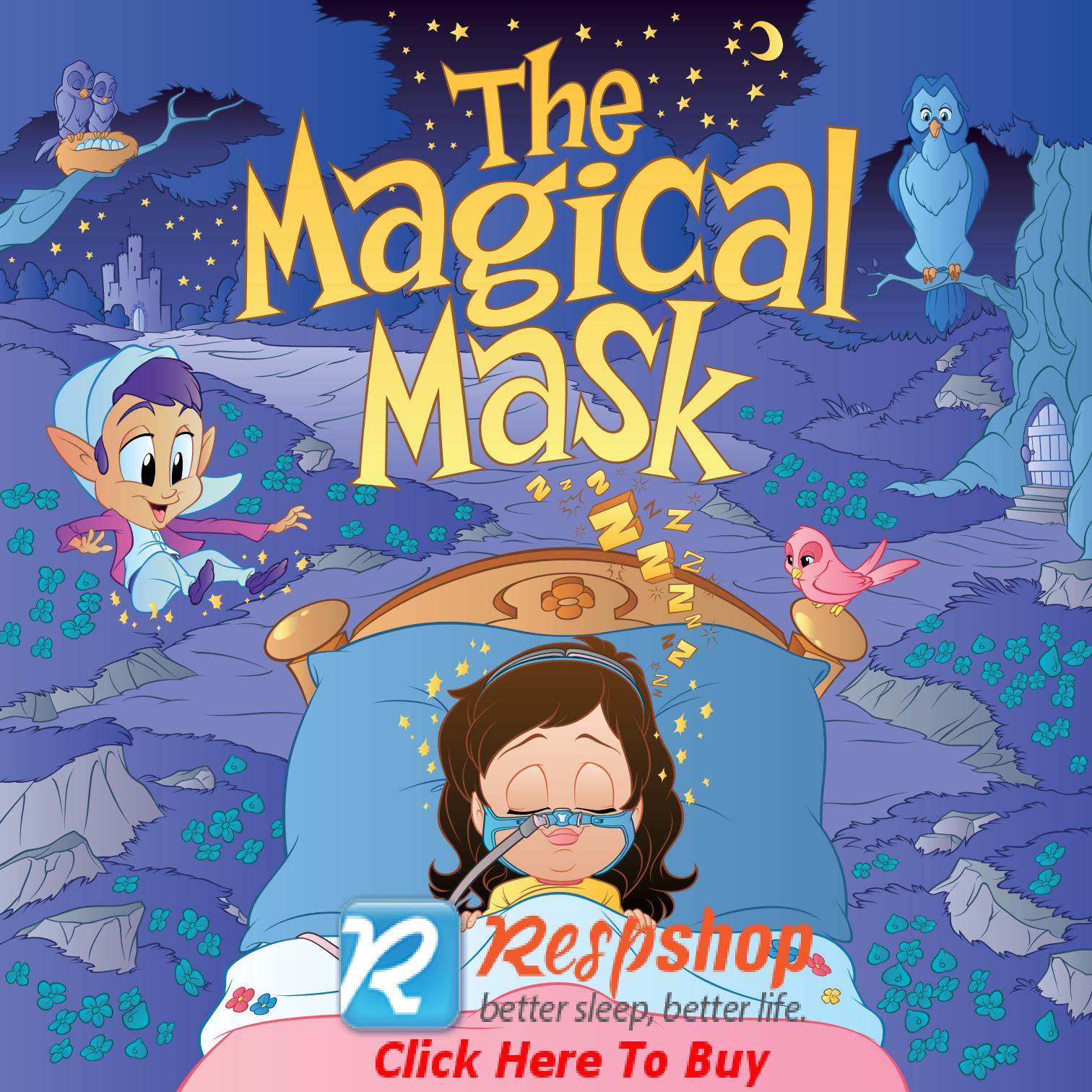


The Magical Mask



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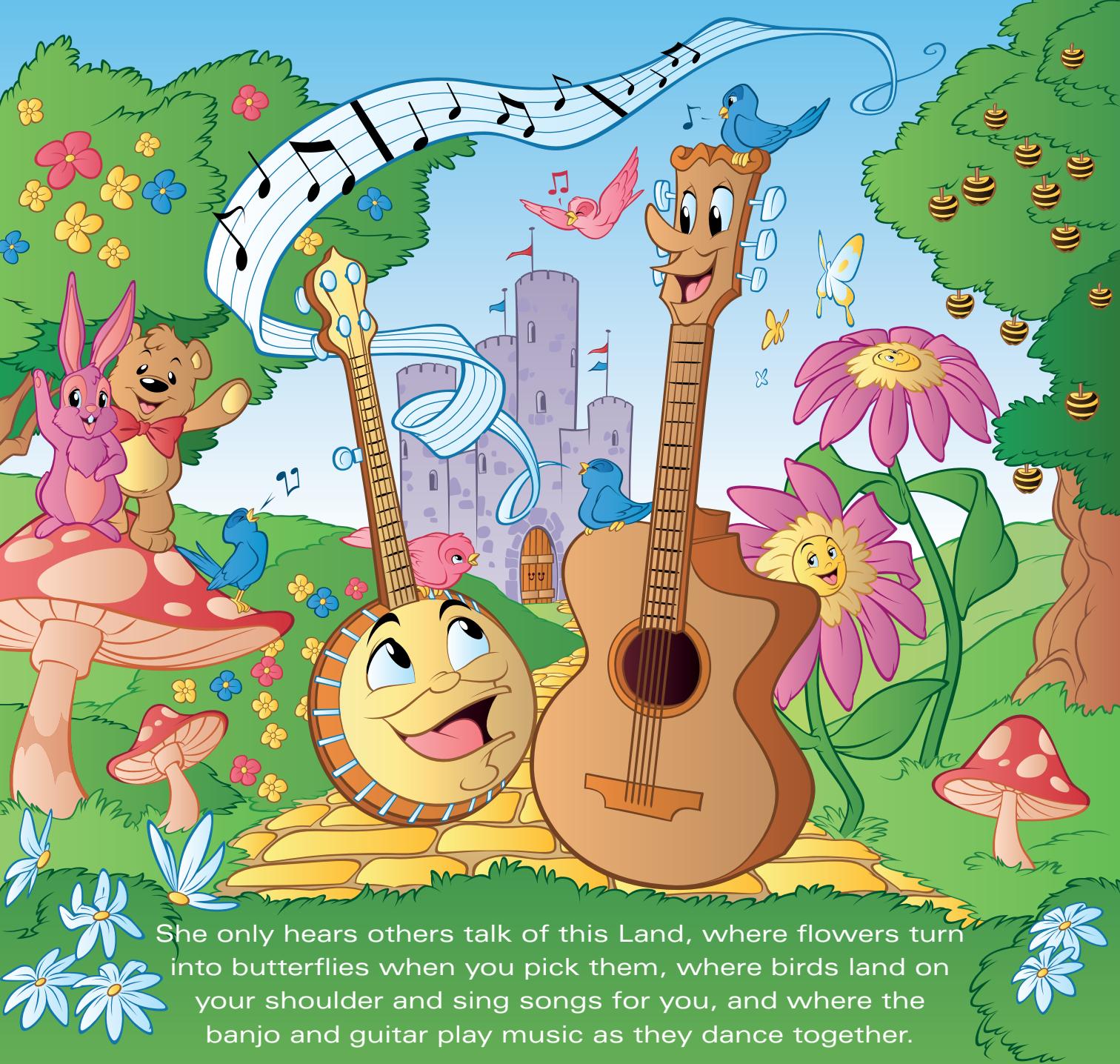


This book belongs to:

Sylvia is a lovely little girl. She likes to go to the park, play on the swings and slide down the slippery slide. She also loves to feed chickens and roosters, and pet cats and dogs. Do you like to do these things too?



Every night Sylvia's mother takes her to bed, kisses her and tucks her in. They read stories until Sylvia falls asleep. But at night, Sylvia does not sleep well. She tosses and turns and snores and coughs. And as hard as she tries, Sylvia cannot soar into the Land of Dreams like the rest of her friends.



She only hears others talk of this Land, where flowers turn into butterflies when you pick them, where birds land on your shoulder and sing songs for you, and where the banjo and guitar play music as they dance together.

Sylvia's mother and father are worried about her, because every morning she wakes up feeling tired. And Sylvia is sad because she wants to dream like all her friends. "We must ask the dreamy little Pixi what to do," said Sylvia's mother.





So when the first three stars of night appeared, Sylvia's mother called upon the Blue Owl to help find the dreamy little Pixi. "I will find Pixi," said the owl, and flew up, up into the night sky, until he reached the home of the dreamy little Pixi ... just beyond the horizon, where the moon begins its journey across the sky.

The owl explained to Pixi that Sylvia coughed and snored and tossed and turned all night, and couldn't sleep and couldn't dream. Pixi smiled and said, "I can help." He reached deep into his pocket and pulled out a bag tied with a golden string.





“Here,” he said, sprinkling some magic stardust on the bag. “Give this to Sylvia. Inside this bag is a magical mask with special wind to help her breathe. When she puts it on, the mask will help her drift off into a good, deep sleep, and she will be able to travel to the Land of Dreams.”

The next evening, Sylvia’s mother said, “Look, I have a gift for you.” Sylvia was very excited—she loved surprises. “It’s a mask with a special wind in it that will help you sleep so deeply and well, that you will wake up every morning feeling refreshed and full of energy,” her mother explained. “Will you try it tonight?” she asked. Sylvia smiled and nodded her head.



When it was her bedtime, Sylvia was a little scared to put on her mask. But Sylvia's mother and father reassured her that everything would be alright. They helped her put on the mask, hugged her close and told her how proud they were of her.



As Sylvia felt the rush of wind on her face, she began to relax, noticing how easy it was to breathe with the mask on her face. That night she slept more deeply and sweetly than she had ever slept before. And did she soar into the Land of Dreams? Perhaps if you put on your mask, you will see her one day in your dreams and then ... you'll know.





Acknowledgements

The *Magical Mask* is based on a story by Keren Stronach, who originally wrote *The Magic Mask* for her daughter, Talia, who was diagnosed with sleep apnea at the age of two. After speaking to other parents who had trouble helping their kids adjust to therapy, she wanted to write a story that would help children like Talia feel more comfortable about wearing a mask.

The story had an immediate effect on Talia, who requested that the story be read to her several times, before agreeing to wear her mask. Keren hopes that the story will help to ease the process of introducing the mask to young children. She would also like to thank Lynda Smith Cowan for suggesting the idea.

An active member of the public health community, Keren has been a support group facilitator for the UCSF Comprehensive Cancer Center for 14 years, sits on the board of directors for the National Bone Marrow Transplant Link, and serves as the Vice President for the Bay Area Chapter of the Little People of America.

In addition to *The Magic Mask*, Keren has authored numerous other publications on public health, including survivor guides for cancer and bone marrow transplant patients.

Keren holds a Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of Michigan. She currently lives with her husband and two children in Berkeley, California. In her free time, Keren enjoys hiking, kayaking, photography and yoga.

The Magical Mask is illustrated by William Ross.

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