



# Animal Sidekicks

## The Crab Spiders and the Flowers



Different types of crab spiders have evolved to blend in perfectly with different coloured flowers. They lie in wait for insects to visit, and then ambush them.

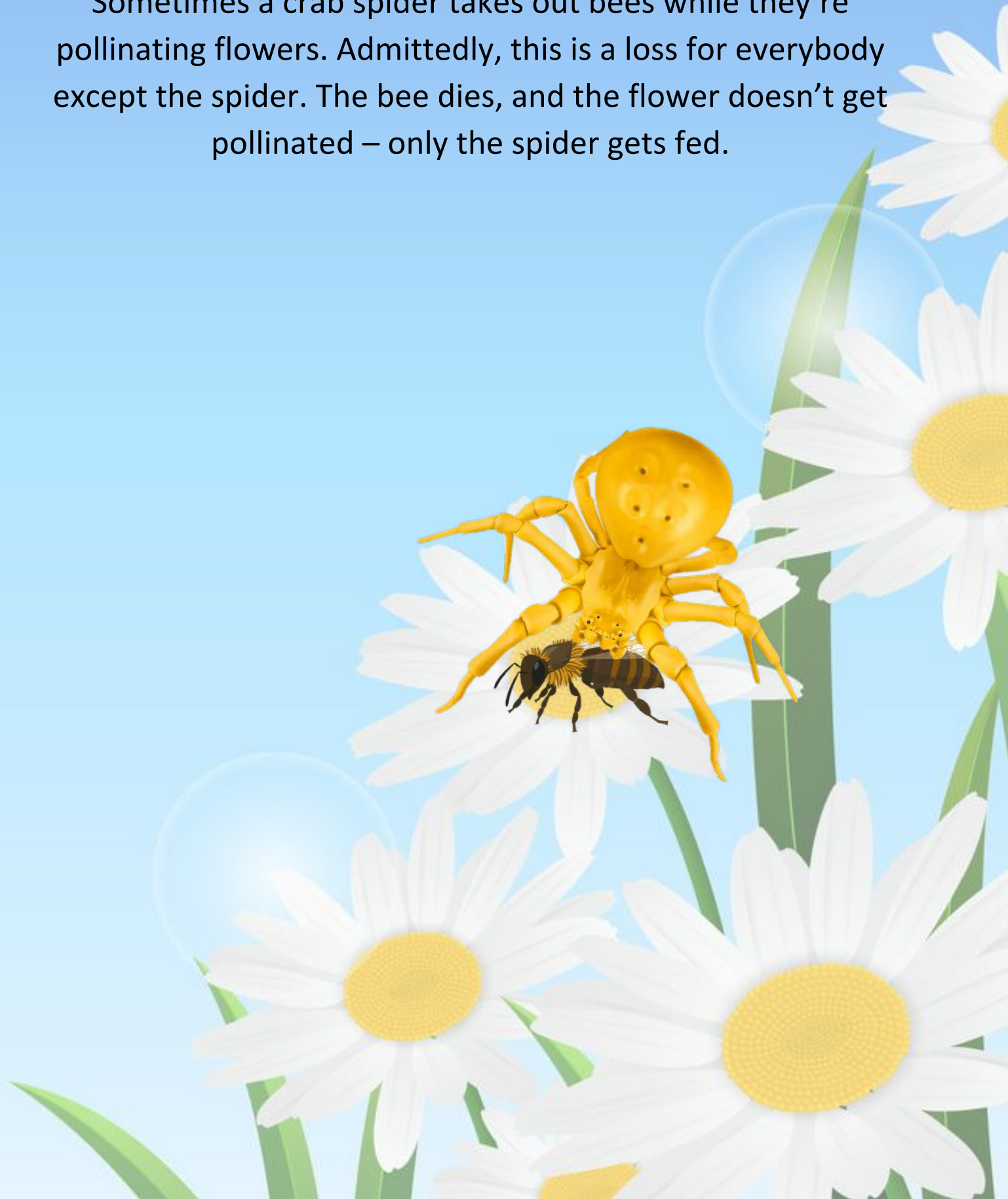


At first glance, this hardly looks like friendship – it looks like the crab spiders are sabotaging one of the most positive relationships in nature! How is a flower meant to reproduce if a spider is attacking all the pollinators? But before we judge, let's take a closer look.



## Not Helpful

Sometimes a crab spider takes out bees while they're pollinating flowers. Admittedly, this is a loss for everybody except the spider. The bee dies, and the flower doesn't get pollinated – only the spider gets fed.



## Sound the Alarm!

Oh no! A caterpillar is eating the petals of the flower, threatening to severely damage the plant. Where is a crab spider when you need one?



The flower releases a chemical alarm as a cry for help.

## The Crab Spider's Redemption

A nearby crab spider detects the flower is in danger. The spider climbs the plant and eats the caterpillar, preventing any further damage. Crab spider to the rescue.



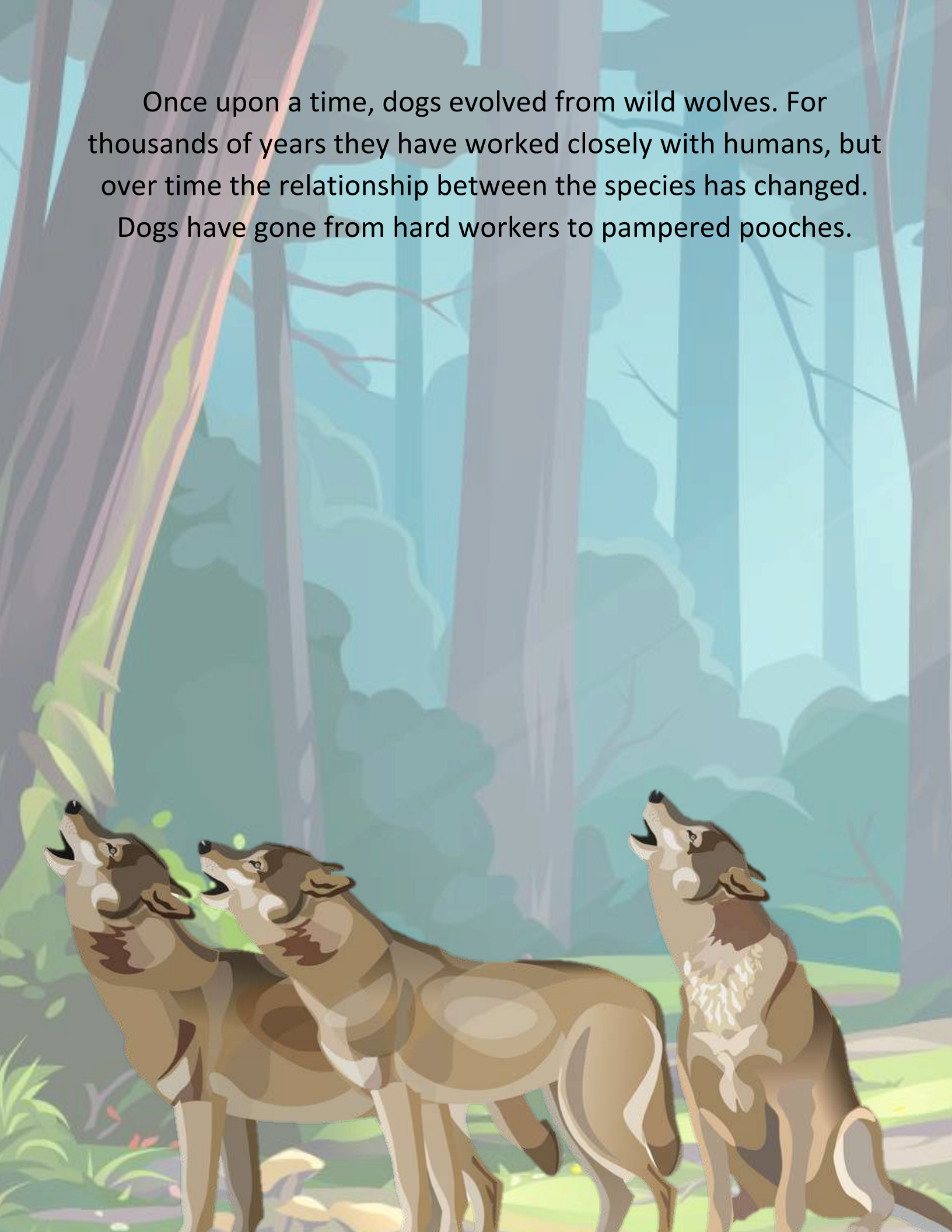
The flower's alarm bell is the spider's dinner bell.



# The Human and the Dogs



Once upon a time, dogs evolved from wild wolves. For thousands of years they have worked closely with humans, but over time the relationship between the species has changed. Dogs have gone from hard workers to pampered pooches.





## Earning Their Keep

In the past, dogs were mainly working animals. They were used for things like hunting or pulling sleds. Though dogs were given food and shelter, humans got the better deal. From an evolutionary perspective, this relationship was mutualistic, meaning that by working together both species improved their chance to survive and reproduce.

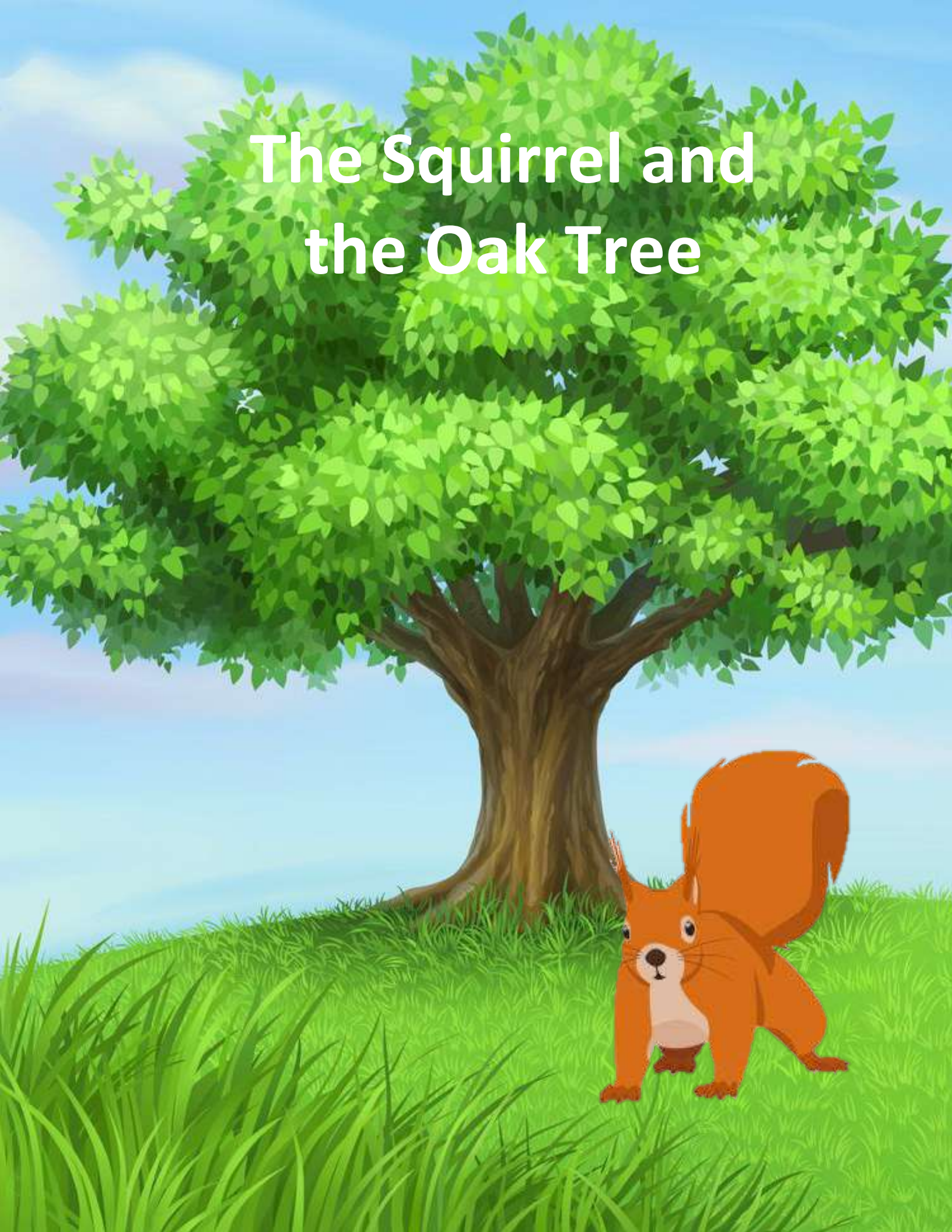


## Parasitic Pets

You might not group your furry friend with parasites like leeches and mosquitoes, but these days dogs take from humans without giving anything back. (From an evolutionary perspective – we're not counting licks and cuddles.) This relationship is therefore parasitic. Dogs get help surviving and reproducing, and humans pay for it.



# The Squirrel and the Oak Tree



Everybody knows that squirrels love acorns, but acorns love squirrels too! Squirrels like to bury acorns in secret locations to stock up for the winter – they're the perfect emergency snack. However, squirrels only remember where they put some of their acorns, so they accidentally plant a lot of oak trees!



## Saved for Later

In autumn, squirrels collect tasty acorns from oak trees. They bury the acorns all over the place, knowing that they'll need them when winter comes and there isn't much to eat.



## Glad You Forgot!

When winter arrives, the squirrels don't always remember where they put their food. Squirrels forget to recover up to 74% of their acorns! (Considering they bury thousands of them, it's actually pretty impressive they remember so many.)



## The Circle of Life

The next year, a forgotten acorn will have turned into a young oak tree. When it matures, it will support the local squirrels for hundreds of years. They will in turn, plant more trees with their forgetfulness.





THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY

