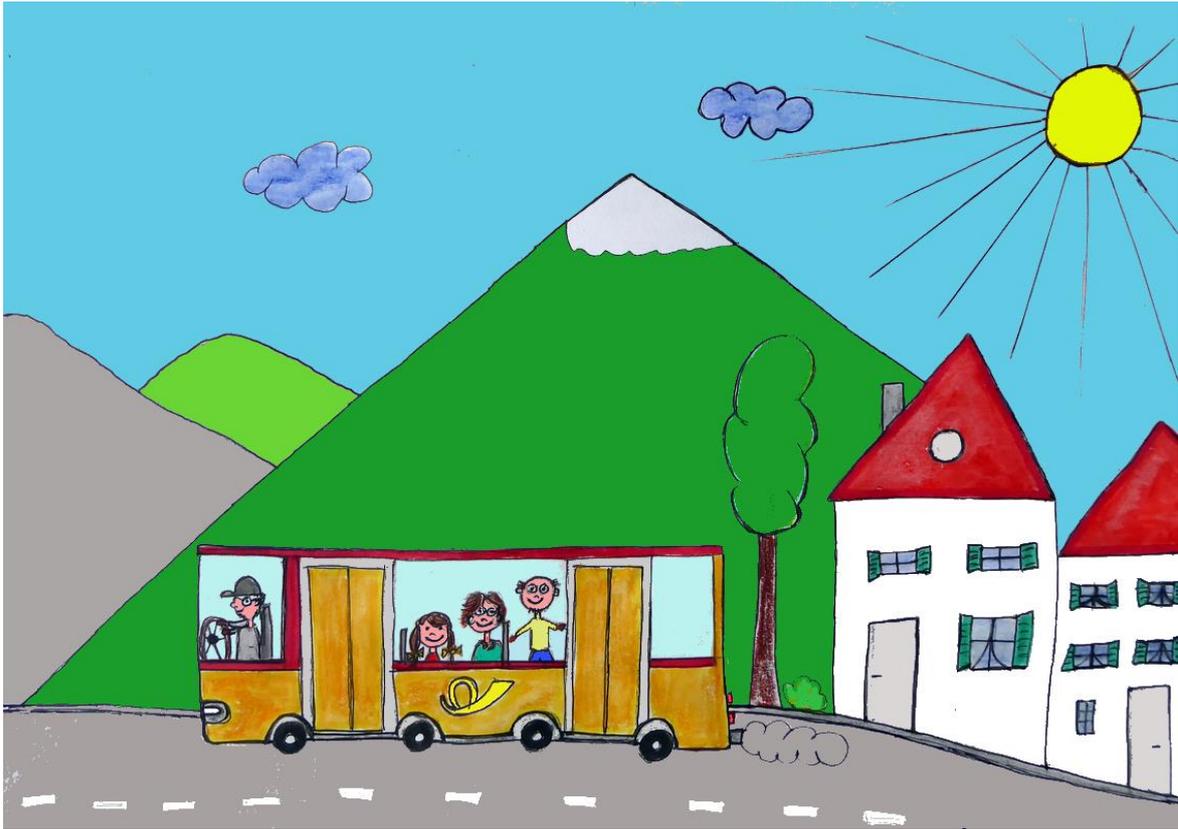


# Nuria Melek and Mario

Words by John Bonthron

Illustrations by Fiona Hagmann and Stefan Hagmann





Nuria Melek was on a bus with her grandparents Nana Pia and Nini Stef. She was looking out through the window spotting birds, cows, sheep, goats, farms, rivers, trees and very high mountains. They were on their way to Goldau Animal Park. It was a special trip to mark her fifth birthday.

Nuria had been to the park many times before. It was one of her favourite places in the whole world. She was looking forward to seeing all her animal friends, especially Pippa Pine Marten.



In her rucksack, Nuria had a special envelope from the Director of the Park.

*“Nuria Melek, please come as soon as you can. We have someone here who wants to see you. He says he knows your big brother, Eli Celli.”*

“Nana, who could it be? Is it Henry the Hoopoe or Ollie Otter? Is it Clarence Cormorant or Vincent Vulture? Or is it Roger Raven? Nana, Nana, who could it be? Nana, who could it be? Who could it be?”

"Nuria, calm down and stop kicking the seat in front. We'll find out soon enough."

They arrived at last and Nini Stef said:

"Look, there's the Director waving to us."

Nuria ran ahead with her envelope.

"Hello again, Nuria," said the Director. "Thanks for coming. I'm sorry to say your friend Mario the Bear has disappeared. He was here earlier but then he simply vanished. We have no idea where he could be."

"Don't worry. We'll find him for you."

"Thank you very much, Nuria" said the Director, "All the other animals are upset today, because he's missing. Everyone loves Mario."

"My brother Eli Celli told me Mario loves honey. Maybe he's at the Bee House? My Nana used to keep bees, she'll know if he's in there or not."

"I'm sorry to say, I can't come with you. I must go to the Blue Pond. The Ducks have fallen out with the Geese."



"I know, they are very noisy when they argue."

"Yes, the Ducks are noisy but the Geese are worse. Now even Henry Hoopoe and Clarence Cormorant are shouting at each other, arguing about who is the best singer."

"Oh no! The Goats are chasing the Sheep. And look, Deer have decided it's too noisy and are hiding in the woods."

"What about Pippa Pine Marten?"

"Sorry, Nuria, she's missing too. It's far too noisy for her as well. Look over there, Bald Ibis and White Stork have been fighting, pecking at each other with their sharp beaks. Even Ollie Otter refuses to come out of his den."



"Have you seen Roger Raven?"

"No. But you'll be sure to find him somewhere, he has been looking out for you all morning. He says he has a message to give you."

"What's the message, please?"

"He says it's only for you so I don't know what it is he wants to tell you. Sorry, Nuria, I really must go to try to calm everyone down. You do know the way to the Bee House, don't you?"

Rushing away, the Director shouted back:

"Thanks, Nuria, I knew you would help."

Just then Nuria's grandparents caught up with her.

"Nana, Mario's lost but because he loves honey, I think I know where he might be," said Nuria.

"Come on. Let's look for him at the Bee House. Run!"

Nuria ran much faster than her grandparents. Just as she was nearly at the Bee House, Roger the Raven flew down in front of her, screeching:

"**Nuria Melek, STOP!** Don't go near the Bee House. Mario the Bear is inside, eating all the honey and Berthold said he so angry he is ready to sting someone!"

"Watch out, Nuria, they're really angry. Look at them swarming. Don't go any nearer or they might sting you by mistake."



When Nana Pia and Nini Stef arrived, Nuria told them: "Mario is stealing honey. He's inside the Bee House. The Bees are very angry with him."

"Nuria," said Nana Pia. "You know I'm allergic to Bees now. Nini Stef, you help Nuria, I must stay clear."



"Nini Stef, help me up onto the Lookout Platform, please."

"Be very careful, Nuria," said Nana. "Hold onto the handrail."

Nuria sang to Mario who was still inside the Bee House.

As she sang her spell-song, the Bees seemed to calm down, becoming less angry because they knew the little girl had come to help them. It was Mario they were angry with, not Nuria.

That's when Nuria moved closer, to sit on a rock.



This is the song she sang.

*Mario is a naughty, naughty bear,*

*His fur is covered in honey.*

*But if he comes out to play with me,*

*I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

*I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

Then she added a second verse:

*When Mario ran away today,  
He forgot that I was coming,  
But if he comes out to play with me,  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

Nuria shouted down:

"Join in Nini Stef and Nana Pia. And you too, Roger."

They all sang Nuria's spell-song to Mario, singing louder and louder.

*Why not join in and sing along to help her!*

*Mario is a naughty, naughty bear,  
His fur is covered in honey.  
But if he comes out to play with me,  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

And now the second verse:

*When Mario ran away today,  
He forgot that I was coming,  
But if he comes out to play with me,  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

Very soon all the birds and other animals were singing along.

Inside the Bee House, Mario stopped stealing honey and listened to the song.

Even the little bear began to sing along too!

*Mario is a naughty, naughty bear,  
His fur is covered in honey.  
But if he comes out to play with me,  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*



Soon everyone was singing Nuria's spell-song:

*Mario is a naughty, naughty bear,*

*His fur is covered in honey.*

*But if he comes out to play with me,*

*I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

*I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

It took ages but at last it worked. Even the bees calmed down, all except Berthold.

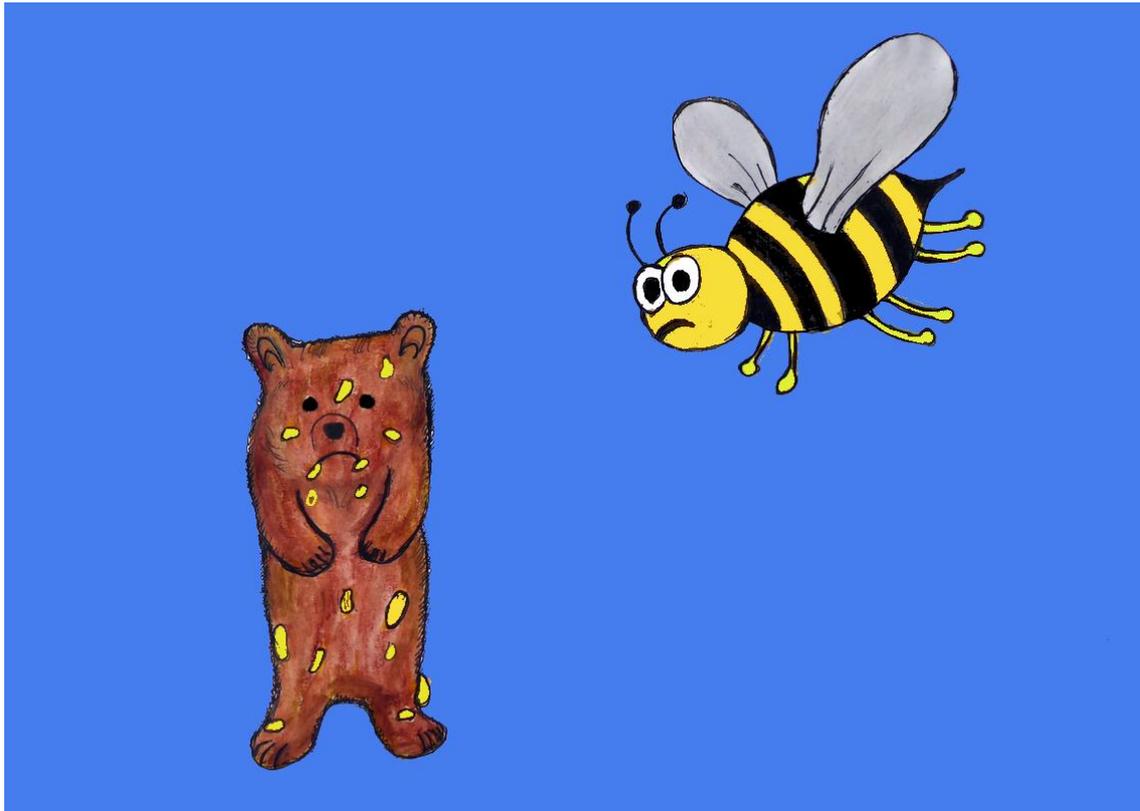
Mario stuck his head out of the Bee House and at exactly that very second, Berthold zoomed down and stung Mario behind his left ear.



**"OUCH! Stop that!"** shouted Mario. "That was very sore!"

Buzzing loudly, Berthold stung Mario a second time, behind his right ear then shouted:

*"Get out of my Bee House or I'll sting your nose next!"*



Mario ran away from the Bee House and Nuria chased after him. Berthold shouted to the other Bees:

*"Come on, guys, let's get him for stealing our honey!"*

The little girl and the little bear were both fast runners and left Nana Pia and Nini Stef far behind.

Flying high, safe from the Bees, Roger the Raven flew all around the Park, singing Nuria's spell-song and telling all the other animals what had happened.

The Bees gave up and flew back to the Bee house.

Mario the Bear had sticky honey all over his furry body. The delicious smell of honey spread through the air and thousands more Butterflies flew from all over Goldau Animal Park and from the next valley too.

Thousands of Butterflies fluttered around Mario's head until there was a giant ball of Butterflies with the little bear inside.

With the Butterflies chasing, Mario ran faster and faster then climbed over a fence into the Goats' Field. Half-way across, he tripped over a boulder and fell flat on his face.

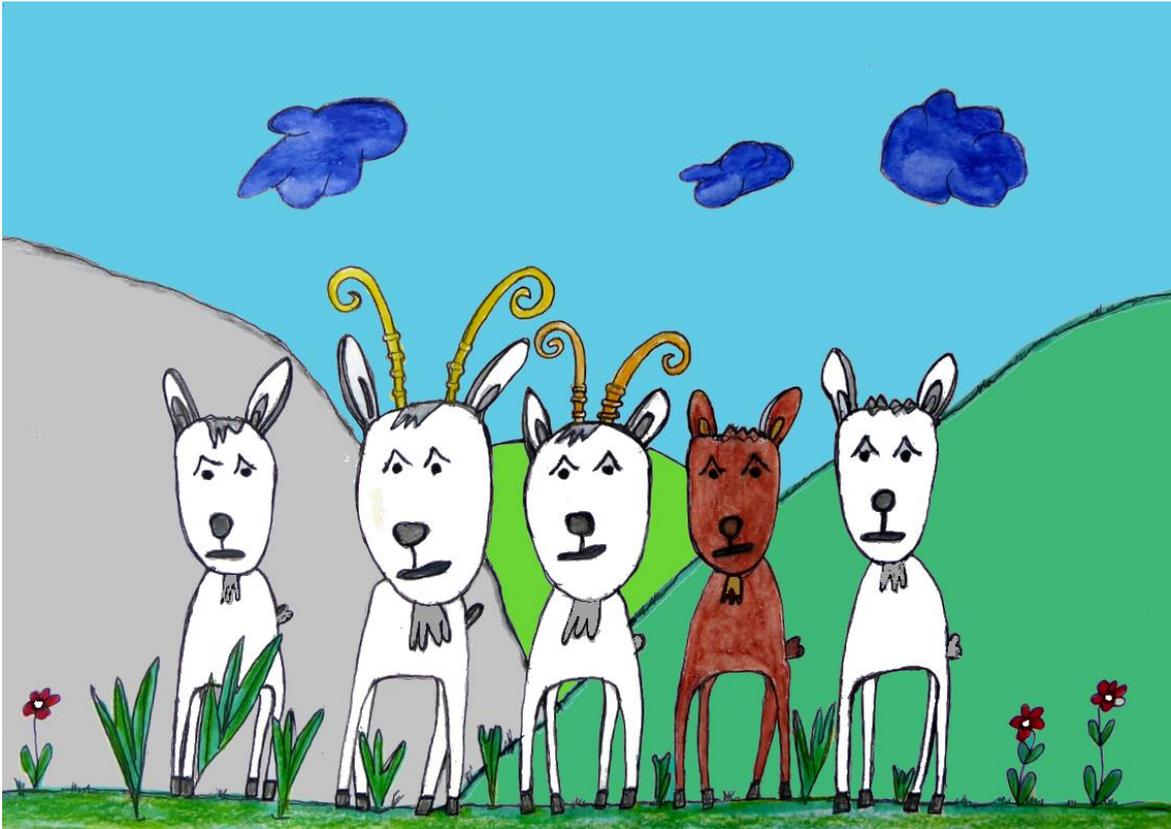


A Baby Goat jumped up on his back and began to lick honey from him.

The Butterflies caught up flew into Baby Goat's face. He was frightened and jumped down, running to his Mummy Goat, bleating:

"Mah-Meh, Mah-Meh, those bad Butterflies are bullying me."

All the other Goats gathered round to stare at the Butterflies.



Mario was still on his hands and knees, hidden inside the ball of Butterflies. The Goats began shouting rude words at the Butterflies.

From inside the ball of Butterflies, Mario shouted at the Butterflies:

"Go away you stupid, silly pests and leave me alone. If I get hold of you, I'll punch your nose, I promise you I will!"

Gordon, the Baby Goat's father was very annoyed and he put his head down and charged into the middle of the ball of Butterflies.



Gordon's head smacked hard into Mario's bottom and he butted Mario so high he flew over the tree where Roger Raven was perched. Up and up and up the little bear went, heading into the clouds.

He flew too high and too fast for the Butterflies who soon gave up following.

They fluttered back to their flowers and forgot all about him. Butterflies have such poor memories they forget which flowers they've already visited.

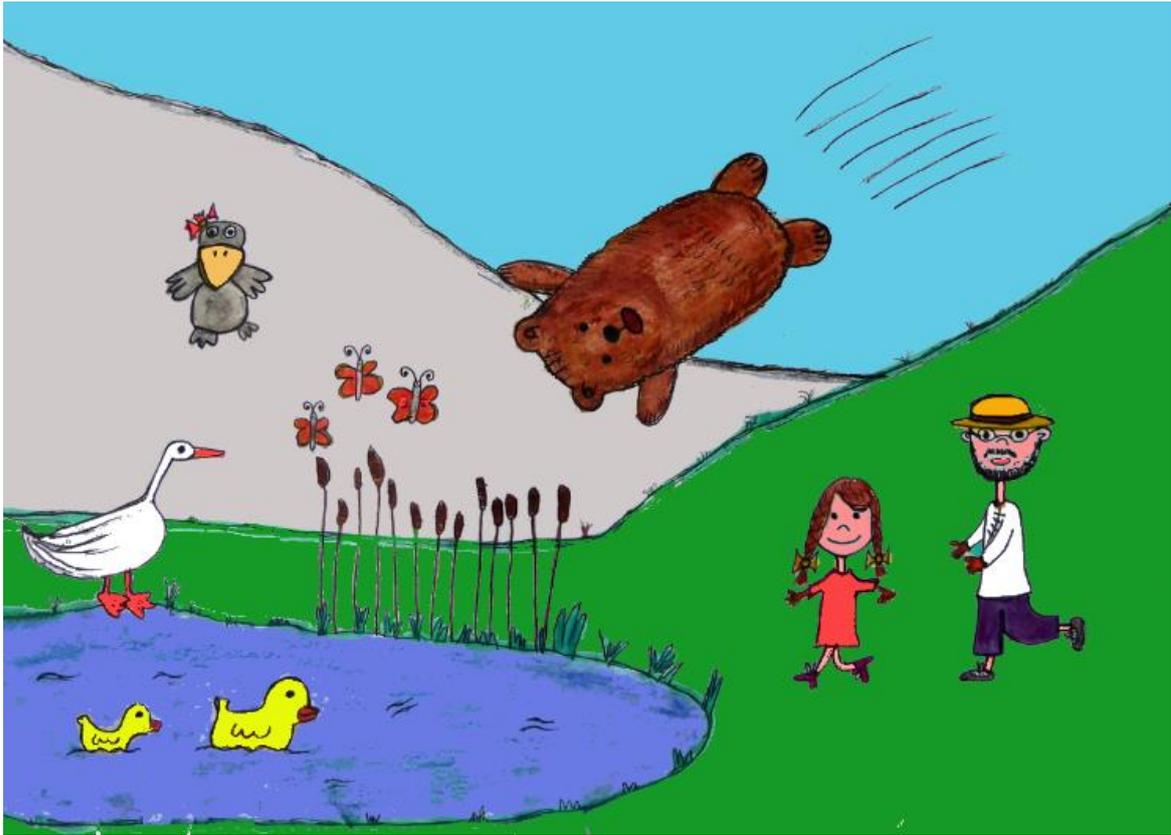
*Try watching them and you'll see for yourself. They are so silly sometimes they go back to the same flowers over and over.*

All this time, Mario was still high up in the clouds, so high a passing aeroplane had to swoop up out of his way to avoid hitting him.

Eventually, the little bear slowed down and began to fall back to Earth, gathering speed, zooming like a space rocket, heading back towards Goldau Animal Park far, far below.

Nuria saw him first and pointed:

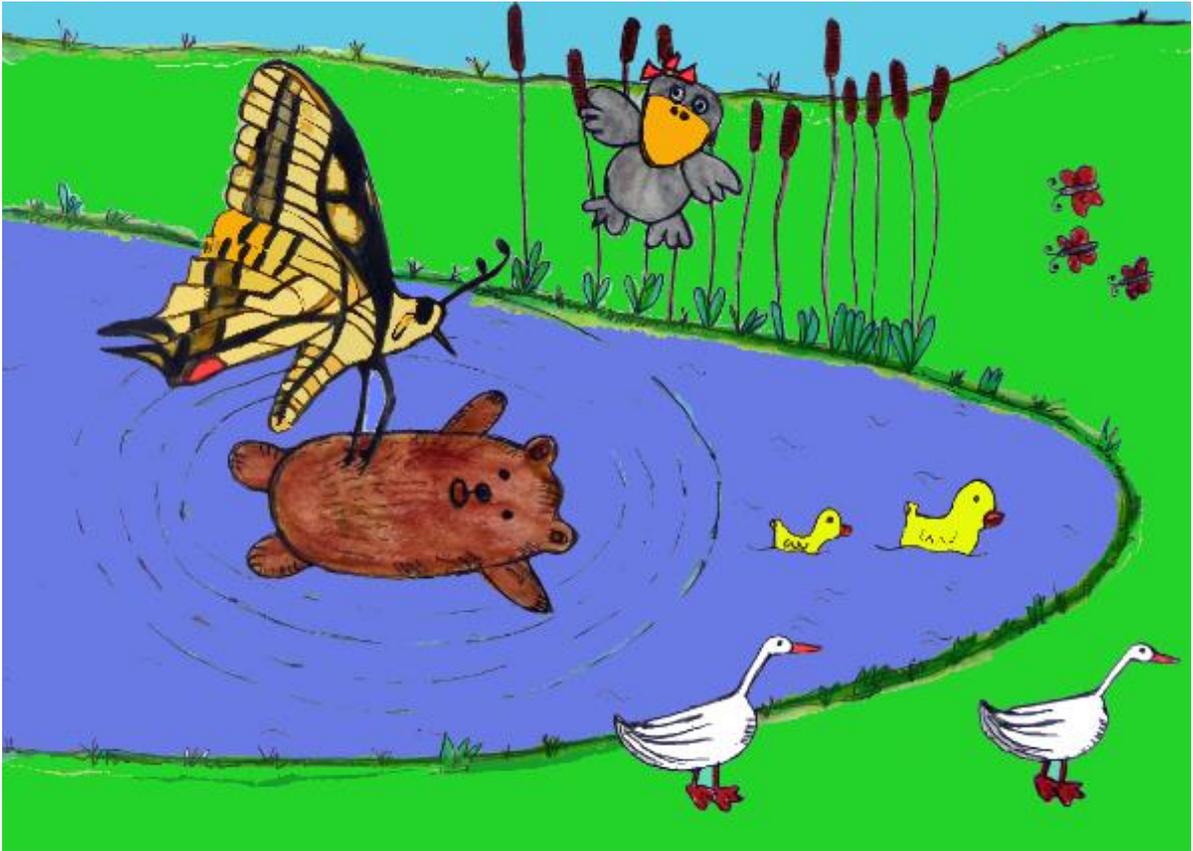
"Look! Mario is going to land at the Blue Pond. Come on everyone, run!"



Nuria was first to get there, just in time to see Mario land with an enormous **SPLASH!**

Mario loved water. He was a very good swimmer and rolled onto his back and swam around in circles until his fur was a bit cleaner.

The Ducks and Geese stopped arguing and swam for the shore to watch quietly on their roosts.



Roger Raven landed on Mario's tummy and shouted, "Look, I'm a Pirate Raven now and Mario is my Pirate Ship."

Heidi the Queen Swallowtail Butterfly landed on Roger's head, flapped her wings and said:

"Look, I'm the Flag on top of the Pirate Ship."

Ollie Otter swam out from his den and tickled Mario's toes, making him splash his feet so hard that Roger and Heidi had to fly up into the sky to avoid getting wet.

Ollie kept tickling at Mario's toes, enjoying their favourite game playing swimming tig-tag.

Mario kept rolling over and over, laughing, trying to catch Ollie.

Because of their antics, the visitors began to laugh and clap.

The other animals stopped their squabbling to watch and decided to be nice to each other instead of arguing and pecking.

After a while, Mario began to feel very tired from his many adventures in the Bee House, the Goats' Field, his Sky Flight up into the clouds and playing tig-tag in the Duck Pond with Ollie.

So, he scrambled out of the pond and sat beside Nuria and the Director, leaving the pond to Ollie Otter.

The Director handed a towel to Nuria which she used to dry Mario.



"Thank you, Nuria," said Mario. "How is my friend Elli Celli these days?"

"Elli Celli is very well, thank you. He is starting Big School soon and I will be starting Kindergarten too."

"Nuria," said Mario. "Will you sing me that song again, please. And remember to tickle my tummy while you are singing. You have to do it, Nuria, you promised!"

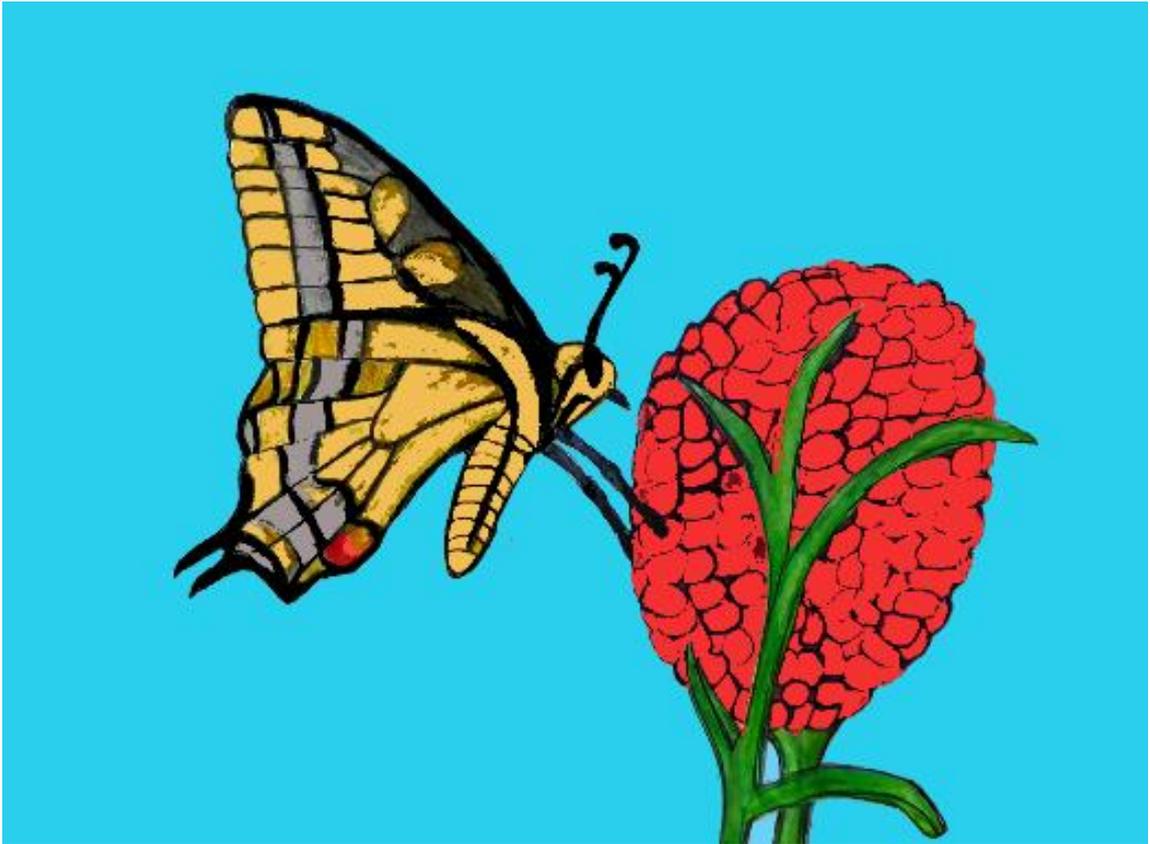
Nuria sang and all the animals in the Goldau Animal Park joined in. The Director was only whistling because he had not yet learned the words.

Even Pippa the Pine Marten joined in from her hiding place, singing very quietly.



The two LOUDEST singers were Ollie Otter and Roger Raven, even louder than the Ducks and Geese.

The two BEST singers with the sweetest voices were Nuria and Heidi but everyone agreed Nuria was the best.



Soon everyone in the whole Park was singing, including the Director who had learned the words at last.

*Mario is a naughty, naughty bear,  
His fur is covered in honey.  
But if he comes out to play with me,  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

*Can you remember the words?*

*Why not join in and sing along with the second verse?*

*When Mario ran away today,  
He forgot that I was coming,  
But if he comes out to play with me,  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

While Nuria sang, she tickled Mario's tummy as she had promised to do, even though it was wet and still a wee bit sticky from leftover honey.

The little bear closed his eyes, curled up inside the towel and fell asleep.

In his dream, Mario was back inside the Bee House again, eating honey.

A few weeks later, on their next visit to Goldau Animal Park, Nuria and her grandparents were joined by her brother Eli Celli and her Uncle Simon. Simon's dog Gwin had to stay at home because pet animals are not allowed at the park.

Nuria collected twigs for Eli Celli who carved them with his Swiss Army Knife into spearing sticks for roasting marshmallows at a barbecue, they were going to have later, when they got home to Meierskappel.

At the Park, Mario and Ollie are still the naughtiest animals but everyone enjoys their antics, especially when they play swimming tig-tag in the Blue Pond, diving under the water to come up again, splashing everyone with a great big **WHOOSHI!**



Each time Nuria visits Mario, she always sings her spell-song to him and tickles his tummy.

*Mario is a naughty, naughty bear,  
His fur is covered in honey.  
But if he comes out to play with me,  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

*When Mario ran away today,  
He forgot that I was coming,  
But if he comes out to play with me,  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.  
I'll tickle and tickle his Tummy.*

When she does this, Mario closes his eyes, falls asleep and dreams he is back inside the Bee House eating honey.

This story is for Nuria Melek who wanted a book of her own. Nuria had seen an early version of a story written for her brother. It is called “Eli Celli and Mario”. You can also find it at:

[www.thebuzzinbee.co.uk](http://www.thebuzzinbee.co.uk)

These stories are available in both English and German versions. The original storylines from John Bonthron (in English) were developed during an online collaboration led by Stefan Hagmann with support from Pia Hagmann and their friend Renata Bachmann who made the German translations.

The superb illustrations were from original drawings by Fiona Hagmann, coloured by Stefan, her father. I hope you will agree they are wonderfully quirky and ‘Swiss perfect’!

The final English versions were modified slightly in final editing, with the help of Margaret Bonthron (aka Mrs Bee).

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At *The Buzzin’ Bee* website you will find many stories for children (in English).

[www.thebuzzinbee.co.uk](http://www.thebuzzinbee.co.uk)

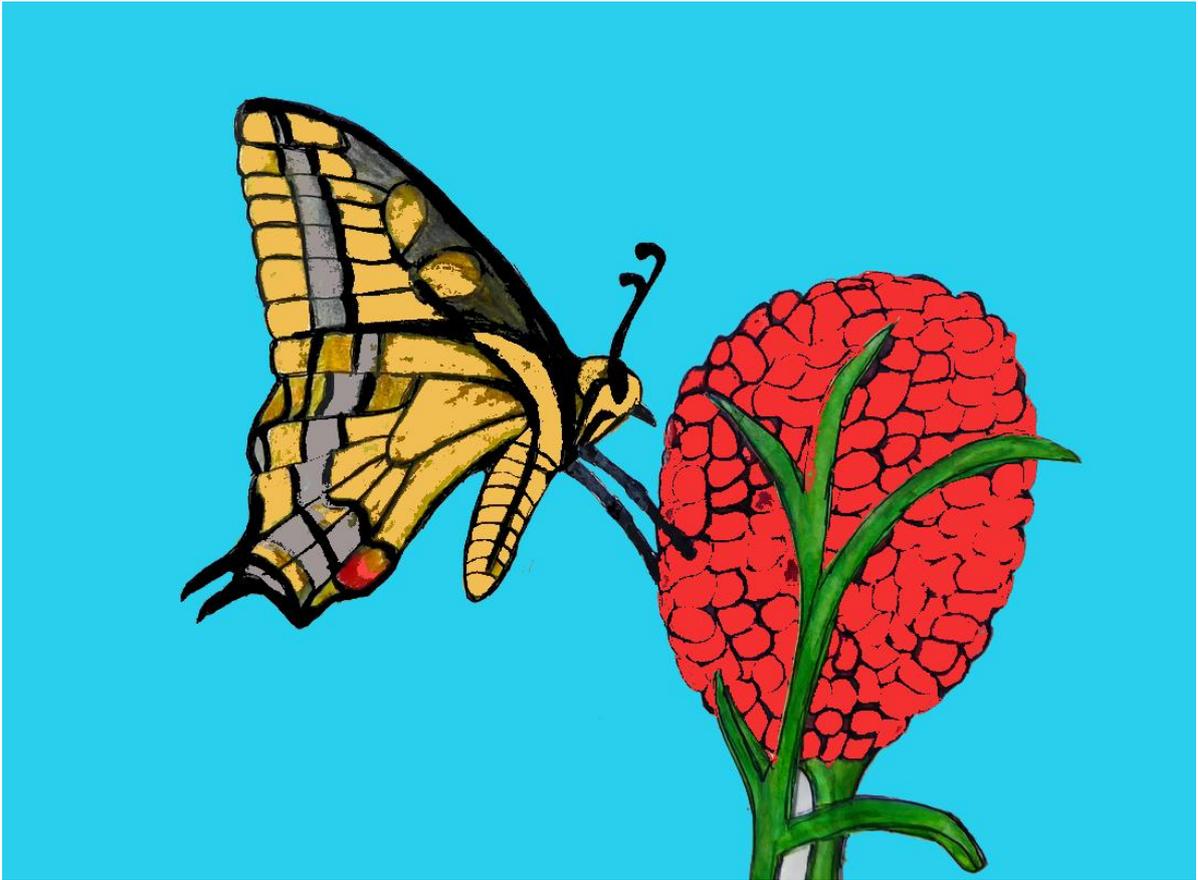
It is predominately a website for adults with some stories quite unsuitable for children!

It is entirely free, no tracking, no sales pitches or suchlike; there are no ‘cookies’ (which means it’s calorie free too!).

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John Bonthron aka John Bee.



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