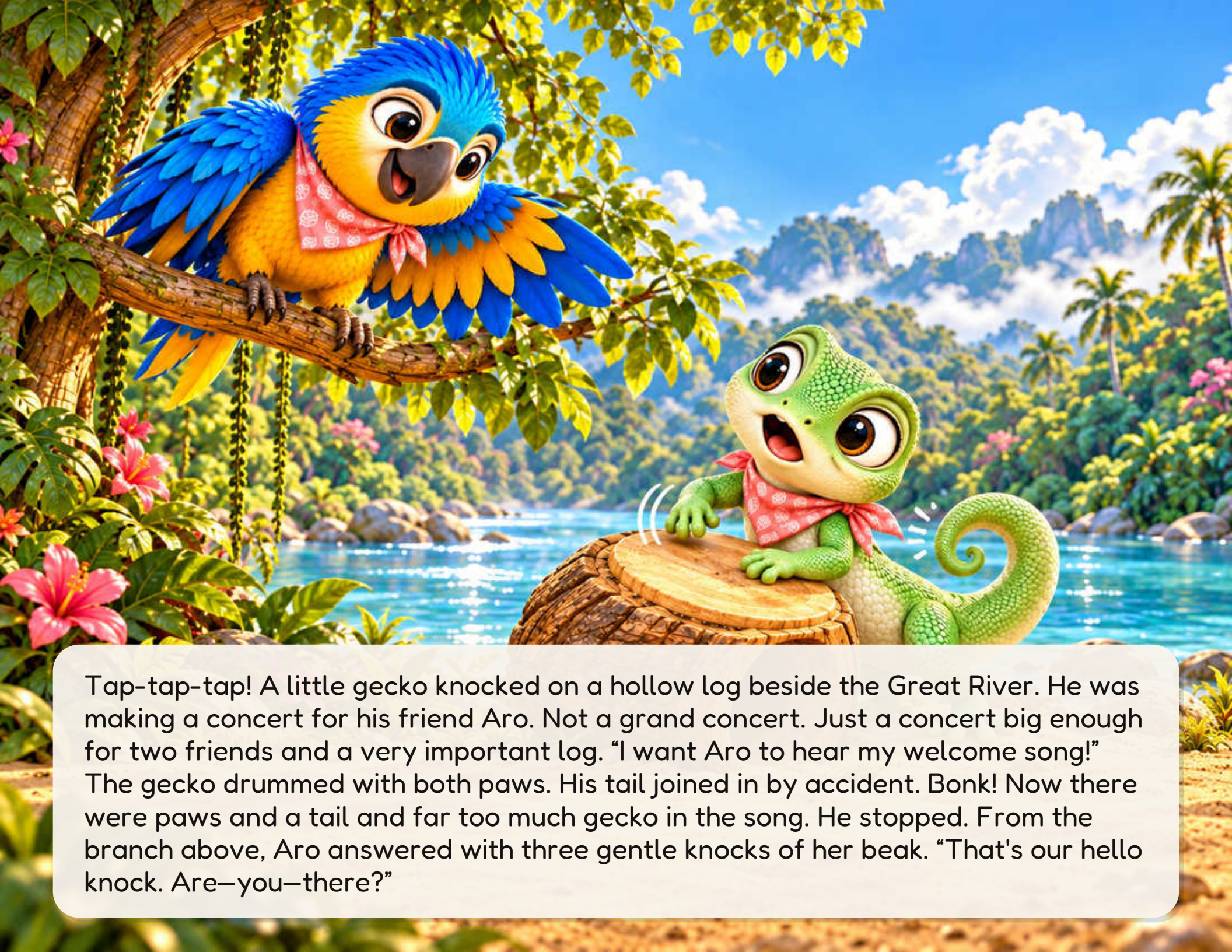
The Island's Little Knock

Ages 3–5

A little pause.
A song for two.

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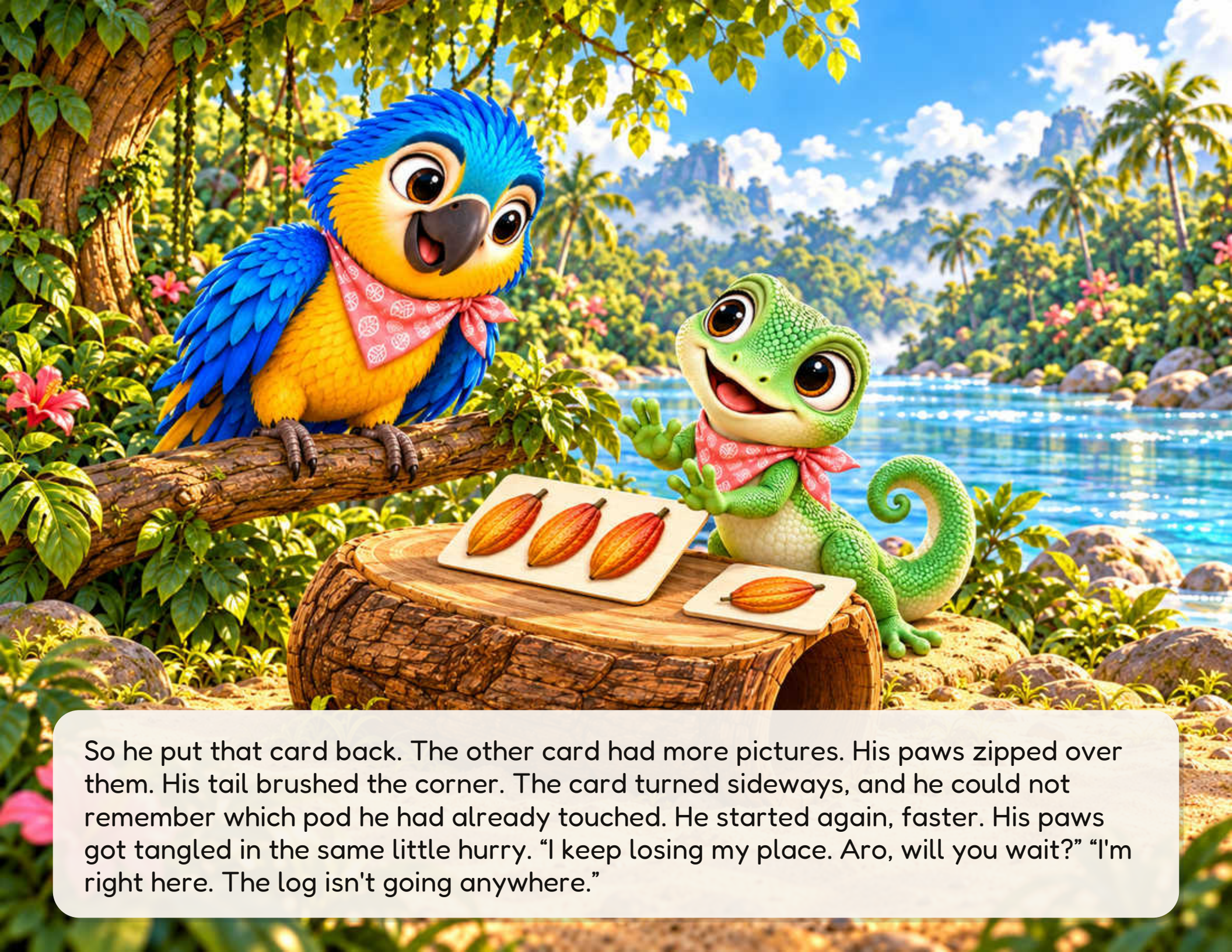
Tap-tap-tap! A little gecko knocked on a hollow log beside the Great River. He was making a concert for his friend Aro. Not a grand concert. Just a concert big enough for two friends and a very important log. “I want Aro to hear my welcome song!” The gecko drummed with both paws. His tail joined in by accident. Bonk! Now there were paws and a tail and far too much gecko in the song. He stopped. From the branch above, Aro answered with three gentle knocks of her beak. “That's our hello knock. Are—you—there?”



Each word had its own little beat. The gecko loved that knock. He wanted to play it himself when Aro came down to the island. Beside the log stood a wooden number three. Two picture cards lay on the sand. One showed one cacao pod. The other showed three. Each picture could help him remember one beat. He would choose a whole card to stand beside the three. “I'll make my paws remember!”



He picked up the card with one pod. It was the first card he could reach. He set it beside the wooden three and touched its single picture. Tap! His paw moved on, but there was no next picture. The little song had run out before hello was finished. “Oh. One picture. One beat. My hello needs more than that.”



So he put that card back. The other card had more pictures. His paws zipped over them. His tail brushed the corner. The card turned sideways, and he could not remember which pod he had already touched. He started again, faster. His paws got tangled in the same little hurry. “I keep losing my place. Aro, will you wait?” “I'm right here. The log isn't going anywhere.”



Aro settled on the low branch. She did not take the card. The gecko laid it flat and rested his tail on the sand. His shoulders dropped. This time, he would give one little part all the room it needed. “One little tap. Then the next.” He touched the first pod picture and made one knock on the log. He kept his paw by that picture until the knock was finished. “One.”



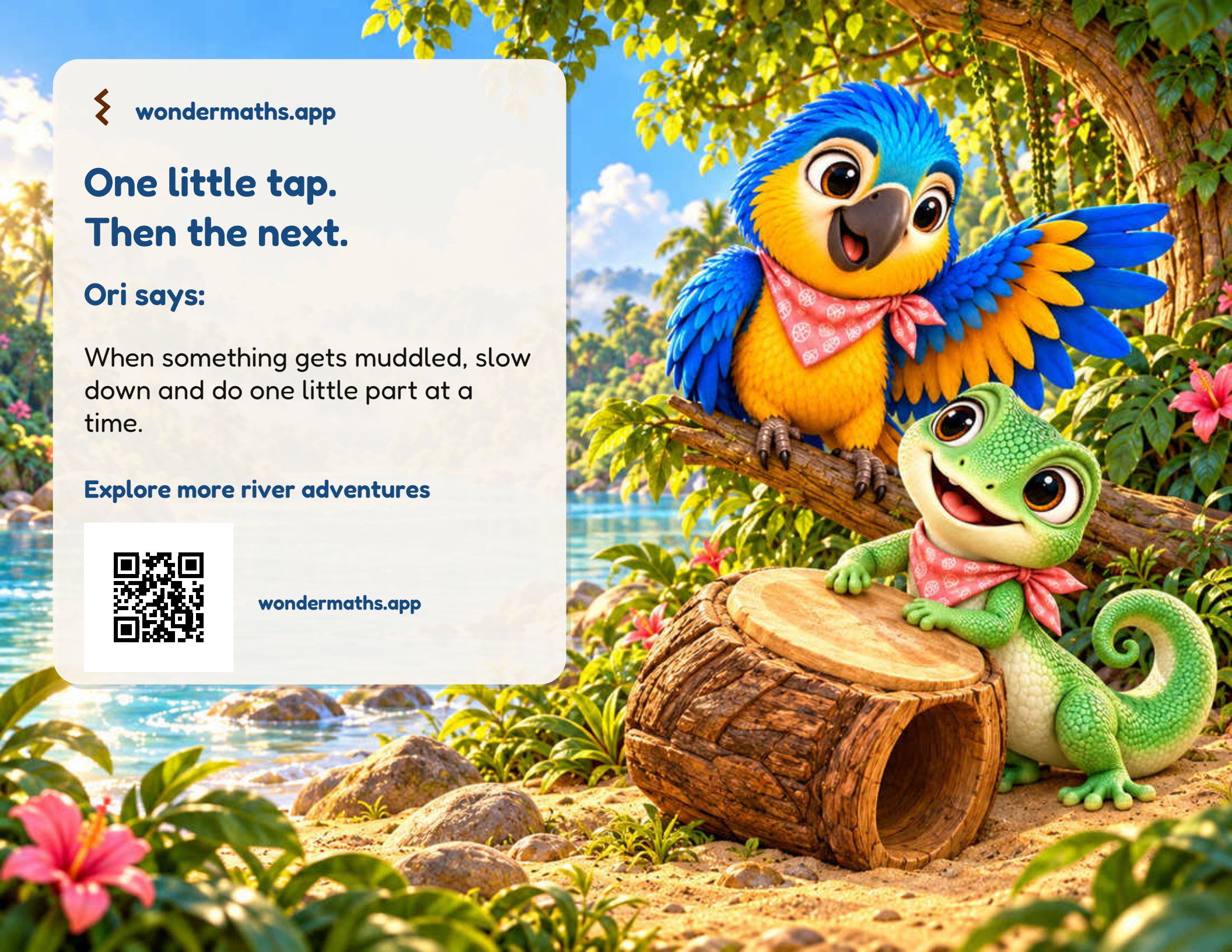
He moved to the next pod picture. Another knock, with a space after it. “Two.” One picture was still waiting. He touched it, knocked once, and lifted his paw away from the card. “Three. That's all of them!” Three pictures. Three separate knocks. The wooden three finally had a picture card that matched. The gecko moved the whole card beside it. Every pod stayed in its picture. Then he tapped their green check button. A small, bright note rang out.



“One little tap. Then the next.” Now he could play his welcome. He looked from picture to picture, leaving a little breathing space between his knocks. Tap. Tap. Tap. Aro leaned close, but she did not answer at once. The gecko's paws hovered above the log. There was room in his song for someone else. “I'm—right—here.” Three soft knocks answered his three. The gecko's tail curled into a happy loop. He had wanted to make a whole concert for Aro. He had made something better: a song with room for Aro to join in.



“One little tap. Then the next.” He played his part. Aro played hers. And the very important log, which had no paws, no wings, and no tail to get tangled, was excellent at being a drum. When the concert ended, they left the matching card beside the three and curled up together in the shade of their home tree. Little one, when something gets muddled, slow down and do one little part at a time.



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One little tap. Then the next.

Ori says:

When something gets muddled, slow down and do one little part at a time.

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