



Breakfast was served. Tristan enjoyed his eggs, toast, and a cup of freshly squeezed orange juice. He had a big day ahead. Today was Ranger Rob Day. Once a month Ranger Rob took the children and teachers from Tristan's school on a hike through the nearby forest. He taught them about the forest, the animals that lived in it, and basic survival skills.

"Are you ready for your field trip?" Grandpa Jake asked as he joined Tristan at the breakfast table.

Tristan nodded. "Ranger Rob is going to teach us about the fish in the rivers. Maybe he'll teach us how to fish, too."

"That would be fun," said Grandpa. "What else does Ranger Rob teach you about?"

"Sometimes he puts us in teams, and we play games about things we've learned that day. I don't like playing the games, because I usually get a bad team, and we lose."





"That can be frustrating. But sometimes to win, it takes working together as a team and helping each other."

"But how do we do that?" asked Tristan.

"Well, that reminds me of a story. ... I'll tell it to you while we walk to school."



Crew and Co.'s Charity Course was a relay race that took place every year to raise funds for a charity project that the company had undertaken. All the construction vehicles participated.

Most of the town folk would show up, and Mr. Oversight always took extra time and care to make sure that the event was as full of excitement and as enjoyable for all as it could be. There were shows to watch and plenty to eat and drink. But the highlight was always the relay race.

The construction vehicles would spend the week before the race tuning their engines and fixing anything that wasn't working well. On the day before the race, they would all have a good wash and fill up their gas tanks.







There were four teams, with three construction vehicles on each team.

"Good afternoon, everyone. May I have your attention?" Mr. Oversight said.

The crowd quieted down.

"The Charity Course race will be starting in half an hour," Mr. Oversight continued. "Before it does, I want to present the four teams that will be competing in today's race."

The crowd cheered.

"Team A," continued Mr. Oversight, "is Con Crete Pump, Con Crete Mixer, and Dee."

The crowd cheered again.

"Team B—Roadmarker, Roadroller, and Crank Crane."

The crowd clapped.

"Team C—Breaker, Crusher, and Lorry Loader."

There was another round of applause.

"And lastly, Team D—Demolition Ball, Little Digger, and Dugs."

Once more the crowd cheered.





"The crowd cheered louder for Team A than they did for us," whined Lorry. "We're going to lose."

"Don't say that," Breaker said, a little annoyed. "You just have to try harder and pull your weight on the team."

"Well, maybe I'm just not as fast as you are," Lorry said.

"Stop whining, Lorry, and go warm up your engine," Crusher said harshly.

Lorry rumbled off, muttering to herself.

Meanwhile Con Crete Pump, Mixer, and Dee stood off to the side whispering about their plan to win.

"If anyone gets in your way, just give them a shove," Mixer said. "We're tough. We can win!"

"Yeah!" Dee and Pump chorused. And then they started to chant, "We're gonna win!" again and again.

"How do I look?" Roadmarker asked, as she pranced around Crank and Roadroller.

"Does it really matter?" replied Crank. "We're in a race. It doesn't matter what you look like, you just have to go as fast as you can and try to win."







"Well, it matters to me!" exclaimed Roadmarker crossly, and off she roared in an angry huff.

Demolition Ball, Little Digger, and Dugs were also preparing for the race.

"Just give it your best shot," Demolition told Dugs and Digger. "It doesn't matter who wins, so long as we have fun, right?"

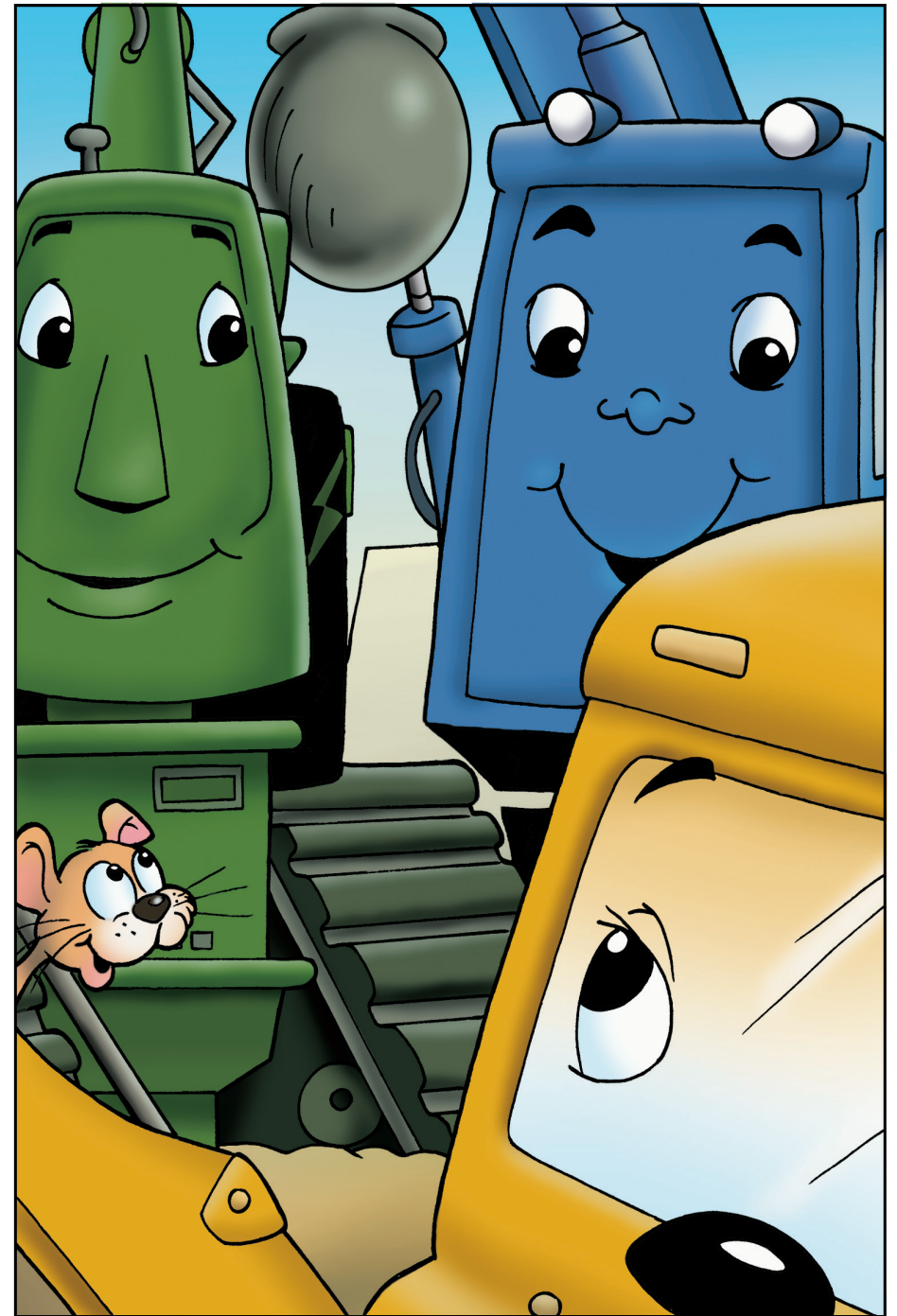
"Right," answered Dugs and Digger.

"I might not be able to go so fast," said Digger.

"Don't worry about it," Dugs said. "I've seen how you can speed up sometimes. You've got quick, young wheels. Just remember to have fun. That's really what matters."

Team D was ready and eager to start the race, but the other teams were having trouble. Lorry was crying, Mixer and Breaker were arguing about who was going to win, and Roadroller was angry at Crank for upsetting Roadmarker.

"What's happening here?" cried Mr. Oversight. "The race is going to begin in ten minutes and you're all fighting. Demolition Ball, can you help sort out the problems?"





"Absolutely, sir."

"Thank you. I knew I could count on you." And off Mr. Oversight hurried to make sure everything was ready for the race.

"I'm not sure I want to race today," Crank said, "and especially not on the same team as Roadmarker!"

Soon they were all in an uproar, arguing about different issues and problems.

"Quiet down, everyone!" Demolition Ball called out. "The race begins in five minutes, and people have been looking forward to it all afternoon. You should remember that we're all working towards the same goal. The money we're raising this year will help us build a new playground for the school. We shouldn't be fighting and squabbling. We're a team. We need to work together. It doesn't matter who wins—just have a good time."

"You're right," Crusher said. "I want to participate in this race, and I'm happy with the team I'm on. Even if we don't win, we can still have fun."

The rest of the vehicles agreed and apologized to each other.







"Crew and Co., take your places," announced Mr. Oversite on the loudspeaker. "The race is about to begin."

The different teams lined up, ready for the starting signal from Mr. Oversite.

"On your marks ... get set ... GO!"

Off they went.

The crowd cheered. The construction vehicles cheered for their teams. Mr. Oversite cheered.

On the final lap, the last representative from each team—Digger, Roadroller, Crank, and Con Crete Pump—all made their way as fast as they could go around the course.

"Hooray! Hooray!" the crowd cheered.

The finish line was in sight. The crowd shouted louder.

"You can do it!" Demolition Ball called out to Little Digger.

Little Digger picked up speed and crossed the finish line first with the other three close behind.

"Well done, Crew and Co.!" Mr. Oversite exclaimed.

Everyone in the crowd applauded.



"I had so much fun," Crank said. "I'm glad I didn't miss out on that race. Even though our team didn't win, I still had a good time."

The others agreed.

"This calls for a celebration," announced Mr. Oversight. "That was the best race ever. Thank you for your help and participation."



That evening around the dinner table, Tristan happily explained all about the day's adventures to his parents and Grandpa Jake.

"There were three teams—the Trout Trekkers, the Mountain Mullets, and the Sticklebacks. Funny Ranger Rob named our teams after fish. My team was the Sticklebacks."

"It sounds like you had a lot of fun," said Grandpa Jake.

"I did. I told my friends the story you told me this morning," Tristan said. "They liked it a lot. Our team was able to work together, and we learned so much about fish and rivers. We played some games, too. Our team didn't win every game, but we won some, and I had fun."

**Moral:** Learn to work together as a team, and you'll find that you can have a lot of fun!

