

Don't Flatten My Curls!



The girl had one rule. Curly hair is **always better** than straight.

She hung **upside down**, and every curl bounced like a little spring. She stretched one out, let it go, and it sprang right back. 'Straight hair **cannot** do that,' she said.





Her **sister** lay on the ground, smiling. Her straight hair spread out all around her, like a **golden carpet** of silk. You could never **mistake** the two **sisters**. One had bounce and spring. The other had a smooth, **golden flow**.

The girl and her cat met some critters with curly tails. A monkey hung upside down, waving hello with its tail curled tight. A small critter sat nearby with a perfect twisted tail. 'I wonder if a rabbit has a curly tail too,' the girl said, giving her cat a scratch behind the ears.



A horse, a cow, and a lion stood in a row. Each had a straight tail. The cow swished a thin one with a fuzzy tip. 'Hello, mister lion,' the girl said with a grin. His tail was straight with a golden tuft at the end.



The girl followed a winding staircase that curled up to the next floor. She gripped the railing and climbed step after step. She saw herself in a golden costume, climbing these very steps. 'This feels like magic,' she whispered.





The girl sat cross-legged on the ground and rested her chin on her hands.

What else in the world was curly or straight?

Her cat curled up beside her like a fuzzy blanket, its tail making a perfect spiral. 'I wonder,' the girl said, 'what other patterns are hiding all around us.'

A picture on the wall showed why curly is better. The girl stood at the mountain summit with her biggest grin, and a curly path twisted up behind her. 'A straight path would send me off the cliff,' she said. 'The curly path saved me!'

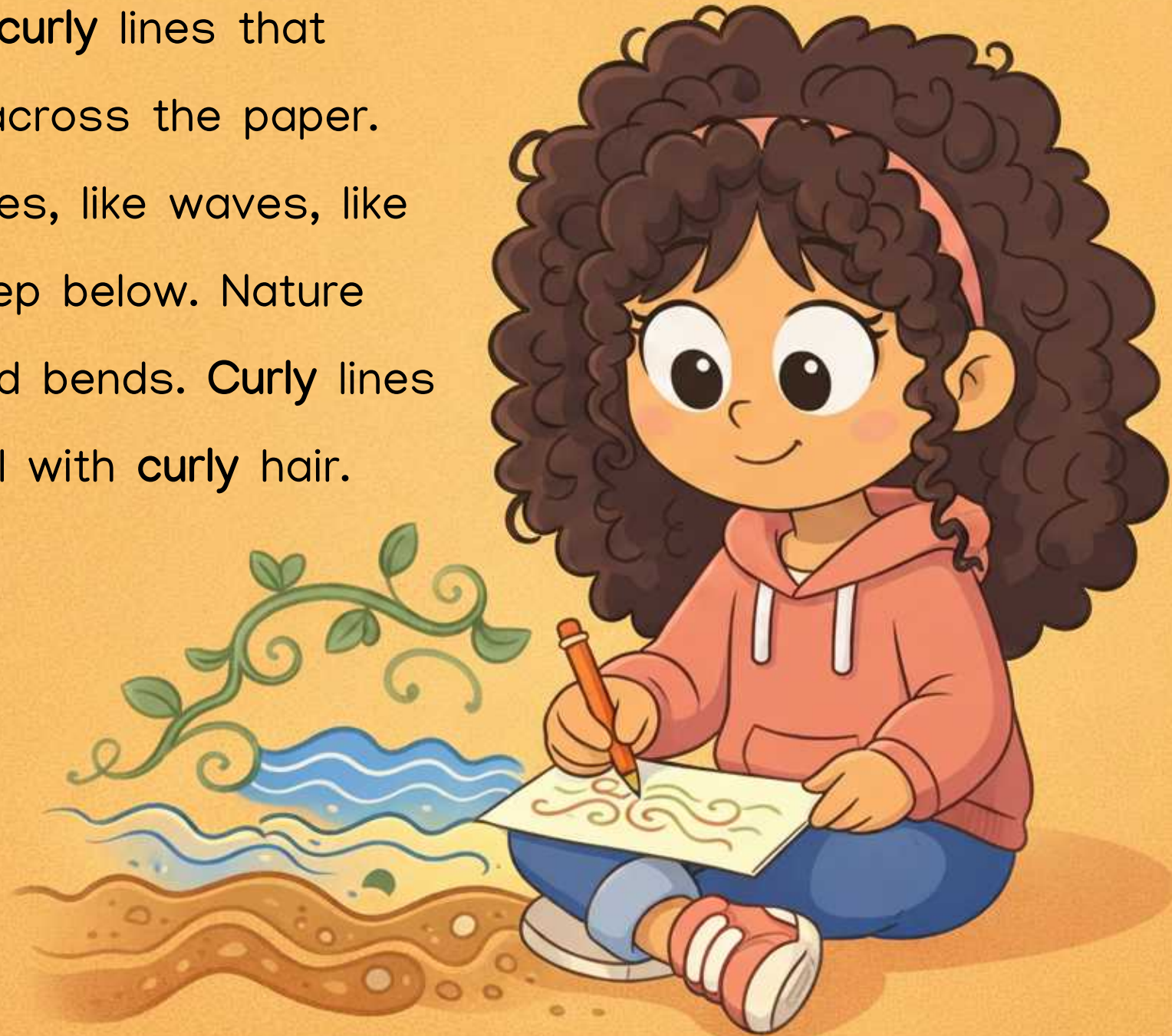




The girl picked up a **pencil** and tried to draw straight lines. Boxes and baskets needed them. But her first tries came out **twisted** and tangled.

'No **mistake** is too big to fix,' she **whispered** to herself. She practiced until each line formed a **perfect** pattern.

Next, the girl drew curly lines that looped and curled across the paper. They looked like vines, like waves, like a rabbit burrow deep below. Nature was full of curls and bends. Curly lines came easy to a girl with curly hair.





The girl found two giant spiral buns, each twisted in a perfect golden coil. They were so big she could wear one as a costume hat! Her cat looked out from behind one, ears pointed and eyes gleaming. 'You little bandit!' the girl said with a grin.

Three curly buns sat on the counter, each one a perfect spiral. The girl bent forward to study them. She did not want to make a mistake.

Picking the best curl was the hardest challenge of her day.





She opened the cupboard and grinned. Curly snacks and straight ones filled every jar and **basket!** 'I should call my friends for a **picnic,**' the girl said. They could spread a **blanket** in the **garden** and share every last treat.



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Mara has one big rule: curly is ALWAYS better than straight! But what happens when she meets a lion with a perfectly straight tail, climbs a spiral staircase fit for a princess, and spots a golden carpet of silky hair belonging to her very own sister? Can curly really beat straight every single time, or might Mara discover a few surprises along the way? This decodable reader practices VC/CV syllables through words like 'basket,' 'carpet,' 'rabbit,' and 'picnic.'

Reading Skills: VC/CV division

always, bandit, basket, better, biggest, blanket, bottom, burrow, cannot, carpet, challenge, costume, crackers, critters, curly, curvy, followed, forward, fuzzy, garden, golden, hardest, hello, herself, mistake, mister, monkey, mountain, pattern, patterns, pencil, perfect, picking, picnic, picture, pictured, practiced, pretzels, princess, rabbit, rested, shimmer, sister, sisters, staircase, summit, tassel, twisted, until, upside, whispered, wonder

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