

DREAMLIS

A Birthday Dream Adventure





To Gemma.
Love, Geezer and Rella.







In the sunshine, Geezer and Rella sat on the biggest branch of the old oak tree in the enchanted forest called Dreamliss. They stared out across the treetops. Dreamliss was a special place hidden from the ordinary world.

There were trees that talked and fireflies that glowed day and night. In the forest, winding paths were marked with stoplights, and in the distance, a waterfall poured from the mountainside until it became a stream at the bottom surrounded by thick moss.

The people and animals who lived there were special, too. The most special people of all were the dream sprites who carry dreams to all the people in the ordinary world.

Dream sprites Geezer and Rella had recently been assigned by the Council of Dreamkeepers to give a little girl named Gemma her dreams night after night as she slumbered away. They had come to love Gemma who thought of them as her friends.

"Tomorrow is an important day! It's Gemma's birthday," said Rella.

Geezer sat reading, with a brown backpack full of books on his back. He looked up from his copy of The Book of Dreams, adjusting his glasses on his pointy nose. "We must give her a special present! But what?"





He flipped the pages of the book one by one, looking for something Gemma would enjoy.

Rella swung her feet in circles looking down at the pink sneakers with silver shoelaces she wore every day, thinking hard. “A rainbow?”

Geezer shook his head. “We gave her a rainbow last Wednesday. How about a unicorn?”

Rella scowled. “Bor-ing!”

They didn’t know it, but the wise tree was listening while the two young sprites sat on his branch, talking. After a long time, he opened his eyes, smiled, and dropped an acorn onto Rella’s head.





“Ow!” said Rella, jumping down from the branch into the soft green grass. She looked at the tree. “Why did you do that?”

The tree smiled his wise smile. “All things begin small.”

Rella looked down at the acorn, who smiled up at her from the grass before rolling closer to a small hole near the bottom of the tree’s trunk.





Rella looked in the hole. “Look, Geezer! There’s something here!”

Geezer jumped from the branch with a clumsy thump.
Geezer reached in and pulled out a scroll. The two friends unrolled it.
A treasure map!

Geezer smiled, "If we find the treasure, then we can give it to Gemma for her birthday dream!"

"Yes," Said Rella. "But the map looks like it will take us far. Aren't you scared?"

Geezer answered, "A little..."

Acorn, whose top looked like a hat, cackled a tiny laugh, and jumped from the ground, bouncing off Geezer's head. Bonk!

He bounced off Rella's head, too. Bonk!

"OW!" they exclaimed. Acorn rolled away in front of the two sprites, giggling, "All things begin small! Come with me!"



Rella grabbed the map from Geezer and began running after Acorn down the path.

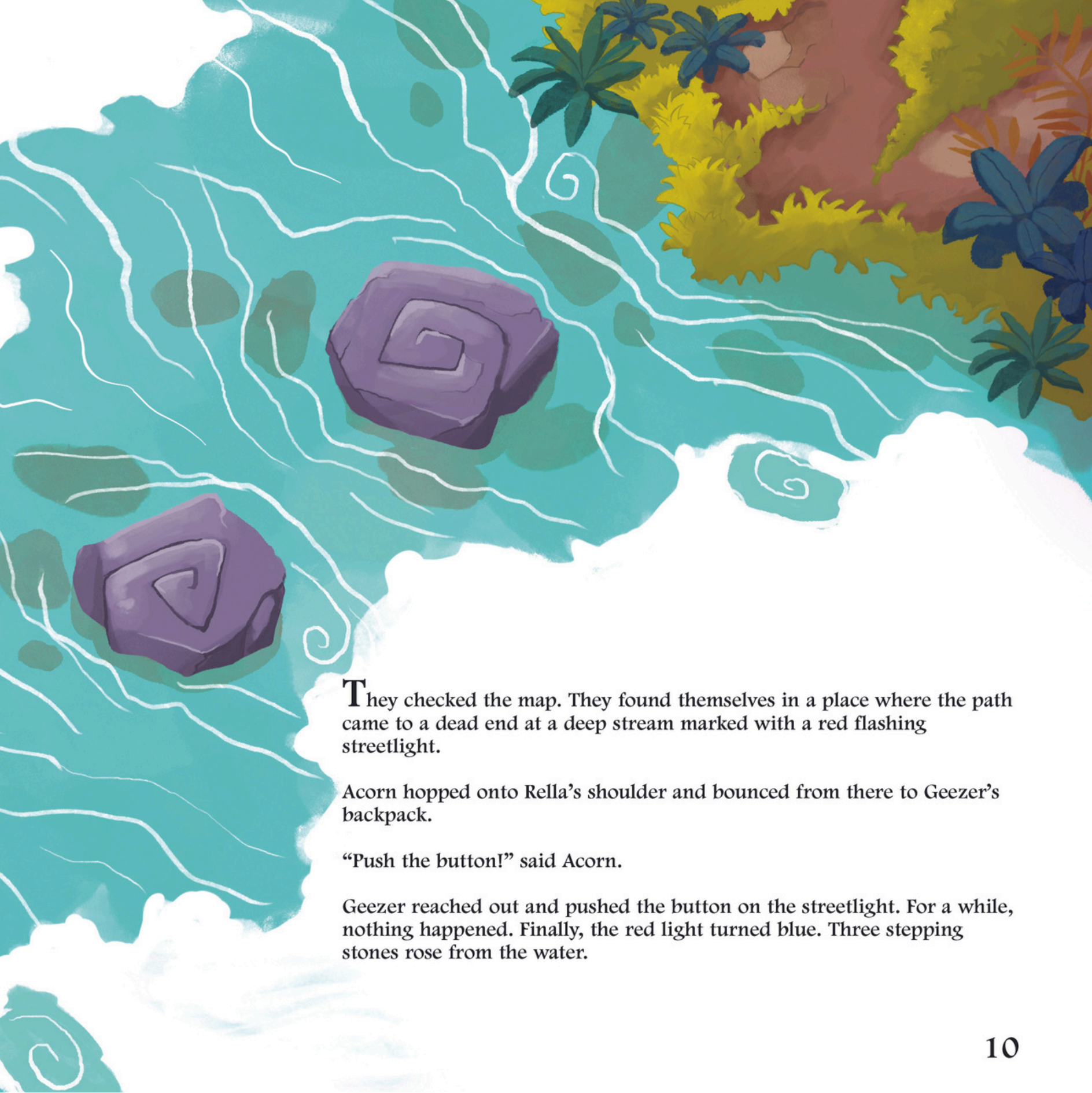
She called to Geezer, “Hurry up! He’s trying to help us!”

Rella was faster than Geezer. He often had a hard time keeping up with her. But he knew Acorn was there to help them so Geezer ran as fast as his short legs would carry him.

The two friends chased Acorn down a narrow path deep into the forest. They ran past trees and boulders. Acorn, being small, rolled faster and faster, giggling, and bouncing off rocks the whole way.

When Geezer and Rella finally caught up with Acorn, they were out of breath.





They checked the map. They found themselves in a place where the path came to a dead end at a deep stream marked with a red flashing streetlight.

Acorn hopped onto Rella's shoulder and bounced from there to Geezer's backpack.

"Push the button!" said Acorn.

Geezer reached out and pushed the button on the streetlight. For a while, nothing happened. Finally, the red light turned blue. Three stepping stones rose from the water.



Rella hopped easily from stone to stone and made it to the other side in no time. Geezer was afraid of water. Rella looked back at Geezer, staring down at the water nervously.

“Come on, Geez! You can do it! The water’s not that deep!”

Geezer looked at Acorn, “What if I push the button again? Will more stones come up?”

Acorn shook his head, “No, I’m afraid not.”

Geezer had no choice but to do this. His first hop was clumsy. Acorn looked down at Geezer’s feet from his backpack perch, concerned.

Rella clapped, “You did it! You see! Just two more to go!”

The spaces between the next two stones weren’t as wide. Geezer, who was now filled with more confidence, had no problem hopping to the second and third stepping stones.

He called out to Rella, “This isn’t so bad after all!”

She called back, “Watch out!”

Just as Geezer made the leap from the third stepping stone to dry land, a giant blue fish wobbled up from the stream into the air, heading straight for Geezer’s head.



Acorn squeezed his eyes shut.

Splash! Geezer stumbled into the stream. His backpack went flying. Acorn sailed through the air, screaming. Rella reached out and pulled the soaking wet Geezer onto dry land.

"Thanks, Rella," said Geezer, pushing up his glasses.

"No problem," said Rella.

Geezer sloshed around in the grass, shaking out the water from his arms and legs. "Where's Acorn?"

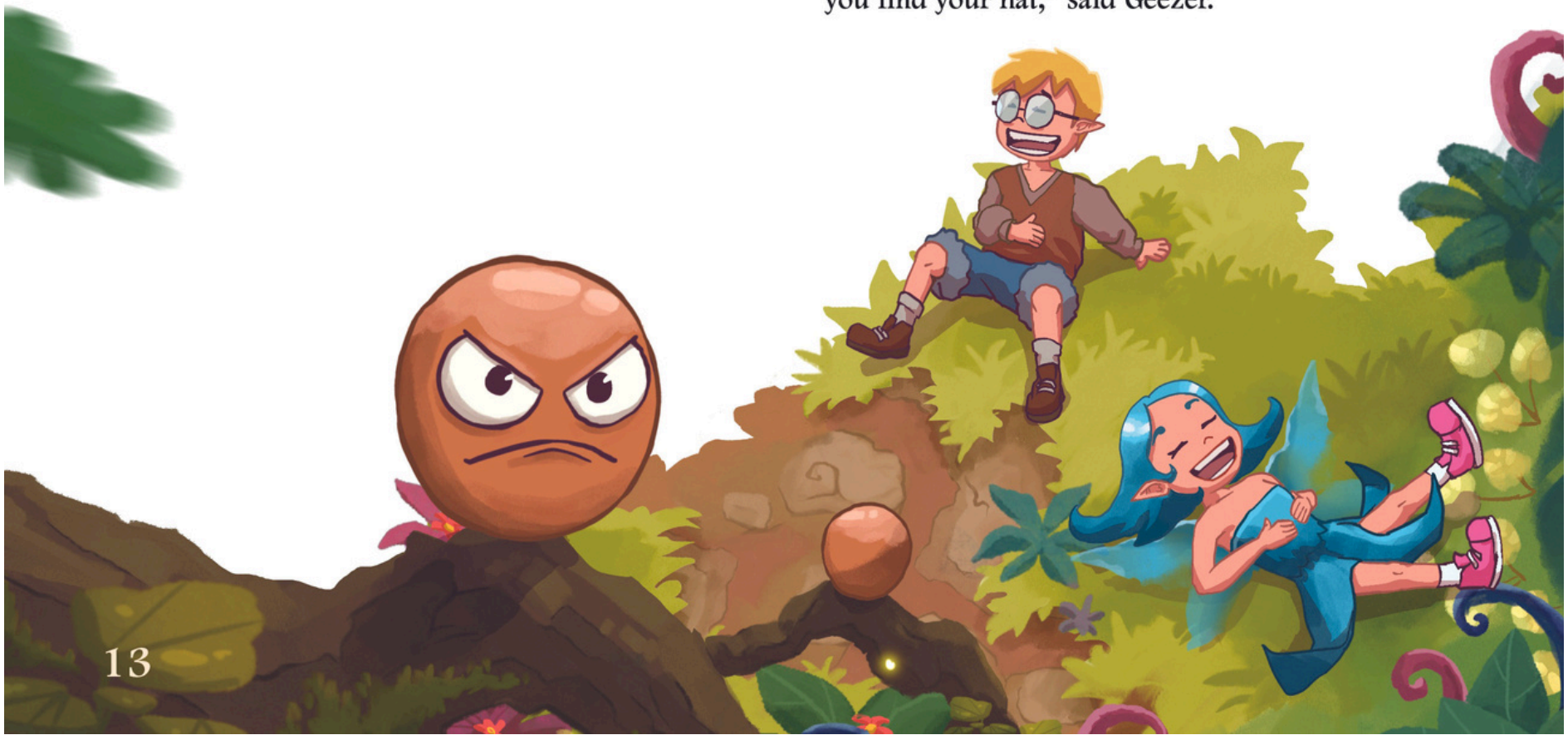
They called out, "Acorn! Where are you?" Acorn's tiny voice called back, "I'm down here!"

Geezer and Rella looked down at Acorn. He was bald. Geezer and Rella fell onto their backs in the soft grass, laughing.

Acorn was annoyed. "Come on, you two! My hat is missing! I look ridiculous! Will you please help me find it?"

Geezer and Rella stopped laughing. They didn't want to hurt Acorn's feelings.

"We're sorry, Acorn. Of course, we'll help you find your hat," said Geezer.



The three searched beneath every bush and between every blade of grass, but they could not find Acorn's hat.

Rella had an idea. She picked up a small leaf and handed it to Acorn. "Here," said Rella. "If we can't find yours, maybe you could wear this instead!"

Acorn placed the leaf on his head, but it was too big.

It covered his face, and he couldn't see.

"How about this?" asked Geezer, holding up a tiny mushroom. Acorn took the mushroom, pulled off the stem and placed the cap on his head.



This hat was a better fit. But to Acorn, it felt too soft, and it smelled funny.

Acorn frowned, "No, I'm afraid none of these hats feel right to me. I just don't feel....welll...like me without my own hat. I'm sorry. I don't mean to keep you from finding the treasure."

Rella said, "Don't worry Acorn. We'll find it."

"Yeah," said Geezer. "Right now, helping you to feel like yourself again is more important than the treasure."

Determined to help their new friend, Geezer and Rella helped Acorn continue the search.

Geezer, Rella and Acorn searched for Acorn's hat for a long time.

Geezer, who was now dry, tiptoed back to his backpack by the stream. He was careful not to step on anything that might be Acorn's hat by mistake. He lowered his glasses and searched the ground.

"Here it is! It's lying on the moss!" said Geezer.

"Great!" said Rella.

Acorn rolled over to Geezer, smiling. He reached out to pick up his hat. The hat wiggled. Acorn looked puzzled. The hat jiggled. Geezer and Rella watched with interest.

A small frog poked her head up with Acorn's hat on her head.





“Is this yours?” croaked the frog. She handed Acorn his hat with round, green fingers.

Acorn nodded. “Why, yes! Thank you!”

Acorn took his hat from the frog’s hand and placed it on his head. He adjusted it until it felt just right. Acorn was happy again. “I feel so much better now!”

Geezer and Rella looked down at the frog, smiling.

“What’s your name?” asked Rella.

“Rana.” said the frog.

“It’s nice to meet you!” said Rella. “I’m Rella and this is Geezer. We’re Dream Sprites. This is our friend Acorn.”

“And what brings you to the blue crossing?” asked Rana.

“We’re following this map,” said Geezer. He pulled the map from his backpack and showed it to Rana.



“Hmmm...I see.” said Rana. “Looking for the treasure of dreams, eh?”

Rella nodded. “Tomorrow is our friend Gemma’s birthday, and we want to give her the best present ever!”

Rana pointed to the map.

“Just ahead, you will find the village of Bannock. A guard named Shadow protects the entrance. Knock three times and Shadow will ask each of you a question. If one answer is wrong, Shadow will not let you in.”

Rella’s eyes widened, “Like a test?”

“Rana nodded, “There are many kinds of tests.”

Rella scowled. “I don’t like tests! I get nervous! Isn’t there another path through the woods?”

“No.” said Rana. To find the treasure, you must stay on the path and go through the village. There are many squirrels in the forest near Bannock. It would be scary for Acorn to go that way.”

Acorn bounced up onto Rella’s shoulder, frightened. He didn’t like squirrels because squirrels love to gather acorns!

Rella could see that Acorn was scared. She disliked tests but she knew that Acorn’s safety was more important. She patted Acorn on his hat. “It’s okay, buddy. We’ll stay on the path.”



Acorn sighed with relief, “Thanks! You’re a good friend!”

Geezer put his hand on Rella’s other shoulder. “Don’t worry, Rella.”

He turned toward Rana, “Do you have any advice for us, green friend?”

Rana smiled, “You must calm your minds before answering Shadow’s questions. Do not let your feelings get the better of you. And remember...each step you take brings you closer to the treasure!”

The three friends thanked Rana and left her resting in the moss by the stream.





On the path to the village, Acorn and Geezer whistled a happy tune. Rella stayed quiet. She was thinking about the test. Rella grew more nervous with every step.

When Geezer and Acorn were finished with their song, Rella asked them, “What if I answer the guard’s question wrong?”

Geezer answered, “You can do it! It’s just like the stepping stones on the stream! I didn’t think I could cross them, and you helped me just by being there.”

“You fell into the stream,” reminded Rella.

“Well...yes...but this is different!” said Geezer.

“How is it different?” asked Rella.



“Because. I’m afraid of water...I mean... I was afraid of water. I’m not anymore. You’re not afraid of anything! I’ve seen you jump from the highest tree in Dreamliss and catch fireflies in midair!” answered Geezer.

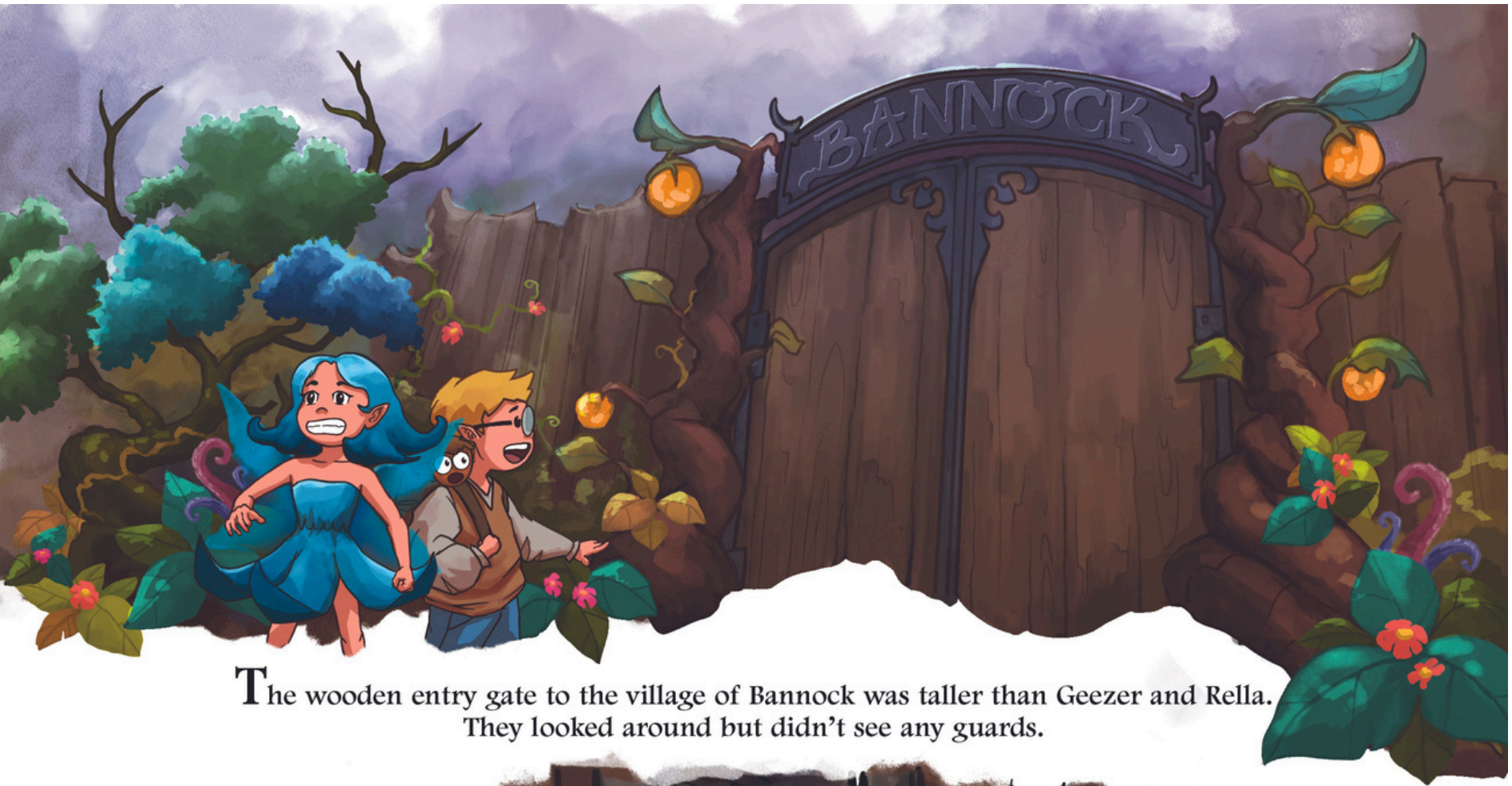
Rella interrupted, “But this is different! I’m good at running and jumping and catching fireflies. Tests make me nervous! I always freeze up! I can’t think of the answers fast enough. I’m worried we won’t get into the village and find the treasure. Then, we won’t have anything to give Gemma for her birthday dream tonight! It will be too late to think of something else!”



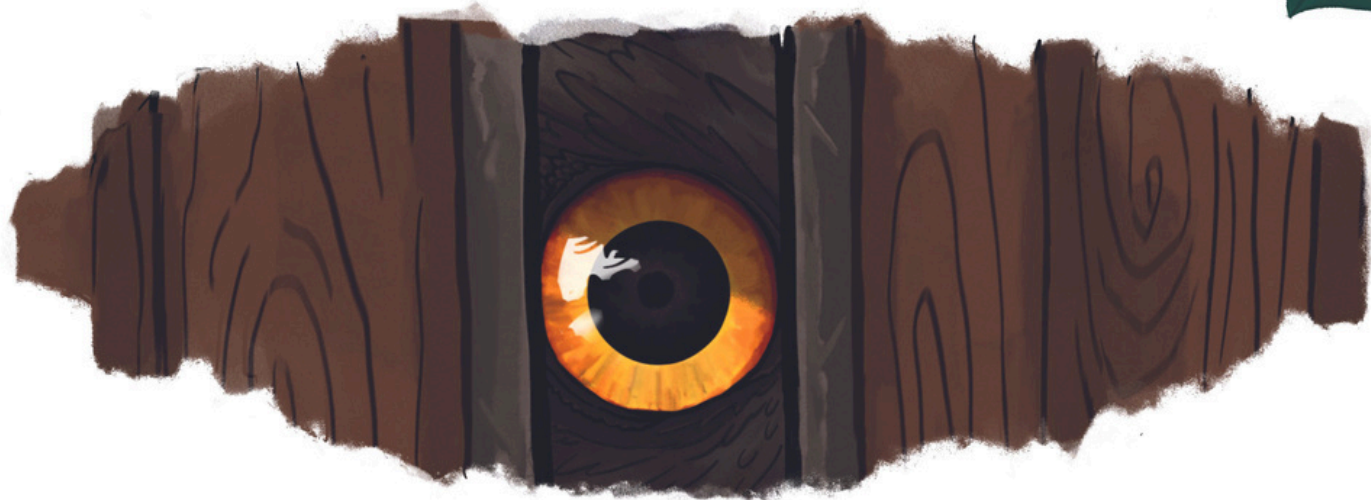
“Please don’t worry so much! You’re smart, too, Rel!” said Geezer, “Keep your chin up! Remember what Rana said. Each step takes us closer to the treasure! Come on! Whistle with us. It’ll make you feel better!”

Geezer and Acorn whistled a new song, much louder this time. Rella joined in.

Rella noticed Acorn perched on Geezer’s backpack bobbing back and forth to the music and laughed. Whistling did make her feel better!



The wooden entry gate to the village of Bannock was taller than Geezer and Rella. They looked around but didn't see any guards.



Geezer approached the gate and knocked three times.
A small slot opened in the center of the gate. A large, round golden eye peeked through.
A mysterious calm voice came from behind the gate. "Greetings from the guardian Shadow! Whoooo goes there?"



Geezer cleared his throat, “Hello! I’m Geezer and this is Rella. We’re dream sprites. We’d like to enter your village, please.”

The round, golden eye shifted from Geezer to Rella and back again.

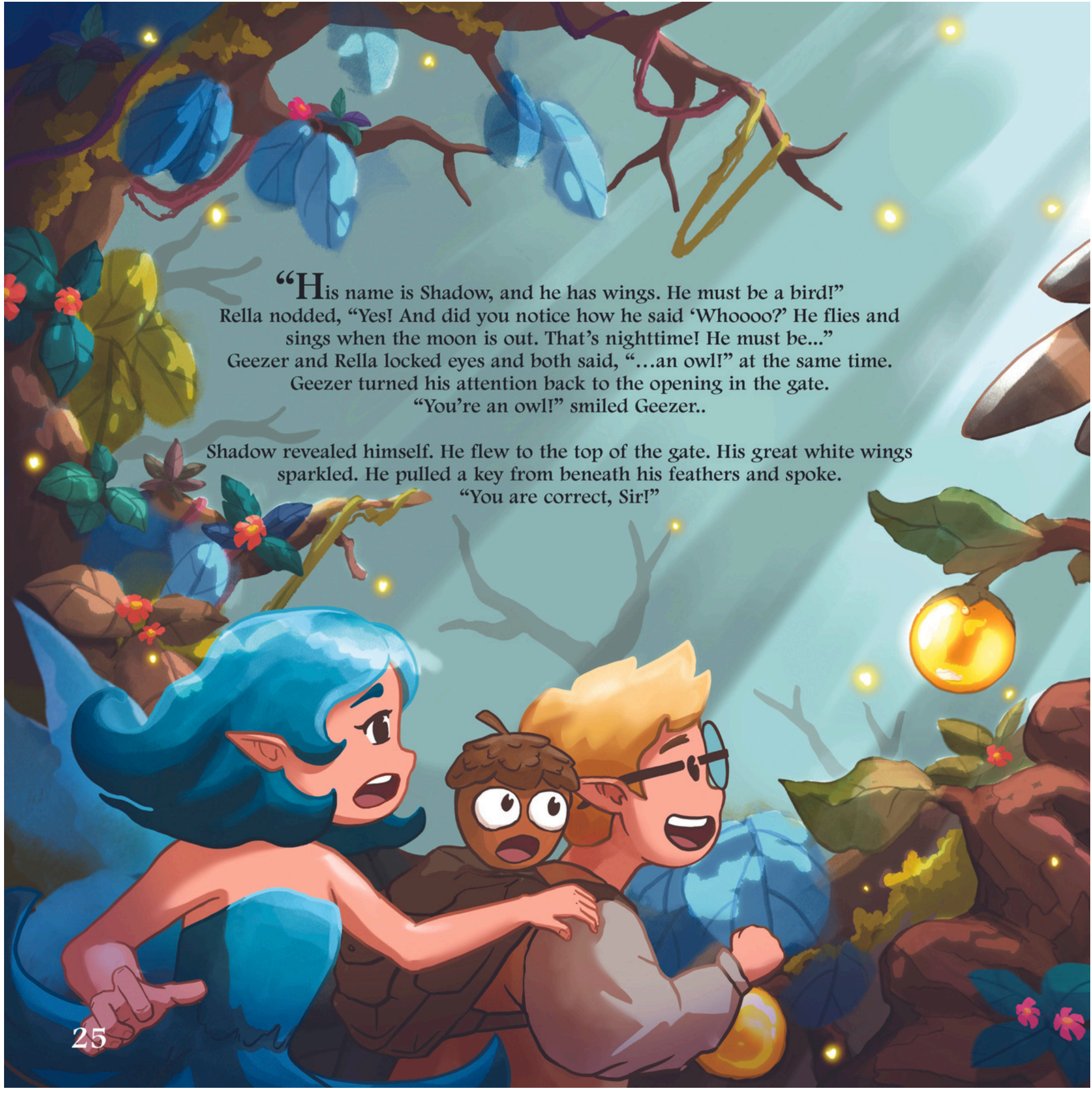
“Before you lies a village of magic and wonder. The greatest in all Dreamliss! To enter, you each must answer one question correctly. Then, I will grant you entry. Whoooo goes first?”

“I will, Sir,” said Geezer.

Shadow’s eye stared at Geezer from the slot.

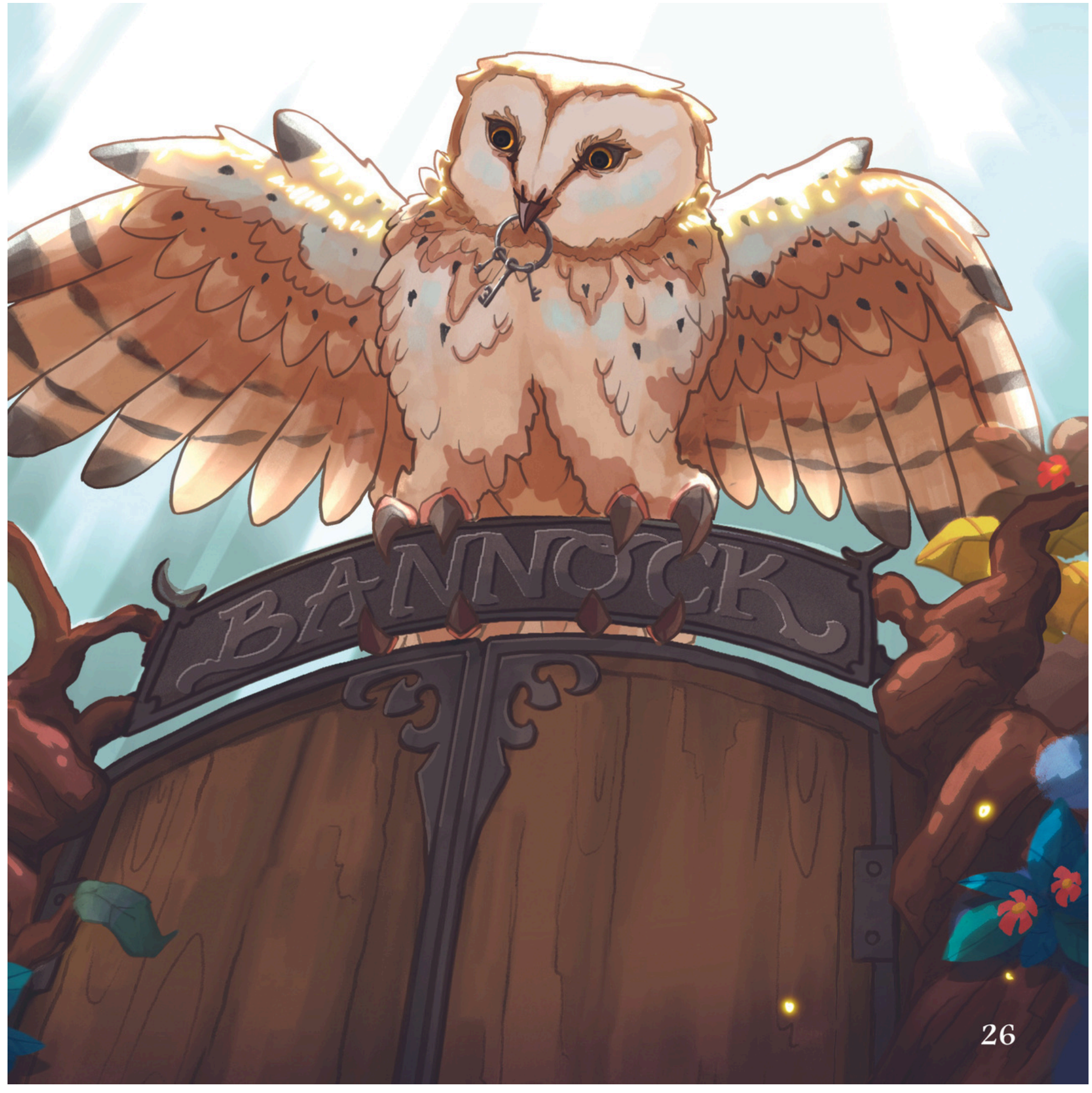
“I sing in the darkness and dance at night. My wings glisten in the glow of mooonlight. What am I?”

Geezer thought for a while, then whispered to Rella and Acorn.



“His name is Shadow, and he has wings. He must be a bird!”
Rella nodded, “Yes! And did you notice how he said ‘Whoooo?’ He flies and sings when the moon is out. That’s nighttime! He must be...”
Geezer and Rella locked eyes and both said, “...an owl!” at the same time.
Geezer turned his attention back to the opening in the gate.
“You’re an owl!” smiled Geezer..

Shadow revealed himself. He flew to the top of the gate. His great white wings sparkled. He pulled a key from beneath his feathers and spoke.
“You are correct, Sir!”





He turned toward Rella, “One more question!”

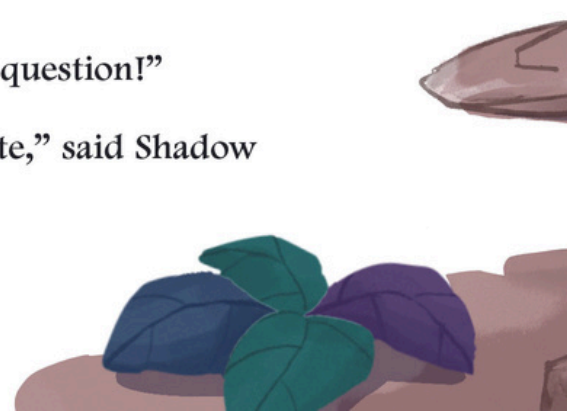
Rella’s face turned bright red. She took a deep breath. “I’m ready.”

Shadow whispered, “The more you take, the more you leave behind. What am I?”

Rella’s mouth opened wide.

“What?? There could be a million correct answers to that question!”

“There is only one answer that will persuade me to open this gate,” said Shadow



Rella turned to Geezer. He gave her a thumbs up. “You can do this!”

She turned from the gate, squeezed her eyes closed and rubbed her forehead. “Think, Rella, think!!” She suddenly felt tired and wanted to cry.

Acorn bounced from Geezer’s backpack and onto her shoulder.

“Not now, Acorn!” yelled Rella, brushing him away with her hand. He landed on her shoe with a small thump. A small cloud of dirt rose. He stared up at her, surprised.



Rella felt sad over losing her temper. She knelt and picked up Acorn. She brushed the dirt off her small friend and noticed her pink sneakers were now covered with dirt from their long walk.

She looked back along the path they had walked down. It was covered with their footsteps. Her feet hurt. She thought about all the walking they did that day. She thought about Rana the frog who said, “Each step brings you closer to the treasure.”

Rella stood up with Acorn in her hand, smiled at him and patted him gently on his hat. “I’m sorry I was impatient with you. I understand now that when I feel bad it’s easy to make others feel bad.” Rella wiped a tear from her cheek.

Acorn forgave Rella, “It’s okay. Everyone gets frustrated sometimes.”



Rella turned back towards the gate and took a big breath.
“Shadow! I know the answer! The answer is...footsteps!”

Shadow said nothing. He flew without a sound back behind the gate.

Rella put her head down, “I guess we won’t be able to give Gemma the treasure after all.”

The trio turned back toward the path home.

Geezer suggested, “Maybe we can make her a double rainbow instead! Double rainbows are...”



Clank! They spun around to see the tall
wooden gate creaking open.

Geezer jumped up, threw his arms in the air,
and shouted, “Yeah! I knew you could do it!
You see! You’re smarter than you think!
Chilly to the Willy!”



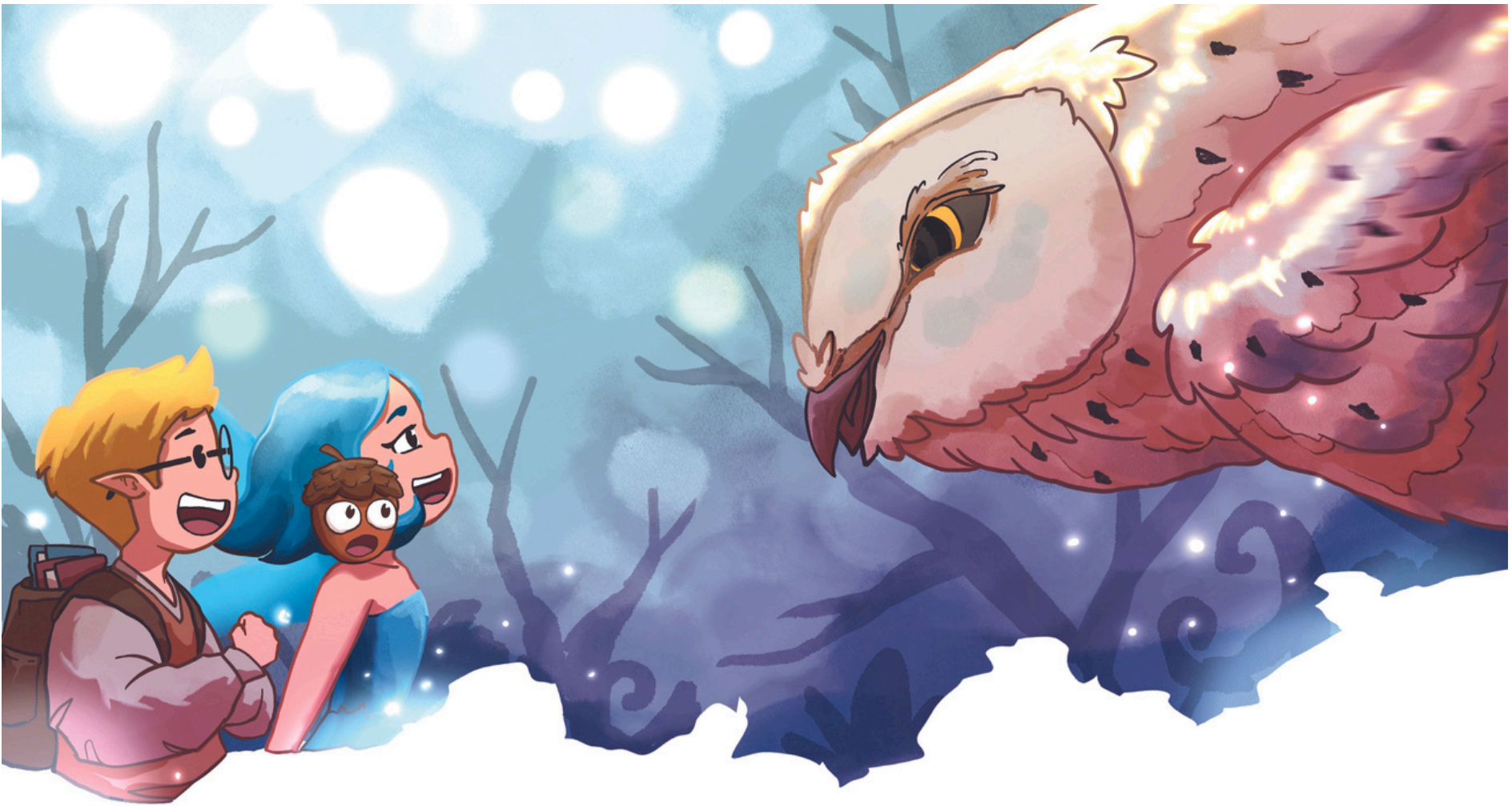


Rella gave Geezer a hug and smiled, “I didn’t do it alone. Acorn helped me. He landed on my shoe and made me think about footsteps. Acorn is a good friend.”

Acorn smiled. “I’m small but I try hard! Someday I will be a wise oak tree!”

“Yes, you will.” said Rella. “Because all things begin small.”

Geezer pointed to the open gate. “Now, let’s go get Gemma’s treasure!”



Shadow the guardian owl of Bannock bowed before Geezer and Rella as they entered the village.

“Welcome travelers, to the village of Bannock!”

The trio returned the gesture.
Acorn couldn’t help but ask, “What took you so long?”

“Sorry. The gate is heavy.” replied Shadow.

“Thank you for granting us entry.” said Rella.

Shadow complimented their efforts. “You did well. Enjoy your time in the village!”

Geezer unrolled the map and asked Shadow about the spot marked with a large X. “Do you know where this is?”

“Ahhh!” said Shadow. “You’re looking for the treasure of dreams! It’s right at the other end of the village past the wishing well. Beware of the rock sprite who lives there. He loves to cause trouble for visitors!”

Following Shadow’s directions, Geezer and Rella continued through the village.



Around the corner, a sign for Little Lady's Café caught their attention. The three were hungry, so they decided to stop for a snack.

Little Lady, a large friendly ladybug, welcomed them warmly, "Greetings, travelers! What can I get you?"





Geezer ordered a delicious plate of fruit and Rella had the soup. Acorn quenched his thirst with a glass of water. “Boy, was I thirsty!” said Acorn.

When they finished eating their meal Little Lady brought the bill.

“Is there anything else I can get you?”

Geezer reached into his pocket and realized he had lost his money back at the stream.





Panicked, Rella turned to Little Lady, “Is there any way we can pay you back later for this delicious food?”

Little Lady thoughtfully suggested, “Well...I don’t have a dishwasher. So, I sure could use some help! If you wash all the dirty dishes, I would be grateful.”

Geezer washed, Rella dried, and Acorn polished while Little Lady took a break.

Little Lady bid them farewell hugs and said,
“You all come back soon! Tell that rock sprite
to go easy on you!”

“We will!” said the trio.



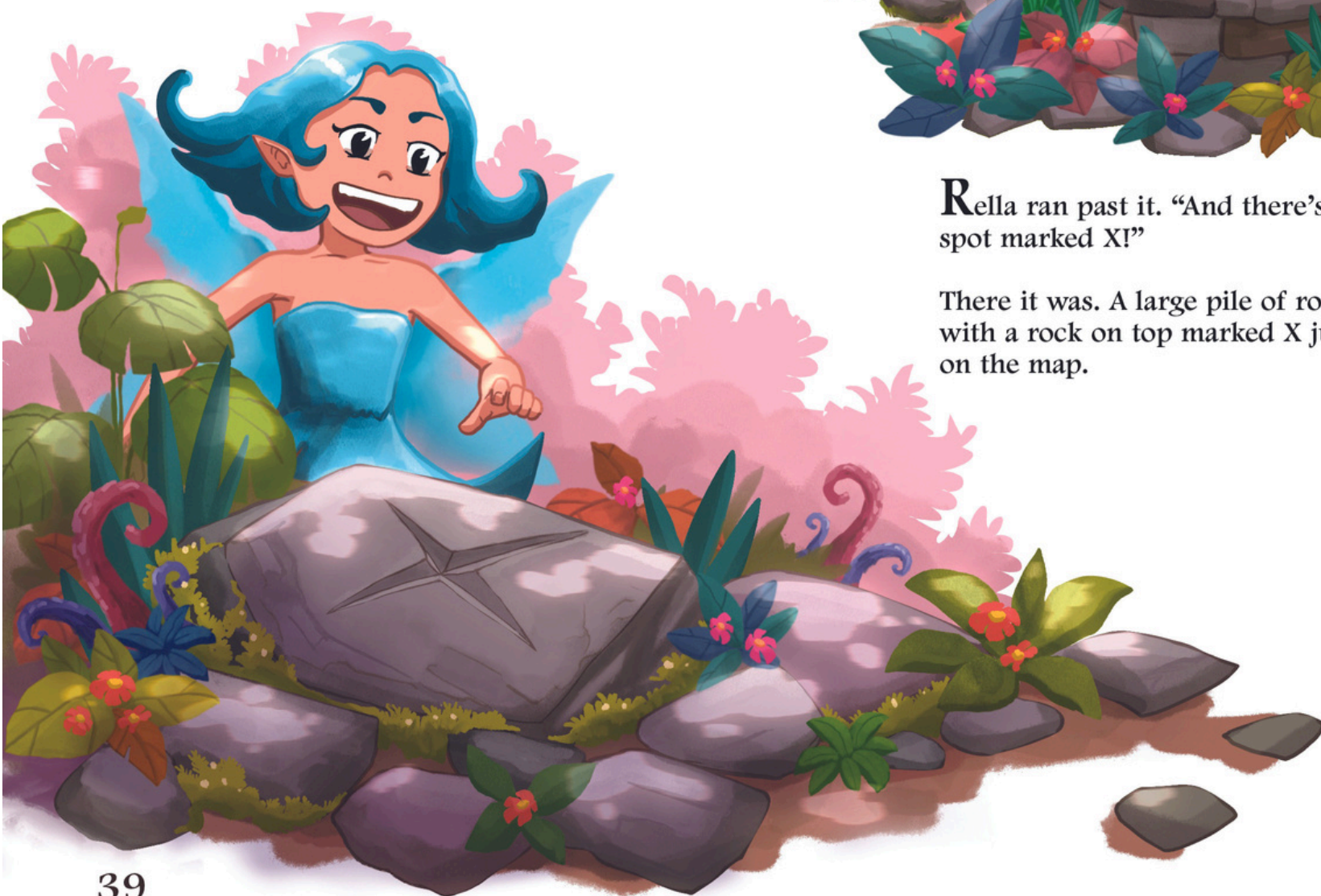
Geezer, Rella and Acorn walked on until they reached the end of the village.

Geezer pointed, "Look! There's the wishing well!"



Rella ran past it. "And there's the spot marked X!"

There it was. A large pile of rocks with a rock on top marked X just like on the map.



“Well, I guess we’d better start digging for the treasure!” said Geezer.

“With what?” asked Rella.

They didn’t bring a shovel. Acorn bounced over to the wishing well,
“Maybe we can wish for tools!”

Geezer and Rella ran over and stared into the wishing well. Rella called down into it, “I wish for a shovel!” Magically, a shovel appeared. Rella grabbed it, ran back to the pile of rocks marked X and started digging.

Geezer looked down into the well, “And I wish for a bucket!” The bucket appeared.





Geezer and Rella took turns digging. They filled up the bucket with rocks and dumped them nearby. As the pile grew bigger, Geezer and Rella became tired. Their hands were dirty, and their backs ached.

“Boy,” said Rella, “This is hard work. We’ve been digging and moving rocks for ages in this spot, and we haven’t found the treasure yet.”

Geezer wiped his forehead and sat down. “I’m so tired! I hope I never see another rock for the rest of my life!”



A low rumble came from underground.
Geezer and Rella stood up.

All the rocks around Geezer and Rella disappeared. They looked around.



The stone path from the village was gone.
A crumbling sound came from the mountain,
and it began to sink into the earth.



Back at the stream, Rana watched from her moss mound as the stepping stones all disappeared. With no rocks in the ground to hold things in place, the stoplight fell over.





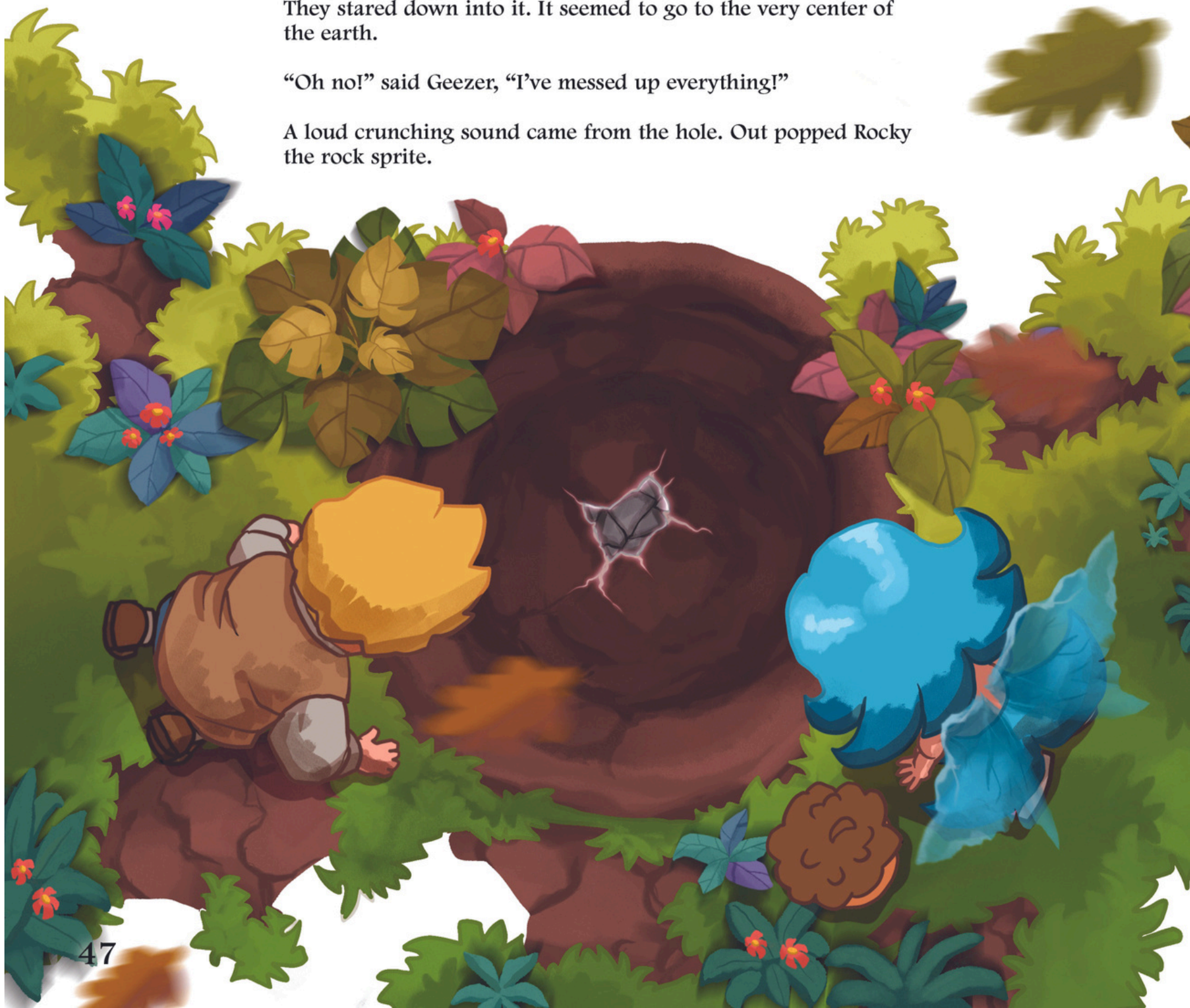
All throughout Dreamliss, the stones and boulders that dotted the forest crumbled and disappeared. The trees fell over into the soft dirt.

Acorn jumped up onto Rella's shoulder, frightened. Realizing the consequences of his wish, Rella yelled at Geezer, "The wishing well! You need to fix your wish!"

Geezer and Rella ran on the wobbly earth back to the wishing well, but it was gone, too. In its place was a deep hole in the ground. They stared down into it. It seemed to go to the very center of the earth.

“Oh no!” said Geezer, “I’ve messed up everything!”

A loud crunching sound came from the hole. Out popped Rocky the rock sprite.





Rocky was a small creature made entirely out of rocks. His head, hands and feet were all rocks. Even his pointy hat was made from rocks!

Rella fell backwards. “Woah! You must be the rock sprite we heard about!”

Rocky ignored Rella completely and held out a pointed rock finger in front of Geezer’s face. “Soooo!” cried Rocky. “You said you never wanted to see another rock as long as you live! Welll...you got your wish!”

Geezer looked around. The whole world was different now. All because he didn’t want to dig anymore. “I’m sorry, Rocky. Can’t I please take my wish back? I didn’t realize what I was wishing for!”

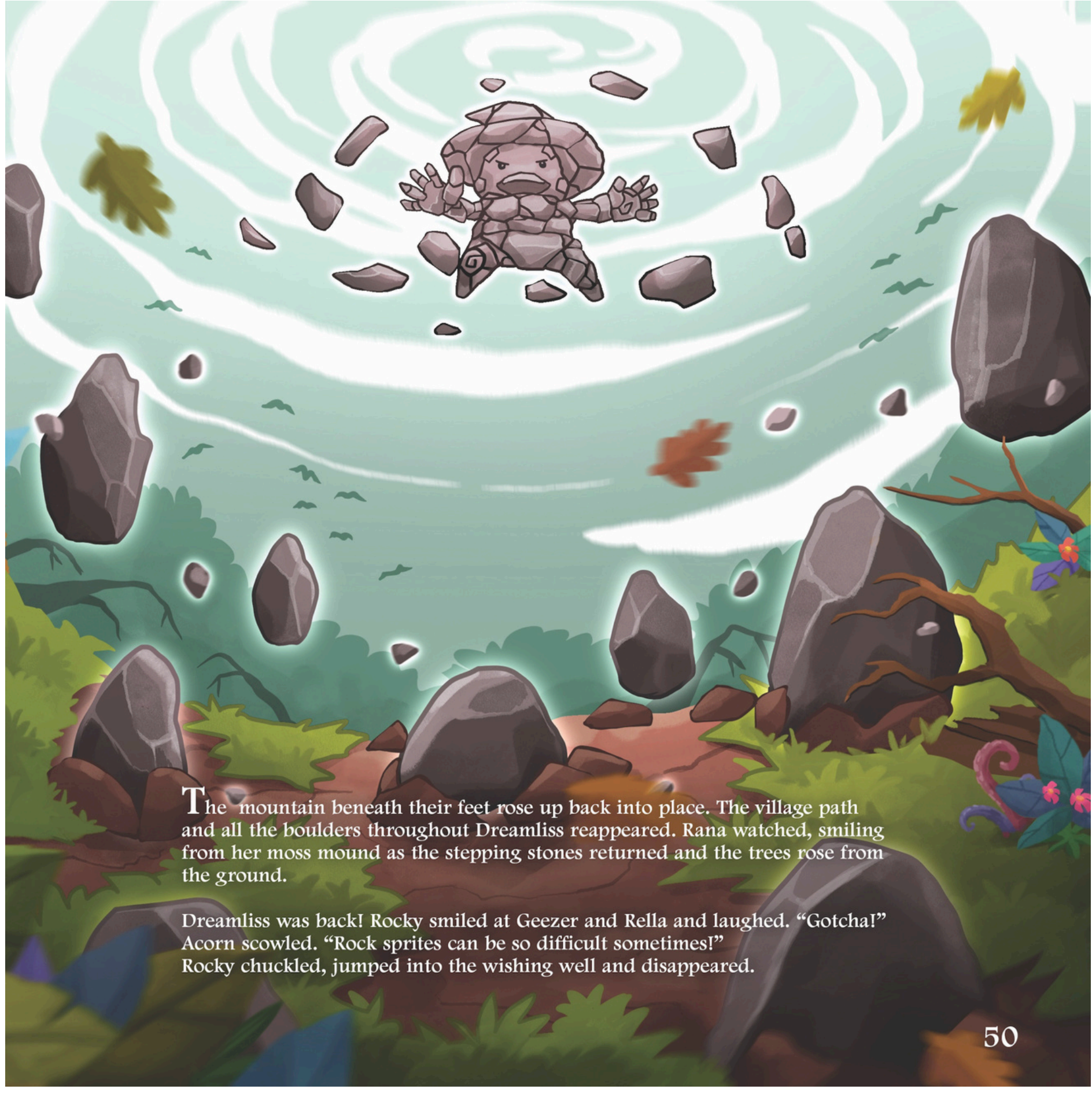


Rella added, “We’ve learned our lesson! Little Lady asked that you go easy on us! We’ve worked hard and come a long way today!”

Rocky put his hands on his hips and tapped his foot.

“Welll....okay! But be careful next time! Don’t ever wish anything like that again!”

Rocky took two small stones from his pointy hat and threw them high into the air. They formed a huge circle in the sky.



The mountain beneath their feet rose up back into place. The village path and all the boulders throughout Dreamliss reappeared. Rana watched, smiling from her moss mound as the stepping stones returned and the trees rose from the ground.

Dreamliss was back! Rocky smiled at Geezer and Rella and laughed. "Gotcha!" Acorn scowled. "Rock sprites can be so difficult sometimes!" Rocky chuckled, jumped into the wishing well and disappeared.



Rella noticed something shiny and gold peeking out from under the rocks in the digging spot.

Gemma's treasure!

"Look, Geezer! All the stones moving around must have knocked the treasure loose!"

Acorn jumped down from Rella's shoulder, rolled over and bounced onto the spot.

Geezer ran over and moved a few rocks away.

"Wow!!!"

They had found it. A beautiful but small golden box. They carried it over to the soft grass nearby. They brushed the dust off and looked at each other.

"You ready?" asked Rella?

"Yes, open it! I can't wait to see what's inside! Gemma's going to love it!"

Rella lifted the lid and looked inside.

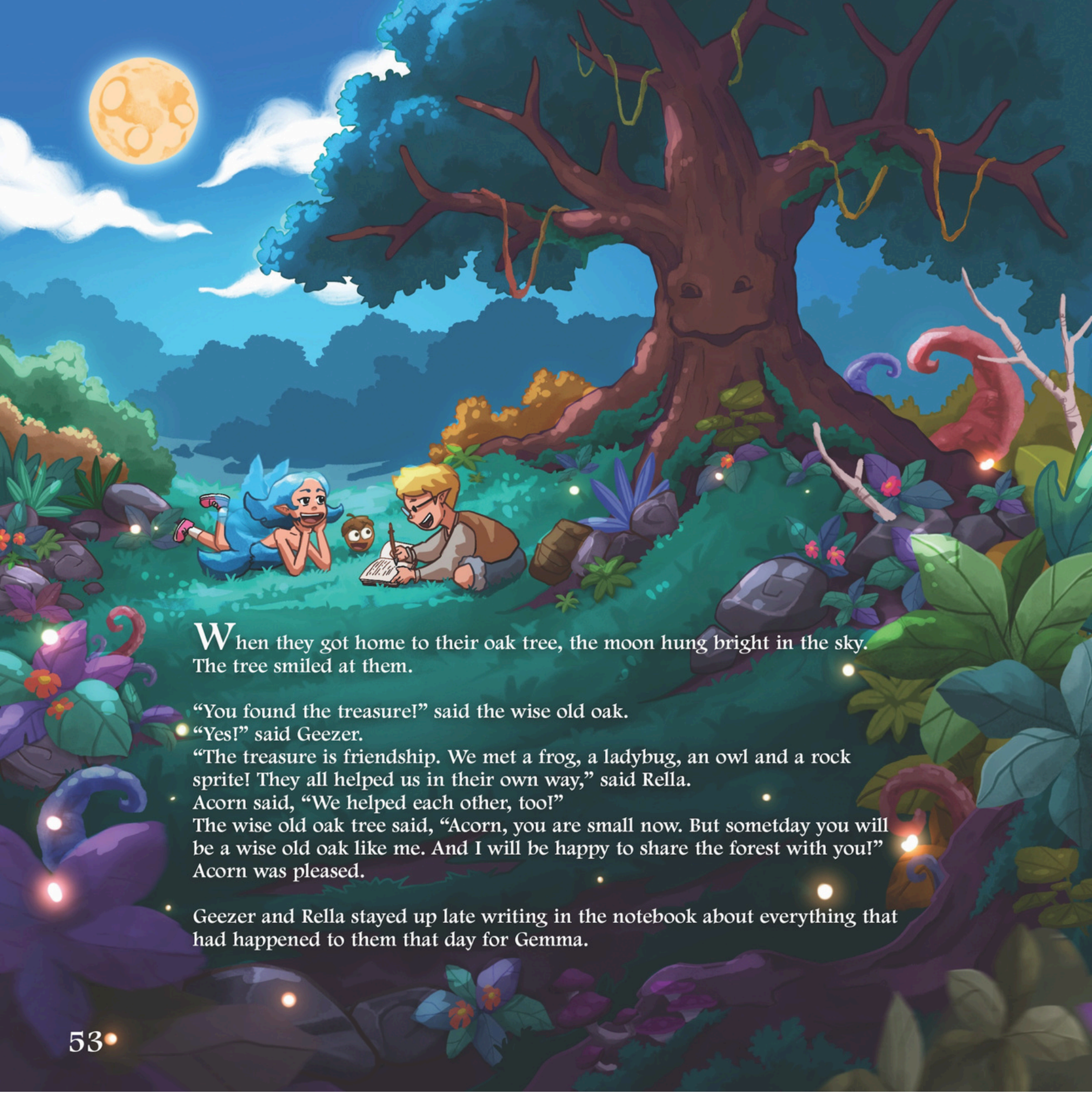
"A notebook and a pen?" said Rella, confused.



All the pages in the notebook were blank except for the first which read, “To Geezer and Rella, please write down your adventures for me so I can read about your life in Dreamliss. Love, Gemma.”

Acorn hopped inside the box and smiled up at Geezer and Rella. Acorn said, “It’s a note from Gemma! The treasure wasn’t jewels or toys or a rainbow or unicorn. The treasure was the adventure we’ve been on for Gemma. Think of all the great friends we’ve made!” Geezer and Rella smiled.

They packed the box with the notebook and pen into Geezer’s backpack and walked home along the same path. Along the way, they greeted Little Lady, Shadow and Rana and told them that they were the treasure Geezer and Rella were searching for all along.



When they got home to their oak tree, the moon hung bright in the sky. The tree smiled at them.

“You found the treasure!” said the wise old oak.

“Yes!” said Geezer.

“The treasure is friendship. We met a frog, a ladybug, an owl and a rock sprite! They all helped us in their own way,” said Rella.

Acorn said, “We helped each other, too!”

The wise old oak tree said, “Acorn, you are small now. But someday you will be a wise old oak like me. And I will be happy to share the forest with you!”

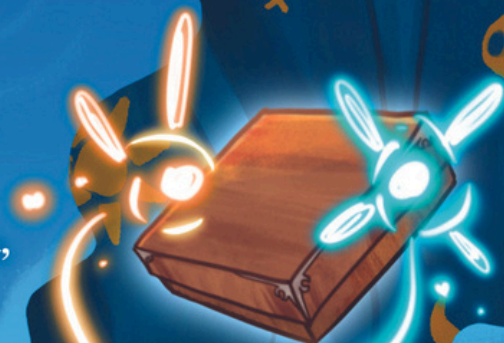
Acorn was pleased.

Geezer and Rella stayed up late writing in the notebook about everything that had happened to them that day for Gemma.

When they had finished writing, they placed the book into the golden box and closed the lid.

Acorn snuggled in between Geezer and Rella while they magically sent the dream to Gemma as only dream sprites could.

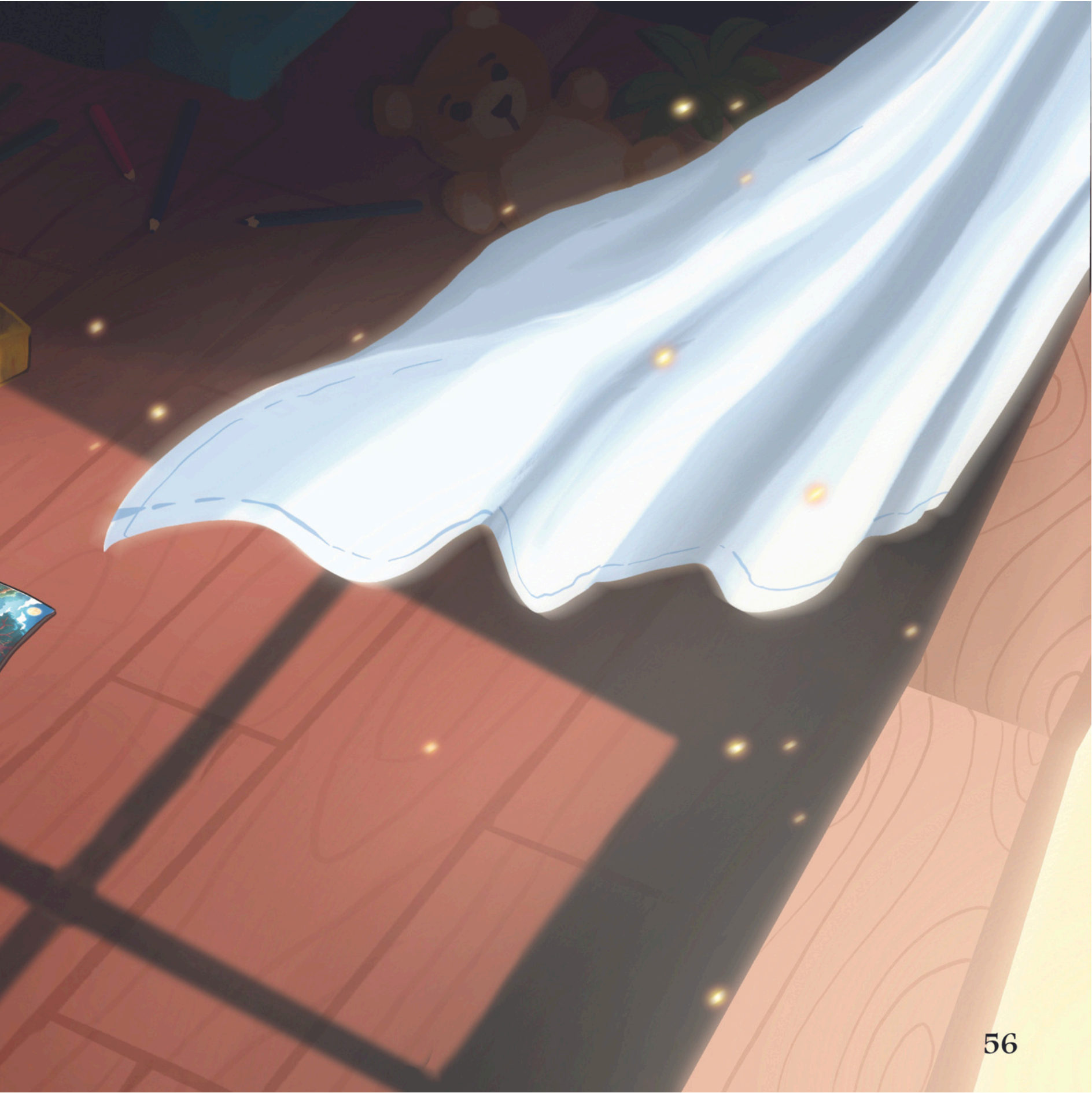
That night, Gemma dreamed of Geezer, Rella, Acorn, Rana, Shadow, Little Lady and Rocky in the enchanted land of Dreamliss.





When Gemma woke up, it was her birthday.

Excited, she looked around her room. There, in the corner by her toys was the golden box with the book inside. A precious gift from her friends in the enchanted land called Dreamliss.





Inspired by the beautiful mind of
Gemma

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