



Dino Tales:

“My Oh My, Milton!”

It was a Sunday afternoon, and Tristan was building his Lego train set in the living room. There were tracks and pieces scattered everywhere.

“Oh my!” Grandpa Jake said when he saw the mess and tiptoed his way around the many pieces. “I was upstairs looking for you.”

“I came to play down here,” explained Tristan. “There was no space to play in my room.”

“I can understand why,” said Grandpa Jake. “Your room is so messy that I could hardly open the door!”

“Mom will clean it up later,” said Tristan. “I think she likes to clean up.”

“Actually, Tristan, picking up after you can sometimes be a lot of work for your mother. Did you know that learning to clean up after yourself and being responsible is part of growing up?”



Tristan shook his head and sighed. "I don't like to clean up. It takes me so long!"

"That's why you need to learn to pick up after yourself little by little instead of waiting until it's a big mess and then cleaning up."

"But why is it important to clean up, Grandpa?" Tristan asked.

"That's a very good question. I have a story that will help you understand the importance of being tidy and responsible."

Tristan scrambled onto the couch, ready for the story.

"Why don't you clean up the Lego first?" Grandpa Jake suggested.

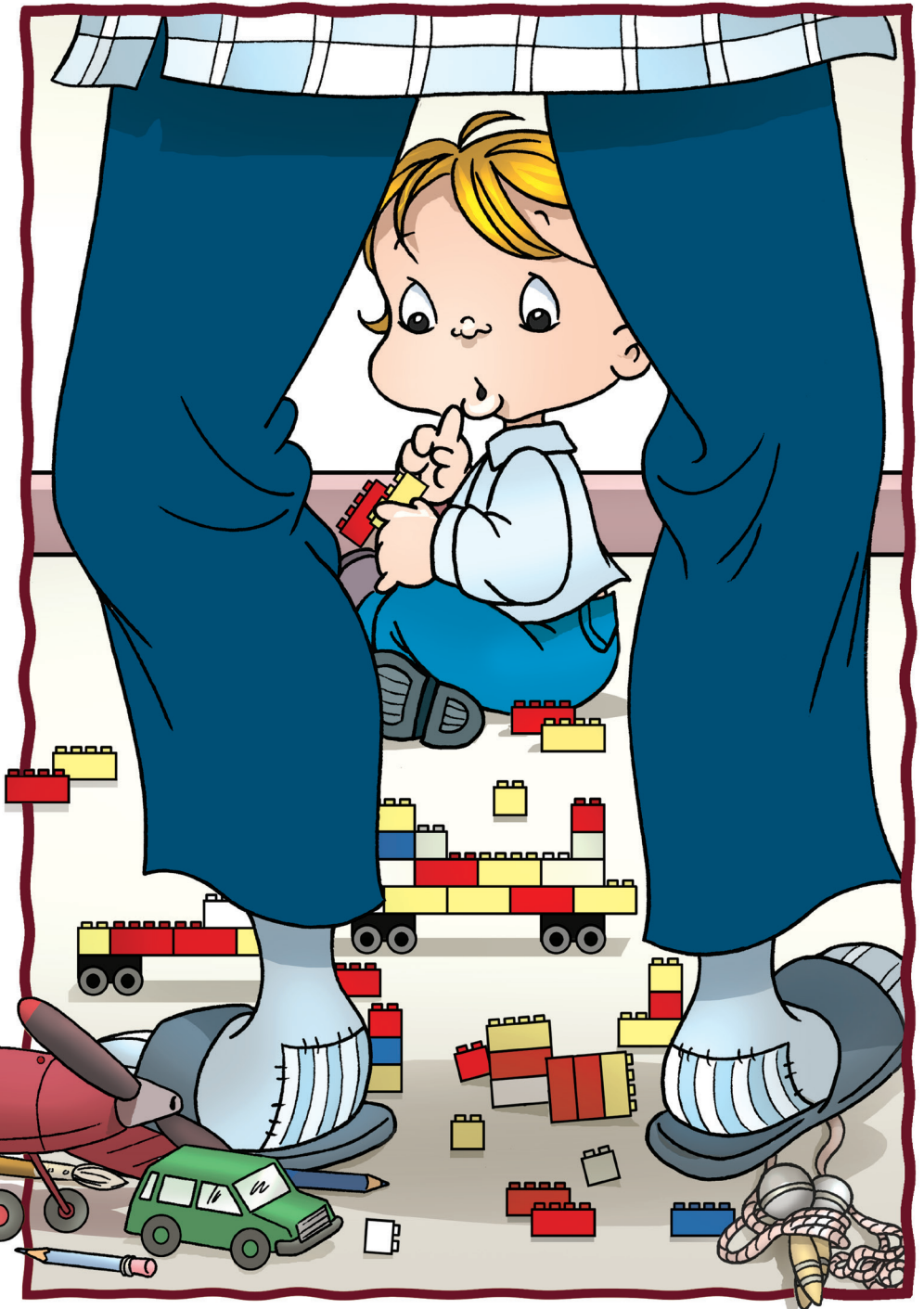
"Okay," agreed Tristan. "Then can you tell me the story?"

"It's a deal!"



Mr. Nuggin arrived at school carrying a large box. "Good morning, class," he said, and placed the box on his desk.

"Good morning, Mr. Nuggin," chorused the class.



"I hope you all had a good weekend."

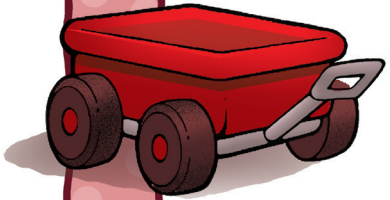
"Yes, we did," the dinosaurs replied.

"Excuse me, but what's in your box, Mr. Nuggin?" Dixie asked.

"Ah! Well, this morning I have a surprise. This week we will focus on learning responsibility, having good manners, and being neat and tidy. I have given each of your parents a chart to fill out this week. Every time you are responsible in your jobs, have good manners, and stay neat and tidy, they will mark it on the chart. At the end of the week, the three dinosaurs who have the best marks will each get a prize."

Mr. Nuggin opened the box and pulled out a bag that contained a small igloo tent. He then pulled out a painting kit complete with an easel and mixing palette. The third item was a kit to build a small pull-wagon.

Milton's eyes lit up when he saw the wagon. He had always wanted a wagon.



School went on, but Milton couldn't stop thinking about the wagon. He was so interested in the prize that he hadn't paid much attention to what Mr. Nuggin said they had to do in order to win a prize.

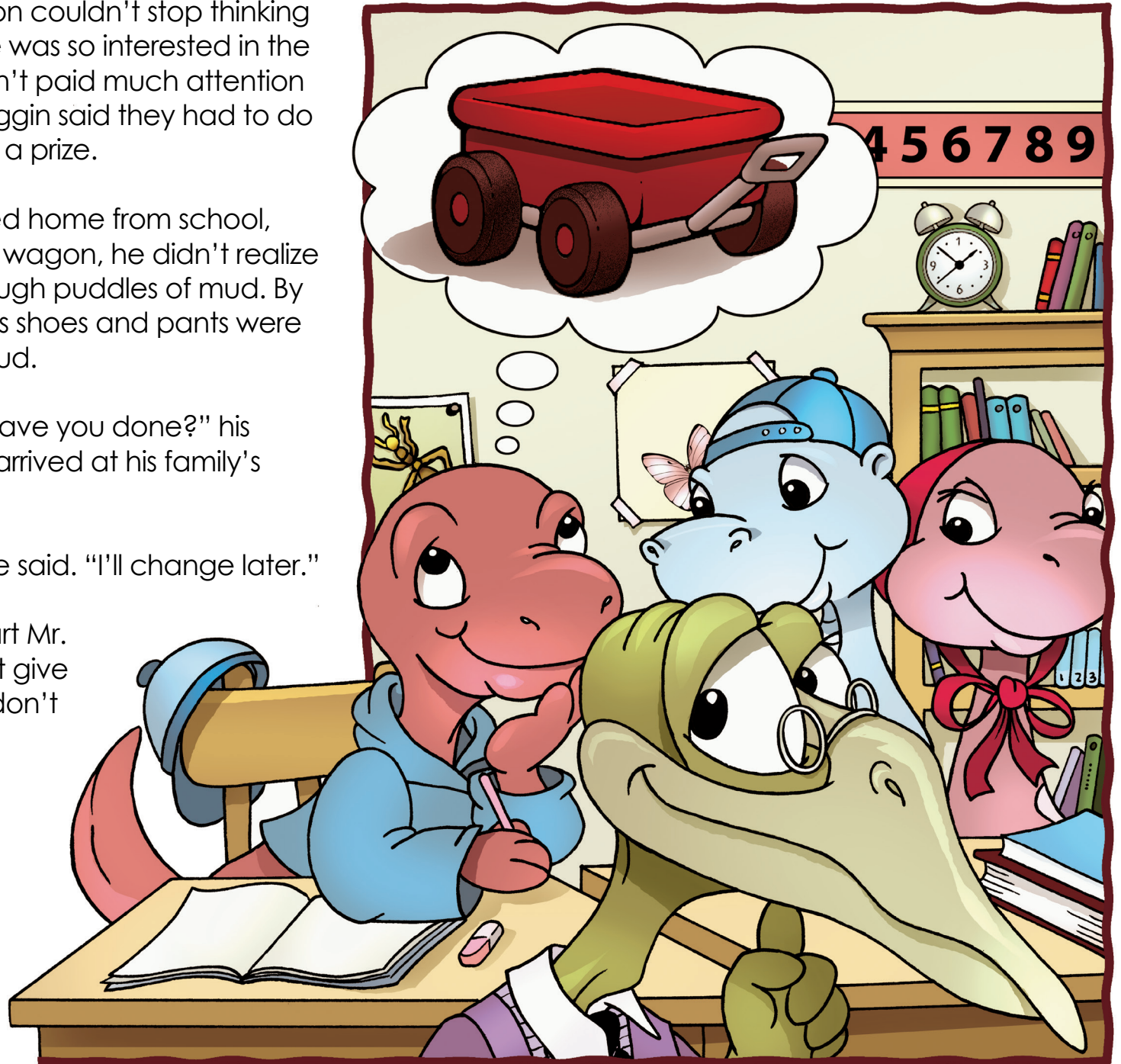
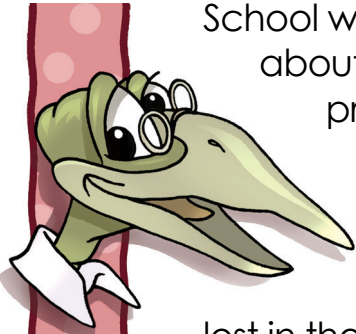
As Milton walked home from school, lost in thought about the wagon, he didn't realize that he was walking through puddles of mud. By the time he got home, his shoes and pants were covered in thick, hard mud.

"Oh dear, Milton, what have you done?" his mother asked, when he arrived at his family's den.

"It's just mud, Mother," he said. "I'll change later."

"But what about the chart Mr. Nuggin gave me? I can't give you a good mark if you don't clean up right away."

"Okay," Milton said with a sigh. He quickly changed his pants, but he didn't wipe his shoes well enough, so he left muddy footprints all over the floor of the den.



Later that evening his father came home.
"Hello," he called out.



"Hello, dear," Milton's mother answered. But Milton didn't greet his dad; he was too busy playing with his toys.

Milton's father went to sit in his favorite chair, but as soon as he sat down, he let out a loud shout. "Owwwww!"

"What's the matter, dear?" Milton's mother asked.

"There's something in the chair," Milton's father answered.

In the chair were several of Milton's jacks, which he hadn't put away after playing with them. Milton's mother shook her head sadly.

The week went on, and Milton couldn't seem to keep his clothes clean. He had driven his toy trucks in the mud and hadn't cleaned them off, so now the wheels didn't turn because the mud had hardened on the wheels. Milton's room was a mess, his toys were scattered everywhere, and he wasn't diligent in his jobs.



“My oh my, Milton!” Mr. Nuggin exclaimed, when Milton arrived at school the following week.

Milton was a mess. On his way to school he had chased a butterfly, and in the process had ripped his pants on a fence. He ran through a puddle, getting his clothes wet, and he was late for school. By the time Milton arrived at school, Mr. Nuggin had already passed out the prizes. Wesley had gotten the igloo tent, Suds the painting kit, and Bumble the wagon.

Milton looked down sadly, and that was when he noticed how muddy and torn his clothes were.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Nuggin. I really wanted the wagon, but I guess I need to learn more about tidiness and good manners.”

Milton went home from school feeling a little sad.

“I didn’t win a prize at school today,” Milton told his mother.



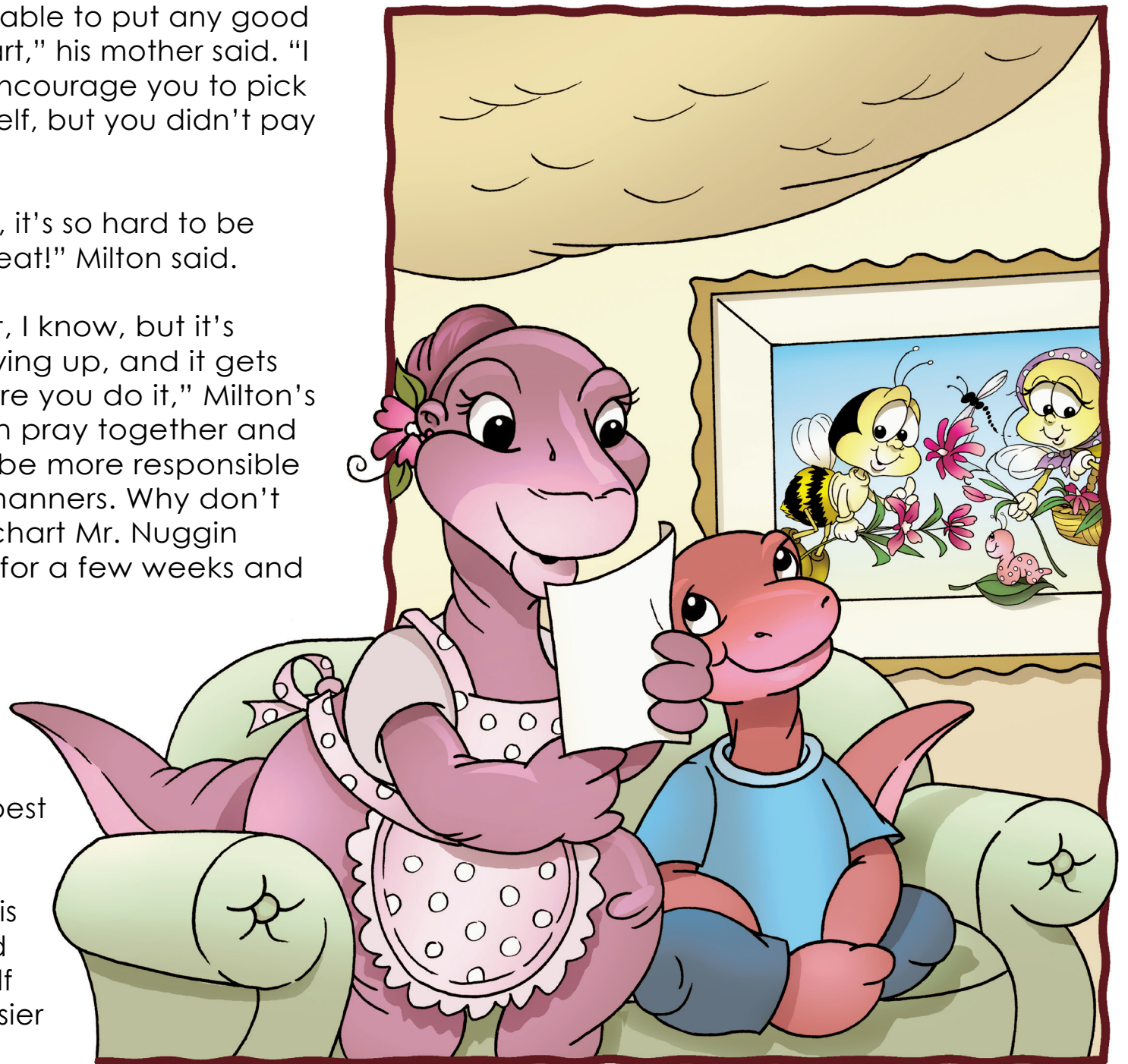
“Well, Milton, I wasn’t able to put any good marks on your chart,” his mother said. “I was trying to encourage you to pick up after yourself, but you didn’t pay attention.”

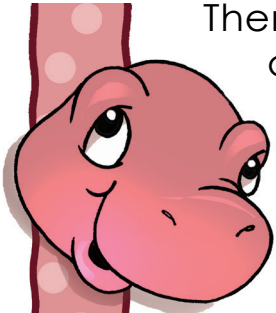
“But, Mother, it’s so hard to be clean and neat!” Milton said.

“It is difficult, I know, but it’s part of growing up, and it gets easier the more you do it,” Milton’s mother said. “We can pray together and ask God to help you be more responsible and to have better manners. Why don’t we try again on the chart Mr. Nuggin made? We can try it for a few weeks and see how you do.”

“I’d like that!” Milton said.

Over the next few weeks, Milton did his best to stay neat and tidy. At first it was difficult, but the more he did his jobs and remembered to pick up after himself and stay neat, the easier it became.





Then one evening his father brought home a wagon just like the one Bumble had won. He presented it to Milton as a reward for doing his jobs faithfully and having good manners.

Milton was very happy! And you know what? From then on, Milton was always known for his good manners, diligence, and neatness.



"I want to do my best to be neater and tidier, Grandpa," Tristan said.

"That's wonderful!" replied Grandpa Jake. "I'm sure it will make your mother very happy."

"I'm going to go upstairs and clean up my room. That way, when Mom comes home, she'll be so surprised to see how neat and tidy it is," exclaimed Tristan.



Moral: When people see that you are responsible, they are more likely to trust you with things because they know you'll take good care of them.