



Meerkat Mbali's Bug Bash

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Mbali loves her home.
She loves her family.
Yet... there is one thing
she cannot agree with...



The food her family ate!
Bugs for breakfast.
Bugs for lunch.
Bugs for dinner.
Bugs. Bugs. Bugs.
BUGS!

Mbali knew in her heart
that the bugs had
feelings too.



The next morning, it was
Mbali's birthday!

"Good morning
sweetheart and happy
birthday!"

Mbali's mom greeted
her as the morning sun
danced through her open
curtains.

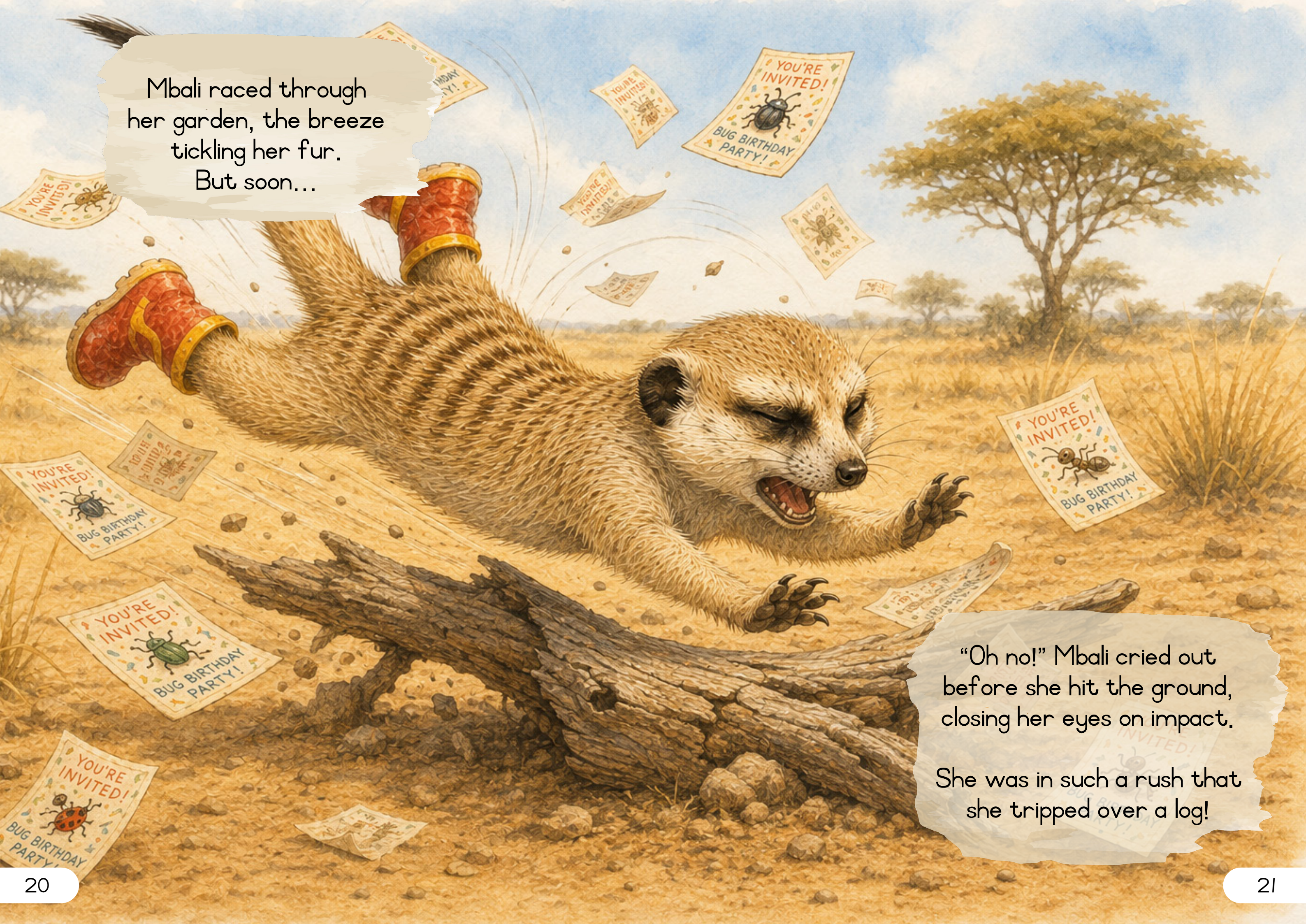




"Go on, make a wish," Mother smiled.
"It's your special day."
"Hmm... I wish... I wish..."
Mbali spent a long while thinking of
the best birthday wish ever.
Finally, she decided...
A party with all the bugs in the
garden!

Mbali spent the whole morning making the prettiest invitations. When she finished the last one, she slipped on her sturdy yellow boots to protect her paws in the tall grass. Now she was ready to begin her mission: to make friends with every bug in the garden.





Mbali raced through
her garden, the breeze
tickling her fur.
But soon...

“Oh no!” Mbali cried out
before she hit the ground,
closing her eyes on impact.
She was in such a rush that
she tripped over a log!



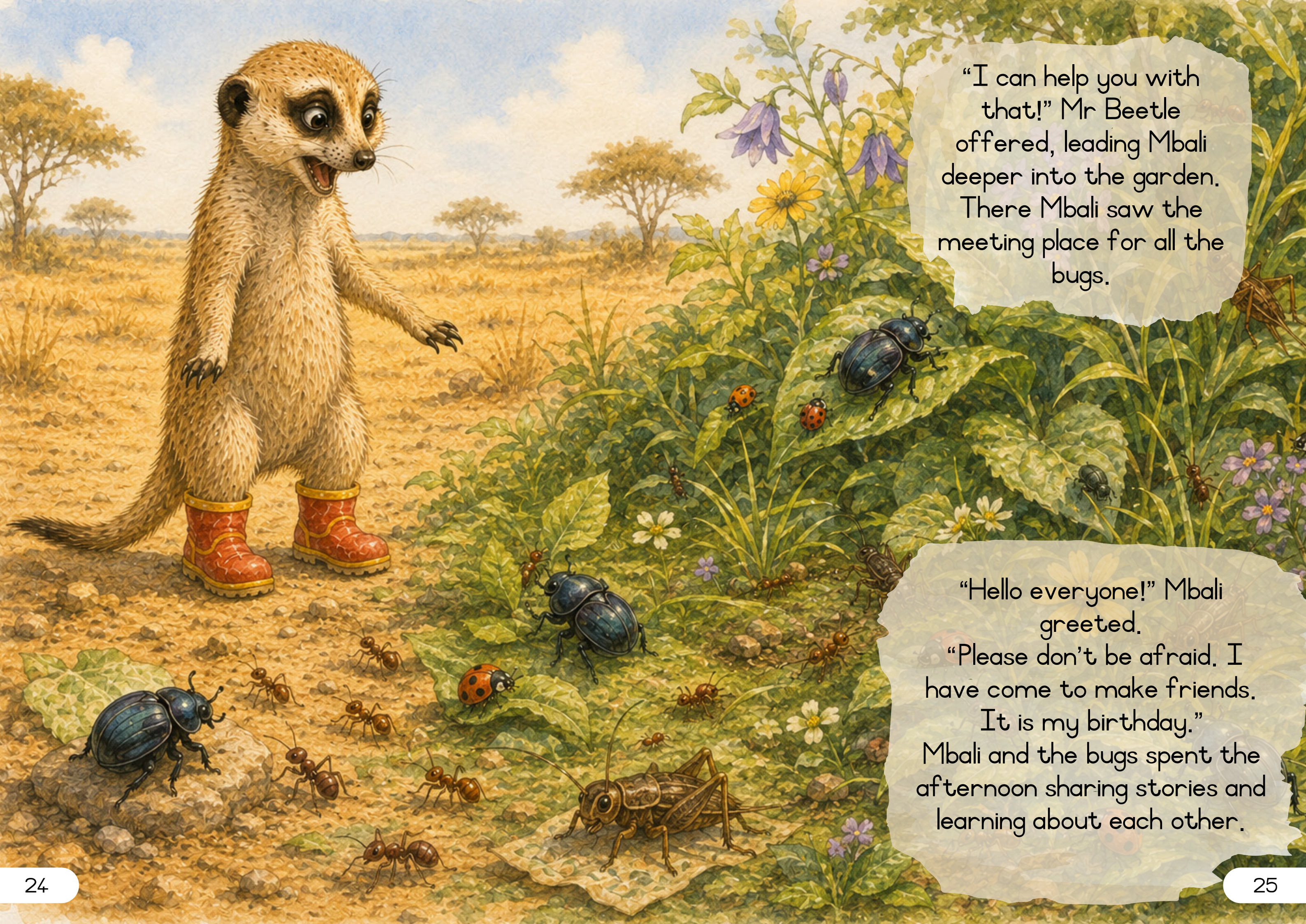
Suddenly, when Mbali opened her eyes, she spotted the beetle she had set free just the other day.

"Hi, Meerkat," said Mr Beetle.

"Are these invitations for a party? Please, can I come too?"

"Sure!" Mbali said with glee.

"I want to invite all the bugs in the garden."



“I can help you with that!” Mr Beetle offered, leading Mbali deeper into the garden. There Mbali saw the meeting place for all the bugs.

“Hello everyone!” Mbali greeted.

“Please don’t be afraid. I have come to make friends. It is my birthday.” Mbali and the bugs spent the afternoon sharing stories and learning about each other.

Mbali didn't notice that
not all bugs are the
same.

Some bugs help gardens
grow, while others can
be dangerous.

Nearby, a small tick
was crawling closer and
closer...





So close that, while the buzz of the party was in full swing, the tiny tick crept into Mbali's fur. Ticks like warm, hidden places. The tick found a soft spot behind Mbali's ear and bit her.

Mbali did not even feel the tick biting. Ticks have special saliva that allows them to numb the skin and eat, letting them stay hidden for a long time. "Goodbye, friends," Mbali said. "I need to go home now. I don't want my mommy to worry."

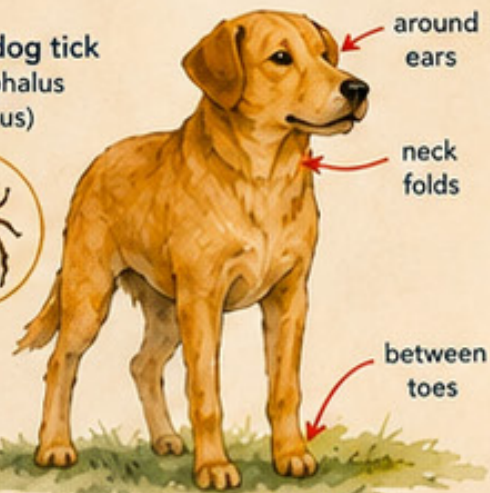


Ticks on Animals

Ticks are small arachnids.
They have 8 legs and live on many animals.

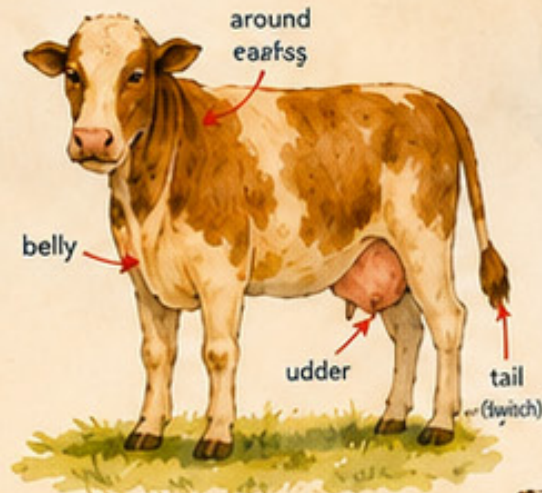
DOG

Brown dog tick
(*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*)



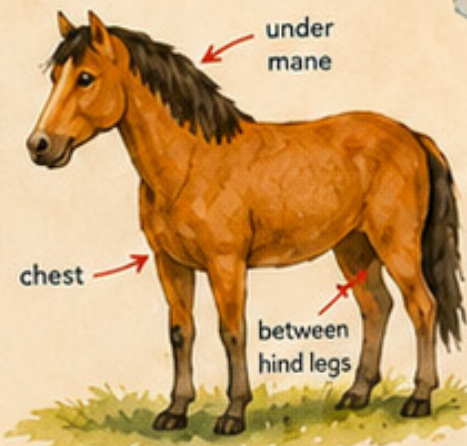
COW

Blue tick
(*Rhipicephalus microplus*)



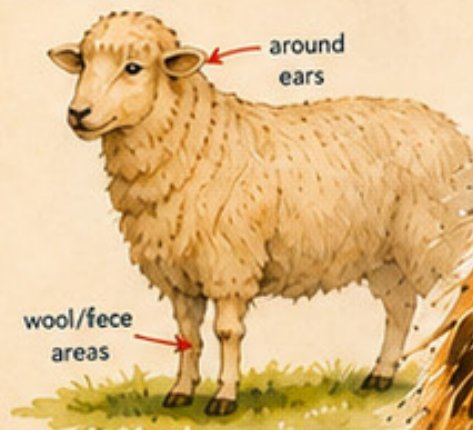
HORSE

Ticks can attach
under the mane
or on the front
between front
hind legs



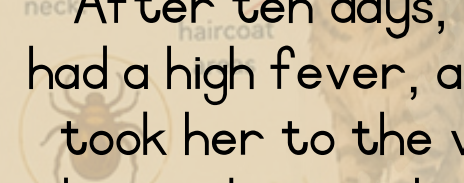
SHEEP

Ticks can attach
around the ears
and on
one of the
beoce.



CAT

Ticks are often
found on the
head and
neck



WILD ANTELOPE

Ticks can attach
around the ears
and on the
groin area.



After ten days, Mbali started to feel unwell. She had a high fever, and her body felt sore. Her mother took her to the veterinarian, a special doctor who knows how to help animals. There, they found out that Mbali had Tick Bite Fever, an illness caused by pathogens—teeny tiny germs that the tick had been carrying. The veterinarian used special tweezers to pull the tick straight out without twisting it. Mbali received medicine to fight the germs, and soon she began to heal.



Once Mbali was well again,
Mommy hugged her close.
She was so happy that Mbali was
healthy again.

Mommy had something very
important to share.

“The one behind this was a tick,”
her mother explained.

“Ticks attach to both animals and
people and feed on blood.”

“They are very small, but they
can make you very sick.”

“If you ever notice a tick
on yourself or someone
else, always tell a trusted
adult,” Mommy said.

“The golden rule is this: Be
quick like lightning to spot
the ticks, and steady like a
rock when they are being
removed.”



From that day on, Mbali always remembered to be careful while playing outside with her bug friends. She never forgot the golden rule.

The End