

Rose Ruby

Story by Melaina Faranda

Illustrations by Cynthia Paul



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Chapter 1

Rose Ruby

“Rose Ruby, are you listening?” Mr Grainger frowned. The way their teacher ran their names together made Rose and Ruby grin.

Rose and Ruby had always done everything together, ever since they had met on the first day of school. Together, as they sat on the story mat, they had learned “h” was for house, as well as for Hong, but Hong liked to be called Rose. That was the English word for her Vietnamese name.



They had started circus classes together, too. Rose was better at backflips, but Ruby was like a spider, climbing and spinning from the hanging silks.

At school, if Ruby had to create a cover page for a new topic, Rose did the drawings. But Ruby helped Rose with maths.



Mr Grainger told everyone to close their books. “We’re lucky to have a new student joining our class tomorrow,” he said. “It’s going to be a big change for Bella, moving here from the United Arab Emirates. She might be feeling shy, so I want all of us to give her a big welcome.”

He pointed to the empty chair next to Rose. “Rose, Ruby, I’d like you two to look after our new student, please.”



At lunch, Rose and Ruby talked about ways they could welcome the new girl.

“Maybe we could invite her back to my place and show her Nibbles?” Ruby suggested. Grandma had given Ruby the guinea pig when she moved in with Ruby and her mum.

Rose agreed. “And then we could go back to my place, and I could show her how to make Vietnamese coconut jelly.”



Chapter 2

A Princess and Some Peacocks

The girls stared. Everything about Bella was ... perfect. The new girl's shiny dark ponytail was held with a gold butterfly clasp. She wore expensive clothes from the kinds of shops that Rose and Ruby had only ever shuffled past with Ruby's mum on their way to a cheaper department store.



Bella smiled as she took the seat next to Rose, and neatly arranged her fancy stationery along the tabletop.

When the class did long division, Bella finished before anyone else. When it was time to draw the solar system, Bella's diagram was so good, Mr Grainger held it up to show the rest of the class.

