



Level 1

# The Magpie and the Milk



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# The Magpie and the Milk

*Retold by Rachel Bladon*  
*Illustrated by Alida Massari*



## Contents

<i>The Magpie and the Milk</i>	2
Exercises	20
Picture Dictionary	22
About <i>Classic Tales</i>	24



It's a beautiful day.  
The farmer looks  
in her bucket.

'Nice, warm milk! Thank  
you, Cow,' she says. 'I can  
make some cheese. But  
first I must make a fire.'

Nice, warm milk!



A magpie sees the milk.

‘Warm milk!’ he says. ‘Mmm.’

He flies down and sits on the bucket. But the bucket falls over.

‘Oh no!’ says the magpie.







‘Bad magpie!’ the farmer says,  
and she catches his tail.

The magpie pulls and pulls.  
Oh! His tail comes off!

‘Farmer, Farmer!’ says the magpie.

‘Please give me my tail.’

‘Bring me some nice, warm milk,’  
says the farmer. ‘Then you can  
have your tail.’



Please give me my tail.

Bring me some  
nice, warm milk.



The magpie talks to the cow.

‘Cow, Cow,’ the magpie says.

‘Please give me some nice, warm milk for the farmer. Then I can have my tail.’

‘Bring me some long, green grass,’ says the cow. ‘Then you can have some milk.’

Bring me some  
long, green grass.





The magpie talks to the field.

‘Field, Field,’ the magpie says.

‘Please give me some long, green grass for the cow. Then the farmer can have her milk. And I can have my tail.’

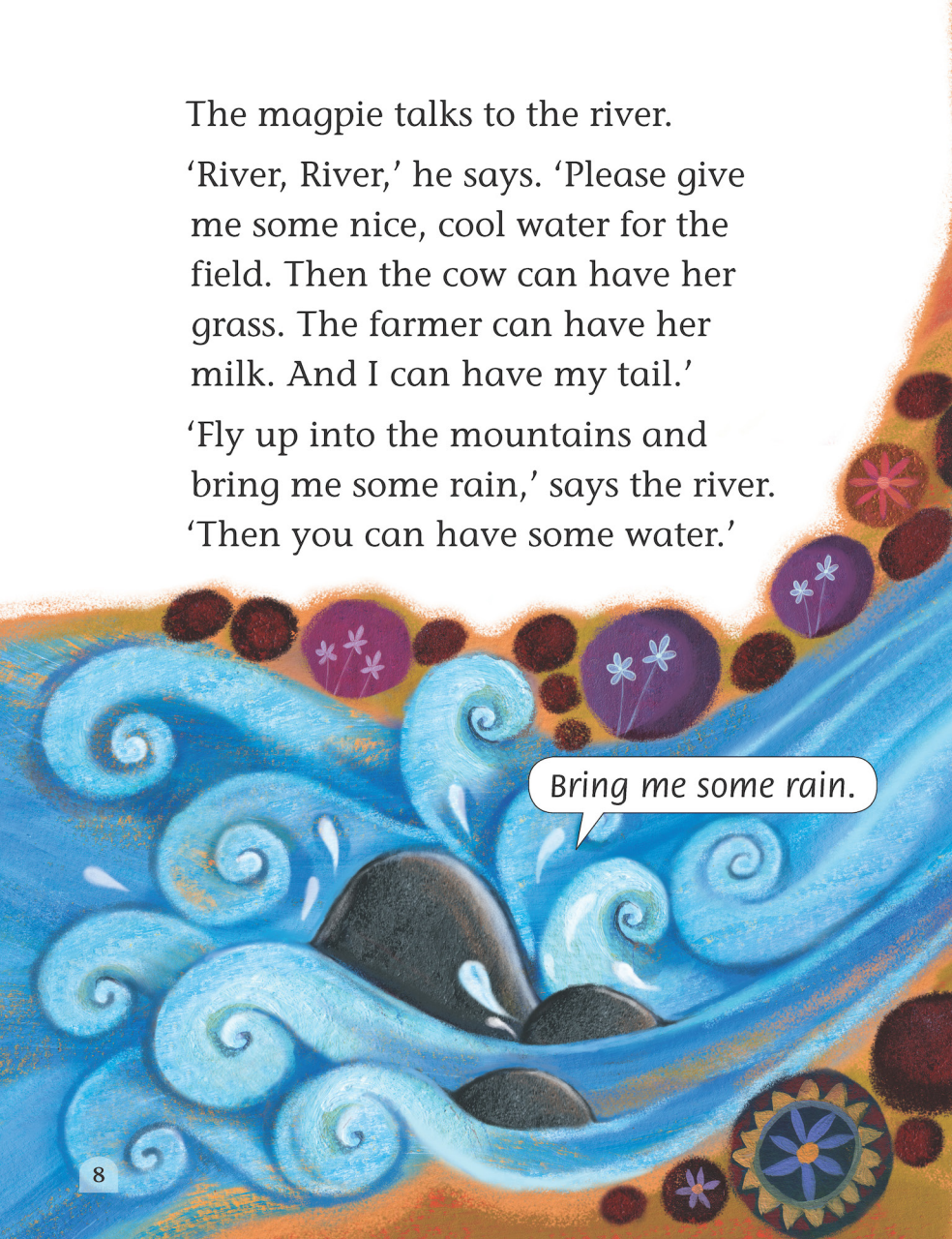
‘Bring me some nice, cool water,’ says the field. ‘Then you can have some grass.’



The magpie talks to the river.

‘River, River,’ he says. ‘Please give me some nice, cool water for the field. Then the cow can have her grass. The farmer can have her milk. And I can have my tail.’

‘Fly up into the mountains and bring me some rain,’ says the river.  
‘Then you can have some water.’



Bring me some rain.



So the magpie flies up into  
the mountains. He sees a big,  
white cloud.

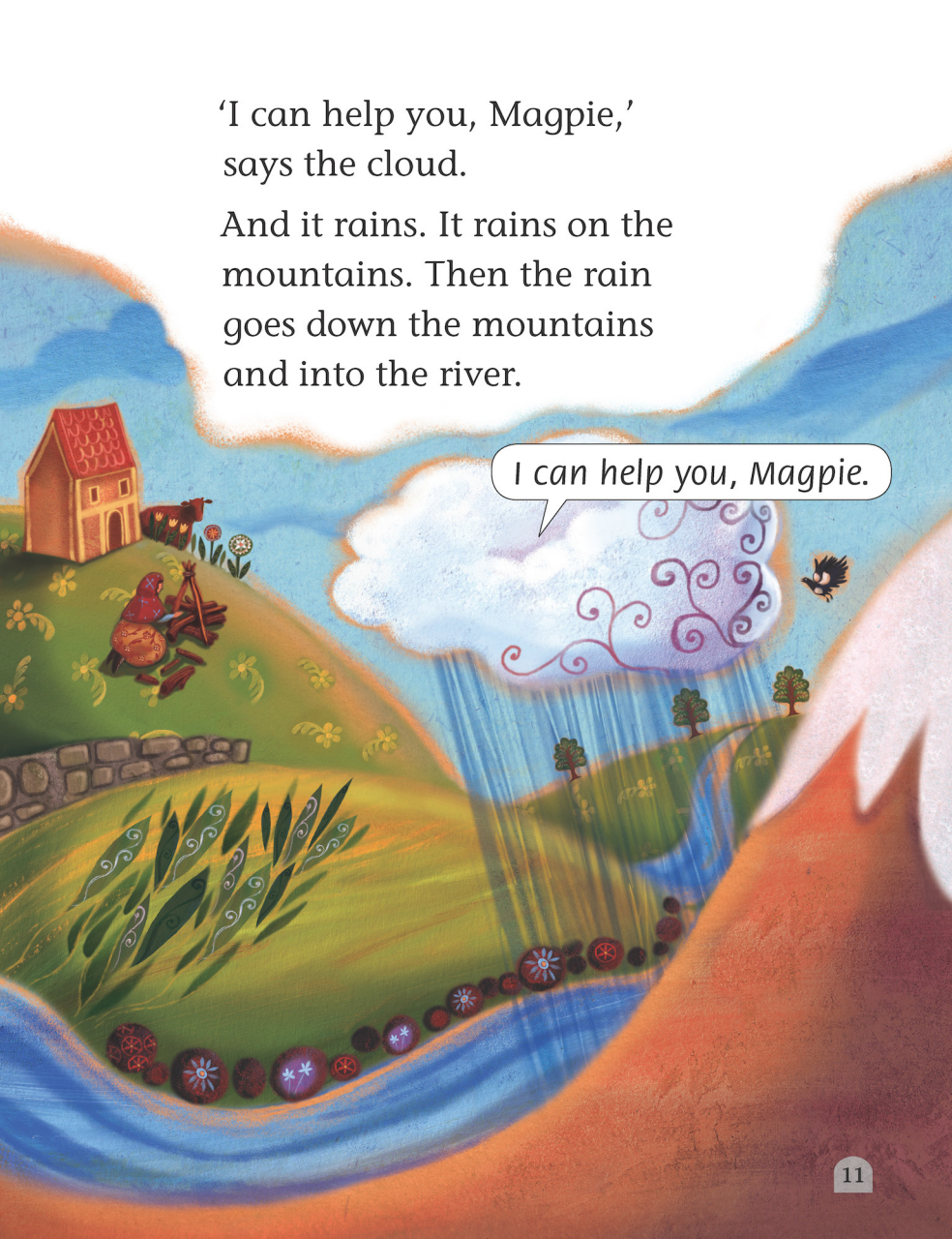




‘Cloud, Cloud,’ he says. ‘Please give me some rain for the river. Then the field can have its water. The cow can have her grass. The farmer can have her milk. And I can have my tail.’

'I can help you, Magpie,'  
says the cloud.

And it rains. It rains on the  
mountains. Then the rain  
goes down the mountains  
and into the river.

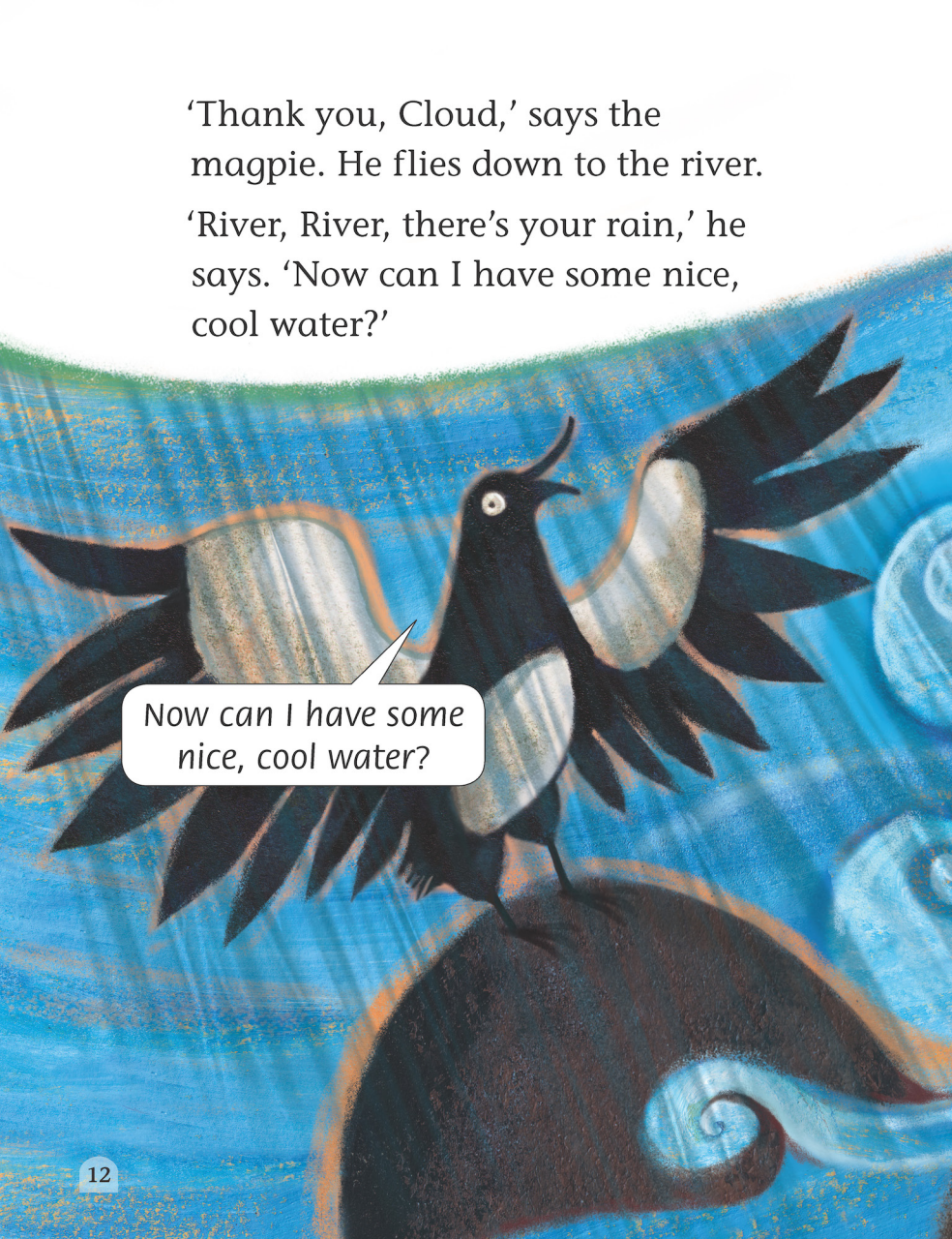
A vibrant, stylized illustration of a landscape. In the upper left, a small house with a red roof sits on a green hill. A red cow and a red pig are nearby. A stone wall runs across the middle ground. In the foreground, a blue river flows, bordered by a row of colorful, patterned stones. A large, white, fluffy cloud with purple swirls is raining blue rain onto the landscape. A small black bird is flying near the cloud. The background features rolling hills and a large, orange, mountain-like shape on the right.

I can help you, Magpie.



‘Thank you, Cloud,’ says the magpie. He flies down to the river.

‘River, River, there’s your rain,’ he says. ‘Now can I have some nice, cool water?’



Now can I have some nice, cool water?

‘Yes, Magpie,’ says the river. ‘Here it is.’





‘Thank you, River,’ says the magpie.  
He takes the water to the field.

‘Field, Field, here’s your water,’ he  
says. ‘Now can I have some long,  
green grass?’




Can I have some  
long, green grass?

‘Yes, Magpie,’ says the field.  
‘Here it is.’



Here it is.





Here's  
your grass.

'Thank you, Field,' says  
the magpie. He takes  
the grass to the cow.

'Cow, Cow, here's your  
grass,' he says. 'Now  
can I have some nice,  
warm milk?'

'Yes, Magpie,' says the  
cow. 'Here it is.'

‘Thank you, Cow,’ says the magpie.  
He takes the milk to the farmer.

‘Farmer, Farmer, here’s your milk,’  
he says. ‘Now can I have my tail?’





‘Yes, Magpie,’ says  
the farmer. ‘Here  
it is.’

She puts on the  
magpie’s tail, and  
he flies away.





‘There,’ says the farmer. ‘Now I can make my cheese.’





# Exercises

## 1 Join the words and pictures.

nice, cool

long, green

a big, white

nice, warm

a long, black

grass

cloud

tail

water

milk



## 2 Write the words.



Please give me some rain  
for the river. Then  
the \_\_\_\_\_ can have  
its water. The \_\_\_\_\_  
can have her grass. The  
\_\_\_\_\_ can have her  
milk. And \_\_\_\_\_  
can have my tail.

### 3 Write the words and number the sentences 1–5.

catches   flies down   ~~sees~~   falls   comes off

- ☐ The bucket \_\_\_\_\_ over.
- ☐ The magpie's tail \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☒ 1 The magpie \_\_\_\_\_ sees the milk.
- ☐ The farmer \_\_\_\_\_ the magpie's tail.
- ☐ The magpie \_\_\_\_\_ to the bucket.

### 4 Answer the questions.

- 1 Who is it? The farmer.
- 2 Does she have milk? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Does she have a fire? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Can she make cheese? \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Who is it? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Does he have a tail? \_\_\_\_\_





# Picture Dictionary

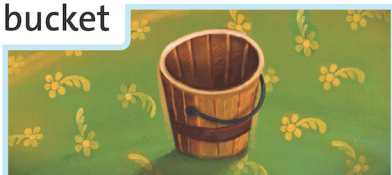
bring



come off



bucket



cool *It's cool.*



catch



cow



cheese



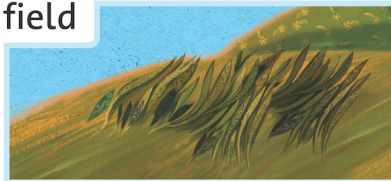
fall over



cloud



field



fire



mountains



fly



pull



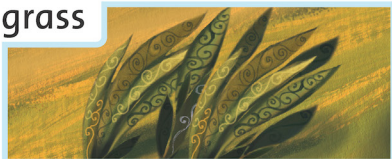
fly away



put on



grass



river



magpie



tail



milk



warm *It's warm.*





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- The Little Red Hen
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- The Magic Cooking Pot
- The Magpie and the Milk
- Mansour and the Donkey
- Peach Boy
- The Princess and the Pea
- Rumpelstiltskin
- The Shoemaker and the Elves
- Three Billy-Goats

## Level 2: 150 headwords

- Amrita and the Trees
- Big Baby Finn
- The Fisherman and his Wife
- The Gingerbread Man
- Jack and the Beanstalk
- King Arthur and the Sword
- Rainforest Boy
- Thumbelina
- The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse
- The Ugly Duckling

## Level 3: 200 headwords

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- Goldilocks and the Three Bears
- The Heron and the Hummingbird
- The Little Mermaid
- Little Red Riding Hood
- Rapunzel

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Level 1

# The Magpie and the Milk

Enjoy this tale from Turkey about a farmer,  
the milk from her cow, and a magpie ...

A retelling of the classic story for learners of English

Retold by Rachel Bladon  
Illustrated by Alida Massari

**Classic Tales – bringing the magic of traditional  
storytelling to language learning**

The stories are carefully graded at Levels 1–5 to provide easy and enjoyable reading. Beautiful illustrations on every page work closely with the text to help understanding. Each *Classic Tale* also includes activities related to the story, and a picture dictionary or glossary.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  <b>Level 1: 100 headwords</b> |  <b>Level 4: 300 headwords</b> |
|  <b>Level 2: 150 headwords</b> |  <b>Level 5: 400 headwords</b> |
|  <b>Level 3: 200 headwords</b> |   |

**Word count for this story: 491**

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