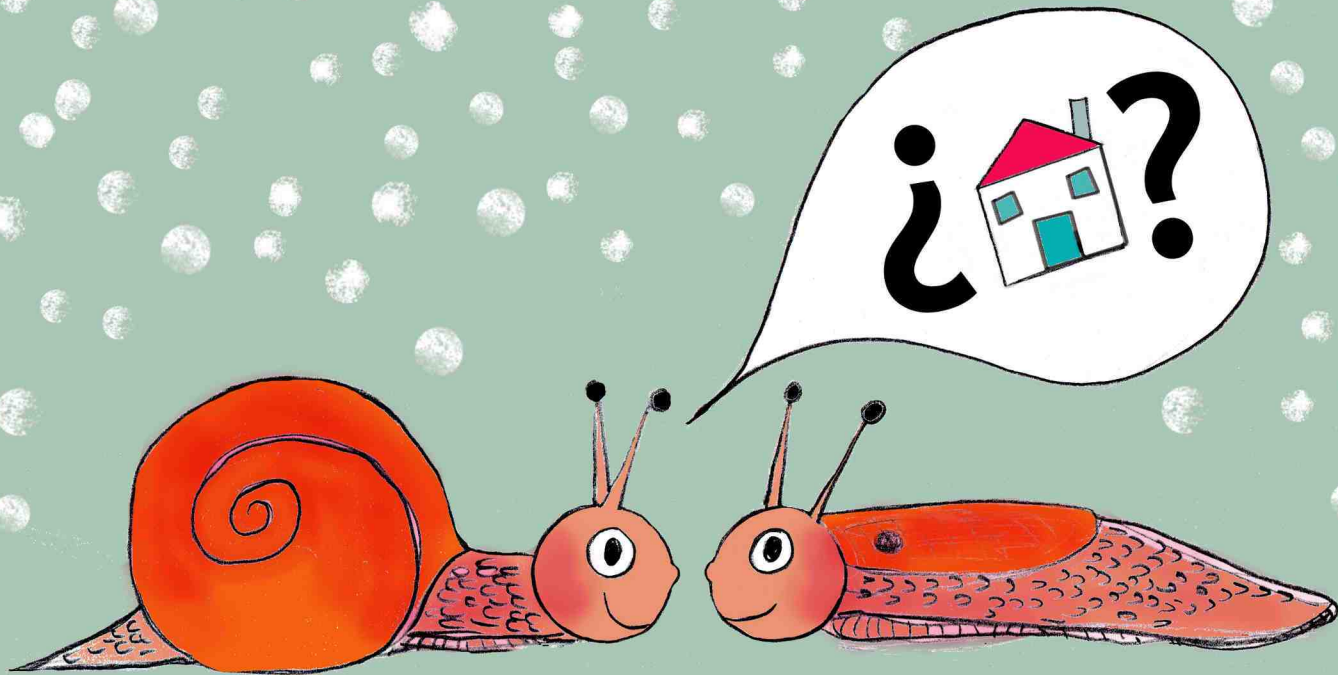
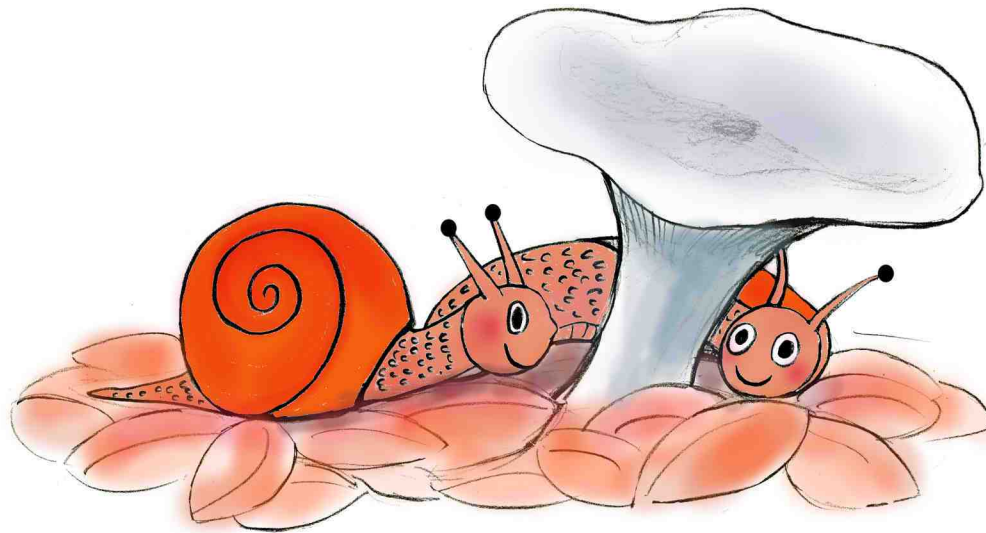


# A LITTLE HOUSE FOR THE WINTER



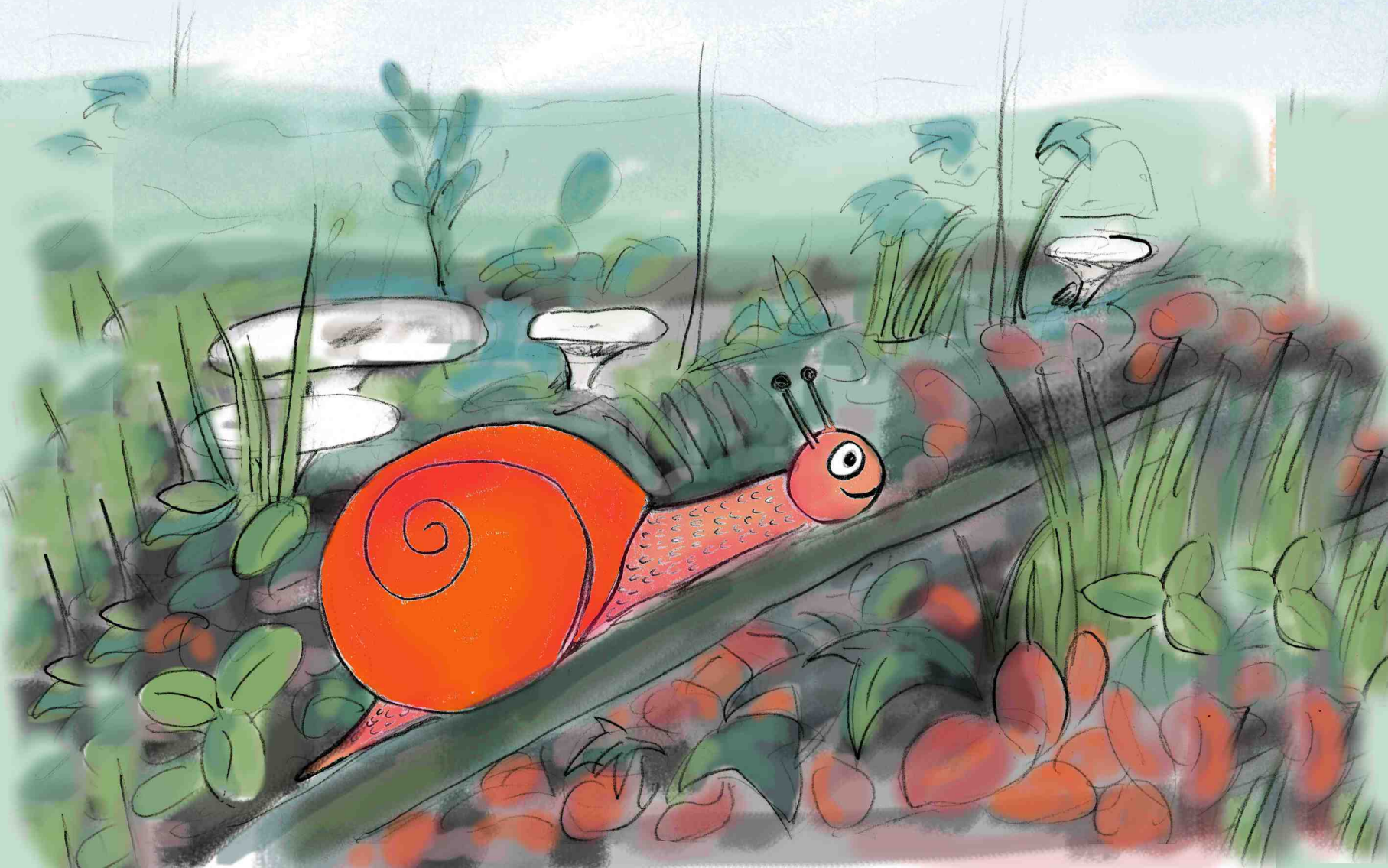
Text and illustrations by NÚRIA VIVES

# A LITTLE HOUSE FOR THE WINTER

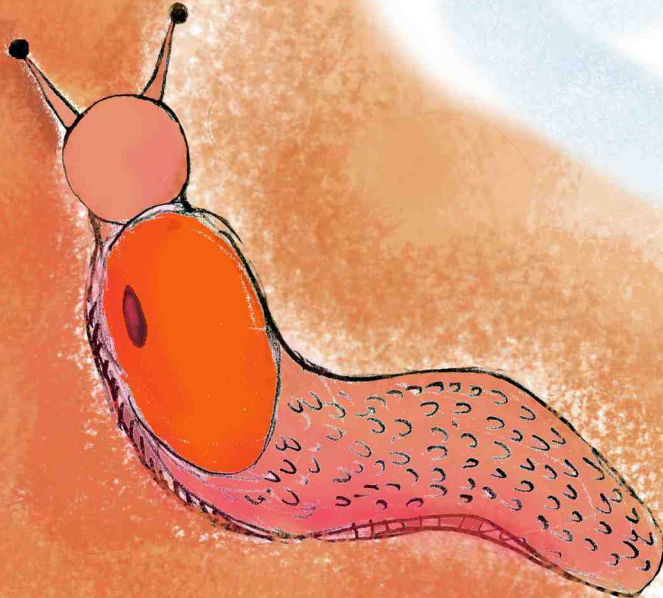
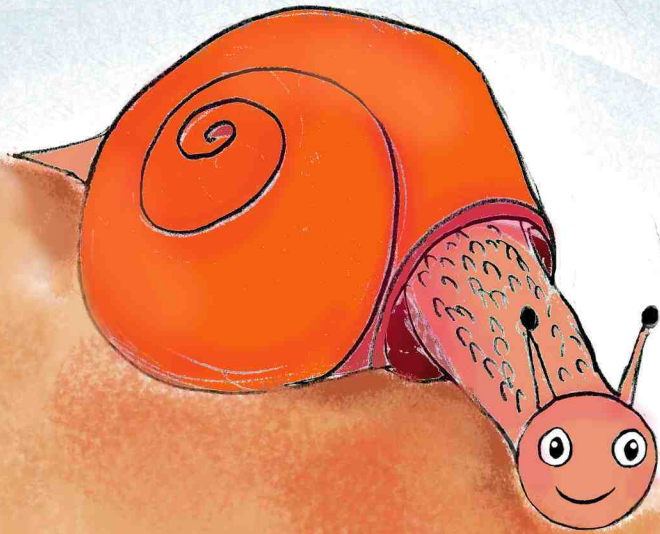


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Once there was a small snail named Trot who slowly discovered all the corners of the forest. He liked to wander calmly. Here he ate a blade of grass, there a tender leaf, but what he liked the most was to make new friends.



One day he went down a path when, suddenly,  
he ran into a slug. They looked at each other  
and were surprised that they looked very similar.

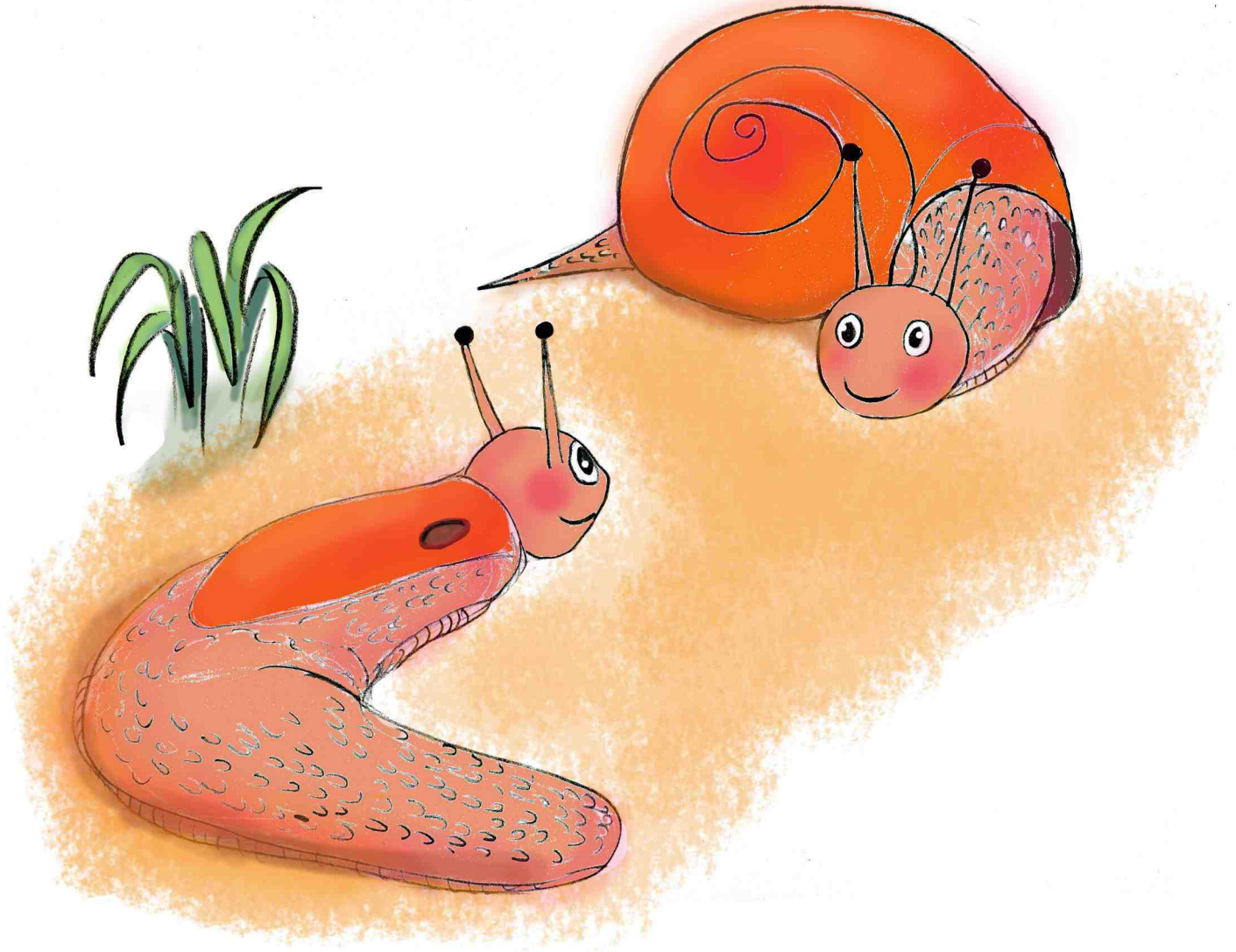


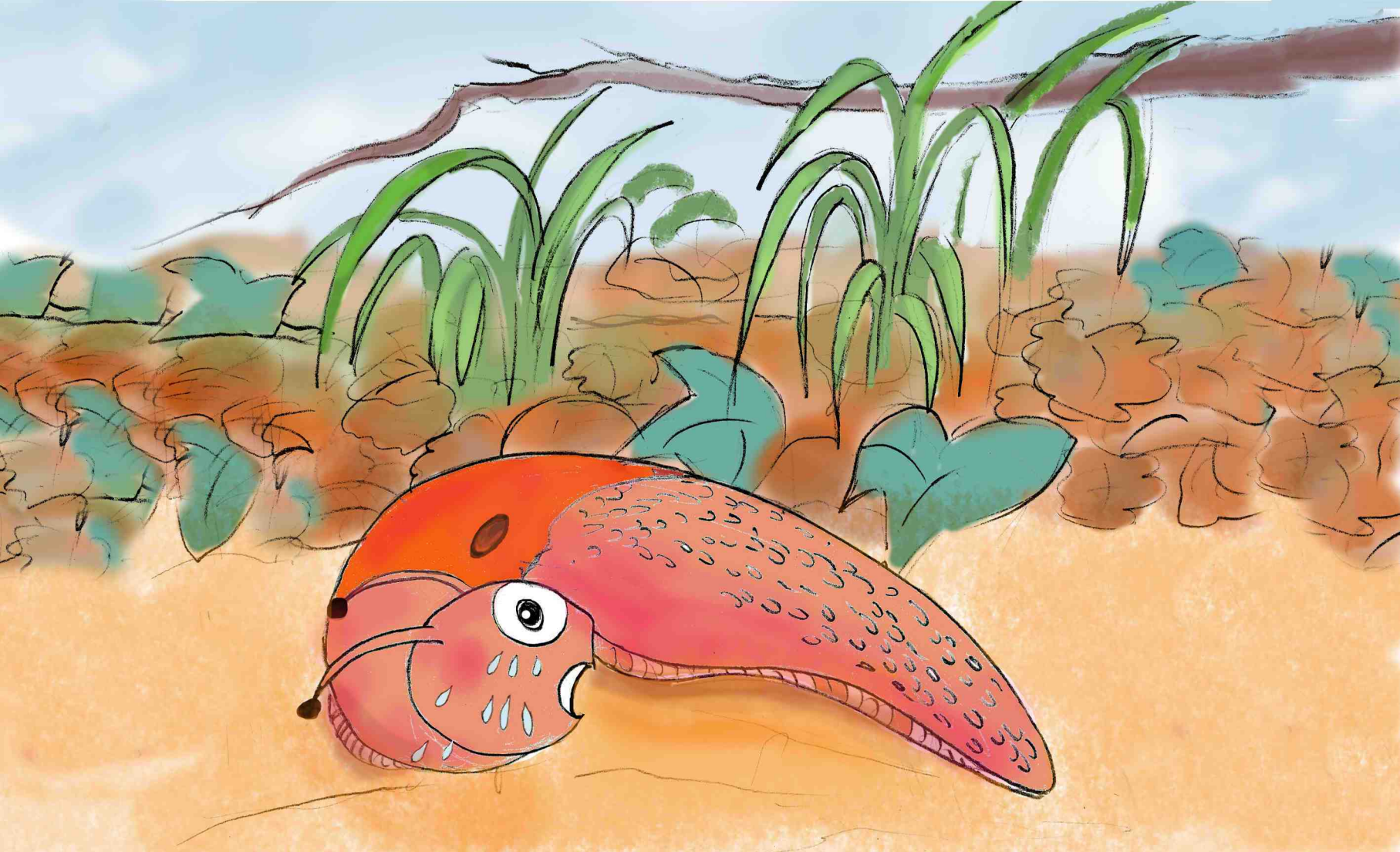
"Hello! I am a snail. I am Trot. Who are you?"

"Hello! I am a slug. My name is Zip."

"We look like siblings, but... where have you left your little house?"

"My house? Which little house?" asked Zip.

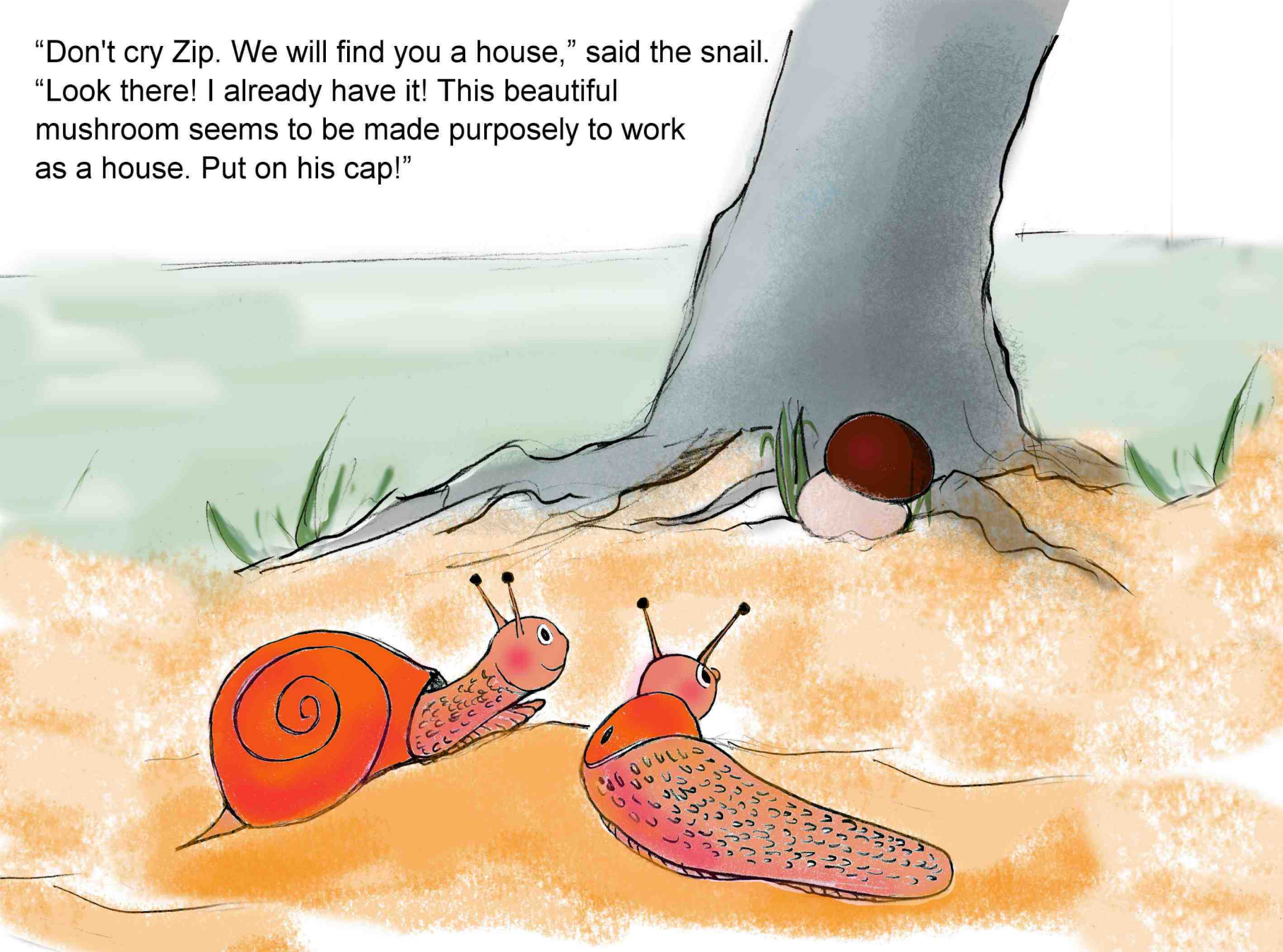


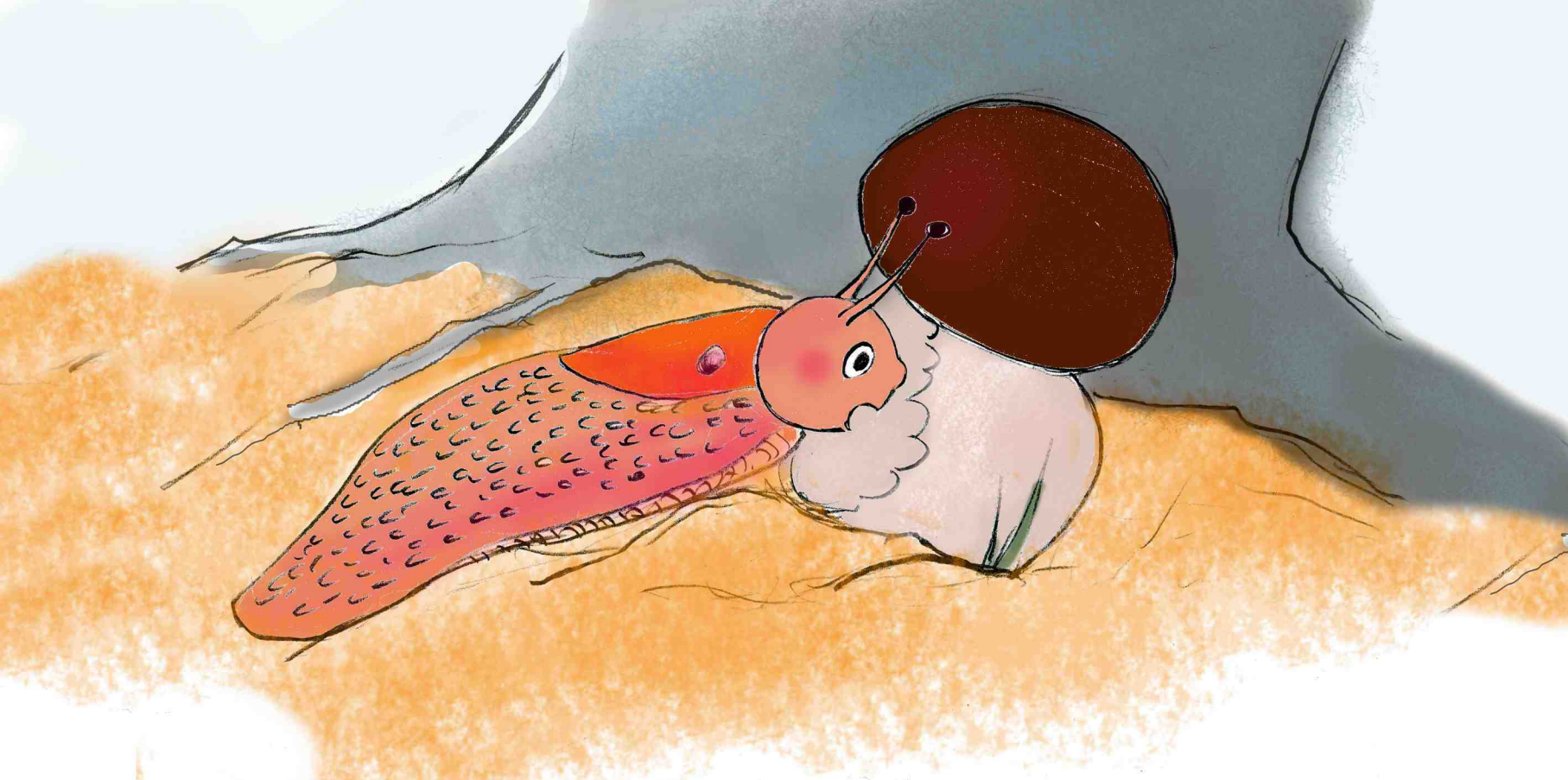


The slug at that moment realized that Trot was traveling with his house on top. "I may have lost it!" he exclaimed. And he started to cry.

"Don't cry Zip. We will find you a house," said the snail.

"Look there! I already have it! This beautiful mushroom seems to be made purposely to work as a house. Put on his cap!"



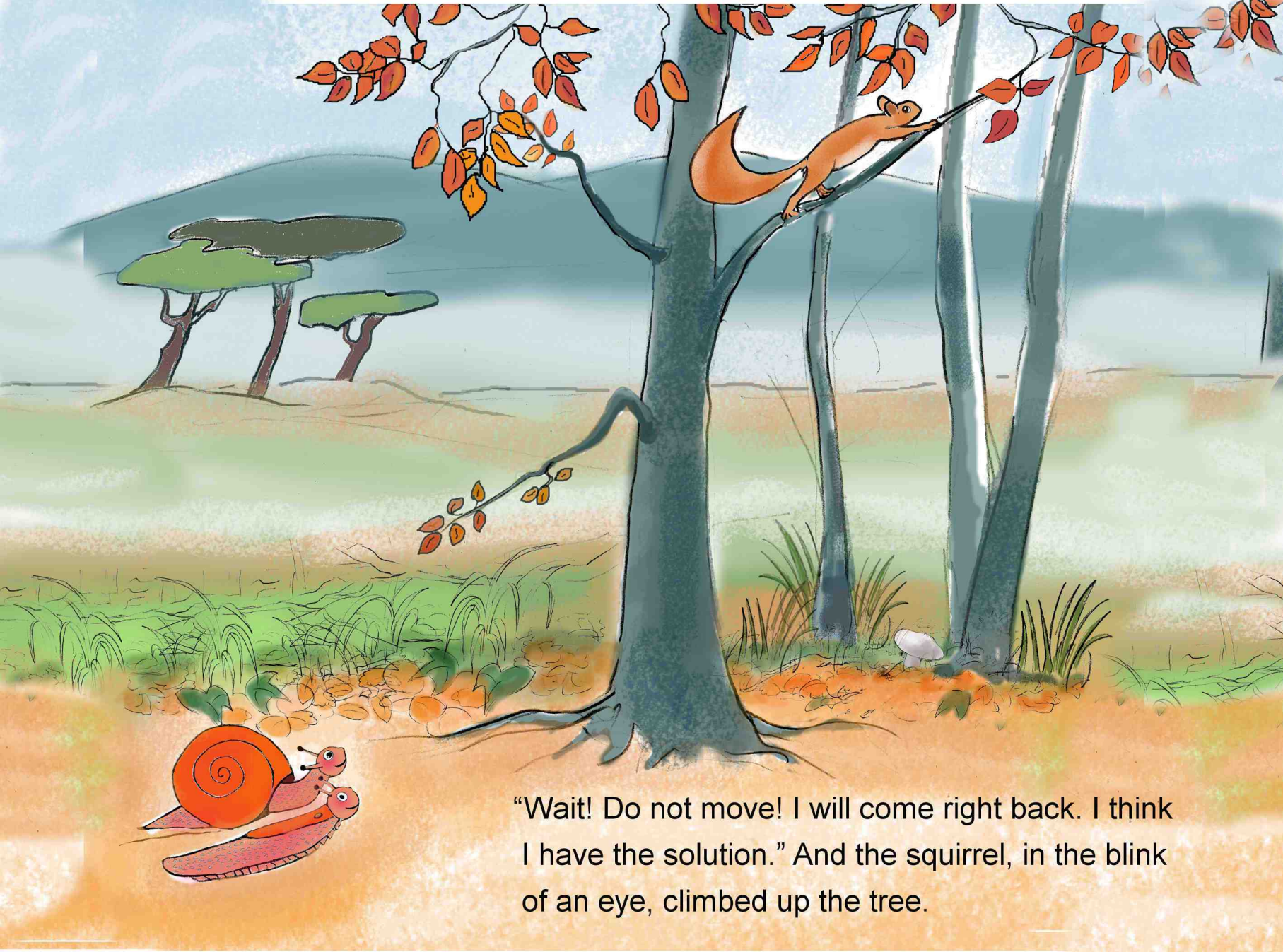


Zip thought it was a very good idea. He ate the mushroom's stem and he left only the cap. But he found it so good that he could not resist the temptation to eat a little more. After a while, there were just a few crumbs left.

"We won't get anywhere that way, " said the snail.

At that very moment, a squirrel passed by and asked,  
“What's happening? You look worried.”  
“Zip has lost his little house,” explained Trot. “Winter is  
coming and if we don't find one, he will die from the cold!”





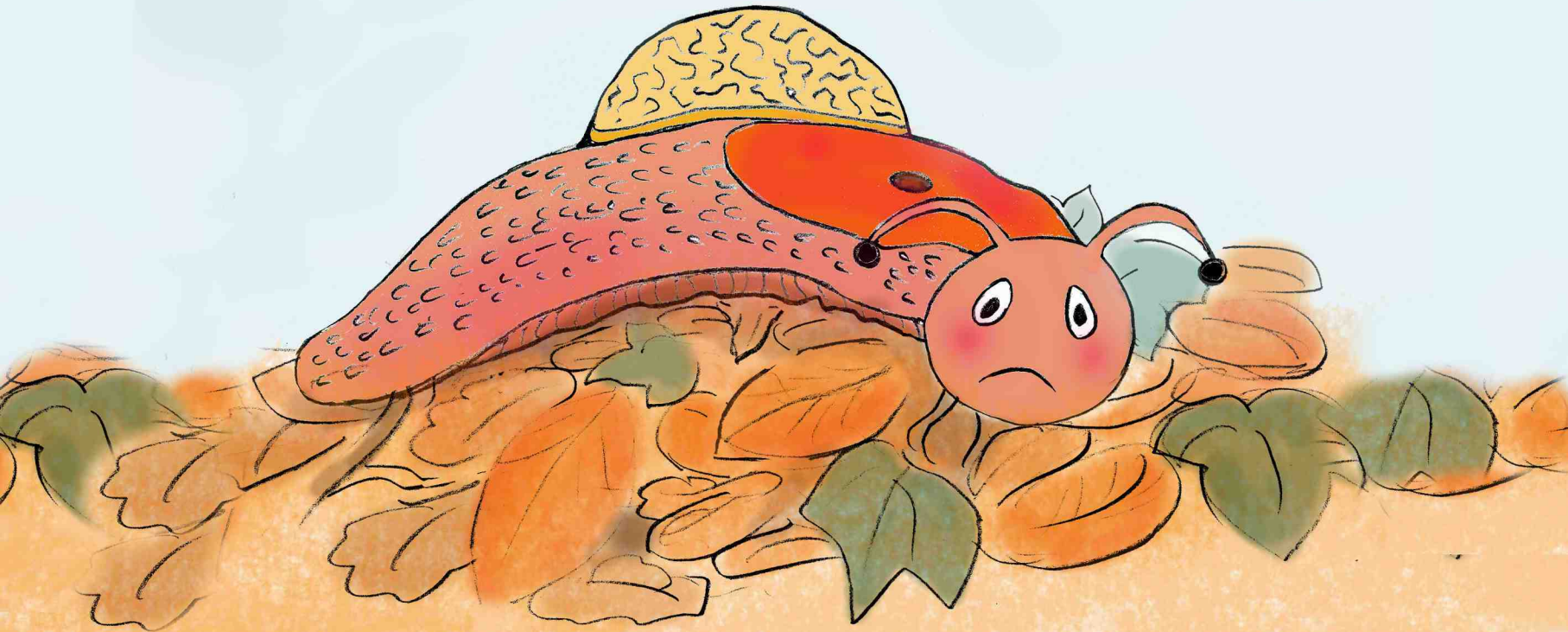
“Wait! Do not move! I will come right back. I think I have the solution.” And the squirrel, in the blink of an eye, climbed up the tree.

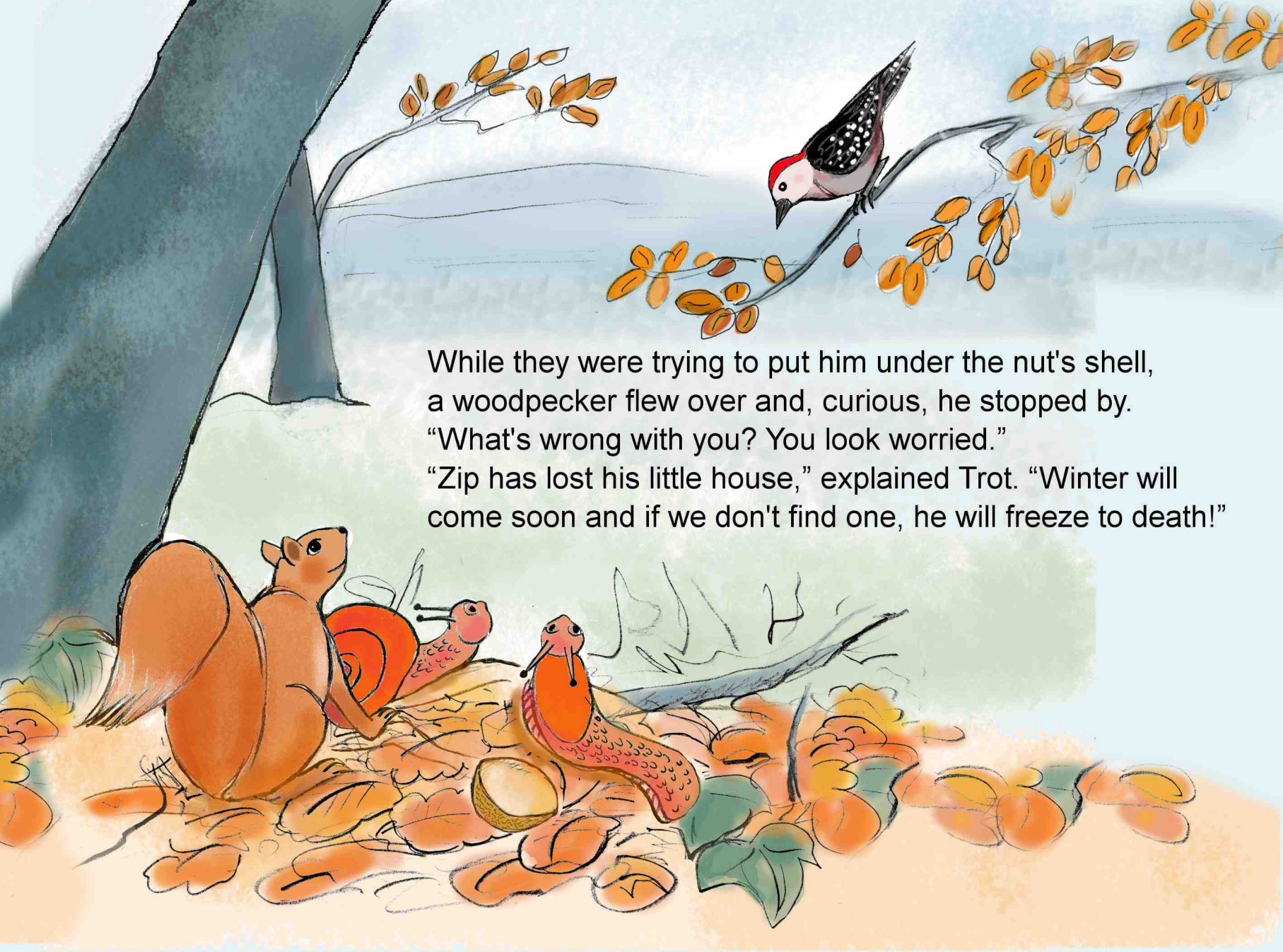
After a while, he reappeared jumping from a branch.  
He brought a nut's shell.  
“Try it! Let's see how it fits to you!” said the squirrel.



Zip put it on top but the shell was too small. More than half of his body was not covered.

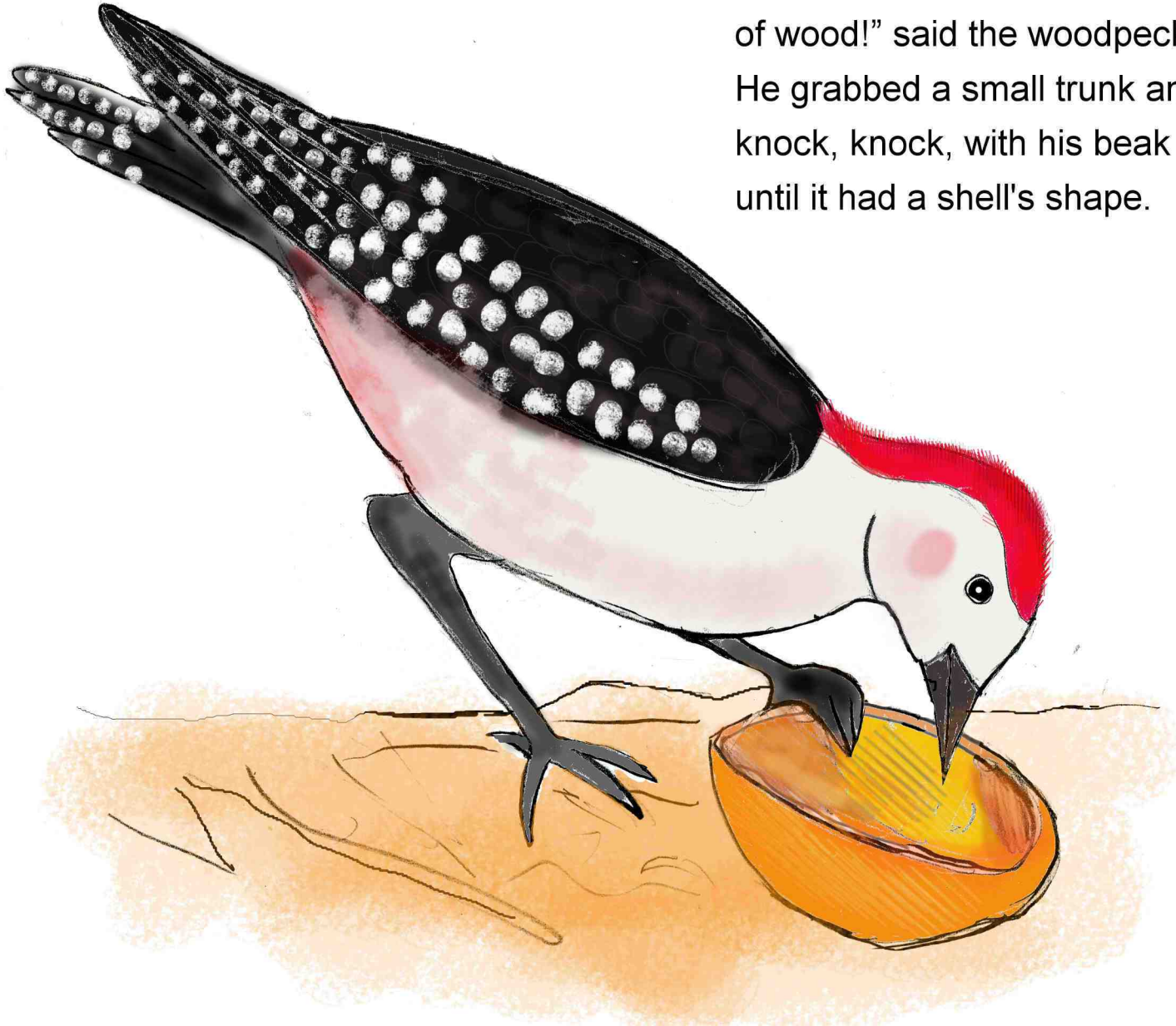
"I won't be able to survive the winter like this," he sighed. "I'll be half-frozen!"



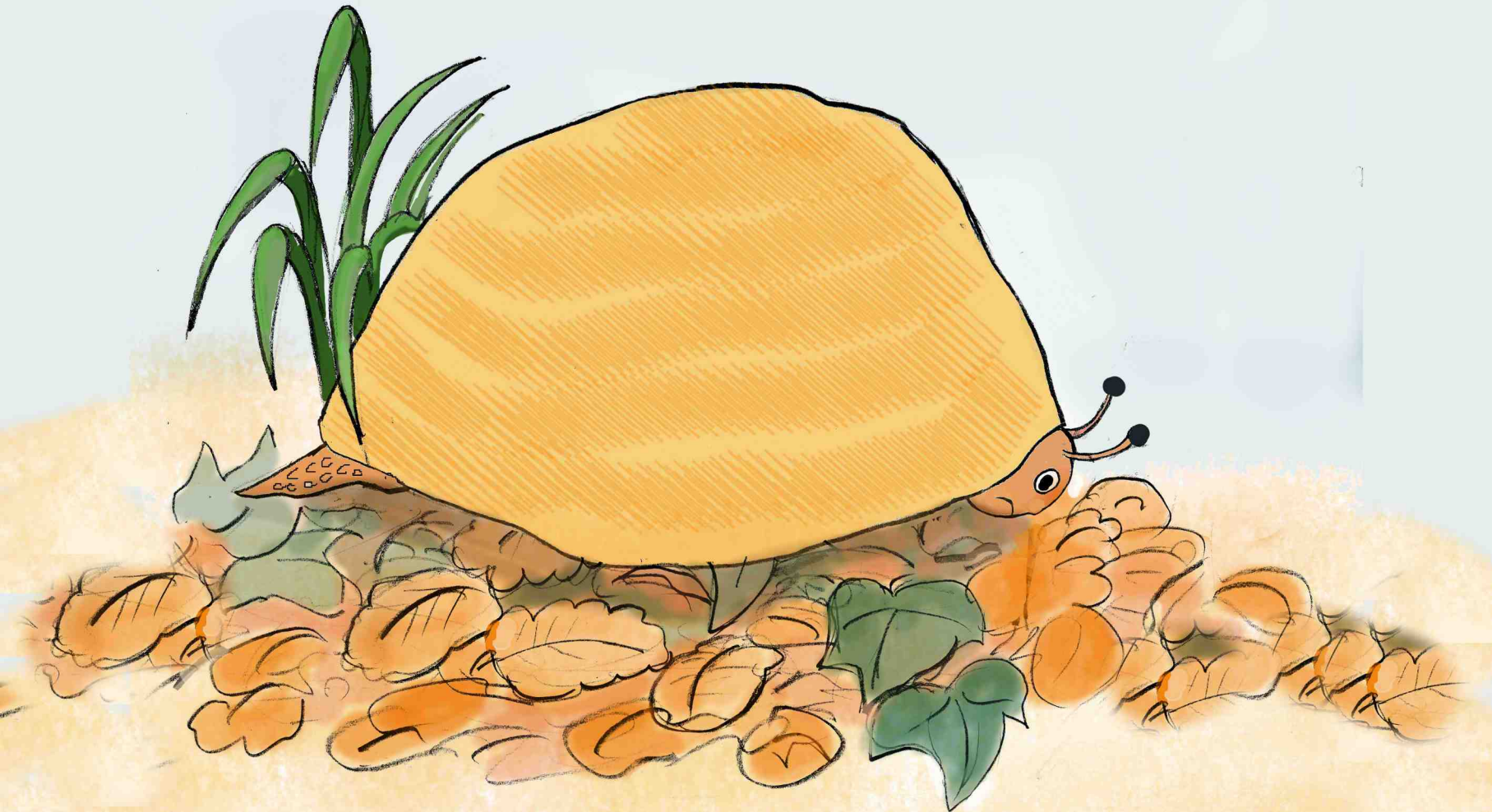


While they were trying to put him under the nut's shell, a woodpecker flew over and, curious, he stopped by. "What's wrong with you? You look worried." "Zip has lost his little house," explained Trot. "Winter will come soon and if we don't find one, he will freeze to death!"

“I have an idea! I'll do one with a piece of wood!” said the woodpecker.  
He grabbed a small trunk and knock, knock, knock, with his beak he chopped until it had a shell's shape.



The slug tried it. It was custom-made but there was a problem.  
It was too heavy. He could hardly move.

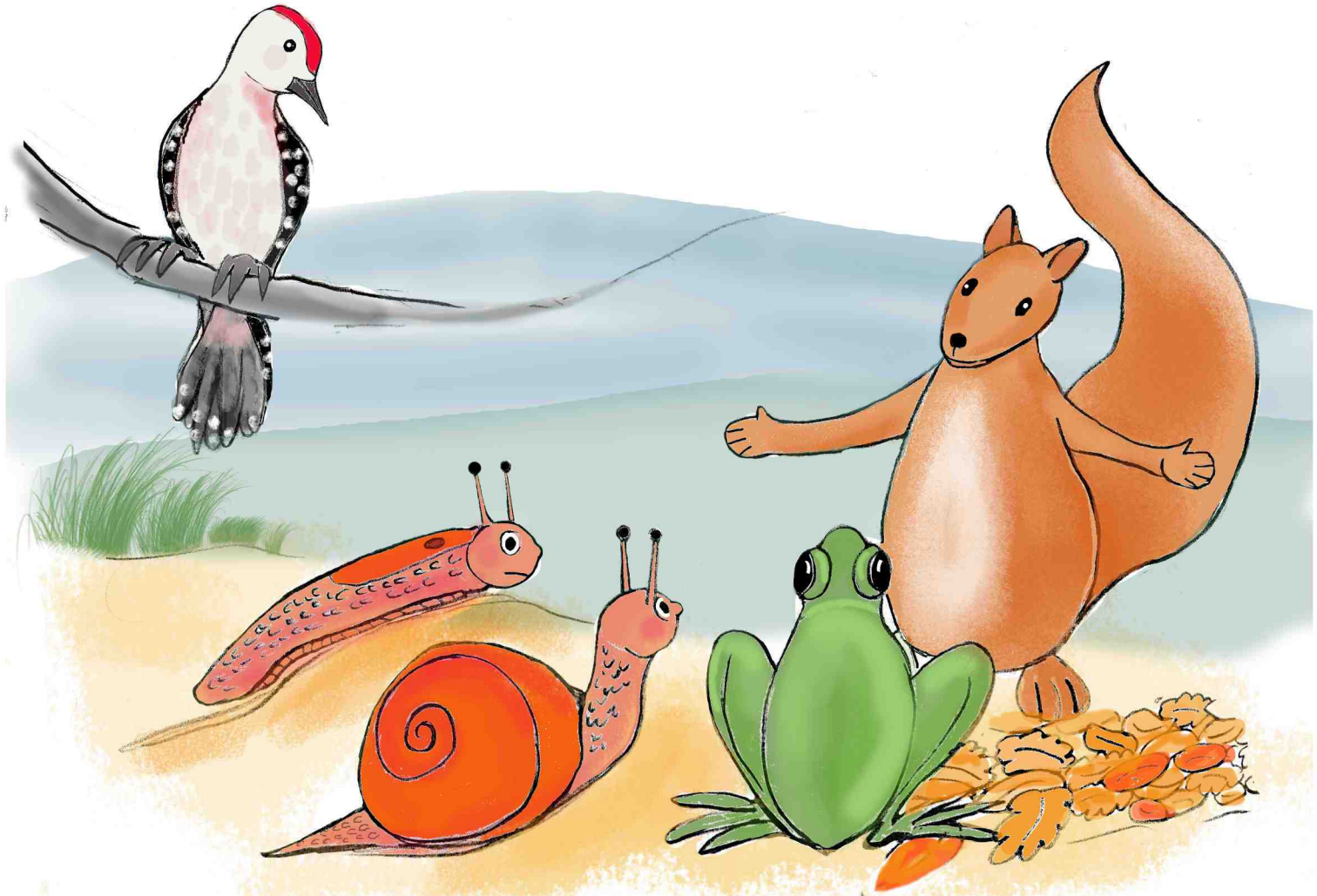


A frog that was close by, hearing the hustle and bustle, approached them.

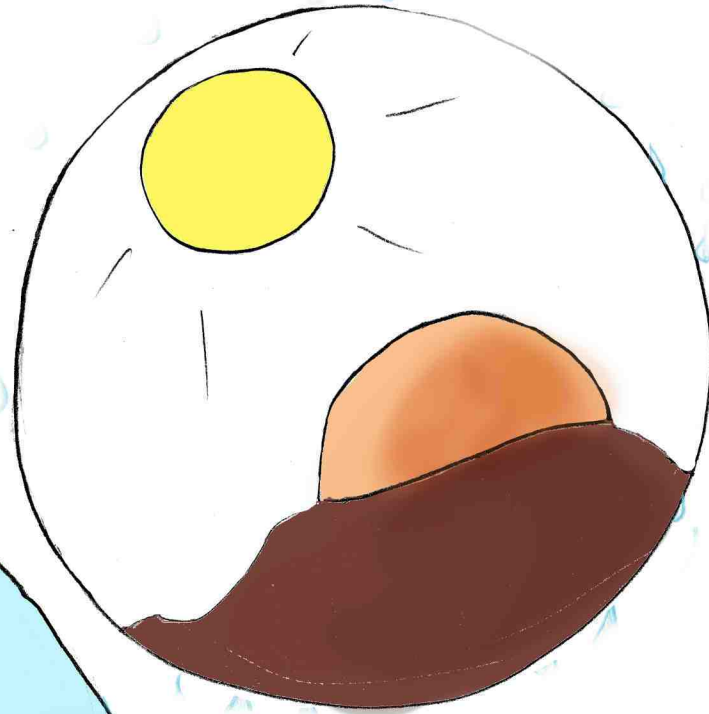
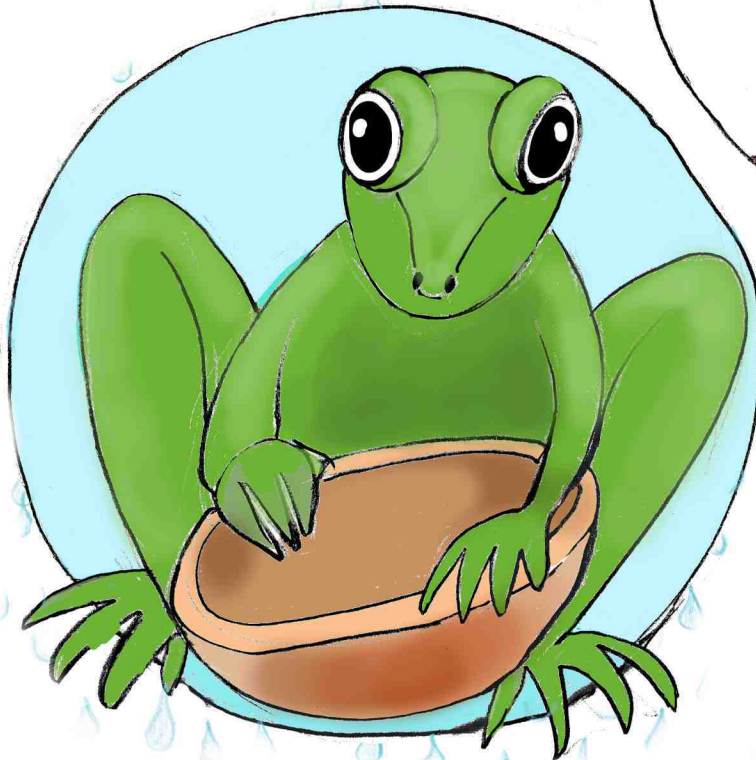
"What happened? Can I help you?"

"Zip has lost his little house," explained Trot. "The winter will come soon and if we don't find one, he will die from the cold!"

"I can do one of mud" said the frog. "Let's go to my pond. There is lots of mud there."



The frog made a shell of mud and he put it to dry in the sun.



"It's beautiful. We can paint it,"  
proposed Trot.



But, suddenly, a black cloud appeared.  
It started to rain and after a while the  
mud shell had melted.

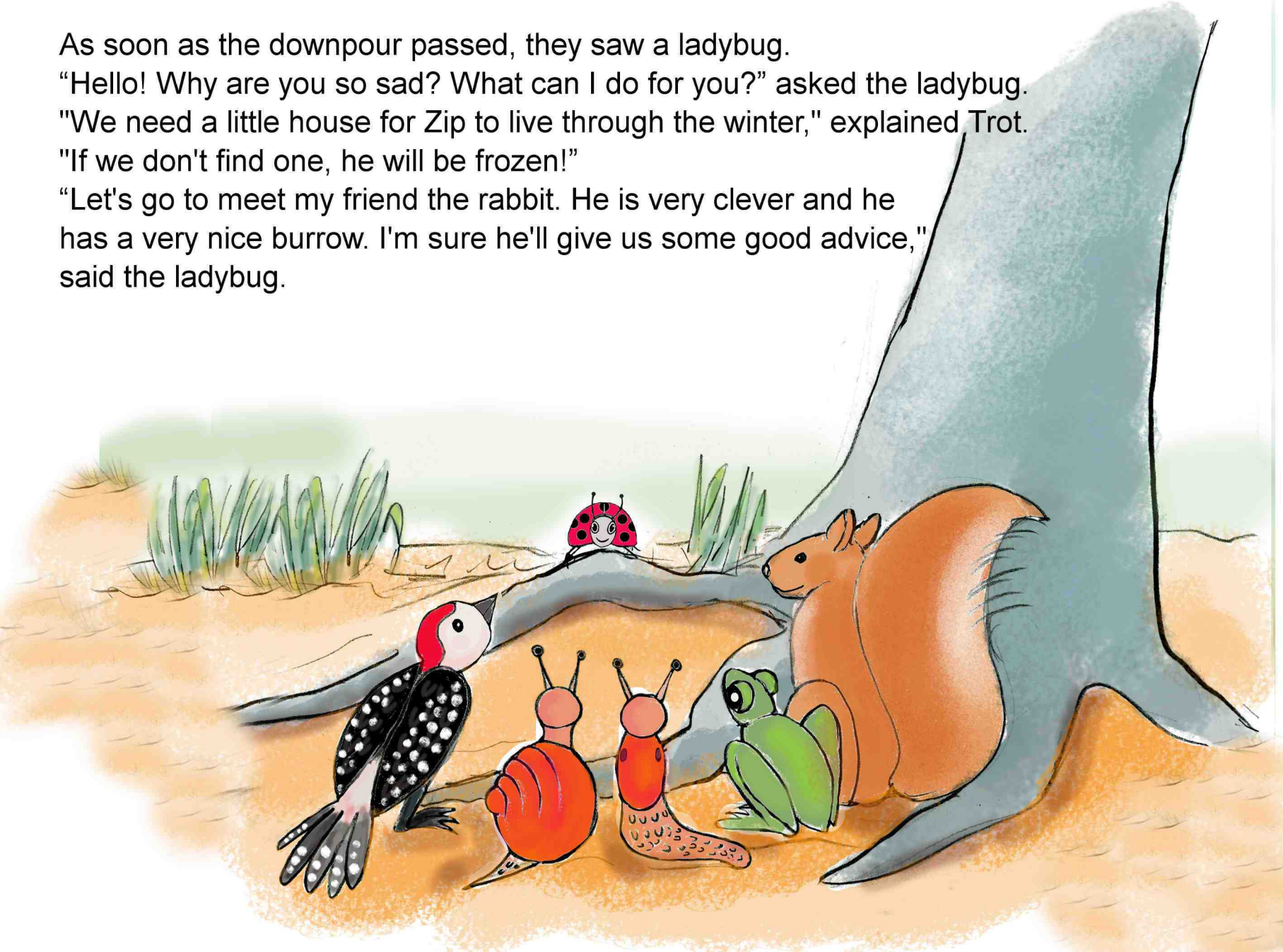
As soon as the downpour passed, they saw a ladybug.

"Hello! Why are you so sad? What can I do for you?" asked the ladybug.

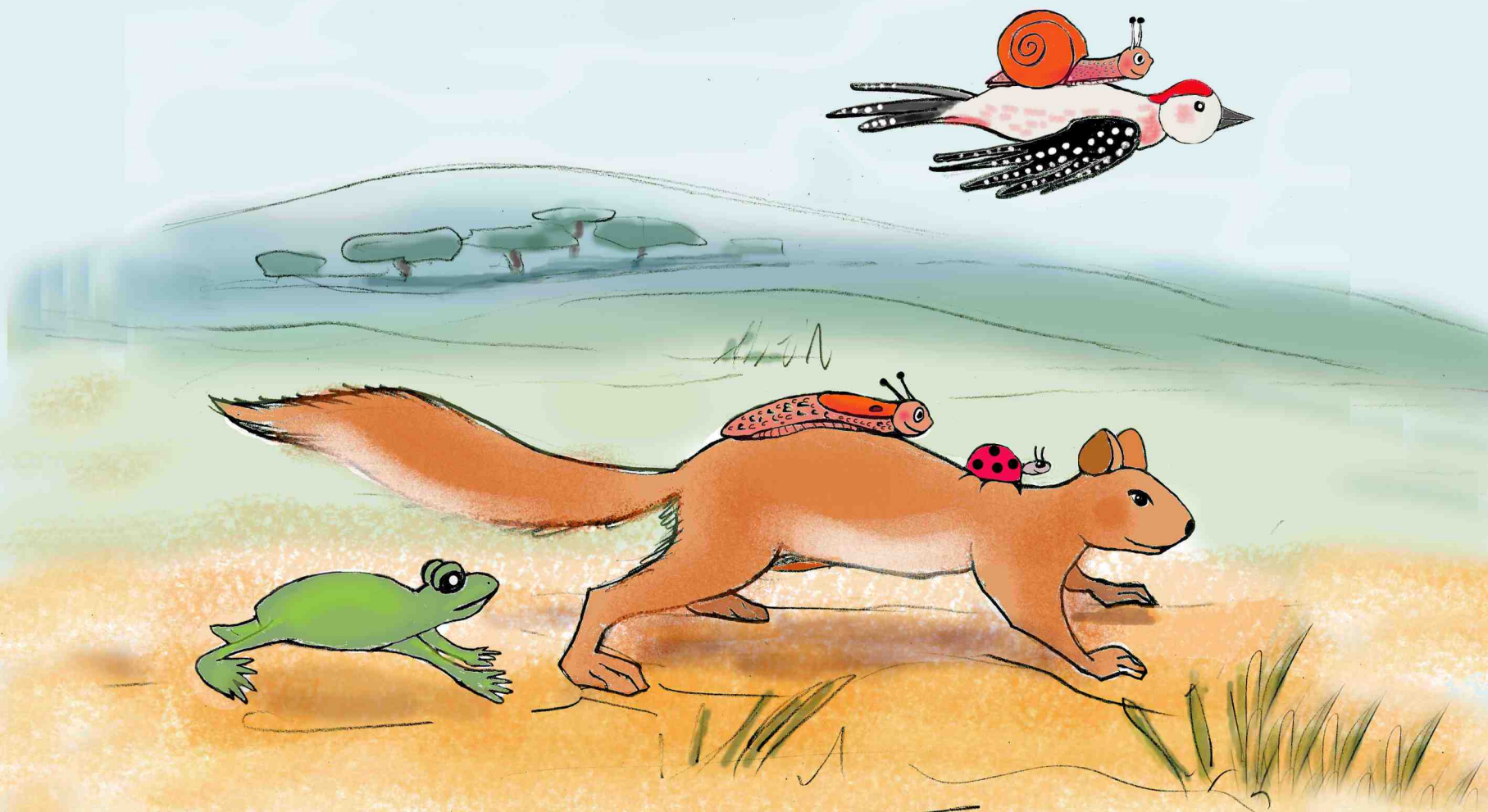
"We need a little house for Zip to live through the winter," explained Trot.

"If we don't find one, he will be frozen!"

"Let's go to meet my friend the rabbit. He is very clever and he has a very nice burrow. I'm sure he'll give us some good advice," said the ladybug.



And the whole group followed the ladybug until the bunny's burrow.





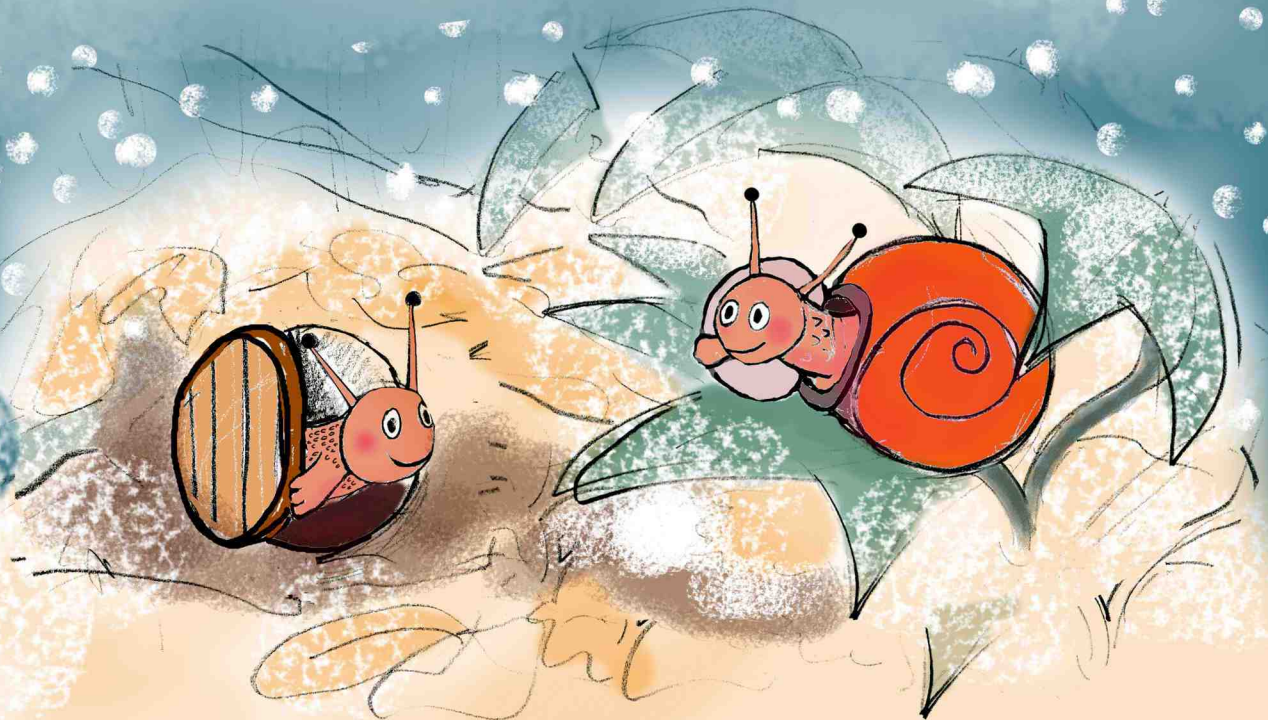
When the bunny learned about their problem, he explained to Zip that he could made a hole in the ground and that way he could have a house as beautiful as his and spend the winter protected from the cold.

The bunny invited them to visit his burrow.

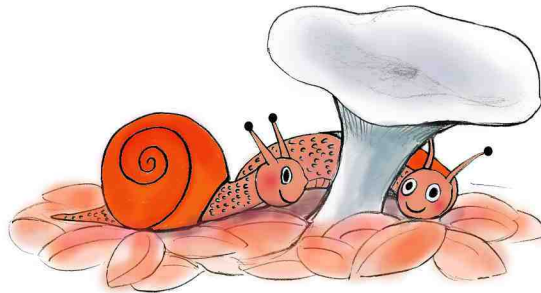


Zip was very happy to have discovered that just by drilling a hole in the ground, he could have a little house wherever he wanted.

When the first snowflakes began to fall, Trot and Zip said good night to each other. They closed the doors of their houses and they went to sleep waiting for the return of the spring's sun.



**"And they lived  
happily ever after"**



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