

A watercolor illustration of a sunset over a green field. The sun is a large, glowing orange and yellow circle at the top. Below it, a green field stretches across the middle. A blue bird is flying in the sky on the right, and a brown fish is swimming in the water at the bottom right. The water is a solid teal color.

# River Rush

Sybila Keogh, Nicola Jones,  
Ellen Gibson and Emma Carter

Barham Public School





Enviro-Stories is an environmental education program that has been developed by PeeKdesigns.



**[www.envirostories.com.au](http://www.envirostories.com.au)**

This program provides an education and learning experience for kids through their active engagement with natural resource and catchment management issues. The final product is a published story written about local issues, by local kids, for local kids and future generations.

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Authors: Sybila Keogh, Nicola Jones, Ellen Gibson and Emma Carter

Teacher: Judy McGuinness

School: Barham Public School

## “Biodiversity of the Murray Catchment” Enviro-Stories Education Program

In 2012, the Creative Catchment Kids program delivered the “Biodiversity of the Murray Catchment” Enviro-Stories Education Program. The project was initiated by the Murray Darling Association and Burrumbuttock Public School. It was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authorities, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and Teys Australia, Wagga. Additional support came from the Wirraminna and Riverina Environmental Education Centres.



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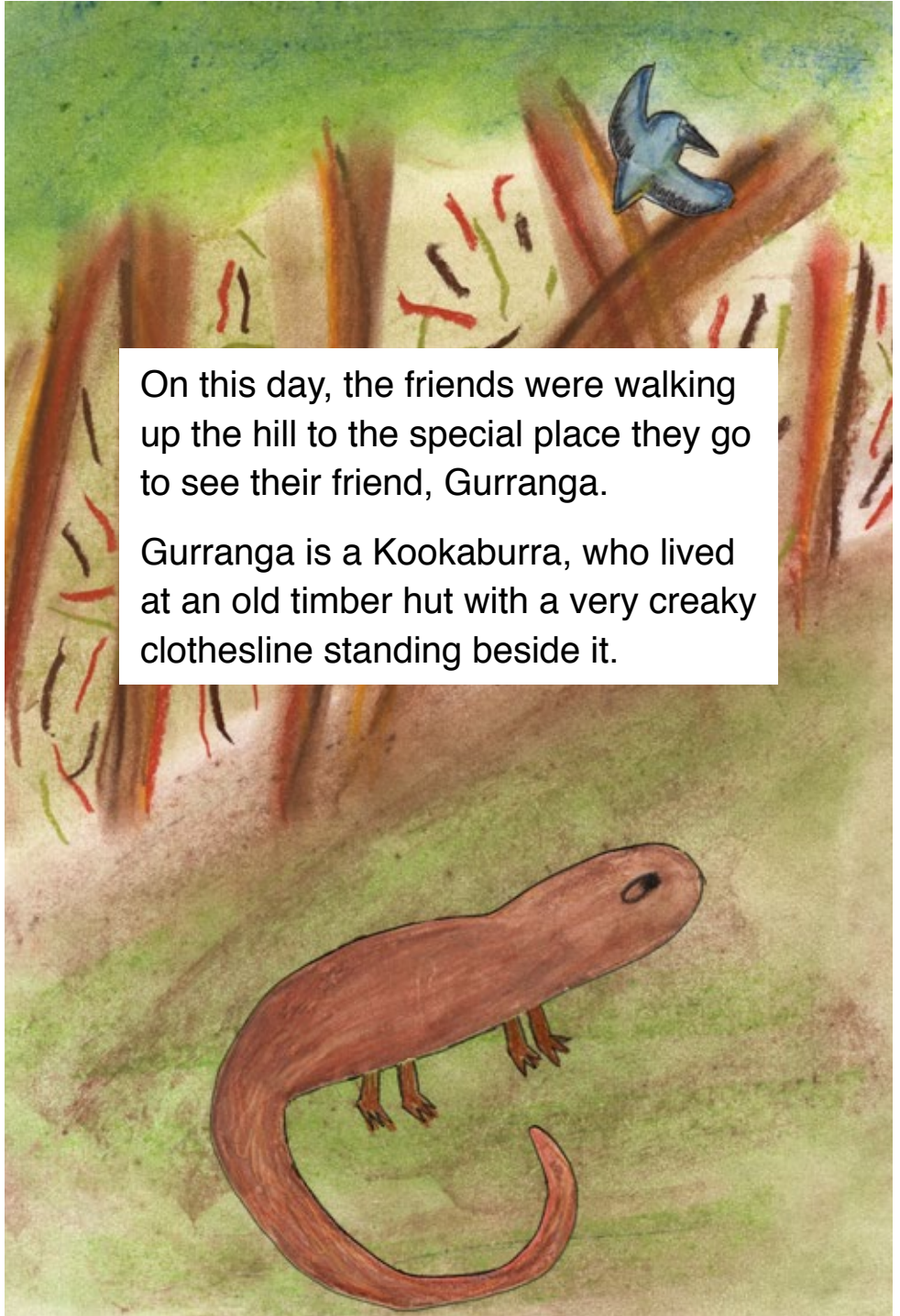
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Once in the Koondrook-Perricoota State Forest, there lived an Azure kingfisher named Duramak and her best friend Ganyal the Goanna. The forest was their home and they loved everything about living there.

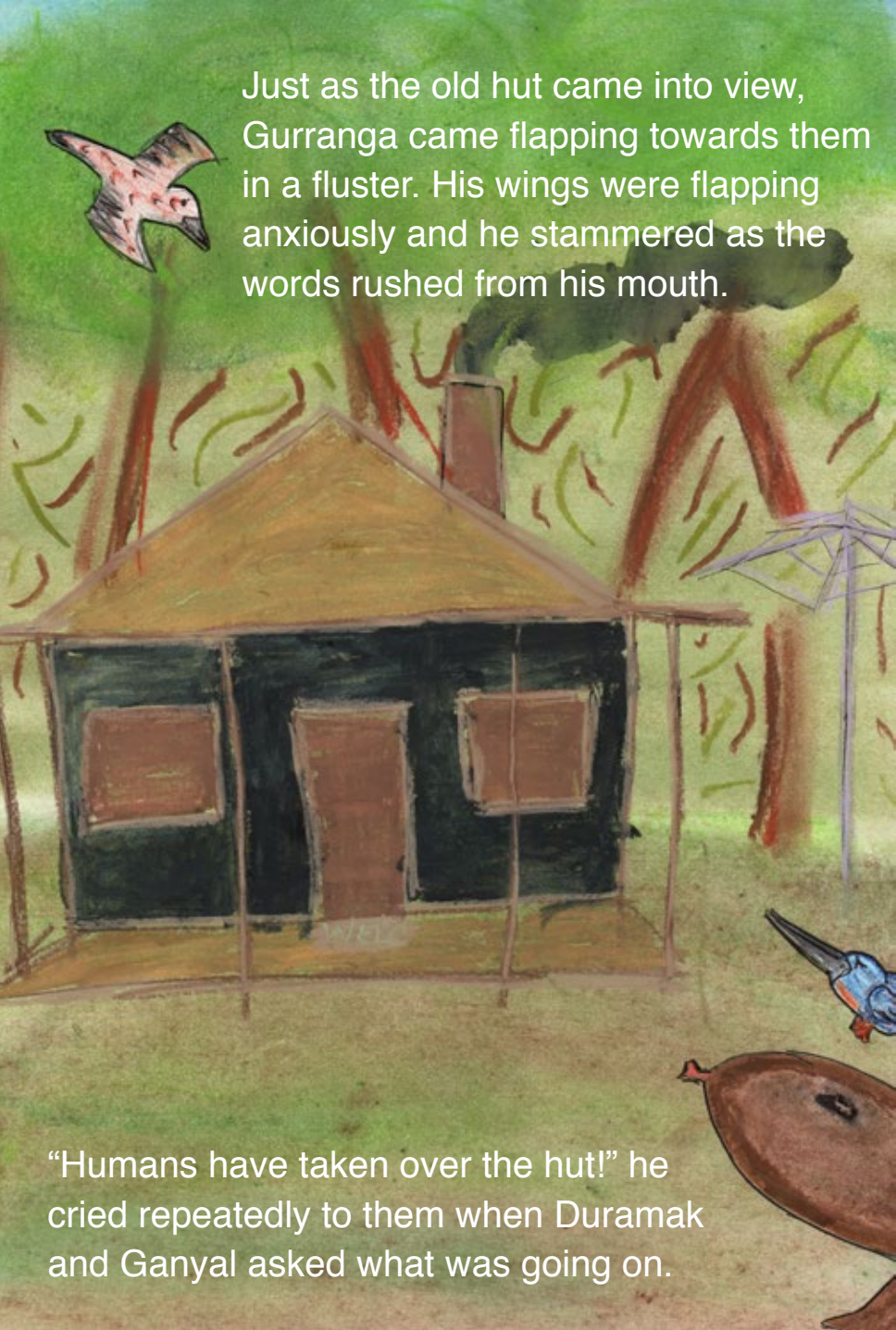




On this day, the friends were walking up the hill to the special place they go to see their friend, Gurranga.

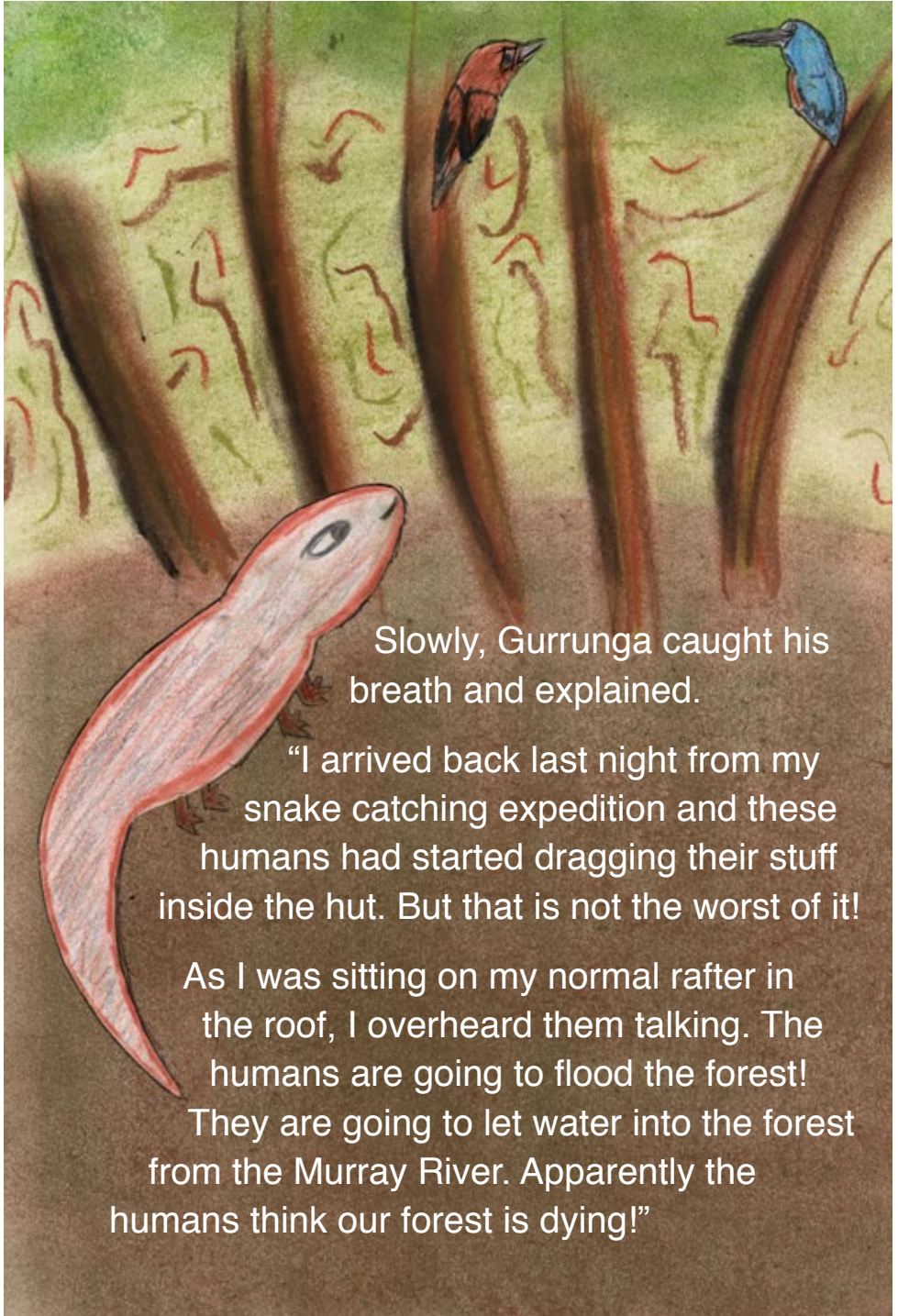
Gurranga is a Kookaburra, who lived at an old timber hut with a very creaky clothesline standing beside it.





Just as the old hut came into view, Gurranga came flapping towards them in a fluster. His wings were flapping anxiously and he stammered as the words rushed from his mouth.

“Humans have taken over the hut!” he cried repeatedly to them when Duramak and Ganyal asked what was going on.



Slowly, Gurrunga caught his breath and explained.

“I arrived back last night from my snake catching expedition and these humans had started dragging their stuff inside the hut. But that is not the worst of it!

As I was sitting on my normal rafter in the roof, I overheard them talking. The humans are going to flood the forest!

They are going to let water into the forest from the Murray River. Apparently the humans think our forest is dying!”



But sadly, Duramak and Ganyal took no notice of what Gurranga the Kookaburra had said.

They listened politely, thought Gurranga was over-reacting, and then they went back to their homes in the forest.



Three weeks later, Duramak and Ganyal heard a small trickling sound come from deep in the forest. The noise grew louder and louder until they heard a great whoosh!

A wall of water was coming, just as Gurranga had said it would. Why hadn't they listened?



Duramak and Ganyal didn't have time for moaning. They had to get out of there. Fast!





As Duramak and Ganyal ran up the hill to escape the flood water, it started pouring rain. More water!

Forgetting the danger of the humans, Duramak and Ganyal ran to Gurranga's wooden hut.

Gurranga wasn't there. He had flown to Gunbower State Forest to get away from the water. But the friends got a real jolt when a woman came out the front door.





“Come back in Yvonne!” called a man’s voice urgently. “They are flooding the forest and it is pouring rain. I want to go into Barham! We will be safe there.”

“Wait,” she answered, staring in amazement at the Kingfisher and Goanna huddled closely together on her doorstep.

“It’s all right,” she crooned softly to Duramak and Ganyal.



Yvonne gently picked up the rain-soaked, bedraggled animals and took them inside out of harm’s way.

Inside the cottage it was warm and toasty. The fire was stoked and the flames were burning brightly. They were happy to be away from the water.

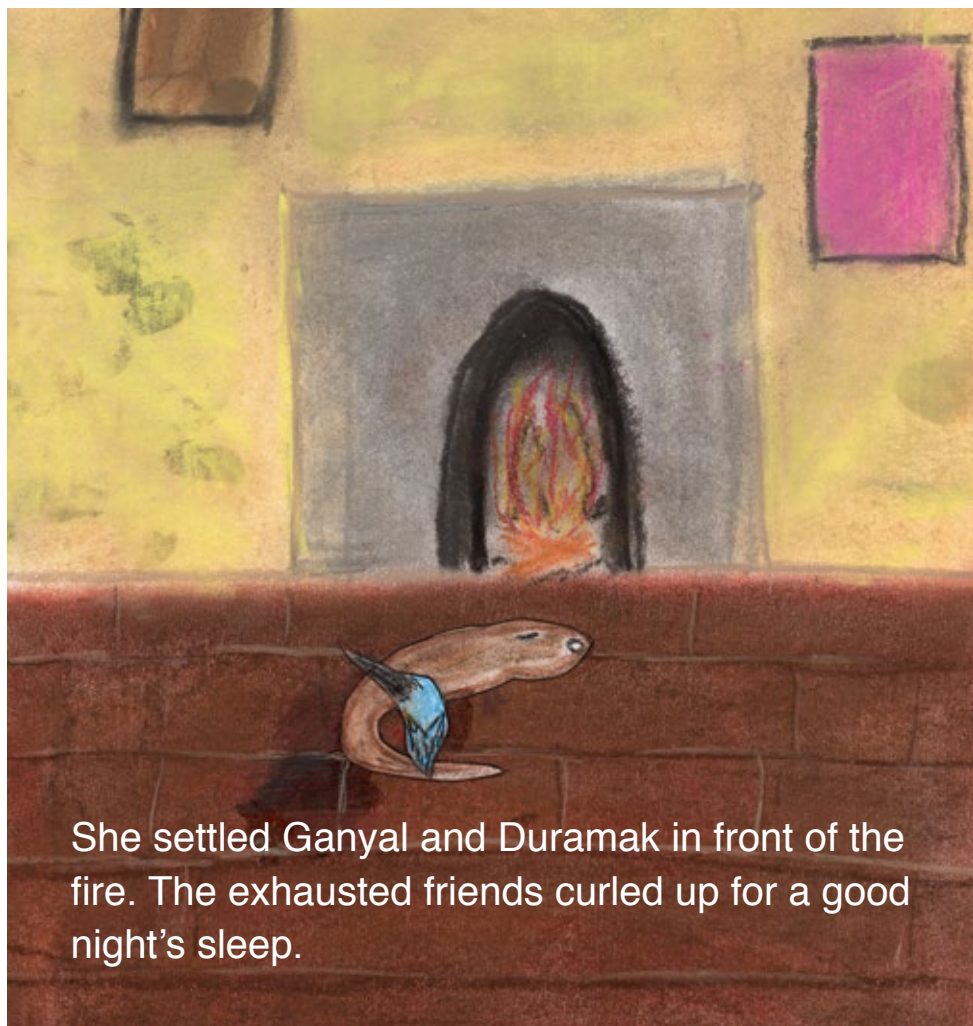
Yvonne prepared a delicious dinner of bread crumbs and meat strips for the animals.

Duramak and Ganyal felt safe. They were not frightened of these humans.



The house had changed a bit since the humans had moved in. The floors didn't creak anymore and there were no cobwebs to be seen anywhere.

Yvonne sat the best friends down on the floor and went into the next room to get an old basket and some dusty blankets.



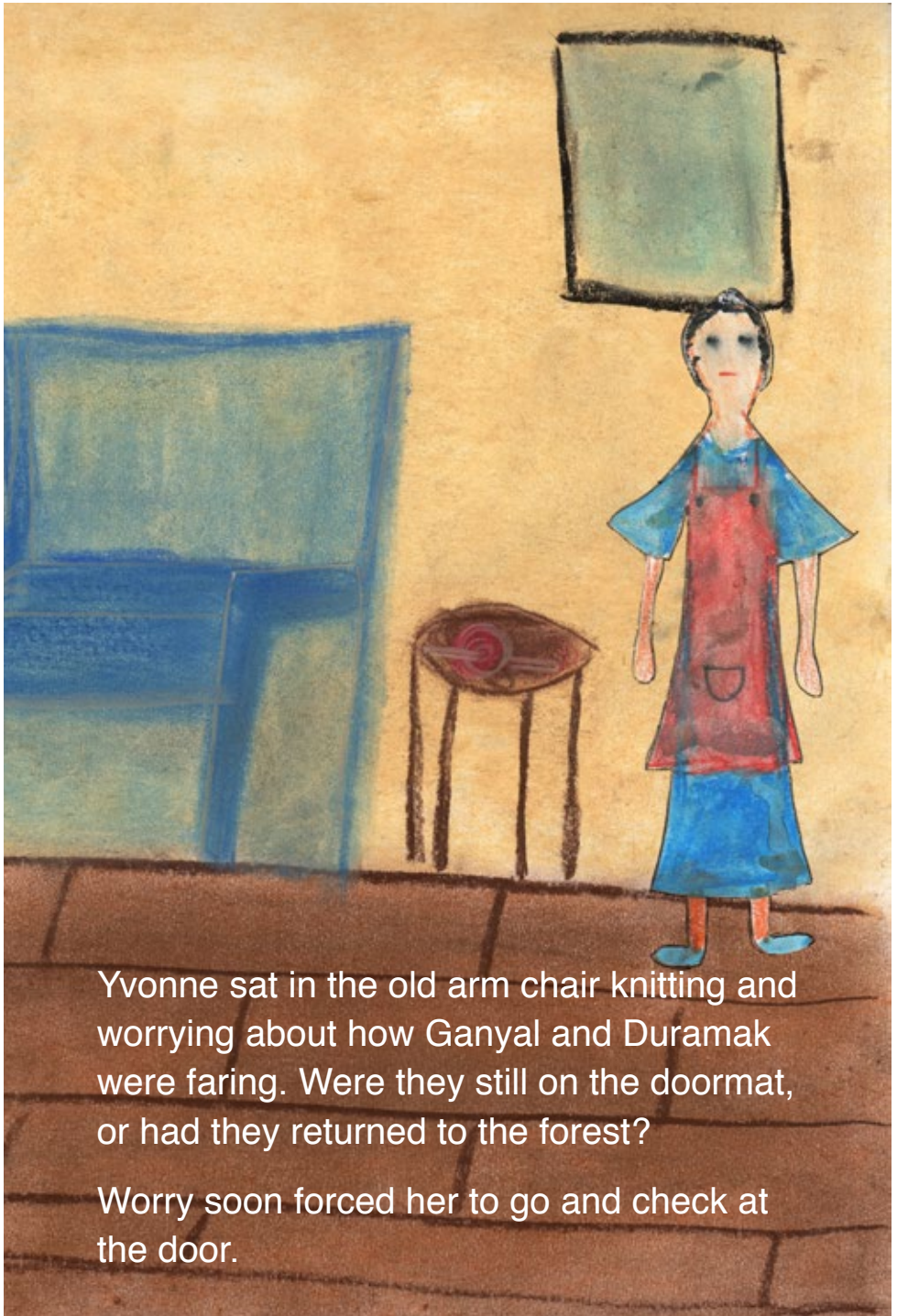
She settled Ganyal and Duramak in front of the fire. The exhausted friends curled up for a good night's sleep.



The next day, Yvonne further gained the trust of the animals by talking to them about everything she was doing.

When Duramak and Ganyal were well-fed and well-rested, Yvonne sat them on the doorstep and went back inside. She was hoping that they would take their chance to go back to their homes.





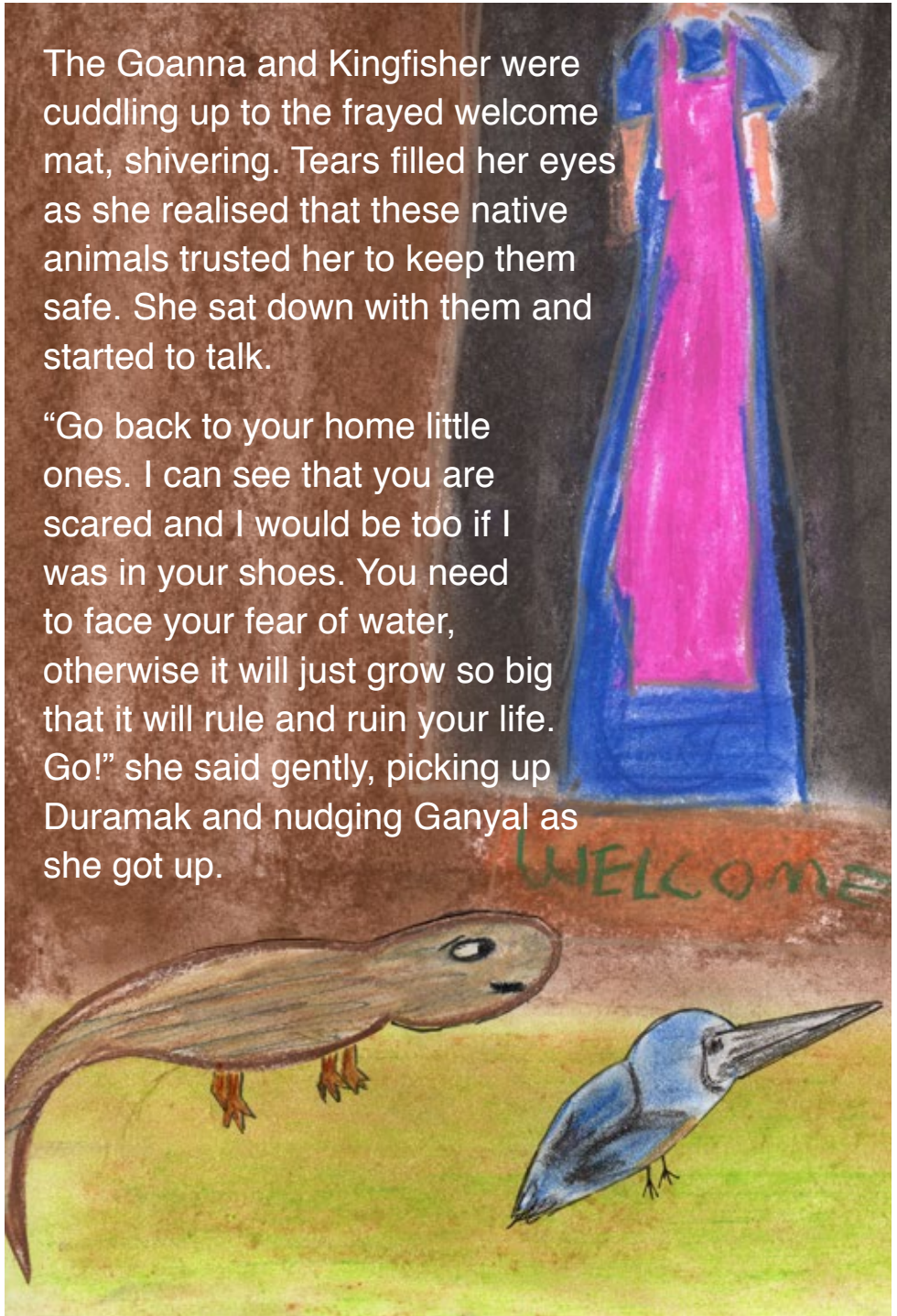
Yvonne sat in the old arm chair knitting and worrying about how Ganyal and Duramak were faring. Were they still on the doormat, or had they returned to the forest?

Worry soon forced her to go and check at the door.

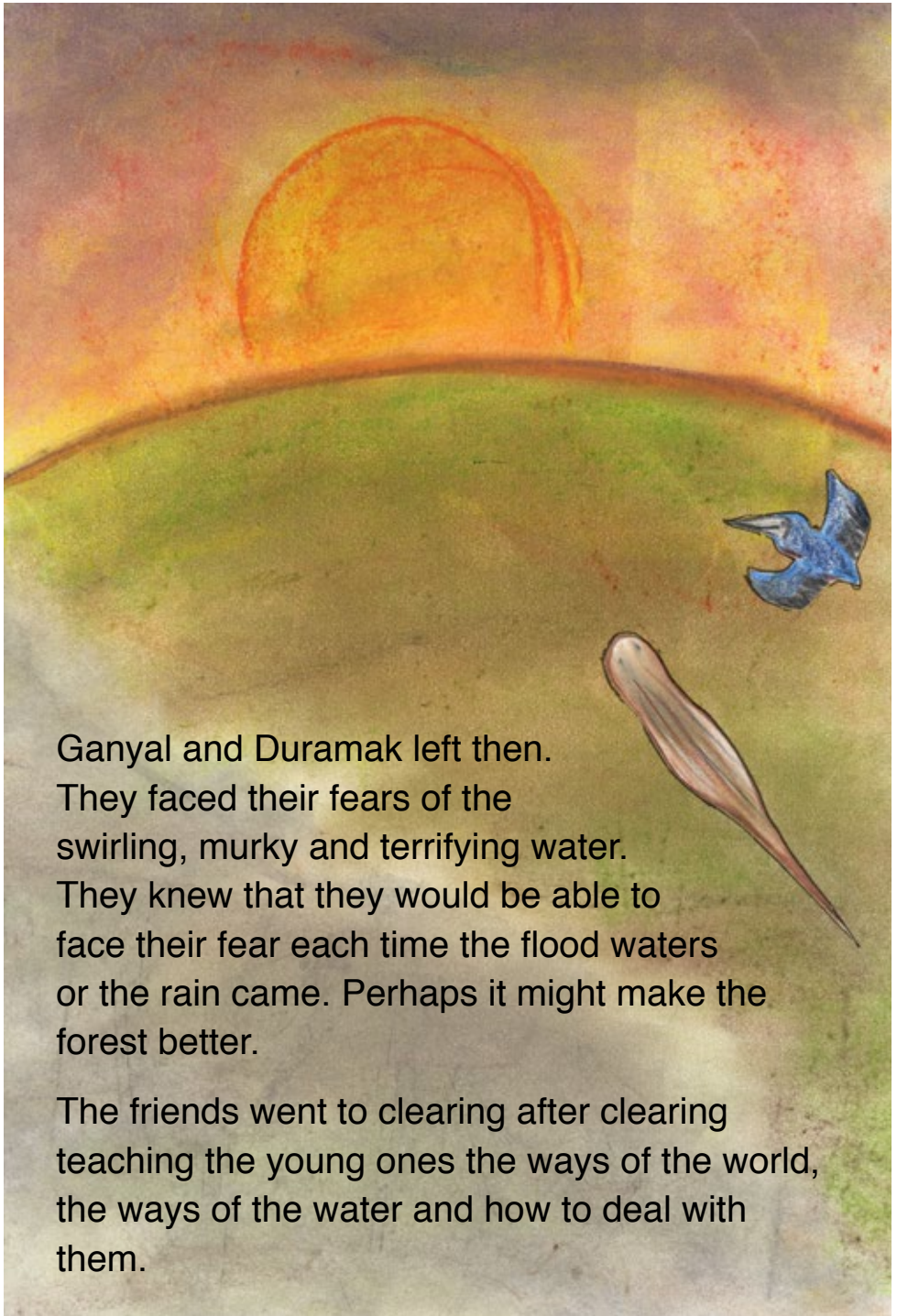


The Goanna and Kingfisher were cuddling up to the frayed welcome mat, shivering. Tears filled her eyes as she realised that these native animals trusted her to keep them safe. She sat down with them and started to talk.

“Go back to your home little ones. I can see that you are scared and I would be too if I was in your shoes. You need to face your fear of water, otherwise it will just grow so big that it will rule and ruin your life. Go!” she said gently, picking up Duramak and nudging Ganyal as she got up.







Ganyal and Duramak left then.  
They faced their fears of the  
swirling, murky and terrifying water.  
They knew that they would be able to  
face their fear each time the flood waters  
or the rain came. Perhaps it might make the  
forest better.

The friends went to clearing after clearing  
teaching the young ones the ways of the world,  
the ways of the water and how to deal with  
them.







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