

"Hurrah for Rabbit and Bear!" —NEIL GAIMAN

RABBIT & BEAR

THE
PEST
IN THE
NEST



JULIAN GOUGH & JIM FIELD









RABBIT & BEAR

The Pest in the Nest

STORY BY
JULIAN GOUGH

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JIM FIELD



Silver Dolphin



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Dedicated to Farnborough Library.
From picture books at 2 years old,
to discovering new music at 22 years old.

Thank you for being there.

J.F.



For my mother, Elizabeth Gough (who is called Betty, and
was a Grogan until she married my dad).

I was not the world's easiest child to put to bed, but she
read me my bedtime stories with great patience, even when
I wanted *The Saggy Baggy Elephant* for the
fifty-seventh time.

Thanks, Mum.

J.G.

THREE SISTER MOUNTAINS

THE CLIFF OF A
THOUSAND BIRDS

BEAR'S CAVE

WOODPECKER'S
TREE

RABBIT'S
WARREN

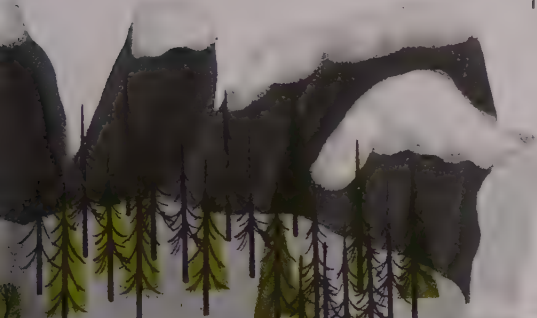
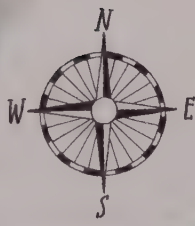
GIANT
SANDPIT

THE
FLOWER
CLEARING



THUNDER MOUNTAINS

THIS WAY
TO MONSTERS
(DRAGONS!
SKOOKUMS!
HUMANS!)



WILD
FOOL
FALLS

WOLF WOODS



BIG PINE
ISLAND



THE LONG
LAKE

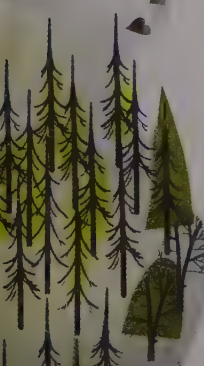


SMALL
ISLAND

PEBBLE
BEACH

TINY MOSS
ISLAND
(A ROCK)

THE BOG
OF FROGS



THIS WAY
TO OCEAN



Rabbit was having a lovely sleep
in his friend Bear's cave, when a
TERRIBLE noise woke him.

Oh, no! thought Rabbit. Thunder!
He opened his eyes. The cave was
full of light.



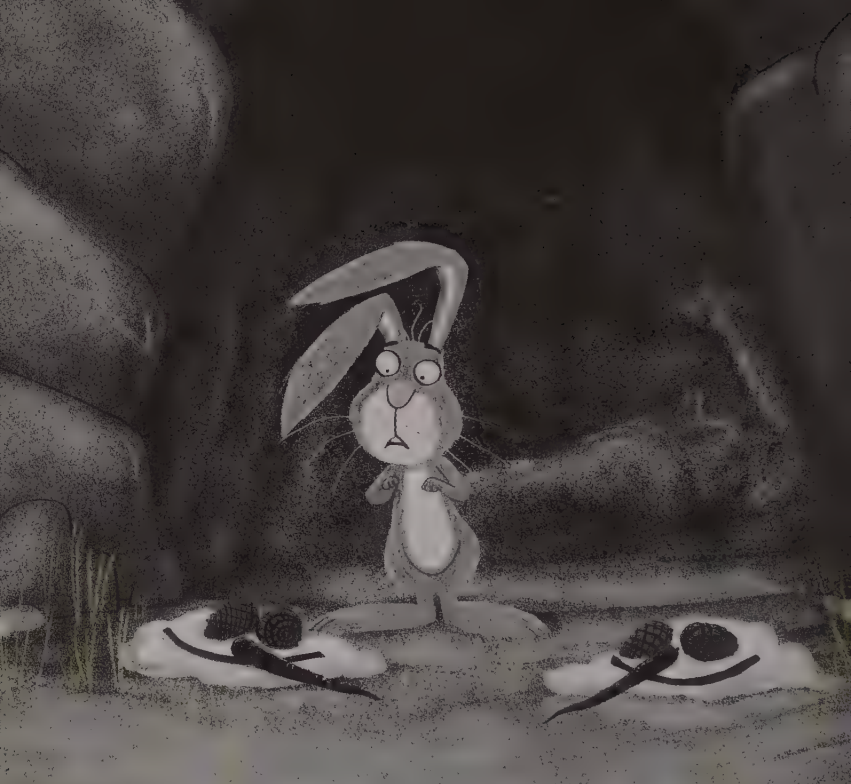
Oh, no! thought Rabbit. Lightning!
But the light was just sunshine, coming
into the cave. And the noise was just Bear,
snoring VERY LOUDLY.

Rabbit tried to cover his ears with his
paws, but his ears were very big, and his
paws were rather small.



"Oh, this is IMPOSSIBLE,"
said Rabbit, and hopped out
of Bear's cave.



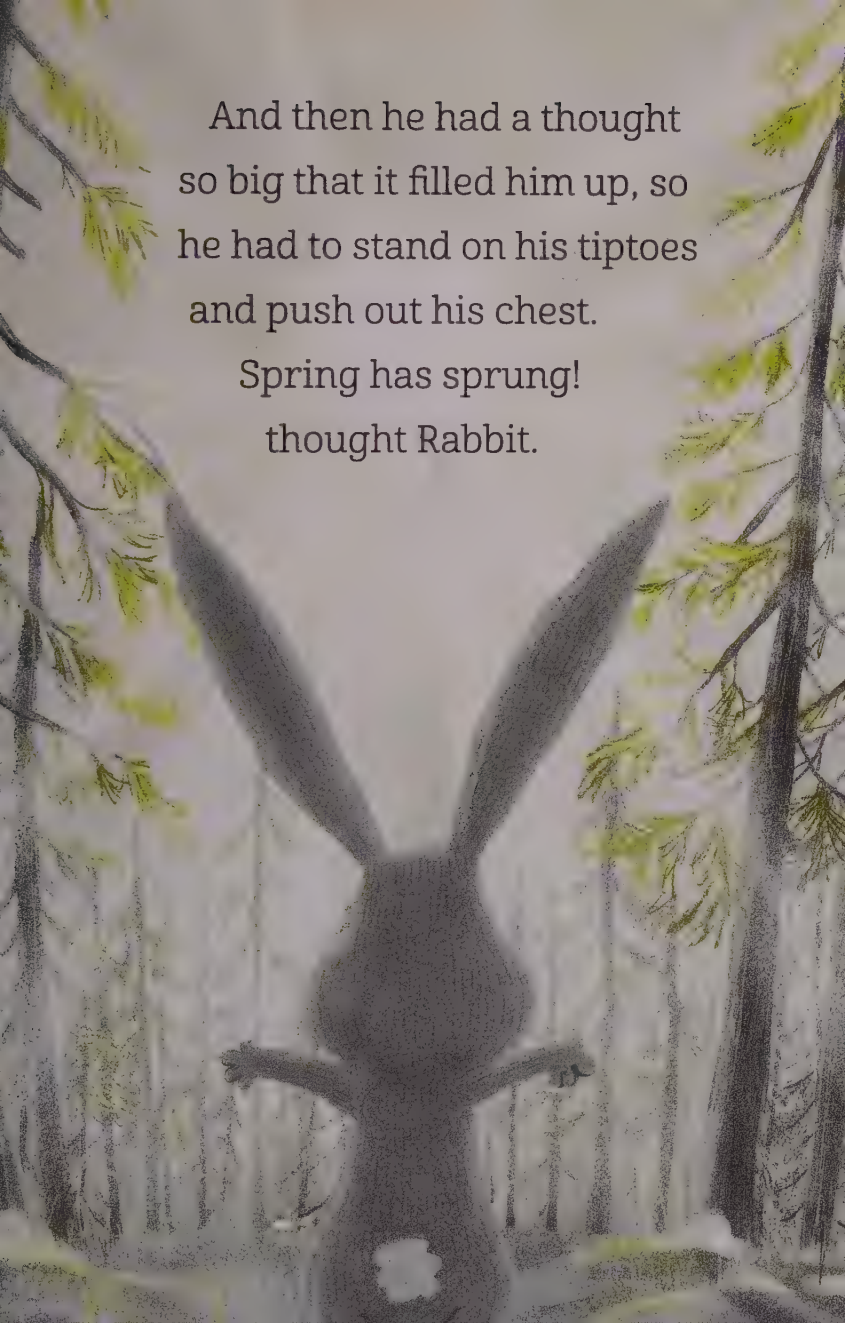


Outside, the winter snow was gone, except for two teeny, tiny piles of old, tired snow. On each pile rested two pinecones, a curved stick, and a carrot.

Our snowmen have melted, thought Rabbit.

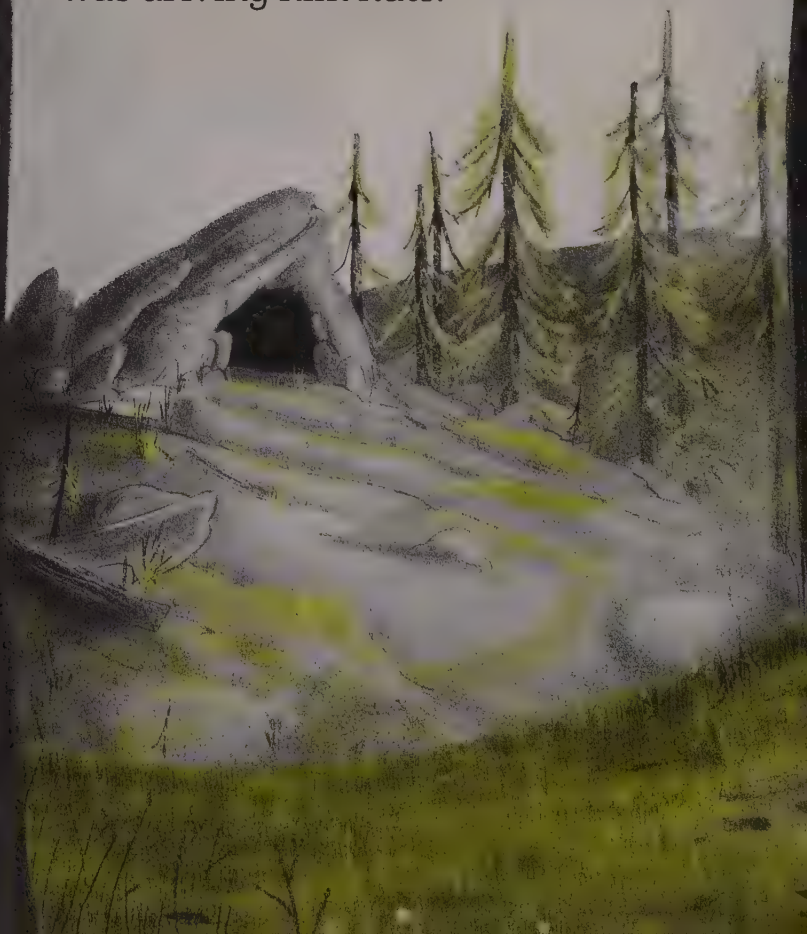
And then he had a thought
so big that it filled him up, so
he had to stand on his tiptoes
and push out his chest.

Spring has sprung!
thought Rabbit.



At last!

Time to go home to his burrow.
He had enjoyed a cozy winter with
his friend Bear, but that snoring
was driving him nuts.



Rabbit hopped down Bear's big hill, and up Rabbit's little hill.

Hmmm. His burrow looked a bit scruffy after the winter.

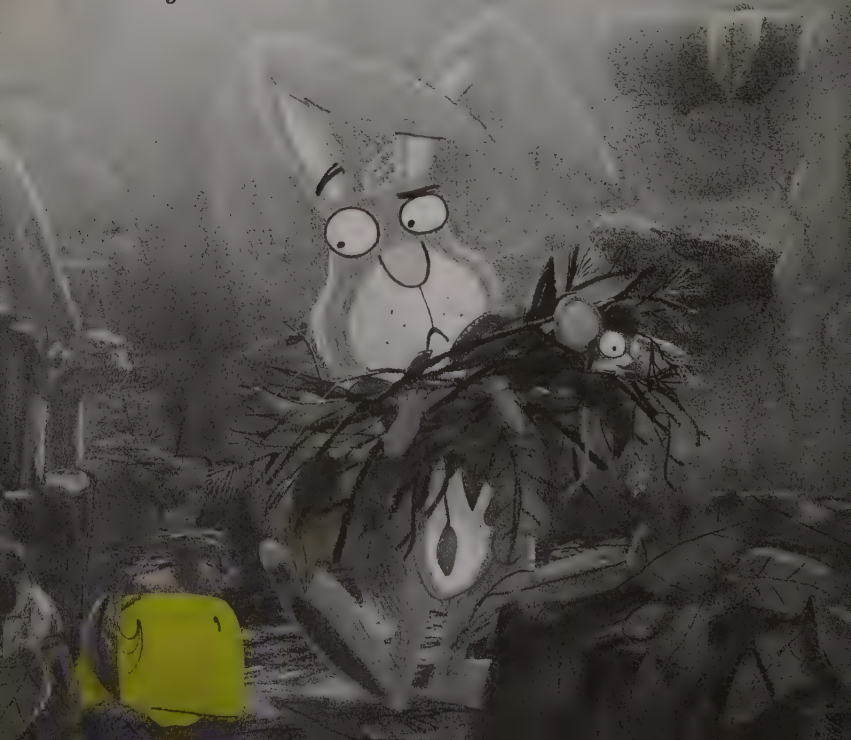
Better do some spring-cleaning, thought Rabbit, and hopped into his burrow.



Oh, his burrow was
REALLY scruffy. Lots of
twigs, old leaves ... Rabbit
scooped out the mess with his
paws, to reveal ...

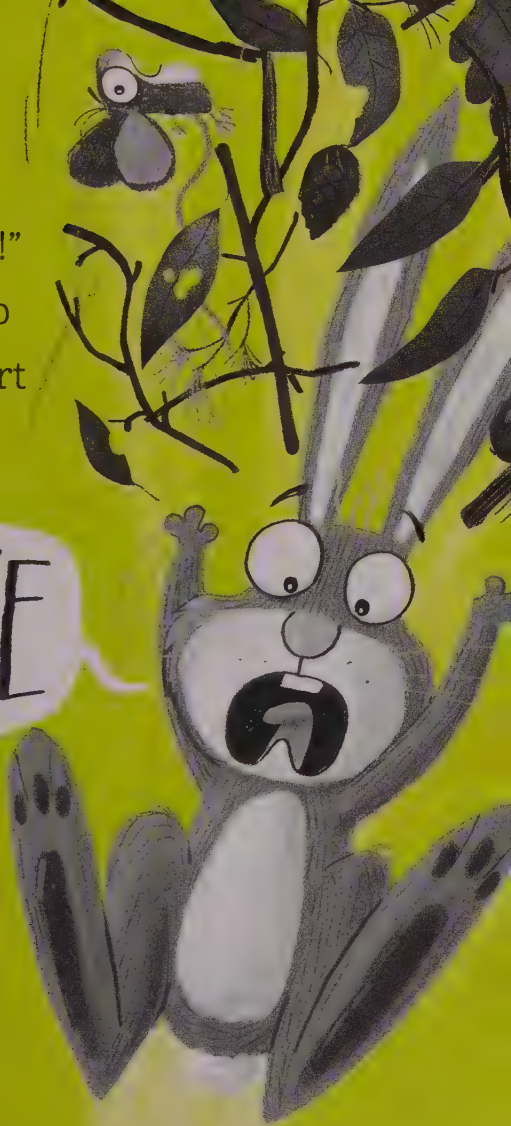
Hmmm. Was it a big rock?

The root of a tree? ... Wait a minute,
it had eyes!



“AaaAAAAaaah!”
shouted Rabbit so
loudly that he hurt
his own ears.

SNAKE



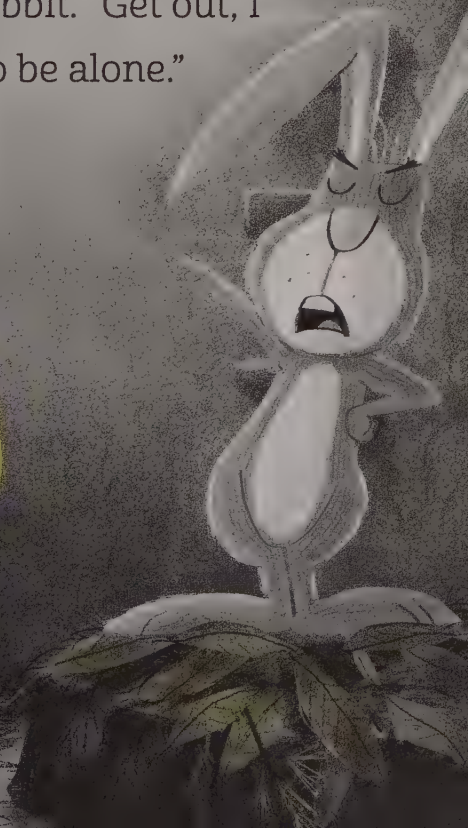


The two little eyes
popped open and
looked straight into
Rabbit's eyes.



“Helllllooooo,
Rrrrraaabbiittt,”
said the animal,
incredibly slowly,
with a long sigh.

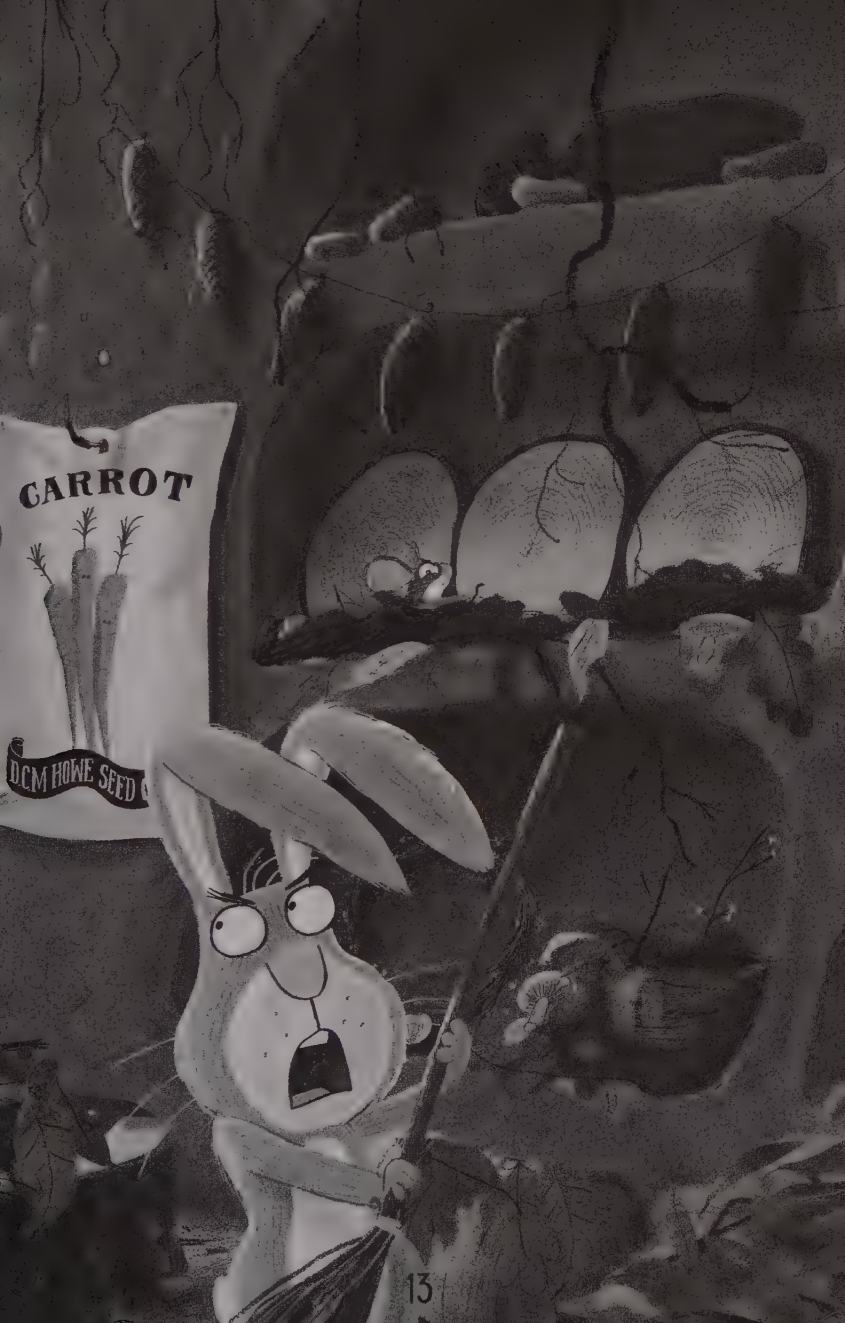
Whew! It wasn't a snake.
"Oh, it's you, Tortoise,"
said Rabbit. "Get out, I
want to be alone."



“Is it ...
nnnnneeeext year ...
alllllllreadyyyyy?”
asked Tortoise.

“Yes!” said Rabbit. “And it’s
already far too noisy! PEACE AND
QUIET,” he shouted, “THAT’S
ALL I WANT.” Ouch. He had hurt
his own ears again.





CARROT

D.C.M. HOWE SEED &

“Aaaaallll right, Rrrrrabbbbit,” said Tortoise, and walked out of the burrow so slowly that Rabbit thought he would go mad.

Tortoise finally got all the way outside, and fell asleep at once in the sunshine.



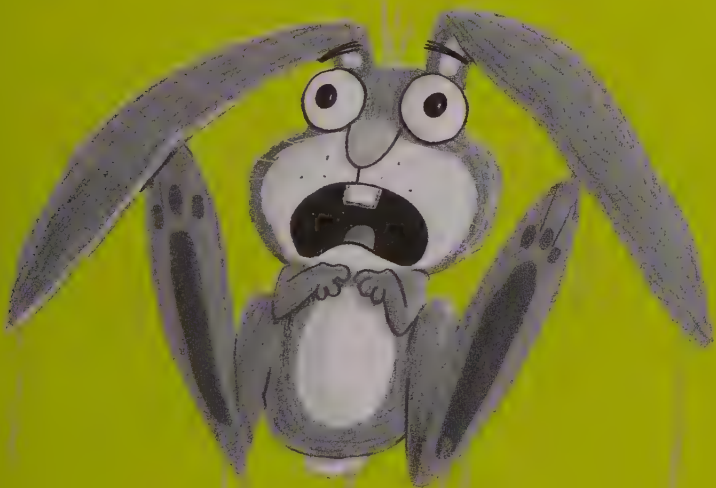


“Whew,” said Rabbit, and sat on
the sleeping Tortoise.

Rabbit stretched in the sunshine.
Ah, peace! Ah, quiet!



BANG! BANG! BANG!



Rabbit jumped so high he scared himself.
(Rabbit was afraid of heights.)

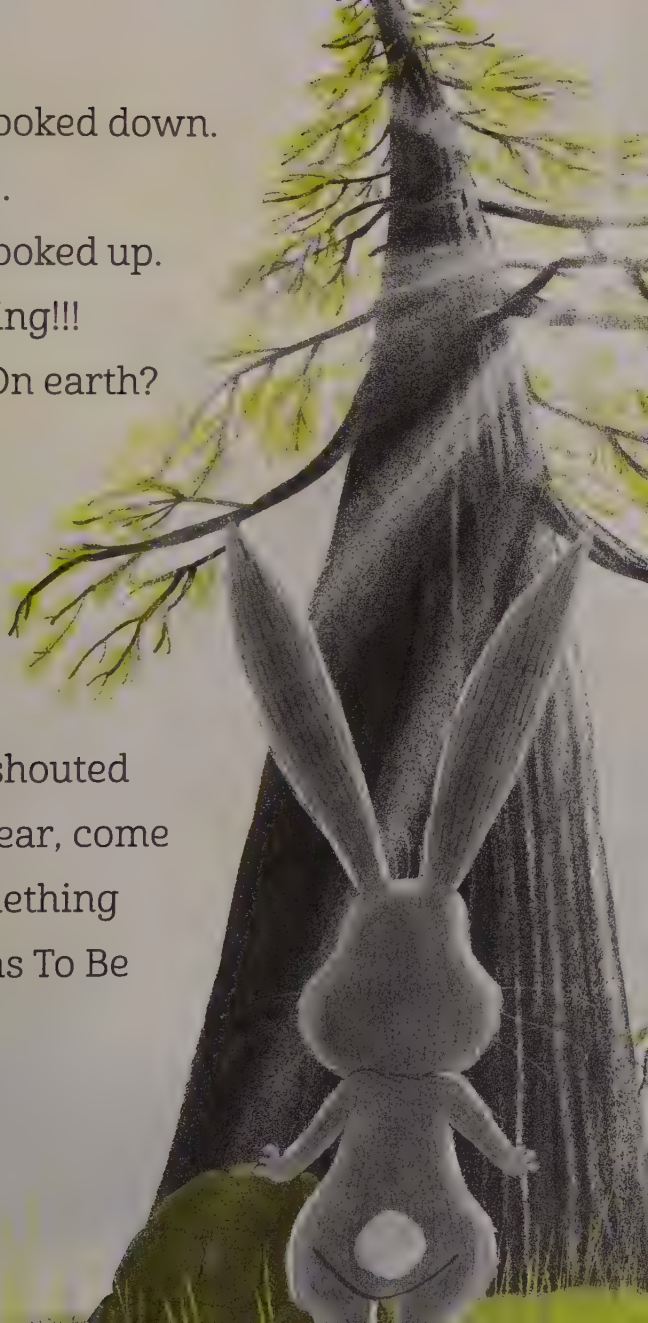
“Oh, my nerves!” he said when he had landed again. He looked all around. Nothing.

BANG! BANG! BANG!
BANG! BANG! BANG!



Rabbit looked down.
Nothing ...
Rabbit looked up.
Something!!!
What? On earth?
Was that?

“Bear!” shouted
Rabbit. “Bear, come
here! Something
Simply Has To Be
Done!”



Bear wandered down the hill from her cave, rubbing her eyes with a big paw.

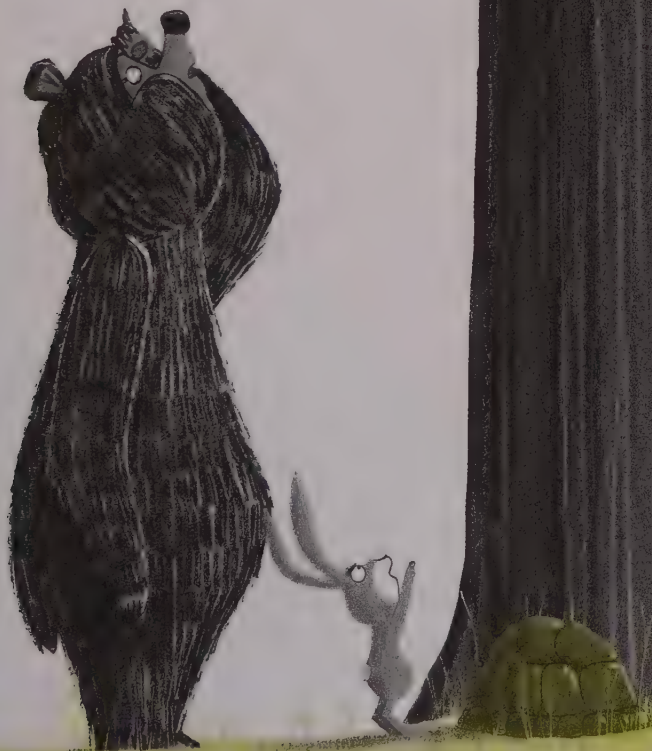
“Look!” said Rabbit, and pointed straight up.



Bear looked. "Sorry," she said.
"I can't see very well. It looks
like a blur."

"It IS a blur," said Rabbit.

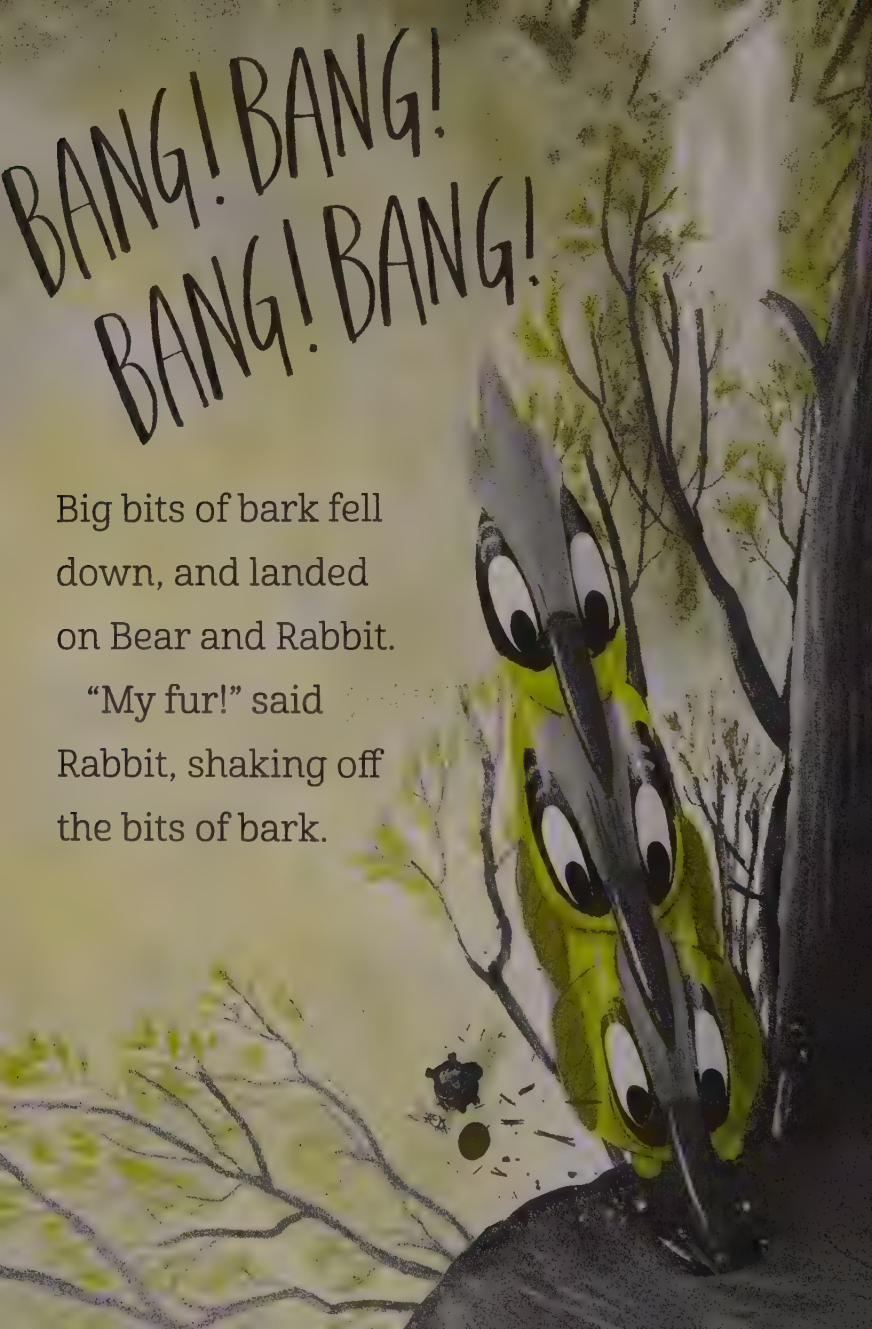
All the way up near the top
of the tree, a green blur went ...



BANG! BANG!
BANG! BANG!

Big bits of bark fell
down, and landed
on Bear and Rabbit.

“My fur!” said
Rabbit, shaking off
the bits of bark.



“This is completely impossible.”

Far above them, the blur

stopped banging.

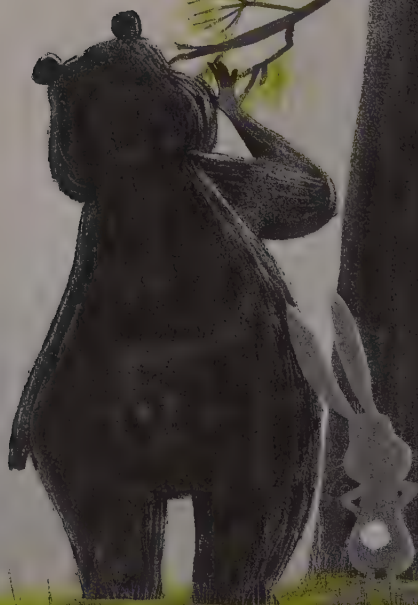
Suddenly it wasn't

blurry any more.



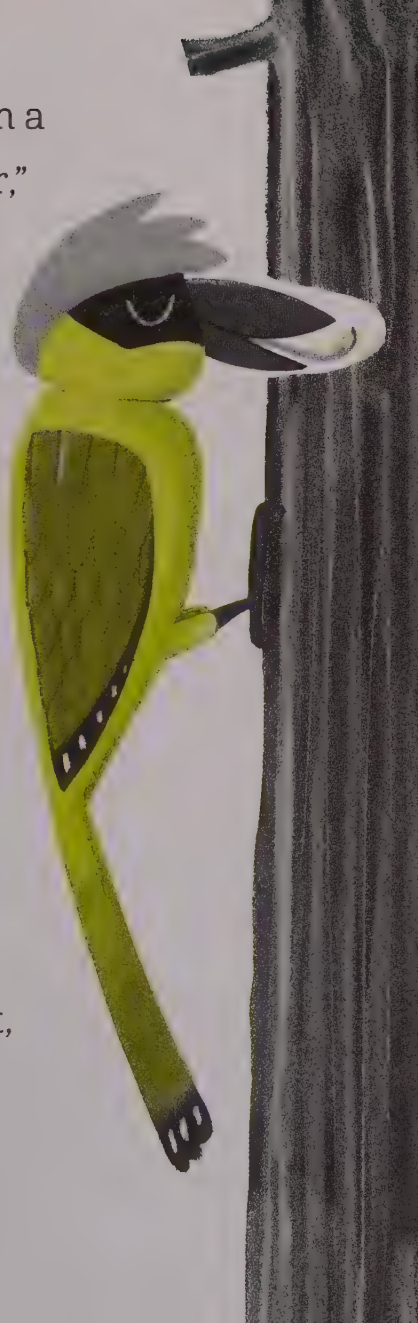
“It’s a bird,” said Bear.

“It’s a pest,” said Rabbit.



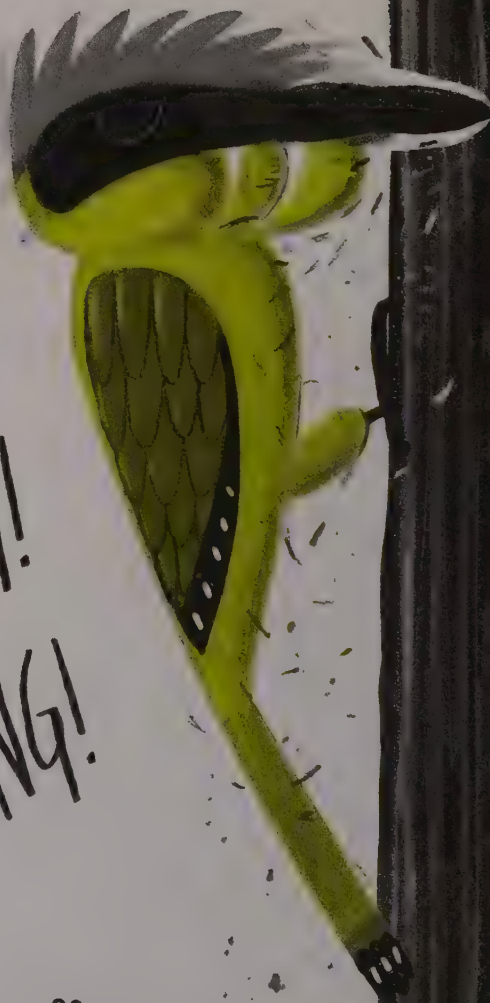
“Hey! Hey hey hey! I’m a Woodwoodwoodpecker,” Woodpecker shouted down at them. “I’m not a pest. I EAT pests.” She licked wriggly beetle grubs out of a hole in the tree with a long sticky, spiky tongue. “WOW WOW WOW,” said the ex-blur, “these are DELICIOUS! Ha ha ha ha ha!”

“Why,” shouted Rabbit, “are you laughing?”



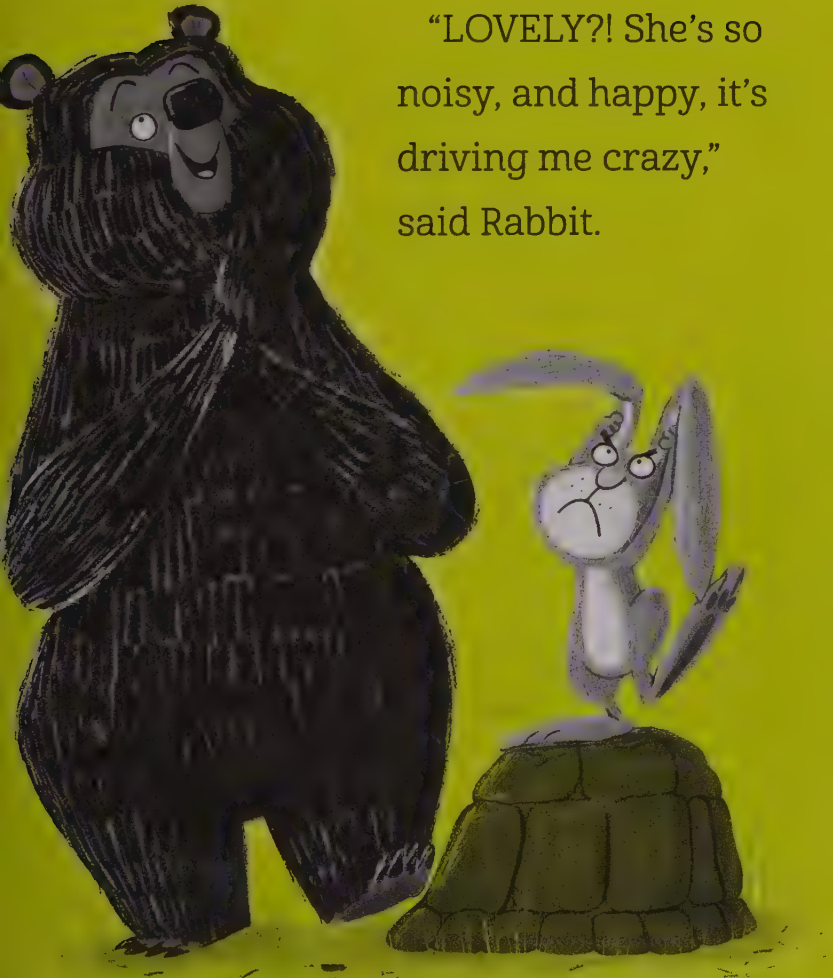
“Because I’m happy! Happy happy happy!” said Woodpecker, and began to peck at the wood again.

BANG!
BANG!
BANG!



“How lovely,” said Bear. “We’ve never had a woodpecker in the valley.”

“LOVELY?! She’s so noisy, and happy, it’s driving me crazy,” said Rabbit.





Indeed, the new arrival was so noisy that Tortoise woke. He stood up. Rabbit fell off.

“Hey!” said Rabbit.

“Helllllooooo again, Rrrrraaabbiittt,” said Tortoise. “Is it ... nnnneeeext year ... aaagaaain ... allllllreadyyyy?”

“No!” said Rabbit. “It’s only five minutes later!”

“Oooohhh ...” said Tortoise with a sigh. “How saaaadddd ... I’m a hundred years ooooooollld, you know. Or possibly ... a hundred ... and one ...” And Tortoise fell asleep.

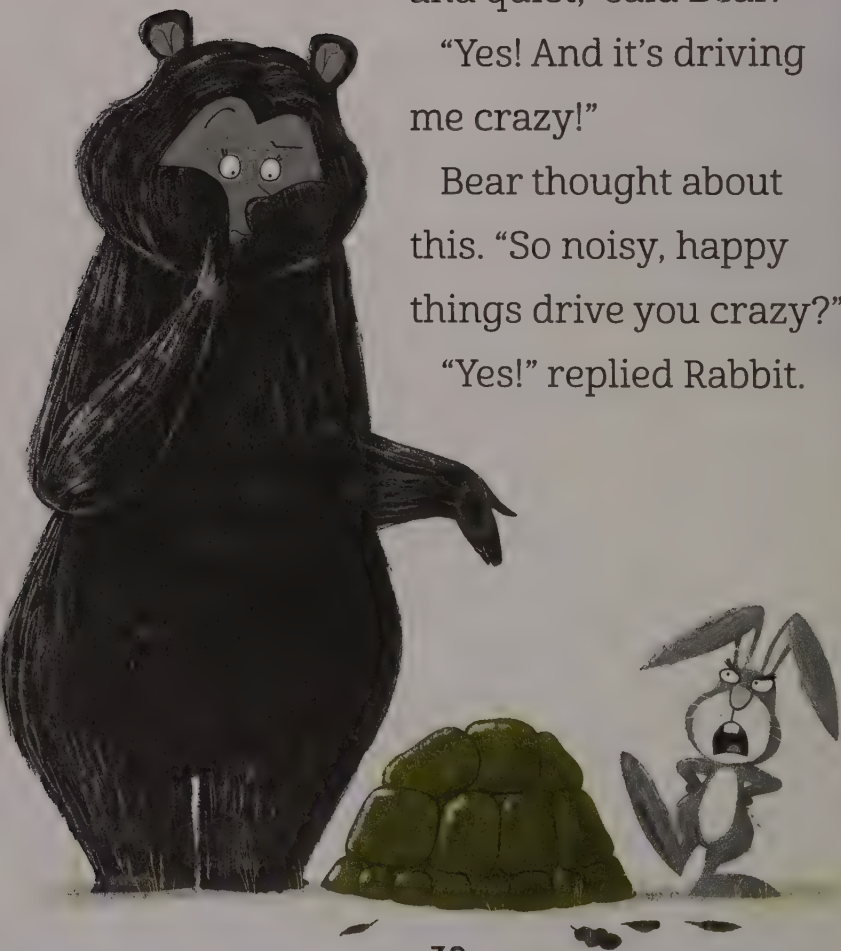
“Gah! He’s driving me crazy, too,” said Rabbit.

“But Tortoise is sad, and quiet,” said Bear.

“Yes! And it’s driving me crazy!”

Bear thought about this. “So noisy, happy things drive you crazy?”

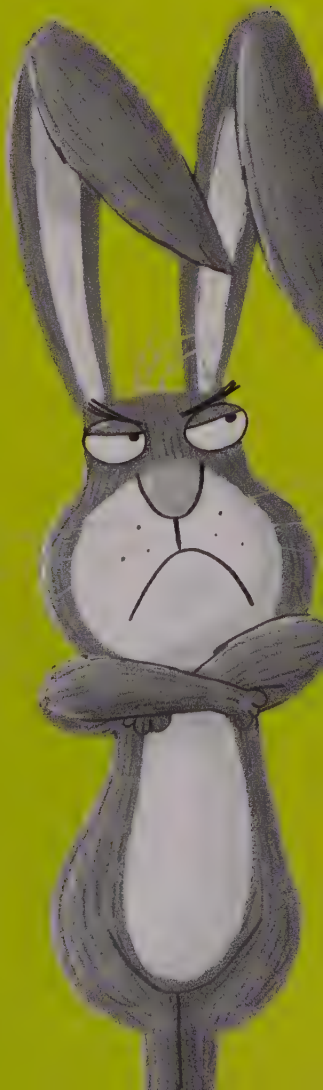
“Yes!” replied Rabbit.





“And quiet, sad things
drive you crazy?”

“Yes! Yes!” said Rabbit.





Bear thought about this some more.

“But ... the only thing those things have in common,” she said, scratching her head, “... is you.”

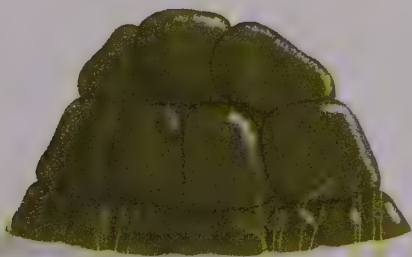
Rabbit gave Bear a Look. “So?”

“Well,” said Bear, “I think the creature that is driving you crazy isn’t Woodpecker. And it isn’t Tortoise. It’s ...”

Hmmm. Bear didn’t want to say it. Rabbit had a FIERCE temper.

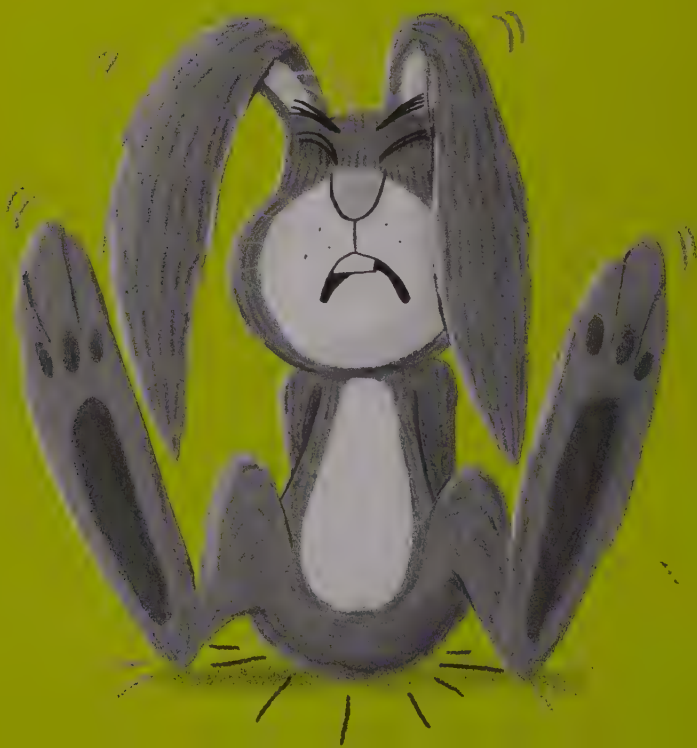
“It’s YOU, isn’t it Bear?” said Rabbit, and raised his right foot to kick Bear.

“Er, no,” said Bear. “It’s *you*.”



“I’M driving MYSELF crazy?” said Rabbit, shocked. He raised his left foot, to kick himself. But he had forgotten to put his right foot back down first, so he fell over.

“Yes,” said Bear, “You see? Your Brain is getting into a fight with the World.”

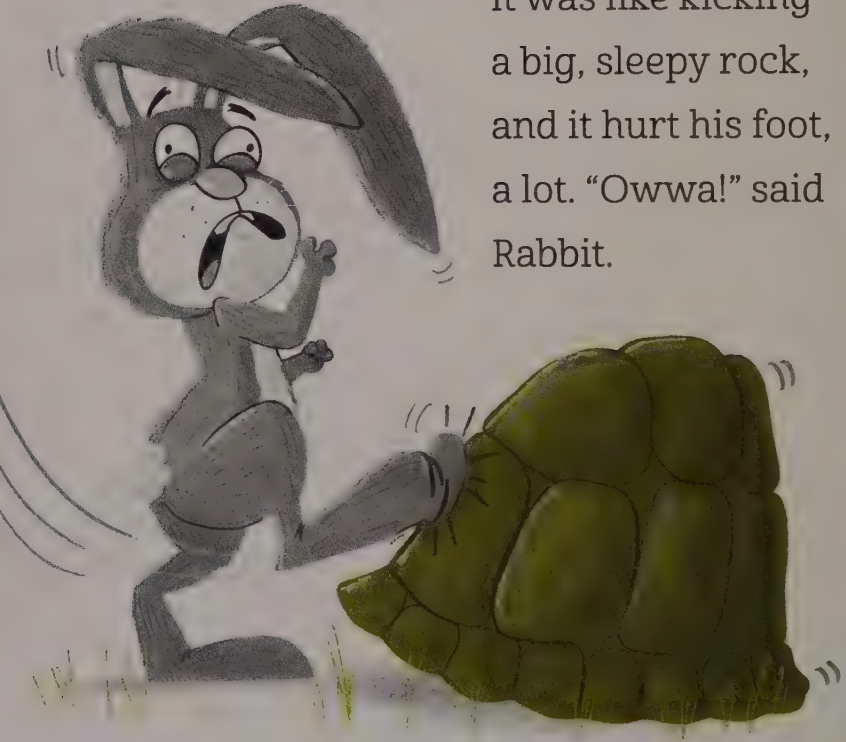


“I’m not getting into a fight with the world!” said Rabbit, standing up. “NOT!” Rabbit raised his foot again to kick Bear.

Hmmm, thought Rabbit, Bear is very big. Maybe not.



So Rabbit kicked
Tortoise instead.
It was like kicking
a big, sleepy rock,
and it hurt his foot,
a lot. "Owwa!" said
Rabbit.



"Hmmm mmmmm?" said Tortoise
quietly, and fell back to sleep.

Woodpecker pecked.

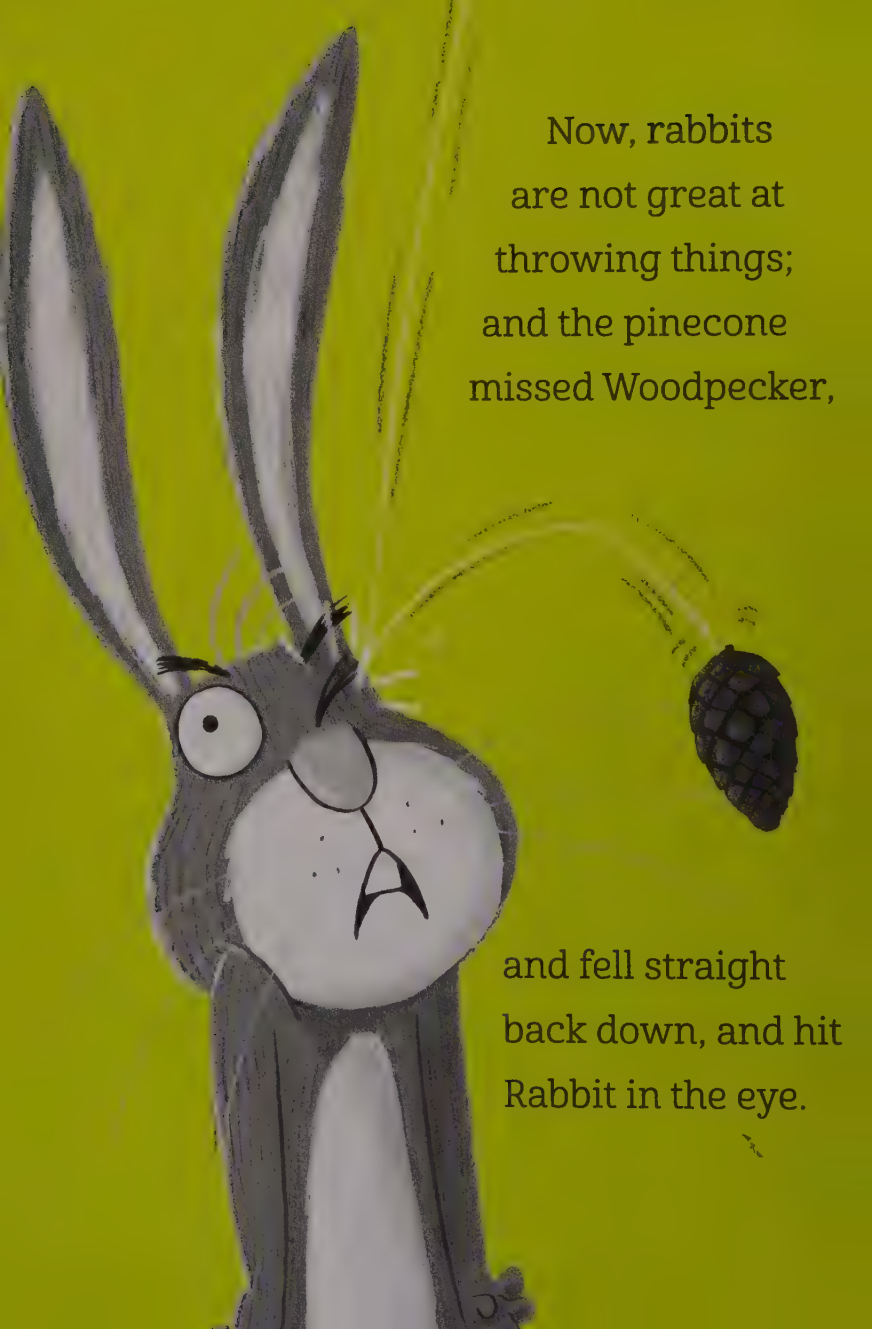
BANG! BANG! BANG!

“Aaargh!” said Rabbit.

“EVERYTHING’S driving me
crazy! But especially HER!”

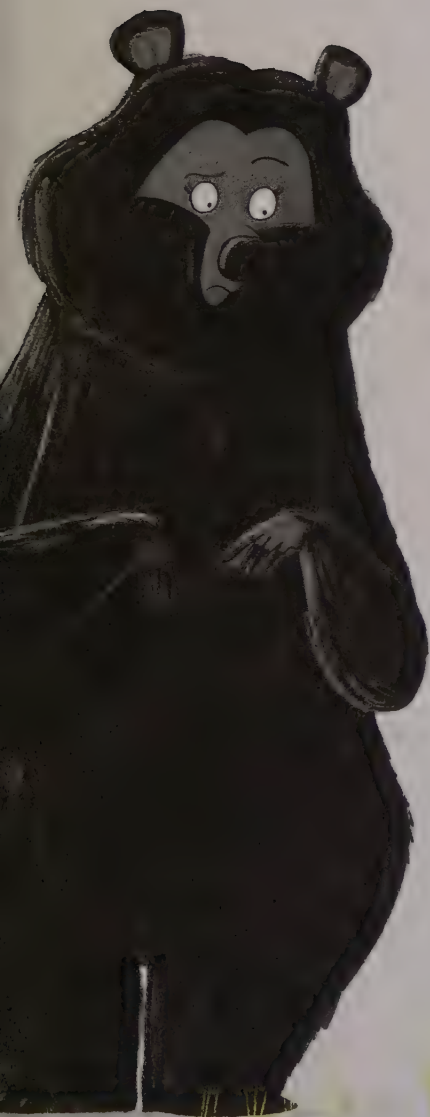
And Rabbit picked up
a pinecone and threw it
straight up at Woodpecker.



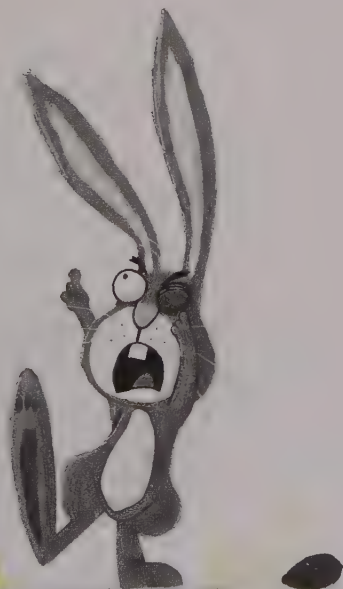
A cartoon illustration of a grey rabbit with long, upright ears. The rabbit has a white belly and a white patch on its face. Its right eye is closed, and a pinecone is stuck in it. The pinecone is dark brown with a textured, scaly surface. Several thin, curved lines radiate from the pinecone, suggesting motion or impact. The background is a solid, bright yellow-green color.

Now, rabbits
are not great at
throwing things;
and the pinecone
missed Woodpecker,

and fell straight
back down, and hit
Rabbit in the eye.



“Owwa!” said
Rabbit. “Look what
she just did!”



Bear thought she had better do something, before Rabbit exploded.

“Er, Woodpecker,” Bear shouted up the tree. “If you could peck more quietly ...”



“Then it would take longer.
Much longer. Much much
longer,” shouted Woodpecker,
who found it very hard
to stop once she had
got going. “MUCH
MUCH MUCH ...”




“Er, yes,” shouted Bear. “I understand. OK, so if you could peck faster, then, perhaps, and get it over with ...”

“STOP SHOUTING!” shouted Rabbit.

“Can’t peck any faster than this!” shouted Woodpecker, pecking to demonstrate.





BANG!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG BANG
BANG BANG

... her head became a green blur again.

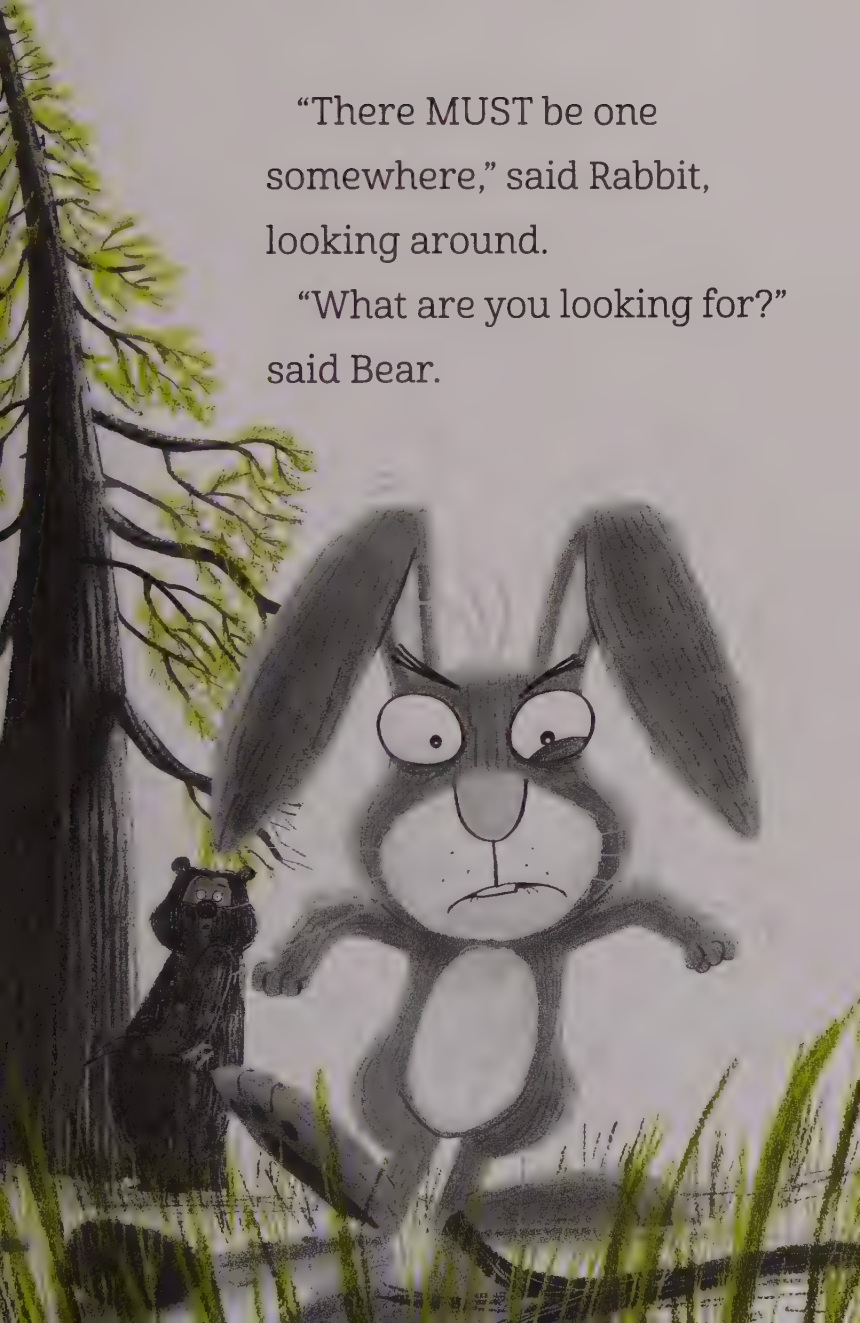
“Er, yes,” shouted Bear,
“I understand!”

Woodpecker stopped pecking and looked around. "Wow! What a view!" she shouted. "I'm going to love love love it here!"



“There MUST be one
somewhere,” said Rabbit,
looking around.

“What are you looking for?”
said Bear.



“A rock. A big one. To throw at that Woodpecker menace.”

“Why don’t we help her, instead?” asked Bear.

“HELP her?”

“Yes, help her.”

“Help her DRIVE ME CRAZY?” said Rabbit.
“What kind of friend are YOU?”

“No,” said Bear. “Help her finish her job faster, so she doesn’t drive you crazy.”





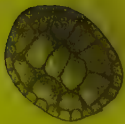
“No way!” said Rabbit.

“Well then,” said Bear, “I will.” And Bear began to climb the tree.

“Traitor!” said Rabbit.

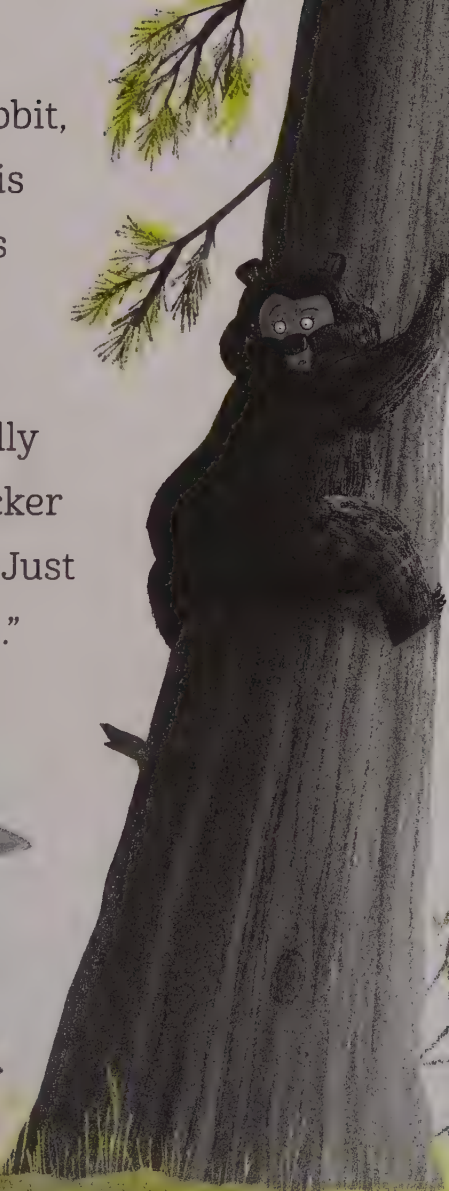
Bear stopped climbing and scratched her head.

“What’s a traitor?” she asked.



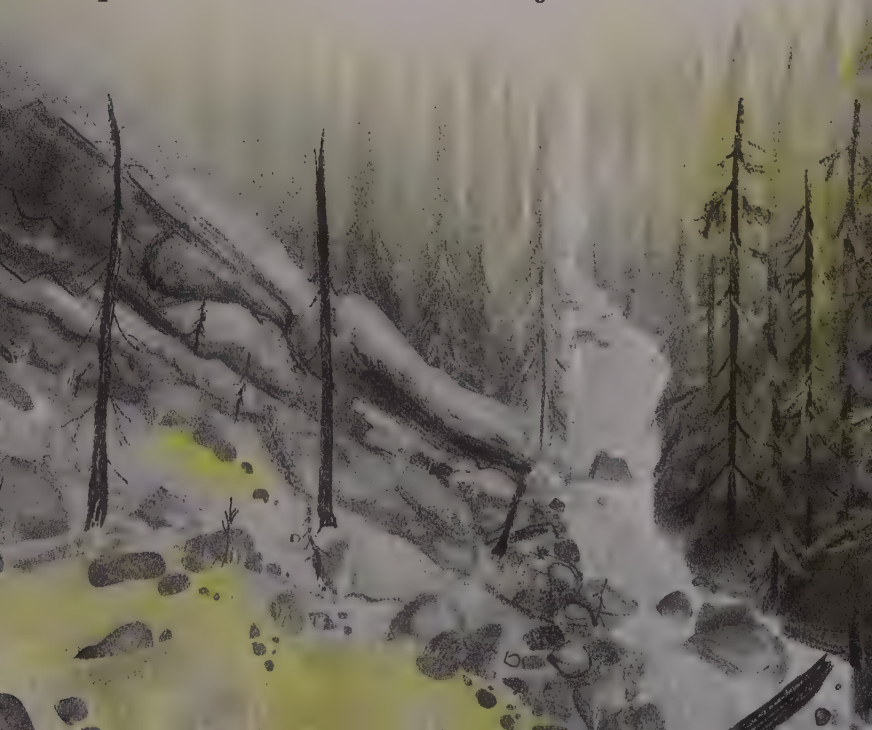
“A traitor,” said Rabbit, glaring up at Bear, “is someone who leaves a friend to help an enemy!”

Bear sighed. “I really don’t think Woodpecker is an enemy, Rabbit. Just let me go up and see.”



Bear was rather good at climbing trees, because she practiced a lot, looking for honey.

The world quickly got bigger, and brighter, and lighter, and airier, the higher Bear climbed. And Bear's problems seemed to get smaller, and less important, and further away ...

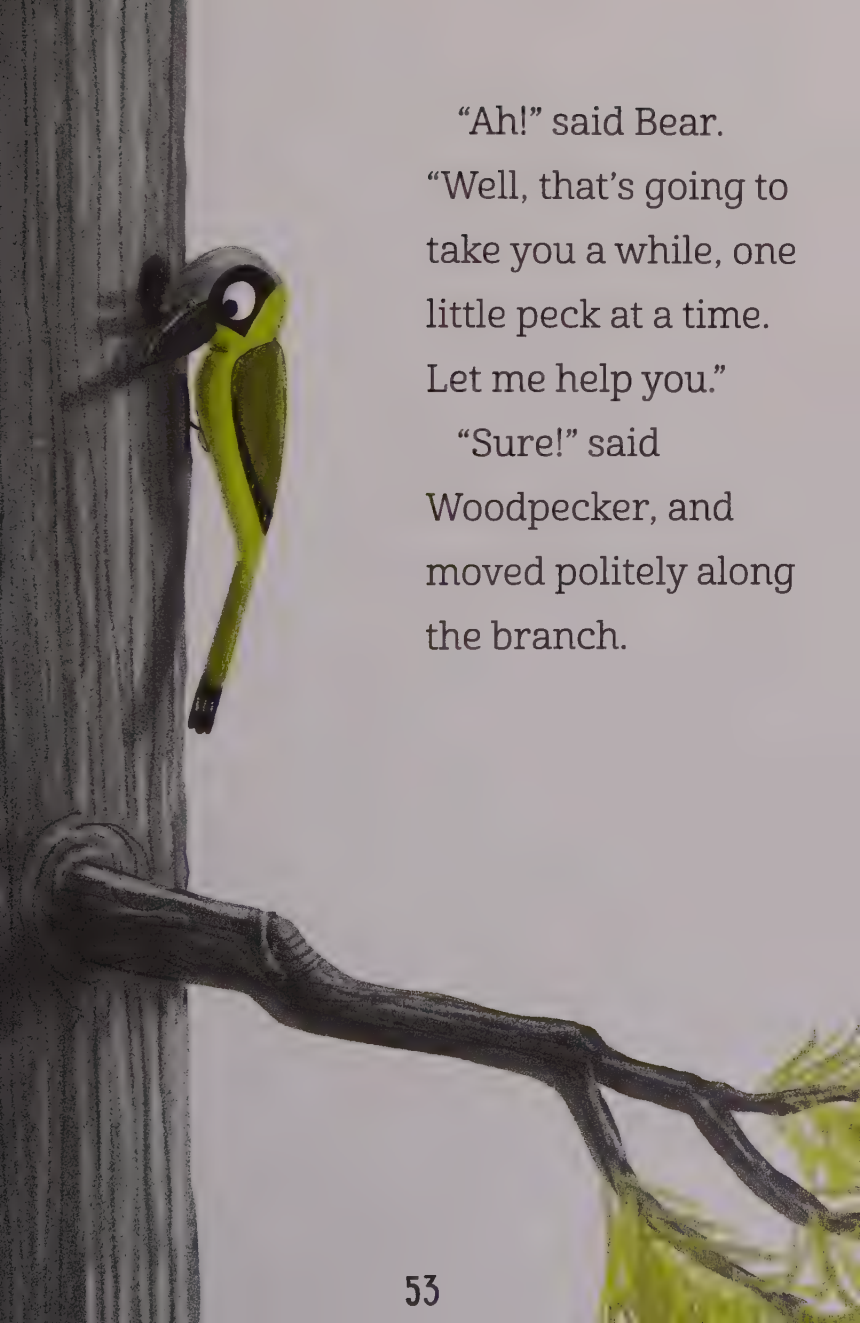




“Hello, Woodpecker,” said Bear quietly, when she had reached the top. “Are you an enemy?”

“No! No no no no no no no,” said Woodpecker, shaking her head. “I’m just trying to make a hole, in this tree, for my nest.”





“Ah!” said Bear.

“Well, that’s going to take you a while, one little peck at a time. Let me help you.”

“Sure!” said Woodpecker, and moved politely along the branch.

Bear stretched out her claws until they were as long as possible, and scraped away at the hole with all her strength. But the wood was very hard, and she could hardly scratch it.

“Oh, dear,” said Bear. “I’m afraid you’re better at this than I am.”



“Practice! Practice! Practice!” said Woodpecker. “You get very good at something if you do it all the time.”

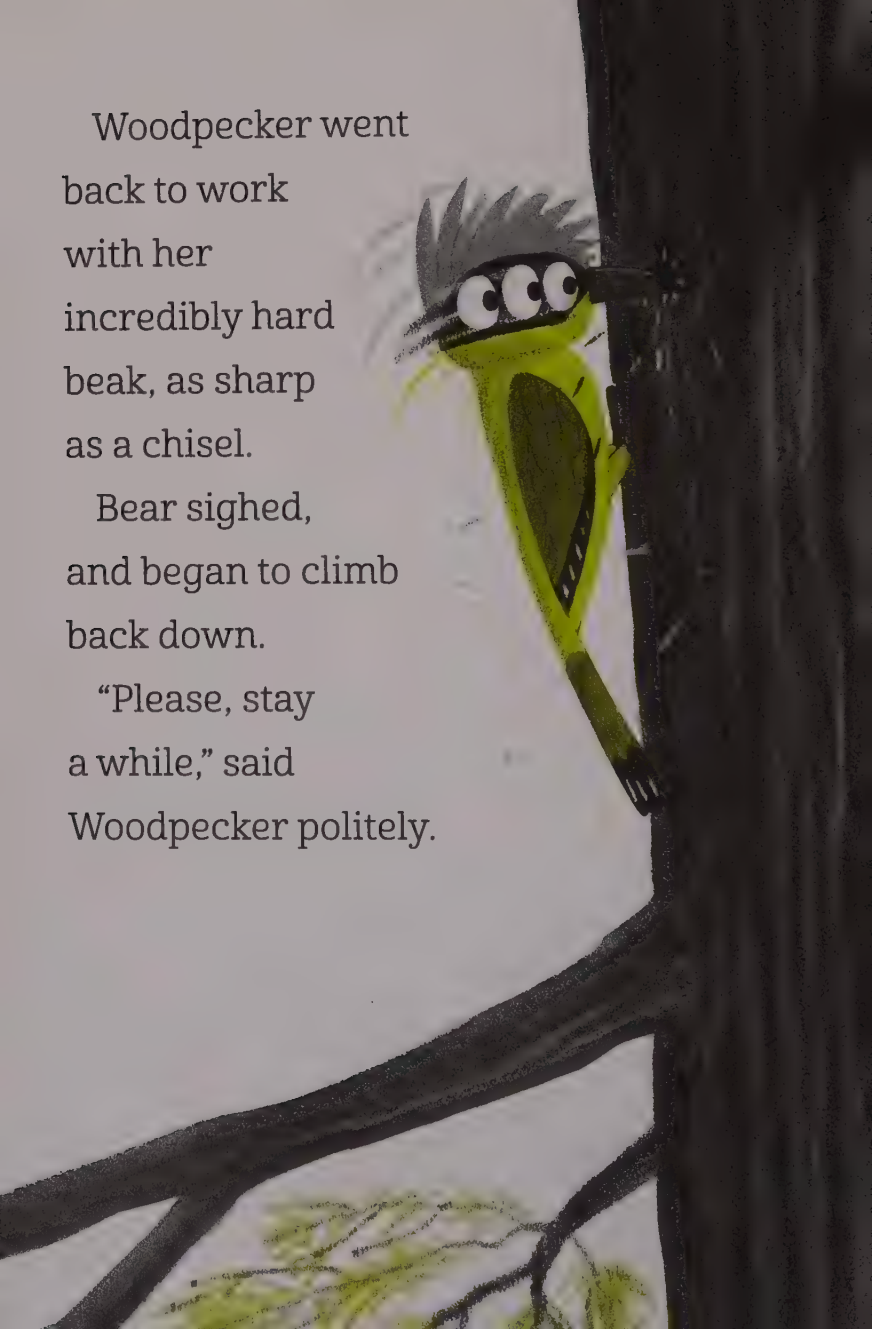
“True,” said Bear, and looked around. What a view!




Woodpecker went
back to work
with her
incredibly hard
beak, as sharp
as a chisel.

Bear sighed,
and began to climb
back down.

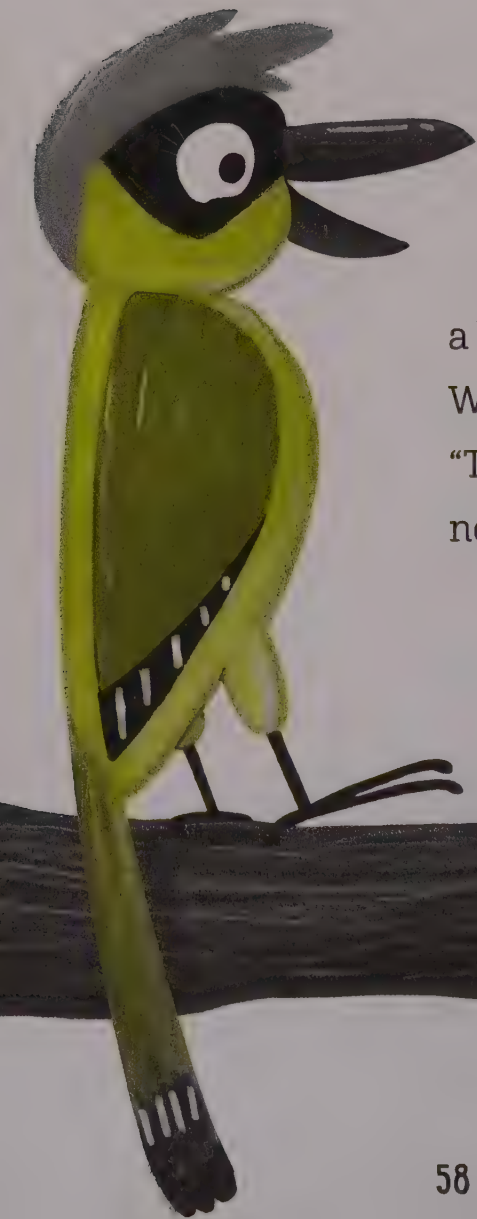
“Please, stay
a while,” said
Woodpecker politely.





“Well, I don’t want
to be in your way,”
said Bear. “And also,
er, it’s very loud,
right beside you.”





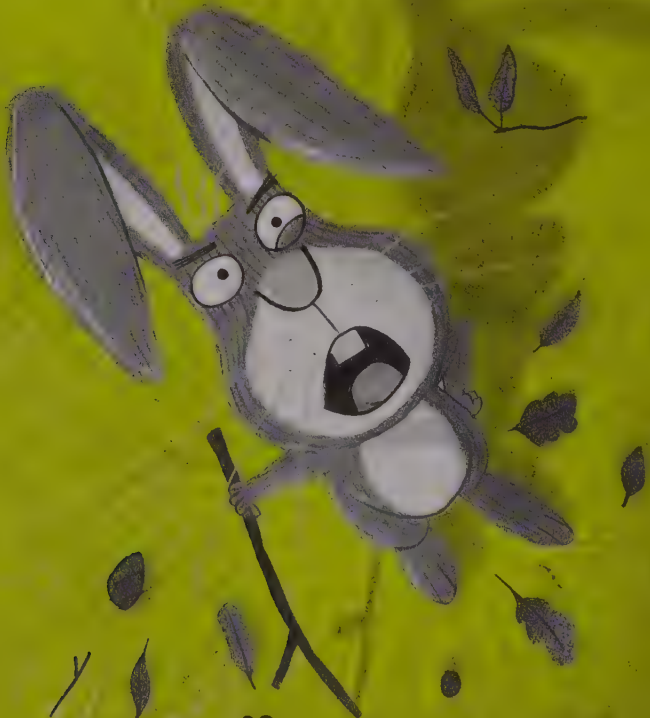
“Oh, I’m taking
a break,” said
Woodpecker.
“To stretch my
neck. It gets stiff.”

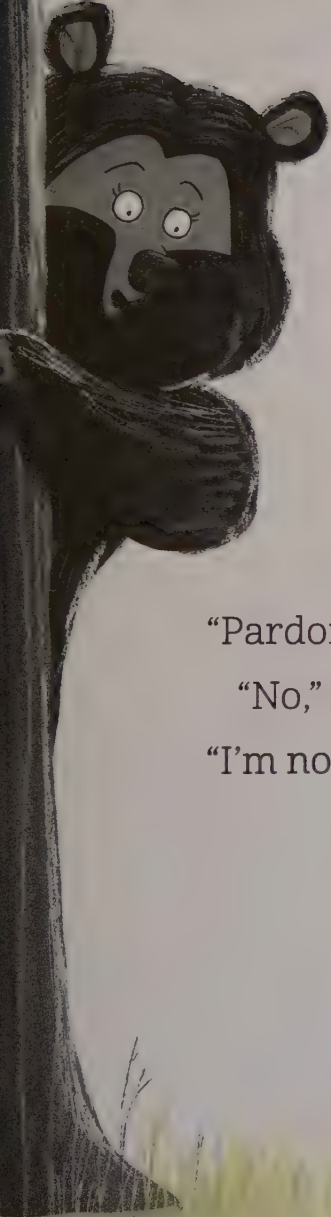


“Oh, good,” said Bear. “Rabbit!” she shouted down. “You should come up here. You’d love it. It would be very good for you.”

“You’re crazy, too!” shouted Rabbit.
“Rabbits don’t climb trees! If you think I’m
going to climb that tree you’re more nuts
than a million acorns!”

“Are you happy down there?” shouted
Bear.





Rabbit wanted to shout
Yes! just to annoy Bear.
But deep down Rabbit
was an honest rabbit.
“No,” he said, very
quietly.

Bear climbed all the
way back down the tree.

“Pardon?” said Bear.

“No,” said Rabbit, more loudly.
“I’m not happy.”



“Then let me give you a lift,” said Bear. “Hang on tight.”

Rabbit grabbed Bear’s thick fur and hung on tight, while Bear climbed back up the tall, tall tree.



“Are you scared?”
asked Bear, when they’d
reached the top.

“No,” said Rabbit.
“Er ... Have we left the
ground yet?”

Bear looked over her
shoulder; Rabbit’s eyes
were tightly shut.



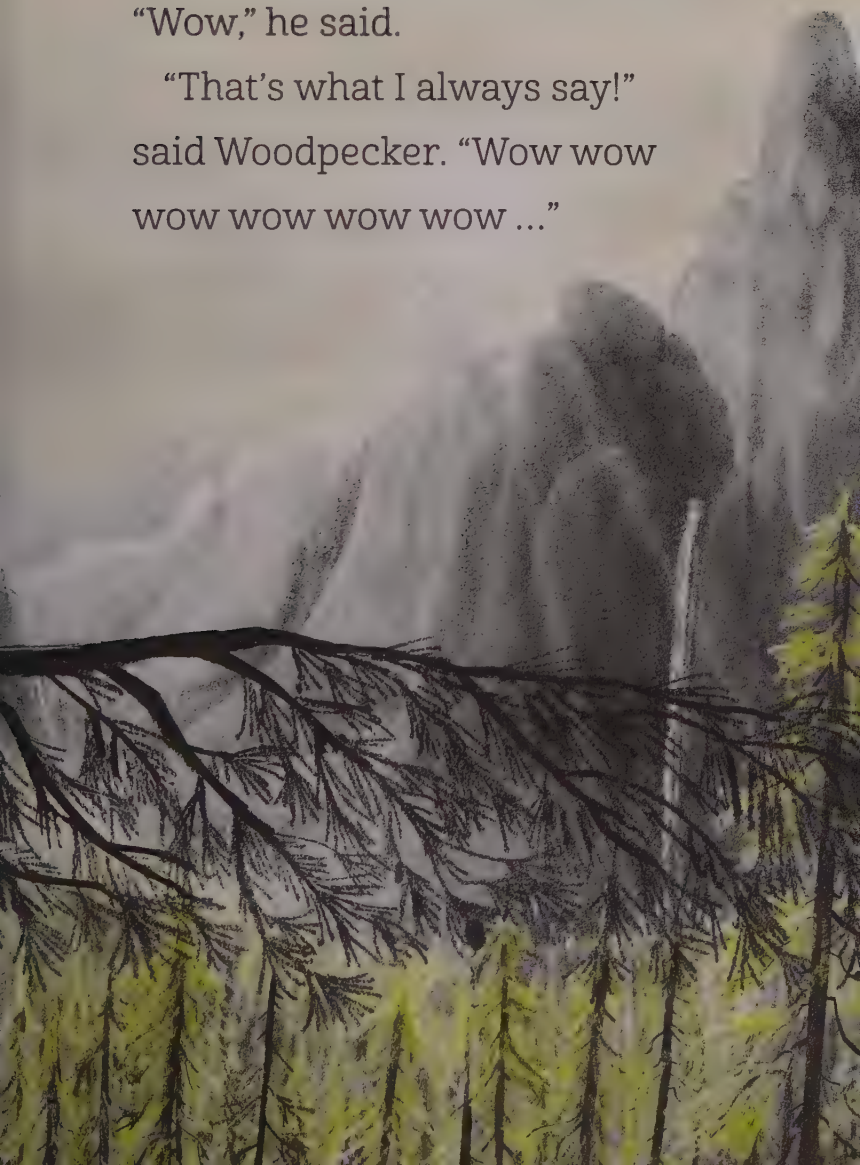
Bear chuckled.
“Look,” she said.



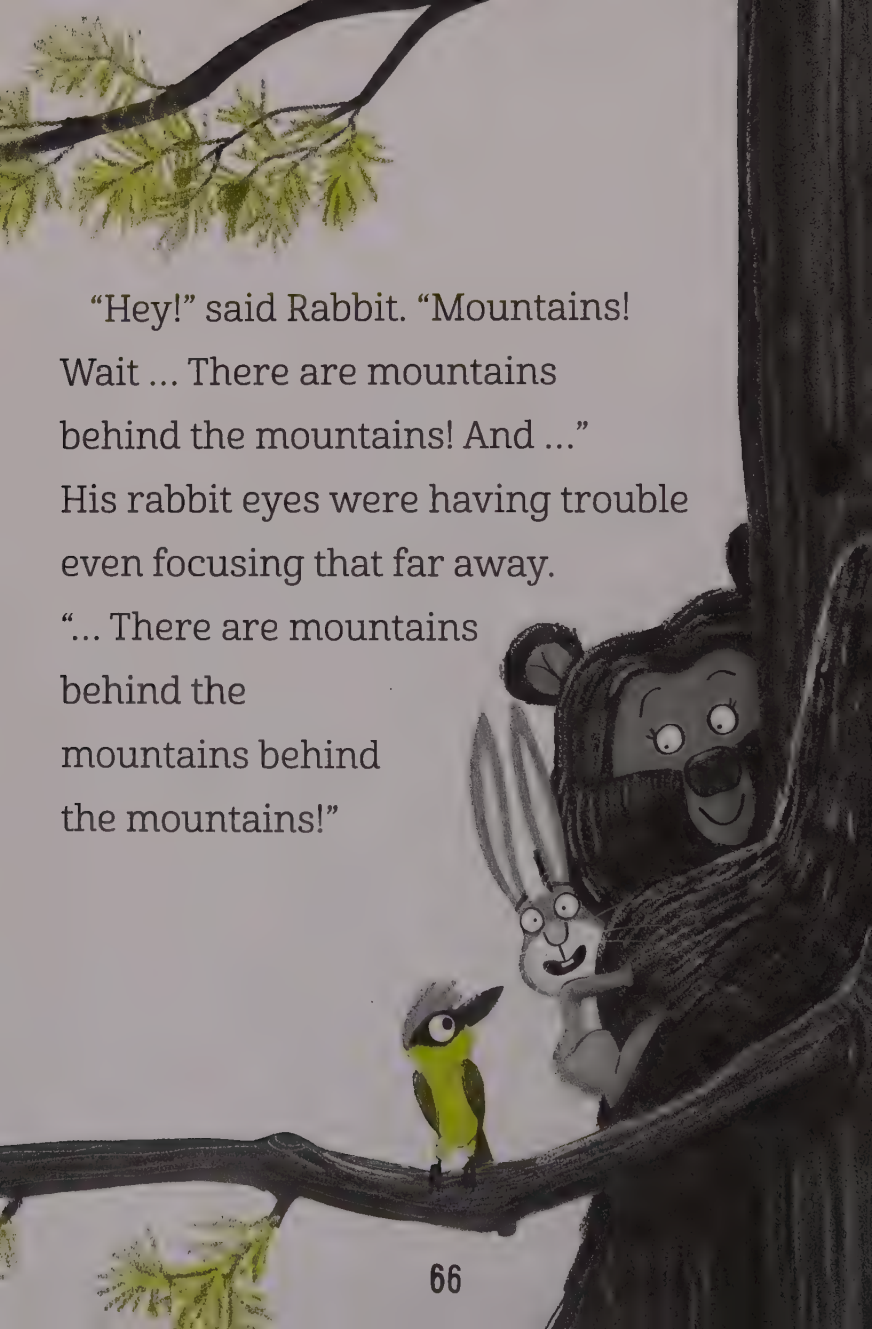
And Rabbit opened his eyes.

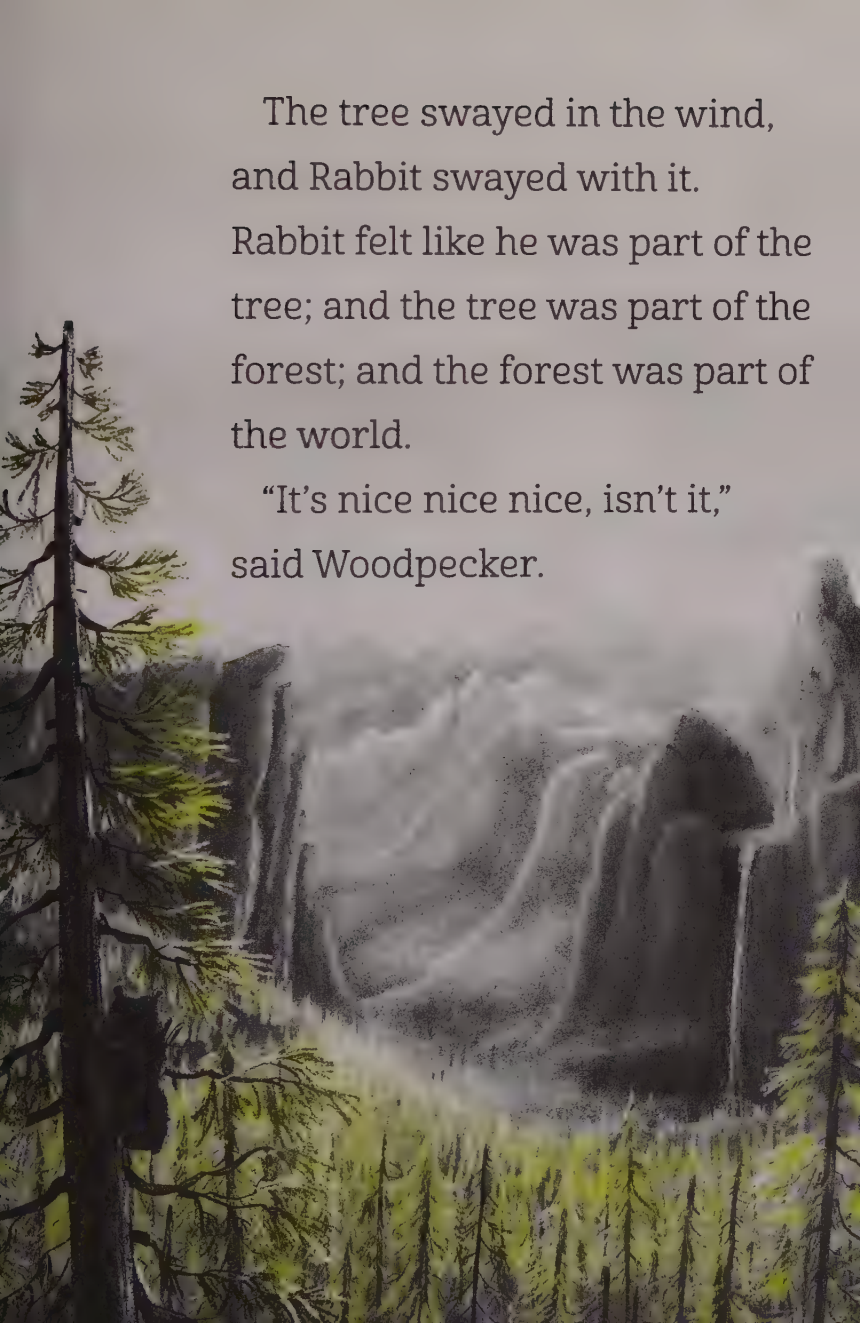
“Wow,” he said.

“That’s what I always say!”
said Woodpecker. “Wow wow
wow wow wow wow ...”



“Hey!” said Rabbit. “Mountains!
Wait ... There are mountains
behind the mountains! And ...”
His rabbit eyes were having trouble
even focusing that far away.
“... There are mountains
behind the
mountains behind
the mountains!”





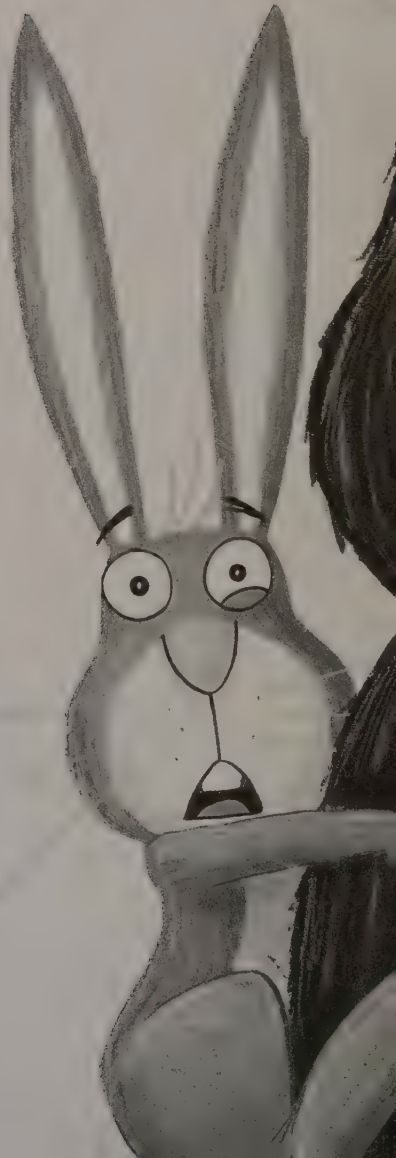
The tree swayed in the wind,
and Rabbit swayed with it.
Rabbit felt like he was part of the
tree; and the tree was part of the
forest; and the forest was part of
the world.

“It’s nice nice nice, isn’t it,”
said Woodpecker.

“Wow,” said Rabbit very quietly. “I thought the world was small, and full of me; but it is big and not full of me at all.”

“Yes,” said Bear.

“Yes yes yes,” said Woodpecker.



“Maybe my problems are not so big after all,” said Rabbit.

“I think you are right,” said Bear.

They climbed back down.

“I don’t understand,” said Rabbit. “I feel calm. And happy.”

“Me too,” said Bear.

“But then, I usually do.”

Rabbit looked up at the tree. “I can’t believe I have learned wisdom from a bird with a brain the size of a walnut,” he said.

“A brain that it bangs off a tree all day.”



“I don’t think you found the wisdom in Woodpecker,” said Bear.

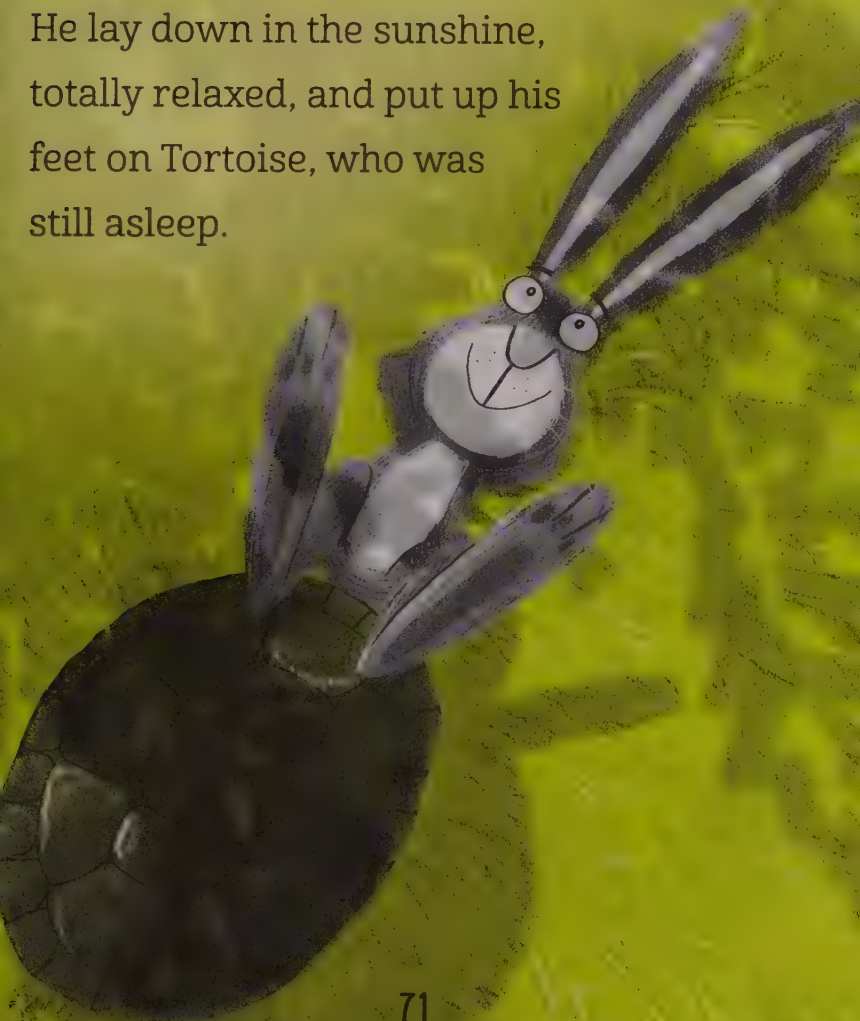
“Ah! I found it in you, Bear!” said Rabbit, and hugged Bear.



“No,” said Bear. “You found it ... in you.”

“This is great!” said Rabbit. “Now I’ll be calm and happy and wise forever!”

He lay down in the sunshine, totally relaxed, and put up his feet on Tortoise, who was still asleep.

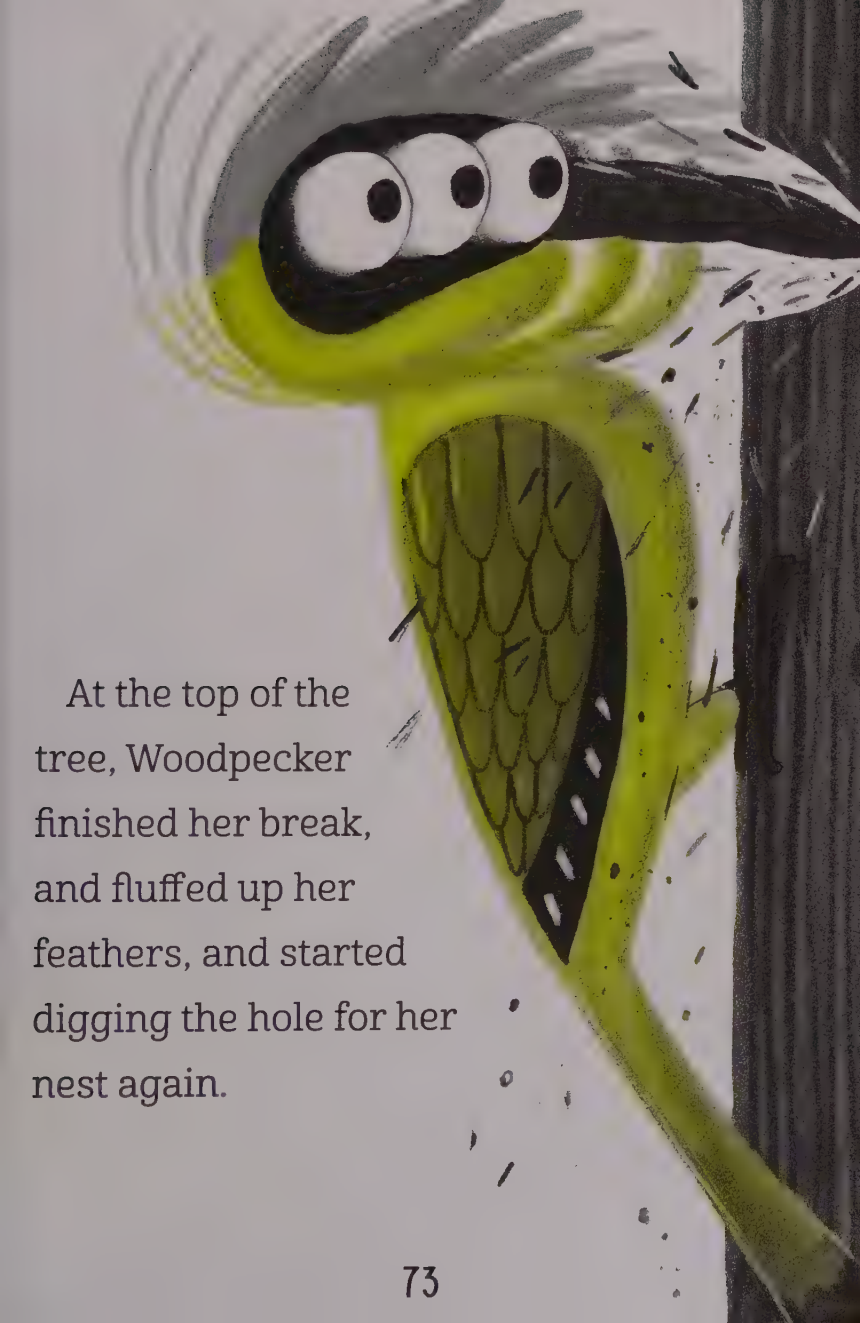


“Maybe not forever,”
said Bear, who knew
Rabbit rather well.

“Unless you practice.”

“Nonsense!” said
Rabbit. “I’ve changed
forever!”

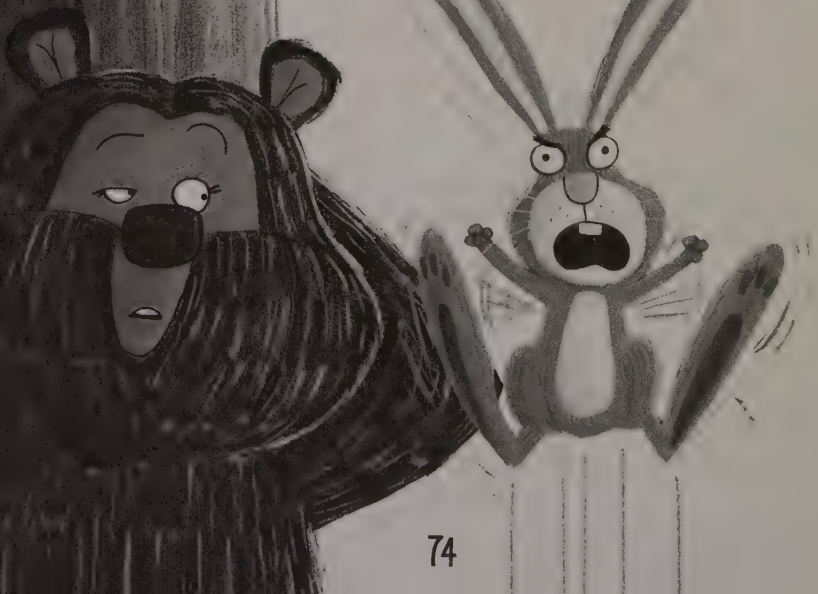




At the top of the tree, Woodpecker finished her break, and fluffed up her feathers, and started digging the hole for her nest again.

BANG! BANG! BANG!
BANG! BANG! BANG!

Rabbit jumped
twice his own height.
“AaaaaAAAAaargh!”





“What?” asked Bear.

“I’m angry! And I want to be calm! So I’m angry that I’m angry!” And Rabbit kicked himself, and fell over.

“Why did you kick yourself?”

“Because I’m annoyed with myself!” said Rabbit. “Because I can’t change myself!”

“But you can change your thoughts,” said Bear.



“Change my thoughts?
What’s wrong with them?
My thoughts are PERFECT,”
said Rabbit.

“But your thoughts are
making you unhappy,”
said Bear.

“No!” said Rabbit. “The
world is making me
unhappy! I must
change the world!”



A little cloud passed in front of the sun.
Rabbit threw a stone at it. "Stupid world!
Change!"

But the world didn't change.



“Maybe you could just think about the world differently,” said Bear. “Maybe you could ... accept it.”

“Accept! Accept!” said Rabbit. “... What’s accept mean?”

“Saying, well, that’s just the way it is,” said Bear. “Not try to change it.”

“No!” said Rabbit.

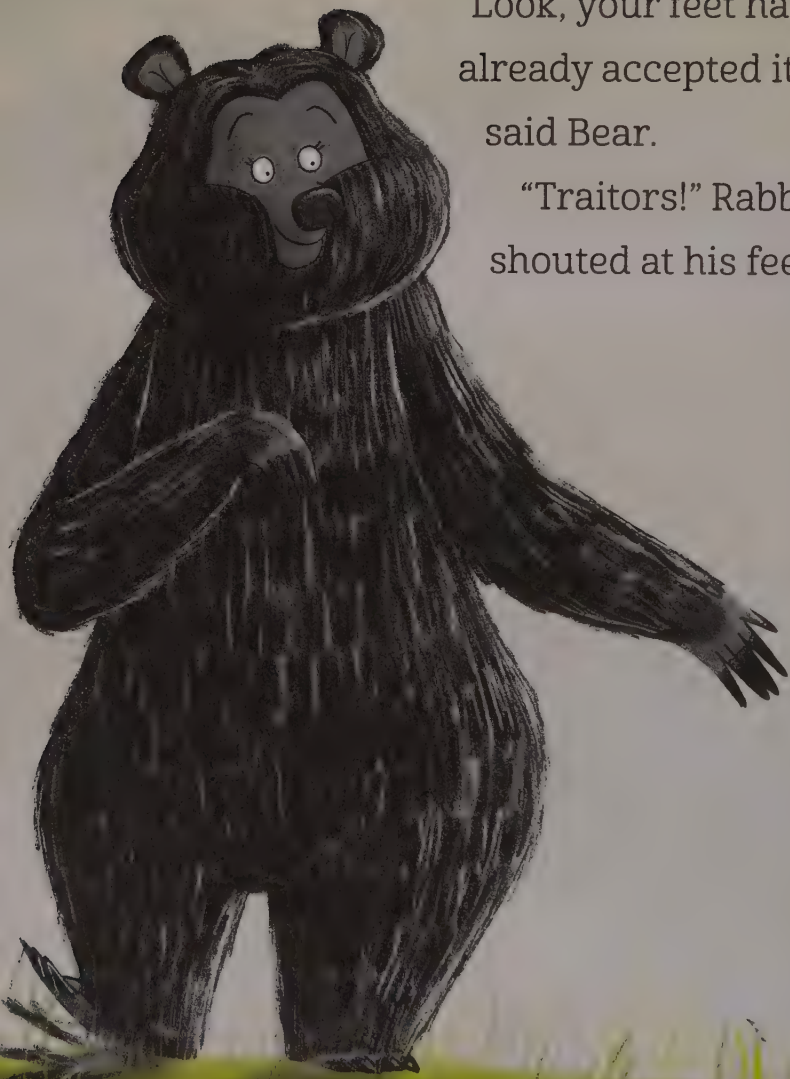
Rabbit seemed so certain. Maybe Bear was wrong. Maybe Rabbit was just too different from Bear, and Bear was being silly. Bear looked down at her feet, a bit embarrassed. Then she noticed her feet were doing something odd. So were Rabbit’s.

Bear's feet,
and Rabbit's feet,
were tapping the
ground, in rhythm
with Woodpecker's
pecking.



“Look, your feet have
already accepted it,”
said Bear.

“Traitors!” Rabbit
shouted at his feet.

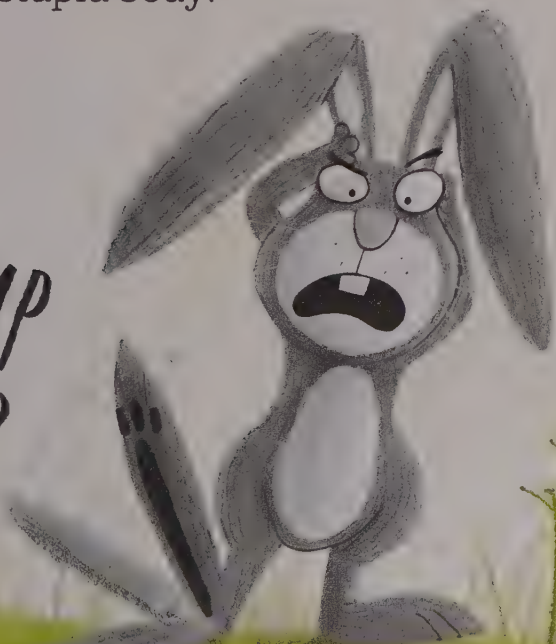


But his feet kept tapping.

“I think your Body and your Mind are divided,” said Bear, whose body and mind were not very often divided.

“Of course they are!” said Rabbit. “My mind is up here, being clever, and my body is down there, being stupid! I don’t want my lovely mind to have anything to do with my stupid body!”

THUMP
THUMP
THUMP

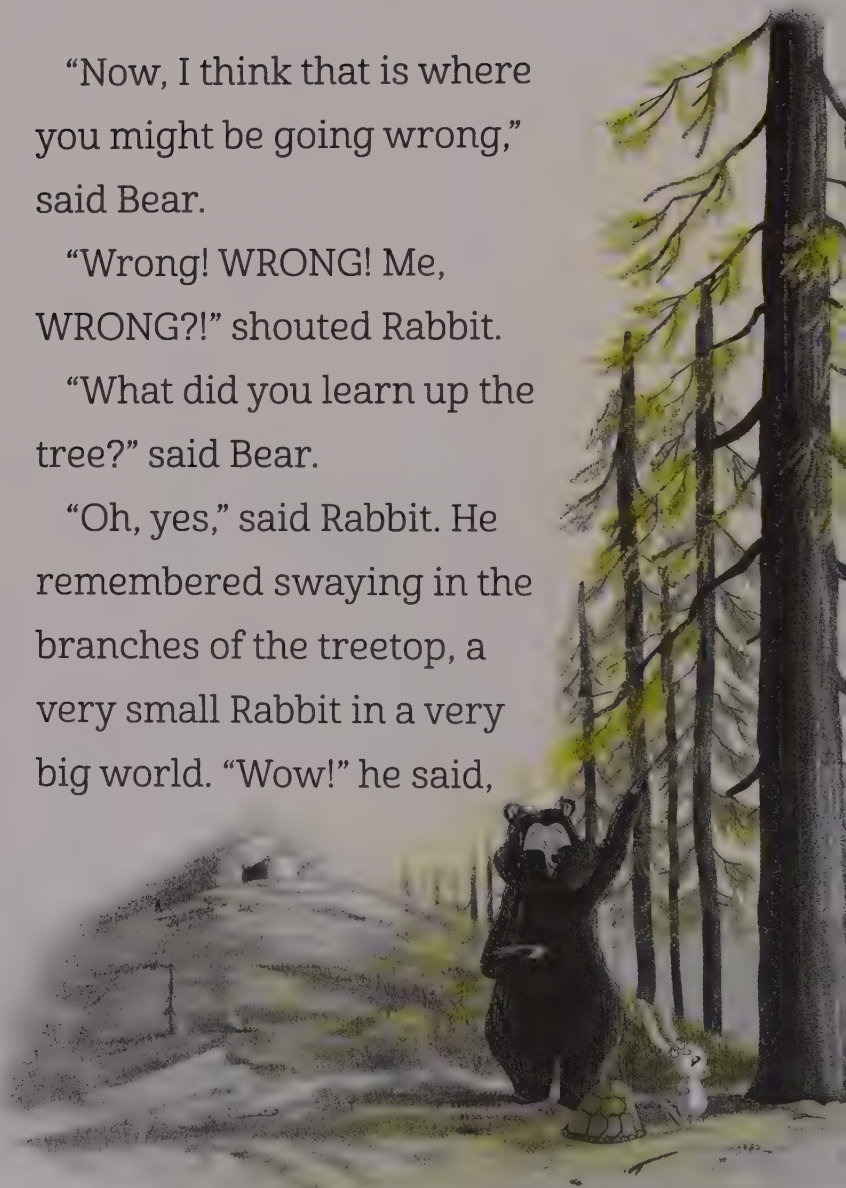


“Now, I think that is where you might be going wrong,” said Bear.

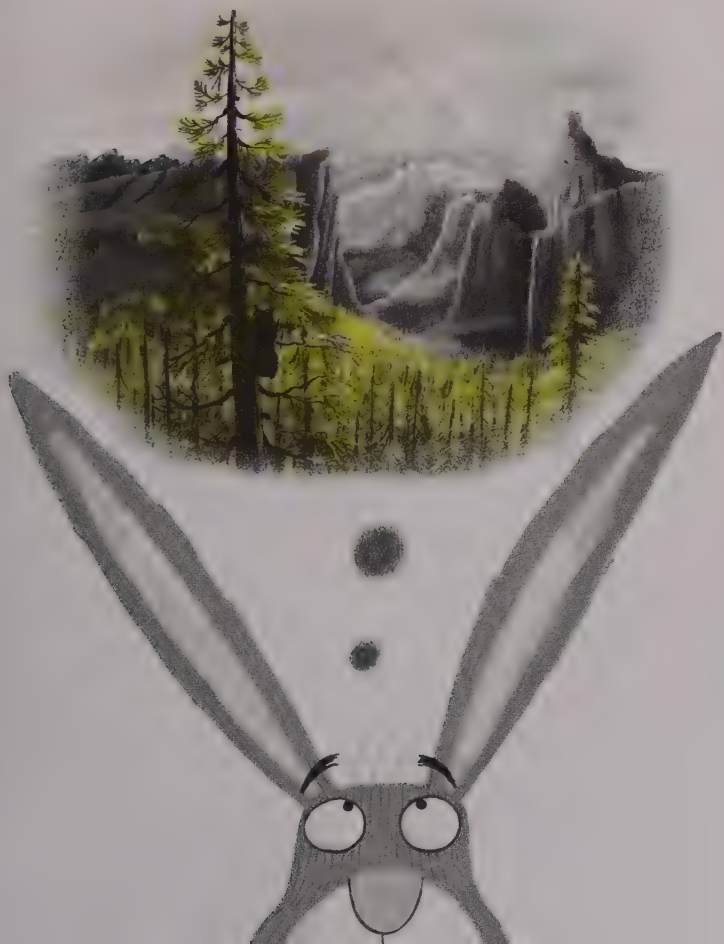
“Wrong! WRONG! Me, WRONG?!” shouted Rabbit.

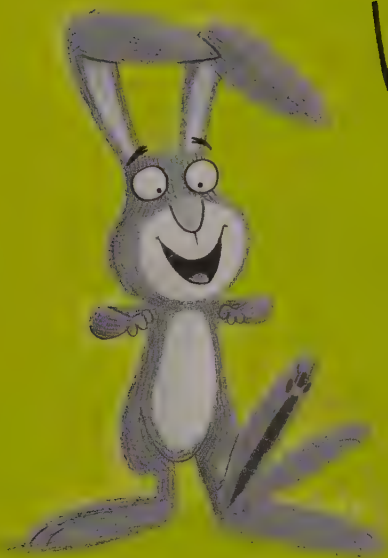
“What did you learn up the tree?” said Bear.

“Oh, yes,” said Rabbit. He remembered swaying in the branches of the treetop, a very small Rabbit in a very big world. “Wow!” he said,



remembering. And he stopped fighting
the world. And he stopped fighting
himself. And in that moment, he accepted
everything.





Wow
Wow
Wow
Wow
Wow

said Rabbit.

BANG!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!

said Woodpecker.



And Bear was so happy to see her friend look so happy that she began to sing. She made up the words as she went along.

“Spring!” she sang. “Spring! Is a Wonderful, Funderful Thing!”

There was a tiny growl of thunder, from the little cloud. Next time around, she sang, “Spring! Spring! Is a Wonderful, Thunderful Thing!”

Soon it would rain, and the plants would begin to grow, and Spring would have Sprung. But right now they were dancing and their minds and their bodies were one.

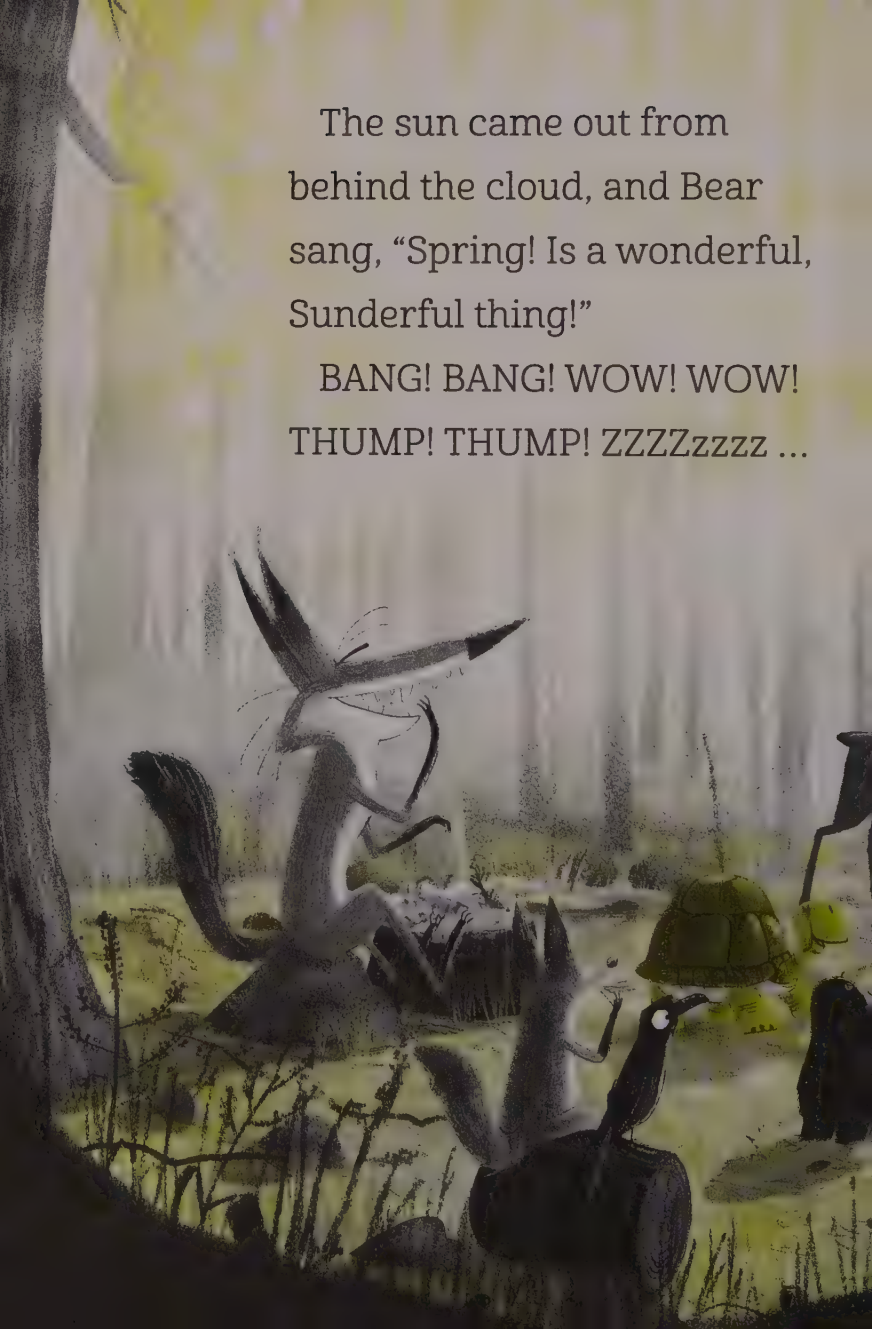
And first Mole ... then Mouse ... then Vole ... and, one by one, all the animals of the forest came out to dance to the amazing music.





The sun came out from
behind the cloud, and Bear
sang, "Spring! Is a wonderful,
Sunderful thing!"

BANG! BANG! WOW! WOW!
THUMP! THUMP! ZZZZzzzz ...



Bear shared the food she had stored in her cave. She even fed Wolf, so that Wolf wouldn't get hungry and eat the other dancers.







And they danced and feasted all day long, until it was dark, and Woodpecker was finished pecking a hole in the hard wood of the tree.

"Wow," said Rabbit, yawning. "That was the best party ever."

"Yes," said Bear, yawning.

"I don't want it to be over!" said Rabbit. "I hate silence! I want Woodpecker to keep going all night! All tomorrow! All week! Forever!"

"Well," said Bear sleepily, "now that the hole is finished, the nest will soon be full of little woodpeckers. And they will grow up fast, and need somewhere to live. More wood pecking. More parties."

“You’re right,”
said Rabbit sleepily.
“Goodnight, Bear.”

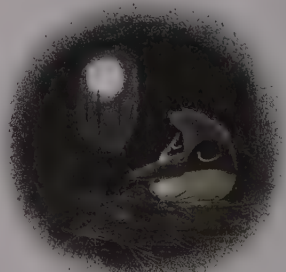




“Oh dear,” said Tortoise, “is it thaaaaat time alreadyyyyy? It will take me aaaaages to get home ...”

“That’s OK,” said Rabbit. “You can sleep in my burrow, with me.”

And soon Bear was asleep in her cave, and Woodpecker was asleep in her nest,



and Tortoise was asleep next to
Rabbit, in Rabbit's burrow.

SNNNOORRRRE

said Bear loudly in her cave.

Down in his burrow, Rabbit heard
Bear snoring, and started to get angry
out of habit.

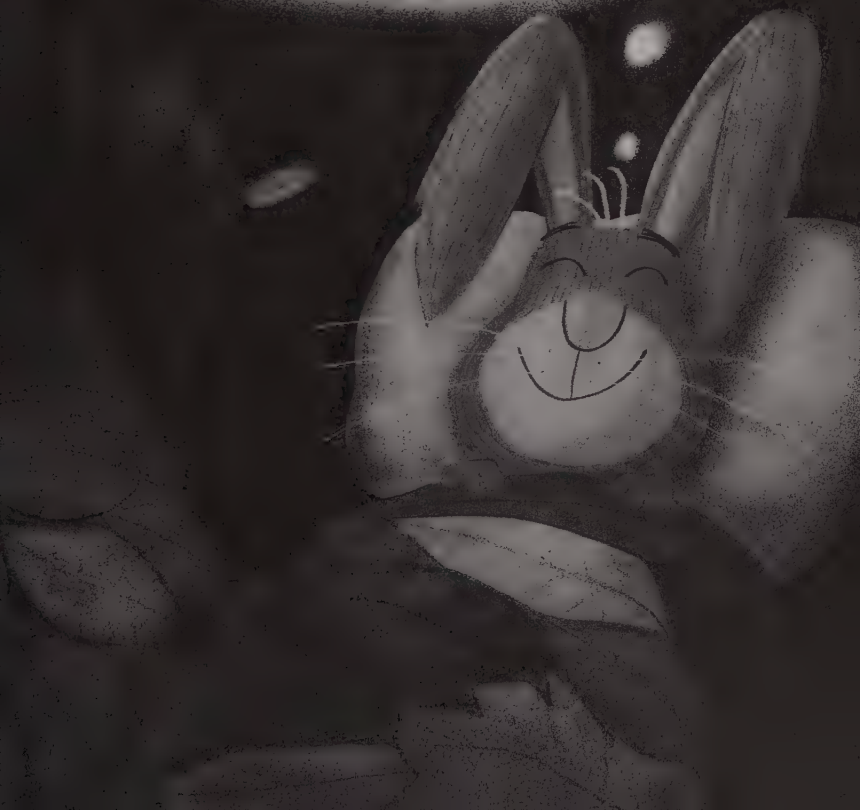


But the snoring wasn't really very loud.

Hmm, maybe I should think about it in a different way, thought Rabbit. Yes! I shall stop thinking of it as a nasty noise. I shall think of it instead as a nice, friendly reminder that my friend Bear is nearby.

And suddenly the sound, without changing at all, made Rabbit feel all happy and warm.

Yes, spring ... is a wonderful ... thing, thought Rabbit. And tomorrow is ... is ... going to be ... a beautiful day ... with my old friend Bear ... and my new friend Woodpecker ... Yes, tomorrow is ... izzz ... izzzzzzzzzz ... And Rabbit fell into his deepest, calmest sleep ever.











JULIAN GOUGH

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Julian Gough is an award-winning novelist, playwright, poet, musician and scriptwriter. He was born in London, grew up in Ireland and now lives in Berlin.

Among many other things, Julian wrote the wonderful novel **Connect**, and the ending to **Minecraft**, the world's most successful computer game for children of all ages.

He likes to drink coffee and steal pigs.

Jim Field is an award-winning illustrator, character designer and animation director.

He grew up in Farnborough, worked in London and now lives in Paris.

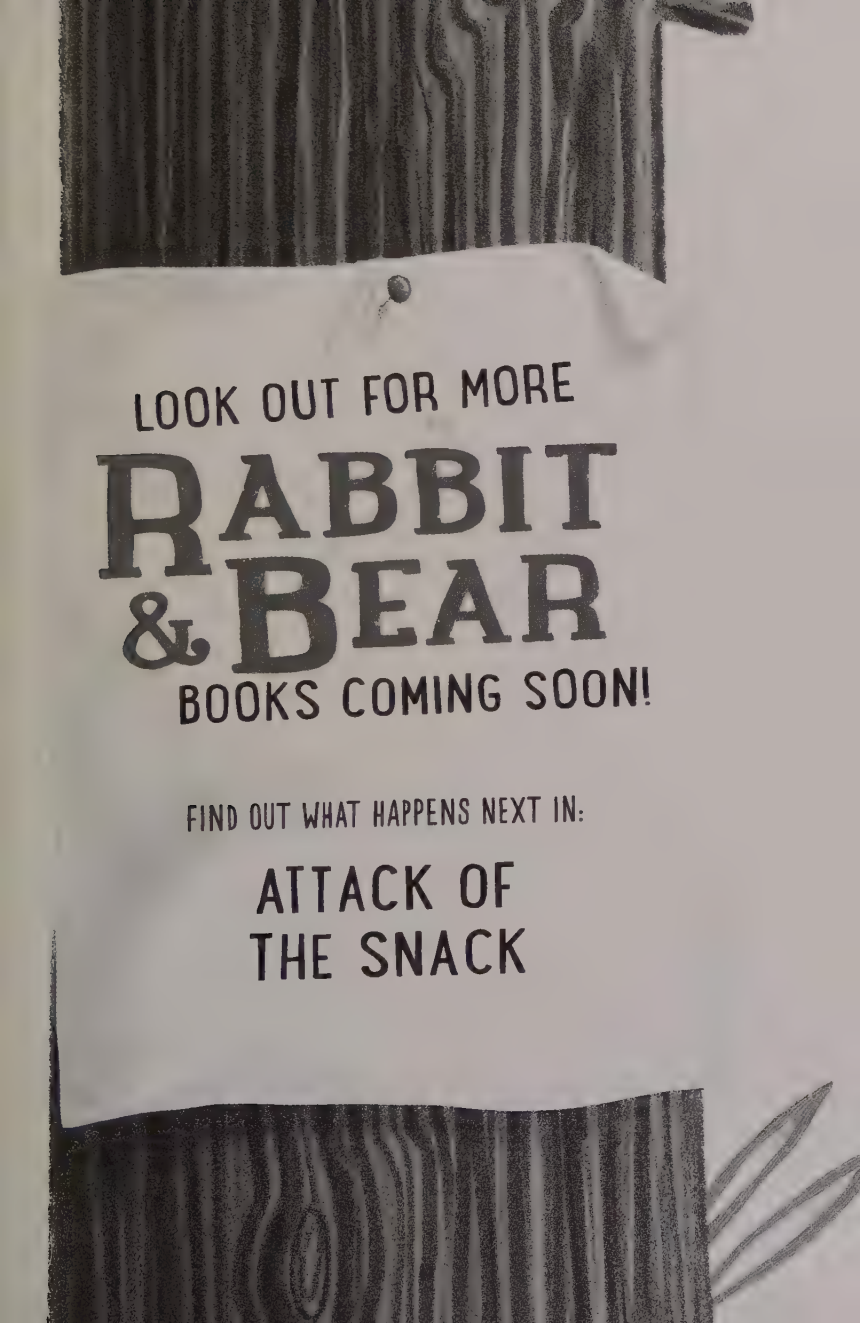
His first picture book, **Cats Ahoy!**, written by Peter Bently, won the Booktrust Roald Dahl Funny Prize. He is perhaps best known for drawing frogs on logs in the bestselling **Oi Frog!**

He likes playing the guitar and drinking coffee.



JIM FIELD

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A white paper sign is pinned to a dark, textured wooden background. The sign has a hole at the top center where it is pinned. The text on the sign is in a bold, sans-serif font. The top line reads "LOOK OUT FOR MORE". The middle line is the largest and reads "RABBIT & BEAR". The bottom line reads "BOOKS COMING SOON!".

LOOK OUT FOR MORE
**RABBIT
& BEAR**
BOOKS COMING SOON!

FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IN:

**ATTACK OF
THE SNACK**

'Rabbit's Bad Habits is a breath of fresh air in children's fiction, a laugh-out-loud story of Rabbit and Wolf and Bear, of avalanches and snowmen. The sort of story that makes you want to send your children to bed early, so you can read it to them.'

Neil Gaiman

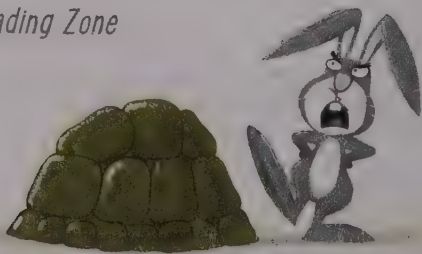
'A perfect animal double-act enchants.'
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'Sure to become a firm favorite.'

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'What a treat this little book is! Not only does it have a funny and warm story that is full of heart, it is also gorgeously presented ... Lots of fun, highly recommended.'

Reading Zone







"PEACE AND QUIET!" shouts Rabbit,
"THAT'S ALL I WANT."

What with his friend Bear's snoring,
and a BANG! BANG! BANG! noise from
up in the tree, Rabbit knows that
something simply has to be done.
But high in the branches, perhaps Bear
can show Rabbit how to see the world
from a different place.

A story of friendship, wisdom,
and how to be REALLY NOISY.

"Should become an instant modern classic.
Cheeky, delightful and hilarious." —EOIN COLFER



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