



written by KAREN BENTZ illustrations by PINKIE MISTRY



*There was once
a tribe of Cherokee Indians
who lived at the summit of the tallest mountain
in the vast eastern forest of Tennessee.
The wise chief, Standing Bear and his Queen,
Bright Flower were the proud parents of twins.....*





*the legend of **Anakeesta***



... *A* girl named ANA, who was
kind and intelligent as well as the *swiftest*
runner in the forest. Her brother, *Keesta*,
was known to be *brave and strong*.

Together, their name, ANAKEESTA
means the *tallest summit of the forest*.
The Chief and his Queen *wished*
for their children to *become strong, wise*
leaders of the tribe on the
mountain top.



the legend of Anakeesta

The tribe of Indians were *Caretakers of the earth* and were able to speak to the trees and the *forest creatures*, but *Ana* and her brother, *Keesta* appeared to have the *strongest* of these gifts.

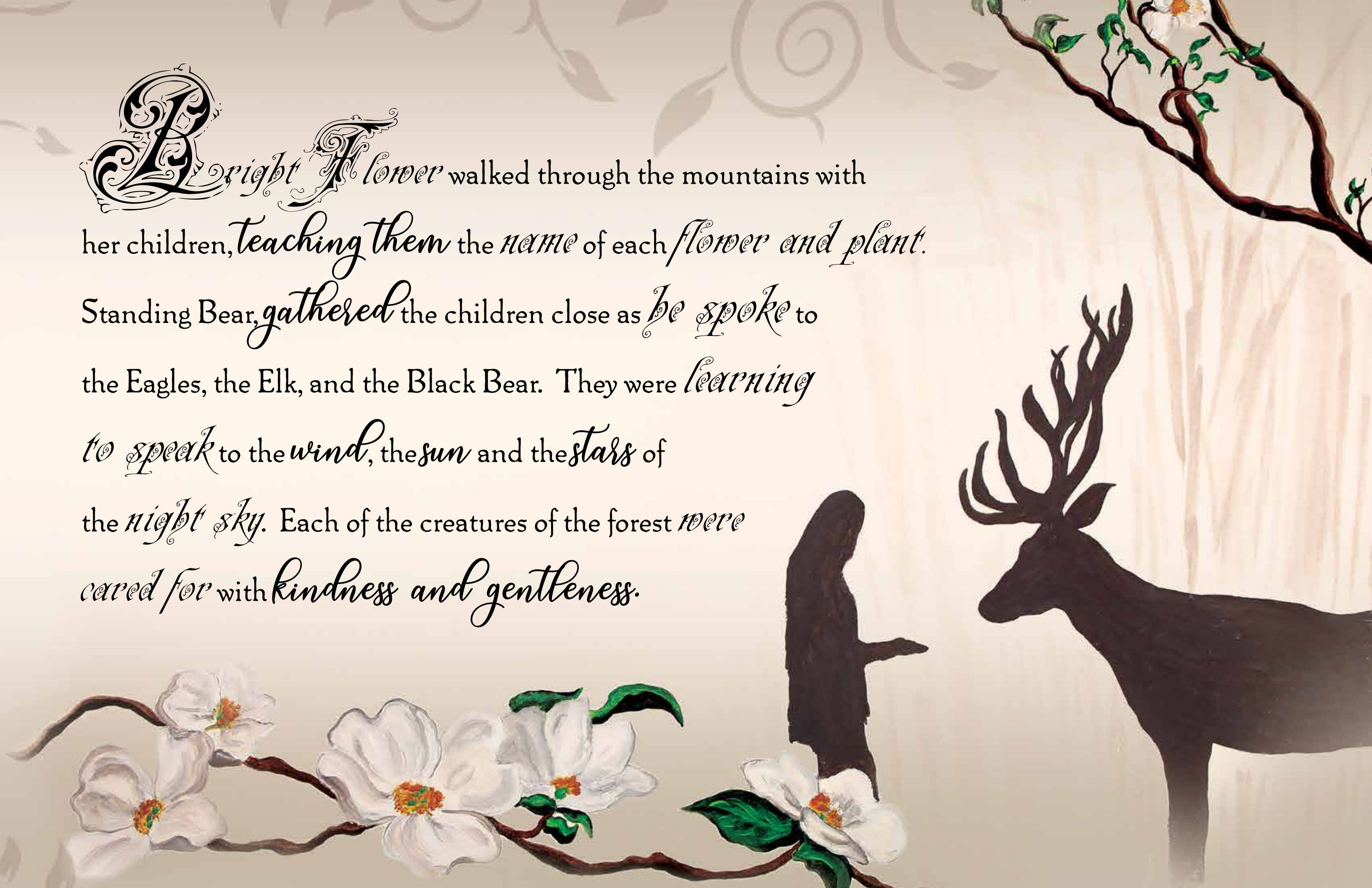
They spent many hours in the forest each day caring for the *small creatures* and *tending* to the *trees and flowers*.





the legend of Anakeesta

*B*right Flower walked through the mountains with her children, *teaching them* the *name* of each *flower and plant*. Standing Bear, *gathered* the children close as *he spoke* to the Eagles, the Elk, and the Black Bear. They were *learning* *to speak* to the *wind*, the *sun* and the *stars* of the *night sky*. Each of the creatures of the forest *were* *cared for* with *kindness and gentleness*.





*A*na would give each flower a special name

and would welcome the birth of each new flower. In the

early morning, she would walk about dusting the

flowers with new seeds and spores to encourage the
growth of the forest.





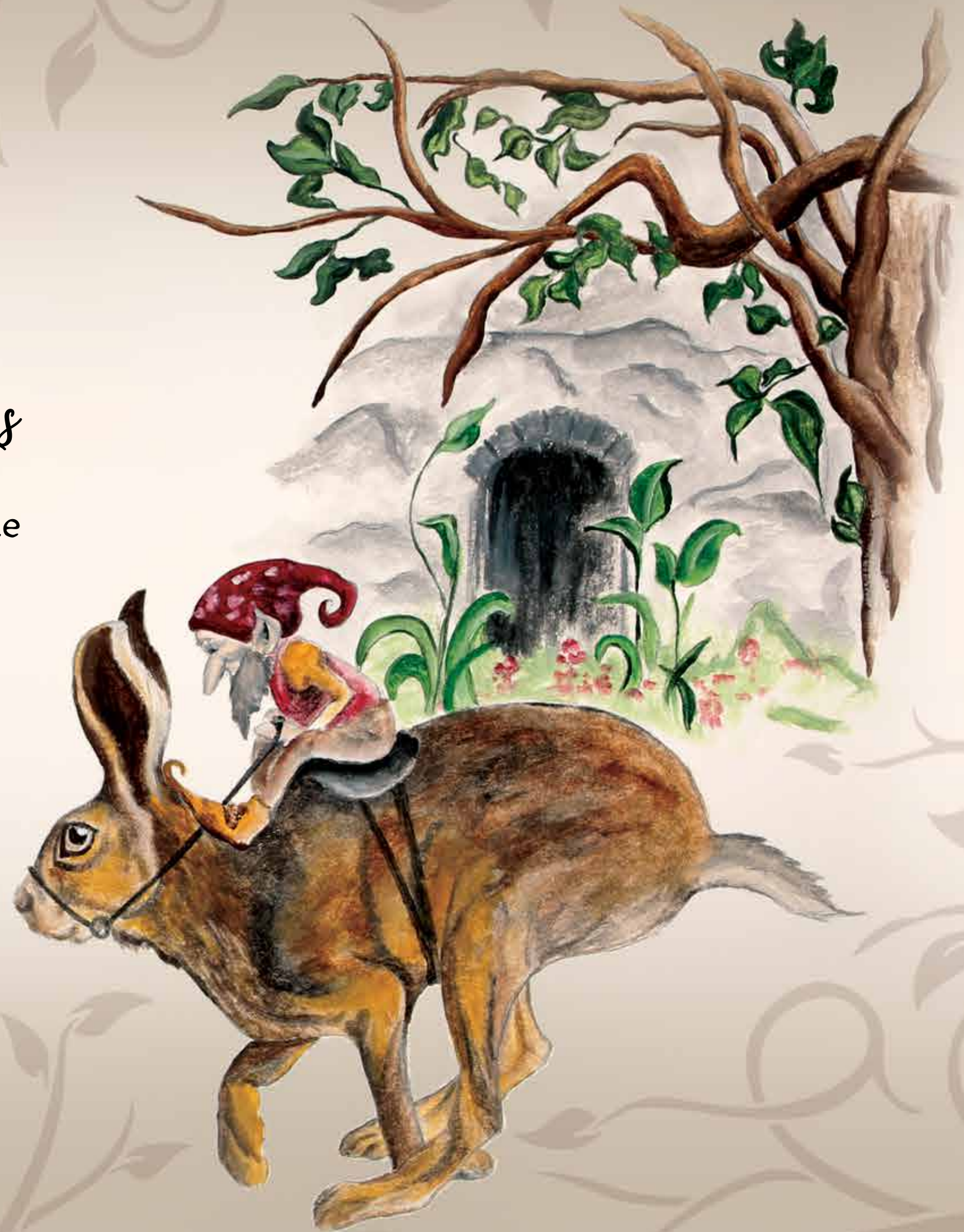


*B*right Flower introduced her children to the *Fairies, the Gnomes* and the *Little People* that lived in the forest and were also *caretakers of the earth*. She would sit her children in a *quiet forest glade* and wait *very patiently* as they *appeared* at dawn or late after sunset, *cautiously joining* Bright Flower and her children under the *forest canopy*.



*the legend of **Anakeesta***

The children adored the fairies,
who would flit about on *transparent wings*
while the gnomes would ride on the backs of the
rabbits to the clearing to *see the twins*.
The Little People lived in the nearby *caves*
with the bears and would *cautiously*
visit when the children would *bring*
them honey.

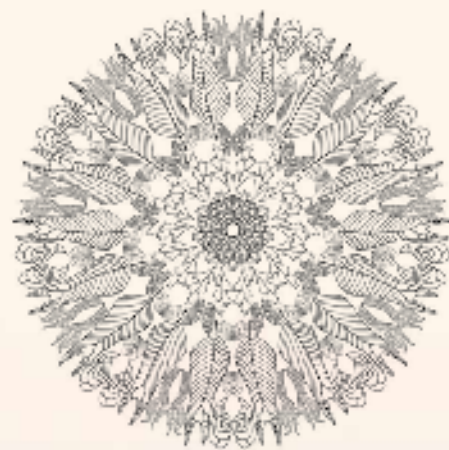




the legend of Anakeesta

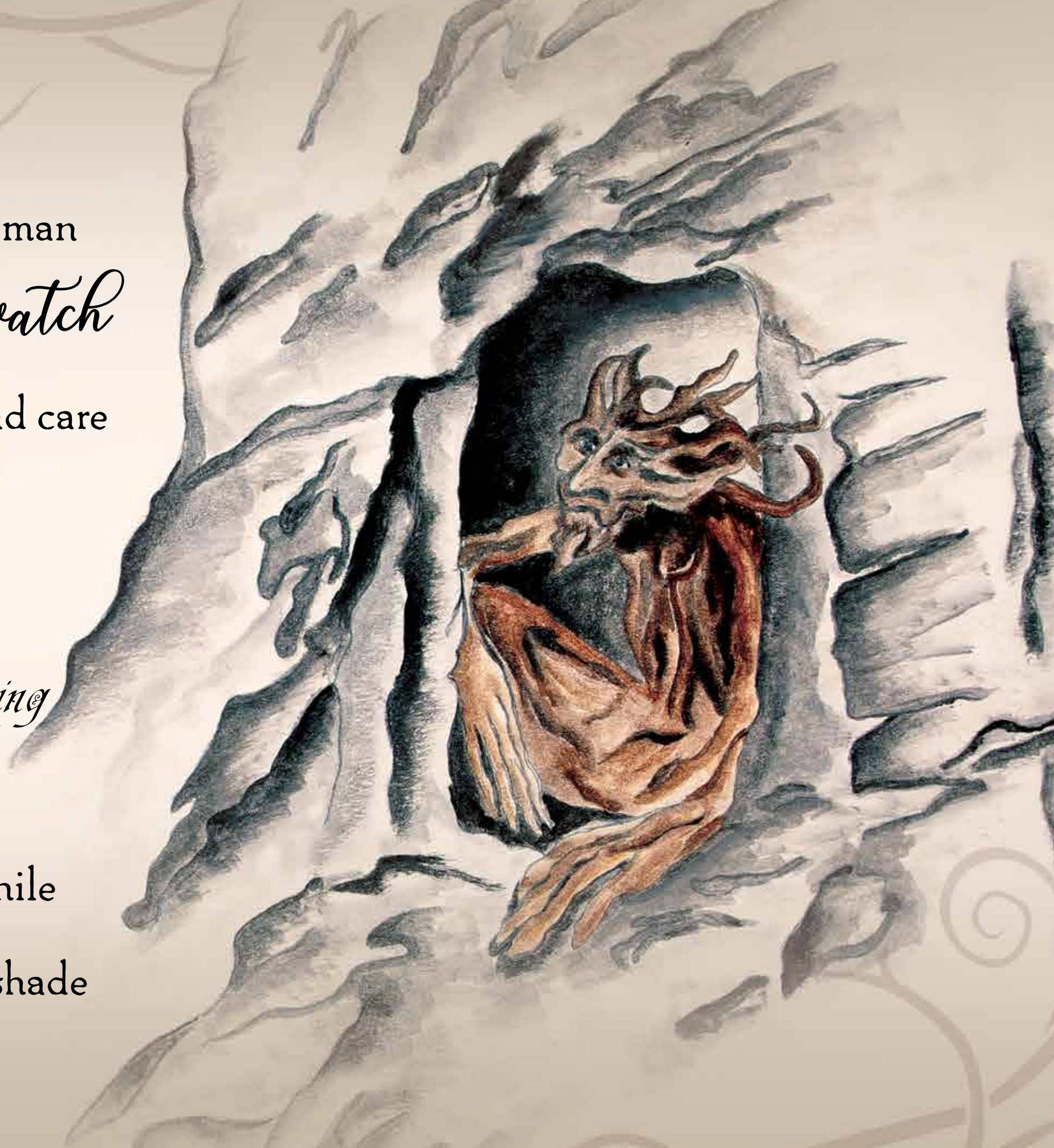


Chief Standing Bear was deeply concerned about an *ancient legend* that was woven into the *fireside stories* of the ancestors. According to the legend, there was a grumbly *angry willow* creature who lived in the *distant mountains*, only a 4 day trek by foot to the *darkest caves*. The willow man, *lived alone* in the dark caves and was *angry* and *suspicious* of the *Indian tribe*.



the legend of Anakeesta

*A*ccording to legend, Willow man was *jealous* of the Indians. He would *watch them speak* to the *forest creatures* and care for the flowers and trees. Because of his *grumbly, complaining* attitude, the *heavens* took away his *skill of speaking* to the forest. He watched the Indians *nurture their flourishing forest* while his land was *dry and dusty* without any shade for his *brittle wooden body*.





*the legend of **Anakeesta***



One day, as he watched from a careful distance, the willow

man decided that *he would punish* the tribe with

a fire, over the forest and mountains. As the tribe

slept *peacefully*, he breathed a *hot breath* over the

grasslands *towards*

the mountains.





the legend of Anakeesta

*The winds blew terribly
and the inferno roared across the lands.
The fairies woke the sleeping tribe
as the glow of the fire grew close upon
their lands. Smoke covered the sky.
The Indians gathered their belongings
and their children and fled
toward the river.*






the legend of Anakeesta

Chief Standing Bear and Bright Flower led the tribe to safety, but the twins refused to leave the forest and the animals. The children, gnomes, and fairies ran ahead of the tribe on the way to the river and warned all of the sleeping animals of the wildfire and its path to the forest. The tribe and the forest creatures made it safely to the river, but the inferno continued across the land.





*the legend of **Anakeesta***



Chief Standing Bear
raised his arms to the *heavens*,
pleading for help.

All of the *tribe*

joined their prayers to

The Great Spirit.

He heard *their cry* in the
wilderness.



*the legend of **Anakeesta***

Suddenly, the wind stopped
and a torrential *rain began* to fall.

The Little People, knowing that
the tribe was lost, brought them
safely back to their home.

The *devastation shocked* the tribe
as they *returned* to their village.





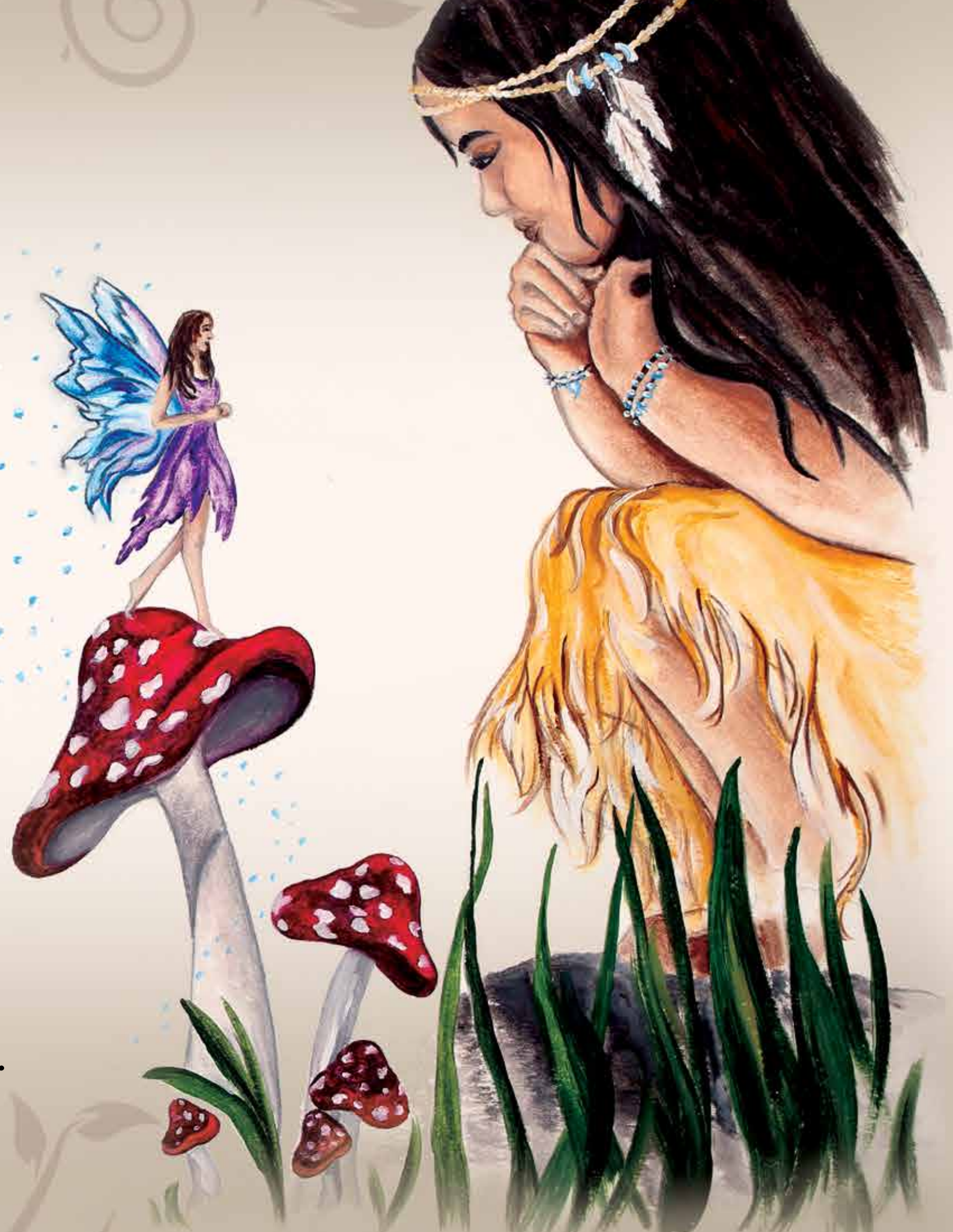
the legend of Anakeesta

Understanding their anguish,
The Great Spirit turned their *despair into*
wisdom. The forest, once burned and
destroyed, *began its rebirth* to
beauty. Tiny seeds *buried safely*
beneath the soil *began to grow* and the
flowers burst out, stretching
toward the *sunlight.*





The fairies began to whisper into the children's ears *about the willow man* who lived in the *deep dark caves*. They knew of his *loneliness* and *sorrow* for his *terrible act* of meanness. The *wise gnomes spoke* to the children about *forgiveness* and *kindness*. Finally, the children gathered their *courage* and decided to *make the trek* to the caves.






the legend of Anakeesta

The wise Chief and his Queen
knew it was time to forgive the
Willow man. They helped the
children *devise a plan* for the long
trip, *knowing* that the fairies and
gnomes would be *by their side*,
showing them the way to the caves.
They knew that the *Little People*
would keep them *safe during*
the night.





the legend of Anakeesta

An illustration of a forest path. Two children are walking away from the viewer, holding hands. The child on the left has long dark hair and wears a blue and black striped shirt and a dark skirt. The child on the right has short hair and wears a yellow tunic. They are walking on a dirt path that leads into a forest of tall, thin trees. In the foreground, there are several red mushrooms with white spots and a green vine with curly leaves. A brown rabbit is sitting on the path, looking towards the children. The background is a light beige color with faint, stylized leaf patterns.

*F*inally, with food and sleeping mats packed, the *twins* set off for their *quest*.

The burned forest was a *scary place to walk*, but the gnomes *told stories* and the fairies *danced ahead* keeping their *thoughts peaceful and brave*.



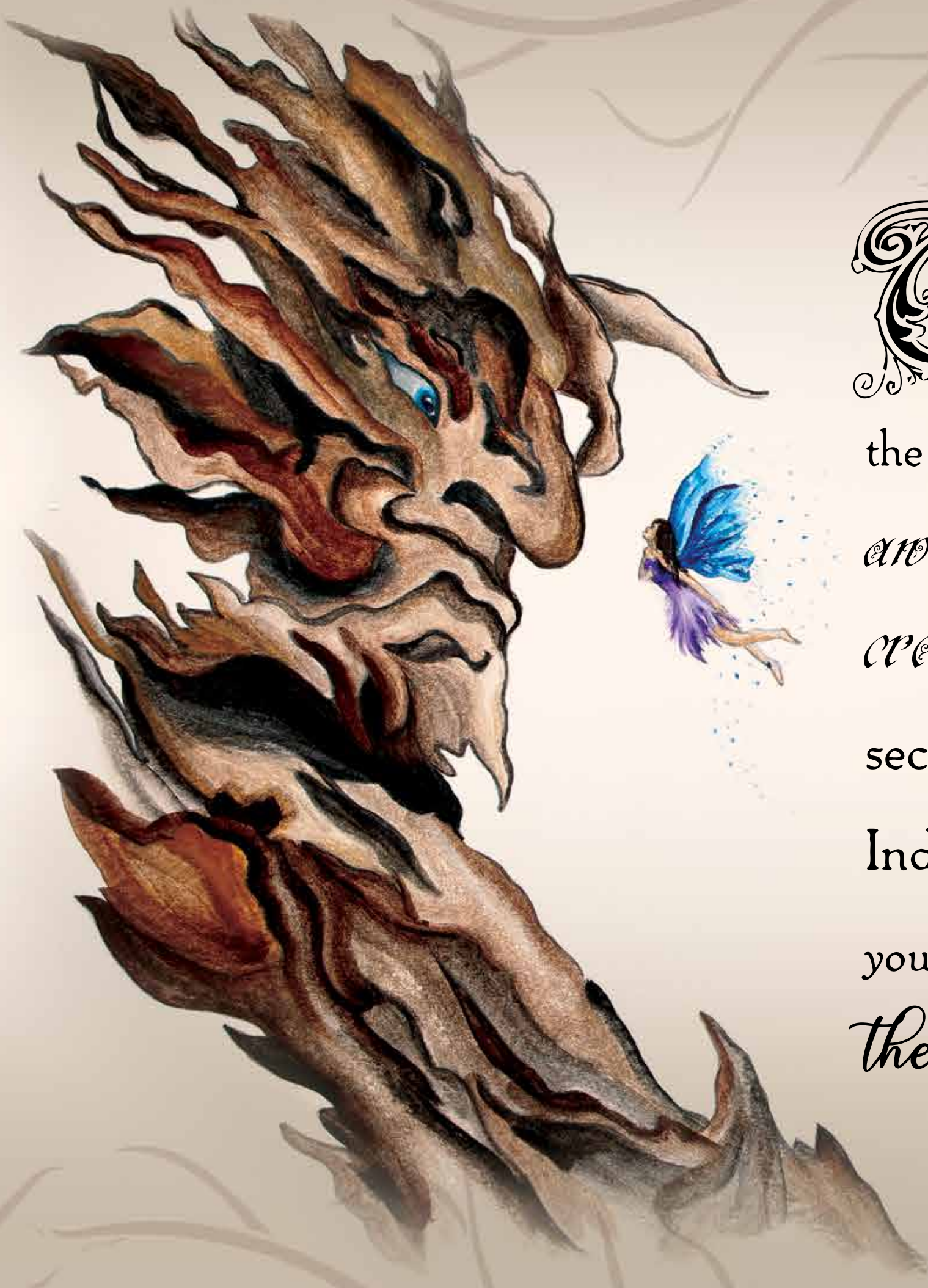
*A*t last, the children
arrived at the darkest caves.

While the gnomes waited with the
children, the fairies flew into the
caves to waken the grumpy
Willow man.





the legend of Anakeesta



The fairies flitted and buzzed around the sleeping Willow, who roared and yelled when he awoke. Snap out of your grump, you angry creature, they chided. You are being given a second chance! Now go, and meet the young Indians, Ana and Keeta and tell them you are sorry for your sins and ask for their forgiveness.



the legend of Anakeesta

The

Willow man, knowing he
had been *terribly bad*, built up his
courage. He *peeked out* of the cave
with a *solemn face*.

Tears began to fall from *his eyes*
as he described his *loneliness*
and sadness.







*H*e told them that he
wanted to *talk* to the *creatures* and
the other forest trees just like the
children. *He missed* his forest
friends. The *children accepted*
the Willow's apology and
The Great Spirit *smiled*.



Soon after, Willow
joined the *trek* back to the
village with his new friends,
learning again how to be a
Forest Friend.



