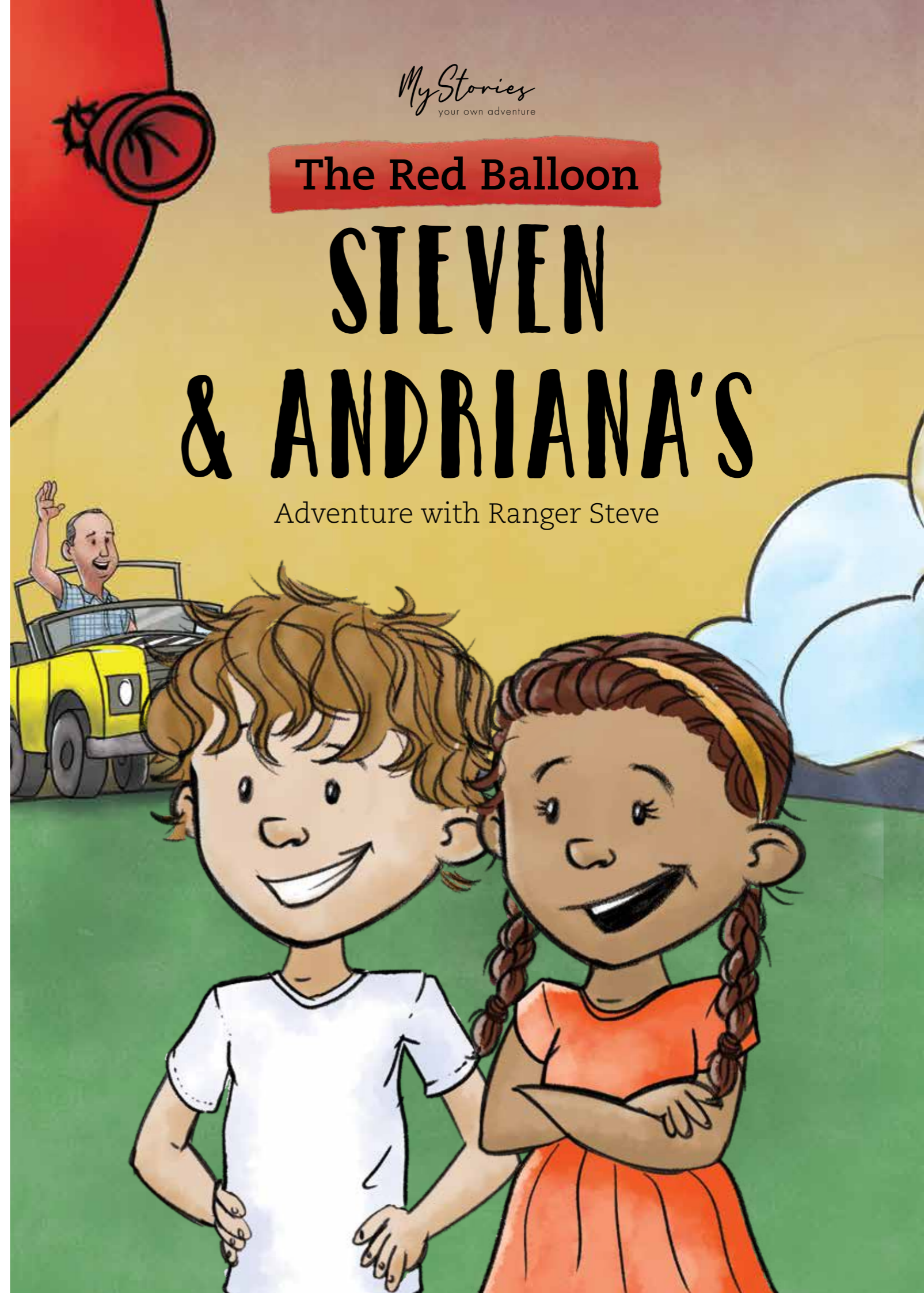


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The Red Balloon

STEVEN & ANDRIANA'S

Adventure with Ranger Steve



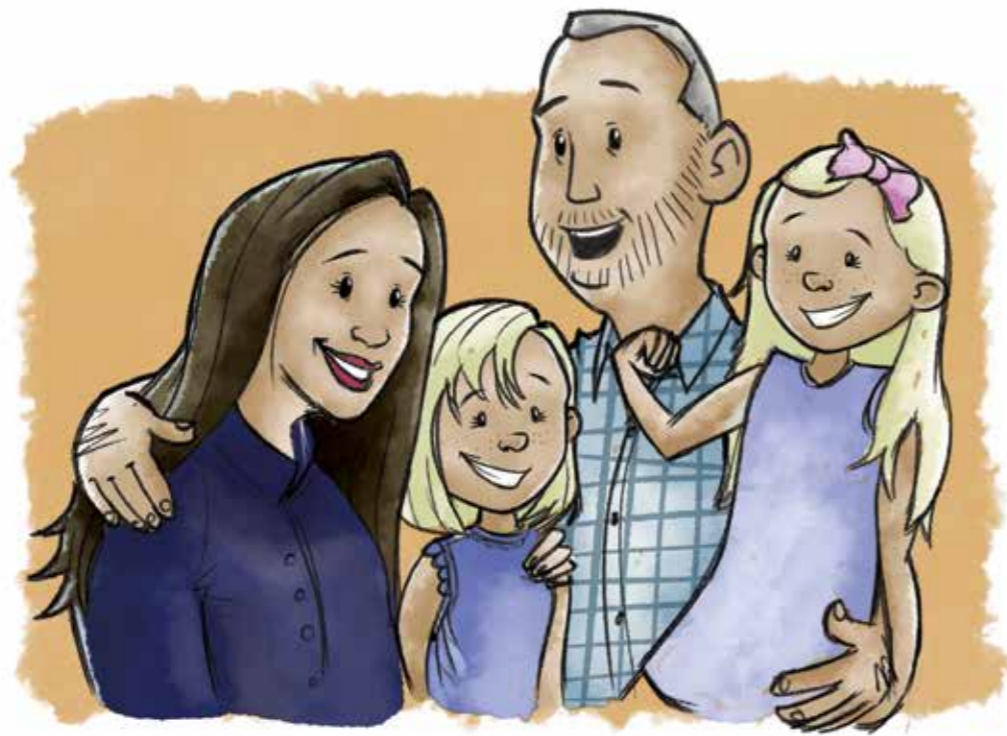
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The Red Balloon

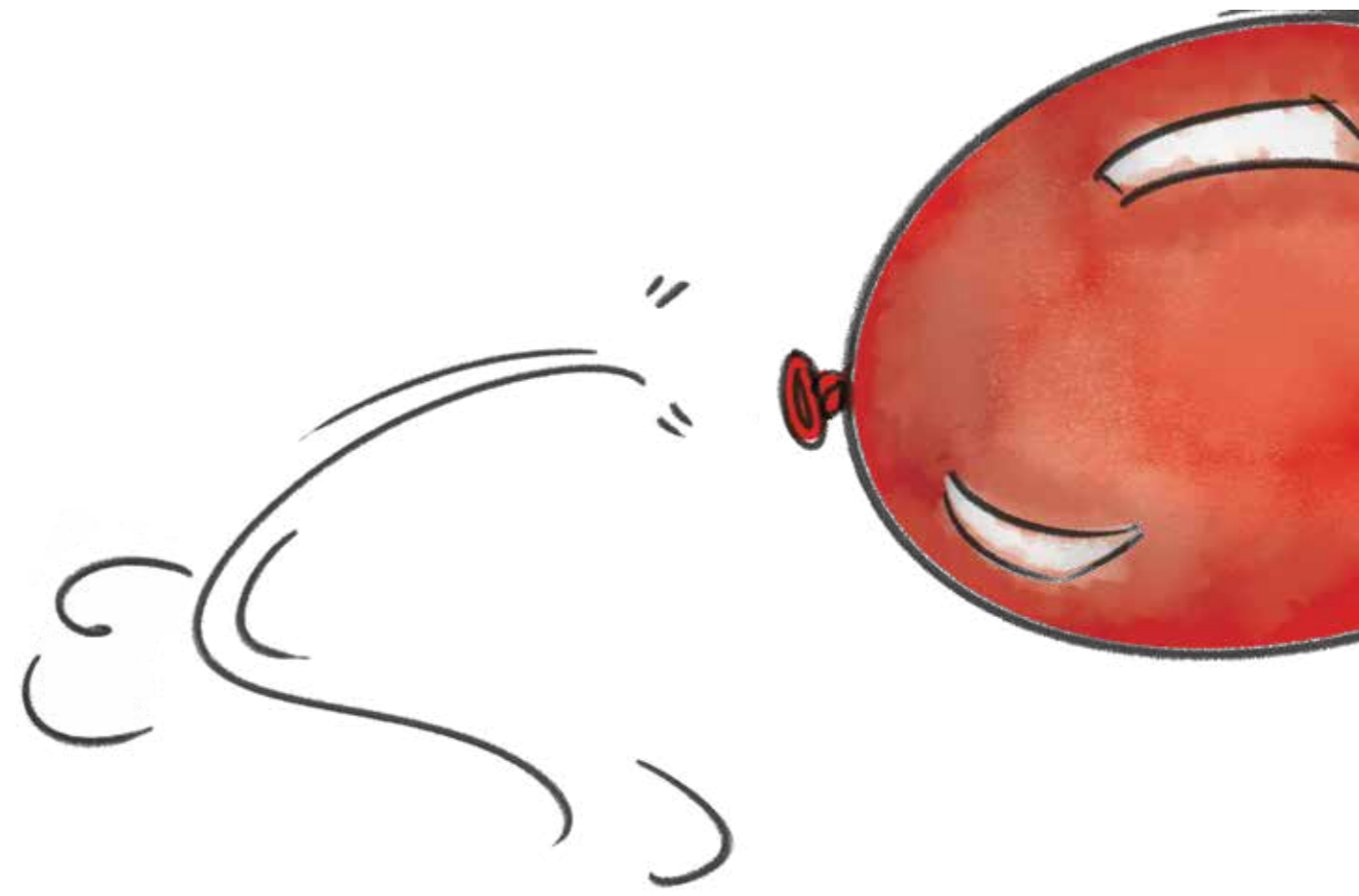
STEVEN & ANDRIANA'S

Adventure with Ranger Steve





Dedicated with love to the Bauer family.



Written by Mariana van der Merwe
Illustrations by Christopher Pinto
Layout by Cené de Wit

MyStories
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Steven and Andriana enjoy every moment of their bush excursion with Steve the field guide. Everybody calls him Ranger Steve. He teaches children all over the world to take good care of nature.

Finally, after a day full of important lessons, Ranger Steve asks excitedly, **“Who is ready for a fun game drive adventure?”**



“WE ARE! WE ARE!”

shout Steven, Andriana and all the other friends.



Steven's backpack looks very full.

Ranger Steve pulls the yellow Land Rover closer and everybody jumps in. **"Ready?"** Ranger Steve asks. He whistles loudly and off they go.



After the first turn Andriana asks,

"PSSST!" Why does your backpack look so round?"

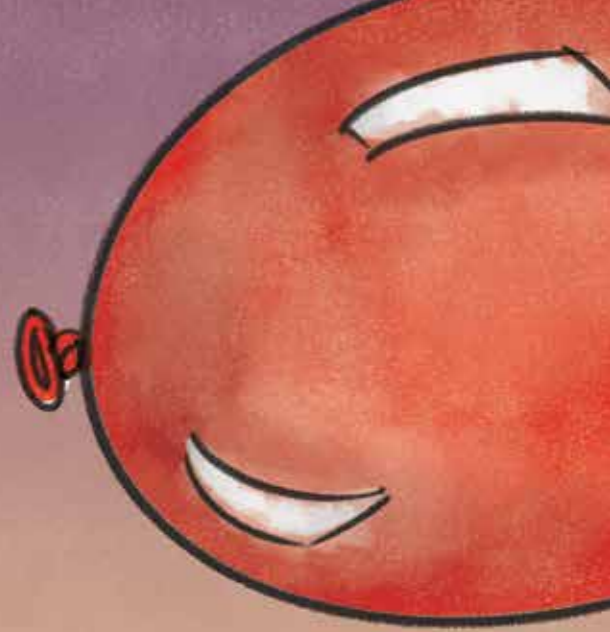
Steven carefully opens the backpack just a little so Andriana can peek inside. "I got this pretty red balloon at a restaurant on our way to the game park," says Steven cheerfully.

In the meantime, Ranger Steve stops to show them an oryx close to the road. But they forgot to close the backpack properly, and all of a sudden, a wild west wind starts blowing and...



...SCHWEEEEP

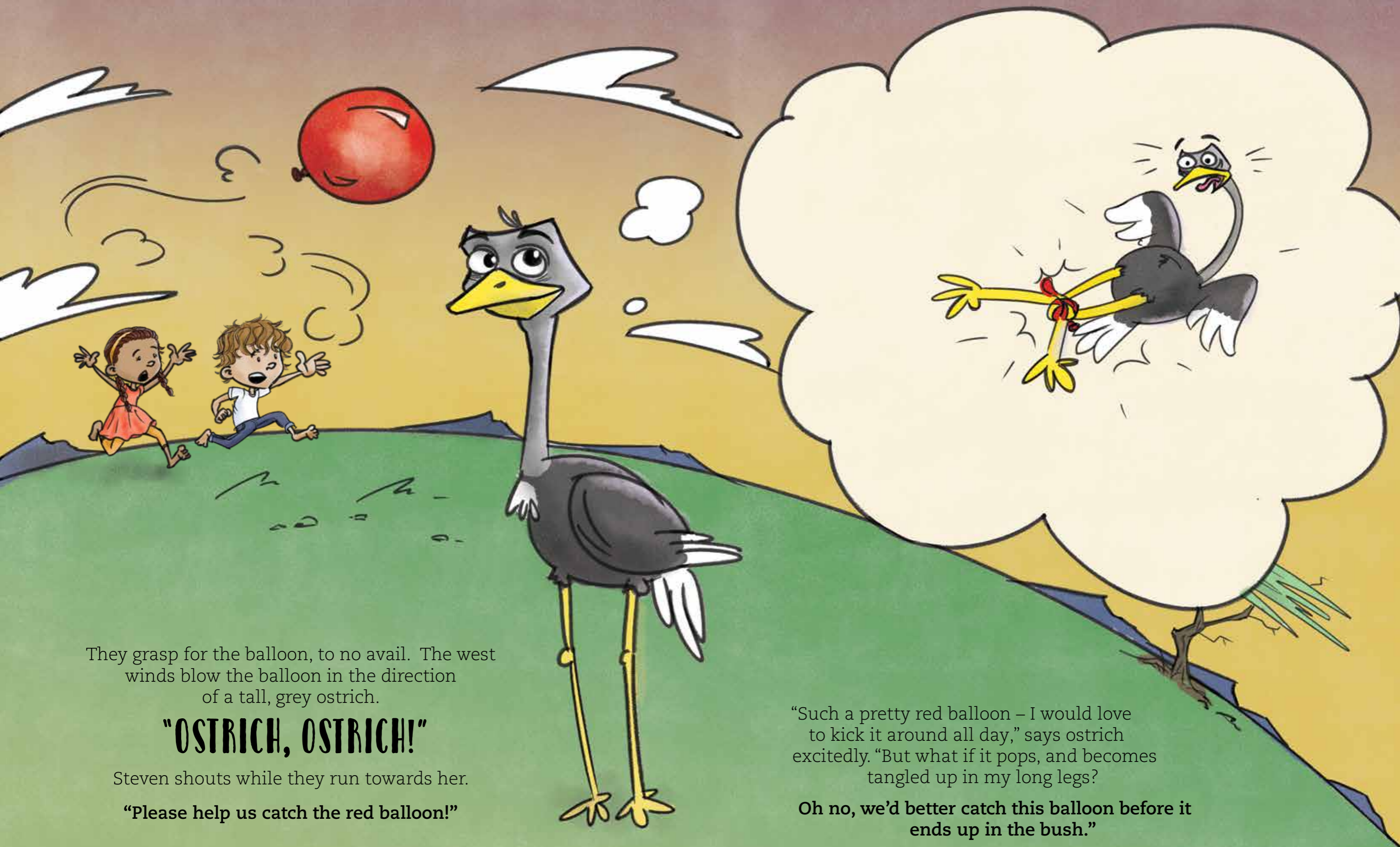
a gust of wind blows the balloon right out of the backpack!



"OH NO!"

shout Steven and Andriana together.

While Ranger Steve is still busy teaching everybody how oryx use their horns, Steven and Andriana jump **WHOOOP WHOOOP** off the back of the Land Rover.



They grasp for the balloon, to no avail. The west winds blow the balloon in the direction of a tall, grey ostrich.

"OSTRICH, OSTRICH!"

Steven shouts while they run towards her.

"Please help us catch the red balloon!"

"Such a pretty red balloon – I would love to kick it around all day," says ostrich excitedly. "But what if it pops, and becomes tangled up in my long legs?"

Oh no, we'd better catch this balloon before it ends up in the bush."



Ostrich points her toes and...



...claps her wings.



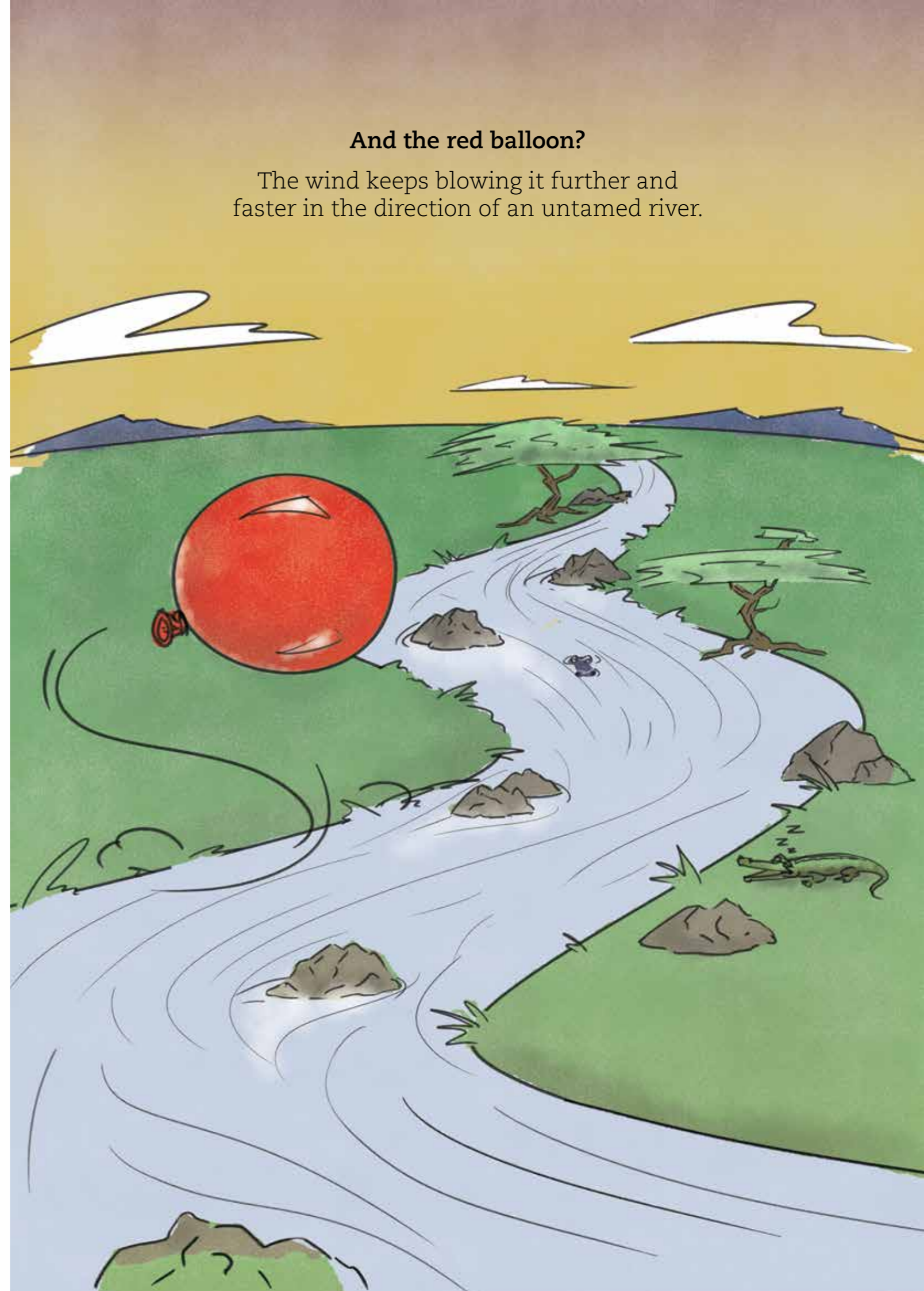
She tries her best to catch the balloon, but ostriches can't really fly.

Embarrassed, ostrich hides her head in a hole in the ground.



And the red balloon?

The wind keeps blowing it further and faster in the direction of an untamed river.



Steven and Andriana start chasing after it.

"CROCODILE, CROCODILE!"

Andriana shouts out of breath.

"Help! Help us to catch the red balloon, please!"

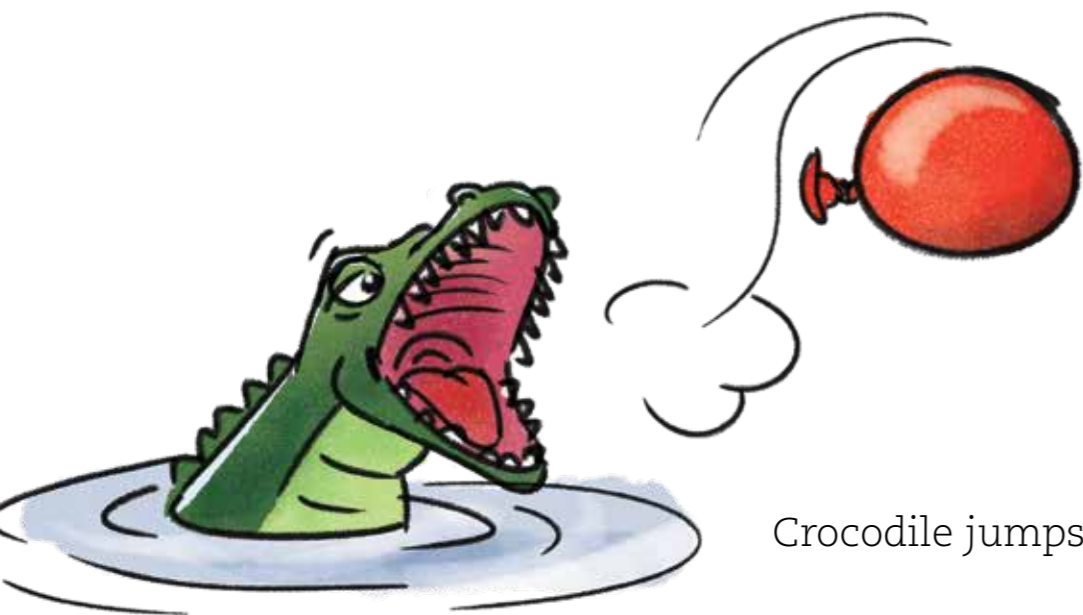


"MMMMMMMM,"

crocodile mumbles.

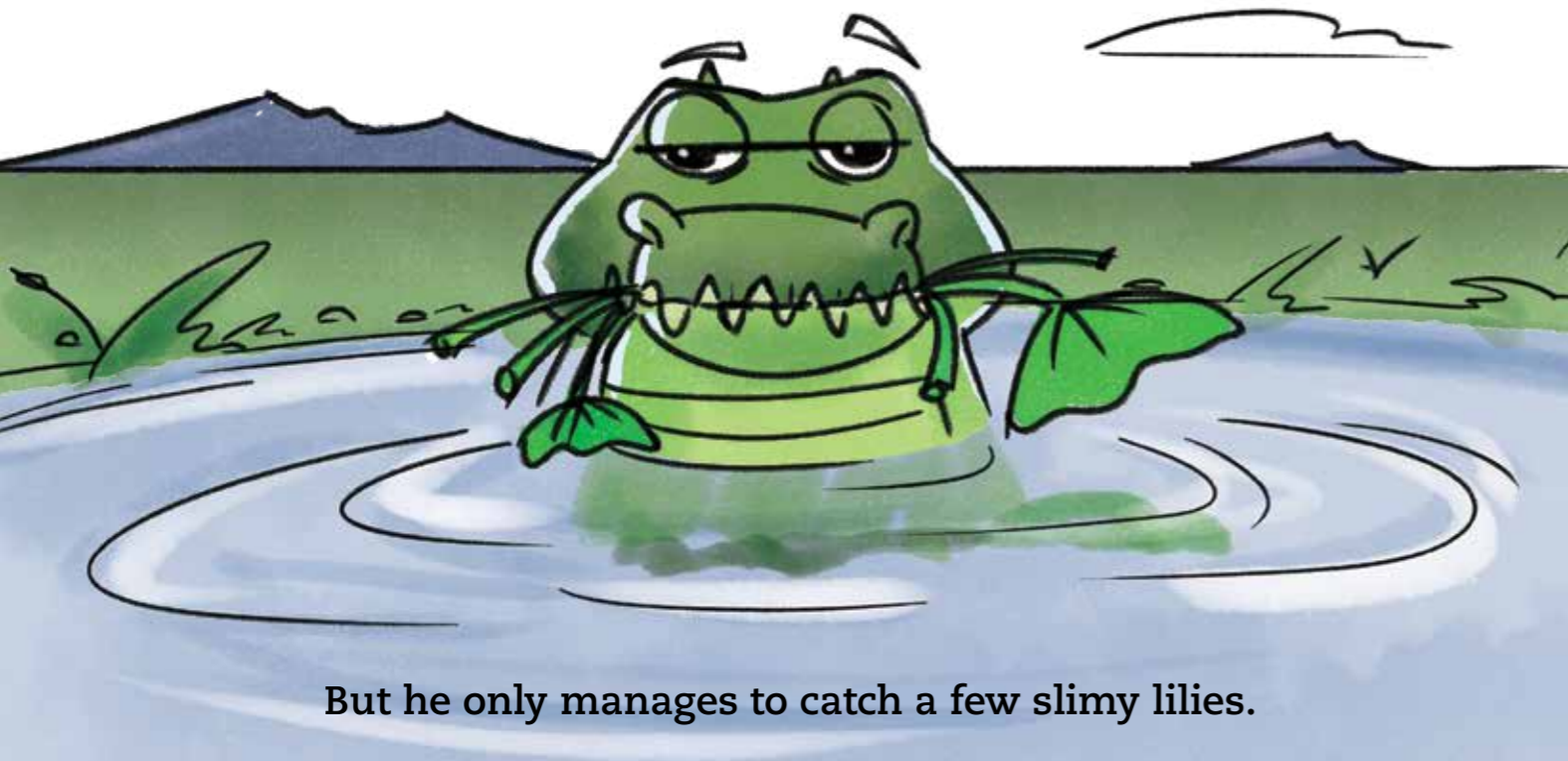
"That balloon looks delightful. But what if I swallow it?
My tummy will ache for days

**Ugh-ah-no-way! We'd better catch that balloon, it's really
dangerous for all the animals in the bush."**



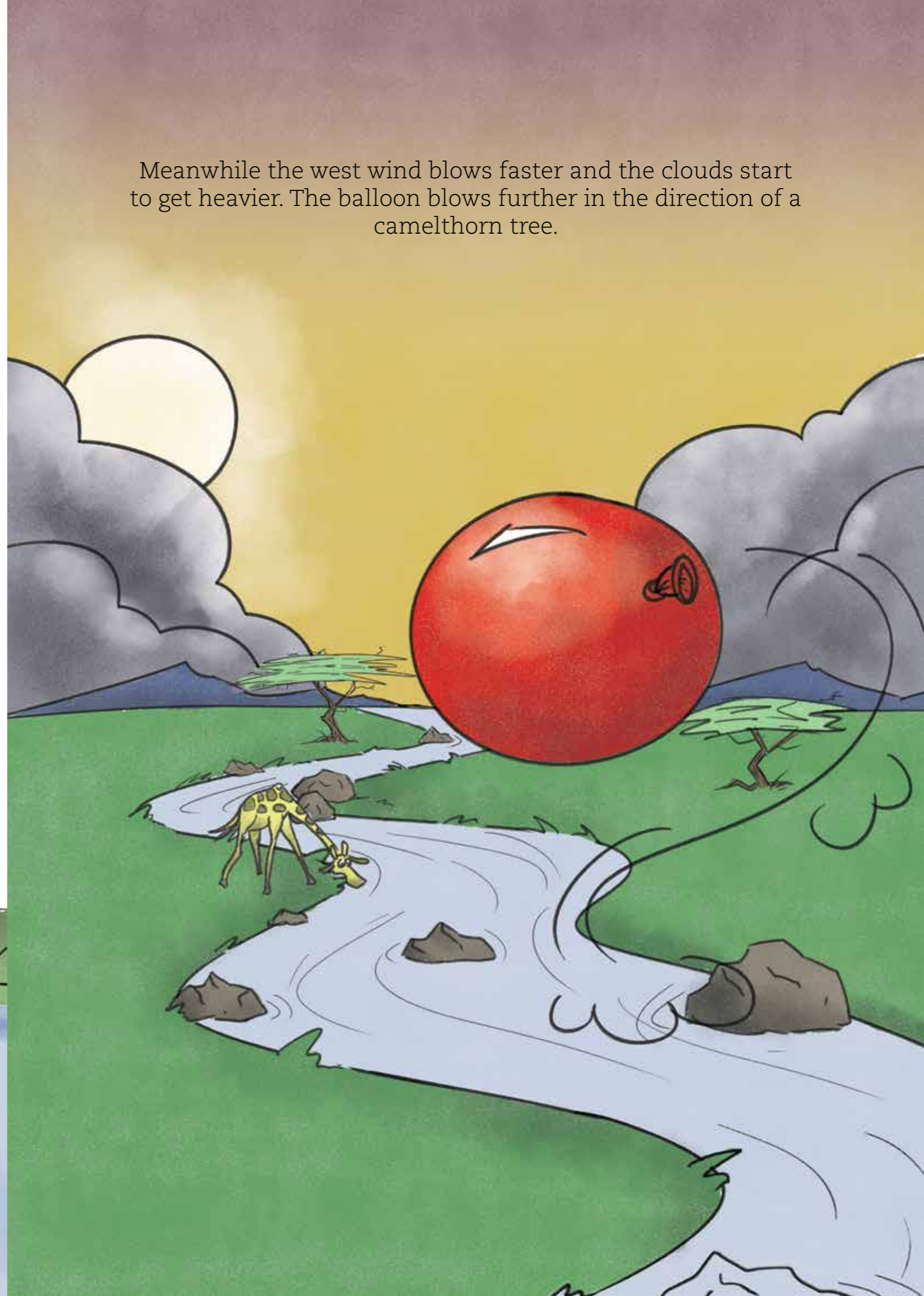
Crocodile jumps as high as he can.

CA-CLANG goes his jaw as he snaps at the balloon.



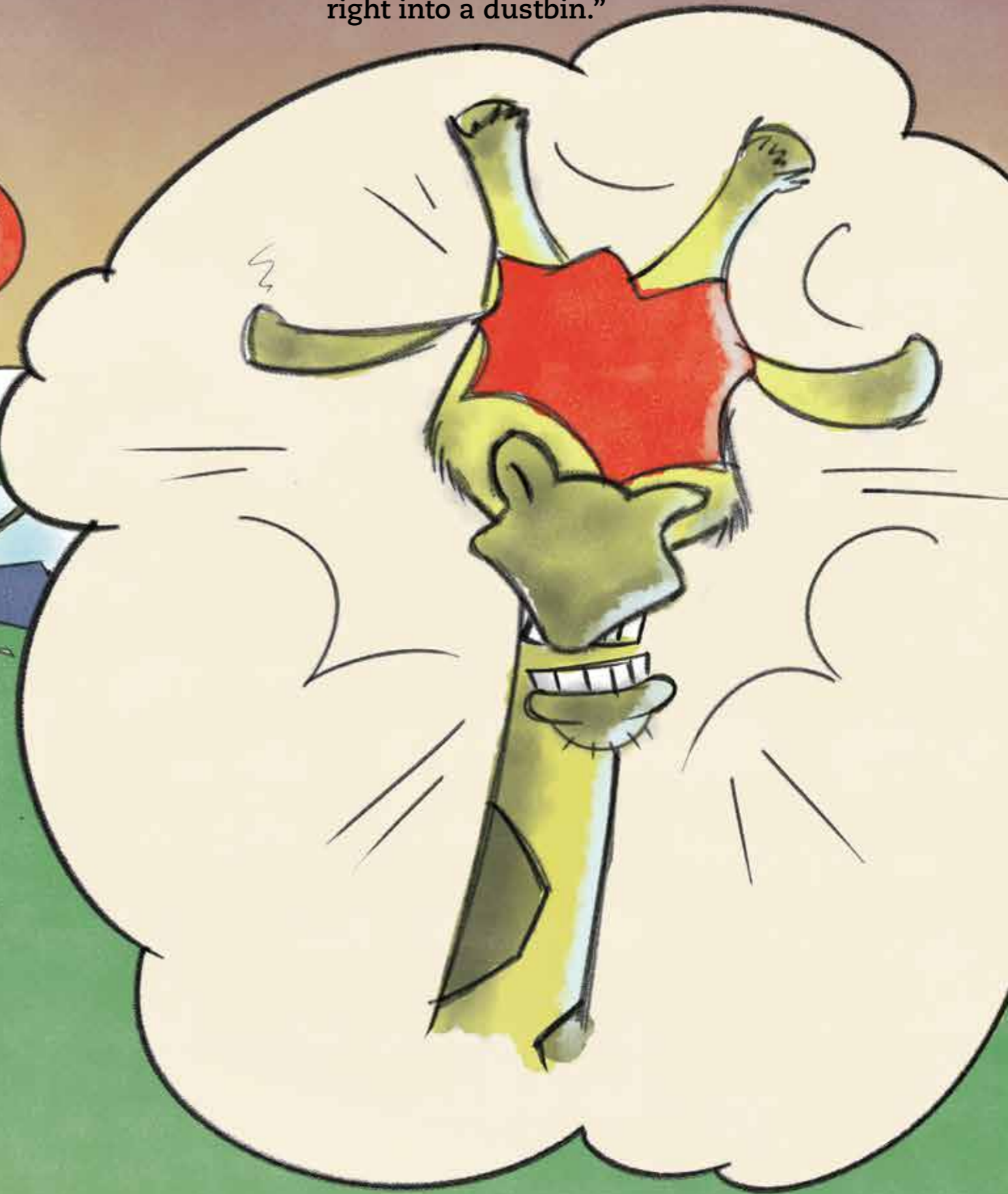
But he only manages to catch a few slimy lilies.

Meanwhile the west wind blows faster and the clouds start to get heavier. The balloon blows further in the direction of a camelthorn tree.



But what if it pops and the shreds of plastic cover my eyes?
I will bump into all the trees.

Oh, golly no, we'd better catch that balloon and throw it
right into a dustbin."



Steven and Andriana run further.

"GIRAFFE, GIRAFFE!"

they shout together.

"Help! Help catch the balloon! Please!"

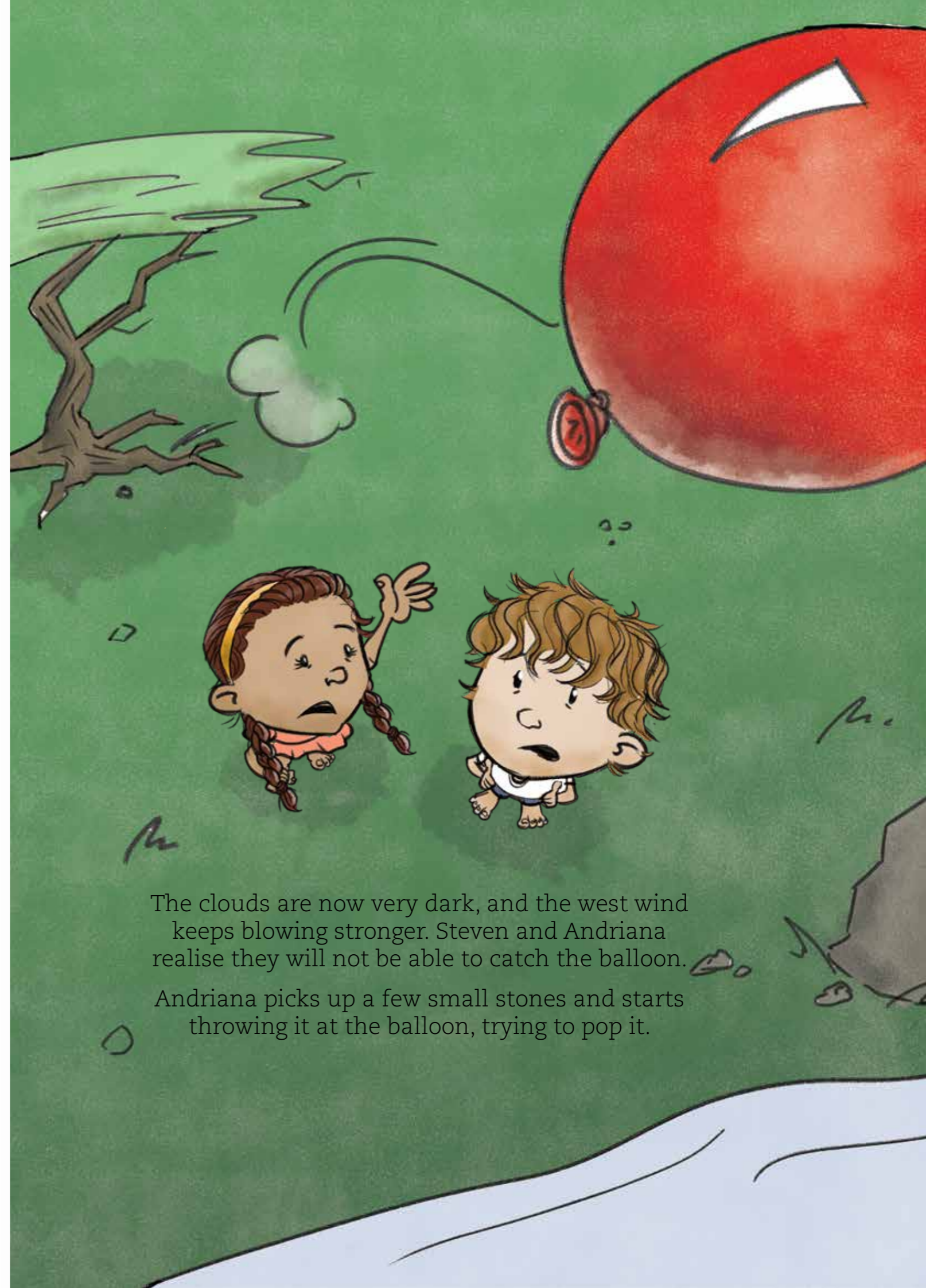
"What a fun, red balloon," giraffe smiles.

"I would love to bounce it on my head like a soccer ball.



Giraffe stands on the edges of his hooves. He stretches his long neck up into the sky.

The west wind blows the balloon round-and-round on top of this head. Eventually it blows all the way back in the direction of the oryx.



The clouds are now very dark, and the west wind keeps blowing stronger. Steven and Andriana realise they will not be able to catch the balloon. Andriana picks up a few small stones and starts throwing it at the balloon, trying to pop it.

“At least then we can pick up the shreds and throw it into a dustbin,” she explains to Steven.

But her efforts are in vain, as the balloon is already too far away.



Ostrich, crocodile, and giraffe worry as they see the red balloon still blowing around in the sky.

Feeling defeated, Steven and Andriana run back to Ranger Steve.

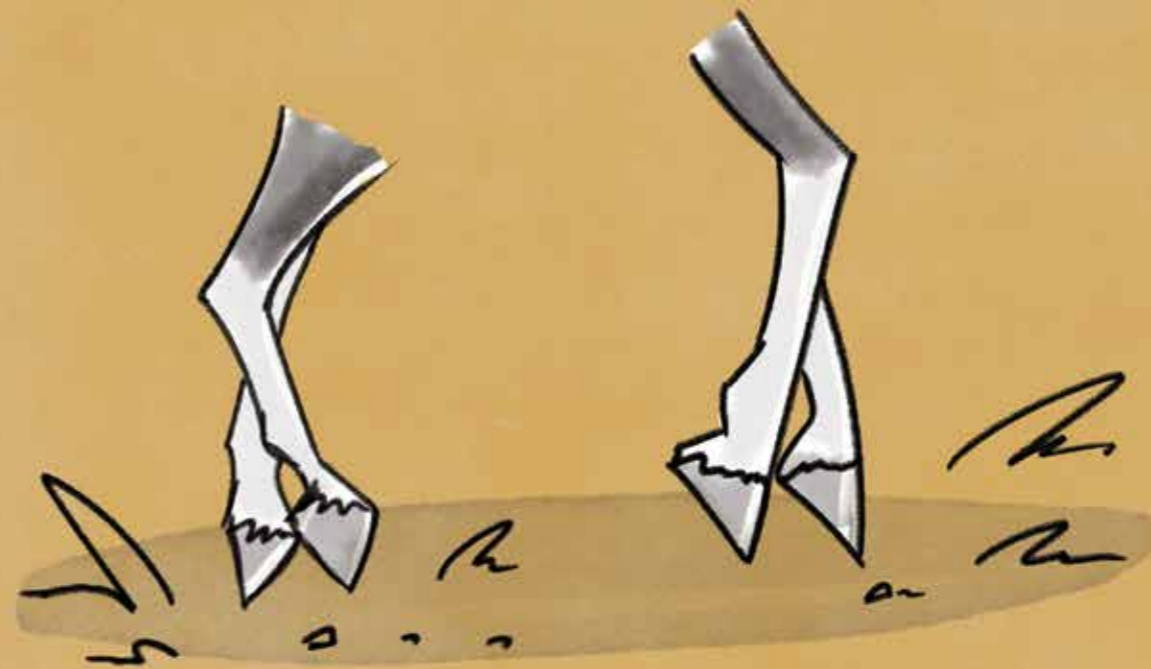
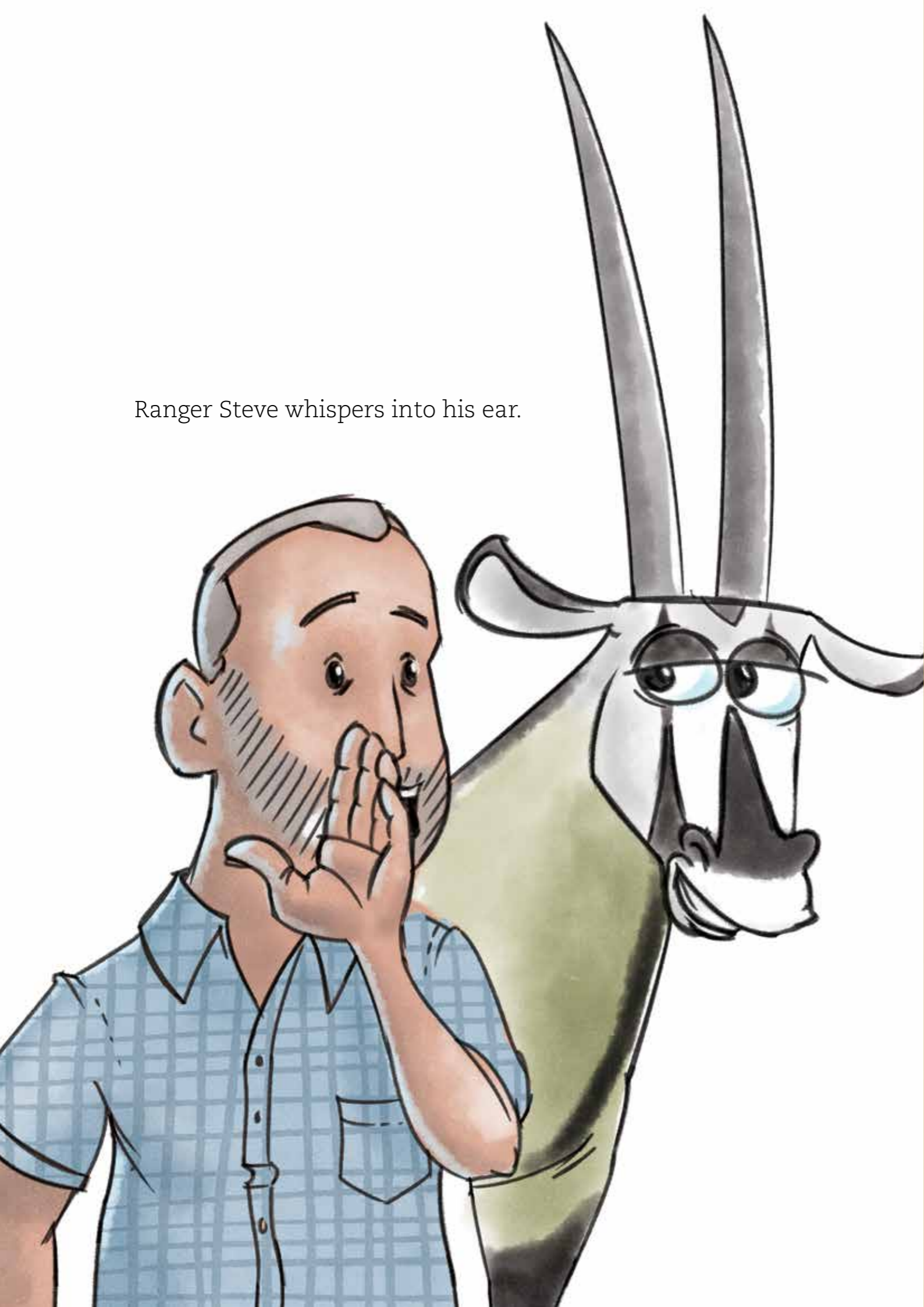
They put their heads together.
Then Ranger Steve whistles loudly.

PHWWWWWWWWHHT!

From a distance an oryx gallops closer.



Ranger Steve whispers into his ear.

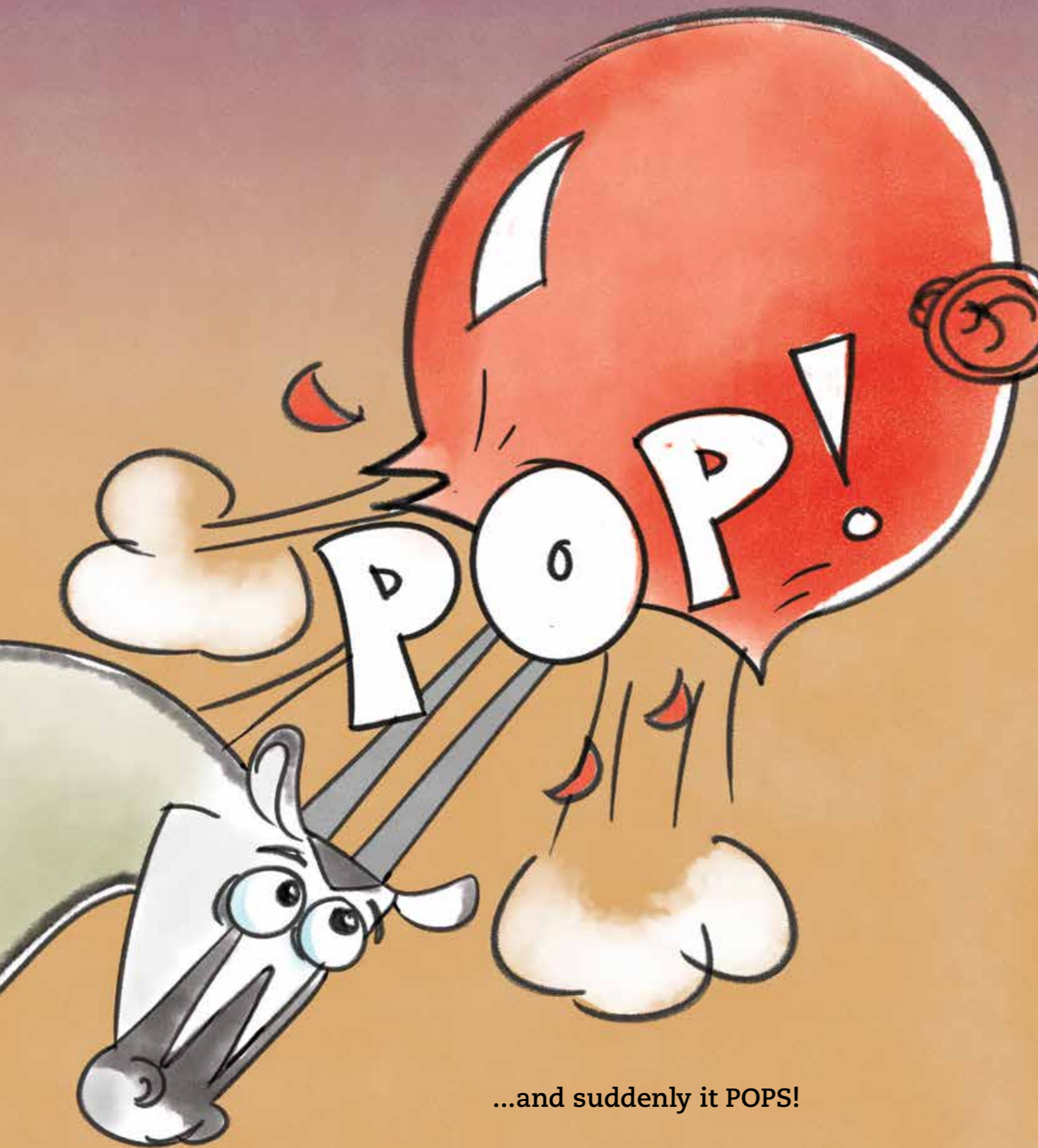


Oryx starts running in the direction of the balloon. His hooves go **CLAPPITY-CLAP** on the ground.



Oryx jumps up, bends his neck forward and flies through the air.

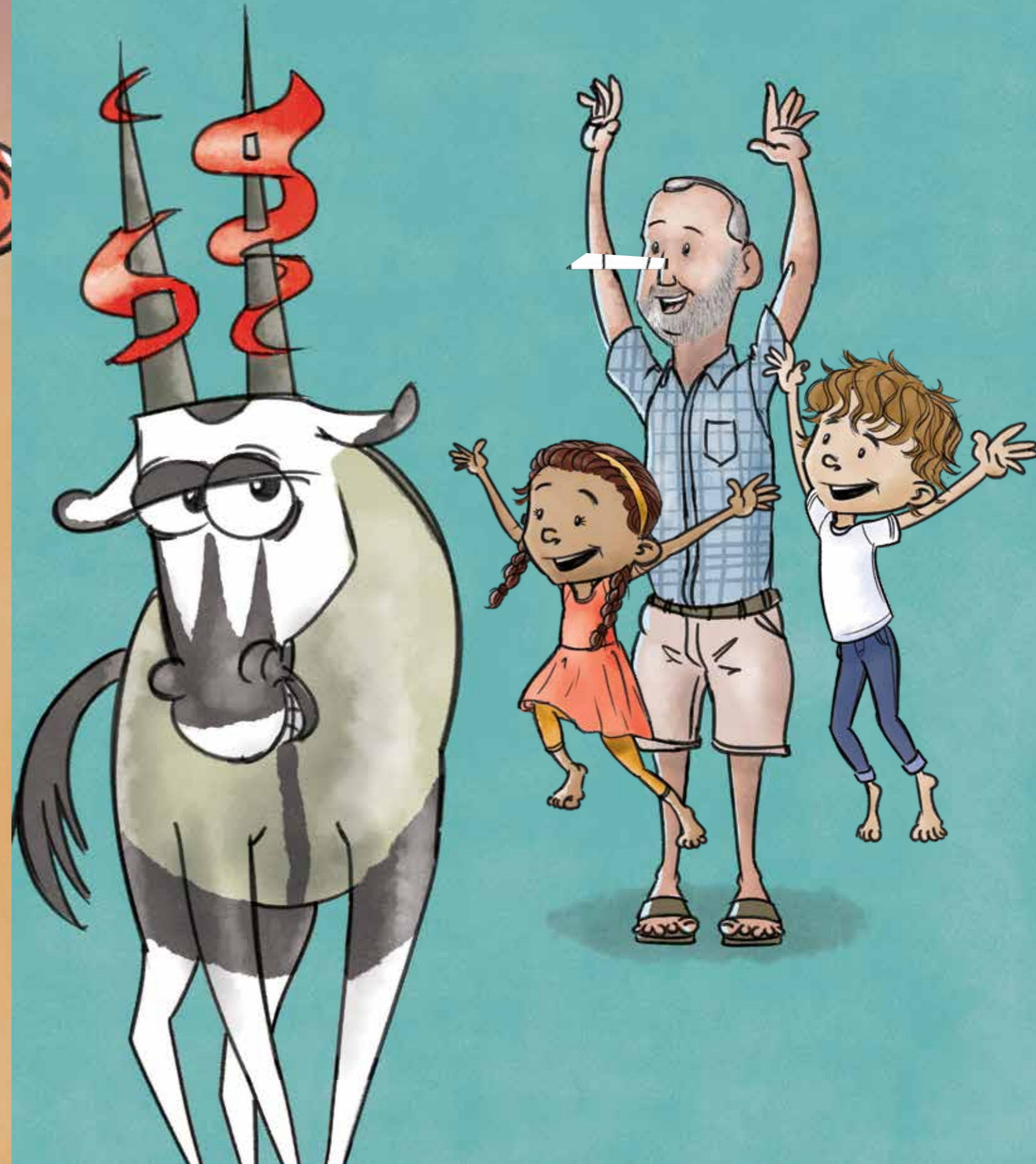
The edges of his sharp horns touch the balloon...



...and suddenly it POPS!

The shreds string like a sossatie through oryx's horns.

"This could easily have been a disaster!" says Ranger Steve. Then they all look at oryx's horns again and laugh together, relieved.



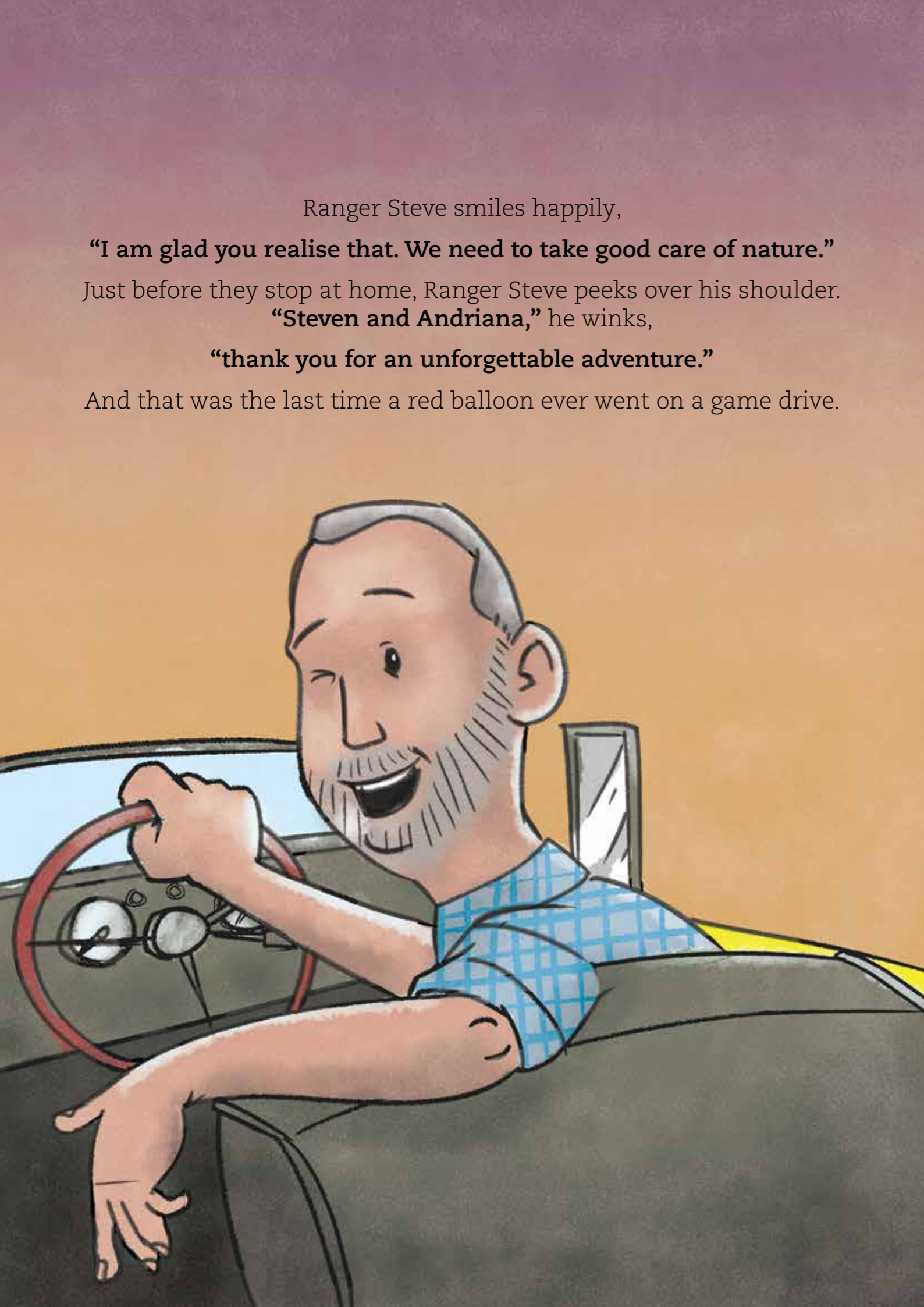
On their way home, Ranger Steve scratches his head.
“I wonder where that balloon came from?”

Steven and Andriana’s faces are now almost as red as the balloon.

“The balloon was so pretty,” says Steven. “We thought maybe later we could all have some fun with it.”

“Yes,” adds Andriana. “But that was before ostrich, crocodile and giraffe reminded us that balloons, just like garbage, does not belong in the bush.”





Ranger Steve smiles happily,

“I am glad you realise that. We need to take good care of nature.”

Just before they stop at home, Ranger Steve peeks over his shoulder.

“Steven and Andriana,” he winks,

“thank you for an unforgettable adventure.”

And that was the last time a red balloon ever went on a game drive.

ACTIVITY:

Take this book with you when you go on a safari one day.
Tick off all the animals you see.

Date:

Game Park:

Aardvark

Baboon

Buffalo

Bush Baby

Cheetah

Crocodile

Elephant

Giraffe

Hipopotamus

Hyena

Impala

Jackal

Kudu

Leopard

Lion

Oryx

Ostrich

Porcupine

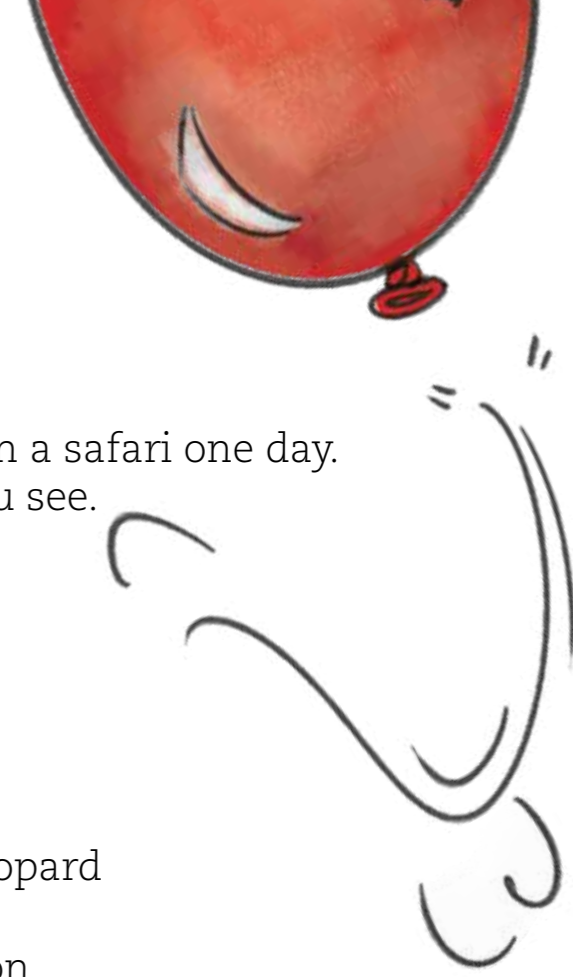
Rhino

Vervet monkey

Warthog

Zebra

Other animals:





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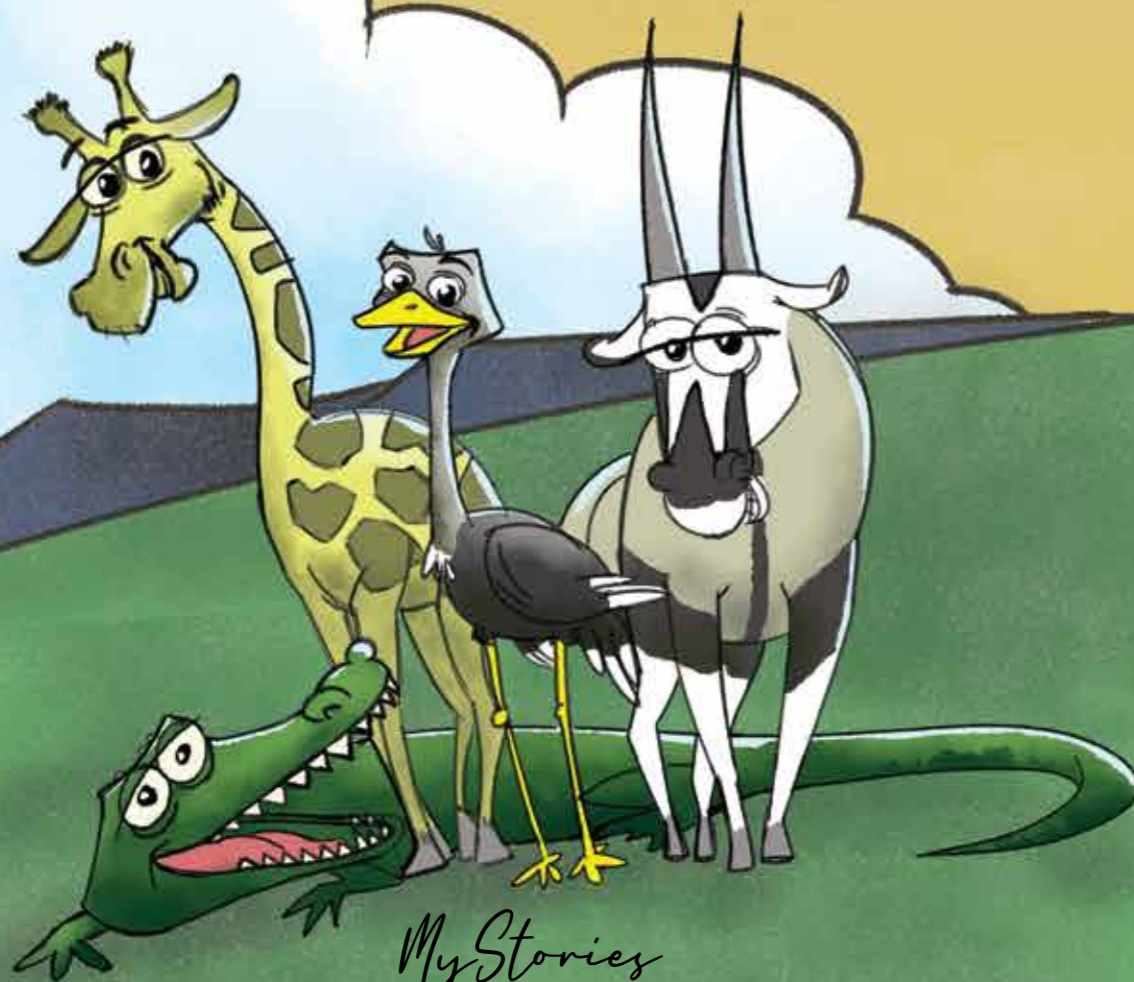
Steven and Andriana go off on a game drive with Ranger Steve. They hide a pretty red balloon in Steven's backpack, but... oh golly! A wild west wind starts blowing and

SCHWEEEEP

a gust of wind blows the balloon right out of the backpack!

Steven and Andriana try their best to catch the balloon, but the clouds get darker, and the wind blows stronger. What if the balloon pops and the shreds of plastic end up in the bush?

Will Steven and Andriana catch the balloon in time?



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