

KIWI MARVELS

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# FLO & FRED

go to  
Glowworm Caves



SARITA BETSCHART  
ILLUSTRATED BY EMILY KINGHORN

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by

**SARITA BETSCHART**

with illustrations by

**EMILY KINGHORN**



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Flo Butterfly yawned and rubbed her antennae briskly. The day was crisp and cold and everything below her sparkled in the winter sunshine.

She fluttered down the spiral stairs of her tree-top house and into the warmth of the florist shop.

“Good morning!” Flo cheerily greeted her parents. “How can I help?”

“Could you make an arrangement of verbena for the window display?” requested her mum.

Flo carefully selected a few strong stems of the citrus-scented blooms and placed them artistically in a glass vase filled with muehlanbeckia.

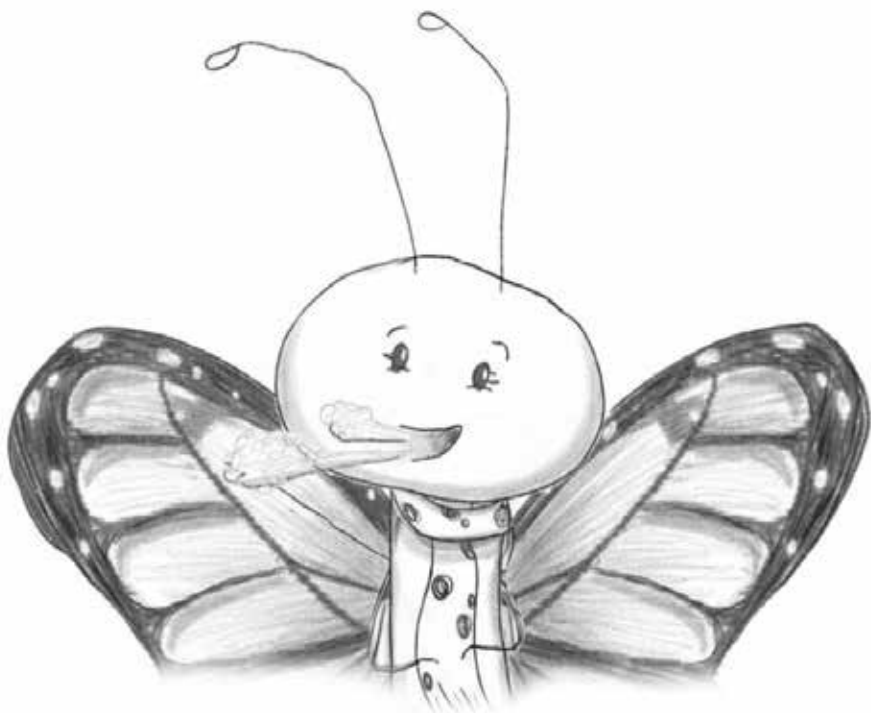
“Thanks darling, that looks lovely!” Mrs Butterfly said. “What are your plans this morning?”

Flo grinned, “Fred’s invited me round to spend the day with him.”

“Oh wonderful, sweetheart. I hope you have fun!”

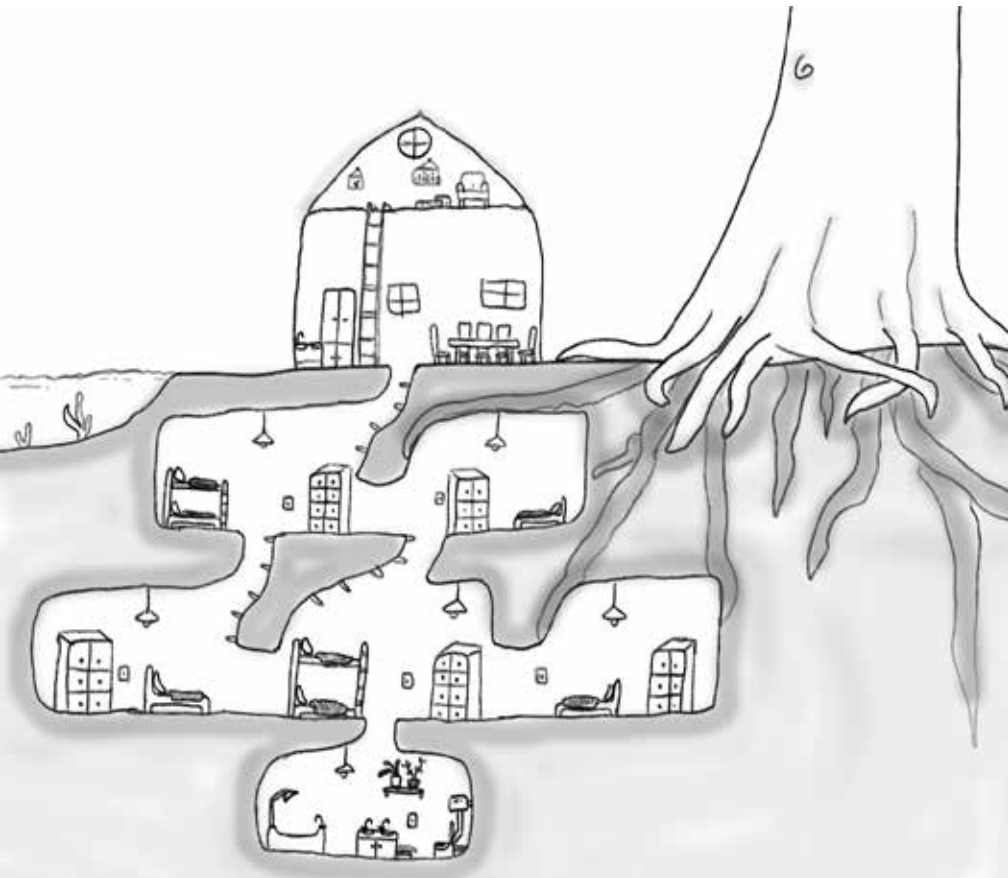
“Thanks, Mum. See you later.” She blew her dad a kiss across the room, then sailed outside.

Flo exhaled and watched her breath form a cloud in the frosty early morning air.



She flitted past her favourite bakery, savouring the sweet aroma of caramelised kūmara that wafted from the door. Her flight slowed as she gazed at the treats in the window, then with a start Flo remembered she had somewhere to be.

She fluttered onward to a cosy house nestled near the roots of a giant oak tree on the edge of the village pond. Flo peeked through the window and caught a glimpse of a book on Fred's lap as he sat at the table eating.



His distraction was causing him some difficulties.

With his head bent low he first fumbled with the food on his plate, then he bumped a beetle pikelet into the side of his cheek before finding his mouth. Flo couldn't help the laugh that escaped her.

Mrs Frog looked up and spotted the butterfly outside. "Hello Flo, come on in, dear. You must be dreadfully chilly," she declared as she opened the door.

Flo made her way into the warm, busy kitchen, filled with Fred's numerous siblings.

She sat down in her usual spot, just as Mrs. Frog plucked Fred's book from his grasp and placed it carefully on the side table.

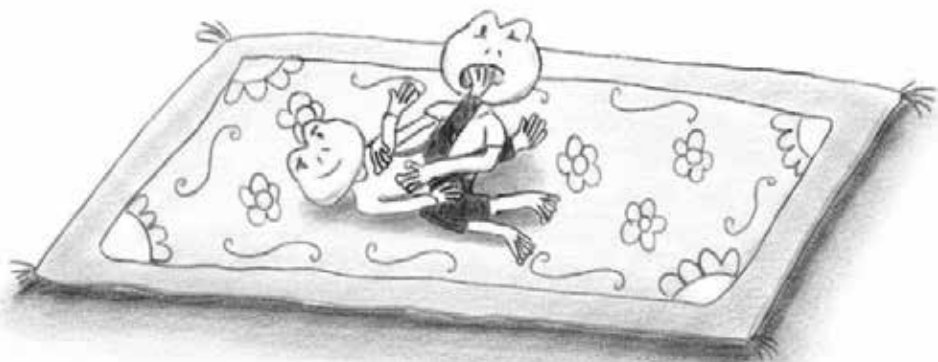
"Oh, it was just so exciting, I couldn't put it down," Fred tried to justify.



“Hidden treasure, a sunken pirate ship, and a great castle underground, filled with glowing lights and crystal caverns...” he continued with wide eyes as he waved his arms over head, knocking a glass of water in his excitement. “Oops, sorry mum, glad that was nearly empty,” he apologised ruefully.

After breakfast Flo thanked Mrs Frog for the delicious meal before heading into the sitting room to discover where Fred had bounced off to.





She found him with his younger brother tangled in a wrestling match on the mat!

Fred's arms were locked around Tom's chest, and a slippery foot was being pushed in his mouth when he looked over and caught Flo watching them. She had a twinkle in her eyes and her grin made him quickly let go and hop up.

"Hey Flo, what do you think we should do today?" Fred asked.

"I'm not sure," Flo replied, "I'm just excited it's the weekend."

"Yes, me too!" Fred agreed.

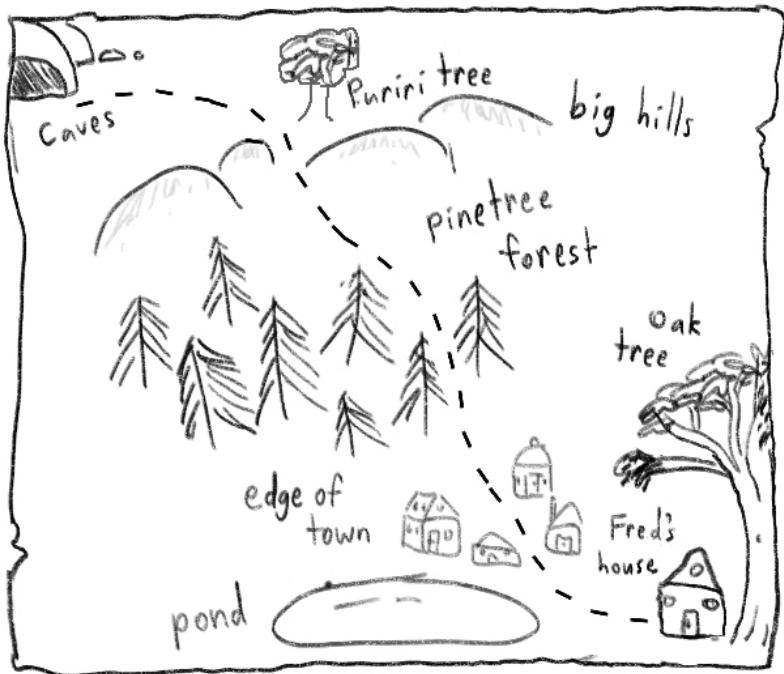
As the two friends cleared the table and washed the dishes together, Fred shared more about the book he was reading.

“An underground cave does sound exciting,” Flo remarked. “I’ve never been below ground before.”

“Why don’t you go see some caves for yourselves?” Mr Frog suggested, as he finished off his last gulp of cricket coffee. “The Glowworm Caves would be well worth a visit. You may not find gold or diamonds, but there are plenty of other interesting treasures there to be discovered.”

Flo and Fred grinned at each other, “Alright, let’s go!”





Fred's dad gave them instructions for getting to the caves, and drew a simple map for them to follow.

"Make sure to stick together and remember, friends are always there for each other, no matter what," he said, but when he looked up, he found only Flo listening attentively. Fred had already raced off to pack the gear they might need for the adventure.

He soon returned with two backpacks. “Well, I think that’s everything,” he proudly stated.

Flo and Fred hoisted their backpacks onto their shoulders and set off on their adventure. They followed the map out of town and into the wild green countryside.

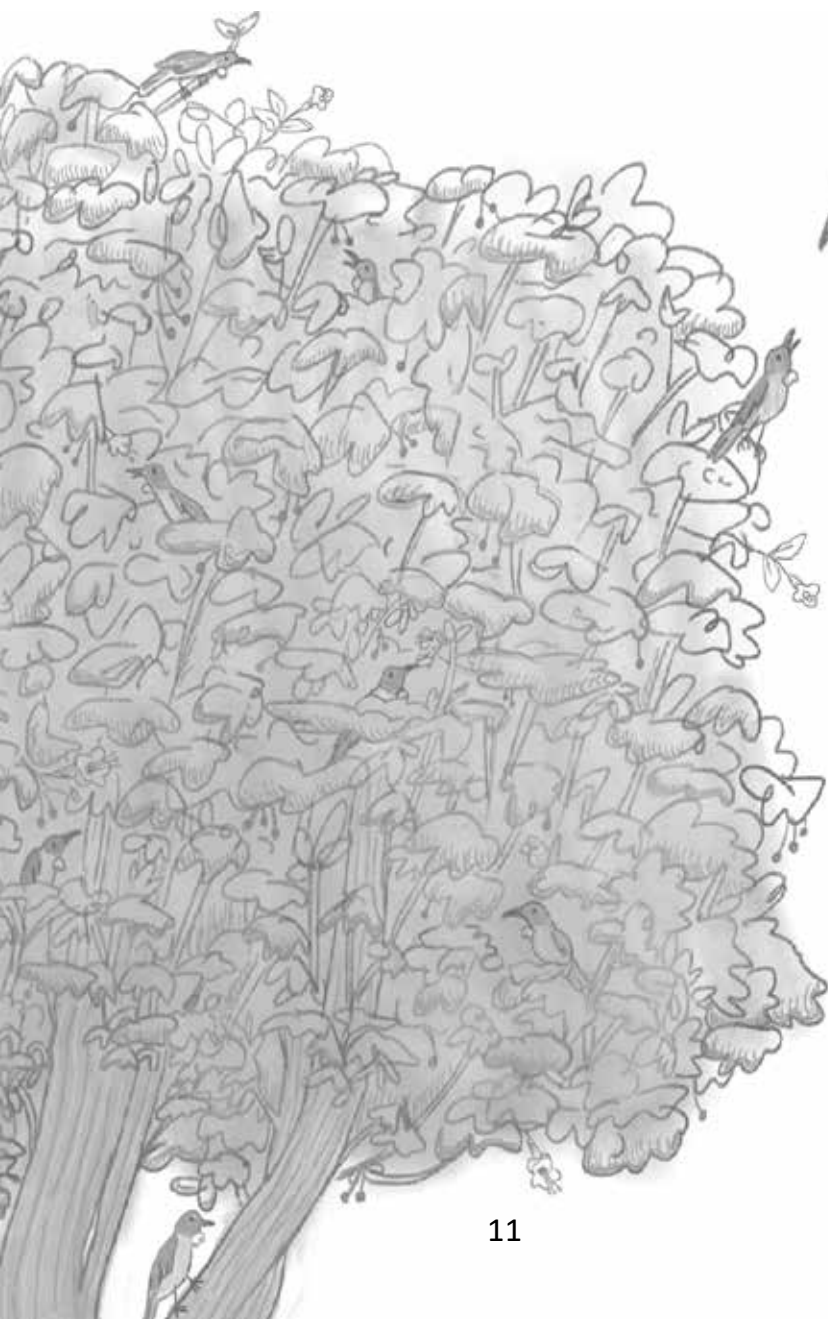




They passed a big pūriri tree covered in bright pink, trumpet-shaped flowers. The tree was rather crammed with tūi, who were all enjoying a delicious winter feast. Their loud cackles and whistles filled the air. They didn't even notice the two friends pass by.

*Flitter, flutter*, a fantail flew up to Flo and Fred. "Hello! I'm Tere. Where are you off to? It's a fine morning," the fantail cheeped merrily, as she zipped back and forth in front of them.

"We are going to explore the Glowworm Caves. Would you like to come on an adventure with us, Tere?" Fred invited.



“Oooohh, not me, not me,” the bird chattered, flicking her tail. “I like it out here. I like the sunshine. I like the forest. But I’ll join you the rest of the way. It is not far now. Not far. Nearly there.”

Then they came around a corner in the path, and there it was! A huge rock archway curving over a hole that led straight into the hillside.

“This is where I leave you. All the best. Stay safe. Goodbye, goodbye.” And with that, Tere flittered away as quickly as she had arrived.

The cave opening looked rather ominous and Flo felt a wave of apprehension.

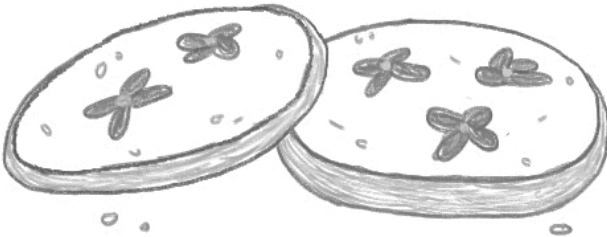
“Did you remember flashlights, Fred?” Flo asked nervously.



“Of course I did! I’m pretty confident I packed everything we’ll need! I even packed some of your favourite sugared violet cookies in our lunchbox,” Fred assured her.

Flo stopped to carefully read the signs at the entrance, while Fred bounded boldly into the darkness.

Flo felt a desire to turn back, like the fantail had. “I won’t let my fears cause me to miss out on this adventure,” she stated with determination. She took a deep, calming breath and flew into the cave.

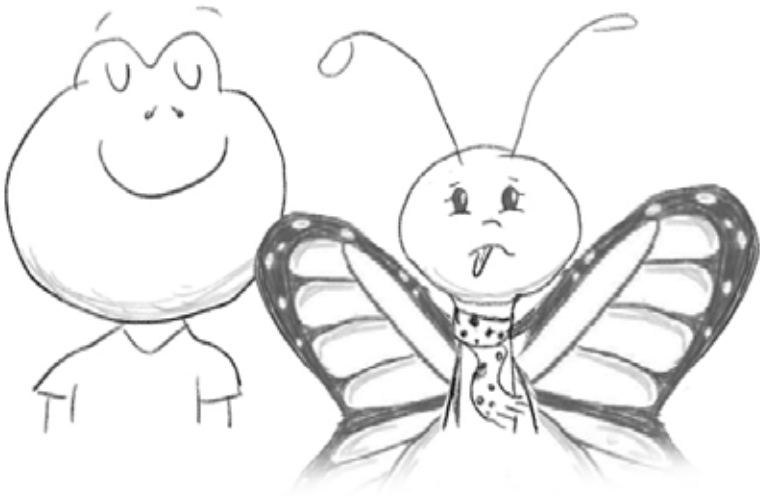


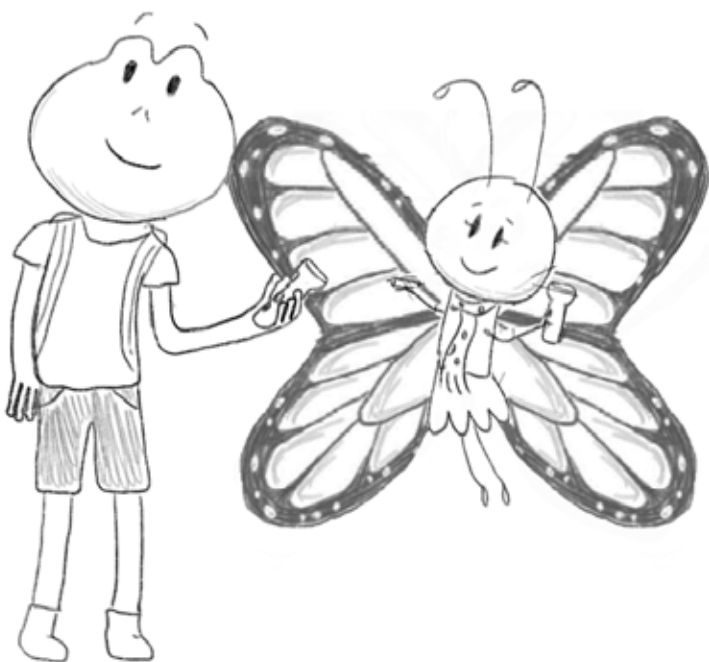
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### Cave of Wonders

As Flo hurried through the archway, she bumped straight into Fred's back. He had paused to let his eyes adjust to the darkness.

They both sniffed at the damp, earthy smell, Fred with pleasure, while Flo wrinkled her nose in distaste. She shuddered at the sudden drop in temperature.





They rummaged in the gloom for their flashlights and followed the path further into the darkness. The walkway became a spiral ramp circling down, down, down, around the fringe of a vast pit that fell away below them.

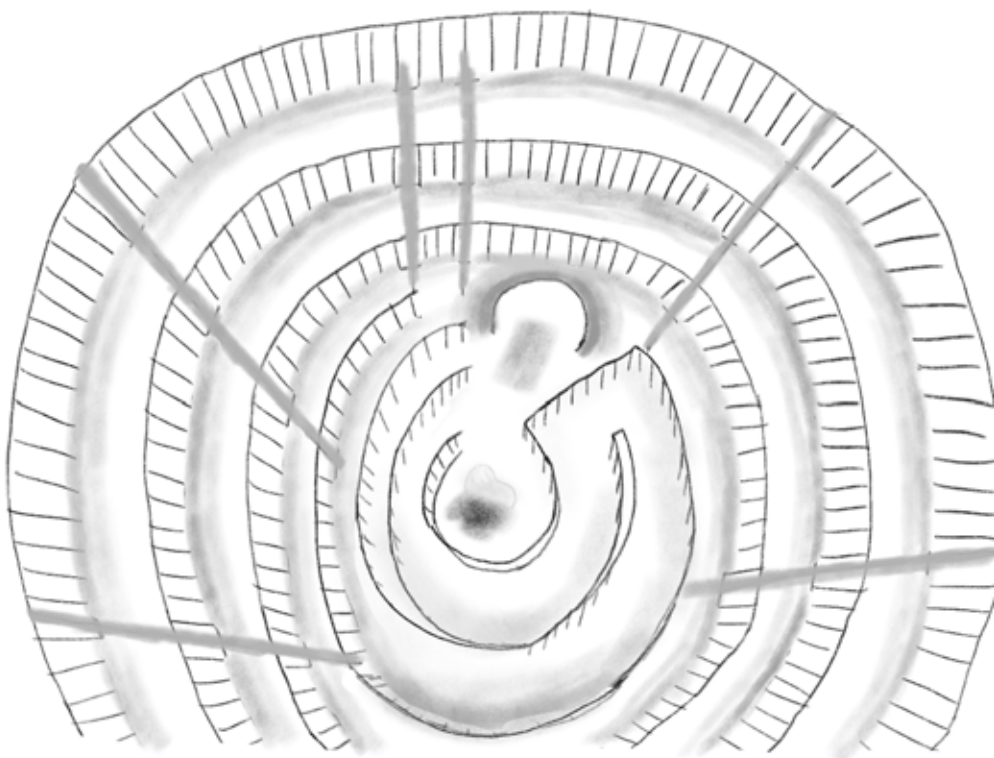
“This hole must be a tomo,” Fred mused, recalling a picture from one of his books.

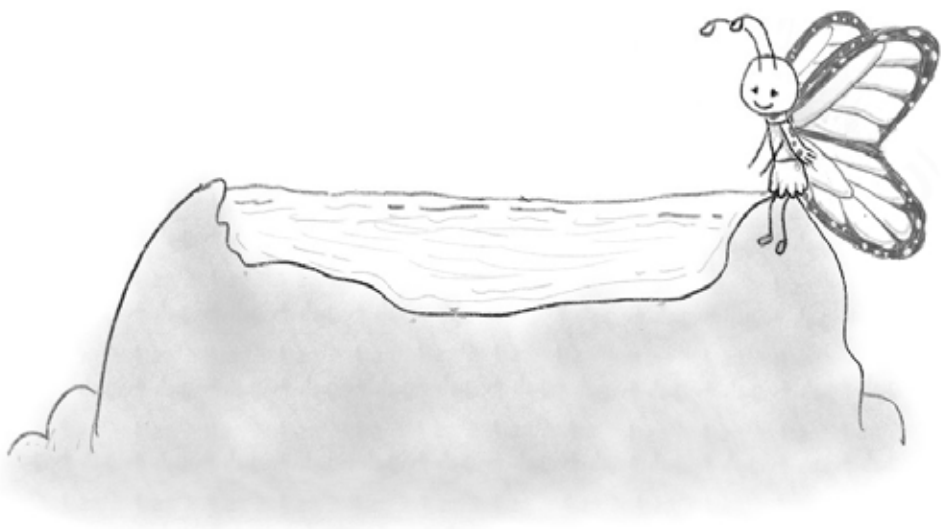
“What is a tomo?” Flo queried.

“They are deep holes in the ground, usually in and around caves like this.”

After a cautious inspection, Flo decided she couldn't see anything that looked dangerous and she might as well fly down the middle of the tomo, instead of following the ramp.

"See you at the bottom, Fred," she called, as she fluttered over the railing, her flashlight lighting her way.





On the cave floor she found a boulder where water persistently dripped, wearing out a hollow in the rock, then overflowing down the sides.

Flo took a tentative sip of the cool water as she waited for Fred to descend.

By the time Fred had worked his way around the long, spiral ramp he was feeling rather thirsty.

“Water,” he joyfully croaked and with one great leap, jumped up into the pool on top of the rock. After a brief paddle and dabble in the refreshing water, he was ready to resume their exploration.



They stood at the opening to the next cavern and looked around in awe. The rock formations on the ceiling sparkled and glittered as the torchlight flickered over them.

“Wow, look at those sheets of limestone hanging down in huge folds,” Fred remarked. “They look like concrete curtains.”

“And that one looks like a knobbly tree trunk,” Flo pointed out.



These must be the stalactites and stalagmites I have been reading about,” said Fred.

“Stal-ic- whats?” asked Flo.

“They’re like rocks that grow,” Fred explained. “Stalactites are the icicle shaped formations that hang from the ceilings. Stalagmites are built up from the floor.”

“Oh, so stalactites hold on *tight*, and stalagmites *might* reach the top one day,” Flo added thoughtfully.

The friends continued on through the cave.

