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Opening extract from

The Christmas Eve Tree

Written by

Delia Huddy

Illustrated by

Emily Sutton

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For Ben and Sydell

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THE CHRISTMAS EVE TREE

written by Delia Huddy



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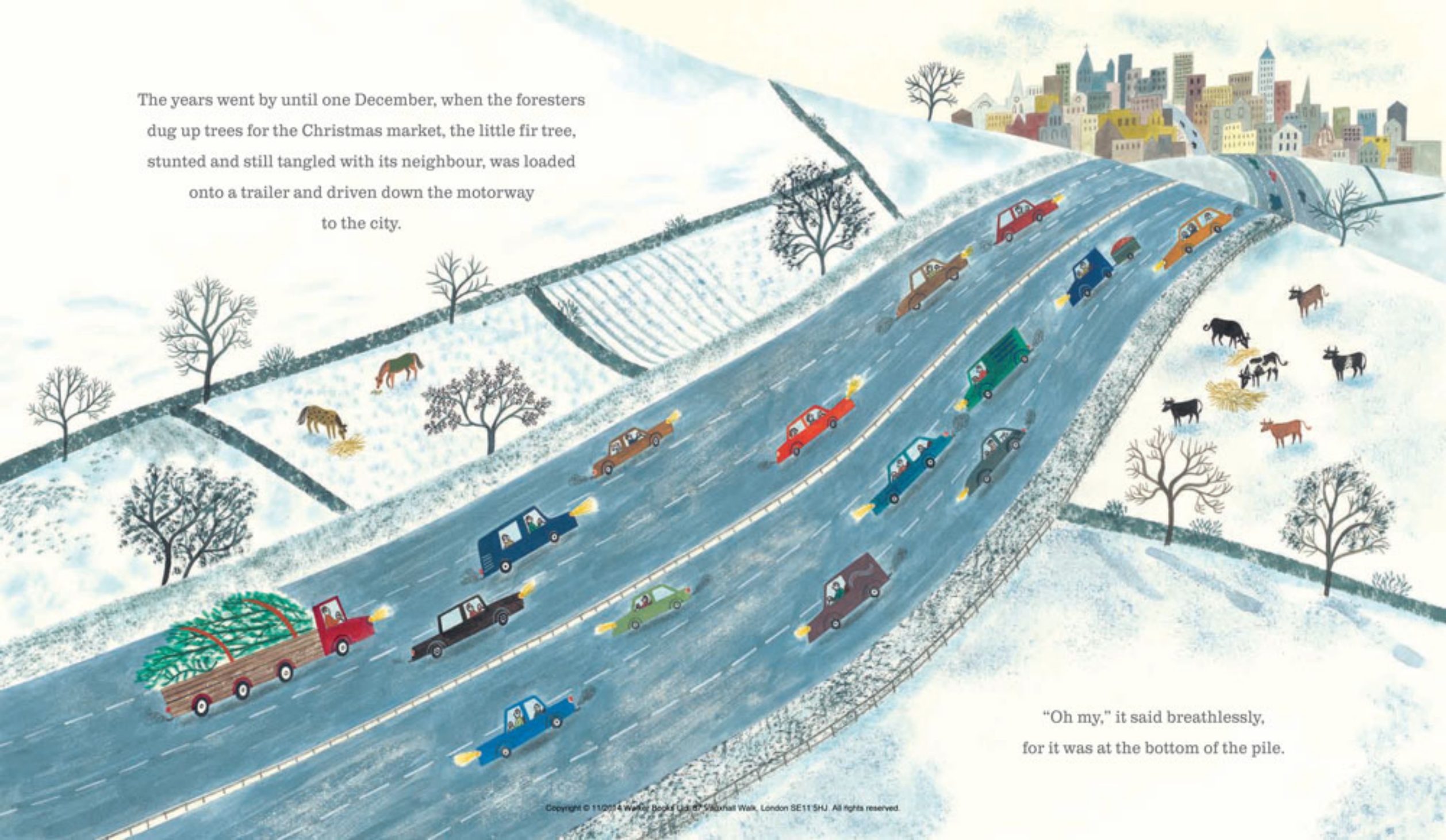
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A
forest of
Christmas trees
stretching over the hills.
That's where the story begins.
There the little fir tree was planted,
but planted carelessly
so that when the wind blew strong
it fell sideways on to its neighbour
and had no chance to grow.

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The years went by until one December, when the foresters dug up trees for the Christmas market, the little fir tree, stunted and still tangled with its neighbour, was loaded onto a trailer and driven down the motorway to the city.

"Oh my," it said breathlessly, for it was at the bottom of the pile.

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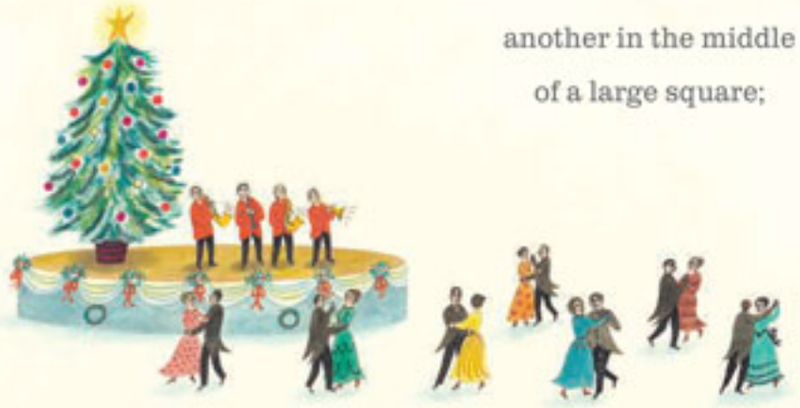


one to stand
proudly in a cathedral;

The tallest trees were unroped
and taken away:



another in the middle
of a large square;



and a third to decorate the stage at a grand Christmas ball.



But most of the trees were bought by ordinary folk, for houses
where there were children who covered them with stars
and silver tinsel, chocolate mice and small secret parcels.

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The little fir tree and its companion were taken to a large store,
where late on Christmas Eve they were the only trees left unsold.
A shopper hurried in to make a last minute purchase.
"You'll not want this weedy thing, miss,"
said the shop assistant, as he pulled the little fir tree
from the roots of the bigger tree and threw it on one side.
The customer smiled and went off, pleased with her buy.
But the little fir tree felt fearful of what its fate might be.

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