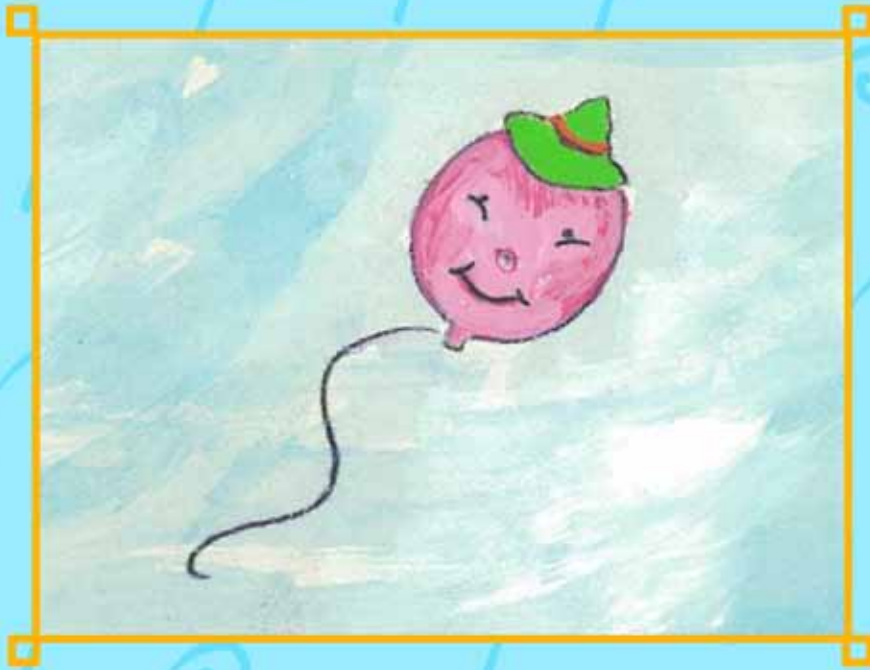
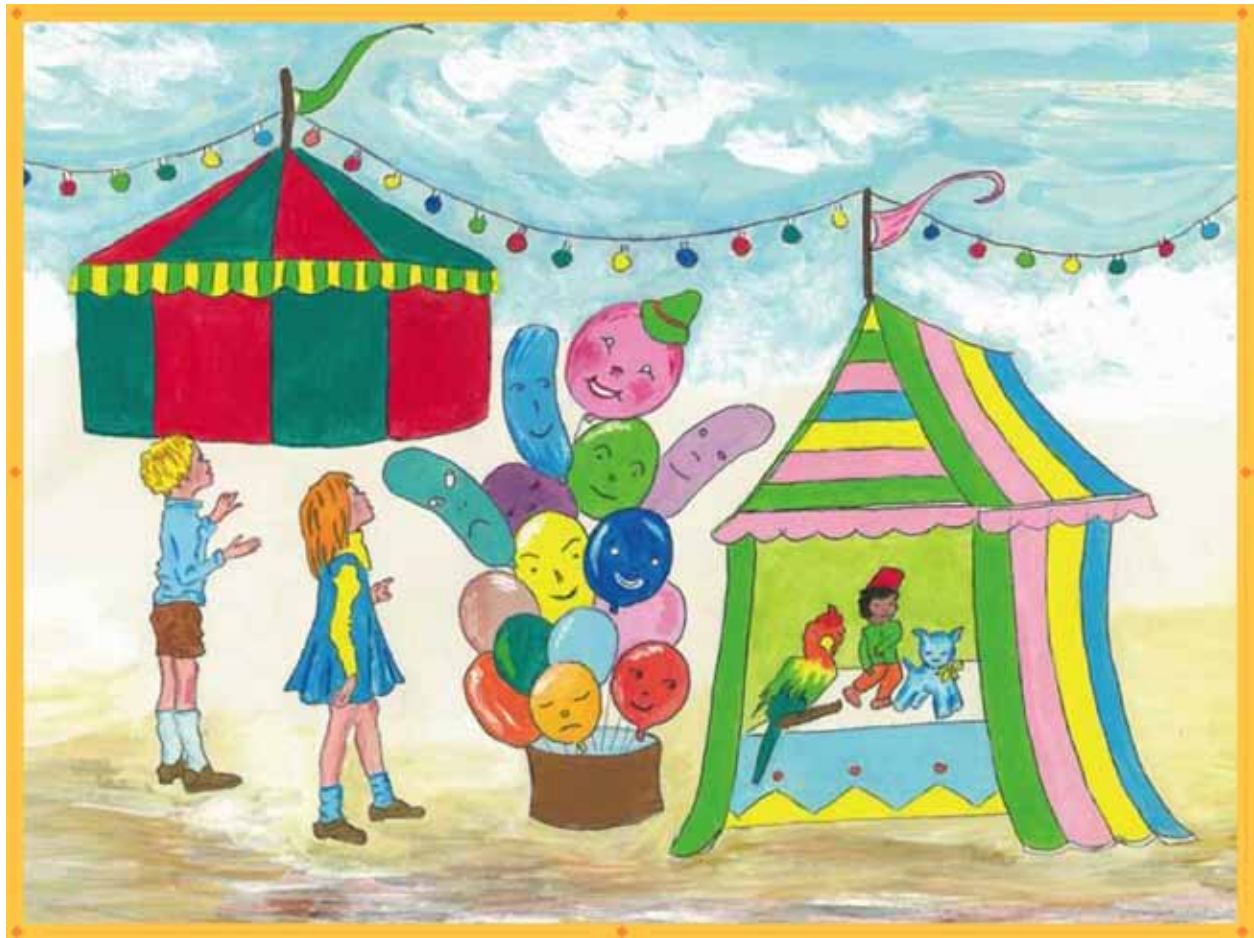


The Adventures of
Bertie Balloon





It was carnival time. Everybody was busy getting ready for opening day.

There were lots of stalls selling all kinds of interesting things.





In one stall there was an enormous bunch of balloons. There were red ones, blue and green ones and some balloons even had faces painted on them.

At last everything was ready.

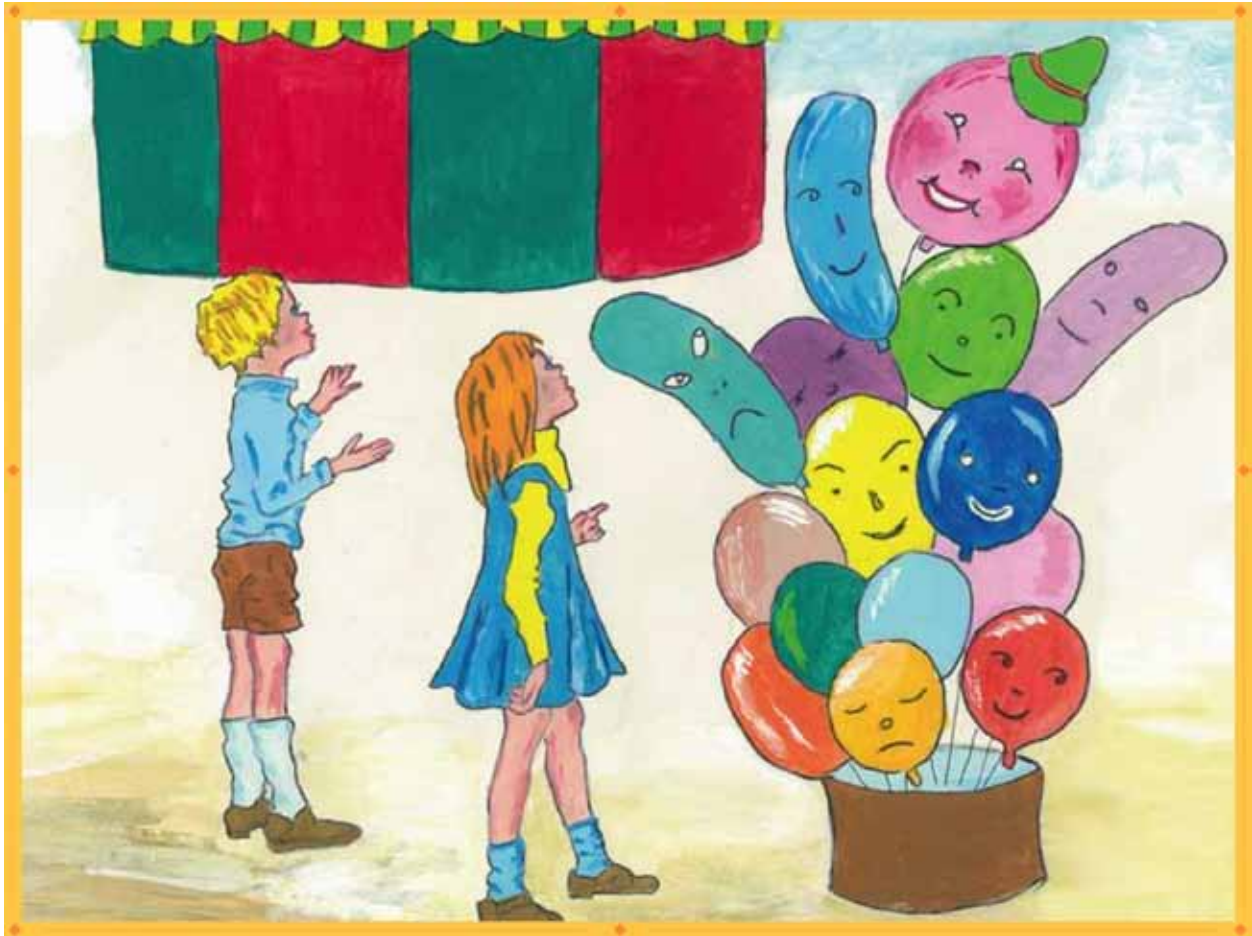




All the balloons were pushing each other. Each balloon hoped that he would be noticed and bought by some boy or girl.

One balloon called Bertie, was bigger than the others and he said in a loud voice, "I am much bigger and brighter than the other balloons, I am sure to be sold first."





Just then a girl called Manya and her brother Peter walked up to the stall. Bertie jiggled around on the end of his string trying to make the children notice him. And they did.

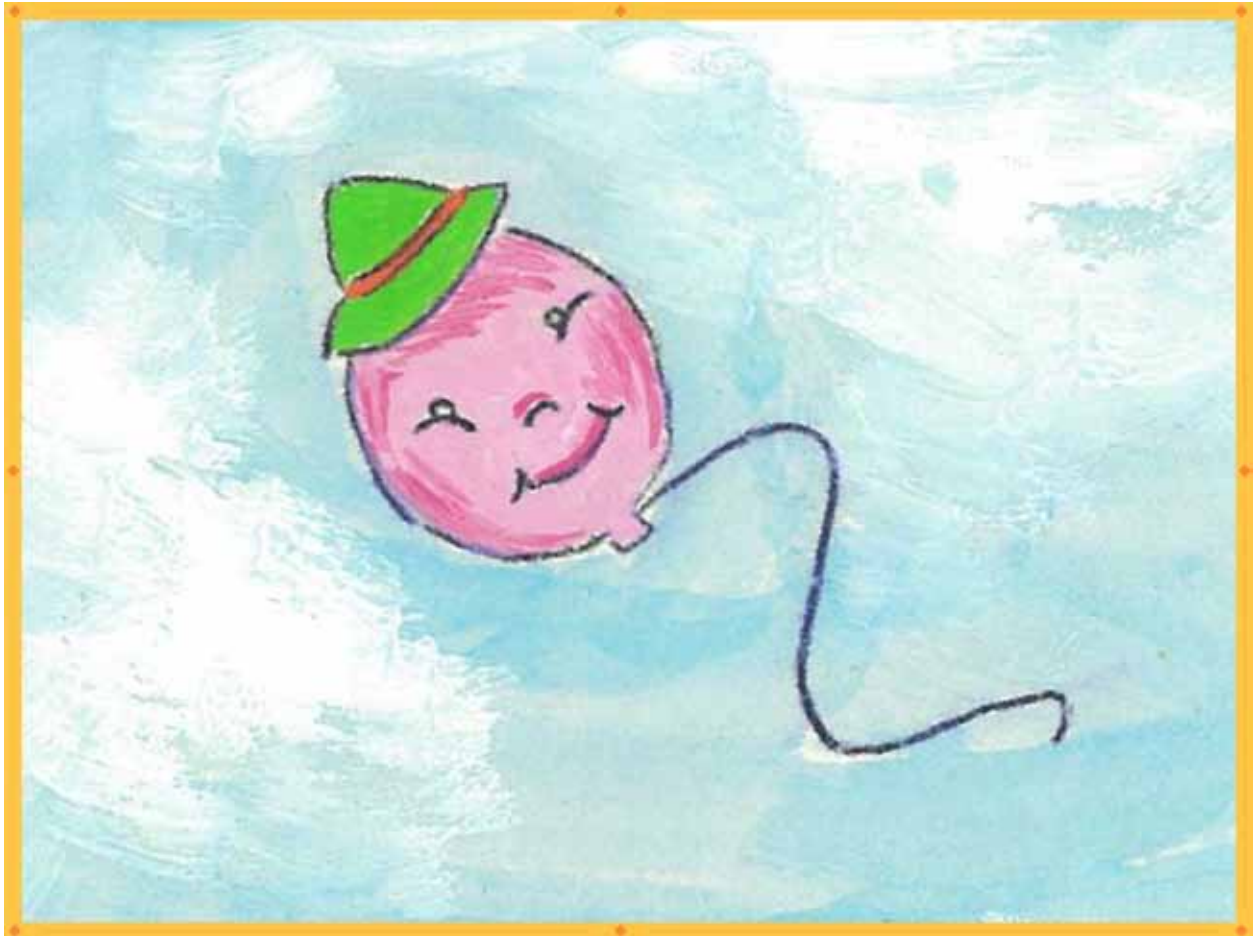




Manya said to the clown who was selling the balloons, "Can we have that balloon please?" Manya had pointed to Bertie, who was jiggling and wriggling even more.

The clown smiled at the children and gave Bertie Balloon to Manya.





Bertie was so pleased to get away from the other balloons that he could not keep still.

Even though Manya held Bertie's string tightly, a big gust of wind pulled the string from Manya's hand.

"Yippee!" Bertie shouted, "I'm free at last." And the wind blew him up into the sky and out of the carnival.





Bertie was having a great time and so he sang a little song to himself.

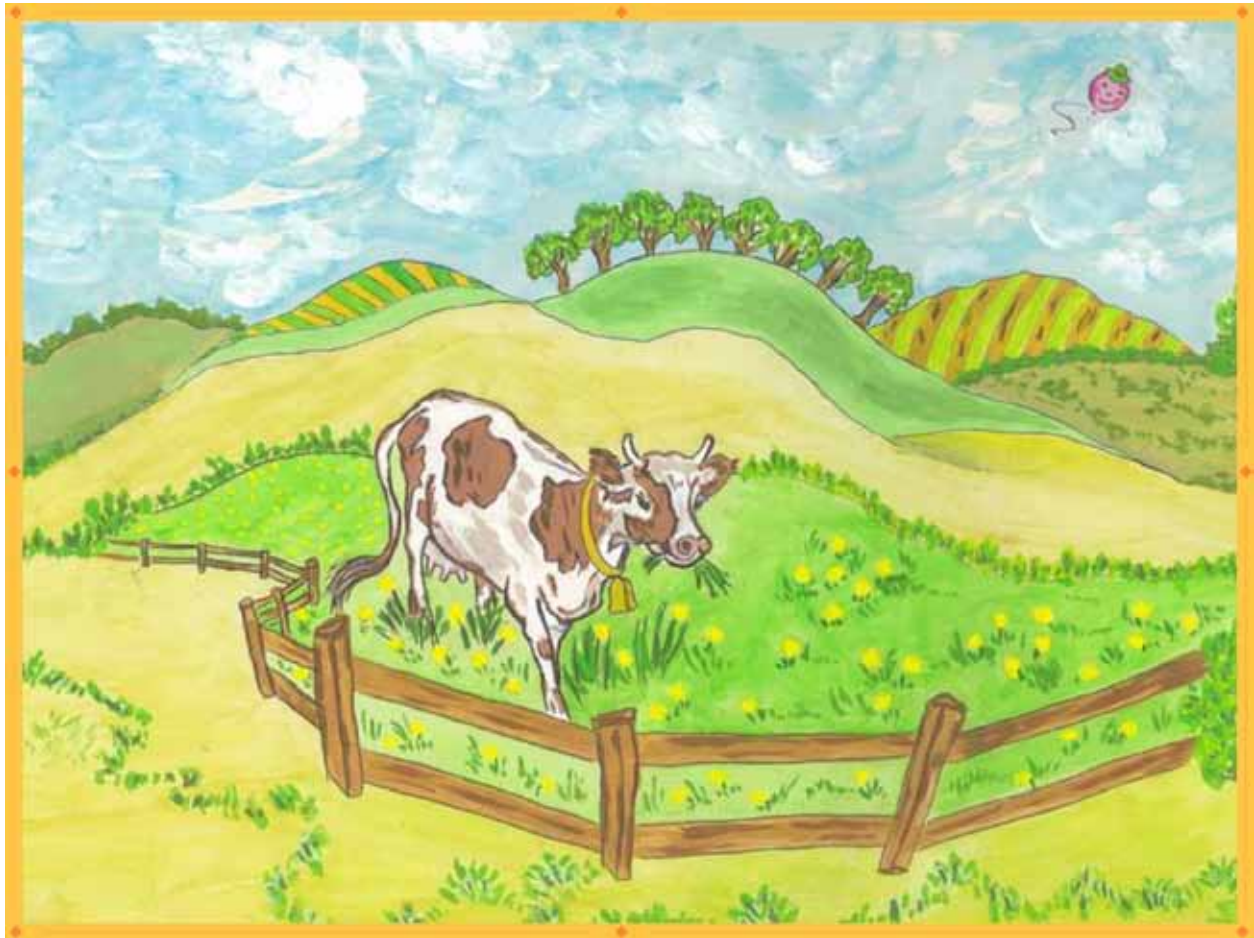
“Flying high up in the sky,
Look and see me flying by,
It’s good to be free up in the air,
Flying by without a care.”





Suddenly an airplane appeared. Bertie called to the pilot, "I'm big, I'm beautiful and no one is as clever as I am." The pilot just stared at Bertie.





Bertie floated over some hills. A cow was eating grass in a field.

“Moo-oo,” said the cow. Bertie answered, “I’m big, I’m beautiful and no one is as clever as I am.”

The wise old cow just smiled and continued eating.





Bertie flew further and saw a scarecrow in a paddock. "Hello, Scarecrow. I'm big, I'm beautiful and no one is as clever as I am," called Bertie as he puffed out his cheeks with pride.

Mr. Scarecrow waved his arms at Bertie as Bertie soared higher into the sky.





Bertie flew over a field full of sheep. “Hey sheep, look at me,” cried Bertie, “I’m big, I’m beautiful and no one is as clever as I am.”

“Baa-aa,” said the sheep and continued munching the grass. Bertie thought that sheep were so stupid as he flew even higher in the sky.





Way down below, Bertie saw a strange animal hopping along. As he floated closer, Bertie saw it was a kangaroo with a joey in its pouch. Bertie said to the kangaroo, "You can hop but you can't fly like me, because I'm big, I'm beautiful and no one is as clever as I am."

The kangaroo twitched her nose, thumped her tail on the ground and hopped away.





The wind pushed Bertie into a valley covered with colourful flowers and butterflies. Bertie dropped almost onto the grass so that the butterflies could see him. Bertie called out aloud, "I'm big, I'm beautiful and no one is as clever as I am."

The butterflies flew from flower to flower and ignored Bertie.





Bertie noticed some gum trees growing beside a creek.

He floated down to rest on one of the branches of the gum tree. Just as Bertie was about to sit on the branch, the wind blew again and Bertie fell right out of the tree.

Two kookaburras sitting on another branch saw Bertie fall and they laughed-ha ha ha ha.





Bertie was so happy when the wind carried him away from the sound of the kookaburras' laughter, that Bertie didn't look where he was going.

Suddenly there was a big THUMP!





“Why don’t you look where you are going!” shouted Miss Kylie Kite.

“I’m sorry,” gasped Bertie, “I didn’t see you.” However, Bertie couldn’t help but notice that Miss Kylie Kite was much bigger and more beautiful than he would ever be.





Then, before he could say another word, the wind gave a mighty puff, and with one big bang Bertie burst. "Oh no," he thought, as he fell to the ground in a crumpled heap.





The wise old cow, who had also heard the loud bang, moo-oed quietly and said to herself, "Poor Bertie Balloon is no longer big or beautiful and he's certainly not as clever as he always believed."

