

Who Wants a Phantom Pal?





I am Gus, the best ghost you will ever meet. I get it. Green skin. Fangs. Floating in a dark wood. But I have stood by this tree all day, and not one kid has come to say hi. This wood has a ghost problem.

Yes, it is a ghost problem. See those three? A big furry one. A bony one. A creepy pale one. They hide, wait for a person to walk past, then pop up and yell, 'Boo!' That person almost **flew** up off the path. The three think it is funny. I think it is **rude**.





I floated up to the
treetops to get away.
Then I **took** a peek past
the leaves. Kids! Kids in
a park! Jumping, playing,
having fun. The fun I had
been dreaming of forever.
'They will love me,' I said.
I **put** on my best grin and
zoomed right to the kids.

'Hi kids! I am Gus! Want to be best pals?' I rolled off the big tree with a wide grin. I felt it was perfect. The kids did not. They yelled. They ran. Not one looked back. Well, one looked back, and that just made him run faster.





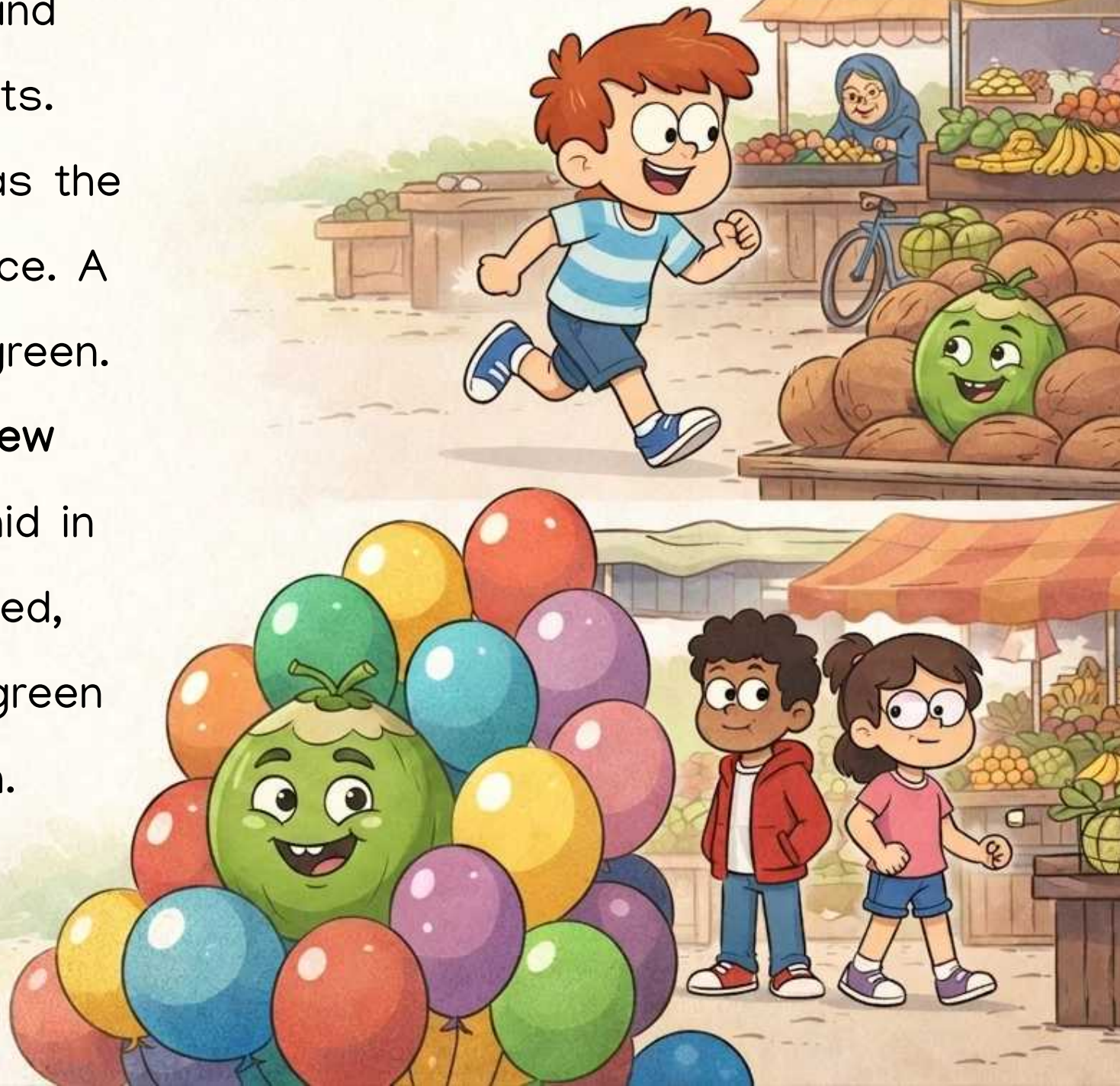
'Wait! Come back! I am not bad!'

But they were gone. A little dog ran off with them, its little legs a blur.

I floated there all alone, dust drifting on the path. Yelling at kids from a tree was a bad plan. I needed a new plan.



I went to the market and hid in a pile of coconuts. Just one problem. I was the one coconut with a face. A kid walked past. Too green. Too odd. Time for a new plan. I puffed up and hid in a bunch of balloons. Red, yellow, blue, and one green one with a cheeky grin.





I drifted over to the kids,
just like a normal **balloon**. 'Hi!
Who wants to play? I am
just a talking **balloon**!

Balloons talk all the time!
The kids **stood** in a huddle.
They did not run. But they
did not smile. Then came a
very bad sound. **Mew!**



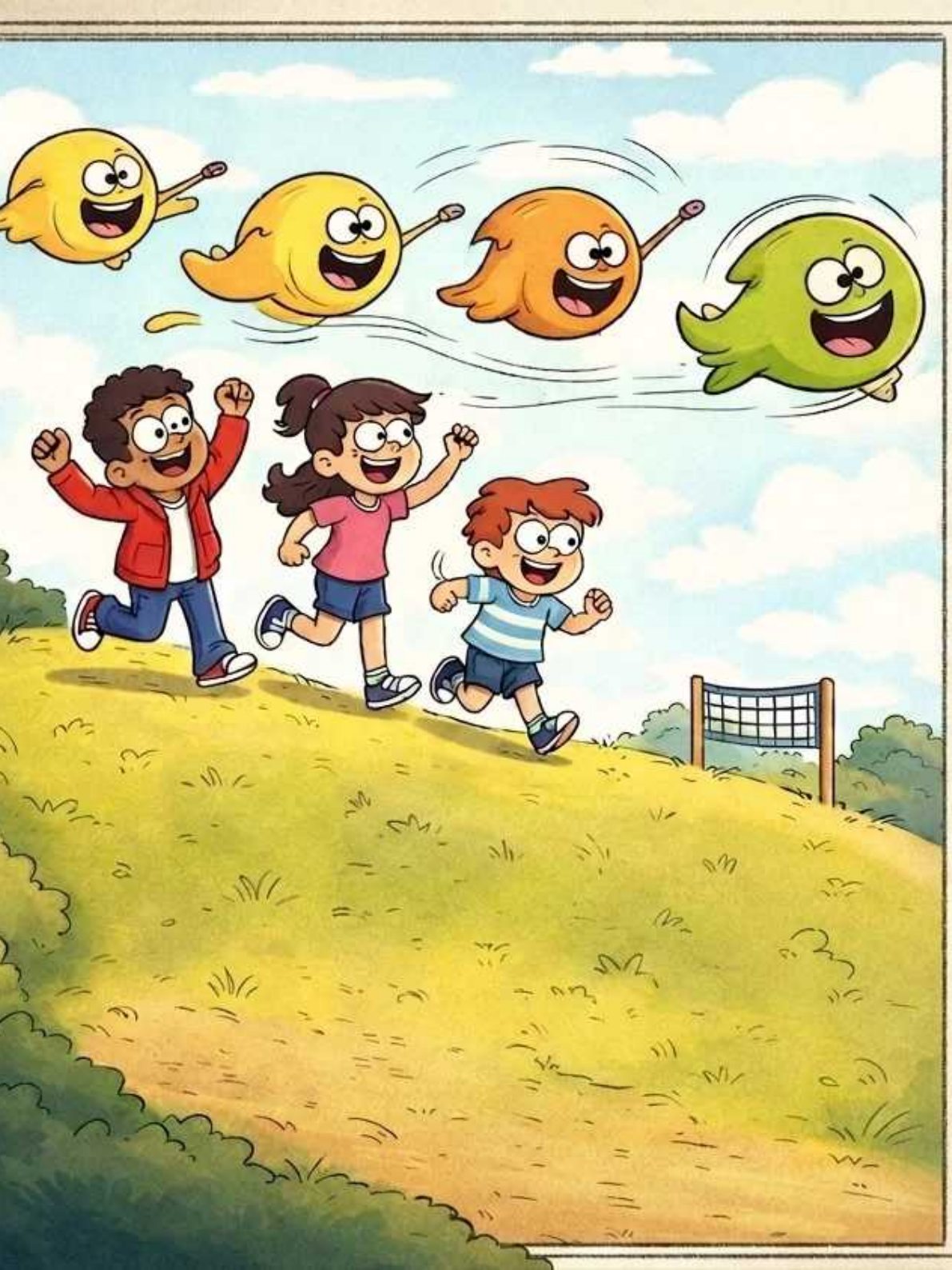
A cat! Leaping at me with a big hiss!

I dodged left. I went flat. I stretched into a long noodle.

The cat swung and missed, swung and missed, then fell on the grass. I pulled a silly face, and the cat just sat there.

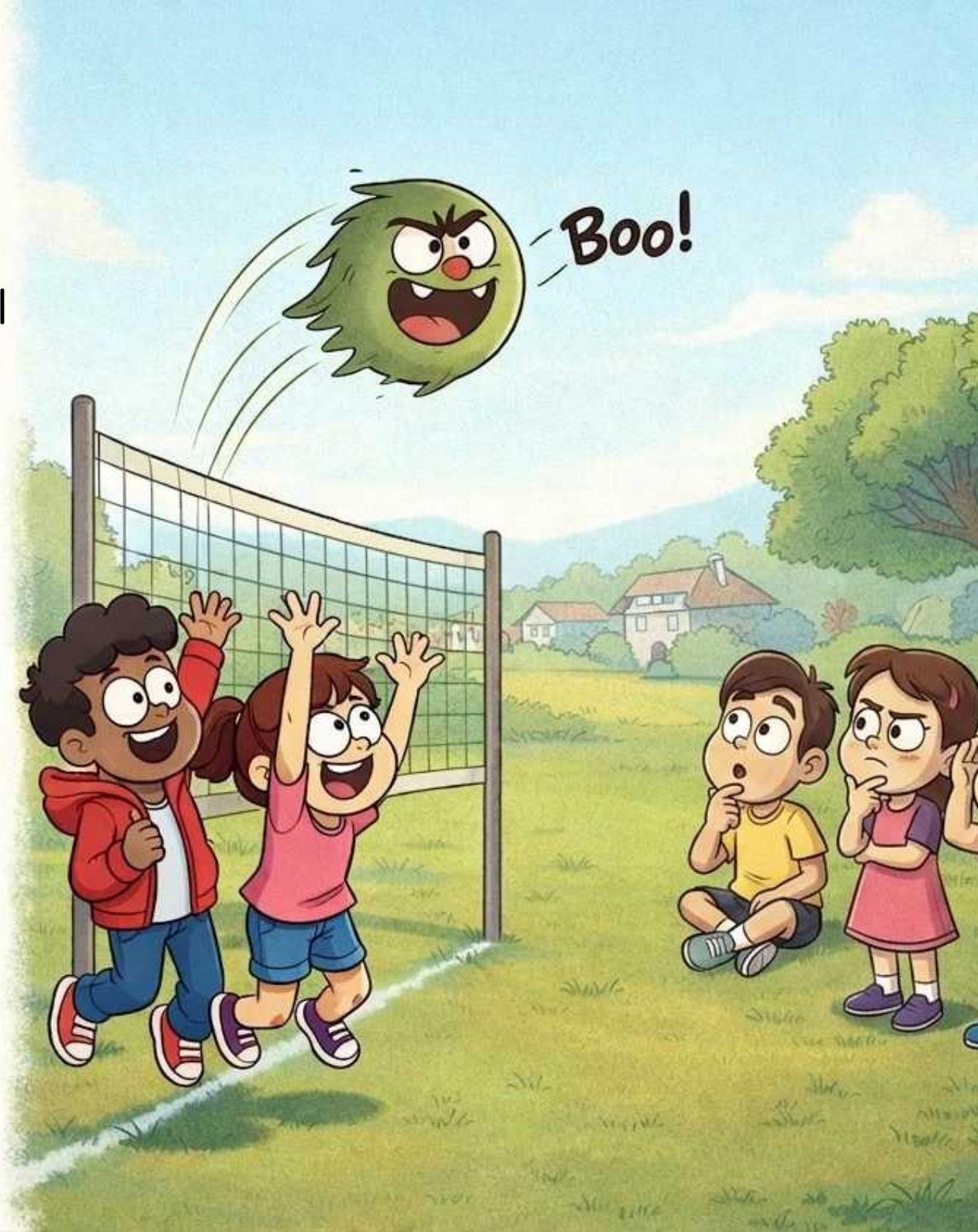
The kids started to giggle. 'You are not spooky at all! Want to play with us?'





'Yes! I am in!' I zoomed by them in a blur. I puffed big, then small. I went **blue**, then red, then back to green. The kids chased me up a hill, giggling. Then I **looked** at the top of the hill. A volleyball net! And the kids had a **sneaky look** on their faces.

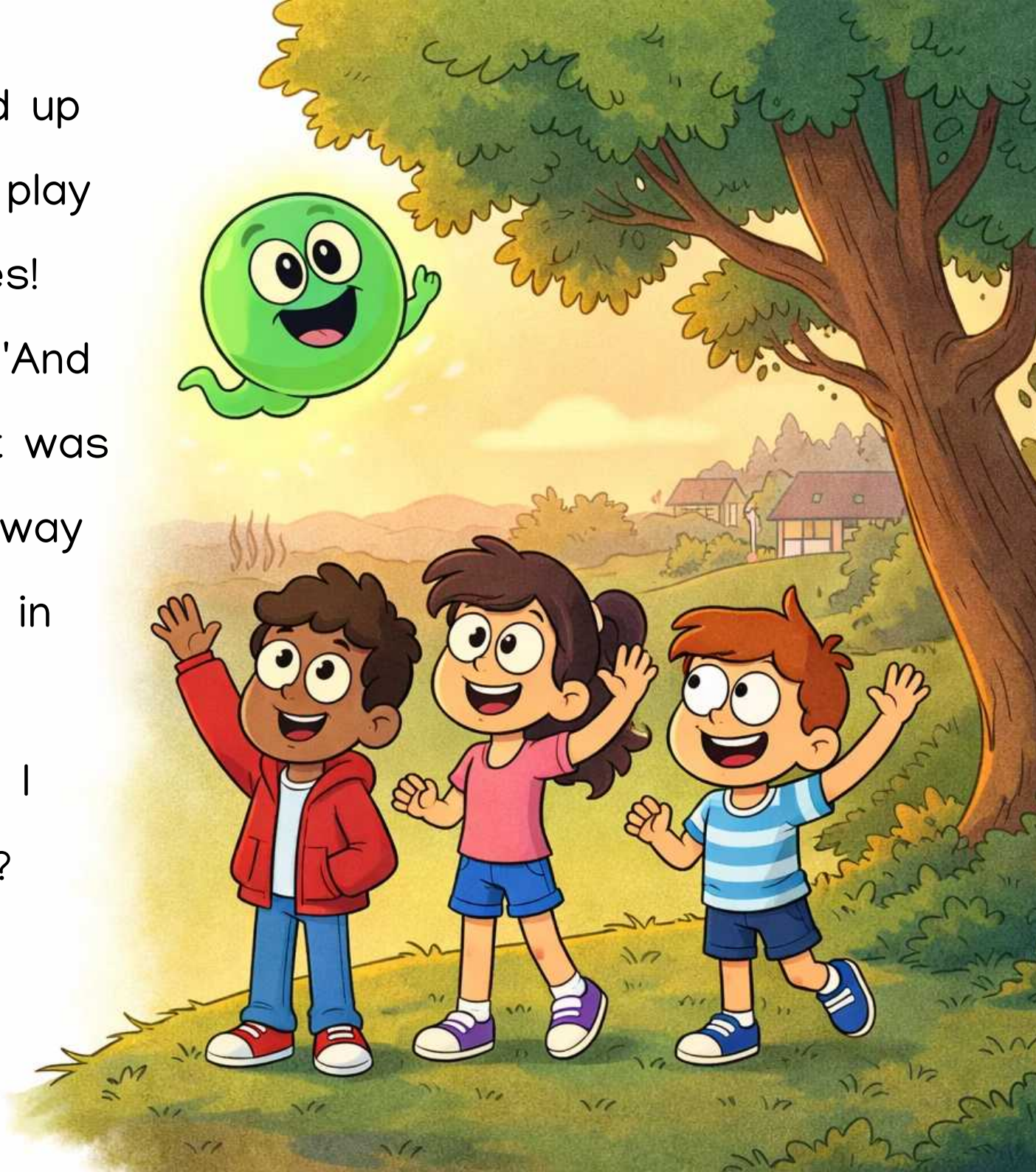
'Gus,' they said. 'Are you set to be a ball?' I puffed into a perfect ball shape. 'I am set!' The other team had no clue. They stood across the net, stretching. My team **threw** me up, and at the top of my arc, I yelled, 'Boo!' You should have seen their faces! They jumped a mile.



I was the best volleyball ever! They tried to serve me. I went the other way. They tried to hit me. I **flew** past their hands! They tried to spike me. I went flat and slid under the net. 'You cheat!' the other team yelled. 'True!' my team said back, high-fiving. We took every game.



As the sun set, I floated up to the treetop. 'Can we play again soon?' I called. 'Yes! Soon!' they called back. 'And bring your coconut! That was so bad!' I smiled all the way home. The other ghosts in the wood could keep popping up to yell, 'Boo!' I had pals! And next time? Next time, I will be the football!





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Gad the ghost just wants a friend, but every kid who spots him runs screaming through the park. Coconuts don't work as a disguise, and even a bunch of balloons can't quite hide his grin. Could a silly, wobbly noodle-shaped dodge finally win the kids over? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 92: Vowel Teams Review 2), this book practices words like 'boo', 'blue', 'zoom', 'balloon', 'true'.

Phonics Focus: Vowel Teams Review 2

balloon, blue, boo, clue, flew, football, look, looked, mew, new, noodle, pulled, put, rude, should, soon, spooky, stood, threw, too, took, true, wood, you, zoom

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