

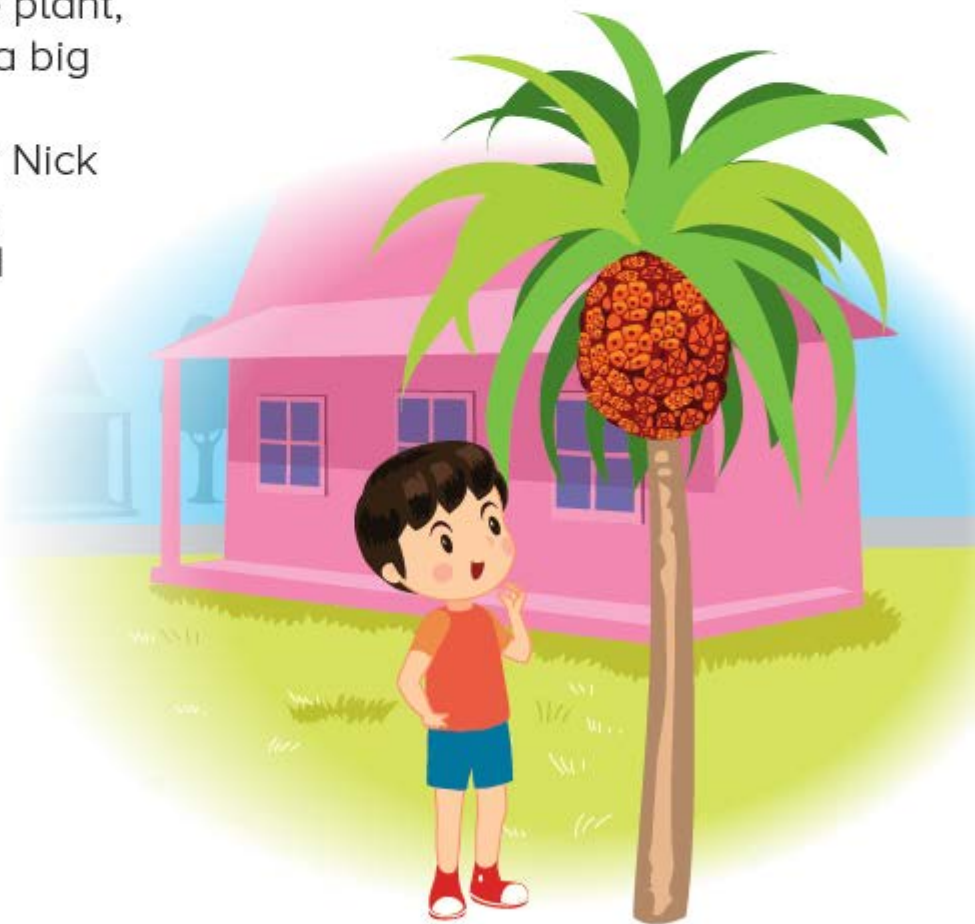
Chapter 1

One day, Nick noticed a strange plant in the garden. He was sure it hadn't been there before. It was very large, and it had a big yellow fruit hanging down from it. The fruit looked like a pineapple.

'I know that's *not* a pineapple,' thought Nick. He had learned about pineapples at school, and he knew that they grew from the top of a small shrub. 'But if it's not a pineapple, what is it?'

Reaching out to touch the plant, Nick got a big surprise.

'Ouch!' Nick said. The plant had cut him.



'It looks like a pineapple,' thought Nick, 'and it cuts like a knife. This plant is a real mystery. I'm going to find out what it is, and I know who can help me.'

Shouting loudly, Nick called to his sister: 'Meg!'

She didn't answer. Then Nick remembered – Meg was camping with her friends. She wouldn't be back all week.

'OK,' thought Nick. 'I'm on my own. But I won't let that stop me.' Nick decided to investigate. He was good at investigating.



He read lots of books and looked on the internet. He found out that the plant was called a screw pine.

'I wonder where it came from,' thought Nick. He had no idea.