THE LAND OF CURIOSITY

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PREFACE

THE LAND OF CURIOSITY has evolved over the past several years as a result of discussions I have had with groups of 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. It all began many years ago in my daughter's 4th grade class. I wanted the group with whom I met once a week to think about rules. So I wrote a little episode about The Basic Rule. The responses to this episode were used as a basis for another episode, this one dealing with The Golden Rule. Responses to that episode led to yet another one on rules.

The names of many of the characters in THE LAND OF CURIOSITY reflect behavior I observed in my daughter's class. I suspect that many of the students still recall who they were in the early episodes. Certainly Jumpy, Slumpy, Wiggle, and Giggle do. From a discussion of rules we turned to assumptions. I presented some "particularly puzzling problems" which require us to question some basic assumptions that interfere with coming up with a solution. Again I used the children's responses as a basis for constructing an episode. Eventually, Jumpy and her friends took on lives of their own as they presented themselves to other groups of students. As thought of new ideas to explore with other children, I continued to invite them to suggest ways in which the characters might deal with philosophical issues. Can a computer lie? Can a machine think? Can it have feelings? Are we really free to make choices? Do all questions have answers? Many of the questions came from me. But many came from the children, with responses that were a regular source of delight and surprise to me.

So, I have had lots of help writing this story – and lots of fun. Hundreds of students have joined me in thinking about thinking by listening to parts of my story and sharing their responses with me. I thank them all for the pleasure and philosophical stimulation our discussions have given me.

CHAPTER ONE
THE MISSING FLOUR

"Impossible!" cried the Professor. "I just filled it this morning. How can it be gone already?" But all he found in his flour bin was a rather peculiar note:

Dear Professor,
"The name of the thief is MacPhee,"
said Edgeworth with obvious glee.
"Oh, what a lie!"
MacPhee did cry.
"But," added Lee, "it couldn't be me!"
Aside from me, the suspects are three. Edgeworth, MacPhee, and Lee. Only one has said what is true. The rest, dear friend, is up to you.
Truthfully yours,
Detective Deductus

"Great!" groaned the Professor, "All these silly rhymes! Why can't Deductus ever give me a straight answer instead of just a bunch of clever clues?" He read the note again, pacing back and forth in his little kitchen. "Only one has said what is true," repeated the Professor. "Which one could it be?" Soon he decided that he must take a walk to help him think more clearly. But the harder he thought, the more puzzled he became. And the more puzzled he became, the more he lost track of where he was walking.

Suddenly the Professor noticed it was getting dark. As he looked about, he realized that he had no idea where he was. He knew that this time he was really in trouble. He had been lost before, but never this late in the day.

As the Professor became more and more worried, he noticed someone approaching him on the road. "Excuse me," asked the Professor, "could you please tell me where the nearest village is? I seem to be lost, and I need someplace to spend the night."

"That's no problem," replied the stranger. "Straight ahead is a fork in the road. Keep to the right, and you'll find an abode."

"Ah," sighed the Professor. "Thank you very much. I'm from the Land of Ideas. Can you tell me where I am?"

"You must really be lost! This is the Land of Curiosity. Let me introduce myself. I'm called Squeezer. That's because I'm always squeezing things." As he spoke, he pulled a sponge from his pocket and gave it a few squeezes.

"Well, I'm called the Professor. I'm afraid I've forgotten why I'm called that. Let's see now, you said that when I get to the fork in the road I should turn left?"

"No, since it's nearly night, go to the right."

"I have such a terrible memory. I'm sure I'll forget which way to go!"

"Well, let me put your mind at rest so you'll be your very best. When you reach the fork, you'll meet my good friend Teaser. He'll tell you the way."

"That's a relief," the Professor replied. "Thank you very much again for your help."

"My pleasure, I'm sure. But I must give you fair warning, or you'll be lost until morning. Since Teaser's from Duluth, he'll tell you the truth – unless he finds it pleasing to engage in some teasing."

"Then how will I tell which way to go?" cried the Professor, who once again began to worry.

"Just remember this. My name is spelled with a 'z,' which makes it quite unusual. Teaser has always wished his name had a 'z' in it, too. Ask him if he spells his name with a 'z'. If he says he does, you'll know he is in a playful mood. So you should go in the opposite direction he tells you."

"If I can just remember that until I reach the fork in the road," said the Professor, "it should be easy to figure out which way to go." So, he continued on his way, happy that before long he would find a place to spend the night. Soon he came to a fork in the road, where he was greeted by a most friendly fellow.

Of course, by now the Professor had forgotten which way he had been told to go. So, he asked, "Could you please tell me the way to the nearest village?"

"Glad to be of service. So, please don't be nervous. Since it's nearly night, don't turn to the right."

"Such a friendly, cheerful person," thought the Professor, as he turned to the left. But he went only a few steps before he remembered, "That was Teaser!" "Was he telling me the truth, or was he just teasing?"

The Professor quickly turned back and asked very firmly, "I say, do you spell your name with a 'z'?"

"Why, indeed, I do. How nice of you to ask. Of course, I'm very pleased to have such an unusual name."

"As well you should be," replied the Professor. "You've helped me more than you can imagine." With a knowing smile, he turned to the right and began walking toward the village.

At least he *thought* he was walking toward the village. But the further he walked, the darker it got. The Professor began to worry again. "Where are the village lights?" he wondered. "Could I be going the wrong way, after all?"

As he continued walking, the Professor had a very troubling thought. "How do I know that the person I met at the fork in the road was Teaser? What if the first person I met actually was Teaser pretending to be Squeezer? And what if the person at the fork of the road was Squeezer – whose name *does* have a 'z' in it? Then the village is really to the left . . . "

But just as the Professor was about to turn around, he saw a light. Soon he saw a very welcome sign.

STAY AT THE HEAVENLY HOTEL
FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

Once he settled into his room, the Professor stretched out on his bed and began thinking about who took his flour. He looked at Detective Deductus's note one more time. But by now he was so weary that he just laid back on his bed, shut his eyes, and softly murmured, "Maybe tomorrow I'll be able to figure it out."

CHAPTER TWO
A PARTICULARLY PUZZLING PROBLEM

As the Professor entered the hotel lobby the next morning, he noticed a bright, yellow box. Printed on the box in bold, green letters was:

PARTICULARLY PUZZLING PROBLEMS

"What a curious box," thought the Professor. "I wonder what could be in it."

Just then Squeezer, Teaser, and several of their friends marched into the lobby and went right up to the box. "Who gets to pick the puzzle this time?" asked Wiggle.

When he saw the Professor, Teaser shouted out, "We can't lose if we let the Professor choose!"

"What will I be choosing?" asked the Professor.

"Just reach into the box and grab a puzzle," replied Squeezer. "Then it will grab you back, and we'll join the attack!"

When the Professor showed them the puzzle, at first no one said anything at all.

> SOMEWHERE IN THIS PARAGRAPH IS A WORD OF MORE THAN TWO LETTERS THAT READS THE SAME WHEN REFLECTED IN A MIRROR. YOU HAVE A CHOICE OF MORE THAN TWENTY WORDS. GUESS WHICH WORD IT IS.

"I've got it. I've got it," insisted Slumpy. "The word 'A' looks the same either way!"

"But," protested Pinch, "that word has *less* than two letters. We need a word with *more* than two letters." Again everyone was silent.

Finally Jumpy urged, "We're going to have to use our imagination. We all know what happens to words when they are put in front of a mirror. They get turned upside down . . . "

"No, they don't," corrected Giggle. "They get reversed!"

"Oh, that's what I meant to say," Jumpy replied, as her face began to turn red. Suddenly she jumped up and did a cartwheel. Then she stopped and stood on her head.

"She said what she meant, and she meant what she said, half of her time is spent on her head," Teaser teased.

Everyone continued to look quietly at the puzzle. Finally Teaser impatiently announced, "Never fear, I'll get a mirror!" But this, it was agreed, would not be fair. They must first try to figure it out without a mirror.

"Look," said Stretch, "it seems to me that we have to find a word that is spelled the same frontwards and backwards, like the word 'DAD.'

"But the word 'DAD' isn't in the paragraph," complained Slumpy.

"I know," replied Stretch, "it's just an example."

"But even if the word 'DAD' were in the paragraph, it wouldn't work," added Wiggle.

"Why not?" asked Squeezer.

"Well," continued Wiggle, "when you hold a word up to a mirror, it's not just the word that gets turned around. The letters do too. So the 'D's would be backwards."

"So, we have to find a word whose letters look the same when turned around too," concluded Giggle, "like the word 'MOM.' "

"Let's see," said Stretch, "the word 'TWO' might work."

"No, that would be 'OWT,' " Wiggle replied. "And 'YOU' would be 'UOY.' "

"I've got it!" grinned Punch. "It's 'THAT.'"

Everyone looked to see which word Punch was pointing at. But she was not pointing at anything. So, Pinch demanded, "It's *what?*"

"It's that 'THAT,' " repeated Punch.

"How are we supposed to know what word you mean if you just say 'It's that'? Point to the one you mean," insisted Pinch.

"It's *that* 'THAT' that I had in mind." Punch pointed to the word 'THAT.'

"That won't work," objected Giggle. "When you reverse 'THAT' you get 'TAHT.' "

"And," added Squeezer, "if you say 'TAHT,' I'll say 'WHAT'?"

"The problem can't be solved," Punch pronounced. "There aren't any more words that can be turned around without some letters being backwards." Everyone went carefully over each word again, and they agreed with Punch. It cannot be solved, they thought.

Once again, Jumpy leapt to her feet and did a cartwheel and stood on her head. And once again Teaser had to tease. "If you stand on your head, your face will turn red. And if you rest on your crown, you'll see upward as down."

"Upward as down? Come on Teaser, that doesn't even make sense," said Wiggle.

"Sure it does," said Jumpy. "Everything looks upside down right now."

"Let her look at the paragraph while she's standing on her head," Squeezer joked. "Maybe she can see it better that way!" Pinch laughed loudly and held the paragraph in front of Jumpy.

Just as Pinch was pulling away the paragraph, Jumpy said, "Wait! Let me look a little longer." Suddenly she said, "Even though all the words are upside down, some of the letters look right side up!"

"Let's see," said Wiggle, as she snatched the paper from Pinch. Everyone crowded around her to see the paragraph upside down.

"What would happen," asked Giggle, "if we held the paragraph upside down in front of a mirror?"

"Well," suggested Stretch, "all these letters that look backward would look forward again. But a lot of them would still be upside down."

"It's 'CHOICE,' it's 'CHOICE!' " Jumpy burst out. "Look at it upside down. All of its letters are backward, but none of them look upside down. If we held it up to a mirror, everything would get turned around and be right!"

Everyone was stunned. As they stared at 'Choice,' one by one they began nodding their heads in agreement. That was it! The word had to be 'CHOICE.' But could they be sure?

They all looked at the word again. Finally, Squeezer said, "Alright, Teaser, now you can bring a mirror. Let's check this out to make sure."

"We don't really need a mirror," said Wiggle. "Just turn the paper upside down and then turn it around and hold it up to a light."

Everyone could see that Jumpy had been right. But it was obvious that Slumpy was not happy about what had happened. "It's not fair," he complained. "Nothing said the paragraph could be turned upside down." Wiggle and Giggle agreed.

"Still, nothing said it couldn't be turned upside down," replied Squeezer. "When nothing seems to work, sometimes we have to try to figure out a different way of looking at things."

Everyone smiled and turned to Jumpy, who once again was standing on her head. And they thought that, perhaps, at least once in a while, standing on your head might not be so bad after all.

CHAPTER THREE
THE BASIC RULE

Jumpy was very pleased that she had discovered the answer to the particularly puzzling problem. Now she was glad that she had said that words are turned upside down when reflected in a mirror. "After all," she said, "I gave a clue at the very beginning about how to find the answer."

"But," objected Stretch, "you didn't *know* that you were giving us a clue. So, you weren't really giving us a clue at all. You just made a lucky mistake."

"Yes," added Squeezer, "we still had to figure it all out for ourselves."

"What do you mean 'figure it all out for ourselves'?" asked Slumpy. "We were just lucky. It was just because Teaser and Pinch were joking around with Jumpy. They didn't know that would help us get the answer."

"Still, we did come up with the answer on our own. We didn't use a mirror," countered Punch.

"That's not the same as figuring it out for yourself. Jumpy just saw the answer," replied Slumpy. "It's not like she added up numbers or anything like that."

"Well," asked Giggle, "what does it mean to figure something out anyway? Didn't we figure out some things? Like what the difference is between holding 'DAD' and 'MOM' up to a mirror."

"I don't know about my Mom" jested Teaser, "but I'm sure my Dad's too heavy to be held up to a mirror."

"Just because we were a little bit lucky to come up with the answer doesn't mean we were just guessing," said Wiggle. "A lot of the things we figured out really helped."

"Yes," added Giggle, "like when we figured out that none of the words were like 'MOM.' That told us we had to think about the puzzle in a different way."

"Besides," Wiggle continued, "maybe we're always a little bit lucky when we figure things out."

"Are we lucky when we figure out that 2 times 16 is 32?" asked Squeezer.

"Well," Wiggle replied, "I don't mean we're *always* lucky. I mean that maybe we're a little bit lucky when we figure out really hard problems. Sometimes we get stuck. Then all of a sudden an idea hits us – kind of like an accident."

Just then Punch fell out of her chair, banging into Pinch. Everyone laughed, for now Pinch had also fallen out of his chair, and Pinch and Punch lay in a heap on the floor with huge grins on their faces.

Suddenly Squeezer shouted, "The Basic Rule! We must remember the Basic Rule!" So, when Pinch punched Punch, Squeezer proclaimed, "The Basic

Rule says that what is fair for one is fair for all. So, Punch should now pinch Pinch."

Instead, Punch punched Pinch. "How confusing," the Professor thought. "If Pinch pinches Punch and Punch punches Pinch, then Pinch should punch Punch and Punch should pinch Pinch." Now this was no problem for Pinch and Punch, for they really were very much alike. Pinch liked to punch almost as much as Punch liked to pinch. So, when Punch punched Pinch, Pinch punched Punch. And, of course, since Pinch had punched Punch, Punch pinched Pinch.

"But," thought Teaser, "it wouldn't really be fair if only Pinch and Punch pinched and punched. Everyone should pinch and punch." So, he cleared his throat and loudly announced, "What's fair for one is fair for all! If one pinches, we all pinch! And if one punches, we all punch!"

"But," cried Jumpy, "I don't want to be pinched or punched!" She was so upset that she jumped right out of her seat onto the table.

"What is fair for one is fair for all," repeated Teaser. "So, if one jumps we all jump!"

"What if I don't want to jump?" asked Slumpy, as he slumped into Squeezer. "Then I'll squeeze you," shouted Squeezer, who liked to jump almost as much as he liked to squeeze.

"Hmm," pondered the Professor. "If one slumps, we all slump. And if one squeezes, we all squeeze."

"That's not fair!" exclaimed Wiggle as she wiggled into Giggle. "I don't like to . . . " But before she could finish, Stretch interrupted, "Teaser is saying nasty things about me to Squeezer." And with that, he stretched a rubber band until it snapped.

"What is fair for one is fair for all!" insisted Squeezer. "If one wiggles, we all wiggle. If one interrupts, we all interrupt. If one squeezes, we all squeeze . . . " But by now there was so much confusion that no one could hear what anyone was saying. Everyone was pinching and punching, slumping and jumping, squeezing and teasing, wiggling and giggling, and stretching and interrupting – until finally everyone was so exhausted that no one could move.

"This is silly," said Wiggle. "The Basic Rule is making everyone of us do something we don't want to do, and no one is really having fun."

"Right!" said Slumpy. "What is fair for one is fair for all. If *one* of us has to do something unpleasant, we *all* must do something unpleasant."

"Isn't that a little bit foolish?" replied Stretch. "Instead of having rules that are bad for everyone, why not have rules that are good for everyone?"

"Yes," agreed Wiggle. "We should be able to figure out how to be fair and have fun at the same time."

"If you're so bright, then set us right," said Teaser.

"There he goes again," mumbled Slumpy. "Every time it's a silly rhyme."

"How outrageous – It's contagious!" shouted Squeezer.

"I have a hunch it's time for lunch," added Wiggle with a wink.

"Or," grinned Stretch, "at the very least, a mid-day feast. But, after some chow, we'll show you how!"

CHAPTER FOUR
THE GOLDEN RULE

After lunch, Wiggle announced, "Squeezer said that if one of us pinches, we all must pinch. But that isn't right. If one of us pinches, then all of us *may* pinch. But we don't *have* to pinch if we don't want to."

"Why not?" asked Pinch, who really liked the idea of everyone pinching. "What is fair for one is fair for all. So, if one pinches, we *do* all have to pinch." And with that he reached out for Wiggle.

"Well," Wiggle replied, as she wiggled away from Pinch, "I think you're saying that only because *you* like to pinch. What if some of us don't want to pinch?"

"Or don't want to be pinched," added Giggle.

"Remember the spinach we had for dinner last night?" continued Wiggle. "If it was fair for one of us to have some spinach, it was fair for all of us to have some spinach. But I don't like spinach. So, I decided I didn't *have* to eat my share, and I gave it to Stretch."

"But I *hate* spinach," cried Stretch. "I wondered where all that green glop came from. It took me *forever* to finish eating it!"

"It wasn't fair to skip your share," said Teaser.

"Especially since all of us were *supposed* to eat our spinach before getting dessert," Jumpy concluded.

Punch frowned and shook her head: "Even if Wiggle is wrong about the spinach, I still think she has a good point. We all had ice cream for dessert. But since Squeezer didn't want his, he gave it to Teaser."

"If ice cream isn't Squeezer's pleasure, I'll eat his for double measure," added Teaser.

"I get it!" shouted Jumpy. "If one of us *has* to do it, like eat our spinach, then all of us have to do it. But if it's something like eating ice cream, then if one of us may do it, all of us *may* do it, too. But no one *has* to do it."

"Okay," said Punch. "No one has to punch. But if it's all right for me to punch, it's all right for anyone to punch." And with that she punched Jumpy.

"But I don't want to be punched," complained Jumpy.

"Then jump!" squealed Pinch, giving her a pinch.

"Please stop," pleaded the Professor. "How can we discuss this with all this pinching and punching and . . . " But before he could finish, he was pushed into Slumpy, who by now was quite grumpy.

"I think we need some more rules," Slumpy mumbled. "We aren't going to get anywhere this way."

"I agree," nodded Wiggle. "I don't think we're being fair. But even if we are, we're certainly not all having fun. Even though Pinch likes to pinch, Jumpy doesn't like being pinched. And even though Punch likes to punch, she doesn't like being teased. And . . . "

"And," interrupted Teaser, "even though I don't mind being teased, I'm never pleased to be squeezed."

"How about the Golden Rule?" suggested Stretch. "It says we should treat others as we would want them to treat us."

"And," added Wiggle, "it says we shouldn't treat others as we wouldn't want them to treat us."

"But," said Pinch and Punch at the same time, "we like to have people pinch and punch us. So, we *are* treating others as we would want them to treat us."

"I don't think that's what the Golden Rule means," replied Jumpy. "Teaser might say to Punch, 'That's not how I want to be treated. How would you like it if I teased you?' You have to think about the other person, too."

"I don't get it," said Stretch. "If Punch punches Teaser and Teaser doesn't like it, then Teaser should tease Punch."

"But then they're both unhappy," said Giggle. "Wouldn't it be better if it never got started in the first place?"

"Right," agreed Jumpy. "Since we don't all like the same things, we have to think about how we are different from each other, too."

"So," Pinch added, "if I think it is bad for someone to make me unhappy, I should also think it is bad for me to make someone else unhappy."

"Sure," commented Wiggle, "but it isn't always easy to follow the Golden Rule. I remember when I bought my brother a birthday present, and he cried."

"Why did he cry?" asked Giggle.

"Because I told him I got him something really nifty. And I put it in an important looking box and wrapped it all up in pretty paper."

"What did you give him?" asked Punch.

"Three packs of baseball cards with bubble gum."

"Three packs!" yelled Stretch. "Wow! I sure wouldn't have cried about that."

"Neither would I," said Teaser. "Yum, yum! Bubble gum!"

"Sure," agreed Wiggle. "I like baseball cards, too. He even got the Tigers team picture. And the bubble gum was pretty good, too. But I forgot that my brother can't eat bubble gum because it's bad for his teeth. And he isn't interested in baseball at all."

"That's the point," concluded Jumpy. "To follow the Golden Rule, you have to think about what other people like. We're not all the same."

By now Slumpy had gotten over being grumpy, for he could see that they were getting somewhere. He liked the Golden Rule, and it seemed to him that the others did, too. Still, Slumpy thought they might need more rules if they were going to keep on sharing ideas. But that could wait until after dinner, for everyone was very hungry after a busy afternoon.

CHAPTER FIVE
MORE RULES?

After dinner everyone gathered to continue the discussion. The Professor began, "I think the Golden Rule is a very good rule. It's even helped me understand the Basic Rule a little better. But Slumpy thinks we need some more rules."

"Yes," Slumpy agreed, "we all like the Golden Rule. But since it's so hard to follow, maybe we should try to think of some rules that would help us follow it. Like . . . "

"Like what?" interrupted Giggle.

"Like, No Interrupting!" Slumpy continued.

"Like, Only Right-handed People Can Talk!" shouted Teaser.

"Only Left-handed People Can Talk," replied Jumpy.

"Only Thin People Can Talk," added Stretch.

"Only Short People Can Talk," proposed Pinch.

"Only . . . ," everyone began saying at once.

Of course, very soon everyone was shouting and booing and cheering and hissing. No one really could be said to be listening. All of this made Slumpy very grumpy again. He slumped against the Professor and said rather grumpily, "The problem is that even if someone had a good rule, no one else can hear what it is. How can we ever get started choosing rules if no one else knows what they are?"

"Quiet!" boomed Wiggle and Stretch together. Their voices were so loud that everyone was quite startled, and for a moment everyone was absolutely silent.

"Slumpy has a good point," Wiggle began. "He says we'll never agree on any rules as long as there is so much noise that we can't hear each other's suggestions."

"Everyone has rules to suggest," Stretch continued. "But there is so much confusion that we can hardly hear ourselves think. Can't we agree to take turns talking?"

"That's funny," said Squeezer. "You're suggesting we have to have a rule about taking turns before we can even get started making rules."

"What Stretch is saying," replied Punch, "is that if we can't agree to take turns, we'll never be able to get anywhere."

"Only a fool could reject that rule," jested Teaser.

"Let the Professor suggest some rules, and we'll vote on them," urged Stretch.

"Yes," nodded Giggle. "We have so many different ideas that it's hard for us to know where to begin."

The Professor wasn't sure what to suggest at first. Finally, he said, "I will recommend some rules if Stretch and Wiggle help me count the votes." Everyone agreed that this would be alright.

"Okay," the Professor proposed, "how about. No Whispering While Someone Else is Talking?"

Immediately four hands went up. But when Slumpy looked around to see how everyone had voted, he quickly pulled his hand down.

"How many are opposed to this rule?" asked the Professor. Four hands went up again. But this time Slumpy voted with the three who had kept their hands down before.

"It's four to three against the rule," announced Wiggle.

"How odd," commented Stretch. "The three in favor all raised their left hands. The four against all raised their right hands."

"That's because left-handers are ganders!" yelled Teaser.

"Hah!" countered Giggle. "Right-handers are geese!"

"The only reason Slumpy voted against the rule is that he was afraid to be against the rest of the right-handers," Punch complained. "He didn't vote the way he really thinks."

The Professor was puzzled. "I don't understand. It seems to me that right-handers and left-handers could all have interesting ideas to share."

"Not really," replied Teaser. "Have you ever laid eyes on a logical lefty?"

"Phooey!" exclaimed Giggle. "Have you ever met a reasonable righty?"

"Just a moment," said the Professor. "I just realized that two of you haven't voted. Wiggle and Stretch were so busy counting that they forgot to vote."

"Well," said Wiggle, "I've never really worried about whether I'm voting with a lefty or a righty. I always try to make the most logical choice. If whispering is allowed, it will get out of hand, and soon no one will be able to pay attention. I vote for the rule." And she raised her left hand.

"I would say that Wiggle is a logical lefty," added Stretch. "I always try to make the most reasonable choice. I think she has given a very good reason for the rule." And he raised his right hand.

"That settles it," the Professor concluded. "Five in favor and four against."

"Six in favor and three against," corrected Slumpy. "I guess it really doesn't matter whether you're right-handed or left-handed. I'm changing my vote."

"Likewise," said Teaser. "This is the time for my latest rhyme."

"If you disagree
just to be with your friends,
others will see
that you bend with the trends."

"Or," added Jumpy,
"If you agree
so you won't be thought defective,
others will see
that you're very unreflective."

CHAPTER SIX
SHARING IDEAS

Pinch was pleased that they had agreed on the new rules, but he was still somewhat puzzled. "These rules will help us be fair," he said. "But Wiggle said we should be able to figure out how to be fair and have fun, too. Where's the fun?"

"Didn't we have fun trying to figure out the puzzle about 'CHOICE'?" asked Wiggle. "We were being fair until you and Punch fell out of your chairs."

"We often have fun talking about ideas where I come from," said the Professor.

"What kinds of ideas?" asked Giggle.

For a moment the Professor couldn't think of anything to say. As he struggled to think of an answer, he cleared his throat several times as if he were about to say something. Suddenly an idea occurred to him. "We like to talk about thinking."

"You mean you like to think about talking," said Squeezer.

"No," corrected the Professor, "we like to think about thinking."

At first everyone sat quietly thinking. After a few moments, Slumpy turned to the Professor and said, "When I think about thinking, I think of myself sitting here thinking about thinking."

"I think of myself sitting here thinking about you thinking about thinking," added Squeezer.

"And I think of myself sitting here thinking about you thinking about Slumpy sitting there thinking about himself thinking about thinking," said Teaser.

Although the Professor found what Slumpy, Squeezer and Teaser said to be very interesting, it also made him rather dizzy. He wasn't at all sure he

understood what they were saying. "Actually, I had something a bit simpler in mind. For example, a while ago we talked about whether you figured out the answer to the mirror puzzle or whether you were just lucky. And just now I tried to figure out an answer to your question. But I couldn't do it. Then an idea just popped into my mind. I think there is a difference between figuring out an answer and just having it pop into my mind. But it isn't easy to explain what it is."

"And what about the difference between daydreaming and really dreaming?" added Stretch.

"For you, there isn't much difference at all," replied Teaser.

"Careful," said Stretch, "you might hurt my feelings!"

"Feelings!" exclaimed Squeezer. "Feelings are thoughts, too."

"Sure," agreed Giggle, "but how can you *hurt* somebody's feelings? *Where* are feelings, anyway?"

Clasping his heart, Pinch stood up and loudly proclaimed, "Me feelings come from me heart!"

Wrinkling his brow, Slumpy said, "My feelings are in my brain. But sometimes they're in my stomach when I'm nervous."

"Sometimes I'm not sure where my feelings are," puzzled Wiggle. "I know my headaches are in my head, and my toothaches are in my teeth. But when I'm feeling really happy or excited, I don't know where my feelings are – they're kind of everywhere."

"What I wonder," said Stretch, "is where my feelings come from. In fact, I wonder where all my thoughts come from."

"Well," added Jumpy, "I wonder where everything comes from. I came from my parents, and my parents came from their parents, and their parents came from their parents, and on and on. But where did it all start?"

"Maybe it didn't start," replied Slumpy. "Maybe it just goes on forever and ever – like numbers."

"I think it all started with God," said Stretch.

"But who made God?" asked Slumpy.

"Yes," continued Giggle, "since we all had to have parents, and our parents had to have parents, why wouldn't God have to have parents, too?"

"But God isn't like us," insisted Wiggle. "Besides, there *had* to be a beginning."

"What happened before the beginning?" asked Teaser. Everyone looked at him as if they thought he was just teasing again. But they could tell that this time Teaser was serious.

"What do you think, Professor?" asked Stretch.

The Professor scratched his head and frowned. "Sometimes I think there must have been a beginning. But then I always think of Teaser's question – what came before the beginning? So, I'm not sure what to say. But I do enjoy thinking about these questions anyway. And I think it's important to try to come up with answers, even if it's hard to do it."

"Are you saying that there are some questions that don't really have any answers?" asked Wiggle.

"Since all answers have questions, all questions must have answers," argued Teaser.

"That's like saying that since all daughters have mothers, all mothers have daughters," countered Punch.

"No," Giggle objected, "it's like saying that, since all children have parents, all parents have children."

"Well," said Slumpy, "I agree that all answers have questions, but I know there are some questions that don't have answers."

"Give us one!" challenged Stretch.

"Is there life in the center of the sun?" said Slumpy.

"Probably not, because it's too hot," replied Teaser.

"But since it's too hot for us to go there, how can we tell?" asked Slumpy.

"Maybe we can't go there to get the answer," said Wiggle, "but that doesn't mean there isn't an answer."

"How many trees are there?" suggested Jumpy.

"That's easy," said Giggle. "Just count them."

"But," Jumpy objected, "by the time you finish counting them, some will have died and fallen down, and some others will have begun to grow!"

"We'll count them at just one moment – there has to be an exact number at any given moment," insisted Stretch.

"That won't work," said Pinch. "Counting takes more than a moment. And during that time things change – in fact, everything is changing all the time!"

"How about this one," suggested Pinch. "Did God make time begin?"

"You should say," added Punch, "*If* there's a God, did He make time begin?"

"How many grains of sand can be found in all the land?" said Teaser.

"It'd take a long time, and we'd have to be *very* careful," admitted Giggle, "but if enough people helped out, they could be counted."

"We couldn't be *that* careful," Slumpy objected. "The sand would blow around in the wind, and the ones we counted would get mixed up with the others. How would we ever know if we had counted some more than once?"

"Even if we could count all the grains of sand on earth," said Wiggle, "we could never count all the grains of sand in the universe!"

"That would be infinity!" said Squeezer.

"There can't be an infinite number of grains of sand unless space is infinite, too," said Stretch.

"Why not?" asked Jumpy. "Any line, no matter how short, can still be divided in half, right on to

infinity. For example, take this ruler. It is 12 inches long. We can divide it in half and get two six inch lines. Then we can divide the six inch lines in half. And it goes on and on."

"But a grain of sand is too big for that," replied Slumpy. "If you lined up a bunch of grains of sand, it wouldn't take an infinite number to add up to 12 inches. It would take a lot, but not *that* many."

"Right," said Stretch. "So, if the amount of space is finite, an infinite number of grains of sand would have to fill up all the space."

"And it's pretty obvious that everything isn't sand," added Wiggle.

"Does space have limits?" asked Slumpy.

"It *has* to," answered Stretch. "Otherwise nothing could be in the middle of the universe. And everything would be just exactly as far from the limits of space as everything else – which means everything would be in just exactly the same place!"

"So, there has to be an edge of the universe," said Giggle.

"But suppose we could get right up to the edge," suggested Slumpy. "Then I should be able to throw a baseball beyond the edge, since there's nothing outside the universe to hold it back."

"Maybe something *inside* would hold it back – like gravity," replied Giggle.

"Where there's an inside, there's an outside," shouted Teaser. "And where there's an outside, there's space – forever and ever!"

By now it was getting late, and everyone was getting sleepy. Besides, the Professor needed a good night's rest before returning the next morning to the Land of Ideas. As the Professor was falling asleep, he realized that he still had not figured out who took his flour. "Perhaps," he thought, "my friends can help me before I set out for home."

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE FLOUR AGAIN

The next morning the Professor showed Detective Deductus's note to his new friends. "Who is this Detective Deductus?" asked Punch.

"She's a good friend of mine," replied the Professor. "She is also a very good detective. And she always tells me that she wants me to work at getting better at figuring things out. I'm sure that's why she gave me this little puzzle instead of just telling me who took the flour. But, I'm afraid she's gone too far this time. I just don't see how to figure it out."

"Well, let's try out some possibilities," suggested Pinch. "The note says that each suspect has made a statement, but only one is true. Let's check them out."

"Okay," said Wiggle, "the first statement is Edgeworth's. He says that MacPhee is the thief."

"Since MacPhee says that's a lie, the second statement says the opposite: MacPhee is not the thief," added Stretch.

"That means that one of those two statements must be the true one," concluded Jumpy. "Either MacPhee is the thief or he isn't the thief."

"That's obvious," said Slumpy. "But where does that get us? It's like saying, "Either Edgeworth is the thief or he isn't the thief.' "

"Or it's like saying 'Either Lee is the thief or he isn't the thief,' " agreed Giggle. "We're still stuck with three possibilities."

"What good are possibilities?" asked Slumpy. "Do you really think that looking at what is *possibly* true can tell us what *is* true?"

"Possibly," replied Pinch.

"I don't see how it's possible at all," grumbled Slumpy.

"Well," said Punch, "let's try it out. Possibly the first statement is the true one."

"Then it had to be MacPhee," concluded Squeezer.

"And that makes MacPhee's cry a lie," added Teaser.

"But if only one statement can be true," objected Stretch, "then Lee's statement has to be false. And, since Lee said he didn't take the flour, that would mean that he *did* take it. So, who was it, Lee or MacPhee?"

"Let's try the other possibility," Pinch proposed. "Maybe the second statement is the true one. Maybe Edgeworth did lie."

"Then it couldn't be MacPhee," said Squeezer.

"Now I can see that it must be Lee!" shouted Teaser.

"Right," agreed Wiggle. "Since Lee said he didn't do it, and his statement is false, he must have done it."

"Wait a minute," Slumpy protested. "What about the other possibility? What if Lee's statement is the true one?"

"But we know that two statements can't be true," said Jumpy. "And we already agreed that one of the first two statements has to be true. So, Lee's statement has to be false!"

"Now *anyone* can see that it had to be Lee," said Teaser triumphantly.

"And the third possibility is an impossibility!" said Squeezer with a puzzled frown.

Although the Professor listened very carefully to what everyone had said, he had to admit that he was still somewhat confused. So, they went through the puzzle again. This time the Professor concluded, "He's never baked a thing, but I must agree, it had to be Lee."

It was now time for the Professor to return home. He had enjoyed his stay in the Land of Curiosity, and he promised he would visit his new friends soon again. As he was leaving, he thanked everyone for their help in solving the flour mystery. He still could not imagine why Lee would want to take his flour. But he was certain that Detective Deductus would be impressed with their solution.

When the Professor reached his home, he saw a note in his mailbox:

> Dear Professor,
>
> I suppose that, by now, you are quite certain it had to be Lee. Nice try! But a good detective must examine *all* the possibilities. You've one to go before you'll know. You see, dear friend, it wasn't Lee! However, you can be assured, I've not uttered an untrue word.
>
> Cleverly (but truthfully) yours,
> Detective Deductus

"Impossible!" thought the Professor. "Either MacPhee is the thief or he isn't the thief. One of those statements *must* be true. What could be plainer than that? So it must be Lee!" The Professor was now very perplexed. He had been so certain that the puzzle was solved. But he was also certain that his good friend, Detective Deductus, would not lie to him – no matter how clever she tried to be. "What possibility could we have overlooked?" wondered the Professor.

CHAPTER EIGHT
RETURN TO THE LAND OF CURIOSITY

For the next several minutes the Professor tried to figure out what possibility he might have overlooked. But, no matter how hard he thought, it still seemed to him that he and his friends in the Land of Curiosity had considered all the possibilities. "It had to be Lee," thought the Professor. "But, then, how could everything Detective Deductus said in the notes be true? And I know she is truthful – and *very* clever. Something isn't right here, but what is it?"

Finally, the Professor decided that he must return to the Land of Curiosity to see if his friends could help him. As he set out, he remembered how he had gotten lost before – and how fortunate he was to end up in the Land of Curiosity. "I cannot expect to be so fortunate every time I get lost," thought the Professor. "Besides, this time my destination is the Land of Curiosity. So, I mustn't allow myself to become distracted and get lost again. Who knows where I might end up!"

With this firm resolve, the Professor carefully folded his notes and put them in his pocket. "I will not look at them until I arrive safely in the Land of Curiosity," the Professor said to himself. Still he couldn't help but think about the flour puzzle from time to time. And every time he did, he became more confused. Finally, he thought, "Surely I cannot get lost if I only take a little peek at my notes." So he took the notes out of his pocket.

Of course, this made the Professor think even harder about the puzzle. And the harder he thought about it, the faster he walked. But the faster he walked, the less he paid attention to where he was going. He walked faster and faster and faster – until finally he was huffing and puffing so much that he had to stop for a rest. Then he realized it had happened again. He was lost! Somewhere he must have made a wrong turn, for he knew that he had never been here before.

He began walking again, but this time very slowly. Soon he came to a fork in the road. He felt certain that one of these roads would take him to the Land of Curiosity. But which one? To his left was Apple Lane. To his right was Banana Lane. He remembered that there were many different kinds of fruit in the Land of Curiosity and that many streets were named after the kinds of fruit there. But he also remembered that Wiggle had told him that there was one kind of fruit that did not grow there. "Let's see," pondered the Professor, "what did she tell me? 'We've lots of apples but no bananas,' or was it, 'We've lots of bananas but no apples'? Oh, no! I can't remember!"

Just then, the Professor noticed a small building. As he approached it, he saw that there was a sign on the front door.

> INFORMATION INSIDE
> INSIDE YOU WILL FIND THREE COMPUTERS
> TO AID YOU IN FINDING YOUR WAY.
>
> WARNING
>
> Be careful. Not all of these computers are reliable. One always lies. One sometimes lies and sometimes tells the truth. Only one always tells the truth.

The Professor heaved a great sigh of relief and entered the building. Inside he saw three computers, each with its own name. Tic, Tac, and Toe. The Professor decided that he should first try to figure out which computer always tells the truth. "The rest," he thought, "will be easy."

The Professor thought it would help if he asked each computer the same question. But he made sure that he knew the answer so that he would be able to tell which computers were telling the truth and which were not. So, he asked, "Does 2 plus 2 equal 4?"

"Yes," answered Tic.

"No," answered Tac.

"Yes," answered Toe.

"Ah ha!" shouted the Professor, "Tac is the one who always lies, since Tic and Toe told the truth. But which one always tells the truth? That's what I want to know." The Professor wondered what would happen if he asked Tic and Toe which way leads to the Land of Curiosity. "Hm," he concluded, "if they give the same answer, I will know which way to go. Since one of them always tells the truth, if they both give the same answer, they will both be telling the truth." So, he asked each computer. "Which way will lead to the Land of Curiosity, Apple or Banana?"

"Banana," answered Tic.

"Apple," answered Toe.

"That's what I was afraid would happen," cried the Professor. Then he had another idea. "I will ask Tic if Toe ever lies, and I'll ask Toe if Tic ever lies."

"Yes," answered Tic.

"Yes," answered Toe.

"Phooey!" fumed the Professor. "I still can't tell which one always tells the truth." Sadly, the Professor sat down to think some more. But the more he thought about it, the more he realized that he would never come up with a way of telling which computer tells the truth only some of the time. "Even if it lies once in a while," the Professor thought, "it might never lie to me. Or even if it does, I might have to wait an awfully long time for it to happen – and even then I might not be able to tell that it's a lie."

Finally the Professor grew weary of thinking and he fell asleep. While he was fast asleep, he had a rather peculiar dream. He dreamed that Tic and Toe were talking about him:

"He's going about this in the wrong way, you know," said Tic.

"Indeed, indeed," said Toe.

"He should know that Tac lies too much," added Tic.

"Much too much," said Toe.

"If Tac is going to lie all the time, the Professor should believe just the opposite of whatever Tac says," concluded Tic.

"Agreed, agreed," said Toe.

Just then the Professor awoke. He remembered his dream and knew exactly what to do. He asked Tac, "Will Apple Lane lead me to the Land of Curiosity?"

"No," replied Tac.

"That's it!" said the Professor excitedly. "The answer's plain – it's Apple Lane!" So, he bounded out of the little building, turned onto Apple Lane and set out for the Land of Curiosity. At least he *thought* that was where he was headed. But he walked, and he walked, and he walked . . .

"Surely I should have arrived at the Land of Curiosity by now," thought the Professor. "Could something have gone wrong? That doesn't seem possible. The computers told me everything I needed to know."

Suddenly the Professor groaned loudly. "How can I be sure that what the sign on the door said is true? Maybe someone put it there as a joke. I've just assumed that the sign was reliable. What if none of the computers lie all the time? Then where will my reasoning have gotten me? Right here, lost on a road that might take me anywhere!"

CHAPTER NINE
LUCKY AGAIN?

Just as the Professor was about to conclude that he was going the wrong way, he saw a familiar figure. It was Squeezer! Then he saw that he had almost reached the place where he and Squeezer had first met. The Professor heaved a great sigh of relief, and he squeezed Squeezer's hand so hard that even Squeezer found it hard to keep his fingers from getting crushed.

Once they arrived at the village, the Professor explained to Squeezer and his friends that he had gotten lost again and that he was very fortunate that the information sign had told the truth after all.

Wiggle frowned. "I agree that you were fortunate to find your way here after being lost. But there's something that bothers me. It seems to me that the information sign couldn't have been telling the truth!"

"Why not?" asked Giggle.

"Well," said Wiggle, "the sign said that one of the computers always lies. But computers can't lie. They're just machines."

"Why can't machines lie?" asked Stretch. "If a computer prints a message that says, "Banana Lane leads to the Land of Curiosity, that's a lie."

"I agree that the message is not true," nodded Wiggle, "but that doesn't mean it's a lie."

"Right," added Jumpy, "if something is a lie, then it's not true. But if something isn't true, that doesn't mean it's a lie."

"It does if someone says it's true!" countered Punch.

"But," Pinch protested, "what if the person who says something false really thinks that it's true? It doesn't seem fair to call that a lie."

"Yes," agreed Slumpy, "you can't really blame someone for not telling the truth if she thinks what she is saying is true. If someone lies, she's trying to fool you – to make you believe something that she doesn't believe."

"But isn't that just what two of those computers were trying to do to the Professor?" asked Stretch.

"I don't think so," replied Pinch. "I agree with Wiggle. Computers are just machines. Maybe the people who designed the computers are trying to fool people. But a computer only does what someone else programs it to do."

"That's what I mean," added Wiggle. "Computers don't *think* at all. They just do what they're programmed to do. They never ask, 'Well, what should I do today?' It's all set up for them, and they don't really have any choice about it at all."

"How do you know they don't think?" challenged Stretch. "You're not a computer. So how do you know what it's like to be one?"

"Asking what it's like to be a computer," replied Wiggle, "is like asking what it's like to be a rock. It's not like anything to be a rock. That's because rocks don't have any thoughts or feelings."

"How do you know they don't have any thoughts or feelings?" asked Stretch.

"Come on," Teaser jested, "if you had rocks for your brain, you'd stay out in the rain. But then, I'll bet, you'd *really* be all wet."

"Don't be silly," interrupted Pinch. "Look, Stretch, do you believe adding machines think?"

"No," admitted Stretch.

"Neither do I," Pinch continued. "They add numbers and help us solve problems it would be hard to solve on our own. But that doesn't mean they think, or know what they're doing, or have feelings, or anything like that. Computers are like fancy adding machines."

"I'm not so sure," commented Giggle. "Computers can do a lot of things adding machines can't do. They can play chess and give us lots of different kinds of information."

"But," Squeezer objected, "they're just made of metal, and plastic, and stuff like that. They don't have skin, and blood, and cells – and brains. So how can they have thoughts and feelings?"

"How do you know you can't get something that thinks like we do out of metal, and plastic, and stuff like that?" asked Jumpy. "If you do it right, it might all add up to a pretty good thinker."

"That's a pretty big maybe," said Wiggle. "Maybe *someday* it'll happen. But it hasn't happened yet. We just don't know enough about what thinking is to make a machine that really thinks about what it is doing. Anyway, I still wouldn't blame a computer for not telling the truth. Either way it was just a mistake, or somebody else made it say something false. So, it wouldn't be lying. And I'm right. What the information sign said wasn't true – computers don't lie!"

"I agree," said Pinch. "I'd blame the one who put the program in the computer."

Slumpy had been quietly listening to the conversation. He wasn't really sure whether computers might be able to think. But he remembered something his little brother said to him recently. "My little brother got mad one day and broke a window. When my parents told him that what he did was wrong, he said, 'I couldn't help it. My computers made me do it.' I asked him where he got an idea like that. He said his favorite TV program has a robot that says its computers make it do whatever it does. So, my brother thought that maybe he has computers in him that make him do things, too."

"Sure," added Stretch, "maybe the brain is a computer. You can't think without a brain, can you?"

"Well," insisted Wiggle, "you can't think without a heart either. So, what does that prove? That your mind is your heart?"

"Oh, that's not what I'm saying," grumbled Stretch. "Actually, I think that the mind and the brain *are* the same thing. But what I really want to say is that the brain is a kind of computer. So, that makes the mind a computer, too."

"The mind and the brain can't be the same," objected Teaser. "There are pictures of the brain. But have you ever seen a picture of the mind?"

"If the mind and the brain are the same, he has," said Punch.

"Right now I'm thinking of something very special, with beautiful colors. But you won't know what it is, unless I tell you," said Wiggle. "Even if someone cut open my brain, they couldn't find out. If the brain and the mind are the same, why can't they see my thoughts when they look inside my brain?"

"Maybe they're too small to see," said Stretch. "But I still think the mind, or the brain, or whatever, might be a computer."

"But then we wouldn't have any real choices either," said Pinch. "Everything we'd do would be because we were programmed to do it. So, no one would ever be able to help but do what they do."

"I think that's what my little brother was trying to get at," said Slumpy. "That's why he was saying it wasn't his fault that he broke the window."

"That seems pretty silly to me," replied Jumpy. "If it wasn't his fault, then whose fault was it?"

"Nobody's!" pronounced Punch. "We're computers. Hurray! We can do whatever we want to, and nobody can blame us. So, I guess I'll punch Pinch!"

However, just as Punch was about to punch Pinch, Pinch warned her, "Maybe it won't be your fault if

you hit me, but it won't be my fault if I pinch you, either."

"Hey," shouted Jumpy, "that sounds like the Basic Rule. What's fair for one is fair for all."

"It seems to me," said Wiggle, "that it isn't quite the same. It's more like there aren't any rules at all. Whatever happens is okay, because we're made to do whatever we do."

"That's why I think it's silly to say that we are like computers," said Jumpy. "We all know that we can make choices, and that sometimes we make wrong choices. And maybe computers can't lie, but we know that we can!"

"It might *seem* like we make choices," said Stretch, "but maybe we don't *really*."

"I might not be free, but at least I am me," chimed in Teaser. "And even when wrong, I'll sing my song."

CHAPTER TEN
THE CASE OF THE FLOUR CONCLUDED

The Professor was anxious to show everyone his second note from Detective Deductus. "I'm not sure I want to blame the person who took my flour," said the Professor, "but I certainly would like to know who it was."

"If it wasn't Lee," said Giggle, "then Lee's statement is the true one – he said he didn't do it."

"That means MacPhee's statement is false," said Slumpy. "MacPhee said Edgeworth lied. But if Edgeworth didn't lie, MacPhee must be the one – just like Edgeworth said!"

"That can't be right," objected Stretch. "If MacPhee's the thief, then Edgeworth's statement is true, too. But only *one* statement can be true."

"What we have to figure out," suggested Jumpy, "is how Edgeworth's statement can be false without being a lie. Remember what we said before: if something's a lie, it's not true; but if something is not true, it doesn't have to be a lie."

"I've got it!" exclaimed Wiggle. "Maybe Edgeworth really *believed* MacPhee stole the flour, even though someone else did it."

"So, that would be an honest mistake, not a lie," said Giggle.

"But if it wasn't either MacPhee or Lee, who took the flour?" asked Pinch.

"It must have been Edgeworth," concluded Stretch.

"But that can't be right," objected Pinch. "If Edgeworth took the flour, he would have *known* MacPhee was not the one."

"Then Detective Deductus must be wrong," said Slumpy. "She said the suspects are Edgeworth, MacPhee, and Lee. We've covered all the possibilities."

"Not quite," objected Jumpy. "What Detective Deductus said is. '*Aside from me,* the suspects are three.' So, there's a fourth possibility. . . "

"Detective Deductus!" shouted Squeezer.

*** *** ***

The Professor was very surprised that it was Detective Deductus who took the flour. He wasn't sure how he felt about what his good friend had done. Why did the Detective take the flour? The Professor was impressed by how clever the Detective had been. After all, everyone had overlooked the fourth possibility. But the Professor thought he might be a little angry, too, since his flour had been stolen – and stolen by one of his best friends!

As he walked briskly toward Detective Deductus's house, the Professor wondered what he should say. He knocked loudly on the door. No one answered, but his knock was so hard that the door opened. The Professor slowly stepped into the Detective's living room. No one seemed to be there. But he saw a large envelope on the dining room table, with *his* name on it! Inside he found a third note:

Dear Professor,
Of your birthday we've been apprised,
which you've forgotten, we've surmised.
We needed your flour
for just this hour,
in order to see you surprised.
Happy Birthday,
Detective Deductus

Just as he finished reading the note, he heard a loud chorus: "Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you . . . " In marched Edgeworth, MacPhee and Lee – followed by Detective Deductus, who was carrying a beautiful birthday cake! For a moment, the Professor was speechless. Finally he brushed a tear from his eye, cleared his throat, and said:

"I'm the first to admit
I forget quite a bit.
But I'm sure I'll recall
today most of all –
and the wonderful power
of my missing flour!"

The End

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