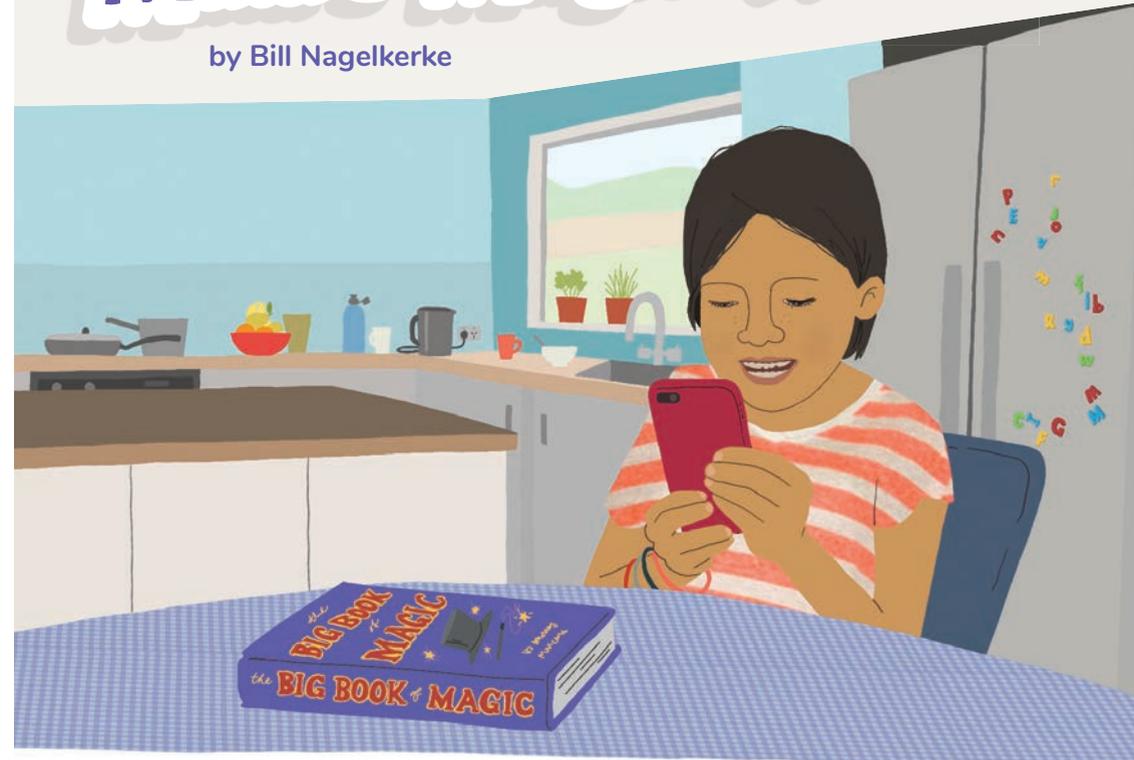


Maia's Magic Wand

by Bill Nagelkerke



Aunty Anna phoned to ask Maia what she wanted for her birthday. Aunty Anna was a scientist. She was always busy, so sometimes she didn't listen very carefully.

"I'd love a magic wand," Maia said. She had just finished reading a book about how to do magic tricks and couldn't wait to try out some of the tricks on her family. A magic wand was just what she needed.

"What a great idea! That's easy," her aunty said. "I'll get one and post it to you."

On Maia's birthday, a package arrived.

"Yay, this will be my magic wand!" cried Maia, tearing off the paper.

Maia's brother, Tai, looked at the present. "That's a funny sort of wand," he said, and he carried on playing with his cars.



Tai was right. The wand didn't *look* magical. It wasn't made of wood, and it wasn't round like a magic wand should be. It was flat, and one end was wider than the other. The wide end felt heavy.

"Aunty put a birthday card with it," said Mum. She handed it over.

Maia read the card.

Dearest Maia,

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Here is the magnetic wand you asked for. I hope you have loads of fun with it. I loved playing with magnets when I was your age.

Love,
Aunty Anna

"But I asked for a *magic* wand, not a magnetic wand!" said Maia.

"It's almost the same thing," said Dad cheerfully. He walked over to the fridge. "Look at this."

Dad made the word MAGNETIC with the letters on the fridge. "Now, this is the clever part," he said. "If you take out these letters, you're left with MAGIC! How about that!"



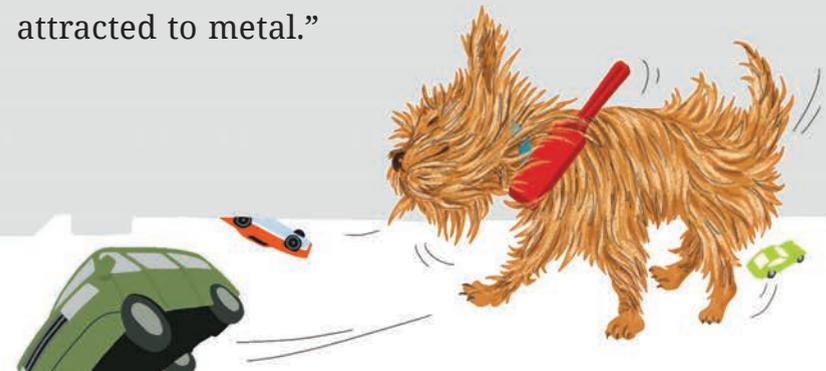
"That's not magic," said Maia, disappointed.

She put the wand on a chair.

Amber the dog looked up from her basket, then she came over and sniffed the wand. Suddenly, the wand jumped up and stuck to Amber's name tag. Amber shook her head from side to side, trying to get rid of the wand. She spun around, her paws sliding all over the floor and sending Tai's toy cars flying off in all directions.

"Hey, stop that!" said Tai.

Dad grabbed hold of Amber and gently removed the wand. "Her tag is made of metal," he explained. "That's why the wand stuck to it. Magnets are attracted to metal."



“That actually *did* look a bit like magic!” Maia said. Mum laughed and gave Amber a pat. “That looked really funny, Amber,” she said.

“*Not* funny,” said Tai, “Two of my cars are gone.” He looked as though he was about to cry.

“Amber must have kicked them somewhere when she was running around,” said Maia.

“They might have gone under the fridge,” said Dad. “Have a look.”

Tai lay down and peered under the fridge. “It’s too dark to see,” he said.

Dad got a torch.

“Yes, now I can see something shiny,” said Tai. “*Two* shiny things.”

Mum reached under the fridge. “They’re too far away,” she said. “I can’t reach them.”



“I know what we can do,” said Maia, grabbing her wand. “My wand stuck to Amber’s tag, so it will stick to Tai’s cars too.”

“That’s right!” said Dad. “Tai’s cars are made of metal. Good thinking!”

Maia poked the magnetic wand under the fridge. She felt it tug at something. She pulled the wand back out – with one of Tai’s cars attached to it.

“I’ll get the other one now,” said Maia.

“No, I want to do it,” said Tai, so Maia gave him the wand.



“It’s just like fishing,” said Tai as the second car appeared.

“I guess my magnetic wand *is* a magic wand after all,” said Maia, with a smile.

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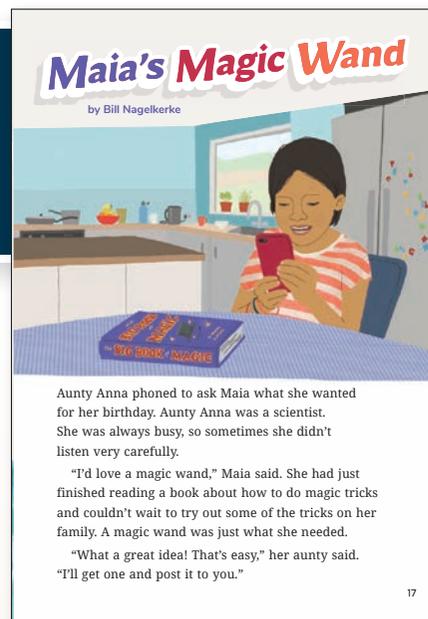
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