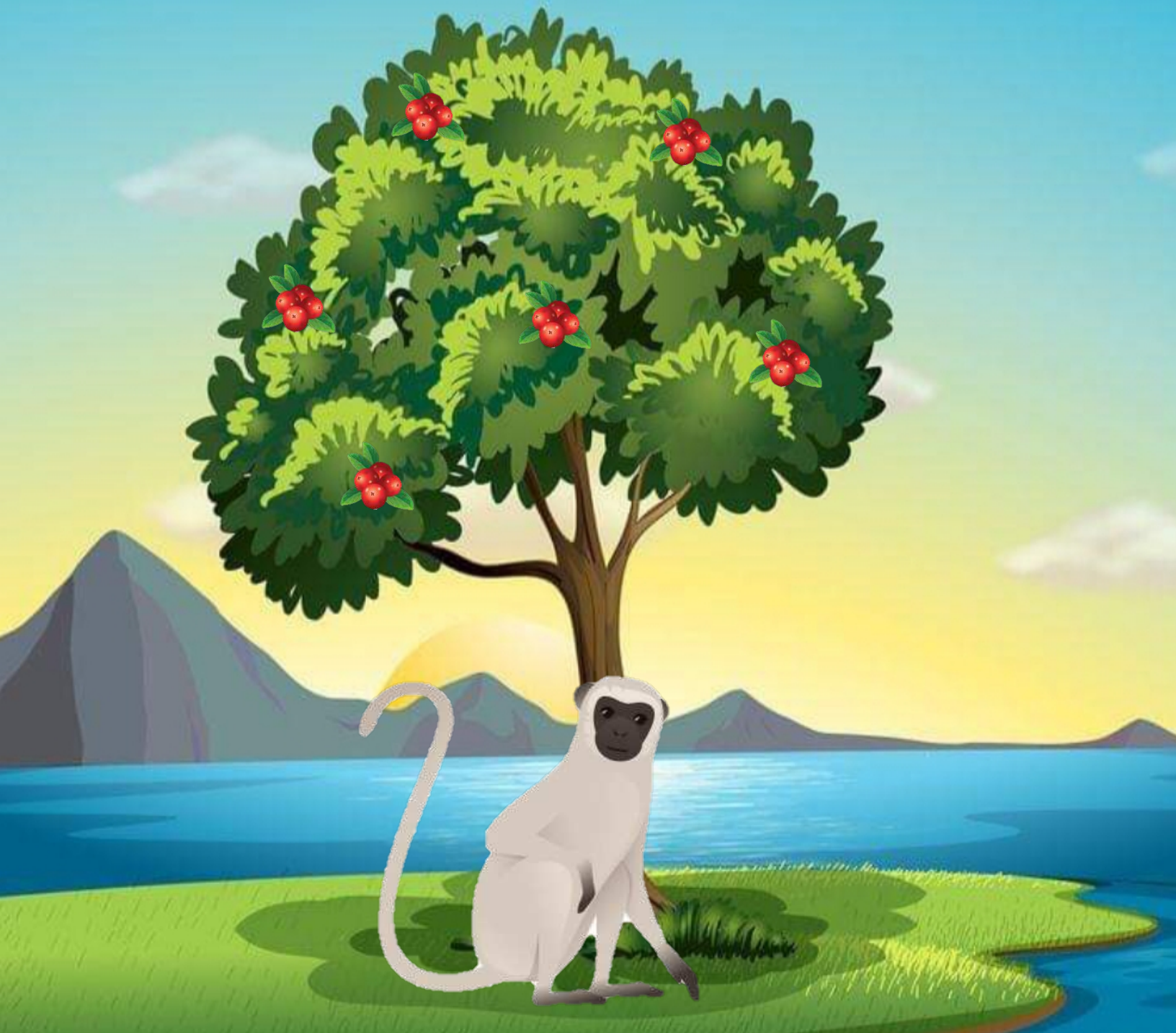


AFRICAN TALES

Monkey's Heart

A Story From the
Swahili of East Africa





Long ago, at the edge of the ocean,
there grew a huge tree that spread
half its branches over the land and
half over the sea.

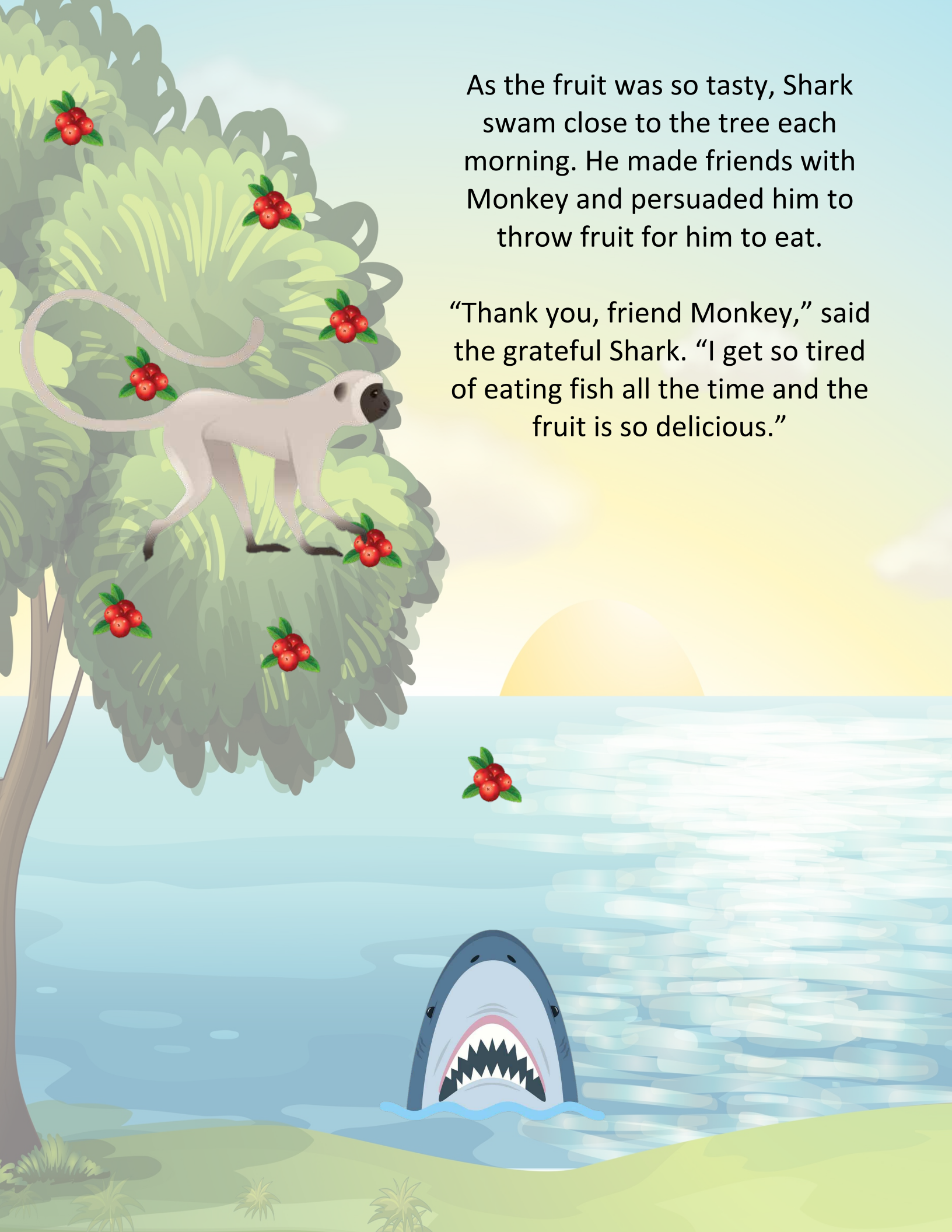
It was the favourite tree of Vervet
Monkey. He would swing and play in
its branches all day, stopping only to
eat some of the tree's delicious fruit
when he grew hungry.

In the sea lived a huge Tiger Shark.
One day, Monkey threw fruit into
the water and Shark gobbled it up.



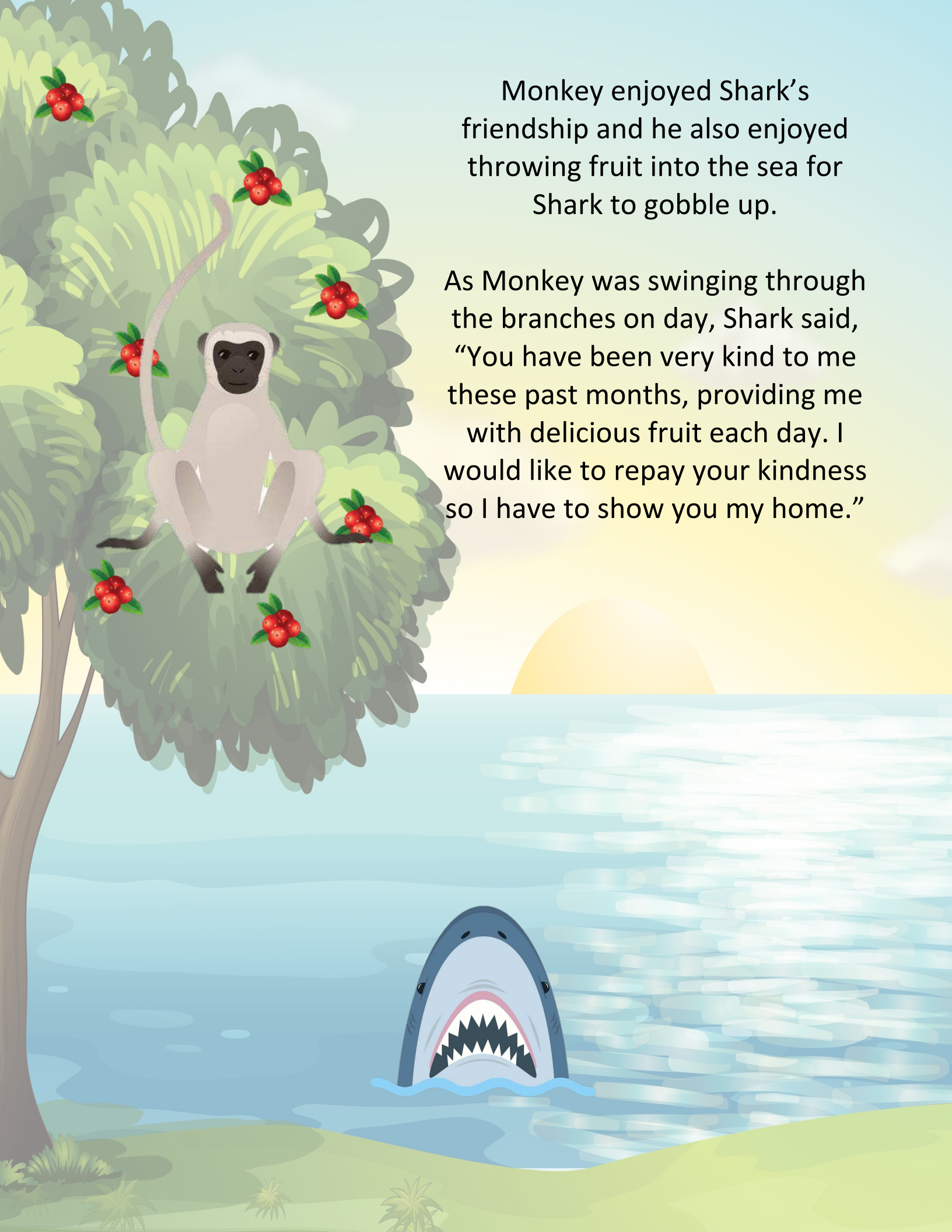
As the fruit was so tasty, Shark swam close to the tree each morning. He made friends with Monkey and persuaded him to throw fruit for him to eat.

“Thank you, friend Monkey,” said the grateful Shark. “I get so tired of eating fish all the time and the fruit is so delicious.”

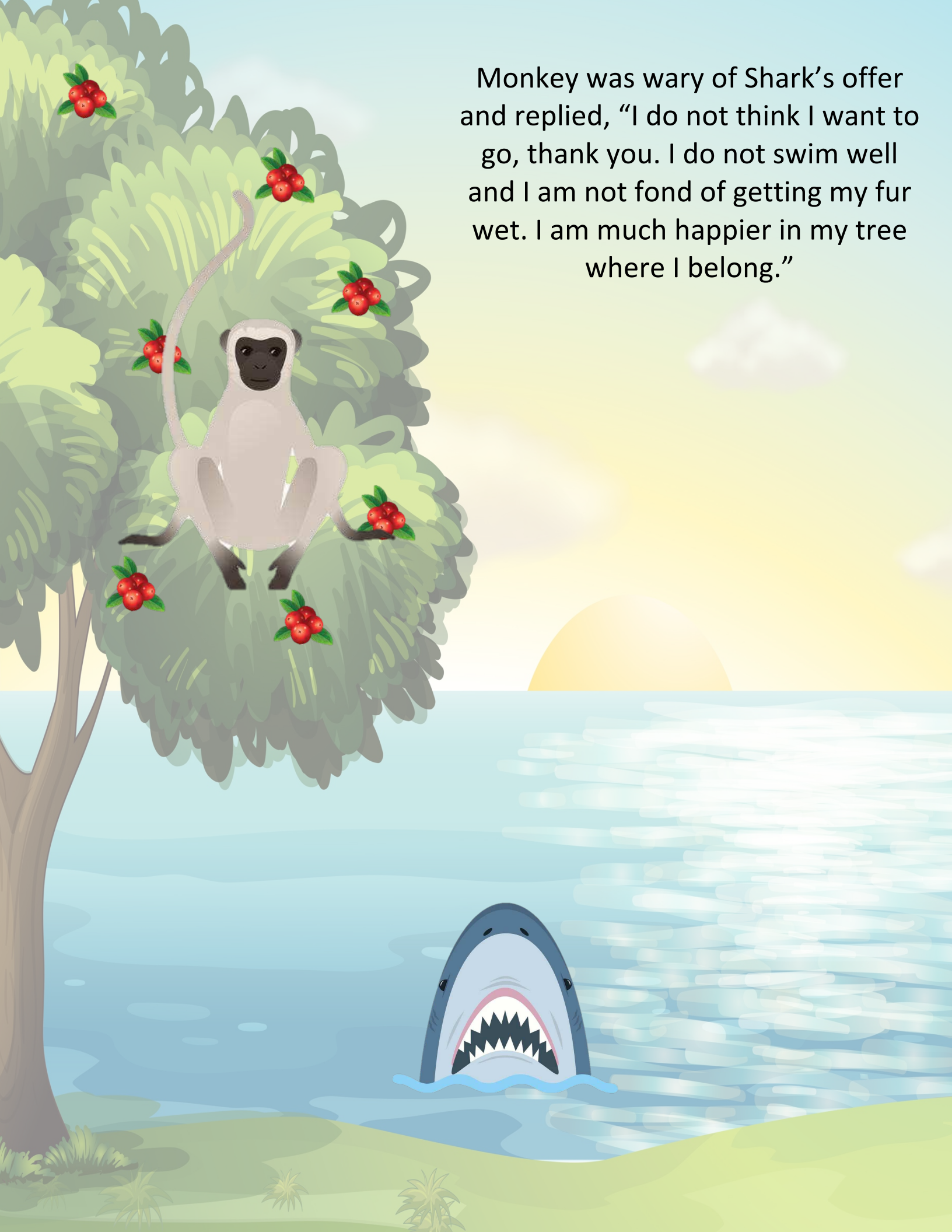


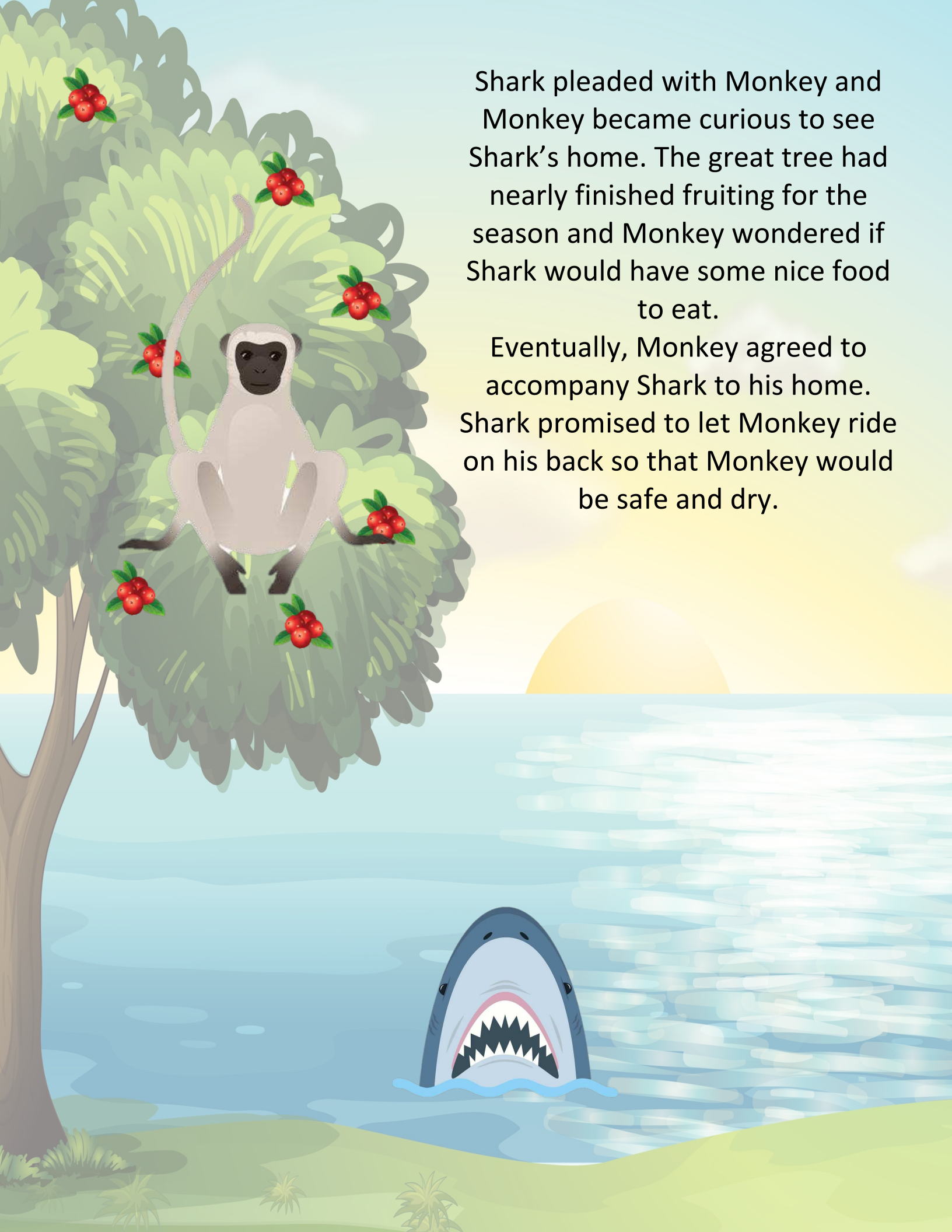
Monkey enjoyed Shark's friendship and he also enjoyed throwing fruit into the sea for Shark to gobble up.

As Monkey was swinging through the branches on day, Shark said, "You have been very kind to me these past months, providing me with delicious fruit each day. I would like to repay your kindness so I have to show you my home."



Monkey was wary of Shark's offer and replied, "I do not think I want to go, thank you. I do not swim well and I am not fond of getting my fur wet. I am much happier in my tree where I belong."



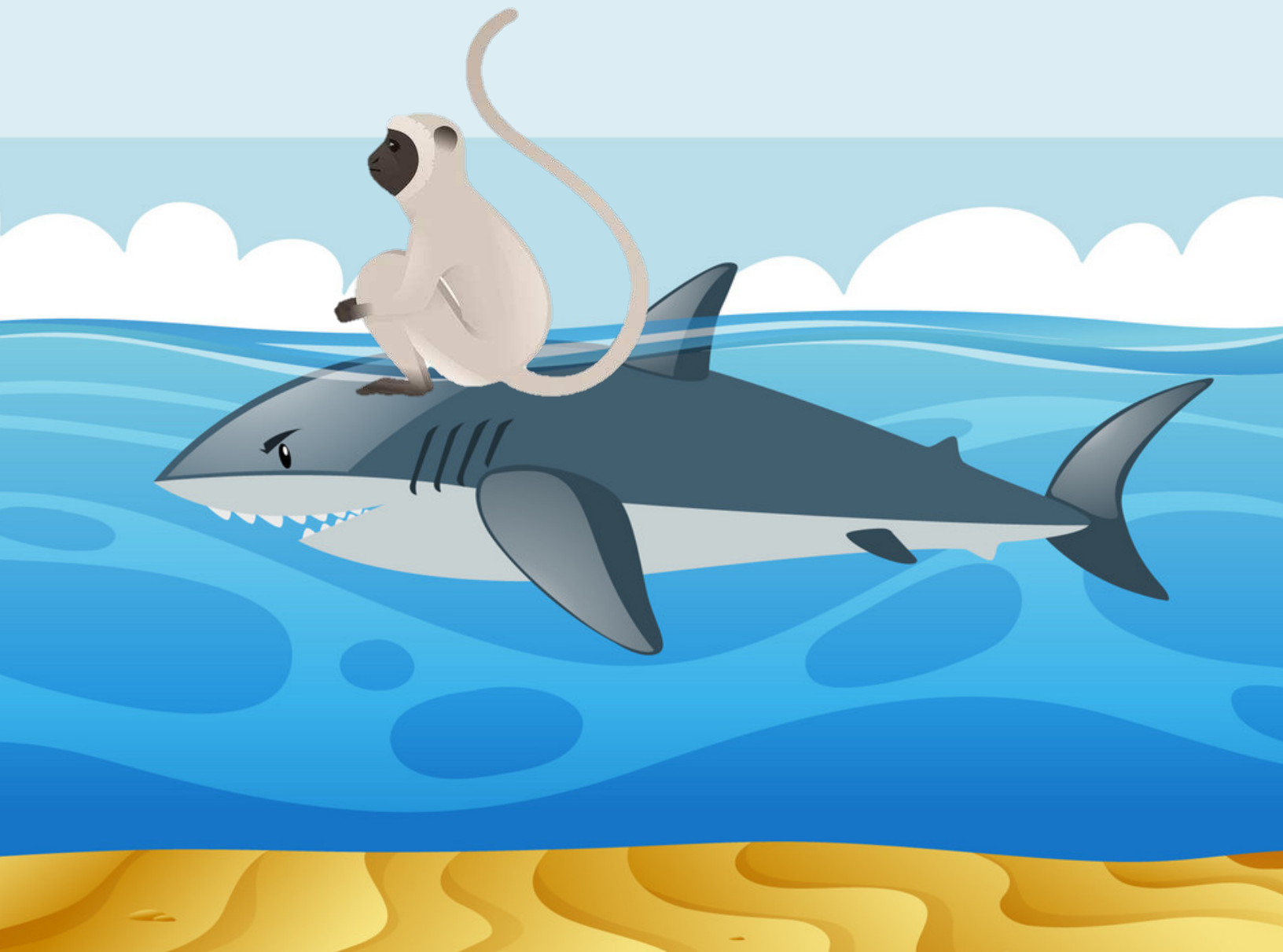


Shark pleaded with Monkey and Monkey became curious to see Shark's home. The great tree had nearly finished fruiting for the season and Monkey wondered if Shark would have some nice food to eat.

Eventually, Monkey agreed to accompany Shark to his home. Shark promised to let Monkey ride on his back so that Monkey would be safe and dry.

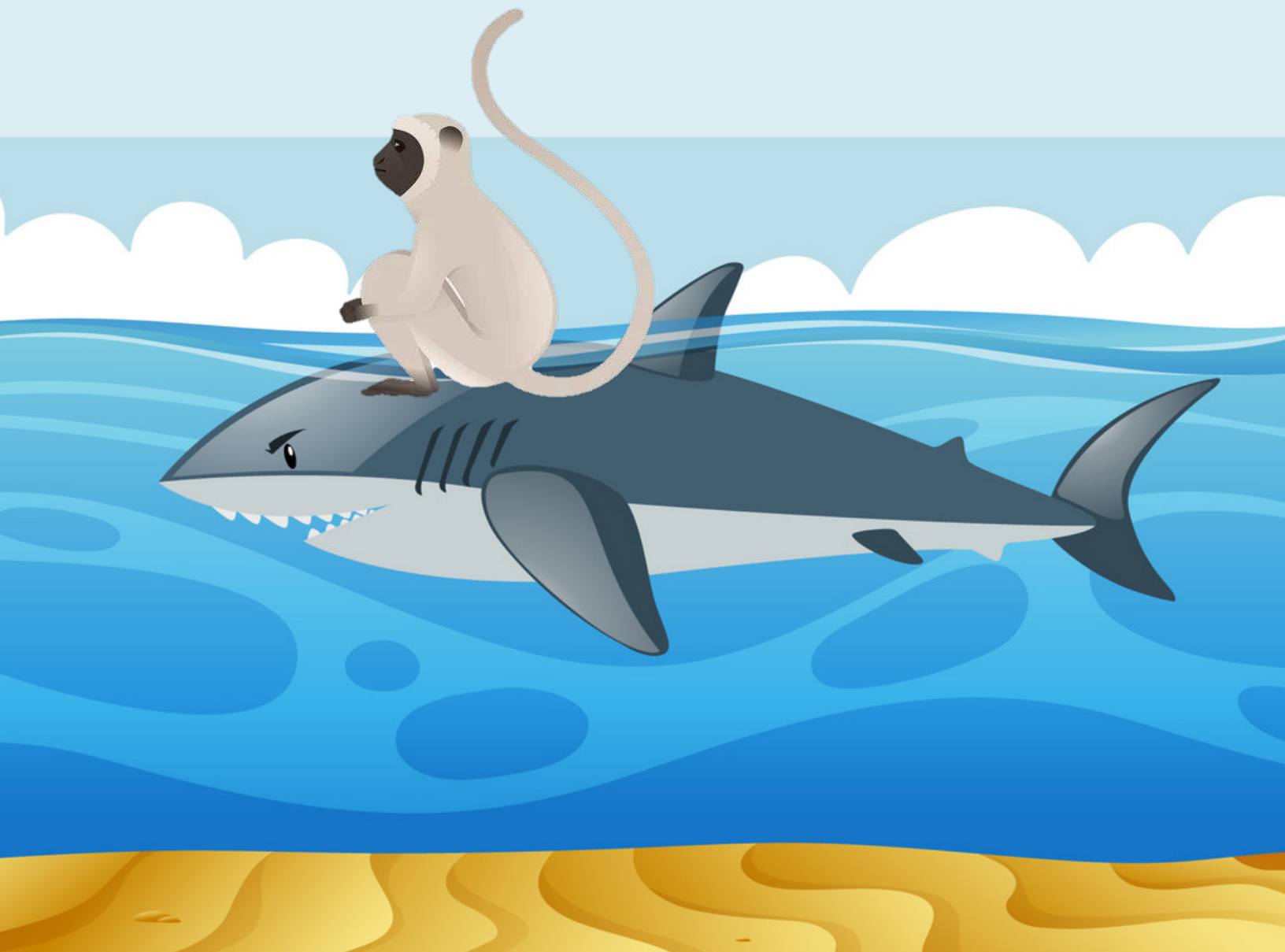
Monkey jumped on to Shark's back and Shark swam off carefully. At first, Monkey was scared, but he soon got used to the movement and the strange sensations of the sea.

After some time, Monkey asked, "How much further to go?" he was getting impatient.



“We are about halfway there,” answered Shark. “But there is something I must tell you first. The chief of our tribe, the biggest and most powerful Shark in the ocean, is very ill. We fear he may die.

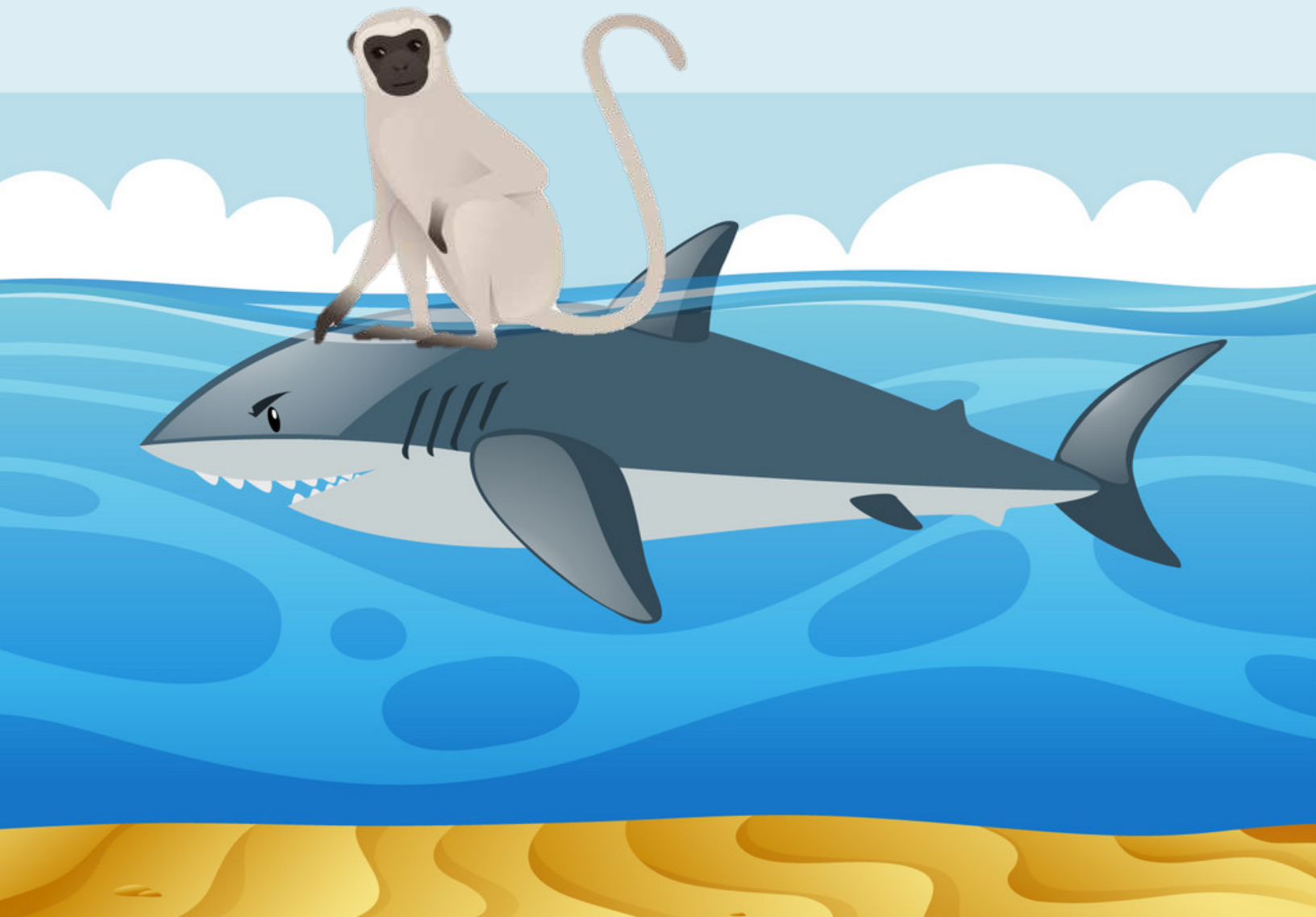
Our tribe’s nganga has told us that the chief can only be cured by eating a monkey’s heart. But because you have always been kind to me, I thought I would prepare you for the sacrifice which lies ahead.”



Monkey was terrified. He bit his lip to stop crying out in fear while he planned his escape.

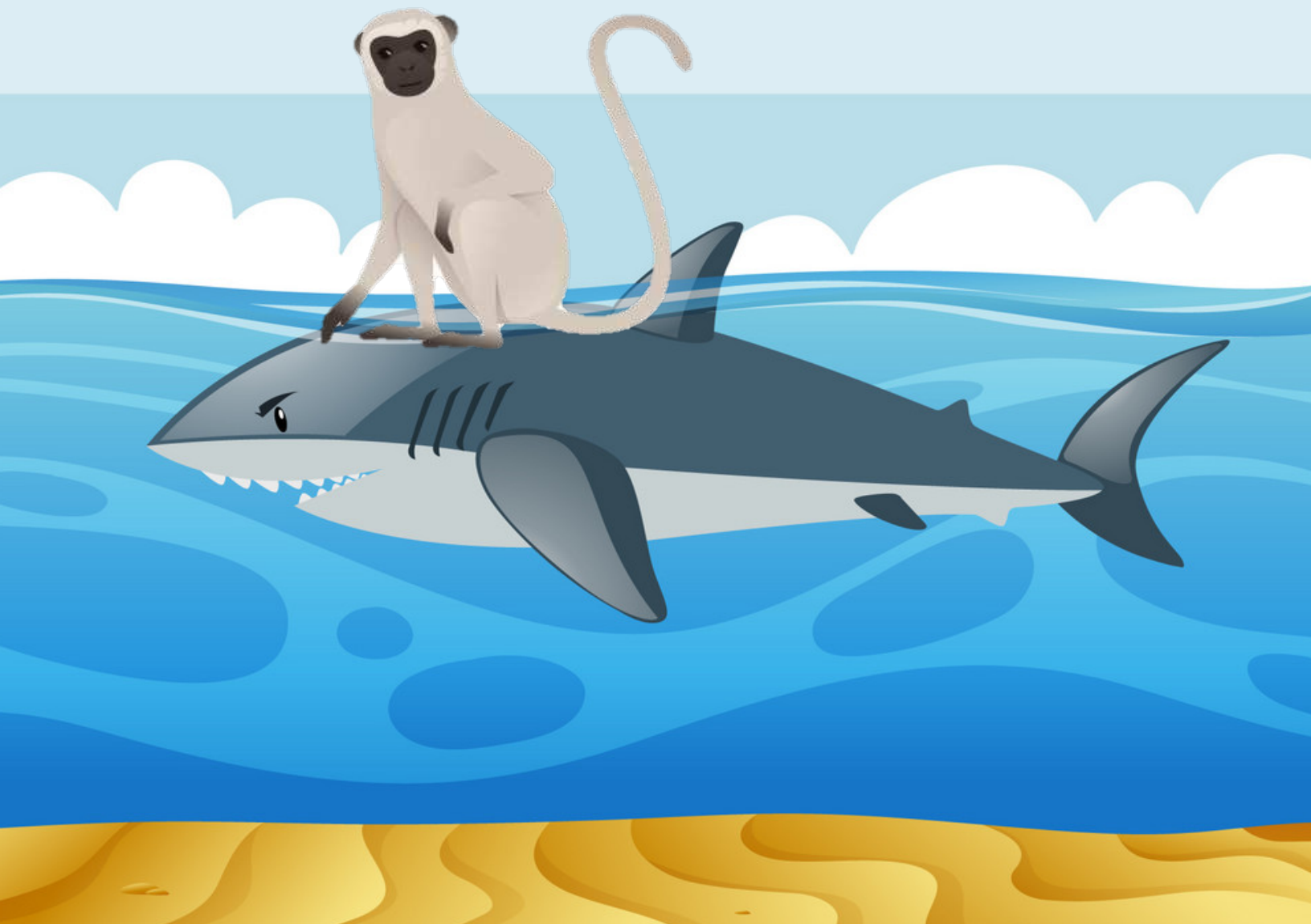
At last, he said as calmly as he could, “My dear friend, how foolish of you not to have told me before we left the great tree.

How can your chief have my heart when I did not bring it with me? Obviously you do not know much about monkeys. We leave our hearts hanging in the tree where we sleep.”



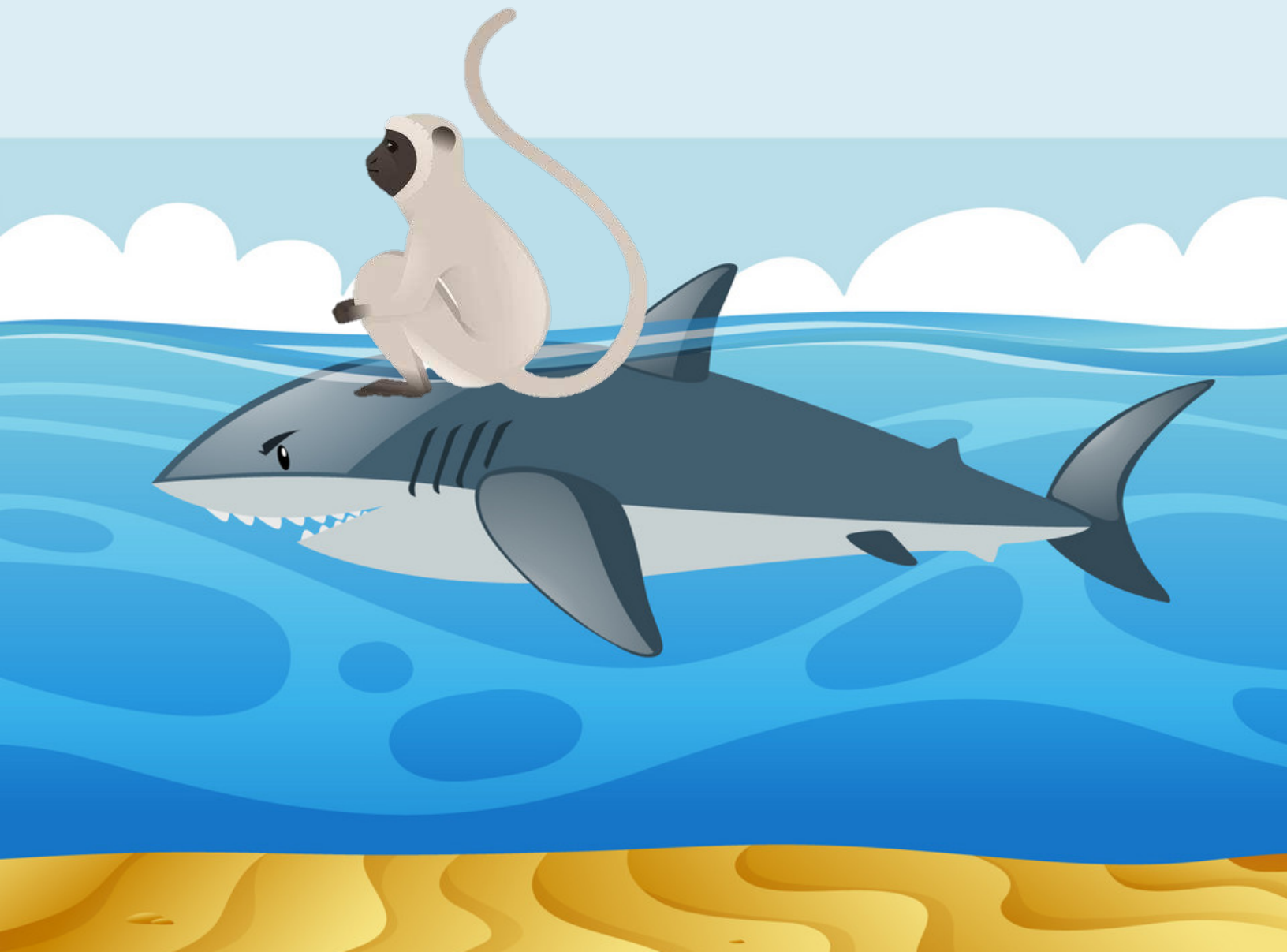
Sharks was very surprised by Monkey's statement. He knew how angry the rest of his tribe would be if what Monkey said was true.

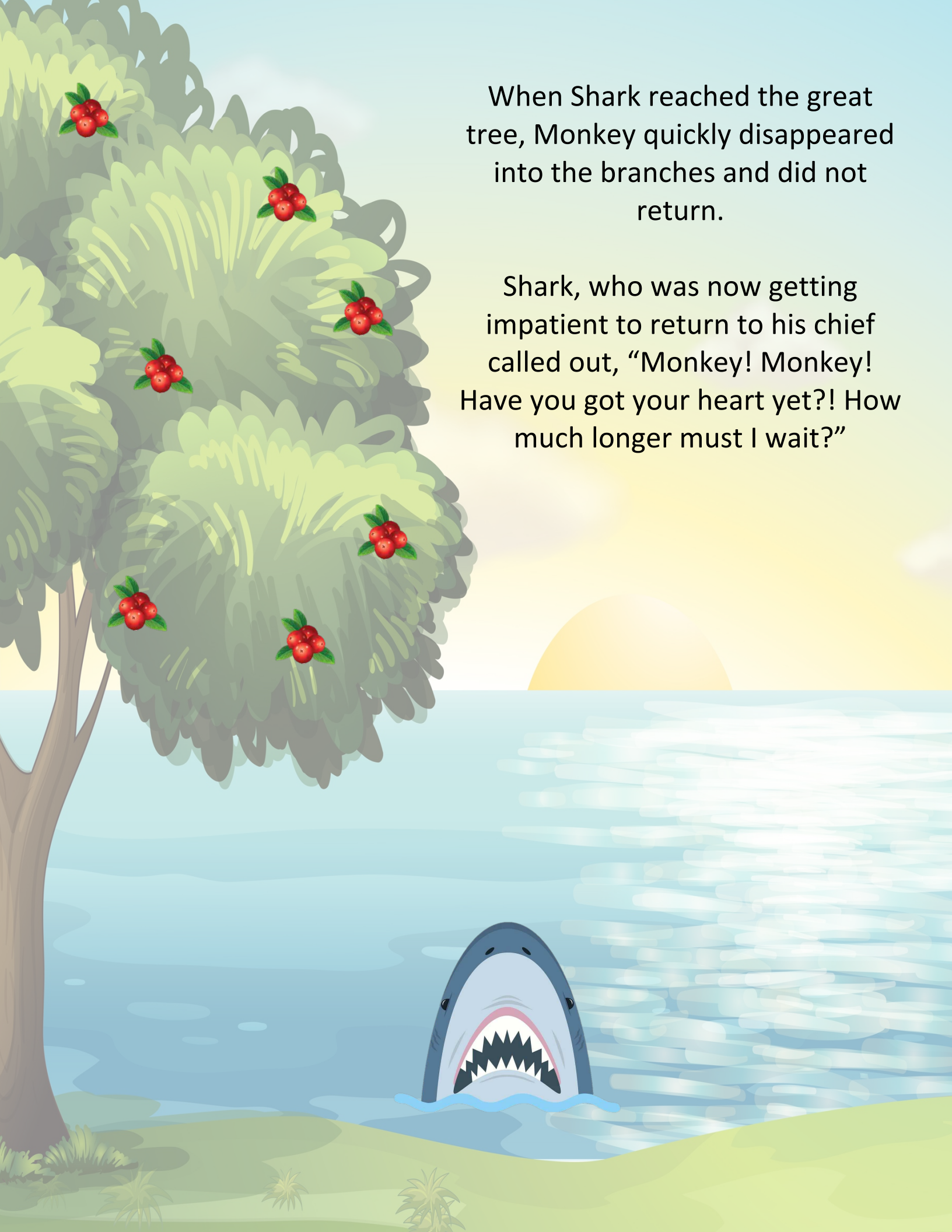
Monkey easily persuaded Shark to return to the great tree so that they could take Monkey's heart to the chief of all sharks.



As Shark swam back towards the great tree, he said, “If I take you back to your tree will you return with your heart?”

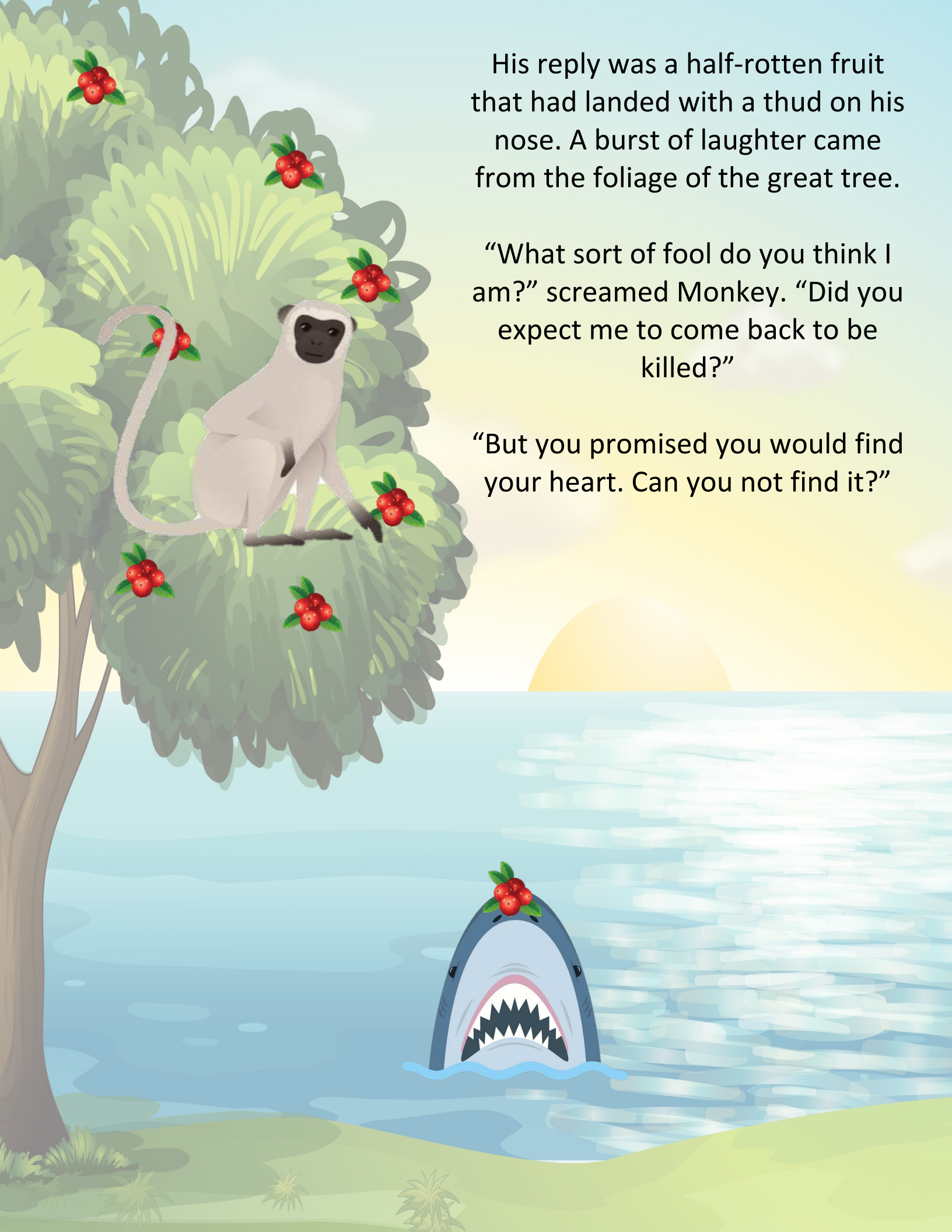
“Of course,” replied Monkey. “Come, make haste so that we do not keep your chief waiting.”





When Shark reached the great tree, Monkey quickly disappeared into the branches and did not return.

Shark, who was now getting impatient to return to his chief called out, "Monkey! Monkey! Have you got your heart yet?! How much longer must I wait?"



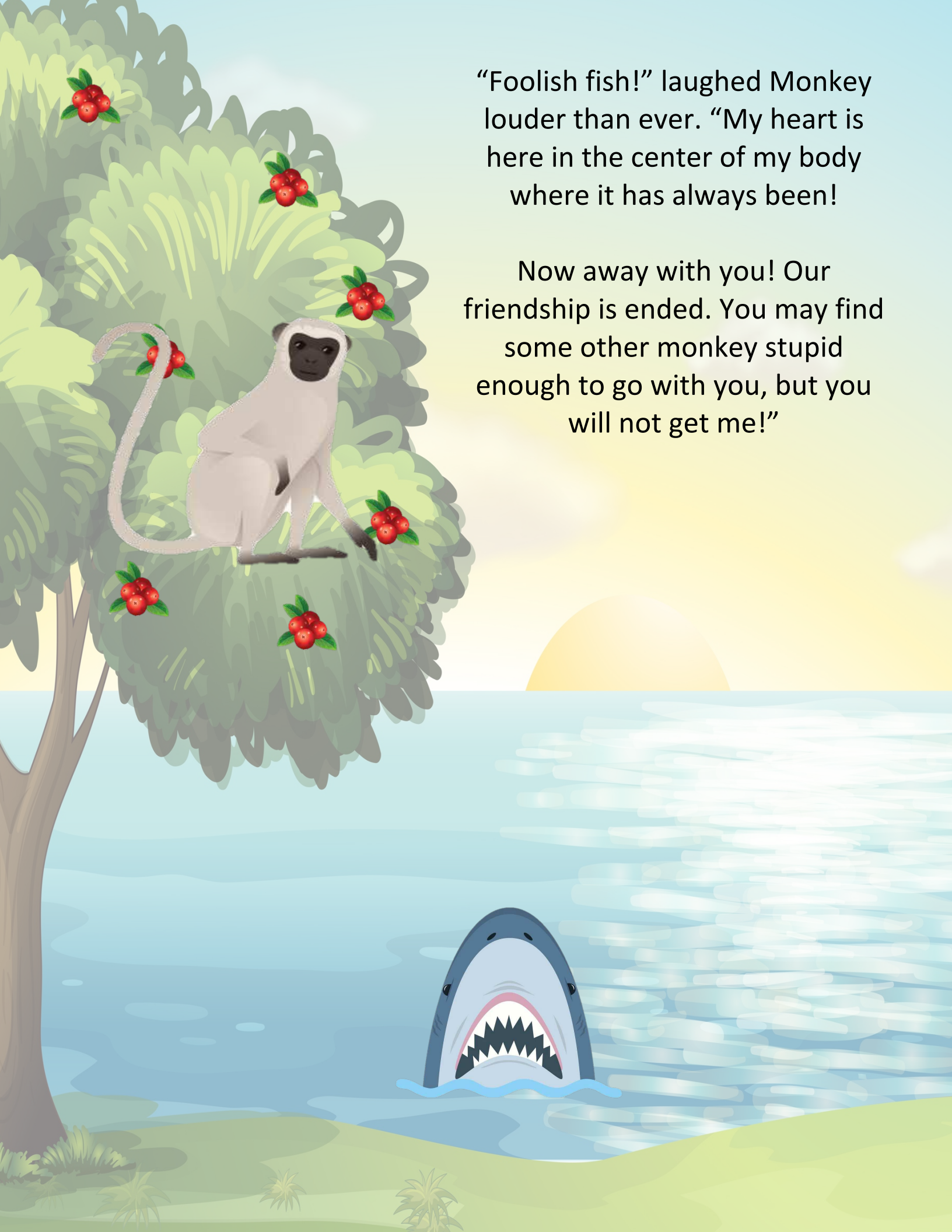
His reply was a half-rotten fruit that had landed with a thud on his nose. A burst of laughter came from the foliage of the great tree.

“What sort of fool do you think I am?” screamed Monkey. “Did you expect me to come back to be killed?”

“But you promised you would find your heart. Can you not find it?”

“Foolish fish!” laughed Monkey louder than ever. “My heart is here in the center of my body where it has always been!”

Now away with you! Our friendship is ended. You may find some other monkey stupid enough to go with you, but you will not get me!”



Monkey laughed and chattered in the great tree,
pleased with his quick wits.

Proudly he told all his friends and relations how he had
outwitted the huge Tiger Shark.

Extracted from: "When Lion Could Fly and Other Tales From Africa."




FUN FACTS

About Sharks

- Sharks do not have bones.
- Shark skin feels similar to sandpaper.
- Sharks can go into a trance.
- Scientists age sharks by counting the rings on their vertebrae.
- A whale shark's spot pattern is unique as a fingerprint.



An illustration of a light-colored monkey with a black face and long tail, sitting in a large green tree. The monkey is looking towards the viewer.

DID YOU KNOW

This About Monkeys

- Monkeys use grooming to strengthen relationships.
- Pygmy Marmosets are the world's smallest monkeys.
- Mandrills are the world's largest monkeys.
- Capuchin monkeys are smart with tools.
- There are around 260 monkey species in the world.
- Most species of monkeys have tails except for the mighty ape.





THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY