The Pebble That Started the Music

A little adventure about trying a new way

Ages 3-5



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That last little clack had no answer.
I'm Ori. Come sit beside me for a river story. Two tiny log rafts floated in a shallow pool, held beside the bank by their ropes. On one raft sat three pebbles. On the other sat two. Two soft strings curled beside Gecko's tail. He had arranged the pebbles for a concert with Aro.



"I want us to make a tune together. Mine calls, and yours answers!" Gecko said.
He tapped his three pebbles. Aro answered on her two. But the last little clack still had no answer.
"The tune seems to have a little hole," Aro said.
Gecko wanted both friends to be part of the tune. He reached for his largest pebble.



"I'll make mine louder!" Gecko decided.
The loud clack bounced off the water. Aro answered brightly. The same little gap waited at the end. Louder had not made a new partner. Gecko rubbed his chin with his tail. Aro rested her wing beside her pebbles.
"I'm still here. We can try again," she said.



"Then maybe faster," Gecko suggested.
His tail began to twitch with the beat.
His taps hurried into Aro's taps. They made a cheerful muddle, like spoons falling into a drawer. Gecko stopped. Now he couldn't tell which tap belonged to which pebble. Louder had left a gap. Faster had hidden it.
"My tune's all tangled," he said.
"Would you like a quiet moment?" Aro asked.



Gecko nodded. Aro lowered her wing. The river could be heard again.
"One at a time. Leave room for a reply," Gecko said softly.
He let the quiet stay, as though making a little space for the answer.



Gecko picked up one of the soft strings beside his tail. He looped it around a pebble on his raft and tied the other end around a pebble on Aro's raft. One pebble had one partner. Gecko touched his pebble. Aro touched its partner.
"One at a time. Leave room for a reply," Gecko said.



He used the second string for a second pair. His pebble, then Aro's pebble.
Now every pebble on Aro's raft had a partner. Gecko still had one pebble with no string.
"Three here. Two there. This one isn't missing an answer. It's an extra call!" Gecko said.
Aro waited while Gecko tried a new beginning.



"What if this one starts us? Then the pairs can answer," Gecko suggested.
He tapped the pebble with no partner once. That was their hello. Then he followed the first string. One tap from Gecko. One from Aro. Then the second string. One tap from Gecko. One from Aro. He did not need to squeeze a third pair into the tune.

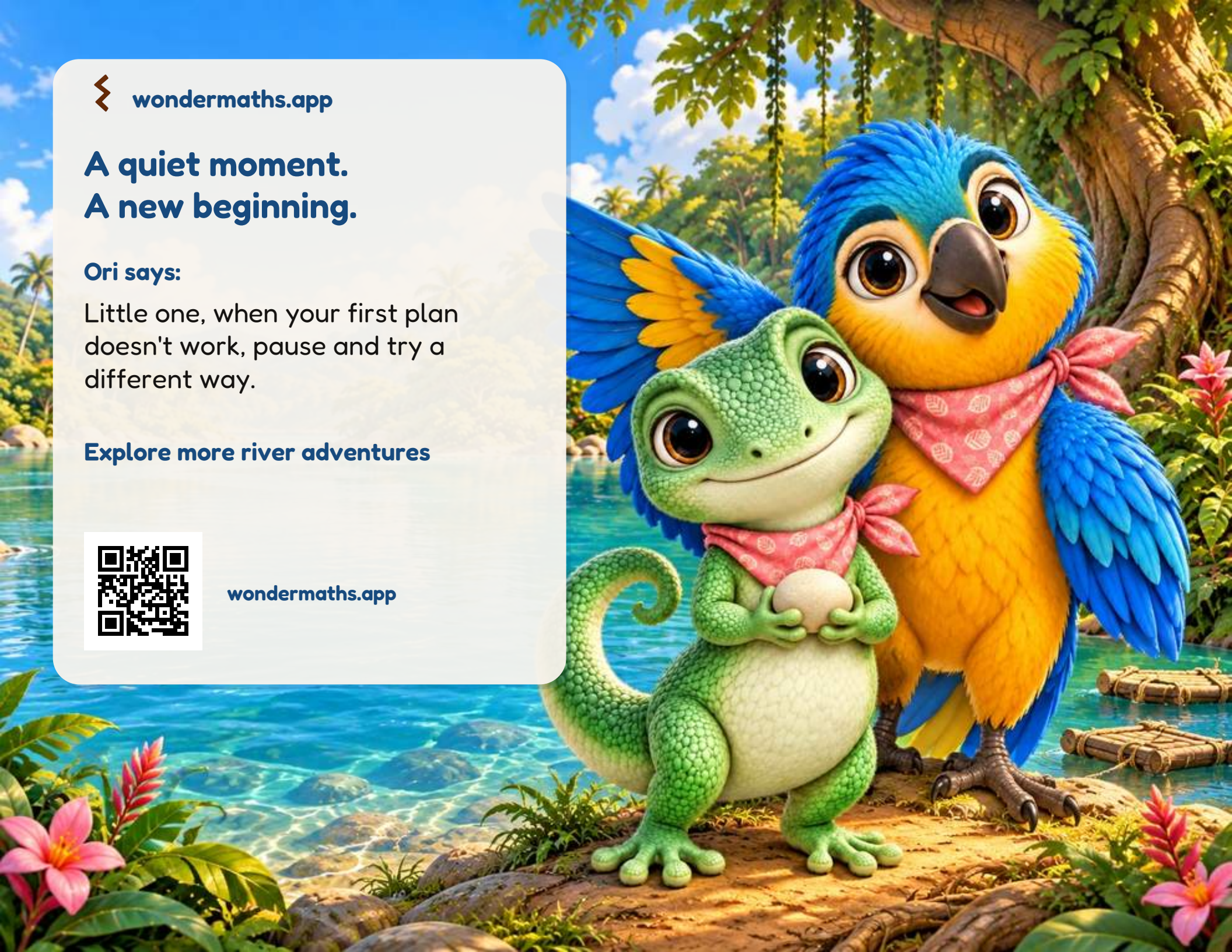


"It sounds like a knock at the door, and two friendly answers!" Aro said.
"I kept trying to fit the old tune. We needed a new one," Gecko said.
They played it again. One hello, then two pairs. Gecko's tail swayed gently instead of chasing the beat. Aro's wing waited for each reply. The extra pebble had not spoiled their concert. It had given the concert a beginning.
"One at a time. Leave room for a reply," Gecko said, smiling.



When the little concert ended, Gecko and Aro carried their pebbles back onto the bank. They loosened the two strings and left the rafts resting together. No taps were left to chase. Aro touched her wing to Gecko's hand. They headed home with their small tune between them.

Little one, when your first plan doesn't work, pause and try a different way.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A quiet moment.
A new beginning.
Ori says:
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