

# My Pet Tree, Albert

Written by Stephen Krensky  
Illustrated by Ioana Hobai



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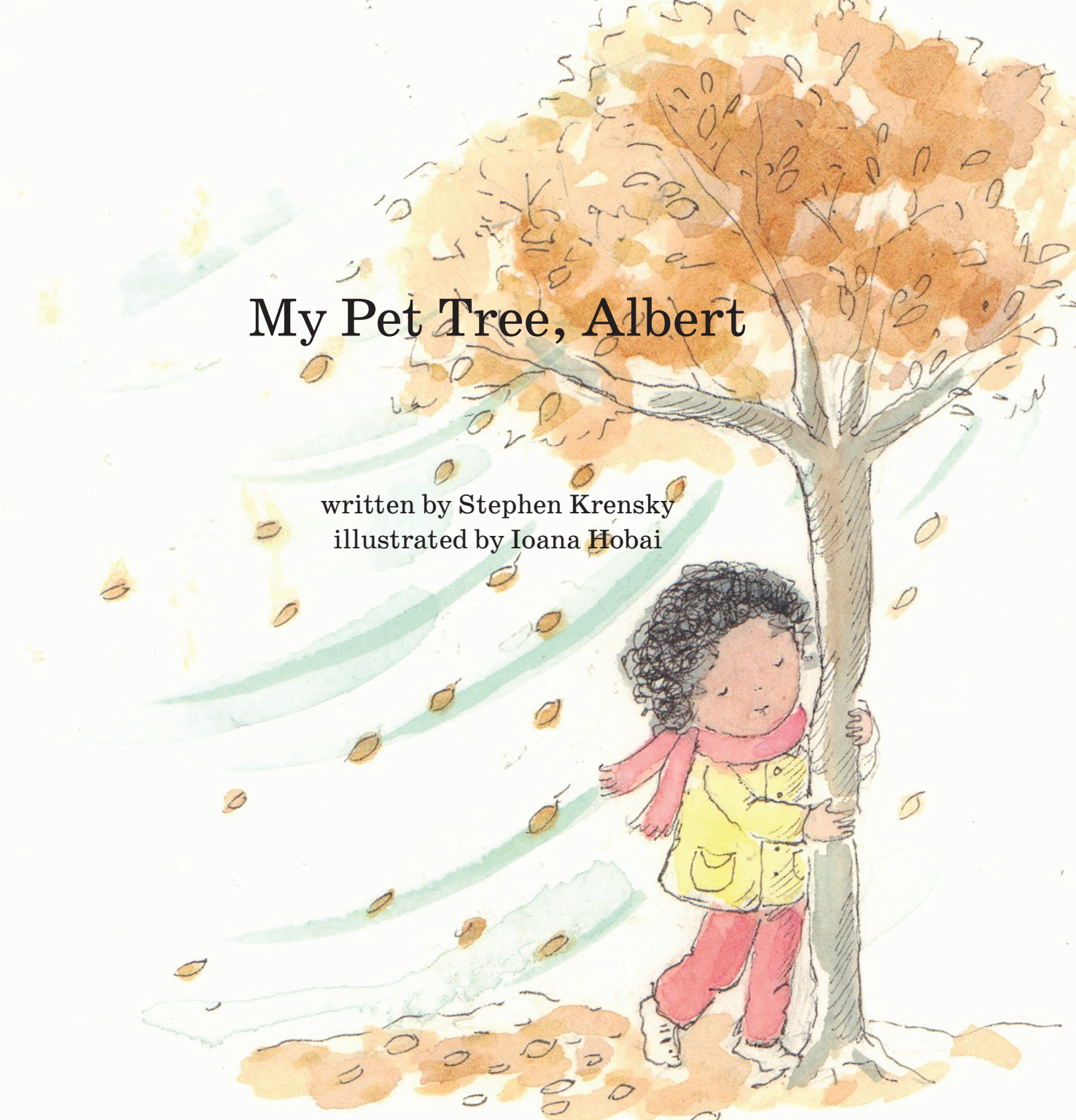
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acknowledges Arne and Steffi Siegel  
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AWIM PreK programs, providing STEM  
education to the youngest learners.





This is me.



And this is my pet tree, Albert.  
Albert lives in my backyard.





I haven't taught him any tricks,  
and Albert can only give me a hug  
if the wind helps a little.



But he is very good at keeping me company.  
I wouldn't trade Albert for anything.



My friends have pets, too.  
Carlos has a dog named Ruckus  
who likes to run in circles.



Jenna has a cat named Fluff  
that purrs when Jenna  
scratches her chin.



And Mason has a rabbit.  
His name is Thatcher.  
Thatcher is a good jumper.  
He can jump faster  
than Mason can catch him.



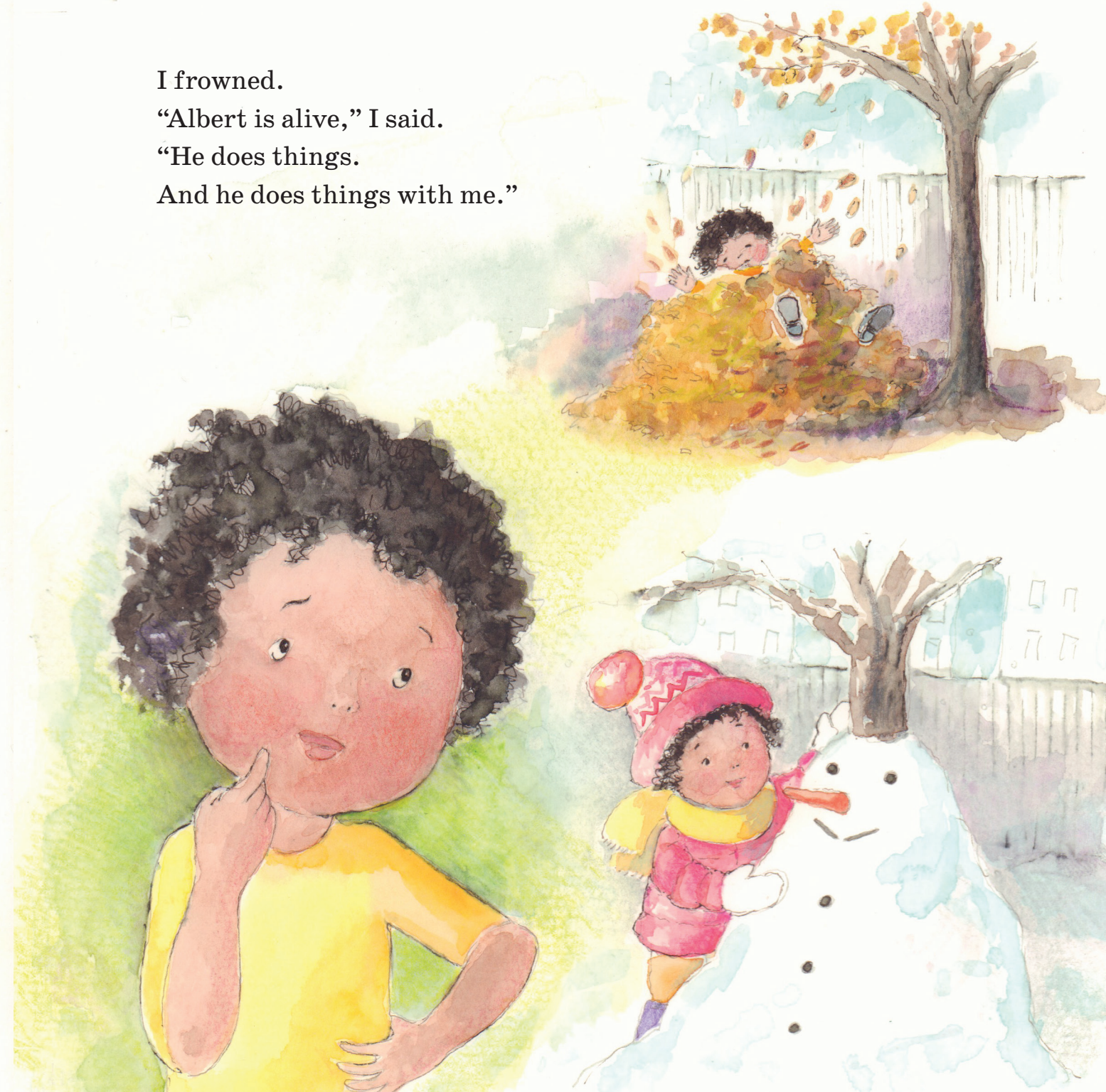
When my friends heard about my pet tree, they laughed.  
“Albert couldn’t be a real pet,” they said.  
“Why not?” I asked.



“Because a pet is alive,” said Carlos.  
“It does things,” said Jenna.  
“It does things with you,” said Mason.



I frowned.  
“Albert is alive,” I said.  
“He does things.  
And he does things with me.”







"You don't understand," said Carlos.  
"A pet grows up."



"My dog Ruckus used to be  
a puppy. Now he is big."



I nodded.  
"But I've seen old pictures of Albert.  
He used to be smaller than I am."



"And now he is tall enough to  
shade me from the sun."



“This is different,” said Jenna.  
“Pets get hungry and thirsty.  
My Fluff drinks a bowl of water every day.”



Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



Saturday



Sunday



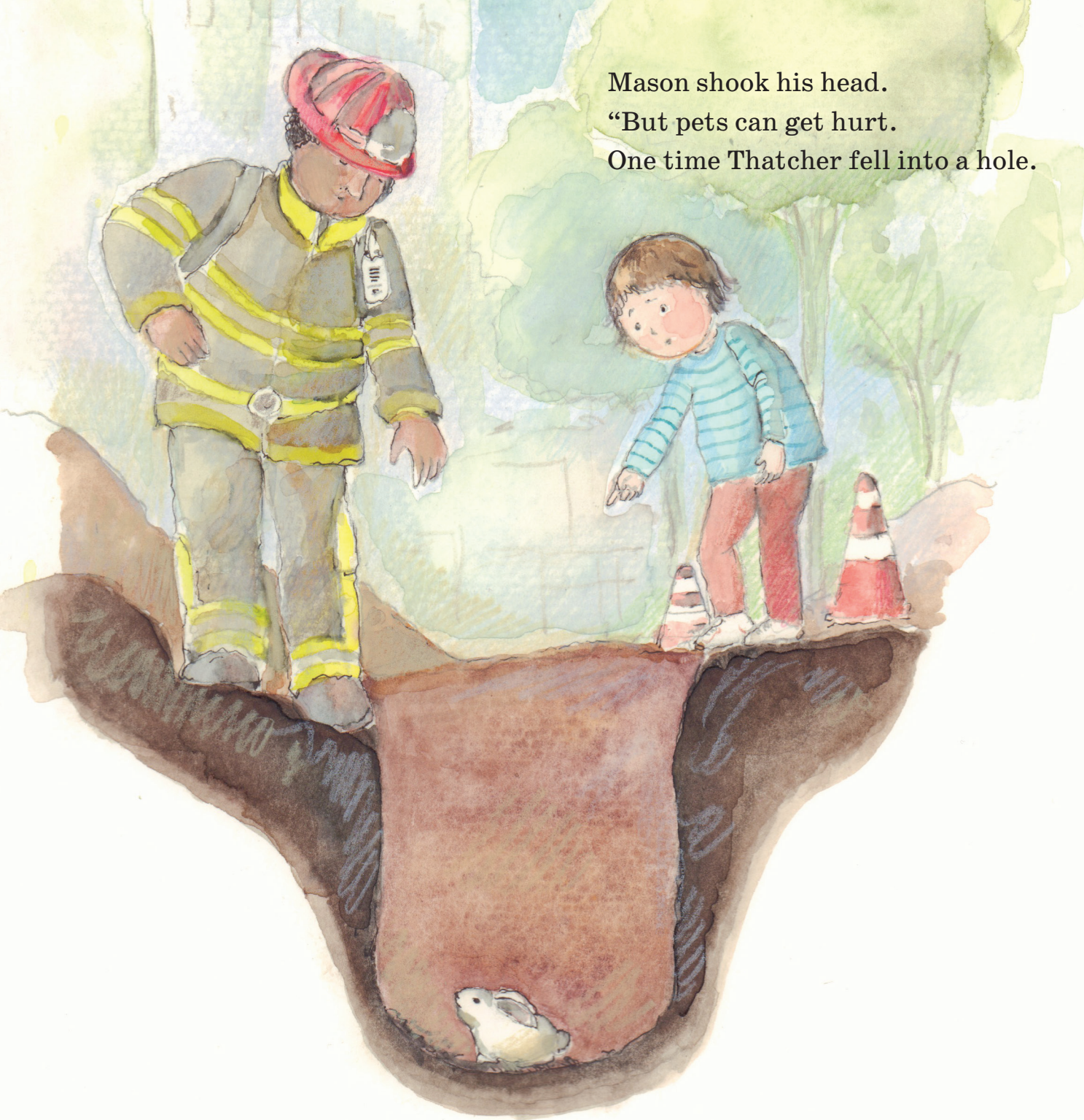
“Well,” I said, “Albert drinks water, too. He drinks the rain when it falls.”



And if there isn't enough rain, his branches get droopy.  
Then I have to water him myself.”



Mason shook his head.  
“But pets can get hurt.  
One time Thatcher fell into a hole.



He really hurt his front left paw.  
He didn't jump well again for a whole week.”







“Do you remember that big thunderstorm last week?” I asked.  
“Albert was all alone in the backyard. For hours.”



One of his smaller branches broke off. I think he will be okay.  
But I was afraid he might get hit by lightning.”



My friends whispered to one another.  
“Maybe you’re right,” said Carlos.  
“We didn’t give Albert enough credit.”  
“He sounds like a great pet,” said Jenna.

“Thanks,” I said.  
“Why don’t you come say hello?  
After all, I’ve met your pets.  
You should meet mine.”







I headed for the backyard.  
Carlos, Jenna, and Mason started to follow.  
Then they stopped to whisper again.  
I turned back to face them.  
“What’s wrong?” I asked.



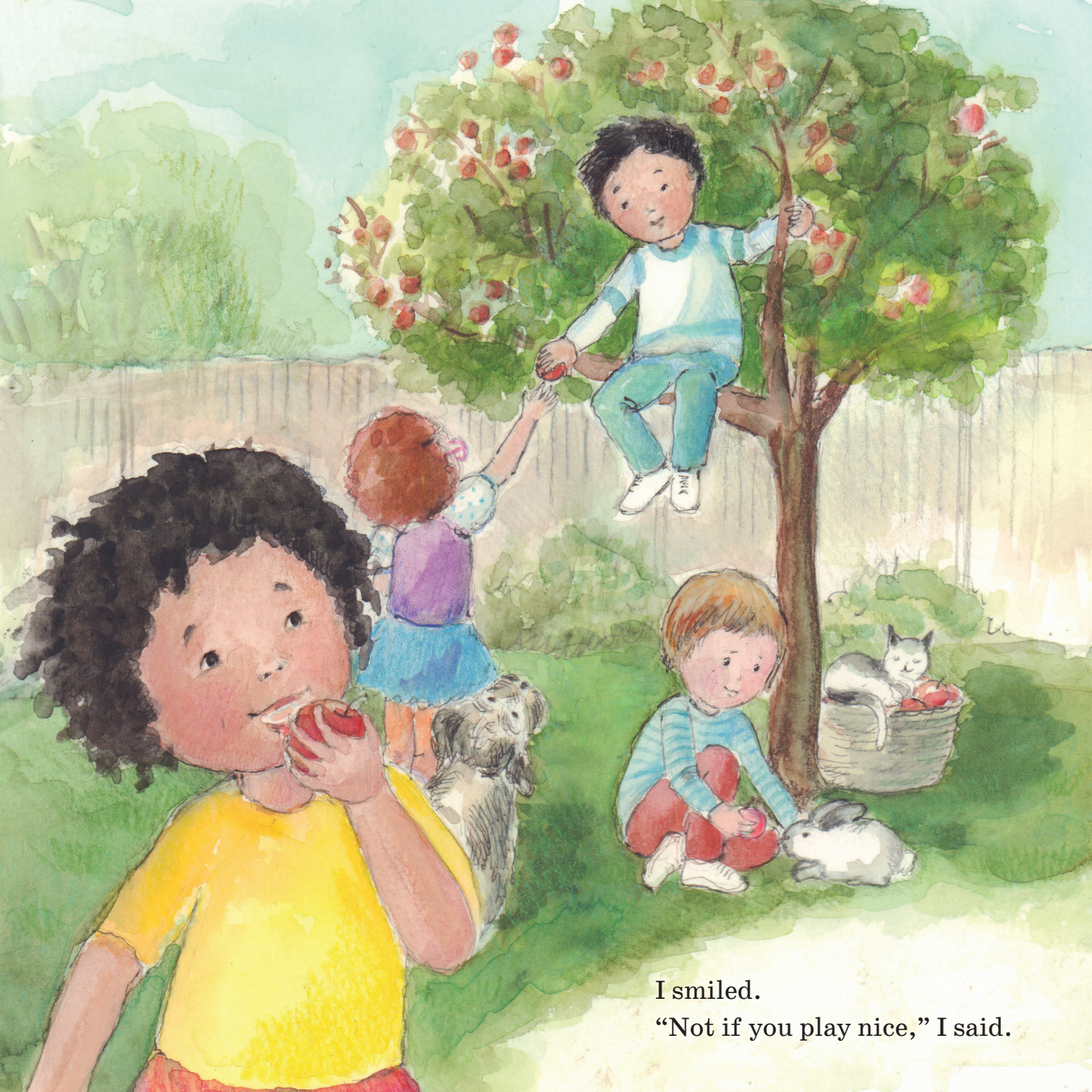
“Well,” said Carlos.

“We were wondering,” said Jenna

“Does Albert bite?” asked Mason.







I smiled.  
“Not if you play nice,” I said.



**P**ets come in a lot of different shapes. There are dogs, and cats and rabbits — and lots of other animals, too. But when one girl claims to have a pet tree, her friends question whether this is possible. So it is up to her to prove that a pet can be more than you might think.

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