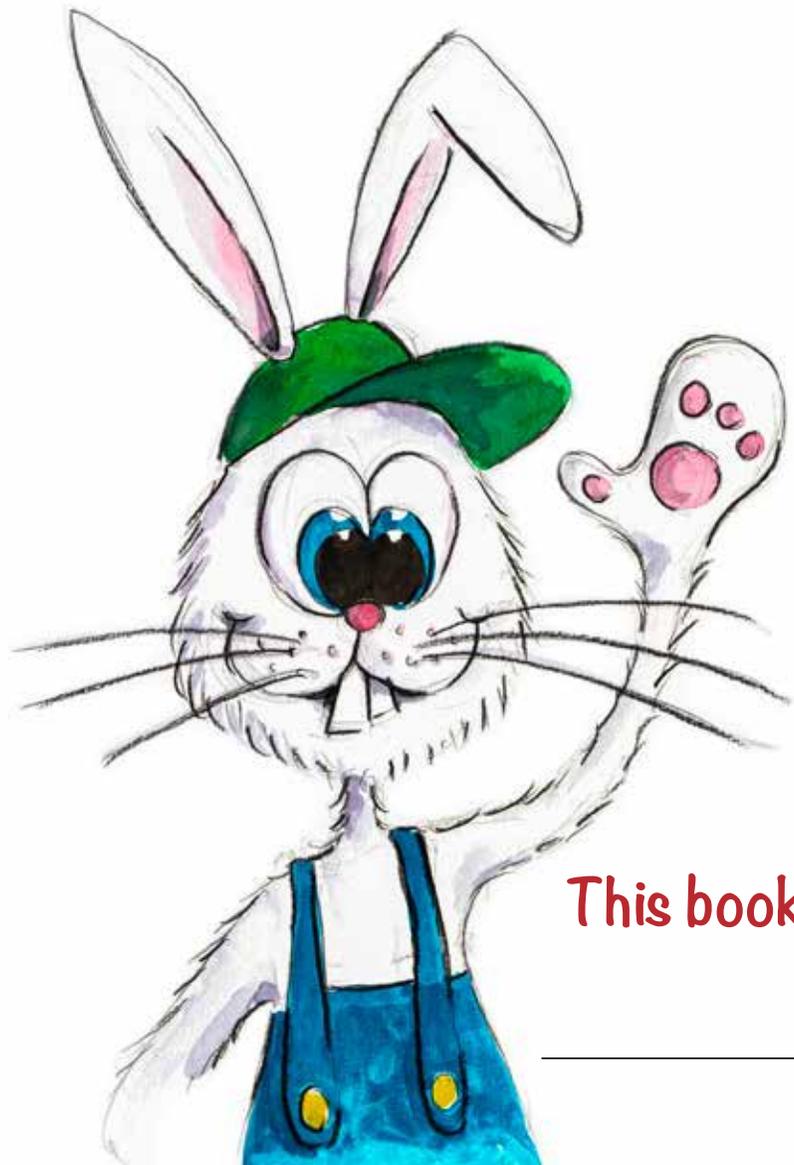




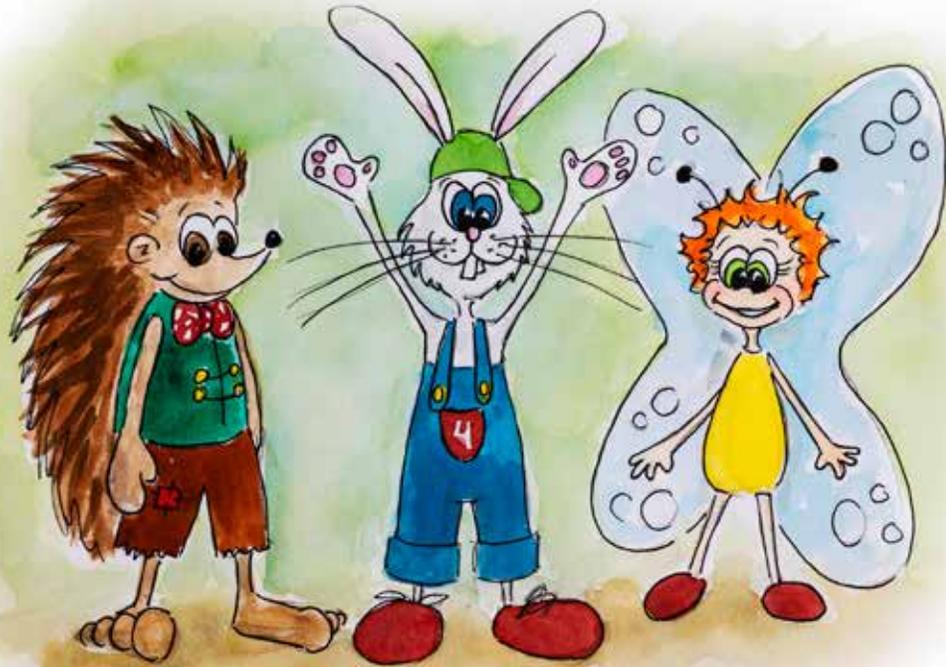
Milton and the animals from the other forest

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This book belongs to:

Hi there! My name is Milton and I'm a curious forest rabbit. I love going on adventures around the world. I live with my two friends Amanda and Conrad in my cozy cave in the enchanted forest. Amanda is a butterfly. She is always in a great mood and her smile fills her entire face. Amanda loves the summer warmth and sun, as well as all the outdoor games we play together. When Amanda becomes excited, her wings begin to buzz. Conrad is a very clever hedgehog who always looks after Amanda and me. Conrad is quite cautious and considers everything twice. Conrad loves to read books and when he becomes eager about learning something new, the tip of his nose begins to wiggle.



On the wall inside my cave is my magic world map. When I dive head first into the map, I can safely go wherever I please. Unfortunately, not everyone travels because it takes their fancy. Many leave because the place where they live has become dangerous. Amanda, Conrad, and I have often wondered where they might go? Today this question was answered.

It was a beautiful day in the enchanted forest and the warm rays of the sun reached us through the trees. Amanda, Conrad, and I were heading for the big clearing where we had a play date with our friends Dan the fox, James the sheep, Freddy the turtle, and Sofia the squirrel. On our way we met a lot of adults. They were also on their way to the clearing. Some of them carried blankets. Others brought bags full of clothes and toys. We also saw Daddy Fox with a pushcart full of food, fruit, and water.



When we reached the clearing, Dan, James, Freddy, and Sofia were waiting for us. They didn't notice us as we arrived - they were busy observing everything taking place in the clearing. It looked quite different. A lot of tents had been put up and it was packed with adults and children who we had never seen before. I'm sure we all thought the same thing - what is going on?



In the middle of the clearing, a long table had been put up. Granny Fox and James' parents were there alongside a lot of other animals from the enchanted forest. They were busy handing out food and water to the newcomers. At the end of the table was the old, wise owl. He came over the moment he spotted us. He could see how we looked like seven big question marks.

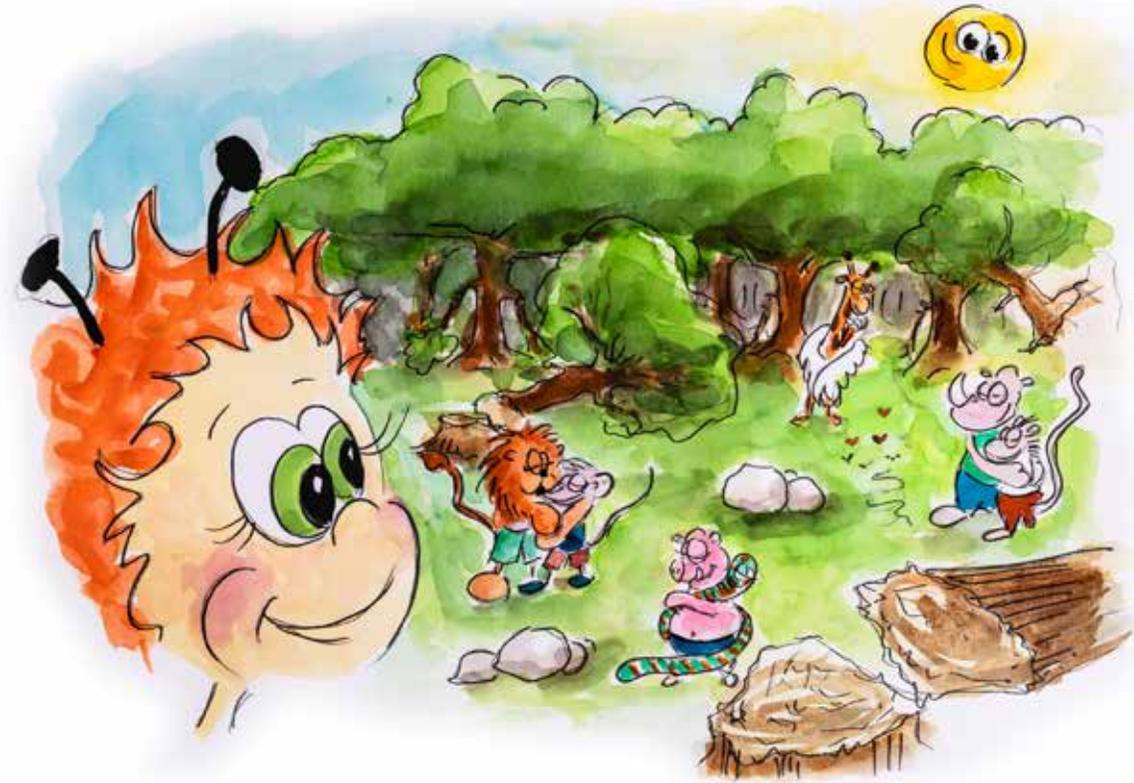
Amanda asked the old, wise owl the question on everyone's mind: "Who are all these new animals?" The owl told us that they were refugees who had arrived at the enchanted forest. He explained that refugees are those who leave their own forest because it has become too dangerous a place to live. Curiously, I asked what exactly was dangerous?

The wise owl explained that it had become dangerous for the animals to live in their old forest, because certain adults disagreed about who should be in charge. And now they had started fighting one another. Conrad asked if this was what was called war. The owl nodded. We looked around at the many newcomers. "How can we help those suffering from the war?" Sofia asked. The owl signaled for us to follow him. He wanted to show us what had already been done to help the animals that had fled.



Amanda looked worried. The wise owl noticed straight away and said: "Amanda, it is quite alright to feel worried." He looked over the rim of his glasses at each and every one of us: "If you find yourselves worrying or wondering about something when you hear of war, it's important that you speak to an adult who you like. You see, adults can help you. Now, you mustn't keep your worries to yourselves, hidden away down there in your tummies." Amanda looked up at the old, wise owl and gave him a quick smile before we moved on.

Looking at Amanda, I could tell that she did keep some worries down there in her tummy. That very instant, it popped straight out of her: "You know, I can feel that I'm keeping something down there in my tummy which I don't want to." The old, wise owl stopped and said: "Very well Amanda, do tell me. You can ask anything you need." Amanda took a deep breath and asked: "Will the adults also start fighting here in our enchanted forest?"



The old, wise owl spread one of his wings around Amanda and replied: "Right now, there is peace and quiet in our forest. And fortunately, a lot of adults are working hard at putting an end to the war by helping those fighting become friends again." Amanda's wings started buzzing and she gave the owl one of those smiles that took up her entire face. Her tummy was feeling much better again.

We reached a humongous tent with a fancy sign above the entrance. "SCHOOL" it read. Outside the tent were our algebra teacher Mrs. Calculus and our music teacher Mr. Minor. They were busy playing the 'head, shoulders, knees and toes' song game with many of the new children. It looked super fun. Just as we were about to join the game, Dan burst out: "Stop! I'm not sure if we can join in. They are not from our forest and we don't speak the same language."



Freddy gave it some thought and said: "Let's ask an adult. We have just learned that we should speak to an adult if we are worried about anything." We went up to Mrs. Calculus and asked what to do. She explained that of course we could play with the new children even though we didn't speak the same language. "You don't always need to understand each other's words in order to show your intentions," she said. Now, she was one clever teacher, Mrs. Calculus.

Our music teacher Mr. Minor came dancing towards us and said: "You know what? When you play with the animals from the other forest you will get better and better at talking together and understanding one another. Because playing is the best way to learn new languages." We all nodded and eagerly joined the game. Everyone participated and sang in each their own language. The bubbles in my tummy were having a ball.



It was wonderful singing, dancing and laughing together. It felt as if we were no longer strangers to one another. The familiar, lovely feeling of joy spread throughout my rabbit body. We may not have brought any blankets, toys, or tents, but it seems we did bring something that made our new friends just as happy. That is, our smiles and eagerness to play.

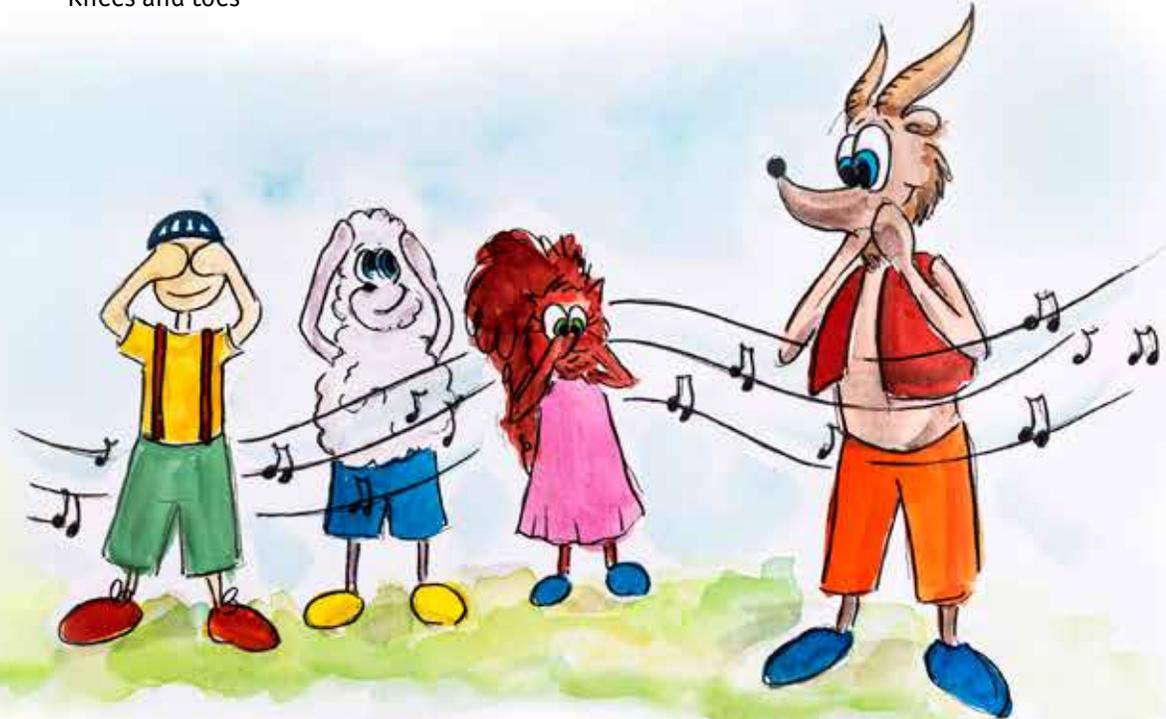
Melody: Head, shoulders, knees, and toes

Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes
And eyes, and ears, and mouth, and nose
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes

Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes
And eyes, and ears, and mouth, and nose
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes

Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes
And eyes, and ears, and mouth, and nose
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes
Knees and toes

We sang the song lots of times and each time we sang it faster and faster. In the end we nearly tripped over the words, that's how fast it went.



When we finished the song game, everyone had become quite thirsty. James' mum and one of the new mums handed out lemonade. I thought it was James' mum's famous lemonade. But no. This one was different. It tasted magical. I asked if it was a new recipe. James' mum told me that it was a recipe that her new friend had brought with her from the forest she fled. We all used our best body language to tell her how magi-tastic it tasted.



Sofia, Amanda, and Freddy were sitting on the grass with some of our new friends. They were busy learning a new clapping game that the friends used to play back home in their forest. James, Conrad, and I were lying in the grass. We were watching the clouds dance across the sky alongside the smiling sun.

The tip of Conrad's nose began to wiggle. "Aren't we lucky!" he burst out. The three of us sat up. James and I looked at him curiously. "Lucky?" we both said. Conrad continued: "You see, we can learn a lot from the new animals. For instance, see how James' mum has learnt to make a new lemonade." James interrupted: "That's true! And just imagine all the games we can teach our new friends". "Exactly!", I said. "And all the games they can teach us." I felt certain that we would have a wonderful time together - here in the safe, enchanted forest.



The old, wise owl joined us on the grass. Smiling, he greeted all of us with his owl-nod. Dan told the owl that he really wanted to get to know all the new animals better. He took a deep breath. He seemed to struggle a bit with his question. Then his curiosity took over. "Do you think it might be ok if I ask them what it's like to flee. I mean, what it's like to not be in your own forest because it's become too dangerous a place to live?"

The old, wise owl answered in a friendly manner that he was sure Dan could ask them this. We all listened curiously while the owl explained: "Our new friends may not want to talk about fleeing all the time." Sofia interrupted: "I don't feel like talking about difficult things all the time either. Once in a while I need a break". This made a lot of sense to me.



I looked up and realised that the sun had almost danced its full dance across the sky. This meant that it would soon set and the moon would rise to watch over us. It also meant that it was time to bid farewell and see you later to the animals from the other forest. We all got up and walked towards the big sleeping tents. This was where our friends would sleep until the adults in the enchanted forest found proper houses for them. In front of one of the sleeping tents we exchanged big see-you-later hugs.



At the crossroads near the big clearing, Amanda, Conrad, and I said goodbye to Sofia, Freddy, James, and Dan. We agreed to meet again the next day. On our way back to the cave we talked about how exciting and different the day had been. I could tell that I was tired, and I looked forward to getting home and sleeping in my own bed.

'My own bed' I repeated in my head. It made me think of the animals from the other forest. They couldn't sleep in their own beds because they had had to flee. I certainly understood if they were missing their rooms, beds, and toys. I bet they were looking forward to returning to their own forest once it was peaceful again. Until then though, we had a lot of games to play together.

When we returned to the cave, Amanda flew to her favourite spot on the root beneath the ceiling and folded herself up in her wings. Conrad made himself comfortable on the soft blanket of moss and I settled under the duvet in my bed. We were happy that the adults knew how we could all help those that came to the enchanted forest. As the wise owl had said, luckily a lot of adults were helping those fighting become friends again. Just before I fell asleep I said to Amanda and Conrad through a big yawn: "I'm certain we can help our new friends feel happy here. All will be well again". Amanda and Conrad both mumbled: "Yes, all will be well again!"



Did you know:

If all refugees in the world joined hands, they would circle the Earth more than twice?



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In 'Milton and the animals from the other forest', Amanda, Conrad, and Milton are meeting up with their friends to play in the big clearing. But the clearing looks different. A lot of tents have been put up and it's packed with adults and children who they haven't seen before. With help from old, wise owl they learn what refugees are. They also learn how to help the newly arrived children and adults feel happy in the safe, enchanted forest.



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