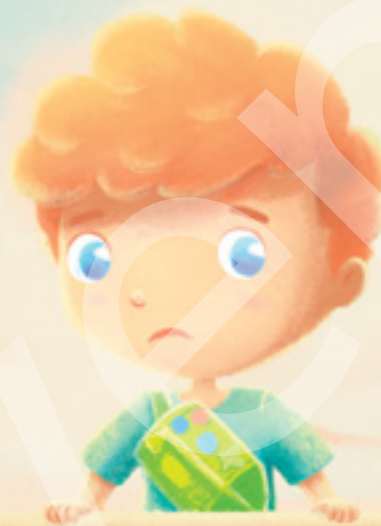


The Boy Who Flooded the World

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Varaždin, studeni 2020.

ISBN 978-953-8008-55-9

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Knjiga je objavljena uz financijsku potporu Ministarstva kulture
Republike Hrvatske.

Ever since he was born, everyone in his family knew he was special. His parents named him Clement - once they held him in their arms and met him, they realised such a name suited him perfectly because Clement was a quiet and sweet boy. When he smiled at you, you would feel a surge of happiness as if you were being touched by a warm southern wind, and when he was sad, you would want to cry your eyes out because you'd feel his sadness like a restless storm.

Dams of his feelings were very low, and he could not contain them inside his heart, so they kept overflowing and splashing onto others.

His mother and father quickly learned how their child sees the world: when they felt cold currents around him, they knew their little boy was scared or sad and that they needed to comfort him with warmth to chase the negative thoughts away. Stories about animals also helped, especially those about butterflies that live in dense rainforests far away: owl butterflies, blue butterflies, the ones with bird wings, dove wings...

And so, the boy was growing up happy and comforted even before he got sad, until he grew old enough to go to school.





- Our dear Clement, you will make many friends in school, and you will learn the names of many, many new butterflies! - his parents told him.

With a wave of cheerful expectations, Clement arrived at school barely acknowledging his mother's goodbyes as he ran into his classroom. Murmur was louder than his thoughts, but still he decided to be brave.

And he was brave for two whole hours, when he started crying for the first time. It happened when one angry little boy took away his butterfly pencil case.

- What are you? A girl?! - he asked him, and before Clement had a chance to respond, the boy threw his dove-winged butterfly pencil case into the trash.

Clement had never felt such powerlessness. He did not know if he was crying because of his discarded pencil case, because the naughty boy made fun of the butterflies or because of the question he didn't truly understand. All he knew was that he wanted to cry.

The teacher was very compassionate and comforted him very gently. She gave him a little chocolate bar from her bag. The chocolate was tasty, which helped contain Clement's sadness somewhat.

On the second day, she patiently comforted him again after another boy pushed him aside in the dining room to grab a better piece of pie for lunch. This time, she gave him an apple. However, on the third day, when another student called him a toothpick because of his unusually fragile stature, the teacher did not comfort him. She simply looked over her shoulder and told him that it was not a reason to cry.

But Clement only wanted to cry more and more.

