TEN PHILOSOPHY BEDTIME STORIES

Questions to Sleep On



For Lara and Zac



The stories

1. What's the Biggest Number?
   Is there a number so big that you can't add one more?
2. Is Bunny Real?
   Can something be pretend and real at the same time?
3. Same Puddle?
   If all the water is new, is it still the same puddle?
4. The Elephant in the Garden
   If everybody knows a different part, who is right?
5. Who Does the Moon Follow?
   Is the moon really following you?
6. Three Cherries
   What is the fair thing to do with the third cherry?
7. The Wind and the Sun
   Who was stronger, the Wind or the Sun?
8. Pip's Promise
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9. Brave Zac, Scared Zac
   Can you be brave and scared at the same time?
10. If Nobody Could See You
    If nobody could ever see you, would you still be good?

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

What's the Biggest Number?

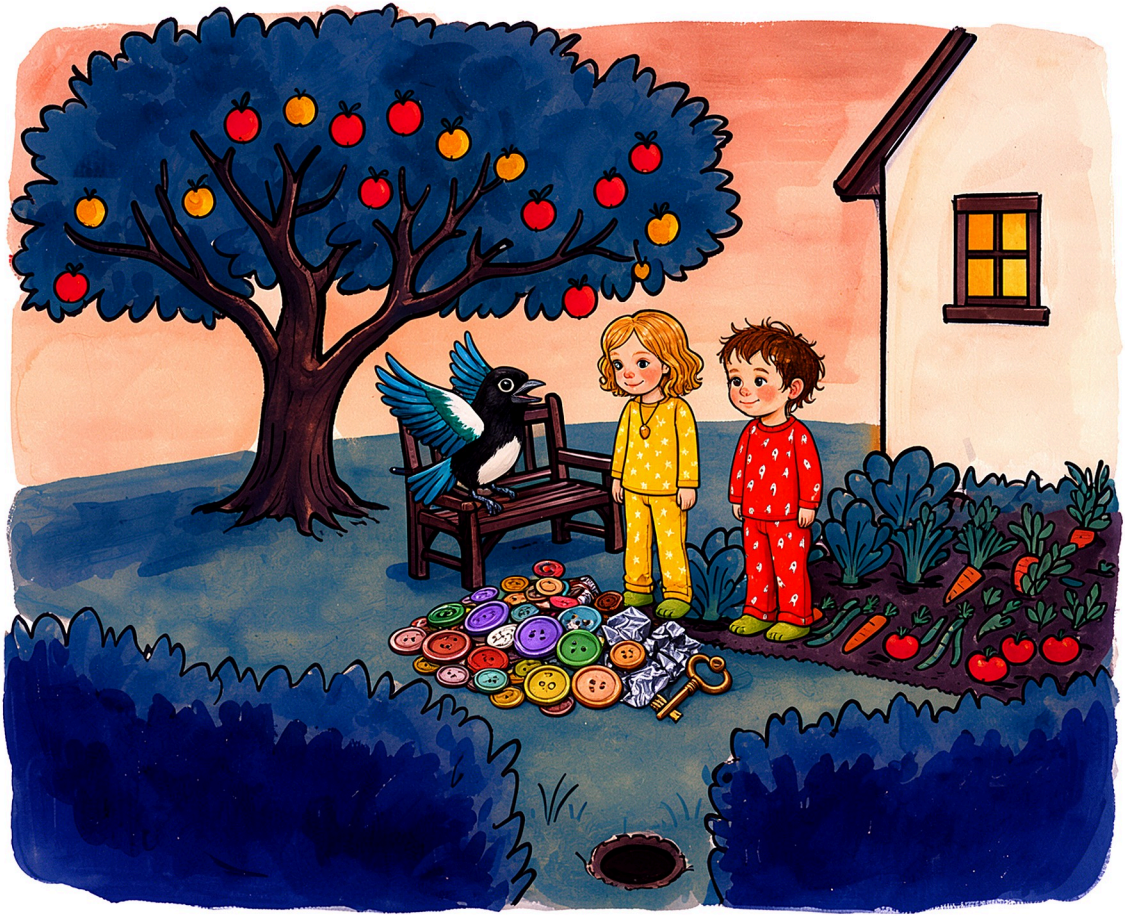


Book 1 · For Lara and Zac



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

Ponder is a tortoise. She lives in a hollow under the hedge at the bottom of the garden, and she is very, very old. Tonight, Lara and Zac pulled their wellies on over their pyjamas and went out to say hello.



Pip the magpie landed with a clatter. “I’ve got a HUNDRED shiny things,” he said.

> Bottle tops. Buttons. A key. A curl of silver foil. Pip puffed out his chest until he was nearly round. “A hundred is the biggest number there is.”



“A hundred and ONE!” said Zac, and he held up Bunny.

> Because Bunny was one more thing, obviously. Pip’s feathers went flat. He had not thought of that.



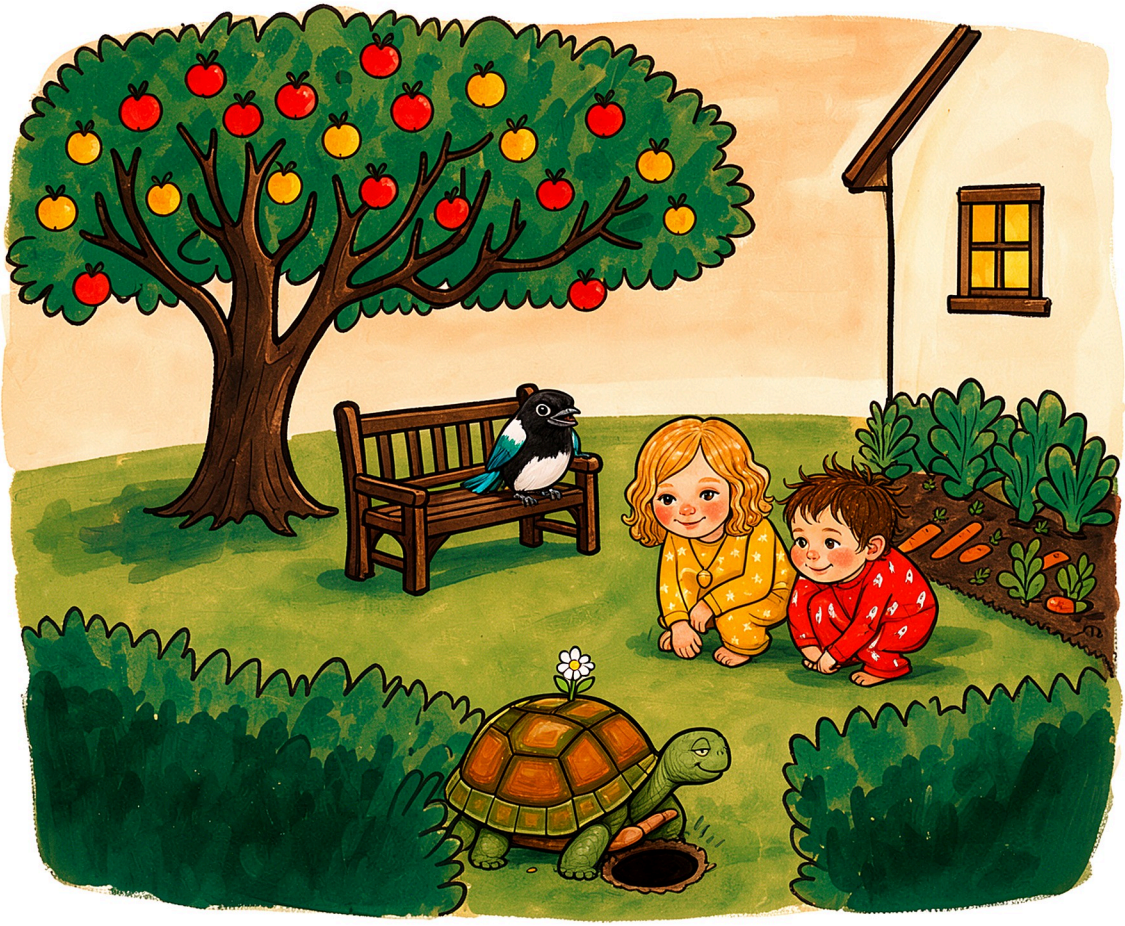
“A million is bigger,” said Lara. “A million and ONE!” said Zac.

> A million is so big that if you said one number every second, all day and all night, without stopping for breakfast, it would take you about eleven days to get there.



“A MILLION MILLION!” shouted Pip. “That’s the biggest number in the whole world.”

> Pip flapped so hard that a button fell off his pile and rolled away under the bench. Lara opened her mouth. Zac opened his mouth. But somebody else spoke first.



From under the hedge, very slowly, came Ponder. “Hmm,” she said. “**...and one more?**”

> Ponder took a long time to say anything, because she was about a hundred and fifty years old, give or take a Tuesday, and she did not like to rush.



“A million million and one!” said Zac.
“**...and one more!**” said Lara.

Pip tried a gazillion. Pip tried a squillion-zillion-trillion. And every single time, Zac said, “And one more!” Lara frowned. “Do numbers go on forever?”



“Ponder,” said Lara, “is there a number so big that you CAN’T add one more?”

Ponder blinked very slowly, once, twice. The first star came out above the apple tree. “Hmm,” said Ponder. “I wonder. What do you think?”



“Long ago,” said Ponder, “a man called Archimedes tried to count every grain of sand in the world.”

Every beach. Every desert. People told him it couldn’t be done, because sand goes on forever. “Big, yes,” said Archimedes. “But forever? Hmm.” And he found a way to write down a number bigger than all the sand.



They lay on the grass and counted the stars. One, two, three… **and one more… and one more.**

> Every time Lara thought she had counted them all, another star came out. “Maybe numbers are like stars,” she said. “They just keep going.” “Or maybe,” said Pip, “there’s a last one. And it’s MINE.”



Back in bed, Zac counted sheep. One sheep, two sheep... **and one more...**

> "Does counting go on forever?" asked Lara. "Not mine," said Zac, and he did the biggest yawn in the whole world. Or nearly the biggest. There's always one more.



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

> Outside, the stars kept on coming out, one more and one more and one more, all night long.

Ponder's question

Is there a number so big that you can't add one more?

ZAC
Show me with your arms how big the biggest number is. Now... and one more?

LARA
If you counted forever, would you ever get to the end? How do you know?



Some people think...

There must be *a* biggest number, because everything stops somewhere.

There isn't one. You can always add one more, so numbers go on forever.

The biggest number is the one you get to when you're too sleepy to count.

Or something else?

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

For grown-ups

The question: Is there a biggest number, or do numbers go on forever? And what would "forever" even mean?

Its name: Infinity. The "and one more" argument; Aristotle's distinction between potential and actual infinity.

Where it comes from: Archimedes, *The Sand Reckoner* (3rd century BC; T. L. Heath's translation, 1897, is public domain). Archimedes did not claim the sand was infinite. He showed it was finite but enormous, which is a nice twist to keep in your pocket. Aristotle, *Physics* Book III, on potential infinity.

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Is a million bigger than a hundred? (Thumbs up or down.)
2. Why can Pip never win the game?
3. Have you ever tried to count something that kept on going?
4. What if you counted forever and ever? Would you be finished?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): "A hundred and one!", or "Bunny number!" Little ones often think the biggest number is the biggest word they know. Play the "and one more" game rather than correcting them.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds often spot the pattern ("you can always add one") and then get stuck on whether "infinity" is a number. Mathematicians argued about exactly that for two thousand years.

TOMORROW

Build a tower of blocks. Could we ever add the very last block? What stops us, the numbers or the ceiling?

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.)

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

Is Bunny Real?



Book 2 · For Lara and Zac



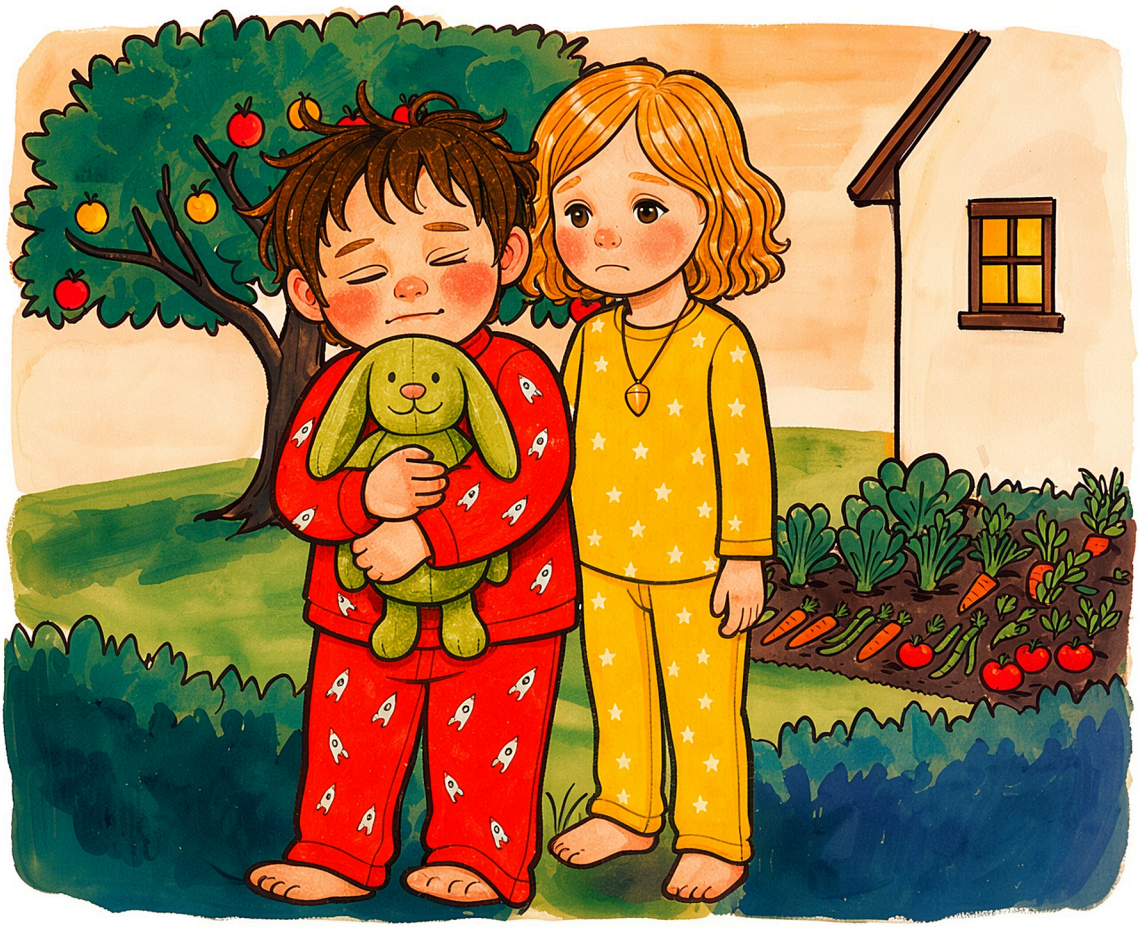
When the lamp goes warm and the garden goes quiet, Ponder comes out to wonder.

> Bunny always came too. Bunny came everywhere. Bunny had been to the beach, and the doctor's, and once, by mistake, inside the washing machine.



Zac sat Bunny on the bench. “Bunny is hungry,” he said, and gave him a twig carrot.

> Lara shook her head. “Bunny can’t be hungry. Bunny is just a toy. He isn’t real.” Zac stared at her as if she had said something terrible.



Zac hugged Bunny tight. “**Bunny is REAL!**” he said, very loudly.

> “Bunny has ears,” said Zac. “Bunny has a nose. Bunny sleeps in my bed. So there.” And he turned Bunny round so Bunny couldn’t hear any more.



Pip hopped closer. “Let’s test him. Real things eat. Eat this worm, Bunny!”

Bunny didn’t eat the worm. Bunny didn’t even look at the worm. “See?” said Pip. “Not real.” “Bunny doesn’t LIKE worms,” said Zac. Which was fair enough.



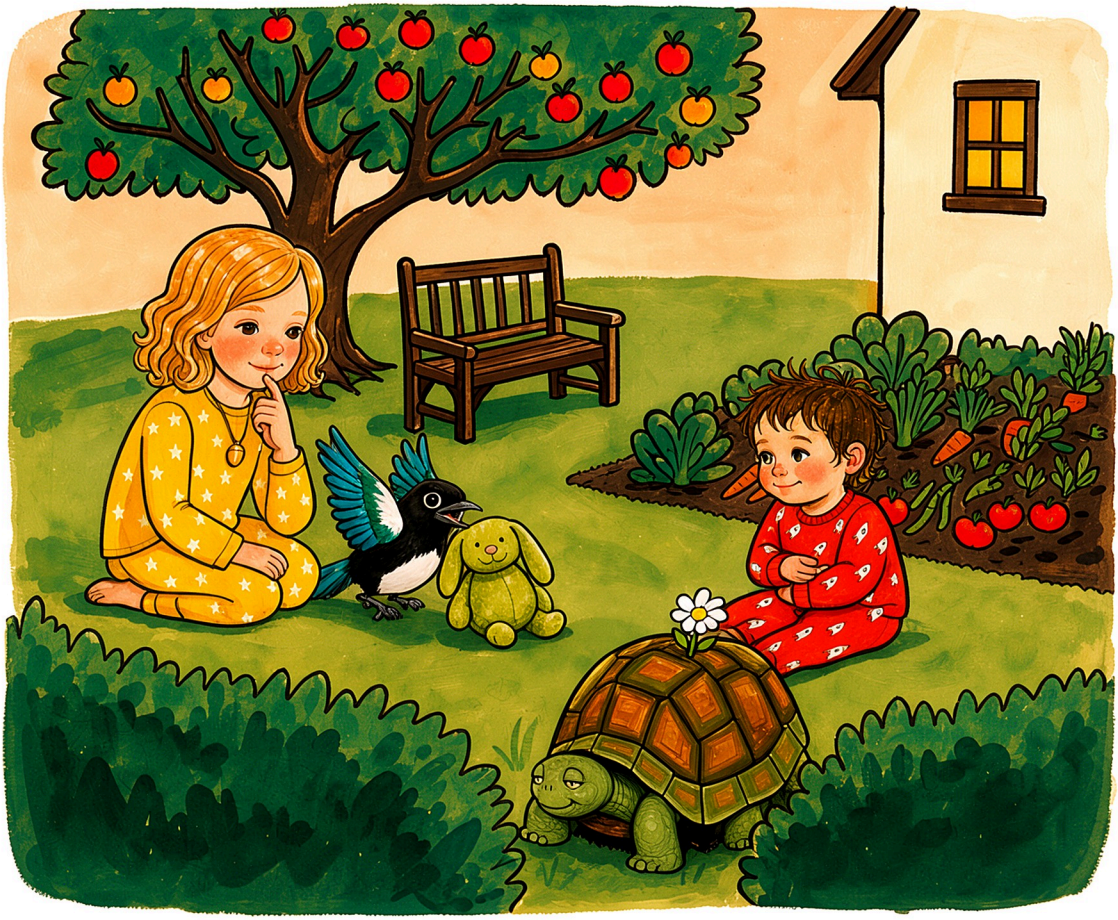
Then something hopped out from under the hedge. A real, wild rabbit!

> It was brown and soft, with a twitchy nose and twitchy whiskers. It nibbled the grass. It scratched its ear with its back foot. Then it looked at Bunny, green and floppy and still. And Bunny looked at it.



“THAT one is real,” whispered Lara. “It eats. It hops. It breathes.”

> “Bunny can’t hop,” said Pip. “Bunny can’t breathe.” Zac held Bunny up to the wild rabbit. “**Bunny is REAL!**” he said. “He’s just a different kind of real.”



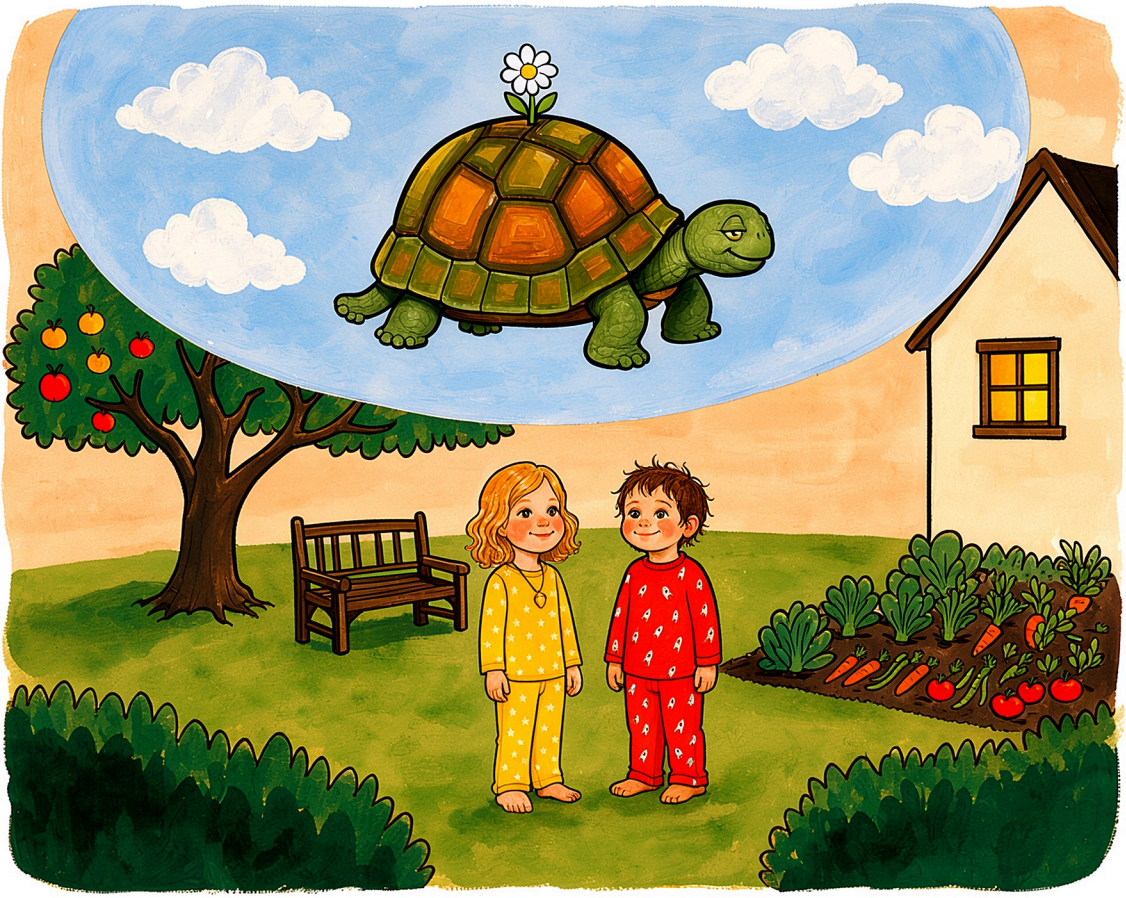
Slowly, slowly, Ponder came out of her hollow. “Hmm,” she said. “What does real mean?”

> The wild rabbit hopped away into the hedge. Lara thought hard. “Real means… you can touch it?” “I can touch Bunny,” said Zac. Pip touched Bunny with his beak, just to check. He could.



“Ponder,” said Lara, “is Bunny real? Or is he just pretend?”

> Ponder blinked one very slow blink. “Hmm,” she said. “I wonder. Can something be pretend and real at the same time? What do you think?”



“Last night I dreamed I could fly,” said Ponder. “Was my dream real?”

> “No,” said Lara. “Yes,” said Zac. “It was a real dream.” Ponder nodded slowly. “And the stories you hear at bedtime,” she said. “Are they real?” Lara opened her mouth, then shut it again. That was a tricky one.



Lara looked at Bunny for a long time. Bunny looked back with his stitched smile.

> “Bunny is a real toy,” said Lara slowly. “And a pretend rabbit. Maybe that’s a kind of real.” “Pretend,” said Pip. “Real,” said Zac. Ponder said nothing at all.



Back in bed, Zac tucked Bunny under the quilt. “**Bunny is REAL!**” he whispered.

> “Real enough to cuddle,” said Lara. She leaned over and gave Bunny a goodnight kiss on the nose. Just in case.



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

> Down in the hedge, the wild rabbit was fast asleep. Up in bed, Bunny was fast asleep too. Or maybe he was just pretending.

Ponder's question

Is Bunny real?

ZAC

Point to something real in the picture. Now point to something pretend. Is Bunny real, or pretend?

LARA

Can something be pretend and real at the same time? How?



Some people think...

Bunny isn't real, because he can't eat or breathe or hop.

Bunny is real, because you can touch him and hug him and he's right here.

Bunny is a real toy and a pretend rabbit, both at once.

Or something else?

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

For grown-ups

The question: What makes something real? Being alive, being something you can touch, mattering to someone, or something else?

Its name: Appearance and reality; the real and the pretend. Philosophers call questions about what exists ontology.

Where it comes from: An original story. Children as young as three can usually tell pretend from real in play (see Paul Harris's research on imagination), so Zac isn't confused and doesn't need correcting. This is a puzzle to share, not a mistake to fix.

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Is the wild rabbit real? Is Bunny? (Thumbs up or down for each.)
2. Why did Lara say Bunny wasn't real?
3. Have you ever had a dream that felt real?
4. What if Bunny could talk? Would that make him more real?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): "Bunny is REAL!", said with total conviction. Ask what makes him real rather than arguing. Three-year-olds often mean "he matters to me", which is a perfectly good kind of real.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds often reach for tests (breathing, eating, moving). Then ask whether a dream is real, or a story. Tests that work for rabbits may not work for everything.

TOMORROW

Sort a pile of things into real, pretend and not sure. Try a toy, a photo, a shadow, a drawing of a cat and a reflection in a spoon.

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.)

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

Same Puddle?



Book 3 · For Lara and Zac



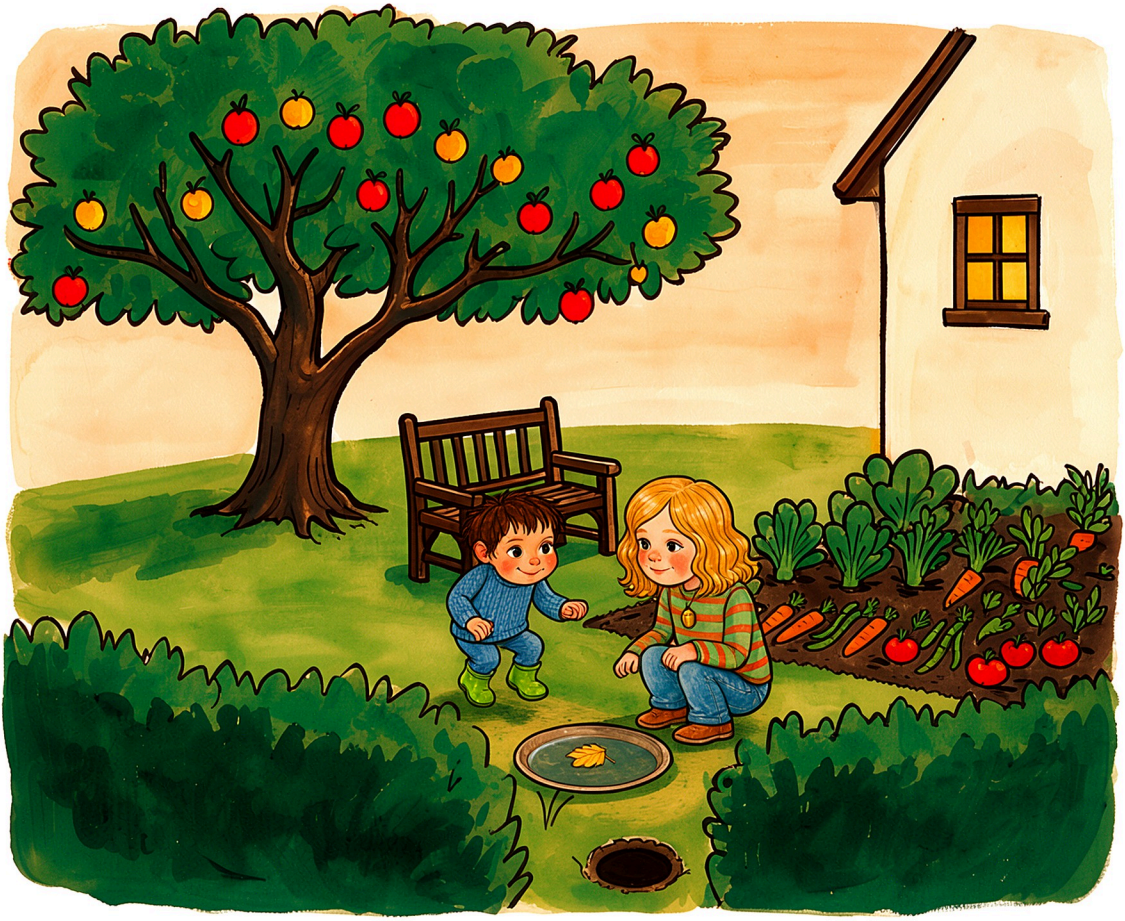
When the lamp goes warm and the garden goes quiet, Ponder comes out to wonder.

> Tonight there was a puddle. Not just any puddle. Zac's puddle. He had been jumping in it for three whole days.



On Monday it rained, and a puddle came, right in the middle of the path. **Splash!**

> It was a brilliant puddle. Round and brown and deep enough to splash right up to your knees. Zac named it Puddle, because that was what it was.



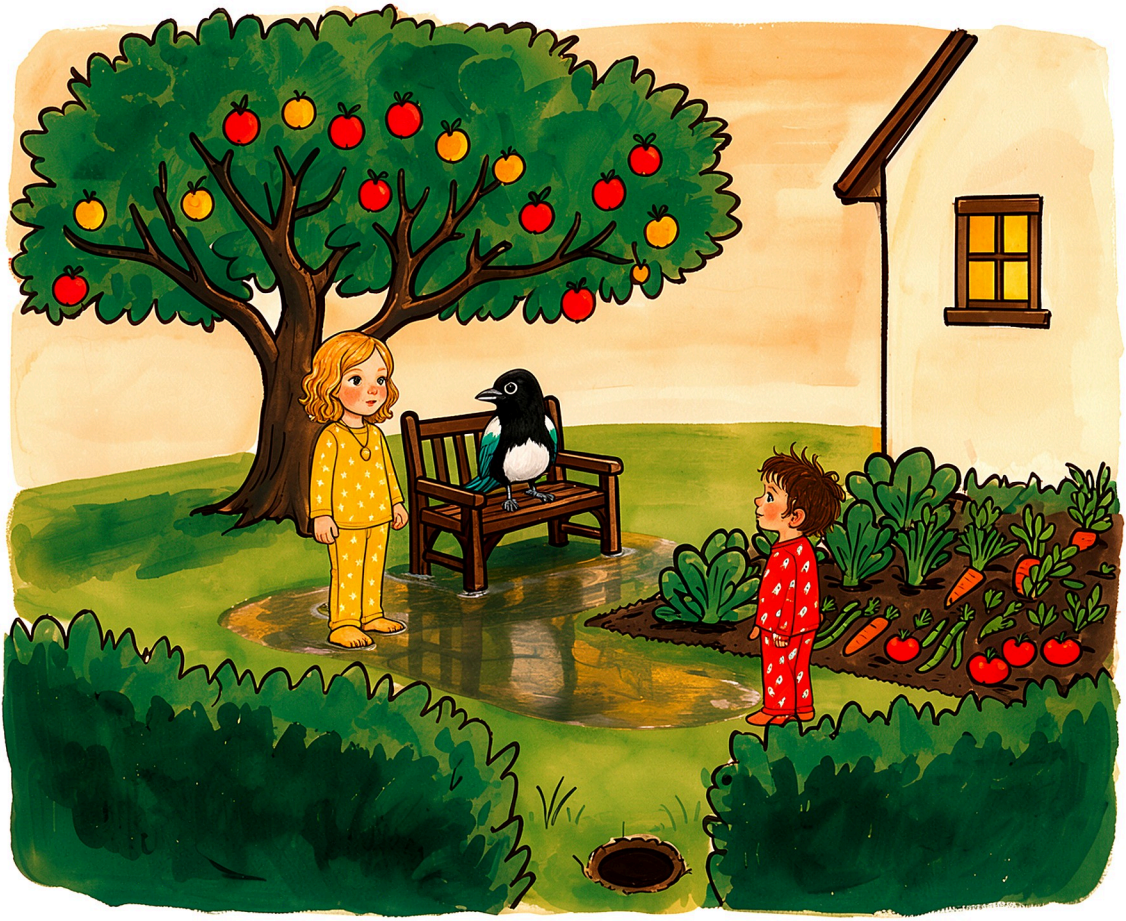
On Tuesday the sun came out, and Puddle shrank. “**Splash! Same puddle!**” said Zac.

> Now Puddle was only as big as a dinner plate, and the splash was only a small one. A yellow leaf floated in the middle, like a tiny boat.



On Wednesday it rained again, and Puddle grew ENORMOUS. “**Splash! Same puddle!**”

> Now Puddle reached all the way to the bench. It had a new wiggly edge and a new long arm. And the yellow leaf had sailed right over to the side.



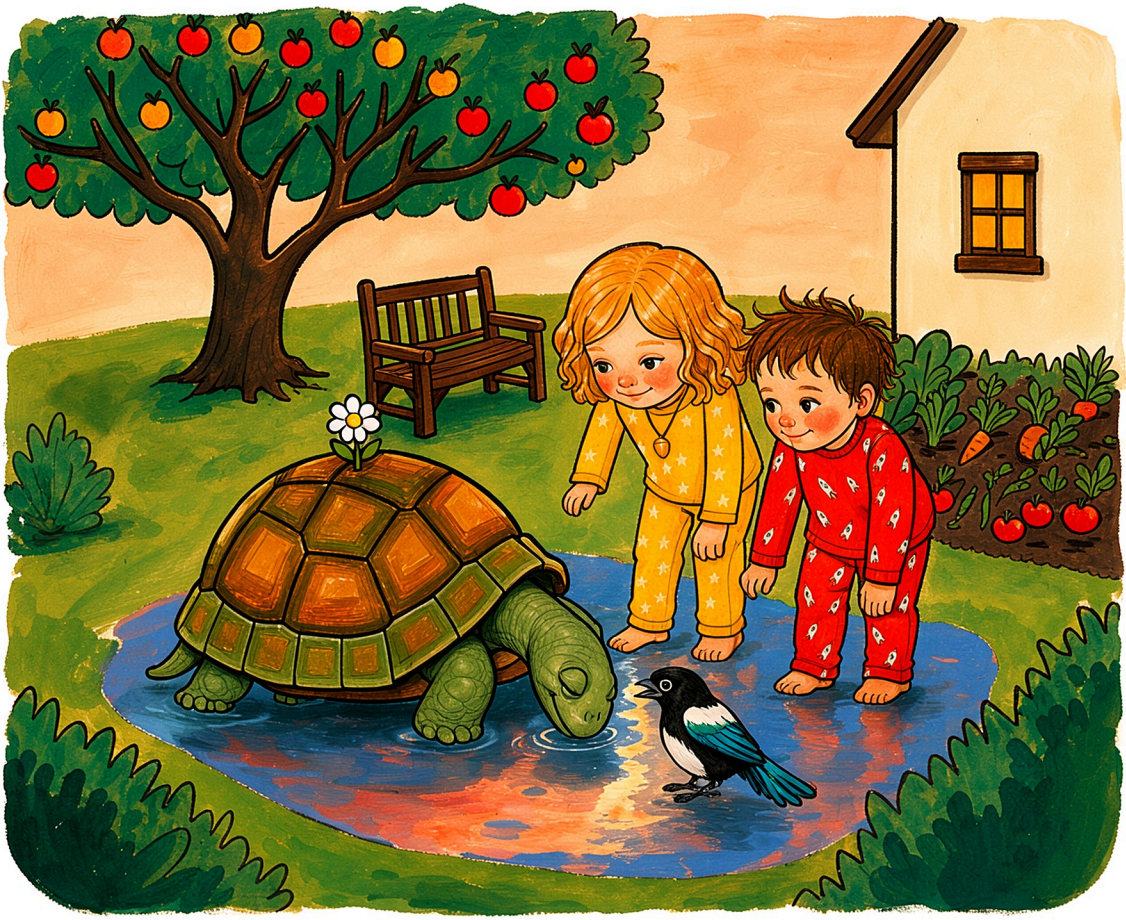
That evening, Pip landed on the bench. “That’s not the same puddle,” he said. “It’s a NEW one.”

> “The Monday water dried up in the sun,” said Pip. “This is all new water, from new rain. New water, new puddle. Simple.” He looked very pleased with himself.



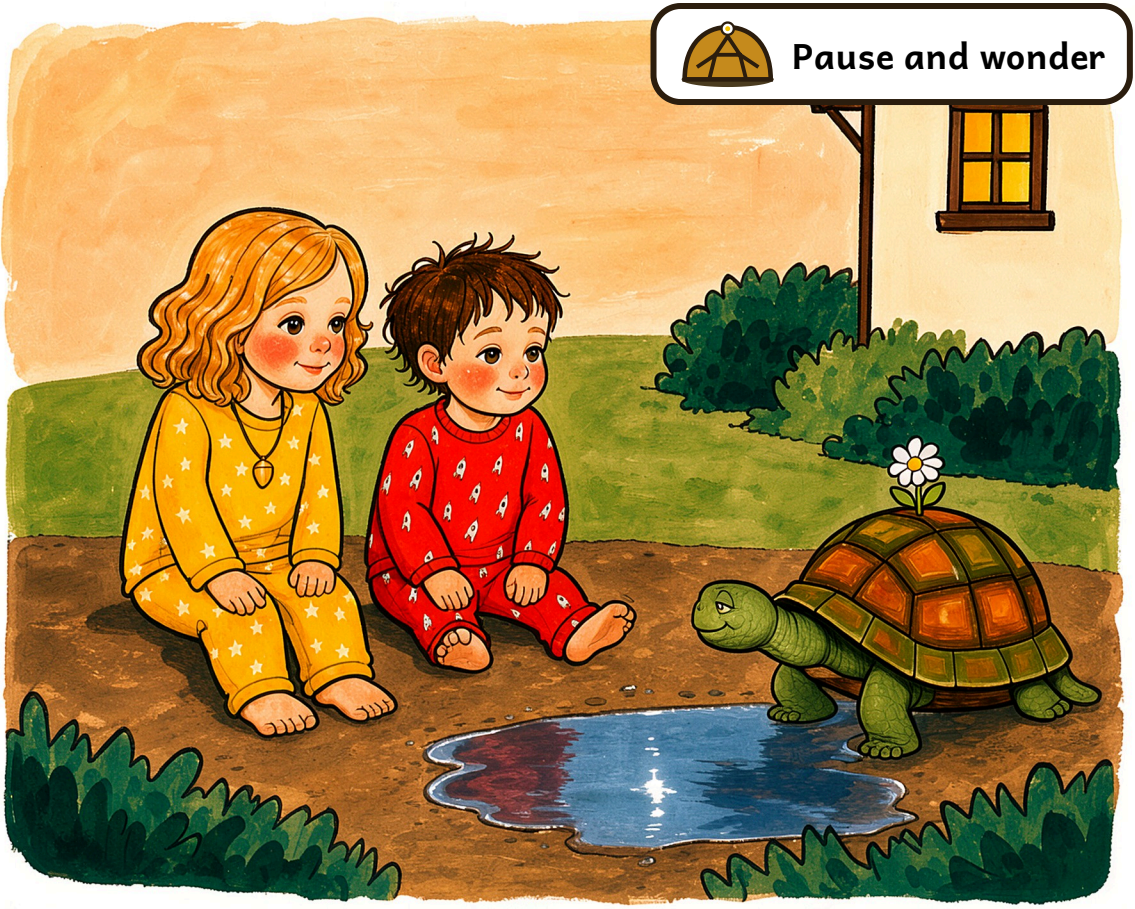
“It IS the same puddle,” said Zac. “It’s in the same place. It’s MY puddle.”

Lara looked. It was in the same place. But it was a different size, and a different shape, and the leaf had moved. “Hmm,” said Lara, who sometimes sounded a bit like Ponder. “Same place. Different water.”



Slowly, slowly, Ponder came down the path and dipped her nose in. “Hmm,” she said. “**Same puddle?**”

She took a long, slow sip. Everybody waited. “Tastes like puddle,” said Ponder at last. Which did not help at all.



“Ponder,” said Lara, “is it the same puddle, or a new one?”

> Ponder lifted her dripping nose. “Hmm,” she said. “I wonder. If all the water is new… then what is it that stays the same?” She looked at Zac. “What do you think?”



“Long ago,” said Ponder, “a man called Heraclitus said you can’t step in the same river twice.”

> “Because the water keeps flowing away,” said Ponder, “and new water keeps coming. And because you keep changing too.” Lara looked at her feet. Zac looked at his feet. They seemed the same.



Zac stepped into the puddle with one welly. Then the other. “**Splash! Same puddle?**”

> “Different water,” said Pip. “Same splash,” said Zac. Lara laughed. “Same Zac?” Zac looked down at his muddy pyjamas. “Muddier Zac,” he said.



After his bath, Zac was pink and clean and fluffy. “Same Zac?” asked Lara.

> Zac thought about it. His mud had gone down the plughole. His hair stuck up like a dandelion. “Same Zac,” he said. “Cleaner.” And he climbed into bed with Bunny.



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

Outside, the rain began again, very softly. Pitter. Patter. Filling up the puddle. Or a new one. Or the same one.

Ponder's question

Is it the same puddle?

ZAC

Same or different? Thumbs up for same, thumbs down for different.

LARA

If all the water is new, what is it that stays the same?



Some people think...

It's the same puddle, because it's in the same place.

It's a new puddle, because it's all new water.

It's the same puddle, just bigger, like you're the same you when you grow.

Or something else?

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

For grown-ups

The question: If something keeps changing (its water, its size, its shape), is it still the same thing? And what about us?

Its name: Identity through change; Heraclitus and the river (the doctrine of flux). Story 11 comes back to this with Bunny and the Ship of Theseus.

Where it comes from: Heraclitus (about 500 BC), as reported by Plato in the *Cratylus* (402a), translated by Benjamin Jowett (1871, public domain). Plato's Socrates says Heraclitus "compares them to the stream of a river, and says that you cannot go into the same water twice."

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Is it the same puddle on Wednesday? (Thumbs up or down.)
2. Why does Pip say it's a new one?
3. Have you ever changed but stayed you, after a haircut or a bath or a birthday?
4. What if we scooped the puddle into a bucket and poured it out somewhere else? Same puddle?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): "It's MY puddle!" At three, whose something is can stand in for what makes it the same. Ask what would make it a different puddle.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds often pick one test (same place, or same water) and stick to it. Offer a case that splits the tests, like the bucket question.

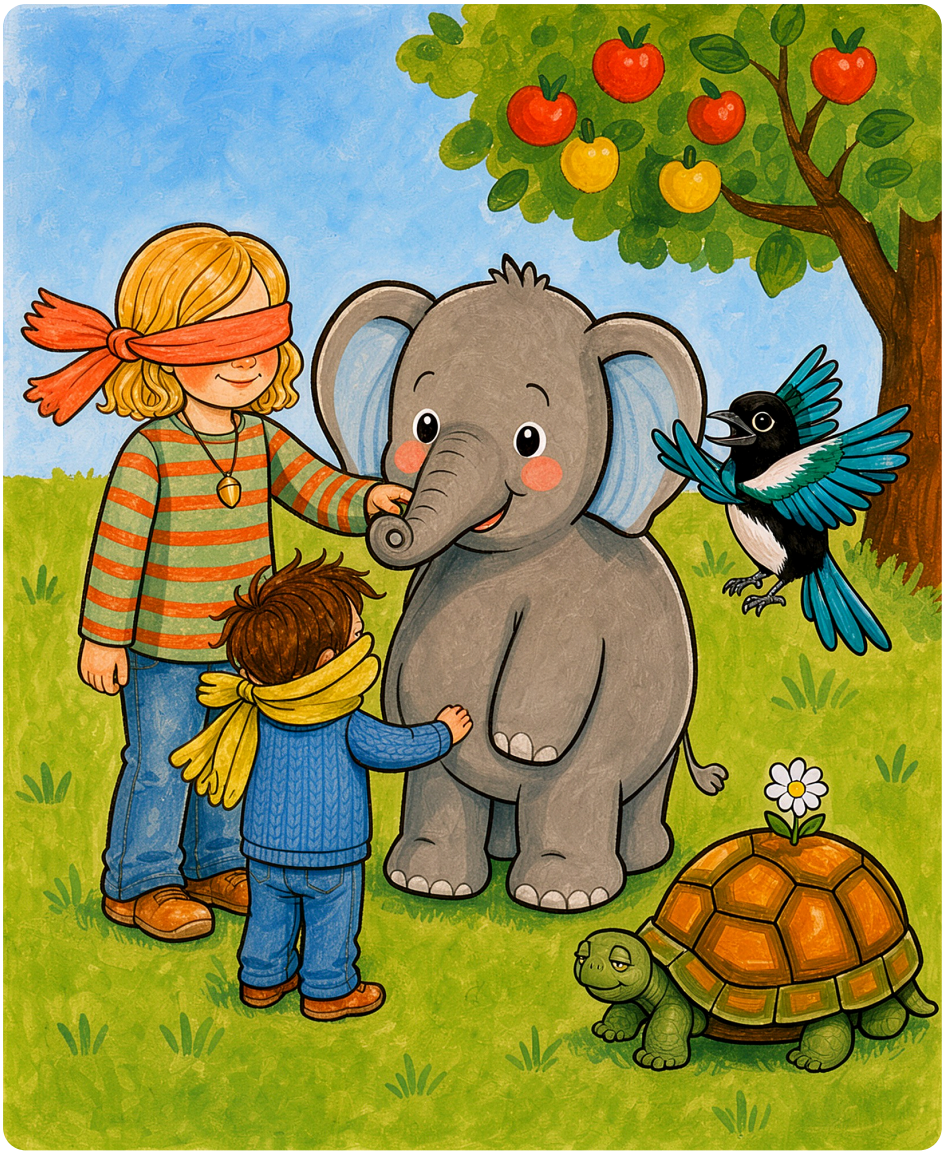
TOMORROW

Pour water into a tray and mark the edge with a pen. Leave it in the sun, then top it up with new water. Same water? Same puddle?

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.)

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

The Elephant in the Garden



Book 4 · For Lara and Zac



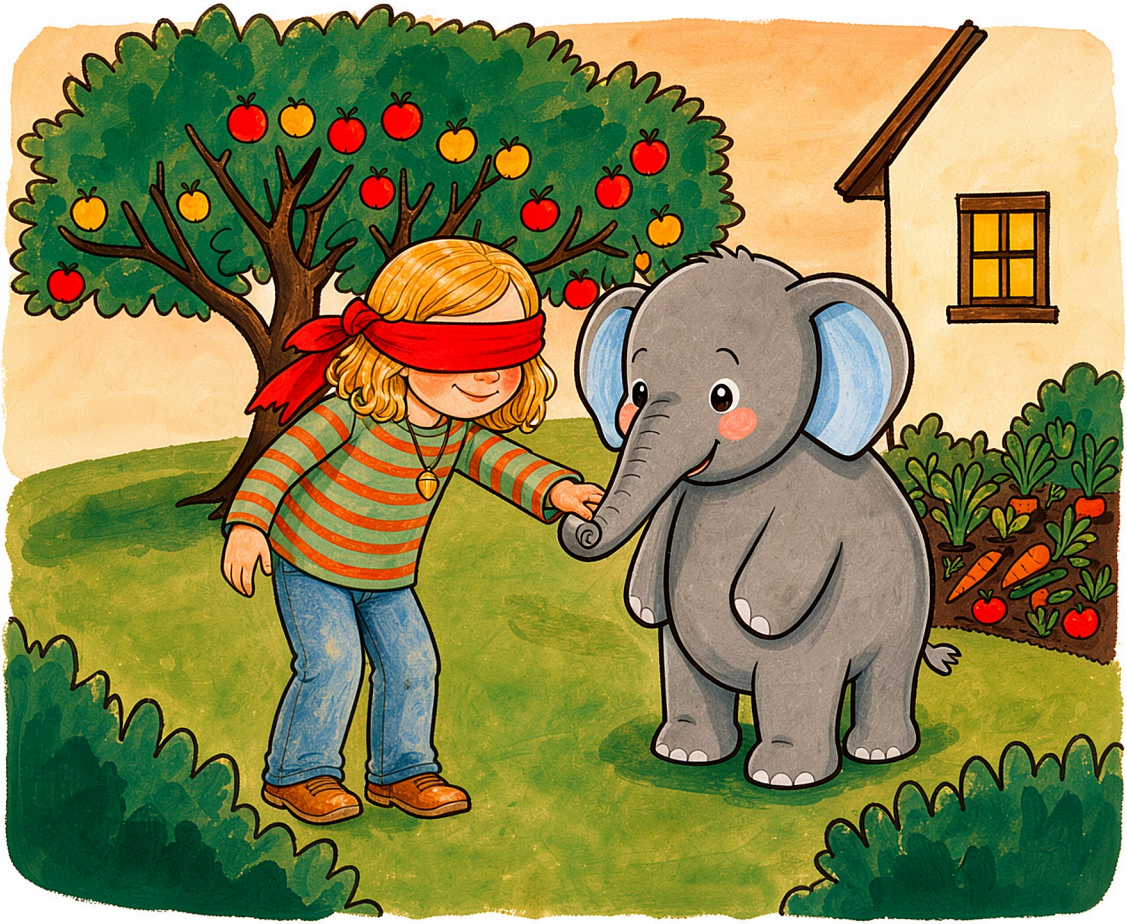
When the lamp goes warm and the garden goes quiet, Ponder comes out to wonder.

> Tonight Lara and Zac were still giggling about the afternoon, when an old friend of Ponder's came to visit, and everybody played the Blindfold Game.



That afternoon, Ponder had a surprise. “Close your eyes,” she said, “and put these on.”

She had four soft scarves. One for Lara, one for Zac, one for Pip, and a tiny one for Bunny. “Somebody has come to visit me,” said Ponder. “Who is it? You may only touch.”



Lara reached out and touched something long and wiggly. "**I KNOW what it is!** A hose!"

> It was warm, and a bit bristly, and it curled around her wrist and blew softly on her hand. "A hose that breathes," said Lara. "A very friendly hose."



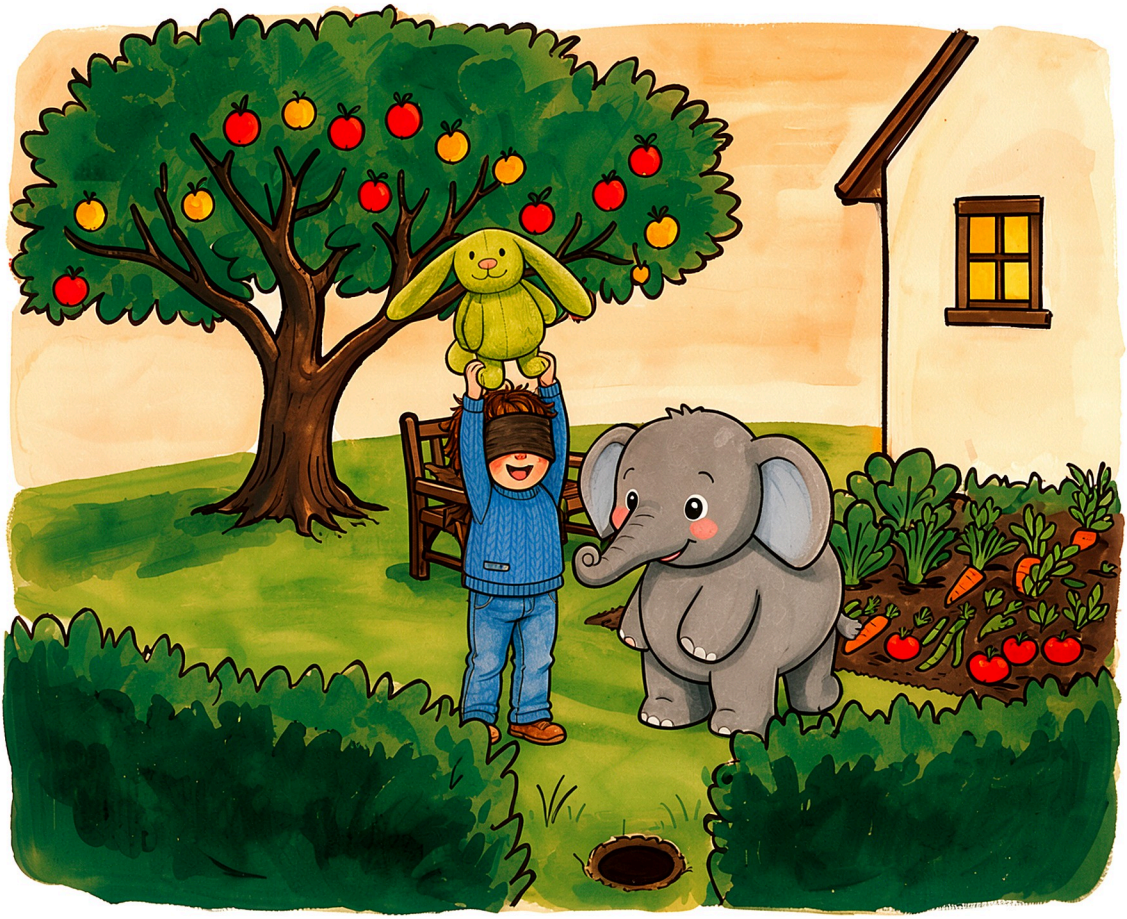
Zac bumped into something thick and round and wrinkly. "**I KNOW what it is! A tree!**"

> It was as wide as a tree, and as rough as a tree, and it went up and up, higher than Zac could reach. Zac gave it a hug. The tree shuffled its foot.



Pip flew into something big and flappy. "**I KNOW what it is!**" he squawked. "A FAN!"

> It was thin and wide and soft as an old glove, and it went whoosh, whoosh, and blew all Pip's feathers the wrong way. Pip did not like that one bit.



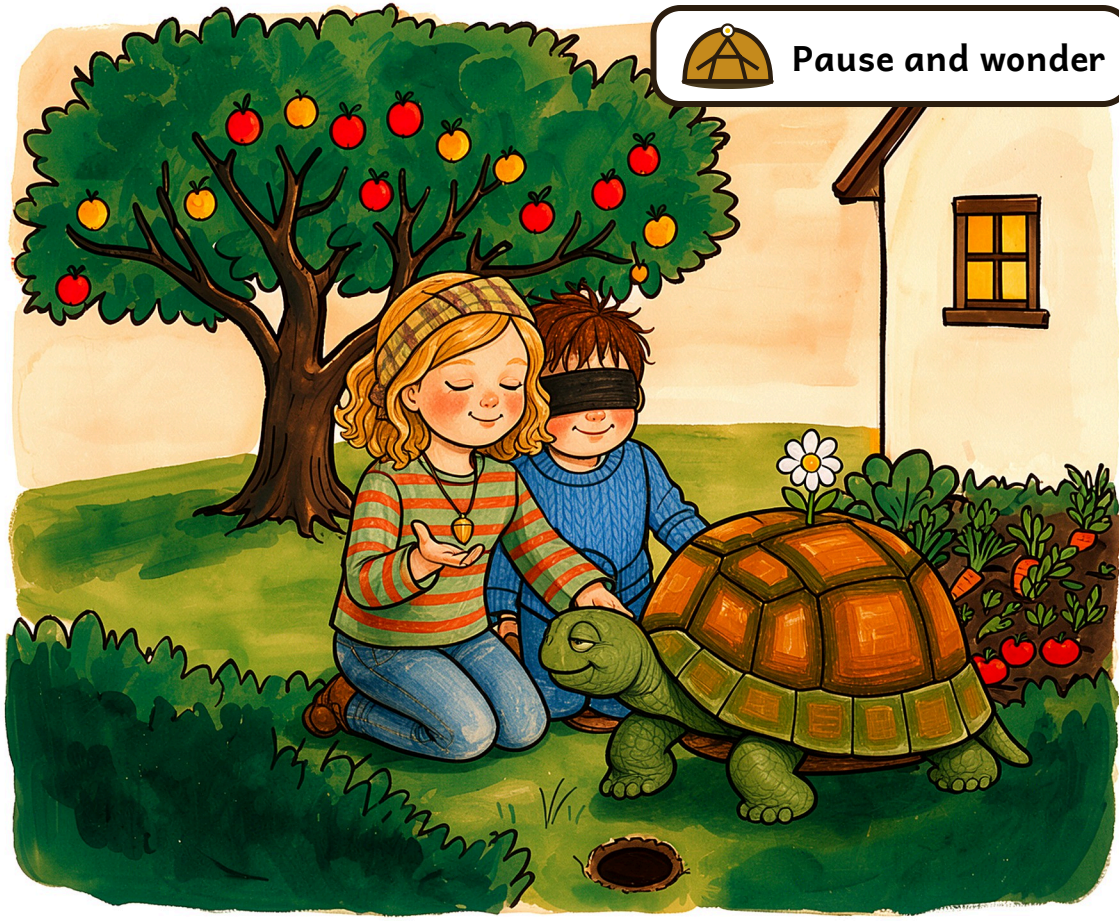
Zac held Bunny up high. Bunny touched something thin and tufty. “Bunny says it’s a paintbrush.”

> A swishy, swashy paintbrush, with a tickly tuft on the end. It swished, and Bunny’s floppy ears went flip, then flop.



“A hose!” “A tree!” “A FAN!” “A paintbrush!” Everybody was sure. And nobody agreed.

> “I touched it myself,” said Lara. “So did I,” said Zac. “I know what I felt,” said Pip. “And I’m always right.” They argued and argued.



“Ponder,” said Lara, “which of us is right? We can’t ALL be right.”

Ponder was quiet for a very long time. Then she said, “Hmm. I wonder. Can you be right and wrong at the same time? What do you think?”



“Long ago, in India,” said Ponder, “people told a story just like this one.”

> “Some people met an elephant with their eyes closed. Each touched one part, and each was sure. They argued and argued. And none of them thought to put what they knew together.”



So they took off their scarves... and there stood a small, gentle, grey ELEPHANT!

> "Hello," said the elephant politely. "I'm an old friend of Ponder's." "I was right!" said Lara. "A hose is a bit of you!" "So was I," said Zac. Pip said nothing at all, which was very unusual.



In bed, Zac shut his eyes and patted his quilt. "**I KNOW what it is!**" he said. "My bed."

> "How do you know?" asked Lara. "I just know," said Zac. Lara shut her eyes too, and felt the soft quilt, and the warm pillow, and Bunny's floppy ear. She was nearly sure.



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

> Down under the apple tree, a small grey elephant and a very old tortoise were having a long, slow chat about old times.

Ponder's question

Who was right about the elephant?

ZAC

Close your eyes. What can you feel? (Hand over something soft, something bumpy.) Do you KNOW what it is?

LARA

Can you be right and wrong at the same time? How could they have found out the whole truth without taking off their scarves?



Some people think...

Nobody was right, because it wasn't a hose or a tree or a fan. It was an elephant.

Everybody was a little bit right, because they each touched a real part.

You have to put all the bits together to be right about the whole thing.

Or something else?

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

For grown-ups

The question: We each touch or see only part of the world. Does that make us wrong, or partly right? And how can we put our bits of knowing together?

Its name: Perspective and the limits of knowledge; partial truth. In Jain philosophy this is anekāntavāda, "many-sidedness".

Where it comes from: A parable found in the Udāna (6.4) of the Pāli Buddhist canon, and also told in Jain, Hindu and Sufi traditions (Rumi has a version set in a dark room). It is best known in English through John Godfrey Saxe's poem about the elephant (1872, public domain). Our version replaces the original's blindness with a blindfold game.

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Was Pip right that it was a fan? (Thumbs up or down.)
2. Why was everybody so sure?
3. Have you ever been sure about something and then found out it was different?
4. What if they had talked to each other before taking their scarves off? What might they have guessed?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): "A tree! It's a TREE!" Little ones trust their own hands completely. That is the starting point of the puzzle, not a mistake.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds often say "everyone was a bit right". Push gently. Is a trunk the same as a hose? What's the difference between being right about a part and right about the whole?

TOMORROW

Play a feely bag game. Each person feels an object through a hole in a bag and describes it without saying its name, then everyone guesses together.

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.)

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

Who Does the Moon Follow?



Book 5 · For Lara and Zac



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

> But tonight's story began a little earlier, on the walk home from the park, just as the sky was turning blue and the first lights were coming on in the windows.



On the way home from the park, Zac stopped and pointed. “**The moon is following ME!**”

> There it was, round and pale above the rooftops. Zac walked three steps, and the moon came too. Zac stopped, and the moon stopped. Zac held Bunny up so Bunny could see.



Zac ran as fast as he could. The moon ran too. “**The moon is following ME!**”

Past the postbox, past the lamppost, past the house with the yellow door. Every time Zac looked up, the moon was still there, right above him, like a balloon on a very long string.



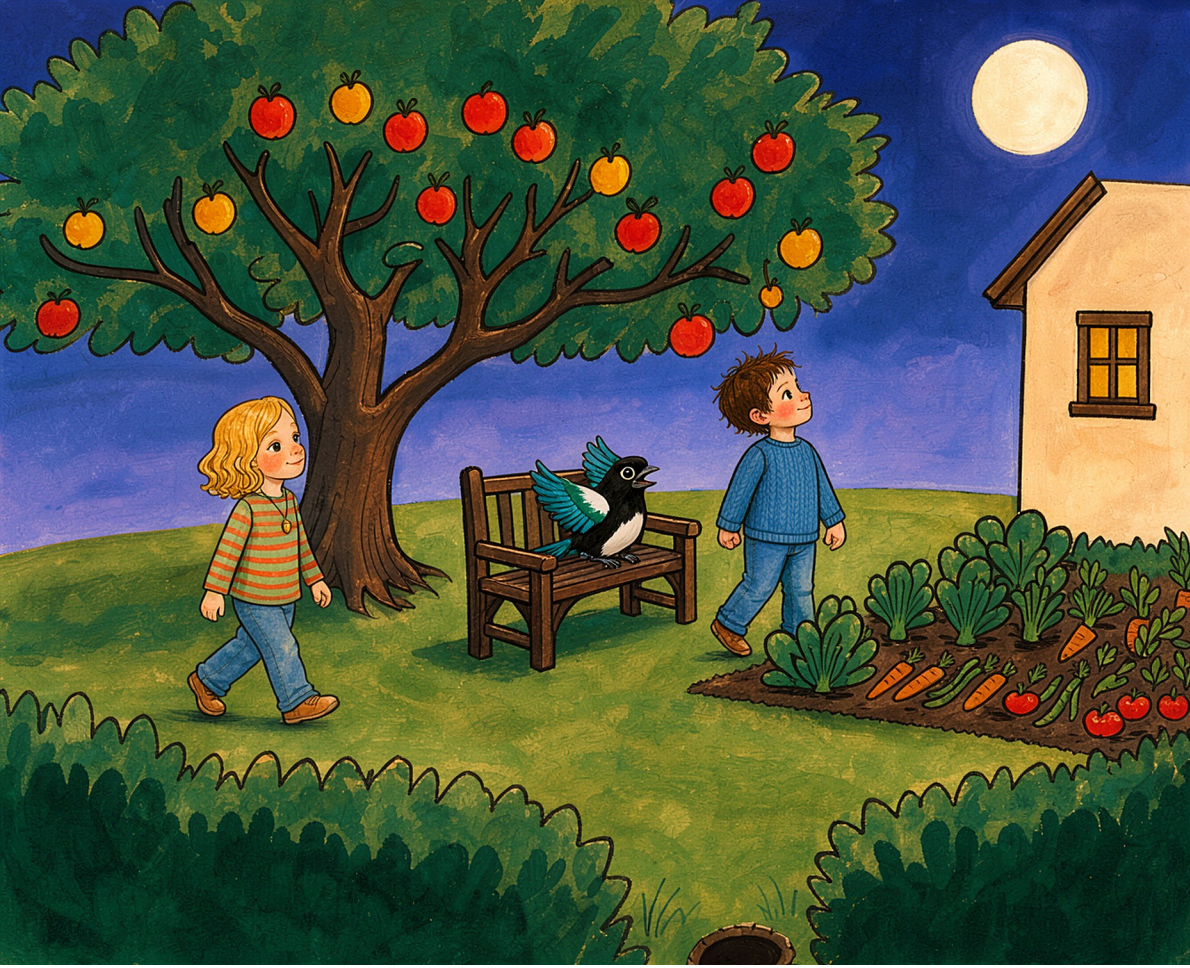
“It’s not following you,” said Lara. “It’s following ME. I’m the oldest.”

Lara walked backwards, very slowly, watching the moon. It stayed right above her too. Which was a bit odd, because Zac was now quite a long way ahead.



Pip was waiting on the garden gate. “Silly,” he said. “The moon follows shiny things. It’s following ME.”

> Pip fluffed out his blue-green feathers. “The moon is the shiniest thing in the sky, and I am the shiniest thing in this garden. Shiny things stick together. Everybody knows that.”



“Let’s test it,” said Lara. She walked one way round the apple tree. Zac walked the other way.

> If the moon was following Lara, it would go with Lara. If it was following Zac, it would go with Zac. It could not possibly go both ways at once. Could it?



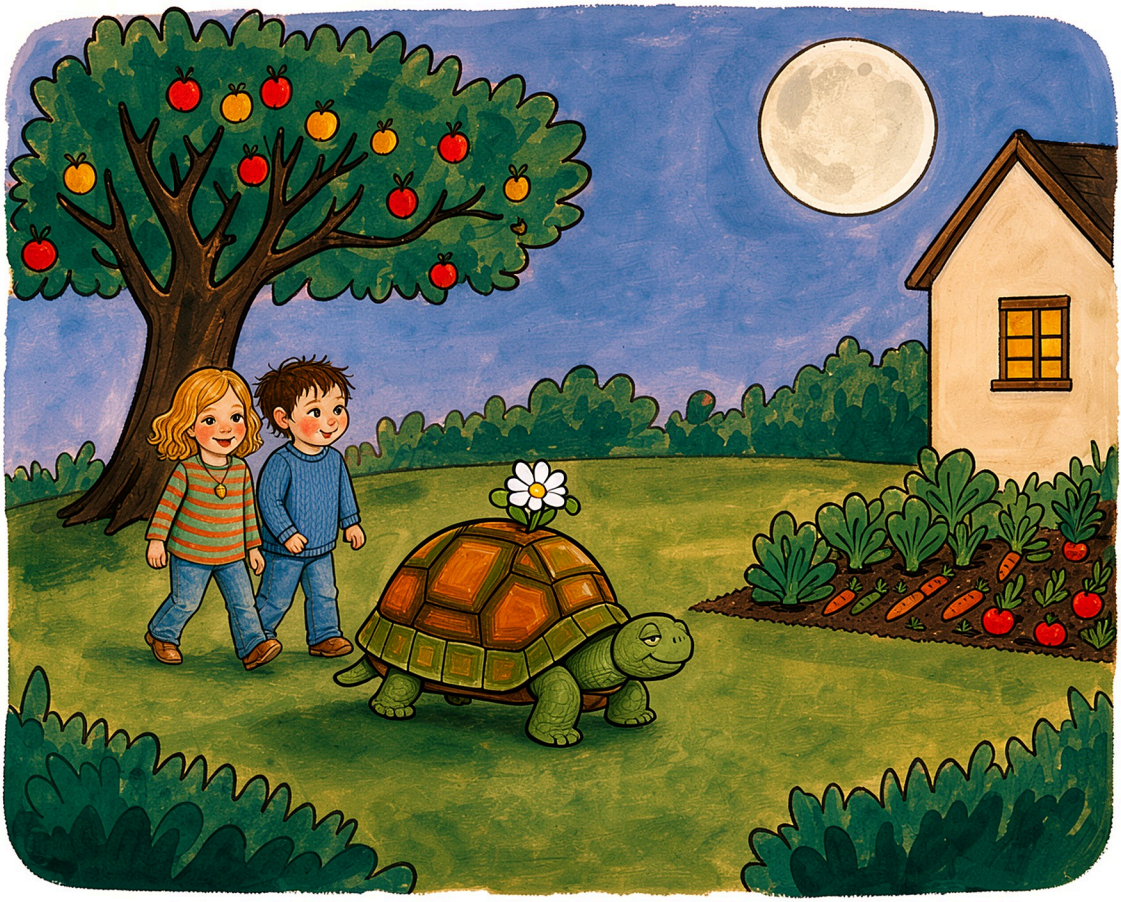
“It followed me!” said Lara. “It followed ME!” said Zac. “**The moon is following ME!**” said Pip.

They all looked up. The moon looked back down at all three of them, round and calm, as if it had nowhere else in the world to be.



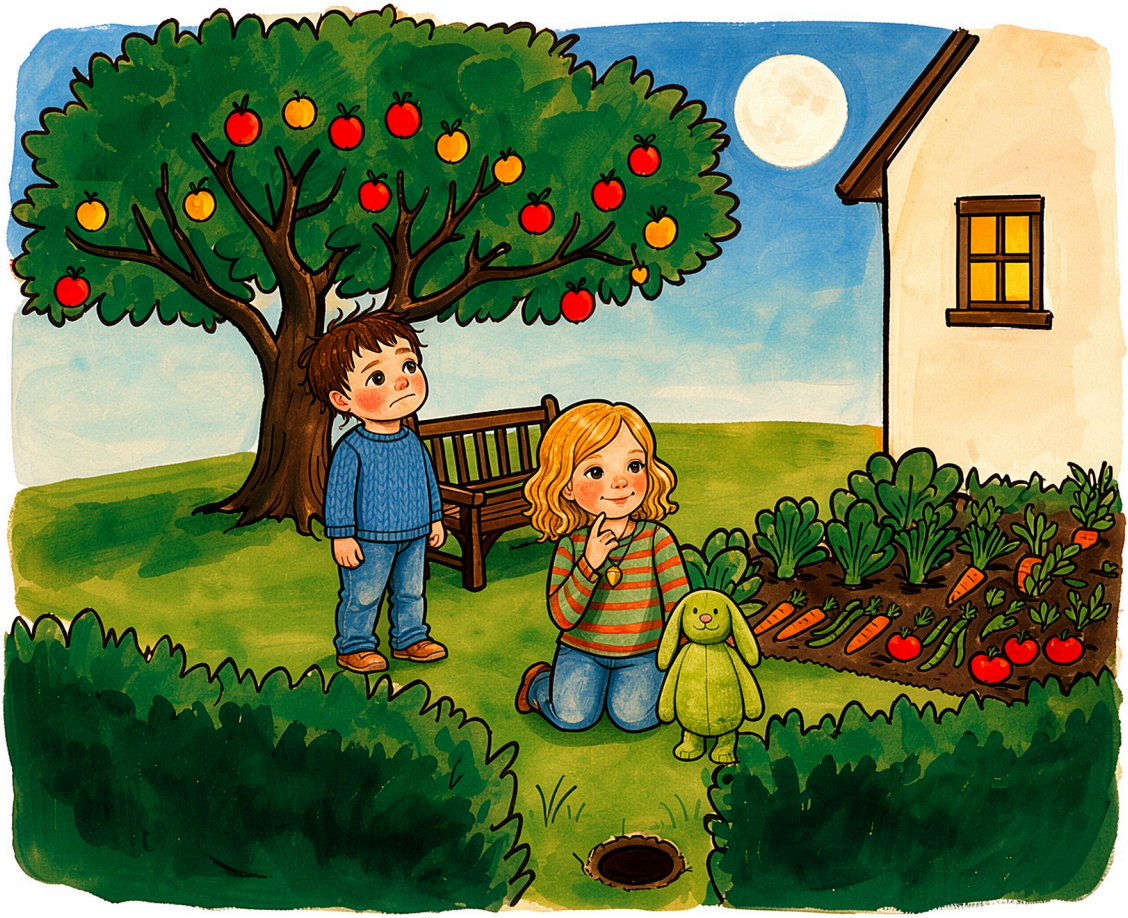
“Ponder,” said Lara, “is the moon REALLY following us? How can it follow everybody at once?”

> Ponder had been watching from the hedge. She lifted her head towards the sky, very, very slowly. “Hmm,” she said. “I wonder. What do you think?”



“When I go for a walk,” said Ponder, “the moon follows me too. And I am very, very slow.”

> “A tortoise walking. A magpie flying. A girl walking backwards. A boy running with a rabbit. And the moon keeps up with every one of us.” She blinked. “That is either a very busy moon, or something else is going on.”



Zac looked at the moon. Then he looked at the apple tree. “The tree didn’t follow me,” he said.

> It was true. When Zac walked, the apple tree slid past, and the hedge slid past more slowly. Only the moon, far, far away, stayed put. “Maybe,” said Lara slowly, “things that are really far away just look like they’re following.”



Back in bed, Zac peeped through the curtains. “**The moon followed me home!**” he whispered.

> “Or we followed it,” said Lara. “Or,” said Pip, tapping on the window, “it just likes us.” Nobody could quite decide whether it really, really did.



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

> And the moon stayed exactly where it was, at the top of the window, keeping an eye on everybody at once, all night long.

Ponder's question

Is the moon really following you?

ZAC

Can you find the moon in every picture? Is it in the same place, or a different place?

LARA

How could we test whether the moon is following us? What would we see if it was?



Some people think...

The moon follows me, because every time I look up, it's there.

It isn't following anyone. It just looks like it, because it's so far away.

It follows everybody, because it's the moon and it can do that.

Or something else?

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

For grown-ups

The question: Things are not always as they seem. How do we tell the difference between how something looks and how it really is?

Its name: Appearance and reality; the problem of perception. Children's "the moon follows me" belief was famously recorded by Jean Piaget.

Where it comes from: Original story. The question is as old as philosophy, from Plato's worries about appearances (*Republic*, Book VII) to Descartes' *Meditations*. Piaget describes children's beliefs about the moon in *The Child's Conception of the World* (1926).

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Does the moon move when you walk? (Thumbs up or down.)
2. Why does the apple tree slide past, but not the moon?
3. Have you ever seen something that looked one way but turned out to be another?
4. What if you and a friend walked in opposite directions on a moonlit night? Where would the moon go?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): "It likes me!" Three-year-olds often give the moon feelings and wishes. That isn't a mistake to fix; ask what the moon might want, then try the walking test together.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds may come up with the "far away" idea themselves, then wonder how far is far enough. Ask how she could check without anyone telling her the answer.

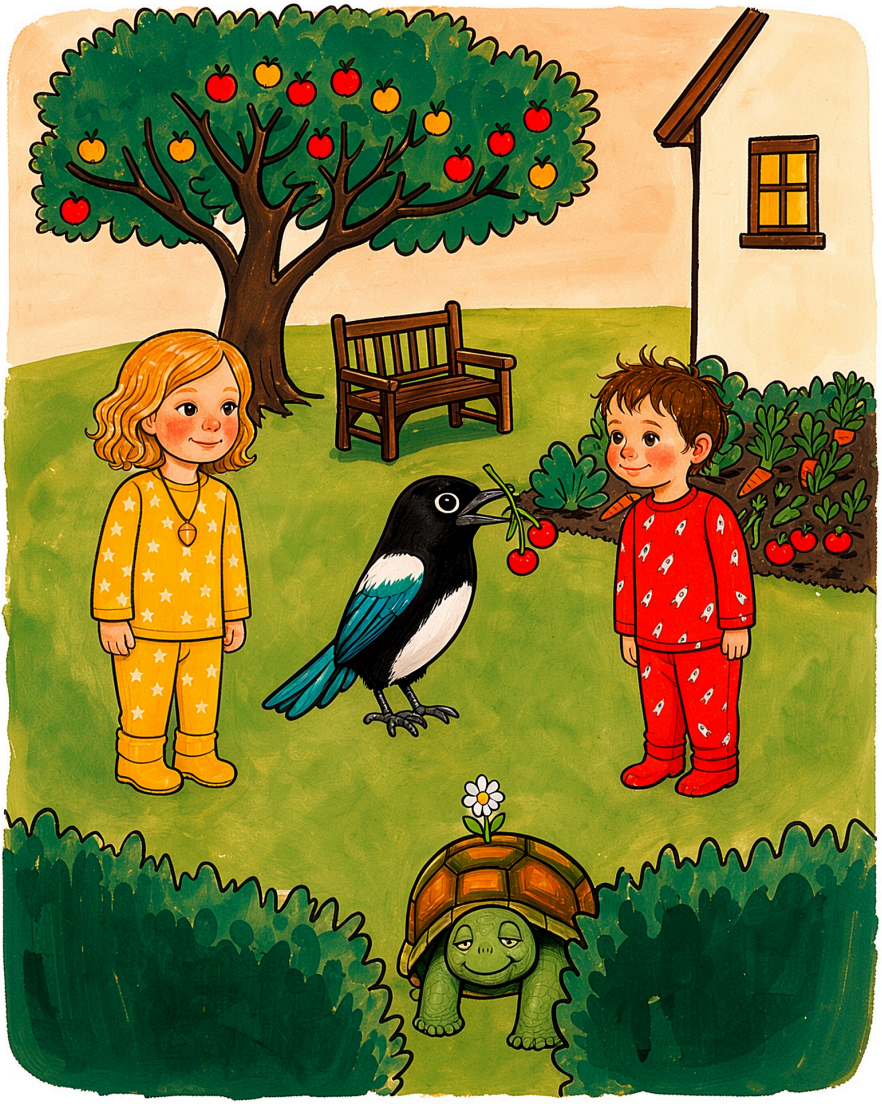
TOMORROW

On a walk, pick a lamppost close by and a tree far away. Walk ten steps. Which one seems to move more? Then try it again on a moonlit evening.

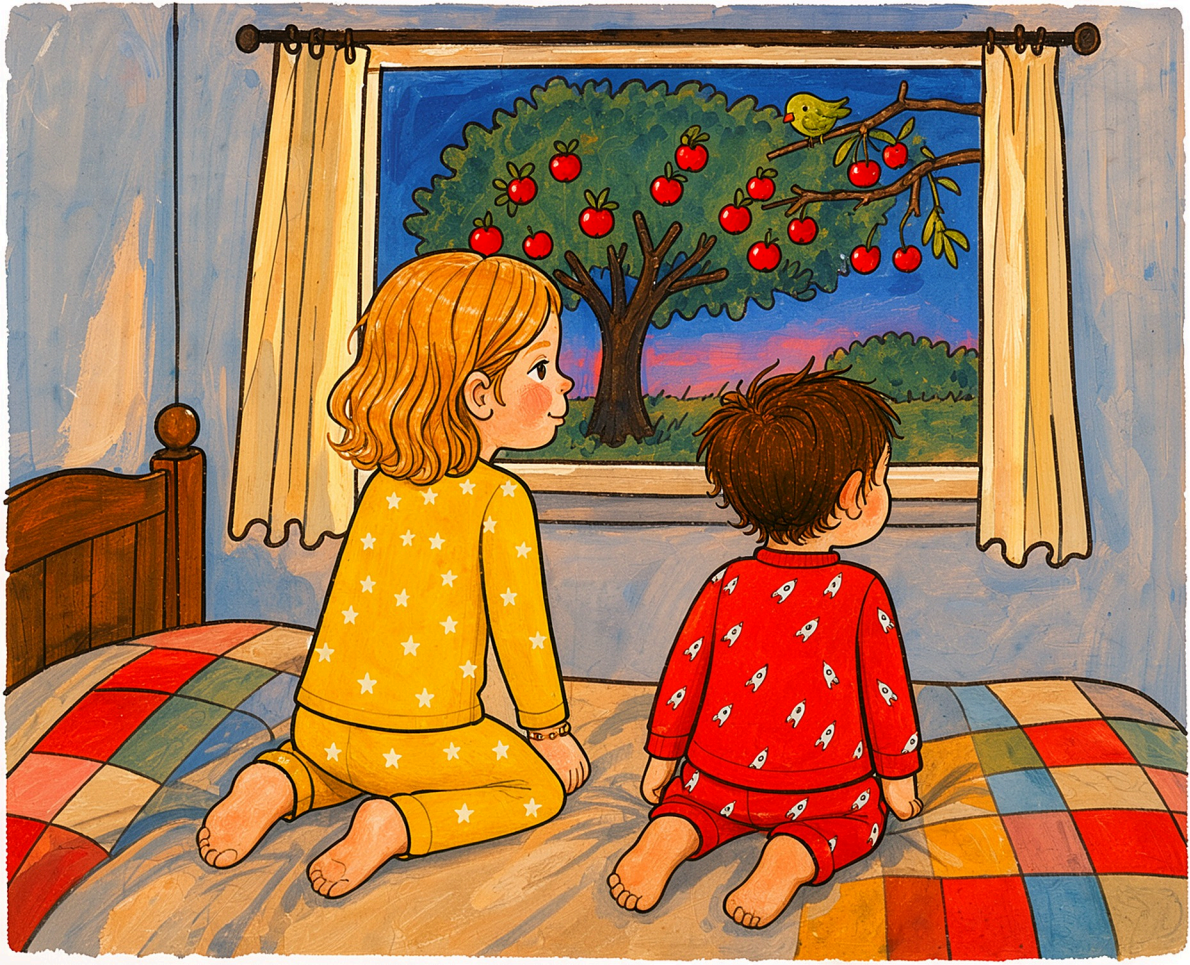
How to wonder together: ask, then wait. Say their words back to them. "Can you say more?" "Someone might say…" Don't say "right" or give your answer; Ponder never does. Too big for tonight? "Let's wonder about that at breakfast." (Then do.)

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

Three Cherries



Book 6 · For Lara and Zac



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

> Over the top of Ponder's hedge hangs a branch of the cherry tree from next door. And this evening, from the window, Lara saw something small and red dangling from it.



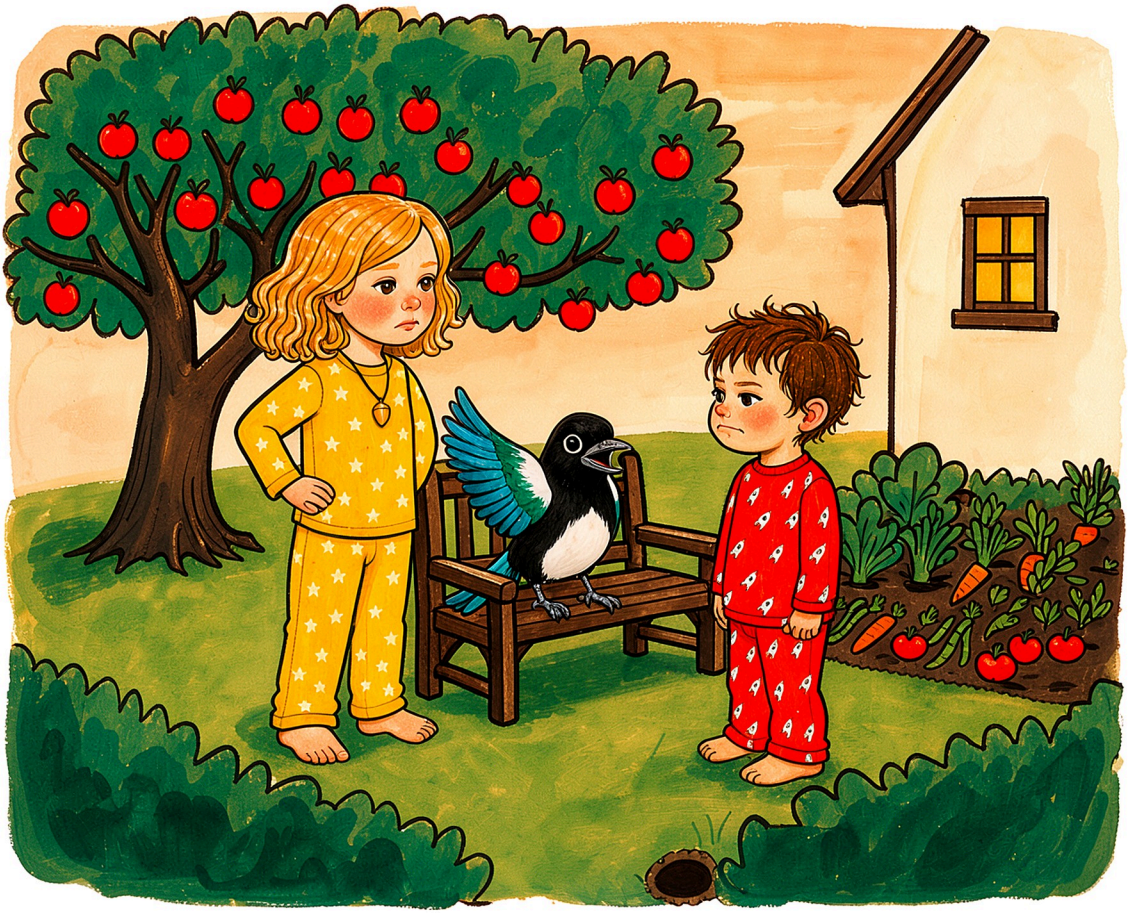
Pip flew down with a twig in his beak. On the twig were three shiny red cherries.

> “Look what I found!” said Pip, through a beakful of twig. Lara and Zac came running across the lawn in their wellies, as fast as wellies allow, which is not very fast.



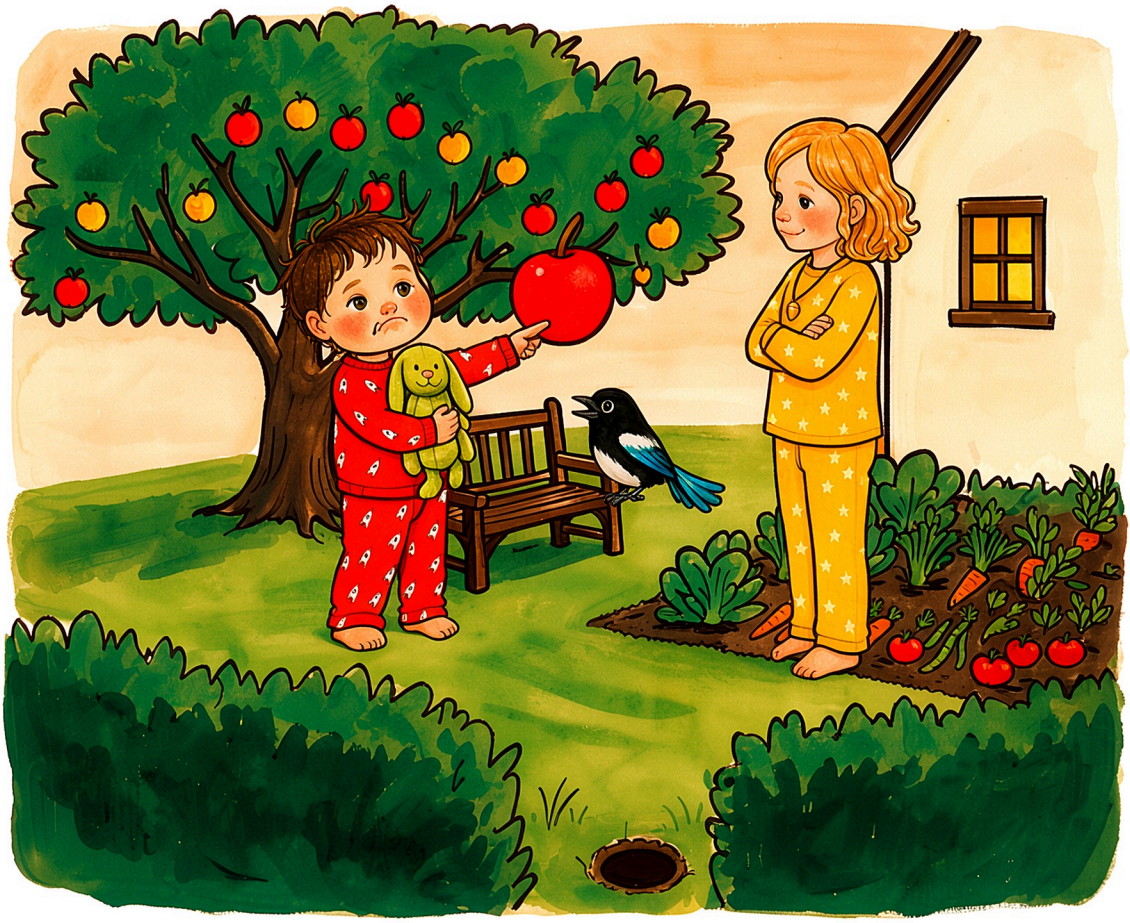
Three cherries. Two children. “One for me,” said Lara, “one for Zac… and one left over.”

> They all looked at the third cherry. It was the reddest, roundest, shiniest cherry of the lot. Even Bunny seemed to be looking at it.



“I should have it,” said Lara. “I’m the oldest, so I should choose first.”

> “That’s how it works,” Lara explained. “Oldest chooses first. And anyway, I’m bigger, so I’ve got a bigger tummy to fill.” It sounded very sensible when she said it.



“No, ME!” said Zac. “I’m the littlest. I need it to grow BIG. **That’s not FAIR!**”

> Zac stood on his tiptoes to look as little and as hungry as possible, which is quite hard to do at the same time. His bottom lip began to wobble.



“NEITHER of you,” said Pip, and he grabbed the twig. “I found them. Finders keepers!”

> “If I hadn’t found them, there wouldn’t be ANY cherries,” said Pip. “So they’re all mine. That’s fair.”
> “**That’s not FAIR!**” said Lara and Zac, both at once.



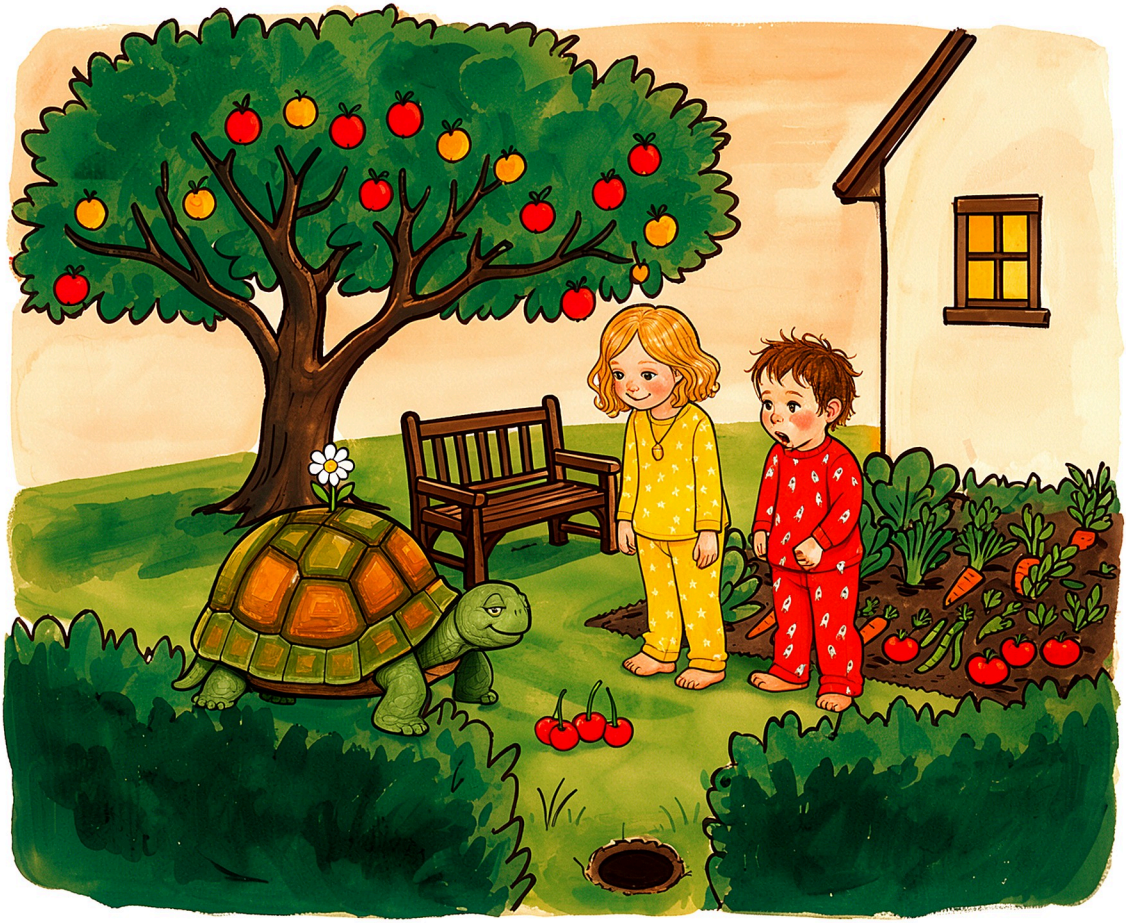
Ponder came out of her hollow, very slowly. “Hmm,” she said. “What a lot of fair.”

> “Lara thinks the oldest should choose. Zac thinks the littlest needs it most. Pip thinks the finder keeps it.” She looked at each of them in turn. This took quite a long time.



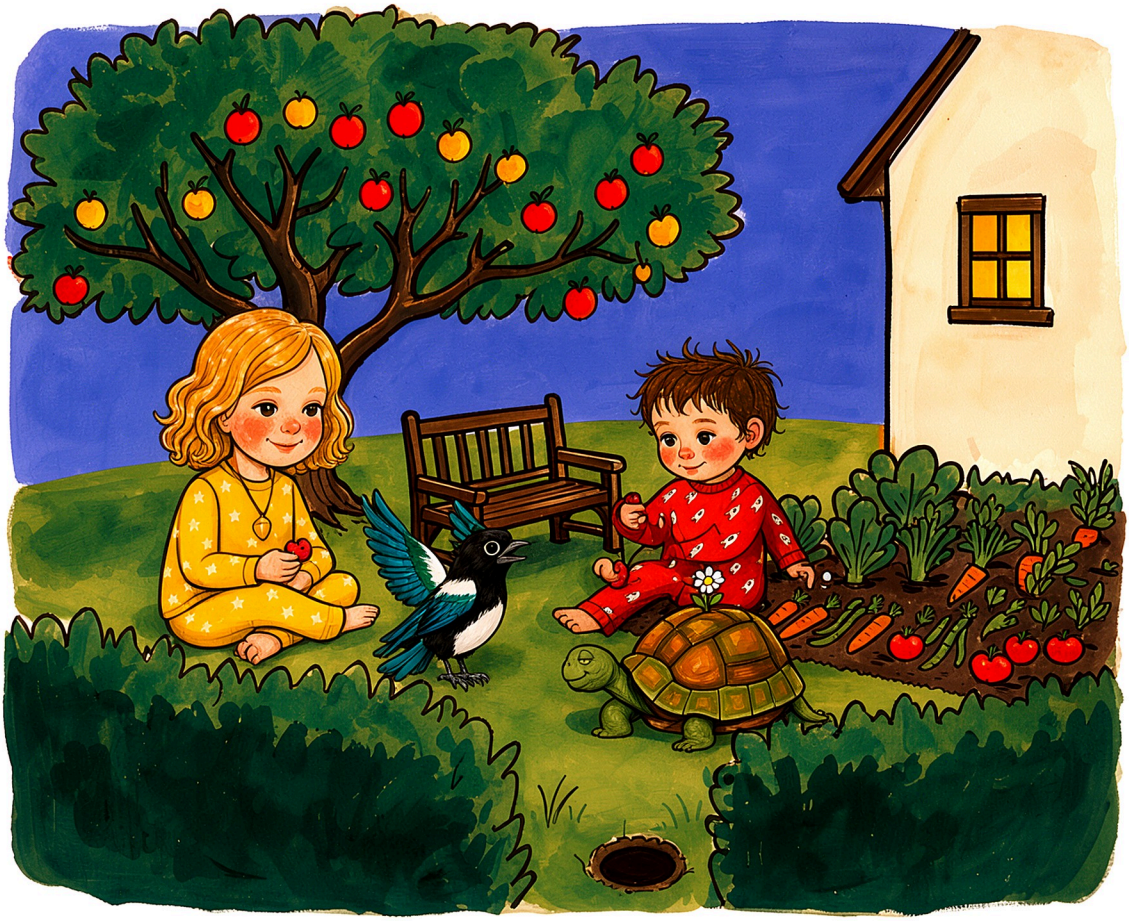
“Ponder,” said Lara, “what’s the FAIR thing to do with the third cherry?”

> Ponder blinked, once and then twice. “I wonder,” she said. “Is fair the same as everybody getting the same? Or is fair something else? What do you think?”



“And what if,” said Ponder, “one of the cherries was for me?”

> Everybody stared at her. Ponder hadn’t found the cherries. Ponder wasn’t the oldest child or the littlest one. But Ponder was very, very old, and she liked cherries very much, and she had never once had one.



So Lara squashed the third cherry into four teeny pieces, one for everybody.

It was very sticky. Zac said his piece was the smallest. Pip said his piece was the reddest. Ponder said hers was perfect. Then Zac took the stone and planted it by the hedge. “For a cherry tree,” he said. “For everyone.”



In bed, Lara licked her sticky fingers. “Was that fair?” she whispered. “Bunny says yes,” said Zac.

> “Bunny didn’t get any,” said Lara. Zac thought about this for a long, long time. Then he held Bunny very close. “Bunny says **that’s not FAIR!**”



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

> And by the hedge, in the dark, a small cherry stone lay in the soft earth. Not growing yet. Just waiting, for everyone.

Ponder's question

What is the fair thing to do with the third cherry?

ZAC

Count the cherries with me. One, two, three. Who should have the third one? Point!

LARA

Is fair always the same as everybody getting the same? Can you think of a time when it isn't?



Some people think...

Fair means everybody gets exactly the same, even if you have to squash the cherry.

Fair means the person who needs it most gets it.

Fair means whoever found it, or worked for it, gets to keep it.

Or something else?

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

For grown-ups

The question: What makes sharing fair? Equal shares, giving to whoever needs most, or rewarding whoever earned it?

Its name: Distributive justice. Equality, need and desert, plus first possession ("finders keepers").

Where it comes from: Original story. The three ideas of fairness go back to Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V, on giving people what they deserve). Researchers find children object to unfairness against themselves well before they object to unfairness in their own favour (Blake, McAuliffe and colleagues, 2015).

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Should everybody get the same number of cherries? (Thumbs up or down.)
2. Why does Pip think the cherries are his?
3. Have you ever had to share something when there wasn't enough to go round?
4. What if Pip had flown a very long way to find the cherries? Would that change things?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): "Me! Because I want it." Very young children usually argue from wanting. Ask what Bunny would say, which helps them step into someone else's shoes.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds often insist on exactly equal shares, then hesitate when need or effort comes up. Try asking whether the cherries even belonged to Pip, since they grew on next door's tree.

TOMORROW

At snack time, put out a number of grapes that doesn't divide evenly. Let them work out what to do with the odd one, and just listen to the reasons.

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.)

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

The Wind and the Sun



Book 7 · For Lara and Zac



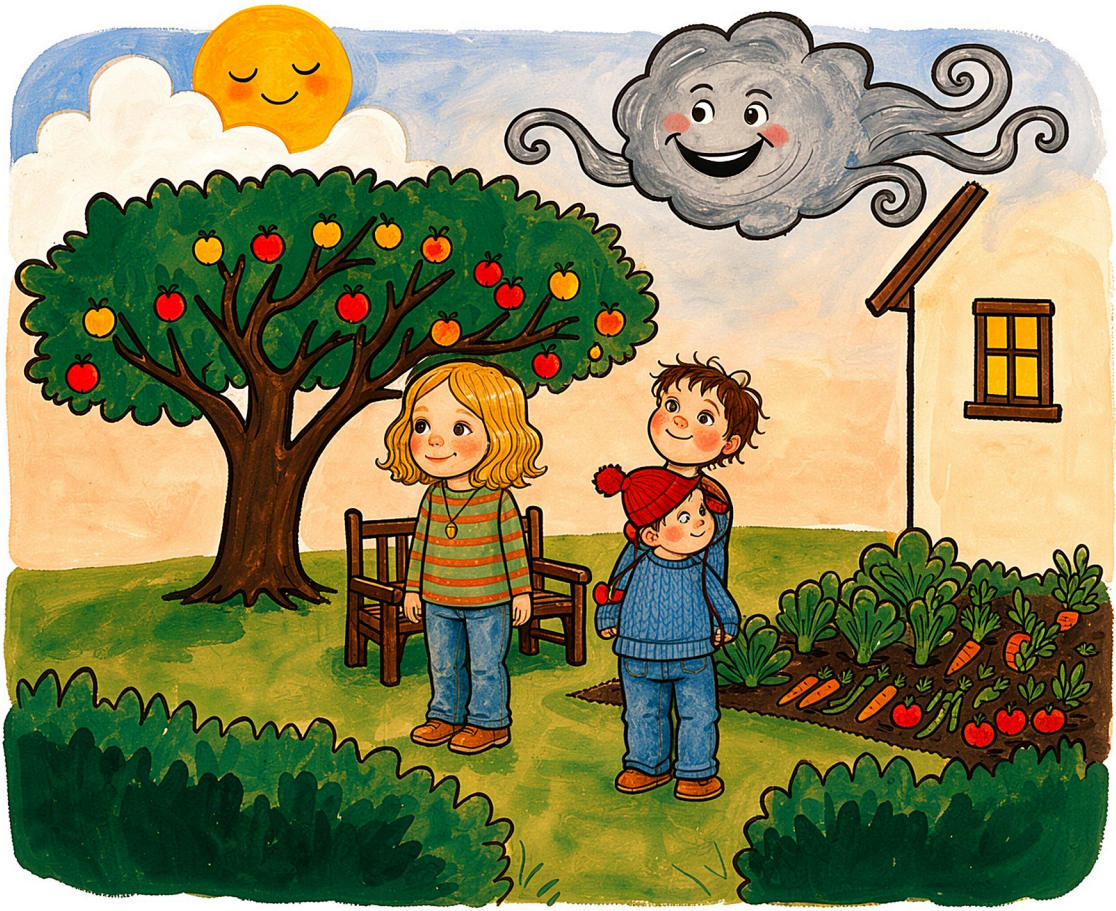
When the lamp goes warm and the garden goes quiet, Ponder comes out to wonder.

> 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.



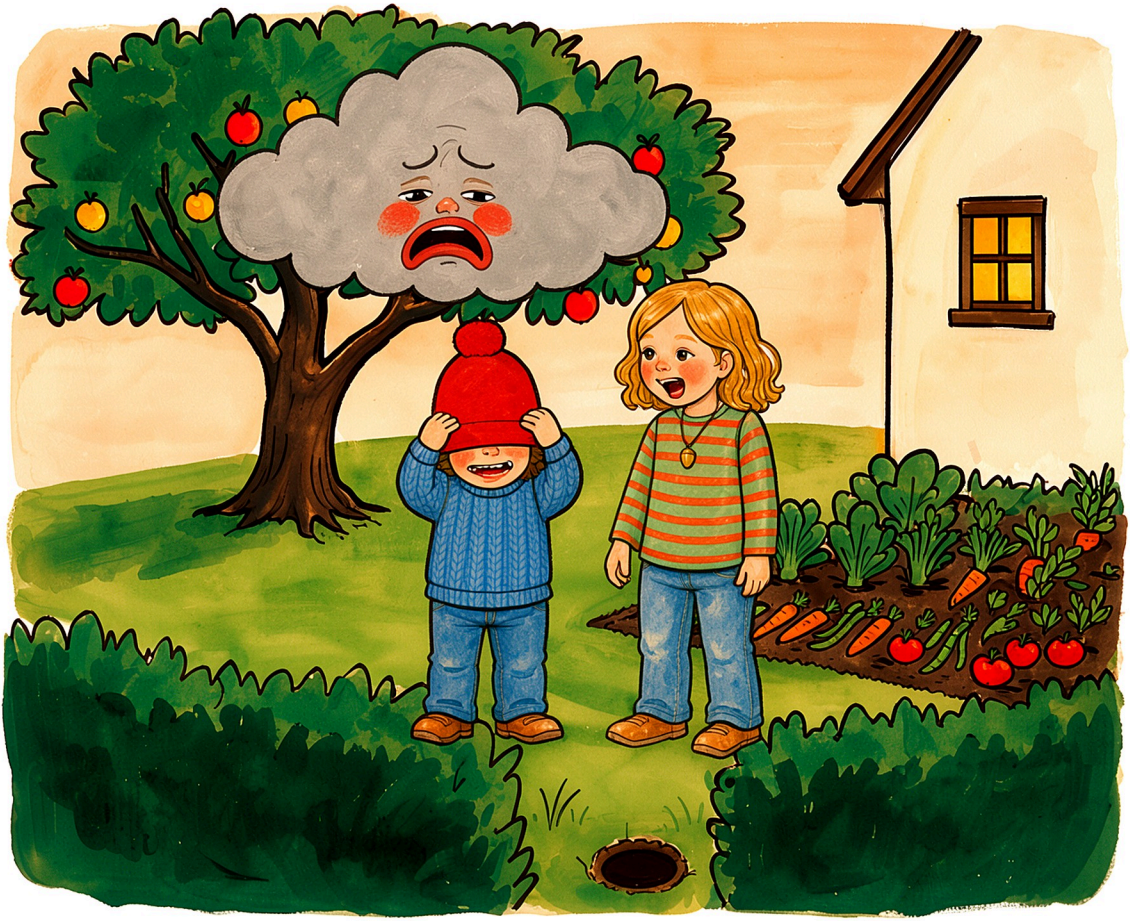
“Oh, I don’t know,” said the Sun, peeping out from behind a cloud.

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.”



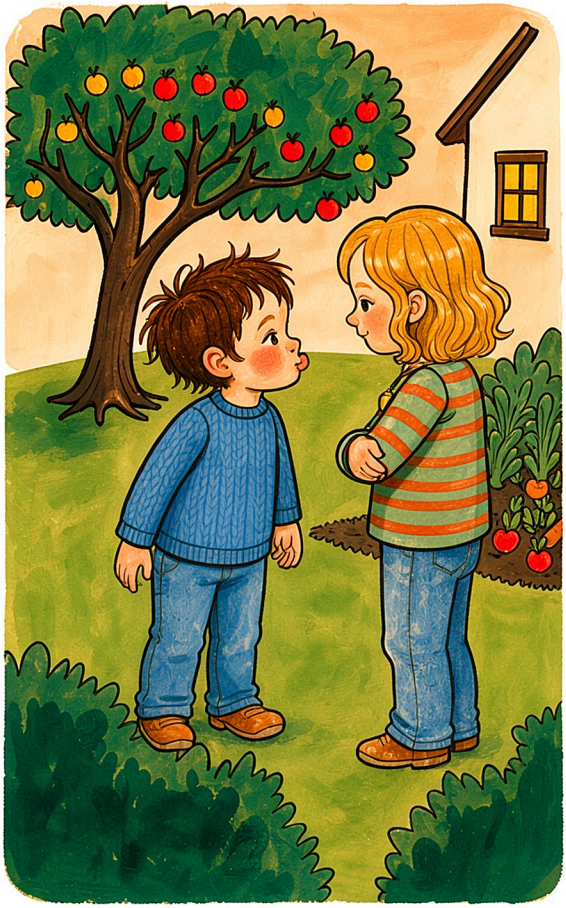
“Ponder,” said Lara, “who was stronger, the Wind or the Sun?”

> 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.)

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

Pip’s Promise



Book 8 · For Lara and Zac



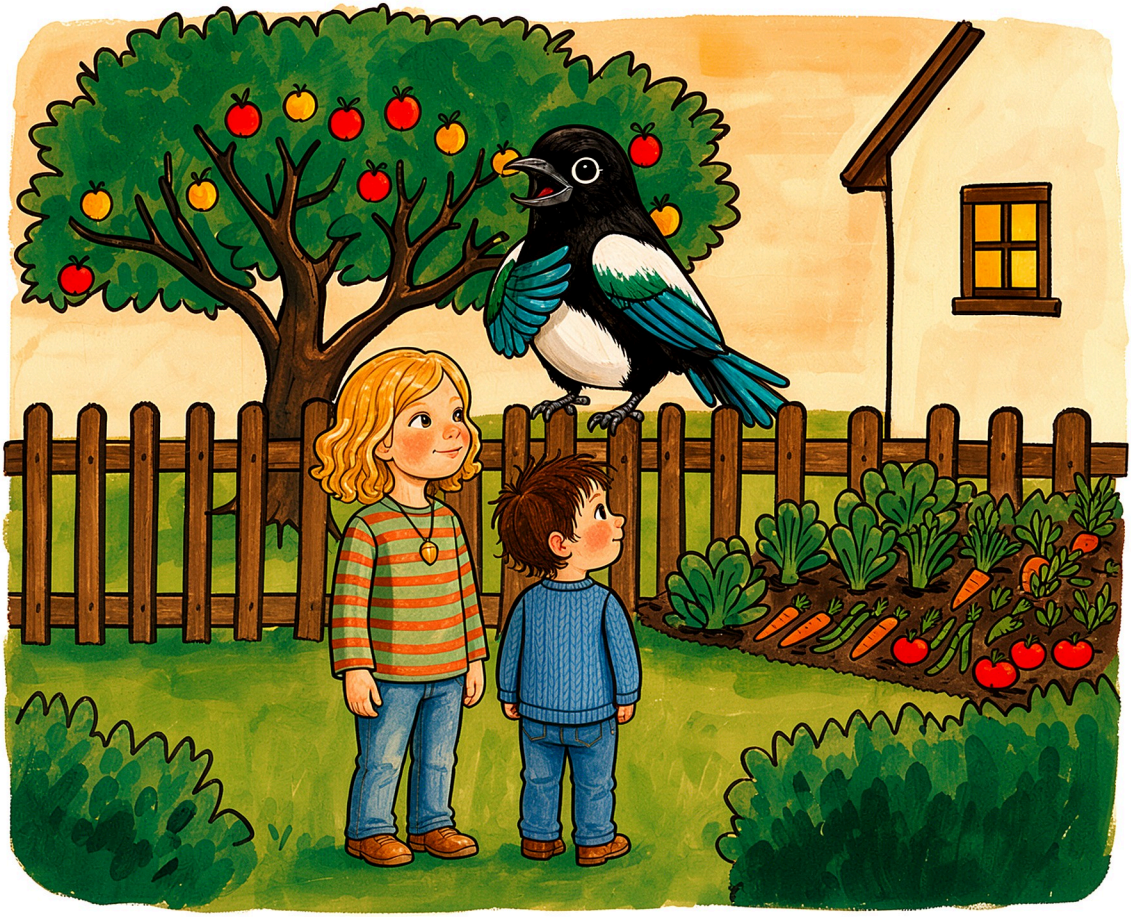
When the lamp goes warm and the garden goes quiet, Ponder comes out to wonder.

> But tonight Lara was not thinking about Ponder. She was thinking about her gold button, the shiny one from her best coat. That afternoon, it had gone missing.



That afternoon, Lara's gold button had popped off her coat and rolled away into the long grass.

> They looked under the bench. They looked in the flowerbed. Zac looked inside Bunny's ear, just in case. No button anywhere.



“I’ll find it,” said Pip. “I promise. I’ll bring it back before the sun goes down.”

Pip was very good at finding shiny things. Finding shiny things was his favourite thing in the whole world, after keeping them.



“**A promise is *a* promise!**” said Zac.
And Pip zoomed *away* over the hedge.

> Lara crossed her fingers *anyway*. A promise is *a* special kind of saying. When you promise, you *are* not just saying that something will happen. You *are* saying that you will make it happen.



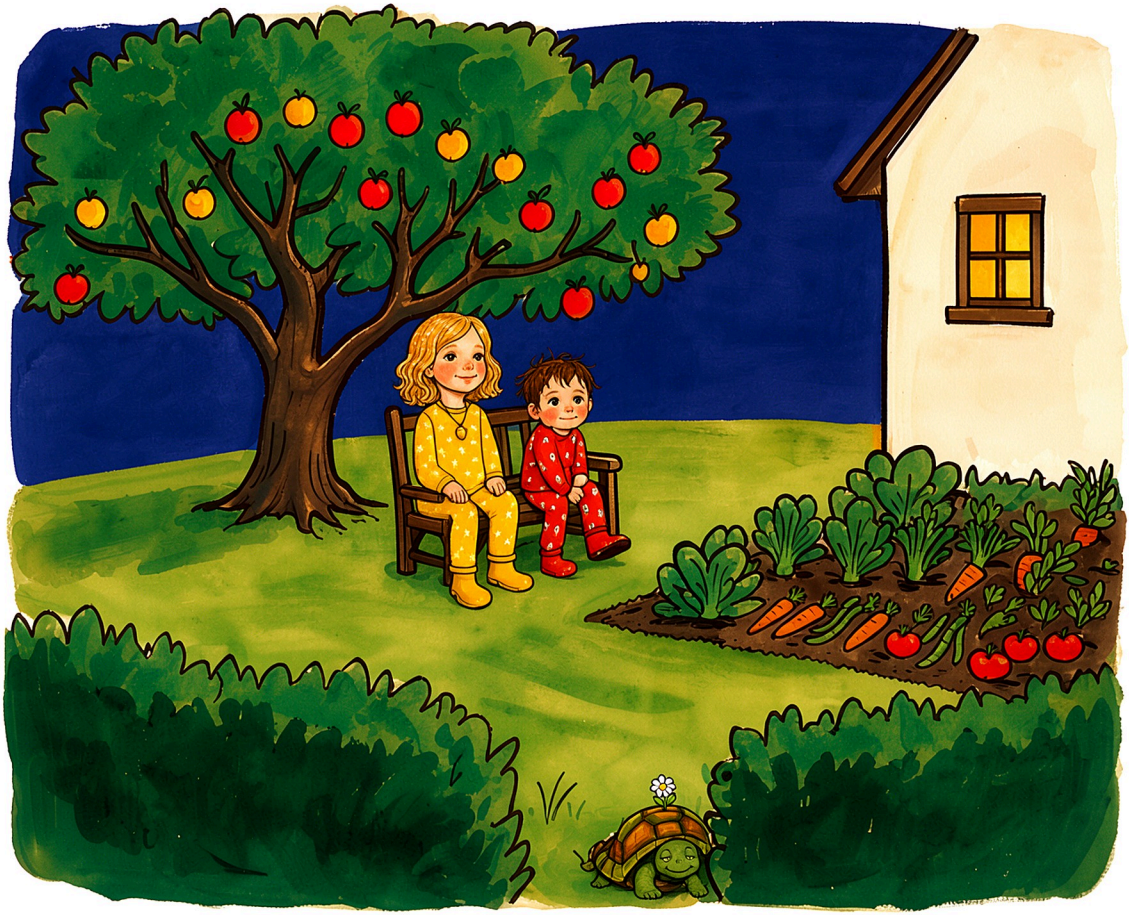
Pip found the button in a puddle by the gate. Then he heard a tiny “cheep”.

On the path sat a baby blackbird, fluffy and round, with a stubby little tail. It had hopped out of its hedge to explore and could not remember the way back. It was perfectly fine. It just looked a bit muddled.



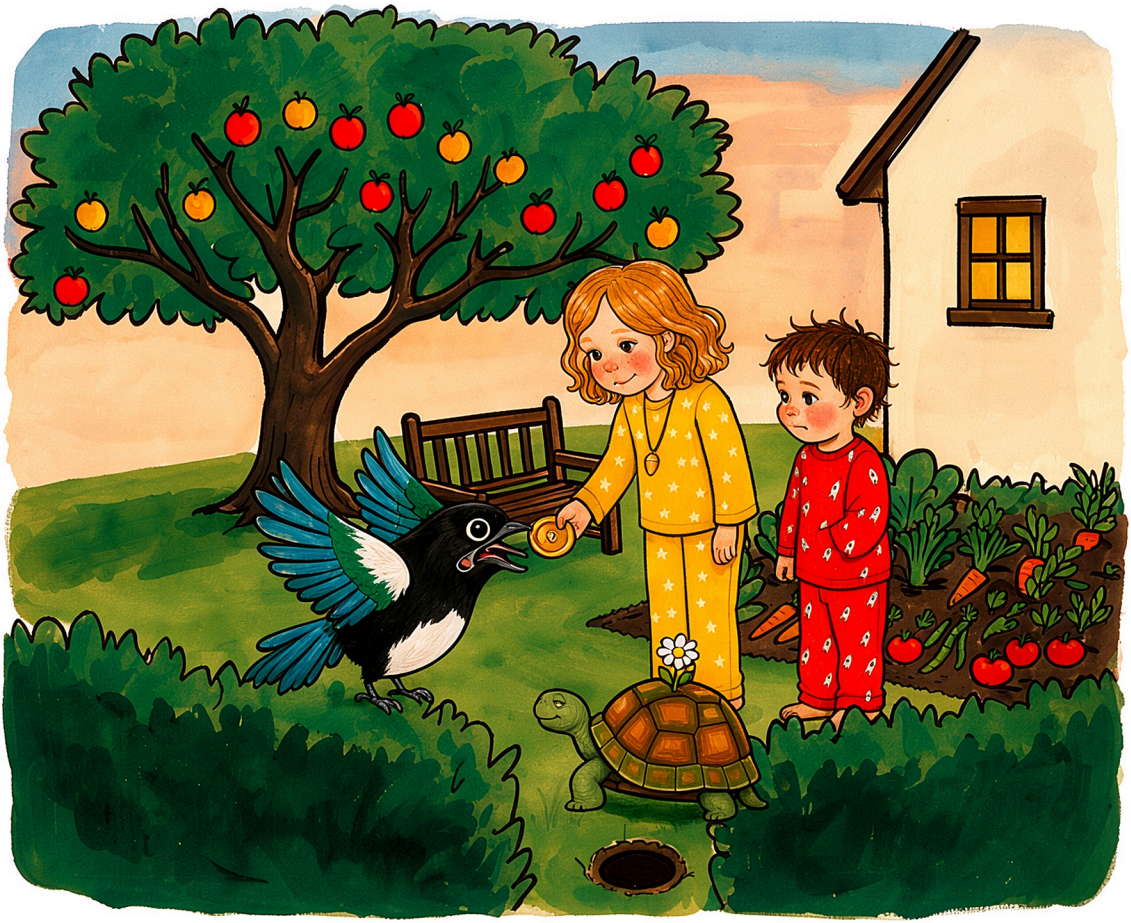
So Pip helped the baby bird hop, hop, hop all the way home to its hedge.

It was a very slow hop. Baby birds stop to look at everything. Its mother was waiting with a worm, and she said “Chack-chack!”, which is how blackbirds say thank you.



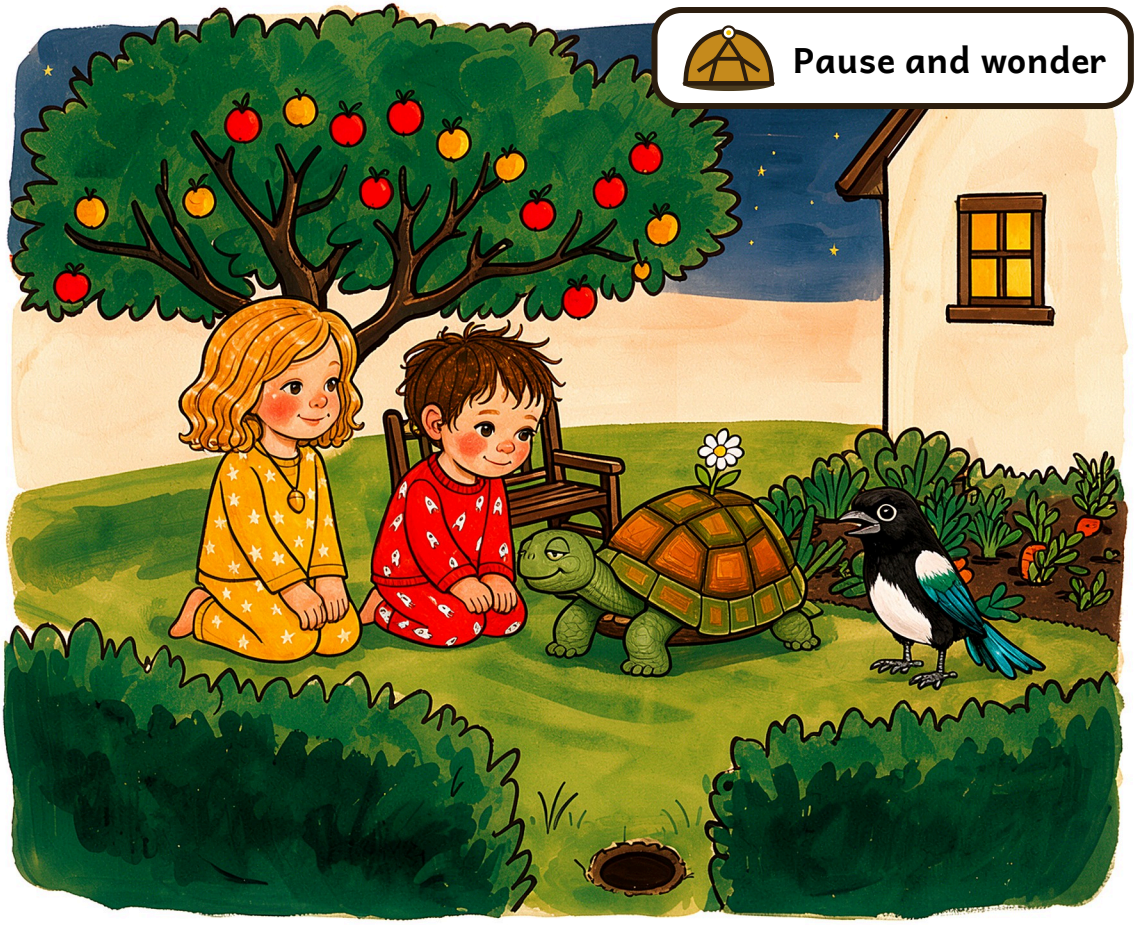
Back in the garden, the sun went down. No Pip. “He promised,” said Lara.

> “**A promise is a promise!**” said Zac, and he stamped his welly. Then, very slowly, as the first star came out, Ponder crept out from under the hedge.



Then Pip landed, puffed and late, with the gold button. “Sorry,” he said. “There was a baby bird.”

He told them all about it. The cheep. The hop, hop, hop. The mother with the worm. Lara took her button. She didn’t know whether to say thank you or to be cross.



“Ponder,” said Lara, “Pip broke his promise. Was that wrong?”

> “But he helped a baby bird!” said Zac. “But he PROMISED,” said Lara. Pip looked at his feet. Ponder blinked, very slowly. “Hmm,” she said. “I wonder. What do you think?”



“What if,” said Ponder slowly, “Pip had flown straight past the baby bird to keep his promise?”

> Lara thought about the little bird, all alone on the path. Zac hugged Bunny tight. “Promises are just words anyway,” said Pip, a bit too quickly. “No they’re NOT,” said Zac. “**A promise is a promise!**”



In bed, Lara held her gold button tight. “I’m glad about the baby bird. But I wish he’d kept his promise.”

> “Can you be glad and cross at the same time?” asked Zac. Lara thought about it. Then she made a promise of her own. “I promise to go to sleep,” she said. “Maybe,” said Zac.



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

Over the garden wall, in the hedge, a baby blackbird was fast asleep, tucked under its mother’s wing.

Ponder's question

Did Pip do the right thing?

ZAC

Should Pip help the baby bird, or bring the button? Point to the one you'd choose.

LARA

Is a promise ever less important than something else? What makes a promise matter?



Some people think...

Pip did the right thing. Helping a baby bird is more important than a button.

Pip should have kept his promise. A promise is a promise, and Lara was waiting.

Pip could have done both, if he'd been quicker. Or told someone he'd be late.

Or something else?

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

For grown-ups

The question: A promise binds you to make something happen. Can another good reason ever outweigh it?

Its name: Promising and conflicting duties. W. D. Ross's "prima facie duties" (keeping promises versus helping others); the old puzzle of returning a borrowed sword.

Where it comes from: Plato, *Republic* Book I (Jowett's translation is public domain), where Socrates asks whether you should return a borrowed weapon to a friend who has gone mad. Retold here as a button and a baby bird.

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Did Pip keep his promise? (Yes or no.)
2. Why might it be OK, or not OK, that he was late?
3. Have you ever promised something and then something else got in the way?
4. What if the button had been for something really important, like Lara's birthday?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): Little ones often focus on the outcome ("He brought it!") or simply repeat the rule ("A promise is a promise!"). Both are real moral positions, so take them seriously.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds often say "He should have told her" or "He could have done both", which is a lovely, practical move. Ask whether it would still matter if there had been no way to tell her.

TOMORROW

Make a tiny promise together ("I promise to put Bunny on the windowsill at lunch") and see if you can keep it. How did it feel to keep it?

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.)

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

Brave Zac, Scared Zac



Book 9 · For Lara and Zac



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

> That morning, at the park, there had been a slide. Not a little slide. THE slide. The tall one, with the twisty bit.



At the park there was a slide so tall it nearly touched the clouds. Well, nearly nearly.

> Lara whizzed down it three times. Zac stood at the bottom holding Bunny, looking up, and up, and up.



Zac climbed the ladder, one step at a time. At the top he stopped. “**Not yet...**” he whispered.

> His tummy felt wobbly, like jelly on a plate. From up there, the ground looked a very long way down, and the twisty bit looked very twisty.



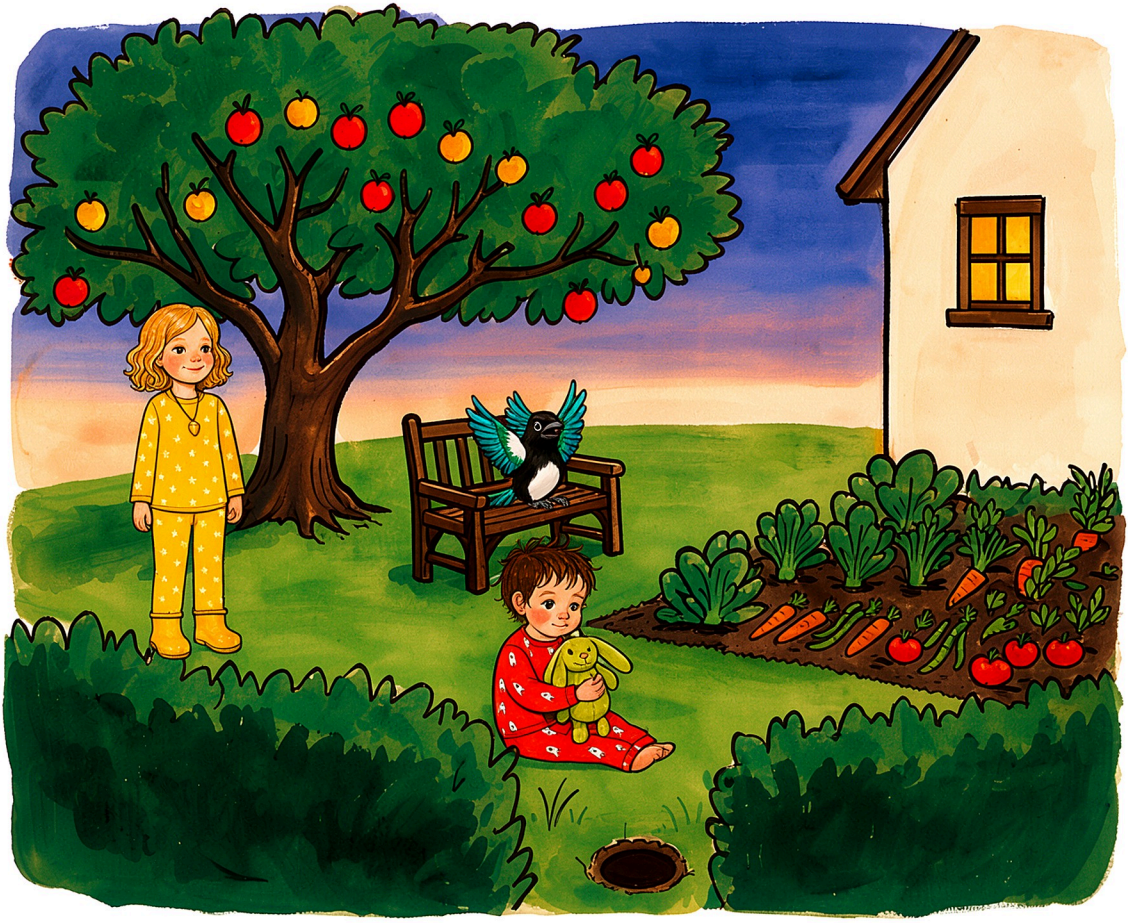
Pip landed on the rail. “Scared? I’m never scared,” he said. “Watch!”

He hopped off the top and swooped down in a loop-the-loop. “See? Easy.” “But you can FLY,” called Lara from the bottom. “That’s not fair.”



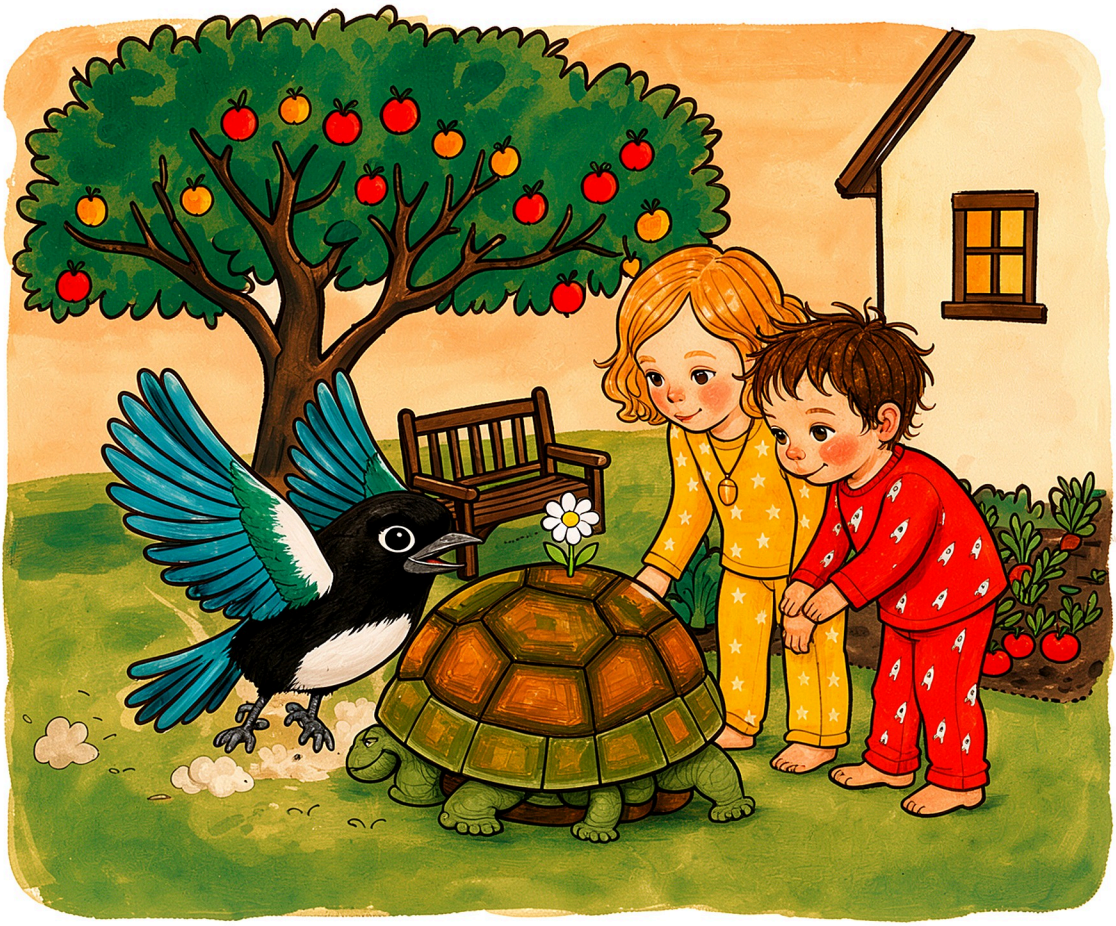
Zac held Bunny very tight, shut his eyes, and... “**Wheeeee!**”

> He whooshed round the twisty bit and landed bump on his bottom at the bottom. His eyes were wide. His hair was wild. “Again,” said Zac.



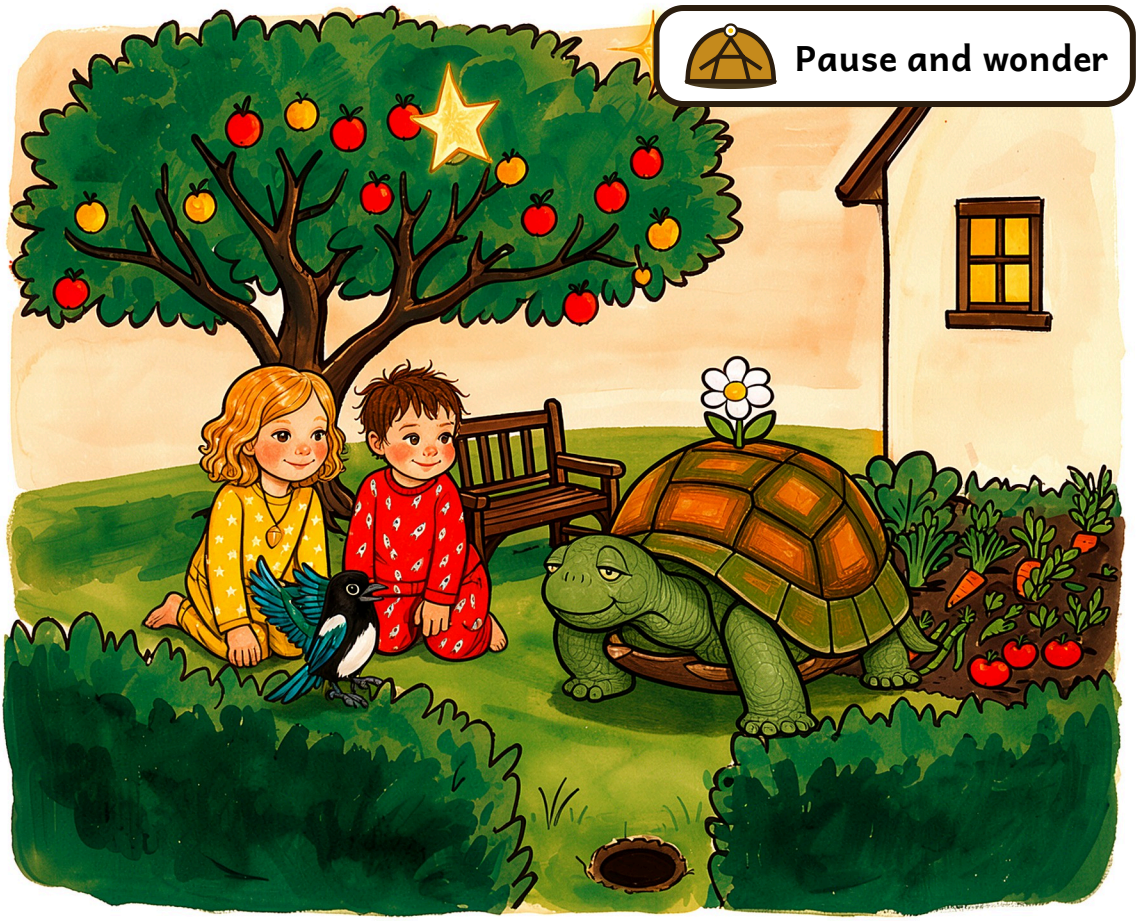
That evening, in the garden, they argued about who was the bravest.

> “Me,” said Lara, “because I went down three times and I wasn’t even scared.” “Me,” said Pip, “because I’m never scared of ANYTHING.” Zac didn’t say anything. He was thinking.



Pip landed with a THUMP, and Ponder pulled her head right inside her shell.

> “Ha! Scaredy-tortoise!” said Pip. Ponder’s head came out again, very, very slowly. “Hmm,” she said. “Or a sensible tortoise? I wonder.”



“Ponder,” said Lara, “who was the bravest? Me, or Pip, or Zac?”

> “Zac was the scaredy one,” said Pip. “I was scared,” said Zac, “and I went down ANYWAY.” Ponder blinked, very slowly. “Hmm,” she said. “I wonder. What do you think?”



“Long ago,” said Ponder, “a man called Socrates asked two soldiers, what is brave?”

> “Easy,” said the soldiers. “Brave is never running away.” But Socrates kept asking. What if running away is the clever thing to do? Is someone brave if they are not scared at all? The soldiers got very muddled.



“Ponder is half in and half out,” said Zac. “Ponder is half brave.”

Lara looked. It was true. Ponder had her head halfway out of her shell. “Maybe if you’re not scared at all,” said Lara slowly, “it doesn’t count as brave.” “It DOES count,” said Pip. “Not scared is the best kind.”



In bed, by the glow of the star nightlight, Zac whispered, “Tomorrow… **Wheeeee!**”

> “Were you scared AND brave?” asked Lara. Zac thought about it for a long time. “I was scared-brave,” he said. “Is that a thing?” said Lara. Nobody was quite sure.



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

And in her hollow under the hedge, Ponder tucked her head all the way into her shell. Which is what you do, if you’re a tortoise, when it’s time to sleep.

Ponder's question

Who was the bravest, Lara, Pip or Zac?

ZAC
Show me your brave face. Now your scared face. Can you do both at once?

LARA
If you are not scared at all, can you still be brave? Why?



Some people think...

Lara was the bravest. She went down three times without being scared.

Zac was the bravest, because he was scared and did it anyway.

Nobody was brave. Pip can fly, Lara wasn't scared, and Zac shut his eyes.

Or something else?

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

For grown-ups

The question: Is courage the absence of fear, or acting well in spite of it? And is it ever brave (or wise) to hold back?

Its name: The nature of courage. Socrates' question in Plato's *Laches*; Aristotle's idea of courage as a mean between rashness and cowardice.

Where it comes from: Plato, *Laches* (Benjamin Jowett's translation is public domain). The general Laches first says courage is standing firm and not running away. Socrates replies with the example of soldiers who fight by retreating, and the two generals end up agreeing they don't know what courage is.

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Was Zac scared at the top? (Point to his face in the picture.)
2. Why might Lara think it doesn't count if you're not scared?
3. Have you ever done something even though you were a bit scared?
4. What if Pip couldn't fly? Would he be brave on the slide?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): "Me!" is a perfectly good answer. Ask what made it brave. Three-year-olds often explain bravery through feelings ("My tummy was wobbly"), which is exactly the point.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds often start with "brave means not scared", then get stuck on Zac. If they also notice that Ponder hiding might be sensible, they've reinvented Aristotle.

TOMORROW

Play "brave, scared or sensible?" Name small things (climbing a tree, saying sorry, touching a worm, crossing the road without looking) and sort them together.

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.)

QUESTIONS TO SLEEP ON

If Nobody Could See You



Book 10 · For Lara and Zac



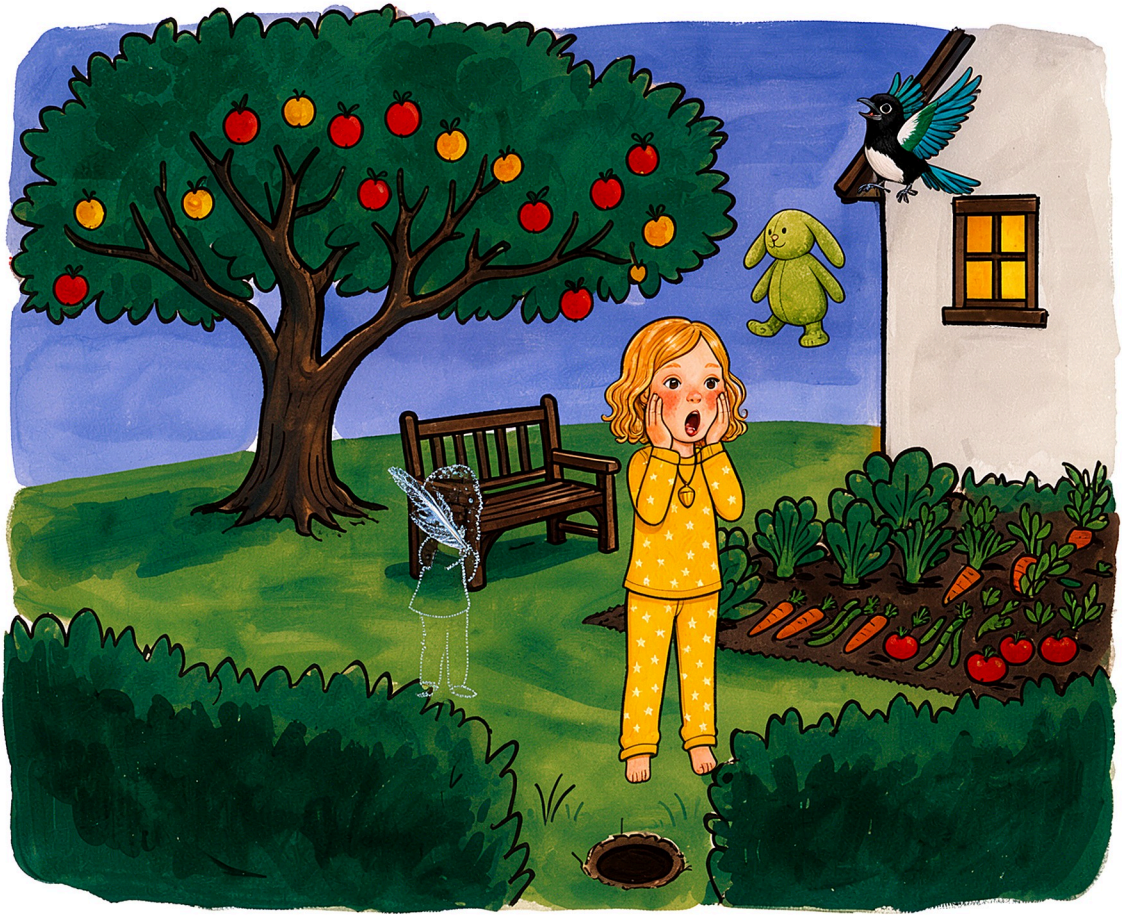
When the lamp goes warm and the garden goes quiet, Ponder comes out to wonder.

> Tonight Pip had a secret. He had been bursting with it all day, hopping and flapping and nearly telling, and not telling, and nearly telling again.



Pip landed on the bench with a long silver-blue feather. “It’s MAGIC,” he whispered.

> “Whoever holds this feather goes completely invisible,” said Pip. “Nobody can see you. Not Mum. Not Dad. Not even a tortoise.” Lara did not believe him. Zac believed him completely.



Zac held the feather. “**Now you see me… now you DON’T!**”

> And Zac was gone. Well, in this story he was. There was just a faint dotted shape where Zac used to be, and Bunny floating in the air all by himself.



“If I was invisible,” said Zac, “I’d eat ALL the biscuits.”

> “Every single one. Even the ones on the top shelf. And nobody would know it was me.” “Bunny would know,” said Lara. Zac thought about this. “Bunny won’t tell,” he said.



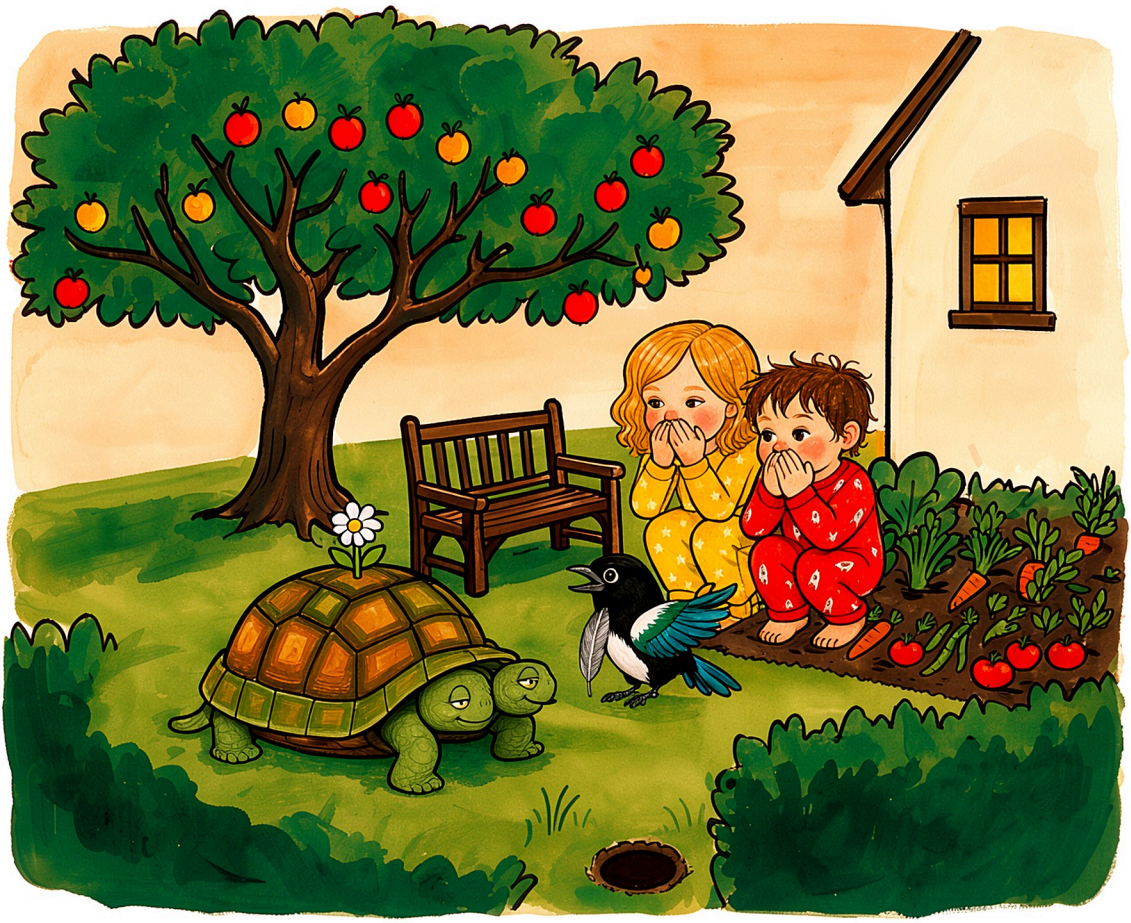
Then Lara took the feather. “**Now you see me… now you DON’T!**”

> “If I was invisible,” said Lara, “I’d peek at my birthday presents, on the top of the wardrobe. Just one little peek. Nobody would ever, ever know.”



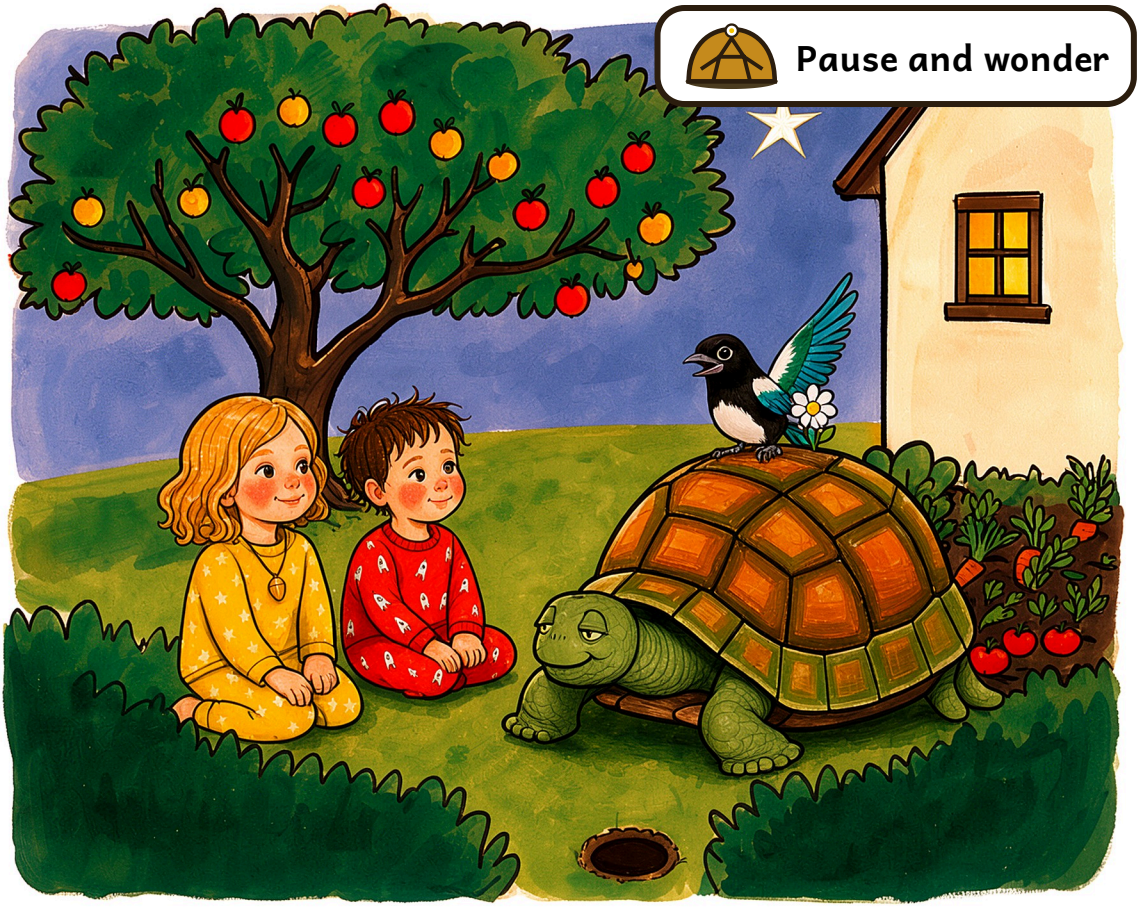
“If I was invisible,” said Pip, “I’d take ALL the shiny things in the whole world.”

> “That’s stealing,” said Lara. “Not if nobody sees,” said Pip. “If nobody sees, it doesn’t count.” Lara opened her mouth, and then shut it again. Did it count?



Very slowly, Ponder crept out from under the hedge. “Hmm,” she said. “Where did everybody go?”

> Zac giggled. Lara giggled. Ponder pretended to look for them under a leaf, which took a very long time. Then she said, “If nobody could see you, would you still be you?”



“Ponder,” said Lara, “if nobody could ever see you, would you still have to be good?”

> “No,” said Pip. “Yes,” said Zac. “Maybe,” said Lara. Ponder blinked, very slowly. “Hmm,” she said. “I wonder. What do you think?”



“Long ago,” said Ponder, “a shepherd found a magic ring that made him invisible.”

> “What did he do?” asked Zac. “Some very naughty things,” said Ponder. “A man called Plato wrote the story down, and people have argued about it ever since. Would a good person do something different? Or would everybody be a little bit like the shepherd?”



Zac looked at the feather for a long time. “Bunny would know about the biscuits,” he said.

> “And I’d know,” said Lara slowly. “I’d know about the presents, even if nobody else did. And then they wouldn’t be a surprise.” “I’d know too,” said Pip, “and I’d LOVE it.” Ponder said nothing at all.



In bed, they gave the feather back to Pip. Or did they?

> Lara wasn't sure it was really magic. Zac was sure it was. Pip said he would keep it somewhere safe, which, if you are a magpie, means somewhere secret.



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

> And if anyone had been looking very, very closely, they might have seen a silver-blue feather on Bunny’s pillow. But nobody was looking. Everybody was asleep.

Ponder's question

If nobody could ever see you, would you still be kind?

ZAC
What would you do if you were invisible? Show me your sneakiest tiptoe!

LARA
Is something naughty because you might get caught, or for another reason?



Some people think...

If nobody sees, it doesn't matter. You only get told off if you get caught.

It still matters, because you would know, and it would still be unkind.

It depends. Peeking at presents is different from taking someone's shiny things.

Or something else?

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

For grown-ups

The question: Do we behave well only because others are watching, or would a good person act the same unseen?

Its name: The Ring of Gyges. The question of why be moral, and whether justice is valued for itself or only for its rewards.

Where it comes from: Plato, *Republic* Book II (359a–360d), where Glaucon tells of the shepherd Gyges, who finds a ring of invisibility. Benjamin Jowett's translation is public domain. In the original, Gyges uses the ring to seize a kingdom; that has been softened to "some very naughty things".

QUESTIONS, LITTLE TO BIG

1. Would you like to be invisible? (Thumbs up or down.)
2. Why does Pip think it doesn't count if nobody sees?
3. Have you ever done something good when nobody was watching?
4. What if you could be invisible, but Bunny (or Mum) could still see you? Would you change your plan?

WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

Zac (3): Expect a wish list (biscuits, toys, staying up late). That's fine. Ask, "Would that be naughty? Even invisible?" and let them say "No!" without correcting.

Lara (6): Six-year-olds often answer "You'd still know" or "God would see". Follow both gently with "Why does that matter?" rather than taking sides.

TOMORROW

Play an "invisible kindness" game. Each of you secretly does one kind thing today (tidying a toy, drawing a picture). At bedtime, guess who did what.

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.)