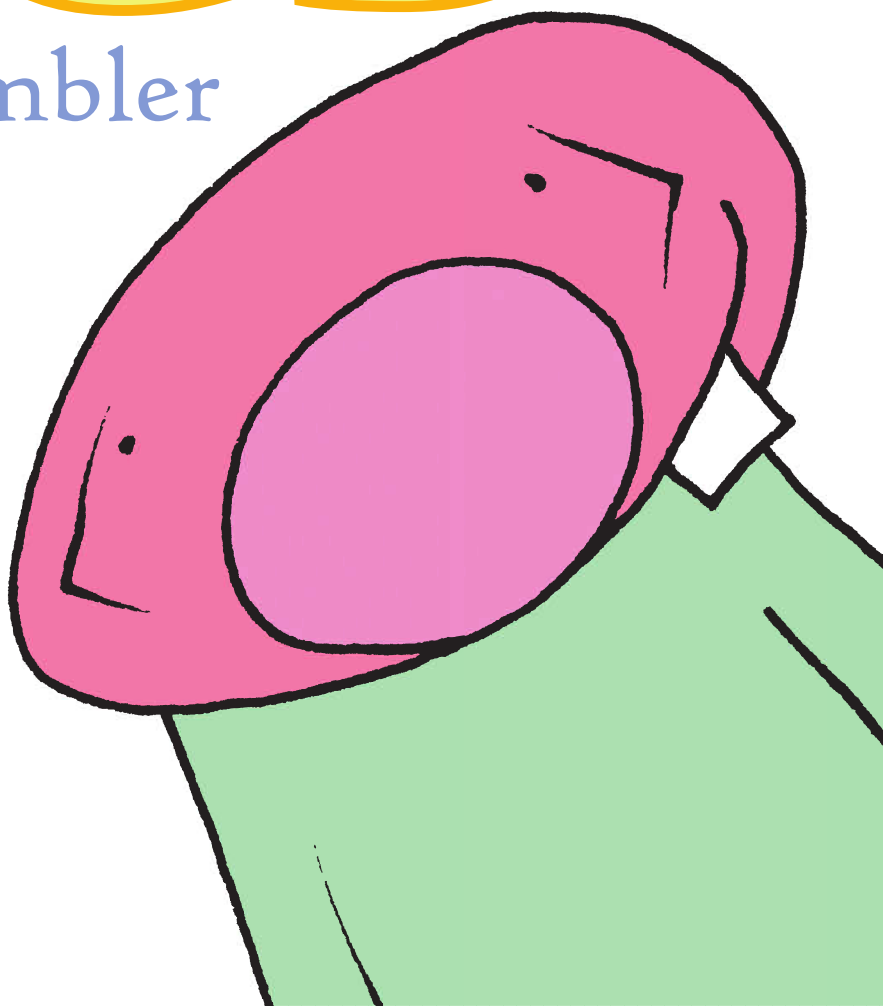
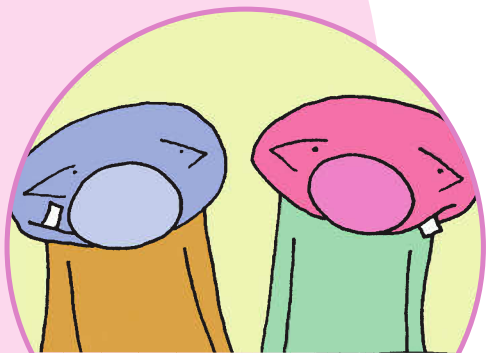
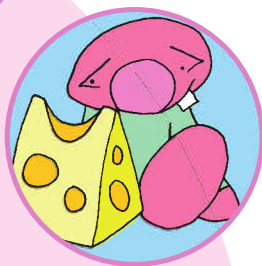
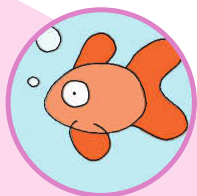


Christian Luke

Christian Smith

BUD

the Grumbler



BUD

the Grumbler

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Christian Luke

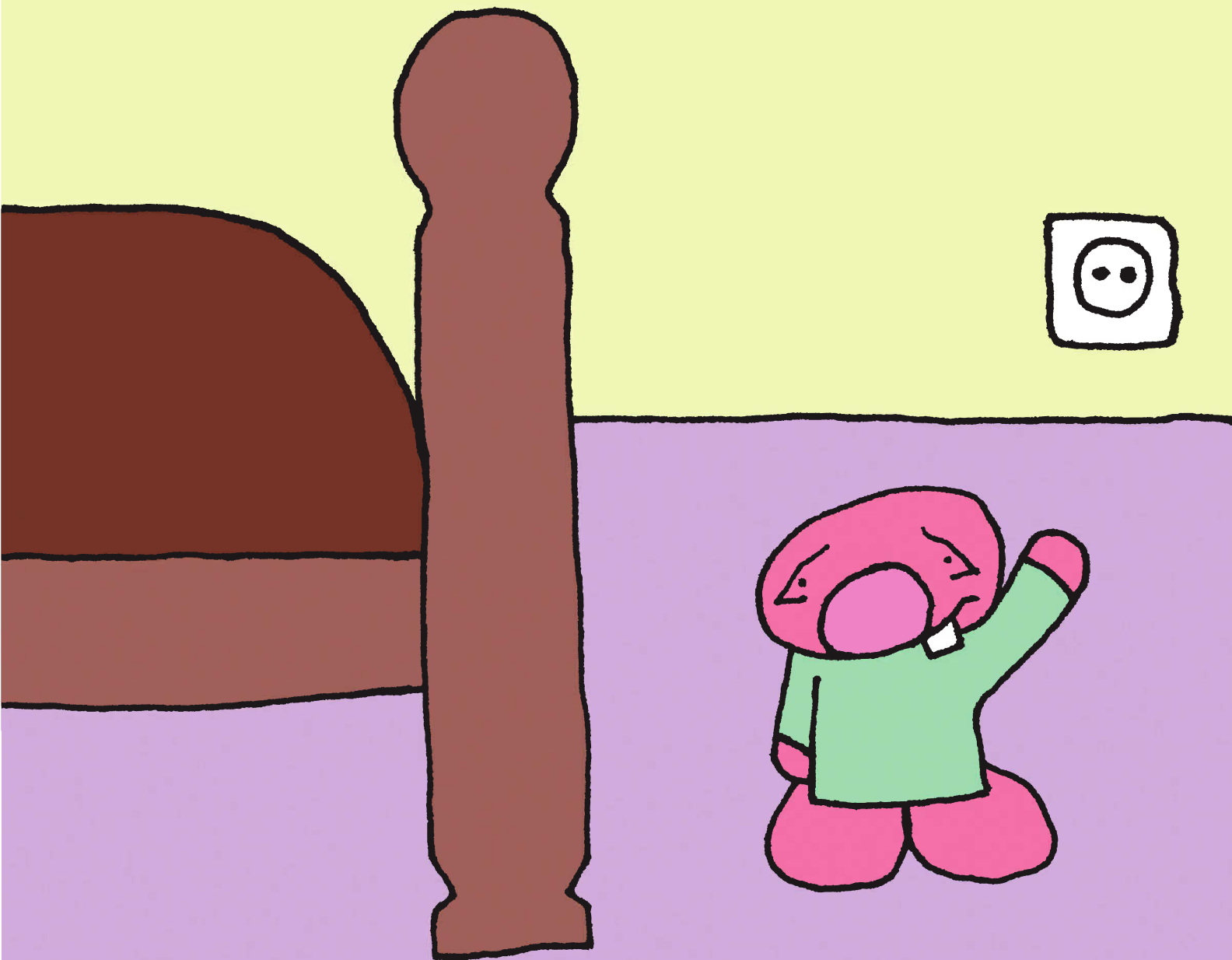
Christian Smith

BUD

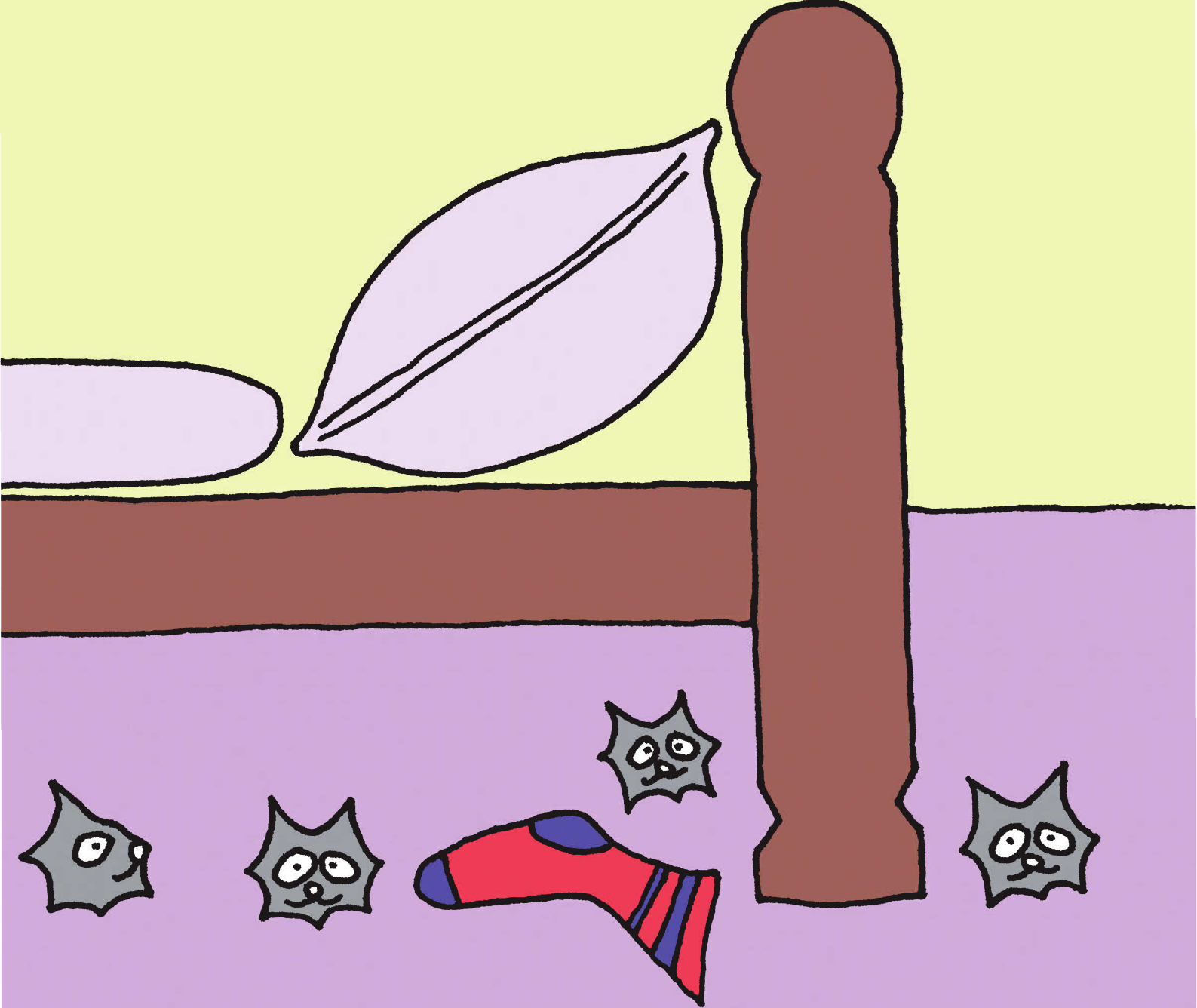
the Grumbler



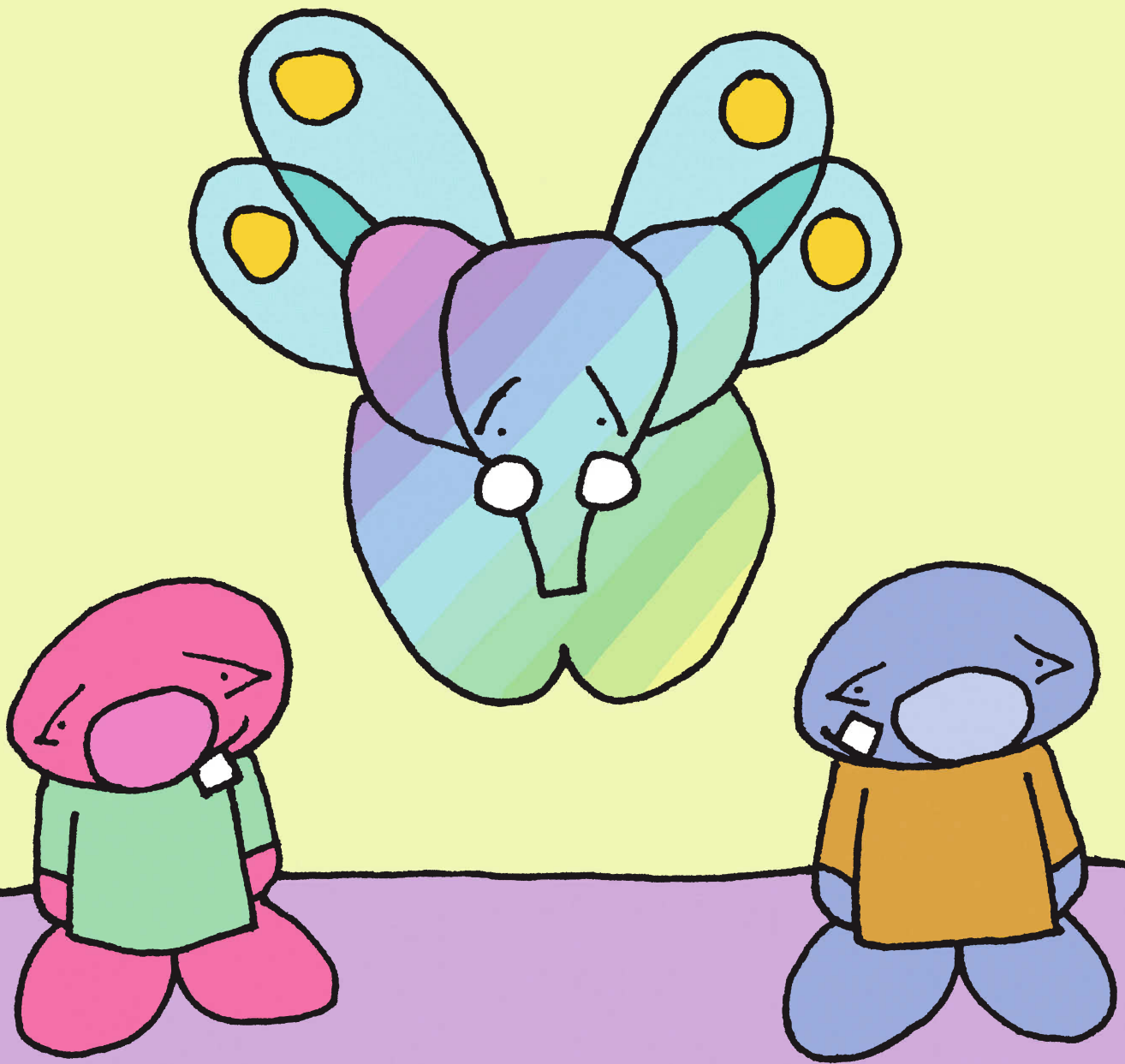
Bud, the grumbler lived under my bed, however I hadn't known about him until one sunny Sunday morning when he appeared next to my bed. "Hi. My name's Bud. I'm a grumbler", he said while he was scratching his belly in a little embarrassment.



“Hi. I’m Christian. I’m a human”, I answered in a frightened voice.
“Well, you know, I live under your bed”, he admitted, and he added at once.
“You should tidy your room more often, there’s a dirty sock under there.”



“I’m so sorry”, I said. “I had no idea that a real grumbler lived under my bed. If I had known it, I would have cleaned it regularly. When did you move in here?”

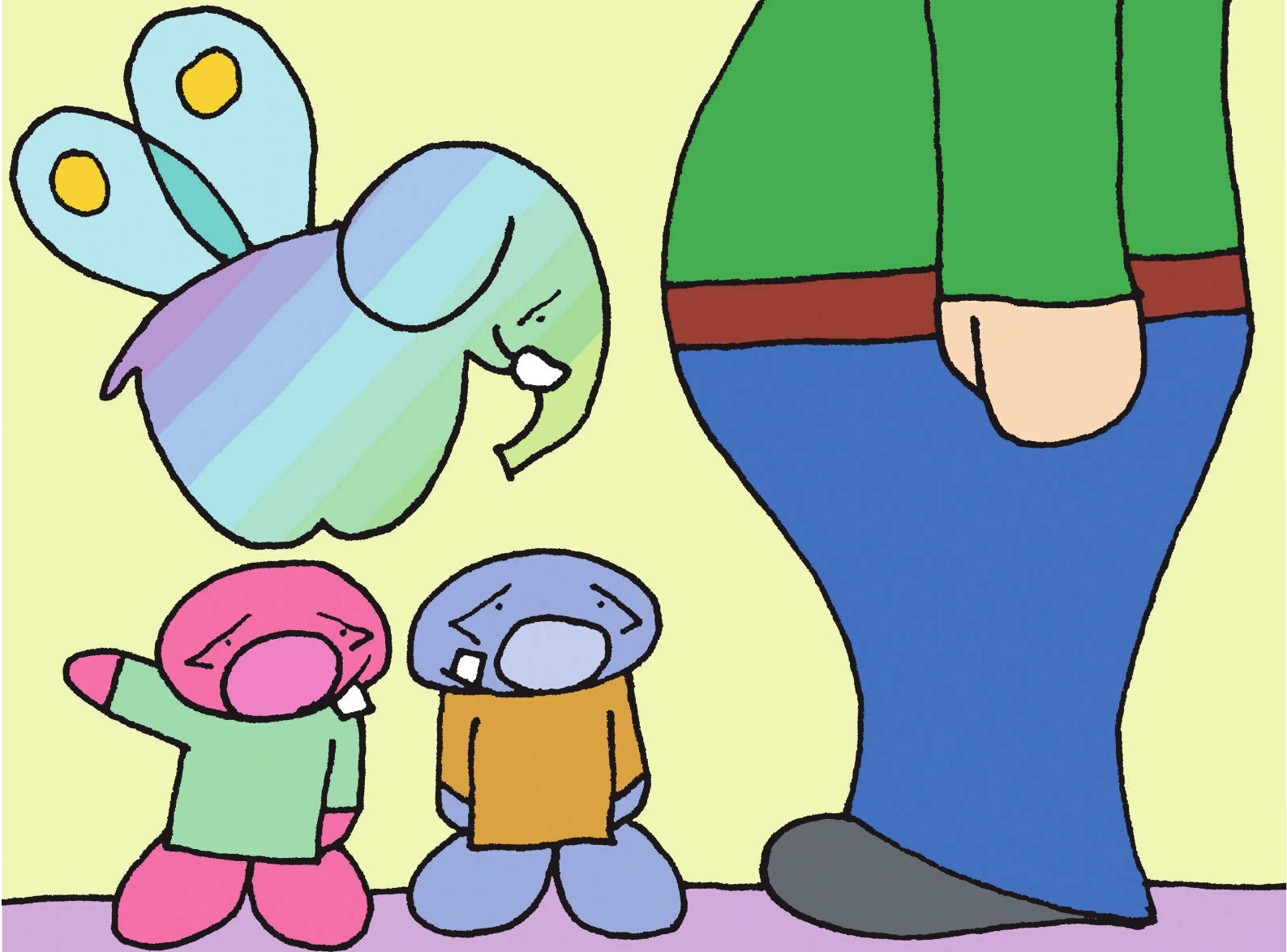


“Well, about three weeks ago. Barnie, Boo and I.”

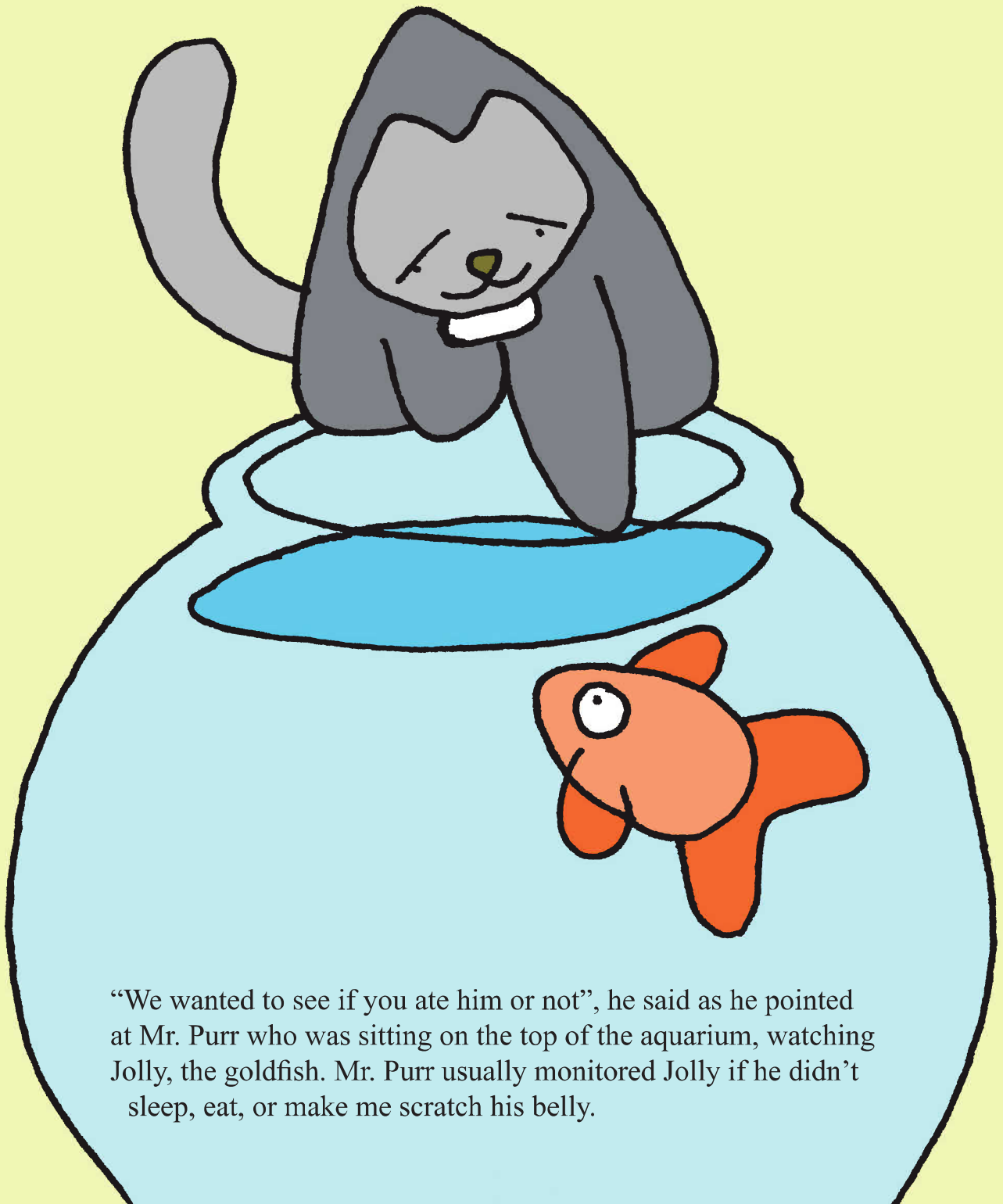
“There are more of your kind?” I asked him in a surprised way.

“Just the three of us.”

“Why didn’t you tell me that you wanted to live at my place. Then you needn’t have slept under the bed.”



“You know, we grumblers are so small, and you are so big...”
“I’m still big”, I told him.

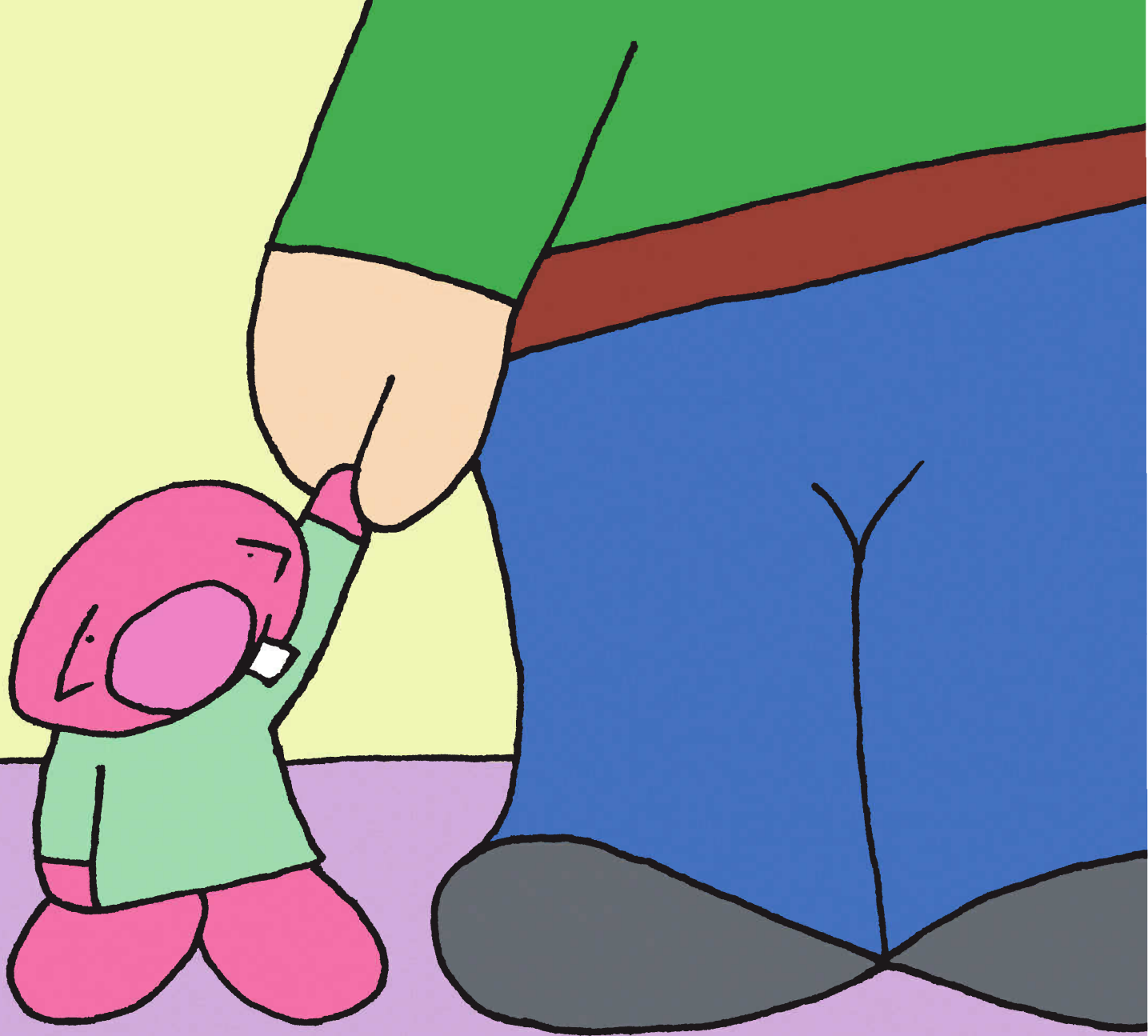


“We wanted to see if you ate him or not”, he said as he pointed at Mr. Purr who was sitting on the top of the aquarium, watching Jolly, the goldfish. Mr. Purr usually monitored Jolly if he didn’t sleep, eat, or make me scratch his belly.



“I see. And are you reassured now?”

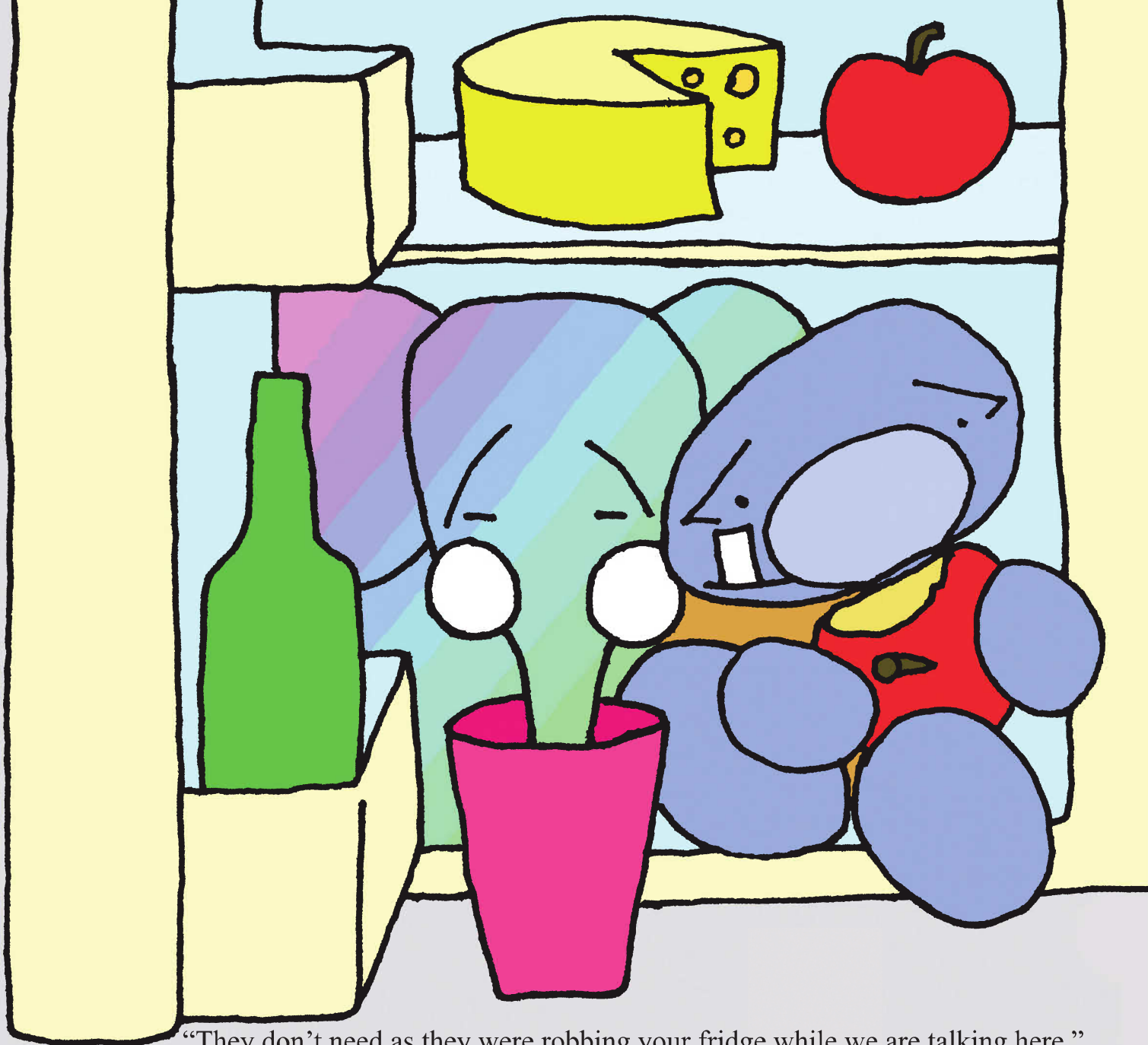
“Yes. You didn’t eat him despite the fact that he’s not very useful, lazy, and sometimes annoying just like the grumblers. And you even gave him food.”



“Are you hungry?” I asked Bud.

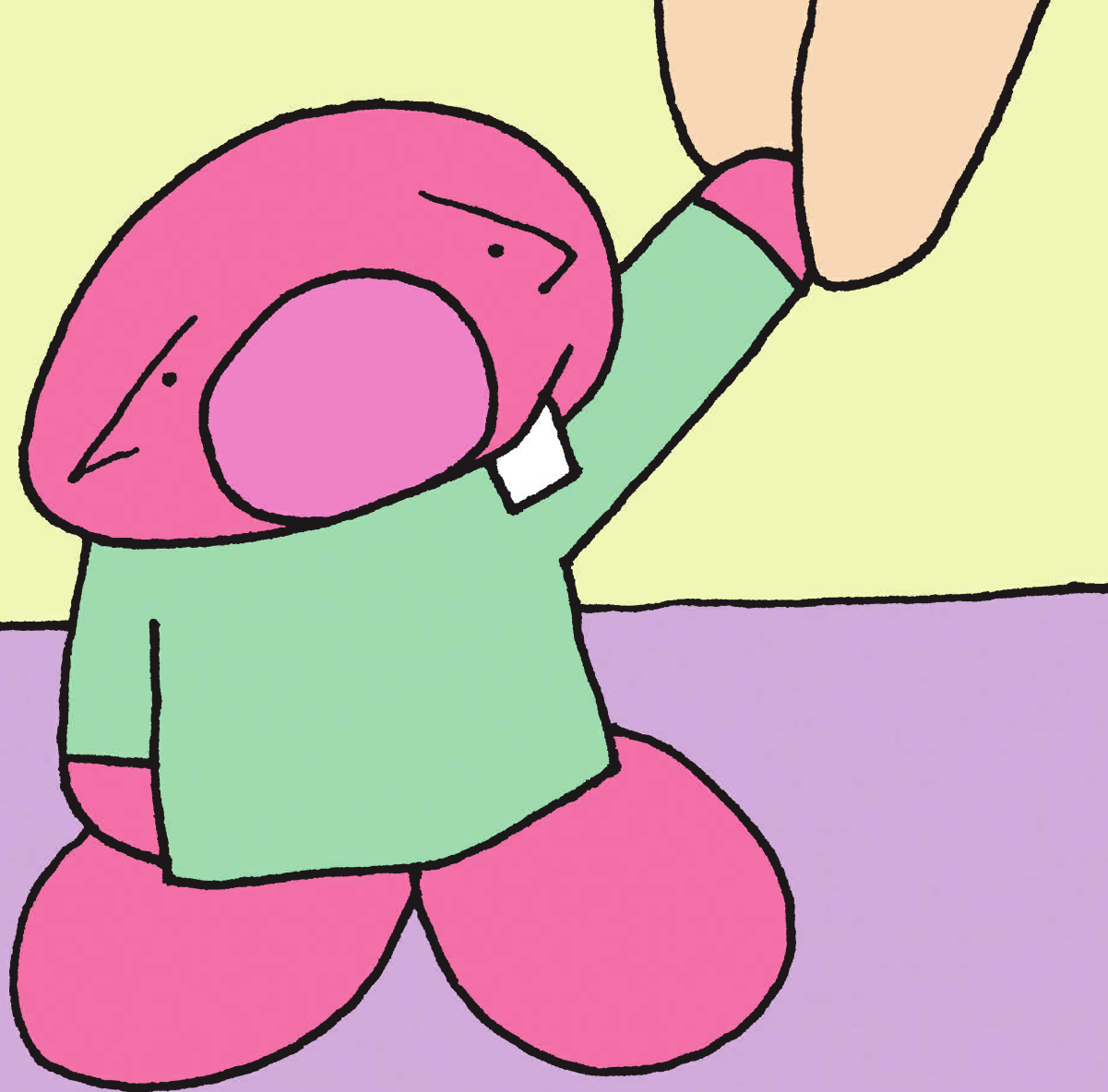
“Yes, we are very hungry.”

“Let’s go, I’ll give you food. Call Barnie and Boo, too.”

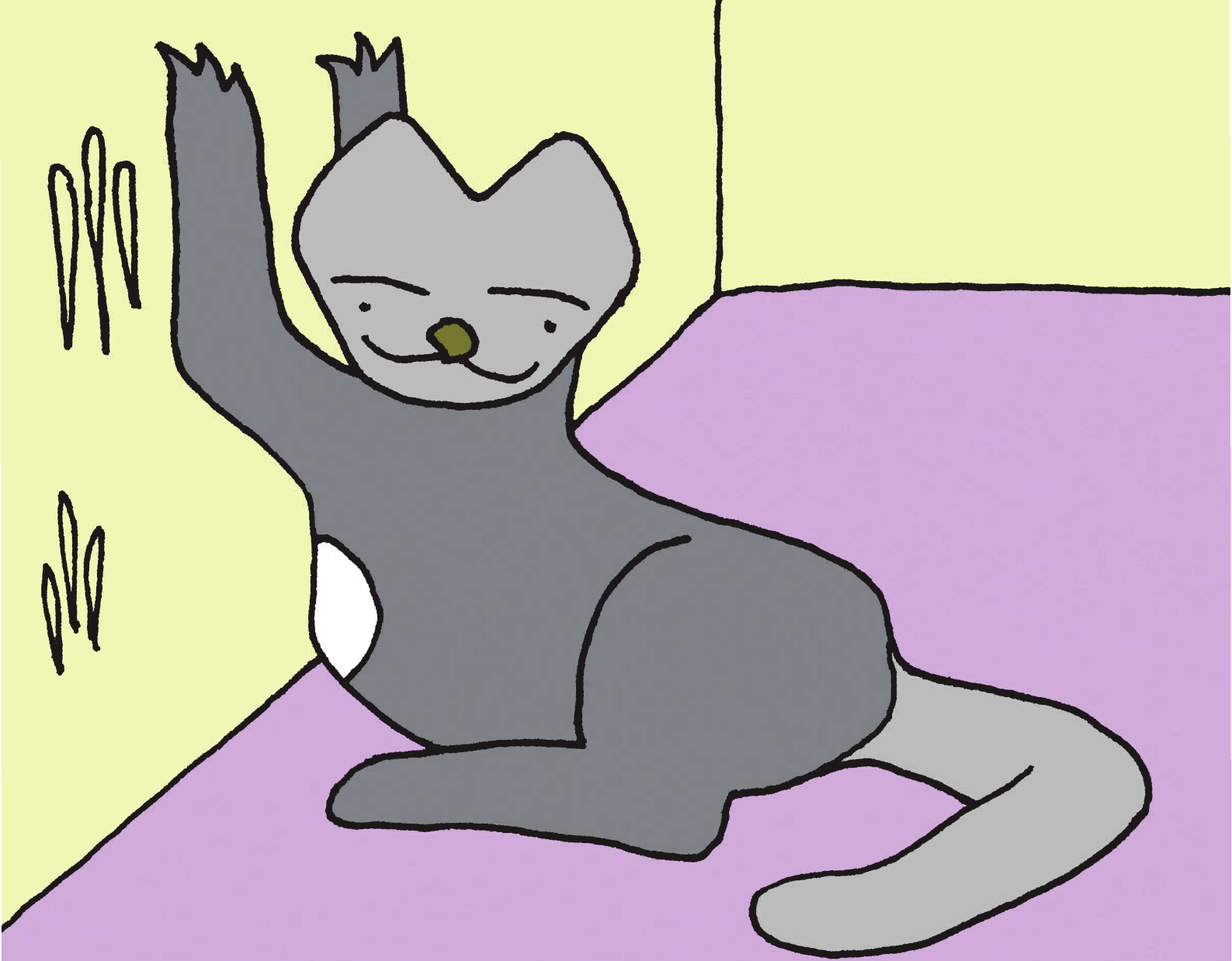


“They don’t need as they were robbing your fridge while we are talking here.”

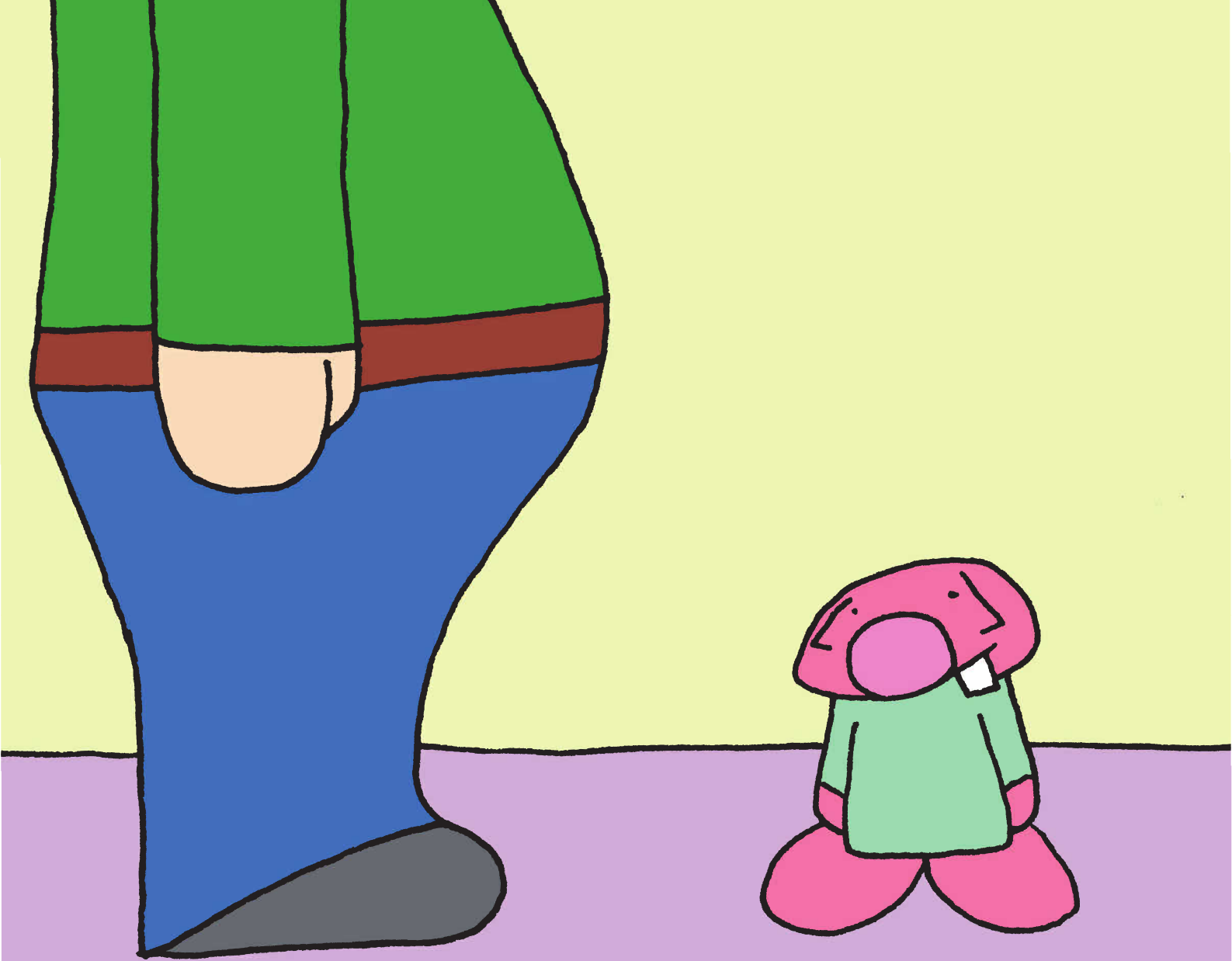
When I got to the kitchen I found the fridge opened and I heard munching coming from inside.



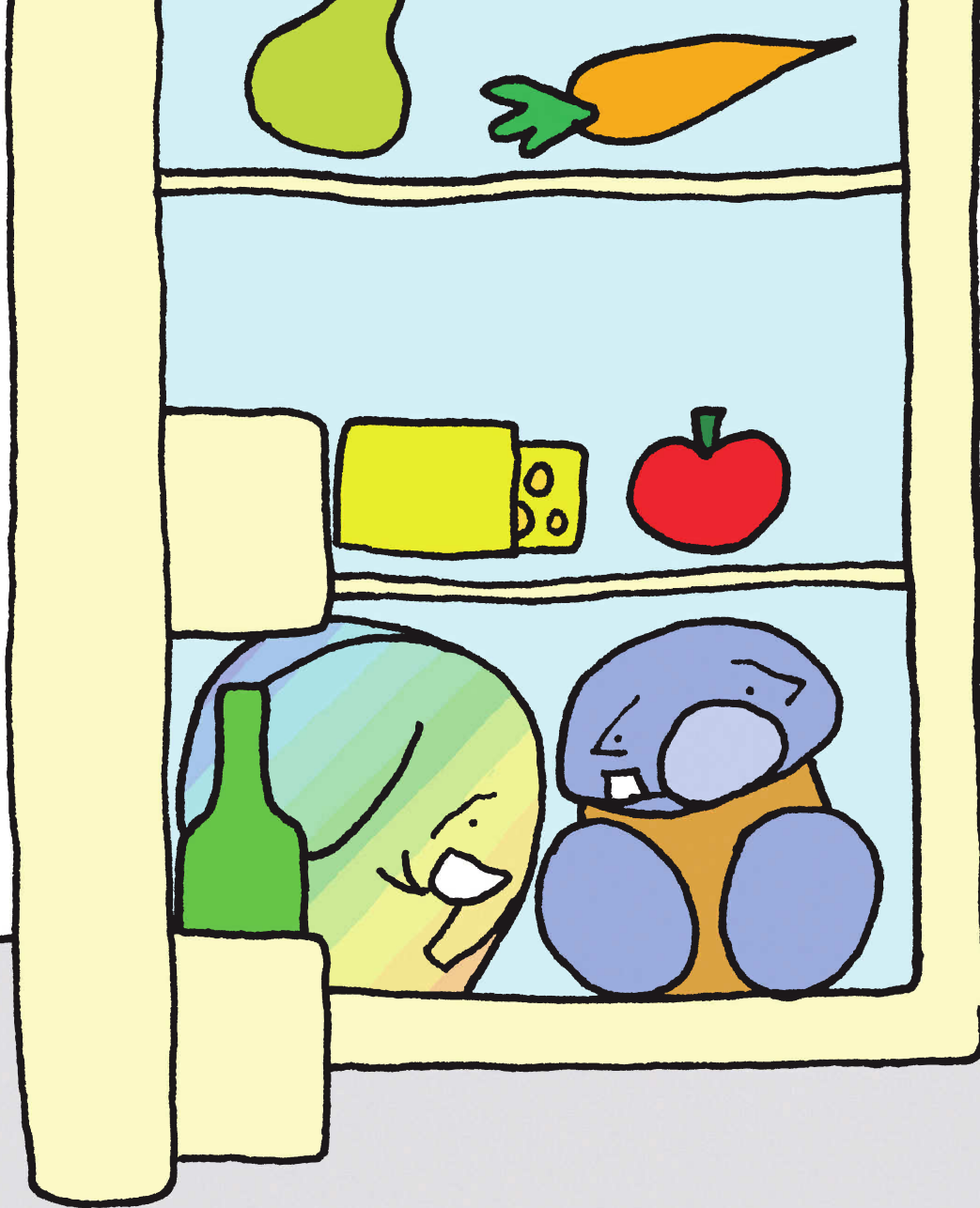
Bud was whistling with his hands behind him, looking in the other direction. I had a chance to have a better look at him. He was a chubby small pink thing. Or more a small, hairy, pink thing.



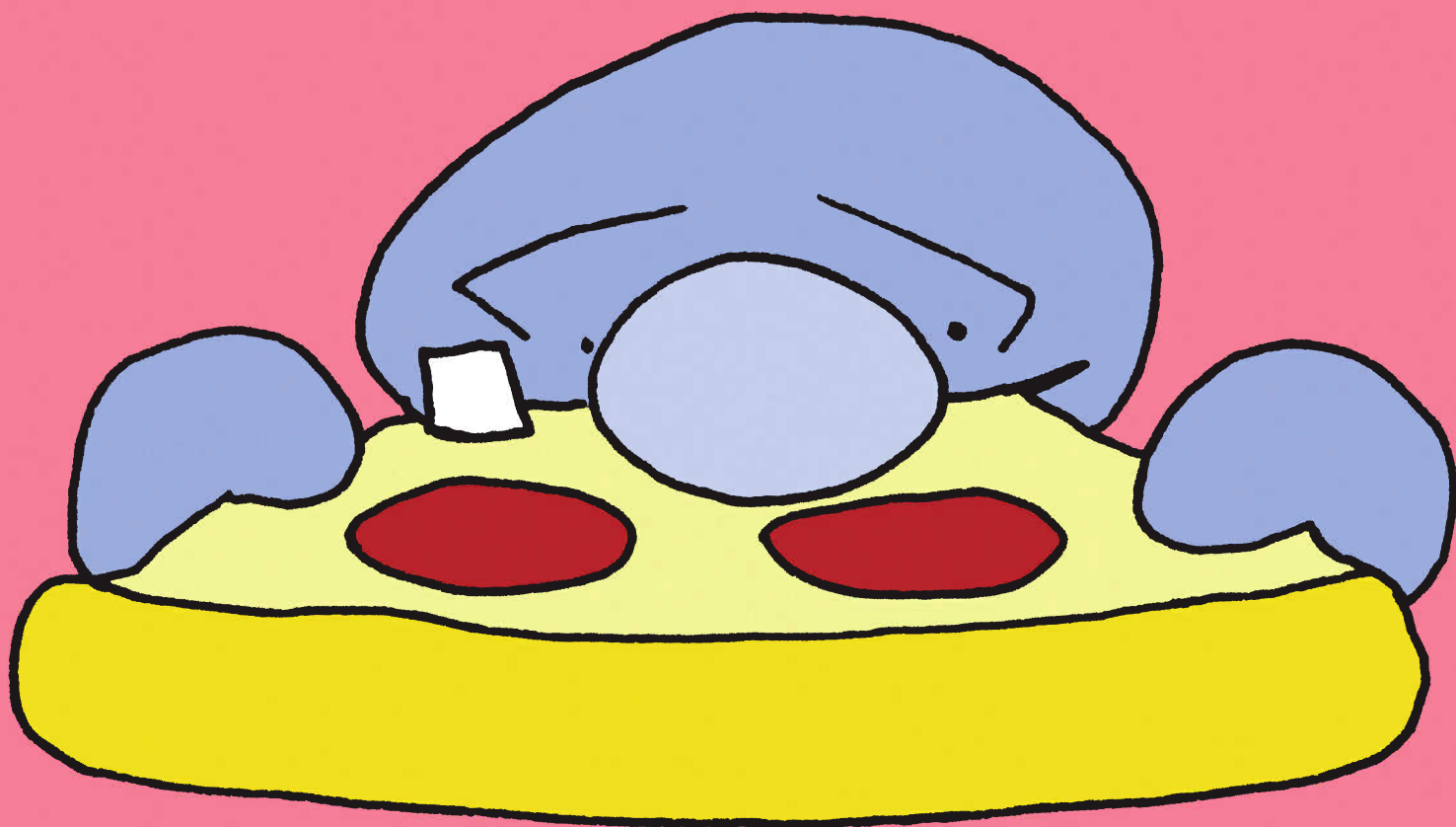
He was just a little bit bigger than Mr. Purr's length. So if Mr. Purr stood up under special circumstances, like sharpening his claws, they were about the same height.



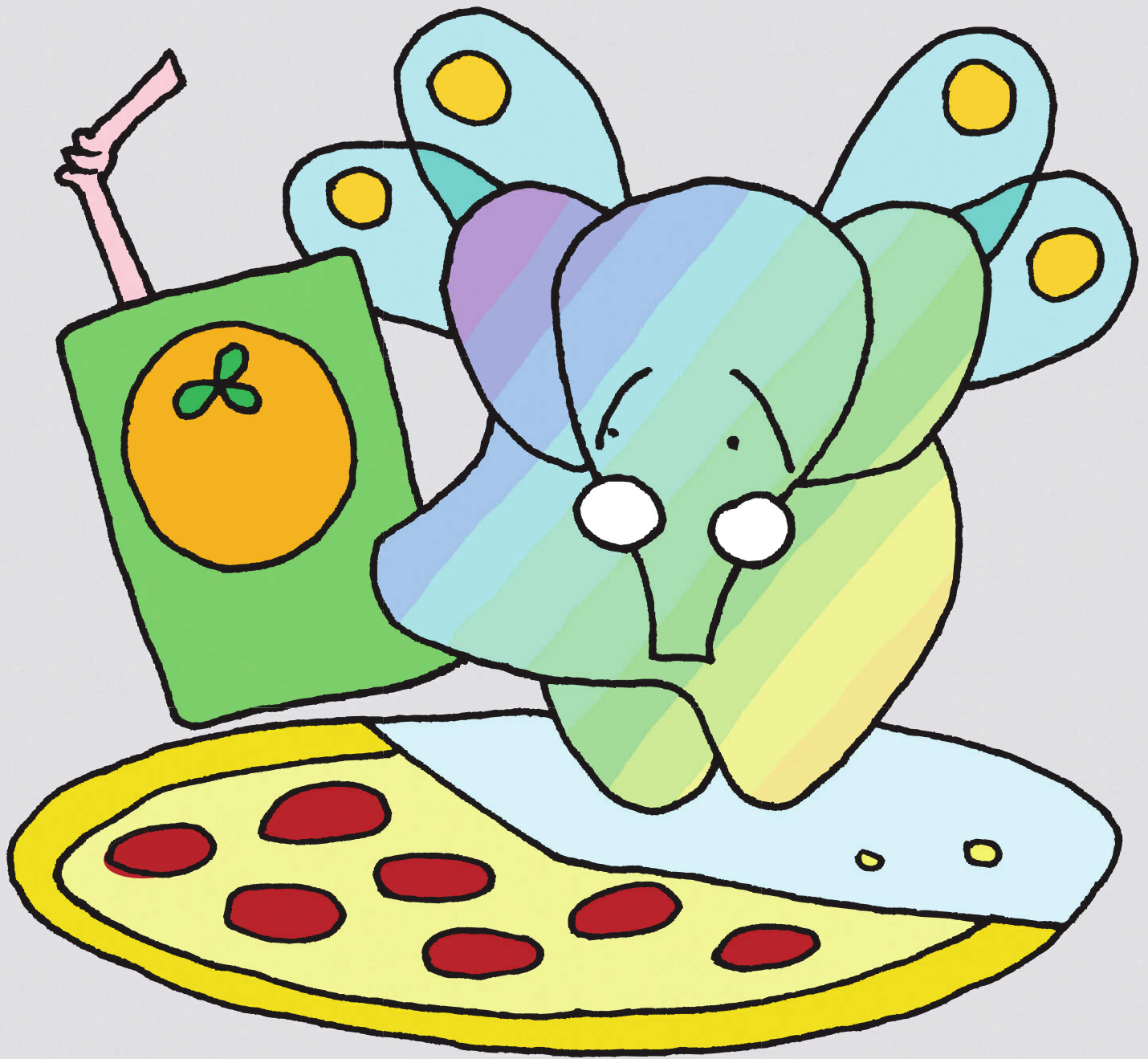
As far as the weight is concerned, Bud was the winner, since Mr. Purr was thin, but Bud was rather like a barrel, with huge squint eyes. His mouth was enormous with irregular teeth, so he wasn't a typical cute character from a tale.



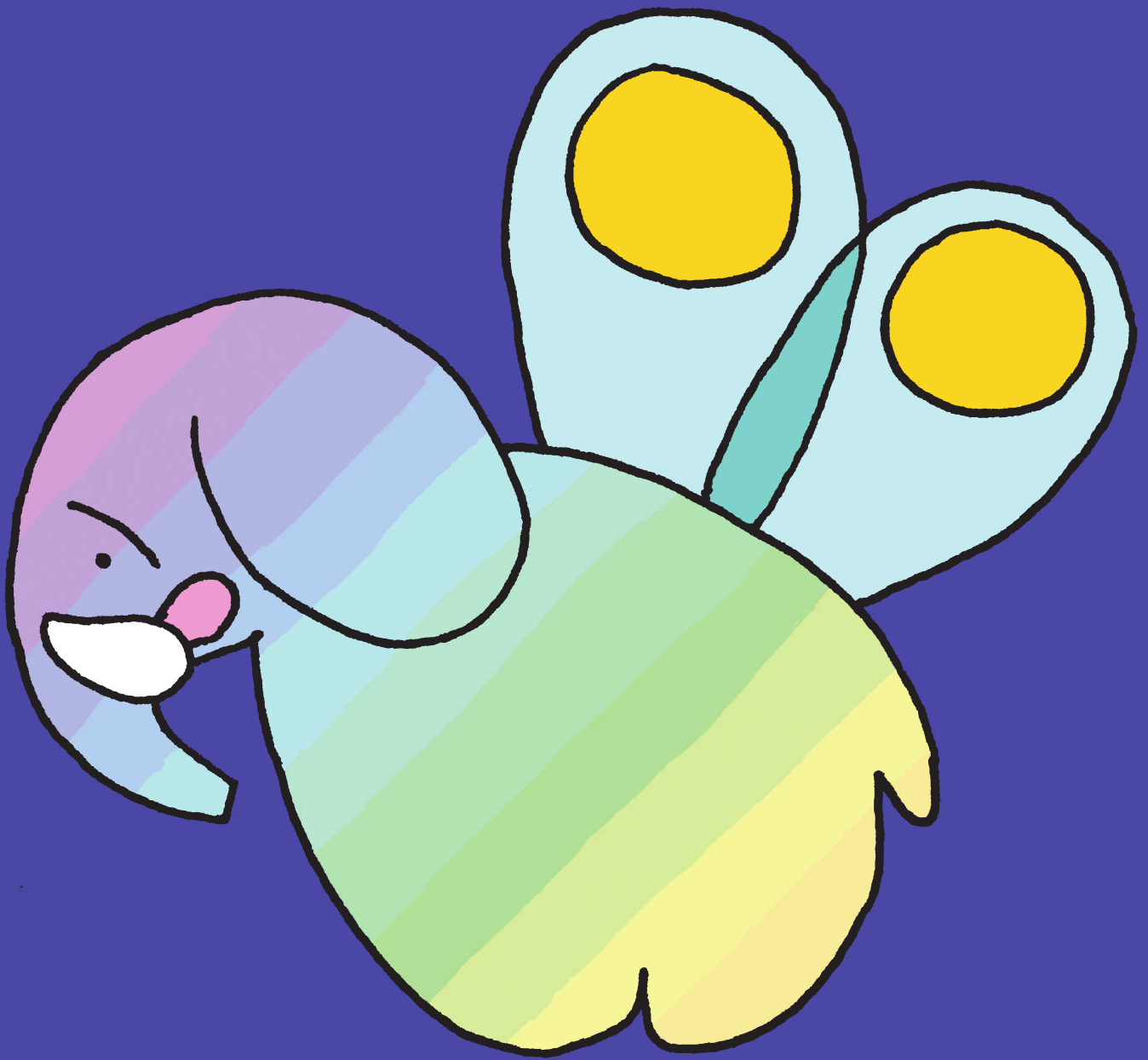
Looking into the fridge I found the ones who were munching. One of them was a blue thing, even bigger and more barrel-like than Bud, with a much bigger mouth, and the other one was a tiny rainbow-coloured striped elephant with small butterfly wings on his back.



The blue one was eating my pizza from the previous evening and he declared in a resentful voice:
“It’s cold...”



“Yes, it’s cold and we also ran out of orange juice”, the elephant added as he was shaking the empty bottle to prove his point.

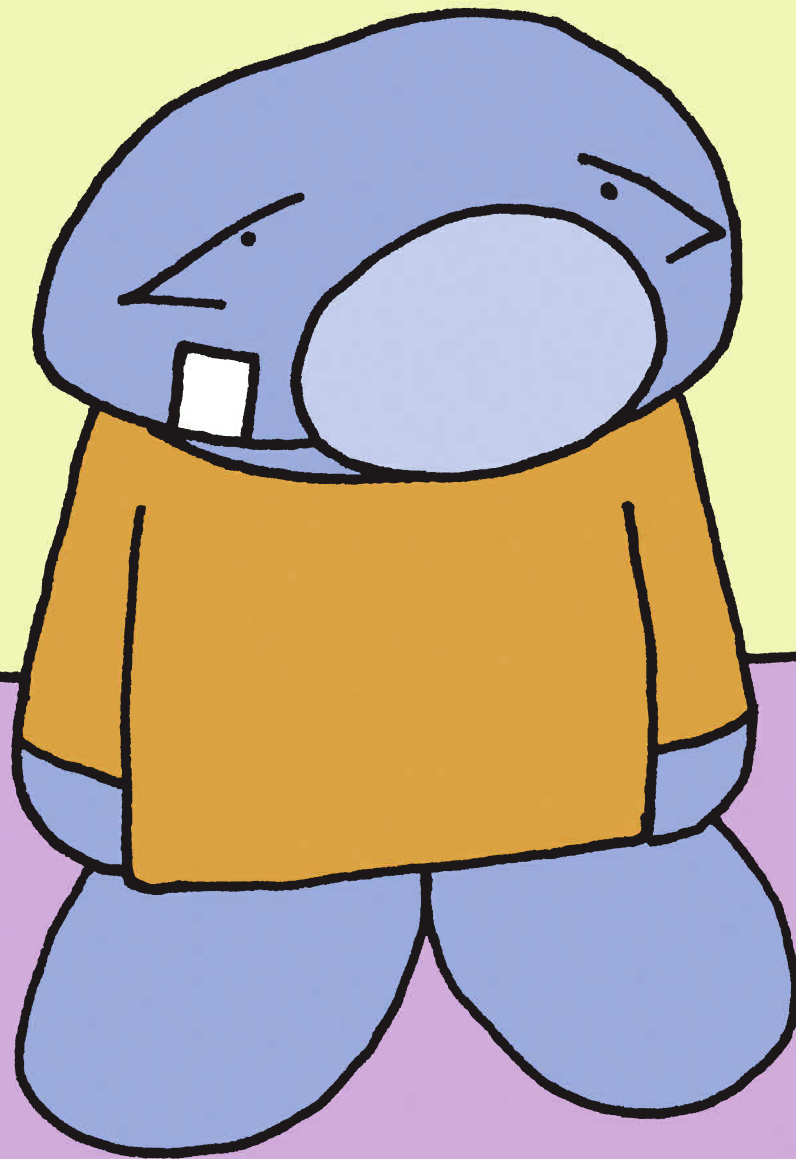


“I have apple juice, but it isn’t cold”, I said.

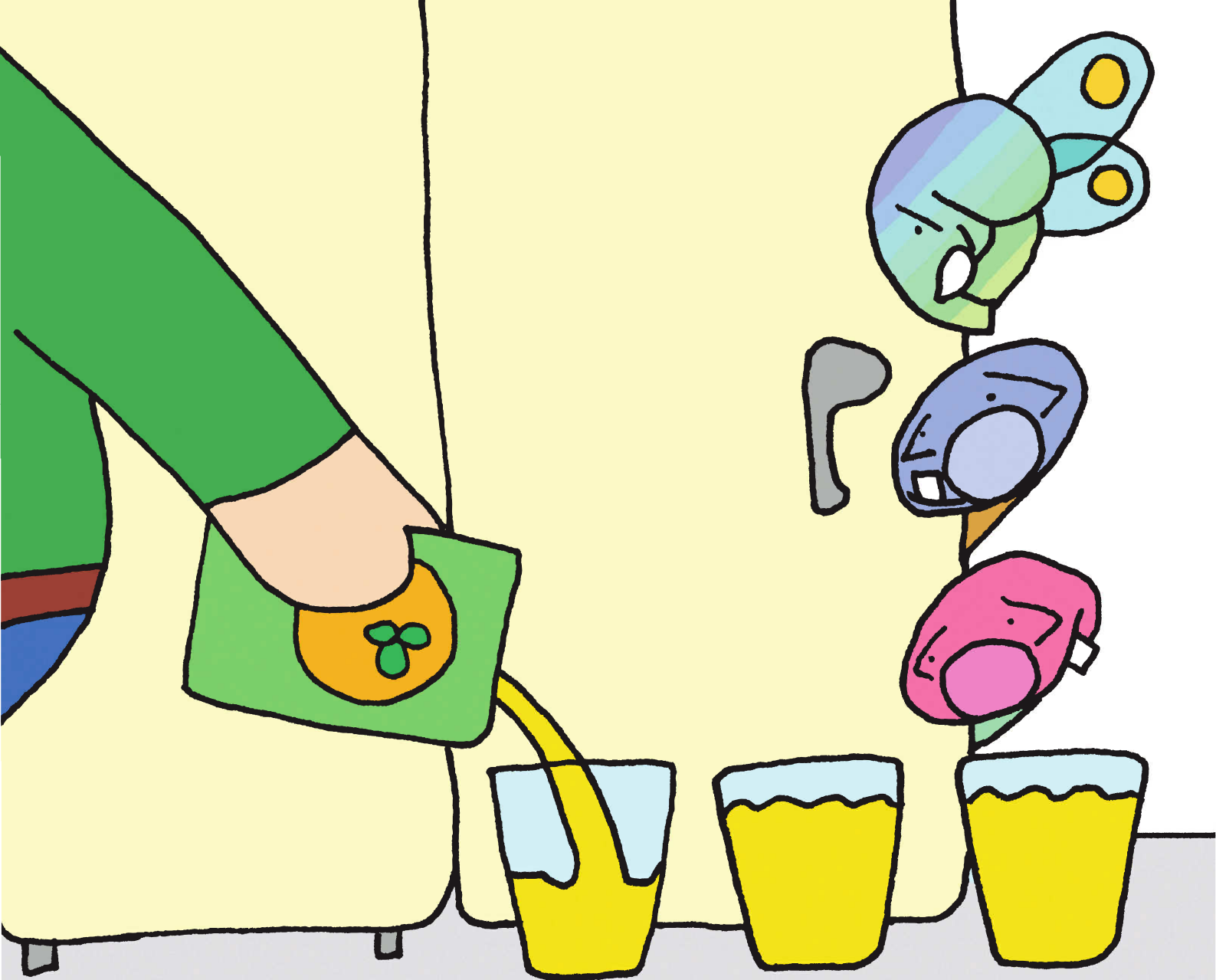
“It’s OK, we like apple juice as well”, said the tiny elephant.

“Are you Barnie?” I asked him.

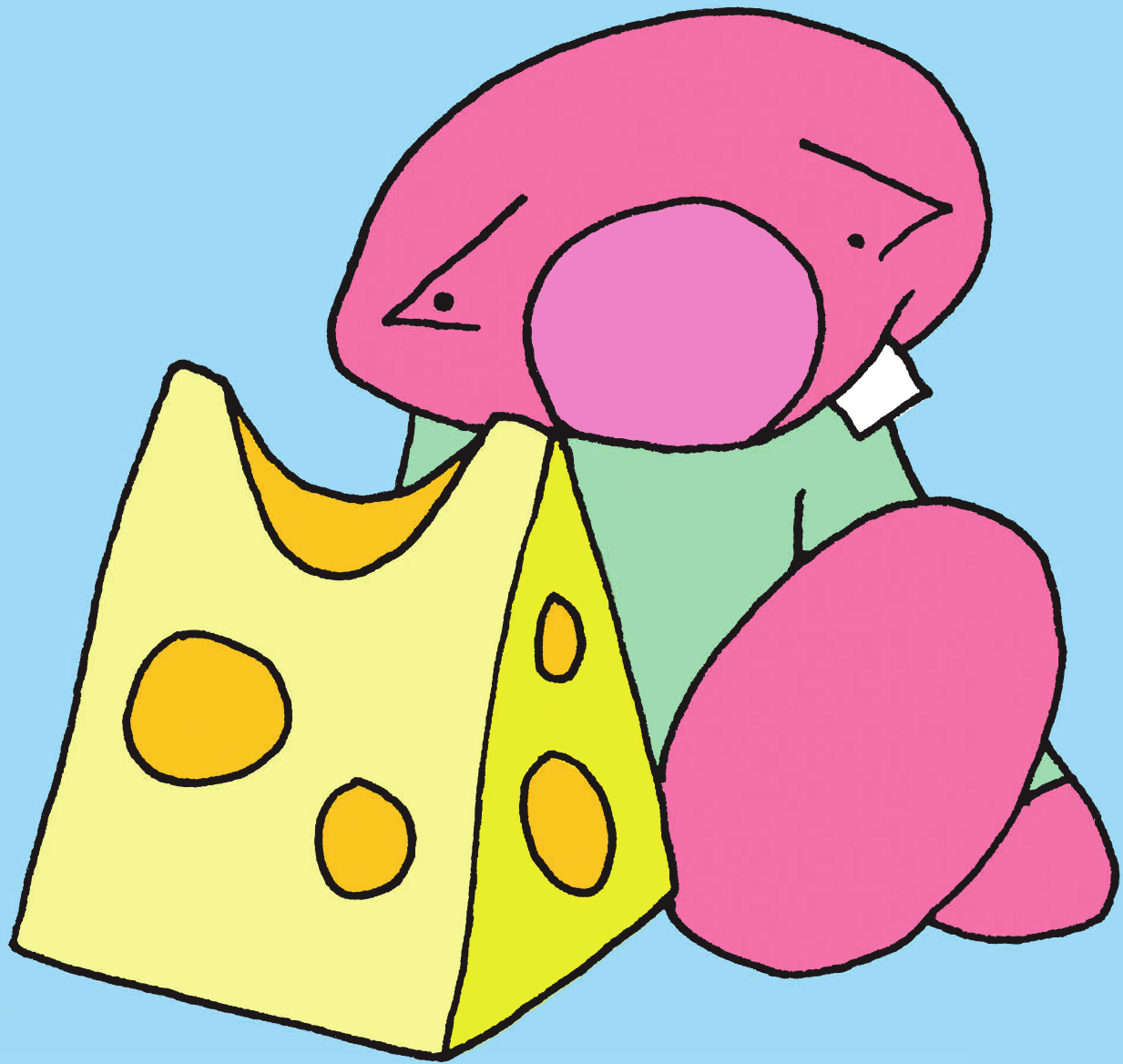
“No, I’m Boo, Barnie would be a silly name for an elephant.”



“I am Barnie”, said the small blue thing. “It’s a good name for a grumbler.”
“All right. Barnie, I’ll give you the apple juice.”

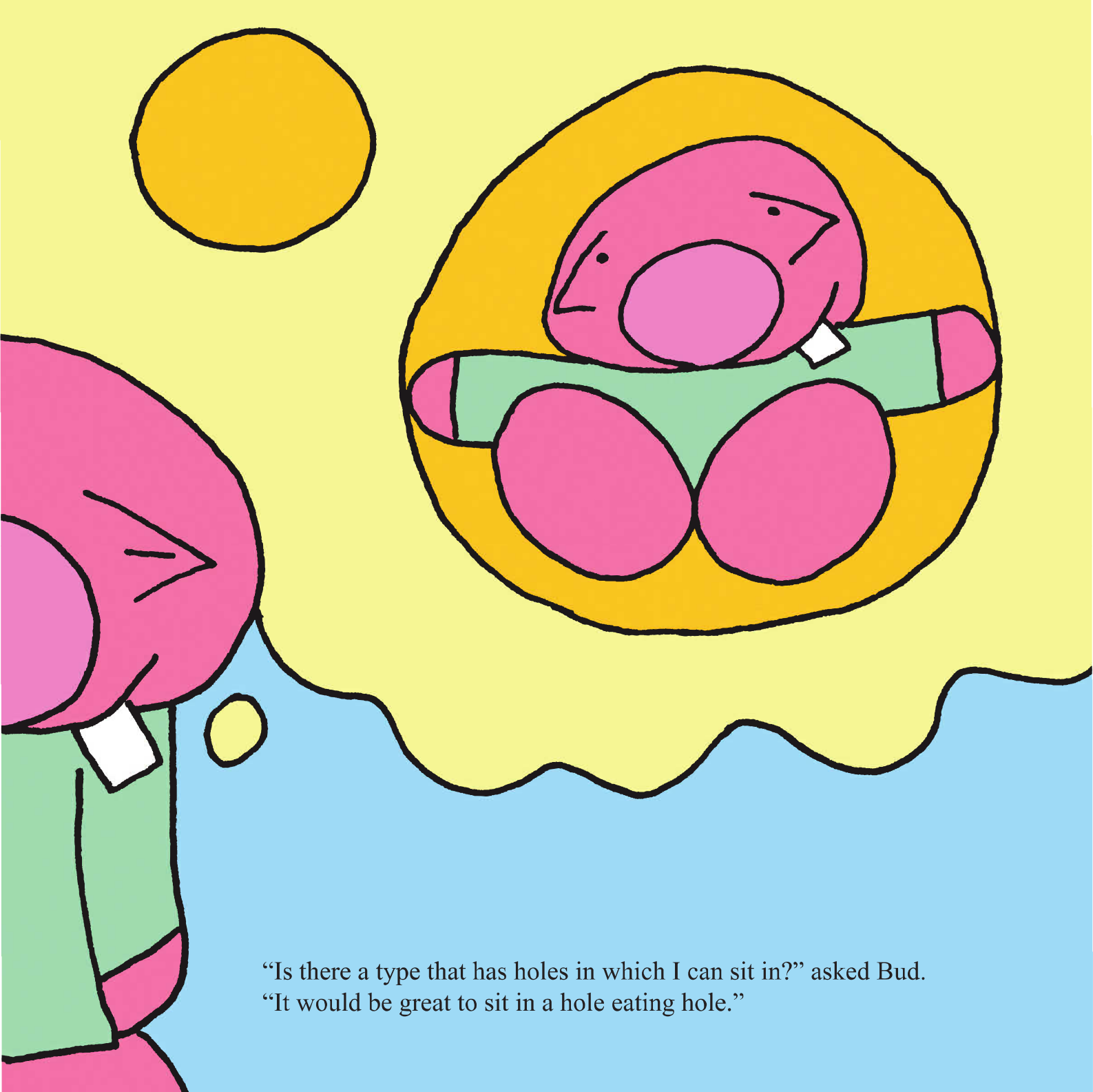


I took the apple juice out of the cupboard and I poured it into three glasses. Meanwhile Bud made himself comfortable in the fridge and started to eat a piece of cheese with big holes in it.

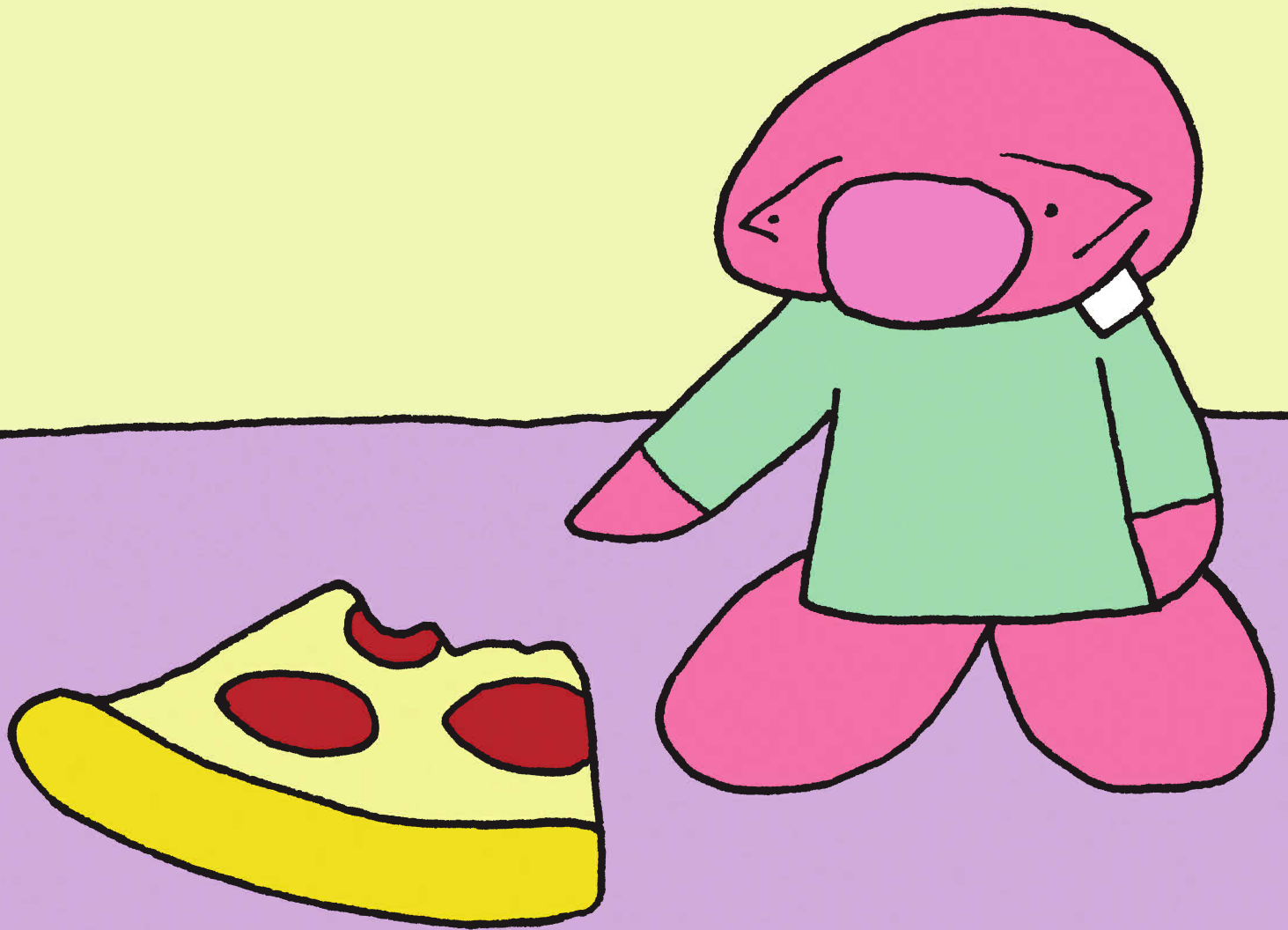


“I’m sitting in the fridge eating holes. I like it.”

“That is cheese. There are many types of cheese, some of them you can spread on bread, some are sweet, and there are some that have such a strong smell that people can barely stand it”, I tried to give a brief summary of cheese types, with information that can be useful for a grumbler.



“Is there a type that has holes in which I can sit in?” asked Bud.
“It would be great to sit in a hole eating hole.”



“Well, I think there is no type in which such a big grumbler can sit.”

“How do you know that I’m big, have you ever seen a small grumbler?” asked Bud.

“No, I haven’t. You know, I just wanted to be nice.”

“It’s all right. I forgive you, but it would be great to have one more of these”, and he pointed at the pizza.

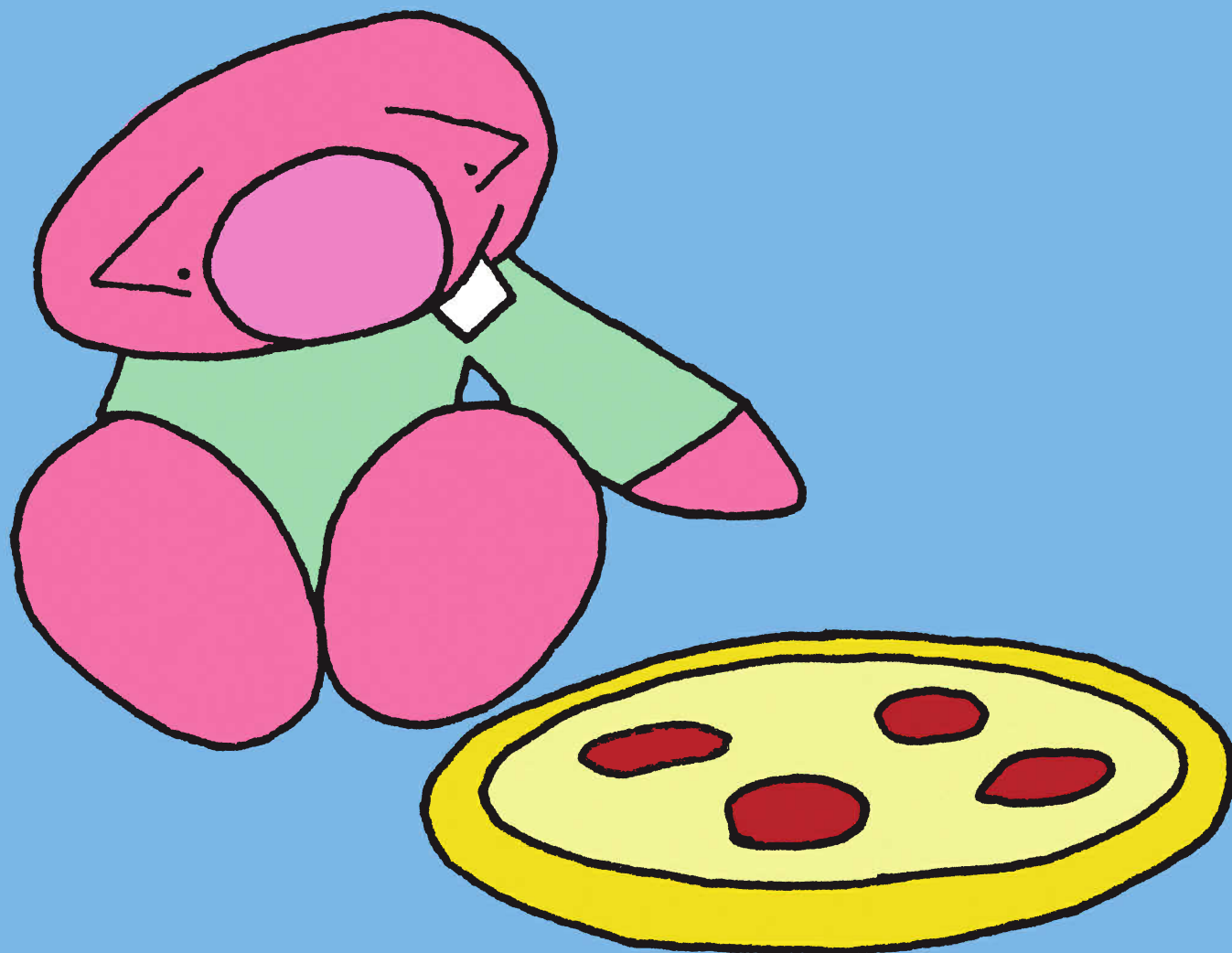


“OK. I’ll order one, anyway it’s called pizza.”

“It doesn’t matter, it is delicious”, said Barnie with his mouth full.

“I don’t want this on it”, said Boo pointing at the mushrooms.

“I do want”, said Barnie.



“I want oily berries, oregano”, demanded Bud.

“Olives and oregano?” I asked.

“You can call them that, but it doesn’t make sense”, said Bud.

“The oregano is in the sauce, they don’t usually put more on it.”

“But I would like more, please, please”, begged Bud.



“Ok, I’ll try”, I said and started toward the telephone. The restaurant answered the phone at once, and a nice female voice answered:

“Hi, this is the ‘Eat as much as you can, restaurant. How can I help you?’”



“Good evening. I’d like to order a family pizza, you know, the biggest one.”

“And orange juice”, shouted Boo from the fridge.

“And I’d like three bottles of orange juice too.”

“What would you like on your pizza?” asked the nice voice.

“Can you divide it into three?” I asked.



“Of course. In case of family sized pizza you can choose four different toppings if you want.”

“One part with only cheese, one with mushrooms, and one with olives. And can you put extra oregano on it”

“But it’s in the sauce”, said the lady.

“Yes, I know, but I need more than that.”

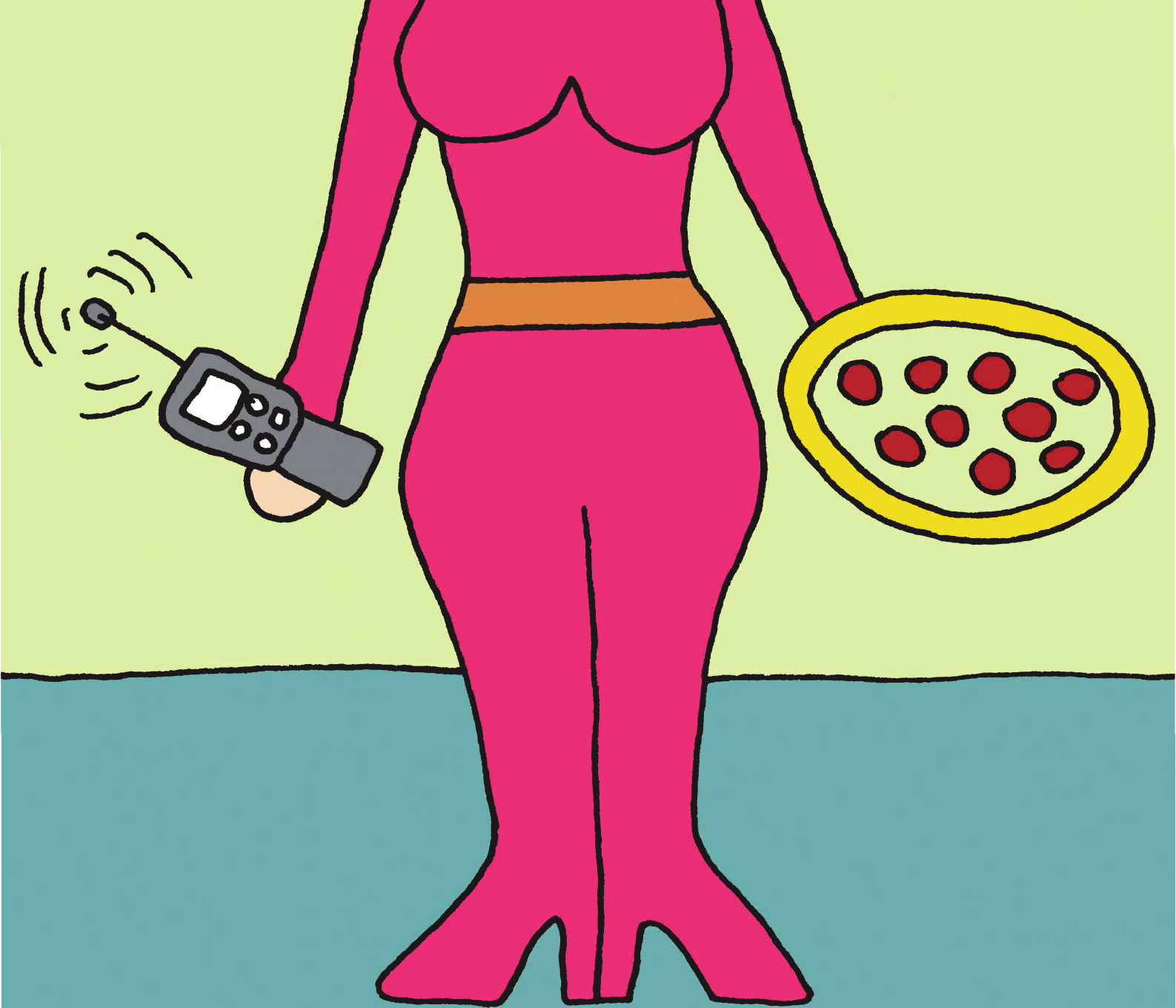
“OK. Fresh or dried oregano?”

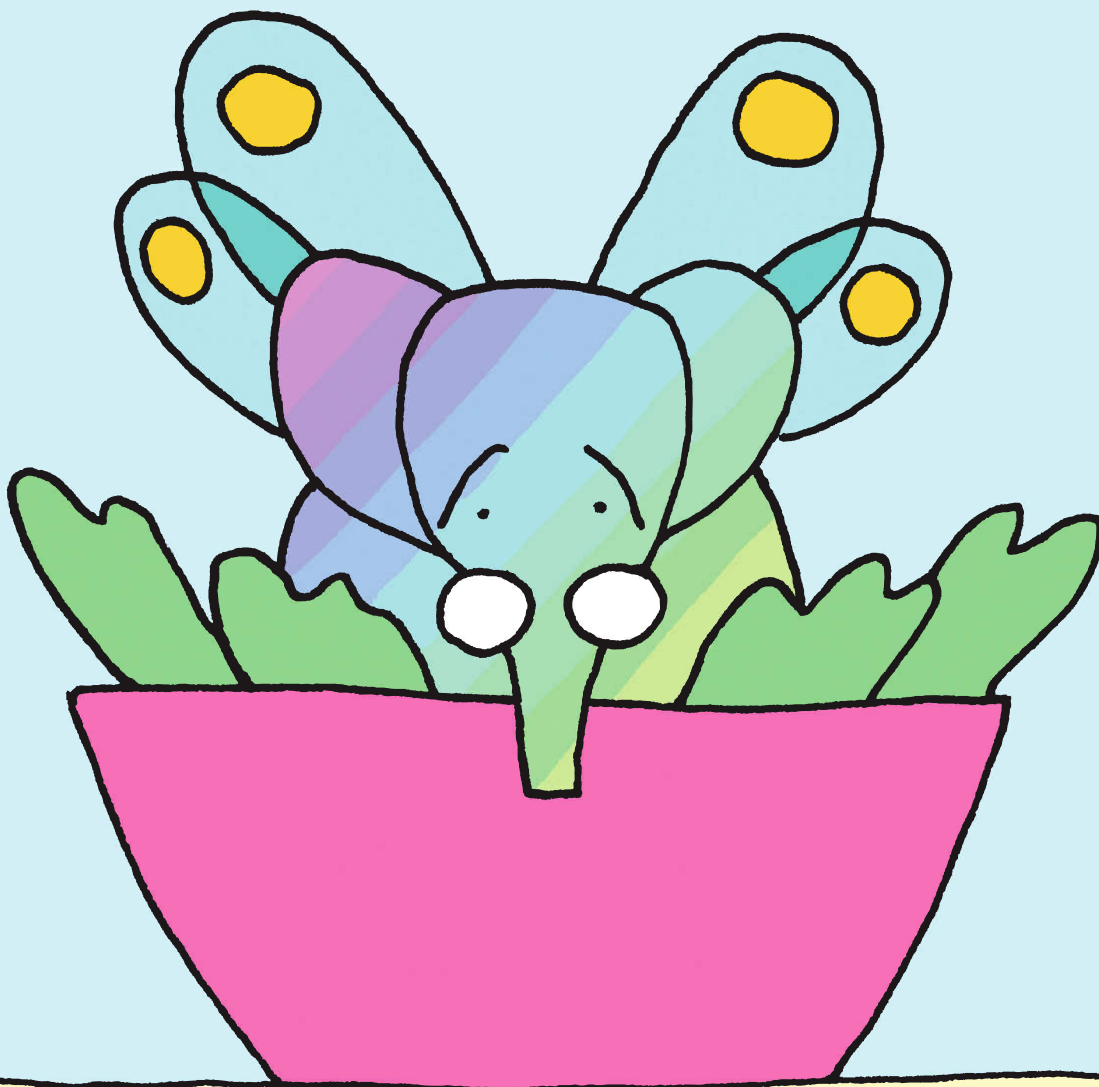
“Fresh or dried oregano”, I shouted.

“Fresh”, answered Bud.

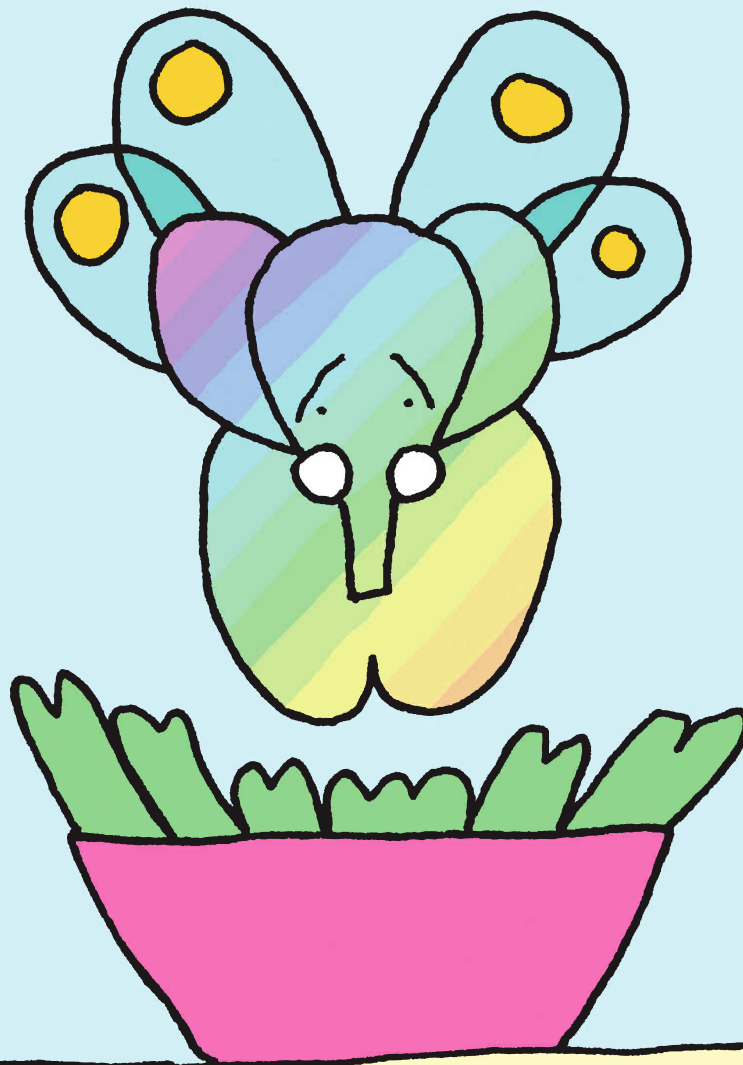
“Fresh, sliced into very small pieces.”

“All right”, said the woman. I told her my address and I ordered a coffee for me as well.





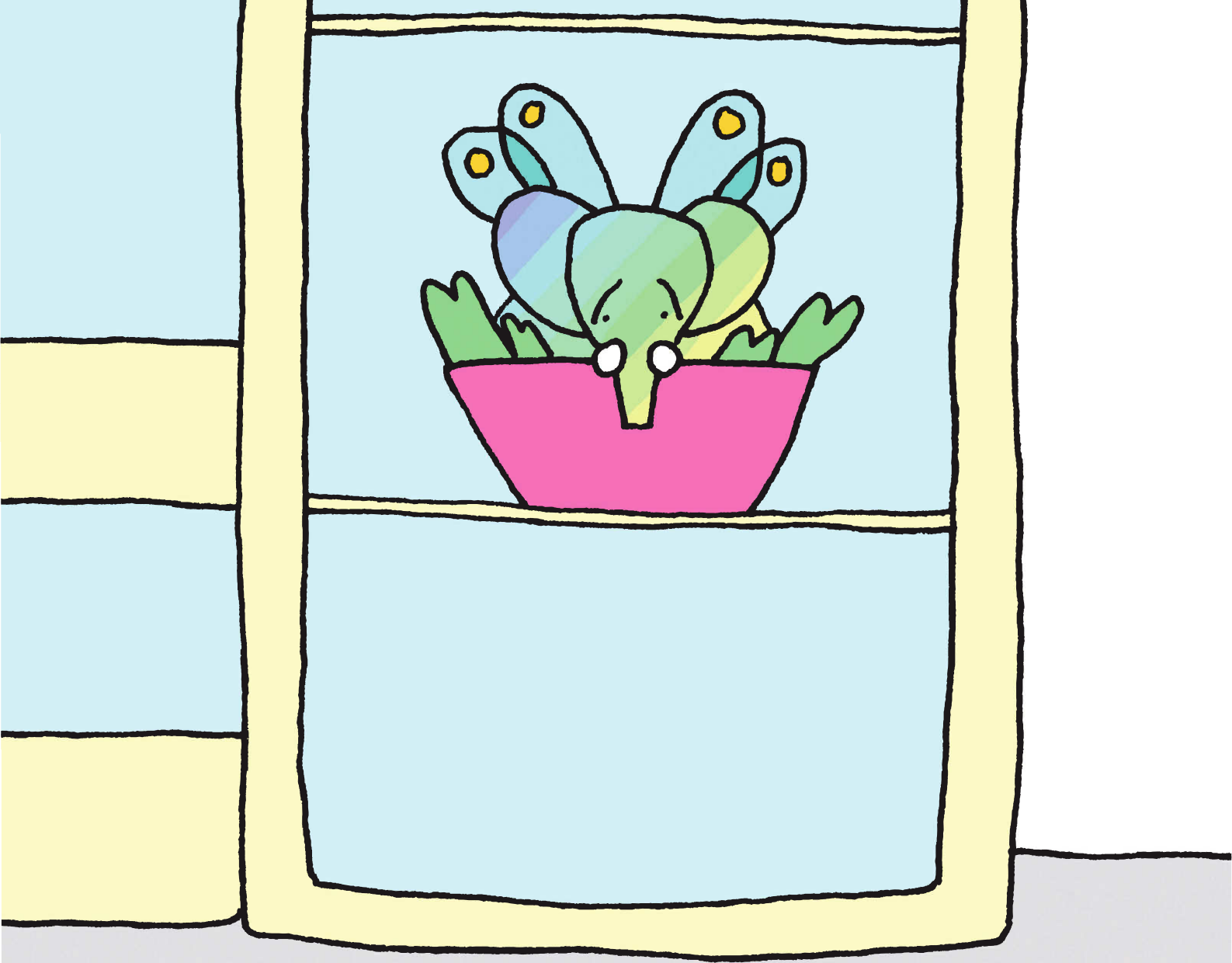
From the fridge I could hear loud laughing, and when I got back, I saw Boo sitting in my salad that I made for breakfast. This wasn't appropriate behavior from a striped elephant, but when he saw my face, he started to explain the situation.



“We, elephants like vitamins very much, you know, and vitamins are in vegetables.”

“I see, but it would be more appropriate to sit next to the bowl”, I tried to convince him.

“You are so silly”, said Boo. “If I didn’t sit in it, I would be much further from the sweetcorn and the pieces of apple.”

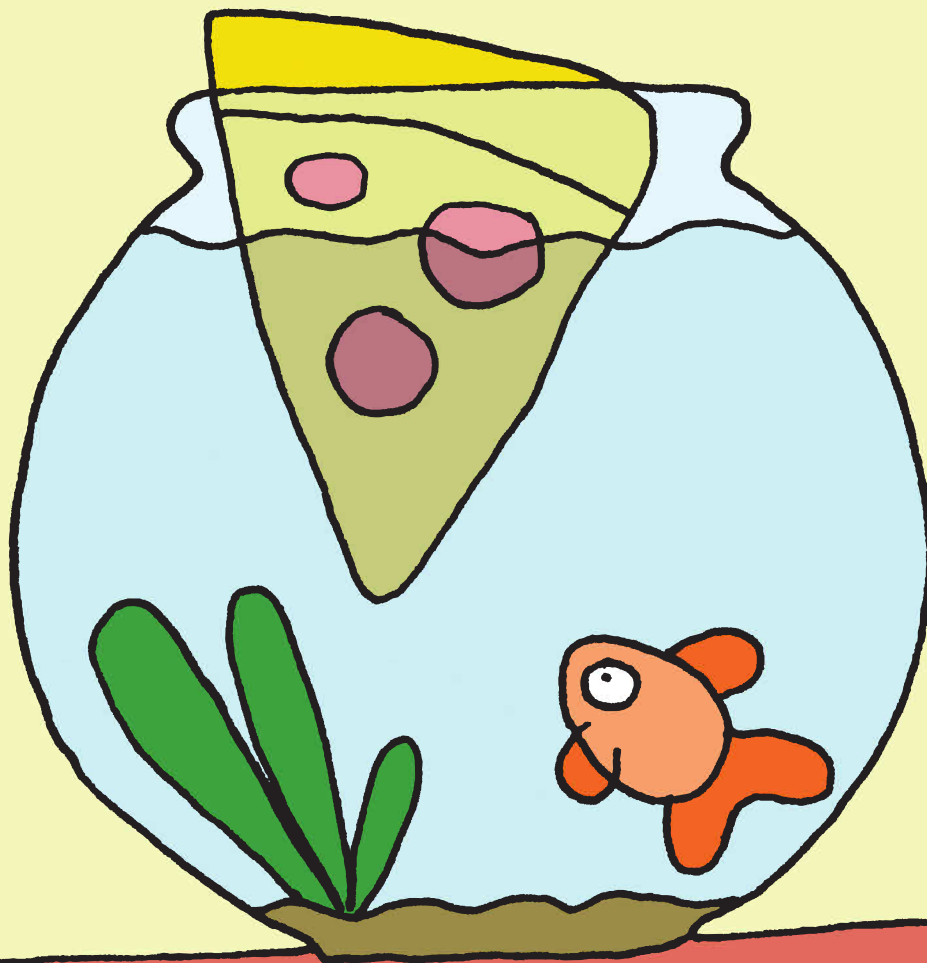


“OK, I understand”, I said and I thought to myself that I couldn’t win this argument.

“Where are the others, Bud and Barnie?”

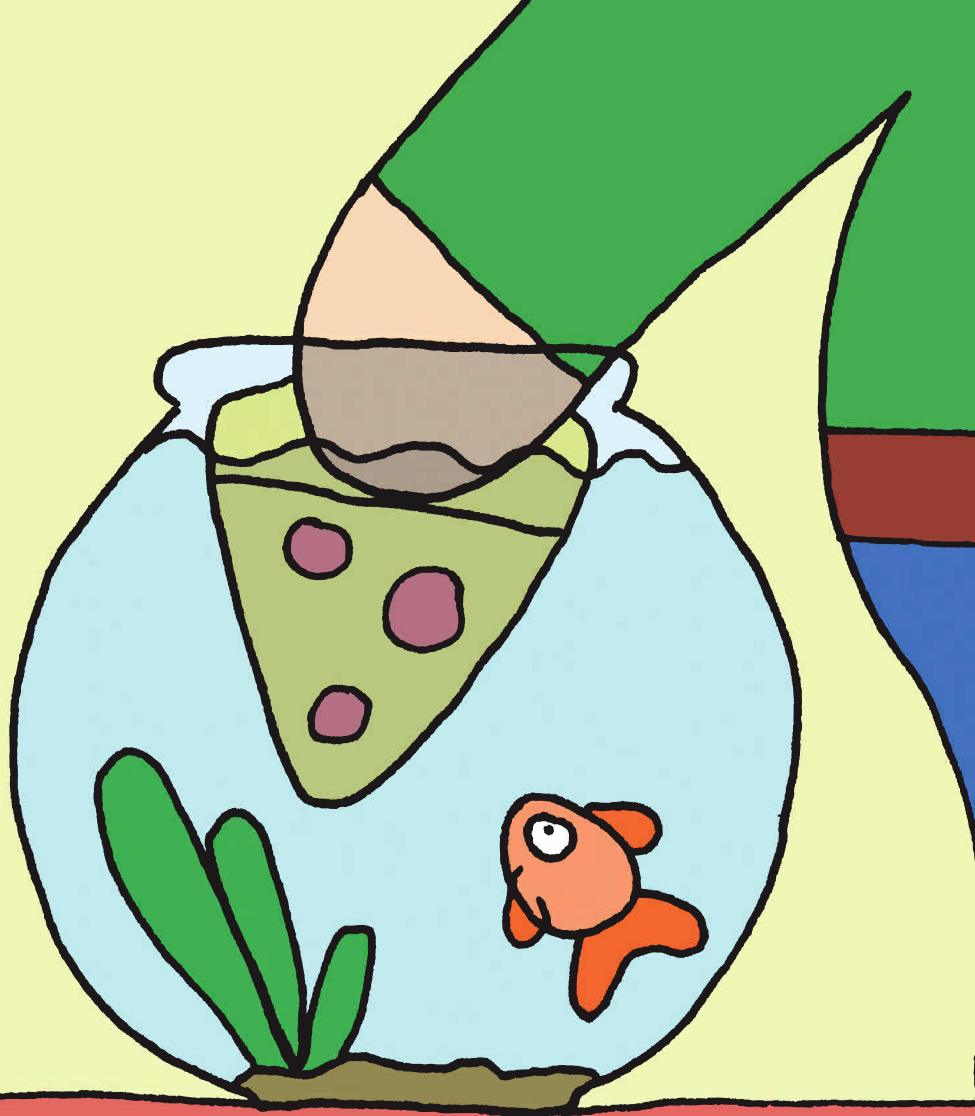
“They are feeding the yellow fish.”

“You mean the goldfish?” I asked.

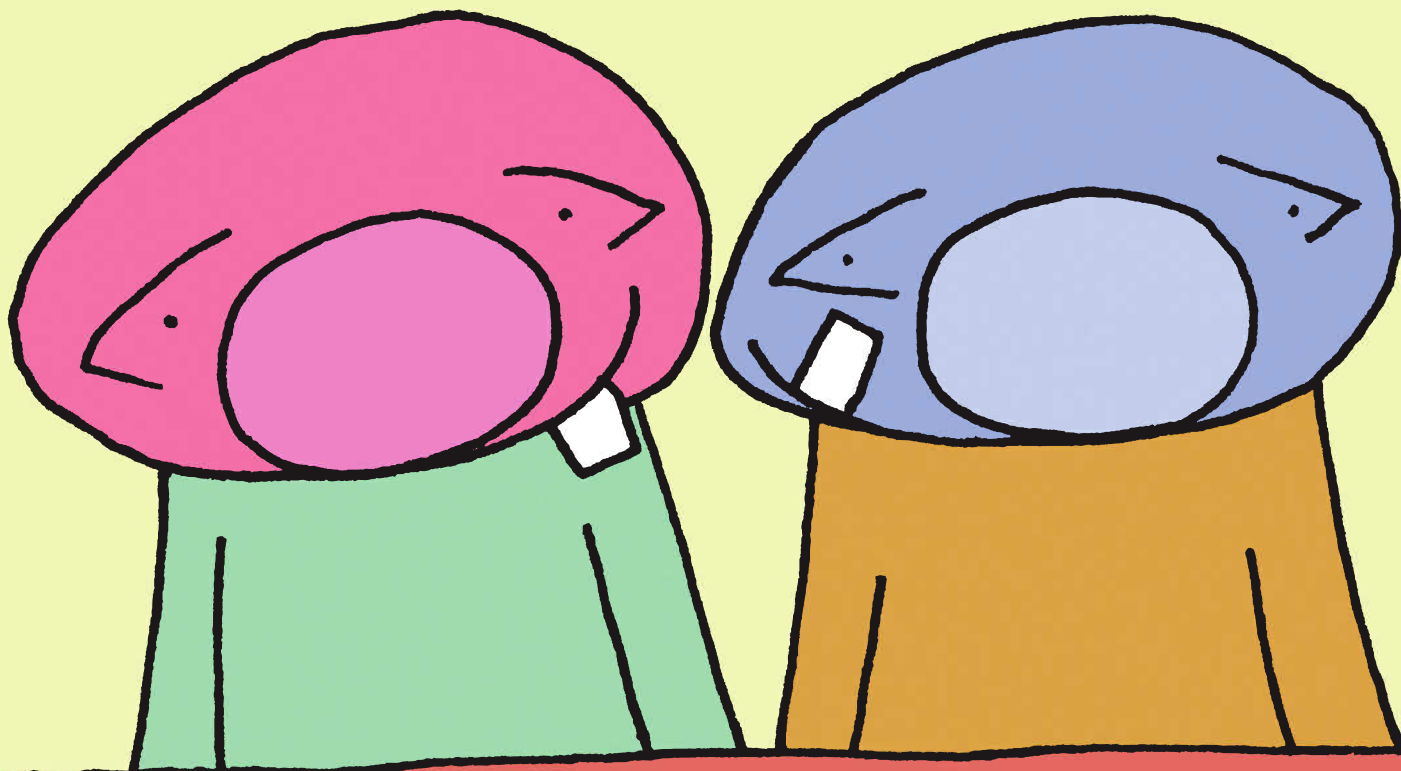


“It isn’t gold”, answered Boo, and he added. “If it was made of gold, it wouldn’t swim in the aquarium, it would sink.”

“You are right”, I said and I headed to the living room to see how serious the situation was.



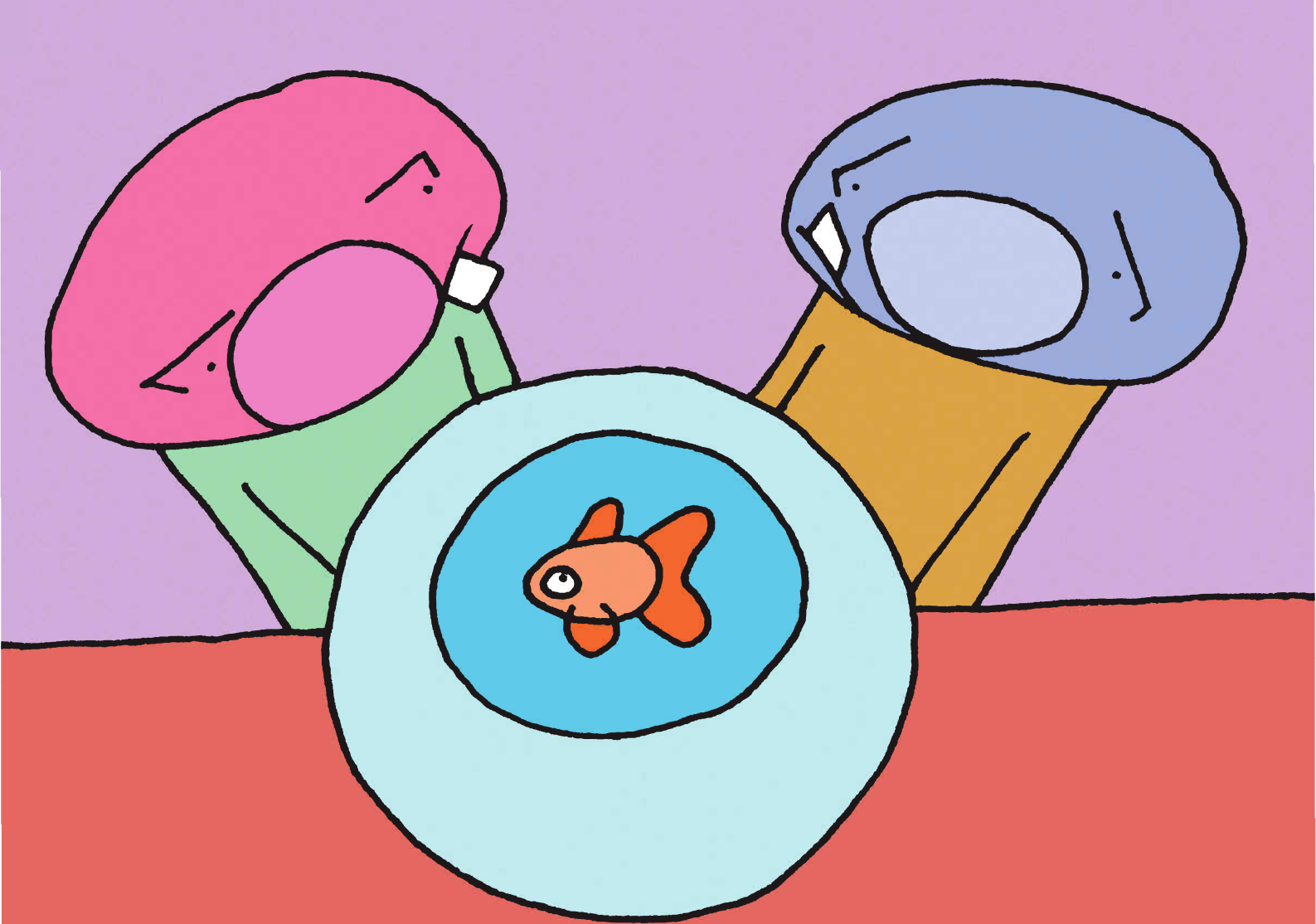
When I arrived, I immediately hurried to Jolly's aquarium where I could see a slice of pizza floating on the water. Jolly seemed frightened as he was hiding among the water plants looking at the piece of pizza. "Complete cleaning", I murmured to myself while I was trying to take the pizza out of the aquarium.



“We fed it!” said Bud smiling proudly.

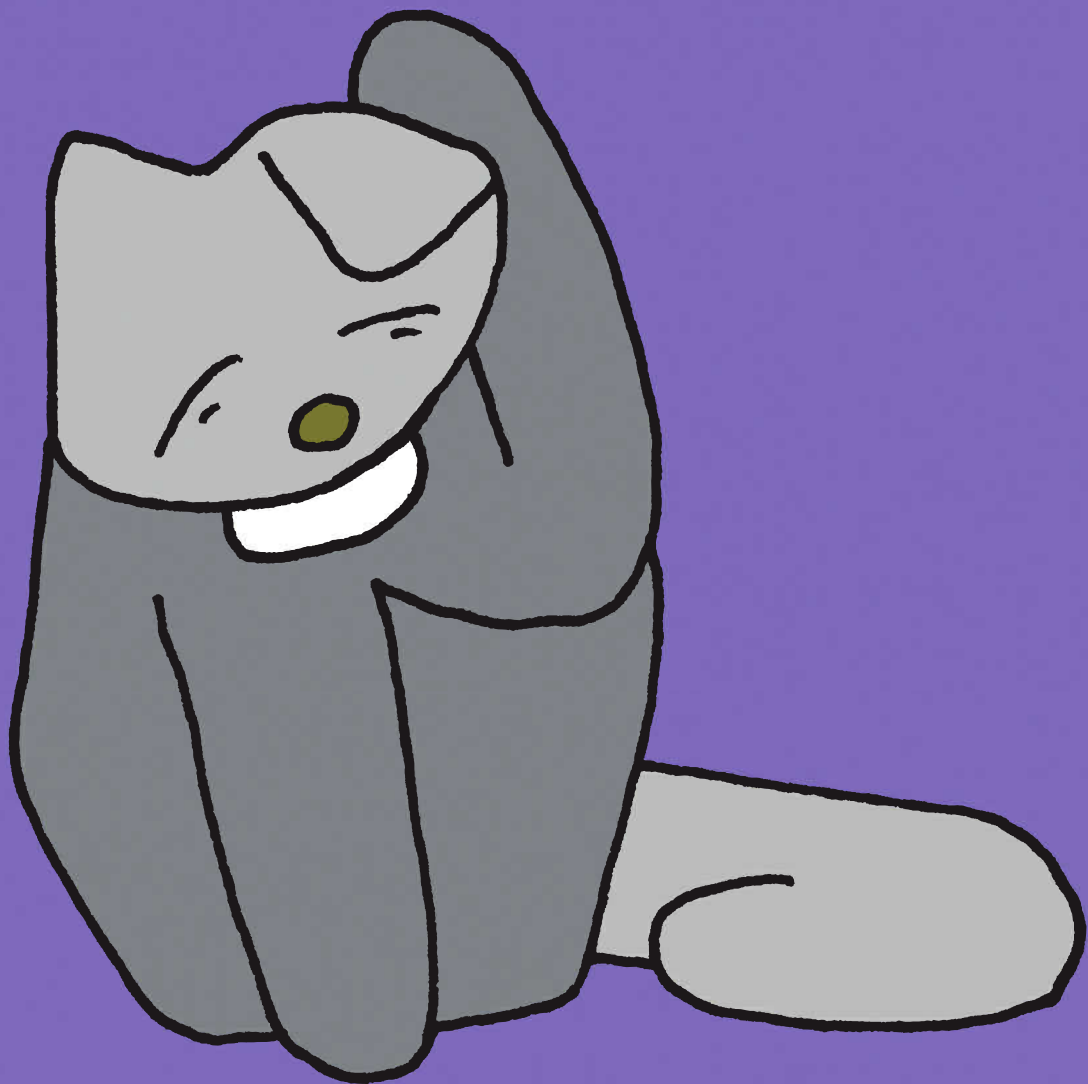
“We didn’t give it anything to drink ‘cause it’s in water, so I don’t think it is thirsty”,
Barnie added.

“We could have poured apple juice in the aquarium”, continued Bud.

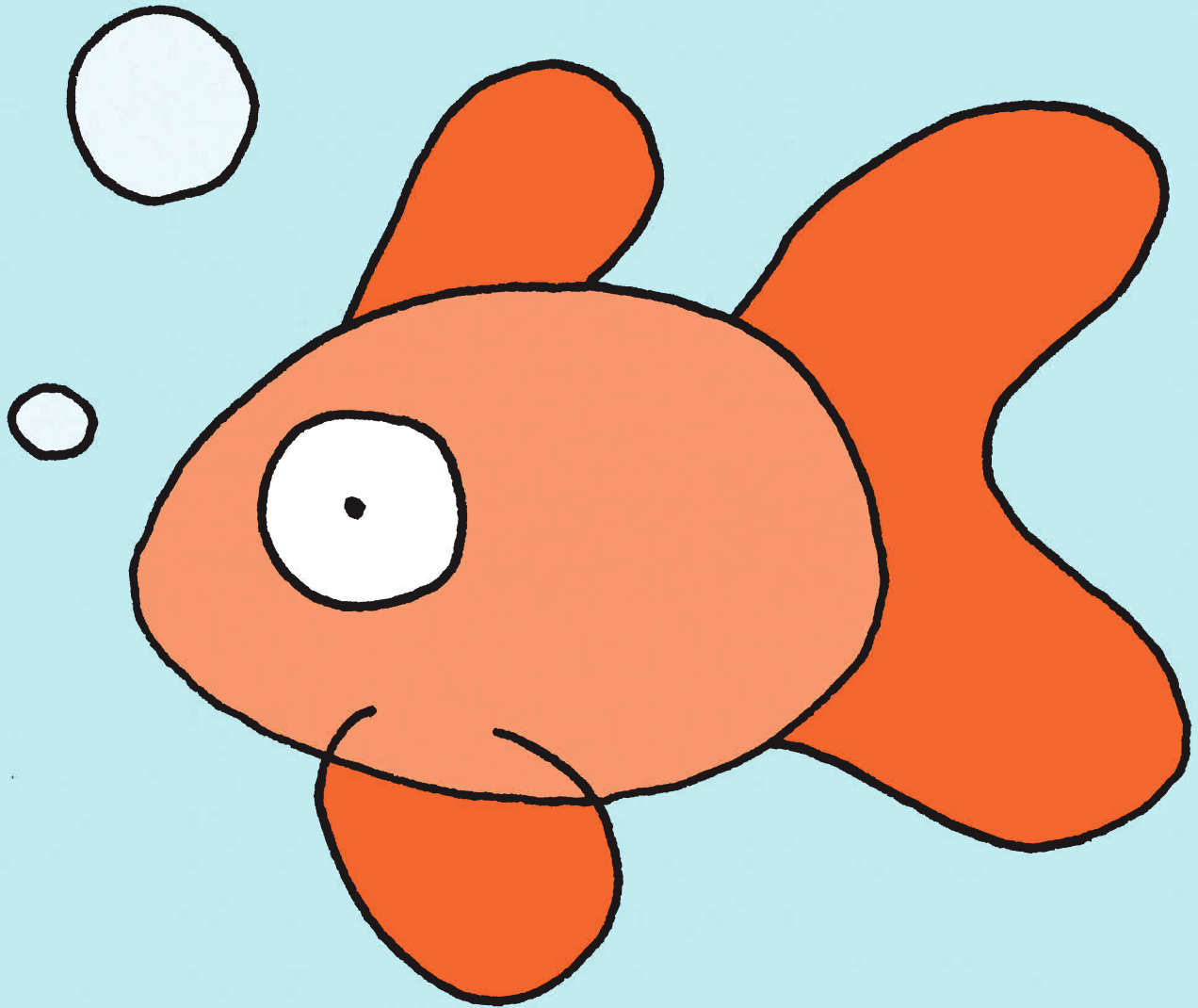


“Yes. The more juice you drink, the healthier you are”, said Barnie.

“Ok, but we’re talking about a fish, aren’t we, so the pizza is enough for it”, explained Bud. Bud and his friends helped me the same way as Mr. Purr helped me in writing.

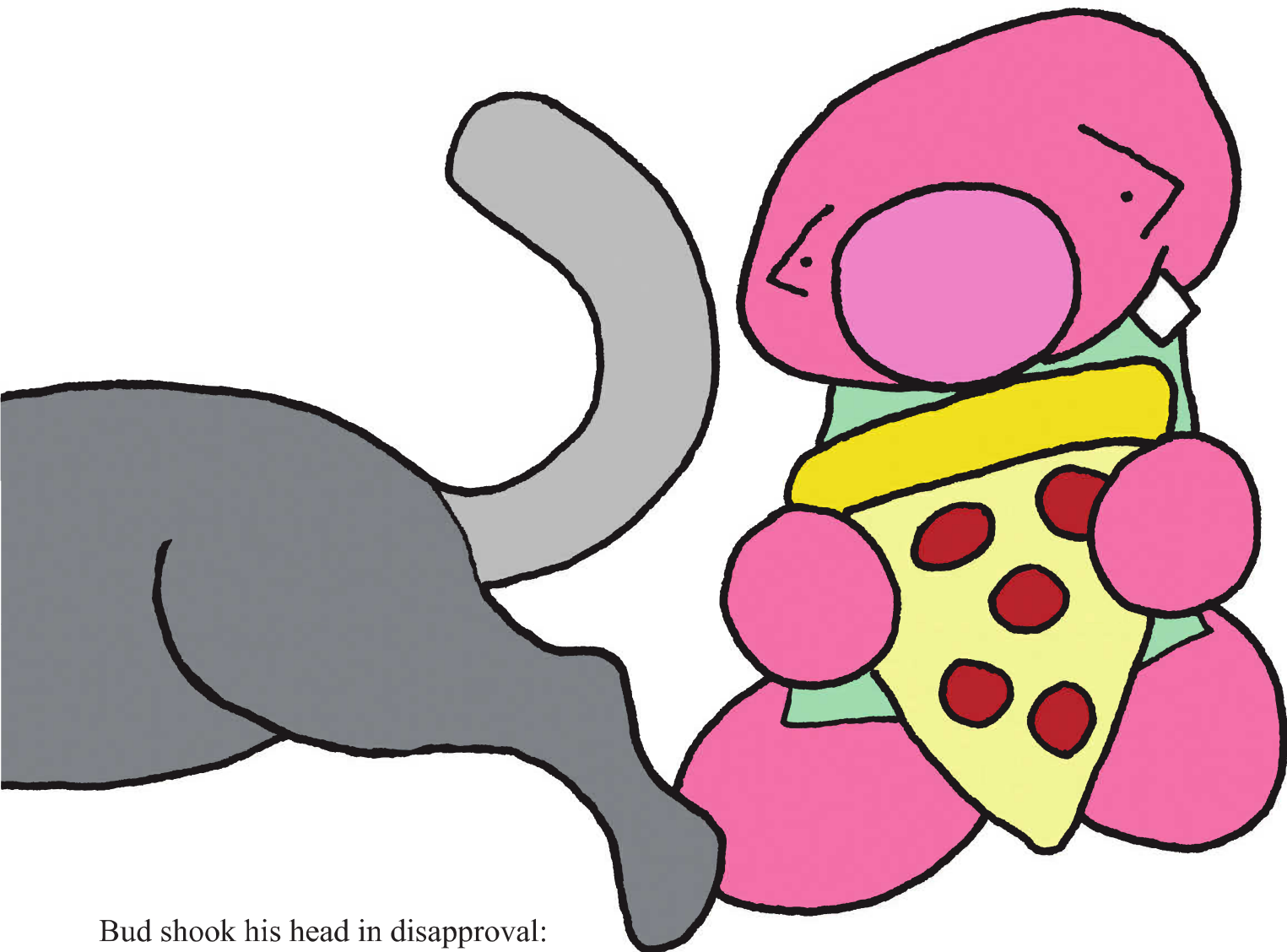


When I'm into it the most, he just walks over the keyboards, or he just sleeps on it so I can't do my work. I wondered if it was comfortable for him, but somehow he liked it. Sometimes when I work, and Mr. Purr doesn't sharpen his claws on the furniture, he sneaks upon me and makes me scratch his ears.



This is the thing that truly helps me in writing because it cheers me up, just like Bud.

“Jolly only eats goldfish food, nothing else, and he doesn’t need to drink”, I tried to look clever.



Bud shook his head in disapproval:

„It doesn't matter. Then we'll give Mr. Purr pizza.”

„But Mr. Purr doesn't like pizza either, I've already tried, you know. He only likes spaghetti very much. I can make really delicious spaghetti.”

„What is spaghetti?” asked Bud.

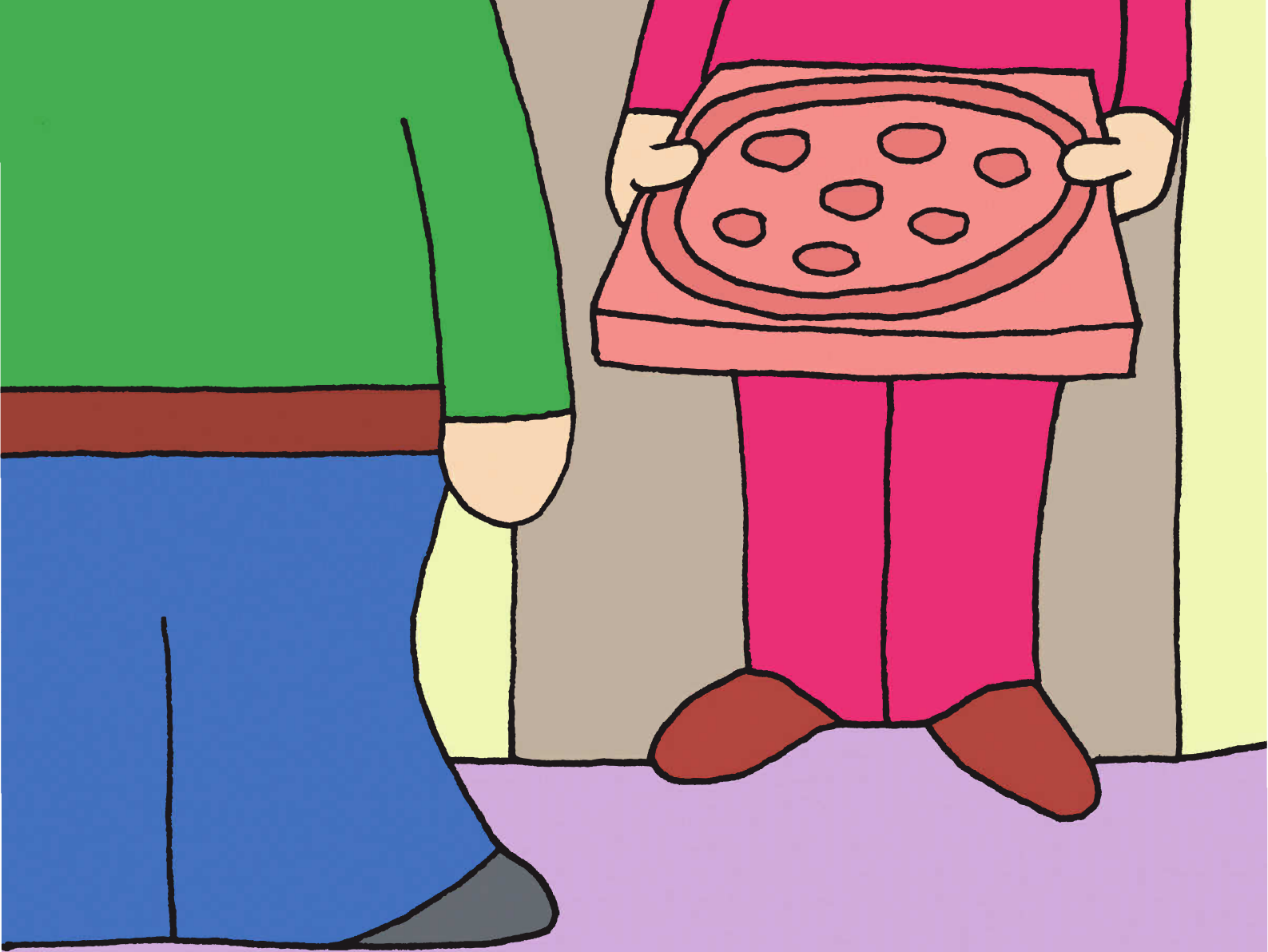
„Well, it tastes like pizza with tomato, but you have to use pasta for it”, I replied proudly.

„I see. When are you making spaghetti?” asked Bud.

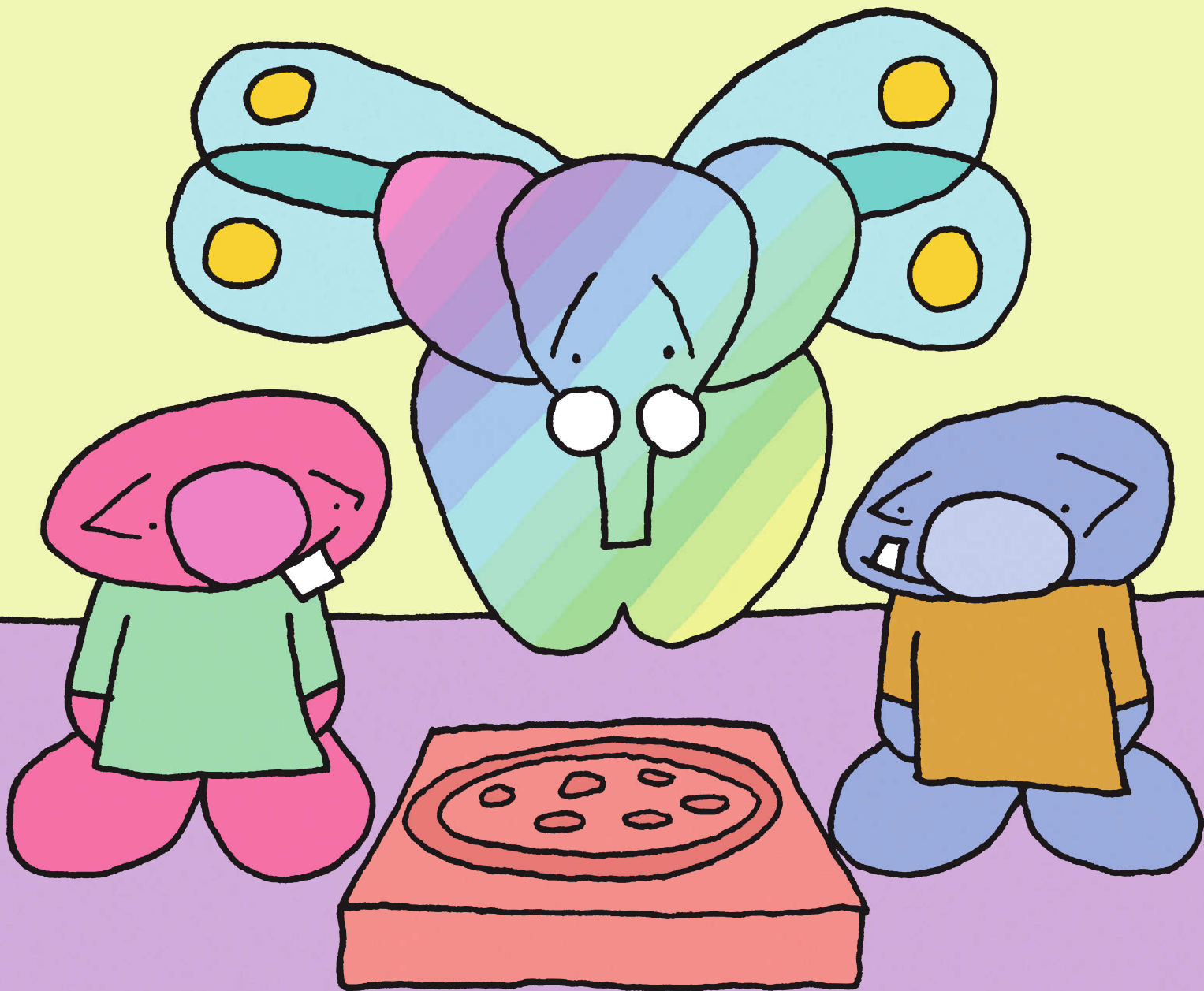
„Tomorrow.”



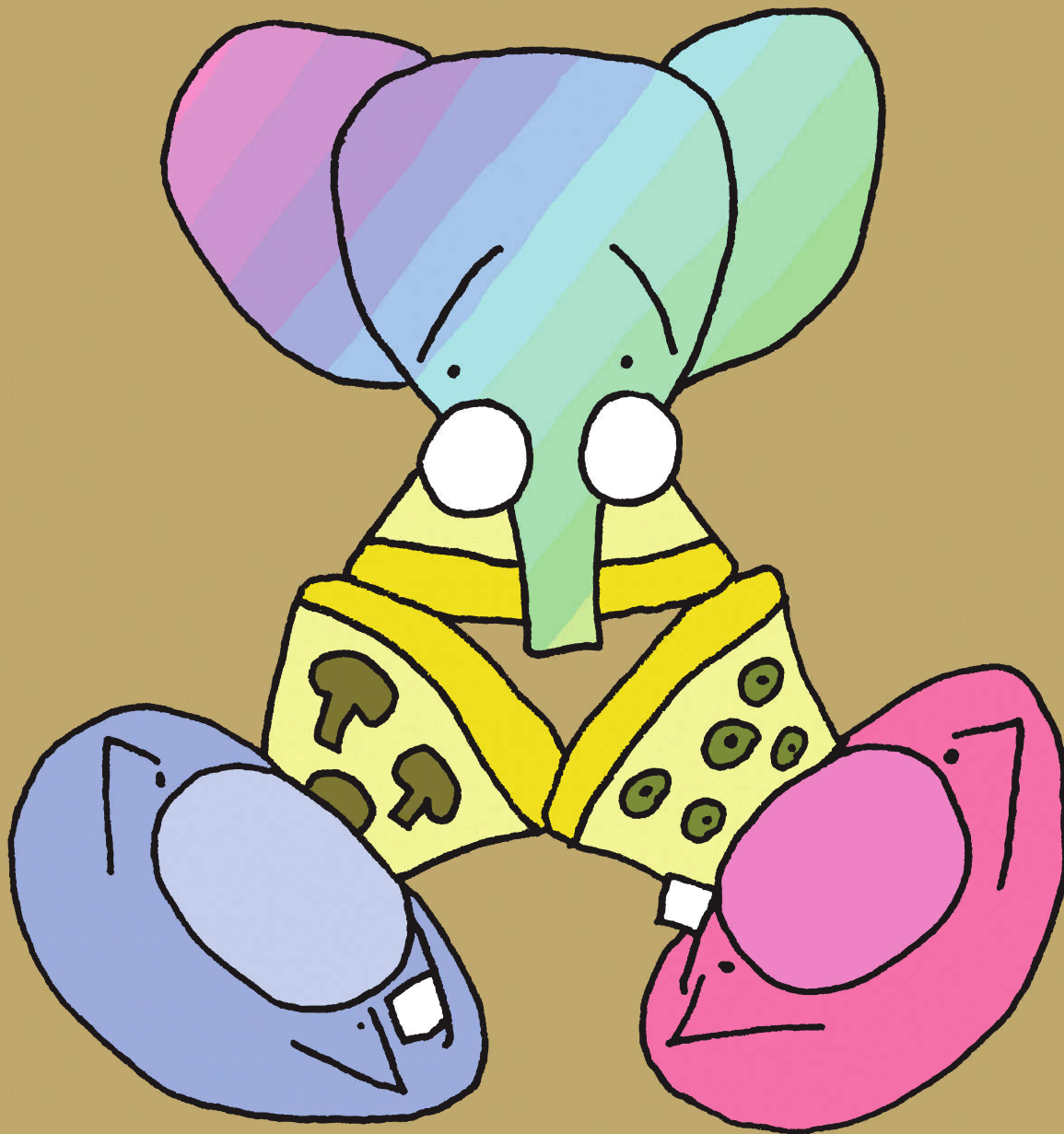
Bud found the remote control and switched on the television and settled on the armrest, Barnie sat in front of the armchair and Boo sat in it watching a cartoon channel.



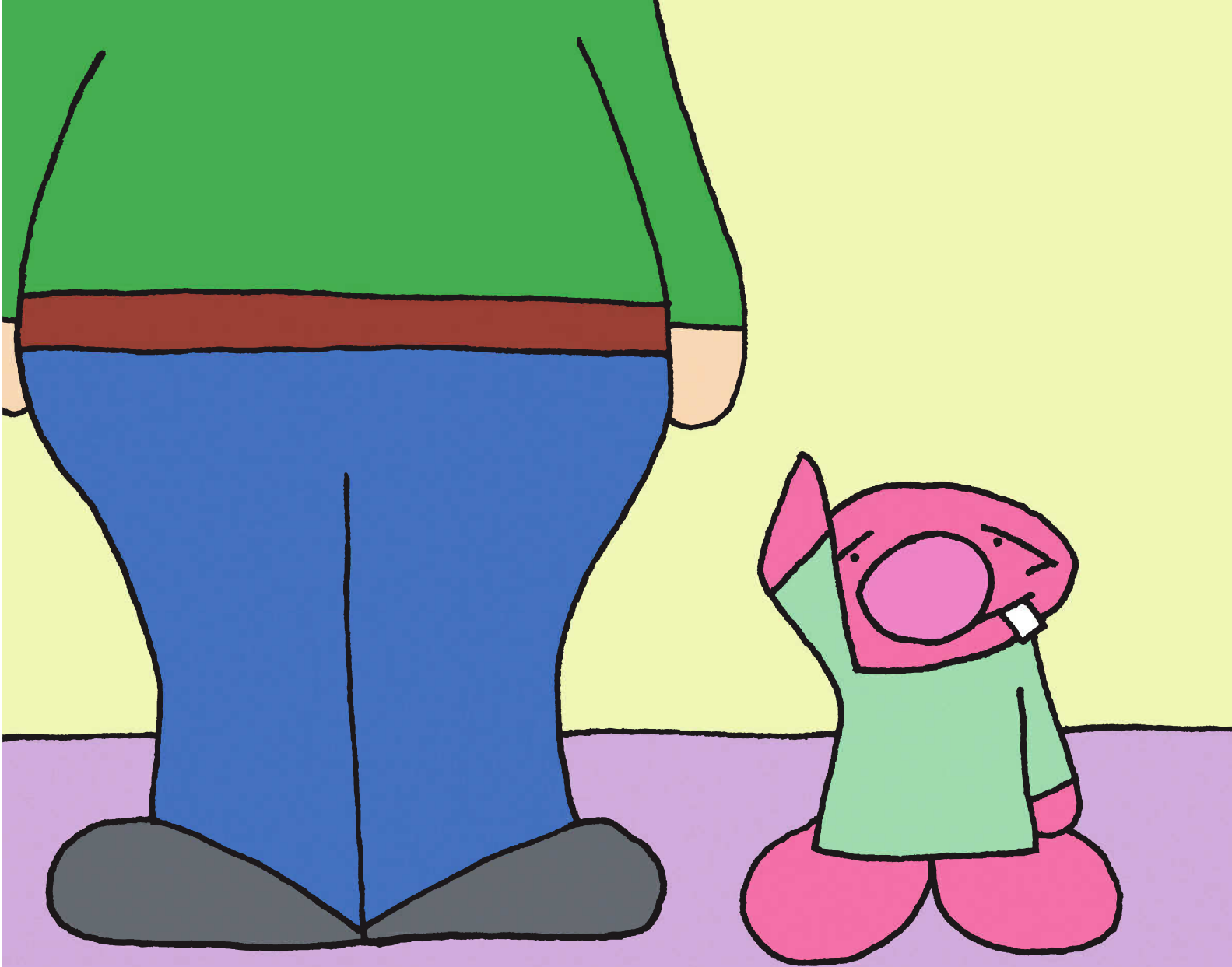
I checked in the kitchen if I had everything for the spaghetti. The doorbell rang, the pizza had arrived.



I took it into the living room where the grumblers were watching a cartoon called the Adventures of a Dragon, but when they saw the pizza, they immediately started eating.



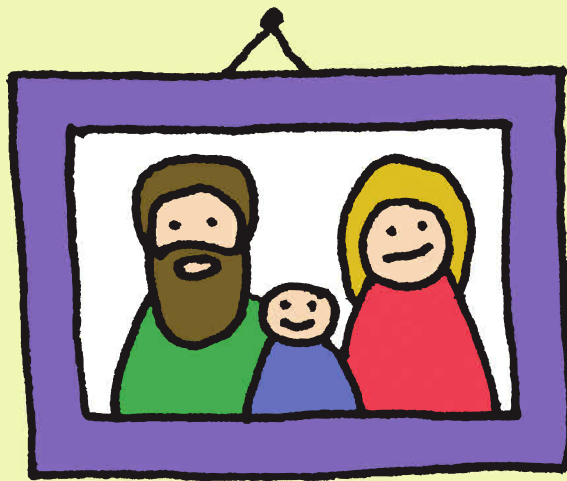
Boo was eating the part with cheese, Barnie with mushrooms, and Bud with olives and extra oregano. Bud and Barnie were holding the pizza in their hands while Boo held in his trunk as they were making the slices disappear in their stomachs.



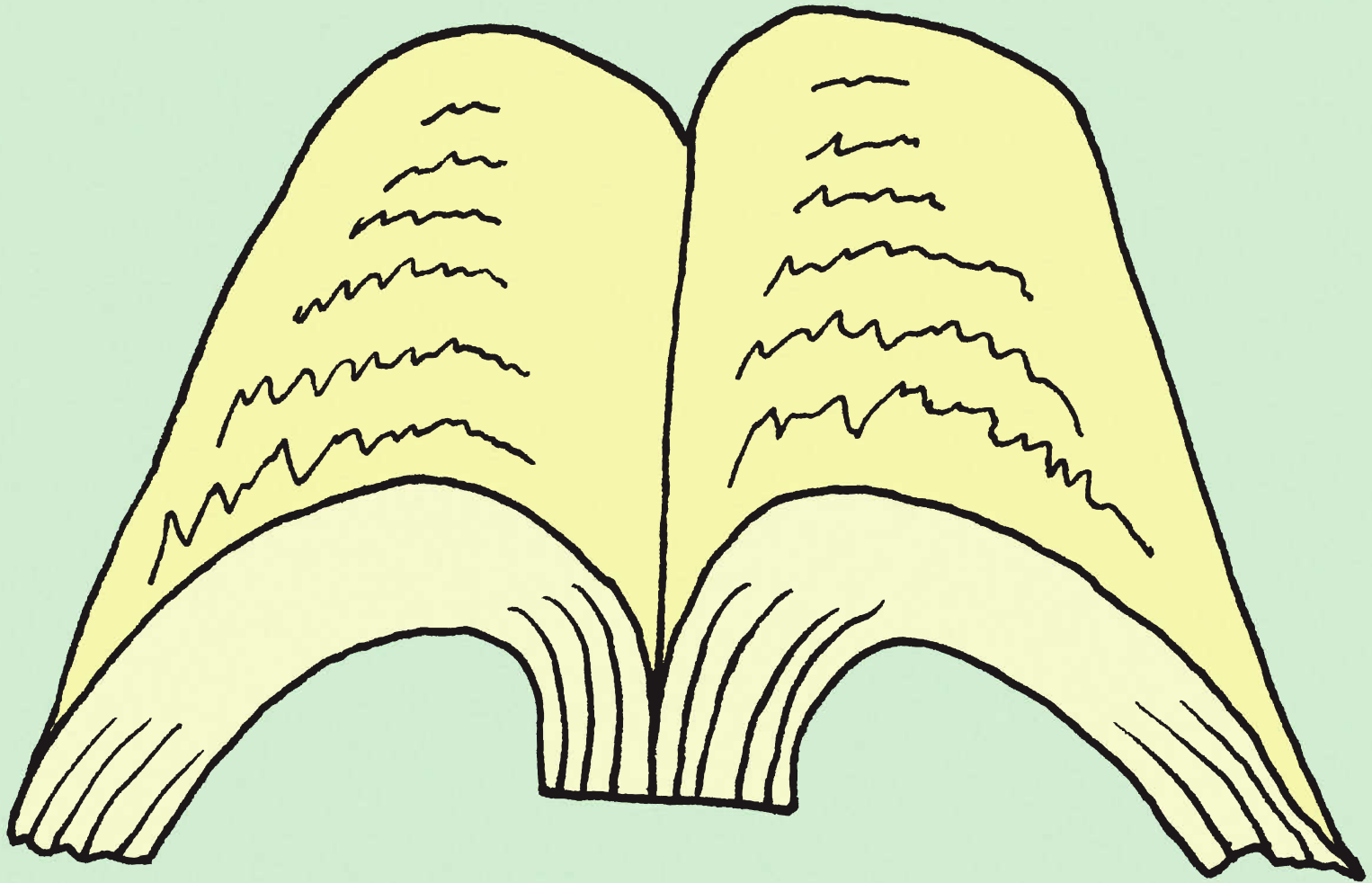
Afterwards they were full, and drank the orange juice as well, Bud asked a question.

“Who is that little boy and that big girl in the picture?”

“They’re my family, my wife and my son”, I answered.



“And where are they now?” asked Bud, then he added. “We haven’t seen them yet.”
“At this time every year they travel to Granny, so that I so that I can concentrate on work.”



“But you don’t really do any work. You write tales”, Bud expressed his indignation.

“Well, I don’t really write for children, I write for adults, and it’s a hard nut because a tale, that is called a novel among adults, can be more than hundred pages long.”

“Then you can’t write a real tale”, said Bud in a sad voice. “We came to you because of the tales! We would like someone to write a tale about us.”



“I can try. Tomorrow I’m going to make the spaghetti and write you a beautiful tale. Is that all right?”

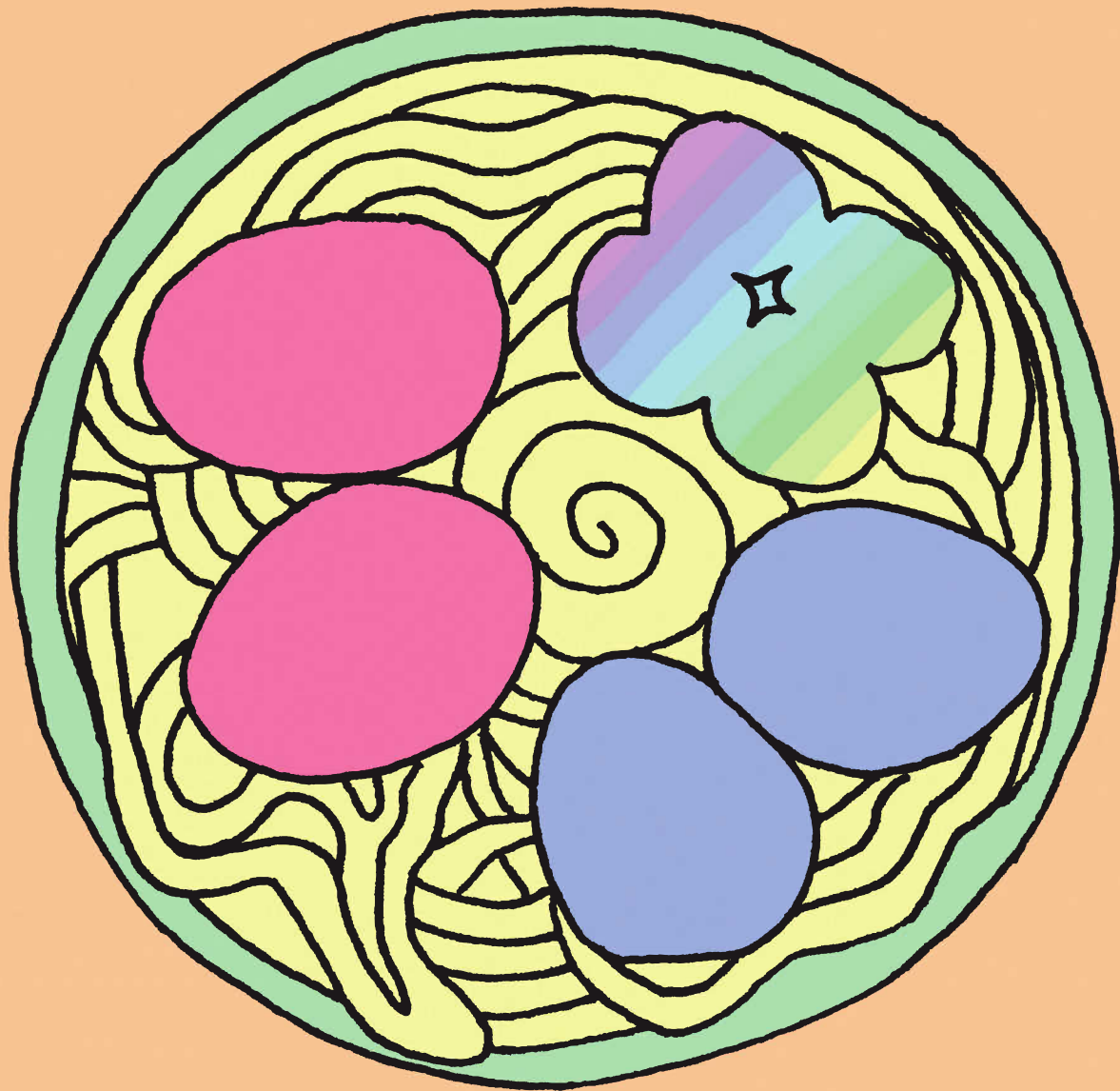
“Ok, but please include olives and oregano.”

“And mushrooms”, added Barnie.

“And it has to be nice”, said Boo.

“What? The spaghetti?” asked in a surprised way.

“No, the tale!” answered the three of them.



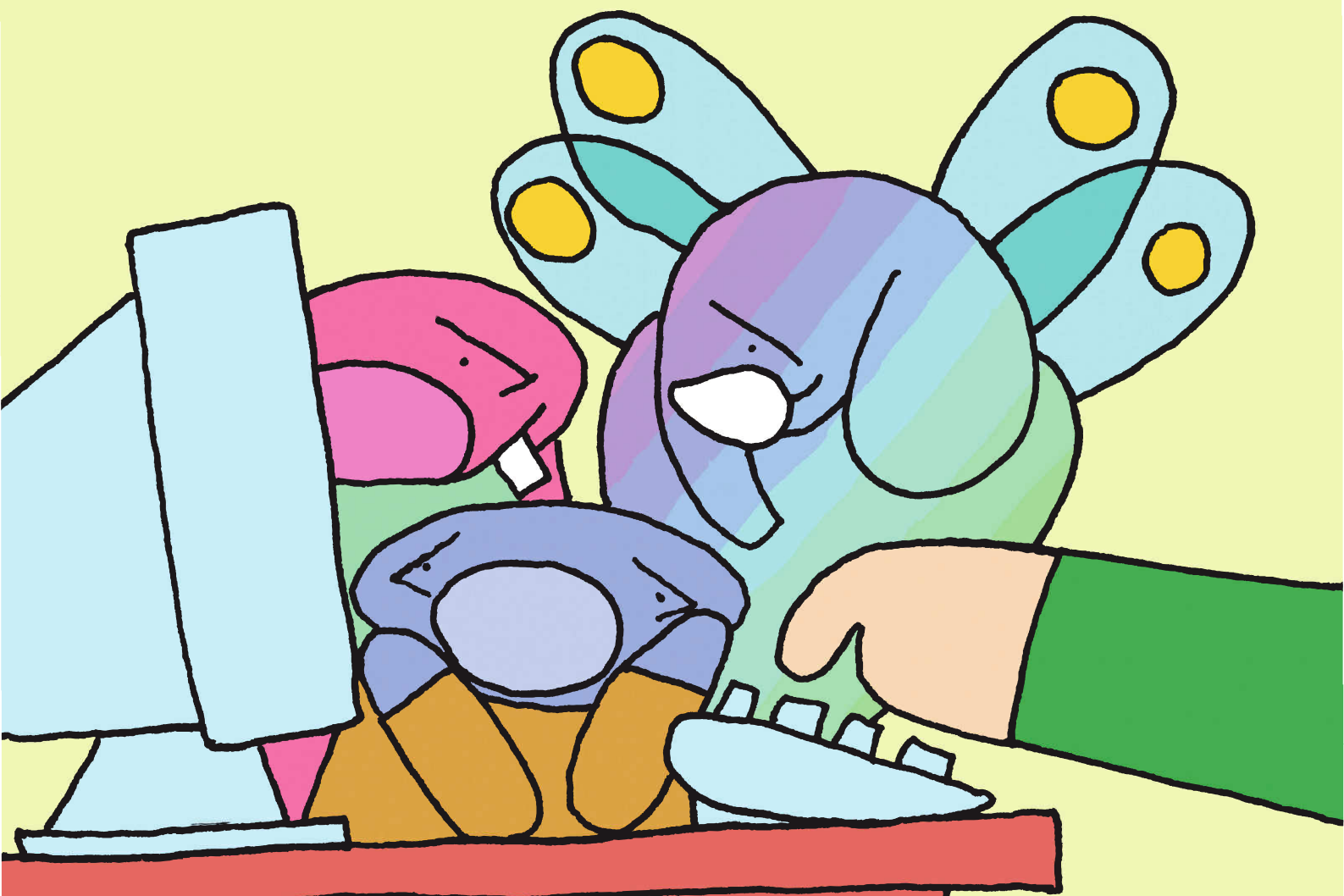
In the morning I started to prepare the meal. I grated cheese, stirred the sauce, chopped mushrooms and olives, mixed them and I poured the mixture on the pasta. I wanted to have some time to make up the grumblers' story before they woke up. When they woke up they were very pleased and they started eating.



All of them were lying in the bowl with their legs upwards. The whole kitchen echoed the sounds of their eating, sipping and munching all over. In just a few minutes there were no signs of any spaghetti, I only saw three grumbler-balls.



Two grumblers and a grumblephant was lying in the bowl. I took them to the bathroom and wiped them with a wet towel, then I returned to the living room, Bud and Barnie followed me on foot and Boo flew.



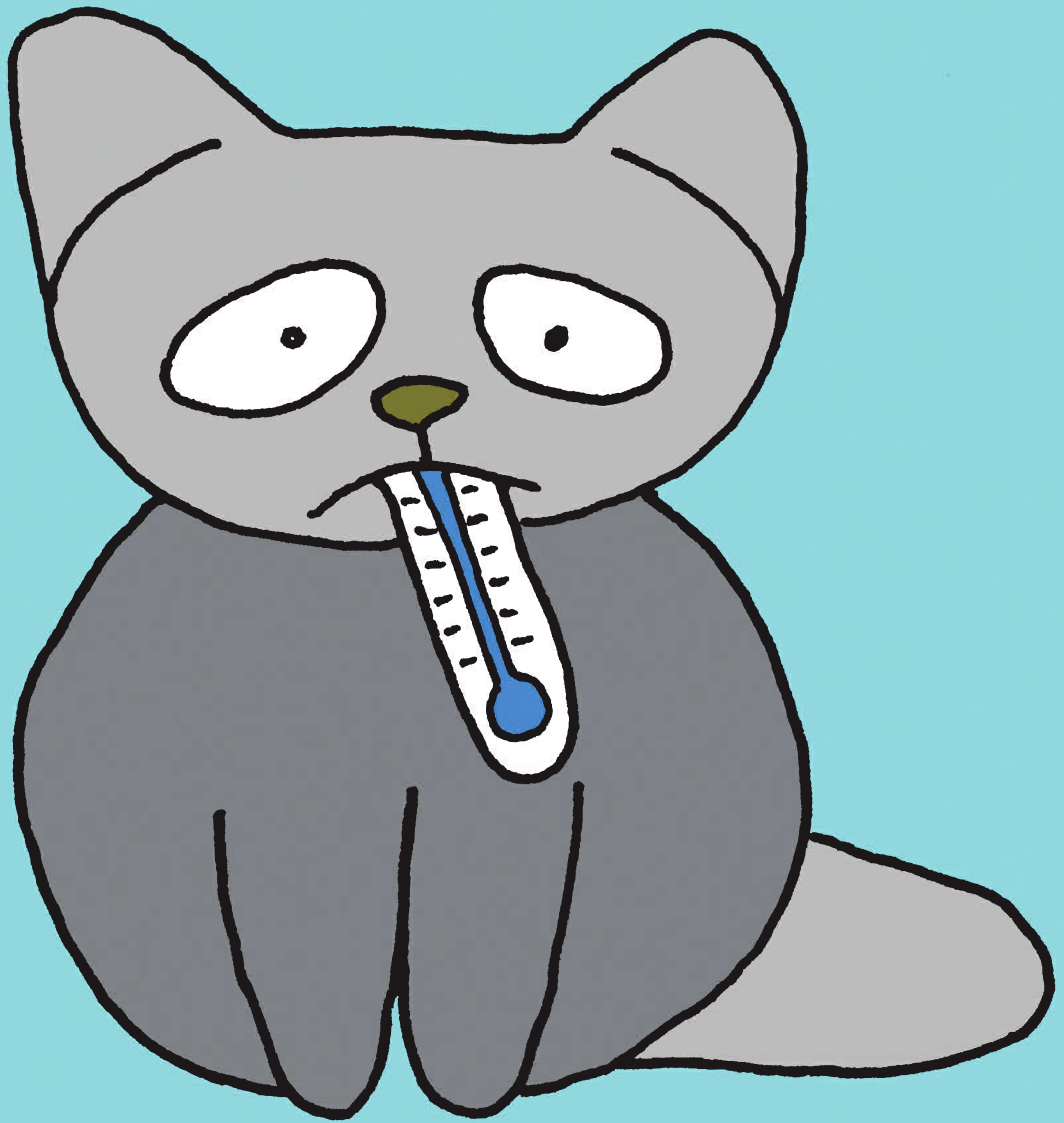
They made themselves comfortable and I sat down to write the tale.



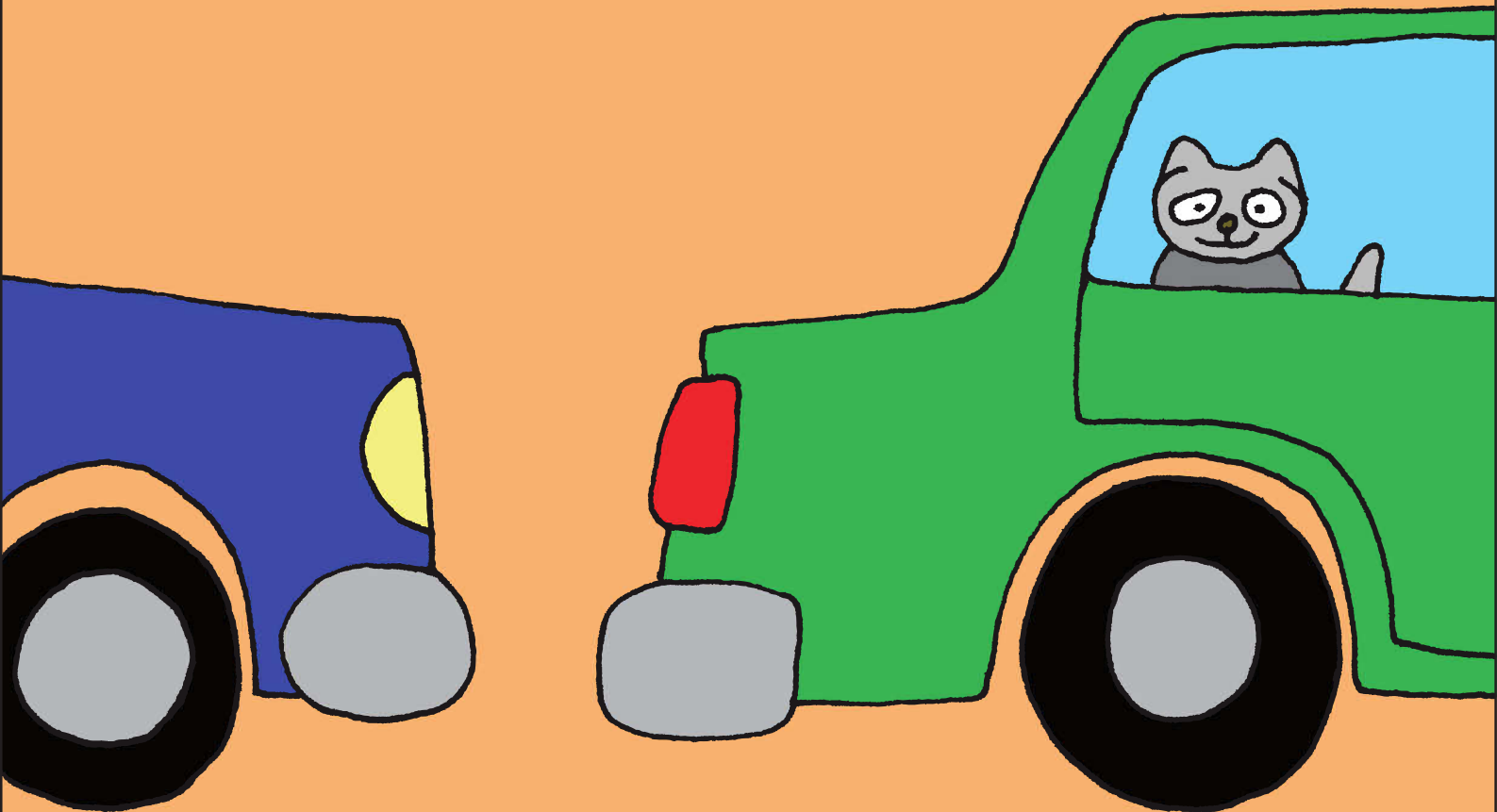
The Tale of Mr. Purr

Once upon a time there was a small kitten who lost his mother and wandered in the streets. He was so young that he couldn't take care of himself: he couldn't catch mice, raid waste-bins, or escape from dogs, but fortunately, he met Lesley, the big fat tomcat. He was doing his evening walk after having a big dinner when he saw the kitten. He felt sorry for him from the first second, so he took him to a loving family which adopted him. They had him washed with cat shampoo, bought him a big basket and a stick on which he could sharpen his claws, although he never used it, he preferred the furniture.

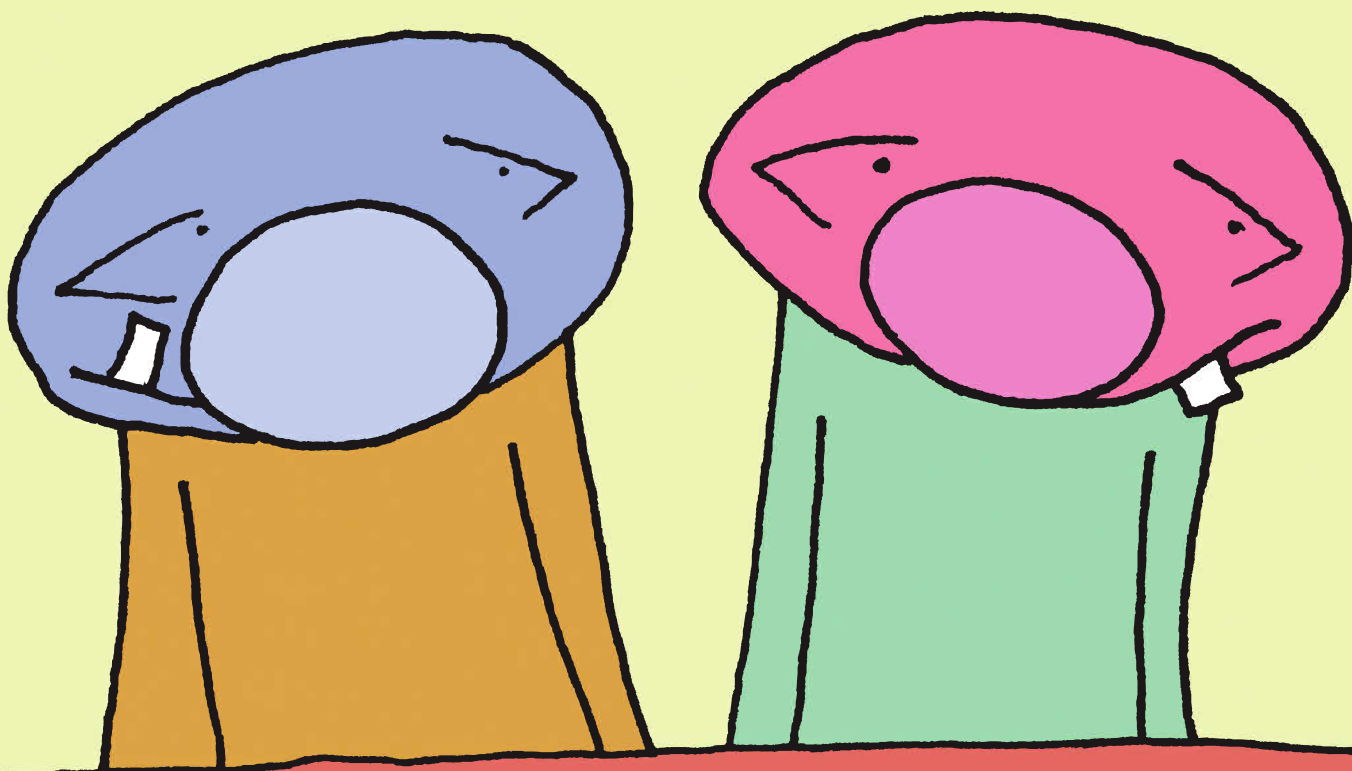




The family was very happy about the kitten. Then once the kitten got sick, he had a temperature, so they took him to the vet. It turned out that he caught a cold so the vet gave him an injection, and he got better.



The family returned home and everybody was happy, but only for a week, when the kitten got sick again. While they were driving to the vet, the kitten was just looking sadly out of the car. The vet injected him once more, and he recovered completely. Later they took him back for vaccination, but otherwise he was happy and healthy. He ate and slept a lot. He became a huge lazy cat who didn't understand why he couldn't catch the goldfish from the closed aquarium.

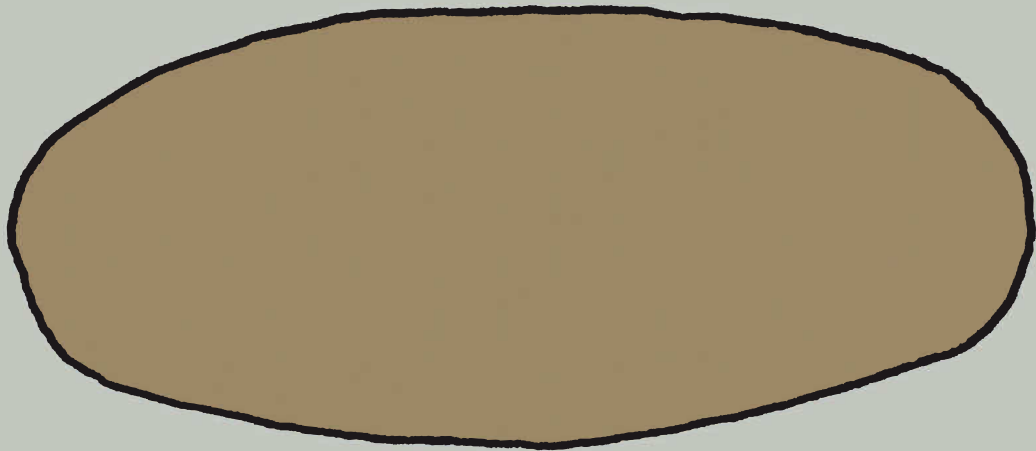


“So...? How was it?” I asked.

“We didn’t like it. We want another kind of tale. It was too simple and what’s more it wasn’t about grumblers”, they replied as a choir.

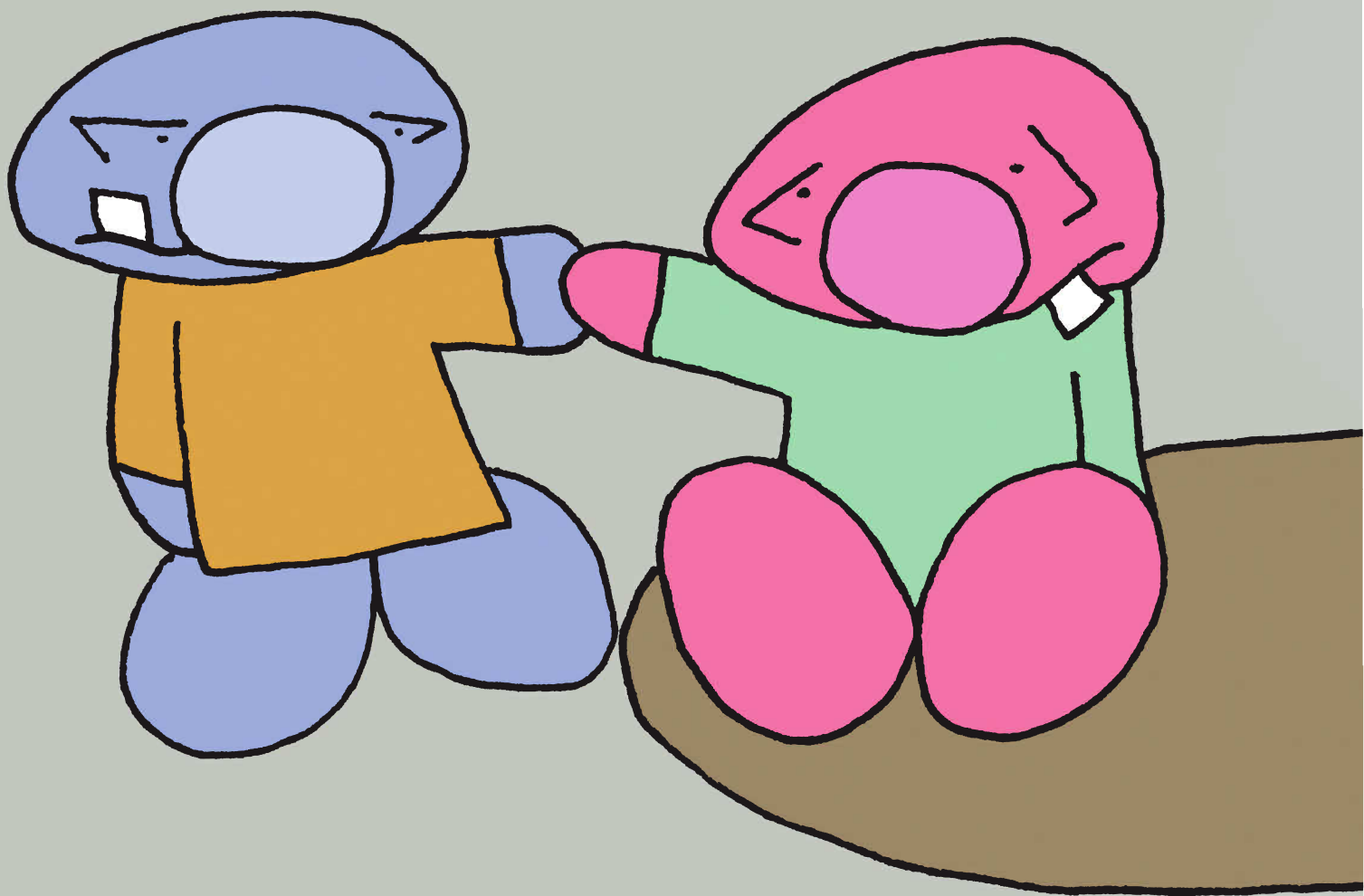
“OK. Wait a minute. I’ll try to make up a story about grumblers.”

So I started it all over again.

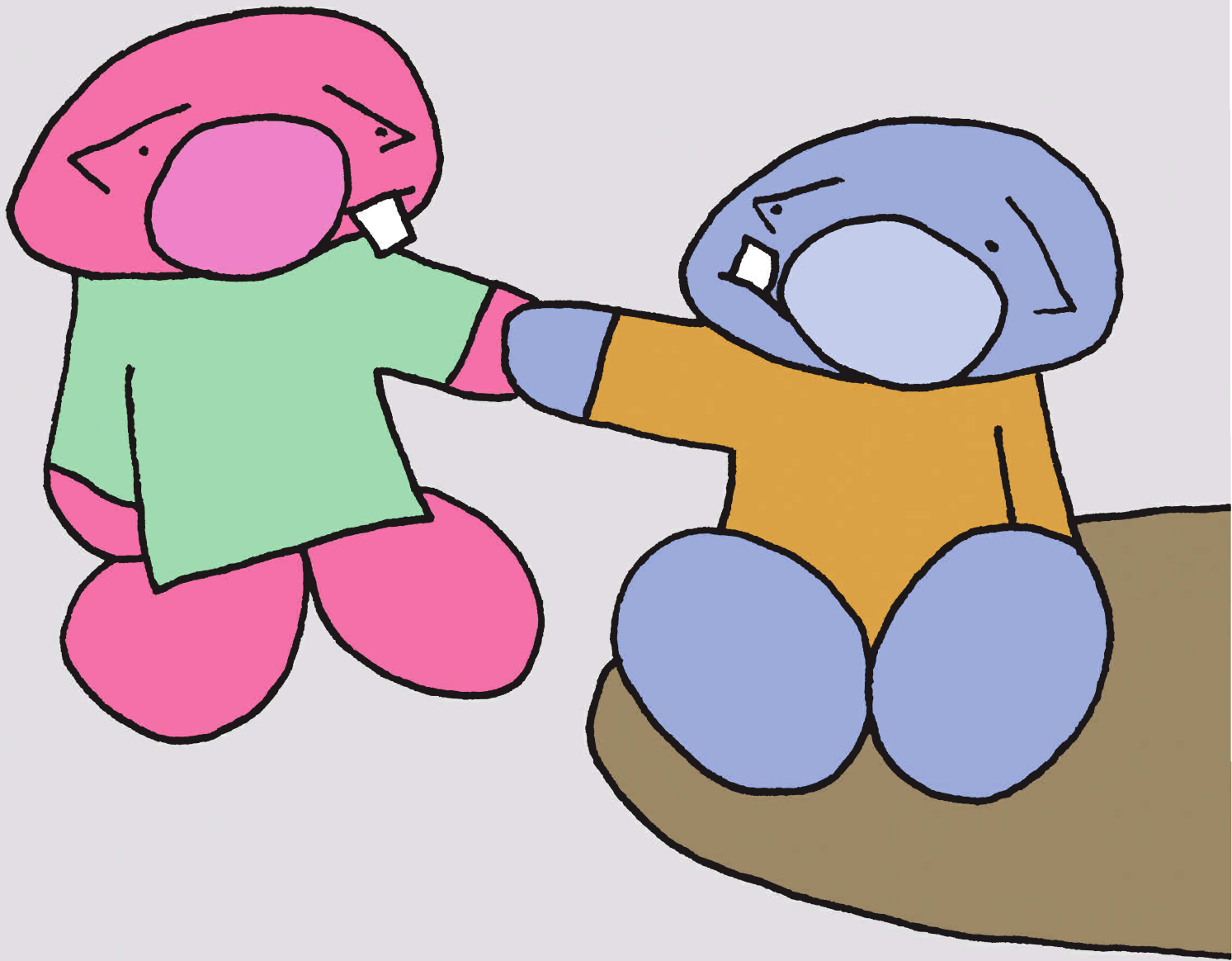


Bud, Barnie and the Puddle

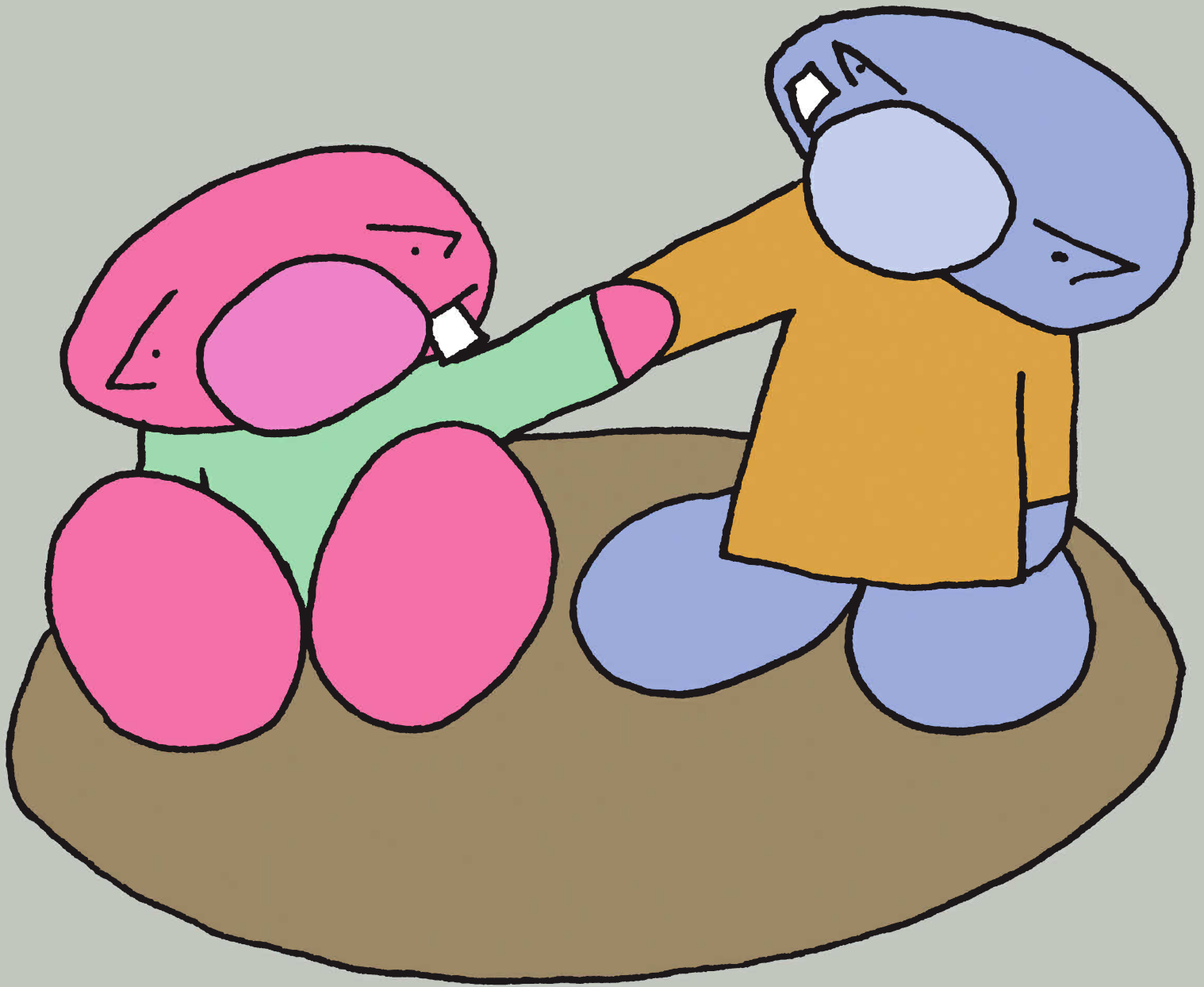
Once upon a time there were two grumblers, Bud and Barnie, who went for a walk on a very-very slippery muddy road.



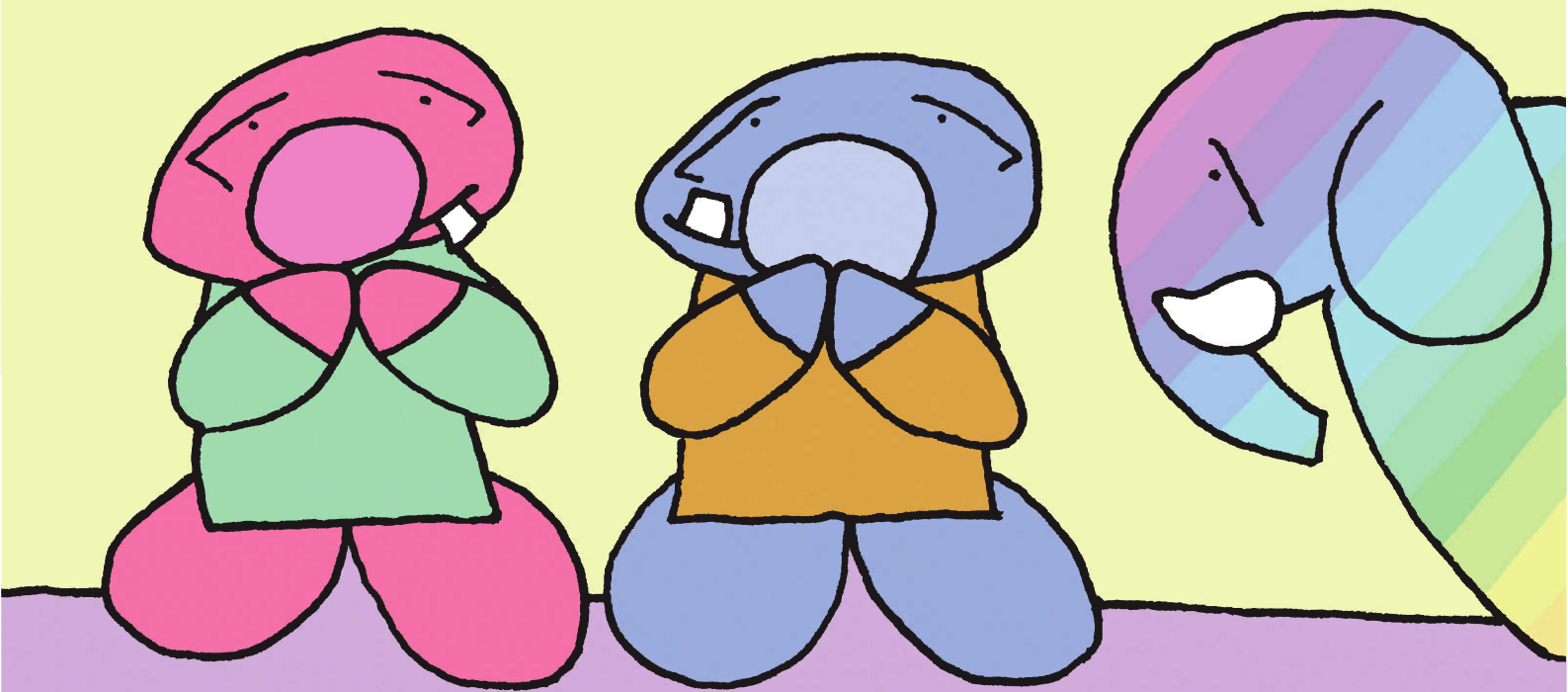
They were walking along when suddenly. “Oops!” Bud slid and fell into the mud. Barnie went opposite him, took his hands and started to pull and pull, and he pulled so strongly that he suddenly. “Oops!” slid and fell into the mud.



Bud went opposite him, took his hands and started to pull and pull, and he pulled so strongly that he suddenly. “Oops!” slid and fell into the mud.



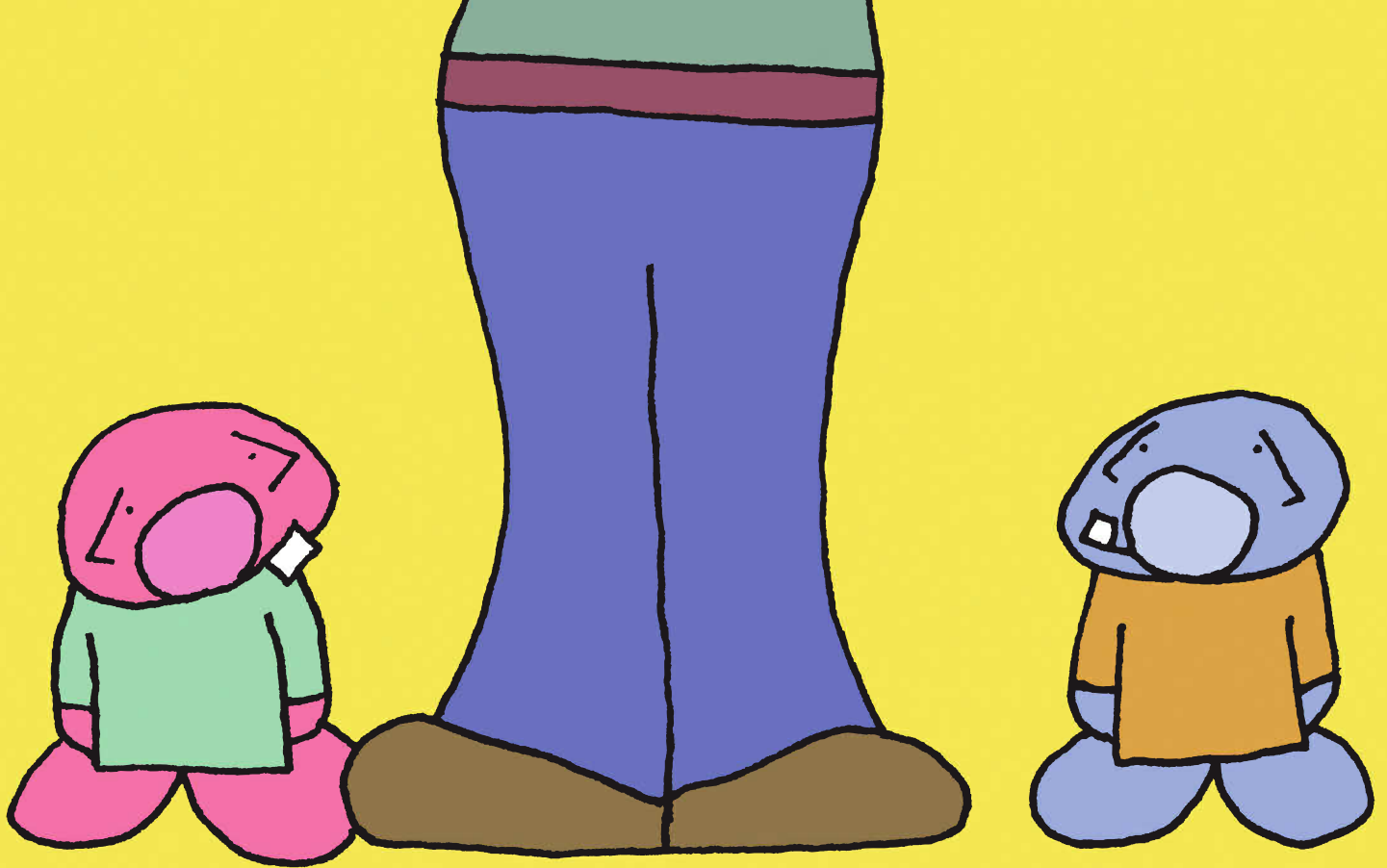
Barnie went opposite him, took his hands and started to pull and pull, and he pulled so strongly that he suddenly. "Oops!" slid and fell into the mud.



Bud went opposite him,... and so on until you get bored with it. All of the three grumblers was laughing out loud. Despite Bud told me:

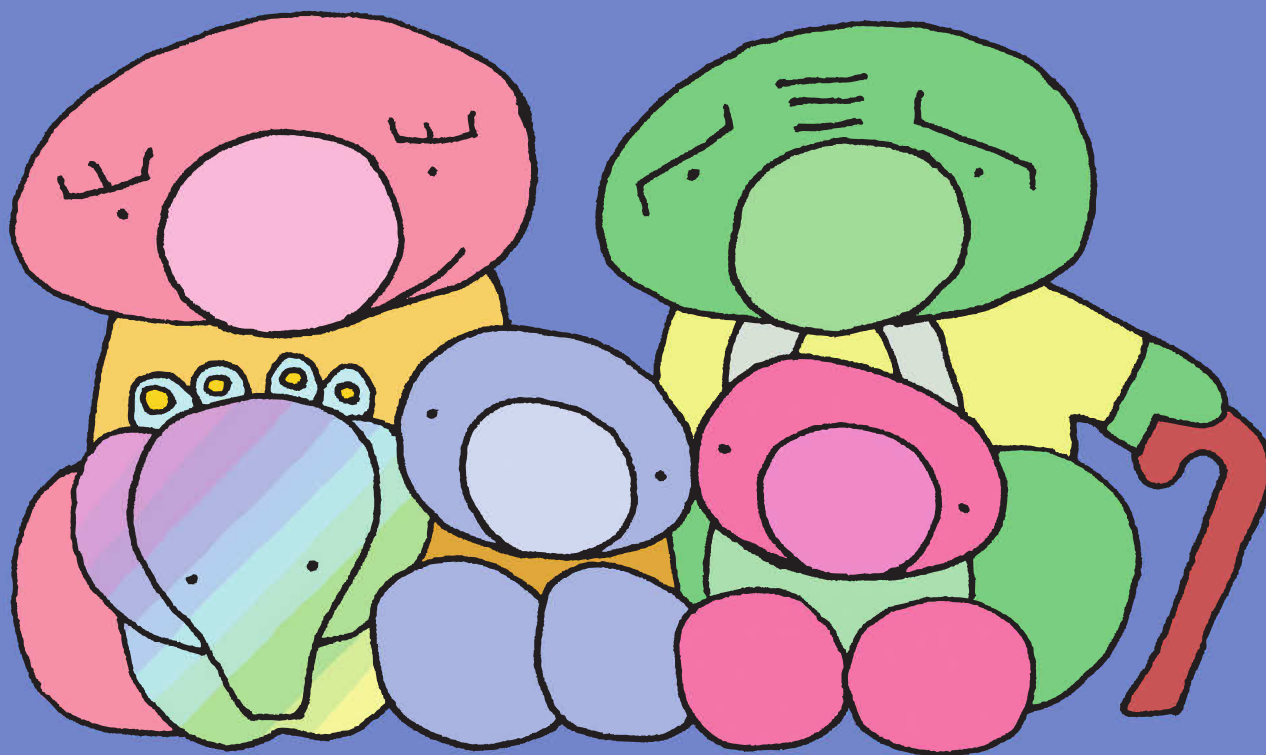
“This tale is not good because Boo is missing from it. And it was too short. Tell us another tale.”

“What about a story about stealing cake, you would steal cake from the confectionery?” I asked.



“We don’t want to steal anything. It’s more than enough that the parents use us to threaten their children. They say that we take them. But how can we move a huge child? We are too small.”

“All right, so here’s the next tale”:



The Three Grumblers

Once upon a time when Bud, Barnie and Boo were very young grumblers. Their mother had to go shopping, so she tried to find a baby sitter. She asked Brad the old grumbler to look after them.

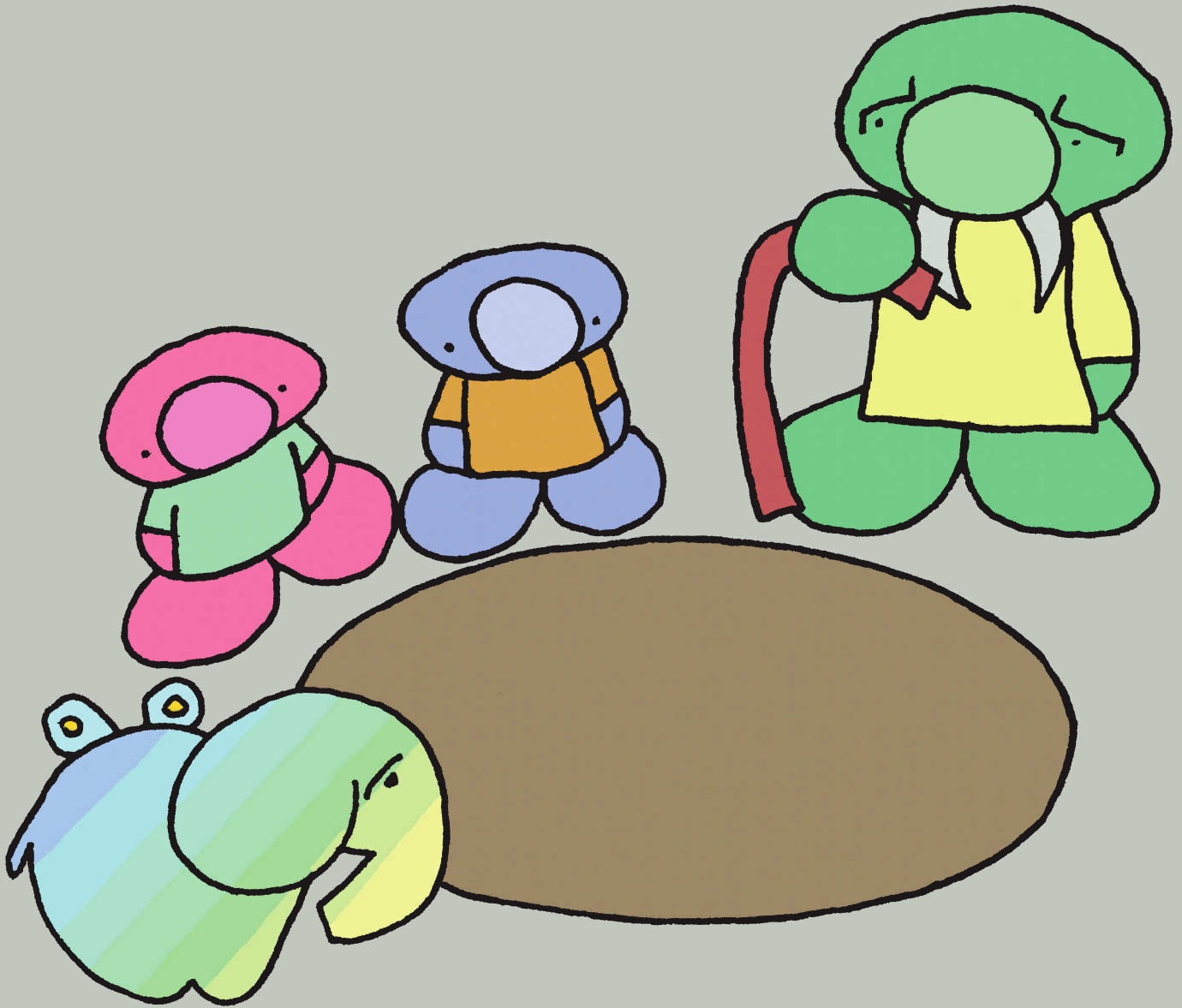
“I promise that I will look after them very carefully”, swore Brad.

So the grumbler’s mother was off shopping convinced that Brad would look after them perfectly. Brad stayed at home with the three little grumblers.



“Grumblers!” shouted Brad. “Let’s go out! Come on, hurry! We are going to the swamp where there are a lot of fine puddles. I’ll teach you how to jump over a puddle.”

They went to a field in the middle of the swamp where they found several puddles.



“Look at this, grumblers!” shouted Brad. “I’ll jump over this small puddle.” He jumped over the puddle easily, but the little grumblers fell into it. They were sitting in the puddle covered with mud from head to toe.



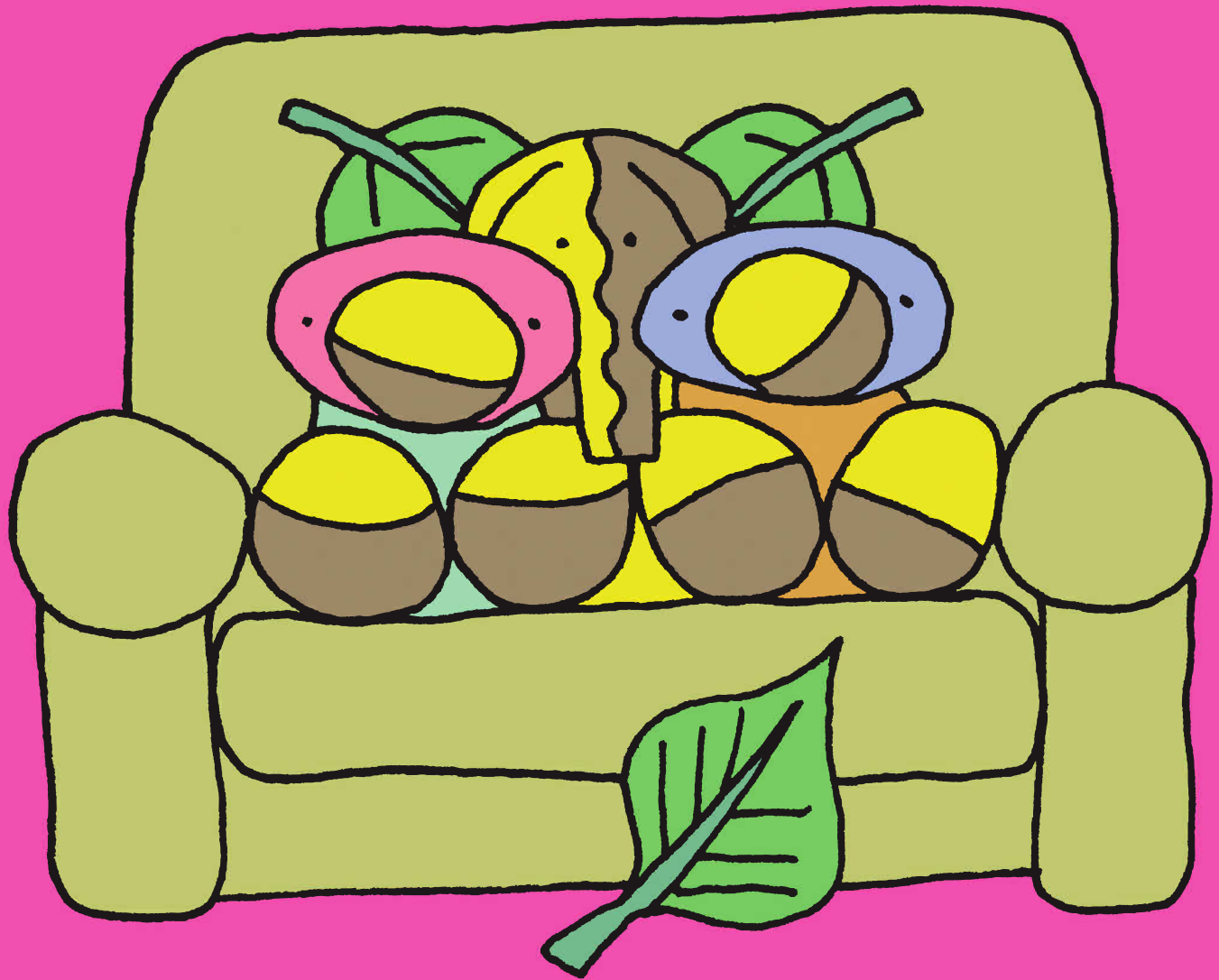
“Do it after me. Don’t be afraid”, said the old grumbler. “You have a bath in the fallen leaves and you’ll be clean.”



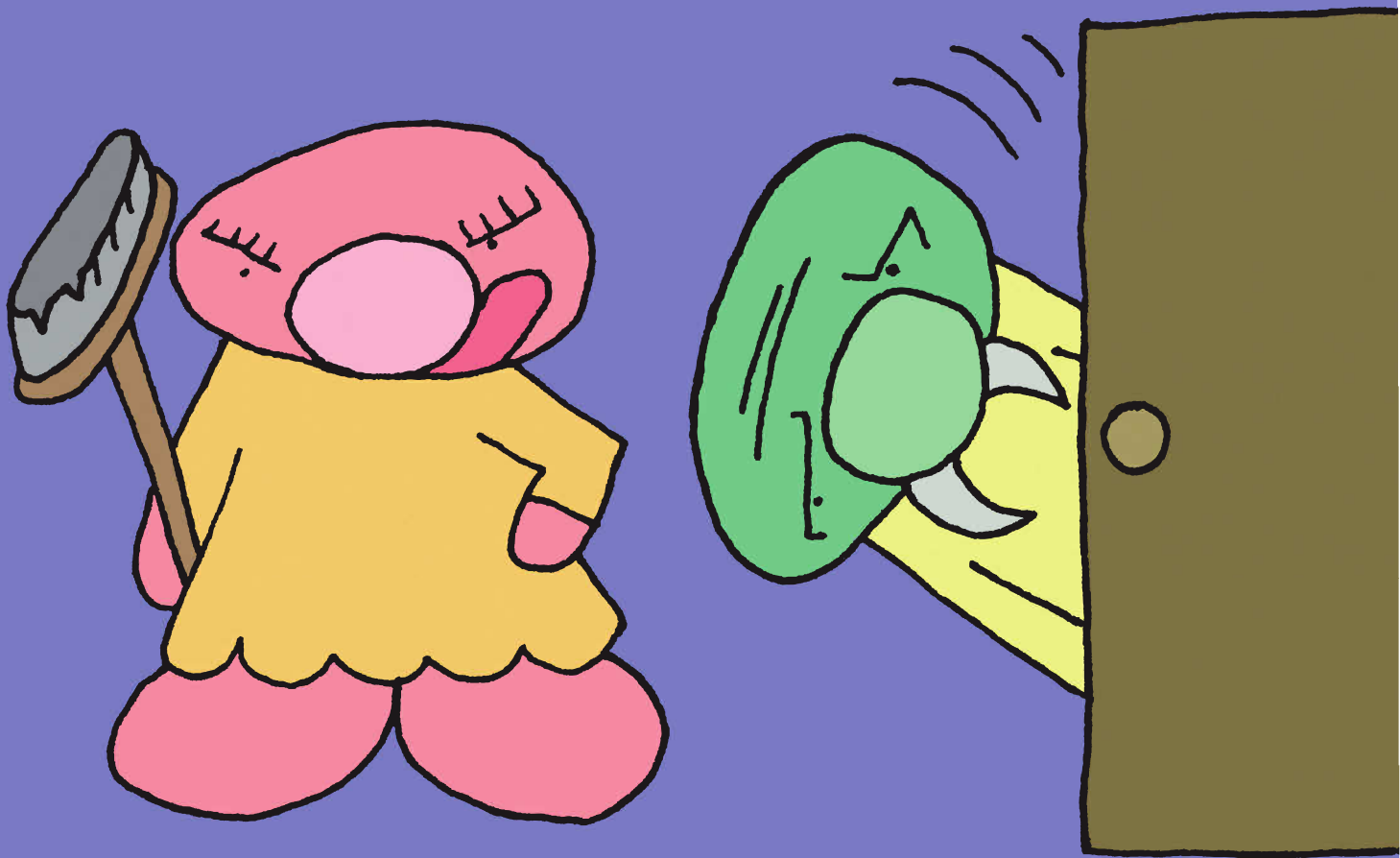
The little grumblers did what Brad told them to, but the leaves stuck on them.



After this Brad took the three little grumblers home where he gave them a big bowl of honey that they jumped into immediately. Now they were covered not only mud and leaves but also honey.



After they were full they sat down on the sofa to watch television. Brad hid in the wardrobe waiting for the mother to arrive home. When she got there she saw her sons on the sofa covered with mud, leaves and honey. She stood still for a minute, then she started shouting.



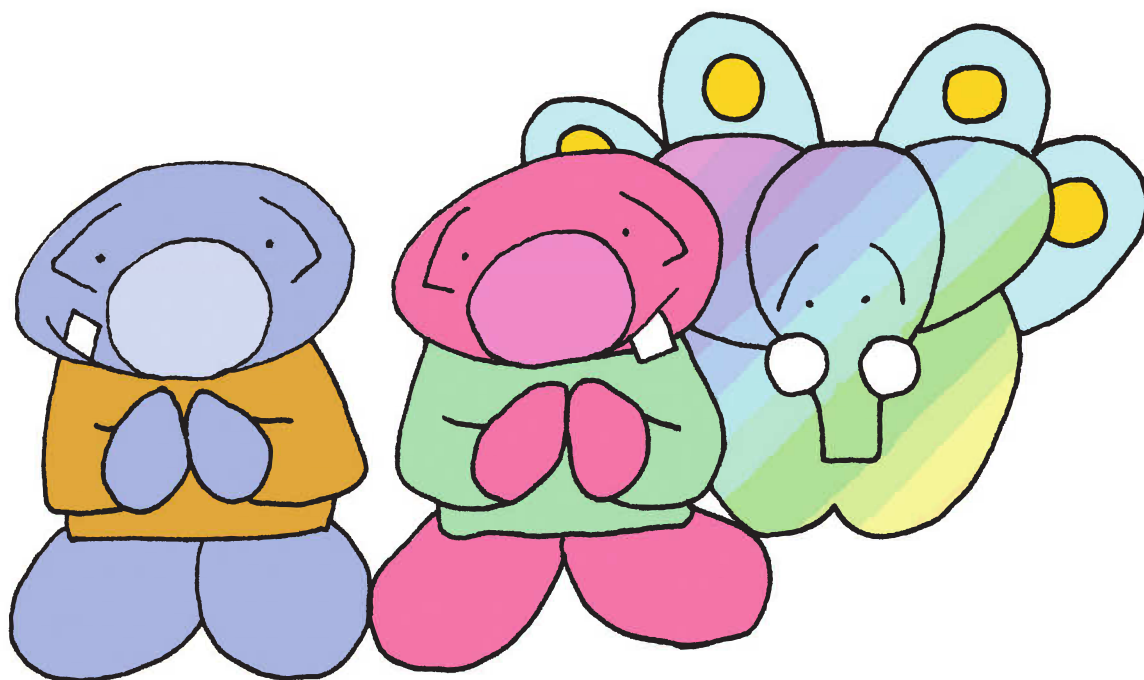
Brad was laughing so much in the wardrobe that he fell out of it.



The mother saw him and with a broom she chased him out of the house. And they lived happily ever after.

“So, did you like that one?” I asked the laughing grumblers.

“Yes, we did. Very much”, said Bud laughing and he added. “I have a better idea. Write a tale about our first meeting and everything that happened since then, including the tales and draw some illustrations for it.”

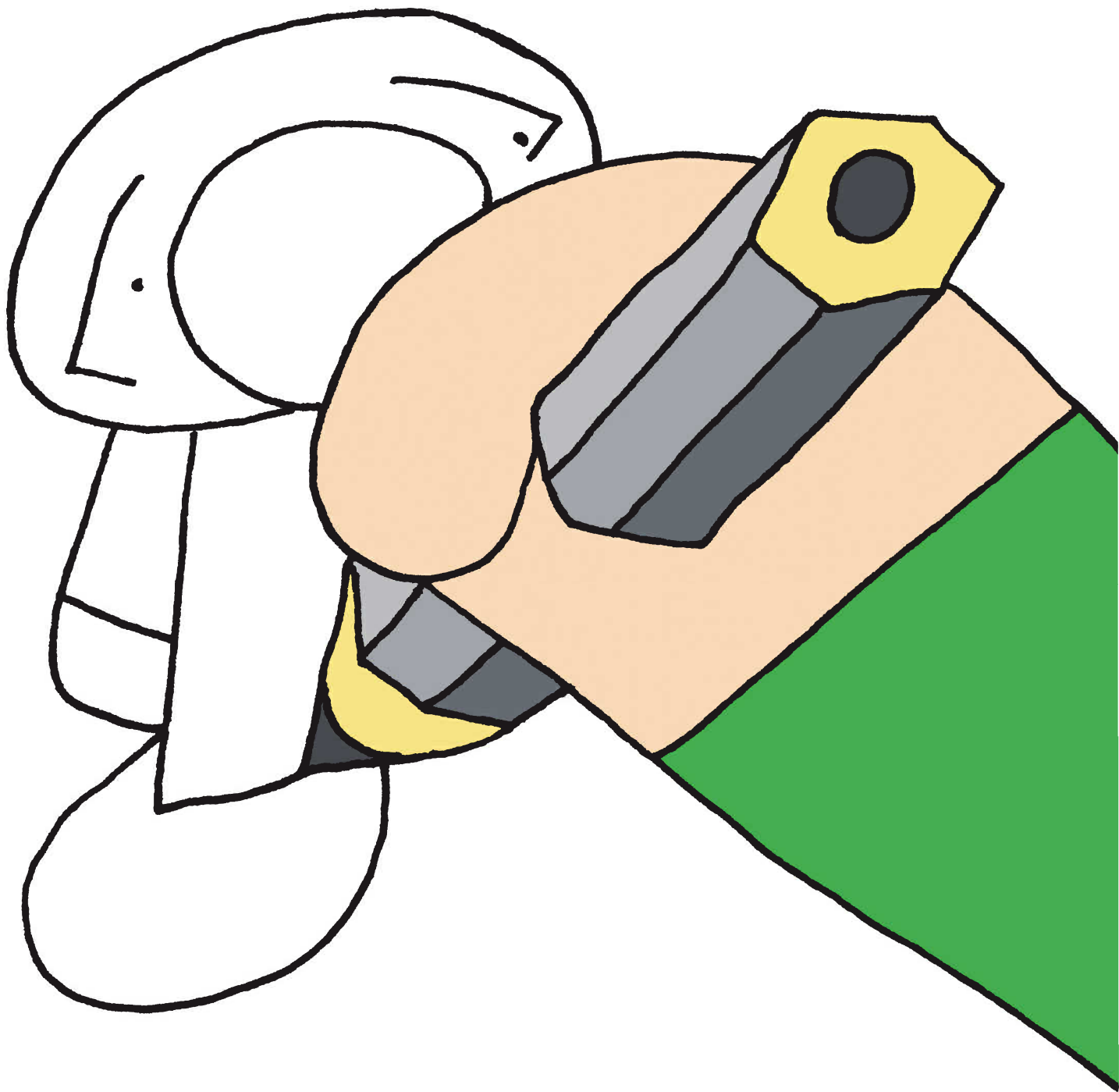


“But, I can’t draw”, I said.

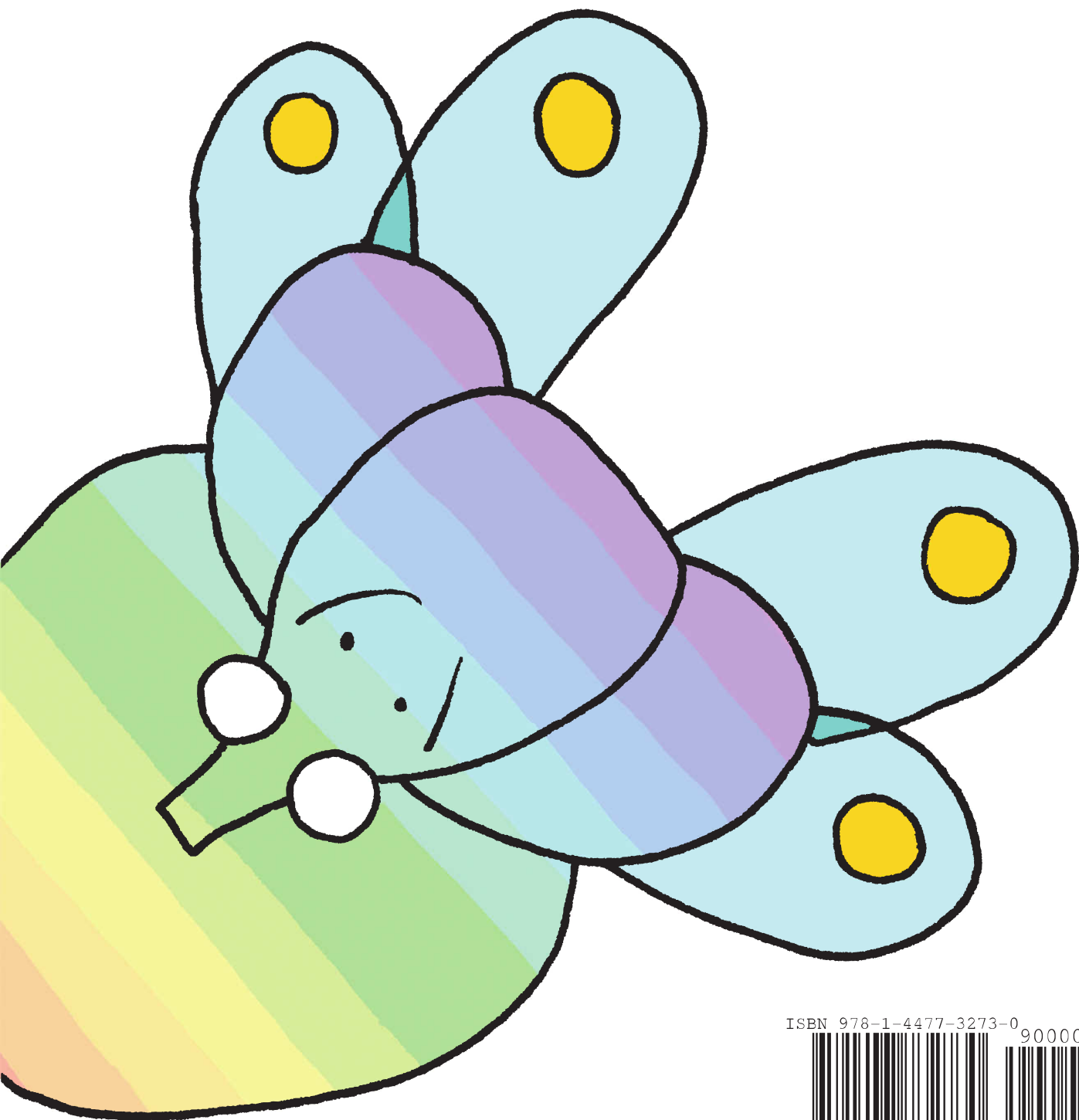
“At least you can try. Please”, begged Bud.

“All right. I’ll try”, I agreed.

This little book is the result of this promise. We lived happily since then, Bud, Barnie, Boo, Jolly, the goldfish, Mr Purr, my son, my wife and I.



The End



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