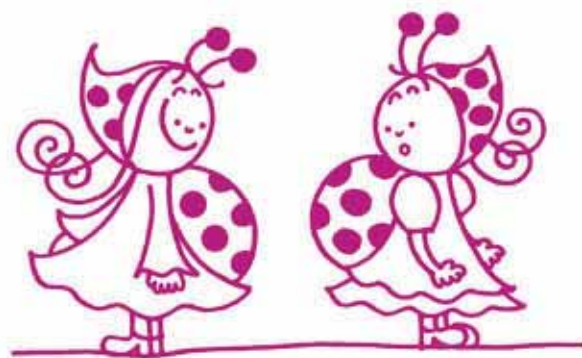


ERIKA BARTOS



BERRY AND DOLLY'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS





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**THE YELLOW LADYBIRD
THE WATER SNAIL**







The spring had come at last. Dolly decided it was time to tidy up her flower garden. She got her spade and a rake, and tied a pretty dotted scarf around her head.

She had only just stepped outside when she heard someone groaning behind her house. "Christopher! Your wing looks broken!" the little ladybird exclaimed. "The sun shone in my eyes and I flew straight into a tree. I really hurt myself," the canary said.



Just then, Berry the snail and Stanley the stag beetle arrived.
"Stanley, please go and get Doctor Owl. Christopher's wing's broken," Dolly said, taking control.

Berry and Dolly gathered up some strong branches and tied a big blanket onto them to make a stretcher.
"One, two, threeee!" Dolly said and they lifted the canary onto the stretcher. They carried him into Dolly's house.



Doctor Owl soon arrived.
"Hmm, it looks like a very bad break," he said seriously. Then carefully and slowly, he bandaged Christopher's broken wing.

"Dolly, can I stay with you until I'm well enough to fly again?" Christopher asked.
"Of course. You can stay as long as you like."
Christopher the canary was going to be there for quite a while.



"You know, Dolly," Christopher said one day, "there's a little ladybird living on the island I come from."
"Really? Is she red with black dots like me?" Dolly asked excitedly. "And what's her name?"



"She's called Katie. Her back isn't red, it's yellow, but her dots are black like yours. She looks a lot like you. Why don't you come to meet her when my wing's better?"
"That sounds like a super idea! Can Berry come, too?"
"Of course he can! There's enough room for both of you on my back."



A few days later, Doctor Owl came to visit the injured canary. He was happy to say that Christopher's wing was as good as new. The canary thanked the owl for his help, put Berry and Dolly on his back, and headed for his island home.

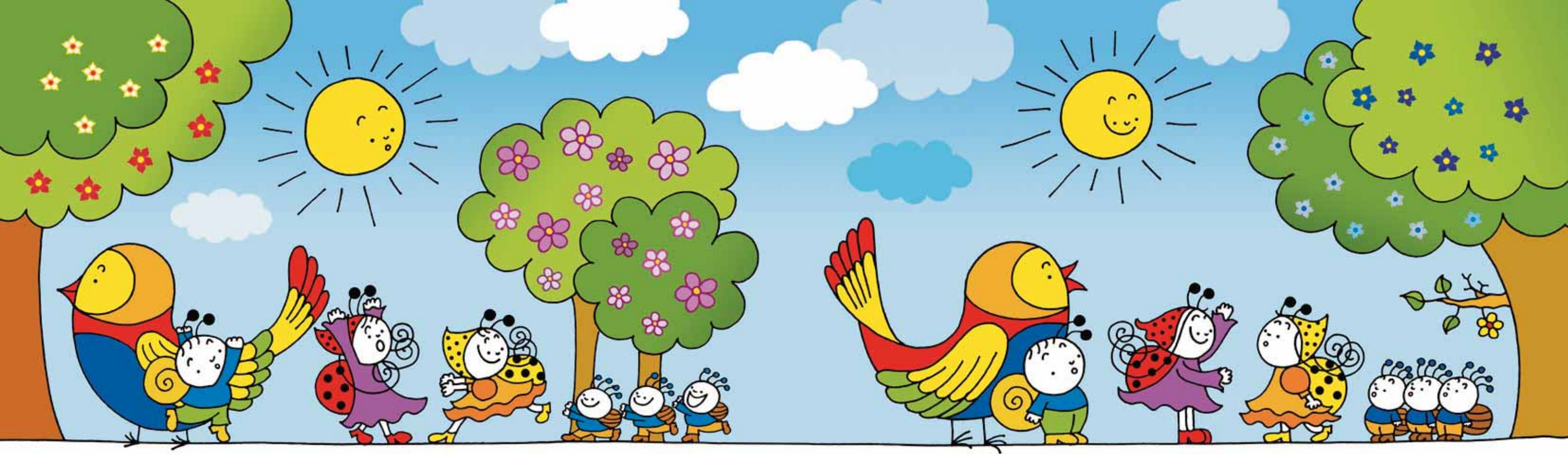
"Bye, Balthazar! Bye, Stanley! We'll be back by bedtime," Dolly shouted from the air.
"Bye bye, Flutter!" Berry added.
"Have a safe flight!" Balthazar, Stanley and Heather shouted back.



Christopher flew high up into the clouds. He flew as if his wing had never been broken. Dolly's dotted house looked tiny down on the ground.

They soon found themselves flying over a large lake with a little island in the middle of the water.

"Can you see it? We're flying to that island. My nest is on top of the highest tree. Hold on tight, we're coming in to land."



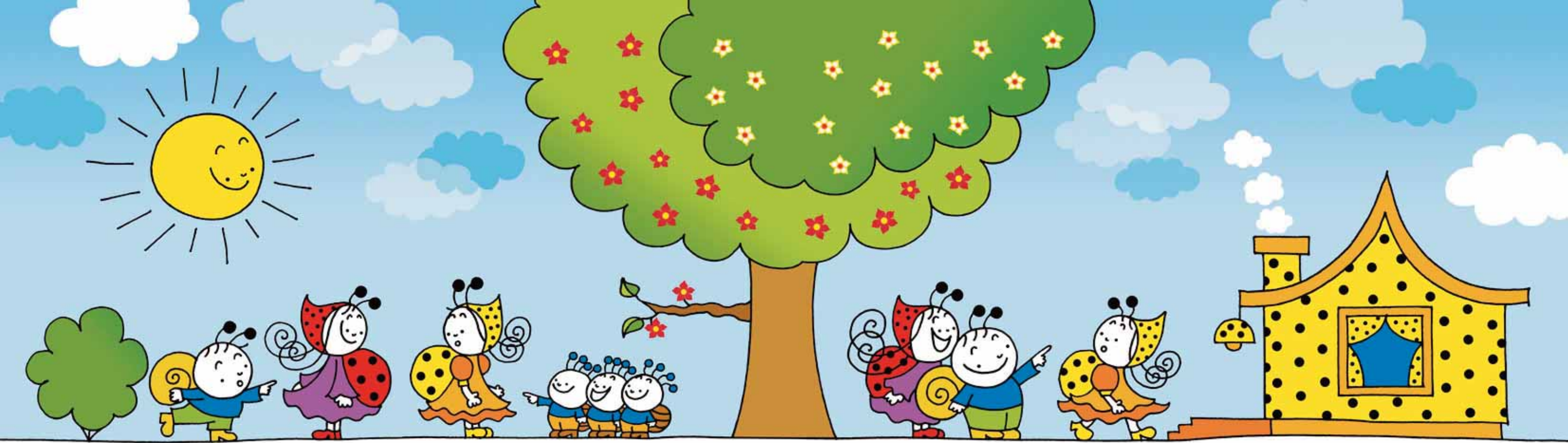
Christopher landed perfectly and Berry and Dolly climbed down. As they did, they heard loud laughter.

"You can't catch me!" shouted a bright beetle in an orange dress. She was talking to the tiny fleas running after her.

"Watch out!" Dolly shouted, but the girl beetle ran right into her.

"I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to knock you over. My name's Katie. Who are you?"

"Oh, you're Katie? We're here to see you! My name's Dolly and I've come a long way to meet my ladybird cousin."



"Ladybird cousin?" Katie asked with a puzzled smile.

"Yes! You've got black dots just like me, except you're yellow instead of red."

"Wow, you're right!" the yellow ladybird said.

"Come with me, I'll show you my house," Katie said.

As soon as they saw Katie's house, Berry and Dolly started to laugh.

"My house looks exactly like this but mine's red."



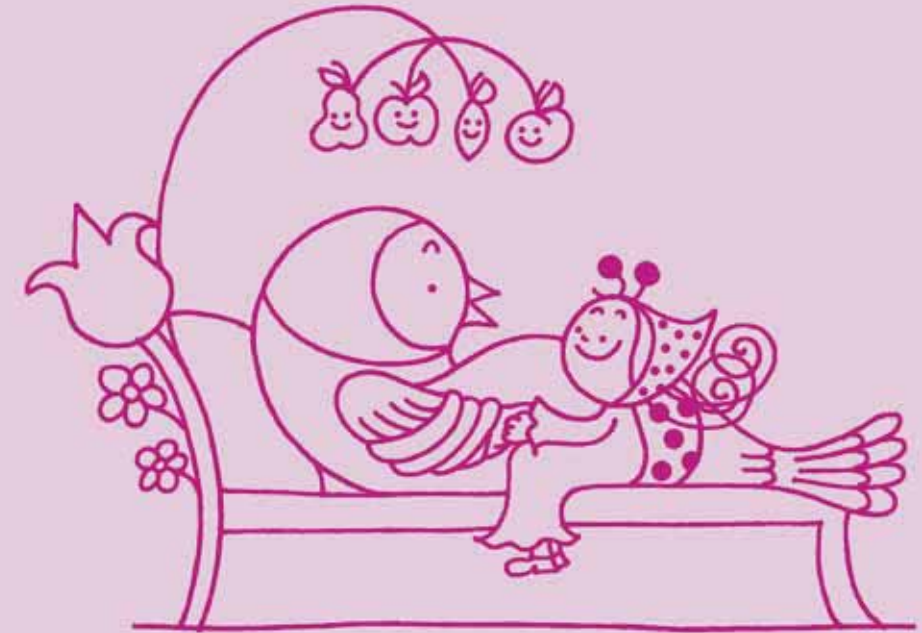
Berry, Dolly and Katie took a long walk around the island.
“There’s the pine forest with the little stream running next to it. We built the bridge ourselves,” Kate explained with pride.
“And what’s that in the middle of the meadow?” Berry asked. “It looks like a slide.”
“That’s right. It’s a special flower slide. Come with me, I’ll show you.”

“Can I have a go?”
“Of course you can! Follow me!” Katie said and slid down on the curvy slide.

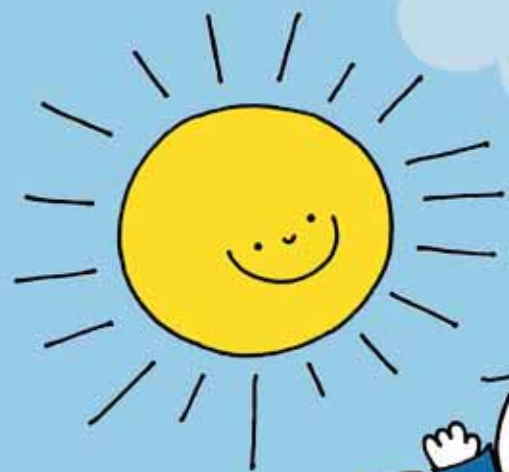
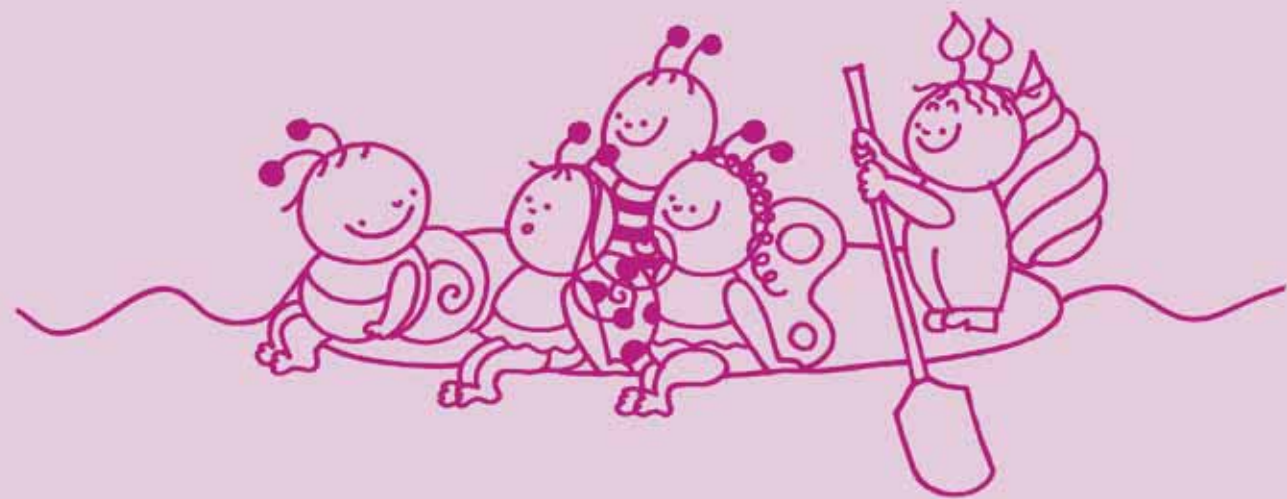


Berry, Dolly and Katie slid down the slide again and again until it started to get dark.

"It's getting late. Come on, you two, I'll take you home," Christopher said. Dolly and Katie swapped headscarves as a parting present.



"Have a safe trip home!" Katie told them. "Do visit me again sometime."
It was very late by the time Christopher arrived at Dolly's dotty house. The moon shone and the sky was full of sparkling stars.



THE WATER SNAIL



Berry, Dolly, Heather and Balthazar were sitting around in the meadow. "I wish I had a cousin, too. A distant snail relative," Berry sighed. "But you've got a sort of cousin, Berry. The water snail is a kind of snail," Flutter the butterfly said. "Really?" Berry jumped to his feet with a grin. "Where does this water snail live?"

"Nowhere," Balthazar retorted. "I don't think there is such a thing as a water snail." "Oh yes there is!" Flutter said angrily. "I know where he lives. He's got a little house deep down in the Round Pond on the other side of the forest." "You're talking nonsense," the bee said.



“Why don’t we all go to the Round Pond to see for ourselves?” Dolly suggested.
“Come with me, I’ll take you,” Hedgehog Harry told the friends. “We can be there before it gets dark.”
“Hurray!” Berry whooped. “I’ll bring the air tanks, so we can swim down to the bottom of the pond.”

Berry, Dolly, Flutter and Balthazar hopped into the hedgehog cart and set out for the Round Pond.



It was late in the evening by the time they finally caught sight of the pond.
“Look at that lovely water lily! Let’s go and have a closer look at it,” Berry said enthusiastically.
“It’s very late, Berry. We’ll look at it in the morning. It’s already closed its petals for the day. We should get some sleep. I’m very tired,” Dolly explained.

The little friends all jumped out of the cart at the same time and it started rolling towards the pond.
“The cart’s running away!” the little bee shouted, but it was already too late.
The hedgehog cart rolled right into the water.



Berry, Dolly, Balthazar and Flutter all started crying.
"It's too late to do anything today. Let's go to bed and tomorrow you can all swim down to the bottom of the pond. I'm sure you'll find the cart," Harry comforted them.

The little fellows built themselves a tent for the night using two big leaves and fell asleep feeling very sad indeed.



Berry woke up bright and early the next morning.
“Look, the water lily has opened its petals. And there’s someone standing on its leaf.
And he’s waving at us.”

“Who are you?” Berry asked politely.
“Hello, everybody! My name’s Sam Snail and I live deep down at the bottom of the Round Pond.”
“Huray!” Berry said and hugged Sam Snail. “See, Balthazar, water snails do exist after all. I’ve got my own proper cousin now!”



Sam Snail didn't understand why Berry was so happy to see him, but then Dolly told him why they had come.

"I'm so happy to meet you, Cousin Berry," the water snail said.

"Would you help us find our cart that rolled into the water, Sam?" Flutter asked.

"I'd be delighted! Follow me!" the water snail said. "We'll look for your cart and I'll show you my underwater world."

So the four friends slipped into their swimming costumes and swam all the way down to the bottom of the pond.

"This is where I live," Sam Snail said announced with pride.



"Hisssssssss!" They heard a frightening hissing sound that scared Berry, Dolly, Flutter and Balthazar who hid behind the little house. This made Sam Snail laugh.
"Don't be scared! It's my friend the water snake."

"Water Snake, have you seen a cart at the bottom of the pond by any chance?" Sam Snail asked.
"Yessssssss, I have," the water snake replied. "Hang on to me and I'll take you there." As the water snake swam, he showed them all kinds of plants and colourful pebbles.



They saw the cart tangled in the weeds.
"There it is!" the water snake shouted.
Berry, Dolly, Balthazar and Flutter were happy they'd found it.

They all pushed the cart until it was back on dry land.



"You did it!" said Harry. He was so happy to see his little friends again.
"Let's go for a trip on the pond while the cart dries in the sun," Sam Snail suggested.
"That's a super idea!" Berry squeaked.

They all sat on the lily pad and Sam Snail started rowing. He showed his friends all around the pond with its weeping willow tree and lots of colourful water lilies.



"It's time we were going," Dolly said when it began to get dark.
"Oh, let's just stay a little while longer!" Berry pleaded.
"We'll come again another day," Flutter reassured the little snail.

Berry, Dolly, Balthazar and Flutter all said goodbye to Sam Snail.
Harry Hedgehog was already waiting for them. They all climbed into the hedgehog cart and headed for home.



The next day, Berry and Dolly both painted colourful pictures of their distant cousins.



