QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

The Wind and the Sun



Book 7 · For Lara and Zac



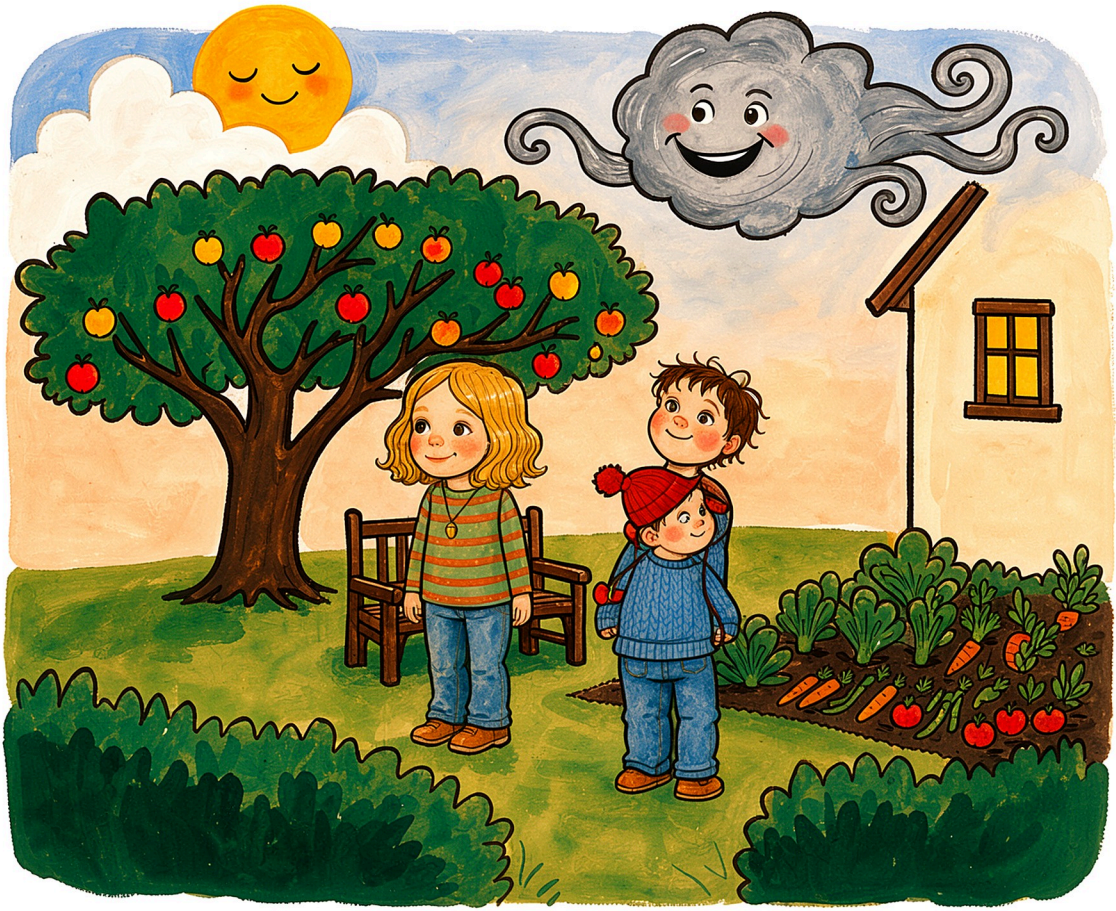
When the lamp goes warm and the garden goes quiet, Ponder comes out to wonder.

> That afternoon had been the windiest of the whole autumn. Leaves everywhere. And Zac had worn his red woolly bobble hat all day long, pulled right down over his ears.



Up in the sky, the Wind puffed out his cheeks. “I’m the strongest thing in the whole world!”

> He had blown three leaves off the apple tree, two bottle tops off Pip’s pile and one sock off the washing line. “Nothing can stand up to me,” he boasted.



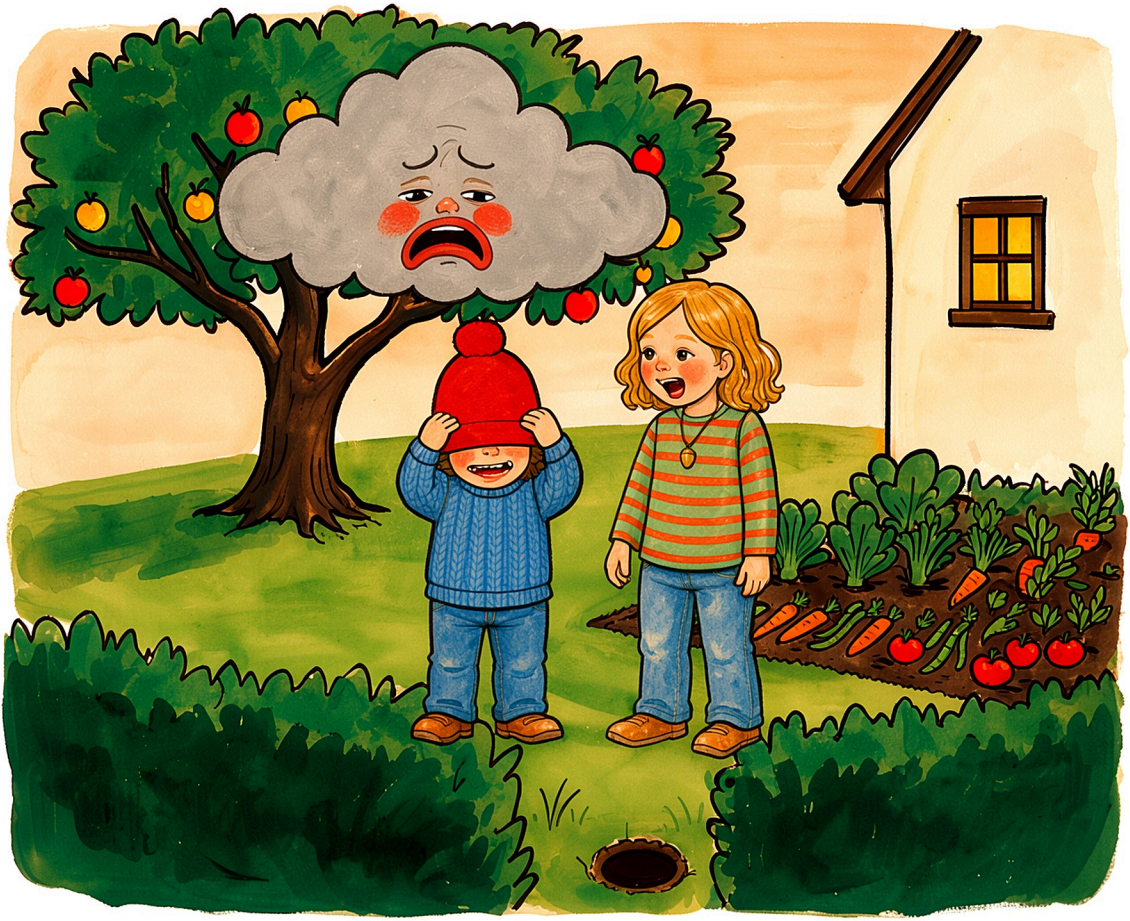
“Oh, I don’t know,” said the Sun, peeping out from behind a cloud.

The Sun was round and warm and not in any kind of hurry. “Shall we have a contest?” she said. “Whoever can get Zac’s hat off is the strongest.” “Easy-peasy,” said the Wind.



The Wind blew and he blew.
“**Whoooosh! Hold on tight!**”

> Leaves whirled round and round. The washing flapped and snapped. Pip went tumbling across the lawn, tail over beak. Lara hugged the apple tree.



The harder the Wind blew, the tighter Zac held on. "**Whoooosh! Hold on tight!**"

> Zac pulled his hat down over his ears. Then over his eyebrows. Then right down over his nose. "I can't see anything," said Zac, "but my hat is still ON." And the Wind huffed until he ran out of puff.



Then the Sun came out. She shone and she shone, warm and gentle.

> The leaves stopped whirling. The washing stopped flapping. Pip fluffed out his feathers and closed his eyes. Zac pushed his hat back up so he could see. It was getting very cosy in that woolly hat. Very cosy indeed.



“Phew, I’m HOT,” said Zac, and he pulled off his hat, all by himself.

The Sun smiled. The Wind sulked behind a cloud. “That doesn’t count! He took it off himself!” Pip picked himself up off the lawn. “The Wind is still STRONGER,” he said. “He knocked me right over.”



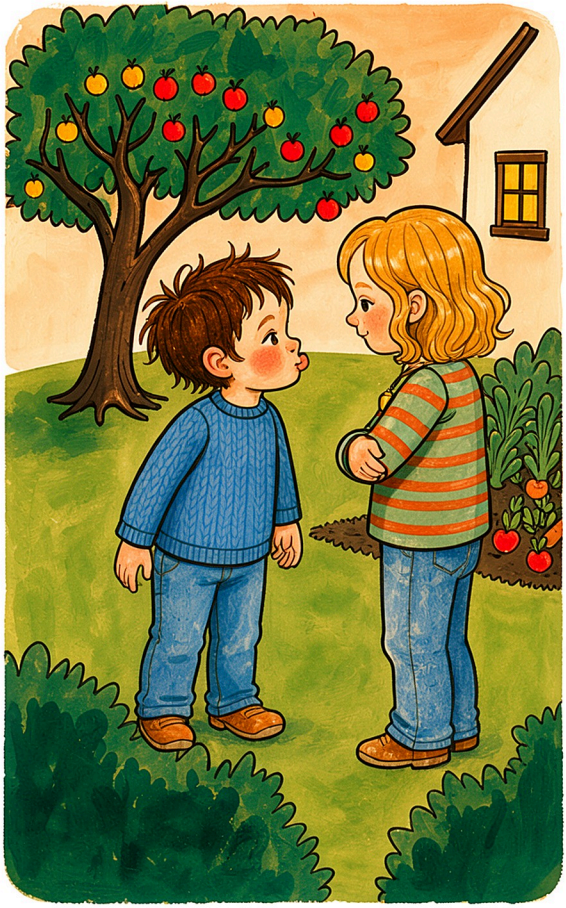
“Ponder,” said Lara, “who was stronger, the Wind or the Sun?”

> Ponder had come out of her hollow to sit in the warm. She blinked up at the Sun, and then over at the sulking cloud. “Hmm,” she said. “I wonder. What does strong mean? What do you think?”



“This happened once before,” said Ponder, “long, long ago, to a man in a cloak.”

> “A storyteller called Aesop told it. The Wind blew, and the man held his cloak tight. The Sun shone, and he took it off.” Ponder thought for a while. “But I never did find out which one was strongest.”





Zac had an idea. “I’m the Wind!” he puffed. “Now I’m the Sun!” he beamed.

When Zac was the Wind, Lara pulled her top tight and turned away. When Zac was the Sun, she gave him a big hug instead. “Being the Sun is nicer,” said Zac. “But being the Wind is LOUDER.”



At bedtime, a soft little wind went **whoooosh** round the house. Zac kept his hat on, just in case.

> "It's not trying to get your hat," said Lara. "It might be," said Zac. Outside, the Wind blew a gentle goodnight breeze through the apple tree, just to show he could be gentle too.



“Some questions are for sleeping on,” said Ponder. “Night night, Ponder.”
“Hmm. Night night. I wonder…”

> And far away behind the hills, the Sun went down, warm and slow, to shine on somebody else’s morning.

Ponder's question

Who was stronger, the Wind or the Sun?

ZAC
Be the Wind! Now be the Sun! Which one was best at getting the hat off?

LARA
Is being strong the same as winning? Can someone be gentle and strong at the same time?



Some people think...

The Wind was stronger, because he could knock Pip right over.

The Sun was stronger, because she got the hat off and the Wind couldn't.

They were strong in different ways, like a shout and a hug.

Or something else?

You're allowed to agree. You're allowed to disagree.

For grown-ups

The question: What is strength? Is it force, or is it getting things done? And is making someone do something the same as helping them want to?

Its name: Power and persuasion; force versus influence. Also the old question of whether might makes right.

Where it comes from: Aesop, "The North Wind and the Sun", in George Fyler Townsend's translation (1867), which is public domain. The question of whether the strong are simply right is argued in Plato's *Republic*, Book I.

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Did the Wind get the hat off? (Thumbs up or down.)
2. Why did Zac hold on tighter when the Wind blew?
3. Have you ever wanted to do something more because someone was nice to you? Or less, because they were bossy?
4. What if the Sun had been so hot that Zac got cross? Would she still be the strongest?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): "The Wind! It goes WHOOSH!" Little ones love loud and big. Acting both parts out lets them feel the difference without needing words for it.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds often say the Sun "won" but the Wind is "stronger", and that split is exactly the interesting bit. Ask whether winning and being strong are the same thing.

TOMORROW

Try getting a cuddly toy off the sofa two ways, by blowing as hard as you can, then by asking nicely. Which works better? Which felt better?

How to wonder together: ask, then wait. Say their words back to them. "Can you say more?" "Someone might say…" Don't say "right" or give your answer; Ponder never does. Too big for tonight? "Let's wonder about that at breakfast." (Then do.)