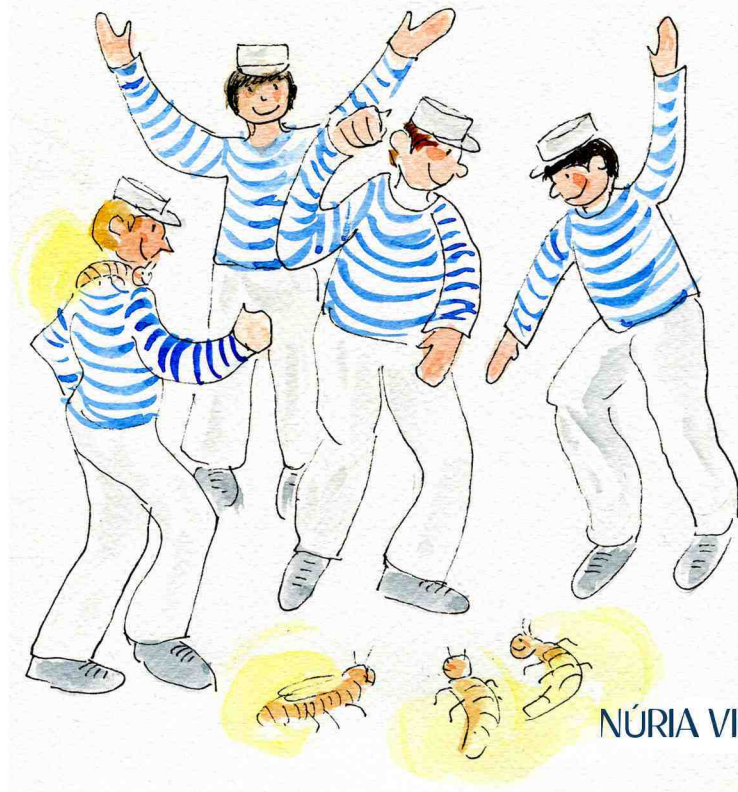


THE ISLAND OF THE FIREFLIES



NÚRIA VIVES

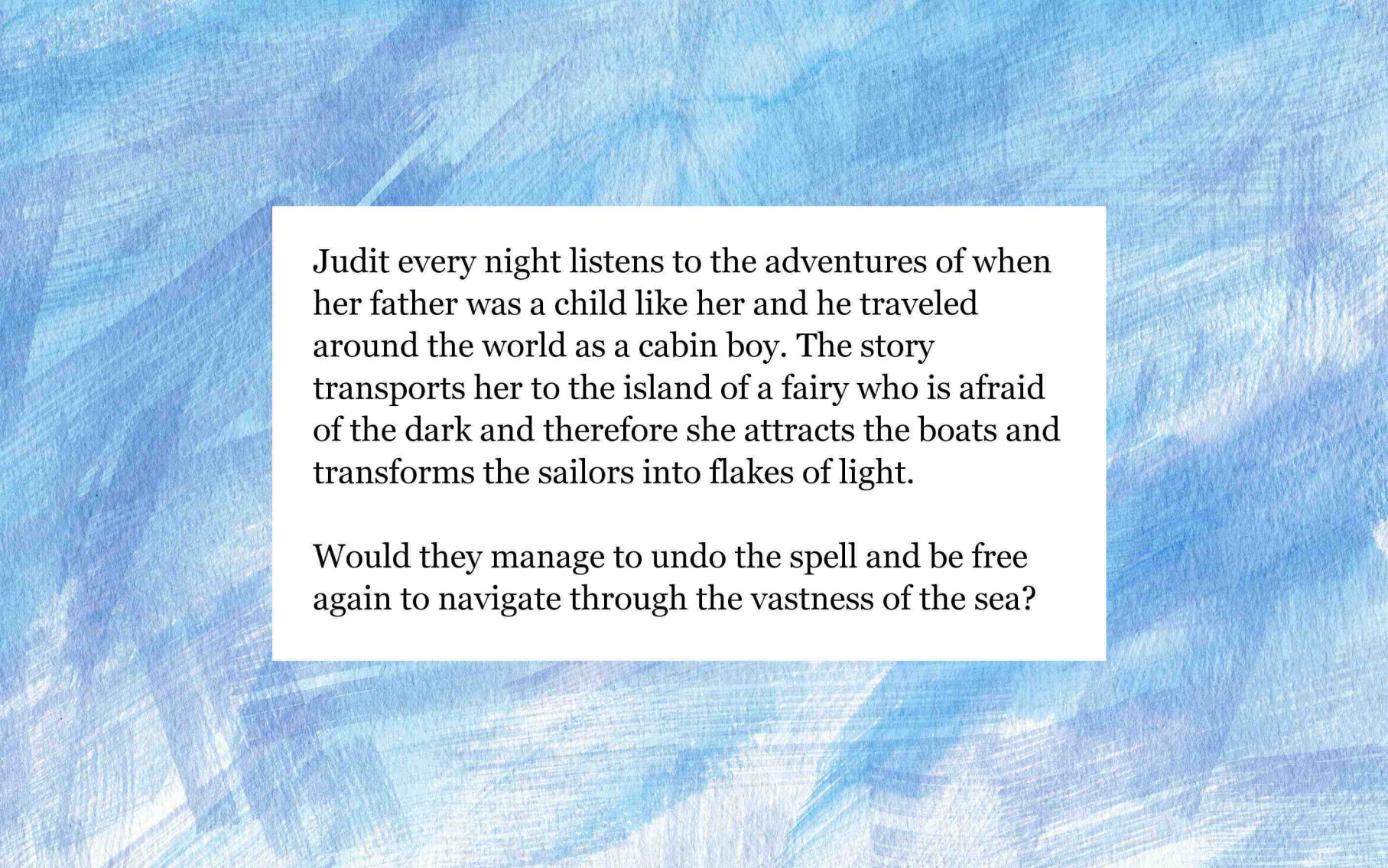
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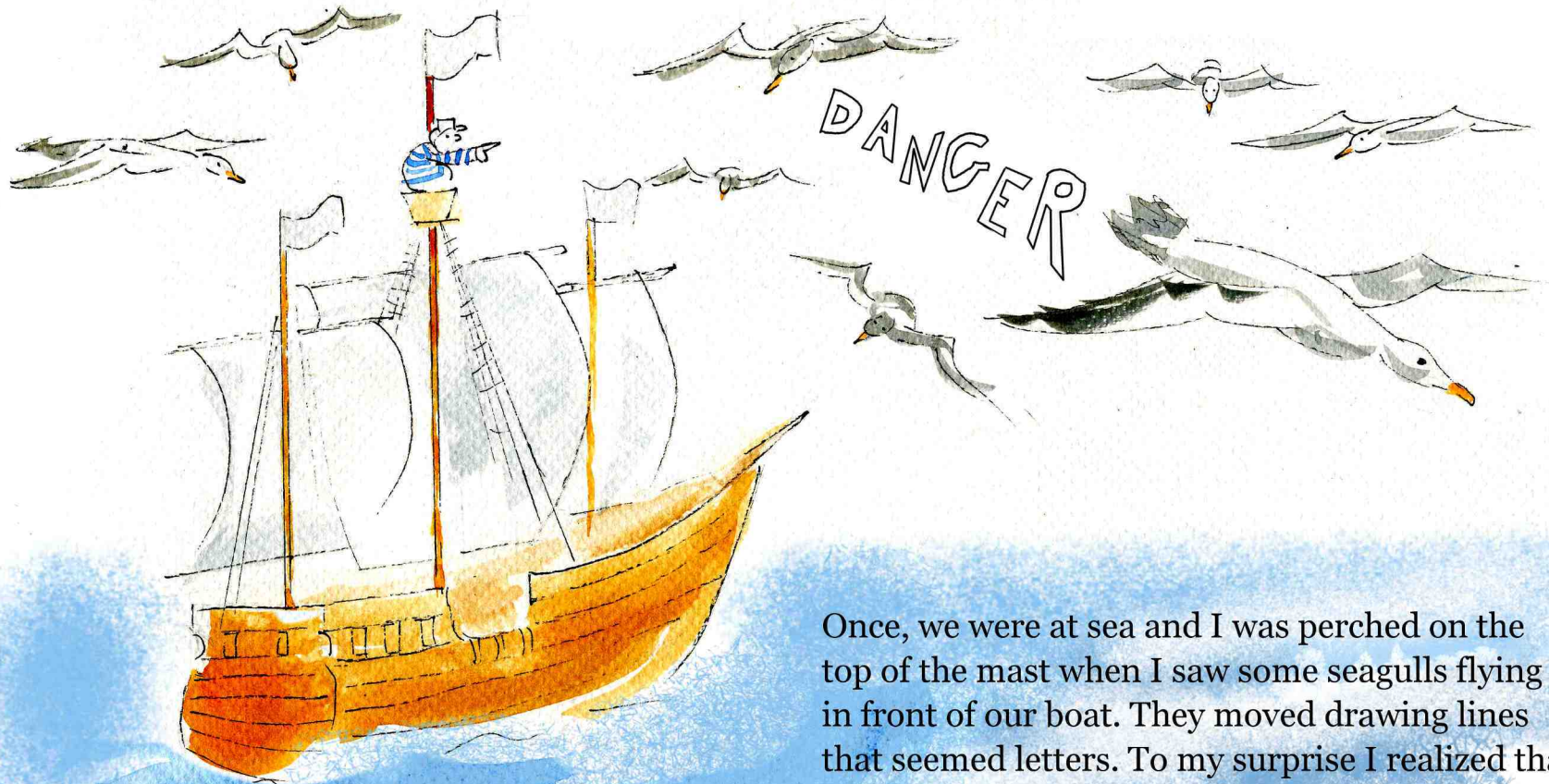
Judit every night listens to the adventures of when her father was a child like her and he traveled around the world as a cabin boy. The story transports her to the island of a fairy who is afraid of the dark and therefore she attracts the boats and transforms the sailors into flakes of light.

Would they manage to undo the spell and be free again to navigate through the vastness of the sea?



Judith waited impatiently in bed until her father returned from work. She did not want to fall asleep without hearing one of his exciting adventures of when he was a child like her. When he arrived, he gave her a kiss, sat on the edge of the bed and quietly, as if sharing a secret, began to explain...

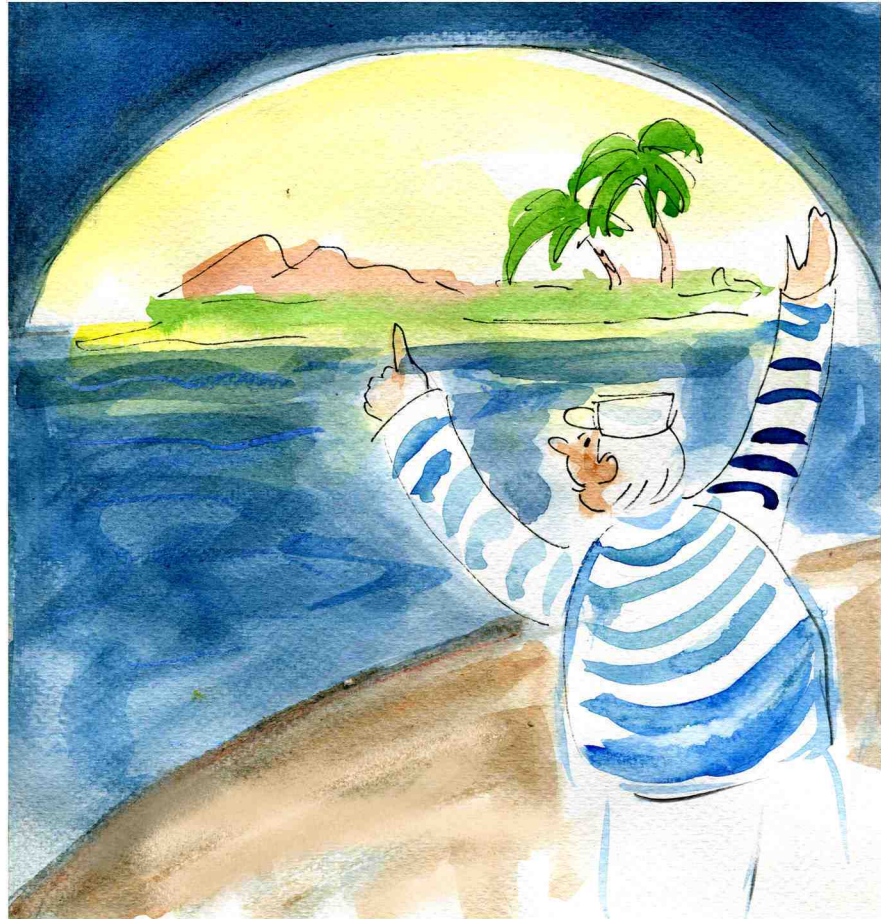




Once, we were at sea and I was perched on the top of the mast when I saw some seagulls flying in front of our boat. They moved drawing lines that seemed letters. To my surprise I realized that they were writing a message, I slowly began to decipher it: “Danger!” the seagulls warned us. “Beware of the fairy!”



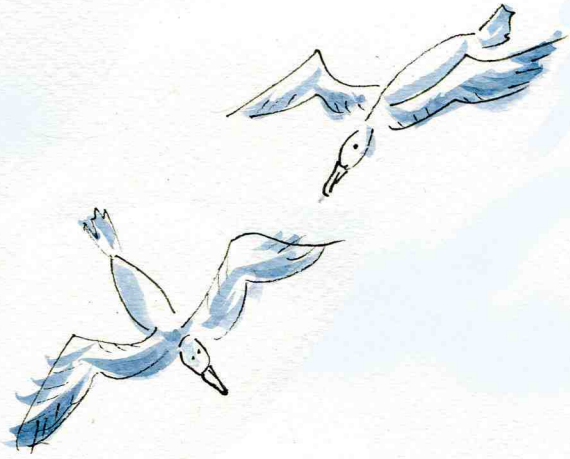
I immediately alerted the captain. The entire crew stood on guard. From bow to stern the sailors were watching carefully. “To which fairy did the seagulls refer?” we wondered. “Does anyone know anything about this fairy?”



As the sun set, suddenly one of the sailors shouted: “Land in sight! Look! It seems like a star floating in the middle of the sea. It is an island! See how it shines!”



That magical glow attracted us. Slowly we moved closer to the island. As the wind died down the boat stopped. A mysterious calm settled upon us broken only by the murmur of our voices. “Where are we?” we asked ourselves. “This island does not appear on the maps!”



“You are at the Island of Light” the seagulls told us. “Here lives a fairy who is afraid of the dark. The days that the clouds cover the stars, she can not sleep and, therefore, she fills the island with flakes of light.”



“And where do the flakes of light come from?” asked the captain, who had not seen it anywhere else. We learned that the fairy, with her magical powers, attracted the ships and she transformed the sailors into flakes of light. That way, she illuminated the island and could sleep quietly.





The seagulls liked to follow the fishing boats taking advantage of the fish that were thrown overboard. The seagulls were afraid that the fairy would capture all sailors. They held a meeting and decided to give us advice about how to recover the freedom for the captive sailors.

“When the fairy invites you to her banquet, don't drink a drop from the golden bottle” the seagulls told us. “This is the magic potion that can transform you into flakes of light.”



The island looked like a paradise. But the poor sailors who had been converted into flakes of light wanted to regain their freedom and sail back to their homes.



Soon the fairy came to the ship. With a charming smile, she invited us to her palace to receive the honors she gave to her visitors.

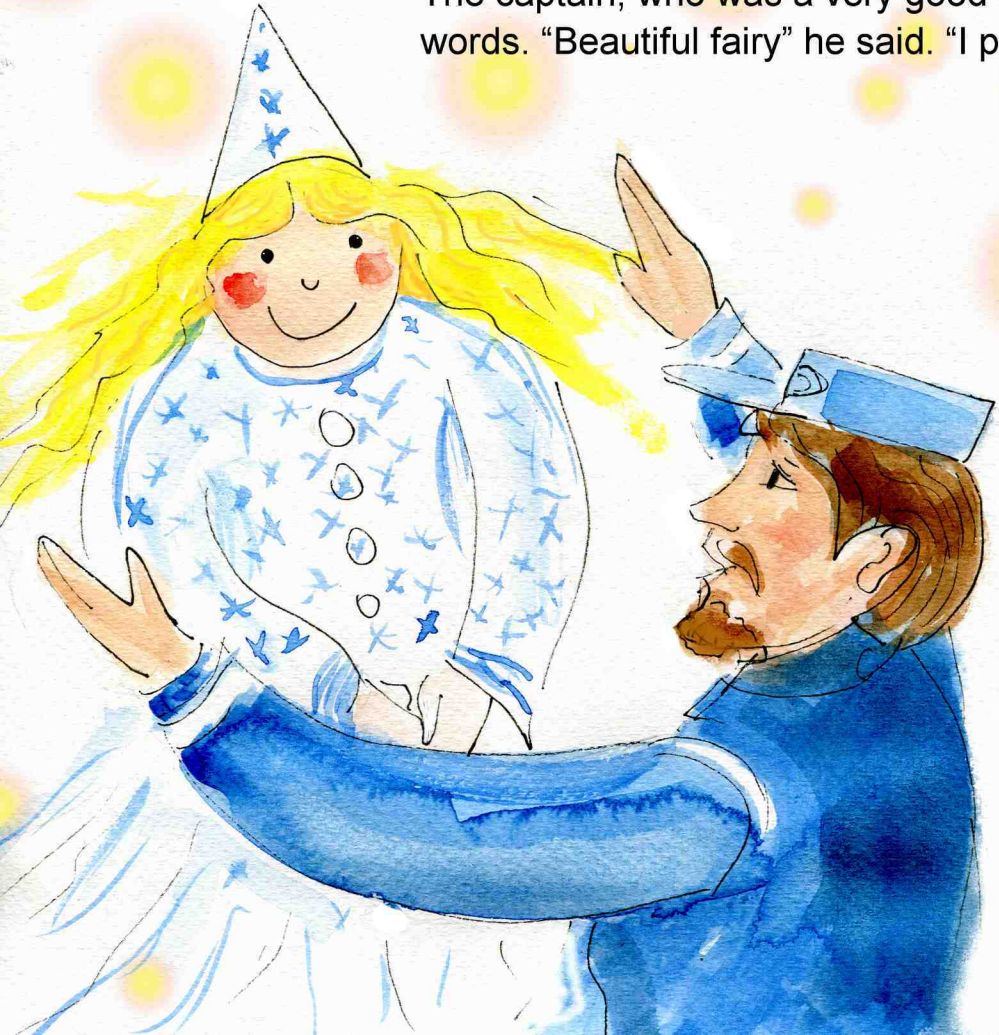


She invited us to sit at tables which were full of delicious plates and then she offered us the golden drink.

But we were cautious and were not fooled by her charming words. "Thank you, I'm not thirsty!" we said one after another.

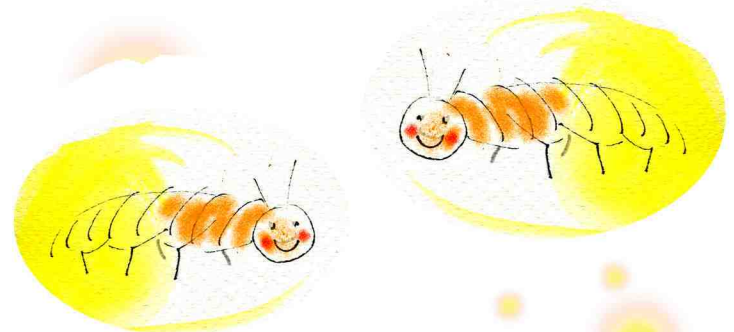


The captain, who was a very good diplomat, also soothed the fairy with his nice words. "Beautiful fairy" he said. "I propose to you an agreement!"

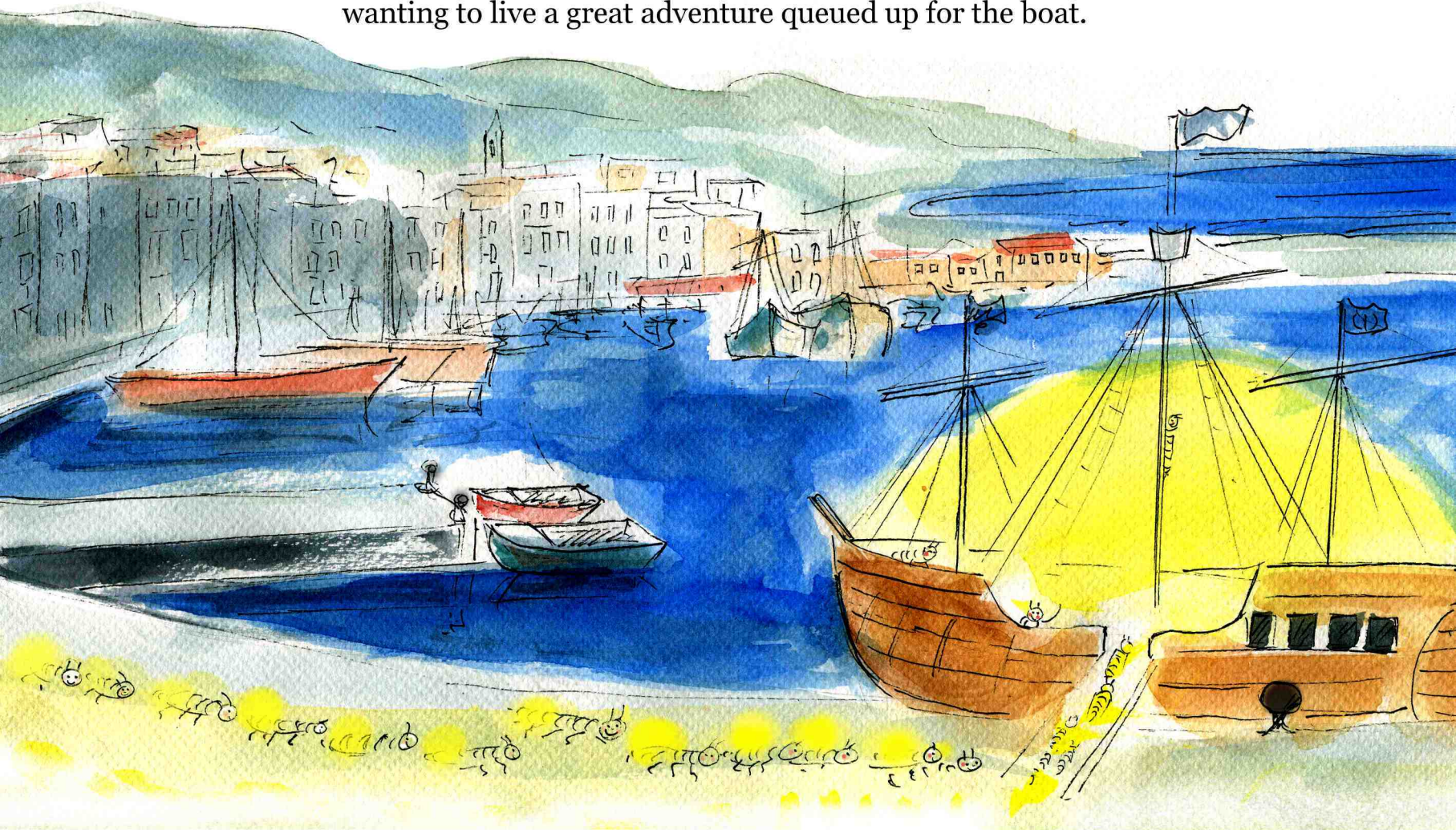


He kindly negotiated with the fairy the release of all sailors. In exchange, we would bring her some fireflies who would be very happy to live in such a wonderful place. And the fairy, who was really kind-hearted, accepted.

We went quickly in the search of the fireflies.



The news of our mission traveled mouth to mouth. All the fireflies wanting to live a great adventure queued up for the boat.





Back on the island, as soon as they disembarked, the fireflies flew to every corner of the island and in the evening their light could be seen from far away. The fairy, fulfilling her part of the agreement, broke the spell. “Xin Xin Shan!” she said playing with her magic wand over all flakes of light. And the sailors were sailors again.

Signs of joy could be seen everywhere and the island seemed even more beautiful because now everyone was happy.





Listening to sound of her father's voice, Judith fell asleep. She was happy to know that the fairy and all who were afraid of the dark could sleep peacefully, because, even if they could not see the stars, the fireflies were very close to break the blackness of the night.



**"And they lived happily
ever after."**

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