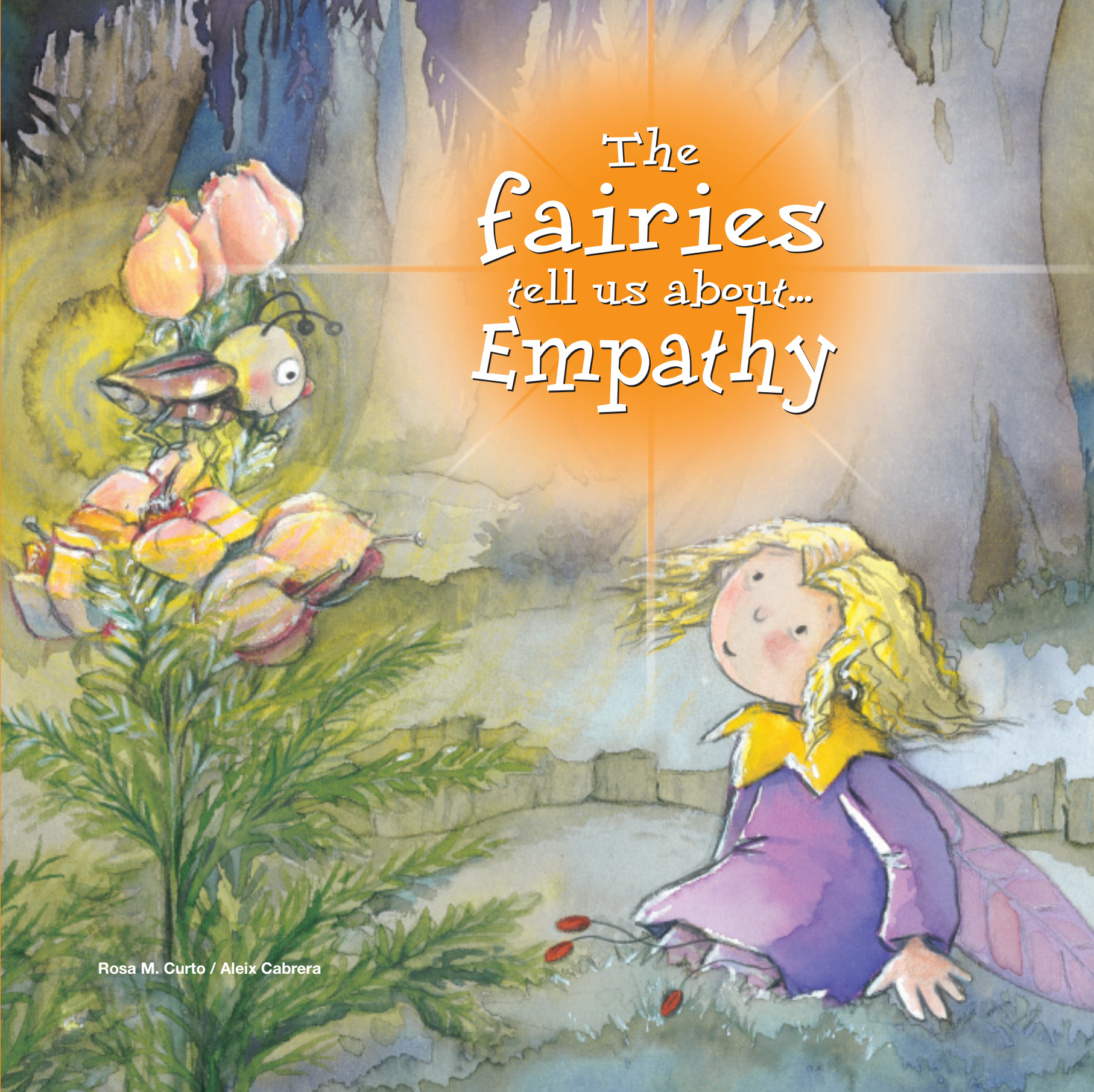

The fairies tell us about... Empathy

Rosa M. Curto / Aleix Cabrera

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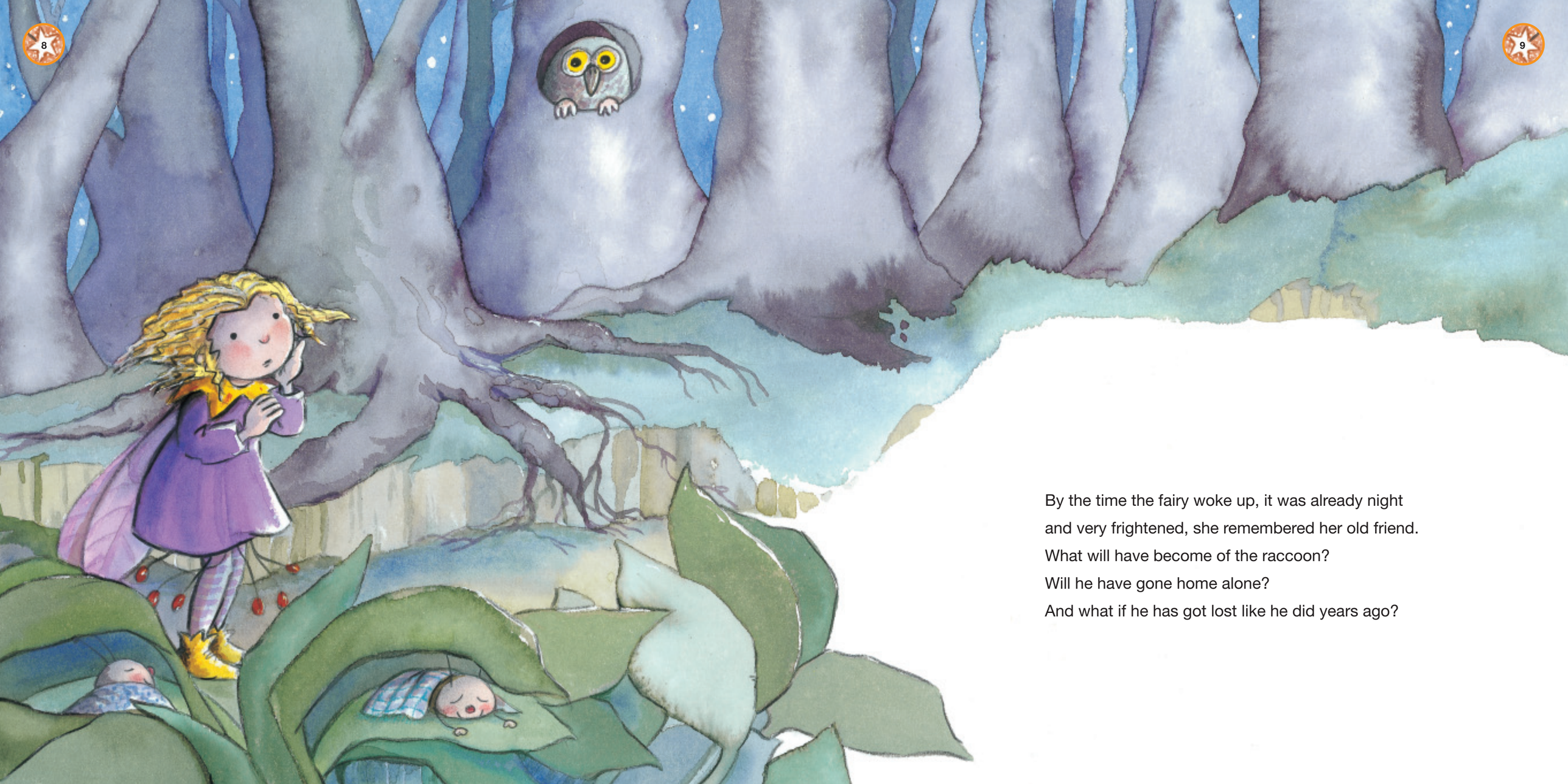
On the other side of the Enchanted Forest, there was a pond full of green and brown frogs that croaked and jumped endlessly. The spectacle delighted an old raccoon called Ursul. That's why he went there early in the morning and stayed until the sun set.

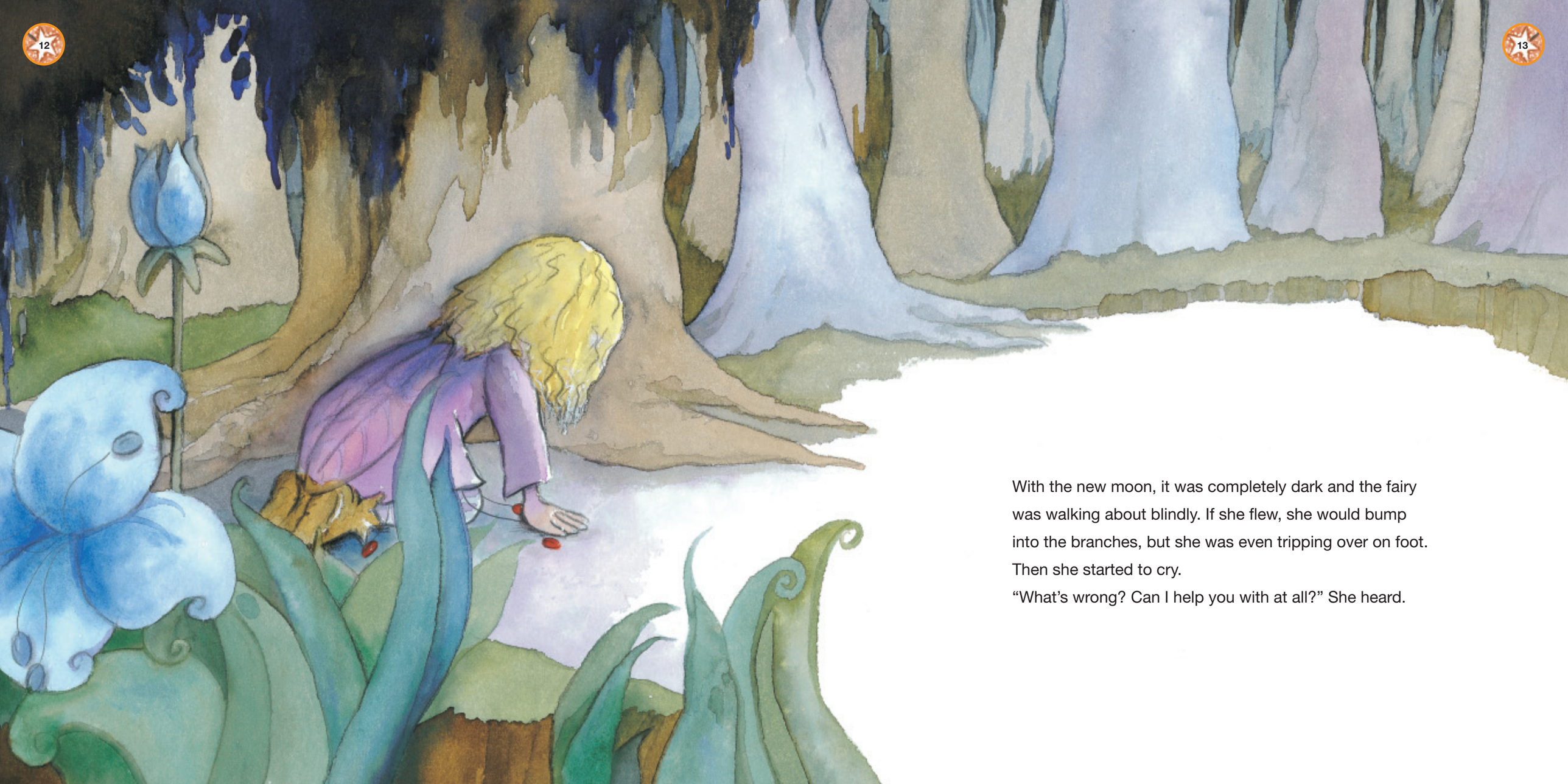
As the path was a bit difficult and Ursul no longer had neither the eyesight nor the sense of smell he had when he was young, he needed somebody to be his guide. Derna the fairy had always looked after him and had never let him down… except for that afternoon. Where was she?

At the apple tree festival, all the fairies had got indigestion from eating cakes, forest fruits and drinking a delicious apple juice with cinnamon. Derna, who wasn't used to eating so much, had got dizzy and fainted half way to the pond.



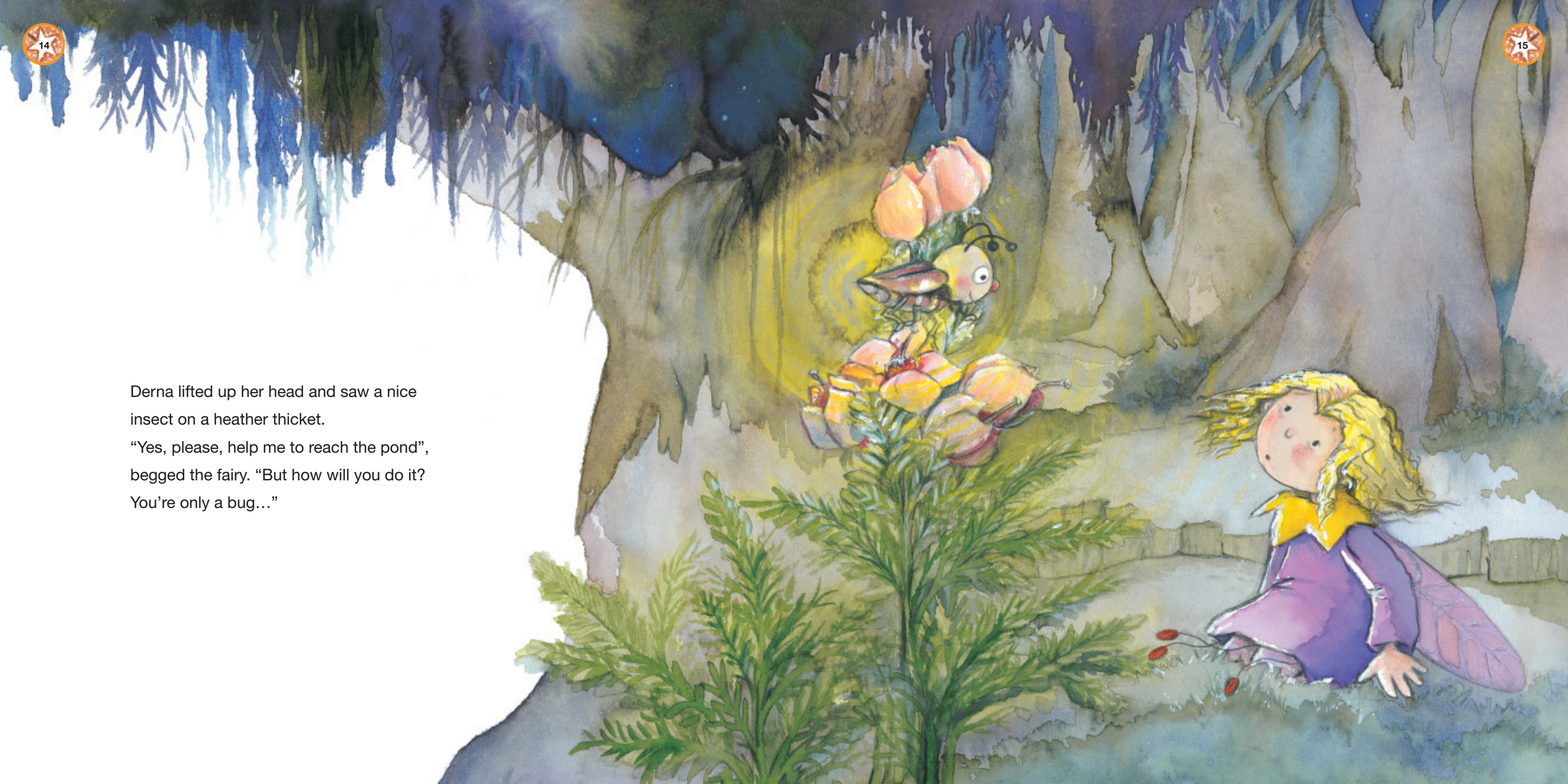
By the time the fairy woke up, it was already night
and very frightened, she remembered her old friend.
What will have become of the raccoon?
Will he have gone home alone?
And what if he has got lost like he did years ago?

Derna thought that she had let her friend down.
She was confused, but above all angry with herself.
And when a fairy is sad or angry, she can't illuminate
her body no matter how hard she tries.



With the new moon, it was completely dark and the fairy was walking about blindly. If she flew, she would bump into the branches, but she was even tripping over on foot. Then she started to cry.

“What’s wrong? Can I help you with at all?” She heard.



Derna lifted up her head and saw a nice insect on a heather thicket.
“Yes, please, help me to reach the pond”, begged the fairy. “But how will you do it? You’re only a bug…”

“Don’t let yourself be guided by what you see
at the first glance”, he replied without being offended.
“Your eyes and mind can deceive you. I’m Lom,
a special insect. Explain to me what the path is like
and I’ll try and help you.”

In the midst of sobs and cries, Derna remembered that to go to the pool, she always went through a field of poppies...,

... turned right at the loving fir trees...,

... caught her breath at the holey rock and splashed in the mimosa stream.

Then she followed the stream.

”I know insects in all of the places you have mentioned”, said Lom in a ceremonious tone. “Now, silence! I have to concentrate.” Lom closed his eyes and moved his antenna agilely from side to side.

Suddenly, the forest was illuminated by small incandescent yellow, green and red spheres. “You’re a glow worm!” exclaimed the fairy, surprised.

“Us glow worms are like your friends”, said Lom satisfied, “although, you can’t see us, we’re always there when you need us. Now Derna, you just have to follow the path of glowing dots.”

The fairy flew safer than ever to the pond, where the raccoon was waiting for her.

Derna explained to Ursul that like her, she needed to be guided. Now she understood how her friend felt and how much she meant to him. She had put herself in his place and it had brought them even closer.

Learning more

The fairy house

Fairies everywhere

There are as many houses in the world as there are fairies. Most of them prefer to live in high places, sheltered from the wind and rain, rather than living close to the ground and in cold, wet zones.

Some city fairies live in church towers, close to the storks, because they can see everything from up there. They also like mouse holes, the cracks in walls and lofts, where they often leave their mark.

In the forest and the jungle, many fairies long to sleep inside perfumed flowers. Others sleep on large leaves or hammocks built among the reeds. The water fairies prefer to hide behind waterfalls or inside empty snail and sea shells.

The forest animals...

Just like the fairies, the forest animals also choose different places to live, depending on their characteristics and needs.

Houses in the trees

Many birds build their nests in the treetops and some of them spend more time on it than others. Finches use different materials for each of the three layers: Moss and spiders' webs for the outside; more moss and mud for the middle layer; and hair, feathers and wool for the inside. On the other hand, the magpie uses small branches and builds more than one nest in the same tree, although she only lays eggs in one of them. The squirrel also lives in the trees. This rodent makes use of hollows in the trunk and gathers branches to make its home.

A hiding place underground

Some animals are natural burrowers and they actually make galleries underground to live. They range from invertebrates, like worms, ants and crickets that live in small holes to mammals, like mice, rabbits and moles. The marmot even covers the exit with hay before hibernating, when the cold weather arrives. You wouldn't dream of waking him up!

Hedgehogs also hibernate and they prefer to take shelter from the weather among firewood, in a nest of dry grass. Nearby, you might find a snake and some small arthropods like spiders and scorpions. A lot of insects hide underneath rocks and tree trunks and they don't all die in winter. Some enter into a state of hibernation called diapause, like butterflies, for example.

... and their places to live

Mountains and water

The rocky outcrops in the mountains are the favorite place of some mammals, like mountain goats and birds of prey, such as eagles and vultures. In the depths of the rocks, in natural caves, bears and bats seek shelter, as they love darkness and humidity.

Aquatic birds such as coots sometimes build floating nests anchored to the shore reeds. And beneath them, a large variety of aquatic insects, fish and amphibians also live.

But not all animals built their own houses. There is one that always carries it with him. Do you know which one it is?
Can you find it in this picture?

Empathy

Empathy is the act of putting yourself in somebody else's place, or as it is often called, to put on somebody else's shoes, to experience and share their feelings and understand their behavior when faced with certain problems or worries.

You are empathic when you...

Try to understand another person's posture, though you may not agree.

Are invaded with the sadness of somebody who is sad.

Feel like laughing when a friend is happy.

Emphatic people are able to listen to the truth, conscientiously and they can even anticipate the needs of others. They have what is called emotional intelligence, because they can imagine somebody else's experience as if it were their own and reply to their emotional reactions.

In the story, Lom shows empathy with Derna the fairy, when he listens to her problem and tries to resolve it. But when the adventure is over, Derna is also able to put herself in the raccoons place, because she has experienced a similar situation: She needed to be guided by somebody.

You're not empathic if you...

Think about your own worries while somebody is talking to you.

Only think about your needs.

Don't put yourself in the other person's shoes to understand their problems.

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