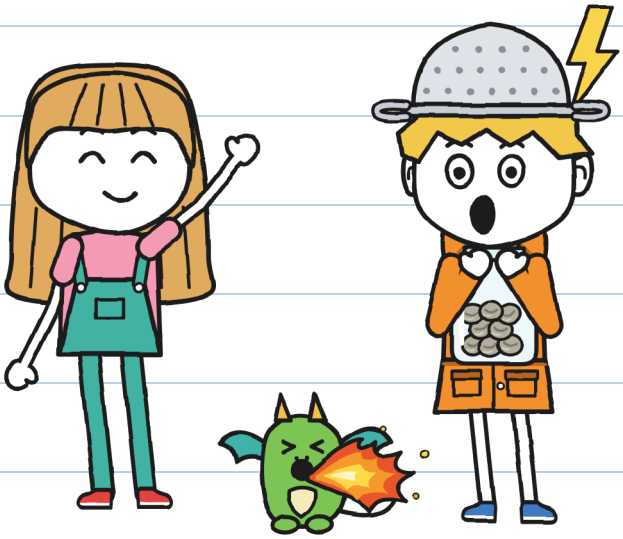
IMPOSSIBLE DELIVERIES · 2

Do Not Open Before Thunder

Lui Eriksson



(Gus's)

SIZE XS
First readers · 5+

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Do Not Open Before Thunder

Text and illustrations: Lui Eriksson

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US English version: LinguAula

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Free to photocopy, for class and for home.

Second book in the series. The first: "This Package Bites."

LinguAula

Work through every chapter at linguaula.com

No thunder was hurt. —J.



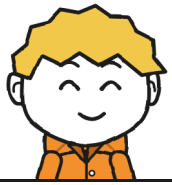
Nobody else. –J.

If you find it, don't open it before thunder.

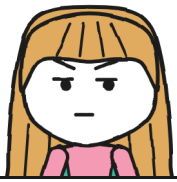
ONLY IN THE STORY

Only in stories. Not you. –J.

WHO'S WHO



Gus, storm chaser.



Julie writes in green.



Crumb, a baby dragon.



Tony, rider for LIGHTNING.



Flora, the gardener.



Vera minds the dragons.



Mara, the witch.

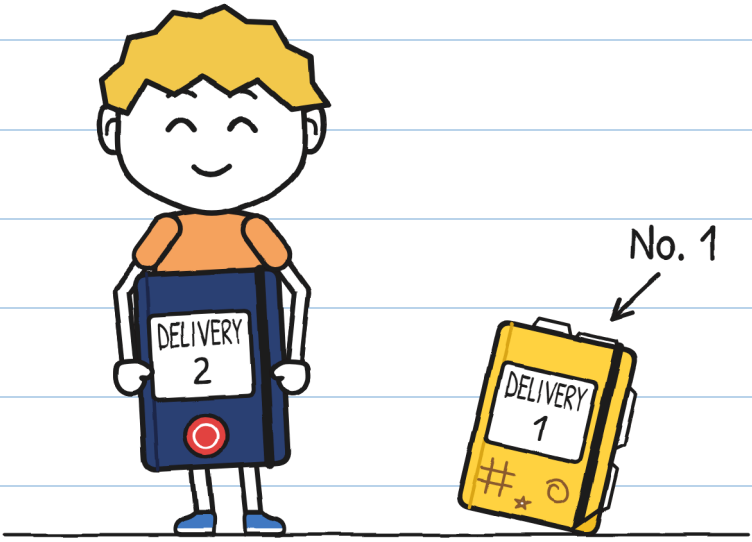


R. sends the packages.

DELIVERY NOTEBOOK 2
by Gus

OFFICIAL.

"Official": I read it first. –J.



Notebook 1 is finished. Mara gave me this one. She says no drawing in it.

CHAPTER 1

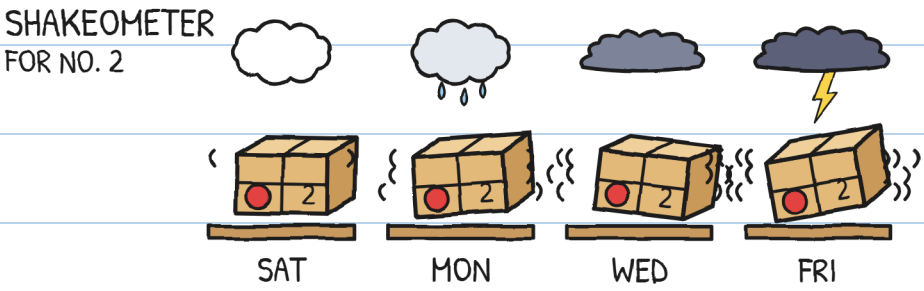
Storm Chaser

A package is shaking in Mara's shop.

I'm not going to touch it.

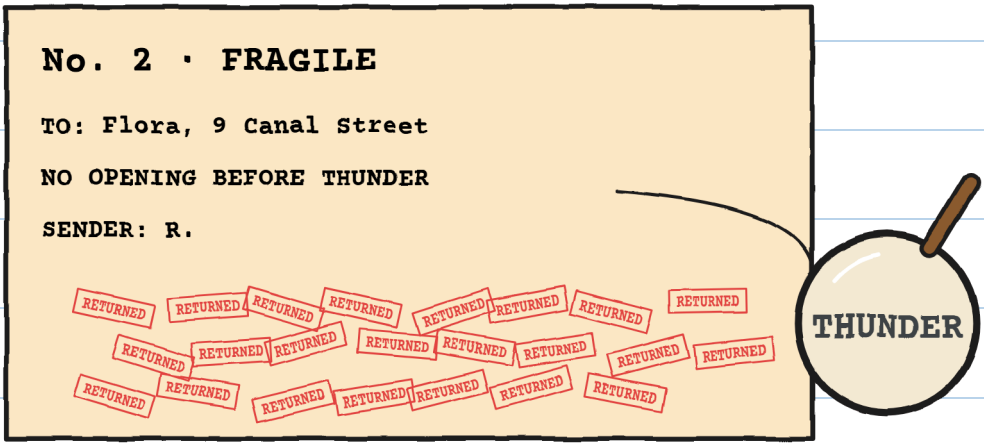
Crumb, the baby dragon, copies me.

Nineteen returns are left.



Storm coming Saturday. —J.

Whoever gets a return must sign. If not, it flies back at dawn.



No. 2 had twenty-three stamps.

I counted them twice. —J.

"Twenty-three times," said Mara. "Never in a storm."

Mara was waiting with
No. 2. Tony was there.
"You'll deliver this one,"
said Mara. "This afternoon."



Julie jumped very high.

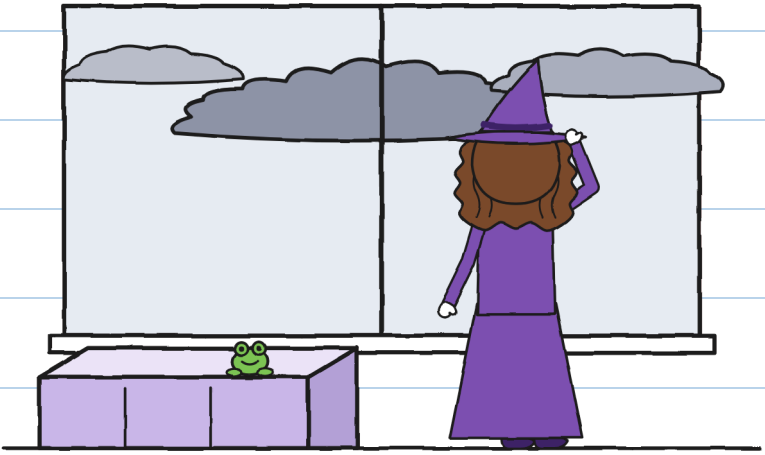
Mara set three conditions.

1. Leave at five.
2. Families told.
3. Open with thunder.

"Aren't you coming?" asked Julie.

"I have things to do," said Mara.

She looked at the gray sky.



What things? —J.

Julie looked at me.

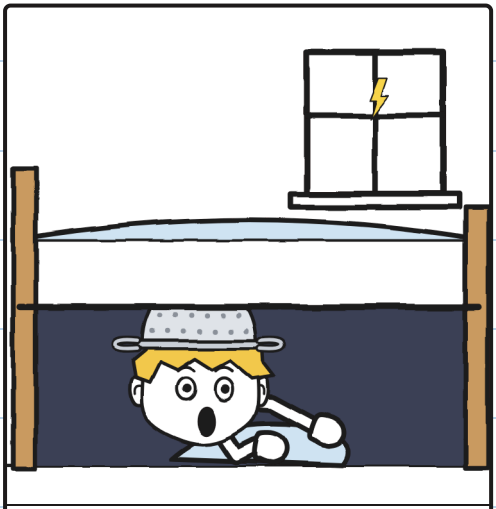
"Do you like storms?"

I said the usual thing:

"I love them. In my old neighborhood I was a chaser."



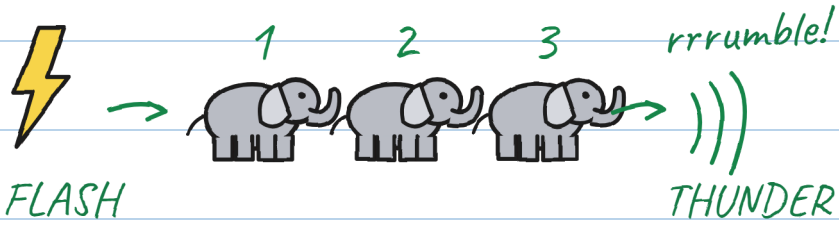
What I said



What happened

Chaser under the bed. –J.

Julie taught me to count storms.



one elephant, two elephants...

1 elephant = 1 second

3 elephants = 1 kilometer

0 elephants = OVERHEAD!

↖ This one opens it.
Faraway ones don't.

More elephants, farther away.

Thunder: take cover!

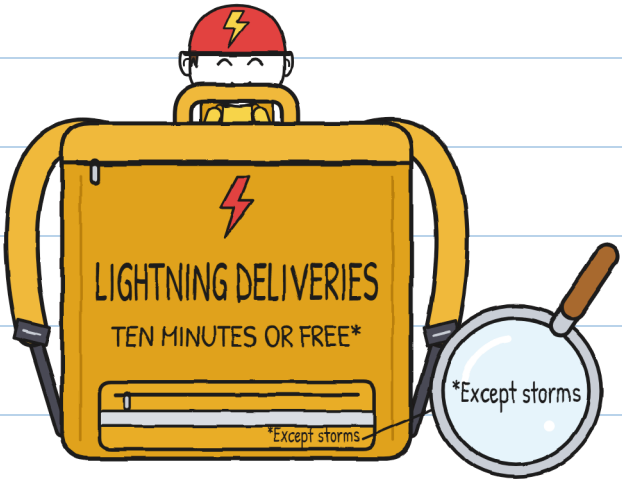
Knowing makes it less scary. —J.

I didn't need it. But I wrote it down.

Tony read the fine print.

"LIGHTNING doesn't deliver in storms."

"Not yet," said Julie.



And he came too.

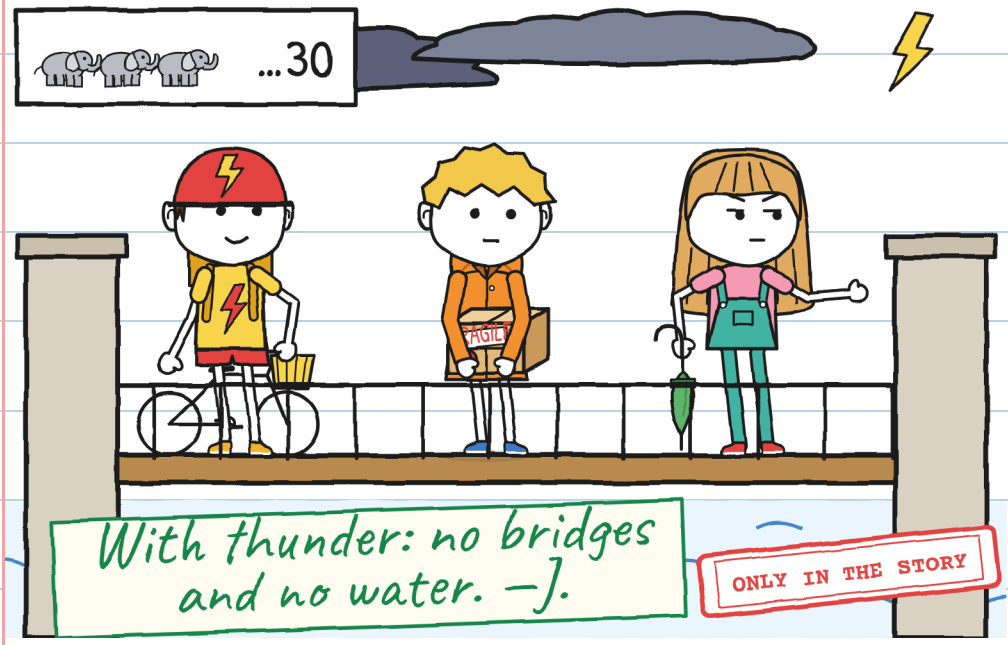
At five I crossed to my house.

"You, when it thunders..." said Mom.

"BYE, MOM!"

WHAT? –J.

We crossed the Big Bridge. Julie waved to the water, very serious.



Julie counted thirty elephants. Rrrumble.

"Can we open it now?" said Tony.

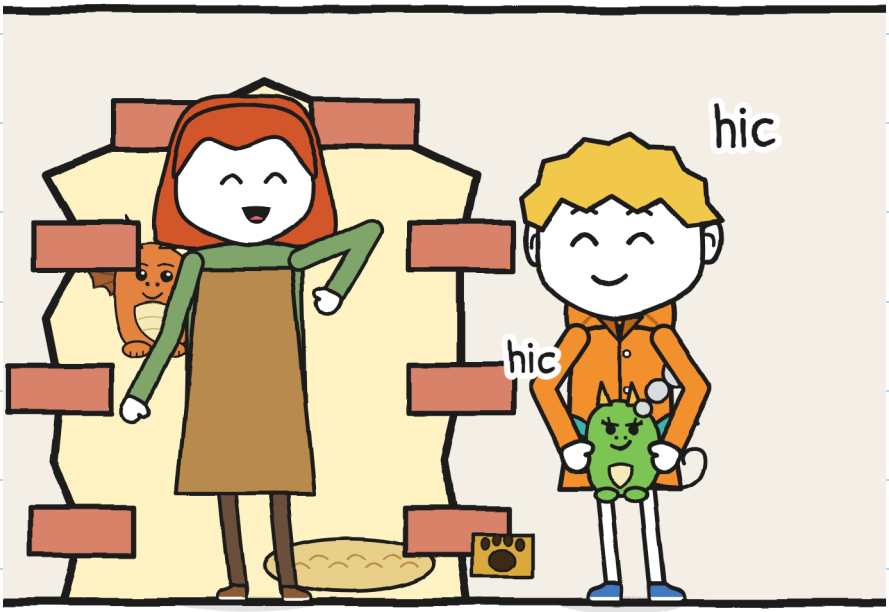
"Not that one," said Julie. "Take cover!"



I get hiccups with every thunderclap. It isn't fear.

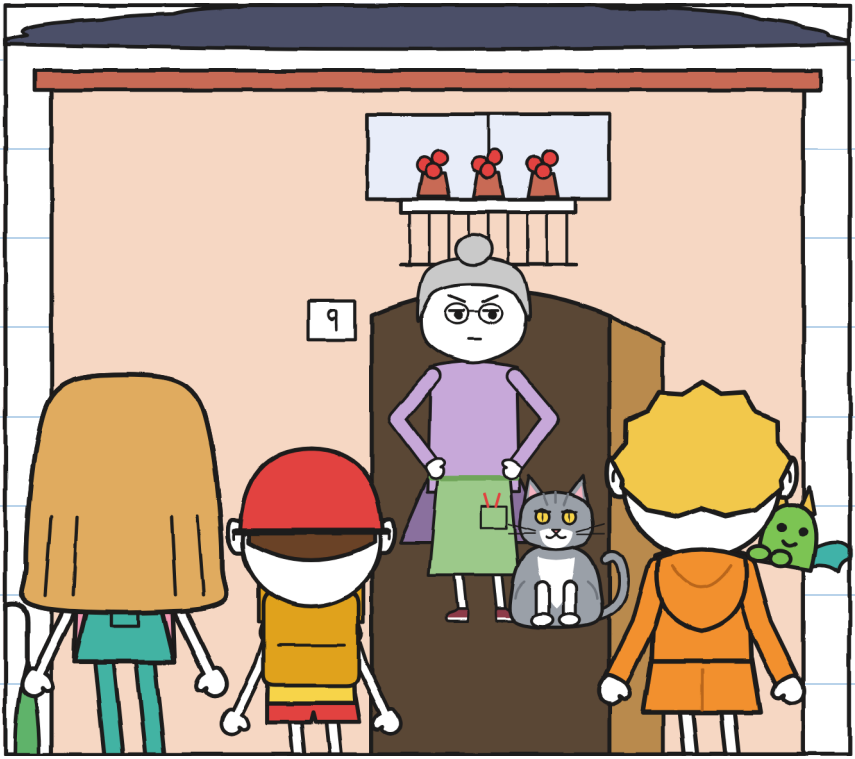
It's called fear. —J.

Vera was waiting with Crumb.
"She copies everything
you do, Gus," she said.



Thunder rumbled. I went
hic, and so did Crumb.
"Inside, now!" said Vera.

Flora's house is the
one with geraniums.



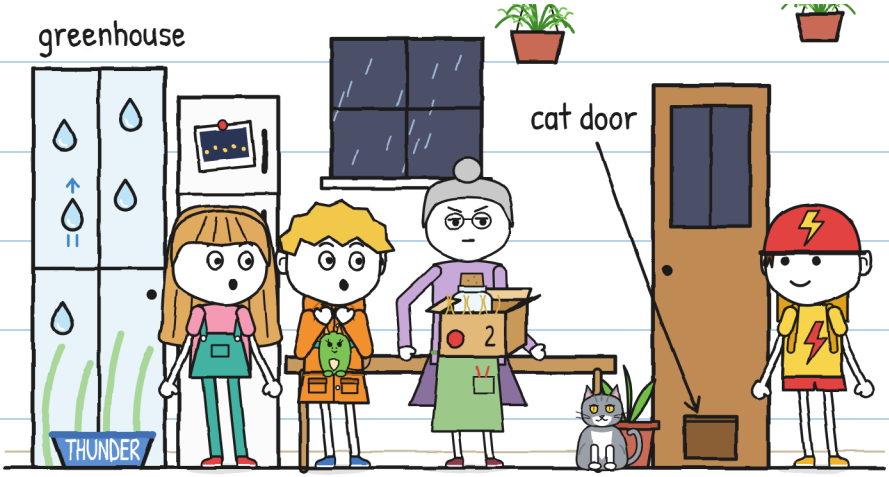
Flora opened the door.
"Come in," she said.
"I don't sign for stones."

CHAPTER 2

Thunder!

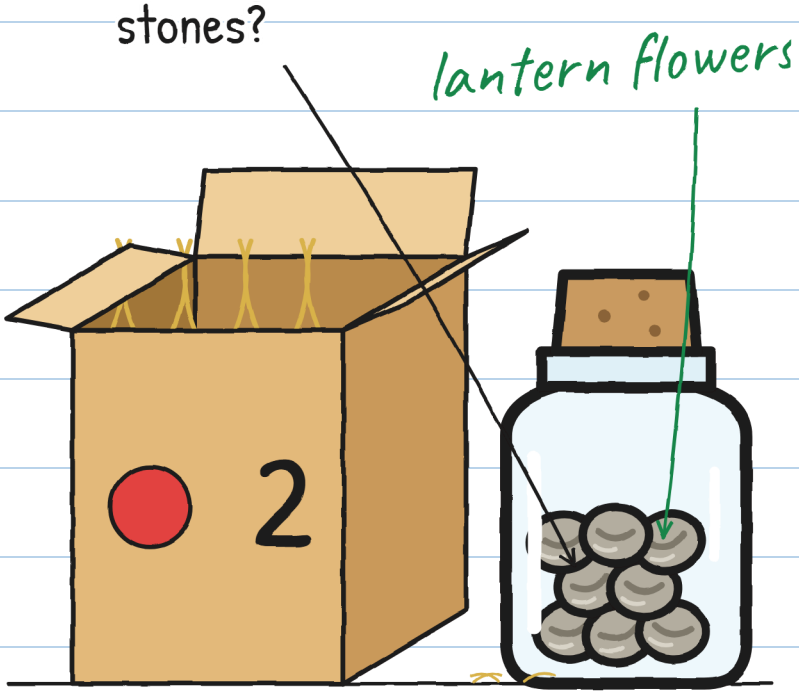
Flora's kitchen is full of plants.

Tony brought in his bike.



There were painted
raindrops on the glass.
"R.'s glass," said Flora. "It lets rain in."

Flora opened the box. Inside,
eight little gray balls.
"R. promised lantern flowers
and sends stones," said Flora.



"What's a lantern flower?" I asked.

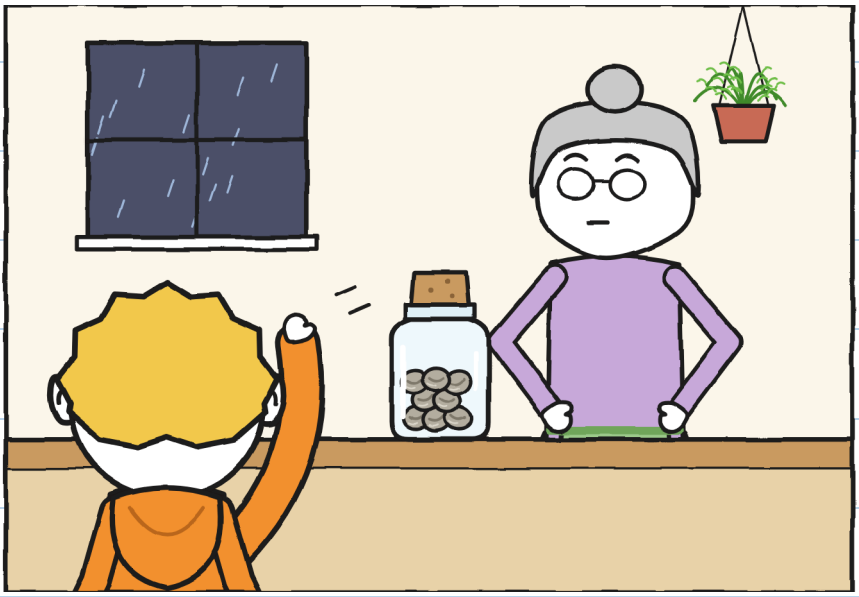
Flora showed us an old photo of the canal.



"They're plants with lightning inside," said Flora. R. stopped coming. That's why the canal is dark.

The footbridge scares me. —J.

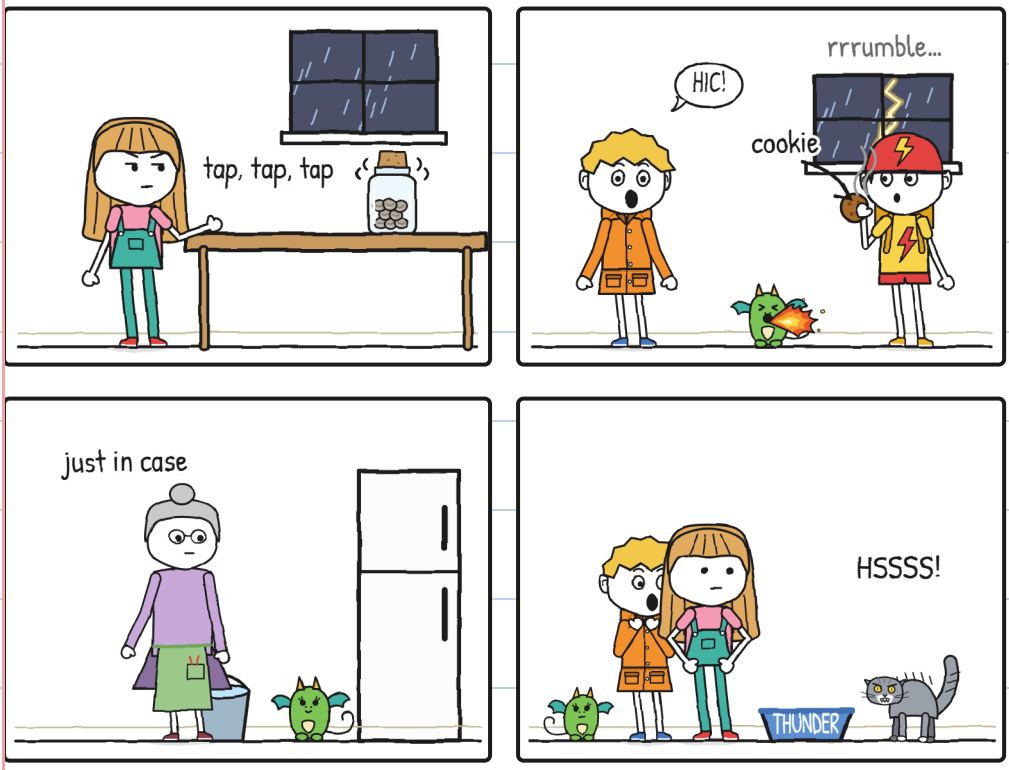
"R. always delivers," said Flora.
"Twenty-three times, stones."
"Did you ever wait for
thunder?" I asked.
Flora looked at me.
"I wait for no one," she
said. "Not even thunder."



Flora's cat is called Thunder.

He is gray like a cloud.

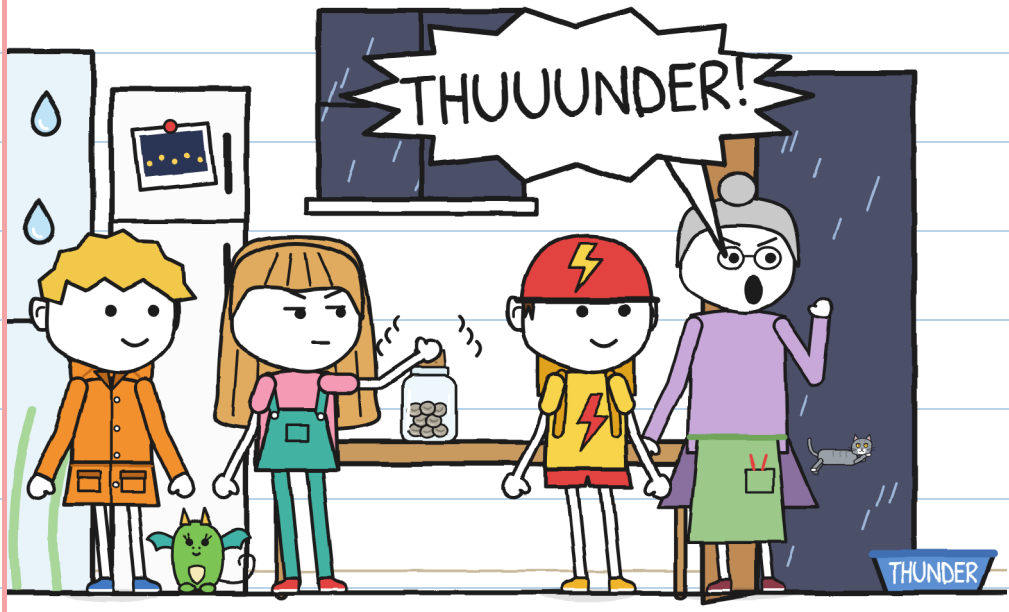
We waited for the storm in the kitchen.



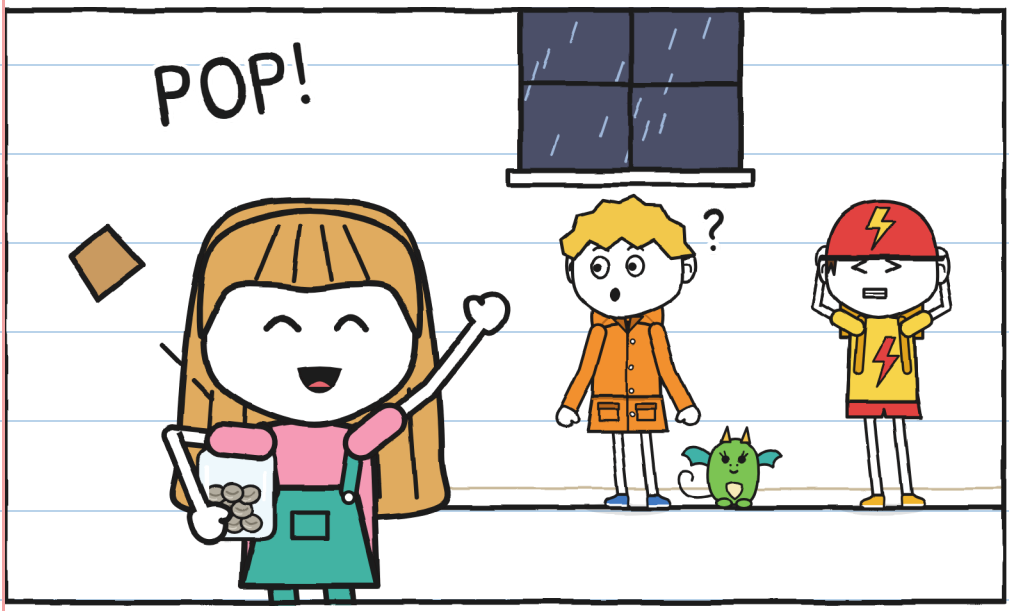
Waiting is the worst. –J.

The jar went ting, ting. Julie counted:
"Twelve elephants." Then: "Nine."

Crumb made a little flame.
Thunder shot out.
"THUUUNDER!" shouted Flora.



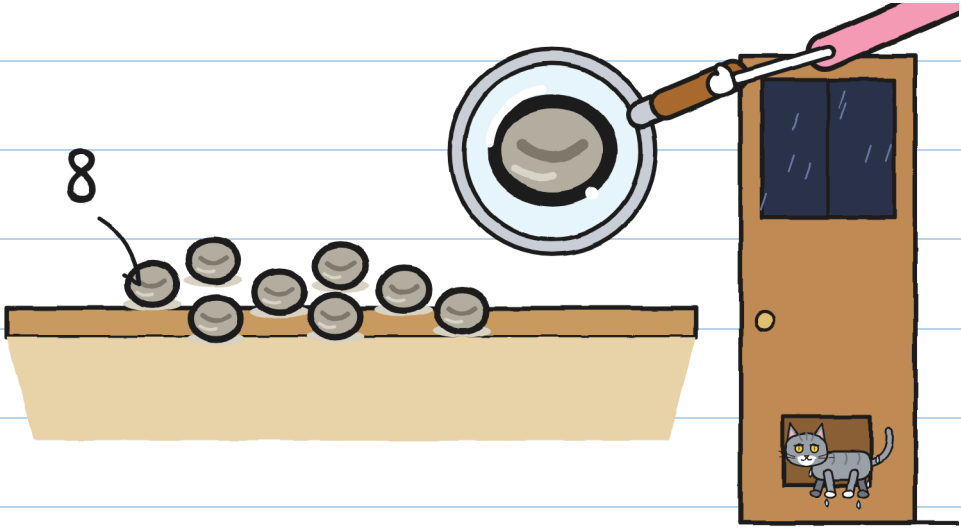
And Julie opened the jar.



"That was thunder!" she said.
It didn't thunder. Flora
shouted. Thunder is the cat.

"THUNDER!" It was a cat. —J.

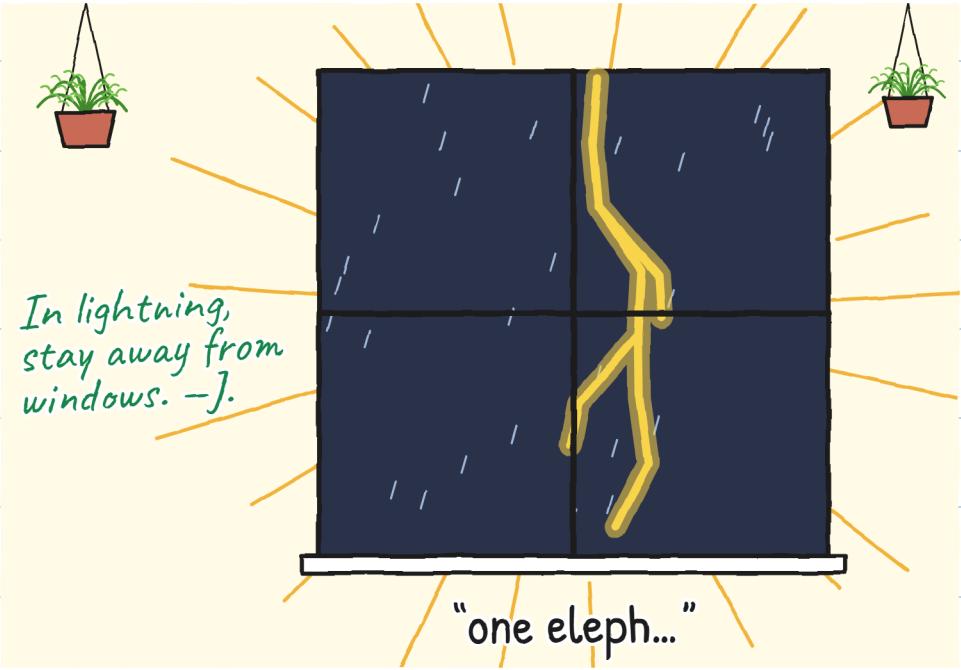
The jar went quiet. Inside, eight
little gray balls, cold and still.
"They have a little line," said Julie.



Thunder came back, soaked.
"Stones, as always," said Flora.

Julie turned red.

"They're seeds, not stones,"
I said. "They're asleep."
"Let them prove it," said Flora.
It was six o'clock. Flash!
Julie began to count:

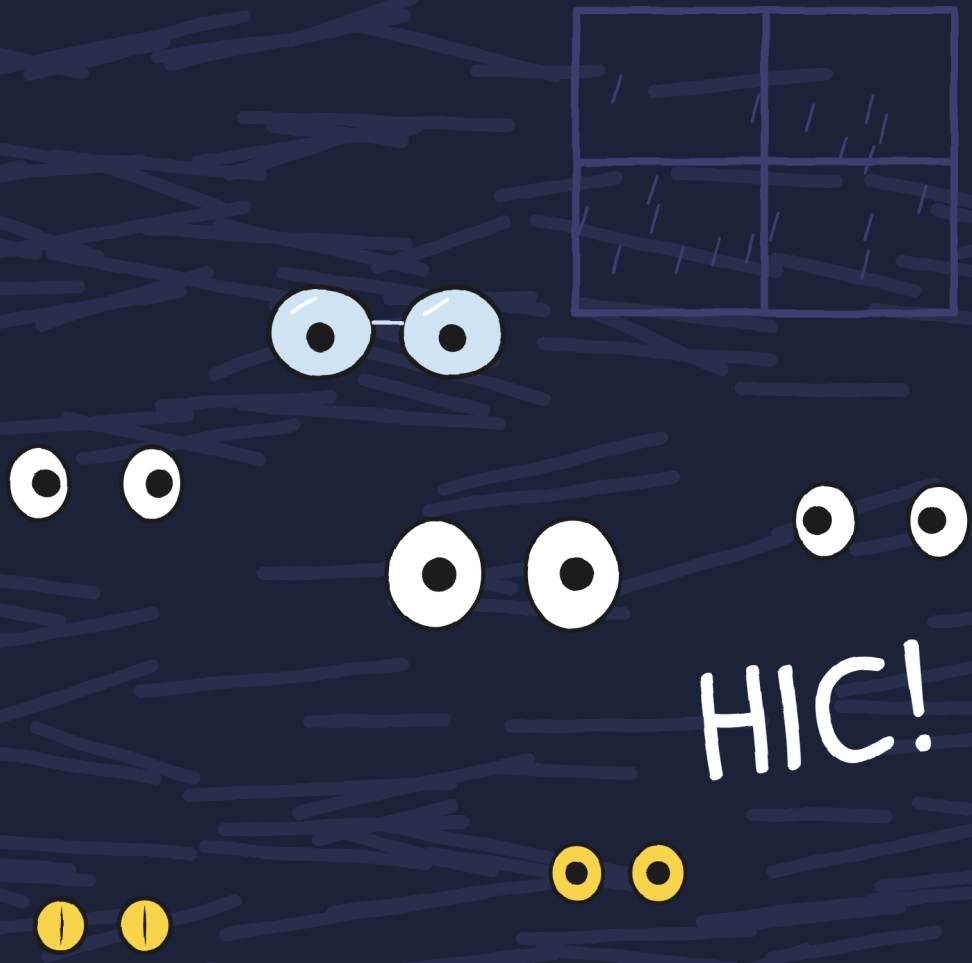


And the real one came.



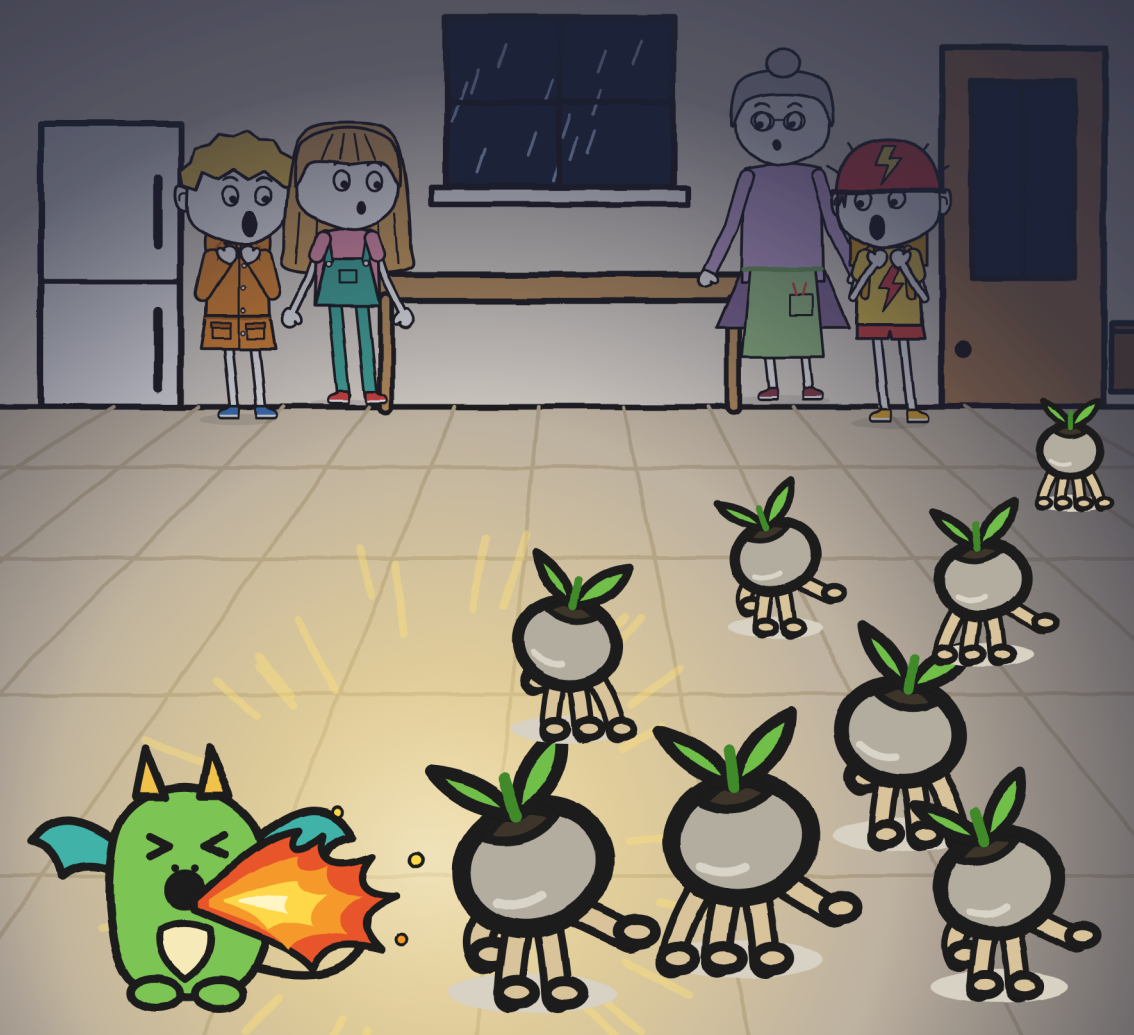
Thunder and lightning together. The storm was overhead. The windows shook.

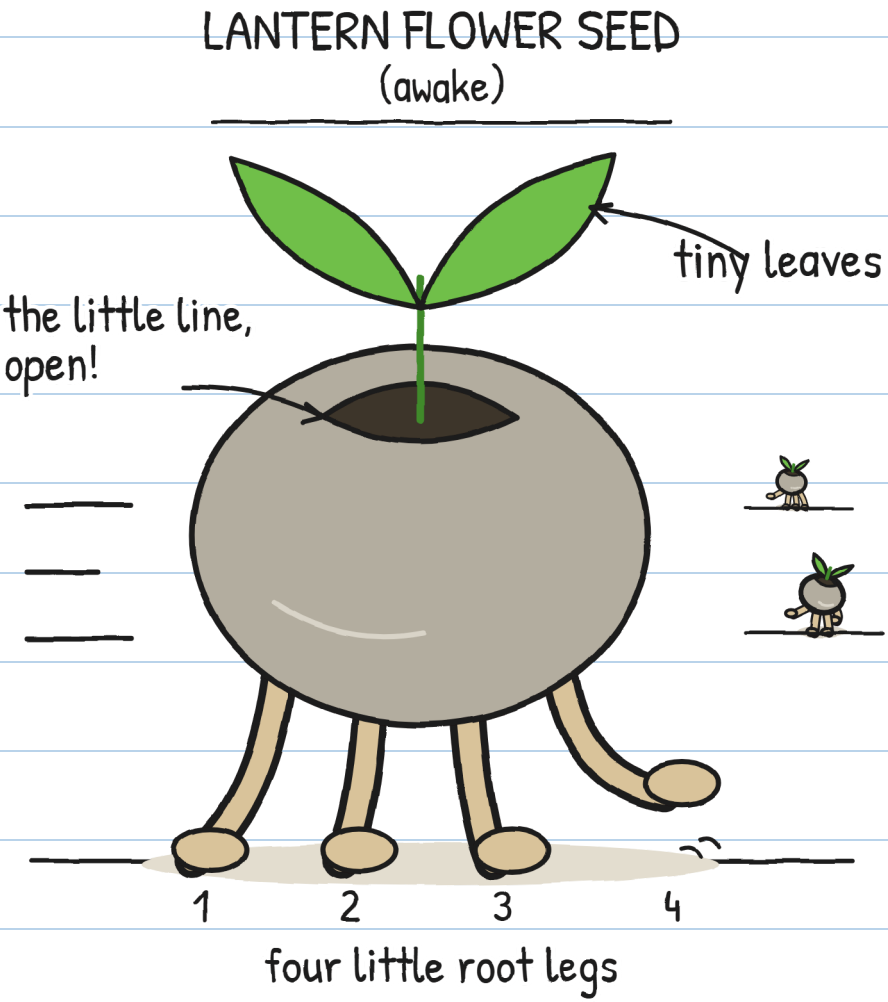
And the lights went out.



I went hic. Crumb went hic: a big flame.

The table was empty.





The stones had legs.

And in a hurry. —J.

CHAPTER 3

They Move When You Don't Look

In the dark: tip, tip, tip.

They ran, but every flash stopped them. I put on the colander.



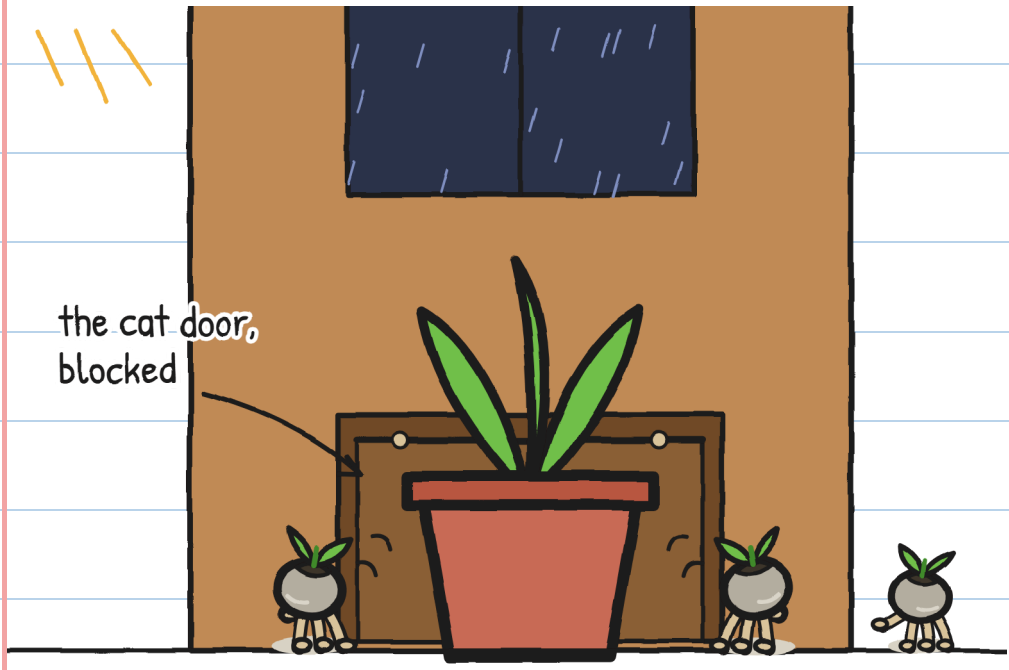
Red Light, Green Light. Seeds! —J.

Flora pointed the flashlight at a seed.
The seed stopped.
"They're seeds!
They're awake!" shouted Flora.



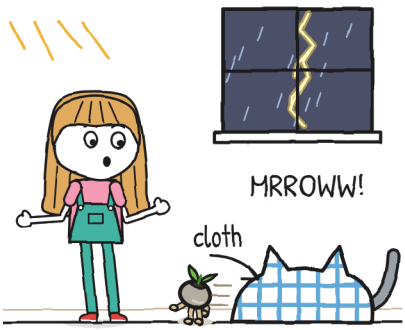
She moved the light. The other ran.
Light: still. Dark: running.
One flashlight isn't enough.

They all went to the cat door.
Flora blocked it with a plant pot.
"They want storm-wet soil."



Now they were all over
the kitchen, in the dark.

We tried everything:



Julie: caught Thunder.



Tony: Thunder caught him.



Crumb: one!

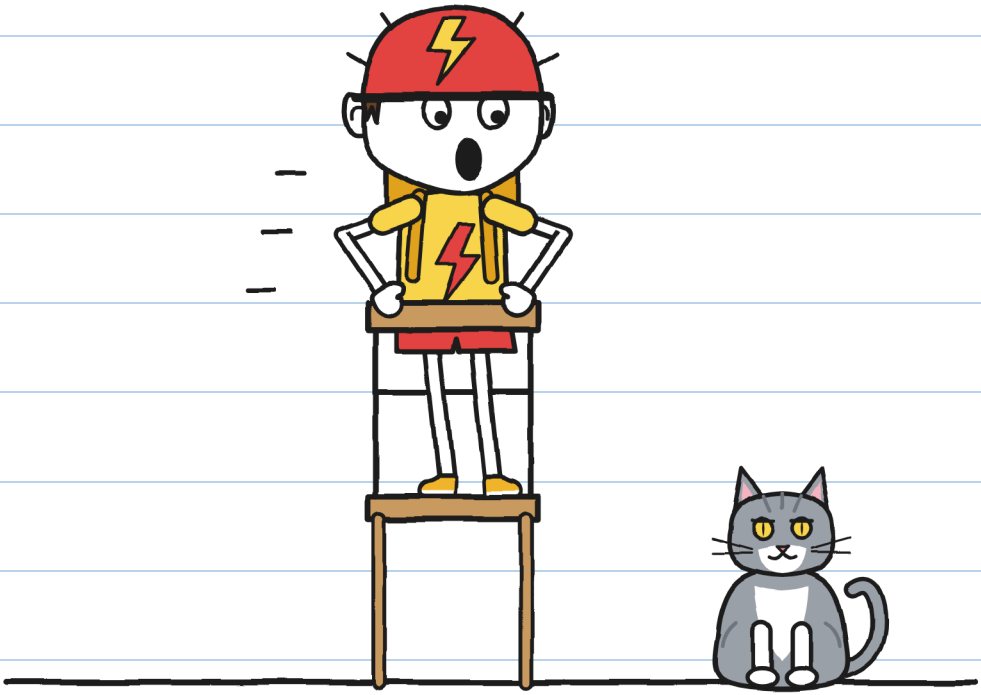


Flora: two!

Thunder was hunting too.

He can see in the dark.

Tony is scared of cats.



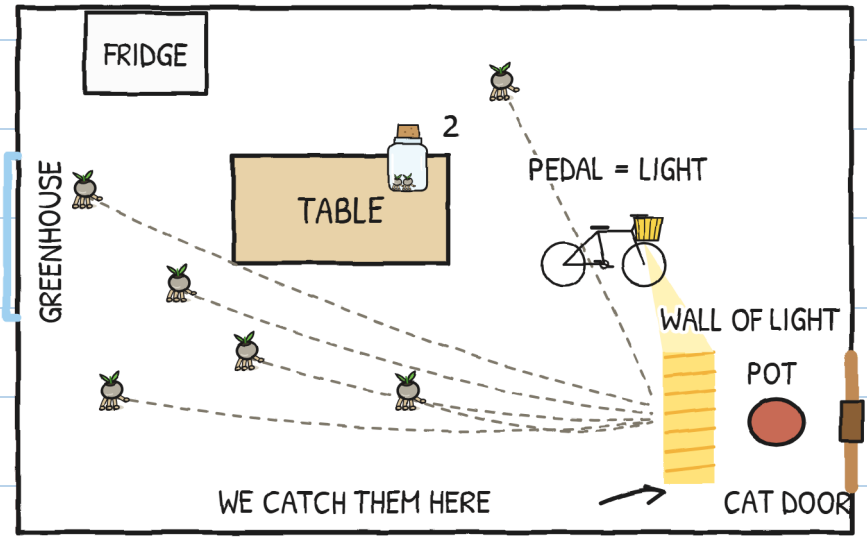
"It's Thunder!" said Julie.

"WORSE!" shouted Tony.

Two scares, one name. —J.

I watched from under the table. They always went back to the cat door.

I drew a plan.



"Tony, does your light come on when you pedal?"

"Of course."

"Today you'll deliver light."

We stood the bike up. The light pointed at the cat door. And Tony pedaled. He pedaled like never before. Thunder climbed on him.



LIGHTNING is good for something. —J.

The seeds stopped in the light.
We caught them: three, four.

Thunder caught another in his mouth.
"Five!" said Flora.



Six.

Flora corked the jar. Thunder jumped on the table and knocked it over.



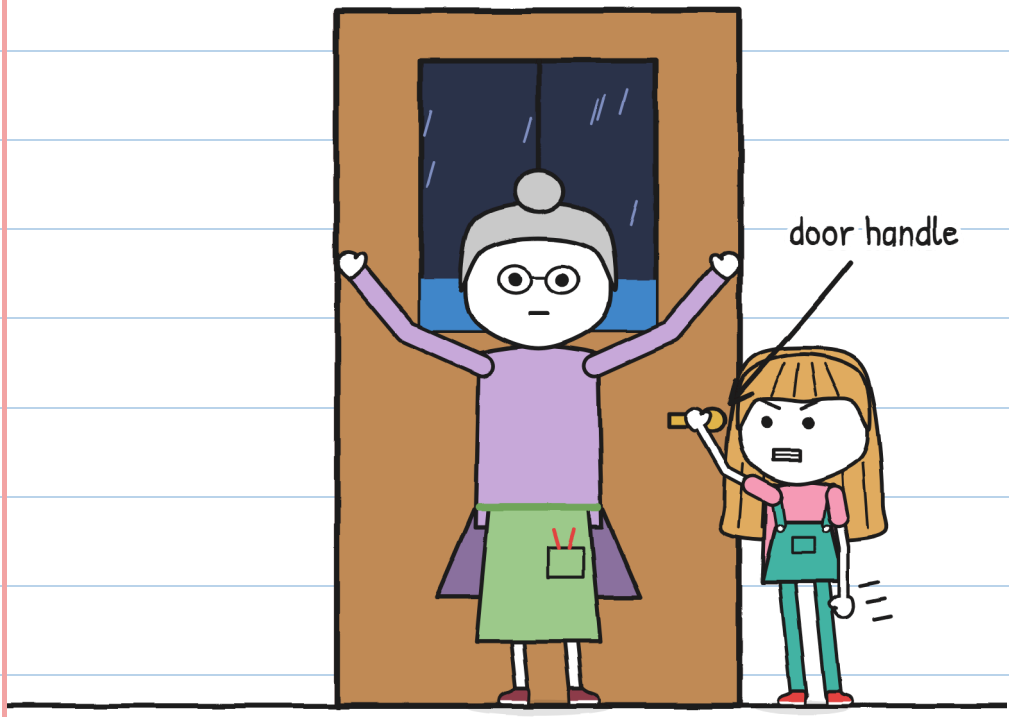
Tony caught it in the air.
But he stopped pedaling.
The light went out.

In the dark: tip, tip, tip.
The cat door went clack.
One seed was left on the
floor. Julie caught it. Seven.



The eighth went through the cat door.

"I'm going after it!" said Julie.
"Not in lightning," said Flora.



Julie didn't let go of the door handle.
Clack! Thunder came back alone.

"One elephant, two elephants."

Rrrumble.

"Very close," said Julie.

"Let's plant them

in the dark," said Flora.

"In there?" asked Julie.

"Lightning stays out."



Flora looked at Crumb.

Crumb looked at me. Hic!

CHAPTER 4

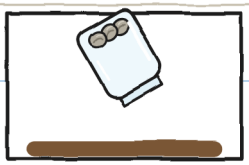
Hic

This is how you plant a lantern flower:

PLANT A LANTERN FLOWER

1. 

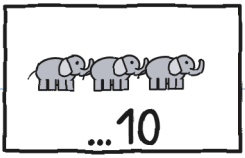
   Storm-wet soil.
   (Not tap-water soil.)

2. 

   Open the jar.
   (Before that, they escape.)

3. 

   All in the dark.
   They plant themselves.
   (Never bury them yourself.)

4. 

   Before it passes:
   More than ten,
   no more planting.

Flora turned a crank. The
painted drops went down.
The real rain fell
on the planting bench.



Real storm: never greenhouses. —J.

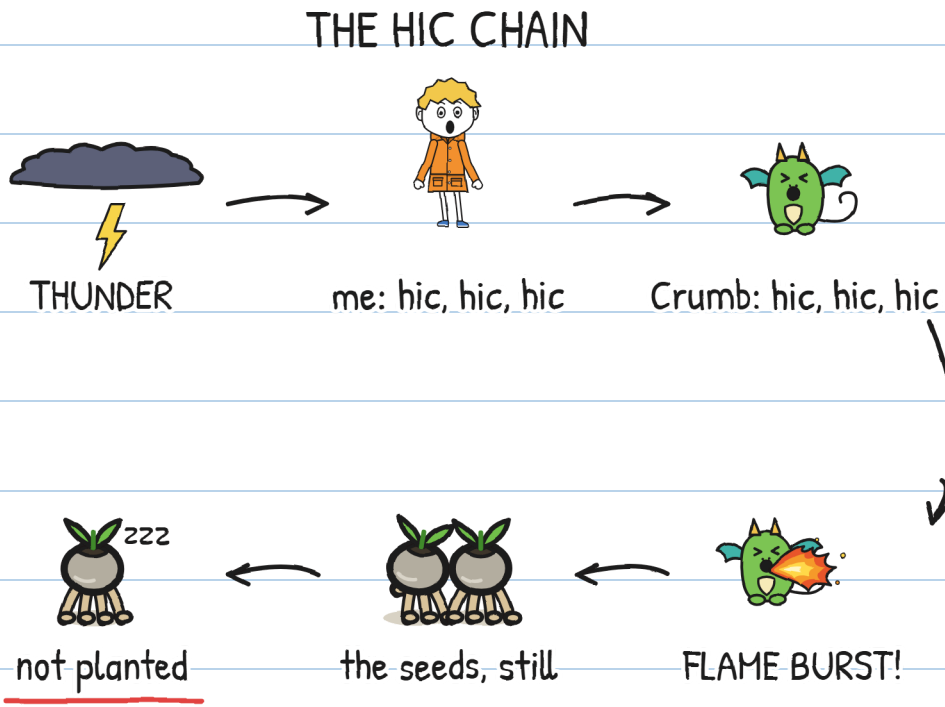
"Everything in the dark," said Flora.

But Crumb was already inside, under the bench. Flora pulled her. Crumb held on to the pots.



Each hic of mine lit up Crumb.

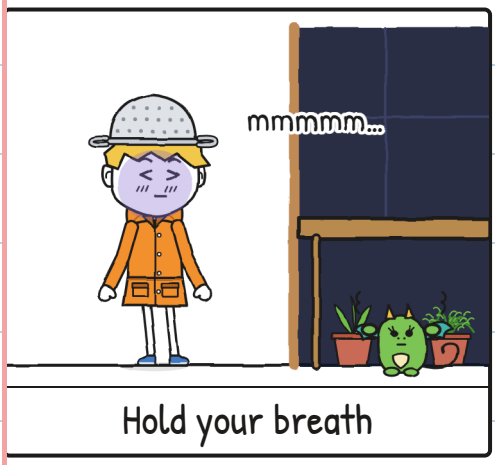
I drew it to understand it:



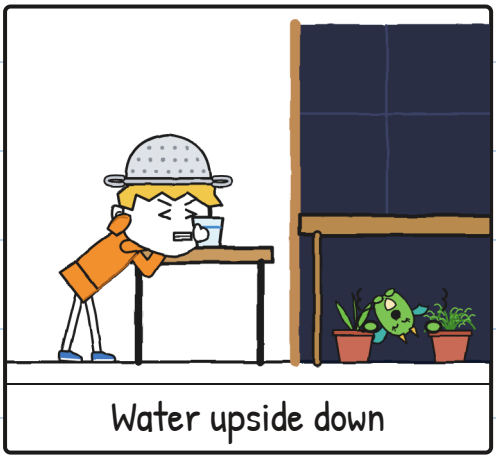
In the kitchen, the hiccups helped. In the greenhouse, no.

We must break the chain. —J.

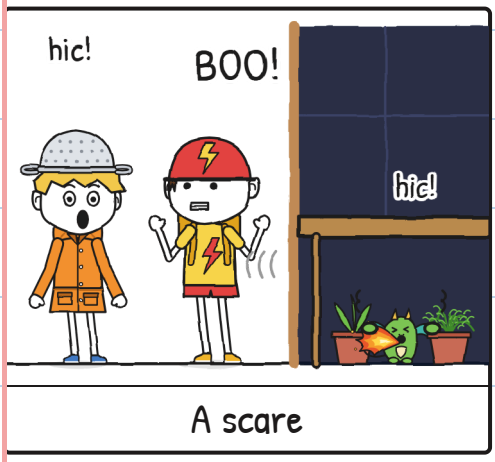
We tried cures for hiccups:



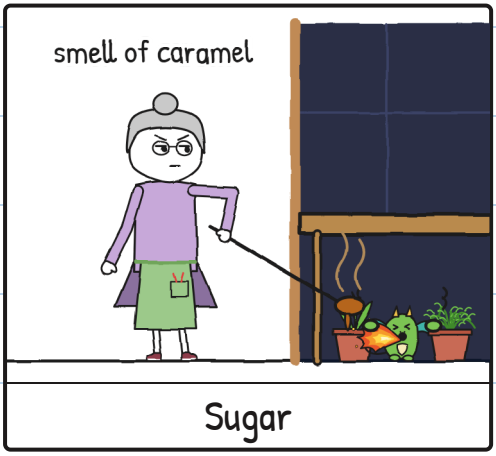
Hold your breath



Water upside down



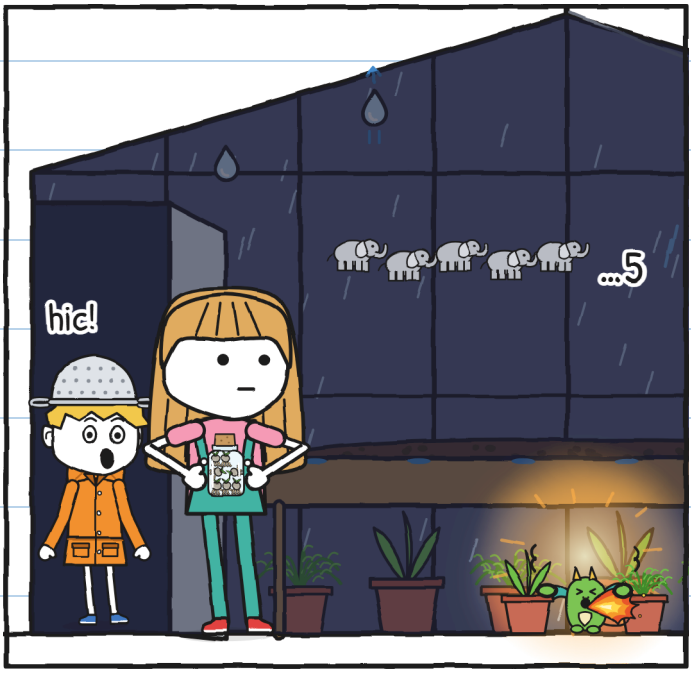
A scare



Sugar

Cures: zero. Hiccups: lots. —J.

"Four elephants, five," counted Julie.
Rrrumble. It struck farther away.
The seven seeds went
around the jar. I went hic.



"What if we get to eleven?" I asked.
"Stones again," said Julie.

"Crumb copies your fear," said Julie. "Stay with her."

My plan didn't work anymore:

My plan to hide the fear:

1. Say I love them.
2. ~~Don't hiccup.~~ hic hic hic hic hic
3. ???

And number 3? —J.

I tried. I really did.



One foot in.



A thunderclap.



Back to the kitchen.

The greenhouse is where thunder is loudest.

I looked up through the glass roof. Vera's dragons were flying in the storm.



They weren't hiccuping.

"Come on, chaser," said Tony.

I waited for the joke. It didn't come.

I gave Flora the colander.



And I went in.

Against fear, it works. —J.

Inside, the rain sounded loud.

I crawled under the bench.

Crumb was shaking like me.



RRRUMBLE! I went hic. Crumb went hic.

We were two storm chasers.

From the door, Julie spoke softly.



"Count on me."

CHAPTER 5

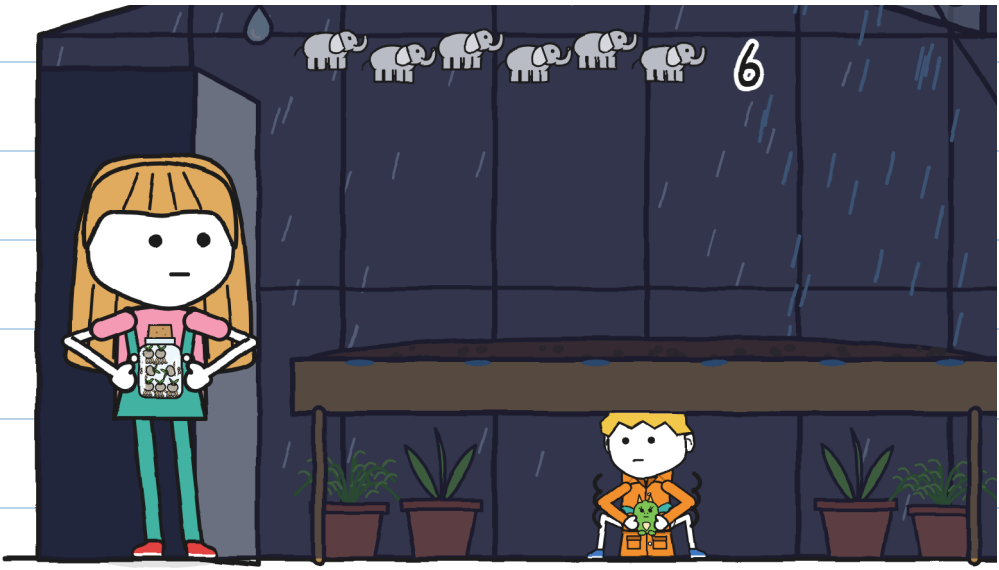
Count on Me

And we counted.

"One elephant, two,

three, four, five, six."

Rrrumble. It struck farther away.



I counted six elephants.

The fear was still there.

I tried the truth.

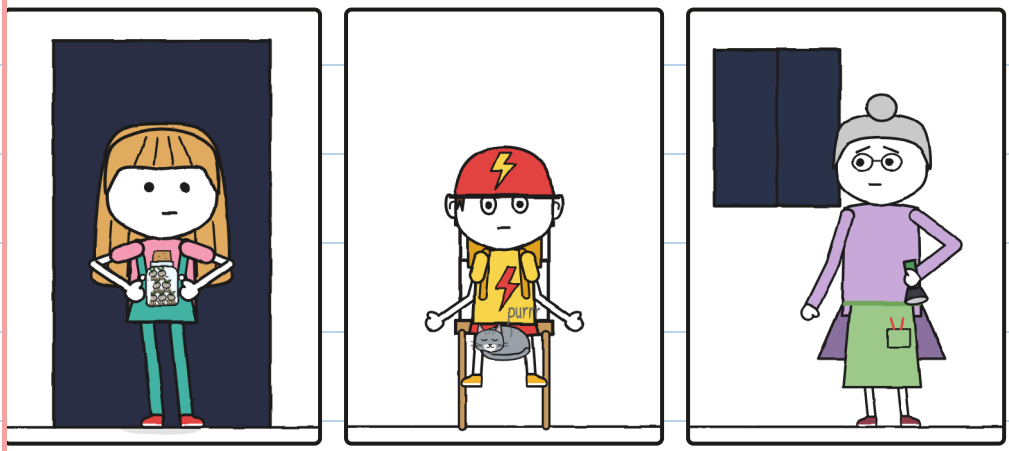


"I'm scared of thunder."

"I know," said Julie.
"You drew it on page 6."

"I'm scared of cats," said Tony.

"And I'm scared of waiting," said Flora.



Footbridges scare me. —J.

Nobody laughed.

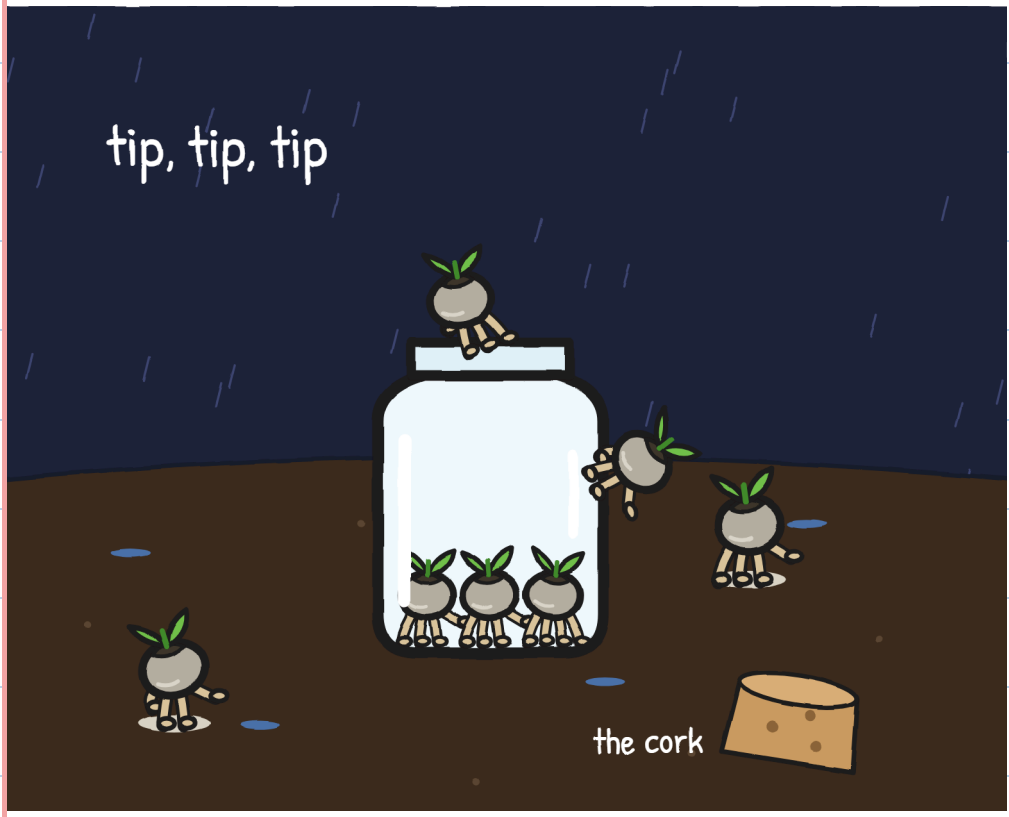
I wasn't alone anymore.

We breathed slowly.



We counted to nine. I didn't go hic.

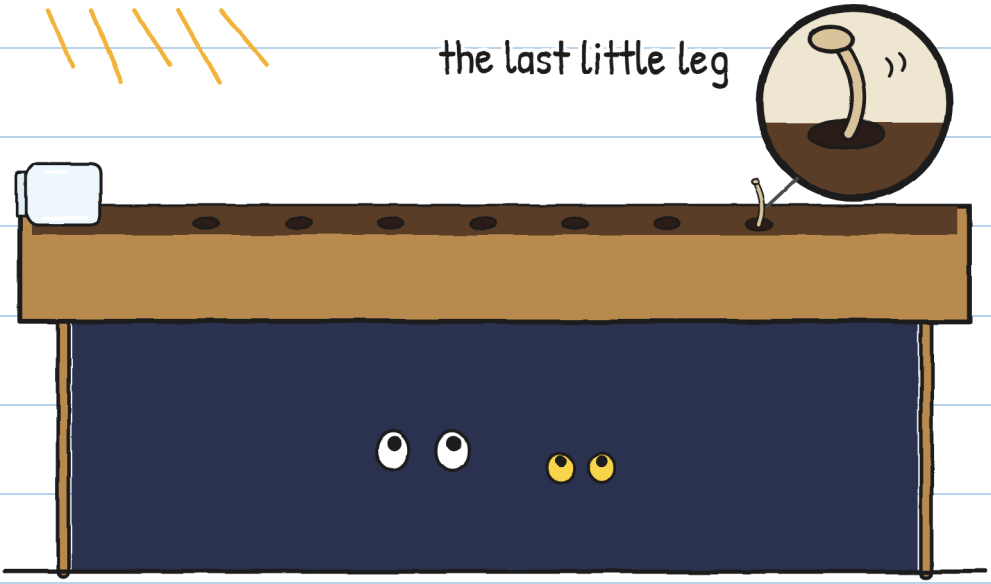
"Now!" whispered Flora.
Julie tiptoed in. She left the jar open.



Tip, tip, tip. Something
was coming out of the jar.

We counted to ten. Rrrumble.

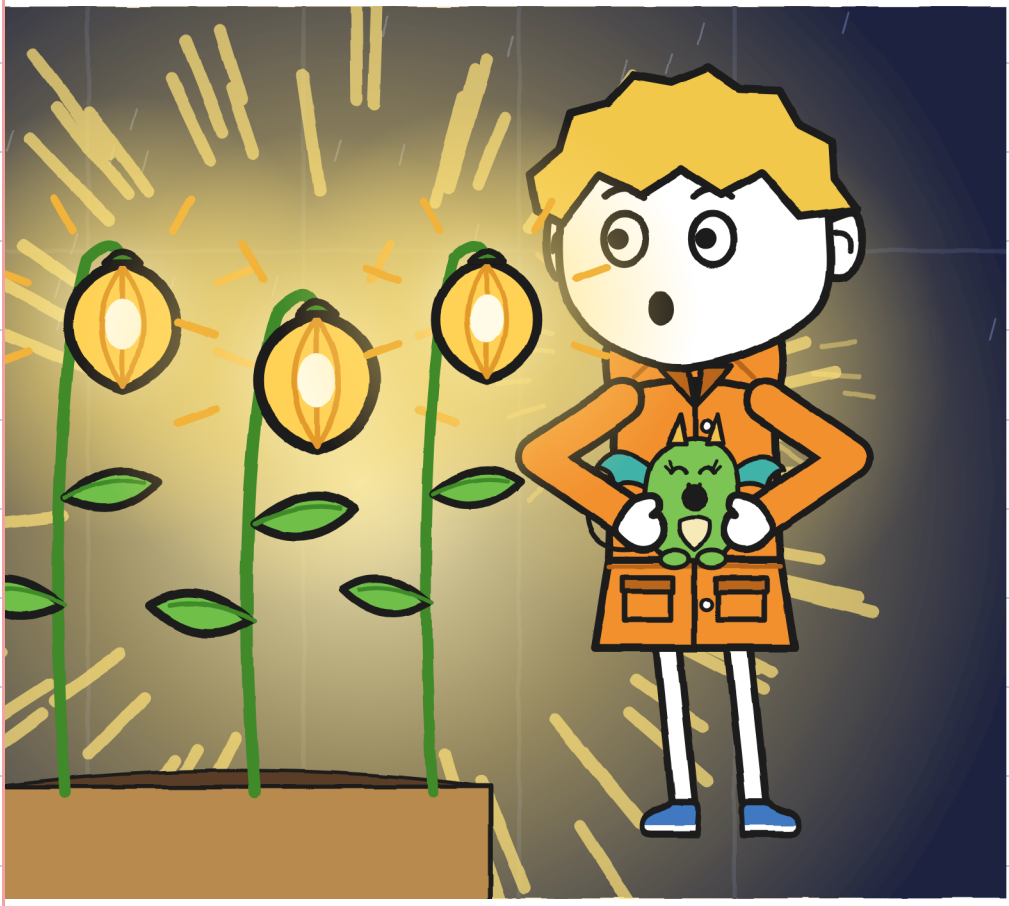
And we saw it:



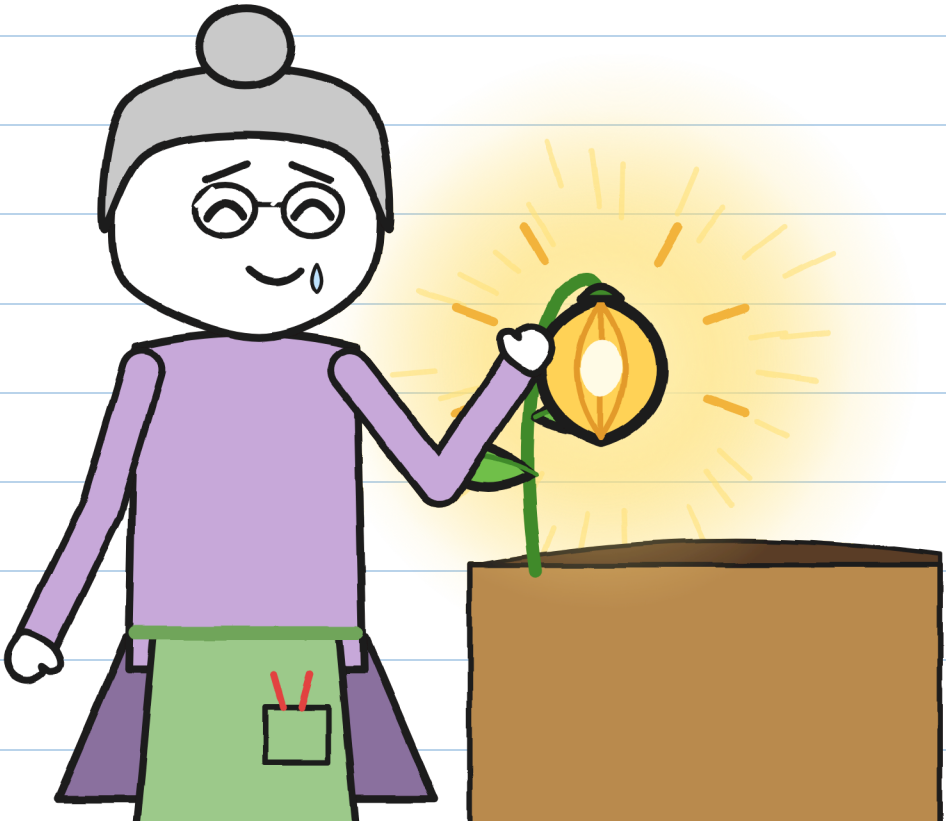
The jar was empty. Seven
tiny holes in the soil.
And the first one lit up.


Seven lantern flowers. Each with a bit of lightning.

Crumb didn't go hic. She looked at the lantern flowers, just like me.



Flora touched a lantern
flower with her fingertip.
"That's how the path was," she said.



I touched one too. It was warm.

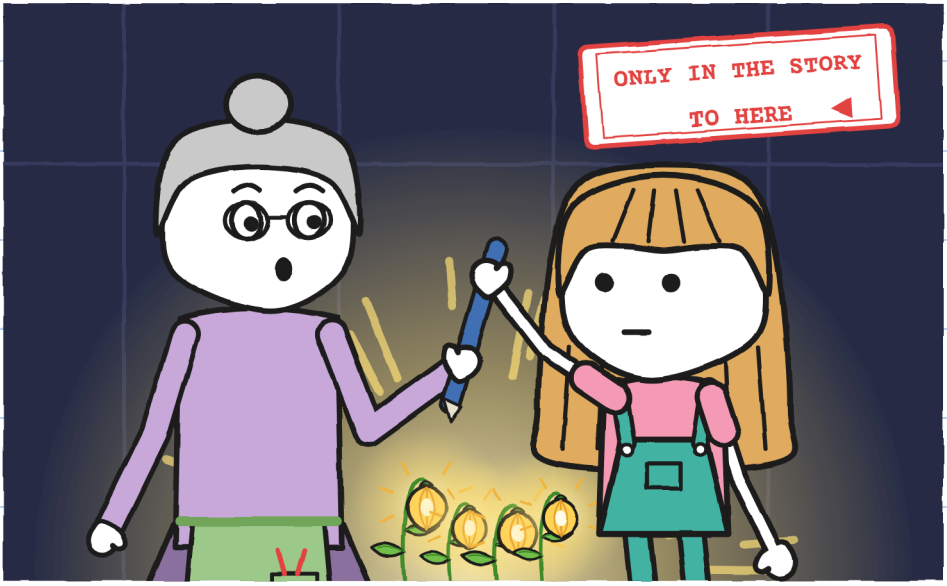
Flora took out a pen.

At last she would sign.

Julie stopped her.

"Not yet. One is missing," said Julie.

Then she peeled off the label.



Whole, or not delivered. —J.

We waited half an hour after the
last thunder. It had stopped raining.

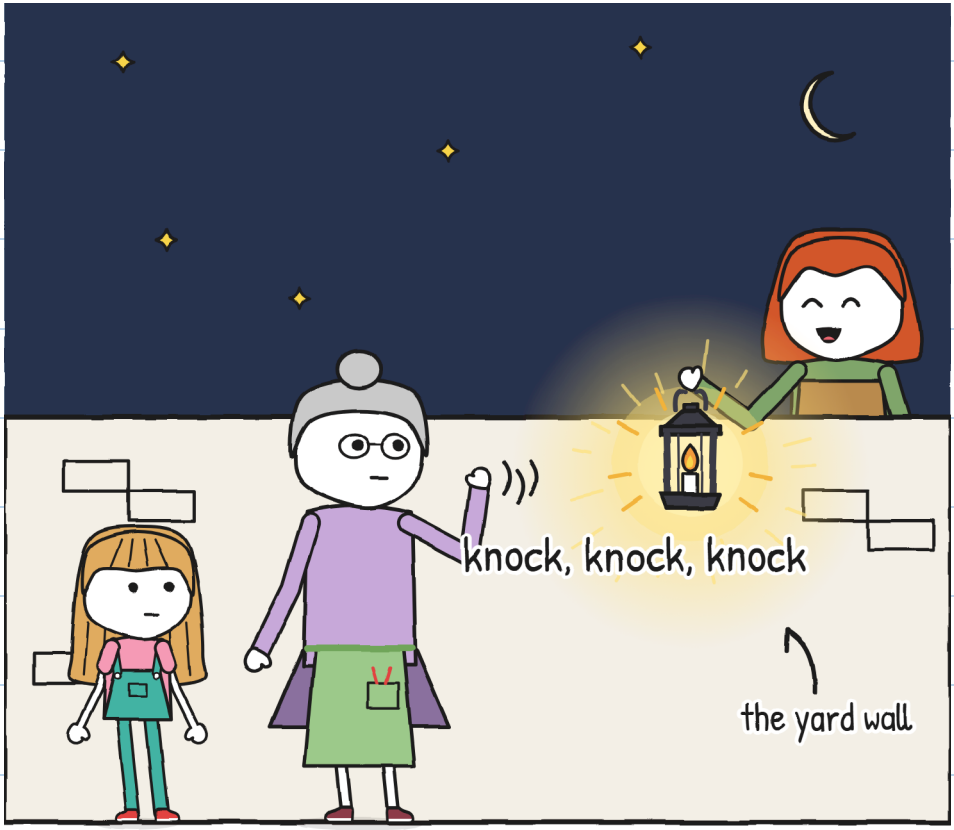


The eighth was still outside, in the dark.
Without a signature,
No. 2 goes back at dawn.

"Let's go and look for it," said Julie.

Flora knocked three times.

She was calling Vera.



"Not alone this time," she said.

CHAPTER 6

The Eighth One

We went out with Flora and Vera.

I carried Crumb inside my raincoat.

We searched the yard and the canal.



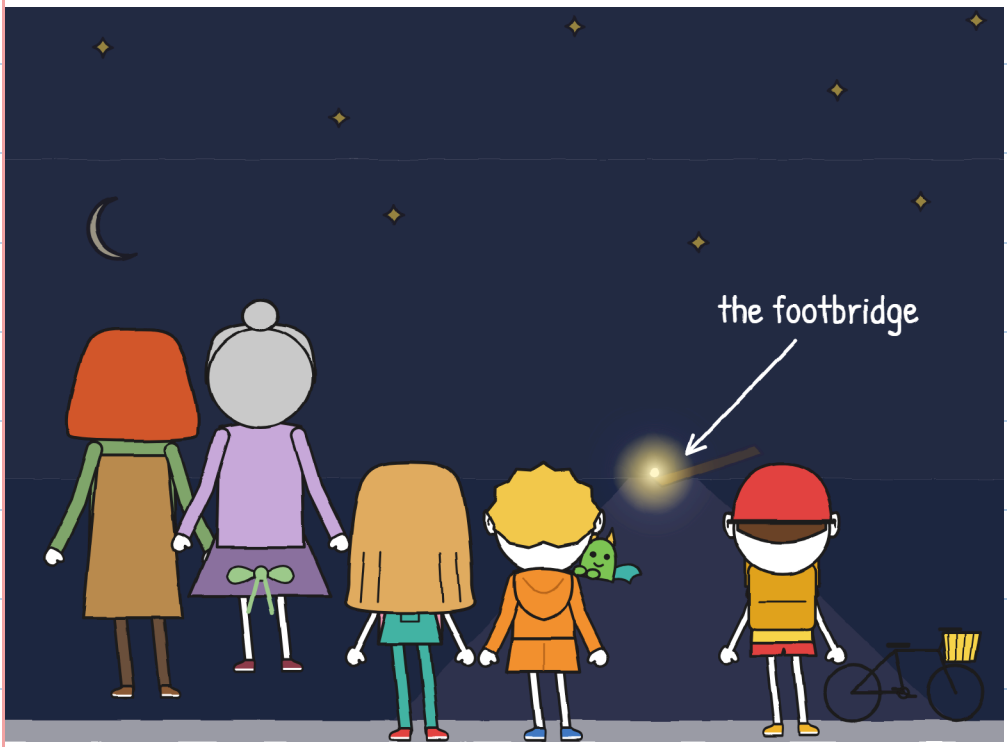
Nothing. It could be any stone.

Tiny lantern flowers hide in the light.

"Turn off the lights," I said.

We stood still.

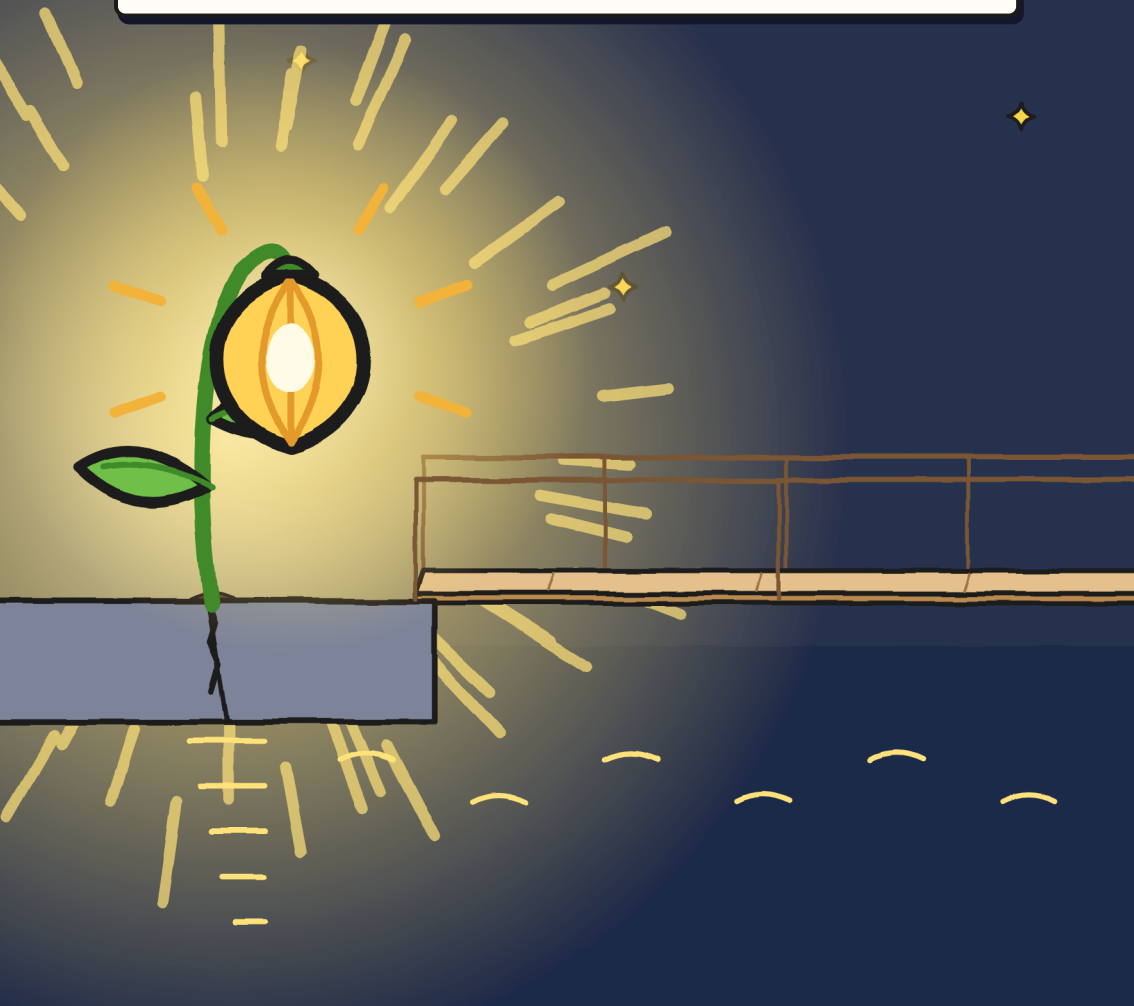
At the end there was a tiny light.



At the foot of the footbridge.

The rain swept the seed down to the canal path. It planted itself by the footbridge.

From far, a tiny light; up close, it lit everything.

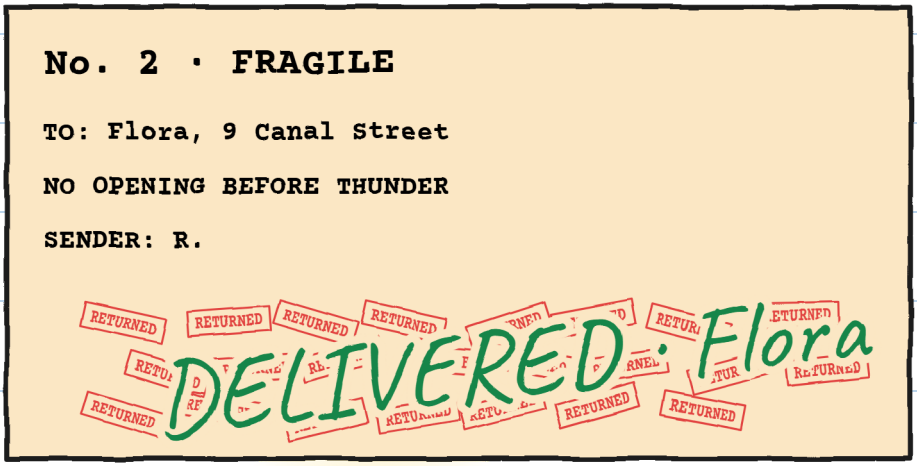


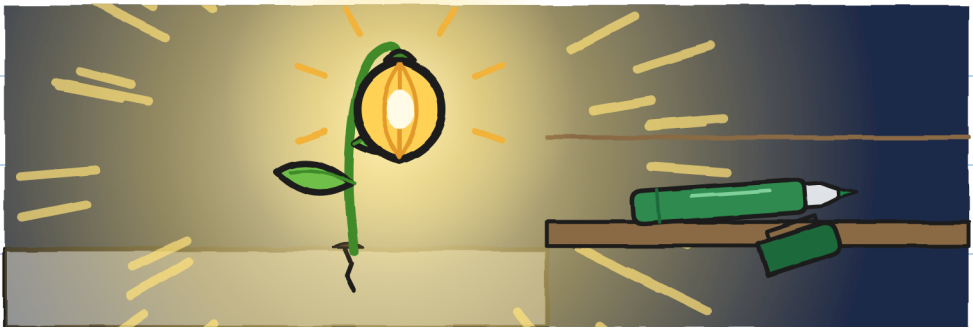
Julie looked at the footbridge.
In the light it looked different.
She put one foot on the
footbridge. Then she took it off.



It hardly scares me now. —J.

"That one stays here," said Flora. She signed in green ink.





Flora gave me her colander. "For the next storm," she said.

Vera drove us to the shop in her van. She went back to her dragons.

The shop was dark. Mara wasn't there. She was underneath.



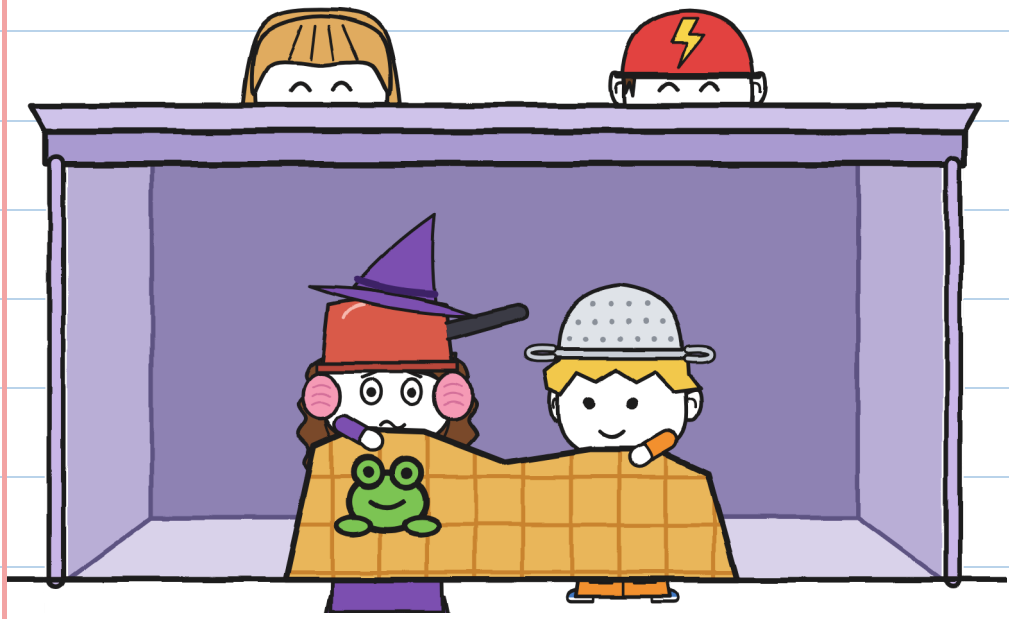
"Has it passed yet?" asked Mara.

A blanket. Earmuffs.

A saucepan for a helmet.

"I'm scared of thunder too," I told her.

She lifted the blanket.



I got under with her.

Mara put out a crate for Tony.

"Your seat," she said.

Tony wrote "and cats" on his backpack.



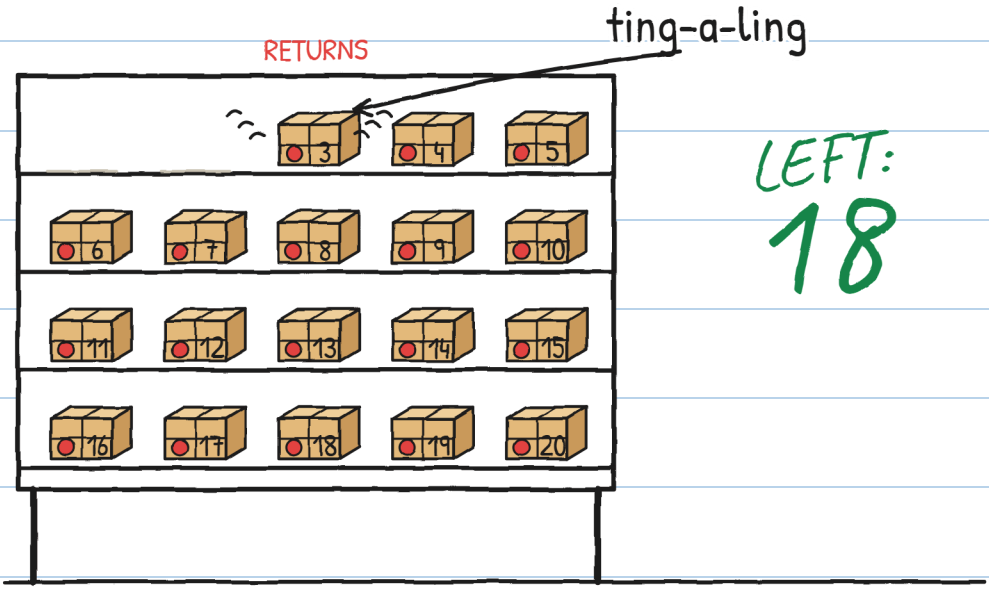
Now it tells the truth. —J.

I fixed my plan for thunder:

1. Count elephants.
2. With someone.
3. Hic? Never mind.



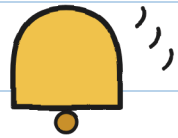
Never say "chaser." –J.



A return rang: ting-a-ling.

No. 3

FOR TONYKINS

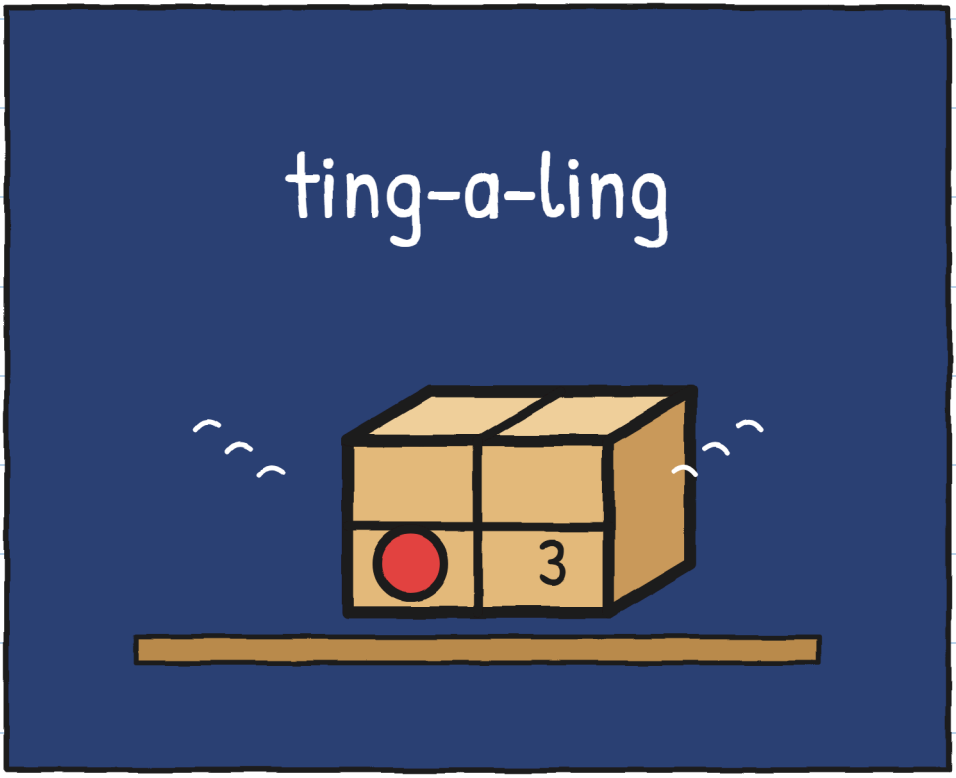


Tony turned red.



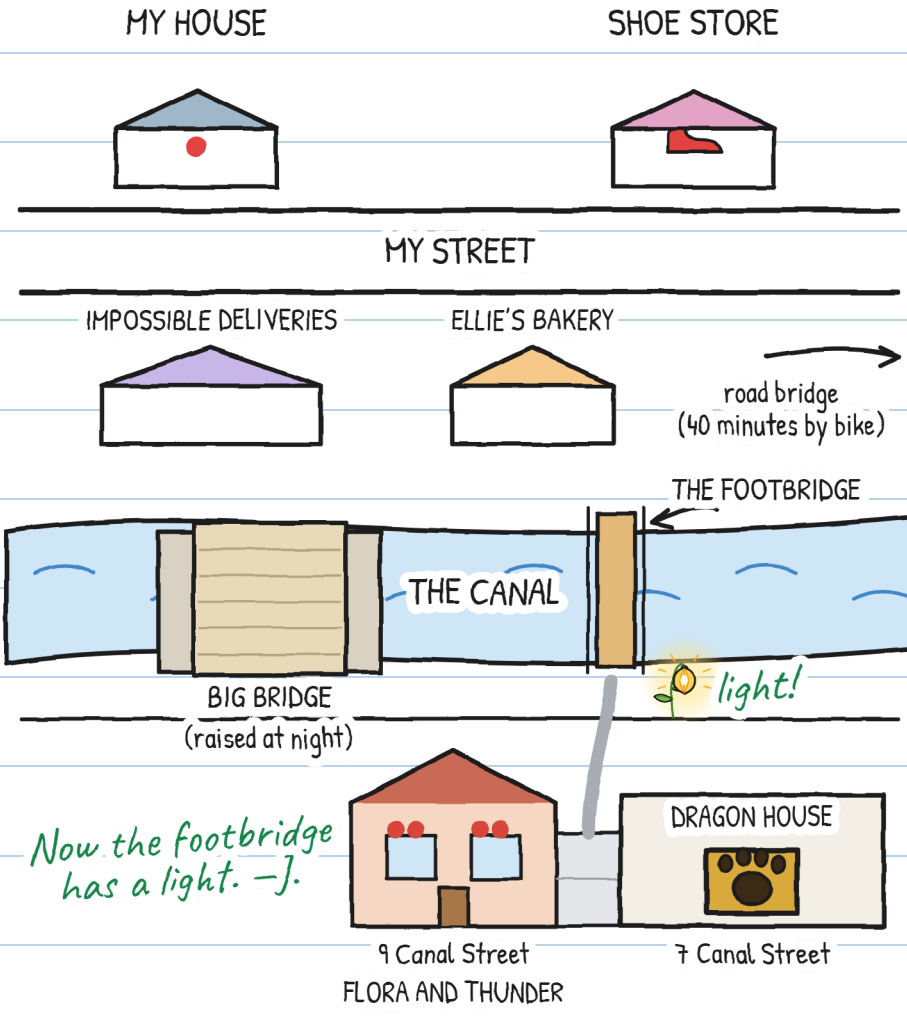
IMPOSSIBLE DELIVERIES · 3

(coming soon)



Who sends packages to Tony? —J.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD (version 2)



WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT R.



R.

1. Awful handwriting (Mara).
2. Vera turned white.
3. Planted lantern flowers.
4. Late, but delivers.
5. Made enchanted glass.

6. Nobody says the name. —J.

And you? Who do you think R. is?

I think R. is...

ONE STORY, SIX SIZES

There are six sizes, for ages 3 to 16, and more than 20 languages.

SIZE XXS · PRE-A1
JULIE CATCHES SEED NUMBER SEVEN.

SIZE XS · A1
One seed was left on the floor. Julie caught it. Seven.

SIZE S · A2
Another flash: only one seed was left on the floor. Julie caught it. Seven.

SIZE M · B1
At the next flash only one seed was left, and Julie caught it. Seven.

SIZE L · B2
When it flashed again, a single seed remained on the floor, and Julie caught it. Seven.

SIZE XL · B2-C1
Illustrated novel · 13+

The CEFR levels are a rough guide for learners of English.

Same storm. —J.

FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

Work through every chapter at linguaula.com

A REAL STORM: WHAT TO DO

1. If you hear thunder, even far away, go indoors: lightning can already reach you.
2. Inside, with an adult, away from windows, doors and glass. No greenhouses, bridges, trees or water.
3. Don't go out until half an hour after the last thunder.
4. Counting elephants tells you whether lightning struck near or far, and helps you calm down. It can't tell you when to go outside.

COUNT YOUR STORM

Count elephants from inside.

Flash	Elephants	Kilometers (1 per 3, roughly)	Is it closer or farther away?
1	15	5	–
2	9	3	closer