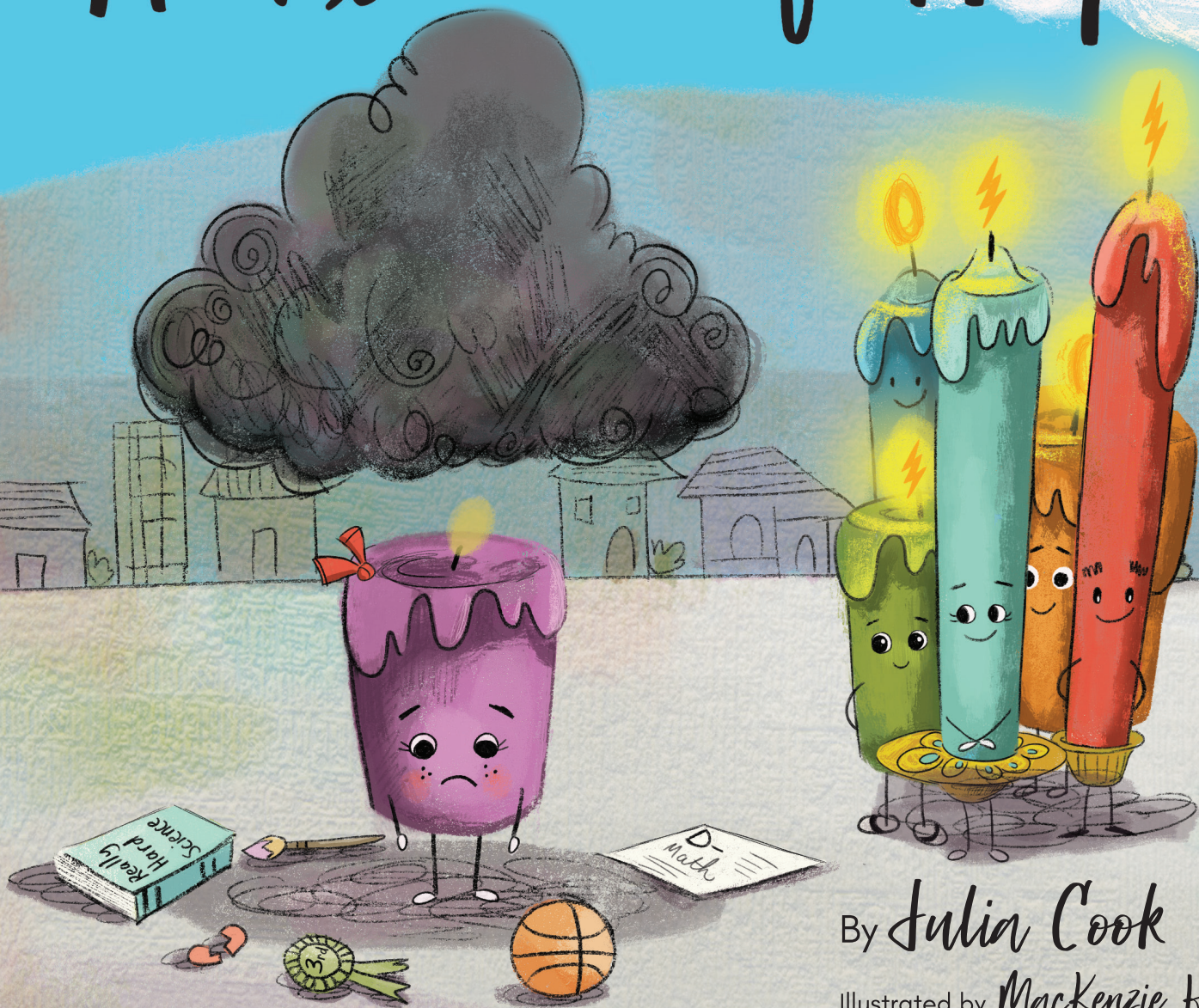


# A Flicker of Hope



By *Julia Cook*

Illustrated by *Mackenzie Haley*





*I have all of these dark clouds hovering over me, but they don't feel like clouds.  
To me, they feel like mountains.*

*I try hard to push them away, but they keep coming back...  
and I'm so tired of trying.*



“You know, a brighter flame can lighten up those heavy clouds of yours. Then, they’d be easier to push away.”

“You can see them too?”

“Nope, they’re your clouds...only you can see them. But I can tell your flame isn’t very bright right now.”

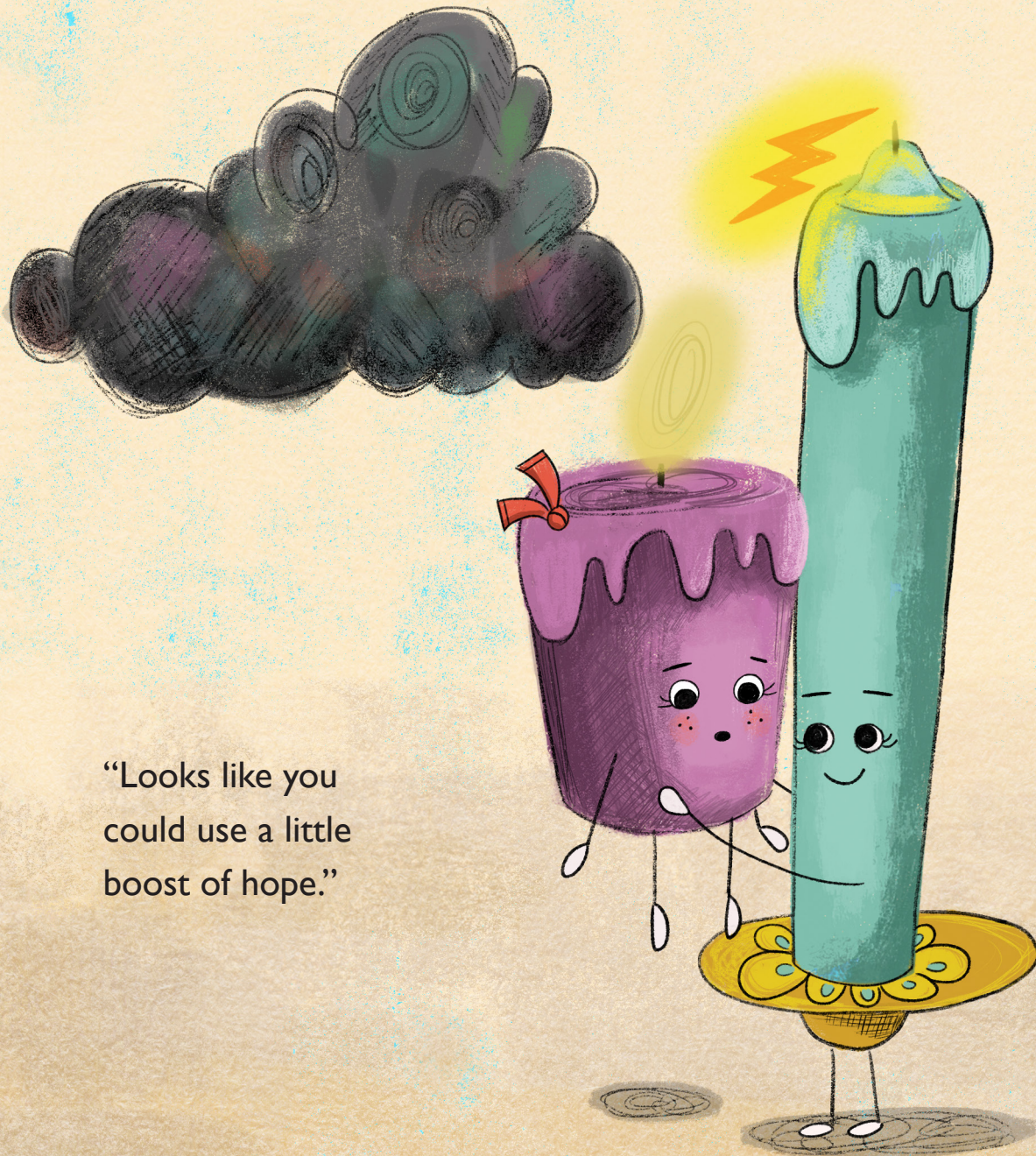
“How do you know?”



“It’s not the ‘how I know’ that matters... it’s the ‘what I know.’”





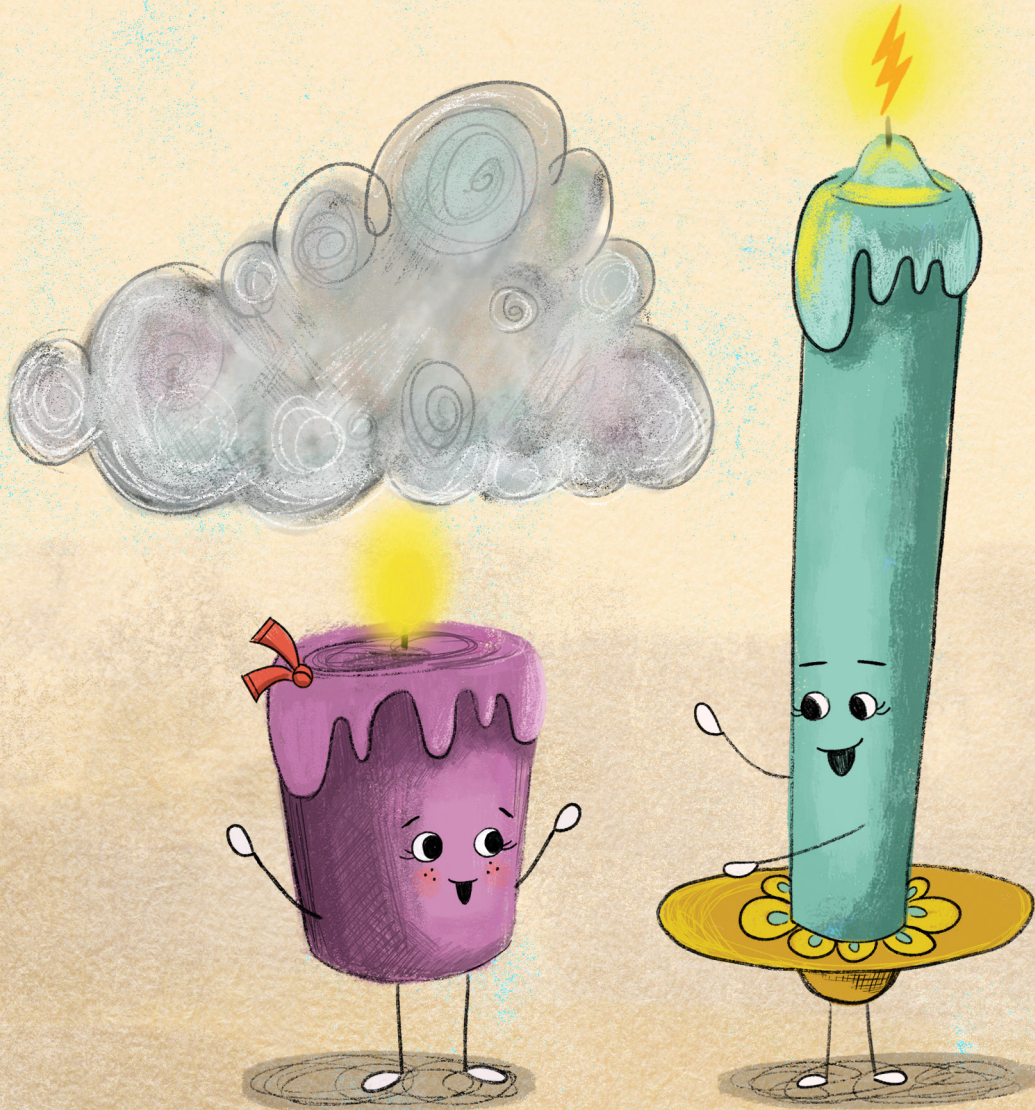


“Looks like you  
could use a little  
boost of hope.”



*“How’d you do that?”*

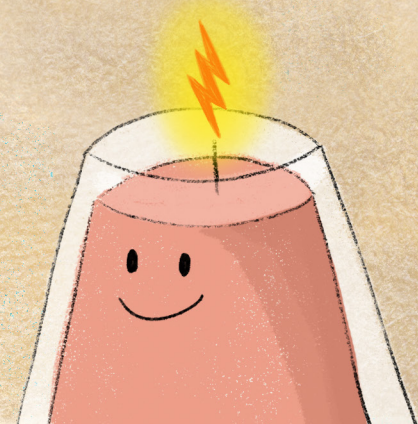
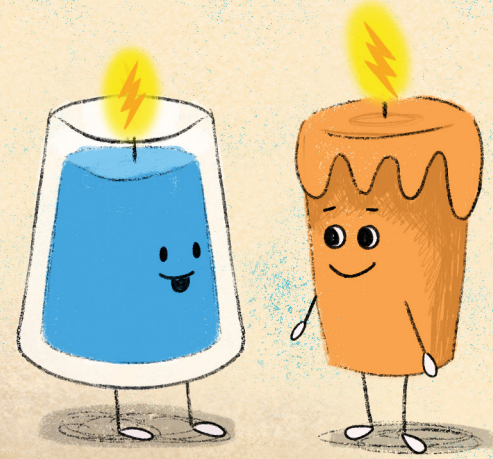
“Since you are standing right underneath your clouds, all you can see is dark.  
They may seem impossible to move.”



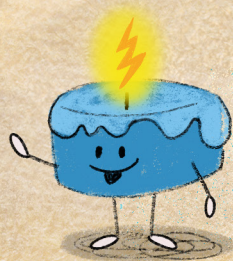
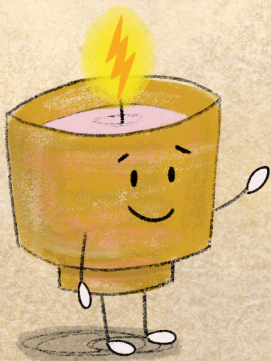
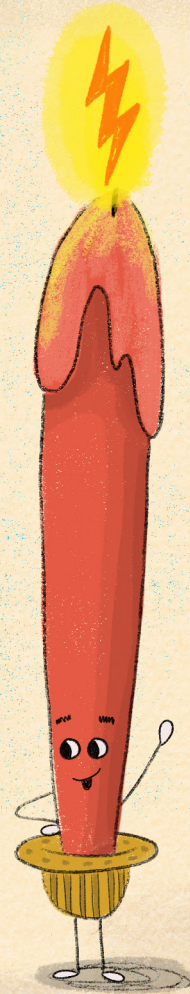
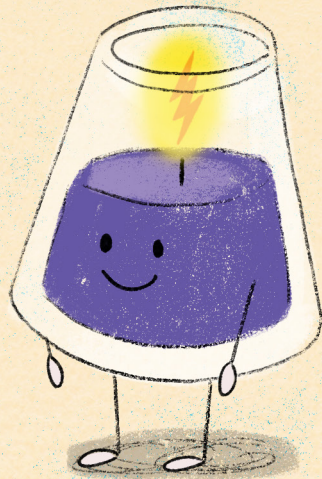


“When your clouds get too dark,  
and too heavy to push away,  
reach out and ask, “Can I borrow some light?  
I’m having a really bad day.”

Hope builders are everywhere,  
but only you can see your clouds.  
So grab some courage and ask for help,  
and don’t worry about being too proud.”









"A *Flicker of Hope* is a much-needed resource for our times. As an international speaker on resilience, mental health, and suicide prevention, I have noticed diverse populations struggling with how best to reach out when times get tough. This book gives readers both the language and mindset of how we can build caring communities everywhere. Together we can build the emotional intelligence needed to create a more supportive world."

**Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas**, Psychologist and Mental Health Advocate

**HOPE** is our children's window for a better tomorrow. In terms of resilience and well-being, hope is a critically important predictor of success. This creative story from the best-selling author of *My Mouth is a Volcano!*, and *Bubble Gum Brain*, reminds children that dark clouds can be temporary and asking for help is always okay. We all have times when we need to borrow a little hope from someone else.

***When your clouds get too dark,  
and too heavy to push away,  
Reach out and ask, "Can I borrow some light?"  
"I'm having a really bad day."***

***"It's always okay to admit to yourself,  
"I just can't do it today."  
Everyone needs somebody sometimes,  
to help them find their way."***

Sometimes the dark clouds overhead seem too heavy and you feel like giving up. Little candle knows all about this. Bad grades, blasted on social media, worried about making the team, and wondering who her real friends are—so many hard things to deal with! All she can see is darkness. But her story begins to change when someone notices she needs a boost of hope. As little candle is reminded she has purpose and her own unique gifts, and that she isn't the only one with dark clouds, her dim light begins to shine brighter.

This hopeful story emphasizes for children (and adults) the many different ways to ask for help, and their ability to be a hope builder for others, too.



**Julia Cook, M.S.** is a national award winning children's author, counselor, and parenting expert. She has presented in thousands of schools across the country and

abroad, regularly speaks at national education and counseling conferences, and has published children's books on a wide range of character and social development topics. The goal behind Cook's work is to actively involve young people in fun, memorable stories and teach them to become lifelong problem solvers. Inspiration for her books comes from working with children and carefully listening to counselors, parents, and teachers, in order to stay on top of needs in the classroom and at home. Cook has the innate ability to enter the worldview of a child through storybooks, giving children both the "what to say" and "how to say it."

**MacKenzie Haley** is an illustrator, runner, and cat whisperer from Louisville, KY. She has a BFA in illustration from University of Dayton, and has worked with a variety of publishers over the last decade.



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Psychologists (2016-17), a nationally certified school psychologist, licensed professional counselor, and licensed special education teacher. She has over 19-years' experience working in public schools, a private school, and day and residential treatment programs. She has co-authored multiple books and publications focusing on school safety, mental health, and trauma.



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