

EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY IN THE ZOO

BY: MICKEY GLANTZ
ILLUSTRATED BY:
NADHURI SHUKLA

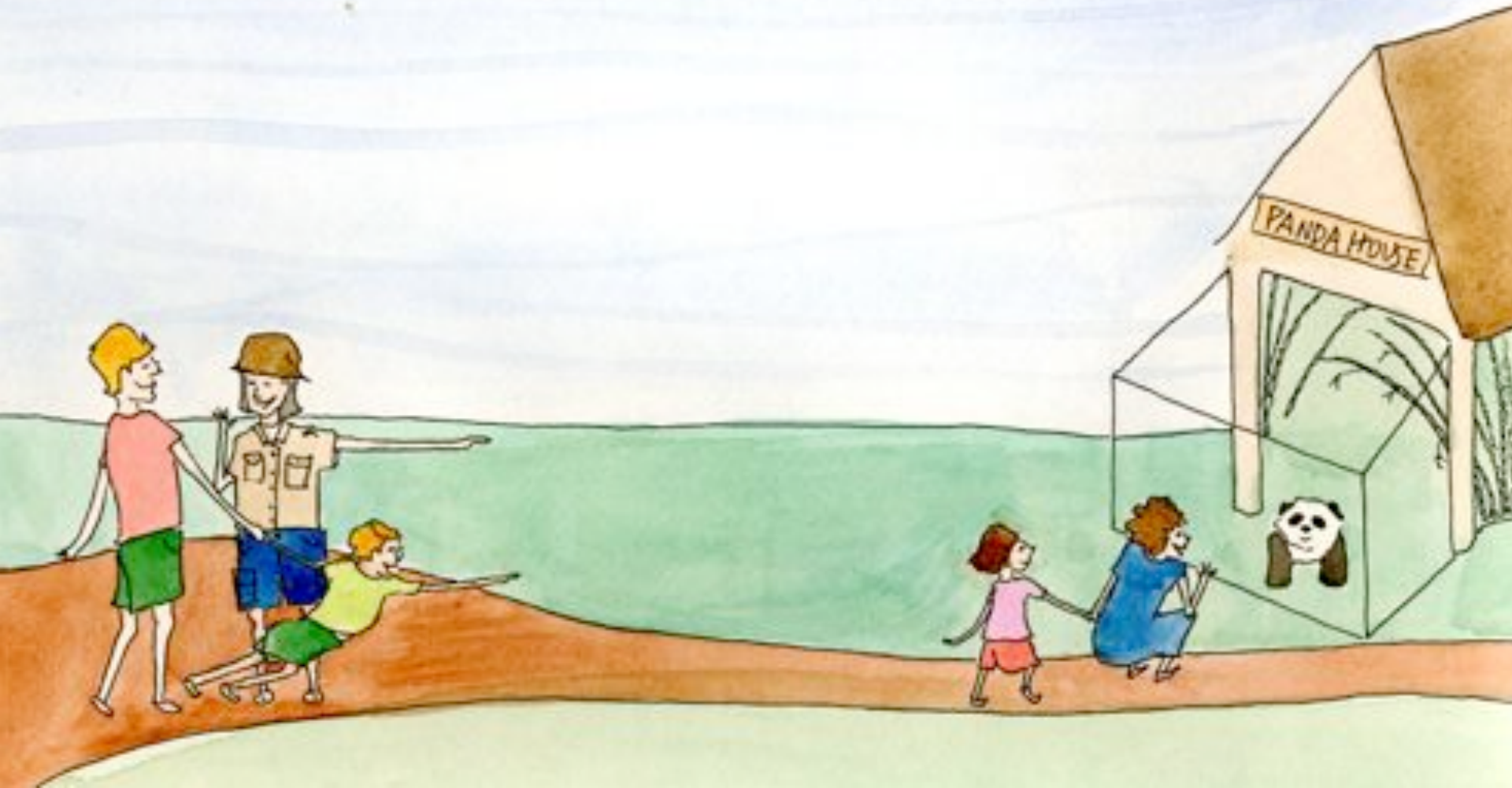


Our zoo was so lucky because it was getting a baby Panda for the very first time. Pandas only come from China, a country on the other side of the planet. They are so cute and look like a small ball of black and white fur. Everyone loves pandas!



All the animals in the zoo were happy.
They had never seen a real panda
before. When they saw it, they too
thought it was so very cute and cuddly.

Everyone was happy, the
zookeepers, the visitors and all
the animals in the zoo.



The happy feeling was also felt all around the town. It was such an honor for a town to have its very own panda.

But life at the zoo was changing. The visitors were running to see the new baby panda. But the elephant house was empty. No visitors!

The birdhouse was empty too. The reptile house was empty. All the other animals at the zoo began to feel lonely.



One night when the zoo keepers had gone home and it was dark outside, all of the animals got together, but not the baby panda because it was sound asleep.

What could they do? They were so sad. No children were coming to see them. They just wanted to see the cute baby panda.



They decided that something had to be done and they had little time to do it. If no one visited them, they were afraid that the zoo owner would send them all back home.

Some would have to go to Africa, others to South America and still others to Asia, Australia or even the Arctic.

But they had become such good friends that the thought of leaving the zoo and their friends made them very sad.



**The lion paced back and forth. What can we do?
The monkeys were scratching their heads. The
elephants, tigers, camels, aardvarks, snakes,
llamas and the other animals and birds had to
put on their thinking caps.**

**All of a sudden the gorilla shouted
“I’ve got it!! I know what we can do
to get our visitors back.”**



“Let's make ourselves look as cute as the panda,” said the gorilla.

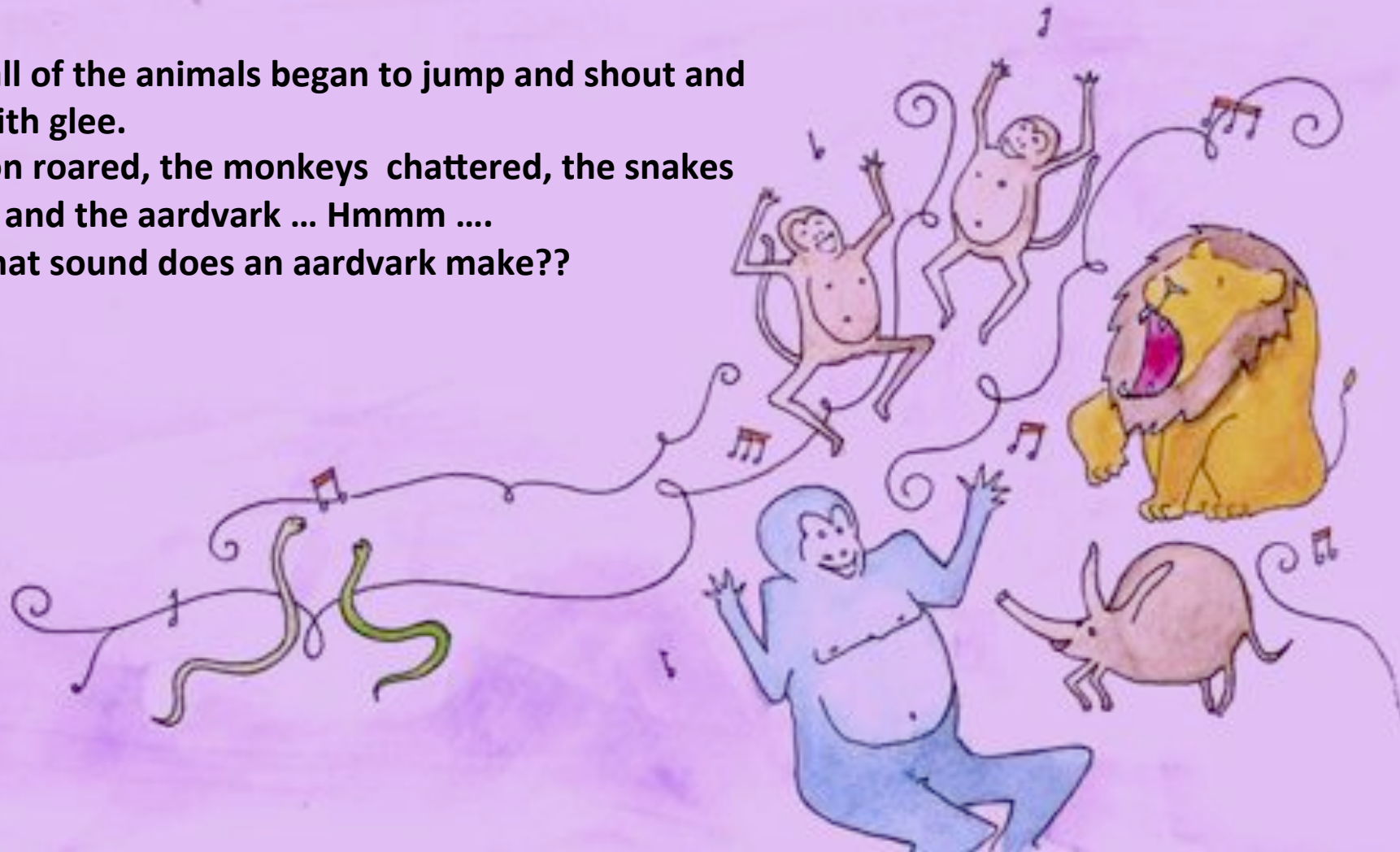
How? they all shouted.

“We can make ourselves look like a baby panda.”

Then all of the animals began to jump and shout and sing with glee.

The lion roared, the monkeys chattered, the snakes hissed and the aardvark ... Hmmm

but what sound does an aardvark make??



They decided to paint themselves white and black just like the baby panda.

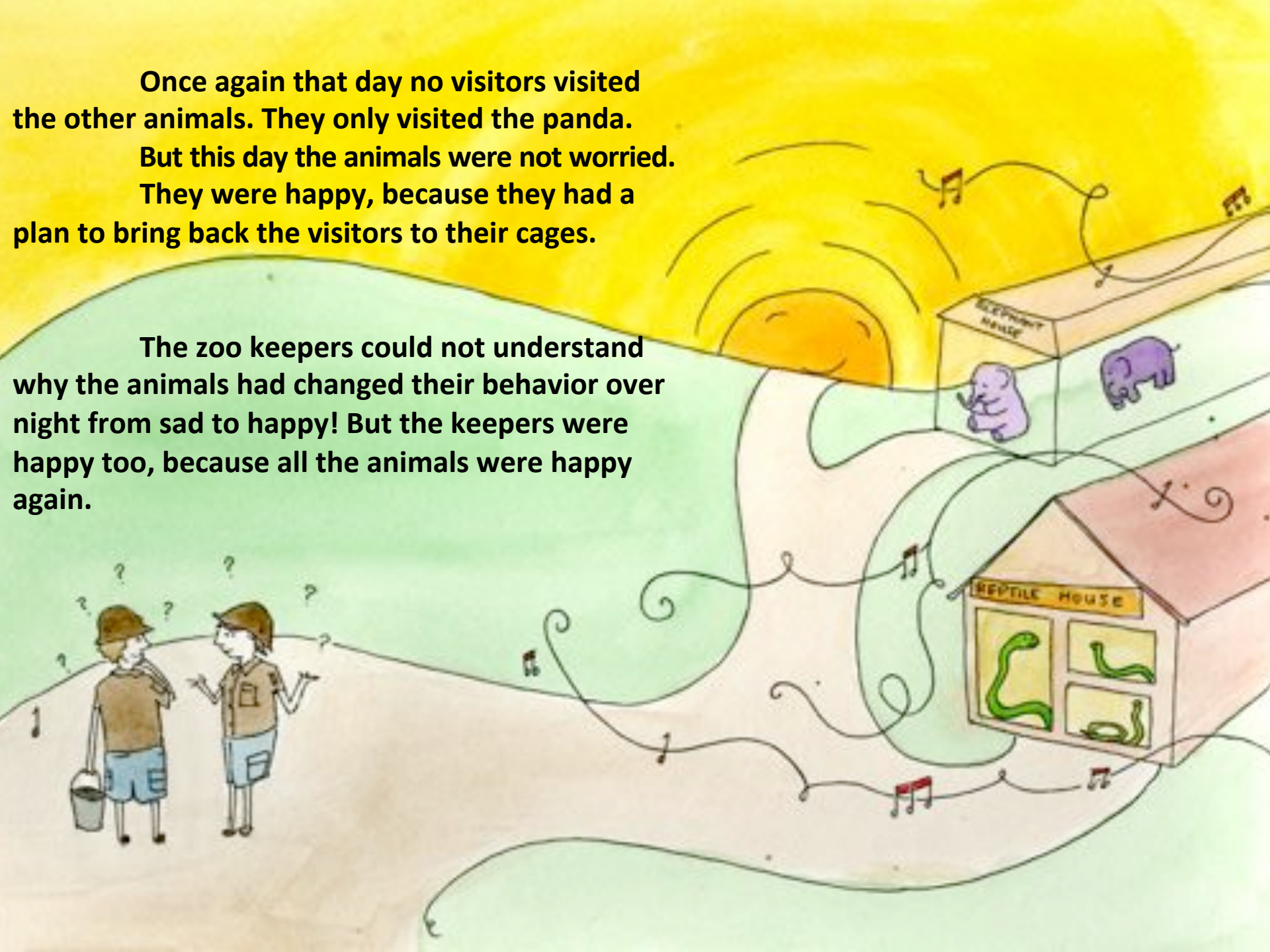
The animals were so excited. They were going to get their visitors back, once they made themselves look like pandas.

The morning sun was starting to come up and the animals hurried back to their cages.



Once again that day no visitors visited the other animals. They only visited the panda.
But this day the animals were not worried.
They were happy, because they had a plan to bring back the visitors to their cages.

The zoo keepers could not understand why the animals had changed their behavior over night from sad to happy! But the keepers were happy too, because all the animals were happy again.



As soon as nighttime came the animals put their plan into action. The monkeys entered the storeroom and had found black and white paint. The animals spent all the night painting each other to look as cute as the panda.



They had to work fast at painting each other, because daylight was approaching.



As the sun appeared in the sky, the zoo keepers arrive to unlock the gate and to prepare the zoo for visitors.



They were so surprised when they went to feed the animals.

They could not believe what they saw.





A hippo panda, an elephant panda, a camel panda, a crocodile panda, an ostrich panda, a rhino panda and so many other animals that sort of looked like pandas.



The zookeepers wondered if the owner of the zoo had discovered new animals? But where were the old animals, the ones that were their friends? The ones they had been caring for?

Their curiosity about the new panda-looking animals was soon replaced with sadness, wondering where were their old friends: the monkeys, the hippopotamus, the llama, the lion, the tiger and other big cats and, of course, the elephants?

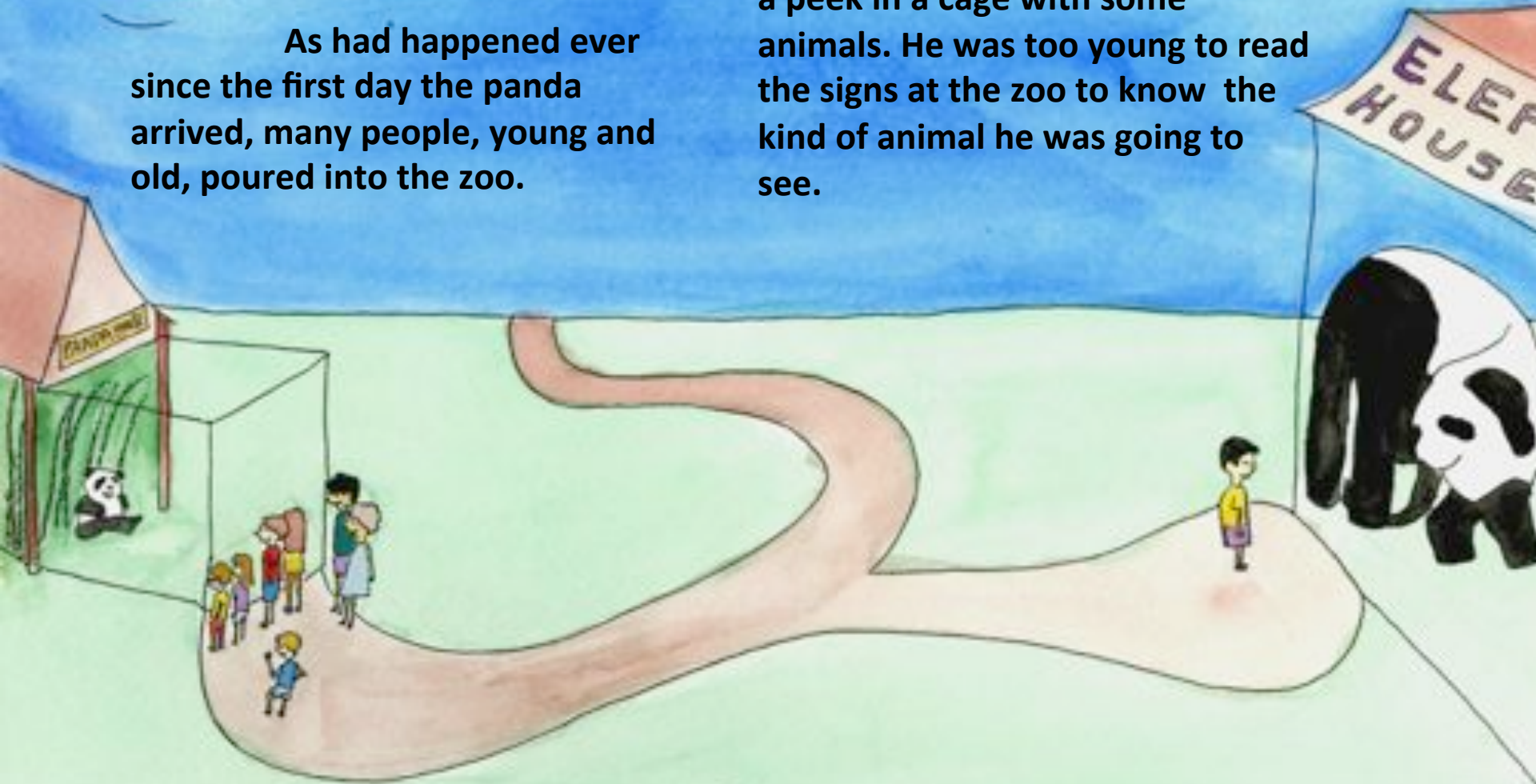


They had work to do to get the zoo ready for visitors. So, they would have to wait to look for their animal friends later, once they finished their chores at the zoo.



As had happened ever since the first day the panda arrived, many people, young and old, poured into the zoo.

One day though a curious little boy strayed away from his father and mother to take a peek in a cage with some animals. He was too young to read the signs at the zoo to know the kind of animal he was going to see.

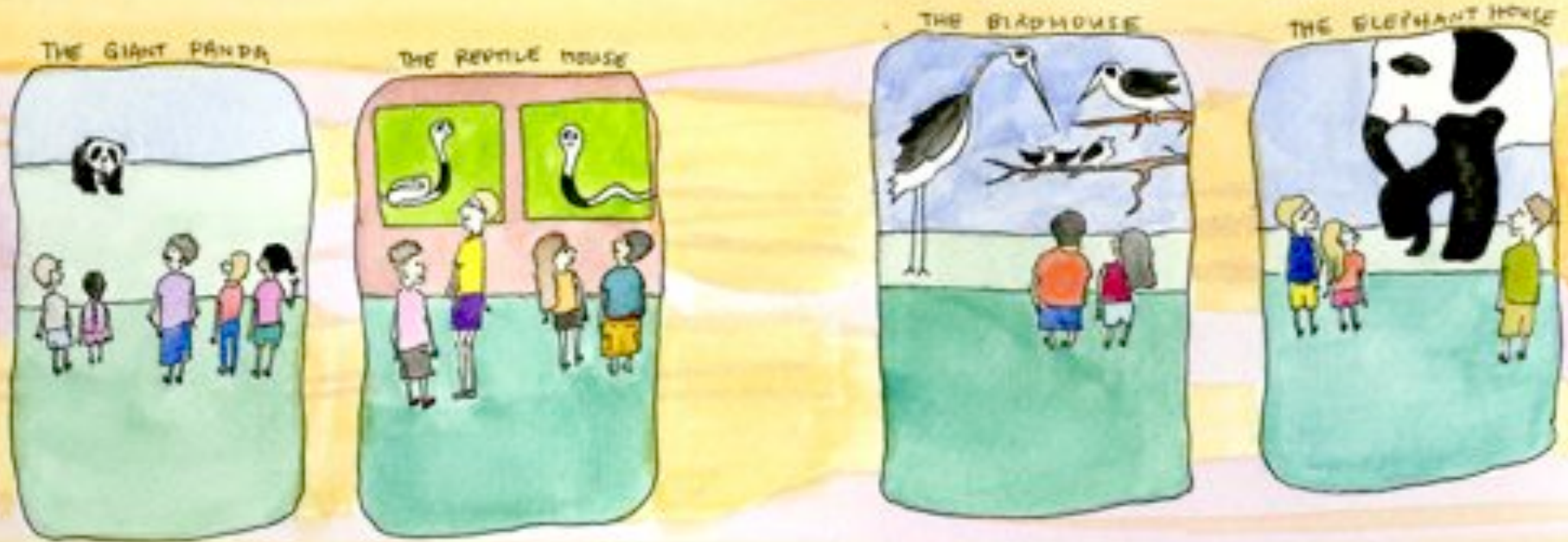




His eyes lit up when he spotted something he had never, ever seen before – an elephant panda. He screamed out loud "Mama! Papa! Mama! Papa! Come here. Look what I found" They heard him shouting and ran to him as fast as they could.

They were amazed when they saw the panda elephant and could not believe their eyes. Indeed, this was a rare animal.



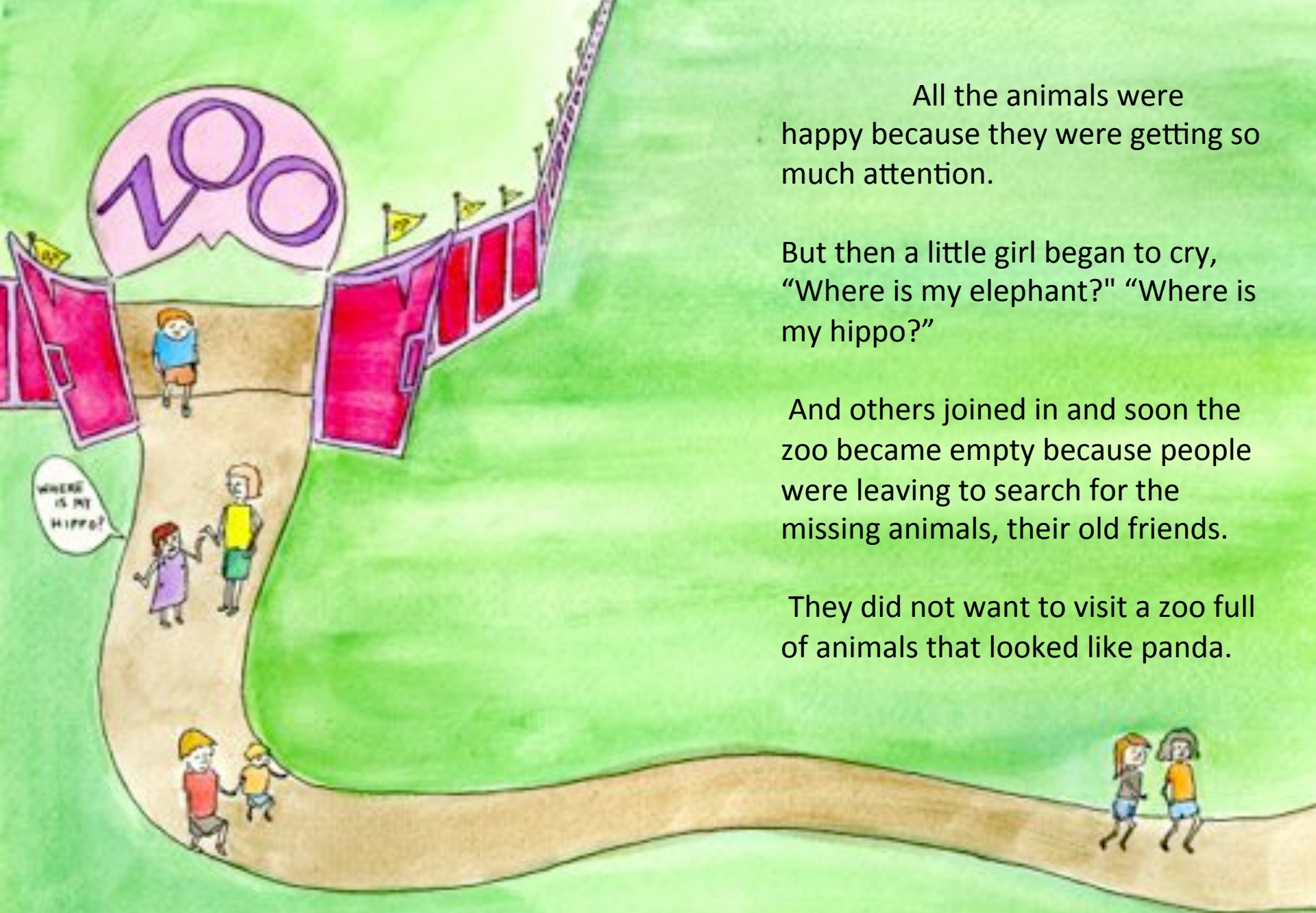


Many people started to drift away from baby panda's cage to look at the strange new animals in the other cages. All the animals sort of looked like pandas.

As for baby panda, it was much too young to know what was happening.

Soon, only a few people were in front of the panda's cage.

Now, the elephant house, the bird house, the reptile house were filled with people looking at these odd-looking black and white animals.



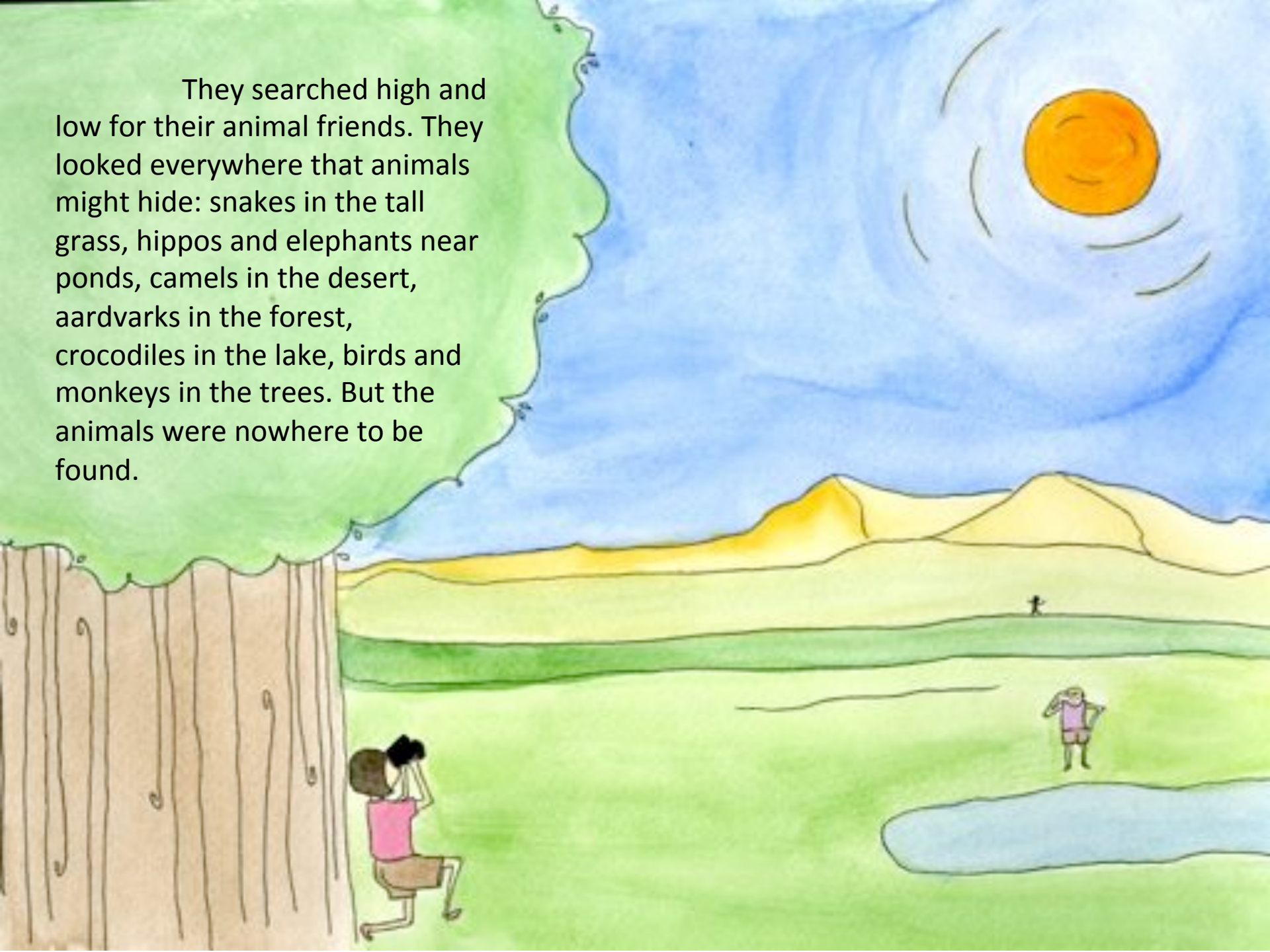
All the animals were happy because they were getting so much attention.

But then a little girl began to cry, "Where is my elephant?" "Where is my hippo?"

And others joined in and soon the zoo became empty because people were leaving to search for the missing animals, their old friends.

They did not want to visit a zoo full of animals that looked like panda.

They searched high and low for their animal friends. They looked everywhere that animals might hide: snakes in the tall grass, hippos and elephants near ponds, camels in the desert, aardvarks in the forest, crocodiles in the lake, birds and monkeys in the trees. But the animals were nowhere to be found.



The truth is that their animal friends had never left the zoo.

They watched from their cages, as people rushed toward the entrance shouting at the zookeepers to get their money back, It was not a real zoo with many different animals. It was just a panda zoo and that was not a real zoo.

The people began to realize that they had spent too much time watching the baby panda. But they had never seen one and were so, so curious.

But, by doing so, they had neglected the other animals and now they were sorry.



That night the animals decided to be themselves again.



They got so busy washing the black and white paint off each other. They lost track of the time and now the sun was coming up. They were half finished. And would do it again the next night.

Many were already back to themselves --- the elephant was gray again; the tiger had his stripes back, the alligator was green, flamingoes were pink --- when they heard the familiar clanking of the zoo keepers' keys as they unlocked the big metal gate to the zoo.



From that day forward everyone was happy. The zoo keepers had their old animal friends back in the zoo again. People were streaming into the zoo in great numbers to share their time with all the animals ... not just the panda.



The baby panda was happy because it was just being a panda. All the animals, each and everyone, were so happy to be somebody at the zoo again.



People loved each and every animal in the zoo, big and small, for who they were and not for what they looked like.

Everybody was somebody at the zoo!!