That Smelly Thing in the Bush

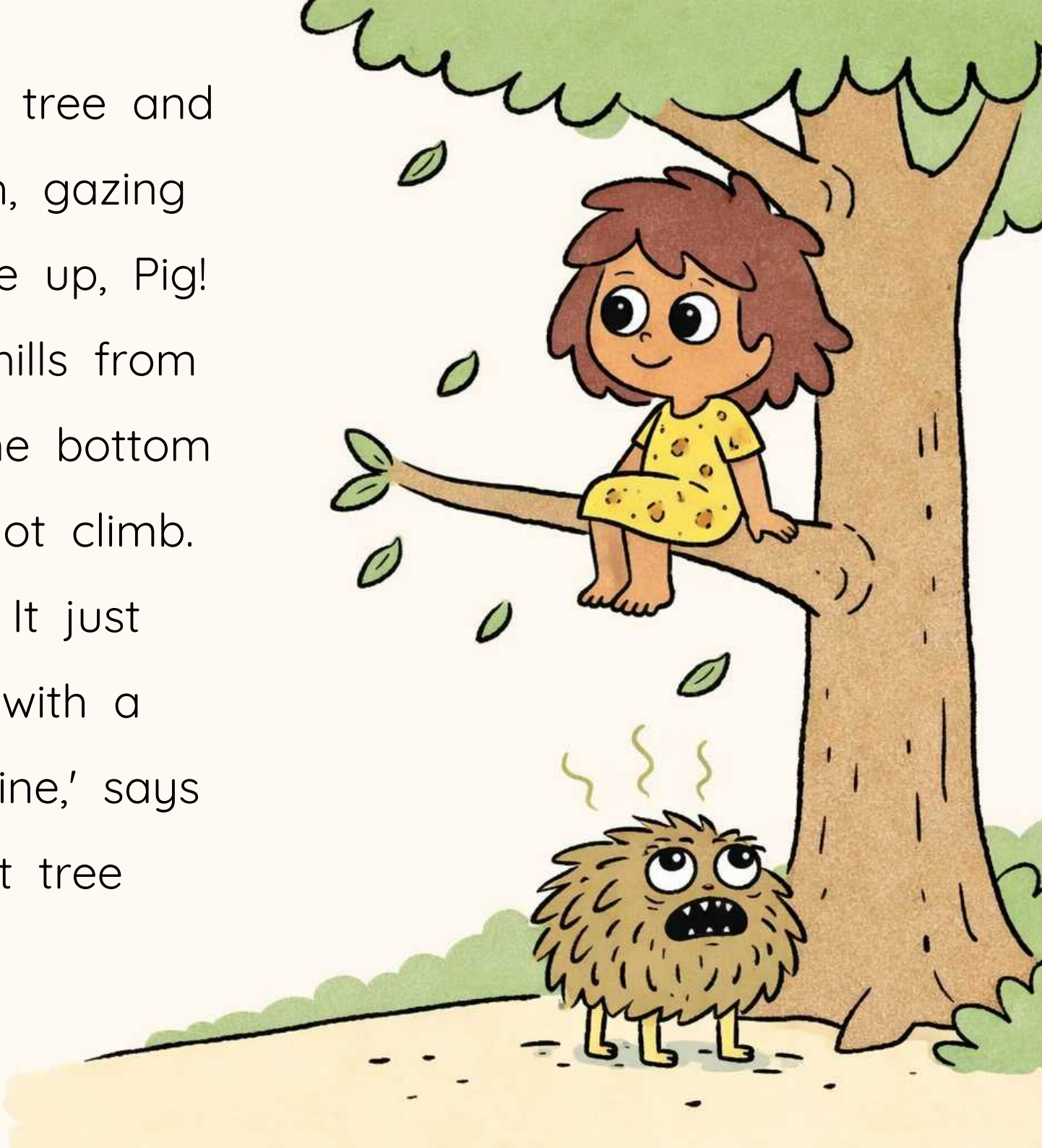
Something stinky is hiding in the park, **though** The Girl can not see it. She sniffs the air. She sniffs again. She follows her nose down the sunny path like a detective on a big, smelly case. Behind a green bush, two little eyes blink back at her. 'I see you in there,' she says. 'And I can smell you, too.'

Out crashes the most stinky animal in the world! Thick, dark mud coats it from head to toe. Green stink lines rise off it like steam. 'It's a Pig!' The Girl shouts. 'A real Pig! At the park!' Pig stares at The Girl with big, grumpy eyes. **Although** Pig does not look amazed, The Girl is amazed for both of them.

The Girl runs down the hill with her arms spread wide. 'Come on, Pig!' Pig comes on. It gallops after her with its mouth open and a goofy grin that takes up most of its face. Flies buzz around them both. 'You are the best thing I ever found!' The Girl yells into the wind. 'Better than a **doughnut!** Better than a snow day! Better than finding money in my pocket!'

The Girl finds a big puddle and points right at it. 'Pigs love mud. Go on!' Pig jumps in with all four feet. Muddy water bursts up all around. It soaks The Girl's new dress. It soaks her boots. It soaks a butterfly flying past. 'I **thought** so,' says The Girl, wiping mud off her face. 'You are very good at being a pig.'

The Girl climbs a big tree and sits on a high branch, gazing out at the hills. 'Come up, Pig! You can see all the hills from up top!' Pig sits at the bottom of the tree. It does not climb. It does not even try. It just looks up at The Girl with a big, grumpy scowl. 'Fine,' says The Girl. 'Pigs are not tree animals, **though.'**



Back on the ground, The Girl pulls off her boots and puts them on Pig's feet. All four of them. Pig opens its mouth and makes a sound. Not an oink. More like a loud honk falling down the stairs. 'That is great, Pig!' The Girl closes her eyes, throws one hand in the air, and sings along as loud as she can. Butterflies scatter. Birds go quiet. It is a very silly duet, **though** The Girl loves every minute of it.

The sun turns orange and sinks. It feels too **early** to go, but Mum will call The Girl in soon. The Girl looks at Pig. Pig looks at The Girl. Flies buzz around Pig's head like a stinky ring. 'You are coming home with me,' says The Girl. 'But we **ought** to be sneaky. Mum is not going to like the smell.' The Girl creeps up the driveway, pushes open the door, and peeks inside. All clear.

They tiptoe down the hall. The Girl holds her breath. Pig holds its breath. Even the flies hold their breath. Behind them, muddy marks and boot marks spread across the floor like a map. It is not sneaky at all. 'Not. A. Sound,' whispers The Girl. Pig makes a sound, **though.** A small, soft one. The Girl pretends not to hear it.

The Girl brings Pig straight to Mum's room and stands at the dressing table. If Pig is going to stay, Pig **ought** to look the part. The Girl sticks foam rolls in her hair and smears blue eyeshadow on her cheeks. Then she grabs the red lipstick. 'Hold still, Pig.' Pig does not hold still. But The Girl gets lipstick on Pig all the same. Mostly around the mouth. Partly on the floor. Pig grins at itself in the mirror. It looks very proud.

'What,' says Mum from the doorway, 'is that?' Mum points at Pig. Pig drips mud on the carpet. A fly lands on the lipstick. 'It's my pig,' says The Girl with a big, charming smile. 'I found it at the park. Can I keep it? Please? I will look after it forever and ever and...' 'March that thing to the tub,' says Mum. 'Now.' The Girl thinks that is almost a yes, **though.**

'So I can keep it?' The Girl asks as she runs. 'You can keep it clean,' says Mum with a frown. 'No more muck in my house.' They fill the tub with soapy water. Pig climbs in. The Girl climbs in after. Bubbles float up to the top as they scrub and splash and scrub again. Layer by layer, the mud comes off. And a strange **thought** creeps into The Girl's mind.

Under all that mud is not a pig. It is a pug! A little pug, with a wrinkly face and a big grin. The Girl stares at it. It stares at The Girl. Its tiny curly tail wags in the bubbles. 'Well,' says The Girl, scrubbing its soft head with a pink brush. 'You are still the most stinky thing I ever found at the park, **though.'** The pug licks her nose. The Girl thinks that is a thank you. She is keeping it forever.

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That Smelly Thing in the Bush

A girl catches a stinky whiff in the park and follows her nose behind a scruffy green bush. There she finds the muddiest, grumpiest creature she has ever seen, and she is instantly smitten. Could this stinky new friend possibly come home with her, mud and all? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 116: ough /aw/, /ō/), this book practises words like 'though', 'thought', 'although', 'early', 'doughnut'.

Phonics Focus: ough /aw/, /ō/

although, doughnut, early, ought, though, thought

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