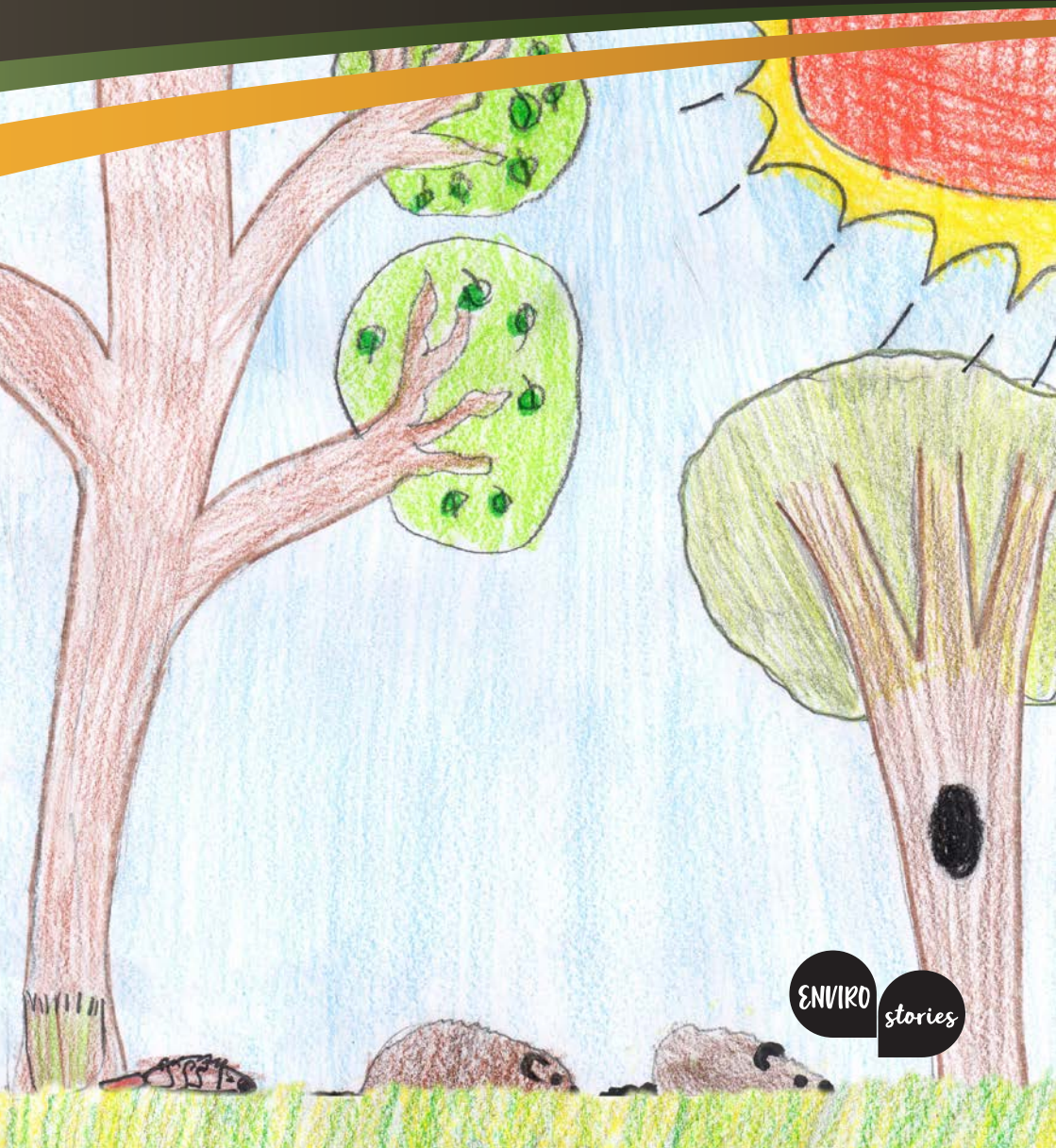


The Heath Mouse Family

Written & illustrated by Clair Harvey, Riley Edwards and Jaden Eiffler
from Moorine Rock Primary School



Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource management issues. Developed by PeekDesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

Wheatbelt NRM

Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Incorporated (Wheatbelt NRM) is an independent community-based organisation involved with natural resource management endeavours within the Avon River Basin.

www.wheatbeltnrm.org.au

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The Heath Mouse Family

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School: Moorine Rock Primary School



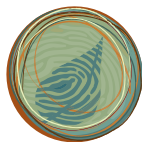
Hotspot Heroes

The Hotspot Heroes Enviro-Stories Program involved schools from the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia learning about the biodiversity, threatened species and feral animals in the Wheatbelt area. A Hotspot Hero is someone who is willing to stand up and take action to help prevent our threatened plants and animals from fading into oblivion.

This project is supported by Wheatbelt NRM through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



**National
Landcare
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**wheatbelt
natural resource
management**



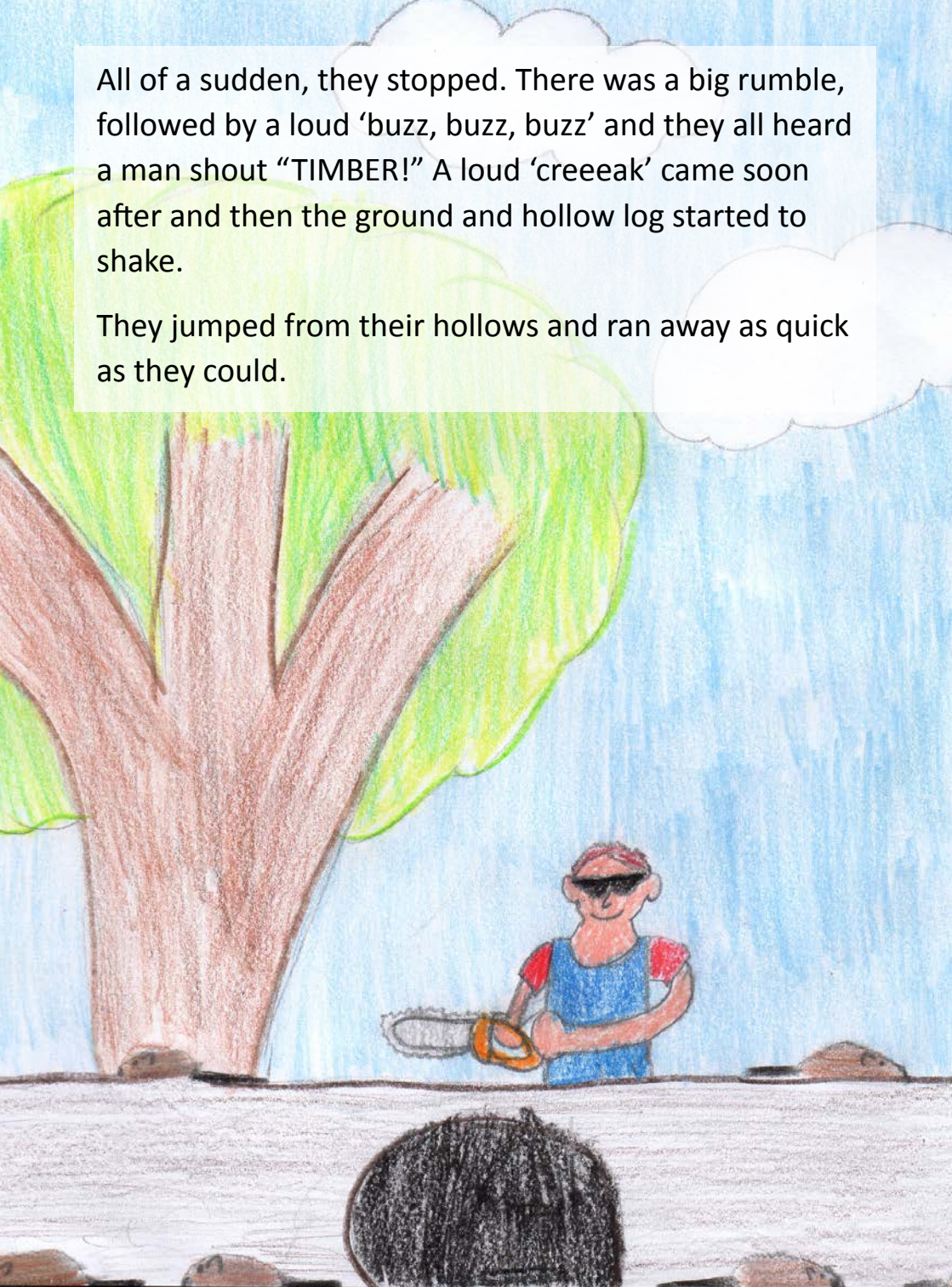
One day, on a cold winter morning in Mount Hampton, the heath mouse families were minding their own business. Patricia was finding food for her three daughters, Sarah, Maya and Isobel.



Just across the bush, Patricia's old friend Neville was fossicking with his three sons, Adam, Bailey and Oliver. The boys discovered a fallen hollow log, just metres from Patricia's shallow burrow and decided to make it home. When they were all settled in, they ate some grass heads for dinner.

All of a sudden, they stopped. There was a big rumble, followed by a loud 'buzz, buzz, buzz' and they all heard a man shout "TIMBER!" A loud 'creeeak' came soon after and then the ground and hollow log started to shake.

They jumped from their hollows and ran away as quick as they could.



All the heath mice looked around and spotted each other, then looked further and saw all the animals fleeing. The bush was being flattened! All the trees in their homeland were lying on the ground!

The men had sawn or pushed down every one of the trees, while a huge bulldozer was pushing all the shrubs and trees into a large pile.

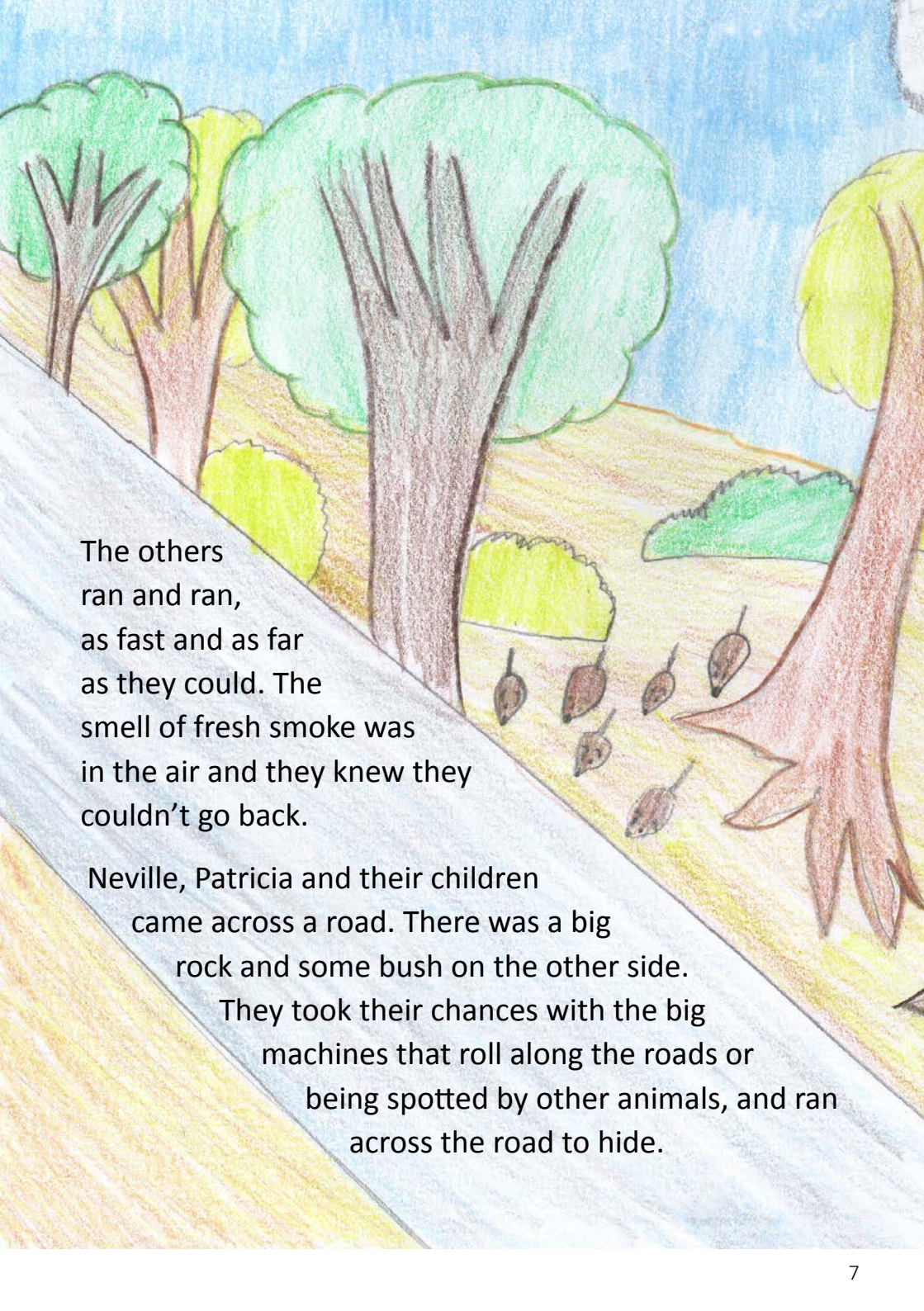
The two families met up, wondering what to do next.





No-one had noticed that there was a big tree behind them. Suddenly, there was a loud snap and a crack from behind them.

“Run quickly”, yelled Neville. Patricia, Adam, Oliver, Sarah and Maya ran, but Isobel and Bailey were too late and got flattened by the falling tree.

A colorful illustration of a landscape. In the foreground, a grey road curves from the bottom left towards the center. To the right of the road, there is a yellowish-brown field with several brown, leaf-like shapes scattered on it. In the background, there are several trees with green and yellow foliage and brown trunks. The sky is a light blue with some white clouds. The overall style is that of a children's book illustration.

The others
ran and ran,
as fast and as far
as they could. The
smell of fresh smoke was
in the air and they knew they
couldn't go back.

Neville, Patricia and their children
came across a road. There was a big
rock and some bush on the other side.

They took their chances with the big
machines that roll along the roads or
being spotted by other animals, and ran
across the road to hide.



As they were all trying to catch their breath, they heard a growl from behind them. They turned around and saw a fox.

The fox growled and licked his lips, so the families started to run again. This time, they went in different directions, but the fox was clever, faster and stronger. He caught Oliver by the tail and quickly ate him.



The remaining mice ran and escaped. They jumped into an old rabbit burrow at the base of a burnt out tree. None of the mice liked this place, the charred wood didn't feel homely, but they were exhausted. So they rested, feeling sad and thought of their lost family and friends.



After a while, Patricia said, “We need to head south. Things will be better south.” So off they headed.

After days of travel, they came across a patch of bush that felt just right. Nearby, they could see the home of a human, but the bush looked safe.

While exploring this new place they heard the strange tinkle of a bell. As they turned their heads towards the sound, they saw a horrid cat staring down at them.

They started to back away, but the cat started following them, crouching down, ready to pounce. The mice ran quickly but, the cat swiftly blocked them and separated Maya from the group.



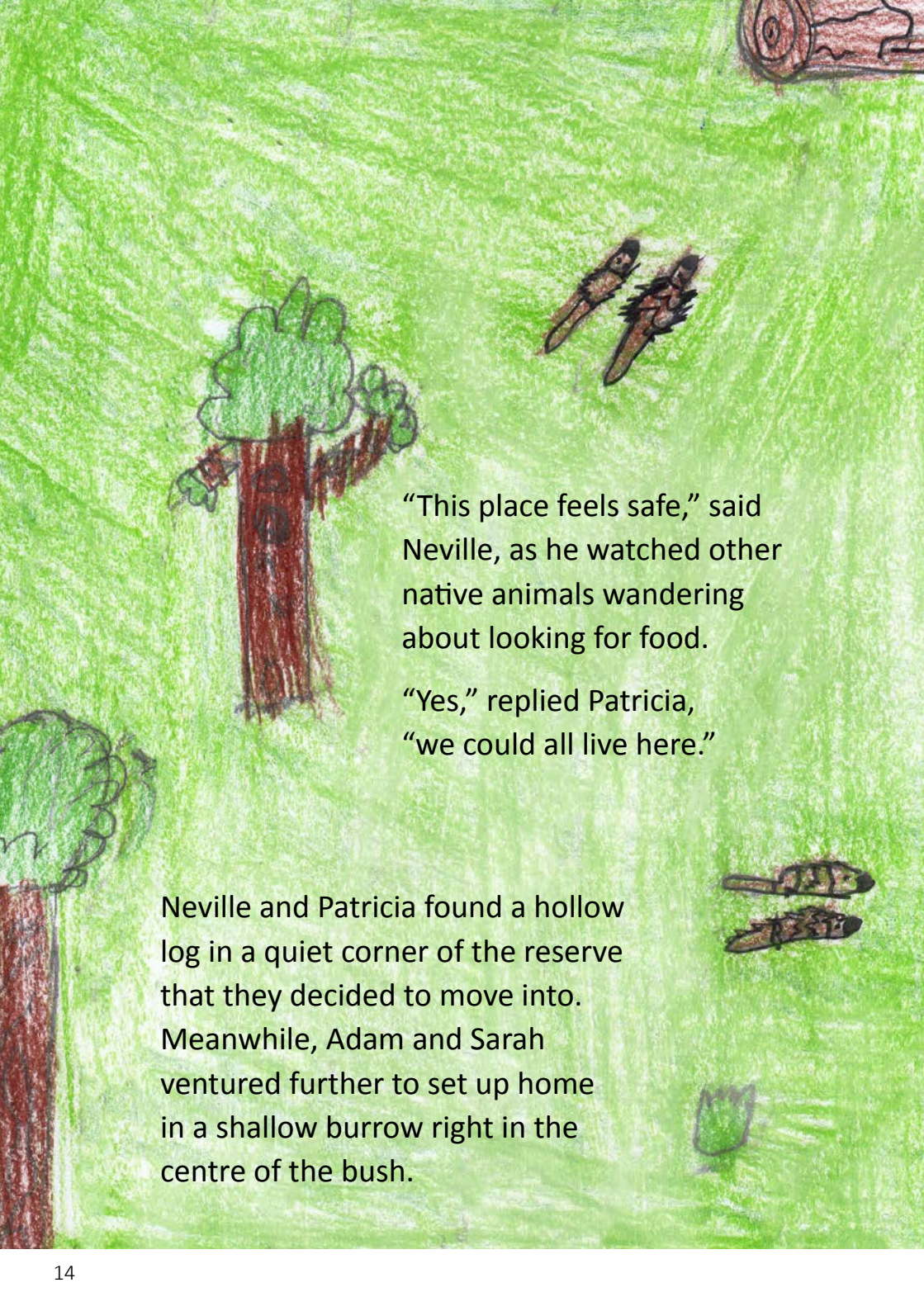


The cat opened its mouth, exposing sharp teeth to Maya. She squeaked in terror! The cat pounced, grabbed Maya and started thrashing her about in his mouth, as well as throwing her in the air and catching her again. It was a game to the cat, however it was the end for Maya.

The other mice wept as they ran away, but didn't stop running until they came across a tall fence.



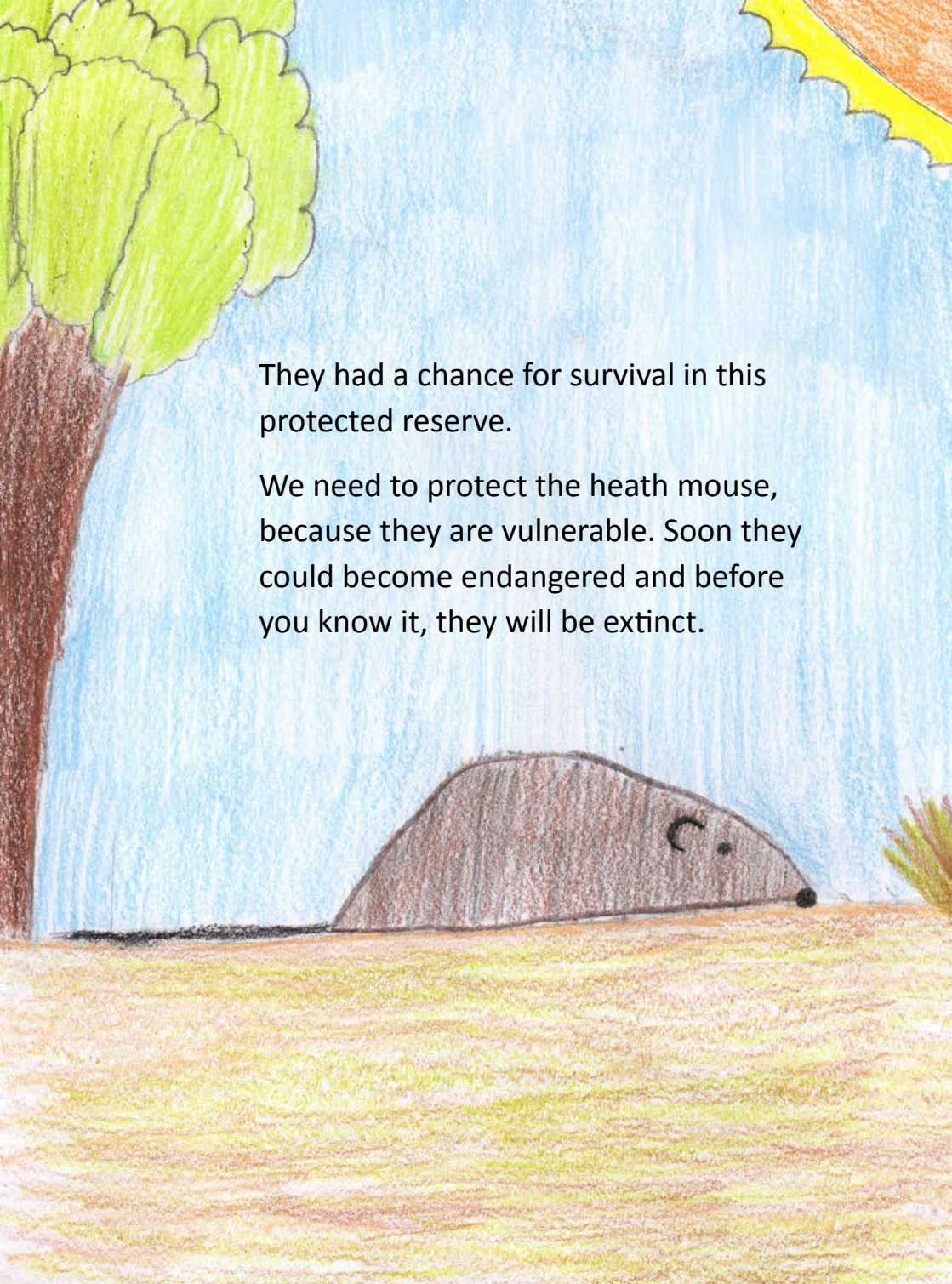
On the fence was a sign that said '1080 Poison', but they didn't know what this meant, so they went through the small holes in the fence. Inside the reserve there were plenty of hollow logs or shallow burrows they could call home. There was no foxy smell and no sign of cats.



"This place feels safe," said Neville, as he watched other native animals wandering about looking for food.

"Yes," replied Patricia, "we could all live here."

Neville and Patricia found a hollow log in a quiet corner of the reserve that they decided to move into. Meanwhile, Adam and Sarah ventured further to set up home in a shallow burrow right in the centre of the bush.



They had a chance for survival in this protected reserve.

We need to protect the heath mouse, because they are vulnerable. Soon they could become endangered and before you know it, they will be extinct.





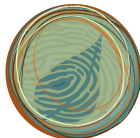
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