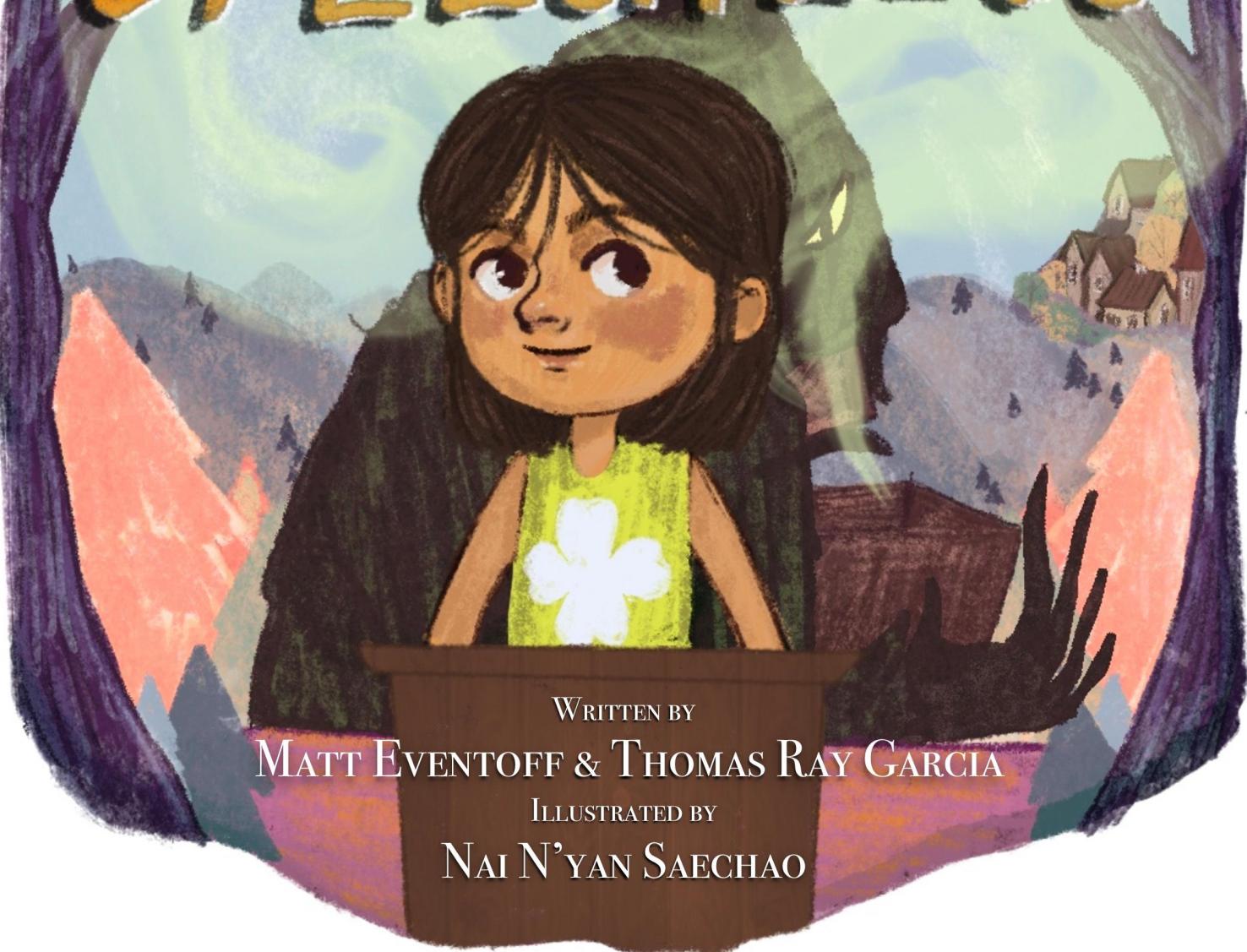


SPEECHLESS



WRITTEN BY

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**Welcome to the Grand Oratory,
where speakers of all ages are
delivering rousing speeches...**





**... if they aren't hiding
behind Mom's blouse.**







**"Hmm? If Amelia Martinez is not present,
then the next speaker is Mr. Rhetorick!"
says the Voz Mayor.**



**With a mysterious box in his hands,
Mr. Rhetorick darts to the podium.**







"Animals deserve a voice,"
says Mr. Rhetorick,
his voice swaying the
audience like ocean waves.

“They have thoughts and feelings like us, but they cannot tell us what they think or feel. We should use our voices to speak for them.”



“Hmm. Good speech,” says the mayor.

**“But just like last year, you never
looked at the audience.**

Next time, it would help if you...”



"I don't want to hear it," says Mr. Rhetorick.

He opens his box...

**... and leaves everyone in Voz Speechless!
Well, everyone except one.**



**"Give their voices back!"
says Amelia, pointing to the
villagers' silent, moving mouths.**

**Smirking, Mr. Rhetorick
escapes with his magical box
shining unusually bright.**



Amelia pursues Mr. Rhetorick into the forest until a frowning bat descends from above.



**"I don't want this squeaky voice!" says the bat.
Behind the trees, a chorus of voices agrees.**

**"W-why do you sound
like Mom?" asks Amelia.**



**"Speak louder, human!"
says the bat.
"The stage is yours."**

**Dozens of beady eyes
open in the shadows,
awaiting Amelia's speech.**



**"... I'm Amelia Martinez,
a villager from Voz...
I'm here to get
the villagers' voices back.
Where is Mr. Rhetorick?"**

**"Hmm. He practices speaking
in a cave near the river," says the bear,
sounding oddly familiar.**



**Amelia finds Mr. Rhetorick's hideout
by following his echo.
"I stand before you today..."**



"The animals don't want the voices. Give them back!"
says Amelia staring at the box casting light through the cave.

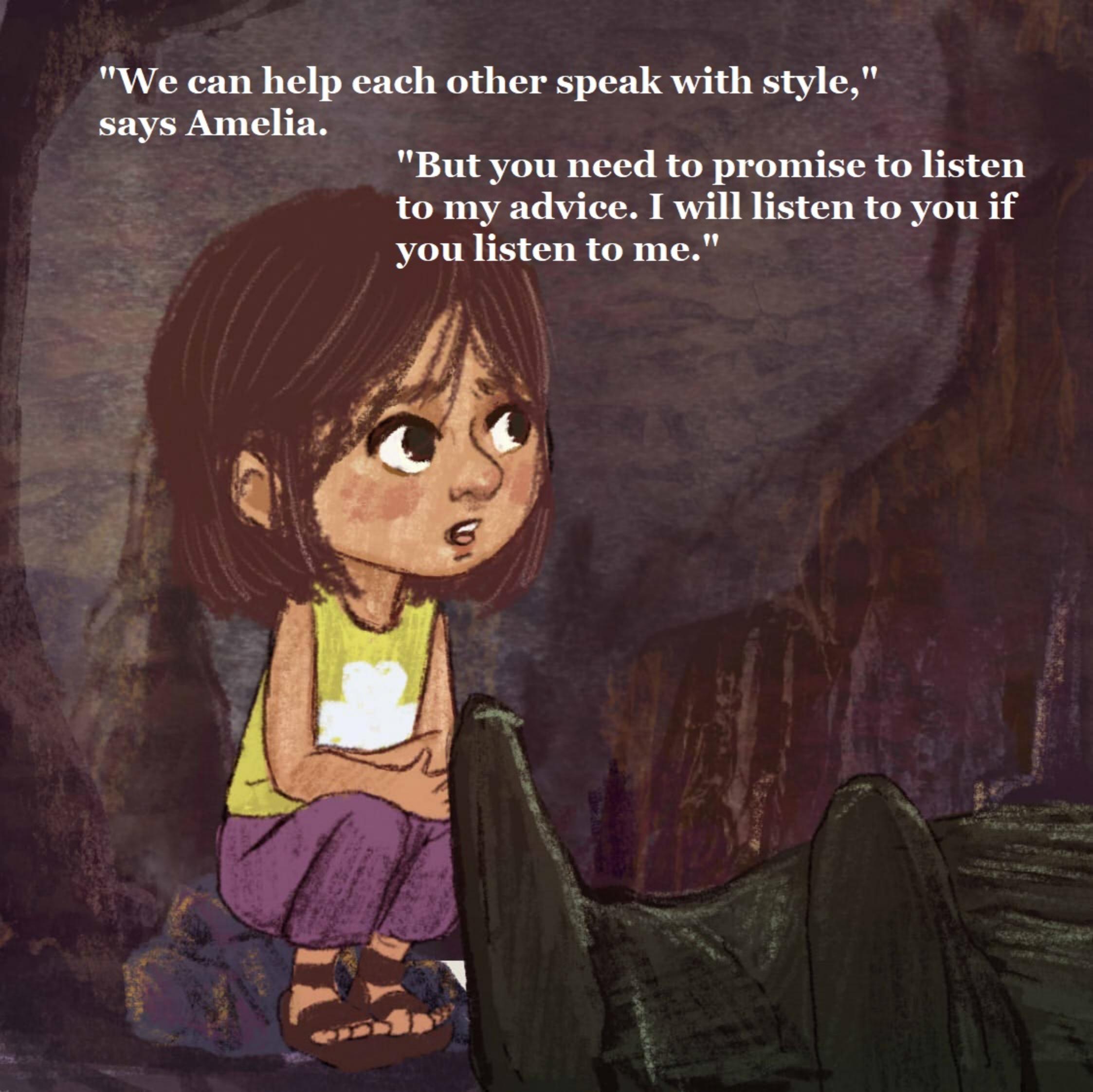
**"I never thought you'd speak against me," says Mr. Rhetorick.
"I should take your voice too!"**





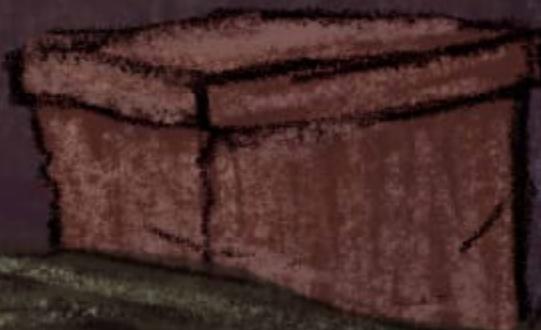
"You're not listening," says Amelia. "There will be no Grand Oratory without the voices. The echo is what you want to hear, but it won't help you improve."

"Then tell me what I need to hear," says Mr. Rhetorick, his voice escaping into the darkness.



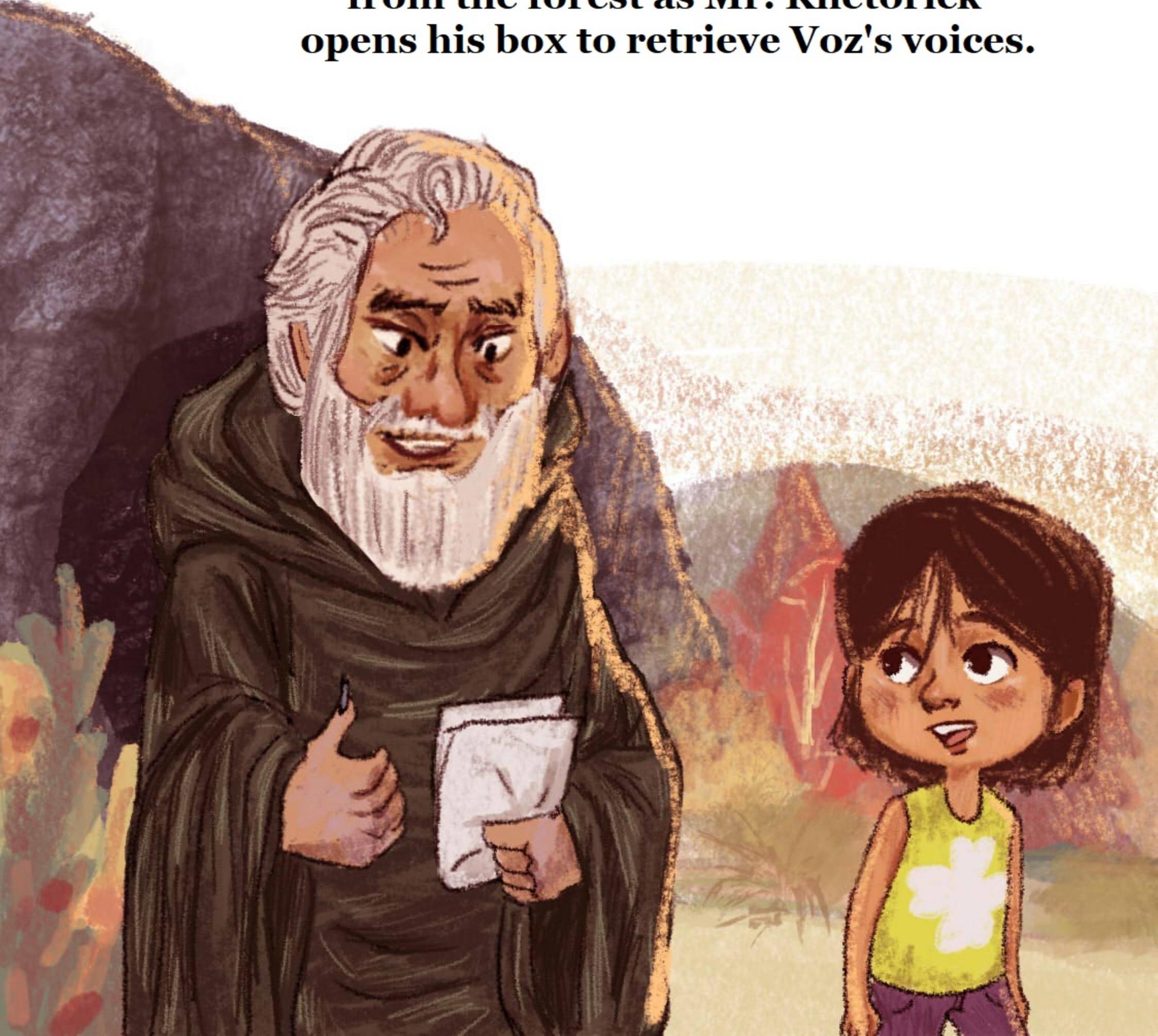
"We can help each other speak with style,"
says Amelia.

**"But you need to promise to listen
to my advice. I will listen to you if
you listen to me."**



"You speak with such confidence,"
says Mr. Rhetorick slumping next to his box.
"I want to learn from you. I promise."

**Joyful roars and squeaks ring
from the forest as Mr. Rhetorick
opens his box to retrieve Voz's voices.**

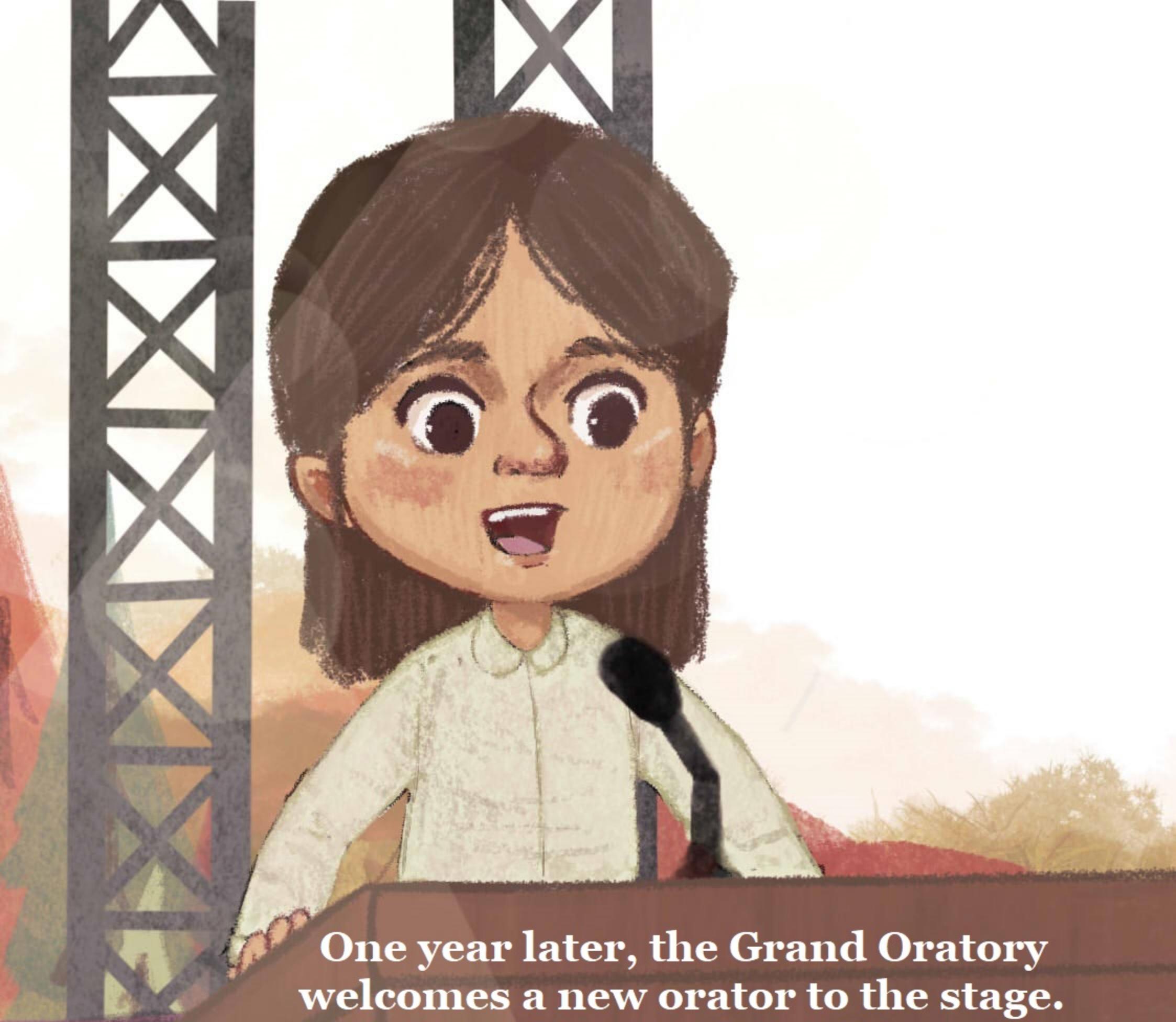






**After a silent dawn, the villagers awake as if from
a dream, rejoicing in the sound of their voices.**





**One year later, the Grand Oratory
welcomes a new orator to the stage.**

"I stand before you today..."

**As Amelia speaks, she imagines her voice fluttering
past Mr. Rhetorick and through the sky**

She never felt more frightened.

She never felt more free.



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