

Crinkle, the Little Leaf

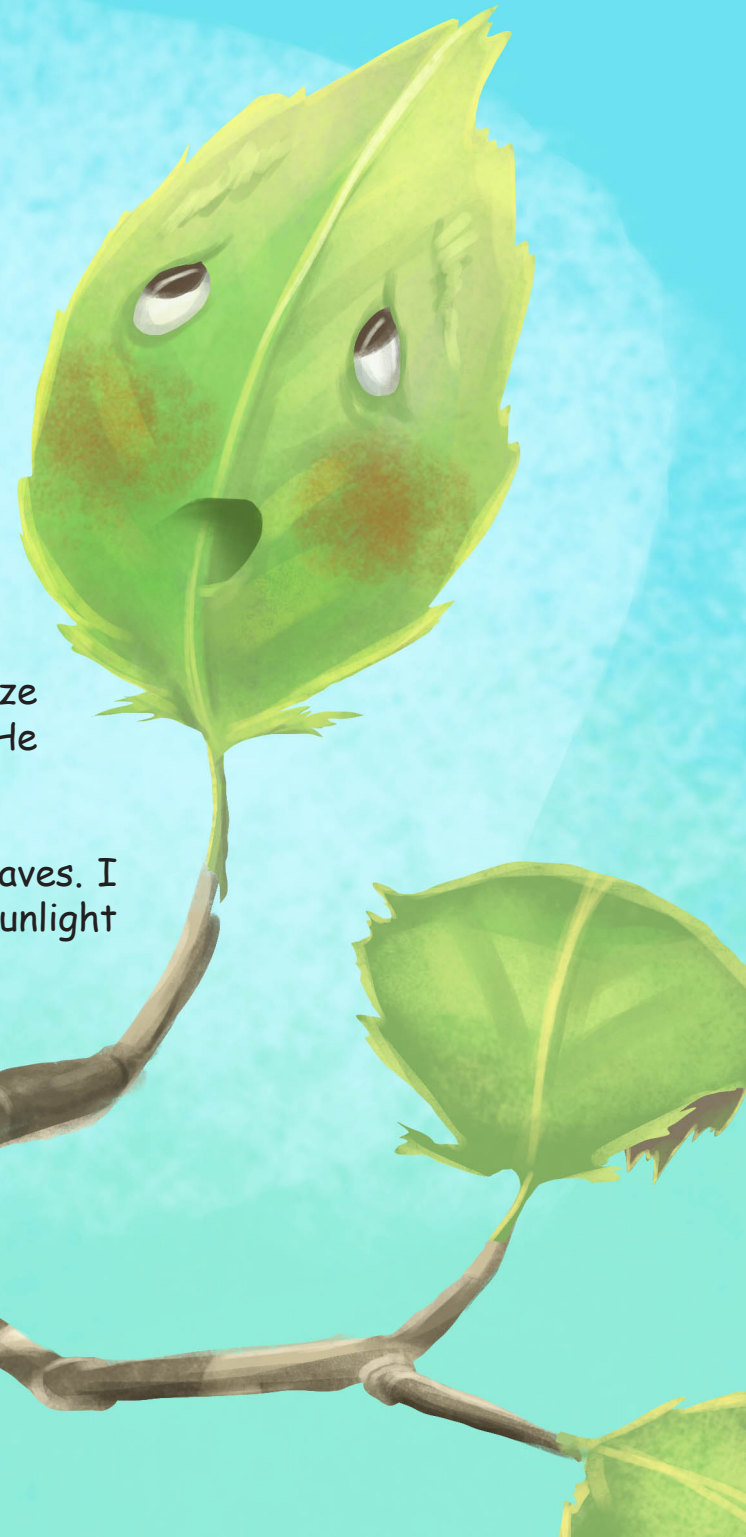
Crinkle felt sad. Why was he sad? He thought that because there were so many other leaves on the birch tree, no one would notice him. Whoever looked up at the tree where Crinkle lived would see thousands of leaves, and he himself would not be noticed.


Crinkle hung on his stem thinking these sad thoughts, when he felt a warm breeze blow him from side to side and begin to wiggle him all around. Crinkle giggled. He liked the breeze. It always tickled him when the breeze blew softly like that.

Along with this breeze, he heard a voice.

"Crinkle," the voice said, "I see you. I know and love each of you, My little leaves. I created you for a reason. Each little leaf has a mission of helping to absorb the sunlight for the tree. And also each one is needed to make a tree beautiful."

Crinkle liked these words. They made him feel good.





So Crinkle spent his days absorbing the sunshine, smiling at the young children playing under him, and encouraging his brothers and sisters when they felt low.

When the warm summer days gave way to colder days, Crinkle noticed that he was changing color. The leaves all around him changed, too. From green they turned into beautiful shades of yellow, orange, and red.

Every day, Crinkle and the other leaves on the tree would change a little in color. The breeze had also changed. It didn't tickle and play with him as it had before; now it had become a wind that tossed him about. The wind was chilly, too.

One day, the wind blew fiercely against the birch that was Crinkle's home. The little stem that had connected Crinkle to his branch broke, and he tumbled down from the tree.



The wind caught Crinkle and sent him up into the air, and then he started to fall again. The wind seemed to be playing with him. Crinkle was a little frightened, not knowing where he would end up. After a little time, Crinkle felt himself floating to the ground, landing on a little patch of grass.

Crinkle lay there looking up at the sky. *Oh dear!* he thought. *I'm all alone down here, and I miss my other leaf friends. What can I do and be, now that I'm no longer with the other leaves as part of the tree? I wish I could be back with the others.*

Suddenly, he heard a child's voice, a voice he knew. It was one of the little children who he had smiled at so many times, and who had loved to play beneath the branches that were his home. "Oh, look," the little girl said, "this is a beautiful birch leaf. Let's take it with us, too."



Take me where? Crinkle wondered, but by then the little girl had picked him up and placed him in a bag with a few other leaves, flowers, a blade of grass, and a leaf of clover.

"Hi, I'm Crinkle!" he greeted the others. "It's nice to meet you!"

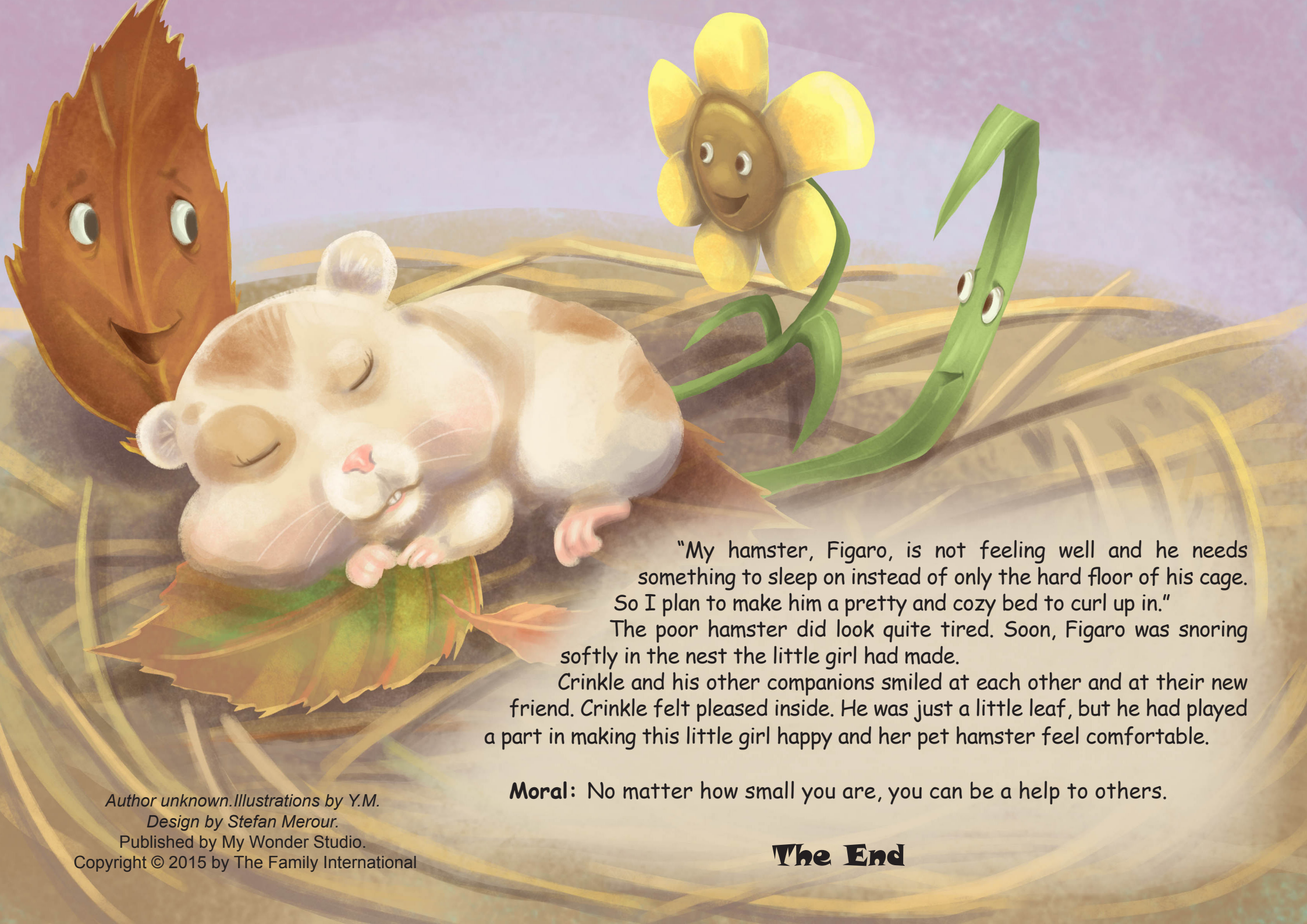
"You too," the others chorused, and went on to introduce themselves.

"Does anyone know where we're going?" Crinkle asked.

The blade of grass answered. "I was the first one the little girl picked up. I heard her talk about how she needed us for a special project."

"I wonder what it is," the clover said.

That afternoon, Crinkle and his new friends were laid inside a nest made of twigs and sticks.



"My hamster, Figaro, is not feeling well and he needs something to sleep on instead of only the hard floor of his cage. So I plan to make him a pretty and cozy bed to curl up in."

The poor hamster did look quite tired. Soon, Figaro was snoring softly in the nest the little girl had made.

Crinkle and his other companions smiled at each other and at their new friend. Crinkle felt pleased inside. He was just a little leaf, but he had played a part in making this little girl happy and her pet hamster feel comfortable.

Moral: No matter how small you are, you can be a help to others.

The End

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