

Hug / David Grossman

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-“You are sweet” Ben’s mom said when they walked in the field at sunset, “you are so cute, there is no one like you in the entire world!”

-“Isn’t there really anybody like me?” asked Ben.

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-“Of course not” said mom “you are one and only”.

They continued to walk slowly.

Above their heads flew a big flight of storks that were wandering to other countries.

-“But why?” asked Ben and stopped walking: “Why isn’t there anybody like me in the whole world?”

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-“Because every person is one and only” laughed mom and sat on the ground. “Come on, sit next to me” she said, and whistled to their dog to sit with them.

-“I don’t want to be the only person like me in the world!” said Ben.

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-“Why not? It’s wonderful that you are so unique and special!” said mom.

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- “But in case I am alone/lonely” said Ben, “I want there to be someone like me!”

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-“You are not alone/lonely” said mom, “I am with you and dad is with you”,

“Come, sit next to me” she said “Put your tushy on the ground”.

Ben didn’t sit. His eyes suddenly grew big and became deep.

-“So isn’t there anybody like you in the whole world?”

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-“No, there isn’t” said mom.

-“Are you also alone/lonely?”

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-“Absolutely not, I have you and I have daddy...”

-“But you don’t have anybody exactly - exactly like you?”

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-“No, there isn’t”.

-“So you are alone/lonely” said Ben,

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“Aren’t you feeling lonely to be alone”?

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Mother smiled and drew circles on the ground with her finger: “I am a little alone and a little with everybody.....

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I feel good to be a little like that and a little like this”.

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The sun started to fall and the sky turned almost red.

-“I feel alone/lonely” said Ben quietly.

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-“But sweetheart” said mom “I am with you”.

-“But you are not me!”

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They sat quietly and the air was filled with the good smell of the ground and grass

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And the humming of small flies and insects that danced and flew all over.

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Ben caressed the dog that lied down next to him: "Miracle] also?"

- "What Miracle also?" asked mom.

- "Is there also only one like her in the world?"

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- "Yes" said mom and she also caressed Miracle's soft fur. "There is only one Miracle like that in the world".

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A line of ants was walking on the ground, near Ben's and mom's feet. A long caravan of ants. There were perhaps about a thousand ants there. They were so similar to each other, really a thousand twin ants, but when Ben looked closely at them he saw that there was one ant that moved quickly, another was walking slowly, there was one that tried hard to carry a huge leaf,

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and another that was carrying only a grain. And there was one, tiny ant that ran back and forth on the side of the caravan. He thought she might have lost her parents and was looking for them. He asked: "This ant, here, does she know there is only one like her in the world?"

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And mother said: "I can't know that". Ben thought a little and then asked: "Because you are not her?"

- "Because I am not her" said mom.

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At last the tiny aunt went back to the caravan and walked with all the other aunts. Ben thought that perhaps the two big aunts walking next to her are her parents and he asked: "So there is only one of each in the world"?

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-“There is only one of each” said mom.

-“So everybody is alone/lonely?”

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-“All are alone/lonely but they are also together. They are both by themselves and by together”.

-“How could it be both?”

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-“Here, look at you – you are one and only and unique” said mom “and I am also one and only and unique, but if I’ll hug you now you will not be alone and I will not be alone”.

-“So yes, please, hug me” said Ben and clanged to mom.

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Mother hugged him. She felt his heart biting strongly. Ben also felt mother’s heart. He hugged her with all his strength.

-“Now I am not alone/lonely” he thought to himself within the hug, “Now I am not alone/lonely”.

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-“You see” mom whispered to him “this is exactly why they invented the hug”.

