

Ouch!
That Was
My Leaf!



Spike the cactus had no friends. Not one. But today was the day.

'Hi!' he called to a giant trio of trees. 'I'm Spike! Want a hug?'

The giant trees did not react well. They shook their leaves at him. 'Ha! From you? No way. Beat it, cactus!'



Did Spike cry or give up? Nope! 'That's fine!' said Spike with a grin. 'Those giant trees were not ready for a friend as great as me.' He hopped across the garden in his quiet pot, humming a little song he made up.



Spike saw a **giant** orange tree by itself.
'You need a **quiet** friend! I'm **fluent** in
chatting,' said Spike. The **giant** tree did
not **react** well. 'No.' 'No to chatting, or no
to **being** friends?' 'No to it all. Go away.'





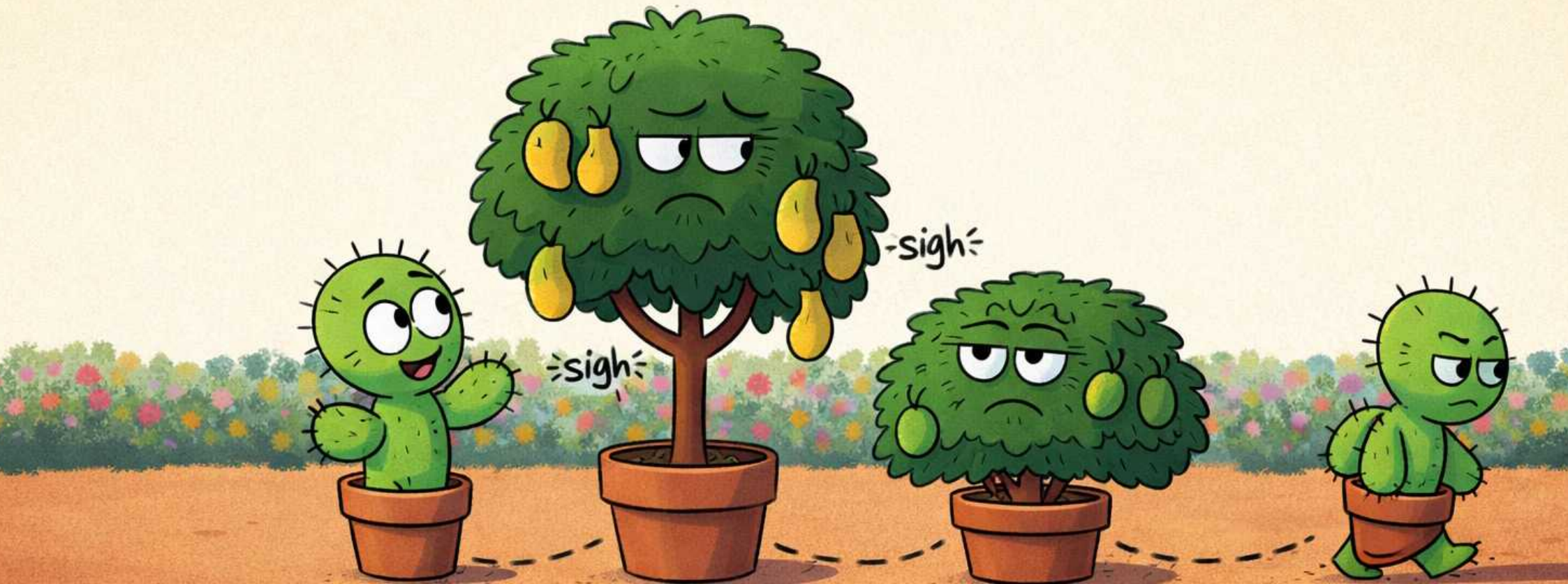
Next, Spike met a **giant** yellow tree with a worried look. The tree took one peek and screamed, 'Spines! Spines!' Two little potted plants nearby ran for their lives. 'I am not that sharp,' said Spike, but he was, in fact, very sharp.

He tried a giant mango tree. It sighed.

He tried a guava bush. It sighed louder.

"Don't touch us," they said. Spike's

bounce got smaller. Spike went quiet.





Only one plant was left. A giant pawpaw tree. Spike hopped over, but this time he did not bounce.

"Let me guess," said the giant tree. "You're Spike. The one who's been looking for a friend all day." Spike nodded.

"Lucky for you, I don't scare easy."

The pawpaw tree spread his **giant** leaves wide. 'All the other plants ran away from you. That's not fair. Come sit with me.'

'Really?' said Spike. 'Really.'

For the first time all day, Spike felt like he might just find a friend after all.





They told jokes and stories in a riot of giggles. But then Spike bent in close with joy and... Pop! His spine pricked the pawpaw tree's leaf. 'Ouch!' yelled the pawpaw tree. 'That was my leaf!'

The pawpaw tree pulled away, his **giant** leaves shaking. 'I was right! Get out, Spike. Find a friend you won't hurt.'

'I'm sorry! I never meant to do it!' said Spike.

'Out!' said the pawpaw tree.





Spike sat alone. No trees. No bushes. No one.

Maybe he had been **naive**.

Maybe a cactus was not meant to have friends.

Then Spike looked at his spines, and at the road beyond the **quiet** garden. 'Wait! I have been looking for a friend who is not prickly. What if I need one who is?'

Spike crossed the road to a **giant** dune. There, in the sand, sat a bush with thorns all over.

'You are so sharp,' said Spike. The thorn bush blinked. 'You are so sharp too!' 'Want a hug?' 'I hoped you would ask!'





They hugged. And no one said 'ouch.' So Spike left his pot by the road, and the two set off across the dunes, singing songs, bumping spines, and smiling all the way. And then, without Spike even seeing it, a little flower grew right on top of his head. He was far too busy **being** happy with his friend.



Ouch! That Was My Leaf!

Spike the cactus is lonely and wants to find a friend. He hops around the garden in his pot, asking different trees if they want to be pals. But the orange tree is grumpy, the banana tree is scared, and others just sigh at him. When he finally finds someone willing to chat, something goes wrong. Why is it so hard for Spike to make friends? Will he ever find a pal who truly understands him?

Reading Skills: V/V division

being, fluent, giant, naive, quiet, react, riot, trio

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