

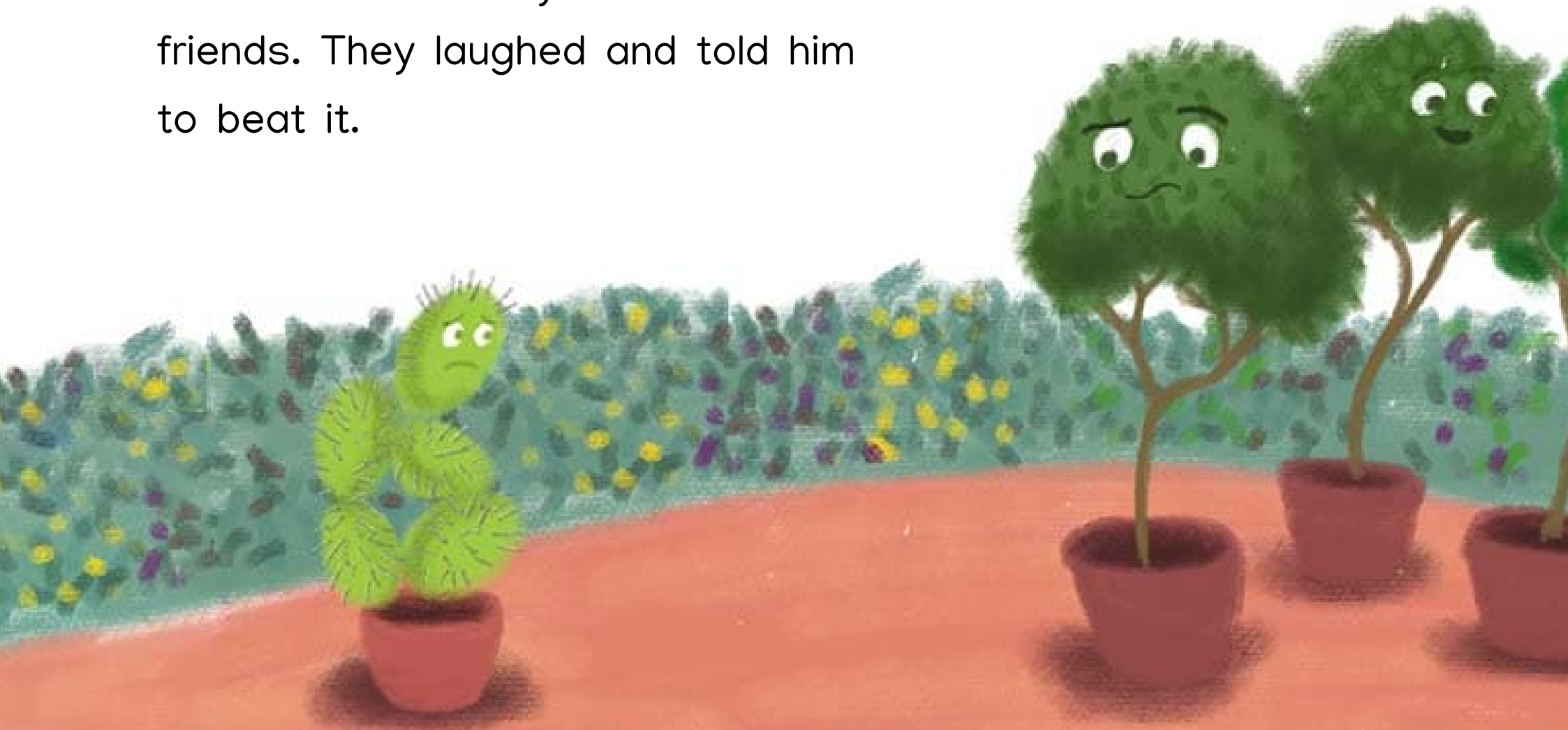


PALS OR NOT?

Illustrated by Subi Bosa

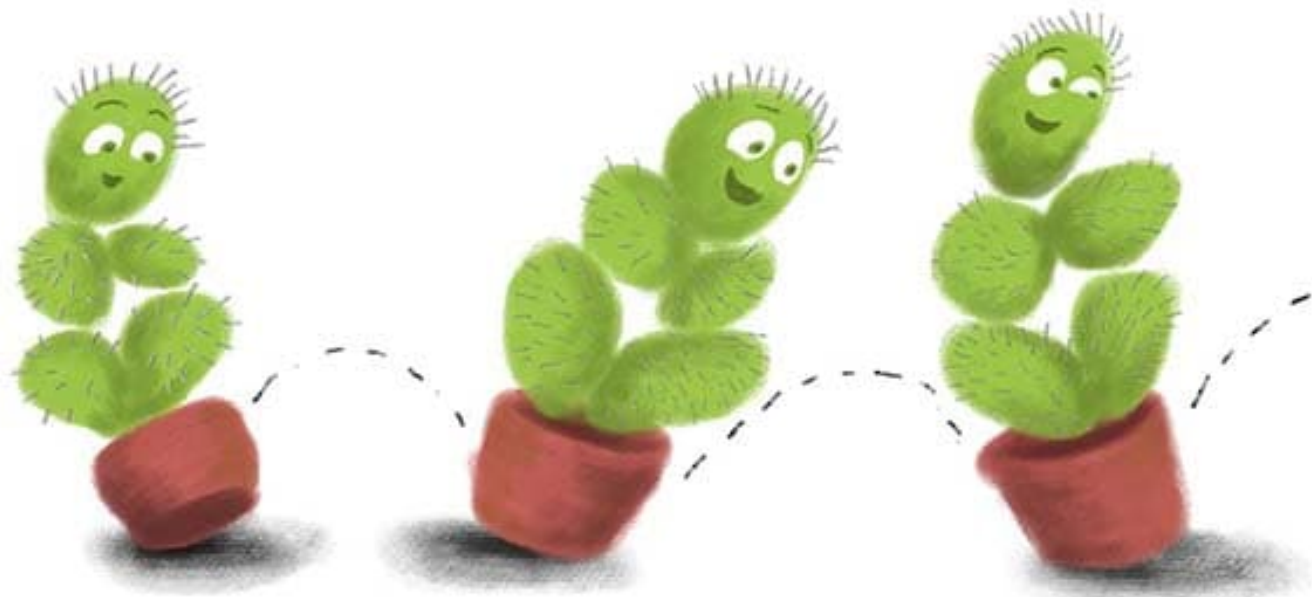
Spike the cactus had no pals.

He jumped over to a group of trees to see if they wanted to be friends. They laughed and told him to beat it.



Spike did not mind. It was only one group of trees. There are plenty of plants out there to be pals with.

He moved on.



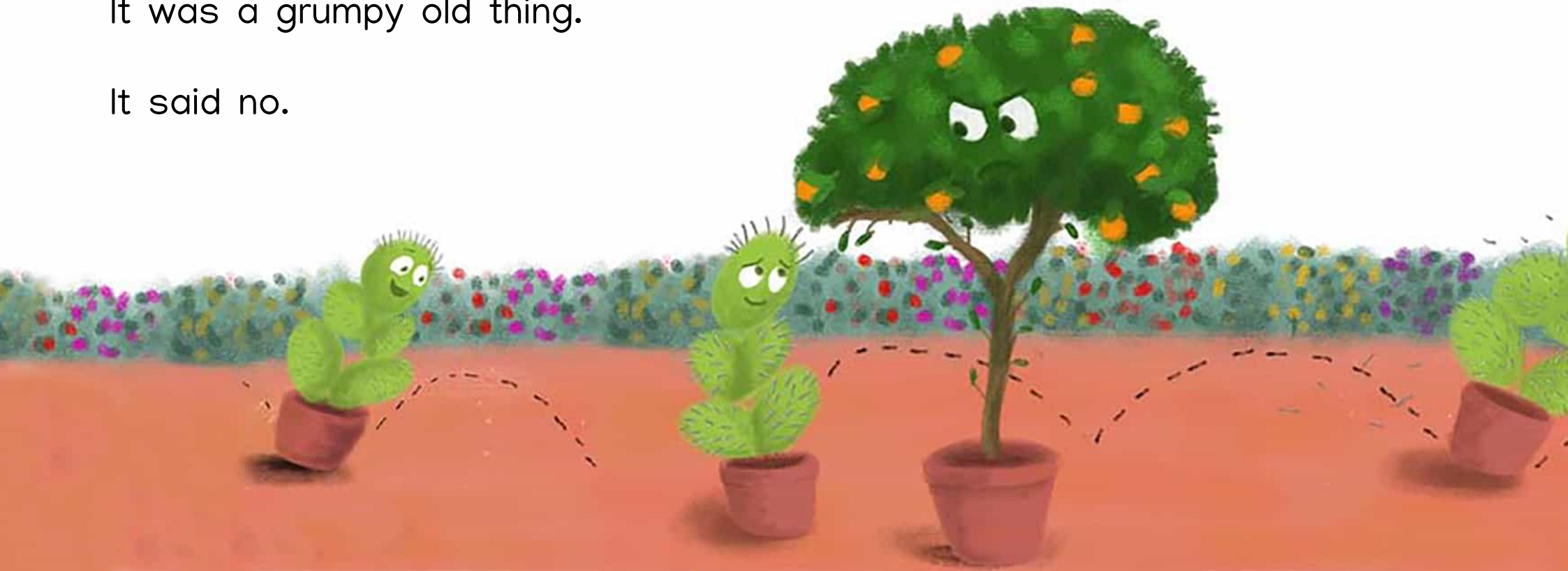
Spike saw an orange tree.

He hopped over there in his pot.

He asked the orange tree if it needed
a friend.

It was a grumpy old thing.

It said no.



Spike went up to a banana tree.

It was scared of him and asked him to leave. He did not know why.

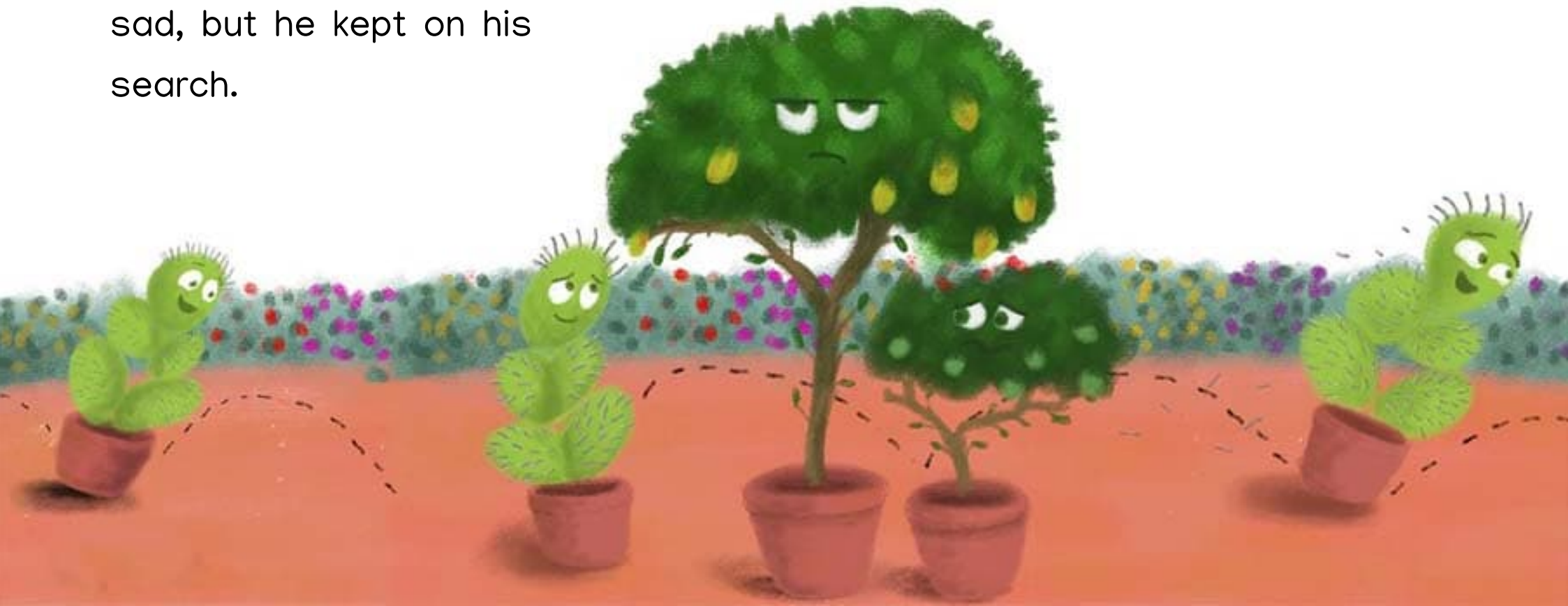
He let the banana tree be.



Next he tried a mango tree and a guava.

They let out long sighs.

Spike was feeling a bit sad, but he kept on his search.





Spike was running out of plants in the garden to be pals with. He went up to the pawpaw tree. The pawpaw said he had heard that Spike was looking for a pal.

The pawpaw tree said that they could hang out. The pawpaw did not want to be biased because other people had not been friends with the cactus.



But when they were chatting, Spike hurt the pawpaw tree by mistake.

The pawpaw did not react well. Was this why it was hard to find friends?

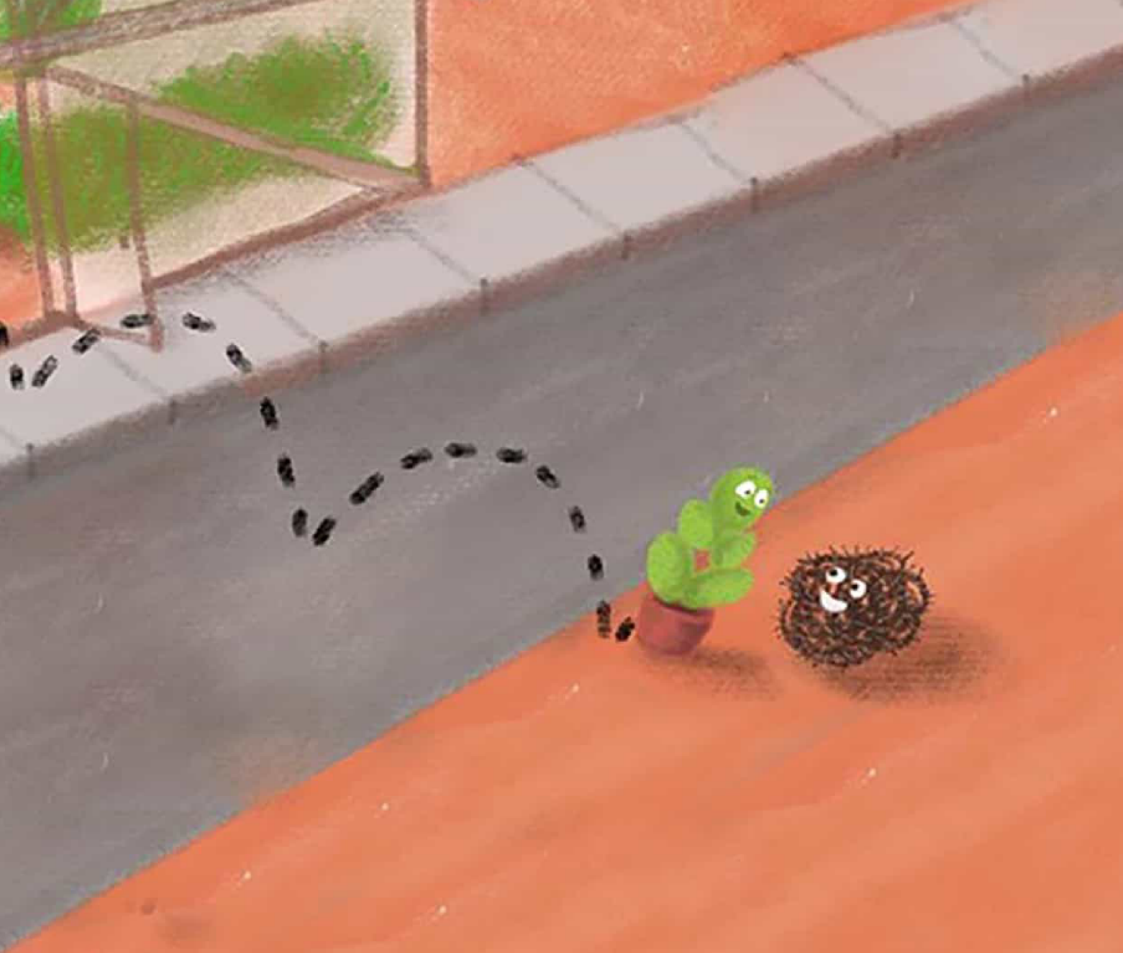




The pawpaw pulled back and told Spike to go find a friend that he would not hurt. He tried to say sorry, but the pawpaw would not hear it.

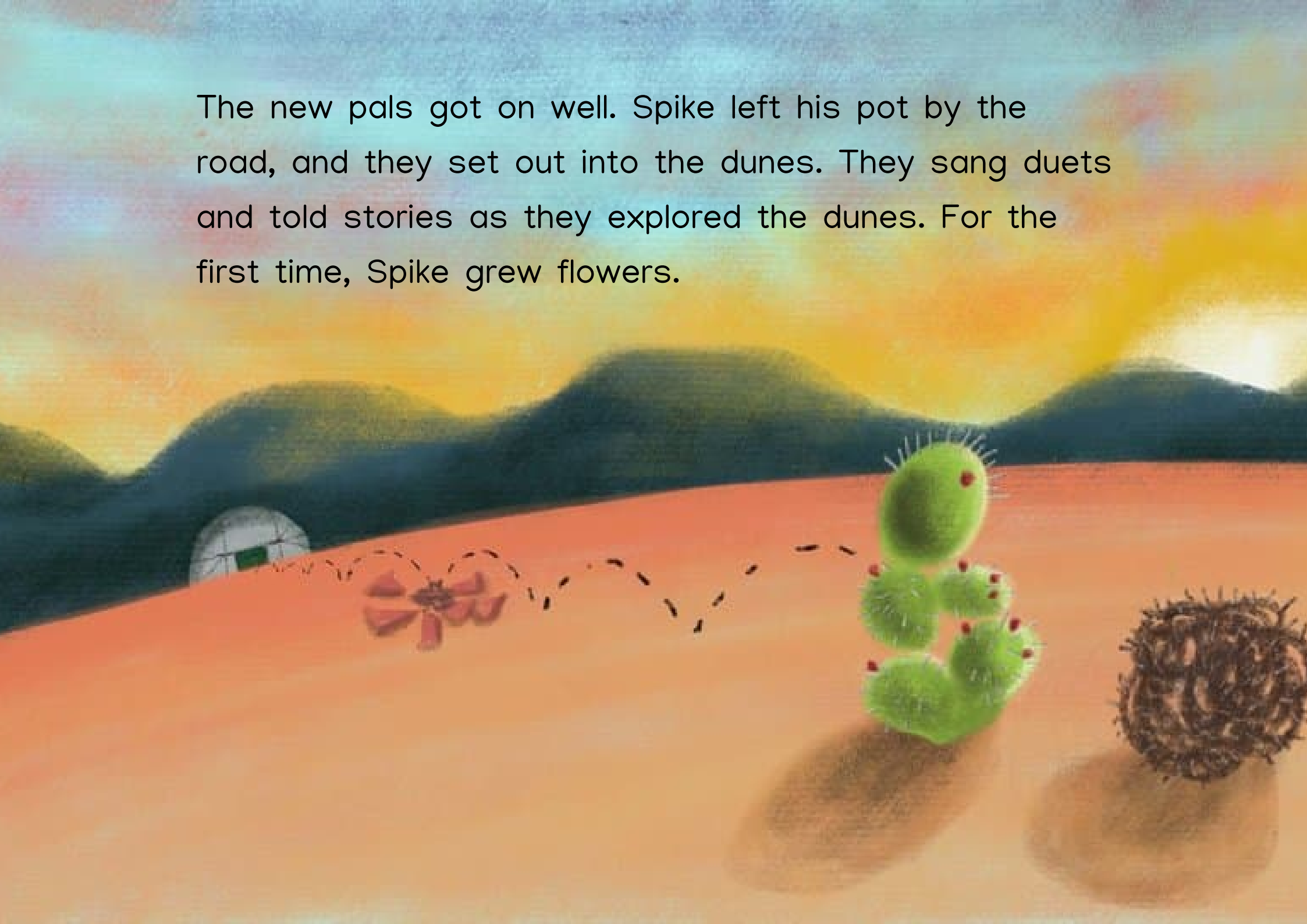
Spike did not know what to do. There were no spikey plants in the garden, but he was tired of being by himself. He left to find a new spot.





Spike went across the road and out to the dunes. He found that he liked it out there. He did not need much fluid, so he felt good in a dry spot. He also found a bush that was covered in thorns!

The new pals got on well. Spike left his pot by the road, and they set out into the dunes. They sang duets and told stories as they explored the dunes. For the first time, Spike grew flowers.





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