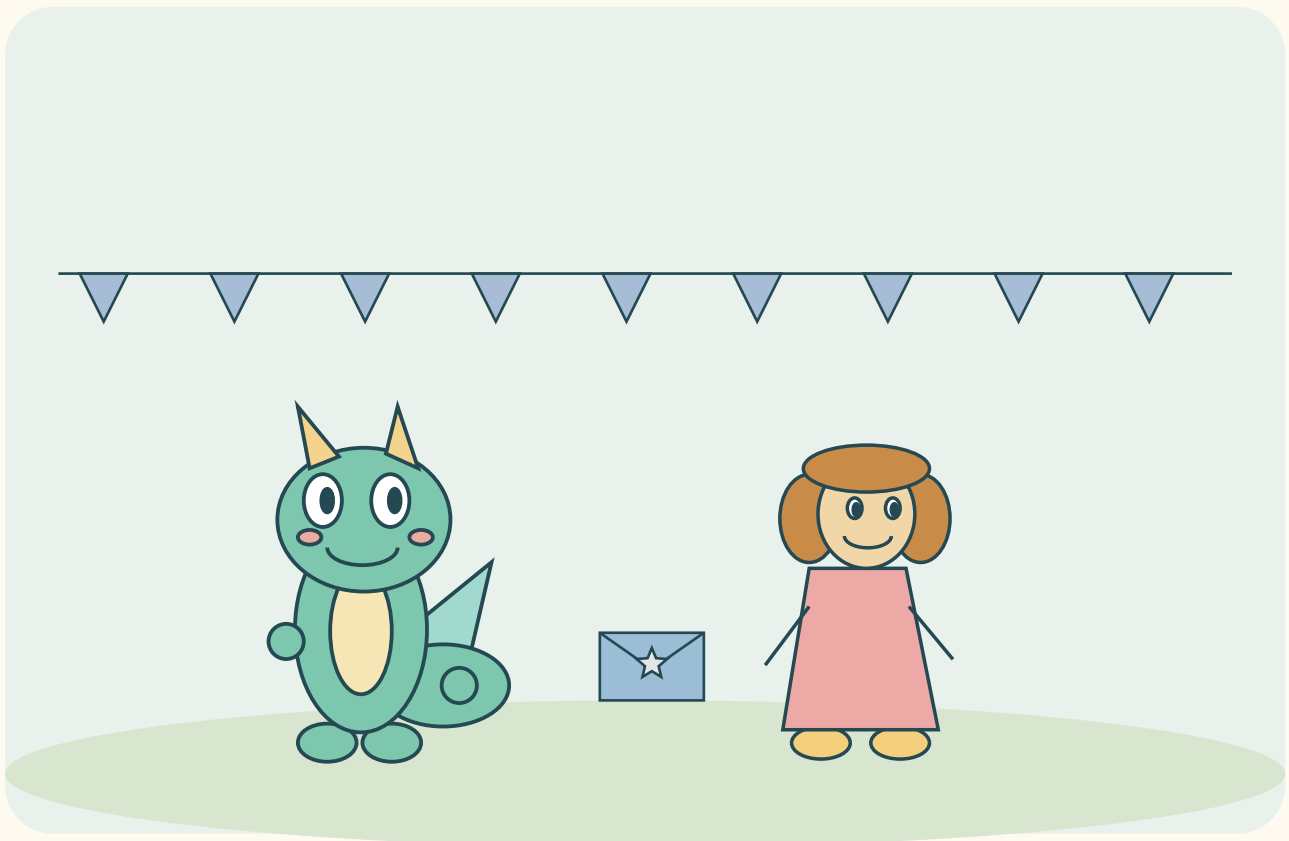


FINN & FRIENDS

The Dragon Who Wasn't Invited

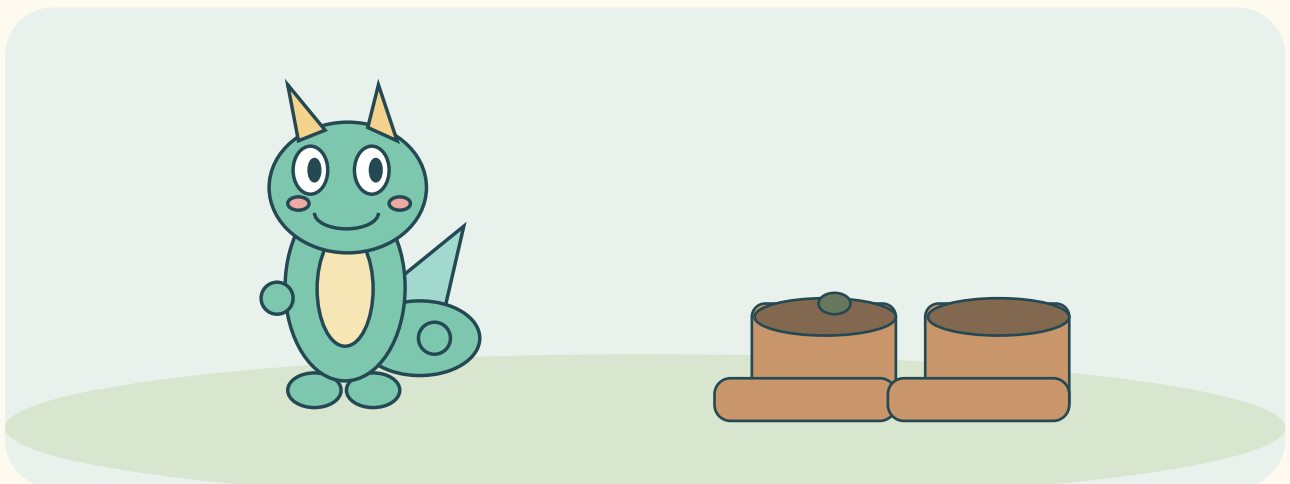


A blue envelope. A worried dragon.
A welcome worth asking about.

LITTLE STORY HARBOR

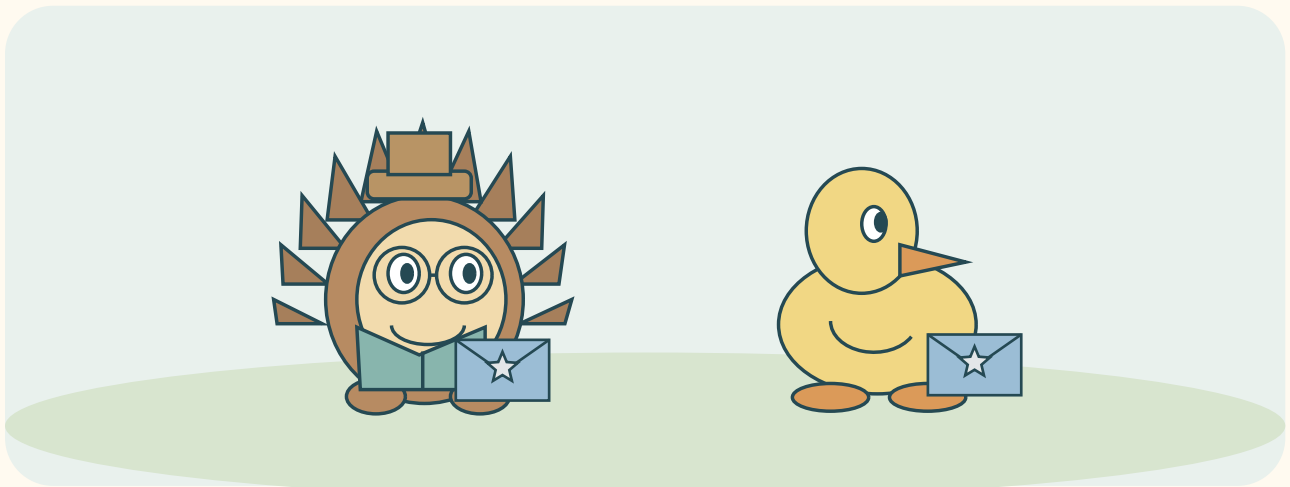
Ages 6–9 • Illustrated read-aloud edition

Finn noticed the invitations on Tuesday.
Pip had one.
Mabel had one.
Even Mr. Moss had one.
They were little blue envelopes with silver stars.
Finn liked silver stars.
He liked blue envelopes, too.
But he hadn't received one.
At first, he wasn't worried.
Perhaps the postman was late.
Perhaps his invitation had fallen behind the door.
Perhaps it had flown into a tree.
Finn checked behind the door.
Nothing.
He checked the trees.
Nothing.
He even checked inside his boots.



There was a beetle.

But no invitation.



On Wednesday, he saw Mabel and Pip whispering beside the bakery.

"Saturday at two," said Pip.

"Don't forget!"

"I never forget anything!" said Mabel.

Pip looked at her.

Mabel thought for a moment.

"Well. Hardly anything."

They spotted Finn.

"Hello!" called Mabel.

"Hello," said Finn.

She quickly hid her envelope.

Finn's stomach sank.

Perhaps they didn't want him to know, Finn thought.

On Thursday, Lily came over.

"Are you coming to the meadow on Saturday?" she asked.

Finn looked down.

"I don't think so."

"Oh?"

"I might be busy."

"Doing what?"

Finn looked around desperately.

"Cleaning."

"Cleaning what?"

"My... chimney."

Lily looked at his house.

"Finn, you don't have a chimney."

"I know," said Finn miserably. "That's why it's going to take so long."

Lily stared at him.

"Are you feeling all right?"

"Perfectly."

But he wasn't.

On Friday, he tried not to think about the party.

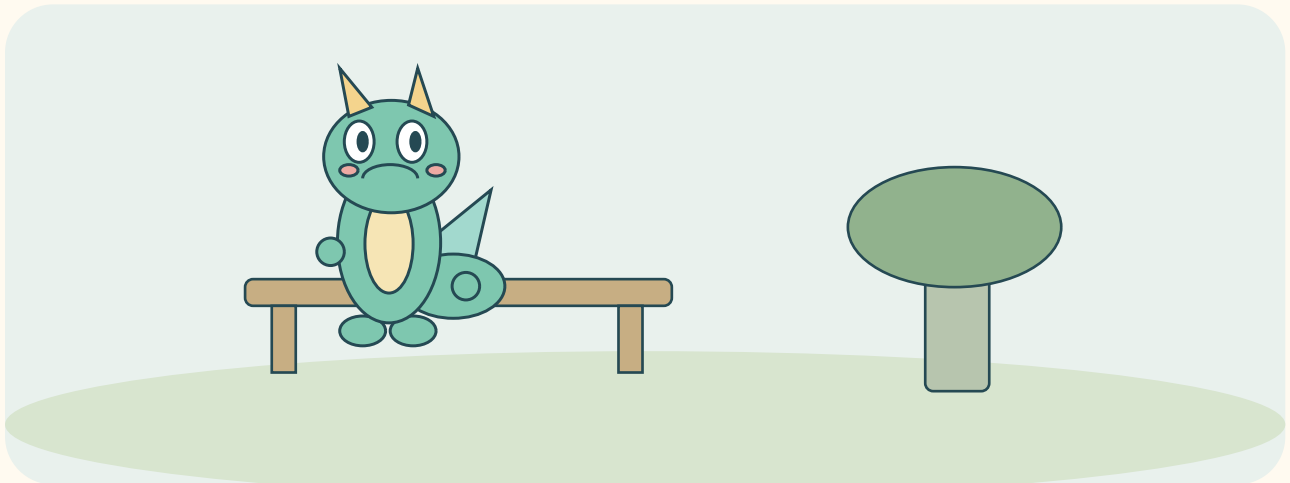
He polished his shoes.

He arranged his books.

He counted all the buttons on his coat.

Then he counted them again.

There were still six.



On Saturday at two o'clock, Finn sat alone in his garden.

He could hear music from the meadow.

He could hear laughter.

He could even hear Mabel shouting, "THAT'S MY SANDWICH!"

Finn sighed.

He wanted to go.

But he hadn't been invited.

So he stayed where he was.

A little later, Mr. Moss walked past.

"Afternoon, Finn."

"Hello, Mr. Moss."

"Not going to the meadow?"

Finn shook his head.

"Why not?"

Finn tried to smile.

"I wasn't invited."

Mr. Moss stopped.

"Not invited?"

"No."

"Oh, Finn. It's the village fair, not a private party. Everyone is welcome."

Finn looked at his boots.

"But the blue envelopes..."

Mr. Moss scratched his chin.

Then he looked at Finn very carefully.

"Did you ask anyone about it?"

Finn shook his head.

"Ah."



Mr. Moss sat down beside him.

For quite a long time, neither of them spoke.

Then Mr. Moss said, "You know, when I was young, I once waited three days for a train."

Finn looked at him.

"Why?"

"Because I thought it was coming on Thursday."

"Wasn't it?"

"No. It came on Tuesday."

Finn blinked.

"What happened?"

"I missed the train."

Mr. Moss considered this.

"Lovely station, though."

Finn almost smiled.

Then Mr. Moss stood up.

"Well. Shall we go and find out what's happening?"

Finn shook his head.

"What if they don't want me there?"

"I'll stay beside you while we ask," said Mr. Moss.

"What if they've been hoping you would come?"

Finn thought about that.

Slowly, he stood up.

They walked to the meadow.

The music was loud.

The decorations were blue and silver.

Pip was arranging chairs.

Mabel was eating a sandwich.

Lily was standing beside a table covered in cakes.

When she saw Finn, she ran toward him.

"Finn! You're here!"

Finn stopped.

"Am I allowed?"

Lily stared.

"Allowed?"

"To come."



"Of course!"

"But I didn't get an invitation."

Lily looked confused.

"What invitation?"

Finn pointed at the blue envelopes.

"Those."

Lily began to smile. Then she saw how worried he looked.

"Oh, Finn. I should have explained on Thursday."

She held out her hand, and Finn took it.

"Finn, those aren't invitations."

"They aren't?"

"No! They're tickets for the games!"

Finn blinked.

"Tickets?"

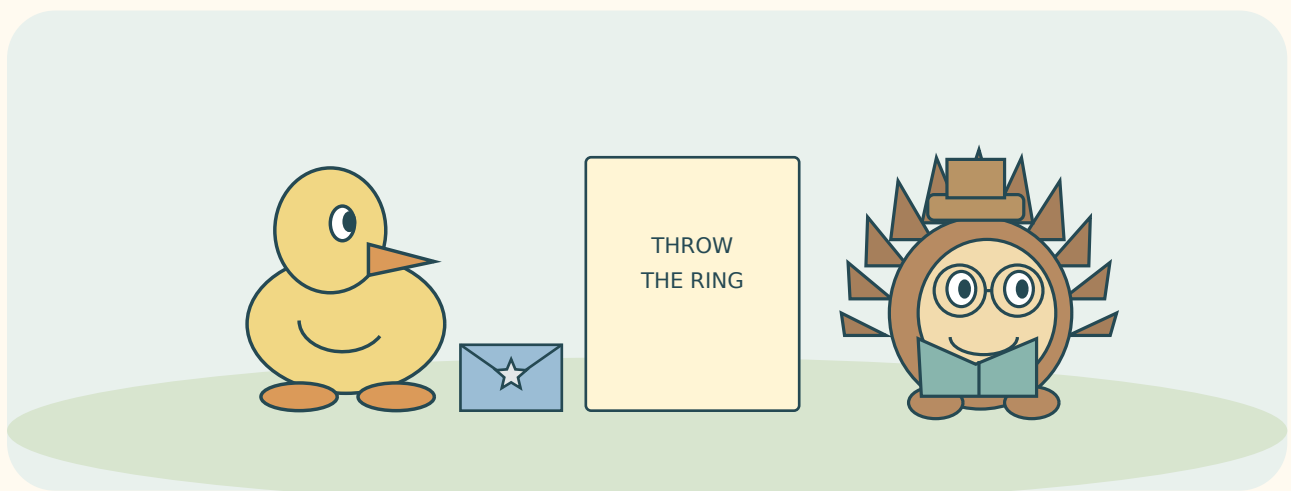
"Pip made them. Everyone gets one when they arrive."

"But Pip had one. And Mabel had one. And Mr. Moss—"

"They helped set everything up, so Pip gave them their game tickets early."

Mabel waddled over.

"I hid mine because I thought you might see my secret ring-toss plan," she said. "It is a very good plan."



Mabel took a card from her blue envelope and held it up.

Pip glanced at the card.

"Mabel, this says, 'Throw the ring.'"

"Exactly!"

Finn looked around.

"So... anybody can come?"

"Of course! It's the Willowbrook Summer Fair!"

Finn stared at the silver stars.

The blue decorations.

The cakes.

The games.

Then he began to laugh.

He laughed so hard that a tiny puff of smoke came out of his nose.

Lily handed him a blue envelope.

"Here. Your ticket."

Finn opened it.

Inside was a silver star and a little card.

Welcome to the Willowbrook Summer Fair!

Finn looked at it for a long time.

Then he tucked it carefully into his pocket.

He wasn't going to lose this one.

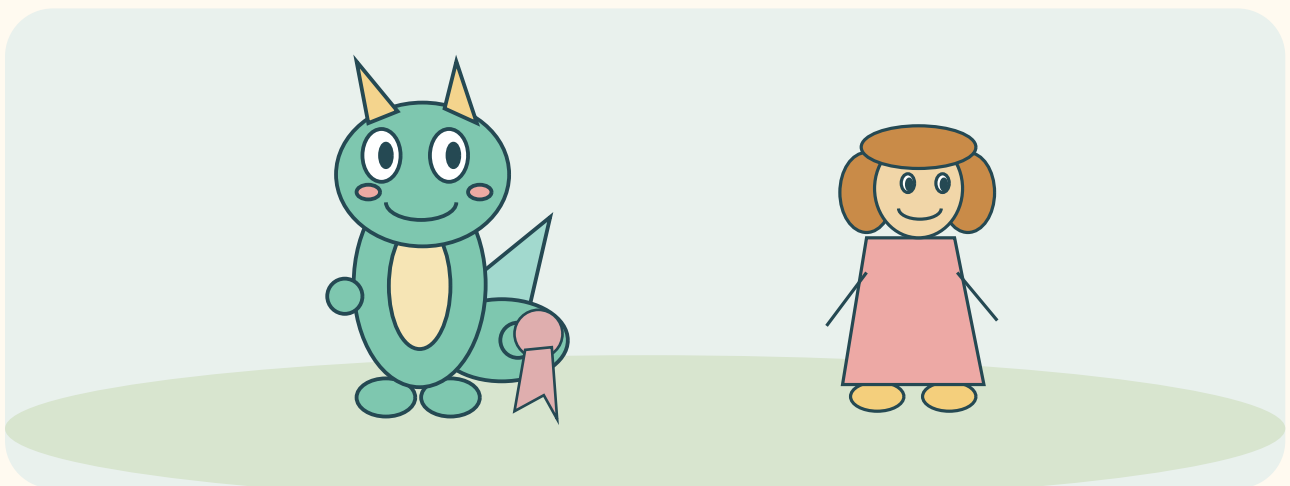
"Come on!" said Lily. "There's a ring-toss game!"

Finn followed her.

And for the rest of the afternoon, he had a wonderful time.

He won a small wooden whistle.

He ate two cakes.

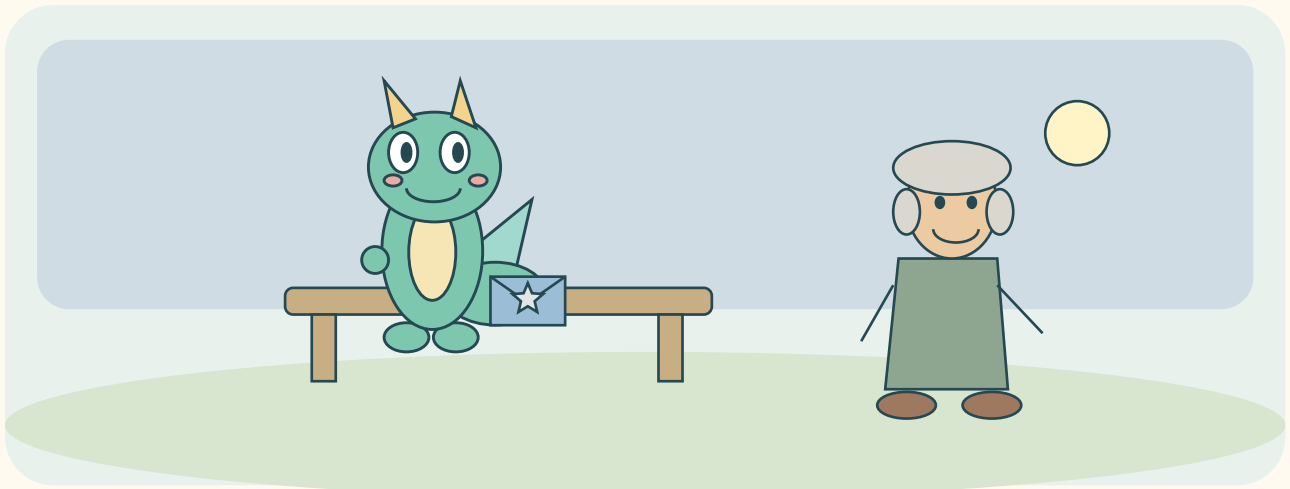


And he accidentally tied a prize ribbon around his own tail.

He turned to admire it.

The ribbon turned, too.

Lily helped him untie it before he became quite dizzy.



That evening, Finn sat in his garden again.

But this time he wasn't lonely.

He was tired and happy.

Mr. Moss walked past.

"Good fair?"

"Wonderful," said Finn.

Mr. Moss nodded.

"Sometimes it's worth asking."

Finn smiled.

"Yes."

Then he looked at the blue envelope in his pocket.

"Mr. Moss?"

"Yes?"

"Did you really wait three days for a train?"

Mr. Moss chuckled.

"Four, actually."

"Four?"

"Yes. I forgot it was Wednesday."

Finn laughed.

And somewhere in the meadow, Mabel was looking for the sandwich she had already eaten.

The End.

An original story and original vector illustrations created with AI assistance and editorial review. For shared reading with an adult. Estimated read-aloud time: 7–9 minutes; not a timed listener test.