

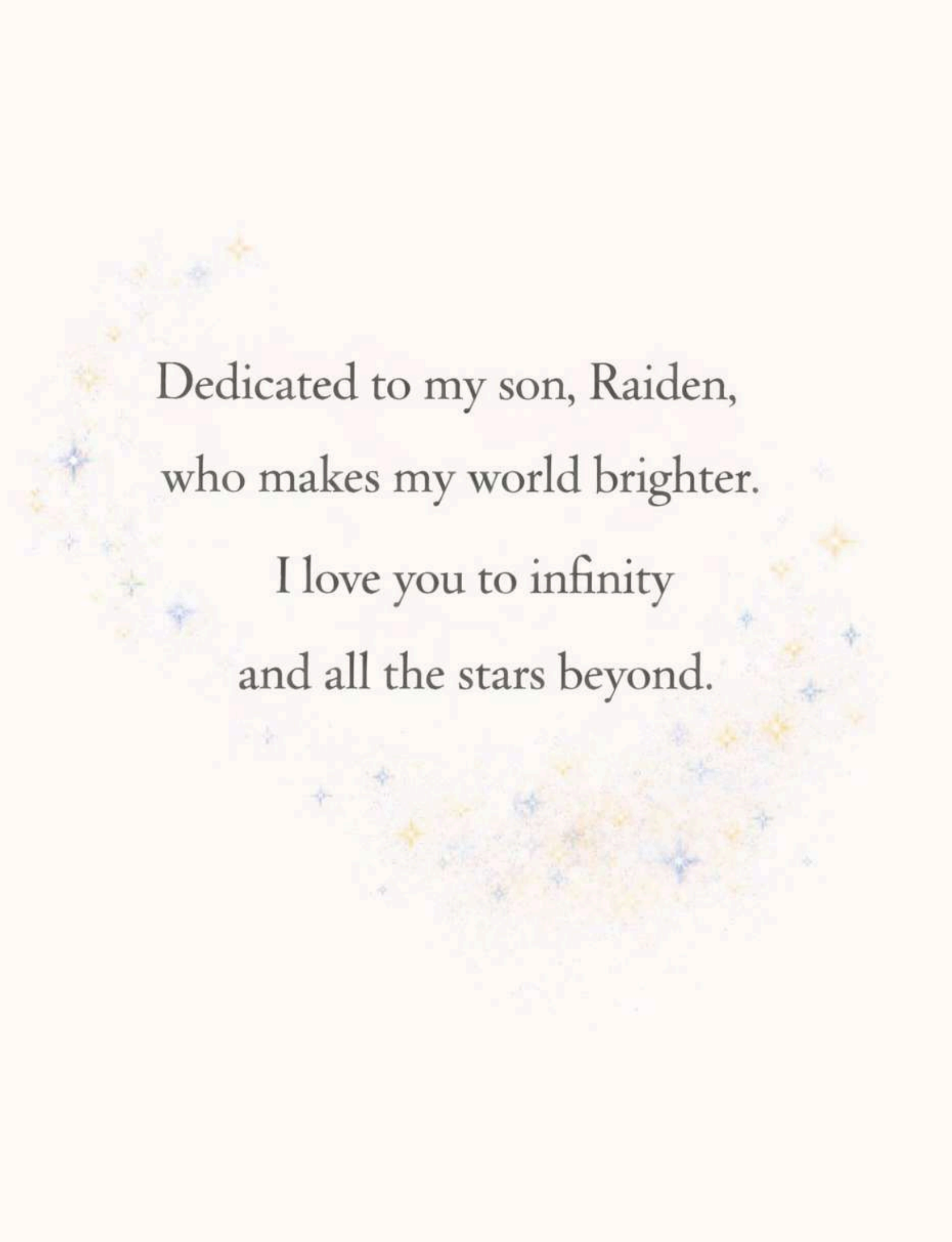
RAÍDEN

and the

WHISPERING MAP

Written and Illustrated by Kallie Metcalf



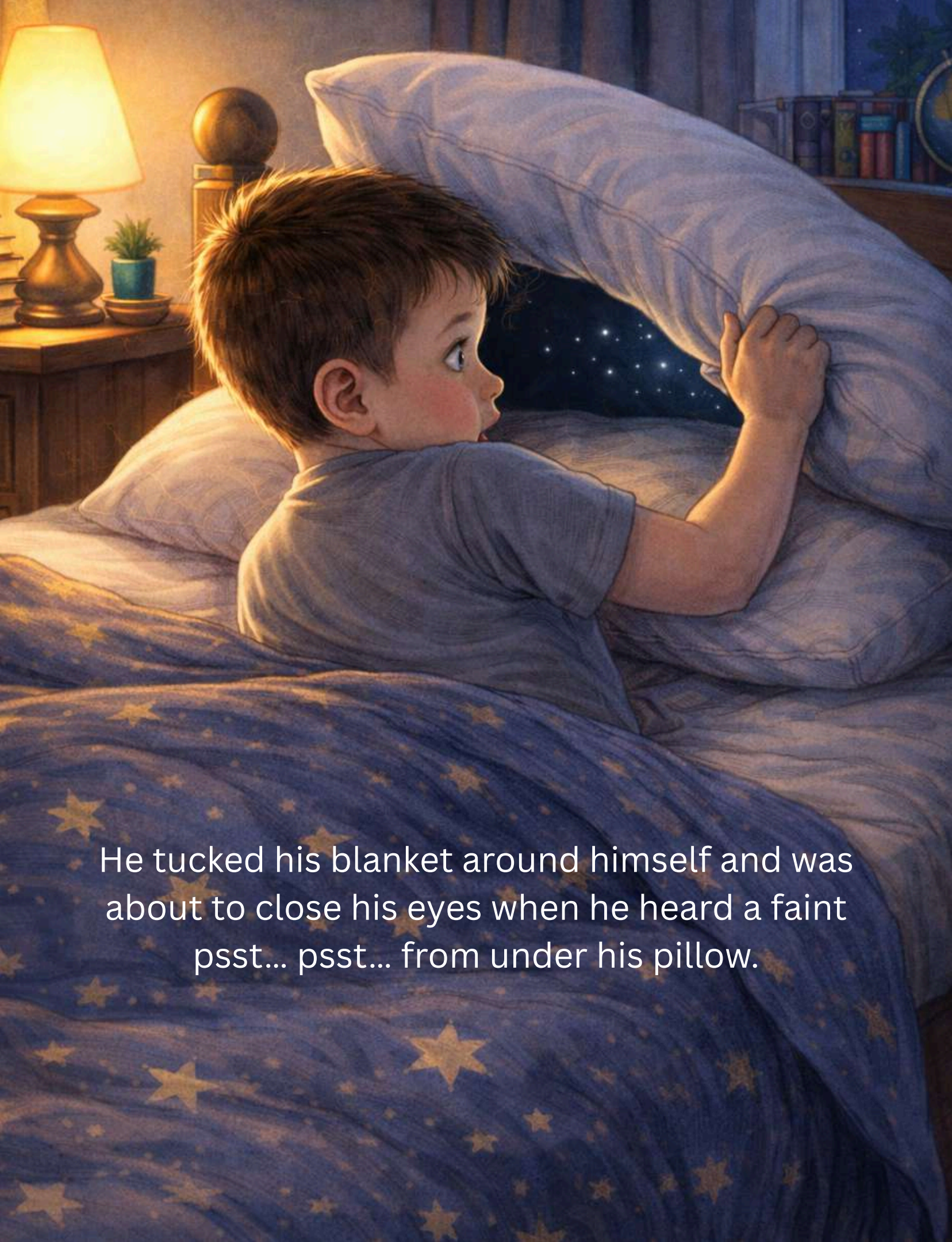


Dedicated to my son, Raiden,
who makes my world brighter.

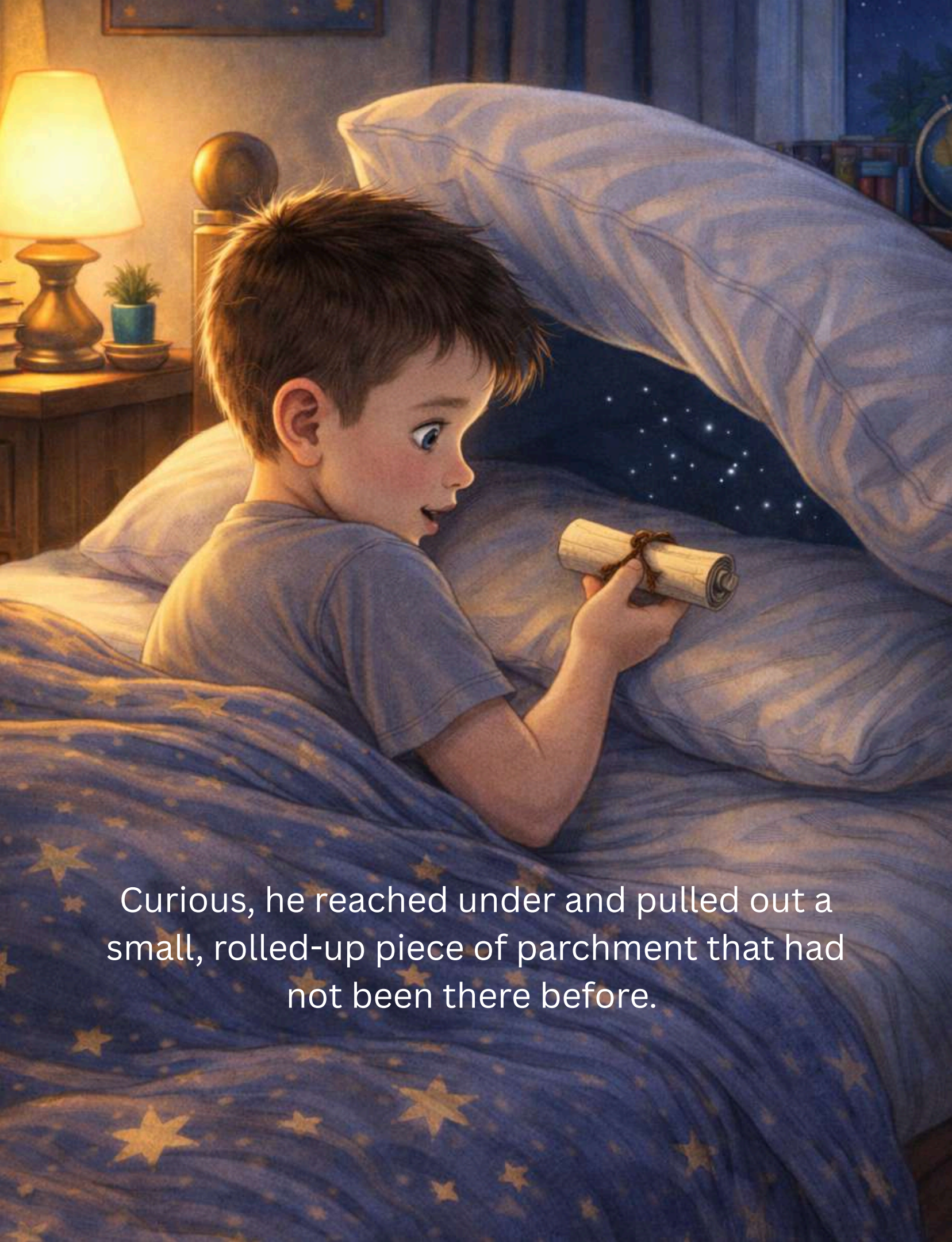
I love you to infinity
and all the stars beyond.



Raiden had just climbed into bed when something strange happened.



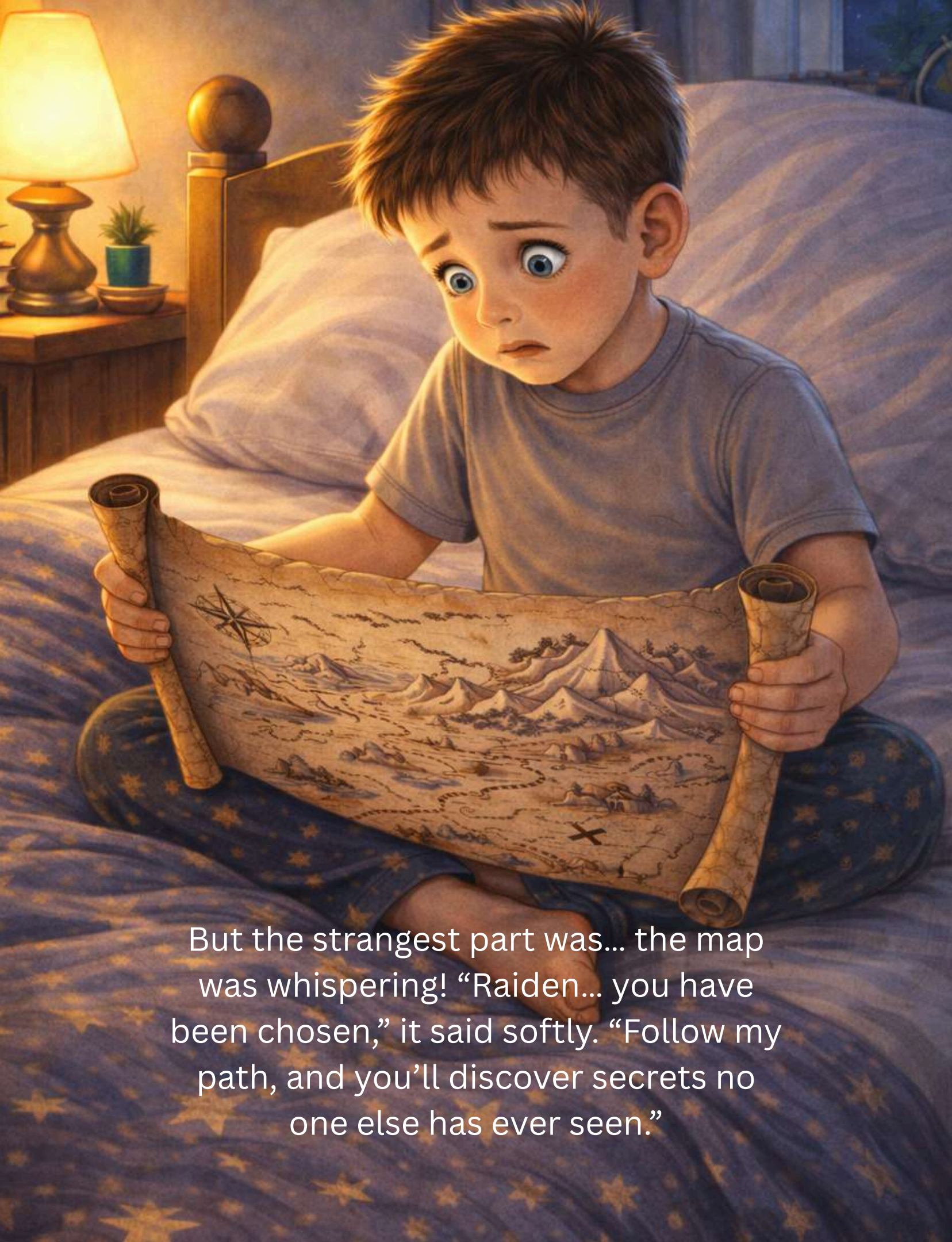
He tucked his blanket around himself and was about to close his eyes when he heard a faint psst... psst... from under his pillow.



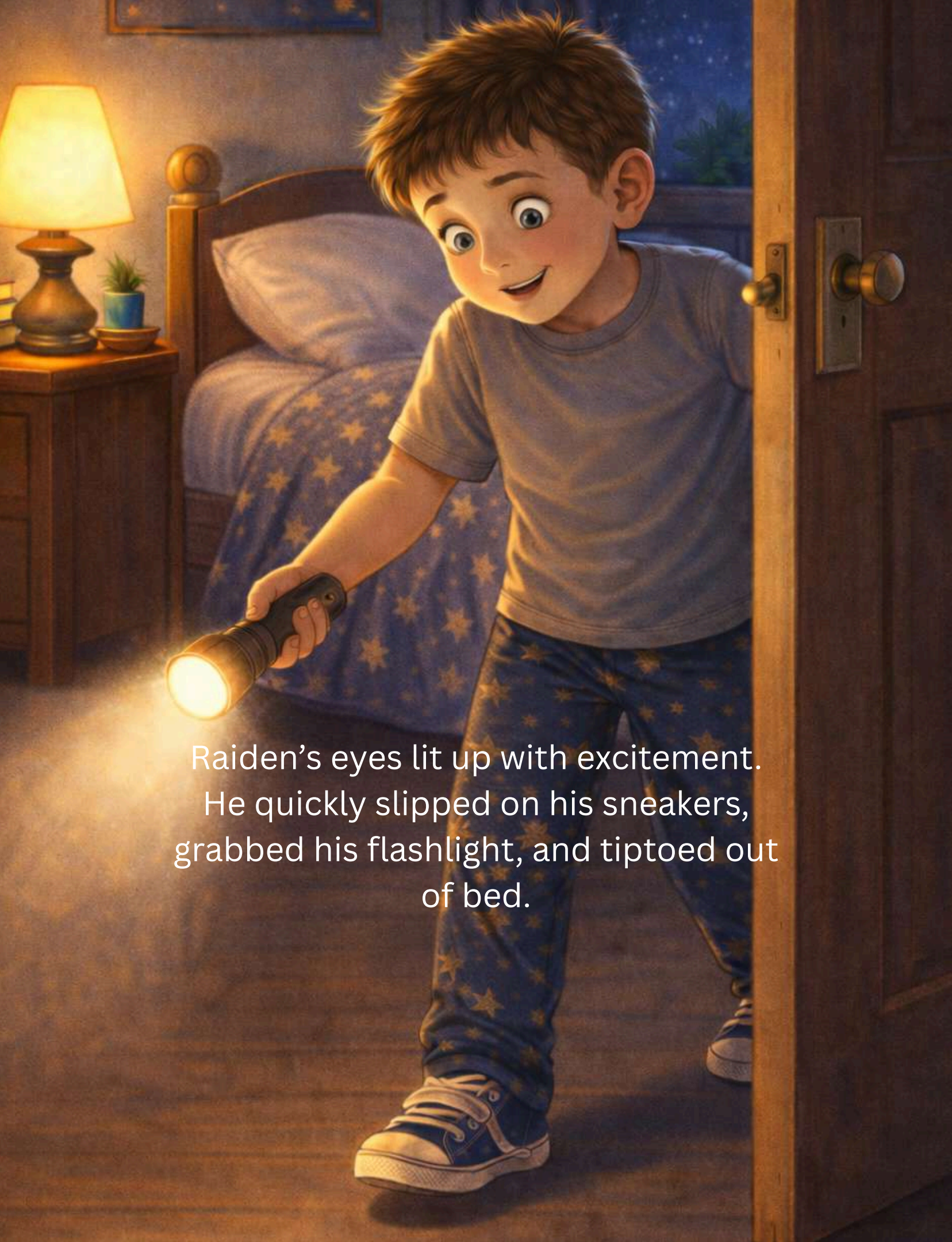
Curious, he reached under and pulled out a small, rolled-up piece of parchment that had not been there before.



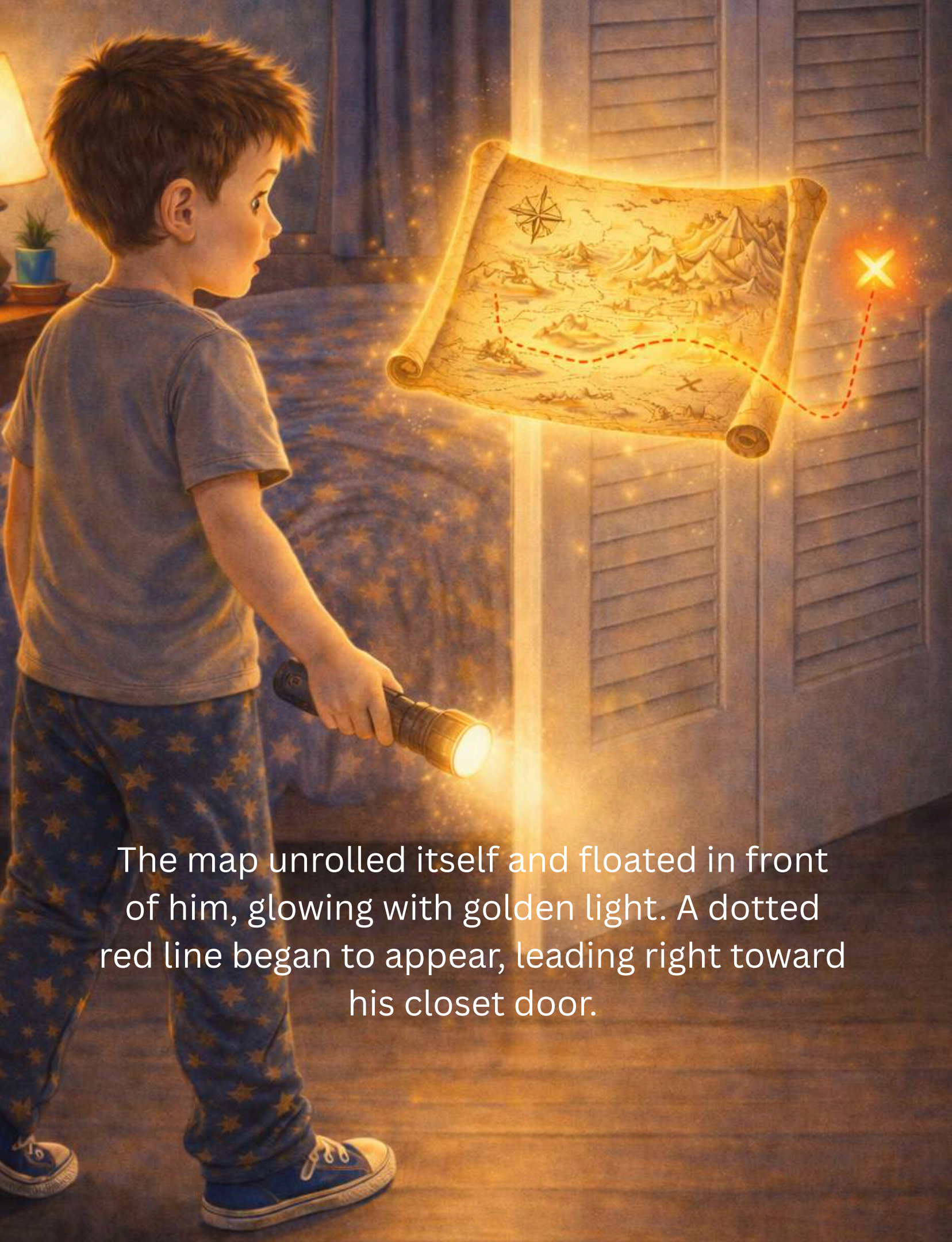
It looked like an old treasure map, with swirls of ink, jagged coastlines, and even little drawings of mountains and rivers.



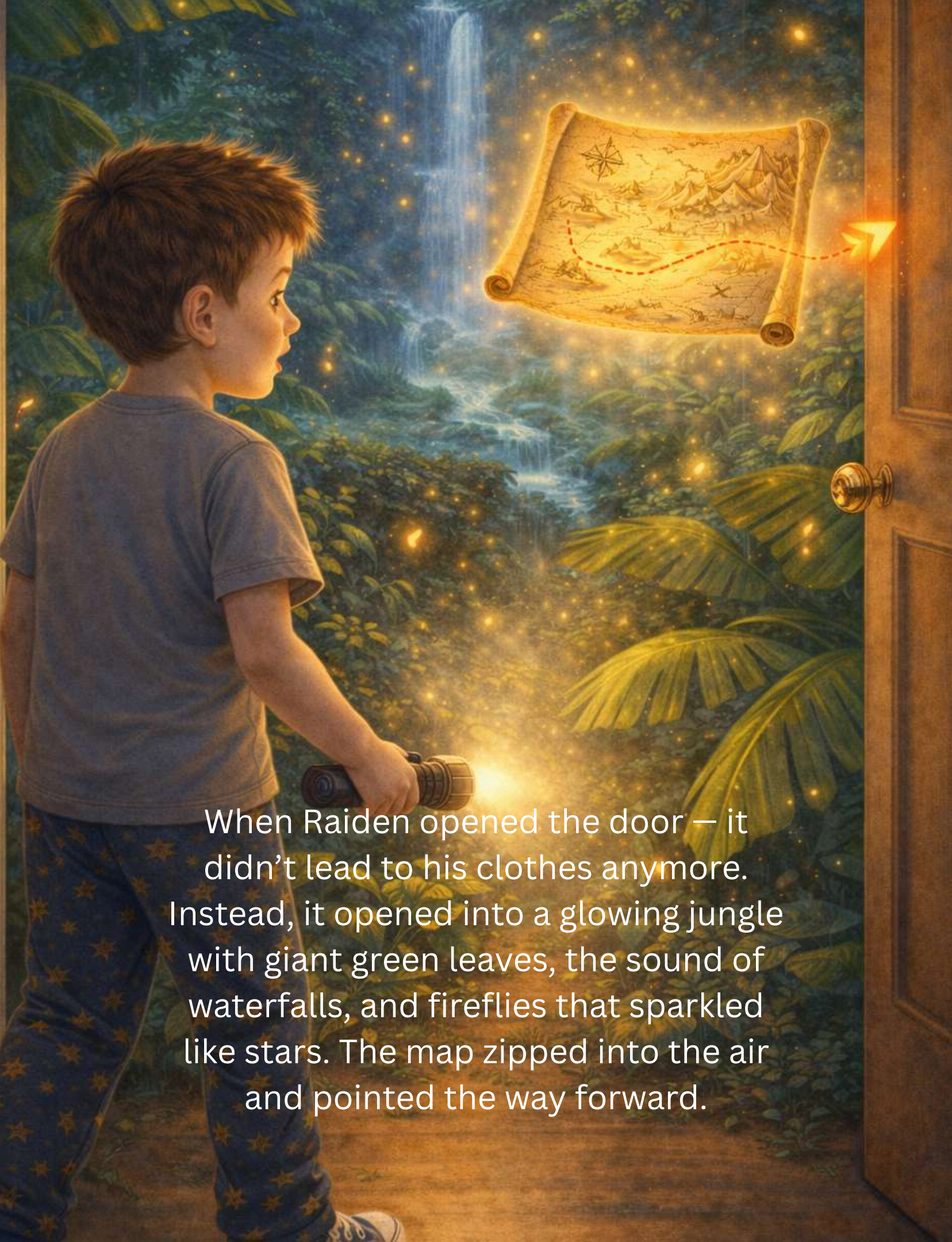
But the strangest part was... the map was whispering! "Raiden... you have been chosen," it said softly. "Follow my path, and you'll discover secrets no one else has ever seen."



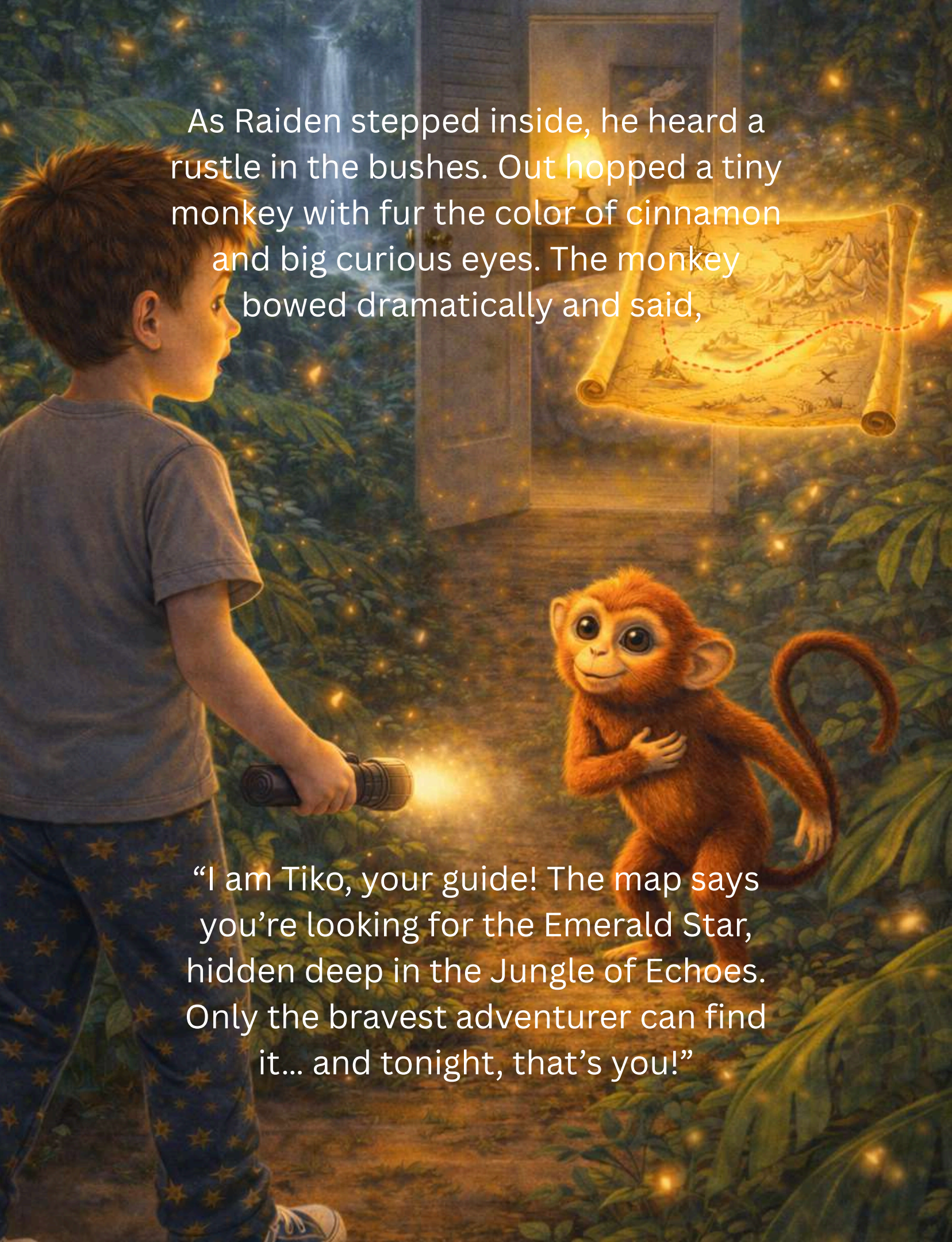
Raiden's eyes lit up with excitement.
He quickly slipped on his sneakers,
grabbed his flashlight, and tiptoed out
of bed.



The map unrolled itself and floated in front of him, glowing with golden light. A dotted red line began to appear, leading right toward his closet door.



When Raiden opened the door — it didn't lead to his clothes anymore. Instead, it opened into a glowing jungle with giant green leaves, the sound of waterfalls, and fireflies that sparkled like stars. The map zipped into the air and pointed the way forward.

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a grey t-shirt and blue pajamas with yellow stars, stands in a lush jungle at night. He holds a flashlight that illuminates a tiny, cinnamon-colored monkey with large, curious eyes. The monkey is standing on its hind legs, bowing slightly. In the background, an open doorway reveals a room with a map on the wall, and a waterfall is visible through the trees. The scene is filled with warm, golden light from the flashlight and the room, contrasting with the cool blue tones of the night jungle.

As Raiden stepped inside, he heard a rustle in the bushes. Out hopped a tiny monkey with fur the color of cinnamon and big curious eyes. The monkey bowed dramatically and said,

“I am Tiko, your guide! The map says you’re looking for the Emerald Star, hidden deep in the Jungle of Echoes. Only the bravest adventurer can find it... and tonight, that’s you!”



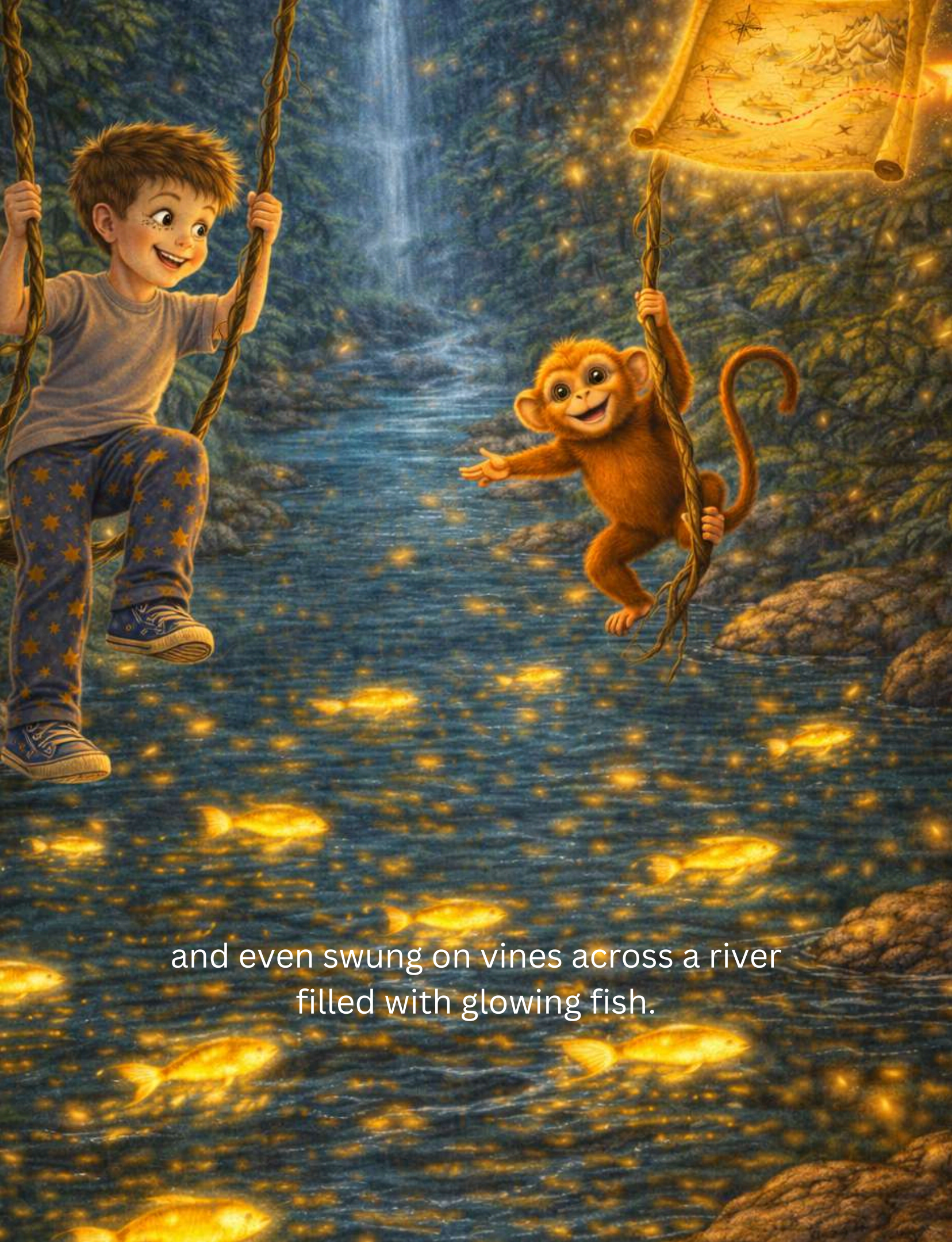
Raiden grinned. "Then let's go!"



Together, Raiden and Tiko trekked
through vines,



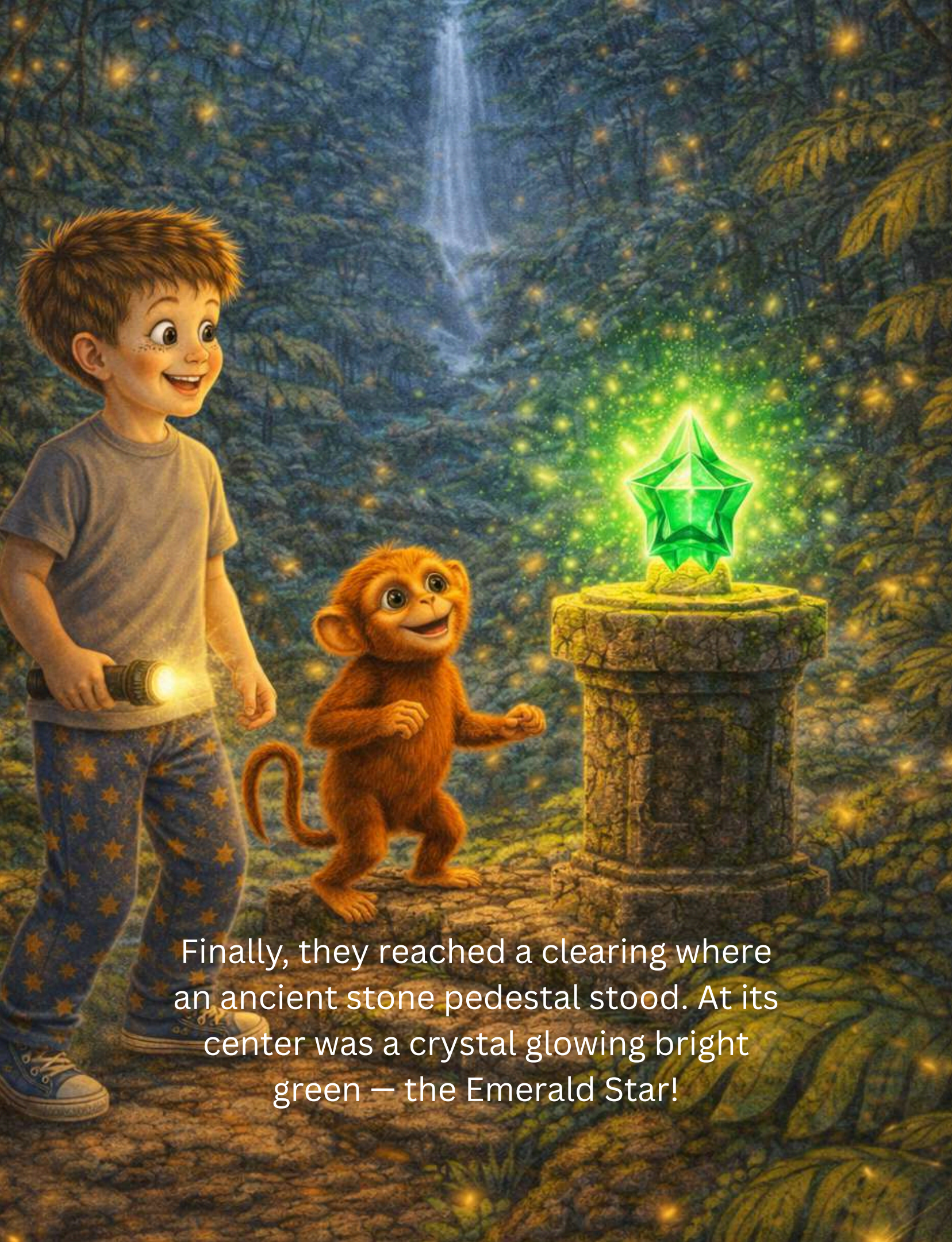
crossed a bridge made of giant roots,



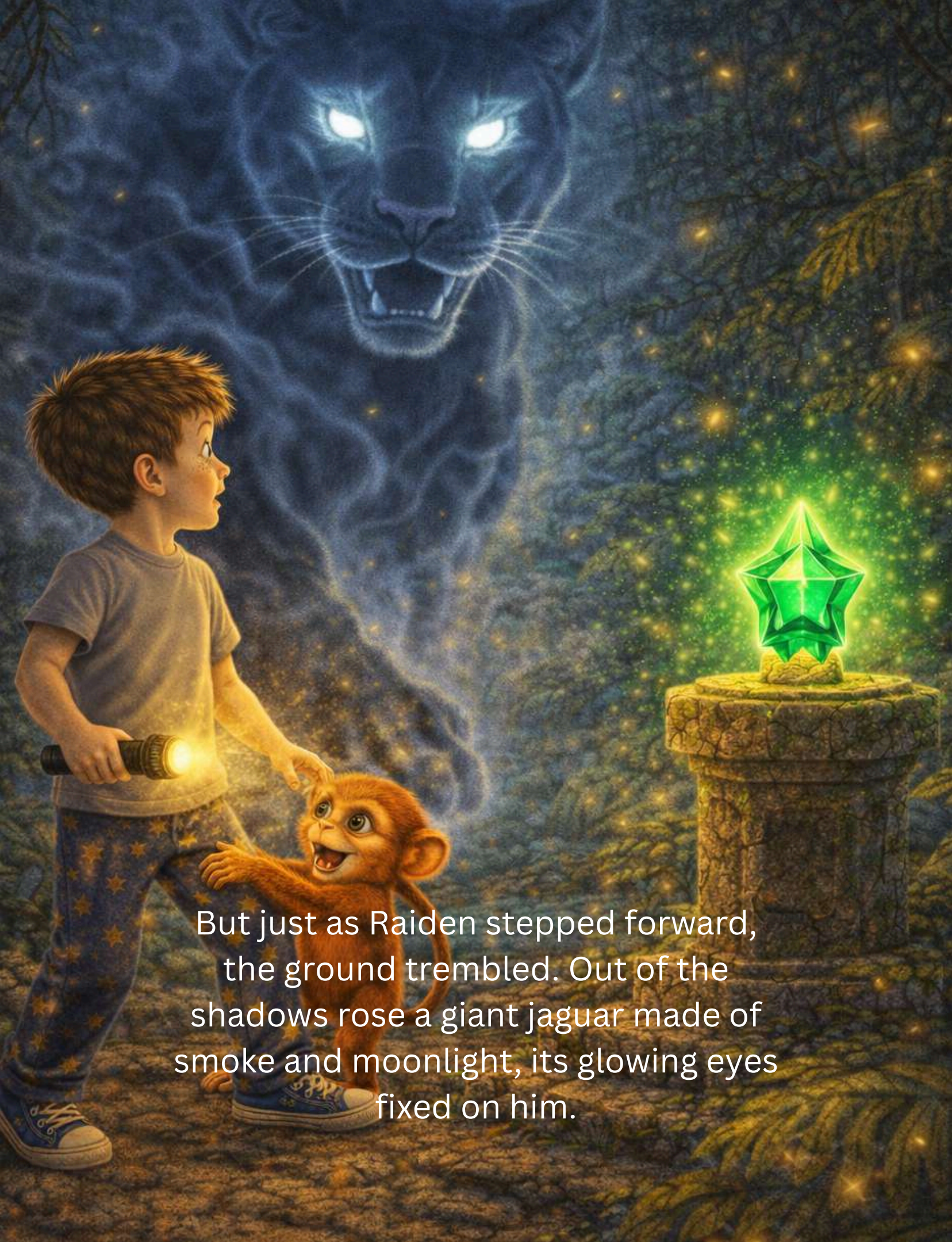
and even swung on vines across a river
filled with glowing fish.



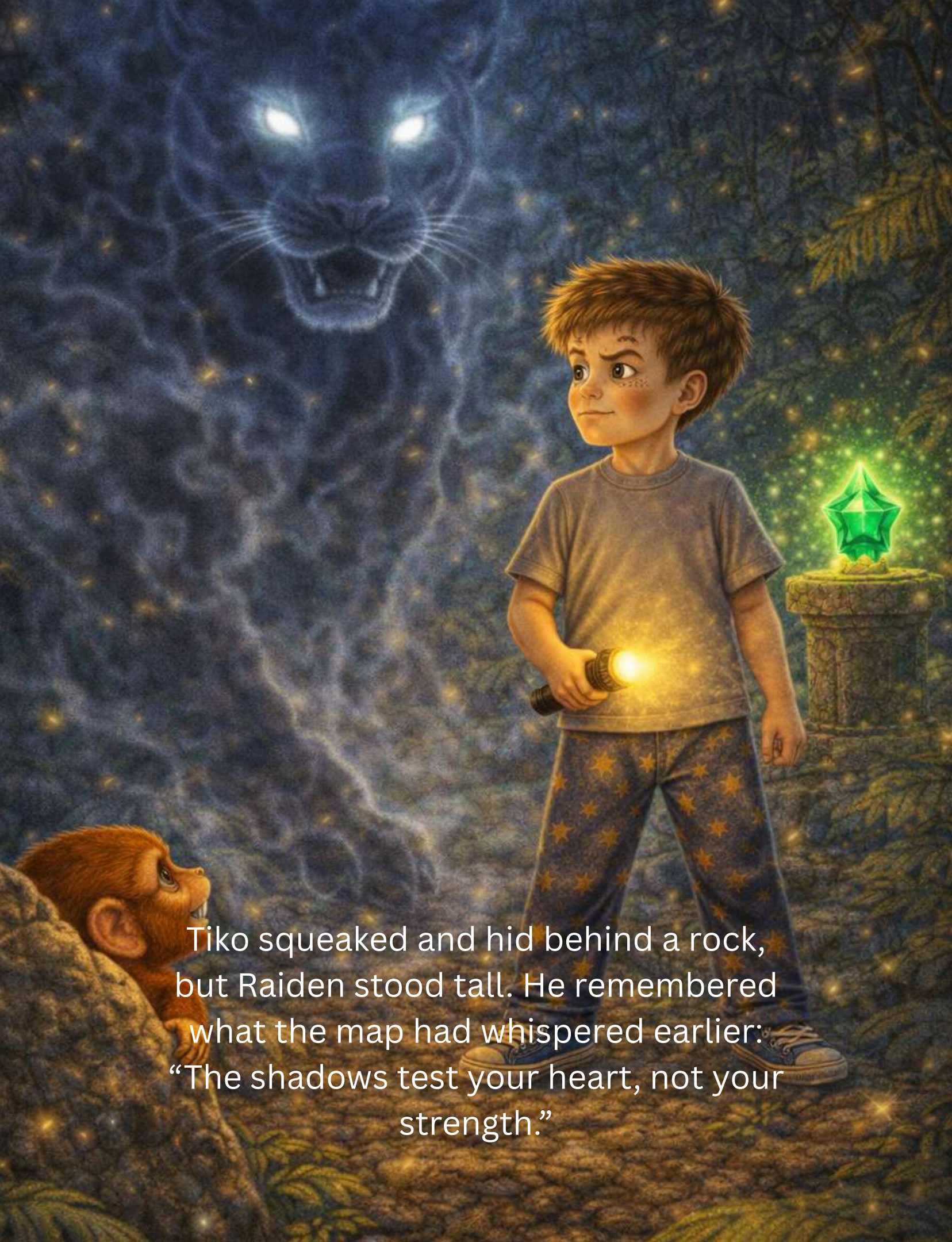
Every so often, the map whispered hints: “Left at the waterfall... climb the stone steps... beware of the shadows...”



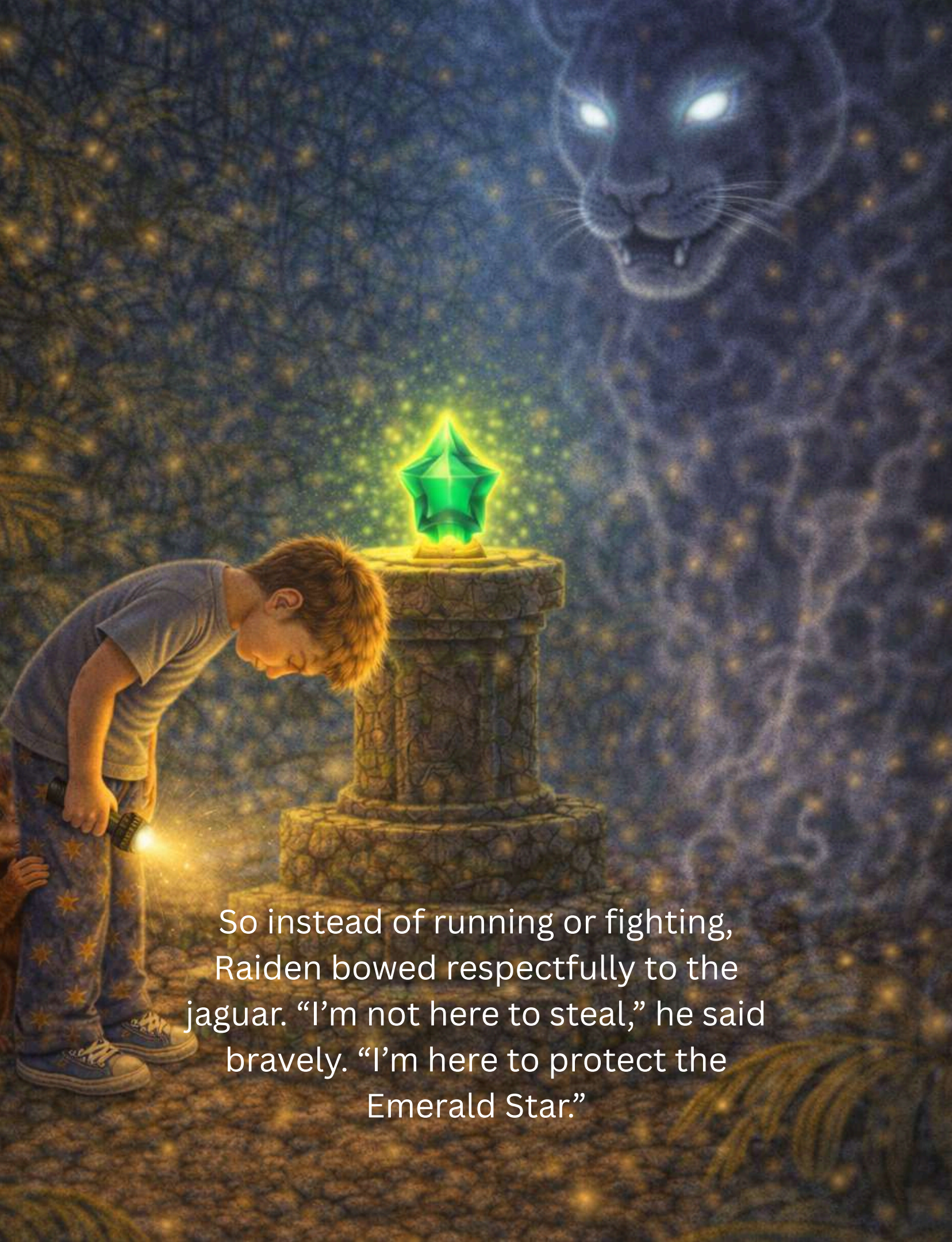
Finally, they reached a clearing where an ancient stone pedestal stood. At its center was a crystal glowing bright green — the Emerald Star!



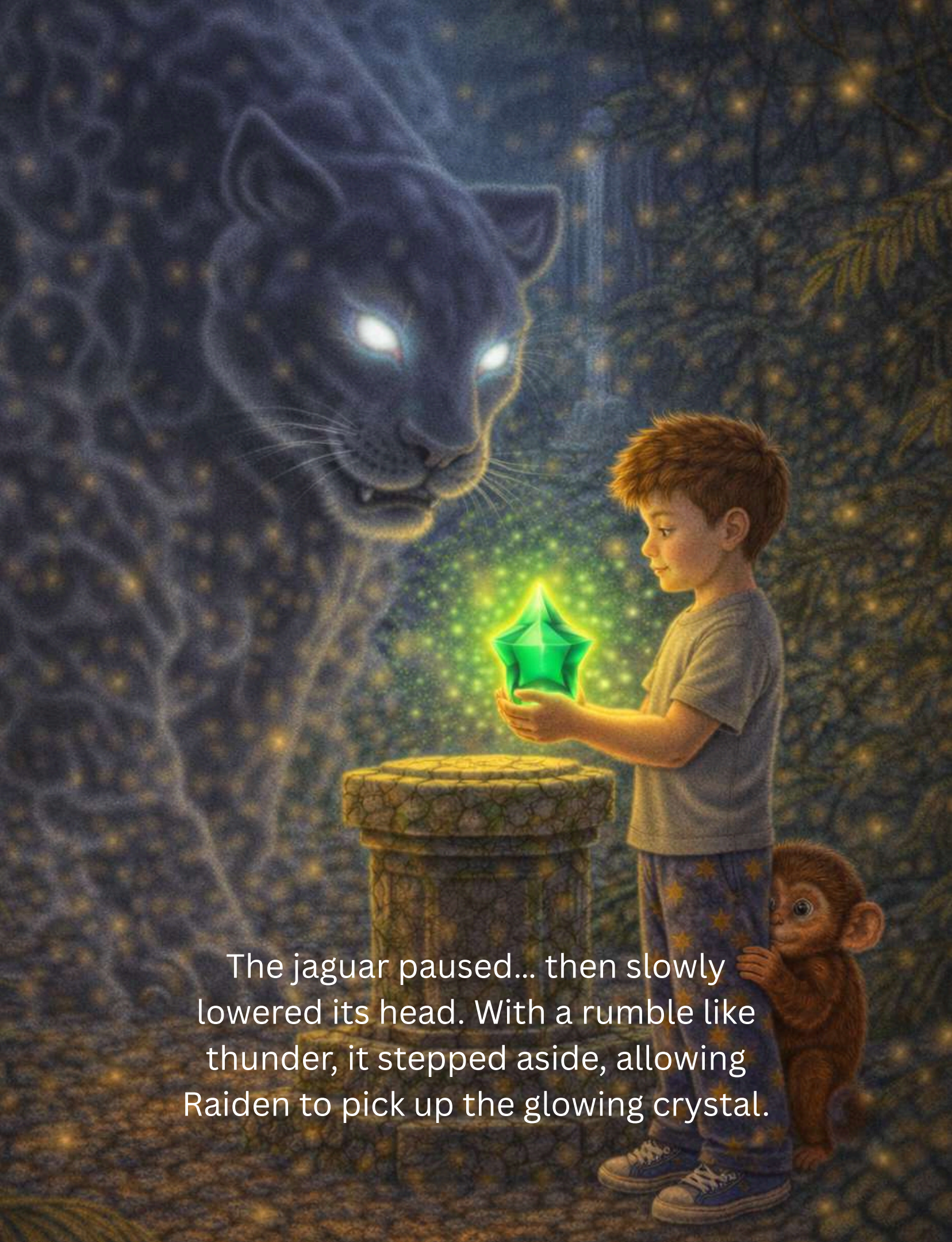
But just as Raiden stepped forward, the ground trembled. Out of the shadows rose a giant jaguar made of smoke and moonlight, its glowing eyes fixed on him.



Tiko squeaked and hid behind a rock, but Raiden stood tall. He remembered what the map had whispered earlier: “The shadows test your heart, not your strength.”



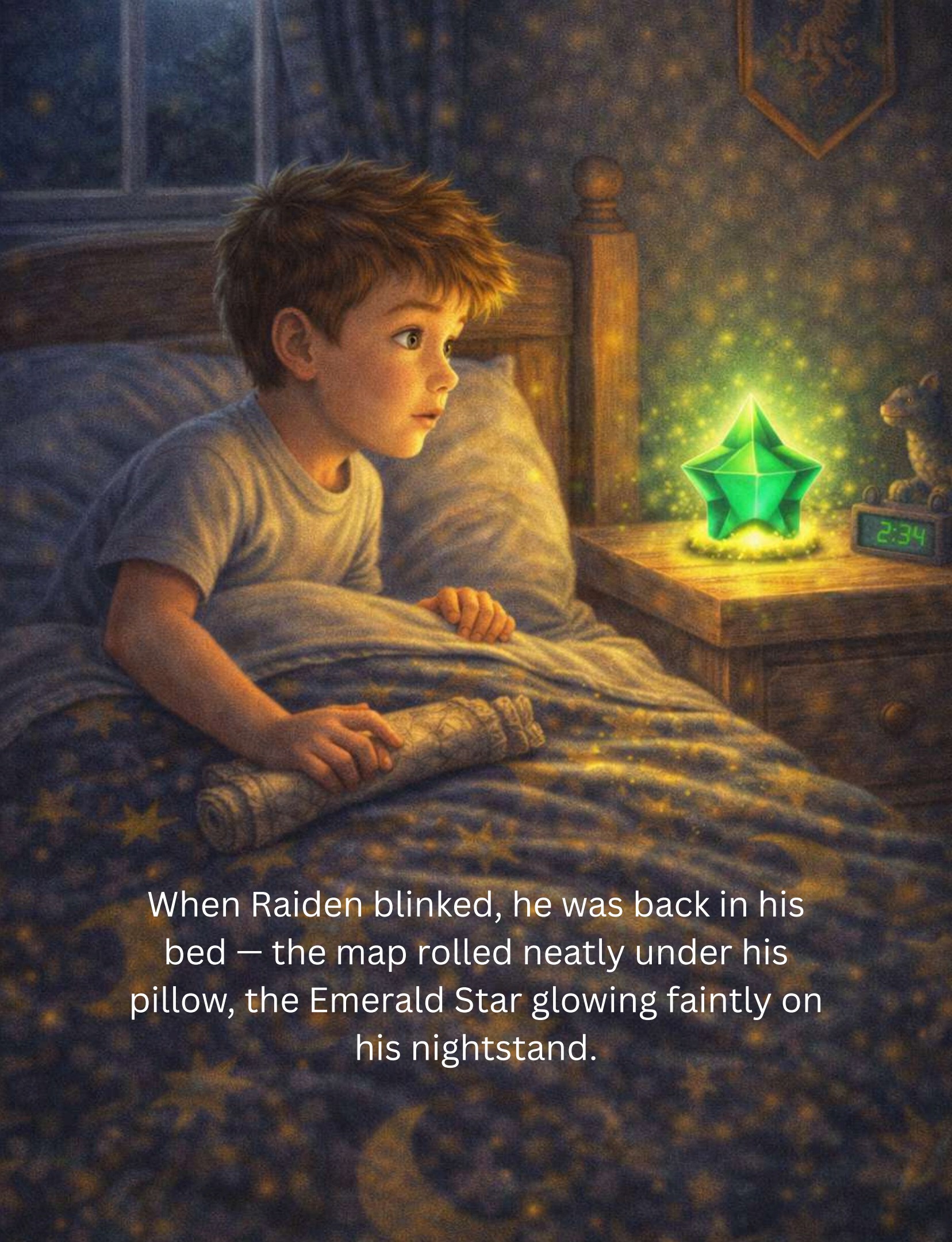
So instead of running or fighting, Raiden bowed respectfully to the jaguar. “I’m not here to steal,” he said bravely. “I’m here to protect the Emerald Star.”



The jaguar paused... then slowly lowered its head. With a rumble like thunder, it stepped aside, allowing Raiden to pick up the glowing crystal.



The moment he touched
filled with light, and
whispered one last r
“Well done, Raiden. Thi



When Raiden blinked, he was back in his bed — the map rolled neatly under his pillow, the Emerald Star glowing faintly on his nightstand.



And with a smile, Raiden drifted off to sleep, already dreaming of the next adventure.

The End