

EDGAR AND GUTH

Guth, the turtle, and Edgar, the squirrel, were best friends. One day they were playing in the forest when Tork, a duck, and Jerry, a bunny, came by.

"Would you like to run relay races with us?" Jerry asked.

"I like relay races," said Edgar.

"Jerry and I will be a team," Tork said, "and Edgar and Guth will be a team."

"Those aren't fair teams," Edgar said. "Guth is very slow."

"But you're fast," Tork said. "We'll run down to the end of the pathway, touch the team player at the other end, and then run back. First team back is the winner."

"One ... two ... three. Go!" called Jerry.



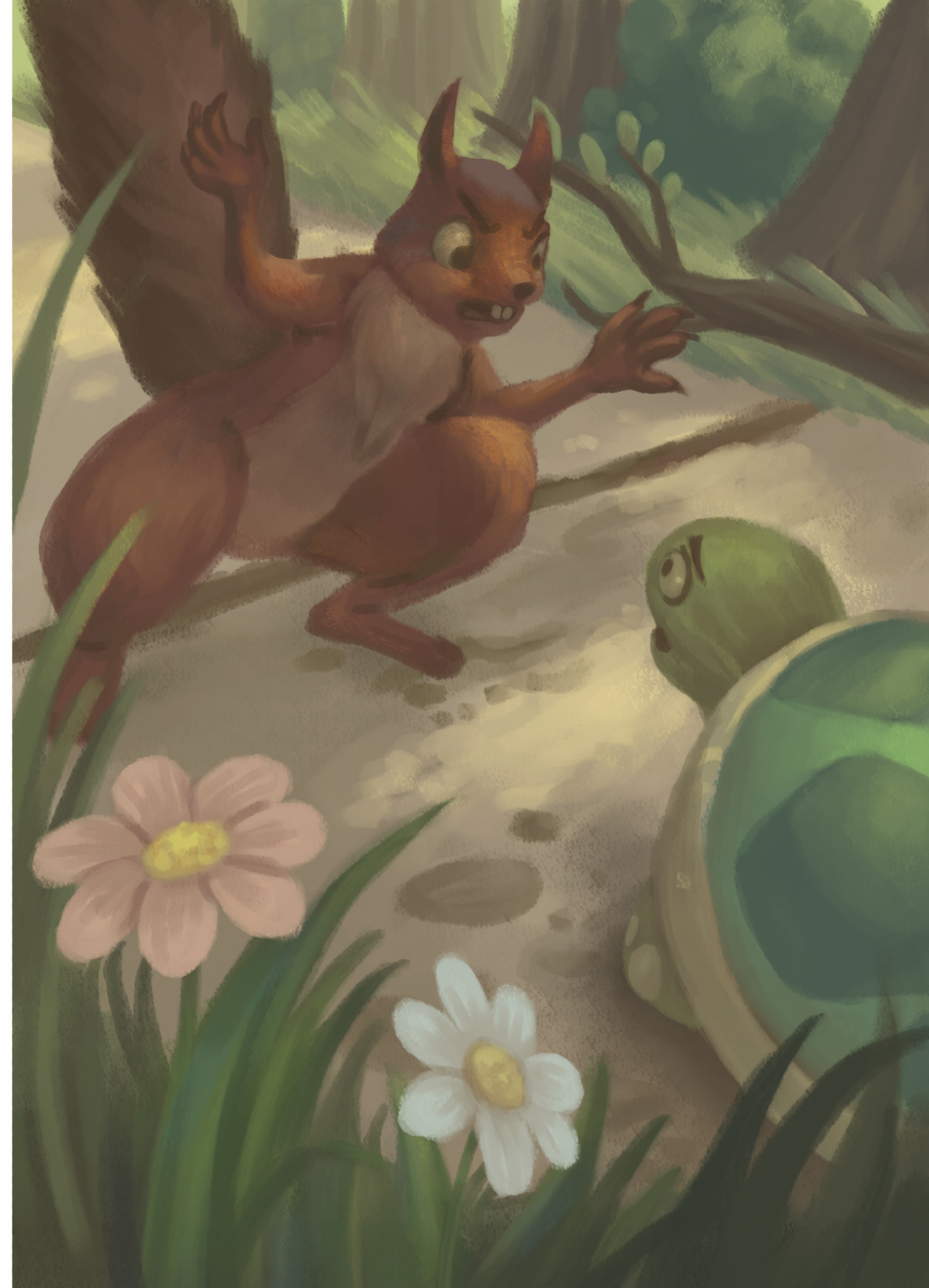
Tork and Edgar both took off down the forest pathway. Edgar made it to where Guth was waiting, and the turtle started his part of the race. It wasn't long, though, till Jerry had caught up with Guth and soon overtook him.

"Go faster!" Edgar shouted.

But being a turtle, Guth was slow. He had hardly made it halfway down the path when Jerry crossed the finish line.

"You made us lose!" Edgar said angrily to Guth when he finally reached the finish line. "I even gave you a head start, and you *still* made us lose! We're going to race again, and this time I'll make sure we win!"

Tork and Edgar lined up again and both took off at the word "go." Edgar zipped down the pathway, and when he got to where Guth was waiting, he picked Guth up and began running down the path again. Edgar wasn't used to running with a turtle on his back, and with a thump he fell. Guth shot off Edgar's back.



"HELP!" Guth cried, as he shot down the path, spinning on his back. He tucked his legs and head into his shell and continued to call for help. Then Guth hit a tree branch, was flung back on to the pathway, and slid across the finish line before Jerry.

"We won! We won!" Edgar shouted.

Guth's legs and head popped out of his shell, and he struggled to turn himself over. He tried to walk, but he was dizzy.

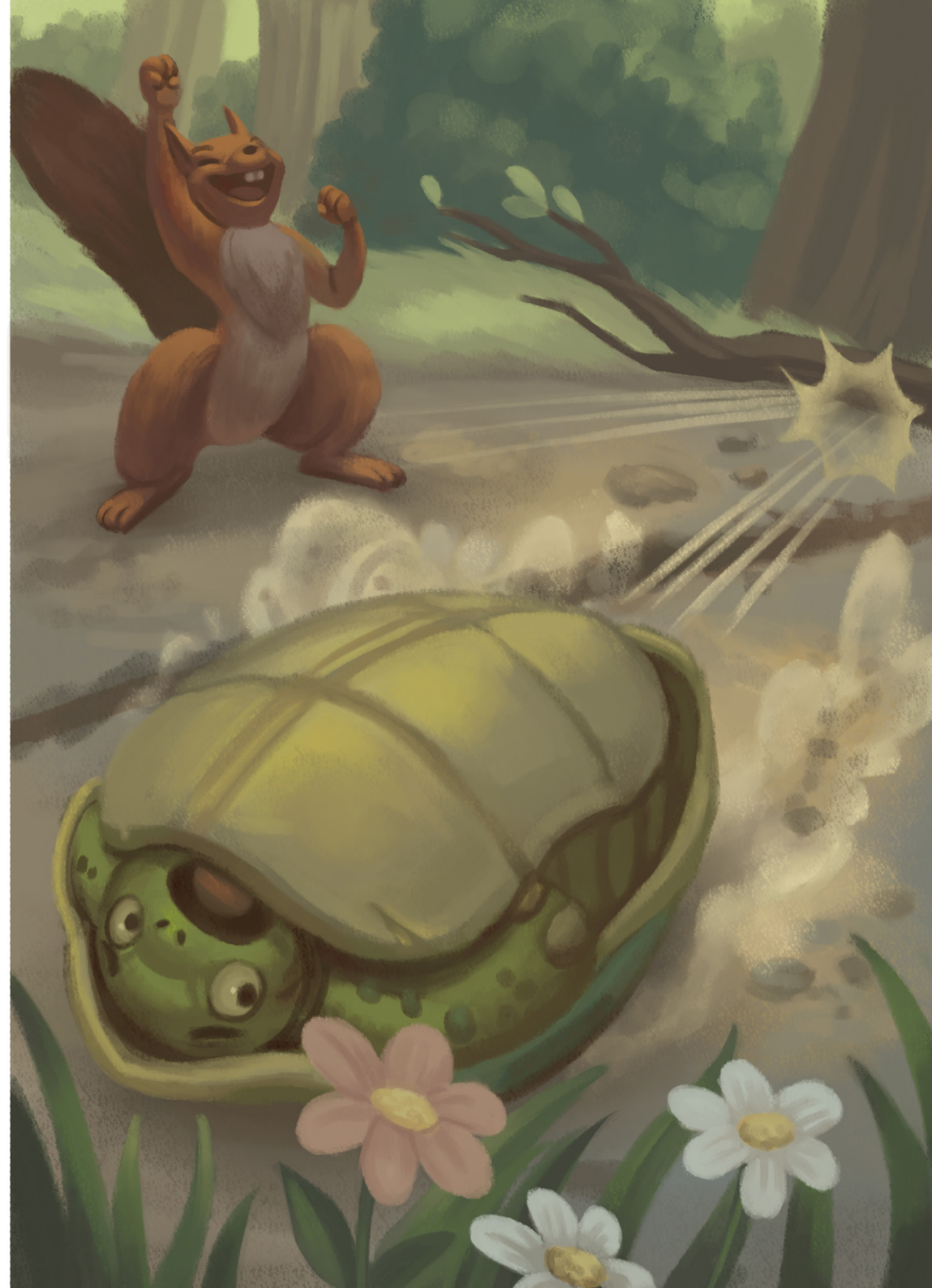
Edgar lifted Guth, exclaiming again and again that they'd won, and how fast Guth had been.

"Put me down!" Guth said angrily.

"But we won!" Edgar said again.

"I don't care," Guth said. "It was a silly race!"

"It wasn't fair either, because you carried Guth," Tork added. "Let's go, Jerry. This isn't fun anymore."



"What's happening here?" Tuft, the owl, asked.

"We were having a race," Edgar said, "and we won!"

Edgar told Tuft all about the race and laughed when he remembered seeing Guth shoot down the path. "It was so funny!" Edgar said.

"And how is your friend doing?" Tuft asked. "Did you make sure he was okay?"

"Uh, no," muttered Edgar. "I think he's fine. ... Guth?"

But Guth had walked down toward the river and hidden himself inside a hollow tree trunk. When he heard Edgar calling to him, he crawled further into the trunk.

"Guth?" Edgar called again, but there was no answer.

"It looks like you need to find your friend, Edgar," Tuft said. "Maybe he's hurt, or maybe he's upset."



Edgar looked up and down the path, down by the river, and even asked other animals if they had seen Guth, but he was nowhere to be found.

The sun was setting, and Edgar was worried about his friend. He felt bad about the way he had treated Guth. He saw a fallen tree log and sat down on it, feeling very sad. "Guth," he whispered, "where are you? I miss you!"

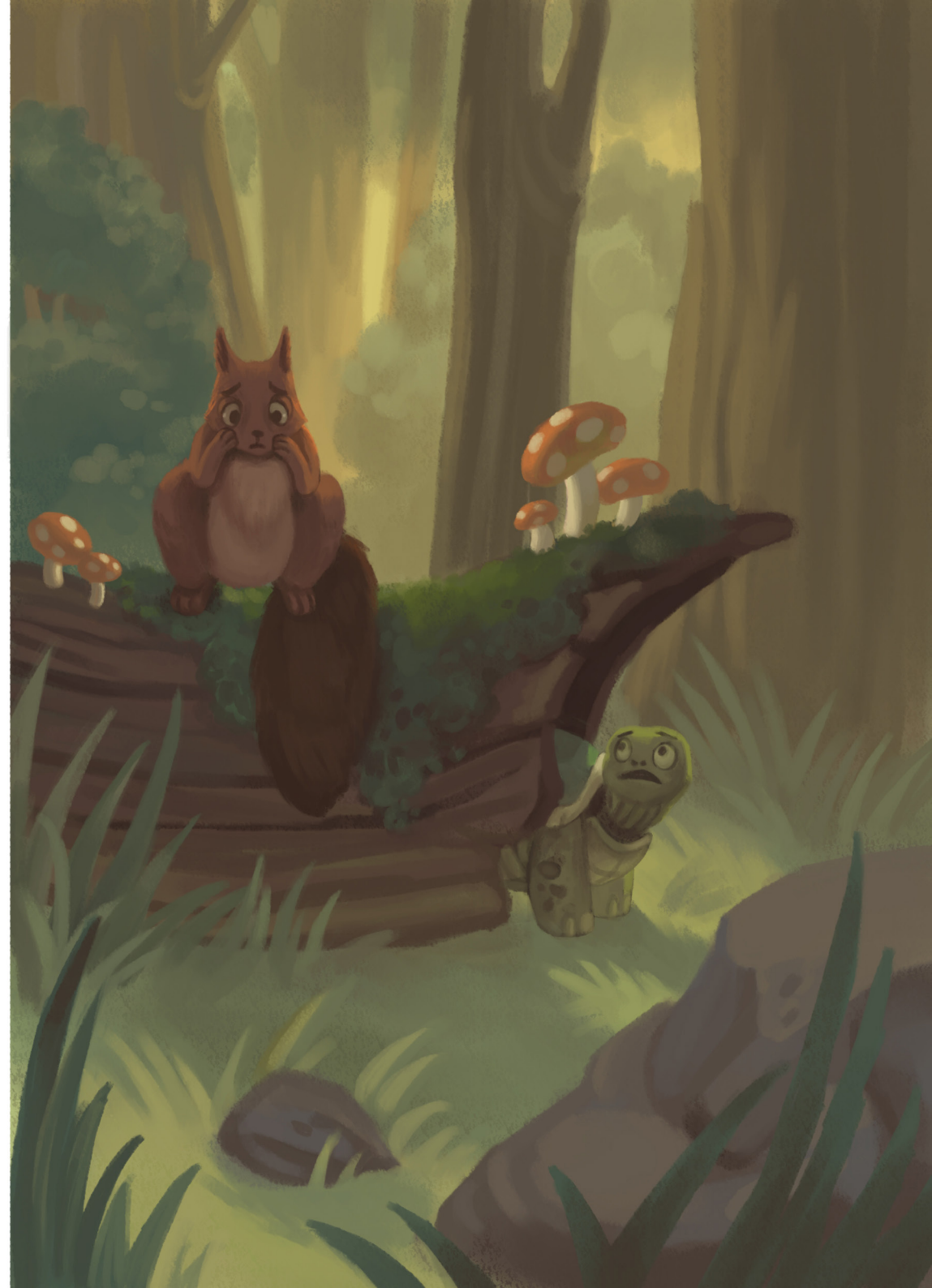
Guth heard Edgar from his hiding place in the tree trunk. *I should say something,* he thought, but then he felt angry. *Edgar wasn't a good friend to me. He was unkind and made me sad.* Then he thought, *But if I did something wrong, I'd want him to forgive me, so we could be friends again.*

Guth knew what he needed to do.

"Edgar?" Guth said as he popped his head out of the tree trunk.

"Guth! I've been looking all over for you!"

"I know. I'm sorry I hid from you. ... I was upset."



"It's my fault," Edgar said. "I wasn't very thoughtful of you during the race, and you could have been seriously hurt. You're my best friend, and I don't want to make you sad. Will you forgive me?"

"Yes," said Guth. "And next time, I won't run off when something makes me unhappy. I should have worked things out with you instead. Thank you for coming to look for me. I'm glad you're my friend!"

"And I'm glad that you're my best friend!" said Edgar.

Side by side, the friends walked toward their homes talking about all the fun they would have the next day, together.

Moral: Be the friend to others that you would like them to be to you.

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