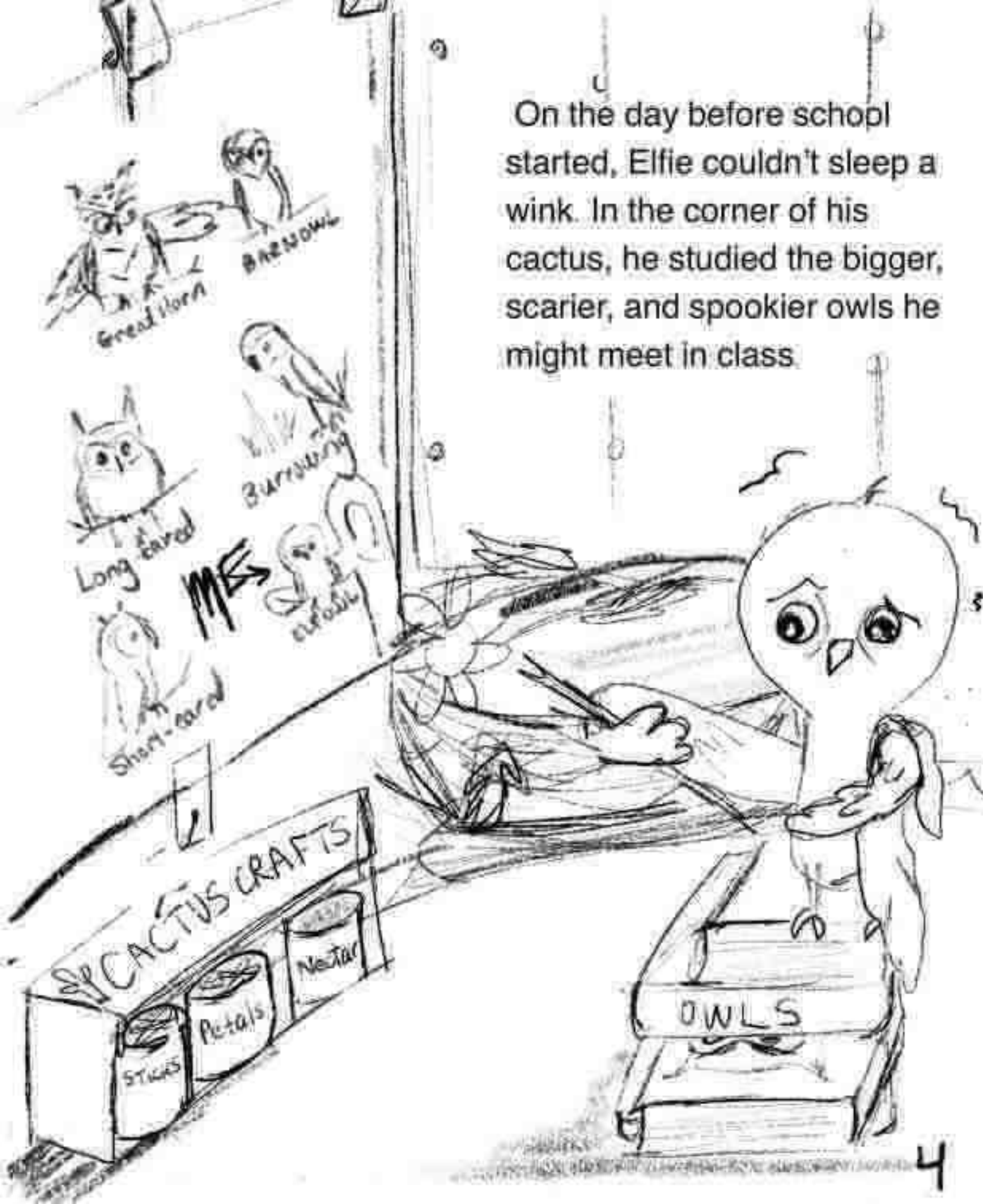
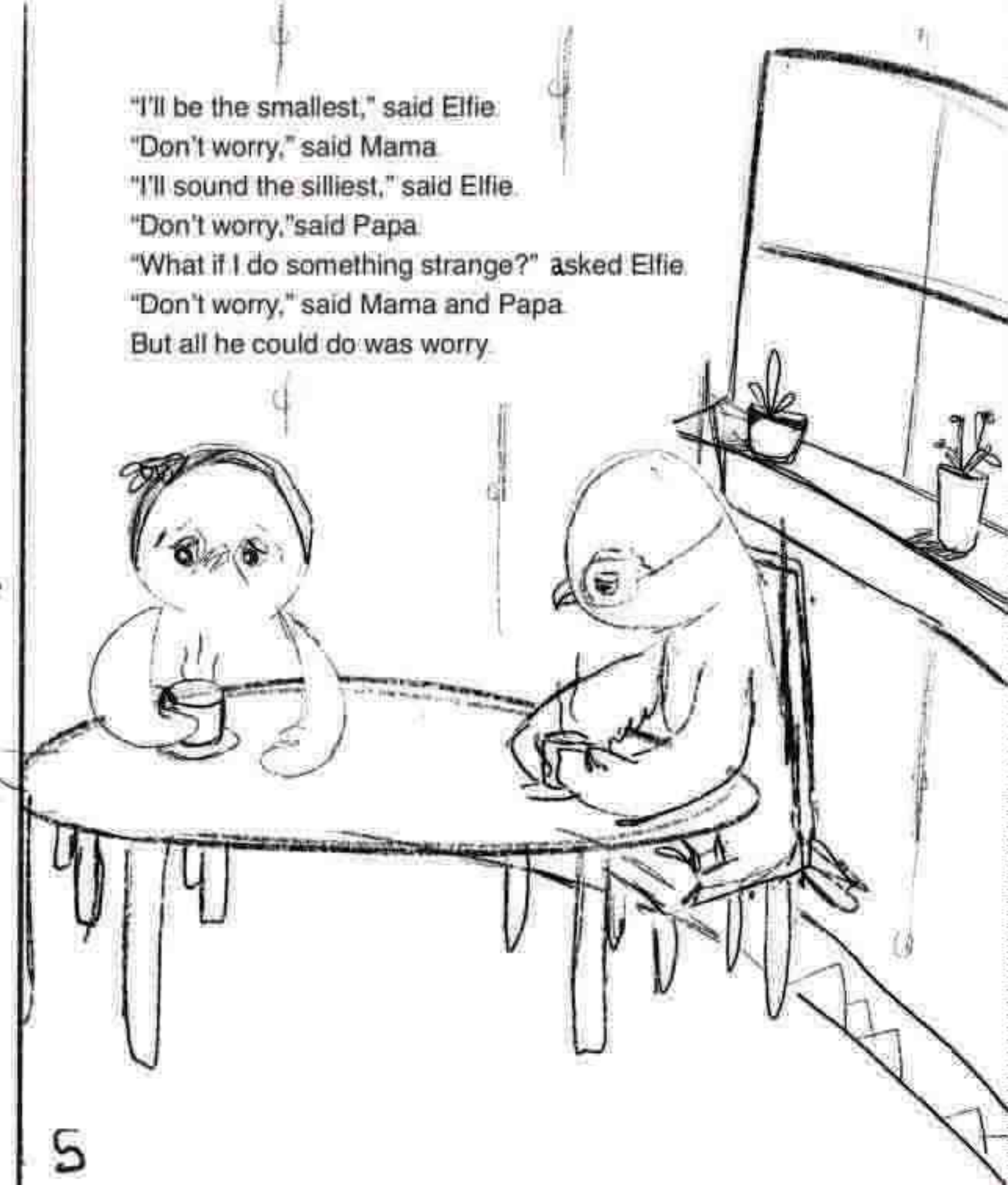


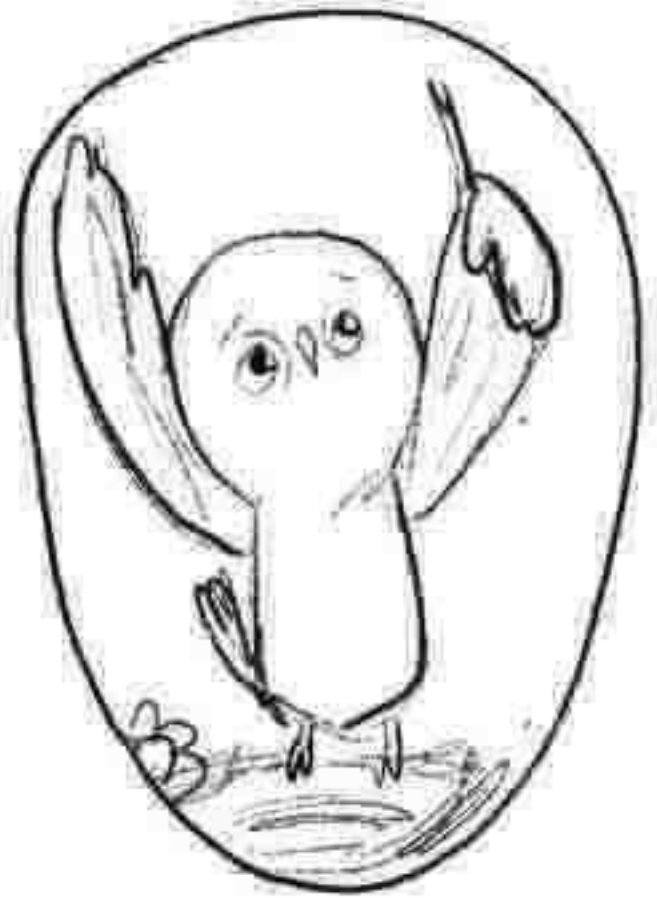
On the day before school started, Elfie couldn't sleep a wink. In the corner of his cactus, he studied the bigger, scarier, and spookier owls he might meet in class.



"I'll be the smallest," said Elfie.  
"Don't worry," said Mama.  
"I'll sound the silliest," said Elfie.  
"Don't worry," said Papa.  
"What if I do something strange?" asked Elfie.  
"Don't worry," said Mama and Papa.  
But all he could do was worry.



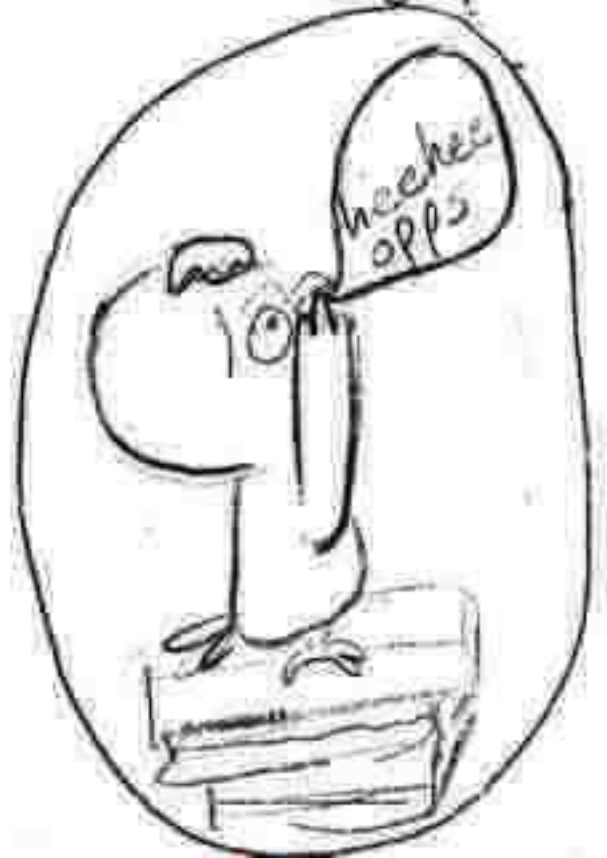
Elfie practiced looking bigger,



acting scarier, and



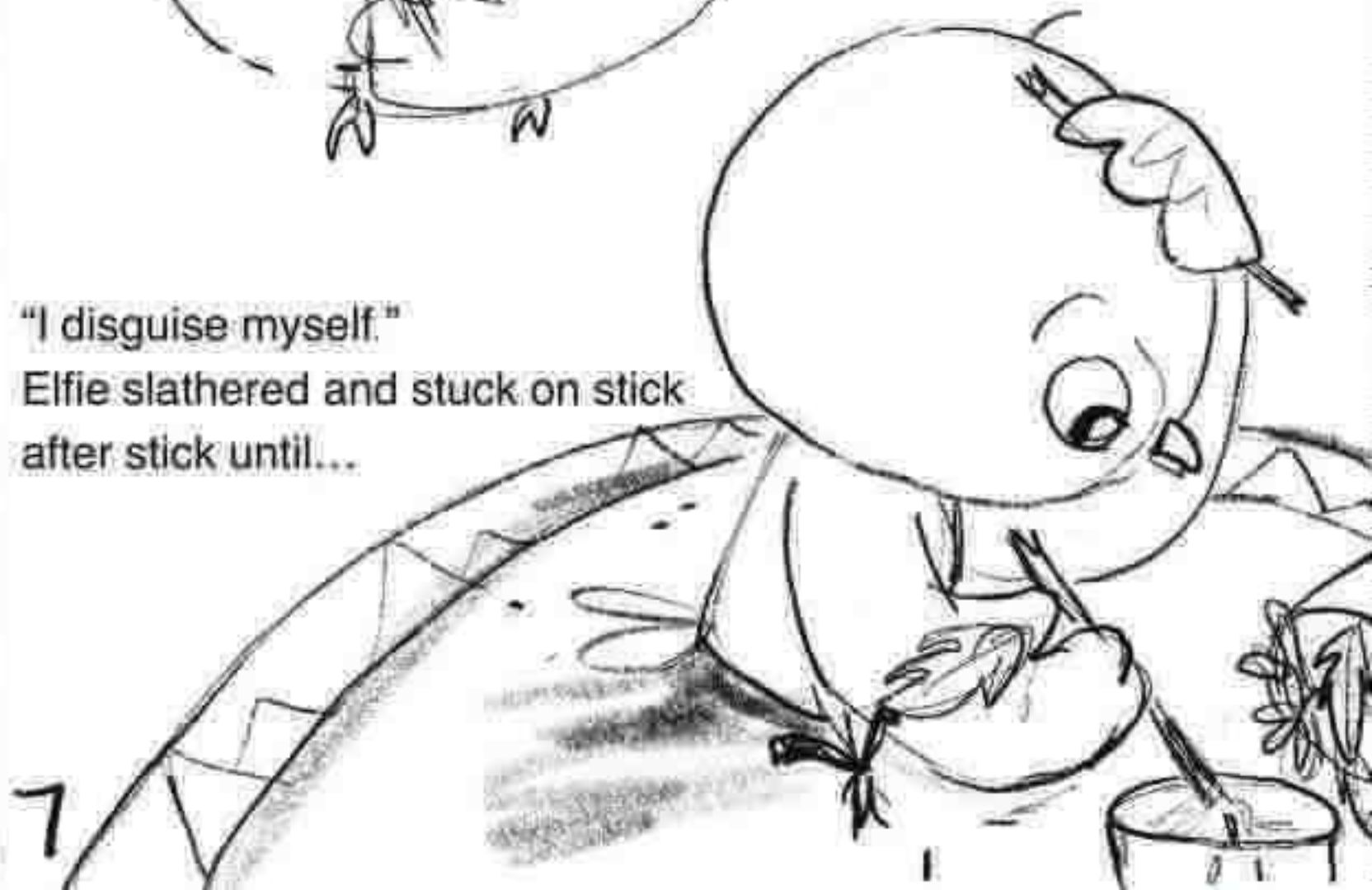
sounding spookier.



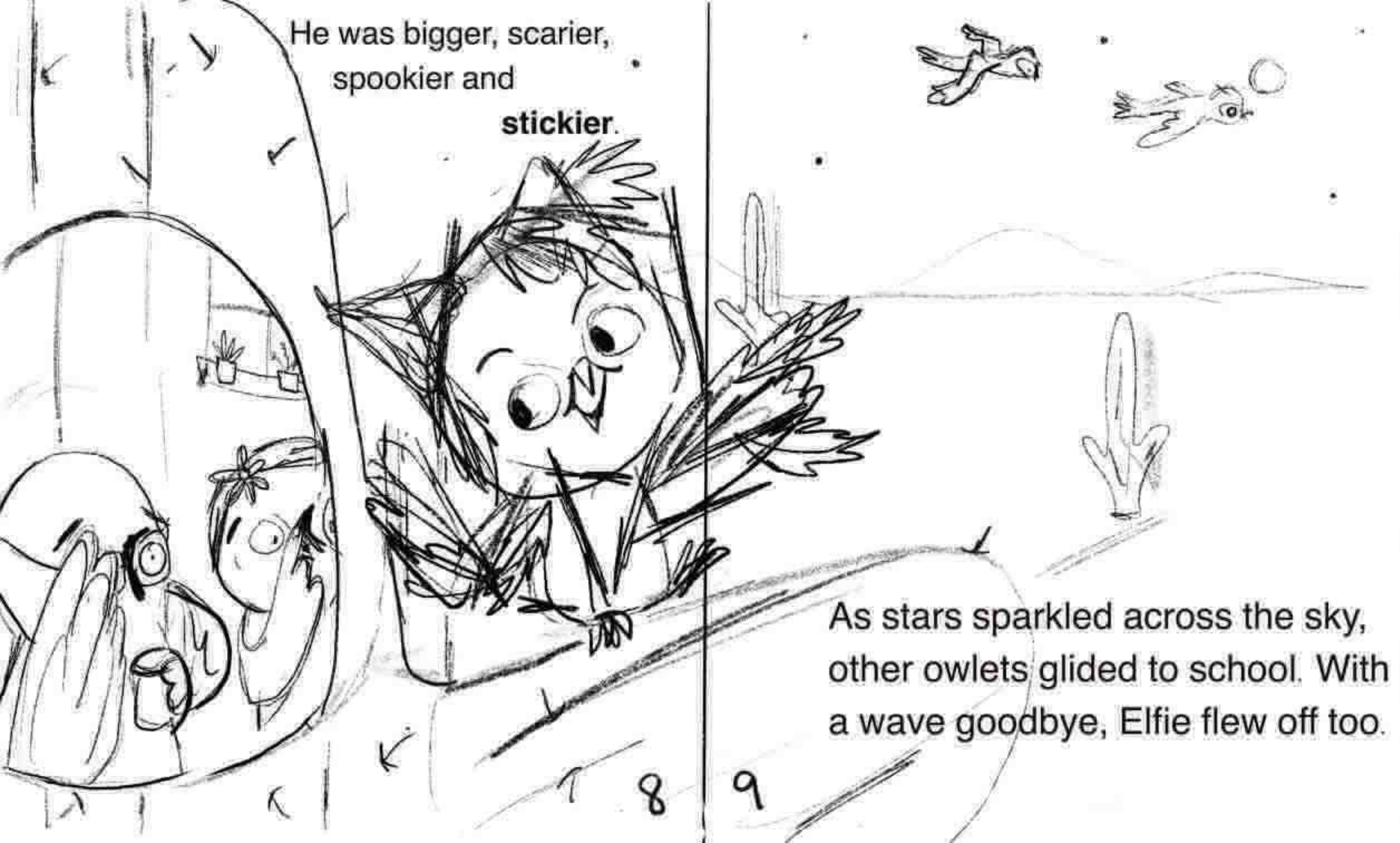
But *humpf. Humpf. HMPF!*  
It only made him more nervous.  
"I'll only be known as the smallest owl in school."  
Unless...



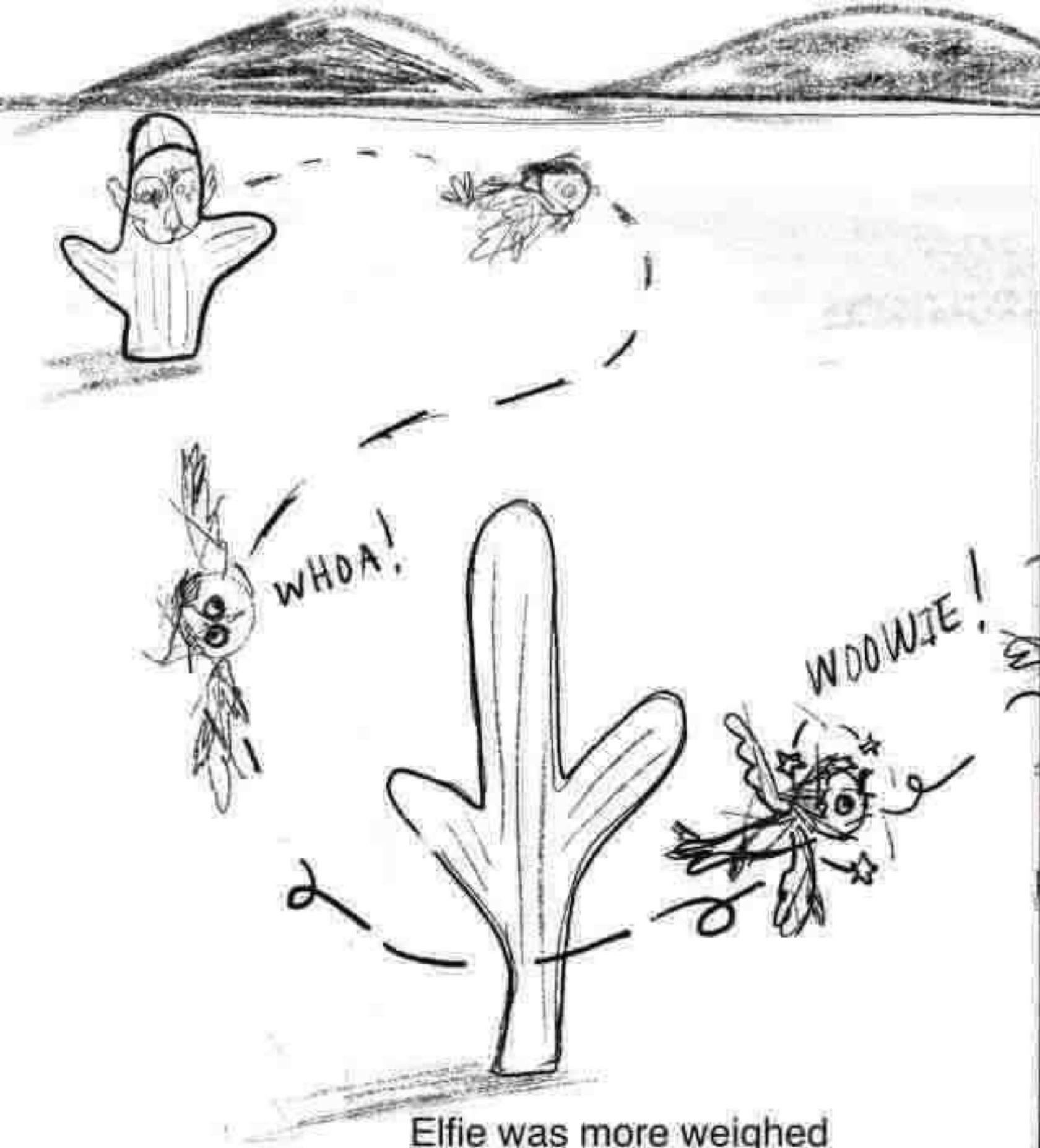
"I disguise myself."  
Elfie slathered and stuck on stick after stick until...



He was bigger, scarier,  
spookier and  
**stickier.**



As stars sparkled across the sky,  
other owlets glided to school. With  
a wave goodbye, Elfie flew off too.



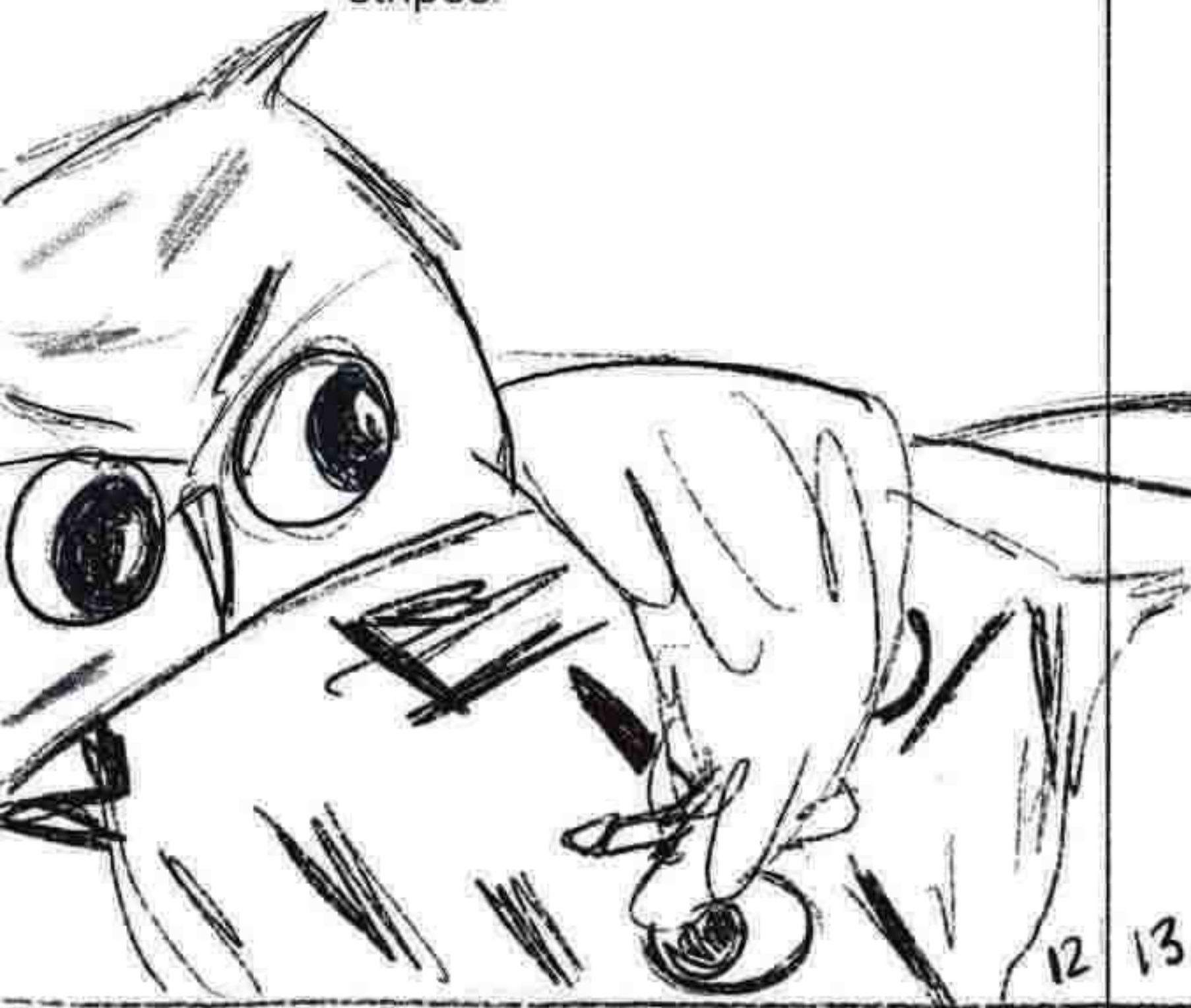
Elfie was more weighed down than he realized.



"Welcome. I'm Mrs. Sage. Let's get to know each other. We'll draw self portraits and share something interesting about ourselves."

Great Horn scribbled fiercely and finished first.

"I'm Great Horn. I have big black stripes."



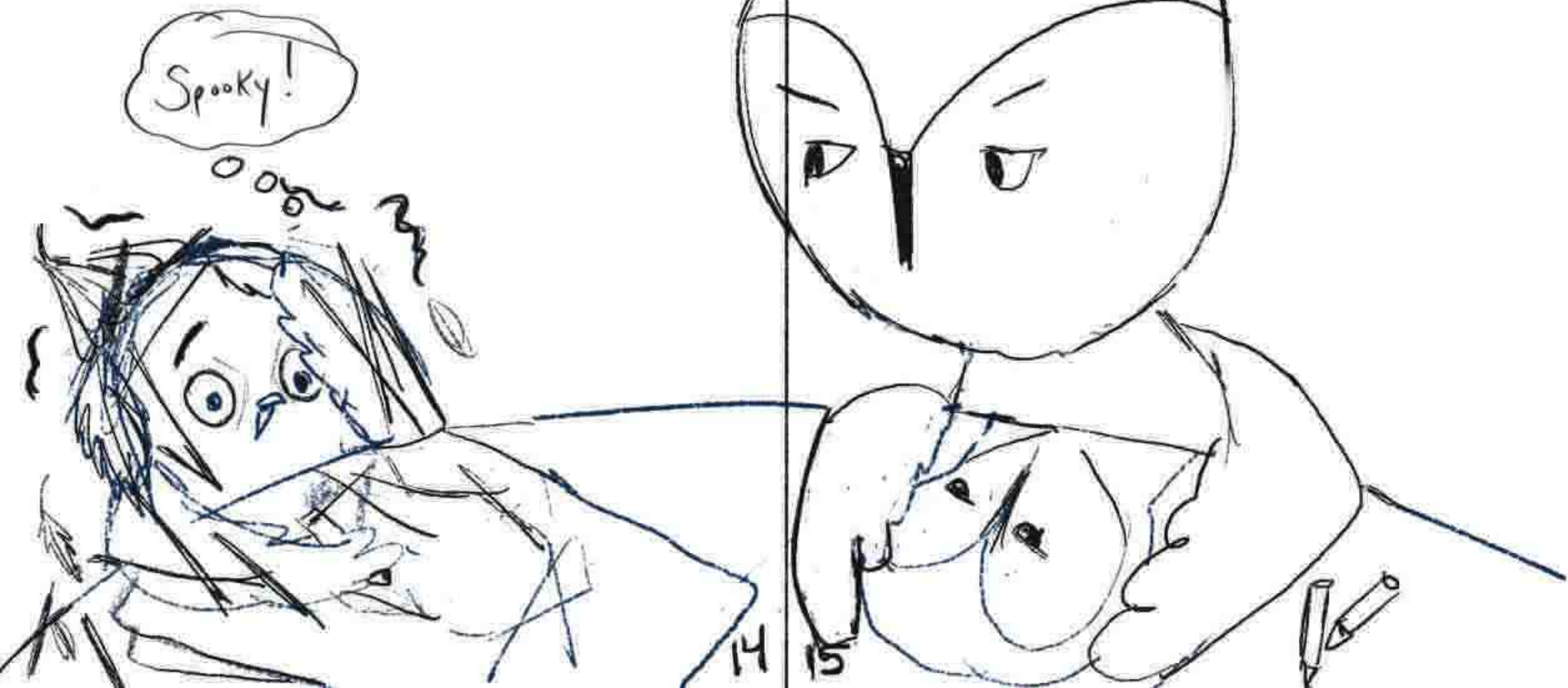
"Like a tiger," blurted Elfie.



Barn owl finished next.

"I'm Barnieeee," he screeched. "Some say I glow."

"Like a ghost," sputtered Elfie.



Elfie drew himself over and over.

"I'm-m-m Sticy -a Stick Owl. Yup, that's me."

"Amazing! I've never met your species before,"  
said Mrs. Sage.

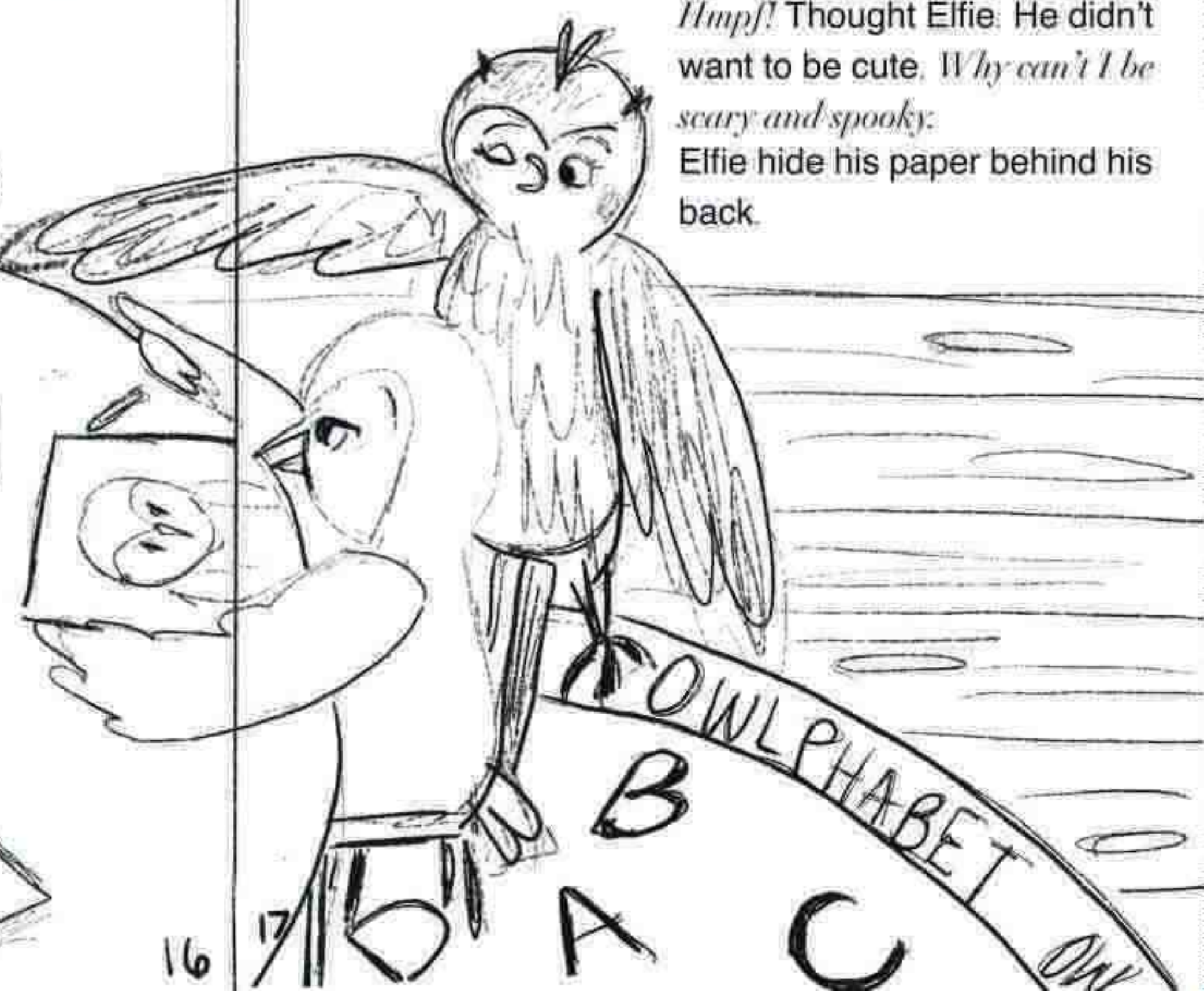
She gave a wink to Elfie.

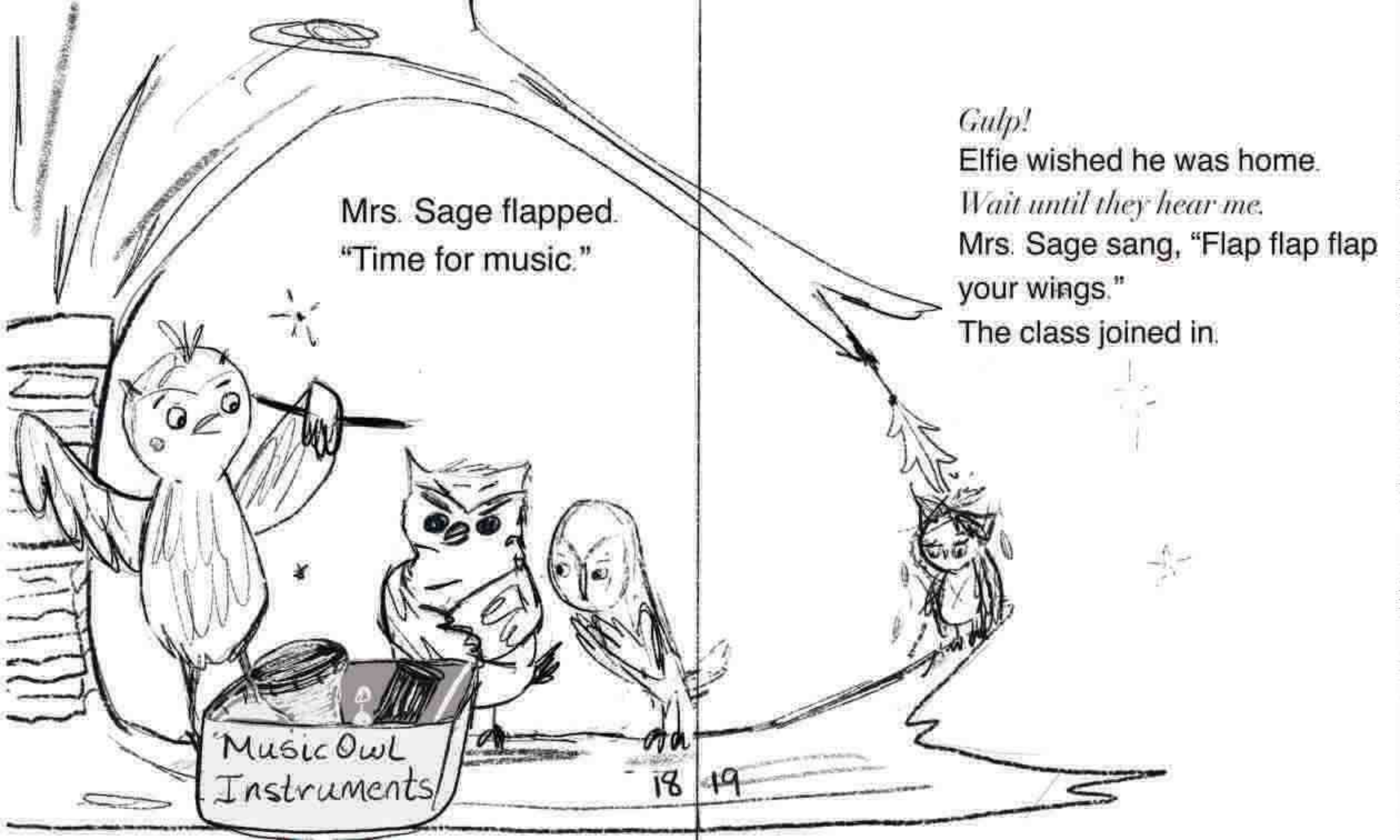


"Your drawing is cute," said  
Barnie.

*Humpf!* Thought Elfie. He didn't  
want to be cute. *Why can't I be  
scary and spooky.*

Elfie hide his paper behind his  
back.





Mrs. Sage flapped.  
"Time for music."

*Gulp!*

Elfie wished he was home.

*Wait until they hear me.*

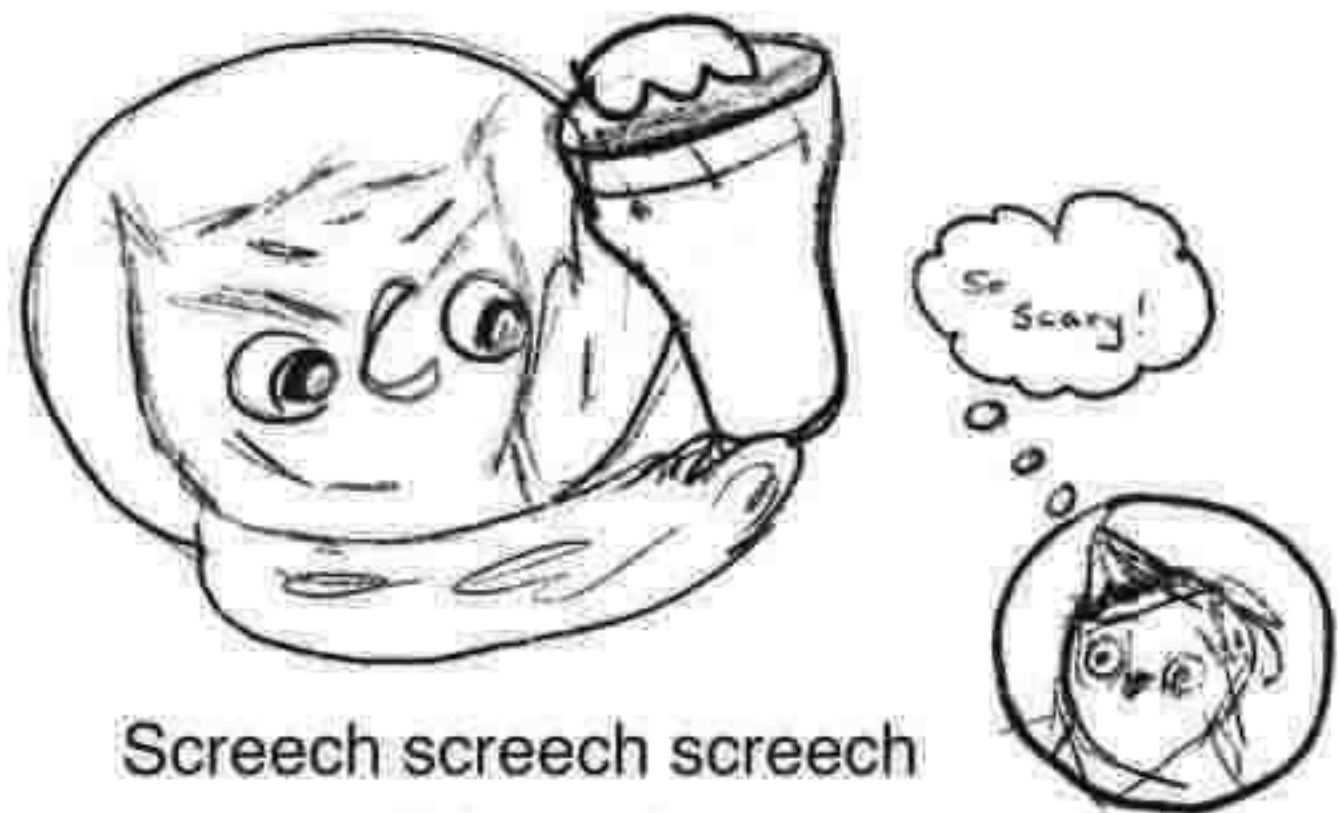
Mrs. Sage sang, "Flap flap flap  
your wings."

The class joined in.

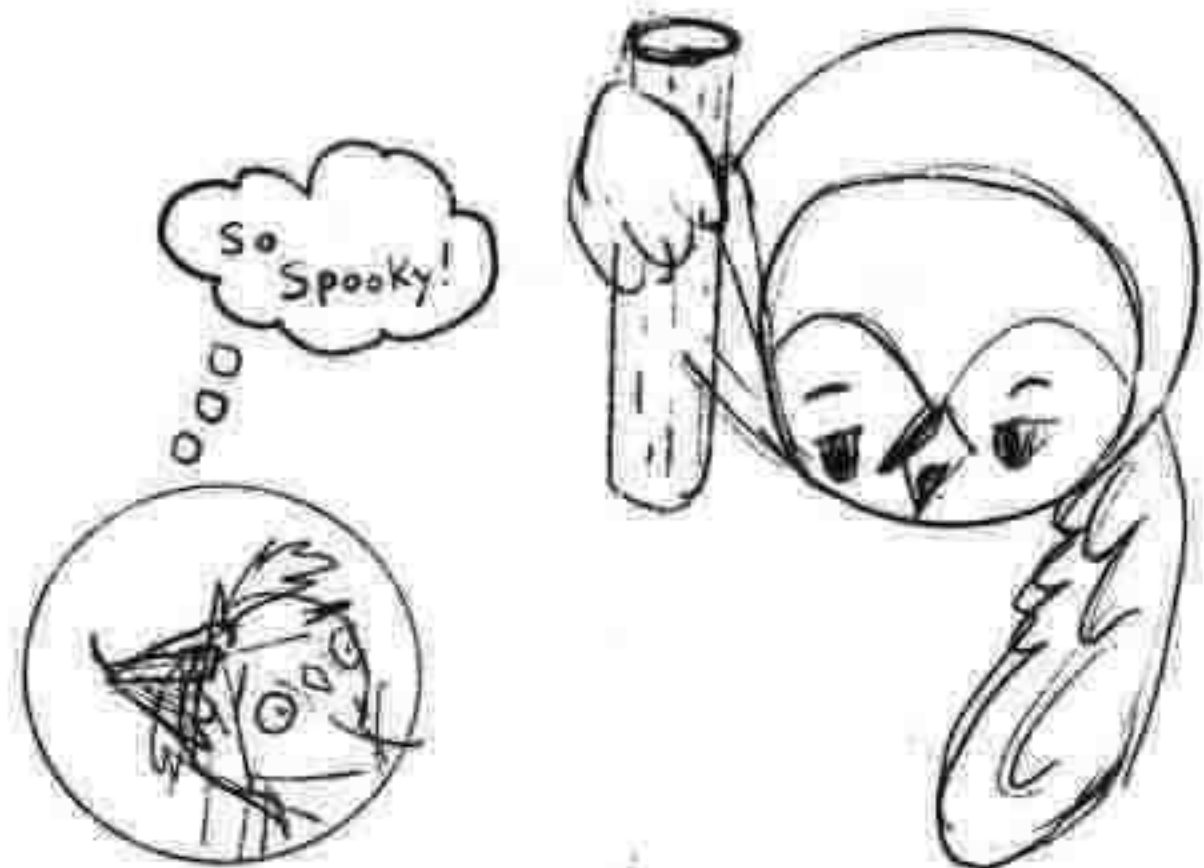
Music Owl  
Instruments



Hoot hoot hoot hoot hoot.



Screech screech screech  
screech SCREECH!



Elfie fidgeted with his feathers and sang to himself *please sound scary please sound spooky*. But when he opened his beak, all that came out was...



Elfie sounded - well, not much like the other owls.

The owlets perked up.

"Where's the cat?" asked Great Horn.

"I hear a mouse," said Barnie. "Is it snack time yet?"

"We'll have snacks after we demonstrate our defense poses," said Mrs. Sage.



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Mrs. Sage opened the box of predator puppets.

Great Horn hooted. He furrowed his brows and widened his wings.  
*So so scary.* Elfie trembled.

Barrie SCREECHED and glowed just like a ghost.  
*So so spooky!* Elfie shook.

Then, it was his turn. Elfie's head spun.  
His talons twitched.  
He teeter-tottered...



# FLOP!

Elfie lay still as a possum.

OH NO!  
Poor Sticky.

What  
happened?  
Is he OK?

"Patience," whispered Mrs. Sage. "Let's wait a fine feathery minute."



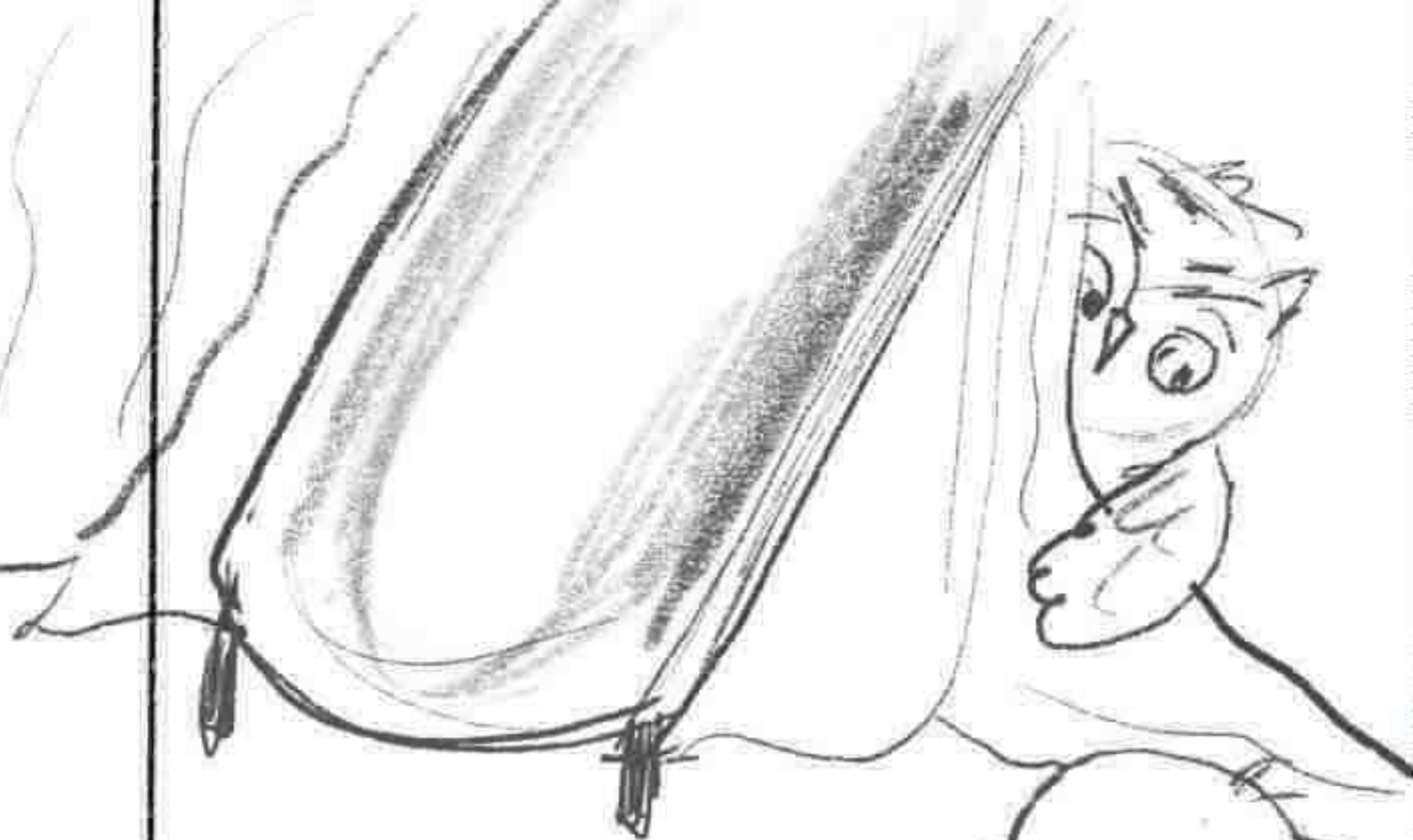


"You hide. I'll seek," Barnie screeched.

Elfie fluttered as he spotted a *small* hole to hide in.

But...

30



...someone was already inside.

"Hi. I'm Elfie. Who are you?"

"I'm D-D-Dusty, a Burrowing Owl. I'm afraid of school."

"Don't worry!" Elfie coaxed Dusty out of his hole. "*Owl* are welcome here."

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## BACK MATTER

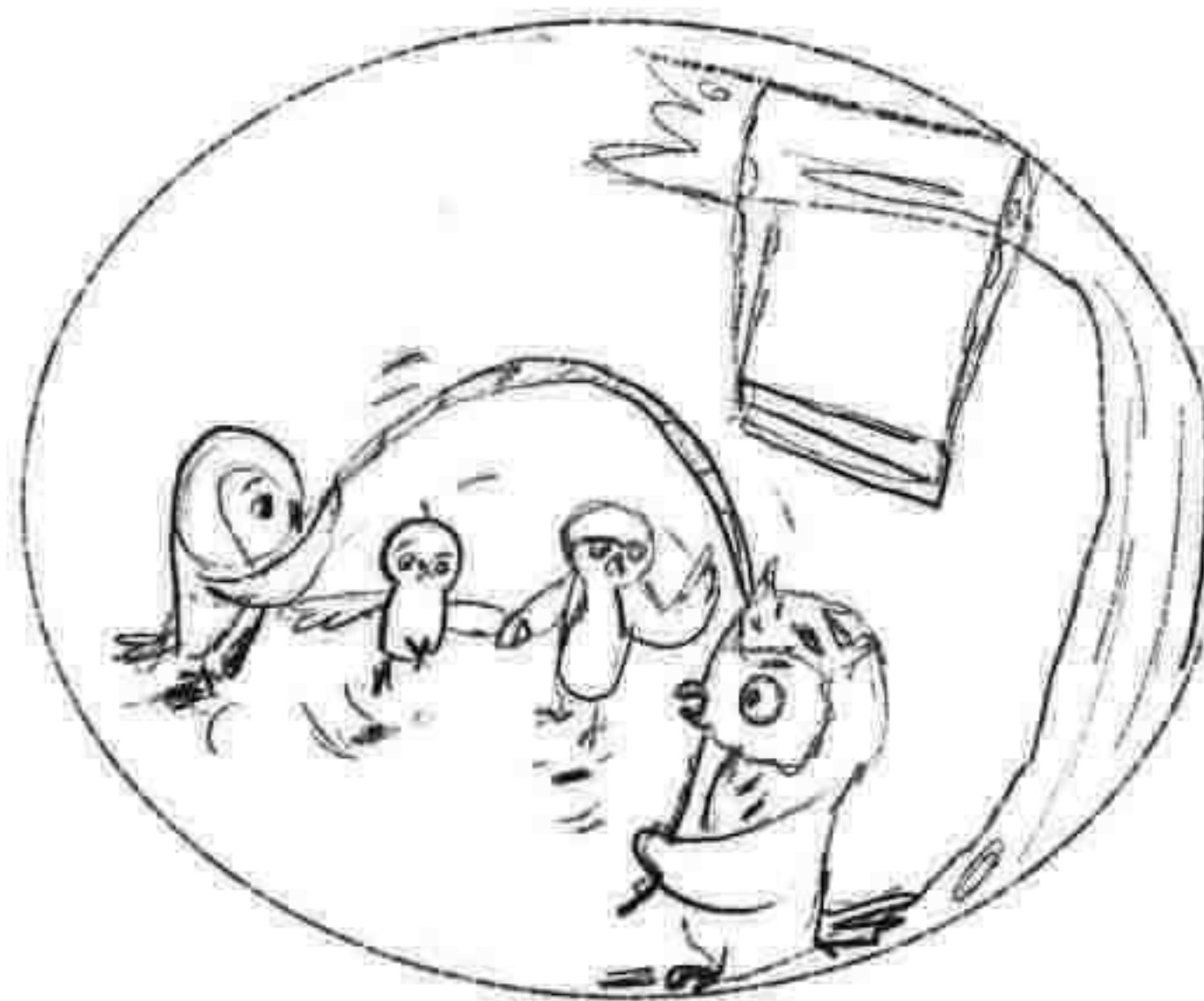
**Great Horn Owls** - Ranging in size from 18.1 to 24.8 inches, these large owls are almost 4 to 5 times larger than Elf owls. They feed on predominantly small vertebrates and occasional insects. Their call consist typically of a series of hoots.

**Barn owls** - These owls are 2 to 3 times the height of Elf owls measuring 12.6 to 15.8 inches. They have a white ghost-like face and a loud screeching call. They feed predominantly on small rodents.

**Elf Owls** - The smallest of owls, measuring 5 inches in height. They are compared to the size of a sparrow. Considered not to be very aggressive, they feed on predominately insects and make curiously cute calls like meows, woffs and chuckles. A notable survival skill is playing dead. They are resourceful in nature and make their homes in recycled, wood, pecker, cactus holes.

**Burrowing owls** - They range in size from 7 to 11 inches. Burrowing in grasslands and deserts, they mostly feed on insects and small rodents.

## Back Cover



# DESERT OWLS



On the day before school started, Ellie couldn't sleep a wink. In the corner of his cactus, he studied the bigger, scarier, and spookier owls he might meet in class.





On the day before school started, Elfie couldn't sleep a wink. In the corner of his cactus, he studied the bigger, scarier, and spookier owls he might meet in class.

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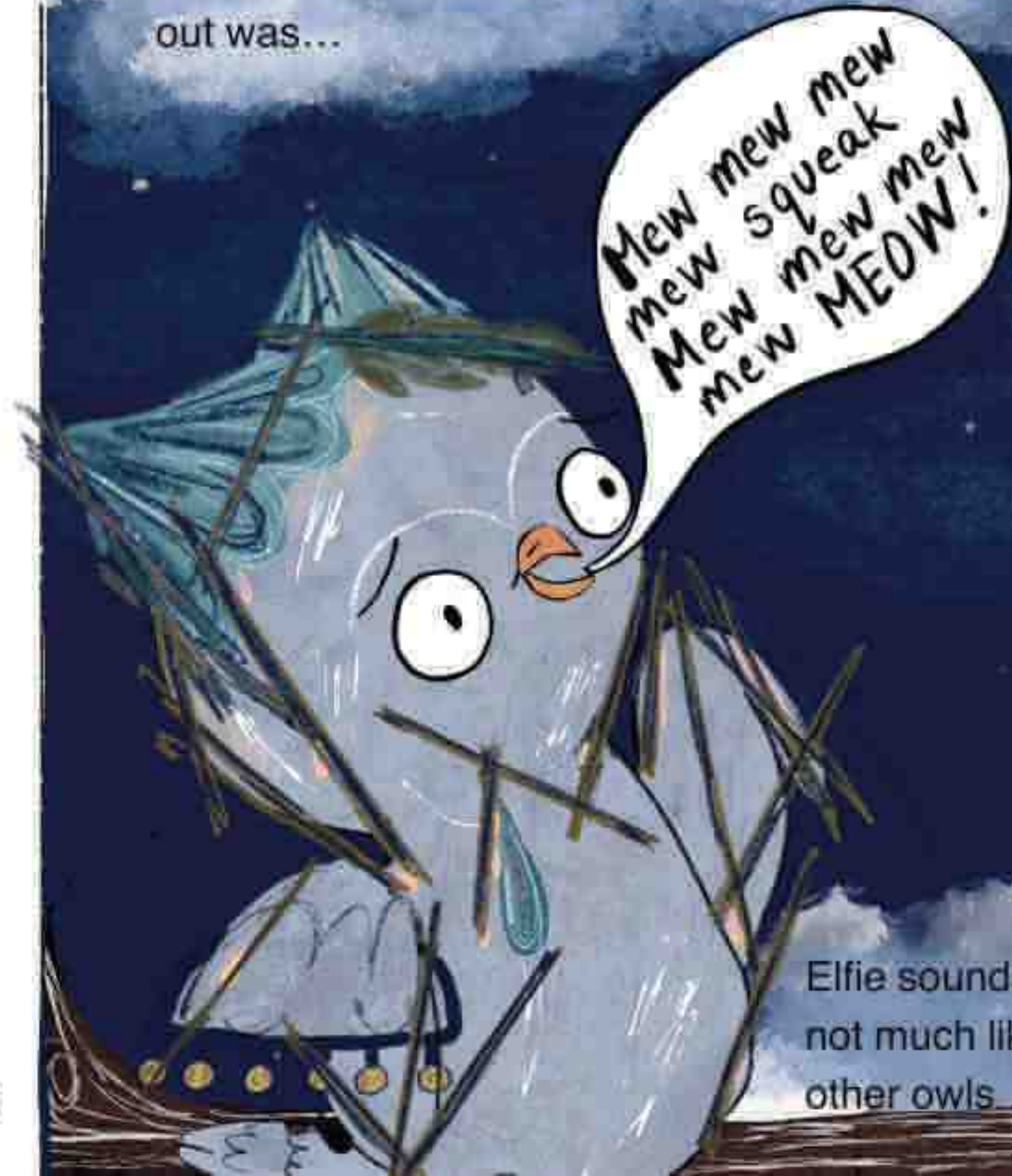
Hoot hoot hoot hoot hoot.



Screech screech screech  
screech SCREECH!



Elfie fidgeted with his feathers and sang to himself *please sound scary please sound spooky*. But when he opened his beak, all that came out was...



Elfie sounded - well, not much like the other owls