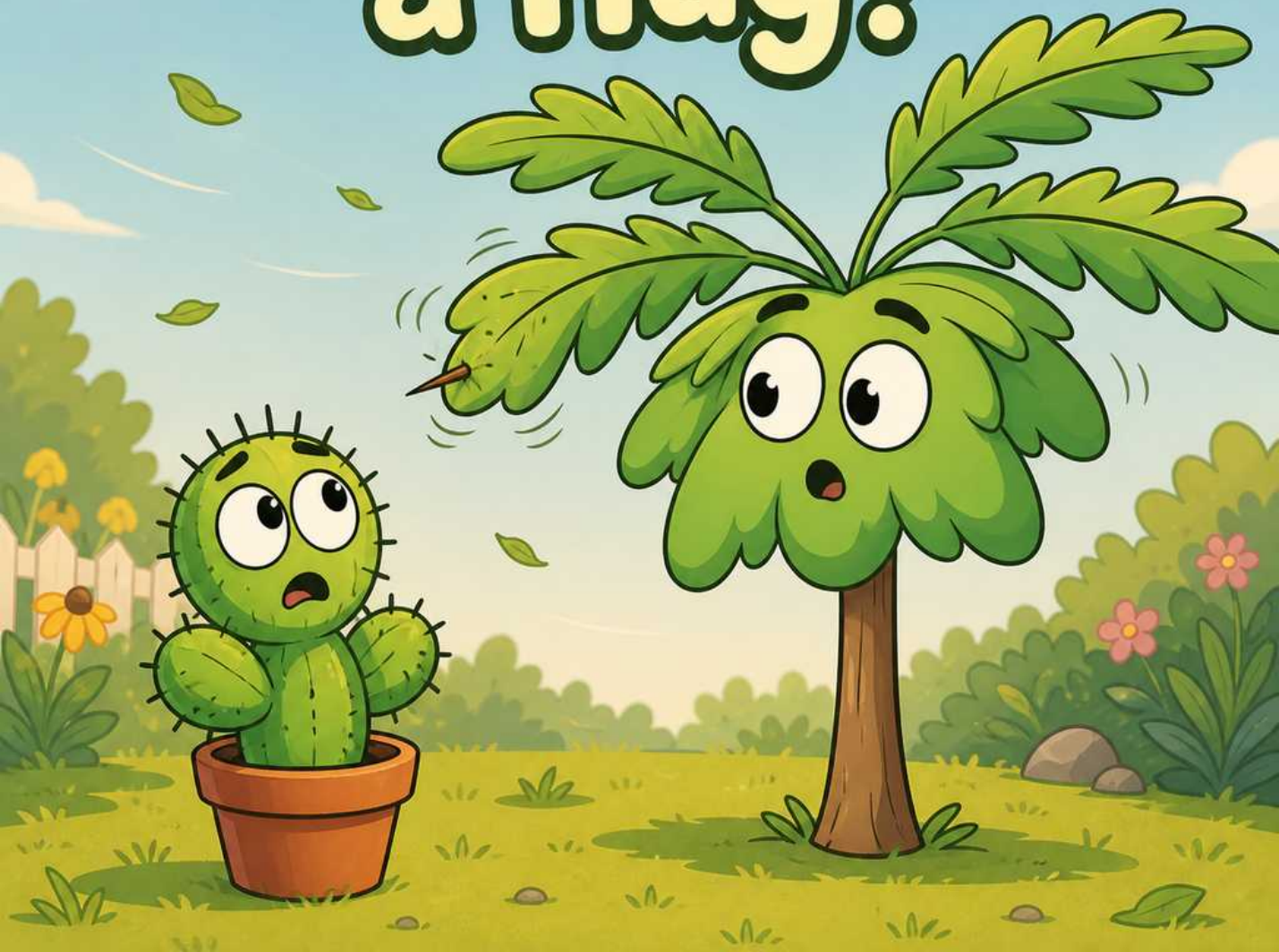


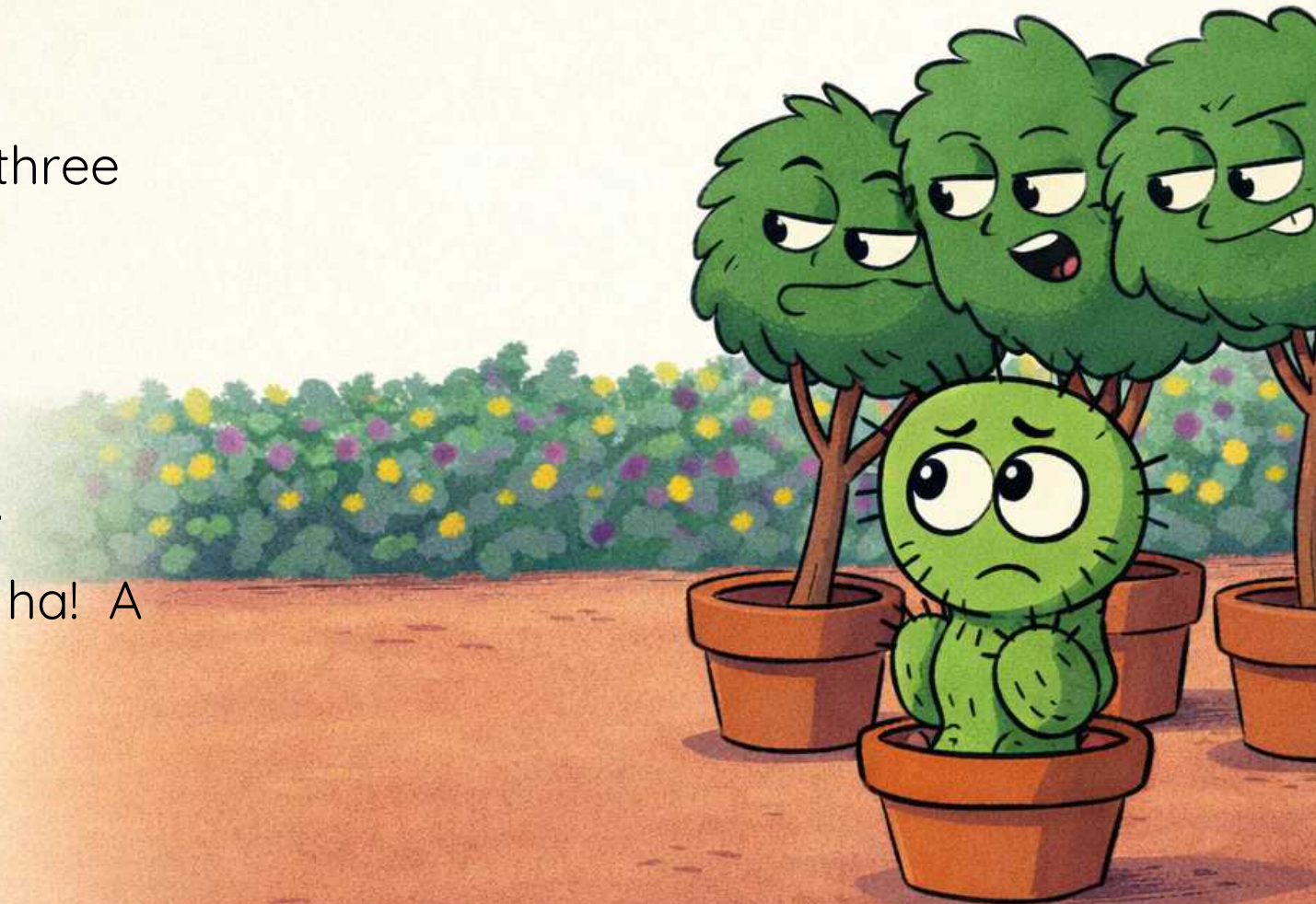
Who Wants a Hug?



No one wants to be pals
with Spike. Not one plant.
Not ever. But today, Spike
feels lucky. He can feel it in
his spines.

'Howdy!' Spike calls to three
trees. 'I am Spike! Who
wants a hug?'

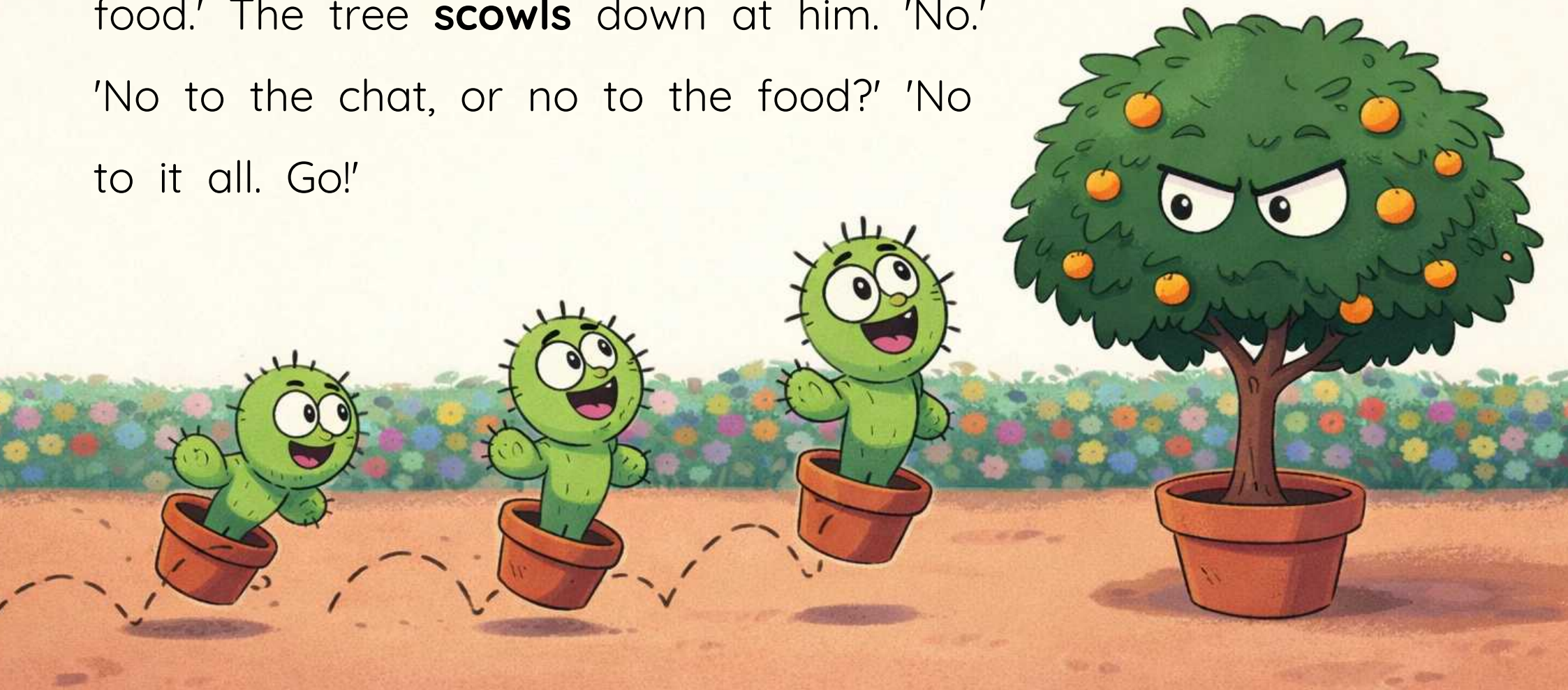
The three look at Spike.
Then they yell, 'Ha, ha, ha! A
hug? From that pointy
fellow? No! Go **home!**'



Spike will not cry. Spike will not **moan**. Spike will not go **home** and sob. Nope! 'That is fine,' says Spike with a grin. 'They can not see what a fine pal I am.' And he hops down the **road**, pot clinking, humming his **own** little song, 'Some Day a Pal Will **Show** Up.'



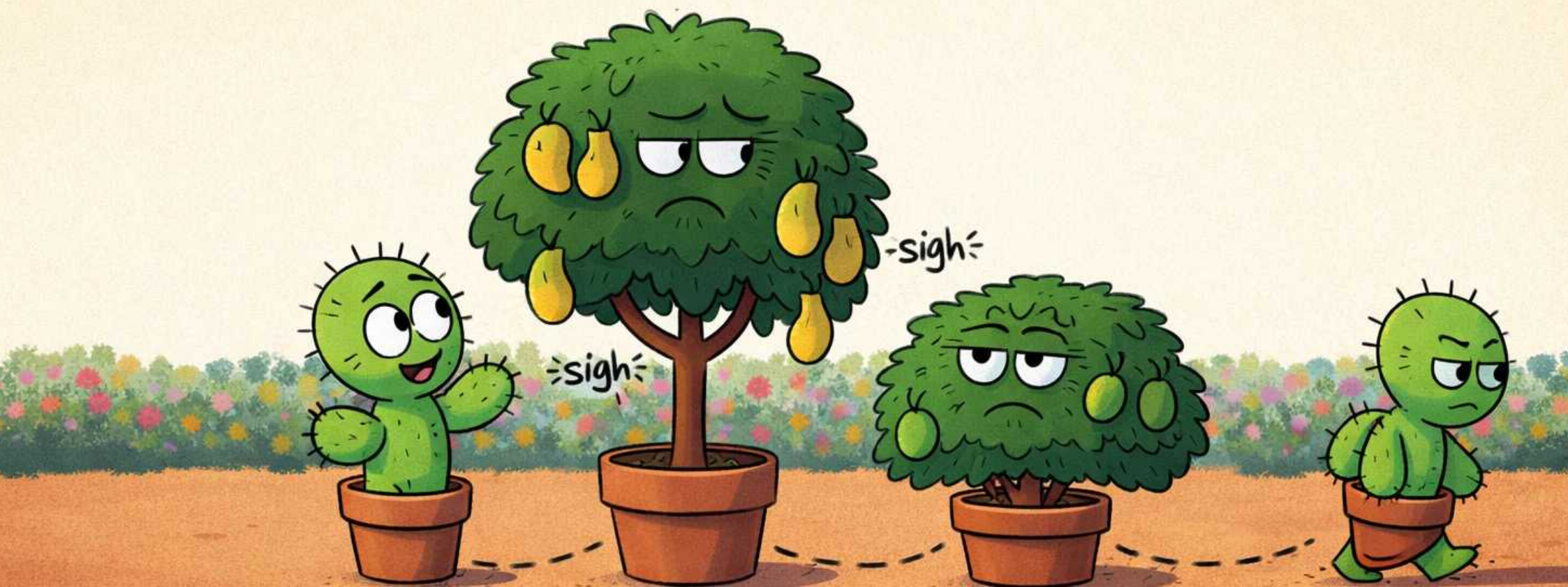
Spike spots a tree with no pals at all.
'**Wow!**' he says. 'This tree needs a pal to
chat with. I chat well. And I like sweet
food.' The tree **scowls** down at him. 'No.'
'No to the chat, or no to the food?' 'No
to it all. Go!'





Then Spike spots a tree with a big green top and a shy **yellow** face. '**Howdy!** I am Spike! Want to be...' The tree looks at his spines and screams, 'Pointy! Pointy, pointy, pointy!' It shakes and shakes, and two little plants run off in fright. 'I am not that pointy,' says Spike. He looks down at his spines. He is very, very pointy. 'Well. A bit pointy, yes.'

Spike tries a tree. It sighs. He tries a **low** plant.
That one **moans**, long and loud. 'We **know** who
that is,' the two say. 'Spike! The pointy one
who wants hugs. Keep the spines far from us!'
Spike goes off, **slow** and sad. His song stops.





One plant is left. A big tree at the far end. Spike goes to it, **slow**. There is no bounce in him **now**. He stands and looks up. 'Let me see,' says the big tree, looking down. 'Spike, right? The one who looks for a pal all day.' Spike nods. 'Well,' says the tree. 'I am brave. Spines do not give me a fright.'

The big tree waves his green top wide, like two arms. 'The other plants never gave a pointy chap a chance,' says the tree. 'That is not right. Come sit with me, Spike.' Spike blinks. 'Is that true?' 'It is true.' Spike **glows**. For the first time all day, his song feels true.





They chat and chat.
Spike tells **jokes**. The
tree tells tales. Wind
tales, rain tales. It is
so much fun. Then
Spike leans in, and...
Pop! One spine jabs a
big green leaf. 'Ouch!'
howls the tree. 'That
was my leaf!'

The tree pulls back, big leaves shaking. 'See!' he **growls**. 'All the plants said so! Go, Spike! Go find a pal that spines can not hurt.' 'I did not mean to jab...' 'Go!' Spike can not finish. He hops off, very little and very **low**.





Spike sits in the empty yard. No trees. No plants. No one. They may be right. A pointy plant may never get a pal. Then Spike stops. He looks at his spines, then at the **road**. 'Wait,' says Spike. 'All day I look for a pal who is not pointy. What if I need a pal who is pointy too?'

Spike goes down the **road**, out to the dry sand dunes. And there, like a scruffy **brown** nest, sits a thorn plant.

'**Wow,**' says Spike. 'What a pointy plant!' '**Wow,**' says the thorn plant. 'What a pointy plant!' They grin.

'I am Spike. Want a hug?'

'I am Thorn. Yes, yes, yes!'





They hug. And no one yelps! Spike hops out from his pot by the **road**, and off they go over the dunes, singing songs, telling tales, bumping spines without one yelp. And then, as the sun gets **low**, a **flower** blooms, right on top of Spike. Spike can not see it. He sings his song with Thorn, glad as can be.



Who Wants a Hug?

Spike the cactus has never had a friend, not one, not ever, but today feels different. He hops off to make one, sure this is finally his lucky day. Will anyone want a hug from the pointiest plant in the garden? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 7: /oa/ mixed), this book practices words like 'howdy', 'slow', 'know', 'moan', 'glows'.

Phonics Focus: <mixed>

brown, fellow, flower, glows, growls, home, howdy, howls, jokes, know,
low, moan, moans, now, own, road, scowls, show, slow, wow, yellow

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