

The
Bear
and the
Piano

David Litchfield

One day, a bear cub finds
something strange in the forest.

When he touches the keys, he begins a journey that takes
him away from his home to a new and wonderful land,
where beautiful sounds fill the air and fame and riches
hang ready for the taking. The city is everything
the bear has ever dreamed of, but deep down
something tugs at his heart...

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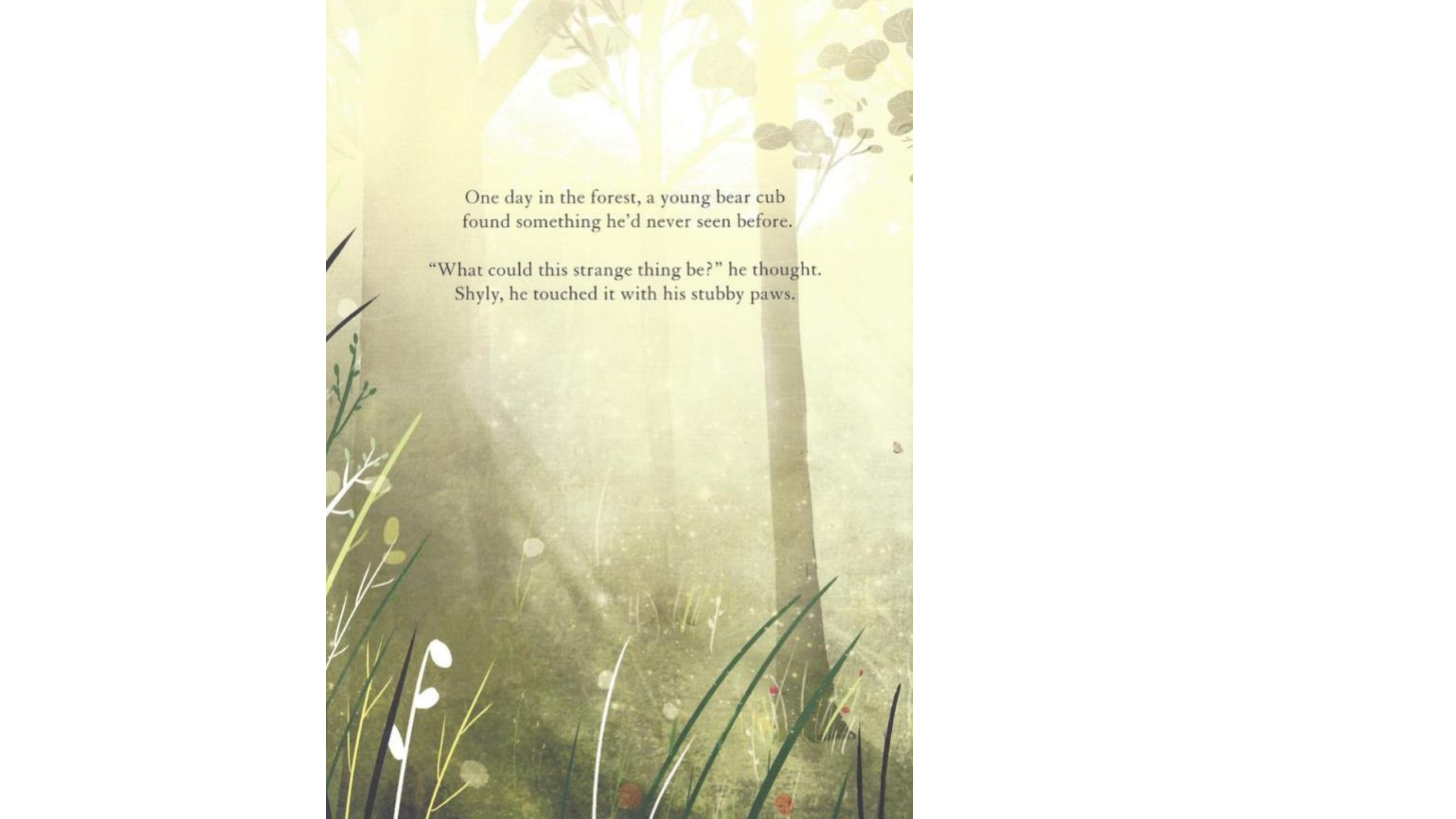


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One day in the forest, a young bear cub
found something he'd never seen before.

“What could this strange thing be?” he thought.
Shyly, he touched it with his stubby paws.



“PLONK!”

The strange thing made an
awful sound.

So, the bear left.



But the next day he came back,



and the day after that too.



And for days and weeks and months and years,



until eventually...



The sounds that came from the strange thing
were beautiful, and the bear had grown
big and strong and grizzly.



When the bear played, he felt so happy.

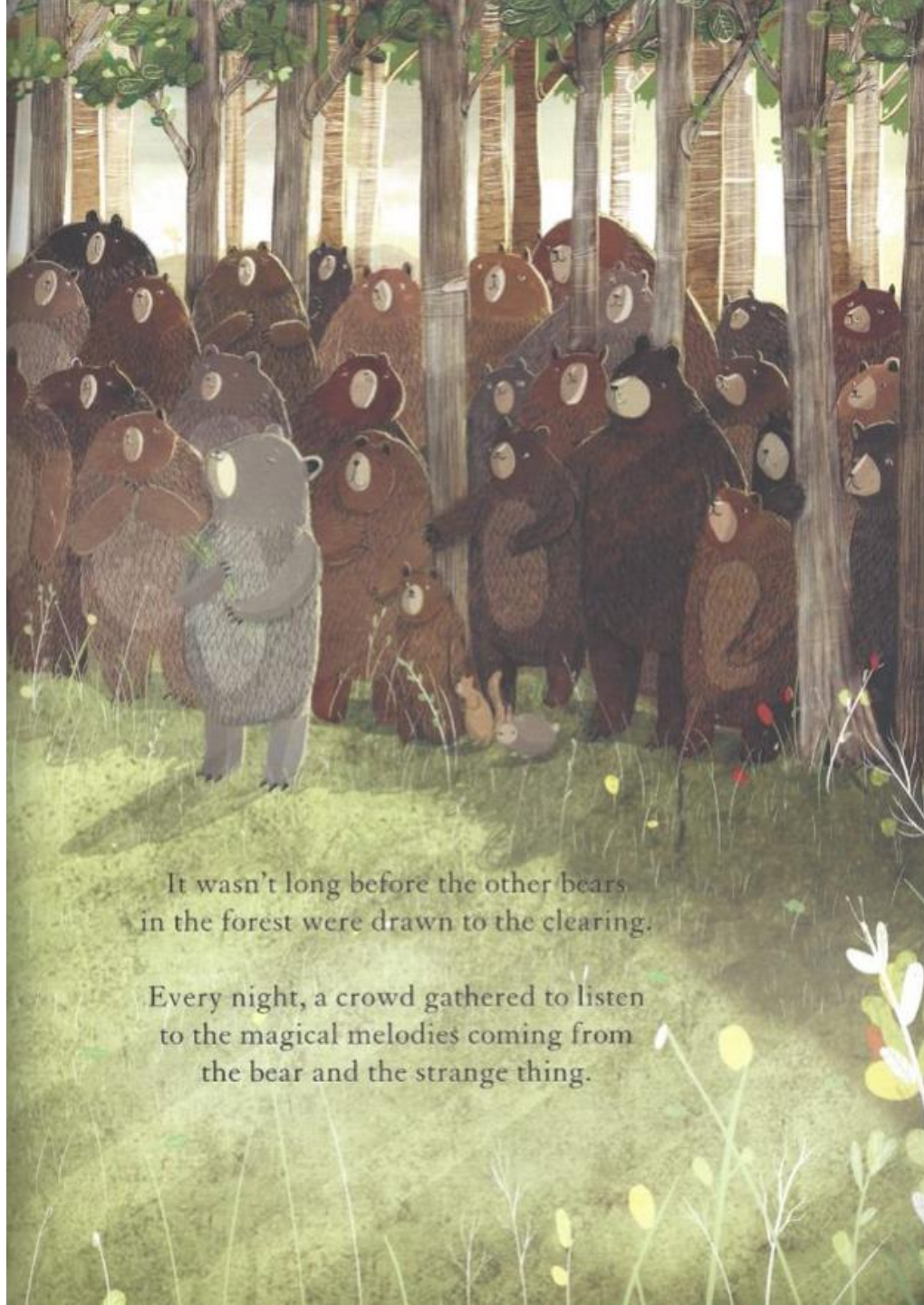


The sound took him away from the forest,



and he dreamed of strange and wonderful lands.





It wasn't long before the other bears
in the forest were drawn to the clearing.

Every night, a crowd gathered to listen
to the magical melodies coming from
the bear and the strange thing.

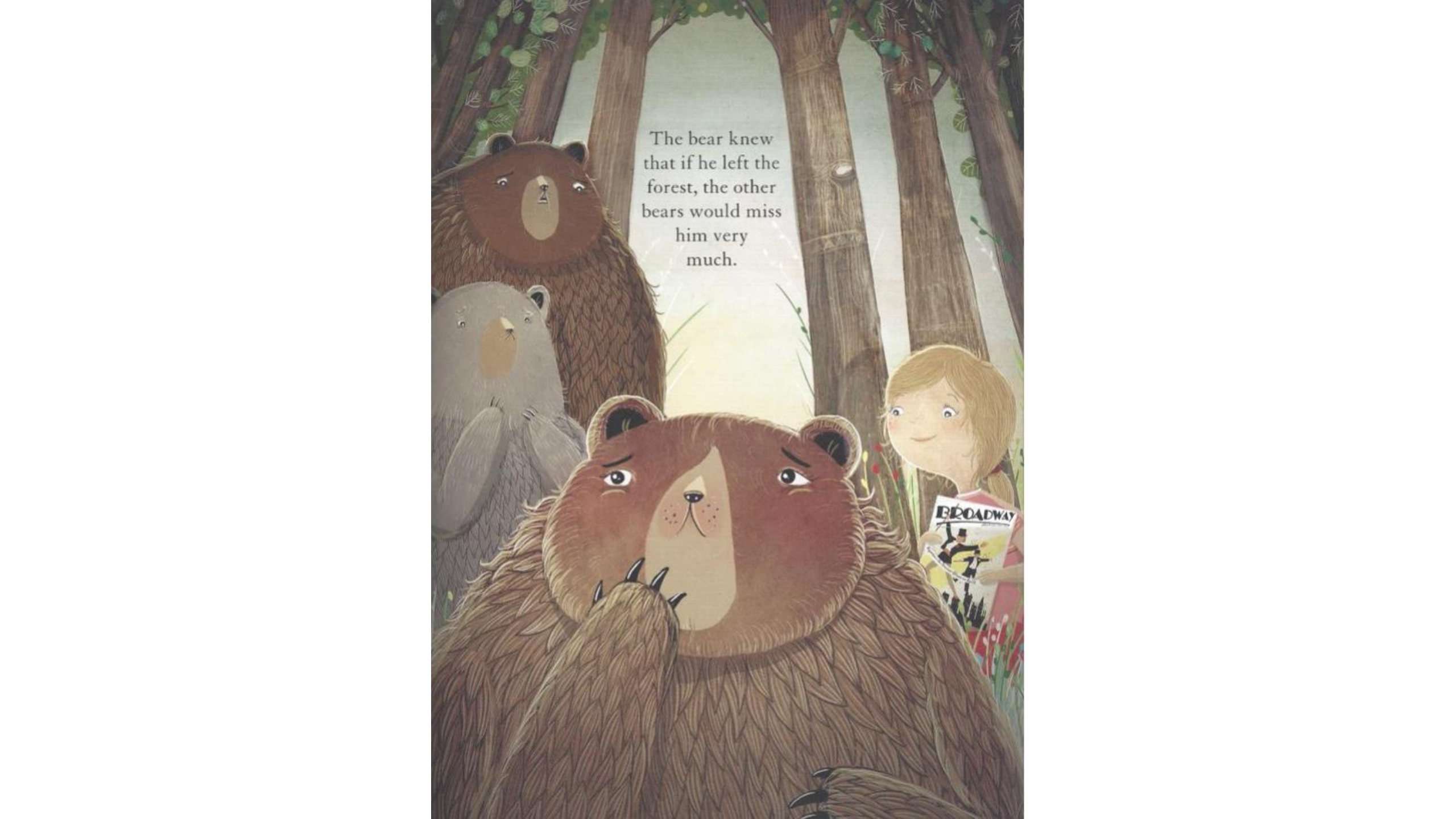
Then, one night, a girl and her father came across the clearing.



They told the bear that the strange thing was a piano and the sounds it made were music.

“Come to the city with us,” they said. “There is lots of music there. You can play grand pianos in front of hundreds of people and hear sounds so beautiful they will make your fur stand on end.”



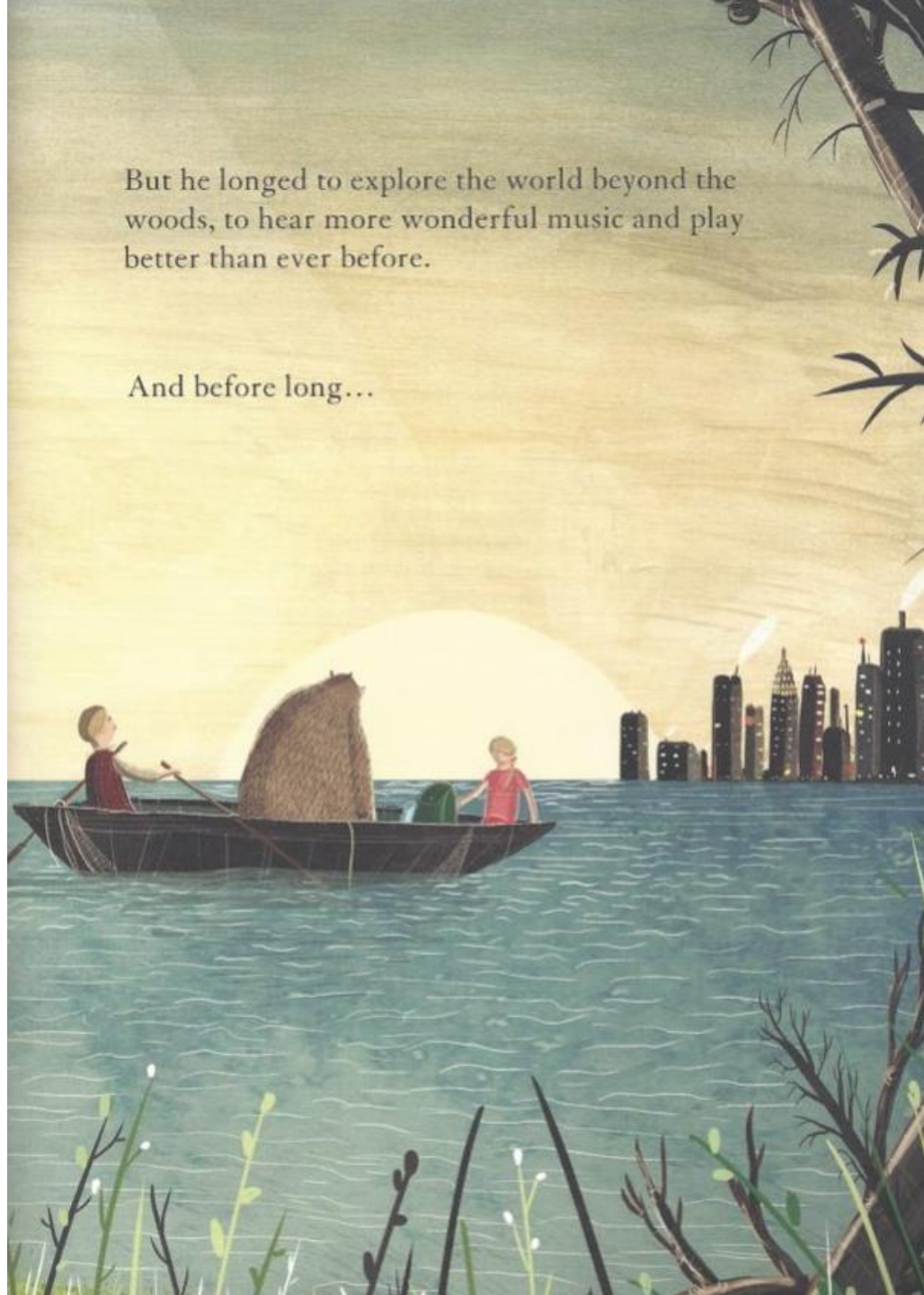
An illustration of a forest scene. In the foreground, a large brown bear with a thoughtful expression looks towards the right. Behind him, a smaller brown bear and a grey bear look on. To the right, a young girl with blonde hair holds a sign that says "BROADWAY". The background shows tall trees and a soft light source.

The bear knew
that if he left the
forest, the other
bears would miss
him very
much.

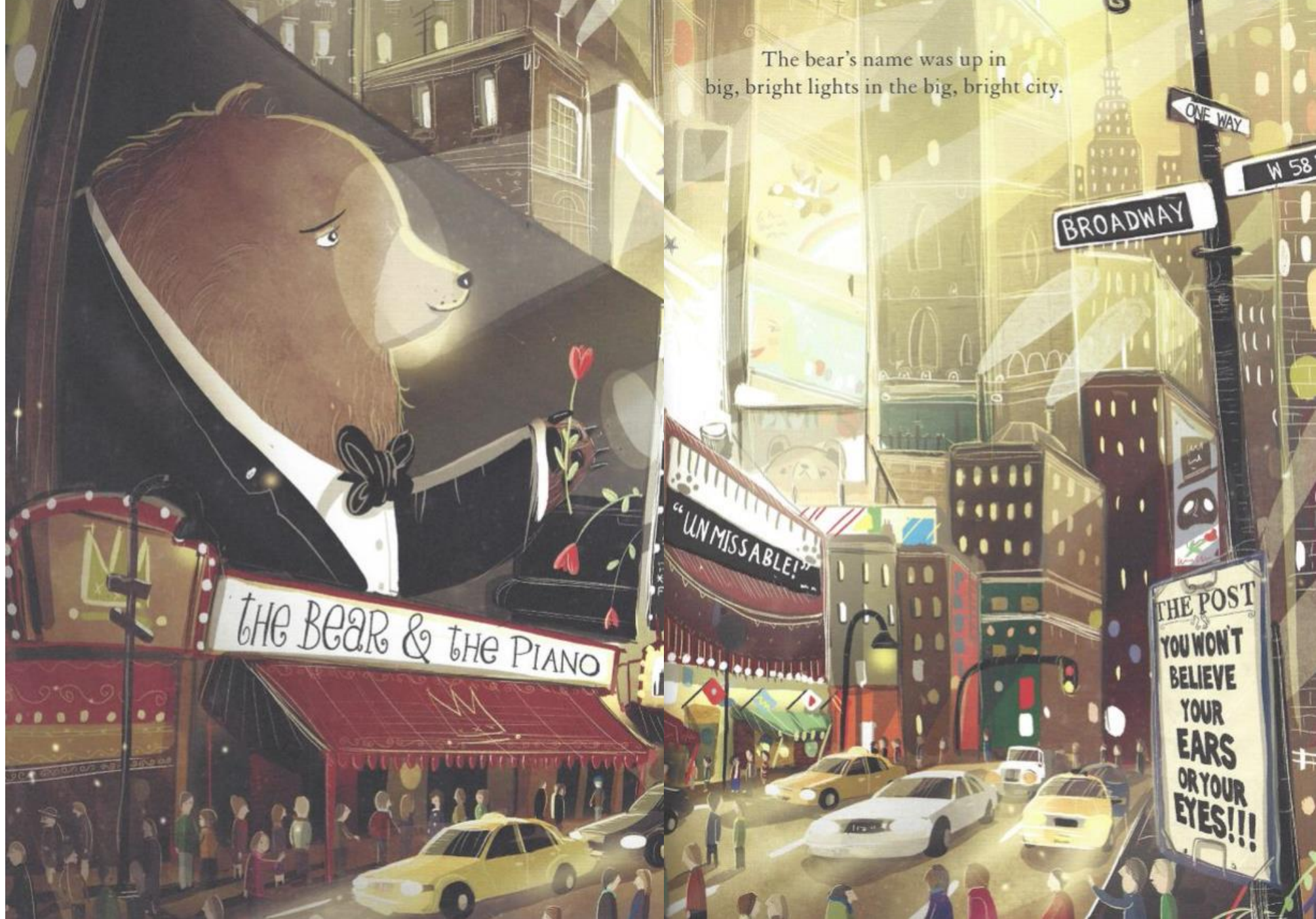


But he longed to explore the world beyond the woods, to hear more wonderful music and play better than ever before.

And before long...



The bear's name was up in
big, bright lights in the big, bright city.





He played sold-out concerts in giant theatres.



Every night, he performed



with such passion



and such grace,



to wild applause



and standing ovations



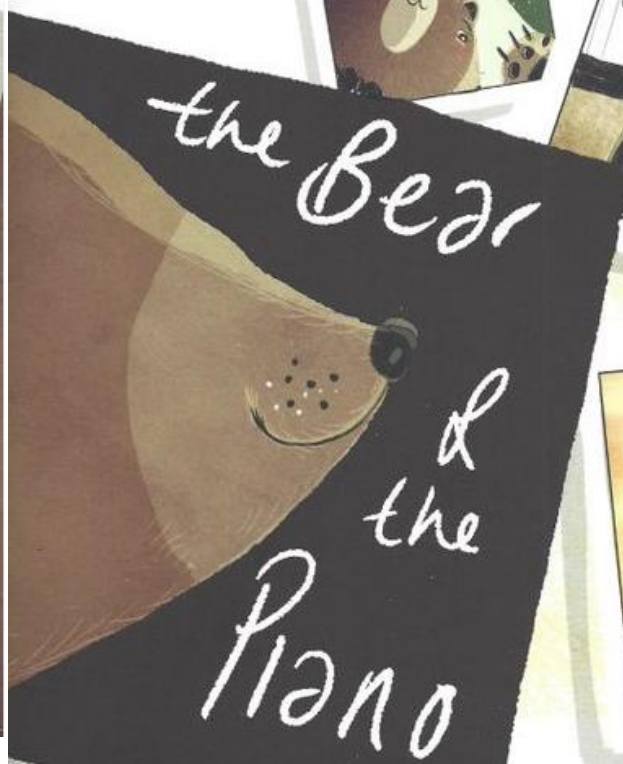
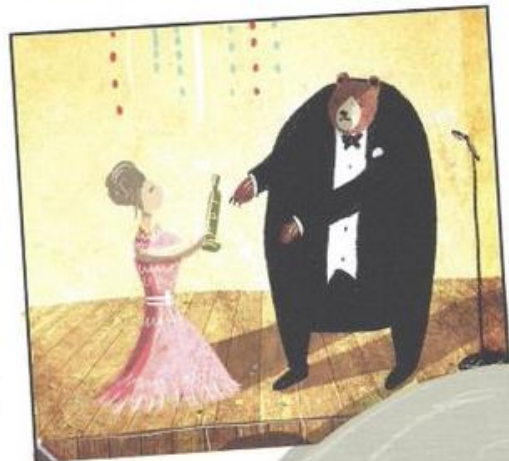
and huge admiration.


The bear recorded albums that went platinum.

He was interviewed for magazines.

He won awards.

He met new people everyday
and created headlines everywhere he went.





The city was everything he had hoped it would be.

But deep down, something tugged at the bear's heart.

He had fame and awards and all the music in the world,
but he missed the forest.

He missed his old friends.

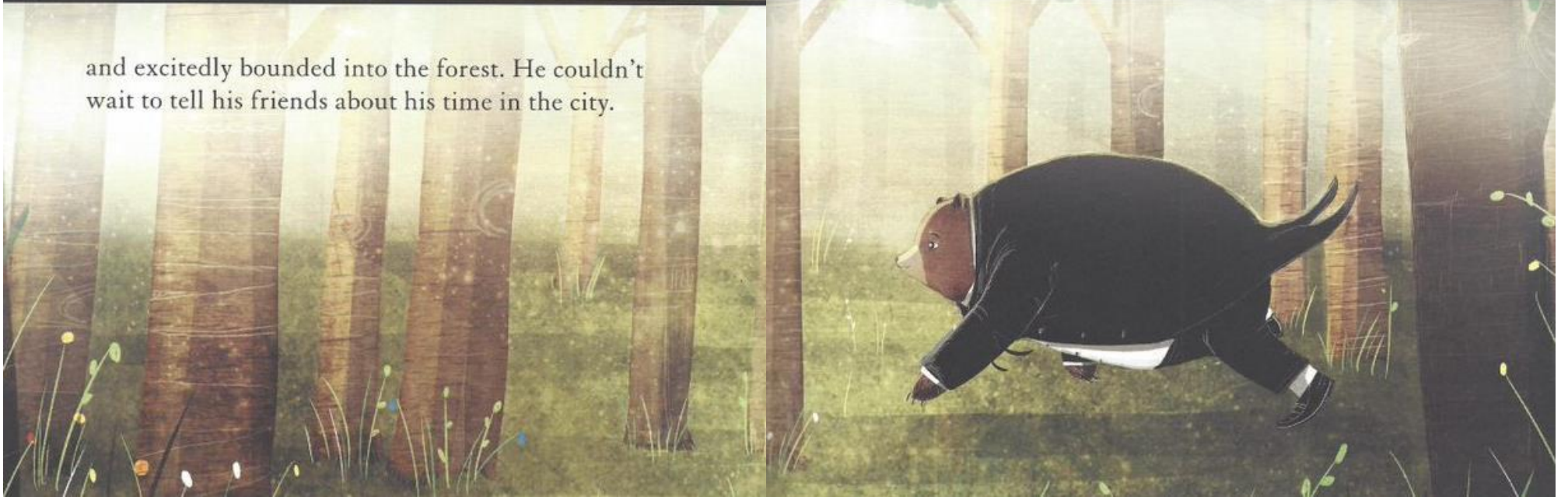
He missed his home.

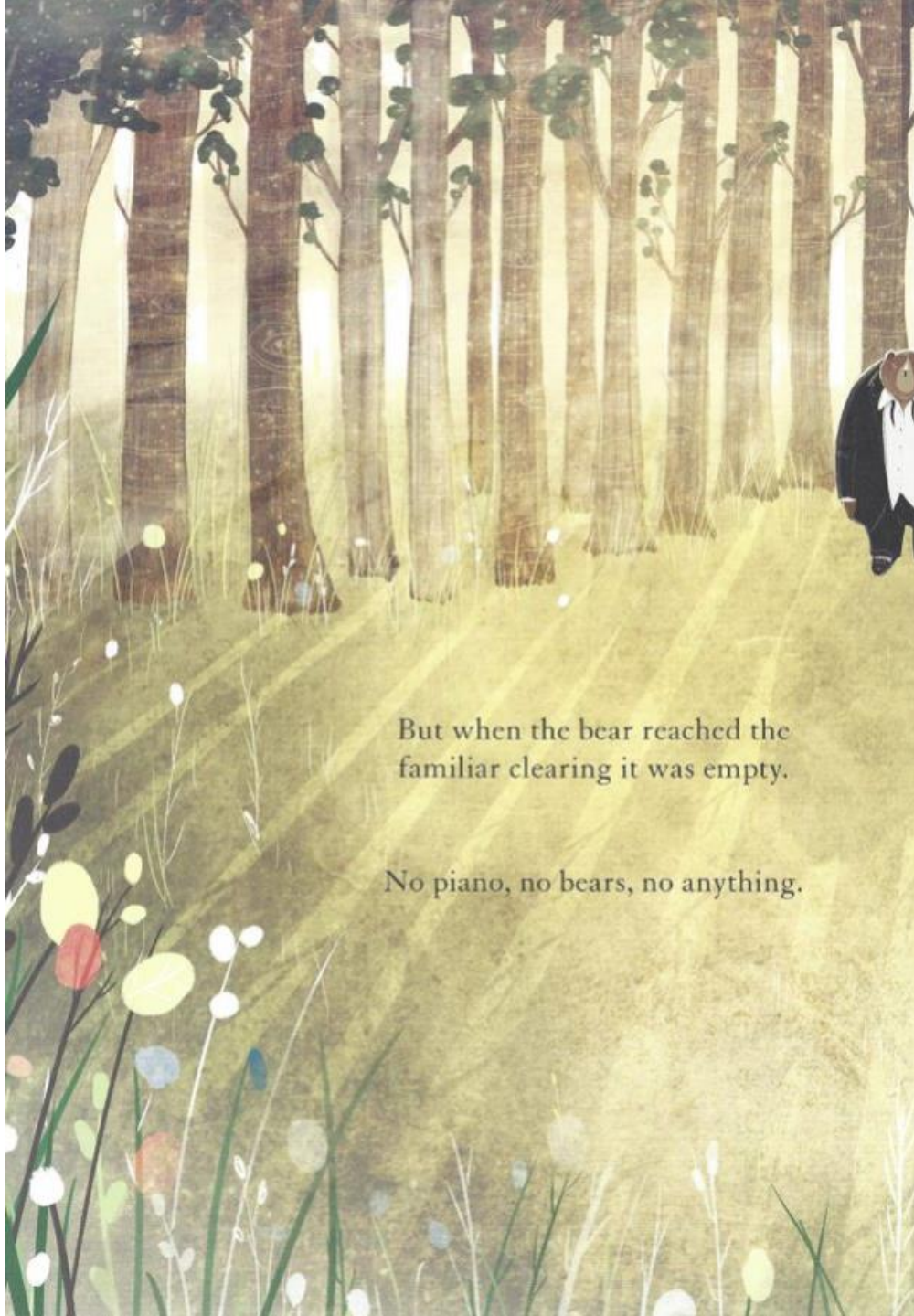


So the bear decided to go back.
He speedily crossed the river...



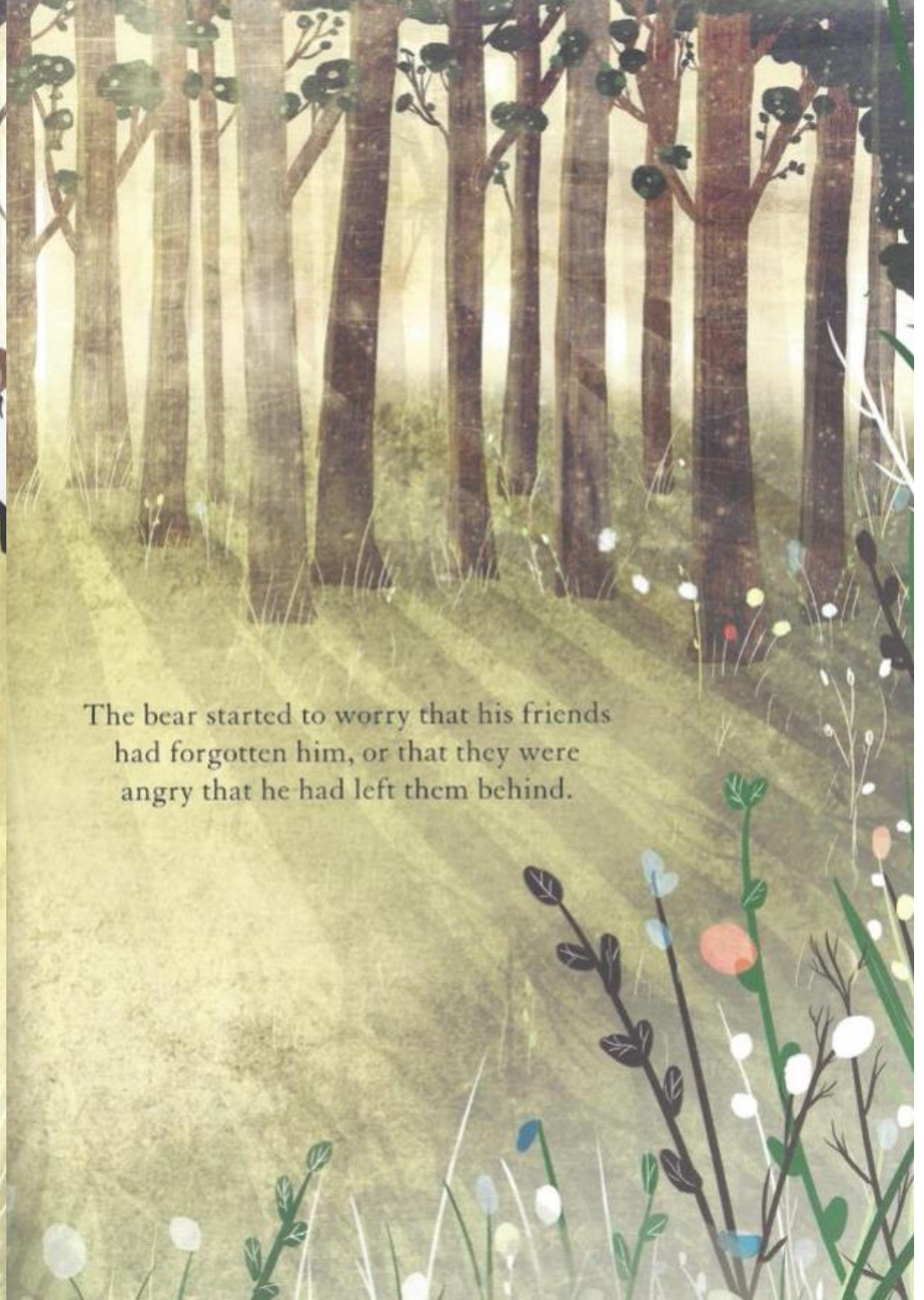
and excitedly bounded into the forest. He couldn't
wait to tell his friends about his time in the city.



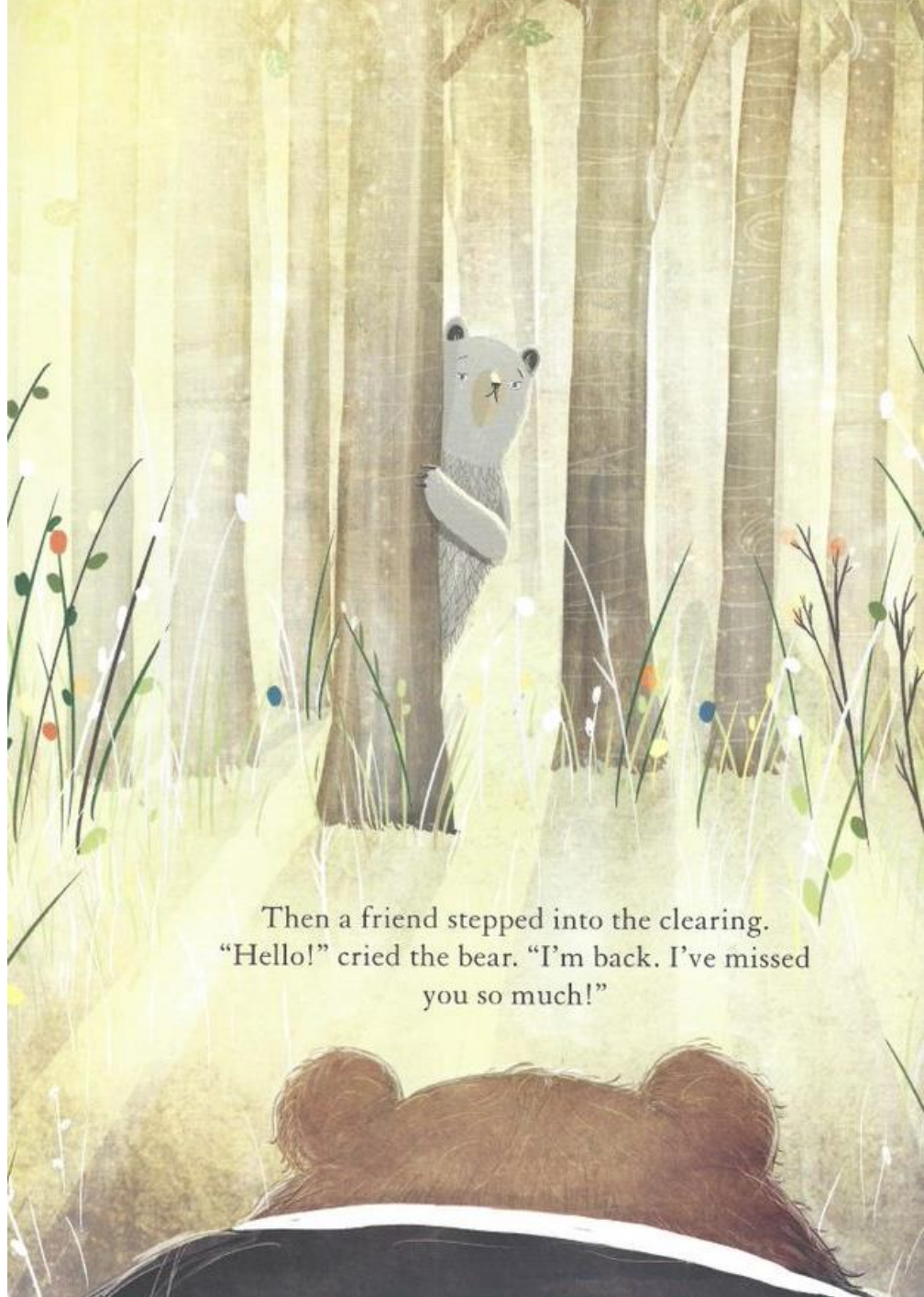


But when the bear reached the familiar clearing it was empty.

No piano, no bears, no anything.



The bear started to worry that his friends had forgotten him, or that they were angry that he had left them behind.



Then a friend stepped into the clearing.
“Hello!” cried the bear. “I’m back. I’ve missed
you so much!”

Without saying a word, the grey bear ran back into the forest.
“Wait!” called the bear. “I’m sorry I left. Please stop!”
But his friend just kept running.



The bear stumbled after him, moving deeper and
deeper into the forest,



until he saw something that made his fur stand on end.



For the bear had not been forgotten.
His friends weren't angry, but proud.



The bear realised that no matter where he went, or what he did,
they would always be there, watching from afar.



They had even kept the piano safe
in the shade, ready for his return.



So after the bear had told his friends about his life in the city, and the many concerts he had played, he sat down to play once more.

This time, for the most important audience of all.

