

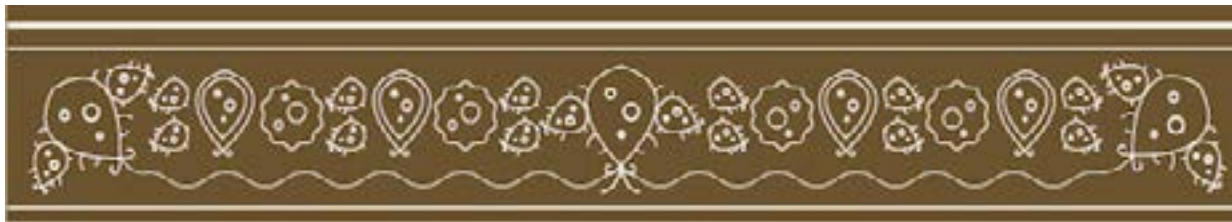
Maya, Princess Scientist

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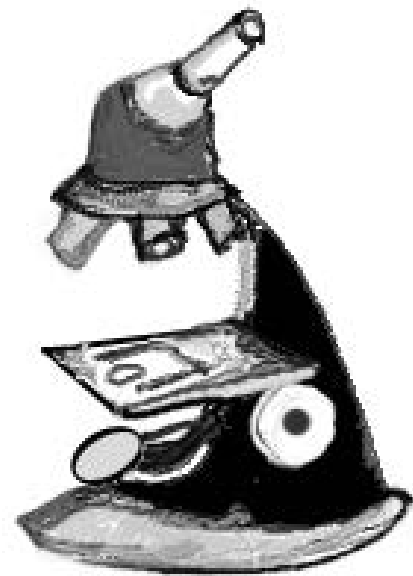
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Dedicated to our daughters,
Maya and Ellie, two budding scientists and amazing young women,
and to Steven J. Abelson, Maj. USAF Ret.





nce upon a time, in the
Kingdom Topaz, lived a
young girl named Maya.

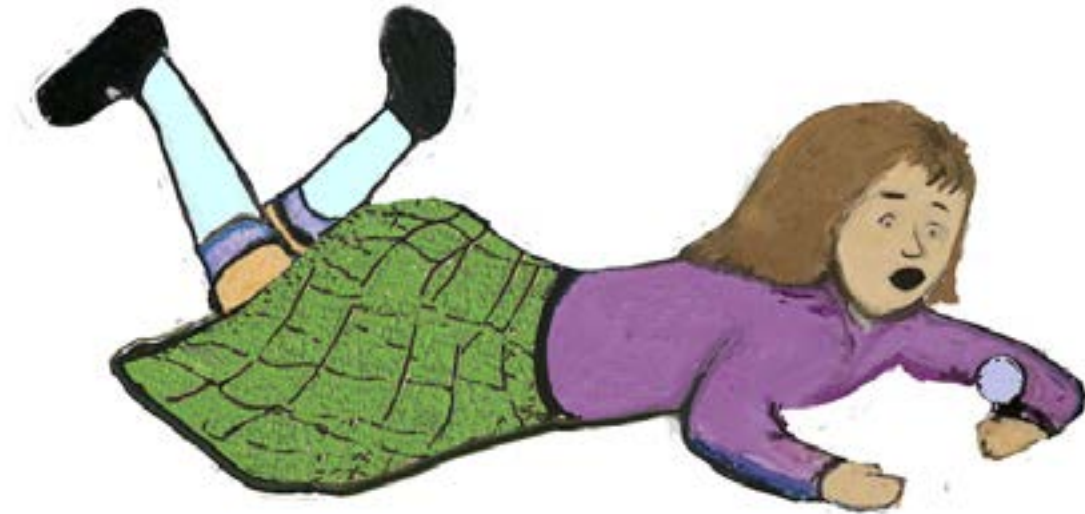




Maya was fascinated by many things in the world and she was always asking questions and trying to figure out how things work.



Maya was a real scientist.





She would observe something interesting
and try to figure out how it worked.





Then she would experiment to see if she could replicate what she had seen in her laboratory.

Sometimes her experiments worked out...



...and sometimes they didn't. But Maya loved experimenting and learning, even when things didn't go quite as planned.





Sometimes the things she observed were too difficult to even guess about; then she would have to read to find out more. Maya would read books, magazines, and look up information on the Internet. She would read and read until she understood what she had seen.



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Sometimes, when Maya's experiments worked out, she would get a great idea, which would lead her to invent something new and exciting! She sometimes dreamed of sharing her inventions and her love of science with people all over the Kingdom of Topaz.

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far away from Maya's house, in the King of Topaz's palace, all was not well. The King was trying to open a jar of pickles, but it was stuck tight!

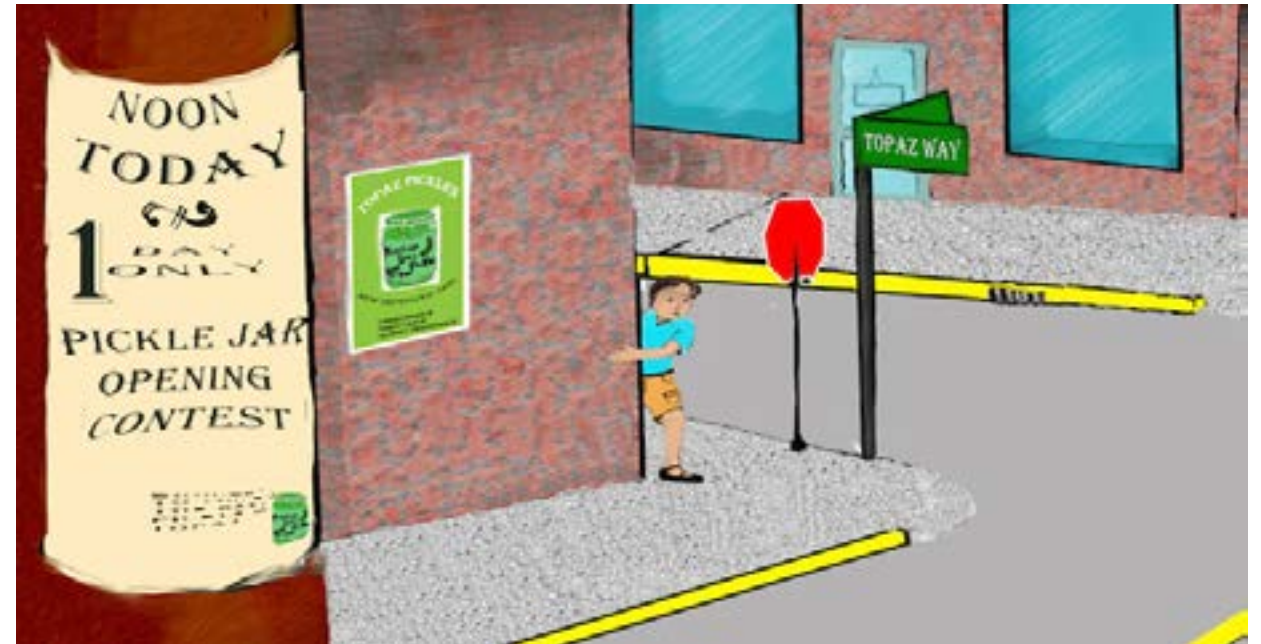




He asked the queen, but she couldn't open it. He asked the duke, but he couldn't open it. He even asked the royal dog, but it was no use. The pickle jar would not open.



“How will I ever get this jar of pickles opened?” asked the forlorn King. Then he had a great idea. “I’ll hold a contest,” he said. “Tell all the mightiest men in the land to come to the royal square at noon today. Whoever opens the pickle jar will be made prince!”





The Kingdom was abuzz with the news. Everyone was going to turn out to see who could open the jar of pickles for the King.





Maya also heard the news of the stuck pickles. As usual, she was fascinated. She took a pickle jar out of her own refrigerator. “Why might a lid get stuck on a pickle jar, and how might we unstick it?” she wondered.





So she read and read. She read about issues like force and vacuums and friction. And when she was finished reading, she had an idea. Maya raced down to her scientist laboratory and got right to work. There wasn't much time until the big contest to open the pickle jar!





t noon, the whole kingdom turned out to see the mightiest men in the kingdom try to open the pickle jar. They all wondered who would be crowned prince.





Maya also came, wheeling her invention under a big, secret table cloth. She tried to stay at the edge of the crowd — maybe her invention wouldn't be needed at all? She felt a little silly.





The trumpets blared, and the King announced the tournament. All the mightiest men of the kingdom must come and try to open the pickle jar. One by one, the strong men all came up to the pickle jar. They strained...and tugged...and stretched...and pulled...and tried with all their might, but the pickle jar would not come unstuck.





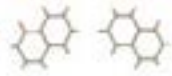
Everyone was very disappointed, and they were about to go home sadly, when a small voice from the edge of the crowd said, “Your majesty, may I try to open the pickle jar?” No one could believe their eyes. It was little Maya! They all laughed. How could this tiny little girl open the pickle jar when the strongest men had failed? The king felt sorry for little Maya. “Of course you may try,” he said.



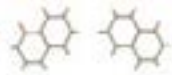


Maya wheeled her invention to the front of the crowd and pulled off the cover. The crowd gasped. “What is that?” someone asked. “It’s an automatic pickle jar opener,” Maya said. “It works on principles of torque and friction.” And with that, she put the pickle jar into the machine. Maya turned the machine on. It clanked and clunked and heaved and chugged...





...and the lid came off, lickety split! No one could believe their eyes! Maya handed the jar of pickles to the king, who ate a pickle right away.





“Well, little girl, you’ve opened the jar of pickles, so you get the reward! From now on, you shall be Maya, Princess Scientist!” “Hurray for Maya, Princess Scientist!” cheered the crowd. “Can you teach us about science, too?”



“Of course,” Maya said. And as Princess, she opened up the Royal Academic of Scientists, which graduated many, many girls (and a few boys, too) who went on to discover and invent many great things.



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