

The Wise Elephant



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**It was a beautiful day
in the jungle. The birds
were singing. The
insects were buzzing
and chirping. The sun
was shining. Tortoise
was looking for
something to do.**





**He spotted a group of
brightly coloured birds
flying between two
trees.**

**They looked beautiful
and happy and like
they were having so
much fun.**

“Can I play?” asked Tortoise happily.

“Sorry,” said one of the birds, “but you haven’t got wings. You need to be able to fly to play this game.”

**“Oh - okay,” said Tortoise,
feeling sad.**

Off he went.





Soon, Tortoise came to a watering hole where some happy hippos were playing and splashing about.

Their faces were filled with glee. It looked such fun.

“Can I play?” asked Tortoise hopefully.

“Sorry,” said one of the hippos, “but you can’t swim. You need to be able to stay under the water to play this game.”

“Oh - okay,” said Tortoise, feeling sad. Very sad indeed.

Off he went.





**After a while, Tortoise
heard the sound of
some cheeky monkeys
playing in the trees
nearby.**

**They were swinging
from tree to tree with
ease and having the
best time.**

“Can I play?” asked Tortoise, holding his breath.

“Sorry,” said one of the monkeys, “but you haven’t got a long tail. You need to be able to swing from tree to tree to play this game.”

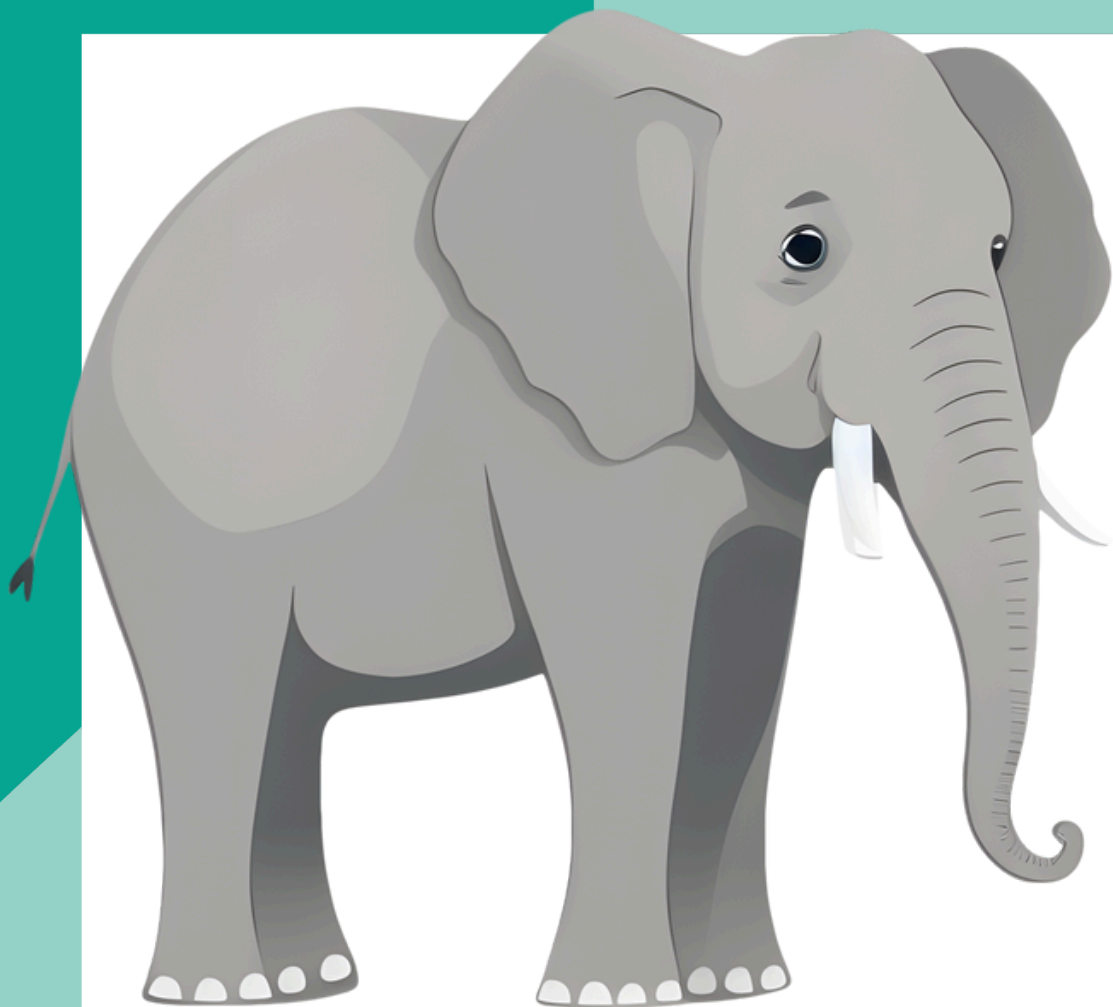
“Oh - okay,” said Tortoise, feeling sad. Sadder than he had ever felt before. Off he went.



Tortoise found some shade beneath a tree and decided to rest for a while. He felt very sad. Very sad and very alone. The other animals had not spoken to him unkindly, but no one had let him play.




He didn't have wings or a long swishy tail. He couldn't stay under water for a long time. He sighed sadly.



**Just then, wise
old Elephant
appeared.**

**“Why do you look so sad,
Tortoise?” he asked with a
gentle voice.**





“I can’t fly. I don’t have a long tail to jump from tree to tree. And I can’t swim and stay under water,”
Tortoise replied, his eyes filling with tears.



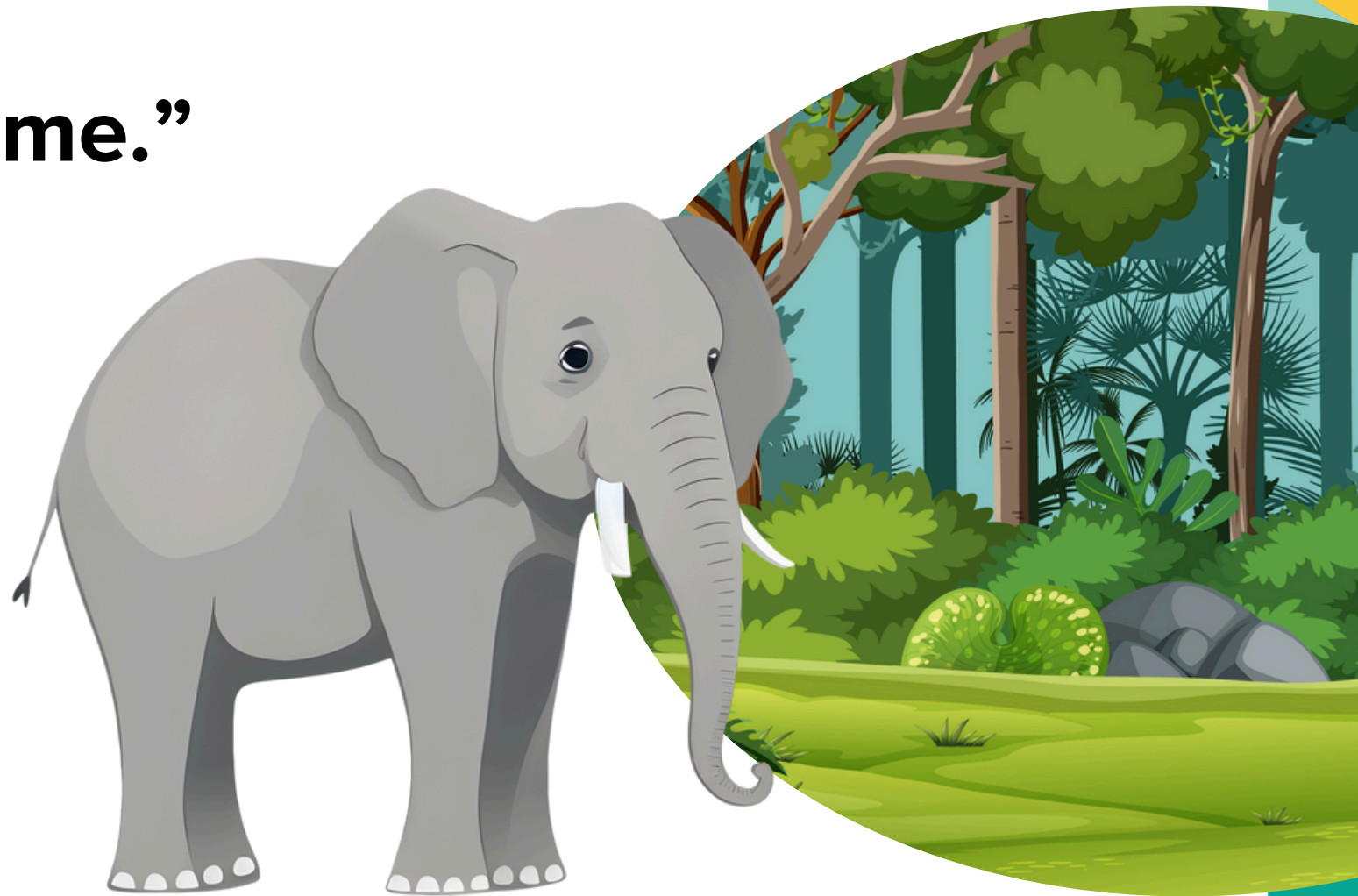
“So?” asked Elephant.



“I can’t join in any of the games,” Tortoise explained sadly.

“Then perhaps they just aren’t the right games,” Elephant said with a twinkle in his eye.

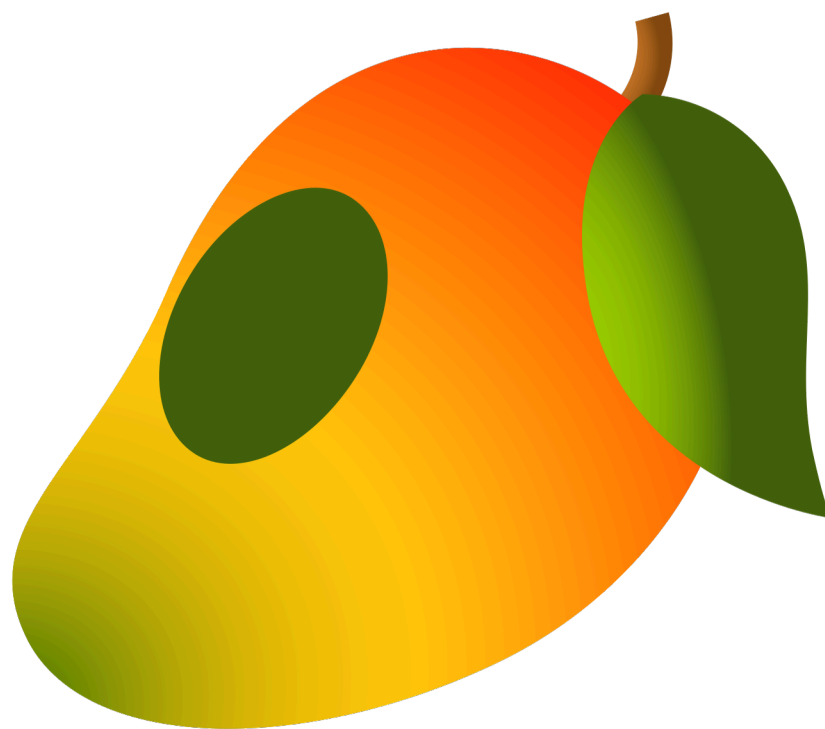
“Follow me.”

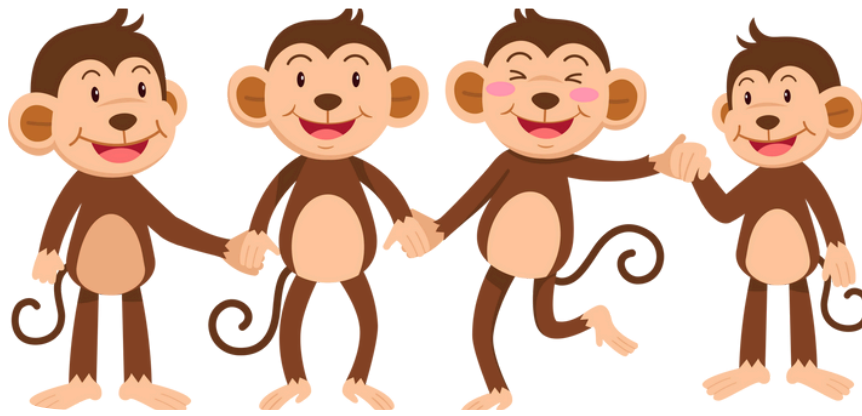


Elephant found a clearing in the jungle.

**He took a large, juicy-looking mango
down from a tree. He threw it to
Tortoise and it bounced off his hard,
shiny shell. Tortoise looked confused.**

**Elephant picked the
mango up with his
trunk and threw it
again.**

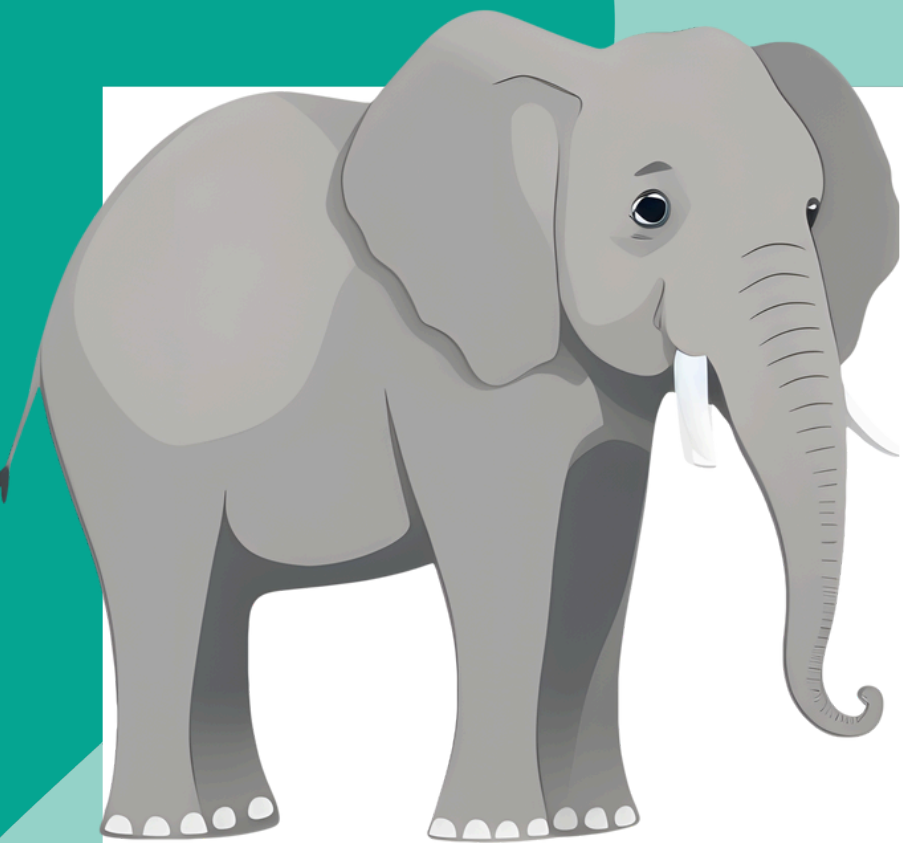




The group of monkeys playing nearby grew curious and came over. “What are you doing?” they asked.

“We are playing mango ball,” Elephant replied. “The mango cannot touch the ground.”

“Can we play?” the monkeys asked.



**“Of course,” Elephant
replied.**

**“EVERYONE
can play.”**





Soon, they were all having great fun. The monkeys were jumping around and using their long tails to catch and throw the mango.

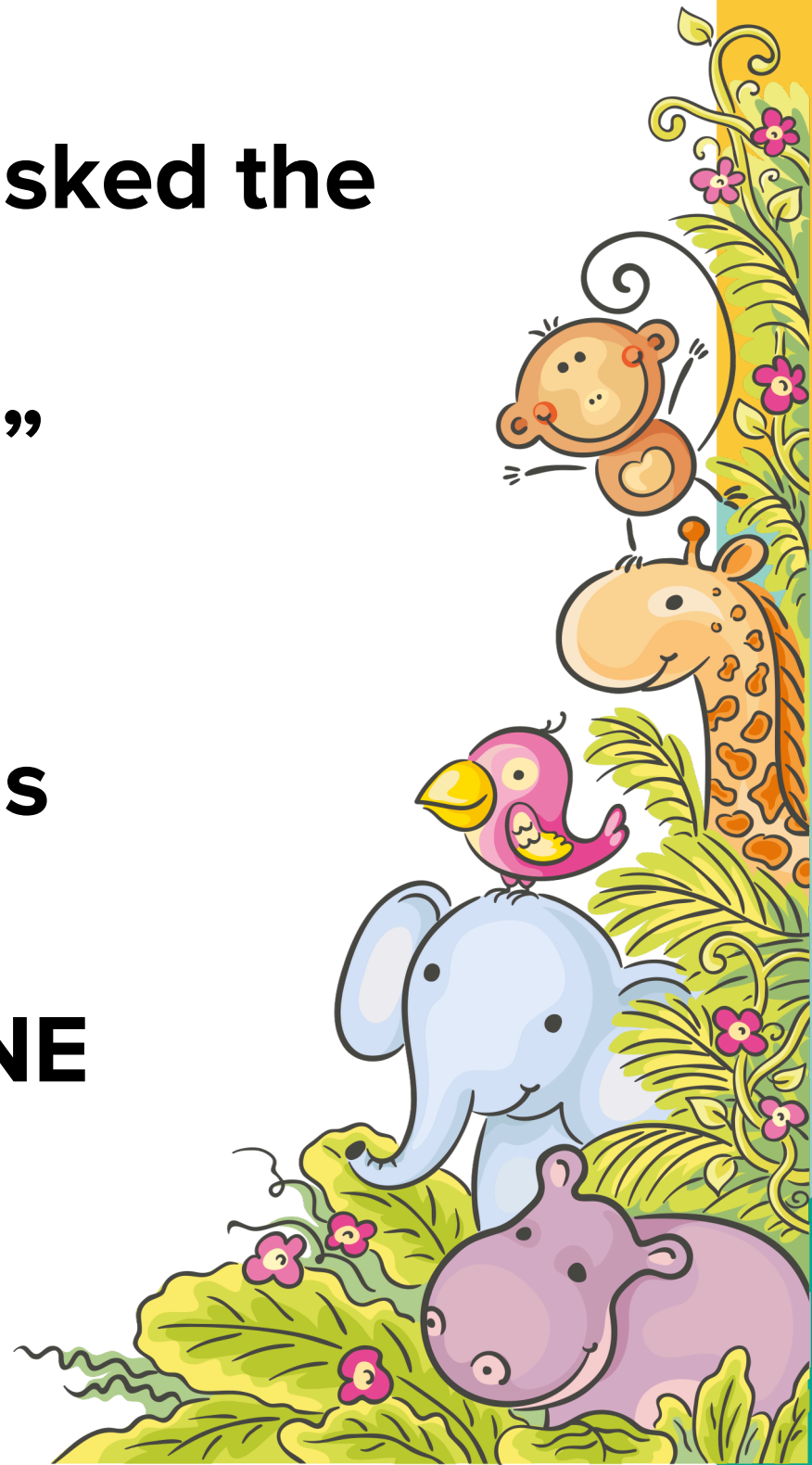
Tortoise was smiling as he used his super shell to hit the mango, lifting his feet or his bottom to send it bouncing in different directions.

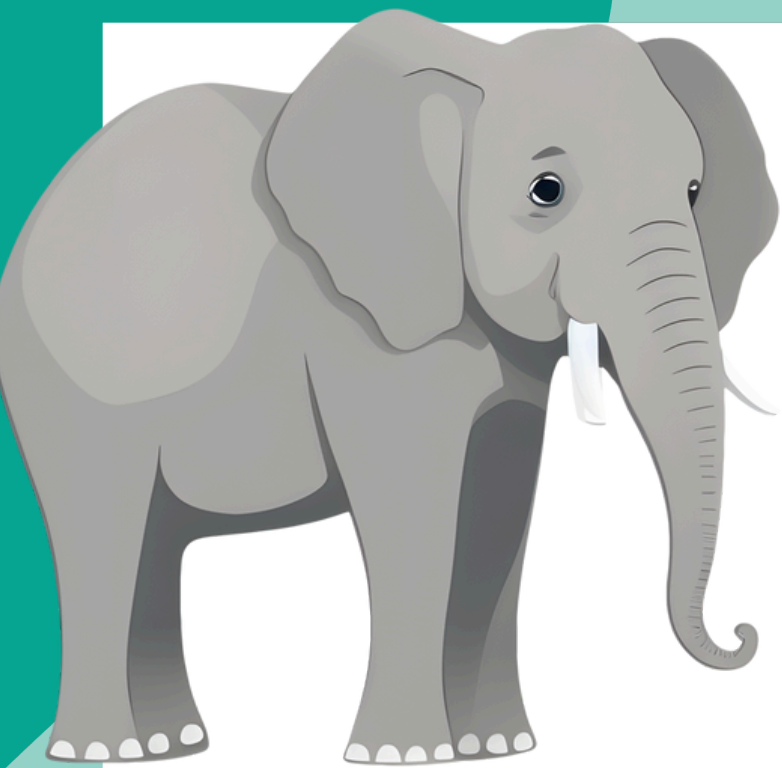
The sound of the laughter drew the attention of the other animals in the jungle. The hippos waded over from the watering hole. The birds flew down from the trees.

One by one, animals of all shapes, sizes and colours came to play. Some had wings. Some had stripes. Some had tusks. Some were very small. Some were very big.

One by one, they all asked the
same thing:
“Can we play?”

And Elephant always
replied with:
“Of course. **EVERYONE**
can play.”





Eventually, Tortoise needed a rest. He went to sit by Elephant, who was happily watching the fun beneath the shade of the tree.

“Thank you,” said Tortoise warmly.

“Are you still sad that you don’t have wings? That you can’t swing from tree to tree?” Elephant asked.

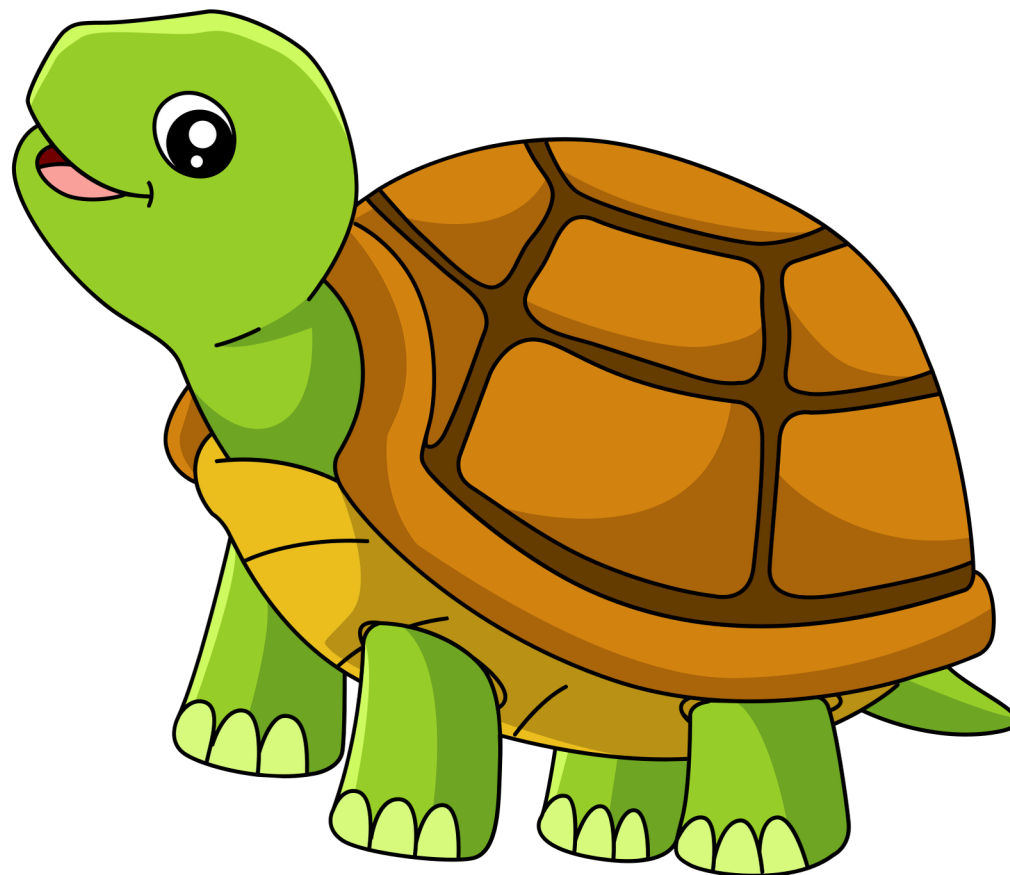


Tortoise thought about this. He turned to watch the game.

He saw how a group of ants worked together to carry the mango across the floor. He watched Snake take the mango and flick it with her tail.

He watched Warthog pierce it gently with his tusk and then run with it before a bird swooped and picked it up with her talons.

“No,” said Tortoise proudly. “I am happy just the way I am.”



Elephant smiled.

All of the animals had learnt an important lesson that day: the best games were the ones that they could all play together!

