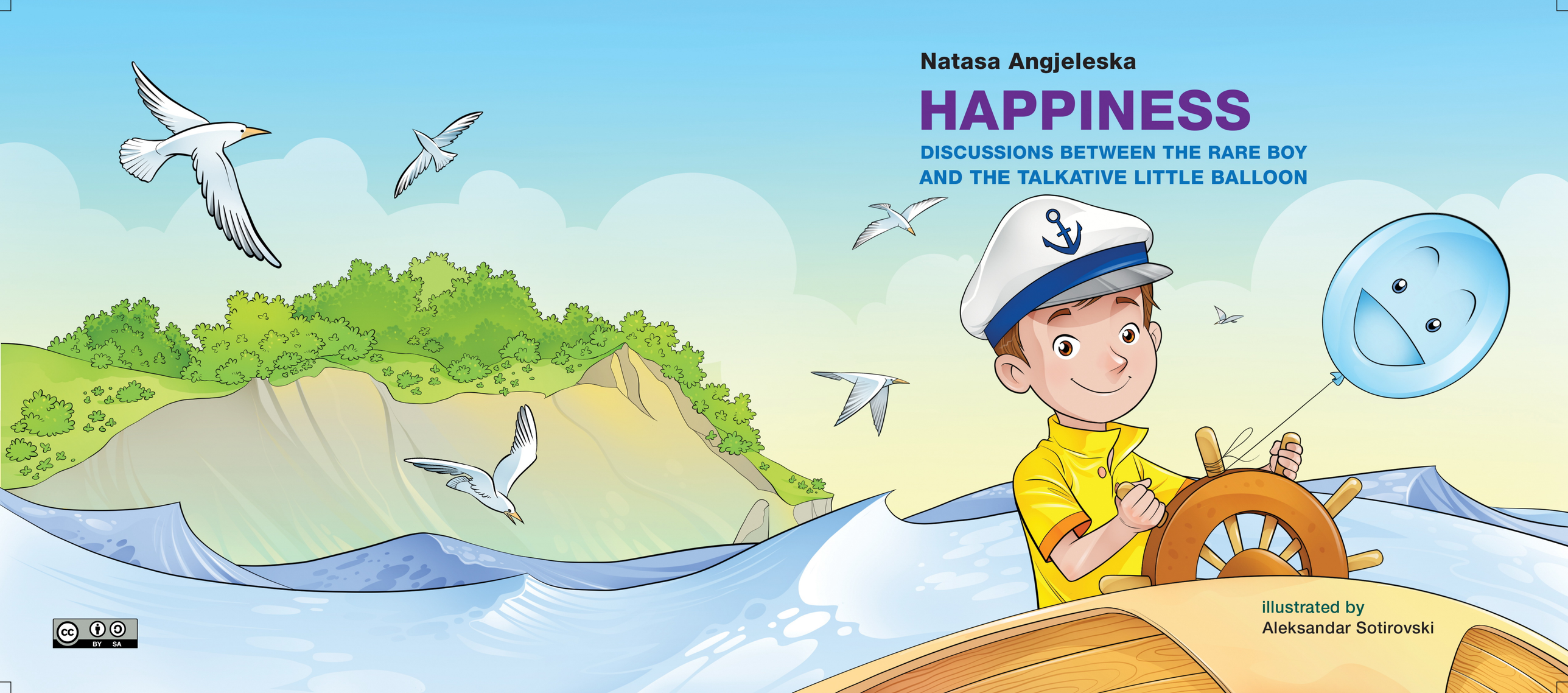

Natasa Angjeleska

HAPPINESS

DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE RARE BOY AND THE TALKATIVE LITTLE BALLOON

illustrated by
Aleksandar Sotirovski

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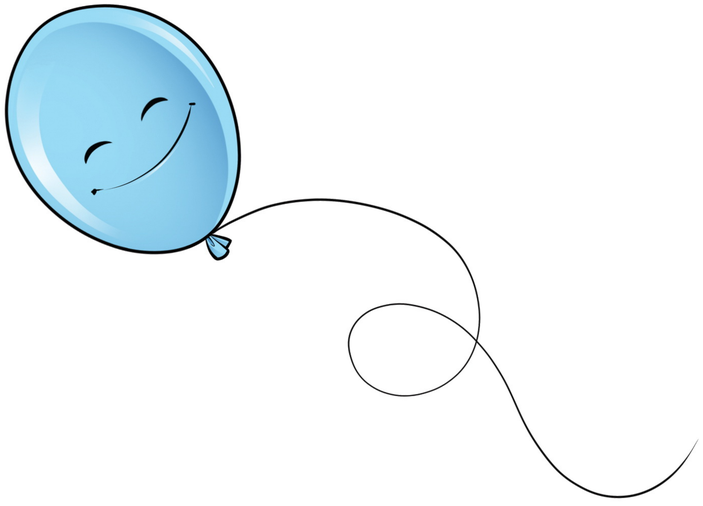

Natasa Angjeleska

HAPPINESS

DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE RARE BOY AND THE TALKATIVE LITTLE BALLOON

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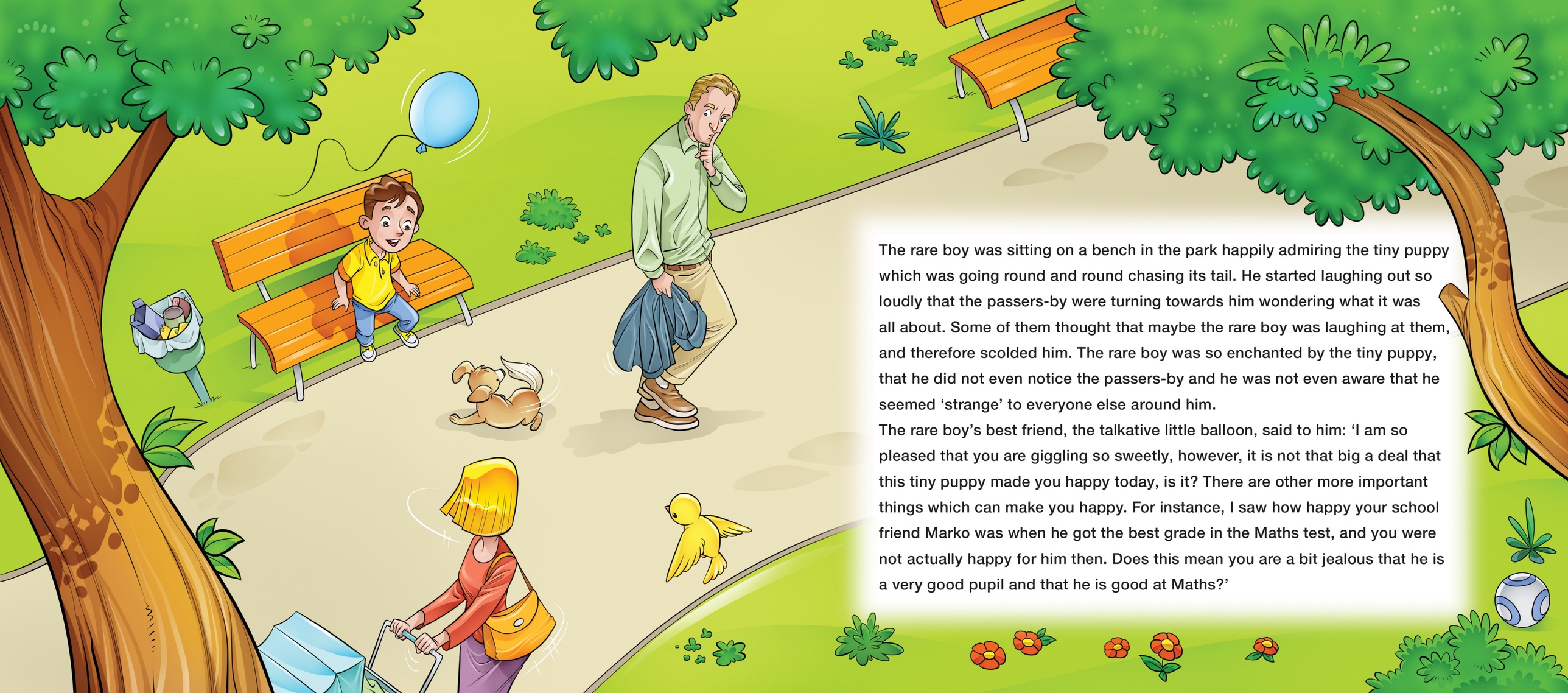


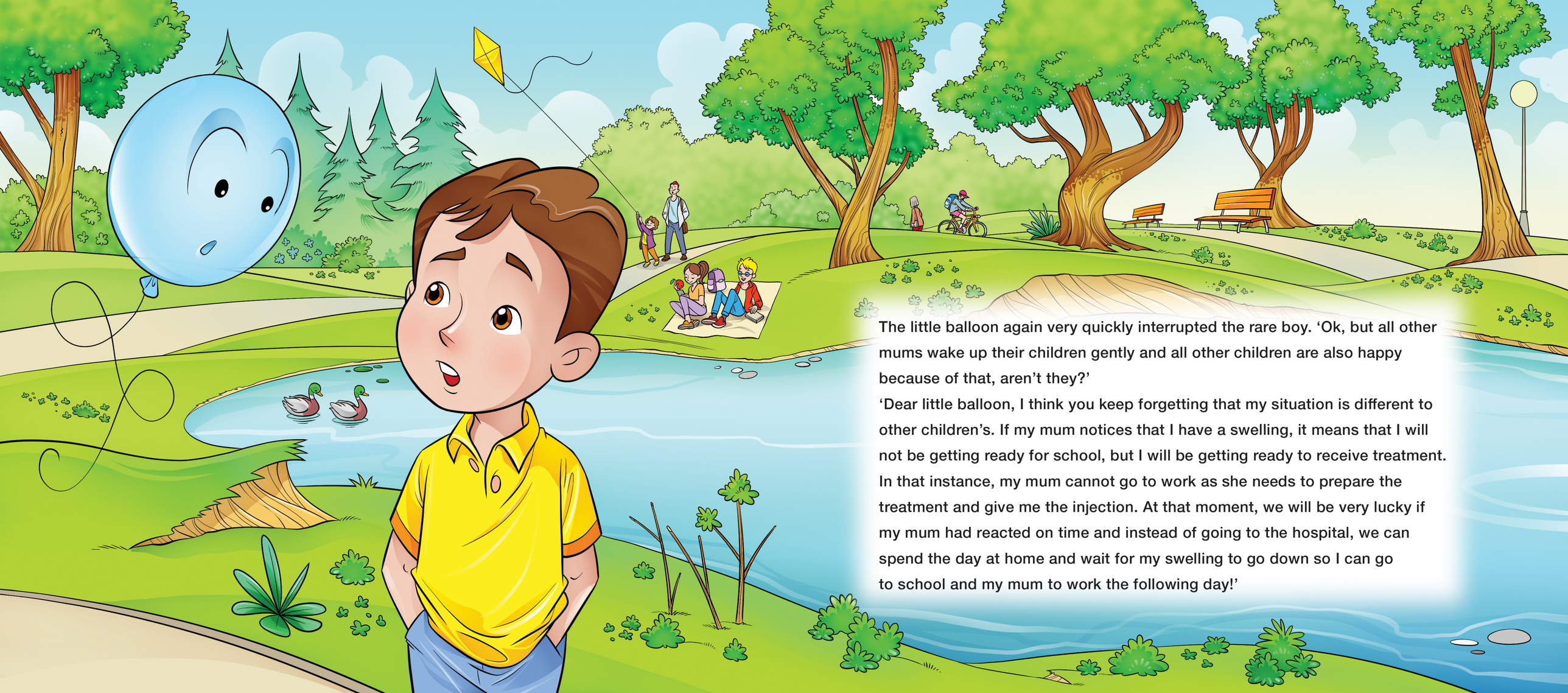
The rare boy was sitting on a bench in the park happily admiring the tiny puppy which was going round and round chasing its tail. He started laughing out so loudly that the passers-by were turning towards him wondering what it was all about. Some of them thought that maybe the rare boy was laughing at them, and therefore scolded him. The rare boy was so enchanted by the tiny puppy, that he did not even notice the passers-by and he was not even aware that he seemed ‘strange’ to everyone else around him.

The rare boy’s best friend, the talkative little balloon, said to him: ‘I am so pleased that you are giggling so sweetly, however, it is not that big a deal that this tiny puppy made you happy today, is it? There are other more important things which can make you happy. For instance, I saw how happy your school friend Marko was when he got the best grade in the Maths test, and you were not actually happy for him then. Does this mean you are a bit jealous that he is a very good pupil and that he is good at Maths?’

The rare boy unwillingly stopped looking at the tiny puppy which had now ceased playing with its tail and he looked at the little balloon in his hand. Slightly disappointed, the rare boy asked the little balloon: ‘How can you even think that I am jealous of Marko and that I am not happy for him? That is not the truth. I am always happy for my friends’ successes at school; I am even happier for them compared to being happy for myself when I have to sit down and do a test and at the same time do my best and win over my ‘worst enemy’ the stress of not getting a swelling and going to the hospital to receive treatment. Are you forgetting that there are other things which make me happy?’

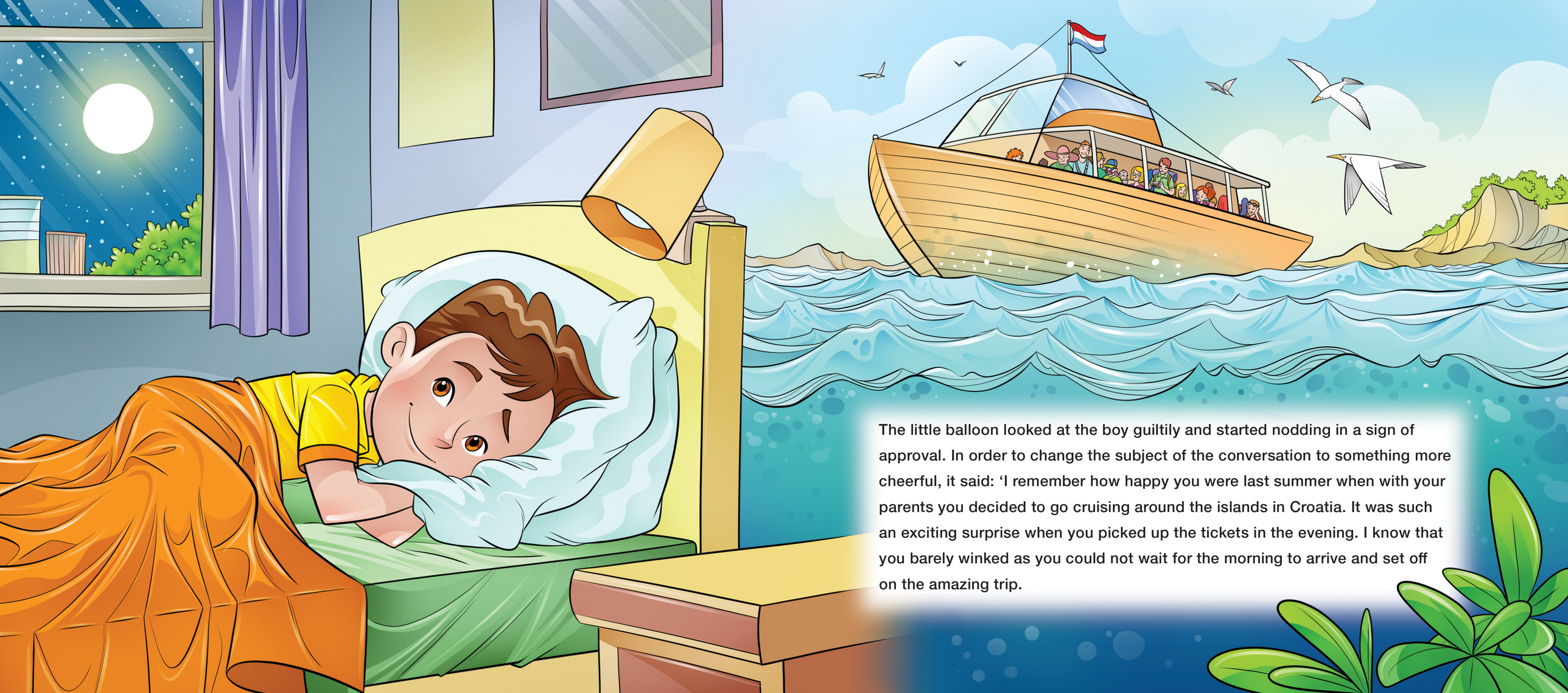
The little balloon deflated and lost a bit of its oval shape as it remembered what his best friend was trying to say: ‘I am sorry I did not mean it. …I am not trying to make you sad or offend you. However please tell me, as I would really like to know, what is it, that really makes you happy?’

The rare boy sighed heavily and started to recount one thing after the other: ‘What makes me happy is when my mum opens the curtains in the morning and wakes me up gently to go to school. She thinks that I do not notice, however, I know that her gentle touch which starts from the head, towards my eyes and my neck and then towards the length of my hands up to the little finger, is for her own reassurance to check in case I have any swellings due to my rare condition. When she kisses me and when I look at her all smiling, then I am the happiest. I know how thoroughly she checks me to make sure there have been no changes since the previous night when she kissed me goodnight.’

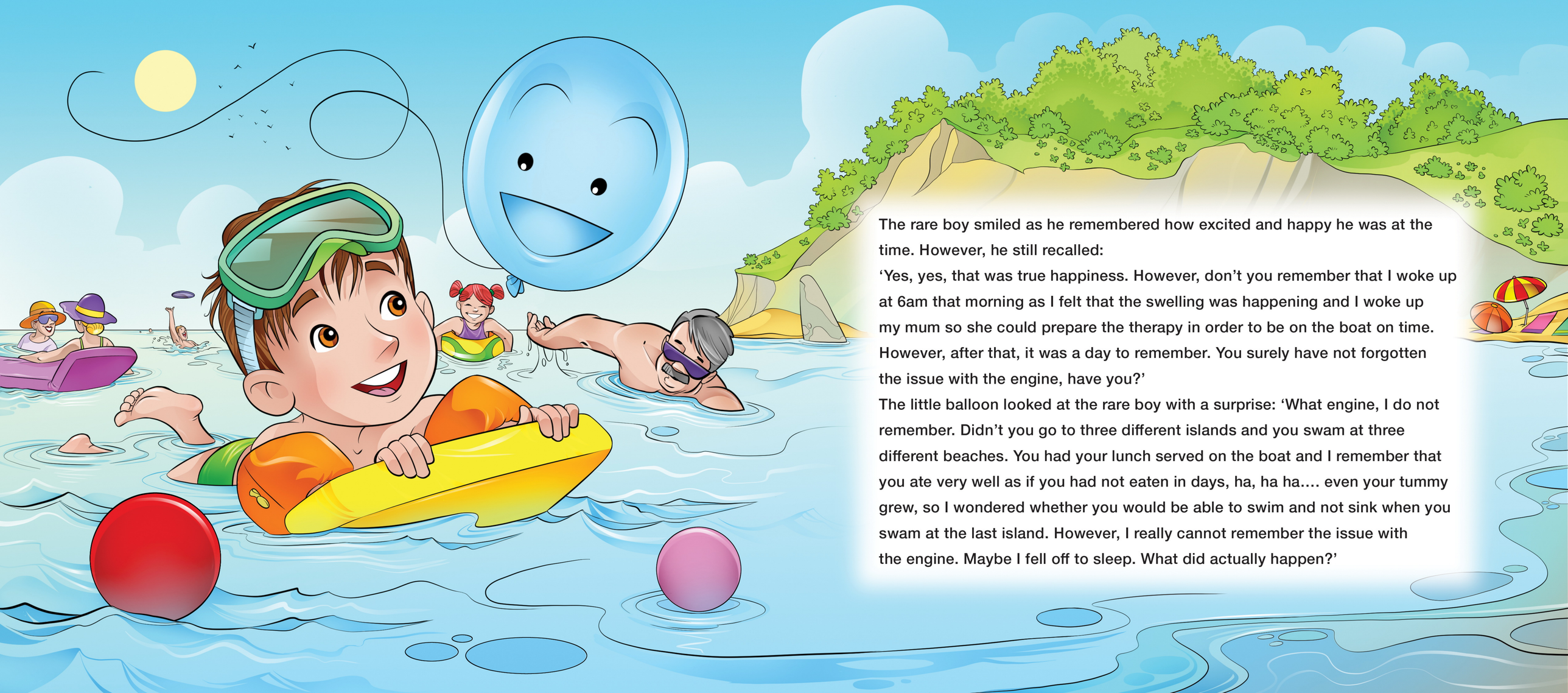


The little balloon again very quickly interrupted the rare boy. ‘Ok, but all other mums wake up their children gently and all other children are also happy because of that, aren’t they?’

‘Dear little balloon, I think you keep forgetting that my situation is different to other children’s. If my mum notices that I have a swelling, it means that I will not be getting ready for school, but I will be getting ready to receive treatment. In that instance, my mum cannot go to work as she needs to prepare the treatment and give me the injection. At that moment, we will be very lucky if my mum had reacted on time and instead of going to the hospital, we can spend the day at home and wait for my swelling to go down so I can go to school and my mum to work the following day!’



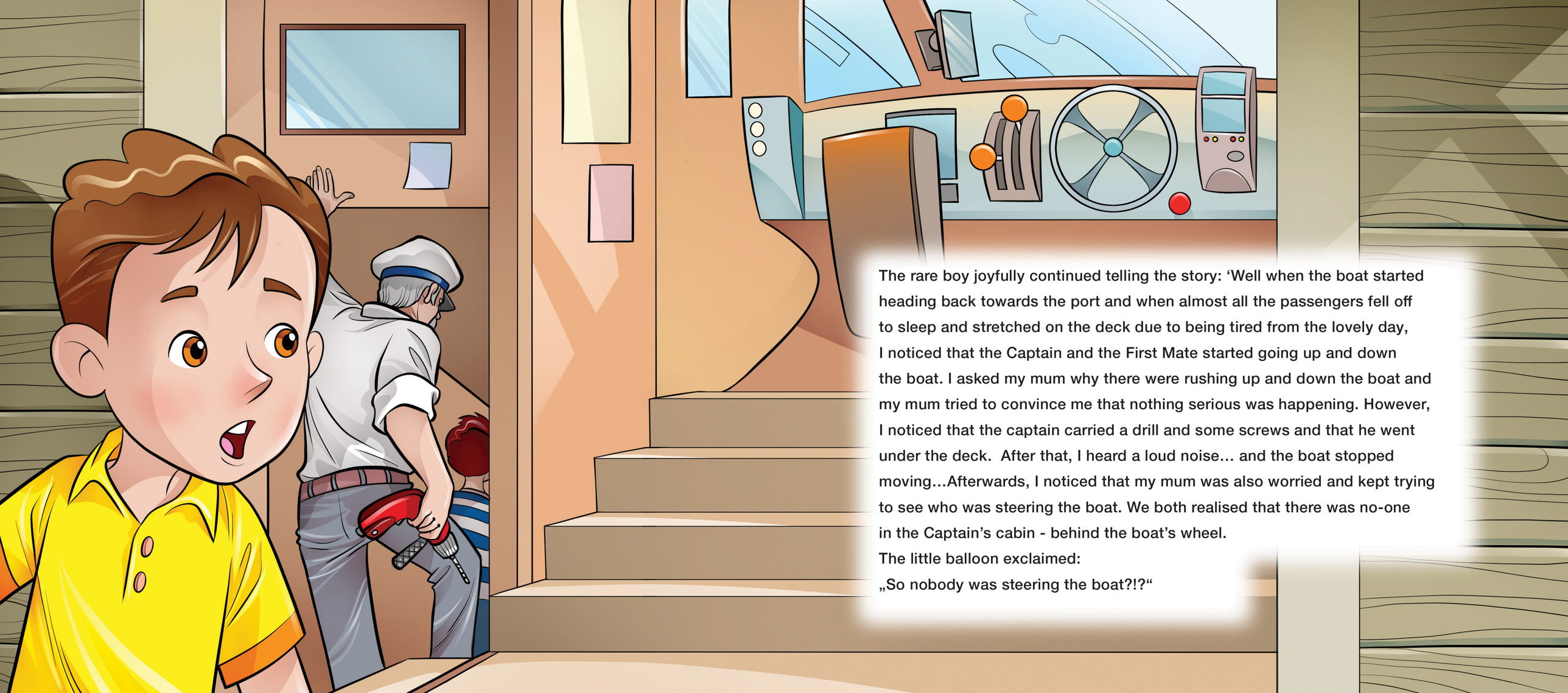
The little balloon looked at the boy guiltily and started nodding in a sign of approval. In order to change the subject of the conversation to something more cheerful, it said: ‘I remember how happy you were last summer when with your parents you decided to go cruising around the islands in Croatia. It was such an exciting surprise when you picked up the tickets in the evening. I know that you barely winked as you could not wait for the morning to arrive and set off on the amazing trip.



The rare boy smiled as he remembered how excited and happy he was at the time. However, he still recalled:

‘Yes, yes, that was true happiness. However, don’t you remember that I woke up at 6am that morning as I felt that the swelling was happening and I woke up my mum so she could prepare the therapy in order to be on the boat on time. However, after that, it was a day to remember. You surely have not forgotten the issue with the engine, have you?’

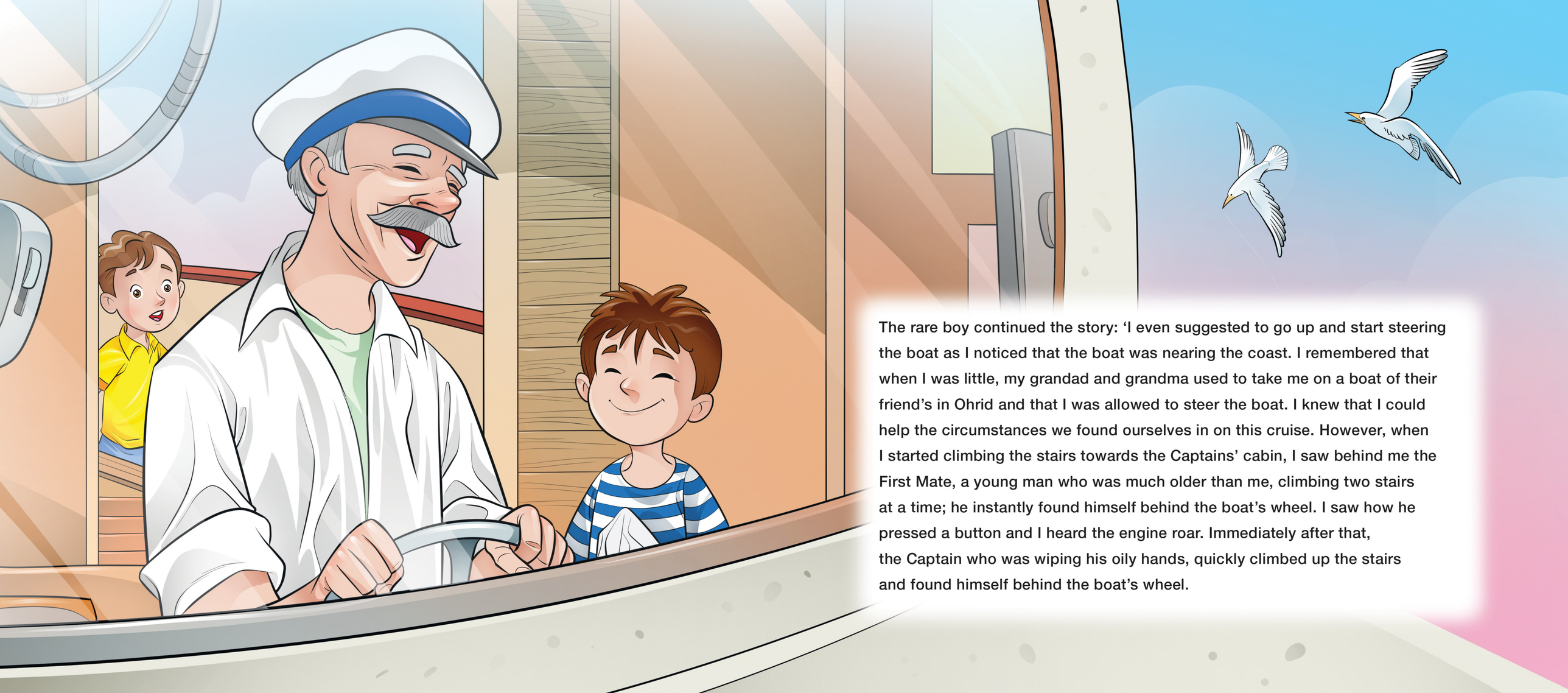
The little balloon looked at the rare boy with a surprise: ‘What engine, I do not remember. Didn’t you go to three different islands and you swam at three different beaches. You had your lunch served on the boat and I remember that you ate very well as if you had not eaten in days, ha, ha ha…. even your tummy grew, so I wondered whether you would be able to swim and not sink when you swam at the last island. However, I really cannot remember the issue with the engine. Maybe I fell off to sleep. What did actually happen?’



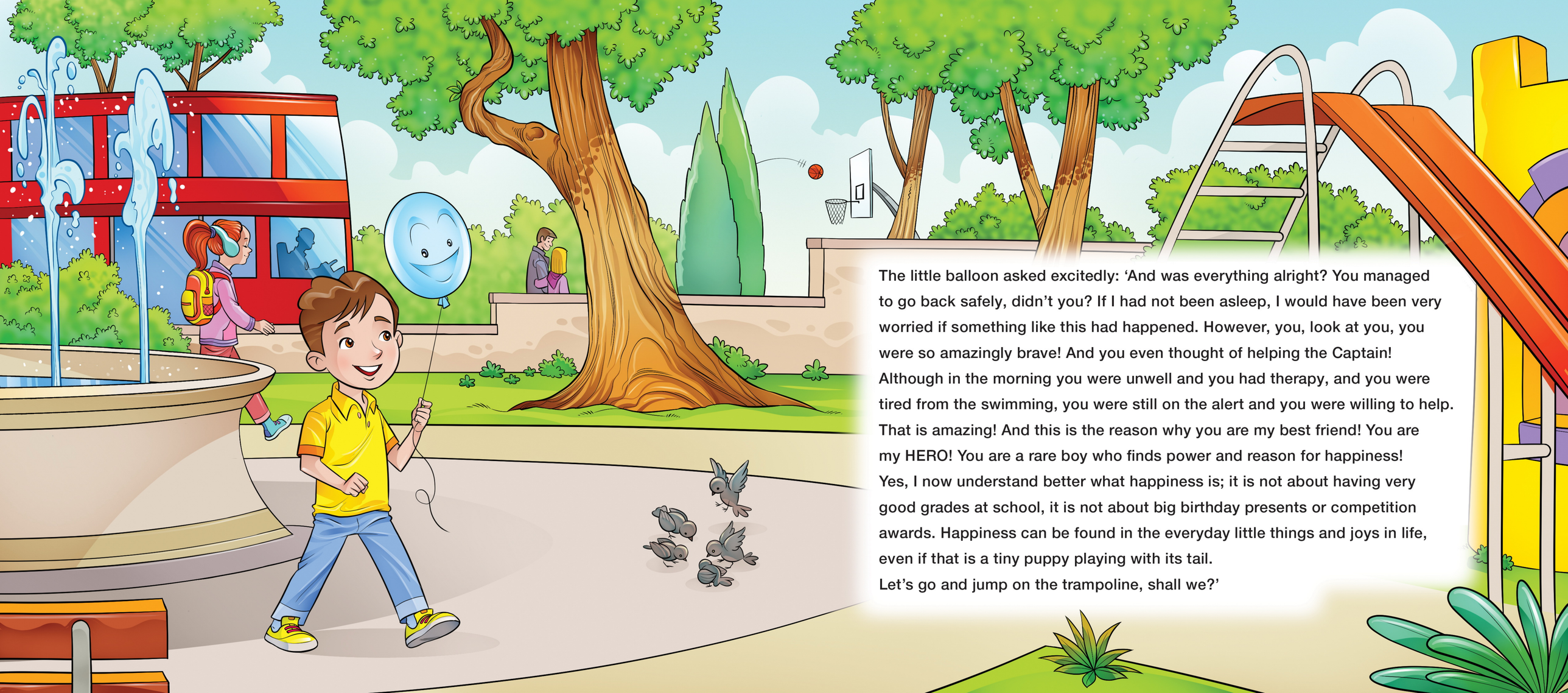
The rare boy joyfully continued telling the story: ‘Well when the boat started heading back towards the port and when almost all the passengers fell off to sleep and stretched on the deck due to being tired from the lovely day, I noticed that the Captain and the First Mate started going up and down the boat. I asked my mum why there were rushing up and down the boat and my mum tried to convince me that nothing serious was happening. However, I noticed that the captain carried a drill and some screws and that he went under the deck. After that, I heard a loud noise… and the boat stopped moving…Afterwards, I noticed that my mum was also worried and kept trying to see who was steering the boat. We both realised that there was no-one in the Captain’s cabin - behind the boat’s wheel.

The little balloon exclaimed:

„So nobody was steering the boat?!?“



The rare boy continued the story: ‘I even suggested to go up and start steering the boat as I noticed that the boat was nearing the coast. I remembered that when I was little, my grandad and grandma used to take me on a boat of their friend’s in Ohrid and that I was allowed to steer the boat. I knew that I could help the circumstances we found ourselves in on this cruise. However, when I started climbing the stairs towards the Captains’ cabin, I saw behind me the First Mate, a young man who was much older than me, climbing two stairs at a time; he instantly found himself behind the boat’s wheel. I saw how he pressed a button and I heard the engine roar. Immediately after that, the Captain who was wiping his oily hands, quickly climbed up the stairs and found himself behind the boat’s wheel.



The little balloon asked excitedly: ‘And was everything alright? You managed to go back safely, didn’t you? If I had not been asleep, I would have been very worried if something like this had happened. However, you, look at you, you were so amazingly brave! And you even thought of helping the Captain! Although in the morning you were unwell and you had therapy, and you were tired from the swimming, you were still on the alert and you were willing to help. That is amazing! And this is the reason why you are my best friend! You are my HERO! You are a rare boy who finds power and reason for happiness!
Yes, I now understand better what happiness is; it is not about having very good grades at school, it is not about big birthday presents or competition awards. Happiness can be found in the everyday little things and joys in life, even if that is a tiny puppy playing with its tail.
Let’s go and jump on the trampoline, shall we?’

The rare boy accepted the invitation ecstatically and happily started jumping on the trampoline. He jumped so high that he imagined he could be a pilot one day and soar really, really high. And why not? The rare boy will never allow his rare condition to prevent him from fulfilling any of his plans and dreams, never ever!