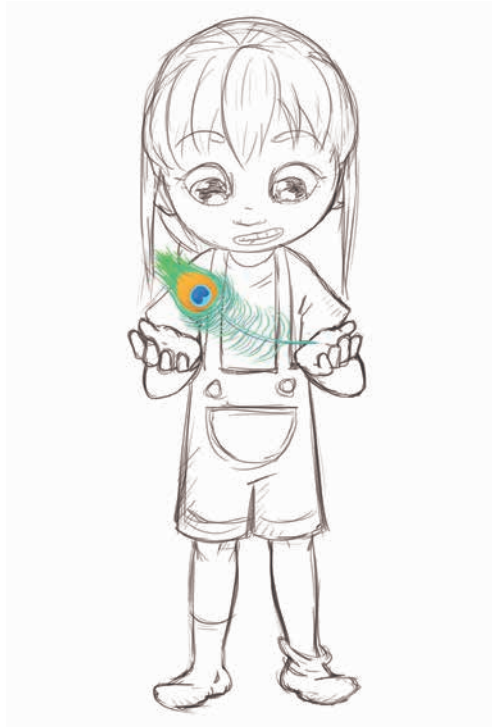


The Day the Thoughts Got Stuck



Ingrid Klass

Illustrated by Christopher Tice

Royal Fireworks Press
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For Dan,
with love

Other books by Ingrid Klass:

The Day the Thought Bubbles Got in the Way

The Circle of Happiness

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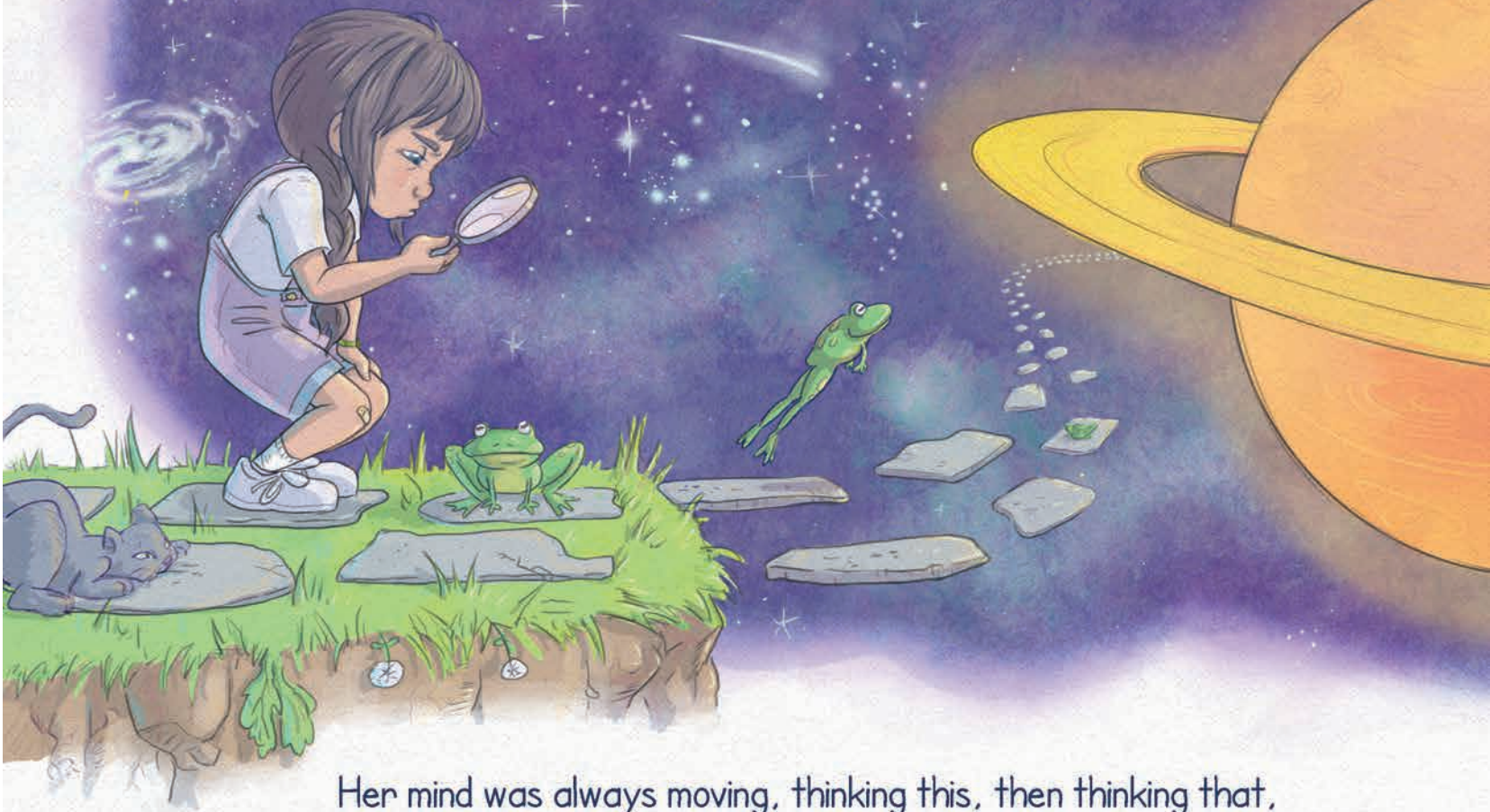
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Chapter One

Rosa's mind was busy, always thinking lots of things.
Like how to find the greenest frog or skip on Saturn's rings.



Her mind was always moving, thinking this, then thinking that,
Like if she could live on the moon or learn to speak in cat.



Some thoughts in Rosa's busy mind would pop in, then pop out. Sometimes they popped in quietly; sometimes they loved to shout. "Is that a star?" or "Yuck, wet socks!" her busy mind might say. All sorts of thoughts would bubble as she went about her day.



But Rosa noticed that some thoughts had quite a different style;
Instead of popping in and out, some thoughts would stay a while.
They might be soft, they might be loud, but all were tough and tricky.
These sorts of thoughts refused to budge—they were too fixed and sticky.



These stubborn thoughts would sit upon
her head like stale old glue,
And there they'd stick throughout the day
while other thoughts passed through.
Sometimes these tricky, sticky thoughts
would be so captivating:
"Let's skip my dentist visit and instead
go roller skating!"

But other times these sticky thoughts were full of mad or dread:

"I'm absolutely certain there's a spider in my bed!"

All sorts of wishes, hopes or fears, and angry feelings too

Would sometimes glom on Rosa's head and stick like gloppy goo.



And so it was, one day, when Rosa daydreamed in the sun,
Her thoughts popped in and then popped out—some boring, others fun.
But in there strolled a sticky thought—a thought that came and sat.
It stayed there on her head just like a weirdly sticky hat.

This sticky thought perched on her head; it held a new desire:
Her birthday was approaching; now she knew what she required!
A robot was her perfect gift, and not one fake but *real*—
A robot sleek and futuristic, forged of gleaming steel.





It'd have a zillion buttons, and it'd also swim and ski.
She'd program it to do her chores, then serve a round of tea!
It'd know kung-fu, would fly and sing, and bake her chocolate cake!
There's nothing that her birthday bot would not do, fix, or make.



She thought about her robot all the day and night, and then
She woke and started thinking of it all over again.

She brushed her teeth,



she drew a star,



she went outside to swing,



And all the while that thought stuck fast
like socks with static cling.

The more that Rosa dreamed about this present she pursued,
The more the thought got sticky, and the more the thought got glued.
This sticky thought stuck to her head, and there it did remain.
"My birthday bot is all I want; no gift would be the same!"



The night before her birthday, Rosa hardly slept a wink.
The bot was on her mind—the only thought that she could think.
“Tomorrow you’ll be mine,” she told the thought stuck on her head.
“I’ll finally have a robot! Do you want to be named Fred?”



Chapter Two

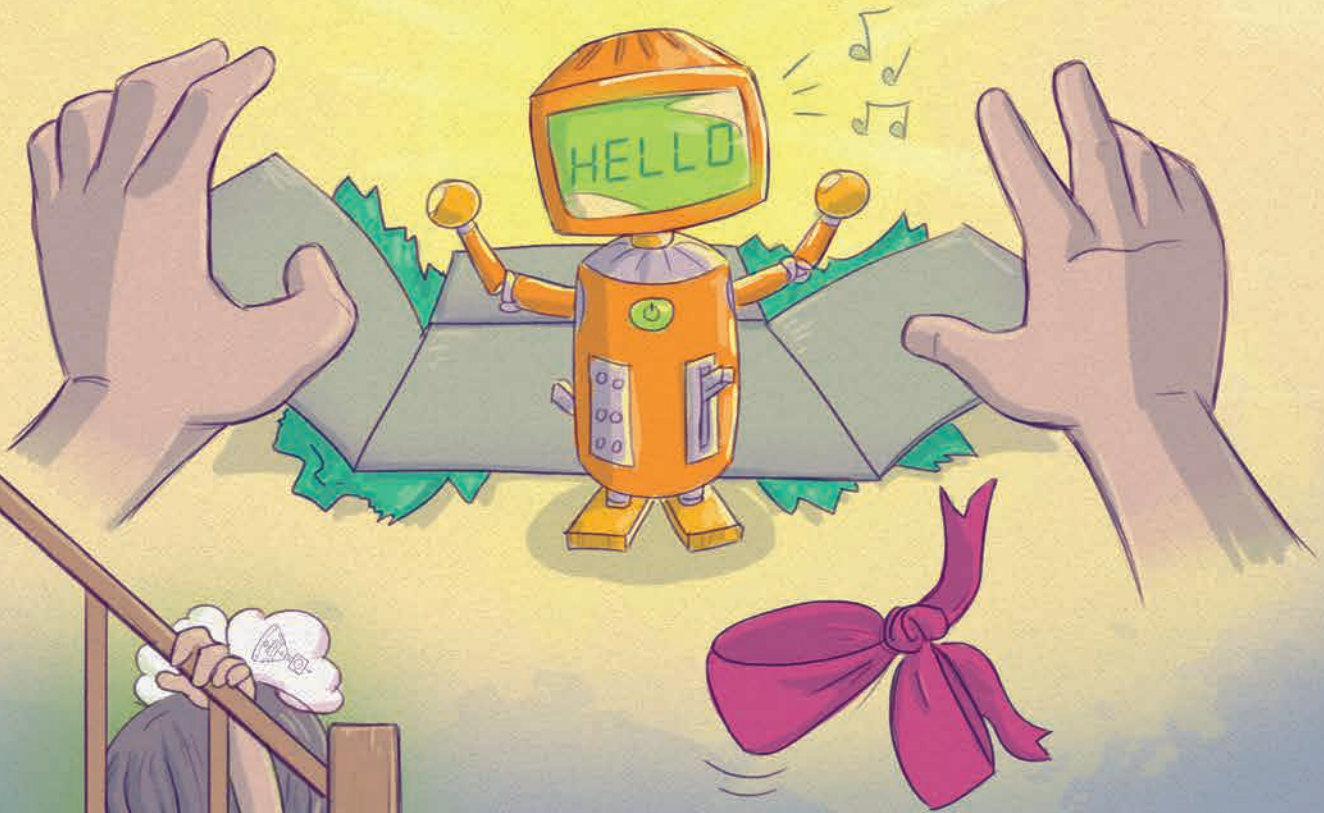
The morning came; it was the day; her birthday had arrived.
When Rosa woke, she rushed downstairs; she would not be deprived!



"Oh Fred!" she cried. "It's time to see the cool stuff you can do....
But wait, what's this? Is *this* is my gift? But Fred, this isn't you."



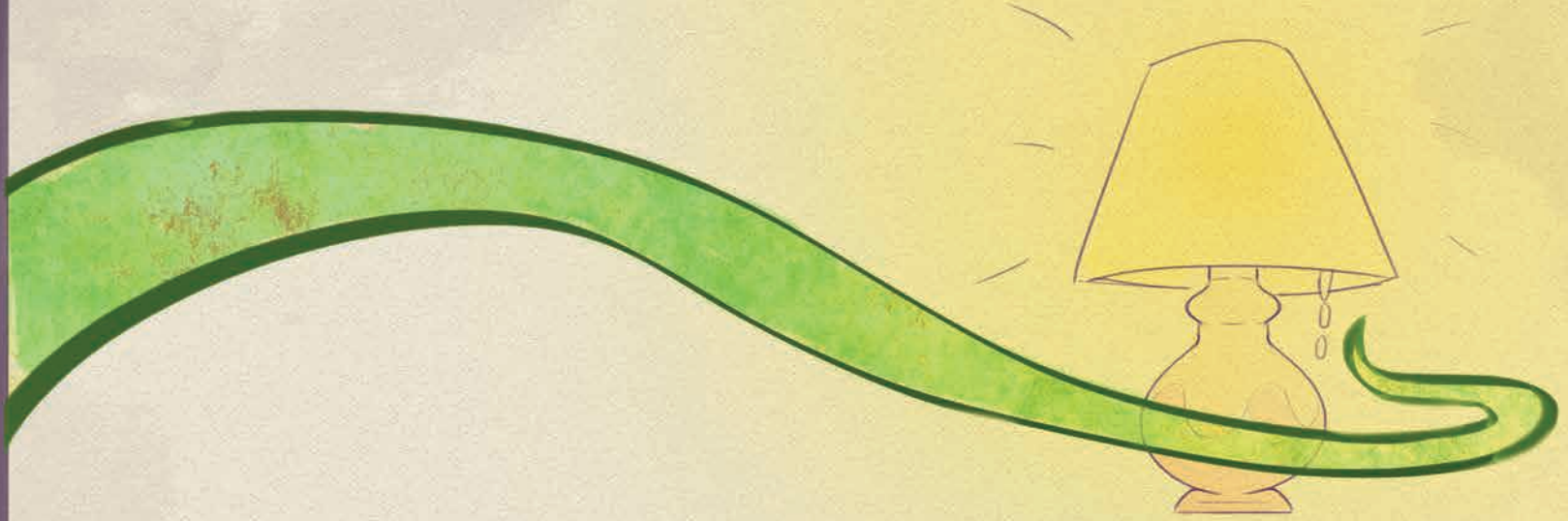
It was not Fred. It was a bot, and one quite new and sleek,
With buttons, levers, lights and sounds, and all that's really neat.
Alas, that sticky, tricky thought made Rosa frown and pout.
"I wanted Fred, not this lame thing!" she almost hollered out.



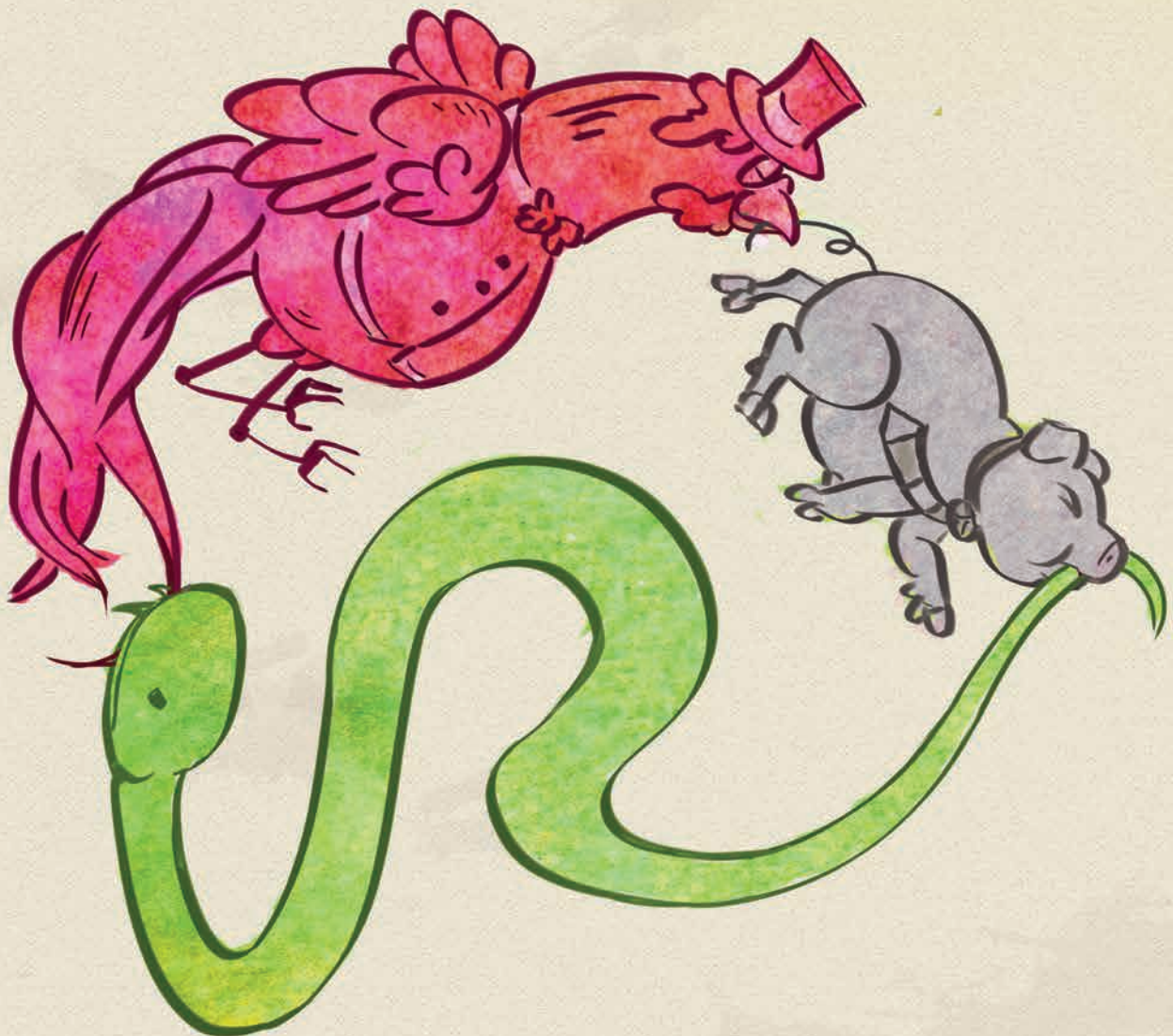
Instead she said half-heartedly,
"It's nice," and trudged upstairs,
And there she sat upon her floor,
her mind filled with despair.
This new toy was not good at all;
she was not pleased one bit.
The more she thought about her gift,
the more she hated it.

"This stupid bot's a hunk of junk!" she grumped around her room.
"It doesn't even swim or ski," she pouted, sulked, and fumed.
She sat there all the morning feeling wronged by her bad luck,
And as she stewed,
 that thought got glued,
 and now *two* thoughts were stuck.





"Good grief," said Rooster while the snake switched on the lamp and smirked. Pig snorted at them huffily, "Well, *your* plans didn't work!" He grabbed Snake's tail; Snake bit the bird, who cried out with a shriek. And pretty soon the three were fighting fang with snout with beak.



While chasing, racing, round and round, each argued he was right.

"Hate's best!" hissed Snake. "No, greed!" clucked Rooster.

Pig oinked, "Get the light!"

They whirled, they twirled, they bounced, they pounced,
they bickered all the while,

Till Rosa hollered, "Stop!" and down they toppled in a pile.



"It's just no use," she said. "I guess these thoughts are here to stay."
But then she wondered if there maybe was another way.
The instant that she had this thought, she heard a gentle knock,
And through her bedroom door there walked a beautiful...

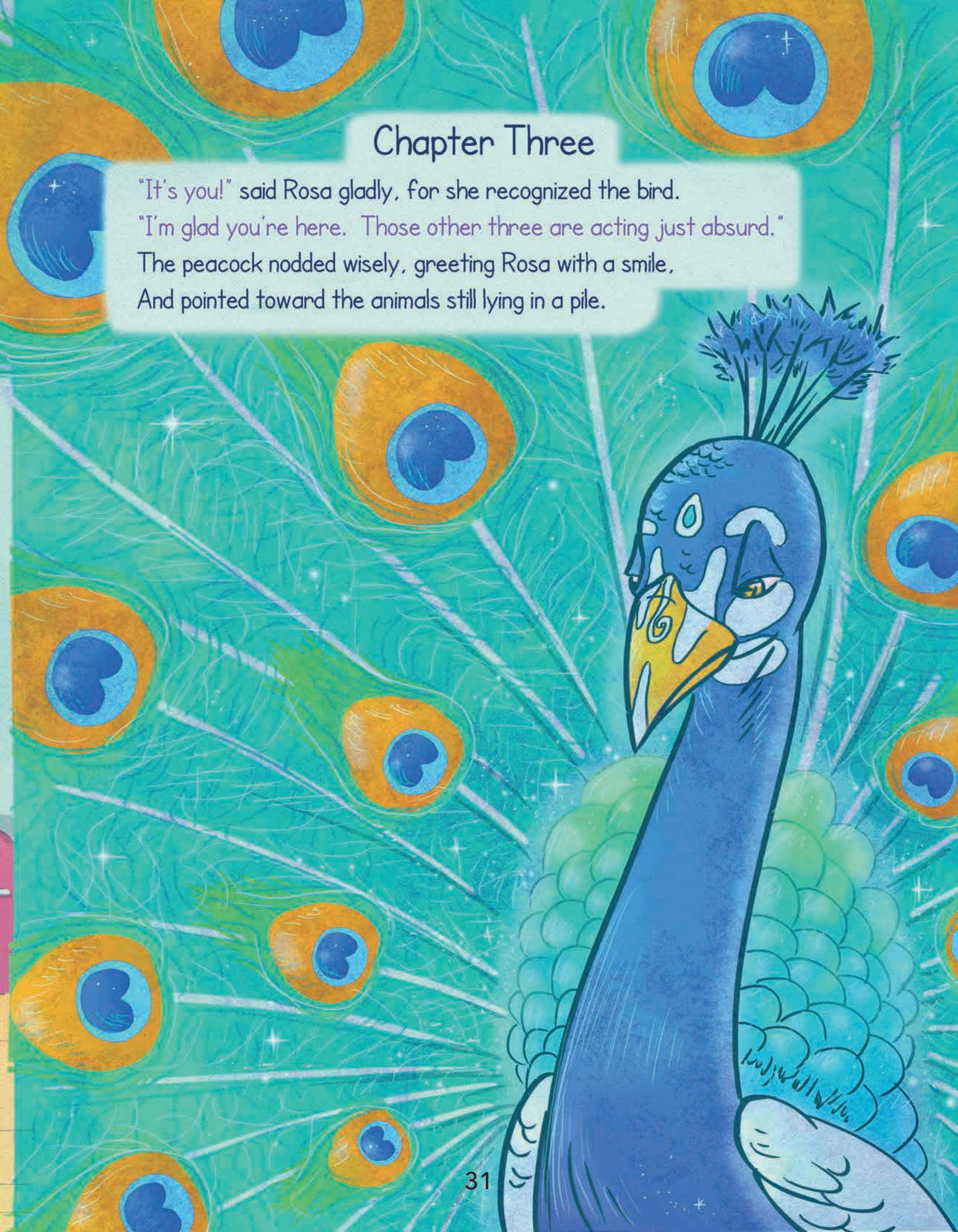


PEACOCK!



Chapter Three

"It's you!" said Rosa gladly, for she recognized the bird.
"I'm glad you're here. Those other three are acting just absurd."
The peacock nodded wisely, greeting Rosa with a smile,
And pointed toward the animals still lying in a pile.



"Did they say they would help you try to move your thoughts along?"
Said Rosa, "Yes, but not one could; all three of them were wrong.
The snake said hate one thought away; the bird said hold one tight;
And see that pig? Well, *his* idea was turning out the light!



But nothing worked, so I'm still feeling angry and upset
About the bot I don't want and the bot I didn't get.
I can't stop feeling grouchy, even though I know I should,
And now these sticky, tricky thoughts are stuck on me for good."



"By knowing," Peacock sagely said, "why sticky thoughts arise,
You *can* unstick those tricky thoughts by being clear and wise.
I'm not surprised that those three fools weren't any help to you.
The reason they can't free the thoughts is that *they are the glue!*"

An Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy:

Thinking about Thinking

For the Child and Parent or Teacher to Read Together

Have you ever had a thought stuck in your head—a thought that would not go away, even if you wanted it to? Maybe the sticky thought was about something great, like how much fun you expected to have playing with your friend or your grandma’s delicious cookies. Maybe that sticky thought was about something *not* great, like how you were teased on the playground or how you need a shot at your next doctor’s appointment. Whether about the past or the future, something wonderful or unpleasant, there are some thoughts that seem superglued in our minds.

Long ago, a philosopher called the Buddha was interested in the sticky thoughts that we all have. He noticed that they come in two varieties: thoughts about what we want (he called these *desires*) and thoughts about what we do *not* want (he called these *aversions*). That thought about your grandma’s cookies? That is a desire. That thought about getting a shot? That is an aversion.

The Buddha said that we do not realize how these sticky thoughts, filled with our desires and aversions, affect us. He said they cause us to feel unhappy. The reason that we have negative emotions such as sadness, anger, fear, jealousy, or boredom is because of these thoughts stuck in our heads.

Why do sticky thoughts cause us to be unhappy? The Buddha said it is because our thoughts do not, and cannot, always come true in real life. Maybe our grandma did not have time to make cookies. Maybe we need a shot to stay healthy. When our sticky thoughts do not match up with what actually happens, we get upset. The more we hang onto those sticky thoughts and compare them to reality, the more unhappy with reality we feel.

Sometimes, of course, we *do* get what we want, and we *do* succeed in avoiding what we do not want. Our sticky thought comes true! Even then, the Buddha said, holding onto that sticky thought will make us unhappy. Change is the only sure part of life, he said, and no desire or aversion can be permanently satisfied. We cannot eat cookies forever! Pretty soon we will want, or not want, something else, and then *that* thought will get stuck, and the cycle will continue.

The Buddha said the key to happiness is understanding why thoughts get stuck and learning to *unstick* them. Unfortunately, we tend to think that happiness comes from getting what we want and avoiding what we don't. We are ignorant about how our sticky thoughts affect our feelings. This is why he called ignorance, desire, and aversion the "three poisons" or the "three roots." All of our negative emotions are caused by these three basic problems. Later, people made up animal symbols for each poison. The snake became the symbol for what we do *not* want (aversions), the rooster became the symbol for what we *do* want (desires), and the pig was used to symbolize our ignorance. Chasing one another in a circle, these

three animals were placed at the center of the Buddhist Wheel of Life (the *Bhavachakra*) that depicts the cycle of suffering.

What do we do about the snake, rooster, and pig—these three causes of unhappiness? The Buddha taught that each “poison” has an antidote. The antidotes can help us unstuck our thoughts so that we can make the best of the present moment with a calm and even mind. The antidote for thoughts stuck on our heads by aversion (the snake) is kindness and compassion. The antidote for thoughts stuck on by desire (the rooster) is generosity. The antidote for not knowing why we have unhappy emotions in the first place (our ignorance, the pig) is wisdom.

Noticing our sticky thoughts and using the antidotes to unstick them takes practice. The more we practice, the more we are learning *mindfulness*. Mindfulness means becoming aware of our thoughts and how they affect our feelings and our experience of the world. As we become more mindful, we become wiser and more enlightened. The peacock in Buddhism is a symbol of this wisdom and enlightenment.

About the Buddha

The Buddha was a philosopher, a teacher, and the founder of an order of spiritual seekers who lived in India almost 2,500 years ago. The Buddha is not a name but a title. The man we think of as the Buddha was named Siddhartha Gautama when he was born. After he grew up and became a great thinker, his followers called him *the Buddha*. It means “the one who woke up.”