



MAKE ANIMALS GREAT AGAIN

and Other Creature Campaigns

WRITTEN BY
**MAUREEN
YEO**

ILLUSTRATED BY
**GRACIE
CHAI**



TREE-CLIMBING CRAB



SNAKEHEAD



PRAYING MANTIS



MOSQUITO



OWL



ATLAS MOTH



SCORPION



PLANTAIN SQUIRREL



CENTIPEDE



ARCHER FISH



CIVET



FIDDLER CRAB



OCTOPUS



SAMBAR DEER



APHID



TERMITE



BEE



MAKE ANIMALS GREAT AGAIN

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For the dyslexic bear & the little bear,
the praying man(tis), the koala kid & the fighting fish.

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Maureen Yeo

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CHAPTER ONE

The moon glowed white and hung so close that Flying Fox thought if he flew just beyond the banana trees, he could touch it. The Emerald Eye was peaceful.

Whenever there was peace, the animals reproduced, and gaggles of their children now sat in front of Flying Fox. For three generations, Flying Fox had taught the young night creatures all the ways of the forest.

It had been many moons since humans threatened the homes of the animals. Sometimes, when Flying Fox told the young animals about the past, he saw them rolling their eyes. Tonight, the full moon and the scent of ripening bananas made them all restless. So, when Jungle Fowl crowed at dawn, it was with great relief that Flying Fox dismissed the little ones from school. In a flurry of wings, fur and feelers, the young animals dashed out of the clearing.

Slow Loris Junior looked at the mad rush anxiously. Flying Fox had told the class to let Slow Loris Junior go first. He was so slow that

if he did not go first, he would not get home till the sun was high in the sky. Flying Fox had been ignored. He felt deeply troubled.

Shrew came rustling and bustling to collect her offspring and they formed a caravan, each biting the rear end of the one in front. Shrew scurried up to Flying Fox with her furry grey train in tow.

“Flying Fox!” screamed Shrew. “I think extra help during the daylight hours would be good for my children!” Flying Fox wondered why she had to shriek at the top of her lungs when she was right next to him.

“Your children are doing well, Shrew,” Flying Fox said. “Perhaps the daylight hours could be used to engage in unstructured play?”

The little shrews looked up hopefully.

“Unstructured play??”

Shrew said this in such a high pitch that the orchids nearby withered and died. The young shrews got back in line. “My children do not need unstructured play. They need more lessons to keep up with the rats! Rats aren’t even from here, but those foreign talents are reproducing rapidly and out-competing us! It is literally a rat race out there!”

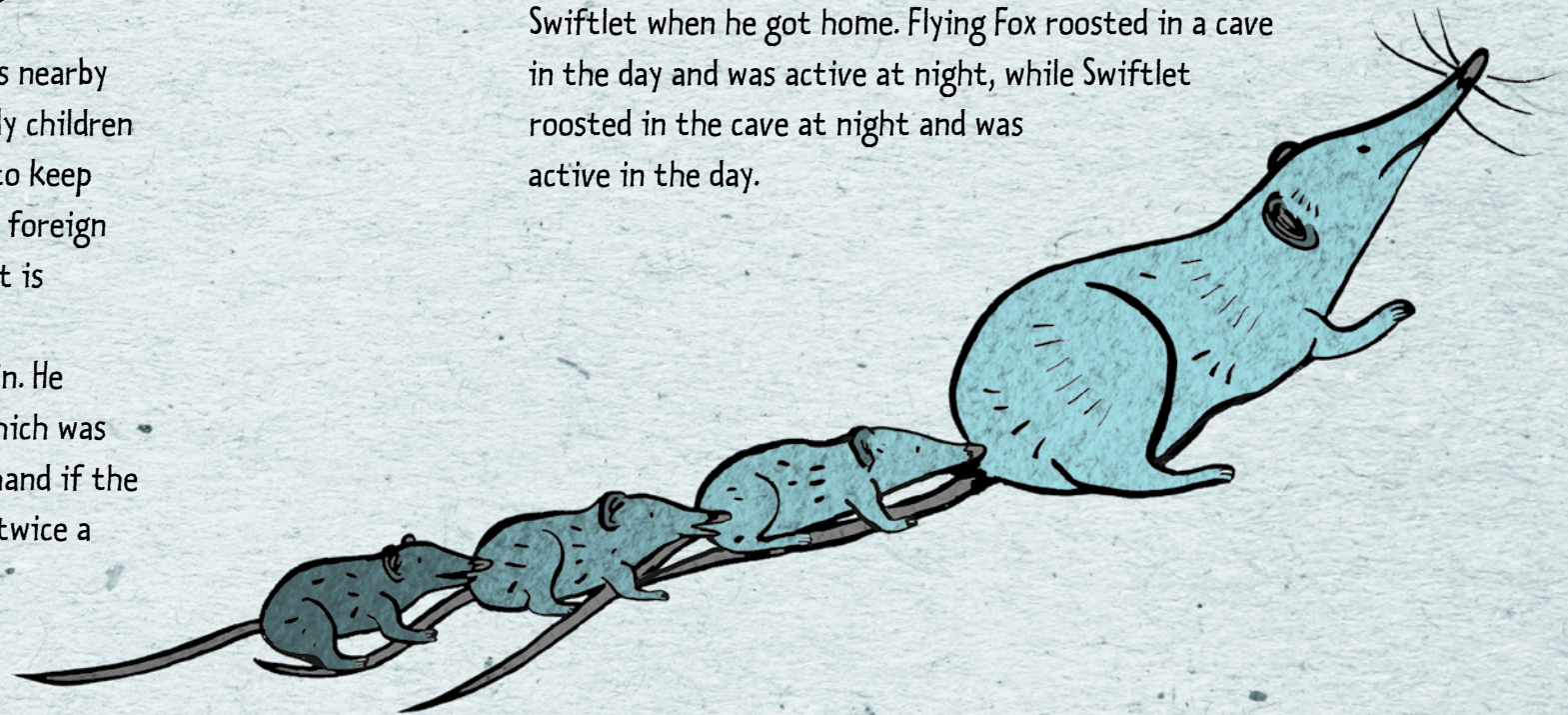
Shrew’s tone was so venomous that Flying Fox gave in. He had heard a rumour that Shrew’s bite was poisonous, which was unusual for a mammal. He didn’t want to find out firsthand if the rumour was true. He agreed to tutor the young shrews twice a week. Satisfied, Shrew and her children shuffled off.

Flying Fox saw Scorpion heading in his direction, with eight little scorplings riding on

her back. A couple of the scorplings had been real troublemakers that night. One had kept pinching Slow Loris Junior, and another had decided to moult right in the middle of class without asking to be excused, creating a huge distraction. They had probably complained to their mother that Flying Fox had made them sit in a corner. Flying Fox took to the air and made himself scarce. Dealing with one difficult parent was quite enough for the night.

As he flew home, he spied Whistling Duck leading her ducklings to the day school. They followed her all in a row, a disturbing picture of conformity. “Which is worse,” Flying Fox mused, “slavish obedience like these ducklings, or disrespect for authority like the scorplings?”

Flying Fox looked forward to talking with his roommate Swiftlet when he got home. Flying Fox roosted in a cave in the day and was active at night, while Swiftlet roosted in the cave at night and was active in the day.



Swiftlet had recently gotten paired with a lady and they had spent a month using their saliva to construct a nest. Swiftlet had not wanted to chat at all during that period. His mouth must have been pretty dry.

After the nest had been built, Mrs Swiftlet laid two eggs and the couple took turns keeping them warm. Then, Swiftlet was very chatty, since sitting on the eggs for hours was pretty boring.

At home, Flying Fox saw that Swiftlet was in a tizzy.

“Sorry, Flying Fox, I can’t talk now,” Swiftlet apologised.

“What’s the matter, Swiftlet?” Flying Fox asked, concerned.

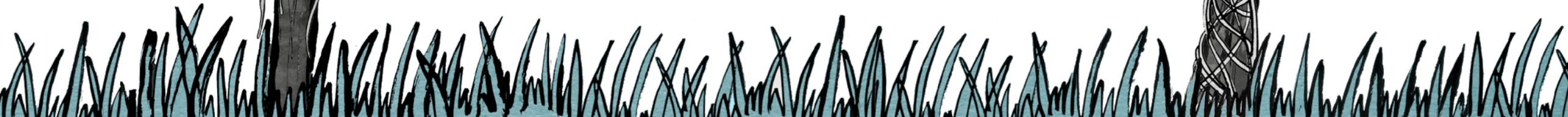
“My chicks have just hatched! My wife found out about a school that all the high flyers go to, and she wants me to start building a nest near it right away. I’ve got to save my spit.”

“But your chicks just hatched!” said Flying Fox, confused. “They won’t need to go to school for some time.”

“I got an earful about this from Mrs Swiftlet this morning!” Swiftlet cried. “She said other animals take the best nest sites and places at the school before their chicks are even out of eggshells! **Gosh, none of this is apparent until you become a parent.**”

Swiftlet darted out of the cave and was gone in a flash. Mrs Swiftlet glared down at Flying Fox as her two chicks cheeped hungrily.

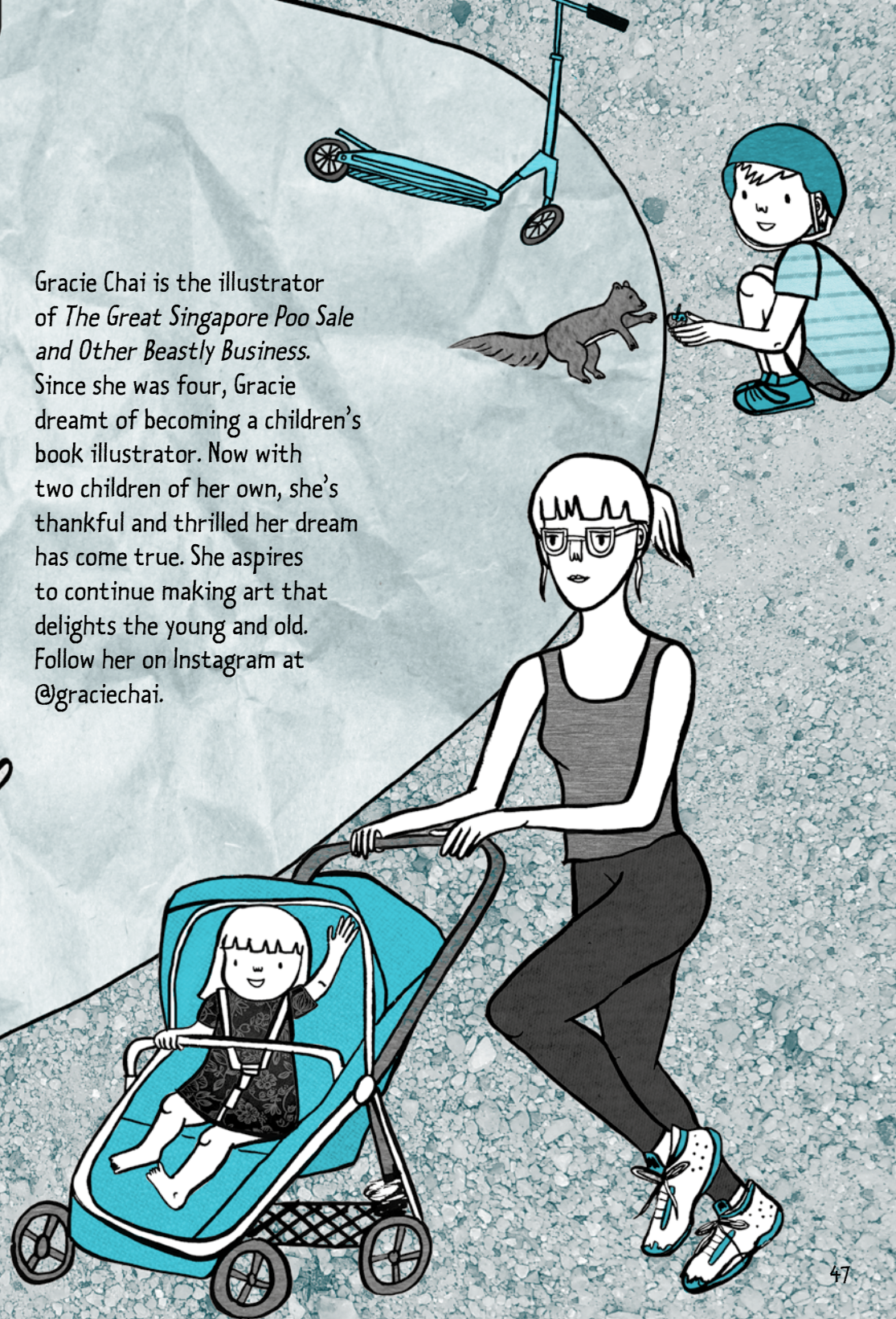
The events of the morning left Flying Fox feeling uneasy. It felt like the time he saw that a strangler fig sapling had sprouted in a crevice of his favourite mango tree. He had done nothing about it. Three fruiting seasons later, the tree was dead. Strangled. Flying Fox decided it was time to convene a Council of the Animals.



Maureen Yeo is the author of *The Great Singapore Poo Sale and Other Beastly Business*. Her travel articles, short stories and poems have been published in various periodicals. Formerly an English and Literature teacher, Maureen is now a full-time mum to a small child and a big dog. She is also the wife of "The Most Irritating Person in the World (Self-Proclaimed)". Follow her on Instagram at @maureenyeosuiyin.



Gracie Chai is the illustrator of *The Great Singapore Poo Sale and Other Beastly Business*. Since she was four, Gracie dreamt of becoming a children's book illustrator. Now with two children of her own, she's thankful and thrilled her dream has come true. She aspires to continue making art that delights the young and old. Follow her on Instagram at @graciechai.

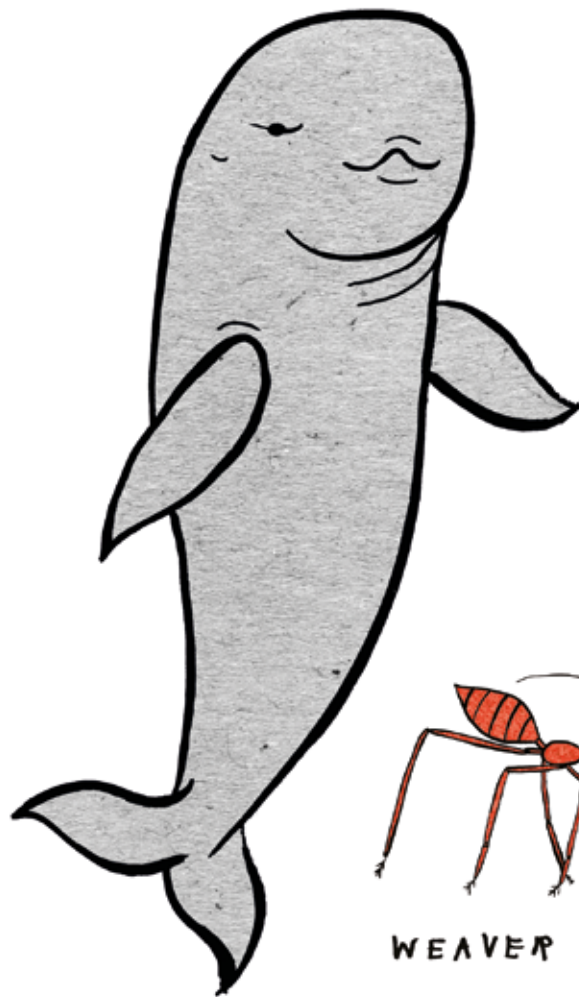




ORIENTAL WHIP SNAKE



LONG-TAILED
PARAKEET



FINLESS PORPOISE



HERMIT CRAB



HORSESHOE CRAB



HERON



WEAVER ANT



FLY



WEAVERBIRD



MILLIPEDE



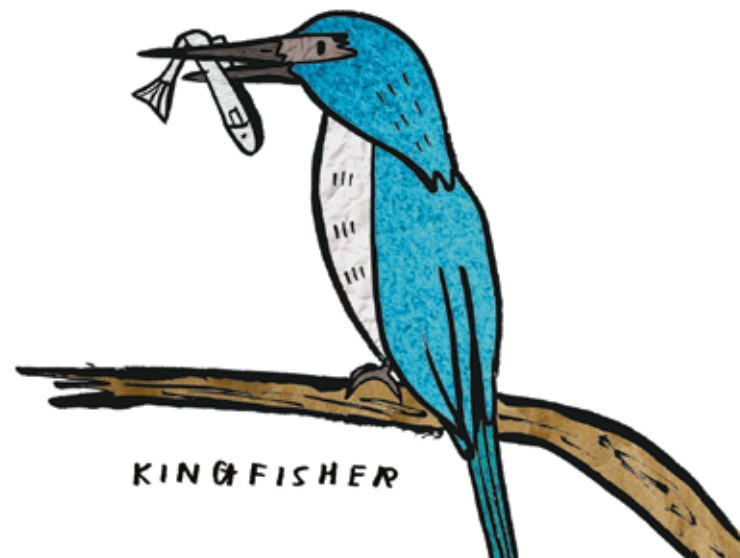
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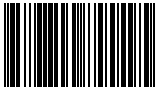
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