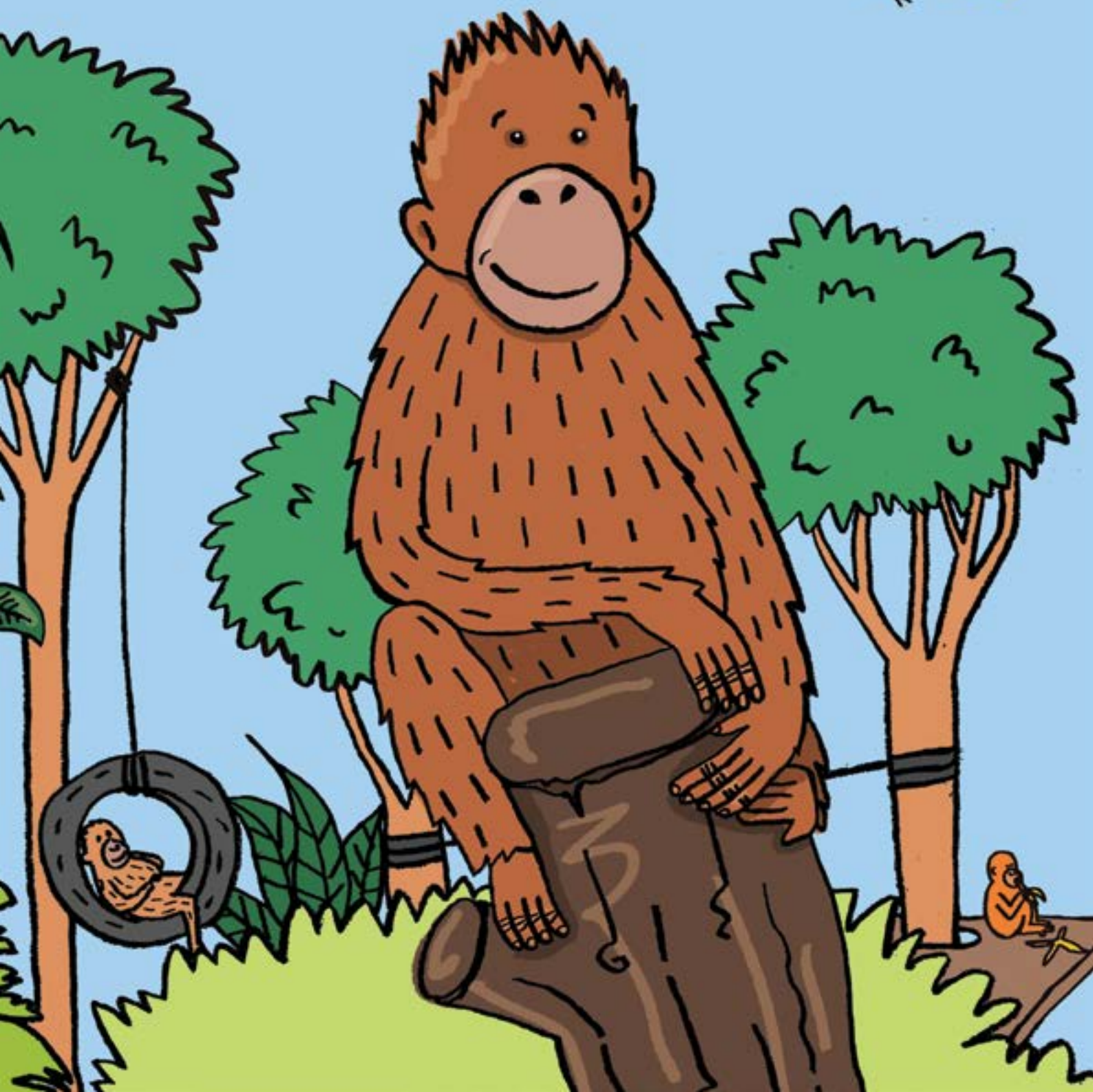
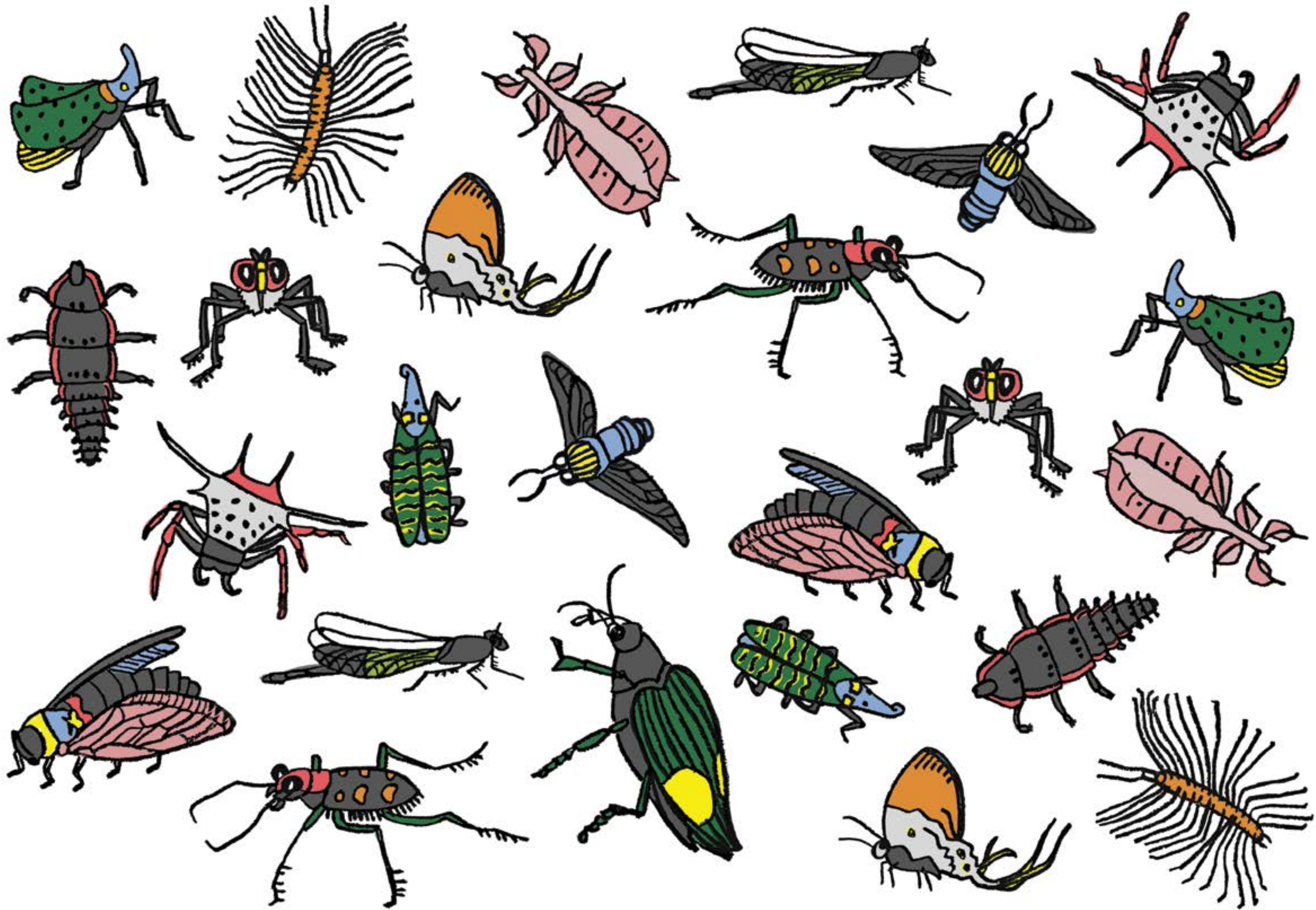


Archie's Road to Freedom

Written by Rachel Unicom
Illustrated by Sarah Campbell







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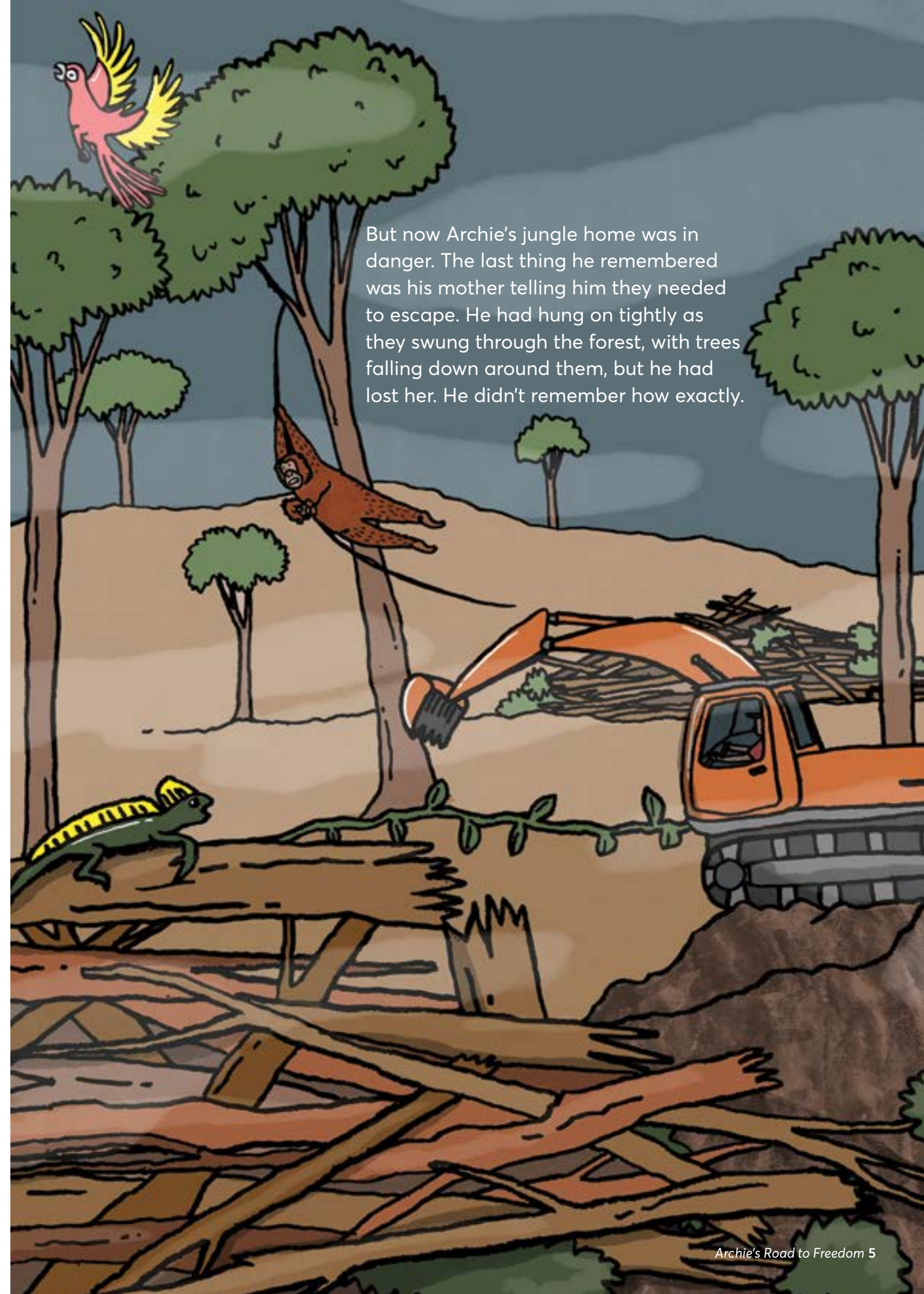
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Archie was a cheeky little orangutan who lived in a big patch of rainforest in the middle of an island called Borneo. Although he spent most of his time close to his mother, he would often sneak off to explore alone, always being careful not to go too far. He loved the forest, and all of its sights and sounds.



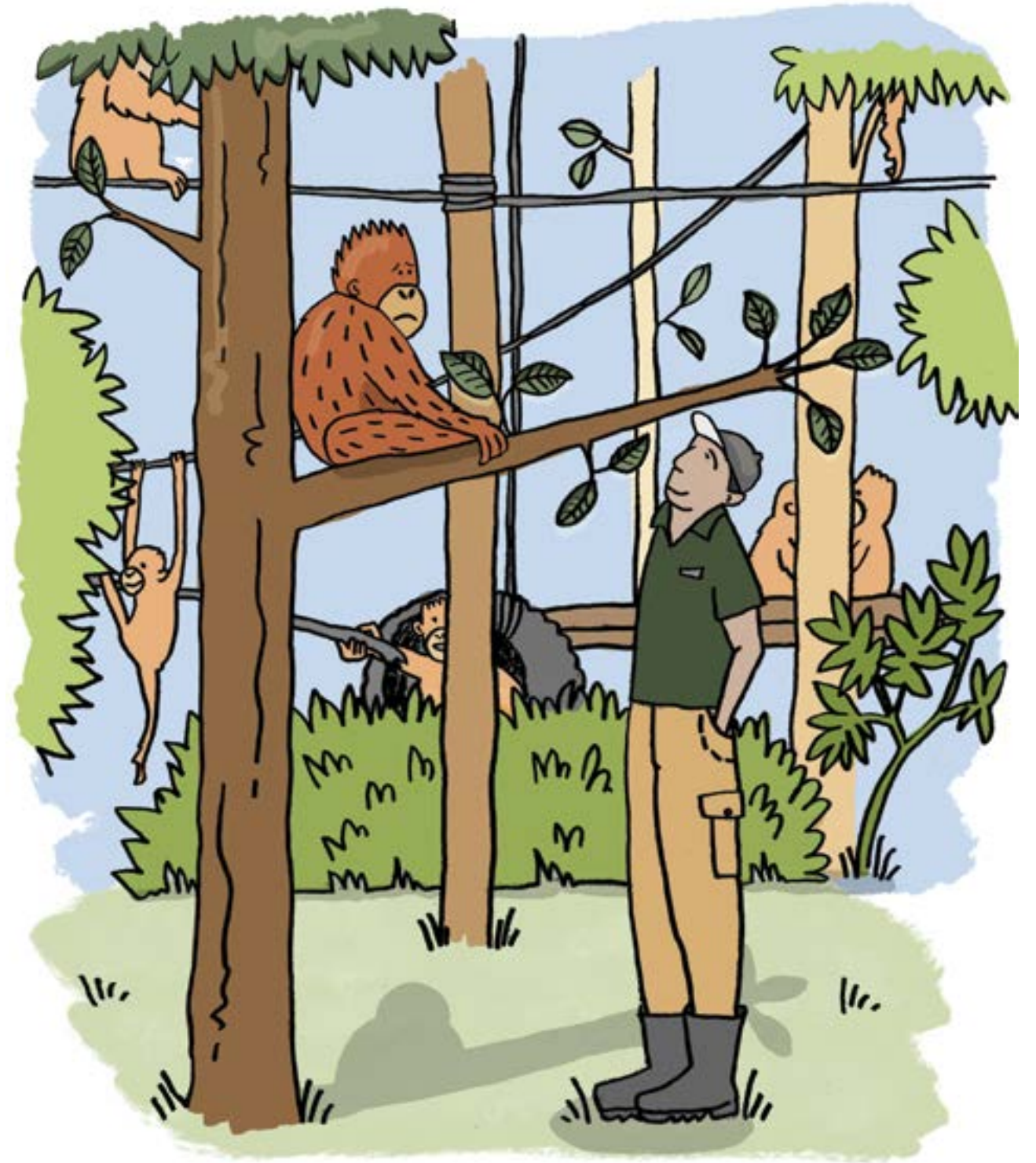


There were colourful bugs and strange, bumpy fruits, and so many shapes and sizes of trees you couldn't climb them all. Apart from his love of trees, Archie also loved his other animal friends. There was Morris the proboscis monkey, who had a big nose. Steph the gibbon, who enjoyed making noisy whooping sounds. Jack the sun bear, whose sharp claws helped him climb trees. And April the pygmy elephant, who never forgot anything. The only thing Archie didn't like was when it rained! Orangutans don't like rain!



But now Archie's jungle home was in danger. The last thing he remembered was his mother telling him they needed to escape. He had hung on tightly as they swung through the forest, with trees falling down around them, but he had lost her. He didn't remember how exactly.

Next thing he knew, Archie was travelling in a noisy, rumbling truck and trapped in something small and dark, which smelt very strange. He could see the sky and trees whizzing past outside, but wasn't sure where he was. As he bumped along the road, Archie wondered if his friends and mother were okay.

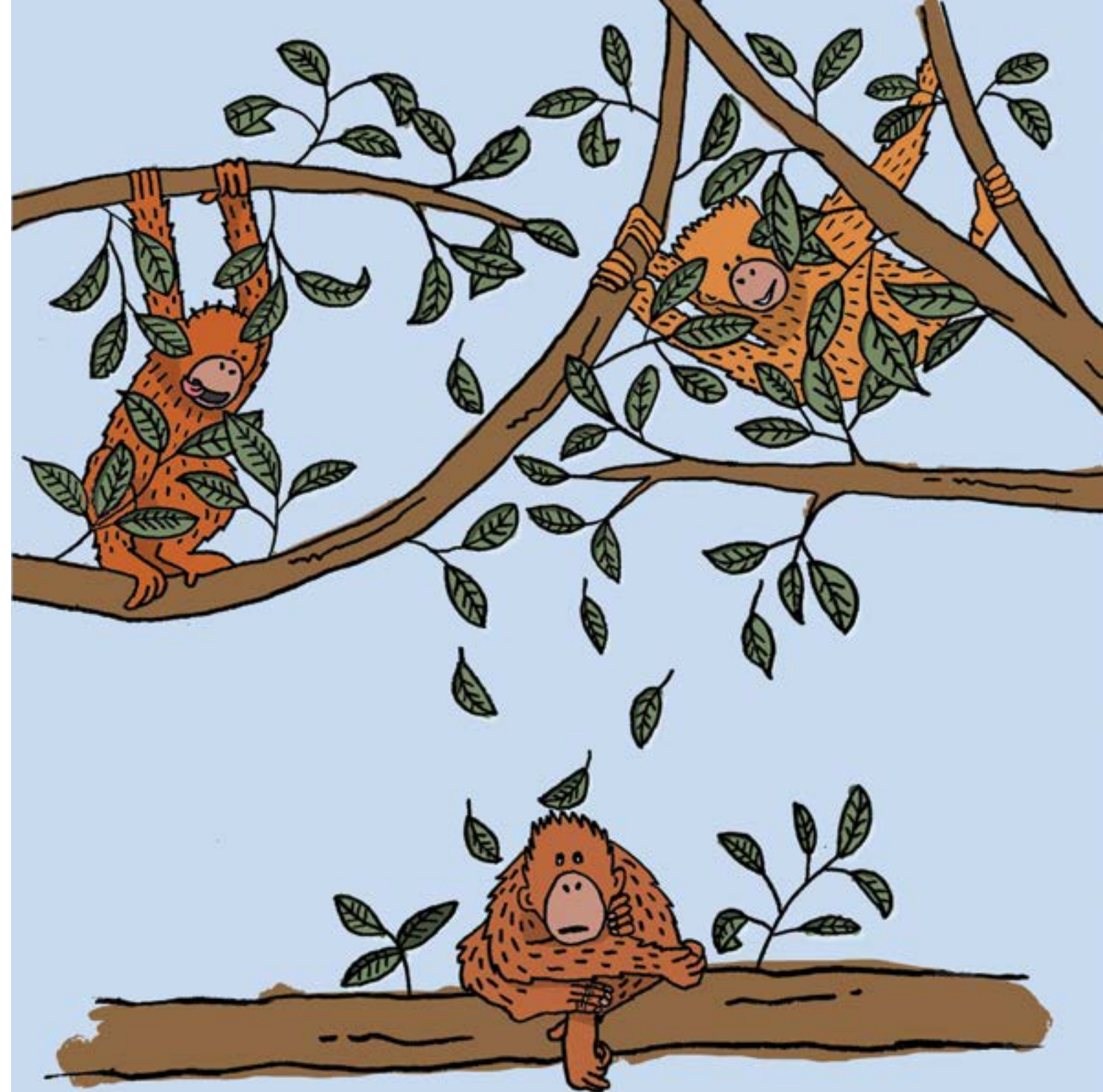


Archie felt very tired and hungry, and before he knew it, he was asleep. He only woke up when the truck suddenly stopped and a pair of large human hands lifted him out into the sunlight.

Archie blinked his eyes and took in his surroundings as he was placed onto a tree branch. Archie had never seen a human before. But this man seemed kind and gentle. He softly patted Archie's back, and encouraged him to climb.



Archie was very good at climbing, but he didn't feel like climbing today. That was something he'd always done with his mother, but now he was alone and he wasn't sure he could do it by himself. So he sat quietly, sucking his thumb, which was something he did whenever he was feeling scared or alone.



But Archie soon discovered he wasn't alone at all. Leaves started to drop down from the tree above him, landing on his head. He looked up and saw the branches rustling and shaking. Something was up there! He hoped it wasn't something dangerous – his mother had warned him there were certain creatures to stay away from in the forest!



Before he could decide what to do, a hairy orange shape suddenly came sliding down a nearby tree trunk at great speed. It was another orangutan! This orangutan, who was a bit bigger than Archie, plopped down beside him and smiled the biggest smile he had ever seen.

"You're new!" she said, still grinning. "My name is Alagoo, what's yours?"

Archie tried to reply, but he found his voice just came out as a quiet squeak. He was so nervous, his tummy started grumbling, and he suddenly felt the need to go to the toilet.

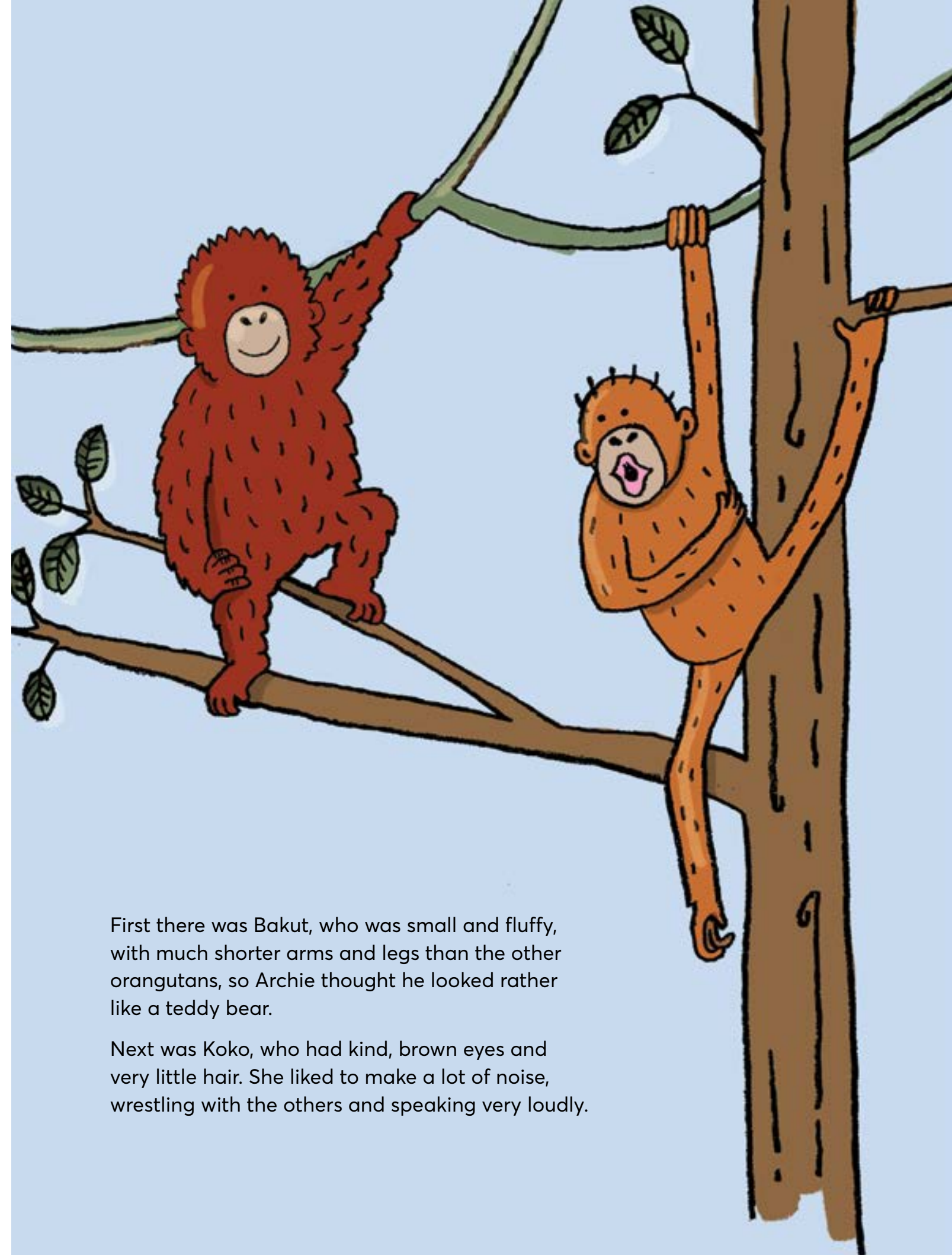


Alagoo looked at him kindly, and just as Archie tried to speak again, she swung off into the forest. Within a minute she was back, holding a banana in her foot. She put an arm around Archie and passed him the banana. "Here, you must be hungry," she said.

Archie was hungry. He quickly peeled the banana and stuffed it in his mouth. He hadn't eaten a banana for a long time, and it was so delicious!

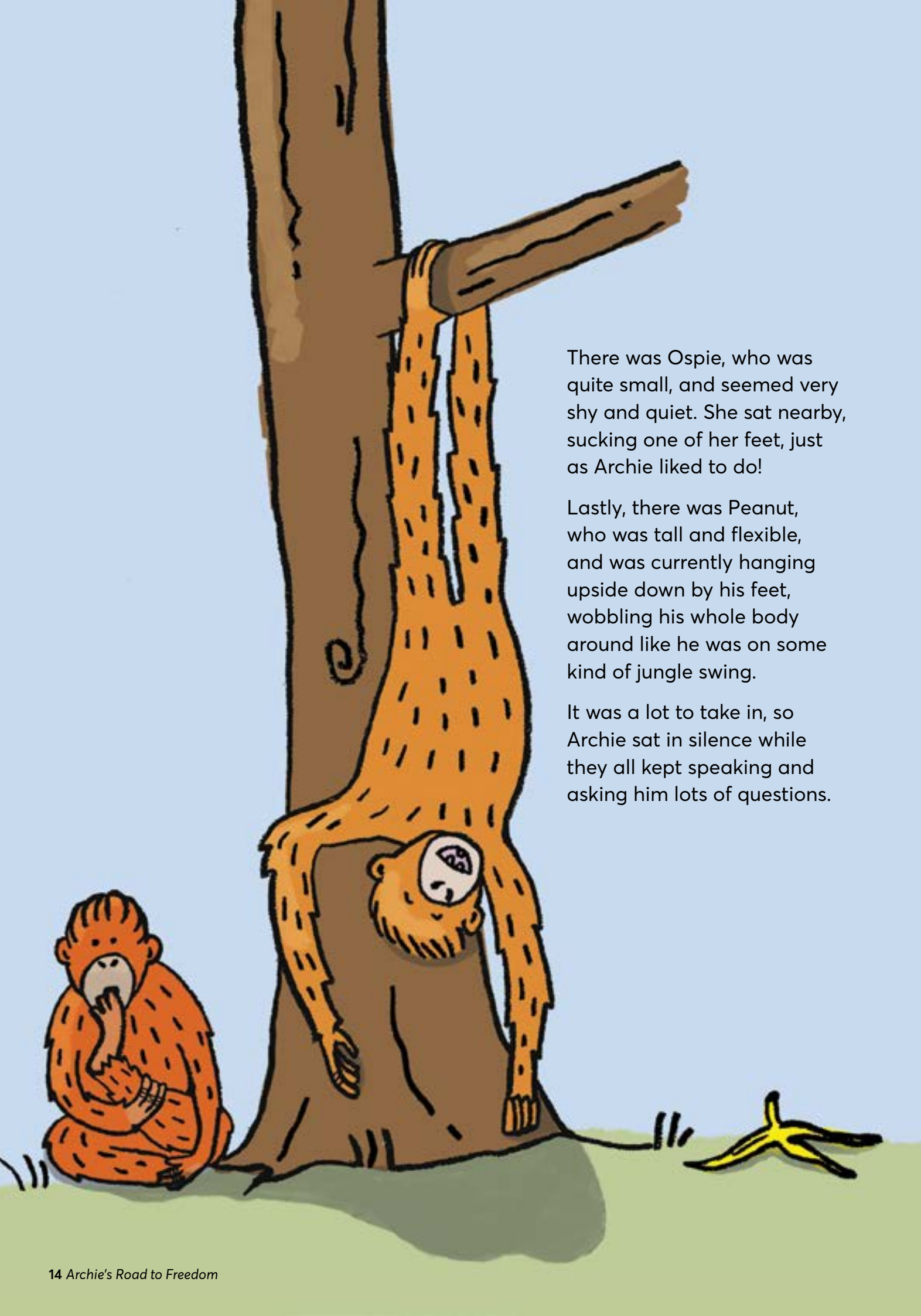


Archie could now hear whispering and giggling from the forest nearby. One by one, four other young orangutans emerged, all talking at once and climbing over each other to catch a glimpse of the new arrival. Alagoo introduced them all.



First there was Bakut, who was small and fluffy, with much shorter arms and legs than the other orangutans, so Archie thought he looked rather like a teddy bear.

Next was Koko, who had kind, brown eyes and very little hair. She liked to make a lot of noise, wrestling with the others and speaking very loudly.



There was Ospie, who was quite small, and seemed very shy and quiet. She sat nearby, sucking one of her feet, just as Archie liked to do!

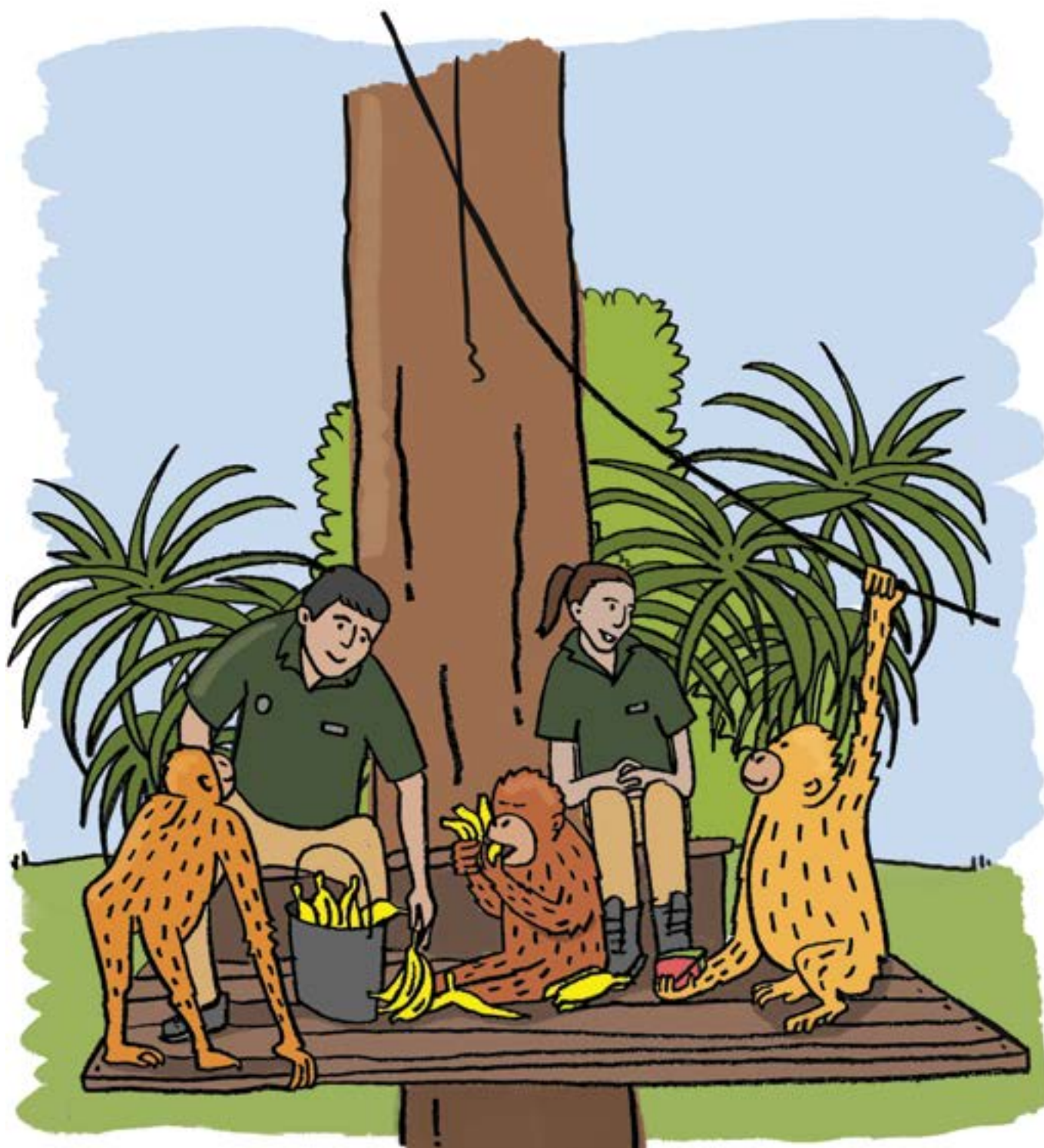
Lastly, there was Peanut, who was tall and flexible, and was currently hanging upside down by his feet, wobbling his whole body around like he was on some kind of jungle swing.

It was a lot to take in, so Archie sat in silence while they all kept speaking and asking him lots of questions.

Alagoo held up both her hands. "Okay guys, be quiet. We don't want to scare Archie away!" Everyone sat patiently and waited for Archie to speak. He started talking – slowly at first, but soon all his thoughts came tumbling out – about his home, his mother, and the fact he was scared and didn't know where he was.

Everyone was nodding, and Alagoo explained to Archie that all of the orangutans here had also lost their mothers. They had been rescued by the humans that work there – she called them 'rangers'. Now they all lived together at an orangutan rescue centre for orphans, just like them.





"The rangers are like our mums now. They feed us and keep us safe, and make sure we're all healthy. They also try to teach us things about the forest, which we didn't get a chance to learn from our own mums."

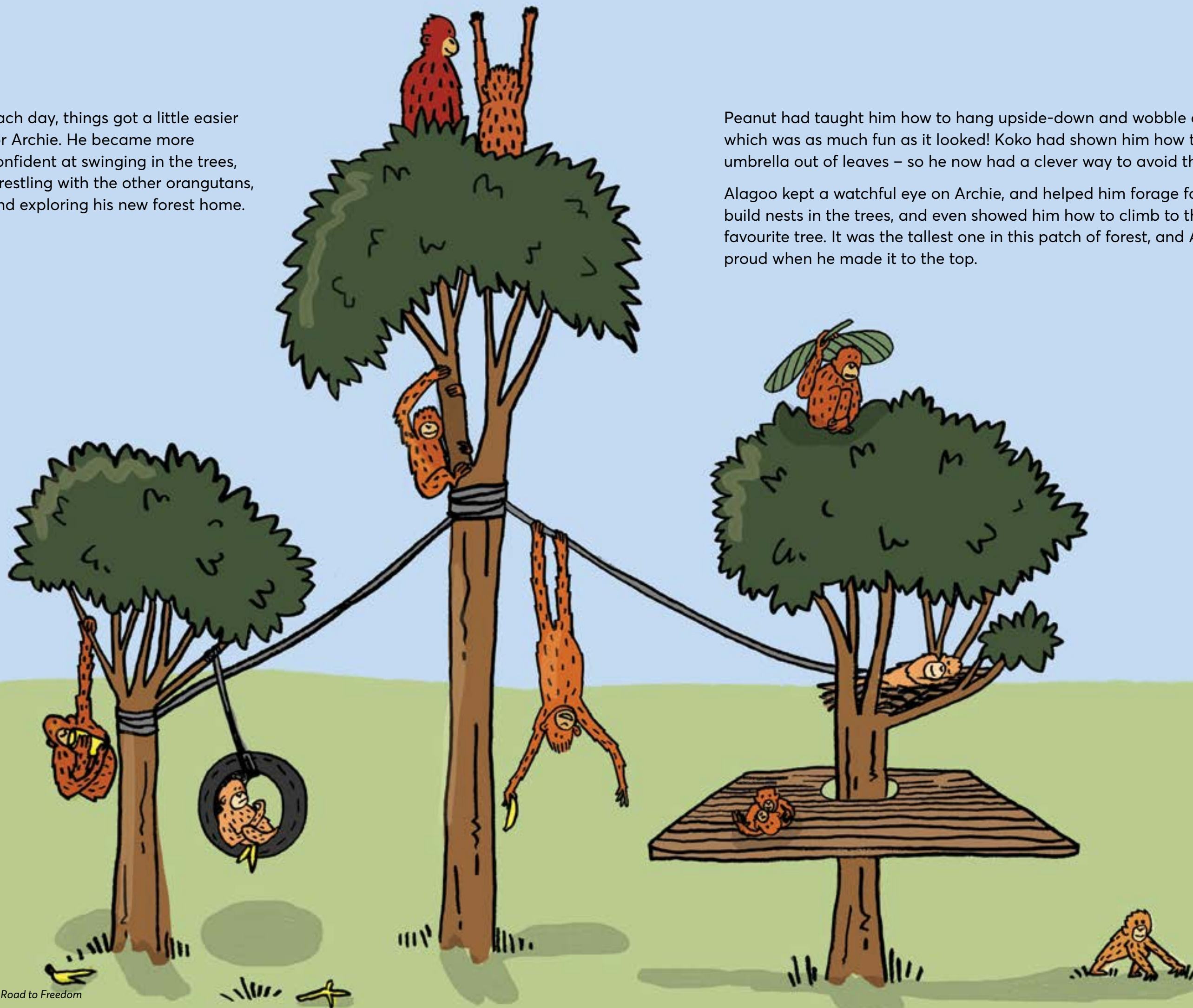


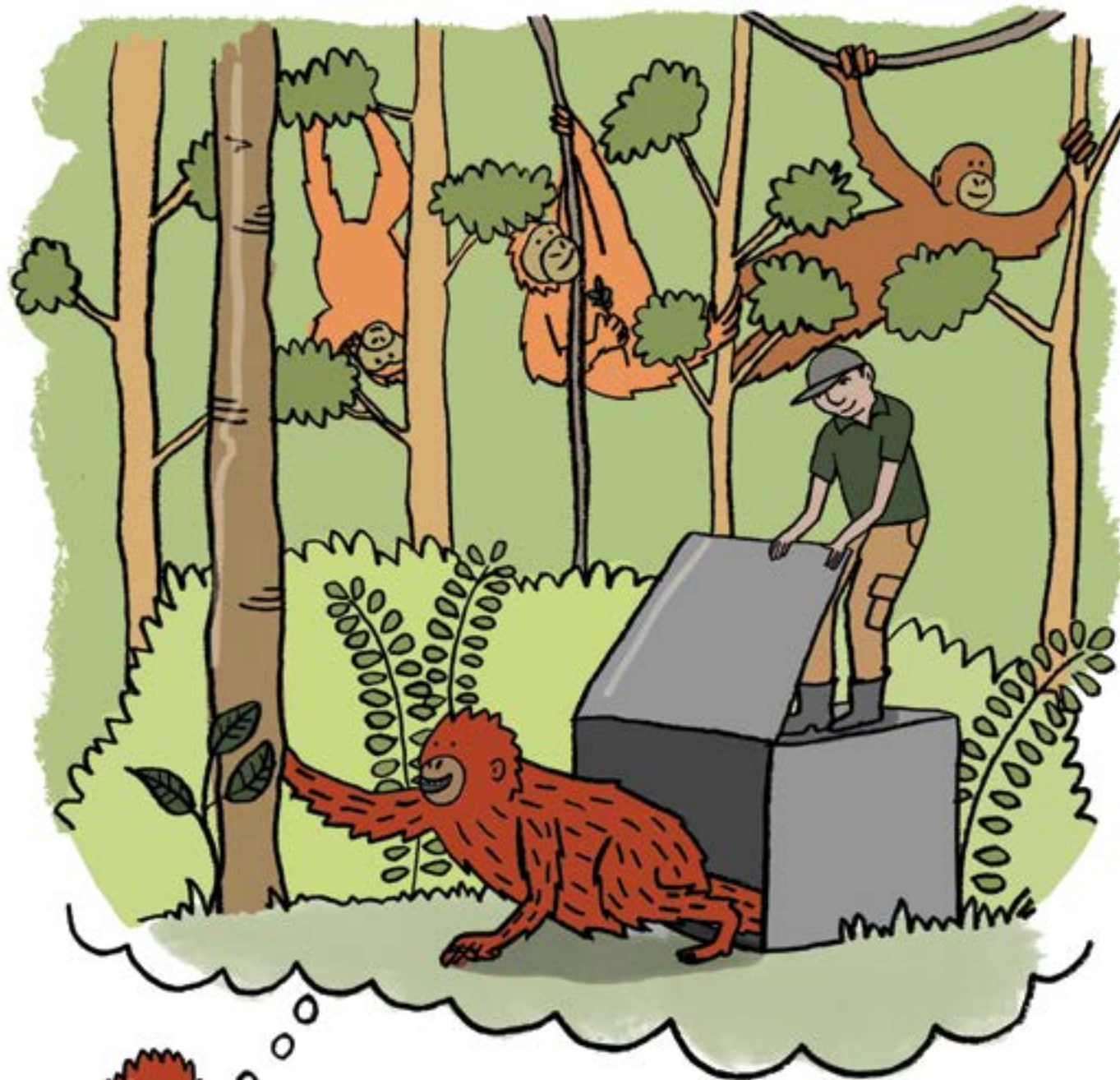
Archie felt so much better – perhaps this wasn't going to be as scary as he thought. As he went to sleep that night, he dreamt about all his new friends and their future adventures. He also dreamt about his mother, feeling her watch over him while he slept.

Each day, things got a little easier for Archie. He became more confident at swinging in the trees, wrestling with the other orangutans, and exploring his new forest home.

Peanut had taught him how to hang upside-down and wobble all about – which was as much fun as it looked! Koko had shown him how to make an umbrella out of leaves – so he now had a clever way to avoid the rain too!

Alagoo kept a watchful eye on Archie, and helped him forage for fruits, build nests in the trees, and even showed him how to climb to the top of her favourite tree. It was the tallest one in this patch of forest, and Archie was so proud when he made it to the top.



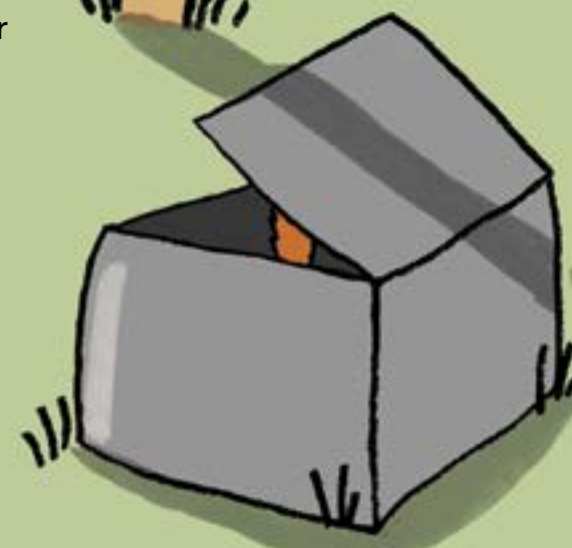


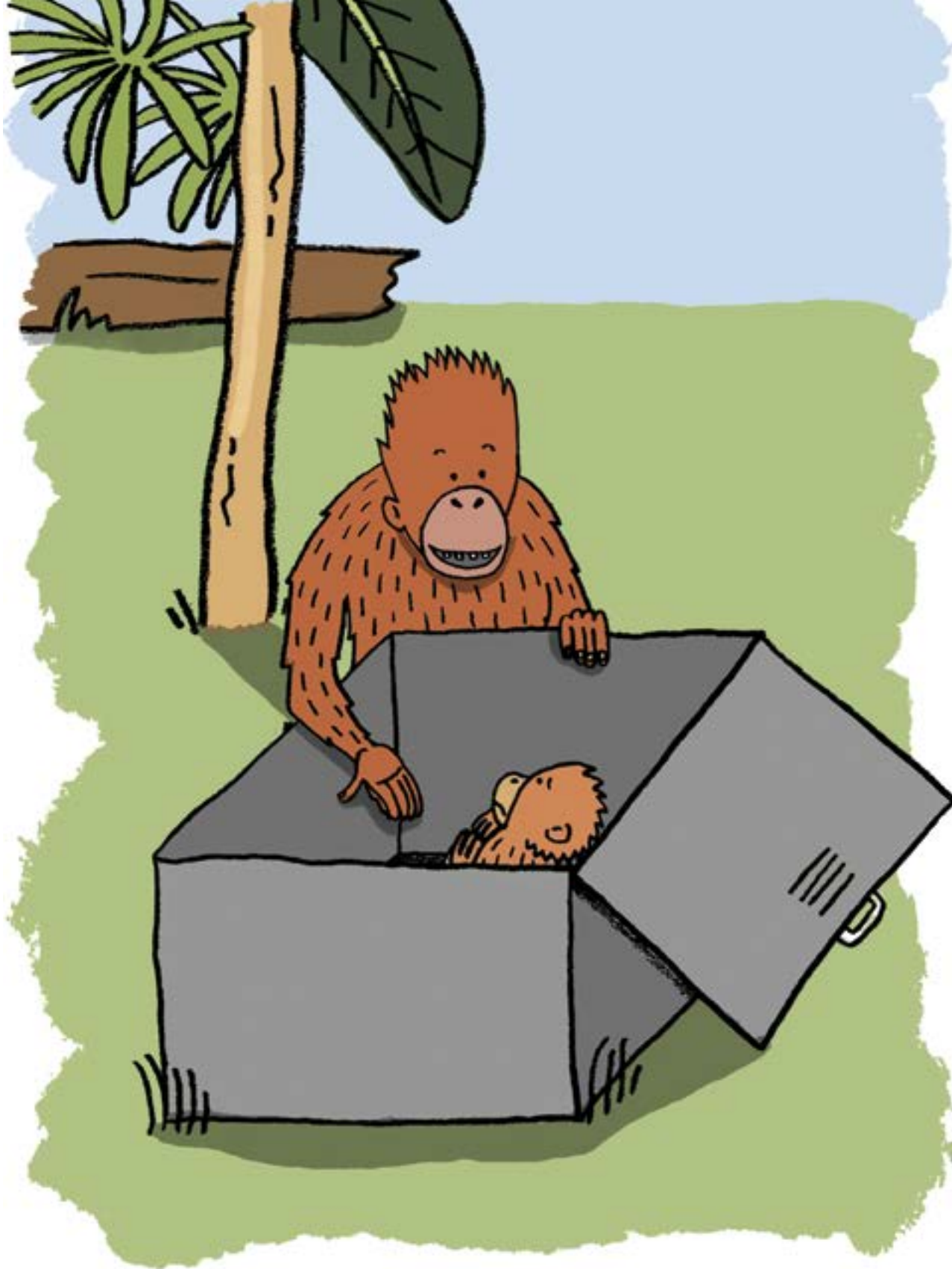
One morning, Alagoo explained that she was leaving. She had learnt a lot at forest school and was now going to another part of the sanctuary, where the older orangutans lived. There she would learn even more skills, so eventually she could return back to the wild forest where she came from.

Archie was very upset to see her go, and so were the others. Koko started to squeal very loudly. But Alagoo told them all this was great news – she was closer to going home. She said if they all kept practising their skills, they would go home one day too. That was something to be happy about, not sad.



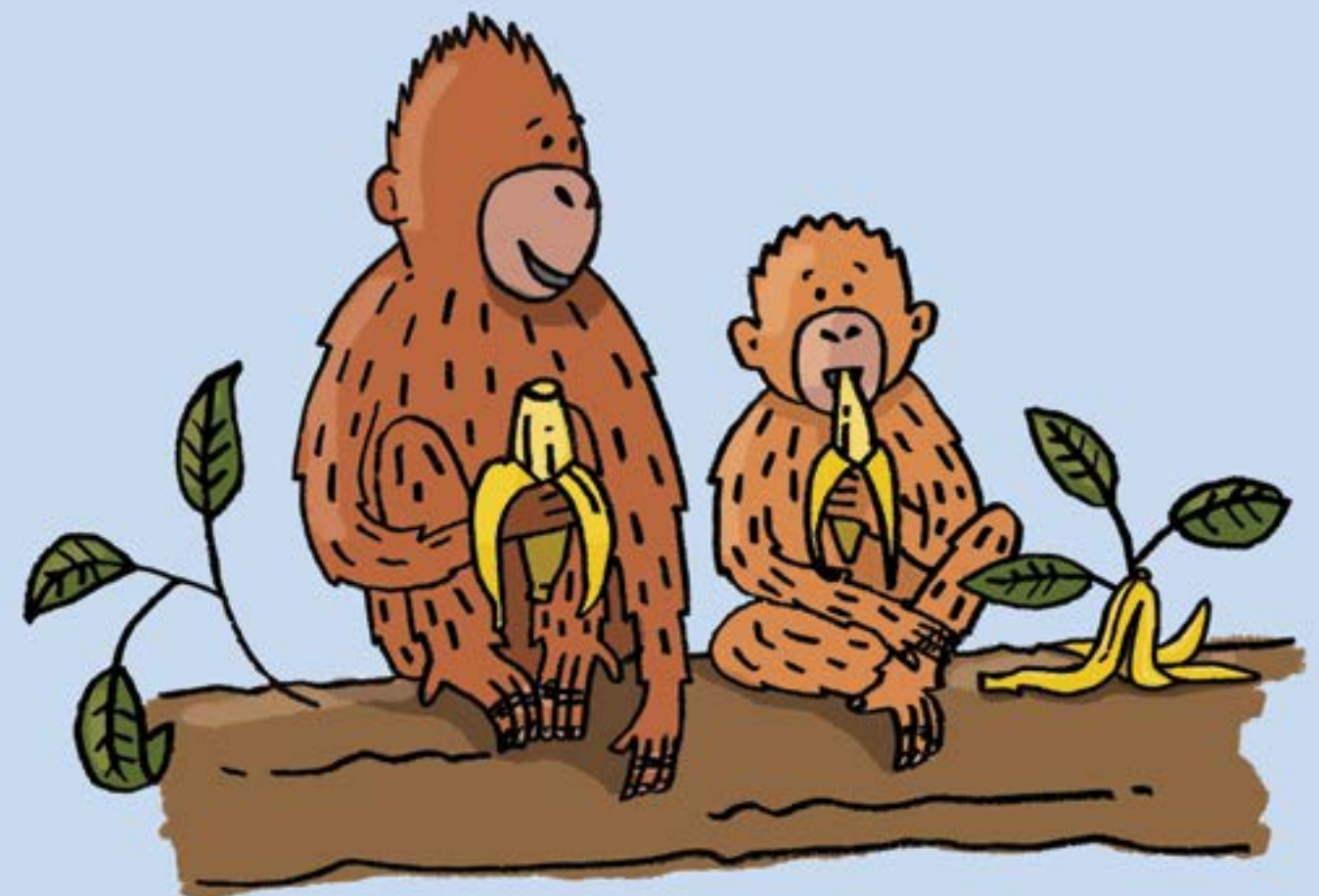
The next day was not the same without Alagoo. Archie was starting to feel a bit sorry for himself, when he noticed a familiar box sitting on the grass nearby. Archie could see a furry hand cautiously lifting the lid, and knew what to do. It was time for him to step up and be the strong orangutan his mother and Alagoo told him he could be!





He swung over and pulled the lid open. A tiny pair of brown eyes looked up at him, as the young orangutan inside scurried to one corner. She was nervous, just like he had been when he first arrived. Archie smiled the biggest smile he could manage, and reached out his hand.

"Hi there little one, you're new! I know you're confused and frightened right now, but we are your new family and we'll take care of you. My name is Archie, what's yours?"



About this book

In 2018, I volunteered at the Sepilok Rehabilitation Centre in Borneo; such centres rescue orphaned orangutans. Here they will spend up to seven years learning all the skills their mother should have taught them - it's a long and expensive rehabilitation process.

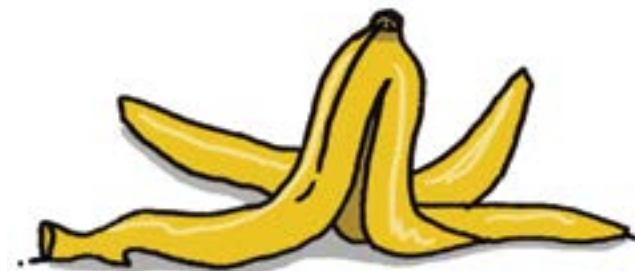
So this book is dedicated to the orangutan – a unique animal unlike any other on the planet. It is also for all of the people who are supporting this noble ape; those who educate and research, those who take on the role of mother for orangutans that have lost their own, and those working tirelessly to reverse their path to extinction.

Thanks also to all of you who have purchased this book. Biodiversity is essential, and the more young minds that learn to love and respect the natural world, the better it will be for every living creature on this planet – animals and humans alike.

The aim of this book is twofold – education and fundraising. I wanted to reduce the cognitive distance – to help parents and children understand the environmental and maternal loss these orangutans currently face, but also to offer hope that things can change.

Finally, a special dedication to Archie. He and all of the orangutan characters in this book are based on real orangutans, who currently reside at Sepilok. I was fortunate enough to work with them and they captured my heart; this really is their story.

Thanks for reading!



A big thank you

A big thanks to all of those who have helped me bring this book to fruition. To Sarah Campbell (www.sarahcillustration.com), who has done a spectacular job with the illustrations. I may have written the words, but your amazing pictures paint the story!

To Sophie Campbell (www.scdesign.com.au) for donating her time to designing the layout of this book, and to Dave Chaplin and the team at Eastern Press (www.epress.com.au) for making it as affordable as possible to print!



About the charity

Orangutan Appeal UK is a small non-profit organisation founded in 2000. OAUK is dedicated to providing a sustainable future for the species through the rehabilitation and conservation of their rainforest habitat across Borneo, and by raising awareness of the plight of this great ape across the world. Orangutans are now critically endangered. In the last 15 years the population has been halved and if the current rate of decline continues, they will become extinct in our lifetime. OAUK also funds projects at the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, including the renovation of enclosures and equipment, the purchase of rescue vehicles, and additional employees. You can adopt an orangutan via the charity's website: www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk

All of the profits from the sale of this book will go to OAUK.

About the creators

Writer: Rachel Unicom

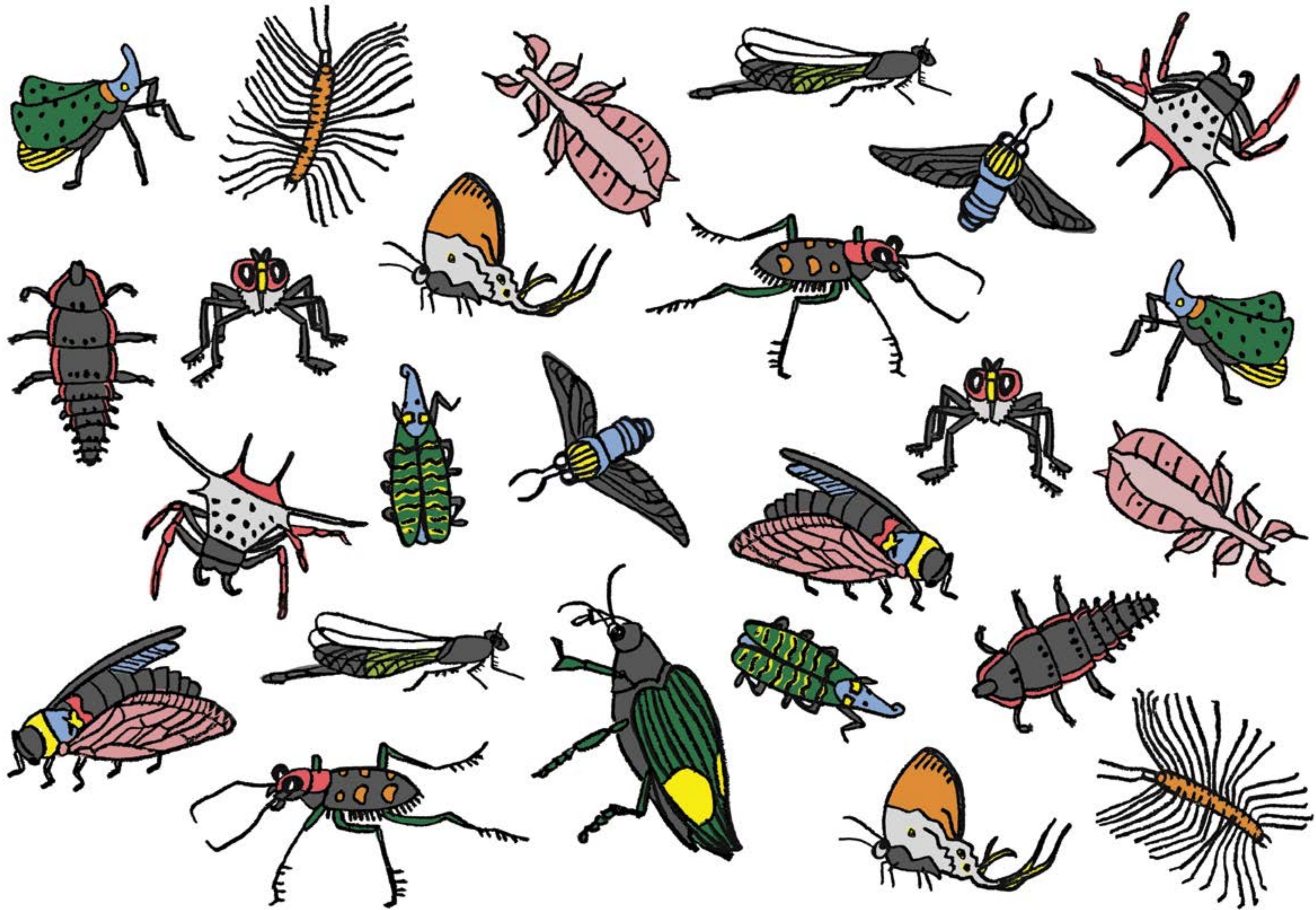



Rachel studied public relations and marketing at the University of Newcastle. She is a keen traveller and writer, with a passion for biodiversity, animal welfare, conservation and the natural world around us. This is her first children's book. After living in the UK for many years, she currently resides in Melbourne.

Illustrator: Sarah Campbell



Sarah is a freelance illustrator based in Sydney, Australia who loves to travel and is passionate about sustainability, environmental awareness and animal welfare. She believes stories and art can help change the world.





Archie is a cheeky little orangutan who finds himself in an unfamiliar world.

But his journey back to freedom is one of growth, support and life-long friendship.