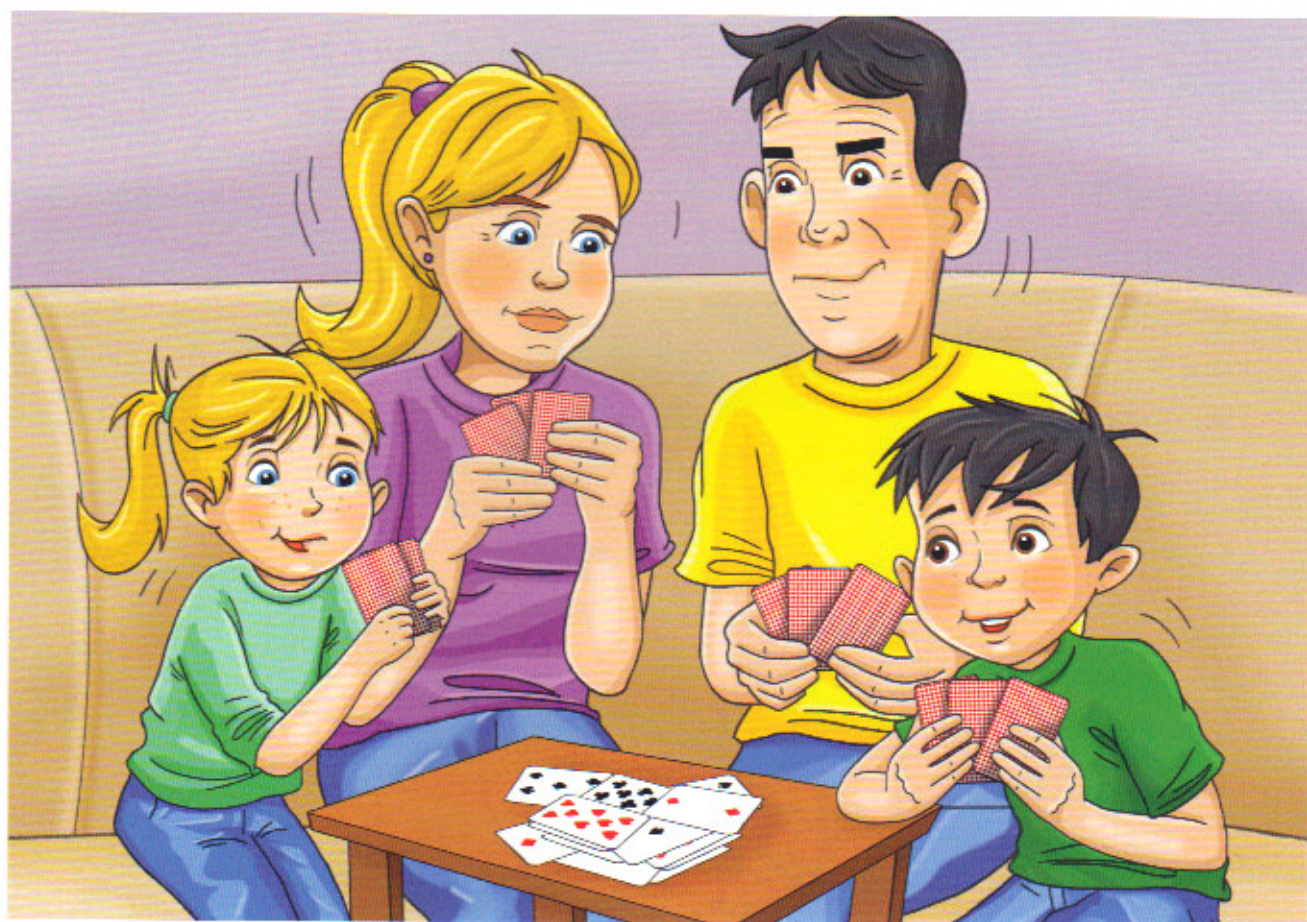
Emma was right. The little top window of her bedroom was open.

'I better climb in,' said Adam. 'I'm bigger.'

However, Adam was too big to fit through the window so it had to be Emma. Daddy lifted her up and she climbed inside like a monkey. She was very nimble.

'Be careful,' called Mammy as Emma squeezed through the little window.

Emma climbed on a chair to reach up to the latch.
'Tah dah!' she said and pulled open the front door.
But Mammy and Daddy were not in a good humour.



There was no television in the house but Emma found a pack of cards in a drawer.

'Let's play snap,' she said.

At first it was a quiet game because Mammy and Daddy were still cross. There were no snaps for a long time and the pile of cards on the wobbly little table was getting bigger and bigger. Everyone was holding up their hands, ready to snap.

Adam put down a card. Daddy slowly put down his card on top. At the last minute he turned it around. It was a match. 'SNAP!' yelled everybody at the same time. They all slapped their hands down together on the pile of cards. The wobbly little table split in two and the cards scattered all over the floor. Everybody burst out laughing.



Later Daddy made hot chocolate for Mammy, Adam and Emma and everyone felt better going to bed. Emma was so tired that she fell asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow!



The next day was cloudy and windy. It was not a day for going to the beach. But they had to go there to try to find the car keys. Adam brought his kite with him.

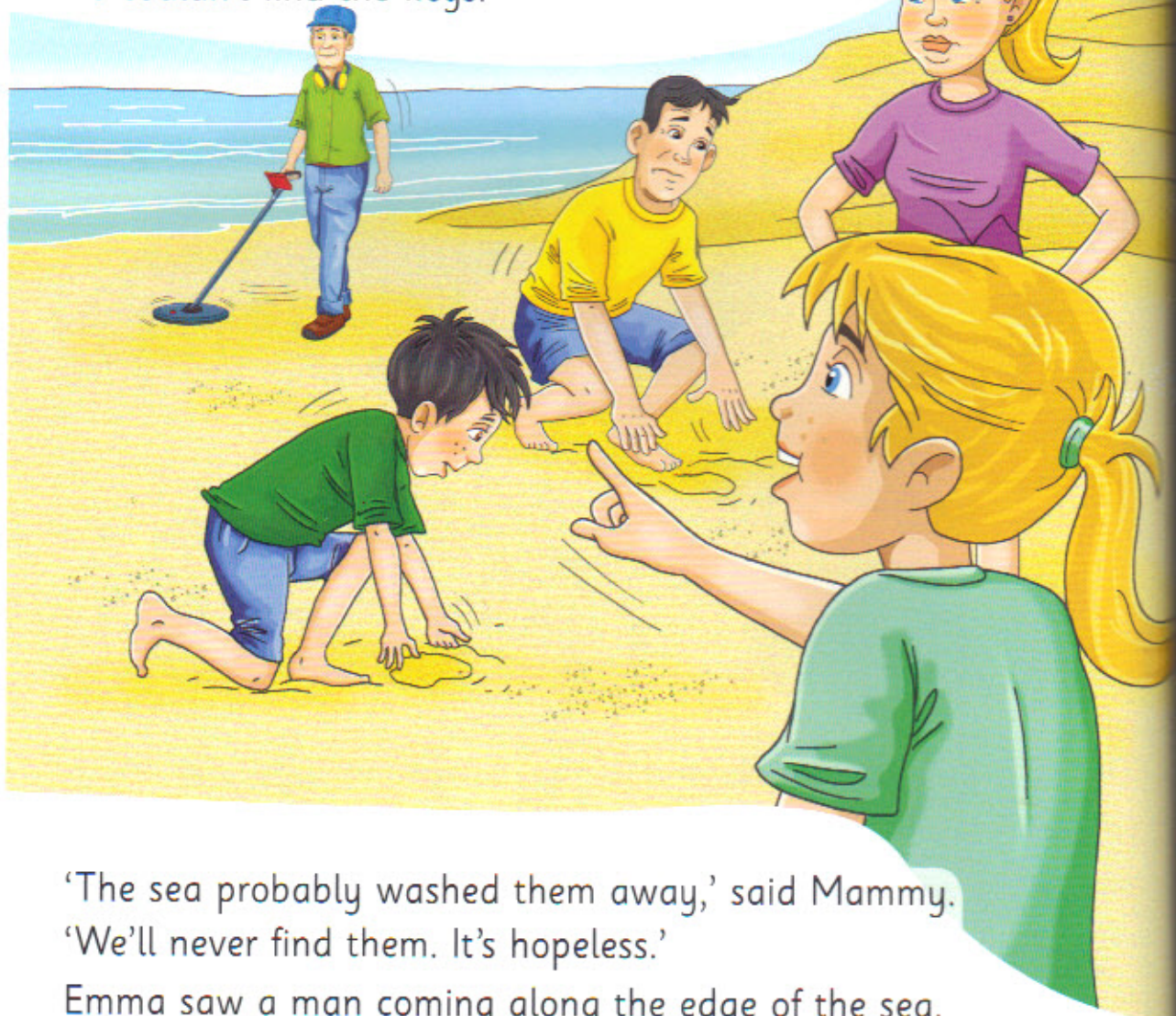
‘We can fly it on the beach after we find the keys,’ he said.

‘If we find the keys...’ muttered Mammy.

The beach was empty and the tide was out.

‘This is where we had our picnic,’ said Daddy. He knelt down and started digging in the sand with his hands. Everyone helped in the search, but it was no use. They couldn’t find the keys.

'We played frisbee somewhere around here,'
said Adam.
He started looking in a different place but
he couldn't find the keys.

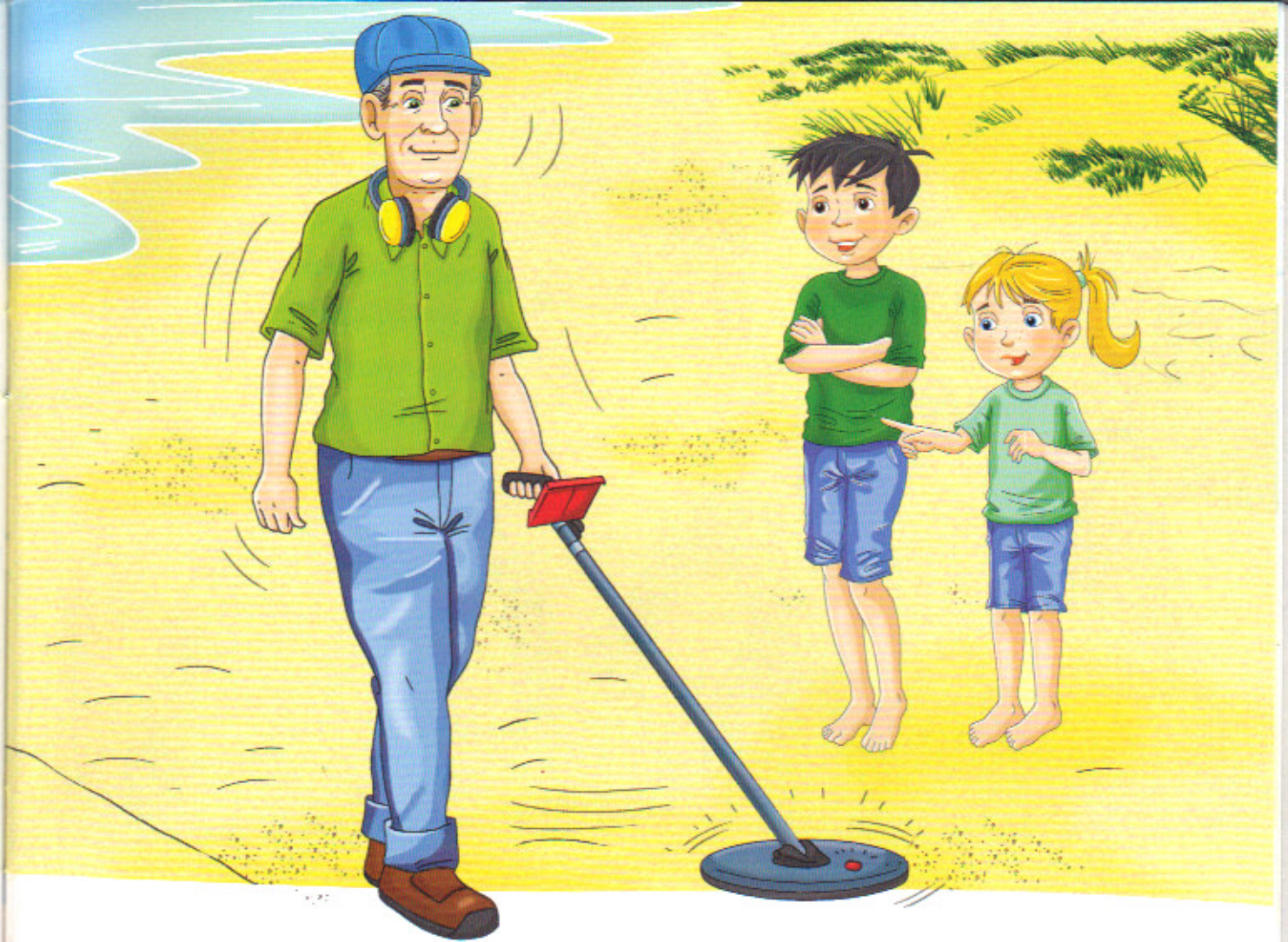


'The sea probably washed them away,' said Mammy.
'We'll never find them. It's hopeless.'

Emma saw a man coming along the edge of the sea.
He was walking slowly and waving a metal detector
over the sand. Every now and then he stopped and
dug a little hole in the sand. Sometimes he found
something and popped it in his pocket.

'Can I help?' he said as he came towards them.





'Yes,' said Mammy. 'We've lost our car keys somewhere around here yesterday. Maybe you can find them with your metal detector?'

The man was only too happy to help.

But Daddy said, 'I'm afraid the metal detector won't be of much help. My car key is not made of metal.'

'But the holiday home key with it is made of metal,' said Adam. 'So it will work!'

The man started waving his metal detector over the sand. It had a little red light and it made a humming noise.



Suddenly the metal detector beeped and the little light turned green.

'Yes!' said Daddy.

The man dug into the sand but all he found was a bottle top. The man walked up and down where Daddy had played with the frisbee. Suddenly the metal detector beeped again.

'This must be the keys!' said Daddy, but it wasn't. It was an old fishing hook.

The third time the metal detector beeped it was for a key! However it wasn't Daddy's key, it was a rusty old key that must have been lost a long, long time ago.

'It's not your lucky day,' said the man.



'What will we do?' said Mammy. 'Our holiday will be ruined if we can't find the keys.'

'I'll think of something,' said Daddy.

But he couldn't think of anything.

Then Emma had a brainwave.

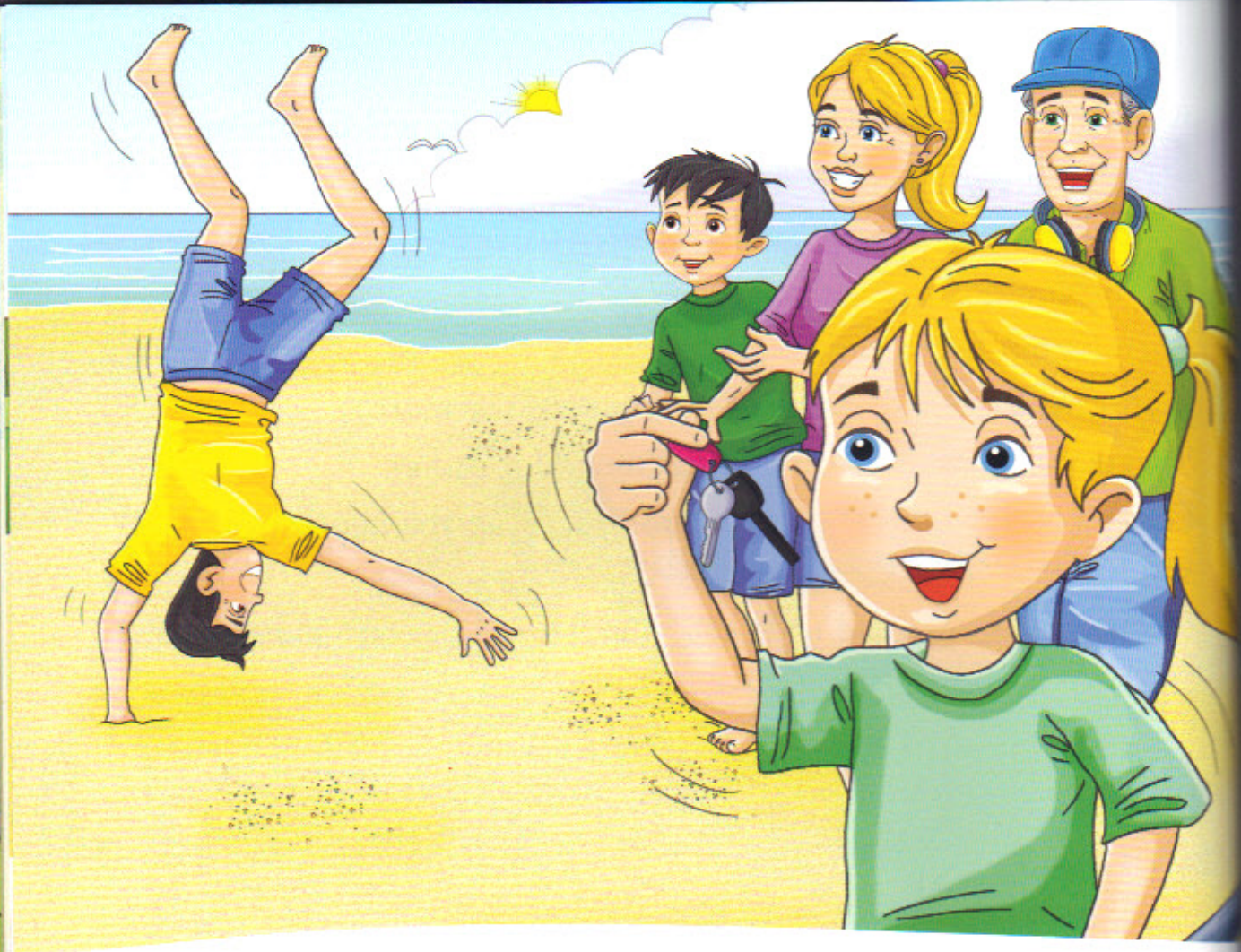
'Can I try the metal detector?' she asked the man.

'Certainly,' said the man and he handed it to her.

Emma took the metal detector and raced up the beach to the sand dunes.

'This is where you did your silly handstand, Daddy,' she said.





Emma waved the metal detector up and down over the sand. At first it just hummed softly, its little red light shining. Suddenly it started beeping and the red light changed to green. Emma dropped to her knees and started digging up the soft sand with her hands. Her fingers touched something hard. It was the key of the holiday home and the key of the car on the same key ring.

'I found it!' she yelled and waved it in the air.

'Emma has saved the holiday!' shouted Mammy.

Just at that moment the sun came out from behind a cloud. Daddy was so happy he did another handstand! But at least this time the keys were safe.



Food Dude

I like to cook,
But don't use a book.
I have recipes in my head,
That I dream of when in bed.

Mustard on peas,
Custard with cheese.
Jam on ham,
I make it for my Mam!

A pie made of fries,
A little ice on my rice.
Some granola in cola,
Served up in a bowl-a!

Don't knock it till you try it,
Make a mess and you'll enjoy it.
So grab a bowl then some tools,
Mix in some food and break some rules.

Marie Synnott

