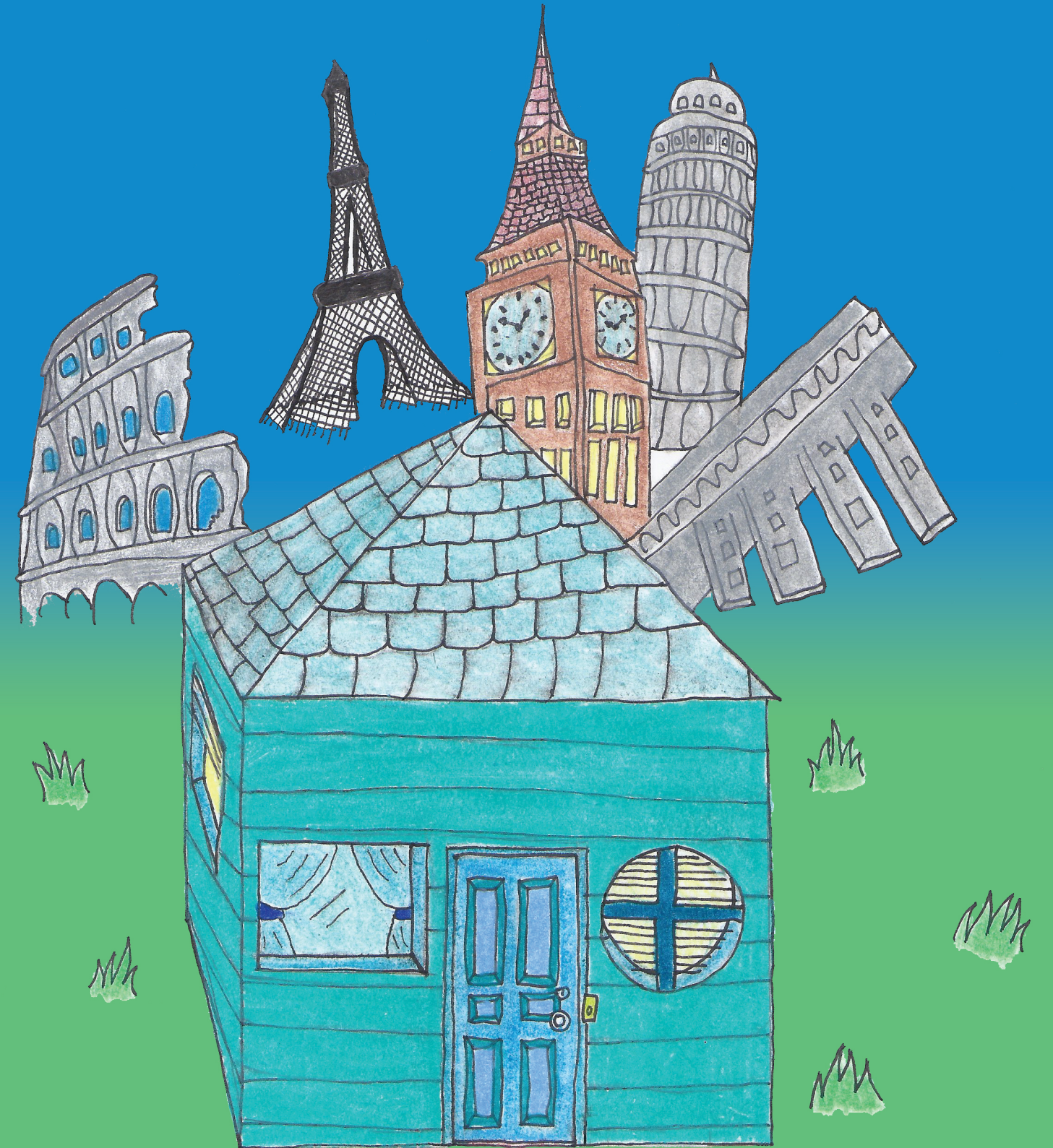


# Outside of My Blue House



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In a country called America, in a state called Utah, in a town called Roy, and in a nice blue house, there was a girl named Emily. Emily was someone who often dreamt about seeing the world outside of her blue house. So, one fine day, she decided to do just that. Flag in hand, she left her blue house. She left Roy, she left Utah, and eventually, she also left America.





She decided to go north first. North of America sits Canada, which is famous for hockey, maple syrup, and moose. In fact, upon venturing about the white tundra, she met a very polite moose. His name was Maple, and he was very kind. In fact, he was worried about how far Emily had walked. Canada is not very close to Emily's state! "How about you ride on my back, eh?" he insisted.

“Well, it would be nice if I could,” Emily pondered, not wanting to be rude to such a nice moose. “If you insist, why not!” And with that, the girl climbed on top of Maple’s back. Maple and Emily then set out on their journey to the next country which sat upon the European continent just east of Canada.







After a long walk, they found themselves in the beautiful and entrancing country of France. France was full of elegance, and it was also home of the world-famous landmark, the Eiffel Tower. She looked around the town, then caught a glimpse of her reflection in a cheese shop window. She found a beret sitting on her head. A beret is a French hat.

“Well, that’s sort of funny!” Emily chuckled, straightening her beret with the decision that she liked the way it complemented her eyes. “France is a very pretty country, isn’t it?” Indeed, the home of croissants and romantic culture was a magnificent place to be. Even so, both Emily and her newfound friend didn’t want to miss out on the other countries. So, with a cheerful “Au revoir, France!” the duo left France.





Making their way northeast on the very same continent, Emily and Maple found themselves sitting in Germany. Emily instantly took note of the beautiful scenery and castles scattered around the land. It was amazing, and nothing like Emily had ever seen before! A man was walking up and down the streets shouting out something about German overalls that are referred to as lederhosen. With a big smile, he handed Emily a pair.

“Oh!” Emily exclaimed, taking note of the sudden gesture. “Thank you, sir!” She waved at the German citizen, who waved back cheerfully. The whole country was extremely beautiful to her, and she really didn’t want to leave. She probably wouldn’t have, had she not thought of all the other places she could go.

“We’d better get going,” Maple reminded Emily.

“You’re right!” Emily declared. And with that, they left the beautiful greenery of Germany. Hopefully someday, she could return and stay a bit longer. “Auf widersehen!”







Just down south a bit further was the boot-shaped country of Italy, where everything practically screamed culture and art. It was full of cheerful Italians, who all laughed merrily. The smells of delectable Italian dishes, such as cannoli and pasta, drifted from the restaurants. Looking down the streets, Emily saw a boot made of Italian leather, which she purchased. It reminded her of the shape of the country.

Conveniently, the boot fit her foot perfectly. “We should go on,” Maple exclaimed, taking note of the setting sun. “The day is almost over, after all!” Emily nodded assertively in response whilst saying “Arrevederci” to Italy as they exited the Big Boot.





Still finishing up the countries on the continent of Europe, Emily and Maple found themselves northwest in England. The Big Ben landmark towered above them, clock hands reminding Emily of how little time she had left before she should get back home. "This is interesting," Maple stated. He then gasped slightly. "Look! A monocle, just like they wore in the earlier centuries of England! Here, Emily!"

Emily set the monocle on her nose, then proceeded to put it behind her glasses, so that her cheeks could help keep it on her face. “Stylish,” Emily approved. “Oh no!” She saw how the clock was inching closer to the time her mother expected her back home for dinner. “We’d better go! We still have one country left to see!” Maple quickly rushed off to the next country, just as aware as Emily of how little time they had.

Cheerio, England!







The Great Wall of China sure is huge! Emily noted as she entered Asia. She could see many things, including an unusual community of pandas. As she walked through, she felt a warm and cuddly animal clinging to her back. She soon discovered an adorable baby panda, who was totally cute!

“You are so cute!” Emily shouted with glee. “What’s your name?” She was, at first, expecting the animal to reply. Maple had replied to her, after all. However, the lazy bear didn’t answer her at all. Emily decided that pandas cannot speak English, of course. If he didn’t know his name, maybe she could find one for him. One that is native to the country he came from. Emily settled on calling him Yu. “That is your name, okay?” Yu didn’t reply, but he still seemed to like it.





“All right, Emily. Say Zaijian to China,” Maple sighed sadly. “Alas, our journey has come to an end, eh?” Maple was quite sad to have to leave his new friend. He really liked traveling with her, and wasn’t too keen on returning to Canada.

Yu seemed to feel the same way. He snuggled into his newfound friend's neck, not wanting to part with either of the companions he had met that day. "Right," Emily sighed, waving her little American flag she had been so careful to keep intact. "This was fun." She looked down sadly. "I hope we can travel together again someday. There are a lot more countries to see." A voice interrupted Emily and her friends quite abruptly. "Em, time for dinner!"



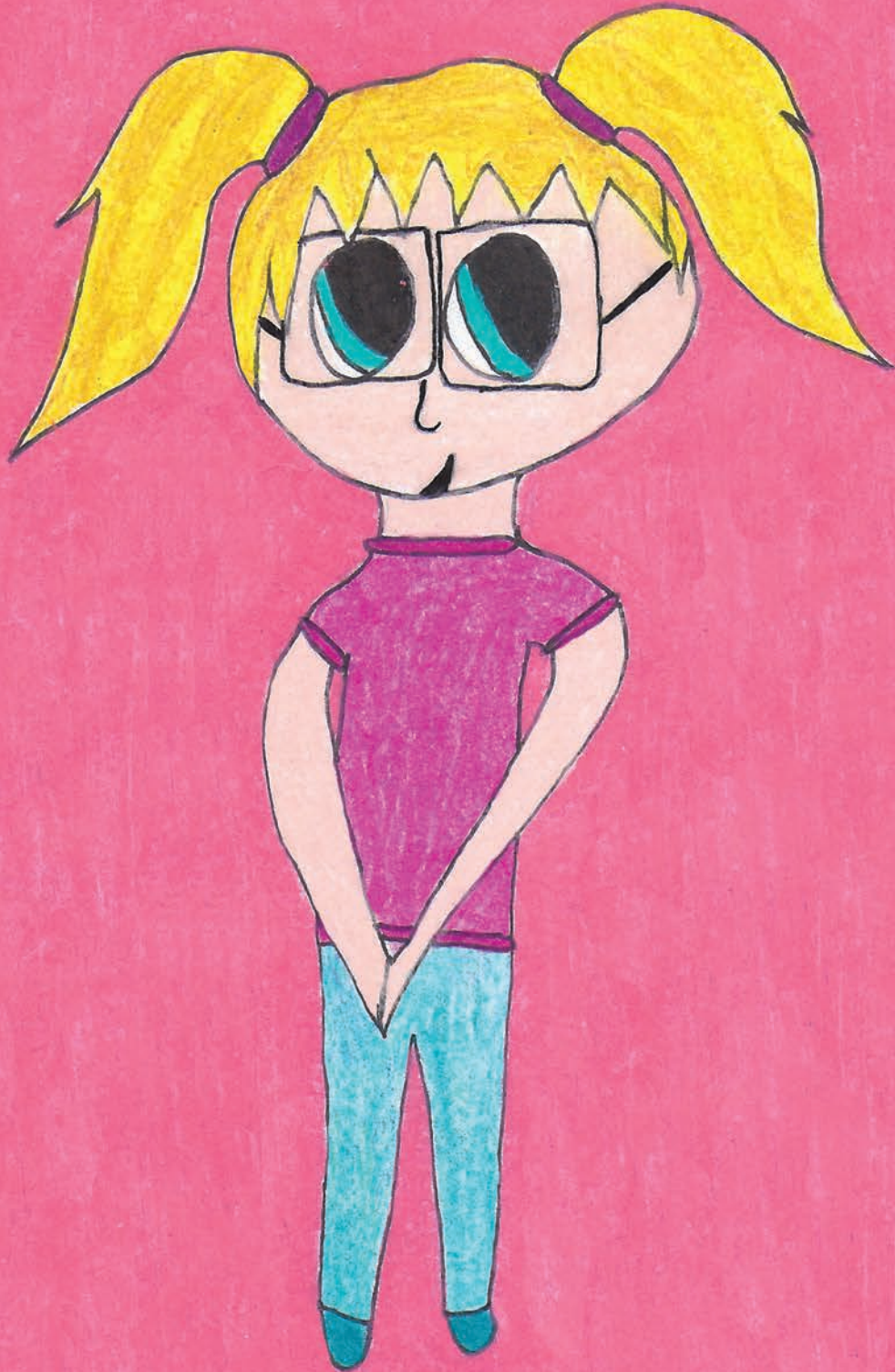




Wearing a most unusual attire, Emily looked up from where she sat on the floor. Standing up from her spot, she made her way downstairs where her anxiously waiting mother stood.

“Well, you most definitely look festive tonight, Em!” Emily’s mother chuckled. “Where have you been all day? I hardly saw you at all!”





“Oh, places,” Emily said mysteriously. “I was just outside of my blue house.”