



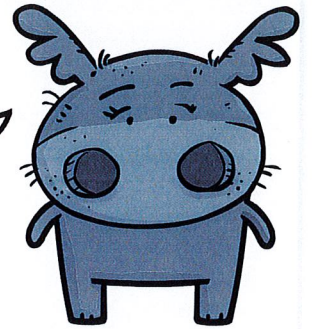
English  
Language Arts

Grade 1

10-15 minutes  
per day

# Asking Questions

A **key detail** is an important piece of information. Asking and answering questions helps you notice key details.



**Here are some questions you can ask about the key details in a story:**

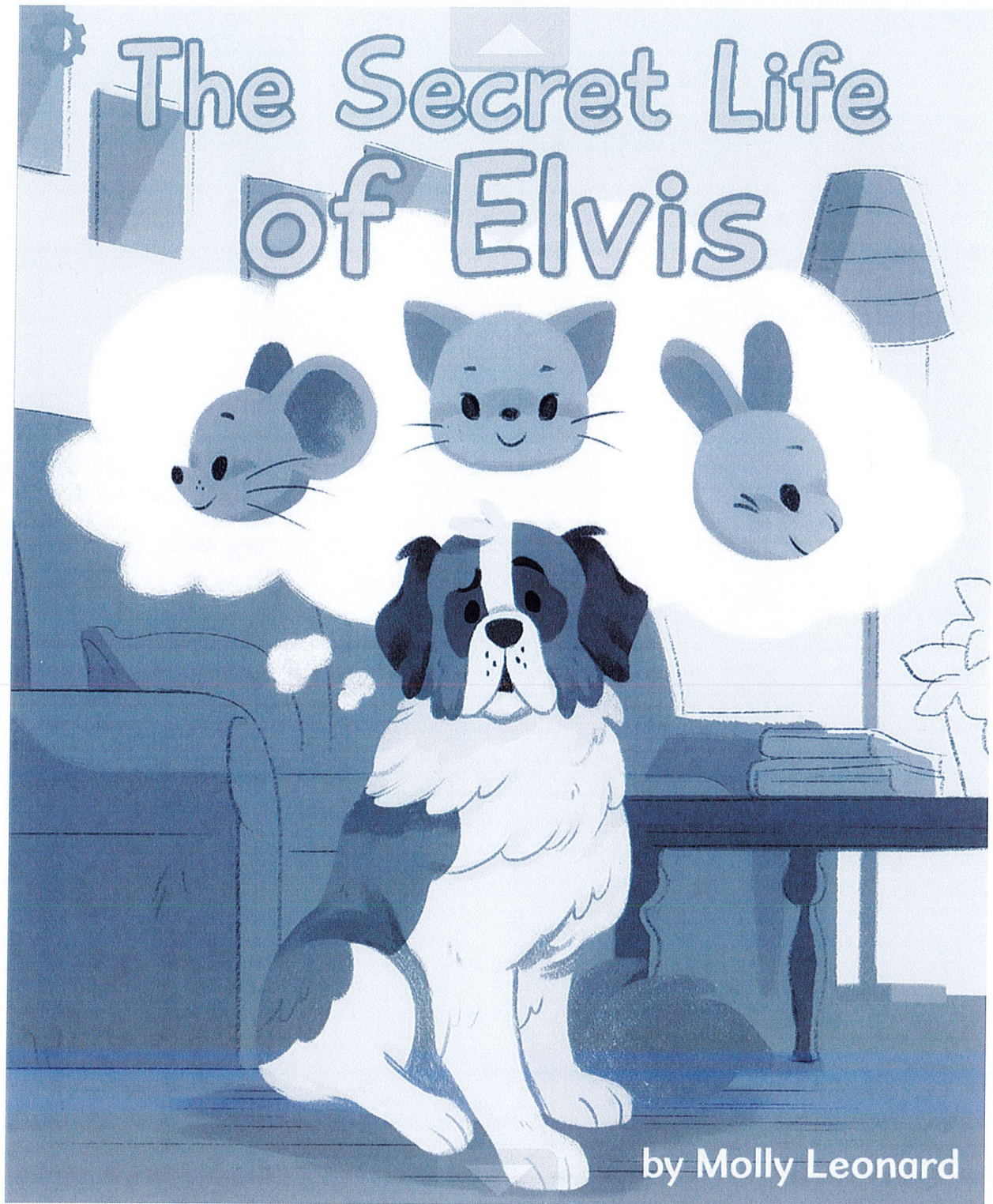
- ▶ Who are the characters?
- ▶ Where are the characters?
- ▶ What are the characters doing?

**Think about:**

When are they doing this?

Why are they doing this?

Asking and answering questions about key details helps you understand how the parts of the story fit together.





People think it is so easy to be a dog.  
They scratch my head and say, “Elvis, your life  
is so easy.”

Boy, are they wrong. Being a dog is hard  
work! I don’t like what I do every day. I just  
can’t do it anymore!





I wake up on a cold, hard floor every day.  
I eat dry dog food for breakfast. Yuck!

Then I have to **drag** myself out the door to chase the mailman. I do NOT want to chase the mailman! He is a nice guy. He scratches my belly. He feeds me bananas.





What do I do next? I hide in a closet. I am trying to cough up a hairball.

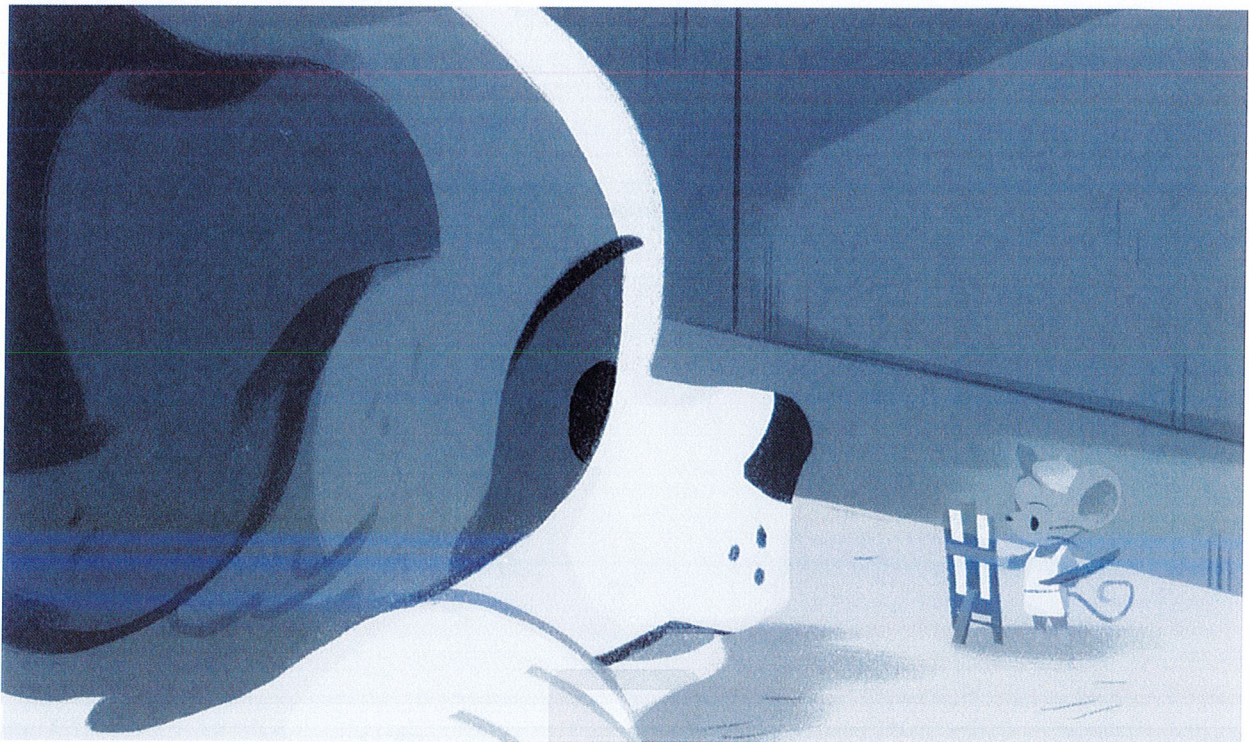
Then I hear someone call, “Elvis! Come!” And of course I come running. I see that someone has dropped some meatloaf. They want me to eat it off the floor. Gross!





Finally, I talk to my best friend, Maxwell.  
“What should I do?” I ask him. Maxwell lives  
under the dishwasher. He is a mouse. He is also  
a painter! Today he is painting a banana.

I say, “I don’t want to be a dog anymore,  
Maxwell. I have no time alone. The food stinks.  
And people throw balls at me!”





“I know what you mean,” Maxwell says as he paints.

“You have to do what makes you happy. That is why I paint beautiful fruit. It makes me happy. Other mice look for crumbs all day. That makes them happy. You have to do what makes YOU happy, Elvis.”







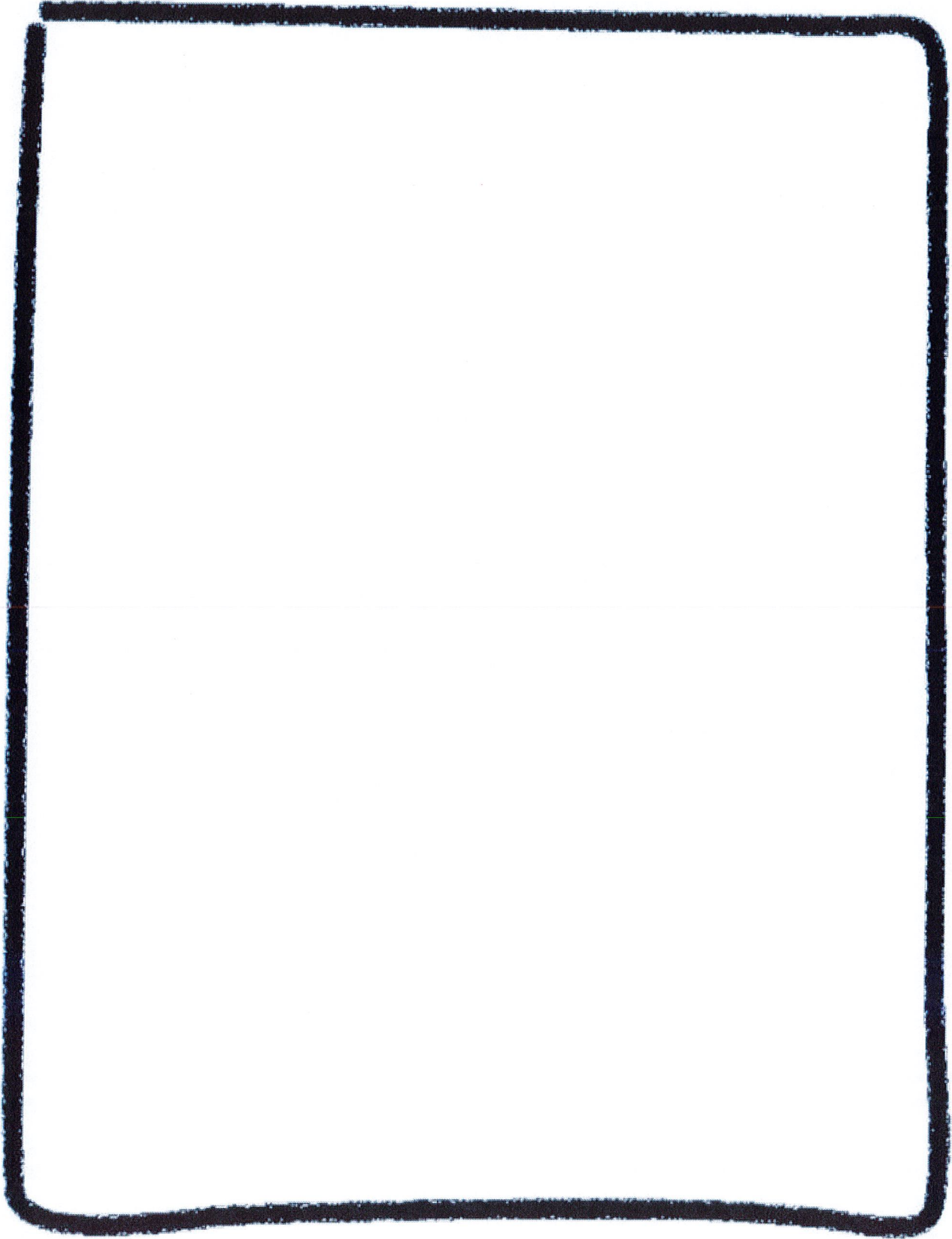
I think about this. Then I say, “Well, I like licking my paws! I like **winding** around people’s feet so that they trip. And I love drinking milk.”

“I’ve got it!” Maxwell cries. “It sounds like you have spent too much time being a dog. Why don’t you try being ... a cat!”



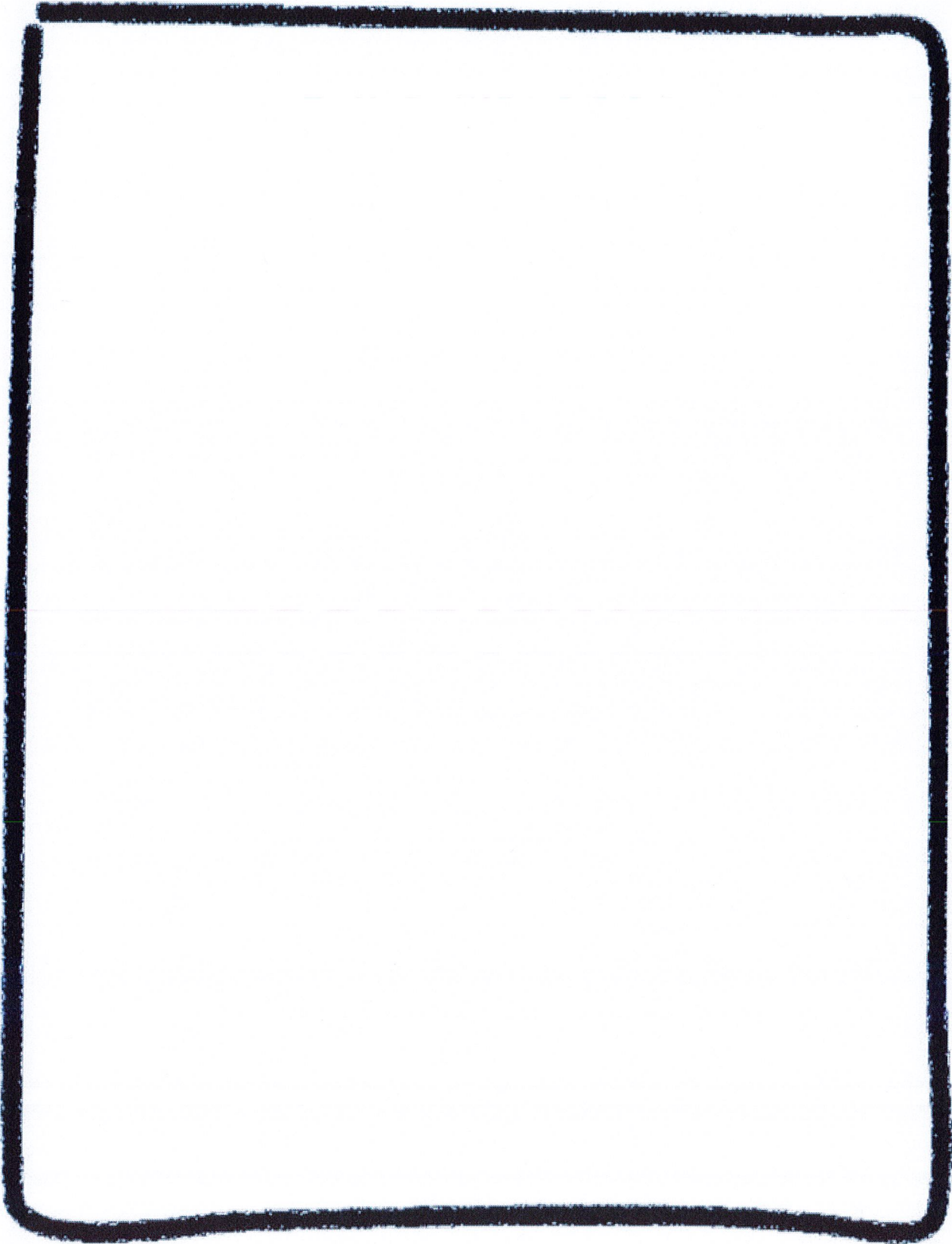


Draw the characters in the story.



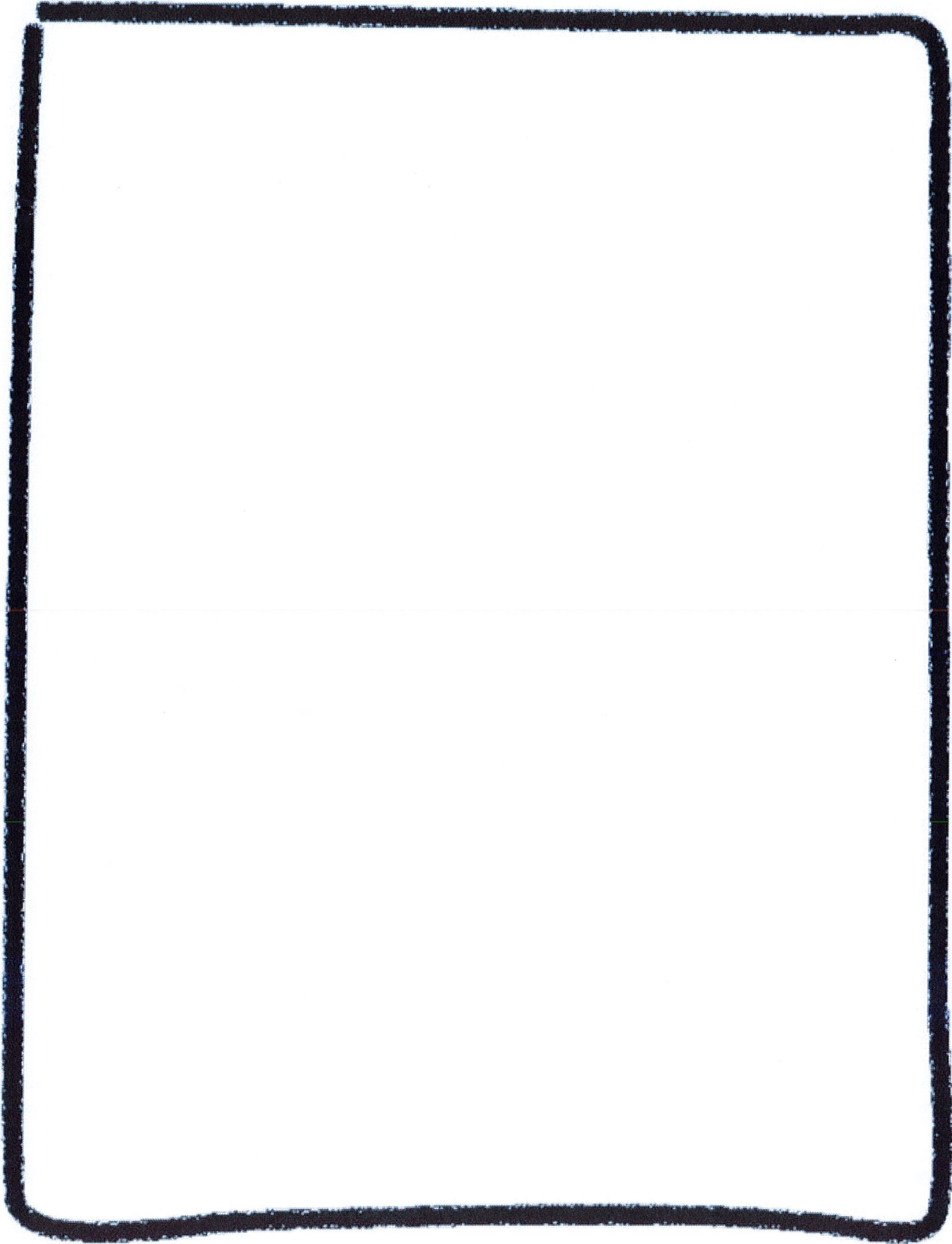


**Draw or Write: Where are the characters?**





**Draw or Write: What are the characters doing?**

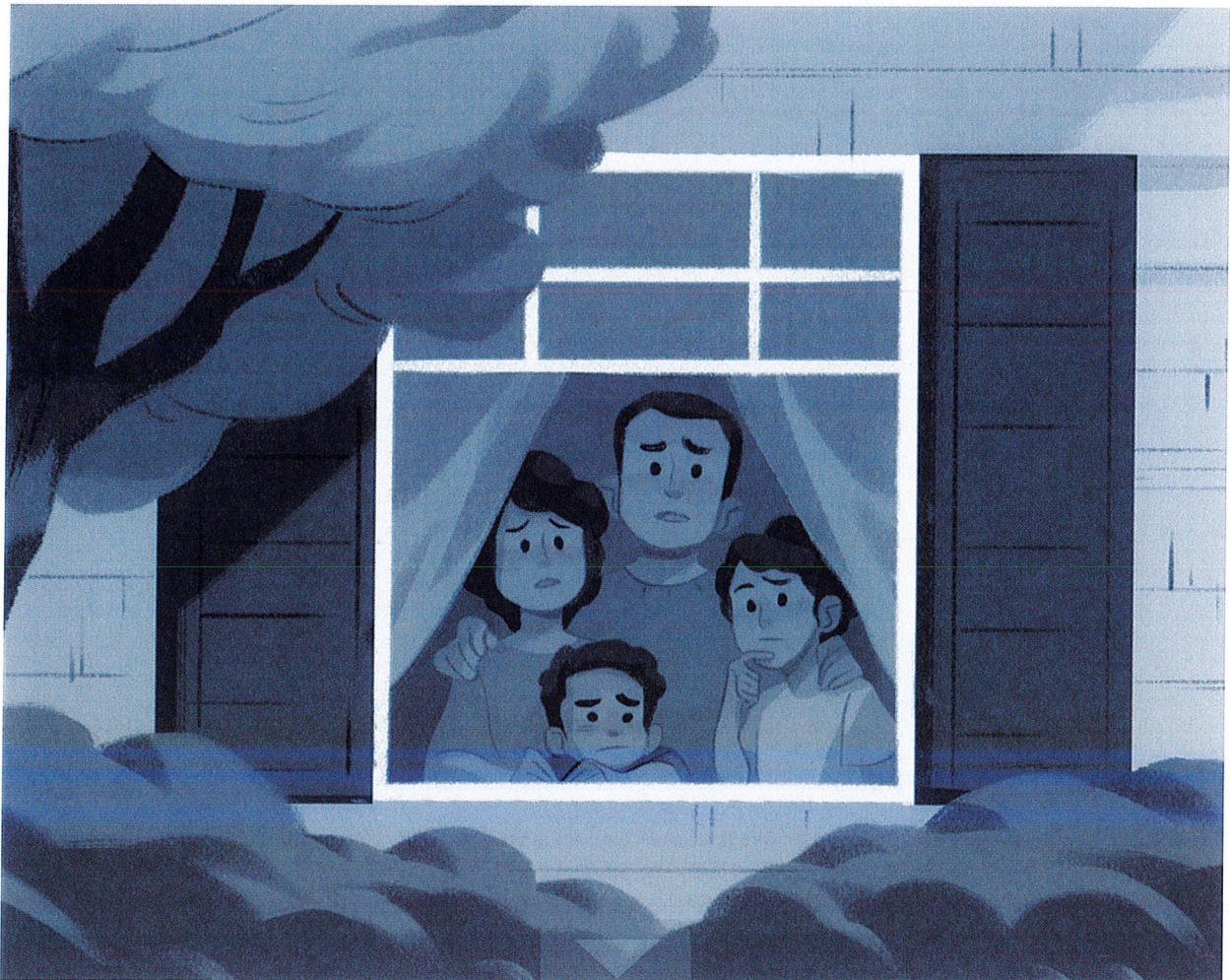






The Picklebottoms have a problem.  
Something is wrong with their dog, Elvis.

They are watching him from the window.  
What is Elvis doing?





“Is he sick?” Penny Picklebottom asks.  
“He has been sleeping standing up. Why would he do that?”

“And why would he gallop around the yard?” Mr. Picklebottom asks.

“And why steal my best blanket? Is he cold?” Mrs. Picklebottom adds.





Now everyone is quiet. They watch the dog. Elvis prances through the yard. He has thrown a blanket over his back.

Elvis shakes his head every few steps. His hair blows in the wind. Then he jumps over a low tree branch.







“What does that dog think he is doing?”

Mrs. Picklebottom wonders. “Last week, he tried to sit in my lap like a cat. But now what? Dogs don’t prance. They don’t wear blankets.”

Mrs. Picklebottom is right. Elvis is acting strange. He is not acting like a dog at all!





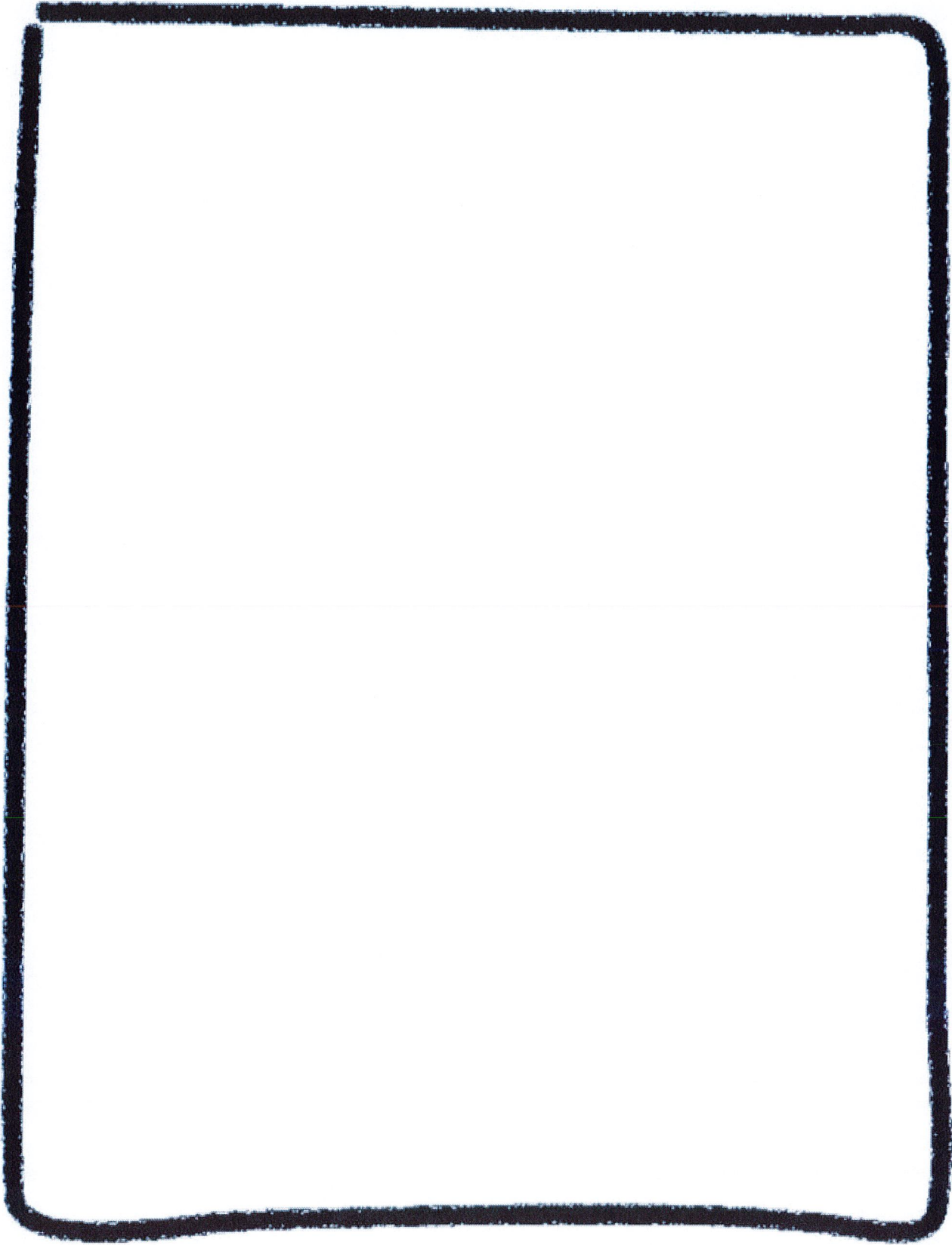
Elvis runs inside. He dashes under Penny's legs. Then he stands up. Penny is sitting on Elvis's back!

Penny's eyes open wide. "He's a horse!" Then she yells, "Giddy-up, Elvis! Let's ride!" And into the garden they go.



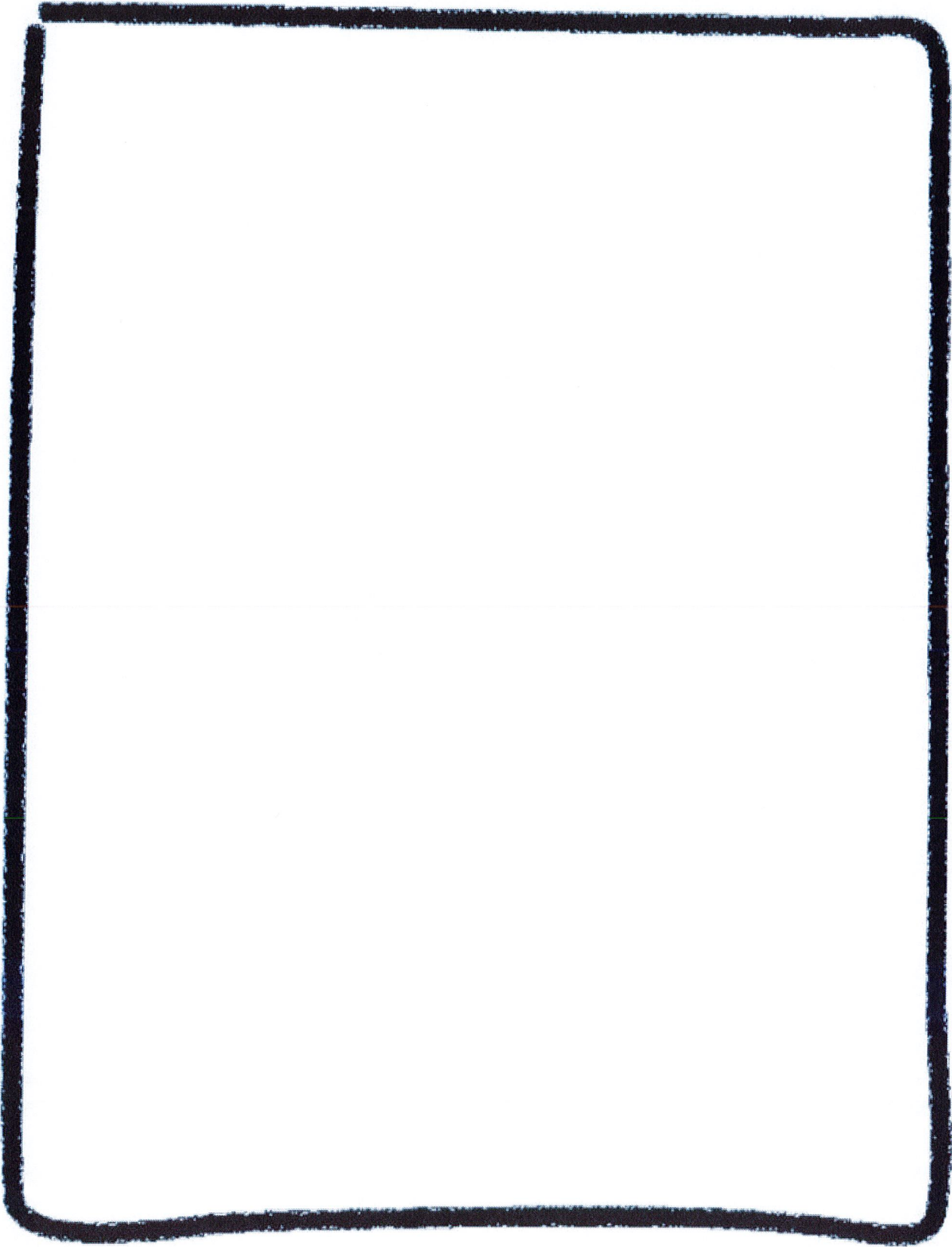


**Draw the characters in the story.**



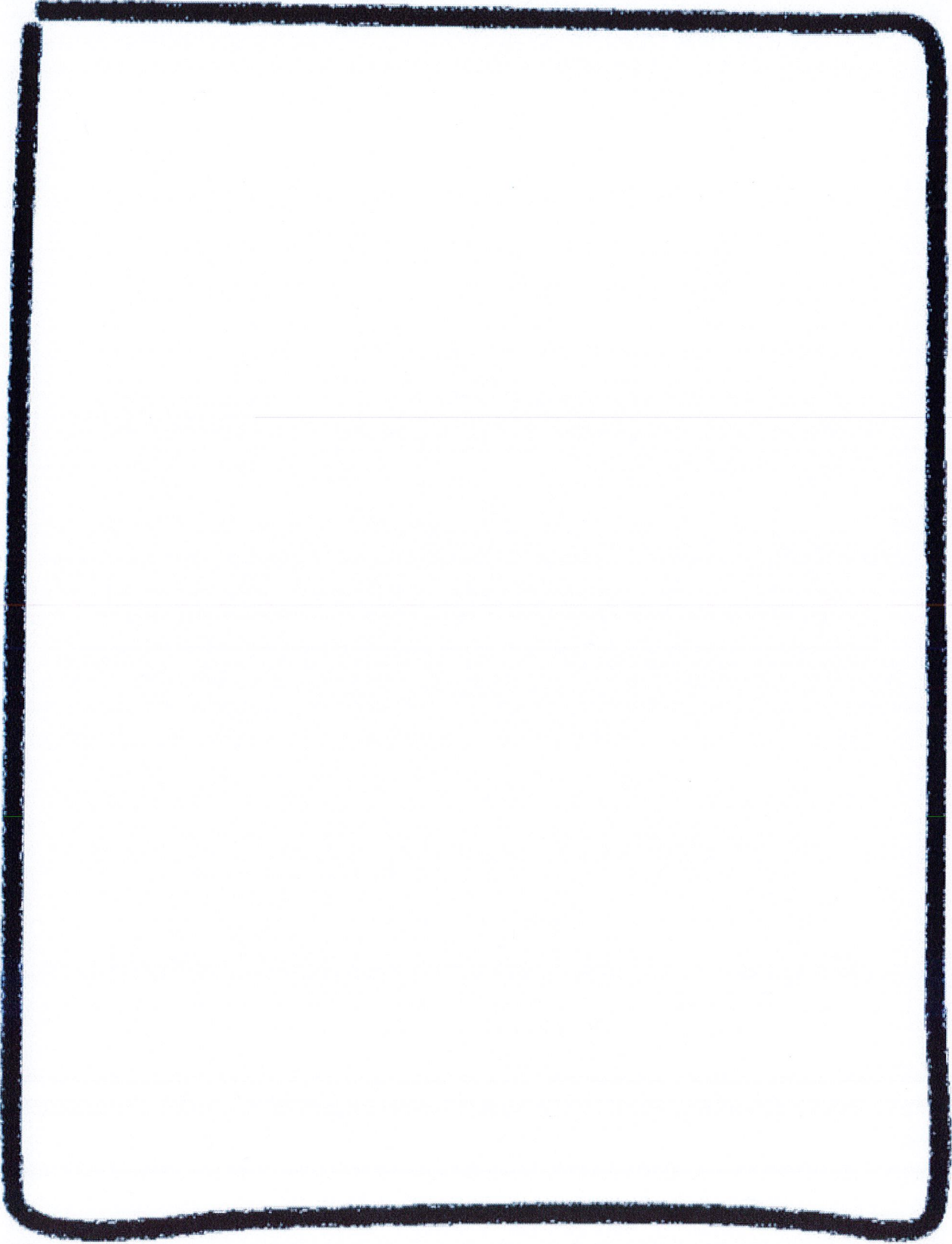


Draw or Write: Where are the characters?



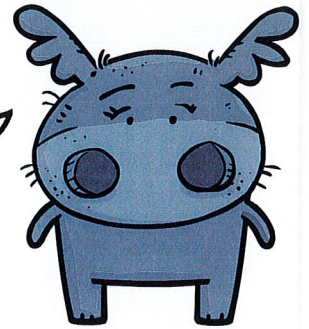


**Draw or Write: What are the characters doing?**



# Asking Questions

A **key detail** is an important piece of information. Asking and answering questions can help you find key details.



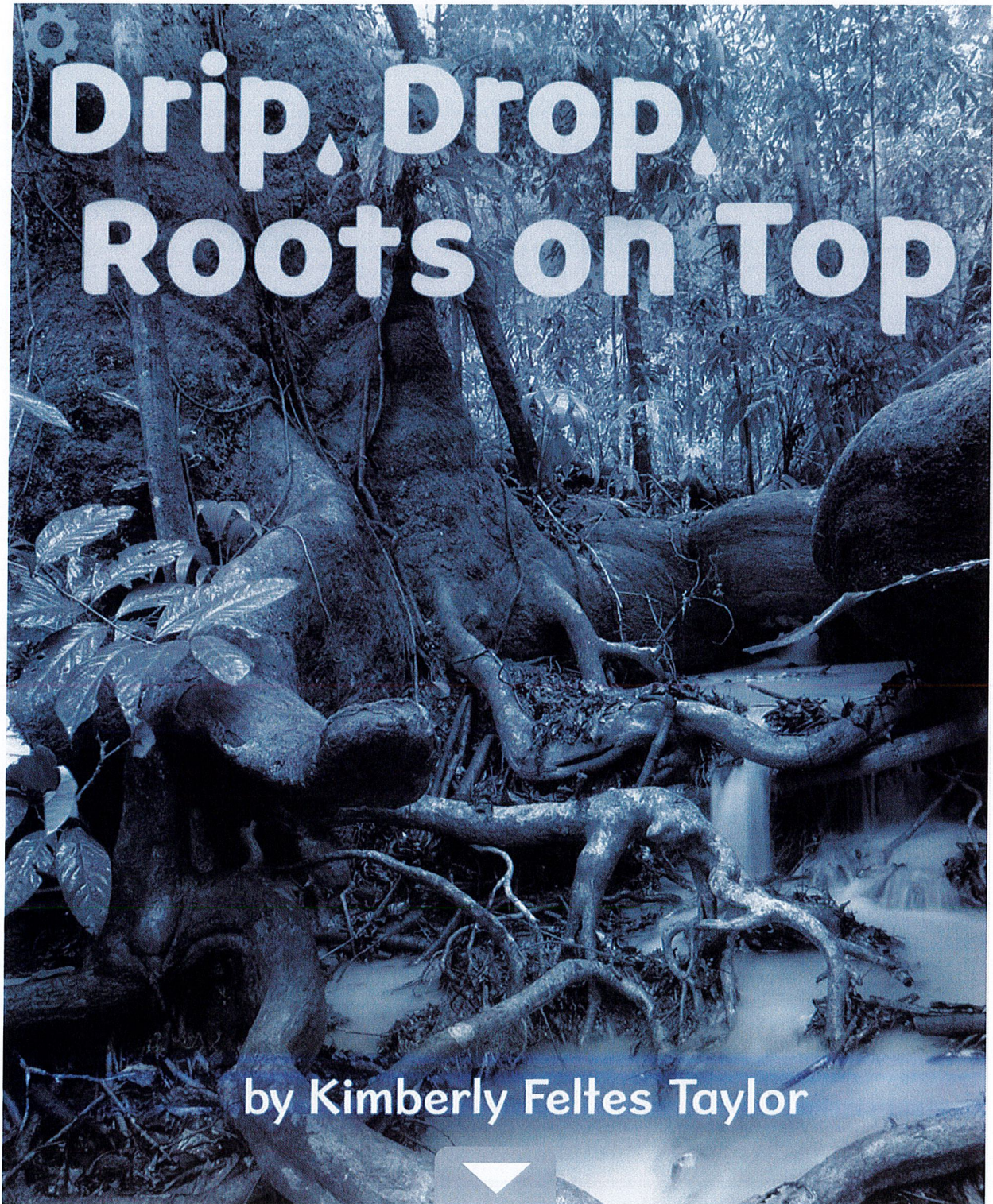
## Here is how you find key details:

- ▶ Ask a question. Begin the question with one of these words:

Who	What	When
Where	Why	How

- ▶ Look for the answer to your question. You can find it in the words or in the text features.

When you ask questions about what you read, answering your questions helps you understand the text.



# Drip, Drop, Roots on Top

by Kimberly Feltes Taylor





You are in a rainforest. The air is warm.  
Rain falls hard and fast. Soon, the rain stops.  
But the air still feels wet. Will it rain again? Yes,  
it will. This is life in the rainforest.



A rainy day in a rainforest







## Drip Tips and Raincoats

Have you ever been **soaked** by the rain? Your clothes get wet. You need to dry off!

Plants need to dry off, too. Plants can die if they get too much rain. Drip tips can help. A drip tip is a pointy end on a leaf. Rain drips off the pointy part. The leaf dries off.



Leaves with pointy drip tips





You can wear a raincoat to stay dry. Some plant leaves make a waxy coating. This coating is like a raincoat. It stops water from soaking into the leaf.

Splat, splat, splat! Rain falls. The drops roll across the smooth, shiny coating. They slip and slide off the leaf. The leaf dries off.



Raindrops rolling off a waxy coating





## Roots Get Food

Many plants have roots below the ground. The roots grow far down. They are hard to see.

The roots absorb, or soak up, food from the **soil**. The food is from dead plants and insects. The dead things fall apart and sink deep into the soil.



Roots below ground





In a rainforest, roots peek out of the dirt. Some roots even stay above the ground. Why?

Roots stay on or near the top because the food is there. Dead plants and bugs wash away before they can sink into the soil. Roots need to stay on top of the soil to absorb this food.



Roots above ground





Trees and plants live with a lot of rain in the rainforest. Plants stay dry with drip tips and waxy coatings. Roots soak up food before it washes away. Plants and trees **survive** in their rainy, rainforest home.



Plants and trees in a rainforest





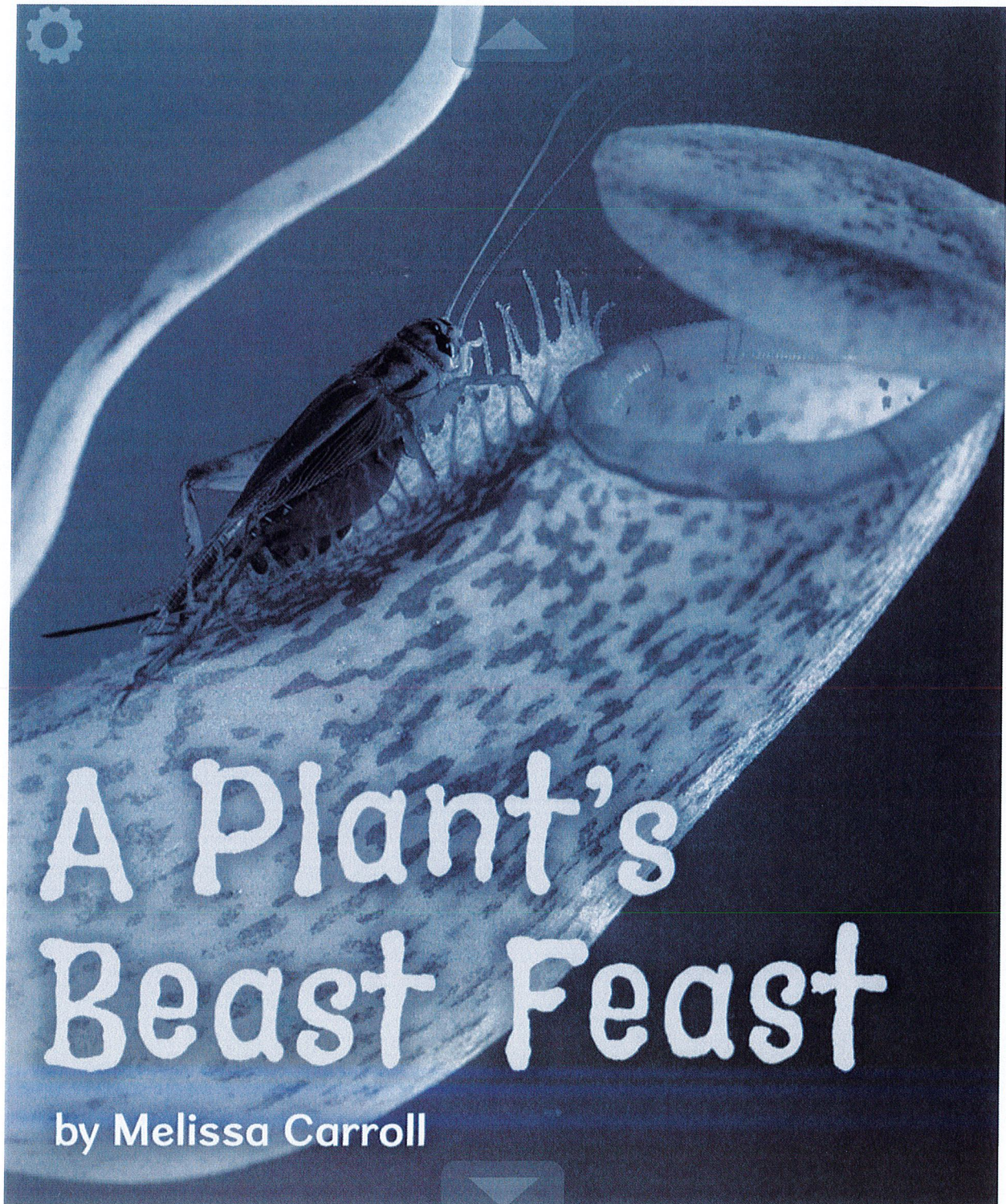
**Draw or Write: Where does the story take place?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick, dark, hand-drawn border. The box is intended for a student to draw or write their answer to the question above.



**Draw or Write: What is the story about?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick, dark, hand-drawn border. The box is intended for drawing or writing a story.



# A Plant's Beast Feast

by Melissa Carroll





Many animals eat plants. And guess what? Some plants eat animals! The pitcher plant does this. It kills and eats bugs for food.

This plant lives in warm, rainy forests. It has a leaf that is shaped like a pitcher. The plant catches bugs in this special leaf.



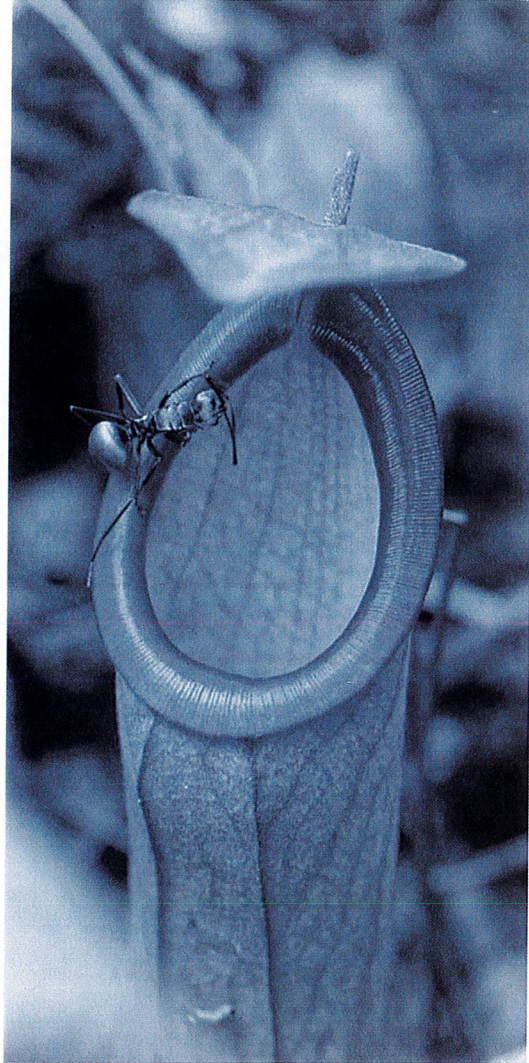
Colorful leaves with a pitcher shape





## Bringing in Bugs

Pitcher plants get bugs to come to them. The plants can be orange, pink, or red. Bugs like bright colors. They go to the plants because these colors **attract** them.

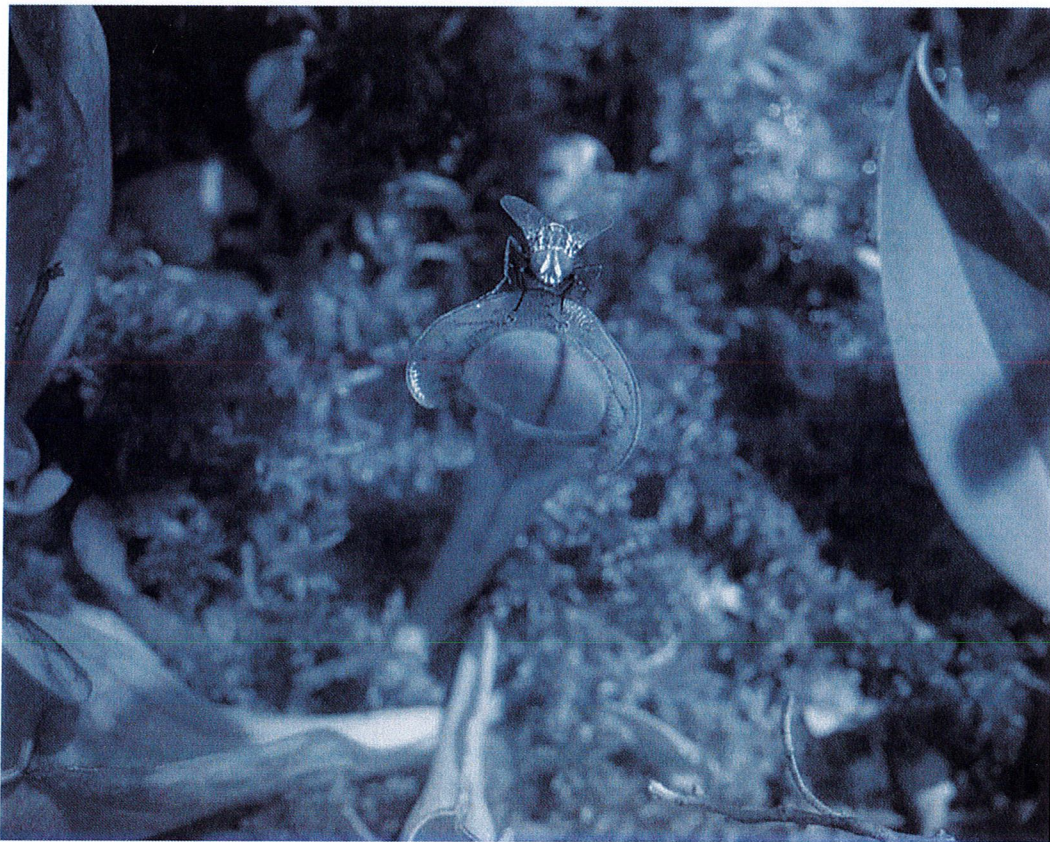


Ant on a bright plant





Some pitcher plants are dark green or brown. These plants have a different way to bring in bugs. The plants have a smell. Bugs follow the smell. They go to the plant.



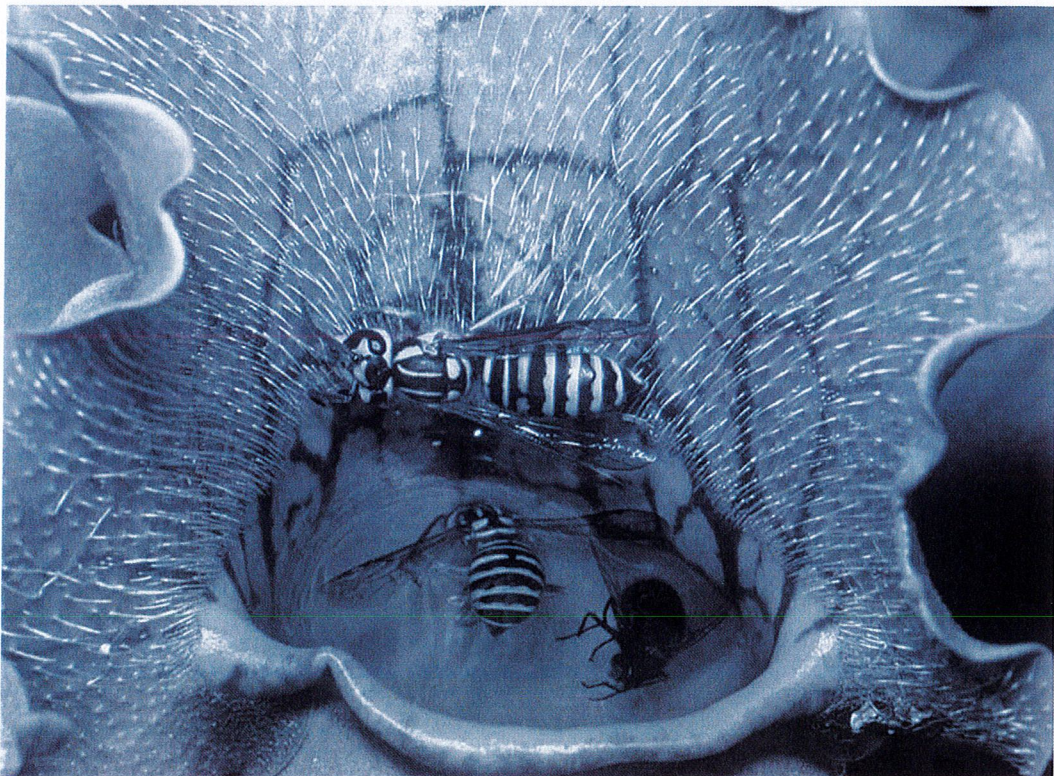
Fly on a smelly pitcher plant





## Eating Bugs

The bug lands on the plant. Pitcher plants have a special outside. The bug cannot hold on tight. It goes down inside the plant.

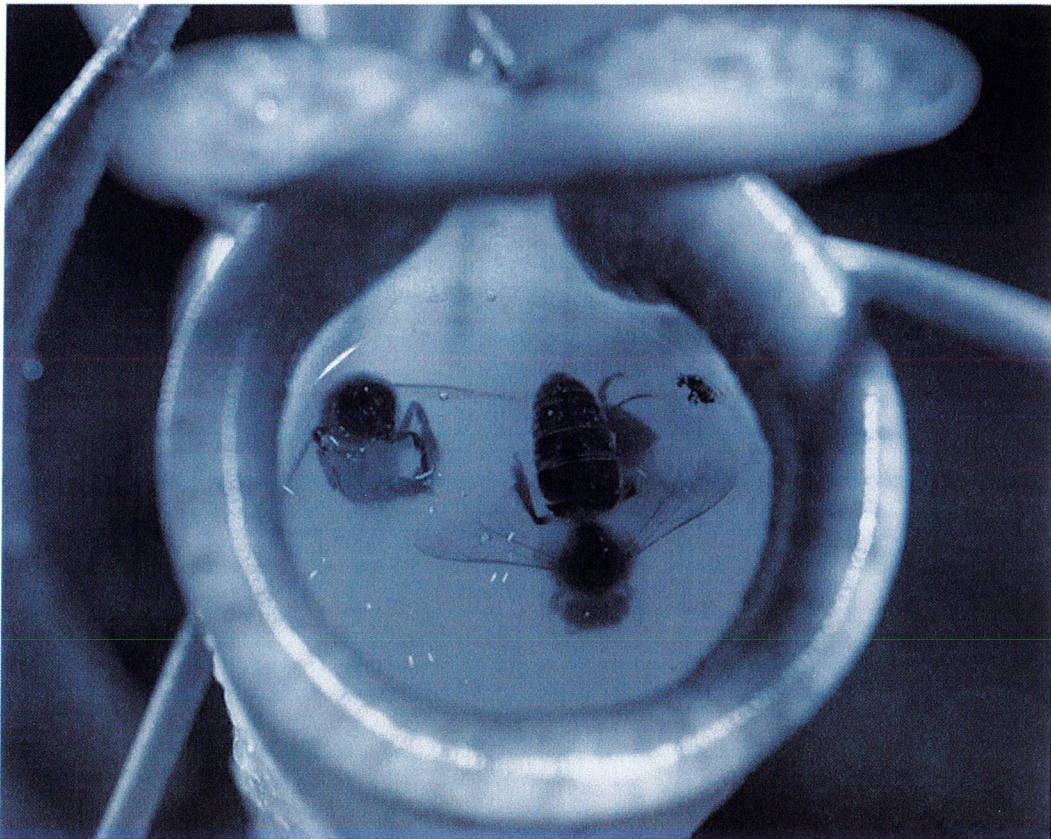


Bug slipping into a pitcher plant





The plant is wet inside. It is so wet that the bug falls apart. It breaks into little bits. The plant takes in these parts of the bug. That is how a pitcher plant eats a bug.



Bugs in the wet inside of a pitcher plant





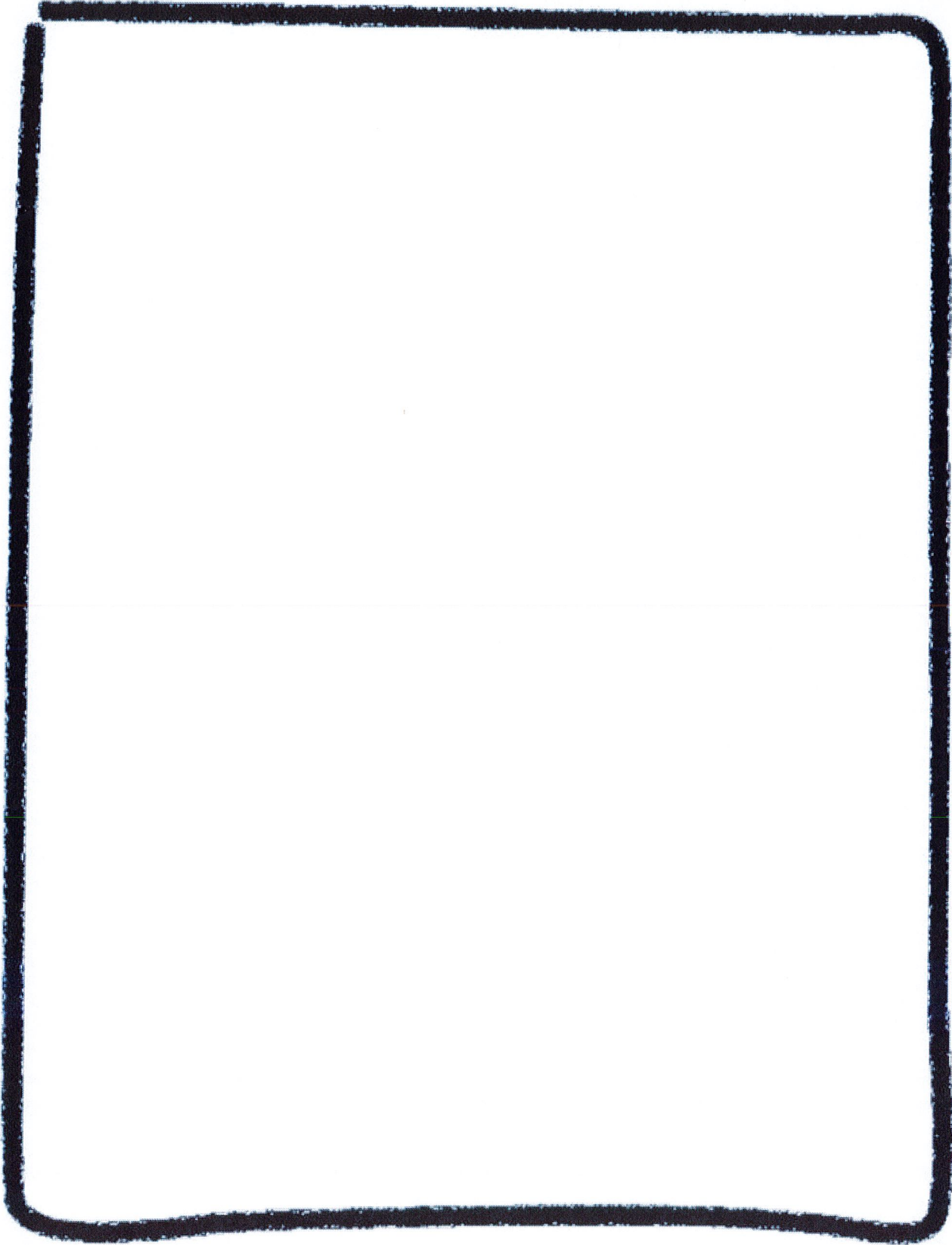
A mouse or a frog can fall into a pitcher plant, too. The plant eats the animal, just like it eats a bug. A pitcher plant is always ready for its next meal.



Frog in a pitcher plant

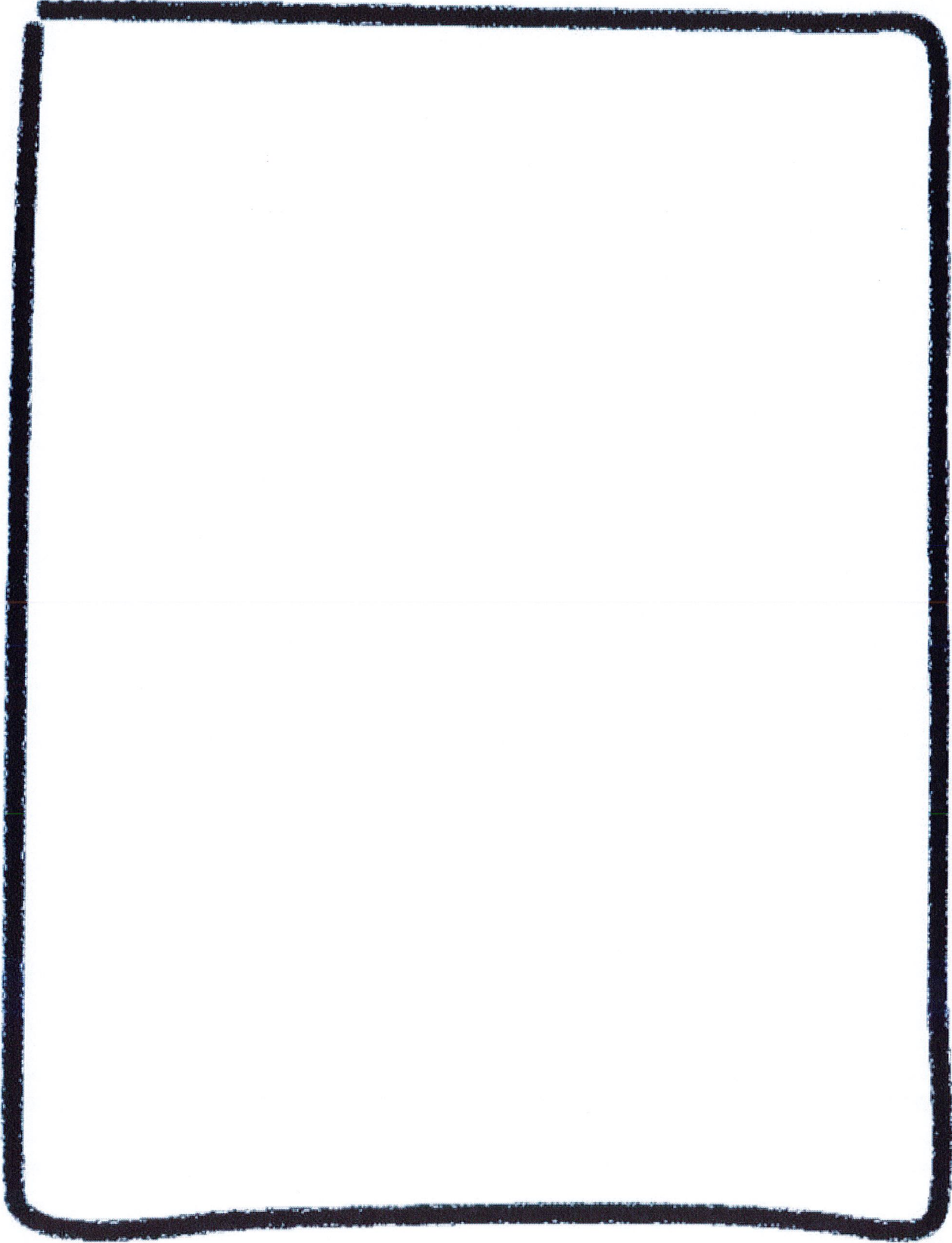


 **Draw or Write: Where does the story take place?**





**Draw or Write: What is the story about?**







# Greedy Fawn Makes the Mush

by Anna Nowak



Every day, Greedy Fawn ate chestnut mush.  
Only his mother knew how to make it.

She boiled water in her biggest **kettle**. She  
sprinkled in a bit of chestnut. She stirred the  
pot two times. The mush bubbled up.

Then Mother hit the pot with a stick. The  
mush dropped down. It was ready to eat.





One day, Greedy Fawn's parents were going for a walk. His mother said, "Greedy Fawn, do not make a fire while we are gone."

Then his parents left.





Greedy Fawn's stomach rumbled. He made a fire and boiled water. He sprinkled chestnut into the pot. Then he sprinkled in even more.

"More chestnut will be better," he said.





Greedy Fawn stirred the mush. He stirred it two times. Then he stirred it ten times.

“More stirring will be better,” he thought.

The mush boiled and grew. It flowed out of the pot, faster and faster. Soon Greedy Fawn was deep in mush!





Greedy Fawn jumped around, trying to get away from the mush. He jumped on a stick. The stick hit the pot. The mush stopped growing!

Greedy Fawn was so tired! He fell down into a heap of mush.





Greedy Fawn's parents returned. They helped him get out of the mush.

"Do you have enough mush now?" his mother asked.

"I don't want any of it," Greedy Fawn said.  
"There is too much mush. Now I know that more is not always better."

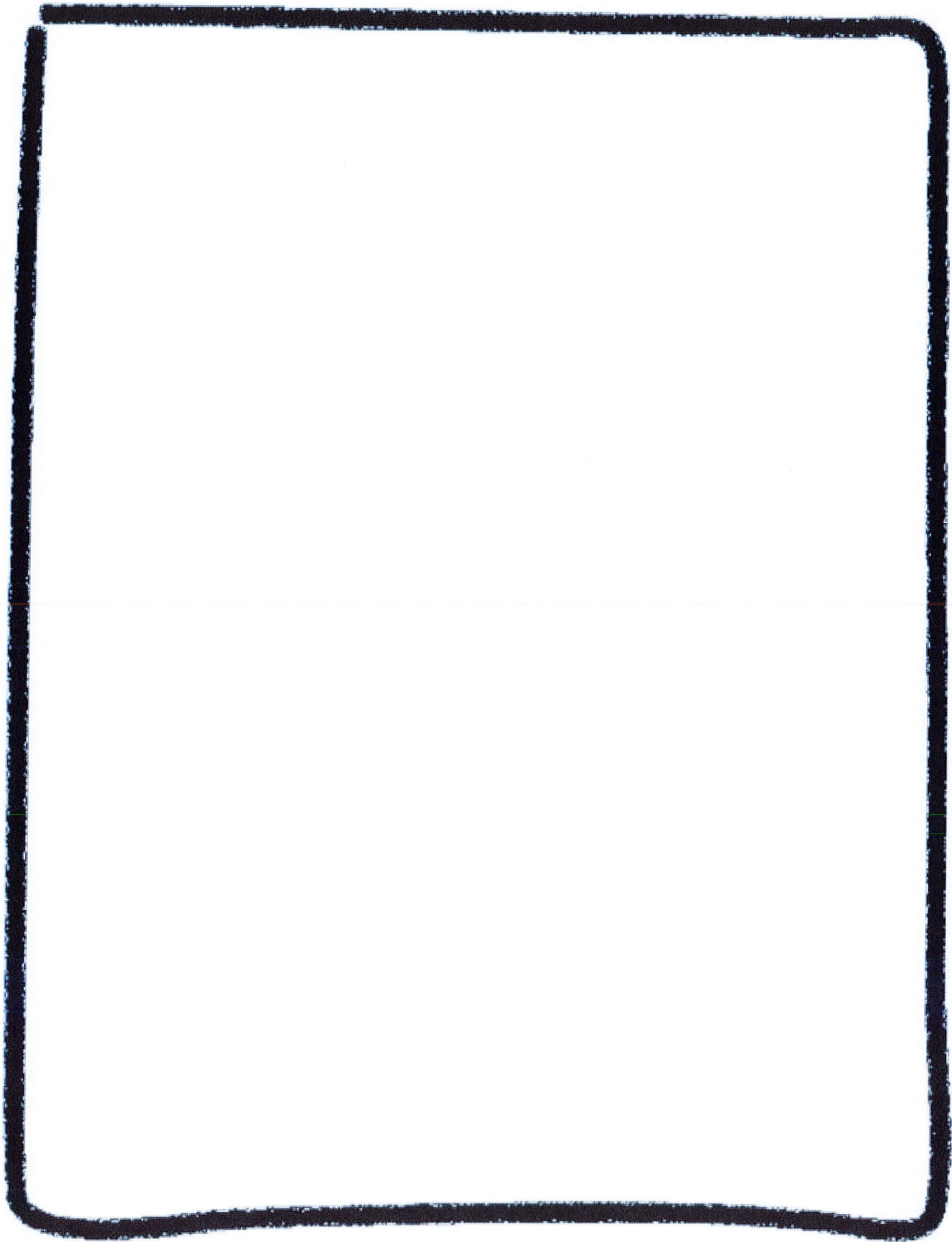


**Draw or Write: What happens at the beginning of the story?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick, hand-drawn black border. The box is intended for a student to draw or write the beginning of a story. The interior of the box is completely blank white space.



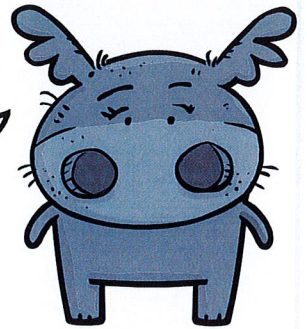
Draw or Write: What happens at the end of the story?



## Listen and Learn

# Describing Characters

A **character** is a person or lifelike animal in a story. You can learn about characters by thinking about what they say and do.



**Here are some questions you can ask about characters:**

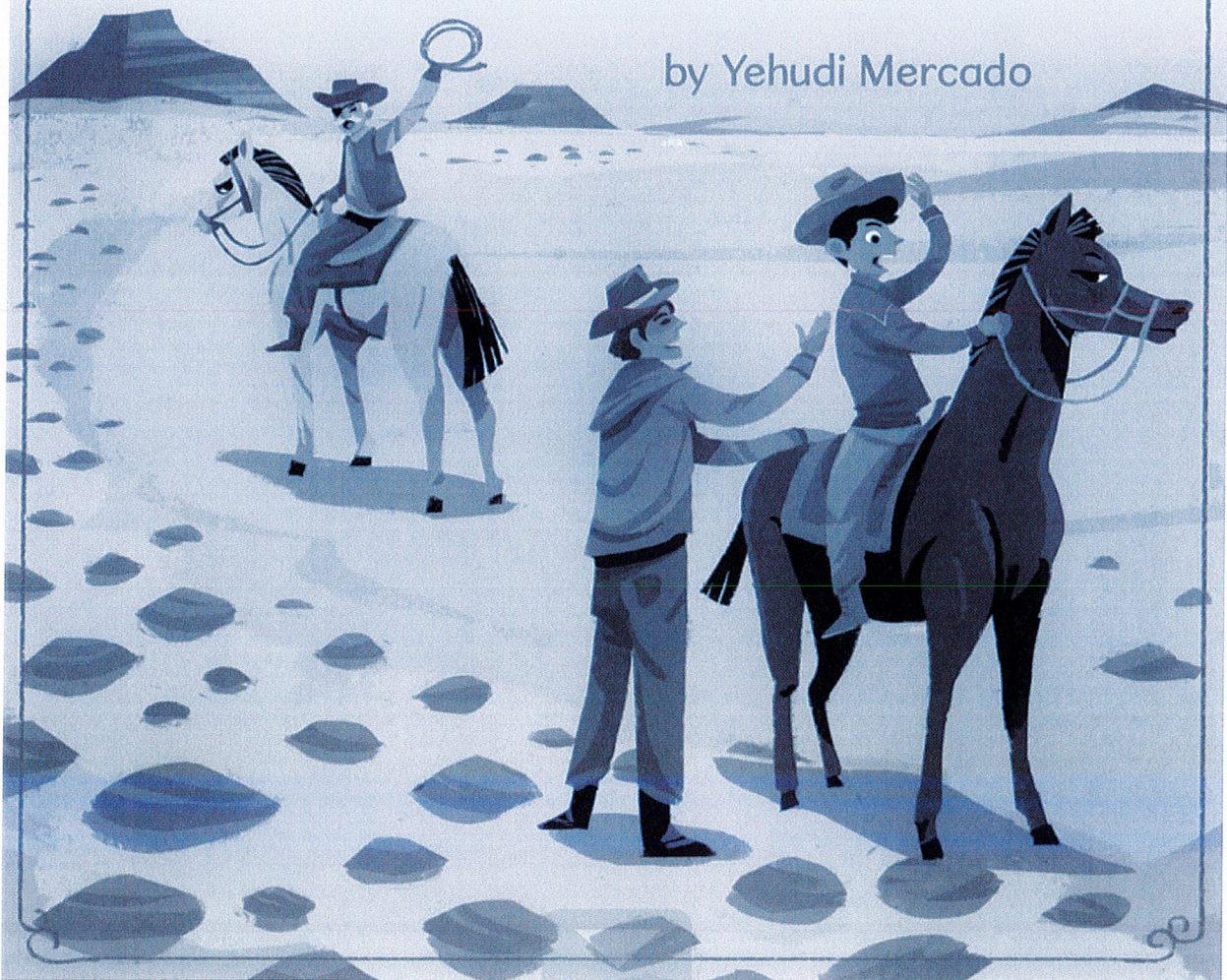
- ▶ What does the character say?
- ▶ What does the character do?
- ▶ How does the character feel?

Asking these questions helps us learn more about the characters.

# Cow Tales

## Are We There Yet?

by Yehudi Mercado





“Are we there yet?” a voice shouts. The voice is coming from the back of the herd of cows.

Cowboys are leading five hundred cows along a rocky trail. They have been traveling on the path for weeks. But they still have a long way to go.





“Who said that?” the trail boss yells. He yanks on the reins to stop his horse. He glares at his team with one angry eye.

The other cowboys are afraid of the trail boss. They stay quiet.





A cowboy named Wayne looks over at the young cowboy who was shouting. Wayne has been herding cows his whole life. He often helps new cowboys.

And the young cowboy surely needs help. He is sliding off his saddle. He looks like he is riding a horse for the first time.





“Hey, new kid. What is your name?” Wayne asks. Then he fixes the young cowboy’s saddle.

“My name is Jelly,” the young cowboy says. He tries to drink from his **canteen**. Water splashes his face.

“Well listen, Jelly. The trail boss does not like when the cowboys ask questions. You want to know if we’re there yet? Just ask me. Don’t make a fuss.”





Wayne holds up a map.

“Wow! Where did you get that map?” Jelly asks.

“It’s Zeb’s map,” says Wayne. He points at a cowboy behind him.

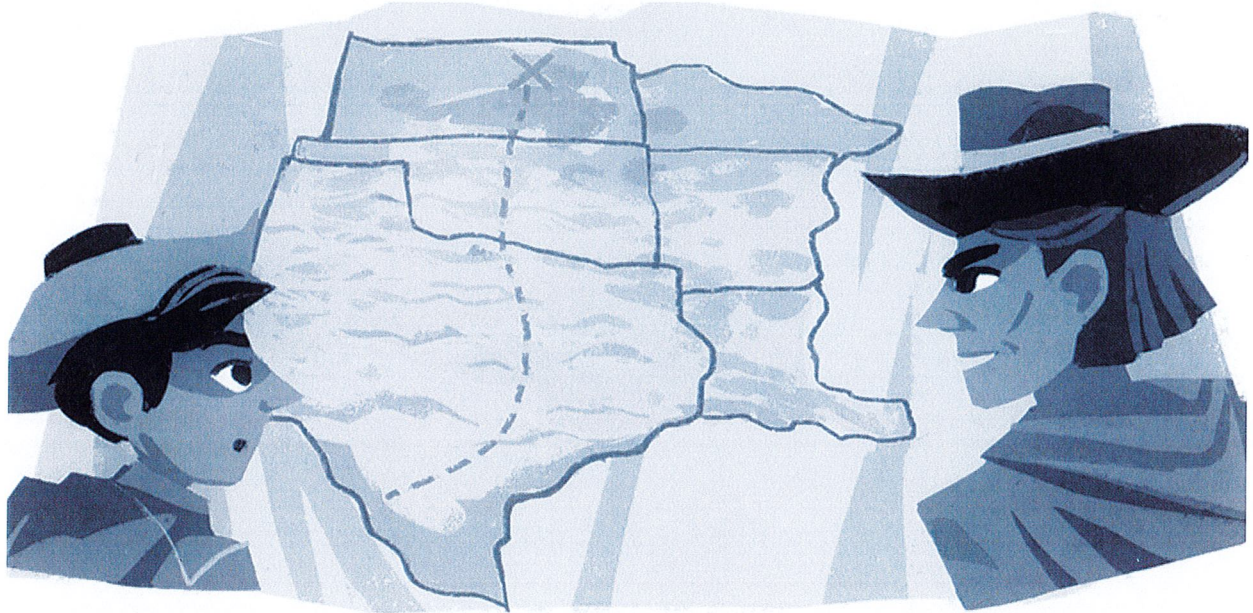
“Hello! I’m Zeb!” the cowboy says. He is pulling a cart full of maps.







Wayne shows Jelly the map.



“We will follow this trail for hundreds of miles,” Wayne says. “We must cross mountains, keep our cows safe, AND end the trip by winter. So please stop asking that annoying question!”

“What question?” asks Jelly.

“ARE WE THERE YET!” shouts Wayne.





“Quiet!” the trail boss yells. He glares at Wayne with one angry eye.

Jelly shrugs his shoulders. “So, we’re NOT there yet?” he asks Wayne.

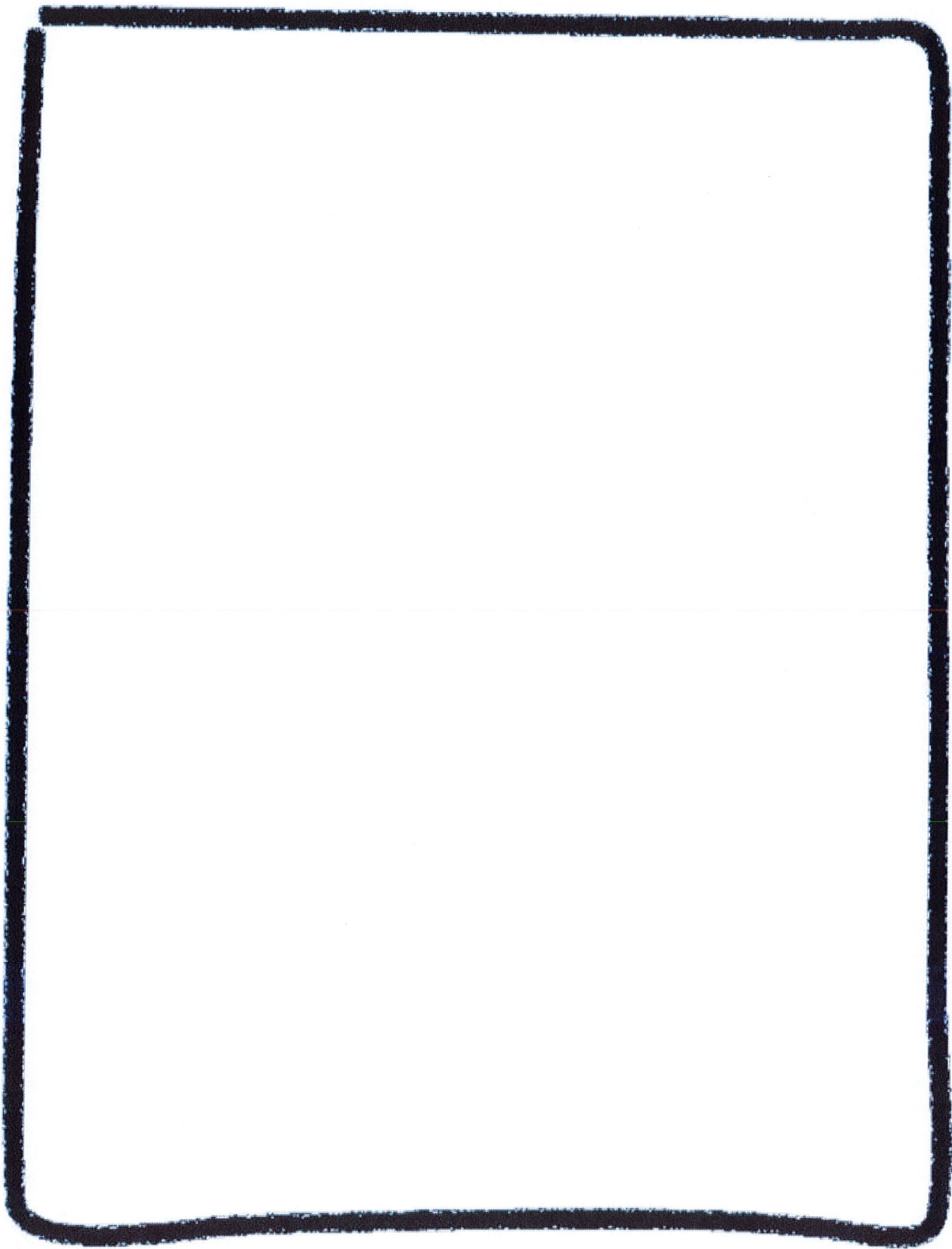
Wayne shakes his head. “No,” he says. “We are not even close.”

They continue on their rocky journey.



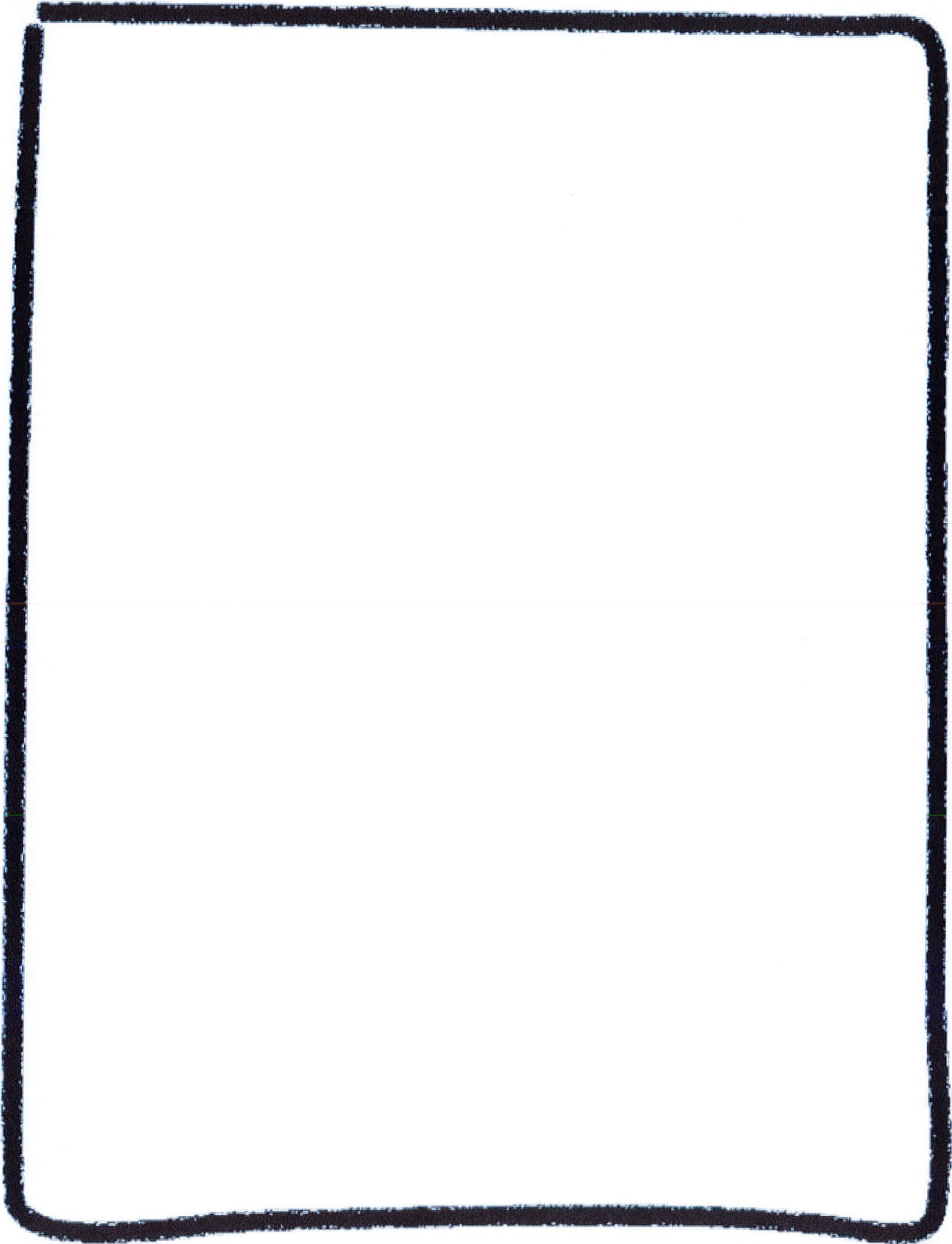


Draw the main character.





**Draw or Write: What are the characters doing?**



# Cow Tales

## King of the Trail

by Yehudi Mercado





Claire's hard feet slide on the rocks. She is so tired! She and the other cows have walked on the trail for weeks. They still have many, many miles to go.

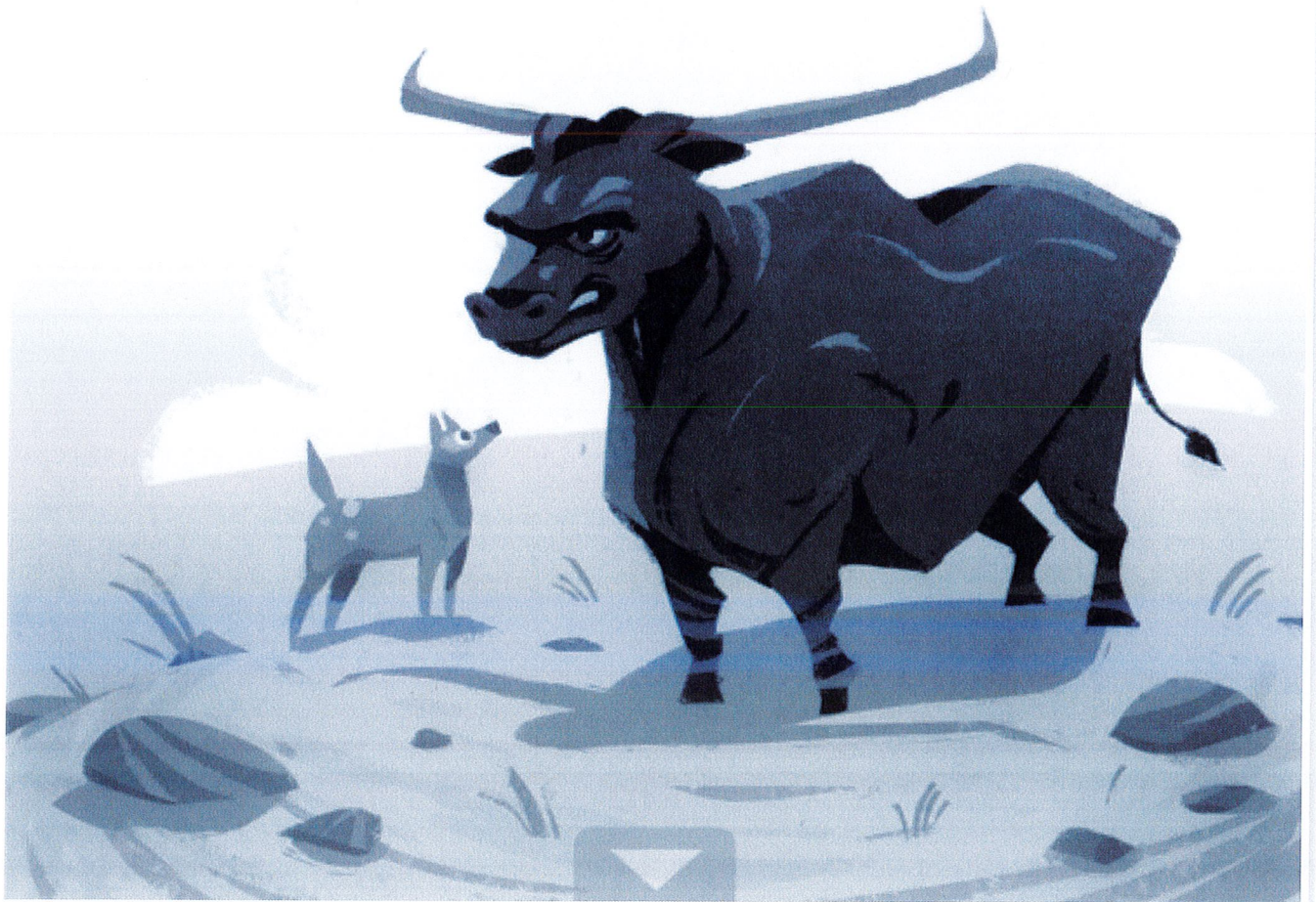
"No," Claire says. She sits.





A large bull stops. He is the leader of the cows. They call him the King.

A small dog named Lady stops next to the King. Her job is to keep the cows moving. “Why did we stop?” the dog asks.





The King says, “This cow stopped.”

“That’s Claire,” says Lady. “She does not listen. She does what she wants. She should start moving.”

The King stands next to Claire. He looks into her eyes. “You must move now.”

“No,” Claire says. “This trail is too long. The rocks hurt my feet.”







Just then, a map blows in the wind. Claire looks at the map. She points to the end of the trail. “Is that a field?” she asks.

“Yes. It is a field with sweet, soft grass,” the King says.

Claire thinks about the field. It would be nice to walk on that soft grass!





The King says more. “I have changed my mind, Claire. Don’t get up,” he says.

“Why not?” Claire asks. She seems mad.

“Why not?” Lady asks. She seems unhappy.

“We need to keep going.”





“You should stay, Claire,” says the King.  
“Then, I can have your grass and mine. Please sit longer.”

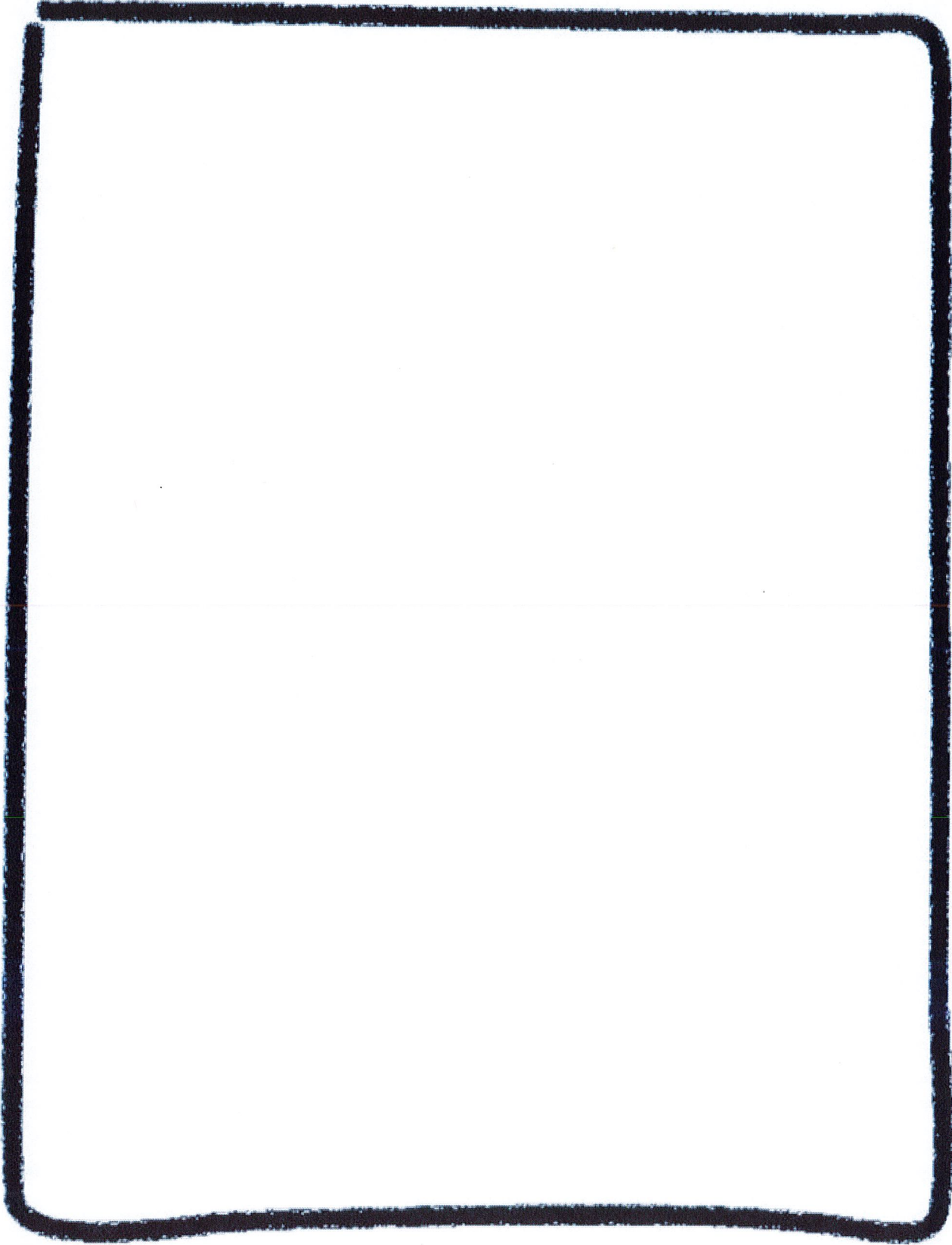
“No,” Claire says. She gets up. “My feet are rested now.”

The King smiles. Lady smiles. The cows keep going on their long trip.



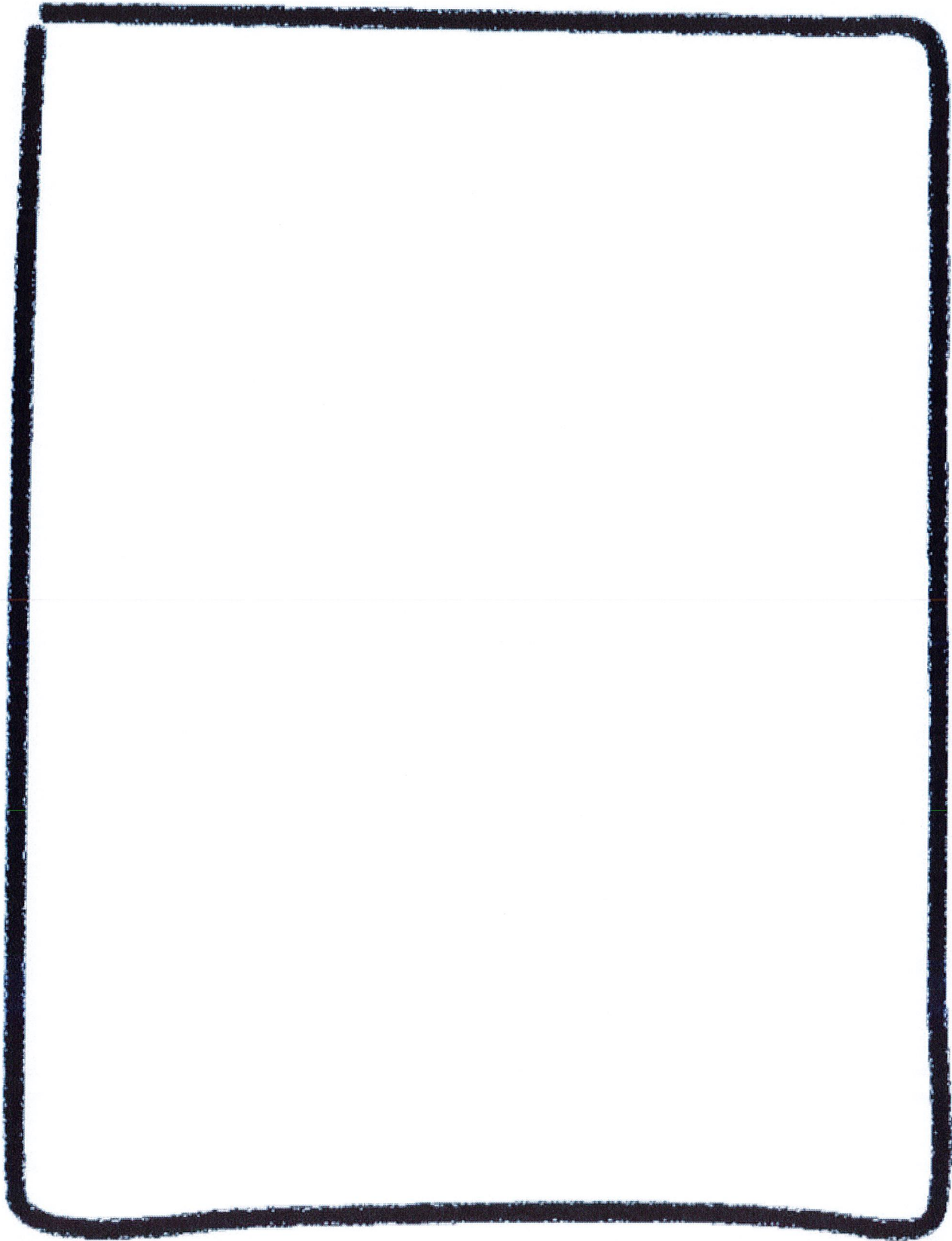


**Draw the main character.**



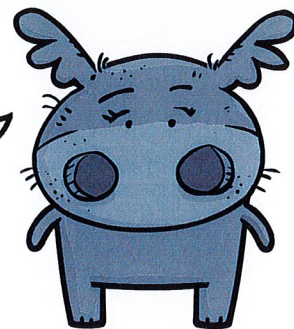


**Draw or Write: Where are the characters?**



# Describing Connections

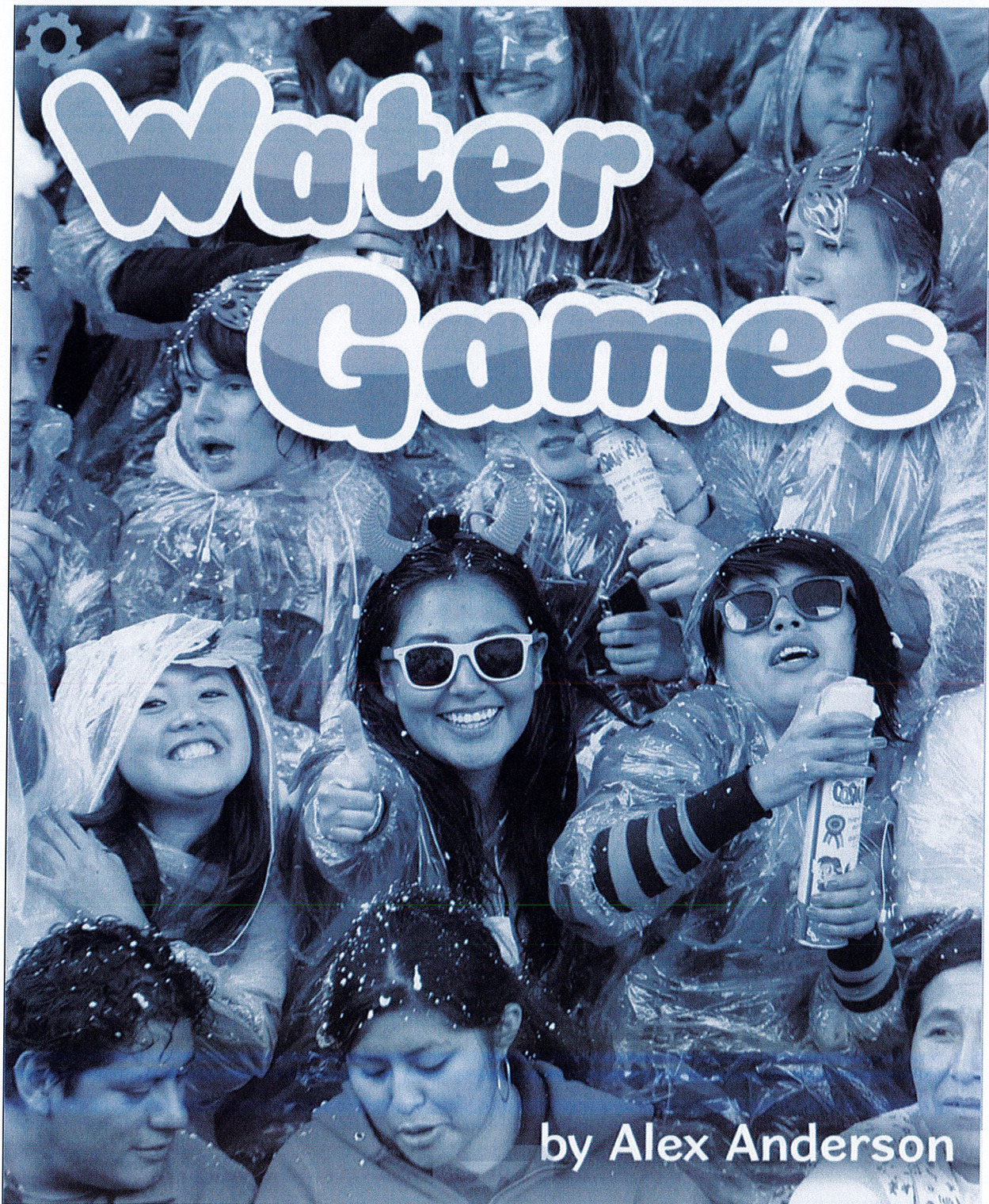
To **connect** means to fit together. Events and ideas in informational text can connect in different ways.



## Here are two kinds of connections:

- ▶ Events follow each other in time order:
  1. New leaves grow in spring.
  2. Flowers bloom in summer.
  
- ▶ One event or idea causes another:
  1. A lot of rain falls at once.
  - ▶
  2. Rivers rise and flood.

Describing connections between events and ideas helps you understand and remember key details.





## Water, Water Everywhere

It's Carnival!

These South Americans are having a water fight. Water balloons fly through the air. They splash when they hit people.

People spray water from hoses. It is hard to stay dry. Some people wear rain ponchos or use umbrellas.



The crowd sprays water.







## Watering the Earth

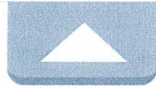
These South Americans cheered for water when they planted long ago. A planting festival began. People sang and danced. They thanked the earth for the food that grew.

People planted and watered seeds. They hoped for rain to help the seeds grow.



People watered the earth at planting festivals.





## Party Time

Water was a big part of the planting festival. Later, people started new traditions based on the planting festival. What was at the center of these traditions? Water!



Splashing people with water is a new tradition.





Some of these new traditions are part of Carnival. South Americans dress up in colorful costumes and masks. They march in parades. They play cheerful music.

Many people dance and sing. And what about the water? People play water games at Carnival, too.



People wear colorful costumes during Carnival.





## More Than Water

Water games are a fun part of Carnival. But the games have changed over time. Now there is more than water. People spray colored foam. They throw flour or paints into crowds. And the next day, they do it all over again!



Lots of people spray foam instead of water.



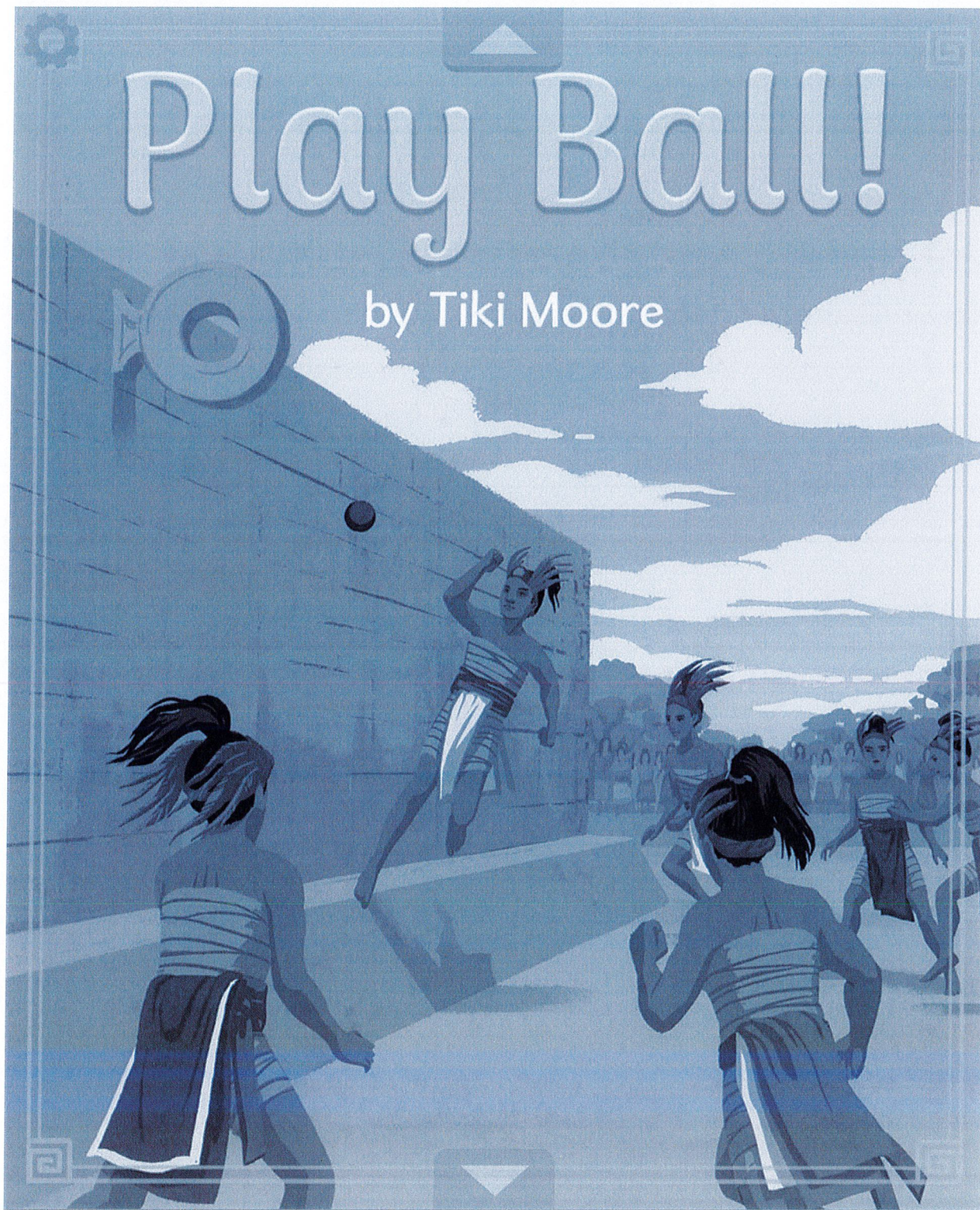


**Draw or Write: What is the story about?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick, dark, hand-drawn border. The box is intended for drawing or writing a response to the question above it.

# Play Ball!

by Tiki Moore





## A Very Old Game

Long ago, people in Mexico and Central America liked exciting ball games. They made up a ball game thousands of years ago. It was called Pok-ta-Pok. It was a little like basketball and a little like soccer.

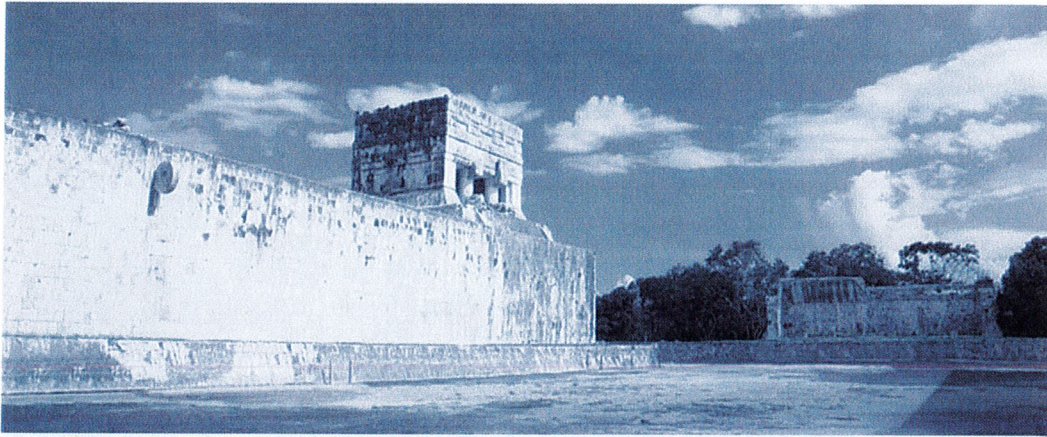


A game of Pok-ta-Pok





Two teams played against each other. They played outside on a ball court. The court was shaped like the capital letter “I.” It had tall stone walls on each side.



Two very old Pok-ta-Pok courts

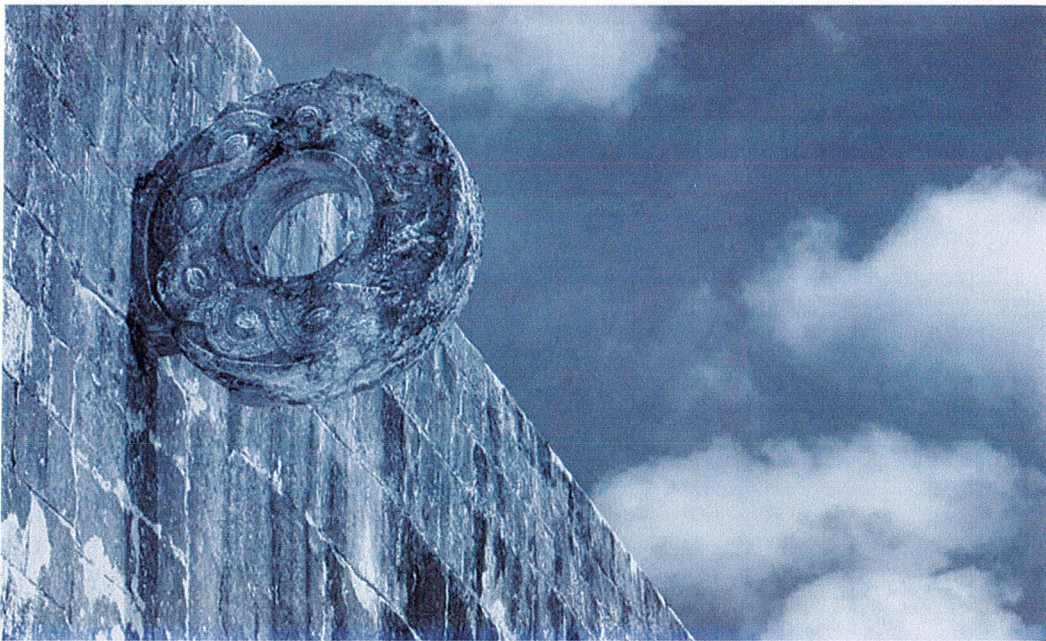






## A Heavy Ball and a High Hoop

Pok-ta-Pok was hard to play! The rubber ball was heavy. The court had two **hoops**, like a basketball court. But the hoops were made of stone. The hoop was 20 feet high. That is as tall as a giraffe!



A stone Pok-ta-Pok hoop





## No Hands or Feet

The rules also made Pok-ta-Pok hard to play. Players could not kick the ball. They could not throw the ball. So players needed other moves to get the ball in the hoop.

Players bumped the ball with their hips. They used their knees. They had to keep trying!

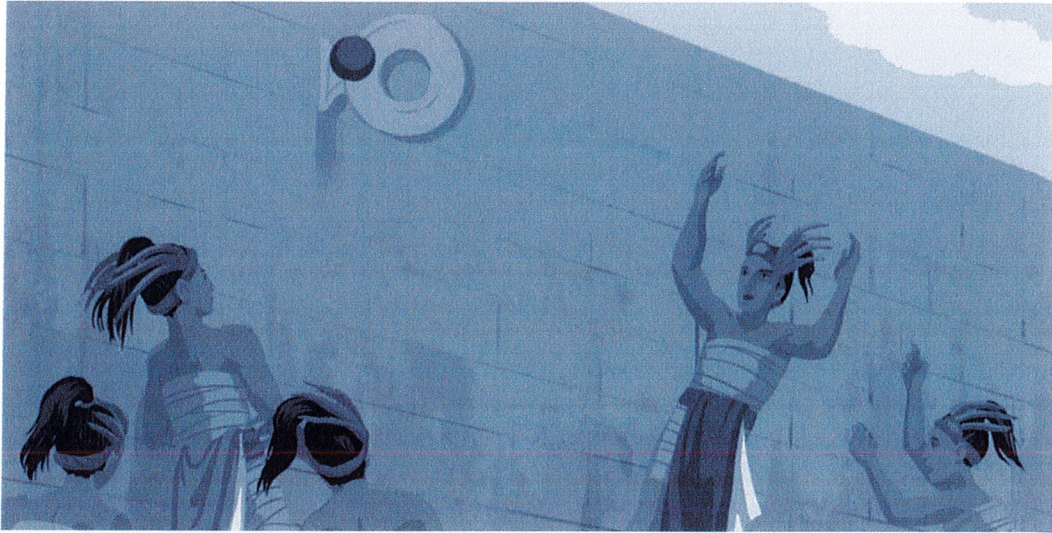


A player hitting the ball with his hip





The games were long. Some games lasted for days! The team that got the ball through the hoop the most times won.



A player happy to get the ball through the hoop

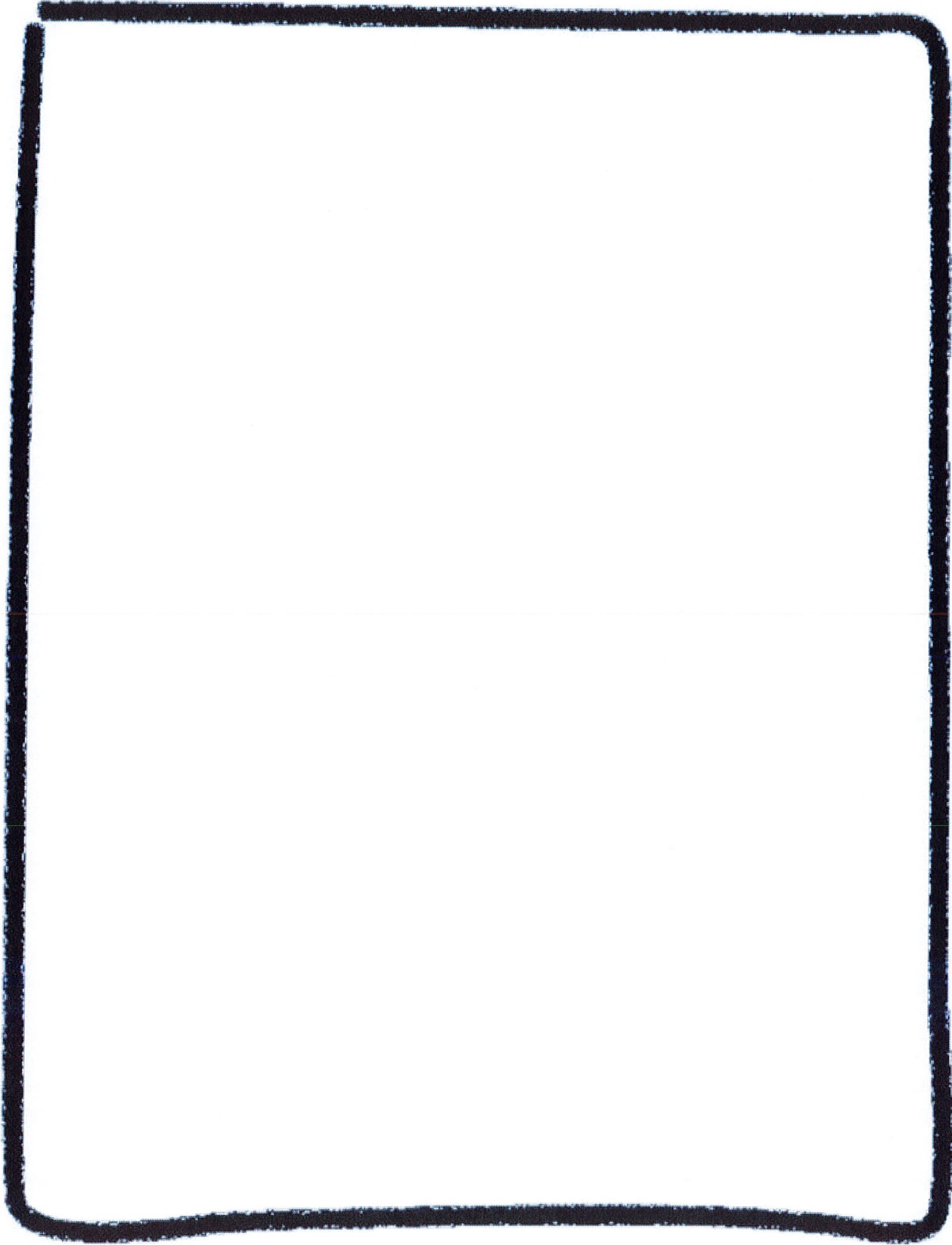




**Draw or Write: What is the story about?**

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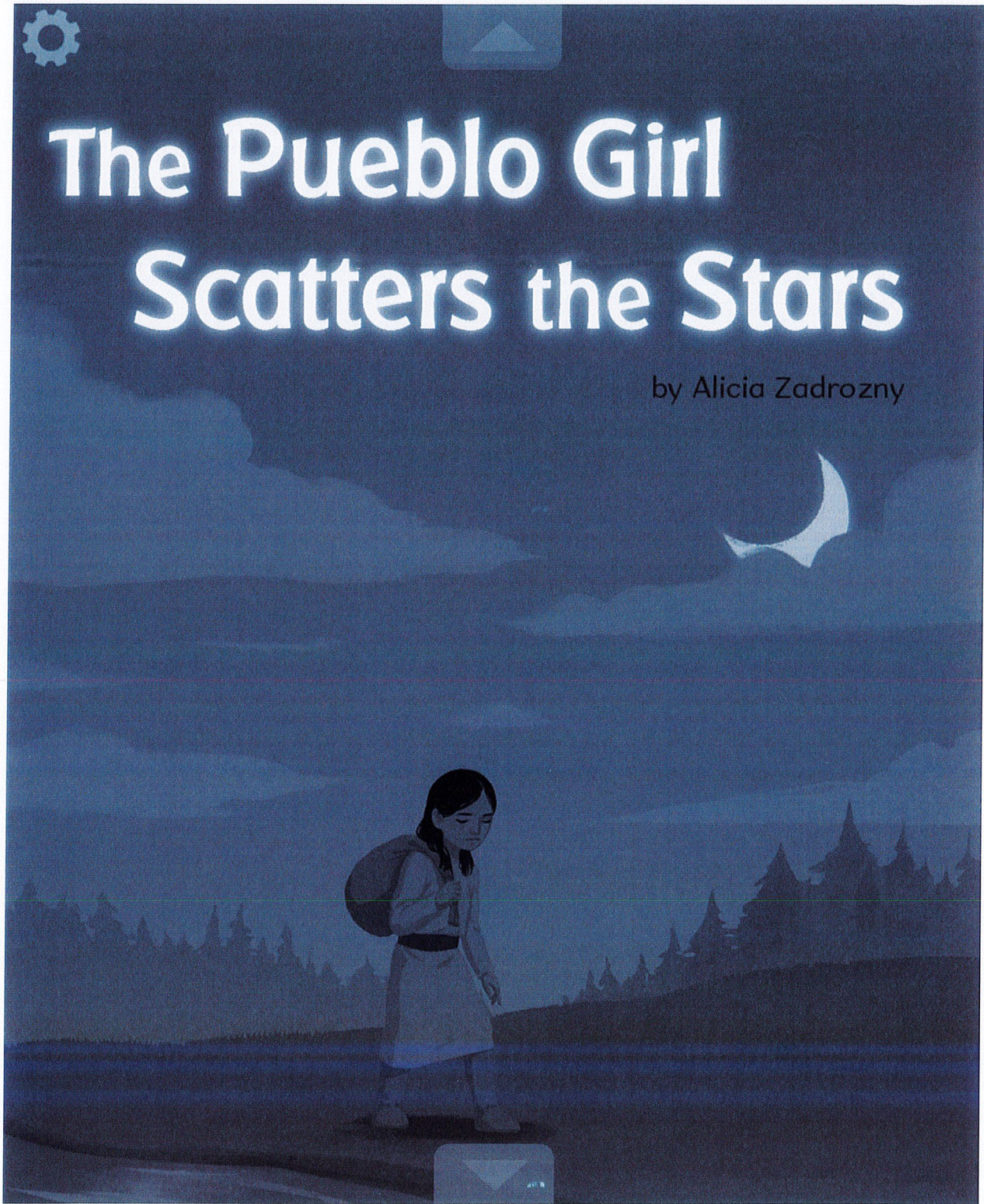
 Draw or Write: Where are the characters?

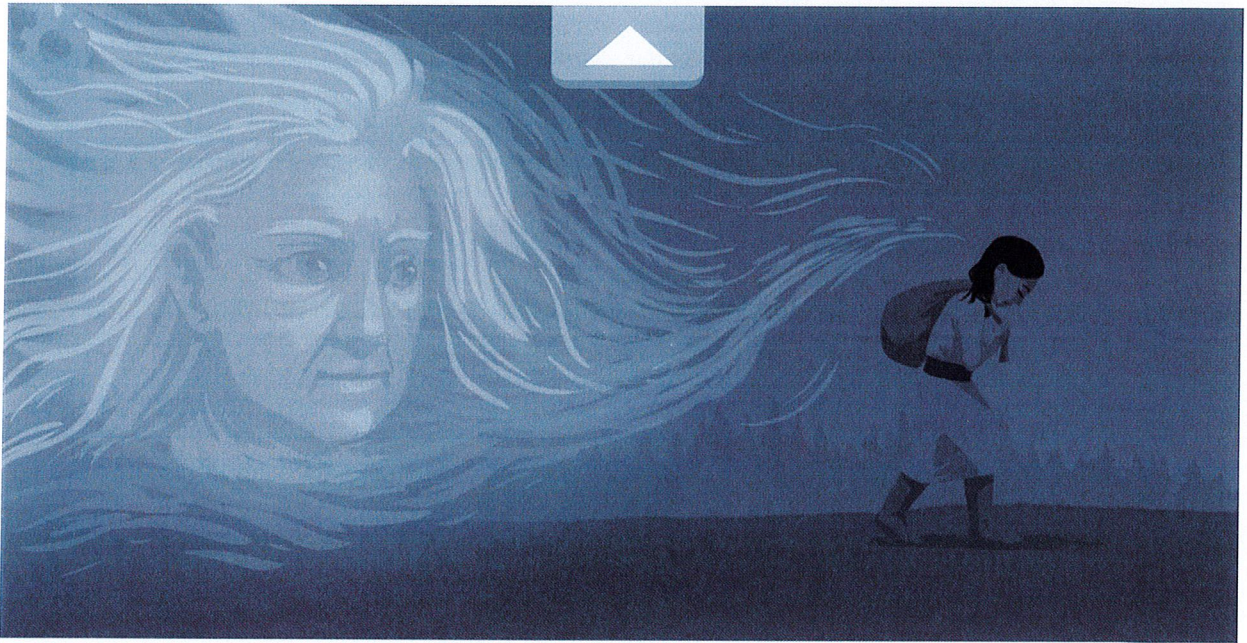




# The Pueblo Girl Scatters the Stars

by Alicia Zadrozny





The lost girl had been walking for hours.  
She moved her bag from shoulder to shoulder.

“It’s as heavy as a sack of corn,” she said.

“Take this bag,” the mother of all people  
had told her. “Do not open it. You will find your  
**tribe** by the great river. Give the bag to the  
elders. Then you will learn its secret.”





The girl walked for many days. Her feet ached. She missed her tribe. But mostly she thought about the bag.

One night, the girl sat by a stream. She held the bag in her lap.

“I know I’m not supposed to...” she whispered. Then she untied the bag anyway.







The girl opened the bag. Tiny objects rolled and scattered everywhere. Were they pebbles? Seeds? The girl didn't have time to find out. The tiny objects moved so fast!

“Oh, no!” the girl cried, as she chased the tiny, **mysterious** things. She grabbed a handful of them. The rest flew away into the sky. They lit up the night. They were stars!





The girl stuffed one handful of stars back into the bag. She kept walking.

All through that night, the girl thought about what she had done. She felt so much **shame**. Never once did she look up at the bright, twinkling lights.





Finally, the girl found her tribe at the river. She quickly gave the bag to an elder.

“This bag is from Our Mother,” she said. “I did not listen to her instructions. I lost so many stars.”

The elder was kind. He said, “You cannot ever lose the stars. They are always with us.”

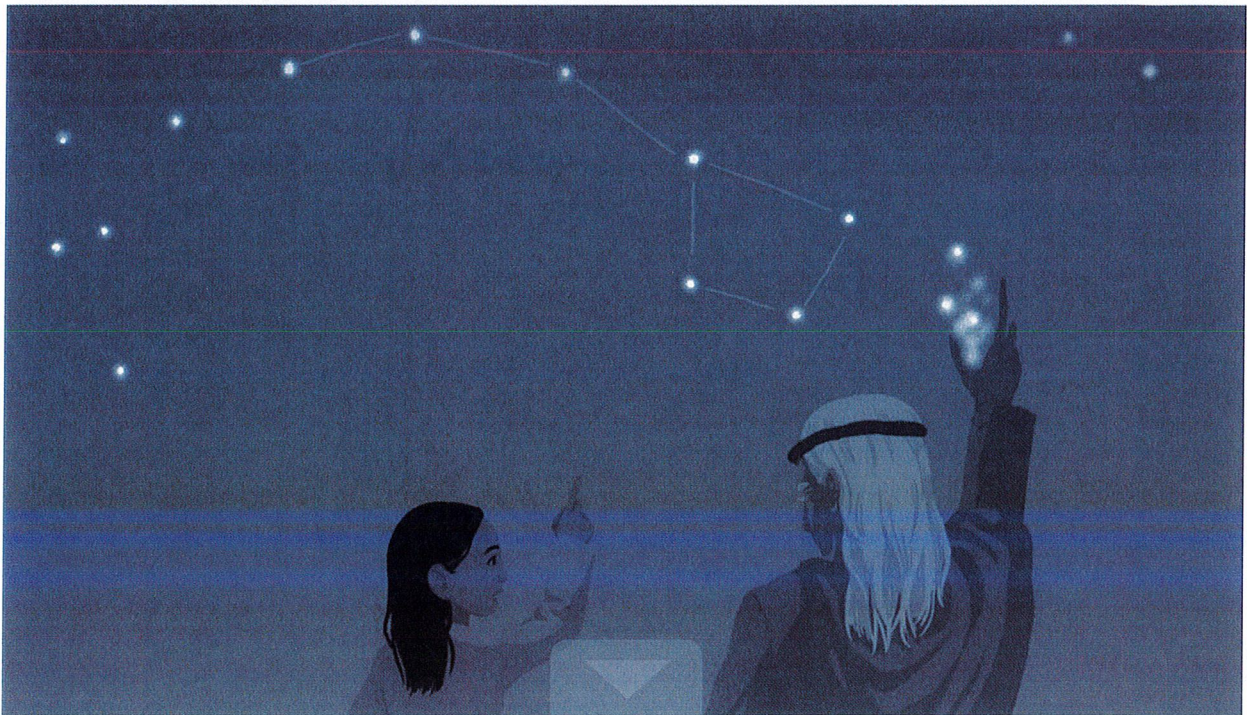




The elder opened the bag. He tossed the rest of the tiny stars into the sky. They hung in the shape of a pot.

“We will name it Big Dipper,” he said.

From then on, the girl always looked up at the stars. And she tried to name them, each and every one.





**Draw or Write: What is the story about?**

