



FLOATING STRENGTH



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special thanks to the many friends, family and colleagues who volunteered in various capacities with the production of this book.

Illustrations based on the wonderful world of Socialocca.

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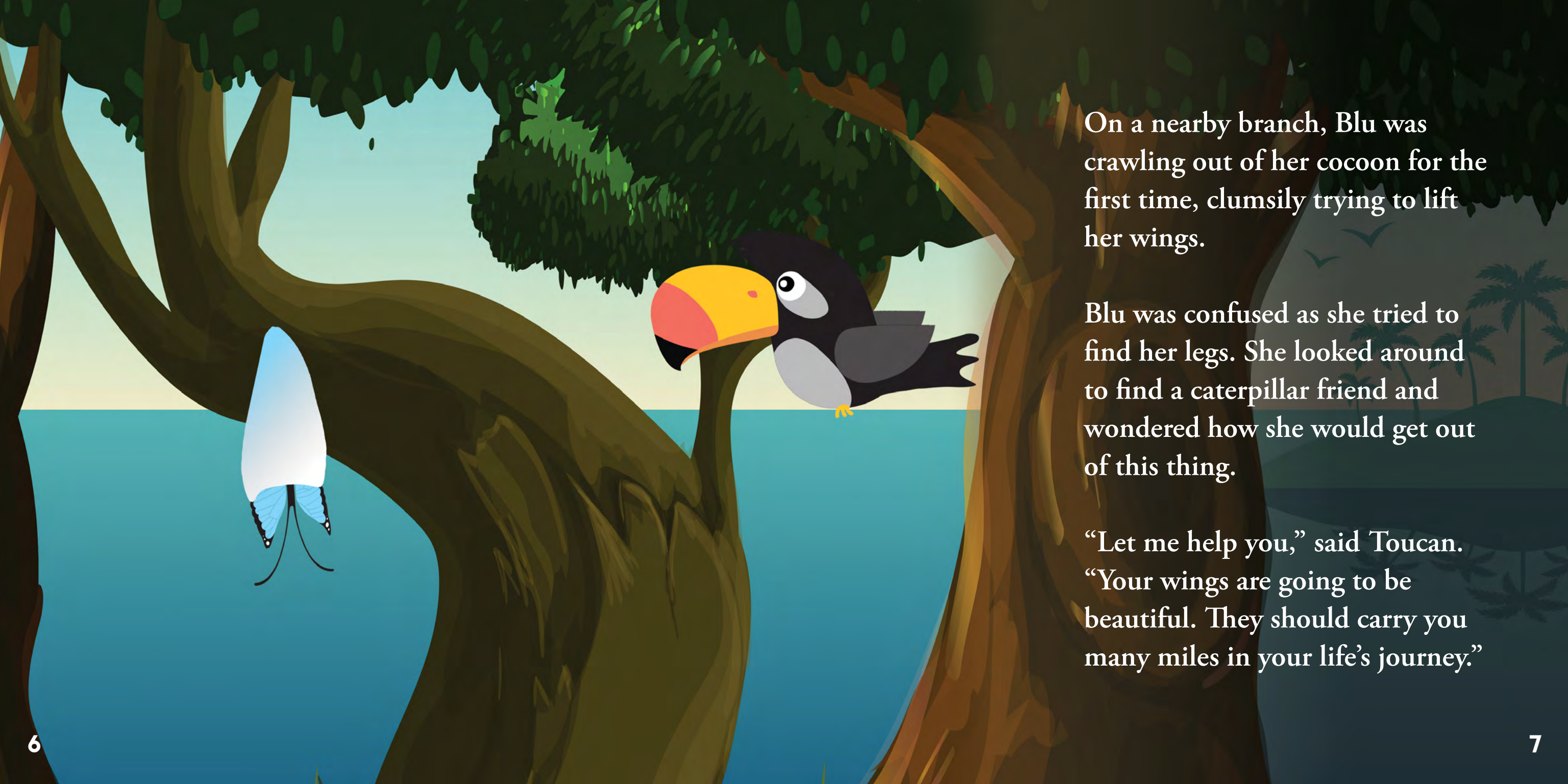
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On an early morning in the rainforest, the sun began to rise, casting a shadow on Chameleon who was waiting patiently for a fly to move closer.

Chameleon's big eyes opened wide as he stuck out his tongue, caught the fly, and devoured it with satisfaction.

Toucan was also sitting on the tree, using his beak to help him reach some figs for breakfast and admiring how colorful and plentiful their rainforest home is.



On a nearby branch, Blu was crawling out of her cocoon for the first time, clumsily trying to lift her wings.

Blu was confused as she tried to find her legs. She looked around to find a caterpillar friend and wondered how she would get out of this thing.

“Let me help you,” said Toucan.
“Your wings are going to be beautiful. They should carry you many miles in your life’s journey.”



“FIRE!!!” yelled Howler. Howler, the bravest monkey in the rainforest, jumped onto the tree that Blu, Toucan, and Chameleon were sitting on.

Suddenly, Chameleon, Blu, and Toucan began to smell smoke and saw the growing flames in the distance.

“We need to get out of here!” Howler cried. Toucan and Chameleon hurried to a bush as Howler carefully picked up Blu and ran her down the tree.

They gasped as they saw their rainforest begin to be engulfed in smoke and flames.

Howler, Blu, Toucan, and Chameleon looked at each other with frightened faces.

“Why is this happening?” asked Chameleon.

“I do not know,” said Toucan. “But we need to escape the rainforest right now or we will all be in trouble. Let’s head to the coast, where we’ll have some time to come up with a plan.”





Watching the fire grow in the distance, the four friends set out on an adventure to escape the danger and find a new place to call home.

“THIS WAY,” directed Howler. “The water is THIS WAY.”

After traveling for several hours, the friends reached the coast.

“I cannot swim or fly over the ocean,” said Blu. “My wings are so new, they are not strong enough yet!”

“I can fly, but not distances,” said Toucan. “Howler and Chameleon cannot fly at all! There must be another way.”

“We are not going to be able to escape the rainforest fire,” complained Blu.

“INKALOOOO!” Howler yelled.

From under the sea, Inkaloo heard Howler and swam to the coast to reach the other animals. “We need to go to Inkaloo for help. She is the wisest octopus in the sea and she will be able to help us.”

“What’s wrong?” asked Inkaloo.

“The whole rainforest is burning down! We need to escape. What can we do?” cried Howler.

Inkaloo looked in surprise at the growing forest fire and the smoke that was approaching them. She explained that they need to find a new home and escape quickly.

“Build a raft,” suggested Inkaloo. “Use any material you can find that will stay afloat and carry you over the ocean.”





“How do we build it?” Chameleon asked.

“USE YOUR STRENGTHS! You must hurry. The rainforest is burning down quickly,” shouted Inkaloo.

“Good luck,” she said as she descended back into the sea.

“I can’t lift anything heavy,” Blu complained.

“Don’t worry, I got it! I’m the strongest and can do this quickly,” boasted Howler. “Chameleon and Toucan, find me as many sticks and fig leaves as you can,” he commanded.

Chameleon and Toucan set out quickly to find raft building supplies. They quickly came back with leaves and sticks. “We are off to a good start, but we need to work together if we are going to survive,” said Toucan.

Chameleon, Toucan, and Blu quickly became frustrated with Howler who was taking over the job of building the raft without any of their help.

Chameleon yelled at Howler, “We can accomplish more by working together, but we all need to be included.”

“Let’s not fight,” Blu said. “We need to cooperate, or we are not going to get out of the rainforest.”

“Yes, we need to remember our purpose,” said Toucan.





Chameleon quickly gave everyone specific jobs to accomplish.

Howler did much of the heavy lifting, and Toucan used his wings to collect vines from the rainforest canopy, and his beak to help tie the sticks together.

Chameleon perched Blu on a branch above the work area to look for areas of the raft where there may be holes, which Howler quickly filled with sticks.

“We did it and it’s wonderful!” admired Blu. “Inkaloo would be proud!”

So they set sail on the adventure of their lives, as the raft floated them through the smooth waves of the ocean as the fire engulfed the rainforest in the distance.

“Howler, I do not think we would have succeeded without your bravery. You showed courage when we needed it most,” said Blu.

Howler grinned and exclaimed, “Chameleon, your perspective and judgement helped us work together. Toucan, thank you for showing hope and keeping us on task.”

“Blu, thank you for helping us work together when we needed it most. While you could not physically build the raft like Howler, your kindness and direction were key to us escaping,” said Toucan.





Suddenly, the waves began getting bigger, the sky began getting darker, and they heard thunder in the distance. Chameleon quickly turned a darker shade of blue. Rain began to fall and the winds grew stronger.

Just when they thought the problem of the fire was long behind them, they faced another grave challenge, a terrible storm at sea.

“Logs and leaves are separating from the raft! It is falling apart!” cried Howler. Toucan and Chameleon’s half of the raft separated from Howler and Blu’s section.

The raft continued to break into many pieces and the rainforest animals started to believe the end was near.

“Goodbye, friends,” said Toucan.

“No! We escaped the fire. We have come this far and we will figure out a way to survive this too!” said Blu.

Each of the animals agreed. Suddenly, Inkaloo appeared and held the raft together with her eight tentacles.





“Friends, you have all survived this by working together and building on each other’s strengths,” said Inkaloo.

“Chameleon’s wisdom, Howler’s courage, Toucan’s hope, and Blu’s kindness is what helped you to be successful,” she said.

“Let me use my strength to help your raft the rest of the way to land.”

The next morning, the sun began to shine brightly as they saw a vibrant, thriving landscape on the horizon. Inkaloo smiled.

“Welcome to your new home!”



The End.

About the Authors

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Caroline Jones is a passionate advocate for childhood literacy and education. She has authored or co-authored three other children's books and has given a TEDx Talk on the importance of teaching leadership to children. Caroline works in Wilkes-Barre, PA and resides in Philadelphia, PA.

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