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Canada



# Maya and Thomas

in Haiti  
and the magic feather









# Haiti



Port-au-Prince





Maya is six years old. She lives in Haiti, a country on an island in the Atlantic Ocean.

The capital city is called Port-au-Prince. On many streets in the capital it's hard to get around. It's so noisy! There are lots of people walking in the streets, as well as children going to school on foot.





There are all kinds of noises and smells, long lines of cars, motorcycles and *tap-taps*, which is what they call the colourful taxis in Haiti. Since the earthquake, buildings are also being rebuilt in some places.

Maya remembers the earthquake that destroyed her house and other houses in her neighbourhood. A lot of people were killed or hurt by the earthquake. Some houses in Haiti have only one room for the whole family to live in.



Thomas the bird has been Maya's best friend since she lost her little brother. That happened when the ground shook and made their house fall down.

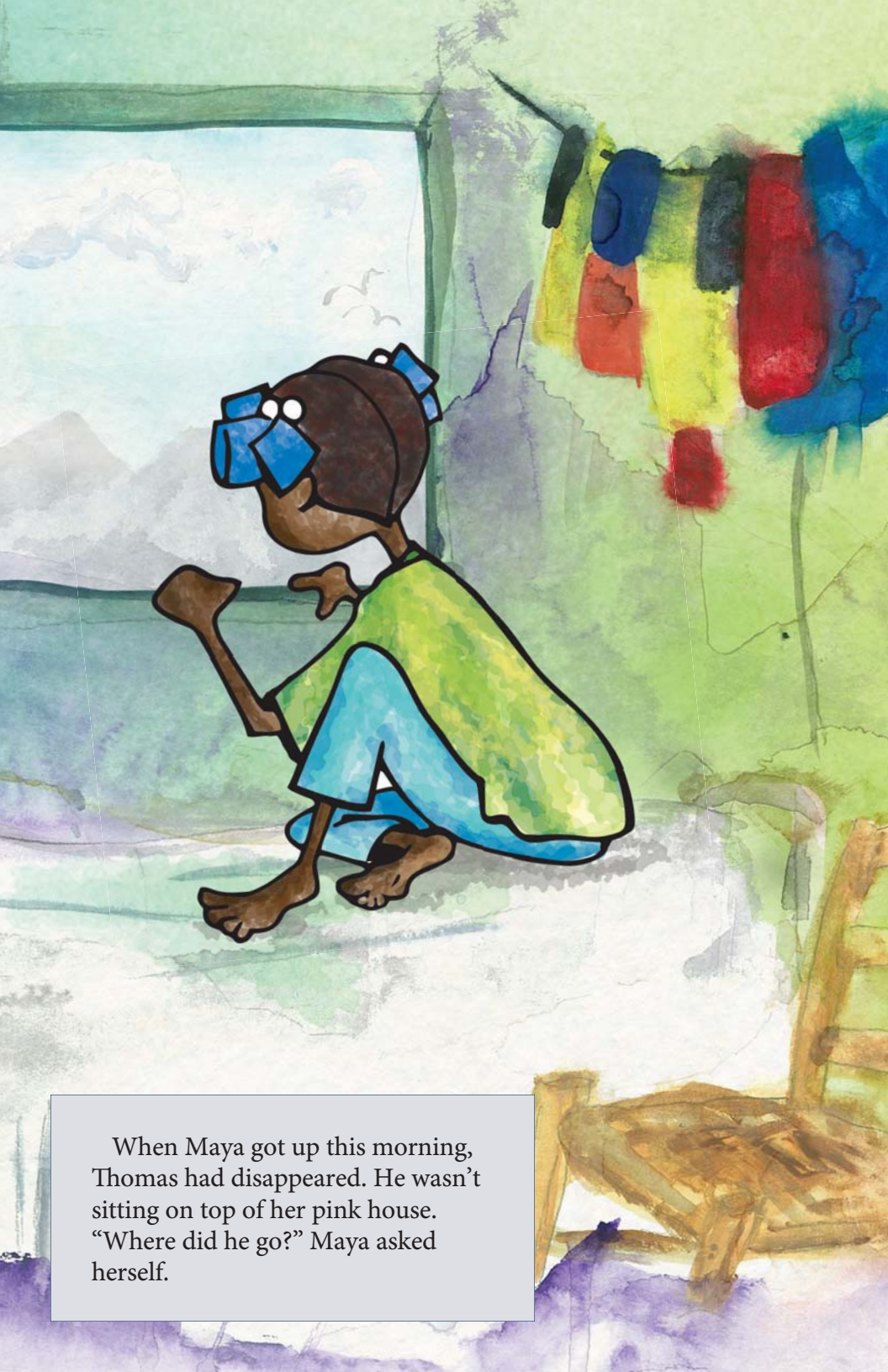
Now Maya lives in a new pink wooden house, and Thomas is still with her. At night, Thomas sleeps on the roof. He wants to keep Maya safe from mosquitoes, which can make people sick with malaria and typhoid fever. In Haiti, there are a lot of sicknesses we don't have in Canada.





Thomas and Maya got a lot of help after the earthquake. For example, at school, teachers told their pupils it was important to wash their hands to avoid getting illnesses such as cholera, which is another really bad disease.

Workers came from Canada and other countries to provide water for people to drink and for taking care of people who were sick or hurt. For a long time, every day, they gave schoolchildren a hot meal, which helped the children to learn.



When Maya got up this morning, Thomas had disappeared. He wasn't sitting on top of her pink house. "Where did he go?" Maya asked herself.





Maya went downtown and looked for Thomas everywhere: in the market, under the fruits and vegetables, among the cars and *tap-taps*, under the straw hats...



Suddenly, a little mouse asked Maya, “Who are you looking for?”

“I’m looking for my friend Thomas,” Maya said. “He’s a nice, colourful bird. Have you seen him?”

“No,” said the mouse. “But take this magic feather as it will lead you to people who can help you find your friend.”

Maya took the feather. It glowed brightly, which helped her to find her way out of the city.





On the way, Maya came across Robert, a donkey who worked all day in the fields. Farming is important in Haiti for helping the country to develop and for feeding families. In Haiti, much of the land is dry because it doesn't rain very much for several months. In the months when it does rain, the land can become flooded because there aren't many trees left to keep mud from sliding down the mountains. The many trees that were cut down were used for making charcoal.

So this makes it harder to farm the land. Robert carries what is needed to help to grow beans. He's very, very proud of that!



“Little girl, what are you doing with that feather?” Robert asked. Maya answered, “I’m looking for my friend Thomas. He’s a nice, colourful bird. Have you seen him?”

“No,” said the donkey. “But go that way and follow the feather. There are people over there under a white tent who help people in trouble.” Then Robert added, happily, “They took care of me when I hurt my hoof! Without them, I could not have kept on working and growing beans.”

“Thanks very much,” Maya answered with a big smile.





The closer Maya got to the tent, the brighter the feather glowed. “That’s a good sign,” she told herself.

When she got to the white tent, Maya saw many people helping children and grown-ups. “Hello, Miss, what are you looking for?” a grown-up asked her. “I’m looking for my friend Thomas. He disappeared, and I have been looking for him since this morning, but I cannot find him. The feather tells me he’s here. Is that true?”

“Your feather brought you to the right place,” the grown-up said. “Come, follow me!”



Maya went inside the white tent. She was surprised at everything she saw going on around her. Doctors and nurses were taking care of people from her country.

In Haiti, it's hard to see a doctor and get free health care. It's hard to get a shot to keep from getting diseases, get clean bandages and for mommies to get taken care of when they're going to have a baby.

It's hard because there's not enough money to pay for this, and also because the earthquake destroyed many hospitals and clinics. Some hospitals don't even have water or electricity. Plus, there aren't enough doctors and nurses to take care of everybody.





*"Tweet, tweet!"* It was Thomas's voice!

Maya was so happy to be reunited with her friend. He was with the Canadians, helping people who needed help. "What a good idea!" Maya said. "We needed help, and now it's our turn to offer help!"



*Since the earthquake struck on January 12, 2010, with the donations and work of Canadians, Canada has helped millions of women and children just like Maya.*

*Now, thanks to the support provided by Canada, mommies can get help for their babies, and children can go to school, eat a hot meal, and have clean water to drink.*





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