

Papon



From the Smaldone Brothers

“What can you do
to promote world peace?
Go home and love your family.”
— St. Mother Teresa

Papon

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Illustrated by Philip J. Smaldone

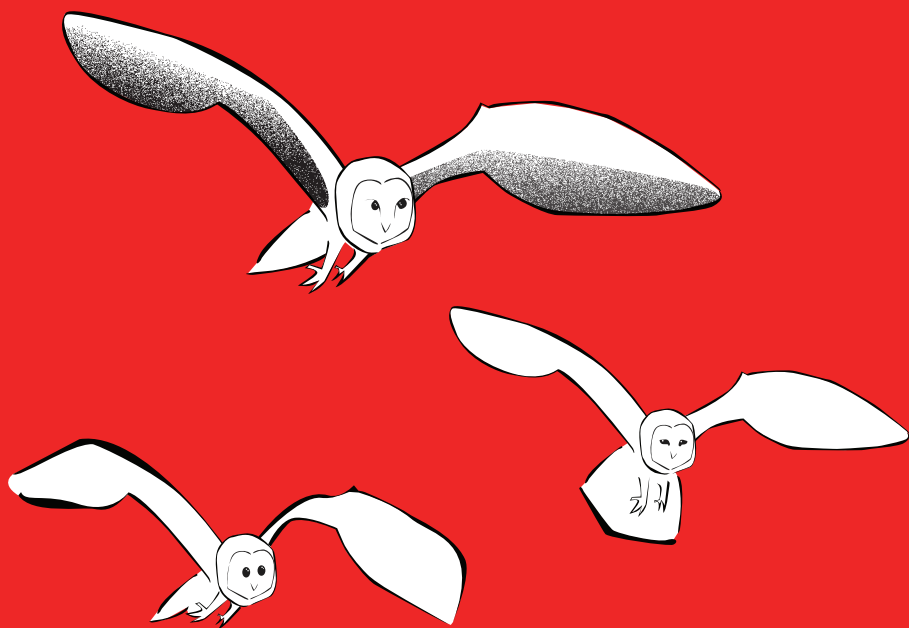


It is an autumn day in France
where, among the falling leaves
and fresh air, there is a farm.
On the farm there is a barn.



The barn is home to many animals: horses, dogs, and the occasional goat who eats through the door. But the barn's most notable residents are the owls, the youngest of which is Papon.

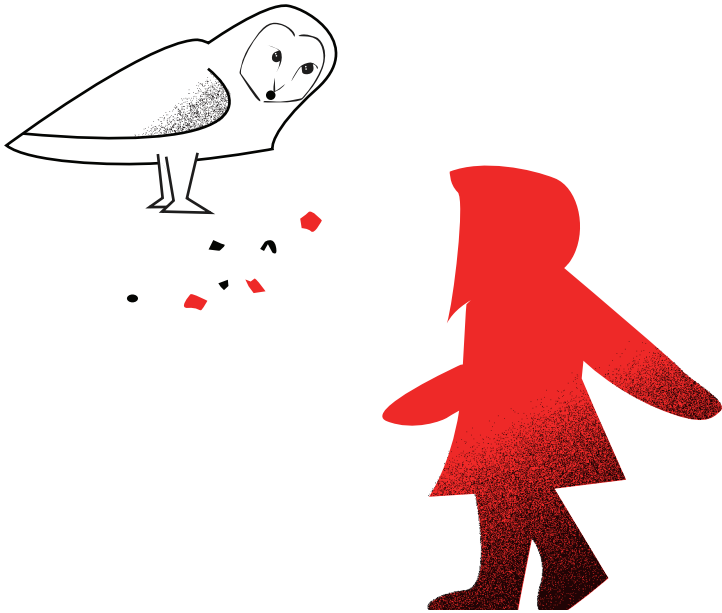
Papon likes to fly with
his brothers and sisters.





Papon likes to play hide and seek with Noa the dog, Camille the goat, and Axel the bull.

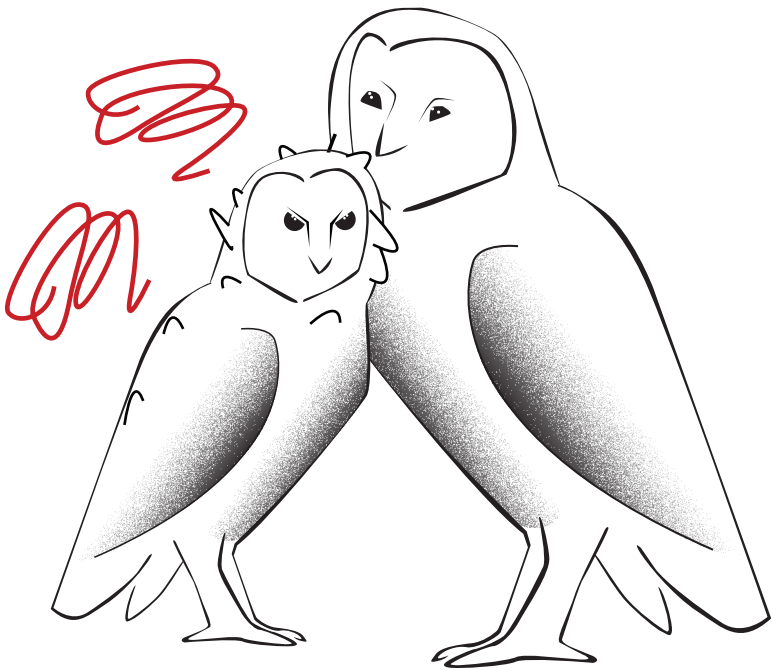
Papon likes to eat the buttered crumbs tossed to him by Suzette, the little girl who lives in the barn house, after she bakes madeleines.



But there's one thing that Papon doesn't like, in fact he can't stand it. It's when other people try to help him.

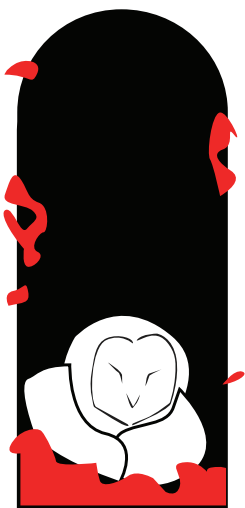


He doesn't like it when his parents
preen his feathers.

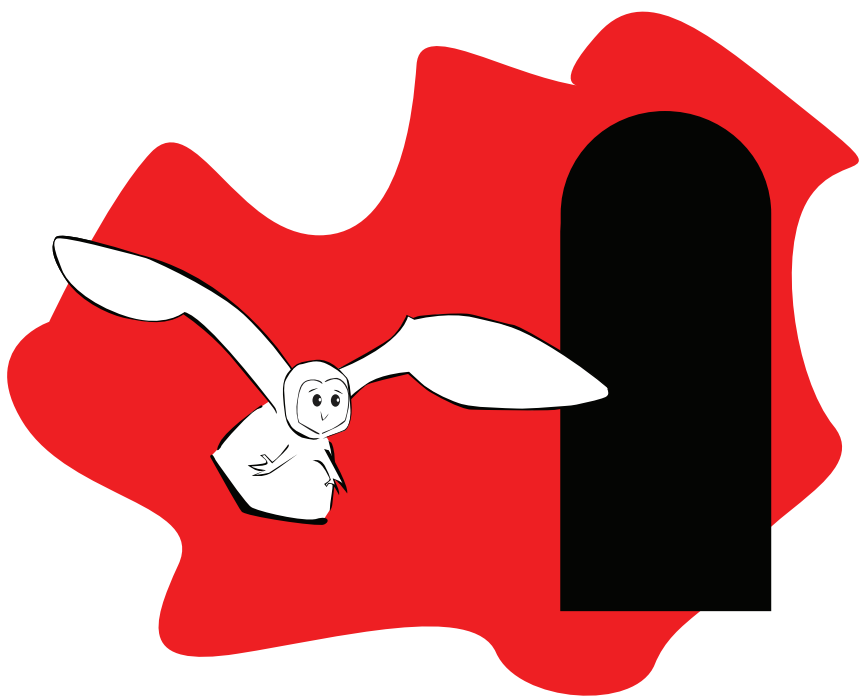




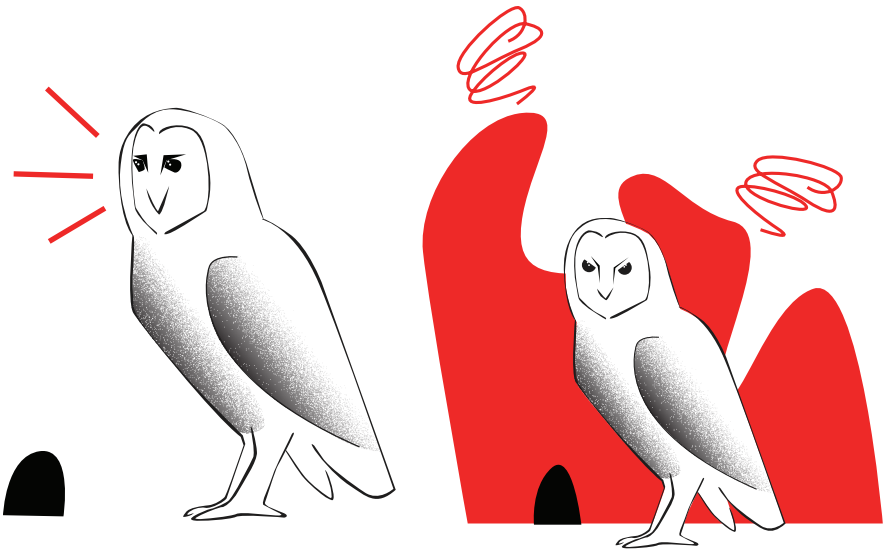
He doesn't like it when old Tortue
the tortoise helps him find berries.



He doesn't like it
when Farmer Jean
Paul fixes up his
special roost.



One day, when Papa Owl was teaching him how to spot a mouse hole, Papon had enough.



“I can’t stand it anymore! I’m going away where no one can find me,” Papon said.



“Then no one will treat me like a little baby anymore!”



“No! Stop Papon!” cried his mother and father as he started to fly away. His father flew after him. But it was too late. Papon had already flown off, straight into an oncoming storm.

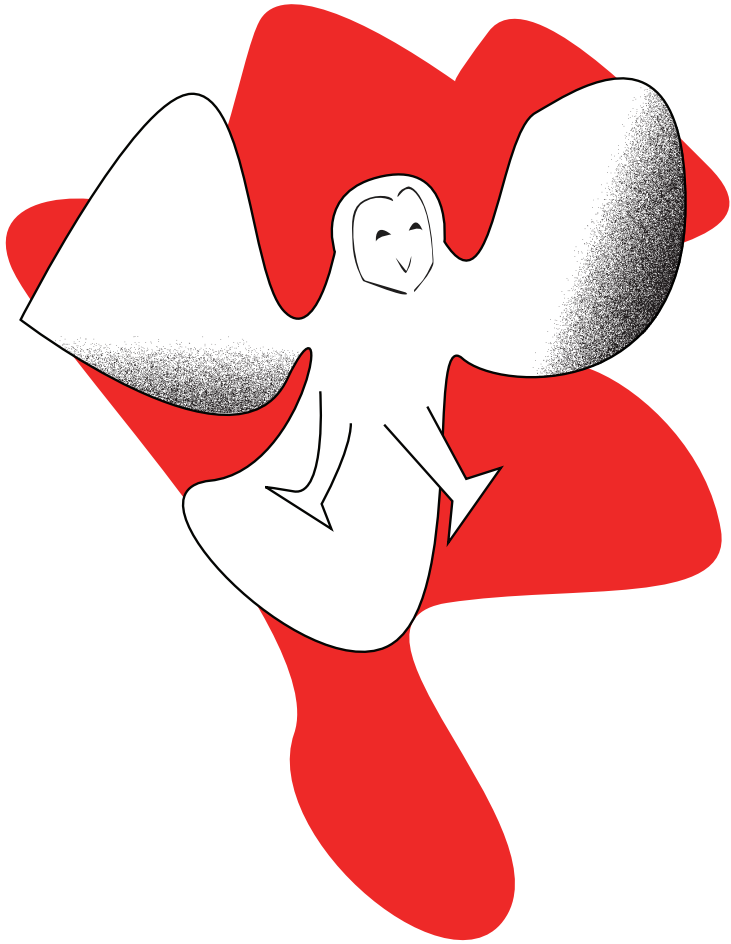


In the thunder and lightning of the storm, Papon and his father were separated. His father was flung back to the farm and Papon was thrown somewhere else.





The next morning, Papon awoke in this somewhere else, far from home and all the helping hands that lived there.



“I’m free!” Papon shouted. “Finally, no one will treat me like a baby! I can do whatever I want!”

Papon dressed himself how he
wanted all on his own.



Papon found berries all on his own.

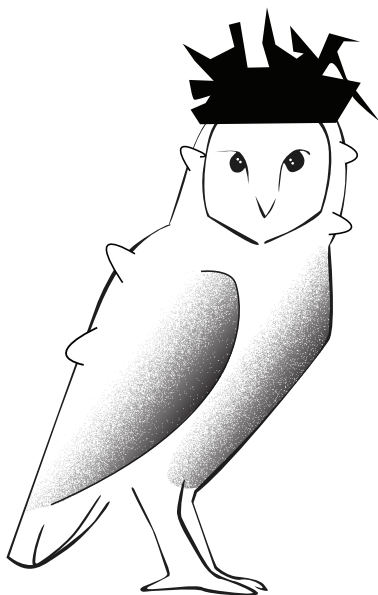


Papon even made his roost exactly
how he liked with no help at all!

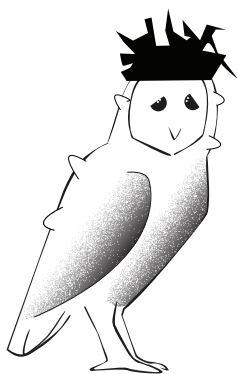




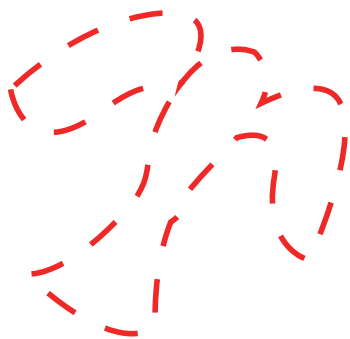
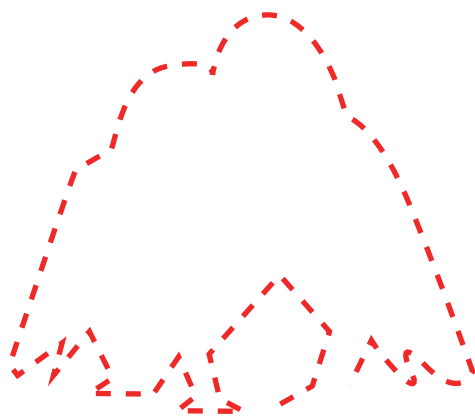
“This is great! I can’t wait to show all my friends and family!” Papon said, but then realized there was no one around.



Sure there was no one around
to make him feel like a baby,
but there was also no one around
to make him feel loved.

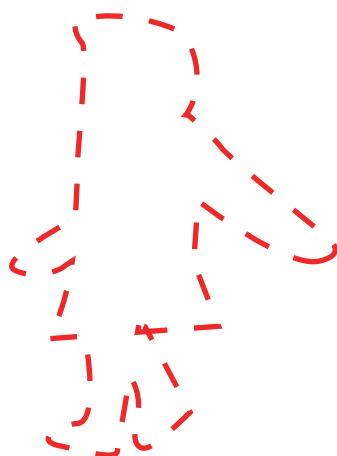


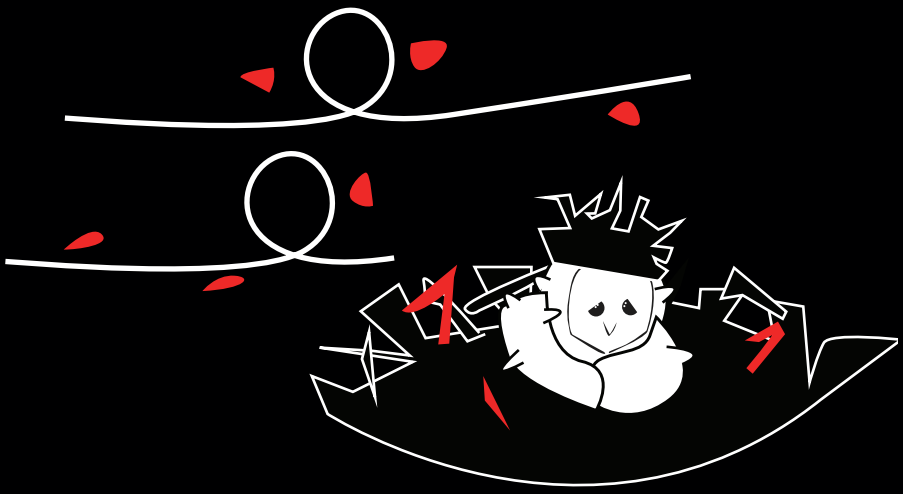
No family



No friends

No Suzette
to throw
crumbs of
madeleines





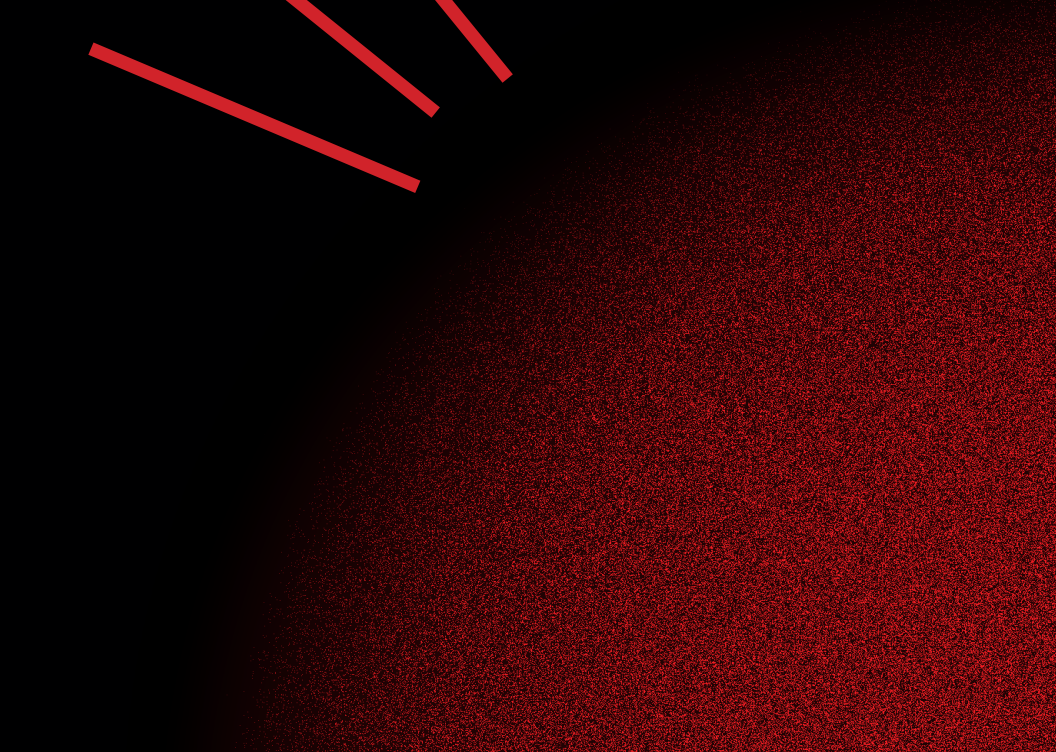
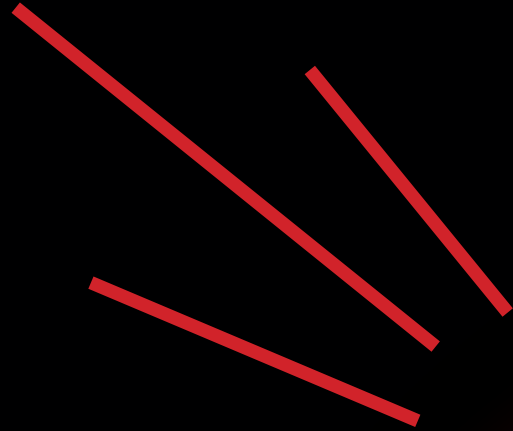
That night, Papon felt cold for the first time in his life because his brothers and sisters weren't around to help him keep warm.

He tried to pull down some leaves as a blanket, but they were too big and he was too small.

“Papa would be able to help if he were here,” Papon said with tears in his eyes.



But then Papon heard something.
Something unfamiliar and dangerous.









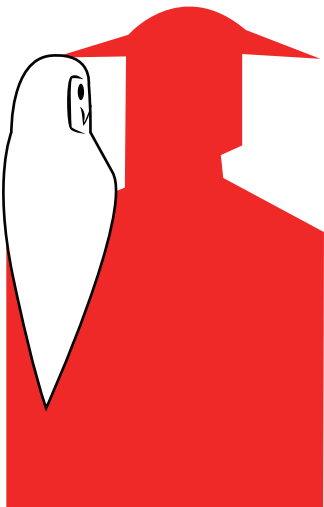
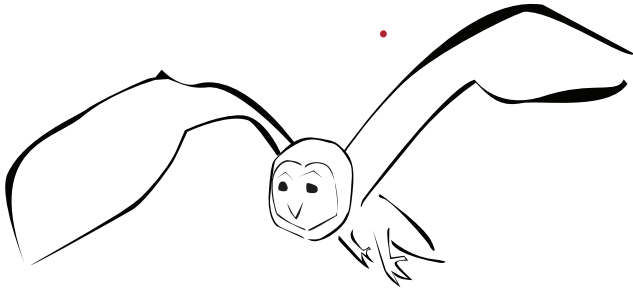
After such a frightful night, Papon found himself hiding in a stump. But along came a very nice man with a flag on his shoulder. “Come little owl,” the man said. “Let me help you.”





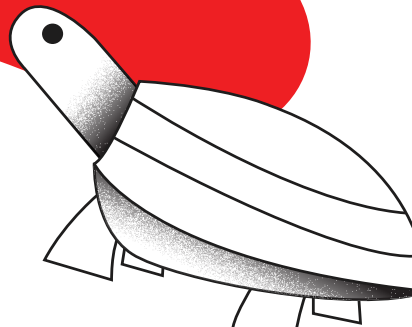
Papon followed the man back through the woods, back over hills, and back to his barn!

As soon as Papon arrived his family and all his friends surrounded him. “Thank goodness you’re back!” they all shouted happily.



“I learned my lesson,” Papon said. “I can do a lot of things on my own, but there are still some things I can’t do yet.”

“So I’m going to stay here with you all, where I’m safe, warm, and happy.” And he did, living happily with his family and friends.



The End

Dedicated to
Gerardo & Mara Smaldone
Antonio & Elena Palmeri

