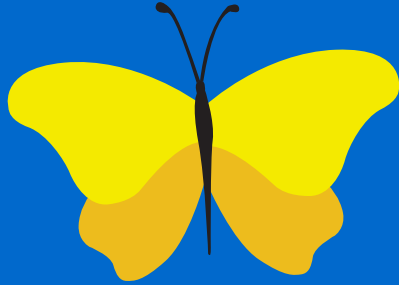


Nightlight Navigators

By Sydney Bailey






Dedicated to the wonder of
geography and the joy of
discovery.


Sammy loved to explore.
She spent her mornings chasing butterflies,
her afternoons climbing trees,
and her evenings watching the sunset.





One day, she wandered
too far and found herself
lost in the middle of a
vast forest.

Her heart pounded.
She didn't know which way to go!
Just then, she heard someone
talking to her.



"Hoo-hoo, why
the long face?"

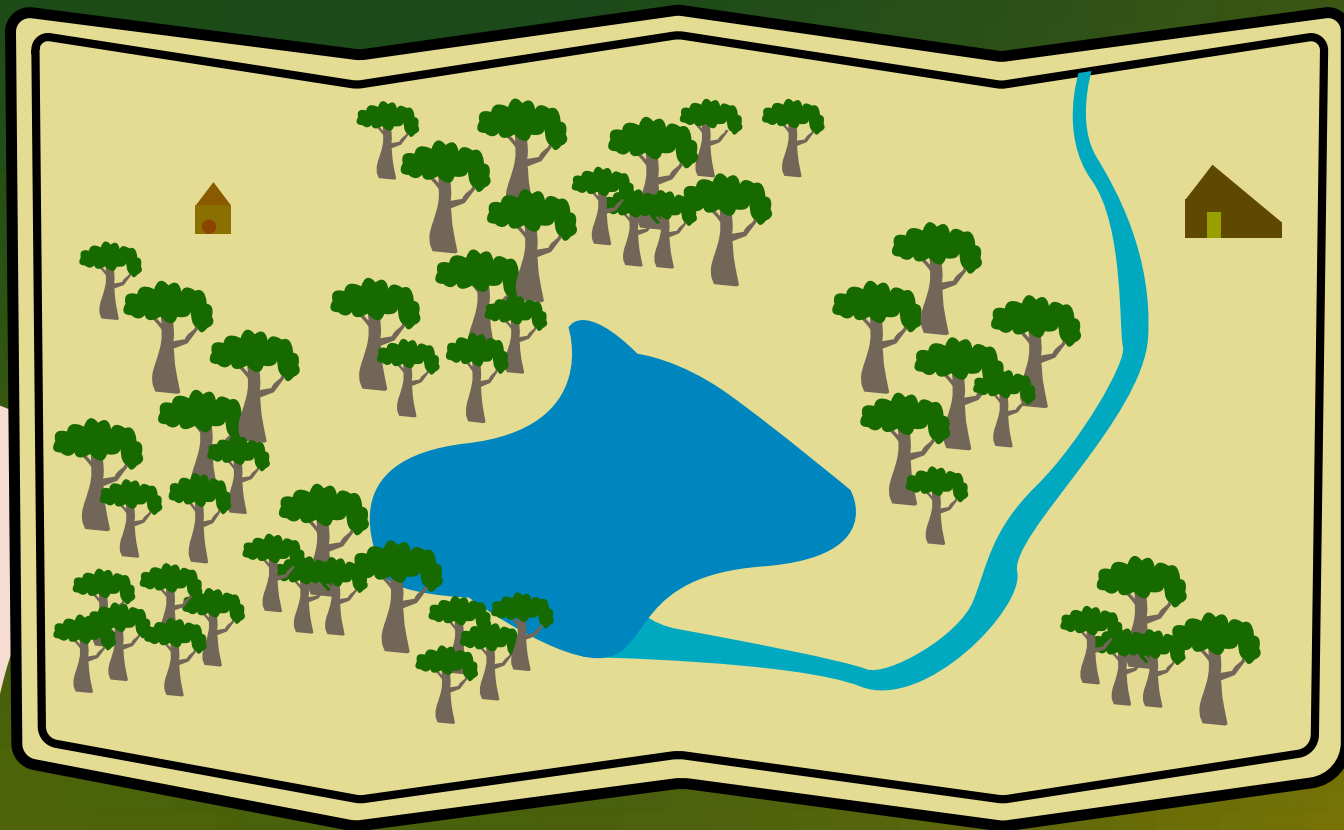
Sammy looked up and
saw a wise, feathery owl
perched on a branch.



"I'm lost," Sammy said, "I don't know how to get home!"
The owl tilted its head. "My name is Iris. I can help. Take this."
The owl dropped a piece of paper down toward Sammy.



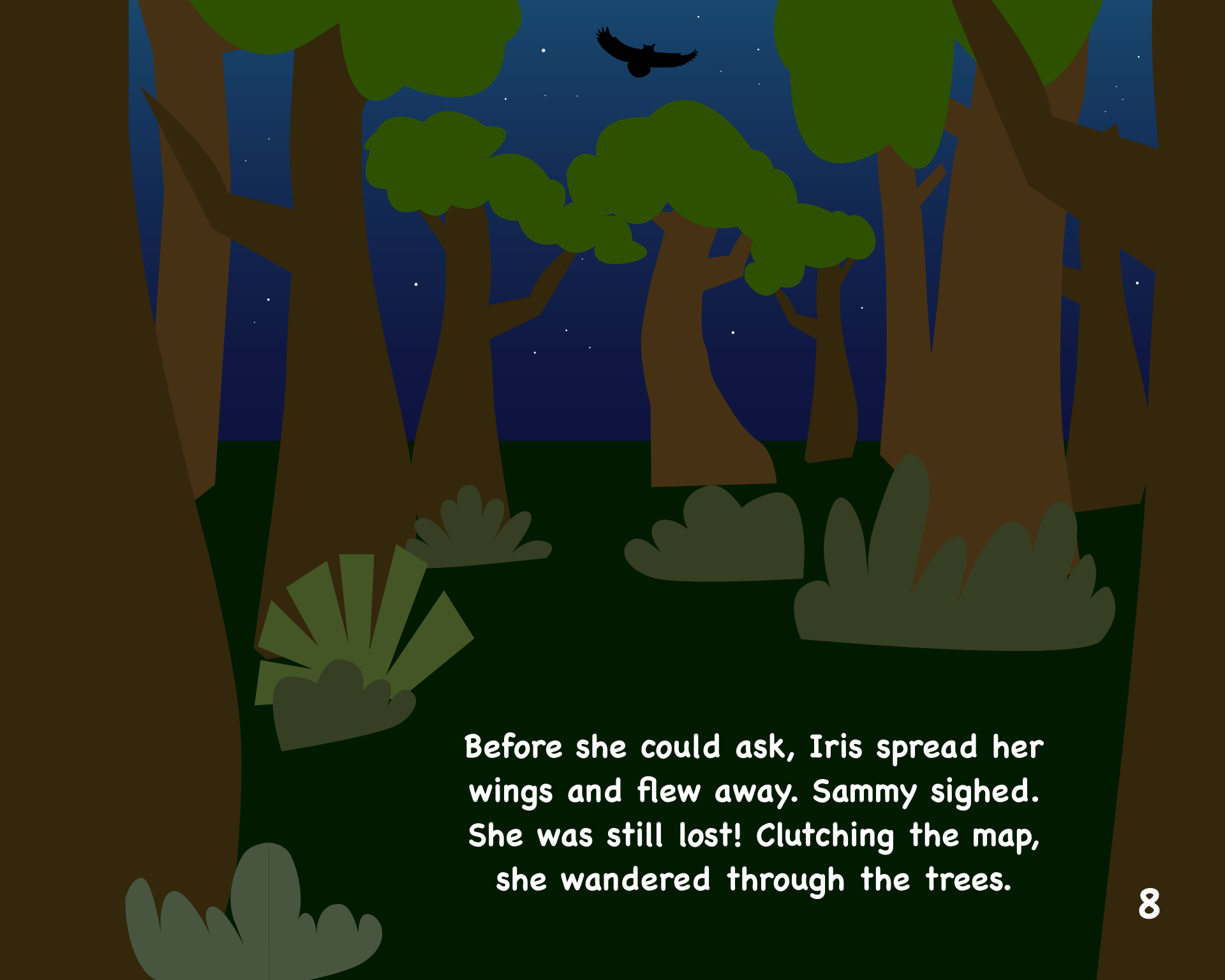
It was a map!



"Use the map to find your way home,"
Iris said, matter of factly.

"But..." Sammy muttered, "I don't
know how to read a map."





Before she could ask, Iris spread her wings and flew away. Sammy sighed. She was still lost! Clutching the map, she wandered through the trees.

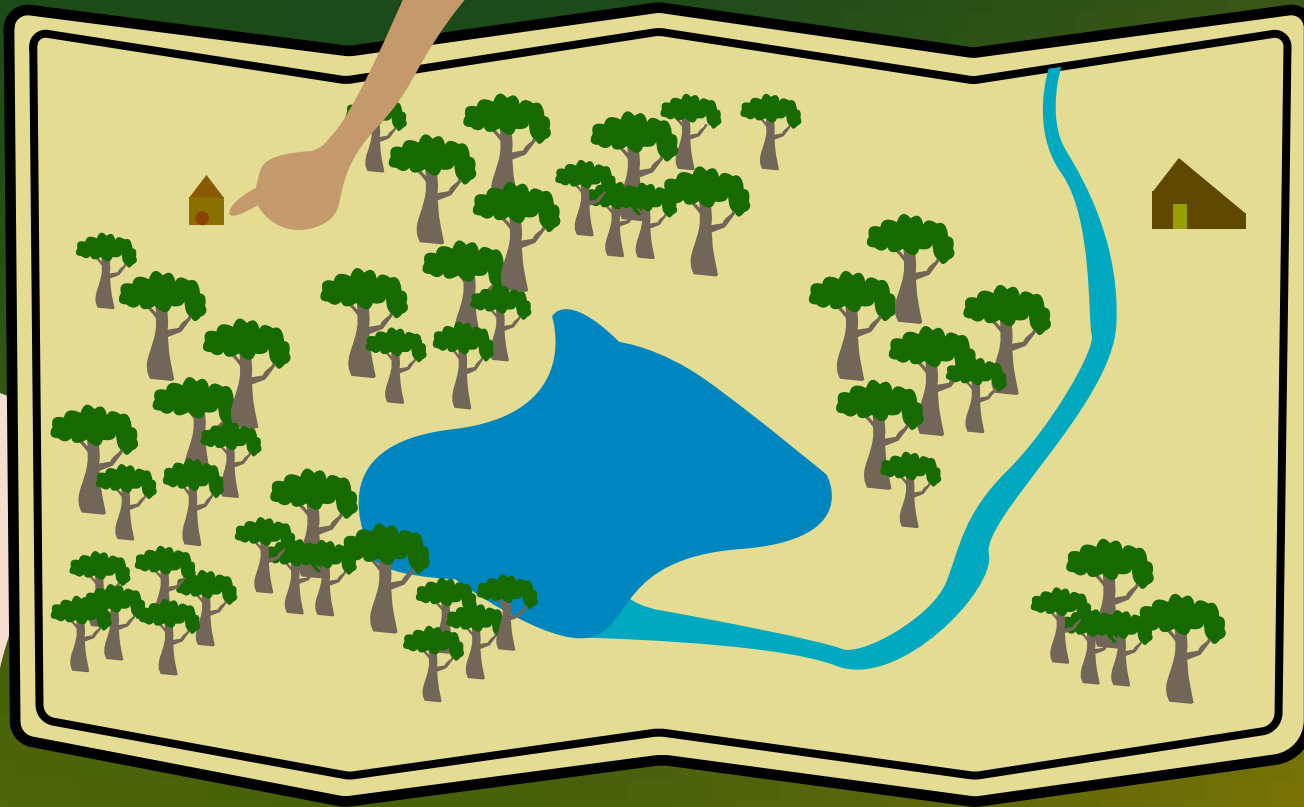
After a while, she came across a cabin. Outside stood a tiny man with a long mustache, wearing a helmet. When he noticed her, he smiled a toothy grin.



"Lost, are you?" The man said.
"My name's Odin. Maybe I can help!"
Sammy sighed. "Hi, Odin. I have this
map, but I don't know how to use it."



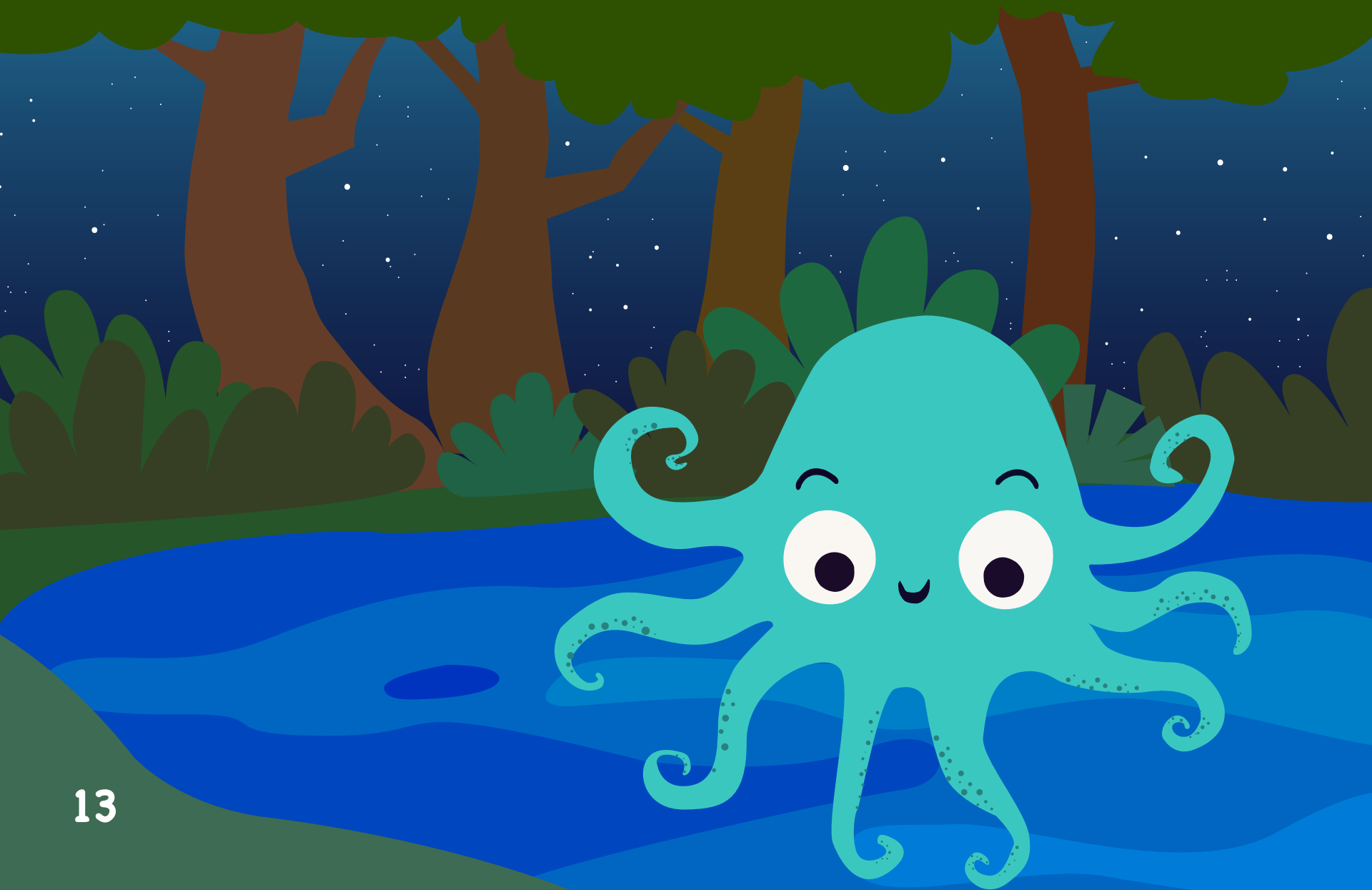
Odin peered at the map. "Here! That square is my cabin. You see, knowing where you are is the first step to finding your way. Looks like you should start by heading towards that big lake."




Sammy beamed. "Oh, thank you, Odin!" He smiled as he hobbled away. "Best of luck out there!"



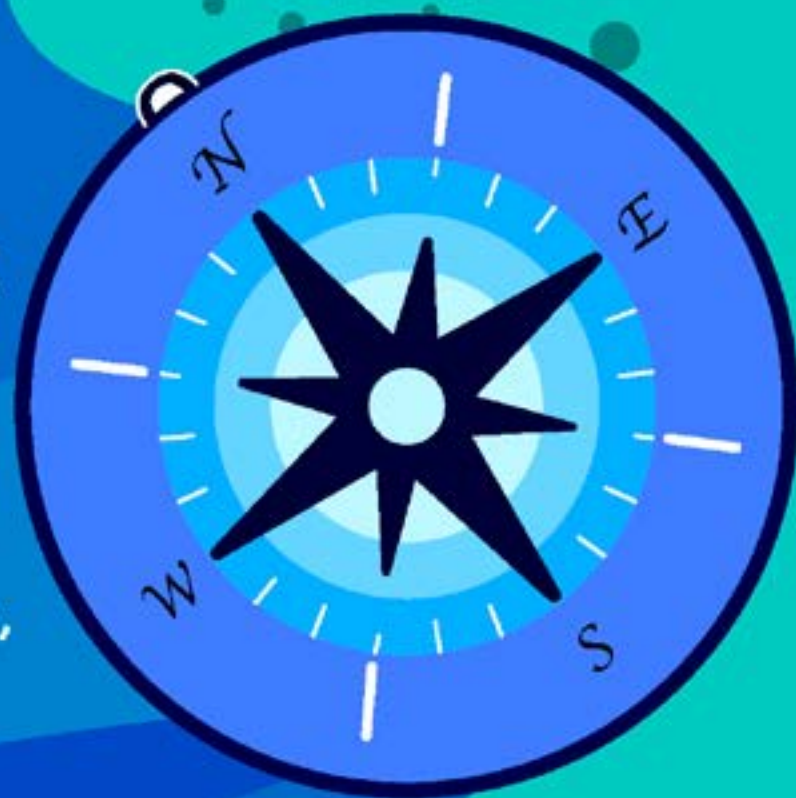
Finally, she found the lake. As she walked toward it, she spotted something rising from the water—a kraken? It smiled warmly at her.
“Hello there, little traveler. What brings you to my lake?”



A young girl with blonde hair, wearing a red dress over a dark blue top, stands in a forest at night. She is holding a small yellow book. The background features large green trees, a dark blue sky with white stars, and a body of water with a large, stylized blue wave in the foreground.

"I'm trying to find my way home,"
Sammy explained. "Odin told me to
come here, but now where do I go?"

The kraken, who introduced herself as Wilma, reached into the water and pulled out a small object. "This is a compass," she said. "It helps you find North, South, East, and West."



Sammy asked, "What do you mean?".
Wilma chuckled. "Think of the top of your map as North, the bottom is South, the left is West, and the right is East. You see, the sun rises in the East and sets in the West. If you remember where the sun was when you left home, you can figure out which way to go."



Sammy said, "The sun was behind me
this morning. If it rises in the East...
then I should go East to get back!"
Wilma smiled. "You got it! Now go
on, little traveler."



Sammy marched east with her compass in hand, watching as the sky finally darkened and stars appeared above. She began to get scared. Sammy didn't like the dark, especially when she was all alone! Suddenly, one of the stars twinkled brighter than the rest.





"Sammy!" it called. "You're almost there!"

Sammy gasped. "A talking star? Who are you?"
"I am Orion," the star said. "Think back to before you got lost. Was there something familiar? Like a funny-looking tree, or a waterfall perhaps?"

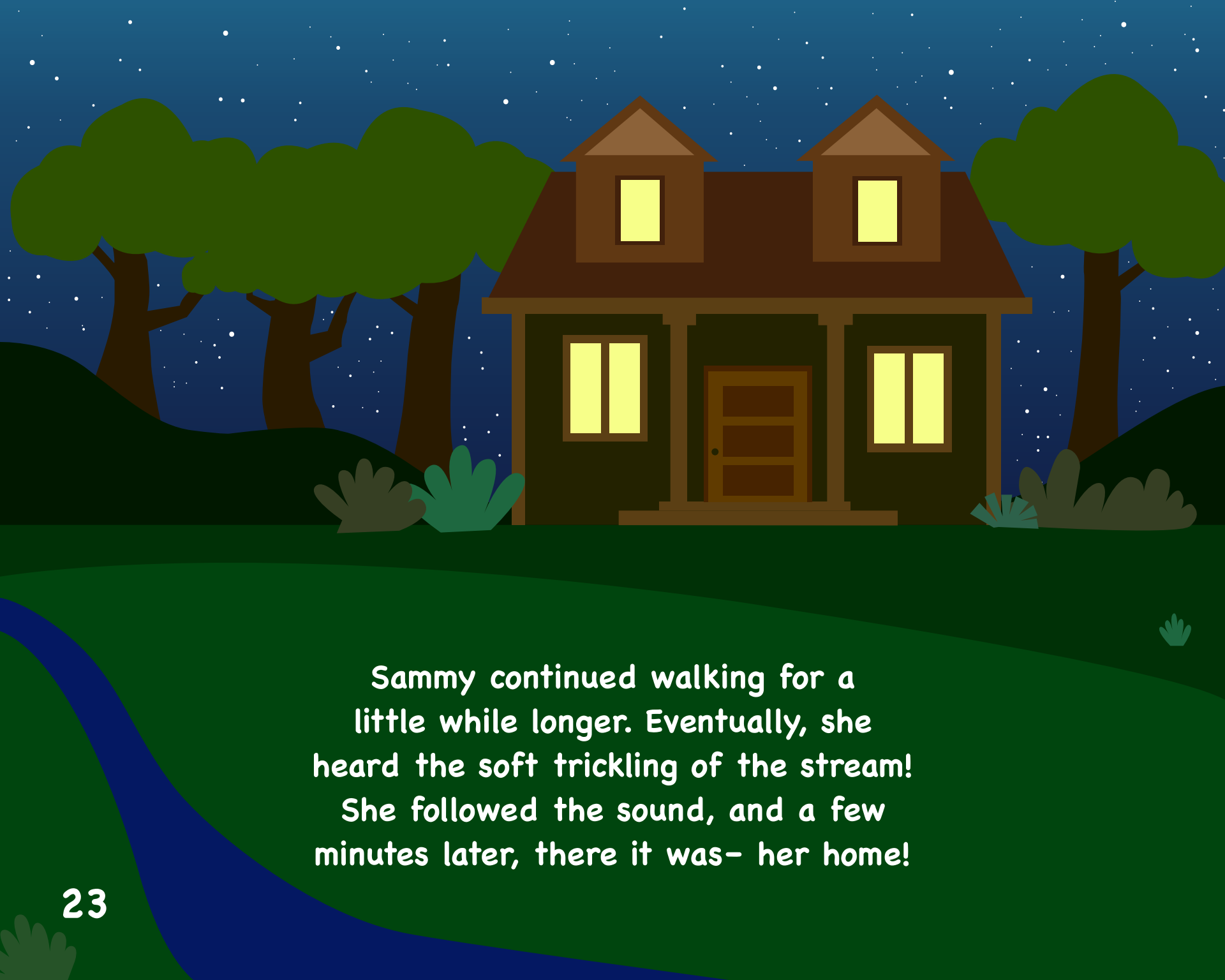


Sammy closed her eyes and thought back to that morning.
She had begun her day playing near the edge of the
forest, picking wildflowers, when she had followed a...
"A stream! I followed a stream before I got lost!"





Orion twinkled. "Perfect. When you hear the water trickling, you'll know you're close to home. Good luck!"



Sammy continued walking for a little while longer. Eventually, she heard the soft trickling of the stream! She followed the sound, and a few minutes later, there it was— her home!



She ran to her house, filled with joy. Sammy learned how to use a map, a compass, and she even got help from the stars to find her way. She would never be afraid of getting lost again!

That night, as she finally got in bed, she wondered what Iris, Odin, Wilma, and Orion were up to now. "Maybe I can use my map and compass to find them again someday!", she thought to herself, as she drifted off to sleep.





The End

When Sammy finds herself lost in the wilderness, she finds help in new friends and learns how to use tools to navigate her way home.

