

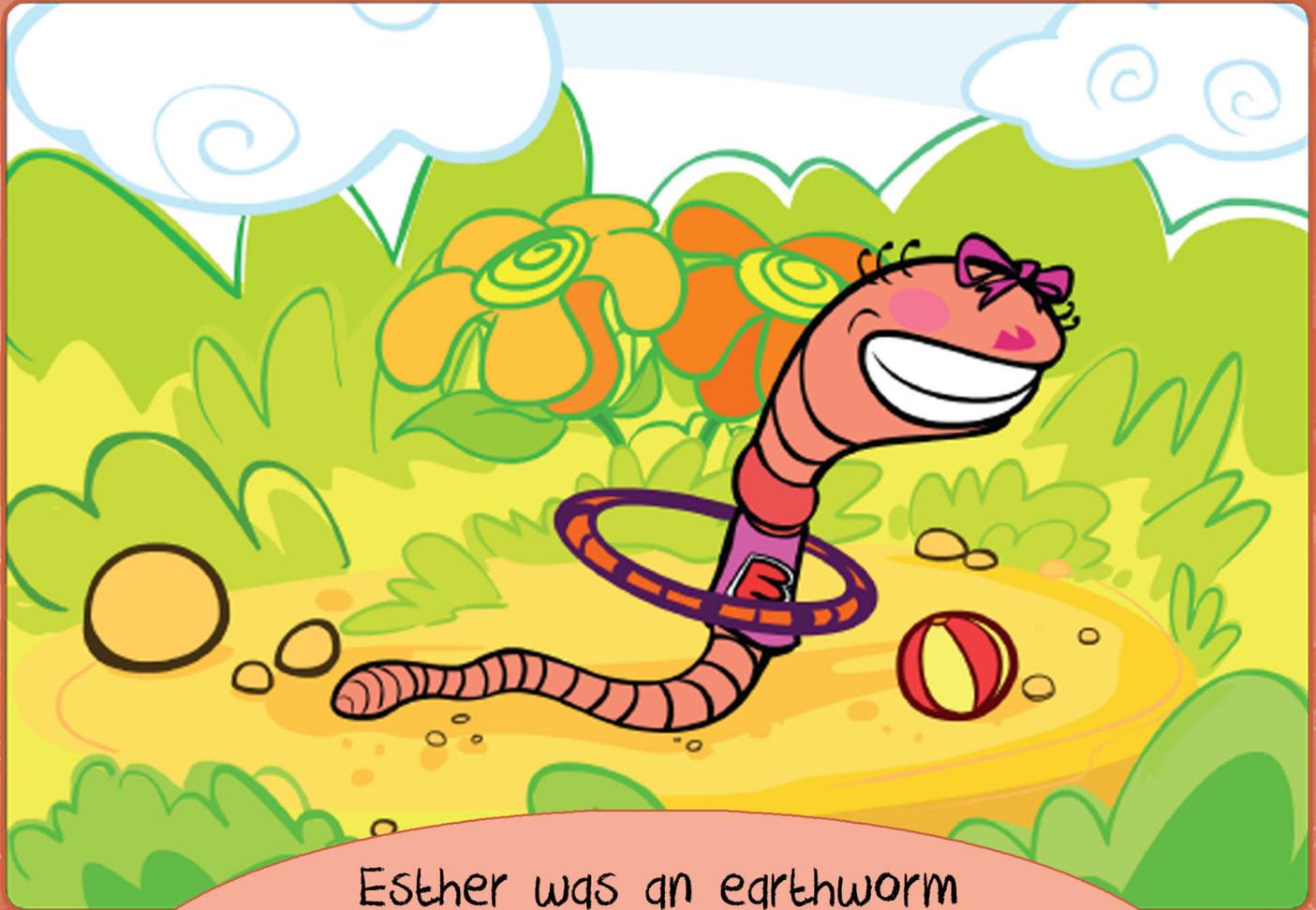


Starting reactions
that last a lifetime®

An Introduction to the **Earthworm**



Sing-A-Long Storybook



Esther was an earthworm
Who loved to play all day
And when she was told to take a rest
This is what she'd say...

"If I take a break from playing
It's fish bait I'll become
'Cause I'm slippery and I'm slimy
And to fish I taste yum! yum!



That's why I must keep moving
Traveling far and near



Eating my way through the soil
6000 pounds a year!



My mouth hasn't got any teeth
It's small and hard to spot
It's covered by a flap of skin
A prostomium is what I've got!"

One day, while tunneling very deep
She heard voices overhead
It sounded like two young boys
And this is what they said:

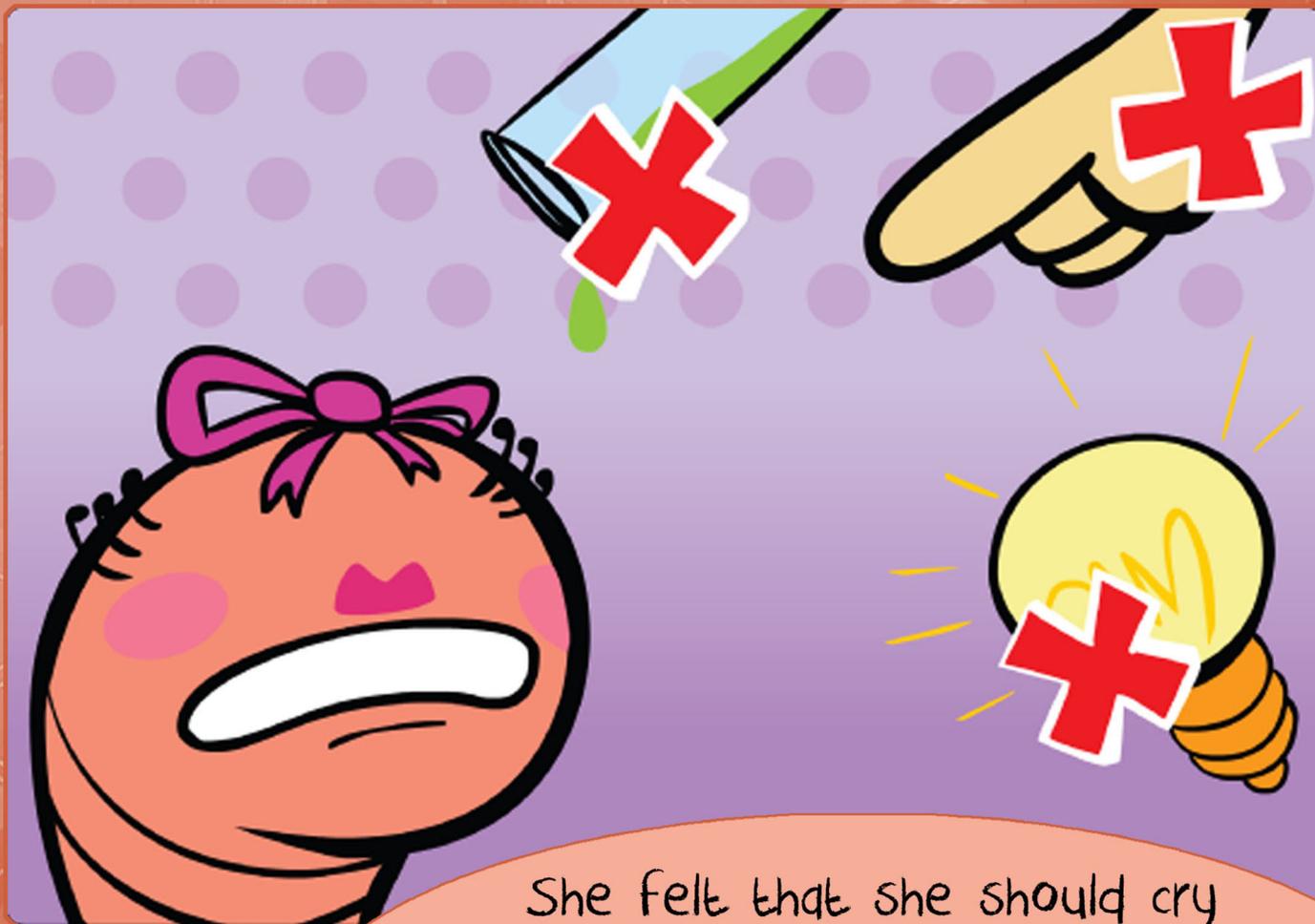




"Hey! Let's find ourselves an earthworm
Then put it in a jar
And since earthworms live inside the soil
We won't have to look too far."



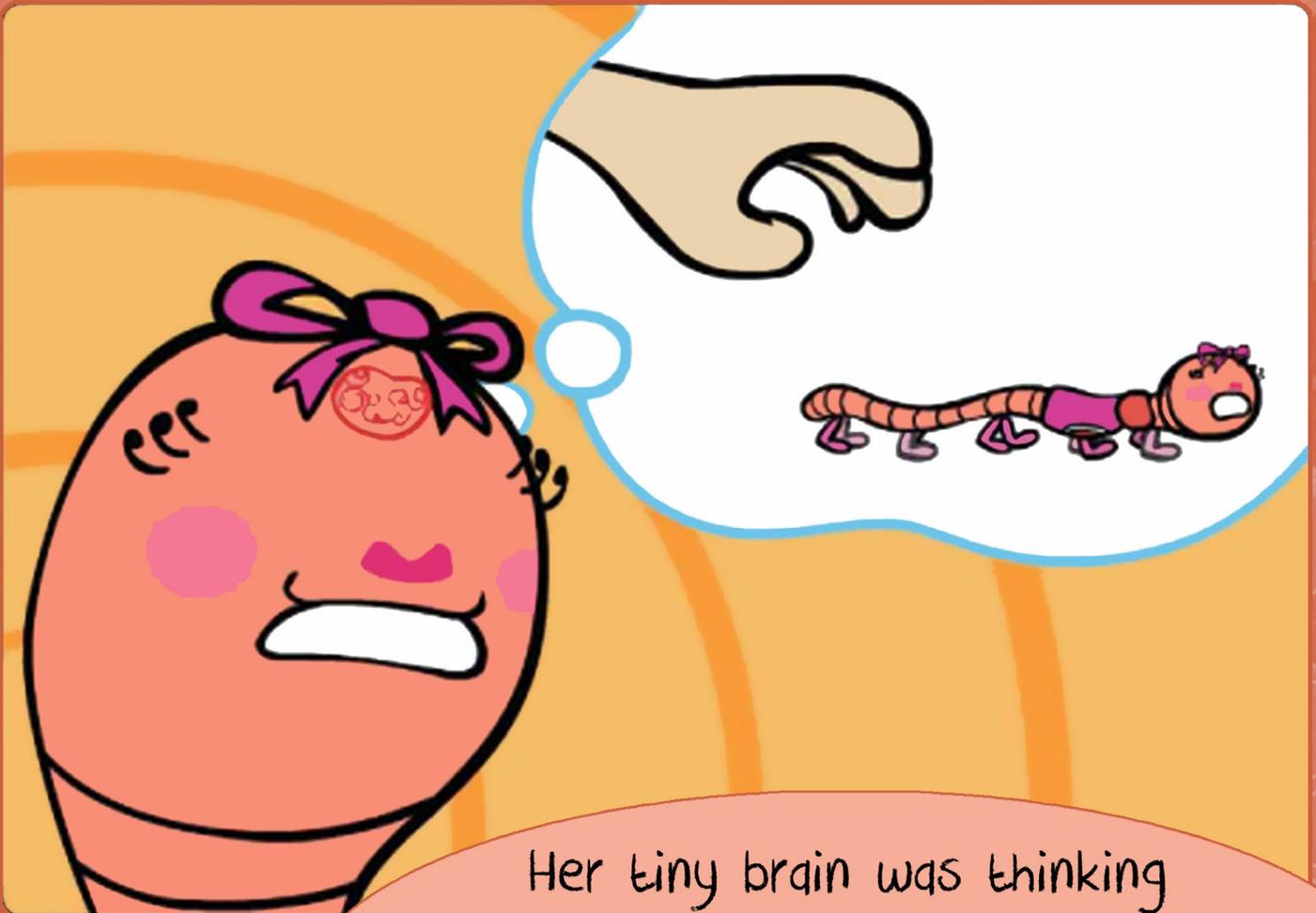
Poor Esther was so frightened
Her five hearts were beating fast
Next she felt a hand grab her
Poor Esther was aghast!



She felt that she should cry
But knew that she could not
For earthworms have no eyes, just cells
Sensitive to chemicals, light and touch.

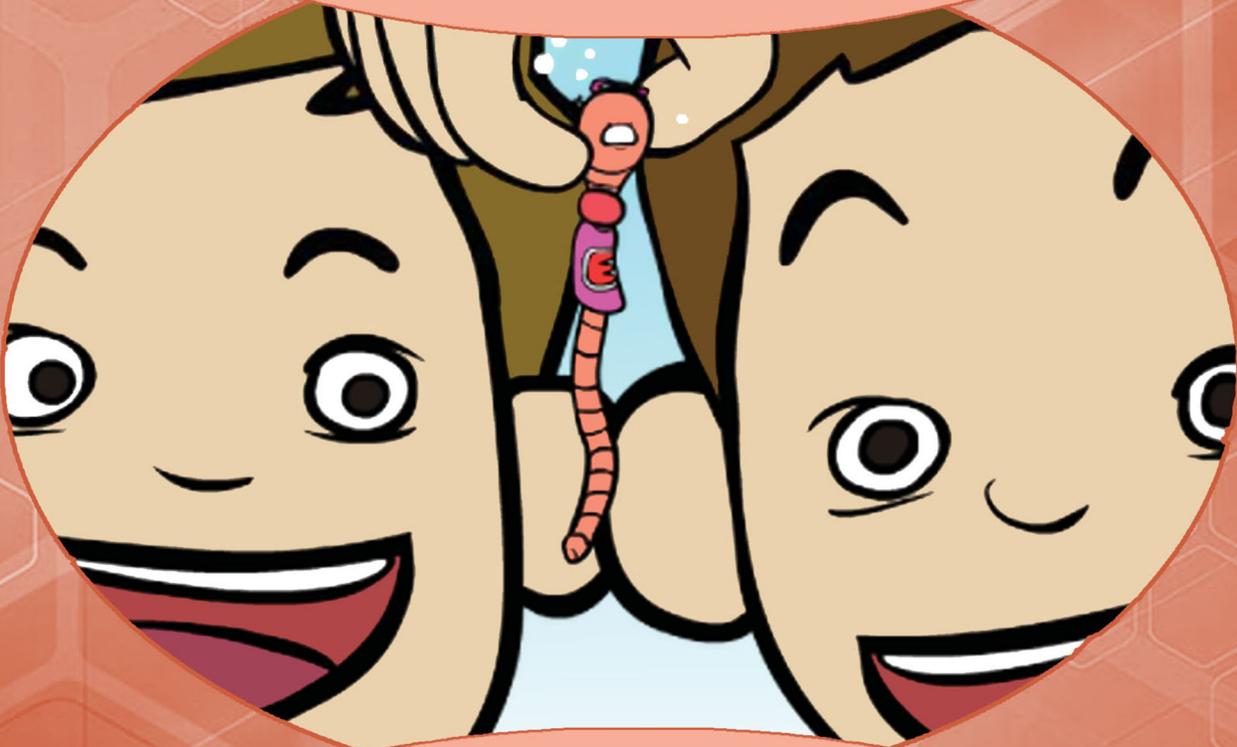


Her breath became quite fast
She was breathing oxygen in
Not through her lungs, earthworms have none
It entered through her skin.



Her tiny brain was thinking
"Oh spare my life!" she begged
"I would have run away from you
Except I don't have any legs."

"You don't have any legs!"
the boys replied amazed
They stopped what they were doing
Their interest she had raised.



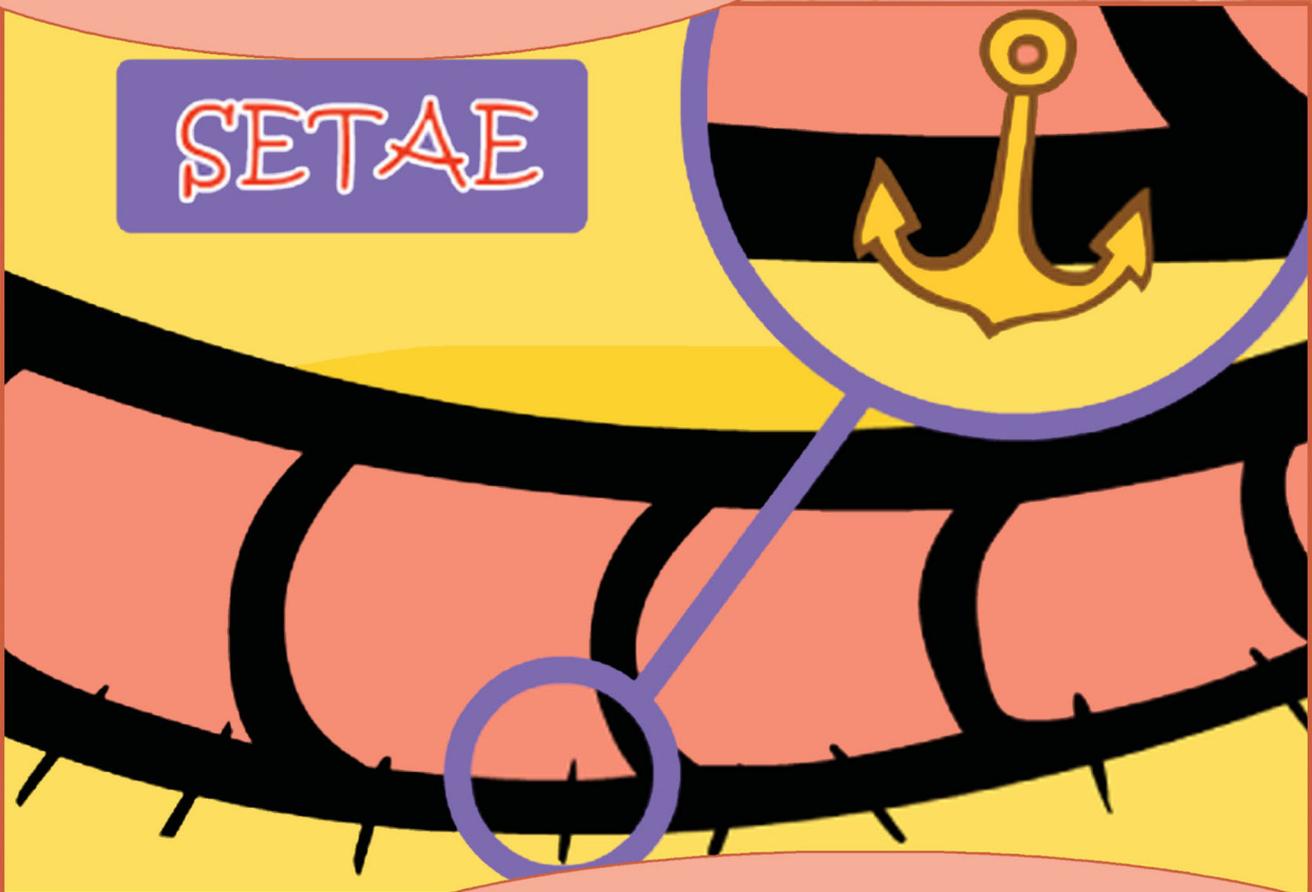
"If you don't have any legs
How do you get around?"
The boys were full of questions now
For that creature from the ground.



"I have no legs or bones
I'm a segmented muscle machine.
I can contract my body to make it look fat
Or stretch it out long and lean.

See the hairs upon my segments
They're called setae did you know

SETAE



I use them to anchor me to the ground
Then I pull fast or slow.

I do this over and over
until I get where I want to go



I know it seems like a lot of hard work
But Hey I go with the flow.

I have no backbone either
But don't think that I'm a coward
It just means that I'm an invertebrate
Found in most backyards.



ANTERIOR



I have a top and bottom too
They both have a special name
Anterior's-head: Posterior's-tail
But they kind of look the same.



POSTERIOR

So here's a little clue
If you want to tell them apart
There's a light colored band - my clitellum
near my head. See I am smart!

clitellum



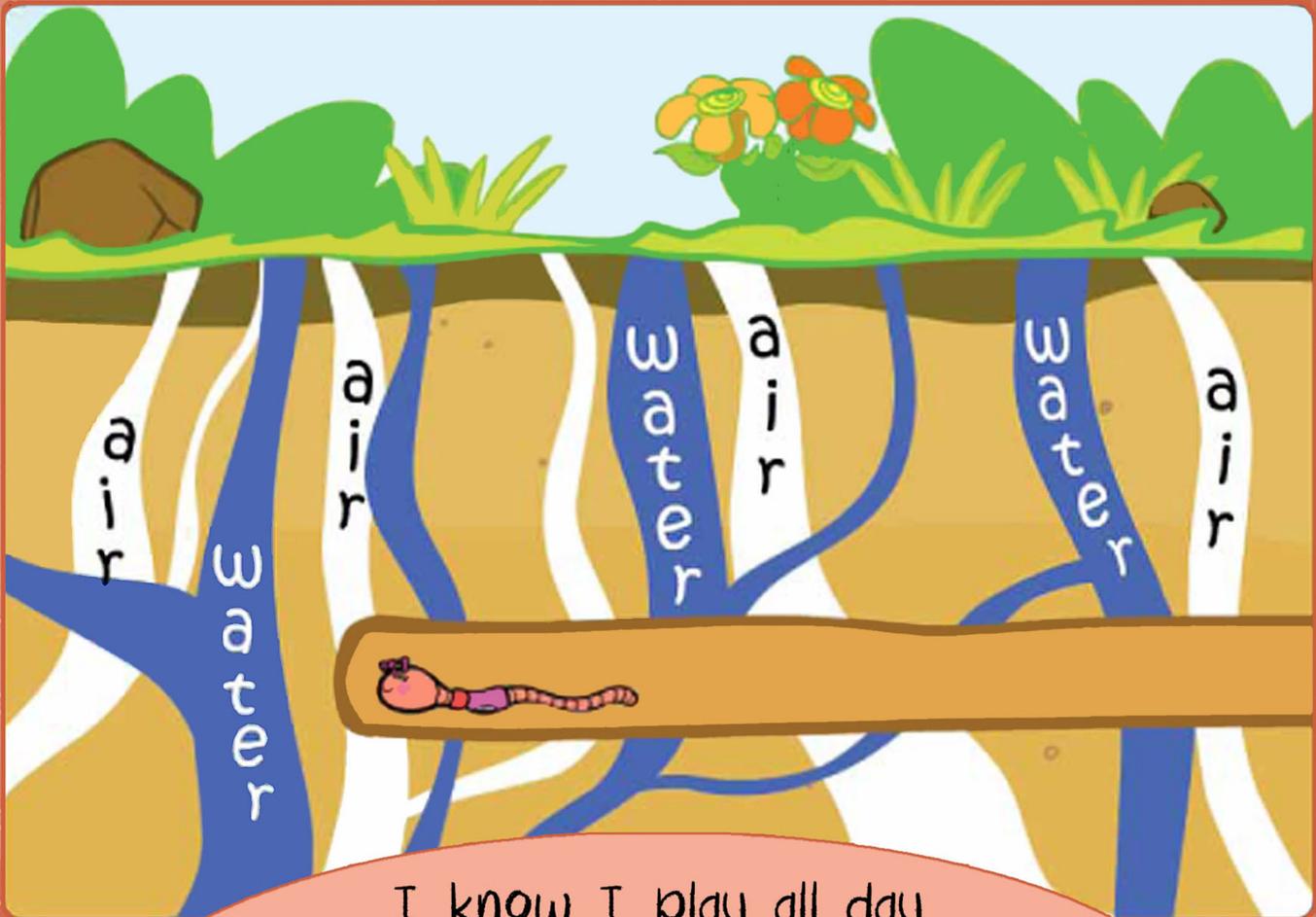
So have mercy on me please

And return me to the soil

For if you take earthworms from the ground

The environment you will spoil.

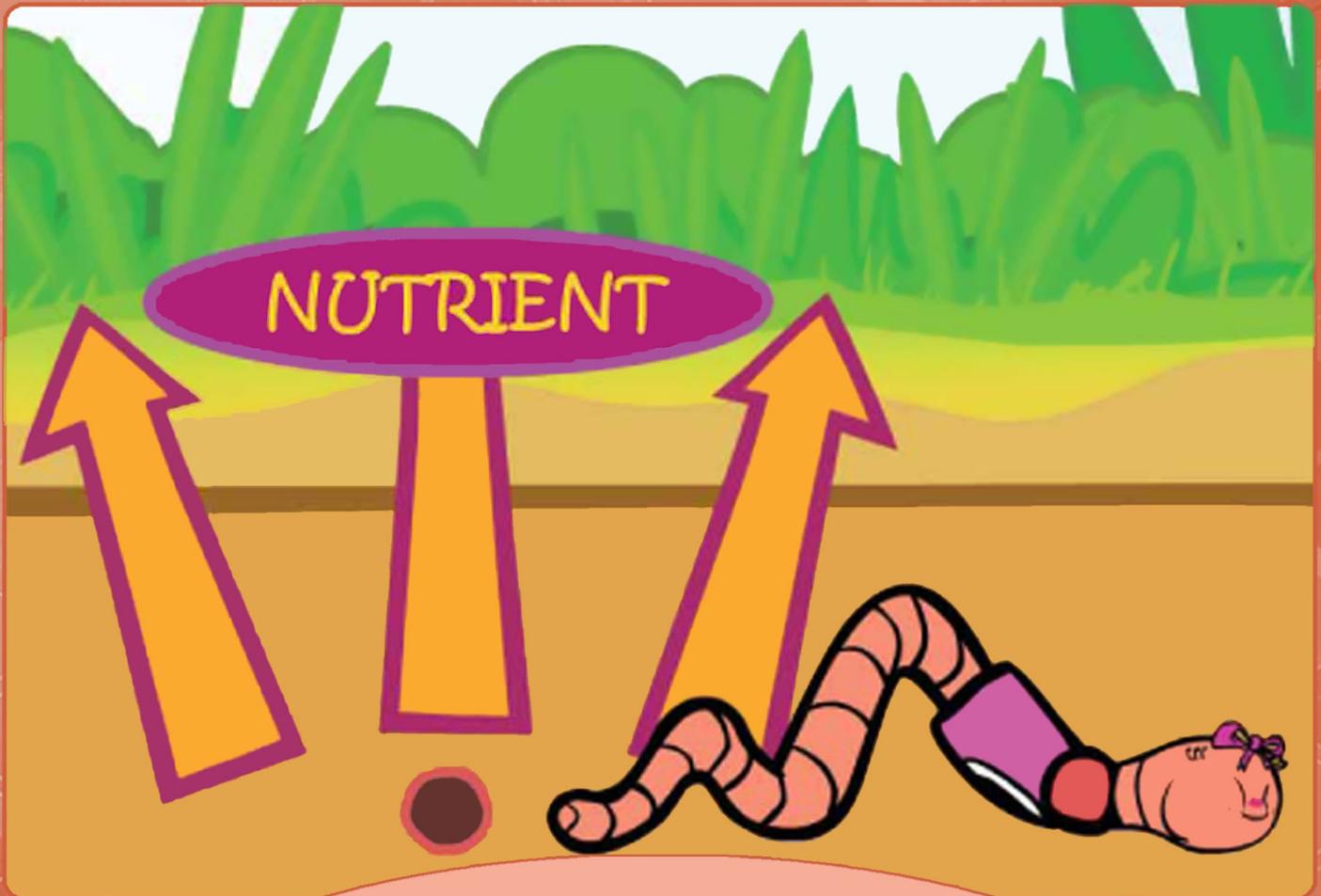




I know I play all day
But I'm a necessary thing
By tunneling through and through the soil
I let AIR and WATER in.



This helps the plants to grow
And microorganisms to thrive
Because they need air and water
In order to survive.



As I digest the soil I eat
Through my body it does pass
So my droppings are full of nutrients
Essential for your grass."



The boys were feeling sorry now
For the brave wee worm they'd found
And decided it was much better
To return her to the ground.



So next time your out in the yard
Have a quick look under a rock
You might see Esther there
Say "Hello" but don't give her a shock!