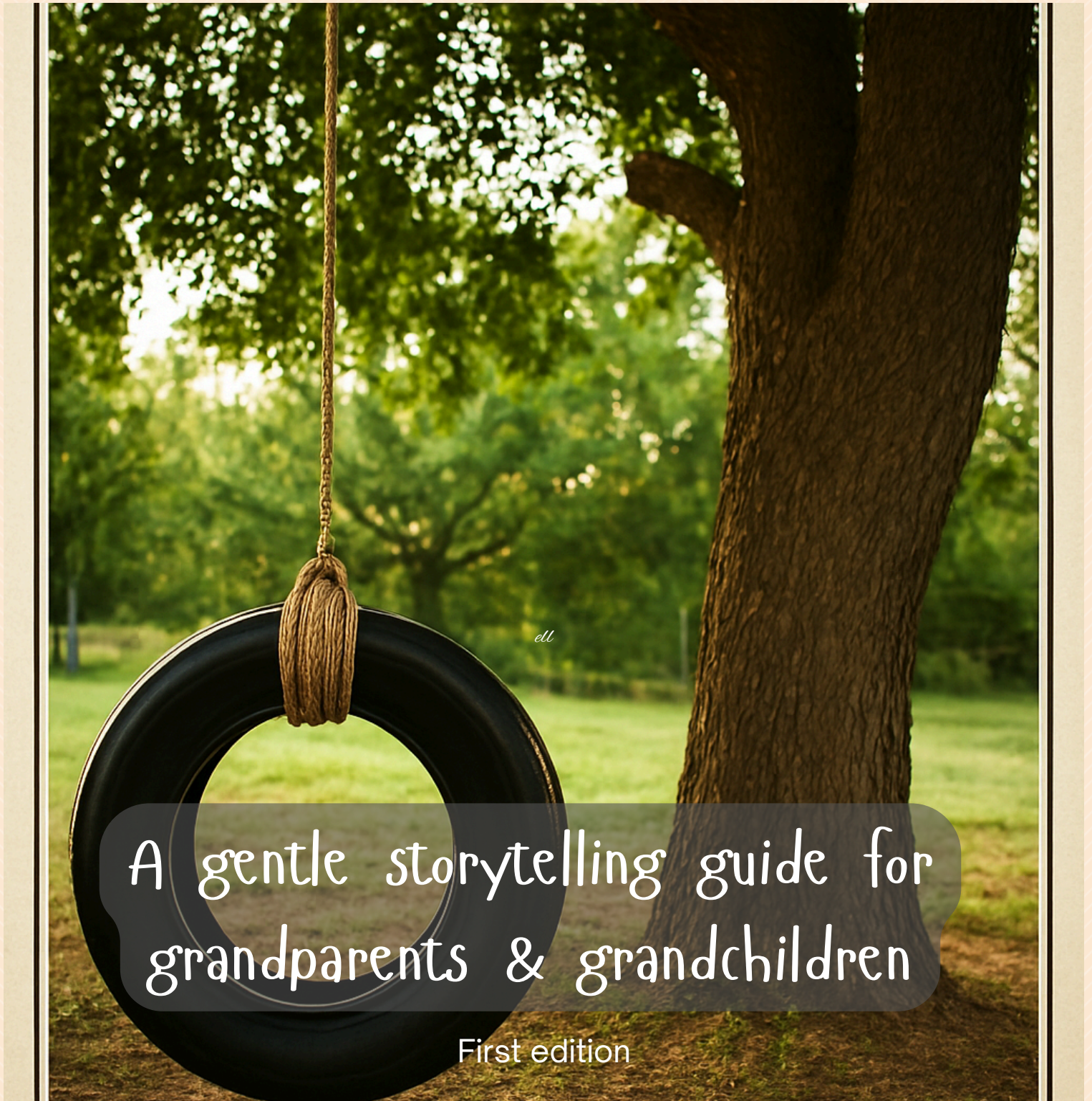


# ONCE UPON A BACKYARD

Storytelling prompts to inspire  
and ignite curiosity



A gentle storytelling guide for  
grandparents & grandchildren

First edition

# ONCE UPON A BACKYARD

A gentle note before you begin...

You don't need to be a storyteller to tell a story.

You just need curiosity and an openness to play.

These prompts are invitations — not instructions.

There's no right way to use them.

Follow your grandchild's lead.

Pause when you want.

Let the story wander.

This is about connection, not performance.

Begin anywhere. Trust yourself.

# Prompt # 1

Start with a hook that raises their eyebrows. One that is funny or mysterious or unusual.



*“Once upon a time, there was a bat who was afraid of the dark”*

# Prompt # 2

Make the character relatable to what children might be experiencing.

*“Bats usually feel at home in the dark.*

*But this bat, Cookie, didn’t.*

*That made him wonder if something was wrong with **him**.”*

?



?



?



## Prompt # 3

**What's at stake here? Why does this matter?**

*“Cookie wanted to hang out with his bat friends. But being afraid of the dark made him feel left out. So he tried lots of things to be brave.”*

## Prompt # 4

**Children like rhythm, repetition and patterns that are fun.**

*“The doctor gave him some bat bravery juice.*

*No use.*

*He tried hypnosis to help him cope.*

*Big nope.*

*He got a cute and fuzzy toy to carry.*

*Still scary”.*

## Prompt # 5

**Time to ask for the kids to participate**

*Ask them for solutions: “What else could Cookie try to help him with being afraid of the dark?”*

## Prompt # 6

**Keep it snappy to hold attention. Use short sentences and action verbs. Move along with surprises, funny twists or silliness**

*Cookie thought he would be a better goose.*

*Or a crow*

*Or an eagle*

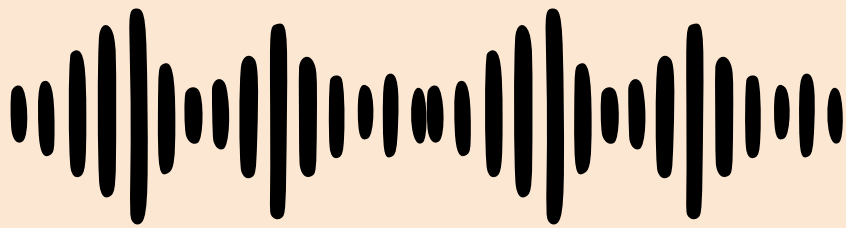
*So he opened his mouth to make those sounds. But nothing came out. No-noise-at-all*

**(good time to invite noise participation.)**

## Prompt # 7

**End with something that resolves the problem.**

*‘Cookie realized suddenly that he had NEVER been able to make any noise. And that’s why he was afraid of the dark. Without a voice, he couldn’t tell where he was going. Cookie knew all he needed to do was make his voice louder. And he traded his flashlight for a microphone to help him be heard’*



## Prompt # 8

**Your voice is part of the magic.  
Whisper for suspense. Pause for  
drama. Be silly—kids love it.**

# ONCE UPON A BACKYARD

## Additional tips

The story of Cookie the bat demonstrates these prompts in action.

Let it guide you through your storytelling experience.

*Notice the rhythm and repetition. Short lines, playful language, and predictable patterns help keep children engaged.*

Let children participate as much as they want. It's fun to ask them to think of an animal—and then give it a problem.

Let the story unfold with your guidance.

For added enjoyment, you can take notes and write the story out as a keepsake. Ask them to do the artwork—children love to draw.

Create fun. Craft a legacy.

Created with care by Marie-Louise Parker