

The Trash in Chigger County

Story by Amanda Robertson
Illustrations by Kelsey Anderson



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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About this booklet:

This booklet is the result of volunteer efforts through the Earth Team. Earth Team volunteers donate their time and talents to help USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) carry out its mission of conserving and protecting our natural resources.

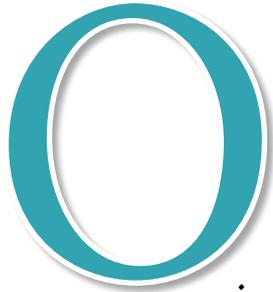
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Special thanks to the South Missouri Water Quality Project Office in Ozark, Missouri, for making this booklet possible.



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nce upon a time
in Chigger County,
it was a beautiful day.

The sun was shining and all of the animals
of Chigger County were having a
picnic by Crystal Pond.



When the day was over,
they all said good night
and went to bed.

That night a soothing rain fell.





Bright and early the next morning,
Wally Raccoon was washing his breakfast
in Chigger County Creek upstream
from Crystal Pond.



He took a big bite
and said, "YUCK!"





He looked down at the water.
Chigger County Creek was dirty.
“What happened?” he cried.
He could not eat a dirty breakfast.



Then he heard Mr. Beaver grumbling,
so he hurried over to Crystal Pond.

“Oh bother. Oh dear,” Mr. Beaver
moaned. “My dam! My dam!
This stuff is breaking my dam!”



On the wave of her wing, Mrs. Robin
passed overhead.

“Good morning,” she trilled. “Peeyew!
What is that awful smell?”

Wally Raccoon yelled back, “I don’t know,
but I can’t wash my food.”

Mr. Beaver shouted, “And my dam is
breaking. There is something wrong
with the water. What should we do?”



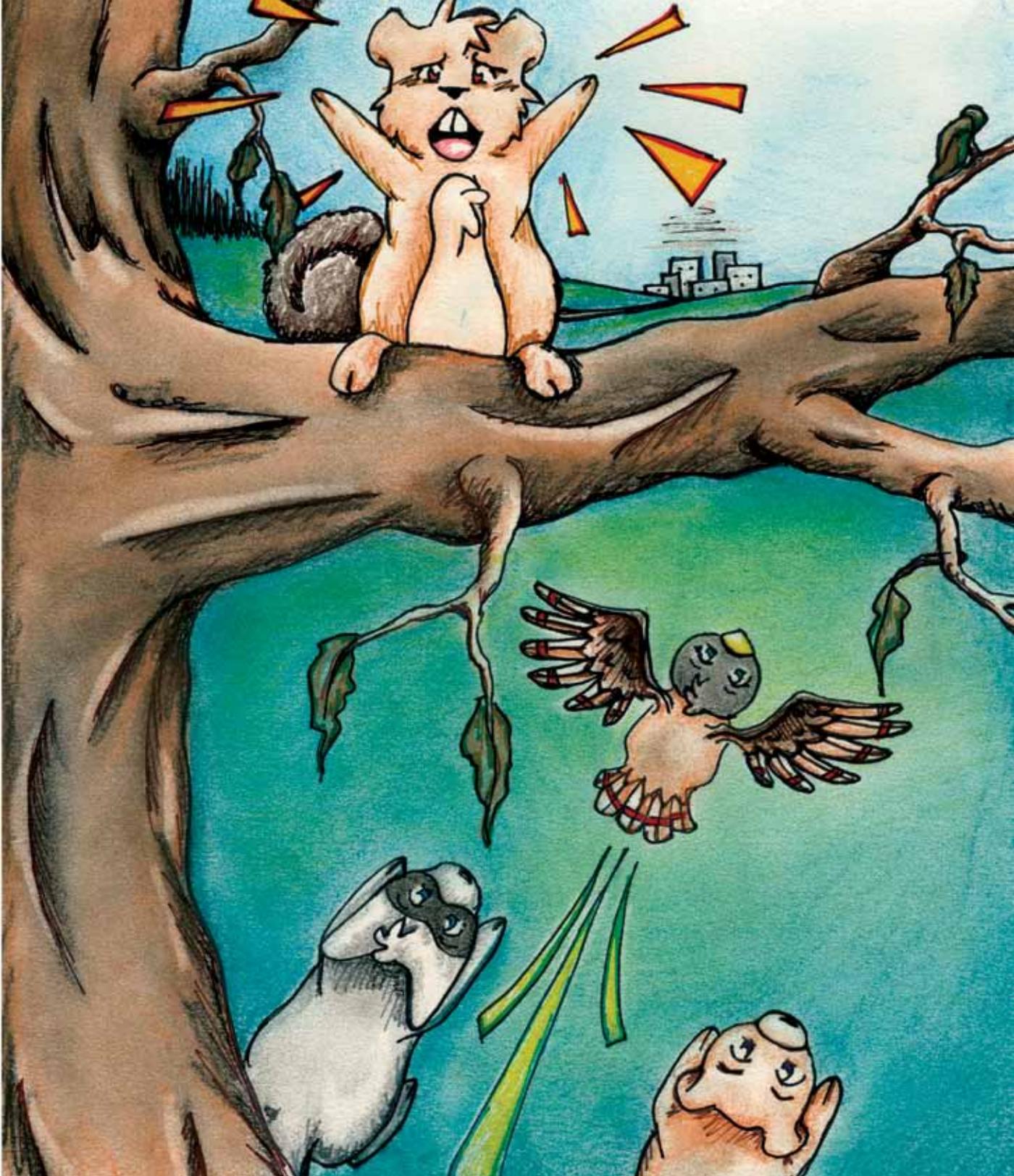


Mrs. Robin tweeted,
“We should ask the
Wise Old Owl what to do.
Come on!”



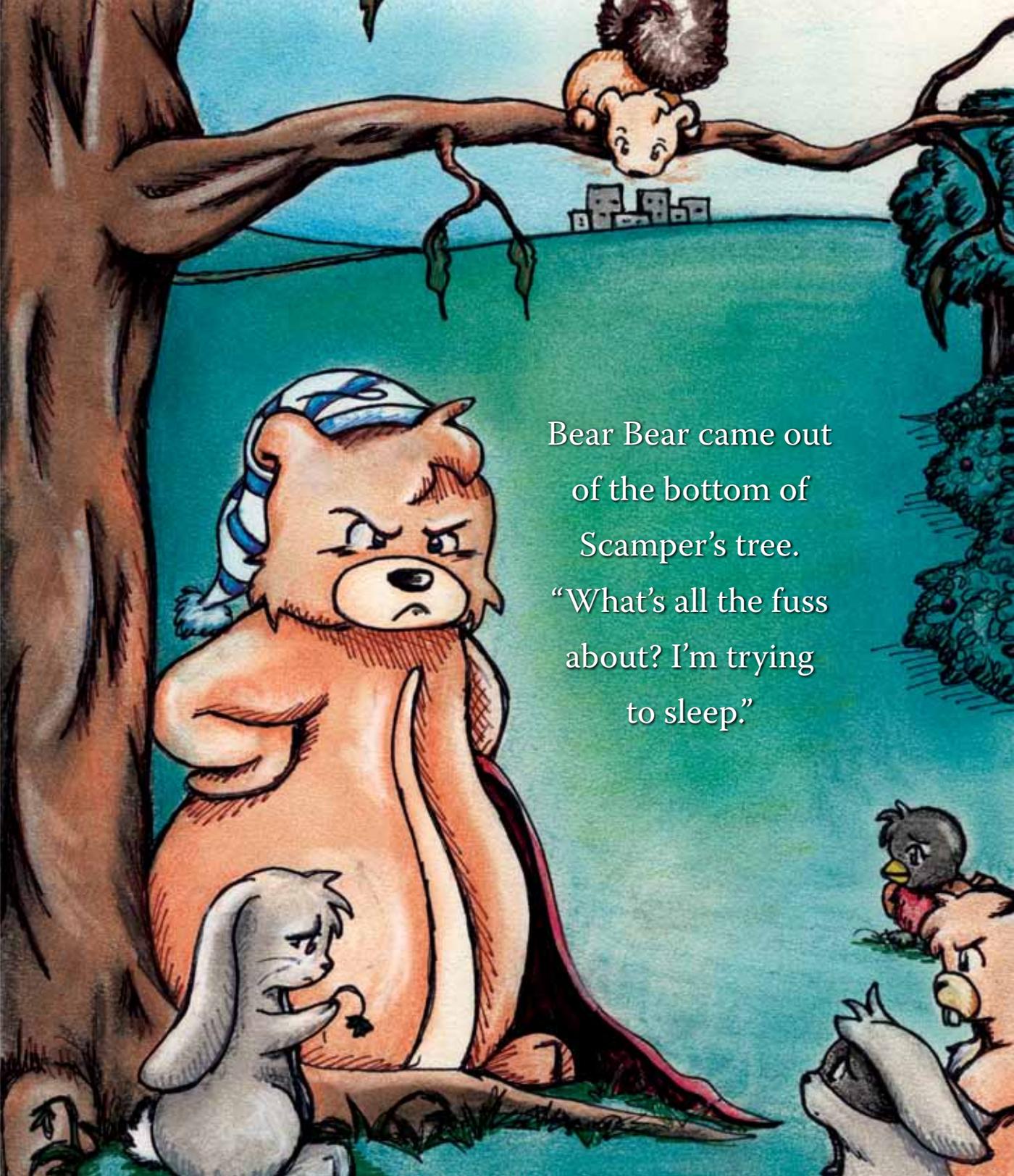
As the three friends were traveling through the forest, they noticed Scamper the Squirrel fussing in his tree.

“What’s wrong with the leaves on my acorn trees?” he said to himself as his tail twitched back and forth.
“They look very sick. Oh no! That means there will be no acorns for me to eat!”





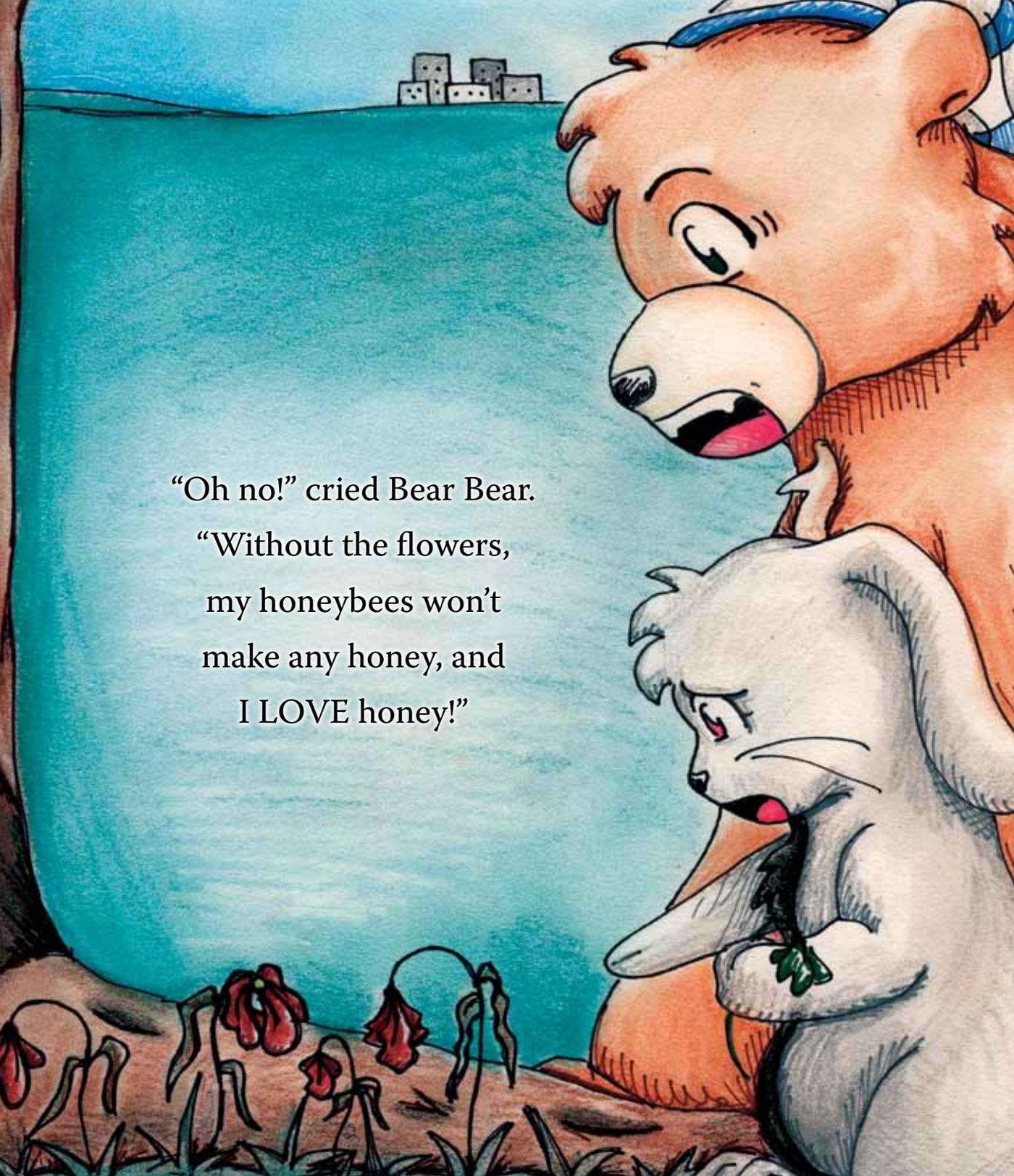
Below Scamper's tree,
Hoppy Rabbit was looking at his clover.
His clover looked sick too!



Bear Bear came out
of the bottom of
Scamper's tree.
"What's all the fuss
about? I'm trying
to sleep."



Hoppy Rabbit said, “All of our
plants are sick and dying,
even the flowers.”



“Oh no!” cried Bear Bear.

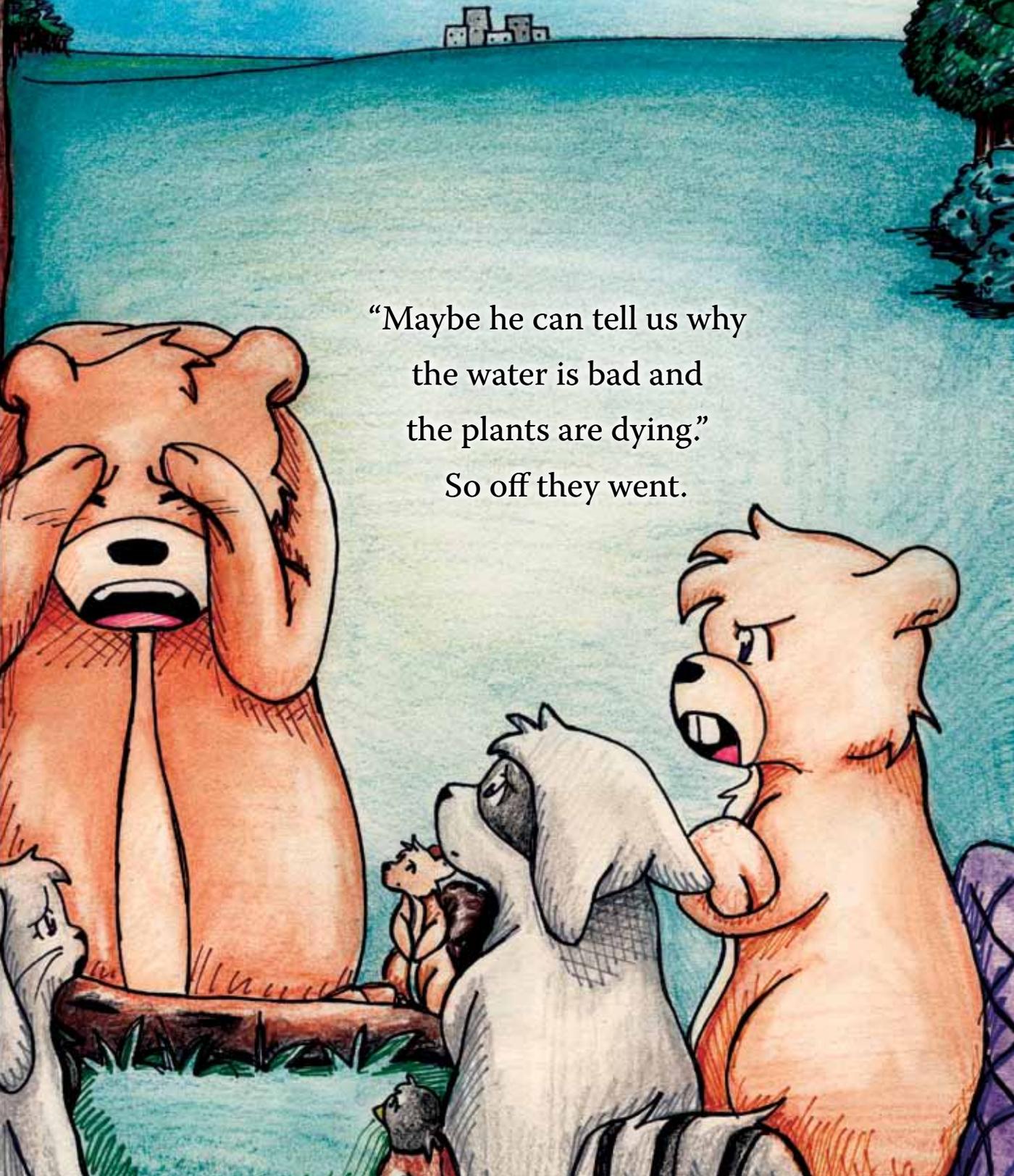
“Without the flowers,
my honeybees won’t
make any honey, and
I LOVE honey!”

“What are we
going to do?!”

Bear Bear roared.

Mr. Beaver cleared his throat and said,

“Why don’t you come with us
to see Wise Old Owl?”



“Maybe he can tell us why
the water is bad and
the plants are dying.”
So off they went.

Wise Old Owl was sleeping after a long night's flight. Everyone began banging on his tree to wake him up.

“We have a big problem! We need your help!” they all cried.

“What is wrong, my friends?”
Wise Old Owl said in a deep, kind voice.





“The creek is dirty!” said Wally Raccoon.

“My dam is breaking!” said Mr. Beaver.

“The air stinks!” said Mrs. Robin.

“I’m so hungry!” said Wally Raccoon.

“The trees are sick!” said Scamper the Squirrel.

“The clover and flowers are dying!”
said Hoppy Rabbit.

“NO HONEY!” cried Bear Bear.

“Oh my,” said Wise Old Owl, sadly.

“I know what the problem is.

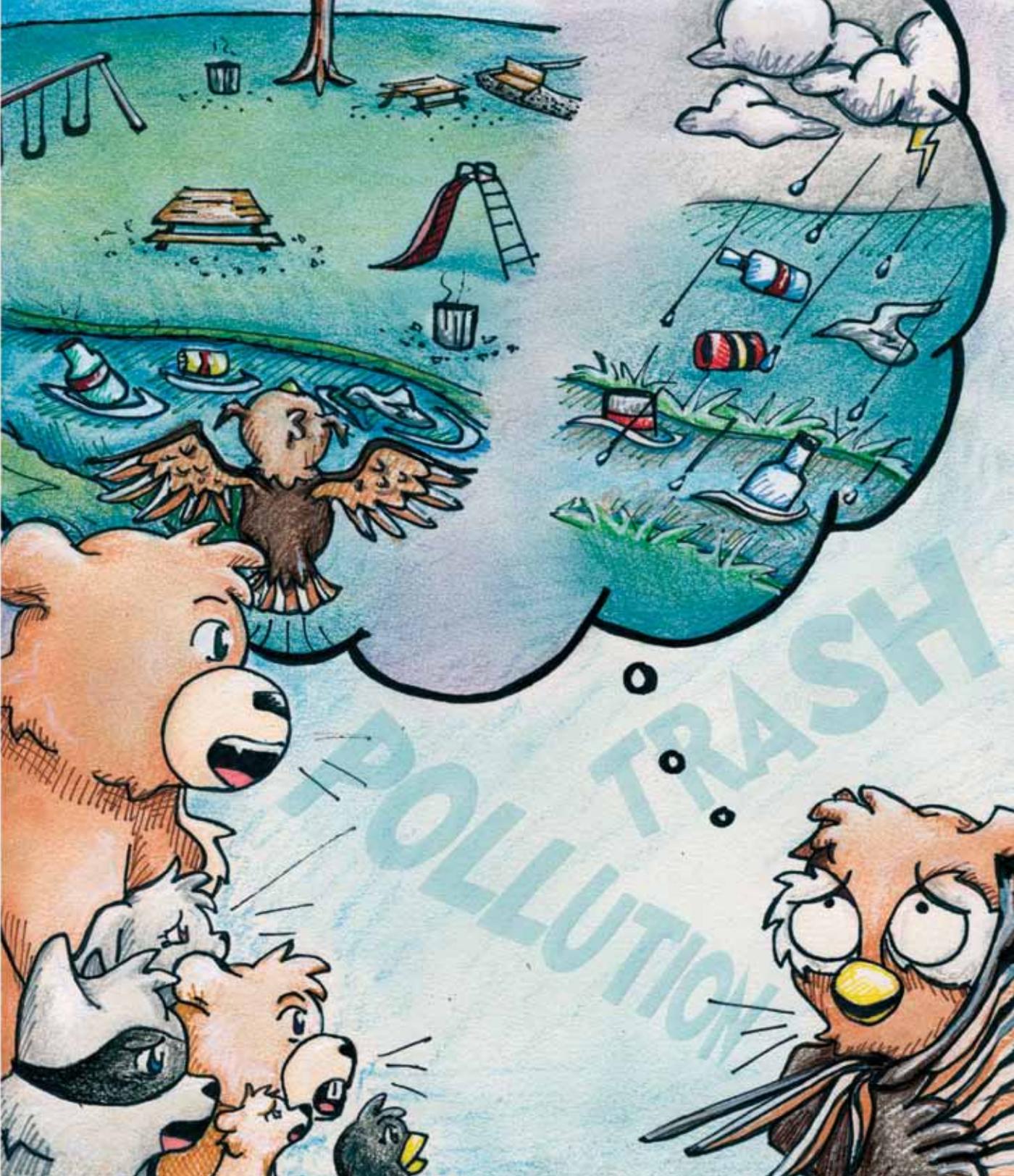
It’s called TRASH.

A bigger word for it is POLLUTION.

When I was flying near the humans, I saw them
throwing all kinds of trash on the ground.

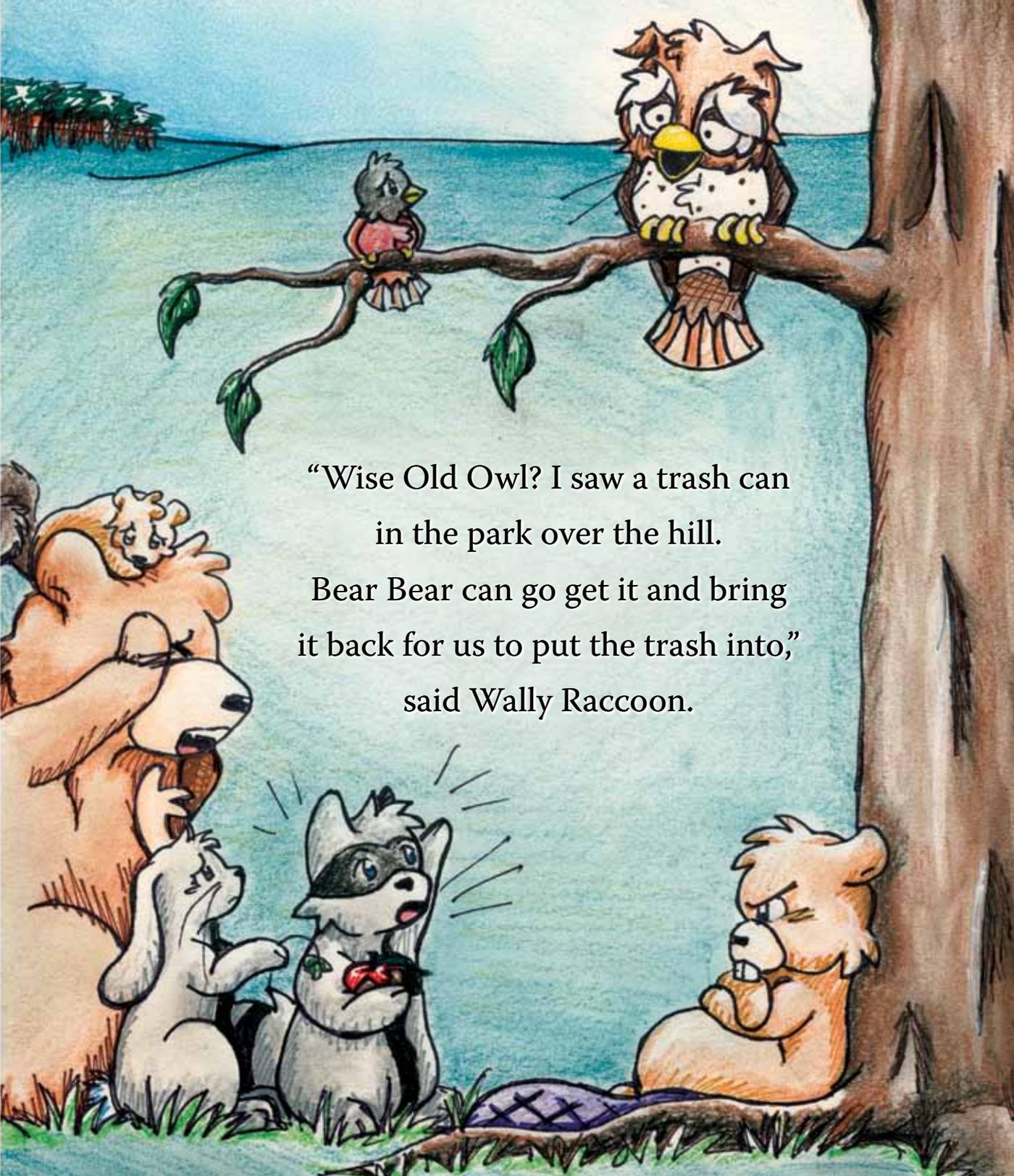
The rain washed it into the creek, and the
bad water is making everything sick.

Soon, there will be nothing to eat in
Chigger County, and we will have to leave.”



“Oh no!” the animals cried,
“What can we do?”

“We must pick up everything and put it
in a safe place where it cannot get in
the water,” Wise Old Owl said.
“I wish we had a trash can.”



“Wise Old Owl? I saw a trash can
in the park over the hill.
Bear Bear can go get it and bring
it back for us to put the trash into,”
said Wally Raccoon.

“Wise Old Owl? That trash is not mine. I did not leave it on the ground. Why should I pick it up?” asked Scamper the Squirrel.

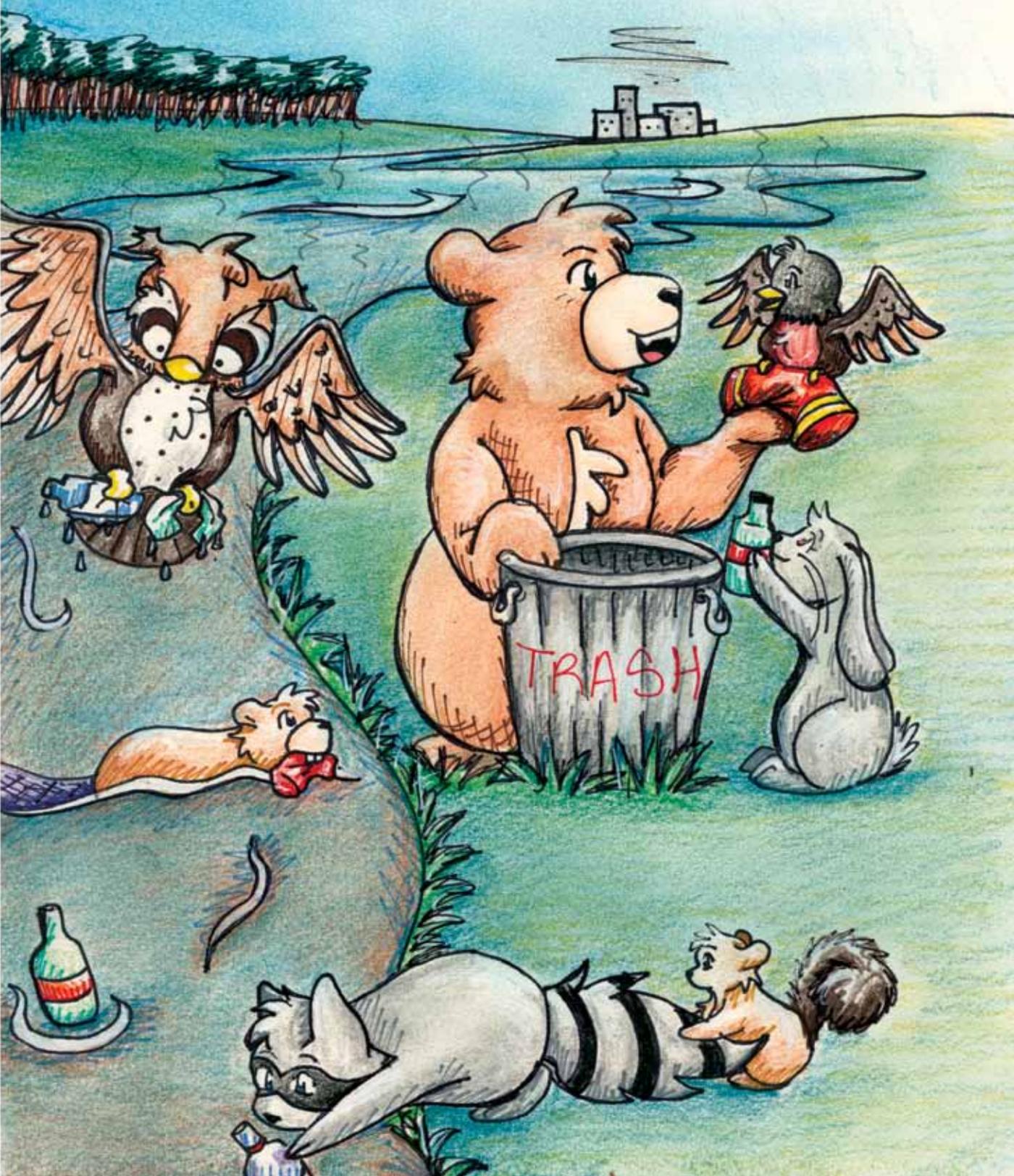
“Even though it is not yours, it is still up to you to clean up your home and keep it safe.” Wise Old Owl replied.



BUT IT'S
NOT MINE...

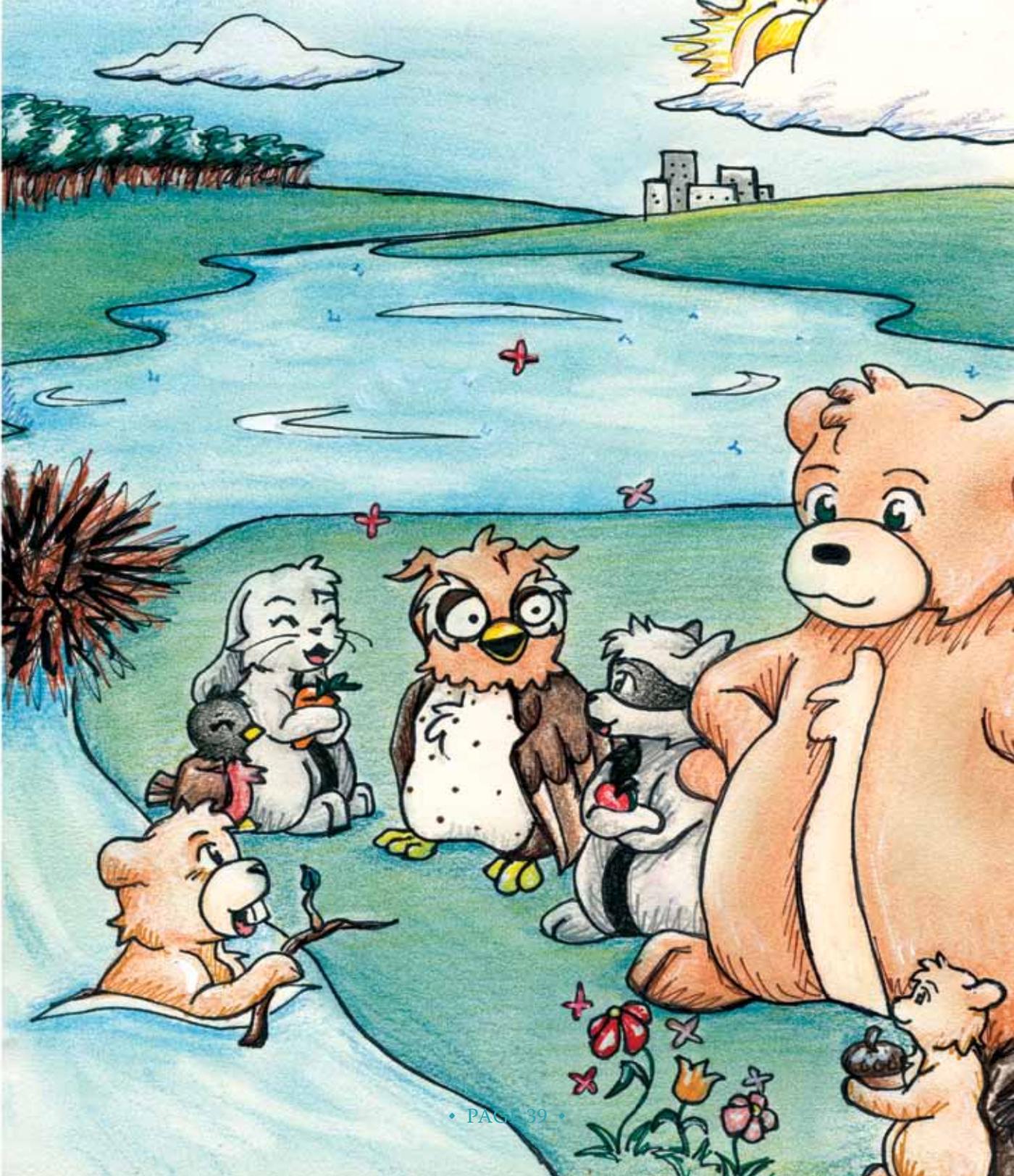
So they all began to work. They worked all day
to clean up every piece of trash and
put it in the trash can where it
could not make the water dirty.

When the trash can was full,
Bear Bear carried it back to the park for the
humans to take to the dump.



“Good job, my friends!” said Wise Old Owl. “Maybe the humans will notice our hard work and not throw trash on the ground and in the water anymore.”

“I sure hope so!” said Wally Raccoon.
“My food tastes so much better!”



Soon, Chigger County was back
to normal – clean and beautiful.

All of the animals of Chigger County
went back to Crystal Pond to
celebrate their clean,
safe and healthy water.





The End



About the Author



Amanda Robertson wrote “The Trash in Chigger County” while taking a children’s literature class at Ozarks Technical Community College (OTCC). The South Missouri Water Quality Project’s Early

Childhood Education Program in Ozark, Missouri, works with OTCC through a partnership program to introduce conservation concepts to children. Amanda wrote this story as a volunteer in that program. She is currently a student at Missouri State University and will graduate in December 2009 with an education degree majoring in Middle School English and Mathematics.

About the Illustrator



Kelsey Anderson thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to advance her art skills in a forum that would also help teach children the importance of caring for the environment.

Kelsey became an Earth Team volunteer, entered a statewide art competition and was selected to illustrate “The Trash in Chigger County.” Kelsey is a senior at Rolla High School. Following graduation 2010, Kelsey plans to attend college and major in biology and possibly art. Kelsey is from St. James, Missouri.



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Helping People
Help the Land.