

A PUDDLEBEND STORY

The CLOUD THAT WOULD NOT STAY



WREN MARLOWE

PUDDLEBEND



The Cloud That Would Not Stay



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PUDDLEBEND

*For everyone who has tried
to keep a beautiful thing.*



The Cloud That Would Not Stay

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“A cloud in the Rain Bowl!” called Cinder. She leaned over the little pool between the reeds.

A white cloud shape lay beside a floating red gum leaf.

“How did you get down here?”





Sora came to look. Skip slid up beside her.
“My turn!” he said.

His fin dipped into the water.
Ripples ran across the pool.
The white shape pulled into wiggly streaks.





“Oh!” said Cinder. “What happened to it?”
Skip lifted his fin.

“The leaf’s still here,” he said.
So were the white streaks, shivering
around it.
Cinder peered closer.





“Maybe it’s under the leaf.”
She lifted the red leaf with her paw.

Water dripped from its point.
Each drop made another little ring.
The cloud shape wobbled all over again.





There was no cloud underneath the leaf.
Cinder laid it back on the water.

“I can pick up the leaf,” she said.
“But where do I pick up the cloud?”





They watched the little rings grow wider
and fainter.

The white streaks joined into a plump shape.
Cinder lifted her snout.
Above the reeds was another plump cloud.





“That one has a long bit,” she said.
She looked down.

“This one has a long bit too.”

Sora stretched her neck to look up, then bent to look down.

“Hmm.”





Cinder held one paw over the pool.

“What happens to the big one if I wobble the little one?”

“I’ll watch up there,” said Sora.
Skip leaned close to watch below.





Cinder touched the water with her pawtip.
The pool-cloud stretched into white ribbons.

“Wobbles down here!” Skip burst out.
“None up there,” called Sora.
Cinder took her paw away.





They waited while the ripples spread to the clay edges.

The water grew smoother.
The plump white cloud shape grew clearer.
Cinder looked up and down once more.





“It’s a picture!” she said. “The water has a picture of the sky.”

Skip looked up.

“That cloud isn’t wet?”

“Not from my paw,” said Cinder.

She showed him her dripping pawtip.





Sora leaned over for a closer look.
Her long neck appeared in the pool beside
the cloud.

Cinder spotted it.

“Oh! There’s a Sora in the water too.”





Skip gave the water one tiny tap.
The watery neck bent into wiggles.

The real Sora stood still beside him.
Cinder laughed.
“Look what your fin can do!”





“Sora’s dancing!” Skip burst out.
Sora watched her watery self wobble.

“Excellent,” she said. “My feet can have a rest.”

All three stayed beside the bowl to watch the dance.



EVERYONE AT THE CREEK



Bramble

COMMON
WOMBAT

The steady big-
kid guardian



Skip

MUDSKIPPER

The tiny little
brother who
cannot wait his
turn



Cinder

COATIMUNDI

The nosy
neighborhood
explorer



Sora

SANDHILL
CRANE

The tall
watchful big-
sister neighbor



Hush

TAWNY
FROGMOUTH

The tall
nervous big
cousin who
thinks nobody
can see him



Tuck

SHORT-BEAKED
ECHIDNA

The littlest
cousin who is
always a bit too
close



Nix

SUGAR GLIDER

The littlest
rocket sibling

ABOUT THE CREEK

Puddlebend is a slow bend in a warm creek where the water is shallow enough to stand in and the mud is soft enough to sit down in. Everyone who lives there is small. Everyone who lives there is working something out.

These stories are about the ordinary, difficult business of being a friend: waiting your turn, going back for what you dropped, letting someone hold you when you are all spikes.

WREN MARLOWE

Wren Marlowe makes quiet, funny picture books at the water's edge: small creatures working out how to be together.



ALSO IN A SKY STORY



The Landing Branch



The Shadow That Followed



The Dropped Rope



The Missed Leaf



PUDDLEBEND

puddlebend.com

Digital edition

A PUDDLEBEND STORY

The Cloud That Would Not Stay

A cloud in a puddle. A very wiggly question.

Cinder spots a cloud in the Rain Bowl. But every little ripple changes its shape.

With Sora watching the sky and Skip watching the pool, she tries one curious experiment—and finds a new way to make a friend dance.



Written and illustrated by Wren Marlowe

PUDDLEBEND

A Puddlebend picture book
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