

Beaver Tales

written by: H.C. MacArthur illustrated by: Anna Koot



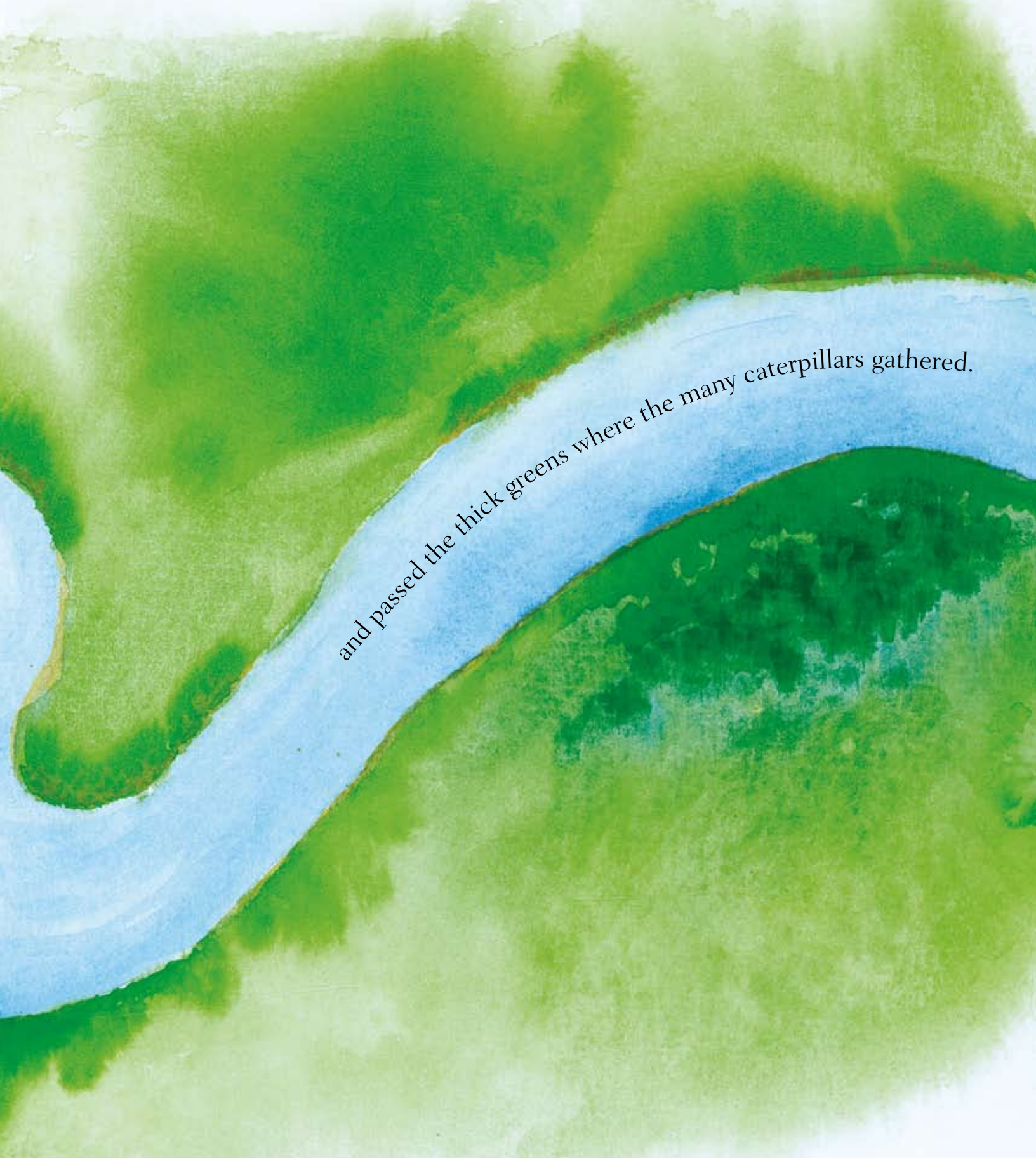




There was a place
where the beavers
lived,



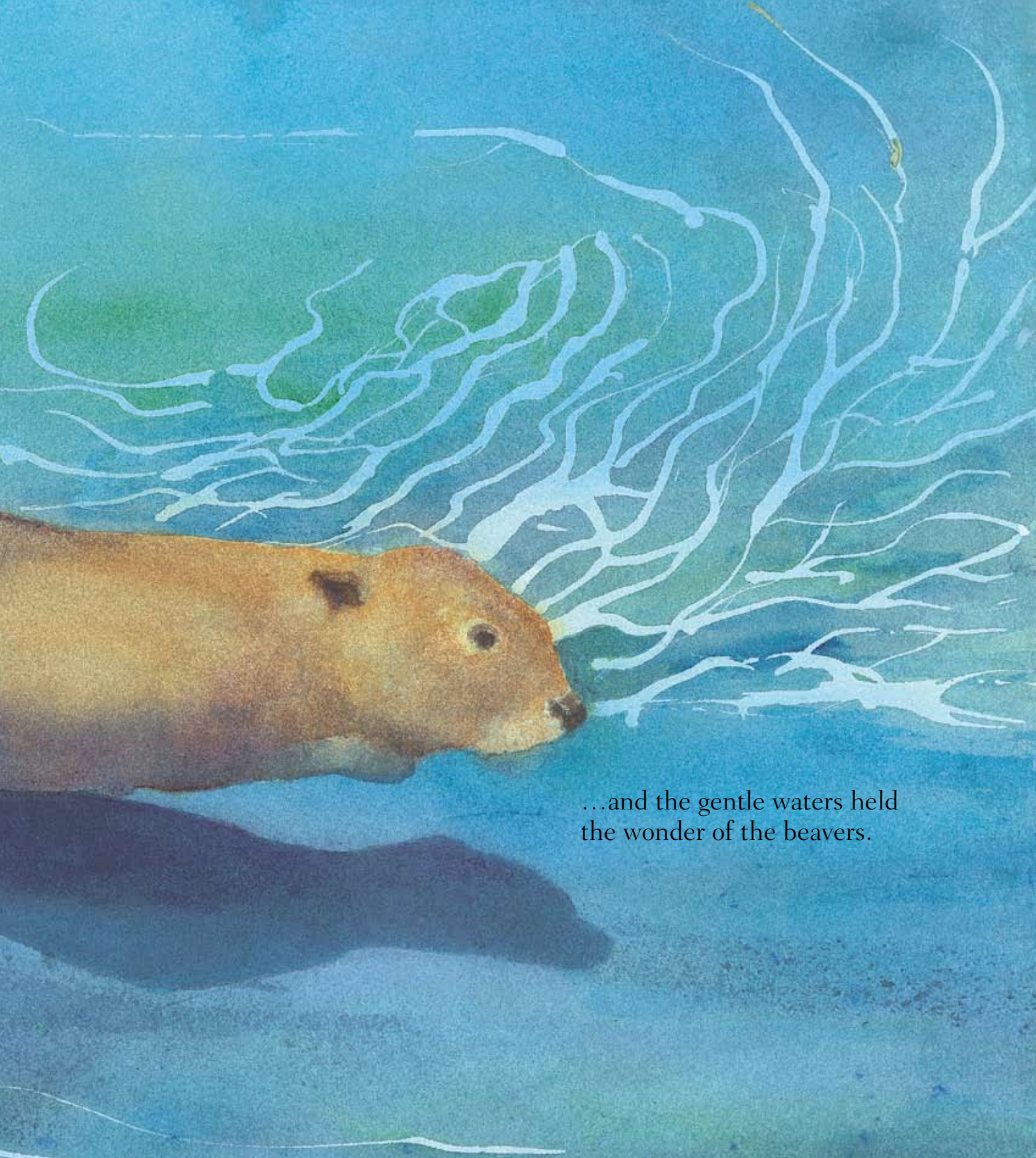
where the river flowed around a bend...



and passed the thick greens where the many caterpillars gathered.

There, the river widened...



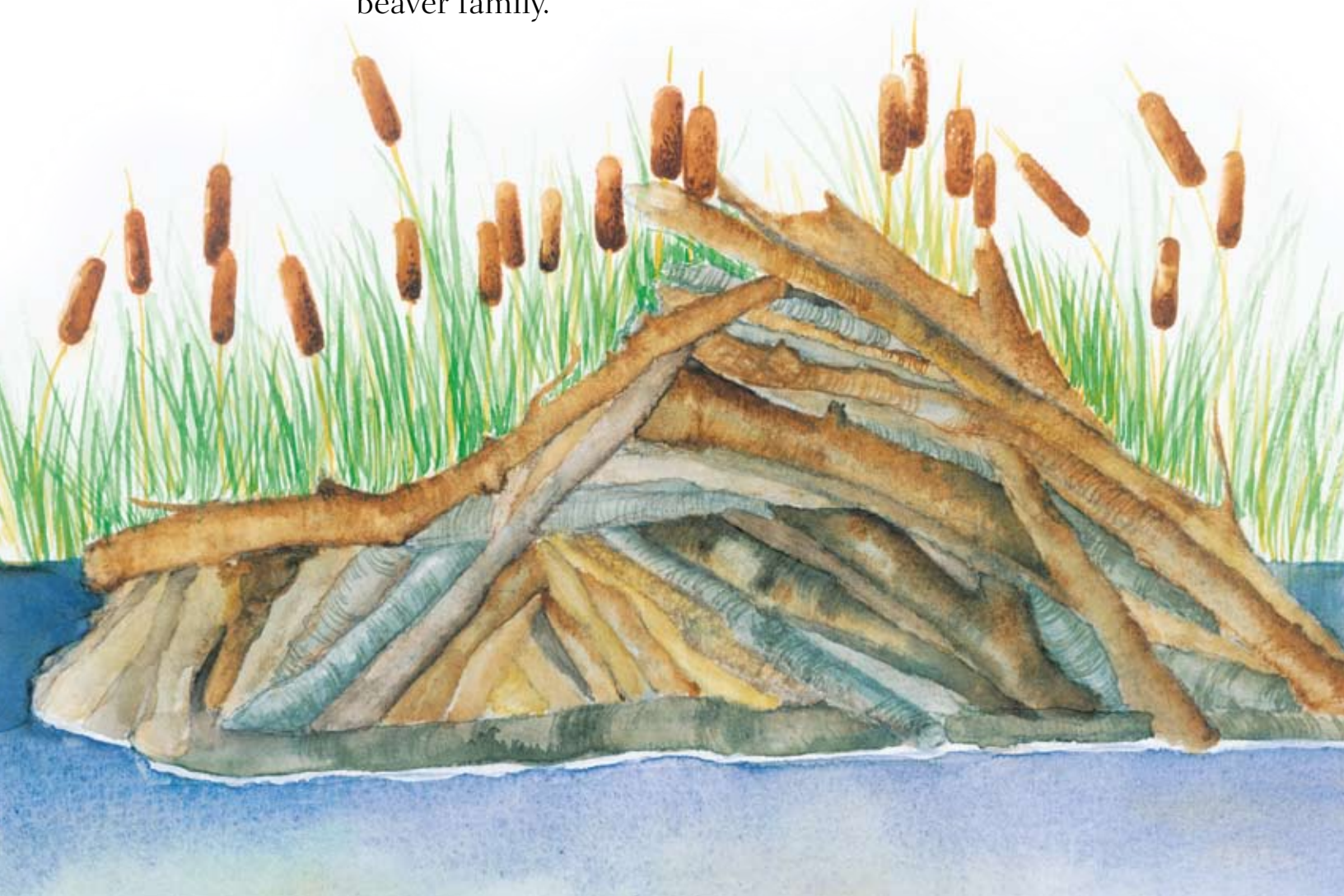


...and the gentle waters held
the wonder of the beavers.

It was there as well, that the beaver's dam could be spotted from the riverbank.

It was a big, strong-looking home, but it looked cozy as well with the extra room that had been built on one side, and the many cattails surrounding it.

In that room lived the grandfather of this beaver family.



Now, Grandpa hadn't always lived in this home.

Not when he was younger, raising his own kits;
and not even after they had grown up and left
home.

But, now that he had gotten older, he needed
some help with his daily chores, so he decided to
move in with his family.



The family loved Grandpa and were
happy to have him join them.

He and his grandson Howard had always been close, and now they were able to enjoy even more of each other's company.



With Grandpa there, Howard always had someone to spend time with.

Grandpa would take the time to talk and play with Howard as well as teach him many new things.






When they finished gathering bark or doing any other chores that had been left for them, they would wrestle or play hide-and-go-seek together.



Sometimes, they would *slap* their tails on the water just to see who could make the loudest noise.



A watercolor illustration of a brown animal's tail splashing in blue water. The tail is a solid brown shape, partially submerged, with a large splash of white water and blue droplets erupting from its tip. The background is a textured blue wash representing the water, with a white, hazy area at the top. The text "Grandpa usually won since his tail was bigger!" is written in a black serif font across the middle of the image.

Grandpa usually won since his tail was bigger!

The one thing that Howard loved the VERY most about spending time with his grandfather was listening to the stories he would tell.

They were the most amazing stories, and every single day Grandpa told Howard a brand new one that he had never heard before.



Howard was always eager to hear a new 'Beaver Tale,' as they jokingly called Grandpa's stories.



One day, the two were working on gathering new wood, a job they did once every week.

Howard noticed his grandpa was frustrated, and that doing this job seemed to be taking all of his concentration, even though they had done it many times before.

Howard asked, “Grandpa, why don’t you tell me a ‘Beaver Tale’ while we do this?”

“We already had a ‘Beaver Tale’ today Howard!” snapped Grandpa.



Howard knew that they had not shared a story that day, but Grandpa seemed so overwhelmed that Howard decided he must be having a bad day and did not say anything more.

It seemed that Howard was right, because Grandpa was his same happy self the next day, and for many days after.

After helping with the neighbourhood cleanup a few weeks later, Howard came home and no one was there.

When he noticed tracks going down to the riverbank and into the water, Howard thought that Grandpa must have decided to go for a swim and lost track of time.

He jumped up onto the lookout rock that all the beavers used to see past the river flats.

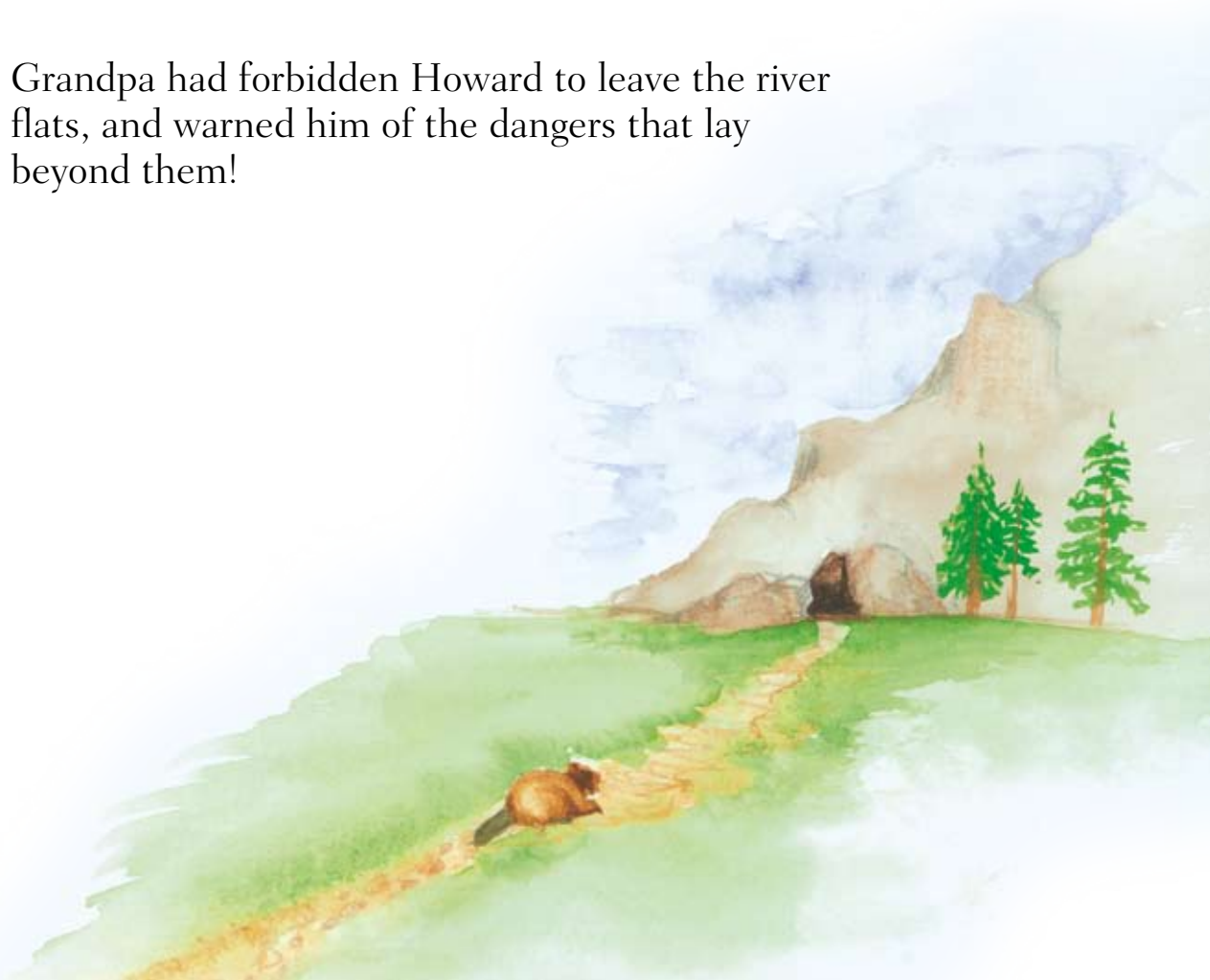


Far in the distance, he saw Grandpa walking down the narrow dirt path that led to the bear cave!

Howard ran as fast as his short little legs would carry him.

What was Grandpa doing?!

Grandpa had forbidden Howard to leave the river flats, and warned him of the dangers that lay beyond them!



When Howard got to him, he found Grandpa was very confused and scared.

When Grandpa saw Howard, he looked relieved but also a little embarrassed.

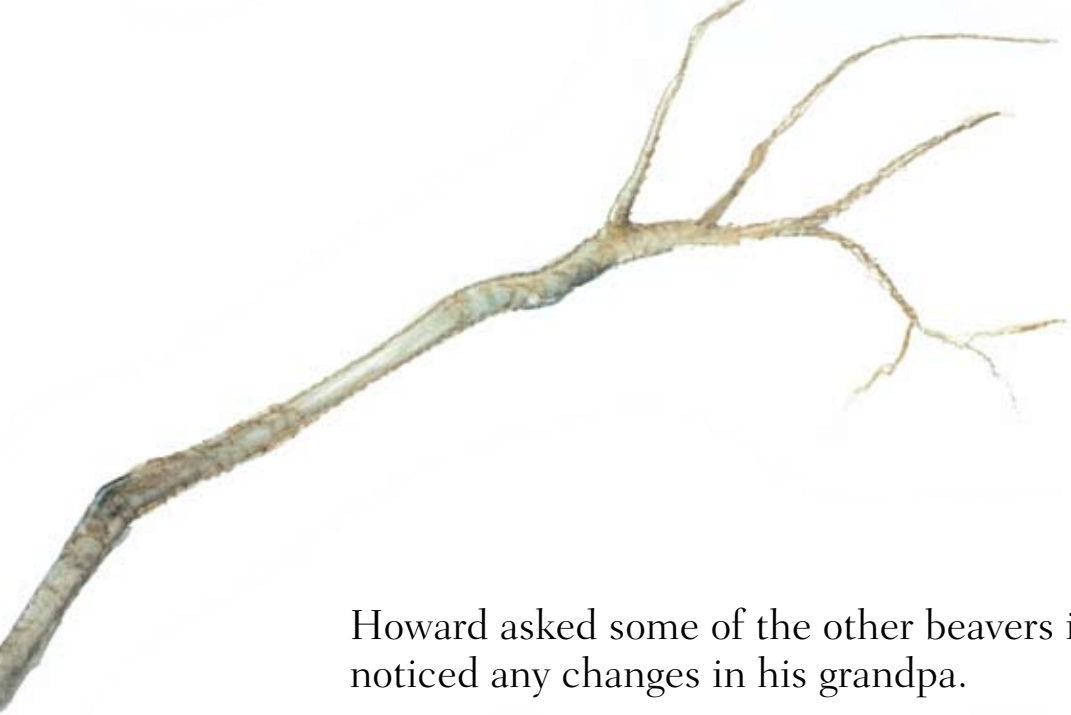
Howard took his grandpa's hand and together they made their way back home.



As it turned out, after swimming Grandpa had gotten out of the water on the wrong side of the river and had started walking to where he thought his home should be.

Howard didn't want Grandpa to worry, so they settled back into their normal routine at the lodge.





Howard asked some of the other beavers if they had noticed any changes in his grandpa.

Some had noticed that Grandpa sometimes forgot names or where he had put something.

One of Grandpa's best friends even said he had not come for his Tuesday visit until Thursday that week!

The more Howard heard, the more he understood that there was something about his grandpa that was changing.



Howard went to visit the beaver who lived under the shade of the big oak trees. He was a wise old beaver, older than Grandpa, but he didn't seem to have the same problems.

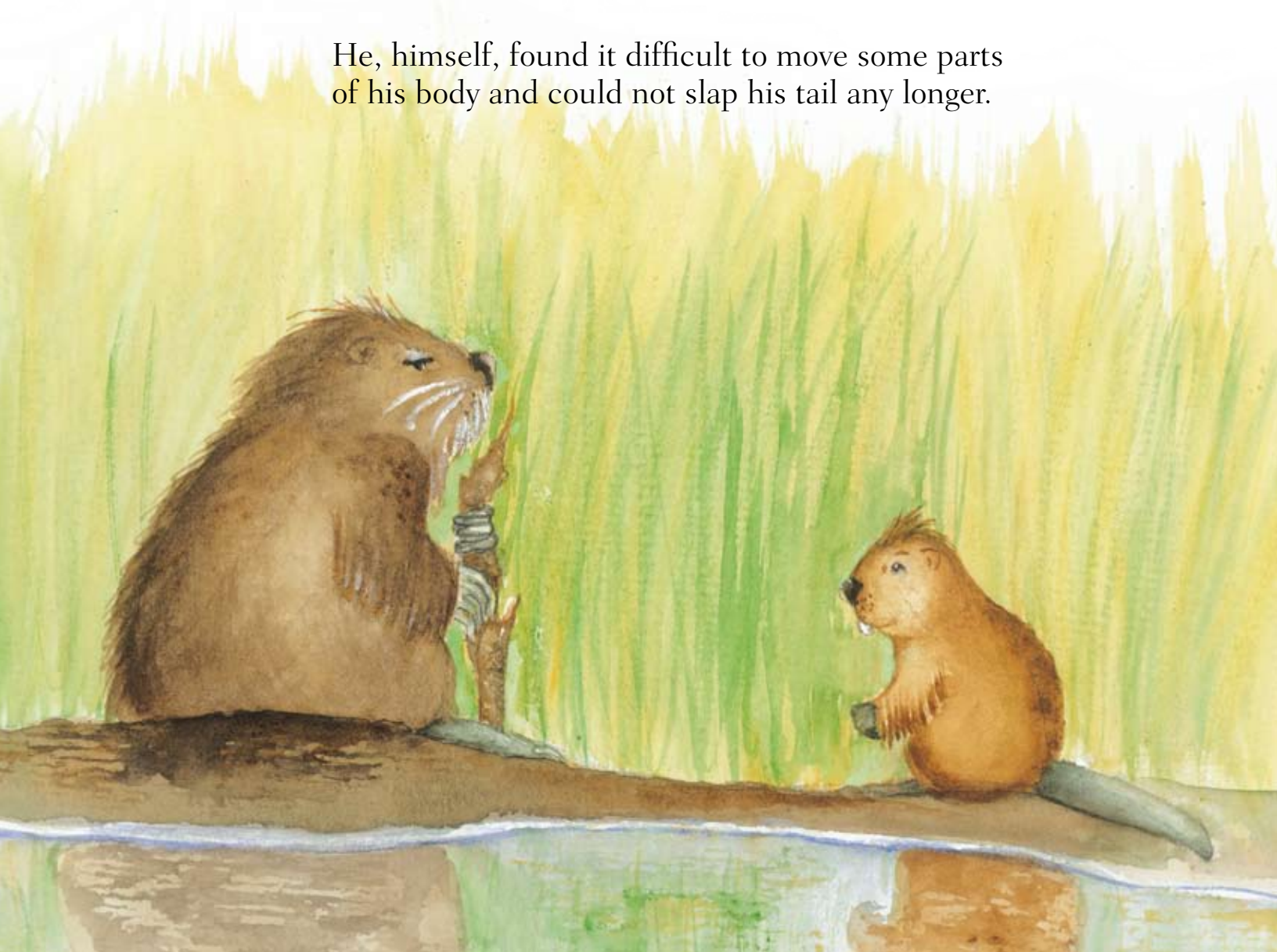
Howard asked him if he knew what was happening to his grandpa.

The wise old fellow told him that he knew of another beaver who had similar problems, but that she did not get better.

That made Howard think perhaps Grandpa had caught the sickness from her, but the beaver said that you could not catch it.

The old beaver went on to explain that some beavers did not have any problems as they aged while others had problems such as being confused, or having trouble remembering things.

He, himself, found it difficult to move some parts of his body and could not slap his tail any longer.



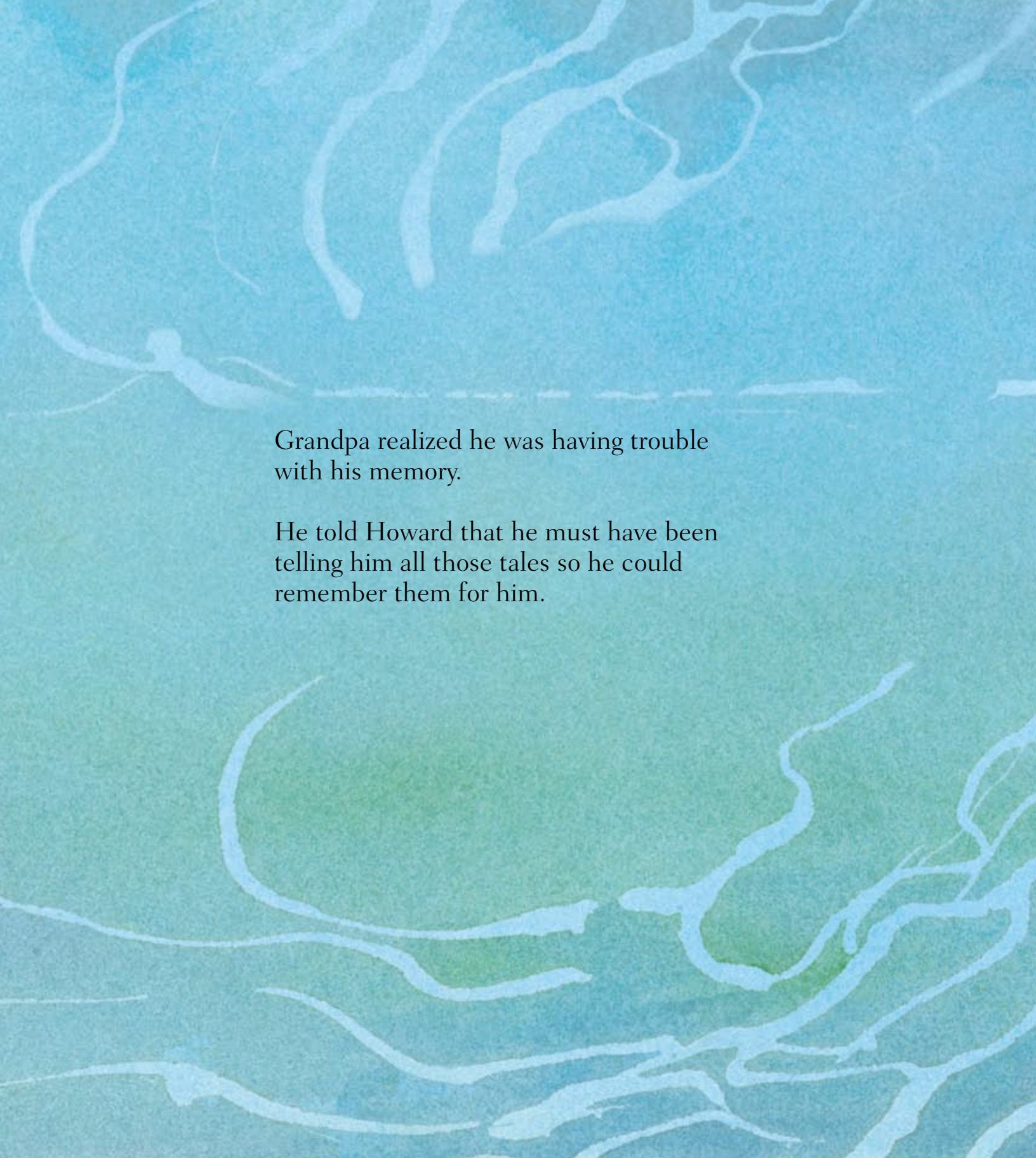
It made Howard very sad to learn that his grandpa wasn't going to get better, but he was determined to help him with the things that confused him. After all, Grandpa had helped Howard so many times.

At first, Howard would remind Grandpa of little things, like which direction he needed to go, when it was time to eat, or where he had put something.

At times Grandpa could not find the exact word he was looking for. Sometimes he would just call Howard, 'boy.'

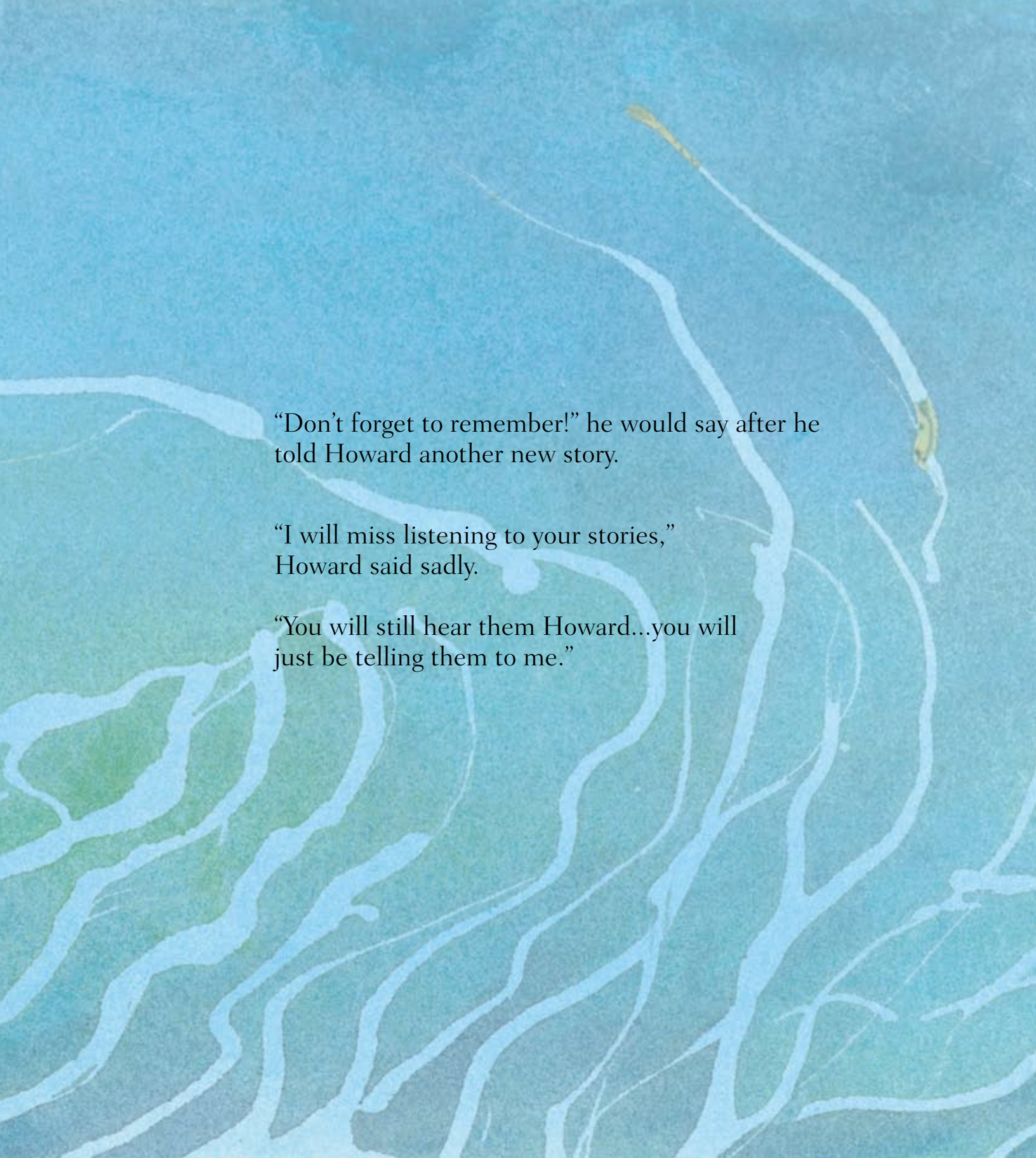
Often Howard could help Grandpa feel content just by sitting near him.





Grandpa realized he was having trouble
with his memory.

He told Howard that he must have been
telling him all those tales so he could
remember them for him.



“Don’t forget to remember!” he would say after he told Howard another new story.

“I will miss listening to your stories,”
Howard said sadly.

“You will still hear them Howard...you will just be telling them to me.”

So, every day Howard and his grandpa
still shared a 'Beaver Tale.'



Usually they took turns telling stories. Some days, Howard would start a story and Grandpa would finish it.



As time went on, Howard was the only
one who told the stories.

Whenever he finished one though,
Grandpa would still smile and nod.



From the Author

In my life I have met many people who will never know how special they were to me because, in fact, they will not remember having met me at all.

Many of these people already had Alzheimer's disease or dementia when I came to know them and it has always been my honour to help them and their families at such a personal time.

Due to the tremendous talents of Anna Koot, the story of 'Beaver Tales' has come to life. She does so much more than paint these incredible pictures. She's a great support, has wonderful insight, gets genuinely excited with me and makes great coffee. I am truly blessed to have her as a friend as well as a creative partner.

Through teaching children in elementary schools about Alzheimer's disease, I came to believe there was a need for this book. Hopefully it will help clarify this subject and heighten awareness and compassion when children meet people with these difficulties.

We are excited to show the world our second book and are very grateful to all the people who have encouraged and supported us along this path.

Also available from More Than Words Books – **Henry and Harriet**



This is a book that tackles the overwhelming subject of death. It gives hope for the life after and most importantly validates the feelings of those left behind. For more information about Henry and Harriet, or to order a copy, please visit our website at www.morethanwordsbooks.ca



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