



The Riddle of the Robin

By Valerie Tripp
Illustrated by Thu Thai



Chapter 1

A Fine Feathered Friend

Willa was excited. She danced a happy little jig of impatience while she waited for her friends, the WellieWishers. She had something wonderful to show them!



Kendall, Ashlyn, Camille, and Emerson came into the garden. “Hi, Willa!” they said.

“Hi!” said Willa. “Hurry and put on your wellies. I’ve got a surprise for you.”

“That’s wonderful,” said Emerson. “I love surprises!”

“What is it?” asked Camille. She was hop, hop, hopping on one foot as she pulled her wellington boot onto the other foot. Carrot, the pet bunny, hippety-hopped along next to Camille.


Willa led the way to the maple tree. “Look,” she said.

There, nestled cozily between the roots, was a brave little bright yellow flower. The WellieWishers crouched around it.

“Oh, it’s so cute!” said Ashlyn.

“It’s a crocus,” said Willa, “and it means that spring is here.”



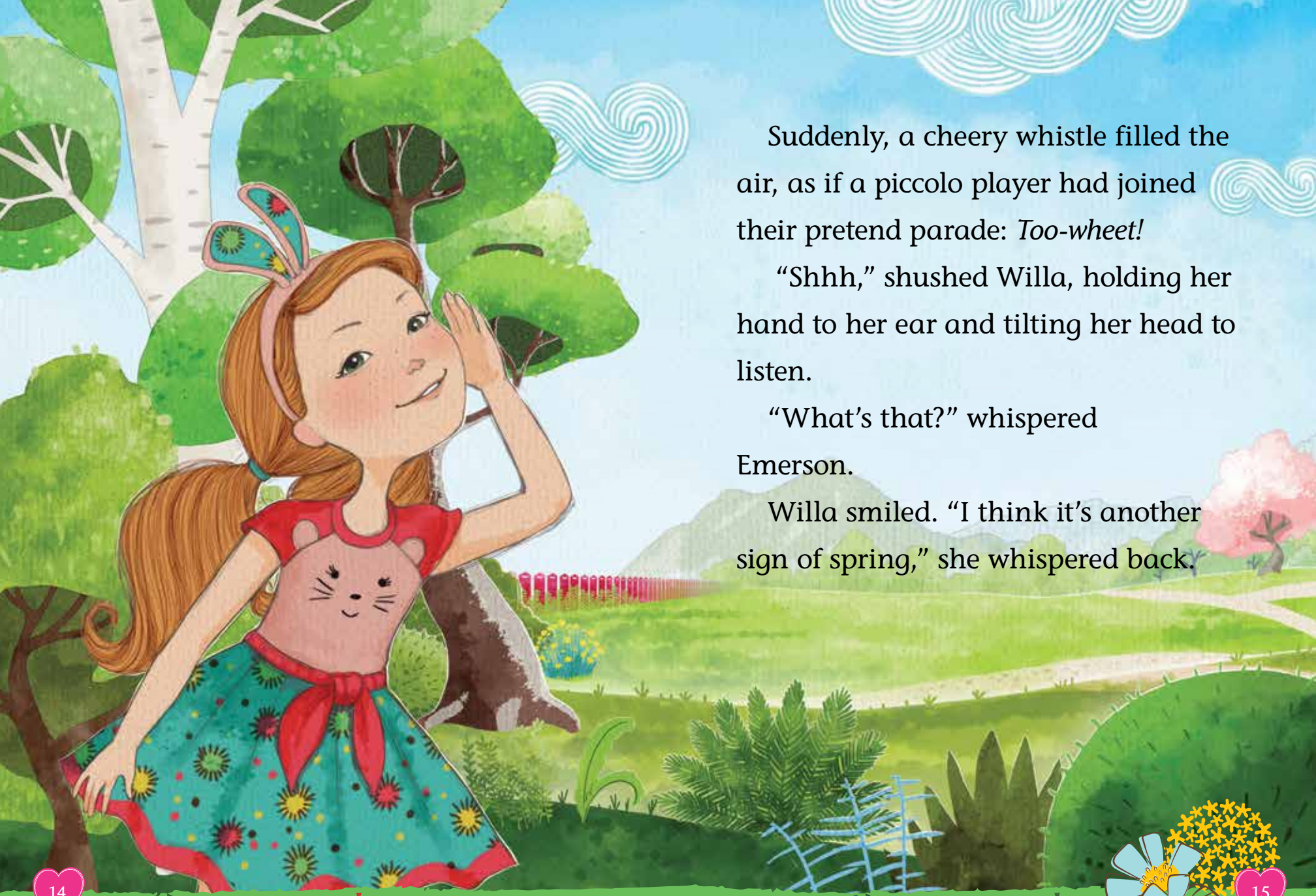


“Spring!” crowed Emerson, bouncing up to her feet. “Spring is my favorite season. I love everything spring-y. I’m spring-y myself!” She began to bounce and boing up and down like a spring. *Boingeddy, boingeddy, boing, boing, boing!*

“I like spring, too,” said Kendall. “Especially March.” She laughed and pretended to play a flute as she marched in place. “Come on, let’s march! Hup, two, three, four. Hup, two, three, four.”

Everyone marched. Carrot hopped behind them to join the fun.



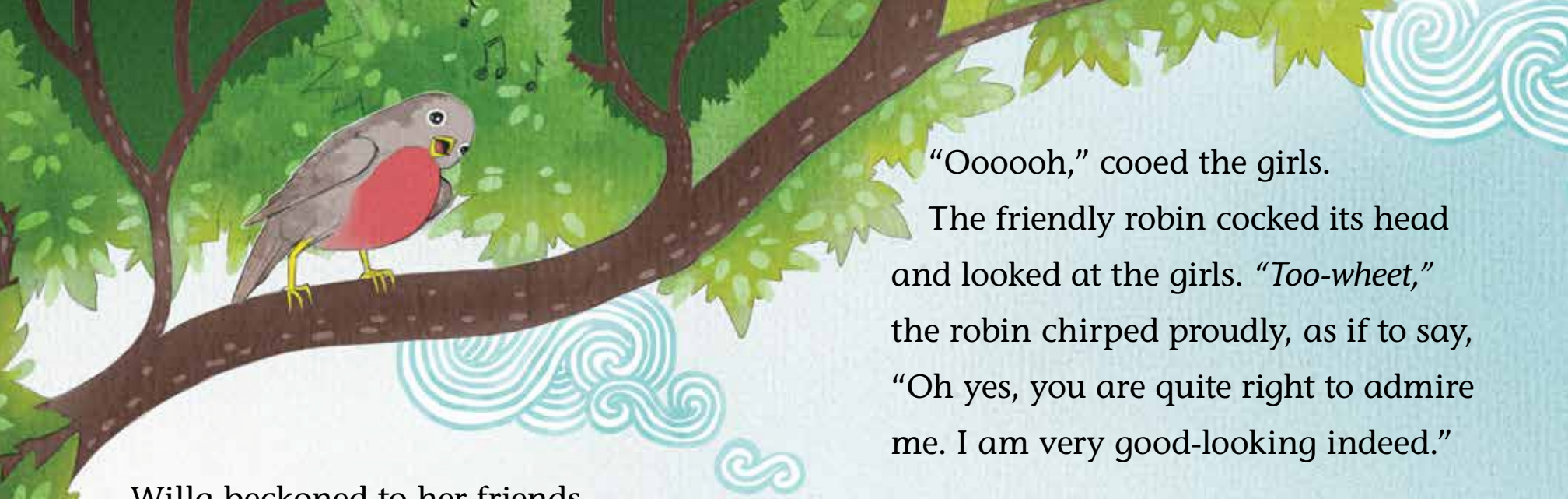


Suddenly, a cheery whistle filled the air, as if a piccolo player had joined their pretend parade: *Too-wheet!*

“Shhh,” shushed Willa, holding her hand to her ear and tilting her head to listen.

“What’s that?” whispered Emerson.

Willa smiled. “I think it’s another sign of spring,” she whispered back.



“Ooooooh,” cooed the girls.

The friendly robin cocked its head and looked at the girls. “*Too-wheet,*” the robin chirped proudly, as if to say, “Oh yes, you are quite right to admire me. I am very good-looking indeed.”

Willa beckoned to her friends. Quickly and quietly, they tiptoed around the maple tree.

Willa pointed to a bird perched way out on a bobbing branch. It was a stout bird with gray wings, a red chest, yellow legs, and bright black eyes. “It’s a robin,” Willa said happily. “The first robin of spring.”



“Look how shiny the robin’s red chest feathers are,” said Camille.

“It looks like it’s wearing a fancy red vest,” said Ashlyn.

“*Too-wheet, too-wheet?*” tweeted the robin, as if it were asking a question.

“Yes, absolutely, *too-wheet,*” Willa answered politely. “Please stay. Welcome to the garden.”

The girls didn’t think Willa was silly to talk to a bird. Willa understood animals, and this robin seemed to understand Willa perfectly.

Too-wheet!

The robin puffed out its red chest, lifted its little bill, and sang.

Emerson rose up on her toes and flapped her hands excitedly. “I’ve made up a song,” she announced. She stood under the tree and flung her arms out wide. Looking up at the robin, she sang to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”:

*Sing to us your song so sweet,
Song so sweet, song so sweet.
Sing to us your song so sweet:
Too-wheet, too-wheet, too-wheet.*

*Since you’re back we know it’s spring,
Know it’s spring, know it’s spring.
Since you’re back we know it’s spring.
Too-wheet, too-wheet, too-wheet.*

As if delighted, the robin fluttered its feathers and trilled with gusto—

*Too-wheet!
Too-wheet!*

Emerson smiled and said, “It’s fun to sing along with a fine feathered friend like our robin!”