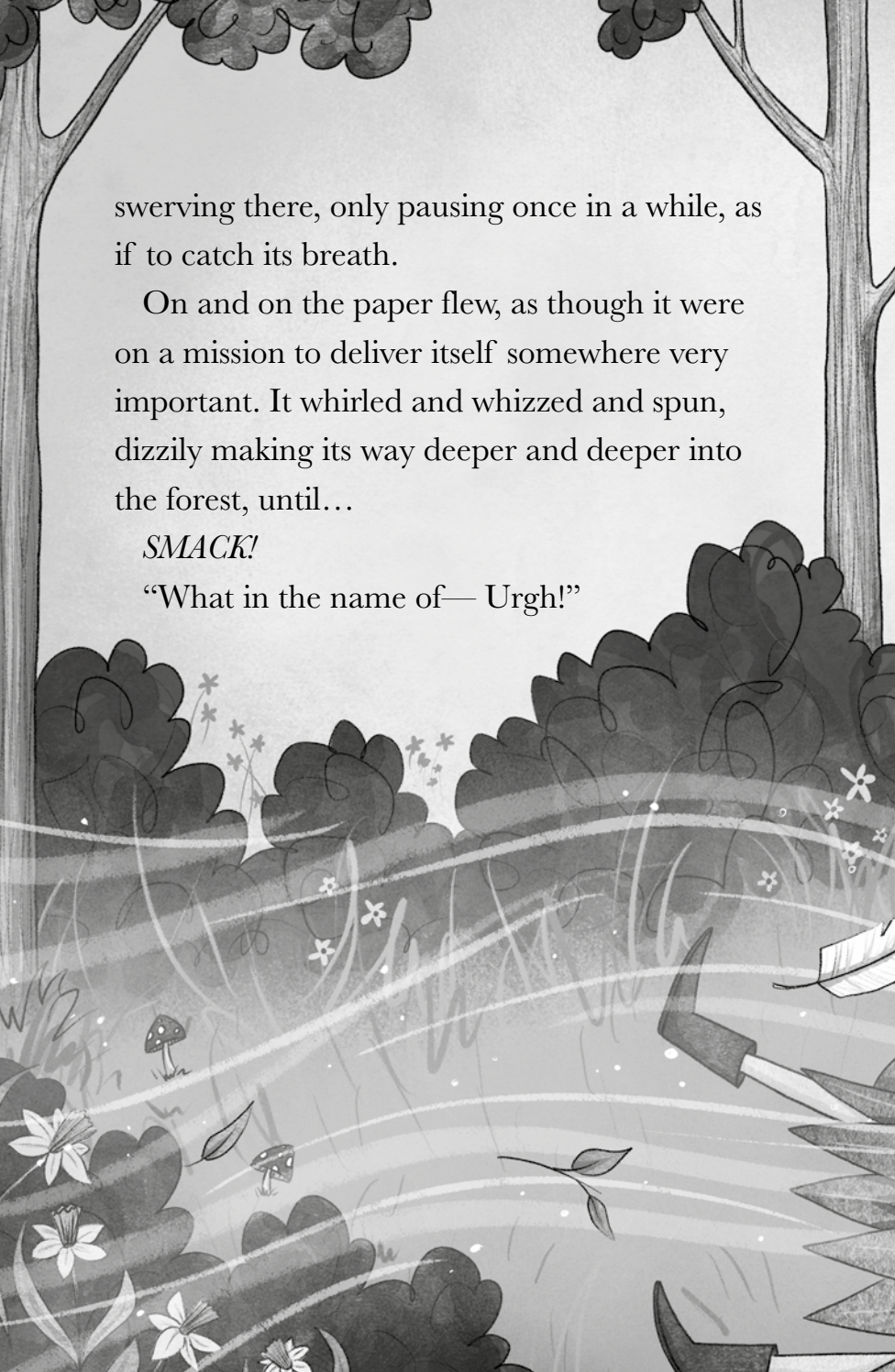


The wind sighed through the trees of a lush, mossy forest. It whistled between branches, swished along the ground, tossed the undergrowth this way and that, and made the leaves whisper and gossip as they danced.

Things were carried along with it – twigs, petals, spiders on their silks, seeds and spores, feathers, and more. On this particular day, the wind also carried a shred of newspaper. It fluttered through the forest, never quite managing to land anywhere, dodging here and



swerving there, only pausing once in a while, as if to catch its breath.

On and on the paper flew, as though it were on a mission to deliver itself somewhere very important. It whirled and whizzed and spun, dizzily making its way deeper and deeper into the forest, until...

*SMACK!*

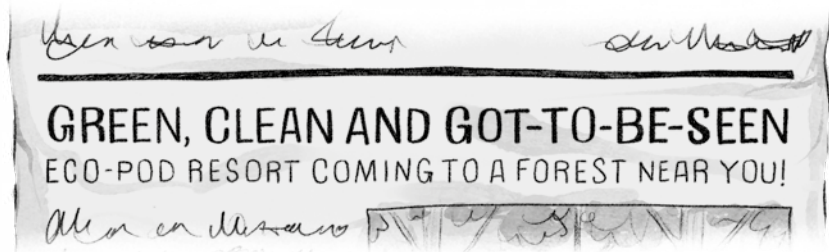
“What in the name of— Urgh!”



came a voice. The voice belonged to a fairy with large black-veined wings, who wore a long gown made from the leaves of her plant, the spurge. She was Euphorbia Spurge, the most wicked fairy of the woods – or at least she had been, before she'd lost her magic. The newspaper collided with her briefly, flapping at her face like a bird. She swatted it away and it sailed towards a nearby tree where at last it



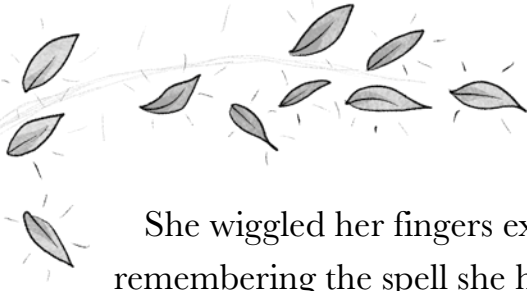
landed with a splat, flattening itself against the damp bark and displaying its headline in big, bold letters.



Beneath this was a drawing of the forest – or, Euphorbia saw, the place where the forest used to be. Except now, instead of trees, there were odd, egg-shaped human dwellings, with silly-looking humans walking about, doing whatever it was humans did. Some small clumps of trees had been left, but in the picture most of them, including the guardian trees of the fairy village, were nowhere to be seen. And as well as that, the stone circle – the place where her old enemies, the fairy clan, took all their magic from – was gone.

“Yes!” shrieked Euphorbia with delight, punching the air with her fists and disturbing a nearby family of woodlice, who were *not* happy at being woken during the day. She ignored them as she danced around shouting, “It worked! It worked! The spell worked!”





She wiggled her fingers excitedly, remembering the spell she had cast a long time ago, before her magic had been taken away by those mean fairies. A spell that had been designed to worm its way into human minds and do its work slowly and carefully, making them think that perhaps it was a good idea to allow a greedy company to come in and cut down all the trees in this ancient forest and build a resort here instead. *And to knock down that pesky stone circle while they're at it, Euphorbia thought. Just as I'd planned! And with the fairies' wild magic set free from the stones, I'll be in charge once again in no time!*

Euphorbia's wicked laughter rang through the forest, making earthworms dig deep and spiders scuttle away in fear, until the wind whisked the laugh away too, sending it high over the whishing trees and out towards the human world...