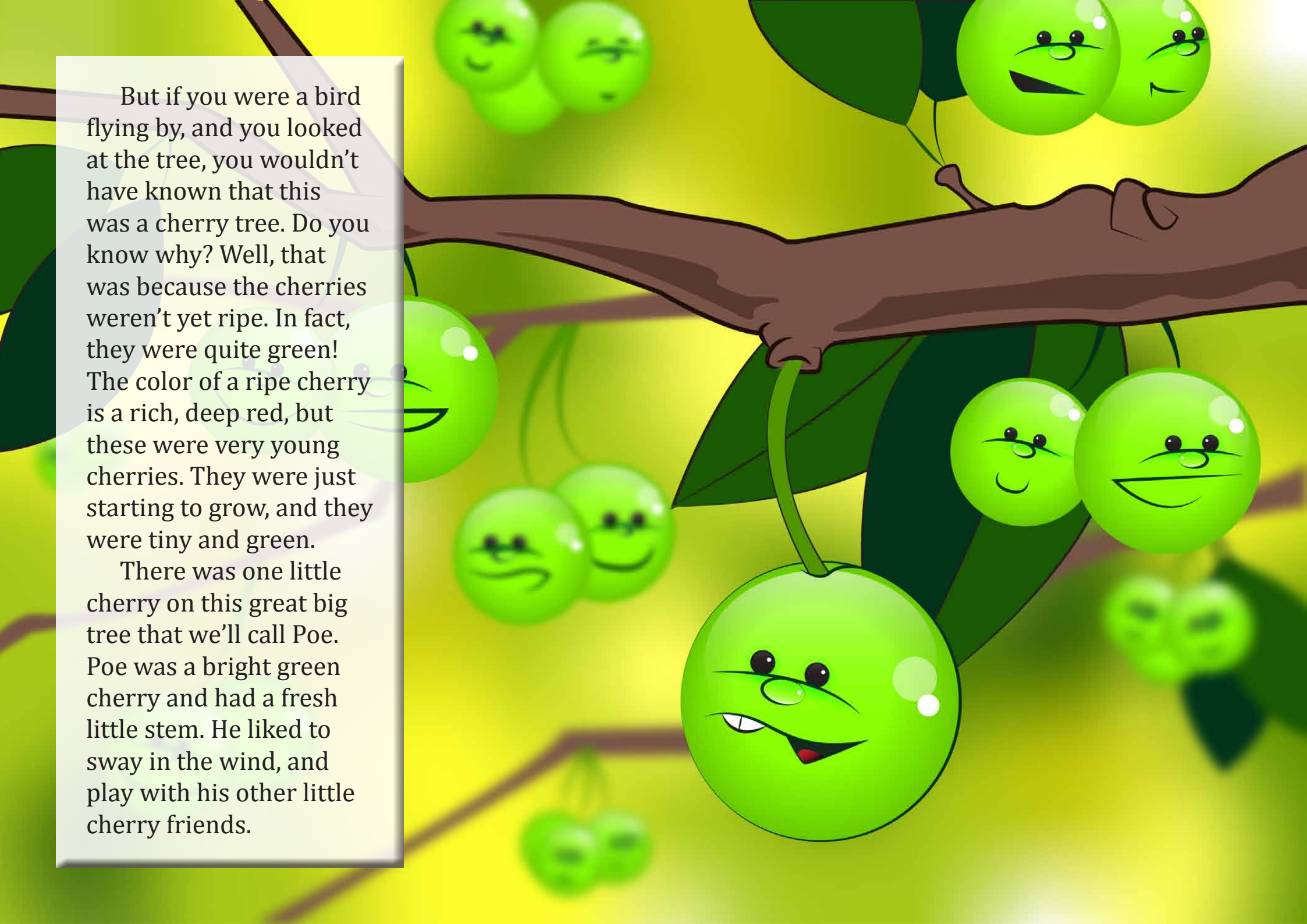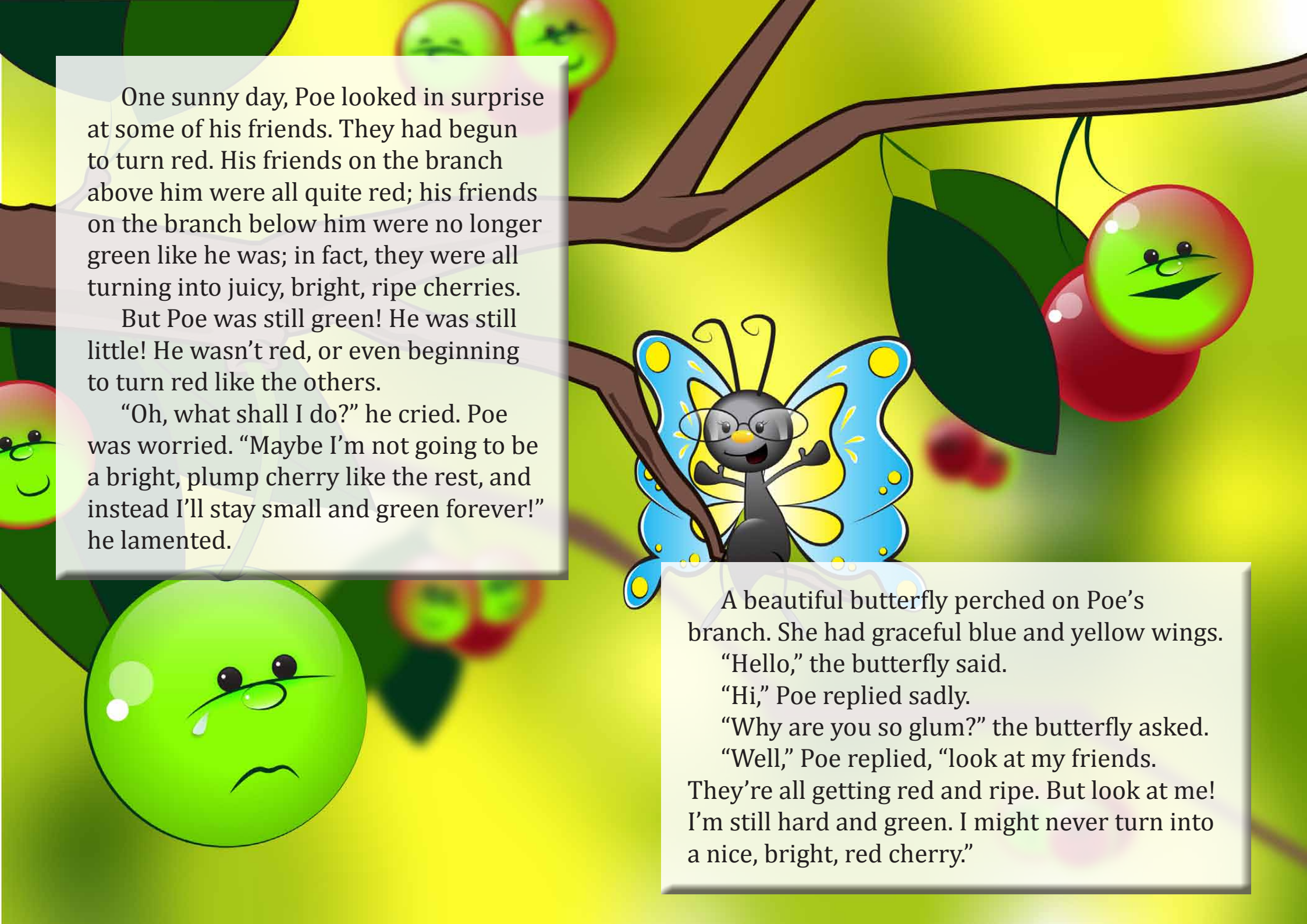# The Butterfly's Promise

Once there stood a large cherry tree with knobby branches that reached up and out. Each branch of this tree was covered in leaves, and connected to each cluster of leaves was a sturdy little stem, and each stem had a sprightly little cherry on the end of it.

But if you were a bird flying by, and you looked at the tree, you wouldn't have known that this was a cherry tree. Do you know why? Well, that was because the cherries weren't yet ripe. In fact, they were quite green! The color of a ripe cherry is a rich, deep red, but these were very young cherries. They were just starting to grow, and they were tiny and green.

There was one little cherry on this great big tree that we'll call Poe. Poe was a bright green cherry and had a fresh little stem. He liked to sway in the wind, and play with his other little cherry friends.

One sunny day, Poe looked in surprise at some of his friends. They had begun to turn red. His friends on the branch above him were all quite red; his friends on the branch below him were no longer green like he was; in fact, they were all turning into juicy, bright, ripe cherries.

But Poe was still green! He was still little! He wasn't red, or even beginning to turn red like the others.

"Oh, what shall I do?" he cried. Poe was worried. "Maybe I'm not going to be a bright, plump cherry like the rest, and instead I'll stay small and green forever!" he lamented.

A beautiful butterfly perched on Poe's branch. She had graceful blue and yellow wings.

"Hello," the butterfly said.

"Hi," Poe replied sadly.

"Why are you so glum?" the butterfly asked.

"Well," Poe replied, "look at my friends. They're all getting red and ripe. But look at me! I'm still hard and green. I might never turn into a nice, bright, red cherry."

The butterfly smiled and lightly flapped her graceful wings. She knew what would cheer up this sad little cherry. "You know," she said, "you don't have to worry. There are a lot of other cherries on this tree that are also green."

"Really?" Poe asked.

"Yes!" replied the butterfly. "I have flown around this whole tree, and while a lot of the cherries have turned red, there are many others that are still green. But do you know what?"

"What?" Poe asked. He had begun to feel hopeful.

"One day, before you know it, you'll be red—just like all the others. And you'll turn into a great big, ripe, beautiful cherry. You just have to have a little patience!"
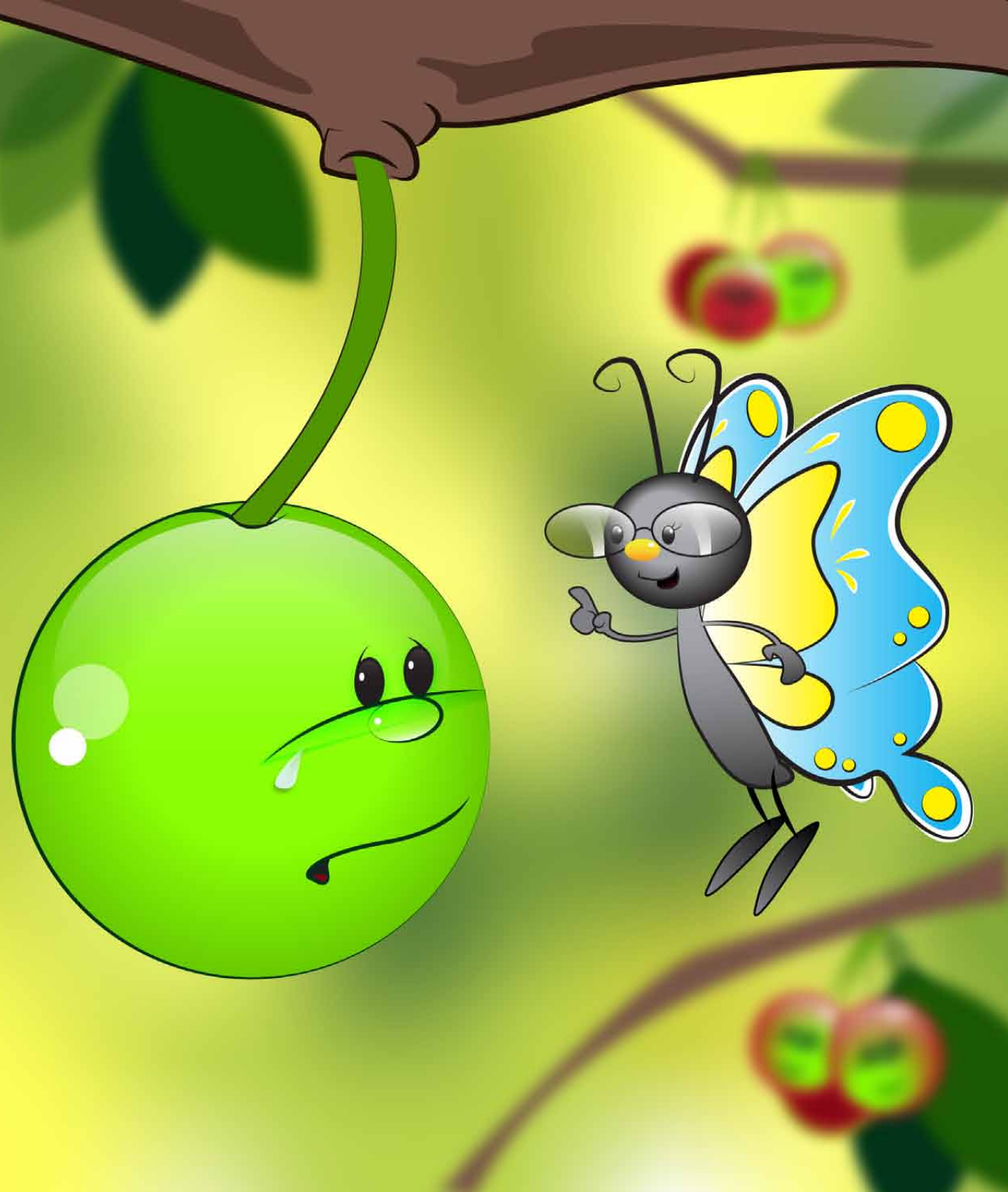
"Patience?" Poe echoed. "What's that?"

"Well," said the butterfly, "patience means waiting. Sometimes there's something that you really, really want, and you wish that it would happen right away. But it doesn't. And so you have to wait. But if all you think about is what you want to happen, it'll seem like it's taking forever.

"The secret is to do something else while you're waiting. For now, why don't you have fun being a little green cherry, and stop worrying about when you'll ripen? Have fun swinging and waving in the wind! Have fun playing hide and seek with your friends, the leaves. And before you know it, you will be just what you're meant to be."

"All right," Poe said. "I'll give it a try!"

The butterfly said farewell and then fluttered away.

Several days later, the butterfly was flying by the cherry tree again. *I wonder how my dear friend Poe is doing?* she thought.

She fluttered to the same branch where she had first seen Poe. And guess what she saw? A slender, firm stem, and on the end of it—a great big, round, *red* cherry!

"Look at you!" the butterfly said in delight. "You are the biggest, reddest, most beautiful cherry I've ever seen!"

"I know!" Poe said, with a huge cherry smile. "I'm so glad that you encouraged me. I was so small, and I thought I would never ripen. But I did my best to wait, and be patient, and I had fun just being little green me. And before I knew it … I was red!"

The butterfly smiled, "I knew you would be!"