

Arthur falls through the World

A story about the right to be
who you are



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LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de l'Éducation nationale,
de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse

Deep in the forest, on a thick old oak tree, lived Arthur. He was not particularly small and not particularly big. He was neither fat nor thin, his beak was neither too short nor too long, and his round eyes glowed bright yellow, just as befits an owl. His flight speed was average, his wings normally strong, his feathers medium brown and his ears pointed, but not too pointed.



A very ordinary forest owl, you say?

Certainly not! Arthur was anything but common...


For Arthur liked nothing better than to sing. He performed all his favourite songs, from classical to pop and rap and also his own songs, from morning to evening. And how he loved to dance! He shook himself, swivelled, fluttered his wings, moved his head wildly back and forth until it made him dizzy. And because he figured that as an artist you also need a suitable costume, he put together a colourful feather dress.



Not everyone in the forest however liked that.

“He’ll get over all that howling and jumping around”,
reckoned Jackie the squirrel.





Monique the magpie shook her head angrily. **“He is nuts!”**, she mumbled. Others, like the wild boars, Mike the hedgehog and Nello the worm, did not know what to think.

Just a few animals were enthusiastic. Carlos and Kiki the frogs danced for hours to Arthur’s songs. And Jeannie the mouse laughed until her tummy hurt.

But his biggest fan, Arthur’s most loyal companion, was Lizzie the little red butterfly.

“Yippee, Arthur has a new song”, she rejoiced. **“And super cool feathers! Arthur, you’re amazing!”** She enthusiastically twirled and somersaulted through the air.

But then there was someone who absolutely could not stand Arthur: the huge and scary Albert.

“You should be ashamed of yourself!”

Albert could look super mean, and his voice was thunderous.

“Move into space with your stupid circus show, you crazy fool!” Or: **“Your bright colours dazzle me and hurt my eyes.”** When Albert told Arthur off so badly, the forest became very quiet. Everyone was afraid of Albert.


So much so that no one dared to take Arthur’s side. On the contrary. Jackie said that Albert was right, the magpie applauded, and the wild boars waved “Yes”. The mouse stuck its head in the ground and the worm disappeared in its hole. Only one, Lizzie, the small, delicate butterfly, had the courage to answer.

“Let him be as he is! You’re not fair, Albert!”

Albert was beside himself.

“Just wait you pathetic fancy-pants midge. When I catch you, I’ll make butterfly mash out of you. You cheeky lout!”

What Arthur said to that, you ask?



Arthur said nothing.
He was startled and afraid.



However in the evening, when he sat quietly on the tree, he gathered all his courage and wrote a song.

“Man!

**Pink, blue, purple bright
Mustard yellow, spotted, striped!**

Yay, I’m a crazy spinning top!

**I never want to stop
Singing and whistling
Dancing and hopping**

**Glittering in colour
Beautifully stellar**

Yay I’m a crazy spinning top!

Not normal?

Poppy cop!

I am me.

You are you.

You are not me.

And I not you.

All different

All the same

It’s ok

Don’t be like that, yo!

Just let it go!”





The more often Albert heard the song, the angrier he became.

And one day he was so cross that, with his thick beak, he bit through the branch on which Arthur was happily singing with Lizzie on his shoulder.



The frogs croaked in shock, Jackie's mouth hung open, the magpie flapped its wings, the mouse stuck its head in the ground, the wild boars quickly fled, and the worm crawled away.

Albert laughed out loud when the branch fell together with Arthur and Lizzie.

On the hard ground. Where you usually stop falling. But not Arthur and Lizzie. They fell into a hole, then into a long, black tunnel.

For minutes they slipped and slid... At such a crazy pace that they could neither speak nor look nor think. If you fall through the world, that's normal.

Believe it or not, Arthur and Lizzie actually really fell straight through the whole world: in on one side in the middle of the forest, and out of the other, through a toilet, bada bing bada boom along a chimney, straight into the sky, past some dumbstruck crows and blackbirds, on and on,...



... until they landed in one swoop,
clonky plonk
in a waddy heap of foam.





“Surprised, aren’t you? Mozzarella’s my name”,
meowed a cat with just one ear as Arthur stuck his
head out of the cloud.

“Welcome to the coolest cloud ever!”,
said a blue fish with big wings.

“Hello, I’m Lucy, the extraordinary spotted unipig! And the fish, that’s Fly”, another cloudie added.

Arthur and Lizzie, carefully peeping from the foam ball, marvelled, their mouths open.

“Don’t worry, you two! Everyone is welcome in our cloudie community!”, said a common grey rat who introduced herself as Lilith.

“But how did you actually get here?”, Fly asked curiously.

Arthur and Lizzie told them their story.

“Oh dear, this is indeed what happened to most of us”, stated Lucy. **“To me, they always said that there is no such thing as a unipig. That’s why they didn’t want me to stay with them.”**



“And I was told, that I ought not to have wings”, said Fly.

“I wanted to marry a mouse, then they chased me away”, added the rat sadly.

“They found me ugly”, meowed the cat.

“And I think cats are cool. A scandal!”, a violet sparrow cheeped indignantly.

“I just wanted to be me”, lamented Arthur.
“But that wasn’t ok.”

The cloudies comforted him and Lizzie, who was sniffling sadly.

“With us, everyone can be what they want and how they want to be. Look, we are all different. But every single one of us is amazing!”, assured the cat.

Arthur and Lizzie were happy that they were allowed to stay. No one here was upset about them. When Arthur sang, the others sang along, and when he danced, they danced along. And everyone was delighted with his colourful feathers.





It was a great time, and Arthur could have lived on the cloud forever. If he hadn't suddenly felt a peculiar feeling in this heart.

All those memories of his beautiful forest and his favourite tree. He thought of the animals, Carlos and Kiki the cheerful frogs, Jeannie the mouse, who always smiled, Nello the shy worm, Mike the quiet hedgehog and the fearful wild boars.

He even missed Jackie and Monique a little. Arthur often had tears in his eyes.

"You're homesick!", declared Lucy the unipig one morning.

"I just want to be who I am. At home, in my forest. On my tree. With the animals I know", Arthur sniffed.

"And that wicked Albert!? Are you going back voluntarily!?", Lizzie squealed frightened. **"I am scared!"**

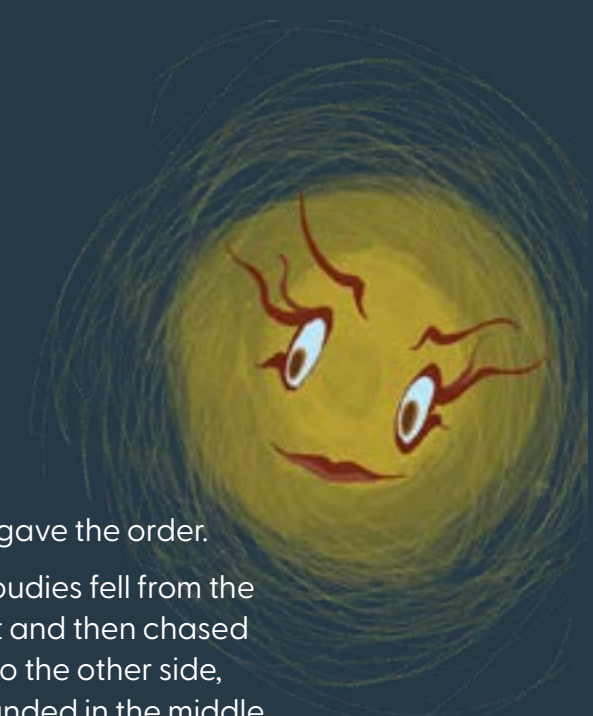


“Don’t worry!” , Mozzarella reassured them.
“You are not alone. We’re coming too!”
But first we’ll get ready!”, announced Lilith.

Posters were painted. Pea whistles crafted. T-shirts sprayed. Caps stitched.

And all together they rehearsed Arthur’s
“I am me” song.





When they were ready, Mozzarella gave the order.
And wham, the cloud with all the cloudies fell from the sky through the chimney into a toilet and then chased for hours through the whole world, to the other side, where it came out of the hole and landed in the middle of Arthur's tree.

Together they began to sing in the cloud tree.

Together they took out the posters.

On them was written:

I am me.


Tolerance!

We love Arthur!

Respect!

Albert almost burst with anger. He shrieked and whinged. When he noticed that all the forest animals were singing along, he went on his way, dismayed.





The frogs, the mouse and the worm danced for joy. For the first time, even the wild boars ventured out from behind the hedge.

Mike the hedgehog's prickles sparkled, and even Jackie looked relieved. **"I didn't want that to happen. It was dead boring without you. I'm sorry that I was so mean"**, Monique the magpie apologised.

"We simply didn't have the courage to stand by you", admitted one of the wild boars. **"That was not right. From now on, we will do better."**

And Arthur?

He was happy that he was back home and could sing and dance again where he best loved to do so.

This book was created in collaboration with Anja di Bartolomeo and Giulia Helminger for the International Children's Rights Day 2023.



Arthur is a joyful owl. Unfortunately, not every animal in the forest likes Arthur being the way he is. But Arthur doesn't mind - until one day an animal attacks Arthur...

Arthur's story is about finding one's place in the world and not having to be afraid of being bullied. The story is about courage, friendship and respect and how to stand up for yourself and your friends.

Like Arthur, you also have your own personality that needs to be protected, supported and nurtured. And like Arthur, you can be who you are, feel comfortable and surprise others with your strengths. You will be supported in this.

Because all people have rights – including you! You even have special children's rights!

Children's rights are included in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country in the world has promised to uphold these rights. Also Luxembourg! It is about the right to education, protection, leisure, a clean environment and the right to express one's opinion.

In order to be able to live your rights, you must of course first know them. Take a look here with your parents:



Luxembourg has an action plan with over 60 actions, all of which are intended to help protect your rights:



Some children experience that their rights are not respected or protected, or are in a situation where someone else wants to harm them. If you or someone you know is in such a situation, make sure to talk to someone you trust. You can also ask for help from the following services that are especially for children:

Kanner- a Jugendtelefon:

<https://www.kjt.lu/en/> Tel: 116 111

Ombudsman fir Kanner a Jugendlecher:

<https://www.okaju.lu/en/> Tel: 26 12 31 24

Office national de l'enfance:

<https://www.officenationalenfance.lu/en/> Tel: 8002-9393

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