



This story is developed under the Civic Horizons program.

Whispers of the Emerald Woods

Story by
Children living in Fakiha and Ain

Illustrator/ Designer
Ahlam Gamal



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initiative "Stories in Colors: Children
Telling Stories about Climate Change"*



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We would like to shine a light on the brave and creative storytellers who imagined the Emerald World and this beautiful story that withholds many wisdoms for us to reflect on and learn from.

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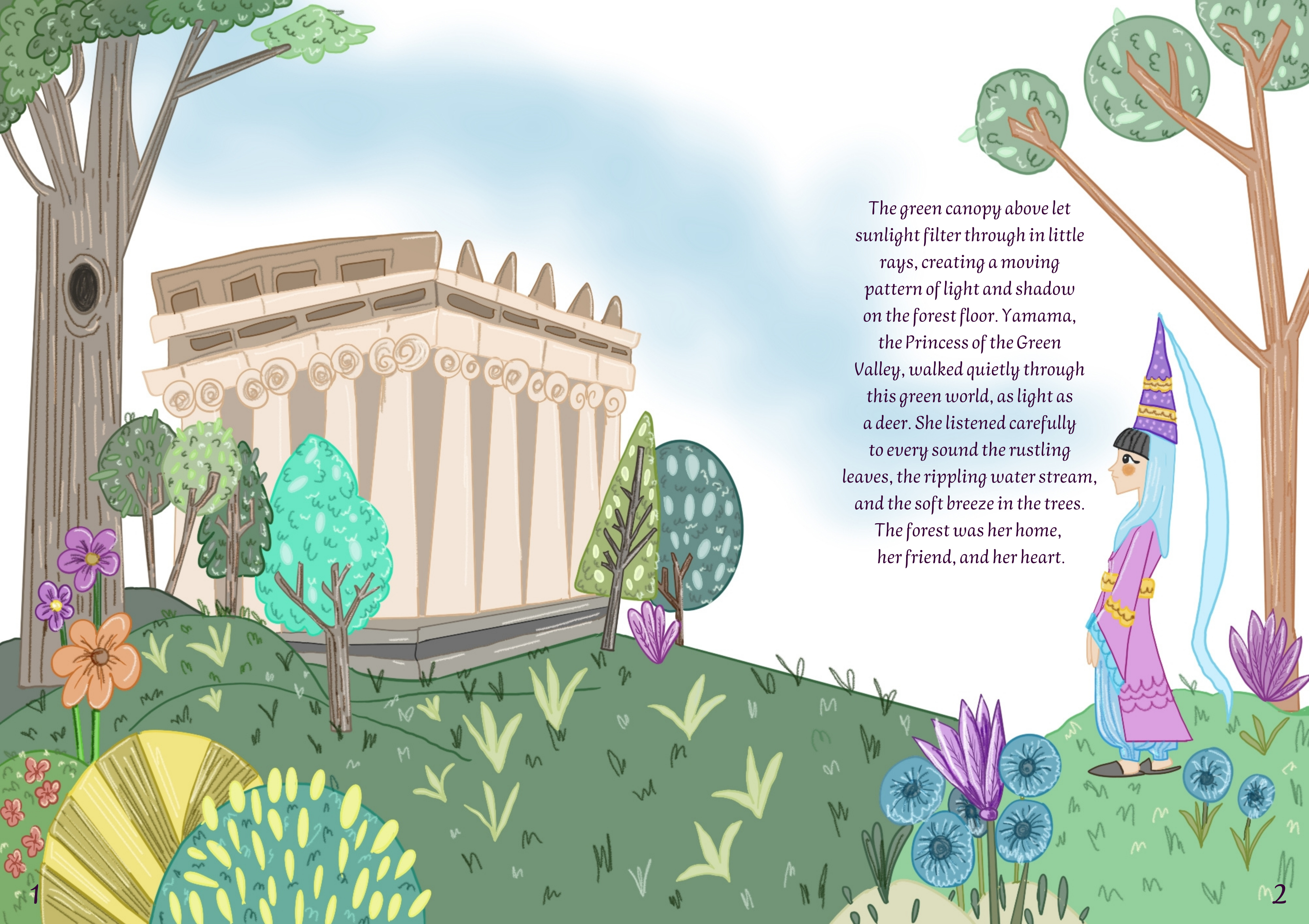
Storytelling strengthens people and communities' ability to imagine the world differently and challenge injustices.





Chapter 1
The Whispering Trees





The green canopy above let
sunlight filter through in little
rays, creating a moving
pattern of light and shadow
on the forest floor. Yamama,
the Princess of the Green
Valley, walked quietly through
this green world, as light as
a deer. She listened carefully
to every sound the rustling
leaves, the rippling water stream,
and the soft breeze in the trees.
The forest was her home,
her friend, and her heart.



But today, something felt wrong. The air, usually sweet with the smell of pine and cedar trees, and fresh earth, was heavy with a strange, metallic scent that made her nose wrinkle. As she walked deeper into the forest, the green leaves turned a dull yellow. Even the water stream, which was always clear, had become murky brown.

A cold feeling of fear crept into Yamama's heart. She had never seen the forest like this before. The trees, which had always stood tall and proud, seemed to droop sadly, their leaves hanging low like tired wings.

Determined to understand what was happening, Yamama went to the heart of the forest, where the oldest and wisest tree, the ancient Cedar, stood. She leaned against its rough bark and felt a deep vibration, like the whole forest was humming with a secret. The cedar, with its ancient wisdom, spoke to her in a soft, sad voice carried by the wind. “The balance is broken, child,” the cedar whispered. “A shadow has fallen over the Emerald Woods, a sickness in the heart of nature.”

Fear filled Yamama’s chest, but she refused to let it stop her. She couldn’t just let her home suffer. With a brave heart, Yamama decided to find out where the sickness was coming from and put things right.





Chapter 2

The Gathering of Friends





Yamama's heart felt heavy with the sadness of the sick forest, so she went to find her closest friends for help. First, she traveled to a quiet valley where Lara, the Whisperer of Plants, cared for her beautiful garden. Lara moved gently around her flowers, as light as a butterfly, her fingers brushing over the delicate petals of each bloom.

"Lara," Yamama said, her voice serious, "The forest is dying. The leaves are falling, the rivers are blocked, and strange, metallic creatures are tearing through the woods."

Lara's face grew worried as she carefully set the flower she was holding back into the ground. "I've felt it too," she said softly. "Something is wrong, a disturbance in the balance of nature. The plants are losing their strength."

Yamama told Lara about her meeting with the ancient cedar and its warning. Lara, who understood the forest like no one else, nodded. "We must find where this sickness is coming from," she said with quiet determination. "And we must heal the earth."

Next, Yamama went to find Maya, the Bender of the Waters, who lived near the Laughing Water Stream, a lively stream that danced over mossy rocks. Maya was leaping through the air, her body a graceful curve as she jumped over the sparkling water.

"Maya!" Yamama called, her voice echoing through the valley. Maya landed lightly, her eyes twinkling with fun. "Yamama!

What brought you here with such a serious face?"

Yamama explained what was happening to the Emerald Woods. Maya's playful expression turned to one of concern as she listened. "The Laughing Water Stream, my joyful friend, is crying," she said sadly. "The water isn't clear or happy anymore. Something is very wrong."

"We have to help," Yamama said, her voice full of resolve.

"Together, we will find a way to heal the Emerald Woods."

Maya, always full of energy and strength, nodded. "We won't let our home fall to darkness."





And so, the three friends Yamama, the Princess of the Green Valley; Lara, the Whisperer of Plants; and Maya, the Dancer of the Waters joined forces, united by their love for the Emerald Woods and their promise to restore it to its true beauty.

Chapter 3
The Journey to the
Heartstone



With courage in their hearts, Yamama, Lara, and Maya began their dangerous journey into the deepest parts of the Emerald Woods. The path was full of challenges: steep canyons where the ground shook beneath their feet and thick walls of vines with sharp thorns that caught their clothes and scratched their skin. Lara, who could speak to the plants, guided them through the tricky terrain. She calmed the trembling earth and whispered to the plants, asking them to move aside and reveal hidden trails. Maya, light and quick as a breeze, danced over rushing water streams. Her graceful movements calmed the wild waters, making them safe for the others to cross.



As they traveled deeper, the air grew thick with something dark and unsettling. Suddenly, the Whispering Stones. Appeared shadowy creatures born from the forest's sickness. These dark figures had no shape, but their whispers were sharp and cruel. They tried to fill the friends' minds with fear and doubt. "You will fail," a cold voice hissed in Yamama's ear. "The Emerald Woods cannot be saved." Yamama, remembering the cedar's wise words, stood firm. "We won't give up," she said boldly, her voice steady. "The forest needs us."



Lara focused hard, calling on the plants around them to form a glowing green shield. The bright energy pushed the shadows away. Maya jumped into action, her movements fast and sure, scattering the shadowy forms like leaves in the wind. Though the journey was hard and the obstacles many, the three friends refused to give up. Their love for the Emerald Woods and their belief that they could heal it kept them going. Together, they pressed on, their bond growing stronger with each step.

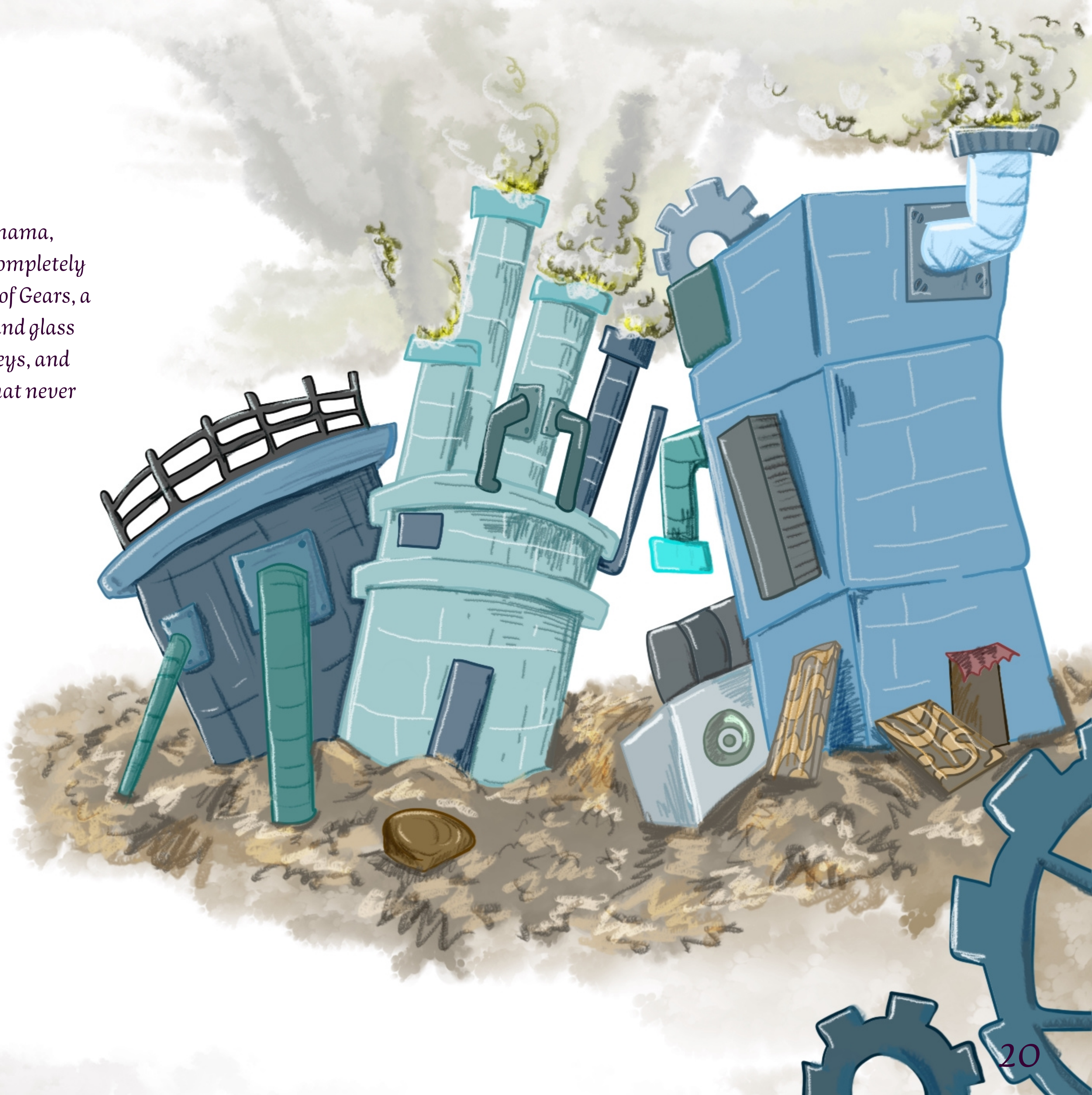


Chapter 4
The City of Gears



Stepping out from the lush, green forest, Yamama, Lara, and Maya found themselves facing a completely different world. In front of them lay the City of Gears, a huge, noisy place filled with steel buildings and glass towers. Thick smoke poured from tall chimneys, and the air buzzed with the sound of machines that never seemed to stop.

The difference from the peaceful Emerald Woods was shocking. There were no trees here, only towering factories and buildings made of metal. The soft, sweet smell of pine, cedars, and fresh air was replaced by the sharp, choking stench of smoke and burning metal.



The friends walked cautiously through the busy streets, their eyes wide with both amazement and worry. Everywhere they looked, strange, shiny carriages zoomed by, moving without horses to pull them. The people inside didn't notice the forest people staring in wonder. "This is the City of Gears," Maya whispered, her voice full of wonder. "A world of amazing creations, but... also something darker."

Lara pointed to a towering factory where thick, black smoke spilled into the sky. "It feels wrong," she said softly. "It's like this place is draining life from the air itself."



Yamama felt a strange energy in the city something powerful but unsettling. The rhythm of this place was harsh and mechanical, drowning out the soft, natural harmony of the world. She knew they had to find the heart of this industrial city, the source of the evil harming the forest.



Their search brought them to the center of the city, where they found a massive workshop, larger than anything they had ever seen. It made even the tallest trees of the Emerald Woods seem small. This was the workshop of the Inventor, a man famous in the city for believing that machines and technology could solve all problems.

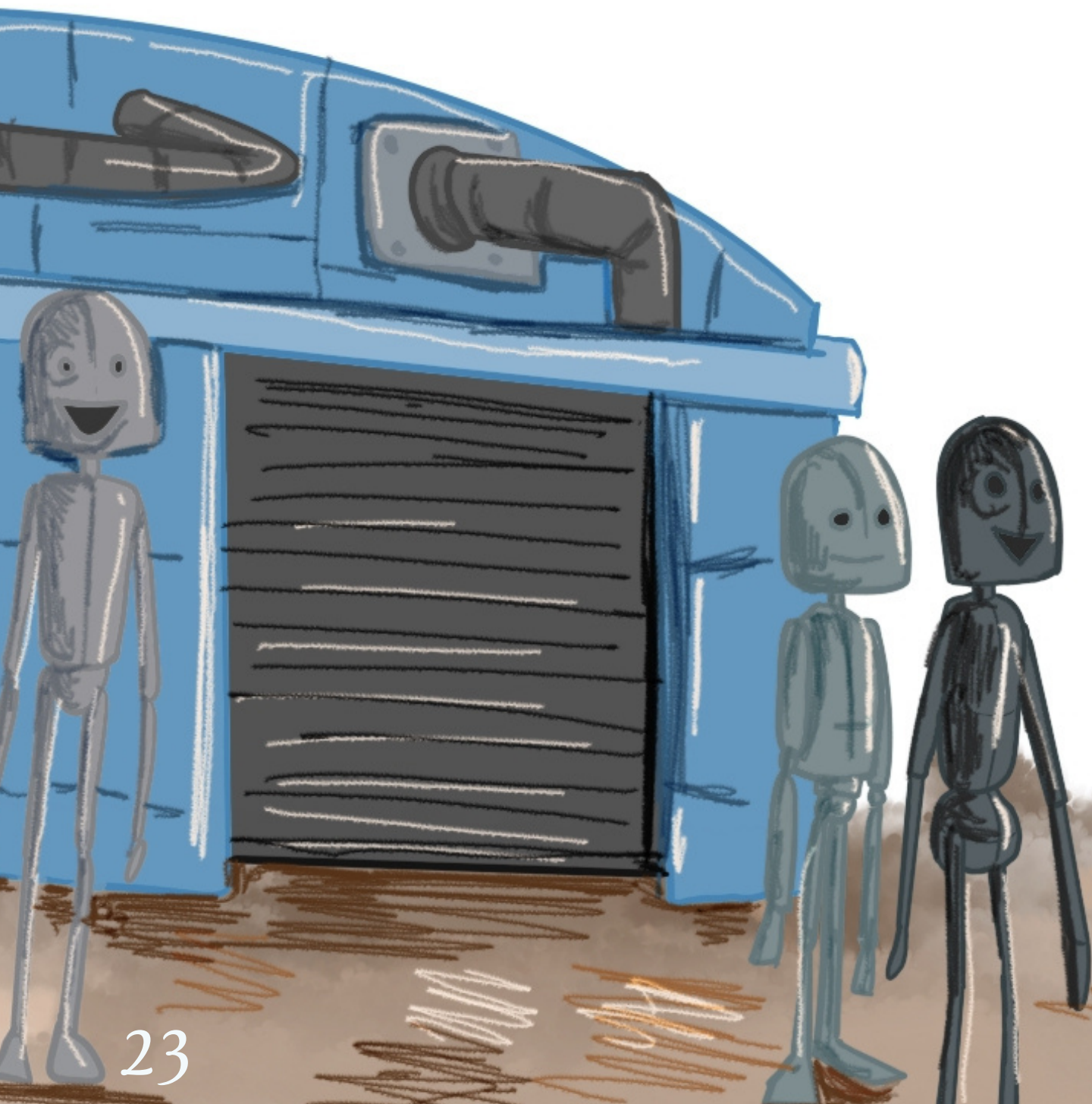
As the friends stepped closer, they saw just how powerful the city had become. Giant machines swallowed piles of raw materials, spitting out endless metal creations. The air was filled with the constant pounding of hammers, the grinding of gears, and the roar of engines.

Yamama felt a chill run through her. This place, with all its noise and power, was the source of the sickness spreading through the forest. It was progress has gone too far, a force that threatened to destroy nature itself.

Chapter 5
Seeds of Doubt



Yamama, Lara, and Maya, their hearts heavy with the sad reality of the City of Gears, approached the Inventor's enormous workshop with caution. Guards in shiny metal armor marched around the area, their watchful eyes scanning for intruders.

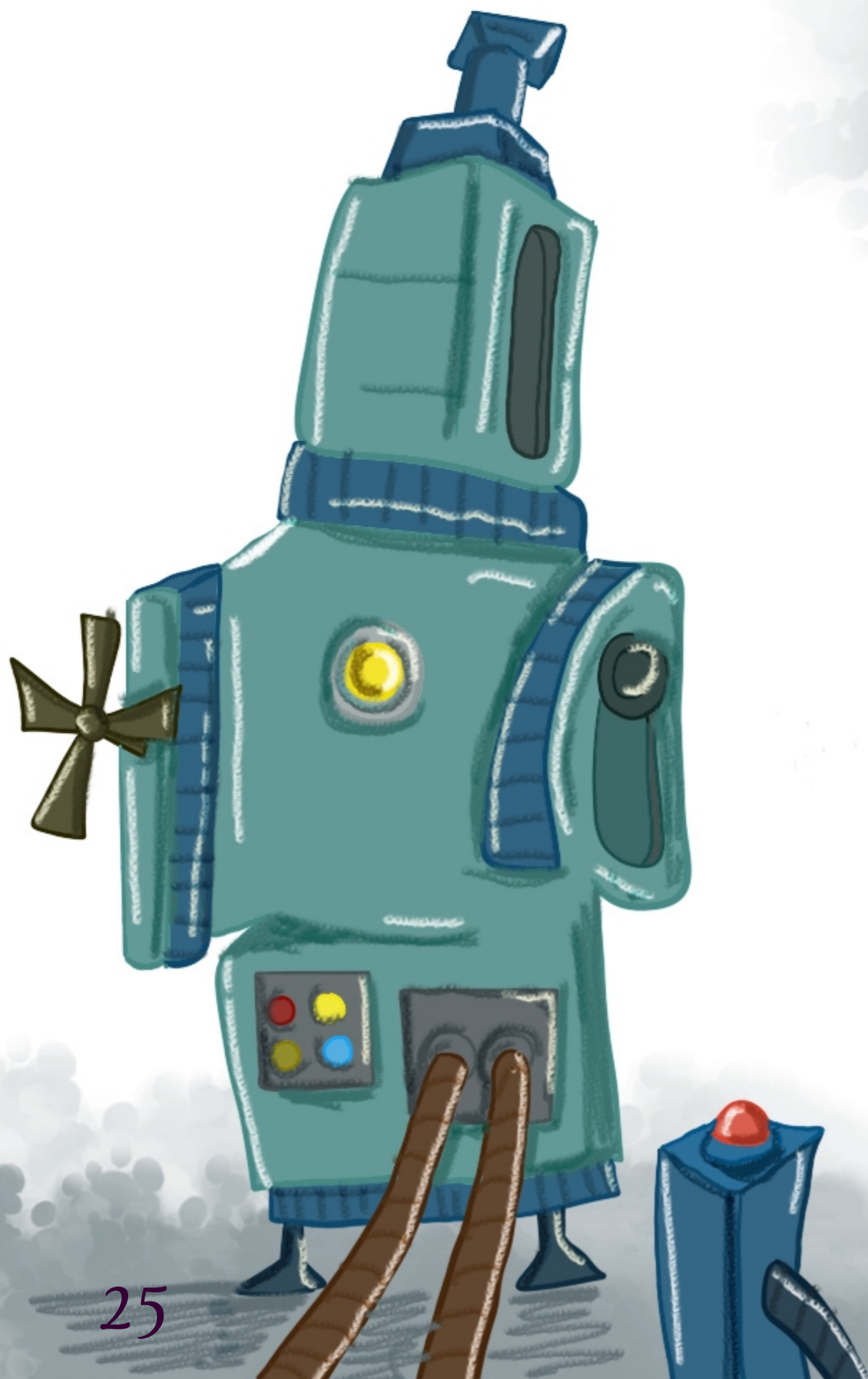


Yamama, quick and light on her feet, found a hidden path through the tangled vines that surrounded the workshop. With silent steps, she slipped past the guards and into a huge hall a space unlike anything she had ever seen. It was like a giant castle, but made of steel and glass, filled with machines that clicked, hummed, and made strange sounds, like a weird song made of metal.



In the center of the hall stood the Inventor. He was tall and commanding with eyes that sparkled with an intense, almost wild light. Around him engineers worked quickly, their faces glowing in the lights of the machines.

Yamama stayed hidden in the shadows, watching closely. The Inventor motioned toward a giant machine, its gears and wheels spinning in perfect order.



“Behold!” he announced his voice loud and proud. “This is the future! A machine that will change everything. A machine that will conquer nature itself!” Lara, who had quietly followed Yamama inside, felt herself drawn to the Inventor’s words. There was something about the way he spoke that sparked interest in her. “Imagine a world,” the Inventor continued,, “where no one is hungry, where feeling sick is a thing of the past, where people are in control of everything, no longer limited by nature!”

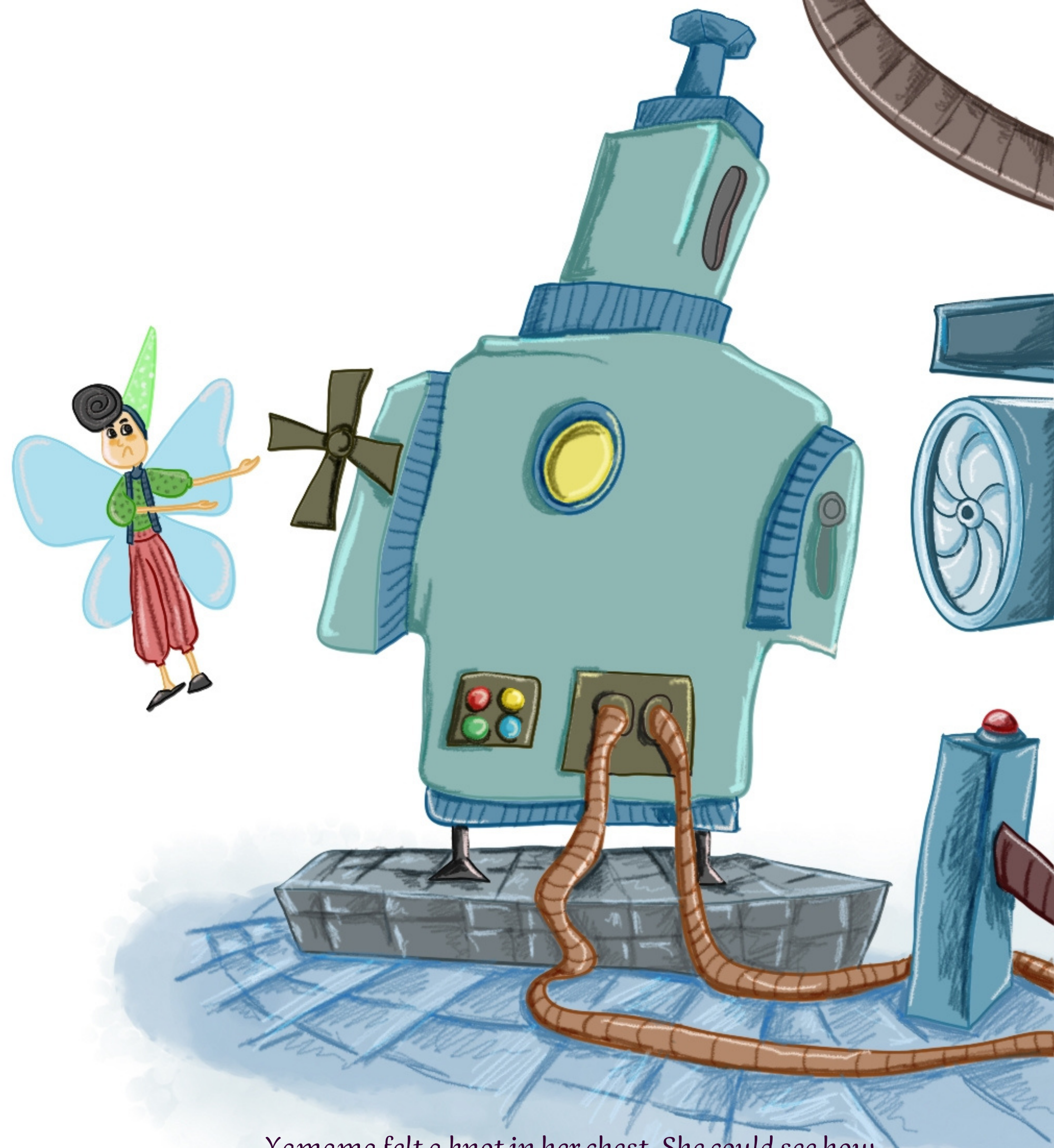
Lara couldn't take her eyes off the shiny machine. Her heart wavered. Could he be right? Could technology fix all the problems in the world? Yamama, hiding nearby felt a rush of fear as she saw the look in Lara's eyes.

The wonder, the doubt it was clear that the Inventor's words were getting to her.

"Lara," Yamama whispered urgently, her voice sharp but full of worry, "Don't listen to him. He doesn't want to heal the world he wants to rule it. He doesn't respect nature; he wants to destroy it!"



Lara turned toward Yamama, her face full of confusion. "But what if he's right?" she asked softly. "What if technology can fix everything? What if we've been wrong to trust only nature?"



Yamama felt a knot in her chest. She could see how the Inventor's words had made Lara doubt herself. The sparkling and the big ideas had planted seeds of doubt in Lara's heart. Yamama knew she had to act quickly, to remind Lara of who she was and what they were fighting for, before the Inventor's words pulled her away for good.

Chapter 6
The Confrontation



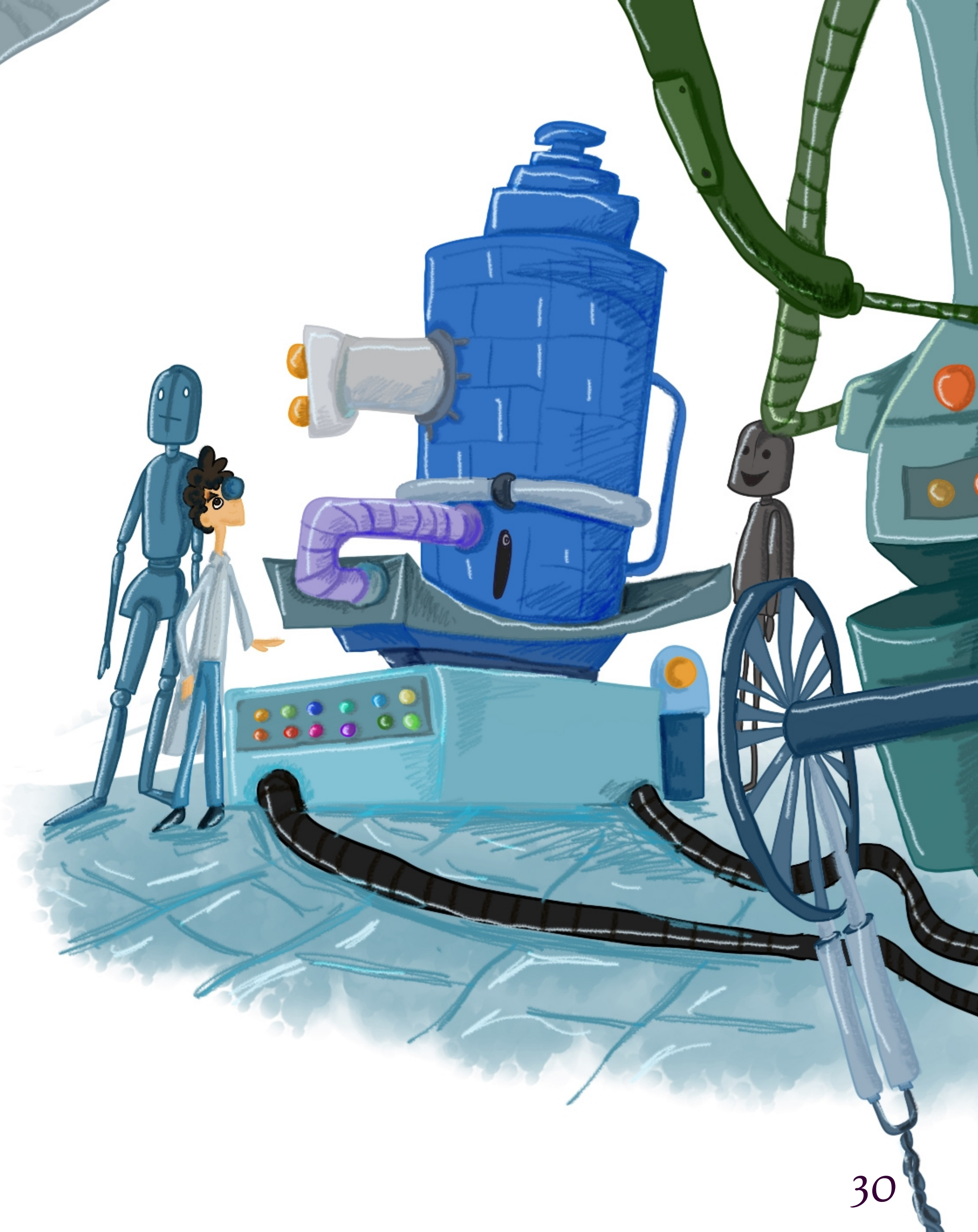
Yamama's words echoed in Lara's mind, louder now than the Inventor's promises. She glanced around the grand hall, at the towering machines and the engineers whose faces were filled with wonder. But then her eyes landed on the metallic creatures the same ones tearing apart the Emerald Woods standing like guards at the

Inventor's side. A sharp realization struck her: These were not machines of progress. They were destroyers. Lara's heart raced. For a moment, she had been blinded by the Inventor's big ideas. But now she saw the truth. His vision wasn't about building a better world; it was about taking control, no matter the cost. "You're wrong," Lara

said, her voice shaking but firm. "You're not creating a better future. You're destroying the one we already have."

The Inventor turned to her, his piercing eyes narrowing. "And what makes you think you understand the future?" he sneered. "You live in the shadows of the forest, clinging to old ways while the world moves forward." "I don't cling to the past," Lara shot back, her voice growing stronger. "I live in harmony with the earth. I understand its balance, its beauty. Your machines, your endless hunger for progress they're not saving the world. They're crushing it." The Inventor's smirk

vanished, replaced by a cold, hard stare. "You dare question my vision?" he hissed. "You dare stand against progress?"





He raised his hand and barked, "Guards, take them!" The metallic creatures came to life, moving with mechanical precision. They charged toward the friends, their heavy steps echoing in the vast hall.

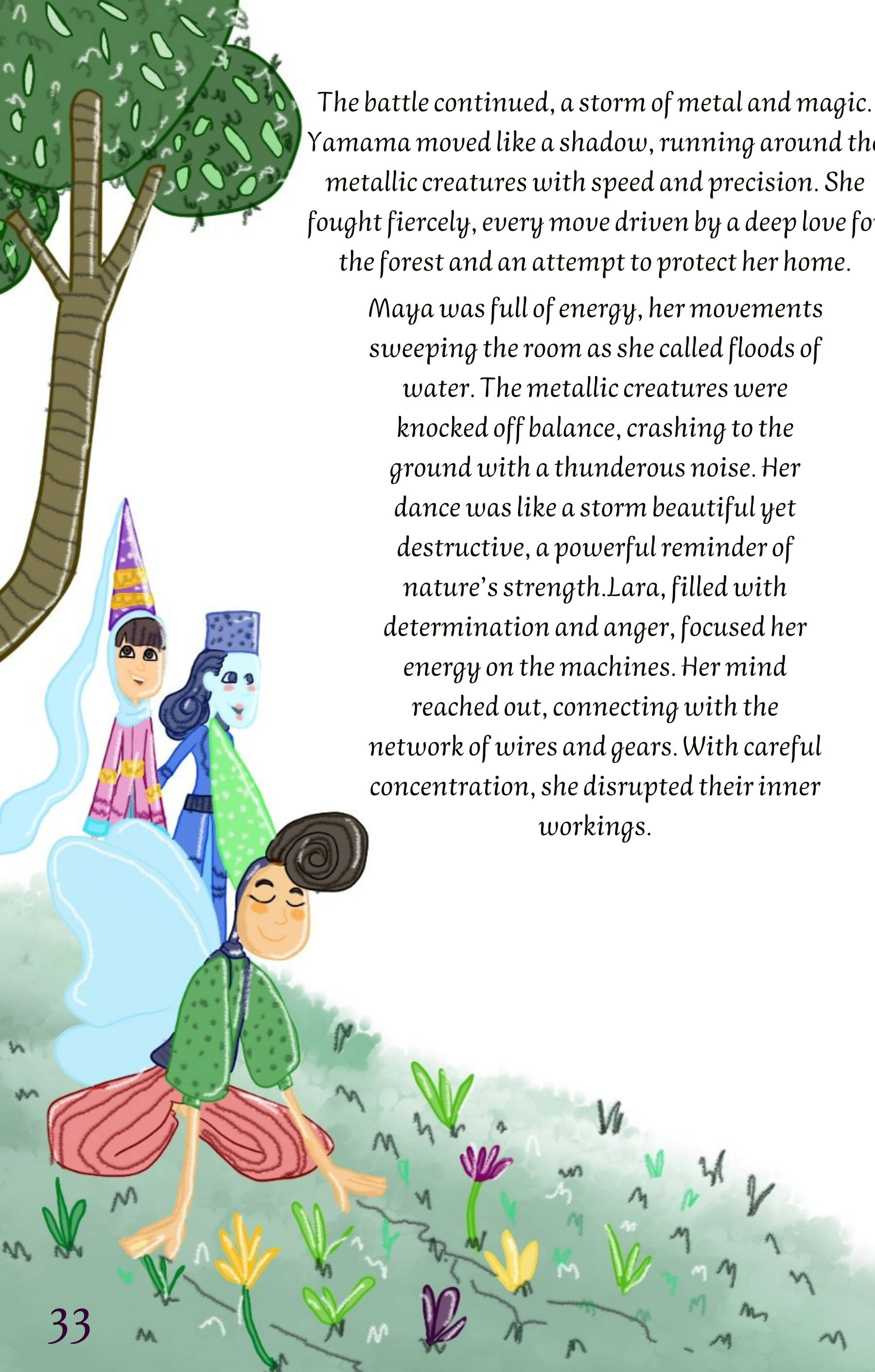
Yamama sprang into action, her movements swift as a shadow. She darted between the machines, escaping their sharp claws and grabbing Lara's arm. "We're not staying here!" she shouted. Maya, always quick on her feet, leapt gracefully into the air. She spun and unleashed a wave of water, crashing into the machines and throwing them off balance. "Keep moving!" she yelled, her voice clear and determined. But the Inventor wasn't finished. With a furious gesture, he unleashed a swarm of smaller, quicker machines. Their thin metallic parts flashed like blades as they hurried toward the friends.

The battle erupted into chaos. Yamama fought with the swiftness of the forest itself, dodging and weaving through the machines' attacks. Maya, her movements fluid like the water she commanded, created walls of shining streams to block the moving swarm. Lara, her connection to nature strengthened again, called upon the plants hidden in the cracks of the city. Vines came forward, wrapping around the machines and slowing their unstoppable march. The friends fought not just for their survival but for the heart of the Emerald Woods. The sounds of metal against water, the crash of vines tearing through machinery, and the Inventor's angry shouts filled the air.

Though the odds were against them, Yamama, Lara, and Maya stood strong, bound by their determination to protect the forest and the balance of nature. They would not let the Inventor's ambition destroy the world they loved.



Chapter 7
The Healing



The battle continued, a storm of metal and magic. Yamama moved like a shadow, running around the metallic creatures with speed and precision. She fought fiercely, every move driven by a deep love for the forest and an attempt to protect her home.

Maya was full of energy, her movements sweeping the room as she called floods of water. The metallic creatures were knocked off balance, crashing to the ground with a thunderous noise. Her dance was like a storm beautiful yet destructive, a powerful reminder of nature's strength. Lara, filled with determination and anger, focused her energy on the machines. Her mind reached out, connecting with the network of wires and gears. With careful concentration, she disrupted their inner workings.

One by one, the machines sputtered and then fell silent, their once-tough limbs now useless and still.

The Inventor, watching his creations crumble, let out a furious roar. He released a wave of energy, a surge of power that threatened to overpower them. But Yamama, drawing strength from the heart of the Emerald Woods itself, stood her ground. With a fierce cry, she deflected the energy, sending it back toward the Inventor.

Weakened and dizzy, the Inventor stood back up, his eyes wide with shock. He had underestimated the power of nature, the strength of the forest, and the will of those who fought to protect it.

As the dust settled and the last of the machines fell, the Inventor stood in the midst of the wreckage. His machines lay scattered around him, lifeless and broken. His eyes, filled with anger at first, now reflected a deep, reluctant respect.

"You were right," he admitted, his voice soft and uncertain. "I was blinded by my ambition. I thought I could conquer nature. But I see now... I should have tried to understand it."

Yamama's heart was heavy, but she remained calm. She extended her hand to the Inventor. "It's not too late," she said gently. "We can learn from our mistakes. We can use our knowledge and creativity to heal the Earth, not harm it."

The Inventor hesitated for a moment, then took her hand, humbled by her kindness. He looked around at the devastation he had caused—the wreckage of his machines and the damage they had done. Slowly, he realized that true progress didn't come from conquering nature. It came from working with it, in harmony.

And as they stood together amidst the ruins, Yamama, Lara, Maya, and even the Inventor knew that a new path was possible—one that would heal the world and restore the balance between nature and invention.



Chapter 8

A New Beginning



With the Inventor humbled and his machines broken, the healing began. The Emerald Woods, once scarred and weary, began to stir with the promise of renewal. Lara, her connection to the plants deepened by the battle, knelt on the forest floor, her hands pressed firmly into the earth. A gentle glow radiated from her fingertips, and with every pulse of her energy, the weak trees began to sprout new leaves. Branches, once lifeless, stretched skyward as if awakening from a deep sleep.

Nearby, Maya moved like the flowing rivers she commanded, her dance a graceful call to the waters. Streams, cleansed of the City of Gears' pollution, rushed back into the forest, their clear, life giving flow nourishing the dry soil.

The Laughing Water Stream, once silent and choked, found its voice again, its joyous ripples echoing through the woods. Flowers, vibrant and colorful, bloomed in its wake, carpeting the ground in a carpet of life.



The Emerald Woods was not the only place touched by change. In the City of Gears, the people, humbled by the destruction they had caused, began to rethink their relentless pursuit of progress. Smoke producing factories were changed with cleaner technology, and alternative energy sources were explored. Streets once choked with soot and noise gave way to greener spaces, where saplings were planted amidst the towering metal structures. The city, once a monument to unchecked ambition, became a symbol of a new way forward where invention and nature coexisted.

Yamama, no longer just a princess of the forest, had become a symbol of hope. She traveled beyond the Emerald Woods, carrying the lessons of harmony and balance to distant lands. Her words inspired countless others to see the interconnectedness of all living things and the beauty of working with nature, not against it. She taught the people of the City of Gears to see their inventions not as weapons of control, but as tools for restoration and unity.



The forest thrived under her care and the guardianship of her friends. Children laughed as they played beneath the towering cedars, their joy a testament to the woods' rebirth. Birds, once silent, filled the air with their songs, and the ancient olive, cedar, and fig trees, their leaves glinting in the sunlight, stood as quiet witnesses to the resilience of the natural world.

Yamama stood once more beneath the ancient cedar, the tree that had first warned her of the impending crisis. Its crooked branches, now brimming with life, seemed to bow toward her in gratitude. She felt the forest's energy humming around her, a sense of peace and balance that filled her heart.

But she knew this peace was not permanent it was a victory, not an end. The fight to protect the delicate balance of life was never truly over. There would always be new challenges, new forces seeking to upset that harmony. Yet Yamama, with Lara and Maya at her side, and the wisdom of the forest going through her veins, knew they were ready for whatever lay ahead.

As the sun sank below the horizon, spreading golden light across the Emerald Woods, Yamama lifted her gaze to the sky. The forest had healed, and the bond between humanity and nature had been renewed. Together, they had proven that even in the face of destruction, hope could flourish, and life could begin anew. And as the stars began to twinkle above, Yamama smiled. Their journey had only just begun.

The End