

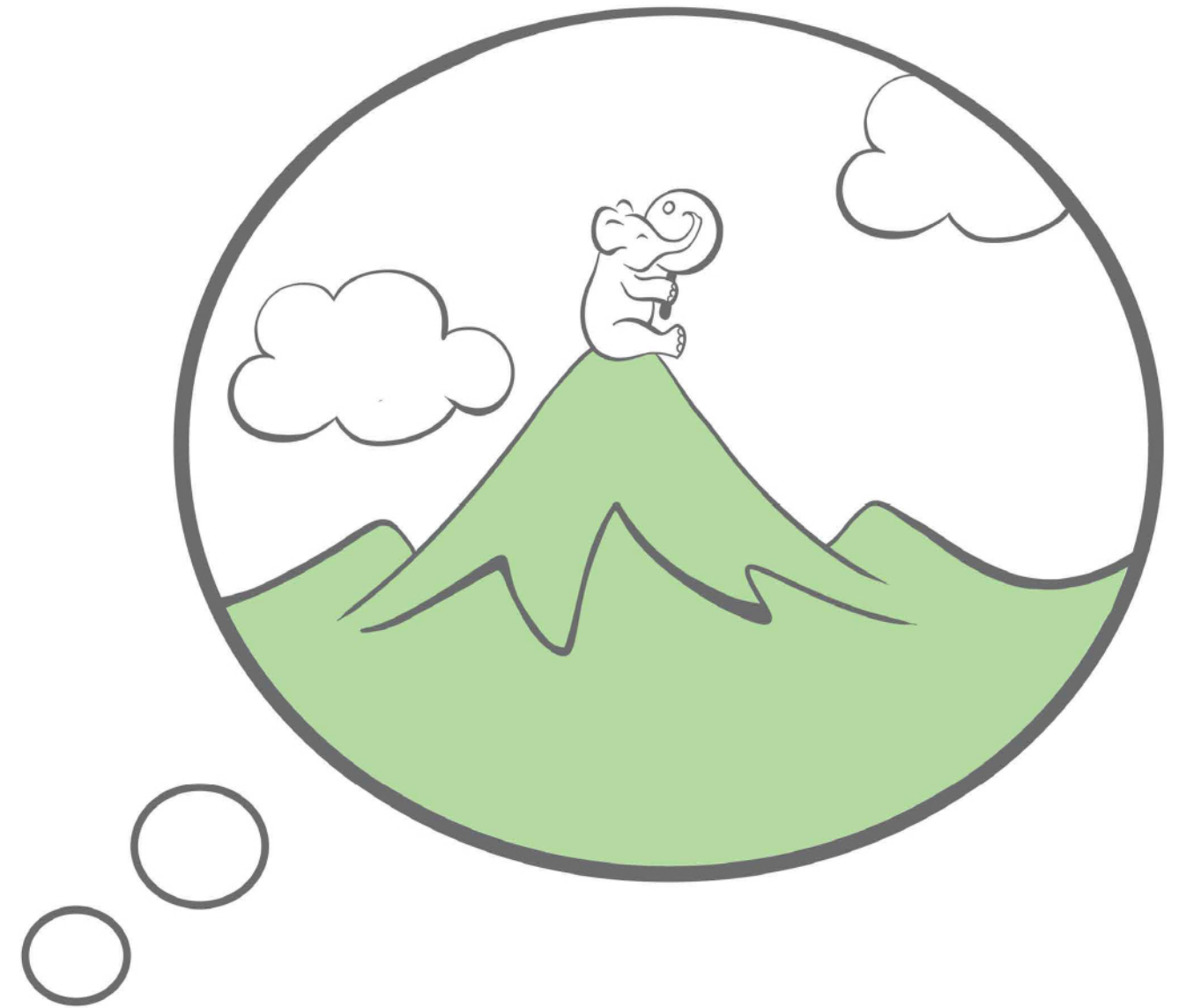
# LIL' EXPLORER



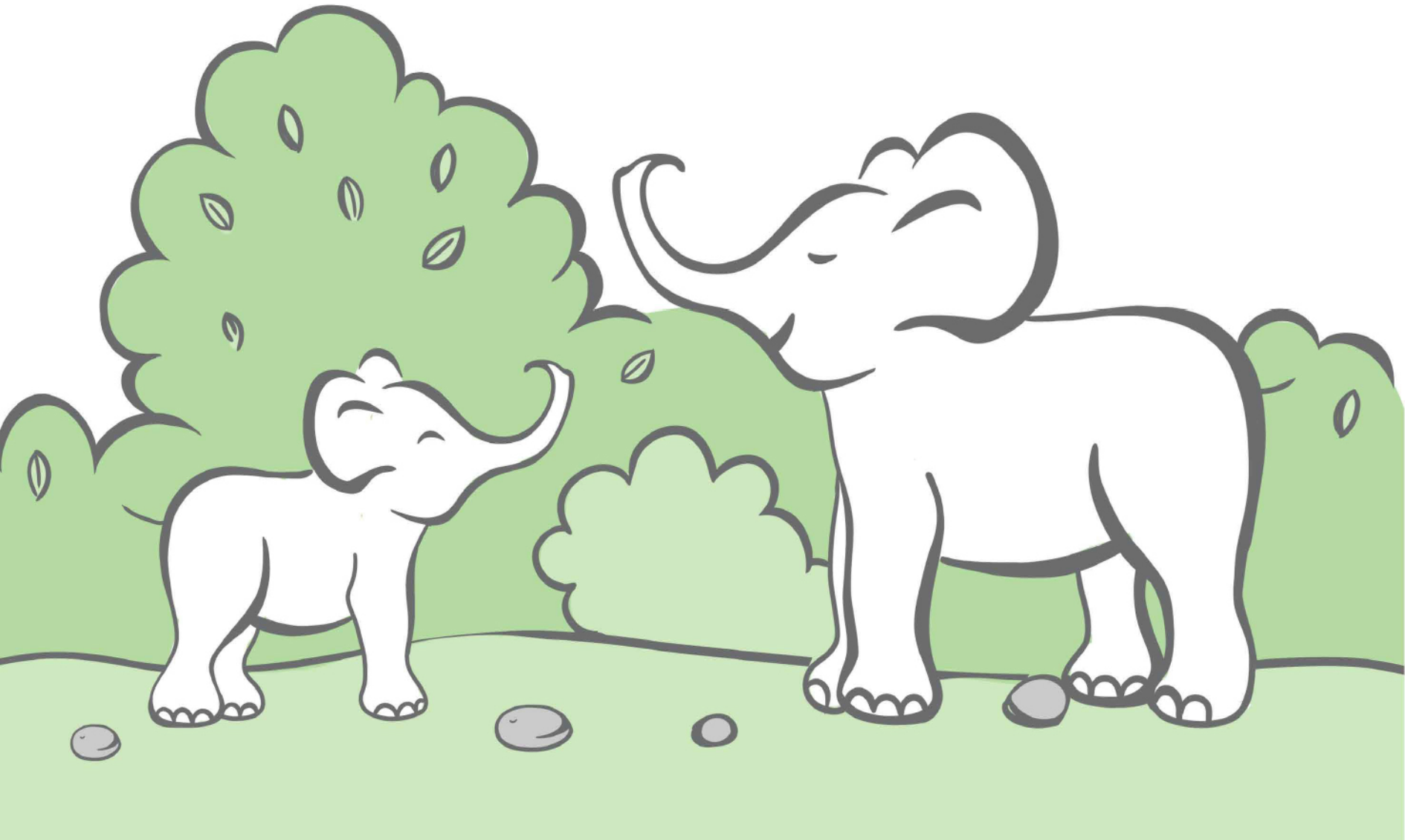
*Little Moy stood on her tiptoes. She stretched, and she stretched. She wanted to see the mountain.*



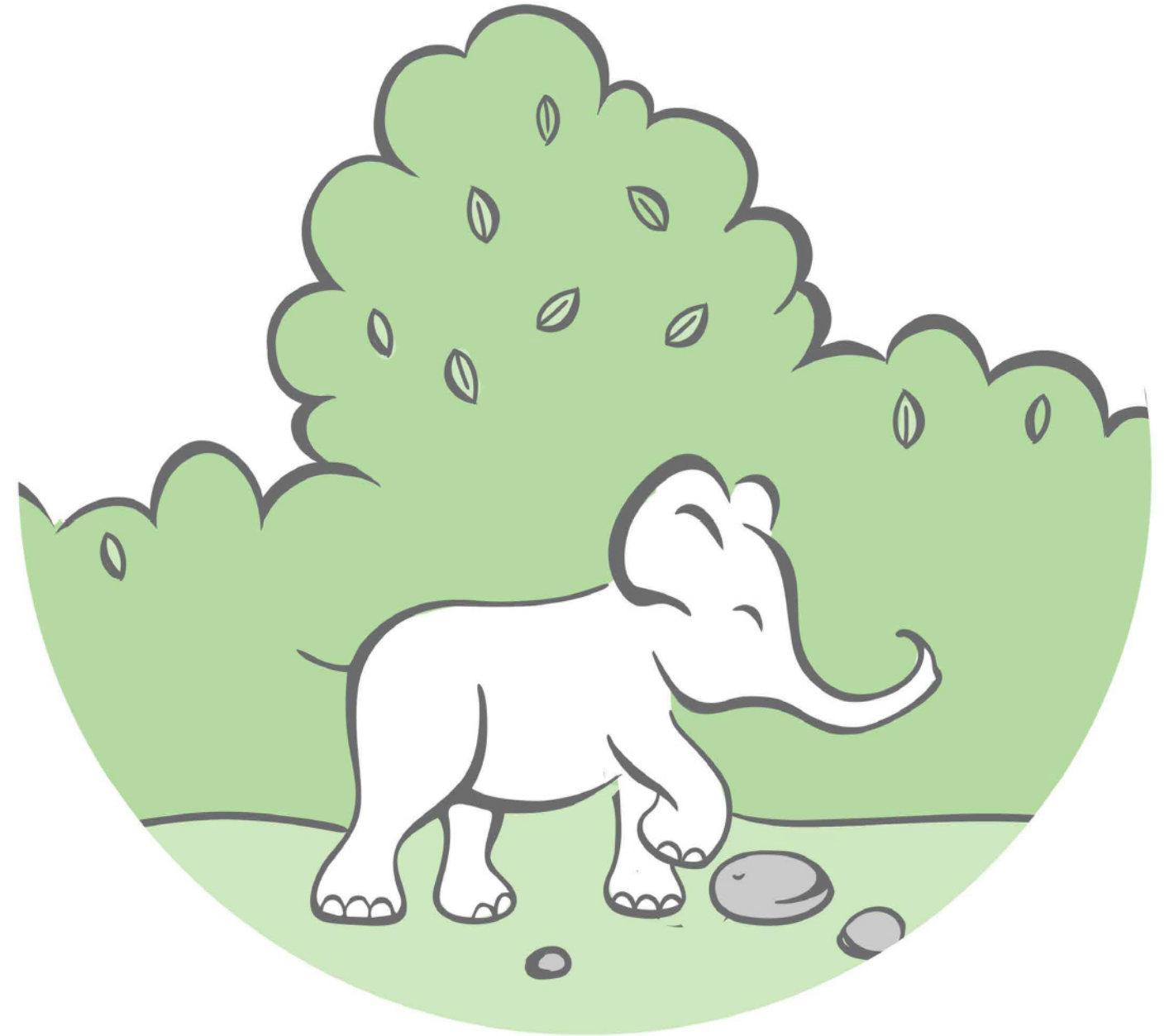
*"It is so big! It is so strong! I will be a famous explorer, and I will see the top of that mountain!"*



*"Little Moy," said Mama, "Why don't you walk to the village for the day and bring me back a treat?"*



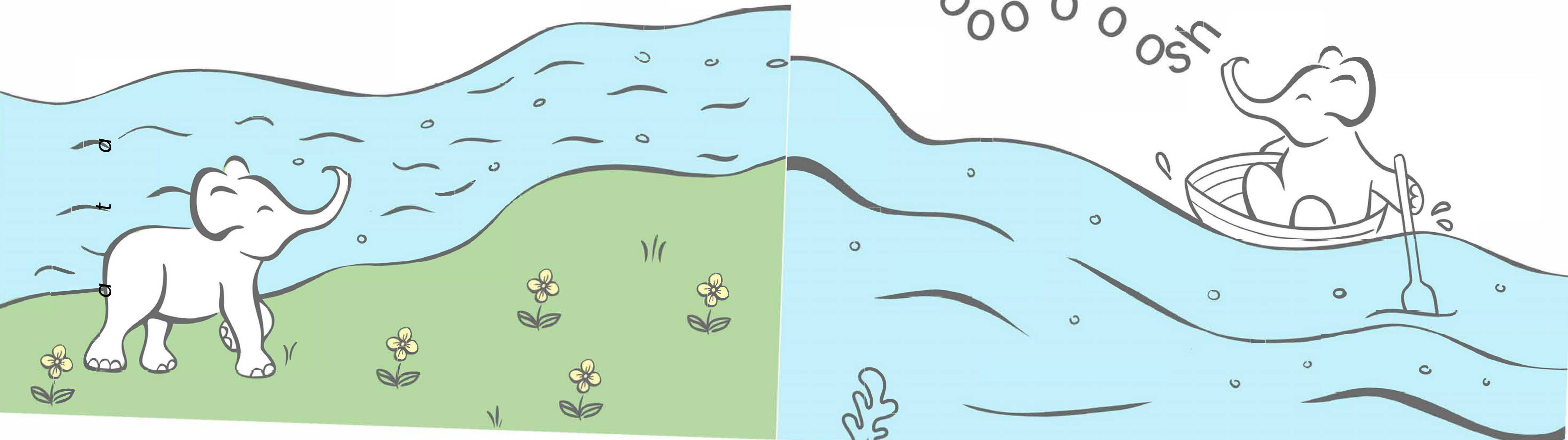
*Little Moy kicked a stone.  
"That's not real exploring, Mama."*



The little elephant slumped her shoulders and wandered down to the river.

"How will I ever be a real explorer?" she grumbled. She walked along the water's edge. "Everyone else will be an explorer before me, and I'll be stuck in the forest, wasting my days." She walked and she walked, she talked and she talked.

She came to a boat parked along the shore. She peered inside, and—whoops!—she fell into it! Then the river picked up, and she let out a "wheeeee!"

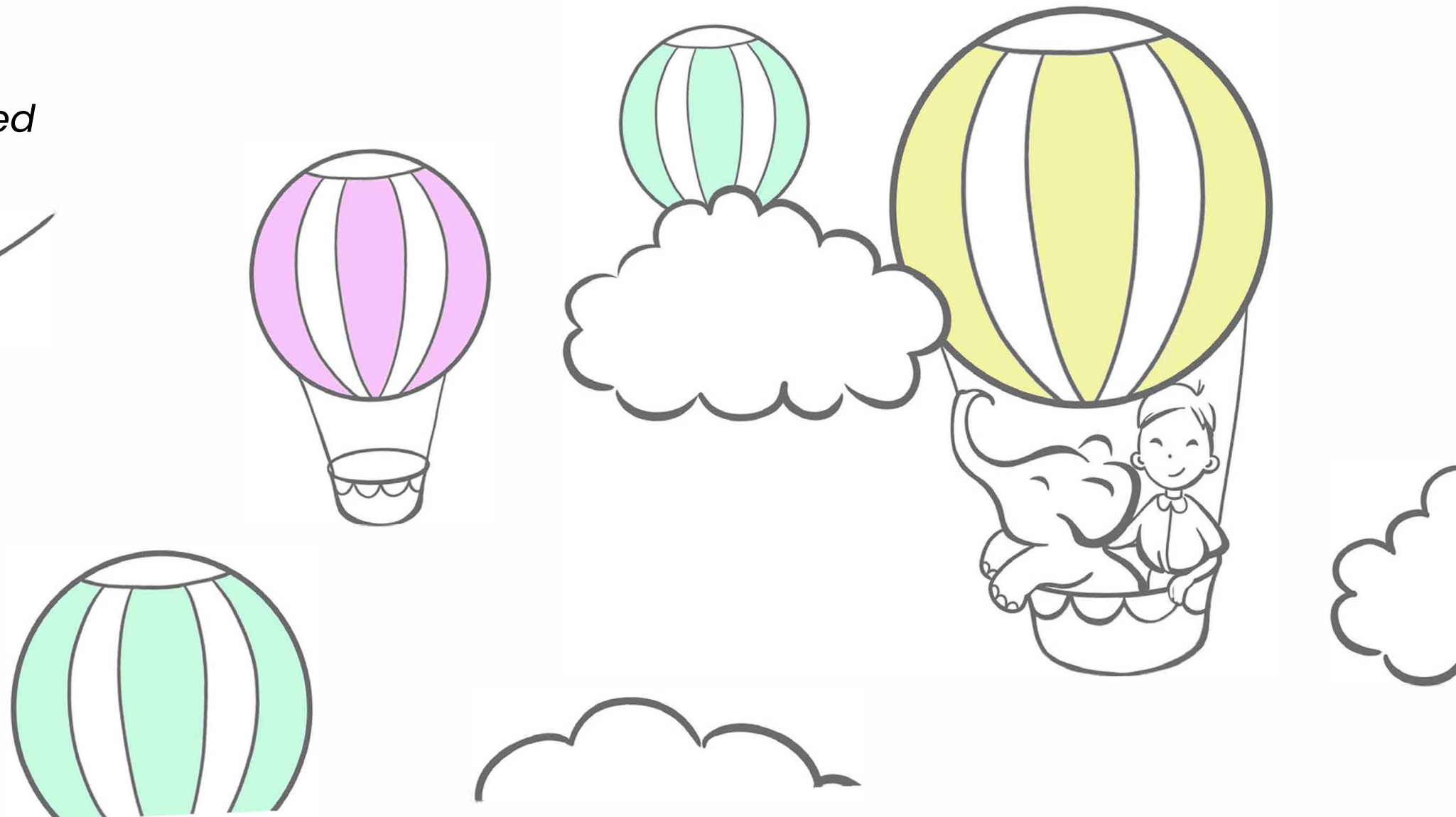


*New sounds were coming from the banks of the river - sounds she had never heard before - there were bells and whistles and trinkets and trifles.*

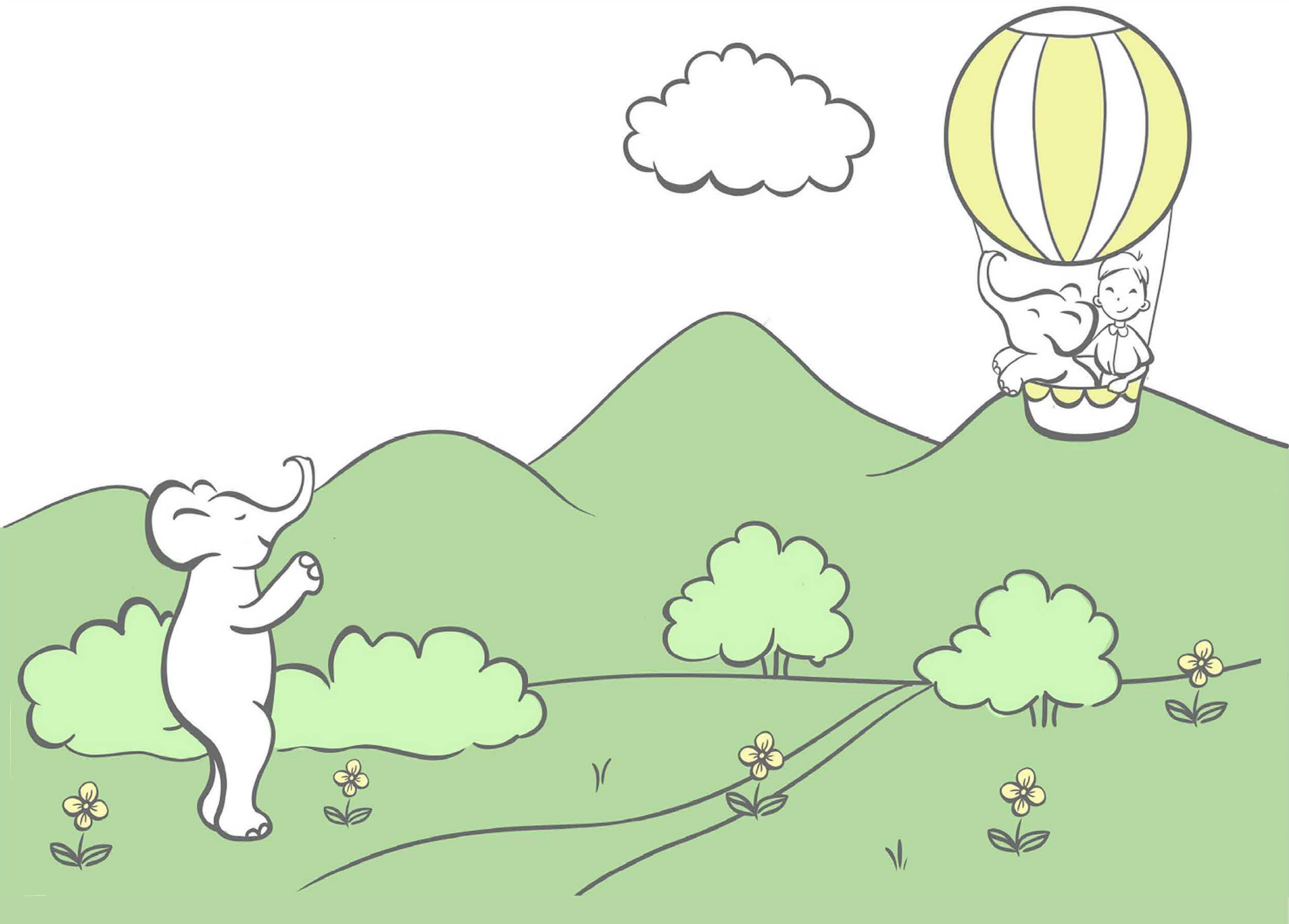
*She parked the boat at the harbor and climbed onto the dock. Everyone was dressed in silly clothes today! They were wearing makeup and masks, and they all were laughing.*

*"What is happening?" she asked a little boy, and he handed her a big pink puff of candy that was as soft as a cloud.*

*The boy ran to a big balloon, so tall it seemed to touch the sky. "Today is the day of the fair! It's the day the hot air balloons come to town!" the boy said. Little Moy followed the boy into a basket, and the balloon began to rise off of the ground—higher and higher and higher.*



*Gazing down at the earth, she could see the village, the river, the hills, she could even see Mama.*



*The gentle winds guided the balloon, and Little Moy floated through the sky. The mountain appeared before her—bigger than it had ever been. “The mountain! The mountain!” she called. “I’m almost at the peak of the mountain!”*

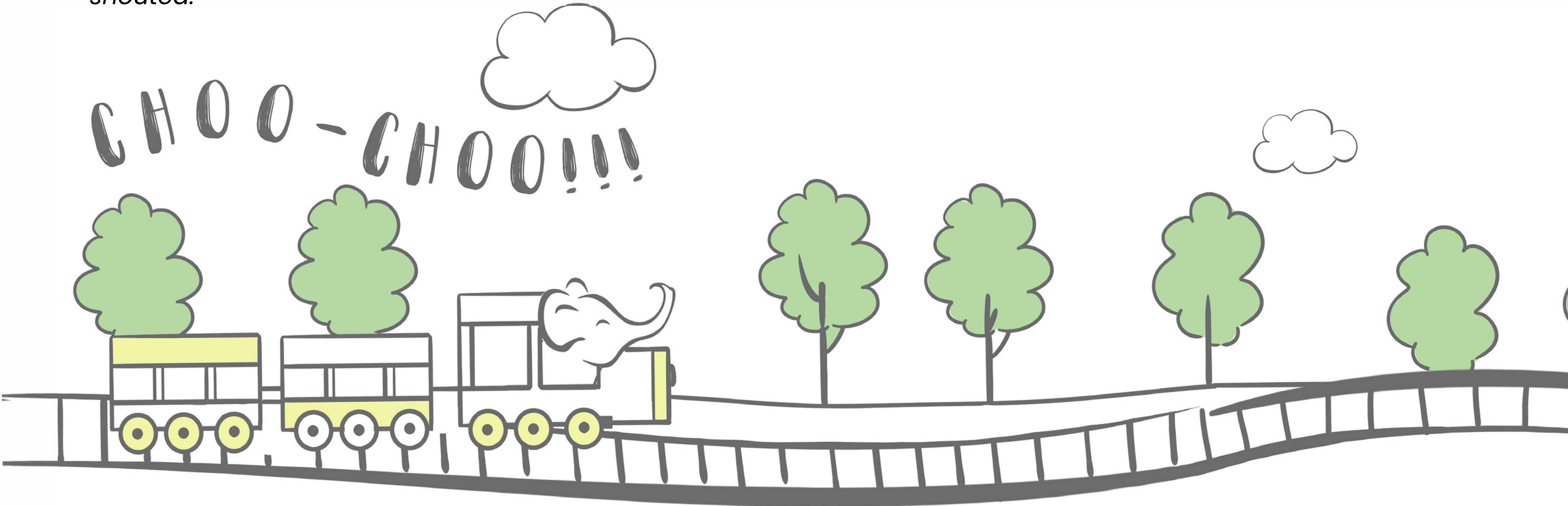
*But just then, a gust rushed towards her, and the balloon was pushed away—away from the mountain, away from her dream.*

*When Moy landed back on earth. “How unfair! I came so close,” she said, and she kicked the earth.*

*“Choo-choo!” What was that sound?*

*She followed it. A lot of humans were following the sound too. They were running so fast that she could barely keep up! "Hurry or you'll miss the train!" they shouted.*

*When Little Moy got to the tracks, the conductor leaned out of the train's window. "Would you like to help me drive today?"*



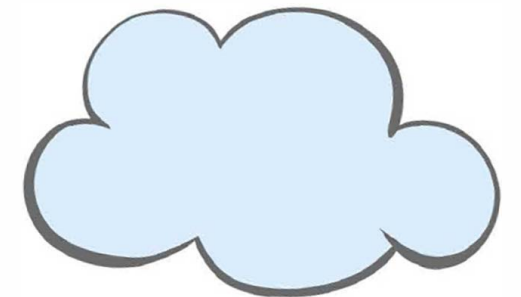
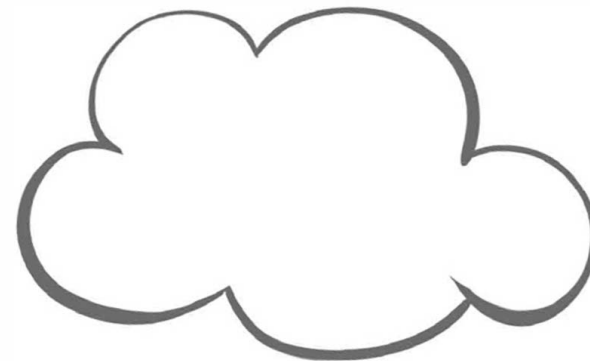
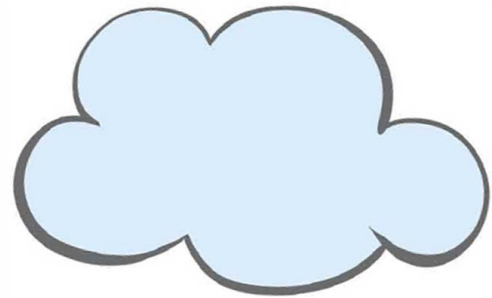
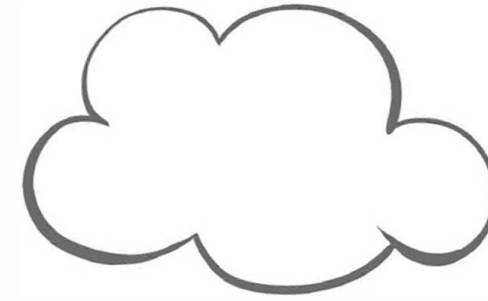
*The train chugged and chugged. She looked out the window and the mountain grew closer.*

*But when the train arrived at a station, it stopped.*

*"But we did not go to the mountain!" Moy said to the conductor.*

*"No, this train only goes to the airport," the man replied.*

*Moy grumbled.*







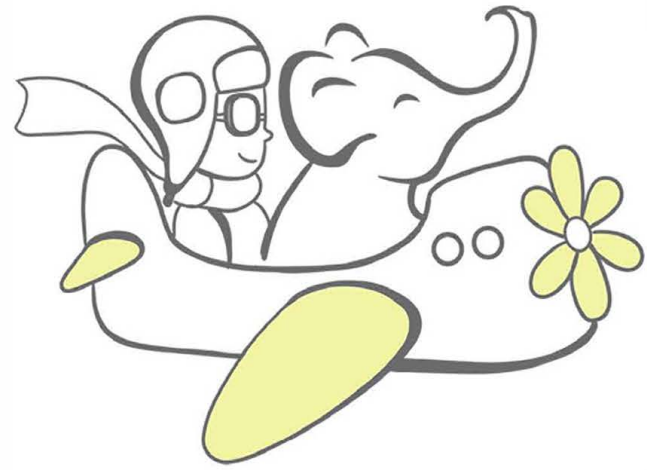
*“Vrooooooom!” What was that sound? She followed it and saw an airplane with its propellers spinning.*

*“Would you like to fly with me?” the pilot asked.*

*Moy lifted her head. “Well, sure, I suppose,” she said with a sigh.*

*The plane rose up and up into the sky, and up and up into the clouds. Everything turned white. Moy was afraid! She could not even see the length of her nose!*

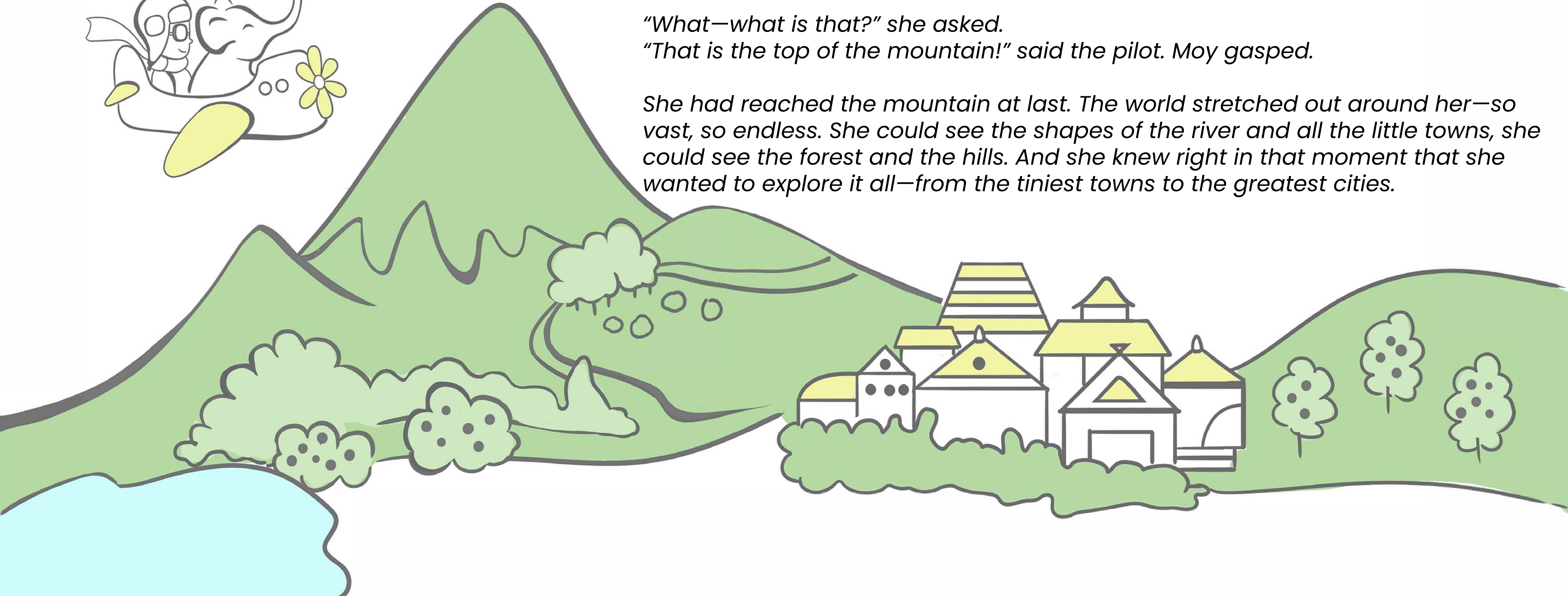
*And then the whiteness cleared, and there in front of her Moy saw something strange - something very strange she had never seen in all her life. It was like a jewel shimmering in the sky.*



*"What—what is that?" she asked.*

*"That is the top of the mountain!" said the pilot. Moy gasped.*

*She had reached the mountain at last. The world stretched out around her—so vast, so endless. She could see the shapes of the river and all the little towns, she could see the forest and the hills. And she knew right in that moment that she wanted to explore it all—from the tiniest towns to the greatest cities.*





*Little Moy helped the pilot land the plane at the airport.*

*She took the train back to the village.*

*She bought a puff of cotton candy.*

*She took the boat up the river.*

*She walked all the way home.*



*Mama was waiting under a mango tree and asked,  
"Did you have an adventure, Little Moy?"*

*Moy looked at her mother.*

*"Yes—and it was only just the beginning."*

