

Lady Tick-Tick

Abdulla Shaig



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Foreword

Lady Tick-Tick, or *Tiq-tiq xanım* as it is called in Azerbaijani, is an old Azerbaijani fairytale that has been transmitted orally from generation to generation. The fairytale was first published in 1911 as a rhyming story by Abdulla Shaig (*Abdulla Şaiq*), and for that reason many people believe that he is the original author of this fairytale. Besides, Shaig is one of the most prominent children's book writers and folklorist in Azerbaijan.

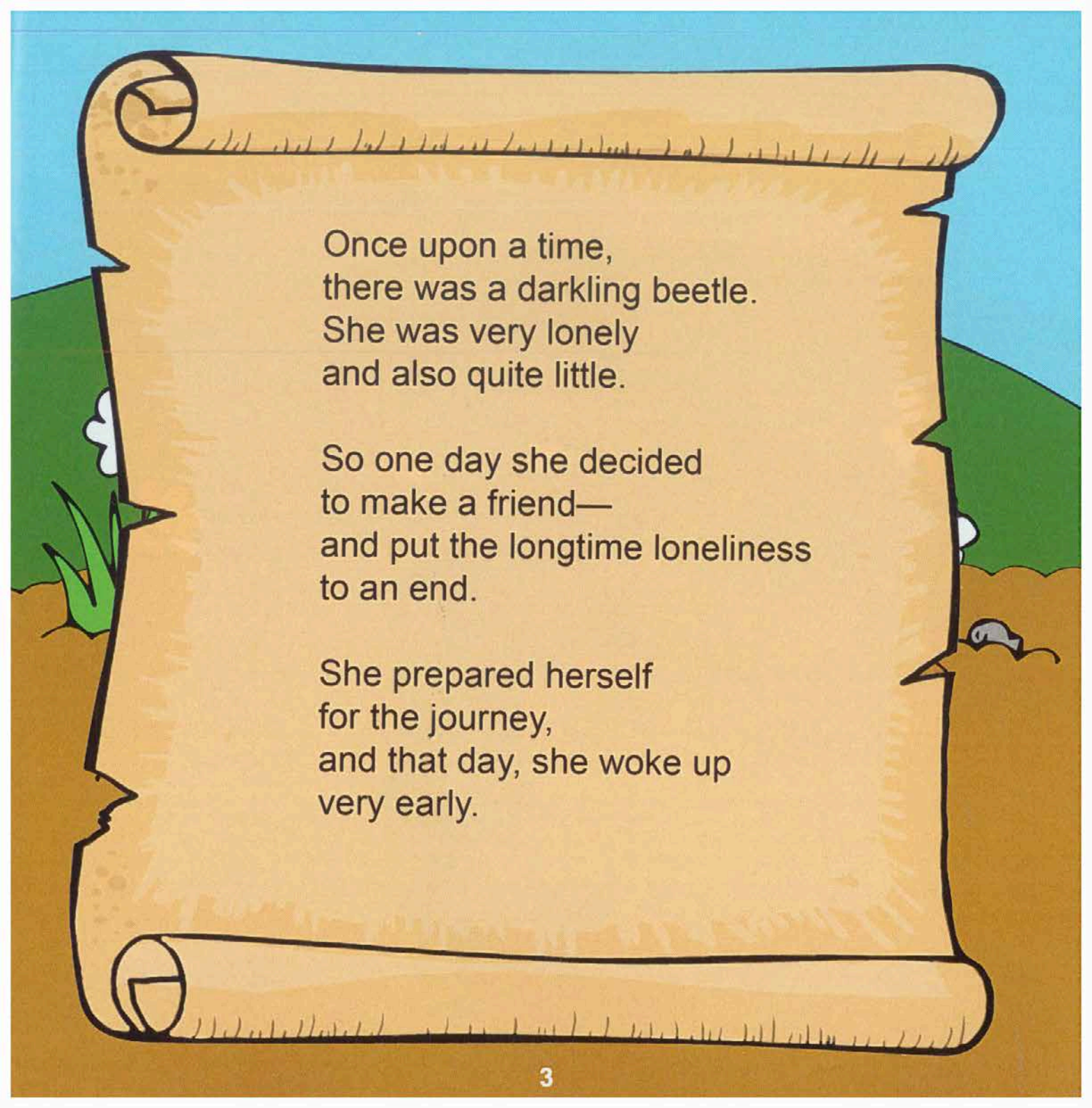
In 1912, a folklorist and scholar named Firidun bey Kocharli (*Firidun bəy Kəçərli*) gathered all treasures of oral tradition in Azerbaijan into one book, "Gifts for Children" (*Balalara hədiyyə*). This is similar to what the Brothers Grimm did in Germany. In "Gifts for Children," the fairytale of Lady Tick-Tick is titled "Ms. Darkling Beetle and Mr. Mouse" (*Pıspısa xanım və Siçan bəy*), also called "*Dozanqurdu Düzxatun və Siçan Solub bəy*." Kocharli's story differs from Shaig's narrative technique in that Kocharli's version does not contain complete rhyming; furthermore, the characters and the dialogues vary, with Kocharli's Woodcutter and Shoemaker instead of Shaig's Shepherd and Fox.

Lady Tick-Tick, the one that people in Azerbaijan imagine today, was developed into a cartoon in 1974. It was produced by "*Azərbaycanfilm*" studio and directed by Masud Panahi (*Məsud Pənəhi*) as well as Aghanaghi Akhundov (*Ağanağlı Axundov*). The characters were designed by art manager Masud Panahi and director assistant Elchin Akhundov (*Elçin Axundov*).

The story in the cartoon is similar to Shaig's version but with a different ending. Today it's difficult to imagine Lady Tick-Tick looking different from the character concept created by "*Azərbaycanfilm*" studio. Therefore, in this book, we decided to preserve this heritage by depicting Lady Tick-Tick and even Mr. Mouse similarly to Panahi's and Akhundov's design. I would like to thank Huseyn Mehdiyev (*Hüseyn Mehdiyev*) the head of the movie directors union, who coordinated me with "*Azərbaycanfilm*" studio and Rashid Aghamaliyev (*Rəşid Ağamaliyev*) founder of Animafilm Festival, who coordinated me with Masud Panahi.

Folklore stories such as Lady Tick-Tick and writers such as Abdulla Shaig are immortal, and the cartoon created by Masud Panahi is iconic. It will remain renowned in Azerbaijani animation, but time goes on, and the story must be told anew. It is also important to make Azerbaijani culture accessible for Azeris living abroad and for anyone who is interested in Azerbaijani culture. Yuriy Fidler (Юрий Владимирович Фидлер) and Siyavush Mamedzade (*Səyavuş Məmmədzadə*) each translated Lady Tick-Tick into Russian, and now it is time for an English version.

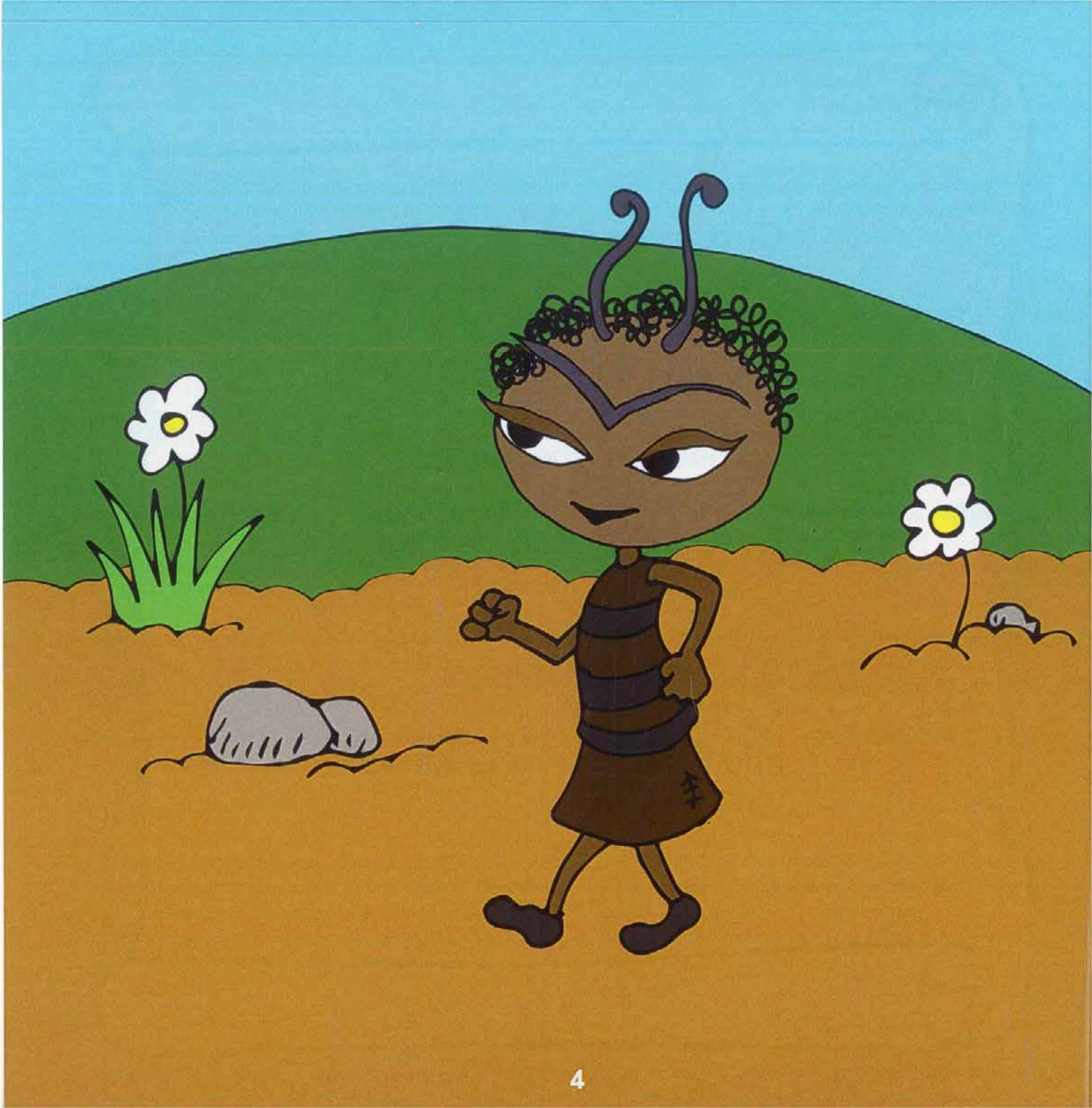
This translation owes special gratitude to Elshad Ahmedov (*Elşad Əhmədov*), parasitologist and doctor of Biological Sciences, who helped define and find the zoological name of Lady Tick-Tick, or Tenebrionidae, the Darkling beetle.

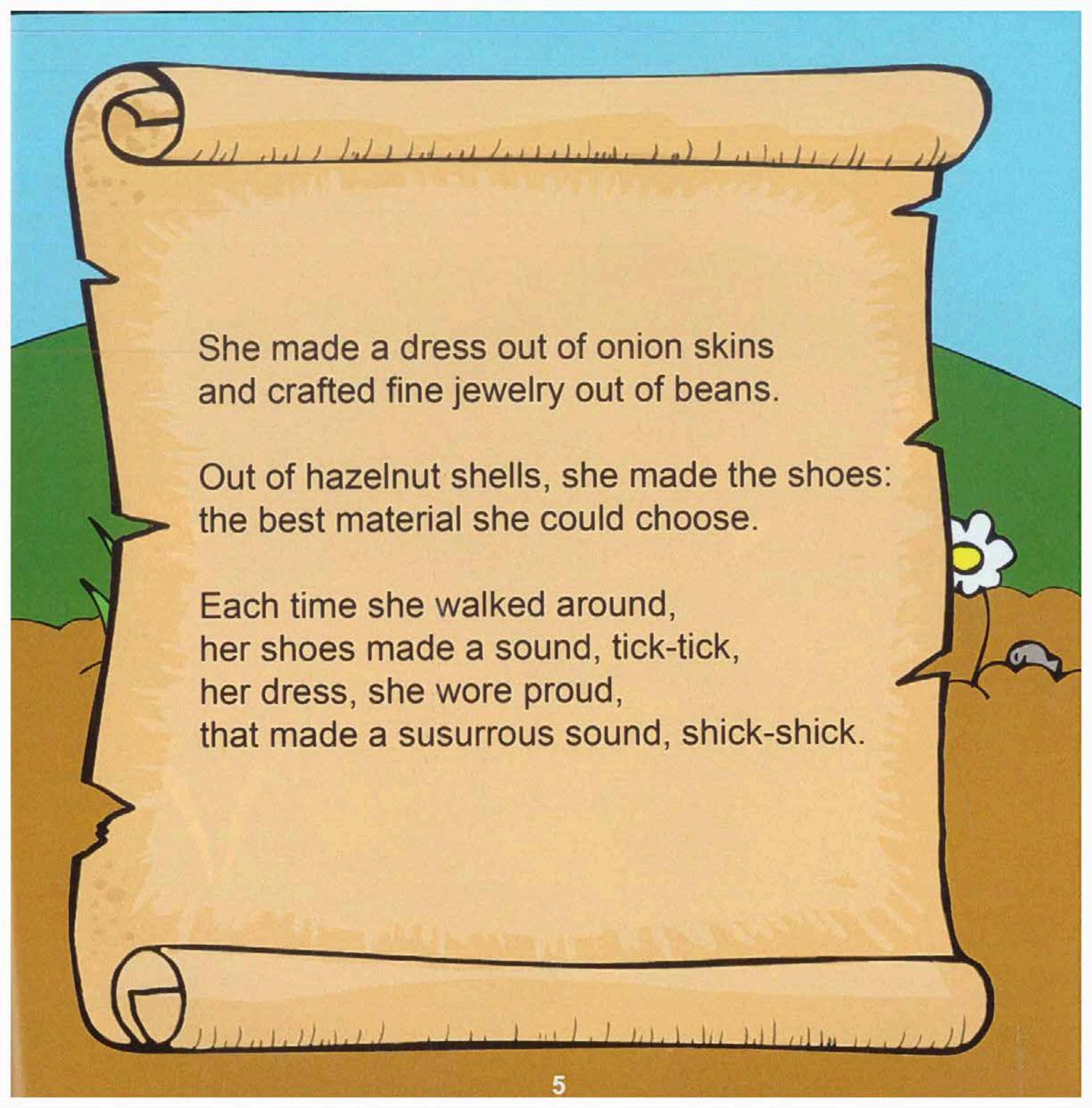


Once upon a time,
there was a darkling beetle.
She was very lonely
and also quite little.

So one day she decided
to make a friend—
and put the longtime loneliness
to an end.

She prepared herself
for the journey,
and that day, she woke up
very early.



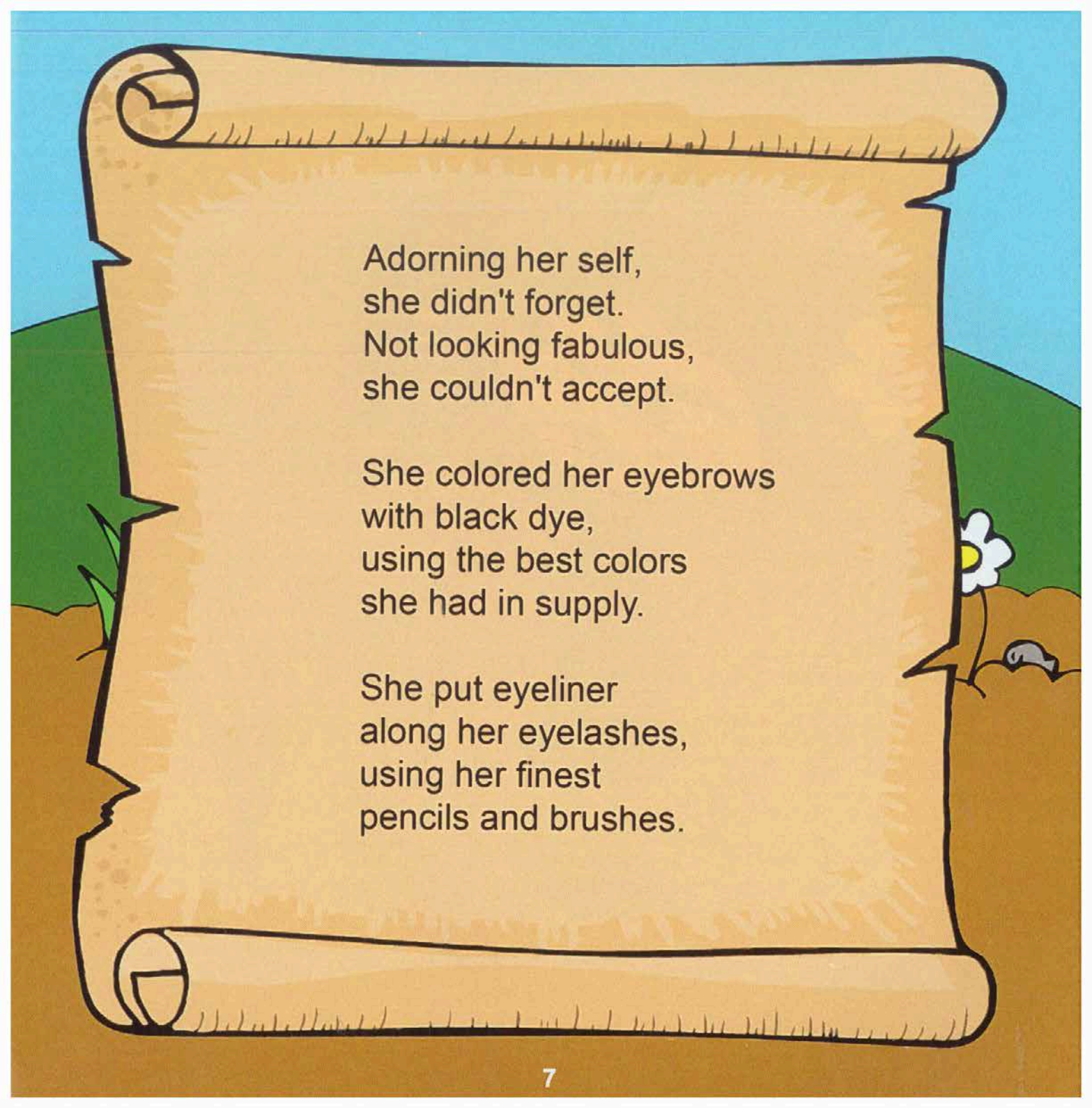
A large, light-brown scroll with a black outline is the central focus. It is unrolled at the top and bottom, with small circular details at the ends of the rolled-up sections. The scroll is set against a background of a blue sky, a green hill, and brown ground. On the right side of the ground, there is a white daisy with a yellow center and a small grey mole emerging from a hole.

She made a dress out of onion skins
and crafted fine jewelry out of beans.

Out of hazelnut shells, she made the shoes:
the best material she could choose.

Each time she walked around,
her shoes made a sound, tick-tick,
her dress, she wore proud,
that made a susurrous sound, shick-shick.

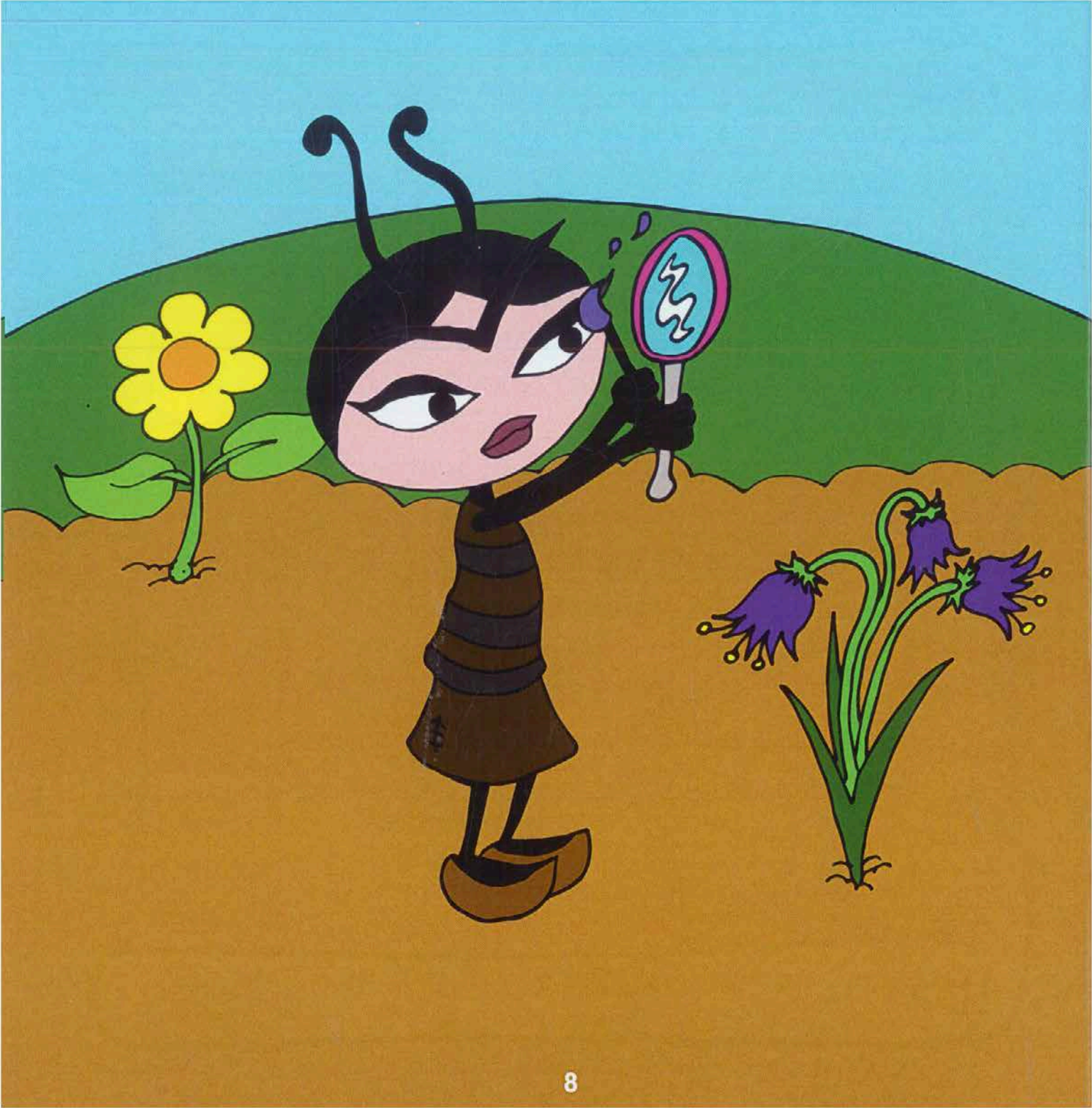


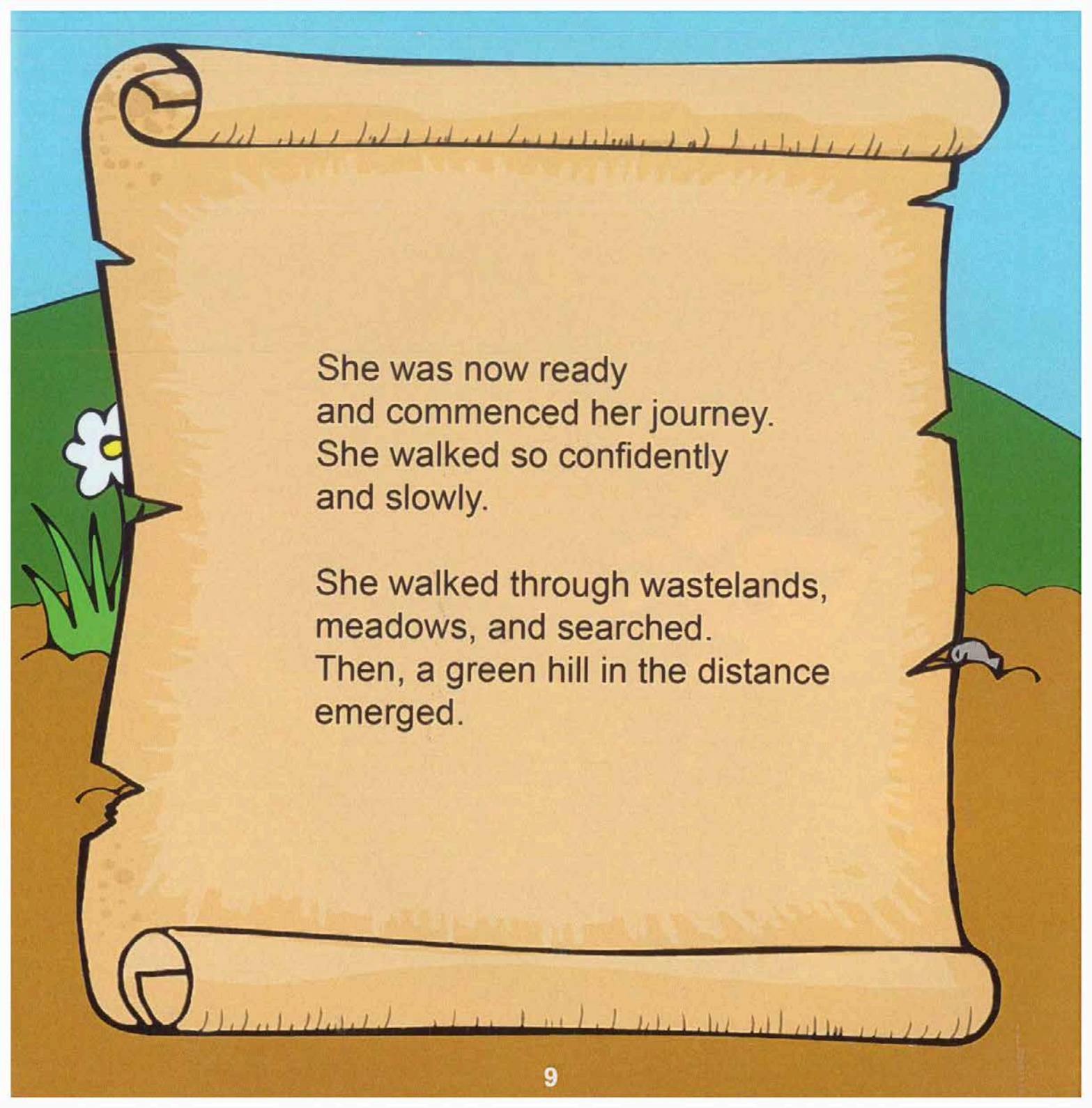


Adorning her self,
she didn't forget.
Not looking fabulous,
she couldn't accept.

She colored her eyebrows
with black dye,
using the best colors
she had in supply.

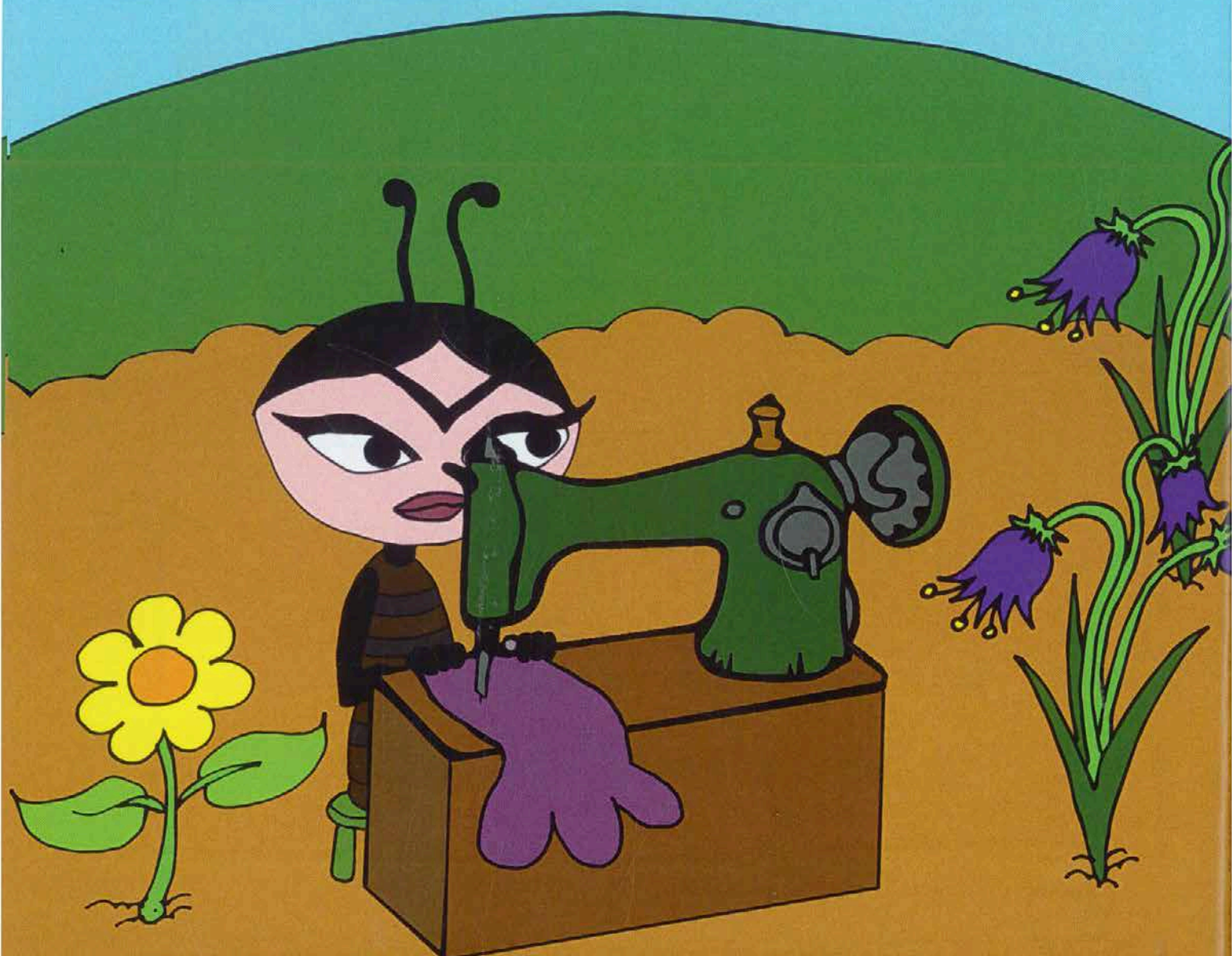
She put eyeliner
along her eyelashes,
using her finest
pencils and brushes.

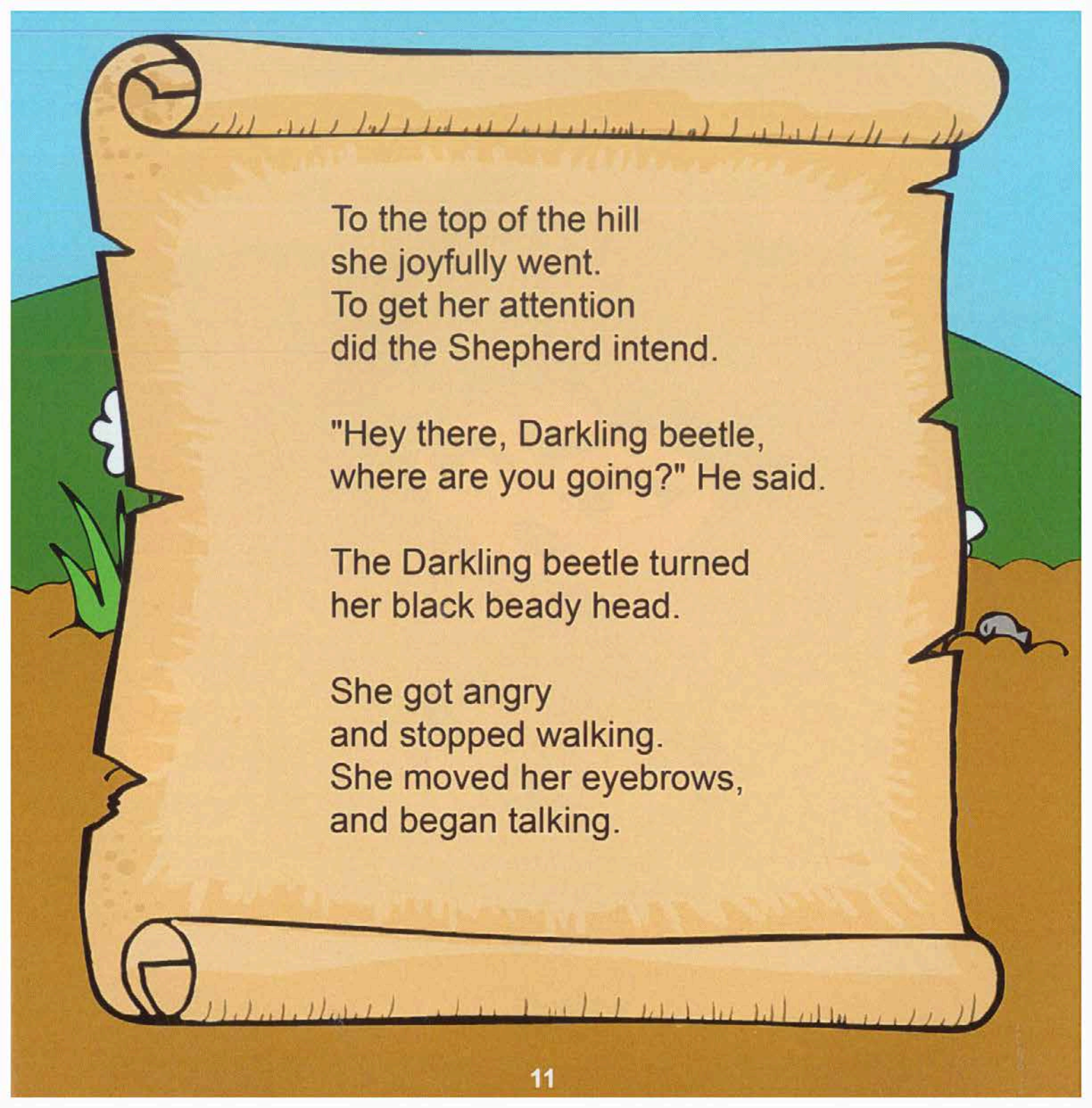




She was now ready
and commenced her journey.
She walked so confidently
and slowly.

She walked through wastelands,
meadows, and searched.
Then, a green hill in the distance
emerged.





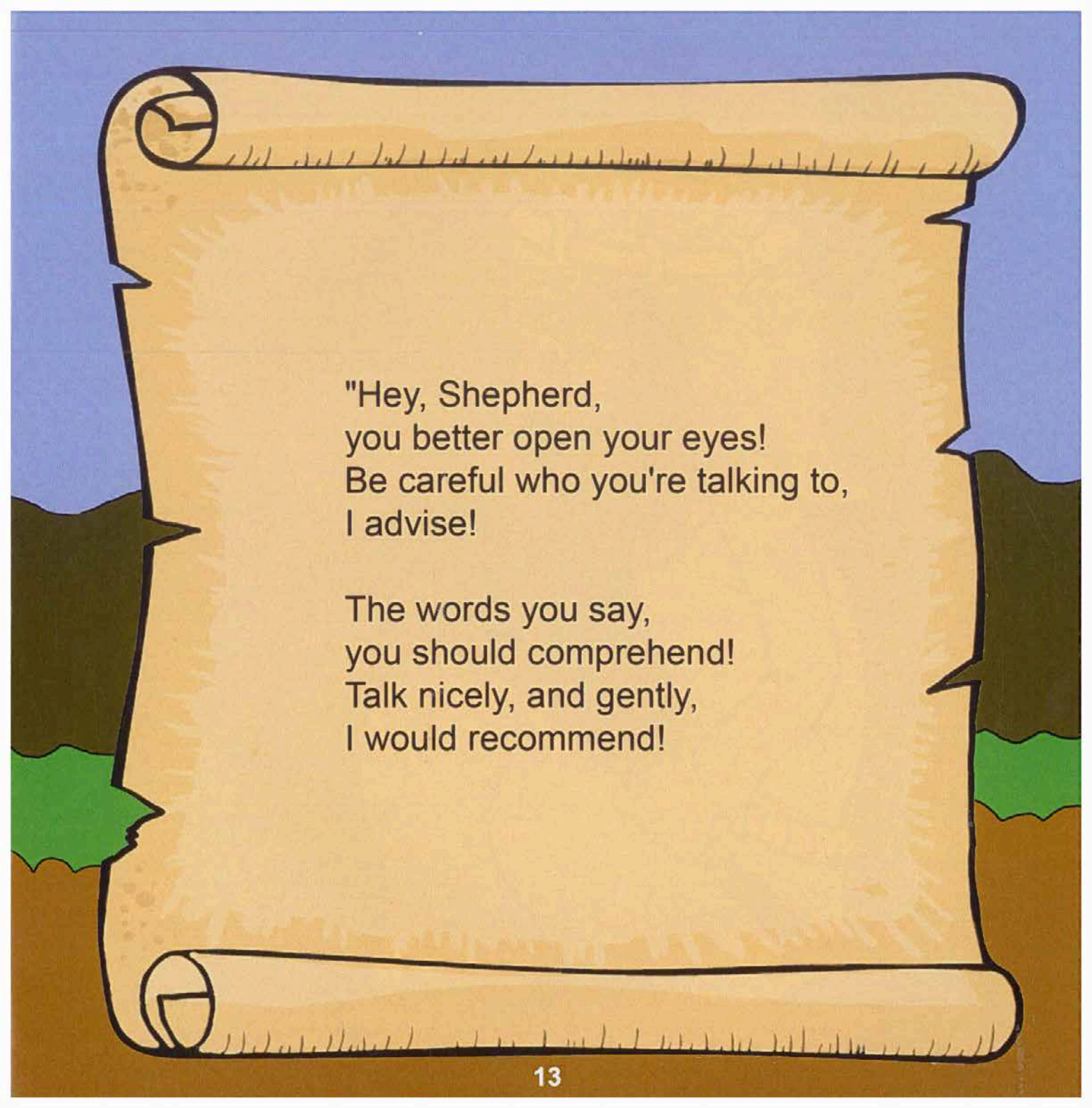
To the top of the hill
she joyfully went.
To get her attention
did the Shepherd intend.

"Hey there, Darkling beetle,
where are you going?" He said.

The Darkling beetle turned
her black beady head.

She got angry
and stopped walking.
She moved her eyebrows,
and began talking.

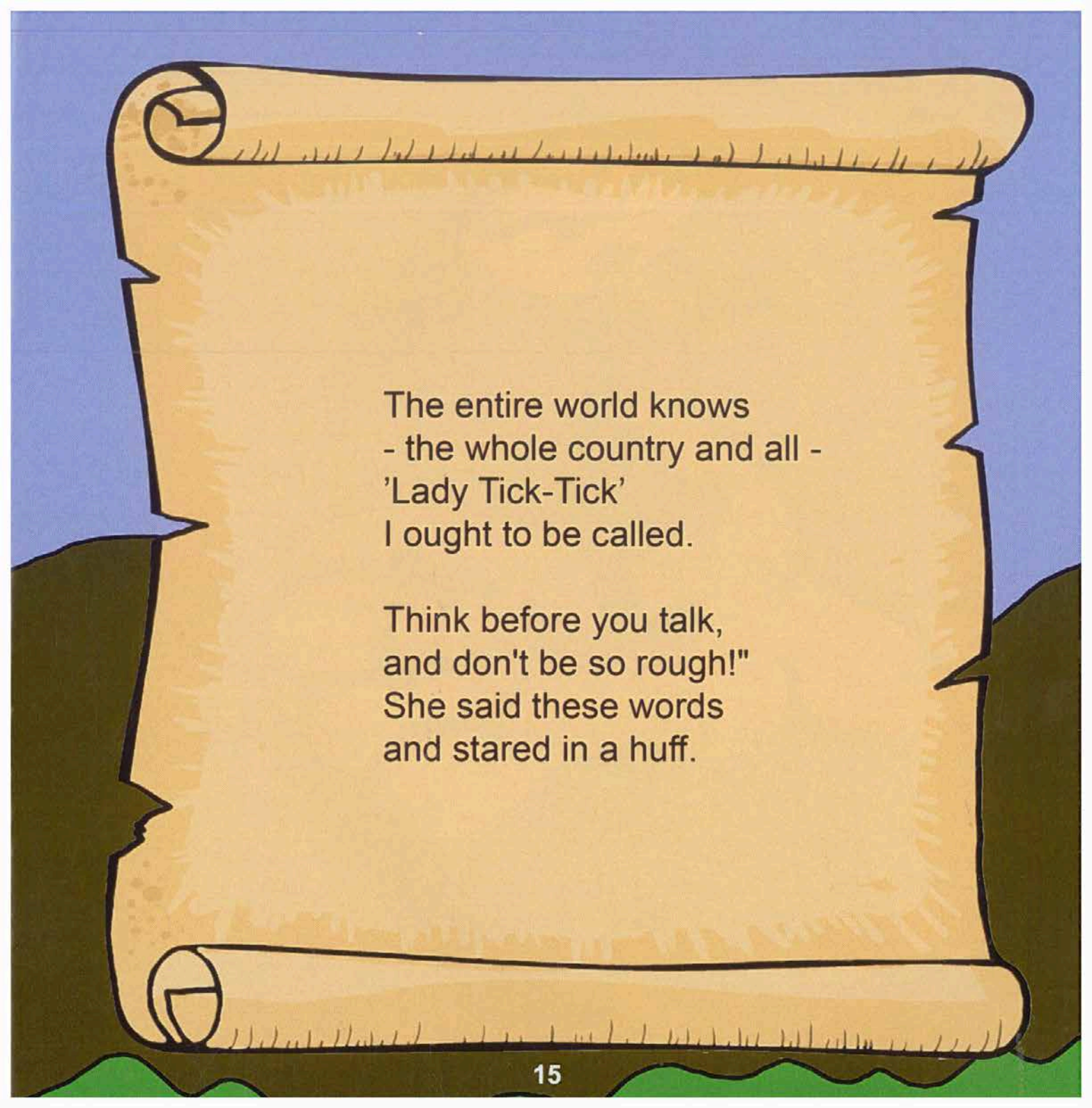




"Hey, Shepherd,
you better open your eyes!
Be careful who you're talking to,
I advise!

The words you say,
you should comprehend!
Talk nicely, and gently,
I would recommend!

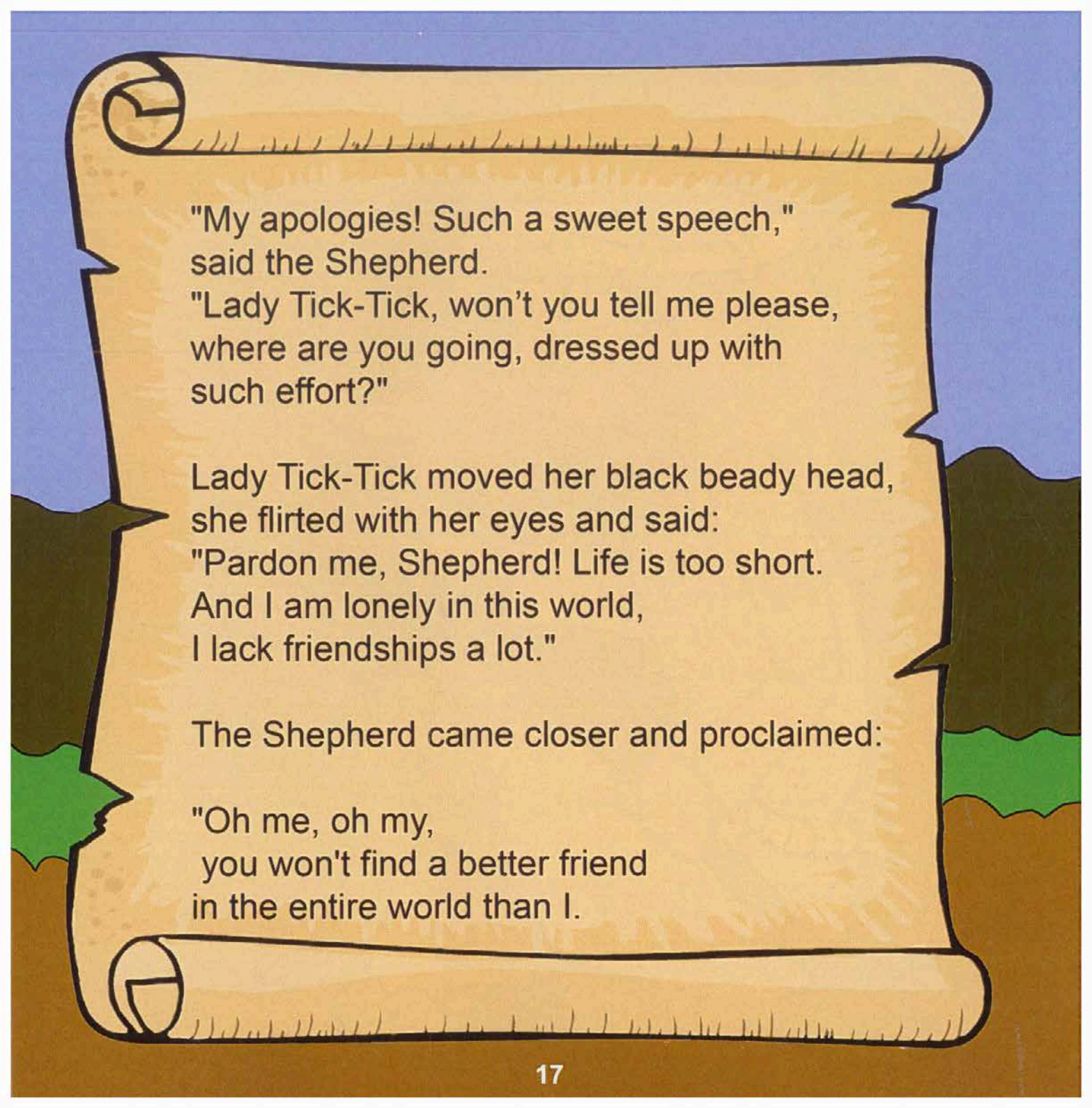




The entire world knows
- the whole country and all -
'Lady Tick-Tick'
I ought to be called.

Think before you talk,
and don't be so rough!"
She said these words
and stared in a huff.



A scroll with text on a landscape background. The scroll is yellow with a black outline and is unrolled. The background is a simple landscape with a blue sky, green hills, and brown ground. The scroll is positioned in the center of the page.

"My apologies! Such a sweet speech,"
said the Shepherd.

"Lady Tick-Tick, won't you tell me please,
where are you going, dressed up with
such effort?"

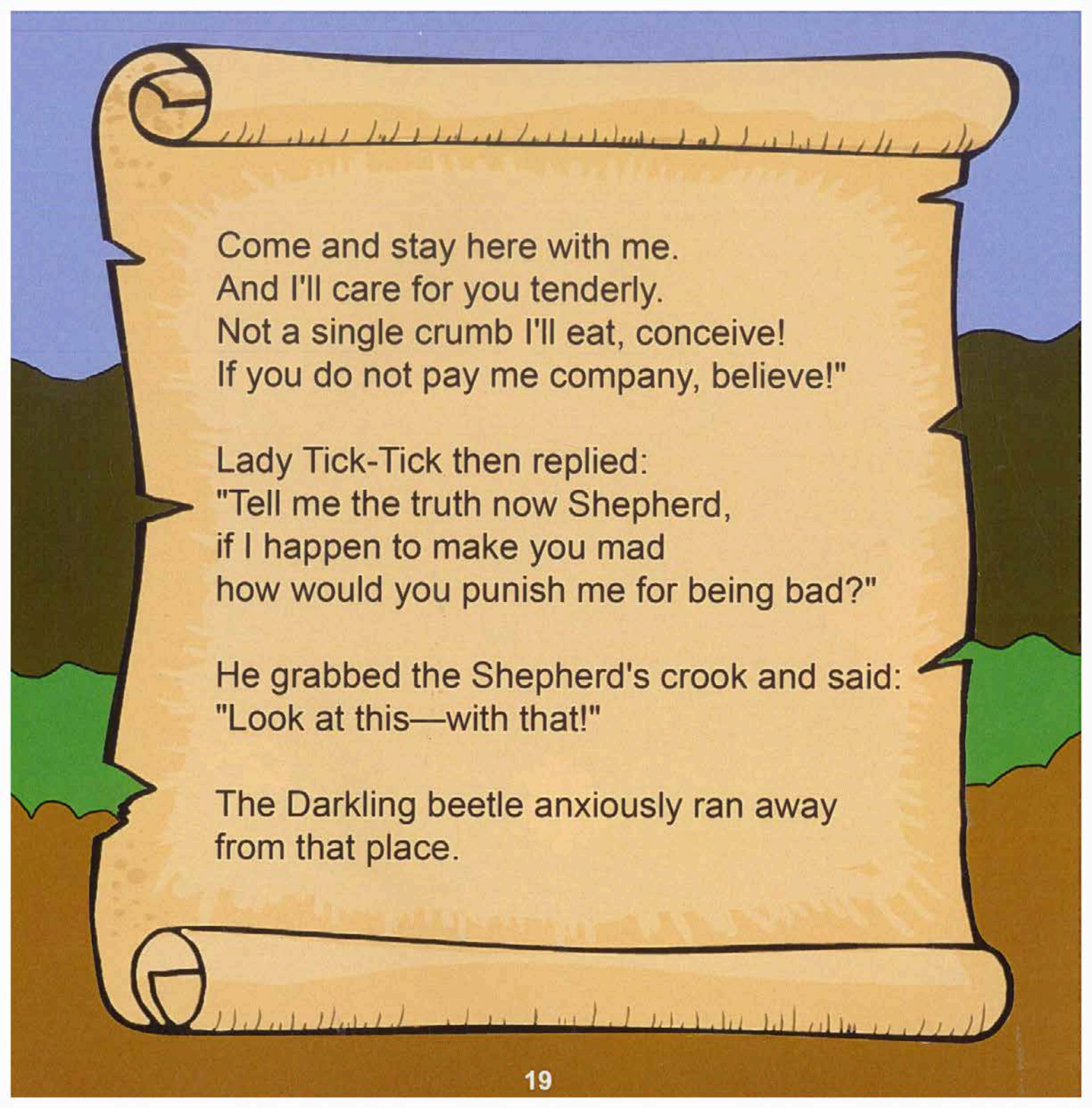
Lady Tick-Tick moved her black beady head,
she flirted with her eyes and said:

"Pardon me, Shepherd! Life is too short.
And I am lonely in this world,
I lack friendships a lot."

The Shepherd came closer and proclaimed:

"Oh me, oh my,
you won't find a better friend
in the entire world than I.



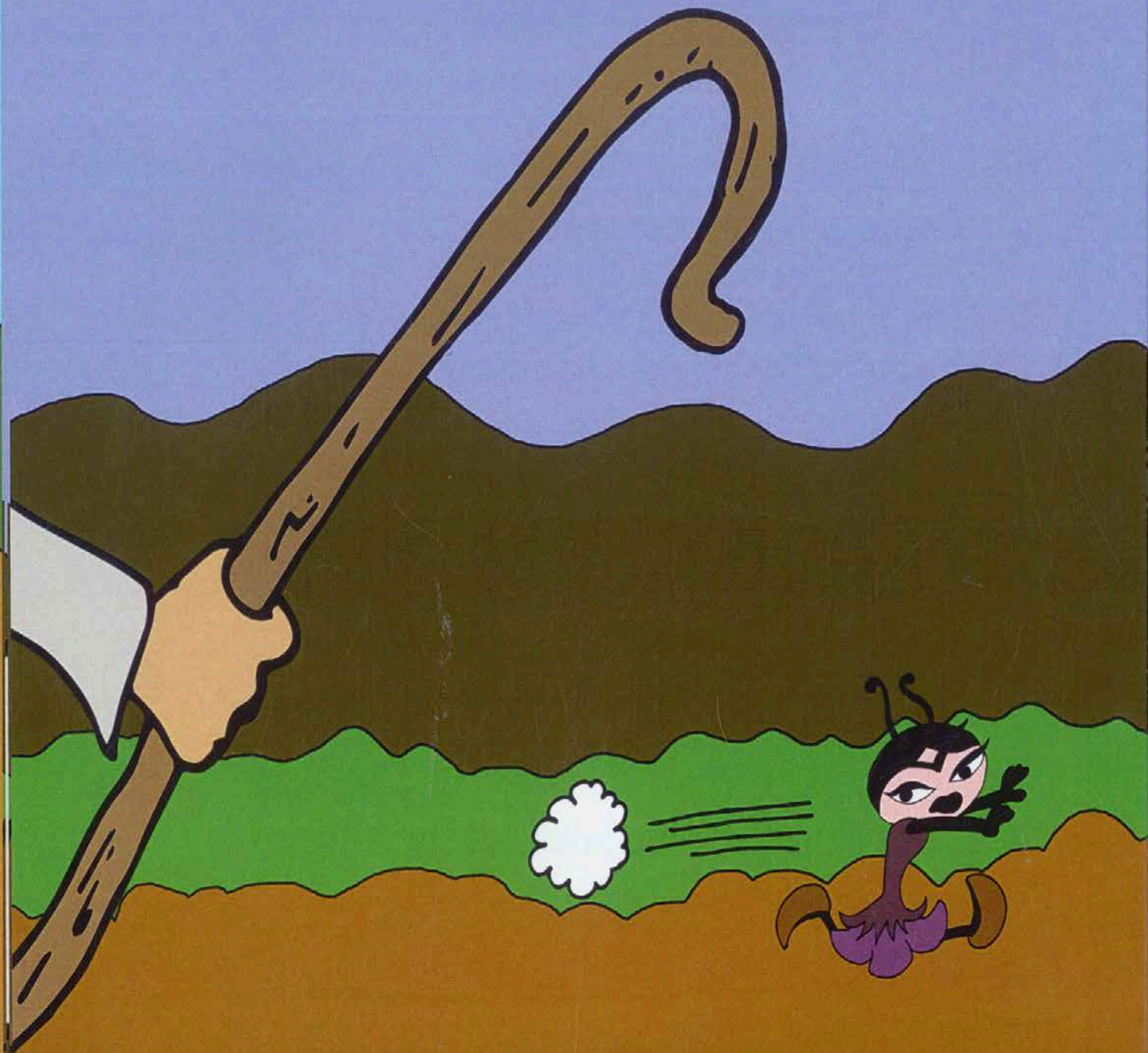
A scroll with text on a landscape background. The scroll is yellow with a black outline and is unrolled at the top and bottom. The background is a simple landscape with a blue sky, brown hills, and green bushes. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

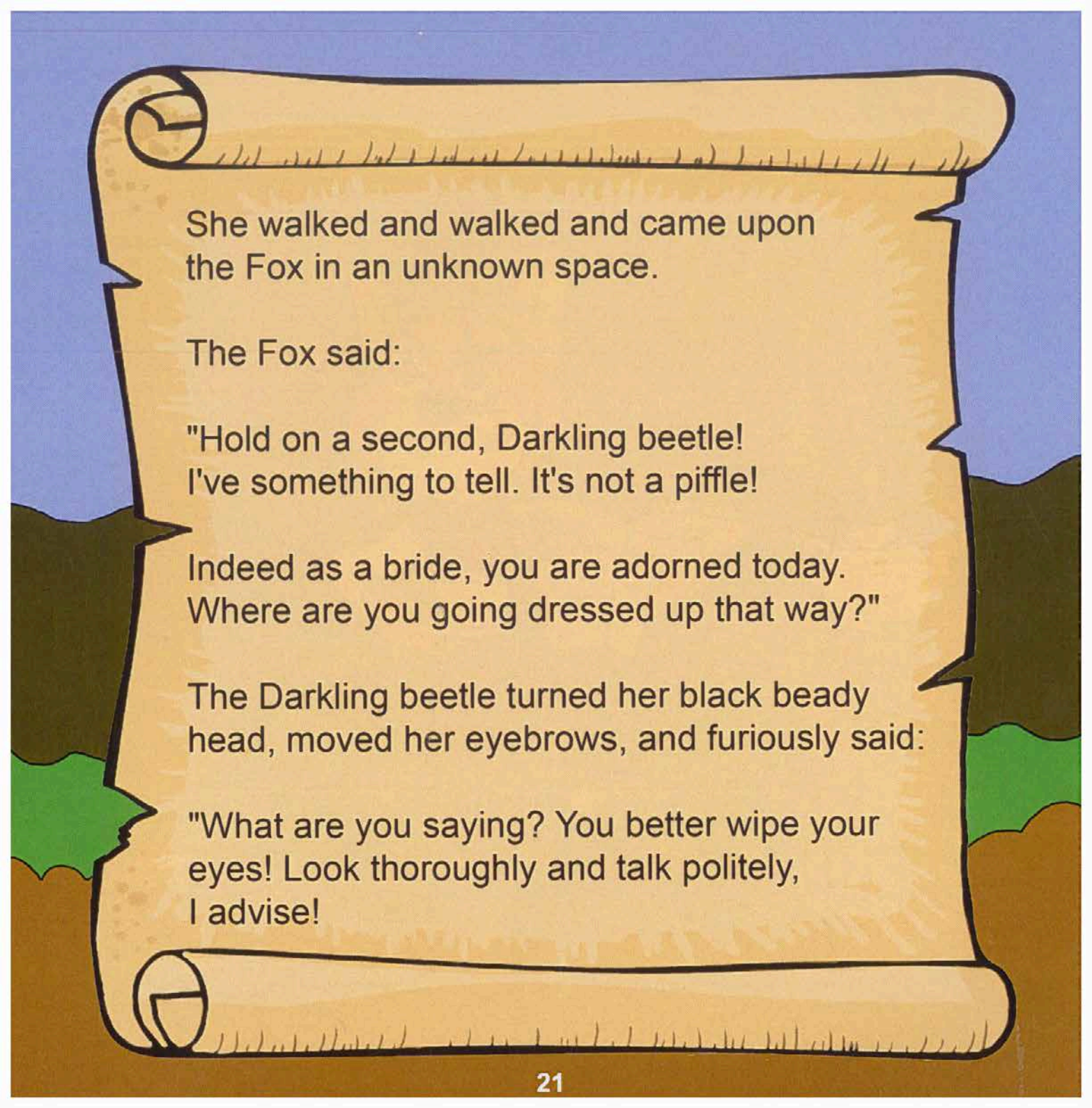
Come and stay here with me.
And I'll care for you tenderly.
Not a single crumb I'll eat, conceive!
If you do not pay me company, believe!"

Lady Tick-Tick then replied:
"Tell me the truth now Shepherd,
if I happen to make you mad
how would you punish me for being bad?"

He grabbed the Shepherd's crook and said:
"Look at this—with that!"

The Darkling beetle anxiously ran away
from that place.



A scroll with text on a blue background with green hills.

She walked and walked and came upon
the Fox in an unknown space.

The Fox said:

"Hold on a second, Darkling beetle!
I've something to tell. It's not a piffle!

Indeed as a bride, you are adorned today.
Where are you going dressed up that way?"

The Darkling beetle turned her black beady
head, moved her eyebrows, and furiously said:

"What are you saying? You better wipe your
eyes! Look thoroughly and talk politely,
I advise!

The entire world and the whole country knows, 'Lady Tick-Tick,' I am ought to be called!"



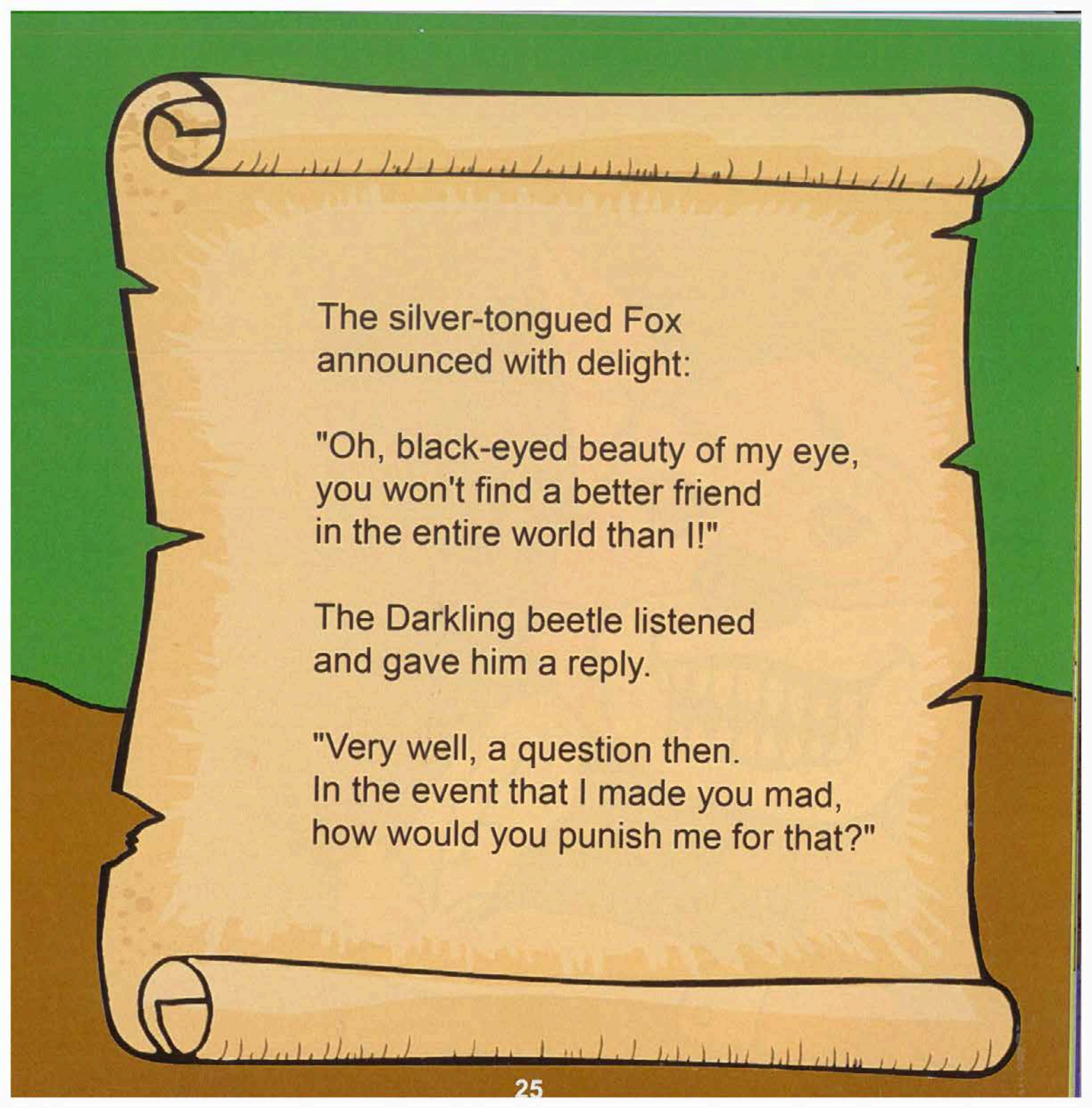
The Fox replied: "Oh, lady please, the fault
is mine, that name of yours I never knew.
I didn't at all recognize you
I beg you the pardon that's due!

May my tongue and mouth wither for hurting
you! Why are you going this way?"
The Fox inquired anew.

"Oh Lady Tick-Tick, oh Lady Shick-Shick,
tell me please, where!
Speak out, don't make Uncle Fox
worry any longer and share!"

Lady Tick-Tick replied: "Oh Mr. Fox, life is
too short, and I'm lonely in this world;
I lack friendships a lot."





The silver-tongued Fox
announced with delight:

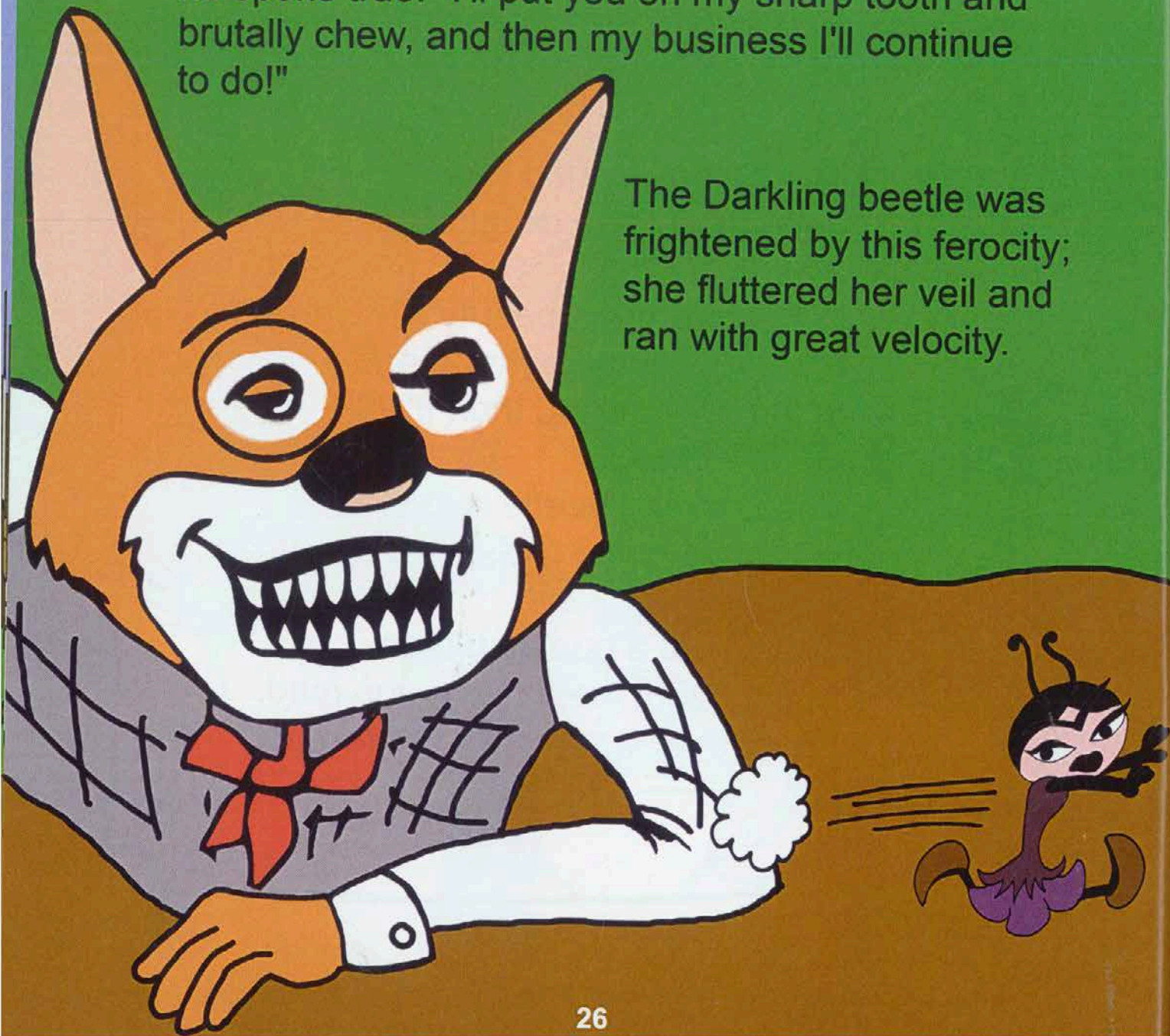
"Oh, black-eyed beauty of my eye,
you won't find a better friend
in the entire world than I!"

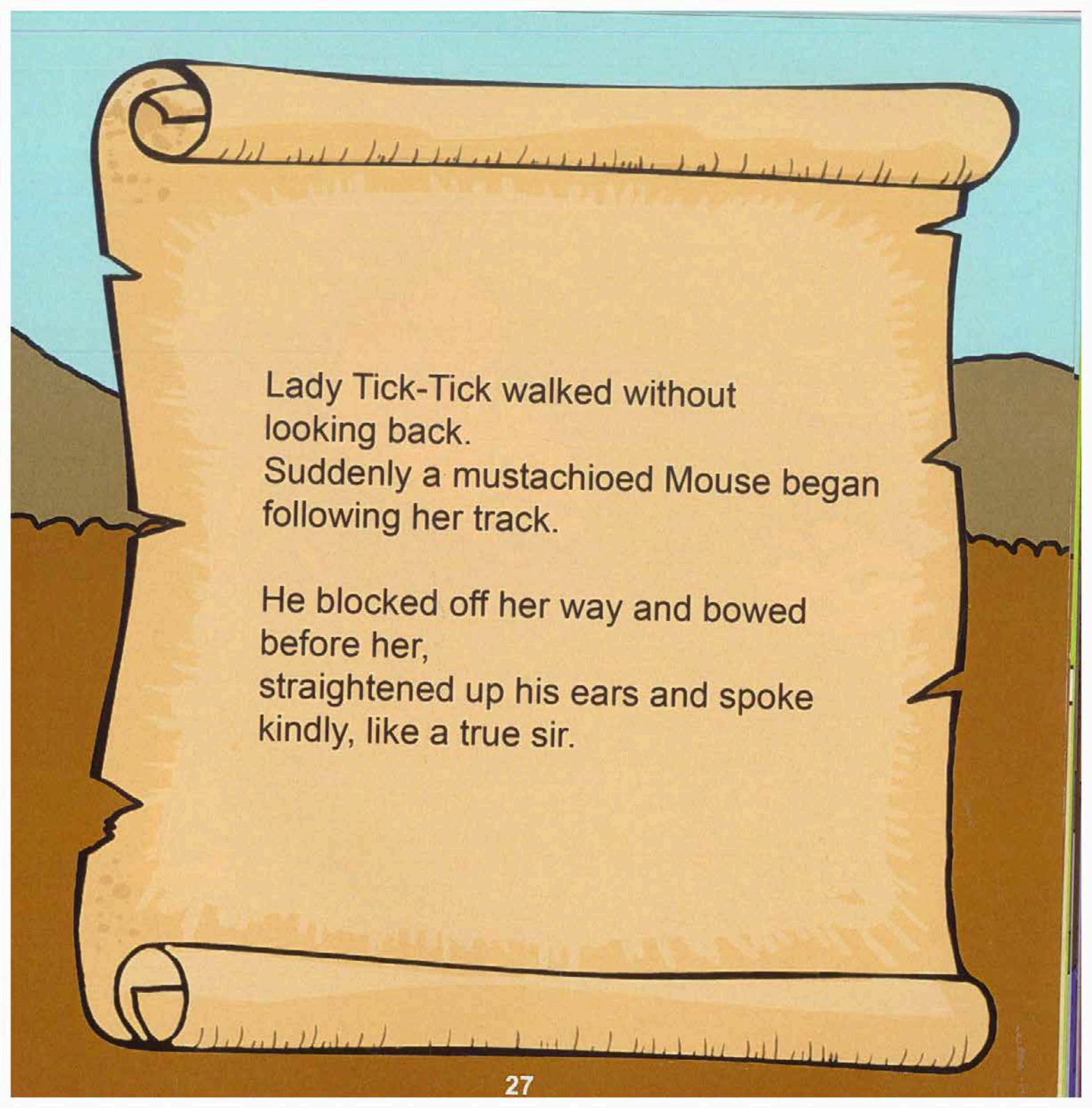
The Darkling beetle listened
and gave him a reply.

"Very well, a question then.
In the event that I made you mad,
how would you punish me for that?"

The Fox was uncertain, but soon,
he spoke true. "I'll put you on my sharp tooth and
brutally chew, and then my business I'll continue
to do!"

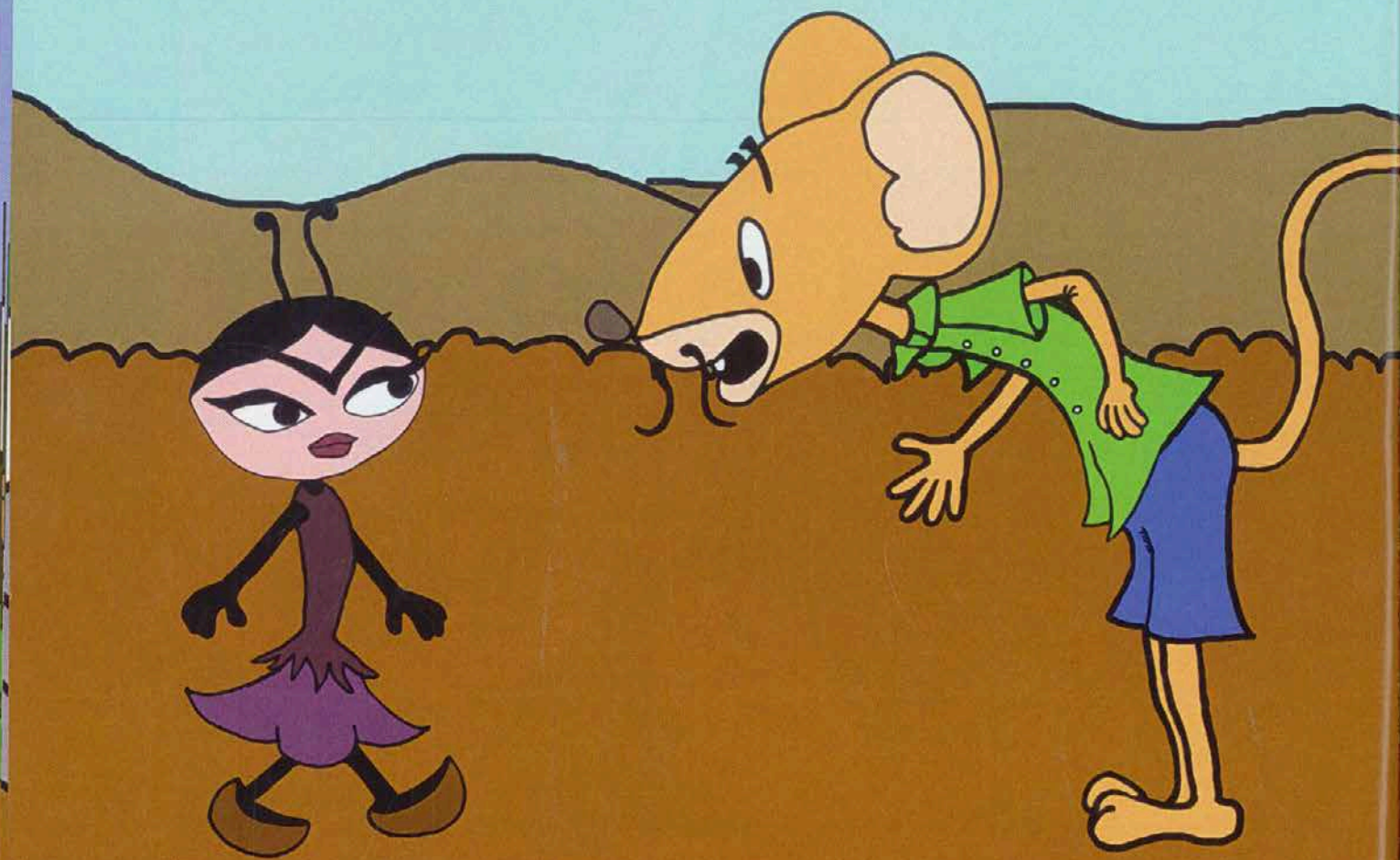
The Darkling beetle was
frightened by this ferocity;
she fluttered her veil and
ran with great velocity.

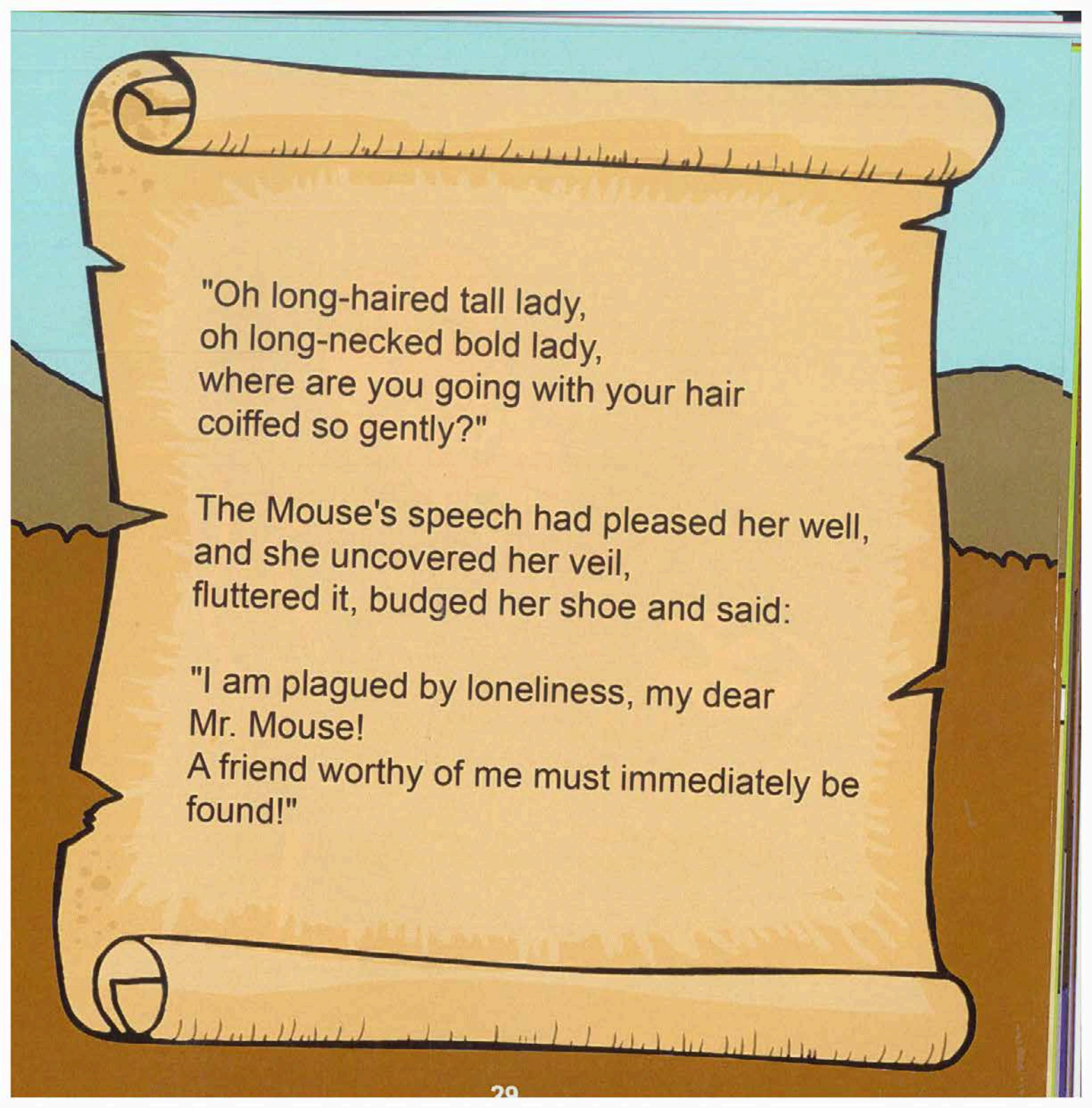


A cartoon-style illustration of a scroll with a light tan, textured surface and a black outline. The scroll is unrolled, with the top and bottom edges showing a dark brown binding. The scroll is set against a background of a light blue sky and brown ground. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

Lady Tick-Tick walked without
looking back.
Suddenly a mustachioed Mouse began
following her track.

He blocked off her way and bowed
before her,
straightened up his ears and spoke
kindly, like a true sir.

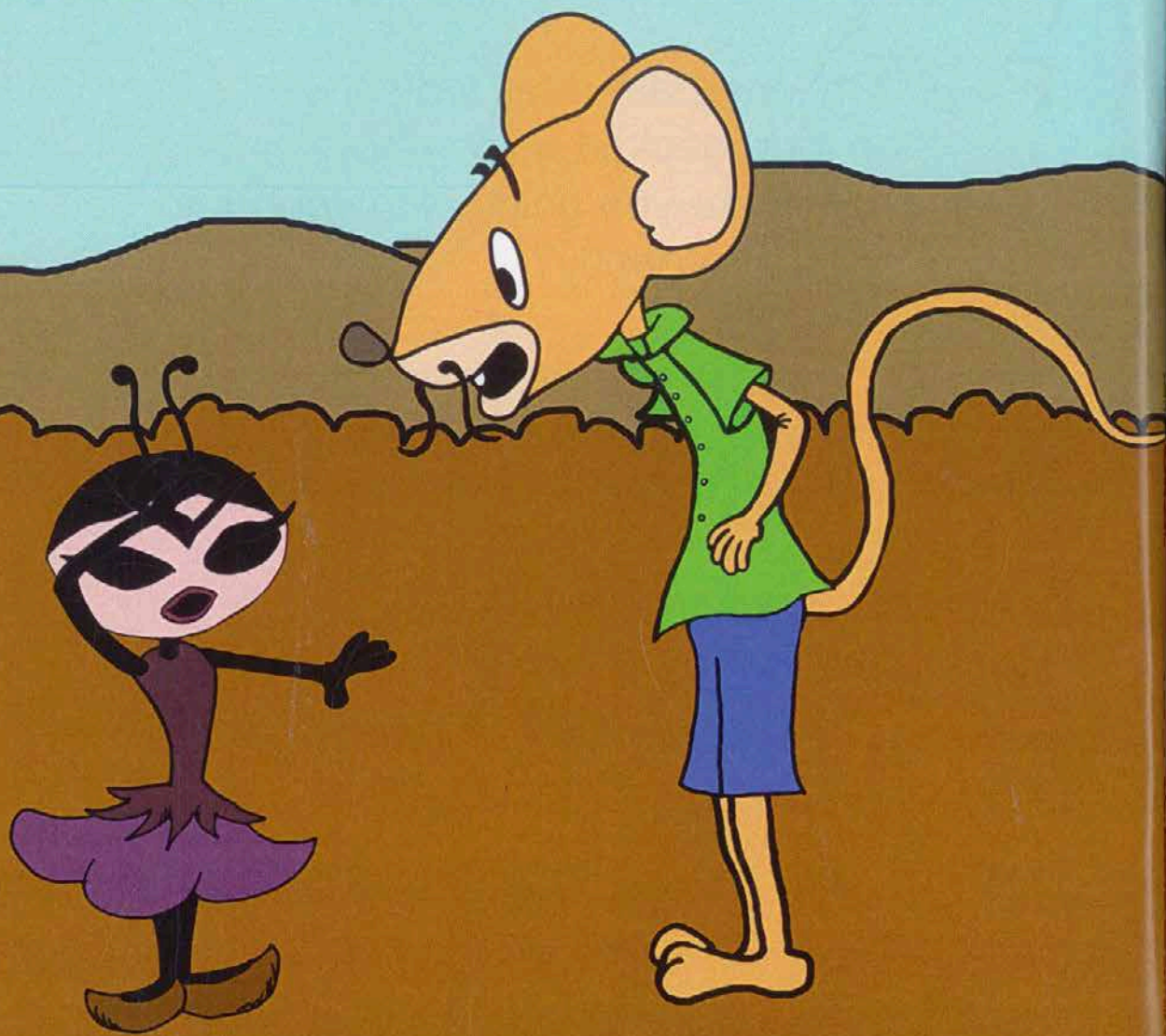


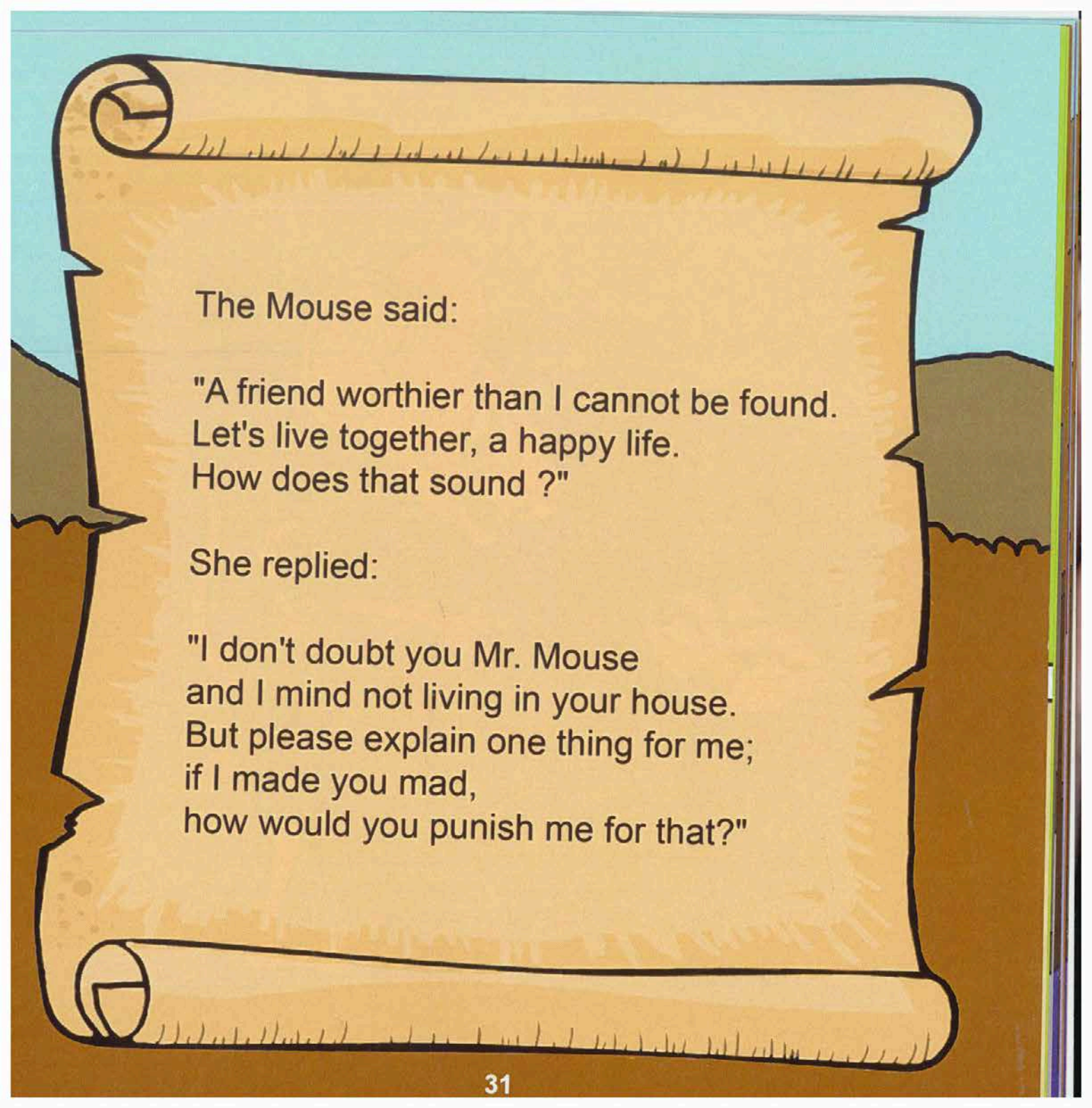


"Oh long-haired tall lady,
oh long-necked bold lady,
where are you going with your hair
coiffed so gently?"

The Mouse's speech had pleased her well,
and she uncovered her veil,
fluttered it, budged her shoe and said:

"I am plagued by loneliness, my dear
Mr. Mouse!
A friend worthy of me must immediately be
found!"



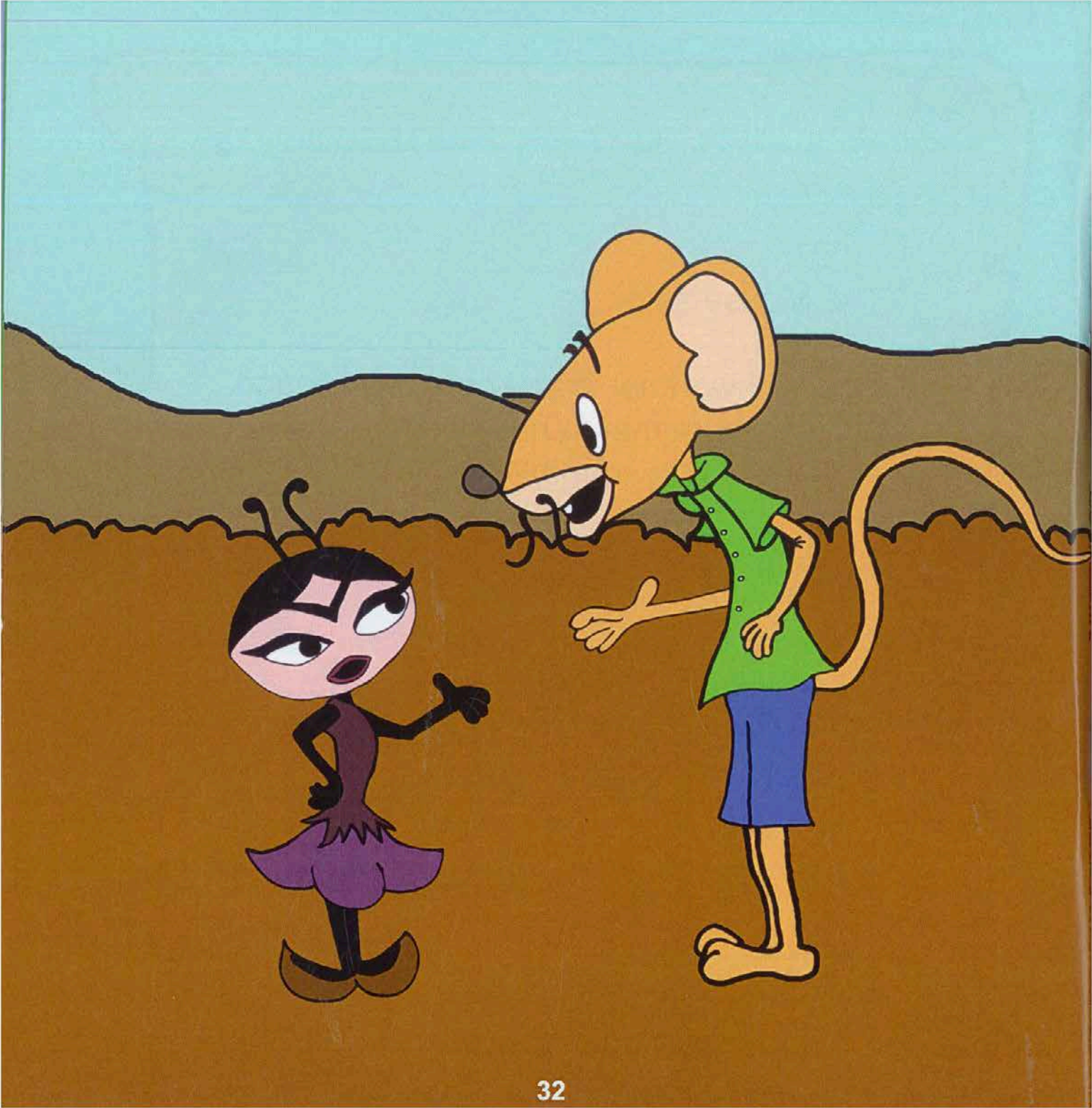
A scroll with text on a page with a landscape background. The scroll is unrolled, showing text. The background is a simple landscape with a light blue sky and brown ground. The scroll is drawn with a thick black outline and has a textured, parchment-like appearance. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

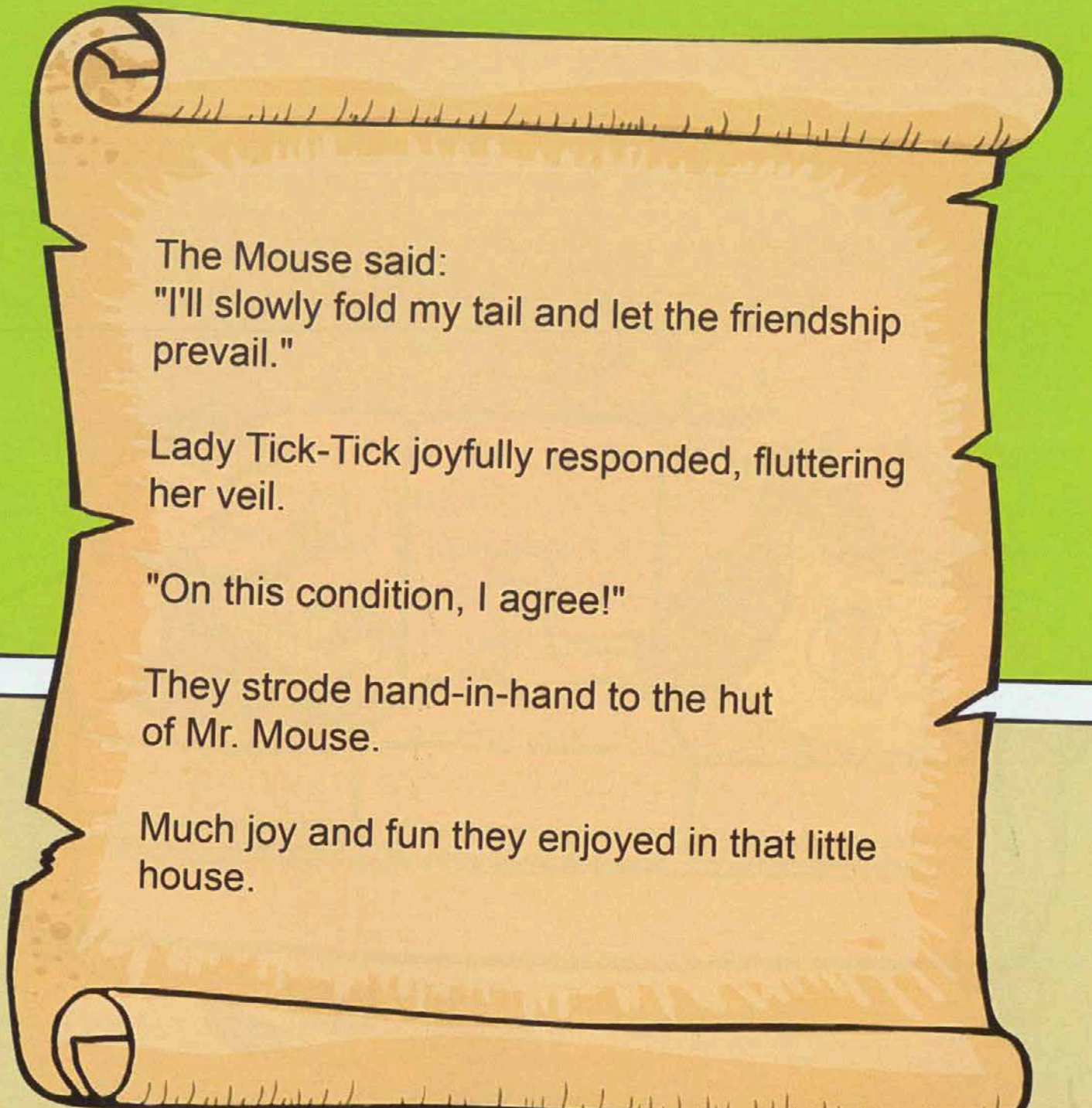
The Mouse said:

"A friend worthier than I cannot be found.
Let's live together, a happy life.
How does that sound ?"

She replied:

"I don't doubt you Mr. Mouse
and I mind not living in your house.
But please explain one thing for me;
if I made you mad,
how would you punish me for that?"



A large, light-brown scroll with a black outline is centered on a green background. The scroll is unrolled at the top and bottom, with small circular details at the ends of the top and bottom edges. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font. The scroll has a slightly textured appearance with some faint, darker brown spots.

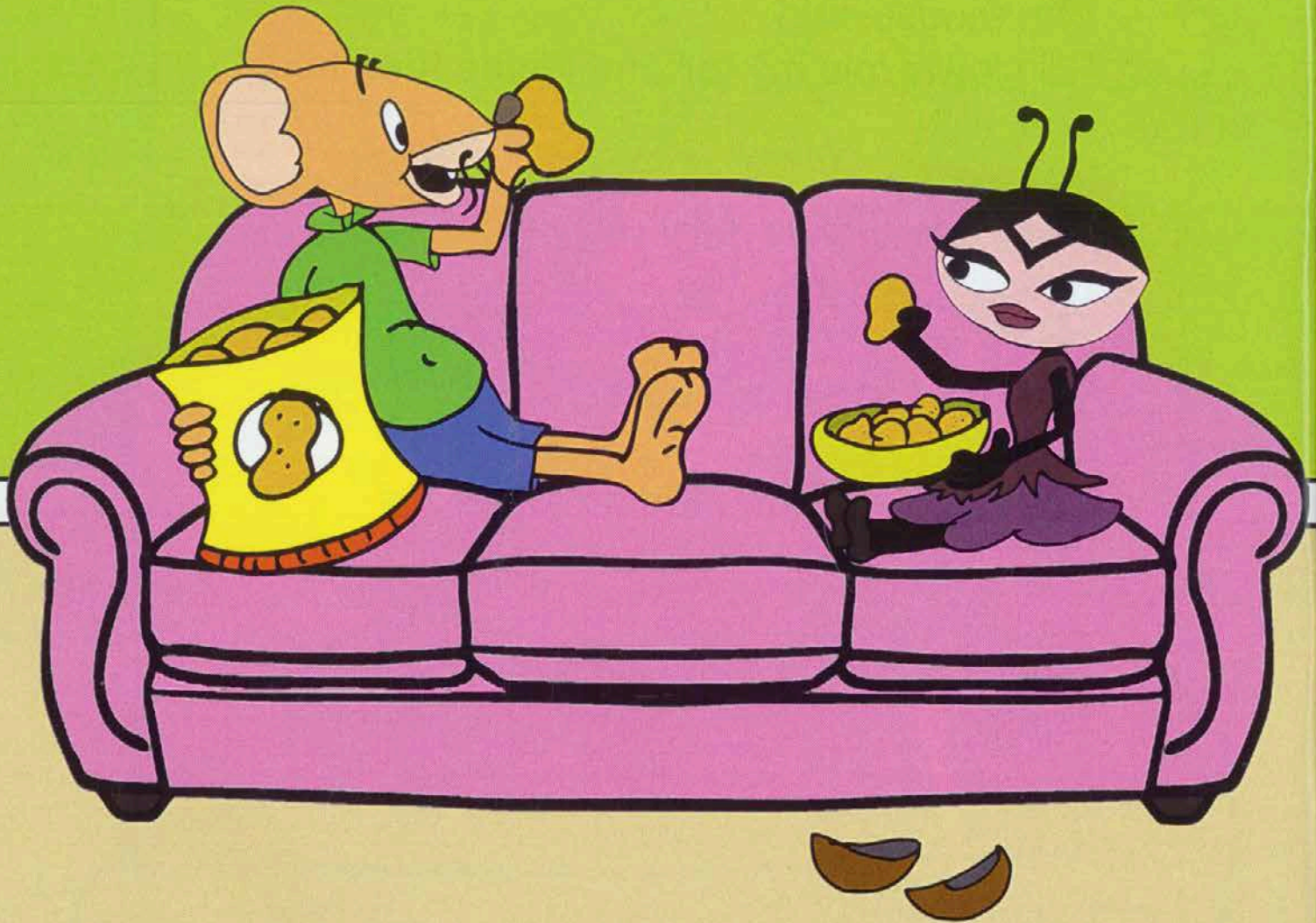
The Mouse said:
"I'll slowly fold my tail and let the friendship
prevail."

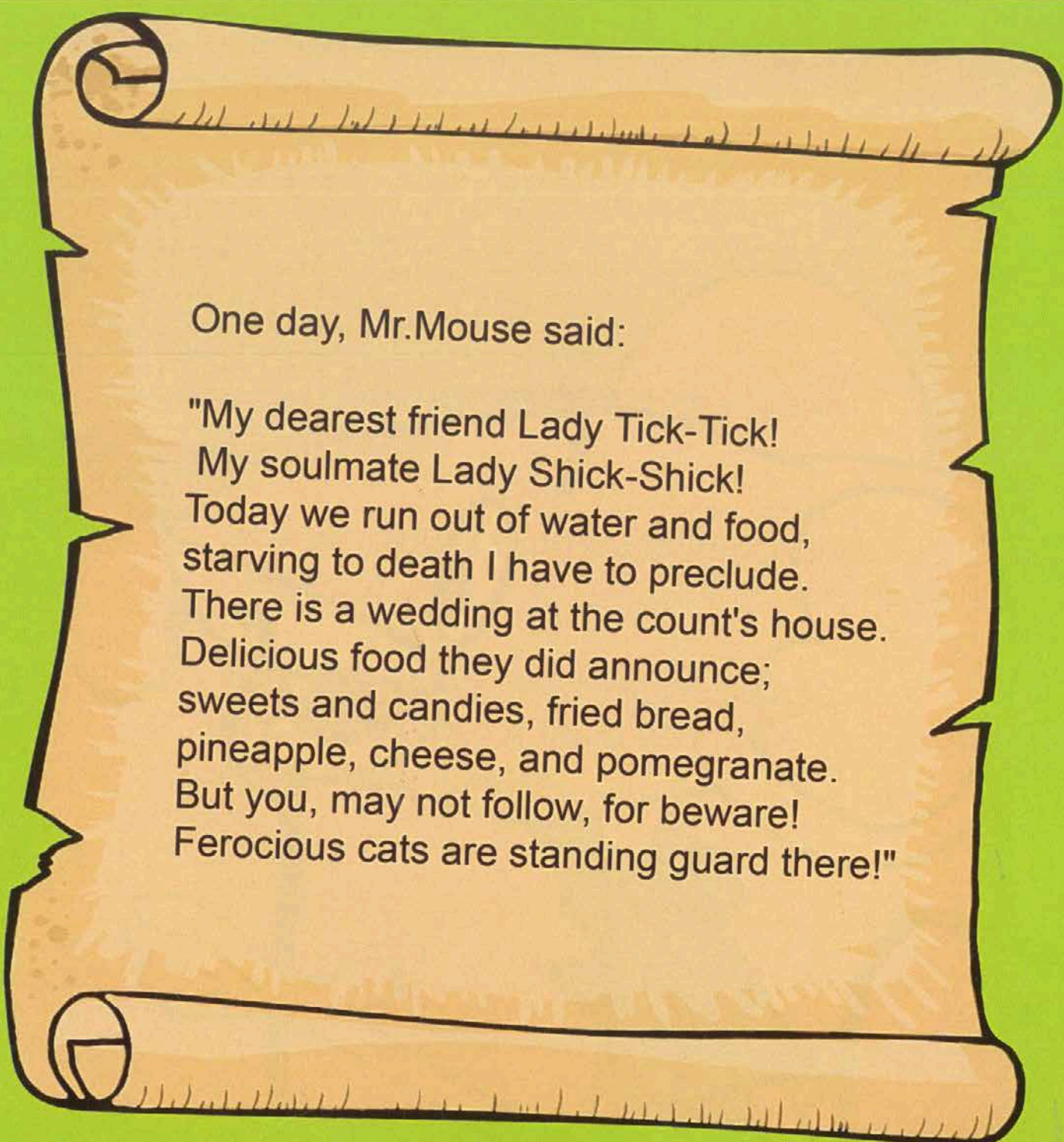
Lady Tick-Tick joyfully responded, fluttering
her veil.

"On this condition, I agree!"

They strode hand-in-hand to the hut
of Mr. Mouse.

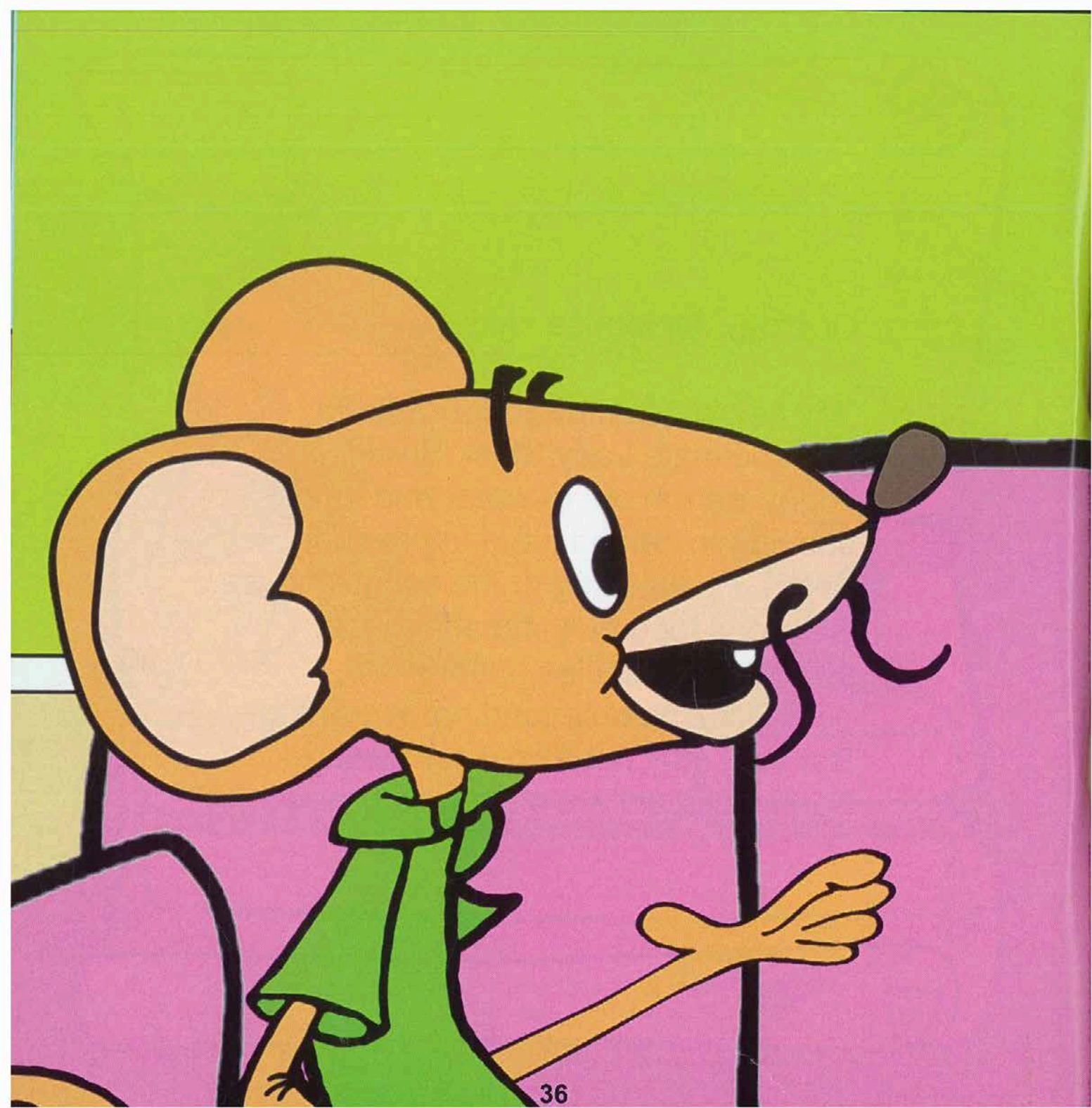
Much joy and fun they enjoyed in that little
house.

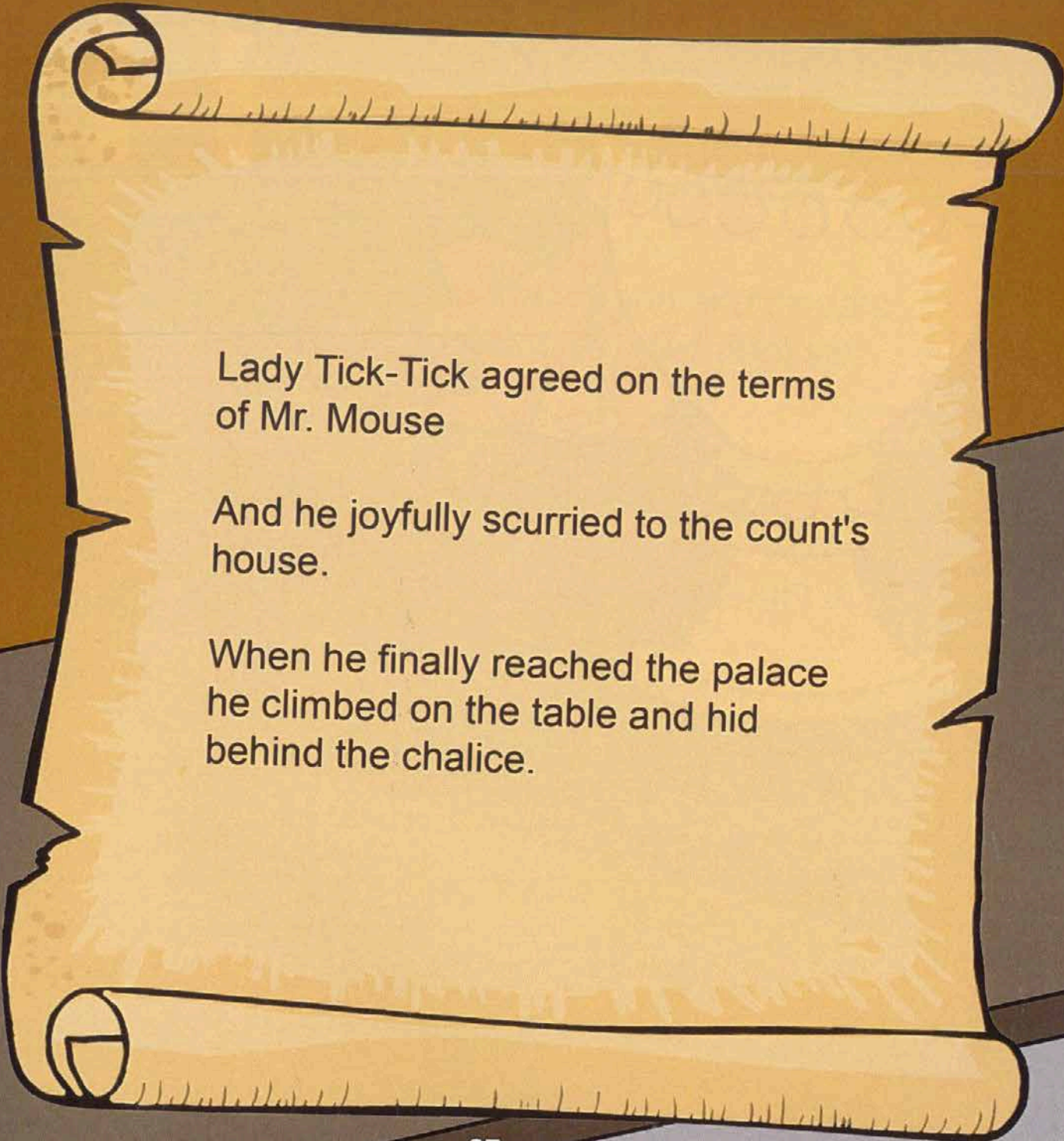


A cartoon-style scroll with a light brown, textured surface and a dark brown outline. The scroll is unrolled at the top and bottom, with small circular details at the ends of the top and bottom edges. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font. The background is a solid light green color.

One day, Mr.Mouse said:

"My dearest friend Lady Tick-Tick!
My soulmate Lady Shick-Shick!
Today we run out of water and food,
starving to death I have to preclude.
There is a wedding at the count's house.
Delicious food they did announce;
sweets and candies, fried bread,
pineapple, cheese, and pomegranate.
But you, may not follow, for beware!
Ferocious cats are standing guard there!"



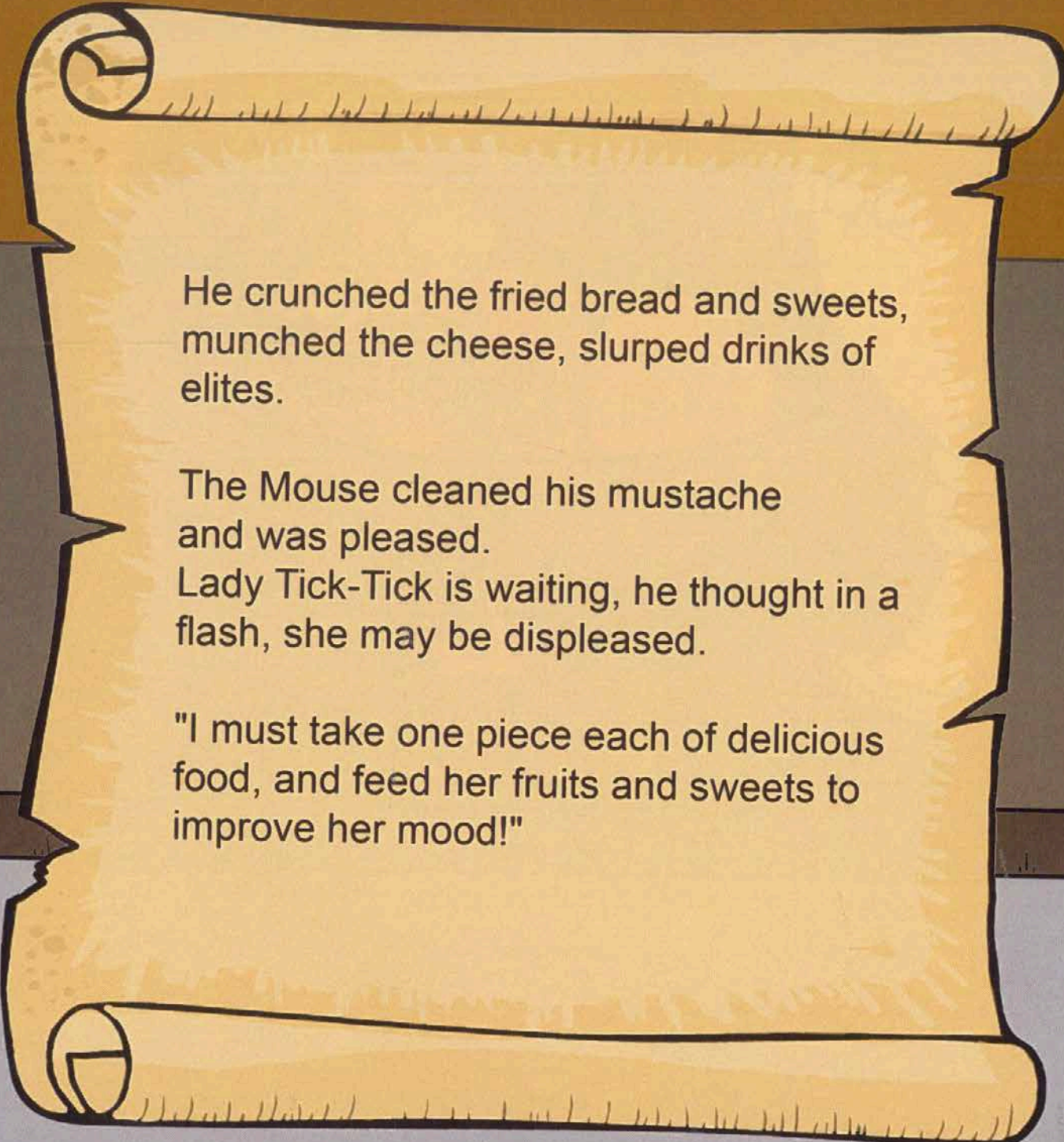


Lady Tick-Tick agreed on the terms
of Mr. Mouse

And he joyfully scurried to the count's
house.

When he finally reached the palace
he climbed on the table and hid
behind the chalice.



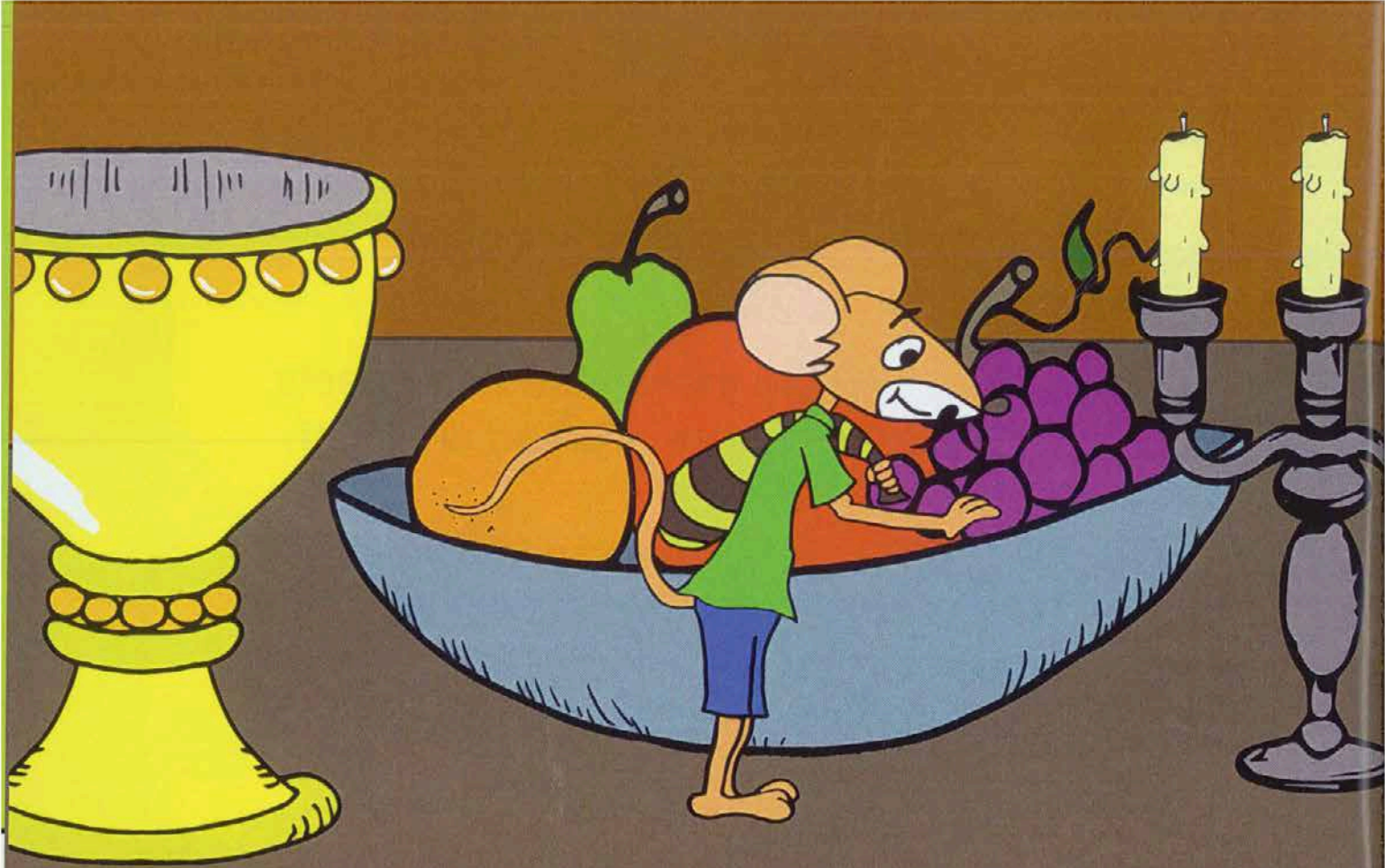
A yellow scroll with a black outline, partially unrolled at the top and bottom. The scroll is set against a background of a brown wall and a grey floor. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

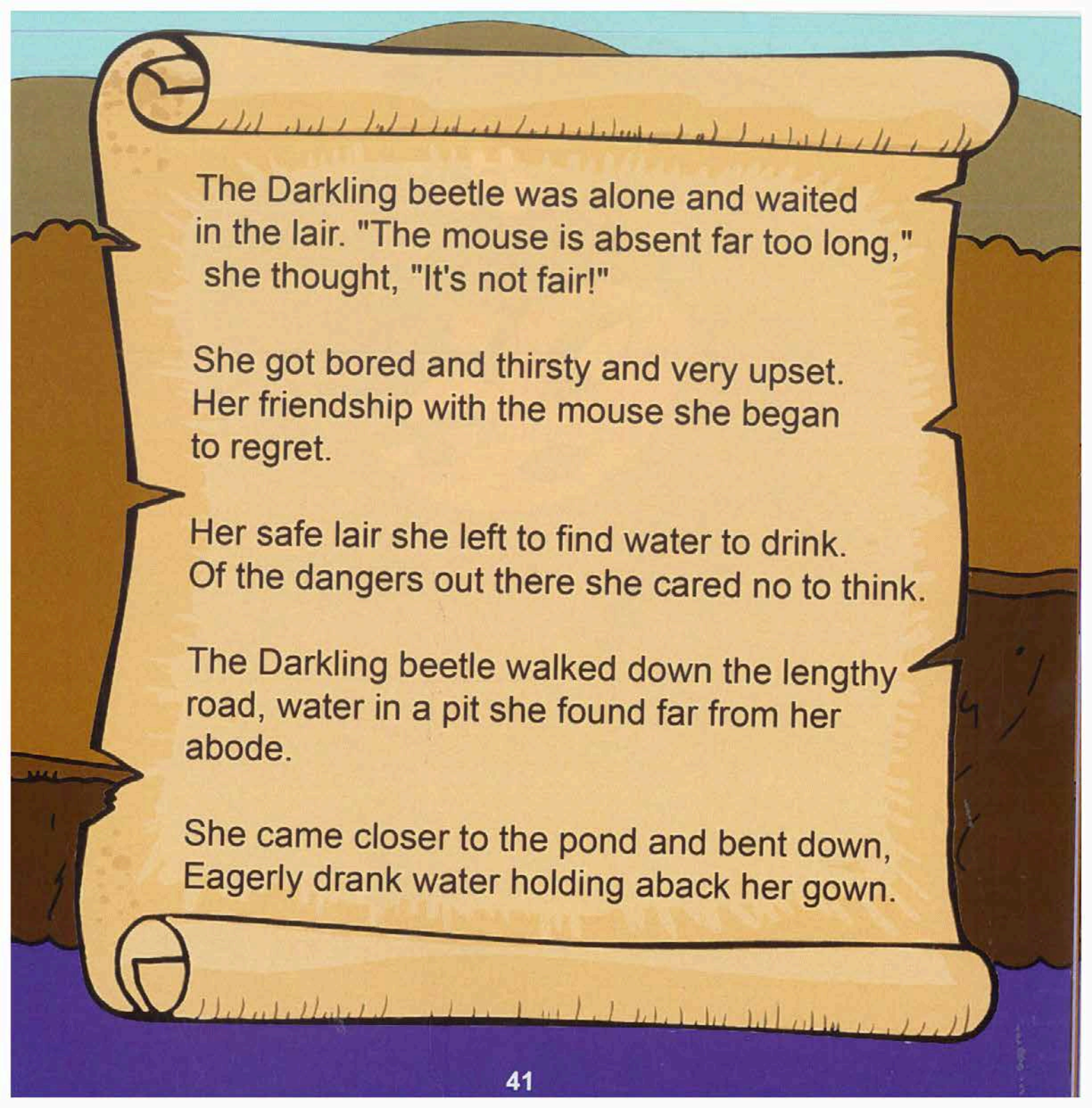
He crunched the fried bread and sweets,
munched the cheese, slurped drinks of
elites.

The Mouse cleaned his mustache
and was pleased.

Lady Tick-Tick is waiting, he thought in a
flash, she may be displeased.

"I must take one piece each of delicious
food, and feed her fruits and sweets to
improve her mood!"



The background of the page is a solid purple color. At the top and bottom, there are stylized brown hills or mountains. In the center, there is a large, light-brown scroll with a black outline and a rolled-up top edge. The scroll contains five paragraphs of text in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

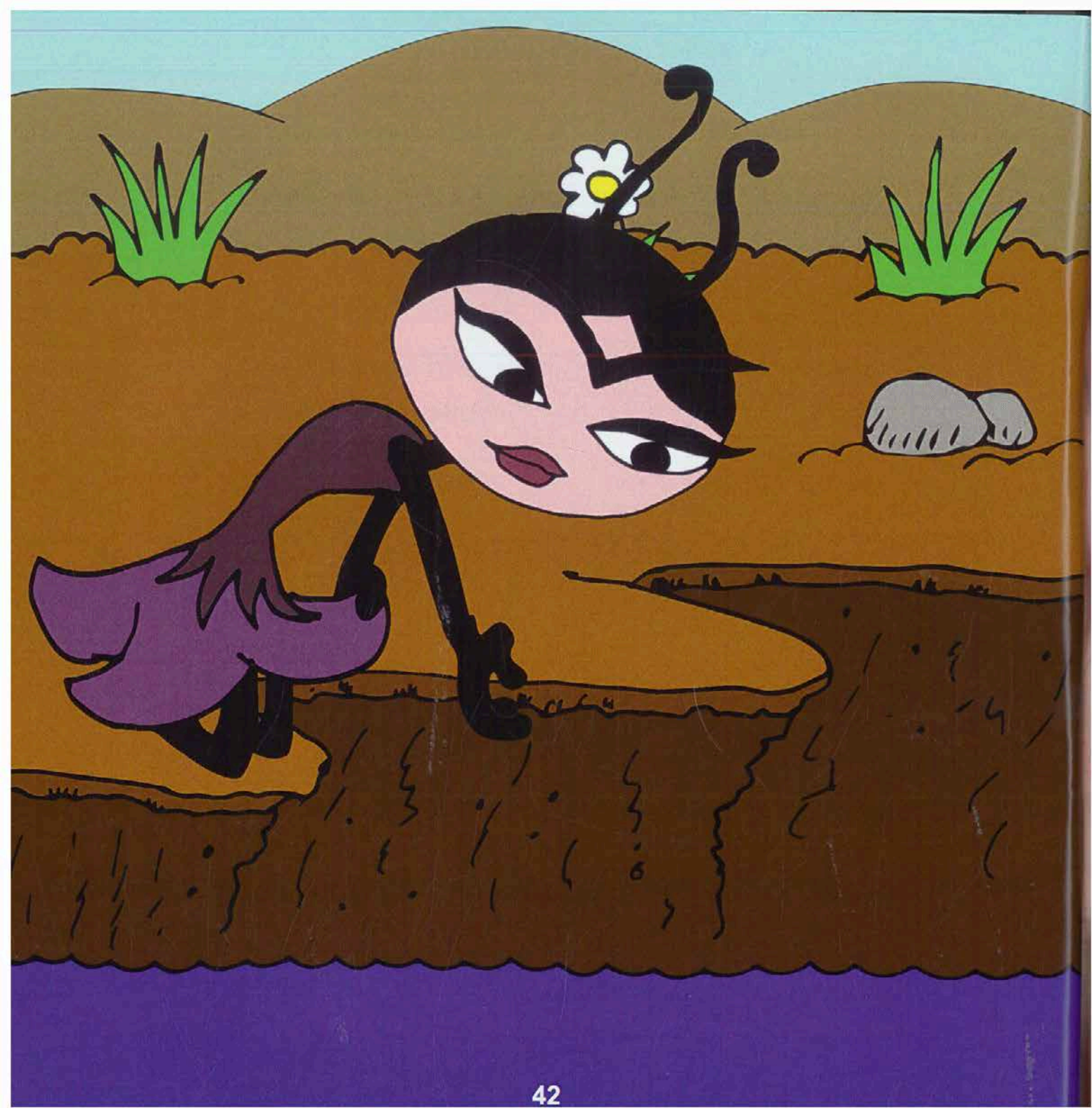
The Darkling beetle was alone and waited in the lair. "The mouse is absent far too long," she thought, "It's not fair!"

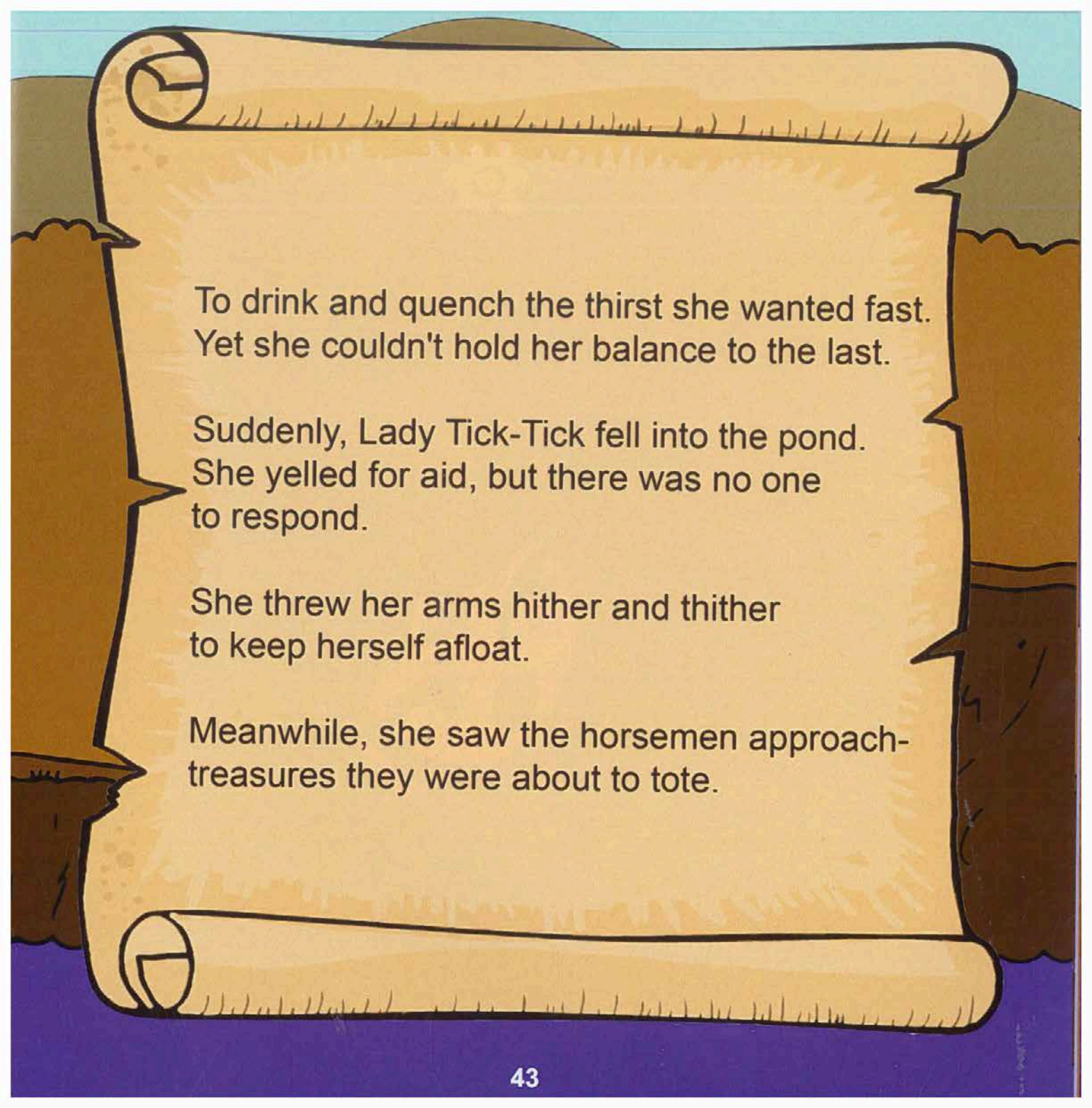
She got bored and thirsty and very upset. Her friendship with the mouse she began to regret.

Her safe lair she left to find water to drink. Of the dangers out there she cared no to think.

The Darkling beetle walked down the lengthy road, water in a pit she found far from her abode.

She came closer to the pond and bent down, Eagerly drank water holding aback her gown.



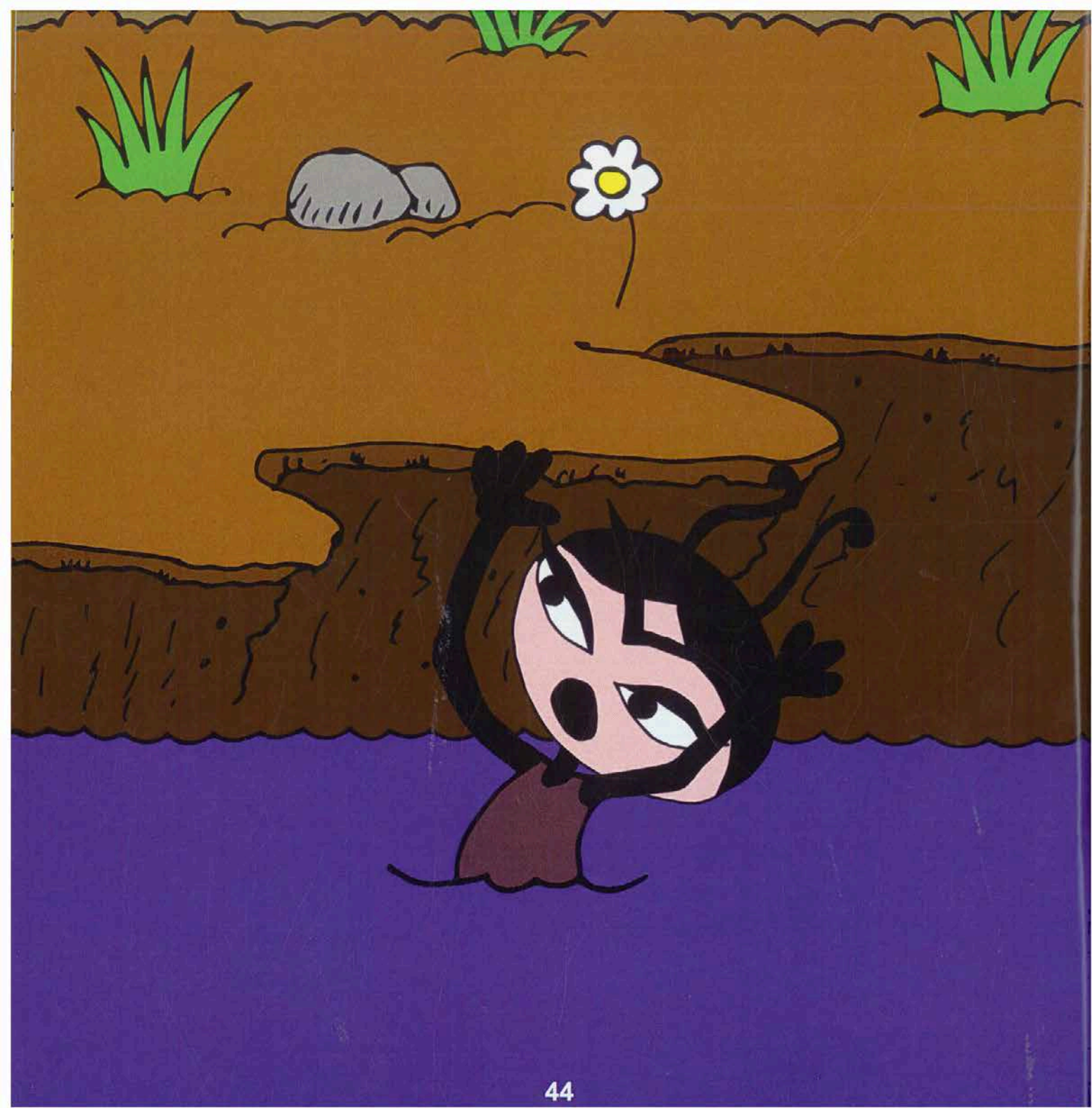
A scroll with text on a landscape background. The scroll is yellow with a black outline and is unrolled at the top and bottom. The background shows a blue sky, brown hills, and a purple ground. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

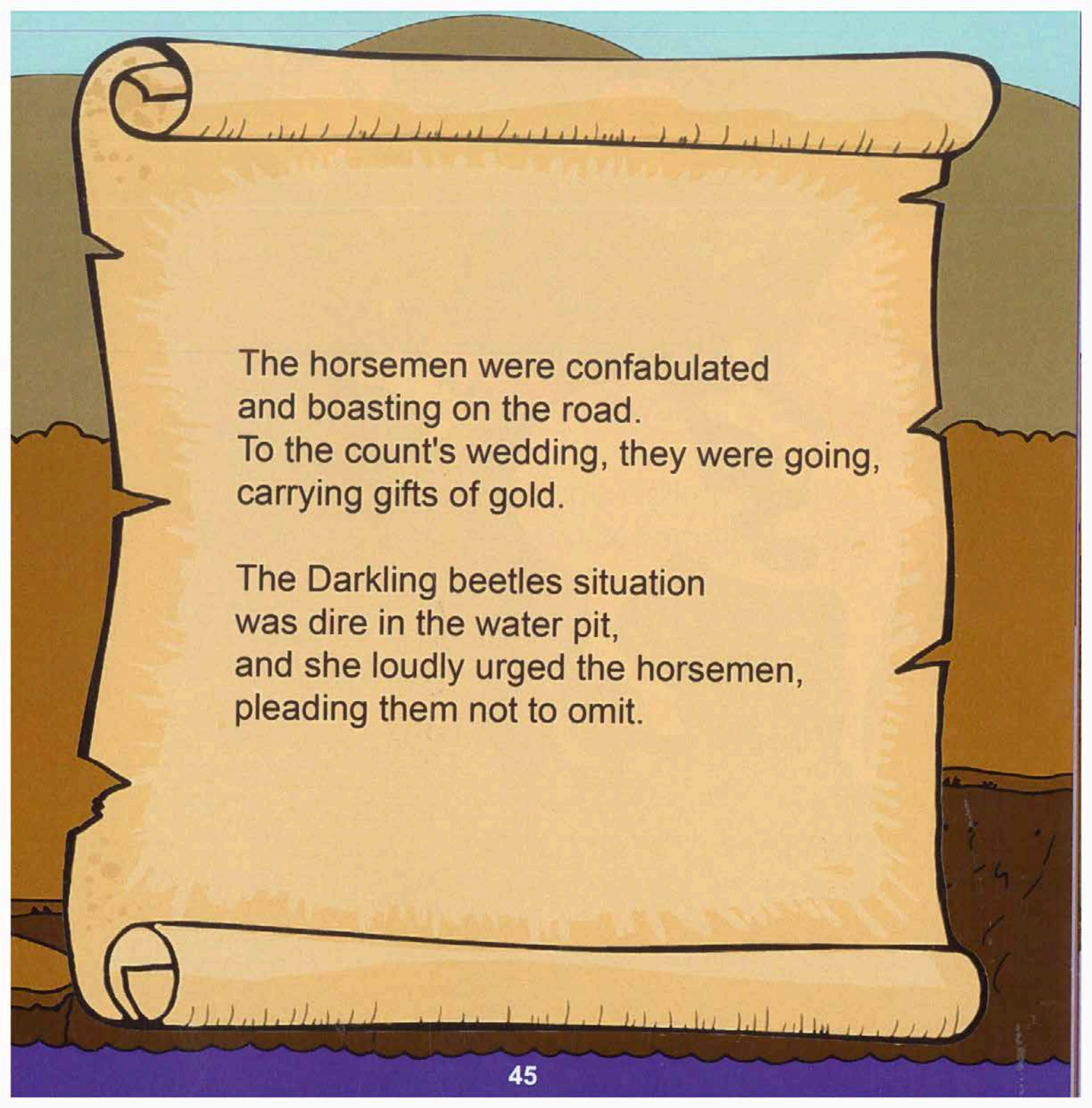
To drink and quench the thirst she wanted fast.
Yet she couldn't hold her balance to the last.

Suddenly, Lady Tick-Tick fell into the pond.
She yelled for aid, but there was no one
to respond.

She threw her arms hither and thither
to keep herself afloat.

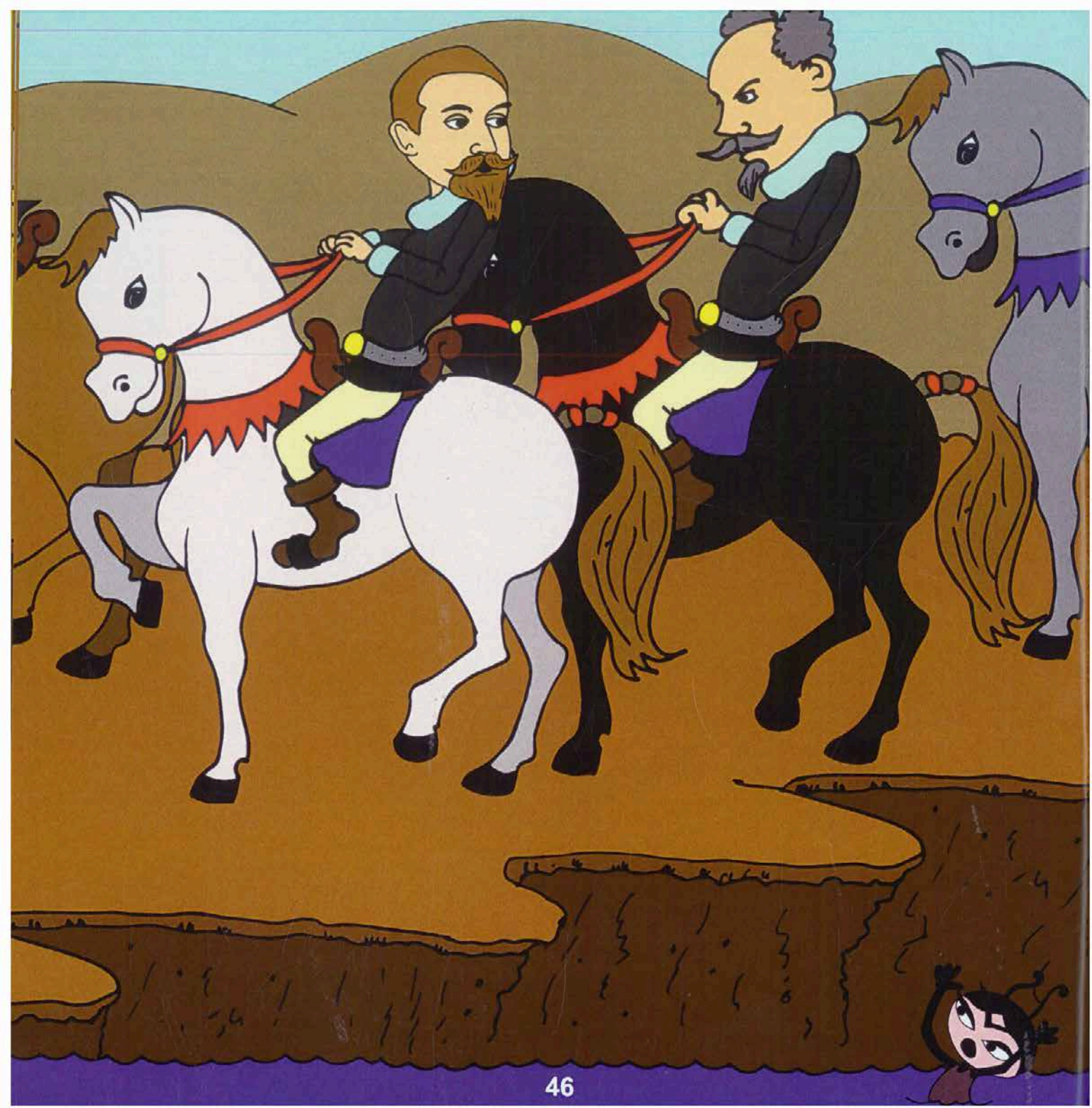
Meanwhile, she saw the horsemen approach-
treasures they were about to tote.

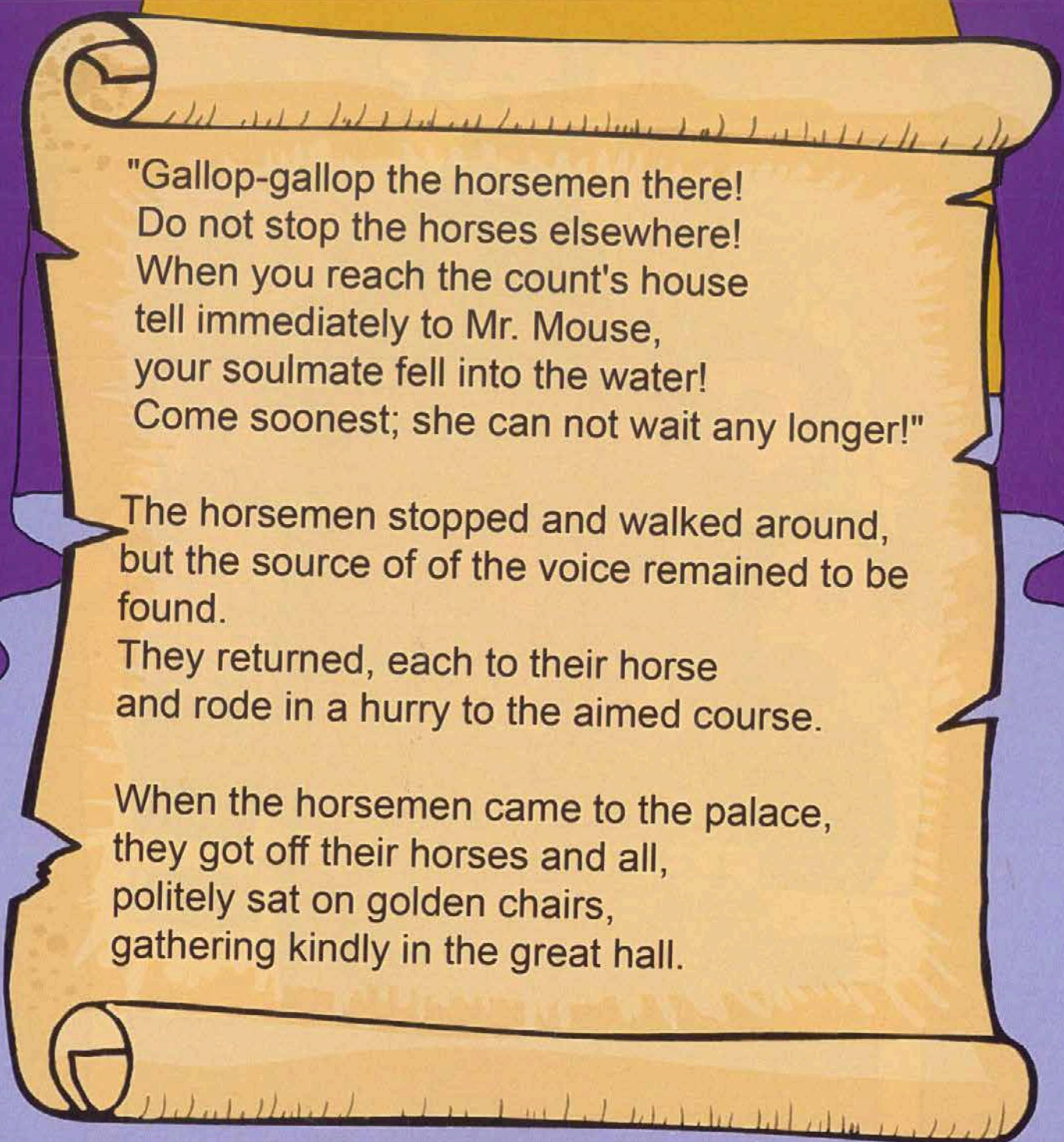


A scroll with a yellowish-tan background and a black outline, set against a landscape background of brown hills and a blue sky. The scroll is unrolled, showing two paragraphs of text. The text is in a simple, black, sans-serif font. The scroll has a small circular detail at the top left and bottom left corners, suggesting it was once rolled up. The background features a blue sky at the top, brown hills in the middle, and a dark purple ground at the bottom.

The horsemen were confabulated
and boasting on the road.
To the count's wedding, they were going,
carrying gifts of gold.

The Darkling beetles situation
was dire in the water pit,
and she loudly urged the horsemen,
pleading them not to omit.



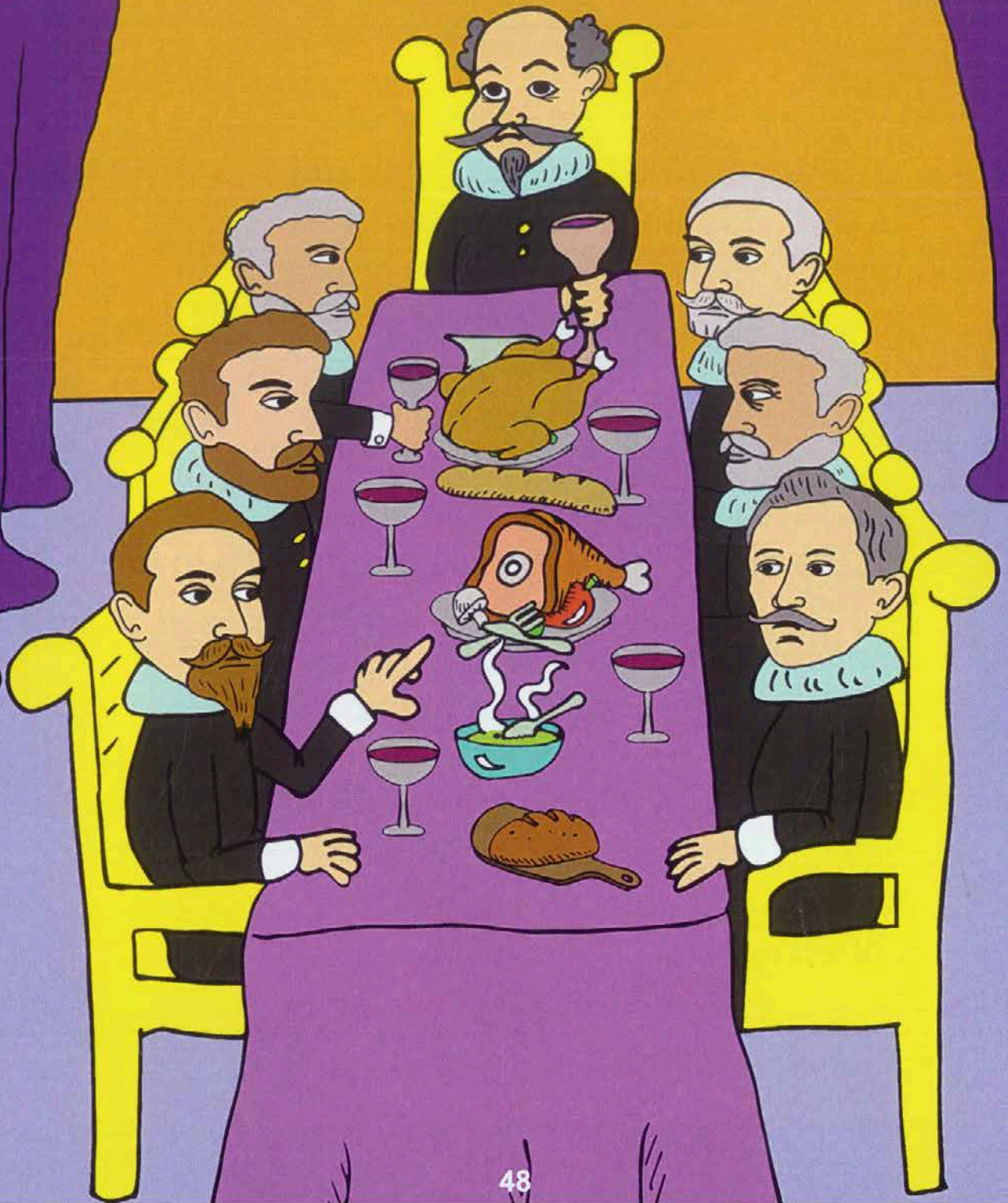


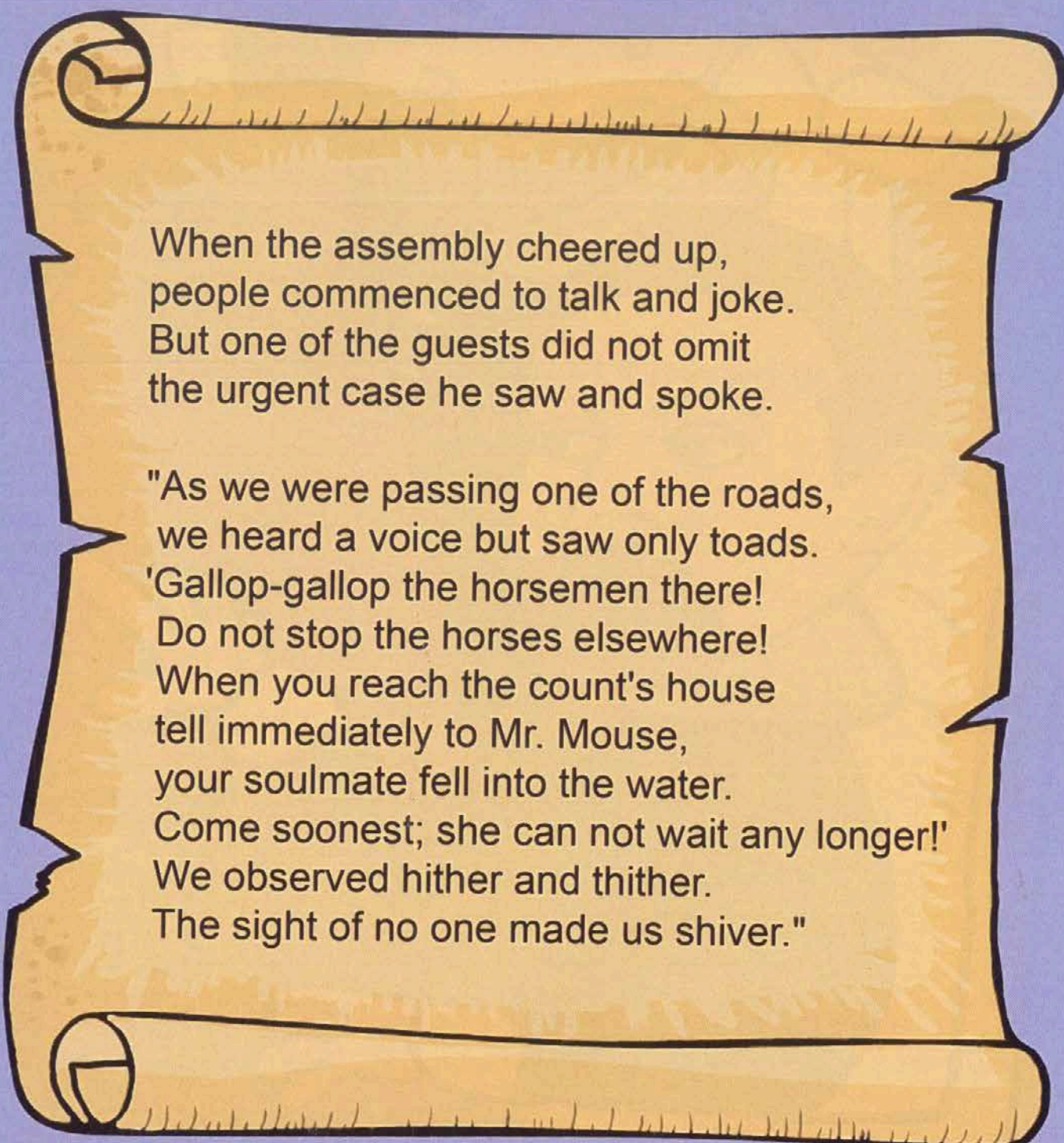
"Gallop-gallop the horsemen there!
Do not stop the horses elsewhere!
When you reach the count's house
tell immediately to Mr. Mouse,
your soulmate fell into the water!
Come soonest; she can not wait any longer!"

The horsemen stopped and walked around,
but the source of of the voice remained to be
found.

They returned, each to their horse
and rode in a hurry to the aimed course.

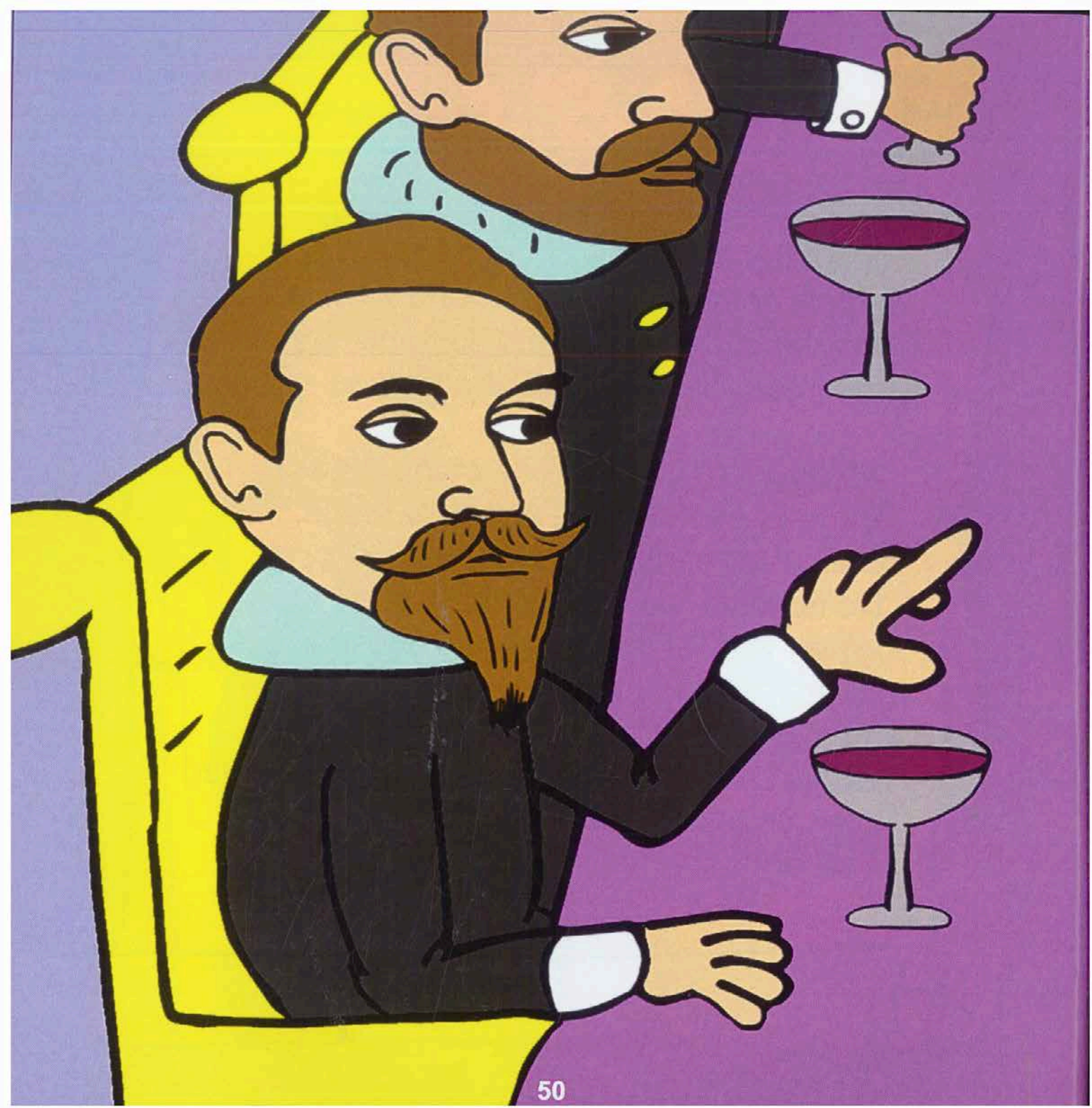
When the horsemen came to the palace,
they got off their horses and all,
politely sat on golden chairs,
gathering kindly in the great hall.

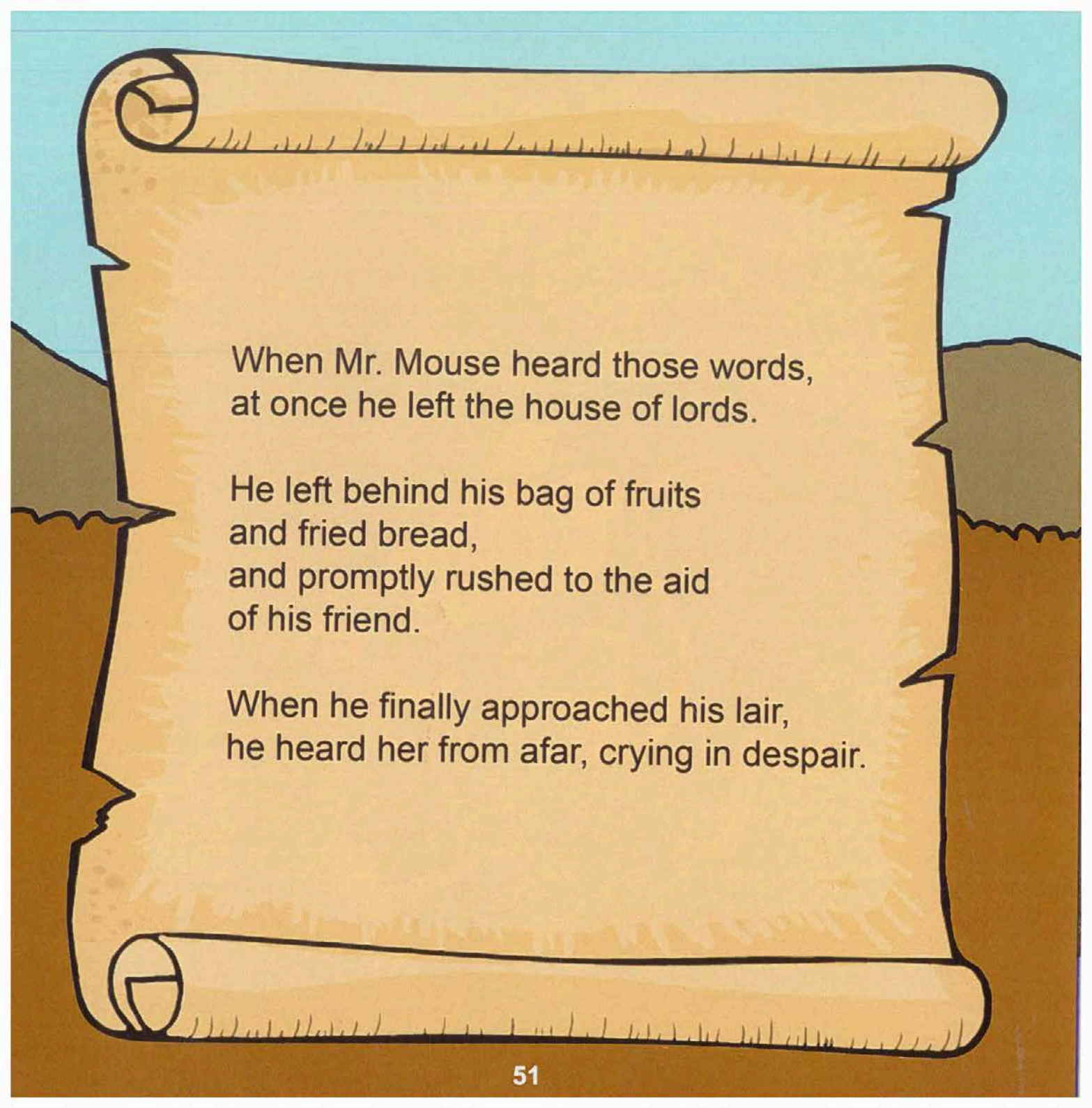


A yellow scroll with a black outline, set against a blue background. The scroll is unrolled at the top and bottom, with small circles indicating the ends of the scroll. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

When the assembly cheered up,
people commenced to talk and joke.
But one of the guests did not omit
the urgent case he saw and spoke.

"As we were passing one of the roads,
we heard a voice but saw only toads.
'Gallop-gallop the horsemen there!
Do not stop the horses elsewhere!
When you reach the count's house
tell immediately to Mr. Mouse,
your soulmate fell into the water.
Come soonest; she can not wait any longer!
We observed hither and thither.
The sight of no one made us shiver."

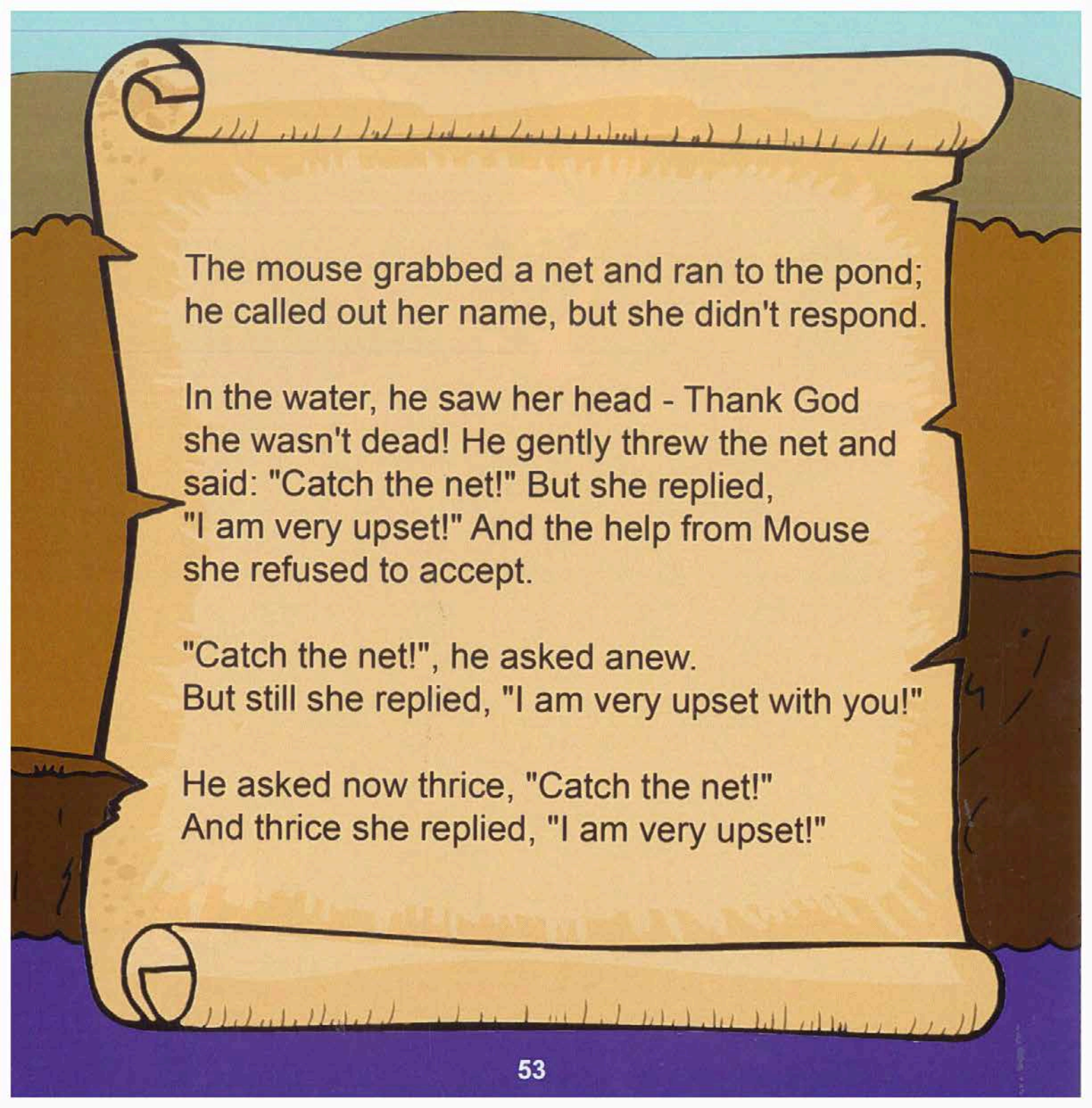


A scroll with a light brown, textured surface is unrolled, showing three paragraphs of text. The scroll is set against a background of a light blue sky and brown hills. The scroll's edges are slightly irregular, and it has small circular details at the top and bottom left corners, suggesting it was once rolled up. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

When Mr. Mouse heard those words,
at once he left the house of lords.

He left behind his bag of fruits
and fried bread,
and promptly rushed to the aid
of his friend.

When he finally approached his lair,
he heard her from afar, crying in despair.

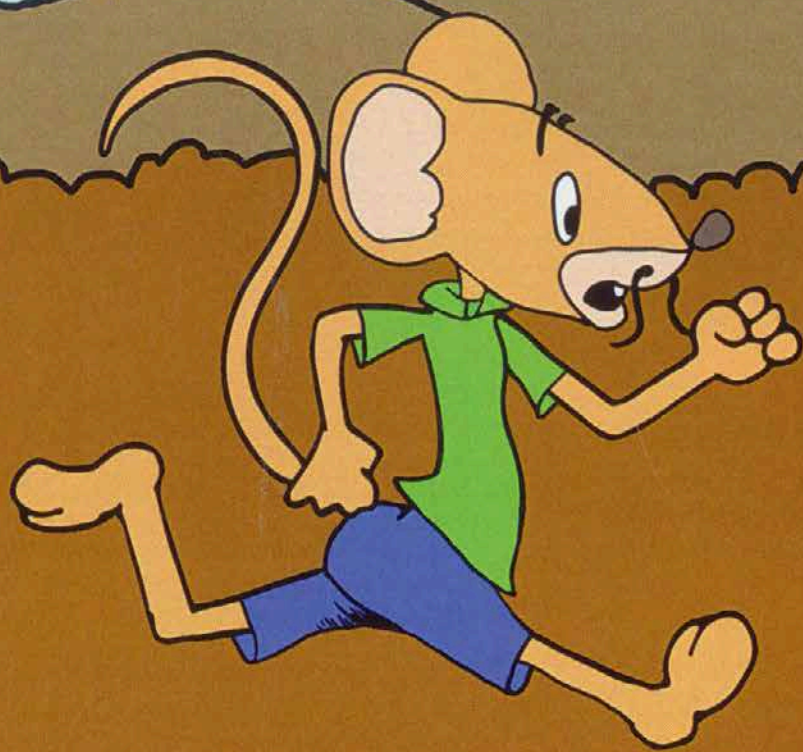


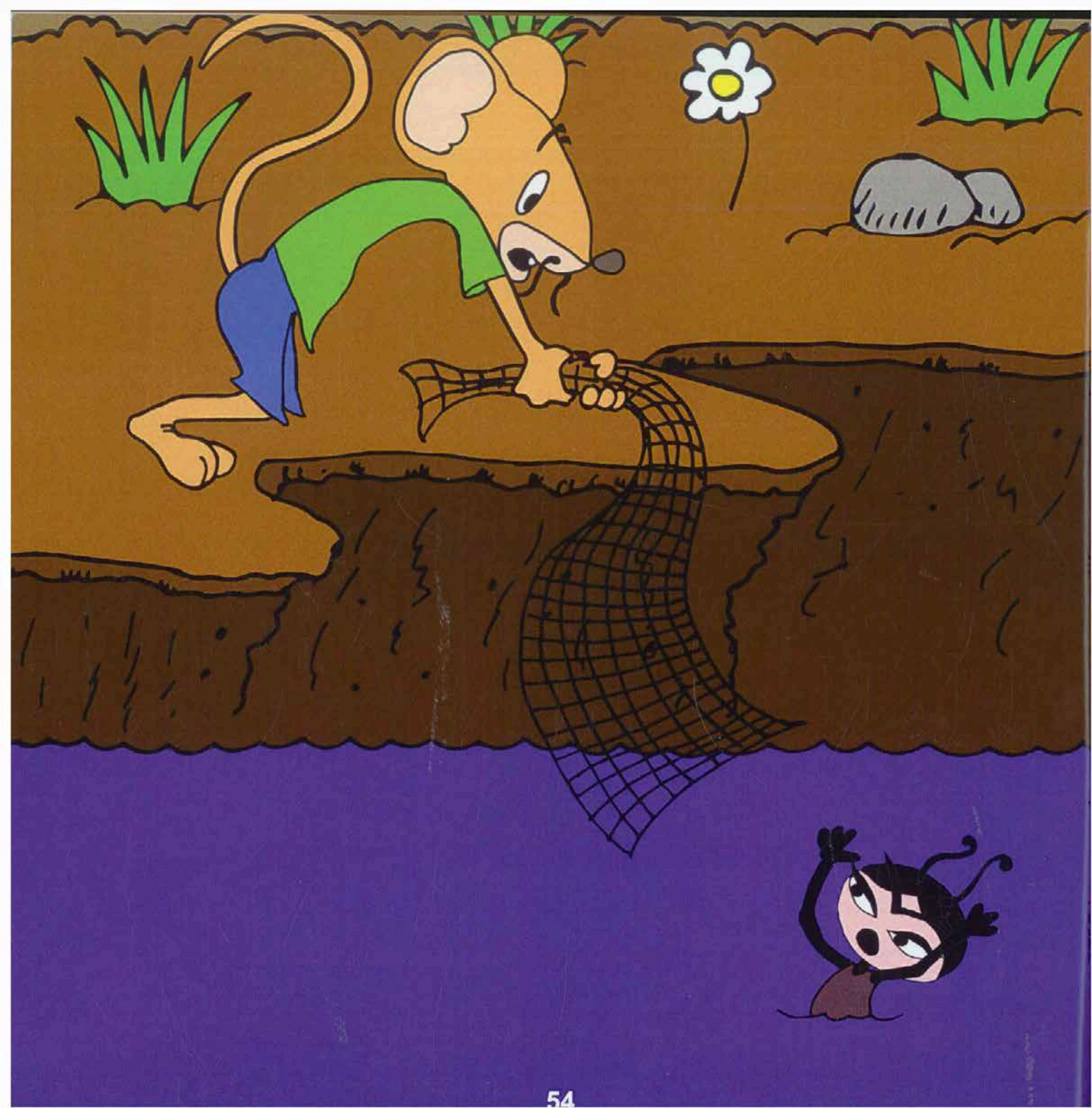
The mouse grabbed a net and ran to the pond;
he called out her name, but she didn't respond.

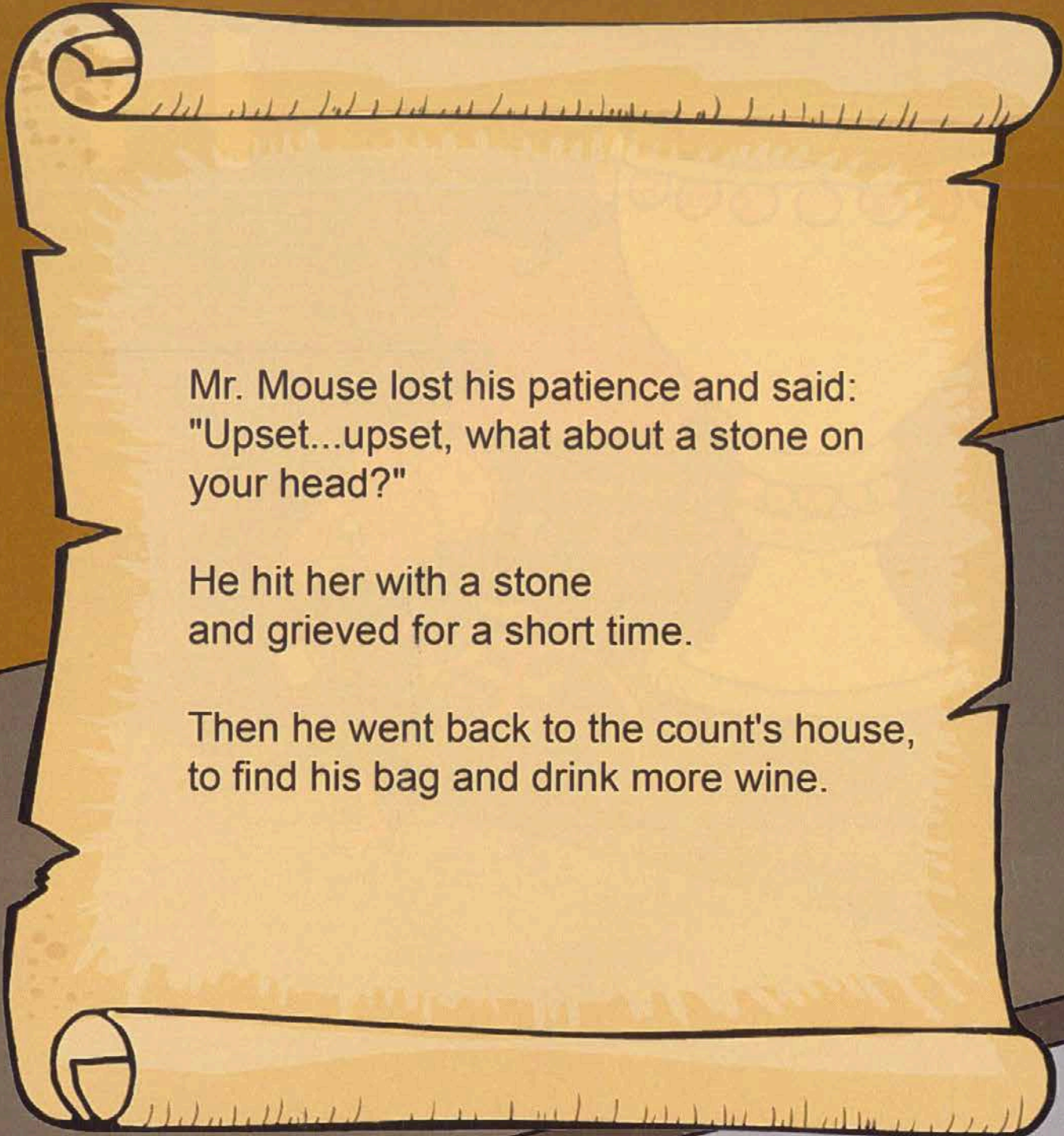
In the water, he saw her head - Thank God
she wasn't dead! He gently threw the net and
said: "Catch the net!" But she replied,
"I am very upset!" And the help from Mouse
she refused to accept.

"Catch the net!", he asked anew.
But still she replied, "I am very upset with you!"

He asked now thrice, "Catch the net!"
And thrice she replied, "I am very upset!"





A scroll with a parchment-like texture, featuring a rolled-up top-left corner and a rolled-up bottom-left corner. The scroll is set against a dark brown background. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font.

Mr. Mouse lost his patience and said:
"Upset...upset, what about a stone on
your head?"

He hit her with a stone
and grieved for a short time.

Then he went back to the count's house,
to find his bag and drink more wine.



In this traditional Azerbaijani folk tale, a little beetle is determined to find a friend. Will she find what she's looking for, or something altogether different?

There once was a lonely darkling beetle, who decided the one thing she needed to make her happy was a friend. Although she was very small, she was determined to venture out into the big world alone. She sewed a new dress from onion peels and hazelnut shoes that made a tick tick sound when she walked.

More beautiful than ever, she takes her first steps toward her goal with radiant confidence. But what she finds may surprise you.

If you and your child like folk tales with a darker tilt, and if you love endings you never saw coming, Lady Tick-Tick is the book for you!

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