

A Noise at the Door!





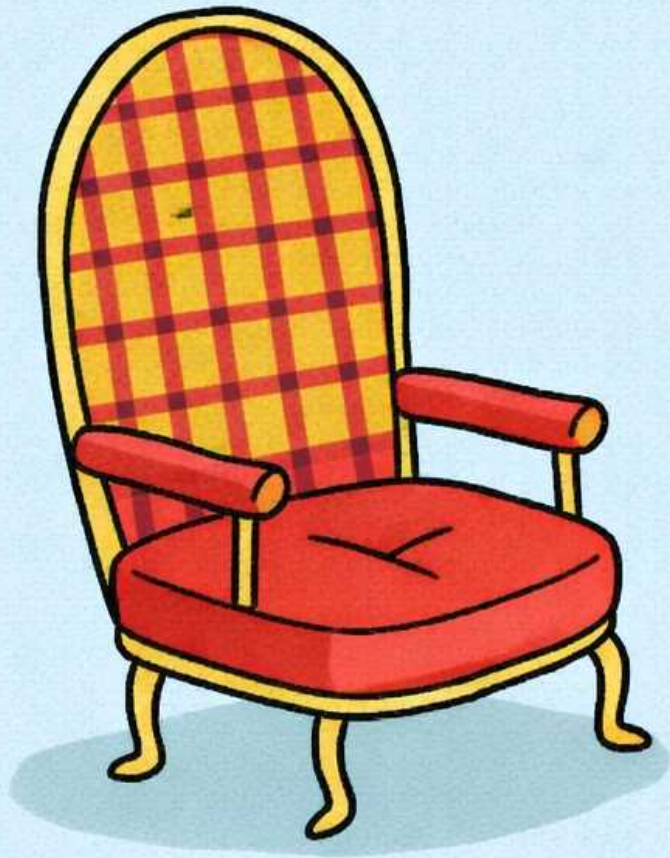
Pa told the best bedtime stories in the world. Better than books. Better than shows. Better than all of them put together. Every night, it was the same **routine**. Pa sat on my bed with his big red mug of hot drink. Every night I said, 'Tell me a story, Pa.' And every night, Pa did.

Tonight, Pa leaned in so close I could smell the hot drink on his breath.

'Tonight,' he whispered, 'I will tell **you** about a girl made of air.' 'A girl made of air?' I said. 'That is not real. That is a tall tale.' Pa smiled.

That smile was always the **cue** that something big was coming. '**You** tell me at the end,' he said.





The girl made of air had no face **you** could see. No name **you** could shout. She could sit right next to **you** in a big red chair and **you** would never know she was there. The only **clue?** A tiny dip in the seat. But who checks a seat? Nobody. That is who. She was there. She was just... air.

When it rained, **you** could almost spot the girl made of air. The drops curved and bounced around a shape that was not quite there, like water sliding off something **you** could not see. She just stood still on the wet path, hoping a **few** people would stop. But people walked right past. They were too busy with their umbrellas to see a girl made of nothing but air.





Snow was better.

Snowflakes landed on her head and body and stayed, so she looked like a girl made of snow. A **few** children stopped. They pointed. They whispered, 'Do **you** see that?' The girl made of air held very, very still. She did not want them to look away.

One morning, the girl made of air did something brave. She walked right into a classroom, sat down at a desk, and picked up a green crayon. A boy just a **few** seats away screamed so loud the teacher dropped her mug. Because from where the boy sat, a green crayon was drawing a wobbly shape all by itself. No hand. No arm. Nothing.





'Please do not be scared,' said a voice from the empty chair. 'I just wanted to draw.' The boy stared. Then he whispered, 'Can I paint your face? So I can see **you?**' The girl made of air held perfectly still. The boy dipped his brush in bright yellow paint and, very carefully, gave her two eyes and a smile.

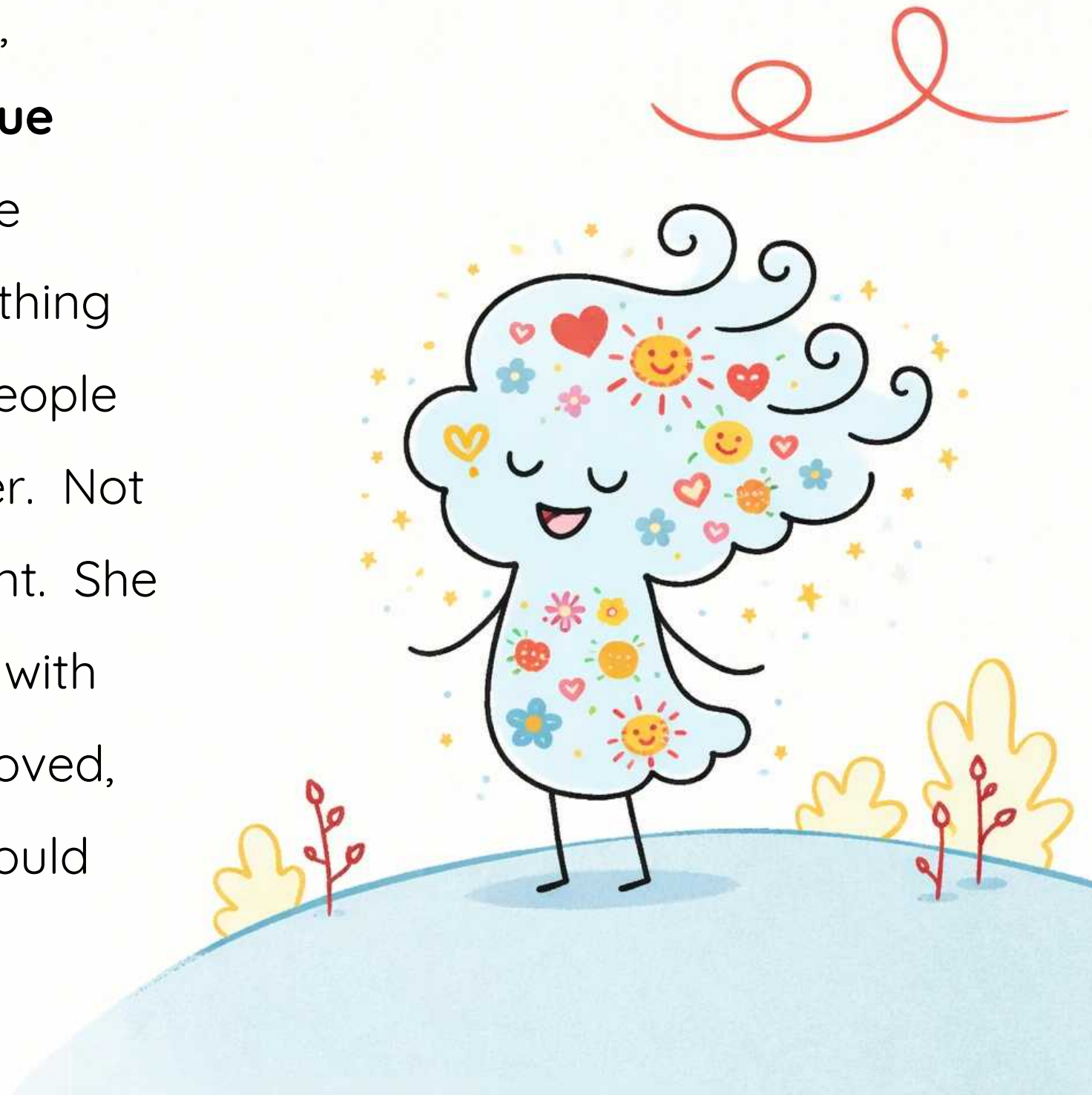
'More!' said the girl made of air. 'Paint my hair full of things I love!' So the boy painted a heart. A star. A fat cat that seemed to **mew**. Music notes that almost seemed to hum. And a bunch of cherries on top, just because. 'How do I look?' she asked. The boy grinned. 'Like a song.'





After that, the girl made of air painted herself every single morning. Hearts on her arms. Stars on her fingers. Bright footprints all along the path she walked, so the world could follow her trail. She **continued** to paint, day after day. She was not hiding now. She was letting the world know she was there.

She stood on a hill,
bright with every **hue**
and every thing she
valued. Then something
grand happened. People
could finally see her. Not
because of the paint. She
had **fueled** herself with
all the things she loved,
and now no one could
miss her.





Pa went quiet. He sipped the last of his hot drink and looked at me. 'So?' he said. 'Tall tale? Or **true?**' I pulled the blanket up to my nose. A girl made of real air? That can not be. That is just silly. 'Made up,' I said. 'All made up.' Pa smiled and kissed my head. 'I love **you.**'

Pa turned off the lamp. He walked out. He closed the door. And then, very slowly, the door creaked back open. Light spilled in from the hall. But nobody came. No one was there to **rescue** me. I pulled the blanket right up to my chin. Don't open that door. Don't open that door. DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR.





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A Noise at the Door!

A girl made of air sits beside you, invisible, unseen, and unheard. Only a tiny dip in a cushion gives her away. Could she ever get someone to truly see her? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 115: Alternate Long U (ew, eu, ue /yū/; ou /ū/)), this book practices words like 'clue', 'rescue', 'routine', 'valued', 'true'.

Phonics Focus: Alternate Long U (ew/eu/ue/ou)

clue, continued, cue, few, fueled, hue, mew, rescue, routine, true, valued, you

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