

Major Characters (in order of appearance)

Visitors to Taniba Springs

Rain: (Rain that Dances; also called Rain or RD by his friends). The American Indian boy chosen by the Eagle. In this story, he accompanies his father on a trip to the Taniba Springs Indian Reservation where he joins with new friends to protect the towns of the Little People from discovery. Rain never forgets the Eagle's messages about eating healthy and being active, and he happily shares the Eagle's diabetes prevention messages with his new friends and the Little People.

Boomer: (Thunder Cloud). Rain's oldest friend. Always ready for adventure, Boomer goes on the trip with Rain and his father. When the situation gets serious, he lifts spirits with his good humor and special talents—most notably his very loud voice. Boomer recognizes that problems created by tricksters are opportunities for learning.

Hailey Jackson: A young African-American girl; Marcus's sister. Like Rain, Hailey accompanies her father to Taniba Springs. When Rain and Boomer plead with her to join their efforts to aid the Little People, she helps them by obtaining the plans that detail a potential invasion of their hidden homes—a plan that is supported by her father.

Marcus Jackson: An African-American boy; Hailey's brother. Marcus, a 6 year-old boy, learns valuable lessons from a trickster Rabbit known by the Little People. The Rabbit teaches Marcus how to outwit a dangerous adversary and encourages him to try new foods—especially vegetables.

Eugene Frimble: An economic developer. Eugene is a nerdy “good guy” who plans to introduce Taniba Springs to an environment-friendly approach to tourism. Although his intent is to generate jobs, he is not aware that his plans could potentially have unintended, negative consequences.

Turtletown Folk

Cricket: (Cholotka) A young woman of the Little People; Sigigi's sister. Cricket, known for her enchanting singing voice, uses spells to protect her people from the threat of the whirling bird.

Sigigi: A young man of the Little People. Sent to discover why a helicopter has been flying over the Little People's towns, Sigigi meets four children of the Big People who help him overcome threats to the well-being of the tiny folk of the forest.

Duffy: A young man of the Big People; Sigigi's friend. Duffy was found in the woods by the Little People when he was a small boy. He chose to stay with them, rather than return to his family. He uses his great strength and size to help the Little People.

Big People of Taniba Springs

Max Bigelow: A helicopter pilot and owner of Sky High Tours. Max Bigelow is a "bad guy" who discovers the Little People while flying over their towns. He devises a scheme to capture and market them as "real-life leprechauns" that will make him a fortune.

Lennie Blatch: An aircraft mechanic for Sky High Tours. Despite warnings from his sister-in-law, Lennie reluctantly joins Max Bigelow in his plot to seize the Little People—and pays the price for believing that Max will let them go free.

Myrtle Owl: A farmer; Lennie Blatch's sister-in-law. Myrtle is the owner of a small roadside store where she sells fruits and vegetables. When Lennie asks Myrtle what happens to people who "mess with" the Little People, she reflects on her own encounter with the tiny folk and her grandmother's teachings. She warns Lennie to have nothing to do with Max's scheme.

The Animals of Stories

Thistle: The little Rabbit; a relative of Brother Rabbit. Thistle always keeps a close eye on the well-being of Rain and his friends. When she has a dream

that Rain may be in danger, she and Coyote follow him to Two Rabbit Mountain in her homeland where she seeks the advice of a great trickster.

Sky Heart: The Eagle. Sky Heart does not accompany Thistle and Coyote on their trip to Two Rabbit Mountain. Rather, he knows that Rain will be guided by the lessons he has taught him about making healthy choices and honoring Native culture and values—and dealing with situations created by tricksters.

Coyote: A Trickster. Coyote is eager to meet the famous trickster of Two Rabbit Mountain. Using his magical prowess, he takes Thistle to see Brother Rabbit, her wily and very funny uncle. Coyote, however, has his own motive for the trip—he wants to learn the source of the trickster Rabbit’s power.

Brother Rabbit: A Trickster (The Two Rabbit; Chufezomo; Brer Rabbit). Brother Rabbit is a crafty fellow whose origins are found in American Indian and West African stories. He draws on his considerable powers to perform a great trick that protects the Little People’s towns from discovery. He also teaches the wisdom of clever thinking over ineffective struggle and the good sense of healthy fruits and vegetables.

Other Characters

Niska: A young woman of Turtletown; Cricket’s friend. Niska is the young woman spotted by the whirling bird. Her children, Foosi and Nikkami, are kidnapped by Max Bigelow.

Gerald. Rain’s father. Gerald’s plan is to take Rain and Boomer fishing with his friend, Don Jackson who (like Gerald) is attending the economic conference in Taniba Springs. Gerald is pleased when Rain and Boomer get to know Don’s kids, Hailey and Marcus.

Osihishi. The Headman of Turtletown. Osihishi oversees the town council and its strategies for protecting Turtletown and the other towns of the Little People.

Don Jackson. Hailey and Marcus’s father. Don, who has prediabetes, is impressed by Rain and Boomer’s healthy eating habits and says he would

like to learn more about diabetes prevention. He hopes that their good example rubs off on his son, Marcus.

Gussie Blatch. Wife of Lennie Blatch; Myrtle Owl's sister. Gussie is a pow-wow dancer and employee at the casino gift shop. She becomes worried when Lennie begins to display strange, confused behavior.

Chukmena: A member of the Turtletown town council; husband of Toloowa. Chukmena advises the Little People to be cautious about eating the Big People's foods and not to become too fond of their material goods.

Toloowa: A healer; wife of Chukmena. Toloowa observed that bees were attracted to the "honey" or sugar in the urine of young men who were eating junk food from the Big People's campgrounds. When Rain told her about the causes of type 2 diabetes, she promised to tell all the Little People to be active and eat healthy foods.

Sumpuhke. The Beloved Woman of Turtletown. Sumpuhke recommends the strategy that keeps Max Bigelow's discovery of their town a secret—without doing anyone any physical harm.

Hummingbird (Bird). An American Indian girl; a friend of Rain and Boomer. In this story, Hummingbird stays home in Thunder Rock. However, she organizes local reading and storytelling of rabbit stories that "powers" the great trick that subverts the discovery of the Little People's towns.

Arianna. A Hispanic girl; a friend of Rain and Boomer. When Arianna meets Hailey on Skype, she explains that she has type 1 diabetes. Arianna offers to invite her online support group "Type 1 Tweenies" into the storytelling network.

Simon. An American Indian boy; a friend of Rain and Boomer. Simon, also in Thunder Rock, also helps to organize the storytelling network. However, Simon uses social media to promote the reading and telling of rabbit stories across the country.