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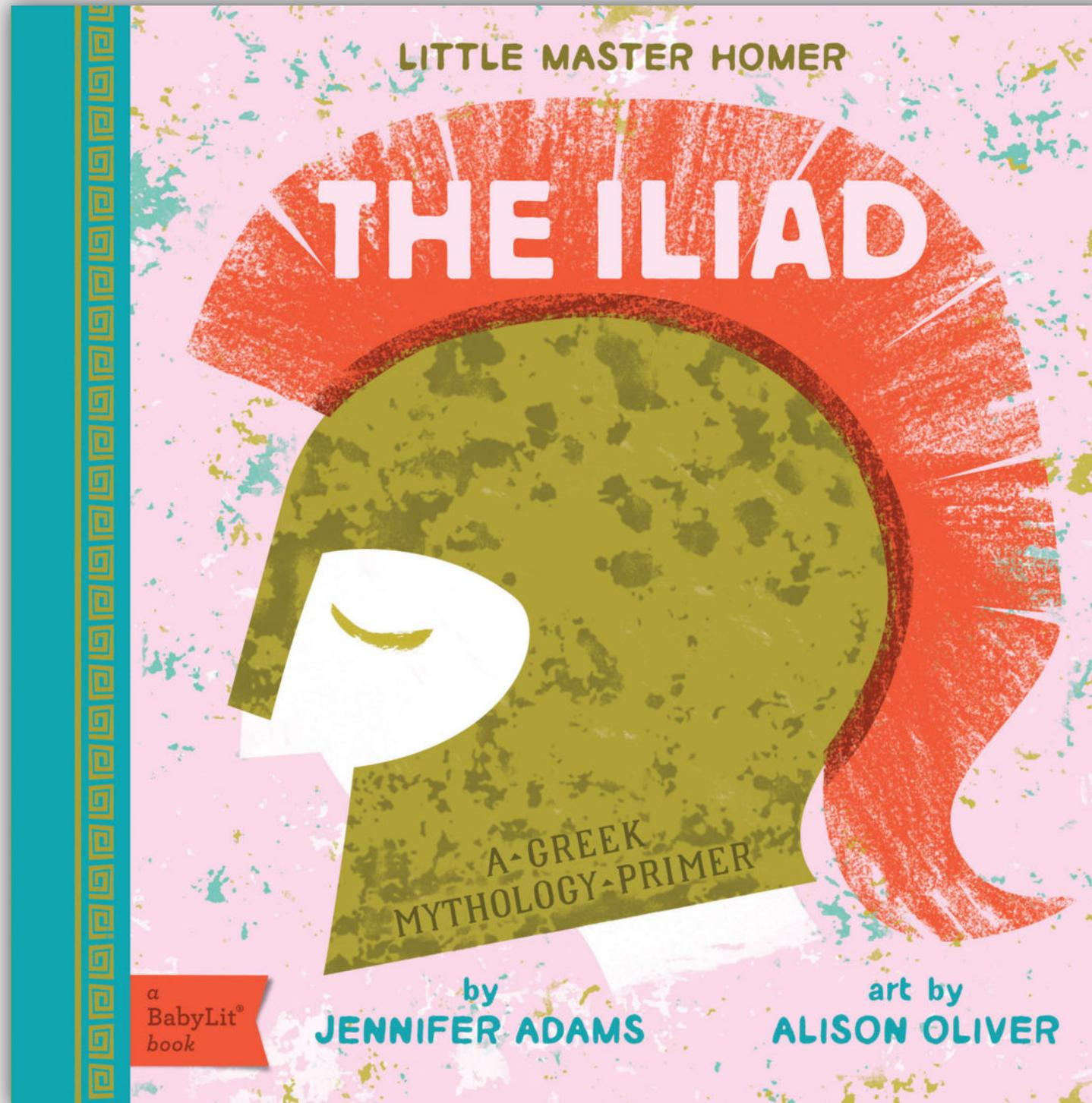
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F24 CHILDREN'S



**The Iliad: A Greek Mythology Primer (A BabyLit Book)**

By Jennifer Adams • Illustrated by Alison Oliver

Board • \$11.99 • 6.875" x 6.875" • 22 Pages • Materials Available Now • 978-1-4236-6737-7 • World Rights



F24 CHILDREN'S



# PANTHEON

In Greek mythology,  
there are twelve gods  
and goddesses who rule  
from Mount Olympus.  
They are called the  
Twelve Olympians or  
the Pantheon.



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**ZEUS**

**King of the Gods**

**HERA**

**Queen of the Gods**

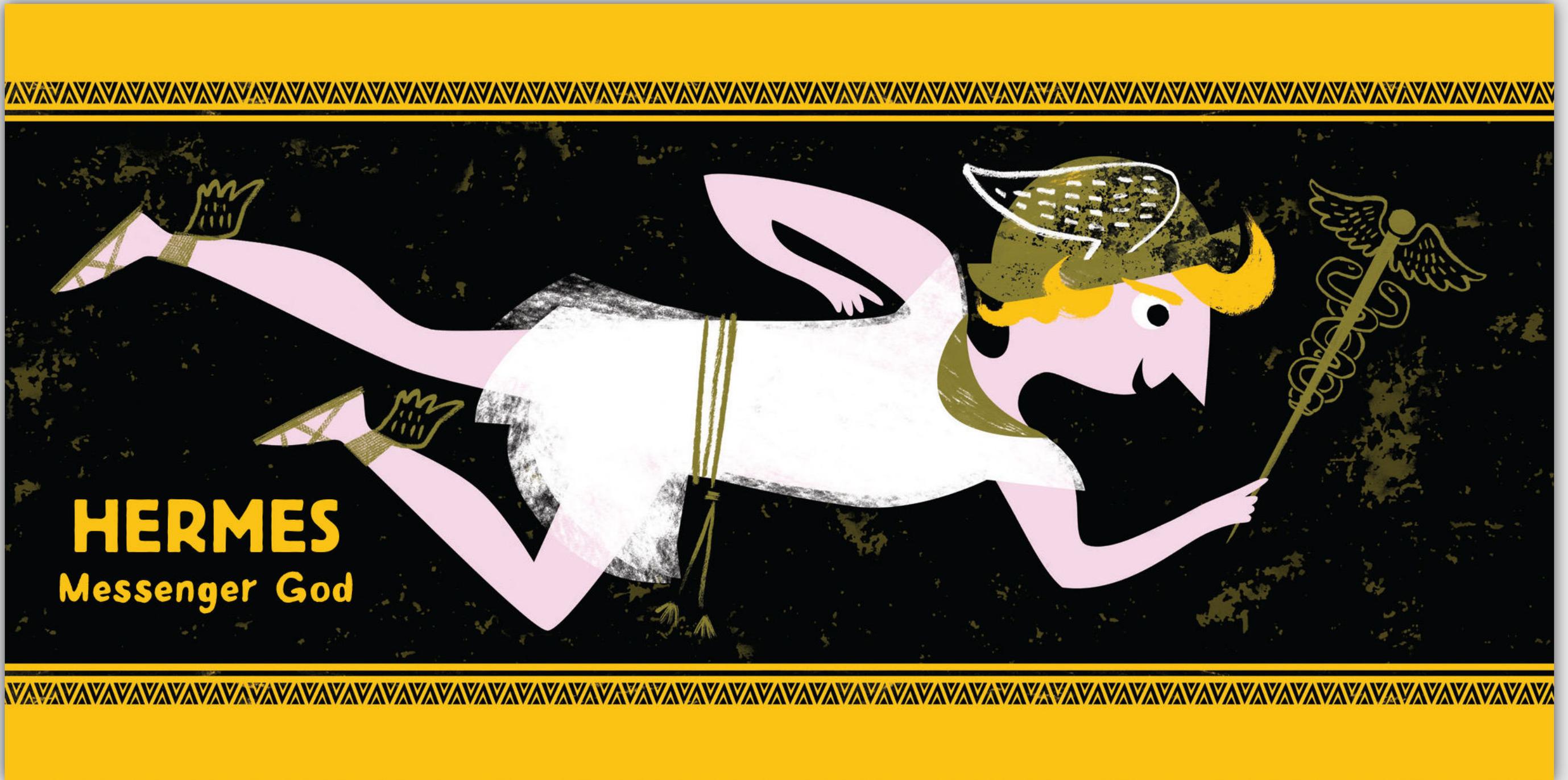
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**HERMES**  
Messenger God

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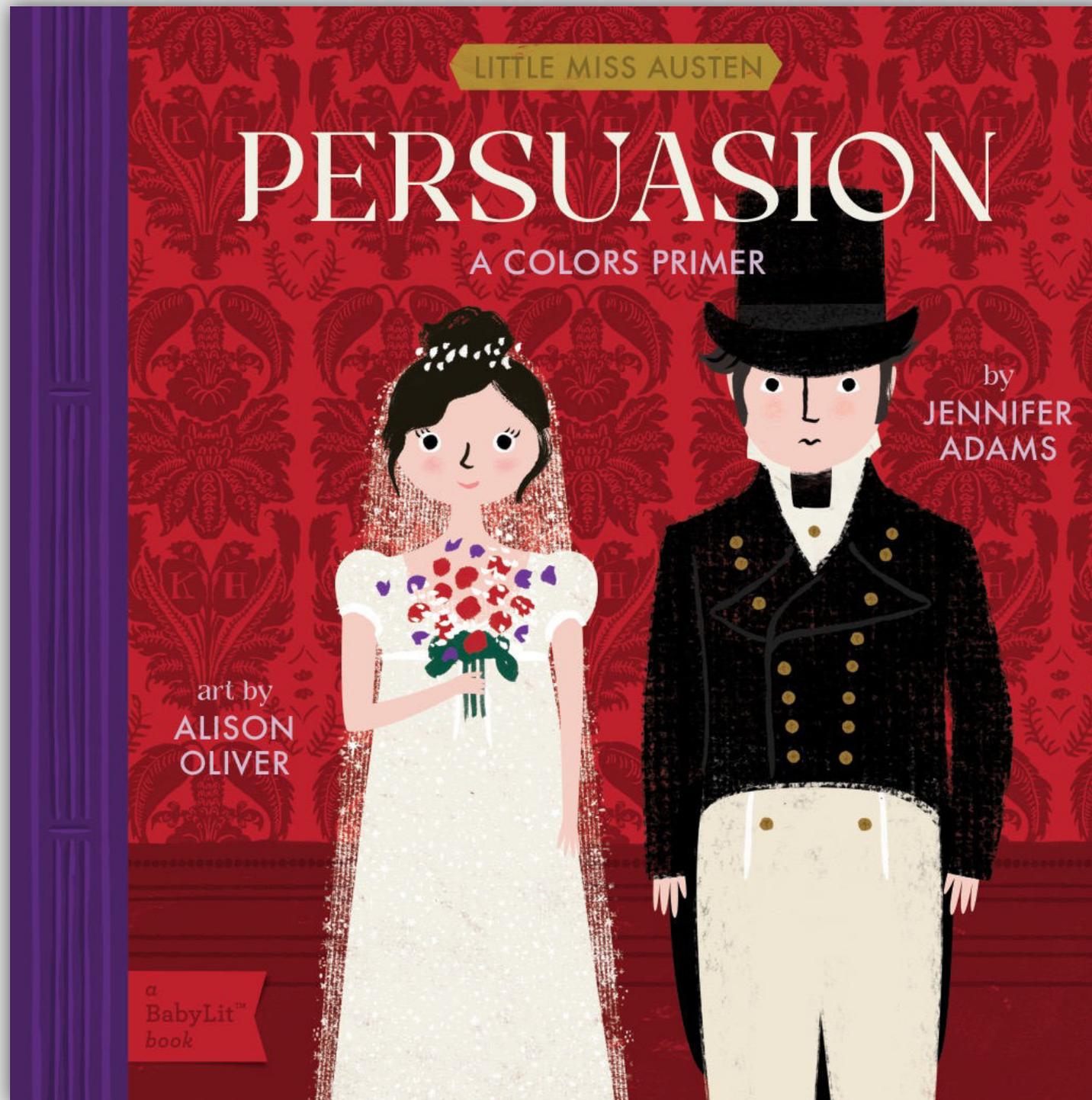
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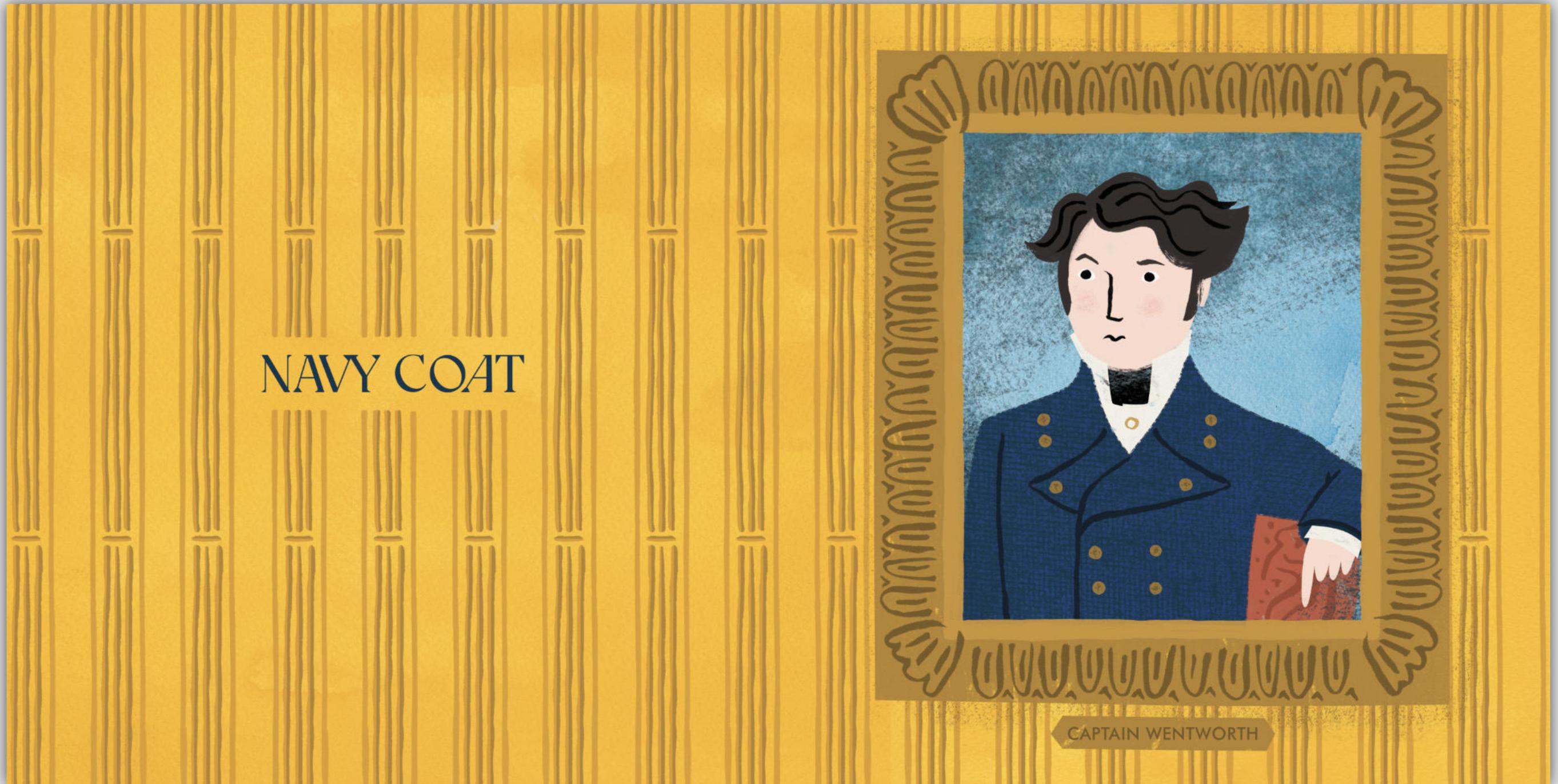
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# NAVY COAT

CAPTAIN WENTWORTH

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## SAGE DRESS

ANNE ELLIOT

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# MAUVE RIBBONS



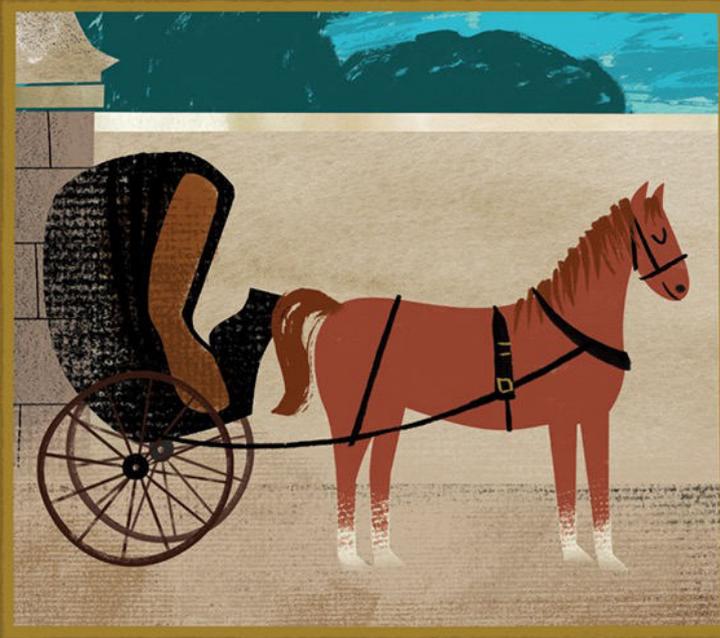
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## CHESTNUT HORSE

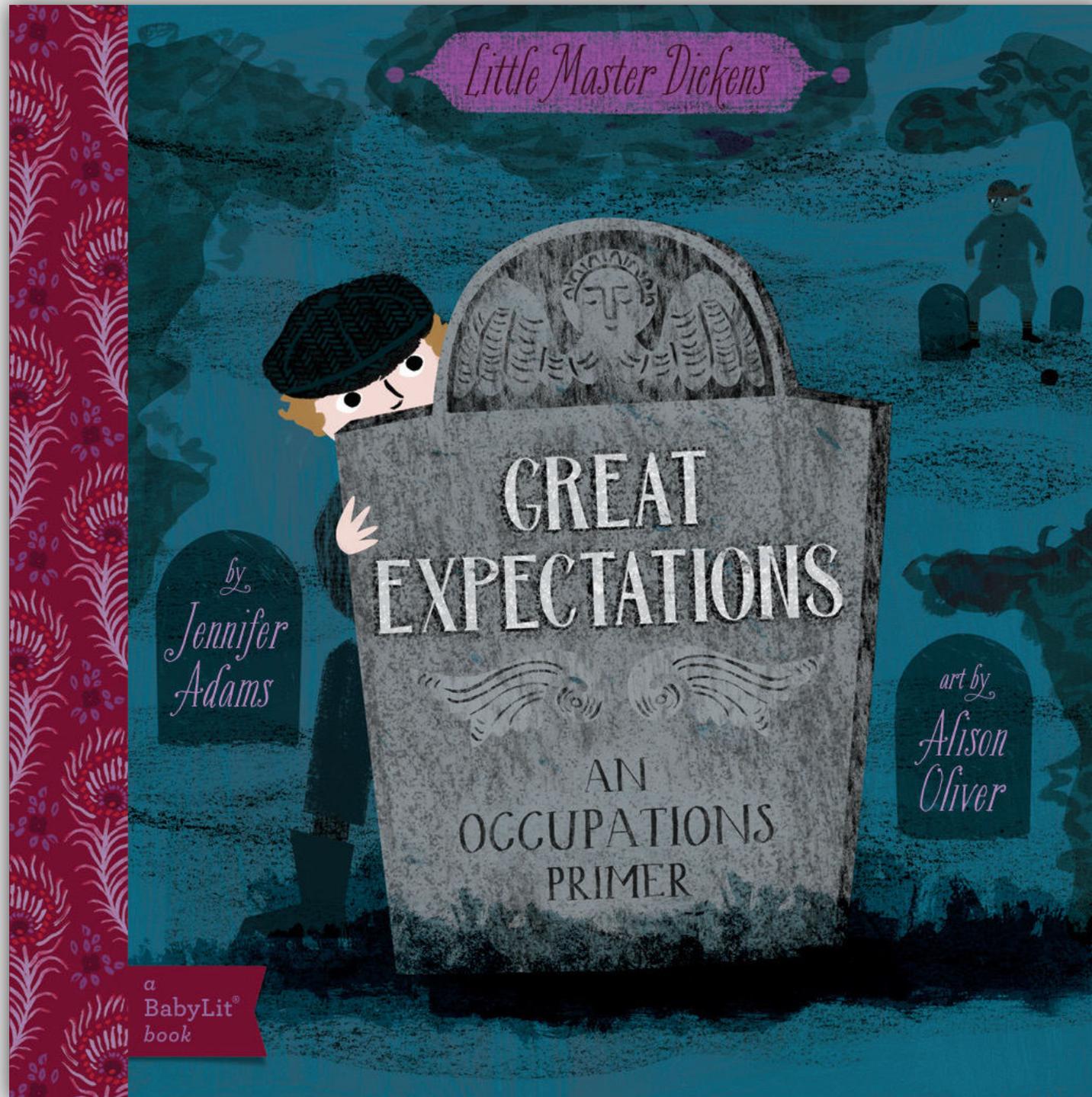
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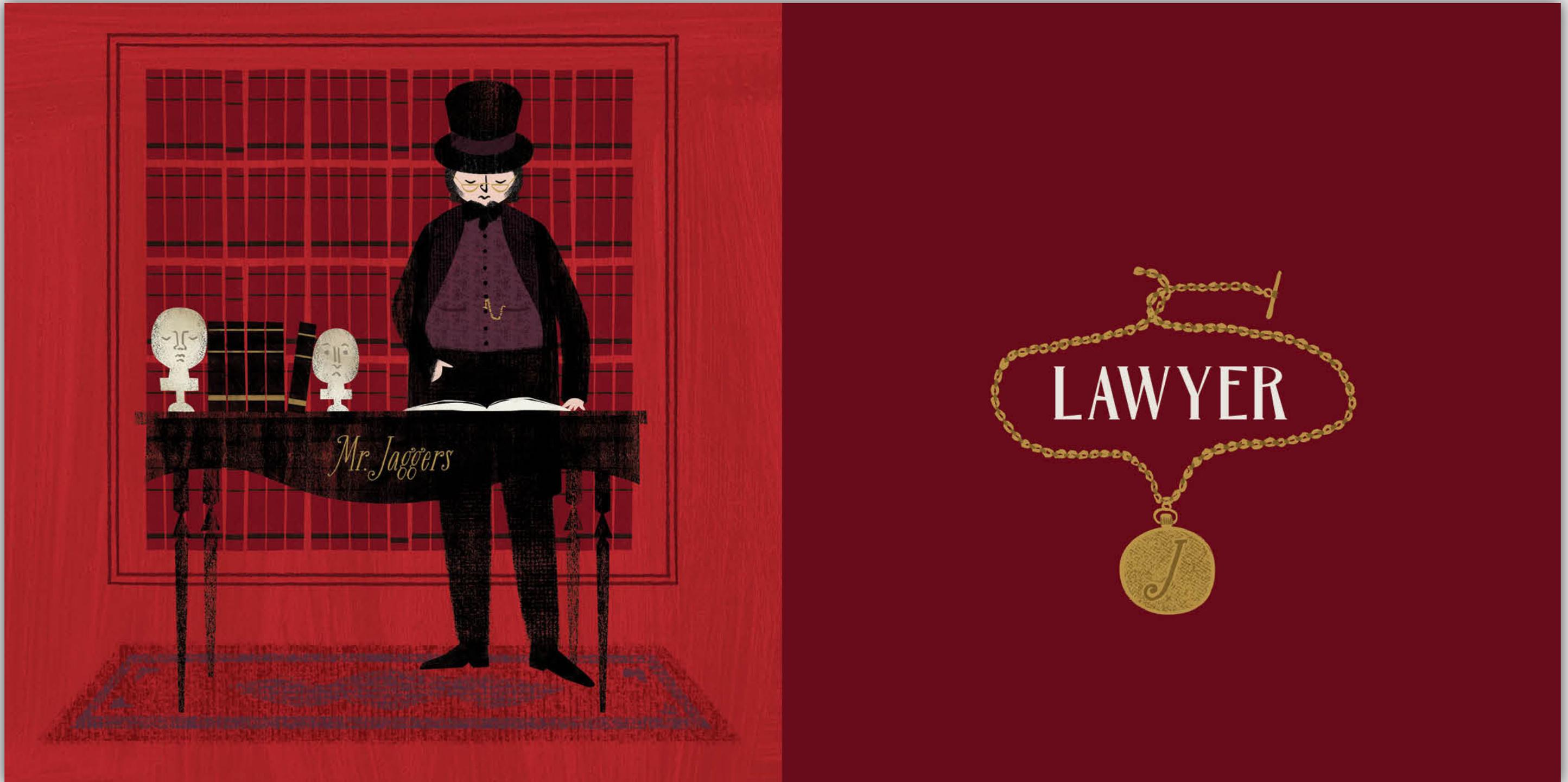
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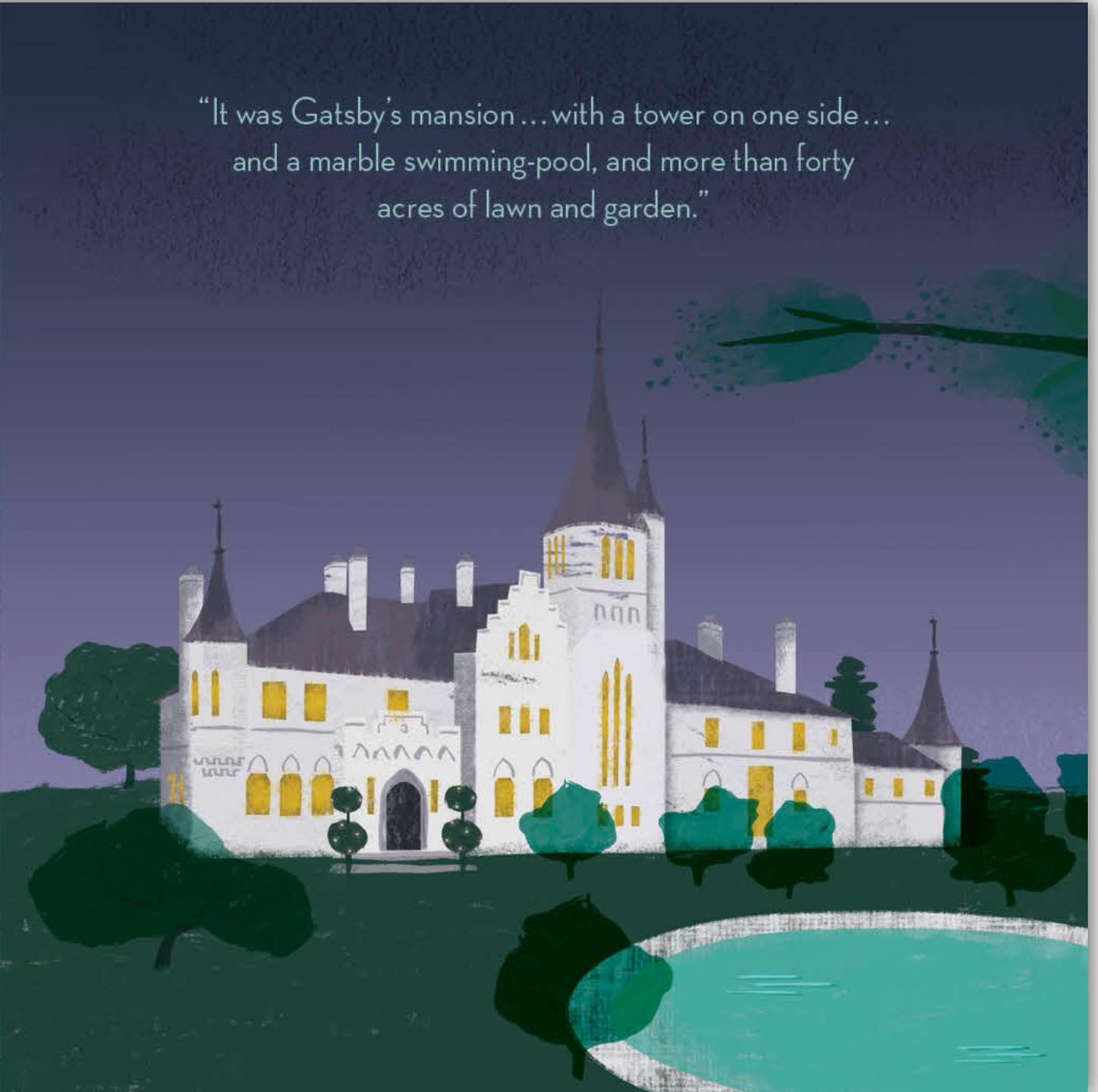
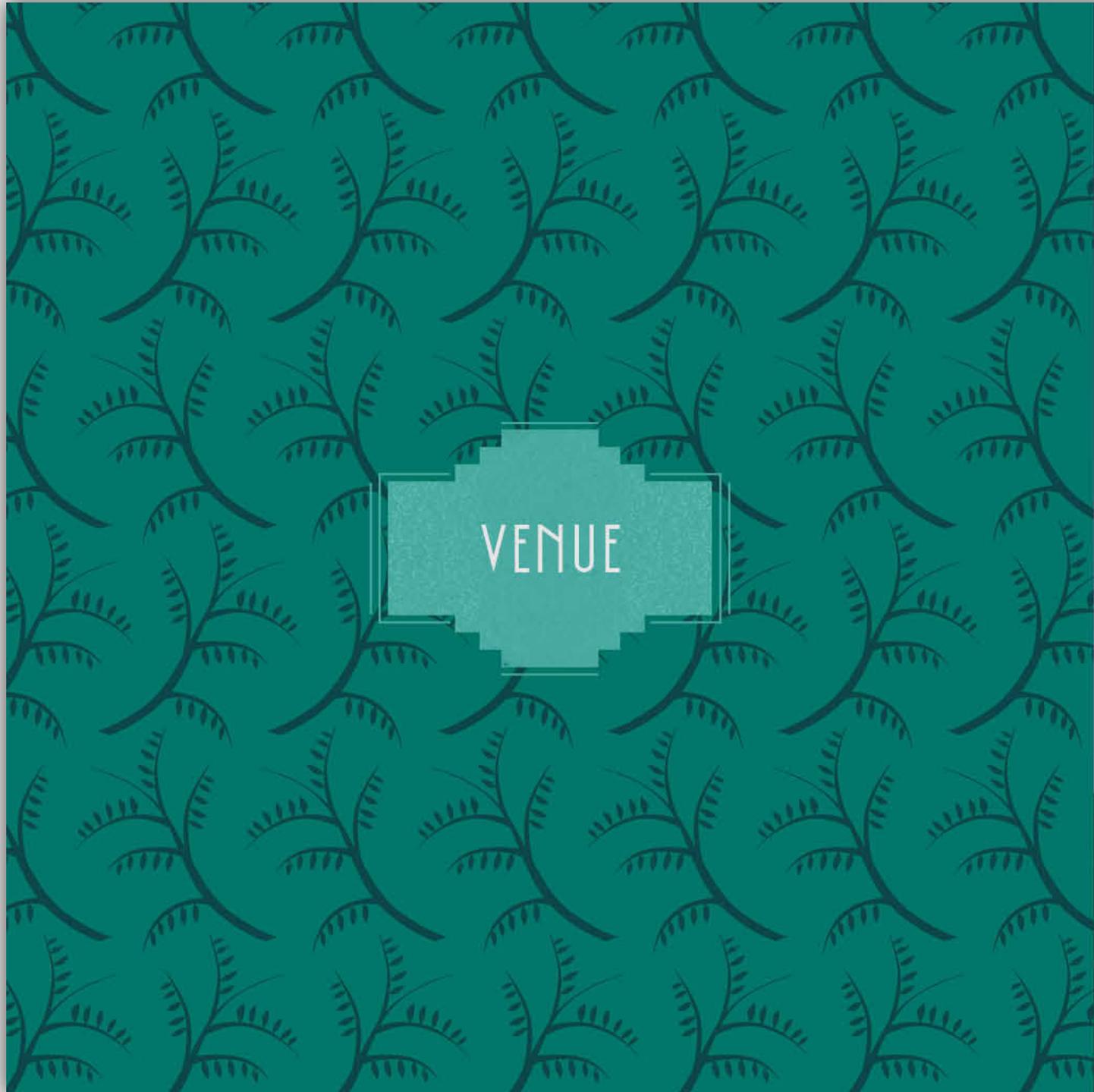
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“He took out shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel ... shirts with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and apple-green and lavender and faint orange, with monograms of indian blue.”

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## REFRESHMENTS



“On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors d'oeuvres, spiced baked hams crowded against salads ... and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold.”

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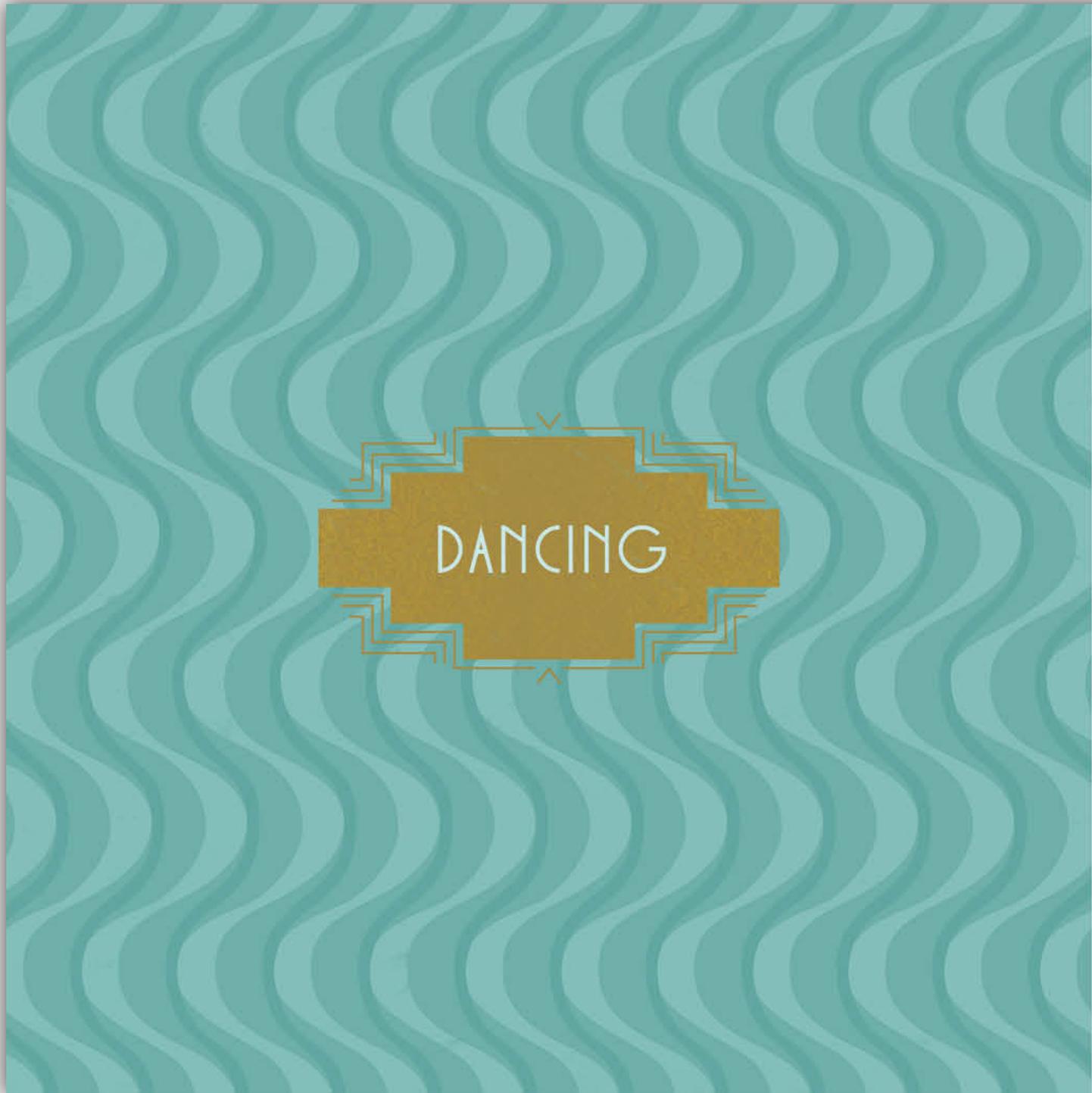
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## THE DAY AFTER



“On Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.”

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## Birdsong (A Layered View Book)

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## Birdsong (A Layered View Book)

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F24 CHILDREN'S



Bluebirds share their morning greetings  
as other birds offer happy tweetings.

Robins and blackbirds sing along,  
adding their cheerful notes to the song.

## **Birdsong (A Layered View Book)**

Illustrated by Margarida Esteves

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F24 CHILDREN'S



This musical dawn chorus  
is sung by birds from the city to the forest;

each adding their very special sound  
heard from the treetops all around.

## Birdsong (A Layered View Book)

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F24 CHILDREN'S



While every feathered friend  
sings in their own unique way,

their voices joined together in birdsong  
creates a beautiful start to the day.

## Birdsong (A Layered View Book)

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S25 CHILDREN'S



**Some Bunnies (A Layered View Book)**

Illustrated by Lydia Nichols

Diecut Layered Board • \$17.99 • 8.5" x 8.5" • 12 Pages • Materials Available Now • 978-1-4236-6805-3 • World Rights



S25 CHILDREN'S



Some bunnies can sit in baskets  
because they are so small.

Others are quite large  
and don't fit at all.

### Some Bunnies (A Layered View Book)

Illustrated by Lydia Nichols

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S25 CHILDREN'S



Some bunnies live in a field.  
Some bunnies live in a barn.

Others live in a house  
and play with balls of yarn.

### Some Bunnies (A Layered View Book)

Illustrated by Lydia Nichols

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S25 CHILDREN'S



Some bunnies have cotton ball tails.  
Some bunnies have long ears that flop.

They all use their feet  
to hippity-hop.

### Some Bunnies (A Layered View Book)

Illustrated by Lydia Nichols

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S25 CHILDREN'S



Whether they have long fluffy fur  
or short and sleek,

bunnies wiggle their cute noses  
at everyone they meet.

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No matter where they live  
or what they look like—



to those who love them,  
all bunnies are just right!

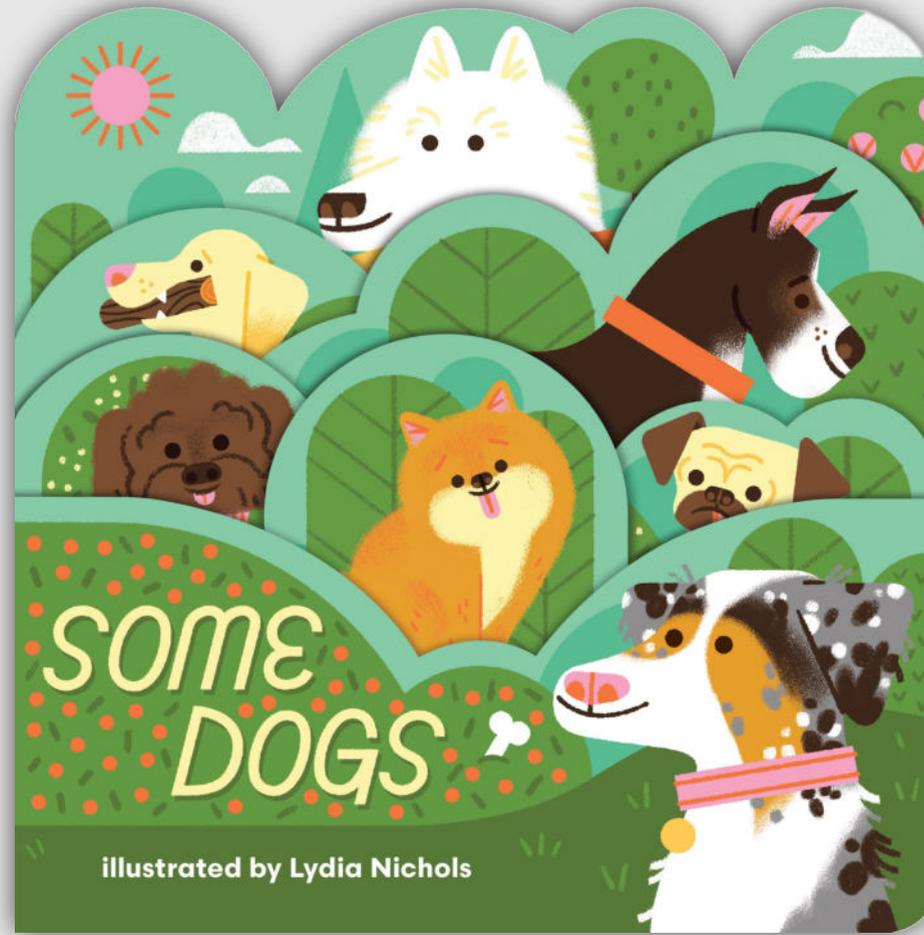
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*All titles illustrated by Lydia Nichols*

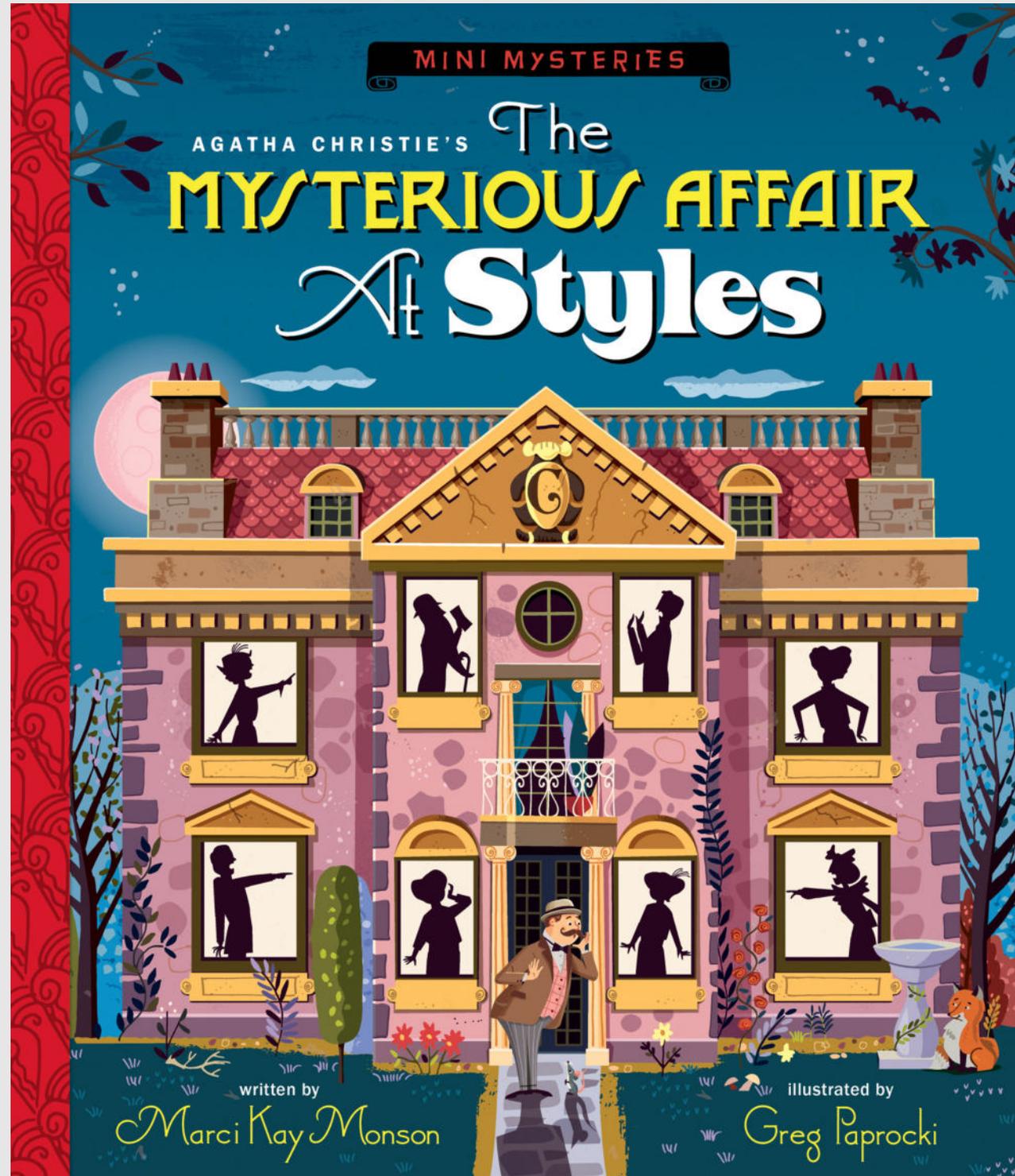
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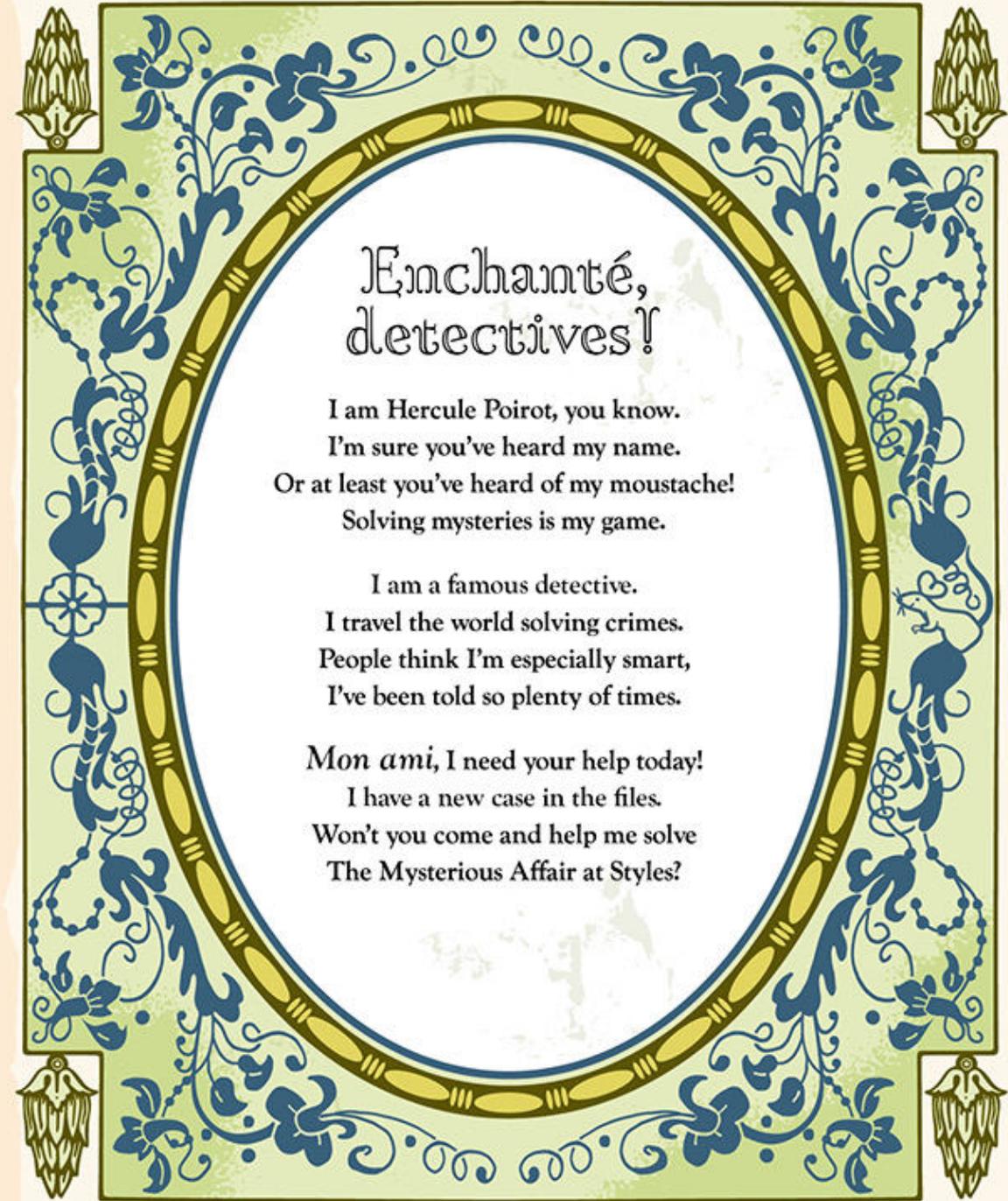
## The Mysterious Affair at Styles

By Marci Kay Monson • Illustrated by Greg Paprocki

Jacketless Hardcover • \$18.99 • 9" x 10.5" • 32 Pages • Materials Available Now • 978-1-4236-6756-8 • World Rights



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Enchanté,  
detectives!

I am Hercule Poirot, you know.  
I'm sure you've heard my name.  
Or at least you've heard of my moustache!  
Solving mysteries is my game.

I am a famous detective.  
I travel the world solving crimes.  
People think I'm especially smart,  
I've been told so plenty of times.

*Mon ami*, I need your help today!  
I have a new case in the files.  
Won't you come and help me solve  
The Mysterious Affair at Styles?

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There once was a family named Cavendish who lived in a house named Styles. A quiet home in a small English town, the family was all smiles.

Until . . .

Mr. Cavendish died and left Emily, and his sons, Lawrence and John. Years later, Emily met Alfred. Alas, the three men did not get along.

Some thought Alfred was greedy, including Evelyn, Emily's friend. But Emily thought he was perfect, and Evelyn left in the end.

### ACTIVITY

Can you match each family member to the emotion they are feeling? Draw a line with your finger from one column to the other.

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| JOHN     | IN LOVE    |
| CYNTHIA  | PROUD      |
| DORCAS   | THOUGHTFUL |
| ALFRED   | SAD        |
| EMILY    | ANGRY      |
| HASTINGS | WORRIED    |
| MARY     | TIRED      |
| LAWRENCE | SILLY      |



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Early one morning, John woke up to find that Emily was sick. The doors to her room were all locked, so getting inside was a trick.

But there was no hope for poor Emily. When they broke in, she was gone. She died in her beautiful bedroom, just as the night turned to dawn.

And yet something didn't feel right. The scene was not adding up. What if Emily was not really sick? Was a poison of sorts in her cup?

### ACTIVITY

Can you find these 6 clues in the room?

- TEACUP
- PURPLE DISPATCH CASE
- CARPET STAIN
- DARK GREEN FABRIC
- CANDLE GREASE
- CRUMPLED PAPER



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Now is the time when *I* come in!  
The family had heard of my history.  
I'm known for solving the trickiest crimes.  
This won't long stay a mystery.

I begin my search by asking  
every person in the house  
what they saw and heard that day,  
I even question the mouse.

Two people heard an angry fight;  
voices raised and yelling.  
Emily Cavendish and a man.  
Who? There was no telling.

### ACTIVITY

Can you figure out who Emily  
was talking to? Connect the dots  
with your finger.



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As I talk to each witness at hand,  
I start gathering clues.  
I even question Evelyn.  
Who came back when she heard the news.

A footprint outside the window.  
A piece of fabric, dark green.  
Could someone have come into her room?  
Then slipped outside unseen?

Everyone thinks it is Alfred.  
They believe he's a very bad man.  
But he wasn't home when it happened,  
Unless he was the one who ran?

### ACTIVITY

Using your finger, help Poirot get back  
to town through the maze.

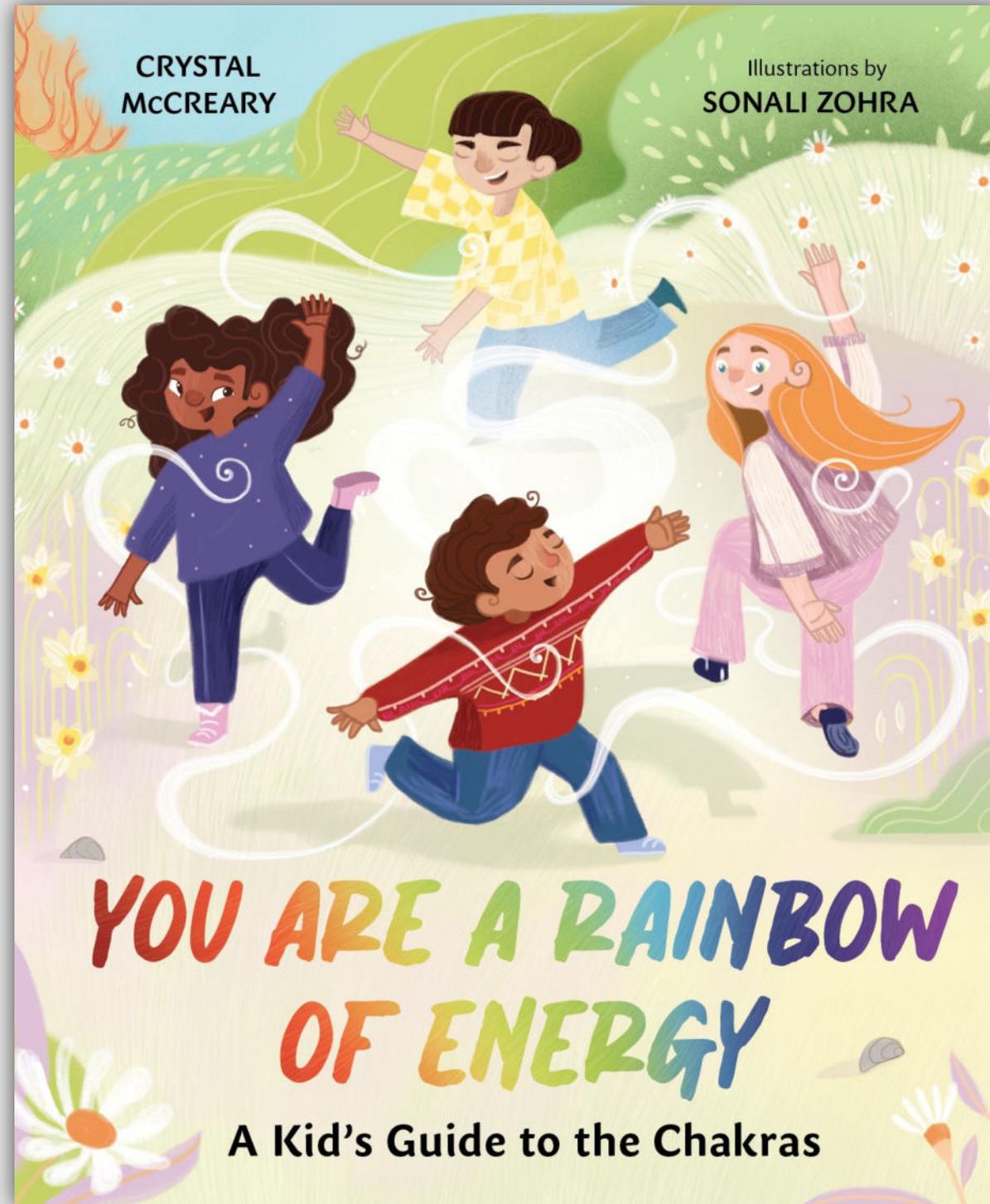
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S25 CHILDREN'S



**You Are a Rainbow of Energy: A Kid's Guide to the Chakras**

By Crystal McCreary • Illustrated by Sonali Zohra

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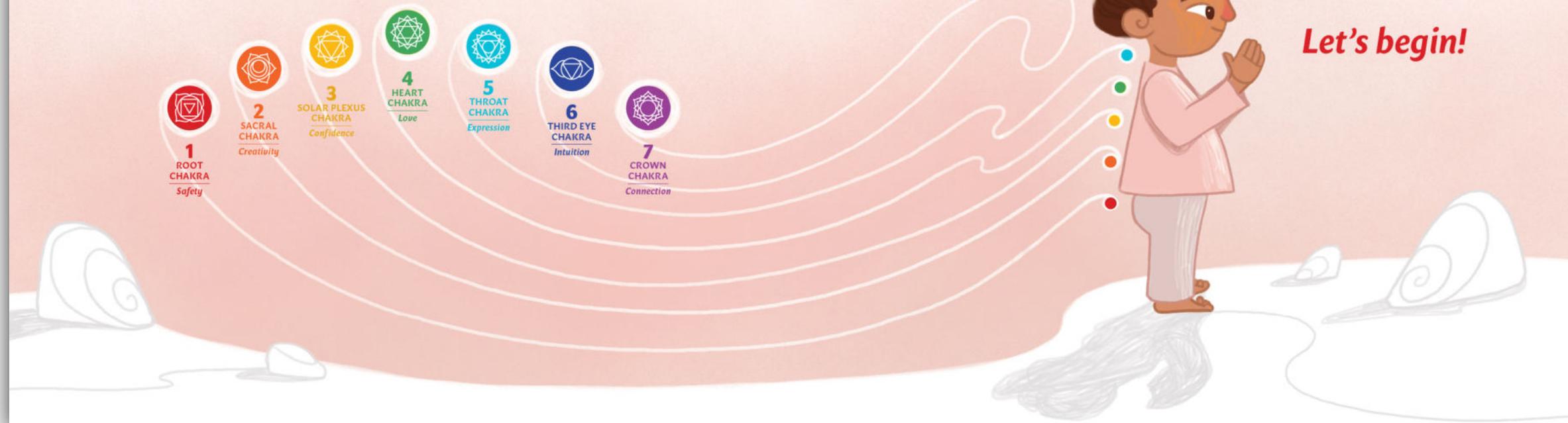
**T**hat is what this book is all about: the seven energy centers in your body that affect how you feel, think, and act. The ancient yogis (people who practice yoga) called these energy centers **CHAKRAS**. Each chakra has a color and a location in your body. Together, they make a glorious rainbow bridge. Our prana, or life force, travels along this bridge. Feelings, sensations, thoughts, experiences, memories, and actions come from the chakra energy centers, too. This book will help you keep your rainbow bridge in tip-top shape so your amazing life force can travel through your body without any traffic jams.

The coolest thing about learning about your chakras is that when you do, you will see much more than your body, skin, and hair. You will see and feel the rainbow of colors inside yourself and in everyone around you!

**A NOTE FOR YOUNG READERS:** When you first begin learning about the chakras, you will need the help of someone older to learn all the new words. Read this book together, then you both can explore the activities

and practices. You can do the practices in any order you like. On some days, you might prefer to have a quiet practice with just poses and softly spoken affirmations. On others, you might want to be loud and do only the Make Some Noise practices. Sometimes you might want to do everything at once. Be sure to ask for help with the practices when you need it. Once you are familiar with the poses and the words, you may choose to practice on your own in a quiet place at home.

Just like a rainbow, our adventure starts with the first chakra and the color red, located at the very base of the spine—the bones along the center of your back that help you stretch, shrink, twist, bend, arch, and round your back. Then we travel up the spine to the colors orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and finally violet. Can you see the rainbow bridge yet? If not, you will soon.



*Let's begin!*

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## 2nd Chakra

*As you rock and roll,  
feel the warm orange glow  
flow up your spine from  
your pelvic bowl!*



**LOCATION**  
Sacrum (bone at the  
back of the pelvis)

**SANSKRIT NAME**  
Svadhithana  
("svAA-thiSH-TAA-nuh")

**COLOR**  
Orange

**ELEMENT**  
Water

**S**ometimes big emotions can feel overwhelming, like we are little boats in a giant storm! Imagine yourself as a boat with an anchor. The anchor that can help keep you steady is your body and your breath. Drop your anchor: feel the parts of you that touch the ground and take a deep breath. Breathe and feel the ground for a few moments to connect to the steadiness inside you.

Now picture the back, the sides, and the front of your pelvis. It is shaped just like a bowl. Place your hands around the sides of your hips and feel the bowl. Take a few breaths and imagine a warm orange light filling that bowl.

## Seated Cat-Cow Pose

*Rock and roll your back like a cat;  
soothe the swirling, twirling feelings  
that need attention and care.*

**1** Sit in a comfortable position.



**2** Inhale, lift your head, and arch your back. Exhale, scoop your tail under, tuck your chin, and round your back like a cat.



**3** Move with a smooth rhythm, as if a gentle river flows up and down with your spine. Keep breathing and let your spine ride the gentle waves of your breath.

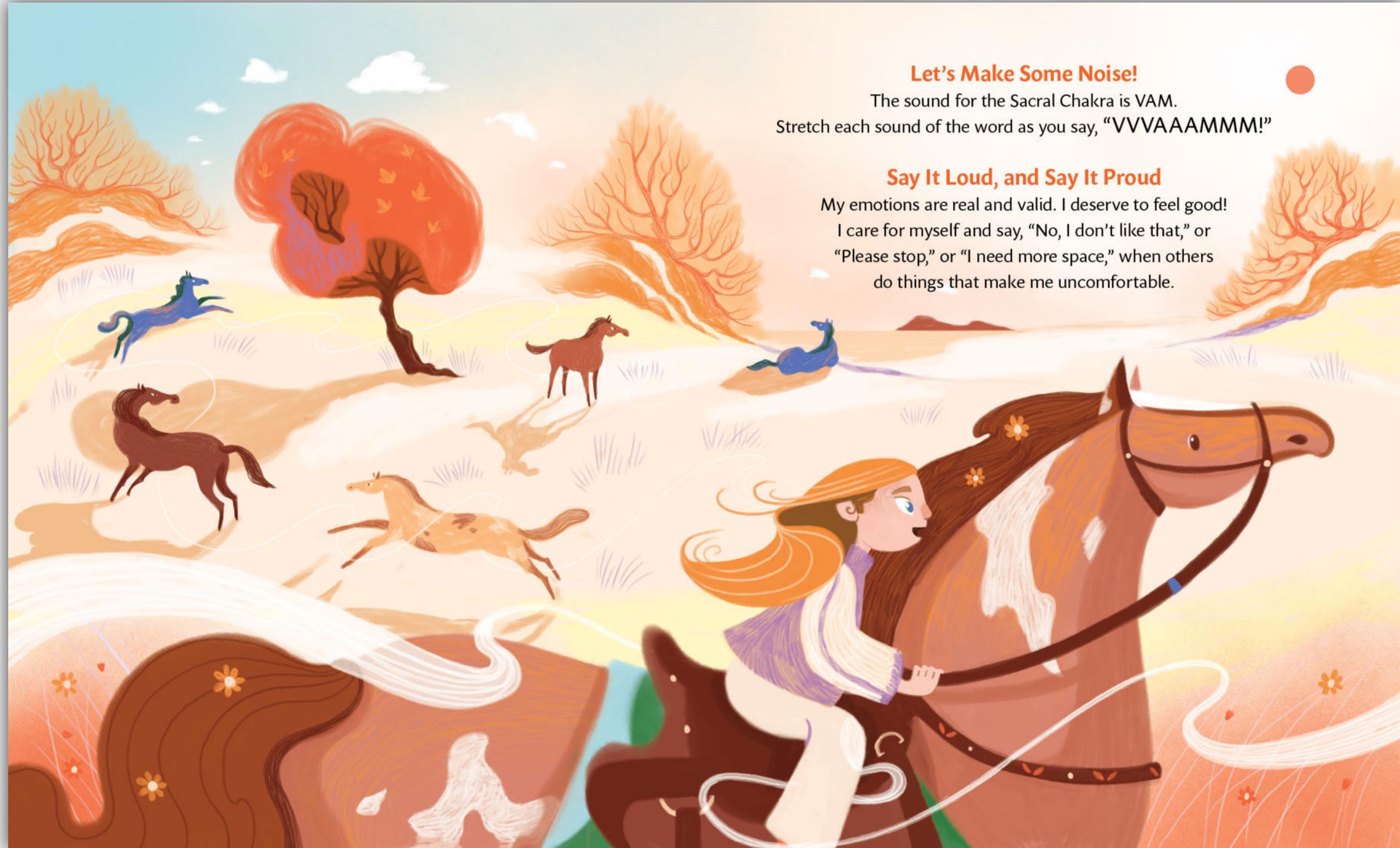
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**Let's Make Some Noise!**

The sound for the Sacral Chakra is VAM.  
Stretch each sound of the word as you say, "VVVAAAMMM!"

**Say It Loud, and Say It Proud**

My emotions are real and valid. I deserve to feel good!  
I care for myself and say, "No, I don't like that," or  
"Please stop," or "I need more space," when others  
do things that make me uncomfortable.

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## 4th Chakra

*Let your green light shine  
from your heart!*

**LOCATION**

Heart

**SANSKRIT NAME**

Anahata ("un-AA-huh-Thuh")

**COLOR**

Green

**ELEMENT**

Air

**T**here is a part of you that always knows just what to do—in an argument, a fight, when you know you are wrong, or when you know you are right. Take a deep breath and let yourself walk in the other person's shoes. Feel what they feel. Then listen to your heart. It will guide you to the caring thing to do!



### Cobra Pose

*Open your chest wide; feel and connect to others  
in a big-hearted and caring way.*

**1** Lie down on your belly. Place your hands alongside your lower ribs. Press your hands, feet, and hips into the ground.

**2** Breathe in and gently lift your head, neck, and chest.



**3** Breathe out and lower everything back down. Do this a few times, lifting your Cobra head and heart as you inhale. Exhale as you lower your Cobra.

## You Are a Rainbow of Energy: A Kid's Guide to the Chakras

By Crystal McCreary • Illustrated by Sonali Zohra

Jacketless Hardcover • \$18.99 • 9.375" x 11.375" • 36 Pages • Materials Available Now • 978-1-4236-6565-6 • World Rights



S25 CHILDREN'S



**Let's Make Some Noise!**

The sound for the Heart Chakra is YAM.  
Say it loud and proud: "YYYYAAAMMM!"

**Say It Loud, and Say It Proud**

I am lovable. I am loving to myself and others.  
When in doubt, I listen to and trust my heart.

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# 7th Chakra

*Royal violet light  
is your birthright!*

**LOCATION**  
Crown (just above your head)

**SANSKRIT NAME**  
Sahasrara ("suh-huss-AAA-ruh")

**COLOR**  
Violet

**ELEMENT**  
Thought

Sometimes when you feel down or alone, it can be hard to remember what it feels like when you are healthy, joyful, and feel good on the inside. Looking at photos of yourself doing things you love with people you love can remind you of who you are. You are a rainbow, glowing bright, bringing all the parts of yourself together in a vision of color and light.

Take a full breath as you imagine the dark indigo light from your Third Eye Chakra turning to violet, a vibrant purple hue, as you move up to your Crown Chakra. This color expands beyond your head as if you are wearing a large, regal crown.

Take three to five breaths. As you sit, imagine zooming out as you look at yourself through a camera lens. Take in the full view.

**You are a rainbow.**



## Wide-Legged Standing Pose

*Let your strength, power, and truth fill the room with all the colors and beauty of the brightest rainbow bridge!*

**1** Stand with your feet wide apart.

**2** Fold forward and place your hands on the floor shoulder-width apart.

**3** Release the top of your head to the ground. If it doesn't touch the ground, place a block (or a book or two) in front of you to bring the ground up to your head. Take five deep breaths, feeling your head connect to the surface it touches.



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**Say It Loud, and Say It Proud**

I am love. I am open to new ideas.  
I trust that the wisdom I need is on its way.

**Now It's Time to Get Quiet**

Close your eyes and visualize the beautiful rainbow  
in you. Can you see, feel, hear, touch, and taste all the  
colors of the rainbow that make you *you*?

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## A Little Chakra History and Science

The word **CHAKRA** means *wheel* in the ancient language called Sanskrit. The ancient yogis who spoke Sanskrit and lived in India more than 3,000 years ago believed that balancing these constantly spinning wheels of energy was an important part of healthy living. They taught that taking care of your chakra energy helps you stay healthy, smart, and strong, just like getting a good night's sleep and eating nutritious foods do. The energy from your chakras has a big effect on your emotions, your thoughts, your actions, and all your experiences with others. So understanding the chakras can help you feel better about yourself and the world around you.

Some scientists agree with the wisdom passed down by the ancient yogis. These scientists noticed that the bundles of nerves found along the spine were located in similar places to the main chakra centers. Nerves contain tiny bits of information that our five senses gather from the world around us. This information travels through the nervous system along the spine to the brain. Here, it is translated into a to-do list for the body, like "Hand, move away from the hot stove *now!*"

## How to Balance Your Chakra Energy at Home

In the beginning, you will have to pay very close attention to the feelings in your body (sensations) and your mind (emotions). Being curious and paying close attention to feelings will help you notice when your chakra energy is moving slowly—like rush-hour traffic—and when you may need to boost your energy in one chakra area or another. For example, regular stomachaches might be your Navel Chakra telling you that your belly needs better

food or care. Constant headaches are often the body's way of telling you that you need to pay some attention to stress (feeling overwhelmed) or nutrition (healthy foods). Here are some tips for giving your chakras a regular tune-up so that these spinning wheels can turn easily and pass energy along through your body:

- + Daily yoga practice
- + Slow, deep breathing in and out of your nose
- + Eating "the rainbow," or lots of different colored foods at every meal
- + Drinking lots of water (instead of sugary drinks)
- + Daily exercise like walking, running, jumping rope, dancing to your favorite songs, or playing a sport

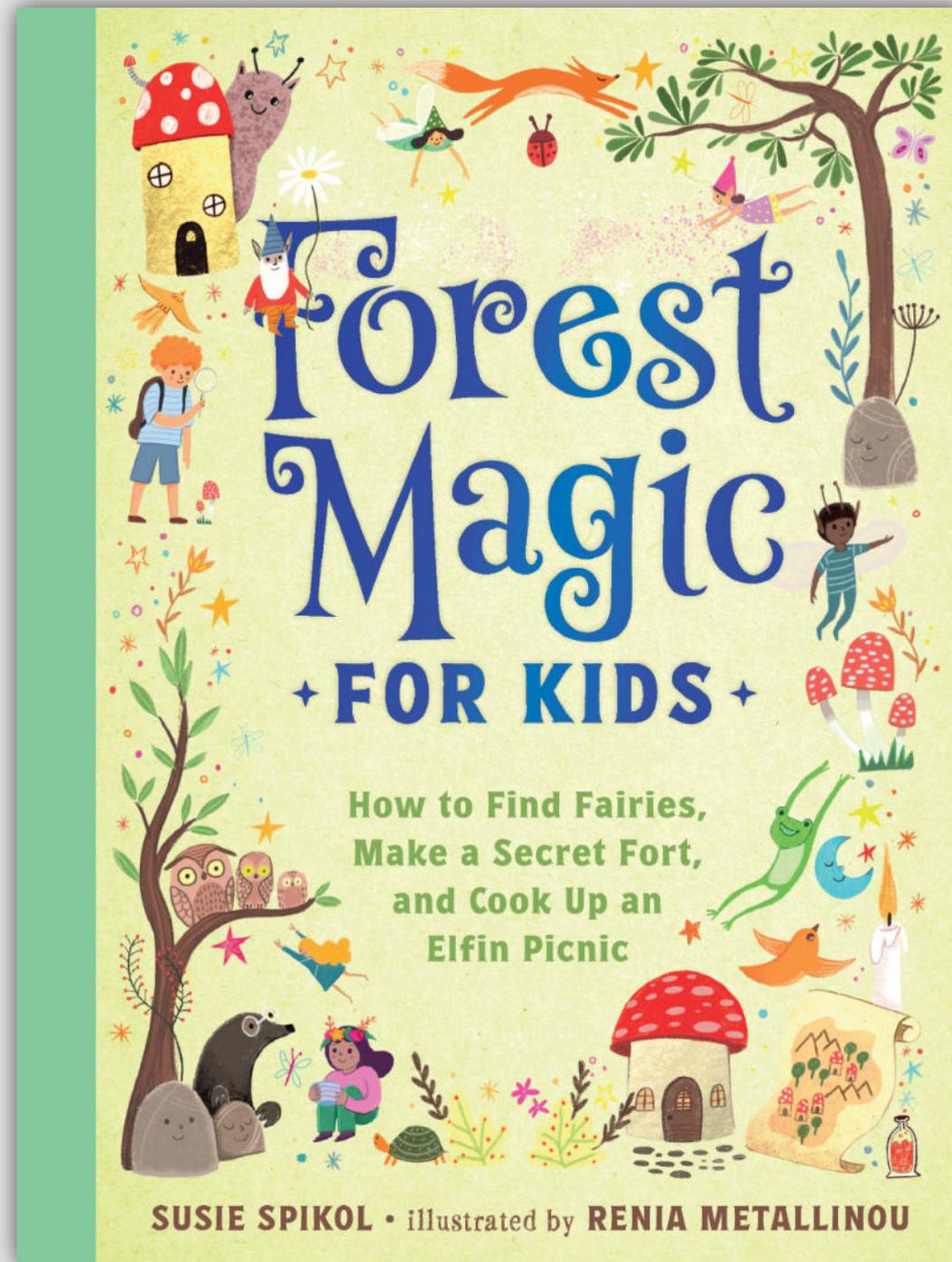
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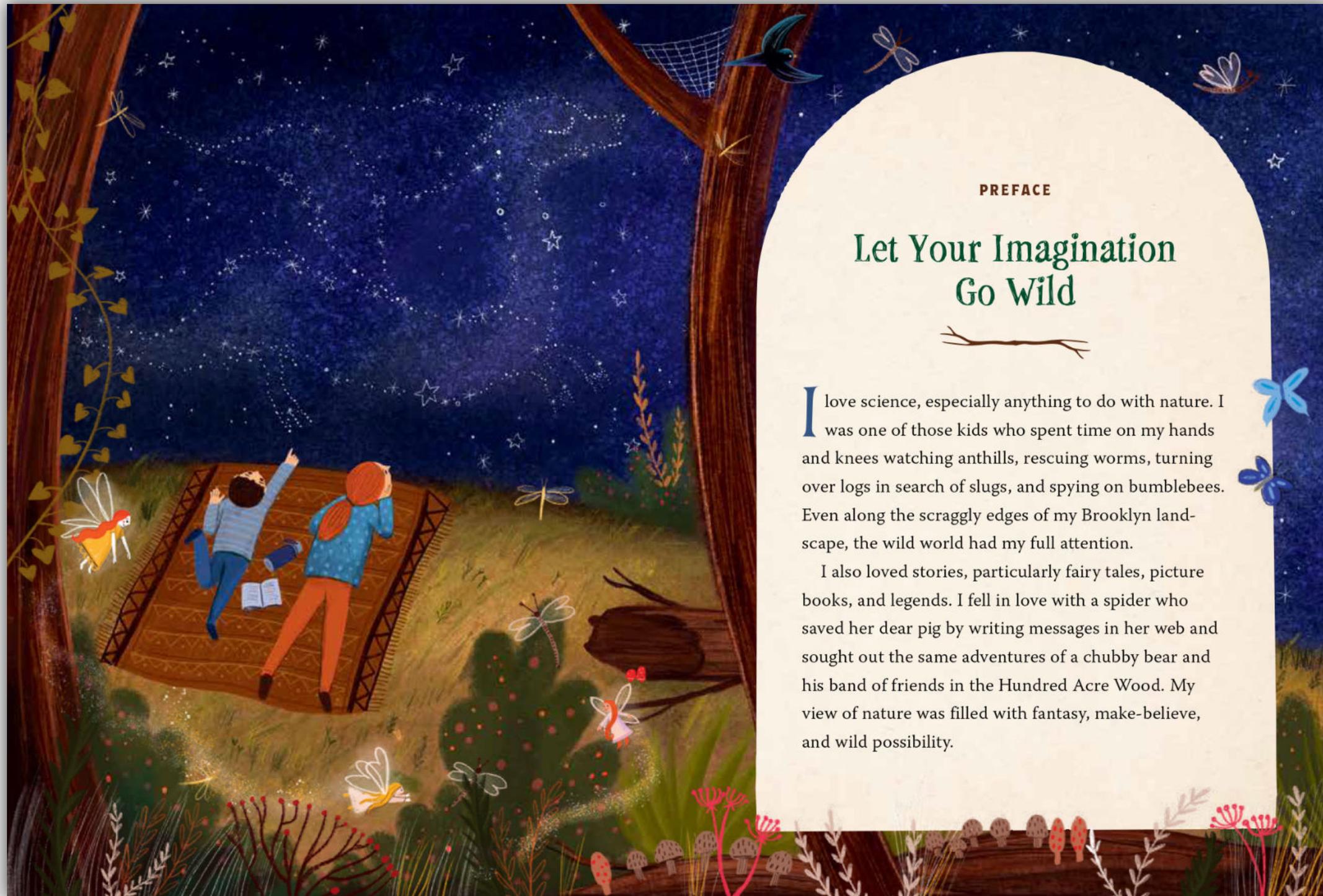
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S25 CHILDREN'S



PREFACE

## Let Your Imagination Go Wild

I love science, especially anything to do with nature. I was one of those kids who spent time on my hands and knees watching anthills, rescuing worms, turning over logs in search of slugs, and spying on bumblebees. Even along the scraggly edges of my Brooklyn landscape, the wild world had my full attention.

I also loved stories, particularly fairy tales, picture books, and legends. I fell in love with a spider who saved her dear pig by writing messages in her web and sought out the same adventures of a chubby bear and his band of friends in the Hundred Acre Wood. My view of nature was filled with fantasy, make-believe, and wild possibility.

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ACTIVITY 1  
TOP TEN TOOLS FOR A  
FOREST MAGIC SEARCH

1. Secret journal (a blank sketchbook, or check out how to make your own in the next activity)
2. One or two pencils
3. Colored pencils or crayons
4. Binoculars
5. Magnifying glass
6. Vegetable peeler or kid's pocketknife
7. Flashlight
8. Natural twine or jute
9. Plastic bags for collecting treasures
10. Your imagination



ACTIVITY 2  
DIY SECRET NOTEBOOK

**BUILD YOUR SKILLS**  
PLANNING, CREATING, AND DESIGNING

If you are going on a magic forest adventure, you will want a place to keep track of all your fabulous and mysterious discoveries—a place to write, draw, and map all your finds. Any notebook, or even scraps of paper, will do. But imagine if you had your own secret notebook.

Make a handmade journal just waiting to be filled with maps to the queen bee's castle, detailed plans for your gnome home, potion recipes, thrilling stories of your magical encounters, and so much more. It is a notebook with no end because you will always be able to add more paper as you have more and more enchanting adventures.

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CHAPTER I

## The Green Team: Trees, Leaves, and Wildflower Magic



Look around. Green plants are all around you: slim blades of grass, lush moss, bright flowers, and mighty trees. There are nearly 400,000 different types of plants on our Earth, and without these oxygen-producing beings, life on our planet wouldn't be possible. Not only do they supply us with the air we breathe, but they are also the fuel to our world's food system. Most animals depend on these green powerhouses for energy. A little cricket nibbles on a stalk of grass. The cricket is eaten by a small green snake who is, in turn, eaten by a young raccoon. The raccoon then becomes a bobcat's meal. Everyone is someone else's lunch, and it all begins with green plants.

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ACTIVITY 3  
THE SECRET WORLD OF  
WILDFLOWER FAIRIES

**BUILD YOUR SKILLS**  
IMAGINING, SEARCHING, AND OBSERVING

Fairies and flowers are often shown together. Stories from long ago tell of how some of the fay folk—that's another term for fairies—make their home in the blossoms and flowers found in gardens, meadows, and forests. Fairies are often seen as the living spirits of the plant world and as the guardians of nature, protectors of the more-than-human world. Look at books, art, and movies, and you will see fairies dressed in delicate clothing featuring flowers, blossoms, leaves, seeds, nuts, and stems. On their backs are wings resembling butterflies, dragonflies, and even

bumblebees. Some glow in the dark like fireflies, and others can appear to us as tiny floating seeds from milkweed and dandelions.

According to the folklore of the British Isles, there are certain times of the year when it is easier to find and see fairies—when the veil between the human and fairy worlds is the thinnest. A good time to look for fairies is May Day, the first day of May; Midsummer's Night, which follows the first day of summer; and Halloween. But you don't need to wait for those times to go on your own wildflower fairy search. Try this one!

**BRING IT**

- Backpack
- Secret notebook
- Pencil
- Flashlight
- Magnifying glass
- Wildflower fairy search list



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CHAPTER 2

## A Wild Forage, Magical Potions, Pixie Dust, and an Elfin Picnic

How would you like to eat like a woodland elf or sip on a cup of phoenix tea? Does mixing wild potions and untamed concoctions with your own stirring wand excite you? Then you've come to the right chapter!

Discover stories and folklore behind old-time tea recipes and how to host an elfin picnic. Make pixie dust and other wild potions, not for eating but for imaging, and find out how long-ago people used the common dandelion to make a healthy tonic.

But first, a few words about foraging, which is a fancy word for collecting things from nature you can eat or use. Here are a few simple guidelines to help you be a safe and respectful forager:

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Stinkhorns and earth stars, lion's mane and tree ears. Getting to know these fantastical fungi will open your eyes to a whole new type of living beings. Discover how to make a mushroom spore print; search for the elusive, glow-in-the-dark fox fire fungi; and find out the secret stories behind magical fairy circles.

A word of caution, please! It is safe to touch a wild mushroom, but since some mushrooms can be poisonous to eat, you should never eat any of the wild mushrooms in this book. Would you really want to eat something called the destroying angel or dead man's fingers?



ACTIVITY I  
**GET TO KNOW THE  
FRUIT OF A FUNGUS**

**BUILD YOUR SKILLS**  
OBSERVING, SKETCHING, LABELING, AND DESCRIBING

**S**tories of mushrooms fill the books of legends and folktales. They are such mysterious beings. Did you know that a long time ago, some people believed that mushrooms were lightning's babies? Ancient people thought that whenever lightning hit the earth, mushrooms were born. What do you think about this story? Why do you think people believed this?

Mycologists—another name for mushroom scientists—have helped us figure out some of the science behind mushrooms. Mushrooms aren't really born from lightning. They are the fruit of certain fungi, similar to how apples are the fruit of apple trees. At the bottom or base of a mushroom are strands of cobwebby, whitish strings. Those strings—called the mycelium—are the actual fungus. The mushroom is the fleshy, fruiting body of the stringy mycelium.

Instead of being full of seeds like an apple, mushrooms have millions of teeny, tiny spores hidden under their cap (that's the top part of the mushroom), ready to be carried by the wind or animals into the world and start all over as new fungi.

Take apart a mushroom and discover the parts that make this unique organism the stuff of legends. Just remember that mushrooms can be dangerous, so please don't eat one unless you are with an adult who knows which ones are safe to eat.

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**ACTIVITY 1**  
**GNOMES AND THEIR HOMES**

**BUILD YOUR SKILLS**

CONSTRUCTING, PROBLEM-SOLVING, WORLD BUILDING

Maybe you've seen a gnome before, like one of those garden gnome statues, with a tall red hat, chubby cheeks, and a bushy beard. But did you know that gnomes aren't just statues? In many places in the world, these small, woody folk live tucked into tiny homes against moss-covered trees, in quiet barns among horses and cows, or even in the tight sliver of land between apartment buildings in big cities. Easily recognized by their tall pointy hats—which are often, but not always, red—and twinkly eyes, gnomes have been inhabiting our imaginations for centuries through folktales and legends.

One thing these tales all seem to say is that if you are nice to gnomes, life will be better for you. In some Scandinavian countries, there are many stories of gnomes, who are also called *tomtens*, *tomtes*, and *nisse*. Gifts are often left out for these wee folk in hopes that they will return the favor by caring for the farm, home, and woodlands.

Do you want some good gnome luck? Then take care of your neighborhood gnomes by building them a beautiful home and filling it with gifts and goodies.

**BRING IT**

Secret notebook

Pencil

Bits of natural twine or jute

Wild building materials,  
like twigs, leaves,  
bark, and stones

Decorating materials,

including bark, seed pods,  
leaves, and flower petals

A homemade gnome  
(optional)

1. Take a walk around your neighborhood and look for a spot that you think would make a perfect home for a gnome. They are secretive, so find a private spot that isn't easily seen. They have a deep connection to nature, so anywhere near trees, plants, rocks, mushrooms, or moss is a good starting place.
2. Gnomes are seen as one of nature's guardians, so when you are creating a home for them, use only bits of things you find on the ground and not things you pull off of live trees or plants. Collect small sticks,

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You'll also learn how to explore the wild world of animal messengers and build an entire small village for your band of merry little beings!



**ACTIVITY 1**  
**A PLACE OF YOUR OWN**

**BUILD YOUR SKILLS**  
SEARCHING, RECORDING, MAPMAKING, CODING, AND DECODING



**H**ave you ever wanted a spot you can call your own? A place you can go when you want to be alone or have an adventure with a friend.

I did! I found a few different spots, including the high-up branches of a cherry tree and under the yew bushes in front of my house. But my favorite spot, and the place I still miss today, was *The Sliver*—a spot between two garages in Brooklyn, New York, where I grew up. It was only big enough for me and a few friends to slide in sideways. I called it *The Sliver* because it reminded me of how the moon sometimes looks like the thinnest sliver of a fingernail. We had the best adventures there! I was sometimes the queen, and my neighborhood friends were kings, tsarinas, wizards, knights, and princesses. We collected all sorts of things, like white, glittery rocks that reminded us of pirate teeth and smooth, dark

brown chestnut seeds that we were sure held special powers. We buried these treasures and drew a secret map written in our own language.



Adventures await for you to discover, invent, and imagine. All you need to do is find a special spot and let the magic begin.

**BRING IT**

Secret notebook	A few drops of water
Pencil	(optional)
Lemon juice (optional)	Cotton swab (optional)

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F24 CHILDREN'S



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## TRAPPED IN THE BACKWARD PLACE

**T**he bones of this old house creak and sigh. Its painted skin chips and cracks. When I swing my sledgehammer against one peeling wall, it shatters, a cloud of plaster dust raining down on my safety goggles. *Smashed to smithereens!* I think with glee, landing another blow.

I am helping my parents knock down a wall in our new house, or should I say, *old* new house. "The house was a steal," Baba likes to say, especially for this part of town where new families are moving in every day. He swears that, with a little love and a lot of work, this creepy old house will look just like it did back in the nineteenth century, all shiny hardwood floors and ornate wooden carvings. But today it's only crooked stairs, creaky doors, and a few hundred spiders. Lucky for me, I'm not afraid of spiders.

39

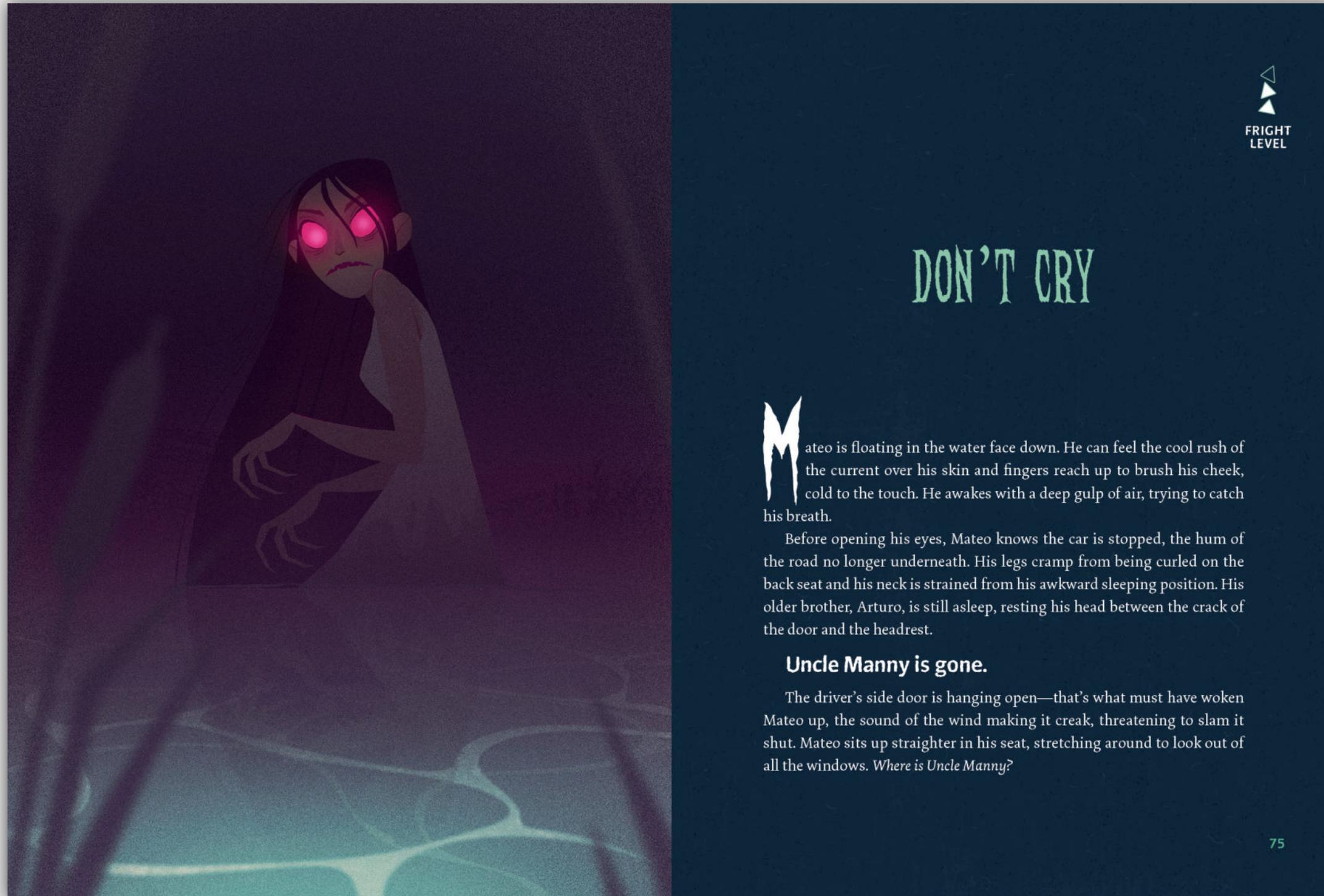
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## DON'T CRY

**M**ateo is floating in the water face down. He can feel the cool rush of the current over his skin and fingers reach up to brush his cheek, cold to the touch. He awakes with a deep gulp of air, trying to catch his breath.

Before opening his eyes, Mateo knows the car is stopped, the hum of the road no longer underneath. His legs cramp from being curled on the back seat and his neck is strained from his awkward sleeping position. His older brother, Arturo, is still asleep, resting his head between the crack of the door and the headrest.

### **Uncle Manny is gone.**

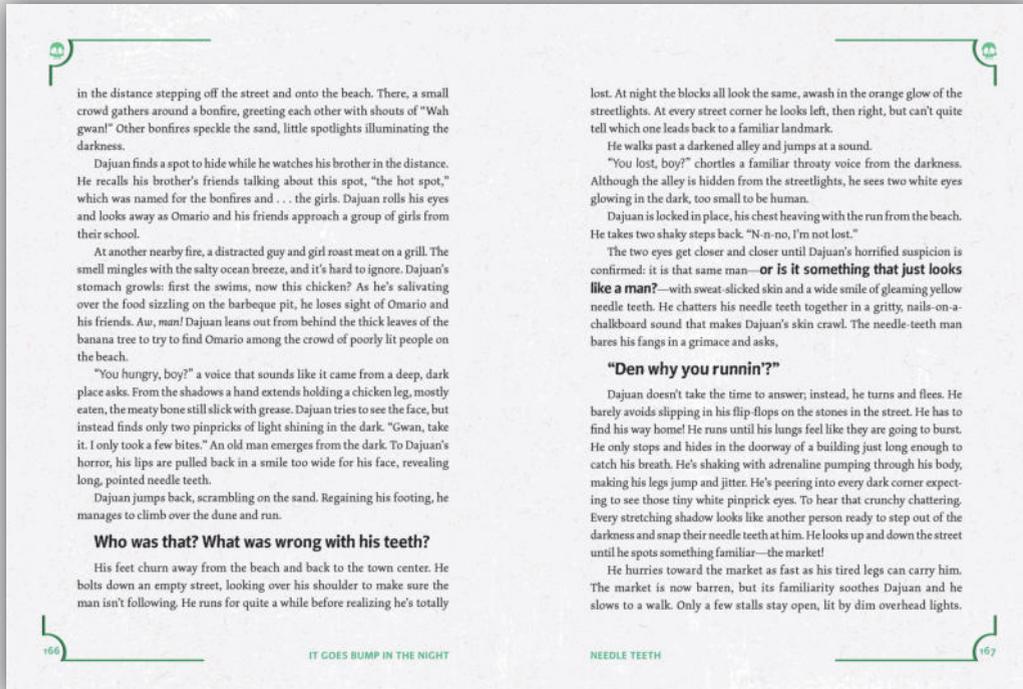
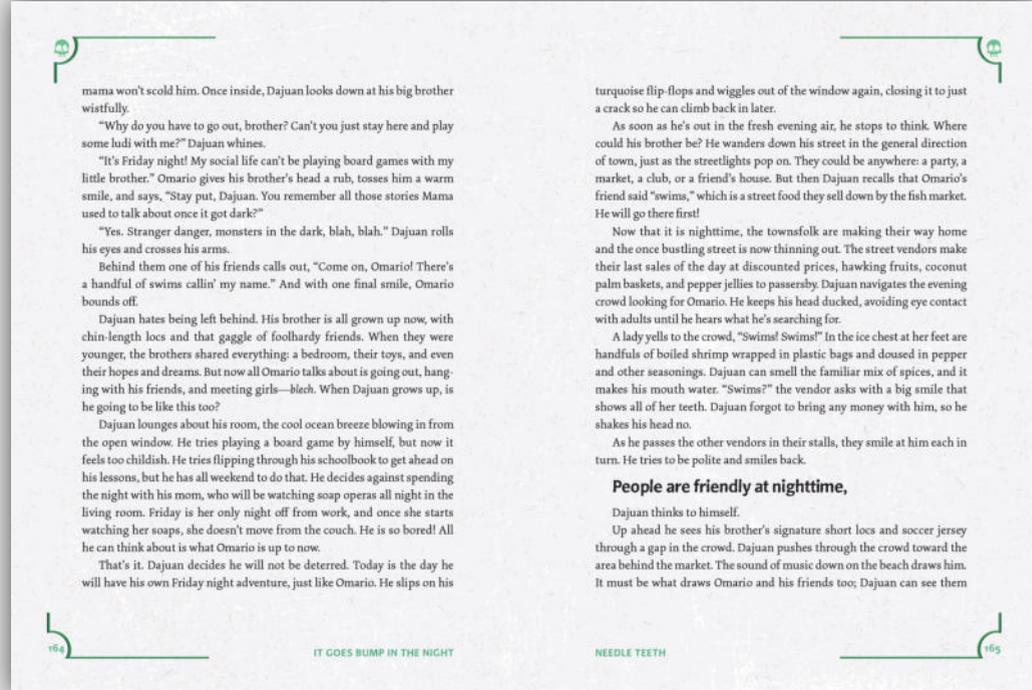
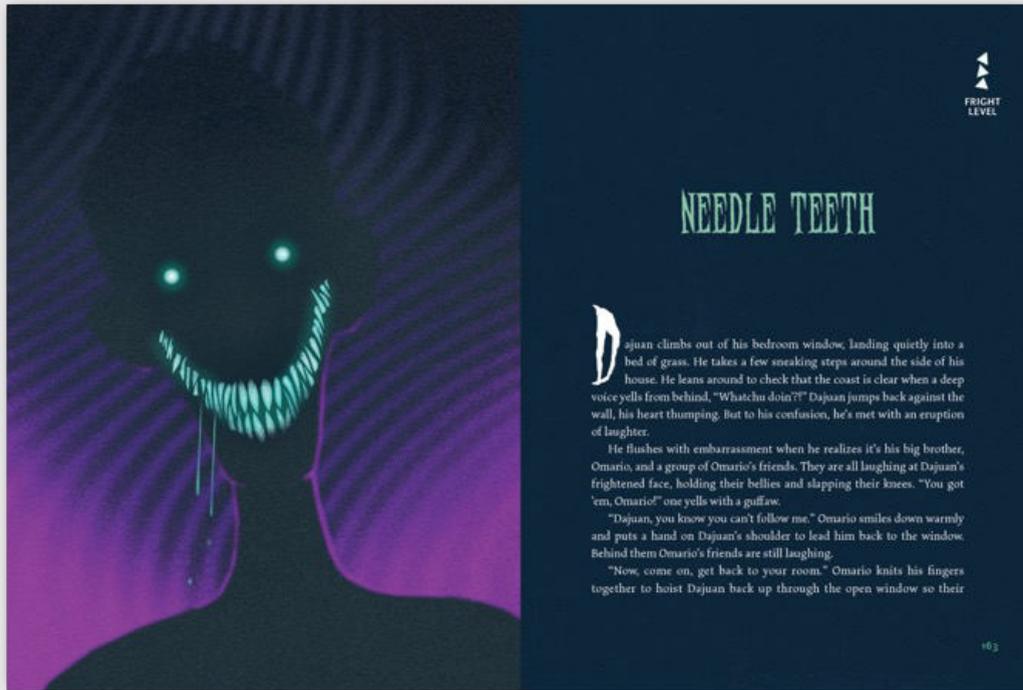
The driver's side door is hanging open—that's what must have woken Mateo up, the sound of the wind making it creak, threatening to slam it shut. Mateo sits up straighter in his seat, stretching around to look out of all the windows. *Where is Uncle Manny?*

75

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"STRANGER DANGER" is a very common theme in cautionary tales. These spooky tales have warned kids away from thin ice, dark creeks, and sneaking out past bedtime. This story is inspired by one that originated in Paramaribo, the capital city of the South American country Suriname. A version called "Teeth" was written down in the 1920s and has been retold all across the Caribbean islands. In that story, a young boy goes out late at night and meets people whose smiles are just a little too big and none too friendly.



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FRIGHT  
LEVEL

## THE DEATH CARD

**“**You are stronger than you think,” Mawmaw used to say. I am reminded of that now as the tears overwhelm me and grief hangs heavy in my heart.

Mawmaw, my grandmother, lived in an old shotgun-style carriage house in the heart of New Orleans. It’s called a “shotgun house” because if you stood in the front doorway and shot a shotgun, the shell would go through the long, main hallway and straight out the back door. No one does that, of course, it’s just an old New Orleans saying. On the left side of the hallway are big, bright windows. On the right side of the hallway are a series of doors leading to the bedrooms.

At the front of the house is a small living room with Mawmaw’s TV propped on an old card table in the corner. The floral wallpaper is peeling, but it looks just like I remember it. I remember tracing the pretty patterns with my fingers when I was small.

115

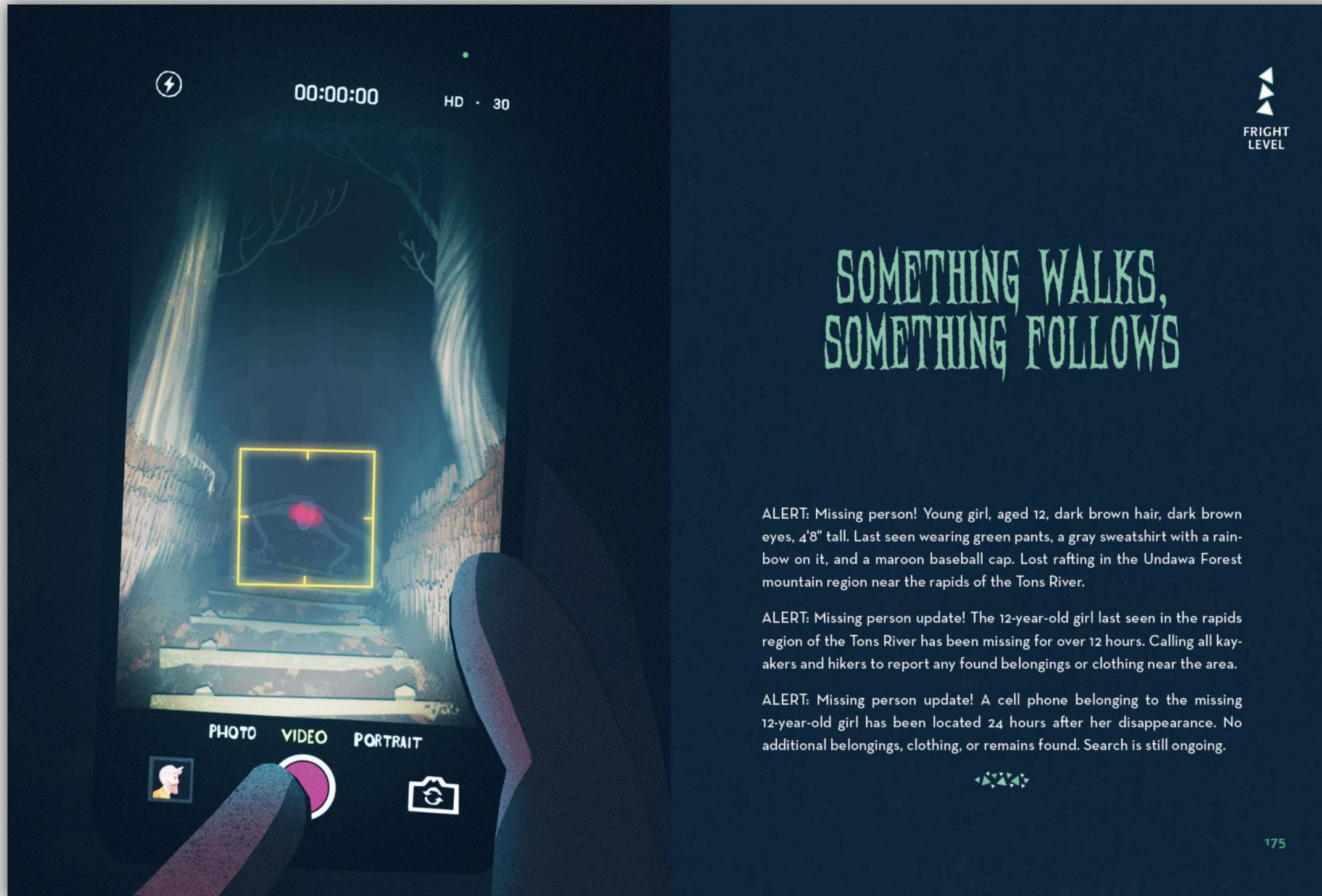
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S25 CHILDREN'S



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# INTRODUCTION

In the heart of the great outdoors, nature's beauty hides unspeakable terrors. Dense forests, rugged mountains, open plains, and vast oceans conceal monsters seldom seen. This collection of horror stories will take you on a haunting journey through the wilderness.

**Step into a world where falling leaves rustle with ghostly footsteps, the moonlight illuminates shadowed shapes, and the silent night is broken by ghostly wails.**

In the distant past, humans lived comfortably in nature, falling asleep under the stars to the sound of animals chattering in the woods. But danger always lurked in the dark, and malevolent spirits and monstrous creatures filled our imaginations. Terrifying tales told around the world were written and shared across cultures and centuries, morphing into familiar and new stories we now share whenever we gather around a fire.

In this book are twenty chilling tales that blend folklore, urban legend, and our darkest fears. As you turn

the pages, you'll encounter cursed artifacts in a curious museum, sinister plants with a taste for flesh, beings made of fire, monsters hidden in snow, strange lights over cornfields, haunted videotapes, and many more chills.

We invite you to gather around our campfire and embark on a spine-tingling journey through a world where the boundaries between reality and imagination blur. **In this realm of darkness, the flickering flame casts an eerie glow and makes the shadows dance.**

These stories are not for the faint of heart! They are a testament to the power of storytelling and its ability to transport us to worlds both familiar and frightening. Whether you are a seasoned seeker of thrills or a first-time adventurer into the realm of the macabre, this book will haunt your dreams long after the last ember of the campfire has faded.



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S25 CHILDREN'S



## A PAINTING IN RED

Alex loves thrift stores. The chaotic, familiar mess of stickers and price tags. That weird, comforting smell that is the same no matter where you go. There is something about digging your hands into a bin of discarded clothing that once belonged to strangers. The treasure hunt for that one item that catches his eye for exactly the right price. The zinging thrill of finding something so cool for so cheap.

His parents are avid antiquers, and Alex loves joining them on their cross-country road trips trekking through back roads and small towns. While his parents look for furniture to refurbish, Alex enjoys the thrill of finding his next great look.

When he thrifts, his mind fires on all cylinders, running through a hundred different stylish outfits. His eyes flit between the colors and his fingers run over the textures—leather, suede, sequins, knit, cotton, faux fur. He imagines pairing thick combat boots with cut-off shorts or a long scarf with a buttoned shirt. He likes mixing and matching, making outfits no one

23

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S25 CHILDREN'S



  
FRIGHT  
LEVEL

## MONSTER MOUNTAIN

“Scout Leader, will you tell us the story?”

Campfire stories aren't a requirement for securing the “Winter Survival” scout badge, but the scouts know it's a nice distraction from the cold. Scouts Derek, Penny, and Wayne are more than familiar with the shivering damp cold that chills any exposed skin. They just reached one of the peaks of Glacier National Park on a winter hike with Scout Leader Nims. Now that the sun is setting across the winter landscape, they are making camp in a small, flat clearing. They just finished setting up their cold weather tents and unloading their small packs. Now they're ready for some evening tales around a campfire.

“Let's finish getting camp set up first,” Scout Leader Nims says as he pulls a few big logs into a circle around the fire pit they dug in a thin patch of snow. As Penny gets the first flame going, the other campers pull out their sleeping bags and supplies for dinner. They shed their wet outer layers and reconvene at the fire, hurriedly slipping inside their sleeping bags

41

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S25 CHILDREN'S



FRIGHT  
LEVEL

## THE VISITOR

C

ompany is coming.

It is just a feeling I have that wiggles into the back of my mind when I find all of our chickens dead, their necks broken and their little lifeless bodies drained of blood. *Someone did this*, I think as I poke at one with a long stick.

I think about how to tell my grandparents about the chickens. My grandfather will say, *at least another creature didn't go hungry*. My grandmother will shake her head and say, *poor things*. But I will furrow my brow and worry, like I always do.

When I am near enough to the porch, I catch a glimpse of something.

A stranger walking up the lonely road to our house.

I don't know why, but I hide. Squatting low in the tall grass, the mud squelches beneath my feet. I watch as the visitor approaches. They wear all black, a long traveler's coat that almost reaches their ankles, pulled tight and buttoned to the neck. Upon their head is an old-fashioned, wide-brimmed

53

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FRIGHT  
LEVEL

## THE DEADWOODS GHOST HUNTING CLUB

**G**hosts are energy forces that remain when someone dies," Devon says in a ponderous tone, hand to her chin.  
"Nuh-uh, ghosts are more like left-behind feelings, a replay of something that happened," Charlie says.

"Does that mean ghosts are dangerous?" Leon asks, his eyes wide.

"Yes, definitely. Ghosts are evil and want to scare us," Sara replies with a wiggle of her fingers.

The four children sit in a circle awash in the glow of a blue lantern tucked away in a treehouse. Beyond their chatter, the wind blows fallen leaves across the yard and the thick branches of an oak tree creak and sway. Crickets chirp a symphony in the night. Deadwoods is a picturesque small town in the northeast originally discovered centuries ago by indigenous

87

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FRIGHT  
LEVEL

## SEEDLING

Out in the country where Eli lives, there are few distractions and even fewer neighbors. All the excitement happens in town, a long walk through a bunch of orchards, but there's a good shortcut if you're brave enough to take it—through Old Mr. Martinez's apple orchard. On occasion, Eli sneaks from the apple orchard to the neighboring orange orchard and onward toward town, grabbing a snack from the trees as he goes: a bright orange with thick skin that hides the juicy flesh beneath or a big, ripe red apple the size of his fist whose tartness is balanced by crunchy sweetness.

But today is different.

Old Mr. Martinez has dug up this corner of the orchard to plant something new. Eli can see fresh, straight rows of dark soil with shallow indentations every foot where the seeds must be planted. Too close together for trees, perhaps vegetables? The ground smells fragrant and earthy, freshly watered.

97

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S25 CHILDREN'S



FRIGHT  
LEVEL

## IT HAS RED EYES

**T**he first time he sees it, Eddie thinks he is dreaming—or more like having a nightmare.

Before, he'd always thought, *The first time I see a monster, I'll be ready.* But when it actually happens, he is just standing there, shaking in his rain boots, staring at it.

### **He can't breathe, much less even fight.**

Moments ago, all he could hear was his dog, Blaze, barking and barking, a cry for attention. Eddie thought his mama forgot to feed Blaze, so he went outside wearing pajamas and his muddy rain boots, holding a tin dog bowl full of kibble in one hand. But Blaze isn't just barking for attention, he is barking *at* something, something big up in the trees. Just beyond the small clearing of the backyard is a wooded area, thick with hickory trees and dense underbrush, and beyond that is a wide, forested mountain ridge and snaking river.

117

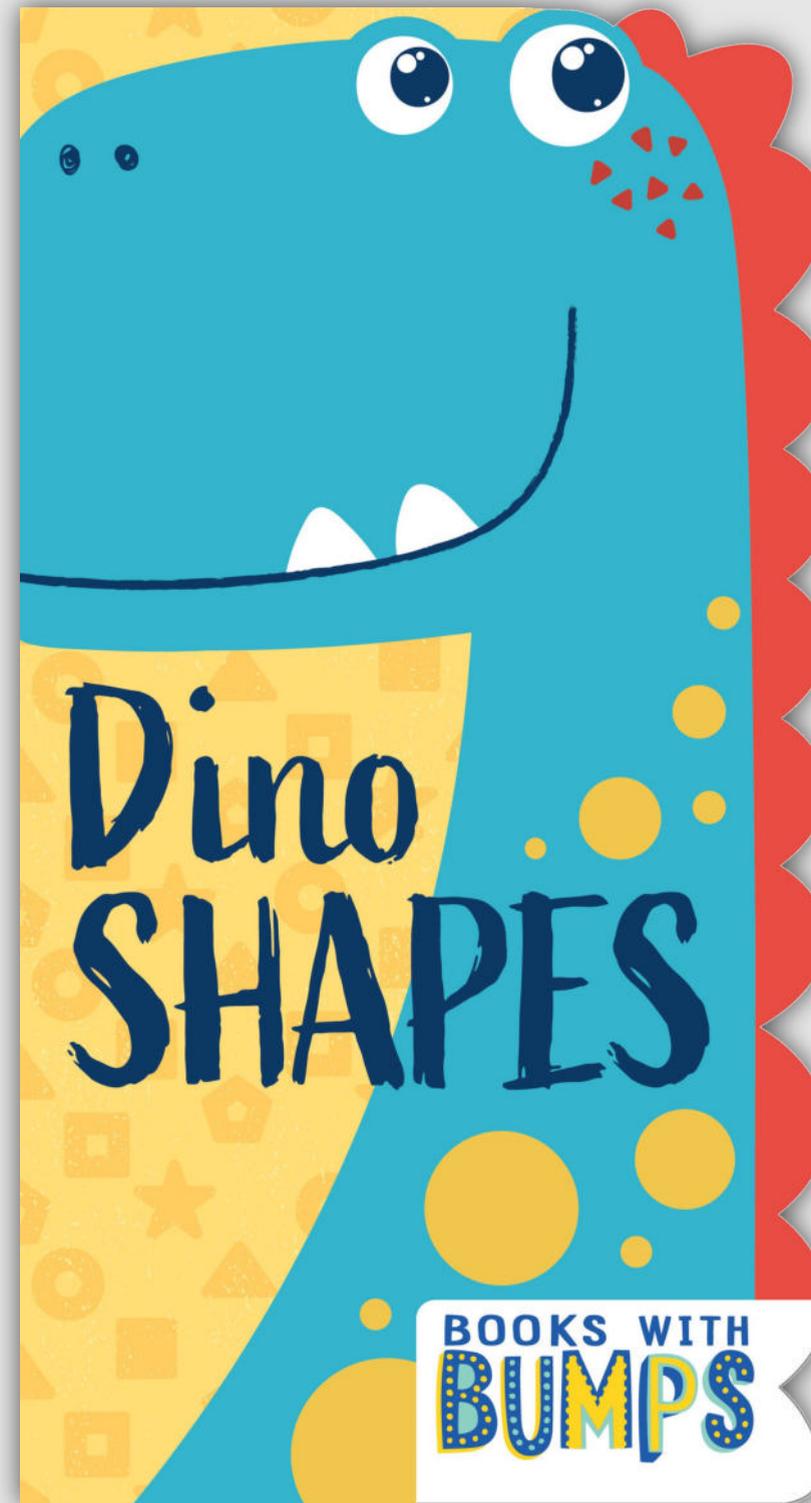
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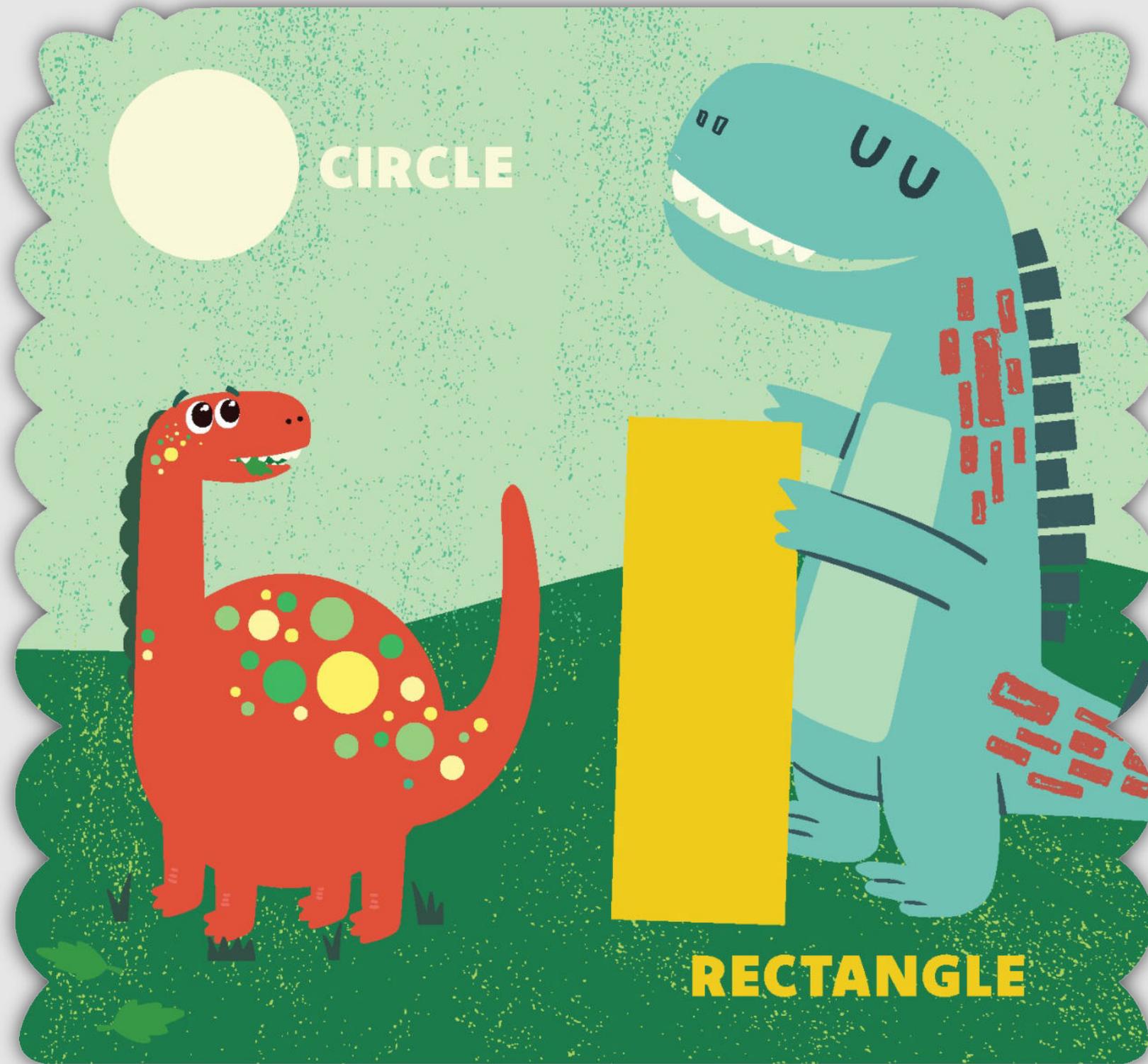


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