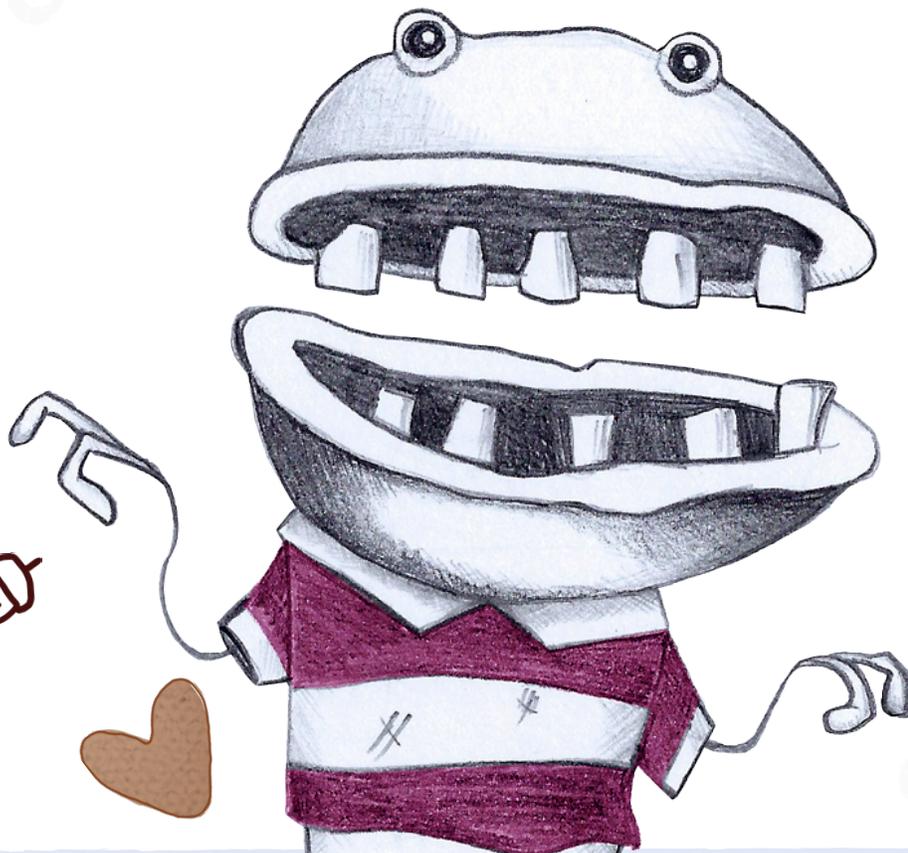


Brigitte Lavoie

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?



When she was born, she was perfect. Everybody was sooooo excited! Wow! Look at her! She is so beautiful! Look at her little fingers! Wow! And her little feet!

Nobody was like her! You could even make a big raspberry on her little belly and she would giggle and giggle. Just like that. What could be more perfect? No need to do anything else to make everyone sooooo happy!

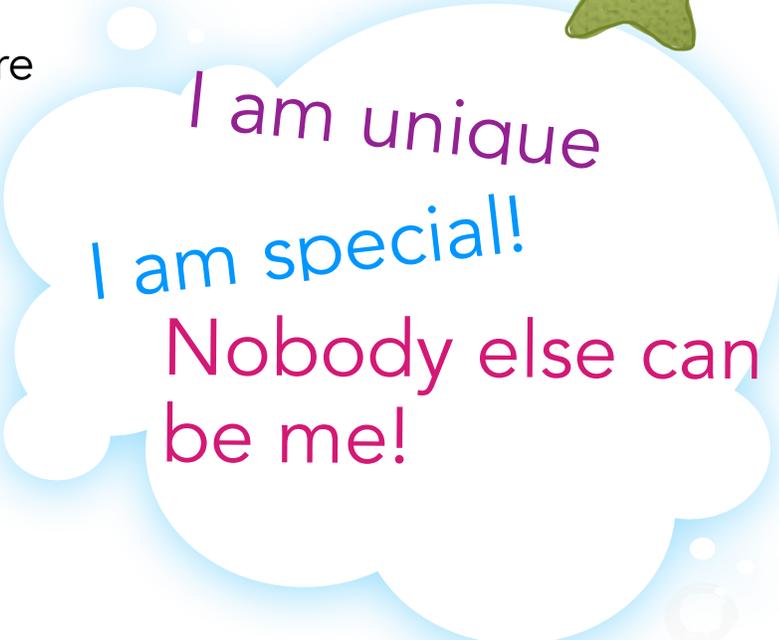
And she started to grow and learn new things. These new things had no words, because she didn't know any, but that didn't stop her from learning them anyway. (Maybe it was even easier because the words didn't get in the way.) And she grew bigger and bigger and bigger!



One day, she stood up on her little feet, and everybody was so impressed that she could do that without words - just with cheers. Actually, that was her favorite game. She would walk, and people would applaud. She would fall on her little bum and she would clap too. That was another thing she knew.

Everybody seemed to be as happy with the falling as they were with the walking.

And then she had her first thoughts. Her first thoughts were good: *I am important. I am special. I am unique. No one else is like me. Nobody else can be me.* Grownups even told her that she was so unique that her fingerprints (those tiny little lines on her fingers) were like no one else's.



I am unique
I am special!
Nobody else can be me!

The world had 7,839,911,784 people in it. That is a looooot of people. And no one else had the same finger prints. She was quite happy with that, because with so many people in the world, it was a good thing to help you remember for sure who you were.

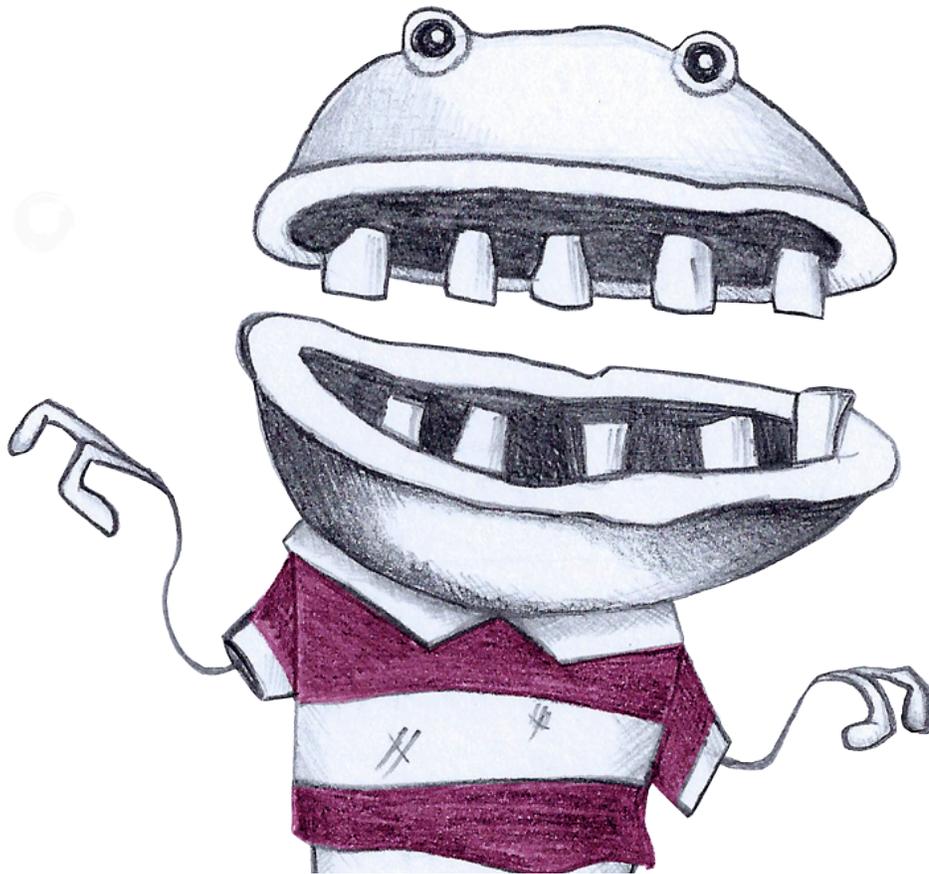


She started to have dreams. She hoped to do things. She wanted to have a bike. She wished to go to birthday parties and have friends over. Some of those things were already happening. Some were fast dreams- you just needed to ask. But for others you had to learn. She didn't like to wait so much, but she decided to be

patient for the big dreams, like riding a bike without training wheels.

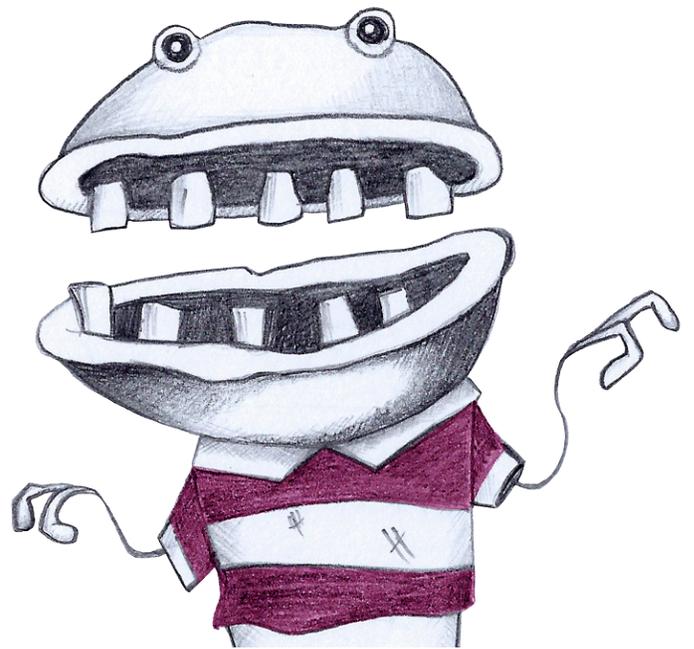


But one night, the Second-Thoughts Monster arrived, just like that, without an invitation (which is often the case with monsters- it's not like birthday parties, where you absolutely need an invitation). It was at her door, and she could only see its shadow, and it said : "Who do you think you are?" When she saw it, it had big teeth, and googly eyes, and it stank. But the worst part of it was its voice.



She would put her hands on her ears, but its voice would get through: "Who do you think you are? Who do you think you are to believe that you are special, and you can make those dreams come true? You will never be able to ride a bike without training wheels. Don't kid yourself- don't even try. It's your imagination that makes you think you are unique."

The monster started to sleep on her floor, every night. And the little girl stopped doing things. After all, who did she think she was believing she could jump higher and speak louder? What was the point of riding her bike if she could never take the training wheels off anyway?



And then the monster started to sleep in her bed, and she had to spend the night on her floor, shivering, because she was only left with her baby blanket.

And then one morning something happened. We don't know exactly what. Maybe she grew in the middle of the night without noticing. After all, this is how growing happens most of the time. She woke up and realized the monster was still in her bed. She felt stronger inside and that made her curious.

She walked to the bed and she looked at it. It didn't look so scary. She realized it was sucking its thumb while it was sleeping. How can that be scary? A giggle came from her belly, like it used to.

The giggle grew louder and woke the monster up. It was startled when it saw her. It's never good for a monster to be taken by surprise (never good for the monster, that is). It seemed not so big, and its voice was not as convincing when it said, "Who do you think you are to wake me up like that?"

The little girl's fists found their way to her hips. She stood steady when she decided to answer its question for the first time:

I am _____

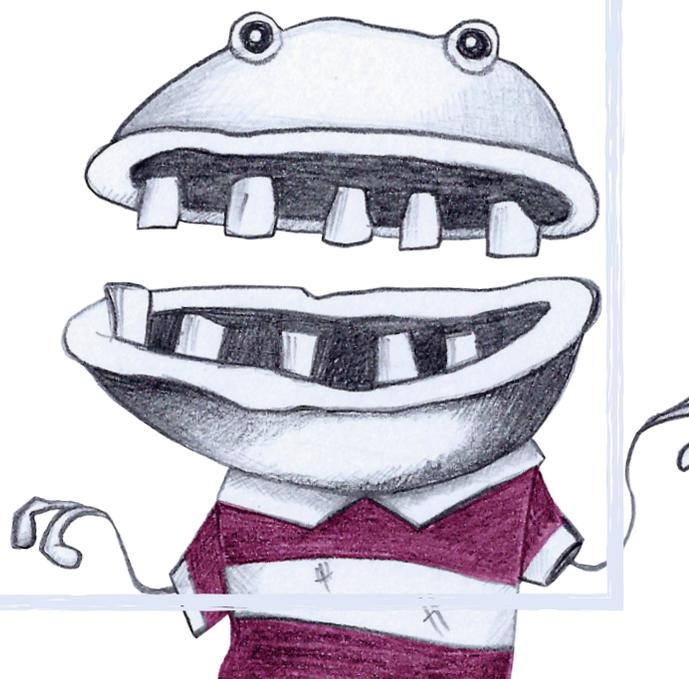
I come from _____

And nobody can be me!

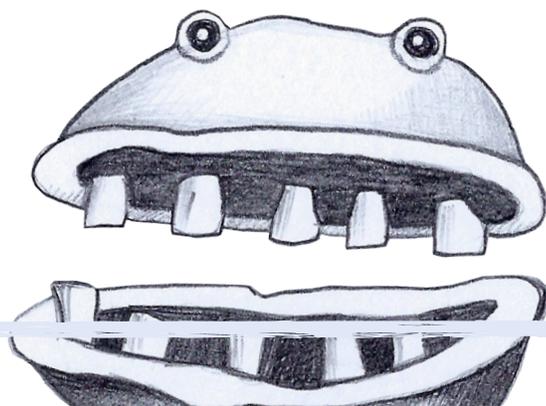
And she added, "I live in this house, this is my room, and **YOU WILL GET OUT OF MY BED RIGHT NOW!!**"

After standing up for herself, she felt her heart pounding, and her hands were shaking, and that is when the book started to wiggle too. And with all that shaking, the monster fell out of her bed with a big bang, and that made the book shake some more. That's when she had an idea, and she started to shake the book with all her might. Can you help the little girl shake the book and see what happens?

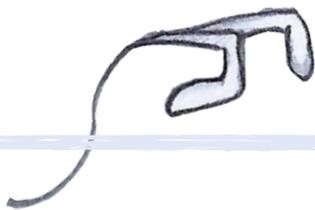
Shake the book and look! The monster's feet are sliding off the page!



Shake it! Shake it! Yes! Look! It's working! The monster is falling off these pages. We can only see its head! Shake the book to get rid of the monster. Shake it some more...



Now we can only see its fingers holding on to the page. The little girl collected her strength one more time. She dared to lift up one of the monster's fingers, so it would fall out of the book for good.



But what she saw was even better, and a big smile grew on her face. The monster had NO finger prints! It was not unique. It was not special. It was not even real. What a humongous imagination she had that she could create such a powerful monster. What else could she make with that enormous talent of hers? That could just be the beginning of it!

That's when she decided to imagine that the monster would **not** fall out of her book. She had something better for it.



She closed her eyes to imagine it wearing a red dress with pink polka-dots and a big pink hat, and flying away attached to pink balloons. You get that pink is her favourite colour, but that is not even the best part.

The best part was that the monster would not be able to put its hands over its ears (because it would be holding the balloons) and it would have to put up with the sound of her giggles as it got smaller and smaller.

THE END

Questions for discussion:

Sometimes, a story is just a story. These questions should not spoil the moment of reading together. But if they spark a fun discussion, you can use them.

- Did you know that nobody is like you (in the whole universe?)
- What is unique about you?
- What are your dreams?
- * Even if you have a twin, and you look alike on the outside, that doesn't mean you are the same inside. What is different?
- Do you have a monster? How would you like to dress up your monster so it isn't scary? Let's imagine we also can also change its voice (change the voice so what it says sounds ridiculous).
- Do you want to tell your monster to get out of your house, like the little girl did? Who could help you with that? Do they know they can help?