

# Michael and the Garden Secret



**Parent Notes:** In this story, Dollop has trouble waiting for her garden to grow. Learning patience is difficult for most young children. In addition to explaining how seeds and gardens grow, you can use this story to talk about ways we learn to be patient in waiting for things to happen.

When Michael walked up to the Rhinos' front door, he heard a loud bumping noise. Around the side of the house ran Ruggles, pushing a big red wheelbarrow!

"All aboard the Garden Express!" he shouted. "Climb in, Michael!"

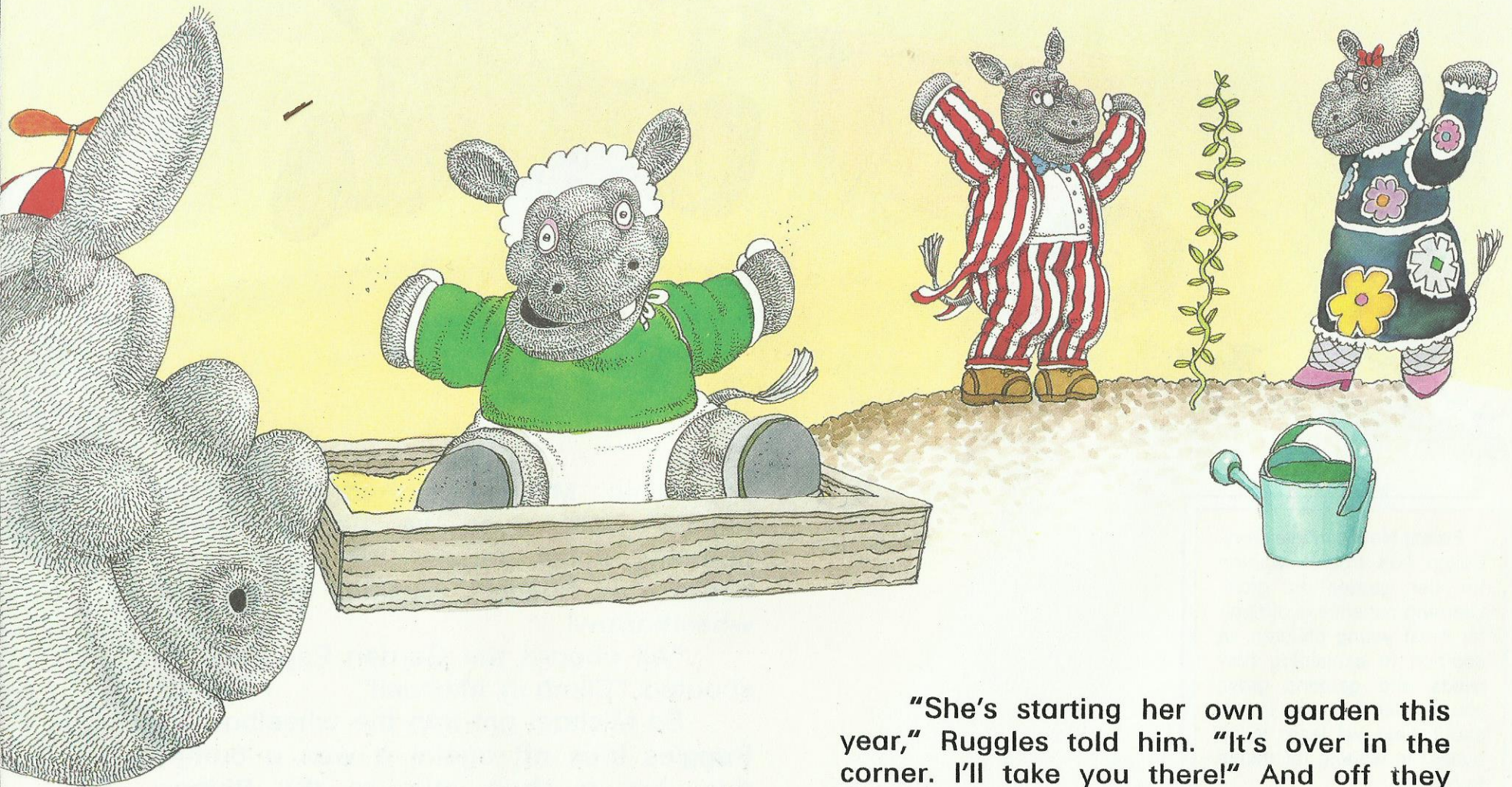
So Michael got into the wheelbarrow. Ruggles took off again! It was a bumpy ride, but a short one, to the Rhinos' backyard garden.

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"Hello, Michael!" everybody called. Mama and Papa Rhino were watering their new rosebushes. Pudge was gardening, too. He was planting little rocks in his sandbox!

"Where's Dollop?" Michael asked Ruggles.



"She's starting her own garden this year," Ruggles told him. "It's over in the corner. I'll take you there!" And off they bumped again.



In the corner of the yard was a little square of ground with string around it. And in the center of the square sat Dollop!

"Come look at my garden, Michael!" Dollop called.



"What are you going to plant, Dollop?" Michael asked.

"These!" Dollop said. She held up some packets of seeds. "Aren't they great? This will be the most beautiful flower garden in the world!"

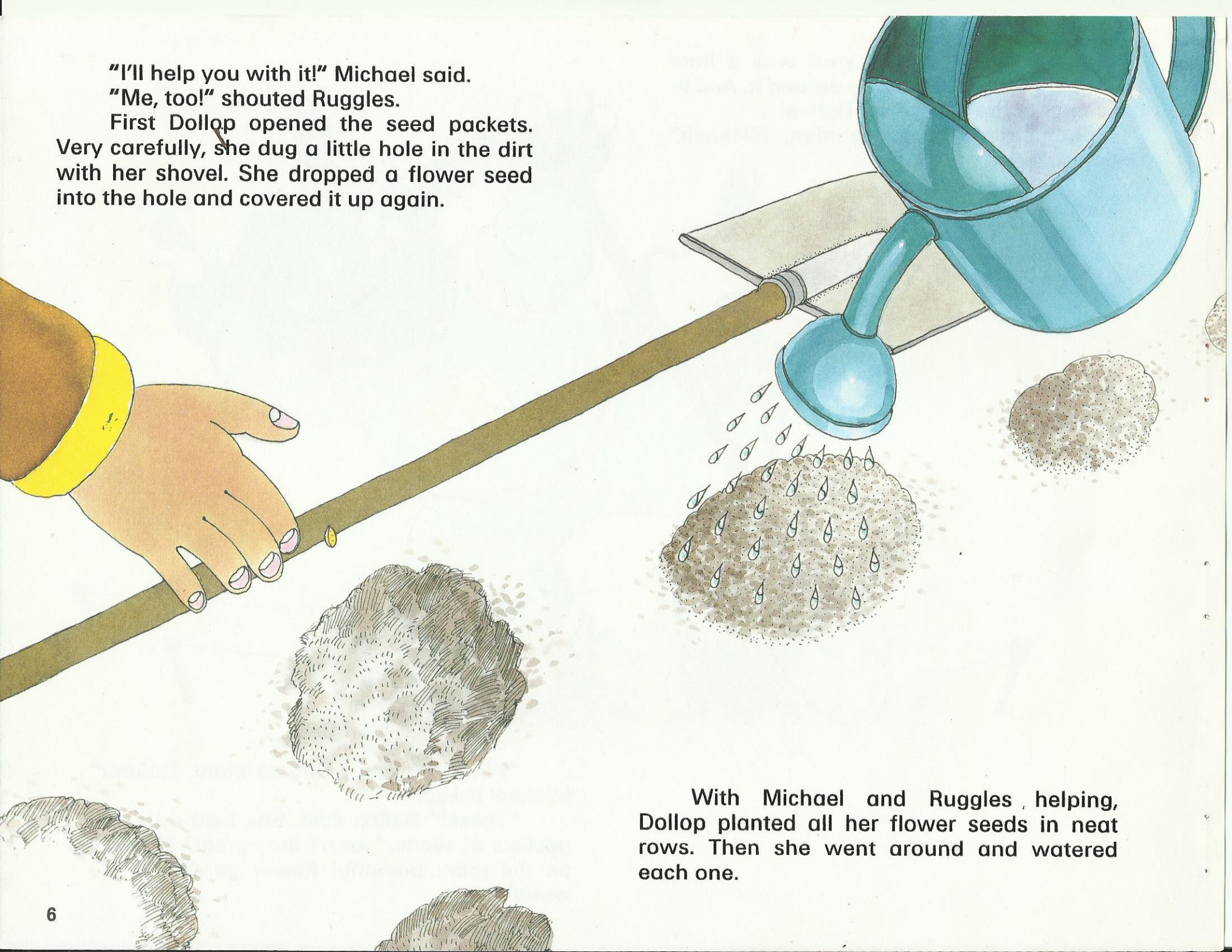
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"I'll help you with it!" Michael said.

"Me, too!" shouted Ruggles.

First Dollop opened the seed packets. Very carefully, she dug a little hole in the dirt with her shovel. She dropped a flower seed into the hole and covered it up again.

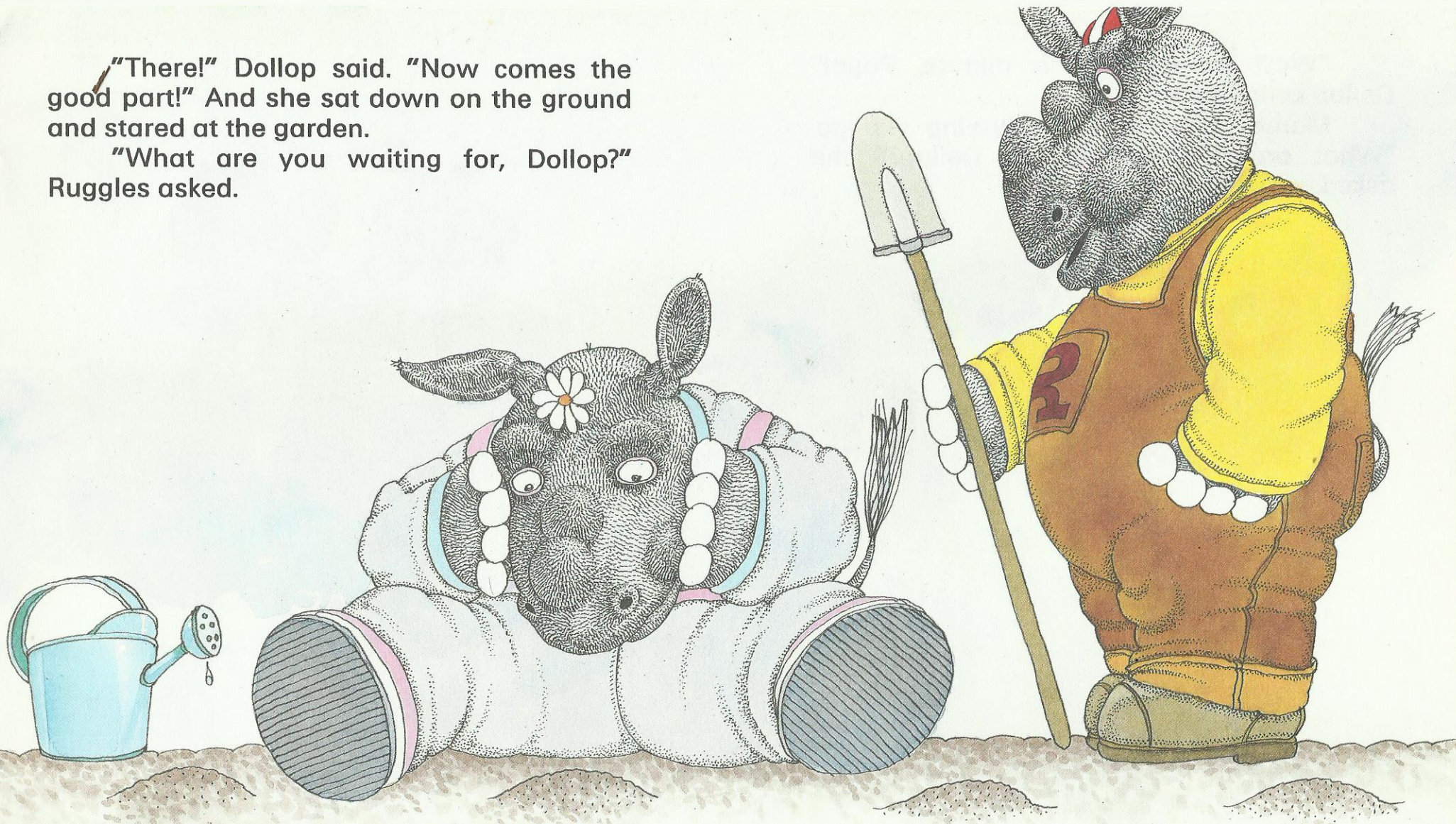


With Michael and Ruggles helping, Dollop planted all her flower seeds in neat rows. Then she went around and watered each one.



"There!" Dollop said. "Now comes the good part!" And she sat down on the ground and stared at the garden.

"What are you waiting for, Dollop?" Ruggles asked.



"You'll see!" Dollop said. So they all sat down to wait. For a long time they just sat there, looking at Dollop's garden.

"Come on, everyone!" called Papa Rhino. "Time to go inside and wash up! The next project for today is a snack!"



"We'll be there in a minute, Papa!"  
Dollop called back.

Mama came over, carrying Pudge.  
"What are you waiting for, Dollop?" she  
asked.



"I want to bring some of my new flowers  
inside," Dollop said. "They should be  
blooming any minute now!"

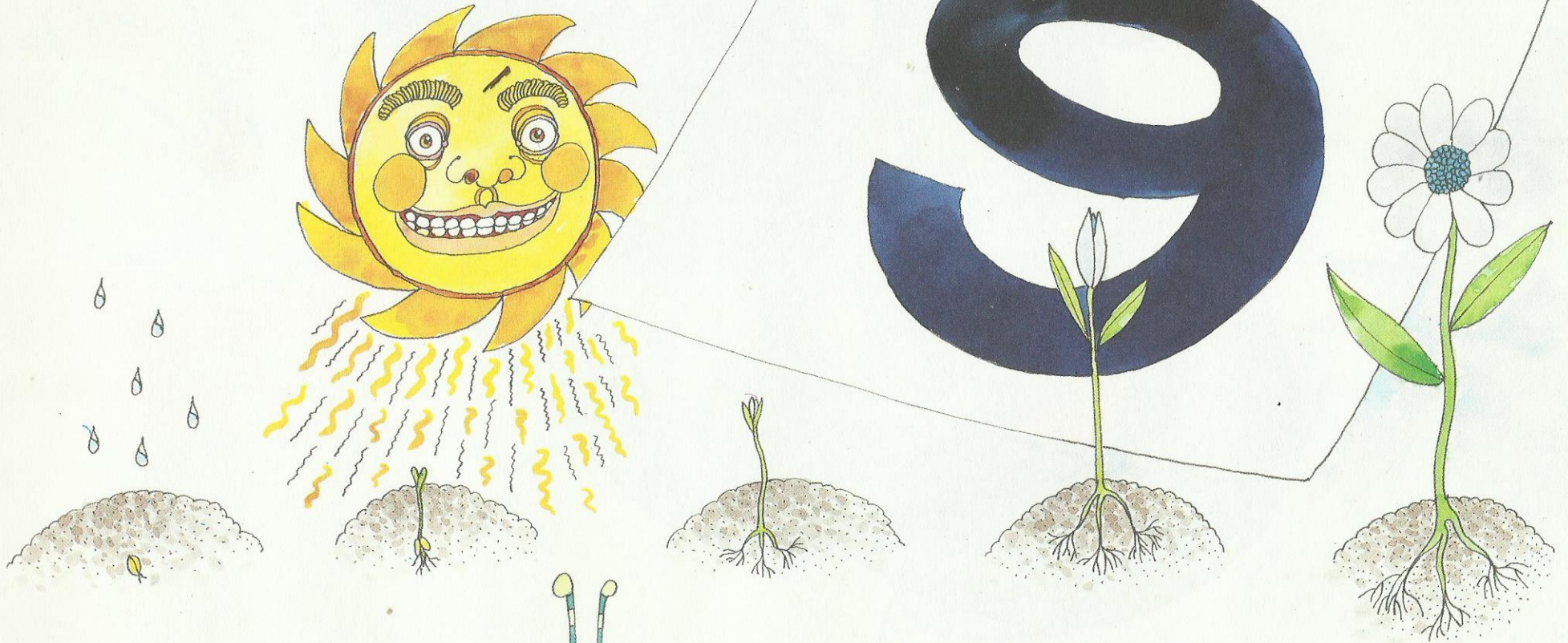
"Oh, Dollop," Mama said. "You can't sit  
here and wait that long."

"But I watered them and everything!"  
Dollop said. "They should be growing like  
crazy!"



"They'll grow, all right," said Mama. "But it will take weeks and weeks for them to become flowers."

"WEEKS?" shouted Dollop. "That's not fair! I can't wait that long! I wanted to take some to school on Monday!"



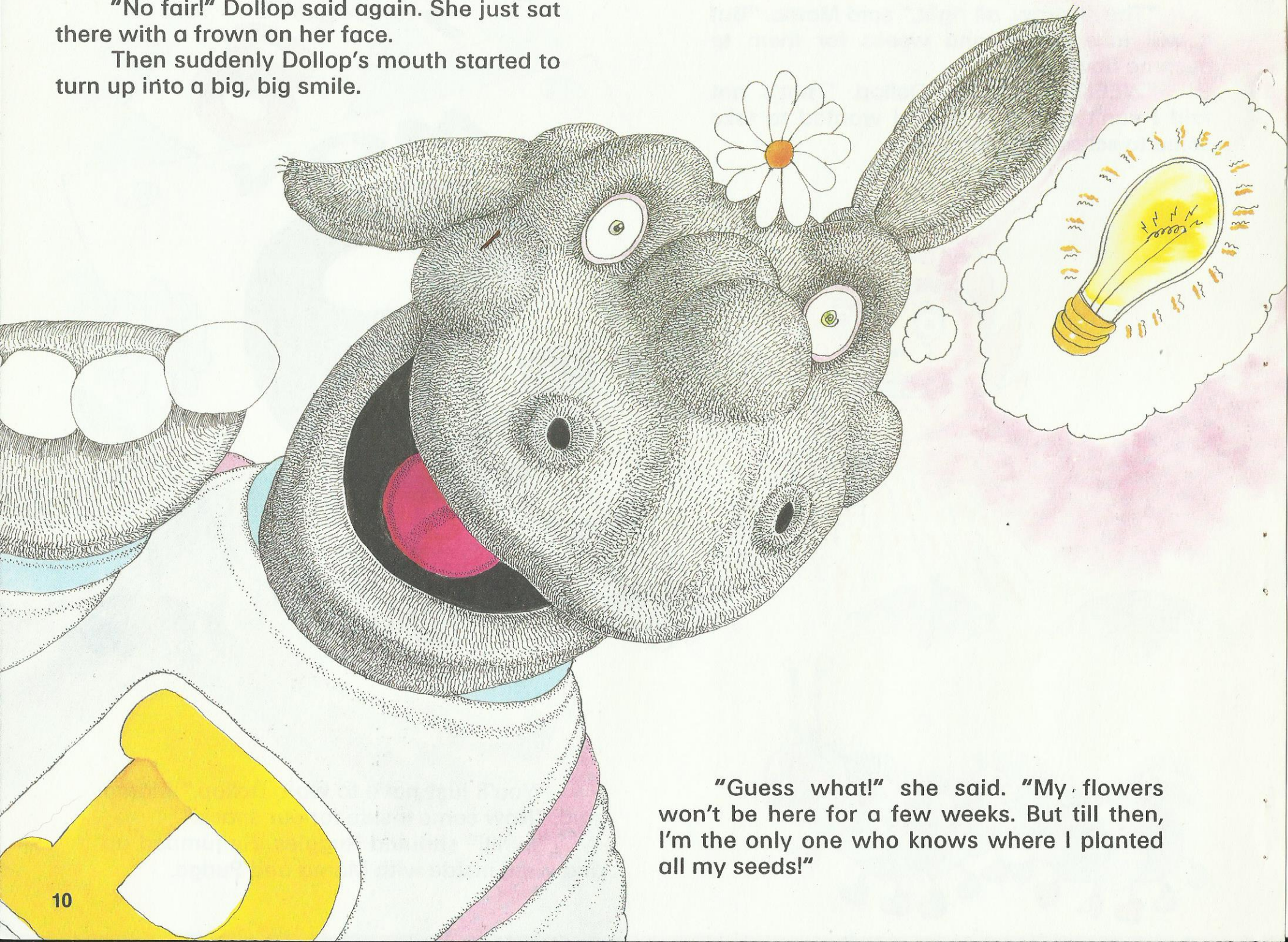
"You'll just have to wait, Dollop," Mama said. "Now come inside for our snack."

"I will!" shouted Ruggles. He jumped up and went inside with Mama and Pudge.



"No fair!" Dollop said again. She just sat there with a frown on her face.

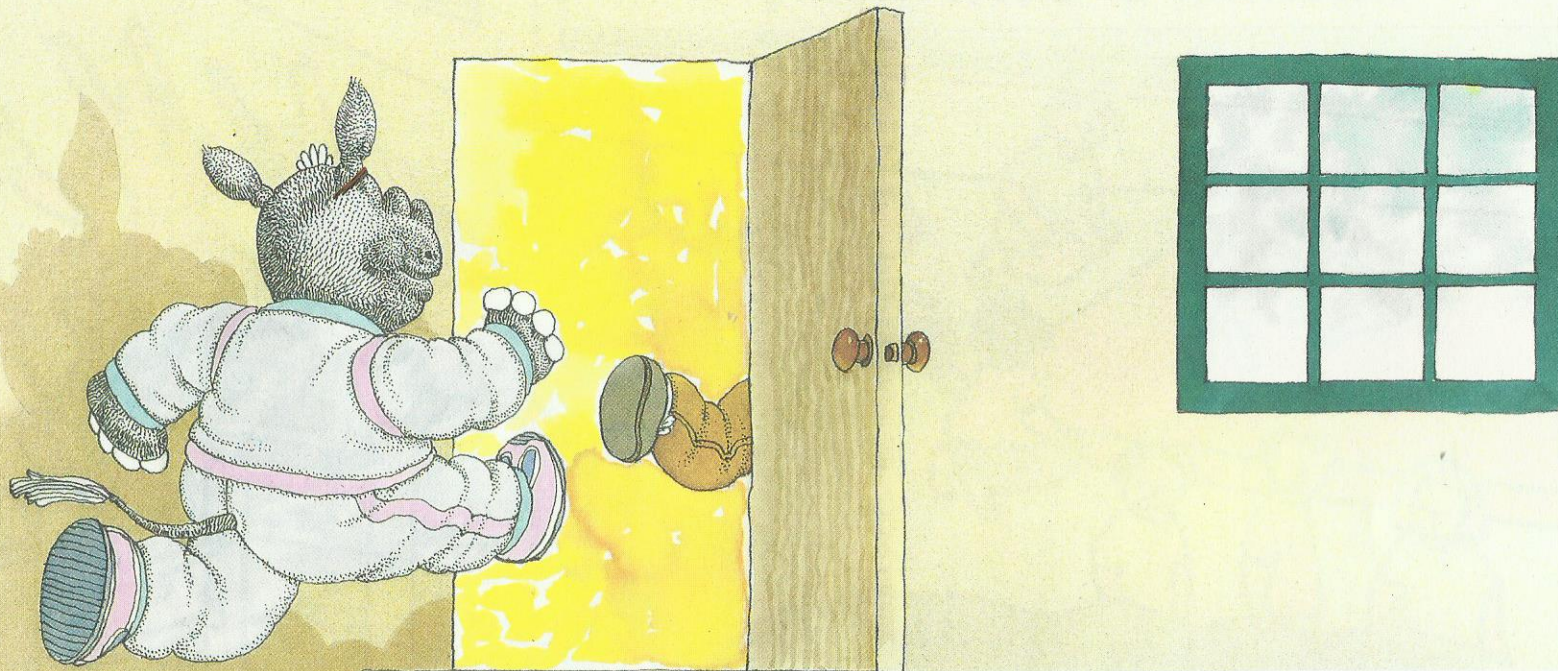
Then suddenly Dollop's mouth started to turn up into a big, big smile.



"Guess what!" she said. "My flowers won't be here for a few weeks. But till then, I'm the only one who knows where I planted all my seeds!"



"That's right!" said Michael. "You won't have flowers, but you'll have. . ."



"SECRETS!" said Dollop. "All my flowers right now are SECRETS!"

Dollop jumped up. Then she said, "Michael, promise not to tell ANYBODY else about the secrets in my garden!"

"Promise!" said Michael. And they both laughed and ran inside. □

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