



5. Granny's roast chicken

It was Sunday morning and Zahara was drawing a picture in her bedroom. *Ding dong*, the front doorbell rang. Zahara ran to open the door. It was her granny.

"Hello, Granny," she said, giving her grandmother a hug.

"I bought a roast chicken from the supermarket," said Granny. The chicken was packed in a big white packet and it felt warm when Zahara touched it. It smelled wonderful!

"Oh good," said Zahara's mother coming towards the door. "Put it on the kitchen counter, and we'll eat it for lunch."

"I can't wait to eat it," said Zahara. "It smells so yummy."

"I'll make some tea," said Daddy from the kitchen. "You three can sit on the couch and relax. Why don't you watch TV?"

Just then Zahara heard her father's cellphone ring and then she heard him talking on the phone.

"I have to go to work," said Daddy walking to the front door. "I'll be back later."

Granny and Mama were busy watching their favourite TV program.

"Bye," said Mama.

"Bye," said Granny.

Zahara was drawing. "Bye, Daddy," she said.

Soon Granny and Mama's TV program was over and it was lunchtime. Mama went to the kitchen to fetch some bread, salad and the roast chicken. She opened the packet, took out the chicken and put it on a plate. Oh! Mama's eyes went wide with shock. Something was missing! One of the drumsticks was gone.



"Zahara," she called. "Come here, right now."

Zahara knew that when Mama called her in that cross voice, she had to run. Quickly, she put down her crayon and hurried to the kitchen. "What's wrong, Mama?" she asked.

"Did you eat a drumstick? Someone has pulled off a whole drumstick and eaten it," said Mama pointing to the chicken.

"No, Mama," said Zahara. "I promise, it wasn't me."

"Are you sure?" asked Mama.

"I'm VERY sure, Mama," said Zahara looking worried.

Mama didn't say anything else. Instead, she went outside to where Uncle Joe was mending his car.

"Joe, did you eat the drumstick from the chicken?" she asked.

Uncle Joe had the radio turned up loud. "What did you say?" he shouted.

"DID YOU EAT THE DRUMSTICK FROM THE CHICKEN?" shouted Mama above the music.

"Yes, please, I'd like some chicken, and a glass of cooldrink too," he yelled.

Mama sighed. She went to the big mango tree in the corner of the garden. Zahara's younger brother, David, and his best friend, Lebo, were playing in the branches.

"David," said Mama, "did you eat the drumstick from the chicken?"

"Oh good, is it lunchtime?" said David. "We're so hungry."

"Did you eat the drumstick?" asked Mama again.

"No, Mama," said David.

"He didn't," said Lebo. "We've been playing in the tree all the time."

Mama went back into the house. She was very upset. "So, nobody ate the drumstick," she said. "Then where can it be?"

"Maybe the lady at the supermarket took it," Zahara suggested.

Mama clapped her hands. "Of course! That's what happened! The lady at the supermarket who sold the chicken to Granny must have pulled it off and given it to someone else."

"Oh no," cried Granny. "I asked her for a whole roast chicken. I paid for a whole roast chicken, and now she has taken some of it. And we haven't got enough for lunch." Granny began to cry.

Zahara was so sad to see Granny crying that she began to cry too. That set Mama off. All three of them sat and cried and cried.



So, Mama, Granny and Zahara set off for the supermarket, while Uncle Joe kept an eye on David and Lebo.

"I'd like to speak to the manager," said Mama when they got there. She used her cross voice, and the manager came running.

"How can I help you, Madam?" he asked.

"Somebody took the drumstick from our chicken!" cried Mama, Granny and Zahara together.

"That is very serious," said the manager. "I'll call the woman from the roast chicken counter." He picked up the intercom and said, "Roast Chicken Counter Woman, Roast Chicken Counter Woman, please come to the manager's office urgently."



Mama tapped her foot and waited. Soon the woman from the roast chicken counter came running in. "Can I help you?" she asked.

"This customer says you took the drumstick from her roast chicken," said the manager.

"No, I didn't," said the woman. "I put the whole roast chicken in the packet and gave it to Granny."

"Oh no, no, no!" said Mama. "When I opened the bag with the chicken in it at home the drumstick was gone!"

The woman quivered and quaked in her shoes. "I didn't take it, I promise. I didn't," she said.

The manager was very angry. "Fetch these people another roast chicken right away," he bellowed. "Granny, I will give you a whole new roast chicken for free, and a chocolate cake, to say sorry."

So, Mama, Granny and Zahara went home with a whole new roast chicken in a white bag, and a big chocolate cake in a box.

When they got home, Daddy was back from work. "Where have you been?" he asked. "Why haven't you had lunch yet?"

So Zahara told him the whole story. She was very surprised to see Daddy looking so shocked.

"Oh no," said Daddy. "I've done a terrible thing. I took the drumstick as I was leaving for work. I was hungry, and it smelled so good."



"Oh no," cried Mama. "I got that poor woman at the supermarket into trouble for nothing."

"And I put the idea in your head that she might have taken it," said Zahara. "Oh no!"

So, Daddy, Mama, Granny and Zahara packed the second roast chicken and the chocolate cake into a packet, and they went all the way back to the supermarket. When they got there, they went straight to the manager's office.

The manager was so worried when he saw them – AGAIN! "Oh no, what is wrong now?" he said to himself. "That woman is going to shout at me again."

But Mama didn't shout.

"We're very, very sorry," said Mama, Granny, Daddy and Zahara.

"It's all my fault," said Daddy. "I was hungry. I took the drumstick. Please call the woman from the roast chicken counter."

The manager picked up the intercom. "Roast Chicken Counter Woman, Roast Chicken Counter Woman, please come to the manager's office urgently."

The woman from the roast chicken counter looked very scared when she saw Mama, Daddy, Granny and Zahara.

"Please, don't fire me," she said to the manager. But Daddy took out his wallet and gave the manager the money for the roast chicken and the chocolate cake. Then he gave the woman the packet. "Here you are," he said. "I'm sorry we got you into trouble. Please enjoy these." The woman was very pleased to have a chicken and a cake for her lunch.

But Zahara was disappointed. "You gave away the chocolate cake," she said. So Daddy took out his wallet again and bought another roast chicken and another chocolate cake. After lunch everyone had a slice of cake – Mama, Daddy, Granny, Uncle Joe, Zahara, David and Lebo. But the biggest slice of all went to Zahara, because she was Daddy's special girl.

6. Why the moon gets smaller and bigger

Author : Kirstin Hartmann

Illustrator: Heidel Dedekind



Long ago, Mother Moon lit up the sky every night. She had a blanket woven from the most beautiful golden thread. Her blanket shone so brightly that there was enough light for all people to see their way through the darkness.

Sometimes, Mother Moon wrapped her blanket tightly around herself and came down to visit the earth. One night, in the middle of winter, near the banks of a river, she came across an old woman who lived alone. The old woman was not frightened to see Mother Moon.

“Come inside,” she said and invited Mother Moon into her home. She was happy to have company.

Mother Moon noticed that the old woman could not stop shivering and shaking because she was so cold.

Mother Moon felt sorry for the old woman and gave her a piece of her golden blanket. The old woman wrapped it around her shoulders. Soon she was warm.

“Thank you,” she said. “You are very kind.”

But in the morning, when the old woman saw how beautiful the blanket was, she wanted another piece. She wanted to sew two pieces together to make a bigger blanket for herself.

So the next night when Mother Moon came down to visit, the old woman told a lie and said that she was still cold. Again, Mother Moon felt sorry for the old woman and gave her a second piece of the beautiful blanket.

In the morning, the old woman sewed the two pieces together, but she was greedy and wanted even more. Before Mother Moon came to visit on the third night, the old woman hid her blanket. She covered it well so that the golden light would not shine from her house. Then, she told Mother Moon another lie. She said that the blanket had been stolen and now she was very, very cold.

Mother Moon felt so sad. She saw how the poor old woman was shivering in the night air. So Mother Moon gave the old woman the last little piece of the blanket she had left. Now, Mother Moon did not shine at all. She said goodbye to the old woman, wished her well and left.

After a few days the people in the nearby village began to worry. They could no longer see in the dark. There had been no moonlight for so long that they decided to find out why. They lit lanterns and began to search. They searched for hours until they were so tired and thirsty that they stopped to rest on the banks of a river.

As they rested, they heard a woman crying. When they looked around, they found Mother Moon. No light shone from her and she looked sad.

“What has made you so unhappy?” they asked. “And how can we help you?”

Mother Moon told them about her beautiful blanket and how it used to shine brightly in the night sky. She also told them how she loved to visit the earth and about the old woman who had been cold. “I cannot take the blanket back,” said Mother Moon. “The poor woman has nothing to keep her warm. But without my blanket, I cannot light up the night sky.” And she started to cry again.

“We will help you,” said the villagers. “Come with us. We will find the old woman and talk to her.”

They did not have to search long for the old woman’s house because the blanket shone so brightly from the inside. They called loudly until the old woman came outside.

When the old woman saw Mother Moon standing in the darkness with tears on her cheeks, she felt ashamed for being so selfish. Without a word she gave the blanket back. The people quickly wrapped Mother Moon in her blanket, and as it touched her, it started to glow even brighter than before.

“Before you go back to the night sky,” they said, “please tell us how to punish the old woman.”

Mother Moon thought about this for a long while and then she said, “No, do not punish her. I would rather teach her how to share.”

Mother Moon unpicked a thick thread from the bottom of her blanket and gave it to the old woman. “When you are cold,” she told the old woman, “pull on this thread, and then you will know what to do next.” And with that Mother Moon went back into the night sky leaving a trail of golden thread behind her.

From that day on, Mother Moon has stayed in the night sky, shining brightly. And from that day on, once a month, when the old woman starts to feel cold, she pulls on the golden thread. She pulls and pulls gathering more and more thread to weave a golden blanket. As she does this, Mother Moon’s blanket in the sky comes undone and gets smaller and smaller until it shines no more. Then, when the old woman is warm enough, she gives thanks and lets Mother Moon take back all the thread bit by bit. Then Mother Moon weaves it until her blanket is whole again and shines brightly in the night sky.

And that is why, every month, the moon gets smaller and bigger. That is how it has been from that day to this.

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7. The bouncing cabbage

Author: By Helen Brain

Illustrator: Illustrations by Vian Oelofsen

Cassidy Ann and her big sister, Trixie, were waiting in the car. Grandpa had gone into the garden shop, but he wasn't going to be long. The car park was empty, except for a big truck that was parked on the other side of the fountain. The truck was filled with plants, and men were unloading them onto trolleys for the shop.



Through the fence Cassidy Ann could see Grandpa walking along the rows of plants. He was trying to decide which rose bush to buy.

Suddenly a cabbage fell off the truck. It bounced on the ground, and rolled past the tinkling fountain.

"Did you see that, Trixie?" Cassidy Ann asked. "That cabbage fell off the truck."

Trixie looked up from her book. "So what?" she said. "It's just a cabbage."

Cassidy Ann watched, waiting for someone to see the cabbage and pick it up. But the men were so busy, they hadn't even noticed it was gone. The cabbage rolled and rolled down the car park towards their car. It stopped right next to the car. Cassidy Ann opened the door to pick it up.

"What are you doing?" Trixie asked, turning the page. "Grandpa told us to stay inside the car."

Cassidy Ann closed the door. She sat there in the car, worrying about the cabbage. She saw the men climbing back into the truck. "I'm just going a tiny way," she said, opening the car door again. "Just to give the cabbage back to the men in the truck."

The men were ready to go. They were slamming the doors and the driver had already started the engine.

"Fine," Trixie said, "but if Grandpa comes back and finds you gone, it's not my fault."

So Cassidy Ann jumped out of the car, grabbed the cabbage and ran over to the truck.

But she was too late. The driver hadn't seen her. He drove off and Cassidy Ann was left standing in the car park, holding a very big cabbage.

"What shall I do now?" she thought. "It doesn't belong to me, but I can't give it back. Should I leave it here? Or should I take it home for Granny to cook?"

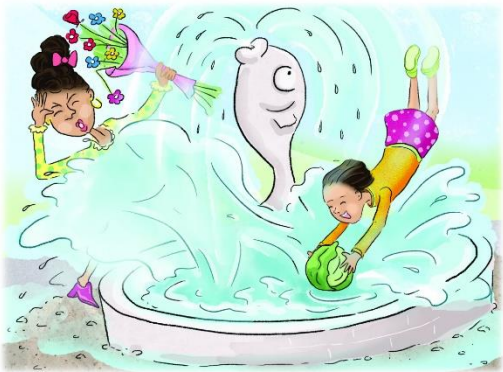
Suddenly the cabbage began to shake! It shook so hard that Cassidy Ann could hardly hold it. It shook so hard it began to bounce around in her arms. And then *Whoosh! Bang!* It bounced right into the air, and Cassidy Ann went with it.

Up it flew, right up to the top of a very tall avocado tree. Then down it came again, while Cassidy Ann held on tight, and *BOOOOOING!* it bounced on the road and shot up again, this time onto the roof of the garden shop.

It was nice up there. Cassidy Ann could see everything – the people buying plants in the garden shop, a lady taking her dogs for a walk along the river, the water lilies in the fountain, and Trixie reading her book in the car. It was fun.

But then the cabbage was bouncy again. It was shaking and shivering and wiggling up and down, and Cassidy Ann had to hold on tight to stop it from getting away from her.

“Where are you going now?” she shrieked as the cabbage bounced once, twice, three times ... then *swoooooosh* into the air, and *boooooing* down to the ground. *Sppppplashhh!* it landed in the fountain, scattering water everywhere. Then up it went again, while Cassidy Ann clung on giggling, and *boooooing* down again into the fountain. Even more water shot out, splashing an angry lady carrying a bunch of flowers.



Up it went again, high, high, high until Cassidy Ann could smell the clouds and feel them making her clothes all damp. Up, up, up till the car park looked far away, and Grandpa’s car looked as tiny as a toy car. Cassidy Ann could see Grandpa coming out of the garden shop, pushing a trolley with a big spiky rose bush on it. The cabbage started shivering and shaking and then it began to fall down, down, down. Cassidy Ann just knew she was going to land on the spiky, thorny rose bush, so she started to scream, “Grandpa, watch out, Grandpa!”

Grandpa looked up and said, “Cassidy Ann what on earth are you doing flying through the ...” Just as she was about to crash into the spiky, thorny rosebush, Grandpa held out his arms and caught Cassidy Ann. He overbalanced and they both tumbled into the fountain. Luckily there wasn’t much water left in the fountain, but a frog got a terrible fright and jumped out, croaking. And Grandpa sat up in the fountain with a lily leaf draped over his head, and Cassidy Ann’s dress was all green and slimy from the pondweed.

Trixie came running over, and helped Grandpa up. “What happened?” she asked. “How did you both fall into the fountain?”

“Cassidy Ann pushed me,” Grandpa said. “I think that’s what happened! I can’t quite remember.”

“It was the magic bouncing cabbage,” Cassidy Ann explained. “It bounced me right up into a tree, and onto the roof, and into the fountain, and then as high as the clouds. And then it bounced me down again and I nearly landed in Grandpa’s rose bush.”

“Hmmmmph,” said Trixie. “You’re naughty to make up stories like that and pretend they are true, Cassidy Ann! Next time you must do as you’re told and stay in the car.”

Cassidy Ann wanted to show them she wasn’t making up stories, so she looked around for the cabbage. It was gone. Then she saw it – so high in the sky that it looked like a bird. A fat green bird, bouncing up and down on the clouds.

“There it is,” she said pointing to the sky. “Up there.”

But they still didn’t believe her. Grandpa wasn’t cross though. He began to laugh and they laughed all the way home.

8. Everyone's special

Author: By Kai Tuomi

Translator: Illustrations by Natalie and Tamsin Hinrichsen

Mandla was out walking one day when he saw Elephant splashing himself in the river. Elephant looked very happy. His big ears flapped and he sprayed water high into the air using his long trunk.



"Hello," said Mandla, waving to Elephant.

Elephant looked down at Mandla and lifted his trunk.

"Hello, Mandla," he said, in his big voice.

"That trunk of yours is amazing," said Mandla.

"Oh, this?" Elephant looked at his trunk. "I suppose it is, isn't it?" "It must be nice to spray yourself on a hot day," said Mandla. "Oh, that's not all I can do," said Elephant. "I can also use my trunk to pick fruit from the trees and pull down branches. I can even use it to make a big noise if I want to. We call that trumpeting! Here let me show you."

Elephant stretched out his trunk. *Brrrrpprump!* The most marvellous, loud noise came out. It thundered through the forest and some birds flew away from a nearby tree. Mandla danced on the spot and laughed.

"That's amazing," he said. "I wish I had a trunk like you."

Mandla left Elephant playing in the river and went on through the forest. He held his arm up in front of his nose, bent his arm and curled his hand so that it looked as if he had an elephant's trunk. Then he tried to pick a bunch of berries from a bush. But he was not looking where he was going and ... *THUMP!* He bumped into something. "Ow," he said, falling over.

The thing he had bumped into was brown and orange. It seemed to reach from the sandy ground all the way up through the trees.

"What's happening down there?" said a voice from high above.

"Giraffe!" said Mandla looking up.

"What?" asked Giraffe.

"It's me. Mandla!"

"Who?" asked Giraffe.

A great big head on the end of the long neck came down through the trees.

"Oh, hello, Mandla," said Giraffe.

"Hello, Giraffe, I am sorry I bumped into you. I was pretending to have a trunk like Elephant and I wasn't looking where I was going."

"A trunk like Elephant?" asked Giraffe.

"Elephant's trunk is marvellous," said Mandla. "He can spray himself with water and pick fruit from the trees and make a great big noise."

"Well," said Giraffe, "that's quite clever I suppose, but I can do much more with this long neck of mine."

"Like what?" asked Mandla.

"I can reach the very tops of the trees, where the leaves are the juiciest. I can also see all around and look out for danger. My tongue is very special too," said Giraffe. "It is very long." Giraffe stuck out his long purple tongue. "And it's very thick too, which means I can eat from trees even if they have thorns. Trees with thorns have the best leaves, you know," said Giraffe.

"That's great," said Mandla. "I wish I was tall like you, Giraffe, then I could see over the trees and eat those leaves you keep talking about."

"Don't be silly," said Giraffe. "Boys don't eat leaves. Which reminds me, it's time for my second lunch. See you later, Mandla."

So Mandla went on through the forest, holding both arms above his head like a long giraffe neck and picking at the leaves on the trees.

"What are you doing?" asked a very quiet voice.

Mandla jumped back in fright.

"I didn't mean to scare you," said the quiet voice. A small, grey buck with a white ring on her bottom, crept from the forest.

"Waterbuck!" said Mandla. "You must be the quietest of all the animals."



Waterbuck blushed. "You are kind, Mandla. Being quiet helps keep me safe. I don't like all those noisy animals."

"It's a very good trick, being so quiet," said Mandla. "I wish I could creep around like you do, Waterbuck."

"You should try it sometime! It takes lots of practice to get as good as me though. See you around, Mandla," said Waterbuck, slipping back into the forest.

So Mandla went slowly through the forest, walking on his tiptoes like Waterbuck. It wasn't long before he tripped over a small branch and fell into a pile of leaves. There was a quiet laugh from the forest and Mandla saw a flash of grey as Waterbuck moved away into the bushes. Mandla picked himself up and ran through the forest back to his house in the clearing. His mother was outside hanging up the washing.

"Mama?" he said quietly.

"What's wrong, Mandla?" asked his mother. "Why do you look so unhappy?"

"Mama, how come I don't have a trunk like Elephant? Why don't I have a long neck like Giraffe? And why can't I creep around like Waterbuck? They are so special and I don't feel very special at all."

His mother bent down and kissed him on the forehead.

"Mandla, if you had a trunk like Elephant, I would not be able to kiss you goodnight. And if you had Giraffe's long neck, I could not pick you up in my arms and swing you about. And just think, if you were as quiet as Waterbuck, I could not find you to give you a hug."

Mandla's mother pulled him close. "Everyone has something special. I love you just the way you are. And to me, you are more special than all the animals in the forest," she said.

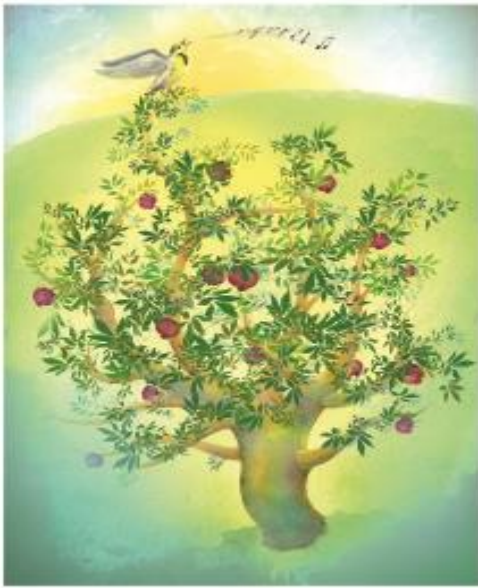


9. The lark and the pomegranate tree

Author: Michael Rice

Illustrator: Alzette Prins

Every morning, just as the sun was beginning to rise, a little lark flew from its nest, perched on a branch of a pomegranate tree, stretched its wings, lifted its head and began to sing the most beautiful song to welcome the morning light.



One morning, just as the bird had finished singing, it looked down and saw a large, ripe pomegranate lying on the ground. The pomegranate must have split open when it hit the ground, for its bright seeds lay scattered about like rich red rubies glinting in the sun.

The lark flew down and began to peck the juicy seeds. As it lifted its head to sing its delight at finding such a delicious meal, one of the pomegranate seeds got stuck in its throat. The lark got such a fright that it flew up into the morning sky.

High in the sky, with a cough and a sneeze, the lark spat out the seed. The seed fell to the earth where it landed on a rock on the side of a mountain.

The lark flew away unharmed, but the seed lay wedged in a crevice in the rock. It lay there for a many years before it began to sprout. There was no soil for it to grow in, and it was only watered once in a while by a passing shower.

Then one day, after a thunderstorm, the seed began to send out tiny, tender shoots, searching for anything to help it grow. After a long time it managed to get a good grip in the crevices of the rock, and then nothing could shift it.

Time passed. The seasons followed one upon the other. The delicate shoots gradually became roots strong enough to reach deeper and deeper into the cracks and crevices, eventually splitting the rock into pieces, while its branches reached for the sky.

And so the tree grew.

Birds nested in its branches and fed on its fruit – which fell to the ground or was scattered over the earth to fall where it may and wait for the rain to soften the ground upon which it lay.

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