



*Spirit
of
Broo*

*James Palmer
Omega*

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Music and story created by James William Palmer.

All illustrations and design by Owen Bell using Core/Procreate Painter 2 and Wacon Graphics Tablet.

Adapted into text and edited by Alwyn Evans.

To play songs click the



icon above each song

Spirit of Broo

A musical play with words and music

by James Palmer

Adapted for this book, and edited

by Fizz

(aka Alwyn Evans)

Illustrated

by Omega

(aka Owen Bell)

Music and lyrics

by James Palmer

Vocals

James Palmer and Melanie Smoker

Arrangers

Don Spurling and Craig Skelton

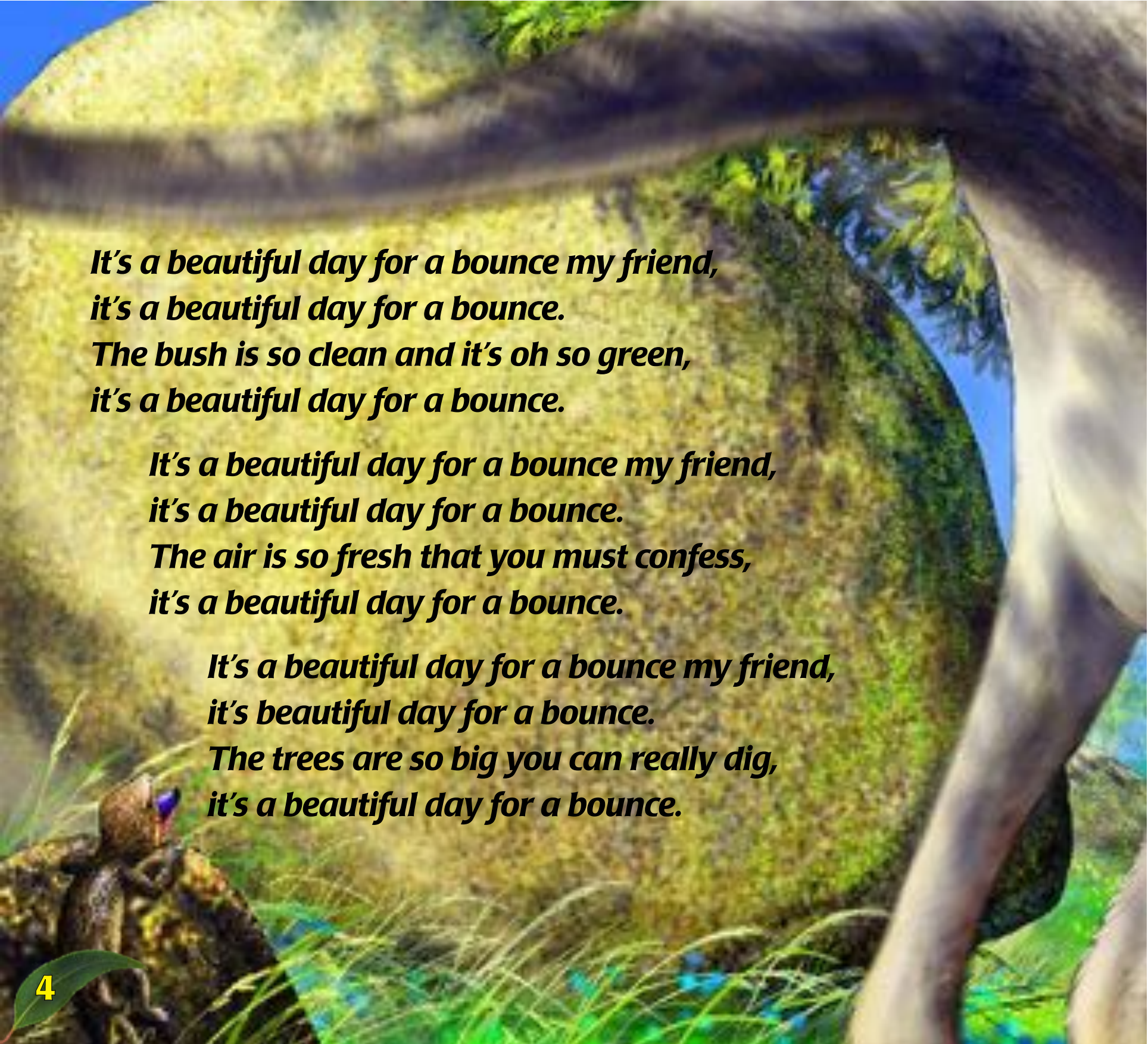
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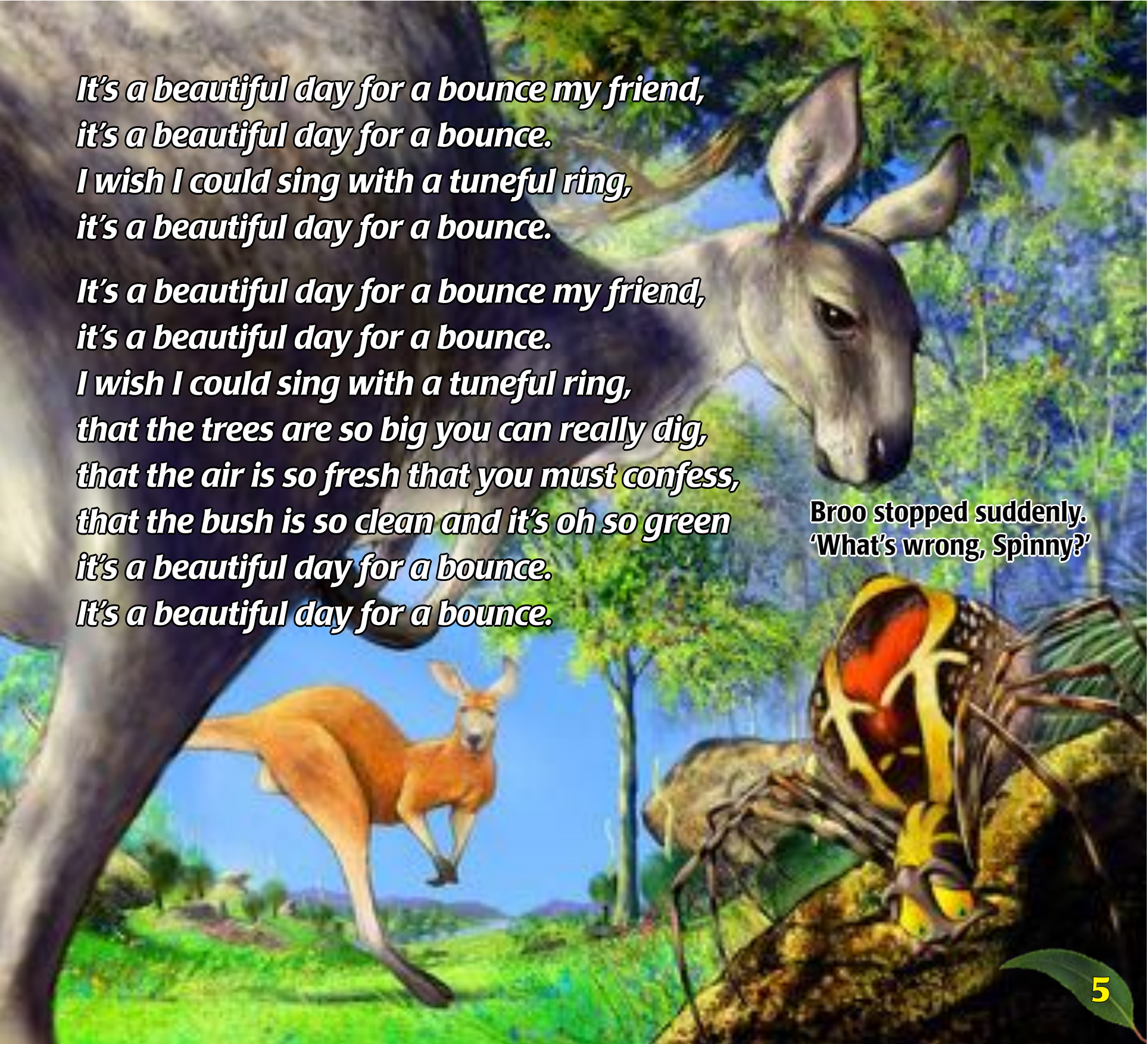
Website: www.spiritofbroo.com



***It's a beautiful day for a bounce my friend,
it's a beautiful day for a bounce.
The bush is so clean and it's oh so green,
it's a beautiful day for a bounce.***

***It's a beautiful day for a bounce my friend,
it's a beautiful day for a bounce.
The air is so fresh that you must confess,
it's a beautiful day for a bounce.***

***It's a beautiful day for a bounce my friend,
it's beautiful day for a bounce.
The trees are so big you can really dig,
it's a beautiful day for a bounce.***



*It's a beautiful day for a bounce my friend,
it's a beautiful day for a bounce.*

*I wish I could sing with a tuneful ring,
it's a beautiful day for a bounce.*

*It's a beautiful day for a bounce my friend,
it's a beautiful day for a bounce.*

*I wish I could sing with a tuneful ring,
that the trees are so big you can really dig,
that the air is so fresh that you must confess,
that the bush is so clean and it's oh so green
it's a beautiful day for a bounce.*

It's a beautiful day for a bounce.

**Broo stopped suddenly.
'What's wrong, Spinny?'**



'I'm worried!' spat Spinny.

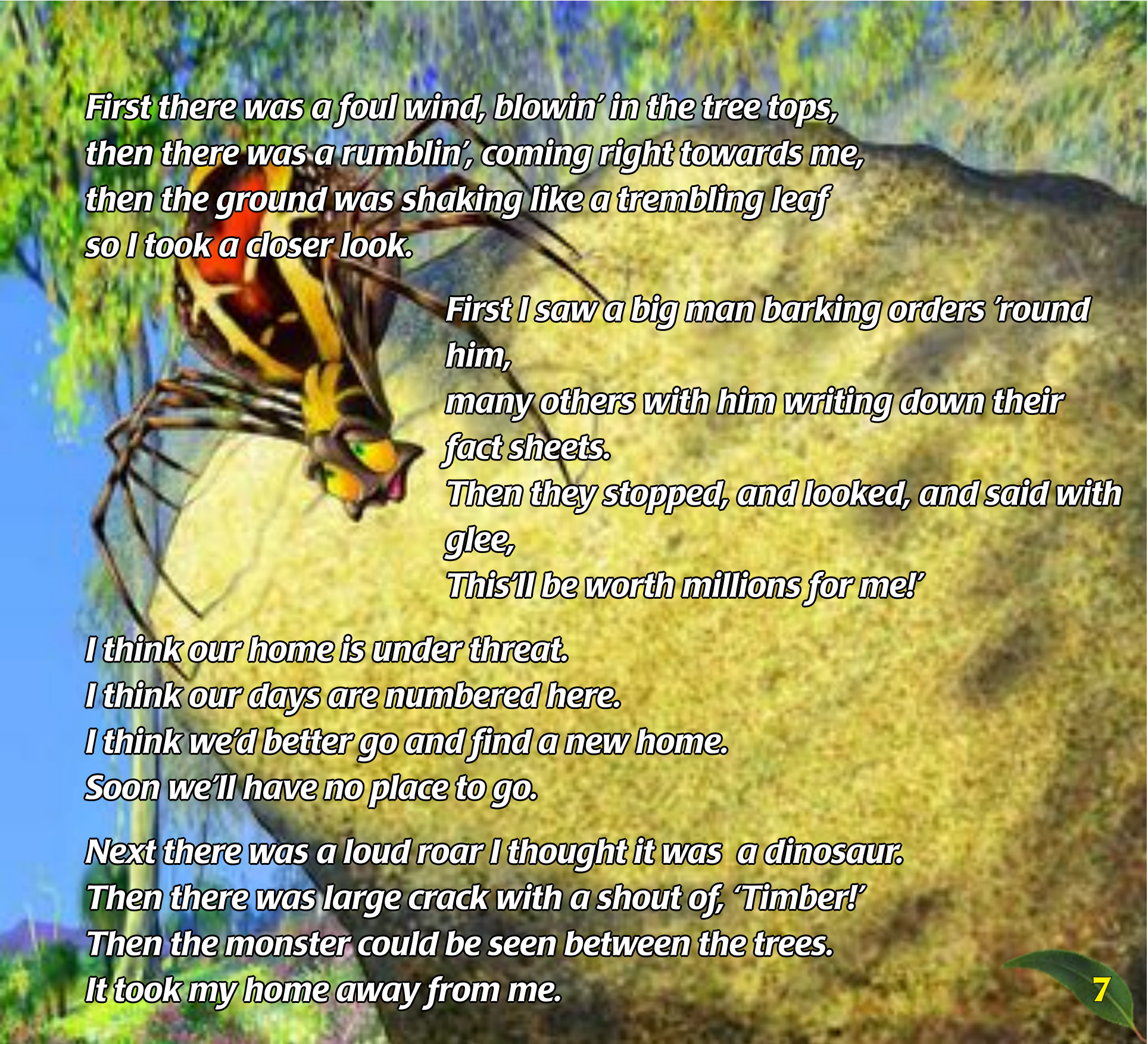
'We're *all* worried.

Haven't you felt the ground shaking and trembling? We think that means the hard, black river is coming closer.'

'I'm not sure what you mean, Spinny...'

Broo frowned.

'Well, I know what I felt – and saw! We're closer to the ground so us little fellas feel every change.'



*First there was a foul wind, blowin' in the tree tops,
then there was a rumblin', coming right towards me,
then the ground was shaking like a trembling leaf
so I took a closer look.*

*First I saw a big man barking orders 'round
him,
many others with him writing down their
fact sheets.*

*Then they stopped, and looked, and said with
glee,
This'll be worth millions for me!*

*I think our home is under threat.
I think our days are numbered here.
I think we'd better go and find a new home.
Soon we'll have no place to go.*

*Next there was a loud roar I thought it was a dinosaur.
Then there was large crack with a shout of, 'Timber!'
Then the monster could be seen between the trees.
It took my home away from me.*



'I had no idea.' Broo shook her head.

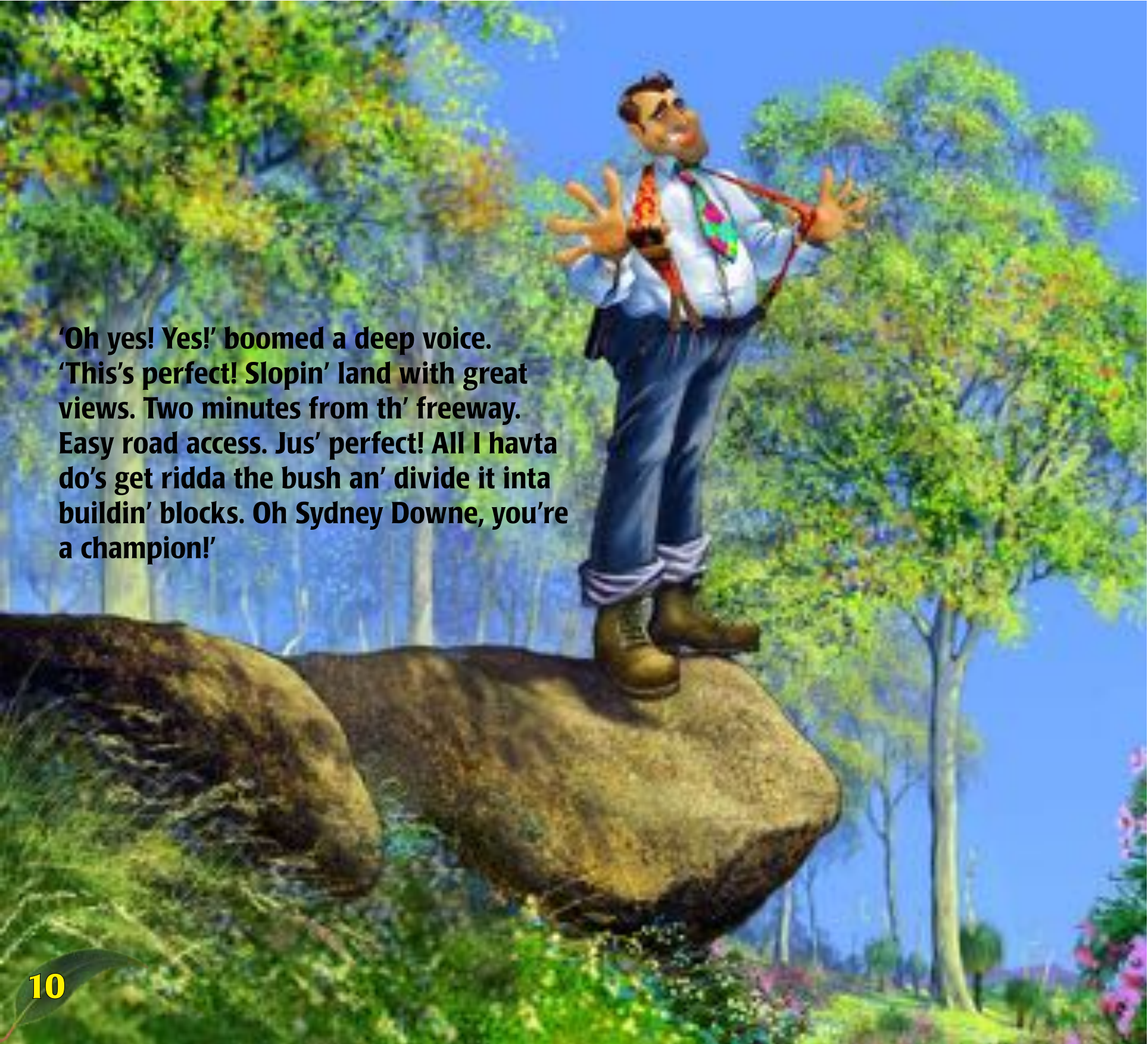
'What'll we do?' Red had hopped up in time to hear Spinny's song.

'We'll call a meeting of all animals and insects and plan our defence.' Broo, as always took the lead.

'Good idea! Ri-dee-roo!' Red bounced off to spread the word.

Broo and Spinny turned to leave. Crunch. Scrunch. Crackle. Broo's ears stood straight. What was that? They sprang behind a Geraldton wax bush. Just in time! Close to where they crouched holding their breath, strode a tall figure.




A man in a white shirt, tie, and blue trousers stands on a large, flat rock in a lush green forest. He has his arms outstretched and a wide, enthusiastic smile. The background is filled with tall, leafy trees under a clear blue sky. The man's tie is colorful and patterned, and he is wearing brown boots. The overall scene is bright and cheerful.

**'Oh yes! Yes!' boomed a deep voice.
'This's perfect! Slopin' land with great
views. Two minutes from th' freeway.
Easy road access. Jus' perfect! All I havta
do's get ridda the bush an' divide it inta
buildin' blocks. Oh Sydney Downe, you're
a champion!'**

'I've never seen a standup here before, Spinny,' Broo whispered. 'It's like the one that smashed Uncle Skip's, and all those other homes. I wonder what it's doing? We'd better warn the others.'

The man took a notebook from his pocket and began to rough out his plans.





It wasn't long before a crowd of bush dwellers gathered at their meeting place.

'Order! Order!' Broo thumped her foot. 'We're here to talk about the rumblings.'

'Terrible rumblings,' wavered a worm. 'Our tunnels collapsed and squashed hundreds of us!'

'I lost my nest,' warbled Maggie. 'Now, I've nowhere to lay my new eggs!'

'If we lose our eucalypts we'll have no food or drink,' a voice floated down from the trees.

'We've got bi-i-ig trouble.' All eyes turned to Broo. 'A little while ago, a standup was wandering around our bush, talking to itself and scratching on a thing in its paws. It came so close to Spinny and me, we could've touched it. Now, I feel the Dreaming Spirit warning me that the standup is linked to the rumblings. We've got to stop it before it smashes our homes – like it did Uncle Skip's'

There was silence.

Suddenly pandemonium erupted! Anxious animals and insects struggled to be heard. The clamour was deafening. Then, as an ominous buzzing penetrated the uproar, a hush fell.

A swarm of bees hovered above the crowd.

'We'll z-z-zurround it! And z-z-zting it'



'You'll make the supreme sacrifice?' Broo was overwhelmed.

'Z-z-zting! Z-z-zting! Z-z-zting! To the death. Who'll help uz-z z-zave our home?'

'We'll swarm over its legs, and bite, bite, bite it ...' The chant rose from an ant-column swaying high above the assembly, to join with the bees' buzzing.

'And we'll bomb it with messy messages,' twittered the birds.

Broo smothered a giggle. 'Great stuff! Excellent! Any more ideas?'

Spinny drew himself up to his full height. 'Here's what I'll do to that standup!'



*I am a spider of the night!
I'll give you one big fright when the sun
goes down.*

*I am the meanest spider you know!
I take on that certain glow when the sun
goes down.*

*I don't want to be your friend.
I want to see your life end.
I just want you to be my piece of apple pie.*

*I am a spider with great ease.
I'll make you plead for mercy when the sun
goes down.*

*I am the spider with the venom!
I'll be the one to get him when the sun goes
down.*

'Yes!' chorused the birds.

'Go, Spinny!' called Red.

'That's so cool!' added the ants.

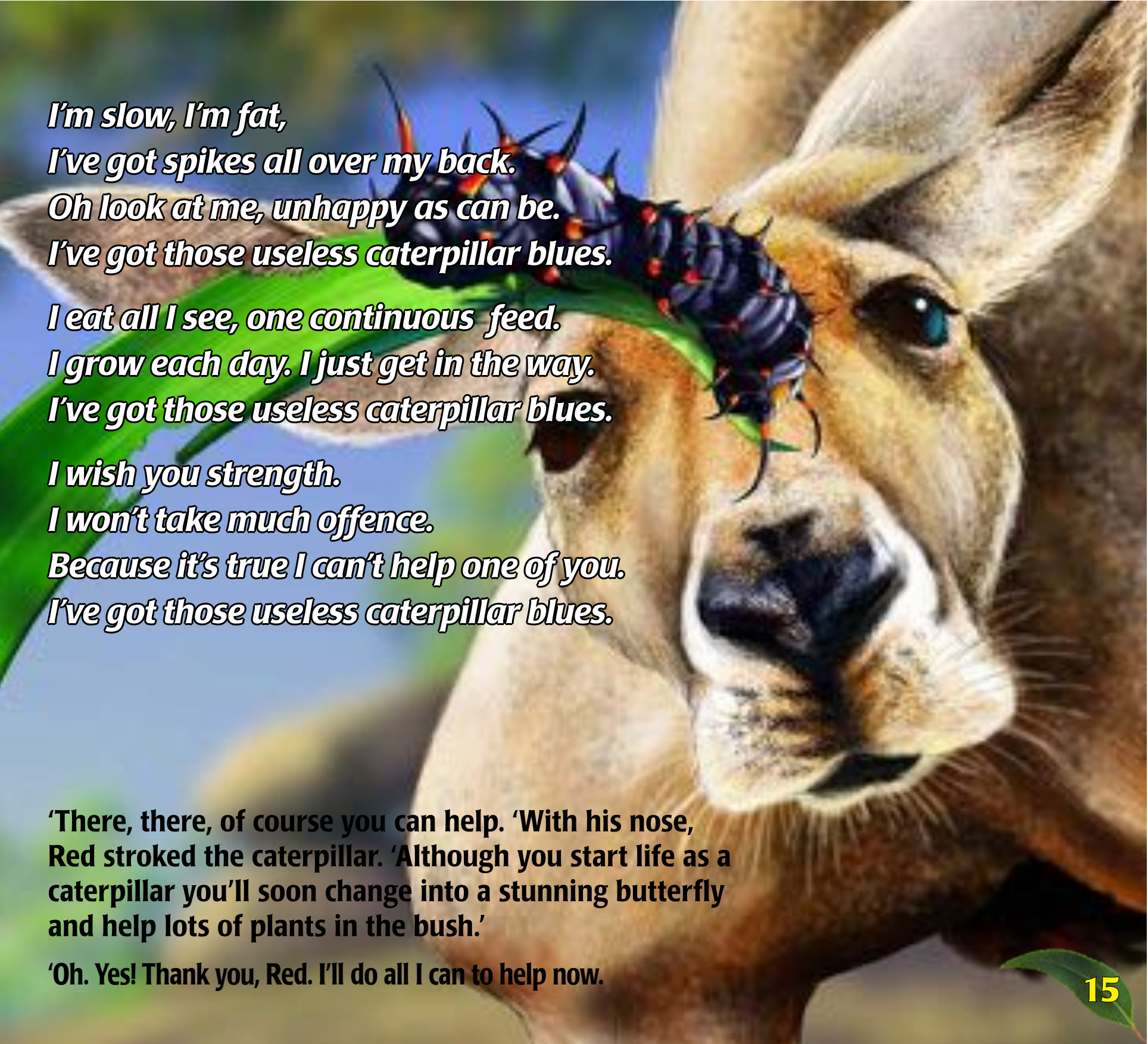
'Fantastic!' shouted the koalas.

'Spin-ny! Spin-ny! Spin-ny
–' The chant arose from the
assembled throng – bees,
goannas, snakes, wombats,
cockatoos, wallabies, worms
– everyone joined in, even the
grand old kookaburra.

As the voices died away, a
caterpillar almost in tears,
quavered, 'That's wonderful,
Spinny. I-I only wish I
could help!'

Red bounded over to the
caterpillar. 'What's wrong?
Why the tears?'

'Because ... because ...'



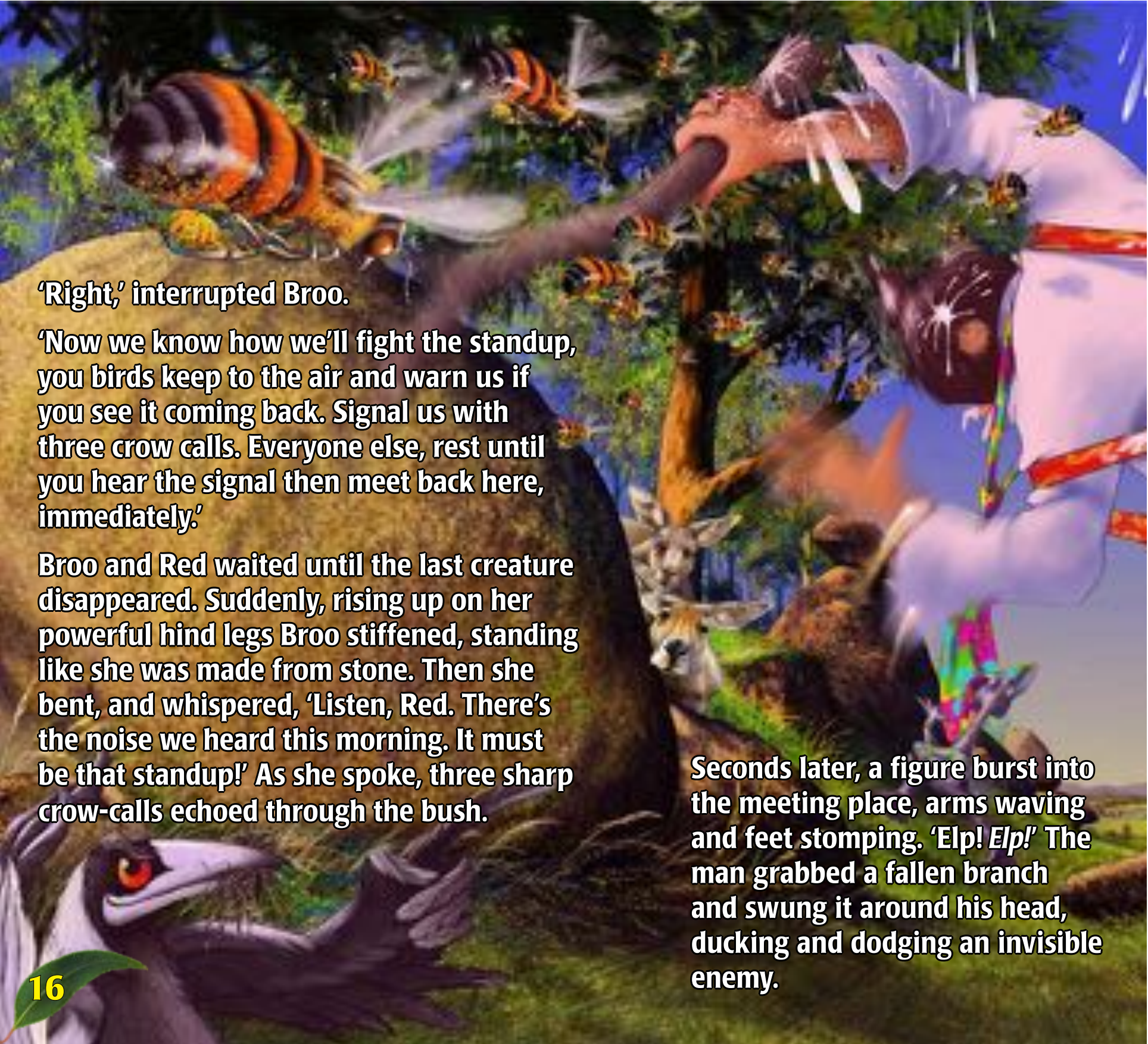
*I'm slow, I'm fat,
I've got spikes all over my back.
Oh look at me, unhappy as can be.
I've got those useless caterpillar blues.*

*I eat all I see, one continuous feed.
I grow each day. I just get in the way.
I've got those useless caterpillar blues.*

*I wish you strength.
I won't take much offence.
Because it's true I can't help one of you.
I've got those useless caterpillar blues.*

'There, there, of course you can help. 'With his nose, Red stroked the caterpillar. 'Although you start life as a caterpillar you'll soon change into a stunning butterfly and help lots of plants in the bush.'

'Oh. Yes! Thank you, Red. I'll do all I can to help now.'



'Right,' interrupted Broo.

'Now we know how we'll fight the standup, you birds keep to the air and warn us if you see it coming back. Signal us with three crow calls. Everyone else, rest until you hear the signal then meet back here, immediately.'

Broo and Red waited until the last creature disappeared. Suddenly, rising up on her powerful hind legs Broo stiffened, standing like she was made from stone. Then she bent, and whispered, 'Listen, Red. There's the noise we heard this morning. It must be that standup!' As she spoke, three sharp crow-calls echoed through the bush.

Seconds later, a figure burst into the meeting place, arms waving and feet stomping. 'Elp! Elp!' The man grabbed a fallen branch and swung it around his head, ducking and dodging an invisible enemy.



Still swatting frantically, he stumbled into a hollow tingle tree. Then, realising his attackers had withdrawn, he stopped his crazy dance.

Red chortled, 'I signalled the birds and bees to stop to see if it's had enough.'

'Shh, Red' whispered Broo, 'It'll hear us.'

Peering from his shelter, the man said, 'Where am I? This bush's s' damn confusin'. If only there wuz footpaths, an' street signs. But I'm gunna fix that real soon!' He grabbed his mobile phone and punched in a number. 'Roger? Sydney. I want th' machines t' start *now*. An' t' keep workin' all night! ... Yep. That's now, moron! ... Now put on m' secet'ry. I need 'elp 'ere.' He stepped out onto the rock.






'What's it holding?' Red cocked his head to one side. "Do you think it'll hurt us?"

'I'm not waiting to find out.' Broo bounded from the bush and thumped the man. The phone flew from his hand – smack onto the rock.

Through lengthening shadows the dazed man saw only a blur of grey as Broo melted into the trees. Panicking, he picked up what was left of his phone. His trembling fingers pressed the buttons. Nothing!

'Blast thad-animal!' Fear turned to anger. He stomped menacingly after Broo.



'Geddorffa me!!' Curses turned to shrieks. Grabbing at his face with one hand, the man frantically brushed at the air with the other. 'E-e-e-el-p!'

He stumbled backwards trying to escape Spinny's sticky strands but tripped, landing on his backside and clawing at his hair.

'Onya, Broo!' Red beamed at his friend, and laughed. 'It's a sit-down, now.'

'Yes!' Broo moved toward the cowering figure. 'But I feel kind of sorry for it.'

'Should we show it the way out?' Red couldn't wait to get rid of the intruder.

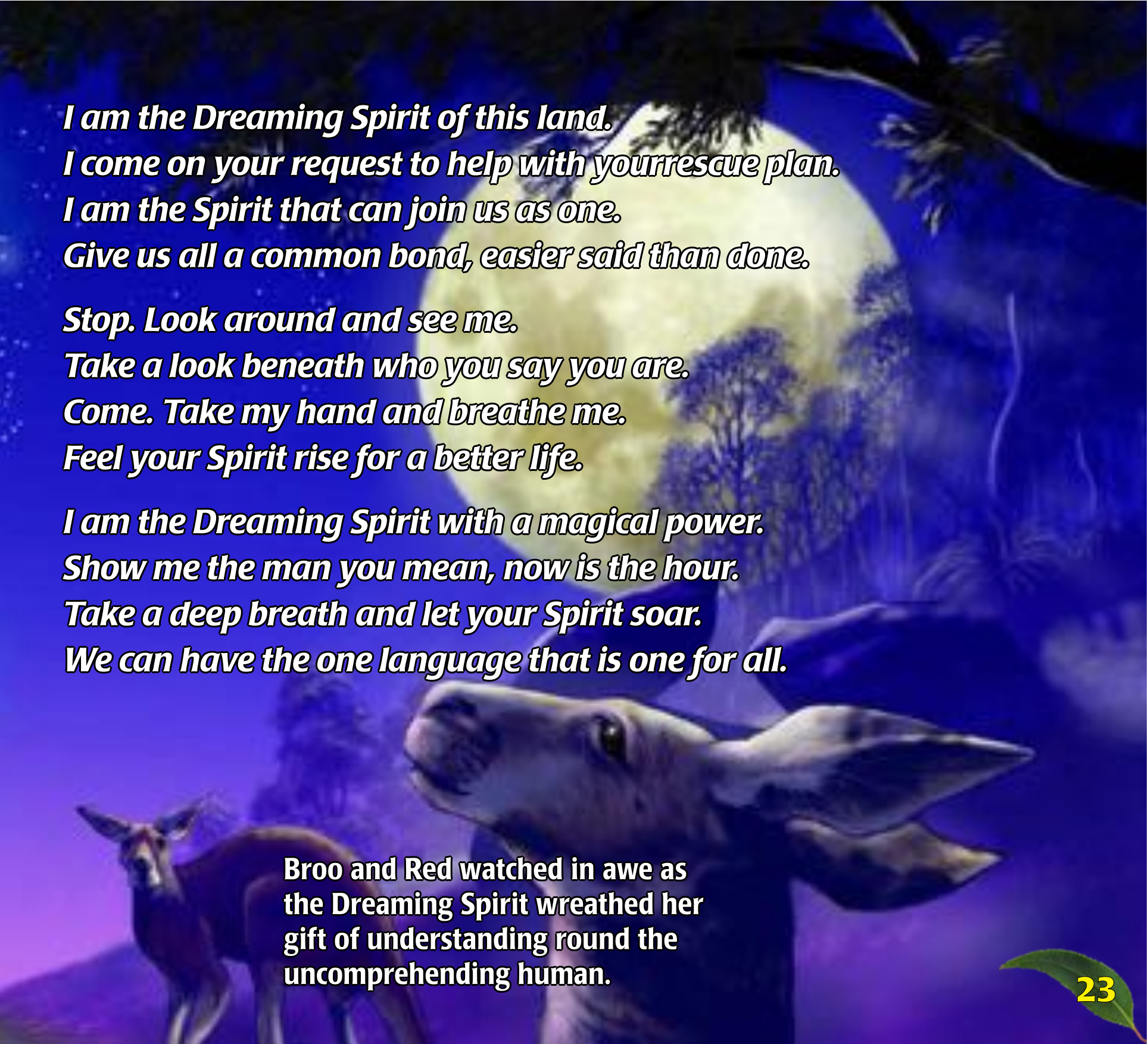
'Guess so.' Cautiously, Broo prodded the still shuddering man.

His head shot up. 'Wozzat? Watchit ya stupid kangarool Y've already smashed m' phone. I'm lost in th' bush an' it's getting dark. You can't 'elp me - y' dumb animal.'

Broo tried another approach. She hopped to a path leading from the clearing, willing the man to follow. But he slumped lower, and wailed. Broo admonished herself, 'You are silly. It's only a standup. *It* can't understand animals ... unless I ask the Dreaming Spirit to help!'

**Stretching towards the darkening sky,
Broo intoned, 'Calling the Dreaming
Spirit. Calling the Dreaming Spirit.'
Magically, a shimmering blue light
appeared, transforming into a mystical
shape all the colours of the rainbow ...**





***I am the Dreaming Spirit of this land.
I come on your request to help with your rescue plan.
I am the Spirit that can join us as one.
Give us all a common bond, easier said than done.***

***Stop. Look around and see me.
Take a look beneath who you say you are.
Come. Take my hand and breathe me.
Feel your Spirit rise for a better life.***

***I am the Dreaming Spirit with a magical power.
Show me the man you mean, now is the hour.
Take a deep breath and let your Spirit soar.
We can have the one language that is one for all.***

Broo and Red watched in awe as the Dreaming Spirit wretched her gift of understanding round the uncomprehending human.



As the music and vision faded, Broo tapped the man's shoulder.

G'day. I'm Broo.'

His head jerked up. Y-y're talking'?'

'Of course. Now you've received the gift you can understand me.'

'I gotta be dreamin'! Wot gift? W-wot's goin' on?' stammered the man.

"Something special, I promise you.'

'It's incredible! The man shook his head. 'I'm talkin' to the' animals. Like Dr Dolittle, I c'd make a lotta money outta this.'

don't believe you! You only think of money.'
Broo backed off, disgusted.

'Wait! *Please* wait. I don' wanna stay 'ere by meself. I'm scareda th' dark. Don' leave me, Broo – innit? I wooden try t' make money outta this. Dinkum. *Please* 'elp me.'

'That sounds like a healthy change of attitude. Or are you just *saying* it?' The grey kangaroo turned, looking at him intently. 'All right, I trust you. And I'll help you.'

'Y' really gunna 'elp me? Even though ...'

'Even though what?'

'E-er, I'm plannin' t' build 'ouses 'ere.'
Something made him tell the truth.

'Really? But now you know about us, will you still go ahead?'

'I dunno much about ya.'

'This bush is our home. Thousands of us bush animals, birds, reptiles, and insects live here.'

Oh, nevva thought about that.'

'Well now you must.'

There was silence. Then the man asked, 'Y' really gunna 'elp me outta 'ere?'

"Yes. Homes are important to everyone. I'll show you the way back to yours.'

'That's real kind, Broo. But, wot's innit f'you?'

'That depends on you.' Steadily, Broo held his gaze.

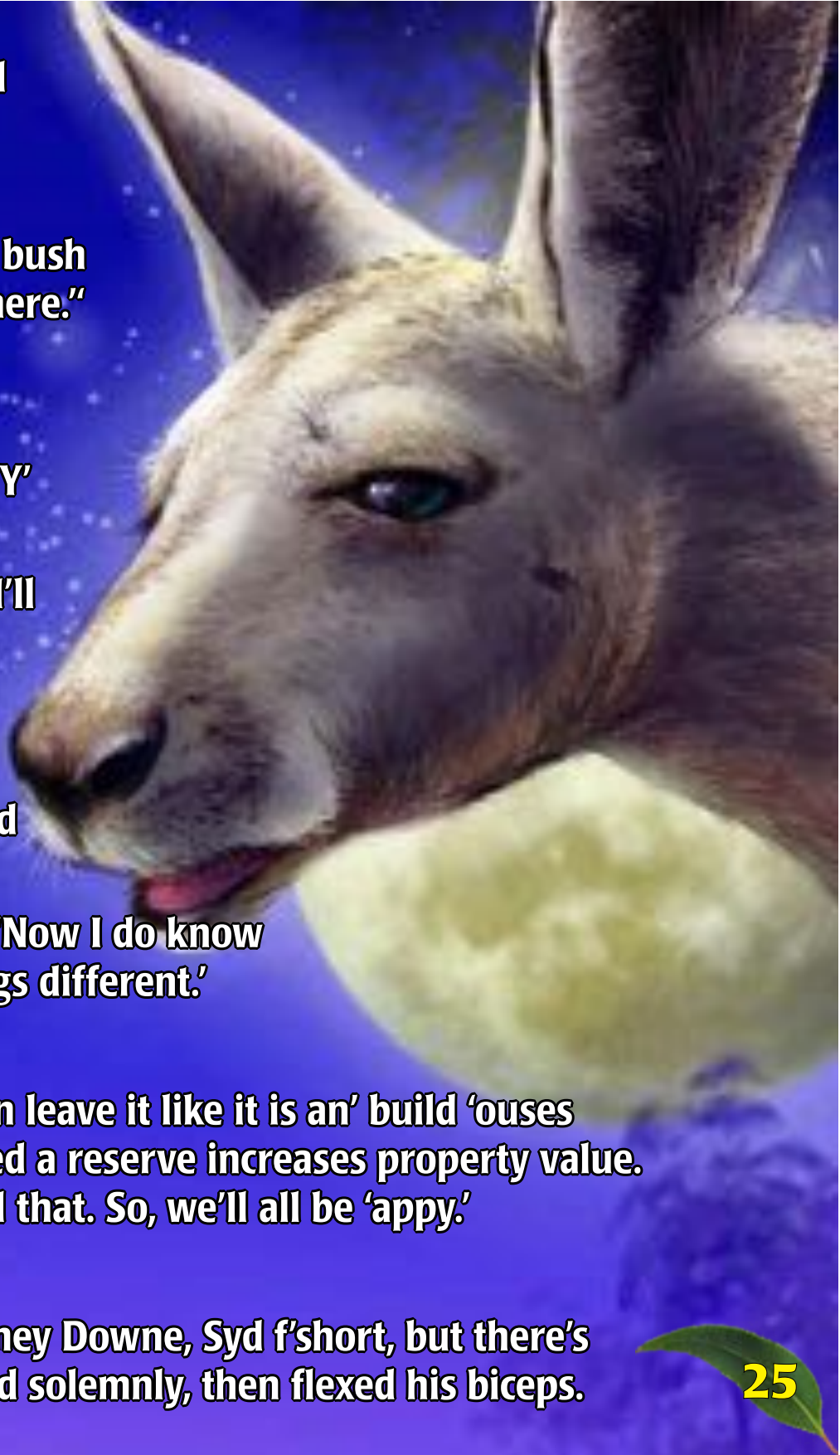
There was silence. Finally the man said, "Now I do know about you an' y'mates I'm gunna do things different.'

'How?'

'Well, I don' need t'develop this place. I c'n leave it like it is an' build 'ouses somewhere else. Anyway, I've jus' realised a reserve increases property value. Lotsa people like living' near trees an' all that. So, we'll all be 'appy.'

'That's excellent' Broo smiled.

'I feel like a new man. M'name's still Sydney Downe, Syd f'short, but there's new ideas in 'ere.' He tapped his forehead solemnly, then flexed his biceps.





Unseen, Spinny swung onto a branch near Syd's head, hissing to himself, 'There's that standup creep! Now I'll get him, and *bite* him. We'll see how he likes that!

'Hey everyone, come and meet the new standup, Syd Downe.'

Broo called, and looked around.

'Oh! There you are Spinny. Great news! Syd Downe's changed his mind.'

'Standup, Syd Downe?' Spinny sniggered, peering evilly at the cringing Sydney.

'That's right! I'm not gunna do nothin' t' y'bush, Youse c'n live 'ere as lo-o-ong as y' like.'

'He can understand us?'

Spinny turned to Broo.

'The Dreaming Spirit.'

'You gave this greedy low-life the gift? You trust him?'

'I thought it was right, Spinny.'

And yes, I trust Sydney.'

'So what changed your mind, Syd?' Spinny sidled closer to him.

'Kindness m' little eight-legged mate. Kindness.' Sydney sidled away.

'Onya, Syd. I'd never have believed it.' Spinny sidled after him.

'Y'home's bewdiful! I've never taken time t' see wot th' bush is like, before.

But now I feel real calm 'n' peaceful.'

Look around and do you see the same as me?

Native bushland, the way it should be.

All around me there is life, from the ground to the heights.

I can't believe I was going to tear it down.

Why is it like this way? Why can't we find a way to have an alternative plan to live our lives in harmony.

And when can we make a plan, to come together and stand?

And live our lives in peace with ourselves.

I once did say it's right, to come and level this site.

It's a million dollar place with a view.

I can't let them tear it down. This place should stay the same.

Build around but don't take away this home.

I must make others see straight. A plan is what we need.

I can make up that plan myself.

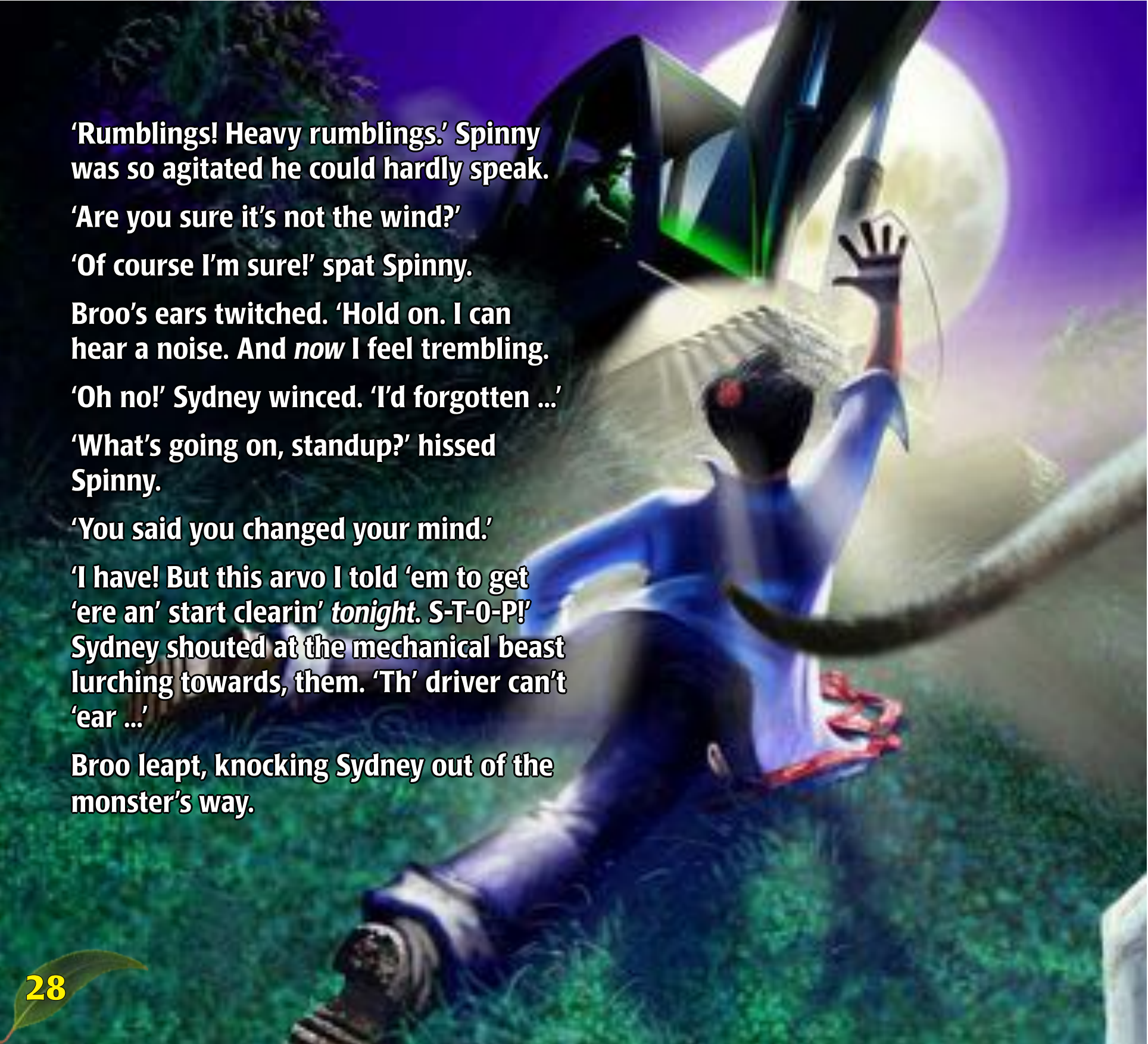
All around me there is life, from the ground to the heights.

And I won't let them tear it down!

That's great Syd, Now, I'll show you the way home.' Broo turned to leave.

'Wait! Stop!' Spinny frantically waved his legs.

'What's wrong, Spinny?'

A character in a blue suit is running away from a large, dark, mechanical monster. The scene is set at night with a full moon in the background. The character is looking back over their shoulder with a determined expression. The monster is a complex, multi-limbed machine with green glowing parts. The character is running on a grassy field.

'Rumblings! Heavy rumblings!' Spinny was so agitated he could hardly speak.

'Are you sure it's not the wind?'

'Of course I'm sure!' spat Spinny.

Broo's ears twitched. 'Hold on. I can hear a noise. And *now* I feel trembling.


'Oh no!' Sydney winced. 'I'd forgotten ...'

'What's going on, standup?' hissed Spinny.

'You said you changed your mind.'

'I have! But this arvo I told 'em to get 'ere an' start clearin' *tonight*. S-T-O-P!' Sydney shouted at the mechanical beast lurching towards, them. 'Th' driver can't 'ear ...'

Broo leapt, knocking Sydney out of the monster's way.

A grey kangaroo is shown in profile, facing right. It is in a dark, industrial environment with several overhead lights that create a dramatic, low-key lighting effect. The kangaroo's fur is a mix of grey and brown tones. The background is dark with some blurred light sources.

**Syd rolled over, waving at the driver,
still shouting, 'S-T-O-P! S-T-O-P!'**

Broo turned to jump to safety.

**Too late. The blade came down as Broo jumped
up. The grey kangaroo slumped to the ground.
Sydney scrambled to his feet,
sprang onto the ladder outside the
driver's door, and thumped
on the window. The machine
stopped.**

Silence filled the darkness.

**Spinny rushed to Broo and
frantically tapped her leg. Syd
jumped down and ran towards
them. 'Wot 'ave I done?' He picked
up the kangaroo's limp paw.**

Shimmering lights drifted towards Broo's' lifeless body. The Dreaming Spirit extended her arms and gently lifted the still form. Faint music filled the silence.



The Dreaming Spirit and Broo's spirit gently swayed in a magical dance before they, still moving together, slowly faded with the music into the shimmering blue light. Broken-hearted, Red and Spinny watched the ritual of Broo's passing. As the light disappeared they understood that Broo's death sealed the promise of safety for their homes, and comfort filled their hearts.

Sydney watched too. He knew he must do as he'd promised. He ordered the bulldozers out. Silence returned. Broo's sacrifice would be worthwhile.

Syd stumbled through farewells, then turned and walked back along the ugly gash the machine had left through the bush.





The following day Sydney Downe returned. Taking out his notebook he began drafting new plans. Creatures watched from the shadows.

Red and Spinny stepped into the sunlight. 'Hello, Syd.'

'Hello, Red, Spinny.' Syd shook Red's paw. 'I'm terribly sorry about last night.'

'So are we.'

'I've made more decisions. I'm makin' this a wildlife sanctuary.'

'What's a sanctuary?' Spinny wanted to know.

'It's a place where everyone is safe, Spinny,' Red explained.

'That's' impressive, Syd,' Spinny turned to him.

Sydney nodded. 'You'll be safe here.'

'Broo's passing has given us something special.' Red sounded thoughtful. 'But now, we must move away while Mother Nature repairs this bush.'

'We won't have to move far. We will return.' Spinny placed a leg on Syd's arm.

'Goodbye, Spinny. Seeya Red. I'll thinka ya often.' Sydney was close to tears.

'Ri-dee-roo!' said Red. 'I'll be watchin' out for ya.'

***Our home can no longer be this piece of land,
we must go and find a new place to call our own.
So go tell your families there is no time to rest.
Say to all that you meet. 'Come on, it's time to go.'***

Leave the home you built, behind.

Take only that you love.

Now go tell your families. Do not hesitate.

Say to all that you meet. 'Come on, it's time to go.'

For the Australian bush and bush-dwellers and our Aboriginal predecessors who cared for our environment so well before the arrival of the first fleet.

Songs:

It's a beautiful day for a bounce **4**

Our home is under threat **7**

A piece of apple pie **14**

Useless caterpillar blues **15**

The Dreaming Spirit **23**

Live our lives in peace **27**


Broo's passing **31**

It's time to go **33**



Spirit of Broo

James Palmer
Omega

A night scene in a forest. A deer is visible in the middle ground, looking towards the right. In the foreground, a firefly is glowing on a rock. The background shows trees and a dark sky with a few stars.

Motivated by greed,
Sydney Downe wants to bulldoze
a beautiful piece of bushland
and turn it into a housing development.

Sensing disaster,
the bushdwellers fight
to save their homes.

No sacrifice is too great...

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