

Les C. Guo and the Pineape Tea



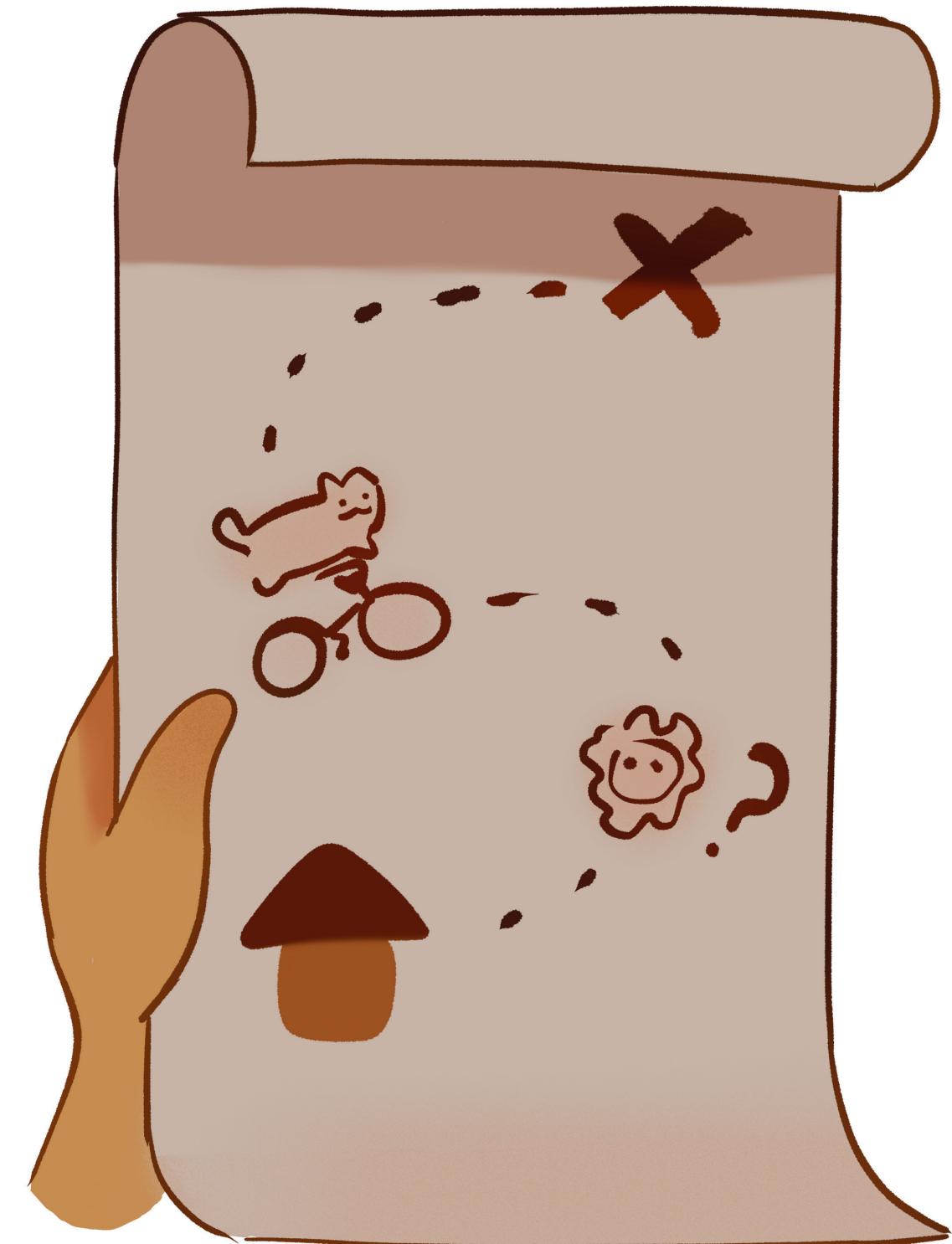
Written and illustrated by Amy Xiao



Les C. Guo loved Tori H. Shond's pineapple tea. She loved the sweet relief. She loved the tangy flavor. She drank it with breakfast, lunch, and dinner. She even had it with dessert!



One fateful day, Les opened the refrigerator door and realized... “Oh no! There’s only one box of pineape tea left!”



Grandma Guo gave Les C. Guo a map. “To get to the tea store, you must cross Yi’s Silly Cogs, ride the Cat cycle, and finally enter the Ox Shop. Young one, it will be a tough journey, but you must persevere.”



The first stop was Yi's Silly Cogs. "Answer our riddle, and we will let you through!" chanted the cogs. "What's the powerhouse of the cell?"

"The mitochondria!" Les exclaimed.

"Correct," the cogs confirmed proudly.

The cogs tried to turn, and turn, and turn... but the gate wouldn't move. "Oh, we're so tired, we have no energy to turn. We drank all our pineape tea and must wait for Ms. Yi to give us more. I'm so sorry child, but I'm afraid we're not able to let you through."

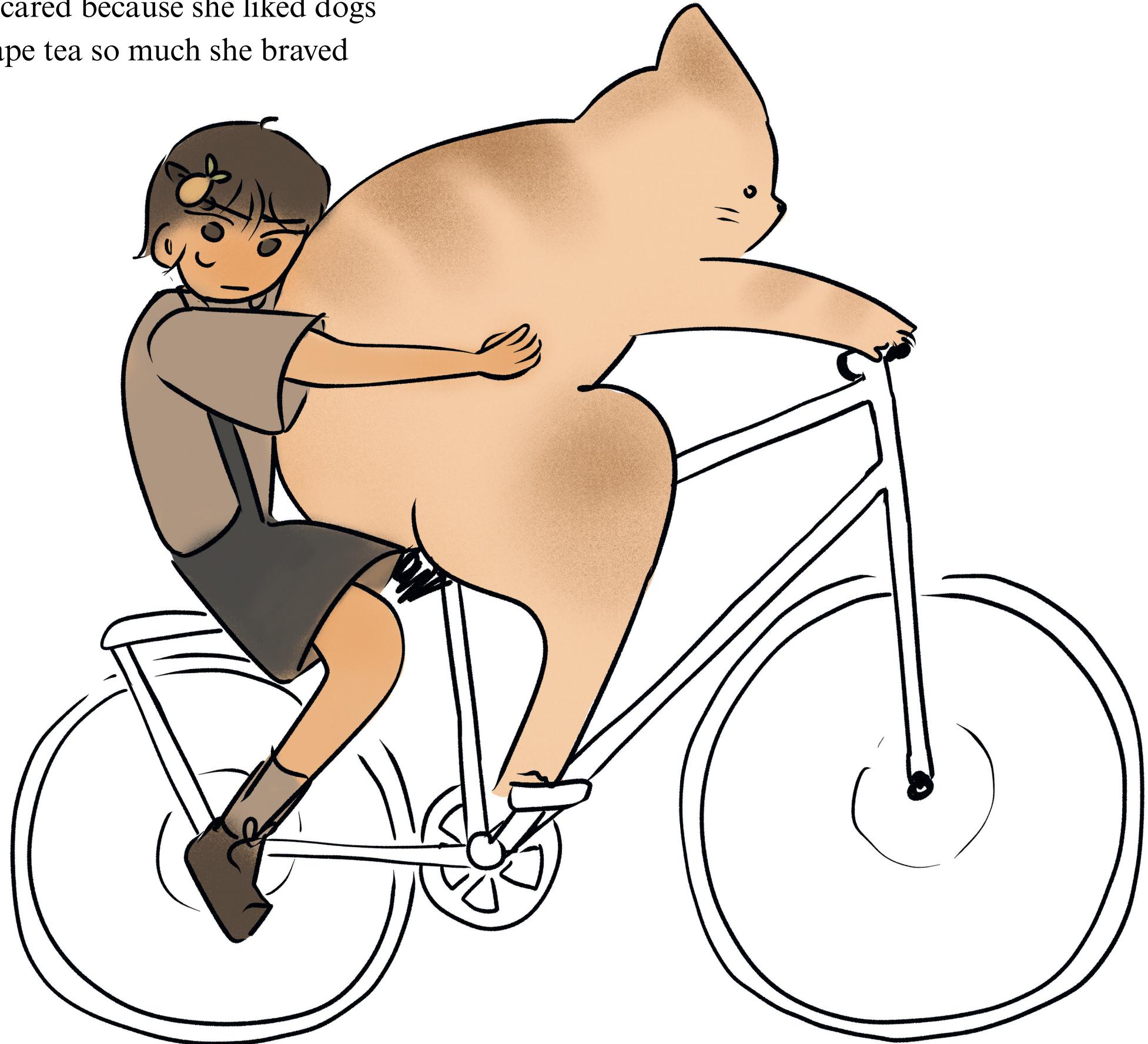
Les C. Guo thought for a moment. She thought of her last box of pineape tea. Would it be better to wait or invest? “Wait, cogs! I have a solution! You can have my last box of pineape tea!”



The cogs drank the tea and turned and turned... and the gate began to open! Les shouted, “Thank you, cogs! I’ll bring you more tea!” as she bounded away.



Next was the Cat cycle. Les was scared because she liked dogs and not cats. But, she loved pineape tea so much she braved all eight cats of the cycle.

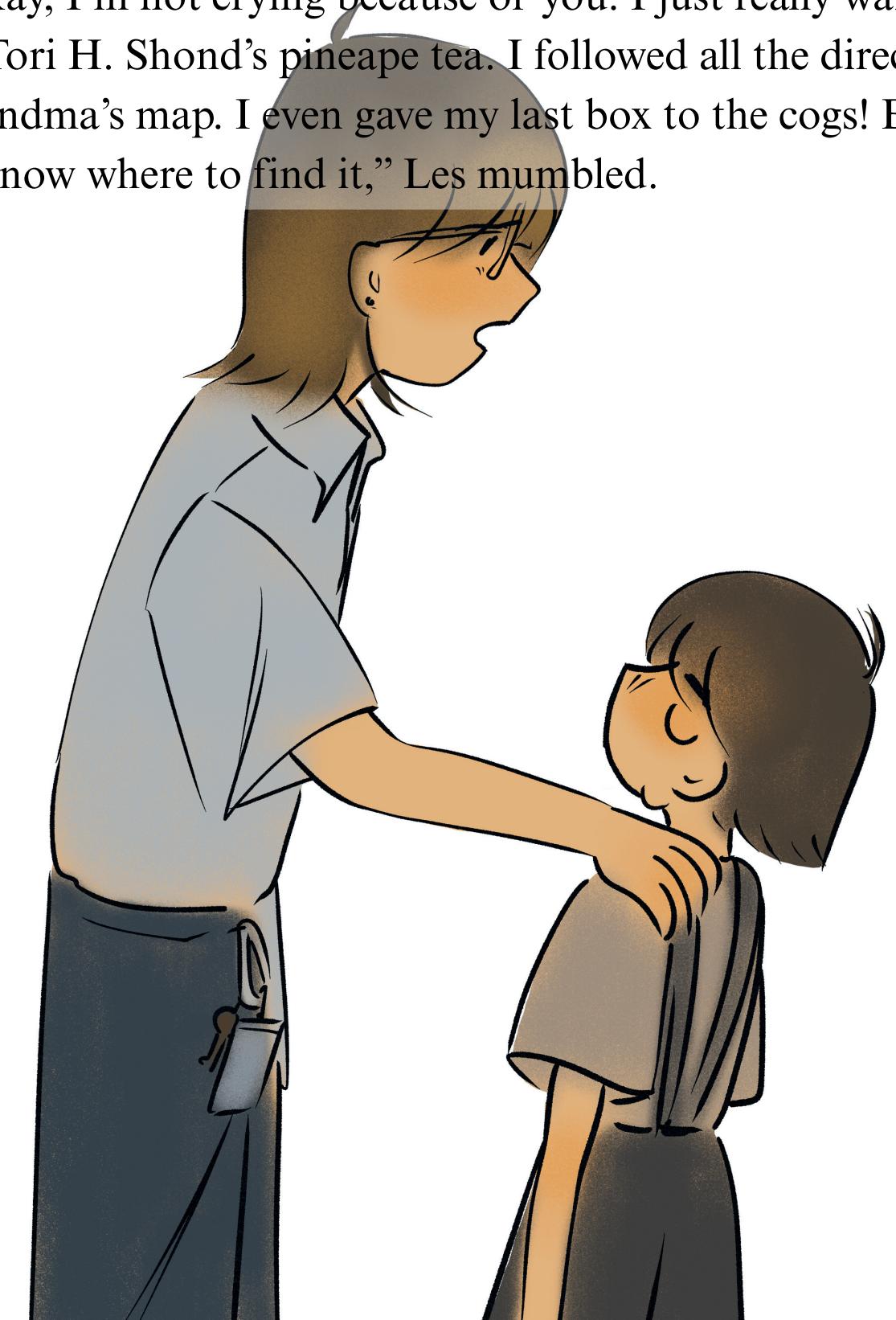




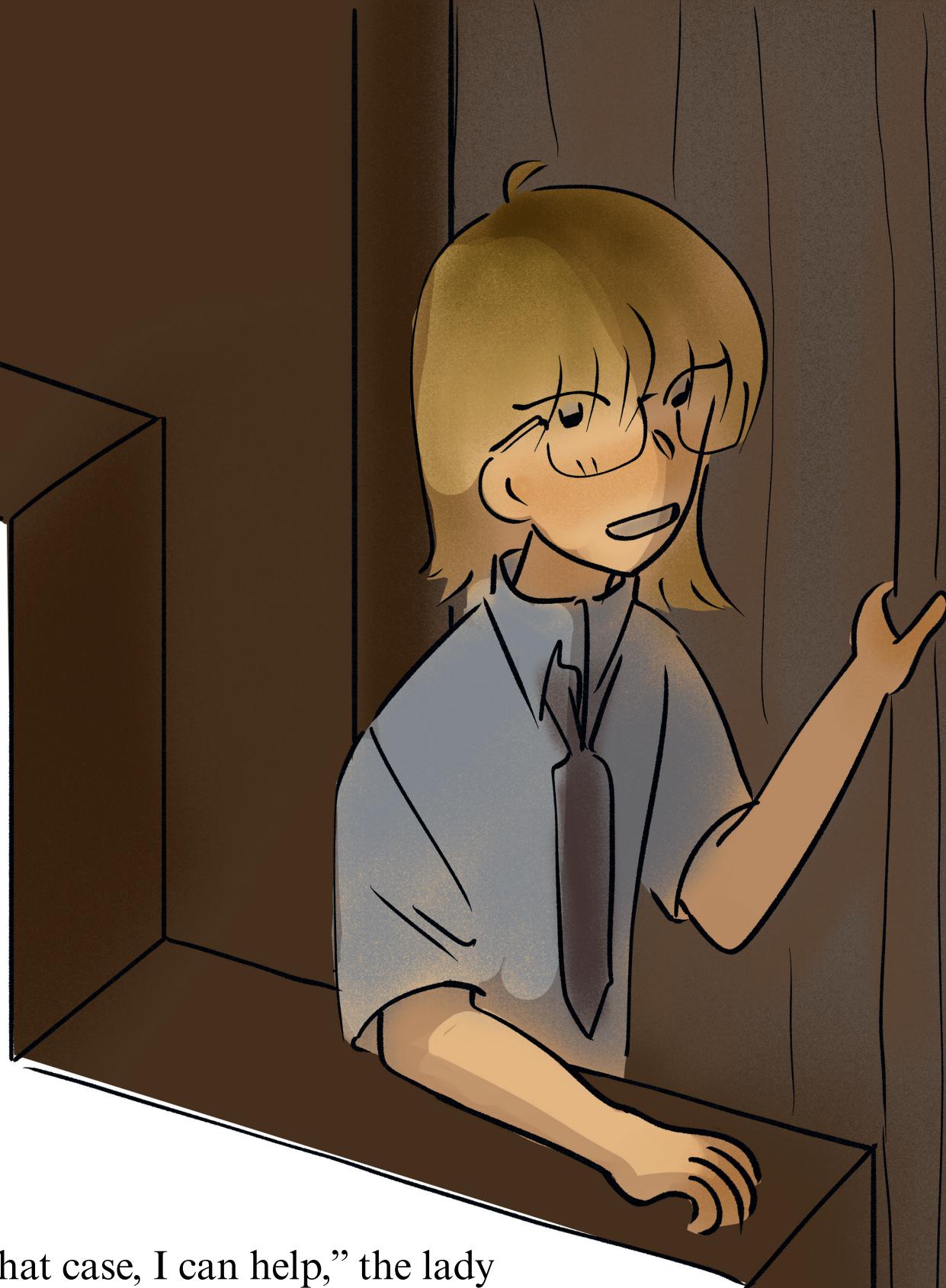
Finally, Les arrived at the Ox shop. She was so excited she could taste the tea! Les entered, but nothing happened. The shop was empty, except for the towering walls of porcelain.

Les. C. Guo didn't know what to do. Dejected, Les left the shop with her head drooping.

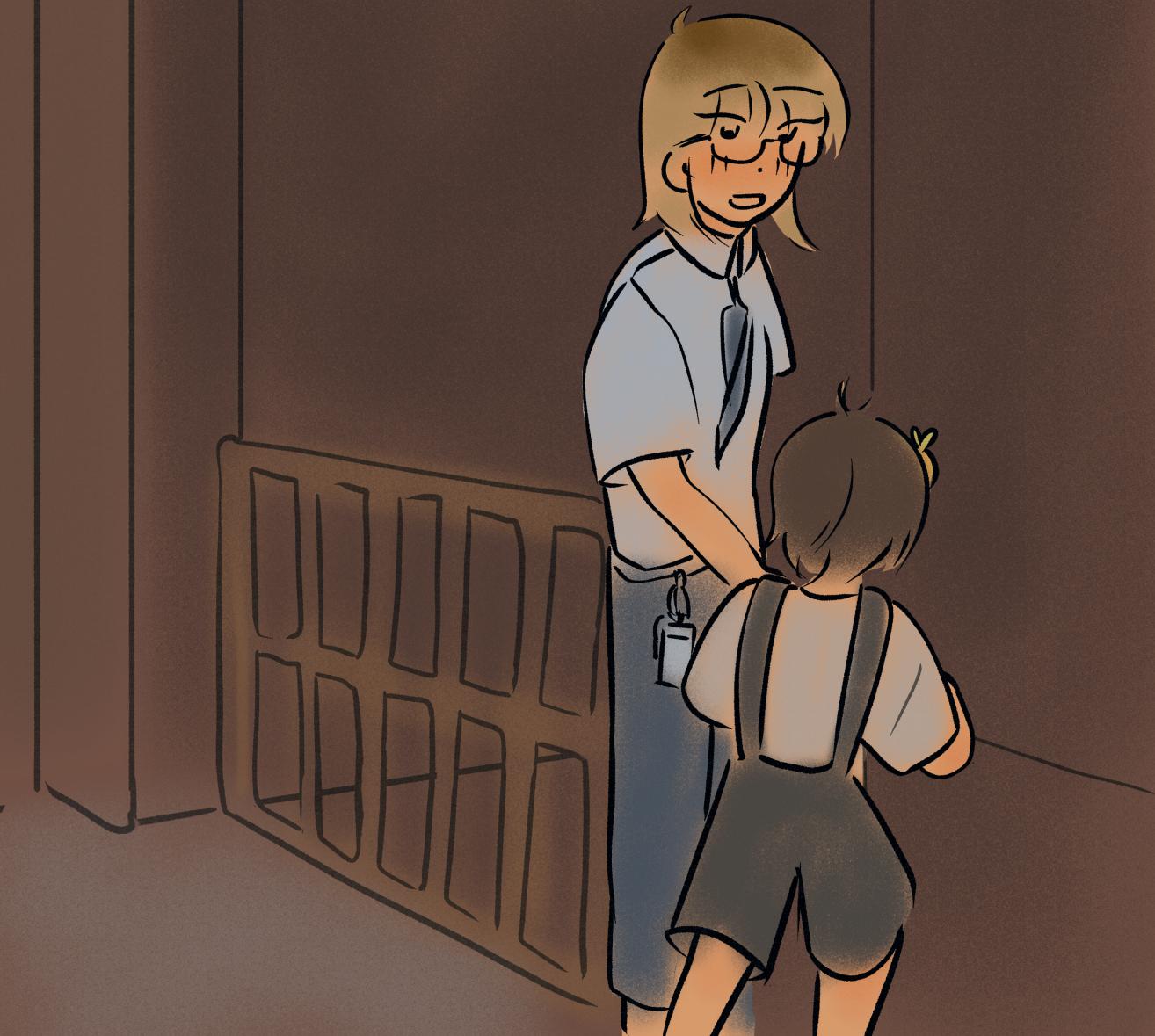
As Les was leaving, she bumped into a lady.
“Oh no, I’m so sorry! I didn’t mean to make you cry!” the lady worriedly gasped.
“It’s okay, I’m not crying because of you. I just really wanted to drink Tori H. Shond’s pineape tea. I followed all the directions on my grandma’s map. I even gave my last box to the cogs! But, I still don’t know where to find it,” Les mumbled.



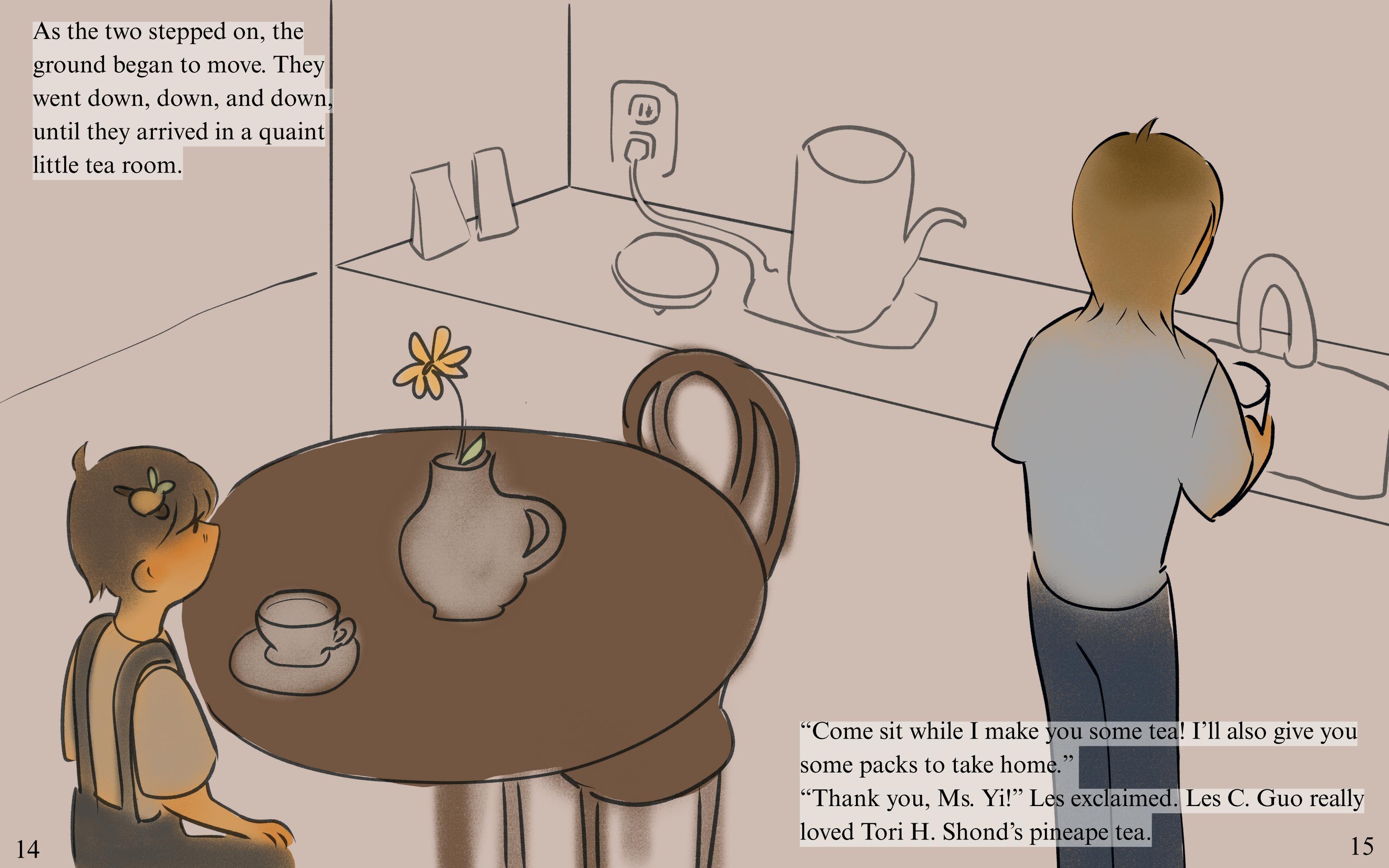
“Well, in that case, I can help,” the lady smiled. The lady led Les back into the shop and to a hidden corridor behind the counter.



“I never got to introduce myself. My name is Ms. Yi, and I own this tea shop. A few years ago, I was experimenting with new tea flavors. One of my customers, Tori H. Shond, loved one of my teas so much that she said I should start selling it for people outside of the shop. I was just on my way back from delivering some tea to Ms. Shond and the cogs! I heard all about your generosity from the cogs. Come, step on this platform. We’ll need a bit of pressure for this old thing to work.”



As the two stepped on, the ground began to move. They went down, down, and down, until they arrived in a quaint little tea room.



“Come sit while I make you some tea! I’ll also give you some packs to take home.”
“Thank you, Ms. Yi!” Les exclaimed. Les C. Guo really loved Tori H. Shond’s pineape tea.