

# NOAH's Desert Friends

## Sheldon Gets Stuck















*Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health*

### **About NOAH**

Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health (NOAH) was founded in 1997 to provide underserved communities with quality, equitable healthcare. NOAH serves more than 50,000 patients annually at our six Federally Qualified Health Centers throughout central Arizona in Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Glendale. With a focus on comprehensive, whole-person care, NOAH offers medical, dental, behavioral health, nutrition, health education, and community resource assistance and enrollment to serve our diverse patients at every stage of life.



# NOAH's Desert Friends

## Sheldon Gets Stuck

Written by

Christina Henning

Illustrated by

Daniel Montoya



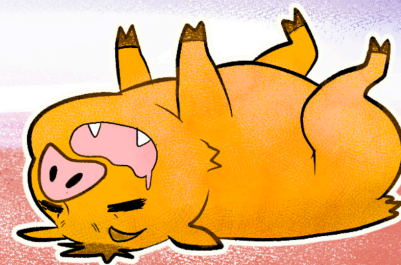


Niko's thick coyote fur sparkled in the bright light  
as the heat warmed the desert sand.

And Javi, doing what javelinas do best,  
laid in a not so graceful position projecting  
his loud snore as far as the wind would carry it.



Z  
Z  
Z

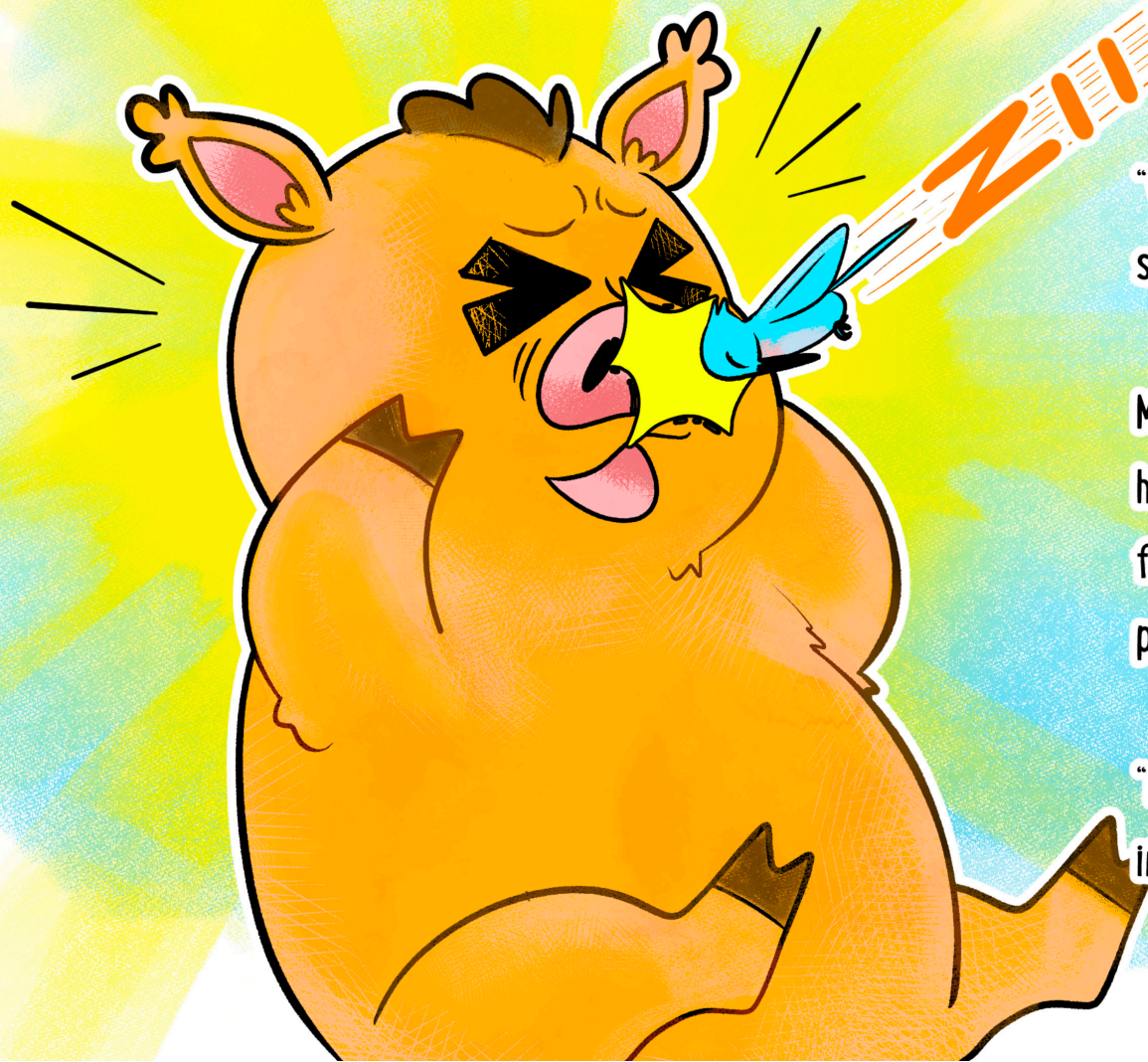




In the distance, their fast-flying feathered friend was  
approaching at a high rate of speed.







“Waaaaake uuuuup and  
seize the day!”

Maya shouted from the sky as  
her little hummingbird body  
flew directly at Javi’s  
pig-like nose.

“I’m up... I’m up.” Javi grunted  
in a sleepy voice.



“Greeeeeetings, sleepy head!  
Today is the day to be the change!”  
Maya chirped as she buzzed in Niko’s ear.

Niko stretched into a  
downward dog pose,  
yawned, and opened her  
eyes to the day ahead.





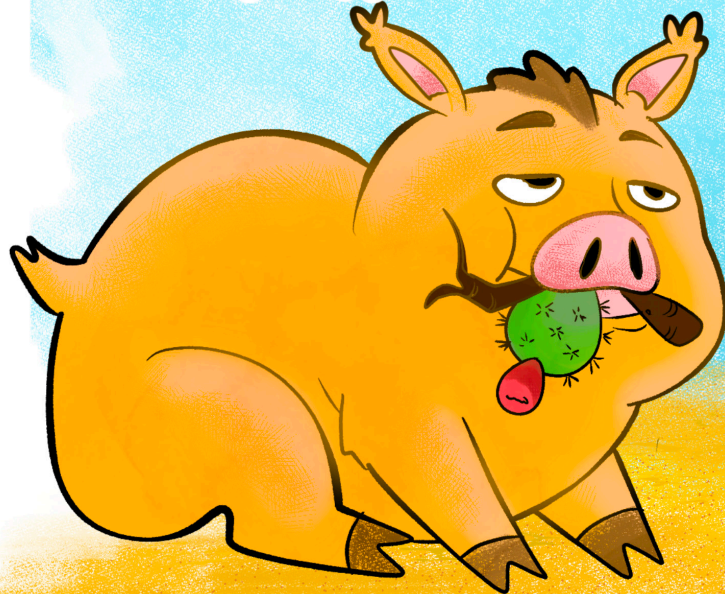
Suddenly, Niko heard something in the distance.

"Ssshhhhh," she called out to her friends.

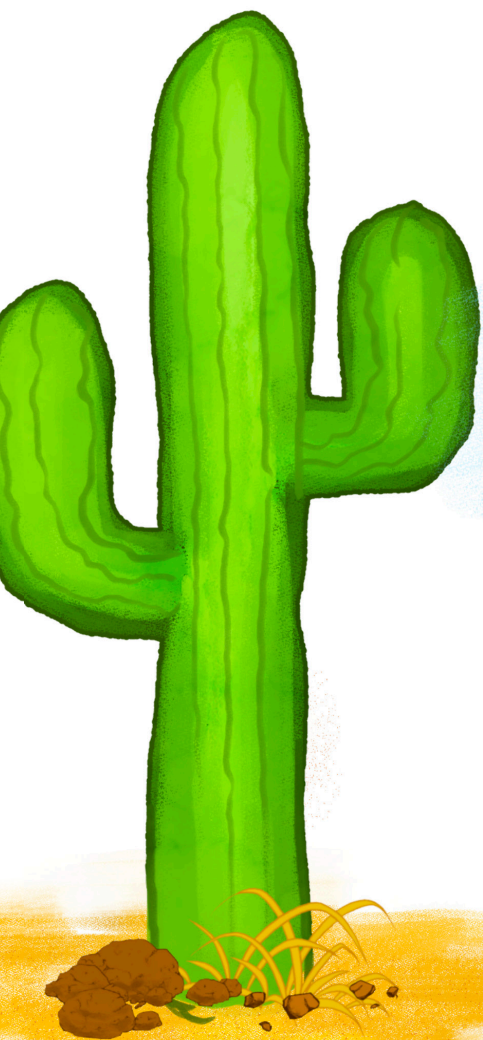
"Do you guys hear that?"

"Mmm-hmmm, I can hear it."

Javi replied while chomping into the  
branch of a prickly pear cactus.







CLUNK

CLUNK

CLUNK  
CLUNK

CLUNK

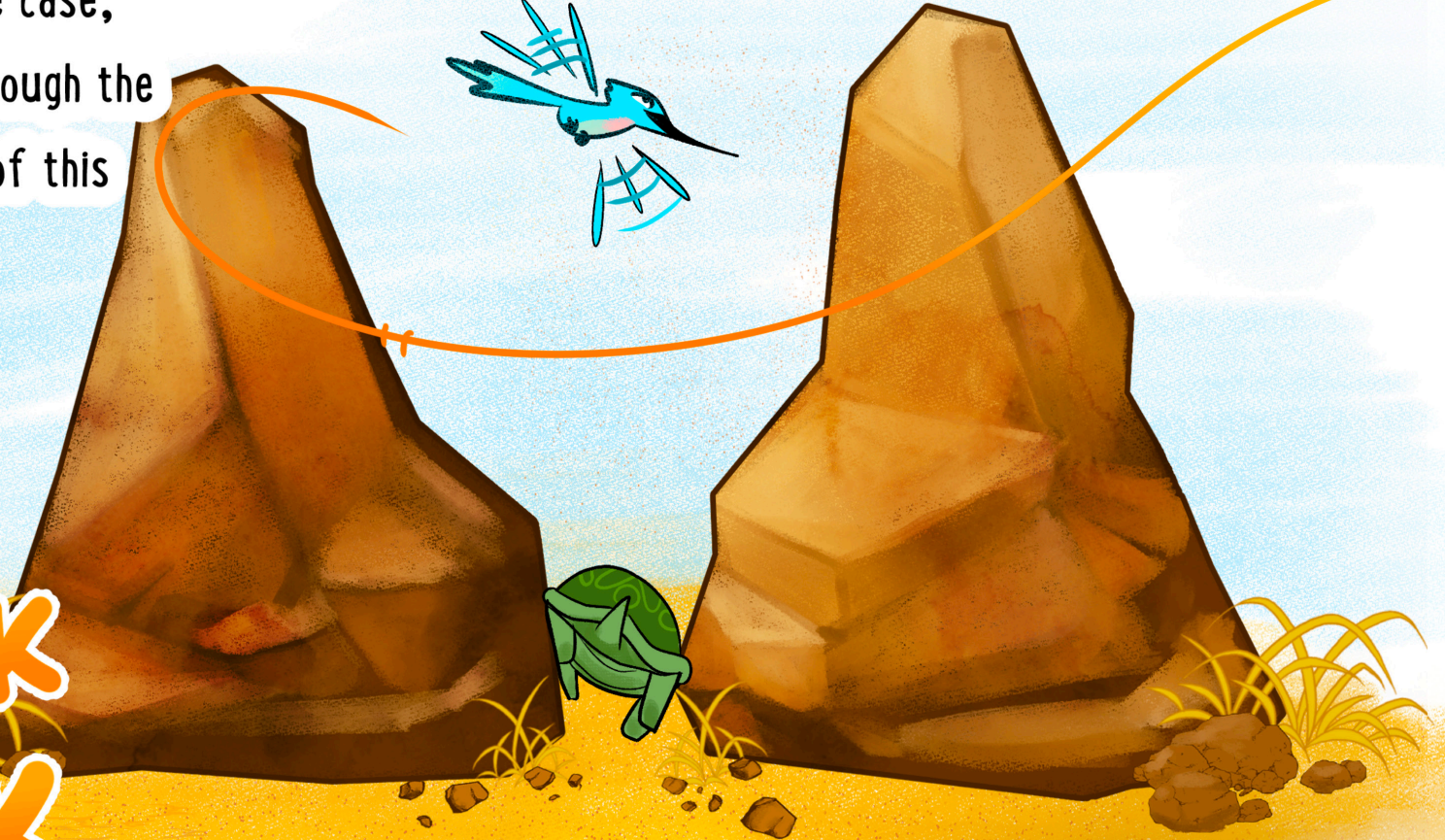
CLUNK





Maya was already on the case,  
zooming side to side through the  
sky to find the source of this  
mysterious sound.

CLUNK  
CLUNK  
CLUNK





Crouching closer to the ground with each step, Niko moved quietly and slowly toward the sound.

CLUNK  
CLUNK  
CLUNK

CLUNK  
CLUNK  
CLUNK





“Well butter my feathers and  
call me a penguin!”



Maya shouted from above the trees  
and below the clouds “It’s a tortoise.”



"Are ya stuck?" Maya called out over the sound of her propeller-like wings.

As usual, unphased by the commotion, Javi slowly made his way over.



CRUNCH  
CRUNCH

"Yup, he's stuck."

he mumbled from the ground, still munching on his mouthful of cactus.





By this time, the tortoise had stopped clunking.

"I - I guess I am." he said sheepishly pulling his head slightly back under his shell.

"Well, what do your friends call ya, Stuck?" Maya asked as she hovered eye to eye with the tortoise.

"Um... Sheldon." the tortoise answered.





Niko, who was already bouncing around sizing up the distance between the rocks compared to the width of Sheldon's shell, said confidently,



"Don't worry Sheldon, we've got this!  
You just need to be lifted up a little."





Sheldon couldn't have agreed more, he could use a little boost right now... for his body and his mind.



He felt so embarrassed. He hadn't taken his usual route through the desert since last fall when he burrowed down for the winter, and evidently, his shell was a bit bigger than it used to be.



Maya couldn't help but notice Sheldon was looking a bit wilted, "Whatcha hangin' inside your shell for, Sheldon?" she asked.

"I guess it's just that I've always walked between these two rocks and I - ,” Sheldon stuttered, “- I don't want to change my path.”



"Sheldon! Life is all about change!" Maya shouted unable to contain her excitement, "Just to mix it up, I'd fly upside-down and backwards on Tuesdays if my wings would let me!"



Meanwhile, Niko had been carefully plotting her plan of action to get Sheldon unstuck. "Alright team," she announced, "let's get Sheldon out of these rocks."

Everyone gathered around Sheldon and started to push upward with their snouts, or beak as Maya would have it.





"We'll be stronger together, so let's lift all at once." Niko barked.  
"Sheldon, as soon as you feel unwedged, start walking forward."

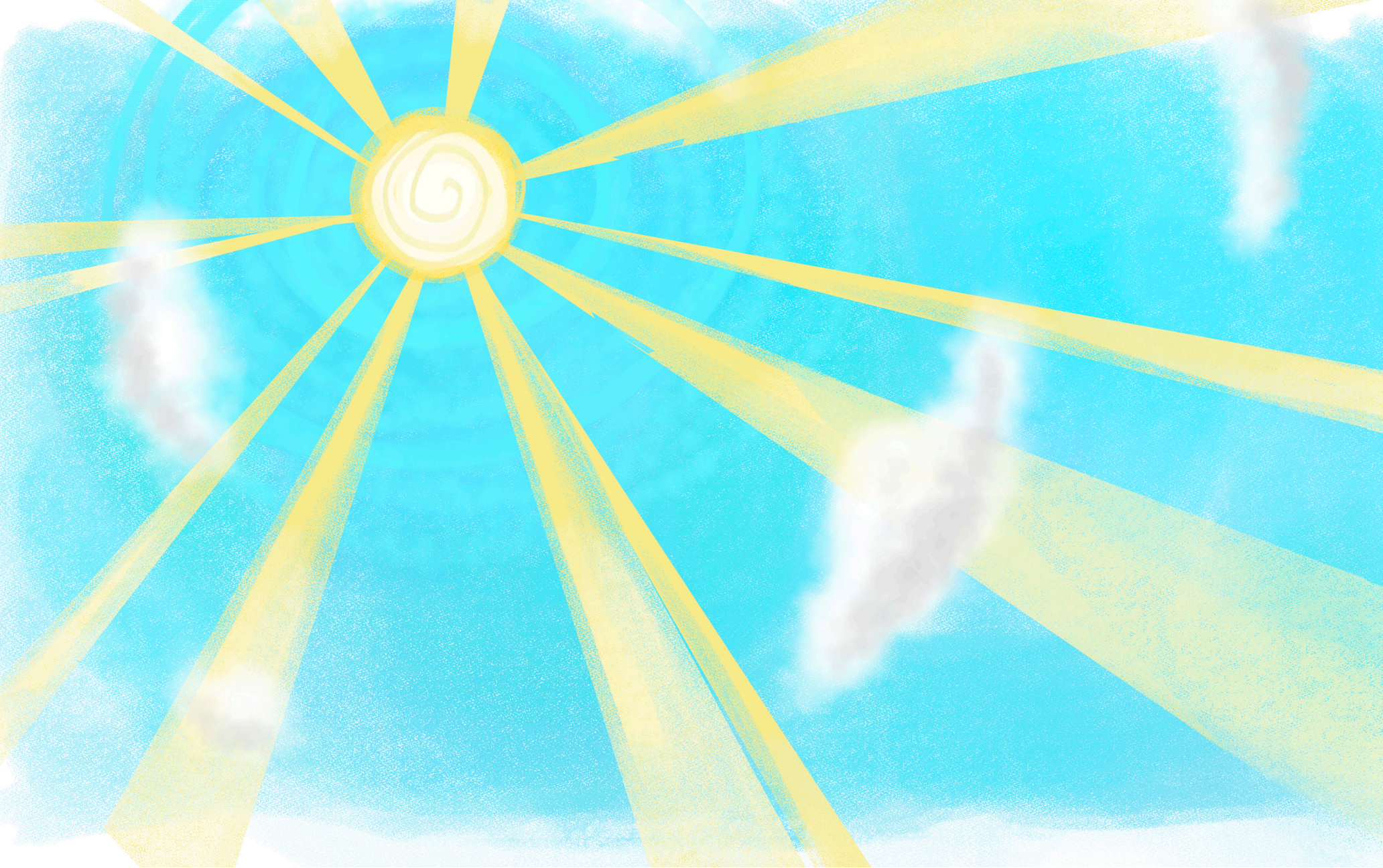


"She counted down,

"3...2...1...**LIFT!**"

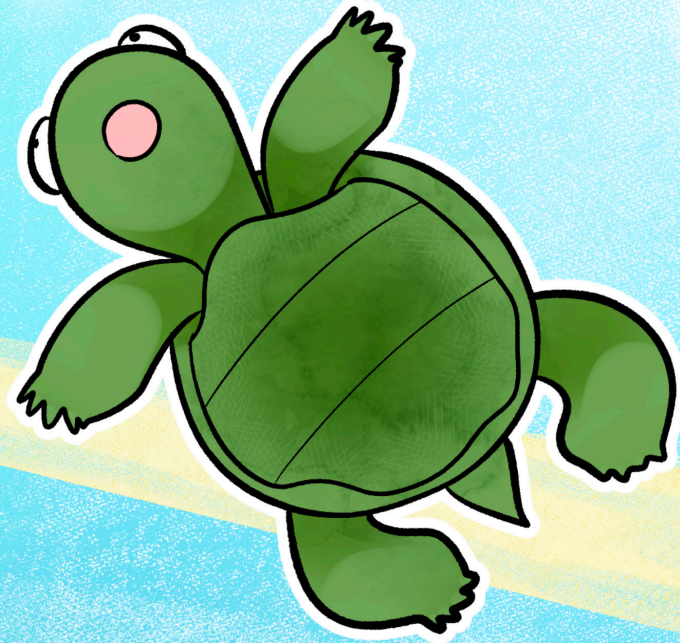
Sheldon closed his eyes...







Sheldon felt free! He was moving  
his legs and going faster than he  
ever had before.









THUD



Sheldon came to a halting stop, opened his eyes,  
and discovered he was looking at – the sky.

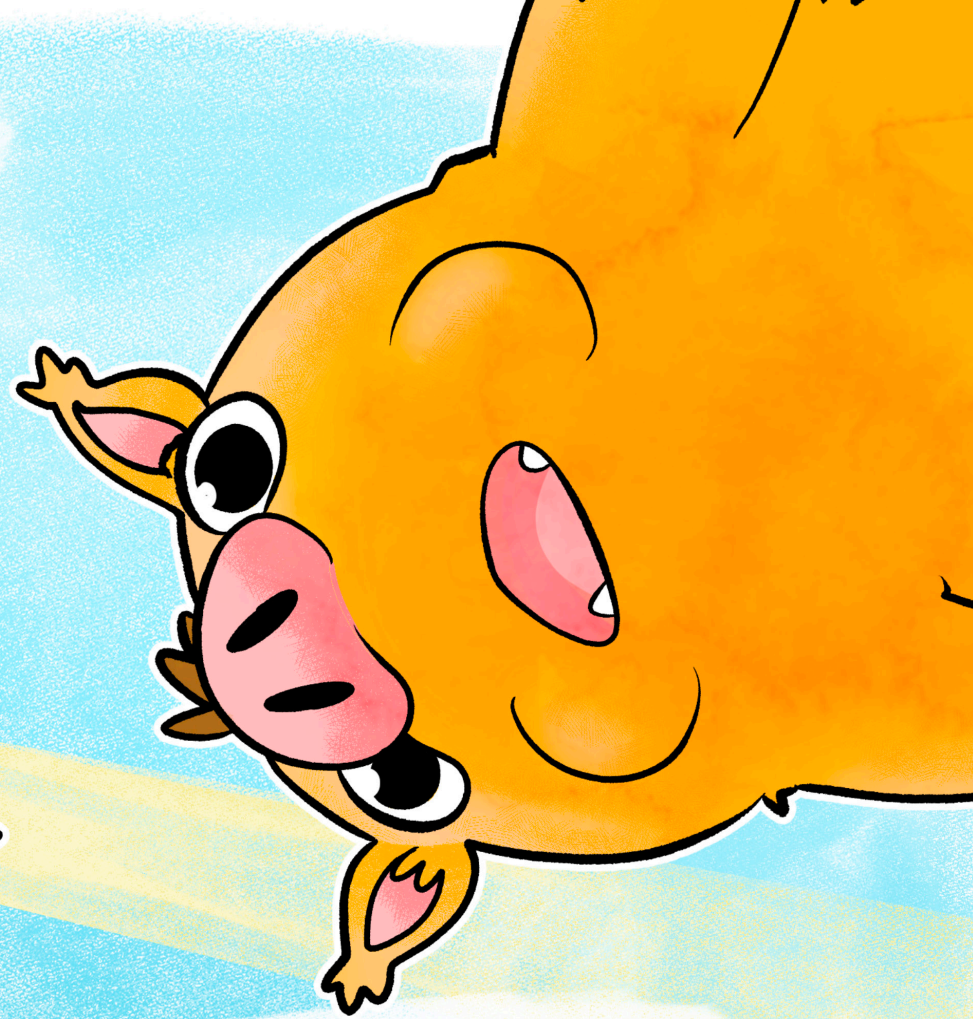
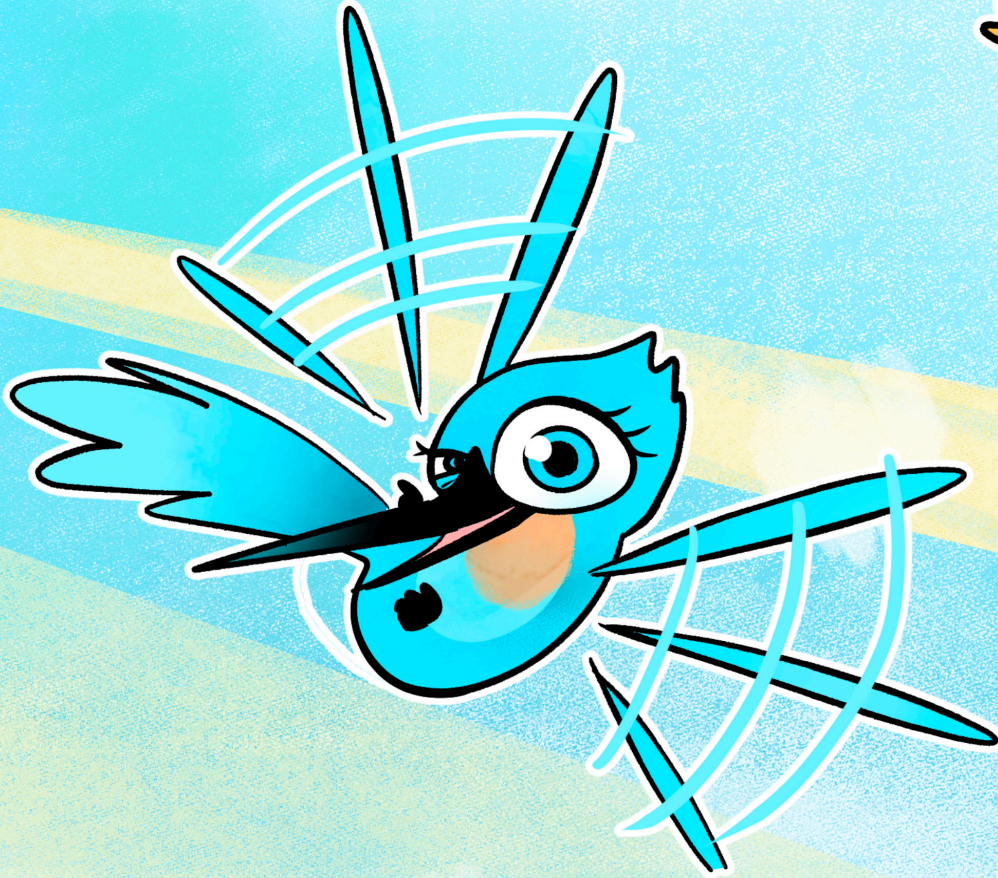
“By golly, Sheldon! You can fly! You’re less graceful than  
any bird I ever did see – but you can fly!” Maya cheered.

“Uh oh, this was not the plan. What have we done?  
How can we fix this? Sheldon! Are you okay?”  
Niko gasped.





Sheldon answered, "I'm okay - at least I think I'm okay. Do I look okay to you?"



Javi questioned Sheldon's assessment, "Depends - how do you define okay?"



Sheldon was in quite the predicament;  
his huge shell made him very top-heavy  
which meant there was no easy way  
to get right-side-up.

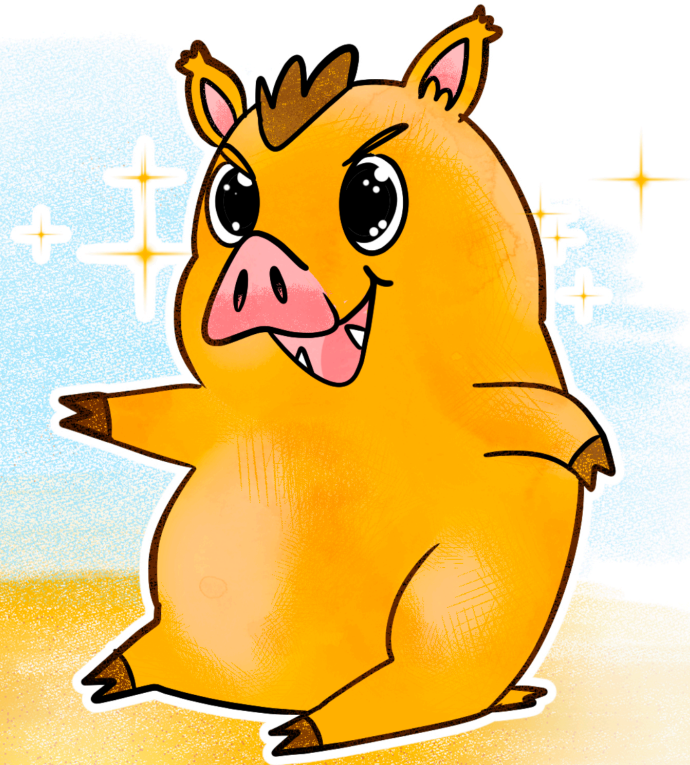




Niko, who was fresh out of ideas turned to Javi,  
“Have you got any ideas to –”



Javi was already a step ahead of her,  
“I thought you would never ask,”  
he said with a twinkle in his eye.





Javi went straight to work using his snout to roll a rock over to Sheldon.

He wedged the rock into the sand at the edge of Sheldon's shell. Then, he walked away.

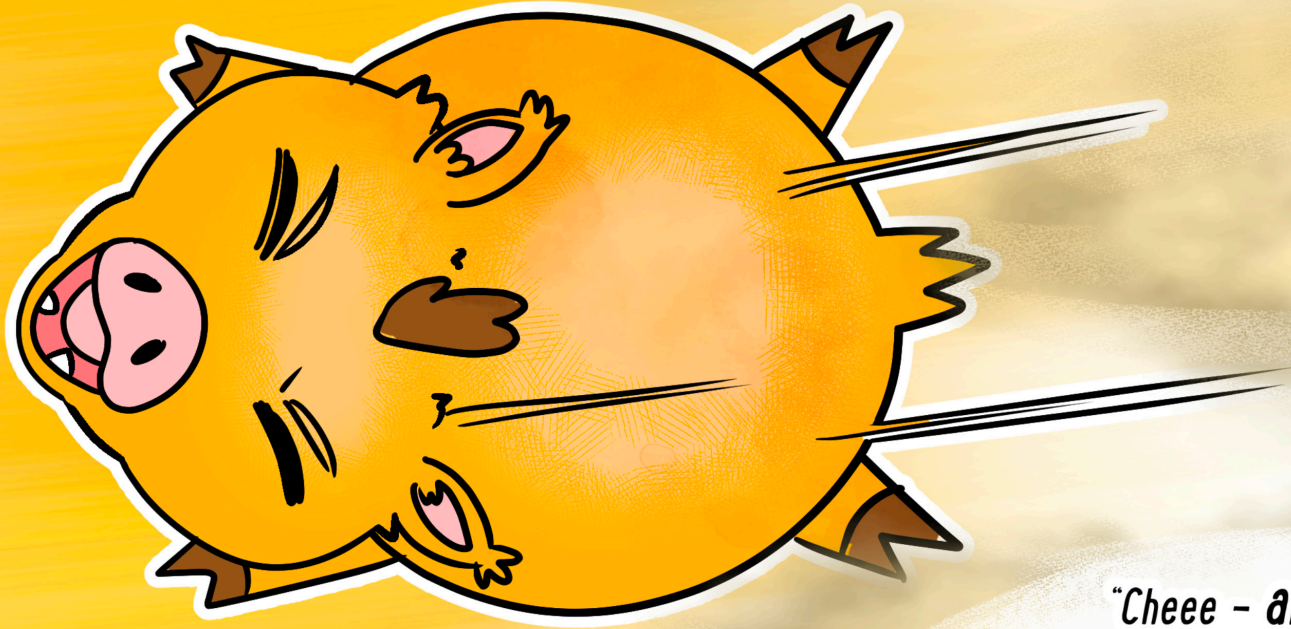
Javi walked, and he walked, without saying a word.

Then, he stopped and turned around.



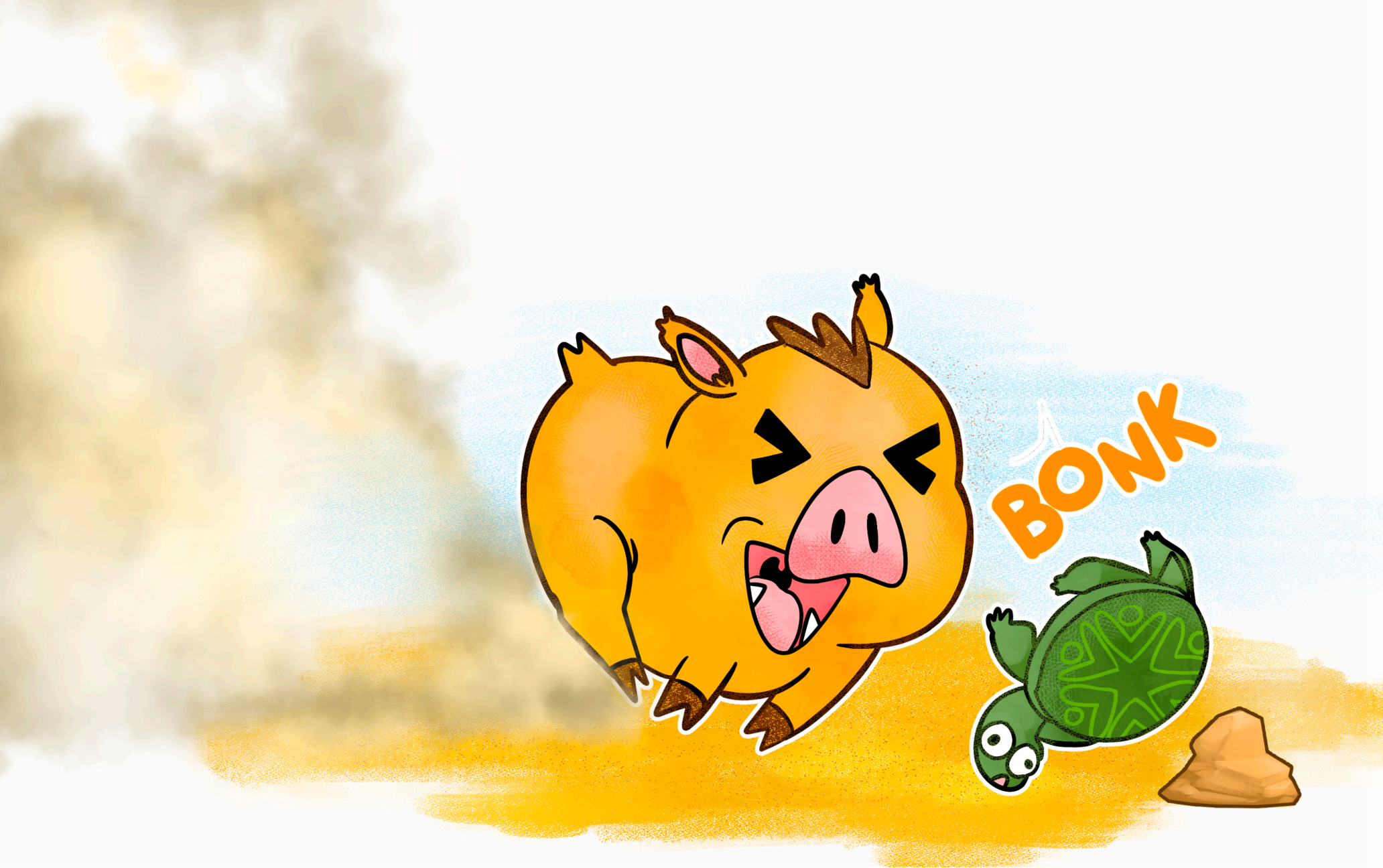


He dug at the rocks beneath his feet kicking up a huge cloud of dust.  
Then he made an eerie sound that echoed through the desert,

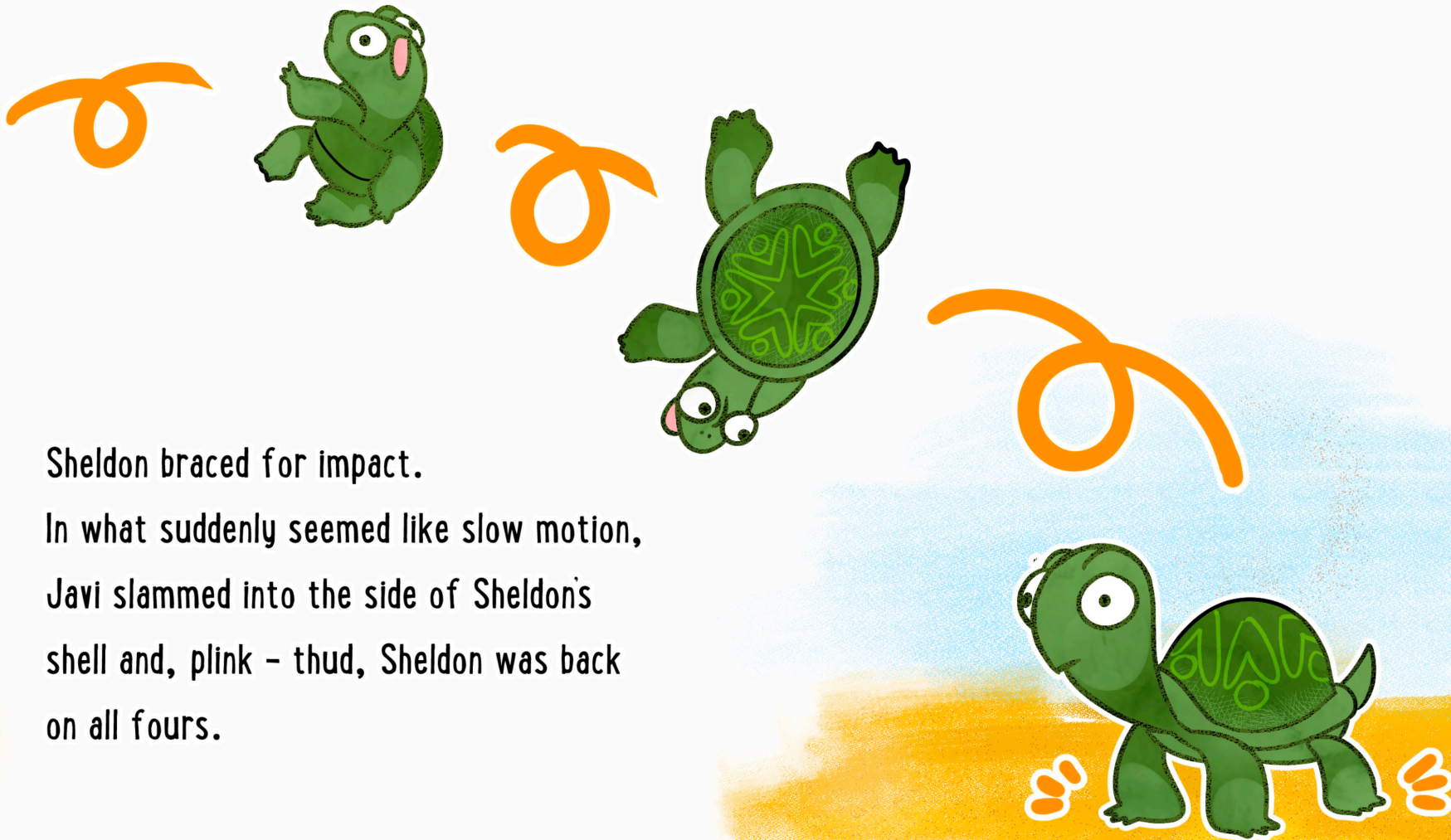


*"Cheee - arrrrrrrrrrrrge!"*  
he screeched as he shot across the  
ground heading right for Sheldon.







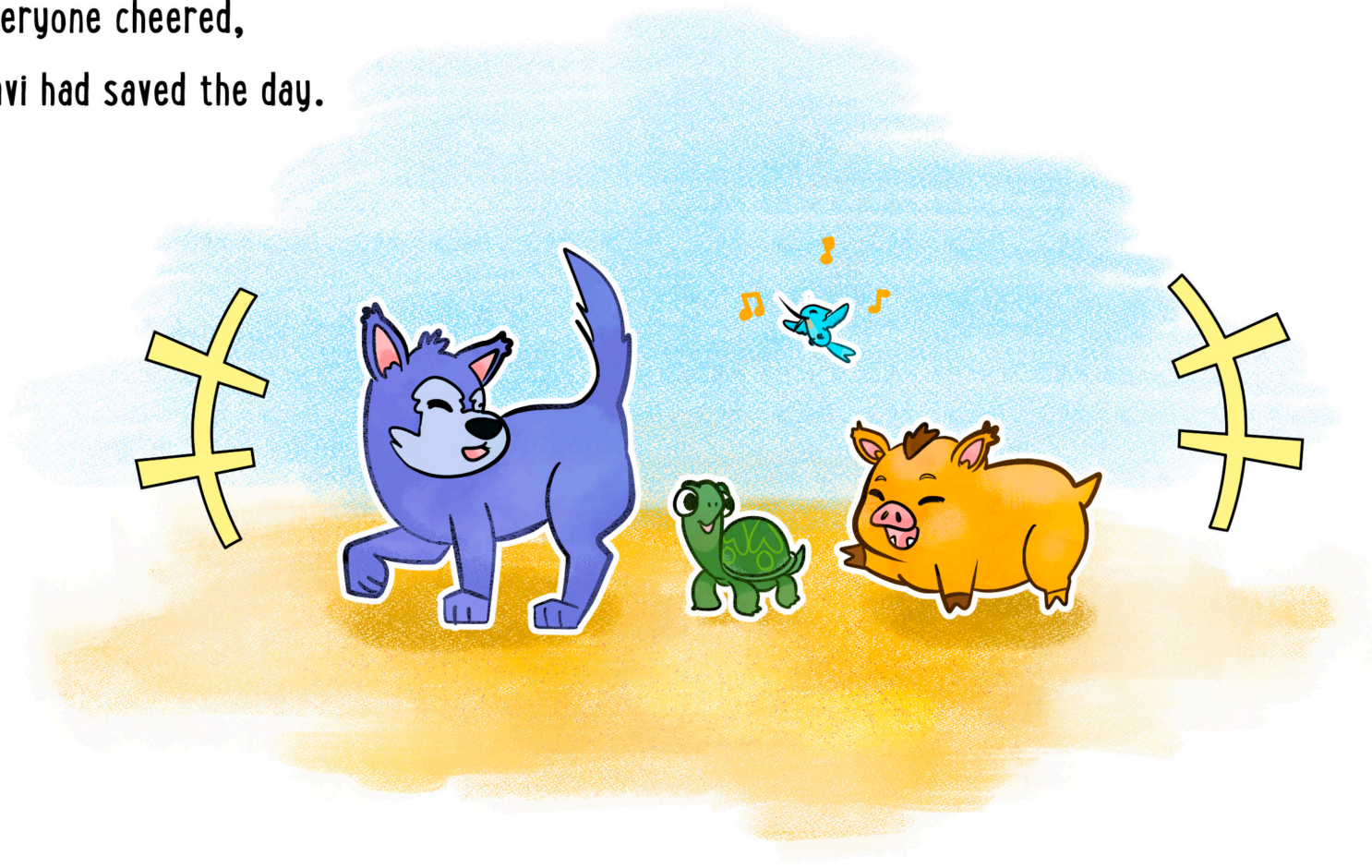


Sheldon braced for impact.

In what suddenly seemed like slow motion,  
Javi slammed into the side of Sheldon's  
shell and, plink - thud, Sheldon was back  
on all fours.



Everyone cheered,  
Javi had saved the day.

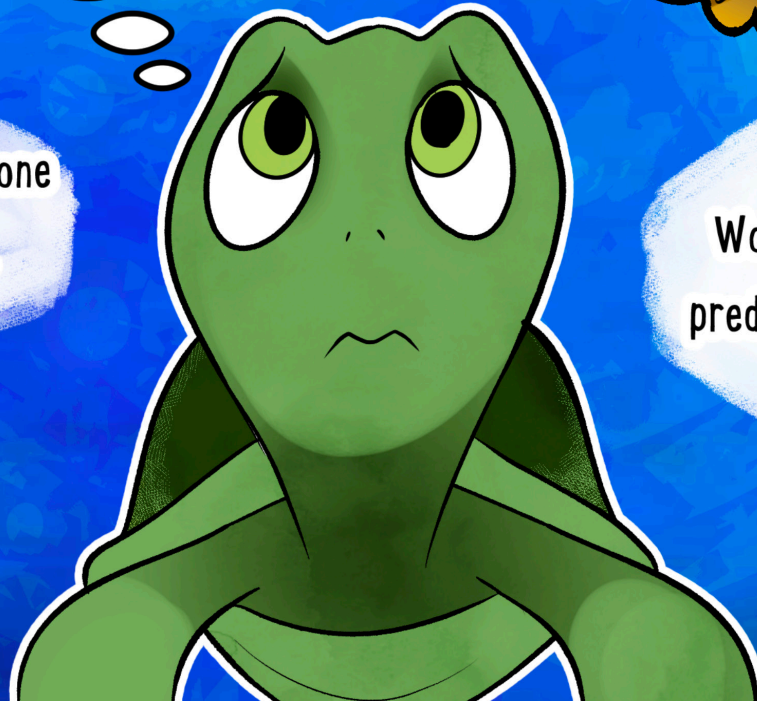






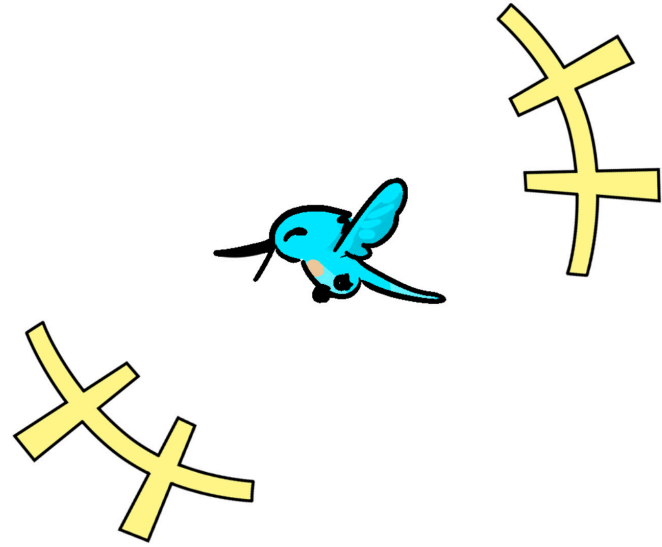
As the sun began to set, everyone was anxious to get back home, everyone but Sheldon.

His thoughts were racing, Would he get lost? Run into a predator? Get stuck again with no one to help this time?





Noticing that wilted look on Sheldon's face again,  
Maya zoomed over.



"Sheldon," she began "you've changed today."

"I have?" asked Sheldon.

"Yes." Maya continued, "You were stuck  
and you got unstuck. Then, you were  
wrong-side-up and you got right-side-up."



“Change can be good, bad, or indifferent; and a lot of that depends on how you approach it. If you go back down that path all gloomy Gus, the change won’t feel good; but if you get a pep in your step and seize the moment – well, you might even find the new path is a shorter one.”



“She’s right, Sheldon!”  
Niko added “Change is what you make of it!”



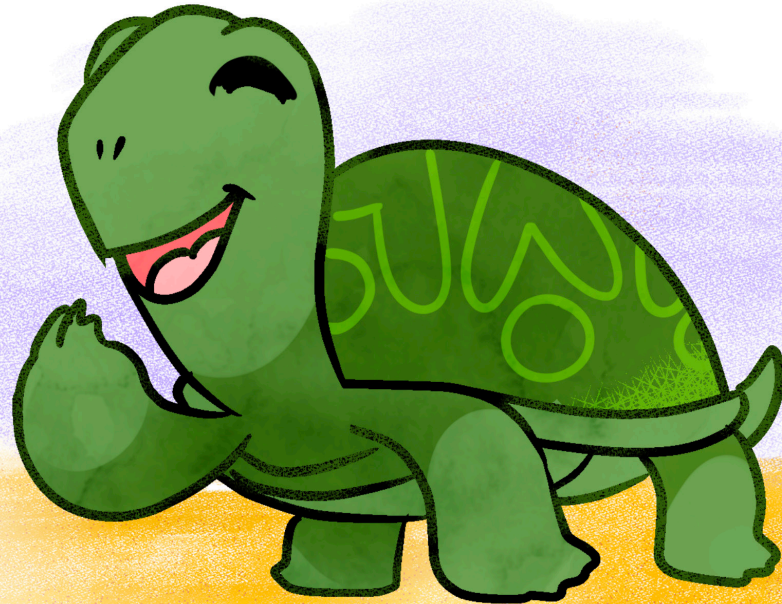
Just as Sheldon was starting to feel a little bit better, he was startled by tree branches rattling behind him, “Yup, change is good.”



Javi poked his head out from between the branches and chimed in. “Like prickly pear cactus for lunch and palo verde roots for dinner!”



Sheldon giggled,  
“Does that guy ever stop eating?”

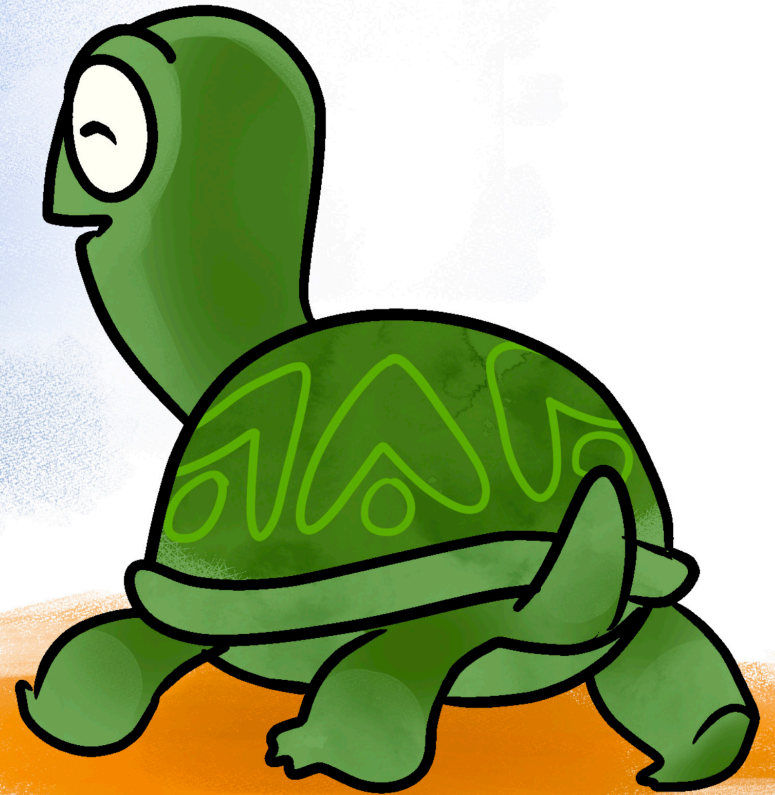








Sheldon thanked his newfound friends,  
and with a pep in his step started  
down the new path home.



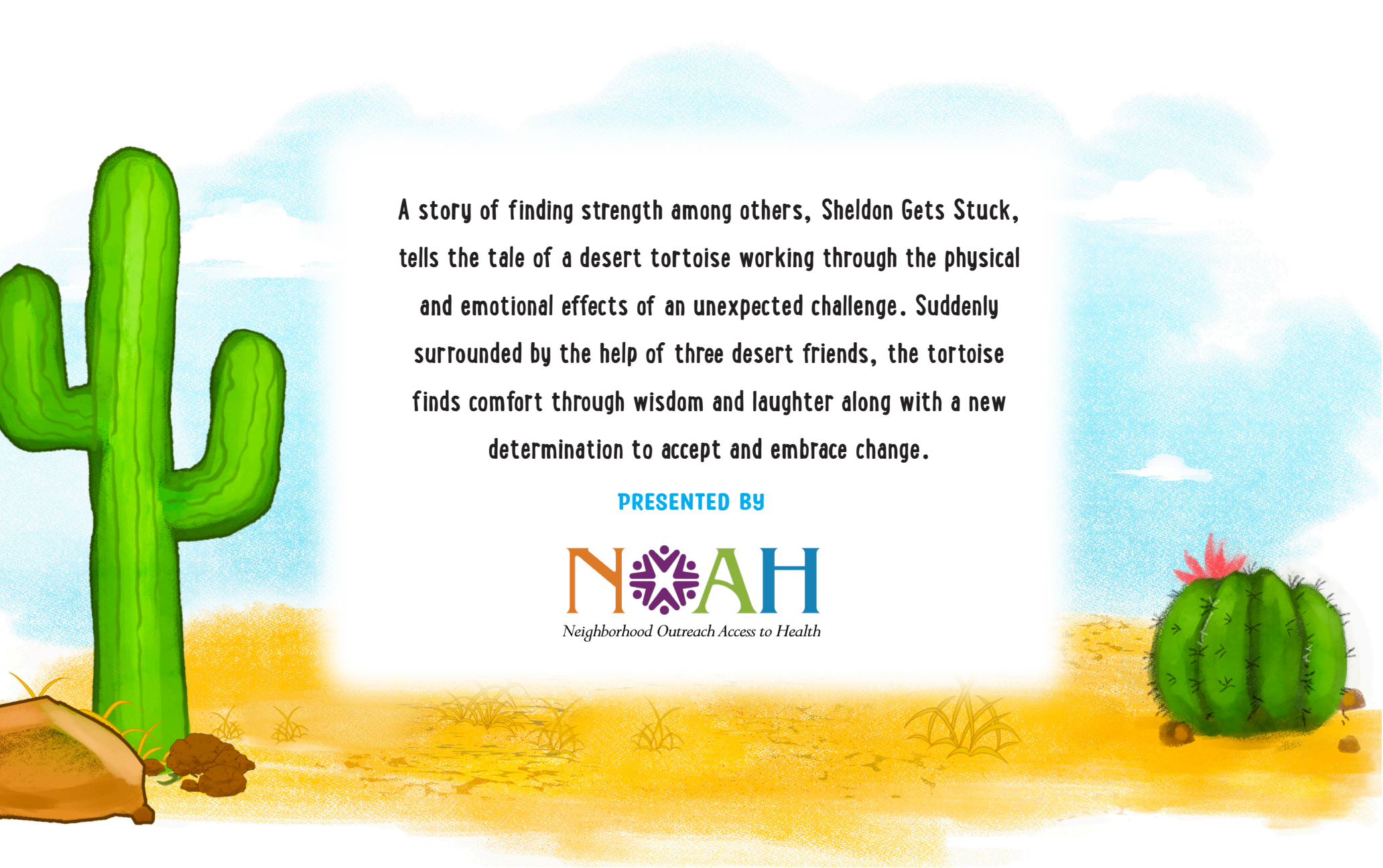












A story of finding strength among others, Sheldon Gets Stuck, tells the tale of a desert tortoise working through the physical and emotional effects of an unexpected challenge. Suddenly surrounded by the help of three desert friends, the tortoise finds comfort through wisdom and laughter along with a new determination to accept and embrace change.

PRESENTED BY



*Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health*