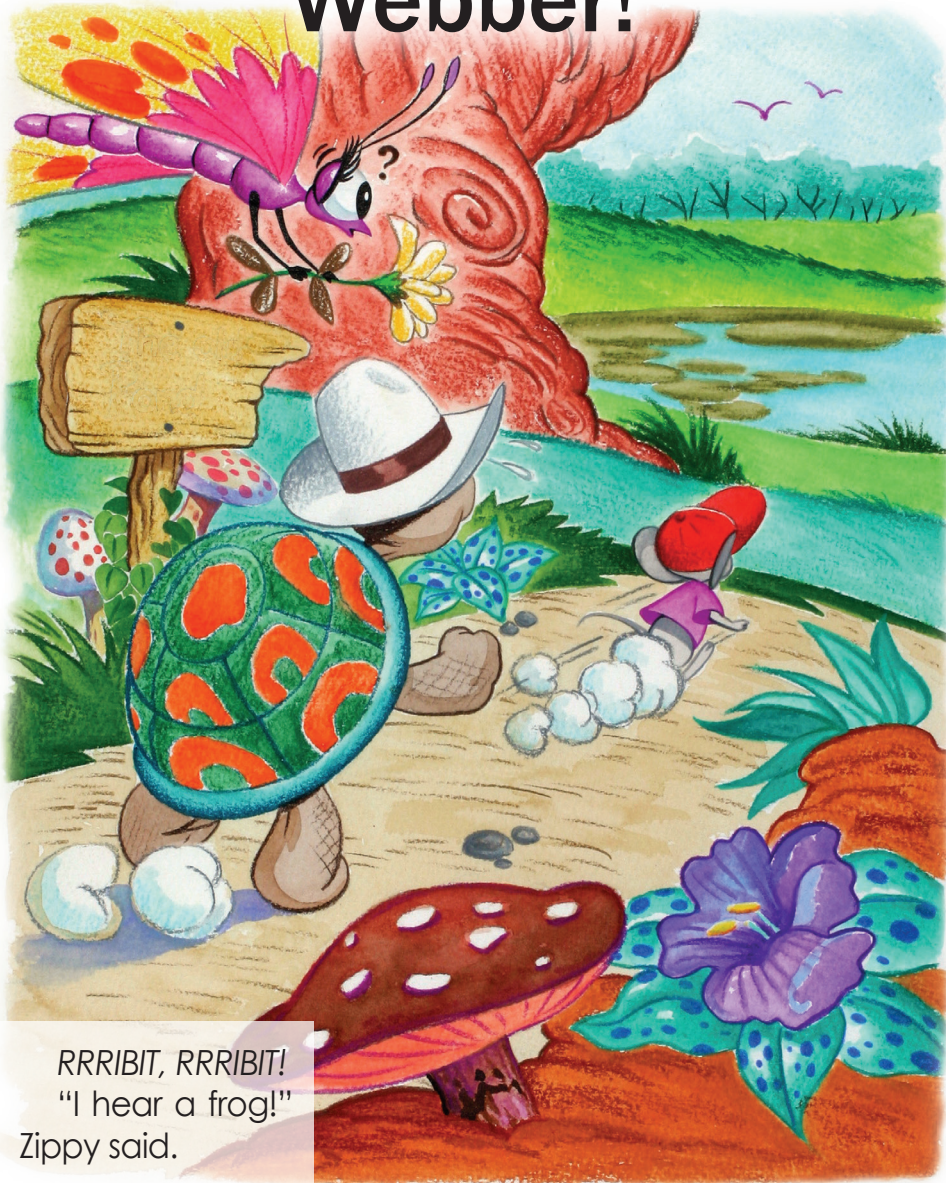


Welcome Back, Webber!



RRRIBIT, RRRIBIT!
"I hear a frog!"
Zippy said.



"Maybe Webber is back from his trip," Zippy said.
"I hope so. He's been gone for so long. Stand on my shell and tell me if you see anything."



Zippy stood on his tiptoes, stretched his little neck as far as it could go, and peered over the bulrushes. Trudge walked down the edge of the pond while Zippy scanned the pond, looking for whatever was making that noise, when suddenly...
RRRIBIT! RRRIBIT!



"AAHHH!" Zippy cried, losing his balance and falling off Trudge's back into the grass along the pond's edge.



He was just about to climb back on Trudge's back when he noticed two big eyes looking at him. "Webber?"
"That's right. It's me!" Webber said.



"Did I scare you, Zippy?" Webber asked.
"Oh no! I wasn't scared ... I ... uh, well, a bit."



Webber grinned with his great big frog mouth. "It's good to be back. I missed you."
"Want to swim?" Trudge asked.
"Always!" replied Webber.



Before Zippy could say a word, Trudge and Webber dove into the water and swam out to the middle of the pond.

“Wait for me!” Zippy called.

Zippy looked around the pond's shore, then gathered twigs and a large leaf. He tiptoed into the pond to float the leaf.



Zippy climbed aboard the large leaf he'd dragged into the water. He used the twigs as oars and rowed toward Webber and Trudge.

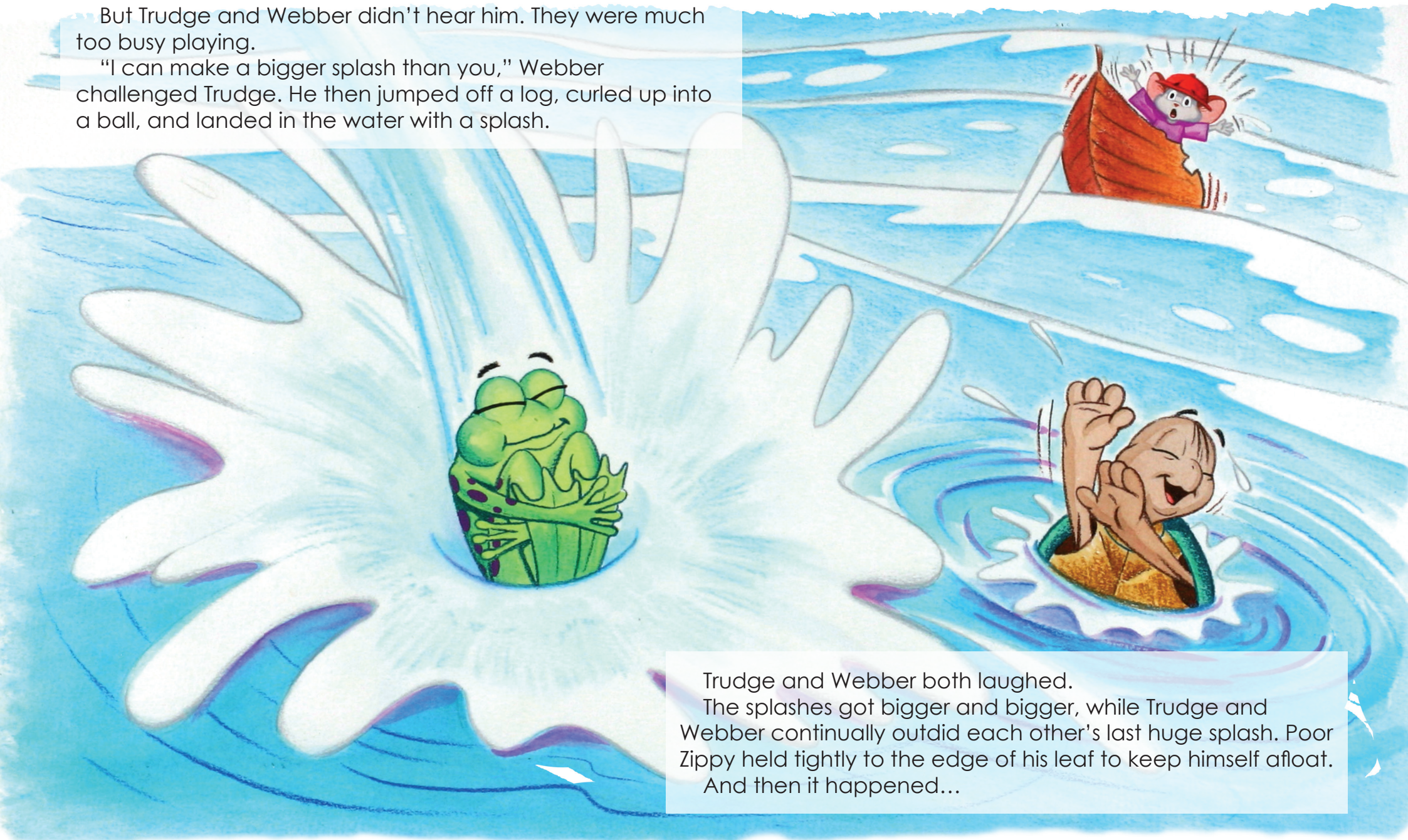
It's a bother that I don't know how to swim, Zippy thought. *Whenever Trudge and Zippy play in the water, they forget that I never learned how to swim.*



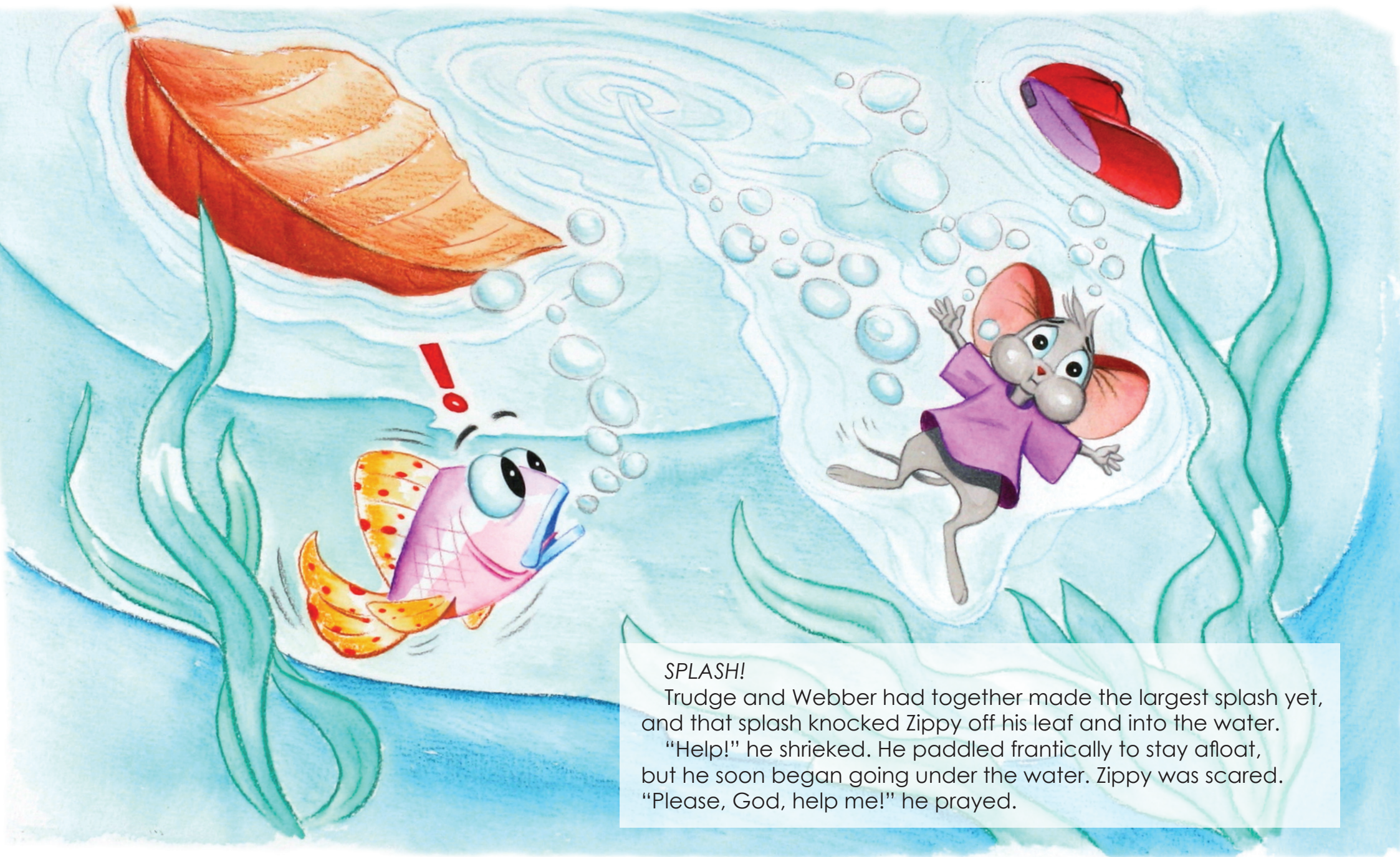
Suddenly, the calm pond water began to stir. Ripples rocked Zippy's leaf boat. Just then a cold wave came splashing down on his head, washing away both his twig oars. "Help! Help!" Zippy cried.

But Trudge and Webber didn't hear him. They were much too busy playing.

"I can make a bigger splash than you," Webber challenged Trudge. He then jumped off a log, curled up into a ball, and landed in the water with a splash.



Trudge and Webber both laughed. The splashes got bigger and bigger, while Trudge and Webber continually outdid each other's last huge splash. Poor Zippy held tightly to the edge of his leaf to keep himself afloat. And then it happened...



SPLASH!

Trudge and Webber had together made the largest splash yet, and that splash knocked Zippy off his leaf and into the water.

“Help!” he shrieked. He paddled frantically to stay afloat, but he soon began going under the water. Zippy was scared. “Please, God, help me!” he prayed.



Just then Zippy was picked up and pulled quickly from the water. Before he could figure out what had happened, Zippy found himself sitting on the shore of the pond, coughing and sputtering.



Rana, Webber's sister, had come to Zippy's rescue. "Trudge! Webber! You almost lost a friend!" Rana yelled from the shore. Trudge and Webber swam over to their friend as fast as they could.

“What happened to you?” Trudge asked as he came ashore.

An angry look crossed Zippy’s face. He turned his back on his two friends.

“You guys left me!” Zippy began. “I tried to keep up. I even called out to you!”



“Oh, but we were playing a game,” Webber said.
“I know!” Zippy said angrily. “If it weren’t for Rana, who knows what would’ve happened to me.”

“We’re really sorry, Zippy,” Trudge said. “We forgot that you don’t know how to swim.”

“We’ll try to be more thoughtful next time,” Webber added. “Will you forgive us?”



Zippy sighed. "Of course I forgive you. You're my friends, after all—and the best friends at that!"
He gave his friends a great big wet hug.

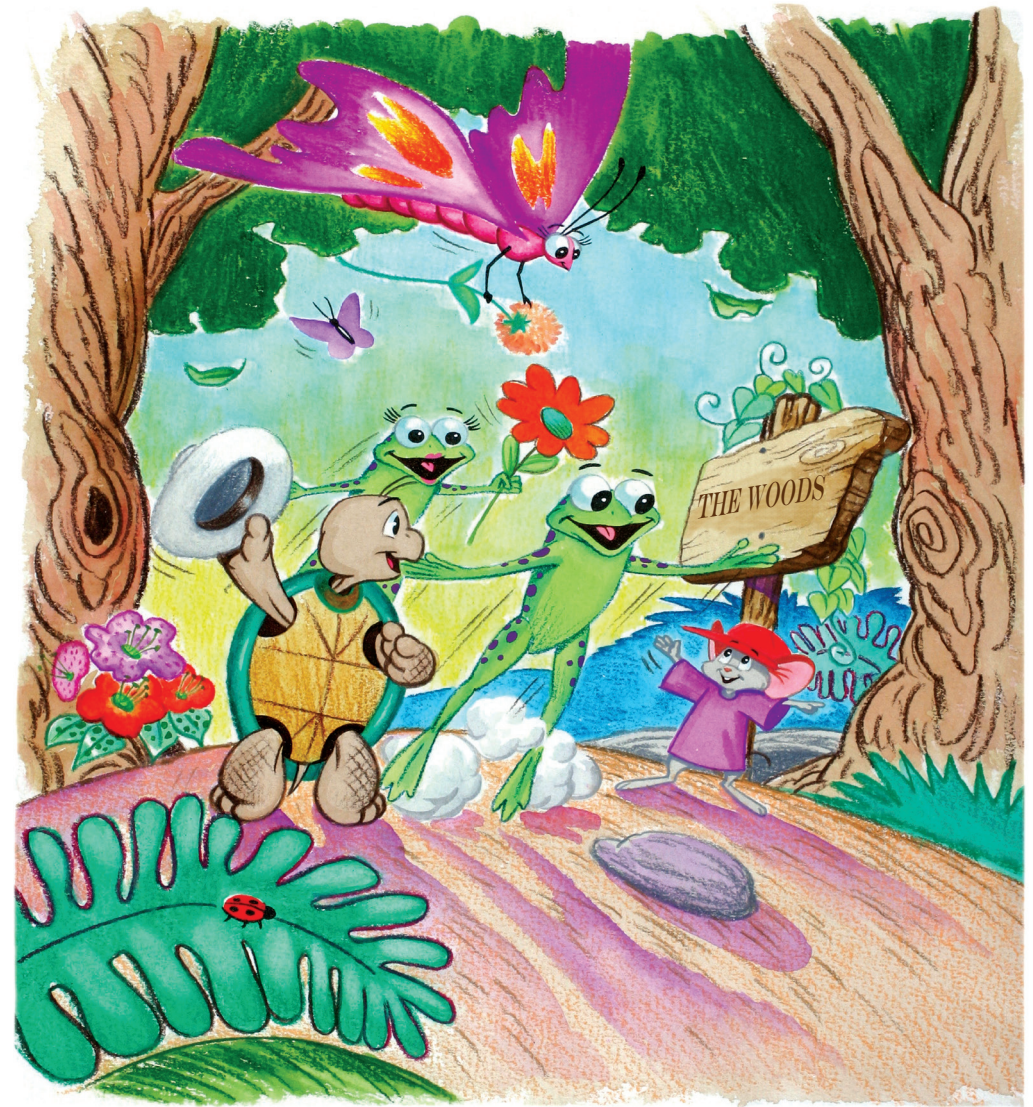


"Next time we'll think of something to do that will include you, too," Webber said to Zippy.
"That's nice of you, but I don't mind you swimming together. I know you like it. Maybe next time I can do something else, instead of trying to follow you into the water. ... That was pretty scary! Thank God for keeping me safe."



"Thank you for rescuing me, Rana!" Zippy said.
"You're welcome," she answered, sporting a great big frog grin, just like her brother's.
"Maybe we can teach you to swim," Trudge said.
"I would like that. Thank you, Trudge."

The four friends set off for the forest, laughing and playing as they went. They had learned to be more considerate of each other, and that made them even better friends.



Don't miss the other titles in this series: "[Trudge and Zippy](#)," "[Different Kinds of Friends](#)," and "[Kizzy, Bugle, and the Honey](#)."