The Windows That Wouldn't Say Hello

A little adventure about trying a new way.

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Ages 3–5





Boop. Capybara froze with her paw in the air. “That is not a hello,” she told the river. Come a little closer. I'm Ori, and this is what happened when Capybara tried to make a welcome for me. Capybara had invited me to share a story at breakfast.


“I want the two water windows outside my home to play their little welcome tune. Without it, my surprise will be a very quiet surprise.” One window already held a picture of two flowers, resting side by side. The other window waited for a picture of its own.



There was a simple secret to the tune. Put the same number of flowers in both windows, press the green leaf, and the windows would answer each other. Capybara hummed the first part of the tune. She had been practicing all morning. “I'll give Ori a hello he can hear around the bend.”



On the bank lay two picture cards. One held three flowers spread out in a row. The other held two flowers, one above the other. Capybara picked the wide row. It stretched across its card, just like the flowers in the first window. “This row is wide. This must be the matching picture.”



She slid the whole picture into the waiting window, then pressed the green leaf. No welcome tune. Just that small, round boop. Capybara's shoulders drooped. She had wanted her windows to sing, and they seemed to have the hiccups. “I've matched the row. What did I miss?”



“Two in my first picture. Three in this one. Spreading them out did not make them the same little group.” Capybara rested her paws on her tummy. The river kept going softly past. Nothing was broken. She could change her picture. “Stop. Look. Try a different way.”



This time, Capybara looked at the flowers instead of how wide the row was. “Two here. And two on that other card.” “The flowers go up and down. They are not side by side. But no flower is missing. There is no extra flower, either.”



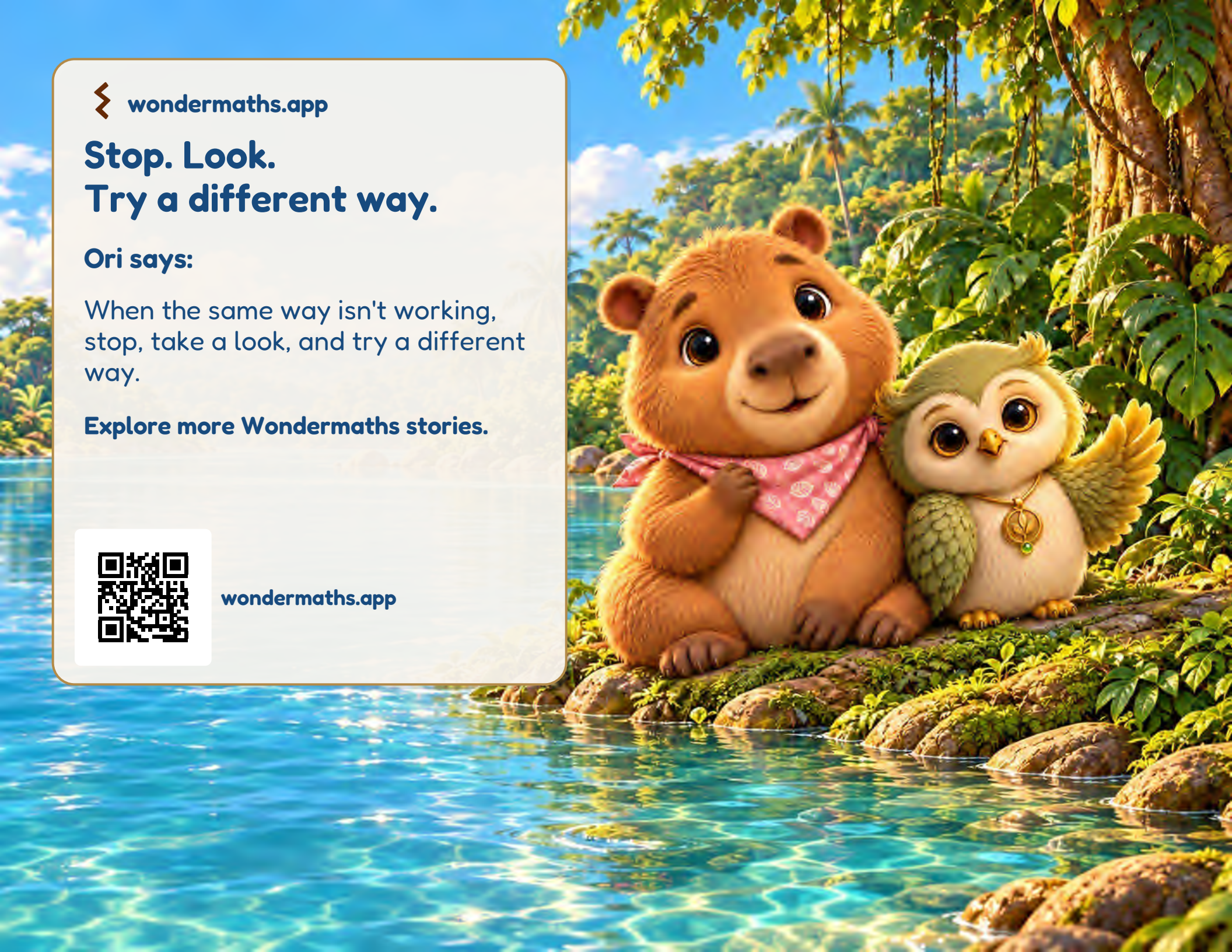
Capybara reached for the card, then paused with her paw just above it. “Stop. Look. Try a different way.” She took out the picture of three flowers. In went the picture of two, one above the other. She kept the whole little picture together. “Look at the flowers. Two flowers here. Two flowers there. Different places.” Capybara pressed the green leaf.



A little tune skipped over the water. The first window began it. The second window finished it. Capybara's paws flew up to her cheeks. “My hello! It was waiting for a different way.” That was the tune I heard as I came around the bend. “Was that welcome for me?” I asked. Capybara nodded so hard that her scarf tickled her chin.



“I kept looking at the row. Then I looked at the flowers. I changed my picture, and it worked!” I settled beside her on the bank. Before breakfast, before my story, we let the windows play their welcome once more. “The flowers do not have to stand in the same places to belong in the same tune.” Capybara leaned against my wing. “Stop. Look. Try a different way.” She said it with a smile this time. I had come with a story for Capybara. But that morning, she had made one for me. Little one, when the same way isn't working, stop, take a look, and try a different way.



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Stop. Look.
Try a different way.

Ori says:

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