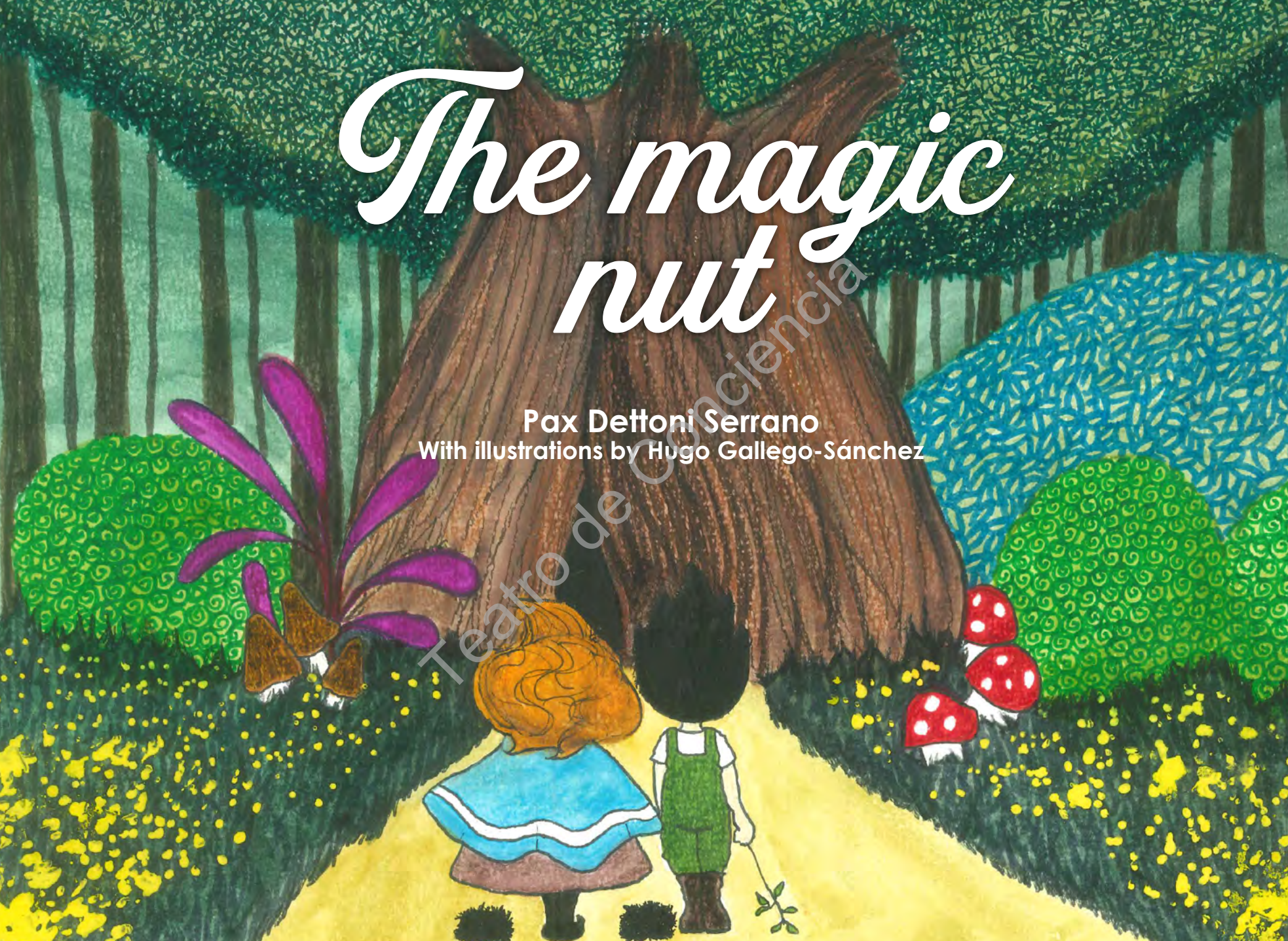


The magic nut

Pax Dettoni Serrano
With illustrations by Hugo Gallego-Sánchez

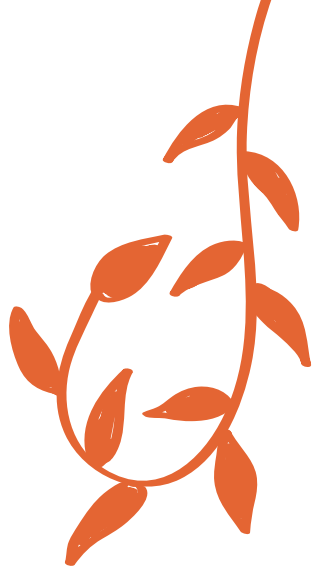


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The magic nut

Teatro de Conciencia



Pax Dettoni Serrano
With illustrations by Hugo Gallego-Sánchez

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To Clara and Pau, my beloved nephews.

*Their names inspired the names of the
protagonists of the story.*

*To C.V., A.C., and P.D., who were once
children and whom I remember with
affection.*

*Their story, and that of many others, has
inspired some of the events in the story.*

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Once upon a time, Clara and Pau, a girl and a boy, who had been born just a few months apart and were neighbors in a small mountain village.



Clara

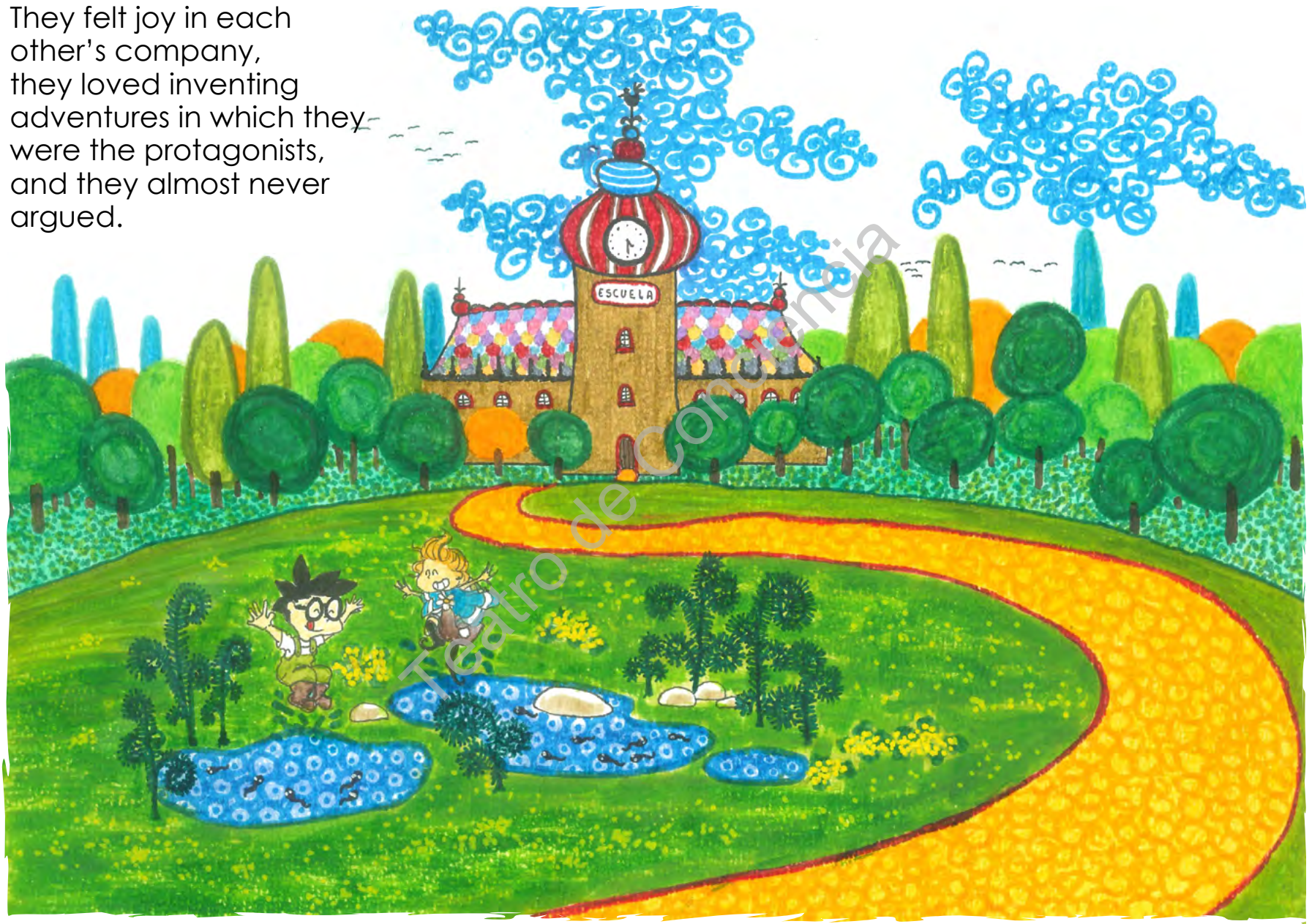


Pau

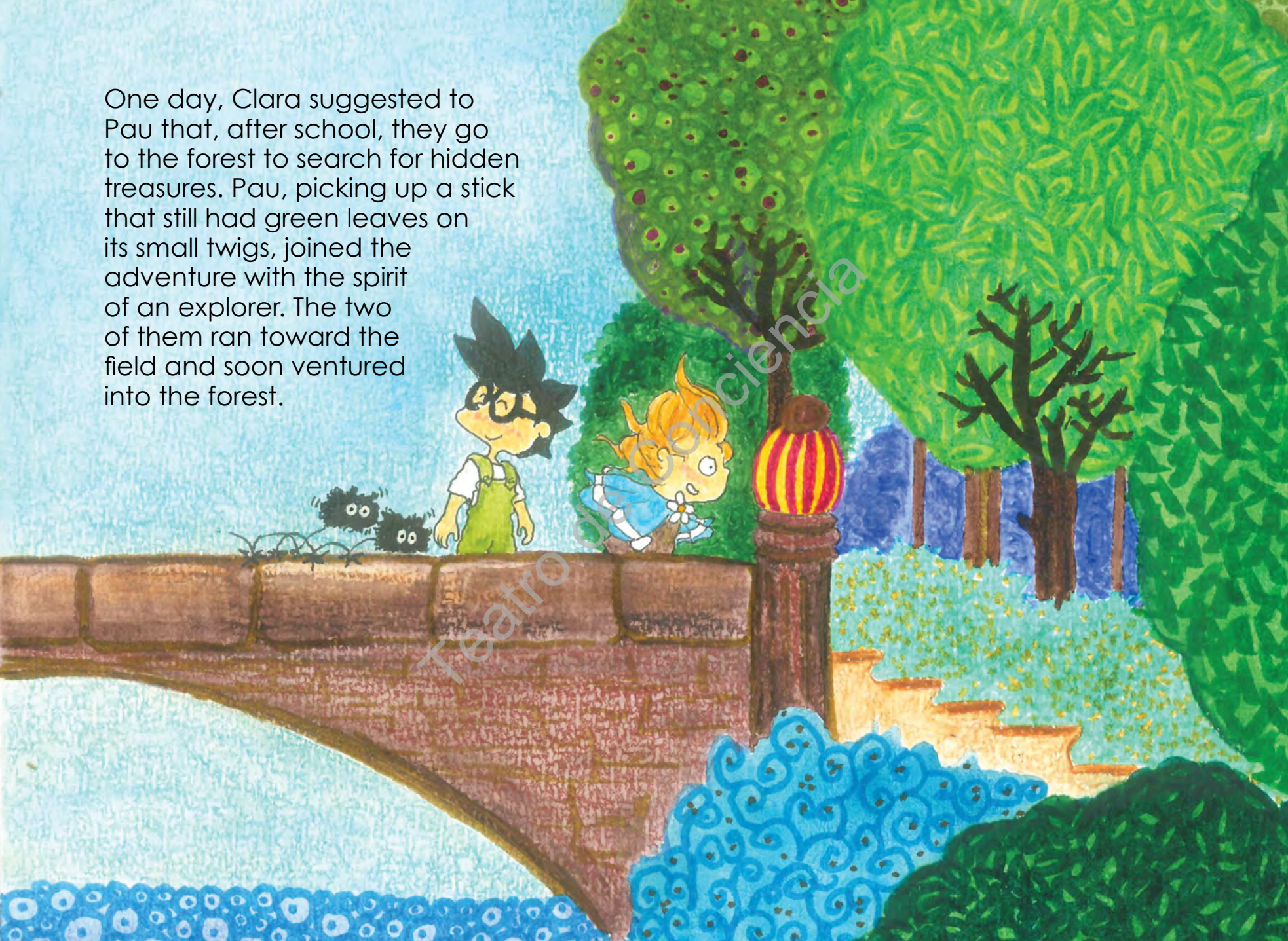
From a very young age, they became friends and enjoyed playing together. When they started school, they were in the same class and always returned home laughing and jumping in puddles, in which they sometimes found funny tadpoles.

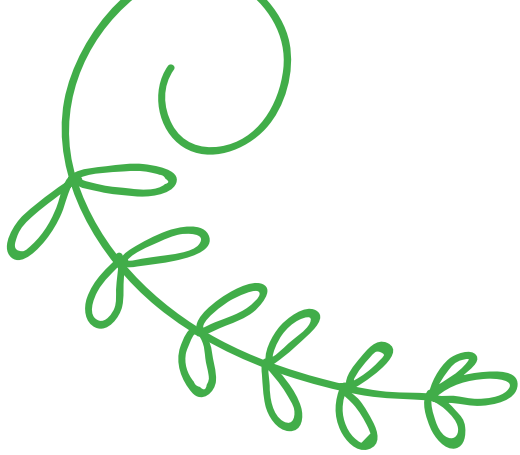


They felt joy in each other's company, they loved inventing adventures in which they were the protagonists, and they almost never argued.

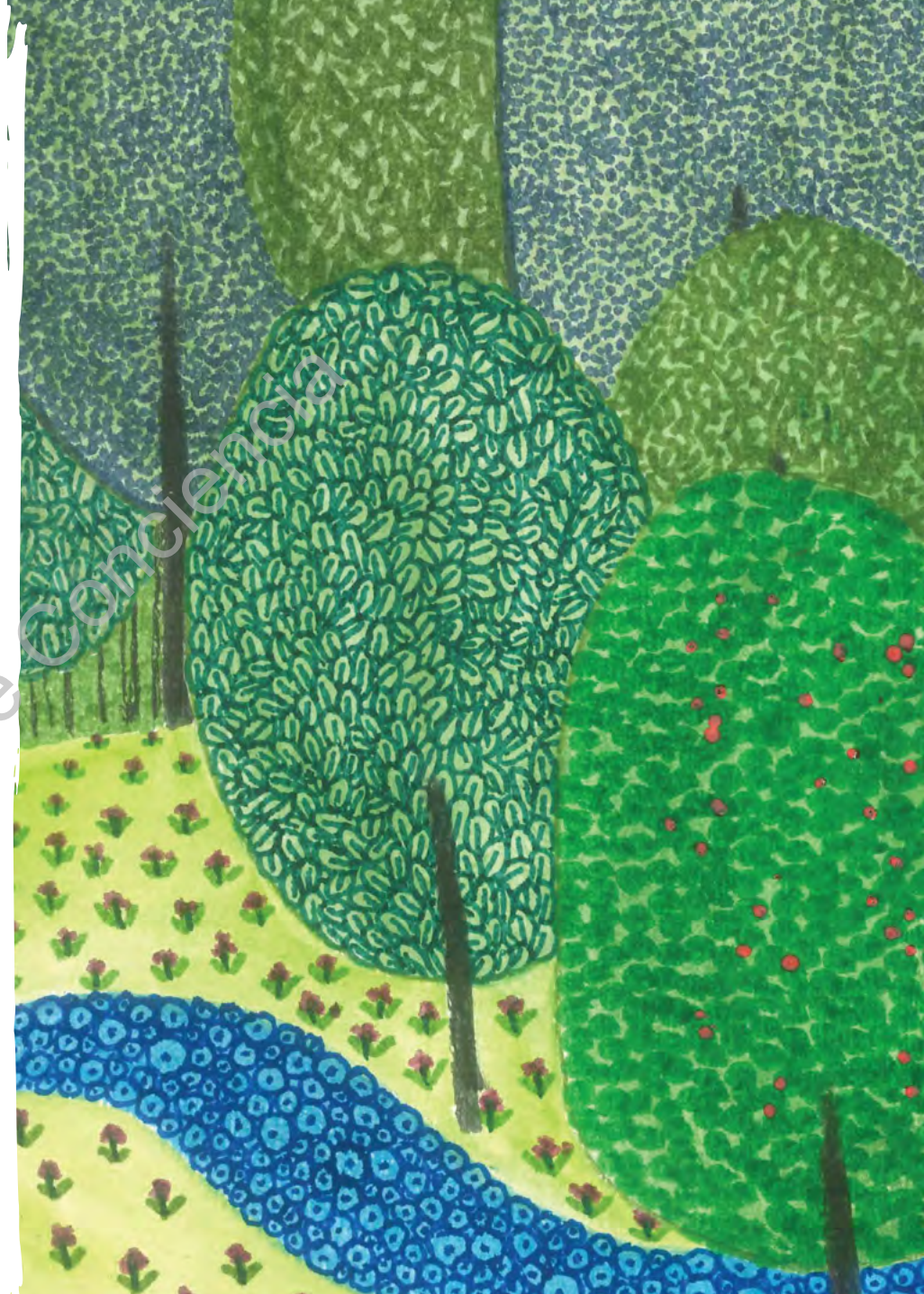


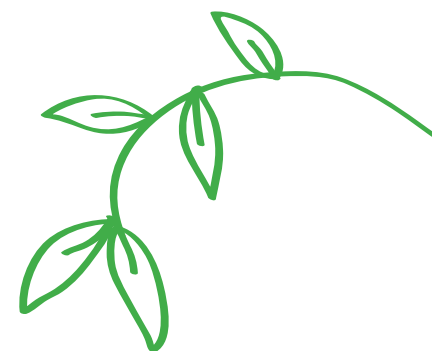
One day, Clara suggested to Pau that, after school, they go to the forest to search for hidden treasures. Pau, picking up a stick that still had green leaves on its small twigs, joined the adventure with the spirit of an explorer. The two of them ran toward the field and soon ventured into the forest.





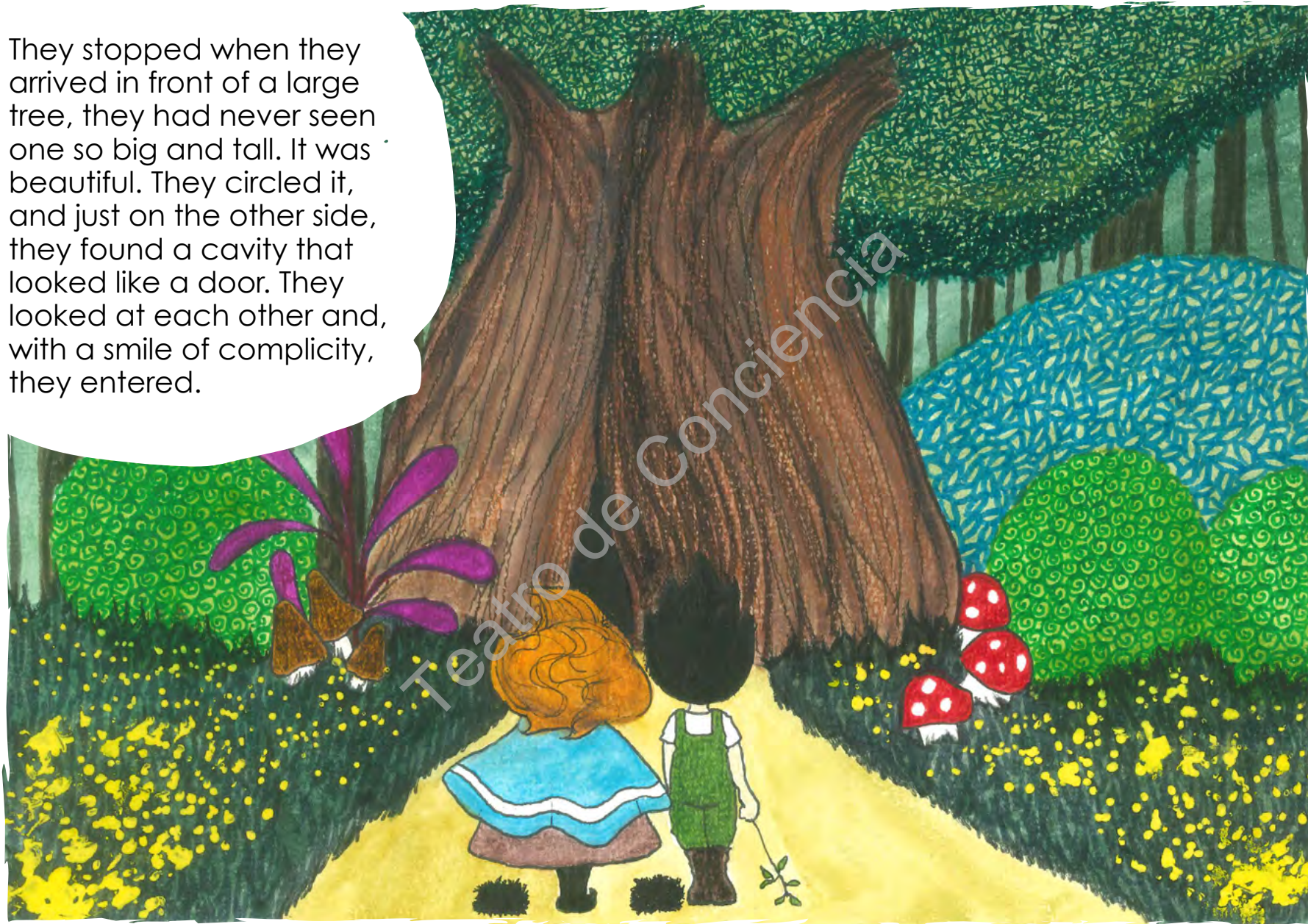
The trees were tall and lush, only allowing a few rays of sunlight to filter through their branches. There was humidity, and the sharp songs of the little birds nesting there could be heard. On the ground, the soil allowed large ferns of a very vivid green to grow, and moss covered the stones. The two friends' eyes sparkled with the excitement of the new adventure they had just begun.





Clara pointed to Pau that they should go to the right, as they could hear a stream. He, with the stick from which he had already stripped all the twigs, led the way as if he knew exactly where he was going.

They stopped when they arrived in front of a large tree, they had never seen one so big and tall. It was beautiful. They circled it, and just on the other side, they found a cavity that looked like a door. They looked at each other and, with a smile of complicity, they entered.



'There's definitely a treasure inside,'
said Pau excitedly.



'How do you know?' asked Clara.

'Let's dig a hole and you'll see,' replied
Pau with enthusiasm.

And with their little hands, they began
to dig in the center of the big tree.



When the hole was a little deeper, they stopped to rest. Then, a green stem sprouted from it, growing and growing until a flower bud appeared at its tip. At that moment, beautiful music began to play. As the sweet melody continued, the bud slowly opened, turning into a lovely flower. And, inside its wide petals, a small and friendly fairy appeared.

'Hello,' the fairy said with a cheerful voice as soon as she opened her eyes and saw them staring at her in bewilderment.

Pau and Clara were very surprised because they thought fairies only existed in stories.

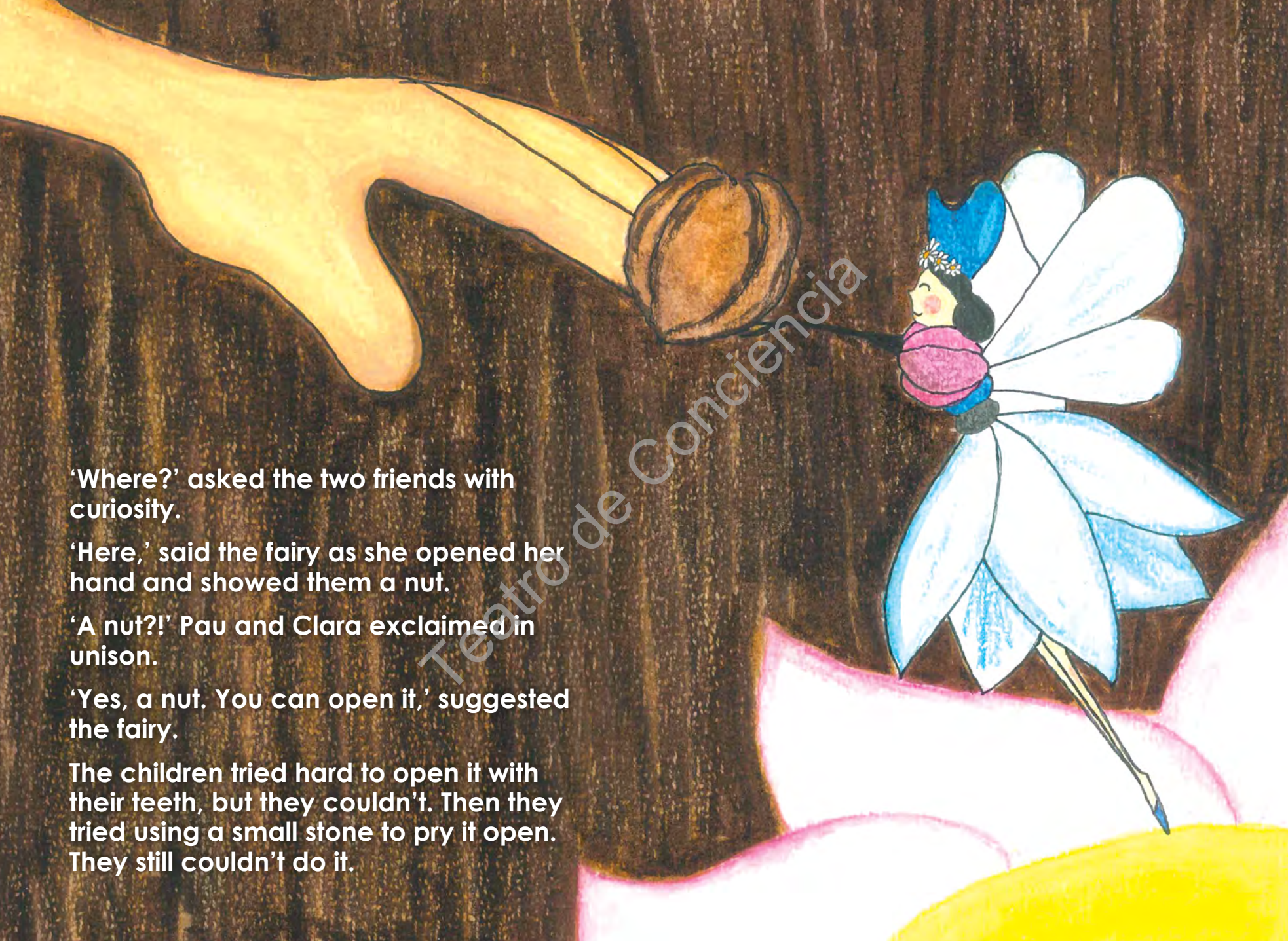
'Are you real?' asked Clara, incredulously.



'As real as your beautiful friendship,' the fairy replied in a strong voice.

'Do you know where there's a treasure?' Pau asked, not losing hope of finding it and believing she might know.

'Yes,' the tiny being replied with a playful air.



'Where?' asked the two friends with curiosity.

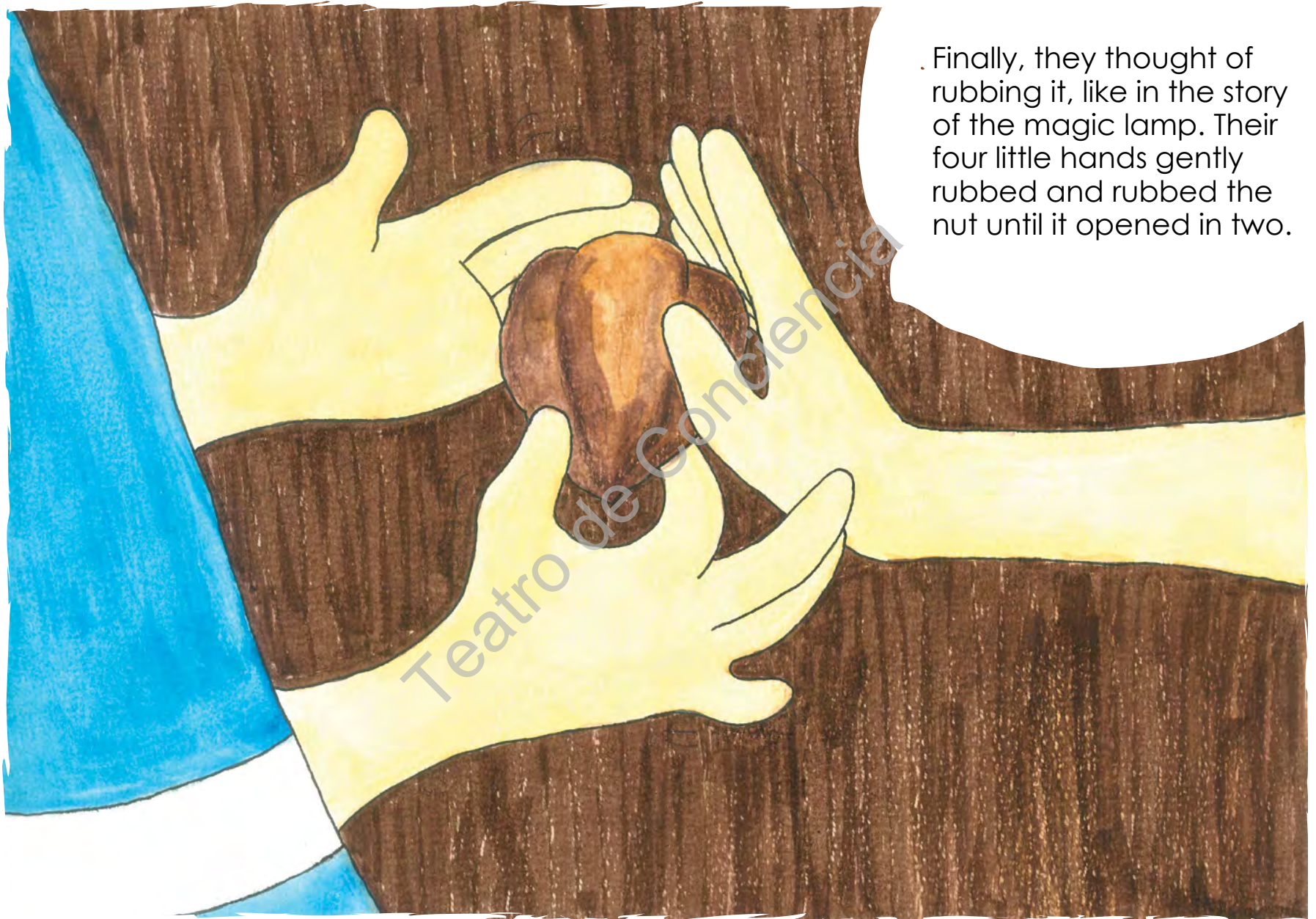
'Here,' said the fairy as she opened her hand and showed them a nut.

'A nut?!' Pau and Clara exclaimed in unison.

'Yes, a nut. You can open it,' suggested the fairy.

The children tried hard to open it with their teeth, but they couldn't. Then they tried using a small stone to pry it open. They still couldn't do it.

Finally, they thought of rubbing it, like in the story of the magic lamp. Their four little hands gently rubbed and rubbed the nut until it opened in two.



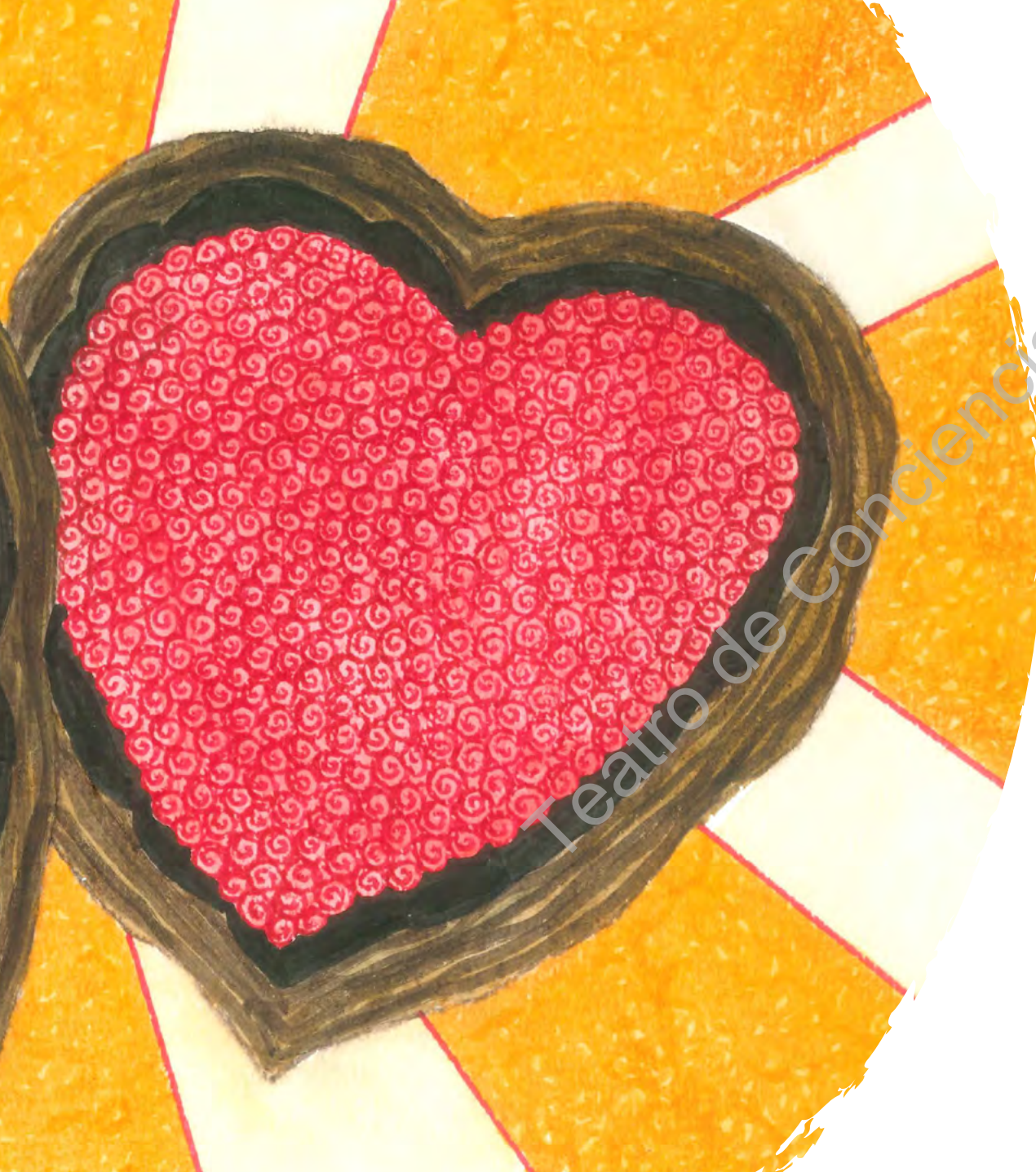
'There's a heart!' Clara shouted with joy when she saw that the nut, split in two, formed the shape of a heart in each half.

'That's right,' the fairy nodded, smiling. 'Sometimes, the hardest and most difficult things hide something good.'

'Is it a magic nut?' asked Pau, who still didn't quite understand why the fairy had given them a nut.

'Of course. Thanks to it, you'll always remember that the kindness in our hearts can harden when we suffer,' said the fairy.





'And when our heart hardens, do we hurt others?' asked Clara, who was understanding very well the message the fairy was conveying to them.

'Our heart hardens because of the intensity of the pain it feels when we get angry, sad, or scared. It is then that we can hurt other people or ourselves,' the fairy explained.





'It's like a monster that enters our heart and pushes us to hurt others!' exclaimed Pau, who had already imagined emotions such as anger, fear and sadness as a monster that entered into our hearts and was called emotional pain.

'So, can that monster also appear in my heart?' Clara continued asking, this time with some concern.

'What I mean is that there may come a day when anger, fear, or sadness make you forget your beautiful friendship and your kindness,' the fairy patiently explained.

'That will never happen to us, because we're very good friends!' Pau snapped belligerently.

'Maybe it will never happen to you. But if it ever does, remember this:

» You can only defeat the monster of emotional pain if you breathe very deeply three times. Then, when the monster has become smaller and you are calm, you can think of this magic nut and its message, which I've just explained to you.'



'After the hardness of the nut, the goodness of the heart is always hidden...'

Clara and Pau recited together.

'That's right, this way you won't let emotional pain push you to hurt others. And you'll also understand that, when someone hurts you, it's because their pain, their monster, has hardened their heart like a nut. Then, perhaps, you'll be able to help them and forgive them.'

With these words, the little magical being had shown them all the treasure she had given them.





Pau and Clara fell silent and each kept their half of the nut. The fairy performed a brief dance with the last notes of the melody above her flower and disappeared. The cavity of the large tree became dark and silent, just as they had found it when they entered.

The two friends made a pact and agreed not to tell anyone what would, from that moment on, be their secret.

They did so, and the years passed...

They were now older, almost teenagers, and a group of kids from school, as hard as nuts, began to insult Pau. They called him 'big ears,' 'tadpole,' and 'four eyes.' Pau felt angry, very angry, and the monster of emotional pain began to harden his heart.



Soon, as his anger continued and continued, his monster grew bigger and bigger. And, just as the fairy had predicted, it pushed Pau to insult Clara. He called her 'nerd,' 'fat,' and 'ugly.' In this way, Pau and Clara stopped being friends.





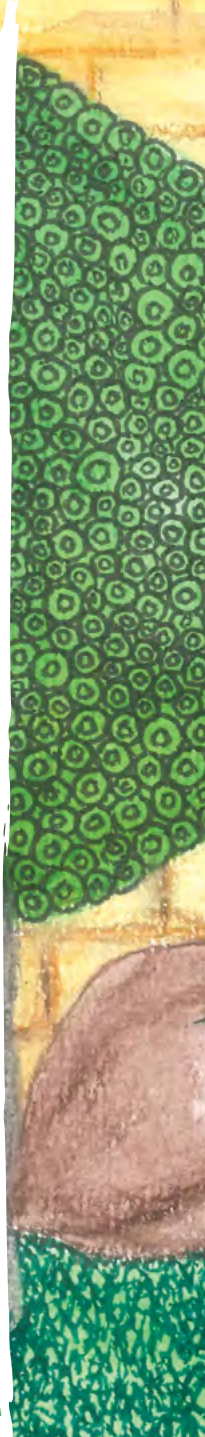
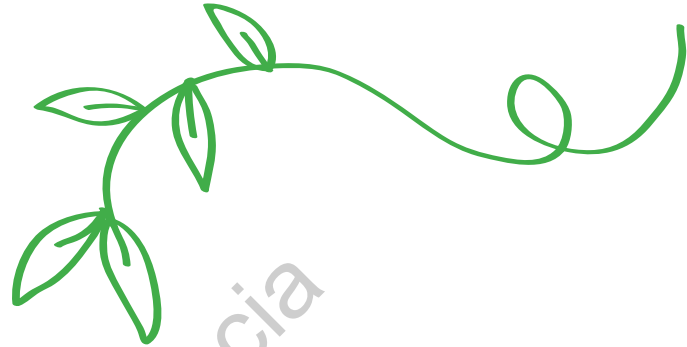
Clara felt very sad and afraid that she would never recover her friendship with Pau. She also began to feel how her monster was hardening her heart. So, she soon joined the other kids in insulting Pau and, in addition, she began to ignore one of her friends, Cándida. She criticized her, excluded her, and convinced the whole class not to play with her.

Cándida, in turn, felt her monster growing, and, hardened like a nut, she started hitting and shouting at her little brother.



The school was full of hard nuts
that bumped into each other,
hurting each other. No one
could see the hearts hidden
behind them.

And so the years went by, and
everything got worse. Clara, to forget
the insults from what had once been
her best friend, asked her parents to
send her to study somewhere else.
And Pau finally quit his studies because
he hated going to school.









Pau and Clara never became friends again, nor did they ever laugh together again. They never remembered their secret or the wise words of the fairy they had found while searching for treasures in the forest. In fact, each of them, on a different day, got rid of their half of the magic nut.

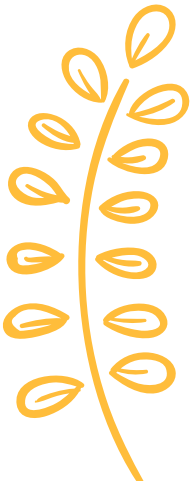


Of course not! This is one possible ending, yes... but... could there be another ending? What would have had to happen to change the course of the story?

Maybe something like this...

A group of kids from school started insulting Pau, because their monsters had hardened them like nuts. Then Pau, feeling very angry, also let his monster win the battle and his heart hardened. Soon, he started insulting Clara and they stopped being friends.

Clara felt very sad. When she cried in her room, driven by her emotional pain, she found in one of the drawers of her nightstand the half of the nut the fairy had given them. She looked at it and remembered its lesson.







She realized that since Pau had been insulting her, she had been feeling sadness, fear, and anger. She recognized that this pain was the monster that was hardening her heart like a nut. So she stood up and started breathing deeply three times, just as the fairy had said she should do to defeat it and make it smaller.



Then, when she felt calmer, she looked again at the heart drawn on her half of the nut and understood that Pau was insulting her because he felt hurt by the insults from the other kids. She realized that her friend's good heart was now hidden behind the hardness of his behavior, but it hadn't disappeared. So, she decided to help him.



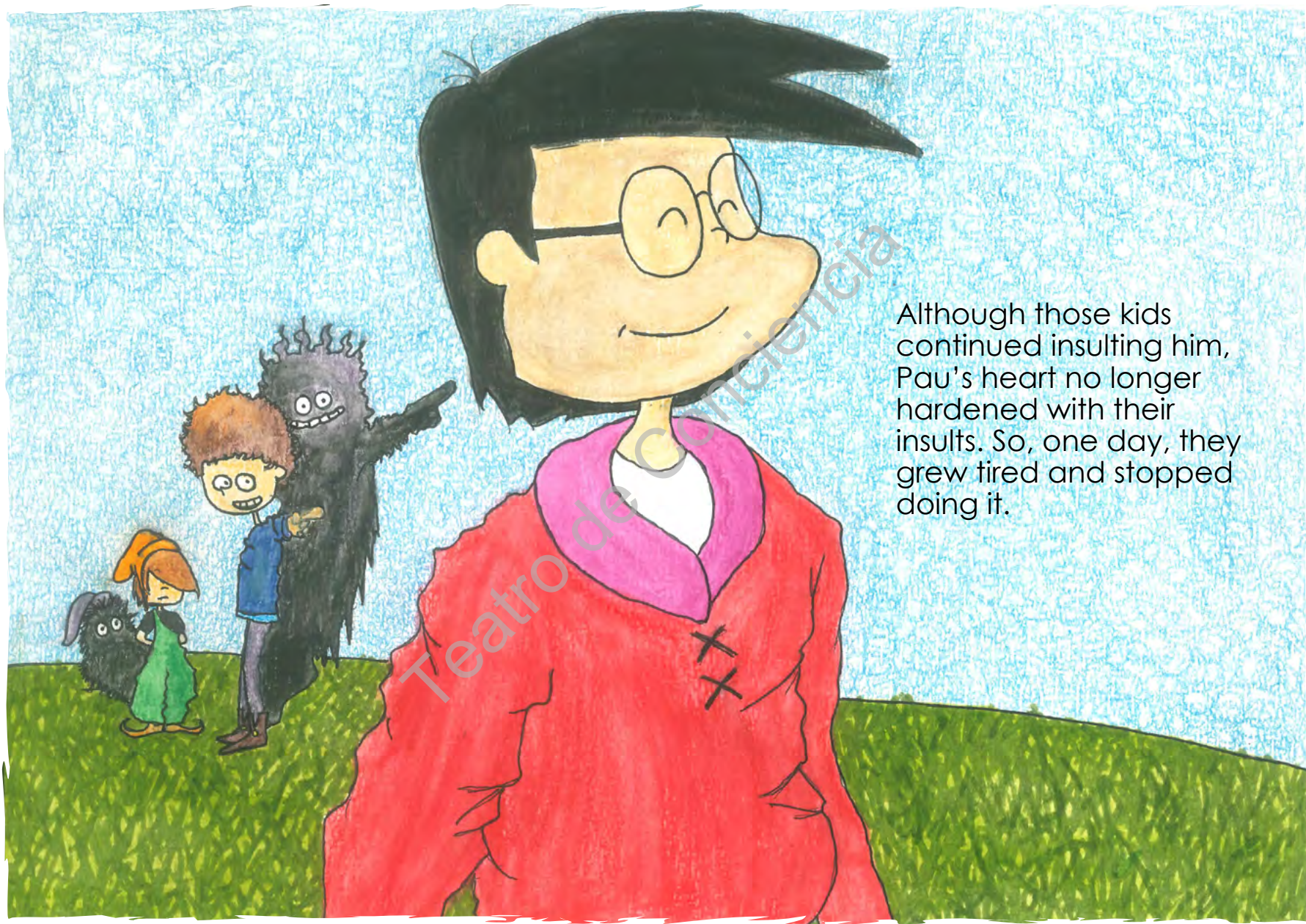
One morning before going to school, she passed by Pau's house and, at the door, she left him a note that said:

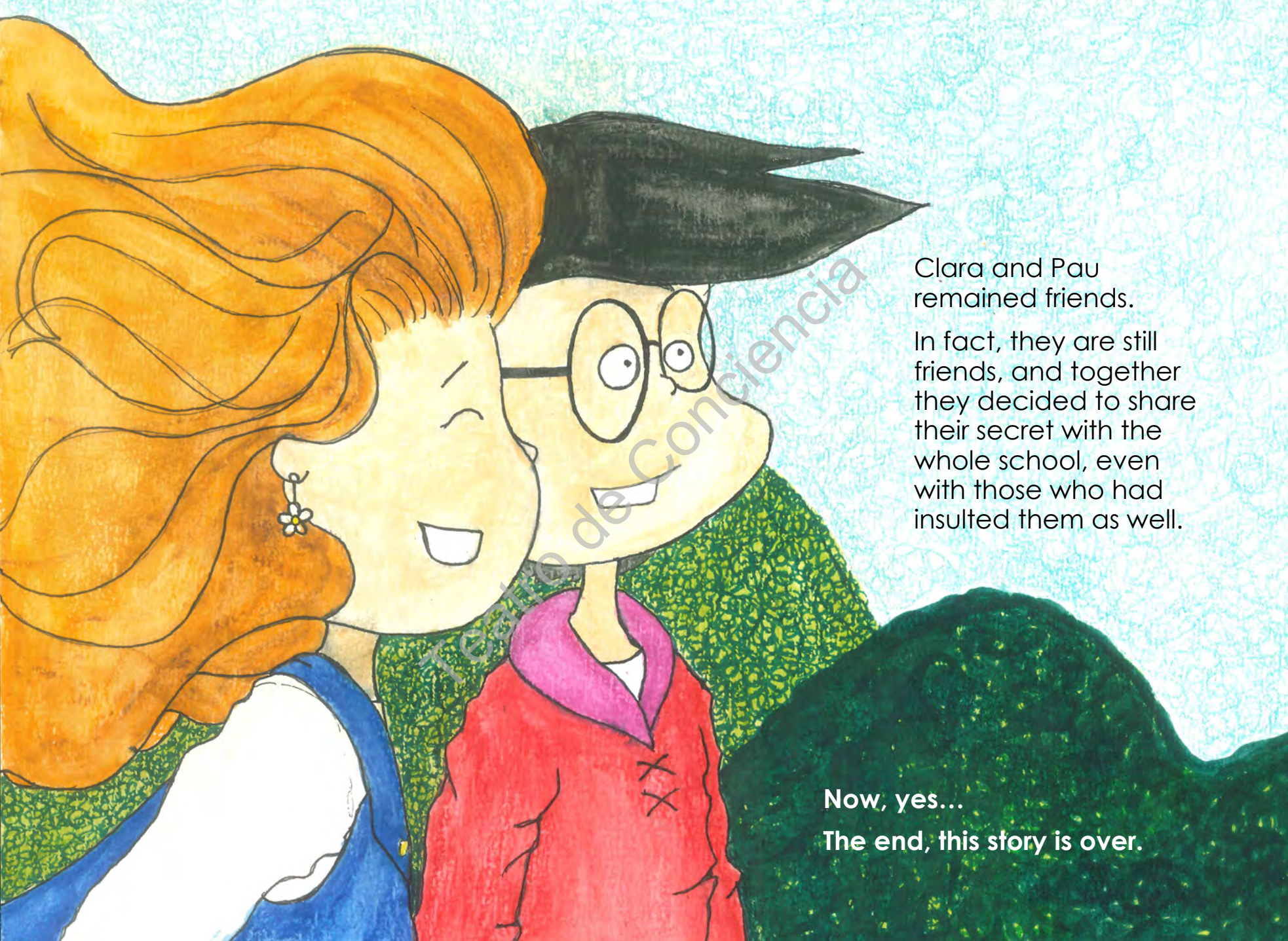
Pau, you are my friend. You've been insulting me for days and it makes me sad, but I know it's your anger that's pushing you to hurt me. You are good, but right now your heart is hidden behind the hardness of the nut. I can see it. The fairy taught me how to do it, and she taught you too. Remember that those kids who insult you do so because they don't know how to defeat their monster of emotional pain, but they also have a good heart hidden. You can and know how to defeat it. I'll help you if you want. It's our secret.

Pau, when he was about to leave, found the note and read it. The clear words from his friend filled him with courage. Then he breathed deeply three times, and his monster became smaller.

After this, he was also able to remember the fairy's message and felt how his heart came alive again; he could forgive the kids who had insulted him and no longer felt the urge to hurt anyone.







Clara and Pau
remained friends.

In fact, they are still
friends, and together
they decided to share
their secret with the
whole school, even
with those who had
insulted them as well.

Now, yes...

The end, this story is over.

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