Paws Off
the Ball!

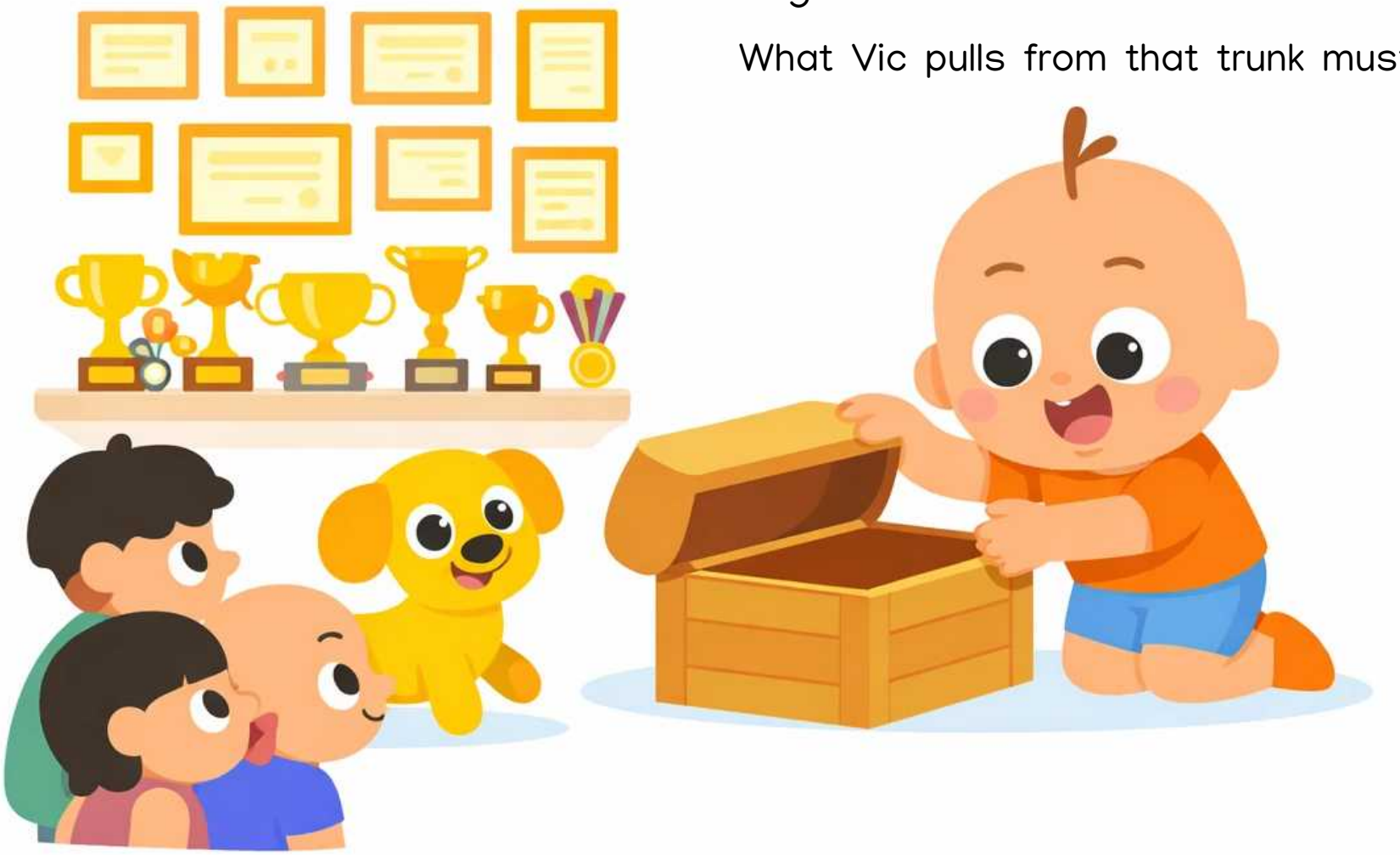
Coach Vic stands on his porch and **watches** us race up the path. Dog **stretches** out in the grass below.

'I have something cool to show you,' he says. 'Meet me in the yard after school!'

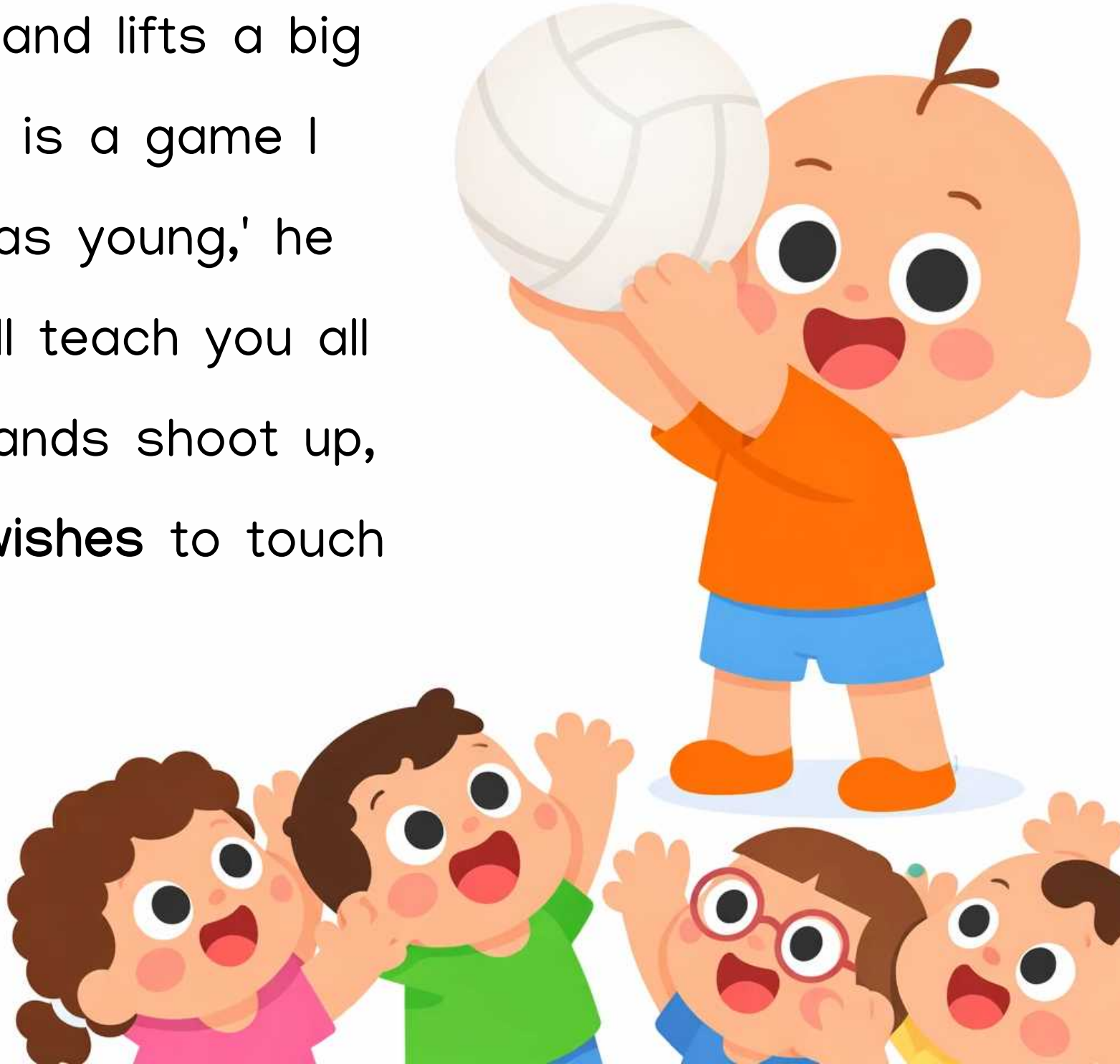
What could it be?

Vic sits by a big trunk and **reaches** inside.
Behind him, the wall is covered in awards.
The shelves below are packed with cups and medals. A heap of shiny **riches.**

Dog and the rest of us crowd in to watch.
What Vic pulls from that trunk must be good.



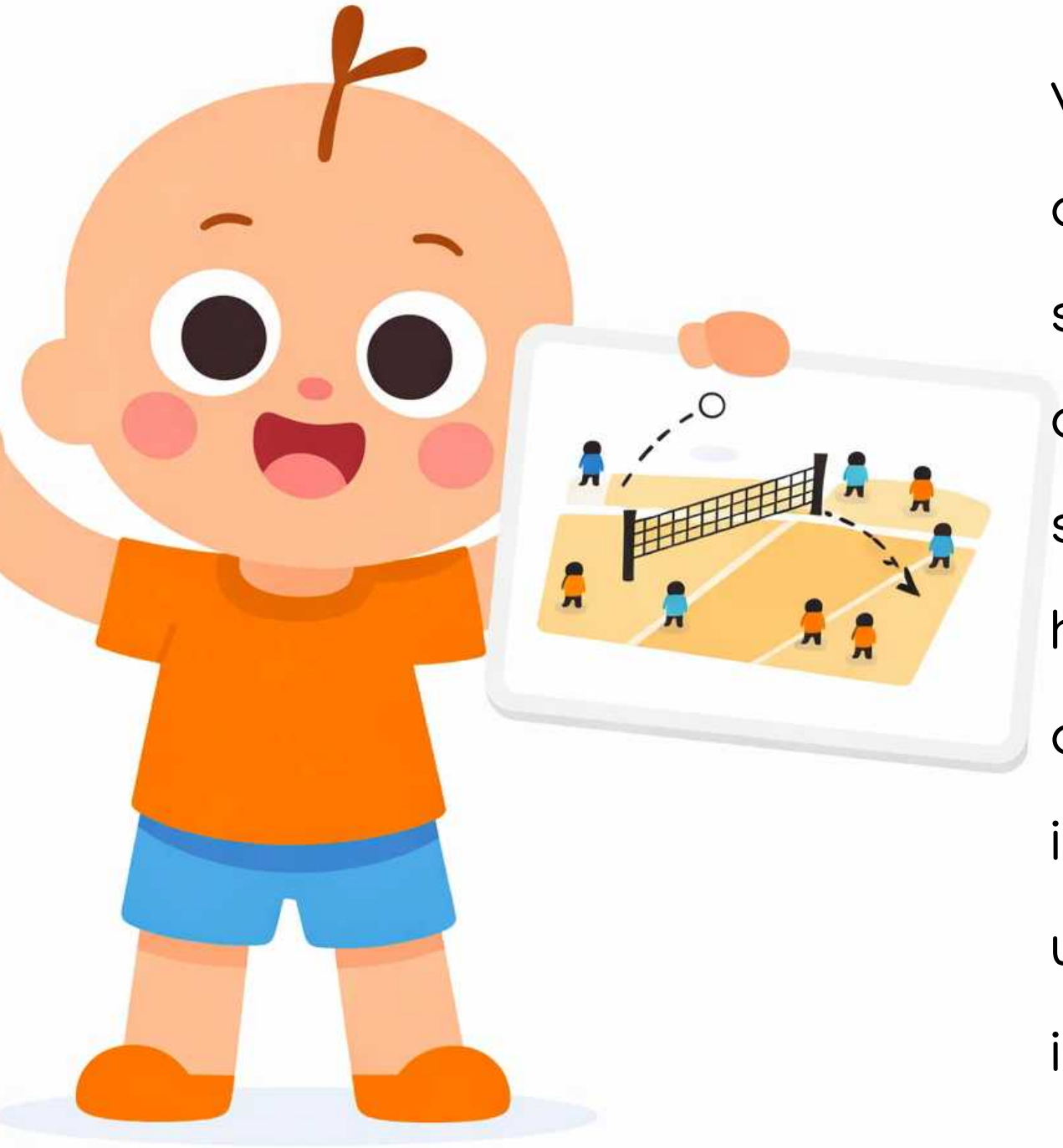
Vic **reaches** in and lifts a big white ball. 'This is a game I loved when I was young,' he says. 'Now I will teach you all how to play!' Hands shoot up, and every kid **wishes** to touch that ball.



Vic pulls a small model of a ball court from one of his **boxes** and sets it on the table. It has a tiny net and little players on each side. 'You split into two teams,' he says. 'Then you hit the ball back and forth over the net. The team that wins the most **matches** is the best!'

Vic holds up three sketches. One player **reaches** high, one **crouches** low, and one **pushes** the ball while the team **watches.**

'If the ball lands where you want, you score,' Vic says. 'But no feet!'



Vic holds up a map of the court. A dashed line shows the ball curving to a spot where no one stands. 'Aim for the gaps,' he says. 'Hit it where the other team **misses.** That is how you win!' He rolls up the map and tucks it into one of his **boxes.**

Dog flips a big stack of pictures on the floor. The top one shows a player diving across the sand to reach a ball. People play this game on **beaches** all over the world. Dog **wishes** he could run across that sand and chase the ball!

Vic **stretches** a big map across the floor and points to spots all over the world.

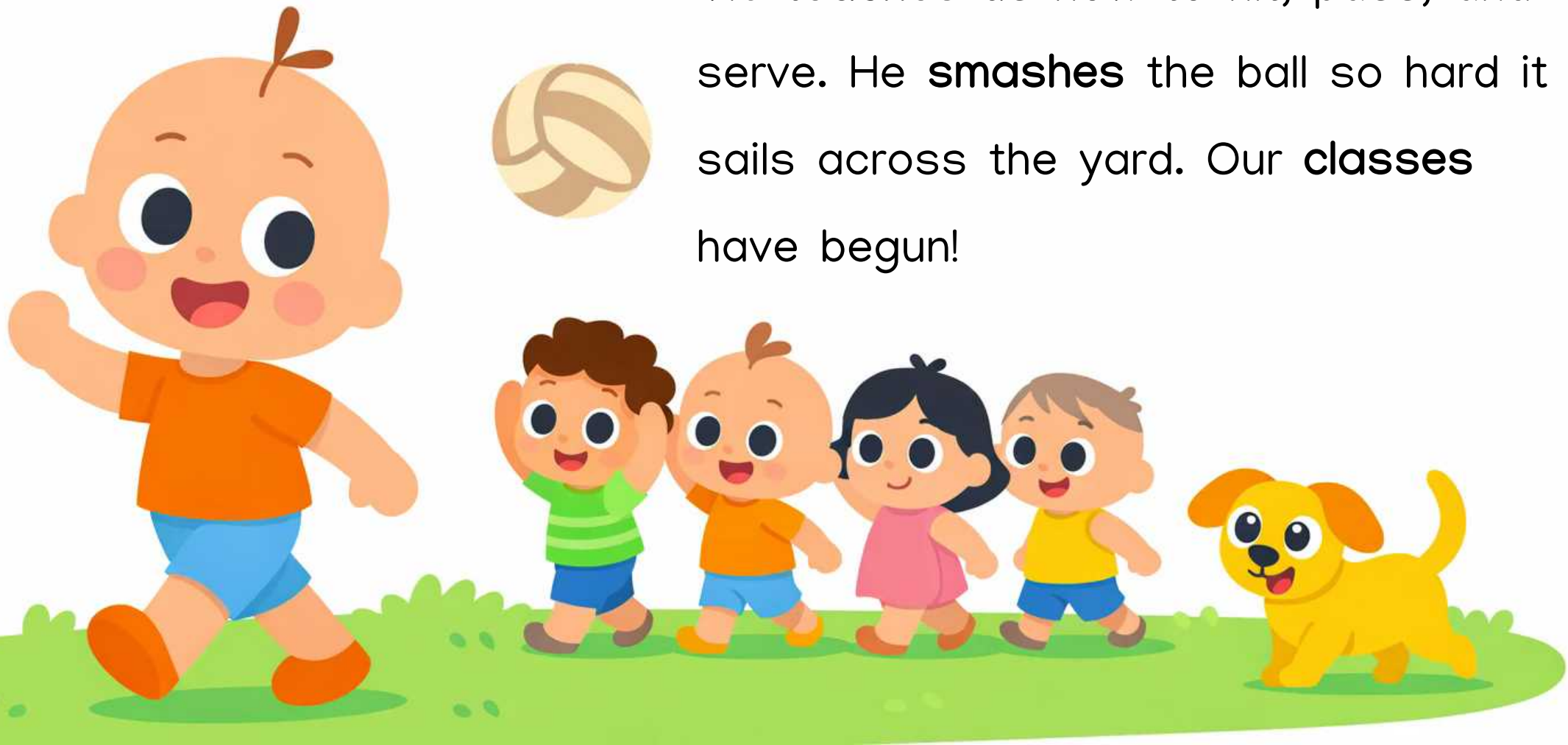
'You do not need a fancy court,' he says. 'Just a net and a patch of flat grass!' Dog rolls on his back nearby. The kid in **glasses watches** him and grins.

Tim looks up at Vic with a shy smile. 'What if I am no good?' he asks.

Vic **reaches** down and pats Tim on the head. 'You do not have to be the best. Just get out there and try!' Dog **watches** from Tim's side, tail wagging, as if to say, 'You can do it!'

Coach Vic **marches** out to the yard, and we all follow in a line. Dog trots along at the back as his ears bounce.

Vic **teaches** us how to hit, pass, and serve. He **smashes** the ball so hard it sails across the yard. Our **classes** have begun!



We spread out by the net and start to practise. One kid **tosses** the ball up, and a friend **reaches** high to send it over.

Dog **crouches** in the middle and **watches** the ball fly. He looks ready to snatch it if it drops!

Dog hugs the big ball in his paws and **pushes** his nose right into it. That toy is almost as big as he is! I think Dog **wishes** he could play too. But how high can one small dog punt a ball?

ES

Paws Off the Ball!

Coach Vic has a secret tucked inside an old trunk, and his shelves are packed with shiny trophies like pirate treasure. What could be so exciting? When he pulls out a big white volleyball and promises to teach everyone how to play, eyes go wide and hands shoot up - especially Dog's paws! But will Dog remember the rules once the ball starts flying? This decodable reader practises es plurals in words like 'beaches,' 'matches,' 'watches,' and 'wishes.'

Reading Skills: <es>

beaches, boxes, classes, clutches, crouches, glasses, marches, matches, misses, pushes, reaches, riches, smashes, stretches, teaches, tosses, touches, watches, wishes

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