

JAN KJÆRSTAD

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Miranda is an elderly lady who owns a second hand store. One day she gets a visit from the six-year-old girl Nora, who has never been there before. Nora gets curious about all the old things and finds the shop is very nice, Miranda also offers Nora squash and chocolate biscuits. Nora raises several questions, and Miranda tells from her diverse life. Nora has a lifetime ahead of her and thinks it is exciting to hear about everything you can experience in life.

This is a book that is suitable for reading across generations and work as a starting point for conversations about small and big themes.

Jan Kjørstad is one of Norway's leading and most popular authors. He has received the Literature Prize, and numerous other awards for his writing.

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*Miranda's  
treasury*



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I have to come up with something exciting to do, thought Nora. She was bored. She was veeeeery bored. It was a whole week until school started, and she was going to start first grade. She was both excited and scared at the same time. But she was mostly excited, especially to learn all the letters. But right now she was so bored that it itched all the way down to her toes. She did not have anyone to play with. Her best friend, Thomas, had moved away just before the summer vacation had started.

Nora decided that she could go on a store exploration. YES! The only problem was she had already visited all the stores in the neighbourhood. All except one. Nora wished she could read the sign hanging over the door. The store always looked a bit sad, she thought. But today there were some strange objects displayed outside, and Nora dared to go inside.

“Hello, my name is Nora. I’m six years and twenty-four days old. It’s very pretty in here!”

“Thank you very much. I’m Miranda,” said the owner. “Can I offer you something? Do you want a glass of squash?”

“Yes, please,” answered Nora. “What kind of store is this?”



“It’s a second hand store,” said Miranda. “That means every thing is used before. You can buy all sorts of things here: An old ABC, a mirror from the castle, and a treasure map that used to belong to Captain Hook. Do you want a biscuit too?”

“Ohh, that’s a VERY pretty box,” said Nora.

Nora was almost more interested in the box than the biscuits, even though the biscuits had a chocolate covering. It was something about the colour and the metal and the beautiful drawings. "I collect boxes," said Miranda. "I have collected them since I was a little girl; boxes, cases and chests of every kind."

"Why's that?" asked Nora.

"I used to like to build things with them," said Miranda.

"What did you build?" asked Nora. "A tower?"

"I could build a whole town!" said Miranda spreading out her arms, "with skyscrapers and everything."

A troll hid inside one of the boxes.

A glass was filled with sweets shaped like diamonds. No matter how many Miranda ate the glass never seemed to empty.

One of the boxes smelled like shoe polish.

One music box played "For Elise" when Miranda lifted the lid.

A genie lived in one of the boxes, and could make all of Miranda's wishes come true.



Nora looked carefully at Miranda. Instead of being bored, she decided to find out more about this mysterious old woman. Nora liked to ask questions. Her mother thought she asked too many, but her dad had told her it was strength. So she braced herself and asked: "Have you always had a second hand store, Miranda? Or were you...say...a lion trainer when you were young?"

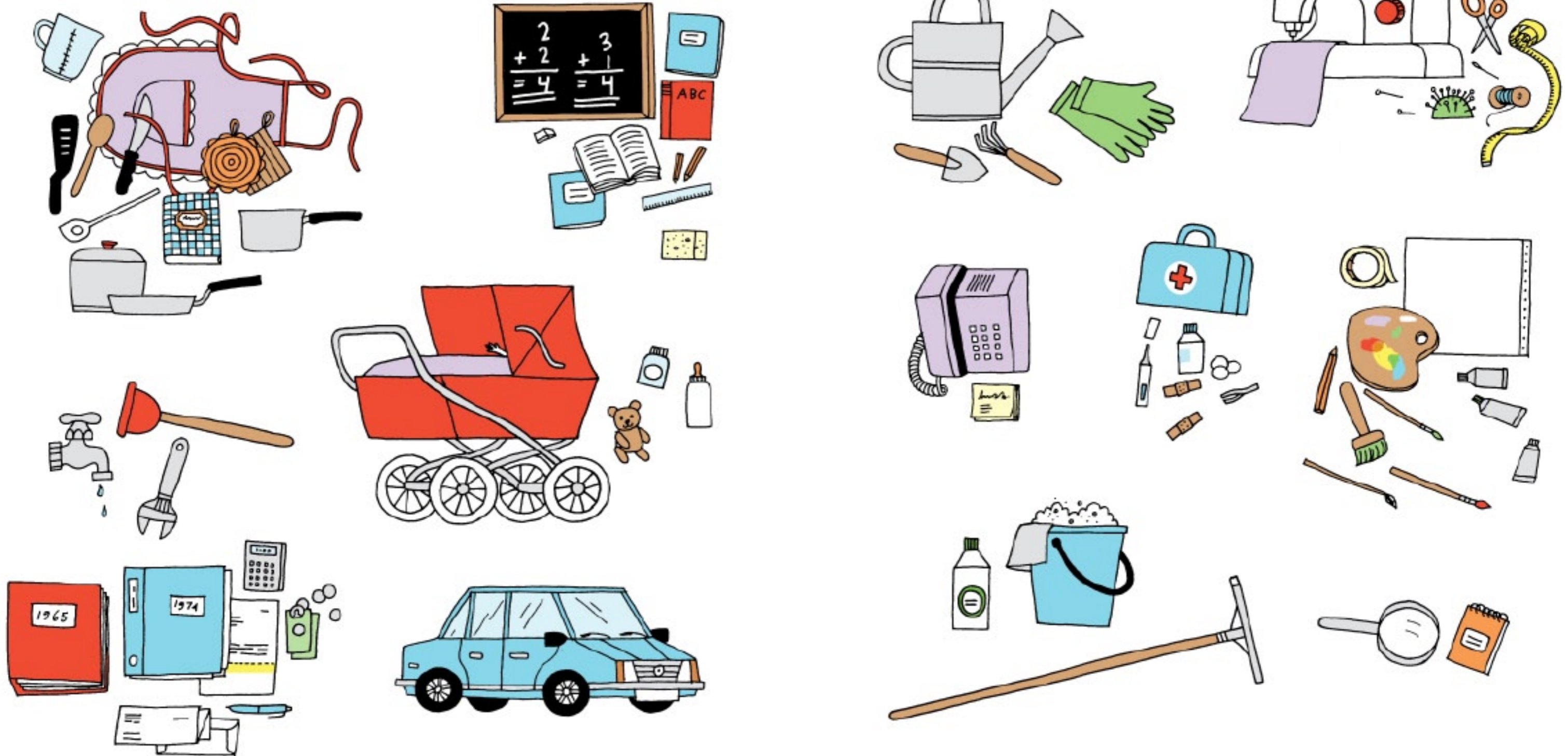
"No", said Miranda and laughed.

"That's good, because lions have extremely sharp teeth," said Nora. "But have you ever sold ice cream?"

Miranda shook her head.

"That's a shame," said Nora.

But Miranda had had many other jobs, and when Nora asked politely to hear about some of them, Miranda started to tell her about them.





“Why are you so interested in boxes?” asked Nora.

Miranda told her that it probably had to do with her dad, because her dad had been a merchant. He used to run a grocery store. A store with groceries: coffee, canned food, syrup and fruits. As a child Miranda liked all the wonderful boxes and cases, and when they were empty she got to keep them. “My father thought I was extraordinary,” she said. “He always called me Miracle Miranda.”

“Did your mother also work in the store?” asked Nora.

“No, she was home and cared for the house,” said Miranda. “My mother was from England, and she taught me to like tea and toast with marmalade.”

Mmmm, that sounded delicious, thought Nora and felt her stomach rumble. It was a bit strange, but she suddenly got the cravings for tea with toast and marmalade. And to speak English. Mai neim is Nora. I lov ju.

“But my mother was most at home in the garden,” said Miranda. “It looked like a piece of art”

“Do you sew as well?” asked Nora. “You certainly have a nice dress.”





“Thank you,” said Miranda. “Yes, I’ve made it myself. I learned it from my mother.”

“Do you know how to use a sewing machine?” asked Nora.

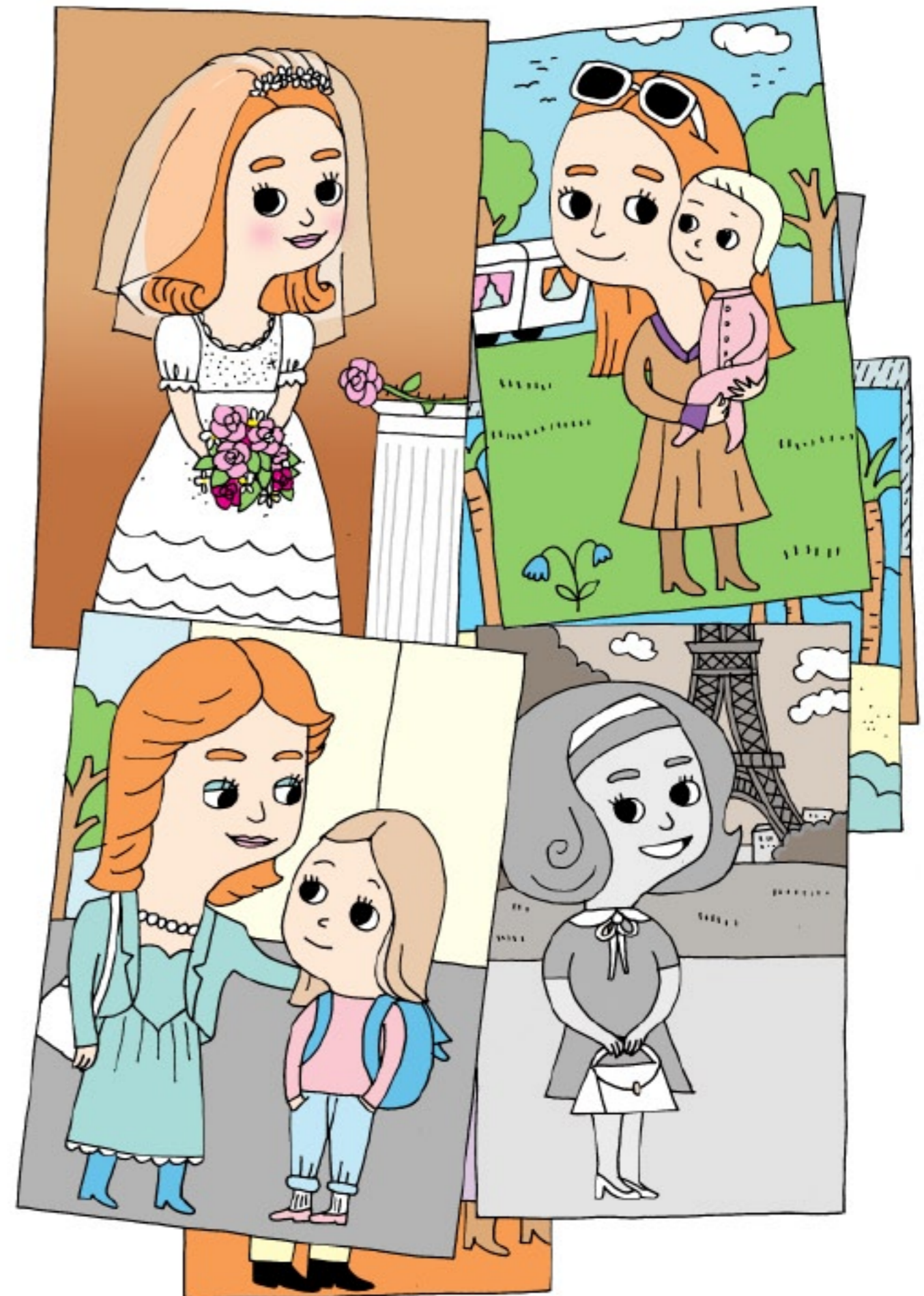
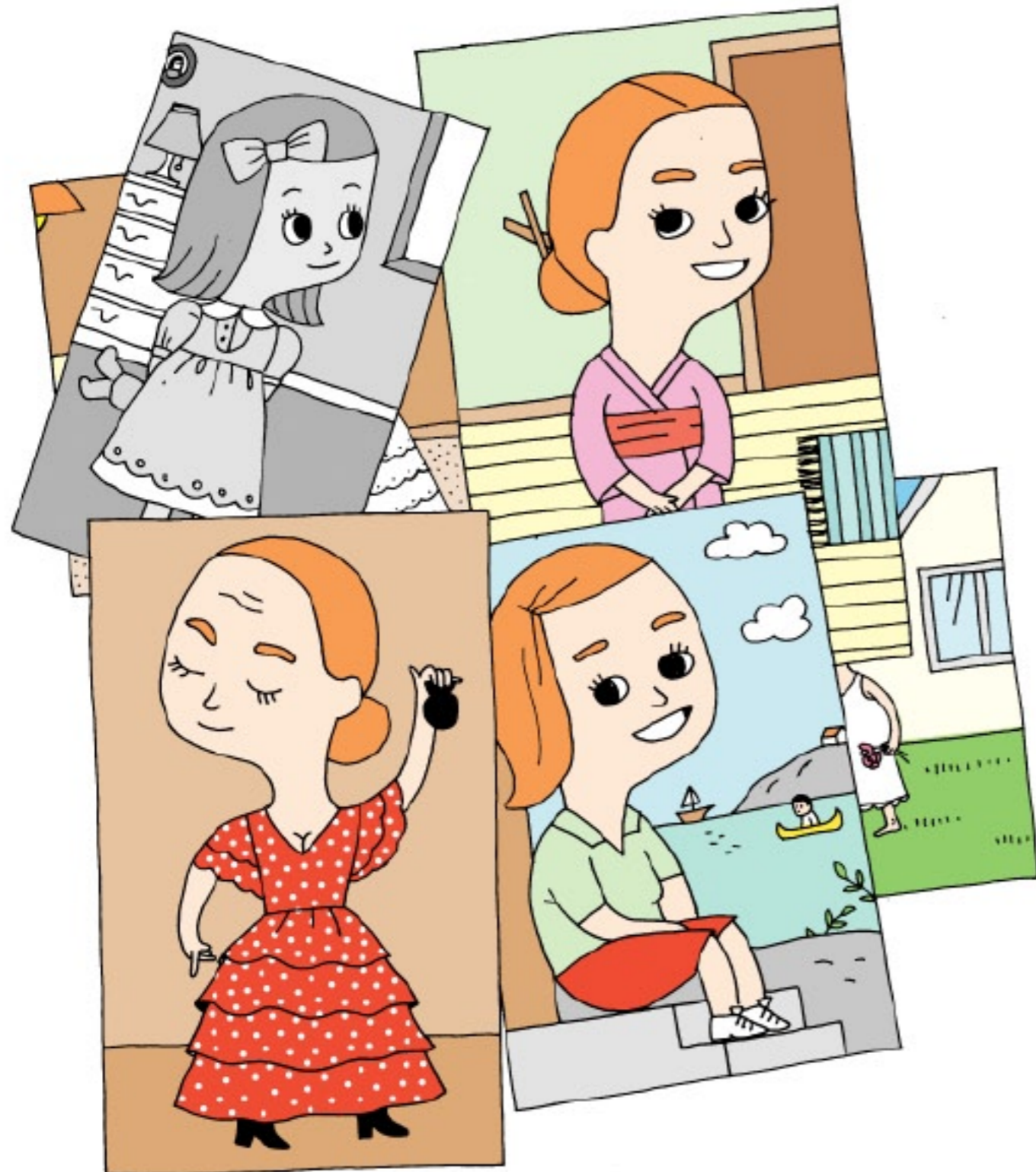
“Yes of course,” replied Miranda. “Do you?”

“I think it looks a little dangerous,” said Nora. “But I know a song about Josephine and a sewing machine.”

“Then you’re halfway there,” laughed Miranda and explained that she had always been interested in clothes. “Do you want to see pictures of some of the clothes I used to wear?” asked Miranda.

“Of course” said Nora.

So Miranda went to get a box filled with old photographs.



On the shelf behind Miranda Nora could see a box that distinguished itself from the others. It was so stunning it was almost illuminating. "Is there a mysterious secret in there?" she asked hopefully.

"Maybe there is," said Miranda and lifted it down. She had found the box in her dad's store when she was about Nora's age. It seemed supernatural. Miranda was smitten by it.

"I got the box from my dad when it was empty," said Miranda. "He said that I should fill it with life."

"With life?" That's odd," said Nora. "Is it possible to fill a box with life?" "But what is the picture on the outside supposed to be?"

"A landscape in The Netherlands," said Miranda.

"Oh, The Netherlands, that sounds exciting," said Nora. "I want to go there. Have you been many places, Miranda?"

