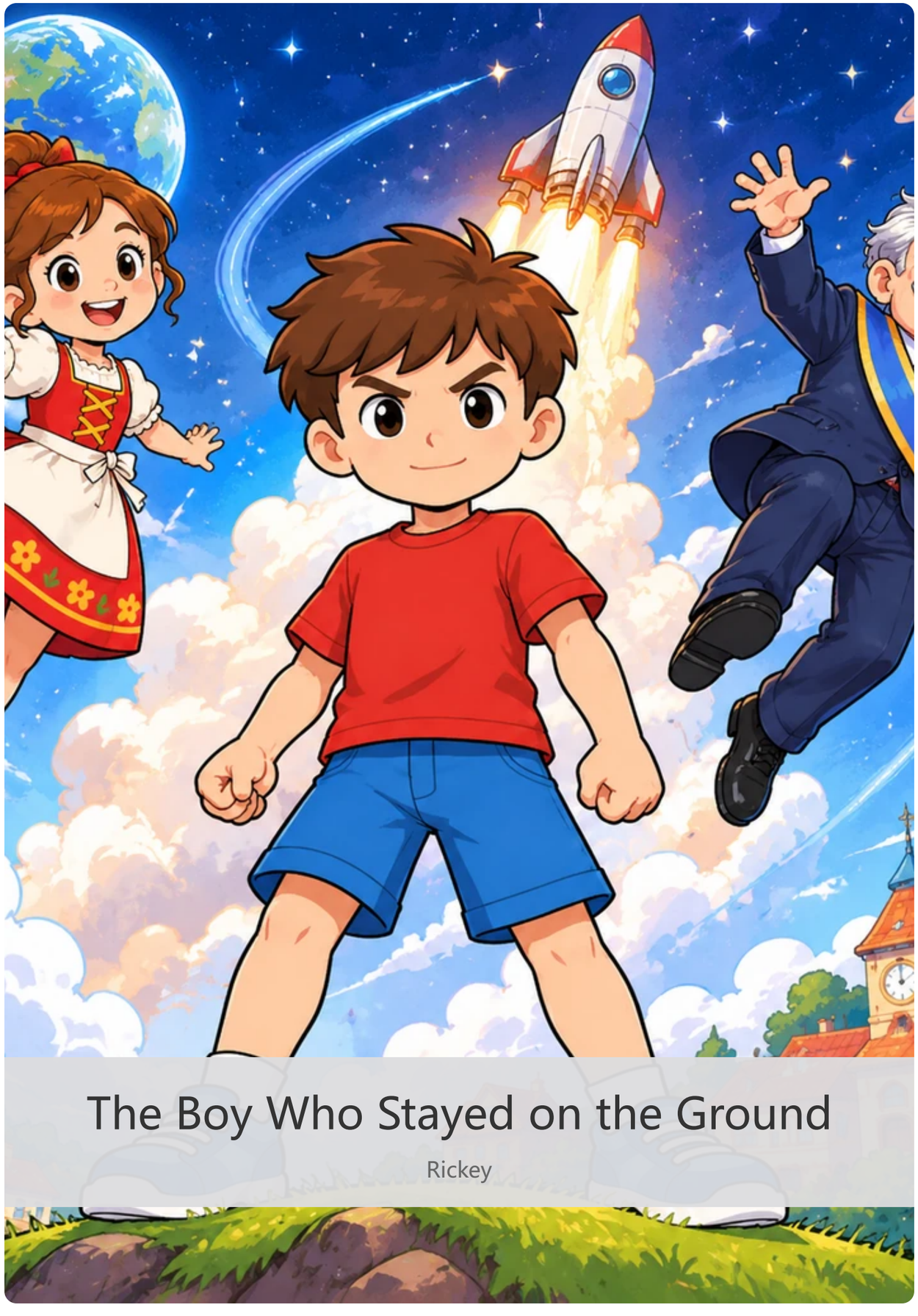

The Boy Who Stayed on the Ground
Rickey



Max lived in a bustling town where every resident naturally floated through the air, attending school classes suspended among fluffy white clouds. Because he remained firmly on the cobblestone streets while others soared overhead, his classmates playfully nicknamed him Brick. Despite being left out of aerial games, Max spent his afternoons dreaming up clever ways to bridge the gap between the ground and the sky.



Every single day in his cluttered garage, Max meticulously tied hundreds of pieces of sturdy rope together into one continuous strand. The massive coil grew larger with each passing week, eventually stretching a staggering two miles long and filling the room to the ceiling. He wrapped the endless line around wooden spools, determined to one day reach the friends playing high above.



The town was celebrating its grand centennial anniversary with a magnificent festival in the central square, featuring colorful banners and festive music. Mayor Sky stepped up to the grand podium to unveil the town's newest invention, a gleaming brass contraption known as the Sky Pump. With a dramatic pull of a giant lever, the Mayor activated the machine to make everyone feel lighter for the festivities.



Instantly, the Sky Pump released a powerful wave of sparkling energy that made every single resident ten times lighter than before. Without warning, people dropped their party treats and began floating uncontrollably straight upward into the bright blue sky. Panic and laughter filled the air as the townsfolk drifted higher and higher toward the outer edge of the atmosphere.



Because Max lacked the ability to float, the machine's powerful lifting force had no effect on him whatsoever, leaving him standing safely on the solid pavement. He watched in astonishment as his neighbors bobbed around like colorful balloons caught in a gentle breeze. Knowing he had to act quickly, Max sprinted toward his garage to retrieve his massive creation.



Dragging the heavy coils of his two-mile rope behind him, Max rushed over to a sturdy stone statue in the center of the square. He securely tied one end of the thick rope around the heavy base of the monument with a tight, reliable knot. With all his might, he hoisted the remaining massive coil into his arms and prepared for the big throw.



Taking a deep breath, Max hurled the end of the endless rope powerfully upward into the sky toward his drifting friends. Ava, who was floating near the top of the crowd with her grandfather, spotted the hurtling line and reached out to catch it. She firmly grabbed the sturdy rope, creating a crucial lifeline between the ground and the skyward-bound citizens.



The rest of the floating townspeople quickly grabbed onto the long rope, forming a massive chain that looked just like a giant kite string. Max planted his boots firmly against the pavement, using his grounded strength to anchor the entire crowd against the pull of the machine. The people held on tight as they swayed gently in the wind, tethered safely to the earth below.



Hand over hand, Max climbed his way up the taut rope toward the elevated platform where the Sky Pump was still humming loudly. Straining against the floating currents, he finally reached the controls and slammed the large red switch into the off position. The whirring sound of the machine slowly died down as the magical lifting energy dissipated into the air.



Gradually, the townsfolk floated back down to the safety of the cobblestone streets below, greeted by cheering onlookers. Ava drifted gently down right into Max's waiting arms, while Mayor Sky splashed softly into a nearby duck pond. Dripping wet and smiling widely, the Mayor shook Max's hand and thanked him for keeping the entire town grounded.