

Rose and the Strange Gate



All summer, Rose and her flock graze on the high hill. The grass is sweet and green.

But summer ends. Time to go home! Rose can see the farm down the hill.

Then she stops. A new gate sits in the fence. A little gate. And Rose is **large**.



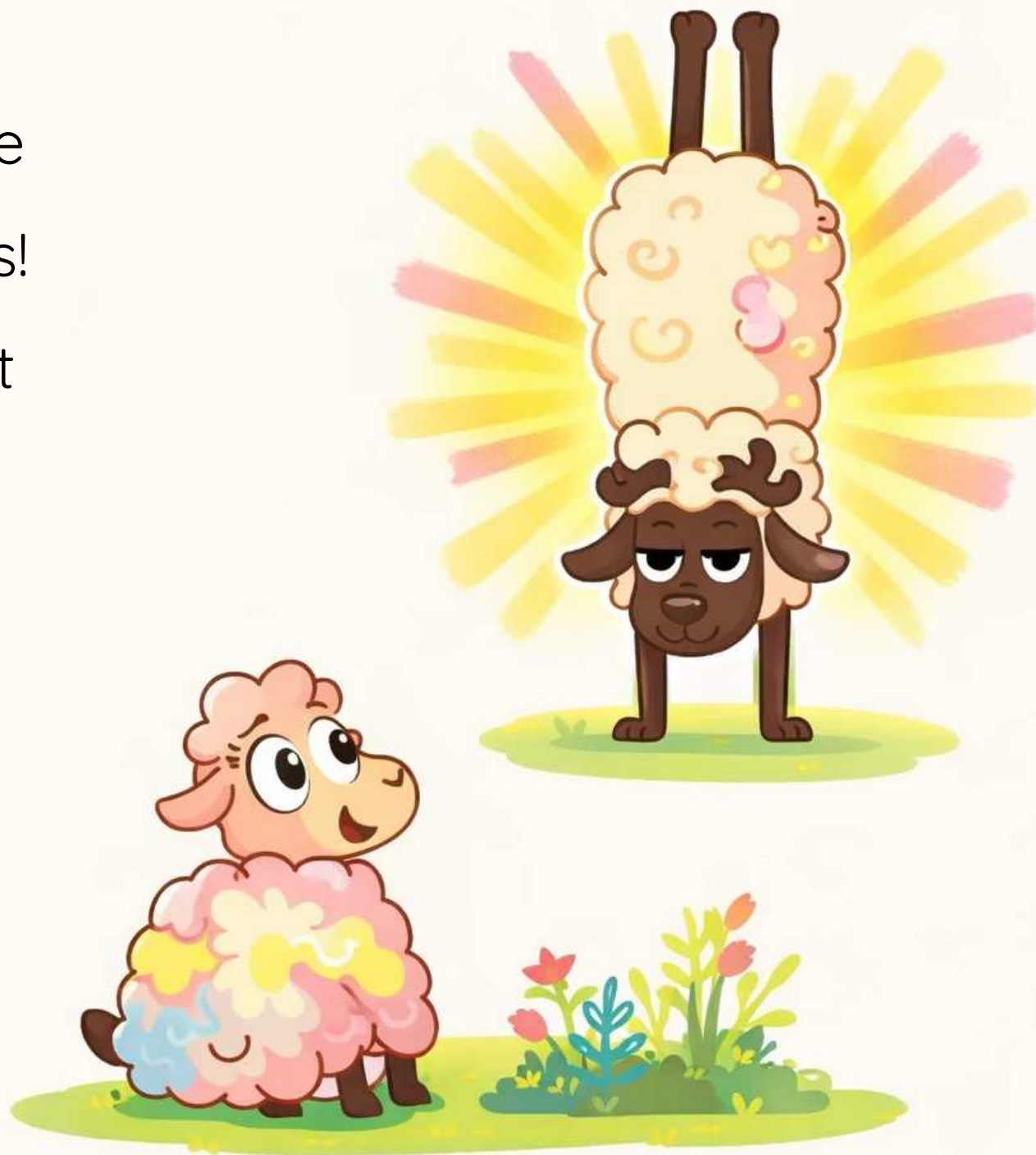


'Go on, Rose! Just slip past!' calls a sheep behind her. Rose tries. She really tries. The other sheep **surge** and bump at her back, and Rose jams tight in the gate. She can not go on. She can not go back. 'Stop!' Rose yells. 'That squishes my face!'

A little sheep comes over. She stands upside down on her front legs! 'Rose, I know just what to do,' she says.

'Stretch! It gives me **energy**. Look at me. I slip past that gate.'

Rose blinks. 'Does it help?' she asks.





'Trust me,' says the stretch sheep, and she rolls out a mat. 'Sit. Stretch. Breathe. Do it all day, Rose, and just see the **change.**' Rose sits on the mat. She stretches her front legs. She stretches her back legs. She tries to breathe, but her nose just makes a loud hiss. 'Nice,' says the stretch sheep. 'Sort of.'



The summer sun beats down. It is so hot it can **singe** her wool. Rose bends and stretches on her mat, day after day. She points her hooves at the sky. She twists into odd shapes. The other sheep look away. But Rose keeps on. If this gets her home, she will stretch till her wool falls off!



Rose stretches all week. Her legs are stiff. Her back is sore. Her nose still makes that loud hiss. She steps up to the gate, turns sideways, and sucks in her tummy. Nope! Not even close. No **change** at all. Rose is the same size, and so is the gate. She lets out a long, tired sigh.



'Rose! That stretch will not help,' calls a thin sheep up on the slope, jogging on the spot. 'Try running! It gives me **energy**. I run all day, rain or shine. Look, slim as a stick!' The thin sheep does a quick lap to show it, kicking up dust. Rose looks at the gate. Then at her own big, round, woolly body. She sighs so long it bends the grass.





But Rose runs. Up the hill she **charges**, then back down, all day long. The heat hits her hard, and her legs go weak. After one week, Rose limps up to the gate on shaky legs. Same gate. Same Rose. Same size. She flops in the grass. 'I think,' she pants, 'that all this help is not much help at all.'

Rose drags herself to the pond for a drink. Then she spots a sheep floating past on her back, feet up, looking very pleased. 'Swim!' the sheep calls, kicking along. 'That is the trick! Jump in, swim all day, and get slim. Like **magic!**' '**Magic?**' says Rose. 'For sure,' says the swimmer. 'Well. I think so.'





Rose does not wait to hear more. She backs up three steps and **plunges** into the pond with a **huge** splash. It sends a frog flying! If swimming is the plan, Rose will swim harder than any sheep ever has.

Rose swims all week. She floats on her back in the gold sunset light, and a little bird sits up on her leg like a captain on a woolly ship. It is so nice. Cool pond, soft light, and no one telling her to stretch or run. But one thing is true: Rose is just as big as before. Three plans, three weeks, and no **change** yet.





Rose steps out from the pond, dripping wet. She stands still and looks up the hill at that gate.

Then she gasps. 'Wait,' she whispers. Then, 'Wait!' A big grin lights up her face. 'I do not need to **change**. The gate needs to **change!**'

Rose packs her red bag. In go a hammer, a rope, many nails, and all her tools. She **charges** up that hill with the bag on her back. She has a plan: wood to cut, rope to tie, and one silly little gate to fix!





That night, Rose lies curled up in the soft hay. Her pals snore all round her. Her legs are tired. Her hooves are sore. Wood dust still sticks in her wool. But she is home. For the first time in three weeks, Rose drifts off with a **huge** smile.

'Rose is in!' the sheep cry
the next day, all crowding
close. 'How? This is so
strange! Stretching did not
help. Running did not help.
Swimming did not help!
They bump and bash,
hopping up on each other
to get a look. Rose just
sits there, still as can be,
with hay stuck to her ear.





'I am fit and I am well,' says Rose, sitting tall. 'The stretch was nice. The run was hard. The swim was fun. But I am still big.' She stops, and all the sheep lean in. 'So I put down the mat, picked up my tools, and fixed the gate to fit me!' They turn and look. There it is: a **large** new gate, wide and strong, with neat new **hinges** and fresh timber. It fits any sheep. Even a **huge** one like Rose!



Rose and the Strange Gate

Rose the sheep is stuck fast in the farm's new gate, and no matter how hard she squeezes, she cannot get through. One sheep says stretching is the answer, another swears by running, and a third insists on swimming, but will any of them help Rose get home before summer ends? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 3: soft g as in giant), this book practices words like 'change', 'large', 'huge', 'magic', 'strange'.

Phonics Focus: <soft> <g>

change, charges, energy, hinges, huge, large, magic, plunges, singe, strange, surge

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