

Author's note to parents

Summerland's story is a gentle introduction to learning about death, grief, and the fact that life carries on after the passing of a loved one.

My aim with this book is to open up the conversation about these difficult topics to help break taboo around death and to help young people work through their grief.

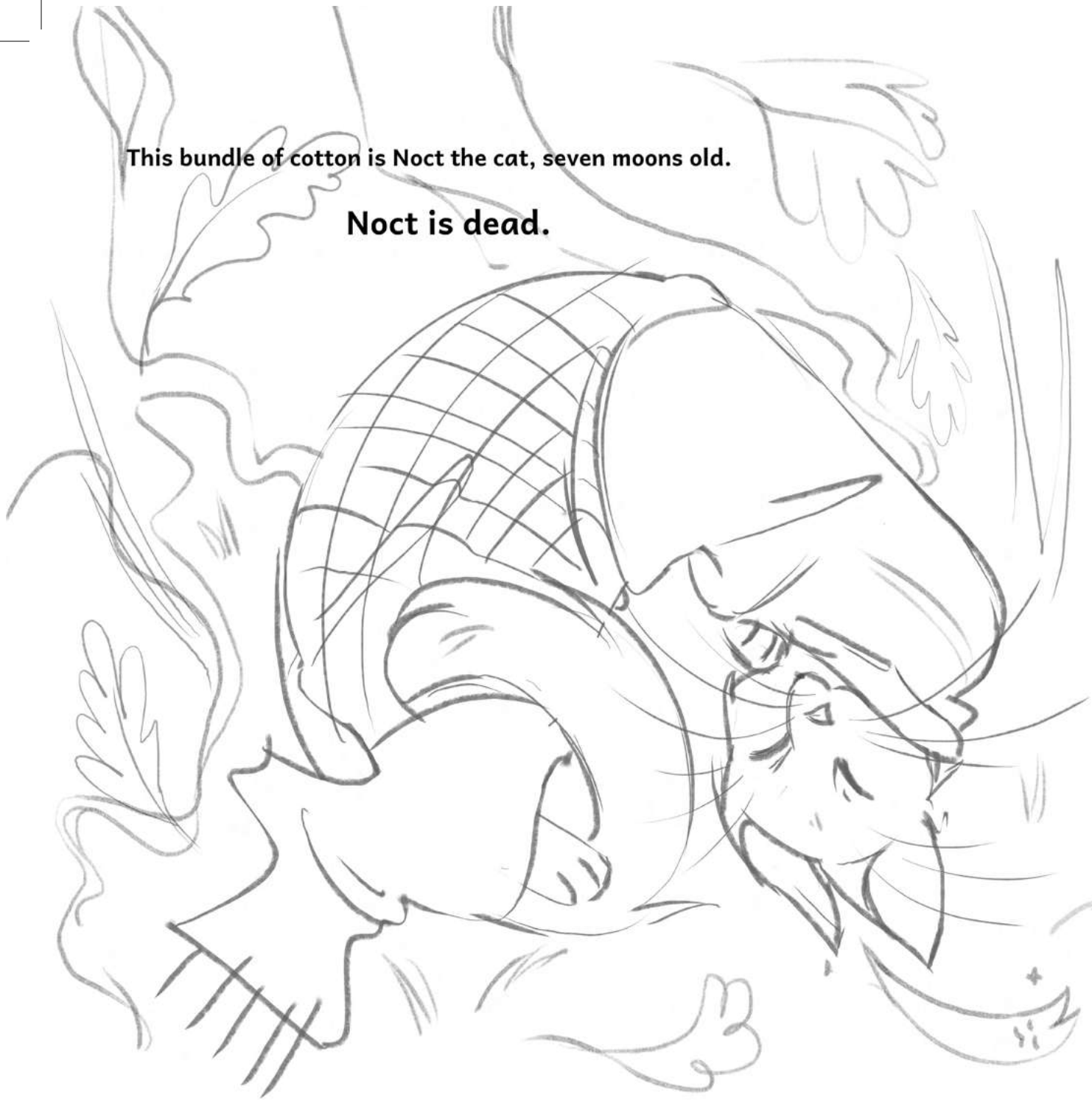
'We are not here to fix the pain, but to tend to it.' - Billy the Skelekitty.

Summerland

Robin Cavender

This bundle of cotton is Noct the cat, seven moons old.

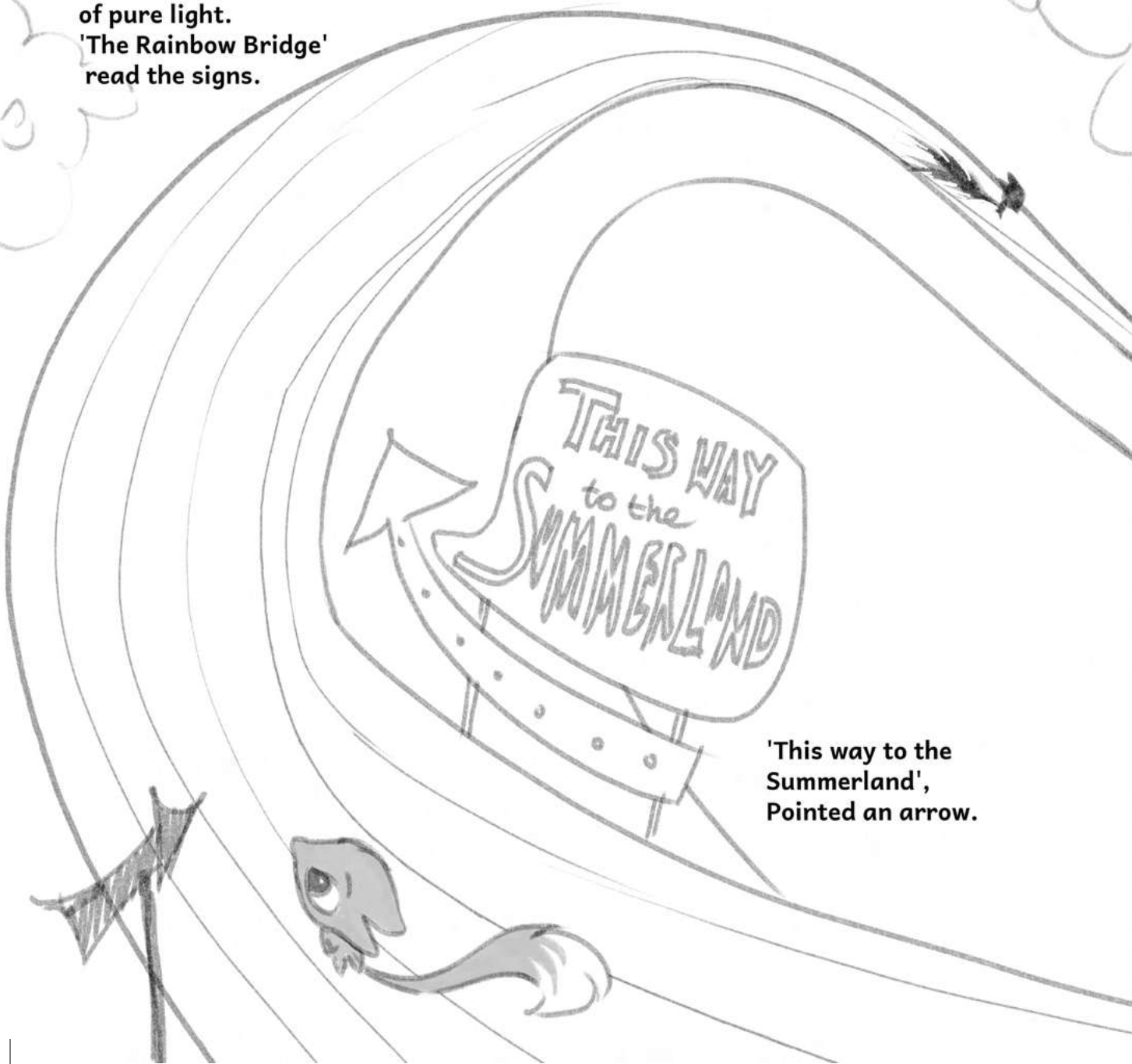
Noct is dead.



Noct's soul glimmered and sparkled as it was swept away by the late autumn breeze.



He found himself on a bridge
of pure light.
'The Rainbow Bridge'
read the signs.

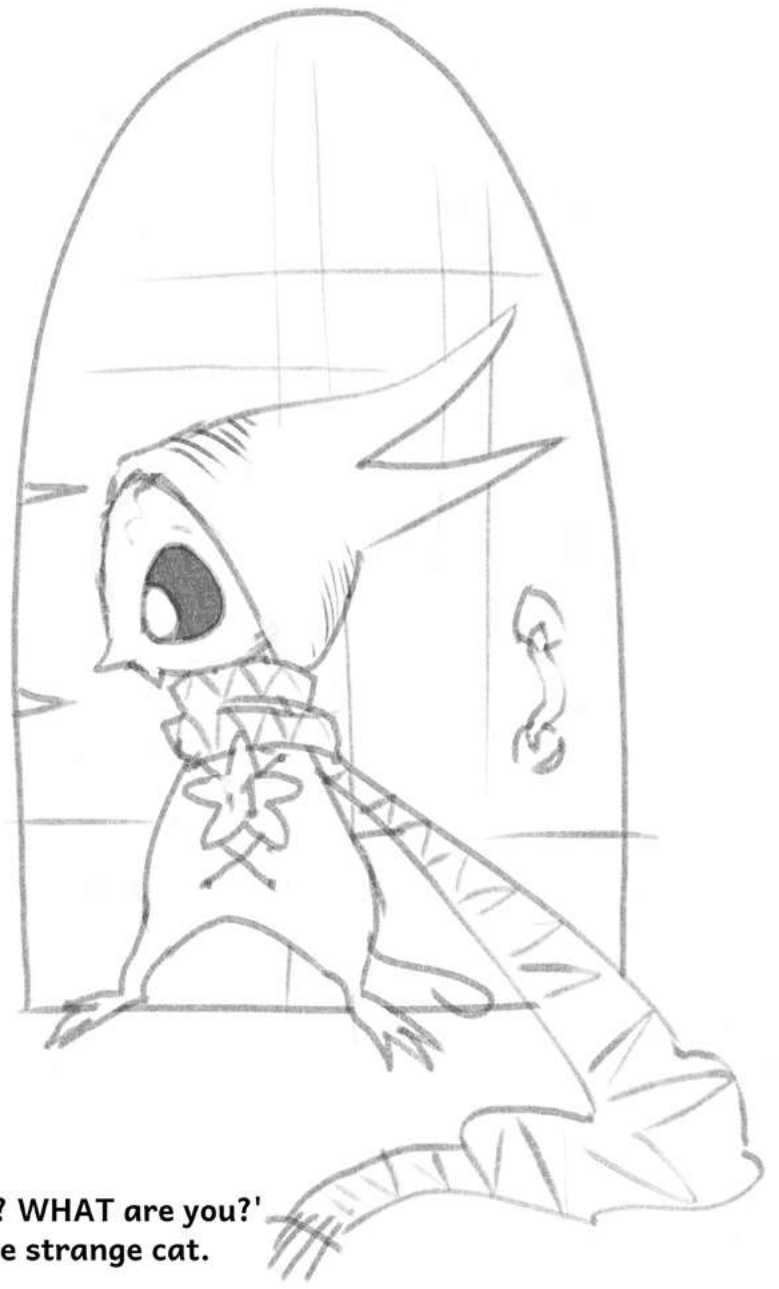


'This way to the
Summerland',
Pointed an arrow.


Noct was scared, but his
feet carried him along
the glittery path until
he reached a large door.
To his surprise, somebody
was waiting for him.



'How do you do Noct?'



'Who are you? WHAT are you?'
Noct asked the strange cat.



**'Billy the Skelekitty,
that's my name!
Number one guide
of The Summerland!'**


'The Summerland?'
asked Noct, with a
confused tilt of
the head.

**'Why, yes! The land
of eternal summer
where your soul can rest
and play before being
born once again.
'Come on, let's go!'**



**'Wait!
I'm scared.'**

**'Death is not to be feared, little one,
but to be seen as one's next big adventure.'**



The Summerland was nothing like London.
Flowers bloomed by the thousands,
trees touched clouds in dense forests,
and the air smelled like honey so
sweet he could taste it.

'My home!'

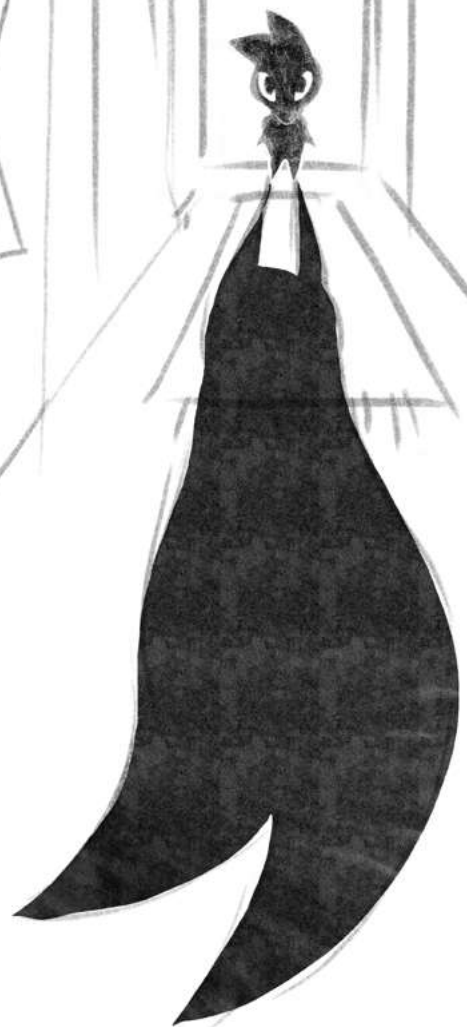
Noct exclaimed happily.
'I must show Mama this
place, she'll love it!'

He ran towards
the house without
another word...

...Billy frowned.

The door opened
with a sly creak.

DARK



NESS

'Creepy...

...This doesn't
feel like home.'

'Mrrp!' he chirped as
he looked under the old
familiar couch.



No reply.



'Mew!'

he called as he
searched the
silent kitchen...

...No reply.

A blue cat with a white collar and a gold bell is sitting on a large, ornate bed in a dark room. The cat has its eyes closed and is crying, with several large, glowing blue tears falling around it. The room is dimly lit, with a small lamp on a bedside table to the left and a window with a crescent moon visible in the background. The overall mood is sad and melancholic.

'Meowww!'


He cried as he sat on
Mama's big empty bed.
Mama isn't there...

...Mama has gone.

Noct cried and cried,
wept and sniffled until
he could cry no more.


Freezing cold air
crept in from the
window, making
his fur stand on end.

How can life be
so cruel to take
his Mama away?



Noct left the house to discover that the warm sun is covered by thick storm clouds and raindrops filled the sky. He closed the door behind him with a sob. He tried to open his mouth to speak but nothing came out.

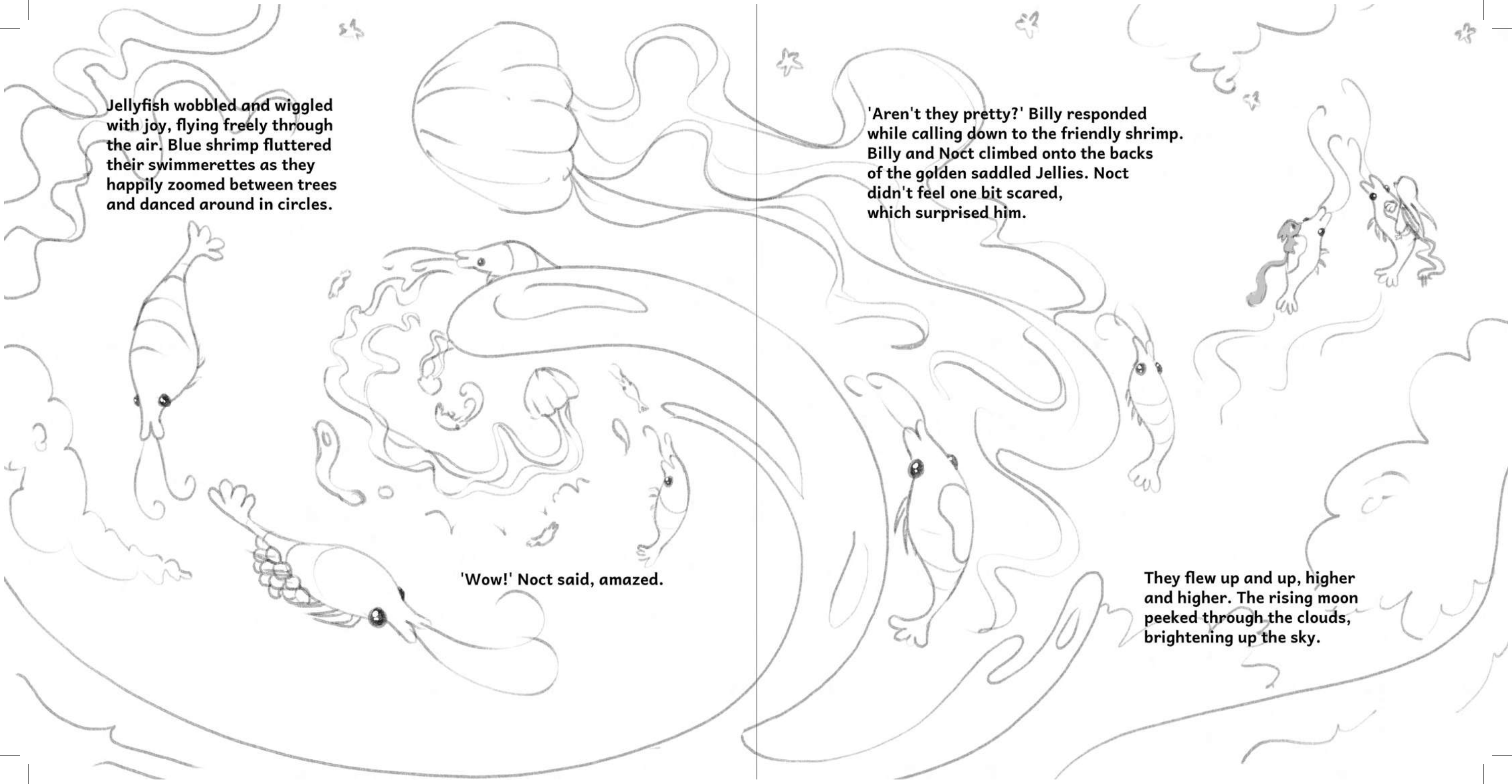
'I understand.'
Billy smiled kindly, glancing up at the sky. 'We are not here to fix the pain, but to tend to it.'



'The rain isn't all bad.'
Billy explained. 'During summer showers is when the Jellies come out to play.'

'Jellies?'

Suddenly, the lakes and streams began to glow! Purples, blues, and golden yellow lit up the dreary sky.

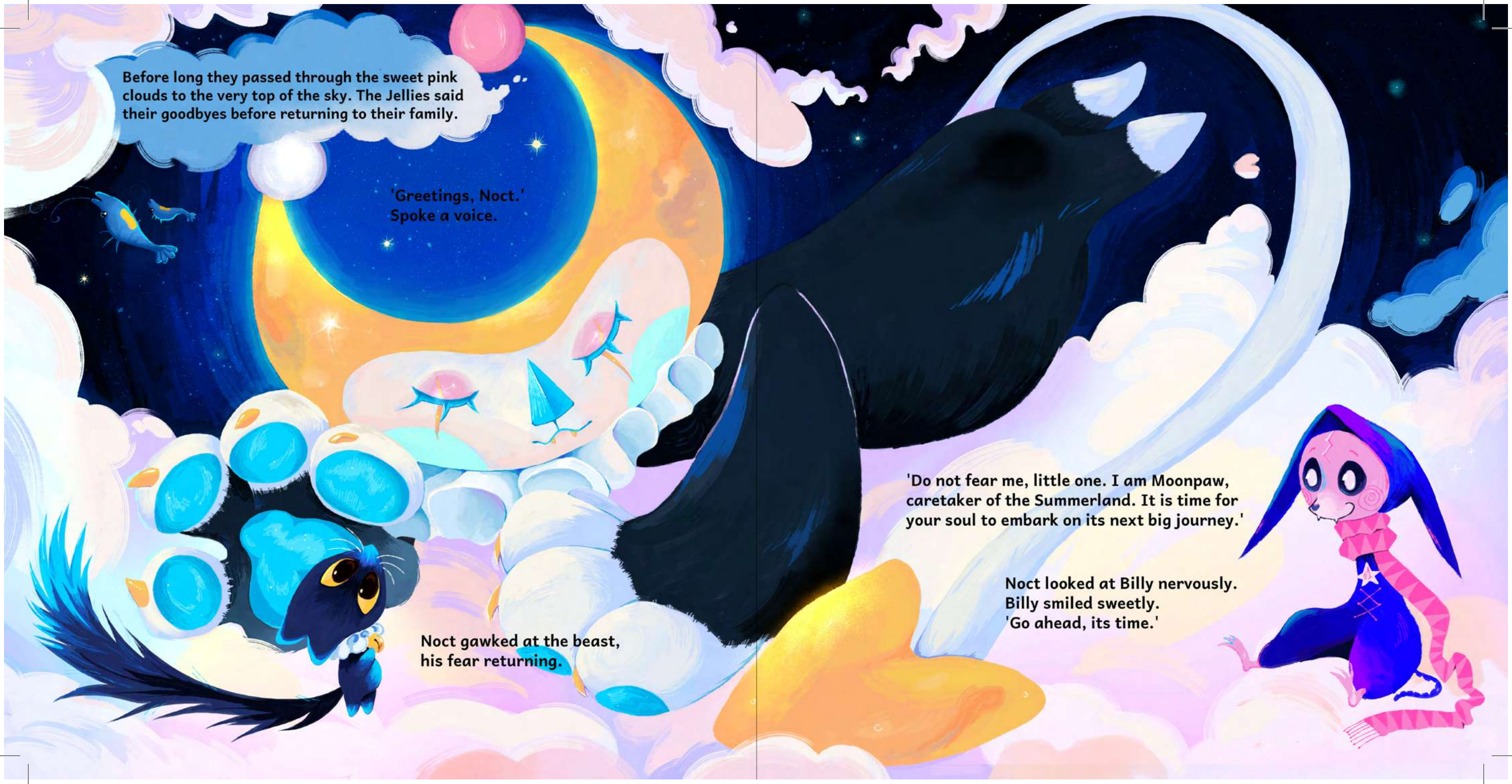


Jellyfish wobbled and wiggled with joy, flying freely through the air. Blue shrimp fluttered their swimmerettes as they happily zoomed between trees and danced around in circles.

'Wow!' Noct said, amazed.

'Aren't they pretty?' Billy responded while calling down to the friendly shrimp. Billy and Noct climbed onto the backs of the golden saddled Jellies. Noct didn't feel one bit scared, which surprised him.

They flew up and up, higher and higher. The rising moon peeked through the clouds, brightening up the sky.



Before long they passed through the sweet pink clouds to the very top of the sky. The Jellies said their goodbyes before returning to their family.

'Greetings, Noct.'
Spoke a voice.

Noct gawked at the beast,
his fear returning.

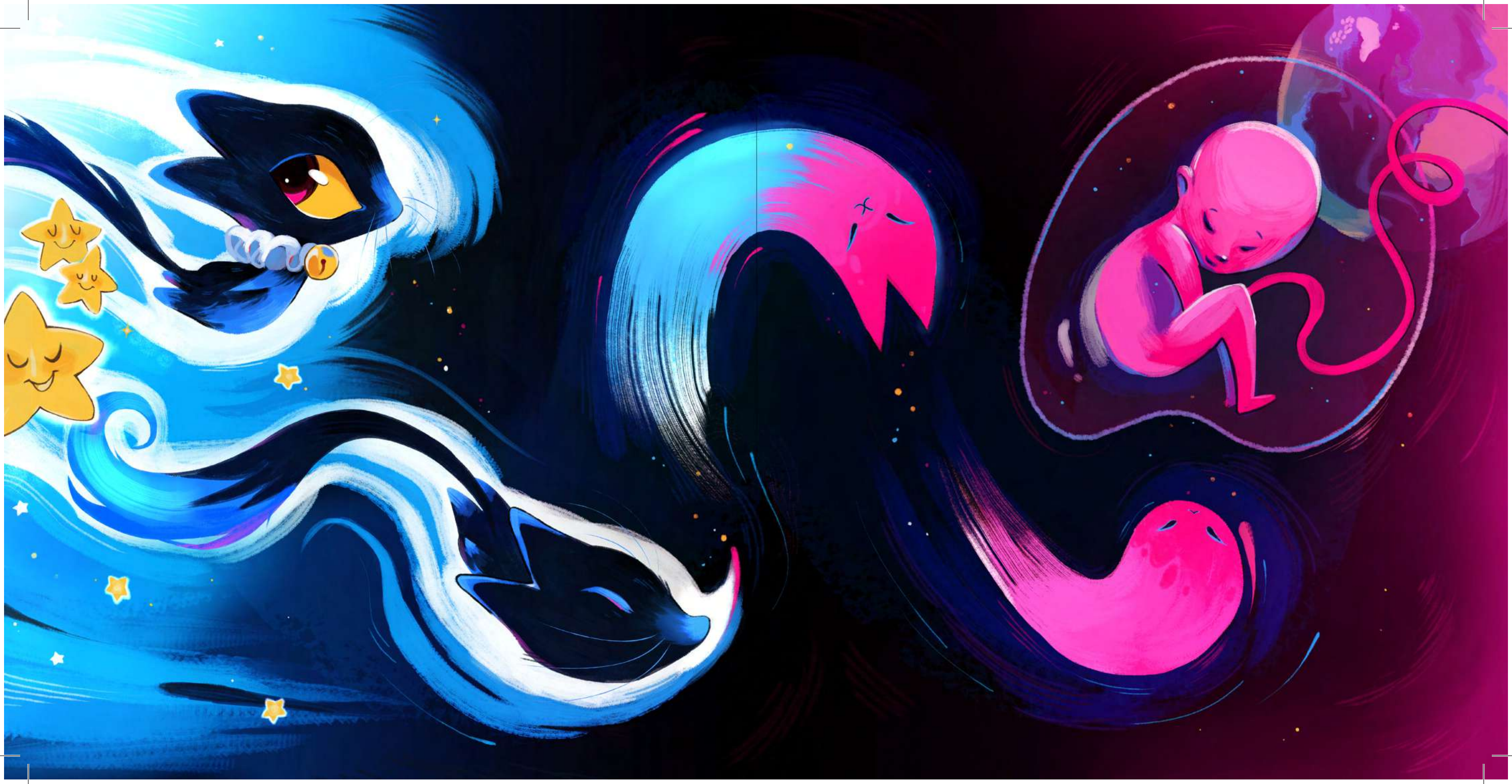
'Do not fear me, little one. I am Moonpaw,
caretaker of the Summerland. It is time for
your soul to embark on its next big journey.'

Noct looked at Billy nervously.
Billy smiled sweetly.
'Go ahead, its time.'

'Goodbye Billy, I'll miss you!' Noct cried, burying his face into Billy's scarf.

'We'll meet again, little one.' Billy winked.

Noct rested upon the bed of clouds. a mixtue of sorrow, joy, and hope filling his mind as he drifted of to sleep...



**This bundle of cotton is
Noah, seven hours old.**



**Noah is snuggled in
Mama's arms at last.**

**Happy, safe,
and alive.**

