Ages 3–5

Gecko and the Extra Tap

A little river story about slowing down

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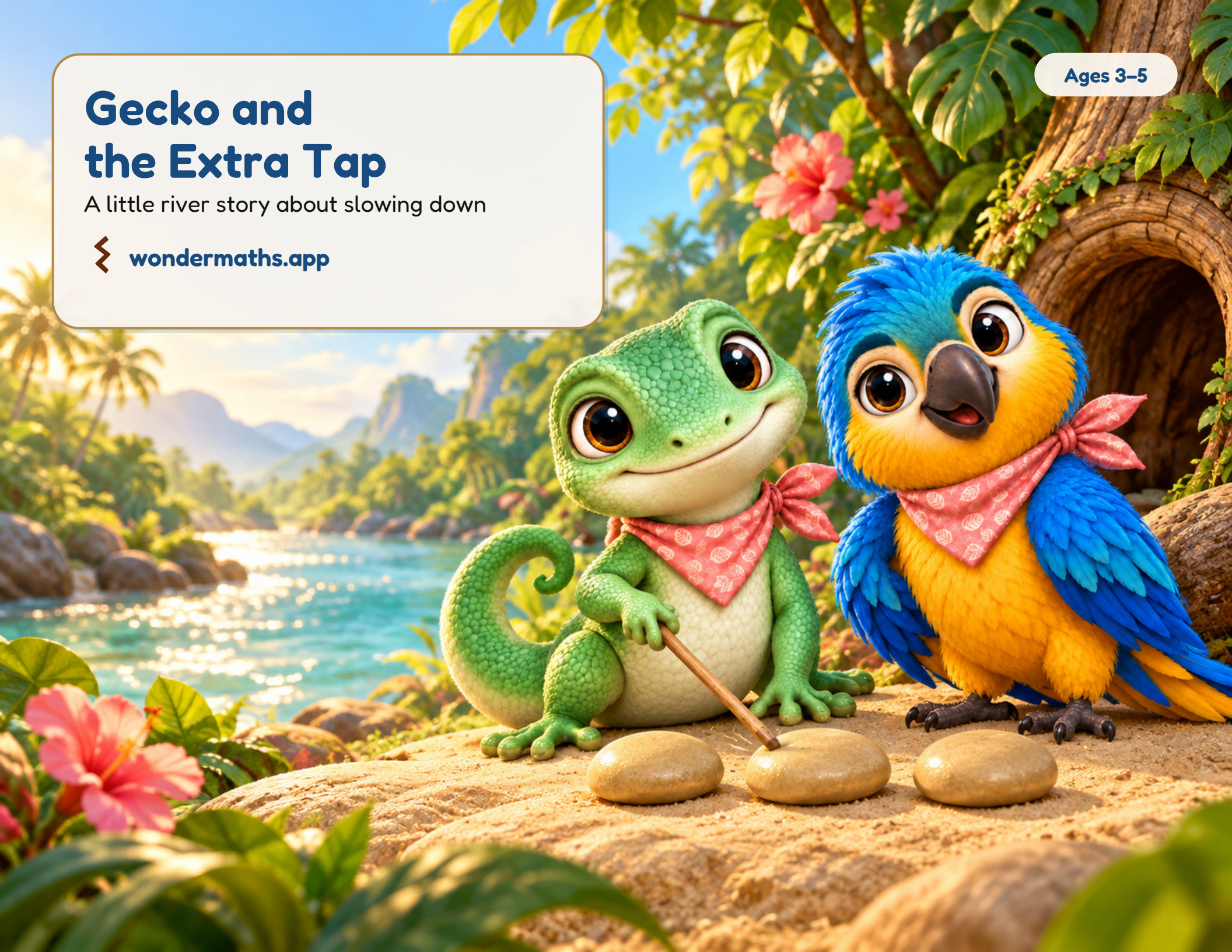




Come close. I have a little river story for you. Outside his home, Gecko was making a welcome for Aro. Not a cake. Not a banner. A tiny concert! He had set three smooth pebbles in a row on the sand beside a hollow log. He could tap each pebble with his little stick. "Three little taps, just for you! I want us to play together, Aro. I'll tap the pebbles, and then you clap. Ready?"



Gecko announced. His tail wiggled with excitement. Its tip brushed the log. Tok! Aro, the blue-and-yellow macaw, settled beside him. Gecko wanted them to play together. Aro would clap her wings after his three taps. He lifted his stick and began much too fast. "Tap, tap, tap!" Tok! His tail bumped the log again. Aro opened her wings, stopped, and folded them.



"I heard an extra tap. I don't know when to clap! I opened my wings, but there was another sound." Their little concert had no ending yet. Gecko lowered his stick. He wanted his welcome to sound like a welcome, not a cupboard full of spoons. Perhaps Aro needed louder taps. Gecko planted his feet. He raised his stick. His tail curled up behind him, ready for the grandest tiny concert on the riverbank.



"I'll make my taps louder. Then you'll hear where to clap. Here comes your welcome, Aro! Tap! Tap! Tap!" TOK! His tail struck the hollow log. This time the extra sound was louder too. Gecko's shoulders drooped. The pebbles were still in their row. Nothing had rolled away. Aro stayed close. "I'm here. Our concert can wait. I'll sit with you while you work it out."



Gecko set down his stick. In the quiet, he gave one small tail wiggle. Tok. He turned around. The end of his tail was resting against the log! His own tail had joined the concert without asking.



Gecko pulled a broad fallen leaf beside him. He tucked his tail onto it, away from the log. Then he picked up his stick again. "I'll stop and check. One little step. Tail, you rest here. I'll tap one pebble, then the next, then the next." He said. Starting at the left end of the row, he touched each pebble once with his stick. This time he left room between the taps.



"One. Two. Three." No extra tok. Gecko walked around to the right end. He left every pebble exactly where it was. Before they played together, he wanted to check from this end too. He began at one again and touched each of the same pebbles once.



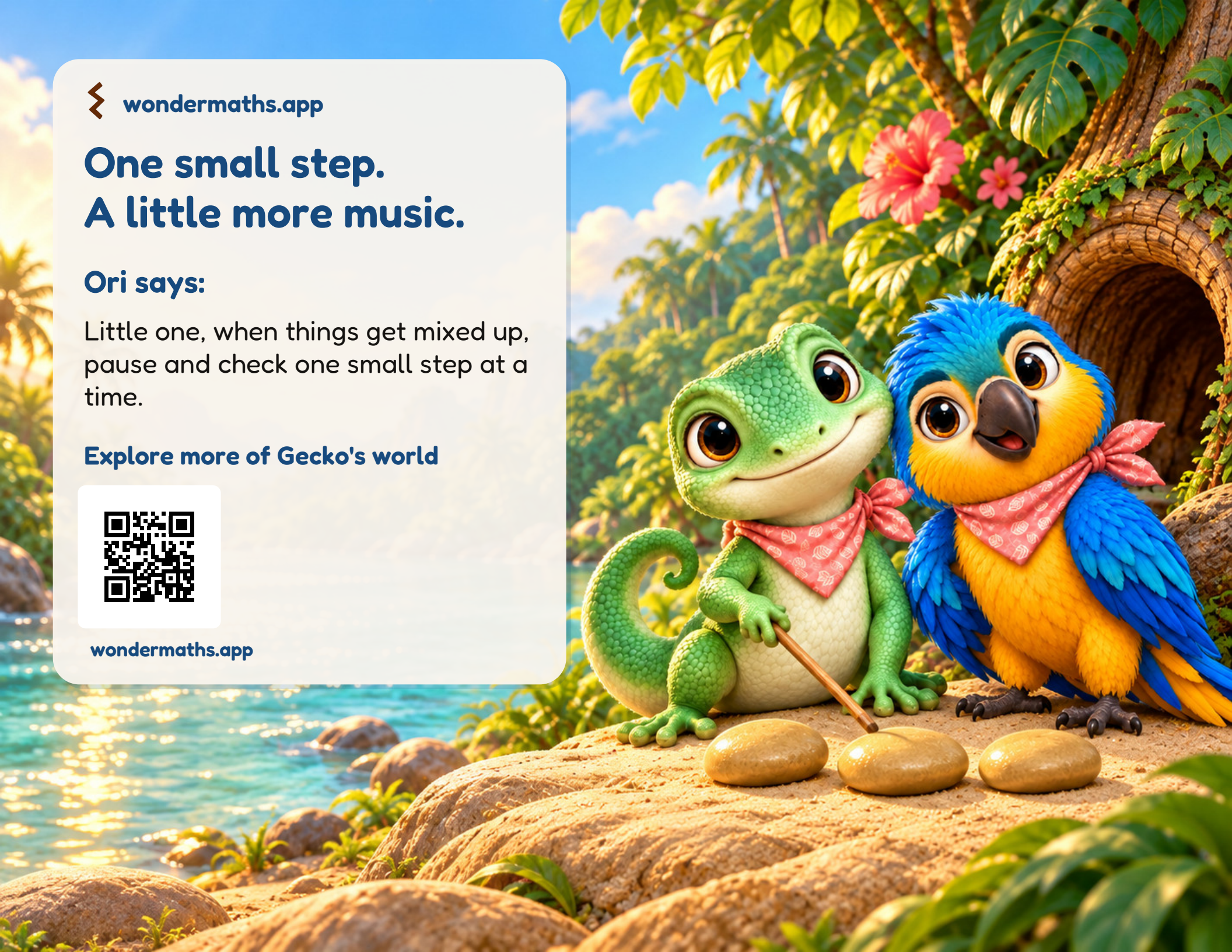
"One. Two. Three. Still three! I started at the other end, but they're the same three pebbles. Nothing went away!" His tail stayed on its leaf. The same three pebbles waited in the sand. Only Gecko had changed sides. He grinned at Aro. Now he knew just where their concert would end.



Aro lifted her wings. Gecko checked his tail, gave her a small nod, and played one clear tap on each pebble. Tap. Tap. Tap. Aro clapped! Right at the end. Their welcome finally fit together. "I stopped and checked. Now we can play! Did you hear it, Aro? My tail was playing the log!"



Gecko said. They played their tiny concert once more. Then Aro bowed. Gecko bowed too, very carefully, with one paw holding his tail on its leaf. "You can bow later, tail." He whispered. Aro laughed softly. They settled outside Gecko's home, with the three pebbles resting nearby. The river rustled past, and their little concert was complete. Little one, when things get mixed up, pause and check one small step at a time.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One small step.
A little more music.
Ori says:
Little one, when things get mixed up, pause and check one small step at a time.
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