

Martin and Kate

GO TO THE

Global Debt Zoo

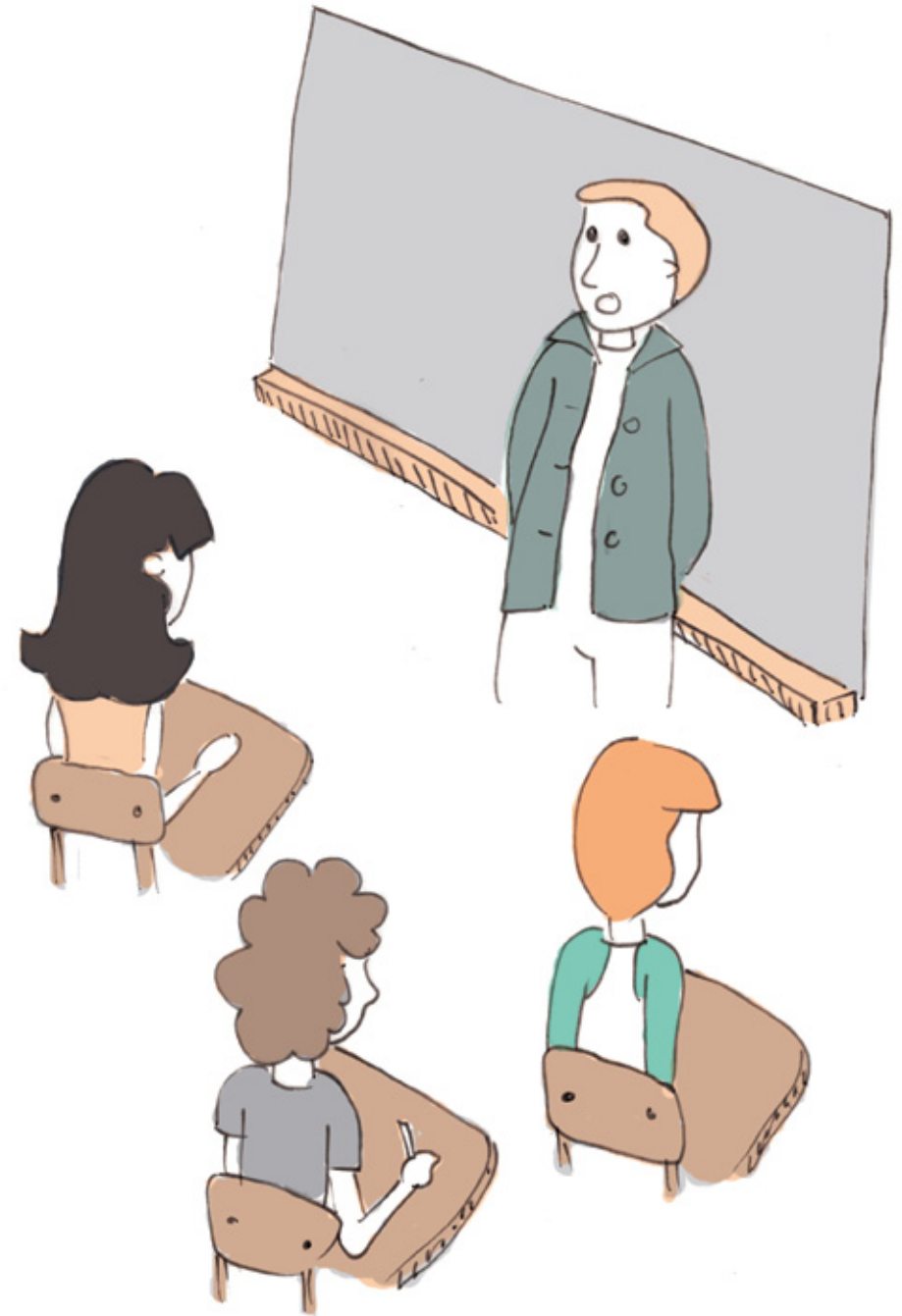
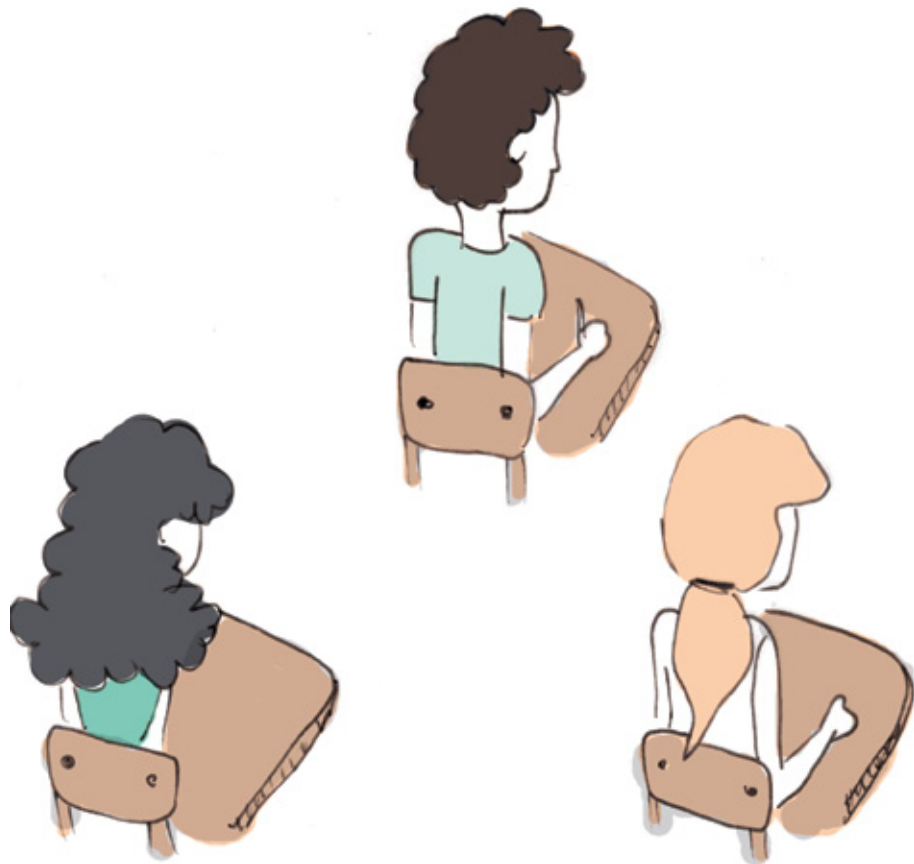


By Kirsten Randall

This book is dedicated
to all those who
have struggled with
finding meaning in the
numbers.

Martin was sitting
In geography class,
When his teacher,
Mr Hall, set them the task.

“Don’t worry kids,
There’s no need to fret;
Your assignment is simply
To write about debt.”



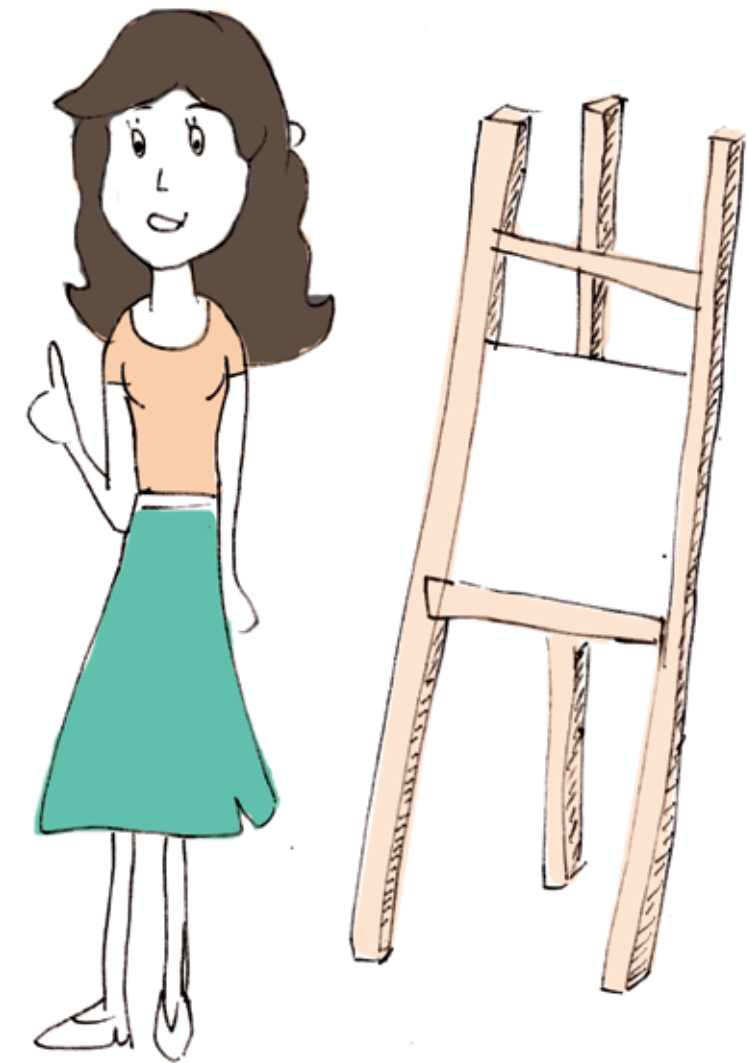
"Sounds easy enough,"
Said little Kate Brown.



Martin, however,
Just sat with a frown.

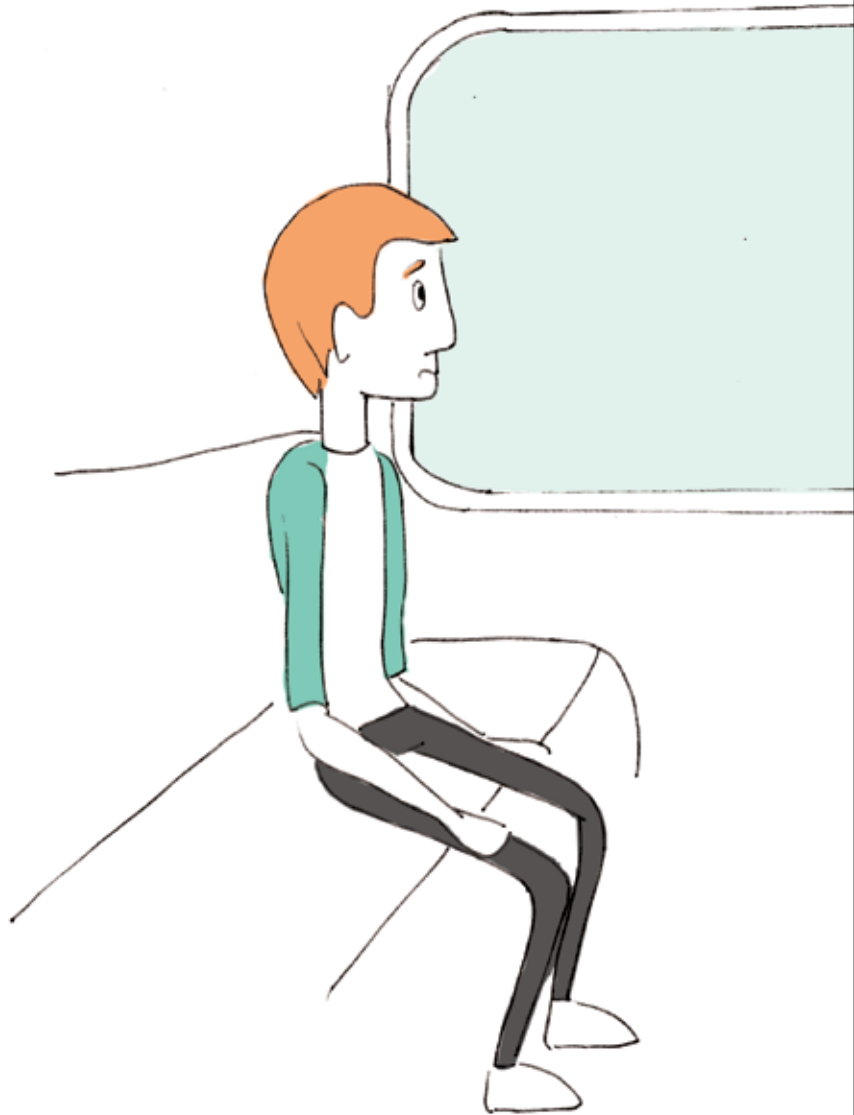


“What’s wrong?”
Kate asked, later in art.
“It’s this debt thing,” he said,
“where do we start?”



“It’s okay, friend,
I know just what to do:
Let’s research together
At the Global Debt Zoo!”

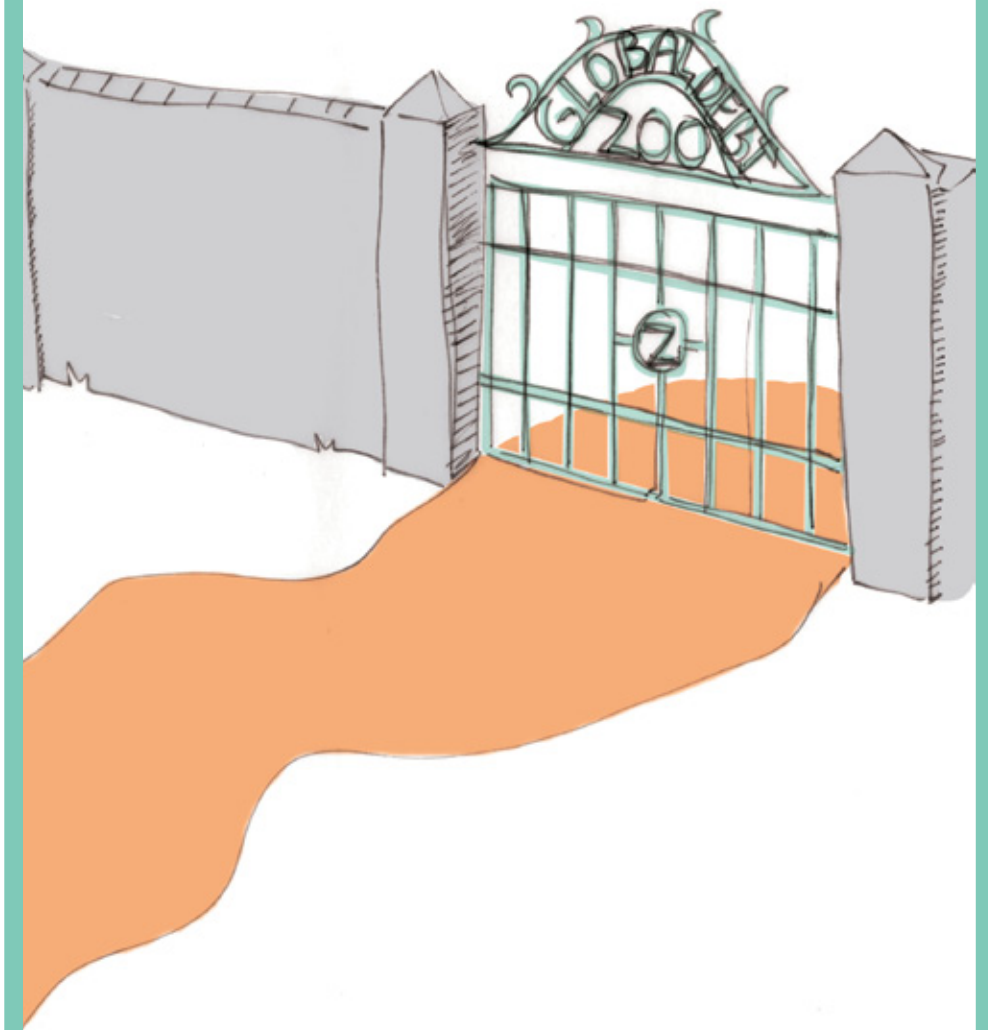
Later that week,
The two caught the train,
But before they got there,
Martin's head was in pain.



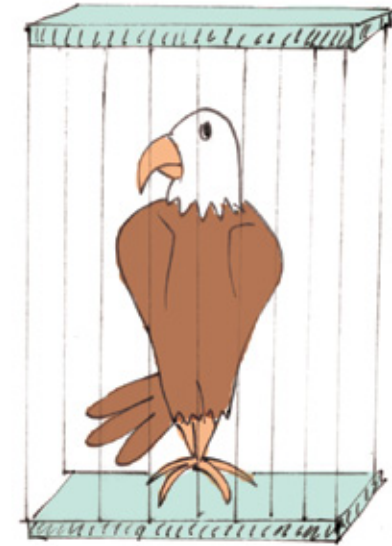
When they arrived,
Martin turned and asked Kate,
“Are you sure all the answers
Are behind this one gate?”



“Don’t worry, dear Martin,
How hard can it be?
All you have to do
Is compare what you see”



The first thing Martin saw
Was a great, brown bird,
"C'mon Kate" he said,
"Let's go have a word."



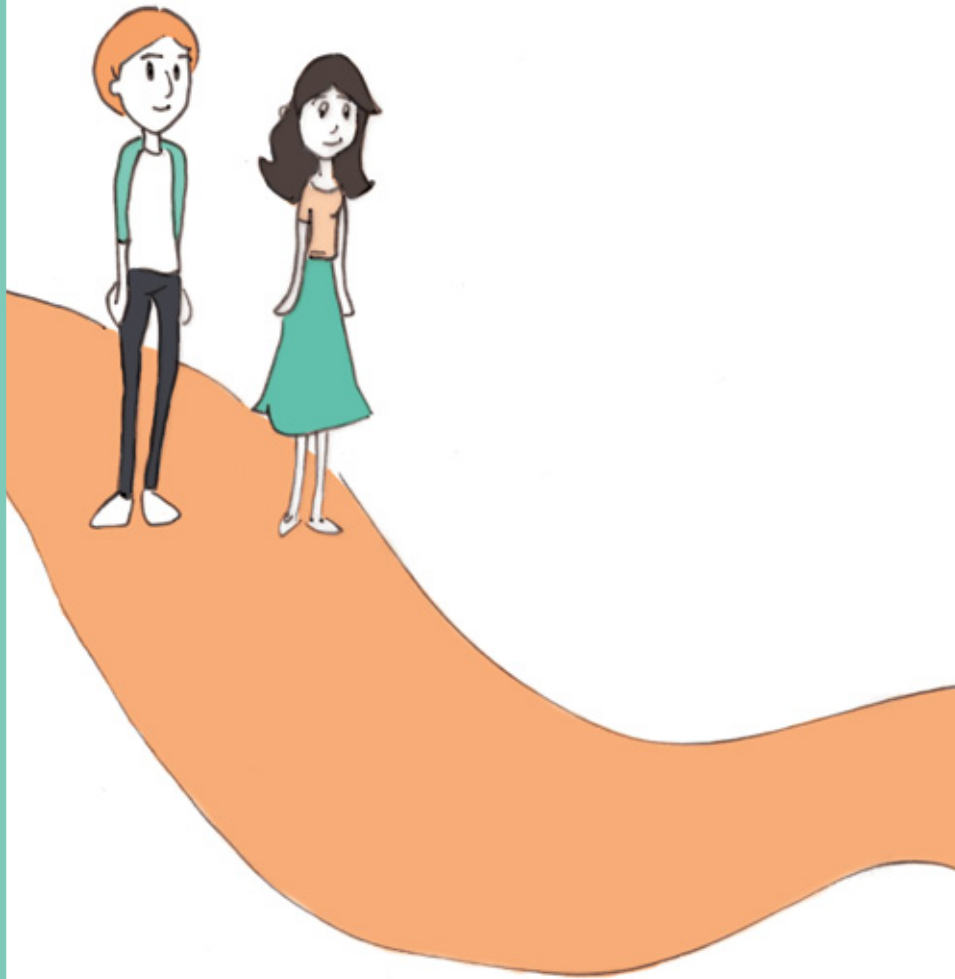
"Hello, Sir", said Kate,
"What's your name?"
He replied, "I'm the proud eagle
from the US of A."

"Pleased to meet you," Kate said,
"If it is no trouble at all,
We would like to know
why your cage is so small?"

He smirked, then replied
"This cage is so small
Because America is
The greatest nation of all."

"You'd think having the largest debt
Would come at a cost,
But ask an American; he'll say
he suffers no loss."





Onward they went,
And found a black bear;
The two friends noticed
That he had not a care.

“Hello Bear”, said Martin
“And where are you from”
To that he replied,
“I’m the Bear of Taiwan!”



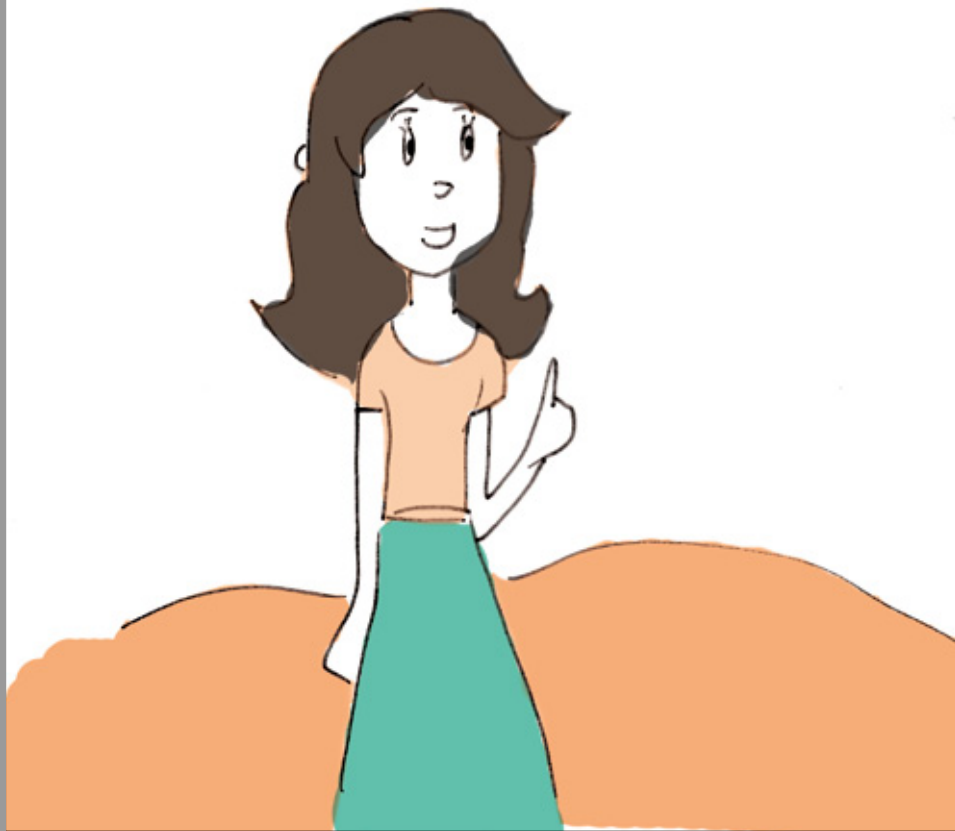
“Where is your cage?”
Kate wanted to know,
“I have none,” he proclaimed,
“We repay what we borrow!”

Martin was confused.
“So you don’t owe a thing?”
“No,” said Taiwan
“Exports make our economy sing.”



They went on through the zoo,
And Kate did exclaim:
"I've got it!" she cried,
"It's all about pain!"

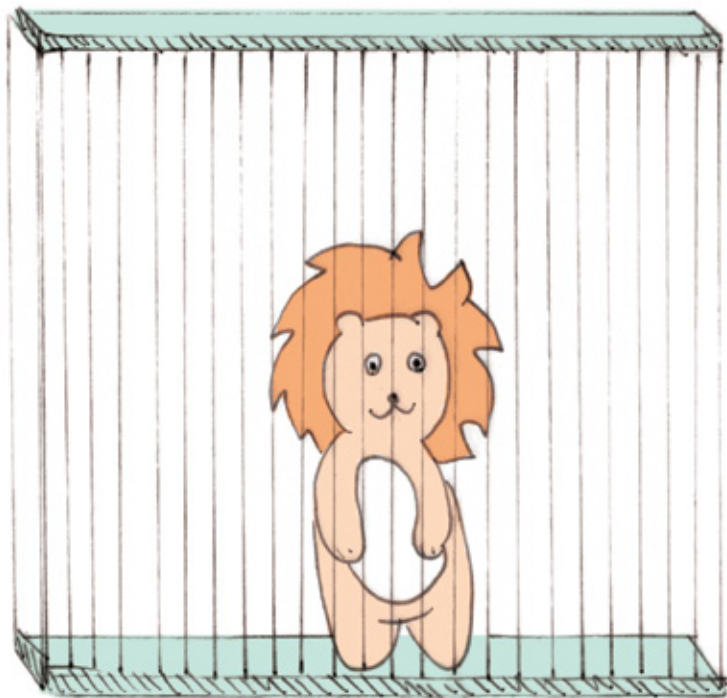
"From these animals I see;
one thing is made clear:
That debts, big or small,
Mean no pain and no fear!"



Martin was unconvinced
By simple explanations,
So continue they did,
And talked to other nations.

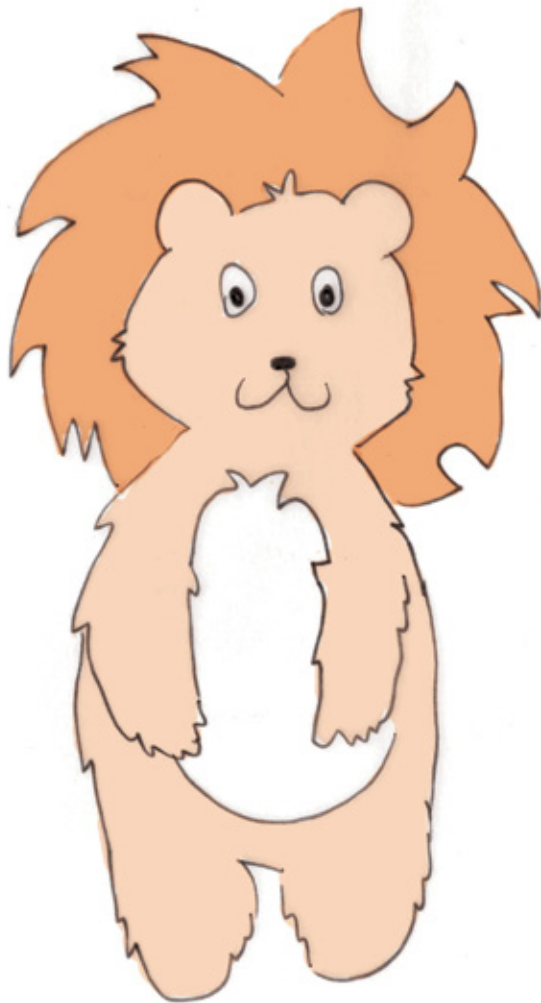
A lion whose cage
Was the biggest they'd seen,
Had many long bars
And less space in between.

"Hello Lion," said Kate,
"I would like to discover,
Who are you,
To have more bars than the others."



"I am Luxembourg!" he said
"And what the bars represent,
Is our debt per person,
down to the cent!"

"But your debt," said Martin,
"It's not bigger than the US,
So fewer people you must have,
To deal with your debt mess?"



"Fewer people we do have,
You're right, that is true,
However messy it's not,
I can assure you!"

"Luxembourg," he said,
with a smile, "has got,
A much smaller land
Than the rest of this lot."

"There are certain advantages
To a country so small,
For example, the Swiss army
Comes at our call.

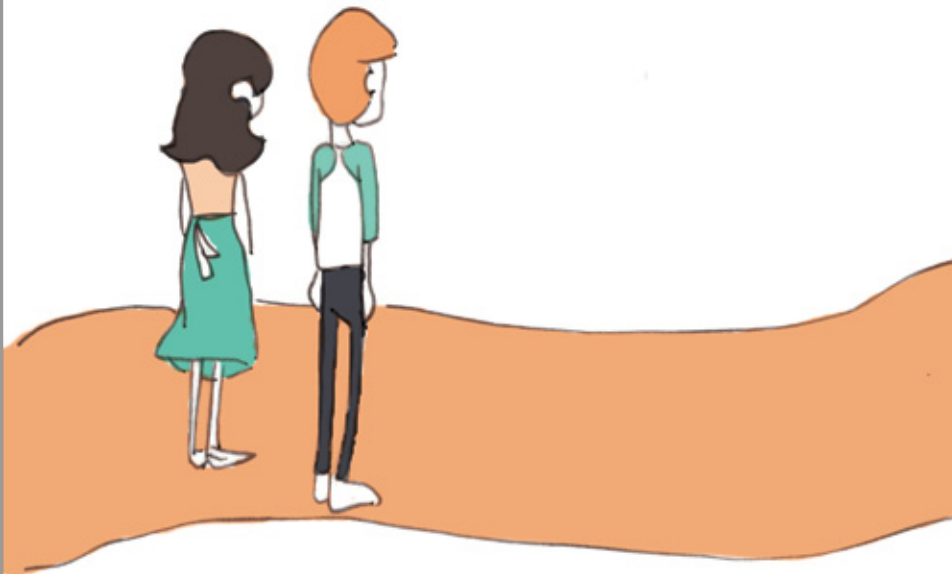
"And we may be small,
but we assure you that
International banking
Is where it is at!"

We also need only
very small infrastructure,
Because so few people
just don't require much juncture!"

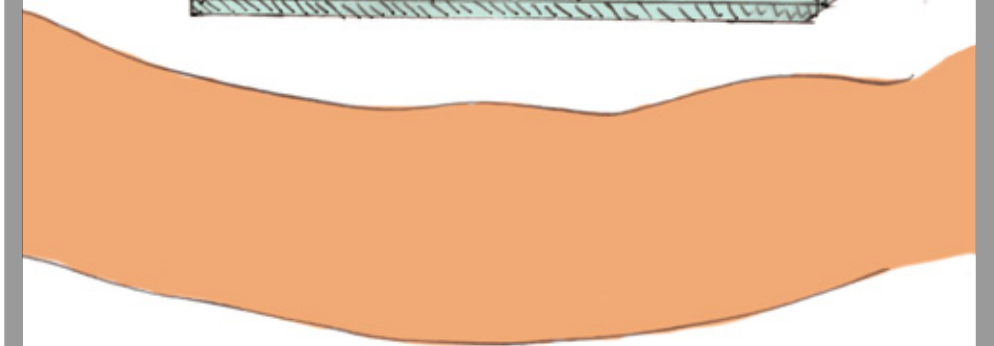
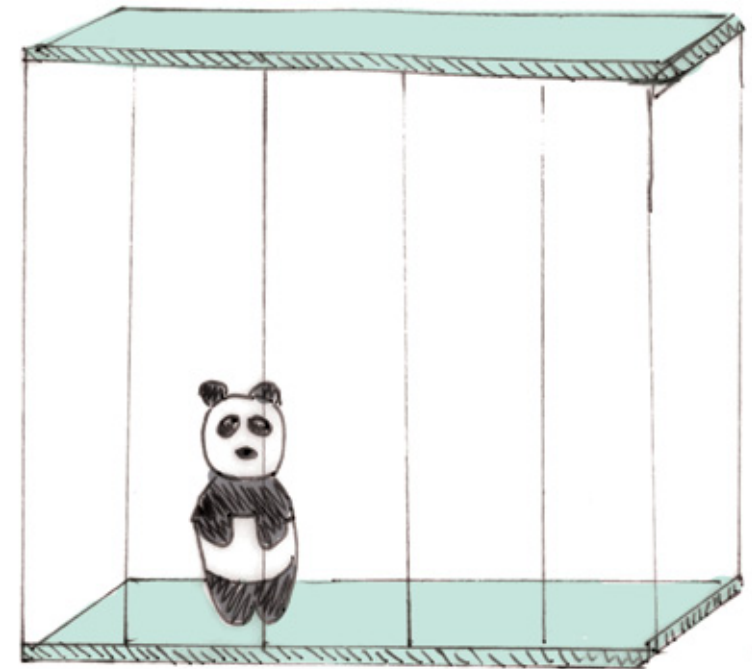
"That's a lot to take in"
Kate after did say,
"I can see a panda,
Lets head over that way!"

"Panda, why does your cage
Have so few bars?"

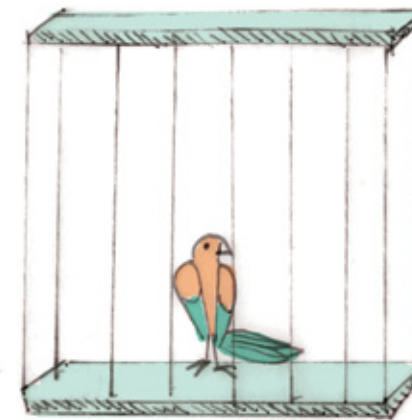
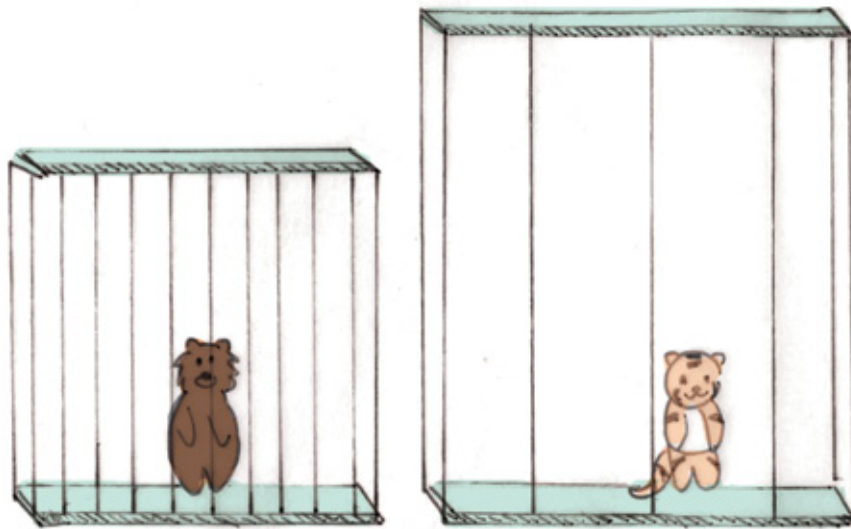
"And where are you from?"
Kate did think to ask



He said, "I'm from China.
We have few bars, little girl,
'Cause our population
Is the largest in the world!"

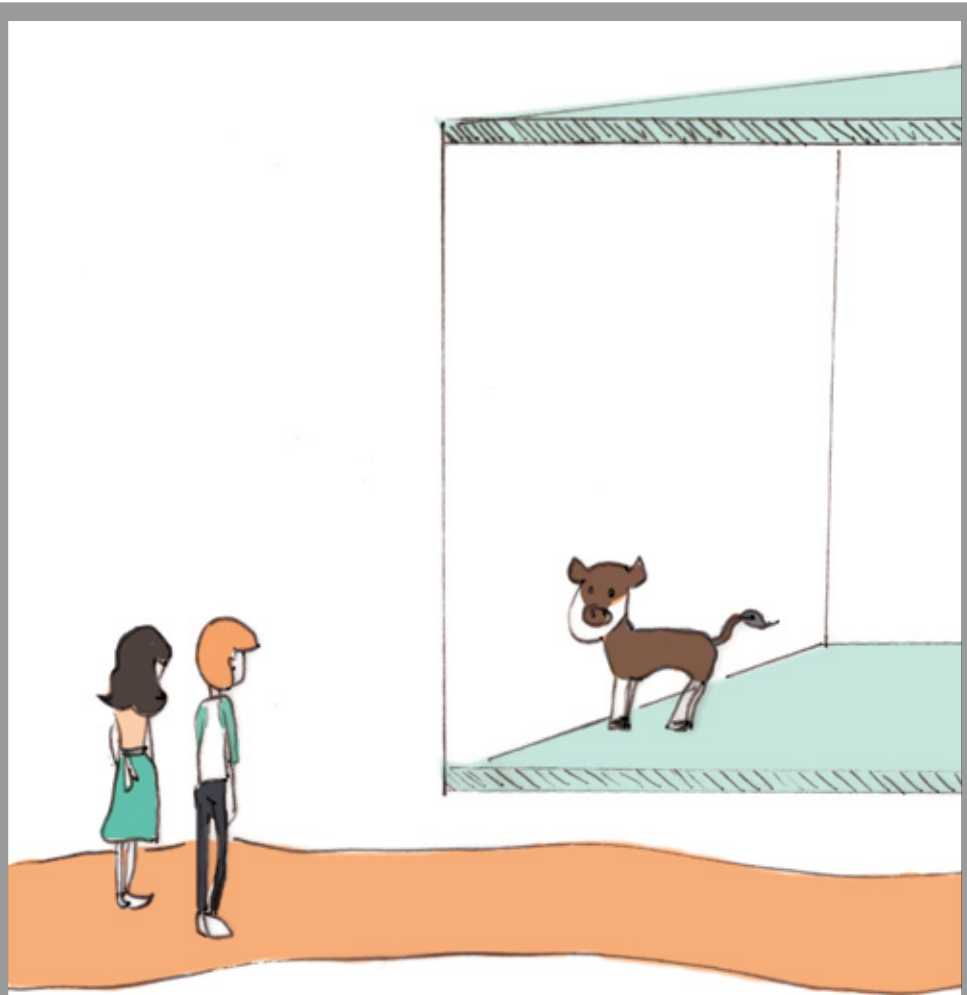


Walking on by,
Martin turned to Kate and said:
“I think we should see
Who has less debt on their head.”



So the two wandered around
And started to see,
All the cages, big and small,
Some with eighty bars, some three.

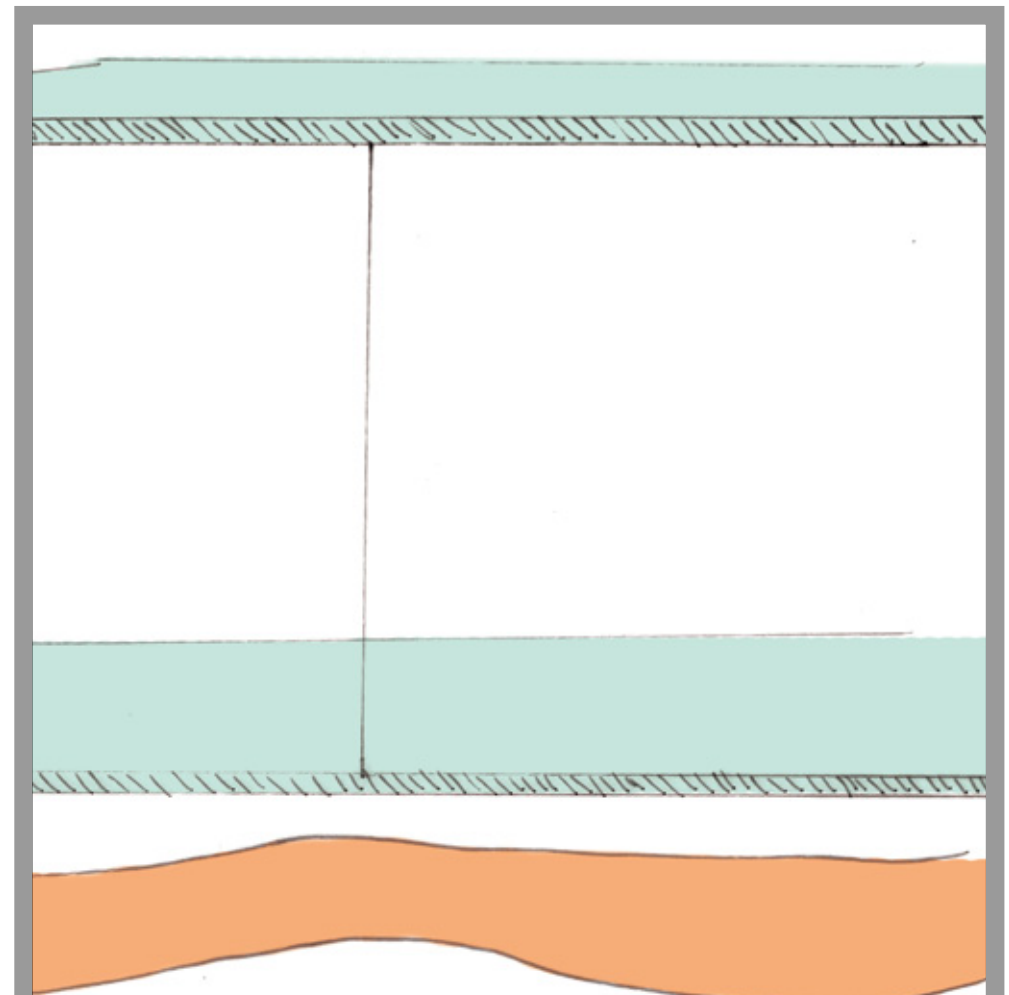
Eventually they encountered
a strange looking creature,
They asked for her name,
And gladly did greet her.



"I am from the Congo,"
She said, when they asked.

"Debt in my country
Is a very gruelling task."

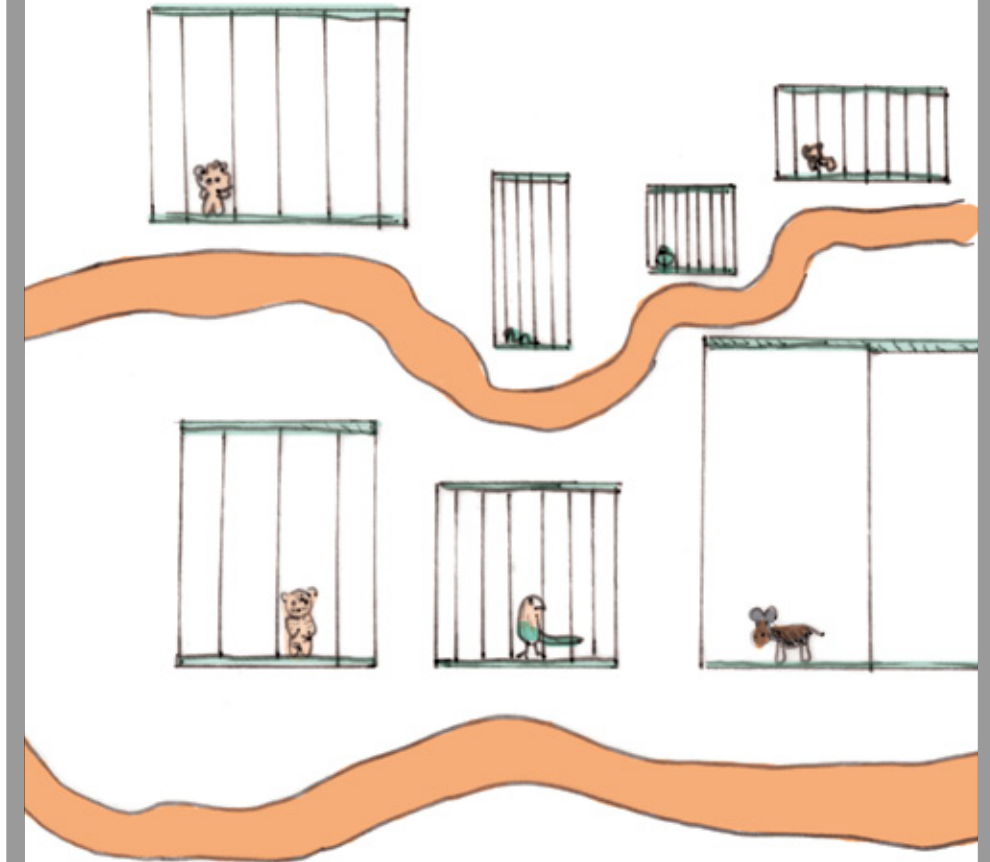
"But your bars are so few
And your debt is so small,
How could that debt
Cause any problems at all?"



"Small it is" said she
"But take into account,
How little money we make,
Then debt can mount."

"There are many of us
Who in this way suffer,
And without others' help
We are likely to keep having it tougher."

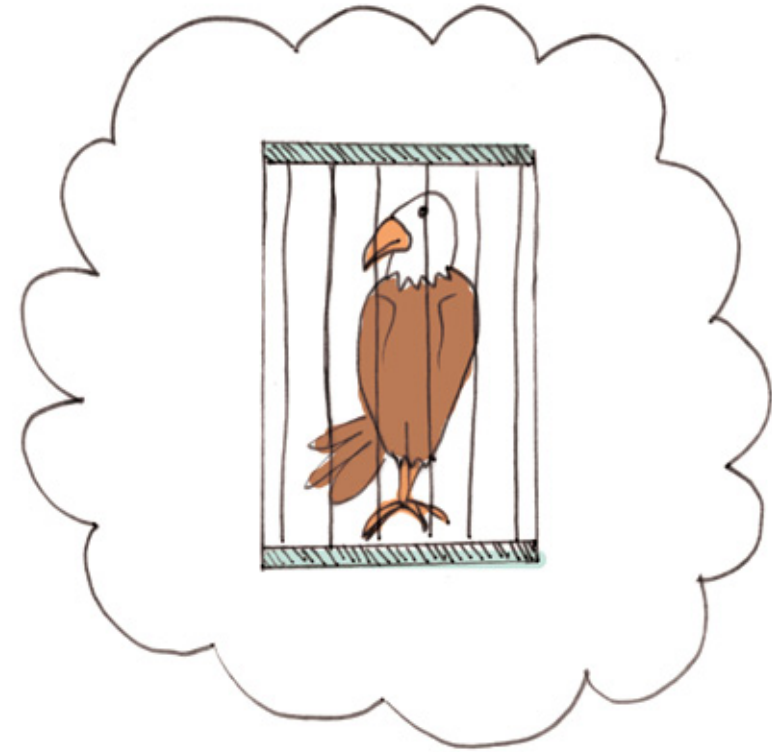
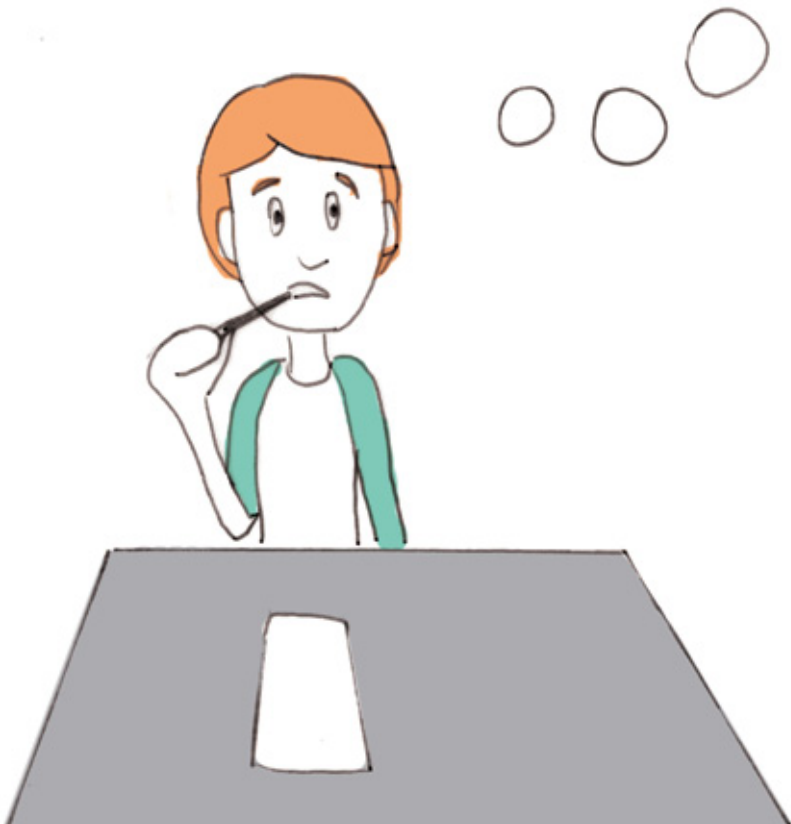
As they were leaving
They decided to see
What the whole zoo looked like
From up in a tree.



They saw those with big debt
And those who had small;
They saw the populations;
They could see it all.

Martin got home,
late that night,
And what he did then
was to sit down and write.

He sat at his desk;
he thought and he wondered,
He chewed on his pen;
he recalled and he pondered.



He remembered proud eagle,
with his tiny cage,
But realized not all the animals
were on the page.

The difference is clear
Between a lot and a little,
When it is so shown plainly,
There appears no riddle.

Martin remembered
Sitting up in that tree,
And making comparisons
Of animals he could see.

He thought back to the Congo
With her massive enclosure;
It was then that he realized
His confusion was over.

While it's easy to compare
The big with the small,
Does that really matter
When you don't know it all?

Comparisons can be made
And are plain to the eye
But not all is simple;
On this you can rely.

