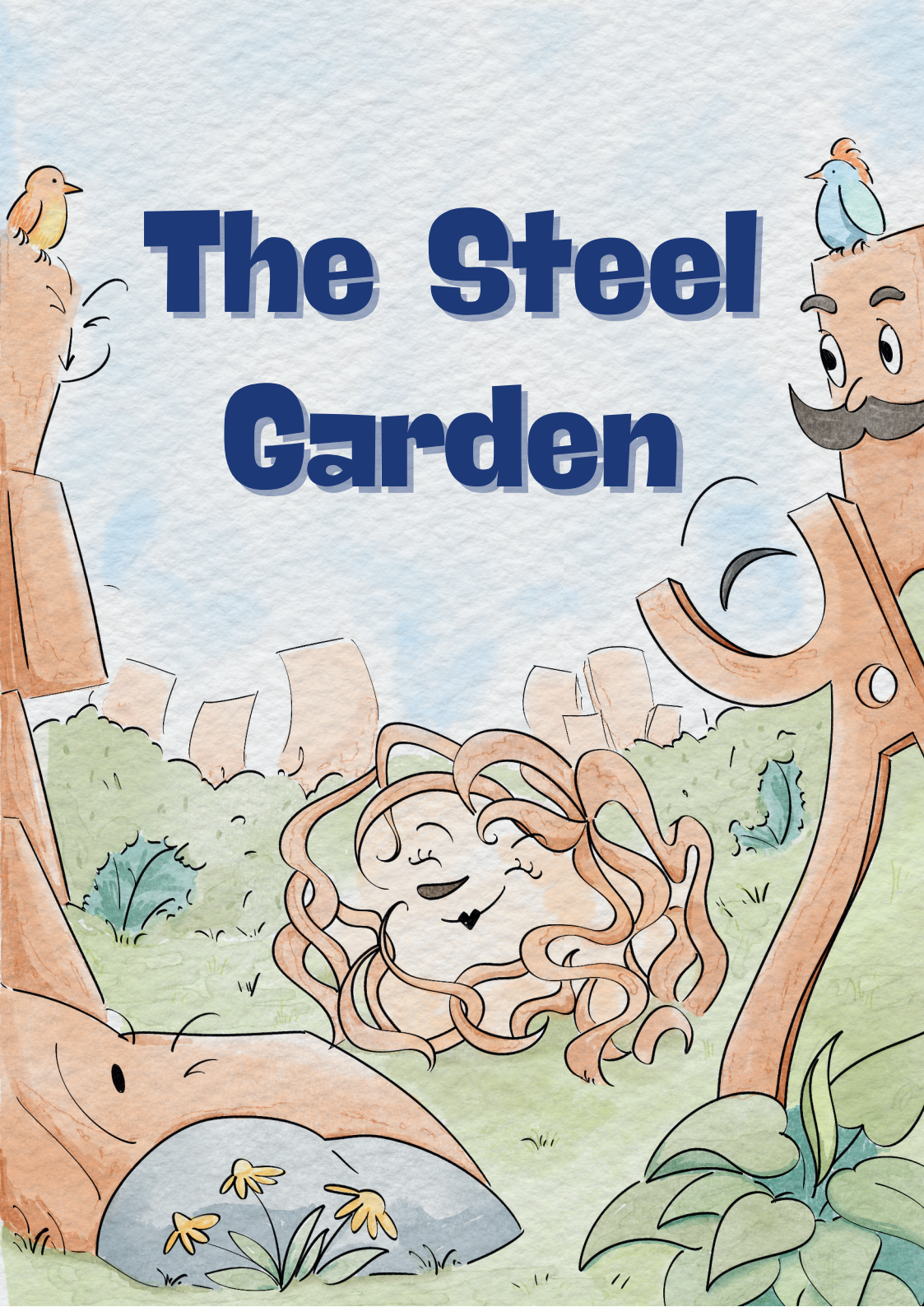




The Steel Garden

The Steel Garden
A new statue in the park...

By Jonno Bright

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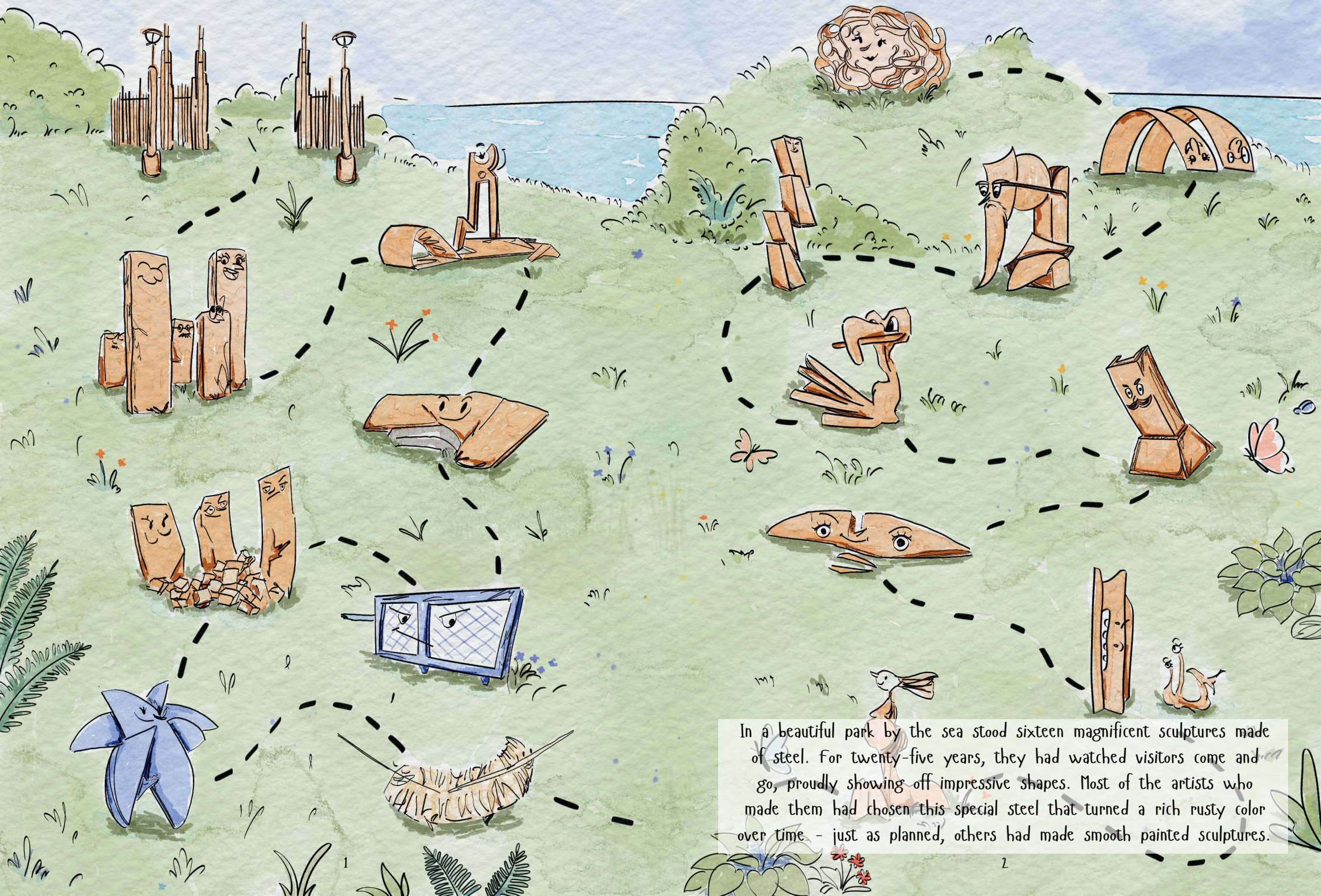
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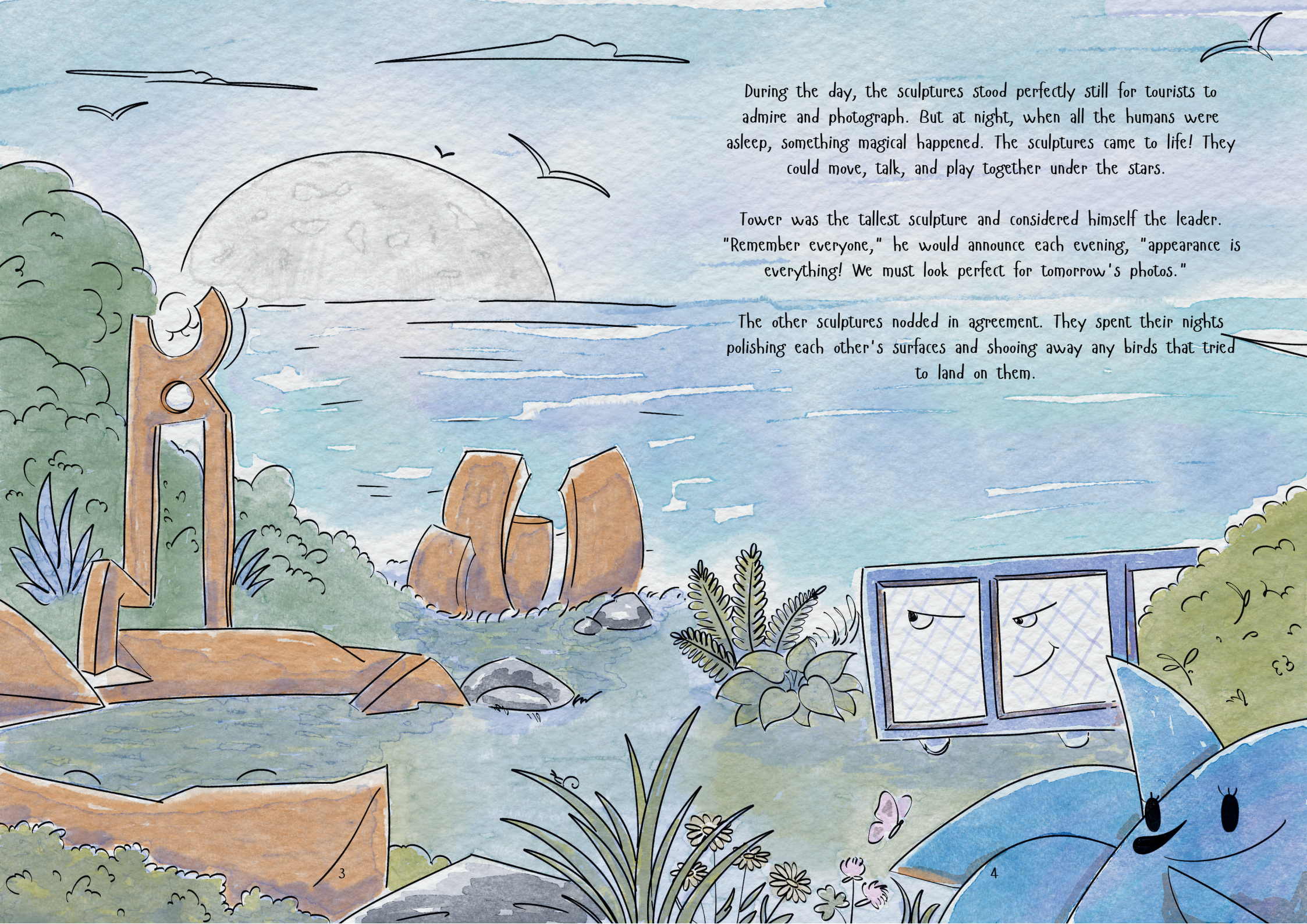
Story written by: Jonno Bright



Skillfully and patiently putting our wild ideas together into a beautiful book: Sanja Bosnjakov - @CreativeBoArt



In a beautiful park by the sea stood sixteen magnificent sculptures made of steel. For twenty-five years, they had watched visitors come and go, proudly showing off impressive shapes. Most of the artists who made them had chosen this special steel that turned a rich rusty color over time - just as planned, others had made smooth painted sculptures.



During the day, the sculptures stood perfectly still for tourists to admire and photograph. But at night, when all the humans were asleep, something magical happened. The sculptures came to life! They could move, talk, and play together under the stars.

Tower was the tallest sculpture and considered himself the leader. "Remember everyone," he would announce each evening, "appearance is everything! We must look perfect for tomorrow's photos."

The other sculptures nodded in agreement. They spent their nights polishing each other's surfaces and shooing away any birds that tried to land on them.

One misty morning, while the sculptures were finally asleep after a wild night of sculpture tag, a truck arrived. Workers carefully unloaded a new sculpture and placed it in an empty spot in the center of the park.

When night fell and the sculptures awoke, they gathered around the newcomer.

"I'm Orchid," she introduced herself with a gentle curve of her steel petals. Unlike the other rigid, angular sculptures, Orchid was shaped like a beautiful flower with a wide, solid base.

Tower looked down on her, frowning from his great height. "What kind of sculpture are you supposed to be? You don't look anything like us!"

"I'm made of steel just like you," Orchid replied confidently, "but I'm inspired by nature."

The other sculptures whispered among themselves. They had never seen anything like her before. All her nice curves in exactly the right places, wauw! Rusty couldn't keep his eyes off her.



Don't you care how you look? That's DISGUSTING!"

All the sculptures laughed at Orchid, all except for Rusty, who stayed quiet.

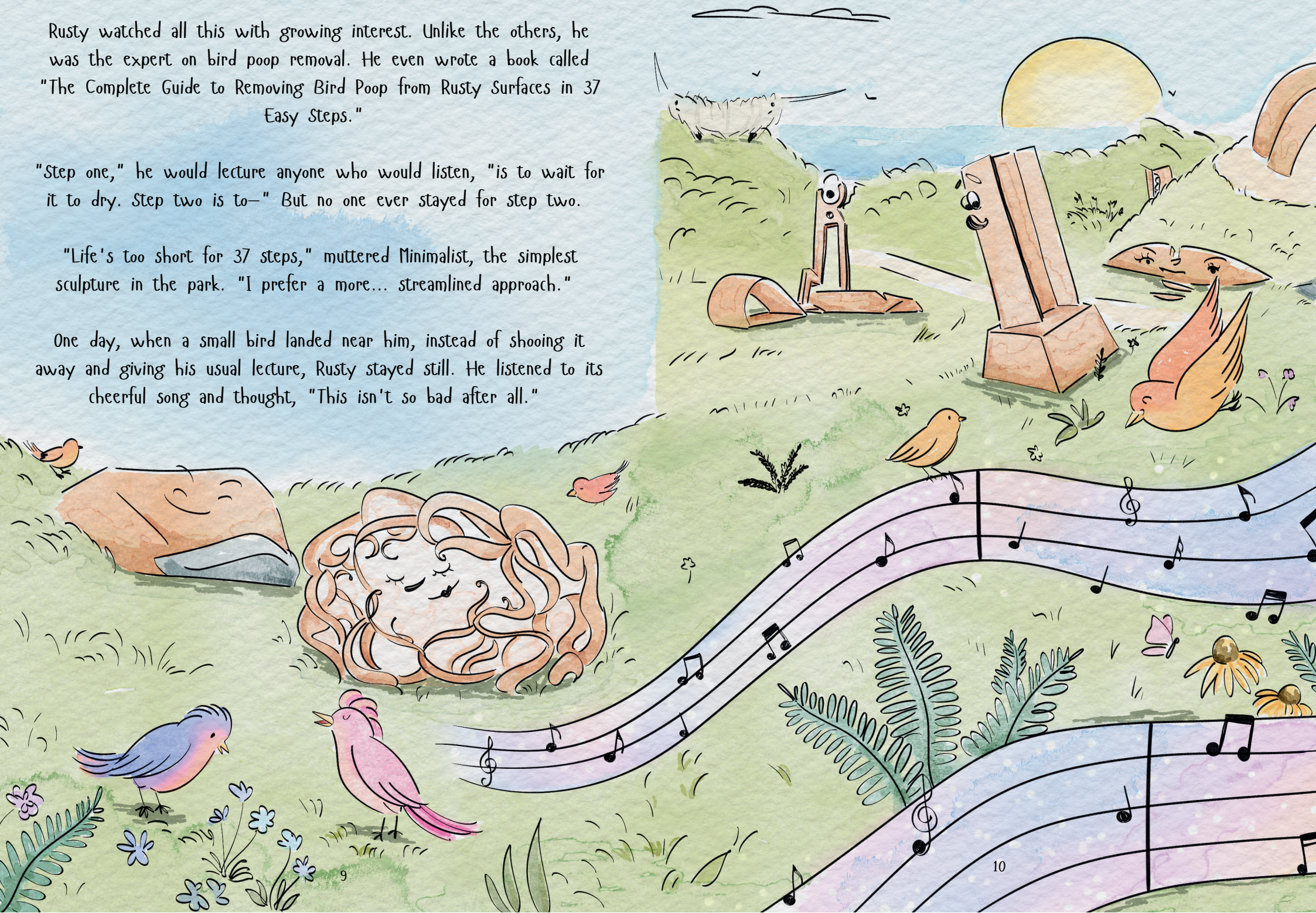
Day after day, Orchid stood tall on her wide base. When birds landed on her, she welcomed them. When wind blew, she stood firm. When rain came, she let it wash over her curves, enjoying the refreshing sensation as it trickled down. She didn't wobble or complain like the others.

Rusty watched all this with growing interest. Unlike the others, he was the expert on bird poop removal. He even wrote a book called "The Complete Guide to Removing Bird Poop from Rusty Surfaces in 37 Easy Steps."

"Step one," he would lecture anyone who would listen, "is to wait for it to dry. Step two is to—" But no one ever stayed for step two.

"Life's too short for 37 steps," muttered Minimalist, the simplest sculpture in the park. "I prefer a more... streamlined approach."

One day, when a small bird landed near him, instead of shooing it away and giving his usual lecture, Rusty stayed still. He listened to its cheerful song and thought, "This isn't so bad after all."



The park ranger began posting weather warnings about strong southwestern winds coming. "The big storm is approaching," he announced, placing big PARK CLOSED signs at the entrance. "Too dangerous for visitors! We're securing everything we can."

That night, Tower scoffed, "We've stood here for twenty-five years! We don't need to worry about a little wind."

But Orchid listened carefully. "Perhaps we should prepare," she suggested.

"What would YOU know?" Tower laughed. "You just got here!"

The next evening, the storm arrived. Fierce winds howled through the park, stronger than any the sculptures had ever felt before. The sculptures tried to hold steady, but one by one, they began to topple over.



"I'm too young and handsome to fall!" cried Slick, the smoothest painted sculpture, as he went down first.

"They spent all the money on my looks and none on my feet!" complained Square, a geometric piece, as he tumbled sideways. First the smaller ones fell, then even the medium-sized ones. Tower wobbled dramatically on his narrow base. "Help!" he cried before crashing to the ground with a loud CLANG!

Through it all, Orchid stood firm on her wide base, her curved shape allowing the wind to flow around her instead of pushing her over. Rusty, who had the second-widest base in the park, managed to stay upright too.

When morning came, the park was a mess. Ten sculptures lay on their sides, unable to get up. The park would be closed to visitors until they were fixed. That night, Orchid looked at the fallen sculptures.

"Let's help them," she said to Rusty.

Together, they went from sculpture to sculpture. Orchid used her beautiful curved shape as leverage while Rusty provided strength. Slowly, they lifted each one back into place.

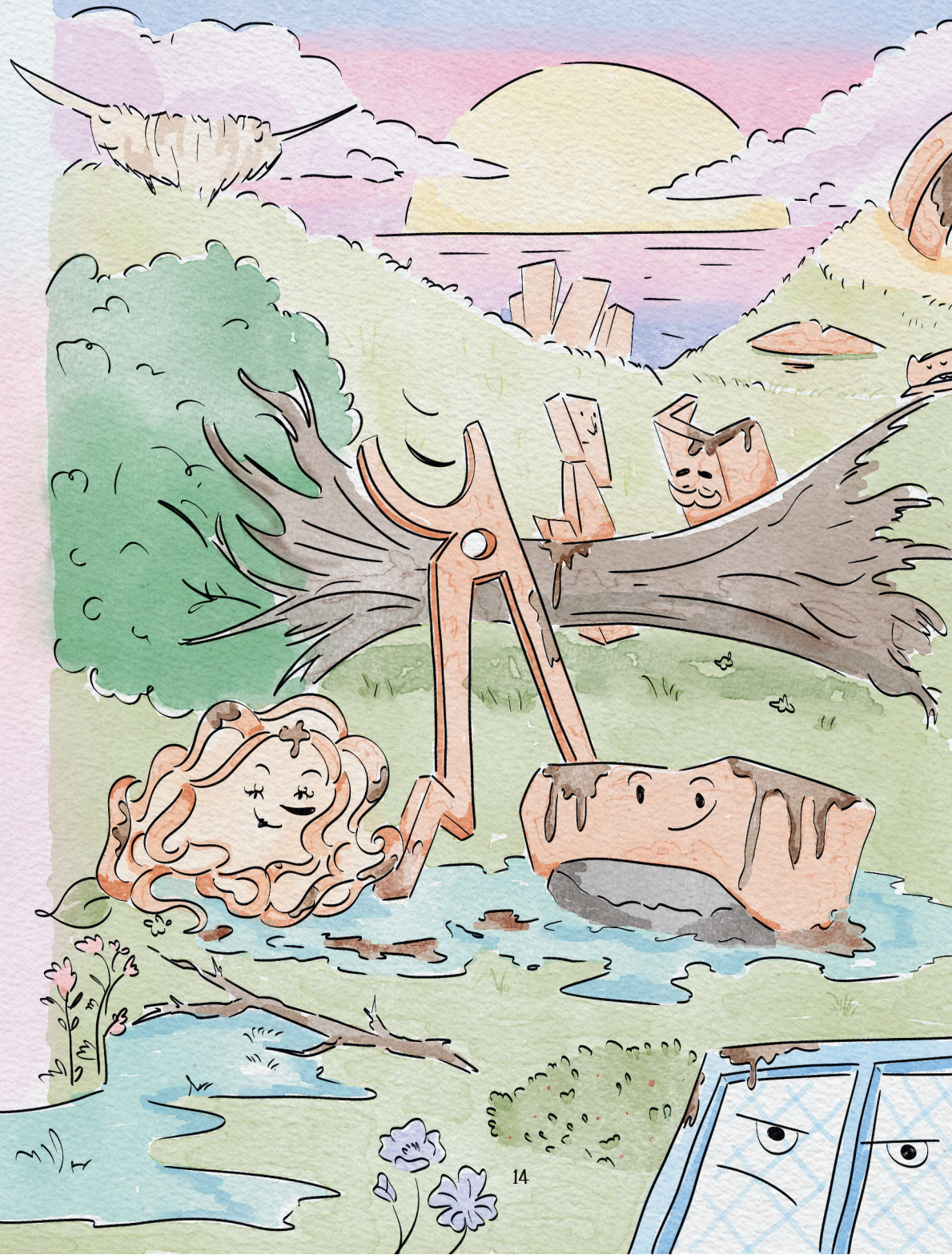
Tower was the last one. He looked away, embarrassed. "I don't need help," he insisted, though he clearly couldn't get up on his own. He was lying face-down in a big mud puddle, which made a huge SPLOOSH sound every time he tried to move.

Rusty couldn't help but chuckle. "Well, well, well... look who's finally getting down and dirty with nature. And here I thought you were too high and mighty to get a little mud on you."

"Very funny," Tower grumbled, blowing bubbles in the mud.

"Everyone needs help sometimes," Orchid said kindly. "Even me."

Finally, Tower accepted their help. As they worked together to stand him upright, he admitted, "I was wrong about you, Orchid. Your shape and your base... they're actually quite sensible."



After that night, things changed in the park. The sculptures still posed perfectly for daytime photos, but they stopped obsessing over every little bird spot. Some even welcomed the birds, enjoying their songs and company.

"Being strong isn't just about how you look," Orchid told them. "It's about having a solid foundation and being true to yourself."

Tower, who now had extra supports added to his base by the park workers (which looked a bit like metal diapers, though nobody dared mention this to his face), had to agree.

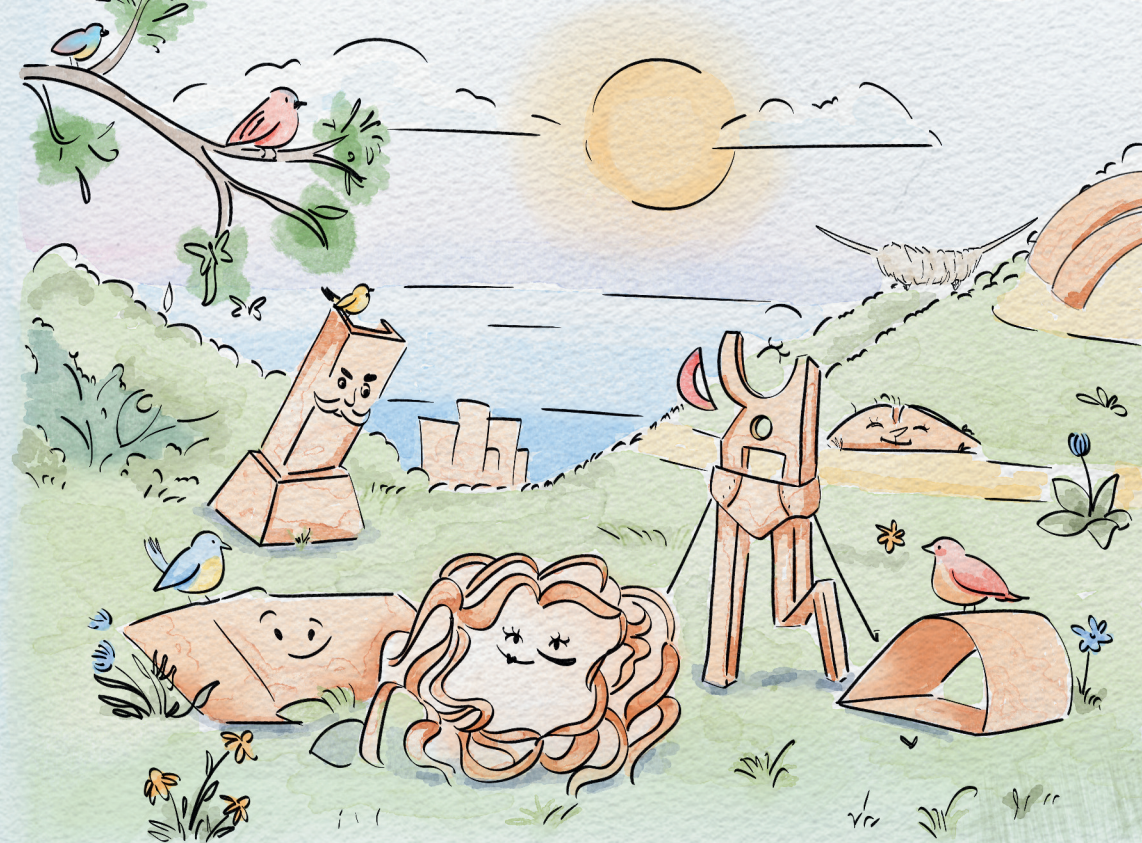
"I've learned that appearances aren't everything," he admitted. "And I've never had so many interesting birds to talk to!"

"Plus," added Rusty with a wink, "birds mean bird poop, and I can finally share my 37-step cleaning guide with everyone!"

"Maybe we can simplify it to just one step," suggested Orchid. "Step one: wait for the rain."

Everyone laughed, even Rusty.

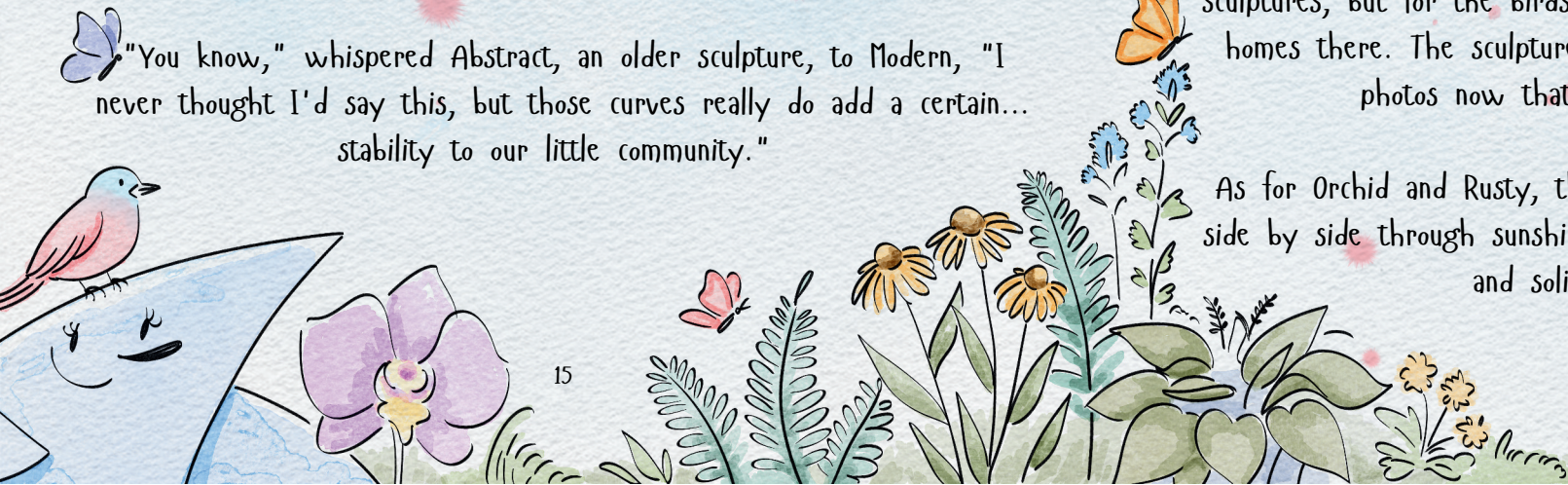
"You know," whispered Abstract, an older sculpture, to Modern, "I never thought I'd say this, but those curves really do add a certain... stability to our little community."



"Definitely," nodded Modern. "And they're not bad to look at either."

And so, the Steel Garden became known not just for its impressive sculptures, but for the birds, butterflies, and flowers that made their homes there. The sculptures found that visitors actually took MORE photos now that their park was full of life.

As for Orchid and Rusty, they became the best of friends, standing side by side through sunshine and storms, always true to themselves and solid in their friendship.



The Steel Garden

In a park by the deep blue sea,
Sixteen sculptures, proud as can be.
Standing tall in the sun and rain,
Some smooth, some rusty, not the same.

Then came Orchid with curves so neat,
The others stared—what a sight to meet!
"She looks different," Tower said with a frown,
As he looked at the newcomer down.

Birds would land and sometimes poop,
The sculptures cried, "Ew!" as a group.
But Orchid smiled and didn't mind,
"Rain will wash it," she was kind.

Rusty watched with curious eyes,
Maybe this new friend was wise?
Birds sang songs so sweet to hear,
Perhaps they weren't so bad, it's clear!

Then one day came a mighty storm,
Sculptures fell, couldn't keep their form.
Only Orchid and Rusty stood tall,
Their solid bases didn't let them fall.

Together they helped their friends stand up,
Even Tower who was stuck in muck.
"We spent all our money on looks, not feet!"
Square complained after his defeat.

Now the park is a happier place,
Each sculpture found their special space.
Different shapes, all standing strong,
In The Steel Garden where all belong.

So remember when the wind blows hard,
It's what's inside that's your safeguard.
Be like Orchid, true and steady,
With friends like Rusty, always ready!



10 Conversation Starters based
on "The Steel Garden"

1. "Why do you think the other sculptures were not nice to Orchid at first? Has anyone ever not been nice to you when you were new somewhere?"
2. "Orchid didn't mind when birds pooped on her. What's something that doesn't bother you but bothers other people?"
3. "Orchid didn't fall down in the storm. What helps you stay strong when things get hard?"
4. "Tower needed help getting up after he fell. When was a time you needed help with something?"
5. "Rusty started to like the birds even though he didn't like them before. What's something you didn't like before but like now?"

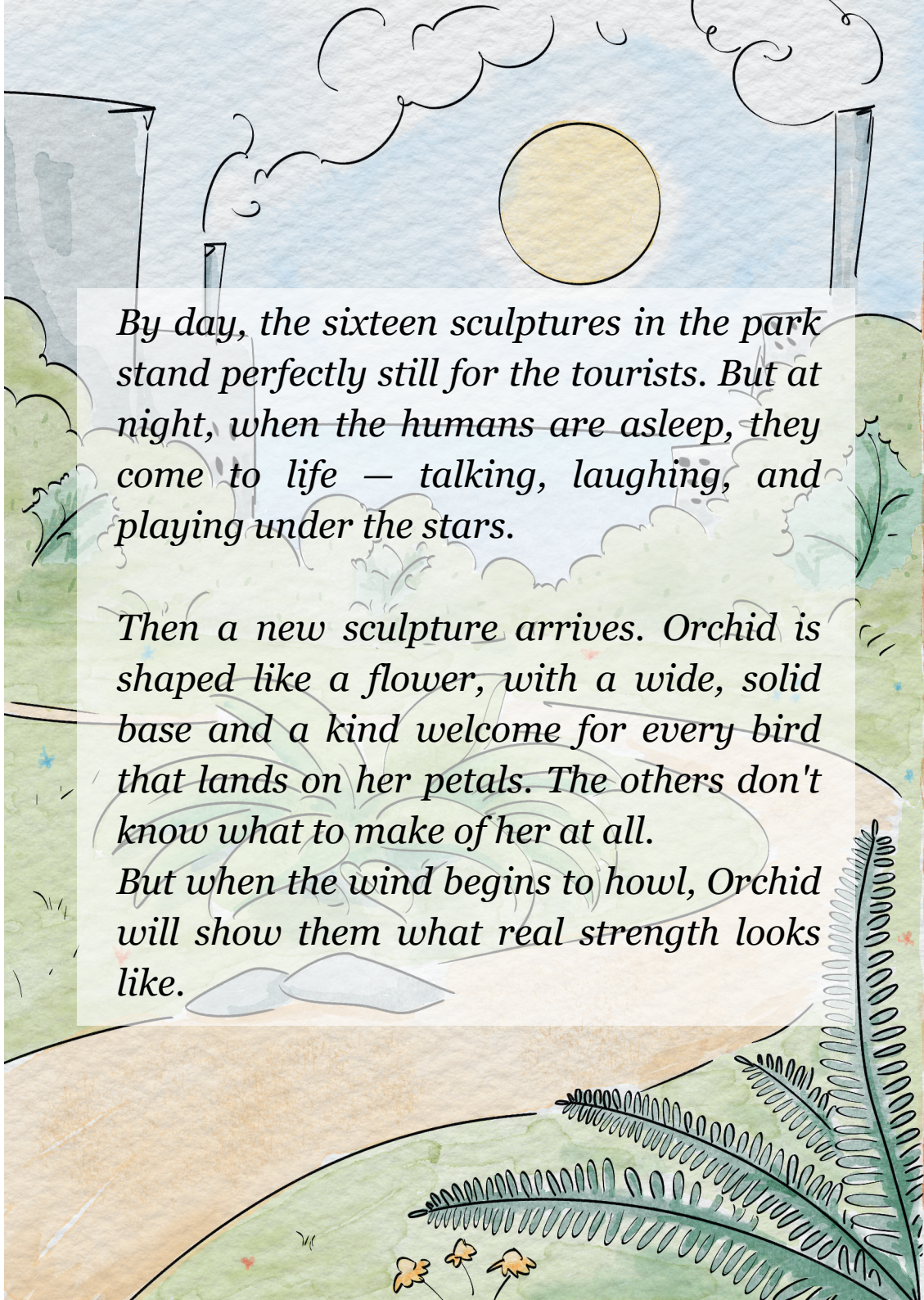


6. "All the sculptures in the park look different. What would be boring if all the sculptures looked the same?"
7. "The sculptures worried about how they looked in pictures. Do you ever worry about how you look?"
8. "How did Orchid make friends with Rusty? How do you make new friends?"
9. "Orchid was strong because she had a good base, not because she looked strong. What makes you feel strong?"
10. "Which sculpture in the story is most like you? Why?"



These questions encourage children to:

- Celebrate what makes them and others different
- Reflect on what real strength looks like – from the inside, not the outside
- Practice empathy for newcomers and anyone who feels left out
- Recognize that everyone needs help sometimes, even those who seem big and strong
- Notice how their own opinions and feelings can change over time
- Think about how to be kind to people who weren't kind first
- Question the idea that looking perfect is what matters most
- Connect the story to their own friendships and feelings



By day, the sixteen sculptures in the park stand perfectly still for the tourists. But at night, when the humans are asleep, they come to life – talking, laughing, and playing under the stars.

Then a new sculpture arrives. Orchid is shaped like a flower, with a wide, solid base and a kind welcome for every bird that lands on her petals. The others don't know what to make of her at all.

But when the wind begins to howl, Orchid will show them what real strength looks like.