



## The Storm Cloud

**Frances Stickley**

**Emily Hamilton, Illustrator**

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A red-bespectacled bear whose mood matches his somber-blue fur tries to shake off the haze above him in this heartening picture book about seeking happier days. Bear refuses an invitation from his forest friends, fearing he'll be a burden; they see that he's in need, though, and reach out in new ways, believing that sometimes, "just knowing that you're not alone is enough." Slowly, with their help, Bear's cloud dissipates. The watercolor and ink illustrations, awash in bright primary colors with splashes of neon, give form to both the spring atmosphere and Bear's cloudy feelings; the book's last spread is a glowing delight.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (May / June 2026)

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