The Last Little Knock

A little river story about listening.

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Ages 3-5





Capybara had practiced her welcome so many times that even her tummy seemed to hum it. “Welcome, welcome, come sit down!” I was beside her on our river dock. I'm Aro. That afternoon, Capybara was getting a little picnic ready for friends coming on a raft. She had brought three soft leaf mats, rolled into one rustly bundle. Capybara told me her plan.



“When the raft gets here, each friend will knock once. I want to hear everybody's hello, and make each friend a cozy spot.” She patted the hollow wooden post. It made a lovely, round sound. Capybara's welcome was going to be magnificent.



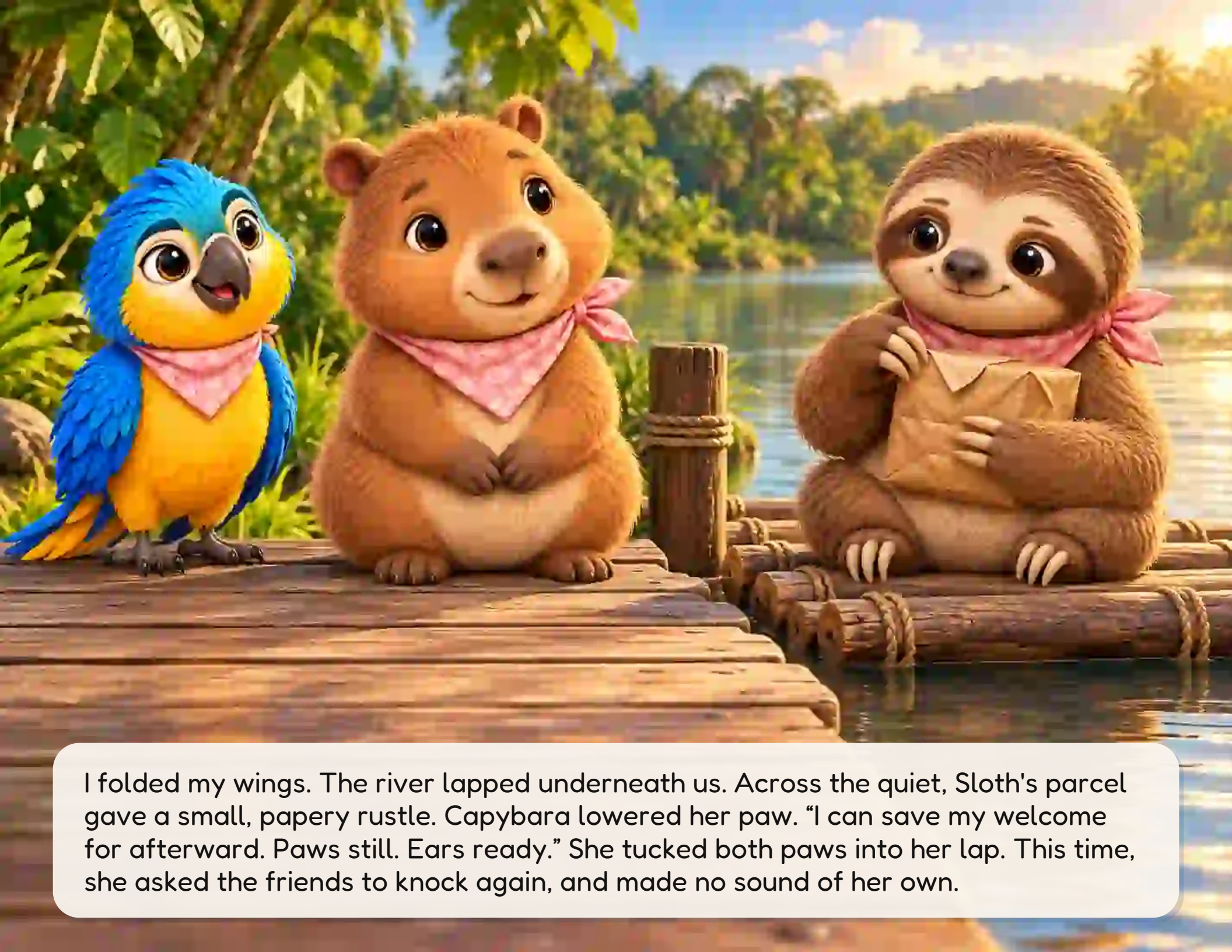
The raft arrived. But before the visitors had finished, Capybara burst into her welcome. “Welcome, welcome, come sit down! Two friends! Two cozy spots!”



She unrolled two mats with two soft flumps. Gecko and Capuchin settled beside them. Sloth was there too, holding a rustling parcel. There was no third mat on the dock. Capybara looked at the rolled-up mat still tucked under her arm. “Oh. My welcome missed somebody.”



Nobody was cross. The friends stayed close while Capybara rolled the mats up to try again. “I'll clap along this time. That will help me keep up!” But her own claps covered the visitors' knocks. Now she could hear a muddle of her sounds and theirs. She stopped with one paw in the air. There were still three friends waiting for their picnic places. “My paws are being very welcoming. My ears can't get a turn.”



I folded my wings. The river lapped underneath us. Across the quiet, Sloth's parcel gave a small, papery rustle. Capybara lowered her paw. “I can save my welcome for afterward. Paws still. Ears ready.” She tucked both paws into her lap. This time, she asked the friends to knock again, and made no sound of her own.



Capybara nearly began her welcome. Instead, she kept her paws in her lap. “Paws still. Ears ready.” Sloth had needed a moment to shift the parcel and free a paw. There was the last little knock. Capybara had left enough quiet to hear it. “Three! Now I heard all of you.”



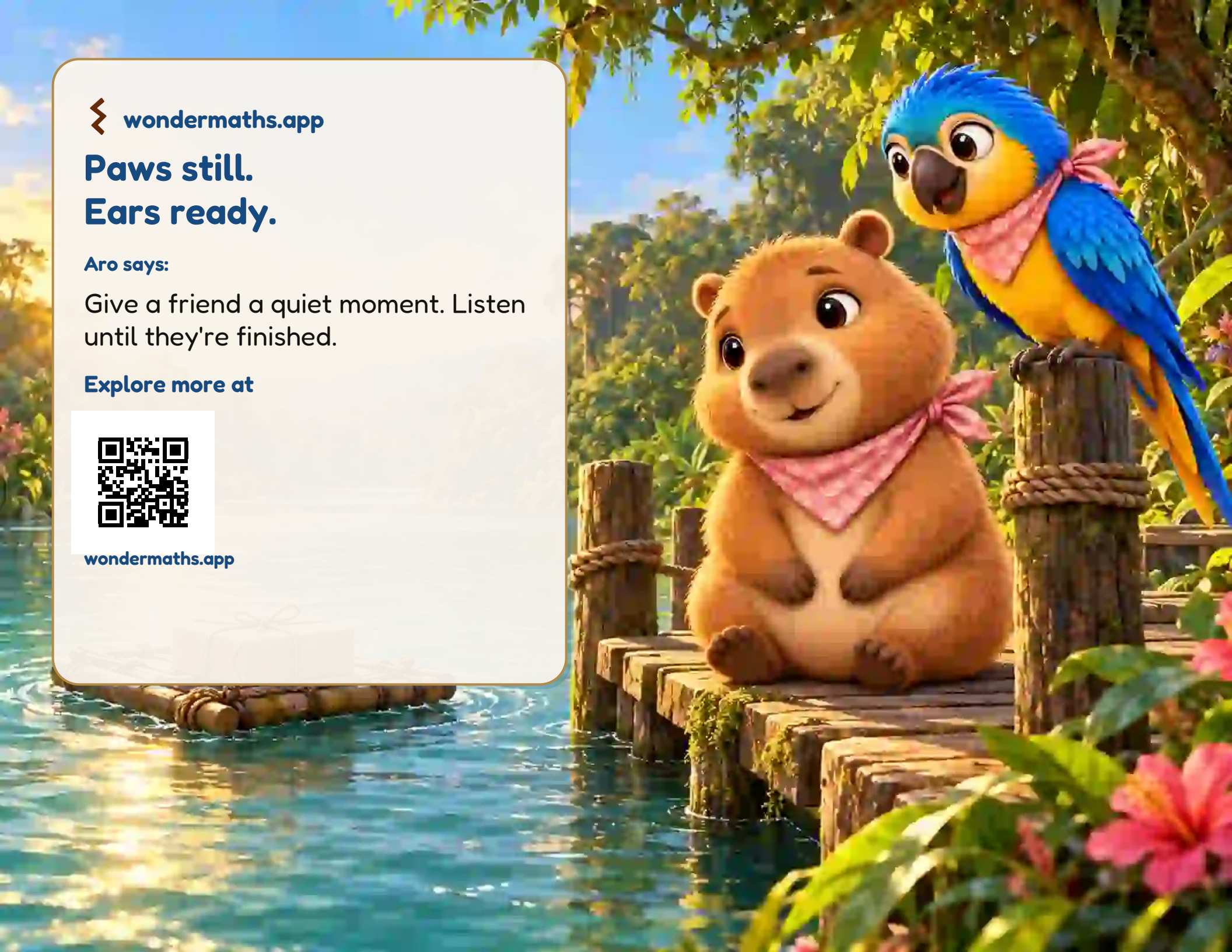
She unrolled a mat for Gecko, a mat for Capuchin, and a mat for Sloth. Three soft flumps, and every guest had a place. Then Capybara let her welcome out. It sounded even happier after its little wait. “Welcome, welcome, come sit down!”



Sloth opened the rustling parcel. Inside was a cushion for Capybara. Her friends had brought a cozy spot for the friend who was so busy making cozy spots for everyone else. “For me? Then I'm sitting right here with you.”



She settled beside them. I perched close by. There was room for a picnic, room for a soft river breeze, and room for a friend to finish making a little sound. “Paws still. Ears ready.” Capybara whispered it with a smile, then took a happy, quiet bite of her picnic. Little one, when you want to hear somebody, give them a quiet moment and listen until they're finished.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Paws still.
Ears ready.
Aro says:
Give a friend a quiet moment. Listen until they're finished.
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