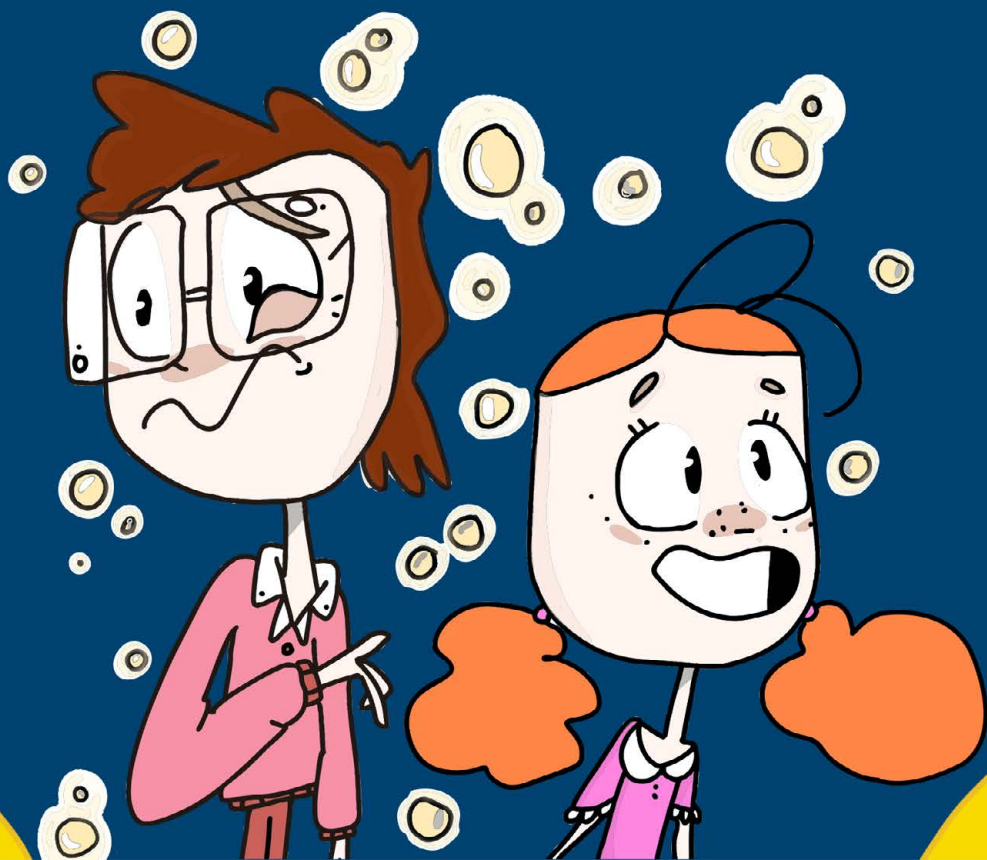


**The Forbidden
Book Club
The Min Min
Lights**

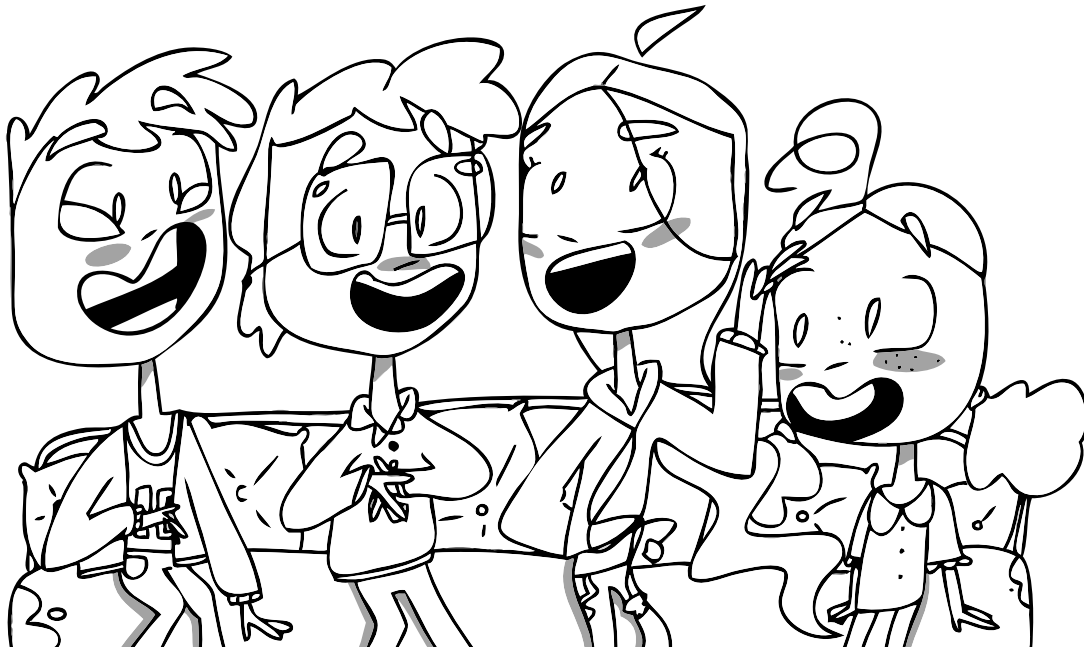


Book 3

The Min Min Lights

The next afternoon, the children headed straight to Mrs. Quigley's house after school. They waited until they were back in her basement before they started raving about the book. They knew that it was rude to talk over each other, but they just couldn't help it. Mrs. Quigley smiled.

"Does that mean that you're ready for your next adventure?" she asked.



They all sat down on the couch and waited to be hooked up to the machine. The book that she chose was black this time, with a yellow circle in the middle of the cover.

First the dark came, then the lines, then a small town of broken-down houses that hadn't been fixed in years. It was late afternoon, but everybody was already shut up inside.

People looked out of the windows at them, wide-eyed. Nobody came out, even when they knocked on their doors. Then, a gaunt-looking man came out of his house and stood at the fence. The children approached.



“You shouldn’t be walking around like this,” the man warned. “Haven’t your mum and dad told you how dangerous it is?”

Ada looked at the sun that was setting on a knoll in the distance. She knew that it was dangerous to walk around at night, but she’d never been warned about the afternoon. The man took their blank faces for an answer.

“Well, you ought to get inside and stay there until the morning.”

Ada felt like he was trying to be sharp in his tone, but it just came out in a sad, knowing kind of way. She felt like there had to be more to it.



“Why?” she asked simply.

The man knelt down so that he was at eye-level with Skink.

“It’s not safe for children at night. That’s when the min min lights come.”

Darren’s ears pricked up.

“I know about those.

Don’t people follow them into the bush?”

The man nodded.

“And never return. It’s too late for my little girl. But it isn’t too late for you.”

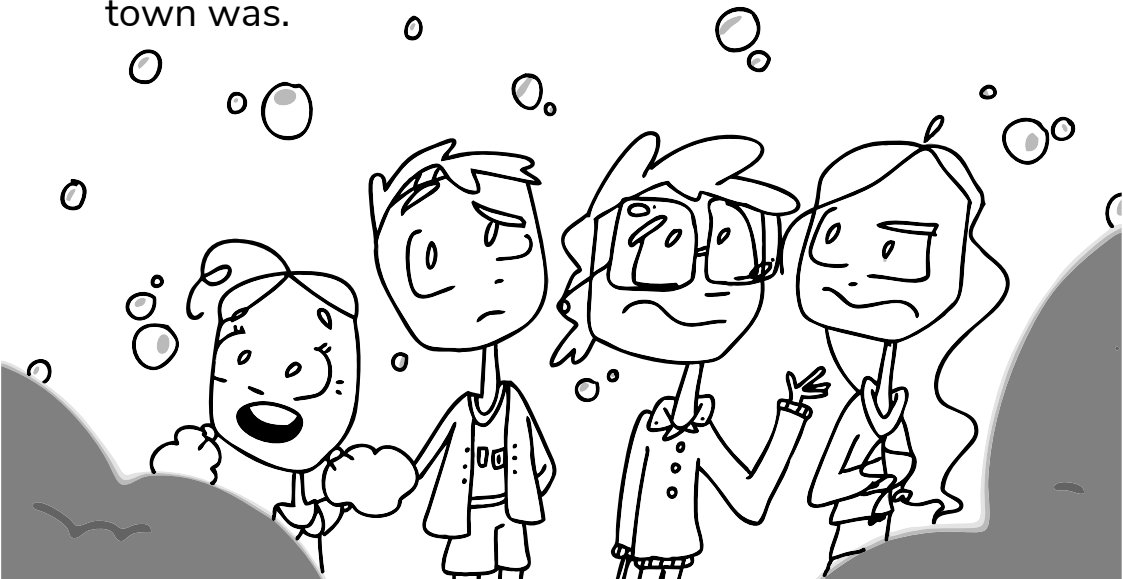


The man got up and went back into his house. Skink played with her knapsack strap and frowned. "You're not planning on..." she started.

"Oh yeah," Ada said with a grin.

"Don't worry little Skink, I'll be your brave knight in the dark," Lachlan mocked.

Skink rolled her eyes, but she still took his hand. They walked away from the town and waited for dark. Just as the man had said, orbs of light started to appear. They followed them deeper and deeper into the bush. Soon they lost track of where the town was.



They started to hear strange sounds around them. The min mins were hard to follow. They changed in size and brightness, and there were glowing mushrooms all around that they sometimes mistook for the lights. And then, the min min lights were gone altogether. The next moment, they appeared much closer to them. The lights slowly floated over until they were near enough for the children to touch.

Ada knitted her brow and reached out. The moment that she touched the min min light, she disappeared. Skink's stomach was in a knot, but she held onto Lachlan's hand as he and Darren touched the lights as well. When they opened their eyes, Ada was there again, but they seemed to be in the same place.



The children found their way back to town. By then, it was morning. They saw people coming out of the sad little houses to start their day. Only, they weren't the people that had been peeking through the windows the day before. They looked similar in some ways. Darren looked at Lachlan and Skink and thought.

“Could it be the lost family members?”

There was only one way to know for sure. They walked to the house of the man they had spoken to. When they knocked, the knob turned and there was a young girl who was only a few years older than them. She looked tired.



“I’m sorry, do I know you?” she asked, confused.

“We know your father,” Ada said softly.

“Knew him you mean,” she said.

Just then, a man in a uniform came up behind them.

“Everything alright here?”

he asked sternly.

“Yes, Sir,” the girl said quickly. “No problems here.”

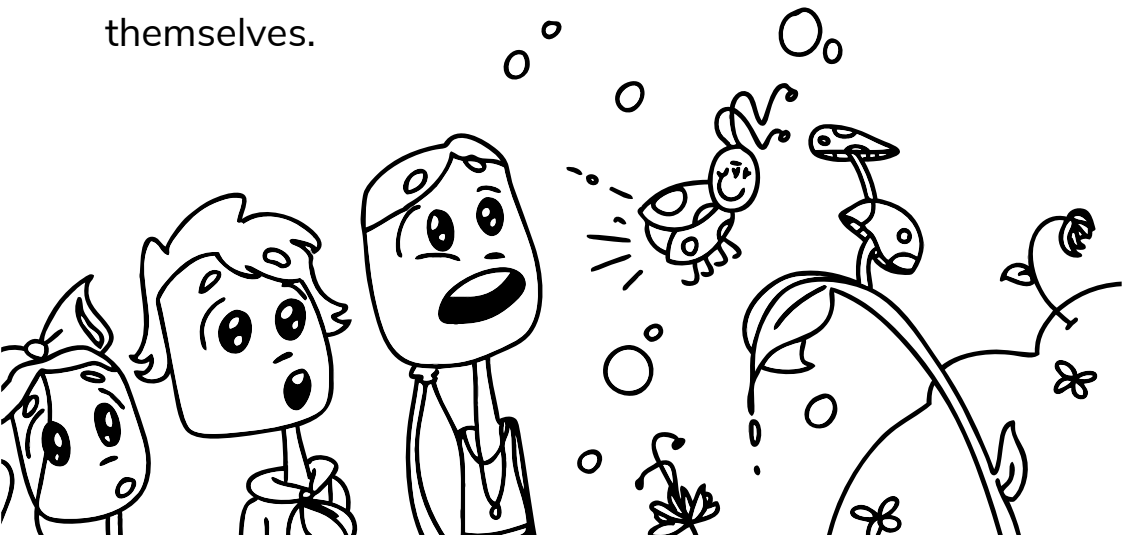
He gave the children a hard look.

“I saw you walking into the town just now. Best get settled in a place.”



For some reason, Ada got the feeling that they shouldn't mention the min mins. It felt like dangerous knowledge. She was getting the knack of this reading thing.

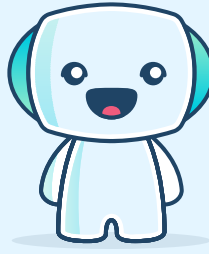
When the man walked away and the girl was back in her house, they made a plan. That night, Skink turned into an insect. She flew into the bush and found some of the glowing mushrooms. Her thorax started to glow as bright as the min mins themselves. One by one, she went to people's windows. They woke to her light and followed her to the edge of the bush. Then, the min mins did the rest. Skink worked all night, and just before the sun rose they went back through the min mins themselves.



When they went back to the town, people were not shut up inside anymore. Brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers and relatives of all sorts were in their gardens, seeing each other for the first time in years. She buzzed around in the flowers as they hugged, the long, exhausted faces looking bright once again.

And as the houses turned to lines and started to fade, they didn't look broken anymore.





I'M FREE! HERE'S HOW...

Bookbot books are free, high quality decodable readers based on the order of sounds introduced in the Jolly Phonics early literacy program.

We're delighted to offer them to you to download and print at no cost. But it would be great if you could link to our page www.bookbotkids.com/phonics-books from your school's website to help support us.

How can we offer Bookbot books for free? Each book is funded by our passionate community who believe in creating an extensive library of decodable readers to inspire and bring confidence to children learning to read. You can support us too: please contribute to www.bookbotkids.com/phonics-books.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
Bookbot will not revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to www.bookbotkids.com/phonics-books, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

NonCommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

NoDerivatives — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you may not distribute the modified material.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

www.bookbotkids.com

Copyright © 2018 by Bookbot

