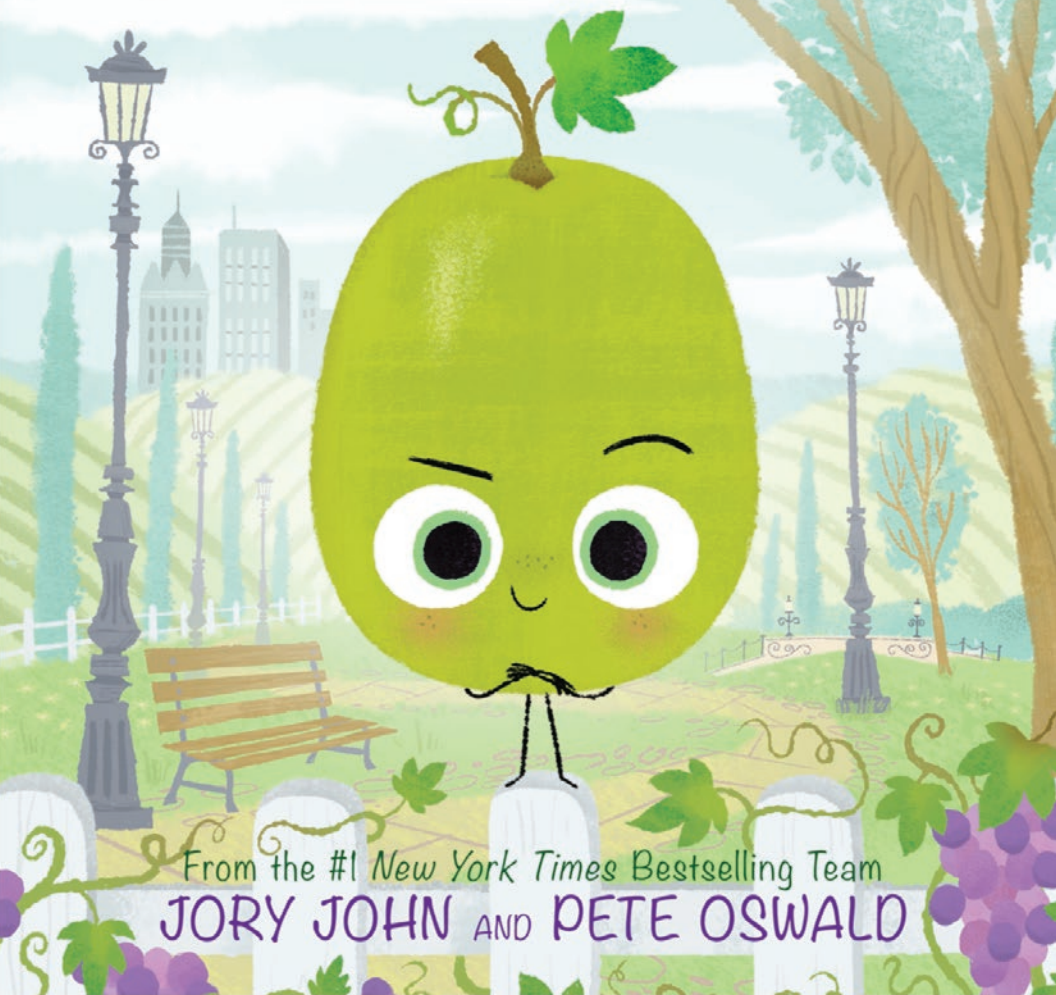


THE SOUR GRAPE



From the #1 New York Times Bestselling Team
JORY JOHN AND PETE OSWALD





To my grandmother, Barbara
—J.J.

For Amy and Annemarie
—P.O.



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The artist used scanned watercolor textures and digital paint to create the illustrations for this book.

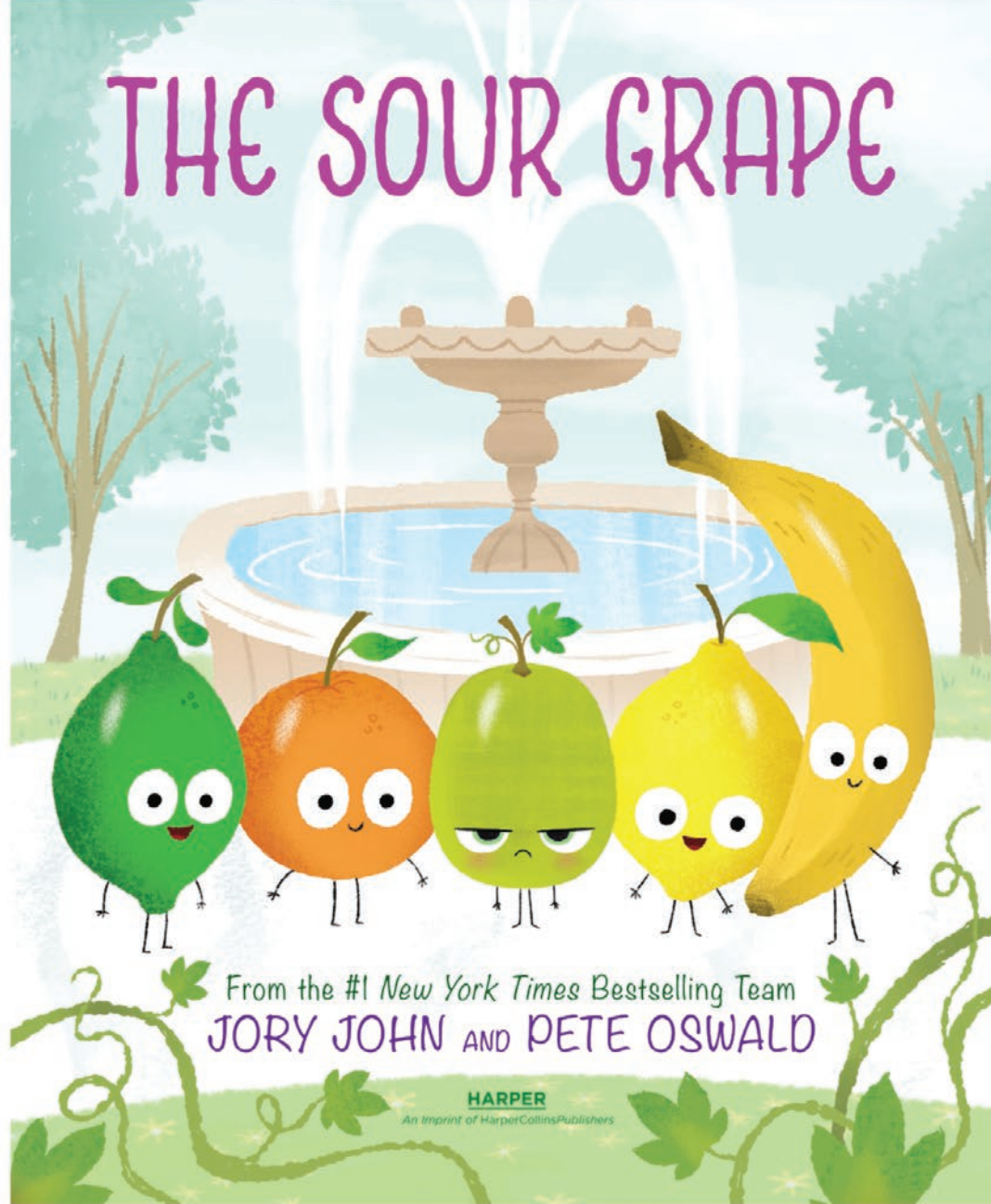
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HARPER

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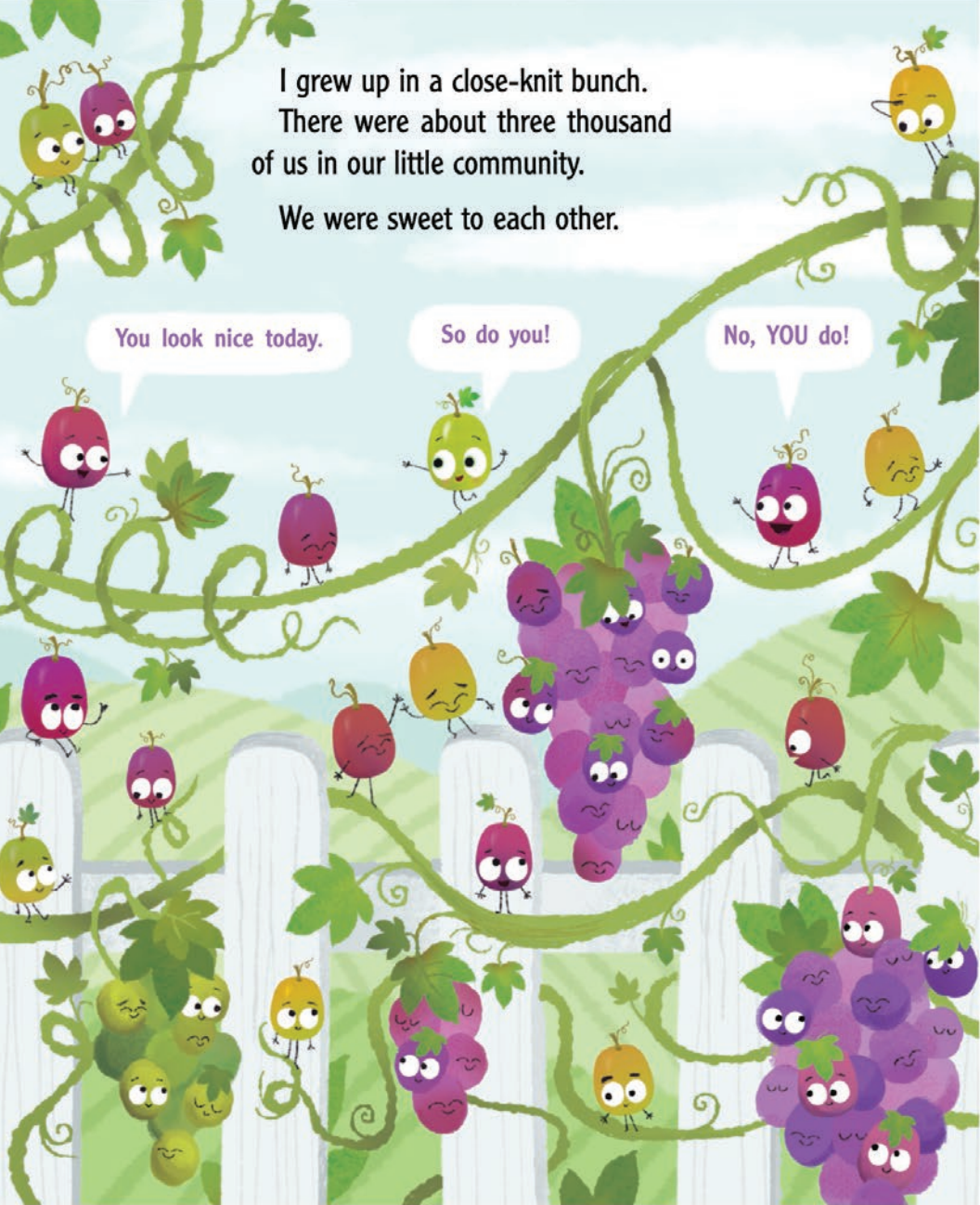


I'm a grape.
A sour grape.

Grrrrrrrr!



If somebody upsets me, I'll remember it.
If somebody wrongs me, I won't forget it.
If somebody insults me, I'll never ignore it. Nope.



I grew up in a close-knit bunch.
There were about three thousand
of us in our little community.
We were sweet to each other.

You look nice today.

So do you!

No, YOU do!

We all lived on a vine. Sure, it was a bit claustrophobic.
Especially when we were trying to get ready in the morning.



Are you done in there? C'mon!

But my family was ripe with humor, goodwill, and
warmth. We did our best with what we had.



Are you gonna finish that?

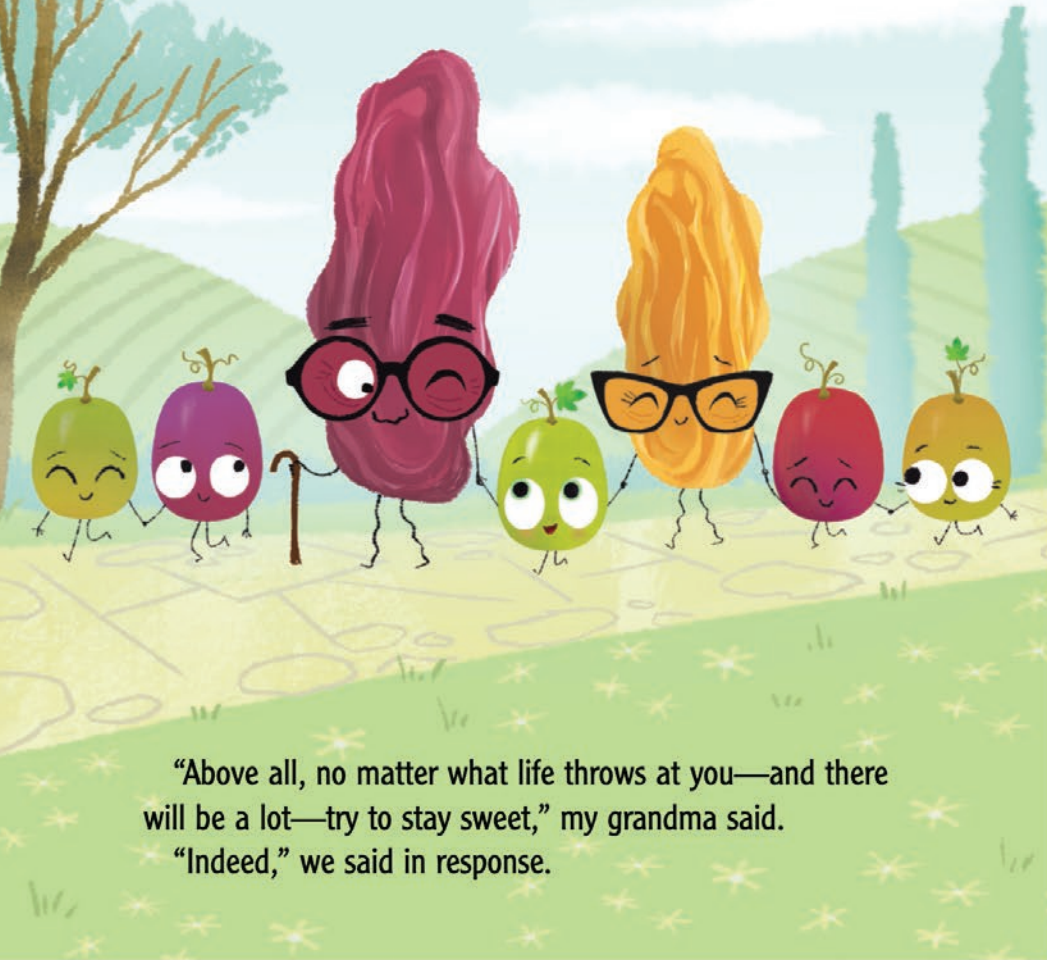
My grandparents visited on the weekends. We'd stroll in the sun and they'd teach us what they knew.

They said that it takes a bunch to raise a seed.

They said that good grapes roll their own way in life.

They told us to be kind, forgiving, considerate, and grateful.

"Or *grapeful*," my grandpa said with a wink.



"Above all, no matter what life throws at you—and there will be a lot—try to stay sweet," my grandma said.

"Indeed," we said in response.

And for a while, I *was* the sweetest of the sweet.

I said, "Please." I said, "Thank you." I brushed aside life's little annoyances. I knew how good I had it.



But then one day, something changed in me.

It was my birthday.

I had rigorously and vigorously planned a big party for weeks.
I'd sent out invitations with the date prominently displayed.



Get this: I had a Ferris wheel, a magician, and hayrides.
I had snacks upon snacks upon snacks.
The highlight of the party, though, was a fireworks display,
which would happen at sundown.



I stood out front and waited for folks to arrive.
I had a gigantic smile on my face.

I waited.

Everybody was a little late, it seemed. No big deal.
No big whoop.

So I waited.

A tumbleweed rolled by.



A coyote howled in the distance.



The sun sank behind
the hills.

And I waited.

Nobody showed up. And I mean *nobody*.

I considered everybody I'd invited and only one
thought came to mind: Grudge grudge grudge grudge
grudge

grudge

grudge

grudge

GRUDGE!

By the time the fireworks show started—with me as the
sole spectator—I was scowling.



After that, my personality became something else entirely.



I went from a sweet grape . . .

to a bitter grape . . .



to a snappy grape.

Who moved my chair?!

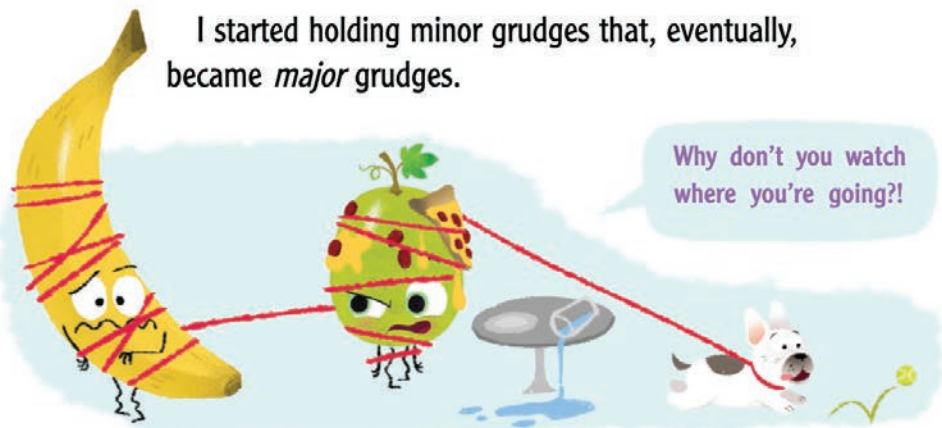


Finally, I became a sour grape.

Grrrrrrrrr!



I started holding minor grudges that, eventually, became *major* grudges.

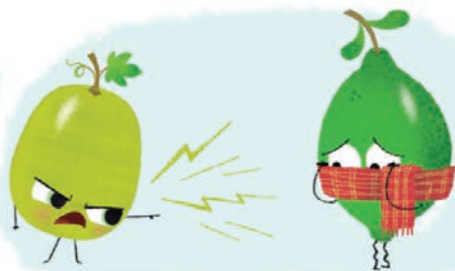


I scowled so much that my face got all squishy.



I took my grumpiness out on others.

Are you ever going to return my scarf?



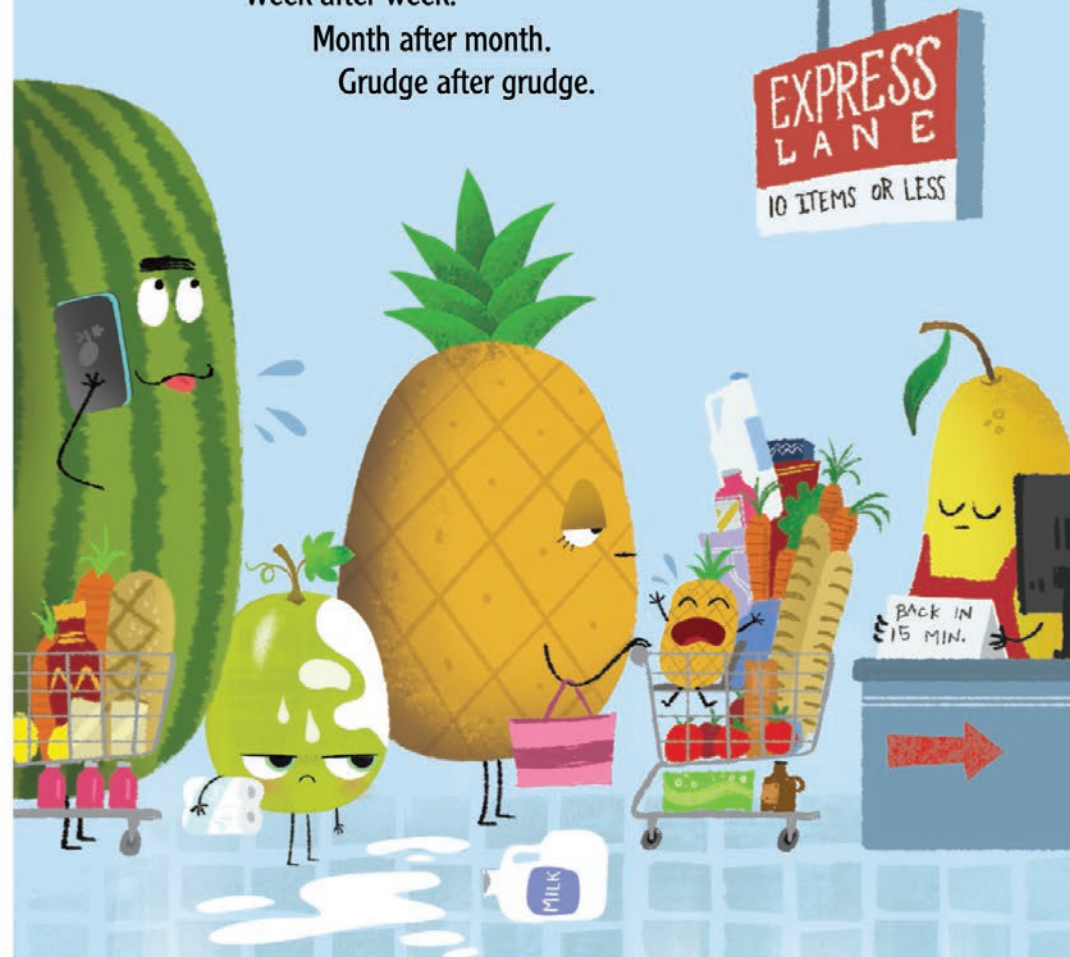
And that's just how it's been.

Day after day.

Week after week.

Month after month.

Grudge after grudge.



But something happened recently that changed my thinking . . .

I was getting ready to meet up with my friend Lenny, the only fellow I know who's as sour as I am.

Lenny and I usually go to the park, where we sit on a bench and rant about stuff.



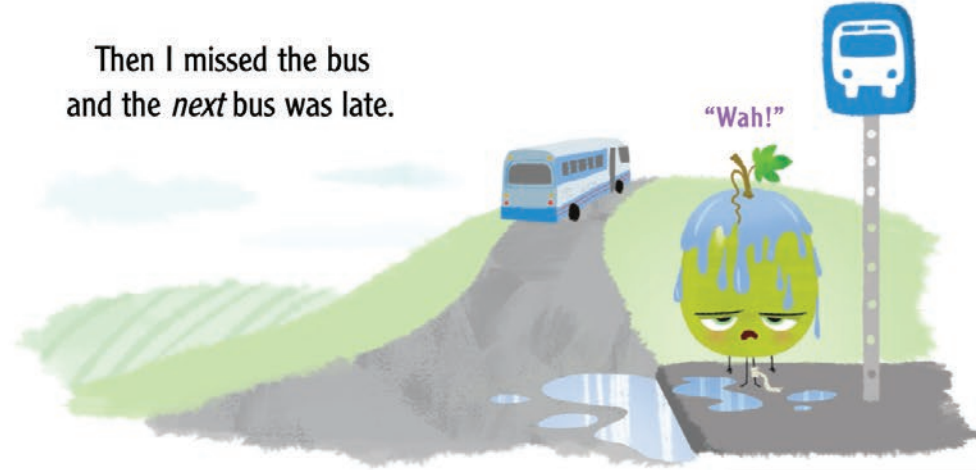
But just as I was heading out the door, I bumped my knee.



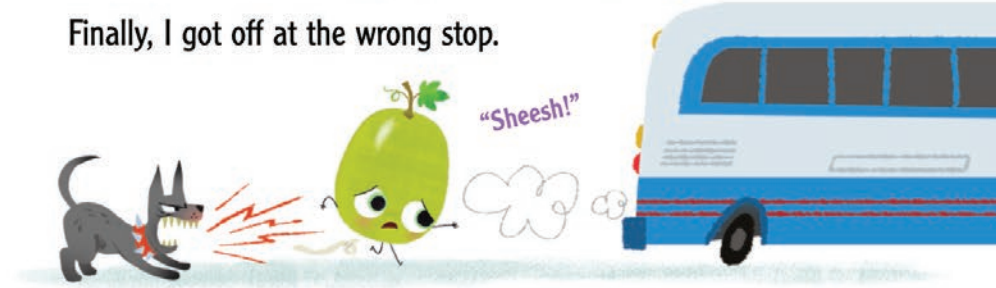
After I bandaged myself up, I discovered I had a flat tire.



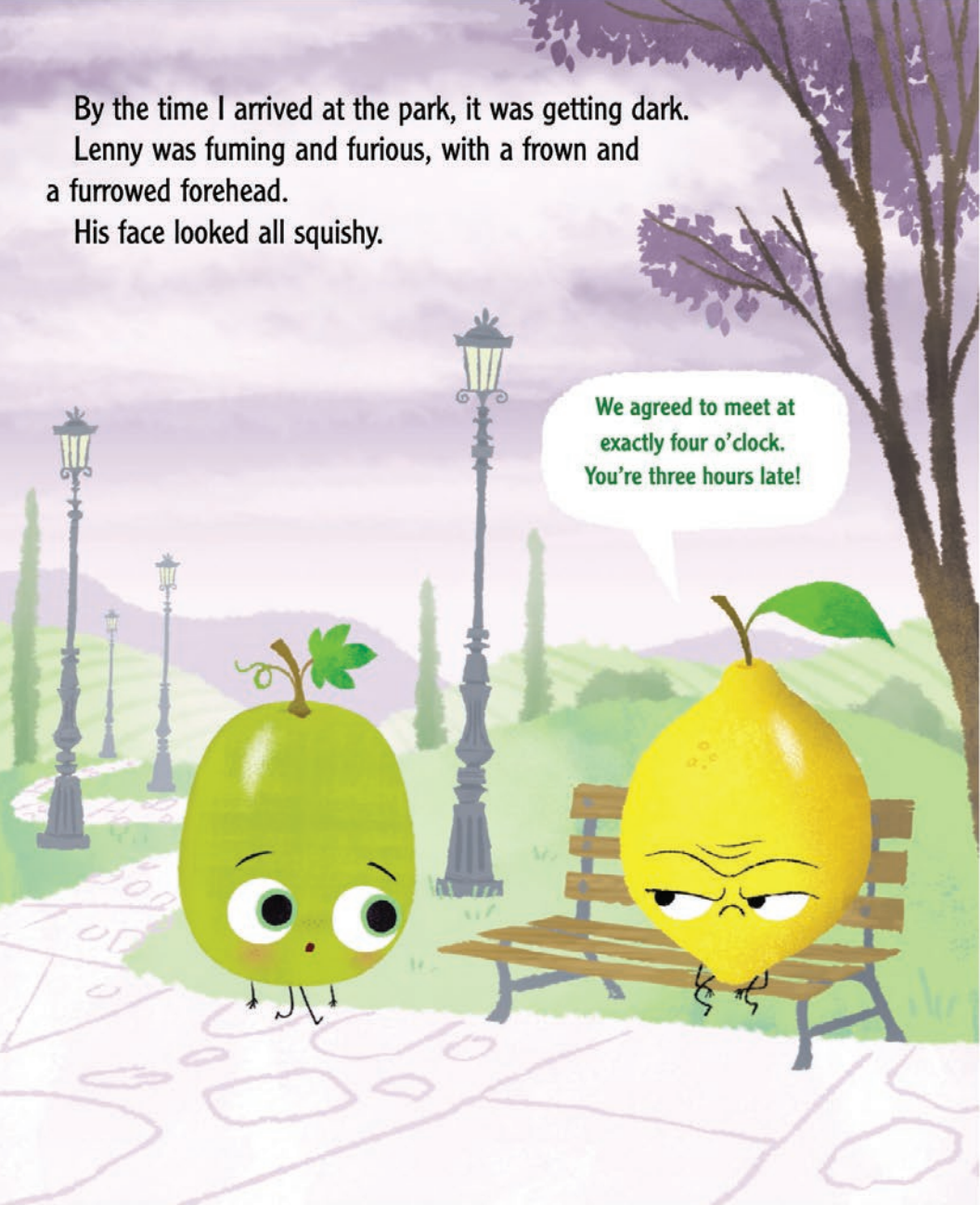
Then I missed the bus and the *next* bus was late.



Finally, I got off at the wrong stop.



By the time I arrived at the park, it was getting dark.
Lenny was fuming and furious, with a frown and
a furrowed forehead.
His face looked all squishy.

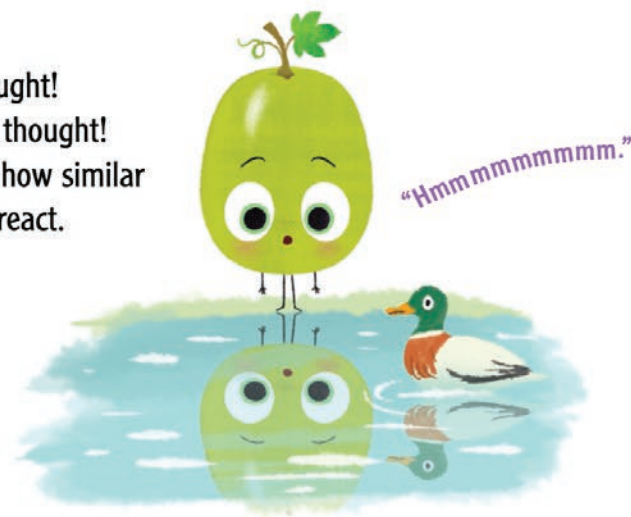


I tried to explain why I was so tardy, but Lenny wouldn't listen.
He'd already made up his mind. He'd formed a huge grudge
and he wouldn't budge!



I couldn't believe it!

How unfair, I thought!
How ridiculous, I thought!
How . . . um . . . how similar
to the way / would react.



Lenny was pretty worked up. He was pacing back and forth, emitting occasional grumbles. His tone was tart.

Had I been missing all this simple beauty because I was too busy complaining?

So I gave him a little space.

Besides, it was nice out. I noticed the sky changing colors, the melodic chirping of the birds, the evening breeze, the buzz of the park's insects coming alive at night. I suddenly felt grateful. And peaceful. And calm.

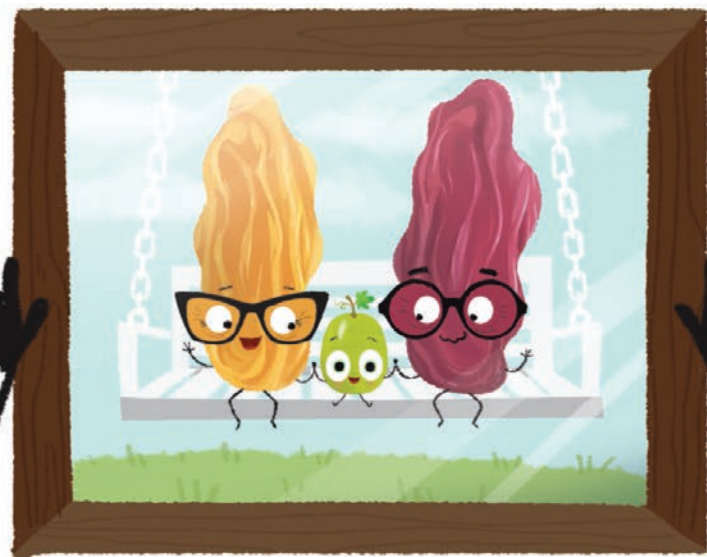
Meanwhile, ol' Lenny stormed off, muttering something about "disrespect" and "lack of consideration." I'm pretty sure I heard him add a "Grrr!" too.



I walked home. I pulled a dusty box out from under my bed. There were old family photos inside.



I spotted myself in one of the pictures. I was so sweet!



I knew that little grape from the photo was still a big part of me, deep down.
It would just take some work to get back there again.

And that was the exact moment I found the invitation I had sent out for my infamous birthday party. The one where nobody showed up. It said May 31. But wait . . . wait a minute here . . . my birthday was on May 21. Alas, I'd told everyone to come on the *wrong day*!

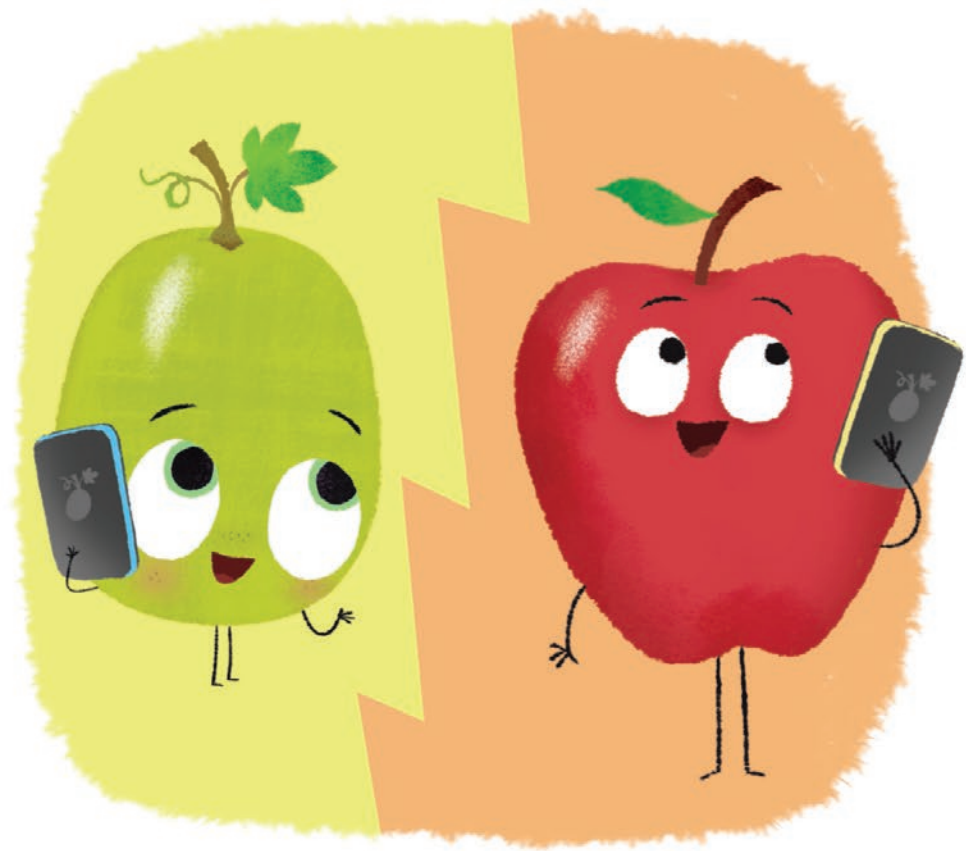


It was all my fault.
I realized nobody's perfect. Not even *me*.

After that day, I started noticing other things, too.
Like . . . how remaining sour all the time is so *draining*.
I'd wasted so much energy holding grudges when I
could've easily cleared the air if I'd felt hurt.



And yes, I still get upset from time to time. But that's okay!



Because now I talk, and I listen, and I work things out
instead of just walking away.

My sourness is fading.
I'm letting go of all my grudges.
And hey, it's working.

Slipups happen!
I'm just glad you're okay.

Aw, thanks!



That scarf looks sublime on you.
Why don't you keep it?

Really?
You're the best!



Orange you glad we got
to catch up?

I'm so *grapeful* that we did!



Sure, sometimes I still let out a little
“Grrrrr” when I’m frustrated.

Like this:

Grrrrrrrr!



But then I move on.
My face is less squishy, too.

Oh, and don't worry. Things are okay with Lenny again.

Gosh, sorry I'm late!
You must be furious.

No big deal,
my friend.



You know what?

If you look at things in the right sort of way—and if you remember to be kind, considerate, forgiving, and grateful—life really *can* be pretty sweet.



Yes, indeed.





Grrrrrrrrr!

