

LEVELED BOOK • M

The Hoppers Start School



Illustrated by David Cockcroft



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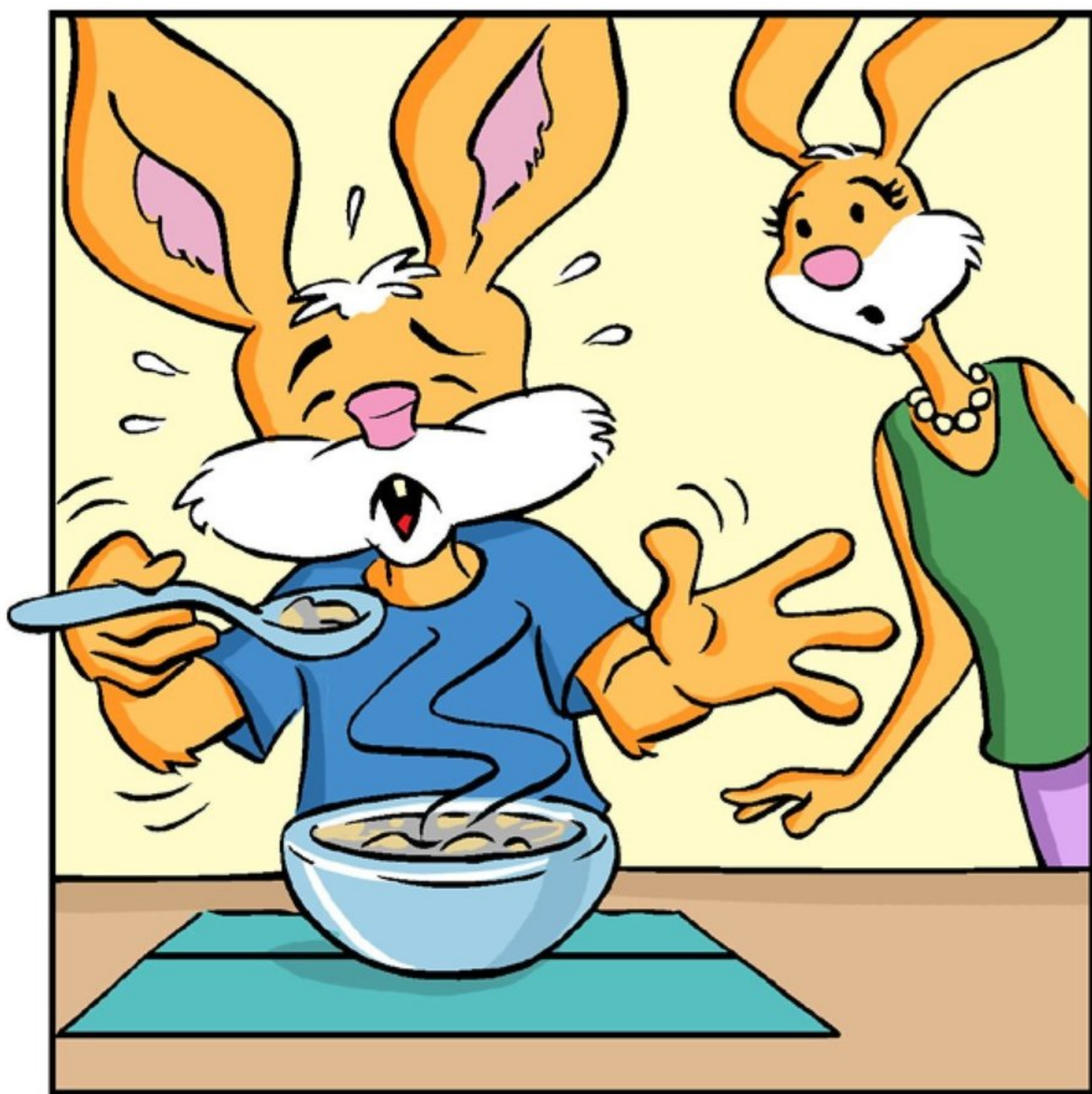


The Hoppers were asleep in their beds when suddenly Mother Hopper called. “Wake up, Hoppers! It’s the first day of school!” Three of the Hoppers didn’t want to wake up early. But Fluffy Tail got up.

“Wake up, Speedy Legs, Floppy Ears. Wake up, Snubby Nose. It’s the first day of school!” Finally all four Hoppers were out of bed. They went downstairs to eat their breakfasts, and Snubby Nose slid down the railing.

“You’d better hurry, or you’ll be late for school,” said Mother Hopper. The Hoppers began to eat their oatmeal. But the oatmeal was very hot. When Snubby Nose ate his, he burned his mouth.

“Ow!” he howled. “That oatmeal is too hot!”





“Quick, take a drink of water, Snubby Nose,” said Speedy Legs.

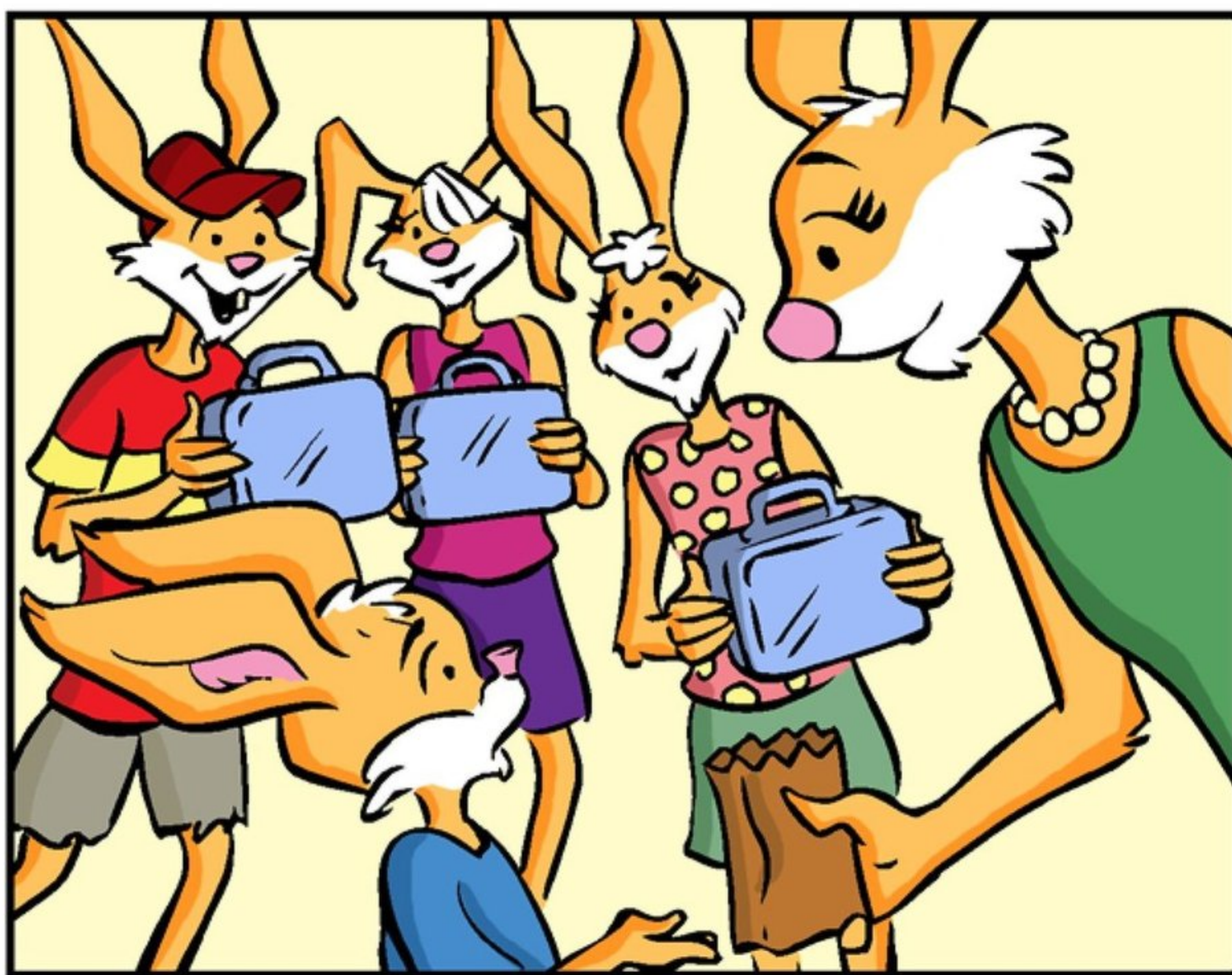
“Swallow some milk,” said Floppy Ears.

“If you don’t finish your oatmeal quickly, you’ll be late for school,” said Fluffy Tail.

“I made your lunches for you. I put them in your lunchboxes,” Mother Hopper said.

The Hoppers leapt up to grab their lunchboxes. But when Snubby Nose got his lunch, it was in a plain brown paper bag.

“Mother, why don’t I have a lunchbox?” Snubby Nose asked.





“I could not find your lunchbox, Snubby Nose. You must have lost it,” said Mother Hopper.

Then Snubby Nose cried even more loudly than when he burned his mouth.

“There is no more time for crying, Snubby Nose,” Mother Hopper said. “You have to get to school before the bell.”



The four Hoppers started out on the road to school. Still, Snubby Nose sniffed and cried.

“You have to stop crying, Snubby Nose. We’ll miss the last bell,” said Floppy Ears.

“You were playing in the garden with your lunchbox. We can clean it out and put your lunch in it tomorrow,” said Speedy Legs.

“I hear the bell! We’ll have to hurry if we want to get to school!” cried Fluffy Tail.

The three Hoppers began to run down the path toward school. They left Snubby Nose behind. He didn't want to run. He was upset about his mouth and his lunchbox. And now he was late for school, and the other Hoppers had left him behind. He sat down on the side of the path and cried quietly to himself.



“What’s this crying on the first day of school?” a voice said. Grandpa Grizzly had come up the path and sat down next to Snubby Nose.

“Today is the first day of school,” said Snubby Nose. “But I burned my mouth on some hot oatmeal. Then I left my lunchbox in the garden, and I couldn’t take it to school.

When I cried, the other Hoppers told me I would be late. They heard the bell ring, and they ran on ahead.”





Grandpa Grizzly put his paw on Snubby Nose's shoulder. "There's only one thing to do when things go bad," he said, "and that is to keep going."

He walked Snubby Nose down the path toward school. "Look at the pretty fall leaves, Snubby Nose. Why don't you put some in your pockets to take to school?" said Grandpa Grizzly. The red and yellow leaves were falling all around them. Snubby Nose filled his pockets.

“See the pretty flowers by the side of the road? Why don’t you pick a bunch for your teacher?” said Grandpa Grizzly. Snubby Nose picked the pretty yellow flowers. Soon, he had forgotten about his troubles.





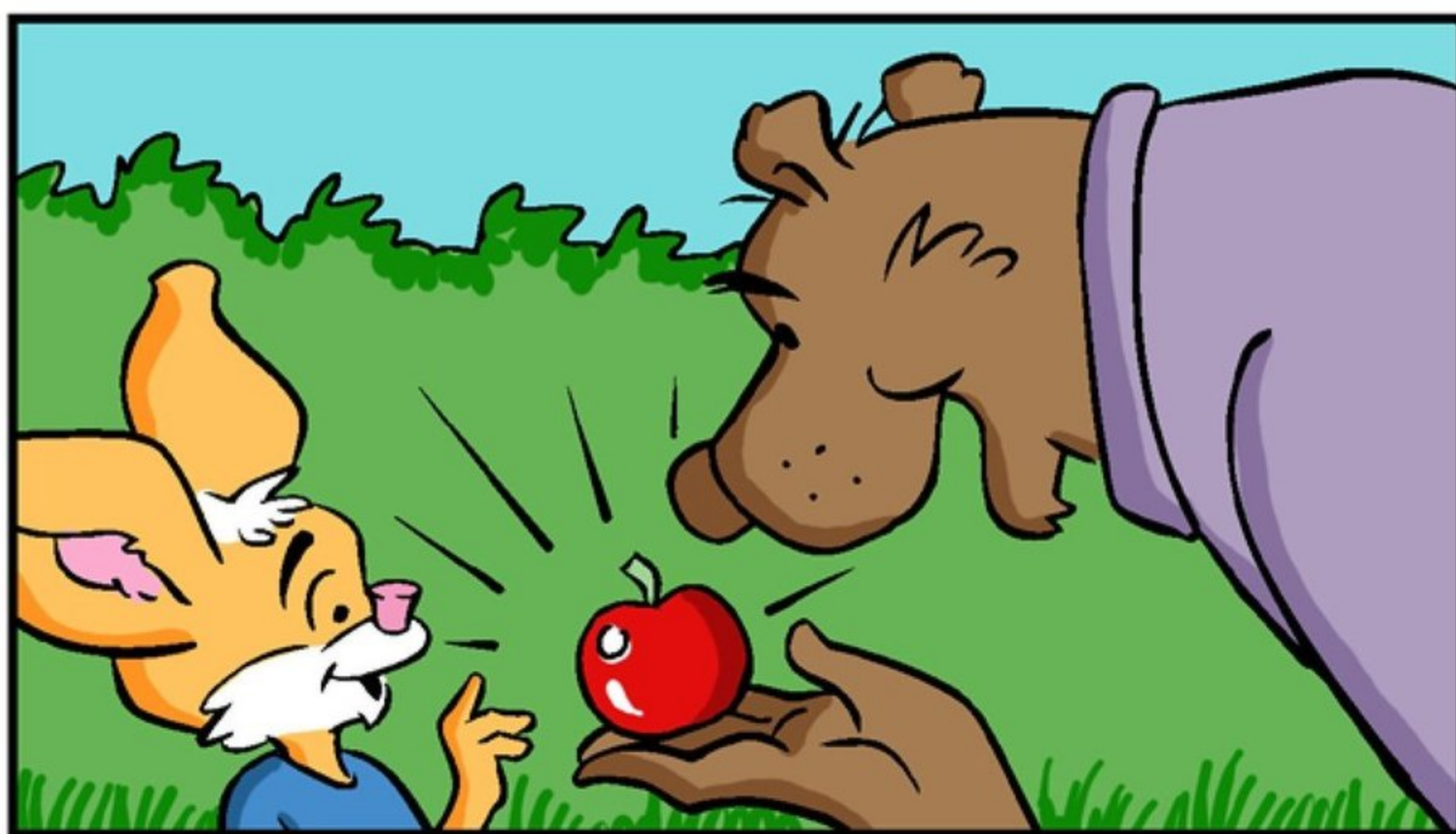
“Here is the school,” said Grandpa Grizzly. “And I think I see the other Hoppers.” Fluffy Tail, Floppy Ears, and Speedy Legs were all waiting in front of the school. They waved when they saw Snubby Nose.

Before Snubby Nose ran to join them, Grandpa Grizzly stopped him.

“Do you feel better, Snubby Nose?” Grandpa Grizzly asked.

“Yes,” said Snubby Nose.

“If you feel bad again, remember the fall leaves and the flowers. Remember that you can feel better all by yourself,” Grandpa Grizzly said. He took a shiny red apple out of his pocket and gave it to Snubby Nose.



“Thank you, Grandpa Grizzly,” cried Snubby Nose. Snubby Nose ran toward the other Hoppers. They went inside the school just as the last bell rang.

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