

ABSTRACT

*Around the Color Wheel*

Avery C. Lill

Director: Dr. Sarah-Jane Murray, Ph.D.

This children's story tells about adventures of a young girl who goes on a hot air balloon adventure to find colors, which disappeared from the world five years ago. In addition to the creative work, which is the primary content of the thesis, the author details her writing process and discusses the relationship between philosophy and children's literature.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

---

Dr. Sarah-Jane Murray, Great Texts and Creative Writing

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM:

---

Dr. Elizabeth Corey, Director

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

AROUND THE COLOR WHEEL

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Baylor University  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Honors Program

By

Avery C. Lill

Waco, Texas

May 2016

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	1
Around the Color Wheel . . . . .	35
Appendix . . . . .	62
Bibliography . . . . .	67

## INTRODUCTION

Wonder changes the way we see the world. It brings life to our surroundings. Admiration and curiosity for the beauty around us can give us the courage to step into adventures and follow our passions. For my senior thesis I wrote a children's story about a young girl whose sense of wonder leads her on a hot air balloon adventure to rescue colors from an artist who has stolen them.

Briefly, the story runs as follows:

When a magician accidentally steals all the color from the world, a young girl must go on an adventure to collect colors at their source.

Iris noticed five years ago that colors seemed to fade out of the world. Everything is black and white. She lives at a hotel that her parents own and operate. When Florence arrives in a hot air balloon one evening and invites Iris to come with her to find colors, Iris leaves the hotel for the first time.

Florence and Iris find the artist-magician, Arthur, who accidentally cast a spell that sucked all the colors from the world. He and his pet butterfly, Lawrence, are preparing for an apocalypse. The sun is about to go out because it is so grieved by the missing colors. He explains that, in order to break the spell, Iris and Florence will have to collect colors at their source. They easily collect yellow from distilled sunlight in the ocean and blue from a bluebonnet seed. However, they struggle to find red. Iris gives up, but on the way home, she realizes that she can find the magician

lives in is a volcano and that lava could be a source of red. She convinces Florence that they must catalyze a volcanic eruption.

Together with the artist, who agrees to help, Iris and Florence make the volcano erupt. They barely escape incineration, and they fly into the gathering storm. They release the colors into a thundercloud. As it rains, color begins to spread back into the world.

Florence leaves Iris back at the hotel with the consolation that the world is round, so she will be back again before too long.

In order to complete this project, I kept in regular contact with my thesis advisor, Dr. Murray. She offered critiques of my work and oversaw numerous revisions. As I drafted this story, I quickly learned that, while children's stories must be shorter than most novels written for adults, the shorter length does not translate into easier execution. It took a great deal of work to fully develop a storyline in thirty pages in a way that is both entertaining and useful for both child and adult readers.

In this introduction to my work I will begin by discussing the philosophy surrounding children's literature. As a University Scholar with a concentration in philosophy, I am interested in how children's literature contributes to the academic discipline of philosophy and on how philosophy in children's literature is useful for its readers. Then I will discuss my creative process in writing this story. Afterward, I will outline major plot points of the story and explain the developments that led to the finalized version of *Around the Color Wheel* and the creative problems that I had

to overcome. In the same vein, I will also talk about the development of the characters in my story and their evolution throughout the writing process. Finally, I will discuss what writing my thesis taught me about creative writing as a means to influence culture, philosophy, and the way people think.

### *Children's Literature and Philosophy*

Children's literature has an important role to play in philosophy. In this section I will argue that philosophy ought to seriously engage with children's literature because, in shaping the adult-child relationship, it shapes rational communities. In order to examine this claim, we will first look at a brief history of children's literature. Then we will examine the way in which children's literature shapes the adult-child relationship to include children in rational conversation. Finally, we will look at the impact and the importance of including children in philosophy.

Children's literature, classified as such, first began to appear in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Its development consists of two distinct waves that coincided with the transformation of concept of childhood. The first wave of children's literature primarily aimed to provide moral instruction. In her work, *Agents of Reform?: Children's Literature and Philosophy*, Karen McGavock explains that authors early in the development of children's literature "adhered to the old construction of childhood, regarding children as empty vessels to be filled."<sup>1</sup> The image of the child

---

<sup>1</sup> Karen L. McGavock, "Agents of Reform?: Children's Literature and Philosophy," *Philosophia* 35, no. 2 (2007): 130.

at this point in history was one of passive receptors for adult wisdom and knowledge. As a result, authors wrote stories to instruct children, not to engage them. As McGavock puts it, “They repressed rather than freed children to think beyond the parameters of convention, to occupy narrative spaces to imagine and reflect.”<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note, however, at the same time that society saw children as innocent and empty, in need of formation, it also exploited them economically. Forced child labor was common, which again demonstrates the view that children could only engage with the world through passive obedience. Society viewed childhood as having extrinsic utility, not intrinsic worth.<sup>3</sup>

By the mid to late 1800s, the concept of the child began to shift. Lewis Carroll’s *Alice and Wonderland* is a landmark piece in documenting this shift. Rather than writing moral tales to instruct his readers, he engages relevant philosophical issues with childlike reasoning. McGavock observes that, “In his writing, Carroll began to reunite children’s literature with its philosophical roots. The expert logician provided opportunities for children to explore philosophical dilemmas through the medium of children’s fiction.”<sup>4</sup> Alice and the children in Carroll’s other stories are imbued with agency that characters in previous children’s literature were not. Rather than empty vessels awaiting instruction, “they are conduits – change occurs within and through them – and they are agents in reform. By representing child characters in this way, Carroll along with other second

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 131.



generation writers activate the child from centuries of dormancy.”<sup>5</sup> This second generation provided a firm foundation for modern children’s literature that takes its cues from Carroll and other writers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that engage with children as rational equals instead of as passive pupils.

An interesting feature of children’s literature is that, in most cases, children need adults to read it to them. This cooperation creates a dual audience, and this co-creative act helps to shape the adult-child relationship. Take, for example, Dr. Seuss’ *The Lorax*, in the story the Once-ler, an adult character, places the last Truffula seed into the care and keeping of the child in the story. Such a story gives agency to children, and it creates a picture of adults including children in their ethical community. Together they must care for the earth. The Once-ler cannot do it without the child; the child cannot do it without the Once-ler. In the article, “‘in Charge of the Truffula Seeds’: On Children’s Literature, Rationality and Children’s Voices in Philosophy,” Viktor Johansson argues that, “Dr Seuss’ gesture can remind us how we do in fact live with children— that we do share a fate, a future world and a community... This return to childhood fantasy, as a way of reasoning, can be realized if we (re)turn to children’s literature.”<sup>6</sup> Such a story invites adults imagine the possibility of engaging with children cooperatively in rational discussion and in ethical responsibility.<sup>7</sup> By giving children’s voices and whimsical ways of reasoning

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>6</sup> Viktor Johansson, “‘In Charge of the Truffula Seeds’: On Children’s Literature, Rationality and Children’s Voices in Philosophy,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 45, no. 2 (2011): 365.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 363.

a space in the narrative of children's literature, it gives children a place in dialogue with adults in a way that allows both adults and children to grow and reason more effectively. Johansson writes:

Children's literature can awaken the imagination that is needed to see the whimsical thoughts of children as autonomous thought; it can awaken the imagination we need in speaking for children. This makes it possible for us not only to become attentive to children's voices, but also to awaken the imagination needed for us to grow into autonomous beings, constantly transforming our mutual attunement and reclaiming our community of reason. Philosophy for children and philosophy of childhood are thus ways of coming to clarity about the life we live with them and our shared fate in that life, as well as of achieving clarity about the life with children we want.<sup>8</sup>

Children's literature initiates children into adult's rational communities, which is simply to say, it gives children a voice.

So what is the impact of giving children a voice in rational communities? What specifically do their voices add to philosophical dialogue? Of what value is philosophical dialogue to children? Gareth Matthews argues in his essay, "Philosophy and the Young Child," that when adults recognize children as rational beings it is mutually beneficial for all involved. Children have the opportunity to engage with a person who has a better command of language and reason, and this exposure helps them develop their own capacities for reason. Adults benefit from engaging with a person who is less constrained by rote, traditional answers. He writes:

The combination of assets and liabilities an adult brings to a philosophical encounter with a child makes for a very special relationship. The adult has a better command of the language than the child, and, latently anyway, a surer command of the concepts expressed in the language. But it is the child who

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 369

has fresh eyes and ears for perplexity and incongruity. And children typically have a degree of candor and spontaneity that is hard for the adult to match. Since each party has something important to contribute, the inquiry can easily become a genuinely joint venture, something otherwise rather rare in adult encounters with children.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, children grow as they have a chance to engage with adults in conversation. Adults grow as they have a chance to engage with ideas from children's perspectives.

Further, children's literature can engage with ideas and philosophy in meaningful ways and in ways that are impossible in other forms of literature. C.S. Lewis wrote in his article, "On the Three Ways of Writing for Children," that one motivation for writing children stories, and his motivation in writing children's stories, like the Chronicles of Narnia or the Space Trilogy is "because a children's story is the best art-form for something you have to say: just as a composer might write a Dead March not because there was a public funeral in view but because certain musical ideas that had occurred to him went best into that form."<sup>10</sup> Some philosophy is best expressed in children's stories. Matthews observes that a style he calls "philosophical whimsy" is common to children's literature. It "consists in raising, wryly, a host of basic epistemological and metaphysical questions familiar to students of philosophy."<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Gareth B. Matthews, "Philosophy and the Young Child," *Metaphilosophy* 10, no. 3 (1979): 368.

<sup>10</sup> C.S. Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1966), 23.

<sup>11</sup> Gareth B. Matthews, "Philosophy and Children's Literature," *Metaphilosophy* 7, no. 1 (1976): 9

For example, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's, *The Little Prince*, provides a unique picture of existentialism. Jean-Paul Satre neatly sums up one of the core tenants of existentialism, "existence proceeds essence."<sup>12</sup> The little prince in Expuréry's story cares deeply for a rose, who tells him that she is the only rose in the whole universe. Having seen no other roses, he believes her. When he comes across an entire garden full of roses he is dismayed. He says, "I thought I was rich because I had one flower, and all I own is an ordinary rose...and he lay down in the grass and wept."<sup>13</sup> Soon afterward, however, he meets a fox. The fox explains, "My life is monotonous. I hunt chickens; people hunt me. All chickens are just alike, and all men just alike. So I'm rather bored. But if you tame me, my life will be filled with sunshine. I'll know the sound of footsteps that will be different from all the rest."<sup>14</sup> The little prince tames the fox, and they form a friendship. The little prince realizes then that his relationship with the rose is the same way. He says to the other roses in the rose garden, "You are not at all like my rose. You're nothing at all yet,' he told them.... 'You're the way my fox was. He was just like a hundred thousand others. But I've made him my friend, and now he's the only fox in all the world."<sup>15</sup> In other words the little prince finds that while his rose and his fox are not essentially different from all other foxes and all other roses, his experience of them forms their identity

---

<sup>12</sup>Steven Crowell, "Existentialism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/existentialism/>.

<sup>13</sup> Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, trans. Katherine Woods (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1943), 56.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 63.

and makes them distinct to him. The story is not a treatise on existentialism. It is a children's story, but it is a children's story that engages philosophy in a way that would be difficult if not impossible inside of academia. McGavok argues that children's literature ability to engage with philosophical ideas in innovative ways makes it valuable to the field of philosophy as a whole, not only to children and to the adults who engage with children. He says that:

With children's literature coming closer to mainstream literature, and exhibiting prominent features of postmodernism, it is only a matter of time before philosophical discussions actively engage with works of children's literature and recognise its contribution to the resolution and reconciliation of ontological dilemmas as agents of reform, instigating change. When this occurs, philosophy and children's literature will re-engage, enriching contemporary investigations of existence, ethics and knowledge and fruitfully developing thought in these areas.<sup>16</sup>

McGavok points to books like *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* as examples of works for children that engage in serious philosophical thought<sup>17</sup> Philosophical whimsy, while it is no replacement for sustained argument and academic philosophy, has a place in the development of philosophical thought in adults and children alike.

Children's literature holds a unique place in literature and philosophy. It empowers child readers by conceiving of them as agents of change and rational beings. It allows adults to consider childlike reason as a form of reason valuable in discourse and to incorporate children into their rational communities. It also gives philosophers a different way to express strange and enigmatic ideas. Bertrand

---

<sup>16</sup> McGavock, "Agents of Reform?: Children's Literature and Philosophy," 141.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 134.

Russell observed that, “Philosophy, if it cannot *answer* so many questions as we could wish, has at least the power of asking questions which increase the interest of the world, and show the strangeness and wonder lying just below the surface even in the commonest things of daily life.”<sup>18</sup> The world is a strange place, and children have had fewer years to come to terms with the way things appear and to become desensitized to its peculiarities. Children’s literature allows children and adults alike to engage with the world with a sense of wonder, which is an attitude at the heart of philosophical discourse.

### *Creative Process*

I am a University Scholar, concentrating in Philosophy, so why did I choose to complete a creative writing thesis? As C.S. Lewis argued, some ideas are best explored through the lens of creative writing and children’s literature. I have had plenty of practice writing academic essays. I decided to pursue a creative writing thesis instead of an academic research project in philosophy largely because I had an idea related to philosophy that wanted to explore in the context of a children’s story. In this section I detail the genesis of my story idea, the way that my academic interests influenced my creative process, and finally how my understanding of the creative process developed as I wrote *Around the Color Wheel*.

### *The idea*

---

<sup>18</sup> Matthews, “Philosophy and Children’s Literature,” 16

*Around the Color Wheel* has been a sandbox for me to play with a question that has stuck with me for years: What is home? For me, that question arises both from a desire for security and from a fear of missing out on a meaningful life. I have a lot of ideas, and I am a driven achiever. I am afraid that if I don't try hard enough to meet my goals, that I will be dissatisfied with my life. At the same time, I am afraid that if I spend too much of myself trying to meet goals that I will distance myself from the people and places that I love. Basically, I don't want to be a workaholic, but I really love to work.

Unsurprisingly, I first began wondering what home the first year after I left home, my parent's house. I spent the first half of my senior year traveling around the United States teaching communications classes for middle and high school students. When I returned from the internship and moved back into my childhood bedroom, I felt disconnect from my family who I had barely seen in sixth months. I also felt disconnected from my fellow interns, who had been my family for sixth months as we travelled from place to place. Geography matters, and when we were not physically in the same place, we lost touch. *What is home?* I wondered. Is home a place or the people you are with?

The question, what is home, obviously begets more questions; what does it mean to belong to a place or to people? What does it mean to live life well? What are people for? I've explored these questions in my academic study of philosophy, but I also began working it out in a story idea that came to me while I was in the summer before I started college.

That summer, my best friend and I studied Spanish at a language-immersion school in Spain. Nearly every afternoon we went to the gelato shop near school after classes finished. Each afternoon she wrote letters to her family and boyfriend. I wrote and doodled in my journal instead. She was cripplingly homesick. I wasn't. I thought a lot about the difference between our trajectories. She would go back home and get married within 18 months. I did not feel tethered to any place in particular. I was finished with high school, and I hadn't yet started college. I loved my family, but it was time begin carving out my own place and identity. One afternoon as I thought about her security and my uncertain future, I doodled a girl standing on the edge of a hot air balloon reaching out to the clouds. Cliché? Maybe, but that was the genesis of *Around the Color Wheel*. After that, the story ideas came slowly. For the next two years, I wrote down ideas in a small notebook for a story about that girl in the hot air balloon as they came to me. Eventually, I had enough pieces to begin building a story.

### *Academic Influences*

Philosophy relies heavily on thought experiments. Philosophers often conduct these experiments in the form of stories that highlight a philosophical problem or paradox. As I studied thought experiments in my philosophy classes it struck me that, like children's stories, they ask their audiences to engage their imaginations and to entertain ideas that seem ridiculous in order gain a deeper insight about the world. While I included enough clues in the story that readers can recognize the paradoxes if they are already familiar with them, readers need not



understand that they are thought experiments in order to understand the stories. Whether or not readers can label Zeno's Paradox or Mary's Room, I hope that readers, young and old, will enjoy wrestling with the logical problems they present. If nothing else, it was fun for me to repackage my philosophy education in a children's story.

*Hilbert's Hotel.* Hilbert's Hotel, an infinity paradox introduced by David Hilbert, was one of the first building blocks for this story. The experiment runs like this: There is a hotel with an infinite number of rooms, and each room is full. If another guest arrives at the hotel, the hotel manager will move the other guests down one room (The guest in room one moves to room two. The guest in room two moves to room three and so on). This way, room one is free for the new guest, and everyone else in this already infinitely full hotel still has a room.<sup>19</sup> This thought experiment illustrates the paradox inherent in actual infinities.

My older brother explained this paradox to soon after I began middle school. He was a senior in high school at the time. The memory of trying to puzzle through that experiment as a twelve-year-old stands out vividly to me. After my conversation with my brother, I kept going over and over it in my mind trying to understand it. I do not give a thorough explanation of this paradox in *Around the Color Wheel*, but remembering that conversation with my brother influenced my decision to incorporate thought experiments into my story. As a kid, I enjoyed paradoxes, and I know other kids do too. My purpose in alluding to this paradox in

---

<sup>19</sup> Helge Kragh, "The True (?) Story of Hilbert's Infinite Hotel," *arXiv*, 2014, <http://arxiv.org/pdf/1403.0059v2.pdf>.

my story is obviously not to introduce elementary school readers to problems in set theory or to the difference between actual and potential infinities. Rather, I use it to introduce the parallel, lived paradox that even when our hearts feel full, we always have room to love one more person in our lives.

*Mary's Room.* Frank Jackson introduces this thought experiment in his 1982 piece, "Epiphenomenal Qualia," an important work in area of Philosophy of Mind. He aims to use this experiment to argue that non-physical states really exist:

Mary is a brilliant scientist who is, for whatever reason, forced to investigate the world from a black and white room via a black and white television monitor. She specialises in the neurophysiology of vision and acquires, let us suppose, all the physical information there is to obtain about what goes on when we see ripe tomatoes, or the sky, and use terms like 'red', 'blue', and so on....What will happen when Mary is released from her black and white room or is given a colour television monitor? Will she learn anything or not? It seems just obvious that she will learn something about the world and our visual experience of it. But then it is inescapable that her previous knowledge was incomplete. But she had all the physical information. *Ergo* there is more to have than that, and Physicalism is false. <sup>20</sup>

In other words, because you cannot explain the experience of seeing color in physical terms, the experience of seeing color must not be physical. Therefore, non-physical states exist.

I explain this thought experiment more directly than I explain Hilbert's Hotel. Iris in her conversation with Mary is unable to convey to Mary what colors are like because Mary has no experience of them. To Mary, the experience of seeing color is cognitively closed.

---

<sup>20</sup> Frank Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 32, no. 127 (1982): 130.

*Zeno's Paradox.* Zeno of Elea lived in 450 BCE, and the mathematical and philosophical communities credit him with a number of paradoxes, perhaps most famously, his motion paradox. Aristotle's *Physics*, preserves this paradox in the form of the Achilles and the Tortoise experiment. It says that Achilles can never catch up to a tortoise that starts ahead of him in a race, because to pass it, he would half to get half way to it. Once he gets half way, he would have to get half of half way to the tortoise, and then half again. No matter how far he gets, he will never be able to close the distance between him and the tortoise because, for any distance remaining, he will still have to get to the halfway point.<sup>21</sup> Florence explains this paradox to Iris directly in the scene where they jump out of the hot air balloon. Again, the purpose is to expose readers to paradoxes. I did not attempt to reconcile the it; I just had the characters jump out of the balloon.

*Panpsychism.* Panpsychism is not actually a thought experiment. It is a doctrine in philosophy that mind is the fundamental feature of the universe. In other words, everything, from rocks to atoms to trees to water molecules have some form of mental state.<sup>22</sup> This doctrine, while not widely held today, is an interesting attempt to explain the difficulty scientists and philosophers have reconciling consciousness to purely physical pictures of the universe. While I do not explain this

---

<sup>21</sup> Nick Huggett, "Zeno's Paradoxes," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2010, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/paradox-zeno/>.

<sup>22</sup> William Seager and Sean Allen-Hermanson, "Panpsychism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2015, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/panpsychism/>.

theory in my story, I do allude to it in the scene where Florence talks to volcanoes and explains to Iris that the only reason she thinks that they do not speak is because she cannot understand them. The cognitive closure of the mental states of rocks, trees, etc. to the human observer is a basic premise of panpsychism. The doctrine, like Florence, says that the only reason we think that objects like rocks do not have mental states is because we cannot understand them.

### *Developing my Creative Process*

Writing *Around the Color Wheel* taught me a lot about trusting the creative process. I did not mention to anyone that I had an idea for a children's book until two years after I had the initial idea at that gelato shop because I was not sure I would ever be able to follow through and finish the project. However, as I gave myself time and space to imagine, ideas kept building on one another. Sometimes projects take a long time, and that's all right. I tend to be product oriented. It is difficult for me to stick with a project when I cannot see the results, but the process of developing the ideas for this story made me stick with a vision for years before I saw the results. It was liberating.

### *Development of the Story*

The study of story structure played a vital role as I moved from brainstorming ideas for *Around the Color Wheel* to executing the project. With the key plot points established, I outlined my piece in beats. While beats typically refer to the plot points in a play or screenplay, they were also a useful foundation for

conceiving of a children's story that, while brief in terms of page numbers, aims to show an entire narrative arc. Before we examine the particular beats of my story, we should take a moment to understand the enduring nature of story structure as Aristotle explains it in his work *Poetics*.

### *Story Structure in Aristotle's Poetics*

Story structure is an ancient concept. Aristotle attributed it to nature and argues that it is the most important part of a play.

From where does the idea of story structure arise? Aristotle notes that living organisms have a beginning; they are born. They have a middle; they reach maturity. They have an end; they die. In the same way, he says tragedies, for which my story fits his definition,<sup>23</sup> have a beginning, a middle, and an end.<sup>24</sup> He says that what makes a naturally occurring organism or object whole is also what makes a story whole, the appropriate parts in the appropriate places.

Further, he argues that the plot is the most important piece of a play. He lists six elements as essential components of tragedy. He says "every play contains Spectacular elements as well as Character, Plot, Diction, Song, and Thought."<sup>25</sup> Of these, he calls plot "the soul of a tragedy."<sup>26</sup> He writes:

---

<sup>23</sup> "Now, according to our definition Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete, and whole, and of a certain magnitude; for there may be a whole that is wanting in magnitude. A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end." *Poetics*, Section 1

<sup>24</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. S.H. Butcher, 3.18, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1974/1974-h/1974-h.htm>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.6.

But most important of all is the structure of the incidents. For Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character: character comes in as subsidiary to the actions. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. Again, without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character.<sup>27</sup>

So the actions, in a story are of utmost importance. The actions in stories imitate life, and the structure of stories imitates nature. His insistence on the importance of structure, that each tragedy be complete with a beginning, middle, and end, shed light on the structure of my own story as I constructed its step outline.

### *Step Outline*

The purpose of this section is to provide an explanation for the form of outline that I used and to provide a picture of how the story's plot developed throughout the process of writing and rewriting it. To this end, I will provide a brief explanation of the general purpose each beat (or step) in the story is supposed to serve and then follow it with a discussion of how that beat developed.

At this point, I should take a moment to clarify that story structure was a tool, not a catalyst, in the creation of my thesis. I already had the general plot points of my story nailed down before I used a step outline to tighten its structure. Identifying the structure that already existed in the story was helpful in making my story stronger.

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 1.6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 1.6.

*Act I.* The first set of beats comprises the story's beginning, its first act. The purpose of this act, overall, is to establish the physics of the story world and to foreshadow the events that will push the character into the middle of the story, the story's adulthood.<sup>28</sup>

*Opening Image.* Iris, a ten-year-old girl, asks her mother how big the hotel they run is. Their conversation references Hilbert's Hotel, a thought experiment dealing with infinity.

The first scene in a story is a sort of quick orientation. It gives the reader an idea of where the story is going and what is at stake.<sup>29</sup> *Around the Color Wheel's* opening image was one of the building blocks for the story. As such, it did not change very much throughout the revisions. In the opening image, Iris asks her mother how many people the hotel can hold. Her mother enigmatically replies with a similar question, how many people can Iris's heart hold? This allusion to the philosophical paradox, Hilbert's Hotel, establishes that the story, at its core, is about how our orientation toward relationships shapes our internal and external world.

---

<sup>28</sup> Murray, *Three Act What* Chapter 1

<sup>29</sup> SJ Murray, *Three Act What? Great Story Structure*, (Nibbles, 2014), chap. 3.

*Ordinary World.* Iris and her parents run a hotel. Her friends are the constantly changing array of guests. All the colors disappeared from the world about five years ago.<sup>30</sup>

This scene is about the physics of the story world. Who are the players, and what sorts of forces can the reader expect to see at work? In my story, I needed to establish that Iris's world is the hotel, and I needed to introduce the external conflict—colors are gone. In this beat of the story, I initially spent so long setting up Iris's external world that the issue with the colors seemed like more of an after thought. As I developed this scene, I introduced Iris's grandparents, who used to visit but have not been back to the hotel in years. These characters provided an opportunity to both introduce the disappearance of colors and illustrate how transient Iris's community is at the hotel. In the final iteration of this scene, Iris practices the order of the colors of the rainbow that her grandparents taught her as she waits for them to come back. As the years pass, the grandparents do not visit and the colors fade. This change provided a more a better external representation of Iris's internal struggle, dealing with the loss of friends and family as they move on from the hotel.

*Trouble is Brewing.* Iris is missing one of her friends who left the hotel, so she climbs onto the roof to go stargazing.

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Beat Sheet.



This scene signals the change that is about to occur that will kick off the story's events.<sup>31</sup> When Iris goes up to the roof to mourn her friend leaving, she is following a ritualized habit, but it puts her in a position where she is the only one who will witness the hot air balloon crash that will catalyze the adventures in the story. The biggest obstacle I faced in constructing this was in deciding how to responsibly talk about a ten-year-old climbing onto a roof. As an elementary schooler, my friends and I occasionally climbed through windows onto roofs without our parents knowing. Obviously, we had fun and survived, but as an adult storyteller who knows that this is a temptation for kids even without reading books that model this behavior, I wanted to tell this scene in a responsible way. I did not encourage young readers to do something that is fun, but dangerous. In the end, I had Iris climb a ladder onto the roof that her father put there. That way her actions, if they weren't adult supervised, were adult sanctioned.

*Inciting Incident.* Iris is making up constellations when she notices that one of the stars is moving. It is not a star; it is a hot air balloon, which crash-lands in a tree next to the hotel.

This is the scene that changes everything. It is the event that begins the chain reaction of events that change the ordinary world from this point to the story's climax.<sup>32</sup> The moment when Iris realizes that the fiery ball of light that she thinks is a star is actually a hot air balloon that is about to crash land in her yard is the

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Beat Sheet.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., chap. 4.

moment when the reader knows the ordinary world is about to change. The evolution of this scene evolved most in terms of characterization. In the early drafts, Iris spoke first and Florence was not very talkative. By the last draft, Florence is a bubbly character, full of words, and Iris is more reticent. This change more effectively framed their relationship and personalities.

*Dilemma.* Florence, the hot air balloonist, knows where the colors have gone. Florence offers to tell Iris the story if Iris will help her fix her balloon and come with her on an adventure to restore color to the world. Iris hesitates, worried if she leaves her friends at the hotel that they might check out before she gets back.

This beat clarifies the protagonist's internal struggle. The moment before the character commits to the story's adventure shows what is at stake for the character. In my story, Iris is insecure in her community. She is afraid of people leaving her, and she is afraid that if she goes on her own adventures, she will lose her friends. I glossed over this moment in the first draft of my story, and Iris committed to the adventure of finding colors without much internal struggle. By the final draft, however, this scene accomplishes much more in terms of character development, which gives the adventure more emotional weight.

*Crossing the Threshold.* Iris loves colors and has missed them since they went away, so she agrees to go on the adventure to find them.

This scene marks the movement from Act I of the story to Act II, the middle.

In her work on story structure, *Three Act What?*, SJ Murray explains:

In Act Two, the protagonist faces the responsibilities of story adulthood, so to speak. She is further shaped by the friends she makes. She confronts and overcomes challenges. She makes hard choices that cement her character. All these adventures and challenges serve to grow the protagonist, hopefully to the point that she reaches her full potential.<sup>33</sup>

Act II begins with the moment that the character makes the active choice to go on a journey, literal or figurative, that will enact a change in the ordinary world.

Overtime, I worked to build the dramatic tension in this scene of my story. I found, however, that I had to do most of that legwork in earlier scenes. In order to make the crossing of the threshold dramatic, I had to raise the stakes and show the ordinary world's external and internal drivers. Iris is waiting for her grandparents and doesn't want to miss her friends at the hotel. These are the things that make her choice to leave more dramatic. Writing this scene gave me an appreciation for problem solving the story as a whole instead of trying to fix in isolation the individual bits that are not working.

*Adventure Sequence.* Iris and Florence head out in the hot air balloon.

This scene initiates readers into the "new world." As the protagonist begins the adventure that will change the ordinary world as she knows it.<sup>34</sup> In my story, this is a sensitive scene because I am writing about a child leaving with a person who is almost a total stranger. As with the scene where Iris climbs onto the roof, I

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., chap. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Beat Sheet.

had to find a way to responsibly allow Iris to go on the adventure. In order to solve this dilemma, I had Iris's parents give her permission to go. In addition, they set boundaries for the trip; she has to be home by bedtime.

*Gaining Support.* Florence explains that she spoke with a volcano that told her someone stole the colors and took them to Hawaii.

This beat develops the relationship between the protagonist and the supporting character<sup>35</sup>, in this case between Iris and Florence. This scene initially began as exposition; Florence explained to Iris her adventures up to that point. In an attempt to avoid exposition and add kid-sized humor, I developed a flashback scene with volcanoes.

*Adventure Sequence Continued.* They arrive at the cave of the color thief who turns out to be an artist named Arthur. They meet him and his pet butterfly, Lawrence.

The second act continues to build toward the midpoint, the critical moment that turns the tide of the story against the protagonist. The readers get comfortable with to the new world, and everything is going well, which builds the dramatic tension for the moment of setback.<sup>36</sup> This scene is barely recognizable in the last draft as compared with the first draft. Two dramatic shifts occurred in this scene.

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Beat Sheet.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Beat Sheet.

First, in the final draft I introduced an additional the external conflict—the sun is going out because it misses colors. This conflict drives Arthur’s interaction with Florence and Iris. The first drafts did not have that external conflict, so Arthur’s interaction with Florence and Iris lacked motivation and direction. Second, in the last draft, I introduced the butterfly, Lawrence. From the story’s inception, I wanted Arthur to change throughout the story from the perceived antagonist to an agent in solving the problem. I struggled, however, to show this change without excessive exposition. His relationship with the butterfly was an effective vehicle for showing Arthur’s internal struggles and motivations.

*Midpoint.* Everything in Arthur’s cave is brown as a result of his spell gone wrong. This spell is sucking color out of the world. He explains that to break the spell Iris and Florence will have to find a way to collect colors at their source. Further, he explains that the sun misses colors so much that its grief is going to cause it to go out. Now that the stakes are raised and the word depends on them not only for colors but also for sunlight, Iris and Florence recommit to their adventure.

Aristotle, in addition to his three-act structure, also breaks everything down into Complication and Unraveling. He writes:

Every tragedy falls into two parts- Complication and Unraveling or Denouement. Incidents extraneous to the action are frequently combined with a portion of the action proper, to form the Complication; the rest is the Unraveling. By the Complication I mean all that extends from the beginning of the action to the part which marks the turning-point to good or bad

fortune. The Unraveling is that which extends from the beginning of the change to the end.<sup>37</sup>

Up to this point the story is building in complication, and this is it the beat that is the top of the rollercoaster. It is the moment where everything that has been building comes to a head, and the stakes are raised one more time.<sup>38</sup>

This scene in my story changed drastically. The problem with the first drafts was that, once the characters and readers found out that Arthur is not actually the bad guy, all the tension vanished. Arthur is helpful in aiding their adventure. They experience a setback in the following scenes when they try to find the color red. It is frustrating for the characters, but their frustration is actually the only thing at stake—not a very compelling reason for the reader to care about the story. It needed higher stakes and more conflict. That’s where the sun came in or, more literally, began to go out. In the last draft, I introduced the external conflict that the sun is going out because it misses the colors so much, and unless they find colors by Iris’s bedtime, it will go out forever. This gives Iris the push to recommit to her adventure in an effort to not only find colors, but to also save herself and her friends, whom she loves so much from darkness and starvation. Arthur may not be the antagonist, but at the midpoint of this story in the final draft, the stakes are high.

Developing this scene was hard. There were moments when I corralled my roommates in the living room of our apartment and had them listen to me spitball ideas and give feedback. In the end, though, this version of the story is much more

---

<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 2.18

<sup>38</sup> Murray, *Three Act What?*, Beat Sheet.

compelling than the first, and it gave the characters plausible motivations to grow and change.

*All Downhill.* They find yellow and blue pretty easily. Yellow comes from distilled sunlight in the ocean, and blue comes from a bluebonnet seed. However, they have a harder time finding red. They try to get it several different ways, but none of them work.

This beat is where we start to see the complication unraveling all the events that seemed to going well in the first half of the story. The dominant values, the values against which the protagonist is fighting escalate in the second half.<sup>39</sup> In my story, as Iris and Florence work to find colors at their source, they cannot find red no matter how hard they try. This part of the story initially floundered because it did not have enough emotional weight. As I built the conflict in the scenes surrounding this sequence, this set of struggles and set backs began to matter more even though the content of these scenes did not change very much throughout the revisions

*Brick Wall.* They cannot find red anywhere, so Iris gives up. On the way back to the hotel, Iris remembers the artist's cave and realizes that it is in a volcano, and she realizes that the lava could be a source of red. She convinces Florence that they must catalyze a volcanic eruption.

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., chap. 9.

This scene is the lowest point for the protagonist. It is the pivotal moment where everything seems lost, but the protagonist still chooses to recommit to the goal. As Murray puts it, “The Brick Wall is the final, most decisive threshold the protagonist crosses in her journey. The test readies her to confront the antagonist.”<sup>40</sup> The scenes surrounding it, made the brick wall much more important in the last draft than in the first. In the first, the only thing at stake is Iris’s participation in the search for color. Presumably, once Florence drops Iris off, she would continue to look for color, so the loss is not terribly dramatic. In the final draft, if Iris and Florence do not overcome the brick wall, colors will be lost forever, the sun will go out, and it will be the end of humanity as we know it. The stakes are higher. This allowed me to explore Iris’s internality more in this scene also and to develop her character. Writing this scene gave me a better feel for the interplay between the external stakes in the story and internal character development.

This brings us to Act Three, the end of the story. Now that Iris has faced her fears of losing her friends, recommitted to the journey so that she can positively impact change and self-realization, she has to apply the changes she has undergone over the course of the adventure in the climax of the action that brings the story to it’s conclusion. This happens in three movements.

*The Final Face Off. Movement One.* Iris and Florence try to make the volcano erupt by insulting it and making it angry.

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., chap. 9.



This scene demonstrates Iris and Florence's newfound energy and commitment. The features of this scene remained stable throughout the revisions. It was the next few scenes that gave me a lot of trouble.

*The Final Face-Off. Movement Two.* They try to enlist Arthur's help in making the volcano sneeze, but he refuses them and admonishes them for wanting to torture an innocent volcano.

Initially, I had no idea what to do with this scene. In the first draft, Arthur was angry that Florence and Iris tried to insult the volcano, but then they all went to the village beneath the mountain together in search of pepper to make the volcano sneeze. They encountered a spice seller in the village whose business was ruined because, since the colors were gone, no one could tell which spices were which. Since he could not tell which spice was pepper, they all go to a café to discuss the problem. At the café, they realized that there was pepper in the peppershakers, which the café owner let them take. Then they all traipsed up the mountain to dump pepper into the volcano. The idea making a volcano sneeze is not as bad as telling a volcano that it's ugly, but in the end it still seemed a bit too cruel for a children's book. In addition, this iteration included a lot of exposition, because Iris and Florence had to explain so much to Arthur, and then the whole team discussed the problem for a while in the cave and again at the café. Ethically, it was questionable. Visually, it was boring. In the final draft, Lawrence tickles the volcano, which seems a lot more humane, and requires a lot less explanation. Arthur still has his moment

of redemption without all of the characters sitting around and talking for an extended period of time.

*The Final Face-Off. Movement Three.* With the help of Arthur's pet butterfly, they make the volcano erupt by making it laugh. The whole crew flies into the gathering storm, and they release the other colors in a thundercloud. The rain puts out the fires. Color spreads back into the world, and the sun does not go out.

This is the beat where the plan is supposed to work, but took me a long time to figure out how any humane plan could work convincingly in my story. How do you make a volcano erupt? I scribbled that question on the corner of my notes in American Philosophy. I laid on my couch in my living room and brainstormed with my friends. I went running and tried to imagine how I could make it happen. Working out the details of this scene taught me a lot about persistence in creative work. It is not easy to make volcanoes erupt.

*Resulotion.* Florence leaves Iris back at the hotel with the consolation that the world is round, so she will be back again before too long. Iris finds that her heart, which was so full, has enough room for Florence, the artist, and whomever else she might meet.

The aim of this scene is to give a picture of how the story world is changed as a result of the adventure that has concluded.<sup>41</sup> The piece of character development that remained in this story from the first draft is Florence's insight that the world is round. That was my initial hope for Iris's character is that as a result of her journey she would develop secure attachments with her community, meaning she could be love the people around her fear of them leaving defining those relationships. By the last draft, this change became more evident because I added the part where Iris retells her adventures to the guests at the hotel. Crafting that picture was an important exercise in demonstrating characters' internal changes through their actions.

### *Character Development*

*Iris.* Writing a developed female character who is insecure about losing her friends was a struggle. In the first version of the story, Iris's insecurity came across as passivity. The turning point in developing her character came when I outlined how each piece of the external conflict mapped onto her internal conflict. I listed the major goals in the story leading up to the brick wall and analyzed how Iris's internal journey coincides with her physical one.

The overarching frame for her internal journey is that, since Iris lives in a hotel, her friends have always been temporary. She is afraid of losing the things and people she cares about. She wants to get colors back so that things will go back to how they were. This internal struggle leads to the external problem that while all of

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Beat Sheet.

her friends have a thing that they do that defines them (telling stories with fruit puppets, climbing trees, drawing noses, etc.), Iris does not.

The first external goal she encounters is that she and Florence need to get the hot air balloon off the ground. The coinciding internality is that Iris is missing her friend, Dolly. While bringing colors back won't make Dolly come back to the hotel, Iris sees this adventure as a way to restore something that has left—color.

Iris's second external goal is to reach color thief's cave. In terms of character development, Iris has to trust Florence to jump out of the balloon when they get close to the cave. This is a big step for her.

Third, Iris and Florence aim to get the colors from the thief. At this point in the story, Iris begins to get caught up in the adventure. It is not just Florence's mission, it is hers too. She begins to speak more for herself.

At the midpoint Iris realizes that it is up to her to save the sun and the colors. Now that the sun is in danger of going out, the external stakes are higher. Iris's goal shifts away from wanting to make everything go back to normal. Now she's in this to protect the well being of her friends and family. She wants to save colors and the sun for herself and for them, and this new focus forces her to overcome her fears.

Her first goal after the midpoint is to find the color red. Iris is actively trying to problem solve at this point, but her idea to collect red from the hot air balloon coals ends up hurting Florence. While it's not enough to make Iris give up, it is discouraging.

After she fails to find red, she tries to find Yellow and Blue. Iris's internal struggle begins to escalate again. She is watching the time now. Finding both colors takes longer than they thought it would. Bedtime is getting closer.

Then Iris and Florence try to find red again. Iris feels like this is her last chance to be a part of saving world. And she comes up with nothing.

At the brick wall, Iris feels out of control. She can't do anything positive for her friends or family. Now everything is going to change again for the worse. The sun will go out and the colors will be gone forever. This set makes it all the more meaningful when she recommits to her external goal to find red by blowing up a volcano because she is growing into her own, self-determining person, distinct from her friends and family.

*Florence.* In the first drafts of this story Florence was more of a means to get Iris from one place to another than an actual character. She may as well have been a personified hot air balloon. I had to work to give Florence her own voice, personality, and background. The scene with where Florence first talks with Mount Etna gave me a chance to explore her character in a scene without Iris. I had a chance to develop her whimsy personality that borders on capriciousness and to develop her fast-paced, easily distractible voice.

*Arthur and Lawrence.* I discuss these characters together because the addition of Lawrence was the most important development in Arthur's characterization. From the beginning, I wanted Arthur's journey to be one of

redemption. He creates a problem he can't fix, but by the end, he is remorseful and becomes a part of the solution. In the first draft of the story, it was hard to show that change in an engaging way because in the early scenes Arthur was more pitiable than he was relatable, so his redemption was not emotionally compelling. In the last draft, I added Lawrence the butterfly. Their interactions show a side of Arthur that is caring but misguided. He wants to save his butterfly from starvation, but he does not have a broad enough vision to save the rest of the world. Instead of Arthur appearing as too poor and weak to even be a villain, he is a selfish and overly ambitious artist who ultimately cares about himself, his butterfly, and his volcano. His interactions with Florence and Iris push him to grow those seeds of care for himself and his immediate friends into a wider vision, and he ultimately helps them solve the problem that he created for the rest of the world.

### *Final Comments*

Storytelling drives me. It drives me because stories make a difference. They humanize abstract issues, events, and theories. They put faces on facts and figures and give audiences an understanding of the world around them. I have consumed stories for as long as I can remember. From the time I was a baby, my parents read books out loud to me, and by the time I was in kindergarten I read them to myself. Before I began writing this thesis, however, I had never written a complete story of my own.

As I wrote *Around the Color Wheel*, I engaged with stories in a new way. I wrestled with my own fears and questions in the context of a fictional story. When

the story fell flat time and again, I persevered and continued to problem solve. I explored the world that I created. I got to know my characters, and I worked to see my story through the eyes of my intended audience, elementary schoolers and their parents. I engaged my own experiences and my academic background in philosophy to create my own story. My story built on the stories I have been reading my entire life, but it is still my own. It reflects my own thoughts, feelings, and perspectives on the crazy world in which we live.

As I move forward, I hope to illustrate and publish this story as a picture book. To this end, I have included a list of possible illustrations in the Appendix. Regardless of whether or not this story is published outside of the Baylor Honors College, it represents countless hours of rewarding work. The product, I hope, is one that gives children and their parents room to engage with paradoxes and questions about what home is and about what it means to belong to people and places. I hope that it adds at least a little more color and wonder to readers' worlds.

## AROUND THE COLOR WHEEL

Iris lived in a hotel. She did not have brothers and sisters. Her family was her mother and father, and together they made their home a place for people on adventures.

Once Iris asked her mother, "How many people can our hotel hold?"

"Enough," Her mother replied.

"But how many is enough?"

"How many people can your heart hold?" her mother asked. Iris thought about it, but she did not know. She had space in her heart for:

Dolly, an artist who specialized in drawing noses,

And Dolly's little daughter, Mary,

Wilber, an expert tree climber,

Jeff, a storyteller who used fruits as puppets,

Francis, a designer who could make clothing out of anything,

And many more. They always had a lot of guests at the hotel.

The hotel used to be colorful; it had been yellow with a purple roof. But, five years ago, colors had disappeared from the world one shade at a time. People lose things every day. People lose their coats, their keys, their toys, their kites, their baseballs, and their wallets. Some people even lose their hair. This, however, was the first time that people had lost color. No one knew where the colors had gone.



Iris first noticed that the colors had faded a year after her grandparents' last visit. Her grandparents were cartographers, which is a fancy word for mapmakers. They were looking for the place where rainbows touch the ground so that they could make a map to it. Mapmaking kept them very busy. And yet, on leap day every four years, they visited the hotel on holiday. Iris wished that they could visit more often. Rainbows, Iris's grandfather taught her, were very mysterious, very shy, and very organized. They always arrange their colors in the same order: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. They came up with silly sentences together to help remember the order.

Roll On Your Giant Bed In Venice.

Rabbits Often Yell, "Growing Bunnies Ingest Veggies!"

Ronald Out Yodeled Grumpy Ben In Vermont.

After her grandparents left, Iris used to arrange her food in the order of the rainbow colors so that she would remember the next time they came. Now, it was impossible to tell the colors apart. She still practiced the sentences every day though.

Mary, Dolly's daughter, was too young to remember colors. One time, Iris tried to explain them to her. "It's sort of like a taste that you can see. Or like a smell for your eyes" Iris said. Mary hadn't understood. Iris tried again, "Imagine that there were more differences than light and dark. Oranges are exciting and blues are calm—"

"Oranges are my favorite fruit," Mary chimed in.

“I’m not talking about the fruit. I’m talking about the color it was named after,” Iris said. She gave up. Maybe it was impossible to explain what it’s like to see colors to someone who has never seen them before.

The roof was Iris’s favorite place at the hotel. It was her place. When her heart felt too full or when she missed a friend who left the hotel, she climbed the ladder her father had placed on the balcony outside her room. It led to the roof.

On the roof, the stars always seemed to be smiling and laughing. She smiled with them, and she found shapes in the stars. Iris did not know real constellations, like Orion or the Big Dipper, so she invented her own.

One night, Iris was particularly sad because Francis, who had stayed at their hotel for several months, had decided it was time to continue her adventure in a new place. She wanted to try to make sleeves out of slinkies, and she was going to find the perfect slinky. After she and Francis said goodbye, Iris sat on the roof and tried to make very complicated shapes out of the stars to take her mind off how much she missed her friend. She was trying very hard to make a fox when she noticed the star that was supposed to be his nose was moving.

In fact, it was getting closer.

In fact, it was not a star.

In fact, it was the flame of a hot air balloon.

A few minutes later an impossibly big, striped hot air balloon crash-landed in a big tree next to the hotel. “Are you alright?” Iris yelled.

“Peachy,” the hot air balloonist said. She clambered out of the basket, disentangled herself from the balloon, and climbed down the tree. Iris rushed down from the roof to see if the balloonist needed any help. The balloonist muttered to herself. Iris only caught snatches of what she said.

“So close—rescue the colors—fix it and be off—Hawaii should be nice this time of year—quickly, quickly, quickly—“

“Excuse me,” Iris interrupted. “Did you say something about rescuing colors?” The hot air balloonist looked up, for the first time consciously aware that Iris was standing nearby.

“Of course. It’s been too long since apples were red or since there have been rainbows to fly over. Now, if you don’t mind staying out of the way, I’m in a hurry to fix my balloon.”

“But I want to know what happened to the colors,” said Iris.

“It would take much too long to explain.” Said the hot air balloonist. She barely looked at Iris.

“I’ll make you cake, or pie or cookies—“

“I’ll make you a deal, dearie” the hot air balloonist cut in, “If you help me fix my balloon, you can come with me, and I’ll tell you the story along the way.”

“If I leave the hotel, Wilber might leave to go climb trees in South Africa before I can say goodbye, or Jeff might tell a story without me,” said Iris.

“If you stay, you won’t have any of your own adventures,” the hot air balloonist said. Iris thought about sunrises, the hotel’s purple roof, blue lollipops, and flowers.

“I don’t even know your name,” said Iris.

“My name is Florence, I’m on an adventure to bring colors back to the world.”

“Alright,” Iris said, “I’ll help you fix your balloon.”

Iris and Florence worked all night to fix the balloon. First they had to get it down from the tree. Then they had to fix the tears in the fabric. While they worked, Florence told Iris about her adventures.

Before Florence started her adventure, she was a cake decorator. She had been decorating cakes when she noticed that the colors were disappearing from her icing. It is very hard to make sunflower cakes, or rainbow cakes, or bluebird cakes when all the colors look the same, so Florence flew from country to country to look for colors. In New York, she found the Statue of Liberty, but no colors. In France, she found the Eiffel tower, but no colors. In China, she found the Great Wall, but still no colors. She had made it almost all the way around the world, but she did not find any colors.

Early in the morning Iris’s mother and father came outside to watch the sunrise and have a cup of coffee before they made breakfast for their guests. They were surprised to see Iris up so early and even more surprised to see Florence and her hot air balloon. Iris ran to give them good-morning hugs and to introduce them to her new friend.

“Florence is going to find colors and bring them back, and she wants me to go with her,” Iris said. Her parents talked to one another. They talked for a long time, and eventually they agreed that Iris could go, but only if she was back before bedtime. They offered to send them with roast beef sandwiches and apples, but

Florence had brought enough peanut butter and jelly to make sandwiches for months.

Once they patched the balloon, Florence hurried to light the fire. The balloon filled with hot air. They waved goodbye to the hotel, to Iris's parents and to all her friends as the balloon rose into the air.

"Anchors away!" Florence yelled as she dropped a sand bag out of the balloon. "Next stop, Hawaii!" The hotel and the people shrank smaller and smaller as the balloon floated higher and higher.

"I guess if I were a color, I might hide in Hawaii," Iris mused.

"They're not hiding, darling. They're being held captive" Florence said. They were so high that Iris's parents and the guests at the hotel were only specks. "The mountains told me—"

"Mountains can't talk," Iris interrupted.

"They most certainly can. They speak very, very, very, very, very slowly. You have to sit still for a long time to hear them." Florence steered her balloon around clouds shaped like ostriches, bunnies, ships, cars, hamburgers, and spaghetti.

"But mountains can't think. They wouldn't have anything to say," Iris insisted.

"The only reason you think mountains don't have minds," said Florence, "is that you don't understand their speech. Mountains can't understand you and me because we talk so quickly. That doesn't mean we don't think. I didn't even know mountains spoke until I got very sick.

"I ate a bad peanut butter and jelly sandwich while I was in Italy. I had to land my balloon and rest for three days before I felt well enough to fly again. I lay in the

basket of my balloon at the foot of Mount Etna. While I rested, I listened to the valley around me. I heard a deep rumble and grumble coming from the mountain. The first day I lay there it only sounded like crunching rocks. The second day I lay there I started to hear a word or two, but I kept falling asleep. I felt very sick. By the third day, I felt much better, and I heard some of the things the mountains said to each other. They were talking about the migration of the birds. I had some trouble understanding what most of the mountains were saying, but Mount Etna is a volcano, so if I listened carefully I could understand her. She said that she missed the swallows. Volcanoes speak a little faster than the other mountains because all their fire and lava makes them excitable.

“I was anxious to fly again, but it occurred to me that a mountain might know something about colors that a human did not. I had already been half way around the world, and no human had been able to help me yet.

“I tried yelling very slowly at the mountain, ‘Eexxcuussee mmee. Ddoo yyoouu kknnooww wwhheerree tthhee ccoollloorrsss hhaavvee ggoonnee??’ It took me almost an hour. I asked my question very slowly. But the mountain did not pay attention to me.

“I tried again. ‘Dddooo yyyoouuu kkknnnoowww wwwhhheerrreee tthhhee ccoollloorrsss hhhaavvee ggoonnee???’ This time I asked my question so slowly that it took me three hours. By the time I finished yelling my voice was hoarse, my throat hurt, and I was out of breath. But the mountain was still talking about the migration of the swallows, and it did not hear me.

“After a few days I was well enough to climb to the top of the mountain. At the top of Mount Etna, I found three huge boulders, so big I could barely move them. I rolled them to the mouth of the volcano and pushed them in to get the mountains attention. Then I sat at the edge of the volcanic crater and I asked so slowly that I fell asleep half way through asking. It took me two whole days to ask the question, but when I finished it, Mount Etna answered. It took two days for the mountain to say, “The thief took them to a cave in Kilauea.” Kilauea is a volcano in Hawaii, and that is where we are going. Mount Etna might have told me more, but I was out of peanut butter and jelly to make sandwiches, so I had to leave because I was hungry. Besides, it’s dangerous to talk to a volcano. If you say something to upset it or if something tickles it and makes it sneeze, it might erupt. Volcanoes are terribly sensitive.”

Iris and Florence flew and flew. They flew by a pod of dolphins, and they flew over a whale. They flew next to a bird for a while. They flew until Iris felt like maybe she was a bird for a while.

When they got close to Kilauea, they could see a cave in the side of the huge volcano. The hot air balloon headed straight toward it, and when they got near Florence said, “We’re going to have to jump.”

“I’m afraid of heights,” said Iris. She tightened her grip on the basket as she looked over the edge.

“Before we can get to the cliff we have to get halfway to it, right?” Florence asked. Iris agreed. “And then we have to get half way between the halfway point and the cliff, right?” Iris agreed again. “No matter how far, we go, though there will

always be half of the distance left. This balloon can get us very close, but it cannot go the whole way. So, we'll have to jump."

When they got close enough, Florence stashed a couple of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in her bag and climbed to the top edge of the basket holding onto the rope. Florence never went anywhere without a sandwich handy.

"Come on up!" she said. Iris grabbed the rope attached to the balloon, and started to hoist herself, but a breeze made the basket shiver. She let go of the rope and fell back into the basket.

"Hurry!" Florence called. The wind blew a little harder, and some jelly jars rolled from the other side of the basket into Iris's ankles.

"No time to lose, darling!" Florence said, and she held out her hand. Iris grabbed Florence's hand, and she climbed to the top of the basket. She squeezed her eyes tightly and together they jumped, landing on a small ledge on the face of the mountain.

In front of them was the opening to a huge cave. Florence tied the balloon's rope to a large rock and left it floating in the air. She turned around when she heard Iris giggle.

A big butterfly had landed on Iris's shoulder. It fluttered its wing softly and tickled her neck. Both Iris and Florence were startled when they heard someone say, "That's butterfly for a hug. Lawrence likes you." The artist to whom the cave belonged had heard them land and come out to greet them. "Welcome, the name's Arthur. What can I do for you?" he asked.



“We’re looking for colors.” Iris said. The artist’s shoulders slumped. His head drooped, and Iris thought she could see tears in his eyes. Lawrence flitted from Iris to Arthur and fluttered his wings sympathetically against the artist’s cheek.

“How did you find me?” he asked. Florence launched into her story. She told him that she used to be a cake decorator, and she had just gotten to the part where she ate a bad peanut butter and jelly sandwich in Italy near Mount Etna when Arthur interrupted her.

“Do you have any jelly left?” he said. Florence frowned.

“You interrupted my story,” she said.

“It actually doesn’t matter how you found me. Or it won’t by tomorrow, anyway. I need jelly. I’ll give you a potion to make you invisible for it.” Arthur spoke quickly. He was not smiling anymore.

“I’m not giving you my jelly,” said Florence, “I hate plain peanut butter sandwiches.”

Arthur threw his hands up in the air. “Look, I’ll show you the colors if you give me twenty jars of jelly.”

“Five,” Florence countered.

“Fifteen,” said Arthur.

“No,” said Iris. Florence patted her on the back.

“Ten,” said Arthur.

“Deal” said Florence, and she gave Iris a thumbs up. She retrieved ten jelly jars from the hot air balloon and marched toward the cave. Iris followed. “Imagine

trying to keep the all the colors in the world for yourself,” said Florence, “quite unbelievable. Very rude.”

Iris blinked several times. The cave was full of color. There was color everywhere. But it was all the same color—brown. Iris looked for even a tiny bit of red or blue or green, but everything was the same muddy brown. It was not bad. Only sad. Sort of like the feeling after you eat the last bite of chocolate cake, and you’re still a little hungry.

“You came to the right place,” said the artist, he sounded sad and tired. “Here are the colors—all of them.” Florence walked over to a great vat of brown paint that sat in the middle of the room.

“You traded rainbows and bluebirds for a bucket of mud,” she said. Florence dipped her fingers in the paint. She pulled her hand out, looked at it, and wrinkled her nose. It might have been at the color or at the smell. The whole room smelled like vinegar.

“For mud and for pickles,” she added because the whole cave was filled with pickles. Shelves lined the walls of the cave, and every shelf was filled from floor to ceiling with giant jars of pickles.

“Give them back. I demand that you give the colors back,” Florence said. Her voice was a little shaky. She had not thought through this part of the plan—how to make the thief give back the colors once she found him.

“It doesn’t matter anymore,” Arthur said. He leaned against a shelf that was full of pickles. “There isn’t anything I can do.”

Iris marched over to him and stood as tall as she could. “Everybody misses sunsets, and flowers, and rainbows, and cardinals, and parrots, and you can’t just keep them all to yourself in a vat in a cave in the middle of the ocean.”

Lawrence started flying in purposeful circles. “There’s no point in getting into it” Arthur said to the butterfly. Lawrence flew faster. “It won’t matter by tomorrow anyway,” he said. He sounded almost panicked. Lawrence started to fly away, out of the cave. “Fine! Fine. I’ll tell them.” Arthur sounded very upset.

“I was trying to invent a new color. I cast a spell that drew the colors out of everything. I collected them in that giant paint bucket,” the artist said, gesturing to the vat of paint. “When I mixed them all together, I thought they would create a new color that no one has ever imagined. Instead, they only made this muddy brown.”

“You should give them back. They’re not yours,” Iris said.

The artist’s shoulder’s slumped, “I don’t know how. The spell I made keeps sucking every color into my cave as soon as it is exposed to the air, and I don’t know how to break the spell.” Lawrence fluttered back to Arthur’s shoulder, and as the artist talked the butterfly’s antennae drooped lower and lower.

“You must have some ideas.” Florence pressed.

“A few, but they’re not very good, and I don’t have time anyway. The sun is going out tomorrow.”

The cave was so silent that Iris could hear Lawrence flutter his wings slowly and sadly.

“The sun can’t go out,” Iris said, finally.

“It’s been in the headlines for weeks now. Everyone is very sure about it,” Arthur said.

“It hasn’t been in the newspapers,” said Florence. “That’s absurd.”

“No, it’s been in the constellations.” Arthur sighed at the confused look on the adventurers’ faces. “Lawrence is a reporter. He can read the constellations. They’re full of news about the earth and the stars and planets near us,” Arthur explained. “The flowers can read them too, but a lot of them close up at night to sleep so they can look their best during the day. They pay him in nectar to come by when the sun is up and tell them the news. Lawrence is the best reporter on the island, but it doesn’t matter because the sun isn’t coming up tomorrow.

“He has been going around and around the earth for years trying to find the colors, but he can’t. And he misses them so much that he is going to retire and let the moon take over. But without the sun nothing will grow. That’s why I’m stockpiling pickles for food to last for the rest of my life, and that’s why I need your jelly. Lawrence won’t eat pickles. But I bet he’ll eat jelly.”

“You’re crazy.” Iris could not believe Arthur would be so selfish. He wanted to take all the food for himself and his butterfly and not even tell anyone that the sun was about to go out. “We have to find colors, and we have to find them today. You said you had some ideas. Tell them to me.”

“I told you they aren’t very good,” Arthur said. He had been so embarrassed about causing this mess that he had not left the island in years. He did not want anyone to know that it was his fault. Now he looked at the little girl who barely came up to his elbow, and he felt a twinge of guilt.

“They’re a start,” Florence said. “Let’s hear them.” The artist went to a large bookshelf and selected a big leather notebook. He flipped through it until he found the page covered in his own sketches and scribbled notes.

“My best guess,” he said, “is that you would have to collect colors at their source. They cannot be exposed to air, or the spell will suck them into my bucket of paint. Then you would have to find a way to spread the colors to the world.” He pointed to a drawing he had made of a thunderstorm and said, “I think if you mixed them into the raindrops of a raincloud it could work. Maybe if enough color was poured out it would break the spell. I really don’t know. I only make spells. I don’t break them.”

Iris and Florence returned to the balloon. They were determined to find the source of colors and to break the spell. It was the rainy season in Hawaii, and clouds crowded the sky, so the adventurers weren’t worried about finding rain to spread the colors. Florence untied the balloon, and as they rose into the air, they brainstormed different places that they might look for the source of red.

“Stop signs,” said Iris.

“Tomatoes,” said Florence. They went back and forth suggesting ideas: lipstick, strawberries, ladybugs, bell peppers, fire trucks.

“Fire,” Iris exclaimed, “It’s red. It’s the reddest of red things because everything turns red while it burns.”

Florence did a little jig and grabbed an empty jelly jar. She climbed up to the basket of hot coals that kept the hot air balloon inflated. She used the jar to scoop

up a coal, but it made the jar so hot that it nearly burned her when she tried to screw the lid on top.

“Ouch!” she cried, and she dropped the jar. It fell out of sight. Florence slid down next to where Iris sat in the basket. She bandaged her burnt hand with a strip of fabric from her skirt.

“Maybe fire is not the best source red,” Florence said. “Besides, fire eats air to survive, so I don’t think it would have any color left anyway.” Iris and Florence agreed that they should try to find a different, less dangerous color.

By this point, it was lunchtime, and Iris was hungry. So she made herself a sandwich. She cut edges so that it was in the shape of a hot air balloon. She liked her artwork so much that she decided to save it and show it to Mary when she told her all about this adventure. She carefully wrapped the hot air balloon sandwich and put it in her bag. Then she made herself a new sandwich in a less exciting shape.

After their quick lunch, Florence and Iris brainstormed yellow things that would be easier to collect than fire.

“Rubber ducks,” said Iris.

“Lemons,” said Florence. They thought of bees, lemons, chicks, macaroni and cheese. Finally Iris yelled, “gold.”

Florence clapped her hands, “No! What makes gold even more gold than gold?” Iris could not imagine what Florence meant. “What makes gold shine? What makes gold yellower than lemons and macaroni and cheese?” Iris still could not answer.

“The sun,” Florence crowed.

“We can’t go to the sun,” said Iris.

“We can go to the sunlight,” said Florence.

“The sunlight is in the air.”

“Don’t be silly, some of the sunlight is in the water. The fish need some to see.”

Iris cleaned out another jelly jar, and Florence let hot air out of the balloon so that it lost altitude. It sank down below the clouds and toward the ocean. She flew the balloon low—so low that the basket almost touched the surface. Iris reached over the side with an open jelly jar, but her arms were not long enough to reach over the basket all the way to the water. She climbed onto the side and held onto the rope with one hand and reached down with the other. Her arms were still too short. Iris climbed over the edge. She clung to the wicker basket, scooped up some water, and scrambled back into the hot air balloon.

Florence cheered, “Only red and blue left now,” Iris set the jar of yellow carefully in the corner of the basket.

Neither of them wanted to try to find red yet, so they made a list of blue things.

“Blueberries,” said Florence.

“The sky,” said Iris.

“Blue jeans are blue, so are sapphires and some people’s eyes,” Florence said, she stoked the hot air balloon’s fire so that they flew high above the ocean again. Iris closed her eyes and thought hard about all the blue things she had seen. When she opened her eyes, she jumped up with a smile.

“Bluebonnets,” she said. “We could collect bluebonnet buds that have not opened to the air.”

They had to fly a long way to find bluebonnets, so Florence flew the balloon high into the air to catch a faster wind. This wind was cold and Iris watched icicles form on the edge of the basket. When she thought she might turn to ice herself, Florence flew the balloon down into a huge field of wildflowers.

Jelly jars in hand, Florence and Iris went in search of a bluebonnet bud. Iris looked and looked and she eventually found a bluebonnet, but it had already bloomed, so its color was gone. She looked and looked some more. Finding flowers is easy, but finding flower buds is difficult. They had to look very hard to tell them apart from the grass. Finally Florence found a bluebonnet bud hiding in the middle of a patch of dandelions. She picked it and put it in her jelly jar.

By the time they got the hot air balloon back into the sky, it was already late afternoon. Iris looked at the sun and at the two lonely jelly jars in the corner of the balloon. She wondered where she they could find a third color. Iris and Florence thought and thought.

“Roses are red,” said Iris.

“But they are also yellow, white, and pink,” said Florence. “We wouldn’t know which kind we were picking.”

“Raspberries are red,” said Iris.

“Only when they are ripe, and they turn ripe in the air,” said Florence..

“Strawberries are red,” said Iris.



“They ripen in the air like the raspberries,” said Florence. Iris sat down next to the jar of sunlight and the jar with the bluebonnet bud and cried. Florence sat down next to her. For the first time she was out of words.

“I want to go home,” Iris said. She didn’t see how they could find red before bedtime.

Florence tried to tell Iris that they could not give up, but Florence was so discouraged that all she could say was, “I’m sorry.”

On the way back Iris worried. She worried about how much food her parents had at the hotel. How long would it last after the sun retired? She worried they wouldn’t have enough candles to see by. She worried they wouldn’t have enough firewood to keep warm.

She also worried that Wilber might have decided their trees were not tall enough and left the hotel. She worried that Jeff had told her favorite story and she had not been there to hear it. Maybe he would never tell it again. Maybe someone had stopped by the hotel for lunch and left again. Iris would never get to meet that traveler. She worried that Dolly might have gotten an invitation to make a portrait of the nostrils of a famous person, and she and Mary might have left already.

Iris pulled her hot air balloon shaped sandwich out of her bag. Even if Mary were at the hotel, she wouldn’t want to tell her a story about how she tried and failed to save colors and the sun. She may as well eat the sandwich as an afternoon snack. Iris nibbled at the edge of the sandwich balloon. A drop of water splashed on her nose.

The sky was crying. The sky and the sun had always been friends, as long as the sky could remember, and these were their last few hours together. The rain fell softly for a few moments and then hard and fast. It drenched Iris's hot air balloon sandwich.

Iris threw the soggy sandwich over the side of the basket. She was mad now. Maybe at Arthur for taking all the colors. Maybe at herself for not being able to find them. She had been so excited to tell Mary about her adventures, about how she had saved the colors and about the artist and his cave, and about catching colors in jelly jars, and about volcanoes that talk.

"Volcanoes!" Iris yelled suddenly.

"Mountains! Rivers! Streams! Sky! Caves! It's no good yelling things," said Florence. She was feeling irritable since they had failed to bring colors back to the world. Iris ignored her. When she was very excited, she didn't listen to anyone very much.

"The artist lives in a cave in a volcano," Iris continued. "You said volcanoes are excitable. We could make his erupt—"

"And the lava inside is red, but it hasn't been exposed to the air," said Florence as she caught on, "So some of it might make it up to the clouds before it loses its color. Plus, an eruption would destroy the cave. Surely that would break the spell! There would be no place for the spell to take the colors."

"Then we could let out the yellow and blue into some rain clouds, and the colors would be free." Iris finished. Florence was so excited that she turned a

cartwheel. She knocked over her remaining jars of jelly and peanut butter, and she almost kicked Iris in the head.

“Next stop, Hawaii,” Florence yelled as she had that morning when they left the hotel. She flew the balloon high above the storm into the cold fast wind, and they flew so fast that Iris was worried they might both fly out.

When they got close enough to the cave, Iris squinched up her eyes, grabbed Florence’s hand, and they both jumped out of the balloon.

The rain had stopped. The sky was crying so hard that she was crying a hurricane. In the center of any hurricane is a dry place, called the eye. The sky was watching the last place she had seen colors—Arthur’s cave.

Iris and Florence looked around waiting for Arthur to appear and welcome them into his cave. When he didn’t, Florence called, “Follow me, ducky!” and led the way to the top of the volcano. The cave was near the top, so the hike was short, but it was slippery from all the rain. Iris clambered up a boulder to peer into the heart of the volcano. All she could see was dark. Florence climbed up next to her. They brainstormed ways to make the volcano explode. Iris suggested that they block the mouth. The pressure would build up until the mountain exploded. When they looked around, though, there were no rocks big enough to stop up the hole.

“We could make it angry,” suggested Florence. “We could call it names, say that it’s cold, or insult it’s family. I hear that it and Mount Etna are close. We could say something rude about Mount Etna”

They agreed to keep it short. Iris's bedtime was just a few hours away, and it takes a long time to say anything to a volcano. They took deep breaths and shouted.

It took an hour to shout,

“YYYYOOOOUUUUU’RRRRREEEEEE UUUUGGGGLLLLLYYYYY!!!!”

When they finished the mountain was still calm. After all, to a mountain, humans look small, soft, and squishy. It doesn't really care how a human thinks it looks.

Iris sat down and looked out over the black and grey landscape. The trees and rocks in the distance below the volcano looked like little specks. Like pepper.

“Pepper!” she exclaimed, “We could make it sneeze!” Down the mountain, she and Florence rushed to Arthur's cave.

Inside everything was the same muddy brown. Arthur who lay on his bed in a corner seemed almost white. Lawrence perched protectively on the headboard. After Florence and Iris left earlier that day, Arthur felt so guilty about stealing the colors that he had worried himself to sleep. In his sleep, he twisted around so much that he was tangled in his own sheet. He mouthed words, but Iris could not tell what he was saying. His expression reminded her of Mary's expression the time that Mary broke Iris's favorite doll. Mary had tried to teach the doll to climb a tree.

Florence moved to the edge of his bed and felt Arthur's forehead with the back of her hand.

He sat straight up and yelled, “I'm not a flibbertigibbet!” The artist's eyes were still closed. Iris giggled. He woke up and opened his eyes to see Iris and Florence in his cave

He grabbed Florence's hand and whispered, "Tell me you haven't told anyone."

"That you're not a flibbertigibbet? I had no idea," Florence said. She laughed at her own joke.

"No, that it's my fault that colors are gone. If people knew, they would hate me." It hardly seemed possible, but, now that he was awake, Arthur had grown even more pale. "You have to understand," he said, "I only wanted to hang my paintings with my new color in museums in New York, London, and Paris. Now the birds don't have their blue sky. Kids don't have their red wagons. I used to watch the sunrise every day. Now it's grey, grey, grey, and inside my cave, brown. Everything is the same, and it's my fault."

"Buck up, Arthur! Can I call you Art?" Florence said, patting him so hard on the back that Arthur's glasses fell off his face. "Lying here feeling guilty isn't going to do anybody any good. Lend us some pepper, and we'll fix all your problems."

Iris was so excited she could not contain herself. "We're going to make the volcano sneeze and explode," she said, and she flung herself on the foot of the bed, making Arthur bounce up and down.

All the blood rushed to Arthur's face, which turned a deep, healthy grey.

"You monsters!" he cried. "I will not stand by and let you torture poor Kilauea."

Iris sat up and stared at the ground. She was too embarrassed to look at Arthur. She hadn't really thought about the mountain's feelings when she had yelled that it was ugly.

“She’s done nothing wrong,” Arthur continued, “My father, grandfather, and great-grandfather have all lived in this cave. I cannot let you torture Mount Kilauea like that.”

Florence bit her lip. She also avoided Arthur’s gaze. “But then we still don’t have red. It’s a bit of a bind we’re in, you see. I’ve flown most of the way around the world, and here we are, so close. There isn’t any other way.” She trailed off. She thought of Mount Etna who missed the birds so much that she spent days talking about it. She knew Arthur was right. The three of them sat in silence.

Lawrence had been perched and still for the whole conversation. Now he fluttered onto Arthur’s shoulder. The soft butterfly wings brushed his neck, and he laughed, in spite of his indignation. Then Florence did a little jig in place, “We could make Mt. Kilauea laugh.”

“Now that’s a good idea,” said Arthur. He got out of bed, straightened his sheets, and tidied his pillows. Lawrence fluttered off his shoulder and flew in loop de loops around the cave. Lawrence may actually have been the most excited to bring colors back. A butterfly’s life is very sad without color. Iris clapped her hands, her excitement coming back to her, but her face fell suddenly.

“The rain hasn’t started again, and I have to go home soon. It’s almost bedtime.”

“All things in good time,” he said. He looked less guilty and more determined. It helps to have a plan. He gathered his belongings. If they succeeded, it would be the last time he saw his little cave.

“Goodbye kitchen,” he said. “Goodbye chair, Goodbye cupboard and easel and teddy bear.” He waved to his home as he left the cave, and he put his little bundle of clothes and paintbrushes in the balloon next to the jelly jars.

“Upward and onward,” he said, and together they all marched to the top of the volcano to wait for it to rain. While they waited, they looked for shapes in the clouds to pass the time. Florence saw a short man eating a bunch of grapes. Iris saw a house with wings, and Arthur saw a cat jumping over a moon. Lawrence saw a daisy. When they got tired of looking at the clouds, Arthur entertained them with a jig. In the middle of Arthur’s dance, Iris felt a drop land on her knee. Then another landed on her toe. As the rain fell, Iris and Florence danced too. They danced for joy and for excitement that they were about to see all the colors that they had missed so much. Did Arthur’s dance cause the rain? Nobody really knows. Arthur was a magician, but they were in the middle of a hurricane, after all. Perhaps it was just a lucky coincidence. He whispered something to Lawrence. Lawrence flitted into the air. He circled the mouth of the volcano twice, and then he flew down into the dark hole. He flew down, and down, and down into the belly of the volcano. And with his wings he gave Mount Kilauea a butterfly hug. He tickled the mountain ever so gently. For a long time, nothing happened.

Then, the volcano chuckled.

It started as a low rumble.

“Get ready!” Iris yelled. The volcano rumbled again. A larger puff of smoke came out. The three of them ran toward the balloon. The volcano sucked in a huge

breath of air. Iris would have been sucked into the volcano if Arthur hadn't grabbed her hand. He and Florence held on to the boulders around them. "Run!" Florence yelled when the breath stopped. Pell-mell, they tumbled toward the balloon and scrambled into the basket. Florence cut the rope just as Mount Kilauea let out a great,

The volcano let out a long,

"HHHHHHHHHHAA"

They could feel the heat on their backs as they soared into the clouds.

"HHHHHHHHHHAA"

The mountain rumbled again. Lawrence beat his little wings as fast as he could. He dodged streams of lava as he sped out of the volcano toward the balloon. Arthur leaned as far out of the balloon as he could and held out his hand to the butterfly.

"HHHHHHHHHHAA"

Mt. Kilauea shook the ground with her deep belly laugh. The air around them was zinging with electricity as the thunder rumbled and the rain and lightning crashed toward the island. Florence was busy with the balloon's ropes, and Iris frantically searched in the bottom of the basket for the jelly jars full of yellow and blue. Arthur stood mesmerized. The mountain was entirely obscured by smoke, but



the lava as it burst into the clouds was a rich red. The rain put out the fire before it tumbled to the earth but the color kept spreading, leaping up the sides of buildings, and rushing through the streets.

Iris found the jars and threw them into a cloud that boiled with electricity.

BAM.

Seconds later, lightning struck, and yellow was back. Everything was vibrant shades of yellow, orange and red. Florence yelled something, but they could not hear her over the storm.

It was only when the thunder and lightning wore themselves out and they burst out of the clouds into a dazzling sunset that Iris realized she could not see any blue. She knew that she should be happy. They had gotten most of the colors back. Still, she couldn't help but feel disappointed. Florence asked Iris what was the matter. Iris explained, and Florence laughed.

"I know it's silly, but blue is my favorite color," Iris said. She was hurt that, after all that they had been through, Florence still was not taking her seriously.

"No, my little flibbertigibbet, I see it in your eyes—the blue is already back," Florence explained. Sure enough, blue was slowly, slowly seeping back into the world. Already at the bottom of the sunset, there was a dark, strip of indigo.

As they floated through the sky, Iris made herself another sandwich. In all the excitement, they had forgotten to eat dinner. She spread a strip of raspberry jelly on the corner of the sandwich. Then she found some apricot jelly, and spread a strip of that next to the raspberry. She found all the colors of the rainbow except for green and put them in order on her sandwich. She couldn't wait to see her grandparents

again. She would be able to tell them about how she saved rainbows from near extinction.

When they finally arrived back at the hotel, it was dusk, and the whole sky was deep, dark blue. Florence landed the balloon gently in the yard next to the peach tree, and Iris's parents came out to greet the adventurers. Iris introduced them to Arthur, and they invited him to stay for a while. They invited Florence to stay too, but she said that the wind was too good, and her adventures weren't finished. Iris was sad to see her go and knew that she would have to make up some very complicated constellations that night.

Before she left, Florence said, "The world is round, you know. I'll be back again before too long." Iris waved goodbye, and went inside with Arthur and her parents. She sat down in the living room with Jeff, Dolly, Wilber, and all the rest. Mary sat in her lap. Tonight, she told the bedtime story—she told her friends all about her day. And Iris, whose heart was so full, found that it had enough room for Florence, Arthur, everyone at the hotel, and whomever else she might meet.

## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### *Suggested Illustrations*

1. "Iris lived in a hotel." *The hotel*
2. "Iris once asked her mother..." *Iris and her mother*
3. "She had space in her heart for...." *Dolly drawing noses, Mary, Wilber climbing a tree, Jeff telling a story with fruit puppets, and Francis wearing a dress made from odds-and-ends*
4. "People lose things everyday." *I-Spy-style drawing of the things people lose. (Set inside the hotel)*
5. "Mary, Doll's daughter, was too young to remember colors." *Iris and Mary*
6. The roof was Iris's favorite place..." *Iris on the roof, the fox constellation.*
7. "In fact, it was getting closer," *The nose of the fox constellation gets closer and becomes a hot air balloon.*
8. "A few minutes later an impossibly big, striped hot air balloon crash-landed in a big tree..." *Hot air balloon in a tree, Florence and Iris on the ground*
9. "Before Florence started her adventure..." *Florence decorating cakes*
10. "Early in the morning, Iris's mother and father..." *sunrise, Iris's mother and father talking with Iris and Florence outside by the tree*
11. They waved goodbye to the hotel...." *The hot air balloon rises into the air. Iris and Florence wave to their friends at the hotel.*

12. "I ate a bad peanut butter and jelly sandwich.." *Florence lies in the basket of her hot air balloon on the ground near Mt. Etna.*
13. "Iris and Florence flew and flew" *Hot air balloon over the ocean with dolphins and a whale in the distance behind them and Mt. Kilauea in the distance in front of them*
14. "The hot air balloon headed straight toward it..." *Iris and Florence jump from the hot-air balloon onto the rocky ledge in front of the mouth of the cave.*
15. "A huge butterfly had landed..." *Iris with a butterfly on her shoulder*
16. "You came to the right place..." *Arthur shows Florence and Iris his cave.*
17. "The artist went to a large bookshelf..." *Arthur shows them a sketch of his theory for getting colors back.*
18. "They brainstormed different places that they might look for the source of red." *Stop sign, tomato, lipstick, strawberries, ladybug, bell pepper, fire truck*
19. "She climbed up to the basket of coals" *Florence burns herself by accident with hot air balloon coals.*
20. "They brainstormed yellow things..." *rubber ducks, lemons, bees, lemon drops, chicks, macaroni and cheese, gold*
21. "She climbed onto the side and held onto the rope..." *The hot air balloon flies close to the ocean and Iris scoops up water with a jelly jar.*
22. "They made a list of blue things." *Blueberries, the sky, blue jeans, sapphires, eyes*
23. "Jelly jars in hand..." *Florence and Iris search for bluebonnet buds in a field of wildflowers.*

24. "By the time they got the hot air balloon back into the sky..." *Florence sits sprawled out with slumped shoulders on one side of the basket. Iris huddles with her knees to her chest on the other.*
25. "Volcanoes!" *Iris stands on the edge of the basket holding the rope. Florence does a cartwheel and knocks over the pile of jelly jars.*
26. "When they got close enough to the cave...." *A panorama of Iris and Florence jumping out of the balloon, running up the side of the mountain, and standing at the top*
27. "Inside everything was the same muddy brown..." *Florence pats Arthur on the back so hard that his glasses fly off his face, and Iris throws herself on the bed. Lawrence perches on the headboard.*
28. "Now he fluttered onto Arthur's shoulder." *Lawrence perches on Arthur's shoulder and tickles his neck.*
29. "Goodbye kitchen..." *Arthur waves goodbye to his cave.*
30. "While they waited, they looked for shapes in the clouds..." *Arthur does a dance. The sky behind him is full of clouds of different shapes.*
31. "He flew down, and down, and down...." *Lawrence flies into the volcano.*
32. "Get ready!" *Iris yelled. Iris, Arthur, and Florence run away from the smoking mouth of the volcano.*
33. "They could feel the heat on their backs...." *The three adventurers sail away in their balloon into the thunderstorm. The volcano behind them erupts. The lava is red, the first color apart from brown in the illustrations.*

34. "Iris found the jars and threw them...." *Iris leans out of the hot air balloon and tosses the jars with color into a cloud that boils with electricity.*
35. "It was only when the thunder and lightening wore themselves out..." *The hot air balloon sails into the sunset.*
36. "When they finally arrived back at the hotel..." *It is dusk, and everything is deep blue. The hot air balloon lands beside the peach tree.*
37. "Before she left, Florence said, "The world is round...." *The hotel sits on top of a drawing of the earth. Florence's hot air balloon flies above it. Around the earth, various buildings and mountains rise up. On the bottom of the circle it is noon, and on either side it is sunrise and sun set. We can see a crowd of people through the windows of the hotel.*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle, *Poetics*, Translated by S.H. Butcher.  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1974/1974-h/1974-h.htm>
- Crowell, Steven. "Existentialism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2015.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/existentialism/>.
- Huggett, Nick. "Zeno's Paradoxes." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2010.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/paradox-zeno/>.
- Jackson, Frank. "Epiphenomenal Qualia." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 32, no. 127 (1982): 127-136.
- Johansson, Viktor. "'In Charge of the Truffula Seeds': On Children's Literature, Rationality and Children's Voices in Philosophy." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 45, no. 2 (2011): 359-377.
- Kragh, Helge. "The True (?) Story of Hilbert's Infinite Hotel." *arXiv*. 2014.  
<http://arxiv.org/pdf/1403.0059v2.pdf>.
- Lewis, C.S. "On Three Ways of Writing for Children." *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, 22-34. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1966.
- Matthews, Gareth B. "Philosophy and Children's Literature." *Metaphilosophy* 7, no. 1 (1976): 7-16.
- Matthews, Gareth B. "Philosophy and the Young Child." *Metaphilosophy* 10, no. 3 (1979): 354-368.
- McGavock, Karen L. "Agents of Reform?: Children's Literature and Philosophy." *Philosophia* 35, no. 2 (2007): 129-143.
- Murray, SJ. *Three Act What? Great Story Structure*. Nibbles, 2014. E-Book.
- Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. *The Little Prince*. Translated by Katherine Woods. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1943.
- Seager, William, and Sean Allen-Hermanson. "Panpsychism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2015.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/panpsychism/>



