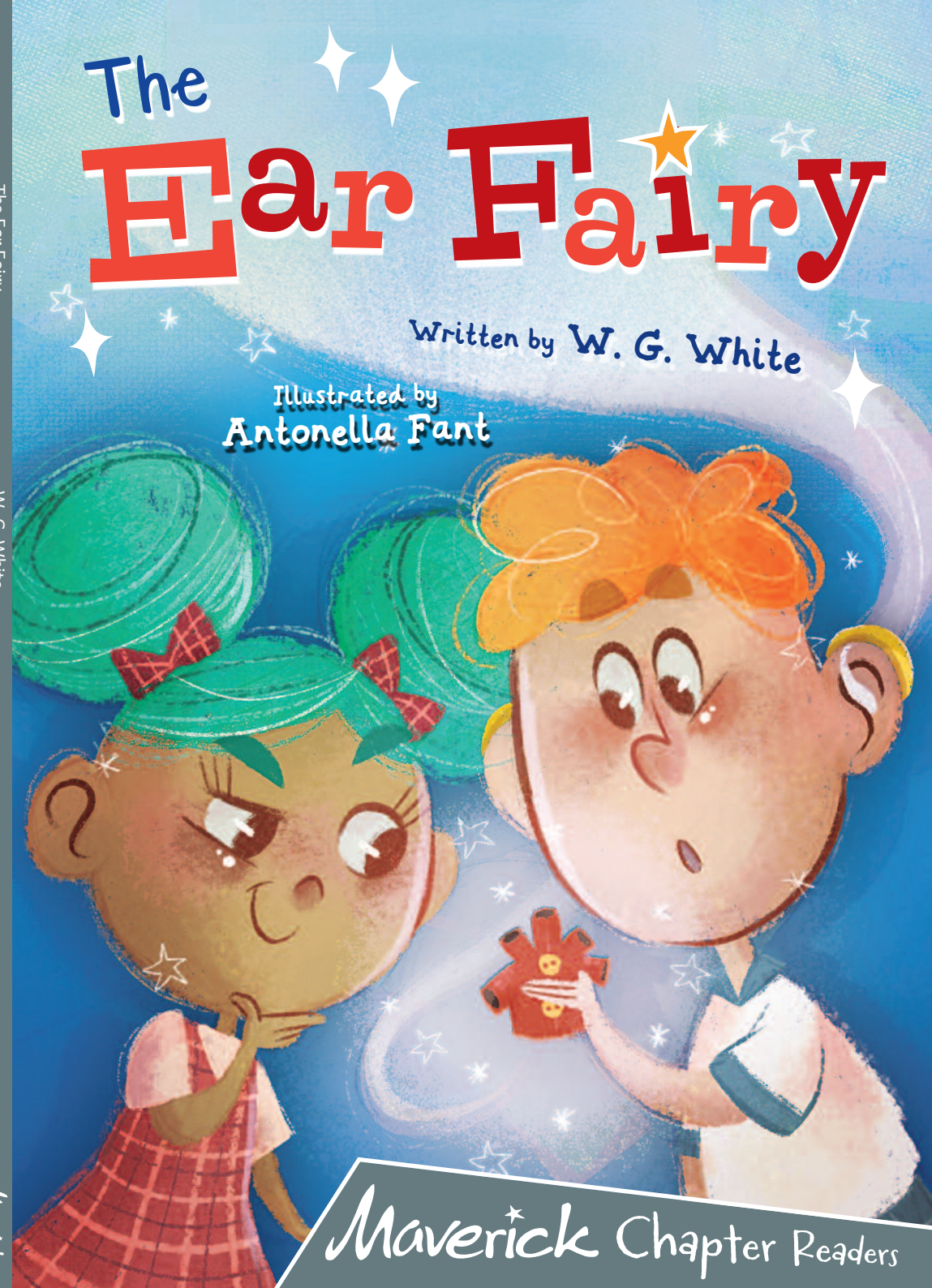


The Ear Fairy

W. G. White

Maverick



'The Ear Fairy'
An original concept by W. G. White
© W. G. White

Illustrated by Antonella Fant

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For Review Only

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Chapter 1

"Have fun!" shouted Mia's mum from the car. "Be good! Learn lots!"

But Mia wasn't listening. She was already halfway across the playground. She'd been waiting to get back to school all weekend. Not because she loved homework. Gross. But because today she'd *finally* get to meet Jonathan.

Jonathan was her best friend. He always had crazy stories about where his parents had taken him for the weekend, or who he'd gone to see. Last summer, he'd visited somewhere strange called *Croatia* and spent the whole time swimming in the ocean.

Mia hadn't even *seen* the ocean!

But, despite Jonathan being her best friend, Mia had never met him before. He actually lived all the way on the other side of the country. At the start of last year, their schools had organised something called a 'penpal scheme'. Mia and Jonathan were put together and hadn't stopped writing since. Now Jonathan, his teachers and a bunch of his classmates were coming to visit for an entire week! He'd even be sleeping at her house!

The penpal scheme was meant to 'connect everyone without boundaries'. Jonathan and his classmates were all deaf. If Jonathan didn't have his hearing aids in, he couldn't hear at all! Because of that, it was hard for Jonathan to make friends outside of his school. Mia didn't understand why; she thought Jonathan was really funny and interesting, and couldn't wait to find out more about him.

As Mia ran into the playground, she saw her classmates playing and teachers everywhere. She wasn't

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interested in hopscotch or skipping today though. Today she was looking for Jonathan. He'd sent her a picture of himself and his mum in Scotland once so she knew what he looked like. Eventually she spotted a group of students she didn't recognise standing in a huddle. They were playing some sort of game with their hands. Jonathan was in the middle of the group.

Mia gasped, raced up to her best friend, and hugged him. "Hi!" Mia said as she broke away from Jonathan. "I'm Mia."

Jonathan smiled and hugged her back. "Hi, Mia!" he said. He tapped his hearing aid, probably adjusting the volume. He could do all sorts of cool stuff with his hearing aid and Mia was even a little jealous. She wished she could turn down her own hearing when her mum told her to eat her brussel sprouts.

"How was your trip down?" asked Mia. "Do you want to see my brand new monster trapper I made this weekend?"

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Jonathan smiled and nodded vigorously. He didn't say much, Mia knew that already.

She was just about to tell Jonathan about her new invention when Mrs Witmoore, her teacher, came over. "Hello Mia," Mrs Witmoore said as she guided Mia away from Jonathan and his friends. "Did you have a nice weekend?"

She crouched in front of Mia. Mia had learned that nothing good happened when a teacher crouched.



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Mia replied, "Yes, miss. I invented a new, custom-designed, state-of-the-art monster trapper. Do you want to see it? I was about to show it to Jonathan."

"Maybe later," smiled Mrs Witmoore. She looked over at Jonathan, then back at Mia. "Now, I just wanted to remind you that sometimes it's hard work for Jonathan to hear. Try not to talk his ear off, please. Make sure he's comfortable and not overwhelmed. Our school's a lot louder than his is and we want to make sure he feels welcome, don't we?"

Mia touched her own ears and looked at Jonathan. She was reminded of her two baby brothers at home and how their screaming often gave her a headache. "Yes, miss. I'll be super quiet. Like a mouse."

Mrs Witmoore laughed. "You don't need to be quite *that* quiet, Mia. Just be mindful."

Oh, Mia could be mindful. She'd be the most mindful girl that there ever was.