

ME AND YOU AND THE UNIVERSE

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
BERNARDO MARÇOLLA



ME AND YOU AND THE UNIVERSE

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
BERNARDO MARÇOLLA

free spirit
PUBLISHING®



Text and illustration copyright © 2020 Bernardo Marçolla

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Unless otherwise noted, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without express written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations or critical reviews. For more information, go to freespirit.com/permissions.

Free Spirit, Free Spirit Publishing, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Free Spirit Publishing Inc. A complete listing of our logos and trademarks is available at freespirit.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

This book has been filed with the Library of Congress.

LCCN: 2019038761

ISBN-13: 978-1-63198-522-5

Free Spirit Publishing does not have control over or assume responsibility for author or third-party websites and their content.

Reading Level Grade 3
Fountas & Pinnell Guided Reading Level P

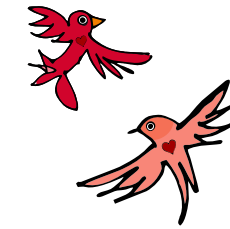
Edited by Alison Behnke
Cover and interior design by Shannon Pourciau

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed in China
R18861119

Free Spirit Publishing Inc.
6325 Sandburg Road, Suite 100
Minneapolis, MN 55427-3674
(612) 338-2068
help4kids@freespirit.com
freespirit.com

Free Spirit offers competitive pricing.

Contact edsales@freespirit.com for pricing information on multiple quantity purchases.

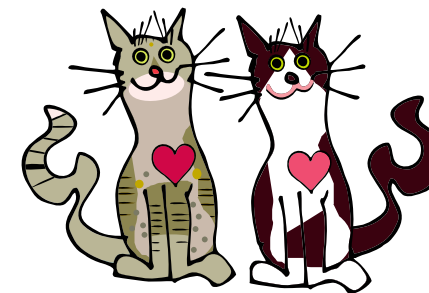


DEDICATION

To Nature and all her creatures, the great and the small.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who helped make this book a reality, especially to my sister Nanda, my wife Adriane, and the whole Free Spirit Publishing team. Beyond that, my deepest gratitude to the dreams that inhabit us, because without them nothing would be possible.



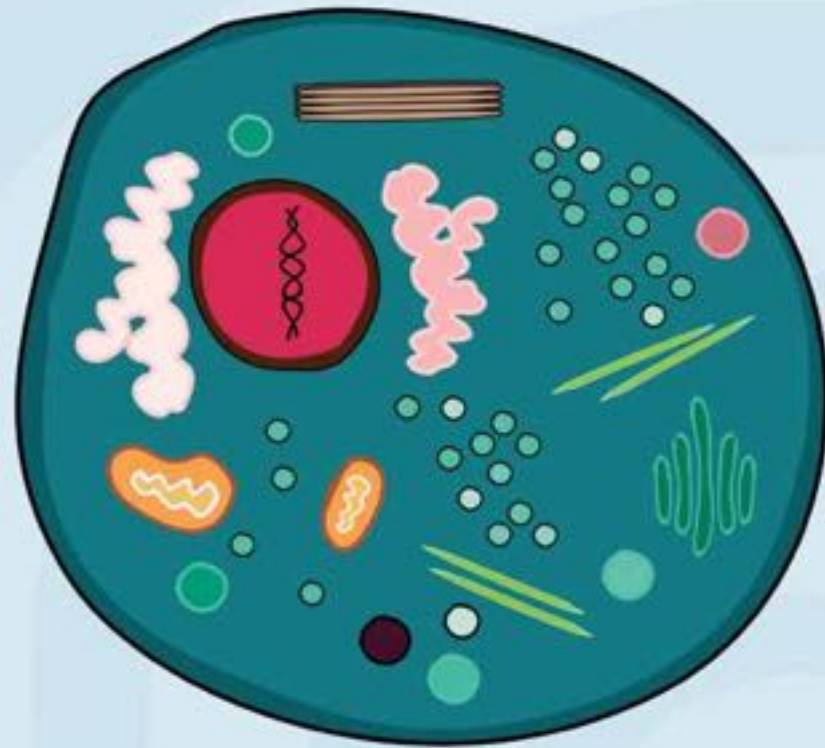
Once upon a time there was a beautiful planet named Earth . . .



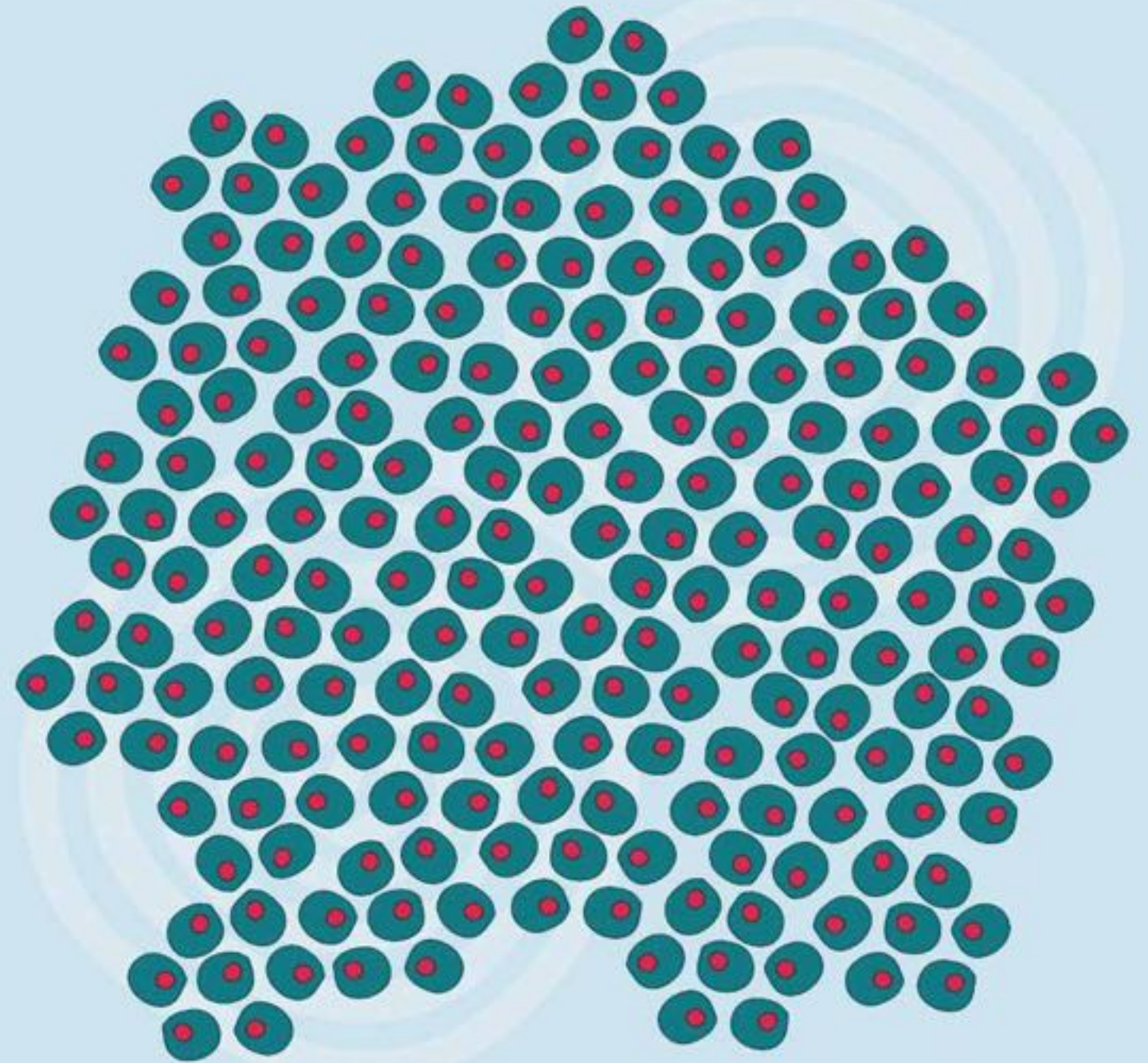
. . . and Earth had something very special that had not yet been discovered anywhere else.

What existed on this planet that was so special?

LIFE!



The smallest form of life we know is the cell. A cell is so small that when it is by itself, we cannot even see it. But cells can multiply.



A NOTE FROM BERNARDO

As you were reading this book, you thought about the way you interact with nature and the larger world. About how you interact with others—and with yourself. About how you are a part of the universe. When you consider these ideas, you open yourself up to a whole new way of thinking and living.

Often, we build walls. Sometimes we even do this as a way of trying to protect nature, or ourselves, or those we love. Although our intentions are good, our actions often do not lead to the desired effects—in nature or in ourselves.

As human beings, we too rarely think of our own nature, and we can forget that the way we relate to the outside world is a reflection of how we relate to ourselves. We forget that we are *part* of nature, and we become fragmented—disconnected from our own inner ecology. We are divided within ourselves, and the relationships we build with other people and with other beings are fragile as a result.

It can even feel as though we're living with blindfolds at times, struggling to see all the beauty that surrounds us. Too often, we don't notice the colors of the sunset; we ignore the amazing processes that transform a seed into a tree or a flower; we forget that before being born we are quite similar to many other creatures. And if we are blind to what is visible around us, imagine how difficult it is to see the invisible and hidden things inside ourselves.

Of course, maybe we were not taught to see clearly. This is not our fault. Yet we can take responsibility for healing ourselves and making a change. We have to look inside and outside ourselves to see everything within us and around us. In doing so, our actions will naturally change. Our own consciousness has a voice, and it speaks to us.

It is important for all of us—at any age—to learn to listen to this voice, to look up to the sky, and, as we see the stars, to *know* that we are part of them. This is a wisdom that is completely different from the knowledge that comes from studying and degrees. It is not the most elaborate reasoning that will change the way we see the world or ourselves. Instead, the answer is wonderfully simple: We have to open our eyes and open our hearts. The world will remain the same, but our experience will be completely changed. *We* will be changed.