Eleri's Enchantment



Chad Queen



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Over the majestic misty mountains
and through the fabled forests of Wales,
There dwelt a witch who prepared more potions
than a dragon had scales.

A sweet-smelling flask of bubbling sap
banished ails to history.
And legend whispered of a dubious draft
to uncover a mythical mystery.

Never a witch like this
the peak of the Brecon Beacons had seen.
The future was brilliantly bright
for the draught-making queen.

But it is rather tricky
to concoct a marvelous magical potion.
So, new ingredients she sought,
which set her feet in motion.

It was on one such journey,
sifting through a bog for mystical moss,
That her eye didn't glimpse the marsh
had an atrocious *afanc* (AH-vank) for a boss.



She didn't notice its glistening green scales
as it emerged from the murk.
It was only when she heard it growl
did she stop her watery work.

The wide-eyed witch froze
then dashed for her pack.
She fled, slinging sorries
and promising for sure never to come back.

It grazed her with a creeping claw
before she hastened her escape,
And with the bog behind,
she spied on her hand a small scrape.

The next day, she rose from her bed,
relieved to feel quite well,
But when she grabbed her cloak,
instead it stubbornly fell.



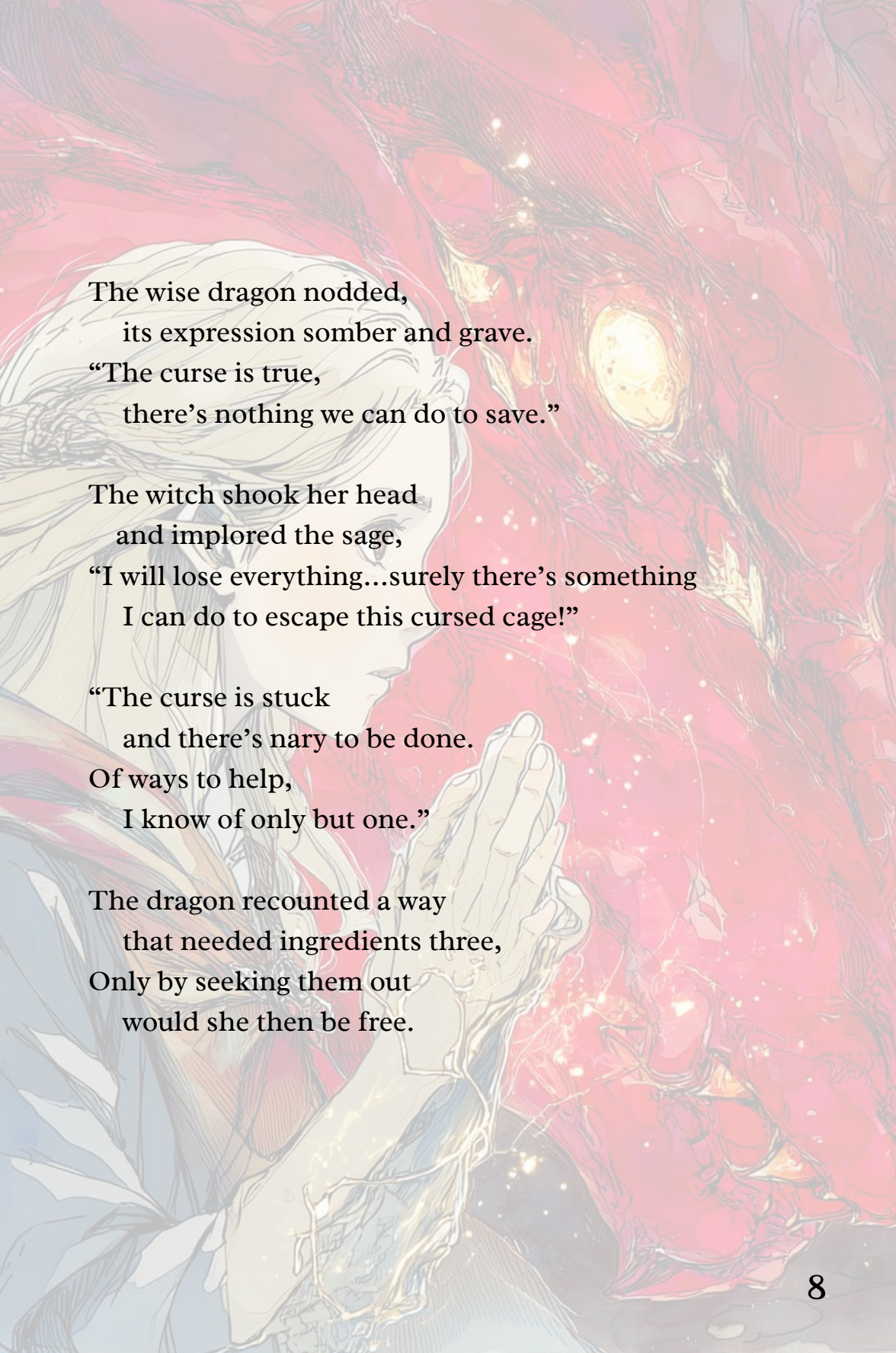


She gasped and saw her hand was stiff,
as if made from wood.
A curse, she recognized straight away,
and knew this was no good.

Bolting to the cupboard, she quaffed a potion,
and soon made it two.
Nothing took, so she clasped her cloak,
and from her house she flew.

Far underneath a mountain,
she spirited to see the dragon of crimson red.
She explained her pitiful plight to
Y Ddraig Goch (uh THRAIG gohk) to hear what it said.





The wise dragon nodded,
its expression somber and grave.
"The curse is true,
there's nothing we can do to save."

The witch shook her head
and implored the sage,
"I will lose everything...surely there's something
I can do to escape this cursed cage!"

"The curse is stuck
and there's nary to be done.
Of ways to help,
I know of only but one."

The dragon recounted a way
that needed ingredients three,
Only by seeking them out
would she then be free.

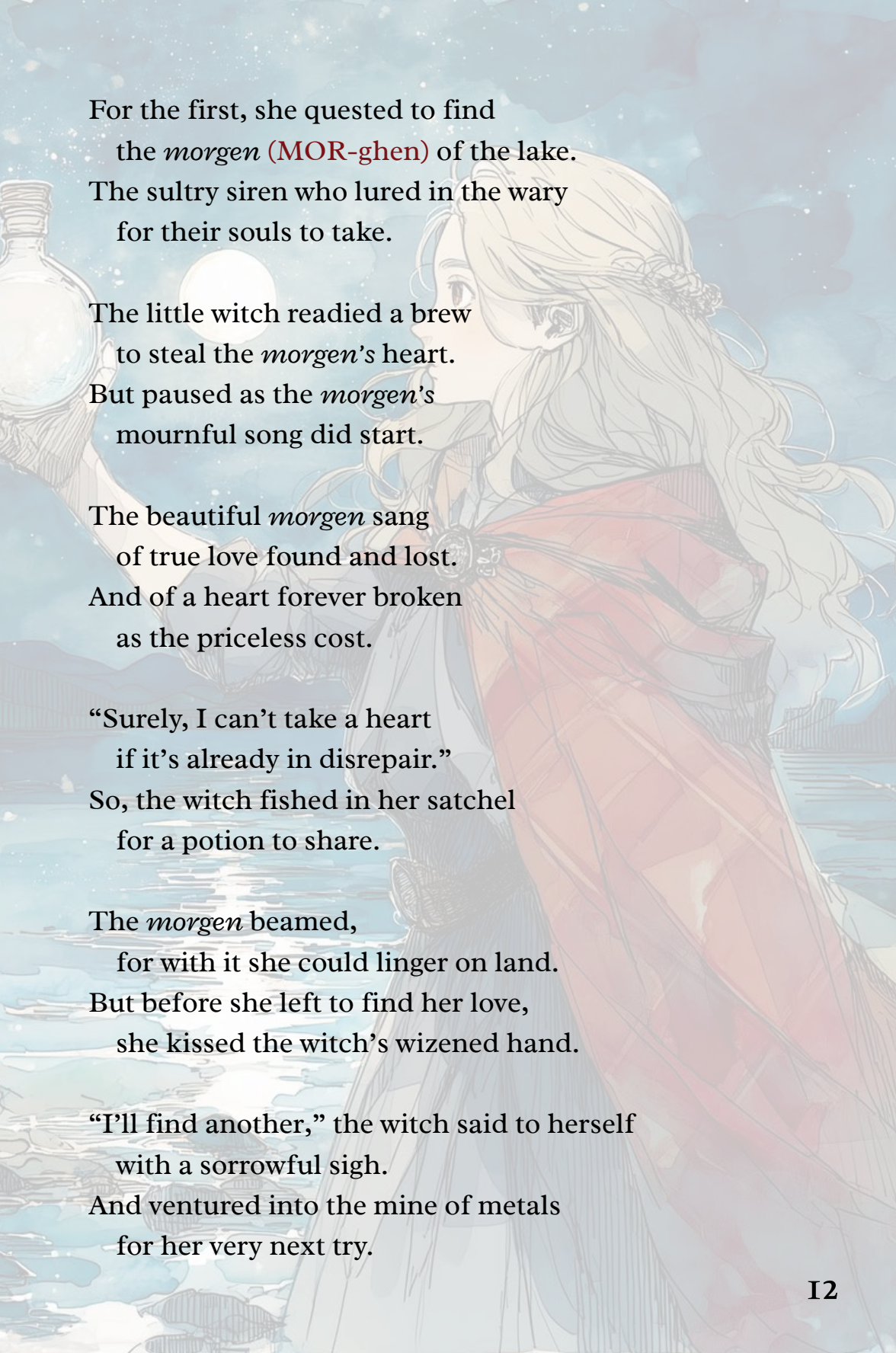


“First, steal the heart
of the *morgen* (MOR-ghen) of the lake.
It is feared many hearts not her own
she already did take.”

“Second, seek the crafty *coblynau* (KOB-lin-eye)
dwelling deep within the mine.
Behold its vision
and hasten back with its sight for us to refine.”

“Last, track the *cŵn annwn* (koon AN-noon)
hunting the spirits of those who are no more.
Find its voice and then
your life we will restore.”





For the first, she quested to find
the *morgen* (MOR-ghen) of the lake.
The sultry siren who lured in the wary
for their souls to take.

The little witch readied a brew
to steal the *morgen's* heart.
But paused as the *morgen's*
mournful song did start.

The beautiful *morgen* sang
of true love found and lost.
And of a heart forever broken
as the priceless cost.

"Surely, I can't take a heart
if it's already in disrepair."
So, the witch fished in her satchel
for a potion to share.

The *morgen* beamed,
for with it she could linger on land.
But before she left to find her love,
she kissed the witch's wizened hand.

"I'll find another," the witch said to herself
with a sorrowful sigh.
And ventured into the mine of metals
for her very next try.





There lived an old hook-nosed *coblynau* (KOB-lin-eye),
whose eyes could see precious ores through the rock.
Rumor had it he scared away the miners
and deftly stole all the stock.

That sagacious sight was the next ingredient,
but she paused when it let out a groan.
"I pick all day with these too-tired hands
ringing against the stone."

Tearfully he added,
"I wish only to keep going.
I could finally feed my family full
and have them gladly growing."

The witch saw the desperation
in those penetrating eyes of pebble gray.
And brought forth a potion
to hold his exhaustion at bay.

The *coblynau* drank, blinked,
and squealed with delight.
He gave the witch a hug
and flexed his arms with newfound might.

Off he went,
as the witch thought of other mines to explore.
But it was getting late,
and soon night would be in store.



As darkness fell,
  a haunting howl stirred the still.
Her spirits sank as the spectral sound
  made her harried heart chill.

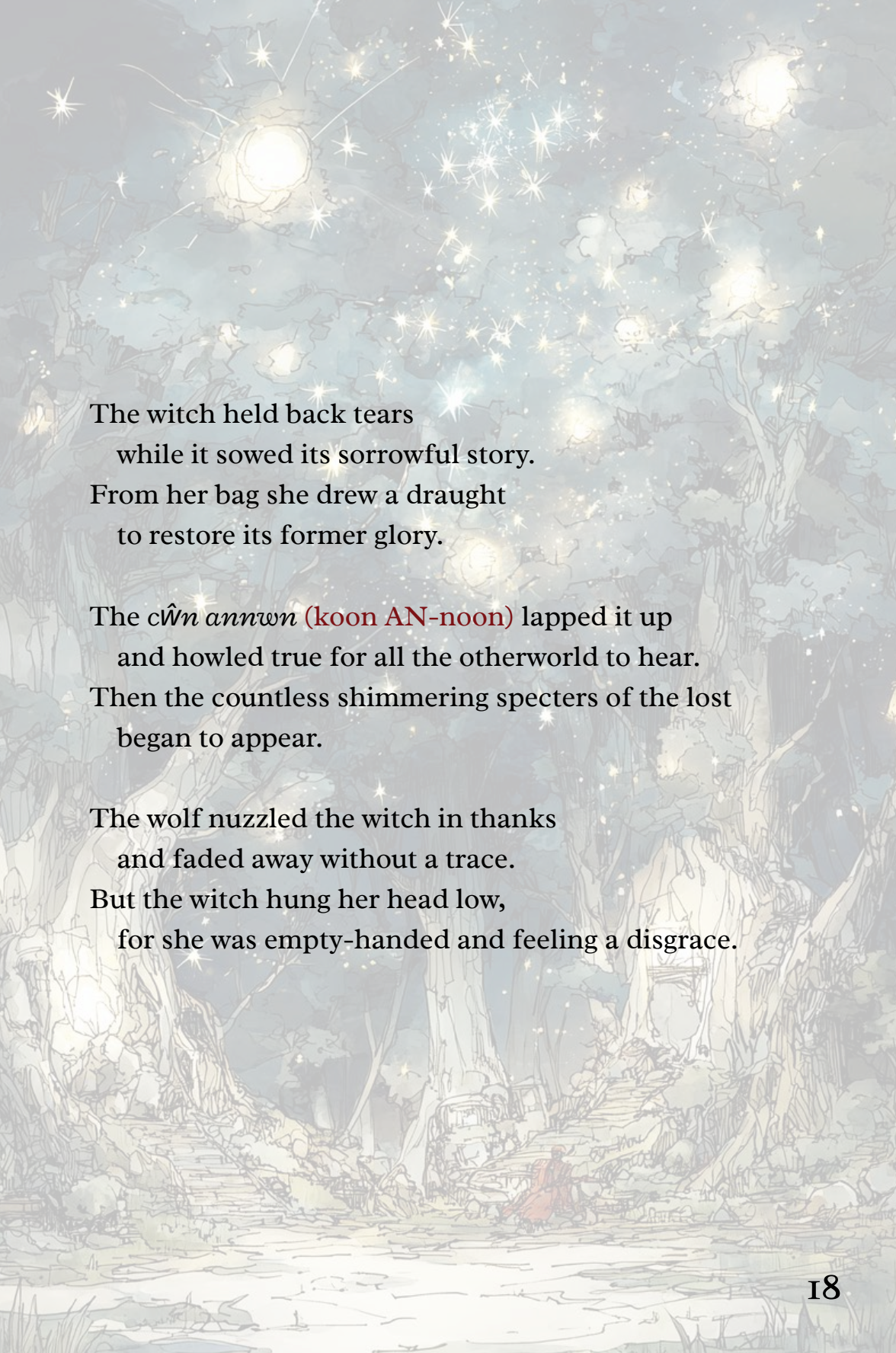
She heard it once more,
  but now much too faint.
She felt something behind her,
  so she turned with rigid restraint.

There sat a *cŵn annwn* (koon AN-noon),
  an otherworldly wolf with glowing red ears.
Whose nocturne cries grow quieter
  when one of them nears.

The red dragon was clear:
  its vesperal voice was needed.
She readied a decanter
  but then the wraith-like wolf pleaded.

"My howl has waned to a whisper,
  and the departed souls wander.
If only it could again soar amongst the mists
  to bring them back from yonder."



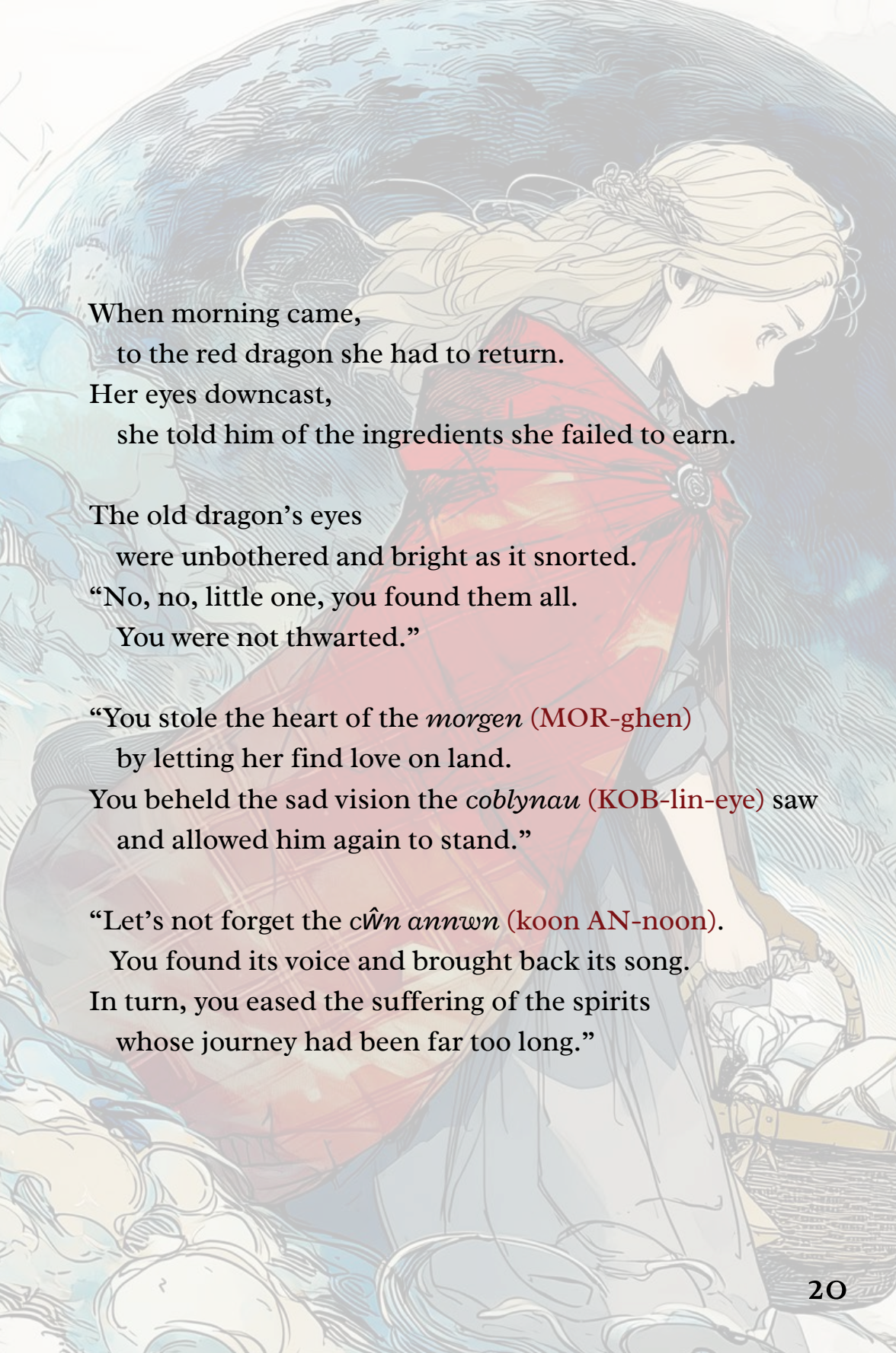


The witch held back tears
while it sowed its sorrowful story.
From her bag she drew a draught
to restore its former glory.

The *cŵn annwn* (koon AN-noon) lapped it up
and howled true for all the otherworld to hear.
Then the countless shimmering specters of the lost
began to appear.

The wolf nuzzled the witch in thanks
and faded away without a trace.
But the witch hung her head low,
for she was empty-handed and feeling a disgrace.





When morning came,
to the red dragon she had to return.
Her eyes downcast,
she told him of the ingredients she failed to earn.

The old dragon's eyes
were unbothered and bright as it snorted.
"No, no, little one, you found them all.
You were not thwarted."

"You stole the heart of the *morgen* (MOR-ghen)
by letting her find love on land.
You beheld the sad vision the *coblynau* (KOB-lin-eye) saw
and allowed him again to stand."

"Let's not forget the *cŵn annwn* (koon AN-noon).
You found its voice and brought back its song.
In turn, you eased the suffering of the spirits
whose journey had been far too long."

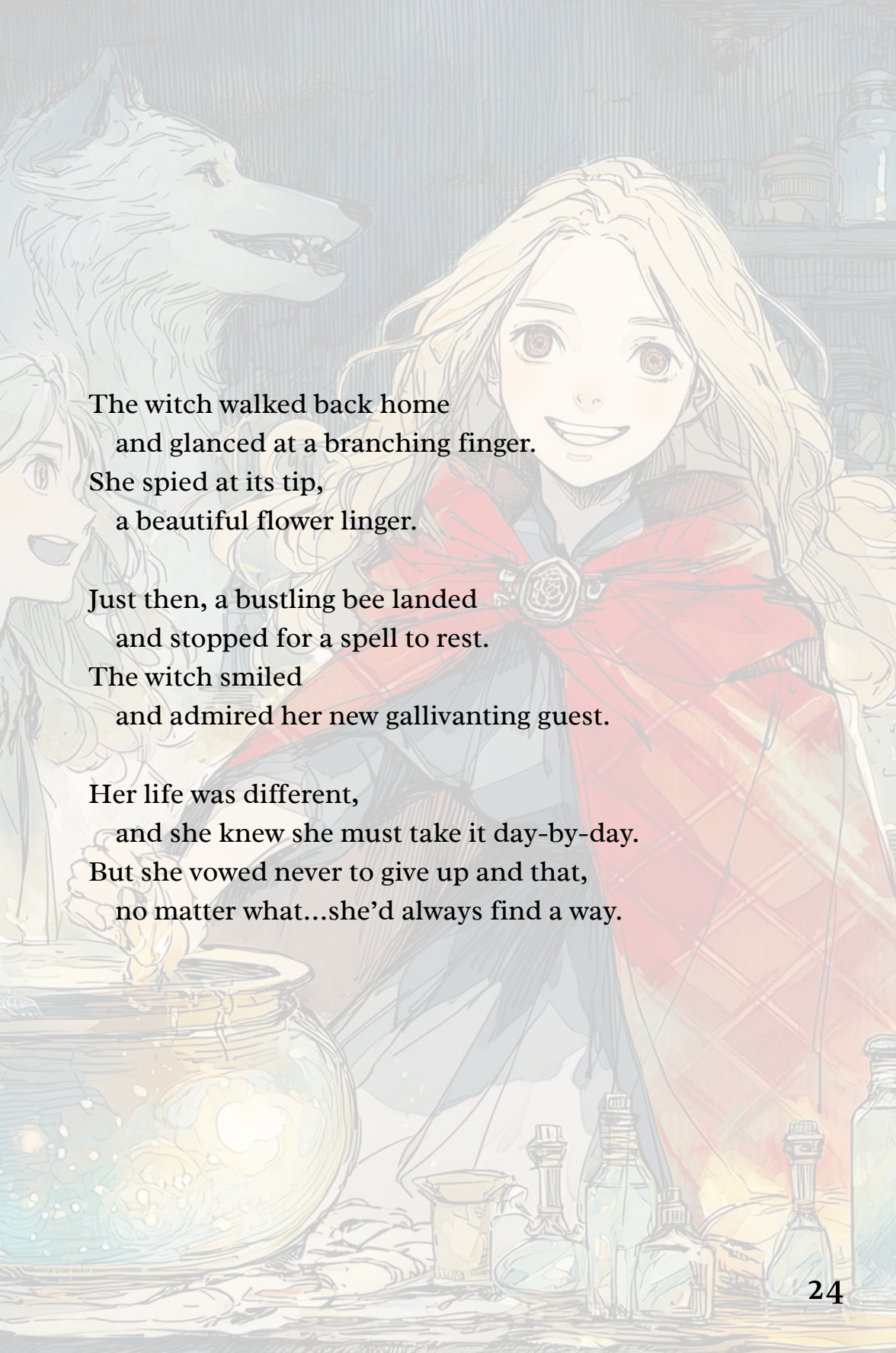


To which she implored,
"But what about my hand of branch and thicket?
Surely you meant we could brew a potion
and that would be my ticket?"

"I'm sorry, my child,
some curses can never be lifted.
Despite your malady, you brought meaning and hope
to the many you gifted.

Everyone struggles with their own curse
of magic or mundane.
But with courage and kindness,
together we can find a new path to ease the strain."

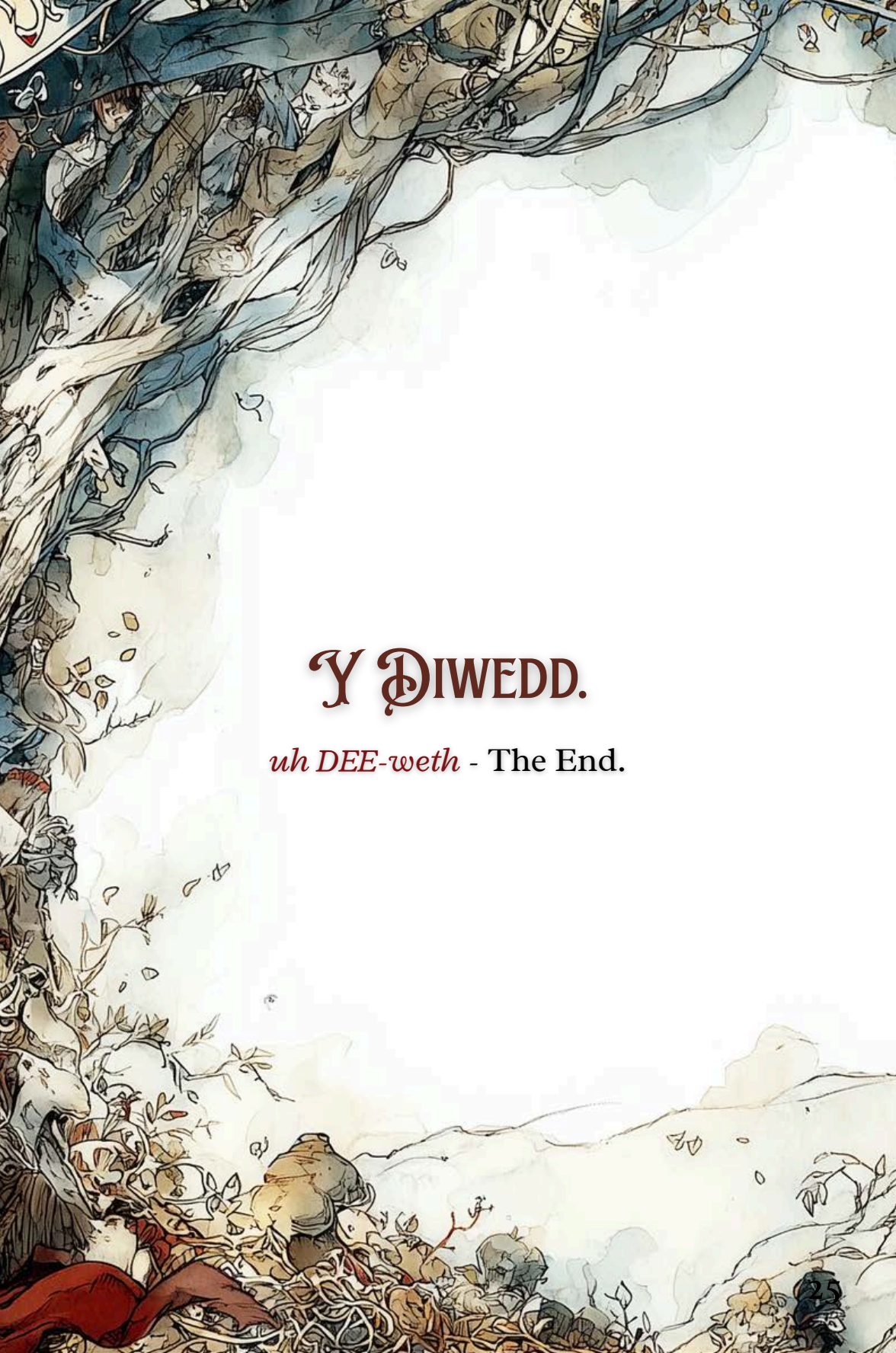




The witch walked back home
and glanced at a branching finger.
She spied at its tip,
a beautiful flower linger.

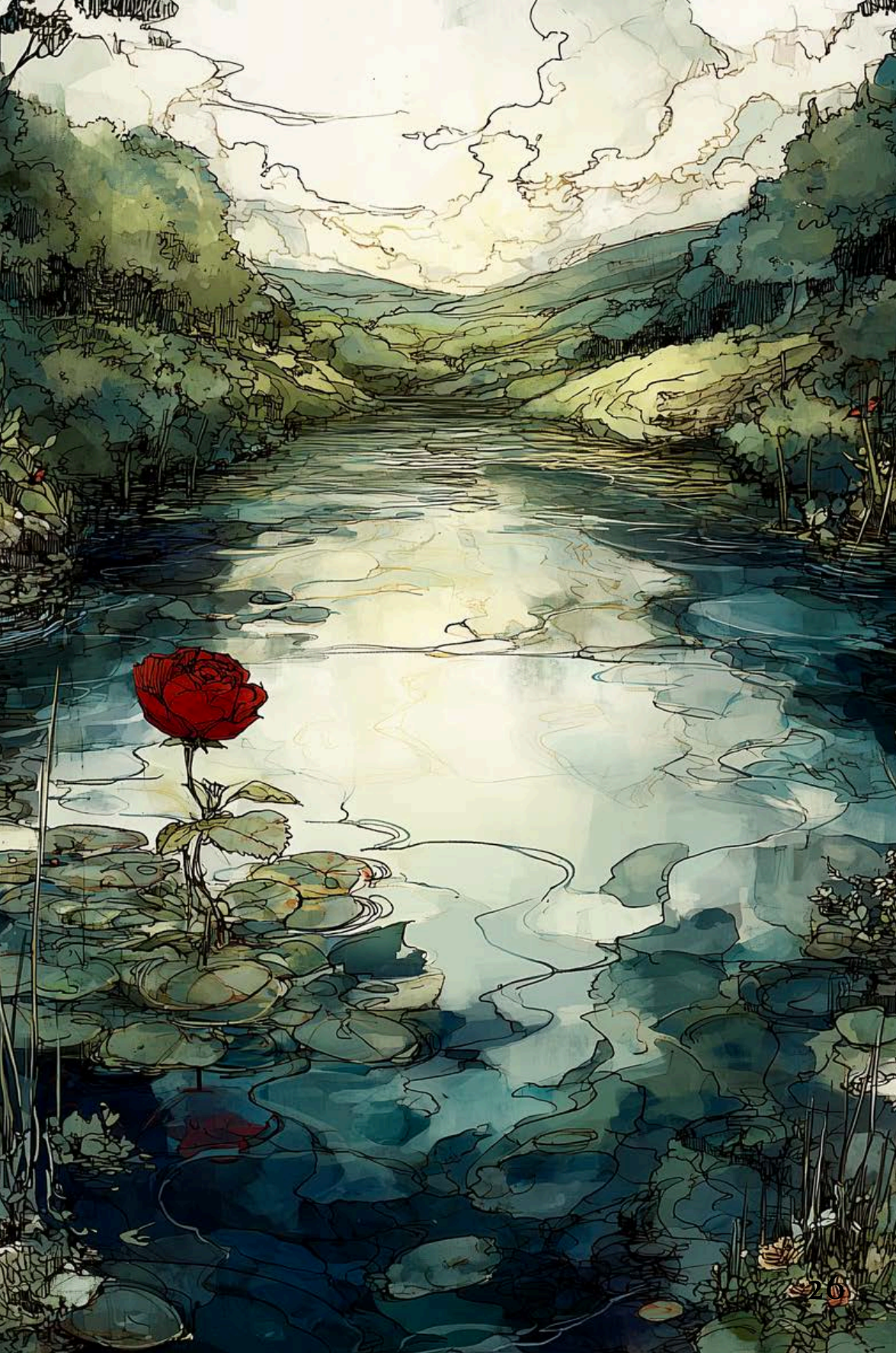
Just then, a bustling bee landed
and stopped for a spell to rest.
The witch smiled
and admired her new gallivanting guest.

Her life was different,
and she knew she must take it day-by-day.
But she vowed never to give up and that,
no matter what…she'd always find a way.



Y Diwedd.

uh DEE-weth - The End.



Dear Reader,

It has always been a dream of mine to make a book like this, but I never had a tale meaningful enough to carry to completion. When a friend (or *ffrind*, if you will) of mine developed a condition that limited the range of motion of their hands and caused them no shortage of pain, I was inspired by their courage and perseverance as they battled—and still battle—its effects. Sadly, there are many ailments which have no cure, and not every story can end the way we may want them to.

The struggles around us are unrelenting. We're in a constant state of change as circumstances shift under our feet as we move forward in life. At the same time, others are experiencing their own challenges and adapting in turn. I hope this tale serves as a reminder to everyone to bring kindness and understanding to the friends around them as they each travel on our respective journeys. And I hope those going through especially hard times are able to find solace and comfort with those very same friends.

We must take care never to let our obstacles define us, but rather let how we overcome them define us instead. And while not every story may end the way we want, that doesn't mean there can't be a happy ending.

Chad Queen