This book was co-written by Giles Clare

WONKY STAR
Published by Wonky Star
Wonky Star Ltd, 6-7 Great Newport St, Covent Garden, London WC2H 7JB

Night Zookeeper material © Wonky Star Ltd 2018
Text copyright © Wonky Star Ltd 2020
Illustrations copyright © Wonky Star Ltd 2018

First published 2018 by Oxford University Press
Published by Wonky Star Ltd 2020

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
without the prior permission in writing of Wonky Star Ltd,
or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,
Wonky Star Ltd, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

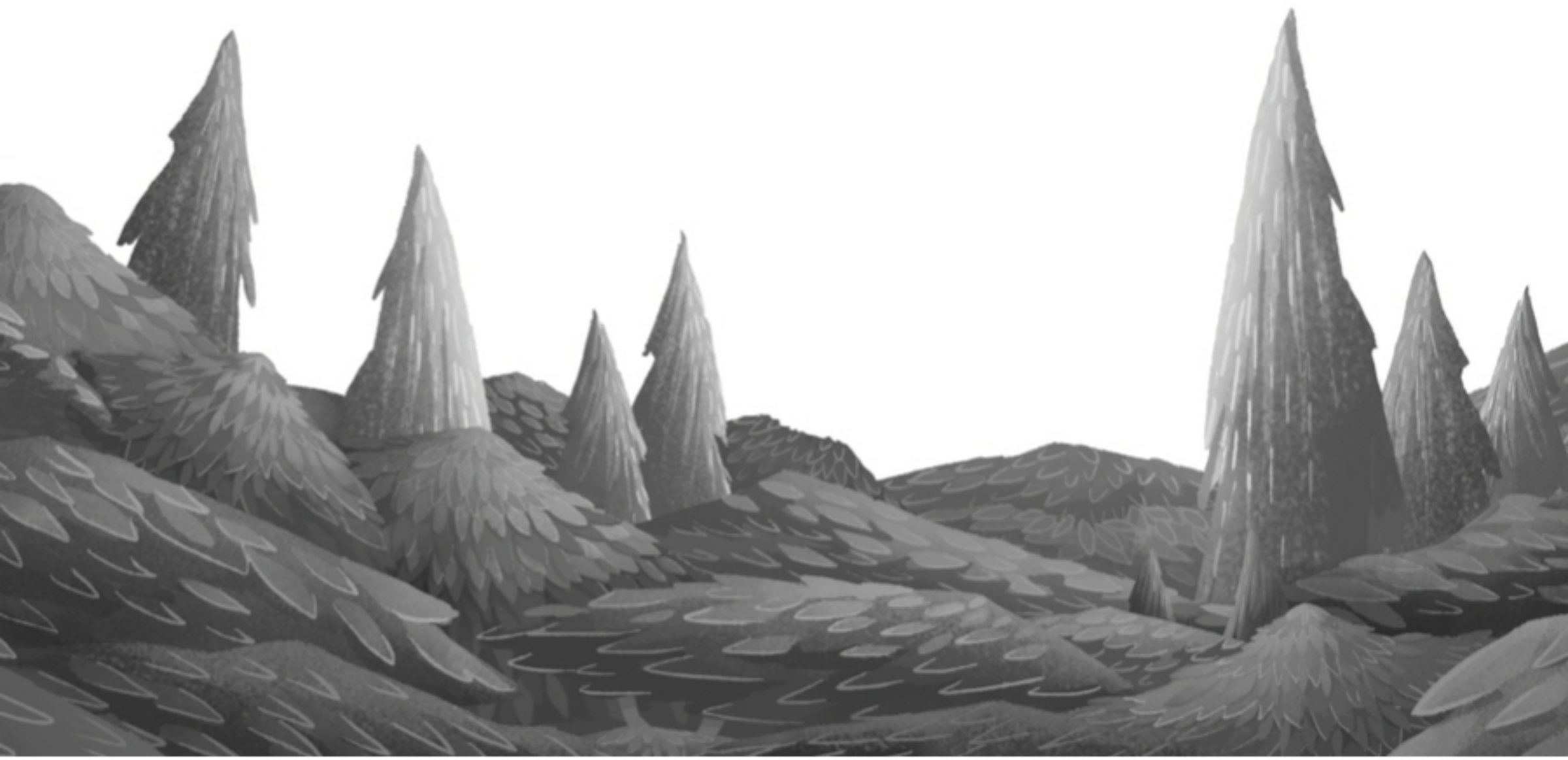
British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

ISBN: 978-0-9933839-3-9

Printed in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

Paper used in the production of this book is a natural,
recyclable product made from wood grown in sustainable forests.
The manufacturing process conforms to the environmental
regulations of the country of origin.



Meet the Characters



The new Night Zookeeper, a force for good in a magical world that's under threat from an evil army of darkness.



Loves adventuring to faraway places and always returns with plenty of stories to tell.



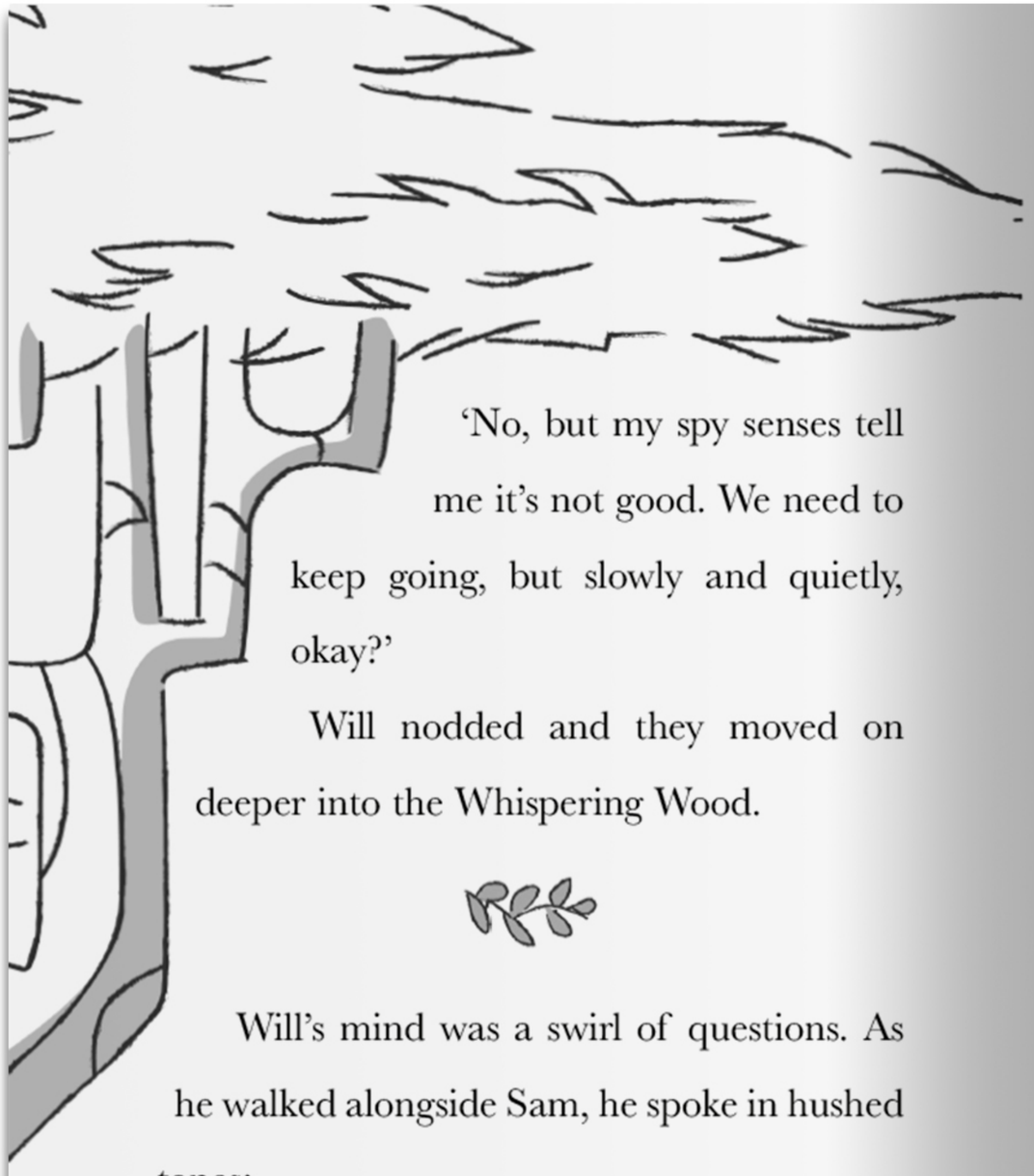
Fast, brave, impulsive. She never lets a silly thing like rules stand in her way.



Extremely tall and extremely clumsy, but when it comes to spying, he's the best.



Robotic spiders set on destroying the Night Zoo and plunging it into darkness.



'No, but my spy senses tell me it's not good. We need to keep going, but slowly and quietly, okay?'

Will nodded and they moved on deeper into the Whispering Wood.

Will's mind was a swirl of questions. As he walked alongside Sam, he spoke in hushed tones:

'Sam, where are we going?'

'To our camp. To all the other giraffes.'

'Are you all spies?'

'Yes, we are,' replied Sam proudly then hesitated. 'Although, technically, I'm not. Not yet.'

'Oh, how come?' asked Will.

'I'm still training,' said Sam with a sigh. 'Nneka—that's our leader—says I'm as clumsy as a bull in a china shop.'

'And what is this weird sphere-thingy?' asked Will. 'This gift from my grandma?'

Sam stopped for a few seconds and fixed his gaze on Will. 'It's called an Orb. It's a very special gift that only a Night Zookeeper has,' the giraffe replied.

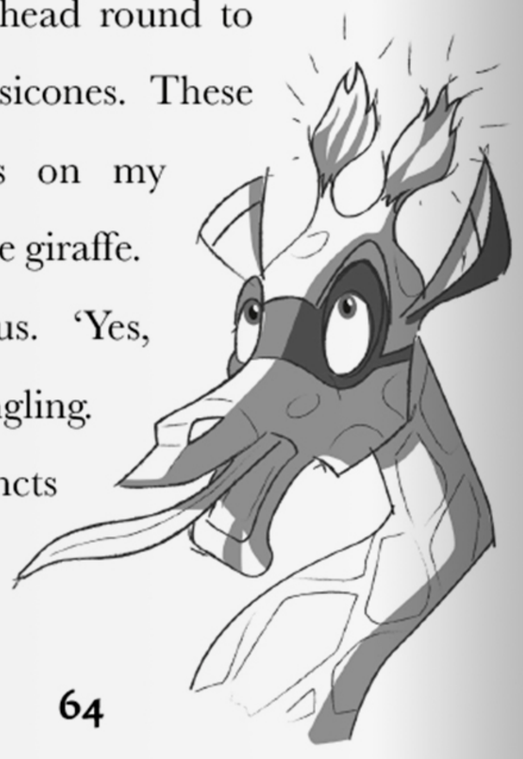
'Shhh!' said Sam, without looking back at Will.

Will peered around the giraffe's flank to see why Sam might have stopped. 'What is it?' he said quietly.

'My ossicones are picking something up.'

'Your what?' asked Will.

Sam swung his head round to face Will. 'My ossicones. These little horn things on my head,' explained the giraffe. He looked serious. 'Yes, there's a definite tingling. It's my spy instincts kicking in.'



They waited in silence for a few seconds and then Will heard something. At first, he thought it was a breeze rippling through the leaves overhead, but then he was sure he could hear voices. It sounded like a hundred people all talking as quietly as possible under their breaths.

'Who is that?' asked Will nervously.

'The trees,' replied Sam. 'We're in the Whispering Wood. The trees are talking to each other, passing on news.'

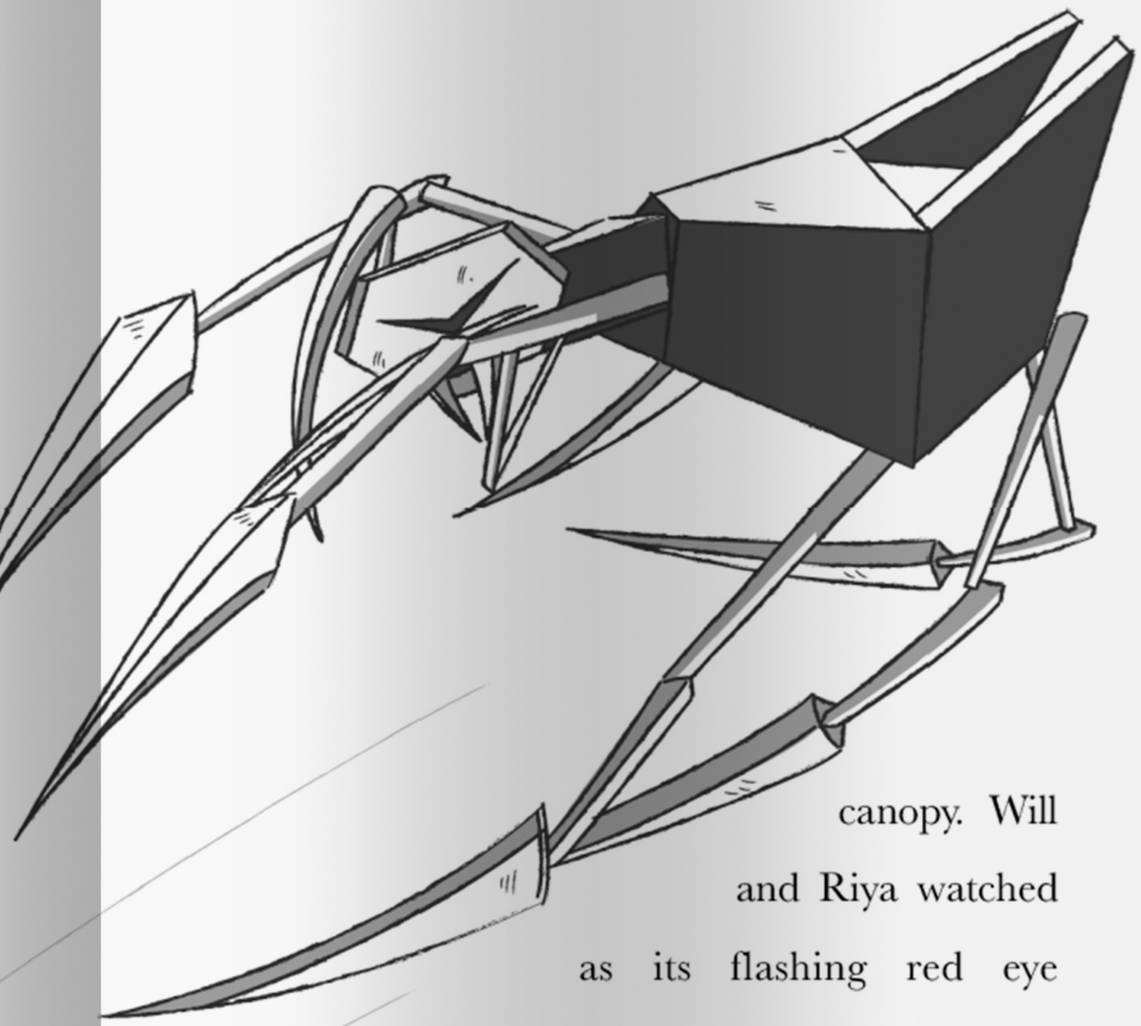
Will strained to pick out any words from the babble of whispering voices. 'Can you tell what they're saying, Sam?' he asked.

the Void's body. The Void hissed and gnashed its fangs. The bent stem creaked like the string of a bow, desperate to spring back into its natural shape.

Riya grinned down at Will. 'Give me a countdown then,' she said. 'Three!'

'Two! One!' shouted Will enthusiastically.

Riya released her grip and leapt aside onto the ground. Like a catapult, the huge flower stem pinged back up with incredible speed. The trapped Void was whipped into the air. At the top of the swing, the flower's jaws opened and the Void was thrown free. It hissed and squealed as it was launched up through the

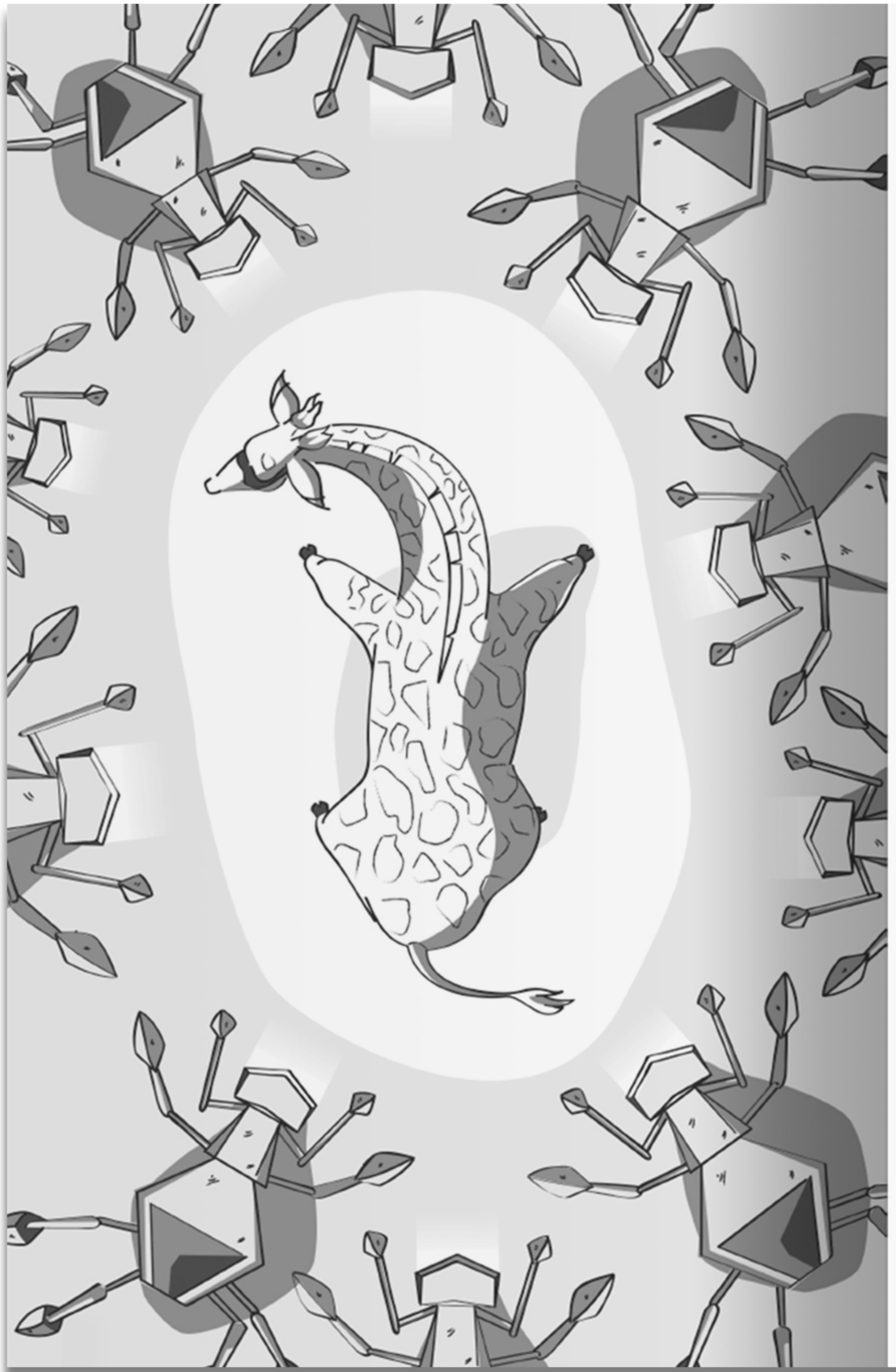


canopy. Will and Riya watched as its flashing red eye disappeared across the treetops.

Riya rushed over to Will.

'That was amazing!' he exclaimed.

Riya shrugged her shoulders casually. 'Your idea,' she replied.



The poor young giraffe looked terrified. Void Gunk dripped from his chin and dribbled down his neck and his long legs started to see-saw beneath him. Worse still, Sam seemed to be fading. Not like before. He wasn't becoming invisible. The colours were draining from Sam's coat, which became a patchwork of different shades of grey. Suddenly Sam was looking directly at Will through the crowd of Voids. Will saw the look of fear and helplessness on Sam's face. And then, to his dismay, Will saw the light in Sam's eyes fading as they became dull and unfocused. The young giraffe tottered drunkenly for a second or two before he keeled

tongue up her face. Dribble glistened in her hair.

Riya screwed up her face. 'Are you serious?' she exclaimed, and Will chuckled.

Sam grinned. 'The Void. Which way did it go?' he asked.

Will got to his feet gingerly. 'I'm not sure. That way I think,' he said.

Sam's eyes widened. 'You mean back towards the camp?'

'Oh,' said Will. 'We didn't exactly have time to aim.'

'We've got to go!' urged Sam. 'You need to save the others.'

'Hang on a sec,' said Will and looked around quickly. 'There you are,' he added and picked up the torch.

Will, Riya, and Sam set off back towards the giraffe camp as quickly and quietly as possible. Several Night Butterflies circled them, lighting the way.

'I thought I was imagining it when I saw you,' Will told Riya. 'How did you get here?'

'I saw you in the alley behind my house. I followed you through those glowing gates,' explained Riya.

Will filled Riya in on everything that had happened so far.

Will struggled to hold on to it as the beam moved across the night sky. The torch seemed to be guiding his hand and the beam was carving out a blazing symbol in the darkness above: a huge eternity symbol. Will, Riya, and the giraffes watched in awe as a strange landscape started to appear within the floating symbol: a huge expanse of moonlit sand; a long, snaking dune; and a silvery lake surrounded by palms. Most strangely, spiralling columns of flames like whirling, fiery trees dotted the desert landscape.

