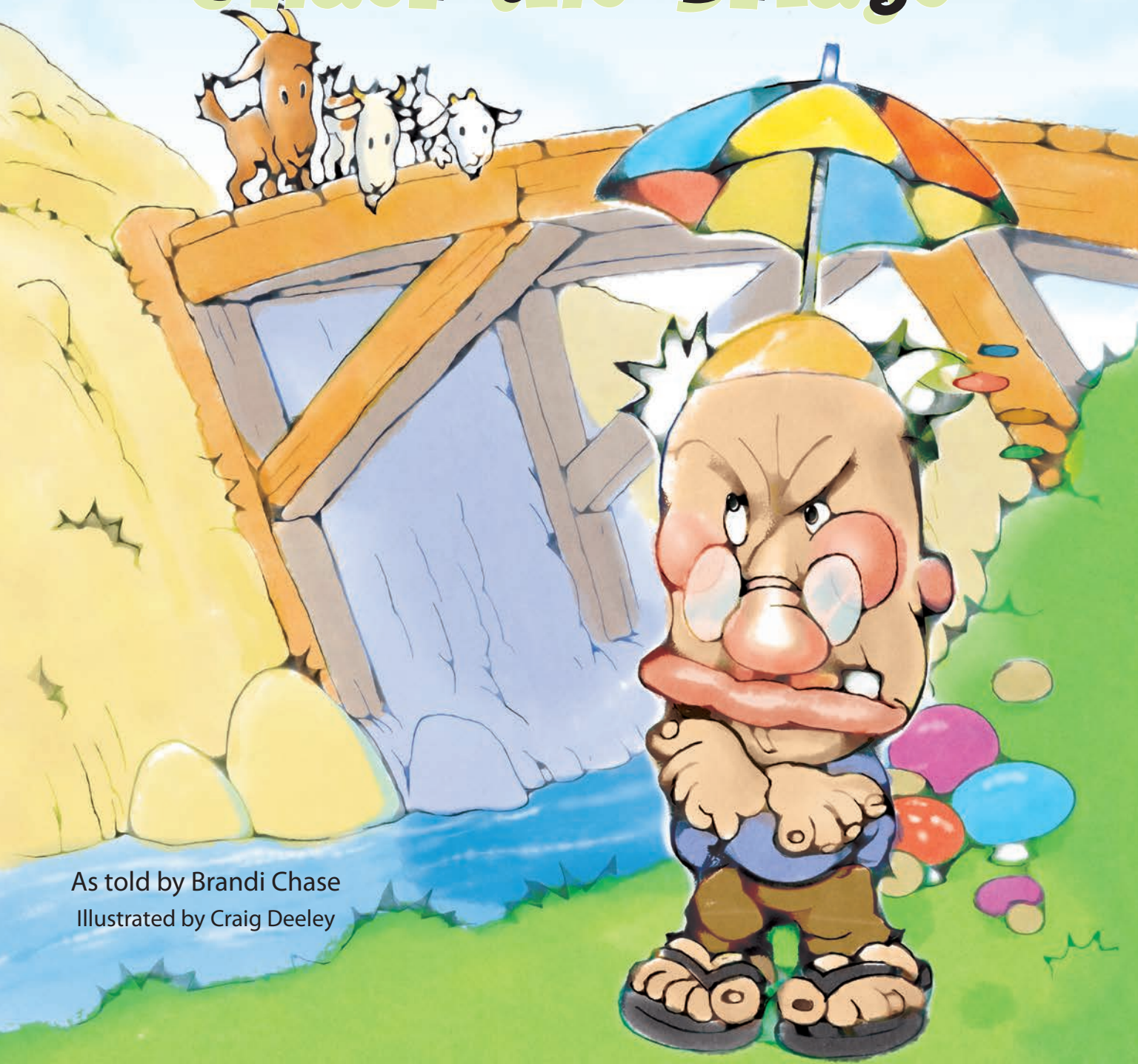


A fairy tale adapted for the youngest ears

# The Troll Who Lived Under the Bridge



As told by Brandi Chase  
Illustrated by Craig Deeley



Told from the troll's point of view, this take on the classic *Three Billy Goats Gruff* reveals the importance of learning both sides of any story.

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**Starfall Education Foundation**

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A troll discovered a bridge crossing a deep river. On one side of the river, the hills were green and thriving. On the other side, the land was barren and brown.

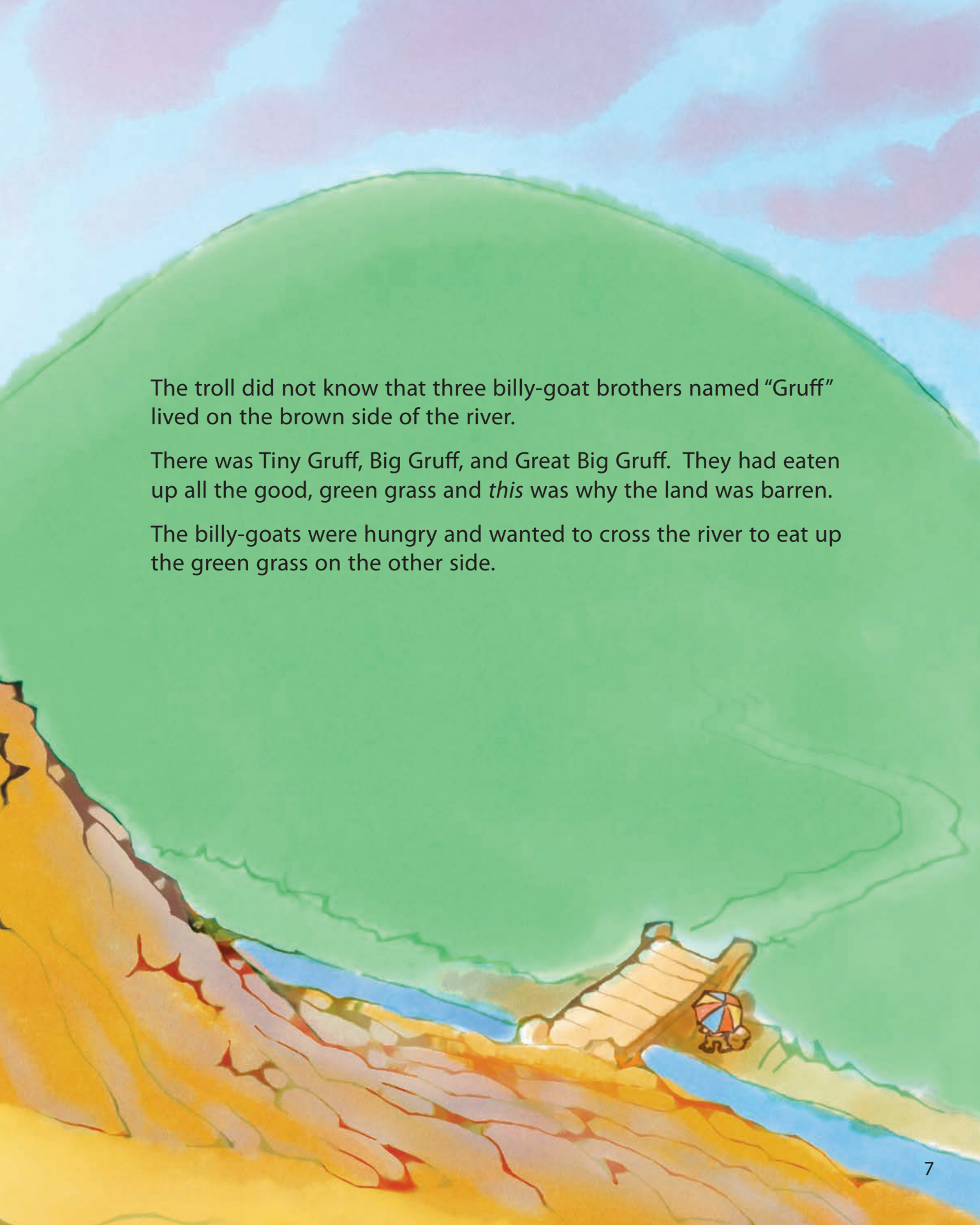
“What a lovely place to make my home,” said the troll to himself.

As he unpacked his things — seeds, a watering can, and other gardening tools — he wondered aloud. “Now why is the land on this side green, and the other, brown?”









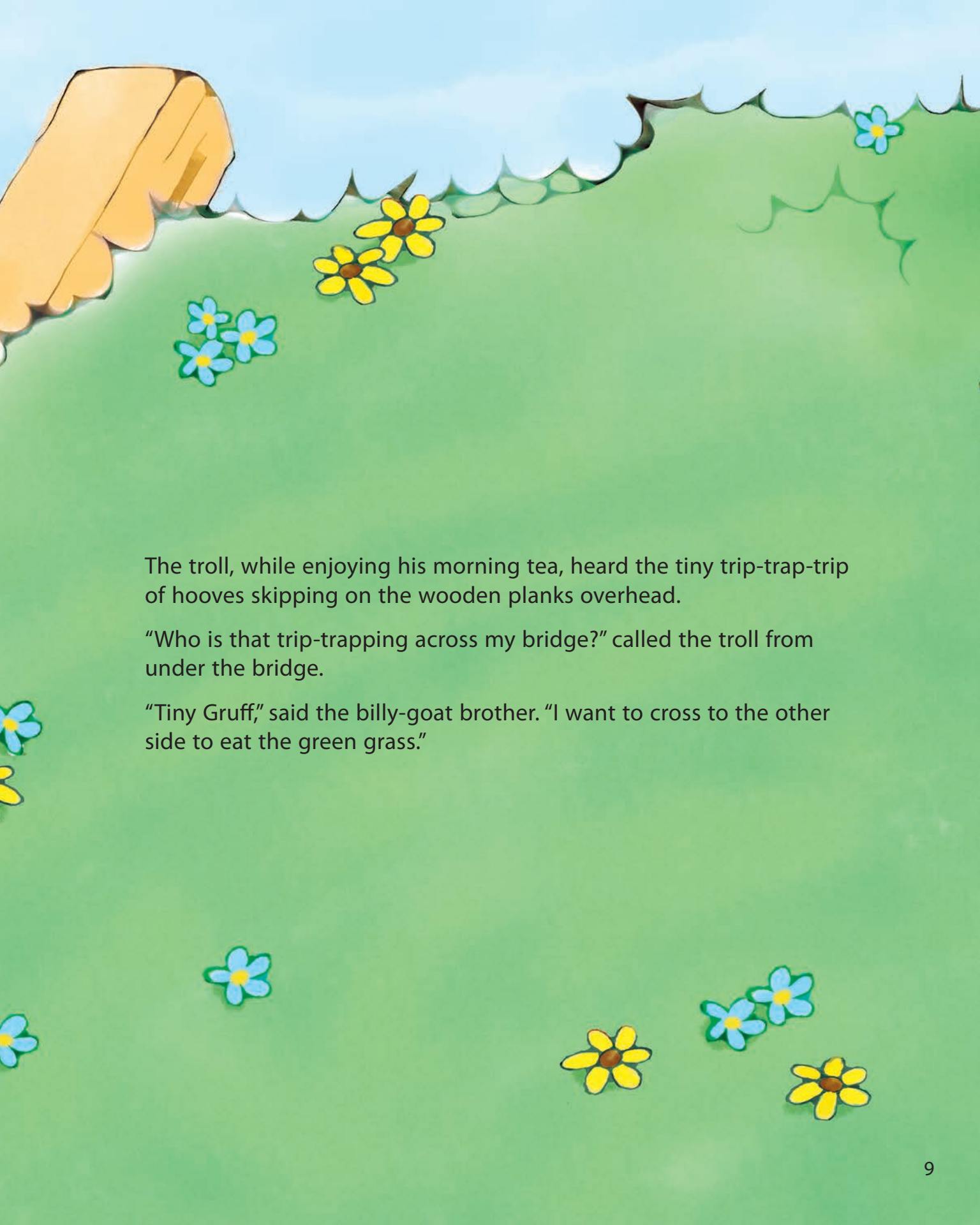
The troll did not know that three billy-goat brothers named “Gruff” lived on the brown side of the river.

There was Tiny Gruff, Big Gruff, and Great Big Gruff. They had eaten up all the good, green grass and *this* was why the land was barren.

The billy-goats were hungry and wanted to cross the river to eat up the green grass on the other side.







The troll, while enjoying his morning tea, heard the tiny trip-trap-trip of hooves skipping on the wooden planks overhead.

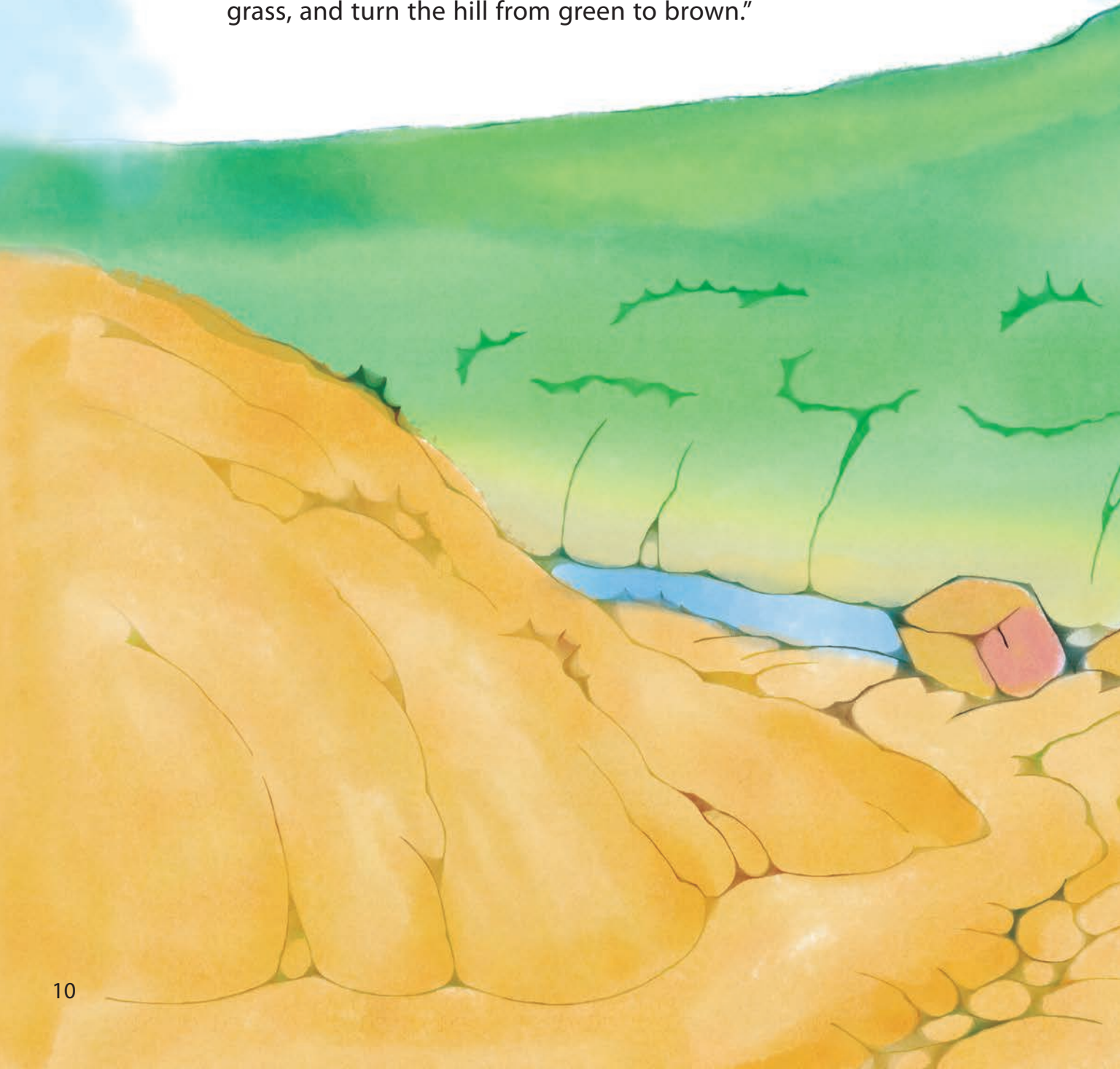
"Who is that trip-trapping across my bridge?" called the troll from under the bridge.

"Tiny Gruff," said the billy-goat brother. "I want to cross to the other side to eat the green grass."

The troll knew that goats do not know when to stop eating and so he said, "You cannot cross my bridge."

"Why not?" cried Tiny Gruff.

Answered the troll, "If I let you cross, you will eat all the grass, and turn the hill from green to brown."








"Oh please," cried Tiny Gruff. "I haven't eaten for days. I will only nibble a few blades of grass. I am tiny and won't eat very much."

So the troll said, begrudgingly, "Promise you will eat only a few blades of grass and then come right back."

"I promise!" pledged Tiny Gruff and went trip-trap-trip across the bridge and up the hill to eat the green grass.





The troll had just started looking at his seed packets when he heard the big trip-trap-trip of hooves trotting on the wooden planks overhead.

"Who is that trip-trapping across my bridge?" called the troll from under the bridge.


"Me!" said Big Gruff. "I want to cross to the other side to eat the green grass and grow fat."

The troll felt worried. He had let one goat cross the bridge. How many more would come? He said, "You cannot cross my bridge."

"Why not?" cried Big Gruff.

Answered the troll, "If I let you cross, you will eat all the grass, and turn the hill from green to brown."

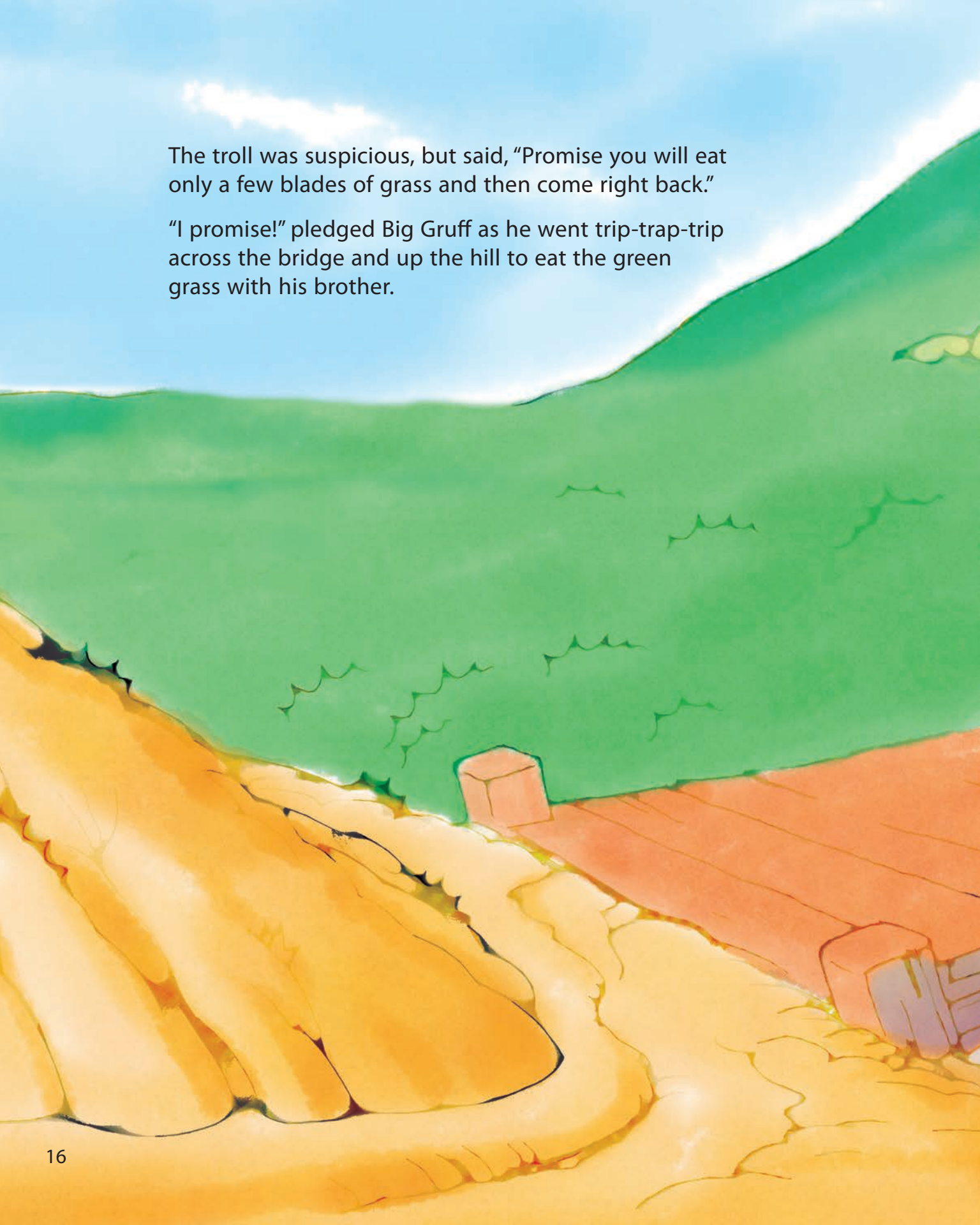
"Oh please," cried Big Gruff. "I haven't eaten for days. I will only nibble a few blades of grass. I am not great big and won't eat very much."





The troll was suspicious, but said, "Promise you will eat only a few blades of grass and then come right back."

"I promise!" pledged Big Gruff as he went trip-trap-trip across the bridge and up the hill to eat the green grass with his brother.





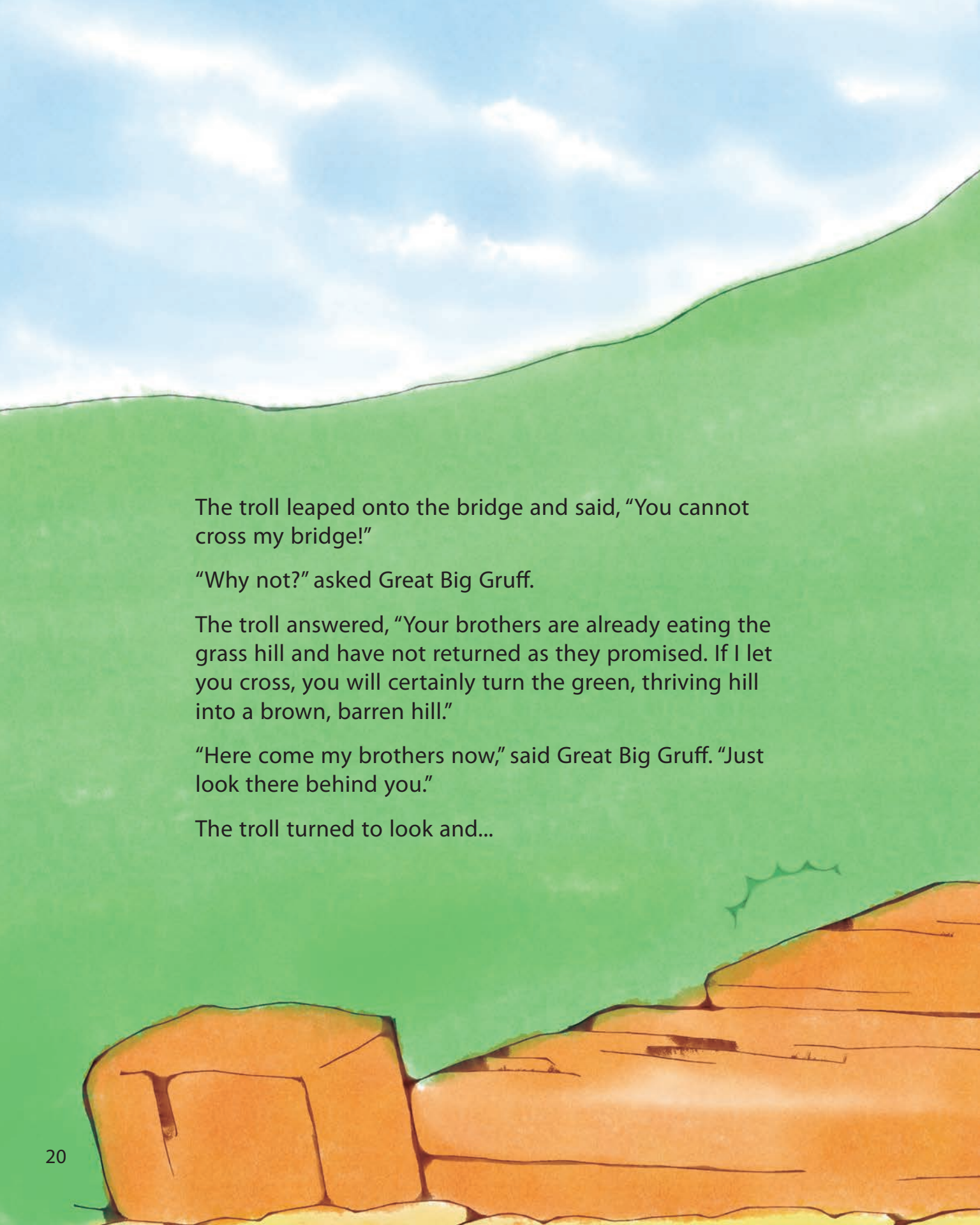




The troll was choosing seeds to plant that spring and wondering why the billy-goat brothers had not yet returned when he heard a great big trip-trap-trip of hooves clomping on the wooden planks overhead.

The troll was worried, for he recognized that as the sound of a very big goat indeed.





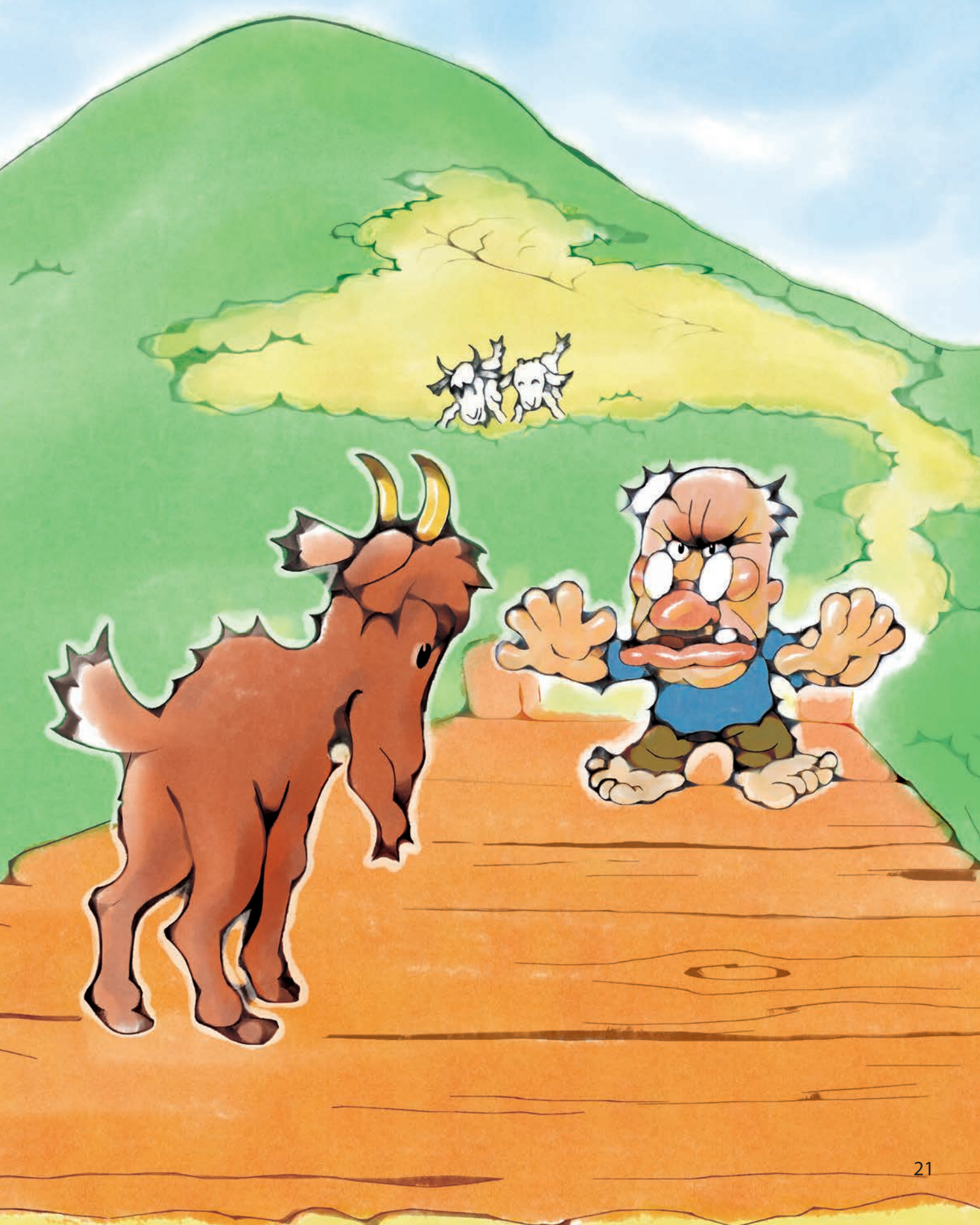
The troll leaped onto the bridge and said, "You cannot cross my bridge!"

"Why not?" asked Great Big Gruff.

The troll answered, "Your brothers are already eating the grass hill and have not returned as they promised. If I let you cross, you will certainly turn the green, thriving hill into a brown, barren hill."

"Here come my brothers now," said Great Big Gruff. "Just look there behind you."

The troll turned to look and...





Trip-trappity-trip! Great Big Gruff tossed the troll straight up into the air and went trip-trap-trip across the bridge and up the hill to join his brothers who were *still* eating.



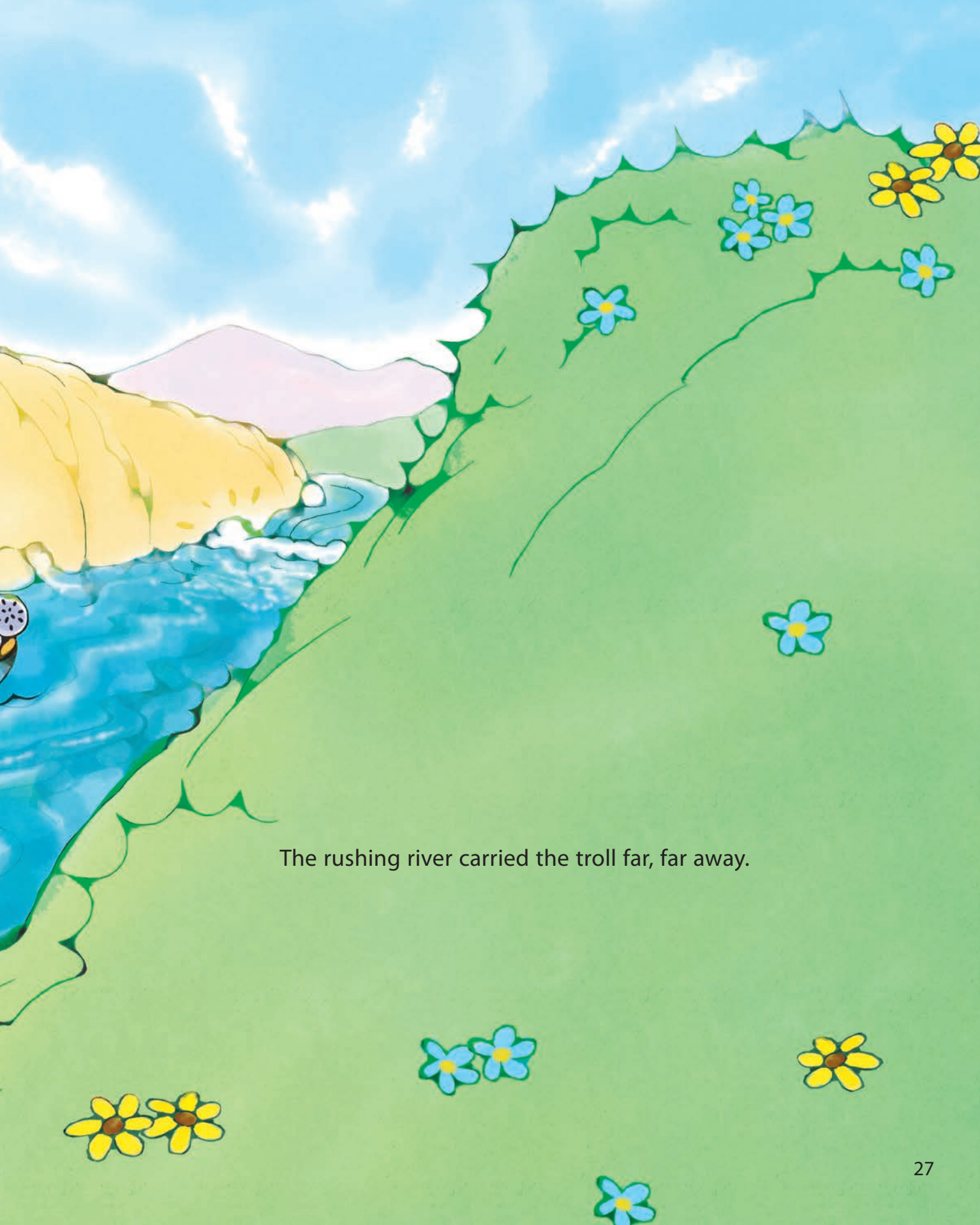




When the troll landed, he bounced, bounced, bounced so hard that the bridge broke into pieces and he fell into the river.





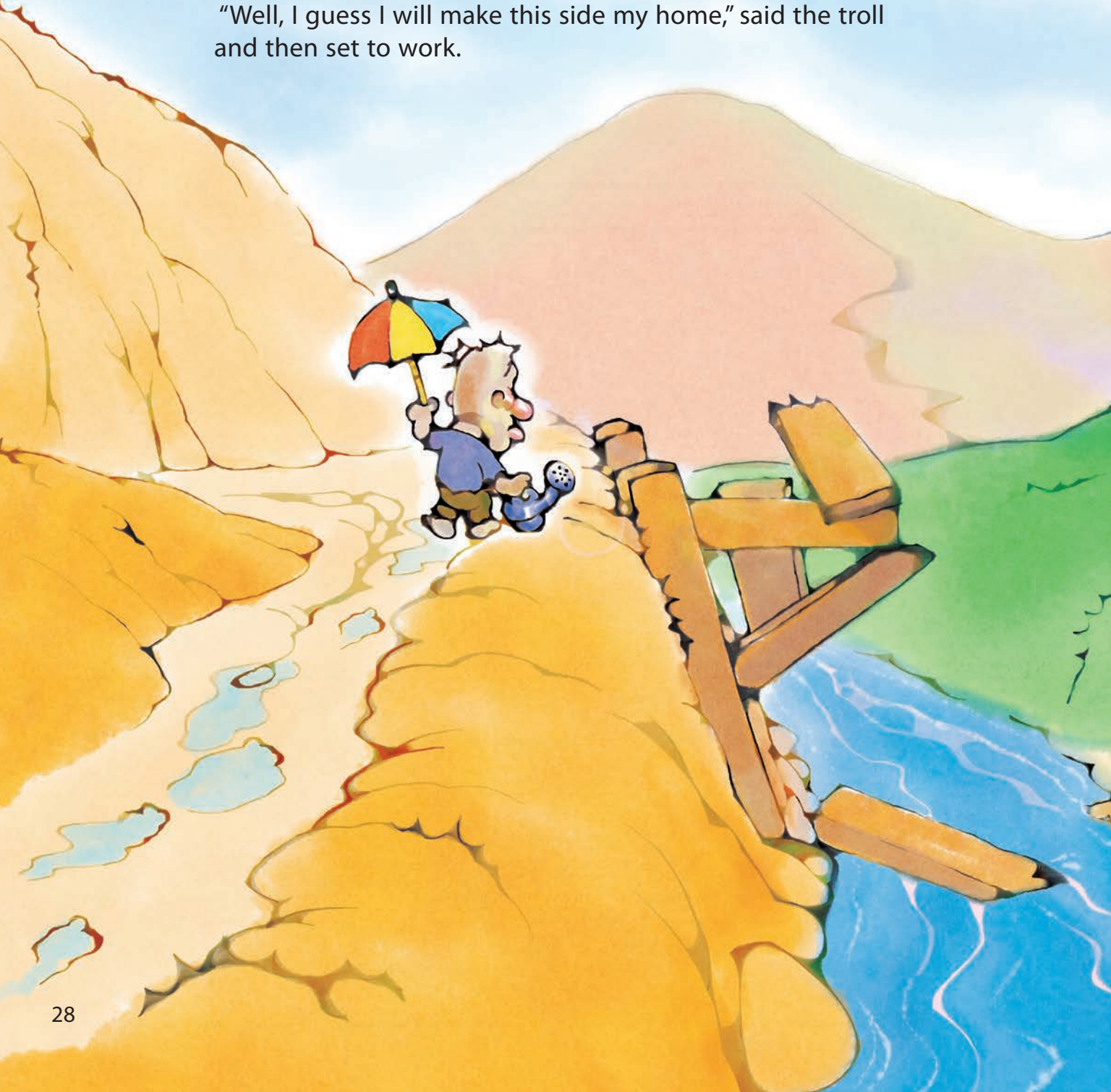


The rushing river carried the troll far, far away.

The troll walked back on the brown, barren side of the river.

When he arrived at the bridge, he looked up at the green, thriving hill and shook his head. The Gruff brothers were *still* there, eating the green grass.

“Well, I guess I will make this side my home,” said the troll and then set to work.







In the same amount of time that it took for the goats to turn the green hill to brown, the troll transformed the brown hill to green.

If you visit the spot today, you will find the troll busily tending to the hill.







## About the Author

Illustrator Craig Deeley proposed an intriguing idea: “Let’s tell *Three Billy Goats Gruff* from the Troll’s point of view!” Inspired by Craig’s rendering of the Troll as a quirky middle-aged gardener, Brandi imagined what might happen if a curmudgeonly hermit found his horticultural efforts interrupted by three voracious goats. Unlike the traditional story of good vs bad, this retelling explores an interaction between characters with differing ideals.

## About the Illustrator

When Craig was in 1st grade he created a picture collage with bottle caps and acorns and a dog cut out of brown paper. All the kids in his classroom thought that the dog was a cow. From that day to this, Craig has loved being an artist, drawing, illustrating, and animating. (Because in art, dogs can be cows!)

