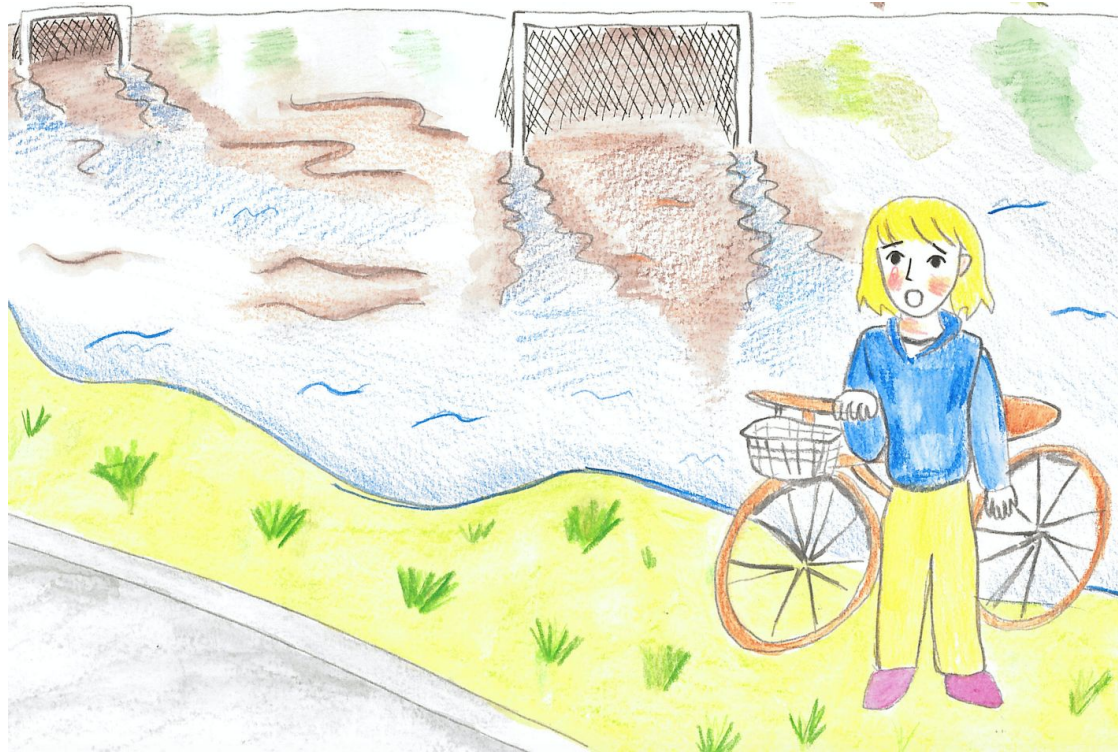


Inquiry Inc. and the Case of the Flooded Fields



Written by

Brittany Collins, Pinn Janvatanavit, Meghan Johnson,
Ruth Neils, Hannah Searles, Lily Sun, and Anna Wysocki

Illustrations by Pinn Janvatanavit

Hello Reader,

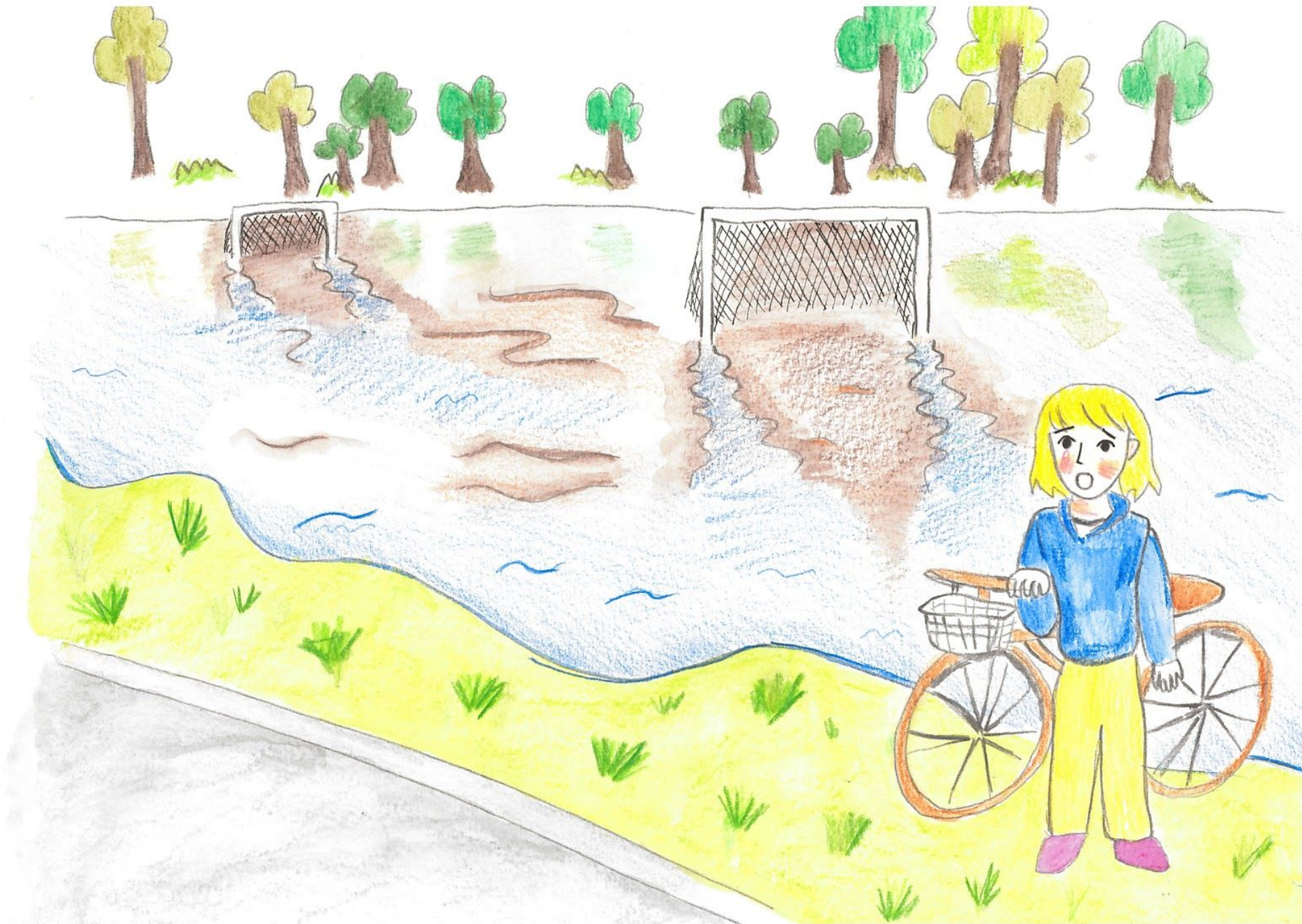
Do you notice anything strange about the end of this book? (Go ahead and flip through, we'll wait). That's right, it's blank! That's because we need YOUR help! Read on to find out how you can help Inquiry Inc. solve the case of the flooded soccer field. Time is running out. This is top priority!

Inquiry Inc. (Silvia, Carlos, Lee, Anna and Prim)



P.S. Teachers: We recommend you read the “Letter to Teachers” to find out how this story project works, and to connect to relevant background resources. The story box will travel to your classroom as soon as you’re ready to start the adventure, complete with student handouts and surprises. This story is part of a series developed by the Smith College Water Inquiry Story Project:

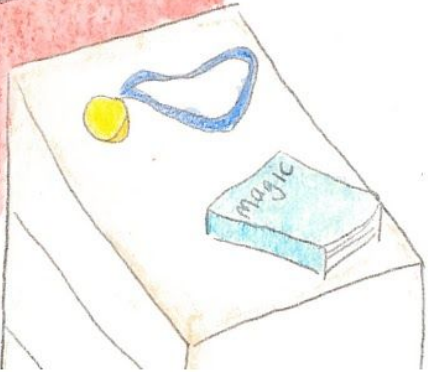
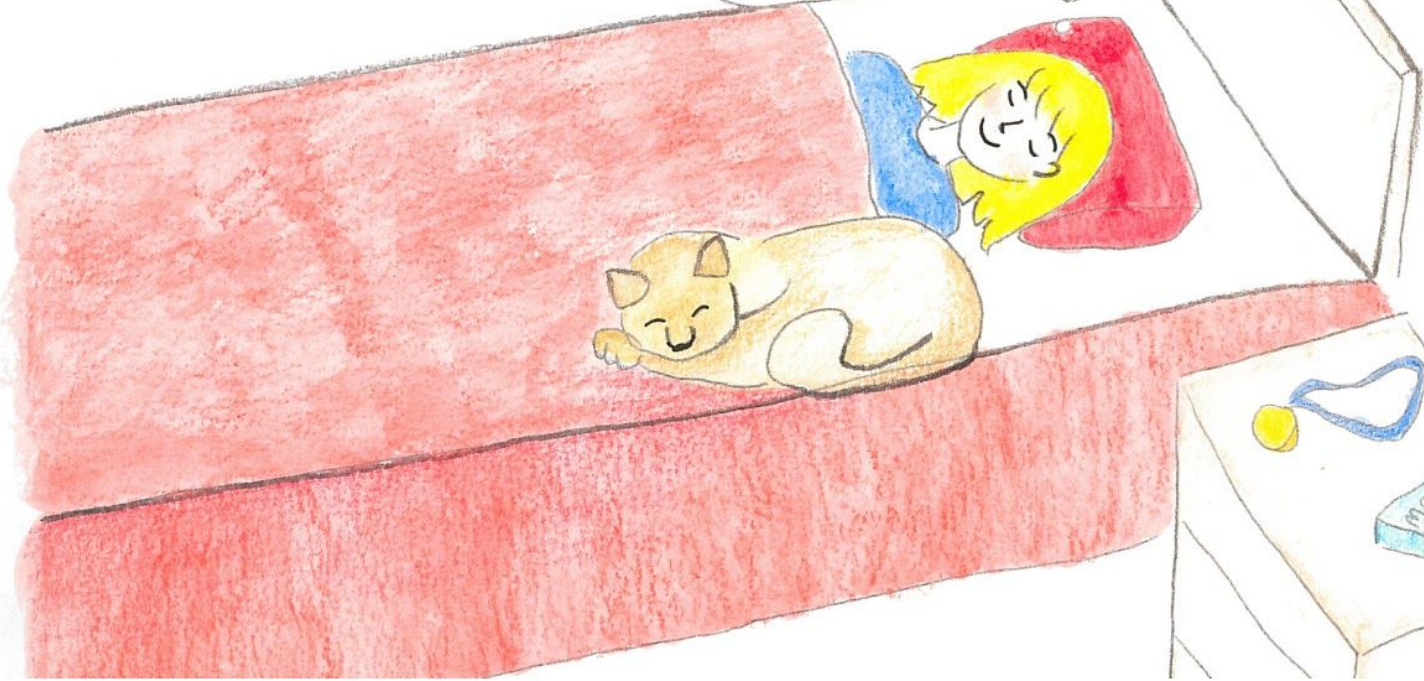
<https://sophia.smith.edu/blog/waterinquiry/>



“Oh no!” Lee gasped as they entered the gates of the soccer fields on their way to practice. “Look at all of that water!”

Every day after school, Lee biked to the soccer fields with cleats and shin guards packed in their basket. They looked forward to practice all day. Sitting in the cafeteria, they dreamed of dribbling and passing a soccer ball down the field, just like Coach Brown taught them.

Every weekend, Lee spent hours in their backyard preparing for an exciting event-- even more exciting, they thought, than their birthday: the All Star Championship Playoffs, the biggest soccer tournament of the year! And it's this weekend!



Each night, Lee fell asleep next to their tabby cat, Whiskers, dreaming of the big Championship day. Posters of soccer players were taped to their wall, and they kept a shining silver medal on their bedside table-- next to their lucky locket and book of magic tricks.

This year, after practicing hard and working together, Lee thought that their team-- the Powerful Pioneers-- would have a chance to earn the golden trophy.

But as Lee sprinted toward their soccer field, they discovered that the puddle of water looked more like a lake.

Their heart beat faster.



“Thunder and lightning kept me up all night!” Carlos exclaimed as he caught up to Lee. He liked to skateboard on the pavement surrounding the fields while Lee practiced soccer.

“How will I ever skate now?” he asked in a panic. “Won’t the water ruin my wheels? Doesn’t it look like it’s up to my knees? And how will you win your big championship? How can we make this water go away?”



THINK AND TALK

Handoff #1: Have you ever seen too much water? Where was it? Where did the water come from and what problems did it cause?



Carlos was known for asking good questions when working to solve problems with his friends from Inquiry Inc. Last year, he even helped save the day when baby ducklings were trapped in a storm drain.

“Lee, can’t you make this flooding disappear? Didn’t you just learn to pull a rabbit out of a hat?” Carlos asked, knowing that when Lee was not on the soccer field, they were at home practicing magic tricks.

“I haven’t reached that chapter in my magic book yet,” Lee said with a sigh. “After I learned to pull Fluffy from my hat, I was so busy showing the trick to my family and friends that I forgot to learn a new one!”



Looking around the fields, Lee and Carlos noticed even more trouble. The typical dog walkers were frazzled. Their usual routine of taking their dogs for a stroll around the soccer fields was now impossible! Some of their dogs sipped water from the flooded field, while other dogs swam and chased after fallen leaves on its surface.

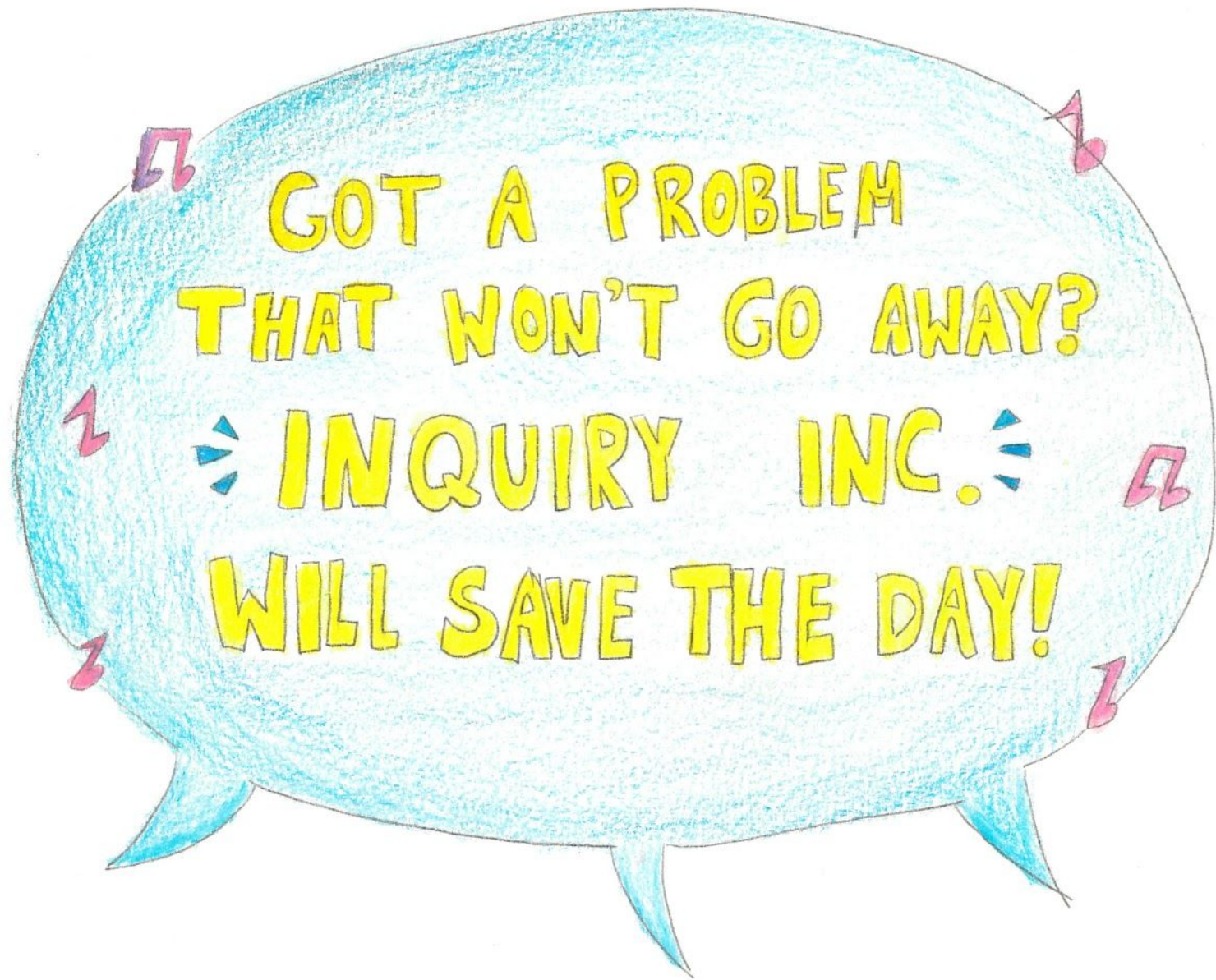
All of the owners had to turn around. The water was just too deep.



Carlos and Lee saw their friends Silvia and Anna running over to join them on the field like they did most days after school. “Woah woah, what happened here?” asked Silvia. Her giant tool belt bounced up and down as she ran. Anna was trying to balance a pile of books in her hands without dropping them in the water.

“The soccer field is flooded! It must have been the big storm last night,” said Carlos. “Why does it flood here? My backyard doesn’t trap water like it does here.”

“I don’t know Carlos, but my life is ruined!” Lee groaned in despair. “The day I have been training my whole life for is only a few days away, and what if we can’t even practice to prepare for it?” Lee sat down on the wet ground in a slump.



GOT A PROBLEM
THAT WON'T GO AWAY?

INQUIRY INC.

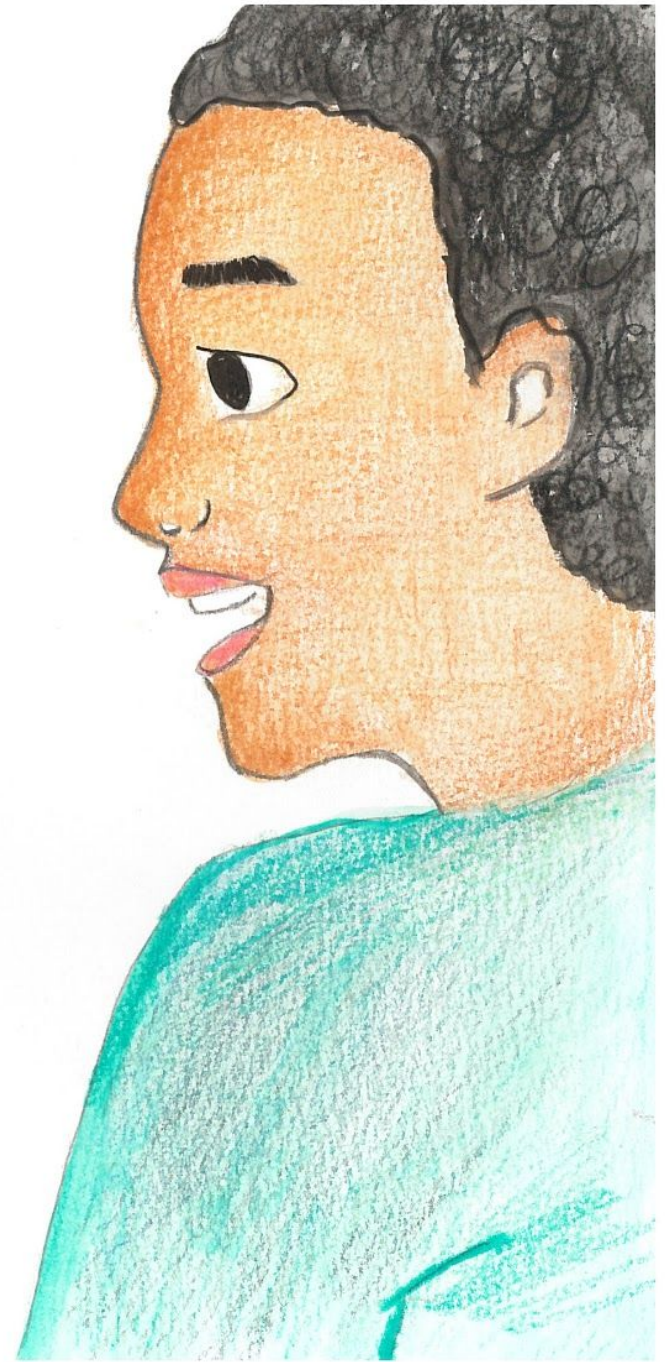
WILL SAVE THE DAY!

Silvia patted Lee on the head, “Okay Lee, let’s not get too down in the dumps. We know how to solve problems! This calls for Inquiry Inc.!” she said, grinning with her arms folded.

They all cheered, “*Got a problem that won’t go away? Inquiry Inc. will save the day!*”

Inspired by the cheer, Anna started them off on the problem-solving steps they liked to use: “Well, we know what the problem is! A flooded field that needs to be dry as quickly as possible.”

“Next, we need to ask questions, and then brainstorm ideas.” They all looked over at Carlos, the question man.



“Hmmm... Why is it flooded here and not in my backyard?” Carlos wondered again.

Anna opened one of her books to a page with a big topographical map. “Well Carlos, you live on a hill, and like you can see on the map, on a hill, the water can just flow down. No problem. But if you are in the bottom of an area, similar to where we are now, then there’s nowhere for the water to escape. This area of trapped water is called a watershed. It’s kind of like a giant bowl of cereal, like fruit loops or something.”

“Oh my gosh, I love fruit loops!” screamed Lee, very excited. Then they came back to reality. “But how do we get the water out when we can’t make it go uphill?”



THINK AND TALK

Handoff #2: What questions do you have? What do you think is the problem? What do you need to understand to solve the problem?



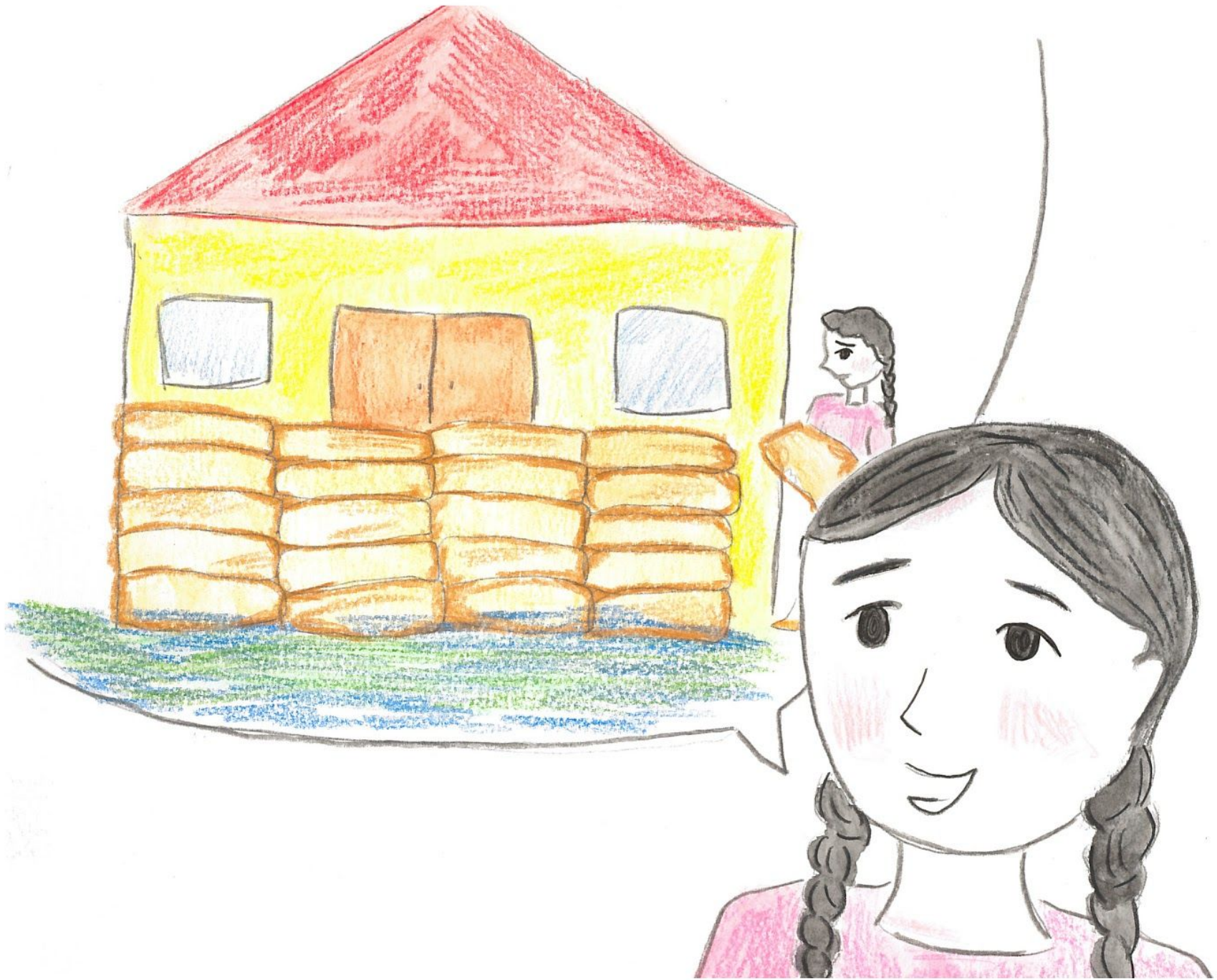
Hi! I'm
Prim.

Just then, everyone turned to see a new face running towards them, waving excitedly as she recognized Silvia. “Hi Silvia! What’s up with all this water?”

“Hi Prim! Everyone, this is Prim!” shouted Silvia as Prim splashed through puddles to greet them. “She is my friend from Bangkok, Thailand!”

“Hi! My name is Prim. I’m an exchange student living with Silvia’s family for a year!” Prim exclaimed with excitement.

All the members of Inquiry Inc. greeted Prim with big smiles and introduced themselves.

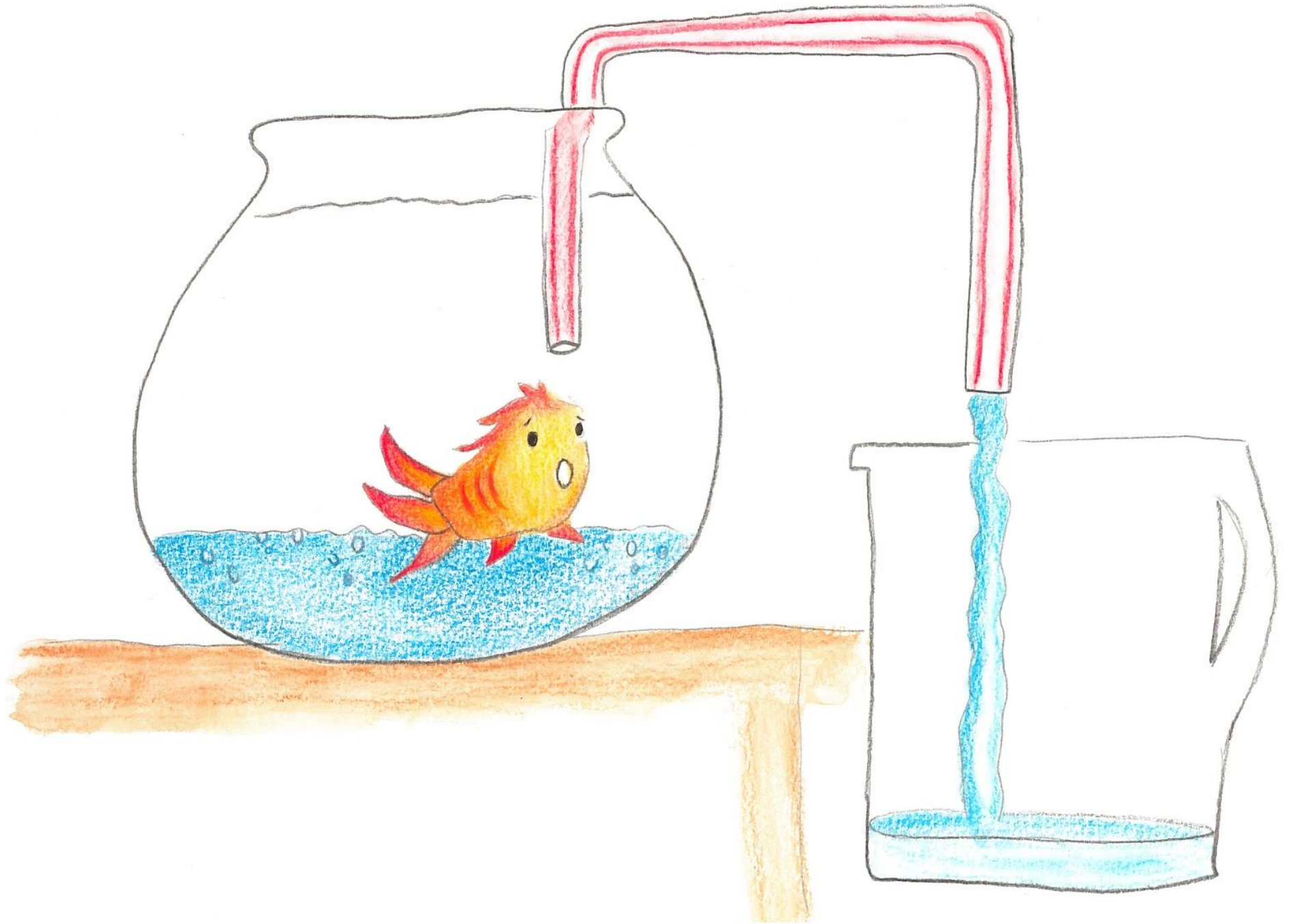


“So Prim, do you happen to know anything about flooding? It’s the problem that we are trying to solve right now, but don’t know where else to go from here,” said Carlos, looking slightly defeated.

“Hmm...In Bangkok, flooding is very common. The streets and roads fill up with water. We pile up sandbags around our houses to keep the water from coming in,” described Prim, using her hands to model out her explanation.

“But why does Bangkok flood?” Lee wondered.

“The city is low and near the mouth of a river. There are pipes and canals that are supposed to drain the water, but my parents say the drainage system can’t keep up when there’s a heavy rain. People were talking about building a giant tunnel to let the water flow under the city!”



“Sometimes they use this really big tube to get rid of the water,” Prim continued.

“Oh! I do something just like that to clean my pet fish Scarlet’s tank. It’s called siphoning. I can show you with a juice box if anyone has one,” said Silvia.

“I love juice boxes! Here, have my Capri Sun,” Carlos offered with a wide grin.

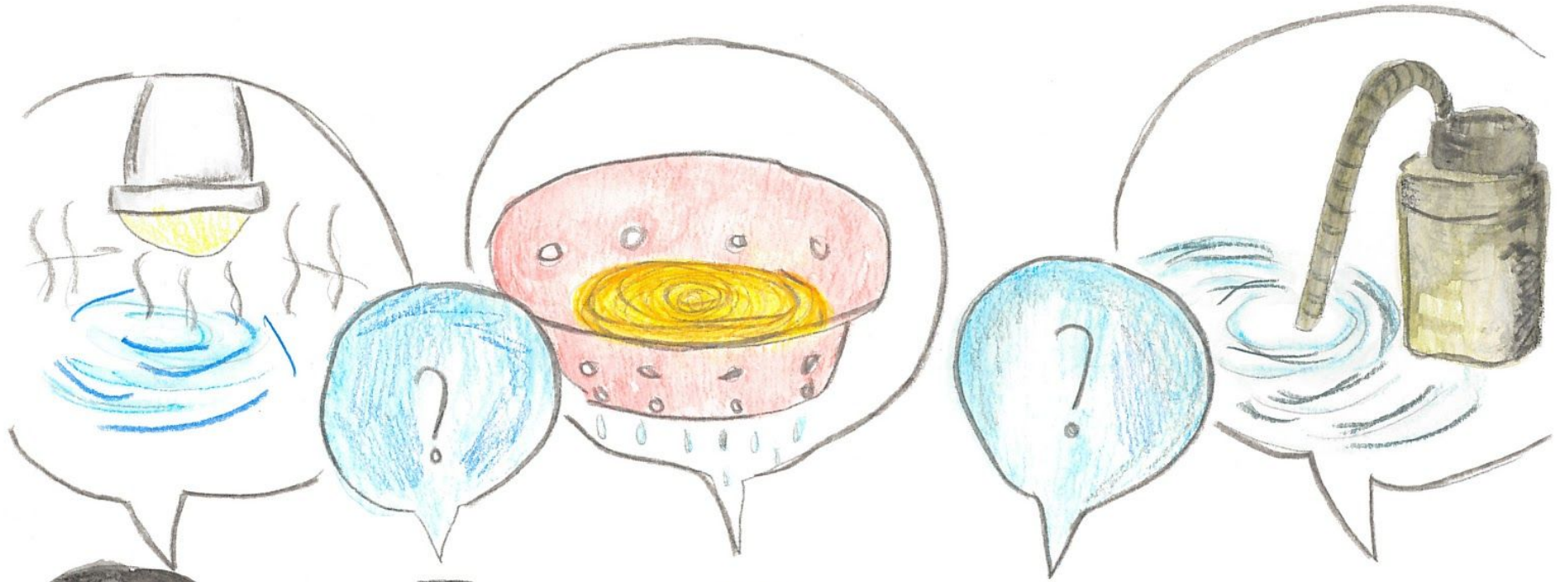
“That’s so cool!” exclaimed Lee, as they watched Silvia’s experiment. “But I need to practice on this field right away, and I don’t see how that’s going to happen.”



THINK AND DO

Handoff #3: Ever wondered how to make water go *up*?

Optional Siphon Experiment: explore a possible method of water removal. See *Letter to Teachers* for step-by-step directions.



“It’s brainstorm time, Inquiry Inc.!” Carlos exclaimed. “So... who wants to start?”

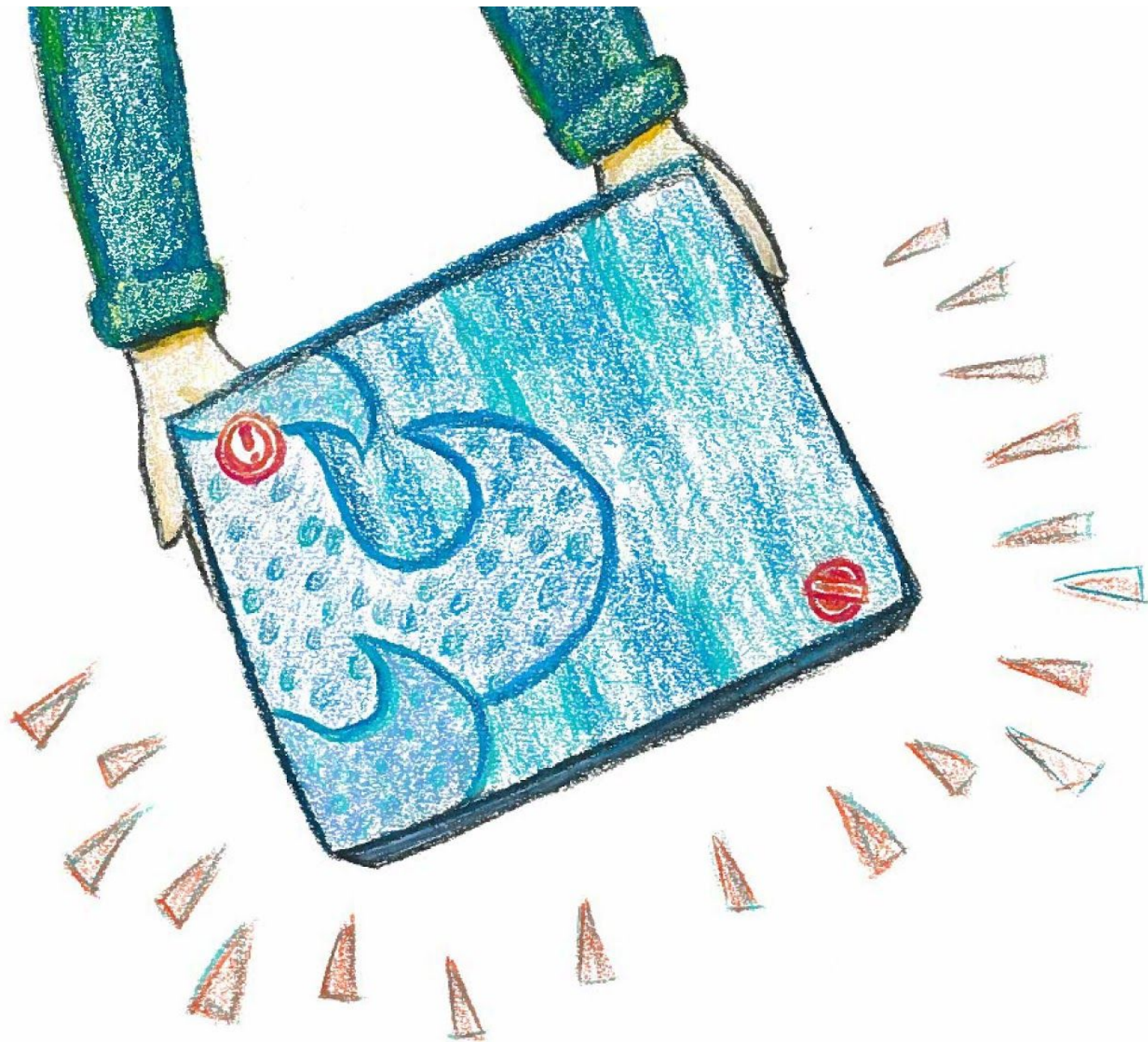
“We could get a giant heat lamp to make the water evaporate! When water gets really hot, it evaporates and turns into steam,” explained Anna.

“Now there’s a start!” Carlos cheered, clapping his hands together.

“A really big vacuum!” shouted Silvia, out of nowhere, “Like the one in Prim’s story.”

“Or maybe we could poke giant holes in the ground to drain out the water, like my mom does when she drains pasta,” Lee said.

“You just love food references, don’t you Lee?” Anna joked, and everyone laughed.



They stood in silence for a couple of minutes, thinking, when Lee said, “I wish we could have some more ideas to get the job done quickly.” They sighed and looked around at their friends, who were all staring at the ground, stumped.

“There’s gotta be some sort of solution,” said Carlos, as he patted Lee on the back. “There just has to be.”

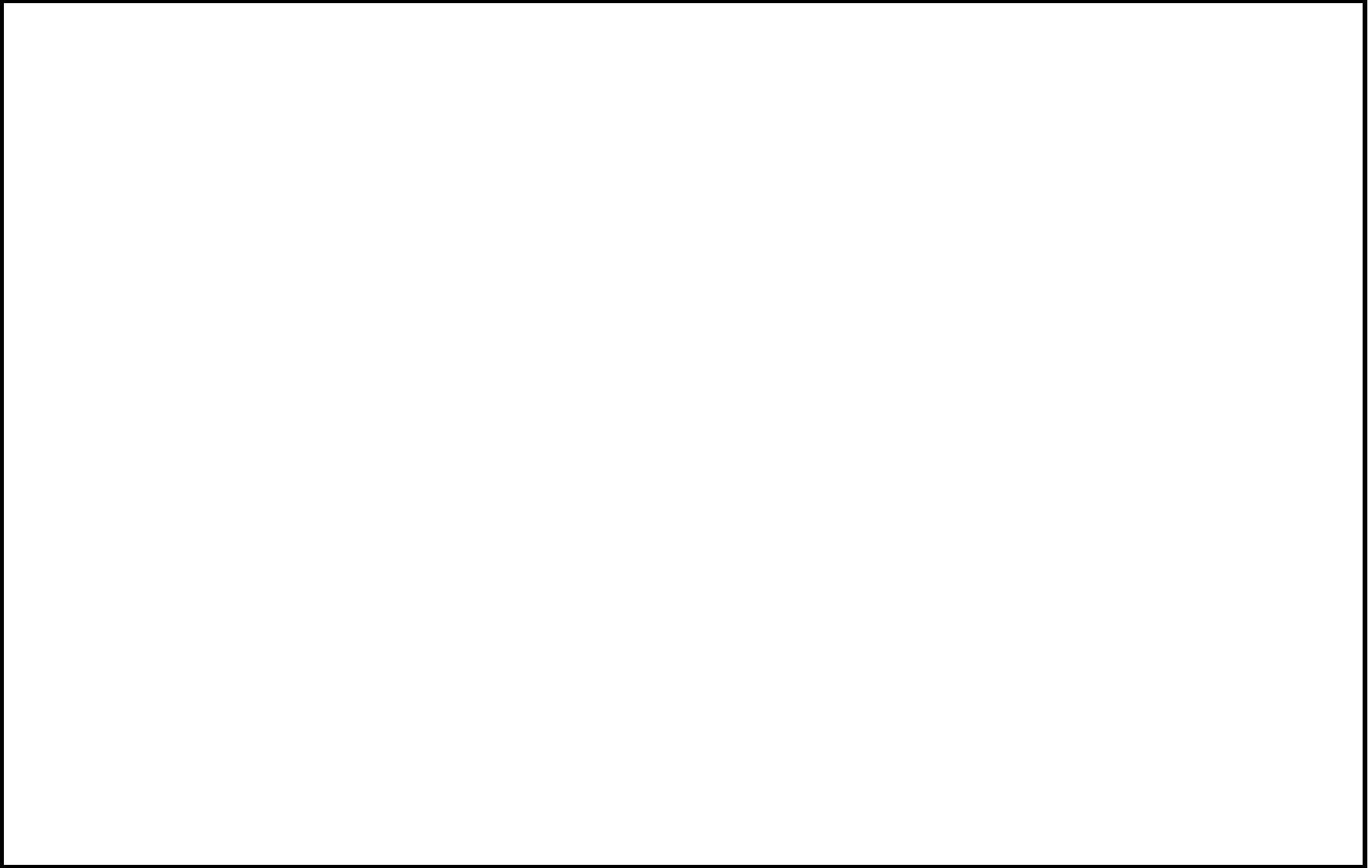
“It’s time to call in reinforcements...”



THINK AND MAKE

Handoff #4: Those reinforcements are... YOU! Inquiry Inc. wants you to help solve the problem of the flooded field. Look for the letter and “**Challenge**” at the back of the book to find out how your ideas can save the day and finish the story!

Show your solution here.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the student to show their solution. The box is centered horizontally and occupies most of the page's width and a significant portion of its height.

Tell us about your solution here.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the user to write their solution. The box is centered horizontally and occupies most of the page's width and a significant portion of its height.

MEET INQUIRY INC!

Hi! We're Inquiry Inc. and we're a group of friends that like to solve problems together. Got a problem that won't go away? Inquiry Inc. will save the day!



Hola! Bon jour! My name is Silvia. I am a girl and I use the pronouns she/her. I love working with Inquiry Inc. I like to build, solve problems, and learn new languages. When I was just three years old, I moved from Ecuador to the United States with my mom, dad, and brother Juan. My family taught me to speak Spanish and English, but I'm teaching myself French, too. Do you want to know a secret? I have a sidekick! Her name is Scarlet, and she is a bright red betta fish. I like to talk to her in all the languages I know, because talking out loud is a good way to solve problems!



Hi! What's your name? Where are you from? Do you like to solve problems? How did you find this book? Oh goodness, I've forgotten to introduce myself! My name is Carlos, and I sometimes get carried away asking questions. I am a boy and I use the pronouns he/him. I think asking good questions is the best way to learn more about the world. When I'm with Inquiry Inc., I like to brainstorm, take careful notes, and ask my friends about their thoughts and feelings. Together, we always find a way to save the day!

Hey there! I'm Lee. I am non-binary and I use the pronouns they/them. I have a twin brother named Hunter, an orange tabby cat named Whiskers, and I like to do magic tricks. There is some magic involved in Inquiry Inc. When we create a plan that solves a problem, it feels just like pulling a rabbit out of a top hat. Only there's no secret to problem-solving... if you put your thinking cap on, you can help us do magic too!



Hi, friends! My name is Anna and I am a girl. I use the pronouns she/her. I'm new to Inquiry Inc. I just moved into town with my moms and sister. Moving was kind of scary, but the best part of my new house is a big backyard with lots of room for pet chickens! I love to read, and I carry a book with me all of the time. When I was moving, it was nice to know that books could be with me wherever I went. They kept me company when I didn't know anybody in town, but now that I have my Inquiry Inc. friends we can read stories together and learn new information to help us fix sticky situations.



Sawasdee ka! I'm Prim! I'm a girl, and I use she/her pronouns. I'm an exchange student from Bangkok, Thailand and I will be living with Silvia's family for a year. Silvia's family moved to the United States from Ecuador, so they know what it feels like to live in a new culture, just like me! I love baking and cooking, and I'm excited to make Thai food for my new friends. I also love art and photography, which means that I am good at telling stories through observation. Silvia told me that she is friendly with Inquiry Inc. and invited me to help them this year! I am excited to work together and solve problems with new friends... and maybe even Silvia's sidekick, Scarlet!



Note:

On the next two pages you will find the “Letter from Inquiry, Inc” and the “Challenge” for students to open when they read Handoff #4.

In the print copy of the story, these are enclosed in an envelope attached to the inside back cover of the book.

Hello

We really need
help with our problem

Do you have
any ideas?

Draw some ideas and
send them to
us.

that would help a lot
we will send positive
notes back!

thanks
Inquiry inc.

CHALLENGE

Calling all problem solvers! Our soccer field is flooded. We need you to come up with a plan so that Lee's championship game can still take place on this field in a few days.

Brainstorm with a partner or group about your ideas. What will we do with the water? What will we need to use? Keep a list of your ideas, even if they seem wild!

Choose one idea from your list to work with. Now, show your idea. You can make a drawing, diagram, comic, or a photograph of a model or experiment. We can't wait to see what you create!

Please tell us about your idea in writing. What do you like best about it? What questions do you have?

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Inquiry Inc.

