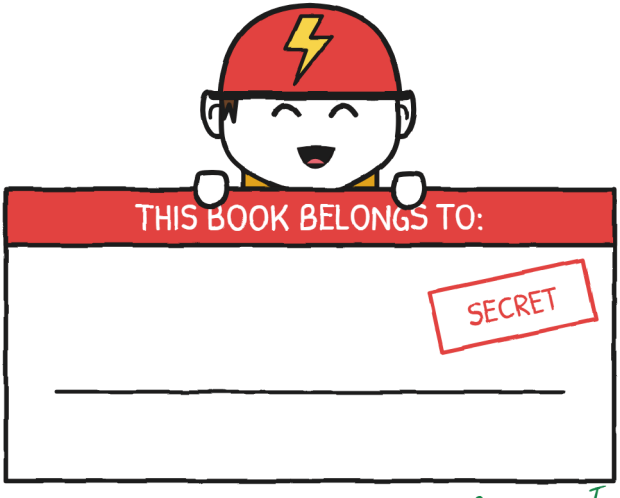



*And I read it first. —J.*

If you find it, return it. Please.

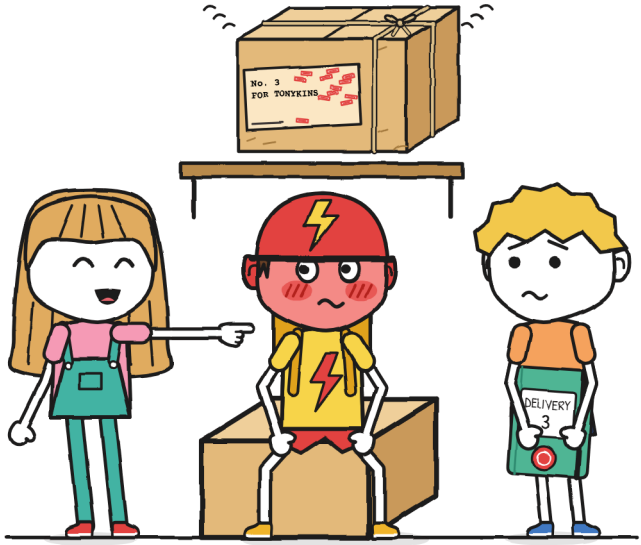



*This stamp marks what only happens in the story: real packages don't fly back. With a real bike, the last page rules. —J.*

IMPOSSIBLE DELIVERIES · 3

# Return to Sender, Please

Lui Eriksson




(Gus's notebook)

SIZE XL · Illustrated novel · 13+

IMPOSSIBLE DELIVERIES · 3

Return to Sender, Please

Third book. Earlier: “This Package Bites” and “Do Not Open Before Thunder”.

Text and illustrations: Lui Eriksson

English version: LinguAula

SIZE XL · Illustrated novel · 13+

First edition: 2026

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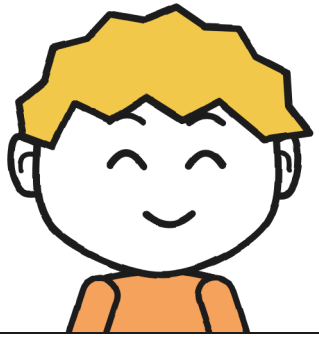
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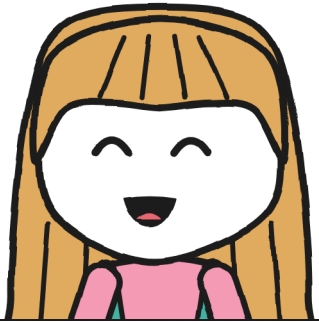
Work through every chapter at linguaula.com

*No courier was harmed here. Red-faced, yes. —J.*

# WHO'S WHO



Gus. Saturday courier. Draws things nobody asked for. This notebook is his.



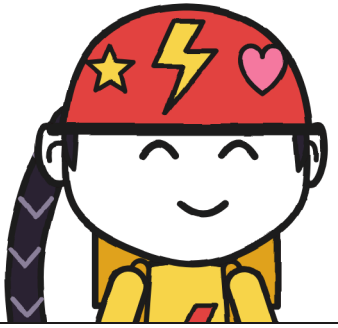
Julie. Writes in green and signs J. Always knows how to help. That's the problem.



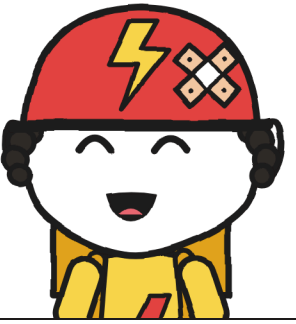
Tony. Rides for LIGHTNING. Ten minutes or it's free. Goes red in parts.



Mara. Owner of Impossible Deliveries. Wears a witch's hat. Knows more than she says.



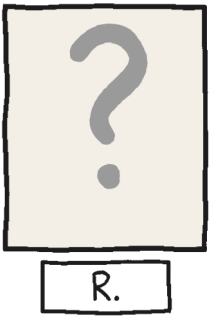
Zoe. From LIGHTNING. The fastest. Gives out nicknames.



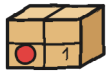
Bruno. From LIGHTNING. Got a puncture once. Two years ago.




Package No. 3. Rings when it's moved. The label only has a name on it.




R. Sends the packages nobody can deliver. Nobody says R.'s name.



CHAPTER 1

# Ting-a-ling

Ting-a-ling.

It was a very small noise, the kind you only hear once everything else has gone quiet: a teaspoon against a cup, the bell on a toy bike. It came from the returns shelf, and the four of us left in Mara's shop went so still that you could have heard a spark drop from the stamp.

The storm had gone some time ago. Julie was still standing on my blue stool, with the green marker held high and the 18 freshly written next to the crossed-out 19. Mara had one hand halfway to the shutter. I, who don't know what to do with my hands even at the best of times, did nothing with them.

It was No. 3. And Tony, who delivers for LIGHTNING in ten minutes or it's free, went the colour of his helmet.

The notebook was new. Notebook 2 ran out on me in a single storm; this one is green, has the shop's stamp in one corner, and

I was going to christen it myself, with ceremony: a title on the first page and a new word.

DELIVERY NOTEBOOK 3 · by Gus. SECRET.

*"Secret" means I read it first. And I don't tell anyone. —J.*

I wrote the title with my tongue sticking out and went to fetch a rubber, in case it had come out crooked. By the time I got back, Julie had already christened it.

"Christened it to help you," she said. "You're welcome."

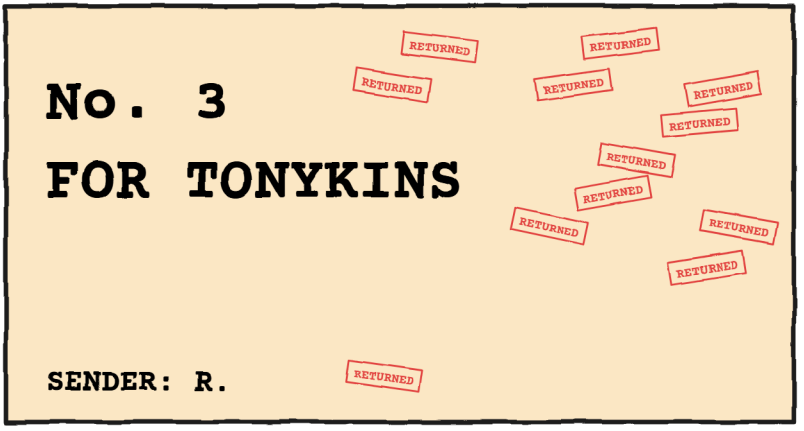
I hadn't asked for help. With Julie, that doesn't matter.

The rest is in case someone other than her ever reads this. The shop is called Impossible Deliveries and belongs to Mara, who is a witch, wears a purple hat and has a stamp that gives off sparks, smelling of a candle just blown out, whenever it comes down. On the shelf on the left she keeps the returns: packages nobody has managed to deliver. They have only one rule: if whoever receives one doesn't sign the label in ink that doesn't come off, at dawn the package flies back to its shelf, as punctual as a cat at dinner time. There were twenty, and they're all sent by the same person, R., of whom I already had six clues in the blue notebook. Julie and I have delivered two, a dragon egg and some seeds with legs that ran, and on the wall it says, in her handwriting and in green, LEFT: 18.

Julie is the one with the green notes. I'm Gus, the new kid in the neighbourhood: almost everything I own is still in boxes. And

Tony is the LIGHTNING courier, the one with the yellow backpack, who serves his punishment with us on Saturdays and who, since the storm, has a place of his own in the shop: a delivery crate upside down, next to the stools. Mara put it there without explanation. “For now,” she said. Nobody dared ask how long a “for now” lasts.

No. 3 was on the top shelf, next to the two gaps left by the egg and the seeds, with its label facing out. I went over to read it, standing, not touching.




Three typed lines: No. 3. FOR TONYKINS. And at the very bottom, SENDER: R. Between the name and the last line there was a whole field of blank paper. All around it, twelve RETURNED stamps. I counted them.

Julie jumped down off the stool and came to stand beside me. She read out loud:

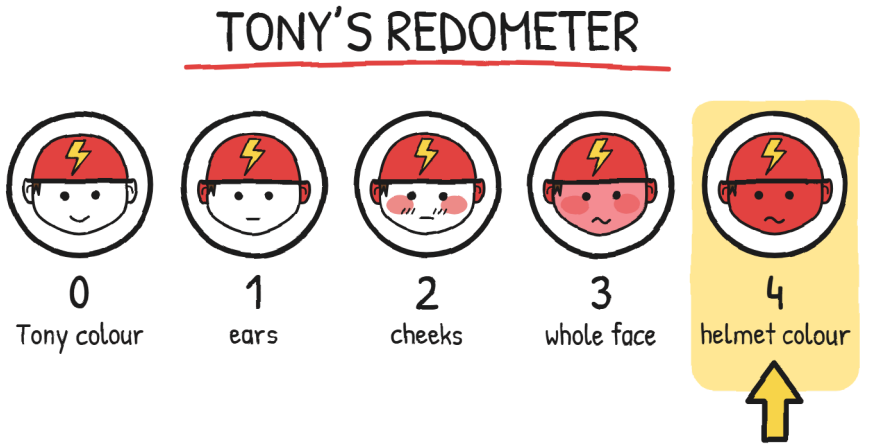
"For To..."

And she closed her mouth.

Julie never stops halfway through a word. I looked at Tony and understood why.

*I read half of it. The other half I swallowed. –J.*

Some people go red all at once. Not Tony: Tony goes red in parts. He started with his ears. Then his cheeks. Then his whole face filled up, right to the helmet strap, and there was still one last step to go, the worst one, which is when his face and his helmet stop being distinguishable. Ever since the shakeometer for No. 2, I can't look at anything that changes without putting a scale on it, so I wrote it down.




Julie reached out to the package to read the part she'd missed.

"That package can wait," said Tony, very quickly. "It's been waiting for years, hasn't it? So one more day. Or ten. LIGHTNING is in no hurry."

It was the first time I had ever heard LIGHTNING say that.

"Nothing gets opened tonight," said Mara. "And nobody touches the shelf without permission."

Julie's hand stayed in the air, a finger's width from the label. Nobody touched anything. And then it rang again.

Ting-a-ling.

"It was the door!" said Julie, in a voice I'd never heard from her: too high and too soon.

The door had been shut since Vera left.

When I don't understand something, I make a list. Ting-a-ling suspects:

1. The door. (Julie's proposal. Shut, no draught, and nobody pushing it.)
2. Tony's bike, on the pavement, with the LIGHTNING bell. (It goes BRRRING, not ting-a-ling. But it's a bell.)
3. The rubber frog. (Julie declared it innocent at once. She says she knows her.)
4. No. 3.

I put No. 3 last, out of politeness.

I went out onto the pavement to check. I took the frog with me, because you don't interrogate a suspect from a distance.

It had stopped raining. The street smelt of wet tarmac and every puddle had a streetlamp in it. I opened and closed the door: eeek. I rang Tony's bike bell: BRRRING! I squeezed the frog: squeak.

On the other side of the glass, Julie was wagging her finger at me: no. At every noise, the same, from side to side, like a car's windscreen wiper. It was none of them.

I went back in and left the frog on the counter. Tony, who saw me looking at him, wriggled in his crate.

Ting-a-ling.

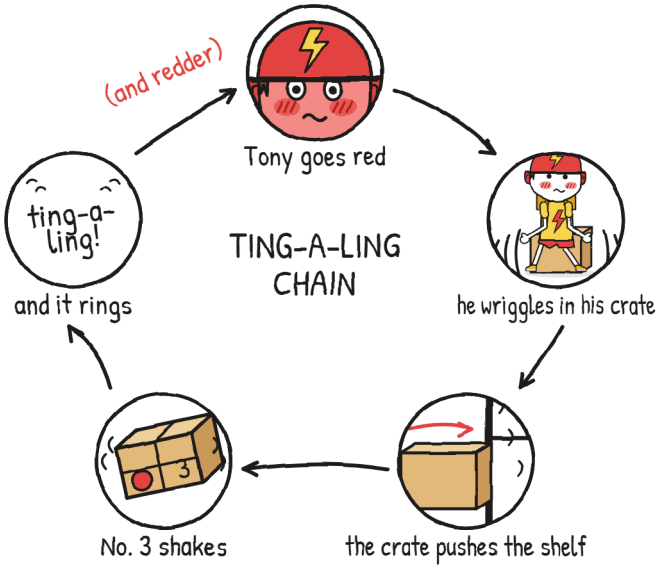
I crouched down. Tony's crate was leaning against the leg of the shelf.

I drew it right there, on my knees, and it came out as a circle, because however many times I went round it I couldn't find where it started.

It wasn't magic. It was Tony. Inside No. 3 there's something that rings when it's moved.

*Like me. –J.*

Tony followed my gaze to the leg of the shelf, looked at his crate and decided to keep still.




It lasted as long as a stretched rubber band does.

Still. Then, stiller: so still you could hear him thinking "still", with a drop of sweat running down his temple. Julie had gone a full minute without speaking, which for her is like holding her breath under water, and sooner or later you come up for air with whatever is closest to your mouth.

"Who is Tonykins?"

Tony jumped. The crate shoved the leg, the shelf trembled and No. 3 said TING-A-LING! with a force no ting-a-ling deserves. Mara looked at the ceiling, like someone counting to ten.

"It was only a question," said Julie. "Questions don't push shelves."

This one did.



"It was me," said Tony, looking down at his trainers. "When I was little."

He said it so quietly that the frog, which was on the counter closer to him than I was, heard it better.

Julie opened her mouth. I could see her questions queuing up, like at the bakery on a Sunday morning, the first one already holding out its money. Then she looked at Tony, who was still looking down at his trainers, and closed it.

"I won't ask any more," she said.

It cost her. You could tell by her foot: tap, tap, tap against the shop floor.

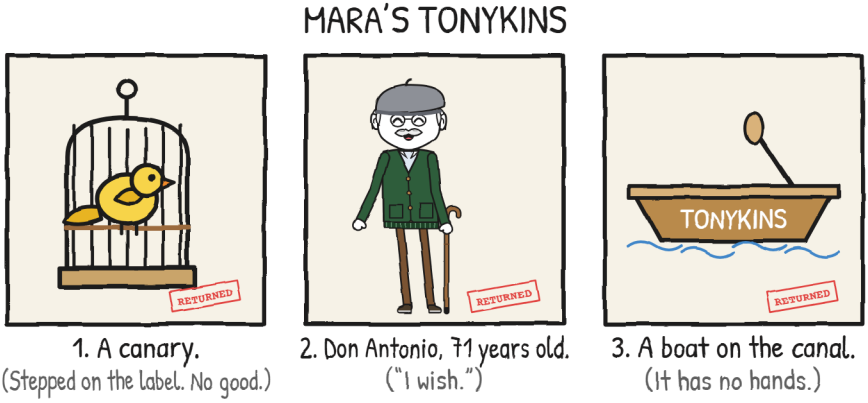
*Questions I didn't ask: nine. I've written them down. –J.*

"And why have you never taken it to him?" I asked Mara.

"Twelve times I've taken it." Nobody needed to count the stamps. "Look at the label: no street, no house number, no surname. I tried every Tonykins I could find."

She counted them off from memory, on her fingers, and I drew them as I heard them. A canary, which really was called Tonykins and which stepped on the label: no good. Don Antonio, aged 71, who put on his glasses, read the paper twice and said "I wish",

looking at it the way you look at a shop window. A boat on the canal with the name painted on its side, which didn't sign either, because it has no hands.




"What about Tony?" asked Julie.

"The last time I tried, I didn't know him yet," said Mara, and looked at him. "And nobody told me what they called him when he was little."

Mara pulled a purple cloth from under the counter and covered No. 3, the way you cover a parrot's cage so it will sleep. Then she asked Tony to stand up for a moment and moved his crate two handspans away from the shelf.

"There. Now you can move as much as you like."

Tony could have left. His bike was at the door: in ten minutes he would have been at the other end of the neighbourhood. He sat back down.

I don't know why. I'm writing it down anyway.

And since his crate has no backrest, I drew him one: tall, slightly curved, with a small cushion, in pencil and dotted line, and underneath, in small letters: "backrest (my idea)".

*Nobody asked you for a backrest. –J.*



At closing time, Tony stayed behind, doing up his helmet with a slowness that at LIGHTNING would count as a serious offence. Mara was switching the lights off one by one; the purple cloth was still over the package, on the top shelf.

"Mara. Tomorrow I'll come and talk about that. But in private."

"These two belong to the shop," said Mara, without turning round.

Tony looked at us. At Julie first; then at me. I sat up straight on my stool.

"These two, fine," he said. "But nobody from LIGHTNING."

He went out and moved off among the puddles, wheeling his bike.

The ting-a-ling had an owner now. What we didn't know was whether the owner wanted it.

*I already know how to help him. –J.*

That’s what worries me.

# ONE STORY, SIX SIZES

This book comes in six sizes, for ages 3 to 16, and in more than 20 languages. XXS, XS, S, M and L tell the story page by page, with the same drawings and more and more nuance. XL is the novel: the same story, with room for everything Gus thinks and doesn't say.

CEFR levels as a rough guide: XXS, pre-A1 · XS, A1 · S, A2 · M, B1 · L, B2 · XL, B2–C1.

*One size each. Same ting-a-ling. —J.*

FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

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