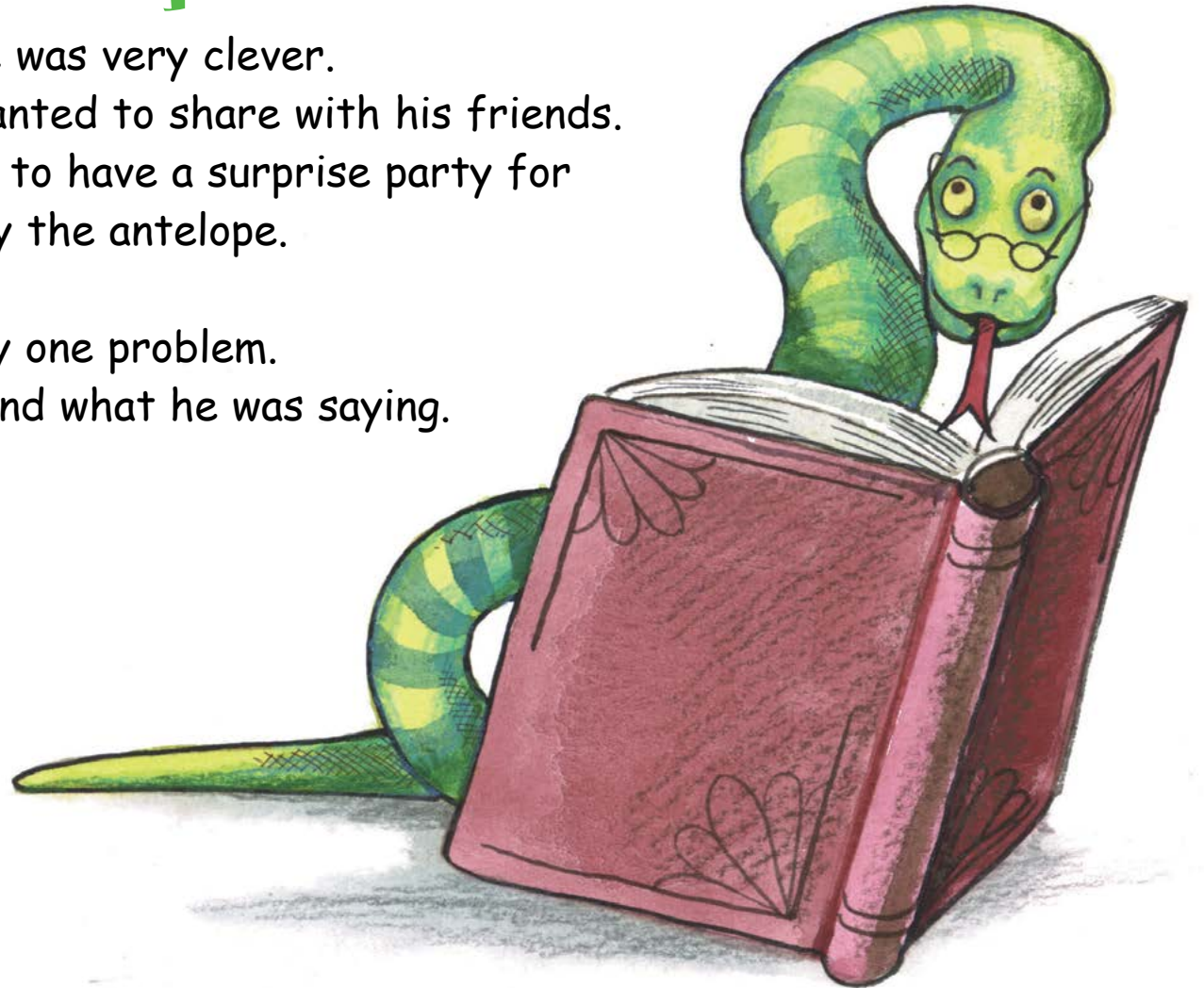


Steven, The Snake Who Couldn't Speak

Steven the snake was very clever.
He had lots of good ideas he wanted to share with his friends.
One day, he had a great idea to have a surprise party for
his friend Andy the antelope.

There was only one problem.
Nobody could understand what he was saying.



"SssssssAndyssssssssssssss," said Steven. "Ssurprisessssssss sspartyssss sss sssssss ssss
sssss!". He was really excited.



"What?" "Eh?" "Pardon?" "Excuse me?" said Steven's friends.
 "Letssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss havesssssssssssss ssssssssss ssssssssssss ssssssssssAndy
 ssssssssss" he tried again. He was getting tired now, because he had to think a lot when
 he was trying to speak.



"Oh, I can't understand a word Steven is saying. Let's just go," said Carole the crocodile, who was quite an impatient person. And because the other animals couldn't really think what else to do, they went with Carole.

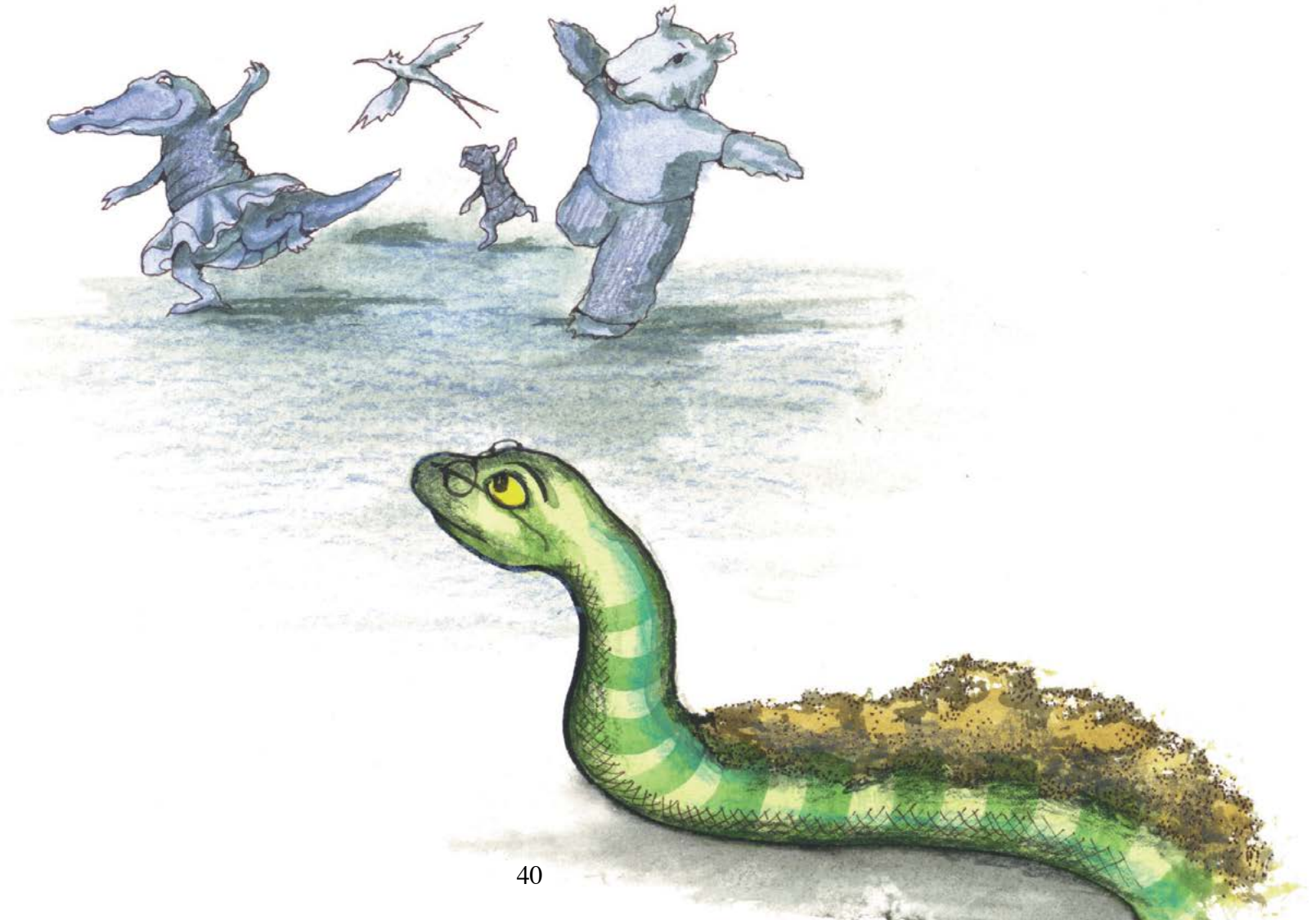
"Why didn't they try harder to understand me?" thought Steven. "I tried so hard to speak, and they didn't try hard to listen. Now I'm really tired."



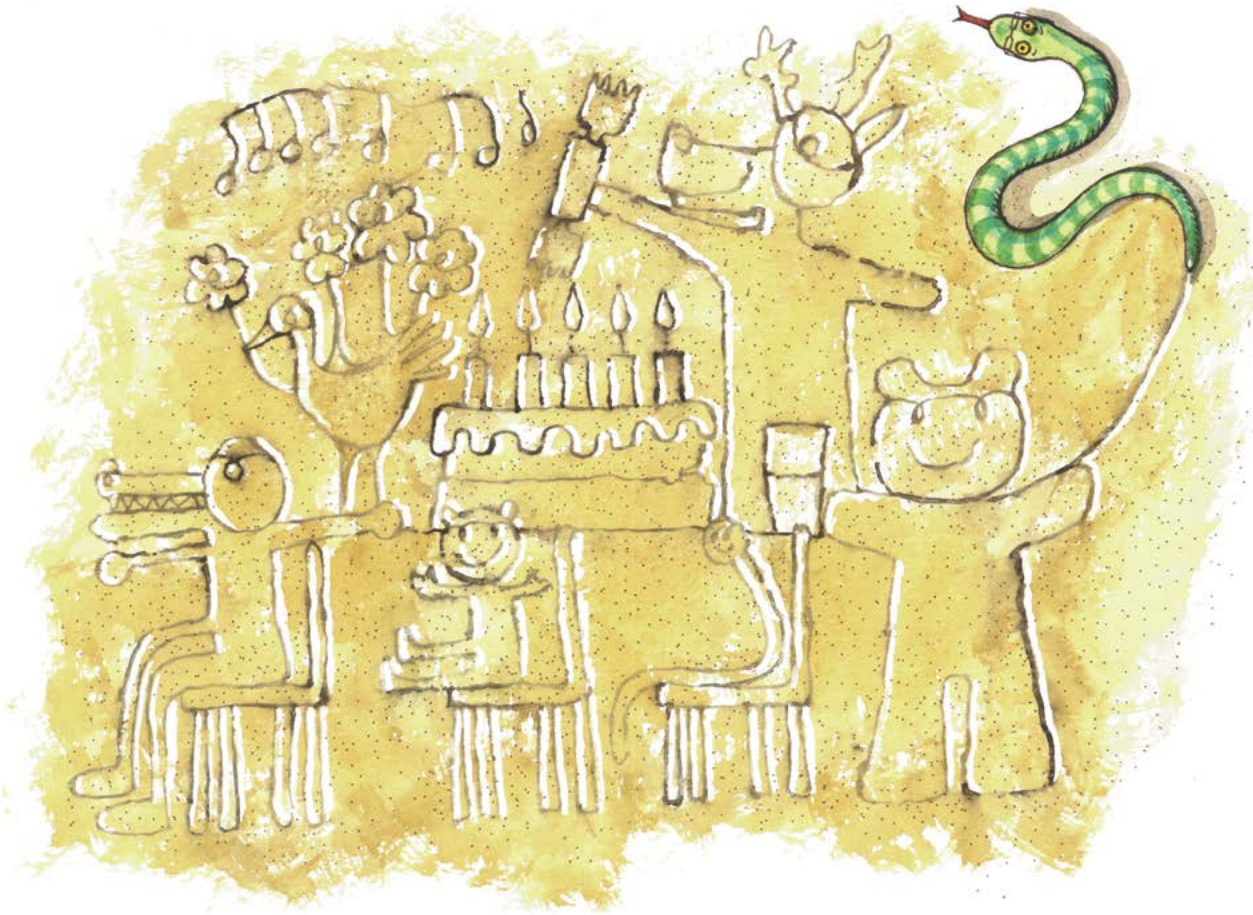
He flopped over into a sandy pit and rolled about a bit. His long, slender body made beautiful shapes in the sand. Steven had another great idea... he could show the animals what he wanted to say instead of saying it!

Slowly (because he was tired), Steven balanced some of the sand on his long, slender back and moved to where Carole and the other animals were playing.

His energy was coming back now, and he slithered right up to them and quickly arranged the sand on the ground so that he could draw in it.



As Steven began to move around on the sand, Harry the hummingbird turned around.
"Gosh, what a beautiful drawing you've made, Steven," he said. "It looks like ...



"... a birthday party for Andy," joined in the other animals, "what a fantastic idea!"
Because Steven's drawing was so good, the other animals saw exactly what decorations,
food, songs, and party games they needed to prepare.

Everyone worked feverishly, until finally, the party was prepared.



"Does everything seem okay to you, Steven?" asked Carole the crocodile. Steven drew a big happy face in the sand, and everybody knew it was time to fetch Andy for the best surprise party the jungle ever had!

Questions for after the story

- If you couldn't understand what Steven was saying to you, what should you do? (say kindly, excuse me, I didn't understand what you said, and be patient, listen carefully)
- Can you think of any signs you can make with your hands that people would understand?
- What was Steven very good at doing and why?
- What did the other animals do when they understood Steven's great idea?