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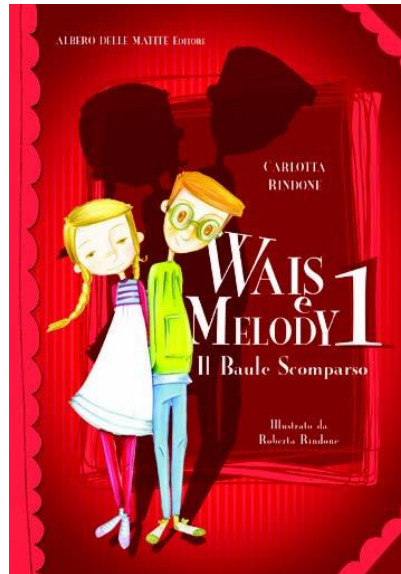
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Wais e Melody Carlotta Rindone Roberta Rindone

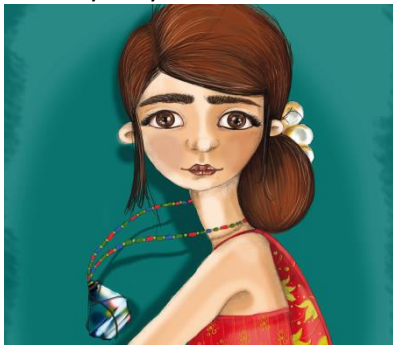
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Series of 6 titles of funny stories that also introduce to physics's laws and principles

Wais and Melody

The Wais and Melody series bring the secrets of physics to life for young people. One mystery to solve that unwinds over six volumes, where science becomes an adventure!

Wais' moving house to a quiet town called Newport, Melody's antique watch, a street lined with extravagant houses, a shop with a sign in the window reading "Here we sell things that do not exist", whose owner is never seen, all make the setting of the mystery in which Wais and Melody find themselves suddenly involved.



This mystery is linked to the finding of an object with extraordinary powers that will accompany them on their adventures to different countries and far off times. Thanks to their intelligence will they succeed in returning home with a

useful clue to solve the mystery. Through the adventures of Wais and Melody the young readers will discover the principles of physics that regulate natural phenomena of our today and they will also come to understand the importance of friendship, of respect and of knowledge.

Each volume is rich in illustrations and contains a "special content" section that explains to the reader the physical phenomenon to which the volume is dedicated and supplies the instruments to experiment also at home.



Carlotta Rindone a physics graduate, she's very passionate about spreading the knowledge of science to children. Other than writing novels she

founded the publishing house Albero delle matite in 2014.



Roberta Rindone an illustrator of children's picture books and novels, has already published for Albero delle matite and

other publishing houses. She is also the Art director at Albero delle matite and Geko's factory, as well as a comix and illustration instructor.



Wais e Melody 1 The disappearing chest

Wais' moving house to a quiet town called Newport, Melody's antique watch, a street lined with extravagant houses, a shop with a sign in the window reading "Here we sell things that do not exist", and whose owner is never seen, all make the setting of the mystery in which Wais and Melody find themselves suddenly involved.

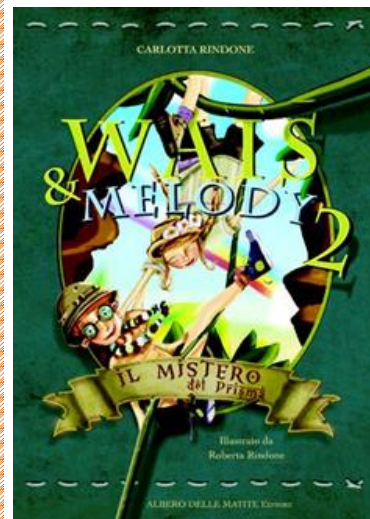
- Physic's law and principles: Universal gravitation



Wais e Melody 2 The Mystery of the Prism

Winter has arrived and Wais and Melody find themselves unexplainably on an island in the Indian Ocean in search of the treasure that is at the foot of the rainbow. Accompanying them on this adventure is Bulan, a girl that lives in a village near the paddy fields with her devoted monkey. Together, riding a wavedragon, they will follow the rainbow all the way to it's home to discover an unexpected but real treasure!

- Physic's law and principles: nature of light



Wais e Melody 3 Iron wings

A new magical adventure begins for Wais and Melody, which will take them on board an extremely original and futuristic vehicle. They will learn about ancient Greece, the magnetite mines on the island of Elba and will fly.

to the north pole where Caterina will meet an Italian researcher who will guide them to discover the spectacular northern aurora. All this in the company of the friend sphere and.... of Lara, the Wais dog, who this time did not want to know how to stay at home!

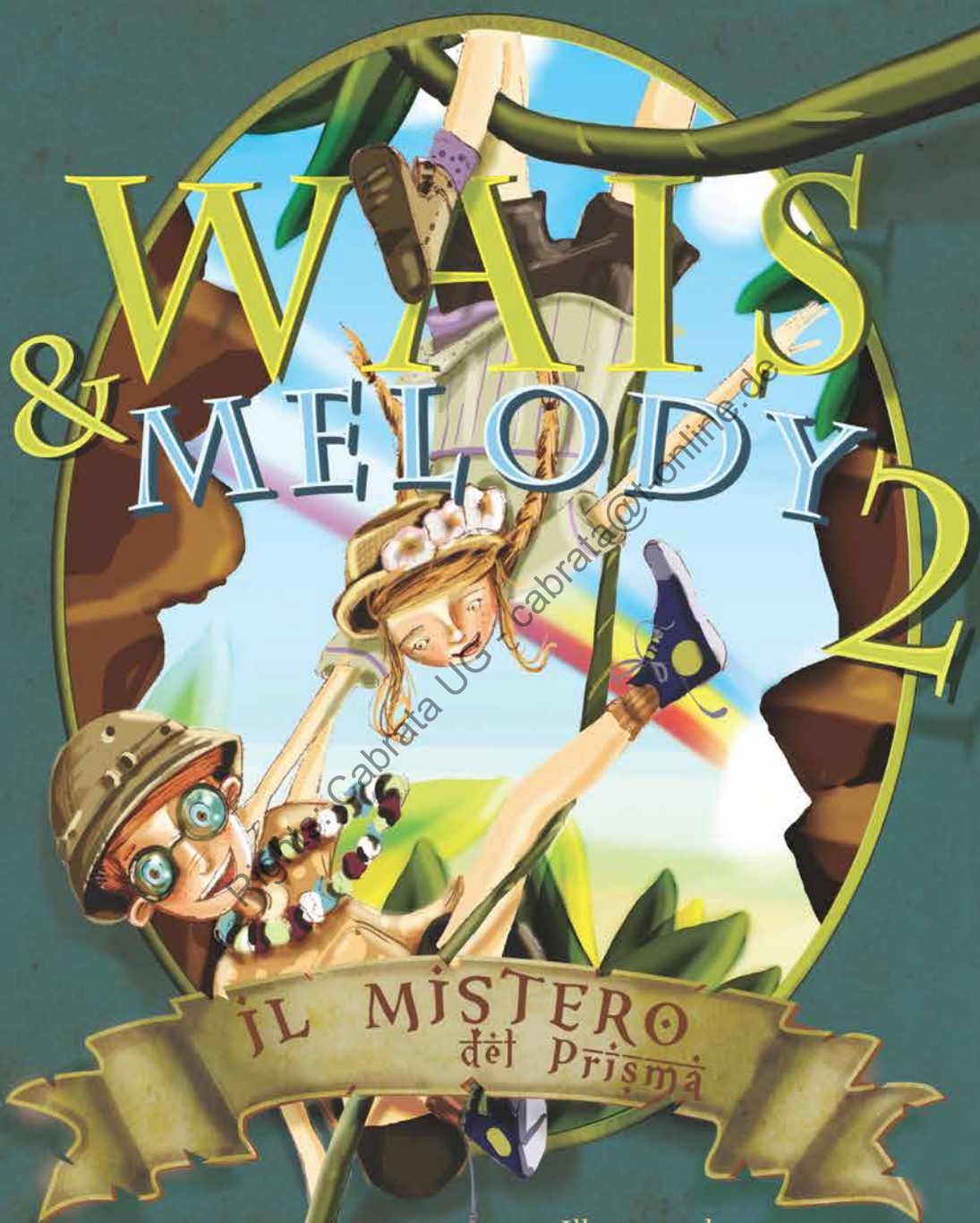
But how many tests will they have to face? And what clue will they bring home this time?

Mystery resolution is getting closer and closer!

- Physic's law and principles: magnetism



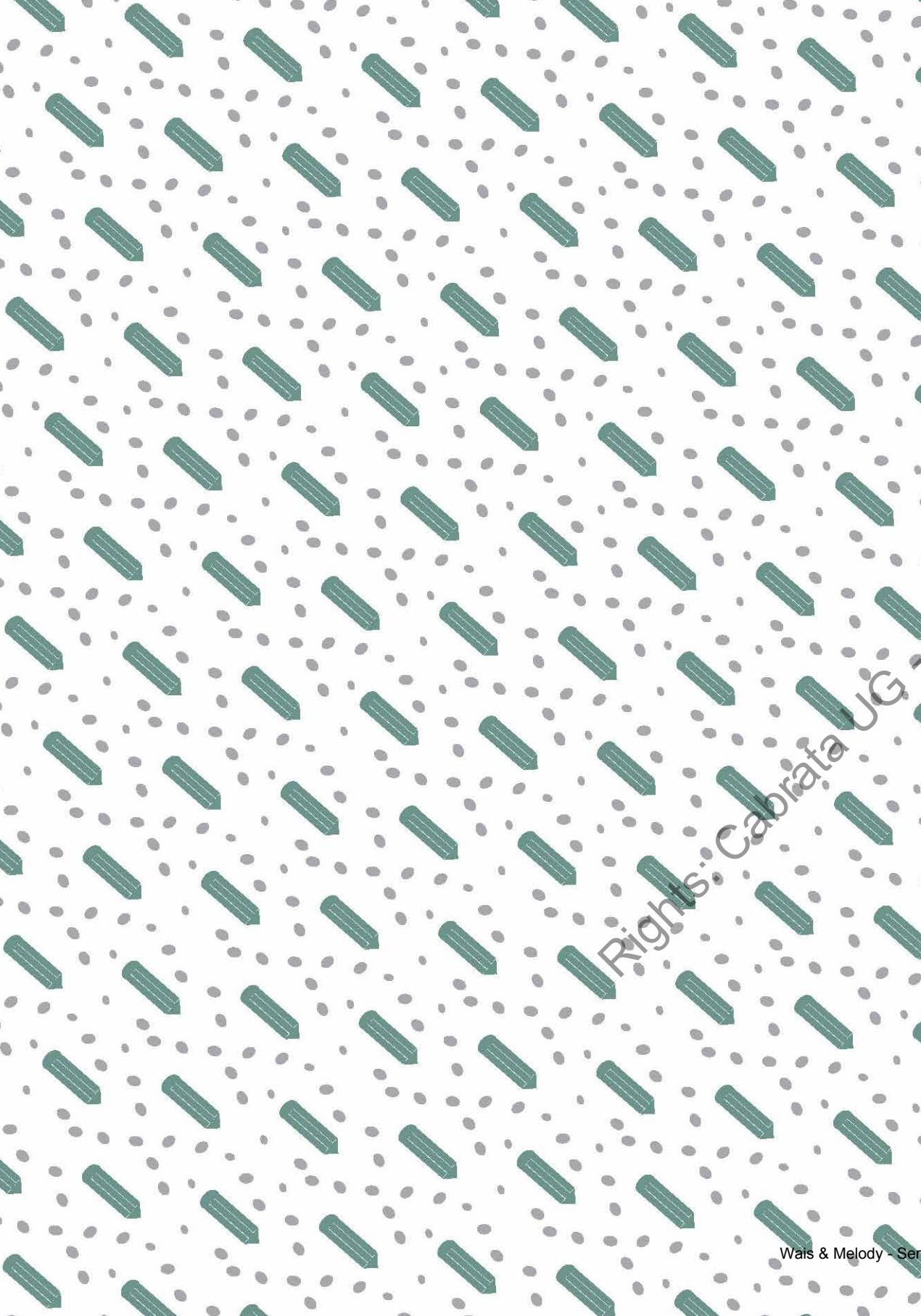
CARLOTTA RINDONE



Illustrato da
Roberta Rindone

Wais & Melody - Series - Vol. 2 - (Partial)

ALBERO DELLE MATITE EDITORE



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WAIS AND MELODY



CARLOTTA RINDONE

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& WAIS MELODY 2

The mistery of the prism

Wais e Melody 2
Il mistero del prisma
Carlotta Rindone

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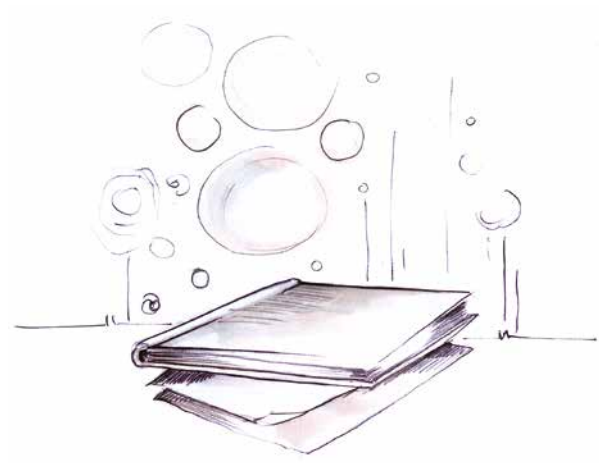
“Rare sono le persone che usano la mente,
poche coloro che usano il cuore,
e uniche coloro che usano entrambe”

R. Levi Montalcini
Premio Nobel per la medicina, 1986

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A QUICK UPDATE

Not much more than three months had passed since I moved to Newport, school had started and I had settled in without any problems. The teachers weren't so bad; the one for English, History and Geography was a creative type, she had travelled almost all over the world and during break she would often tell us about incredible places and people that she had met; the Maths and IT teacher managed to put everything into simple terms, at the start of every test she said: - Remember that there is a solution for every problem and often the simplest solution is the right one!

Useful advice especially for those, like me, who always did torturous workings out, even when they had the solu-

tion staring them right in the face. Then there was the Music teacher, very young and a great friend of Melody; I often saw them chatting in the school hall, who knows what they talked about!

The P.E. teacher was good but too strict, she had been high jump champion and no one was allowed to escape; we left her lessons exhausted. Lastly there were the teachers for Art, Drama, Technology and Languages.

Louis sat next to me on the table. I would define him as a calm boy, respectful of my half of the table, very focused during lessons; he always carried a book in his backpack that he pulled out to read at break time and there wasn't therefore any way we could chat for more than the classic exchange of words:

- You studied?
- Today is the test!
- It's cold today.
- The usual wise guy.

This last one was aimed towards Andrew, the wise guy of the class that always managed to get by even when he hadn't studied and he played on it greatly: he did nothing but talk about how sly he was and of all the stunts he did at school, like at home, to avoid being shouted at. Melody's class was on a lower floor to mine so we didn't get to see each other during the school day; we only saw each other in the mornings to walk to school and outside the gates when lessons finished for the day. We always started the trip back

home with a group of ten kids amongst them me, Melody and some friends. As we gradually got further and further away from school each turned down their different road until it was just Melody and me left and heading for Singleway.

There were days in which Melody hurried home and those were the days in which she had a special appointment on Skype.

- Are you hearing from your mum today?
- Yes, she's calling me in half an hour.
- Is she still in Africa or has she moved?
- She's still there, she'll be there until February and then she's coming home.
- She'll have a load of things to tell you, - I added.
- Yes, every time she comes home she has lots of stories to tell me and lots of photos to show me, we spend entire days talking.
- You'll also have lots of things to tell her, the new teachers, new classmates, - I continued.
- New friends, - concluded Melody, smiling.

Having arrived at the start of Singleway, we waved goodbye in front of the house with the clocks where Miss Beth was waiting for her, and I continued on. My house wasn't very far from the house with the clocks where Melody lived, five minutes by foot up a somewhat steep road and you couldn't miss it; it was easily recognisable from the blue front door that had as a doorbell a music box that played a strange tune; every time it played, Lara, who didn't like the odd

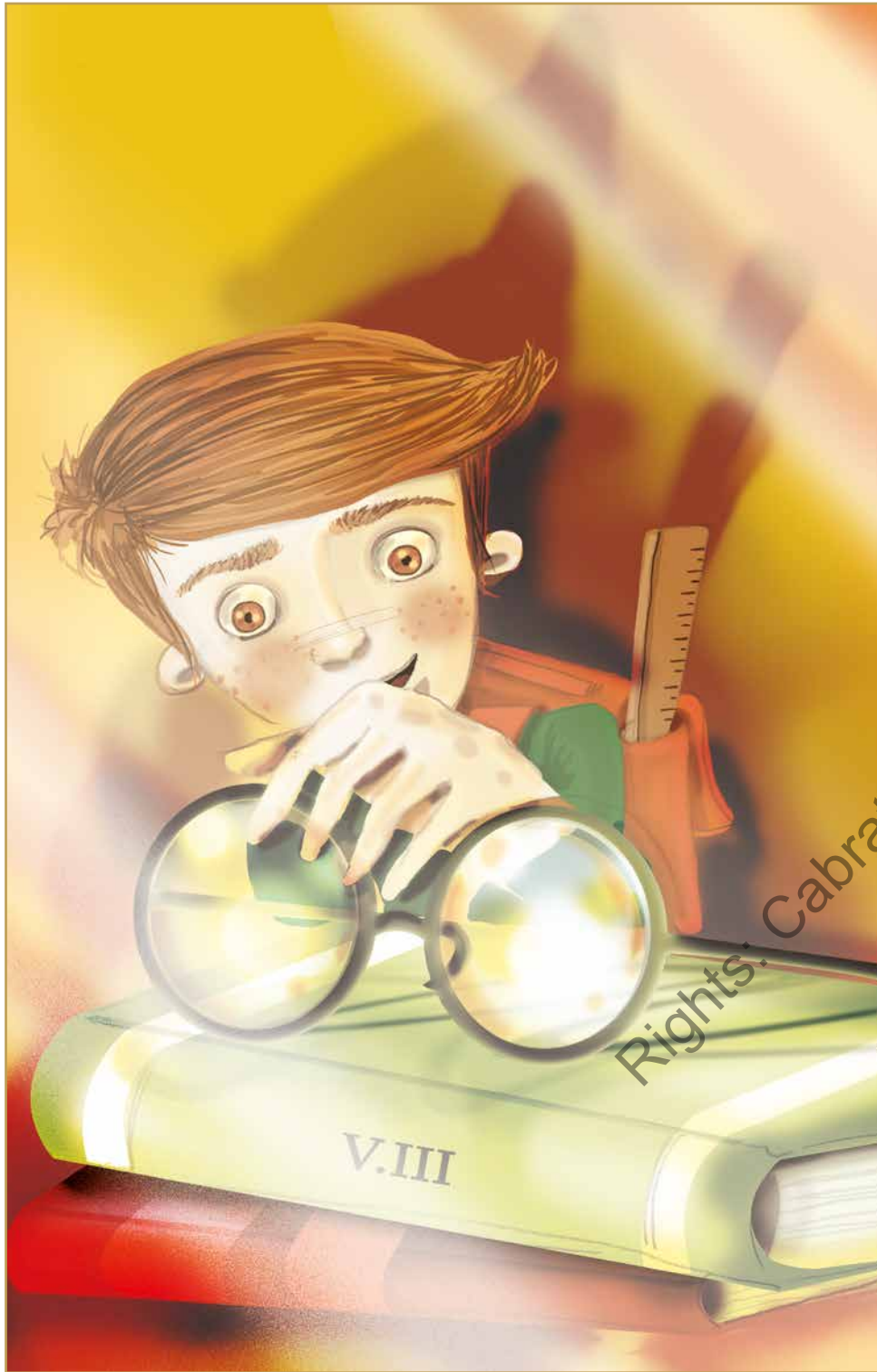
motif, barked and then escaped to her basket in the shade of a lemon tree. My mother dedicated much of her free time to tending to the garden, she liked plants and she was also very good at it, in just a few months she had created a little green paradise meticulously following the advice from Mr and Mrs Green, with whom she had quickly made friends, yet not forgetting to put her own touch on it, too.



My father had contributed to the garden furnishings, buying a very colourful and comfy hammock and a basketball hoop to challenge me to a game on Sundays, after having cooked delicious steak on his new barbecue!


At this point you may be wondering what happened to the sphere... she also settled in well... in my bedroom! Since that night in September she didn't show any more signs of life. She was there, on the shelf of the bookcase, like an ordinary metal sphere. The only interaction that we had was when I cleaned the dust off of her: she started to light up again in ever brighter colours and gradually her temperature rose until she became boiling hot, at which point I had to stop otherwise I would burn my fingers; Lara, however, growled at her every now and again, go figure what was going on in her mind!

I was about to forget the big news: an amazing new computer that's all mine! No longer do I have to use that old one of my dad's that takes a good half an hour just to turn on; I have a super-fast computer to help me with school projects, but also to download basketball games and apps for the programming of drones, how cool!



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Capitolo secondo

MAGIC REFLECTIONS

That morning winter had definitely arrived. After the alarm clock had sounded for the third time I decided to roll out of bed and, with my eyes still half-shut, I went to the window and opened it, a cold shiver ran through my body, I opened my eyes wide and shut the window immediately. I remained there, looking out at the panorama from behind the glass. The view had completely changed: the bare trees on the sides of the road had their branches decorated with little pearls of ice that reflected the few rays of sun that shone, creating a magical show of lights; the leaves of the evergreens were covered in a white fur coats, turning them into elegant women. The air was sharp and Lara didn't even want to hear about doing her usual mor-

ning outing, instead she was curled up lazily near my bed, groaning every time she was called. I left the house to go to school covered up from head to toe, like my mother had told me to do with a strict voice, but the effect wasn't what I was hoping for, I looked like I had stalactites attached to my hands, burnt cheeks and an iceberg for a nose; luckily, as I got closer to the house with the big clocks my nose defrosted thanks to the smell of Miss Beth's freshly baked honey biscuits.

- Hi Wais! – exclaimed a very energetic Melody, appearing at the front door.

- Hi Melody. Good morning Miss Beth!

Not even the cold deterred Melody's morning enthusiasm. I always thought it was all down to Miss Beth's sweet treats that Melody was always so full of beans in the morning, even in freezing temperatures and with the streets covered in ice. The days passed the same, basketball training three times a week for me, music and dance lessons for Melody, but from that evening of September something had changed and every day that went by left a sense of something unfinished! We tried not to think about it, but inevitably when we passed in front of the shop, that continued to hang the usual sign on the door: "Here we sell things that do not exist", our hearts accelerated, our legs stiffened and words escaped us, suspended in the air. That morning it was the ice that brought our words back to us...

Passing by the shop our attention was caught by a ray of

light that, reflected by a pearl of ice hanging off a tree branch, passed through the window of the shop and hit an object inside.

- Wais what is that? Do you see it too? – asked Melody.

- Of course I see it! But I don't know what it is.

We moved closer to the window with our hearts in our mouths. Now we saw it well: a spectacular rainbow actually there, inside the shop!

We stood there with our noses touching the glass until our breath fogged everything and so, our legs itching with curiosity, we entered.

- Wais, do you think at the foot of the rainbow we'd find treasure? – suggested Melody jokily.

- I don't doubt it, - I replied, sounding more convinced than I wanted.

Fascinated, we followed with our noses in the air the rainbow, without realising that in the meantime the shop was growing excessively: the ceiling had become so high it wasn't visible anymore and the shelves had shrunk almost disappearing completely from sight. The silence however, that yes, we realised straight away, you couldn't even hear the sounds of our footsteps; only the ticking of Melody's pendent, that always told the exact time, kept us company.

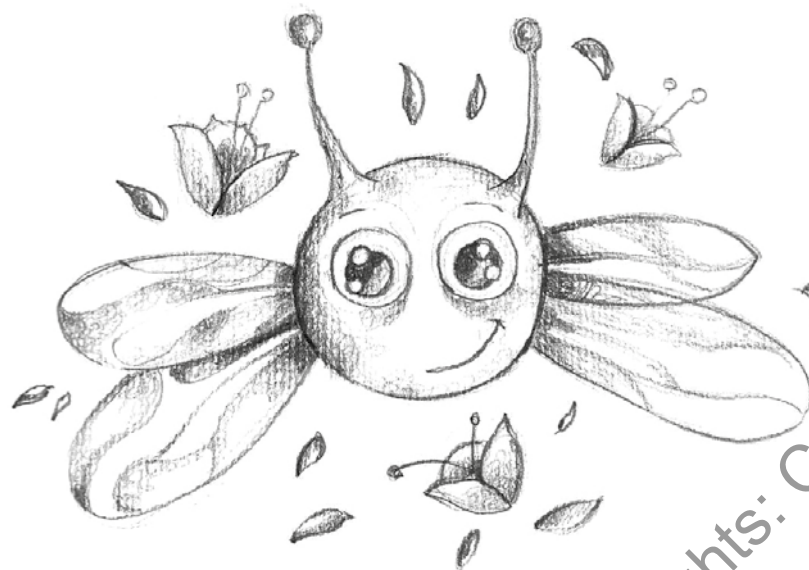
- Look how amazing it is, Wais, all the colours are there: purple, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red.

As we checked, still with our heads leaning back so we could see above us, that the colours were in fact all there,

I stumbled on an object and, grabbing hold of Melody, we found ourselves with a thud on the floor with our legs in the air.

- Wais! – Melody shouted, furious.
- What is she doing here! – I exclaimed, pointing at the object in question: the sphere!
- You never get tired of mocking us.

I didn't say it but I was happy to see our friend the sphere newly active and full of life, I had missed her bizarre company. The sphere, still the jester, started to fly from left to right, doing pirouettes and enjoying messing up our hair; only then did we realise the transformation of the shop and that Melody's watch had stopped after the arrival of the sphere.

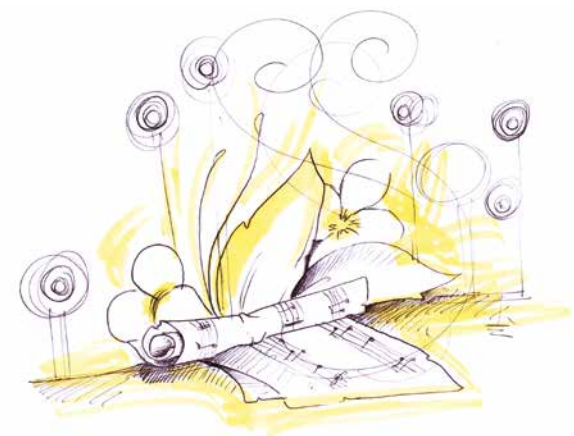



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Capitolo terzo

A CHEERFUL SOUNDTRACK

What had first been a shop was now an open space; it no longer had walls, above us a beautiful clear sky with just one or two clouds on the horizon. The ticking of Melody's clock had been substituted by very different music to what we usually listened to, it wasn't pop, it wasn't jazz or classical; it was a very rhythmic sound.

- It sounds like a mix between wind and percussion, - suggested Melody; my ear wasn't as trained as hers.

- An old, primitive sound, - she added, no doubt to amaze me even more!

We looked around; green, just green and even more green filled our eyes and a strong smell rose into our nostrils and into our lungs, making us feel stronger, a bit like Asterix and Obelix's magic potion!

Now, full of this new energy, we felt ready to face anything, but...

- Oh no, not this! Where have my hat, my hoodie and my gloves gone? – I exclaimed in disbelief.

Melody didn't seem as perturbed by the change of clothes: - It doesn't seem that bad, Wais, and you'll probably feel better without them.

Well yes, I hate to admit it but I can't easily, actually I can't at all, give up my hoodie. Our friend the sphere's magic had this time given us a pair of shorts, t-shirt, gilet and an absurd hat!

- I saw you laughing, you know?

She's the usual trickster! The rainbow continued to shine in front of us and that primitive sound didn't cease.

- I think it's coming from over there, - Melody pointed and we ventured along a little climbing road that made its way through the green. Walking along the lane, Melody gathered white flowers fallen from the neighbouring trees and in no time at all had made her hat decidedly more gracious; I, to not be out done, began to pick up leaves and little fruits, without a clue of what I could fashion from them! The music, that was getting closer and closer, made our walk more cheery; we were accompanied also by beautiful butter-

flies that fluttered from one flower to another on Melody's hat and, gradually, we moved forward, the green enhanced by the thousands of colours of the flowers. Every now and then we looked up to keep an eye on the rainbow.

- Don't worry, the rainbow is still in front of us, - repeated the sphere, anticipating us.

In the distance we spotted a roof.

- Look Wais, the music is coming from there.

What we saw was a very particular roof, not because of its black colour but for its shape.

- It looks like it wants to puncture the sky.

- True! – replied Melody. – I remember seeing something like this in a photo my mum took on one of her trips to Japan but it didn't have a point like this, isn't it brilliant! It didn't take us long to get to what we assumed was a dwelling.

The wall that surrounded the property was made of many little grey stone bricks, some of which were bigger and they looked like nice masks with big eyes, potato noses, long beards and nice smiles with teeth showing. A few, but high, steps introduced the arch way of the entrance, watched over by two stone statues, one on the right and one on the left, in the shape of elephants that seem to be having a lot of fun; on the top of the arch, through which you had to pass to enter, there was another one of the pretty faces that, along with the elephants, seemed to welcome us.

We look at each other without denying the unease we felt, but as usual the sphere didn't give us time to think; she

entered and we followed. Up the steps and quickly passing through the archway, we found ourselves in a big garden.

We were pleasantly surprised by the peacefulness that permeated the garden; frangipane trees were blossoming, their white scented flowers falling from them, as if they wanted to play with us, and palm trees were growing, whose roots protruded incredibly high out of the ground, as if they were about to run away at any moment.

The sphere pointed to a patio: that's where the music was coming from!



In the middle of the patio there was a man sitting on the floor with his legs crossed. He was wearing a type of sarong and a head scarf made from a very pretty and decorated cloth; he was happily playing an extraordinary instrument: it was brightly coloured and was composed of eleven halved bamboo canes placed horizontally, like the keys of a piano, which he was hitting with sticks.

- Wow! – exclaimed Melody, and the man turned to us with one of those smiles that you can't forget easily. Why? Because there are people who don't just smile with their mouth, but also with their eyes, with the lines of their face, with their hands and with all the pores that cover their skin; a true and complete smile greeted us.

But not just that, unfortunately... a monkey came silently out of nowhere and stole Melody's beautiful hat, running off and taking shelter in a tree to the right of the patio. It was a grey monkey, eyes close together, small and lively, and had a very funny hairstyle, almost punk-like with a big tuft of hair that went straight up off its head.

- Hey you mischievous monkey, give me back my hat! – Melody yelled as she ran after it but she didn't get very close, the monkey climbed another tree, holding the hat firmly in its paws.

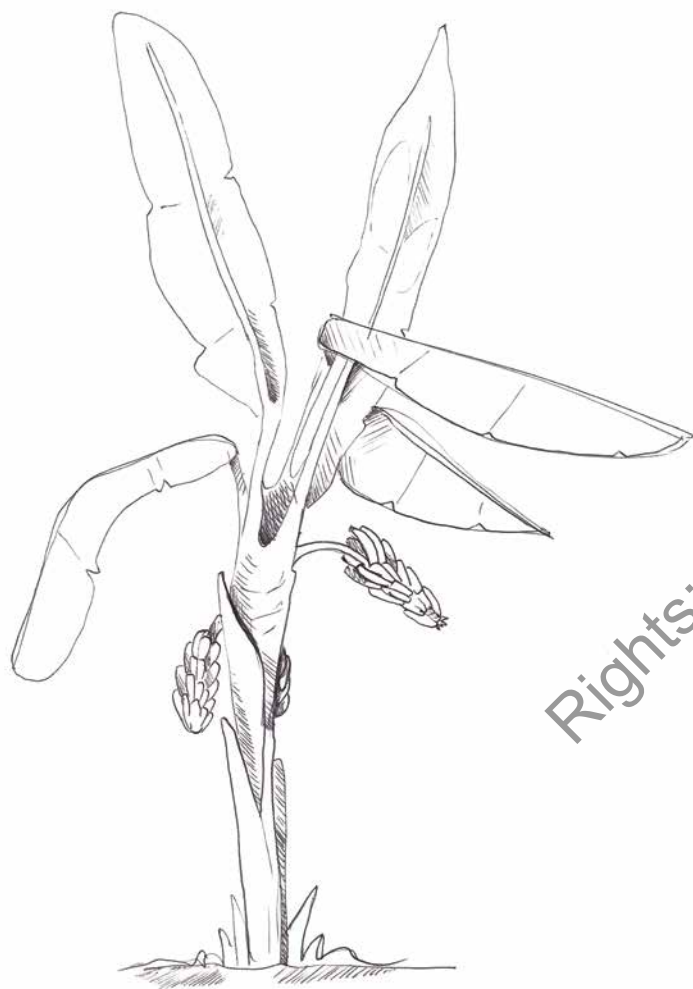
- You see, tying all those flowers to it made it too cute Melody, vanity's to blame!

- This is creativity, not vanity Wais, - she replied, amused. On another little patio behind us we spotted various bunches

of bananas hanging; they were different to what we were used to eating, they were much smaller! Melody picked one and moved towards the tree, probably the monkey's favourite, threw the bananas into the air and the monkey -eager to catch them- dropped the hat.

"Clever", I thought but didn't tell her, naturally.

- What's this? exclaimed Melody.



Together with the hat the monkey had thrown down a lined piece of paper that looked exactly like a sheet of music.

- I don't believe it! – continues Melody, eyes wide open and shining more brilliantly than ever. In the meantime, without us realising, distracted as we were with the mischievous monkey, the musician had stopped playing and had disappeared.

We moved over to the instrument, Melody sat in front of it, crossing her legs, and began to read the music score.

- Silence! – she ordered to the sphere and the monkey that were chasing each other noisily through the trees: the monkey was throwing the banana skins at the sphere, which in turn was trying to dodge them. Melody began to play the strange instrument, initially producing not the most harmonious of sounds, but it took only ten minutes for the sound to start to have a sense, until she was playing the exact tune that Mister Smile, as I had named him, had been playing. To the sound of that music the sphere, with her satisfied and seemingly friendly gaze, and the monkey, with more peaceful intentions probably thanks to the bananas, had come closer.

Suddenly I heard the sound of some footsteps, the rustling of leaves and snapping of twigs; someone, but more than one, was coming towards us. A wave of fear overcame me, I couldn't move an inch nor utter a syllable, my eyes

were as big as headlights, my arms rigid, stiff as branches, the only thing that kept me human was the beating of my heart that was making more noise than a brass band.

By now they were close, I could feel their presence behind me and I was petrified, and Melody? What was she doing still playing the instrument? And the monkey and the sphere? It was as if time hadn't passed at all. I couldn't believe it; my fear turned into anger, into lava I'd say, that started to melt my motionless arms and legs, that made me squint my eyes and clench my jaw, but when I was ready to shout, elegant and slender figures passed by me, unfazed by my presence, intoxicating me with a smell of vanilla. In a second my anger and fear vanished.

There was a group of twenty women organised into two lines, one passed on my right and the other on my left, wearing very colourful clothes and on their heads they were carrying small baskets in which fruit bulged in the shape of pyramids. They deposited their baskets at the foot of a stone statue that I hadn't seen until now; it was resting on a base covered with a lucid white and gold fabric and took the form of a woman sitting with her legs crossed, her head decorated with flowers.

A girl our age reached us, smiling broadly and, speaking our language, said to us: - Hi, I am Bulan, welcome to our temple.

- Hi, I am Melody and this is Wais, thanks for greeting us.

- Today is a very special day for us, it is the festival of the Earth, - she said, giving us an explanation of the ritual we had seen moments ago.


We felt a little awkward, we didn't know if they expected something from us or how we should behave. The sphere, that seemed in contrast to be completely at ease, flew in an elegant way that she had never shown us before and rested on Melody's hat; Bulan then gave Melody a small square basket made from green leaves weaved together. Melody, after hesitating slightly, took the flowers from her hat and put them in the basket, and then I remembered that along the path to the temple I had gathered fruit and leaves and I placed them into the basket, too. Bulan guided us to the statue where we placed our offering down then she said to us: - I noticed that you keep looking up at the rainbow, follow me. We left the temple and walked along a path with the sphere and the monkey following us. At the end of the path a breath-taking panorama appeared: we were on a cliff and in front of us the rainbow glimmered once more with its magnificent arc. The path carried on to our right along a walkway of a wall. This developed close to the cliff that was at least thirty meters high and the rainbow seemed to end right behind a curve in the wall, so we headed in that direction.

On the way, Bulan told us about how she passed her days, that she also liked music and playing outside with her friends; she explained to us that we were on an island in the Indian ocean where it rained often, but it wasn't cold like it was where we lived and that, towards the inside of the island, existed a volcano with a beautiful lake at its foot.



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Càpitòlò qùàrtò

THE FIRST ATTEMPT

We're here, - said Bulan – now I must return. I leave you this, you might find it helpful, - she concluded, giving us a bag, and so with a look she called the monkey that went with her back down the path.

- Well! Now what do we do? – exclaimed Melody.

We found ourselves at the end of the path and in front of us there was a locked door, naturally that was the only road that headed towards the rainbow.

- And on top of that, the end of the rainbow has moved again! – grumbled Melody. In fact, every time we thought that we had taken the right direction to reach the end of it, the rainbow appeared more frontally, causing us to change

direction.

I tried to force the door, but it didn't give any signs of surrendering; it was a beautiful wooden door decorated with painted blue flowers, mounted in thick walls made from light coloured stone, there wasn't a keyhole but two ring shaped door knockers. Looking at it closely, I noticed an iron wire that protruded from the door just below the right handle; I tried to push it, to turn it from left to right, but it didn't move. I moved back from it to look at the door, trying to look at the whole thing, a bit like you do when you look at a painting to capture its whole message, but even looking at it from a distance I didn't see anything.

I turned around and saw Melody, who was taking out objects from the bag that Bulan had left us and I moved closer to her.

-Look Wais, Bulan said that they would help us, what do you think? –asked Melody, pointing at a circle of white card and some colouring pencils that she had taken from the bag and placed onto the ground next to her.

-I wouldn't know.

I was so confused!

We remained in silence to look at the objects as if they would jump up and tell us what we had to do at any moment. I imagined the circle with its hardback voice, a bit creaky, say: - I am the beginning and the end,- and the 5 colouring pencils stood up and exclaimed in unison: - We are the cause, without us there wouldn't be a beginning or an end.

I felt Melody's wide-eyed gaze staring at me, and so I turned towards her and I understood that I hadn't imagined anything at all, it had actually happened: they had spoken!

Once again, like every time we passed by the shop, our legs went like jelly, our hands trembled, our mouths dropped open and our breathing stopped short; I thought of our friend the sphere to wake us up with one of her loud whistles that would round up a herd!

And she was laughing, obviously...Now the objects were motionless.

Disbelieving and dazed at what had just happened, we moved forward with caution, knowing that it was useless asking questions about how and why objects could come to life: when you had our sphere friend with you anything could happen!

- I am the beginning and the end, so we have to use it at the start and at the end, - I exclaimed, taking the circle-shaped card in my hands and inspecting it.

-Wais did you see that the coloured crayons correspond to the colours of the rainbow? – Melody added.

-You're right and look Melody, the card has a hole in the middle, before when it was on the floor I hadn't noticed that.

I stepped towards the door and, as I had foreseen, I managed to feed the disc onto the iron wire that was fixed under the knocker, while Melody followed me bringing with her the colouring pencils.

The sphere, tired of flying or maybe doing it on purpose,

rested on a branch that crossed over the wall. The sun's rays that passed through the trees created a show of shadows on the door and on the disc of card; in that moment the branch on which the sphere was resting also created a shadow, dividing the disc into seven uneven segments.

Melody, with her inspired manner, took the colours and, looking at the rainbow, began to colour in the seven segments, being careful not to step in front of the branch that projected the shadows onto the disc.

"We are the cause, without us there wouldn't be a beginning or an end", we repeated between us while we waited for the result of the colouring in that was fast but careful to not to neglect spaces or to go over the lines of the segments.

Time passed and a light breeze had risen, making the leaves and the lighter of the branches dance around us; Melody began to colour even faster and the sphere, that seemed to want to keep the branch on which she stood still, was motionless with her gaze fixed on Melody's hand that coloured and coloured. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and purple...

- Finished!

One look at the rainbow, one look at the disc of card now everything was coloured in...

I am the beginning and the end.

We are the cause, without us there wouldn't be a beginning or an end.

-Good, - I said –at the start we took the disc and we posi-

tioned it on the door, then we applied the colours that are the cause onto the disc and now in the end we're lead back to the disc...what do we have to do now?

- The reasoning isn't wrong, but at the end we changed the disc from what it was at the start to now with all the colours! It isn't white any more like before, - Melody added.

Had we perhaps ruined everything?

No, there was something eluding us and, looking at the coloured disc of card we looked for a solution to this puzzle. We started to look within to find inspiration that didn't come to us: shadows, lights, leaves, walls, branches, birds, butterflies, nothing more; so we concentrated to develop complex hypotheses that included improbable angles and implausible measurements. Our heads felt like they were about to explode, we were surely making everything more complicated than it actually was.

- The solution must be right under our noses, - said Melody. The sphere, that didn't want to stay on the branch any longer, came closer and tried to dissolve the tension by distracting us and flying from left to right, until she began doing pirouettes around the disc, first slowly then faster and faster that in that moment we couldn't distinguish her anymore; we saw only a contrail that spun around the disc like a vortex in the middle of the sea.

- Stand still! – Melody yelled, frightened and worried for the sphere; thus she slowly decelerated and, tired, rested on Melody's hat that she took and kept in her hands like

you do with a new-born puppy. Knowing that our friend the sphere always gave us good suggestions, I moved closer and tried turning the disc; basically it spun around the iron wire that made it pivot, but nothing happened, so, thinking again about the sphere, I pushed the edge of the disc harder and harder until Melody exulted: - Wais look!

I stepped back a few steps and, standing facing the front of the disc, I realised that it had turned white!

“I am the beginning and the end”

“We are the cause, without us there would be no beginning or end”

- Yesss! – I yelled, jumping with joy. The door slowly started to open, but didn't get very far because the disc slowed down until stopping, turning back to being colourful, at which point the door was immobile once more, but sufficiently open to let us pass through. I detached the disc from the iron wire and picked up the colouring pencils, putting them back into the bag and giving it to Melody.

- Fantastic, the mixing of all those colours gave life to just one colour: white! – said Melody.

- So, the start and the end were the colour white, composed in reality of all the colours! Cool!

We felt drunk from the discovery, we wanted to shout, run, dance and so we started to run, signing at the tops of our voices free from any embarrassment, to the descending steps that waited for us on the other side of the door.



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Câpitòlò qũĩntò

THE RICE FIELDS

Without realising, we were heading away from the coast, making our way deeper and deeper into the forest where we were surrounded by palm trees and tropical plants; the heat hit us and we began to feel very tired.

Descending along the path, we realised that on our right there was a view we had never seen before: the terrain, a vivid shade of green, eroded, forming vast terraces, one under the other.

They were like huge steps that accompanied the hill towards the valley where there were houses surrounded by palm trees. On these terraces brilliant green plants were growing that were covered by a velvety cloak. In addition

to being tired, we were thirsty and hungry so we decided to head down towards the village.

Next to the houses, under a big palm tree, there were many women that were making hats by weaving the leaves from the palms.



We walked towards them, but they didn't speak our language; one of them stood and entered one of the houses and returned with Bulan at her side.

What a relief to see a familiar face.

- There you are! I knew you would be able to do it. Come, you'll be thirsty.

Turning her back she headed towards the house. Bulan's house also had a wooden front door, decorated with pink and yellow painted flowers; we spotted straight away the first room, it was a big room covered by a straw roof, but it didn't have walls.

Entering, taking off our shoes and leaving them next to

the door, Bulan made us comfortable at a table where we sat on brightly coloured cloths.

She went away and then returned with two open pineapples, emptied and filled with their juice.

- Is this your house? – Melody asked her.

- Yes, I live here with my family and when I don't go to school I help them pick rice.

- Are those beautiful terraces rice fields? – I asked.

- Yes and for us it is a precious good, - added Bulan.

Moments after a woman from the village arrived, offering us two bowls of cooked rice. We thanked her, nodding and smiling, as we saw our new friend do. Now with full tummies we felt much better.

- Why are you here? – asked Bulan.

-We're looking for the end of the rainbow to reach the pot of treasure there, - I replied.

- I have never heard of there being treasure on our island. By the way, how did you get here?

- We actually don't know, we just suddenly found ourselves here on this island, - Melody replied, without giving any further explanation. In that moment the sphere, that had hidden inside Melody's hat, peeped out.

- Do you think you will be able to return home only after finding the treasure? – asked Bulan.

We nodded together, aware that even the time before we had managed to return home only after having resolved the enigma.

- What do you think this treasure is?

The question left us disorientated, we had ventured until now without thinking about the treasure, or about what could be waiting for us. What if we didn't manage to find it? What if there wasn't any treasure at all?

- I don't know, - Melody replied and I shrugged to confirm that I didn't know either.

-You'll see, it will be great treasure, if it has brought you to this point, it cannot be anything other than precious, - added Bulan.

When we left the house the sphere met the monkey with which it had made friends at the temple and they started to chase each other here and there among the palms and the courtyards that surrounded the village.

The sunlight had reduced a lot, it was becoming evening, and the sun was setting and looking at the sky we realised that the rainbow was no longer there.

- Oh no! We lost it; we didn't do it in time.

- I know a place where there is always a rainbow, perhaps it is its home. Tomorrow I will take you there, - Bulan proposed, - now let's think where you could spend the night. Bulan's family was really kind, leaving Bulan's room for Melody and made up a camp bed for me in the room in which we had just eaten.

As soon as our heads touched the pillows we fell into a deep sleep; even the sphere had fallen asleep at my feet just like my dog Lara does when I'm in Newport, perhaps she

wanted me to feel a bit more at home. The sun had just risen when I was woken by a loud and constant tapping; I had the feeling that it was someone using a pneumatic hammer for road works. When I realised I wasn't in Newport, I managed to distinguish the source of that noise: a bird seemed to want to knock the straw roof off the house. I got up and went out to the back with the sphere following behind me; I found a garden with a structure that looked like a shower in a corner: it consisted of a bamboo cane cut in half long ways and it came out of a wall horizontally. I turned a lever and water started to run along the cane, creating, where it finished, a little waterfall.

The bird had stopped pecking, the air was already hot and no one seemed to be around so I made the most of it and jumped under the recycled waterfall. The sphere dived into the cane and, like on a ride at a water park, she was dragged by the water to then be launched into the air, enjoying herself as usual! I lay down on a mat to dry off in the heat of the first rays of sun, accompanied by the surreal silence that reined over the village. Not long after, Melody came out to join me, making the most of the little waterfall herself and then lying in the sun with me. We remained in silence for a few minutes.

-Silence can give you great company sometimes, don't you think Wais? – observed Melody.

- True, - replied Bulan who had arrived without making any sound, bringing us two freshly squeezed fruit juices.

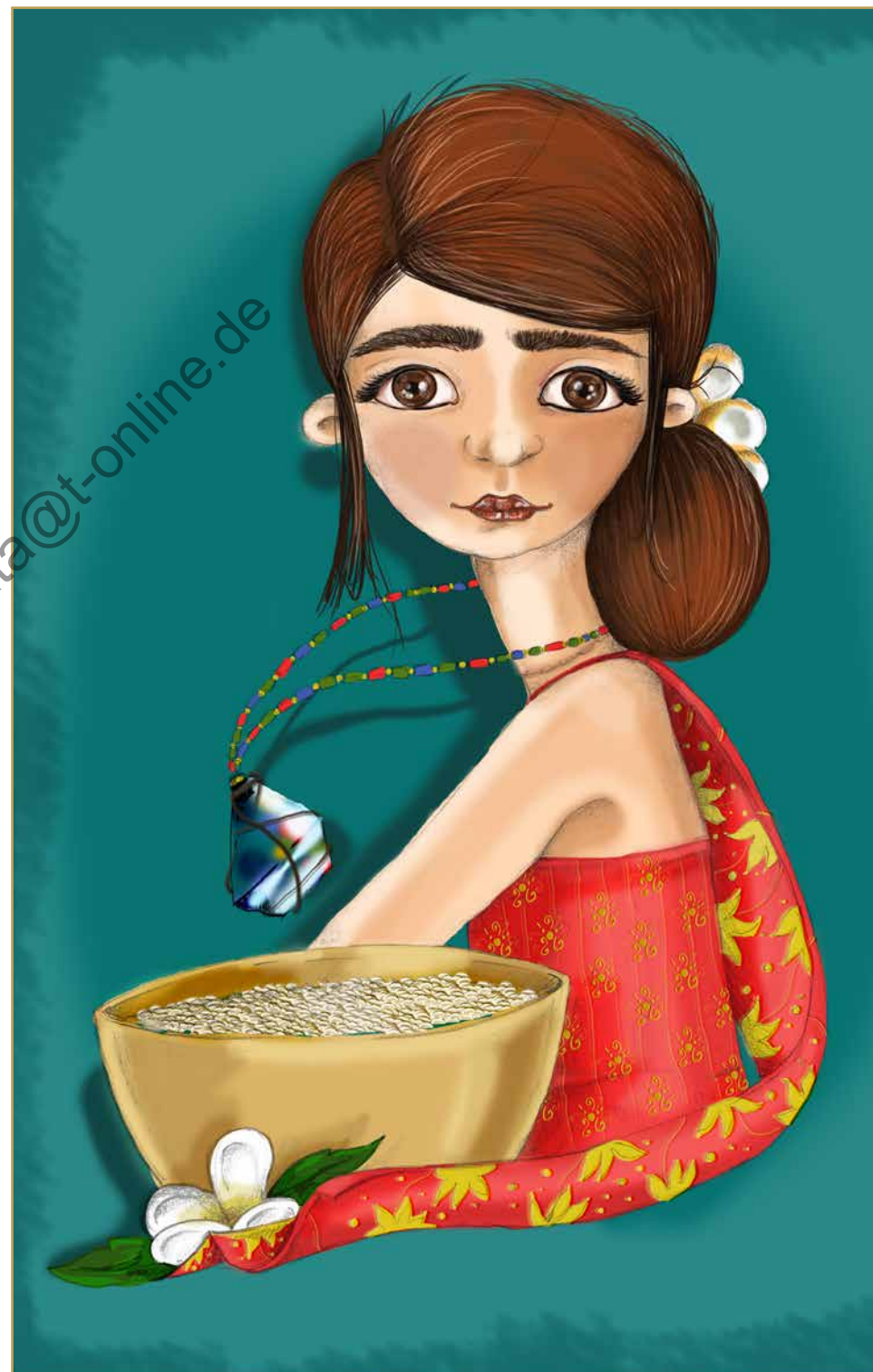
She sat next to us and perhaps being restored by sleep I saw her clearly for the first time: she had an oval face, great big nut-brown eyes that were always smiling and full of light, she was slender but filled the space with such strength that she seemed to have a lioness on her side; that morning she was dressed in a red and gold dress, her black hair was pulled back and decorated with frangipane flowers and round her neck she wore a necklace made from coloured wooden pearls that had a glass jewel in the middle.

- Bulan, yesterday you talked of the home of the rainbow, - Melody reminded her.

- Yes that's right. I believe it is his house because there is always a rainbow there. It's not far, but it's not very easy to get to it, but if it is so important to you two to find the rainbow I will be happy to take you.


-Thank you Bulan, I don't think we will be able to get home without first finding the treasure.

- Well then, let's go, - she replied.



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Căpitolo șeștô

THE WAVEDRAGON

We passed by the kitchen first to pick up some provisions that Bulan put in a backpack, then we said our goodbyes and crossed the village that in the meantime had become much louder. The little monkey followed us and Bulan told us that he hardly ever left her side, much like the sphere with us.

All the children were in the street and some of them were carrying floral offerings to the village temple, some women were already under the trees and weaving palm leaves and the men with their hats were heading towards the rice fields.

We climbed the path that crossed the rice fields, to our left and right were stretches of green that left you breathless. The sphere began to fly across these rows of green plan-

ts, making them wave in the breeze she created as she flew and, as if they were being stroked by the light breeze, they started to dip and rise, creating a sea of green waves, until all of the rice plants on all the terraces surrounding us started to wave in unison, in perfect synchronicity and so we could feel the incredible energy like that of an unchained sea in a storm. The energy made from this movement became stronger and stronger and this green sea became one big wave that overwhelmed us, lifting us up into the air. Melody, Bulan and I found ourselves riding a green wave that propelled us in only one direction, it seemed to us to be a dragon that didn't breathe fire but that advanced through the wavy rice fields, sinuously, in a constant rhythm without harsh movements and this allowed us to stay steady without falling, even if I began to feel slightly sea sick. Suddenly I had the feeling that the earth was moving away from underneath us more and more.

- Wais, hold on tight we're taking off! – said Melody amused, as if we were at a theme park.

- What?!

Essentially, the earth was either falling away from our feet or we were being lifted up off it, everything is relative but I asked worriedly: - Does anyone have a fear of heights?

-No, - Melody and Bulan replied in chorus.

As soon as we were ten meters high off the ground, the wave motors of the wavedragon started to change, waving even more insistently: it felt as if we were on a roller-coaster

where the rises and dips were becoming more frequent while the wavedragon was transforming into... a wavechameleon! Indeed, the wave was changing colour, gradually waving up and down faster and faster, its colour moved from green to blue and purple to end with. Suddenly the waving slowed down and the wavechameleon changed colour once more. When it turned blue we felt like we were on a real wave from the ocean suspended in the air, we could feel its freshness and its salty smell, then it turned green and we were once more on the back of the wavedragon. Riding, we were travelling away from the rice fields and now we could spot the tops of the trees that climbed the slopes beneath us. The wavedragon continued to slow down its wave motors, becoming now a yellow wave; in addition we were losing height and coming closer back to the ground and after having once again slowed down to a frequency to which we rose and dipped, the wave turned red.

At this point we were low enough to pass through the trees with palm tree trunks and tropical plants that bloomed around us, while frightened birds took flight and made a great racket. The forest was getting ever denser and we struggled to wind our way through the trees!

- I fear that sooner or later we'll hit a tree trunk.

- Let's jump down and continue on foot, we're no longer that high up, - Melody replied.

- On the count of three, - I said – one, two, three...

We jumped.

Just in time, the wave disappeared between the tangles of branches of a tall tree.

- Wow, what a journey! – exclaimed Melody.

-I'd never ridden a wavedragon before, I hadn't even ever dreamt it, - I said.

- Plus that changing from one colour to another depending on the frequency of the wave was truly wonderful, - Bulan added.

- Bulan, are we still going the right way? – Melody asked.

- Yes, we have to continue in that direction, going up a bit more, and we will arrive at the rainbow's house, - she replied.

- Where's your sphere? – Bulan asked after a little while.

- Good question!

We looked around but she wasn't there.

- I haven't seen her since we were on the wavedragon.

- I don't think we should worry, - Melody added, - she can manage better than us.

Yet her assertion didn't make me feel better.

Bulan muttered a – but... - deliberating whether she could proceed or not, then she summoned up the courage and proceeded: - She is very strange your sphere, she isn't an animal or an object; things like this don't exist in my village. Are there many of them where you live?

- Honestly...

I didn't know what to say in response, we had promised ourselves that we wouldn't reveal to anyone what had hap-

pened months before.

- I think we can tell her, - Melody intervened, looking at me to check, I nodded. Bulan was a girl like us, raised with good principles, she didn't know what cruelty was or better, she knew what it was but didn't let it consume her; she was also neither fake or jealous which some of our classmates showed signs of being, she was courageous in the sense that she had that strength of character, or fortitude, that helped her to overcome the fear of facing difficult situations and she had already demonstrated it, she had come away from home to help us find the treasure at the foot of the rainbow.

Melody began to tell her everything.

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