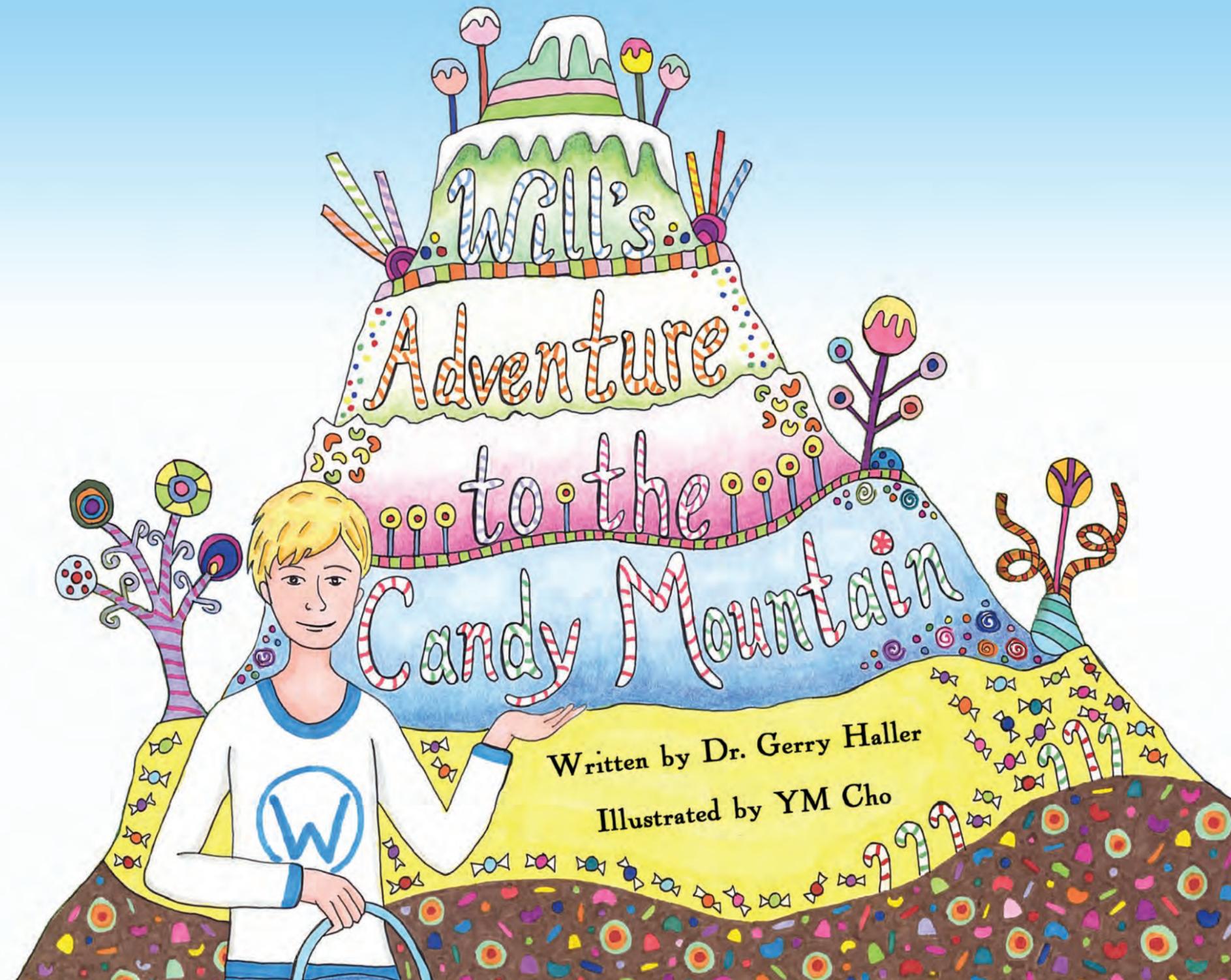


Will's  
Adventure  
to the  
Candy Mountain

Written by Dr. Gerry Haller

Illustrated by YM Cho



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## DEDICATION:

To my grandson Will who felt everyone should hear this story.

- Grandma

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

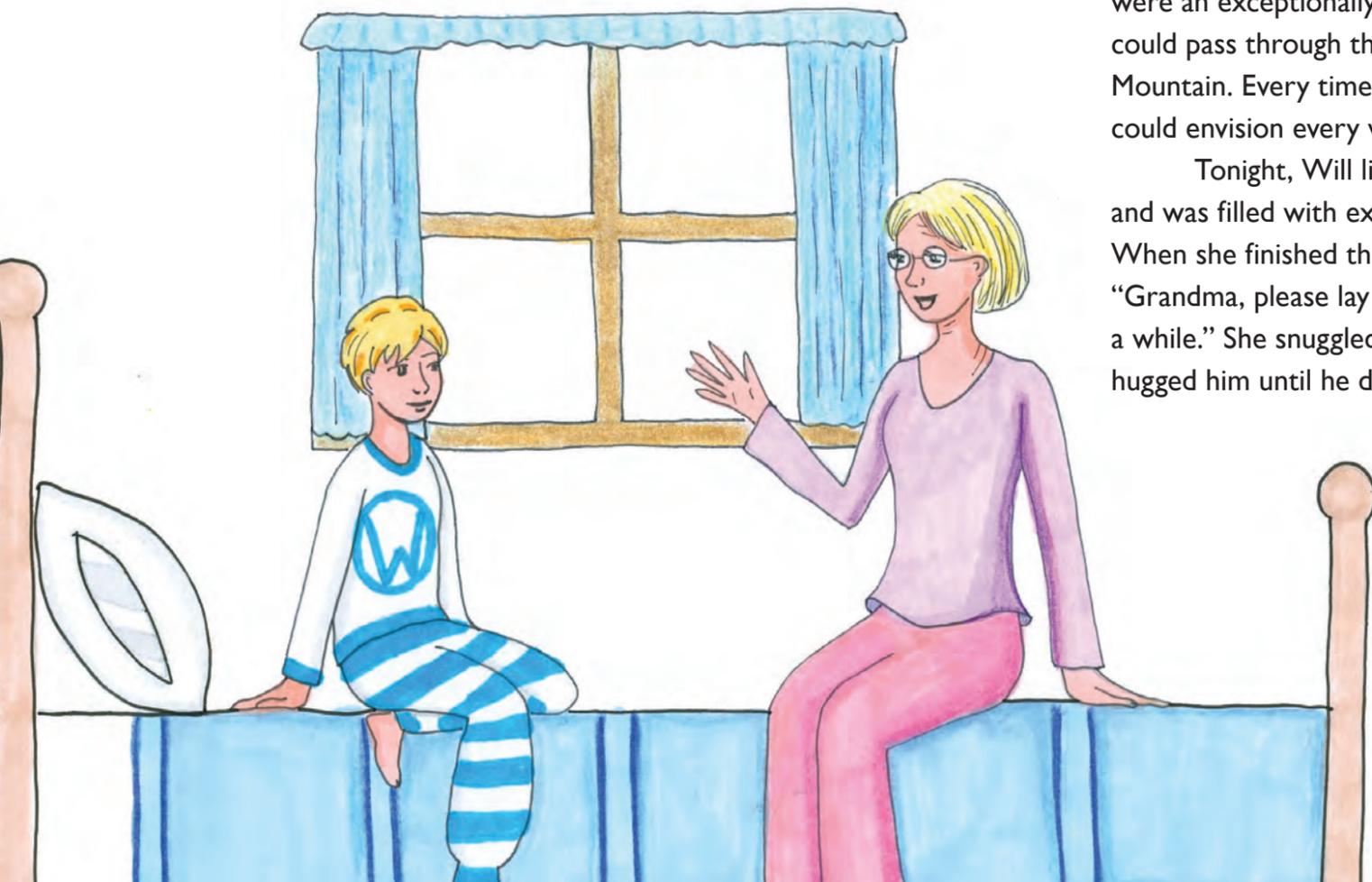
To my husband Walter who cheered me on and helped with revisions.

Thank you, Ethan and Caleb, for your interest in this book and your editing help.

- Gerry

Many thanks to my parents, and sister and friends for all their love and support; especially Laurel Manning, Caroline Dabrowski, Patricia McFadden, Renita Ho, Courtney & Nick Knapp, Blaire & Charlie Klehm, Gary & Sara Brock, Stephen Hall, Anne Kim, and Gloria Roka, who believed in me and encouraged me to go after my artistic dreams.

-YM Cho



Will's Grandmother would put Will and his brothers to bed every Saturday night. Grandmother loved to tell the story about The Candy Mountain because she had been there when she was a young child. If you were an exceptionally good boy or girl, you could pass through the gate to The Candy Mountain. Every time she told the story, Will could envision every word she said.

Tonight, Will listened to the story and was filled with excitement as she spoke. When she finished the story, Will said, "Grandma, please lay down with me for a while." She snuggled closely to him and hugged him until he drifted off to sleep.



Suddenly, he felt a hand shake his shoulder and a voice say, "Wake up Will. It's time to go." Will opened his eyes and sat up on his bed. In front of him stood a lady conductor of a train. She was a thin woman with black curly hair. She wore a conductor's hat on top of all those curls.

"Go where?" asked Will.

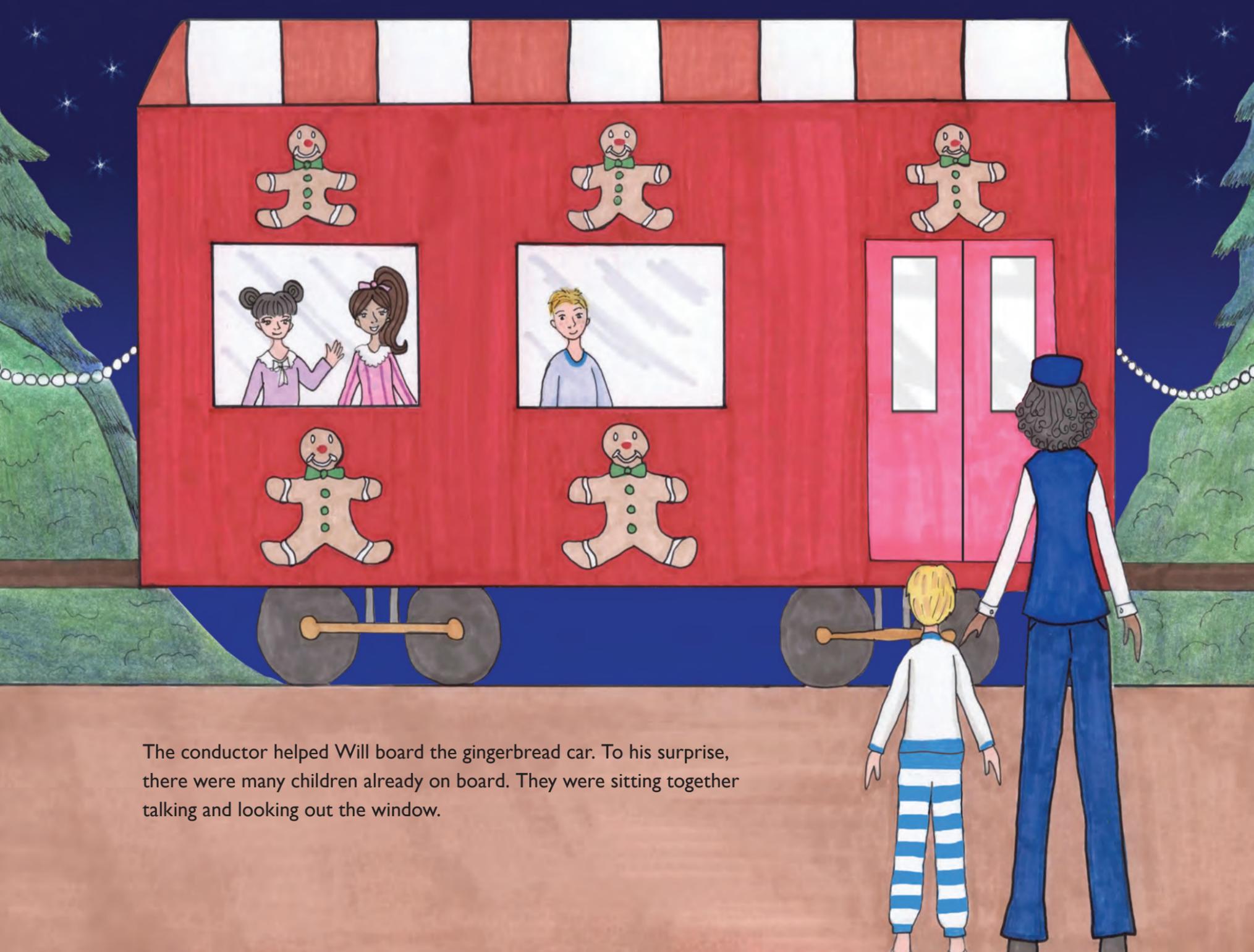
"Why, off to The Candy Mountain!" replied the conductor. Will jumped out of bed, put on his slippers and walked to the train with the conductor. He could hardly believe it.



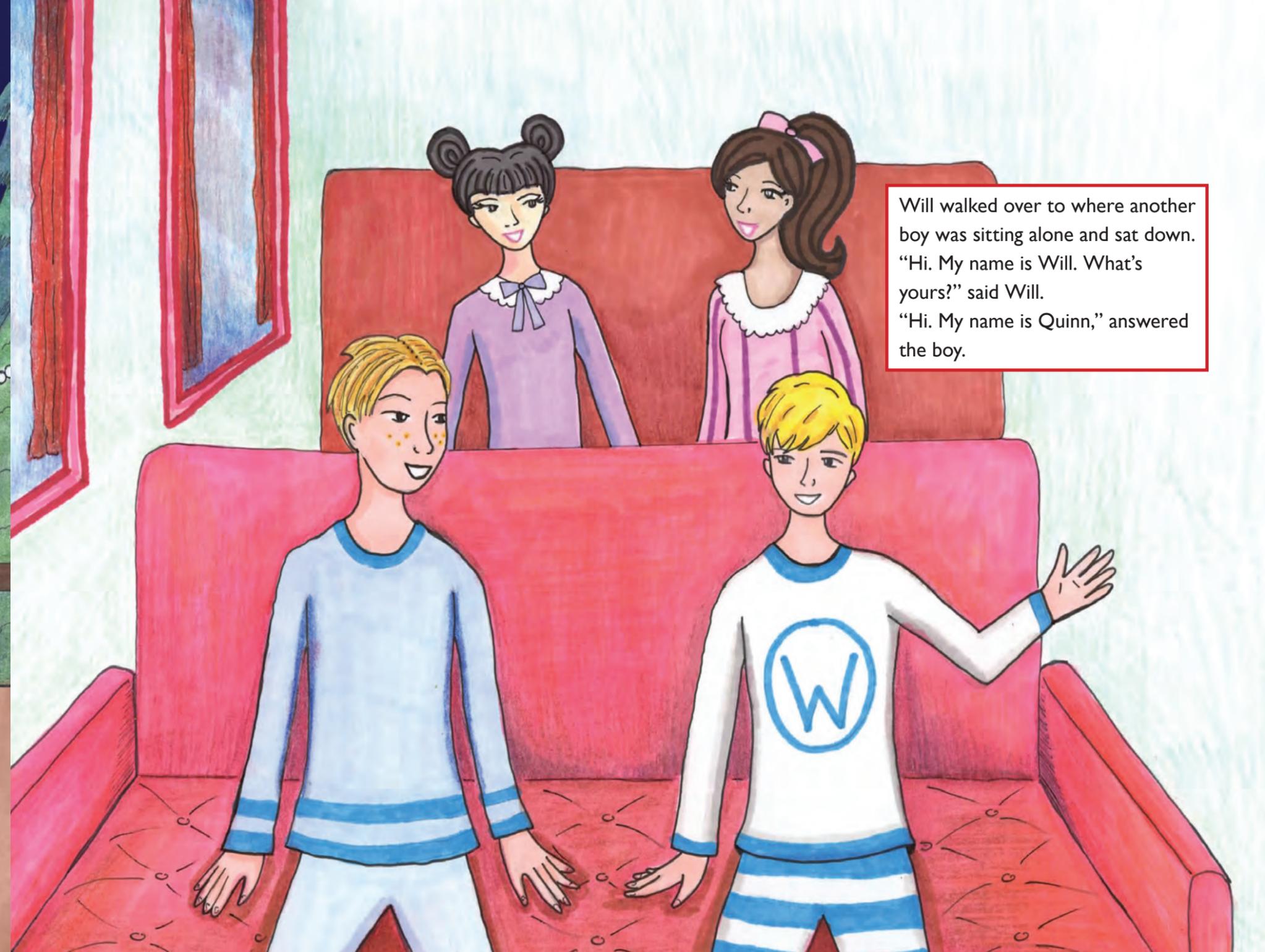
There was a huge steam engine train waiting on the tracks at the end of his street. Will could not believe his eyes. It had four passenger cars attached to the steam engine.

The first car was white and had gumdrops painted on the car. The second car was green with corn candy painted on its side, while car three was red with gingerbread men and the fourth car was blue with colored candy canes on the side.

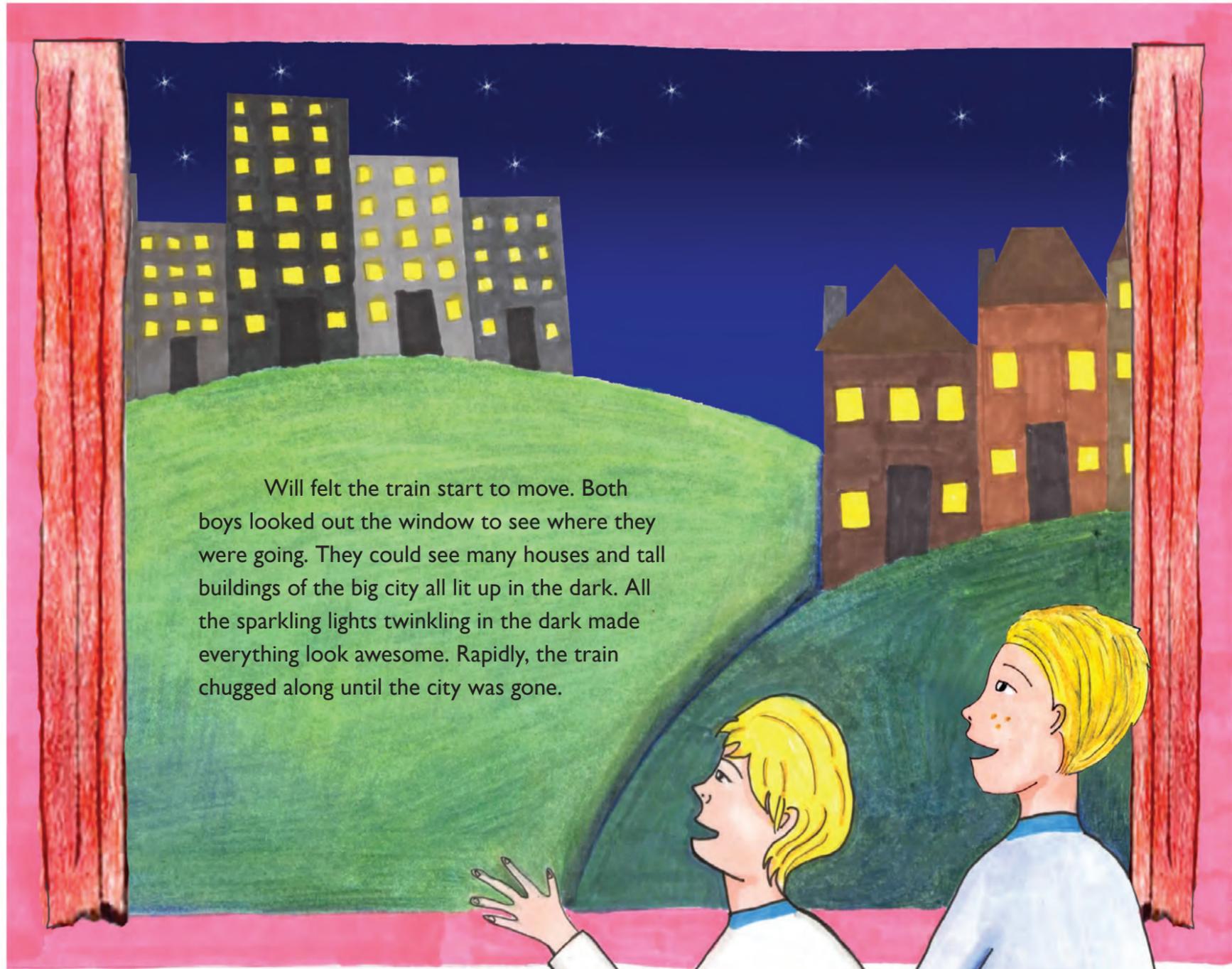
*What a magical looking train, thought Will.*



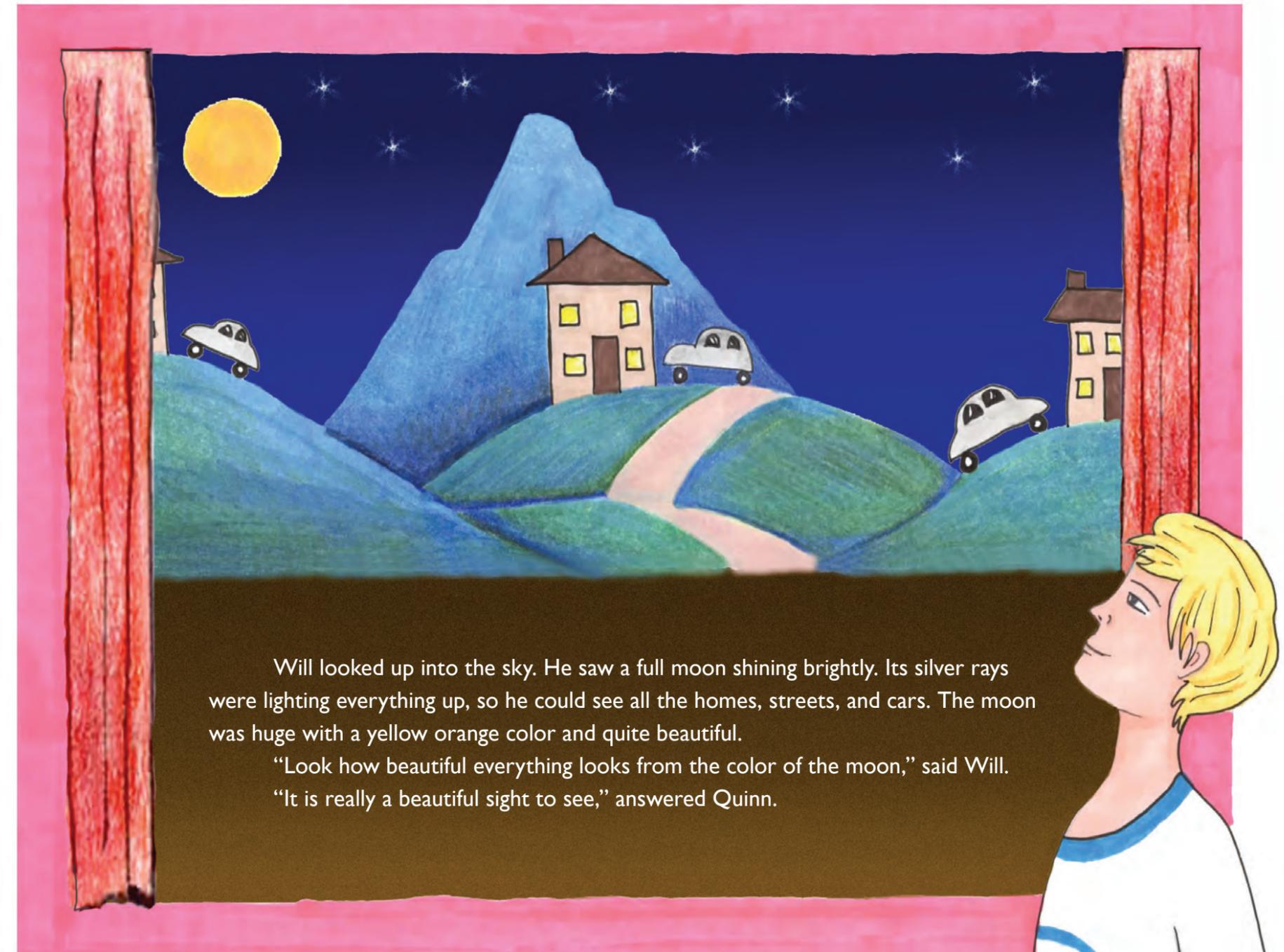
The conductor helped Will board the gingerbread car. To his surprise, there were many children already on board. They were sitting together talking and looking out the window.



Will walked over to where another boy was sitting alone and sat down. "Hi. My name is Will. What's yours?" said Will. "Hi. My name is Quinn," answered the boy.



Will felt the train start to move. Both boys looked out the window to see where they were going. They could see many houses and tall buildings of the big city all lit up in the dark. All the sparkling lights twinkling in the dark made everything look awesome. Rapidly, the train chugged along until the city was gone.



Will looked up into the sky. He saw a full moon shining brightly. Its silver rays were lighting everything up, so he could see all the homes, streets, and cars. The moon was huge with a yellow orange color and quite beautiful.

“Look how beautiful everything looks from the color of the moon,” said Will.

“It is really a beautiful sight to see,” answered Quinn.



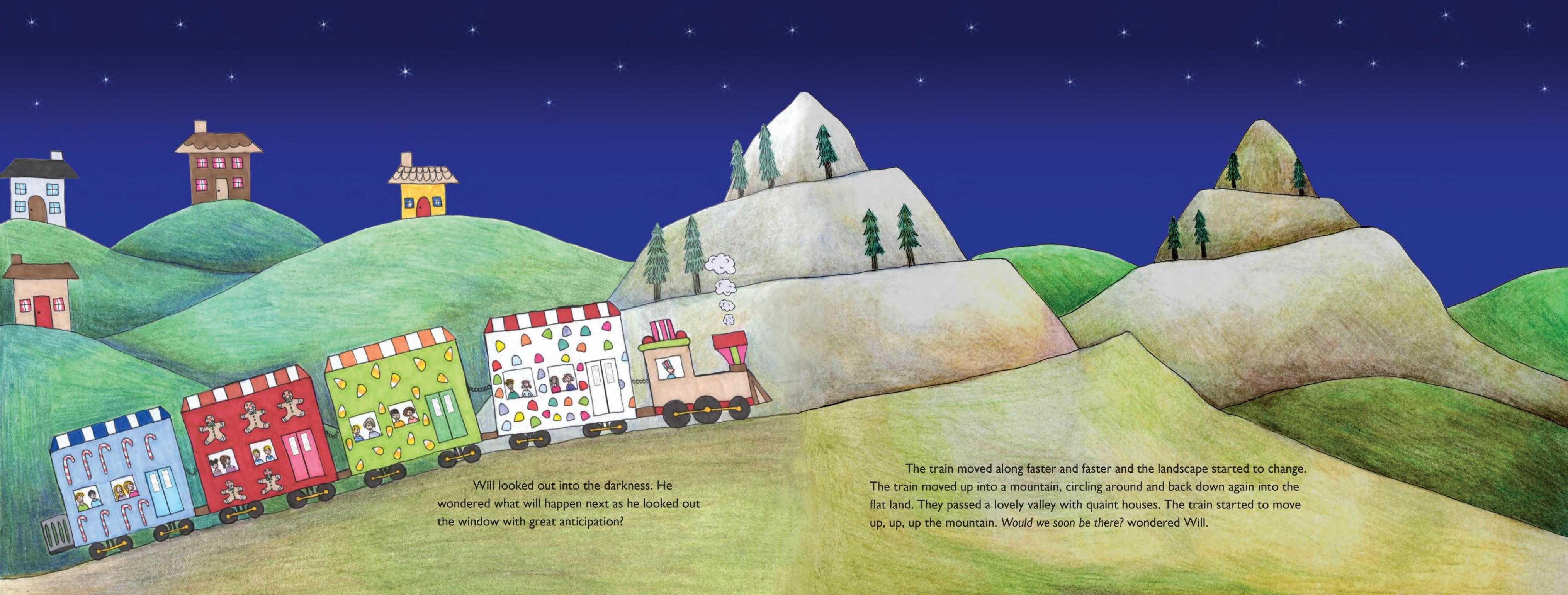
Soon they could see the forest as they moved along into the wilderness. In the darkness, they could see the tall trees.

“I believe I can see the glowing eyes of the forest animals,” said Quinn.

“I believe you’re right. It looks rather eerie,” said Will.

The next thing they knew, they were passing along the lush farmland where they could see the animals on the farms as they passed by. They were amazed to see that the animals were out at night. The cattle were eating hay, while the sheep were lying on the ground looking around. There were also pigs in their sty. Mostly, there were cornfields.

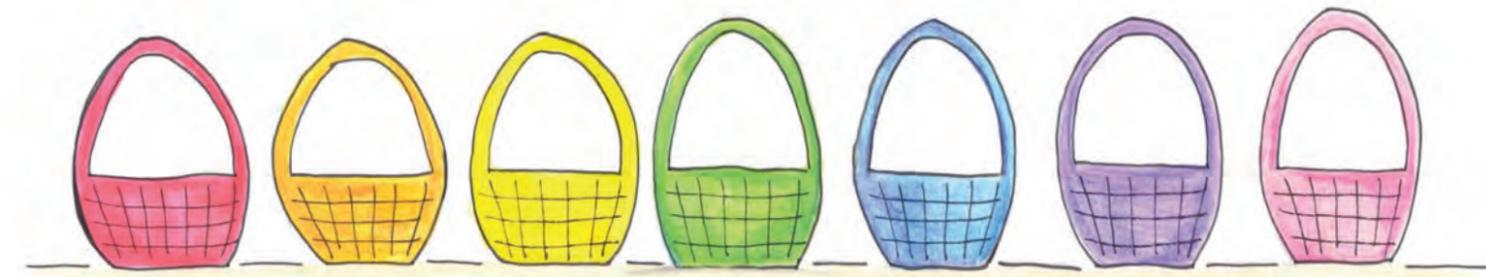
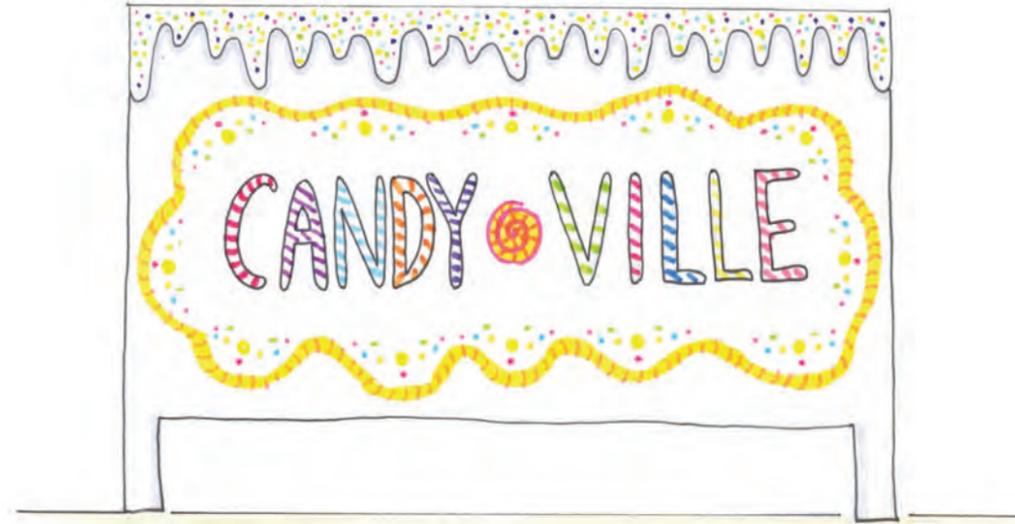




Will looked out into the darkness. He wondered what will happen next as he looked out the window with great anticipation?

The train moved along faster and faster and the landscape started to change. The train moved up into a mountain, circling around and back down again into the flat land. They passed a lovely valley with quaint houses. The train started to move up, up, up the mountain. *Would we soon be there?* wondered Will.

The train rode on until Will could see bright lights ahead. They were coming to a train station. It was bright and colorful. It was sparkling white like a gingerbread house coated in sugar with sprinkles of every color on the roof. The train was slowing down to stop. Will could read the town sign. It said 'Candy Ville'.



He could see all kinds of colorful child size baskets sitting on the platform next to the station.

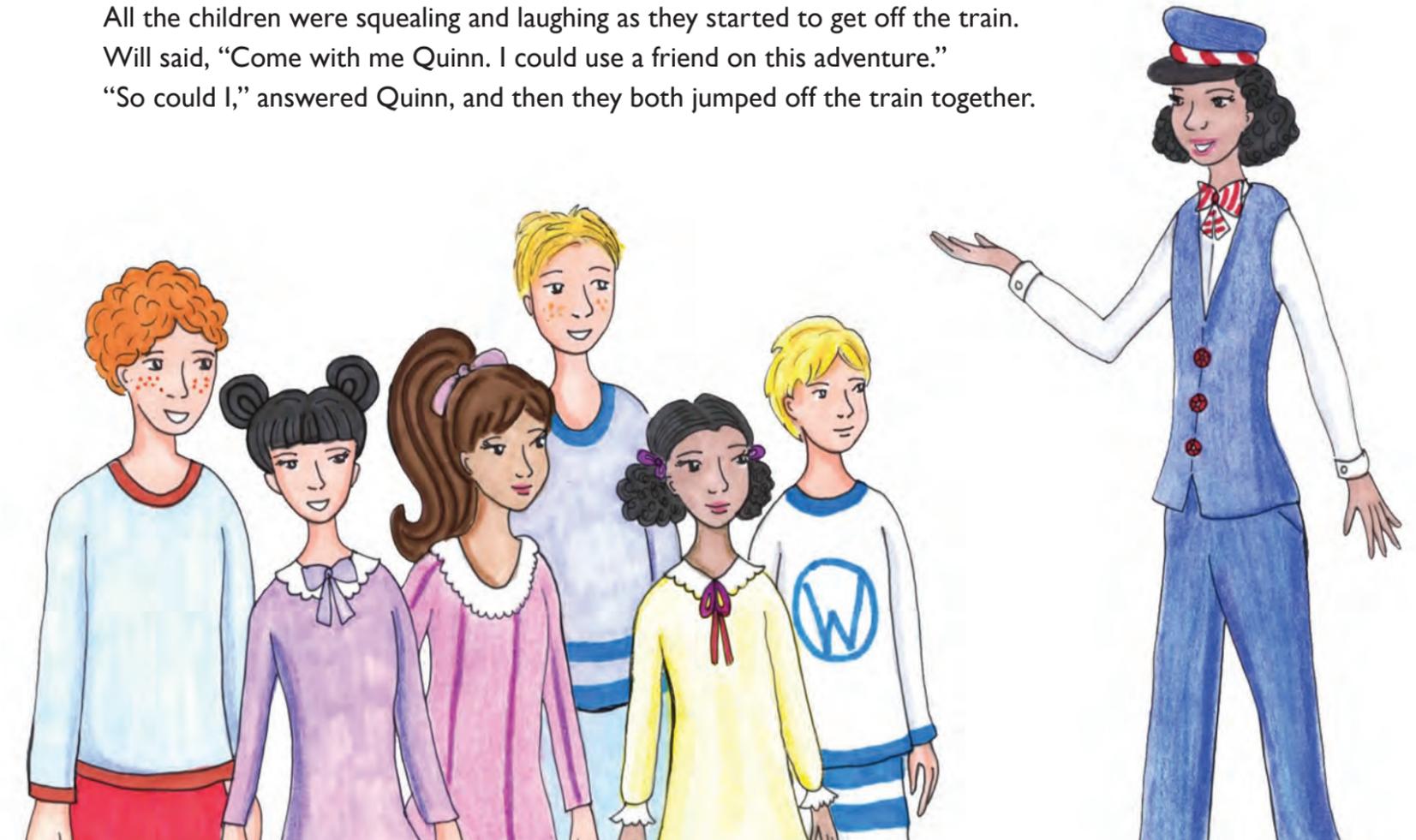
Just then, the conductor came into their car.

She said, "We are here in the great land of candy and fun. There are baskets for you to put your treats into. Pick whatever color basket you want, but there is one thing I must warn you. When the train blows its whistle, you must get back here as quickly as possible because the train will leave."

All the children were squealing and laughing as they started to get off the train.

Will said, "Come with me Quinn. I could use a friend on this adventure."

"So could I," answered Quinn, and then they both jumped off the train together.

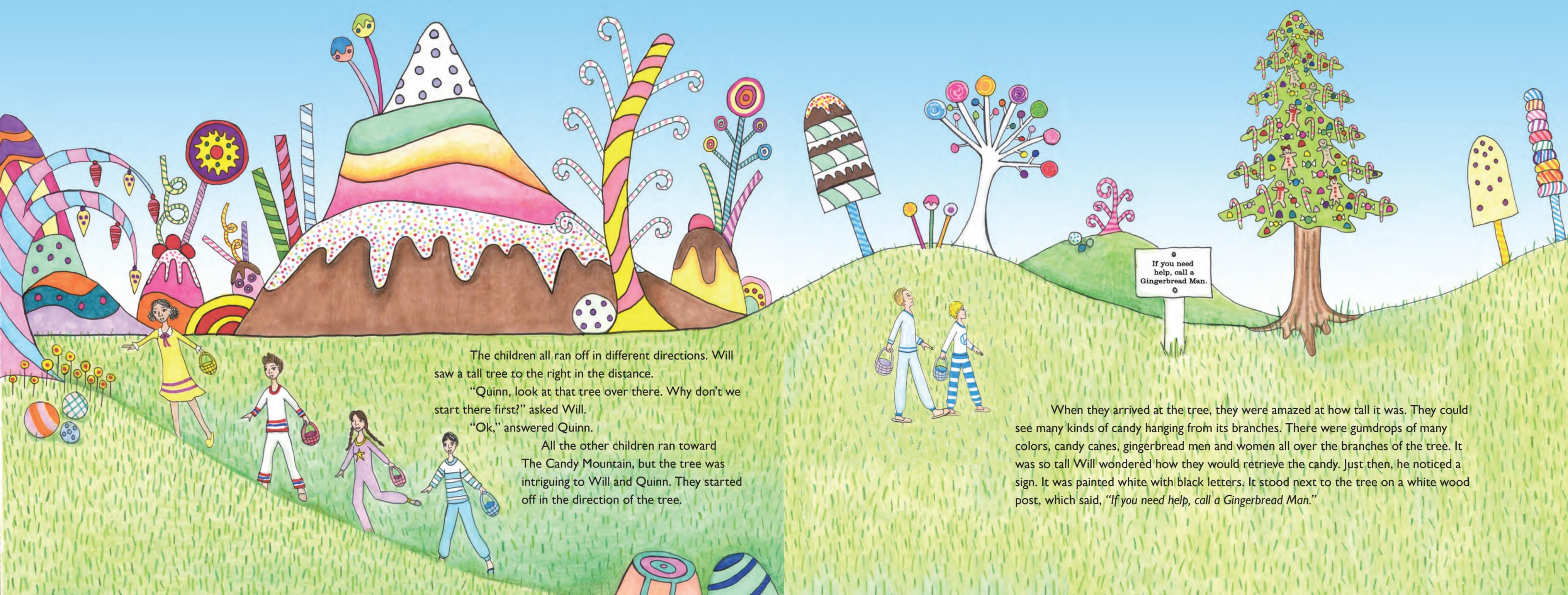




Will could hardly believe his eyes. The station was made of gingerbread and candy. What a beautiful sight. He saw the baskets on the platform in front of the gingerbread station. He picked out a blue basket, while Quinn picked out a purple one and they headed toward the gate. He could see the mountain glistening with every color imaginable. The top of the mountain was white as snow.

The gate was also glistening with every kind of candy you could think of. There were gumdrops, gummy bears, marshmallows, candy canes, red licorice, and jellybeans. Then the conductor opened the gate and said, "You are here at The Candy Mountain. Only good children can pass through this gate. Congratulations! This is your treat for being good."





The children all ran off in different directions. Will saw a tall tree to the right in the distance.

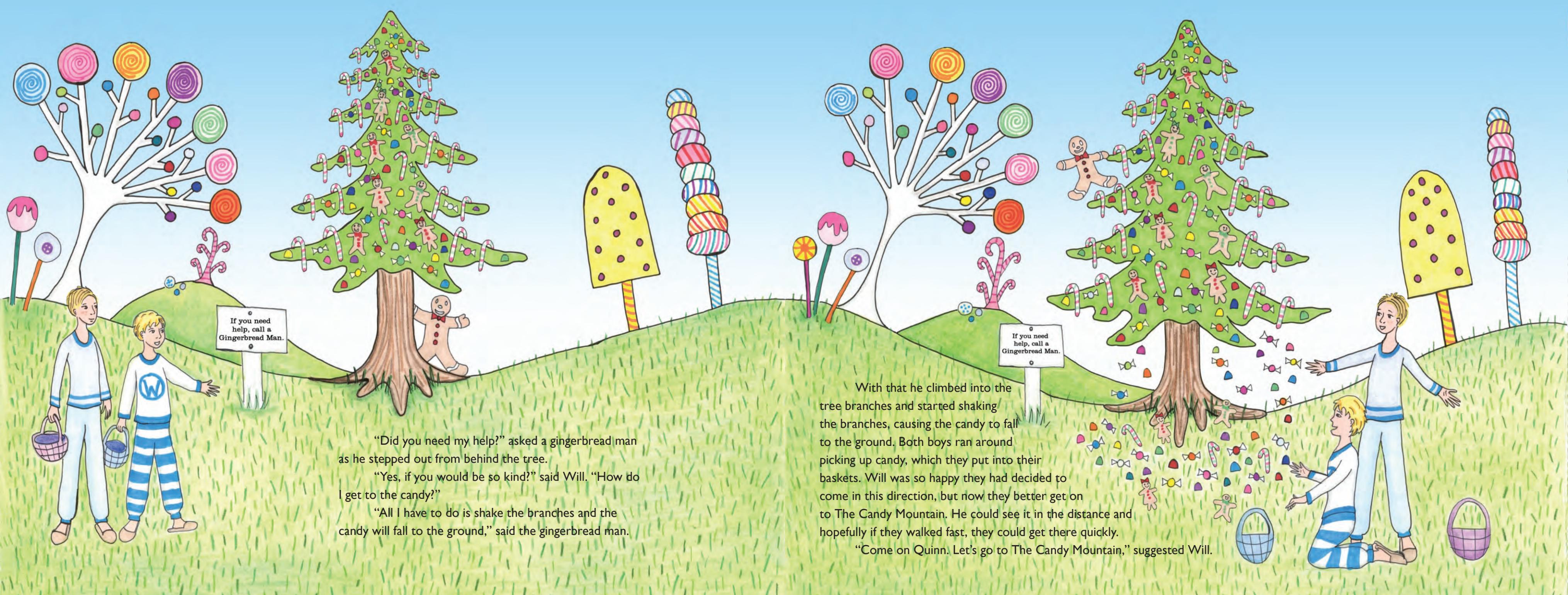
“Quinn, look at that tree over there. Why don’t we start there first?” asked Will.

“Ok,” answered Quinn.

All the other children ran toward The Candy Mountain, but the tree was intriguing to Will and Quinn. They started off in the direction of the tree.

•  
If you need  
help, call a  
Gingerbread Man.  
•

When they arrived at the tree, they were amazed at how tall it was. They could see many kinds of candy hanging from its branches. There were gumdrops of many colors, candy canes, gingerbread men and women all over the branches of the tree. It was so tall Will wondered how they would retrieve the candy. Just then, he noticed a sign. It was painted white with black letters. It stood next to the tree on a white wood post, which said, “If you need help, call a Gingerbread Man.”



•  
If you need  
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“Did you need my help?” asked a gingerbread man as he stepped out from behind the tree.  
“Yes, if you would be so kind?” said Will. “How do I get to the candy?”  
“All I have to do is shake the branches and the candy will fall to the ground,” said the gingerbread man.

•  
If you need  
help, call a  
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•

With that he climbed into the tree branches and started shaking the branches, causing the candy to fall to the ground. Both boys ran around picking up candy, which they put into their baskets. Will was so happy they had decided to come in this direction, but now they better get on to The Candy Mountain. He could see it in the distance and hopefully if they walked fast, they could get there quickly.

“Come on Quinn. Let’s go to The Candy Mountain,” suggested Will.

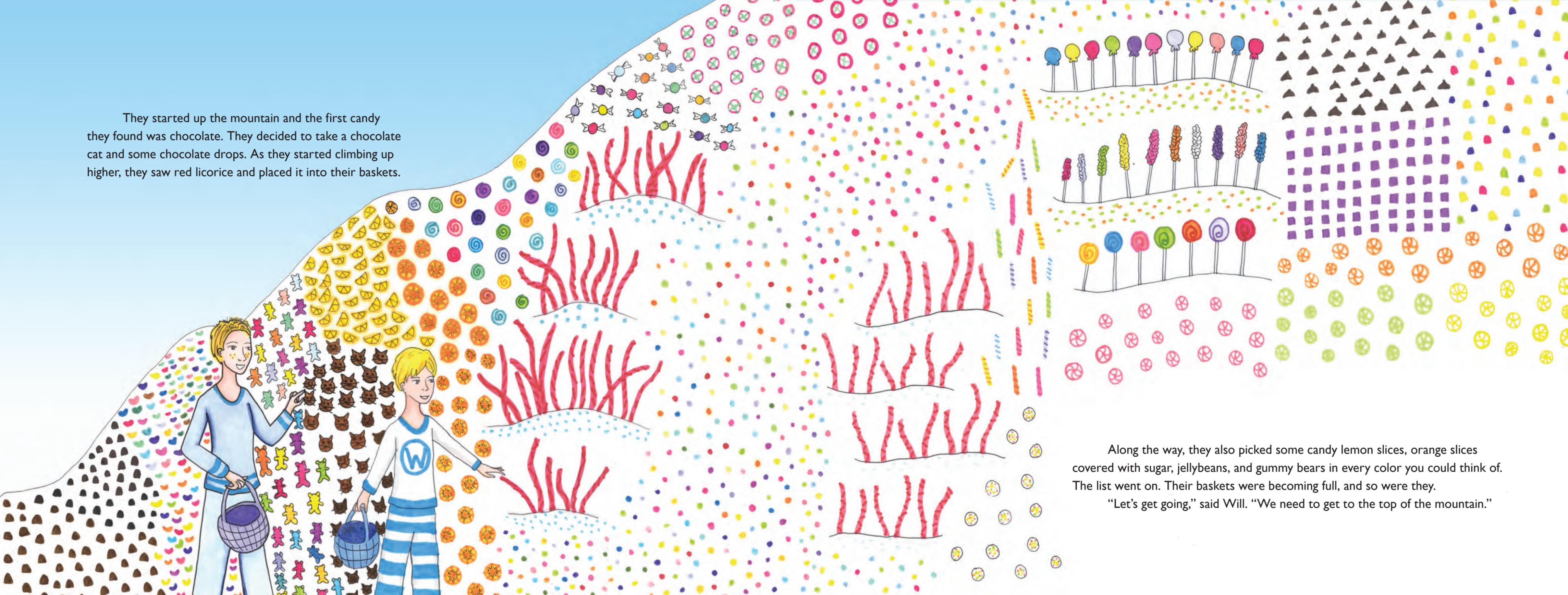
After much walking, they were finally standing at the foot of The Candy Mountain. There it was standing so majestically in front of them. The colors were so beautiful, and it shown so brightly from the morning sun. Will could see candy everywhere.

"Well," said Will. "It looks like this is going to be quite an adventure. Are you ready to get going?"

"I can hardly wait!" exclaimed Quinn.



They started up the mountain and the first candy they found was chocolate. They decided to take a chocolate cat and some chocolate drops. As they started climbing up higher, they saw red licorice and placed it into their baskets.



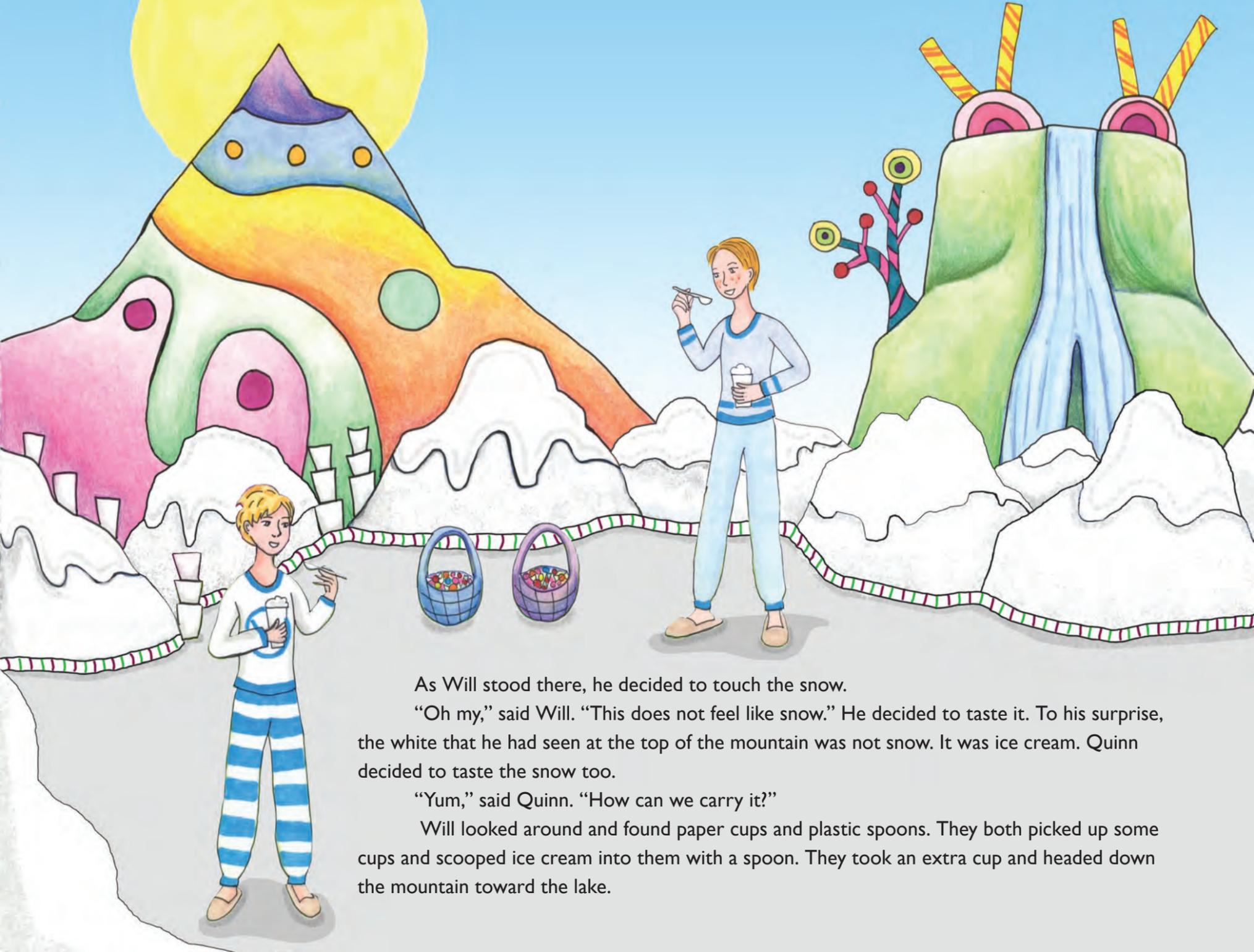
Along the way, they also picked some candy lemon slices, orange slices covered with sugar, jellybeans, and gummy bears in every color you could think of. The list went on. Their baskets were becoming full, and so were they. "Let's get going," said Will. "We need to get to the top of the mountain."

The next thing they knew, they were at the top of the Candy Mountain and their baskets were getting heavy. They could not believe it. They were exhausted.

“Look at this, Will,” said Quinn. “You can see forever.”

They could look far off and see other places to go. There was a lake and a river with a bridge that went across into a small village. There was so much to see and do.



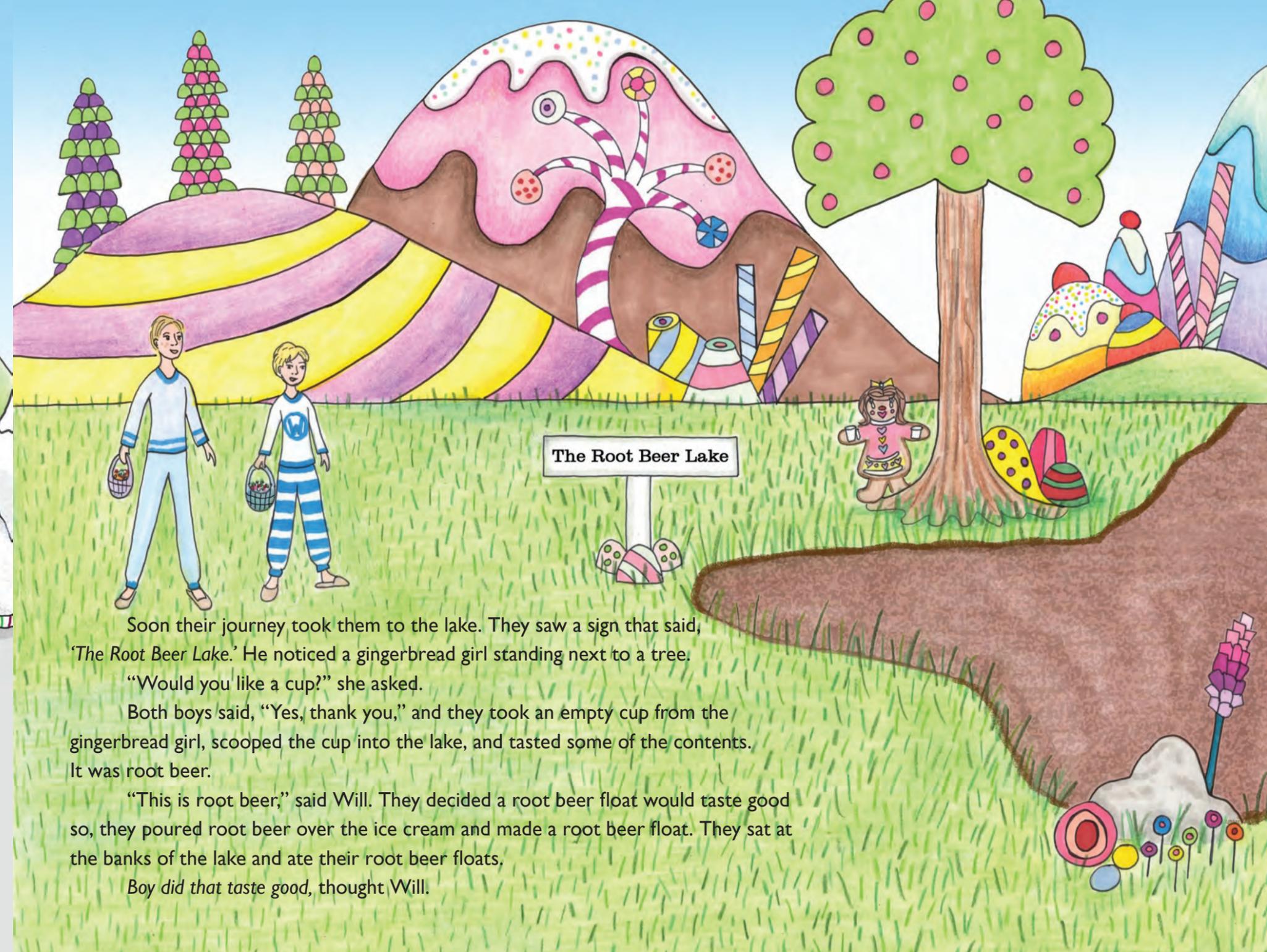


As Will stood there, he decided to touch the snow.

"Oh my," said Will. "This does not feel like snow." He decided to taste it. To his surprise, the white that he had seen at the top of the mountain was not snow. It was ice cream. Quinn decided to taste the snow too.

"Yum," said Quinn. "How can we carry it?"

Will looked around and found paper cups and plastic spoons. They both picked up some cups and scooped ice cream into them with a spoon. They took an extra cup and headed down the mountain toward the lake.



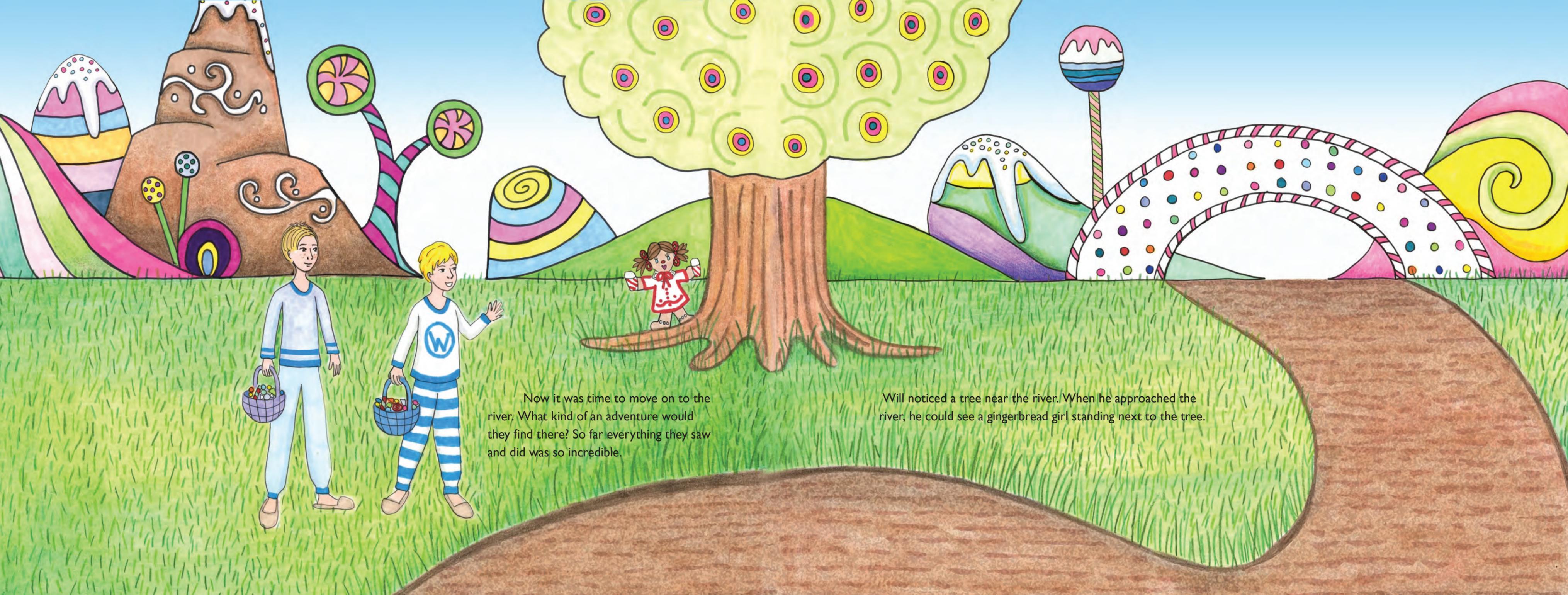
Soon their journey took them to the lake. They saw a sign that said, 'The Root Beer Lake.' He noticed a gingerbread girl standing next to a tree.

"Would you like a cup?" she asked.

Both boys said, "Yes, thank you," and they took an empty cup from the gingerbread girl, scooped the cup into the lake, and tasted some of the contents. It was root beer.

"This is root beer," said Will. They decided a root beer float would taste good so, they poured root beer over the ice cream and made a root beer float. They sat at the banks of the lake and ate their root beer floats.

*Boy did that taste good,* thought Will.



Now it was time to move on to the river. What kind of an adventure would they find there? So far everything they saw and did was so incredible.

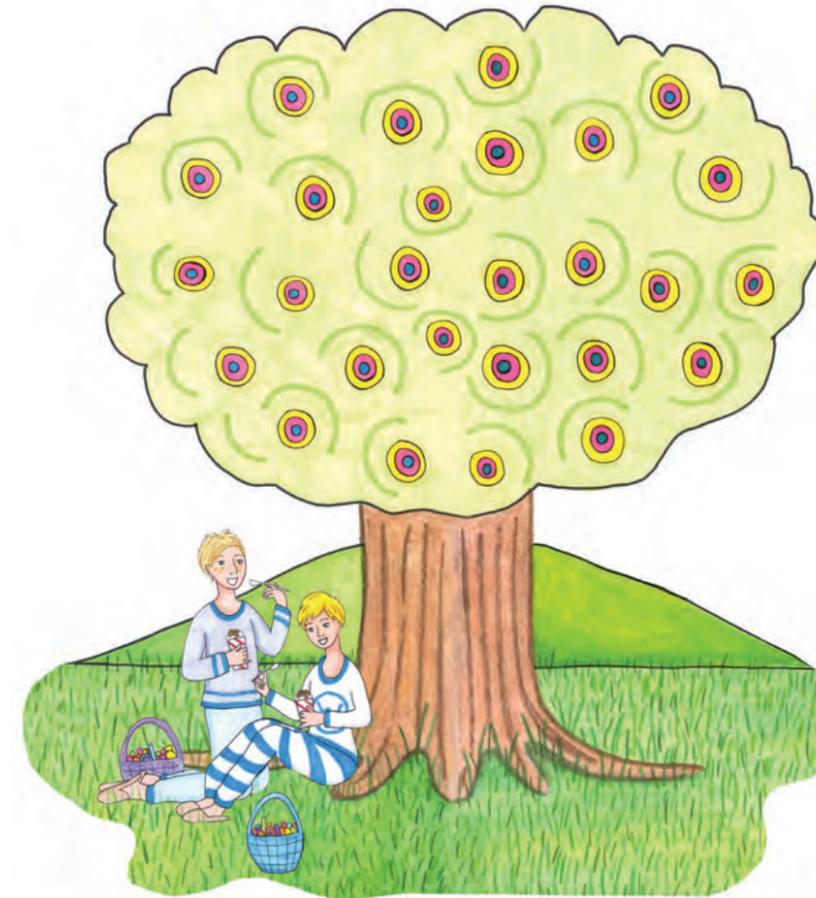
Will noticed a tree near the river. When he approached the river, he could see a gingerbread girl standing next to the tree.



She said, "Welcome to the chocolate river. Would you like an ice cream sundae?"  
Without hesitation, both boys said, "yes!"



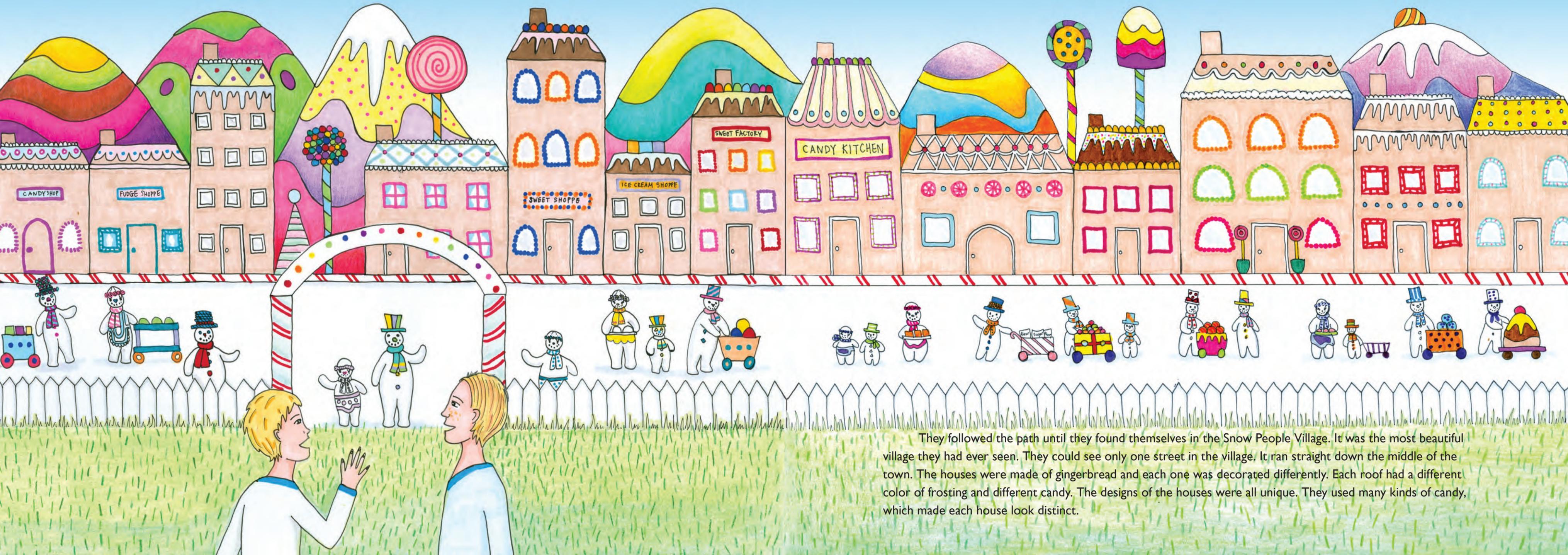
They took a cup of ice cream from the gingerbread girl and some chocolate from the river. The gingerbread girl gave them some whipped cream.



They took out a spoon and sat down under the tree where they proceeded to eat their sundaes.

Will looked to the bridge and his head was filled with thoughts once more. He wondered what could possibly be on the other side of the river? He stood up slowly and said, "Quinn, it looks like we have another adventure ahead." Quinn stood up and both boys crossed over the bridge on to a new adventure.





They followed the path until they found themselves in the Snow People Village. It was the most beautiful village they had ever seen. They could see only one street in the village. It ran straight down the middle of the town. The houses were made of gingerbread and each one was decorated differently. Each roof had a different color of frosting and different candy. The designs of the houses were all unique. They used many kinds of candy, which made each house look distinct.



The snowmen had on top hats that were made of different kinds of candy with colorful scarves around their neck. Their faces had features made from candy as were their buttons.



There were snow people scurrying all over the village. They seemed very busy. The snow women were dressed in knitted hats that had flowers on the brim and a scarf around their neck. The hats and scarves were very colorful with many different designs and colors. Their faces had features made from candy.



The children were dressed the same as their elders.

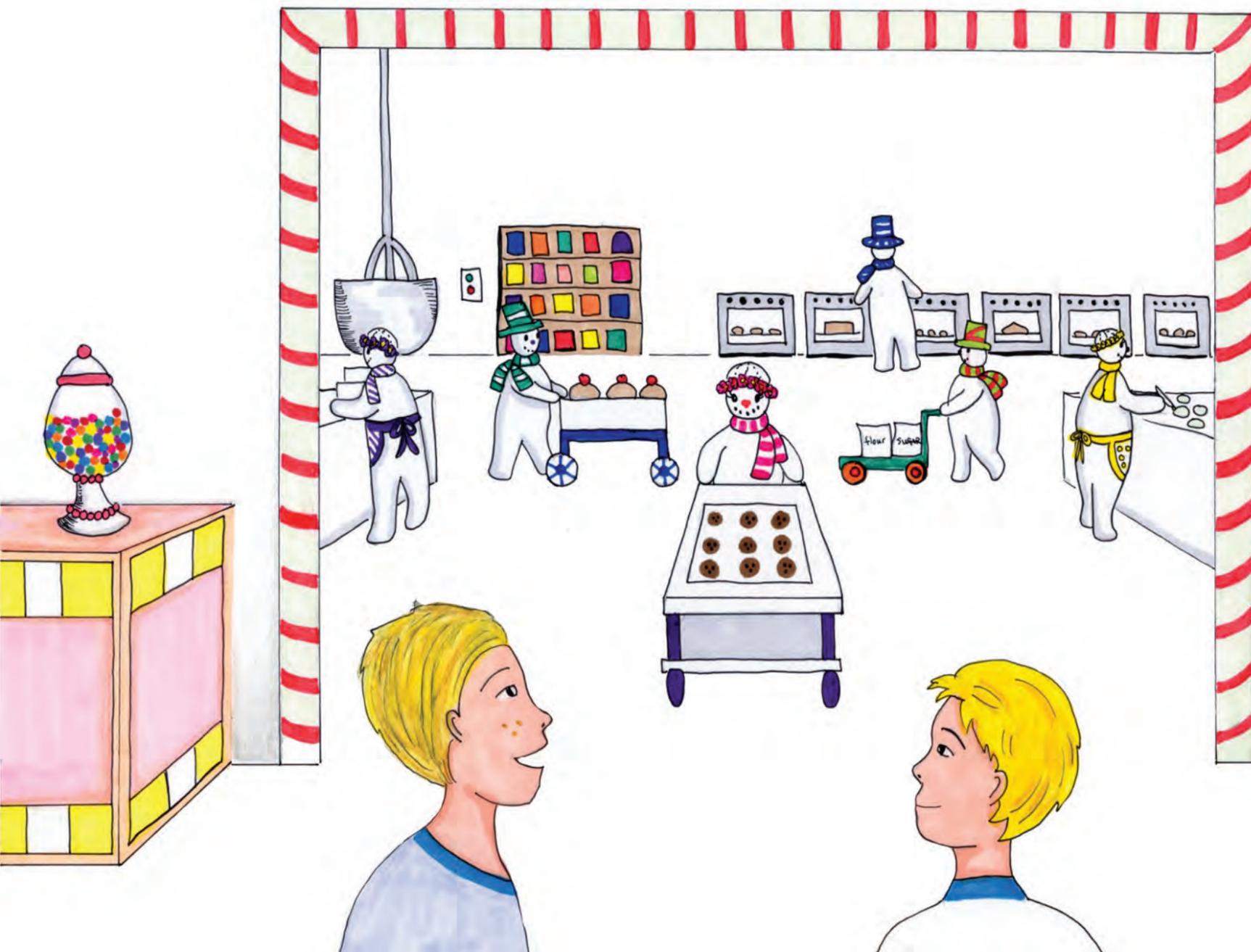


Down the street, Will saw a factory with a store attached to it. There was a sign that read 'Bakery.'

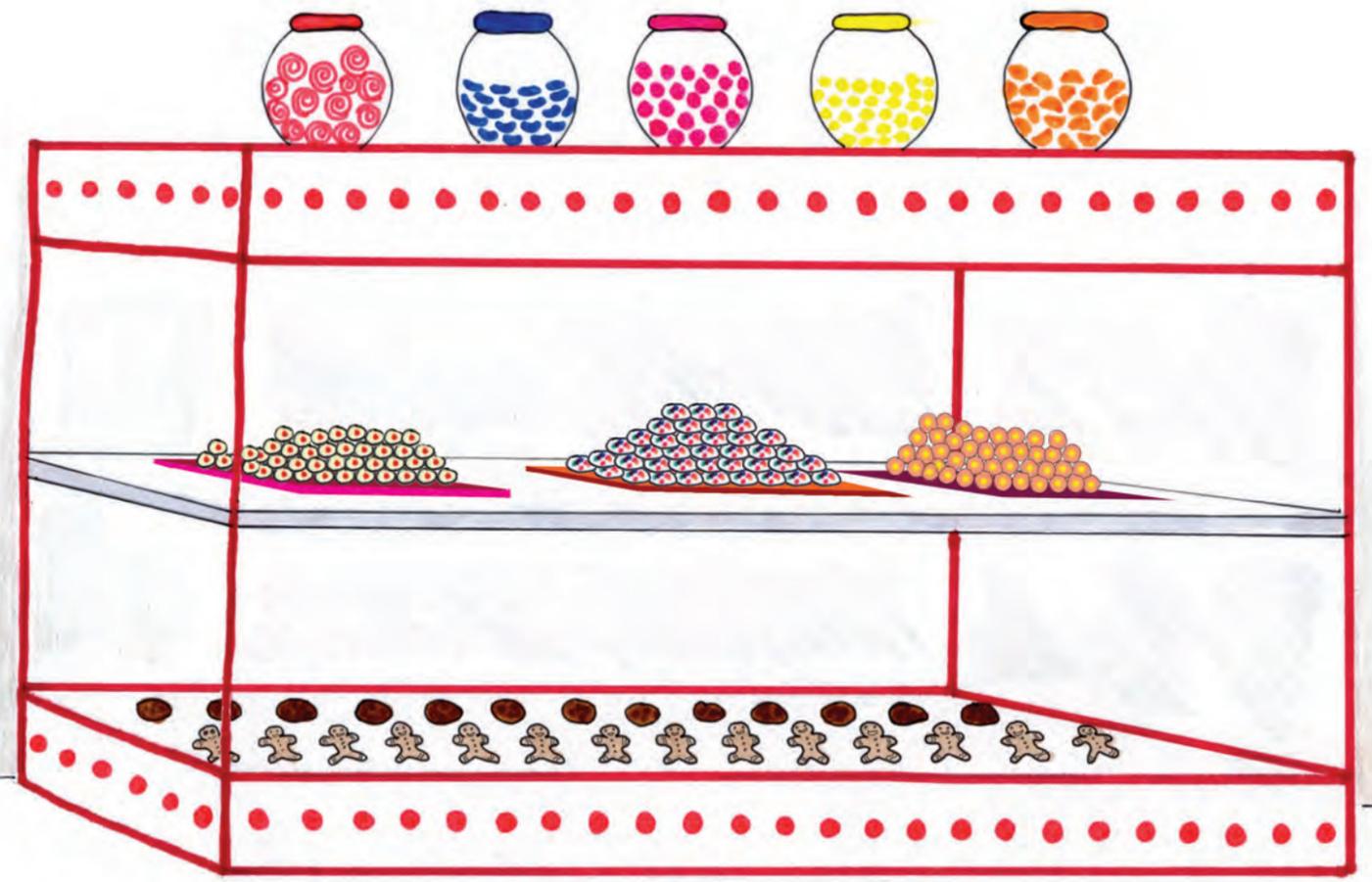
"Hey Quinn. Do you want to go to the Bakery to see what is going on?" asked Will.

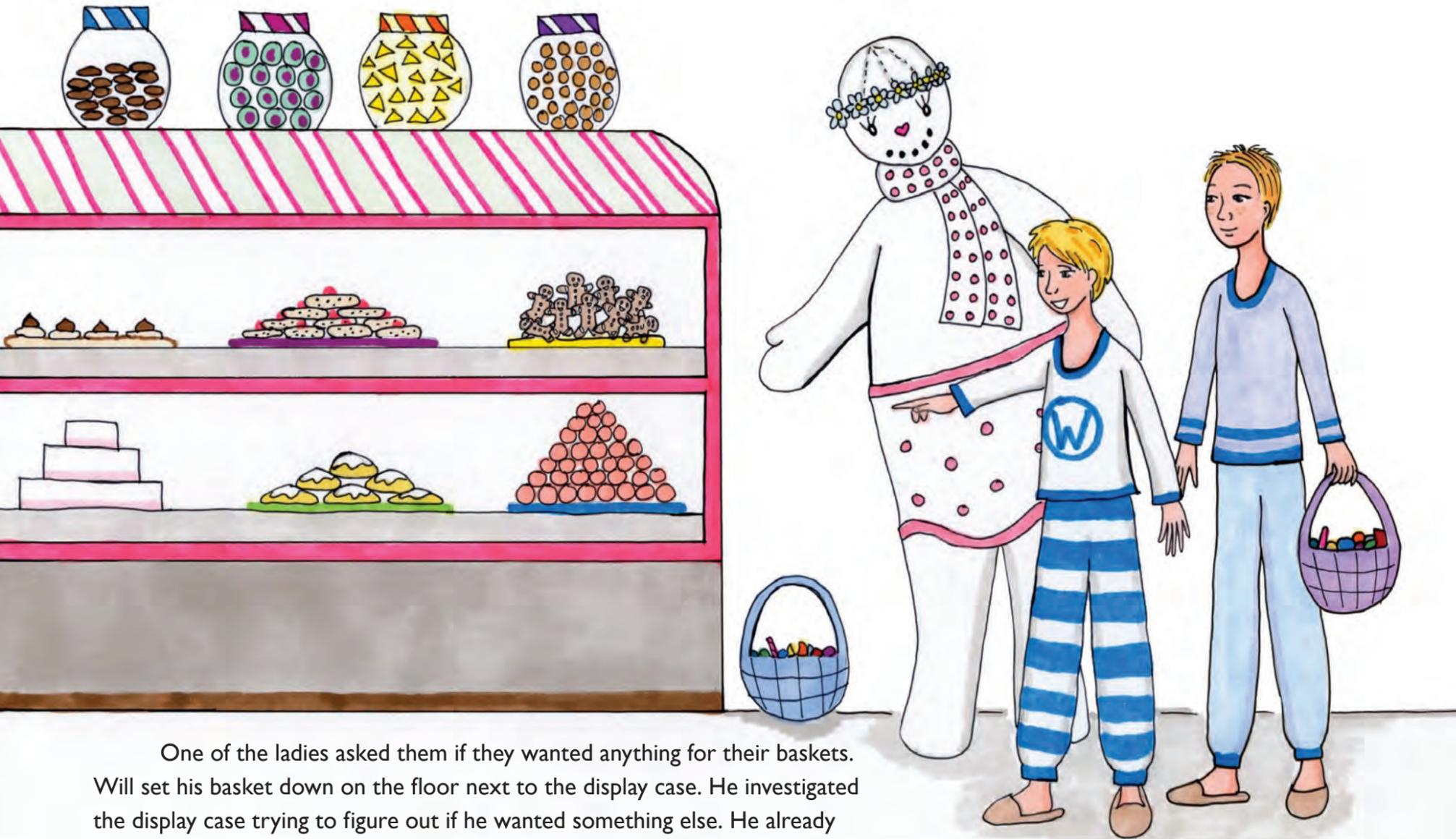
"Yes. It looks like there is a factory connected to it. I want to see what is going on in the factory," answered Quinn.

So, down the street they went to explore what was in store for them next.



When they walked into the store, the snow people all smiled at them. Will could see all kinds of candy, cookies, and gingerbread men decorated with frosting in the display cases. The gingerbread cookies had faces with big smiles and squiggles near the end of their arms and feet. The factory was to the left of the store and you could see the snow people happily working inside. There were wonderful aromas coming from the factory. Aside from the cookies, everything looked like the candy from The Candy Mountain. *What could you assume from that?* thought Will. Did everyone work together to make up this wonderful adventure?





One of the ladies asked them if they wanted anything for their baskets. Will set his basket down on the floor next to the display case. He investigated the display case trying to figure out if he wanted something else. He already had so much.

"I think I would like a cookie," said Will. "I would like the cookie with the cherry in the middle."

The snow lady reached into the display case and handed him the cookie.



Will took a bite of the cookie and then smiled.

"This is very good. Thank you so much. You have been so kind," said Will.

Quinn also wanted a cookie. He looked through the display case and decided to have the one with the Hershey kiss in the middle. He took a bite of his cookie and said, "Yummy, yummy in my tummy." Then, he giggled. He also smiled at the ladies and they waved good-bye as they walked out the door.



Will realized that it must be getting late. The boys hurried down the street, along the path and over the bridge. Suddenly the boys heard the tooting from the train. "Oh no!" yelled Will. "We better run faster!"

He grabbed Quinn's hand and they sprinted toward the train as fast as their legs could carry them. *If they missed the train, how would they ever get home?* thought Will. They just kept running.

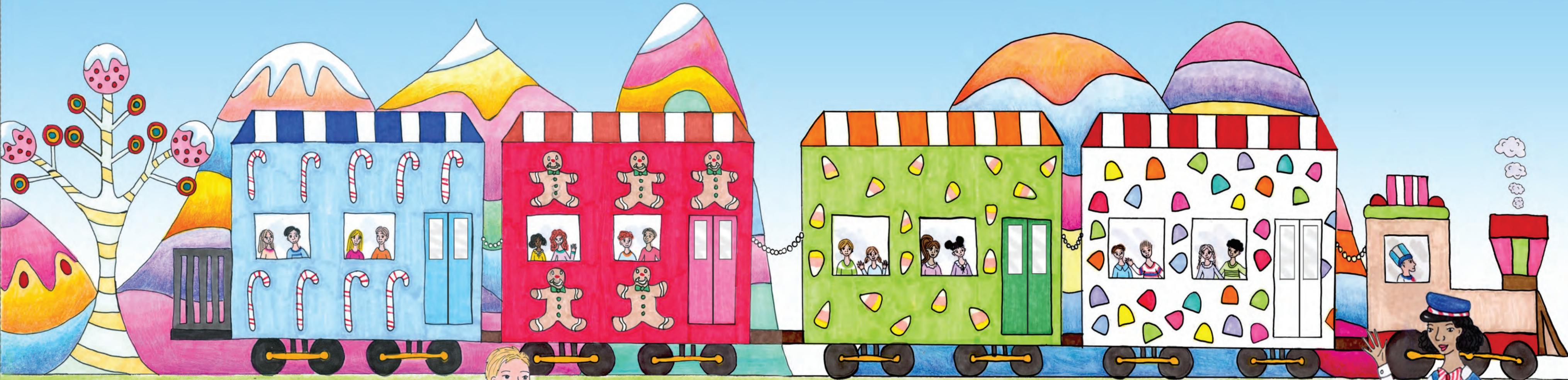




Finally, they could see the gates for The Candy Mountain. They raced faster. Will's heart was thumping in his chest. Will they make it on time? He could see the train was still in the station. He ran through the gate just as he heard, "All aboard."

"Wait! Wait! We're coming!" shouted Will. Could the conductor hear him?

"Wait! Wait!" they both shouted. The train tooted again as they reached the conductor.



"I am here," said Will.

"So, you are, Will. I'm happy to see that. Nice to see you both made it. Did you have a good time? Jump aboard," said the conductor.

"You cannot imagine what a wonderful adventure we had. I will never forget it," said Will as he jumped onto the train along with Quinn.

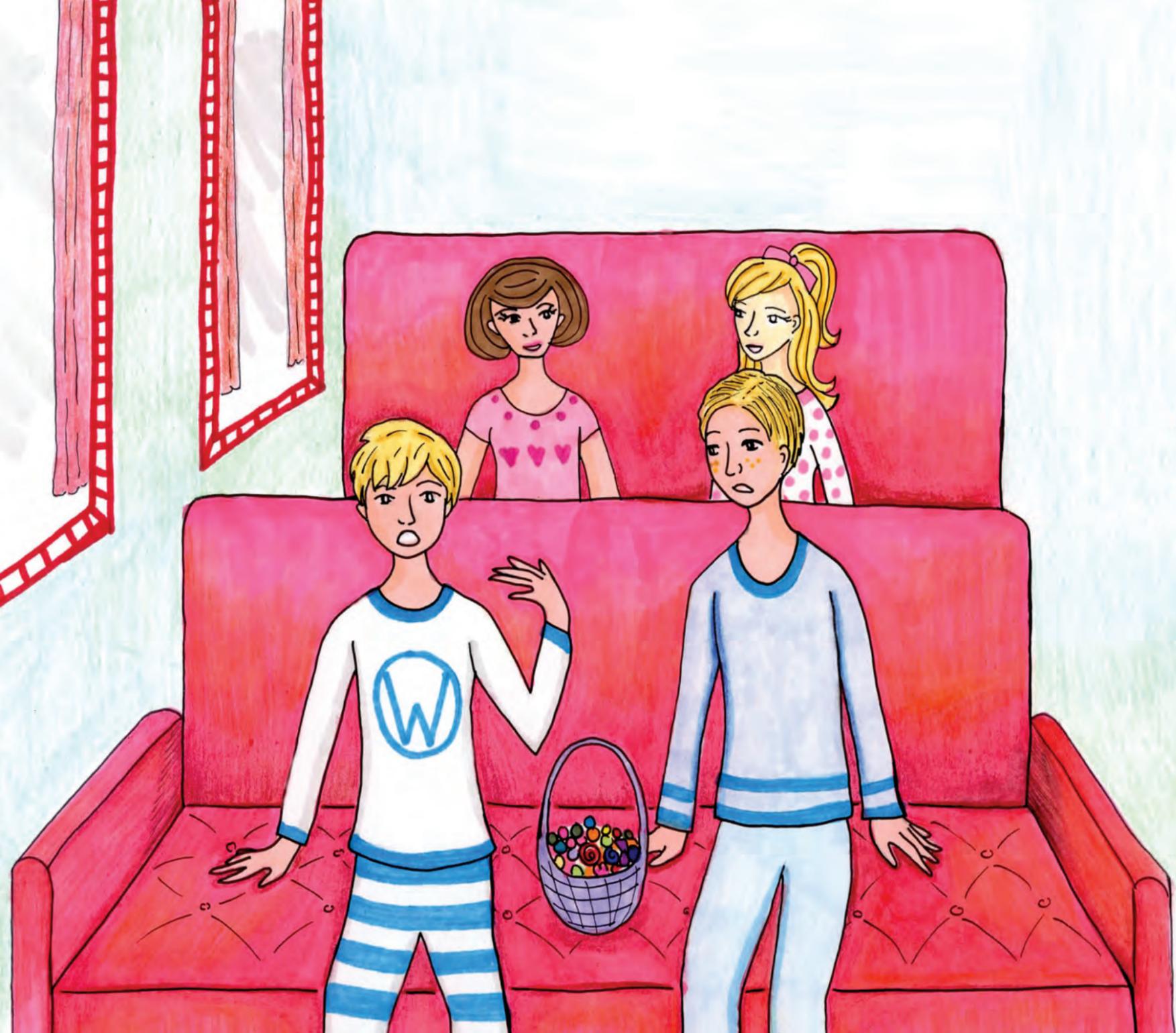
The conductor waved her lantern to the engineer, and the train jolted forward. They could hear the cars bumping into each other.



Will investigated the gumdrop car for a double seat. He could not see any. They moved on to the candy corn car and could not find two seats. He kept going and finally found a place for both to sit in the candy cane car.



Will and Quinn flopped into their seats. There was so much they had seen and done. It was quite an adventure. *One I will never forget*, thought Will.



As Will sat back and thought about his wonderful time, he realized that he did not have his candy basket.

“Oh no! Quinn, I forgot my candy basket at the candy factory,” said Will. “I laid it on the floor and left it there.”

“I am so sorry for you, Will. There is nothing we can do now. Would you like to share mine?” asked Quinn.

“That’s ok, Quinn. Thank you for being so kind. I wish I could always know you,” said Will. Will thought about their adventure.

“You know what, Quinn? Everything was so much fun. At least I have the memories. I will never lose them.”

“Neither will I,” said Quinn.

The train rocked back and forth as Will felt himself getting tired from all the excitement. Slowly, he fell asleep.

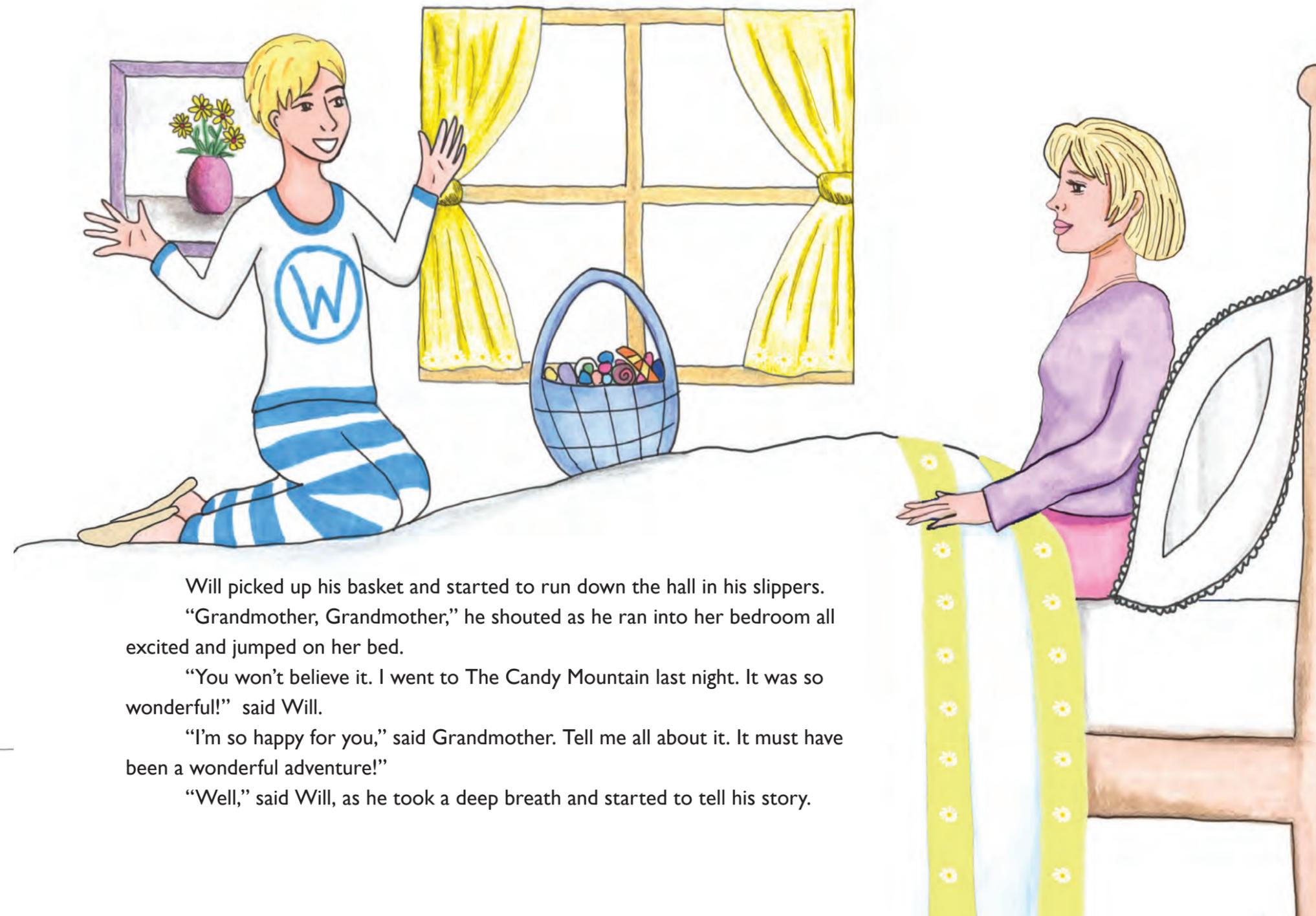




When Will woke up, he found himself in his bed under the covers.

*How did I get here?* thought Will.

He sat up suddenly surprised to find out where he was. What an amazing night. He looked around still searching for an answer. To his surprise, his basket was lying at the foot of his bed. How could that be? He had left it in the candy store.



Will picked up his basket and started to run down the hall in his slippers.

“Grandmother, Grandmother,” he shouted as he ran into her bedroom all excited and jumped on her bed.

“You won’t believe it. I went to The Candy Mountain last night. It was so wonderful!” said Will.

“I’m so happy for you,” said Grandmother. Tell me all about it. It must have been a wonderful adventure!”

“Well,” said Will, as he took a deep breath and started to tell his story.

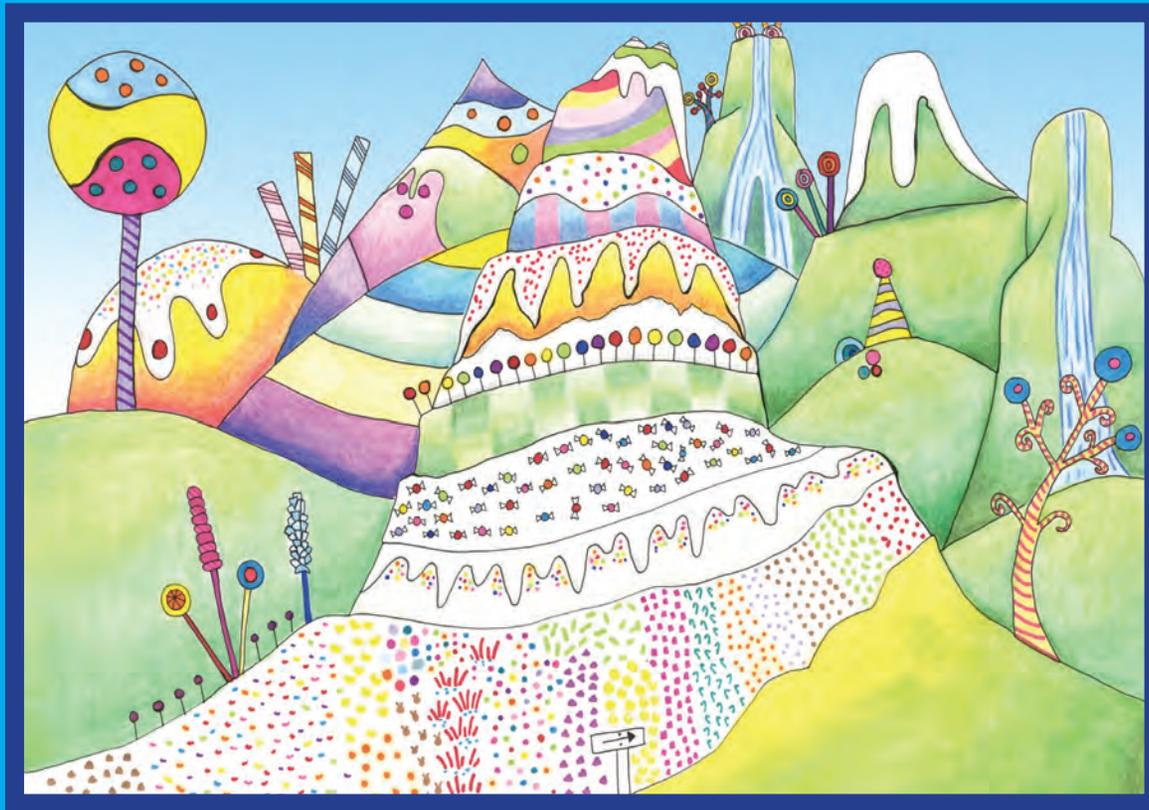


#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Haller is an accomplished educator; she has received many awards for being outstanding in teaching, curriculum and administrative fields including being recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for her teaching in the Inner City of Chicago and receiving the Phi Delta Kappa Award for being The Outstanding Principal of the Year.

#### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

YM Cho earned a BFA degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, with a focus in visual communications and fashion illustration. Her interest in art began as a toddler, when she spent hours drawing on a dry erase board that her father brought home one day, which ultimately planted the seeds for her artistic ambitions.



Will's Grandmother has told Will about the Candy Mountain since he was a small child. One night, Will is awakened by the Conductor of a train. He is told to hurry to catch the train. "What train?" "The train to the Candy Mountain, of course." On the train, he meets a boy named Quinn and they decide to go on the adventure together. He can hardly believe he is going to The Candy Mountain. Together, there are many decisions to make. Each one more mysterious than the other. What will they find? What decisions will they have to make?