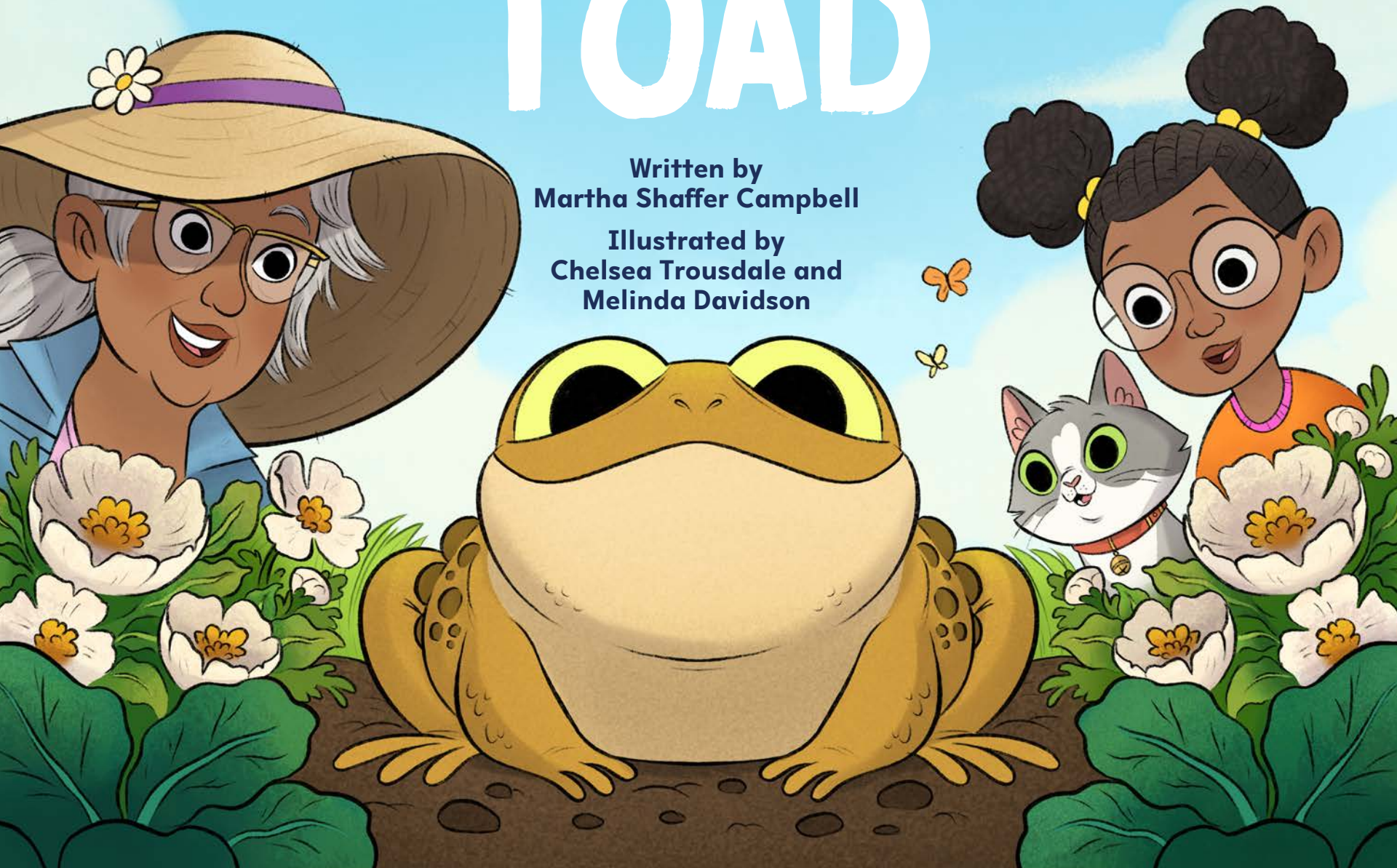


# MR. CROAKY TOAD

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One spring morning, Grandma Gordon decided to plant some flower seeds. She put her large wooden seedbox on the porch and filled it with dirt and peat moss. Next she placed marigold and petunia seeds on top. Then she covered the seeds with fine dirt. Last of all, she took her sprinkling can and dampened the dirt. The water and warm sun would help the seeds grow.







The next morning, while she was watering the seeds,  
Grandma Gordon saw something move in her seedbox. What was it?  
She looked closer and saw something alive.  
It was dark brown, just like the dirt in the seedbox.  
It had bumpy skin and bulging eyes.  
It was a toad!

Grandma Gordon was surprised.  
She picked the toad up, and he croaked.  
“You are sitting on my seeds,” she told him.  
“Find another home, Mr. Croaky Toad!”





Grandma Gordon put the toad down on the porch.  
Soon a fly buzzed by Mr. Croaky Toad.  
Out darted his sticky tongue.  
He caught the fly and swallowed it!  
“Well, well,” said Grandma Gordon.  
“You are a good toad. Catch lots of flies today.”

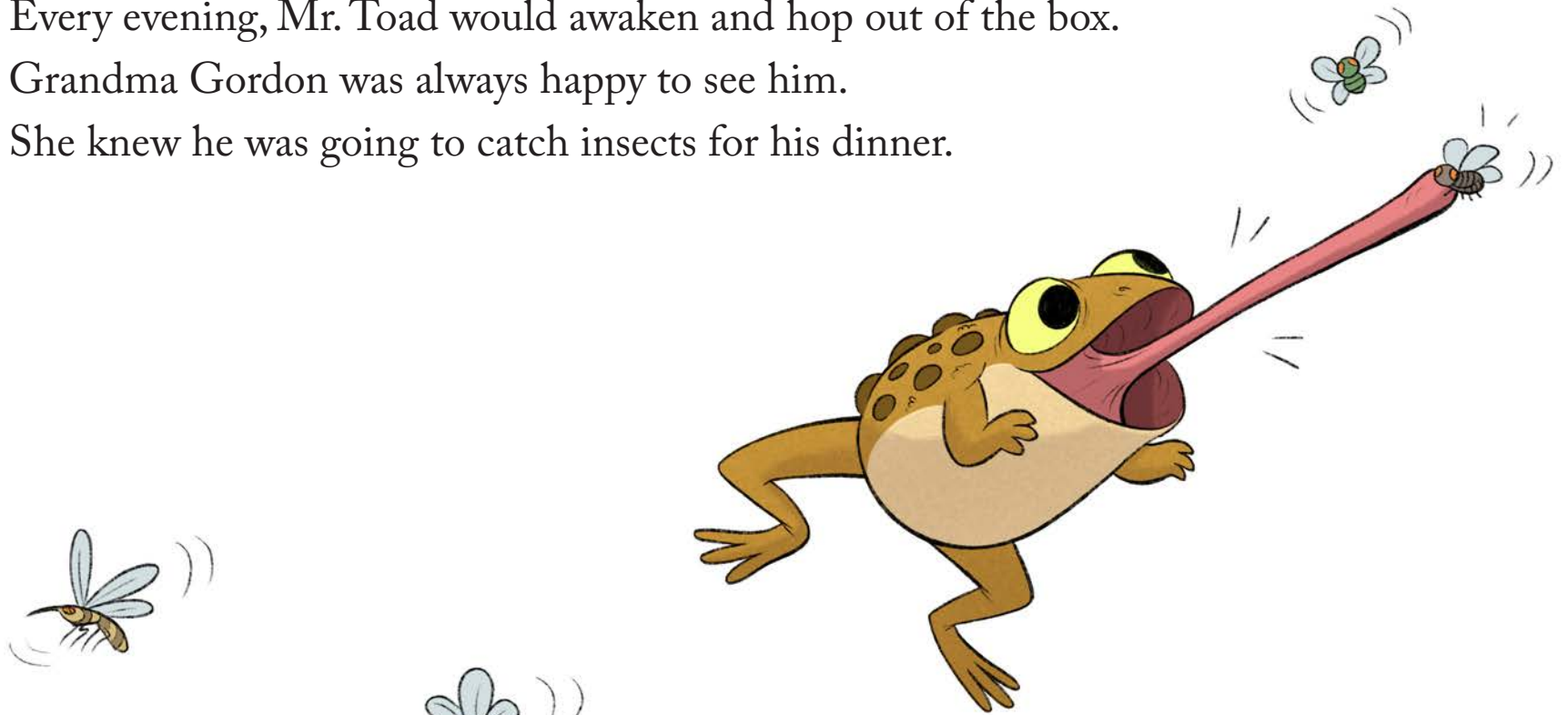


The next morning and the next, Grandma Gordon found Mr. Croaky Toad back in her seedbox.

At last she told him, “Mr. Toad, I like you. You may live in my seedbox.”  
Mr. Toad only croaked and went back to sleep.

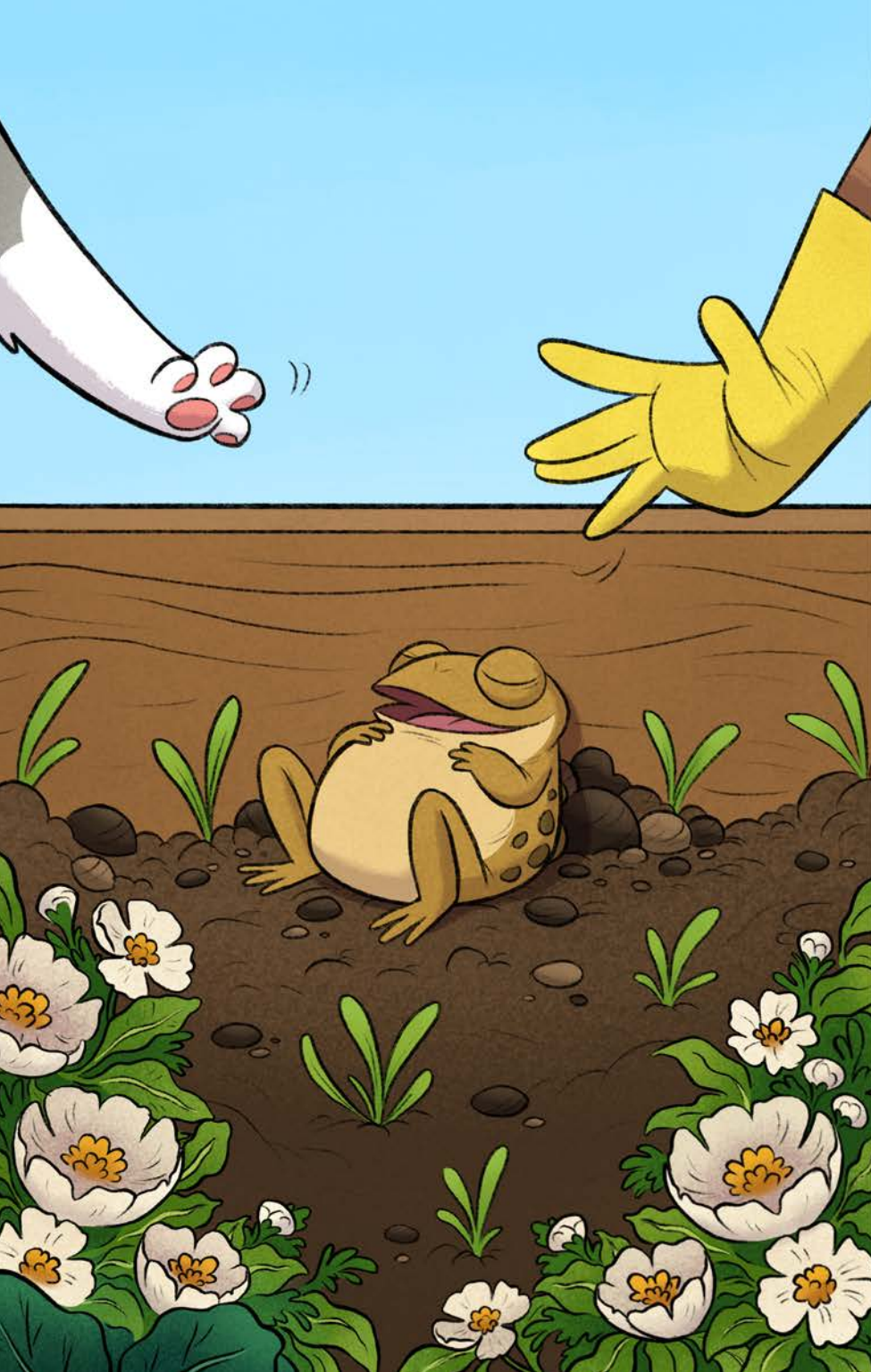


Every evening, Mr. Toad would awaken and hop out of the box. Grandma Gordon was always happy to see him. She knew he was going to catch insects for his dinner.



First he would catch a fly or two. Later he would catch mosquitoes and gnats that flew around the porch at night. Grandma Gordon did not like these insects, so she was very pleased.





Mr. Croaky Toad would sit still  
until an insect flew by.  
Then his sticky tongue would dart out.  
Down the insect would go.  
By morning he would be full.  
Grandma Gordon would find him  
back in her seedbox, fast asleep.  
When she touched him,  
he barely croaked.



One evening, Grandma Gordon's granddaughter,  
Ella Mae, spied Mr. Croaky Toad in the flower bed.  
He croaked loudly when she picked him up.  
He was hungry and wanted to hunt insects.  
"Oh, Grandma!" cried Ella Mae.  
"May I have this toad?  
I want to take him home and keep him in my room!"

“No, Ella Mae,” answered Grandma Gordon.

“Mr. Croaky Toad is happy here.

He likes to catch live insects at night.

He likes to sleep in my cool, damp seedbox all day.

He would not be happy in your room.”

Ella Mae put Mr. Toad down very gently.

He hopped away with a happy croak.







Grandma Gordon and Ella Mae enjoyed Mr. Croaky Toad all summer.  
He grew large and fat.  
Ella Mae could barely hold him in her hand.



As the days grew cooler,  
Mr. Toad did not come back to the seedbox.  
Grandma Gordon and Ella Mae  
looked everywhere for him.





Then, one evening, Ella Mae found him in the flower bed.

He had dug a new home in the dirt.

Only his head showed.

His eyes were closed.

He looked very sleepy, so they left him alone.

The next day he had dug deeper into the dirt and disappeared.





“I know,” said Ella Mae.

“Mr. Toad is hibernating.

That’s what toads do in winter.”

“That’s right,” said Grandma Gordon.

“In the spring, when the earth is warm,  
Mr. Croaky Toad will wake up.

Then we will see our friend again.”

# Reading

**Read-along** books are designed to be enjoyed together and to foster a love of reading. These books help children build comprehension skills and learn new vocabulary. It is helpful to develop these skills in any language!

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