



Deepest Thanks to My Heavenly Father who placed this story in my heart
and gave me the courage and persistence to write it.

Many thanks also to *Trisha Edwards, AKA PJ Friel, and Melody Kettlewell,*
God's special Angels whose support and talents made this story become real.

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

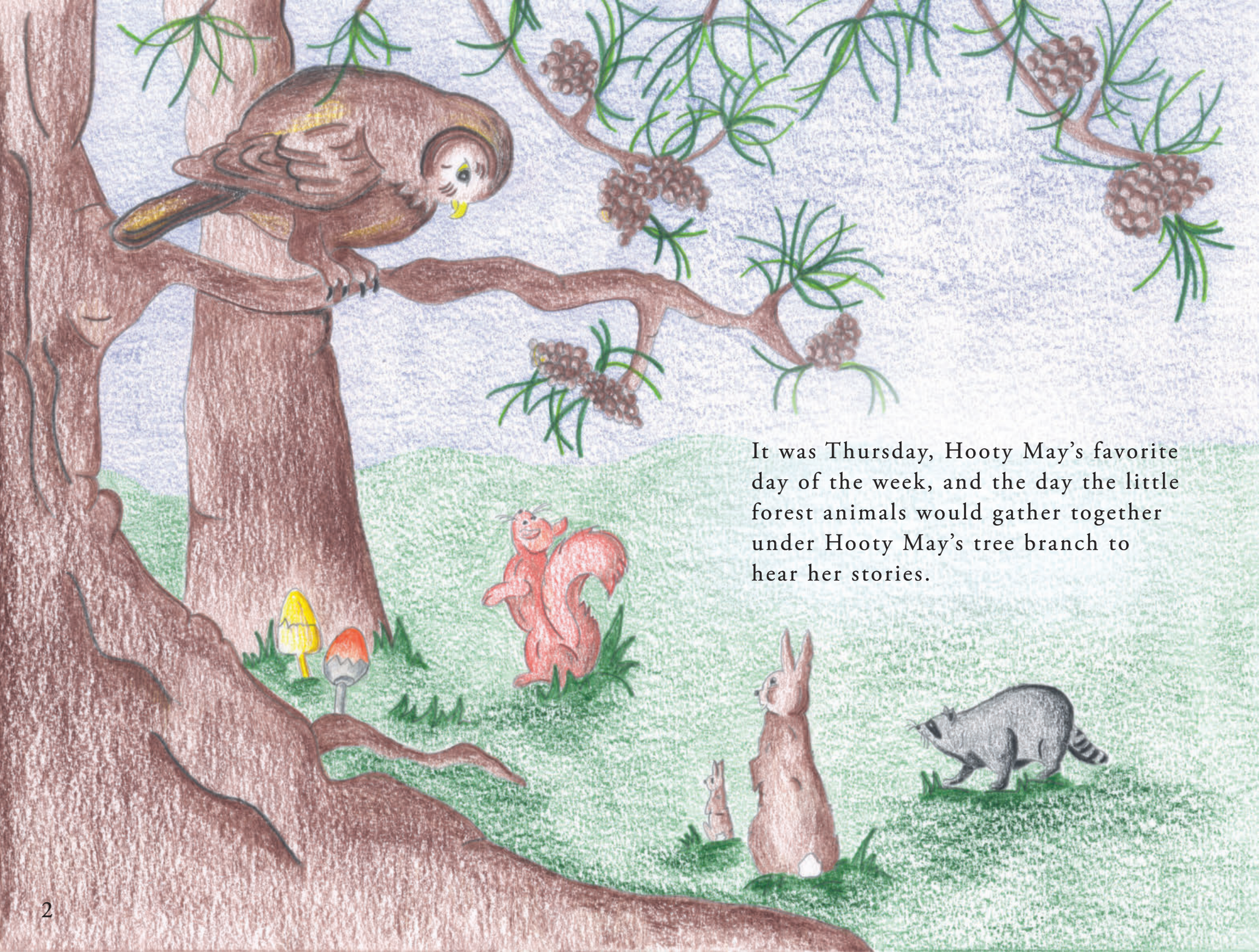
FROM:




THE sun was hiding just behind the tree tops when Hooty May owl hopped out of her nest, fluffed her feathers, stretched, and flew down to her favorite tree branch.

She rubbed her eyes and cleared her throat to get ready for story telling time.





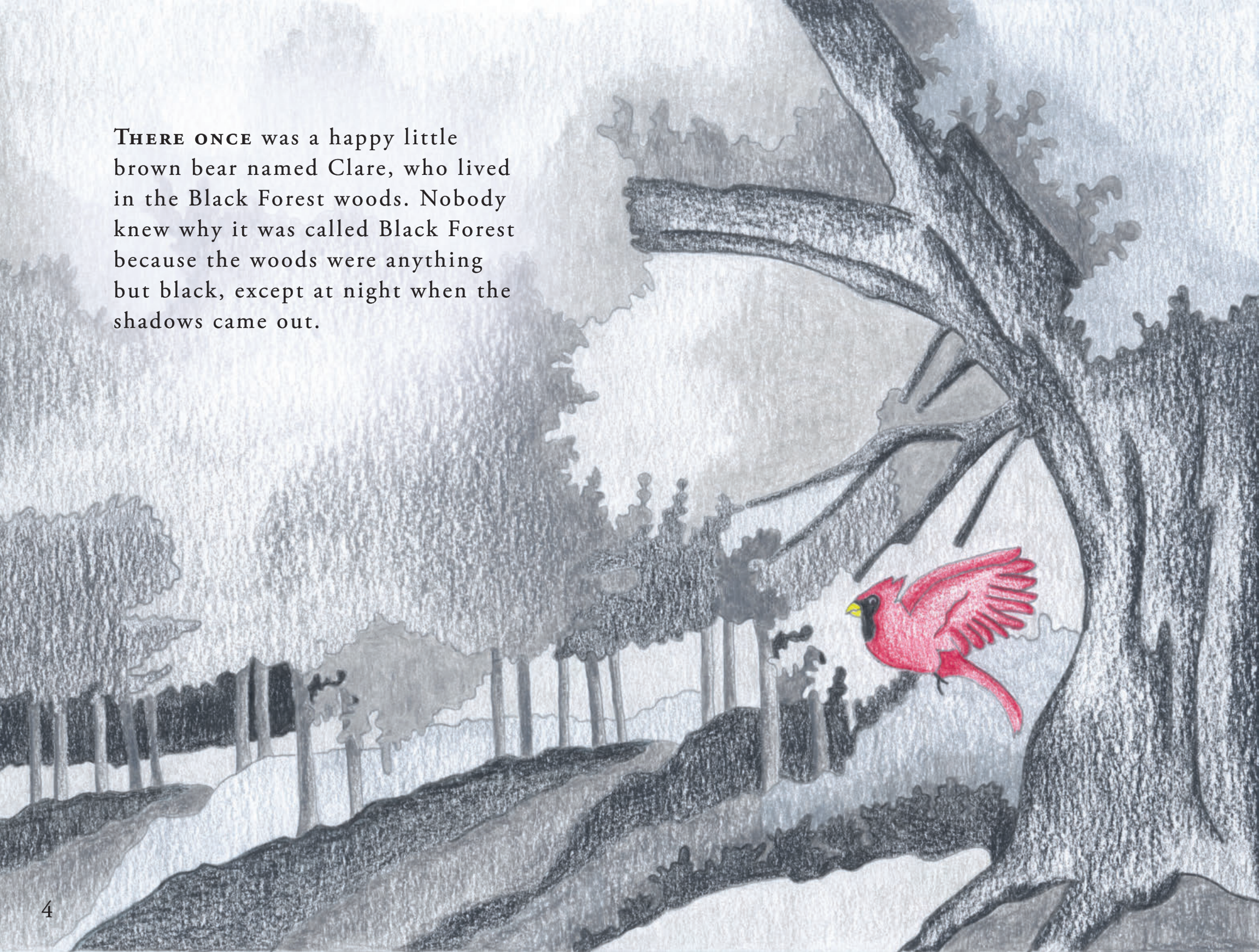
It was Thursday, Hooty May's favorite day of the week, and the day the little forest animals would gather together under Hooty May's tree branch to hear her stories.

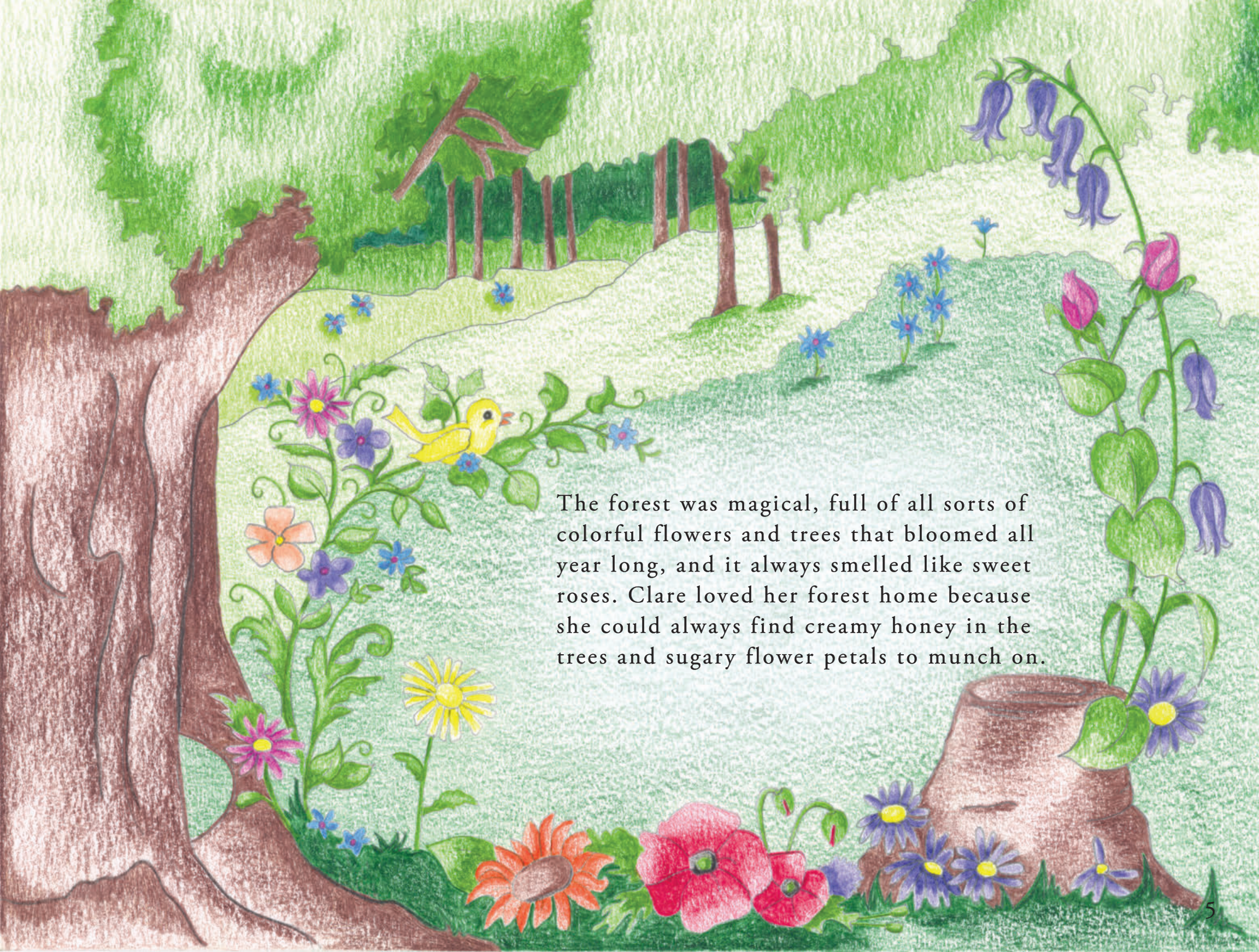


“Have you ever heard the story about a bear named Clare?” asked Hooty May. The forest animals shook their heads. “Nooooo...”

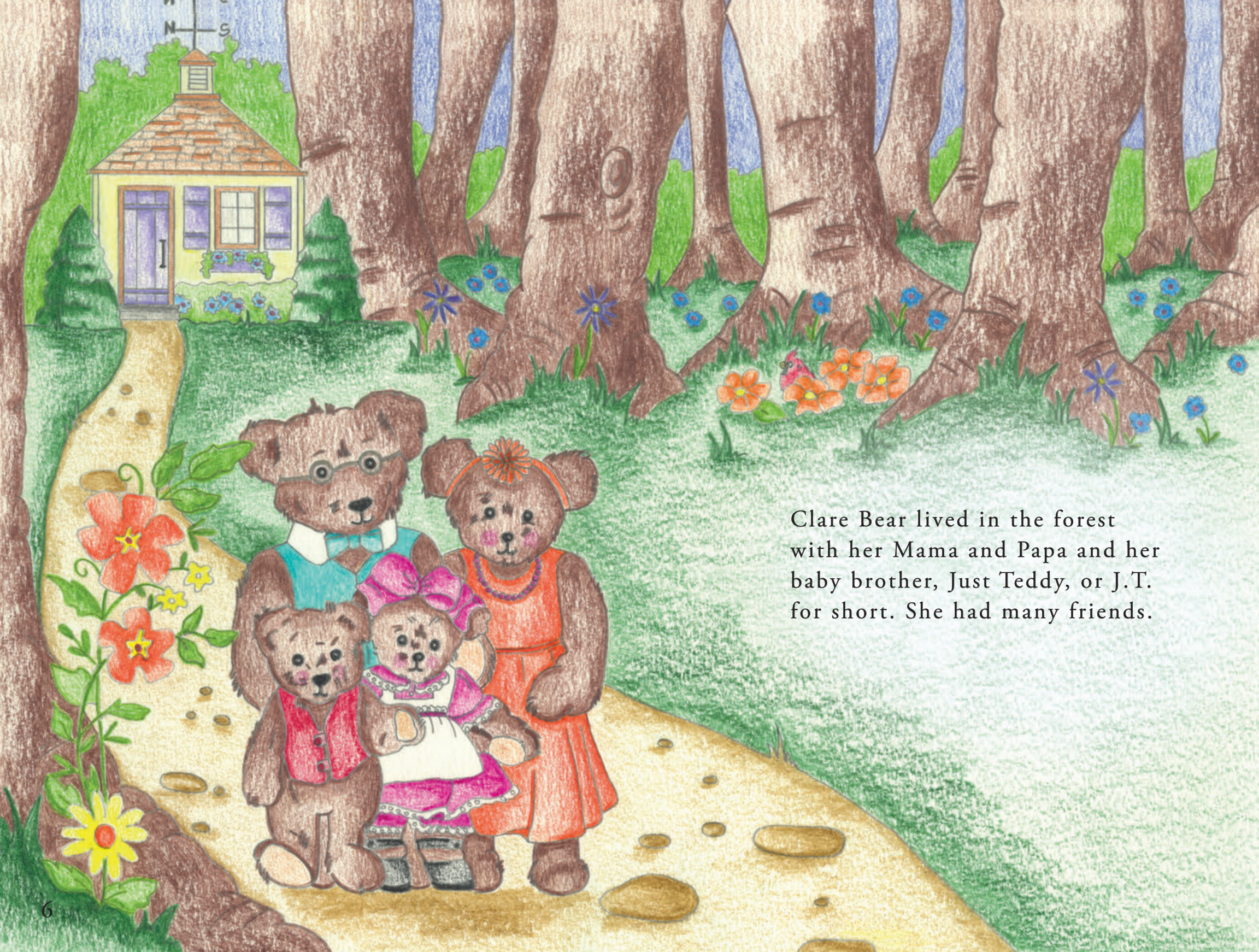
“No?” repeated Hooty May. “Well, gather around and I’ll tell you all about Clare and her forest friends.”

THERE ONCE was a happy little brown bear named Clare, who lived in the Black Forest woods. Nobody knew why it was called Black Forest because the woods were anything but black, except at night when the shadows came out.





The forest was magical, full of all sorts of colorful flowers and trees that bloomed all year long, and it always smelled like sweet roses. Clare loved her forest home because she could always find creamy honey in the trees and sugary flower petals to munch on.



Clare Bear lived in the forest with her Mama and Papa and her baby brother, Just Teddy, or J.T. for short. She had many friends.

There was Andy, the chipmunk;
Harry, the rabbit; and P.J., the
finch whose name stands for Pure
Joy because her feathers looked like
pure gold, and her whistle was such
a joy to hear.



Her best friend of all, though, was
Rachael, the raccoon.



One day Clare's Mama asked her to go out in the woods to gather a bouquet of flowers.



Always happy to do what her Mama asked her to do, she put on her straw hat and started out to the flower patch.





“Have fun, but be careful,” Clare’s Mama called out to her from the kitchen window. “And be back before dark so you don’t get lost in the forest,” she added.

“I will, Mama,” Clare shouted back as she skipped down the path toward the flowers.



On her way, Clare decided to stop by and ask Rachael Raccoon to go with her. Rachael, so happy and excited to join Clare, plopped her hat on backwards. Clare took one look at Rachael, pointed at her hat, and began to giggle and giggle and giggle some more.

“What’s so funny?” Rachael stammered.

“Your hat!” laughed Clare.

“What’s wrong with my hat? That’s not very nice,” cried Rachael. “Didn’t your Mama teach you that it’s not nice to make fun of others?”

“I’m sorry, Rachael,” smiled Clare. “I didn’t mean to laugh at you, but you put your hat on backwards, and it just looks so funny.”

“Oh!” Rachael exclaimed and reached up and turned her hat around. “I’ll bet that does look funny. I would have laughed too,” she giggled.





So off went the two best friends hand-in-hand to pick a beautiful bouquet of flowers for each of their mothers.



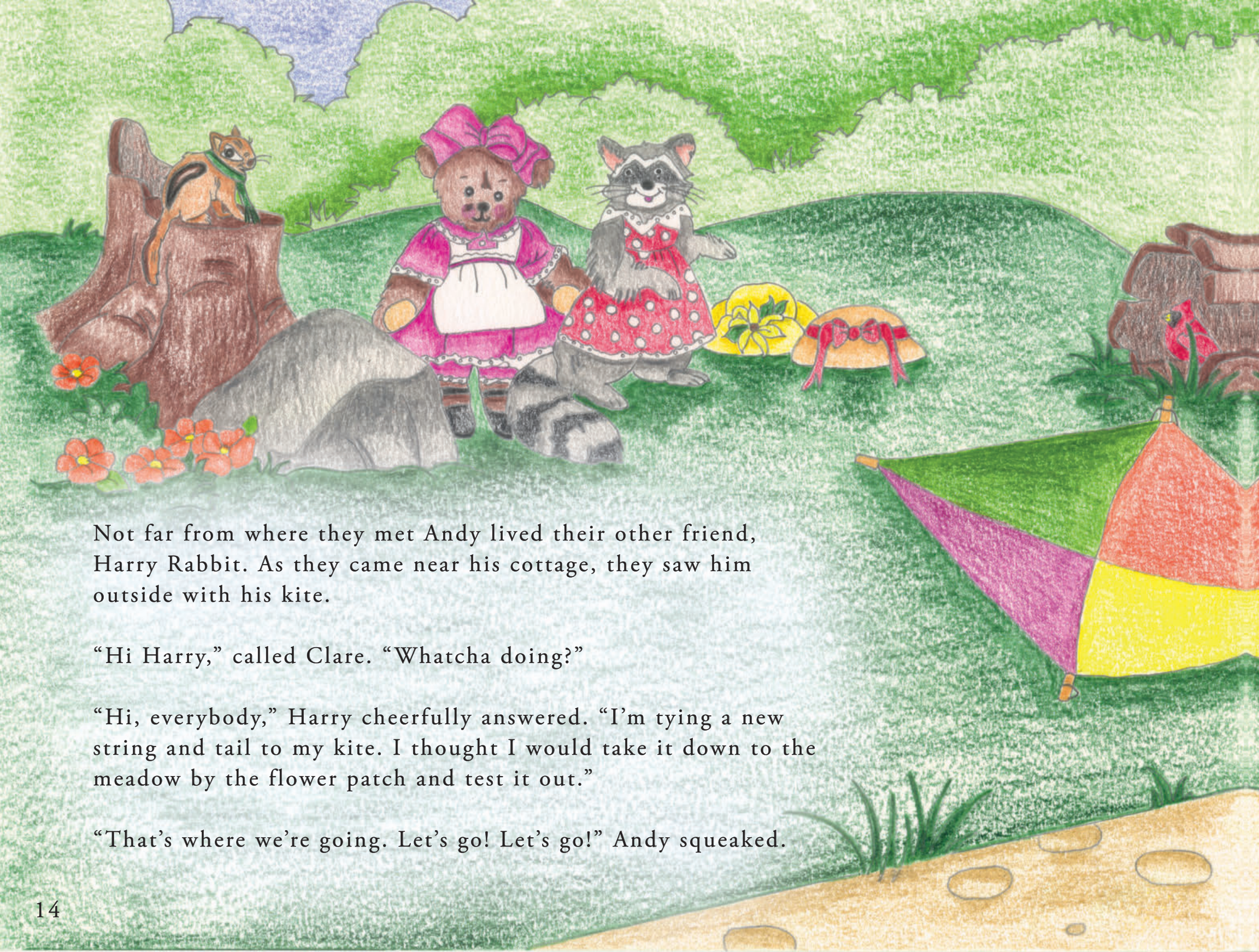
Along the way to their favorite flower patch, they ran into Andy Chipmunk.

“Where are you going? Where are you going?” chattered Andy.

“We are going to pick flowers for our mothers,” the two friends said in unison.

“Can I go? Can I go?” asked Andy.

“Sure,” said Clare. “The more the merrier.”



Not far from where they met Andy lived their other friend, Harry Rabbit. As they came near his cottage, they saw him outside with his kite.

“Hi Harry,” called Clare. “Whatcha doing?”

“Hi, everybody,” Harry cheerfully answered. “I’m tying a new string and tail to my kite. I thought I would take it down to the meadow by the flower patch and test it out.”

“That’s where we’re going. Let’s go! Let’s go!” Andy squeaked.