

When Soolie wakes to find a storm is coming, he soon starts to feel sick.
Is it something he ate?

Come along with Soolie and his family as they learn:
what stops us from having peace
where perfect peace comes from
and how we can have it too!

This book includes discussion questions to help your family take a deeper dive into God's word and a family project to help you remember this good news.



Jodie Cooper lives in a small town in the Wheatbelt of Western Australia with her husband and two kids. She loves time with her family, leaving the house, playing the guitar and deep & meaningfuls. She is passionate about discovering God's good news for every-day life and growing more in love with God.

GOOD NEWS in the GUM TREES



A STORY ABOUT PEACE

Written by Jodie Cooper

READ // ENGAGE // DO

An interactive resource engaging families with God's word



More Good News in the Gum Trees coming in 2020

Joy
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Good News in the Gum Trees

10. Read Revelation 21:3-4. Do these verses tell us that God's children will have "storms" forever?

11. God plans to bring an end to all bad things in the world one day. How can knowing this help you with the "storms" you face today?

12. Read 1 Peter 5:7. Can you put this verse into your own words?

13. What would it look like for you to do this?

14. Is there anyone that you want to share God's message about peace with? What could you say?

15. Think about something that makes you feel worried or afraid. What is a verse from the Bible that you could replace your fearful thoughts with when you catch them?

16. What Jesus is offering us here is amazing. Peace in this lifetime, no matter what is going on around us, and beyond that eternal life in a wonderful new creation. Are these gifts guaranteed to everyone? If not, how do we get them? What do we need to do to receive the amazing gift that is on offer? (You might want to read some of these... 1 John 2:17, John 3:16, 1 John 5:13, John 17:3, Matthew 10:39, Matthew 7:21-23)

Family Peace Project

Brainstorm together as a family how you can remind each other of God's good news about peace. Decide on a message or bible verse that you would like to focus on and think of ways that you can incorporate this into your family rhythms.

Some suggestions: Make a poster to display in your house, come up with a call and response message that you will use at a certain time of day together, write a song or do a memory verse challenge. Your creativity is the only limit and if you would like to share what you come up with please post on the "Good News in the Gum Trees" Facebook page. We would love to share your ideas to inspire other families.

Questions for Older Cookies

Please use these questions as a guide for discussions on what God says about fear and peace. These questions are intended to be used over multiple discussion sessions. Follow your kids' lead and share a little about your own experiences as well. After the questions is an activity for you to complete as a family. So, even if you aren't able to get through all the questions, make sure you give this a go.

1. What were the signs that showed Soolie and his family that he was scared?
2. What are some things that can make you feel afraid sometimes?
3. What signs does your body give you when you are feeling scared or worried?
4. Read John 16:33. Does Jesus promise us we will have a trouble-free life? How do you think we can have the peace that he is talking about?
5. Can you think of a time when Jesus was afraid or worried? Why do you think he might have been feeling this way? What happened?
6. How did God use the scary things that happened in Jesus' life for good?
7. Read Hebrews 12:2 and John 12:27-28. What are some reasons that Jesus was able to go through difficult things in these verses?
8. Read Romans 8:28. What good could God do in a "storm" or scary thing that you are facing in your life?
9. Romans 8:29 tells us that God's people will become more like Jesus. How do you think life's "storms" can help us with this?

Dedicated to Joey and Hazel

*May your love for our God grow and grow
As you grow and grow*

Soolie awoke from his sleep to a loud sound. He opened one eye and looked around. The sun was just peeking through the trees. He opened the other eye and gave each of his wings a long stretch. Then he heard it again. Bang.

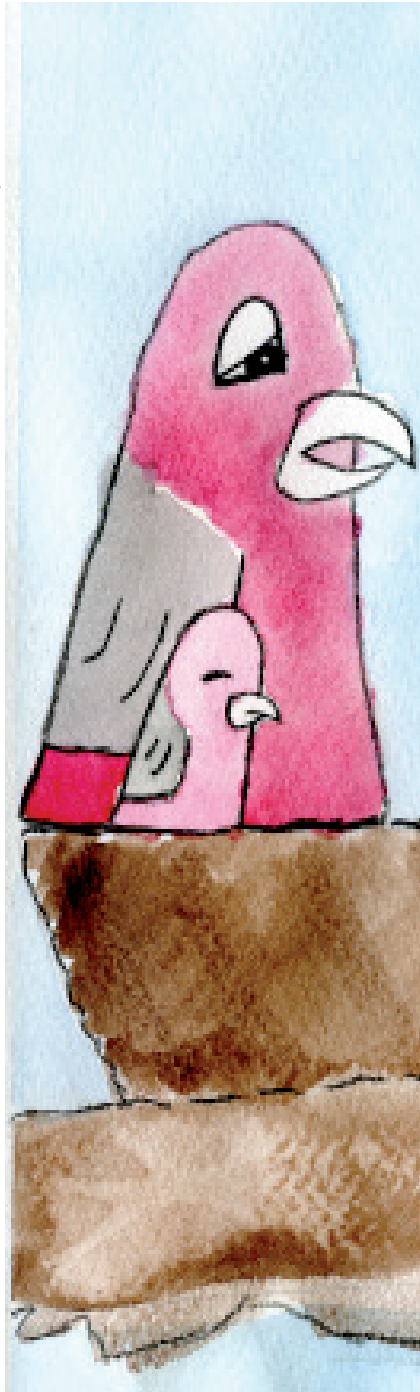
He let out a startled little squawk.

Where was the sound was coming from? He was glad to see it was only his Dad, but he seemed to be doing something very strange. His Mum was still snuggled up with his little sister in the nest so he gave her a little peck to find out what was happening.

“Soolie, good morning,” she said sleepily before closing her eyes again.

“Mum, what’s Dad doing?” he asked.

“Oh, he got woken up early this morning by Old Man Carnaby. He said there is a storm on the way and that we need to get ready for strong winds. He must be getting some branches together.” Mum gave a yawn and tucked her beak back into her warm feathers.



“Well that is good news!” said Mum, giving him a little kiss on the cheek. “That is what happens when we put our faith in God and remember who he is, instead of thinking about the scary things that are going on. He is able to give us peace anywhere, even in the middle of a storm!”

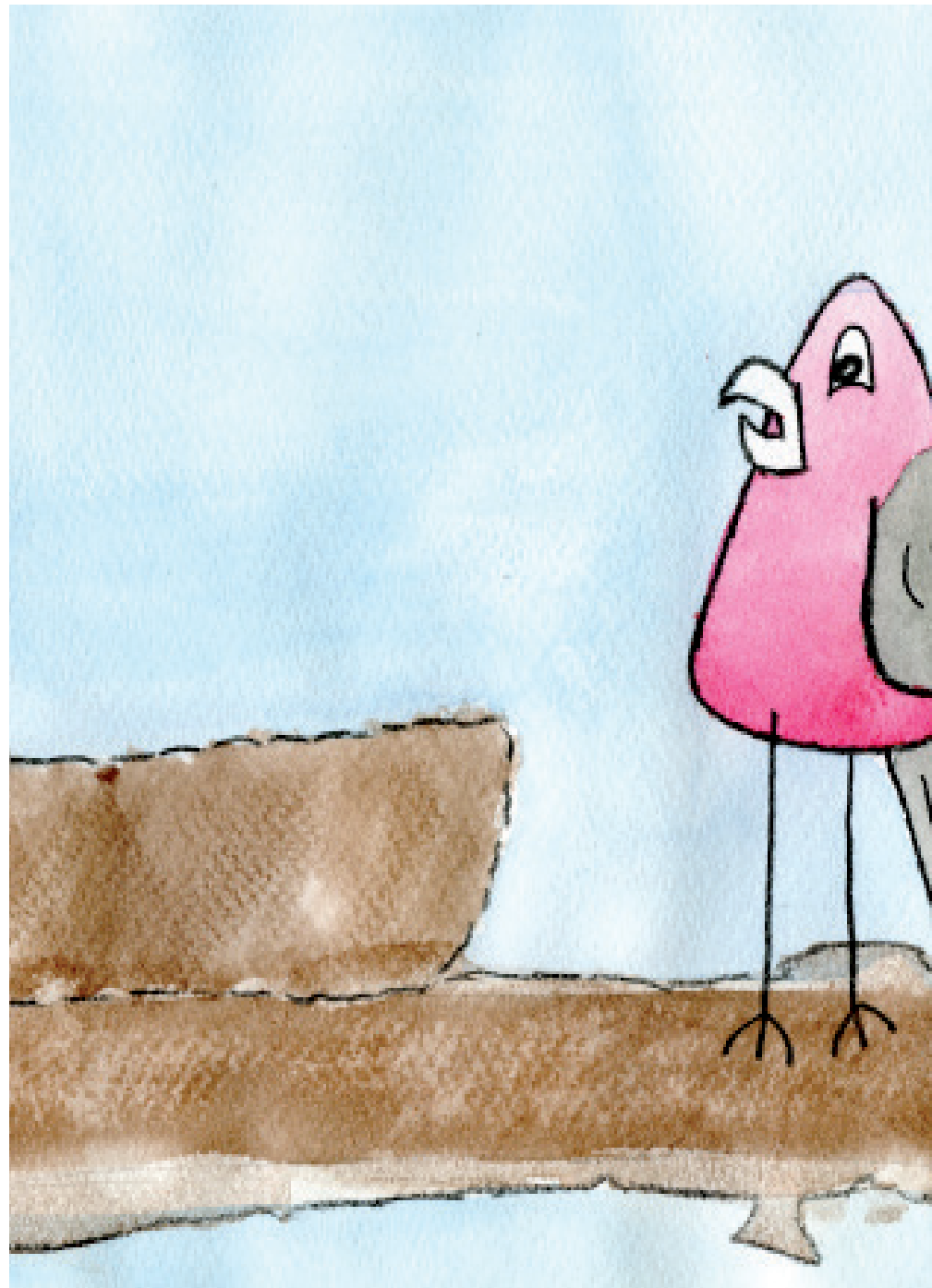
“I feel so much better. I’m so glad that he is here with us now,” smiled Soolie.

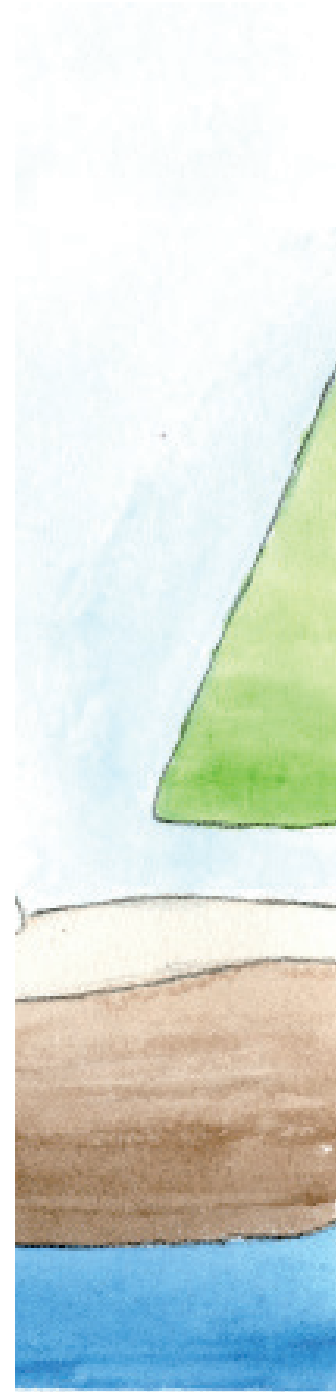
“Me too,” said Dad.

Mum started to sing. “Be thou my vision, Oh Lord of my heart...”

Dad joined in. Soolie snuggled in next to them, his sister was snoring already. He closed his eyes and listened to the song. He listened to the rain, the wind and the thunder. Still, he felt safe. He wasn’t worried or scared, because he wasn’t thinking about the storm. He was thinking about his friend, God, who was with him. In the rain, wind and thunder, in his nest. He was a big and powerful God, who cared for Soolie very much.

He drifted happily off to sleep, in the middle of the storm.





“The wind and the waves...stopped. The lake was calm. Jesus said to his friends, ‘Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?’ You see when we are afraid or worried, we aren’t trusting in God. He knows what is going to happen tomorrow and every day after and we can trust Him that whether we live or die, he is in control and his plans for us are good.”

“Dad, Jesus must have had faith in God if he could go to sleep during such a big, scary storm?”

“Yes, Soolie. Jesus had perfect faith in God all the time. He knew that everything that God allowed to happen to him, good things and bad things, were a part of God’s good plans. Somehow our God is able to bring good things even out of the hard and scary things that happen to us.”

“Wow,” said Soolie. “That is what our God is like?” He sat quietly for a moment, listening to the loud whistle of the wind and the beating down of the rain over their heads. “Hey, my tummy feels better!”



“Strong winds...” said Soolie thoughtfully. He suddenly felt a funny feeling in his tummy. Must be hungry, he thought to himself. He spread his wings and glided over to his favourite spot for catching bugs.

Soolie rustled around and found four earth worms and a fat hopper in no time at all. Feeling very pleased with himself, he looked over to see what Dad was up to. He was working hard carrying strong branches up to their nest and arranging them around the edges.

Soolie remembered the last time there was a storm. He remembered the loud noises. He remembered the beating rain that seemed to go on forever. He remembered the way the sky slowly grew darker and darker, but then suddenly would be bright as day for just a moment. He remembered the sound of the strong winds blowing through his nest. That funny feeling in his tummy was back.

Could he be hungry again already?

Now Mum and Baby Pip were awake and Soolie could hear his sister squawking loudly. Mum flew from the nest over to a thick bush to find Pip some food. Soolie wasn't sure why but he wanted to be closer to her.

"Mum," he asked, quietly.

"Yes," she mumbled, she had a worm in her mouth that was still wiggling.

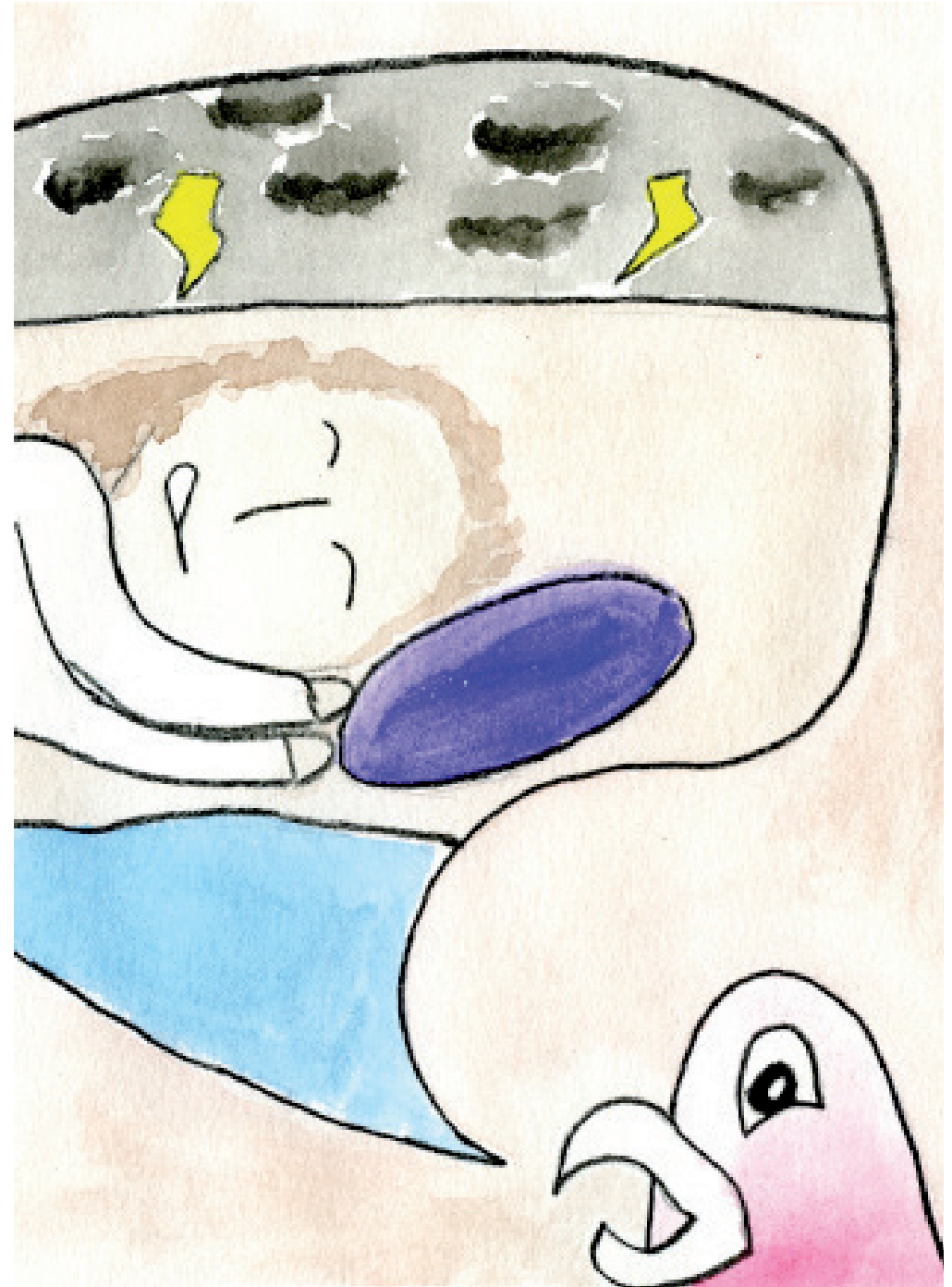
"Mum, I...I don't feel well."

"That's not good. Is your tummy hurting?" she replied, digging for another worm.

"Yes," said Soolie, "I thought I was hungry, but I've already had a big breaky and it still doesn't feel better."

"Well, it's probably that old chip you found in the park yesterday. I told you not to eat it. Man food isn't good for us birds Soolie, you need to remember that." Mum was digging and gobbling as she spoke. "I'm getting Pip her breakfast, can you go tell Dad you aren't feeling well? He might take you to get some peppermint leaves."

"OK," said Soolie. Dad was perched near the nest holding a large branch.



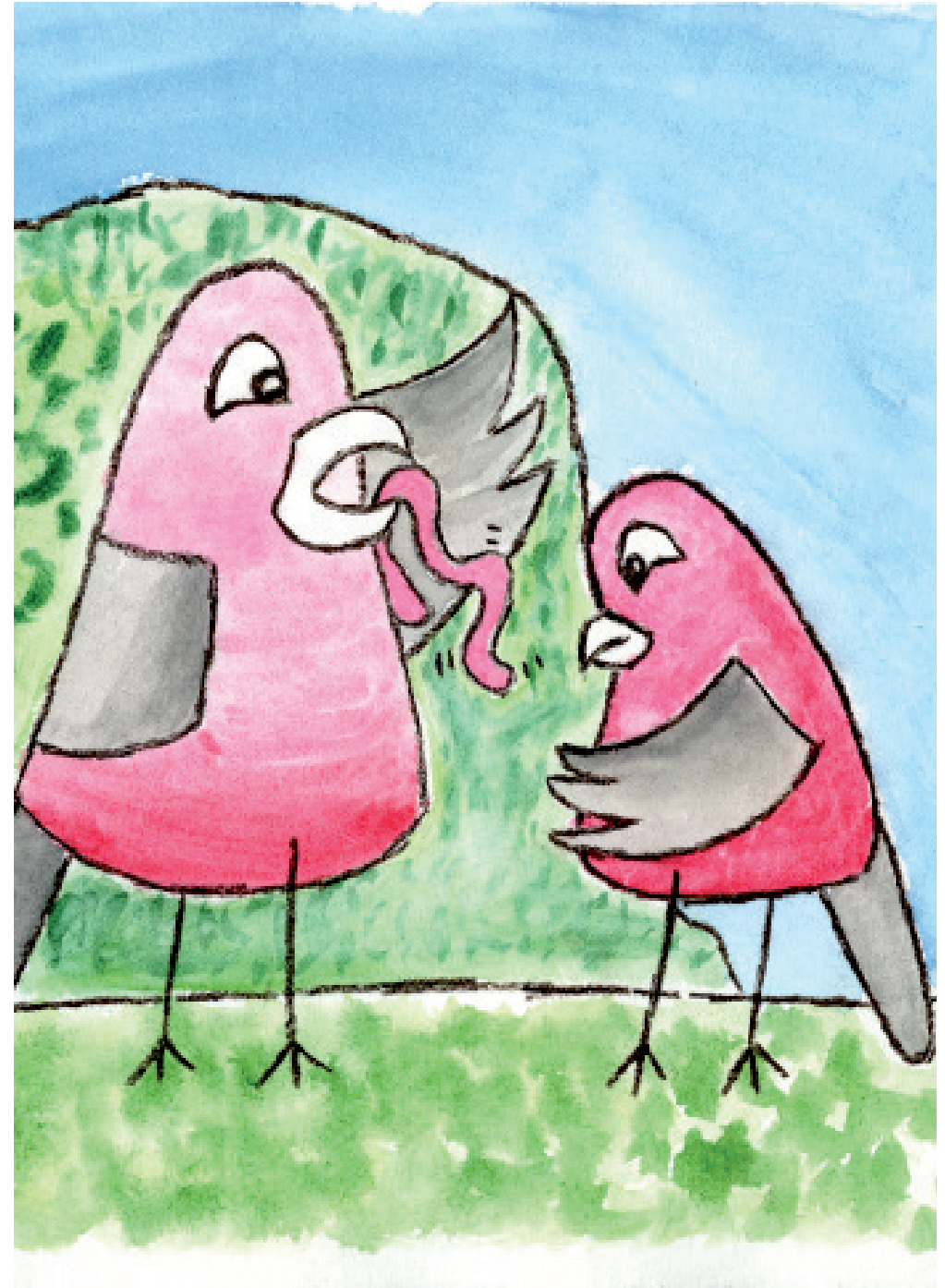
The rain was starting to get heavier and heavier, and a loud crack of thunder sounded very close. Soolie didn't seem to notice. "Oh, please can you tell the story Dad!" Pip squawked in agreement.

"I'd love to. Jesus and his friends were in a boat travelling across a big lake. When they were far from the land, a big storm came over them and they were very scared. The waves were coming up over the sides of the boat and it was filling up with water. Things looked bad!"

"What was Jesus doing?" asked Soolie.

"He was sleeping in the boat with his head on a pillow!" laughed Dad. "He wasn't worried at all. His friends came and woke him up and asked him, 'Jesus don't you care about us? We are about to drown!' Jesus got up and told the wind and waves what to do: 'Quiet! Be still!' he said. And do you know what happened?" asked Dad

"What?" asked Soolie in suspense.





Dad was just finishing putting the branches together when Soolie and Mum landed in the nest.

“Ok, I need your help to get this over us.” Clever Dad had woven together some branches with lots of fresh leaves, which could act as a covering for the family while they sheltered in the nest. The three of them pulled the branches up and quickly squeezed in under them. They huddled together in the warm, strong nest.

“Dad, Soolie has been feeling worried about the storm today,” said Mum.

“That’s why your tummy was feeling funny!” Dad said, cuddling up close to him.

“Yes, I think it was. Mum has been telling me about how I need to catch my scary thoughts and think about what God has told us instead.”

“That’s right, Son!” said Dad. “Mum and I have had to learn to do this over many, many years and many, many storms and other scary things that have come. You can start to practice now, since you’re growing up into a big galah. You know, this reminds me of a story about Jesus going for a boat ride with his friends.”



Soolie landed quietly next to Dad.

“Hey Son,” said Dad, fixing the branch in place. “What are you up to?”

“Mum told me to ask if you can get me some peppermint leaves. She’s busy feeding Pip.”

Hearing her name, Pip threw her wings up in the air and let out three desperate squawks.

“Well, looks like Mum better hurry up, little Pip is starving over here! Son, I’m pretty busy but if you can help me with this nest when we get back I think we should be ready by the time the storm comes.”

They heard the distant rumble of thunder.

“Let’s go!” said Dad.

They flew quickly over the river, past Old Man Carnaby's tree and over to the dam where the peppermint trees grew.

"What do we need the peppy for anyway?" asked Dad as he carefully plucked a stem from the tree with his beak.

"Well, Mum said it might help with my sore tummy," said Soolie, looking down.

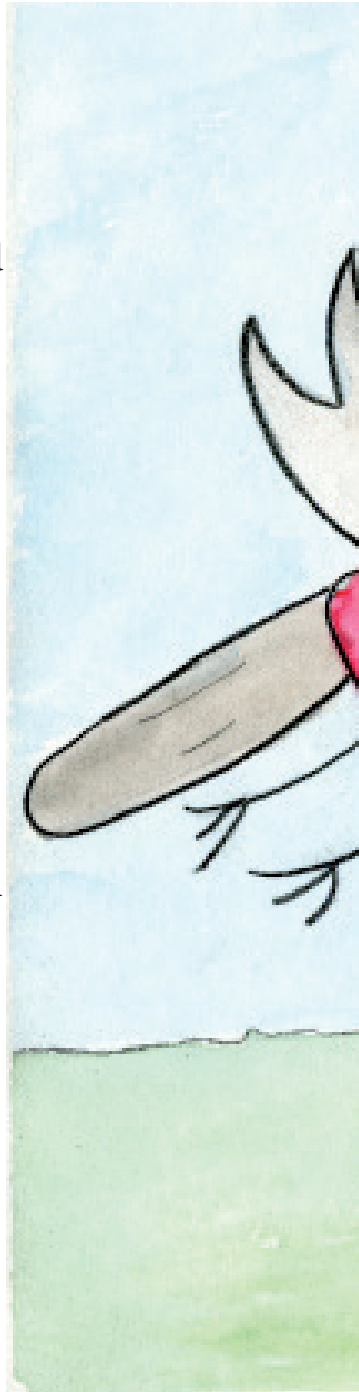
"Oh Soolie, have you been eating chips again? I told you they're rubbish. Even the people shouldn't be eating them!"

Dad said as he passed the leaves to Soolie. "Have a few now and I'll carry the rest home."

Soolie chewed and chewed on the tough leaves and felt the cool peppermint on his tongue. The thunder rumbled again.

Dad looked up to the sky.

"Come on Son, we need to get ready." He spread his wings and led the way home.



“Oh, Soolie,” she whispered and held him close.
“Storms are powerful aren’t they? And we have no way of avoiding them. We just have to prepare as much as we can and leave the rest to God.”

“What do you mean?” asked Soolie.

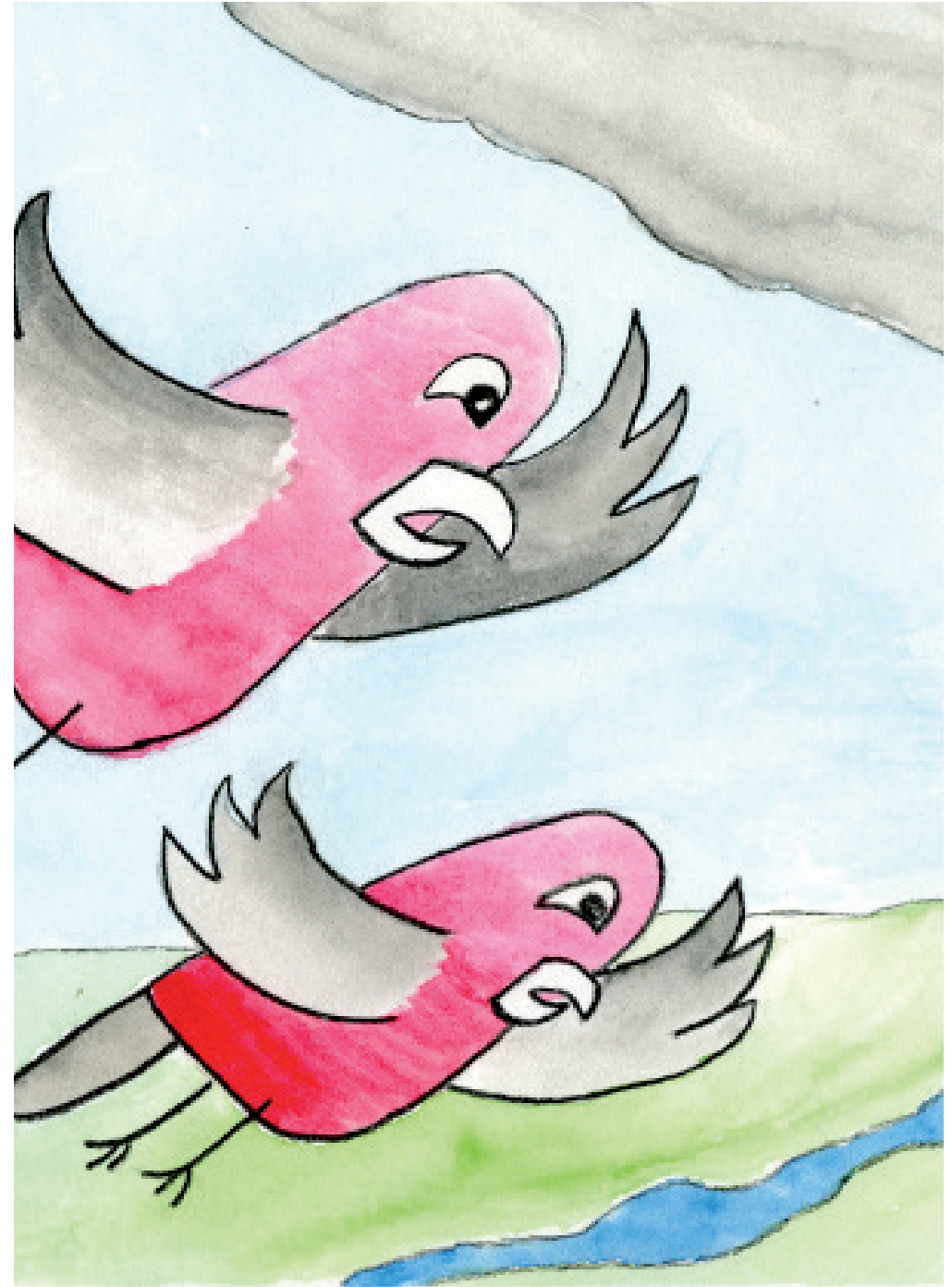
“Well, when we think about the bad and scary things that might happen today or tomorrow, they start to be the boss over us. If we’re full of worries and fears we feel sick and weak. But God tells us a new way of thinking. He says, ‘Don’t be afraid, because I am with you.’”

“God is with me?” asked Soolie.

“Yes he is my darling. He has promised that he isn’t going to leave us, he is always with his children. We might get hurt by this storm or we might not, we don’t get to choose which will happen. But we can choose to catch the thoughts that are making us feel scared or worried and think instead about who is right here with us. We can remember how strong and powerful he is instead.”

Plop. Soolie felt a heavy drop of rain fall onto his head.

“Quick, Soolie, let’s get to the nest!”





Back at the nest Pip was happily playing with a gumnut.

Dad, Mum and Soolie worked together to collect the best branches they could find and weave them into the nest to make it strong and secure. As they worked, the wind grew stronger and stronger. The thunder rumbles got louder and louder. Soolie looked up at the dark sky.

“I don’t think the peppermint is working Mum,” he said.

“You’re still not well?” she asked, putting down her branch and wrapping her wing around his little body.

“No, I think it’s getting worse,” he whispered into her chest.

“Oh, my poor love. You’re shivering too. You’ve been so quiet all morning,” she said as she thought. She pulled him in closer. “Is there something that you’re thinking about a lot?”

There was a long pause.

“The storm,” Soolie finally whispered, a little tear rolling down his feathery cheek.