



Ellie and the Moo-tastic Mystery



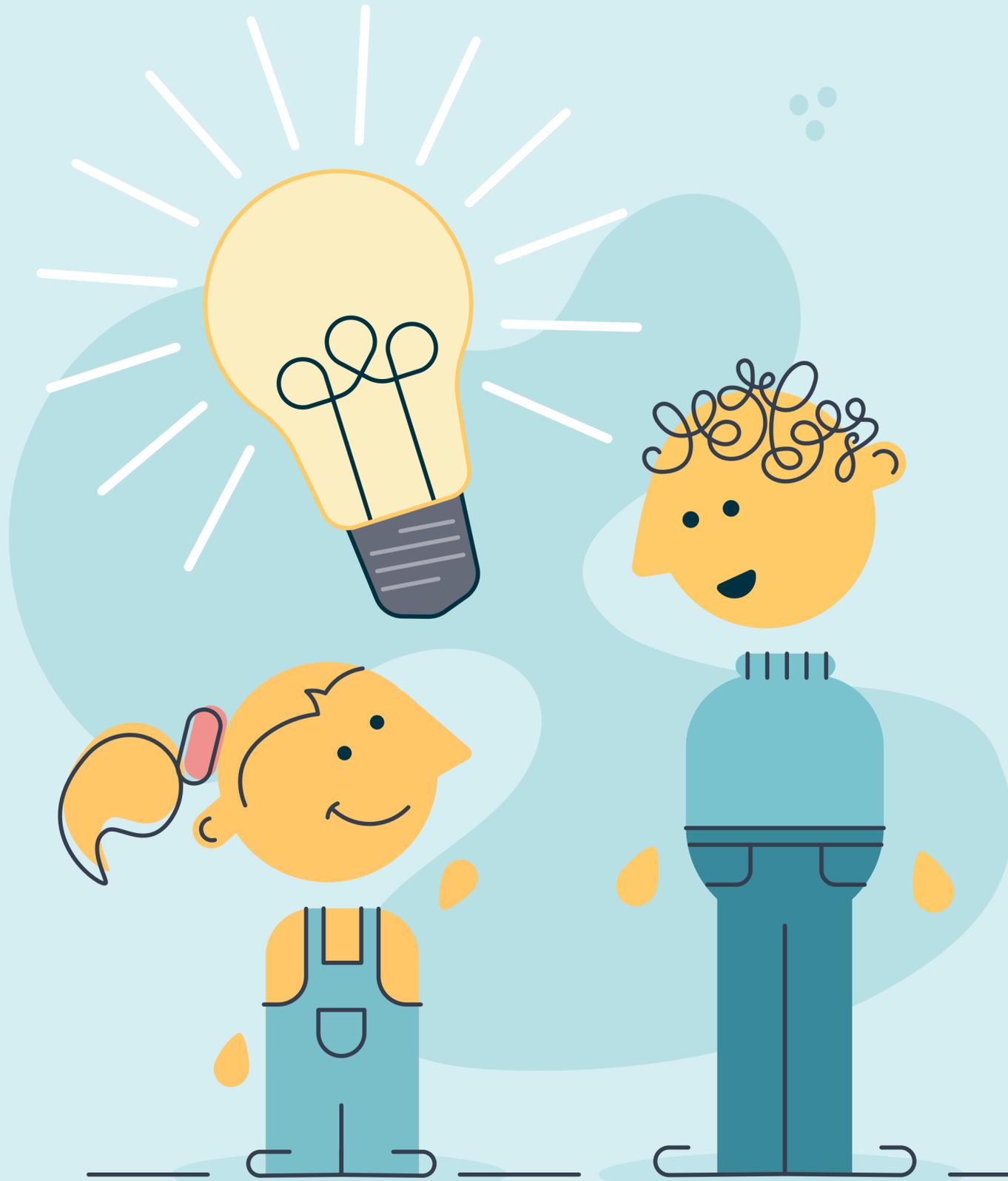
Ellie and her favourite teddy, Mags, loved milk. They drank it with breakfast, lunch, and dinner, always getting a white moustache - much to the amusement of Ellie's mother, Susan!

One sunny morning, whilst sipping her glass of milk, she started to think. A little frown settled across her forehead as she pondered... Mags sat beside her, wiping a splash of milk off her forehead.



With her usual curious nature, Ellie was looking around the breakfast table, and thinking about a question she realised she did not know the answer to: How does milk get from a cow to my breakfast table?

Ellie knew milk could be bought in a shop, or delivered to your door, but when and how is it put in bottles? And how far does the milk have to travel?



Oh, it was complicated! So many questions!

Her stepdad, Kai, suggested she speak to James, one of her friends from school, who happened to live on a farm. James would have the answers, Kai was sure.





Now full of excitement and having finished her breakfast, Ellie skipped off upstairs with Mags to get ready for school.

Mags, rearranging herself on the bed, smoothing her yellow fur nicely, was also thrilled at the prospect of going to the farm. Usually, they ran straight inside from the car to play with James's dog, or up into the woods, to play hide and seek, but this time, they might get to see what goes on inside the big sheds. Who lived there, she wondered..



Ellie tucked her teddy bear up into bed, gave her a big kiss and ran off to school. Mags started to snooze, thinking of the farmyard adventures in the offing. Would she get to ride in a tractor? Or would she get to collect some fresh eggs?



The weekend arrived in no time. The weather was sunny, with a gentle breeze and an excited Ellie, in green dungarees and black wellies, together with Mags in a similar outfit, were bundled into the family car to go and visit James's farm.

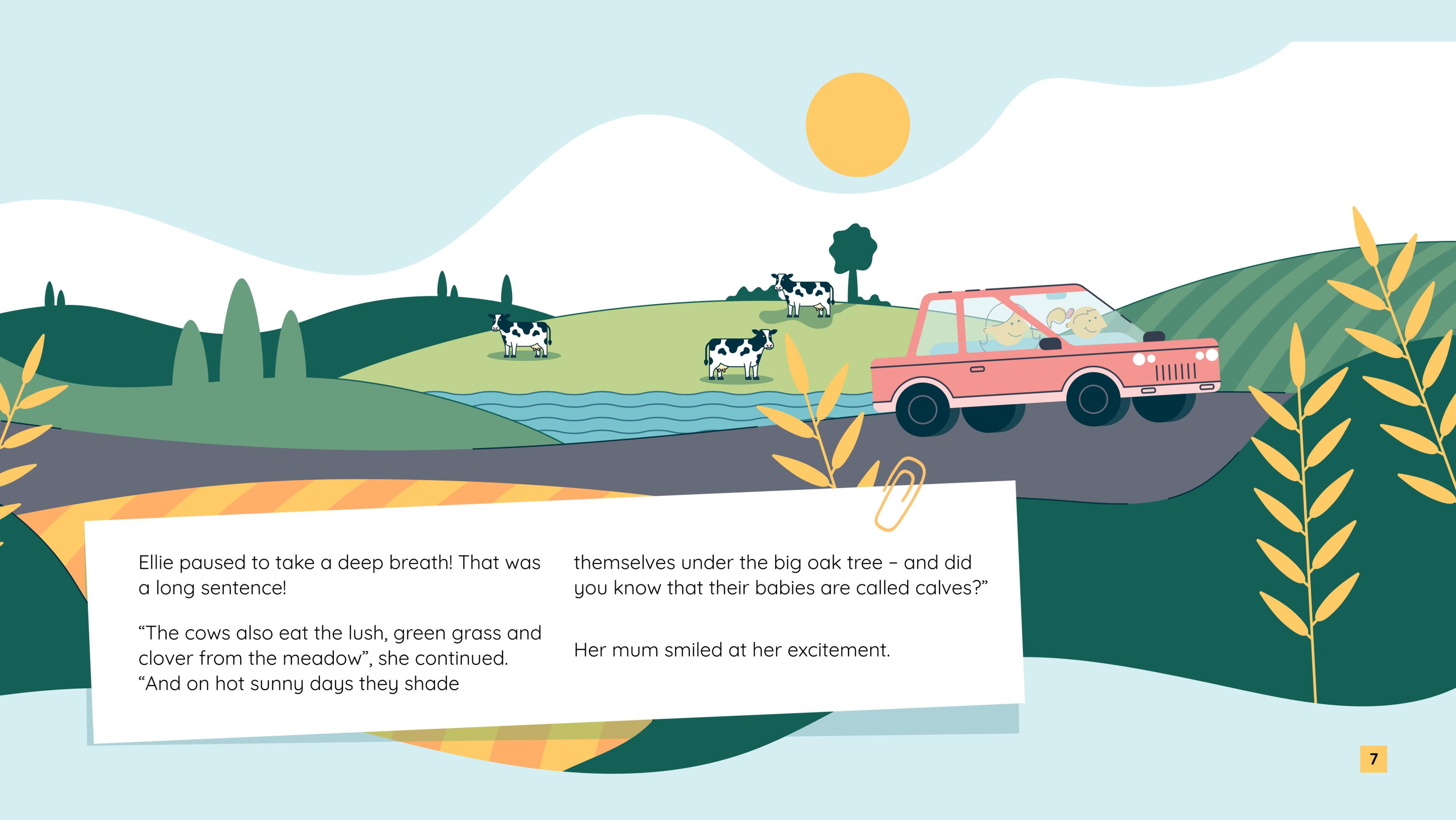




Ellie chattered nonstop to Mags and her mum about the farm.

“Did you know that James’s farm does more than one thing? They do mixed farming, which means that James’s dad, (also known as Daddy Farmer to the children!), does two jobs on the same farm – he looks after animals and

he grows plants. For example, the cows give milk (that’s called dairy farming), and in the fields, Daddy Farmer grows crops like wheat or vegetables. The animals and plants help each other too. The cows can eat some of the plants, and their manure helps the crops grow. It’s a clever way of farming because it uses the land for more than one thing!”



Ellie paused to take a deep breath! That was a long sentence!

“The cows also eat the lush, green grass and clover from the meadow”, she continued.

“And on hot sunny days they shade

themselves under the big oak tree - and did you know that their babies are called calves?”

Her mum smiled at her excitement.



Suddenly, rounding the corner, they were there!

James ran out to greet her and the two happy children, (with Mags being dragged behind), ran laughing as they jumped over puddles, to the nearest barn. Once inside, they were greeted by a lot of black and white cows munching on hay, and a loud chorus of “Moo!”.





“Welcome to Moo Manor!” said James proudly.

“These are dairy cows,” James explained.

“They give us lots of milk!”

Ellie’s eyes widened. “Wow, they could have produced the milk I had for breakfast this morning!”



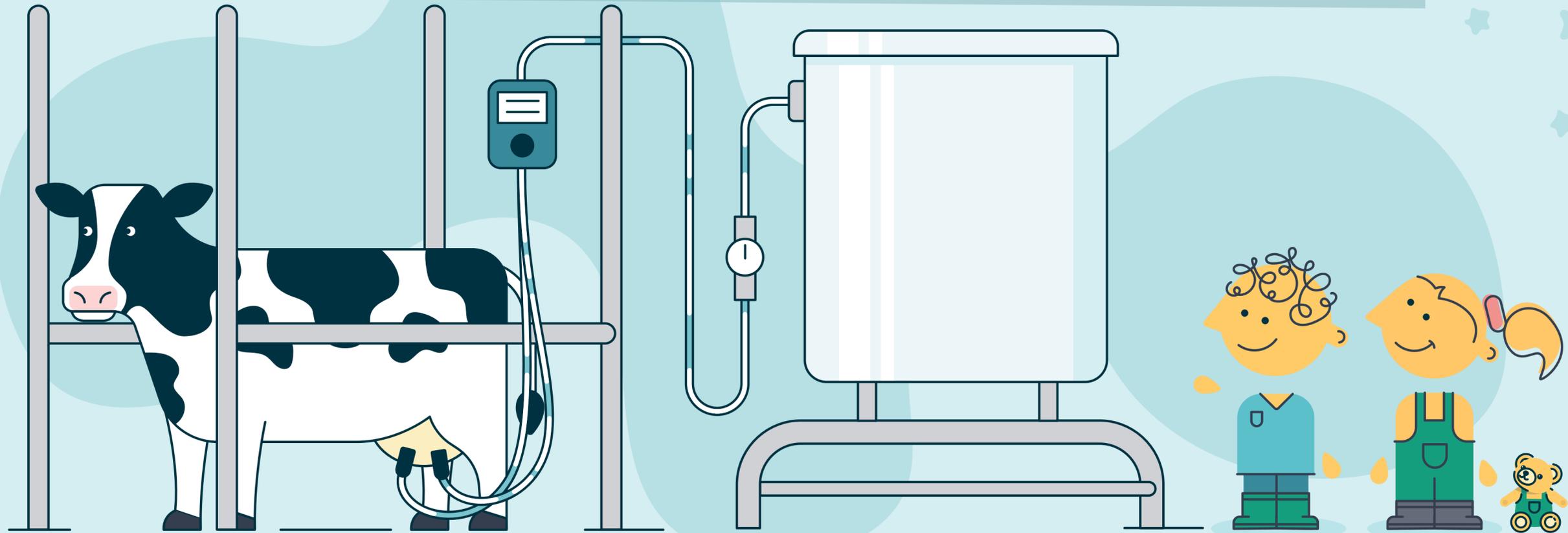
James nodded. “Every morning, we gently milk them using a special machine. It doesn’t hurt; it’s like a tickly hug for their udders!”

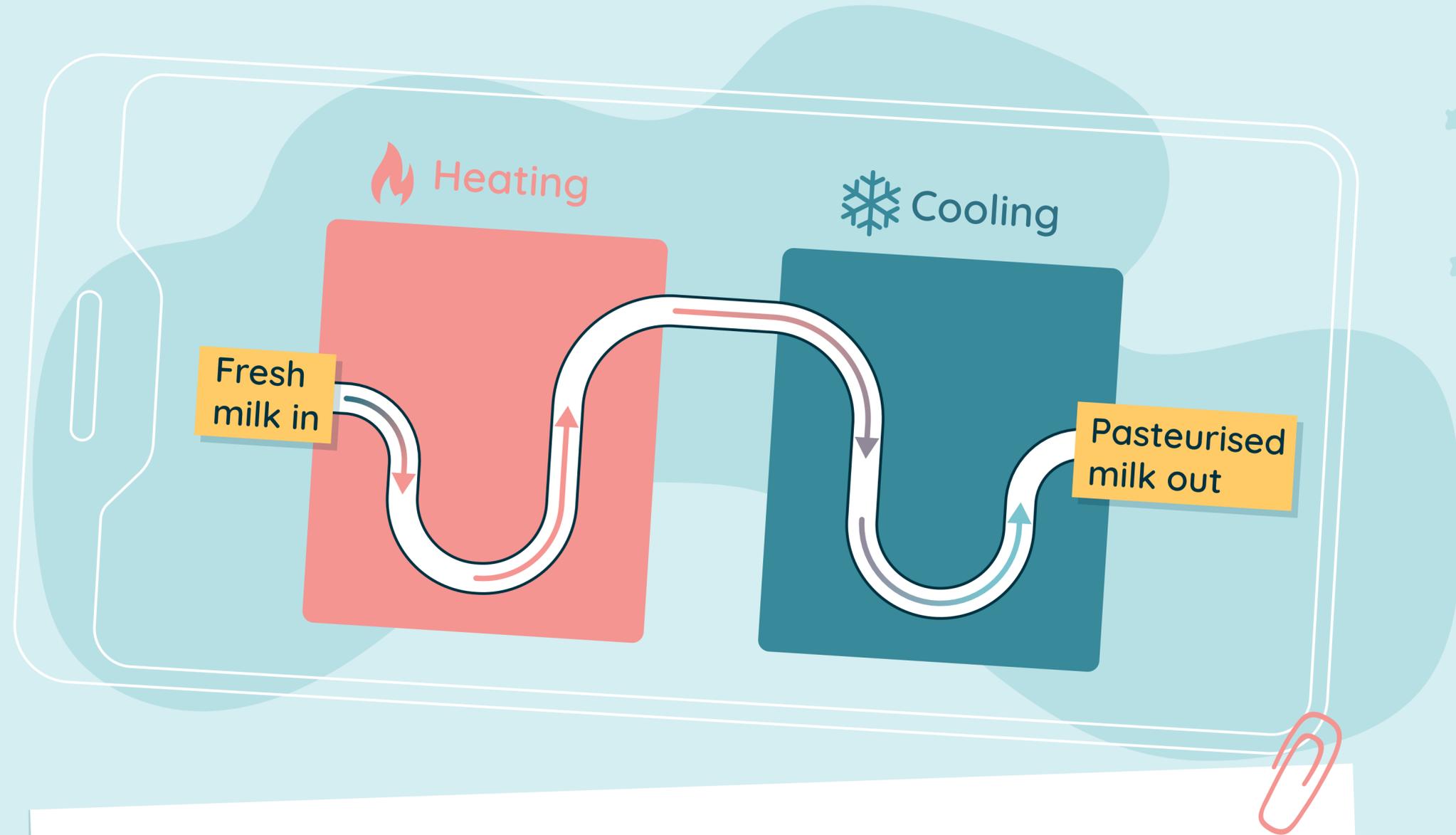
Ellie watched as the milk flowed through tubes into a big silver tank.

“This keeps the milk cool and clean,” said James. “But it’s not ready to drink yet!”

“Why not?” asked Ellie.

“Because we need to make sure it’s safe,” James replied.



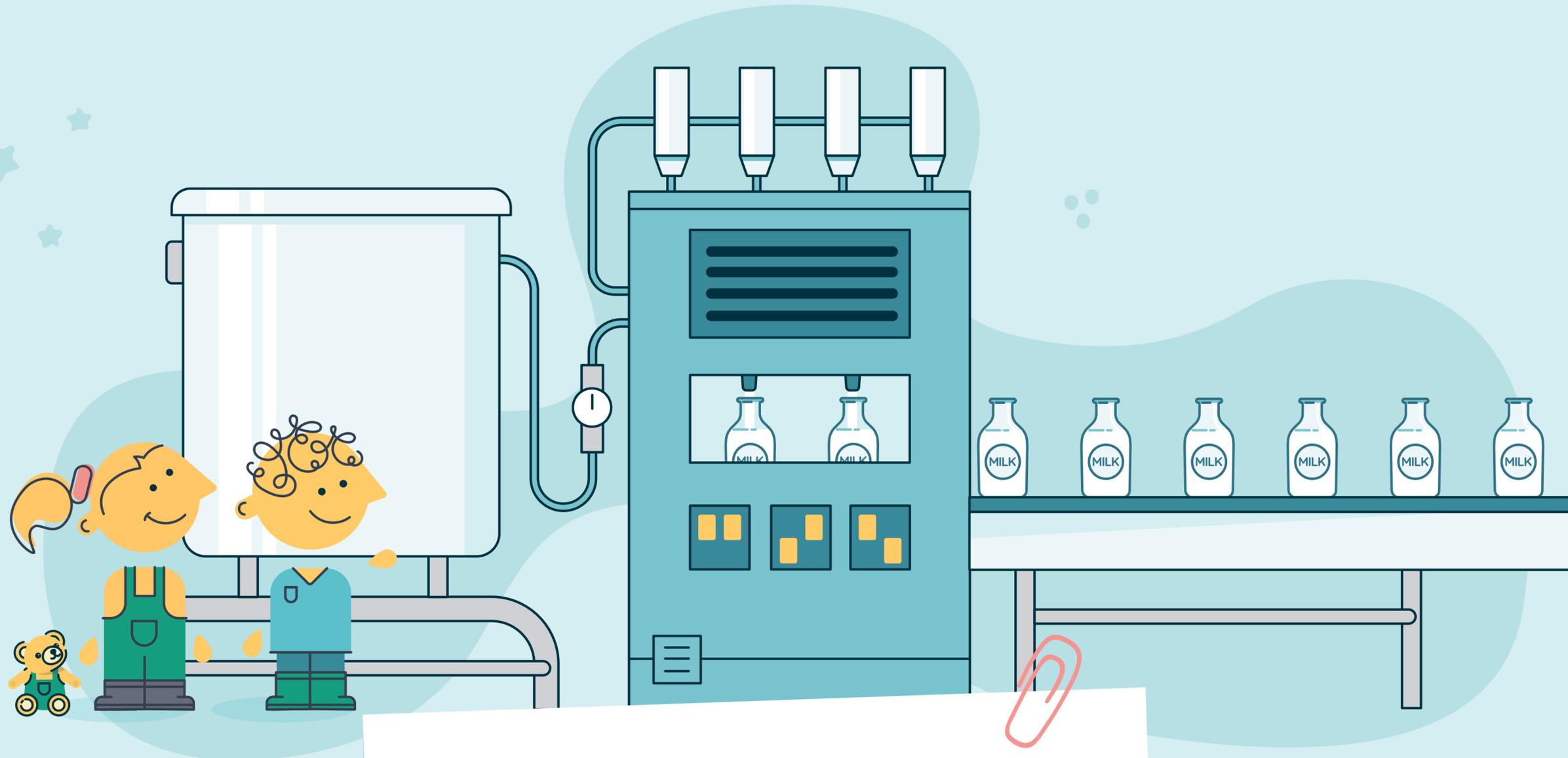


Daddy Farmer handed James his mobile and he showed Ellie a video of the on-farm pasteurisation process.

“This is called pasteurisation,” he said.
“The milk is heated and cooled quickly

which kills any nasty germs, so the milk is safe and tasty!”

Ellie clapped. “Paster what? That’s a funny word, but it all looks very clever!”



“Next,” James said, “the milk is poured into cartons and bottles, then loaded onto trucks.”

Ellie watched as a big lorry drove away.
“So that’s how it gets to the shop!”

James smiled. “And then to your fridge!”

- moo-velous

On the way home, Ellie said, “I knew milk came from cows. But now I’ve seen how it’s collected from cows, goes through a process with a long name, and travels in trucks!”

Mum smiled. “The long name is pasteurisation and it sounds to me like you’ve cracked a Moo-tastic Mystery!”

Ellie beamed, cuddling Mags “And I think farmers are moo-velous!”



For more stories featuring Ellie,
her family, friends and teddies,
as well as accompanying
teaching resources, visit:
www.abpischools.org.uk



Story by Rebecca Dixon-Watmough
Freelance creator and author of children's stories

Designed by tothepoint

In association with Andy Markwick
Associate Professor in Science and Primary Education, University College London

And with Josh Payne
National Farmers' Union

