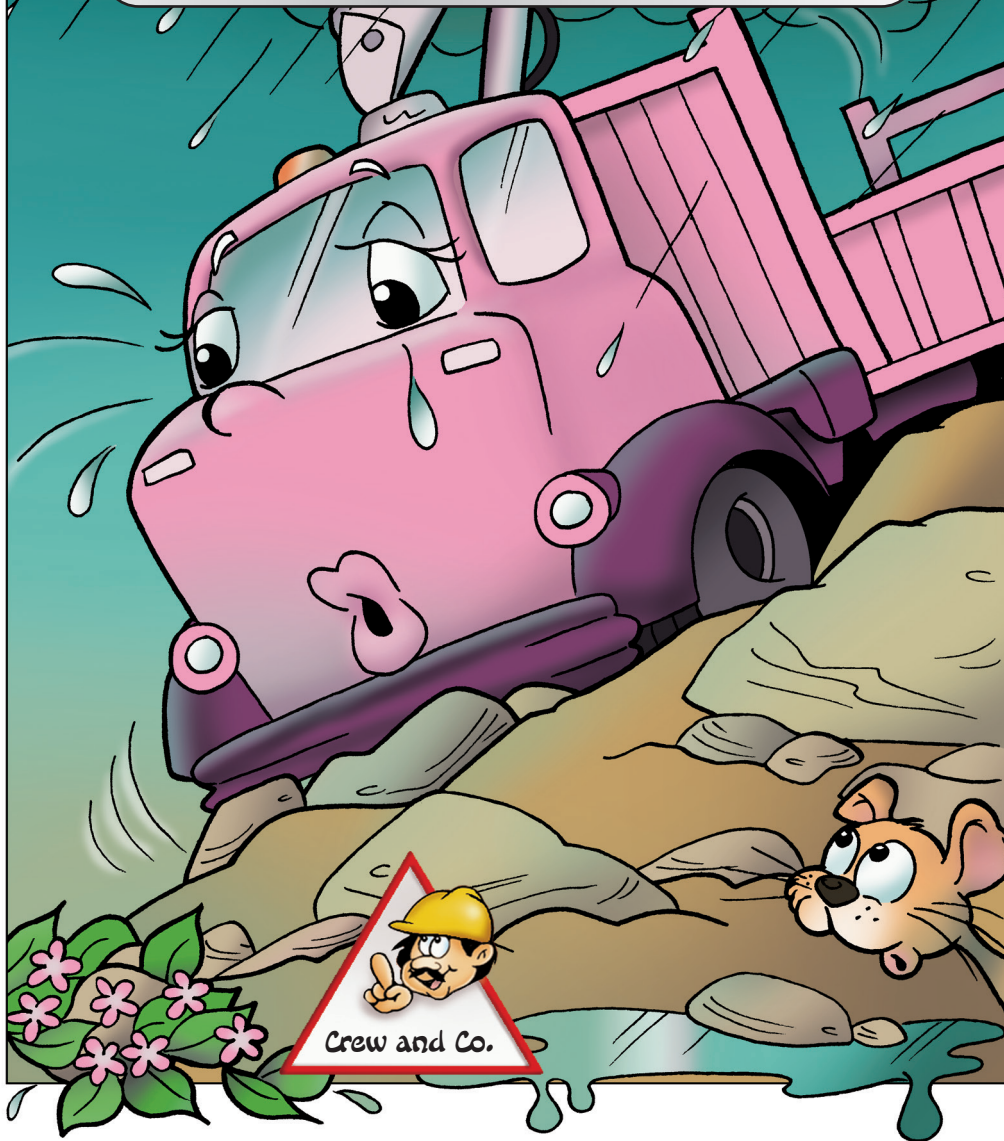




Rain and Rumble



"Why did it have to rain today?" asked Tristan in frustration. He stood by the window watching the storm. "I wanted to play outside with Derek, and now I can't."

"How about we do something together?" Grandpa Jake suggested.

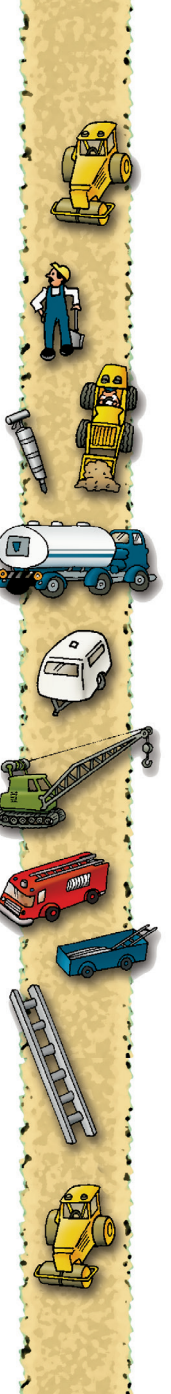
"Like what?"

"Well, if you'd like, I could..."

"Tell me a story?" Tristan asked enthusiastically.

"Yes. I have a storm story in mind. I can make some hot chocolate and then tell you the story."

"Fun!" exclaimed Tristan.





The weather had been grim and stormy for almost a week, and Crew and Co. were finding it increasingly difficult to get their work done. The ground was a mess of deep mud. The construction vehicles had to work extra hard to keep their wheels and tracks from sinking in the mud.

Friday, the fifth day of bad weather, was the most miserable day they'd seen yet.

Crank's crane arm had been blown from side to side, until some of the construction vehicles had to help secure it so the wind wouldn't blow it right off!

Hardly any work had been accomplished as they were all working to make sure nothing got damaged by the storm.

Mr. Oversite didn't want to risk any accidents, so he told the construction vehicles to take the day off.

"We should wait this storm out!" Mr. Oversite shouted above the noise of the storm. "Pack up and make your way home. We'll see what the weather's like tomorrow."





Everyone worked furiously to put things away so they could leave before the storm worsened.

"Help me! Help me!"

The cry could hardly be heard over the noisy storm.

"Come on," said Digger to the others. "Let's go see what happened. It sounds like Lorry."

At the edge of the work site sat Lorry Loader, calling for help. She had been leaving the site when she'd skidded off the dirt road and down the embankment, and she now found herself stuck in a ditch of deep mud. No matter how hard she tried to get herself out, she couldn't move. Instead, her wheels would skid, sending mud flying everywhere.

A number of the construction vehicles had now gathered around the embankment to see what had happened.

"Please, someone give me a hand!" cried Lorry. "I just want to go home and get all cleaned up."

"Try getting yourself out again," Crusher suggested.

"It's not going to work."





"Just try. Maybe it will this time."

Lorry spun her wheels as fast as she could, but instead of getting her out of the ditch, the effort sent mud flying everywhere.

"Ick!" cried Roadmarker. "Now I'm covered in mud. As if I wasn't dirty enough already!"

"I'm sorry," Lorry said sadly.

"I don't think we can help you, Lorry," Crusher said. "You might have to wait till the storm passes and the mud hardens a bit."

"Are you ready to go home, Miss Roadmarker?" asked Mr. Roadroller, as he trundled over.

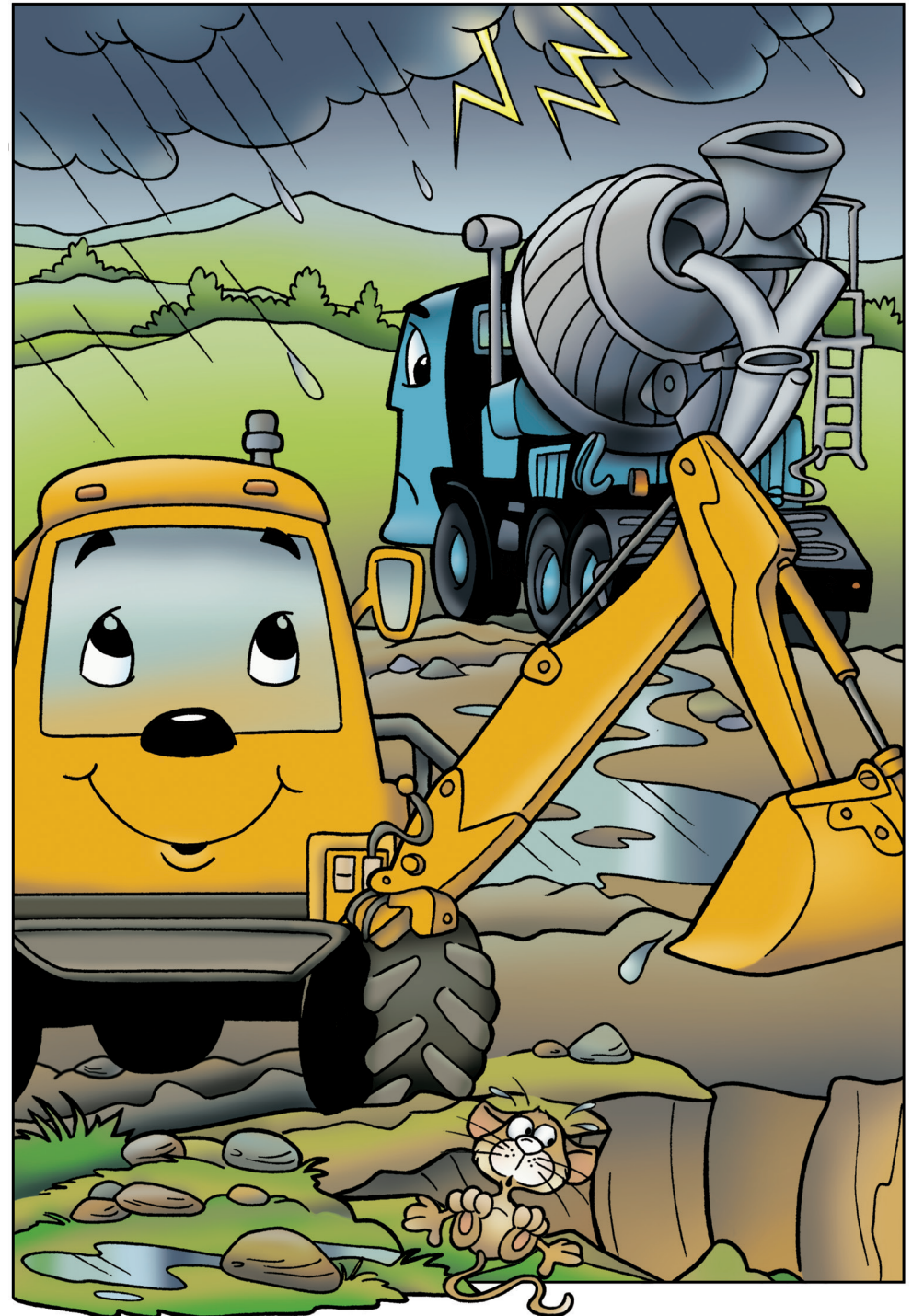
"Just about. I'm dreadfully dirty," she whined. "Lorry splashed me with mud."

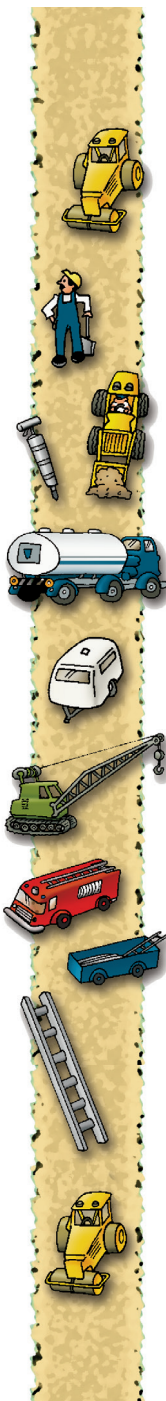
"How inconsiderate," Roadroller said with a frown.

"But Lorry's stuck," Little Digger said. "She didn't do it on purpose."

"Well, I don't like mud and dirt, and if Miss Roadmarker is ready, I'm out of here," huffed Roadroller.

However, as he turned to leave, one of his rollers slipped on the edge of the embankment, and he slid right into the ditch, landing next to Lorry.





"Oh dear!" shrieked Roadmarker, as she tried to help Roadroller, but instead she also skidded into the ditch. There sat Lorry, Roadroller, and Roadmarker in very deep mud, unable to get themselves out.

Roadroller was not happy with this turn of events.

"Miss Lorry Loader!" he shouted. "If you hadn't been so careless as to get yourself into this fix, none of this would've happened."

"It wasn't her fault," Crusher said.

"I think I'm going to leave before I end up in this ditch with the rest of them," Con Crete Mixer said.

"You can't leave us!" Roadroller shouted.

"Well, what am I supposed to do?" Mixer asked.

"Give us a hand, of course!"

"And skid into the ditch with the three of you? I think not!"

"Maybe Mr. Oversight will know what to do," Lorry said.

"He probably would, but he left the site fifteen minutes ago," said Digger.





"What are we going to do?" cried Roadmarker.

"We should all work together to help the three of you," answered Crank Crane, who'd been silently watching.

"I don't think it's worth it," said Mixer.

"These are our friends," Crank said. "Friends are supposed to help each other. If you were in a difficult spot, wouldn't you want someone to help you?"

"Crank has a point," Crusher said. "I'll give a hand if there's something I can do."

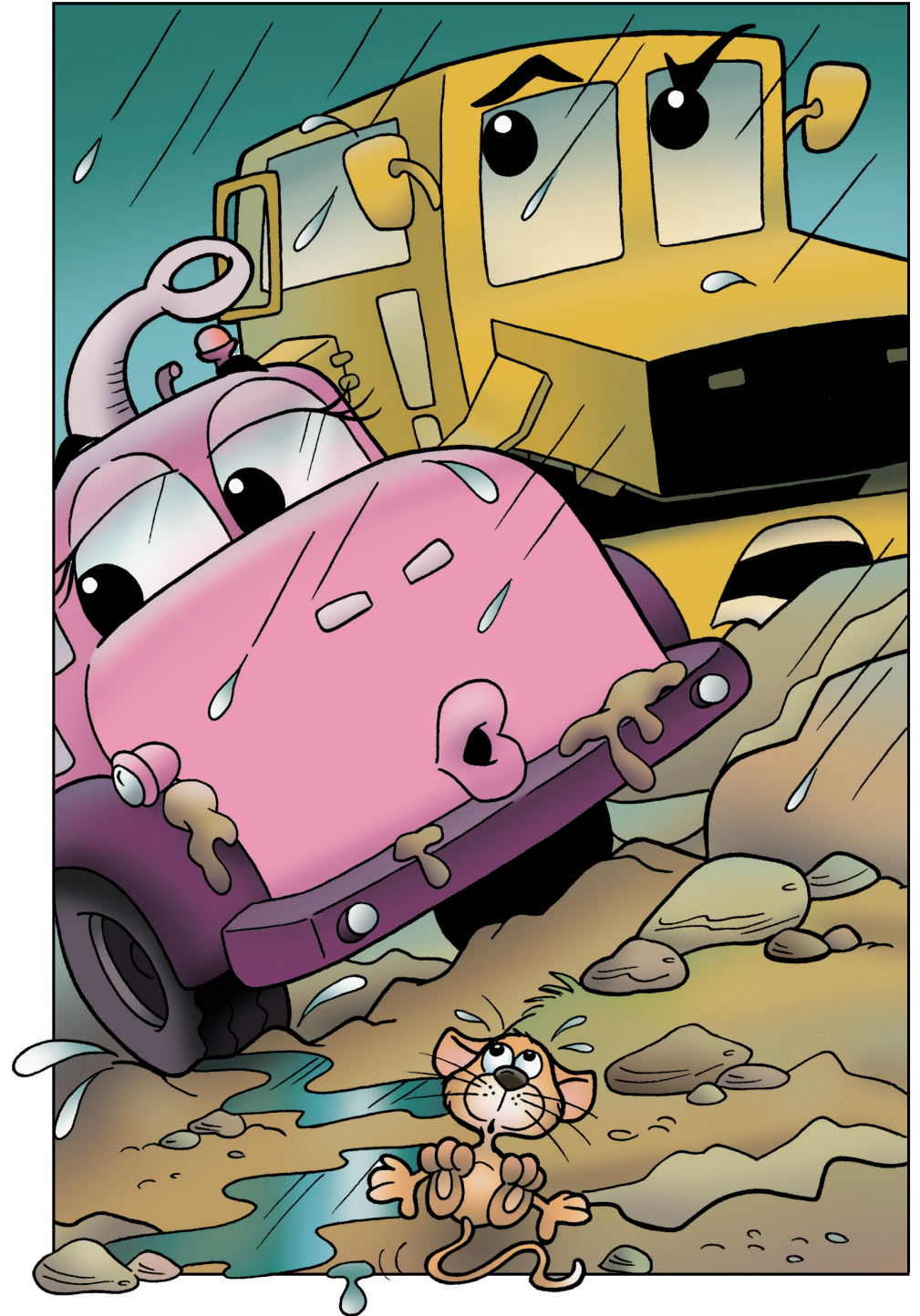
"Me too," added Digger.

"Count me in," Mixer agreed. "What do we do?"

"I have a plan," Crank told them. "First, Digger, will you go get Dozer? We could use his help."

In spite of the pouring rain, the team of construction vehicles came up with a plan to free their three unfortunate friends from the mud.

Little Digger cleared away some of the mud with his long arm. Crusher found boards to put in front of Lorry's wheels. With a rope attached to Lorry, Concrete Mixer pulled while Dozer gave a shove to get her moving as his treads prevented him from sinking in the mud. Crank coordinated the rescue.





After a few pulls, a few shoves, and a whole lot of determination, Lorry was free from the mud. The rest of the team then helped Roadmarker and Roadroller.

"Thank you so much," Lorry said. "I'm so glad that I have friends like you."

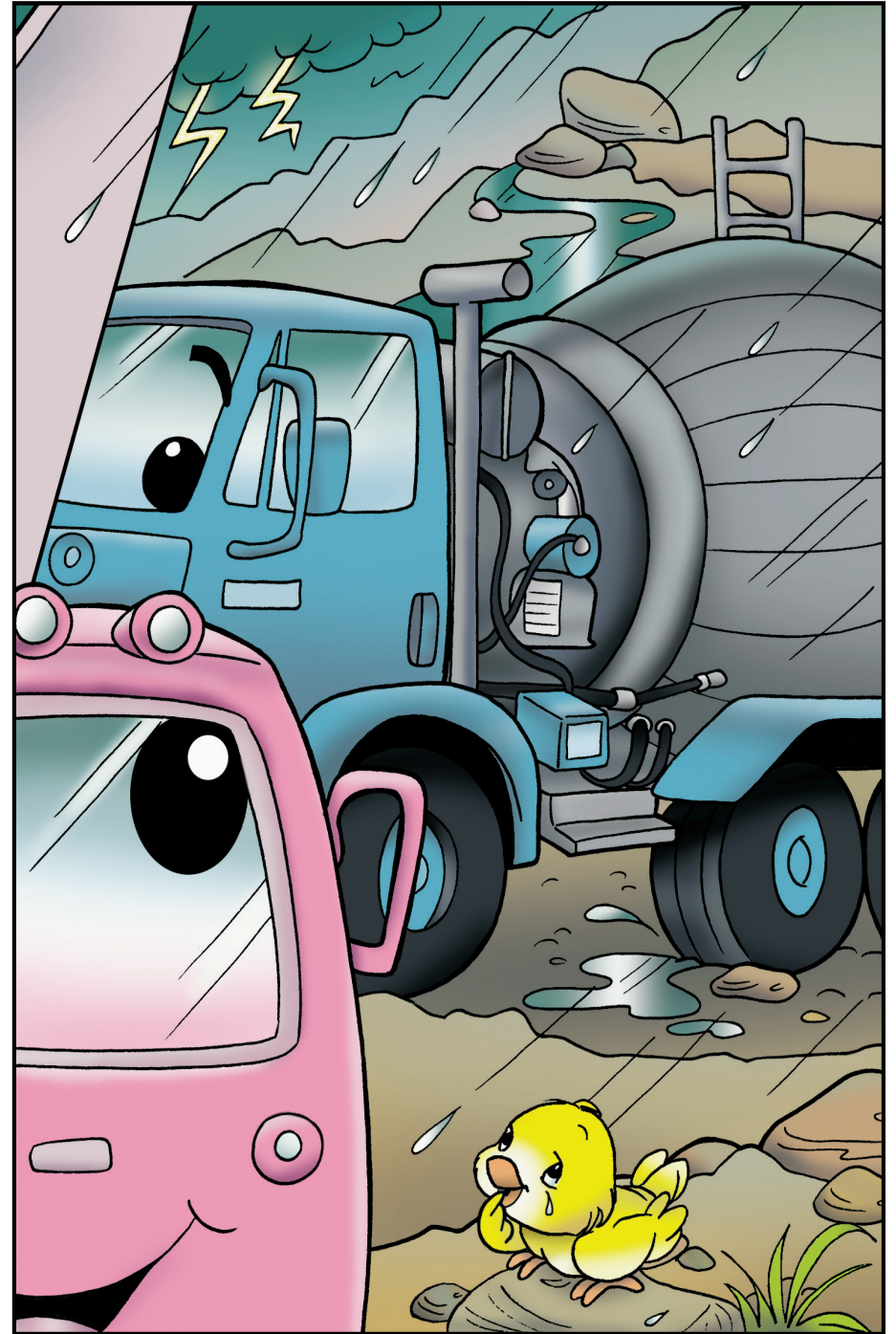
"It was our pleasure," replied Crank.

"I'm sorry I was not nice to you, Lorry," Roadmarker said apologetically. "I should've been thinking about how to help you, rather than just thinking about myself and trying to stay clean. That was so silly of me."

"That's okay," Lorry said. "I forgive you."

"Will you forgive me, too?" Roadroller asked. "I feel bad that I got upset at you. Next time I'll think about what I would do if I were in someone's place when they're having a difficult time, and then maybe I can be a help."

"I forgive you," said Lorry. "It's been a rough week for us all."



"Now that everyone's free, let's head home," Dozer suggested. And off they headed to the garage, away from the wind, rain, and storm.



"It was a good thing that Crank, Crusher, Digger, Dozer, and Mixer helped their friends," Tristan said.

"Yes, it was," replied Grandpa Jake. "One day, you might be stuck in a difficult situation and in need of help, and if you've been thoughtful and helpful to your friends when they needed a hand, they'll be there to help you when you need it."

"Look, Grandpa, the rain stopped, and there's a rainbow in the sky!" Tristan exclaimed. "Can I go outside and play now?"

"Sure. But make sure to wear your rubber boots. There are many puddles."

"Thank you, Grandpa, for that story."

Moral: It's important to treat and help others in the way that you would want them to treat and help you. The kindness and friendship you show others will come back to you.

