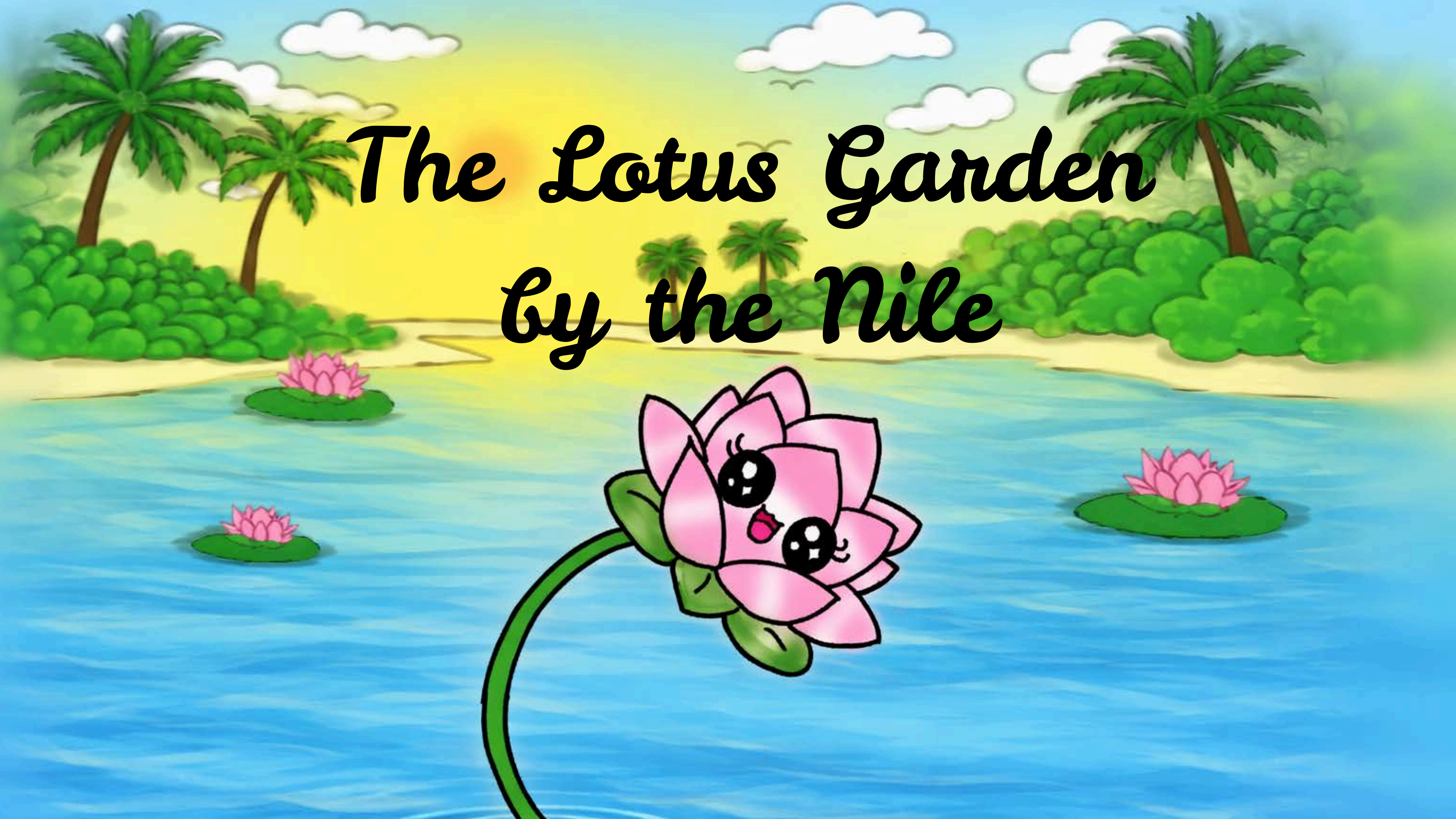
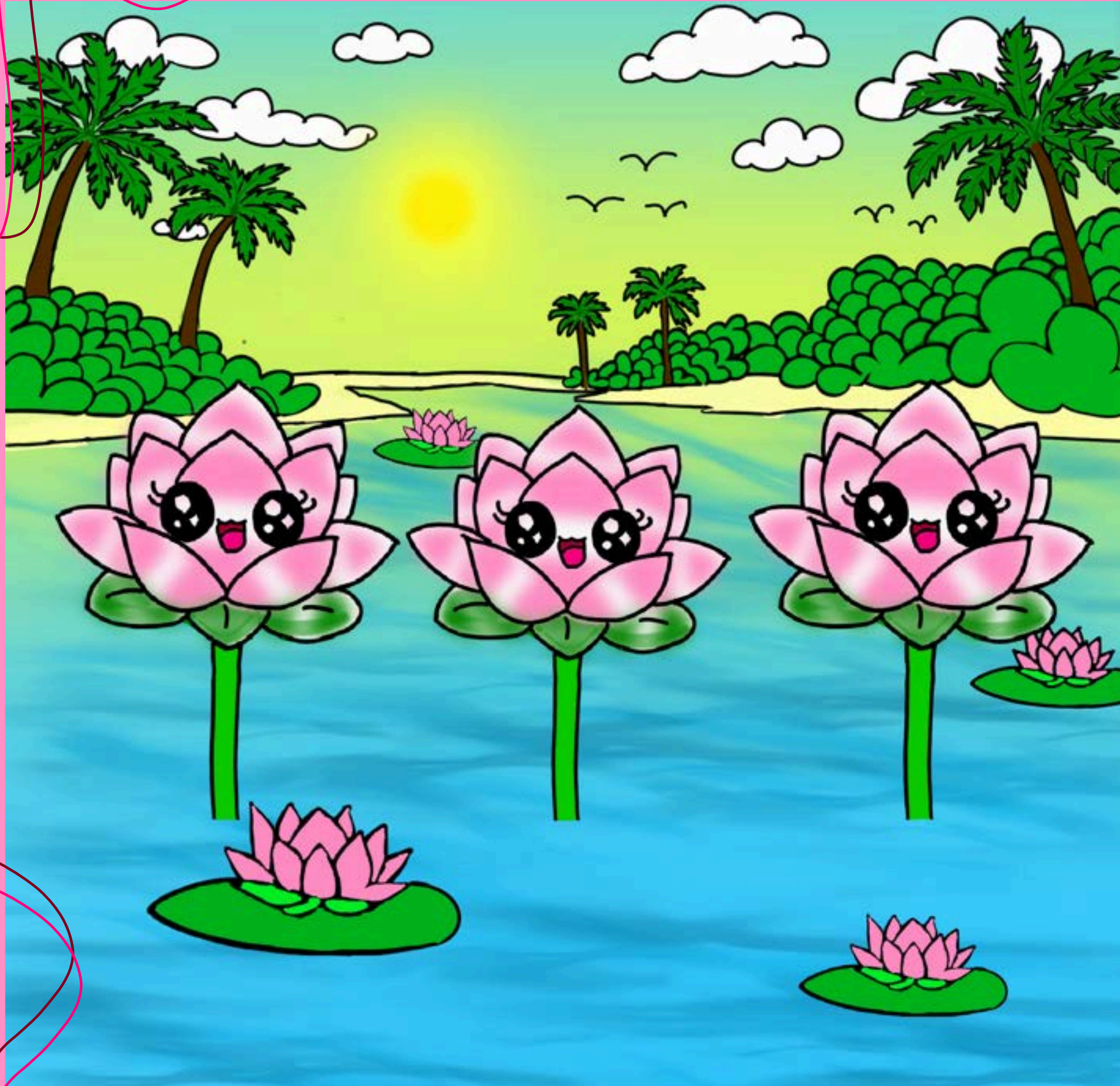


The Lotus Garden by the Nile





Near the Nile River, there was a magical garden.
An ancient spell made it alive and full of color.

The garden was filled with beautiful lotus flowers.

The sun gave them warm light.
The wind danced with their petals.
The Nile's water and soil gave them everything they needed to grow.
All the lotus flowers looked almost the same.

Their stems grew straight and tall, side by side.



Deep in the soft mud, under the water,
a small lotus seed began to grow.

Her name was Neela.

As Neela grew, her stem did not grow
straight like the others.

It gently curved to one side.
Some older lotus flowers were noticed.

They whispered,
“That is not how a lotus should grow.”
The magical garden became worried.

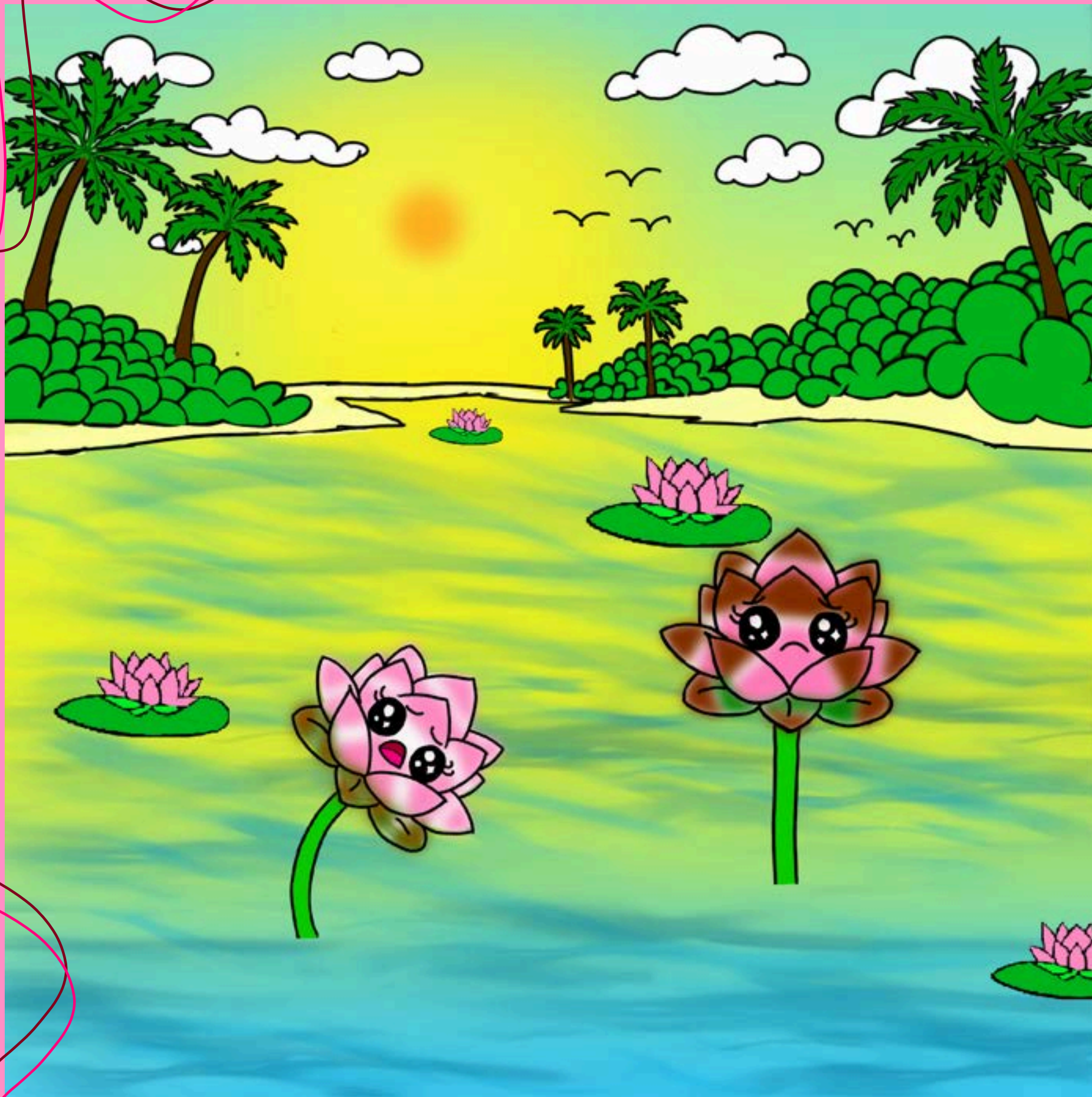
The wind blew harder.

The sun shone strongly.

The soil gave Neela less food.
All of this was done to make her grow
straight.



Neela felt tired and confused.
The wind pushed her again and
again.
The hot sun burned some of her
leaves.
The soil felt tight and dry.
Neela thought,
“Why am I hurting just to look like
every other flower?”



Nearby grew another lotus flower named Noura.

Noura's stem was straight,
but her leaves were dull,
and her colors were faded.

Neela asked her,

"Why do you look sad?"

Noura replied softly,

"I did not always grow this way."

Neela listened closely.

"I was curved once," Noura said.

"But everyone told me I had to change.

So I did."

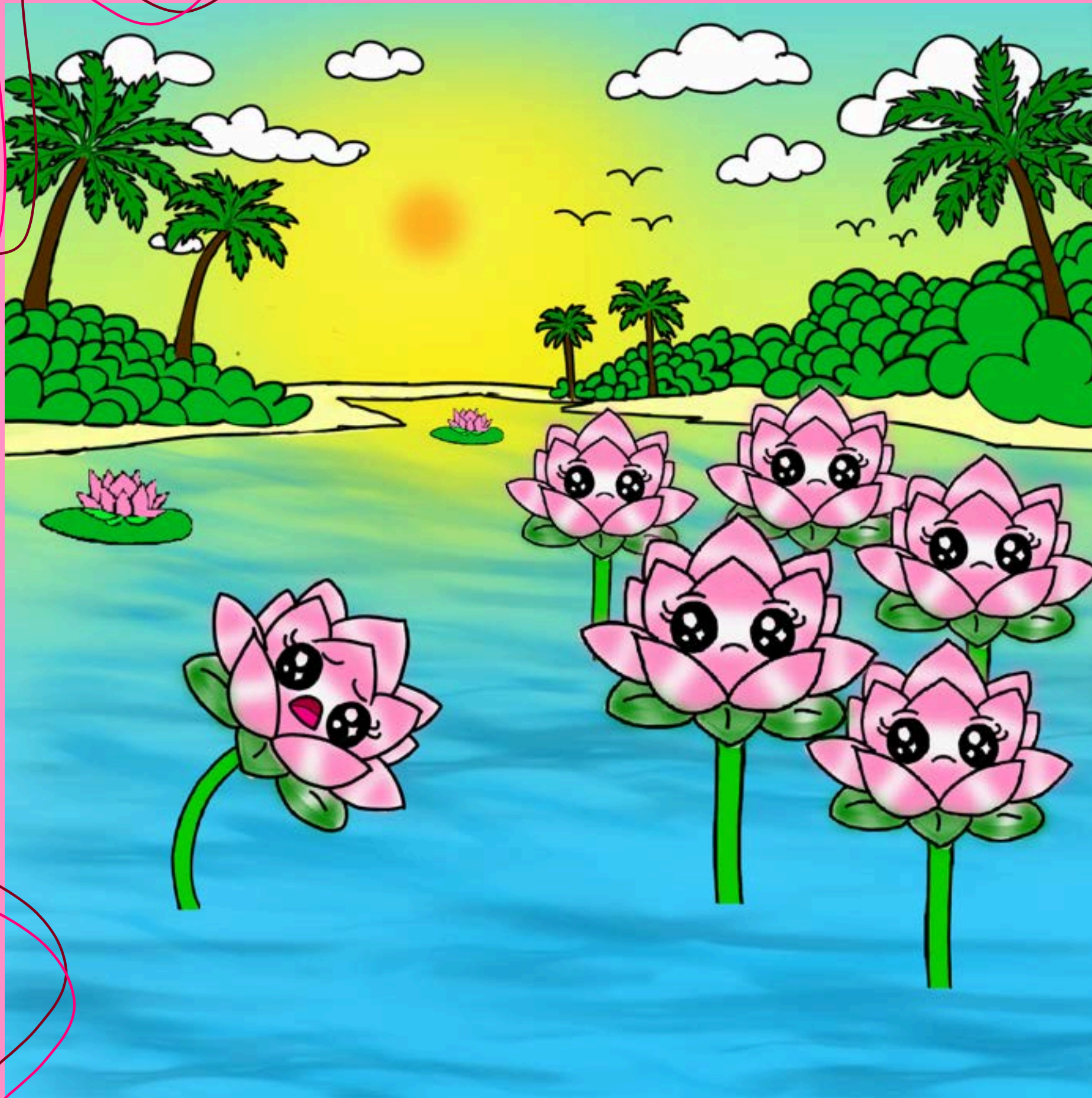
Neela asked,

"Did it make you happy?"

Noura shook her petals.

"No," she said.

"I grew the way they wanted,
but I lost my shine."

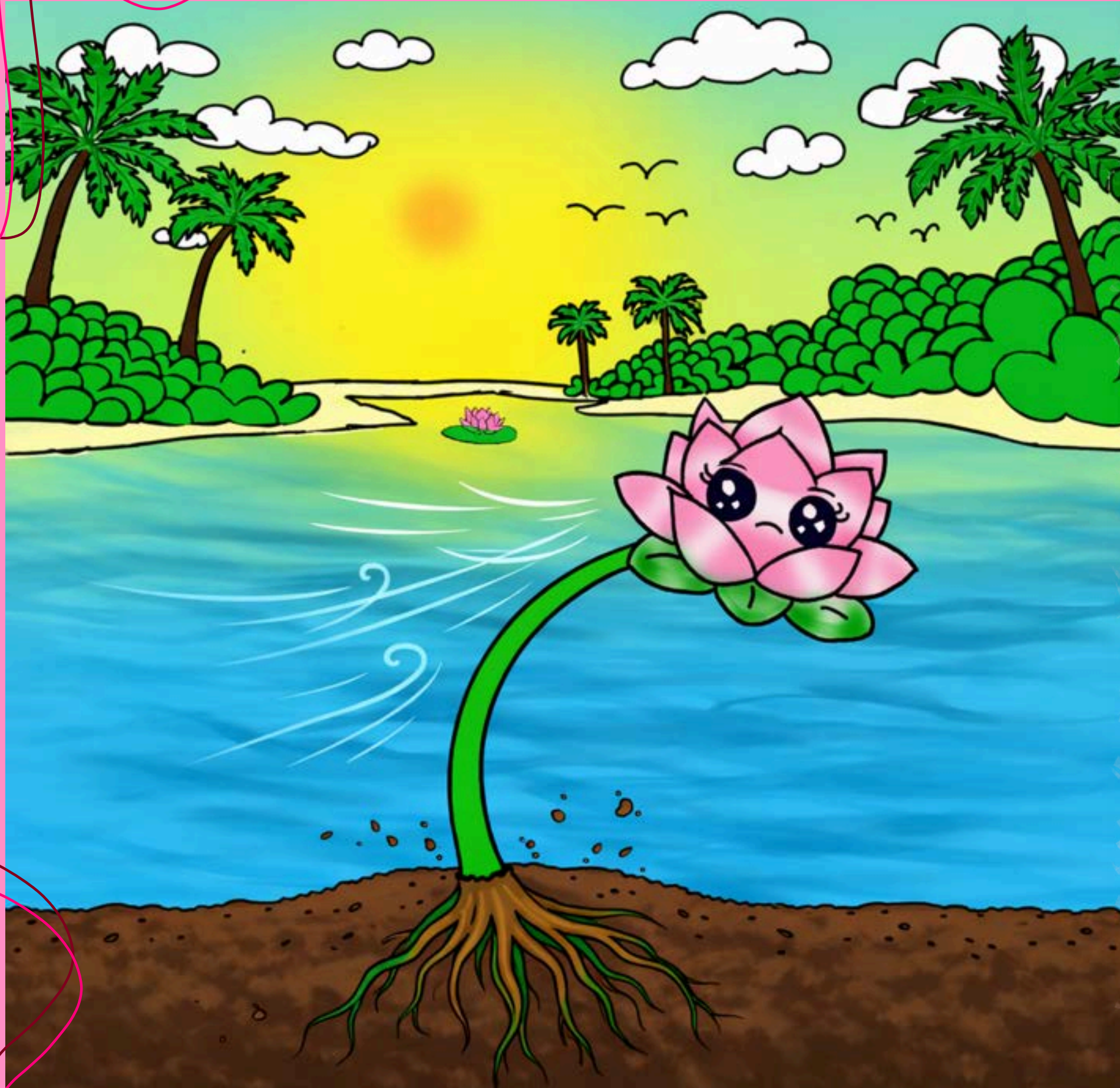


Neela turned to the other lotus flowers.
She said,
“Why must we all grow the same way?”

One flower replied,
“That’s how it has always been.”

Another said,
“It’s safer to be the same.”
Neela answered bravely,
“But some of us struggle just to fit in.”

Why should growing hurt?
The garden grew quiet.



Neela thought about Noura's words.

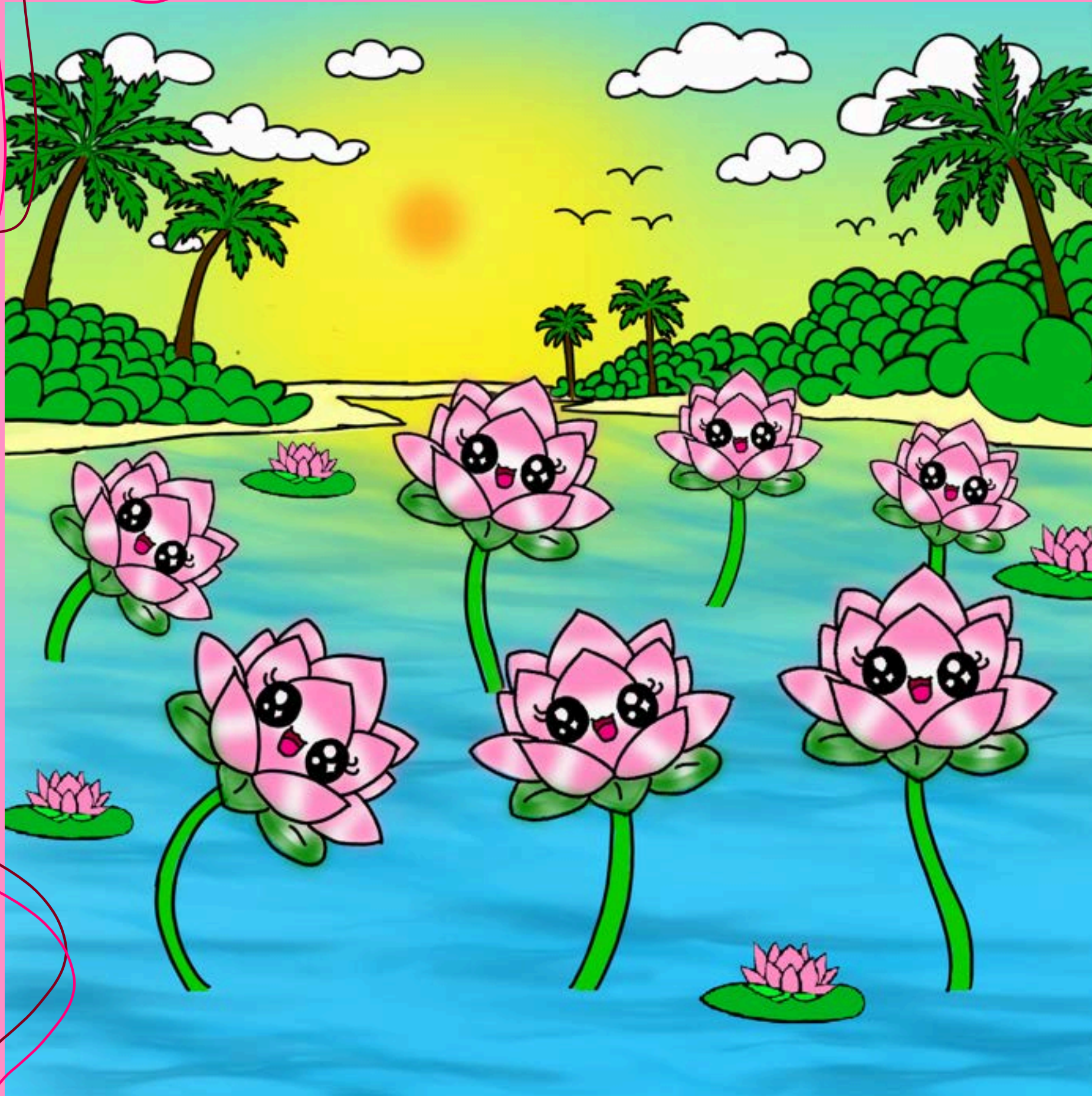
She decided she would grow her own way.

She pushed her roots deeper into the mud to search for more food to support her growth.

The wind blew.

The sun shone.

But Neela stayed strong.
Her stem stayed curved.



One by one, other lotus flowers
began to grow freely.

Some curved.

Some leaned.

Some stayed straight.

The garden changed.

It became brighter.

Kinder.

More beautiful than ever before.

The magical garden finally
understood:

There was more than one right way
to grow.



One Garden, Many Ways
Neela smiled in the sunlight.
She learned that being different
is not wrong.
It is what makes the garden
special.
And sometimes,
it only takes one brave flower
to help everyone grow freely.





The End