Foreword

In 2013, shortly after creating my first illustrated book, *How Heather Got Her HAT'ness Back*, I went through a season of intense self-doubt and - almost as a sort of encouraging message to myself, I scribbled out the opening lines of the rhyme you're about to read.

Those first few lines grew into another illustrated rhyme, which eventually ended with the stanza: *"I'm learning the Art of Not Giving a Fuck!"*.

"Ooh"... I thought to myself. "That's an interesting and rather original title for a book!"

(You can see where this is heading, can't you?)

Just as I was adding the final pages to my new rhyme, a book with (almost) the same title stormed the shelves and became an international bestseller. And I immediately knew... that if I ever dared to use those words in *my* rhyme, everyone would assume I'd pinched the idea.

So, true to form, and plagued by the usual *what-will-people-say-and-what-will-people-think?* rumblings and ruminations swirling through my head, I did what any overthinking, conflict-averse, approval-seeking creative would do: I packed the whole thing away and never showed it to anyone

The irony, of course, is exquisite.
In my desperate quest *not* to give a fuck about what people might think, I wrote and illustrated an entire book about mastering the art of not giving a fuck... and then, flustered by the idea that I might be labelled a copycat or accused of hitching a ride on someone else's success, I buried the book and proved—beyond all reasonable doubt—that not only *do* I give a fuck, I probably give *far more* fucks than most sane humans ever would.

I still love this book, though. It's fun... and I'm particularly proud of my troll illustration.

I'm currently figuring out how to rework the ending so it keeps the same message but feels different enough from that other famous book... y'know, *just in case* anyone thinks I'm a plagiarist.

Clearly I haven't learned the lesson my own book espouses.
Maybe I never will.

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AI was not consulted.

Haters will hate
and Whingers will whine.

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Sheeple will bleat
and complain all the time.

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Trolls will torment you
('cause that's what trolls do)...

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...and Knowers will tell you
that THEIR truth is true.

Judges will judge you
and Shamers will shame.

THE RIGHT WAY TO: * BE... * BELIEVE * BEHAVE NB: ALL THE OTHER WAYS ARE WRONG!!

THE RULE BOOK

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The Mockers
will mock...

...and the
Blamers
will blame.

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Gossipers gloat
when you make a mistake...

...and Scoffers will scoff
at the choices you make.

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It is what it is
(yes, it's horrid, I Know)
There's bullies out there
(though I wish it weren't so)

And though I just WISH
we could all get along...
...there are folK who believe
that we're doing Life

WRONG!!!

And they've made it their mission
to pontificate...
...'cause they feel it's their duty
to set OTHERS straight.

So... what should one DO
and how should one BE...
...when folk disapprove
...when folk disagree
...when folk wag their fingers
and get in your face
and tell you...

SUBMIT and get BACK in your PLACE!!

WRAPPED IN COTTON WOOL
UPPER CLASS
LEADER
GIFTED
PEDIGREED
BLUE COLLAR
NOBODY
MIDDLE CLASS
RELIGIOUS
LOSER
OUTSIDER
LIBERAL
CONSERVATIVE
NAUGHTY
SEEN NOT HEARD
RIFF RAFF
YOUR PLACE
ADDICT
STUPID
DANGEROUS

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Should you snap
to attention
and do as you're told?

Should you squeeze
yourself in to an
ill-fitting mould?

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Or do you feel cornered,
compelled to comply:

When they say you must jump,
do you ask them "How high?"

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Does your fear of a fight
Keep you dosed on their bile...?

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Must you dance to their tune
with a painted-on smile?

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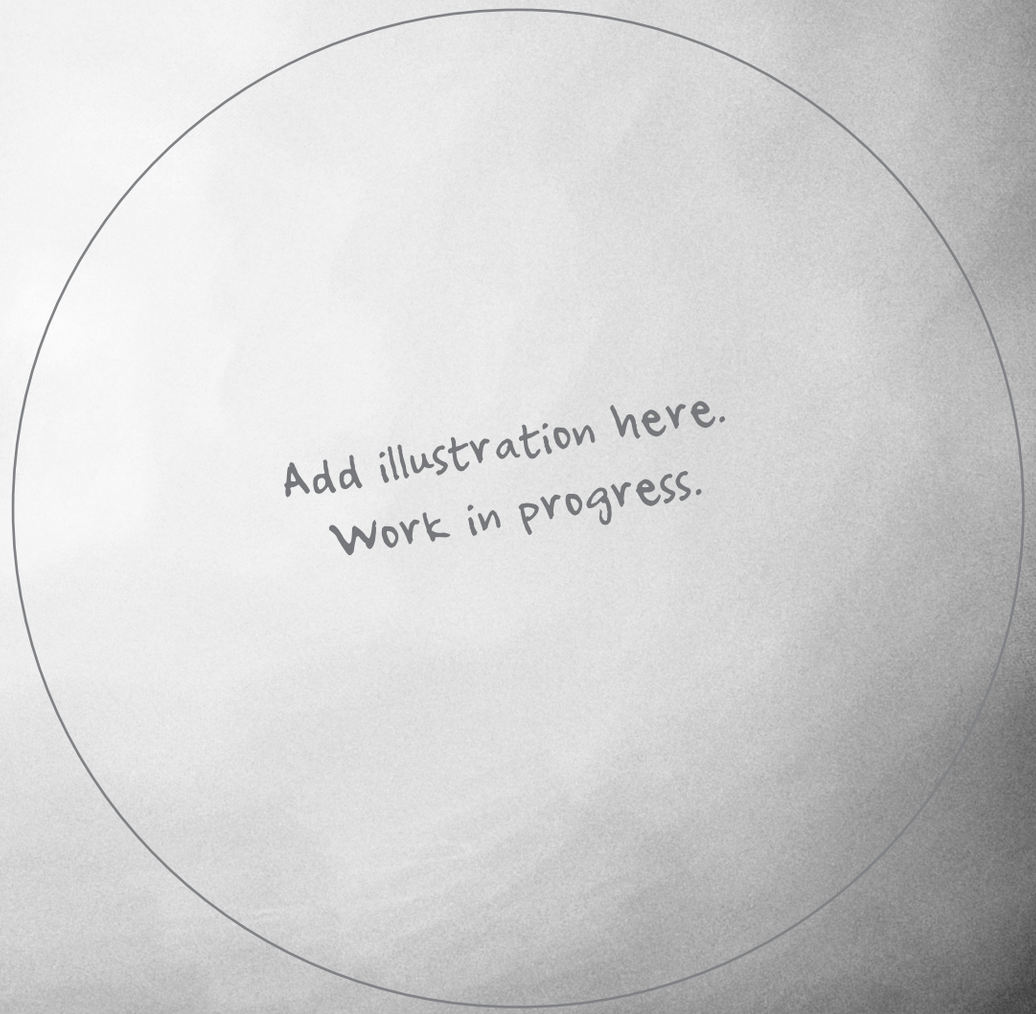
Or perhaps you feel tempted
to launch YOUR attack;
to lash out in anger
and troll-them-right-BACK... (!?)

See, here is a fact
that I've TRIED to dismiss...
...(and it's taken some effort
to reconcile this):

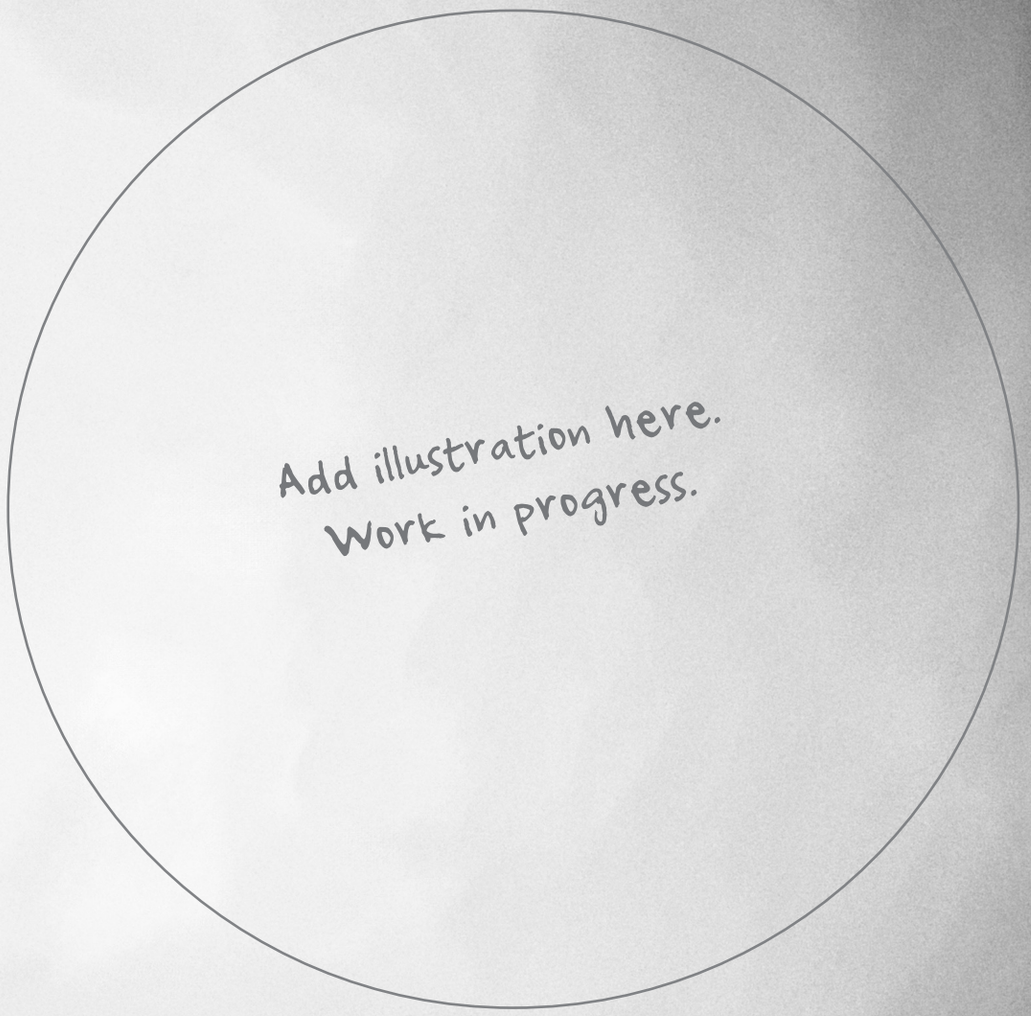
Some folk don't like me.
And some never will.
Some people think
that I'm mentally ill.

Some say I ought to
behave and be quiet.



Some say I'm...
...FAT!
...and in need of a diet!

And, guess what?
That's fine!!
I'm just letting them be!
It's none of my business
what folk think of me!



Like fog isn't hurt
by an arrow or dart...

Complete this illustration
(Work in progress.)

...like fish are unfazed by an odious fart...

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...like water that rolls
off the back of a duck,

I'm learning to smile and
to not give a...

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