

DAHLIA



BARBARA McCLINTOCK

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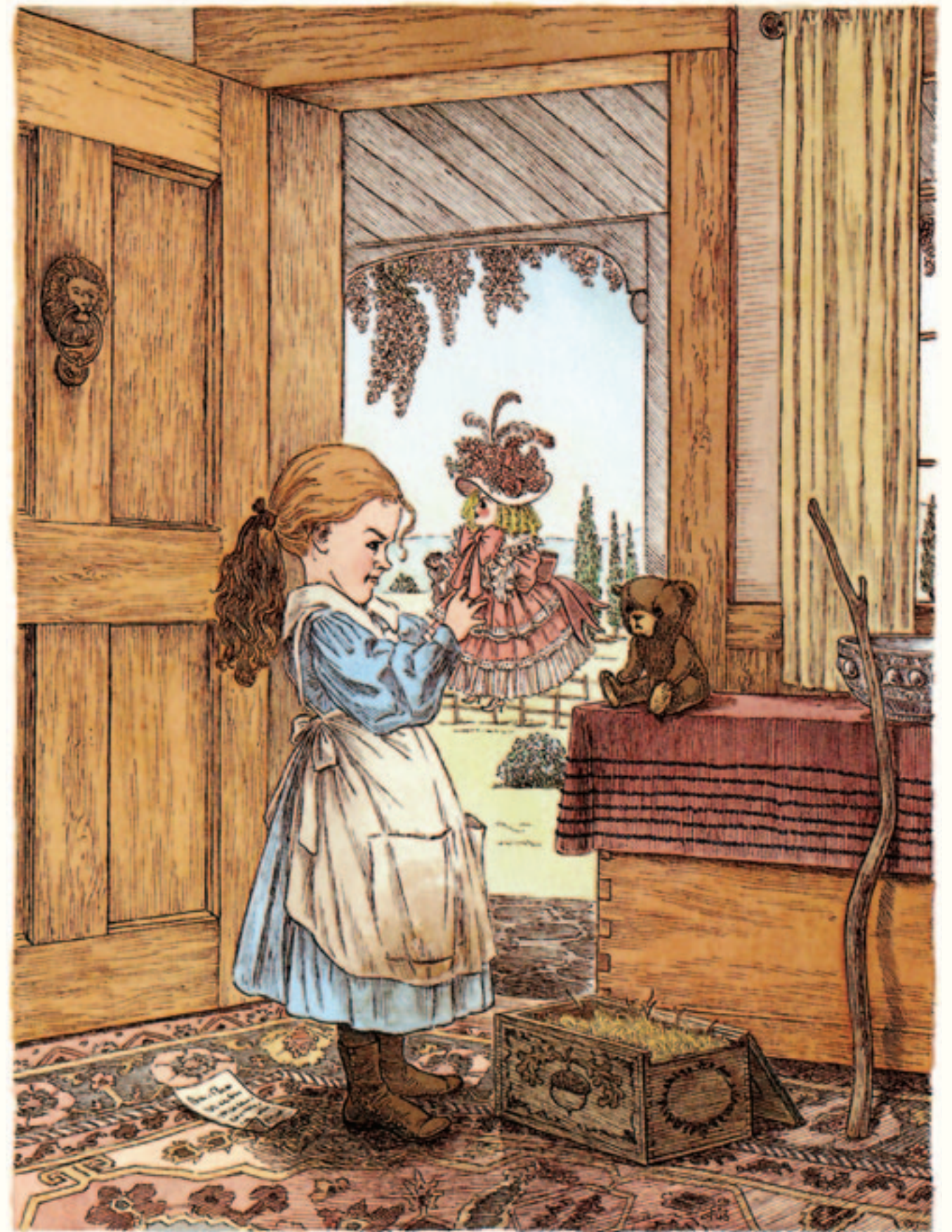
Purple House Press
Kentucky

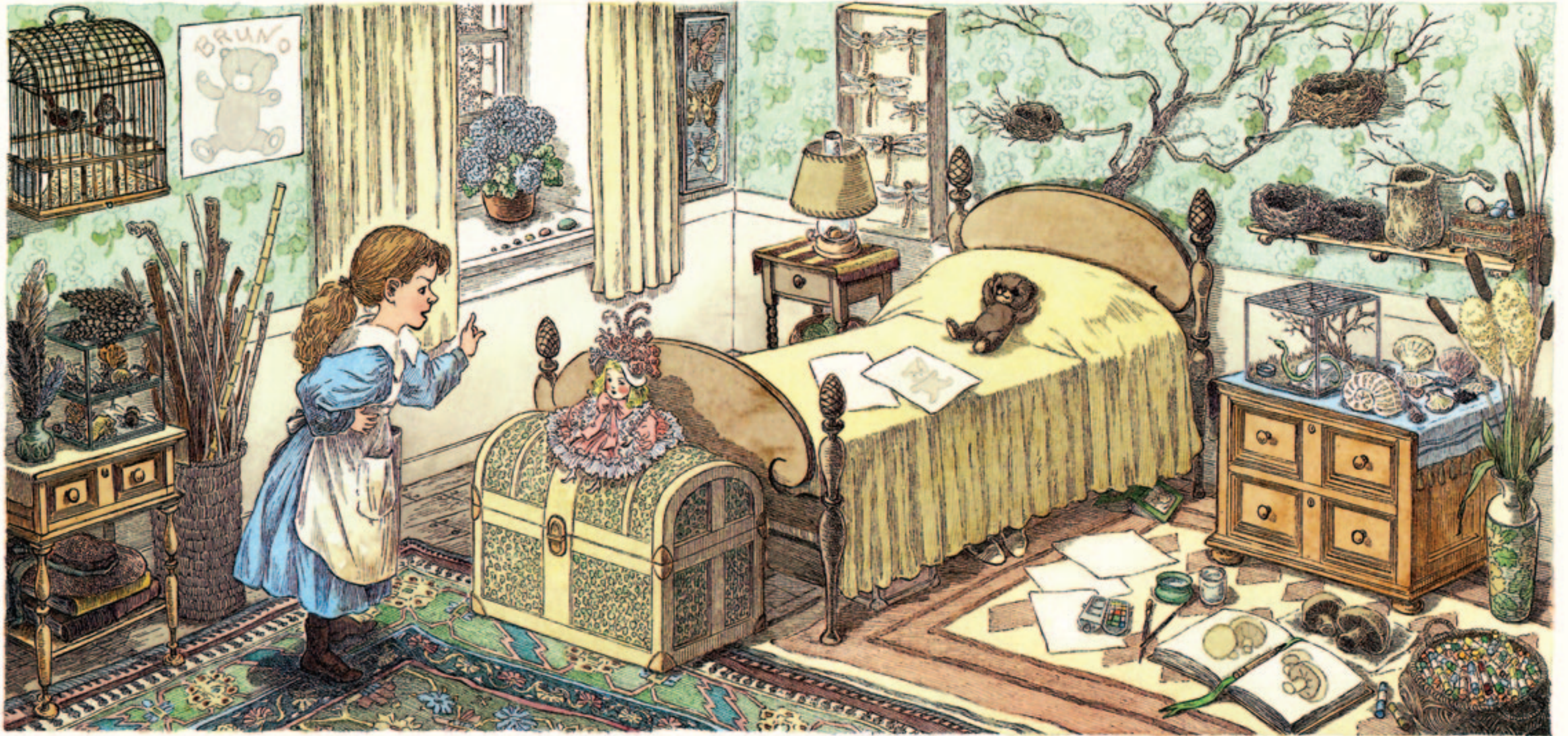
IT WAS a beautiful blue morning. Charlotte and Bruno were making mud cakes when Charlotte's mother called.



There was a package for Charlotte. Inside was a doll. Her painted mouth was prim. She was dressed in linen and lace and delicate silk ribbons. Frail hands were covered with thin gloves.

Charlotte found a note. "Dear Charlotte, I saw this doll and thought of you. Tell your mother I'm coming for dinner. Love, Aunt Edme."





Charlotte didn't have a doll. Charlotte didn't want a doll. She carried the doll upstairs, thinking at any moment it might break.

In Charlotte's room, among the dragonflies and boxes of beetles and found birds' nests, the doll looked out of place.

"We like digging in dirt and climbing trees," Charlotte confessed to the doll. "No tea parties, no being pushed around in frilly prams. You'll just have to get used to the way we do things."

The doll looked concerned, but said nothing.