



Milton and the invisible coronavirus

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Hi! My name is Milton and I'm a curious forest rabbit who loves to go on adventures around the world.

I've visited lots of lovely children in different countries. I have a magical world map. When I dive head-first into the map, I can go wherever I want.

I live in a cave in the enchanted forest with my two best friends, Amanda and Conrad.



Amanda is a butterfly. She's always in a good mood and her smile fills her entire face. Amanda loves the warmth and sun of summer, and all the games we play outside. When Amanda gets excited, her wings begin to buzz.

Conrad is a very wise hedgehog, who always takes good care of Amanda and me. Conrad is very careful. He always thinks things through very carefully. Conrad reads a lot of books, and when he is eager to learn something new, the tip of his snout starts to vibrate.



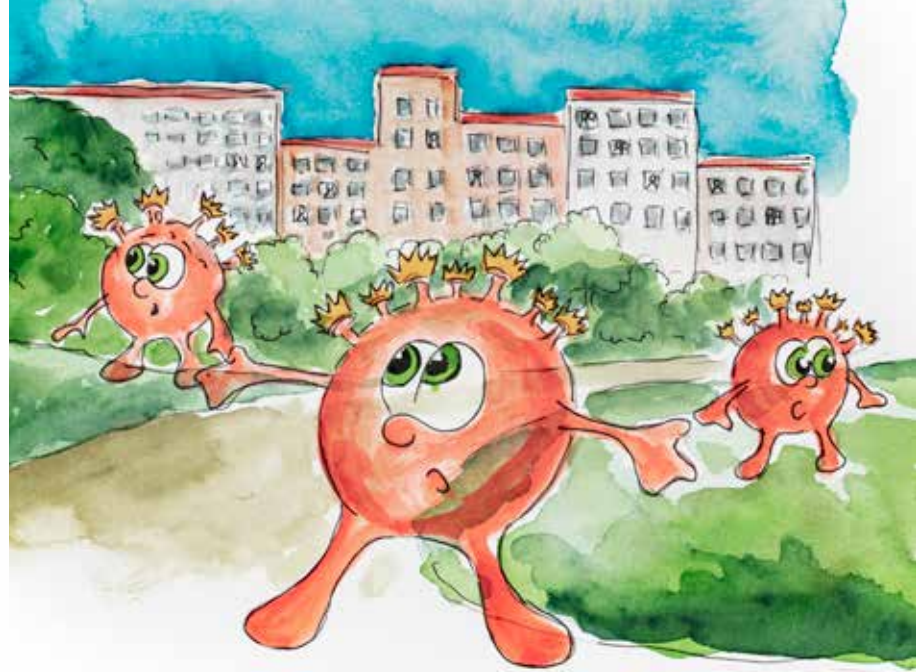
I love my cave. Amanda and Conrad helped me decorate it, and it turned out just the way I wanted it. The floor and walls are made of earth. In the middle of the cave, there are two chairs — one for Conrad and one for me. Amanda loves to sit on the tree root in the ceiling.



I'm happy that my cave is so nice and cosy, because these days, we actually have to stay at home most of the time. You see, there is a contagious virus that is making a lot of people around the world very sick.



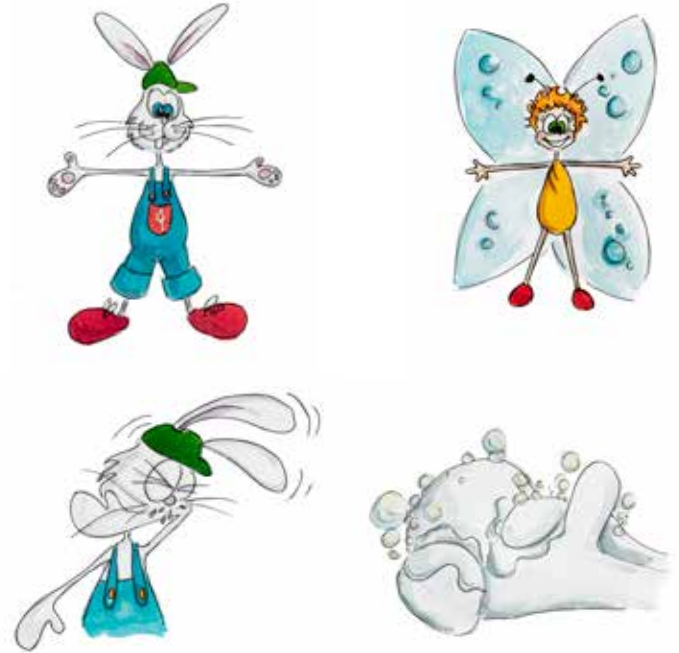
Conrad told Amanda and me that the virus is called coronavirus. Corona means crown which comes from an old language called Latin. Conrad showed us a picture and explained that when you look at coronavirus under a microscope, it looks as if it's wearing lots of little crowns. A microscope is a funny device which makes teeny tiny things look bigger. It didn't look all that dangerous, but Conrad told us that some people get very sick if they are infected with the coronavirus.



Corona is a real naughty virus. It's very contagious and it spreads from human to human. It does this when people get close to each other. That's why we must all stay inside our caves, houses or flats. That way, we won't get so close to each other, and that means that fewer people will be infected with coronavirus.



Thankfully, most of the people who become sick with coronavirus will get well again. All around the world, clever people are working hard to create medicines that will help the sick to recover quickly. They are also working to find a vaccine against the coronavirus that can make sure you don't get infected at all.



Knowing that the coronavirus won't always be here in the enchanted forest, in our country or in the world makes me really happy. Fortunately, we can all help to stop the coronavirus. Conrad told me about it. We just need to help each other and follow some simple advice.



Now that the naughty coronavirus is here, Amanda can only play with Conrad and me. However, Amanda loves to fly all over the enchanted forest. She has a lot of friends, and she usually visits them all the time. At first, Amanda was a little bit sad and found it difficult. She misses all the other animals in the forest. Conrad told me that no animal in the enchanted forest is alone. You are allowed to be with your family and friends in small groups if you stay outside. That cheered Amanda up a lot.

Conrad also told me that, in some countries, you can't go and meet your friends in real life. But you can play together in a virtual world. That is, a world where you can see each other on a computer screen, tablet or mobile phone.





Sometimes, we go for a walk. Fortunately, we can still do that here in the enchanted forest. When we meet other animals, we must remember to keep our distance.

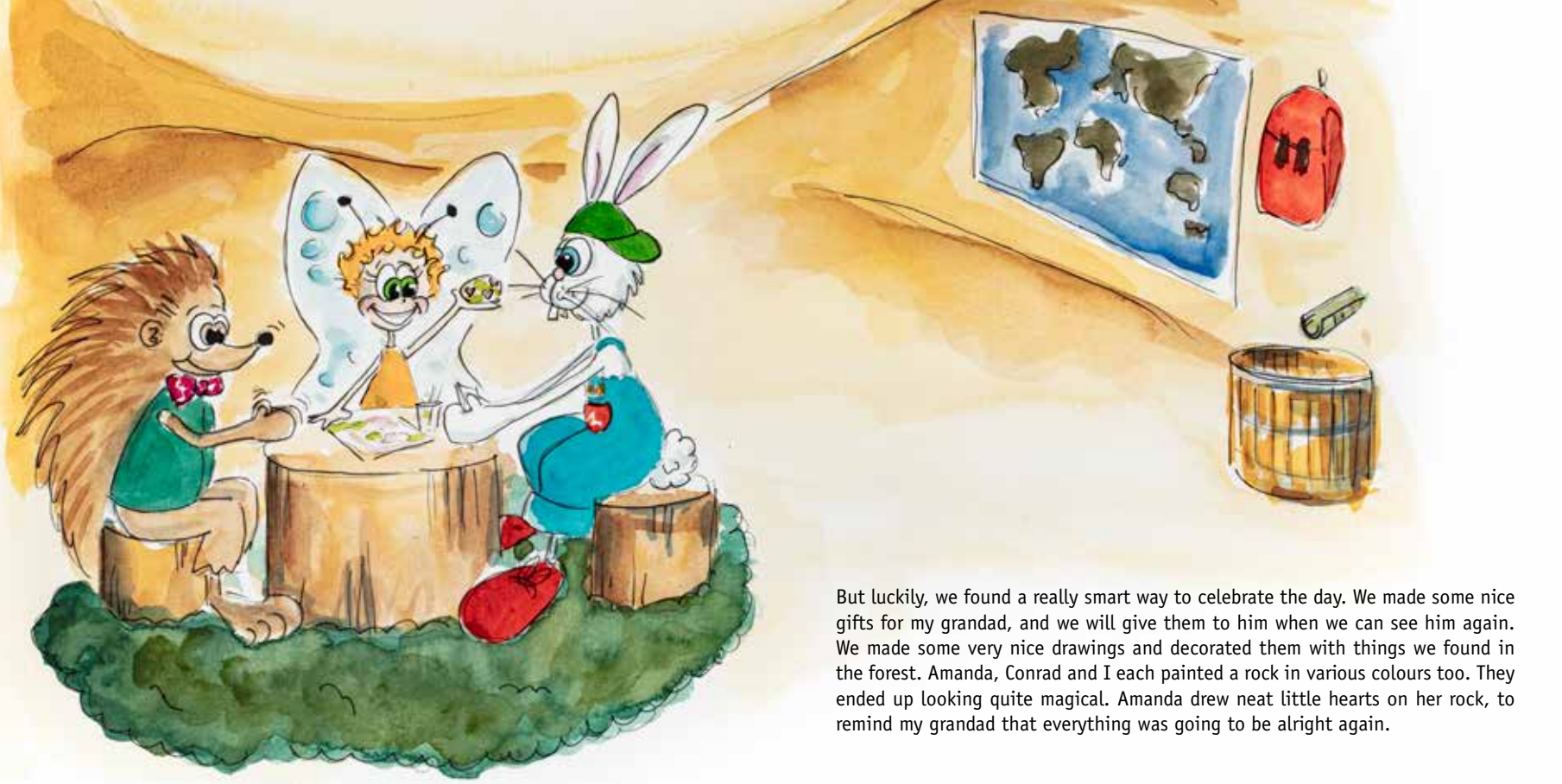
We can wave and say hello, but we can't get too close to each other or give each other a hug. That's one piece of advice you should remember. If you keep your distance, you're helping to stop the corona-virus from spreading.



One day when we were out walking, we met one of Amanda's good friends. Normally, Amanda would have given him a big hug. But because we have to keep our distance right now, they invented a new game. They imitated each other's movements, just like in a mirror. It looked like fun, so Conrad and I started playing too. We've been playing it ever since because it was so much fun! Every time we meet our friends in the forest, we play the Stop-Corona-Mirror-Game.

There's another thing that's a bit different right now. It was my grandad's birthday yesterday. Usually, his family and friends all go to his house. We eat cake, drink cocoa and sing Happy Birthday. But we couldn't go to visit him yesterday. You see, my grandad is an old rabbit. We must take particularly good care of the elderly and those in poor health right now, because they can get very sick from the coronavirus.





But luckily, we found a really smart way to celebrate the day. We made some nice gifts for my grandad, and we will give them to him when we can see him again. We made some very nice drawings and decorated them with things we found in the forest. Amanda, Conrad and I each painted a rock in various colours too. They ended up looking quite magical. Amanda drew neat little hearts on her rock, to remind my grandad that everything was going to be alright again.

Conrad told us how it is very important to wash your hands very thoroughly. In fact, you need to wash your hands for 20 seconds.

Amanda and I didn't know how long 20 seconds was. So all three of us tried to wash our hands while we counted:
"1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20."

20 seconds sure is a long time! I don't think I usually wash my hands for that long.





We found out that if we sang a song rather than counted, it was much more fun. We wrote our own wash-your-hands song to the tune of 'Brother John'.

Do you know it?

The song went like this:

***Wash your hands clean, wash your hands clean
Rub and scrub, rub and scrub
Do it nice and slowly, do it nice and slowly
One more time, one more time***

***Wash your hands clean, wash your hands clean
Rub and scrub, rub and scrub
Do it nice and slowly, do it nice and slowly
Wash and dry, wash and dry***

We practised the song as we washed our hands. When we were done, we dried them on some paper towels. Conrad told us how important it is to wash our hands thoroughly and often. But what does 'often' mean exactly? Of course, Conrad had the answer to that as well.

He said that we should all remember to wash our hands every time we go to the toilet — before and after we eat — if we cough or sneeze into our hands — when we blow our noses — when we help each other make food, and every time we've been outside playing.



1. Wash your hands clean,
wash your hands clean



2. Rub and scrub, rub and scrub



5. Wash your hands clean,
wash your hands clean



6. Rub and scrub, rub and scrub



3. Do it nice and slowly,
do it nice and slowly



4. One more time, one more time



7. Do it nice and slowly,
do it nice and slowly

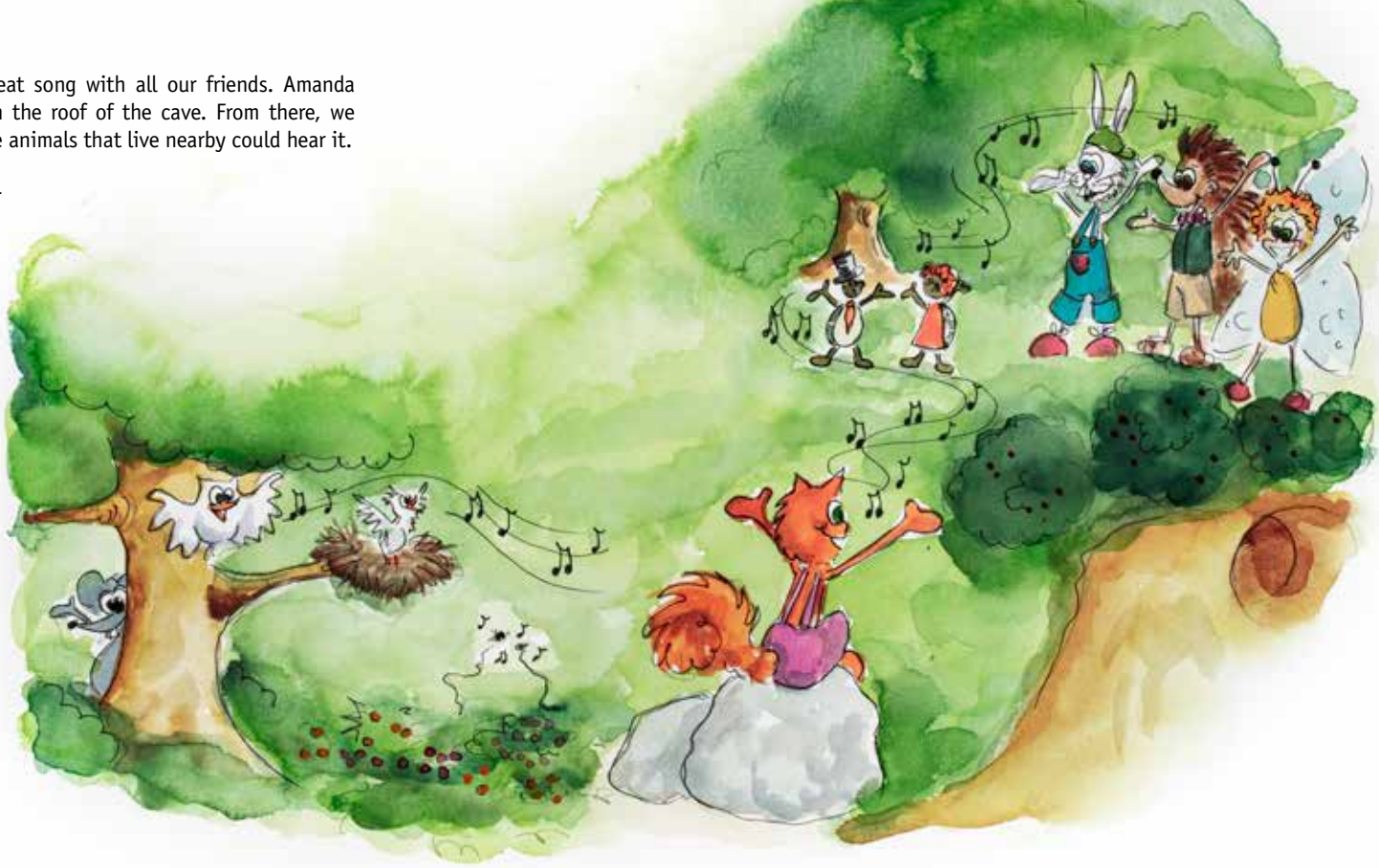


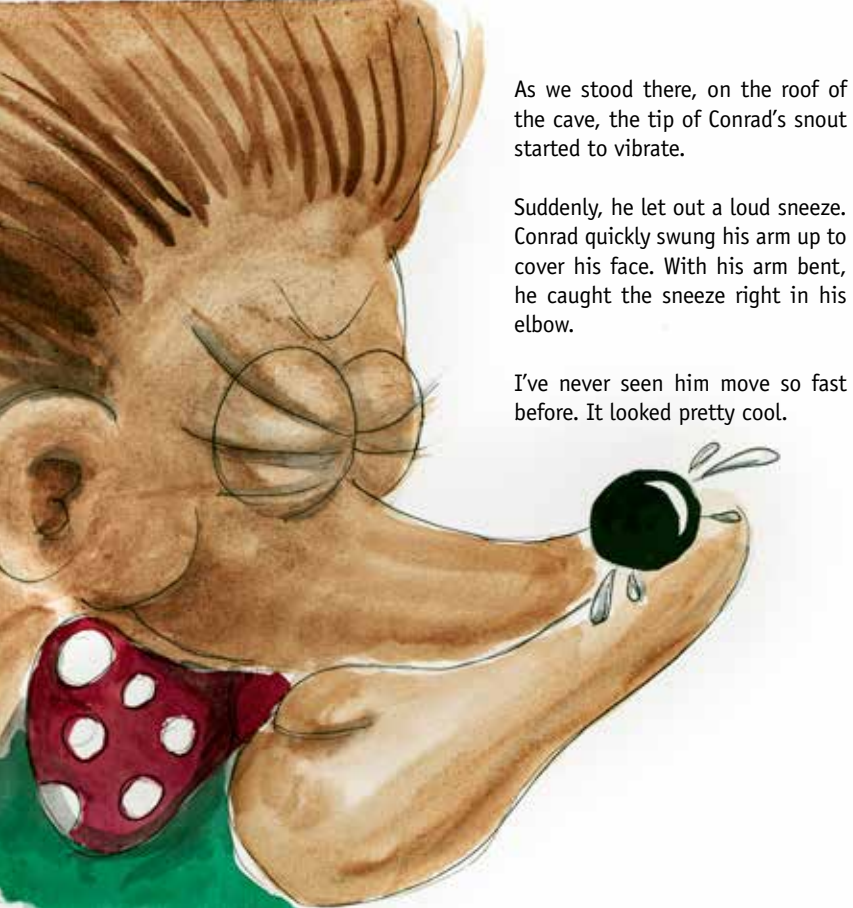
8. Wash and dry, wash and dry

We wanted to share this great song with all our friends. Amanda suggested that we go up on the roof of the cave. From there, we could sing the song so all the animals that live nearby could hear it.

It didn't take long before our neighbours peeked out and sang along. Their neighbours were also curious, and suddenly the whole forest seemed to be singing our hand-washing song.

It sounded absolutely fantastic, and it was great to unite over the song. Even at a distance.

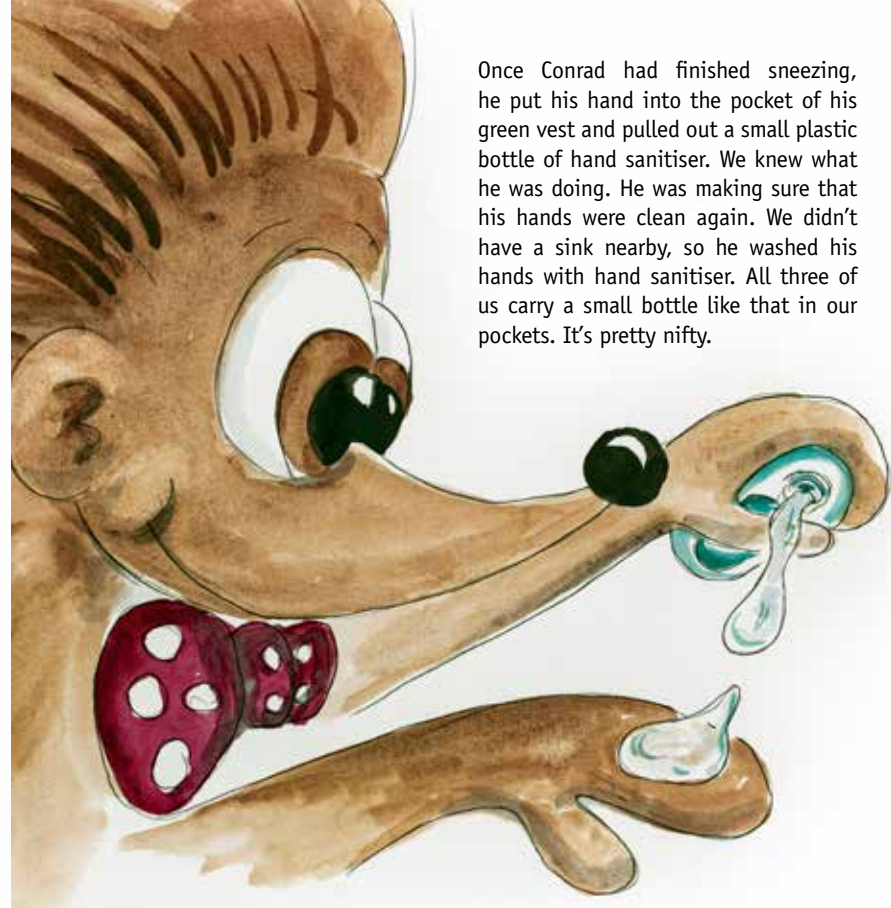




As we stood there, on the roof of the cave, the tip of Conrad's snout started to vibrate.

Suddenly, he let out a loud sneeze. Conrad quickly swung his arm up to cover his face. With his arm bent, he caught the sneeze right in his elbow.

I've never seen him move so fast before. It looked pretty cool.



Once Conrad had finished sneezing, he put his hand into the pocket of his green vest and pulled out a small plastic bottle of hand sanitiser. We knew what he was doing. He was making sure that his hands were clean again. We didn't have a sink nearby, so he washed his hands with hand sanitiser. All three of us carry a small bottle like that in our pockets. It's pretty nifty.



The sun had almost finished dancing its daily dance across the sky. Soon, the moon would appear and look after us. Amanda, Conrad and I sat inside the cave. I looked over at my red backpack. I missed my adventurous travels around the world. Amanda seemed to have read my mind.

From her favourite spot on the root in the ceiling, she said:

"Everything will be alright again, Milton. Even though it's a bit of a strange time right now, and a lot of things are not as they used to be, everything will be alright again."

The coronavirus will go away, and everyday life will go back to normal. Until then, we must remember to follow the good advice and take care of each other."

I looked at Conrad and Amanda and nodded, and I felt a nice feeling of security and warmth spread through my body.

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In 'Milton and the invisible coronavirus', Conrad, Amanda and Milton teach children some simple advice that we must follow to stop the naughty coronavirus from spreading.

The three friends agree that while it's a strange time right now, and a lot of things are not as they used to be, everything will be alright again. The coronavirus will go away, and everyday life will go back to normal.

Until then, we should follow the advice, take care of each other and help each other stay well.



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