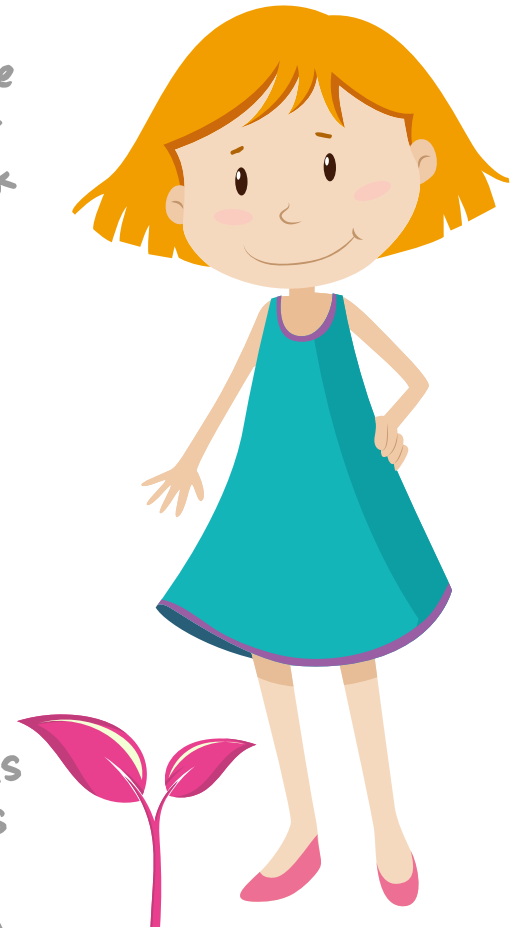


The Magic Seedling

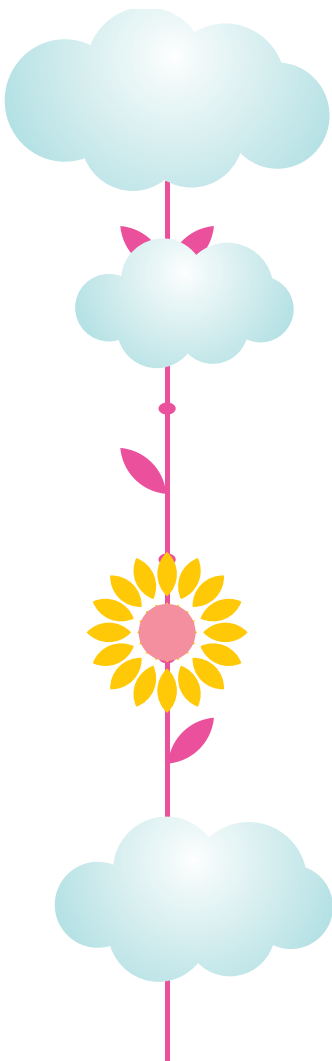
There was something a little strange about the seedling that Sarah found growing next to her garden fence - for one thing it was bright pink and for another it was growing faster than she could keep up with! Every night it grew a metre more!

By the end of the week it was like Jack's Beanstalk: it had grown high above the rooftops and disappeared into the clouds!



Sarah stood in the garden one morning and stared up at the enormous pink plant who's top was quite out of sight. Little nodules sprouted from its stem like footholds - it was just asking to be climbed! So Sarah, wondering what might be at the top, did just that.

Up and up she climbed, right up through the damp, cold clouds and still the plant towered above her, the top nowhere in sight. When she finally emerged through the clouds, she saw a beautiful golden flower glittering in the bright sunshine.



The Magic Seedling

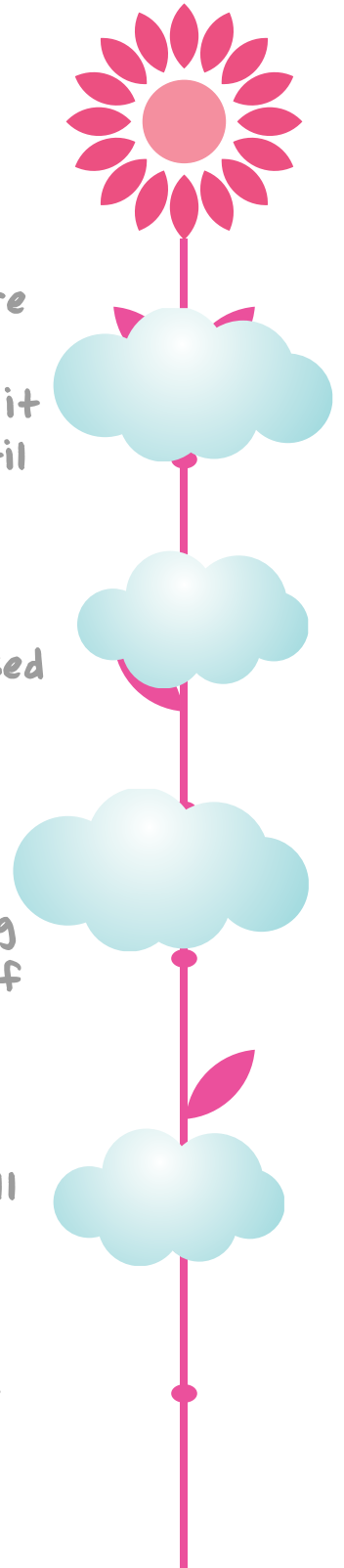
"That looks like real gold!" Thought Sarah. "I could pick it up now and go back home and I would be rich beyond my wildest dreams!" But Sarah was curious and the adventurous type... and the plant still stretched

high above her. Taking one more glance at the golden flower, Sarah decided to leave it where it was and carried on climbing until she reached the pink, feathery top of the plant.

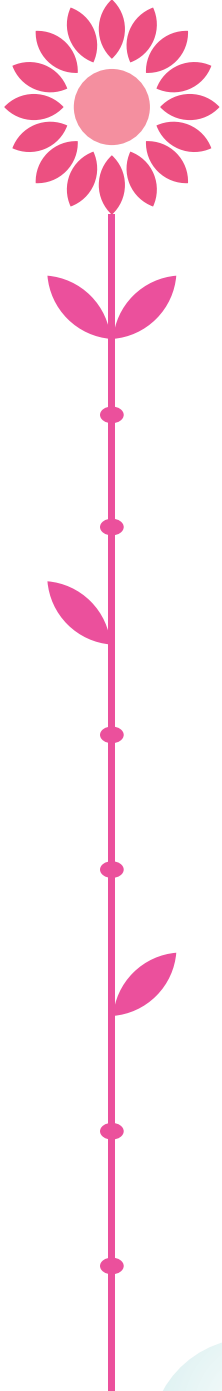
She was not really very surprised when she found that she could step right off the plant and onto the cloud surrounding it. She had expected there to be a grand castle too, but something quite different appeared out of the mist to greet her instead.

It was clearly a Wizard. He wore a splendid cloak in a deep midnight blue covered with golden stars, and a tall blue conical hat to match.

They stared at each other for what seemed like an awfully long time, until finally the Wizard said, "Have you anything in your pocket?"



The Magic Seedling



"N... Not much", Sarah replied nervously, remembering the golden flower she had been so tempted to pick up. The wizard set about looking in her pockets, and found a handkerchief, a bouncing ball and small gummy bears she had taken from the sweet jar in the kitchen this morning whilst her Mum wasn't looking.

"No golden flower?" Asked the Wizard.

Sarah shook her head, "oh dear", she thought, "was I supposed to bring that with me?" But to her surprise the Wizard laughed delightedly.

"Splendid!" He said. "That's why you are the only person to have ever reached the top of the plant. Everyone else who has climbed it has always stopped to pick the golden flower and taken it home. Not that it did them any good, for as soon as their feet touched the ground at the bottom, it turned to dust."



The Magic Seedling

"At last I have met someone who's natural curiosity is greater than their greed!"

The Wizard then took a small wooden box from his pocket and handed it to Sarah. "Inside this box is another seed. Plant it and look after it carefully, and it will soon grow to be as tall as a sunflower and will bloom all year round.



Don't give it any water, it doesn't need any but clean the leaves regularly with metal polish, and sing a lullaby to it each night."

Sarah thanked the Wizard and waved goodbye, before turning and quickly climbing back down the plant. Once she reached the bottom, she did exactly what the Wizard had said, and planted the new seed in the garden by the fence. Before long, a small, bright pink shoot had appeared, and Sarah patiently cleaned its leaves and sang to it every night before bed.

Would you believe it? By the end of the summer, Sarah had picked bunch after bunch of pure golden flowers, and had everything she could have ever dreamt of - all because she hadn't been greedy.

