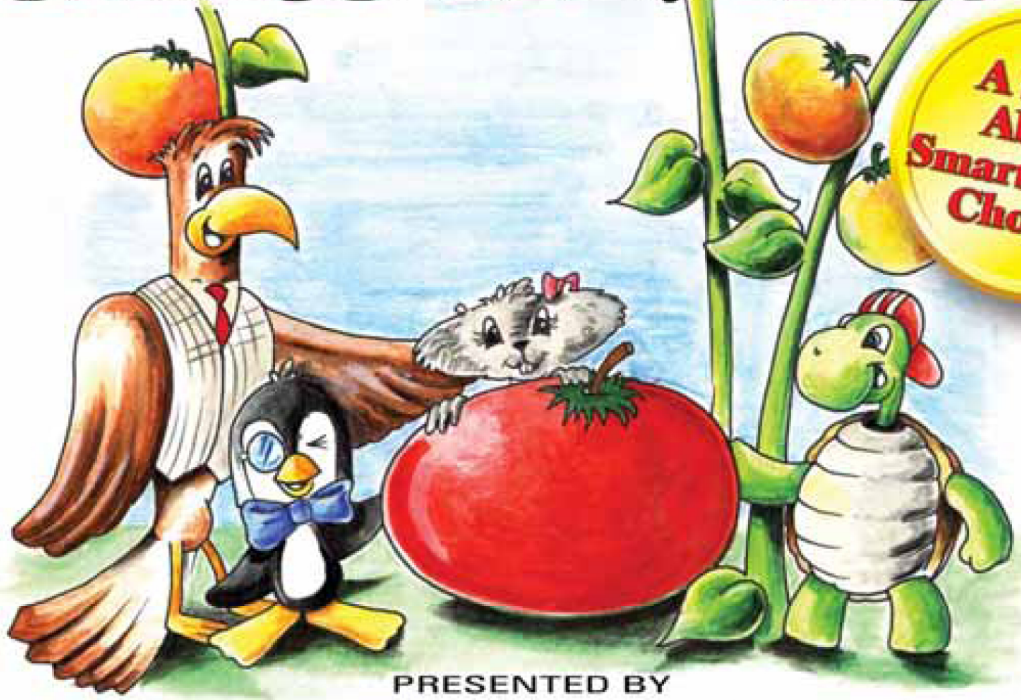
The Great Tomato Adventure



A Story About Smart Safety Choices

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN®

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The Great Tomato Adventure
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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Duracell® and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) have partnered to create the Power of Parents program. This national child safety campaign is designed to help prepare, protect and empower families.

Did you know that some child safety messaging taught today is outdated? This book offers up-to-date safety tools to help dispel some less effective safety myths and reinforce important safety lessons developed by NCMEC.

It is our sincere hope that as you enjoy sharing the adventures of Petey, Tom and Sofia, you will take the time to discuss the situations they encounter and the choices they make. Along the way, you'll notice a small Duracell flashlight icon. This flashlight serves as a symbol that you have encountered a "teachable moment"—an opportunity to review a safety lesson with your children.

To prepare for these conversations, you'll find a *Teachable Moments Guide* in the back of this book. Additional guides designed for older children also are available on our program Web site: www.powerofparentsonline.com. The guides contain sample questions and conversation starters to help you engage your children in conversations about their safety.

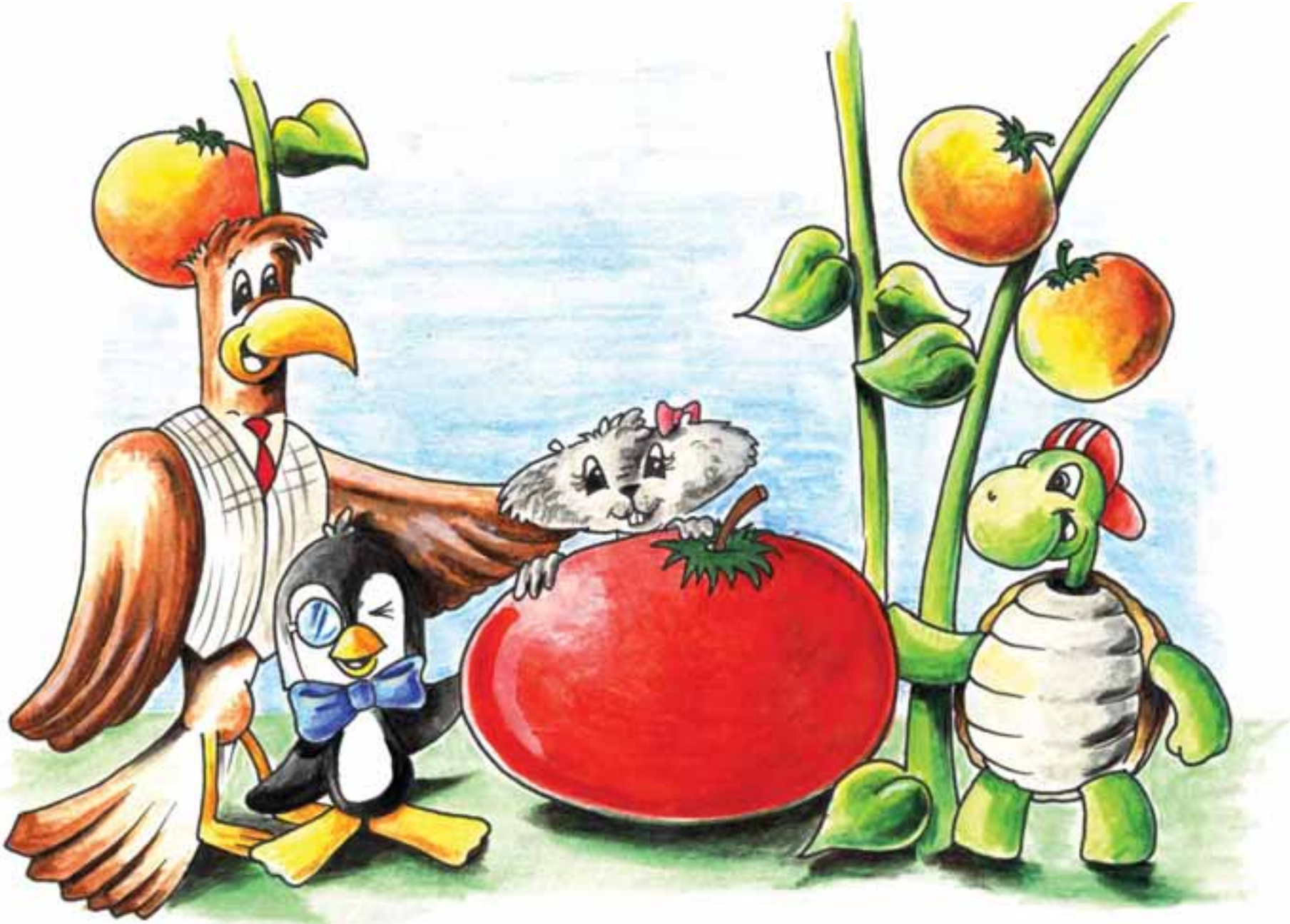
The Power of Parents Web site also houses other important safety tools, such as a downloadable child photo ID guide and a reminder service to help you update photos of your children every six months—a timeframe recommended by safety experts.

Thank you for taking the time to read our book with your child. After all, when it comes to keeping children safer, every action counts.

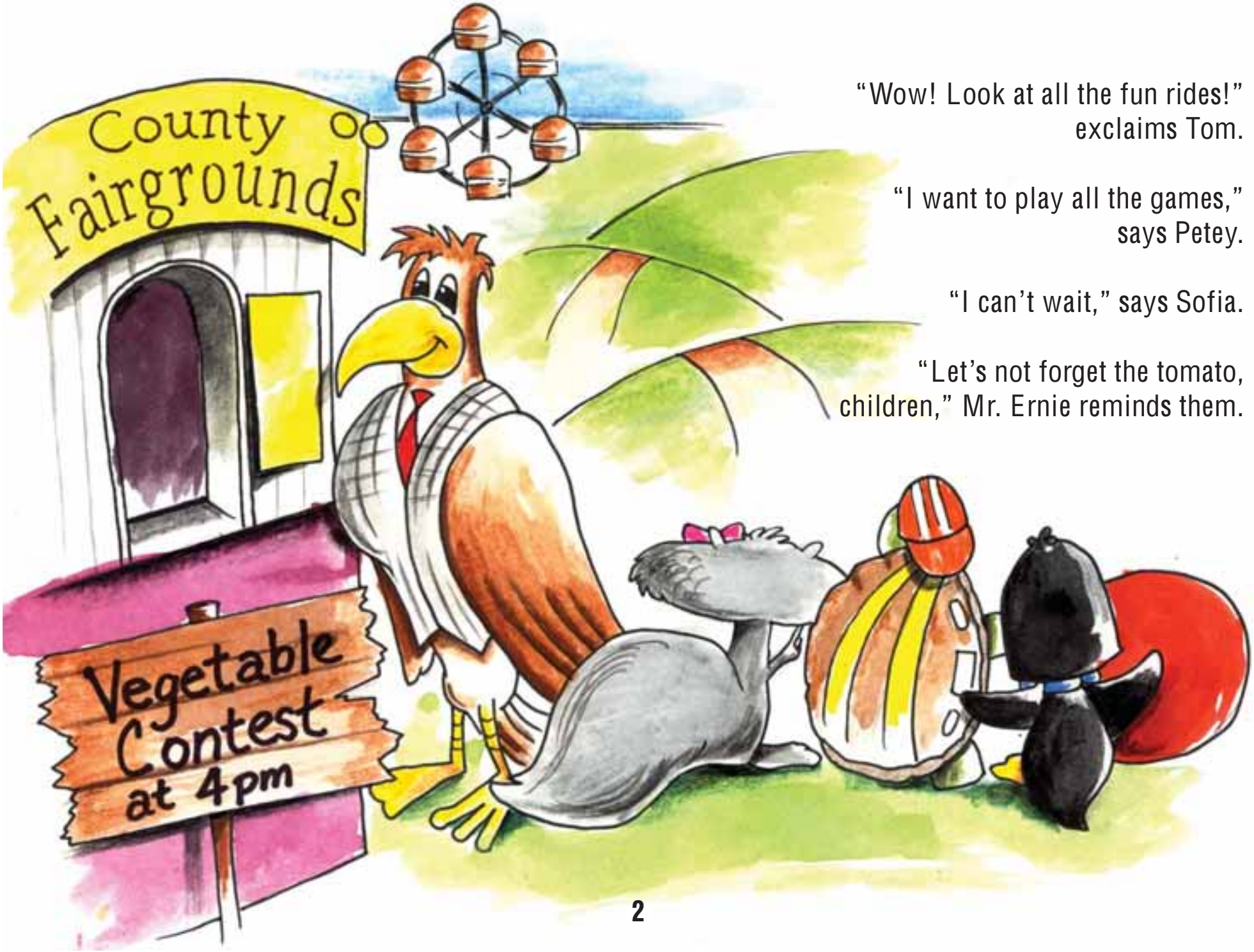
Sincerely,

Joseph F. Dooley
President, Duracell

Ernie Allen
President and CEO, NCMEC



Three good friends, Petey Penguin, Tom Turtle and Sofia Squirrel, have grown a giant tomato for the vegetable contest at the county fair. Mr. Ernie Eagle, their teacher, helps the children pick the tomato, and they all set out together for the fair.



"Wow! Look at all the fun rides!" exclaims Tom.

"I want to play all the games," says Petey.

"I can't wait," says Sofia.

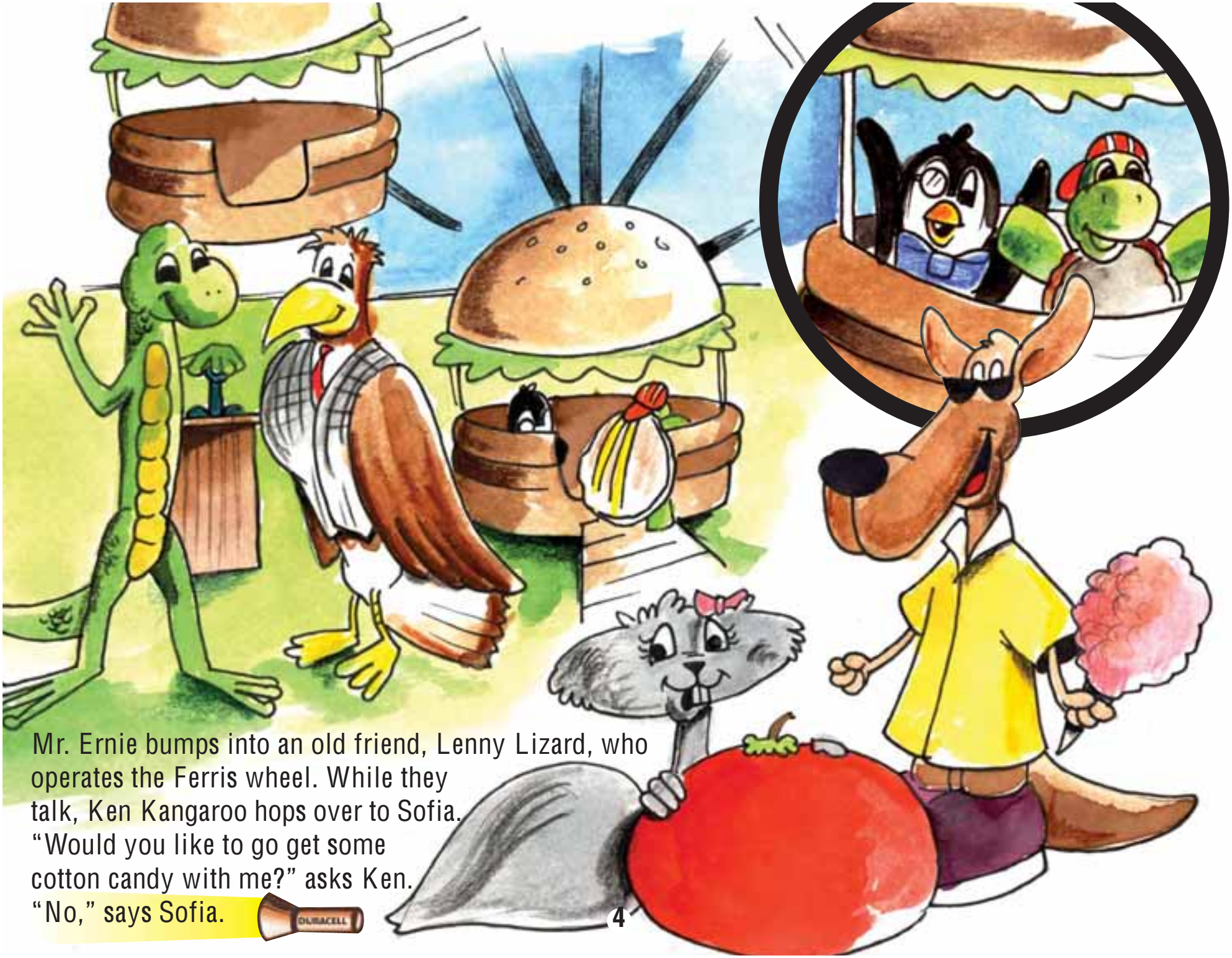
"Let's not forget the tomato, children," Mr. Ernie reminds them.

"Let's ride the Ferris wheel," suggests Petey.

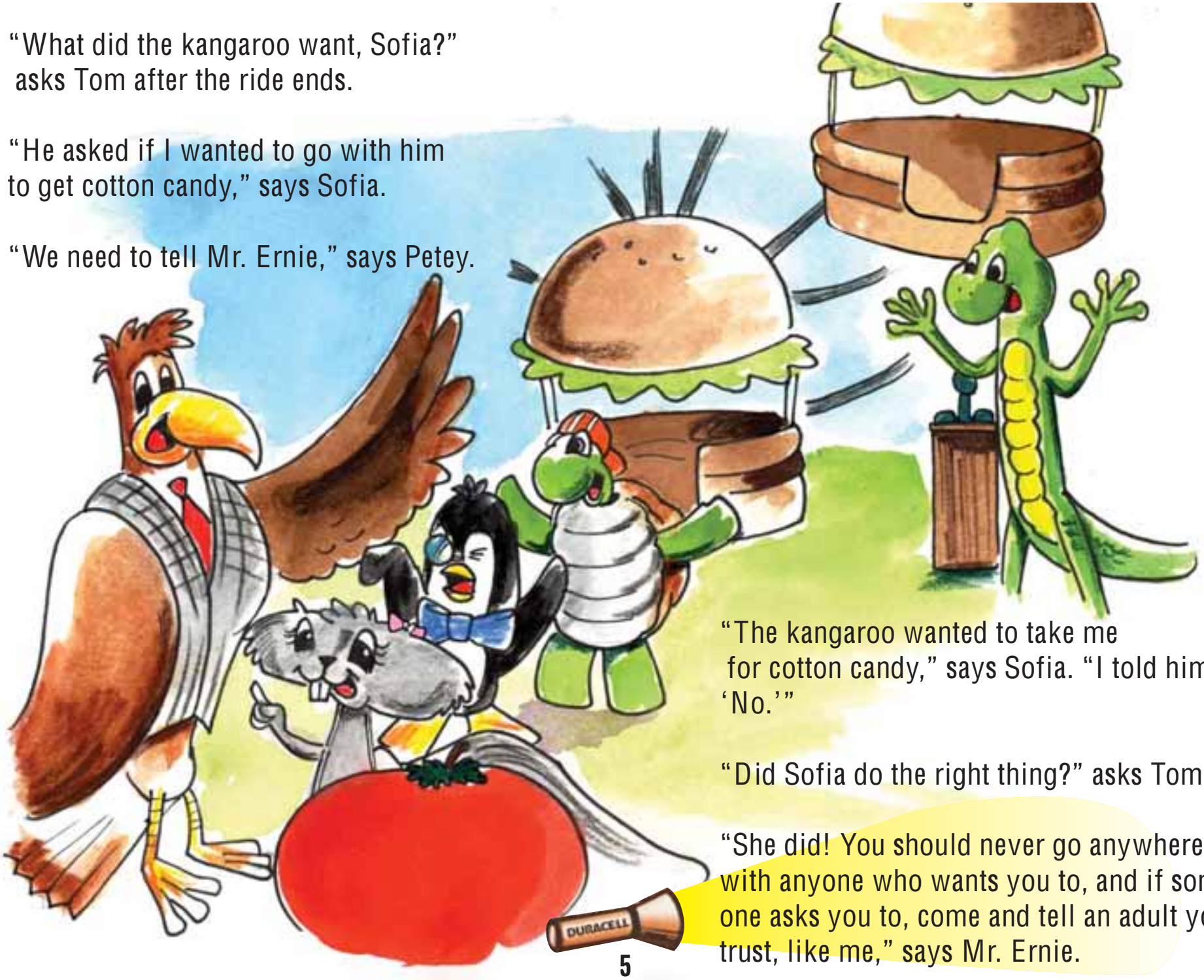
"I don't know," says Sofia. "It looks pretty high!"

"It's okay, Sofia. We can go on a different ride," Tom reassures her.

"Petey, why don't you and Tom go on the Ferris wheel? Sofia and I will wait here for you," says Mr. Ernie. "We will watch the tomato."



Mr. Ernie bumps into an old friend, Lenny Lizard, who operates the Ferris wheel. While they talk, Ken Kangaroo hops over to Sofia. "Would you like to go get some cotton candy with me?" asks Ken. "No," says Sofia.



"What did the kangaroo want, Sofia?" asks Tom after the ride ends.

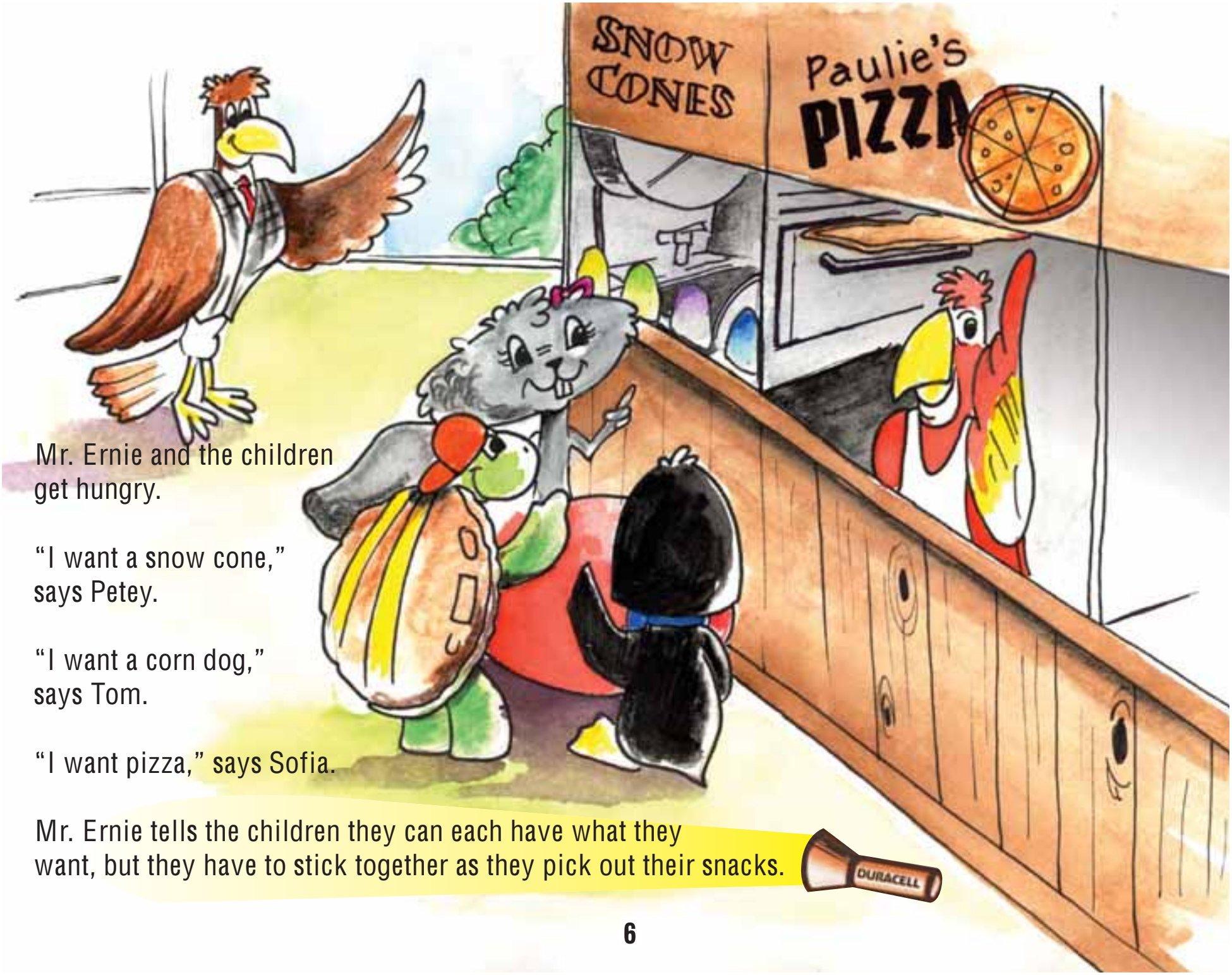
"He asked if I wanted to go with him to get cotton candy," says Sofia.

"We need to tell Mr. Ernie," says Petey.

"The kangaroo wanted to take me for cotton candy," says Sofia. "I told him 'No.'"

"Did Sofia do the right thing?" asks Tom.

"She did! You should never go anywhere with anyone who wants you to, and if someone asks you to, come and tell an adult you trust, like me," says Mr. Ernie.



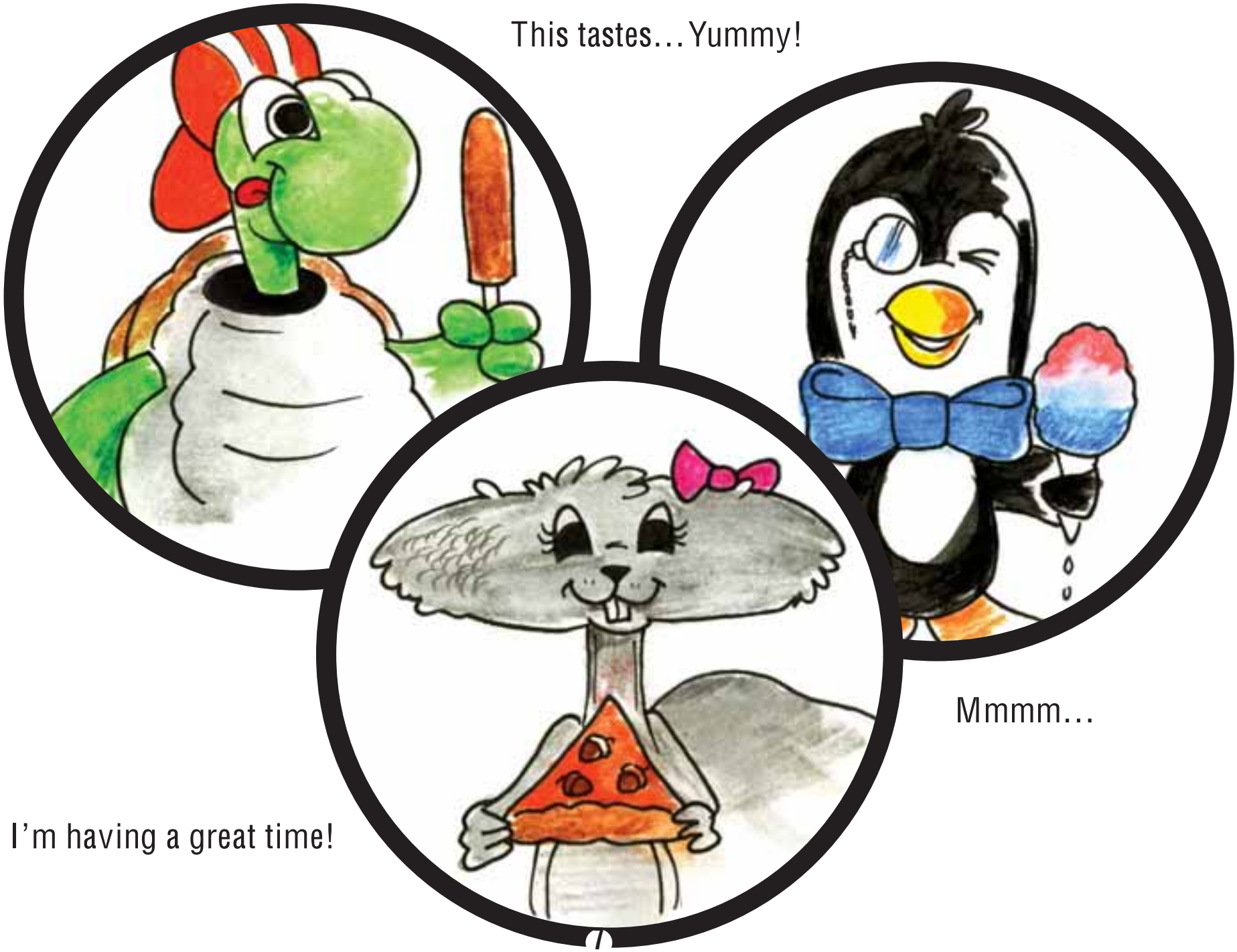
Mr. Ernie and the children get hungry.

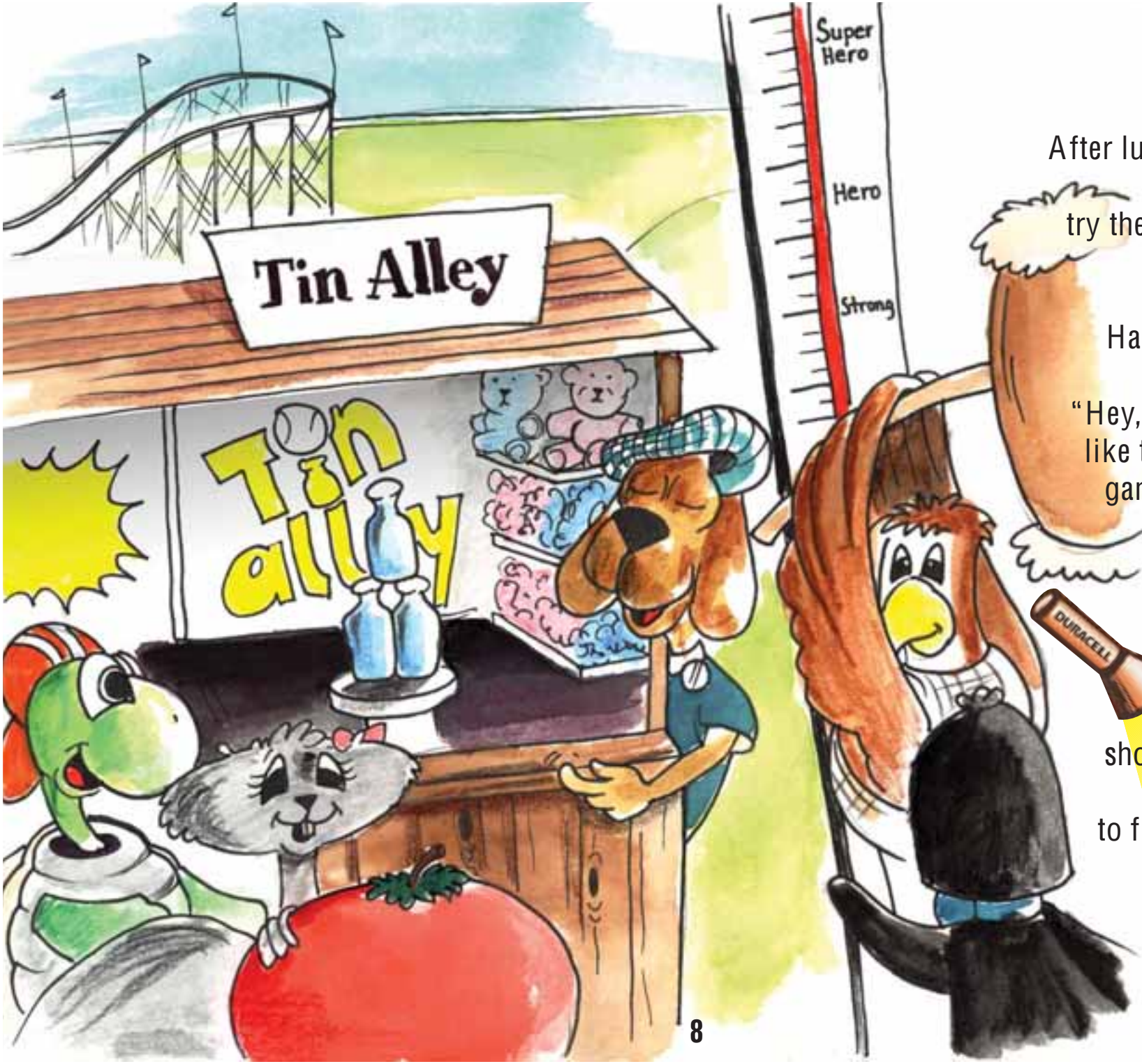
"I want a snow cone," says Petey.

"I want a corn dog," says Tom.

"I want pizza," says Sofia.

Mr. Ernie tells the children they can each have what they want, but they have to stick together as they pick out their snacks.


This tastes… Yummy!
Mmmm…
I'm having a great time!



After lunch, the children watch Mr. Ernie try the test-of-strength, where they are approached by Harold Hound Dog.

"Hey, kids. Would you like to help me play a game so I can win a prize for my daughter?" asks Harold Hound Dog.

The children shout, "No," and go with Mr. Ernie to find Gina Giraffe, the town sheriff.

"Hi, children," says Sheriff Gina. "Are you having fun?"

"Yes, but we have something we need to tell you,"says Sofia.

"What is it, children?" asks Sheriff Gina.

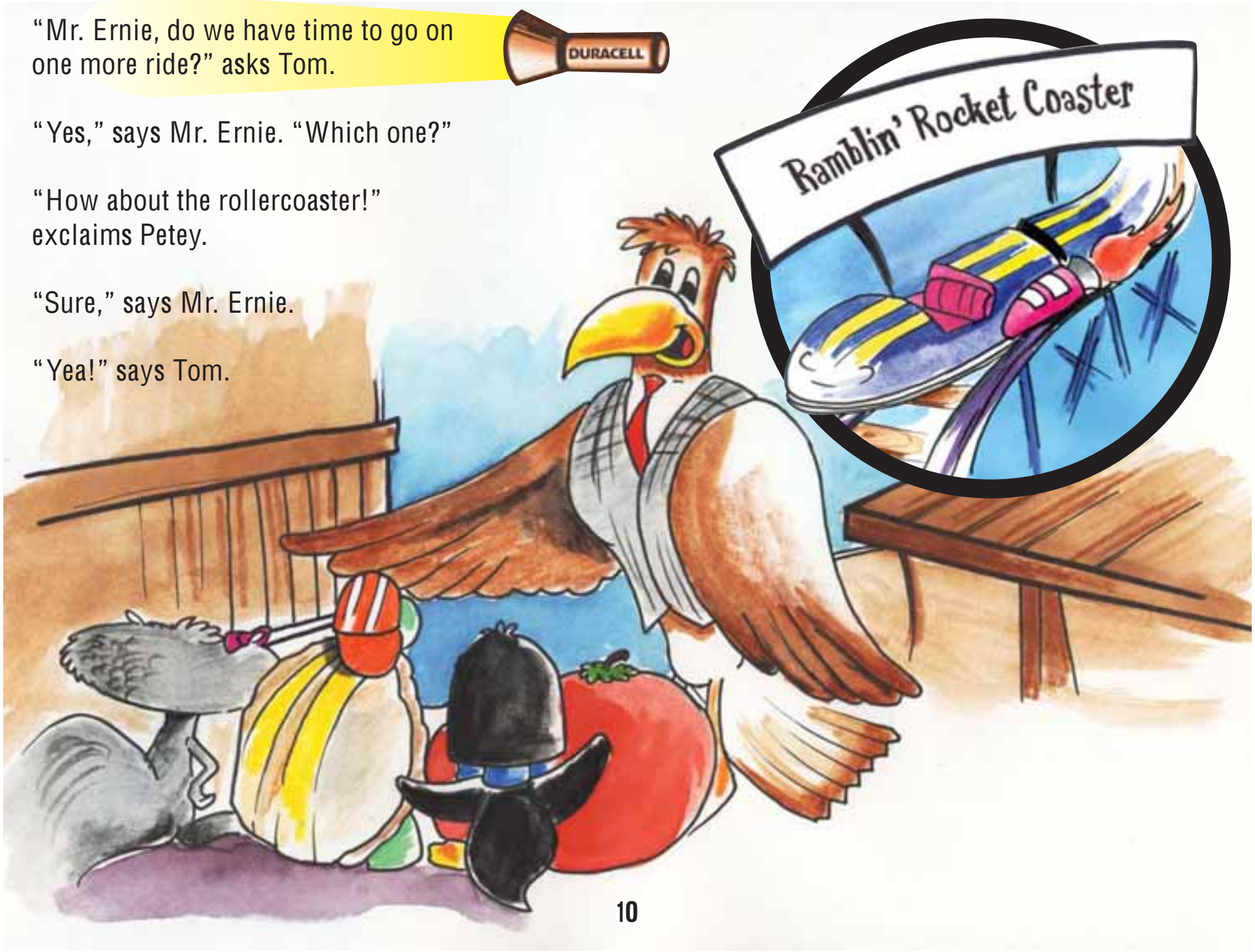
"The hound dog asked us to help him play a game," says Tom.

"We told him 'No.' We didn't like the way he made us feel," says Sofia.

"I'm proud of you," replies Sheriff Gina. "Adults should never ask children for help. They should always ask other adults."

"Thanks, Sheriff Gina!" reply the children.

"Thank you for telling me, and good luck," says Sheriff Gina.



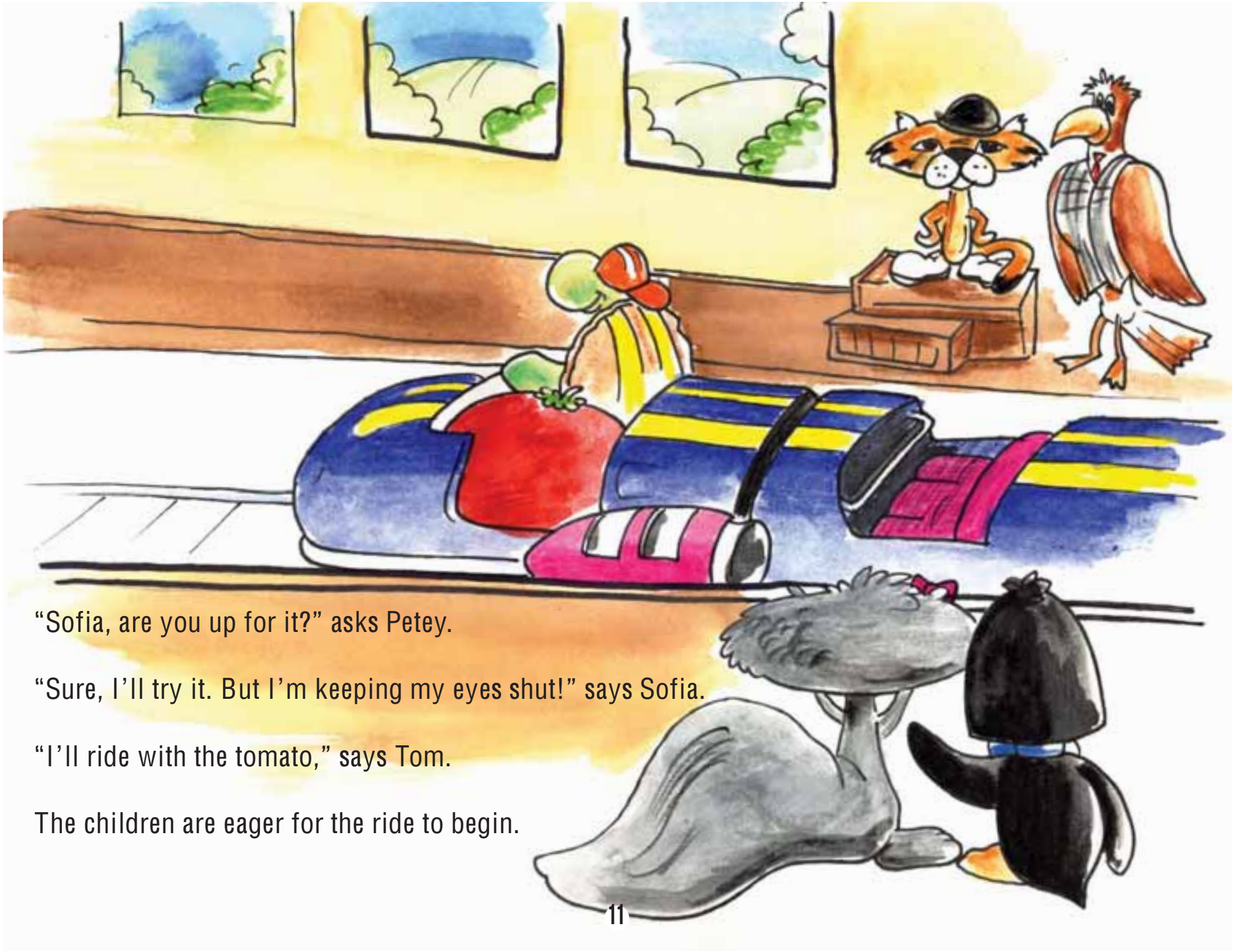
"Mr. Ernie, do we have time to go on one more ride?" asks Tom.

"Yes," says Mr. Ernie. "Which one?"

"How about the rollercoaster!" exclaims Petey.

"Sure," says Mr. Ernie.

"Yea!" says Tom.

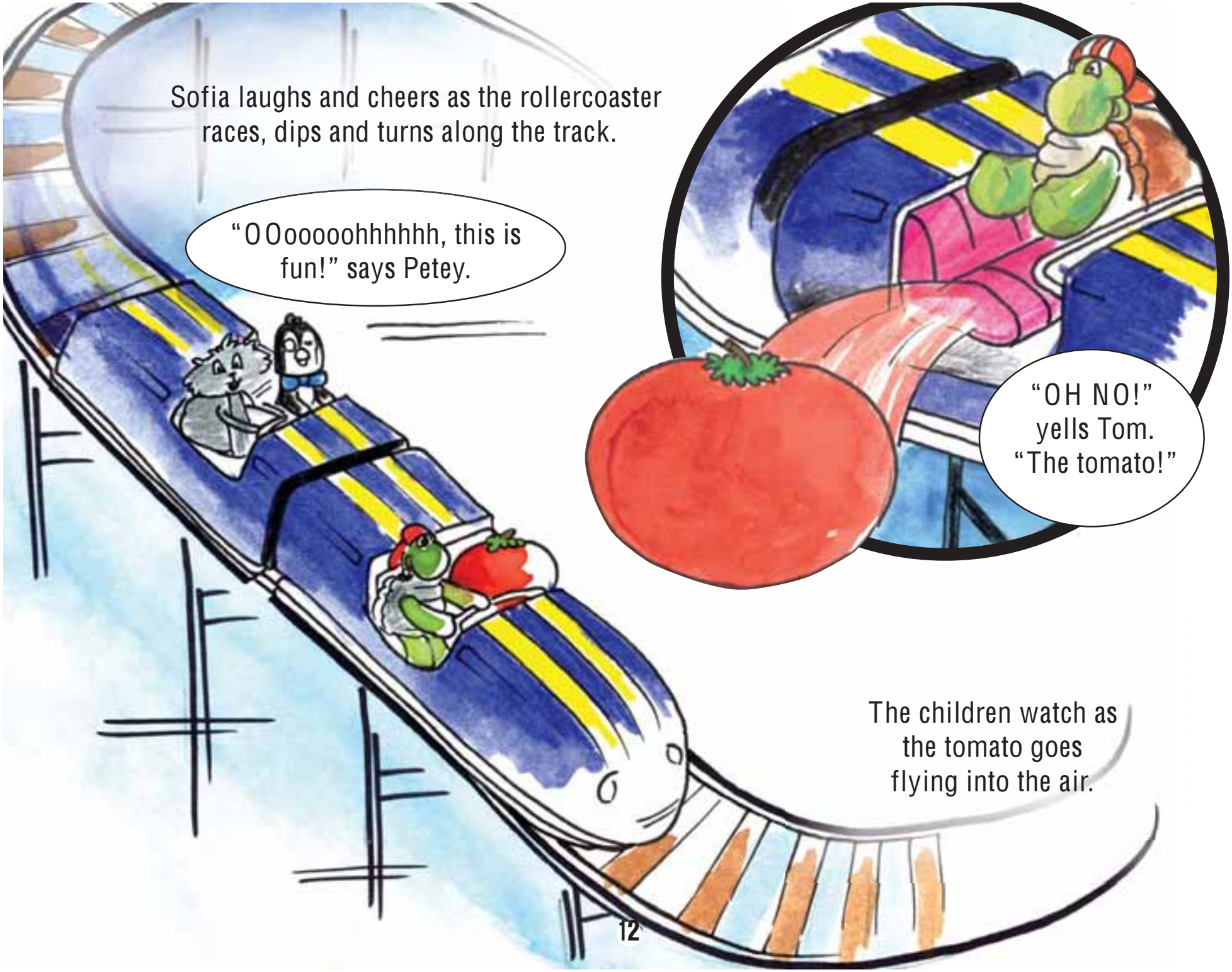


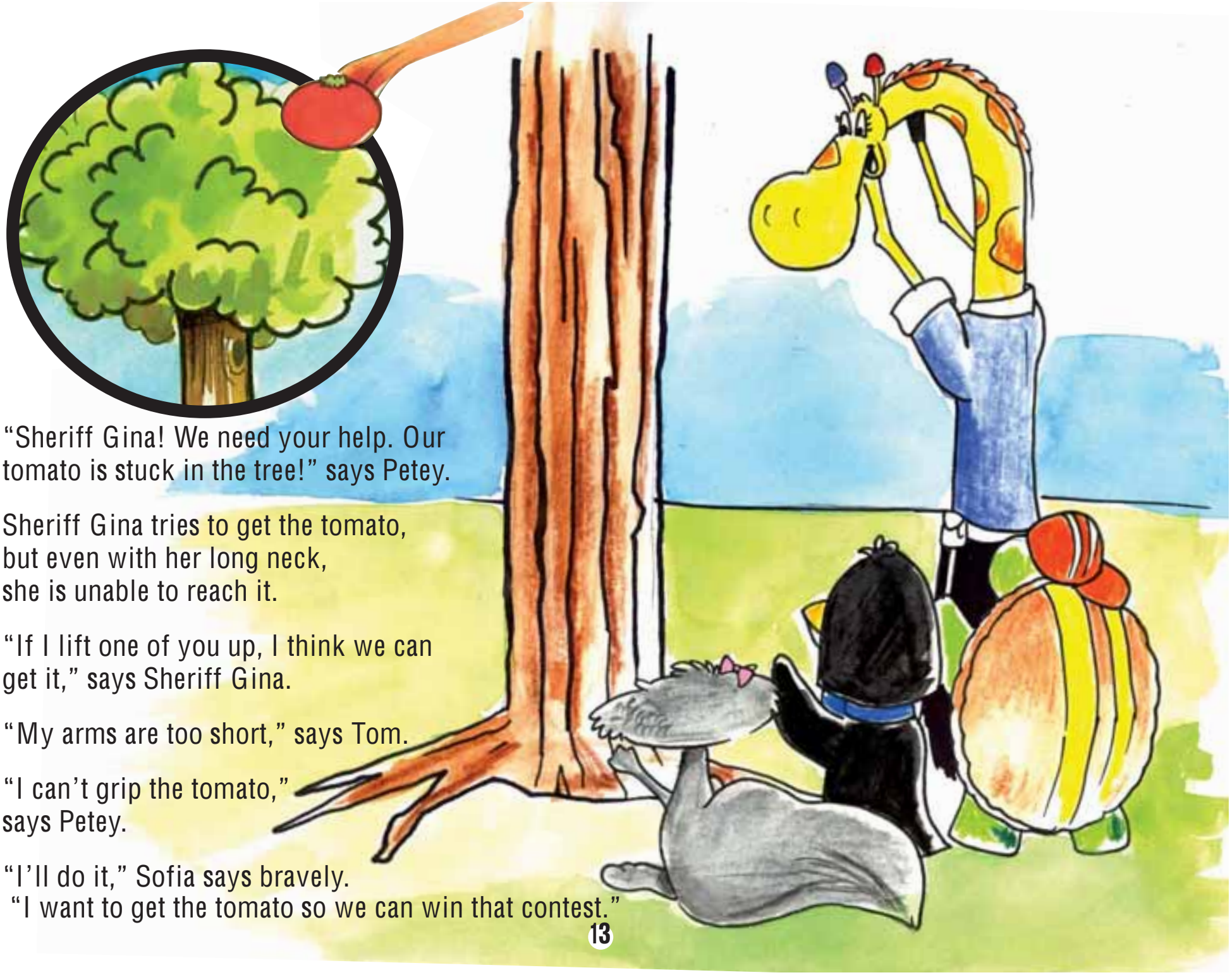
"Sofia, are you up for it?" asks Petey.

"Sure, I'll try it. But I'm keeping my eyes shut!" says Sofia.

"I'll ride with the tomato," says Tom.

The children are eager for the ride to begin.


Sofia laughs and cheers as the rollercoaster races, dips and turns along the track.
"OOoooooohhhhhh, this is fun!" says Petey.
"OH NO!" yells Tom. "The tomato!"
The children watch as the tomato goes flying into the air.



"Sheriff Gina! We need your help. Our tomato is stuck in the tree!" says Petey.

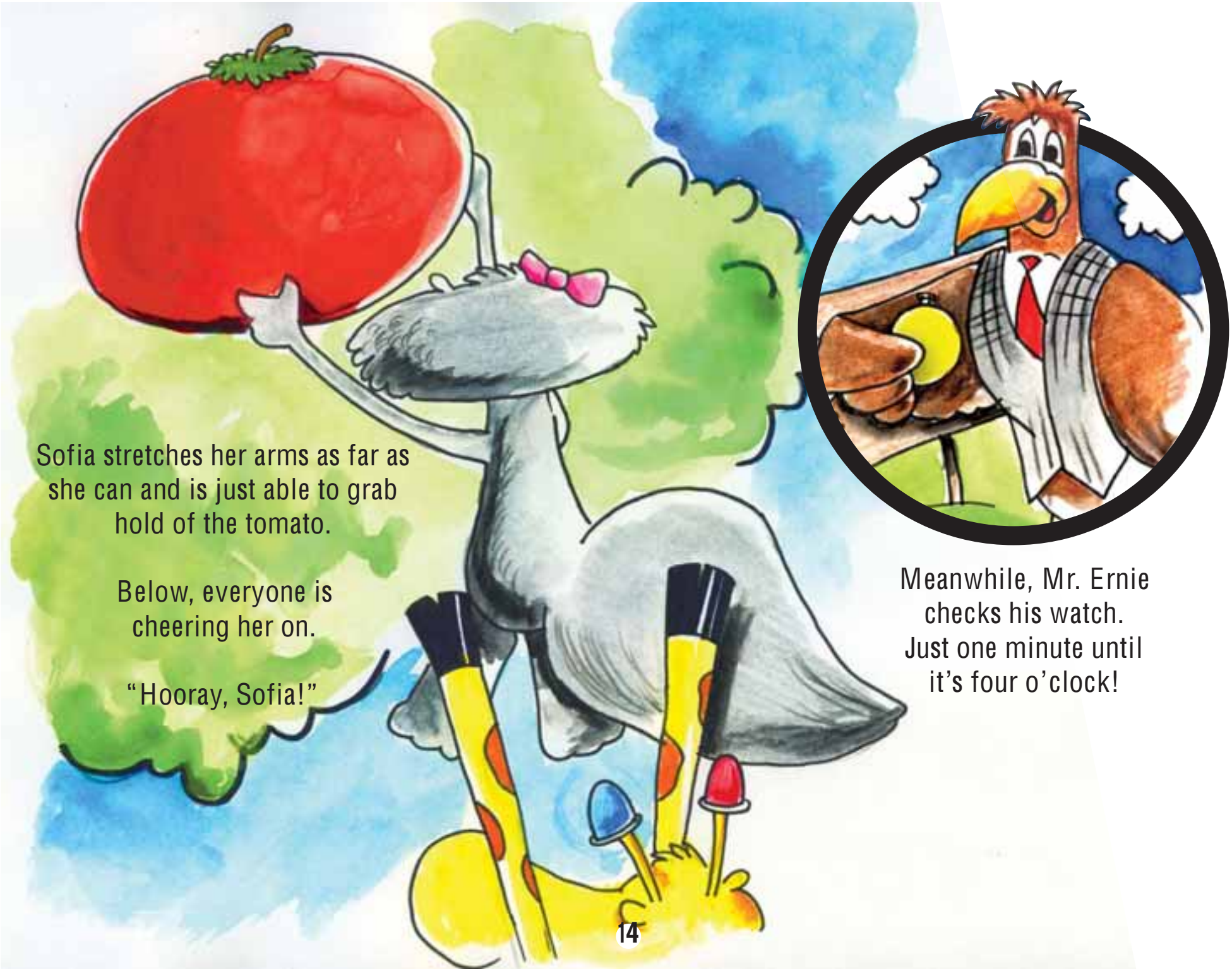
Sheriff Gina tries to get the tomato, but even with her long neck, she is unable to reach it.

"If I lift one of you up, I think we can get it," says Sheriff Gina.

"My arms are too short," says Tom.

"I can't grip the tomato," says Petey.

"I'll do it," Sofia says bravely. "I want to get the tomato so we can win that contest."

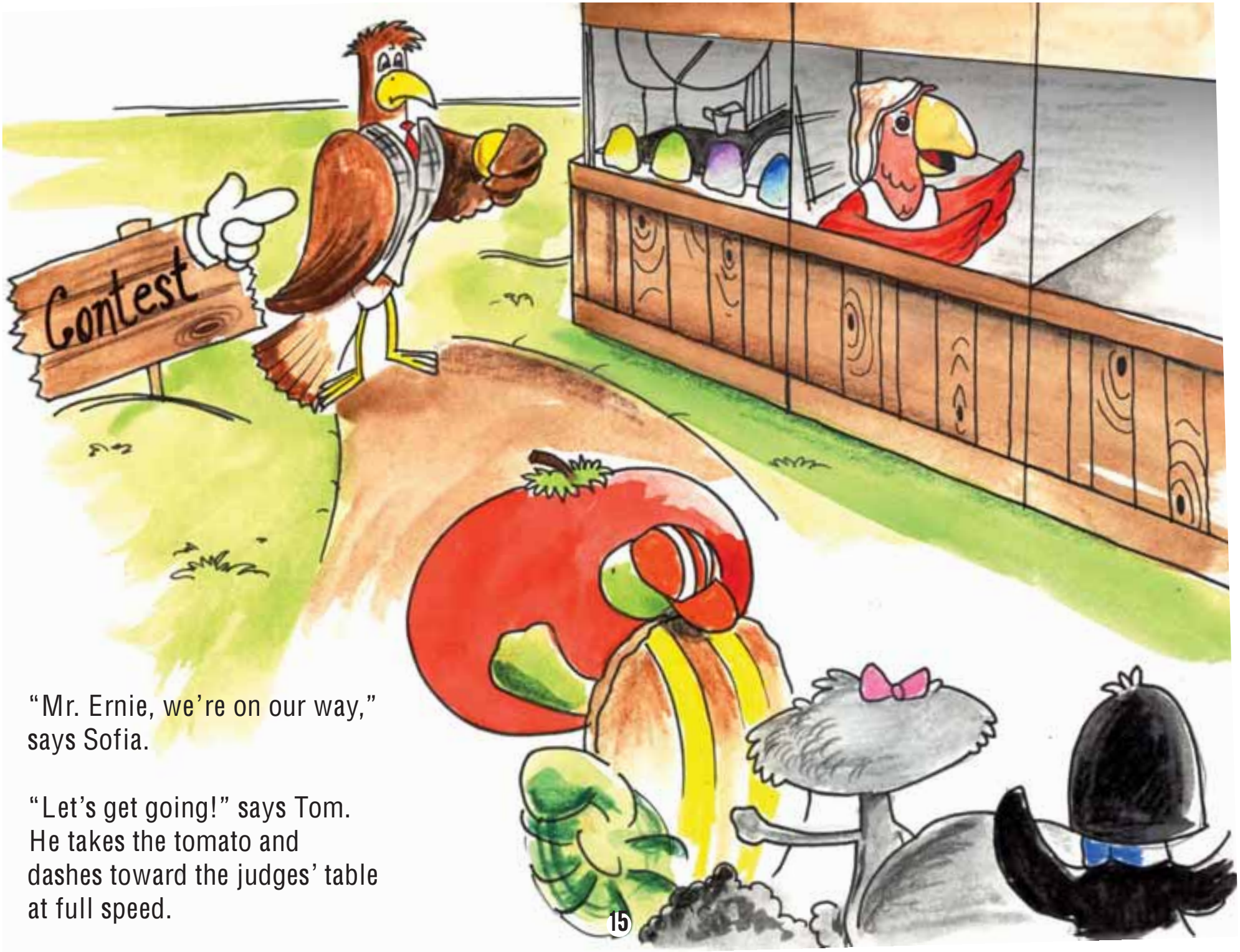


Sofia stretches her arms as far as she can and is just able to grab hold of the tomato.

Below, everyone is cheering her on.

"Hooray, Sofia!"

Meanwhile, Mr. Ernie checks his watch. Just one minute until it's four o'clock!



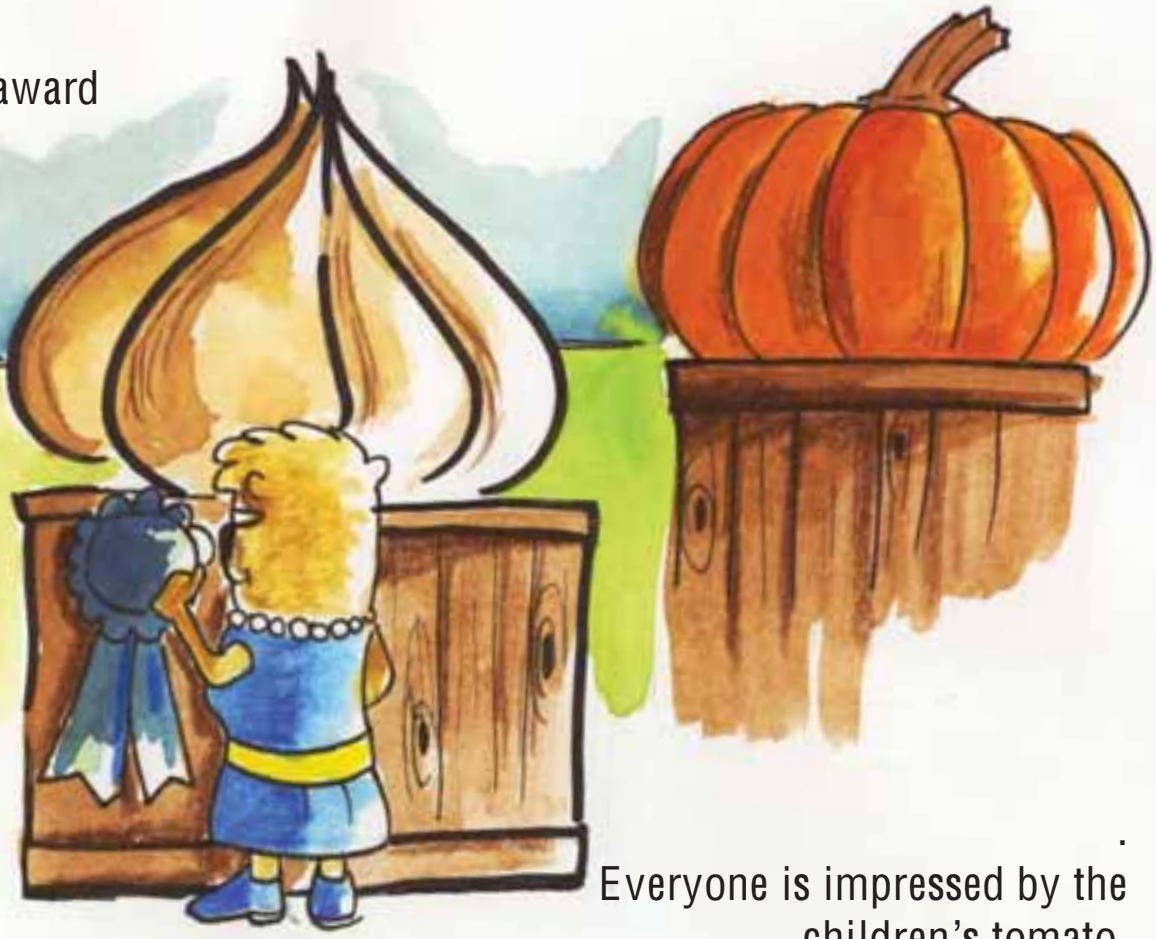
"Mr. Ernie, we're on our way," says Sofia.

"Let's get going!" says Tom. He takes the tomato and dashes toward the judges' table at full speed.

"Huge tomato coming through!" shouts Mr. Ernie.

When they arrive, the judges are about to award the Blue Ribbon to a large, white onion.

"Hold the judging!" yells Tom.



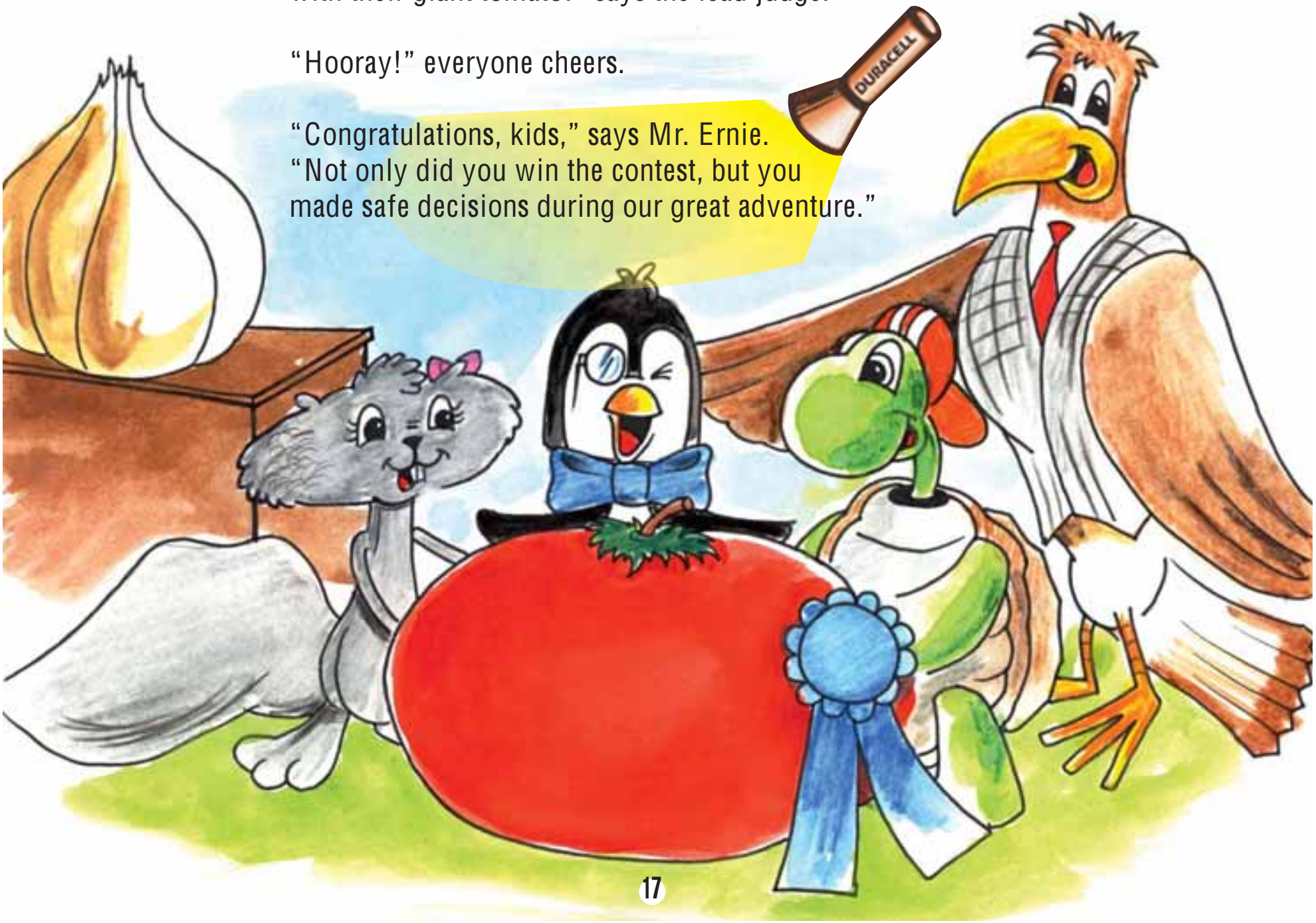
Everyone is impressed by the children's tomato.

"Wow! I've never seen such an enormous tomato," says one judge.

"The winners are Petey, Tom and Sofia with their giant tomato!" says the lead judge.

"Hooray!" everyone cheers.

"Congratulations, kids," says Mr. Ernie. "Not only did you win the contest, but you made safe decisions during our great adventure."



Teachable Moments Guide

Shine the Light On Child Safety

The small flashlights throughout this book indicate an important safety situation or choice faced by our main characters. Duracell® and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) encourage you to use the guide below as a simple tool to help start a conversation with your child about safety. We hope that you will engage your children by asking questions and giving "real-life" examples that relate back to the scene.

Just Say NO! and Walk Away – Pages 4 and 8

Teachable Moment: Sofia Squirrel firmly says "No!" when Ken Kangaroo asks her to go get cotton candy with him; the children say "No!" when Harold Hound Dog asks them to help him win a prize for his daughter.

- Children need to understand that adults who are not in charge of them should never ask them to go anywhere or try to buy them candy, gifts or other treats.
- While this can be difficult for children because they may be turning down something they really like, it is important for them to feel empowered to say "no" and walk away without fear of hurting feelings or needing to be polite.
- Reinforce that it is always important to tell you or another adult they trust if a similar situation occurs.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you think Sofia did the right thing in this situation? Why?
2. What do you think Sofia should do now that she's told the Kangaroo "no"?
3. Should Sofia worry that she hurt the Kangaroo's feelings?

Tell a Trusted Adult – Pages 5 and 9

Teachable Moment: The children tell Mr. Ernie that Ken Kangaroo offered to buy Sofia cotton candy; the children tell Sheriff Gina that Harold Hound Dog approached them.

- More often than not, children are hurt, abused or abducted by an adult known to the child or the family. Teach your children that even if the person who makes them feel uncomfortable, offers to buy them something or asks them to keep a secret is someone they know, it's still very important for them to tell you or another trusted adult.
- This is also a good time to help your children identify two other trusted adults they can go to if they feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused, such as teachers, grandparents, or other relatives. It is important for children to know that they are not alone; there are many trusted adults in their lives who will help protect them.
- We know that children love and need to be commended for doing the right thing. This is a great opportunity to reassure your children that they can talk to you about anything without being afraid that you will be angry.
- Just like Sofia and her friends, you want your children to feel safe talking to you.

Conversation Starters

1. Why do you think it is important for the children to tell Mr. Ernie and Gina the Giraffe what happened?
2. Do you feel comfortable telling me if another person, even someone we know, makes you feel scared, uncomfortable or confused?
3. Do you think you should keep any secrets if someone asks you not to tell?

Always Take a Friend – Page 6

Teachable Moment: The children go with each other to get snacks.

- This is one of the most important safety lessons of this book because often children like to show their independence by wanting to go places alone or ahead of their parents or guardians. However, children who are alone are more at risk than those accompanied by others.
- As parents and guardians, you may recall doing many things on your own at your child's age so you might want them to mark the same milestones. But you must remind your children that they should have a friend with them at all times—even when playing in the yard.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you understand why you should never go places without a friend or trusted adult?
2. Do you think you need to have someone else with you to play in the backyard?

Adults Should Not Ask Children For Help – Page 9

Teachable Moment: Sheriff Gina explains to the children why they did the right thing in telling Harold Hound Dog "No!" and walking away.

- One of the wonderful things about children is that they want to help and please others. That is why you should teach them that if an adult asks them for help they do not need to be polite and that you want them to say "No!" and get away from that person.
- This lesson should be reinforced because abductors may try to trick a child by asking for help finding a lost puppy or child, with directions or carrying something to their home or car.
- Remind your children that adults should ask another adult for help—never a child.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you think adults should ask children for help?
2. Is it okay to help someone if I've given permission to you?
3. Practice out loud how to say "No!" in a loud, firm tone.

Always Check First – Page 10

Teachable Moment: The children want to leave Mr. Ernie to go on the rollercoaster.

- The important message here is that your children should understand they are not to leave you or their guardian without permission first.
- It is essential that you or another trusted adult know where they are and where they plan to go at all times—even if they are just going outside to play in the yard.
- Again, reinforce that they should always ask for your permission and take a friend.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you understand that you need to stay with a friend or an adult you trust when you are playing?
2. Why do you think it is important for me to know exactly where you are going to be?

Recapping the Lessons – Page 17

Teachable Moment: Celebration of teamwork and lessons well-learned.

- This is a great opportunity for you to reinforce the safety messages in the book and praise your children for learning them.

Conversation Starters

1. Do you think Petey, Tom and Sofia did a good job learning about safety at the fair?
2. What did they learn?

"Real-Life" Scenarios

1. What would you do if someone asked you to get in his or her car?

- No matter how your children reply, in a calm voice, tell them that they are not allowed to leave with anyone, even if it's someone they know, unless you are with them or they check first with you or another trusted adult.
- Remind your children that you will never ask someone to pick them up from school or the playground unless you have discussed it with them first.

2. If you are playing outside with your friend <INSERT FRIEND'S NAME> and you decide that you want to go to his or her own backyard and play instead, what should you do first?

- Be firm in setting the rule that your children need to check first before going to someone else's house to play—even if it is nearby.

3. If you were playing on the playground at school and someone you do not know asked you to help find his or her missing puppy, what would you do?

- It is important to reinforce here that they should firmly say "No," get away and tell a trusted adult.
- Children should feel confident in saying "No" if a situation makes them uncomfortable, and they should know that they never have to be polite in an uncomfortable situation, even with someone they know.

Tip For Parents

Praise your children whenever you notice that they are practicing one of these safety lessons. Explain to them that you are very proud that they are learning to make safer choices.

This type of positive reinforcement empowers children with the confidence they might need if they encounter an unsafe situation.

The Great Tomato Adventure

A Story About Smart Safety Choices

Join our entertaining cast of characters, including Petey Penguin, Tom Turtle and Sofia Squirrel, as they embark on a fun adventure to enter their prize tomato in a contest at the local county fair. As they work together to deliver the tomato to the judges' booth before the entry deadline, they encounter safety situations that help them learn valuable lessons.

As you read this book with your child, please discuss the situations the characters encounter and the choices they make. To help prepare you for these meaningful conversations, you'll find a ***Teachable Moments Guide*** written especially for you—including sample conversation starters and tips—located in the back of this book.

Did you know that some child safety messaging taught today is outdated?

To provide you with up-to-date safety information and tools, Duracell® and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) have partnered to create the Power of Parents program. This program provides parents and guardians with child safety resources and updated tools, like this children's book (for ages four to six).

Take Action Today

Please take time today to visit the Power of Parents Web site: www.powerofparentsonline.com. This site provides additional ***Teachable Moments Guides*** designed for older children, as well as important safety tools, like a free downloadable child photo ID guide and a six-month e-mail reminder service to update your child's ID photo—a timeframe recommended by safety experts and authorities.

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