

Blanquita, the Fairy



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Chapter 1

Introduction to Blanquita, the Fairy

Our little fairy was named Blanquita because her home was in a place where they speak Spanish. She was blonde, with blue eyes and pale skin, and she dressed all in white. She was very tiny, about the size of a small dragonfly, and her wings reflected the colors of her surroundings: silver, gold, red, green, and blue. She lived in a beautiful rainforest covered with green ferns and lush vines that were filled with bright, blooming flowers. She was protected by a large-leafed plant that kept her dry in the heavy rains and shady and cool in the hot, midday sun. A narrow stream bubbled through the forest, its crystalline water lapping along the shoreline where Blanquita bathed and swam every day.

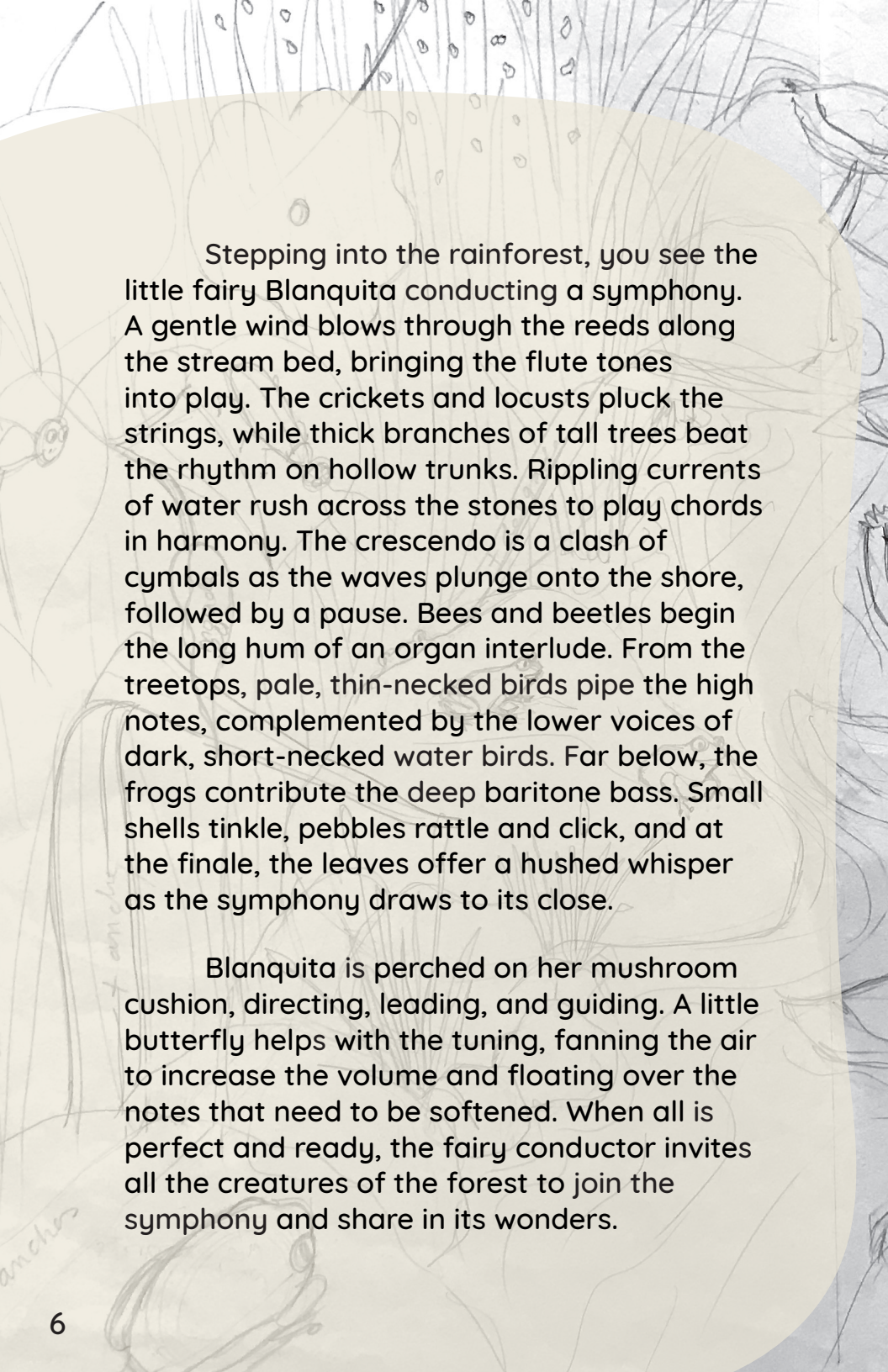






One day as Blanquita wandered through the sun-sprinkled forest, to her surprise, she stumbled over the end of a rainbow. The crimson-to-gold tones began evaporating into the air. She decided that nobody would mind if she cut off a tiny piece of the rainbow, and with this she fashioned a splendid, colorful gown to wear, with a long trailing skirt and little hat to match. Because it was very filmy, her gown shone with the ethereal tones of the rainbow as it floated behind her, and the forest was illuminated whenever Blanquita passed by. At night, the fireflies would rest on her gown, and if you didn't know better, you might have mistaken Blanquita for the starry night that penetrated the forest.

Keep in mind that only you can see this rainforest. It is magical, and only you know the secret way to enter it. You must close your eyes and clap your hands three times while whispering the magic password. When you open your eyes and see the lush, green landscape and hear the soft, musical sounds of the forest, you will know that you have entered the secret land.



Stepping into the rainforest, you see the little fairy Blanquita conducting a symphony. A gentle wind blows through the reeds along the stream bed, bringing the flute tones into play. The crickets and locusts pluck the strings, while thick branches of tall trees beat the rhythm on hollow trunks. Rippling currents of water rush across the stones to play chords in harmony. The crescendo is a clash of cymbals as the waves plunge onto the shore, followed by a pause. Bees and beetles begin the long hum of an organ interlude. From the treetops, pale, thin-necked birds pipe the high notes, complemented by the lower voices of dark, short-necked water birds. Far below, the frogs contribute the deep baritone bass. Small shells tinkle, pebbles rattle and click, and at the finale, the leaves offer a hushed whisper as the symphony draws to its close.

Blanquita is perched on her mushroom cushion, directing, leading, and guiding. A little butterfly helps with the tuning, fanning the air to increase the volume and floating over the notes that need to be softened. When all is perfect and ready, the fairy conductor invites all the creatures of the forest to join the symphony and share in its wonders.



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Chapter 2

Blanquita's Accident

One day, Blanquita had a serious accident. She was riding on a leaf floating along the shallow stream. She was using a pole to push herself along, dipping it into the sand, in and out, in and out, coasting along the gently rippling waters. She was looking for fish because she understood that fish live and travel in schools, and she had a plan now to begin an education system for ants. It is very clear that ants need many specialists, such as scouts, soldiers, guards, and traffic controllers, in addition to farmers, leaf-cutters to process food, attendants for the queen, and nurses for the babies. Blanquita thought she could help with some of the training, but she needed advice on setting up a school.

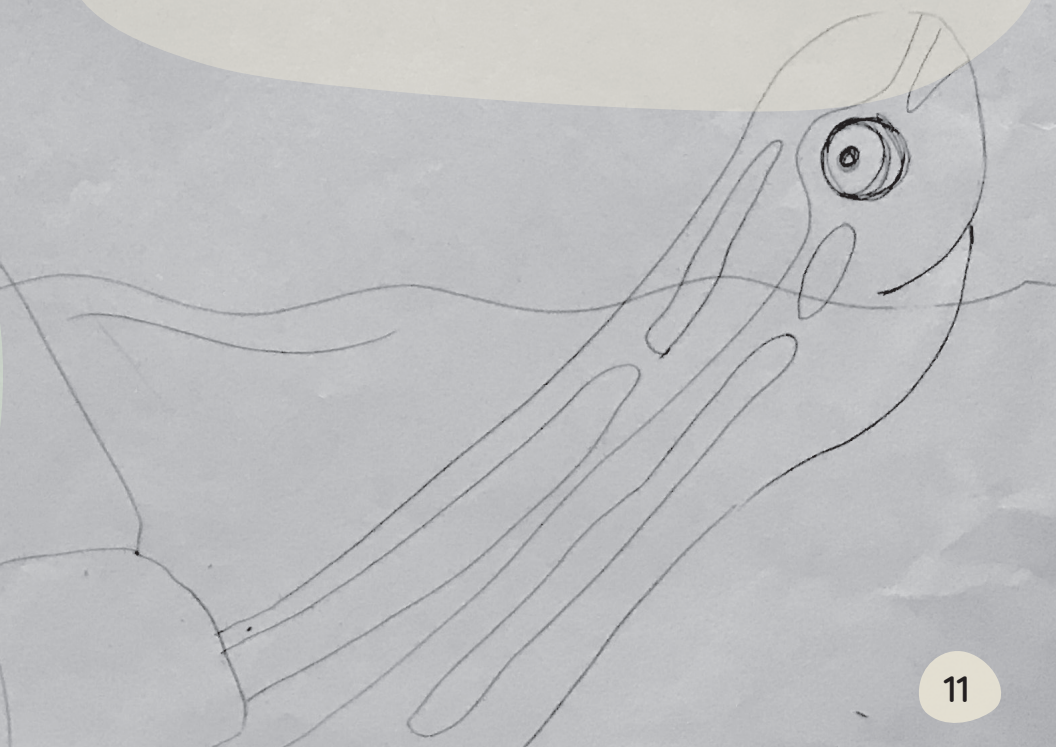
At this moment and most unexpectedly, a gust of wind blew her leaf into rough water, and Blanquita went tumbling and turning about wildly, this way and that. The current carried her leaf under a low branch, and she crashed into a rock and broke her wing. When a fairy wing is broken, it makes it very difficult to keep balance, and it is impossible for the fairy to fly. Blanquita desperately hung on to her leaf.





Fortunately, her friend Butterfly came fluttering by and, alarmed at seeing Blanquita's predicament, swooped in to help. She perched on the opposite side of the branch and pumped her large wings, trying to stabilize both the fairy and her leaf to keep them afloat. Soon, both Butterfly and Blanquita were exhausted, without any means of extracting themselves from the trap in which they were stuck.

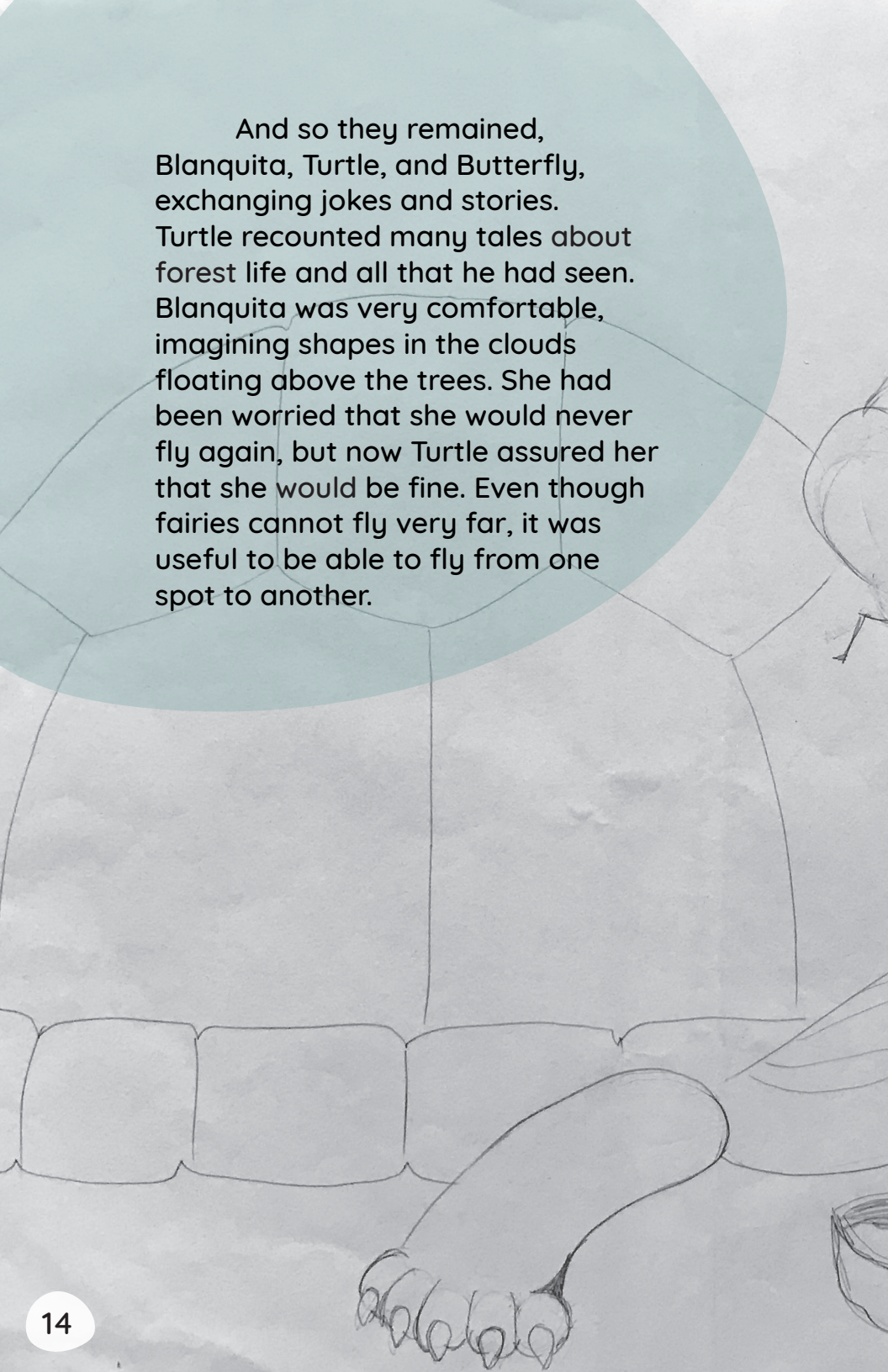
Suddenly, the leaf began to rise and move smoothly out from under the branch, gliding slowly across the raging stream. It seemed that an island had arisen in the waters, lifting Blanquita and Butterfly above the surface and moving her towards land. As she approached the shore, four short legs began to spread from the base of the island, and then a head appeared. Blanquita and Butterfly could see that they were riding on the back of a large turtle. They were soon deposited safely on dry land. Nevertheless, Blanquita could neither stand for long nor fly because of her broken wing. Turtle, it turned out, had lived for a very long time and had a wealth of knowledge to draw upon from his lengthy and adventurous life.



He advised Blanquita and Butterfly that he might be able to repair the wing if he could find a certain tree, but they must remain in place until he returned. The fairy's wing was beginning to curl up, and it was well-known that a curled-up wing would never be able to fly again.

Fairy wings do not pump up and down and beat the air the way bird wings function. Fairy wings are diaphanous, which is a big word for such a tiny wing, but it means that they are made like dragonfly wings, very transparent and delicate. The veins that run through them are brittle and hard to mend. When fairies fly, their wings flutter in short strokes, even though they make no sound. But when a vein in the wing breaks, this leaves a hole in the membrane so that when the wing is fluttering, there is no resistance and air simply flows through the hole. This was a very upsetting moment for Blanquita, and even Butterfly could not cheer her up with comforting remarks.

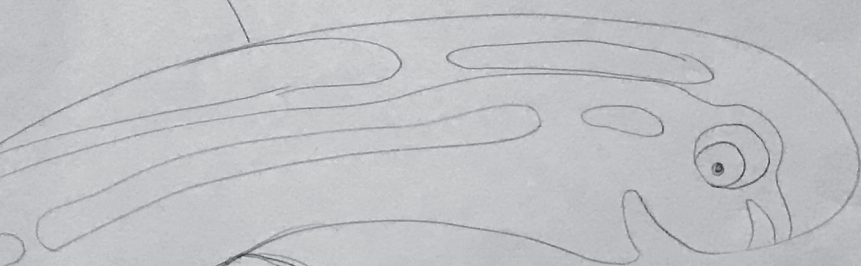
A rustle in the leaves diverted Blanquita's attention and she saw that Turtle was approaching, step by step, from the depths of the forest. He had found the tree and collected some of its thick, sticky sap in a small nutshell clenched in his mouth. He told Blanquita to lie down and spread her wing out on the flat ground. He applied the sap gently to her wing, spreading it over and over in light strokes, sealing the break. When the tear was smoothed over and patched, Turtle stretched the wing very securely and placed his great weight directly on top. He explained that they would have to be very patient, for it would take two hours to dry, but the great weight on the wing would flatten it out so that Blanquita could fly again. Every so often, Butterfly would fan her own large wings, blowing on the mend to hasten the drying process.



And so they remained,
Blanquita, Turtle, and Butterfly,
exchanging jokes and stories.
Turtle recounted many tales about
forest life and all that he had seen.
Blanquita was very comfortable,
imagining shapes in the clouds
floating above the trees. She had
been worried that she would never
fly again, but now Turtle assured her
that she would be fine. Even though
fairies cannot fly very far, it was
useful to be able to fly from one
spot to another.



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Although Blanquita was enjoying herself, she was perturbed by an occasional roar in the forest. She asked Turtle about it.

“Oh yes,” he said. “That is the dragon in the house at the edge of the forest.”

“A dragon?” she asked.



Turtle continued, “You must never go there. A man and a woman live in the house, and they have the dragon. No forest creature that has entered has ever returned. I have seen the dragon once in the window, and it has the form of a long snake with a small mouth that feeds on ants, spiders, flies, and probably also fairies! A fairy would be just one gulp.”

Blanquita shivered, wondering what it must feel to go down the long throat of a snake. She would have to carefully avoid that dangerous house.

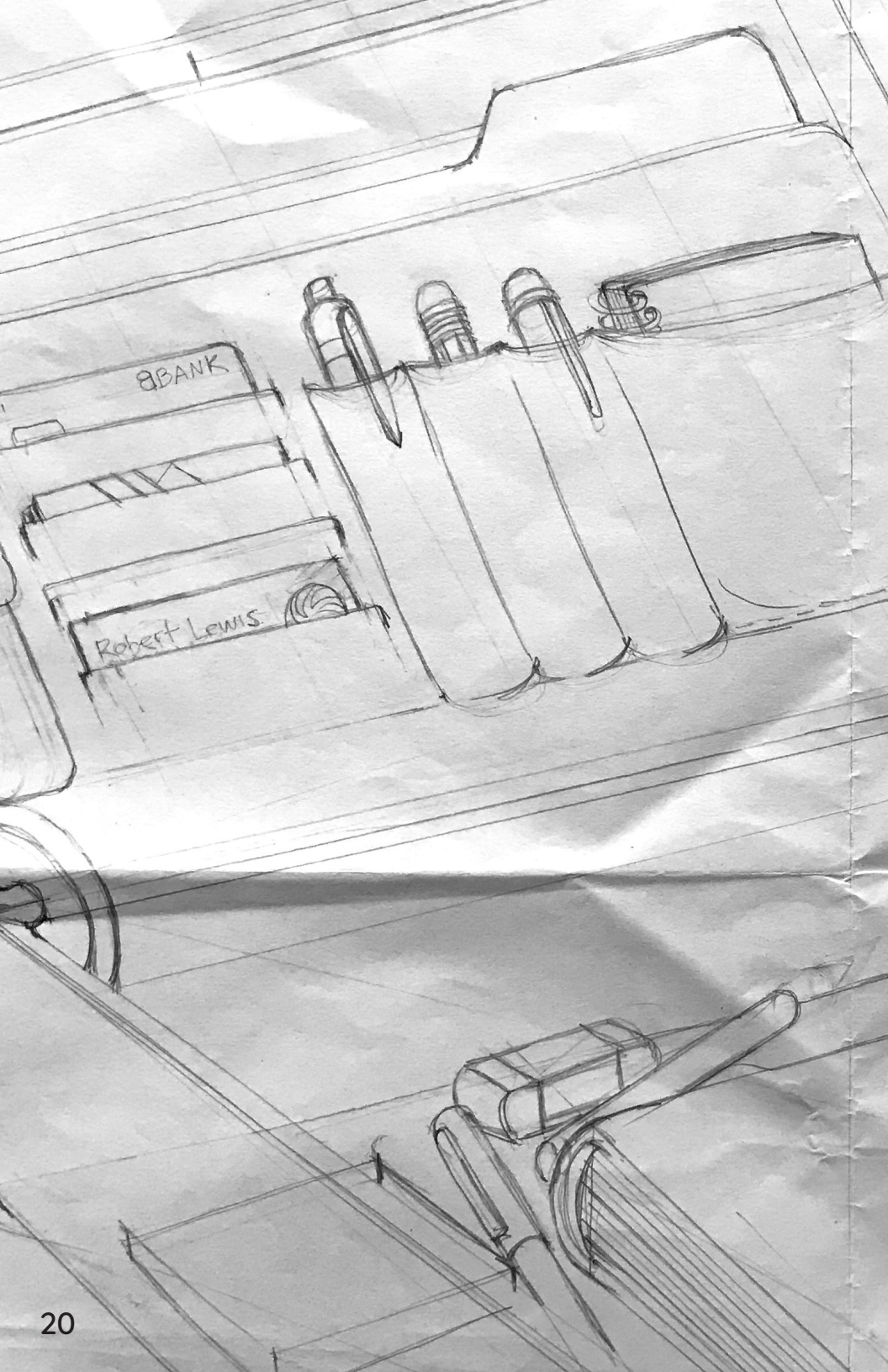
Finally, the two hours had passed. Turtle moved aside, and Blanquita stood up, standing strong and straight. Cautiously, she gently moved her wings back and forth, and the glue from the tree sap held firm. She hugged Turtle, and they agreed that they would continue to be friends forever. Turtle gave her the instructions for the best route to return home, and they waved a tearful farewell.

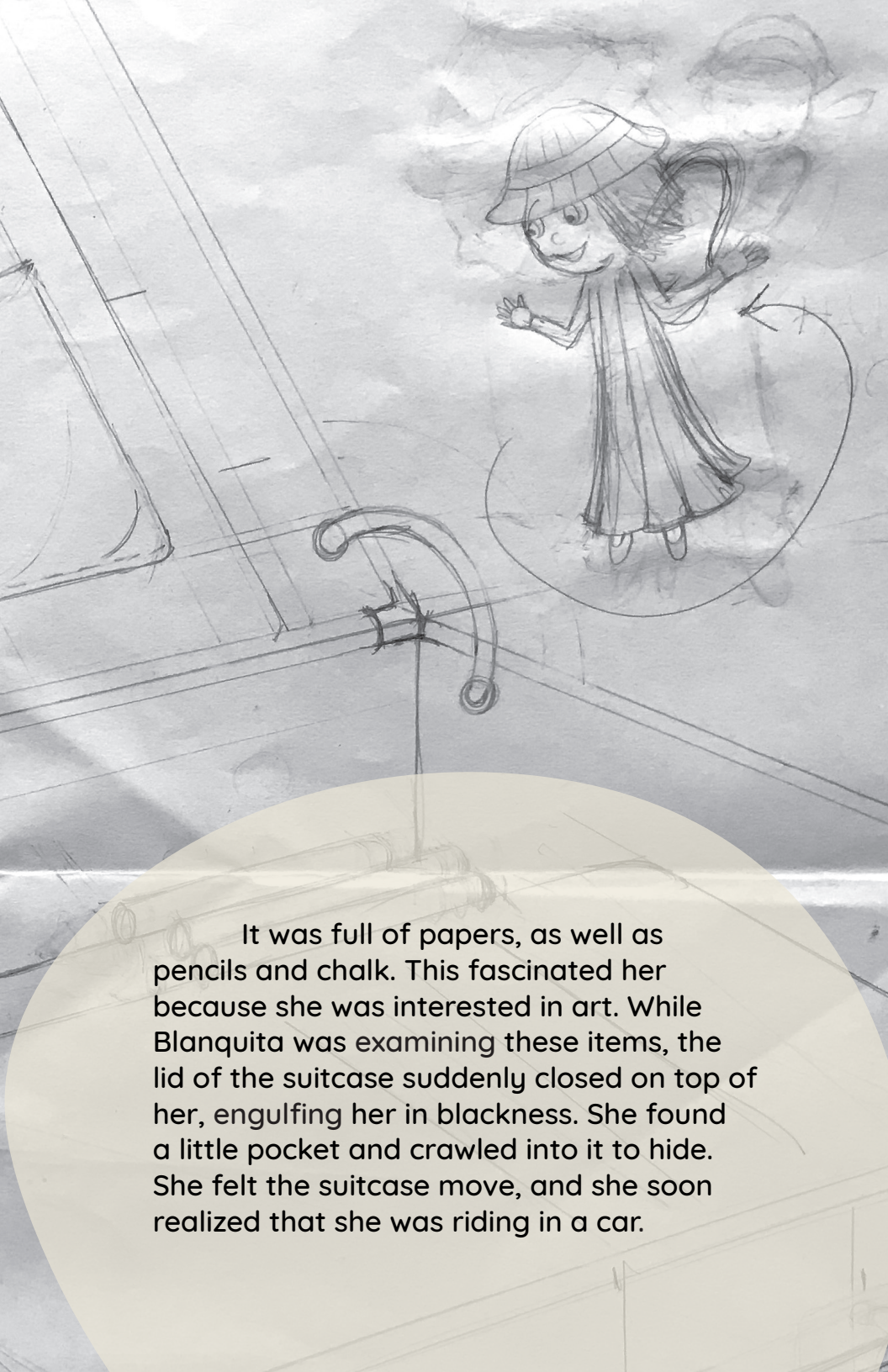
Chapter 3

The Visit to the Distant North

Time passed, and Blanquita continued to think about the dragon at the edge of the forest. Turtle had warned her to never go there, but she was tempted to get just a peek at that house, being sure to stay hidden in the trees. Soon she began visiting regularly, getting closer and closer to the house. She heard the dragon roar when hungry, and she could occasionally see the woman and man leave the house. The man would sometimes go away in a car, always carrying a small suitcase.

One day the man left the suitcase outside, open, and then he went back into the house. Blanquita was so curious to find out what was in that suitcase. Looking around carefully and seeing that she was completely alone, she rushed over to see the contents.





It was full of papers, as well as pencils and chalk. This fascinated her because she was interested in art. While Blanquita was examining these items, the lid of the suitcase suddenly closed on top of her, engulfing her in blackness. She found a little pocket and crawled into it to hide. She felt the suitcase move, and she soon realized that she was riding in a car.



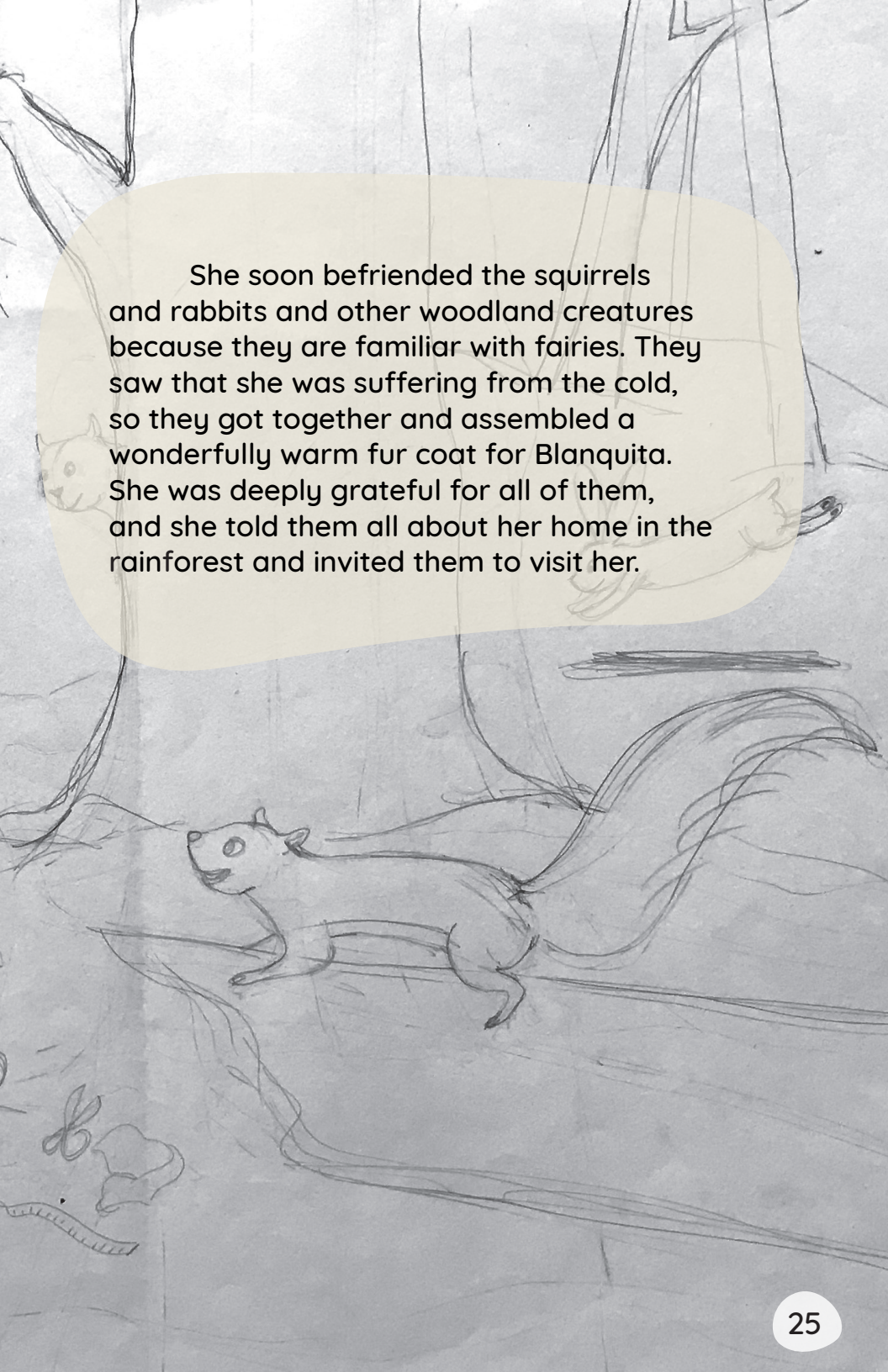
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Other sounds caught her attention, and she suddenly recognized the reverberant hum of airplanes. She was at an airport! Inside the terminal, the suitcase was opened, causing Blanquita to panic, but only a few papers were picked out and the suitcase was closed again, and she was safe. Within a short time, Blanquita felt that they were on an airplane as it rose in the air. After several hours, the airplane descended and landed.

When the suitcase was finally opened, the man was talking with many other people. Blanquita peeked out from her hiding place and saw that the world about her was very different, far away from her rainforest. It was bitterly cold. Blanquita had read about the North and that they had snow in wintertime. She saw that the land was white with snow drifts, and snow blanketed the trees. No one was paying attention to Blanquita because she was so tiny. If they did notice her, they thought she was probably a pale insect. She put her rainbow gown in the corner of the suitcase, slipped away from the people, and flew out of the building. Taking account of her location, she began flying around until she found the edge of a woodland and entered.

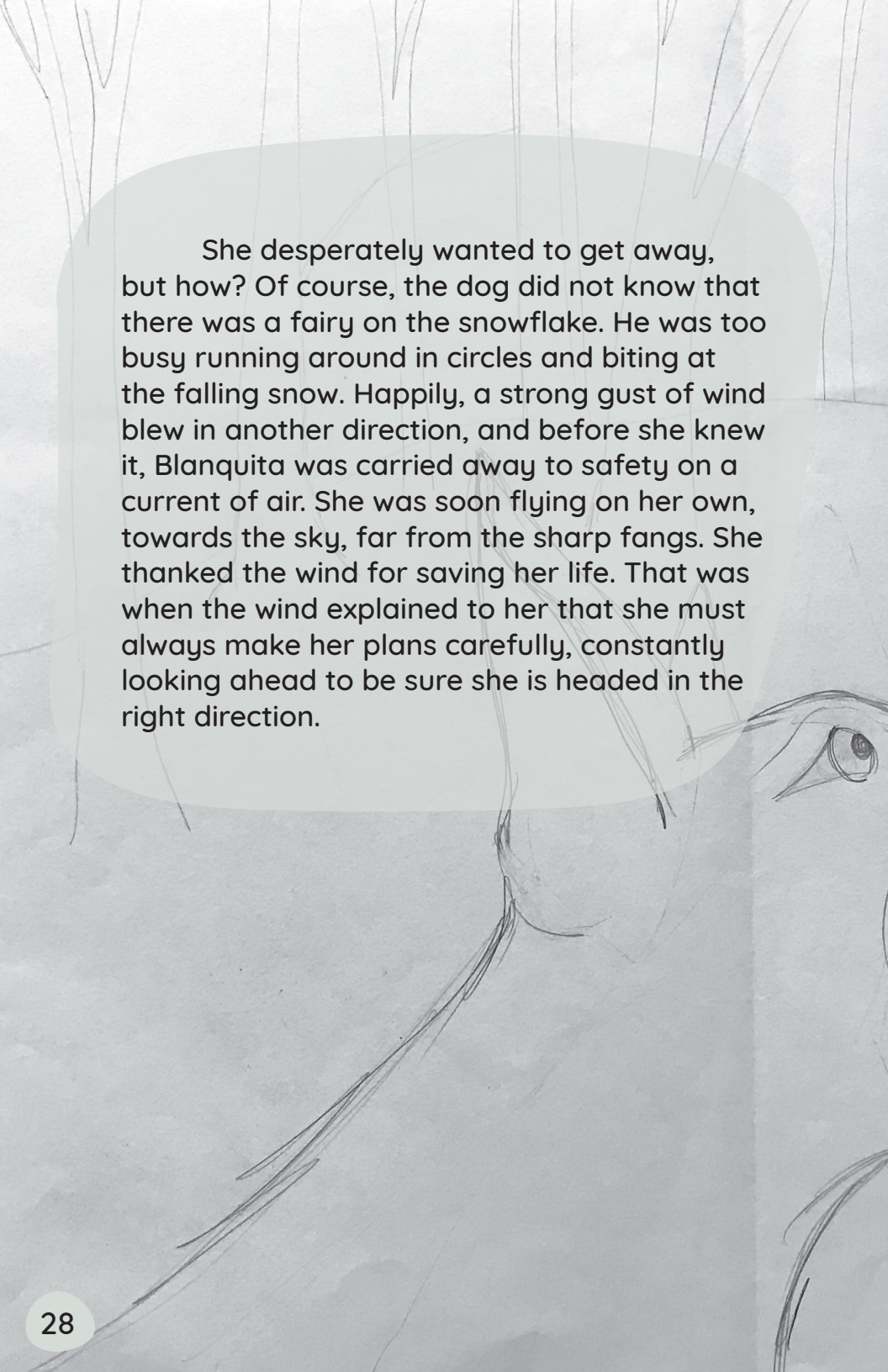


A pencil sketch of a forest scene. In the foreground, a squirrel with a long, bushy tail is walking towards the left. To the left of the squirrel, there is a small, cat-like creature with large eyes. The background shows several vertical lines representing tree trunks. A large, light-colored oval shape is superimposed over the upper part of the sketch, containing text.

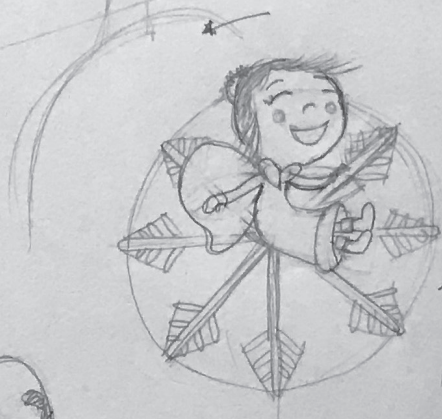
She soon befriended the squirrels and rabbits and other woodland creatures because they are familiar with fairies. They saw that she was suffering from the cold, so they got together and assembled a wonderfully warm fur coat for Blanquita. She was deeply grateful for all of them, and she told them all about her home in the rainforest and invited them to visit her.

That afternoon, Blanquita's new woodland friends demonstrated to her how much fun it was to play in the snow. They showed her some little boys riding their sleds down the slopes. There were snowflakes softly falling, blowing and swirling through the air. Blanquita jumped onto a snowflake and was having a glorious time riding on it. She would float down from the sky very gently, riding along for a while, and then abruptly a rush of wind would rock the snowflake from side to side. Often, the wind would blow so forcefully that little Blanquita had to hang tightly onto the sides of the snowflake to keep it from tipping over. It was a very exciting ride.

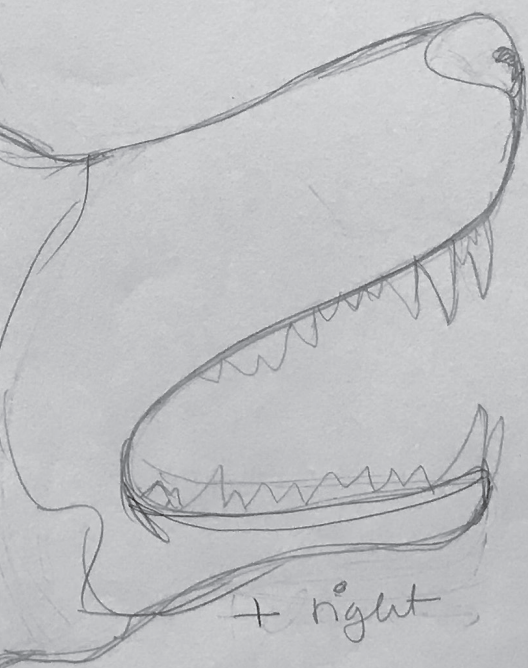
Unfortunately, Blanquita did not know that dogs were also out enjoying the snow, running around and barking at the snowflakes. There was a big black dog that was jumping and barking and snapping at the swirling flakes, trying to catch them on his tongue. Suddenly, Blanquita found herself dangerously close to the dog's nose and open mouth. She could feel his warm breath and see his sharp, white fangs. The snowflake was starting to melt, and she was not able to stand up and spread her wings to fly away. Closer and closer, the dog's jaws approached as she scrambled helplessly.



She desperately wanted to get away, but how? Of course, the dog did not know that there was a fairy on the snowflake. He was too busy running around in circles and biting at the falling snow. Happily, a strong gust of wind blew in another direction, and before she knew it, Blanquita was carried away to safety on a current of air. She was soon flying on her own, towards the sky, far from the sharp fangs. She thanked the wind for saving her life. That was when the wind explained to her that she must always make her plans carefully, constantly looking ahead to be sure she is headed in the right direction.



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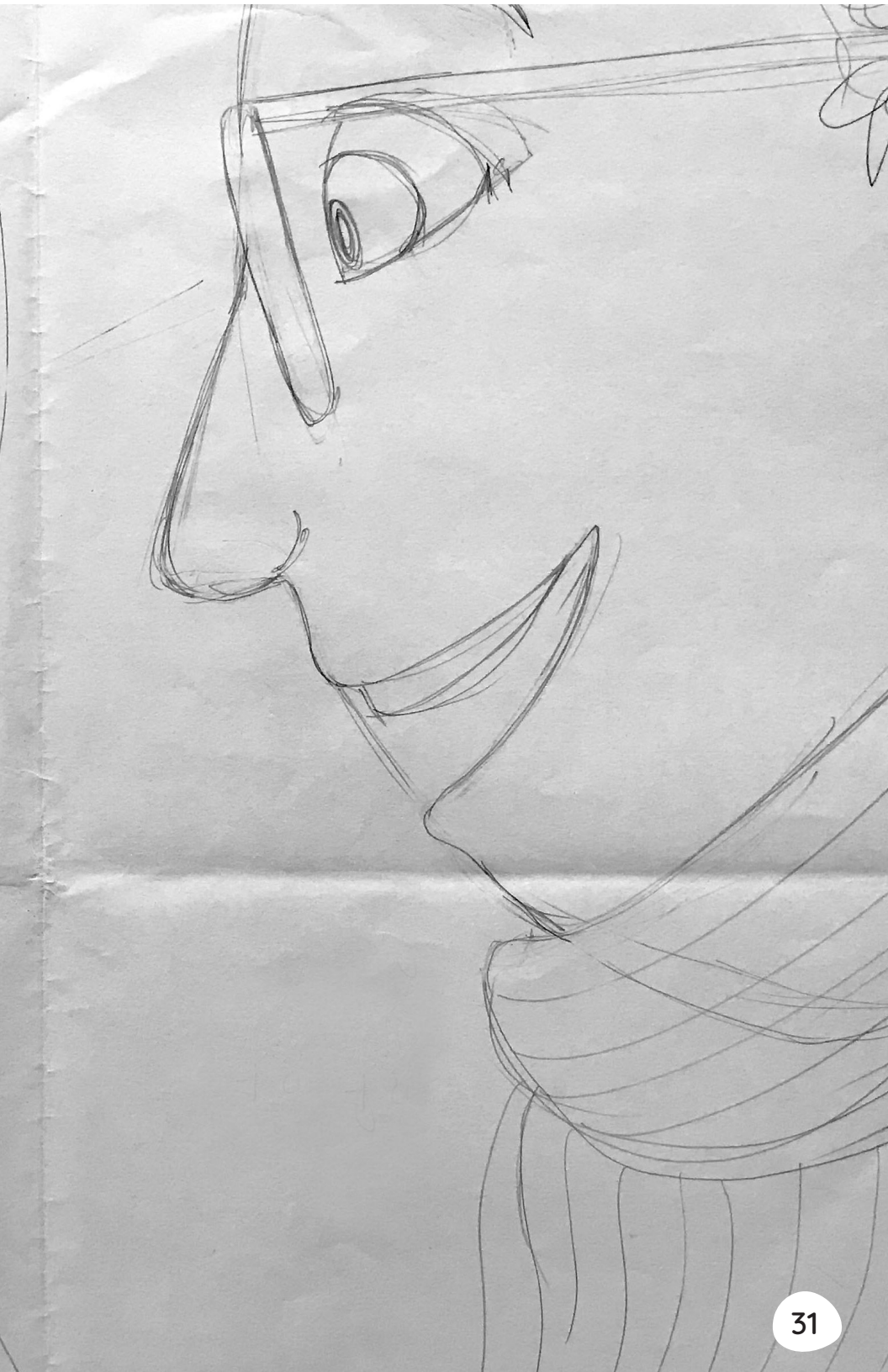


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When Blanquita finally returned to the airport, she found the suitcase. The man was preparing to pack up and close it. Blanquita jumped on the handle. The man thought she was only a bit of fluff, seeing her furry coat, and was about to brush her away when she began jumping up and down and waving her tiny arms. He stared at her in amazement and leaned in to get a closer look. She told him that she was a fairy who lived in the rainforest close to his house.

“But fairies do not exist!” he insisted.

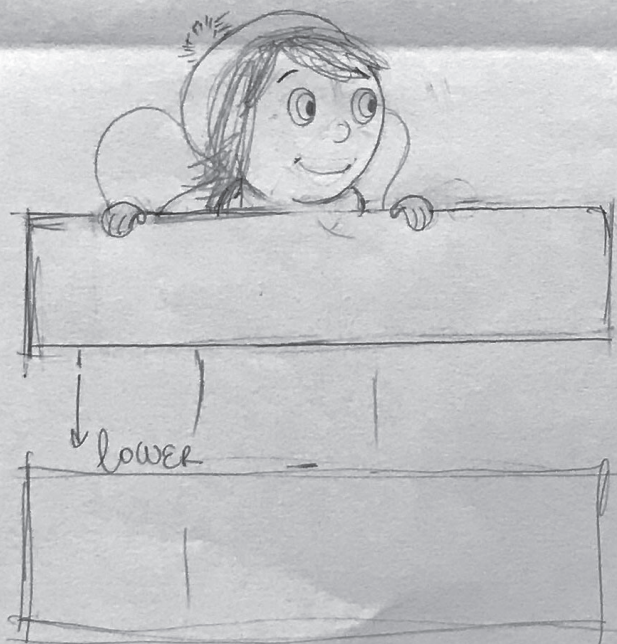


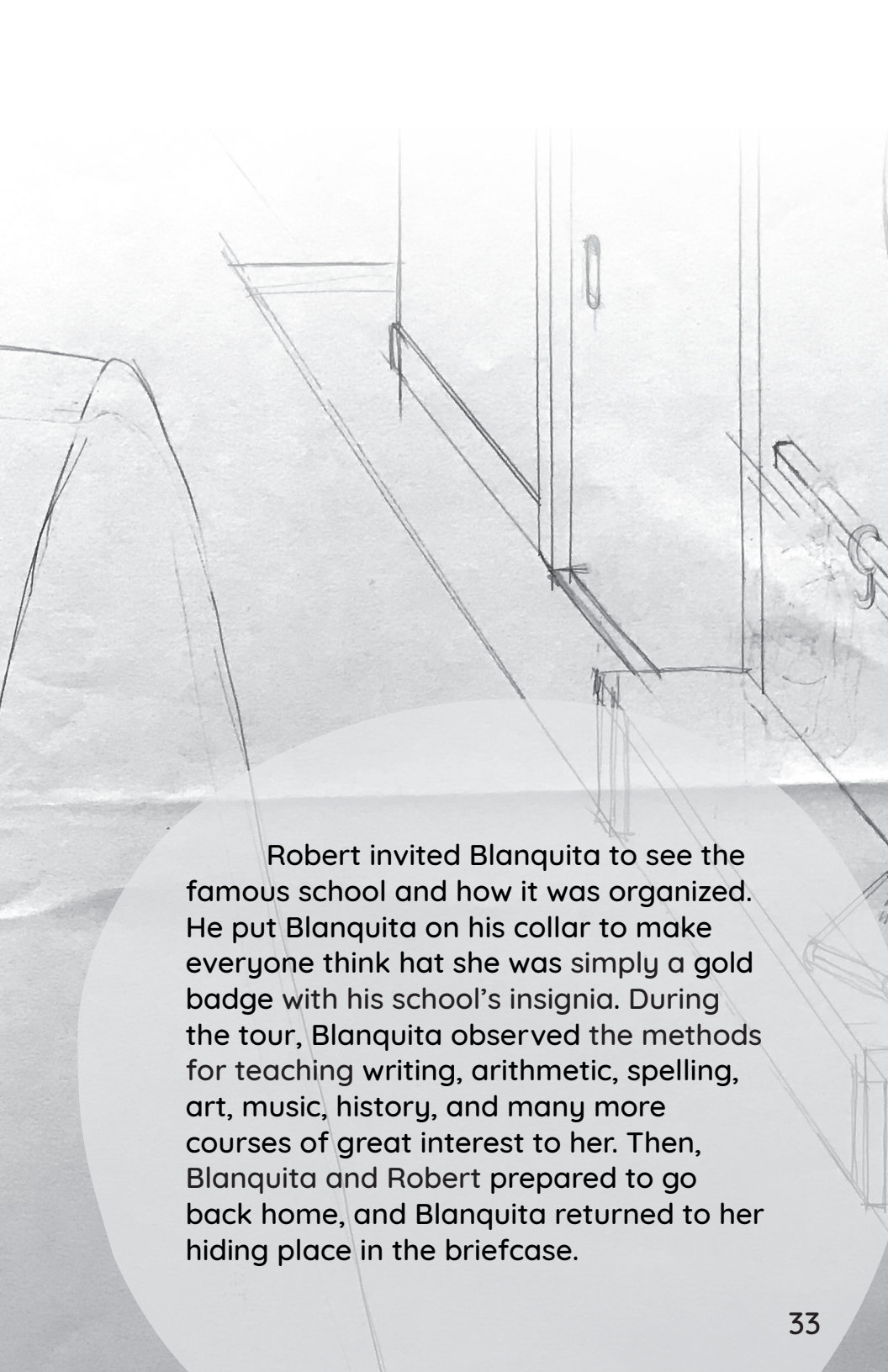


Blanquita convinced him that she was indeed a fairy, and she explained how she got into his suitcase and that she had to get back to the rainforest because she had plans to start a school for some of the creatures.

Before long, the man and Blanquita were friends. He told her that his name was Robert, and that the “suitcase” was a briefcase. But that wasn’t all.

“This has truly been a coincidence,” he explained, “because I am a school teacher, and I have come here to visit a famous school. I will be glad to help you set up your school in the rainforest.”



A faint pencil sketch of a school hallway. On the right side, there are lockers with a door handle visible. A door is at the end of the hallway. On the left, there is a large, rounded object, possibly a desk or a piece of furniture. The sketch is light and serves as a background for the text.

Robert invited Blanquita to see the famous school and how it was organized. He put Blanquita on his collar to make everyone think that she was simply a gold badge with his school's insignia. During the tour, Blanquita observed the methods for teaching writing, arithmetic, spelling, art, music, history, and many more courses of great interest to her. Then, Blanquita and Robert prepared to go back home, and Blanquita returned to her hiding place in the briefcase.

Robert, carrying his briefcase with the tiny fairy hidden in its pocket, took a taxi to the airport, and once again they boarded a plane. However, this trip was much easier and pleasant than the previous one because Robert let Blanquita slip out of the briefcase and look out the window. From there she could see the frosty, white-blanketed landscape, passing gradually to pale brown and gray tones and finally to leafy green trees, which indicated she was getting close to home.

The plane landed in the rainforest, and Blanquita thought she would explode with happiness. It had just rained, a soft mist was rising above the trees, and from the moist earth emanated a clean and refreshing fragrance. Sunbeams interrupted the shadows, sprinkling rainbows upon the dripping leaves. Blanquita whispered a song of gratitude to be home again; she knew she would remember this moment forever and treasured it in her heart.

On the way back from the airport, Robert invited Blanquita to meet his wife, Linda, at their home. Blanquita wanted to meet Linda, but she was deathly afraid of the dragon. Turtle had said that no forest creature who entered the house had ever come back.

Blanquita kept finding excuses to make it impossible to accept the invitation, but Robert kept insisting that it would be so easy to come because the visit was on the way to her home and would only take a minute. Finally, Blanquita conceded.

As they reached the steps to enter Robert's house, the dragon began to roar.

"I cannot enter!" insisted Blanquita.

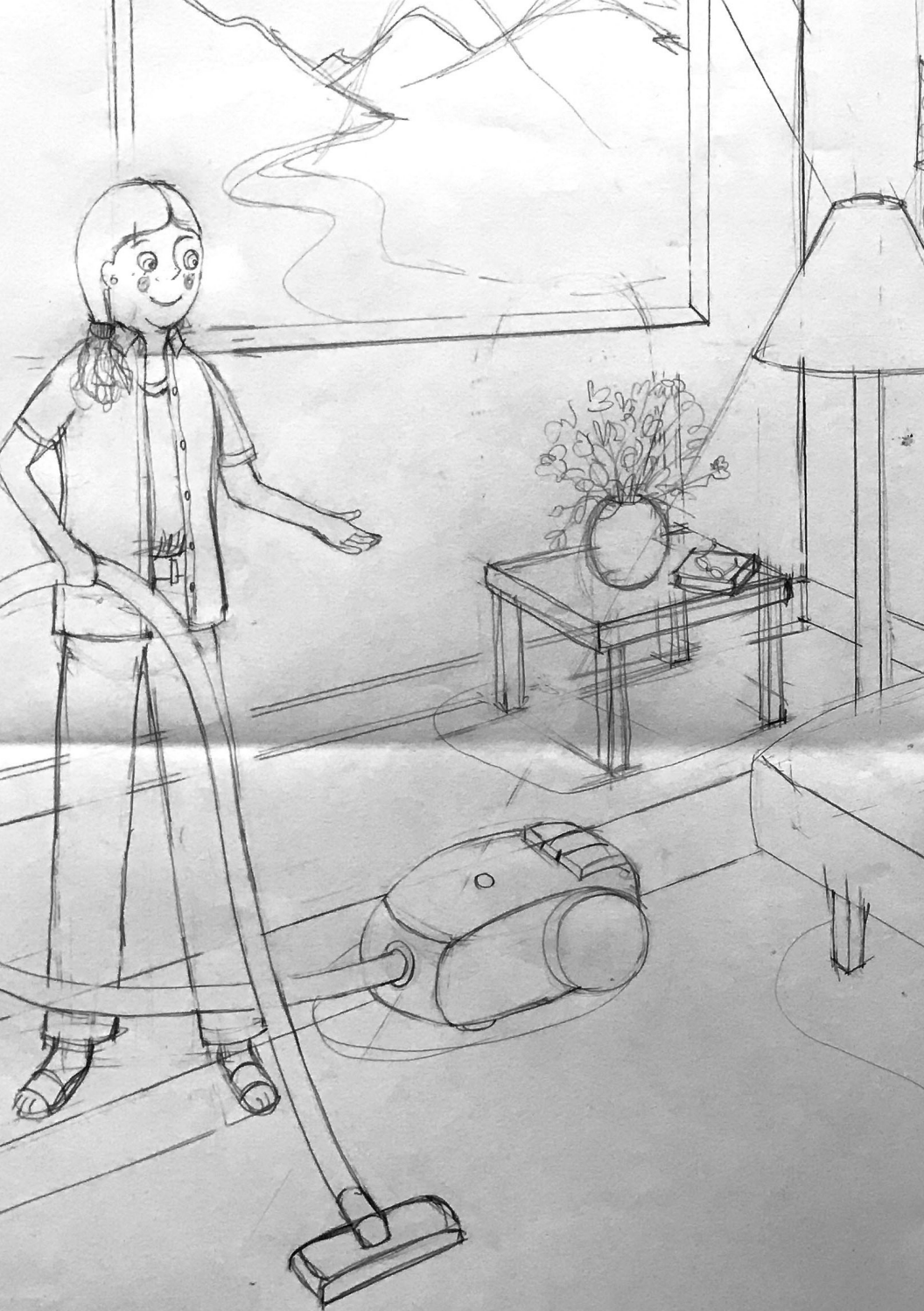
"But why?" queried Robert, frowning.

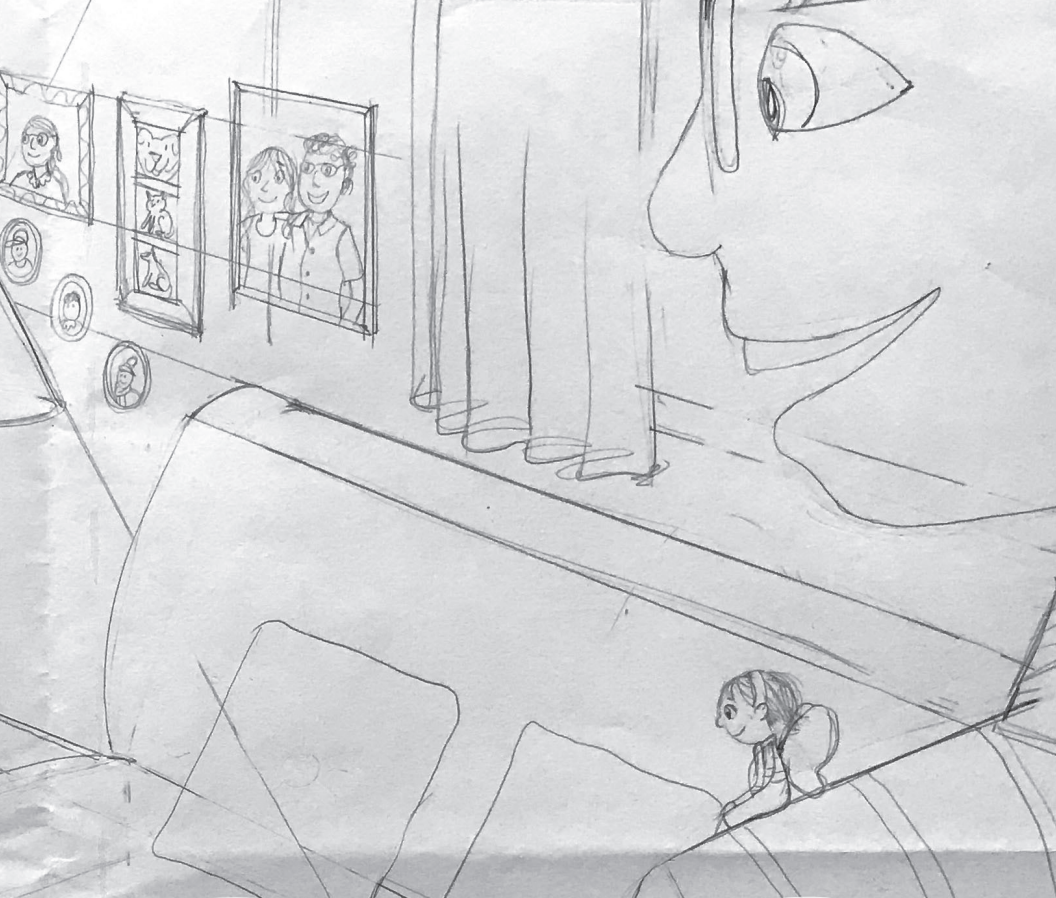
"The dragon is hungry, and it devours little fairies."

"What dragon are you talking about?" demanded Robert in surprise.

"The dragon that is roaring in there!" explained Blanquita.

"Let's see about that," he said as he cupped his hand to protect the fairy as they entered.





There was the snake-like dragon in Linda's hand. It had been roaring until she clicked a button, and silence followed. Blanquita's eyes followed the snake to a round body supported by wheels. When the sound had stopped, the snake had gone limp. Robert told Linda that he wanted her to meet the fairy called Blanquita, and that Blanquita was very interested in learning about the vacuum cleaner.


Introductions completed, Blanquita checked the electric tank that had caused so much alarm for the forest creatures. She was so relieved with her new discovery that she stayed another hour, sipping honeysuckle tea with Linda. They became lifelong friends.




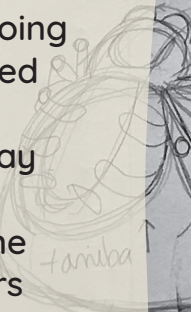
Chapter 4

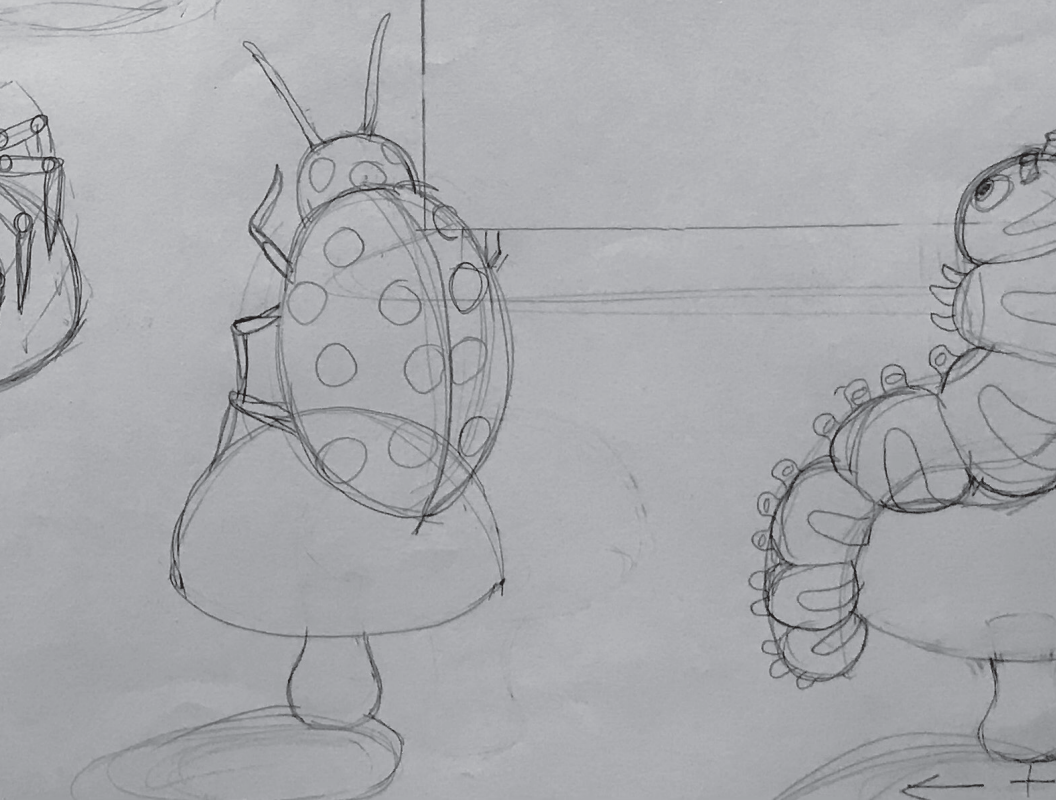
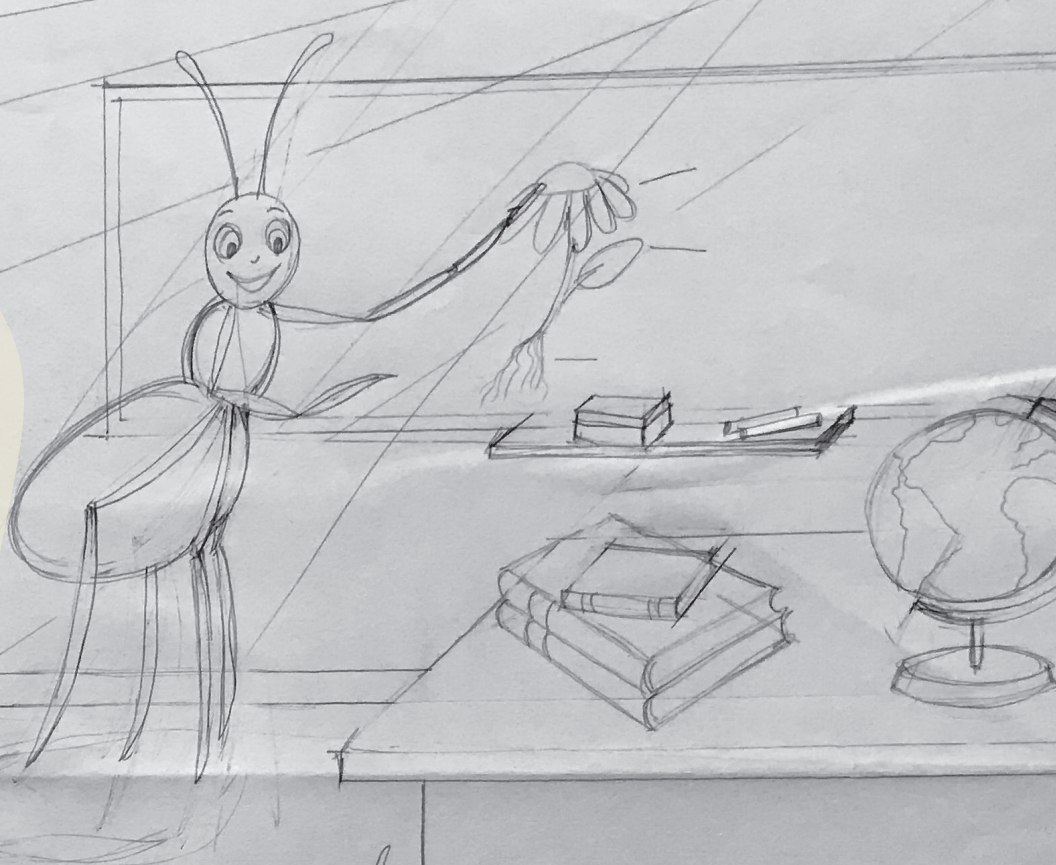
The First Rainforest School

Robert suggested that his garden would be a good place for Blanquita's school, for it could be protected and cared for during holidays and vacations. In the days following Blanquita's visit, Robert and Blanquita planted rows of little mushrooms to serve as seating for the students in each of the classrooms. Blanquita's school would offer classes in agriculture for improving soils, art for coloring the forest plants, music for the rainforest symphony, and forest materials for cooking, clothing, and building. There would even be a class in the stream for water purification.



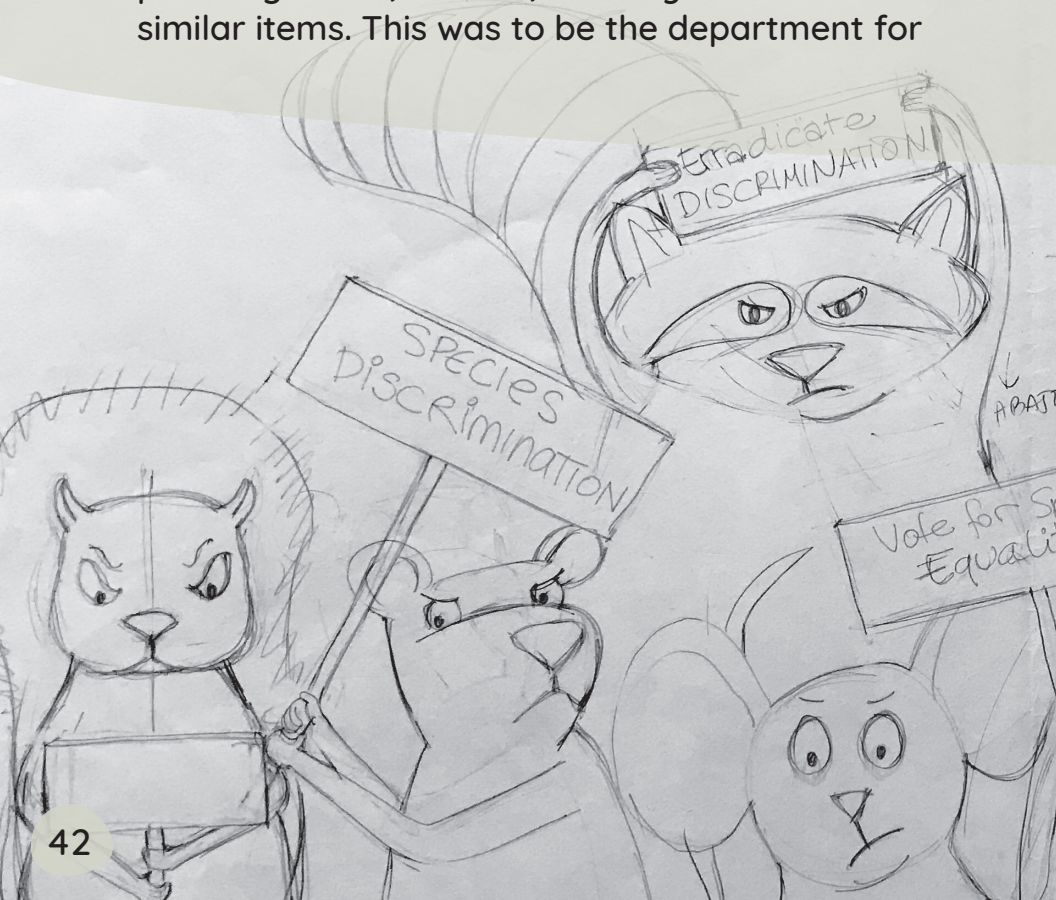
Robert would be the Principal Director of the school because he was a teacher and had experience. An ant professor would direct agriculture, art would be directed by a fairy, music by a cricket, and the water purification by a fish. There was even a clinic to mend broken wings and legs, directed by Turtle. Blanquita had already organized a symphony that she would direct: the crickets would play the violins, the locusts the deep tone of the cellos, mosquitos would handle the high notes, butterflies would blow the wind instruments (directed by Butterfly), and woodpeckers would manage the drums. There was even a section for opera for singing birds. After some time, classes were in session, and all was going smoothly. The school was very well-attended by students among the forest creatures. However, the peace was interrupted one day when Blanquita looked out the window of her administrative office and saw a long line of protestors carrying placards. The posters carried messages like "Species Discrimination," "Vote for Species Equality," and "Eradicate Prejudice, Close This School." Blanquita was befuddled. What on earth was going on?





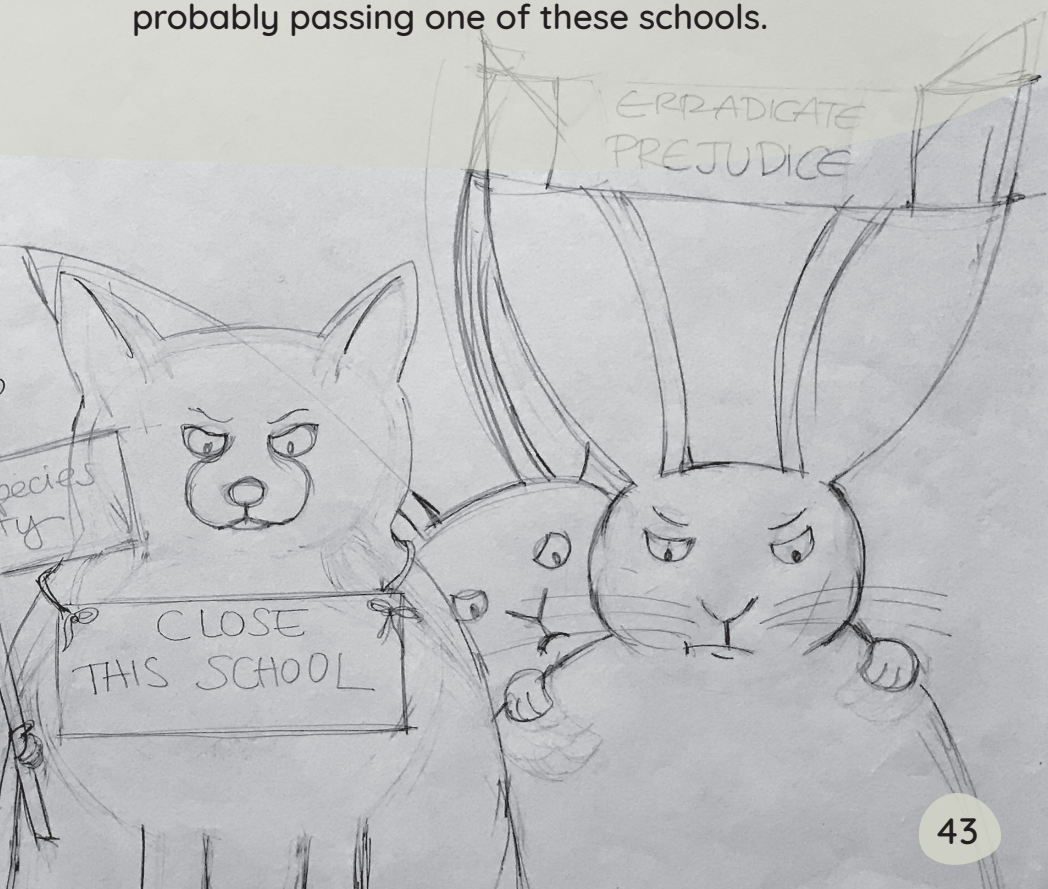
Blanquita gathered the protestors together to discuss the problem and saw that all the participants were furry animals: rabbits, squirrels, mice, rats, raccoons, wild cats, and others. That was the problem—there was no focus in the curricula for furry animals, and they were protesting this absence. She remembered her furry coat in the North and how it saved her life.

Blanquita informed the group that there was a department that was not yet formed devoted to furry materials: clothing, rugs, polishing cloths, dusters, and any number of similar items. This was to be the department for



them, and she told them how useful that furry coat had been for her in the North. The rage of the furry creatures began to subside, and they soon got to work organizing the topics and selecting the professors.

In this way, all the creatures of the rainforest were involved with Blanquita's school, and soon there were many other schools starting up in different locations of the forest. Today, when you walk quietly through the forest contemplating the busy life of all the bustling creatures around you, and you see rows of small mushrooms and anthills nearby, you are probably passing one of these schools.



Blanquita continued to see all her friends in the rainforest, and she never forgot how much they had helped her. Robert and Linda were also included as administrators of the first rainforest school, NAME?, and the cleaning crew used the dragon to vacuum the floors every afternoon after the students had left.





Blanquita designed a gold badge for the most diligent participants in the school, and the first ones were awarded to Robert and Linda. The badge was inscribed elegantly with the letters ABF, meaning Always Believe in Fairies.

Robert and Linda do.

Do you?

