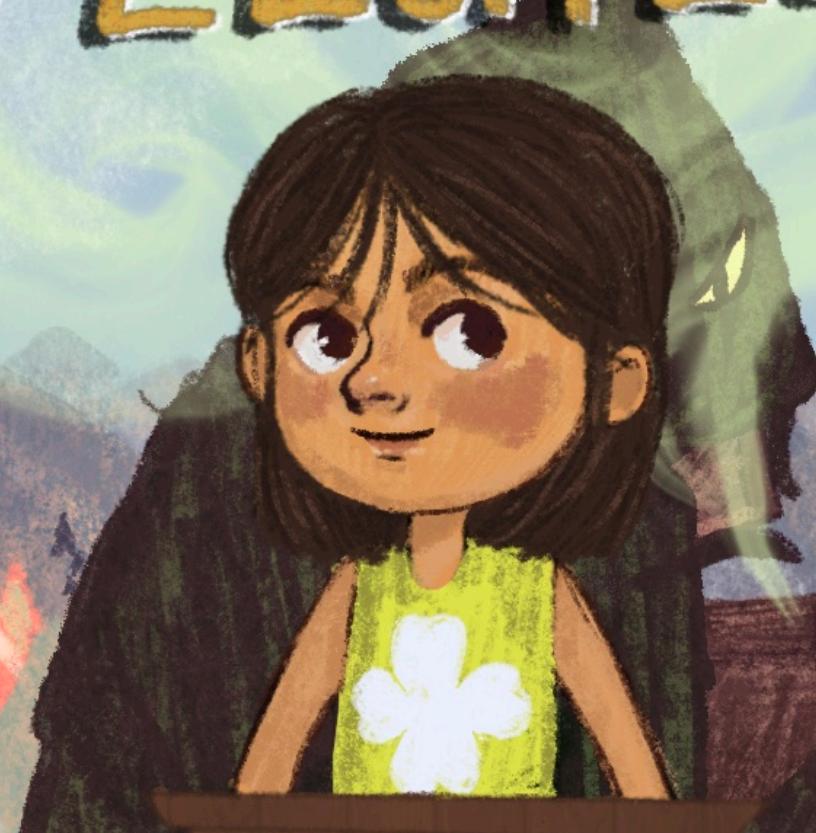


SPEECHLESS



WRITTEN BY

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Welcome to the Grand Oratory,
where speakers of all ages are delivering rousing speeches...





...if they aren't hiding behind Mom's blouse.





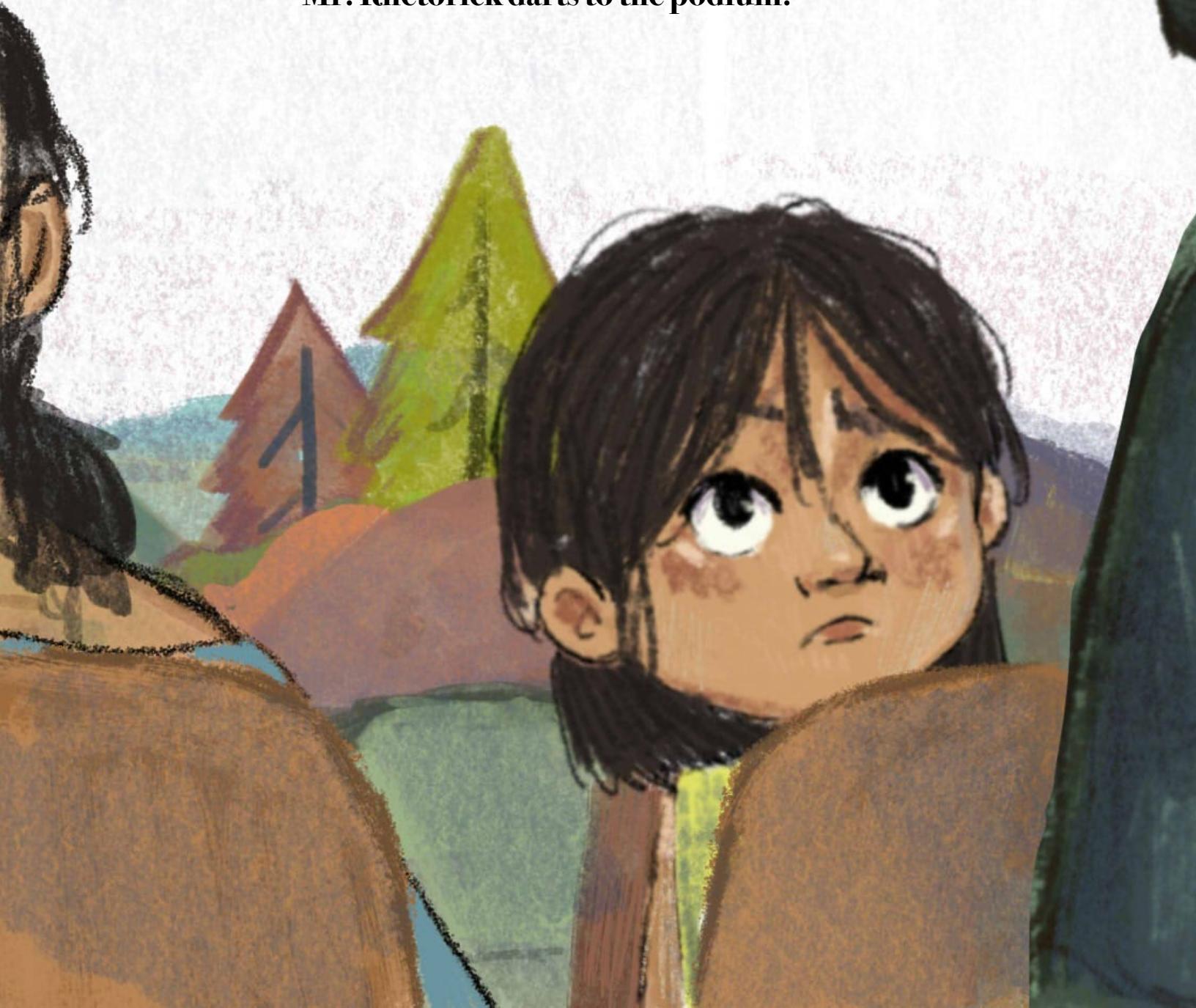


**“Hmm? If Amelia Martinez is not present,
then the next speaker is Mr. Rhetorick!”
says the Voz Mayor.**



With a mysterious box in his hands,

Mr. Rhetorick darts to the podium.

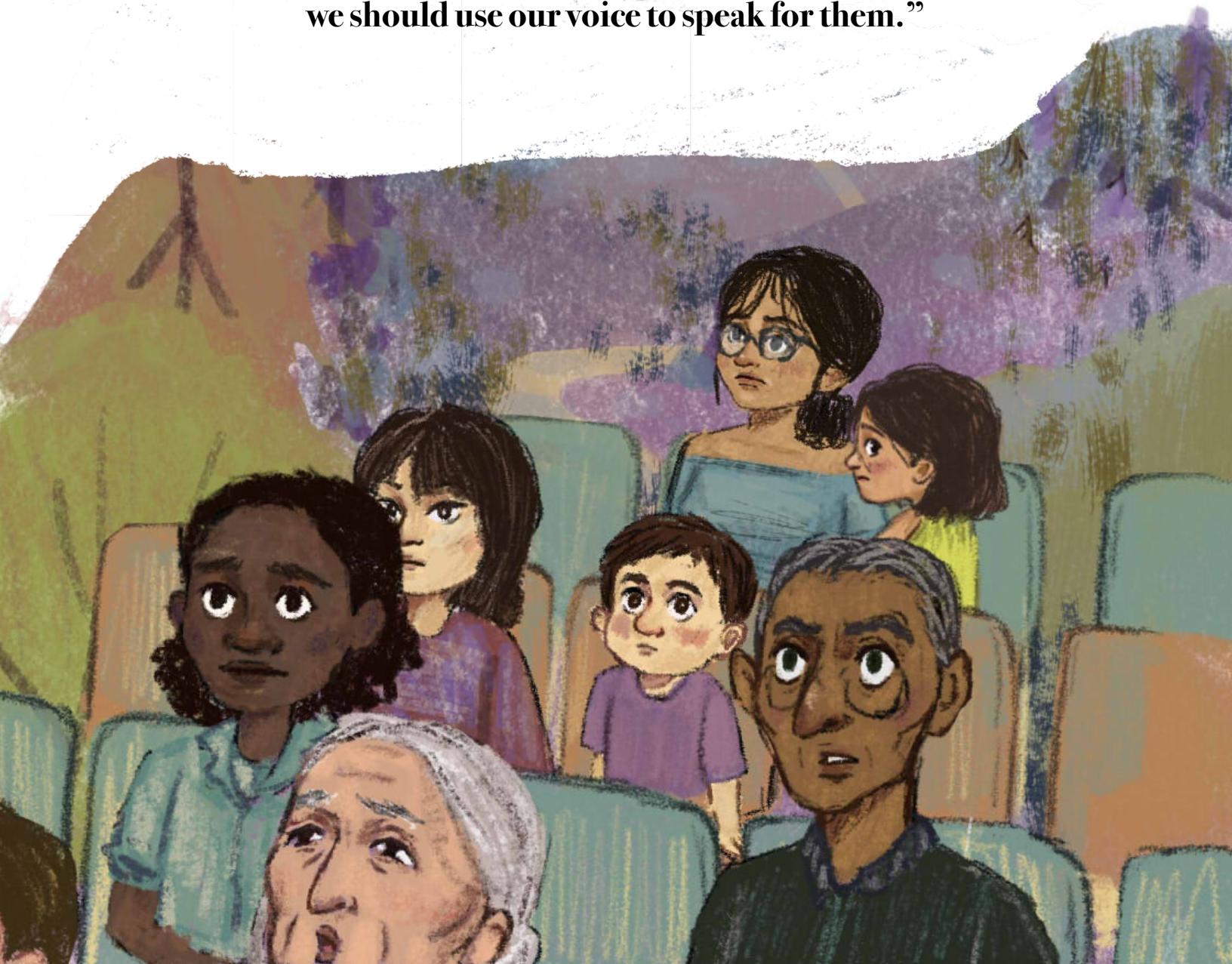






**‘Animals deserve a voice,’ says Mr. Rhetorick,
his voice swaying the audience like ocean waves.**

**“They have thoughts and feelings like us,
but they cannot tell us what they think or feel,
we should use our voice to speak for them.”**

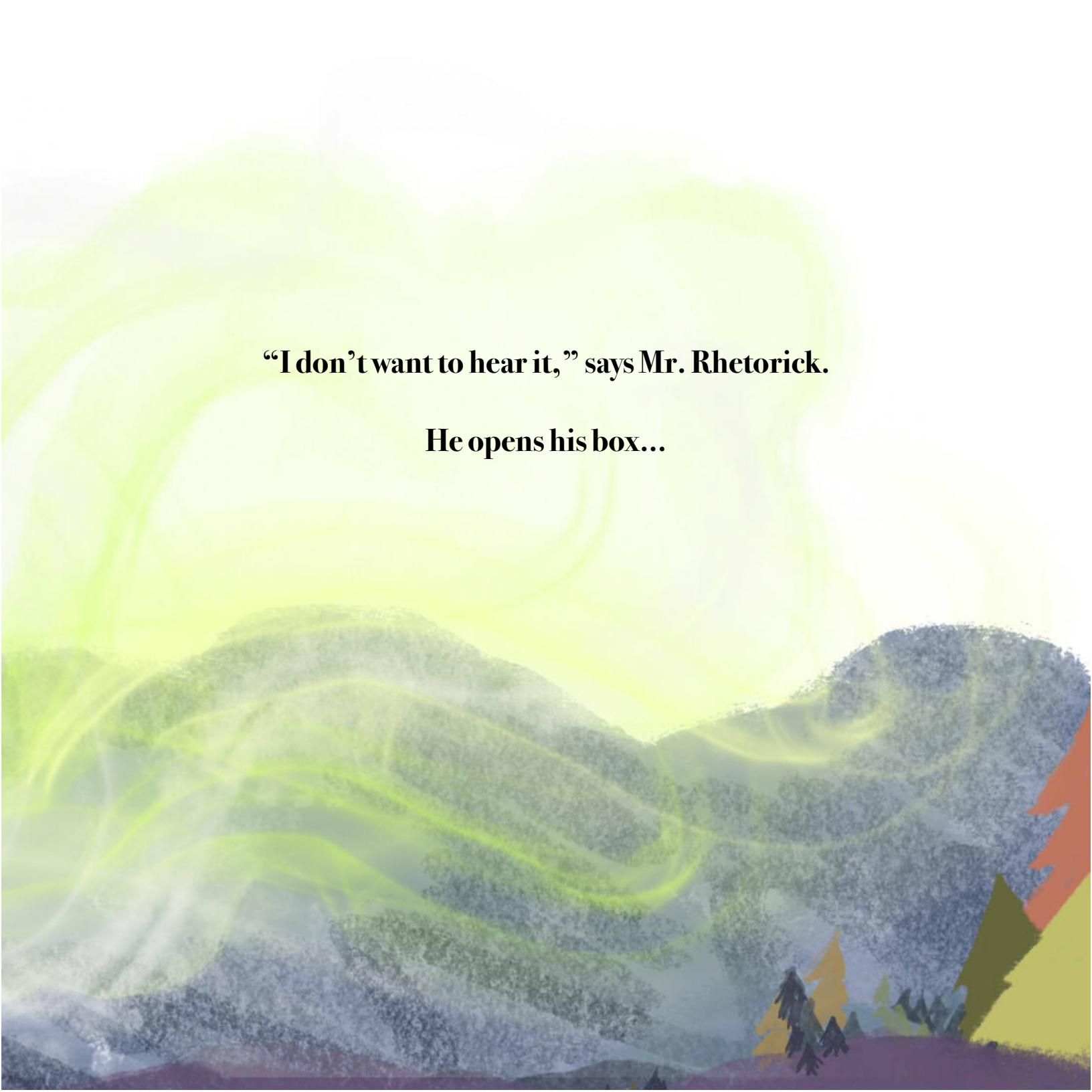


“Hmm. Good speech,” says the mayor.

“But just like last year, you never looked at the audience.

Next time, it would help if you...”



The background of the image features a soft-focus landscape of rolling green hills under a pale sky. A bright, yellowish-orange sun is positioned in the upper right quadrant, casting a warm glow over the scene. In the lower right foreground, there is a cluster of stylized trees in shades of yellow, orange, and green.

“I don’t want to hear it,” says Mr. Rhetorick.

He opens his box...

...and leaves everyone in Voz Speechless!

Well, everyone except one.





“Give their voices back!” says Amelia,
pointing to the villagers’ silent, moving mouths.

Smirking,

Mr. Rhetorick escapes with his magical box shining
unusually bright.



**Amelia pursues Mr. Rhetorick into the forest until a frowning bat
descends from above.**



“I don’t want this squeaky voice!” says the bat. Behind the trees, a chorus of voices agrees.

“W-why do you sound like Mom?”
asks Amelia. “Speak louder, human!”
says the bat. “the stage is yours.”



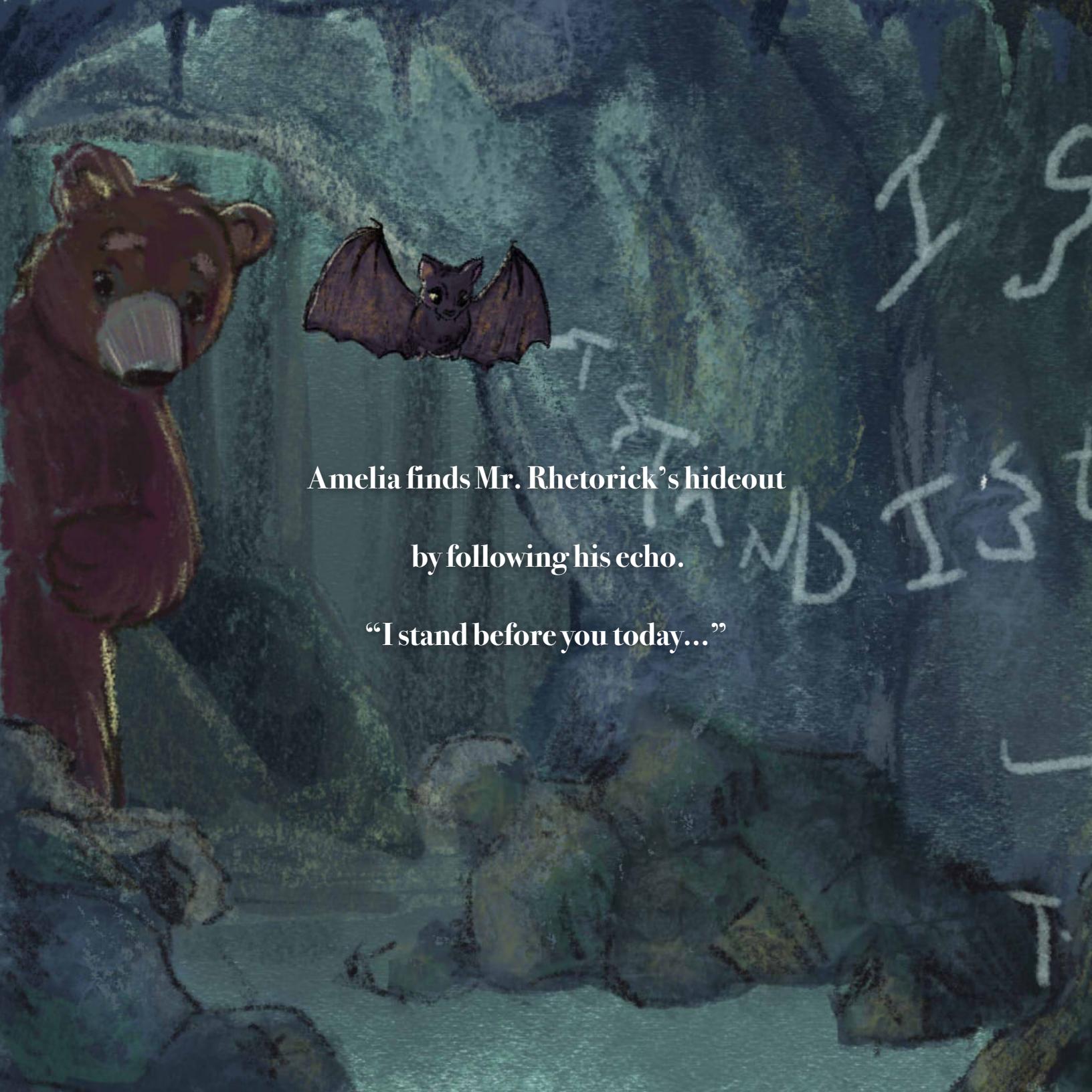
**Dozens of beady eyes open in the shadows, awaiting
Amelia’s speech.**

Amelia speaks, her voice floating past trees.



**“...I’m Amelia Martinez, a villager from
Voz...I’m here to get the villagers’ voices back.
Where is Mr. Rhetorick?”**

**“Hmm. He practices speaking in a cave near the river,” says the bear,
sounding oddly familiar.**



Amelia finds Mr. Rhetorick's hideout

by following his echo.

“I stand before you today...”



“The animals don’t want the voices. Give them back!” says Amelia pointing to the box casting light on Mr. Rhetorick.

“I never thought you’d speak against me,” says Mr. Rhetorick.

“I should take your voice too!”





“You’re not listening,” says Amelia. “There will be no Grand Oratory without the voices. The echo is what you want to hear, but it won’t help you improve.”

“Then tell me what I need to hear,”
says Mr. Rhetorick, his voice escaping into the darkness.



“We can help each other speak with style,” says Amelia.

“But you need to promise to listen to my advice.

I will listen to you if you listen to me.”



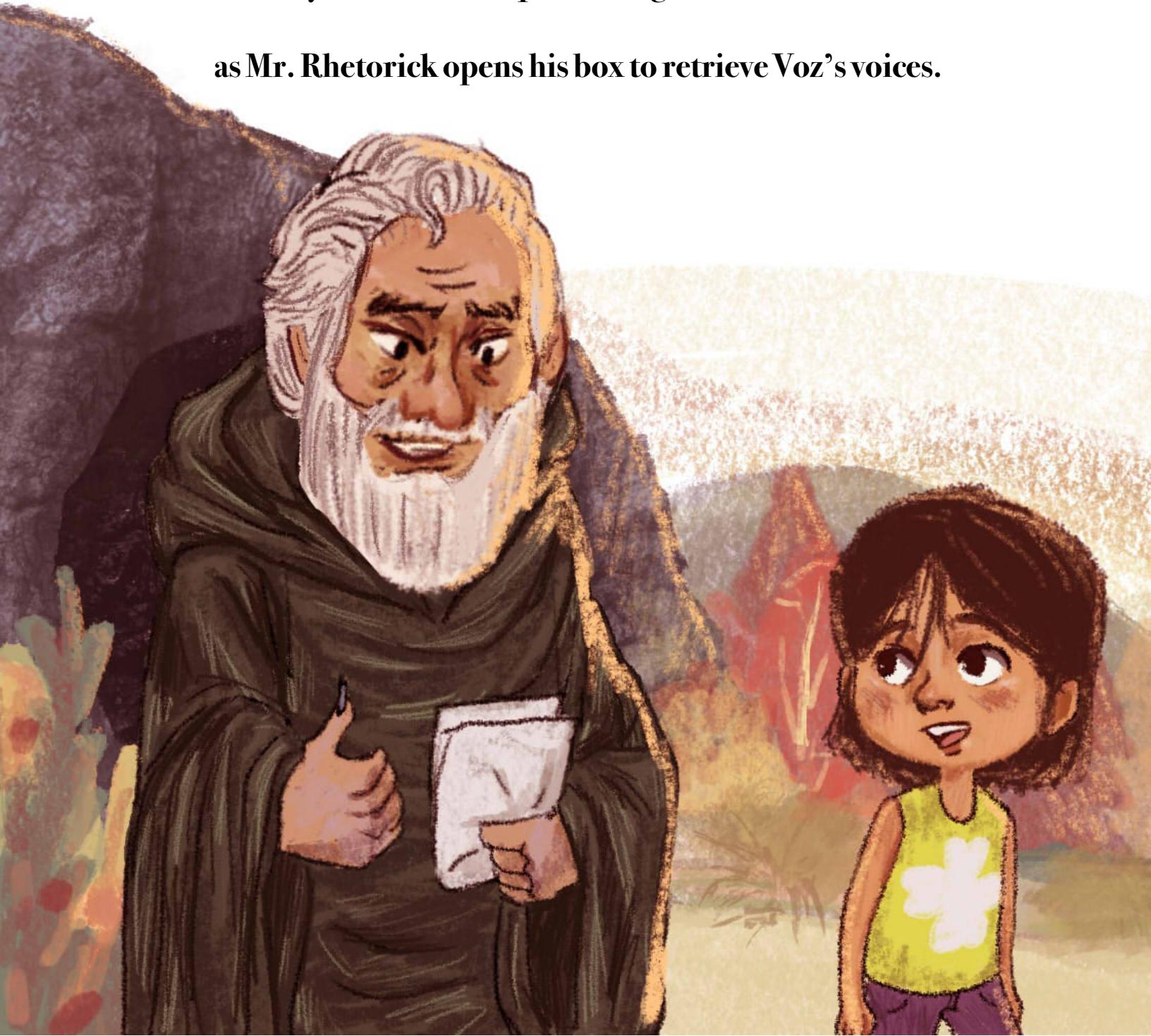
“You speak with such confidence,”

Mr. Rhetorick says as he touches his box.

“I want to learn from you. I promise.”

Joyful roars and squeaks ring from the forest

as Mr. Rhetorick opens his box to retrieve Voz's voices.

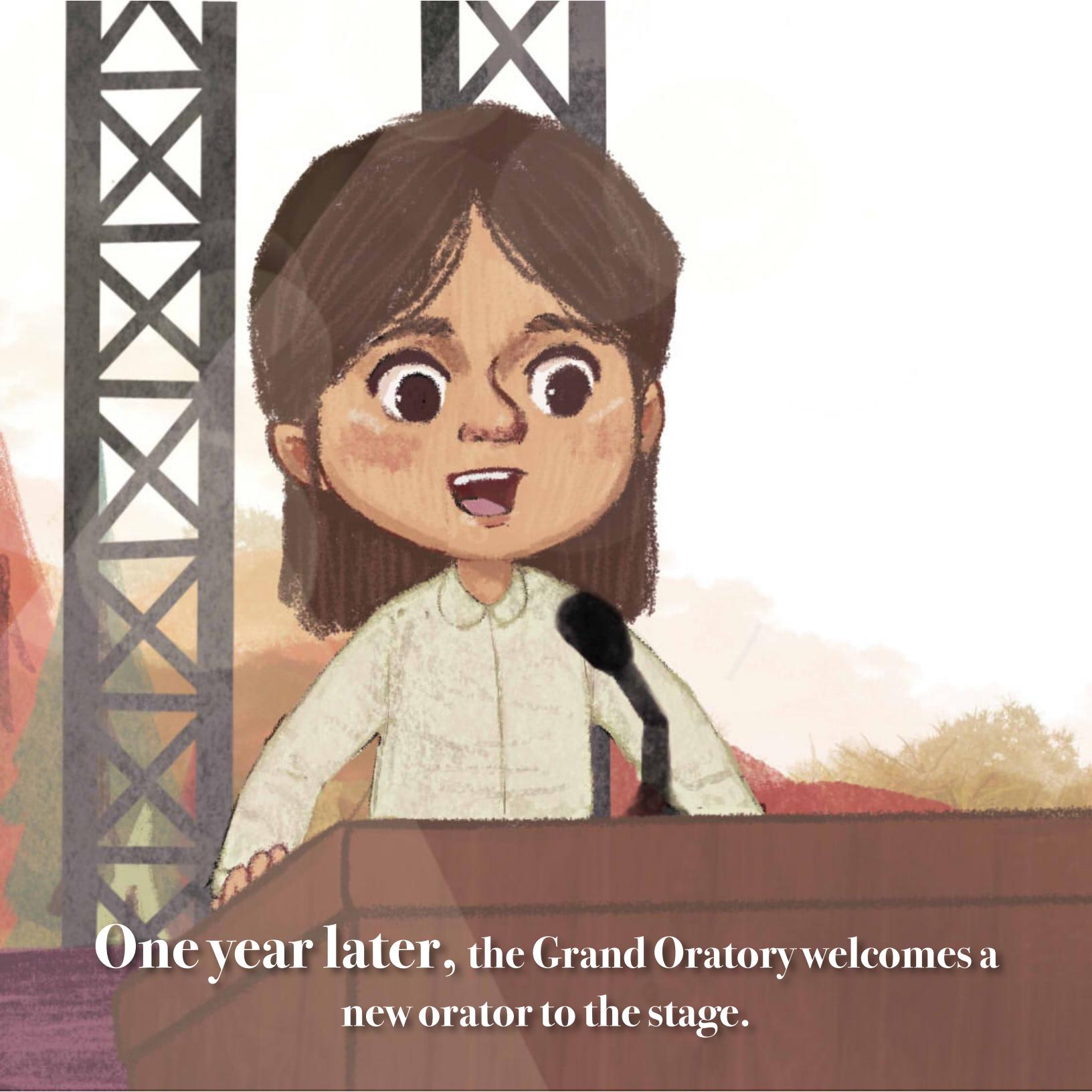






After a silent dawn, the villagers awake as if from
a dream, rejoicing in the sound of their voices.





One year later, the Grand Oratory welcomes a
new orator to the stage.

“I stand before you today...”

**As Amelia speaks, she imagines her voice fluttering past Mr. Rhetorick
and through the sky.**

She never felt more frightened.

She never felt more free.



