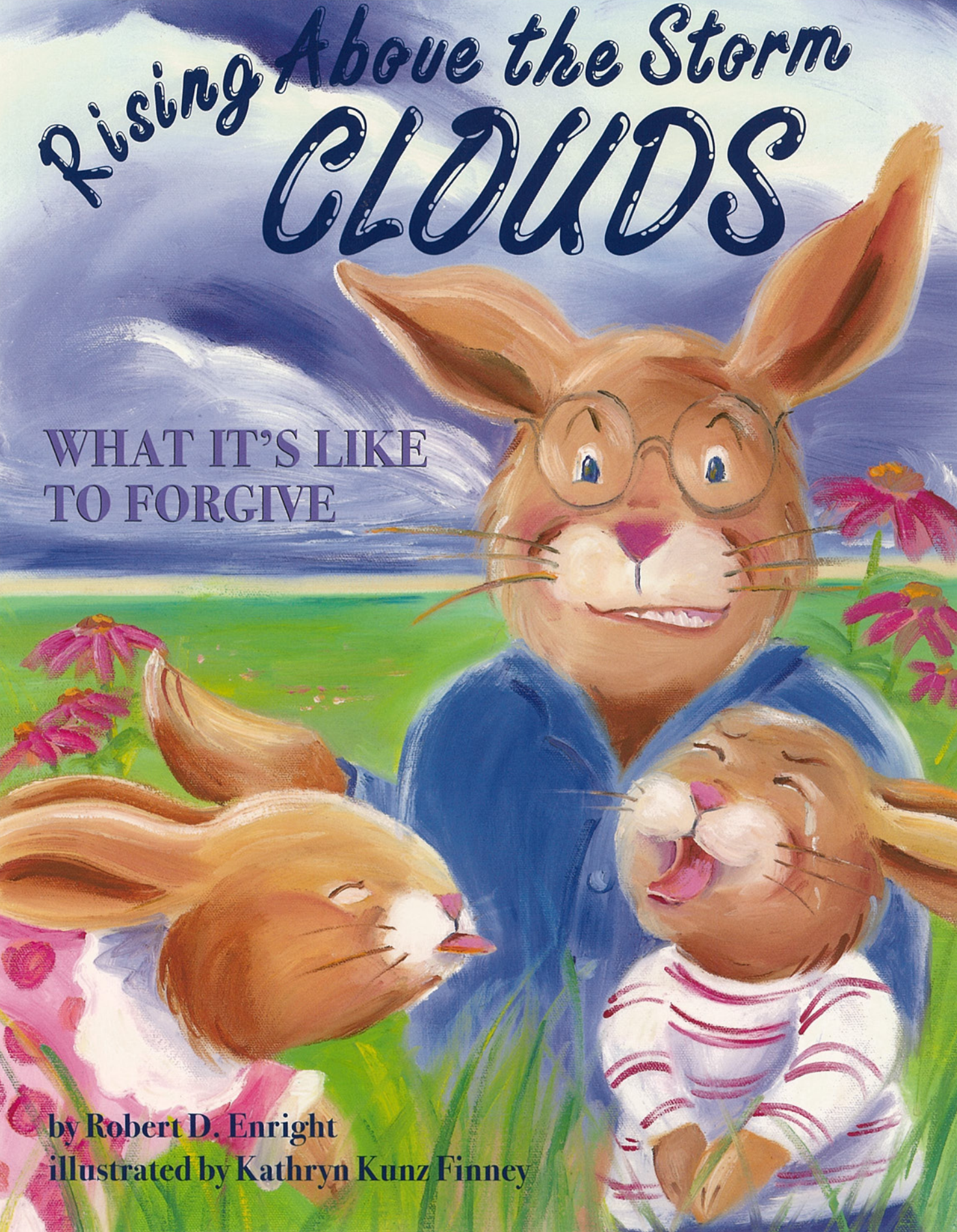


# *Rising Above the Storm* **CLOUDS**

WHAT IT'S LIKE  
TO FORGIVE



by Robert D. Enright  
illustrated by Kathryn Kunz Finney





*Rising Above  
the Storm Clouds*

*For Shawn, Anna, Kevin, Maria, and all the children — RDE*

*For Patti, who constantly forgives — KKF*

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# *Rising Above the Storm Clouds*

WHAT IT'S LIKE  
TO FORGIVE

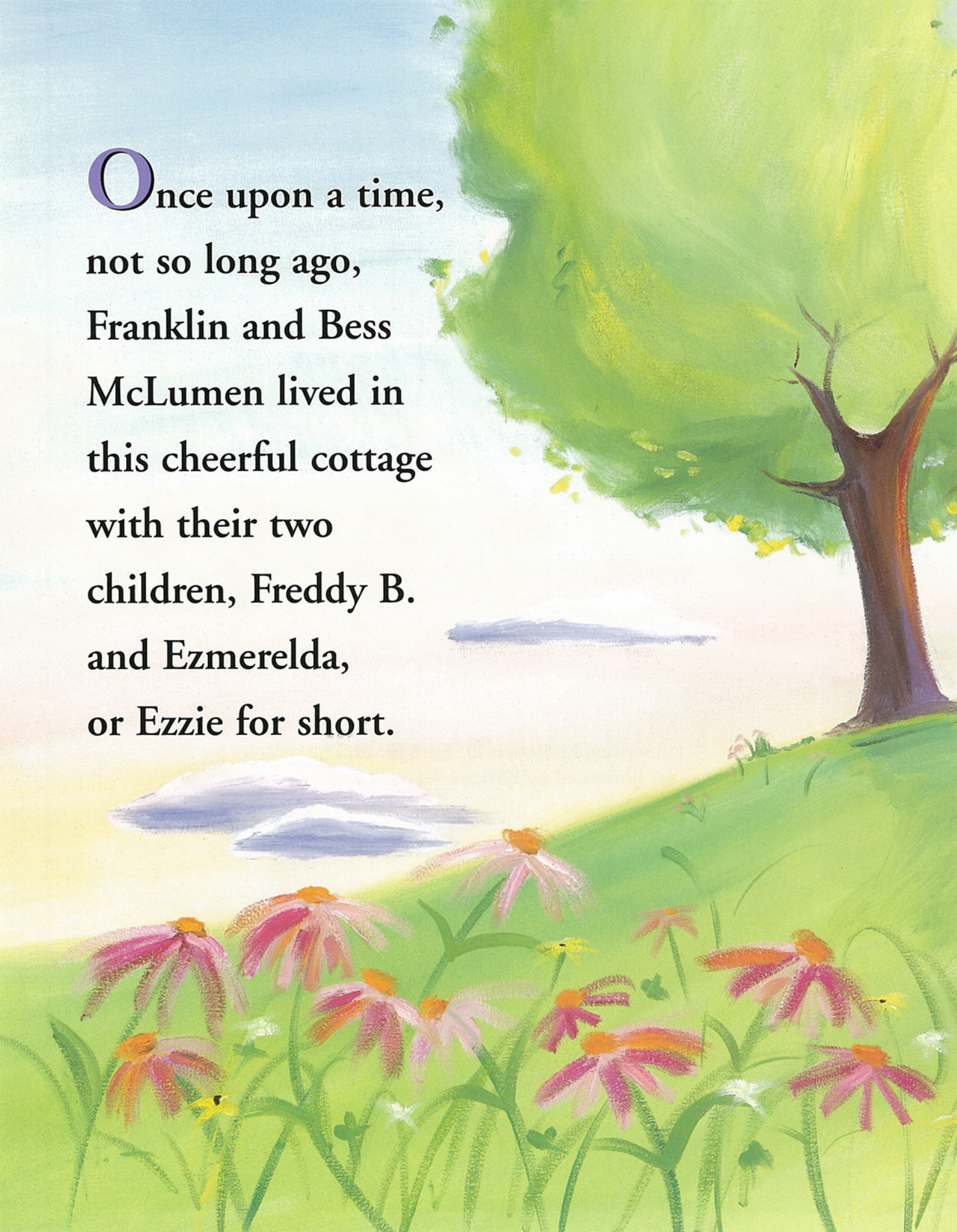
written by Robert D. Enright, Ph.D.  
illustrated by Kathryn Kunz Finney



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Once upon a time,  
not so long ago,  
Franklin and Bess  
McLumen lived in  
this cheerful cottage  
with their two  
children, Freddy B.  
and Ezmerelda,  
or Ezzie for short.











Mr. McLumen liked a tidy home, run with dignity and efficiency. "A place for everything and everything in its place," he always told the children. On this sunny afternoon, he was in the tea room reading a favorite story and basking in the peace of the place. Mr. McLumen was very fond of the friendly feeling that flows when all is fine.





Suddenly, Freddy B. and Ezzie tumbled into the room,  
romping, stomping, yelling, and belly-aching.



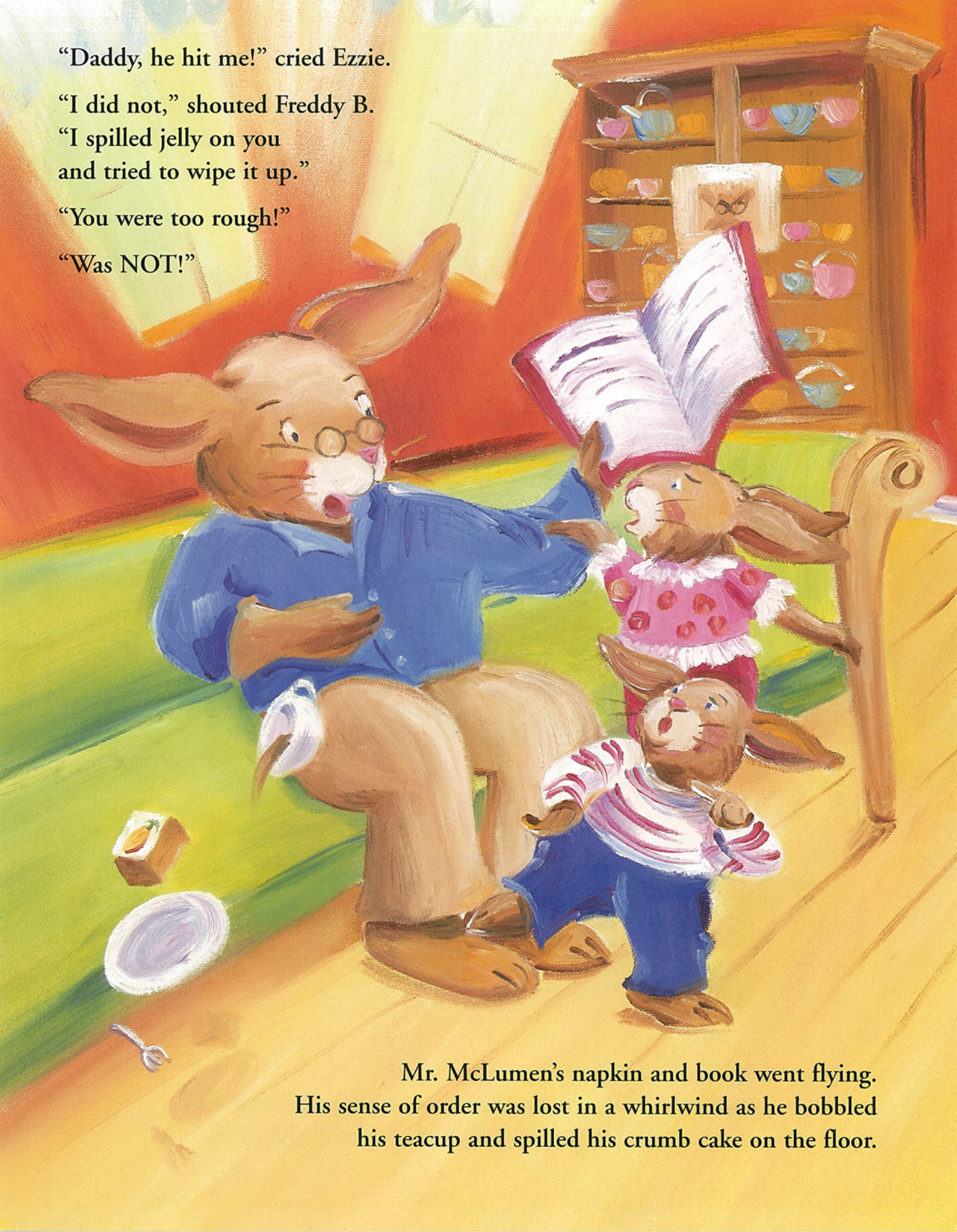
"Daddy, he hit me!" cried Ezzie.

"I did not," shouted Freddy B.

"I spilled jelly on you  
and tried to wipe it up."

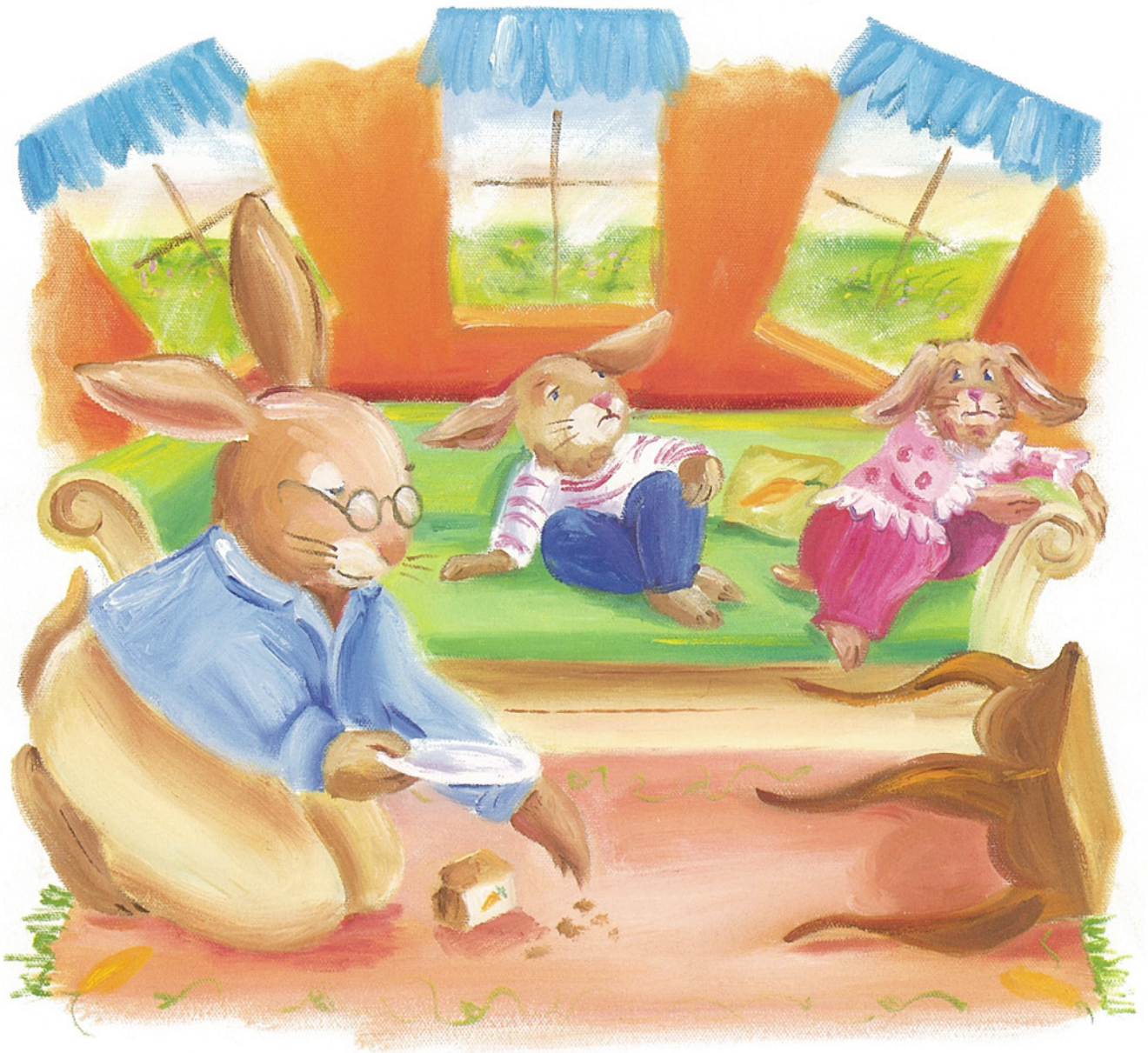
"You were too rough!"

"Was NOT!"



Mr. McLumen's napkin and book went flying.  
His sense of order was lost in a whirlwind as he bobbled  
his teacup and spilled his crumb cake on the floor.





“My word! Sit, children, and let’s collect ourselves,” said Mr. McLumen.

“Collect ourselves?” huffed Freddy B. “What are we, football cards or something?”

“That will be quite enough,” Mr. McLumen said in the stern way that fathers sometimes use. He began to collect himself by bending down and gathering up the scattered crumbs of his cake.



An illustration of two anthropomorphic rabbits in a room. The rabbit on the left is wearing a white shirt with purple stripes and a purple bow tie. The rabbit on the right is wearing a pink dress with red polka dots and a white lace collar. They are both looking at each other with open mouths, as if in the middle of a conversation. The background shows a room with orange walls and three windows looking out onto a green landscape with flowers.

**“But HE said...”**

**“No, SHE  
said...”**

**“It was  
SOOOOO awful!”**

**“YOU are the  
one who’s awful!”**





Having straightened up his plate and cleaned up the floor, Mr. McLumen quietly said, "Come here children. Sit by my chair. I have a question for you."

Ezzie and Freddy B. eyed their father warily. Slowly they seated themselves beside Mr. McLumen's plump, overstuffed chair.



“What is it like to forgive each other?” Mr. McLumen asked with a quiet smile.

Freddy B.’s ears shot way up. “Forgive her? No way!”

“But I didn’t ask you to forgive Ezzie, did I? I only asked you, ‘What is it like to forgive each other?’”







“Like eating a liverwurst sandwich with mustard and onions on pumpernickel bread!”

“Oh, yeah?” Ezzie shot back. “It’s like falling in a mud puddle. And landing on a slimy frog!”



Mr. McLumen sat back in his chair  
and picked up his teacup.  
“Remember going to the airport when  
it was thundering and lightning?”  
he asked. “It seemed that the whole  
day would be stormy.”







“Forgiveness is like getting in the plane, taking off, and rising above the storm clouds until you are bouncing gently on big white cotton ball clouds with the blue sky and sun ahead of you all day. Think of forgiveness this way. When you forgive each other, you rise above the shouting and sputtering, just like the airplane rises above the storm clouds. Your hearts are quieter and sunnier.”



“Forgiveness is like two butterflies, newly hatched from their dark cocoon world, sharing a flower together. You know how they change amazingly from their cocoons into glittering, sparkling colors? Well, forgiveness is like that. When you forgive, your thoughts change about the one who hurt you. You now see the sparkle in the other.”

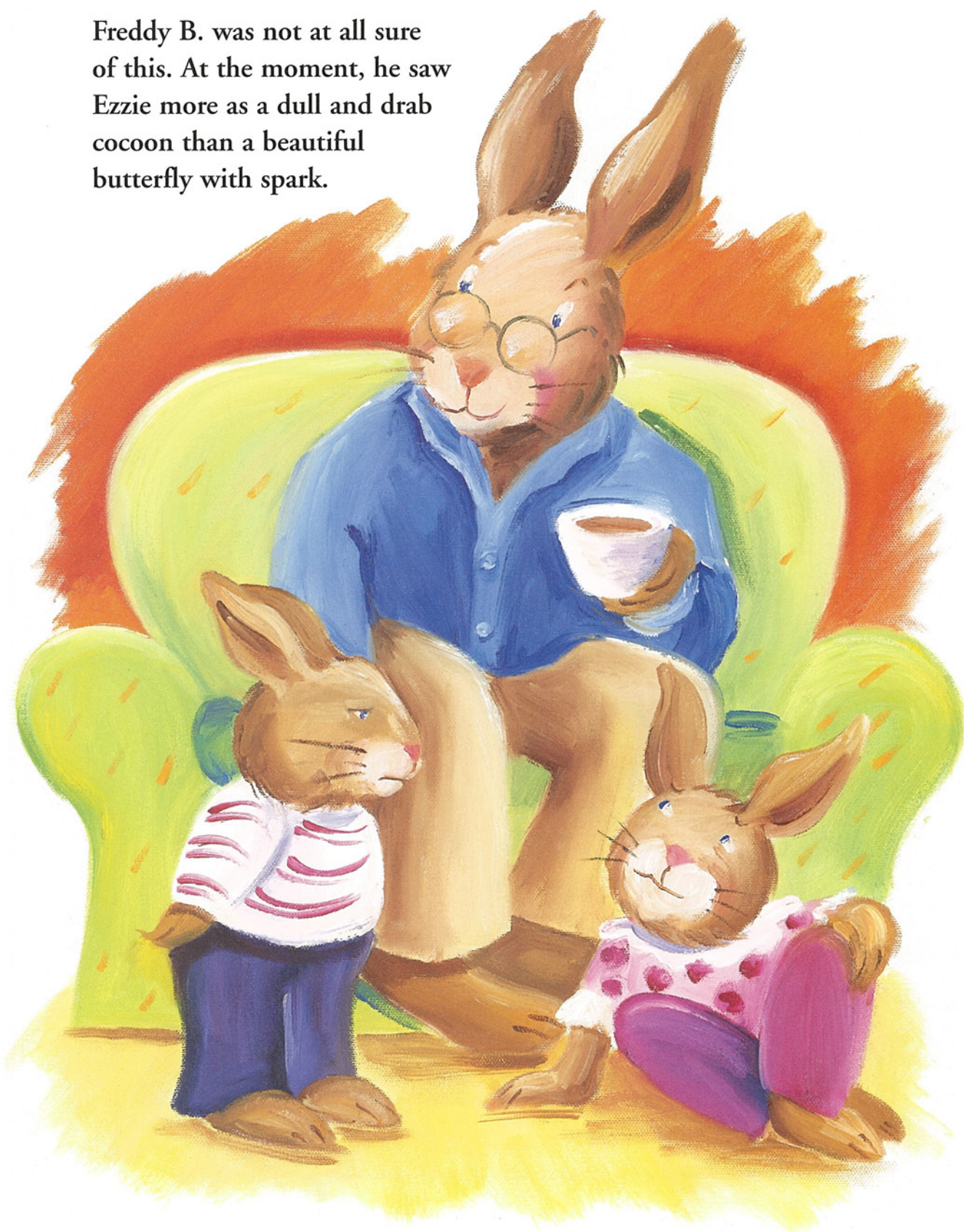








Freddy B. was not at all sure of this. At the moment, he saw Ezzie more as a dull and drab cocoon than a beautiful butterfly with spark.







Mr. McLumen continued  
in his calm, reassuring way.

“Forgiveness is like the big, strong  
mama polar bear who just caught her  
little cub with his hand in the cookie  
jar right before dinner. She corrects  
him, but continues to gently love him.

She loves him with a great big  
bear-hug love, no matter what he does.

Think of forgiveness this way.  
You keep on loving the other one even  
though you don’t like what he did.”





“Forgiveness is like the cat gently sharing and the dog graciously accepting that warm spot by the fireplace after both had a howling, scowling squabble that day. When you forgive each other, you both show kindness, even though the other did nothing to earn it. When you forgive each other, you both live well.”



“Forgiveness is like a porcupine and a mole sharing the same small hole in the winter time. The mole steps slowly through the house, avoiding the porcupine’s sharp quills, and the porcupine gives the mole lots of room. Each tries to respect the other. Forgiveness is like this, too. You might not always like what is happening, but you try to respect the other as best you can. “





“Forgiveness is like the guppy, oh so grumpy, losing all of her lunch money at fish school. The grouper, at whom the guppy grumbled yesterday, swims up and just gives the money to the guppy without her even asking. The guppy is so grateful to receive it and the grouper is glad he gave it. To forgive is to be a generous gift-giver. It melts the heart of the one giving and the one getting the forgiveness.”









“Forgiveness is like this. You’ve just had a big blow-up fight with your friend. The world is all gray clouds and gloom. You go out to the meadow with all the wild flowers. The sun is wearing a happy face, and there is your friend with the biggest smile, hoping you would come. You both lie in the meadow, look up at the cotton ball clouds, and talk of the time you took that airplane ride together. When you forgive each other, you might be surprised when you both find a fragrant summer meadow bursting forth in your heart.”











“Forgiveness is like...,” said Mr. McLumen, but Ezzie and Freddy B. weren’t listening now. They looked at each other, and their eyes danced. Their smiles were sweet. They knew what it was like to live well together.

“Come on, Butterfly! Let’s play outside,” Freddy B. said as he took Ezzie’s hand.





"Don't you want to hear more?" Mr. McLumen asked. He never liked to end a lesson before he felt it was finished.

"Thanks, Dad," said Freddy B.  
"But can we hear more another time?  
We have a meadow waiting for us."









This was fine with Mr. McLumen. He had a little bit more to clean up in the tea room before going to Bess. He always liked to leave that room with a sense of order and quiet and peace. After all, Franklin and Bess McLumen knew how to live well.



## A NOTE ON FORGIVENESS

Dear Parents, Teachers, and Caretakers,

You are about to embark on a truly exciting adventure: helping a child learn about forgiveness, one of the moral virtues. Psychologists have a rich tradition of studying the moral virtues that goes back to the late nineteenth century.

Forgiving people who hurt us deeply can lift the weight of revenge that may burden us for years. I've known people who have resented family members for decades. One man, whose father was very unkind to him when he was a child, dreamed every night for 22 years that his father was chasing after him. Once he learned to forgive his father, that dream left. Rather than bitterness, he now has inherited a sense of peace.

Forgiveness is like that. It has a way of cutting through our angers and resentments to give all involved a fresh start. As you forgive, you are set free from the prison of resentment. As you offer forgiveness to another person, he or she has the chance to begin anew with you, trying to be more civil, more respectful, more kind. Those around you benefit because you are less likely to carry your anger into other situations. You are less likely to displace your anger onto those who don't deserve it.

### **What Forgiveness Is...**

Forgiveness can be defined this way: You have been unjustly hurt by another person, yet you struggle to give up the resentment (to which you are actually entitled because you were unfairly treated) and you strive to offer the offending person compassion, benevolence, and love (knowing that yours is an act of mercy and therefore not necessarily deserved by the person).

Forgiveness has three paradoxes embedded in

it. First, the rest of the world seems to encourage anger: "Don't let the person get away with this!" A forgiver gives up resentment nonetheless.

Second, a forgiver seems to be doing all of the giving and the offender all of the taking. Why give kindness? Is it not the offender's turn to give, not the other way around? A forgiver gives kindness nonetheless.

Third, a forgiver, who reaches out to the other person with concern and care, often finds that he or she (the forgiver) is the one who is emotionally healed.

### **...and What It Is Not**

As you and your child learn more about forgiveness, you will see that it is not always what it seems to be. Forgiveness is not something weak, but strong. Giving a gift to one who was unfair is a lavish act of love and mercy. Forgiveness does not make us a doormat, to be walked on by others. When we forgive, we can and should stand up for our rights.

Forgiveness is not the same as condoning or excusing. When we forgive, we label the other person's actions as wrong; we do not find an excuse for that person's actions.

Forgiveness is not equated with forgetting. Having scientifically studied forgiveness now since 1985, I can say that I have never—not once—seen anyone who forgets the wrong done when forgiving. Yes, people may remember in new ways, but they do not develop a curious moral amnesia upon forgiving.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same thing. When a person forgives, he or she unilaterally offers an end to resentment and institutes compassion and love. The other person might spurn this gift, but the gift-giver is the one



who decides whether or not to give it.

When two or more people reconcile, they come together again in mutual trust; to reconcile is to trust the other person again. In contrast, to forgive is to offer love, but not necessarily to trust the other person in certain areas unless he or she resolves not to offend in the same way again (within reason), repents, and offers recompense. One can forgive and then not reconcile if the other continues with his or her hurtful ways.

### **Children's Rights and Safety**

As you work with children on forgiveness, please keep in mind some basic issues to guard the child's rights and safety.

Forgiveness is a choice of the forgiver. Teachers, parents, and anyone else should not demand that a child forgive someone. If a child does not want to forgive, we must respect that. Please keep in mind that a child's defiant "No!" is not necessarily his or her last word on the matter. The child may be ready to forgive at a later time, but it still is his or her choice.

Forgiveness does not mean that a child automatically enters into a relationship with a bully or anyone who is a danger to the child. Remember that forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same.

Please avoid putting pressure on children as they learn to forgive. This is not like math class or any other class where children get good grades for performing better and more than others. We should avoid making forgiveness into a competition. Try to get the children to enjoy this, again keeping in mind that it is their choice.

Even if a child does not want to forgive someone, you should decide whether or not it is appropriate for the child to at least learn about forgiveness. Understanding forgiveness is not the same as practicing it. A skeptic might say that

this is just a subtle way of getting a child to practice it. I disagree. When handled sensitively, the child can listen and learn without feeling pressured to perform acts of forgiveness.

### **The Ingredients of Forgiveness**

*Rising Above the Storm Clouds* introduces children to the world of forgiveness by showing them five important ingredients of forgiving:

**Inherent Worth.** This is the important idea that a person is a person no matter what he or she does. It is akin to the idea that we are to love the wrongdoer but hate the wrong. As children begin to see beyond what people do to what they are like inside themselves as persons, they will be laying an important foundation for forgiving.

**Moral Love.** When we morally love someone, we love him or her unconditionally, despite flaws. Certainly, someone who morally loves another can ask fairness of him or her. At the same time, one who morally loves has the other person's interest at heart. Moral love is not a selfish or self-centered love. Moral love underlies true forgiveness.

**Kindness.** When people are kind, they tend to be warm-hearted, concerned about the other person, humane. People who practice being kind are laying the foundation for forgiving. Some people talk about the "change of heart" that occurs when someone forgives. The heart of stone becomes the softened heart.

**Respect.** When someone shows respect, he or she is highly regarding the other person. Some people think that respect must be earned. I believe, following the philosopher Immanuel Kant, that people possess intrinsic value to such a degree that we should respect all persons. We respect, not because of what people do, but because of whom they are. As children practice respecting all people, they make forgiveness easier in the future.



**Generosity.** To be generous is to give abundantly. Gift-giving surprises and delights the recipient. If children can learn to be generous, they will be in a better position to understand what it means to give a gift of forgiveness to someone who hurts them.

Forgiveness encompasses more than the practice of inherent worth and the exercise of the virtues of moral love, kindness, respect, and generosity. As children develop, they realize that they can generalize their forgiveness of a brother, for example, to others such as a teacher or friend.

Later, some adolescents realize that forgiveness is an important part of their lives. They make forgiveness one of the moral principles by which they abide. Still later, some adolescents and adults practice forgiveness so consistently that they make it a part of whom they are—to forgive becomes natural and consistent with one's own identity. Welcome to the world of forgiveness.

With kind regards,  
Robert D. Enright, Ph.D.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ROBERT D. ENRIGHT, PH.D., is a licensed psychologist and professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the author of more than 80 publications and has been a leader in the scientific study of forgiveness and its effects since 1985. His work on the subject has appeared in *Time*, *McCall's*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. He has appeared on ABC's *20/20*, NBC's *Nightly News*, and many other television and radio shows. Currently, Dr. Enright is working on forgiveness education programs for primary school children in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

KATHRYN KUNZ FINNEY received her art and design degree from Iowa State University. She has illustrated four children's books, greeting cards, and a variety of educational materials for children, and she is a portraitist specializing in children and pets. She lives with her family and Great Pyrenees, Harry, in Des Moines, Iowa. Like Freddy B. and Ezzie, her own daughter and son constantly forgive each other and know that they are the best of friends.







# Rising Above the Storm Clouds

## WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FORGIVE



*Forgiveness is like flying above storm clouds  
and bouncing on big white cotton ball clouds  
in a clear blue sky.*

*It's like the cat sharing her warm spot  
by the evening fire with the dog  
who fought with her that morning.*



*It's like a mole sharing his underground home  
with a prickly porcupine through the cold winter.*



When Freddy B. and Ezzie arrive tussling and tattling in their father's quiet study, he decides to lead them on an imaginary journey through the landscape of forgiveness. Together they see what it's like to forgive, and discover that forgiveness can feel good to the forgiver, perhaps even more than the forgiven.

In a Note to Parents, author and psychologist Robert Enright, Ph.D., defines forgiveness, differentiates it from reconciliation, and guides parents in helping their children learn how and why to forgive.

Robert Enright is "the forgiveness trailblazer."

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