

Noora Nikka Teemu Laasanen Emiel Inkeri Nikula
Story Piano Illustrations

Mary the Heart Singer

A music fairytale



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A music fairytale

*To my roots and
the clean nature of Finland*

*A warm thank you to my dear family and children for their endless inspiration.
Thank you to the creative and wonderful team.
Thank you to the family of Jean Sibelius.
Thank you to Teija Enroth for the initial energy of the Source.*

Noora Nikka

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MARY THE HEART SINGER

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1. The Heart Singer

The fell rose into the darkening evening sky. The spruce trees stood festive and sturdy in their dark green clothing, timeless guardians of the slopes. The autumn wind whispered through the treetops and the undergrowth glowed in tones of red and yellow, following the procession of the foliage. The dwarf birches offered their leaves to the wind, and a rain of yellow leaves rustled in the woods. The forest goblin sped along the path that wound down the fell. He stomped his hairy feet and carefully dodged all the tree cones and roots in his path. The goblin was worried. Extremely worried. Soon it would begin again, when the night falls.

- Mary, where are you? Goblin must find Mary!

The goblin rushed around in desperation, muttering to himself and looking for the little fairy in a frenzy. Only Mary could help him now. So bad was the state of things in the forest. For weeks, the goblin had been keeping an eye on a number of humans he had never seen before. They had come to the foot of the fell with their iron monsters and were digging a great mine in the side of it. At the same time, the river had suddenly turned brown and the fish looked gloomy. They were greatly disturbed that the once clear water was now murky and foul-smelling. At night the fell had started to whimper, and a rattle and clang from its insides echoed in the darkness as the iron monsters guzzled up its rocks. All was quiet during the day however, which made the goblin think that something remarkable was afoot.



Mary sat on a ledge and listened to the songs of the autumn wind. She heard the goblin from far off and started to hum a quiet tune so that he would find her. Mary was the tiniest of fairies but she carried a great gift with her wherever she went. Mary's mysterious singing lit up whoever heard it with joy and peace, and she managed to pry open even the toughest of hearts. Mary's singing could offer answers to those pondering serious questions – but only if their minds are calm. While few could see the minuscule fairy, many felt her song resonate in their hearts. At last, the goblin noticed Mary, who had been sitting above him. She jumped down from the rock, light as a feather.

- There is something awfully peculiar happening! They showed up again last night and started to gobble up the rocky gold! The goblin has heard troubling accounts from different animals, and the fish in particular are already in grave distress. They are simply unable to live in the brown water. And what is more, the iron monsters rattle at night, and their rumbling disturbs the sleep of all the animals of the forest. The humans that accompany these monsters are strangers, the goblin has never seen them before. Mary, something evil is on its way, the goblin is afraid!



The goblin buried his face in his hairy paws and started to shed heavy tears. His words poured out in quick succession, he stomped his feet and pulled and tore at his nearly bald head. The poor goblin was in visible agony.

- Don't cry, dear goblin! I can see how you care so dearly for the fell and the animals of the forest. You have a good heart. I will share your worries with the fairies, we will gather tonight at the pond.

Mary caressed the teary-eyed and trembling goblin along his back and hummed gently to him. The goblin calmed down and felt his heart grow lighter. He raised his paw and waved goodbye at the fairy who took off with the goblin's message.



A round pond stood in the starlight, surrounded by magnificent rocks. Fairies from all over the North had gathered around it. Younger fairies sat on the top row and the distinguished council of elders gathered on the lowest row. Usually such meetings remained peaceful but this time a loud ruckus rose up from the huddle of fairies, which carried deep into the woods. The fairies were agitated and kept interrupting each other.

- Silence!

A rock rose from the water in the middle of the pond and the Fairy Elder stood on top of it. She raised her wand and struck it against the rock. All the fairies fell silent.

- We have heard serious news from all over the North. The forest goblins reported human strangers coming to the fells at night and digging at their insides. They claim the fells as their own, set up fences, and dam the rivers after dark. We the fairies know that this type of action impoverishes the earth and harms its animals. It is time for us to start saving the land. What can we do, what say the fairies?

A lively murmur rose at the pond as the fairies started to think hard of a solution to the tricky situation.

- Excuse me! I also come here with news from a forest goblin. What if we turned to the humans for help?

The whole population of the pond turned silent in an instant and all the fairies slowly turned their gaze at Mary, who had gotten up on her feet.



- Humans!?! But they are fools!

- Indifferent buffoons!

- Humans do not understand our words!

- This is our shared home. Fairies, goblins, animals and humans alike all need this land. Everyone is able to care for it according to their own abilities if they so wish. I know that also humans wish for peace and a clean home.

- How do you speak to humans!?! They would not listen to a fairy!

- Perhaps they do not listen, but they can feel Mary's singing. It speaks to their hearts. And we have no other option than to work together with humans. Mary shall head further north, the forest fairies will head east, and the fell fairies towards the west. Let us leave the south for me and the wind fairies to worry about.

Go, wake up the humans, speak with their animals, and rattle all the corners of the houses you come across. There is no time to waste!

Lanterns lit up in the dark forest and one by one the fairies started their travels. Mary was the last to stand by the pond to admire the light reflecting from its surface. The night sky drew an outline of twinkling stars on the dark, autumnal water.

- I also want to shine with starlight, please be my guides, dear stars! Light up my path and I will enlighten everyone I meet along the way.



2. The Depth of Winter

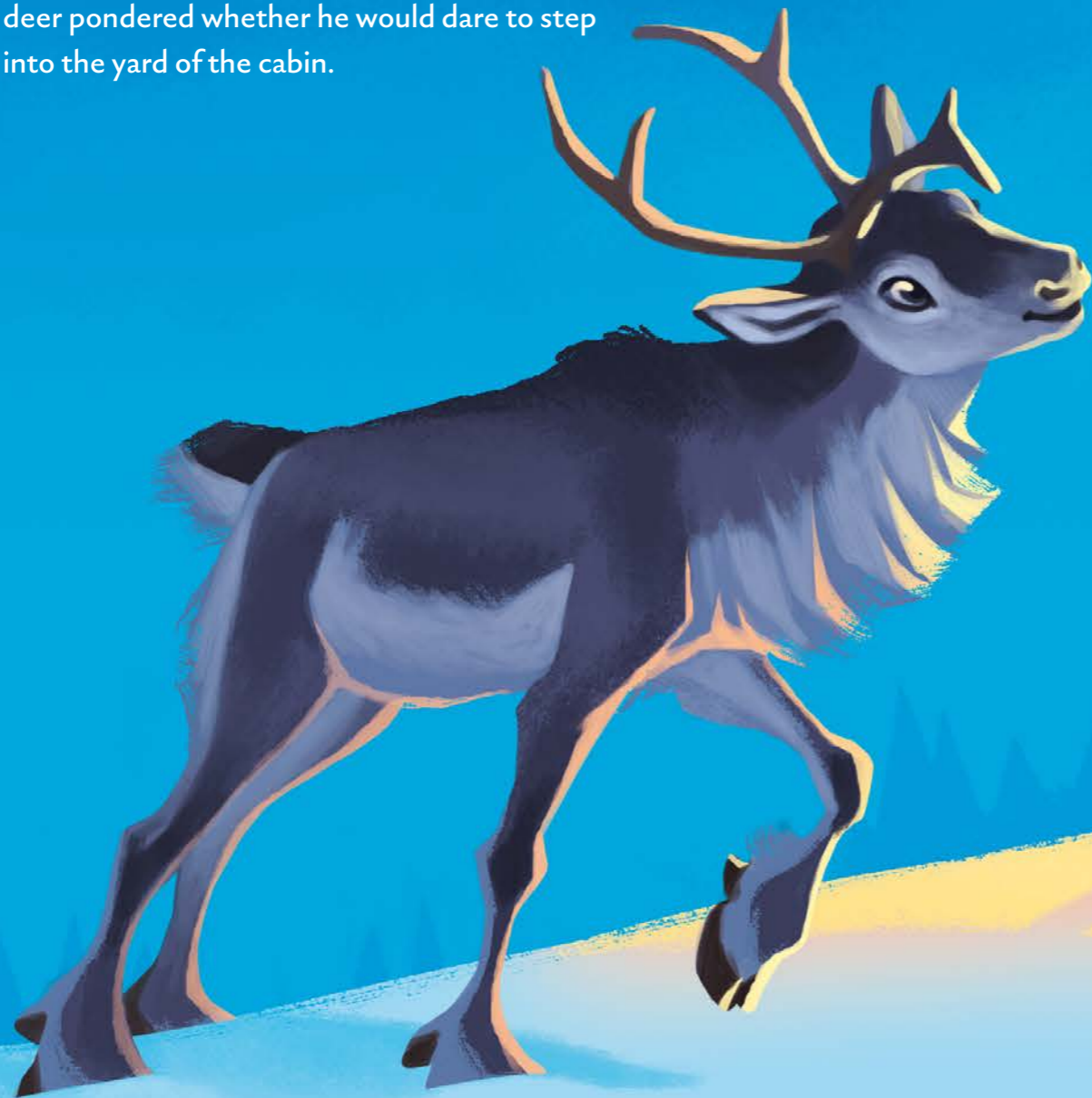
A tiny reindeer was peeping at the cabin yard through the trees. The first snow had fallen and a clean white veil covered the land. The reindeer examined the marks pressed into the snow and sniffed the air with his shivering snout. Smoke rose out of the chimney of the cabin and light flickered from its windows. The reindeer knew that it was far too close to human dwellings for his own good, but he could not take his eyes off what seemed to be a precious present left just for him: an arrangement of beautiful branches and at their foot, LICHEN! Reindeers cannot resist lichen, the fluffy arctic forest moss. The reindeer pondered whether he would dare to step into the yard of the cabin.

He circled around the trees and took several more careful peeks to see if anyone was at the cabin. Nobody seemed to be at home so he stepped carefully into the yard.

- If I just have a tiny tiny bite, a little taste...

He inched nearer to the window and reached his neck out.

- Just a little bit closer! Surely nobody will notice if I just try a little bit of the treat...



Just as he was about to bite a piece of lichen, the woman of the house appeared in the window! For a brief frozen moment, the two stood still staring at each other. Suddenly the woman started bellowing like a fog horn and searching for an object to shoo the reindeer away.

- Holy hooves! I better escape, and fast!

In a state of alarm, the reindeer got entangled in his own feet and was stuck on the spot. Meanwhile, the woman of the house had already made her way to the yard and was swinging a baking shovel in the air in an angry fit.

- You nitwit reindeer! Get out of my yard!

The reindeer leaped around the yard and the woman was hot on his heels, chasing him. He galloped towards the bushes. Much to his own misfortune, the reindeer's antlers got caught on the bushes and he had to tug with all his might to free himself.

- And a thief, too! Don't you dare step into this yard again!



The frightened reindeer trotted for miles before daring to stop. He felt tired and hungry and he spotted nothing poking out of the snow that could feed his famished mouth. And to add to his distress, there was something peculiar dangling from his antlers. The reindeer rubbed his bony crown against a tree but he could not get the thing off his antlers. And what is more, it let out jingles at every head shake.

- *Oh little reindeer, look what you have in your antlers! It looks mighty fine. I did not know you could bring light into the darkness like that! Humans call those Christmas lights.*

- *Christmas lights?*



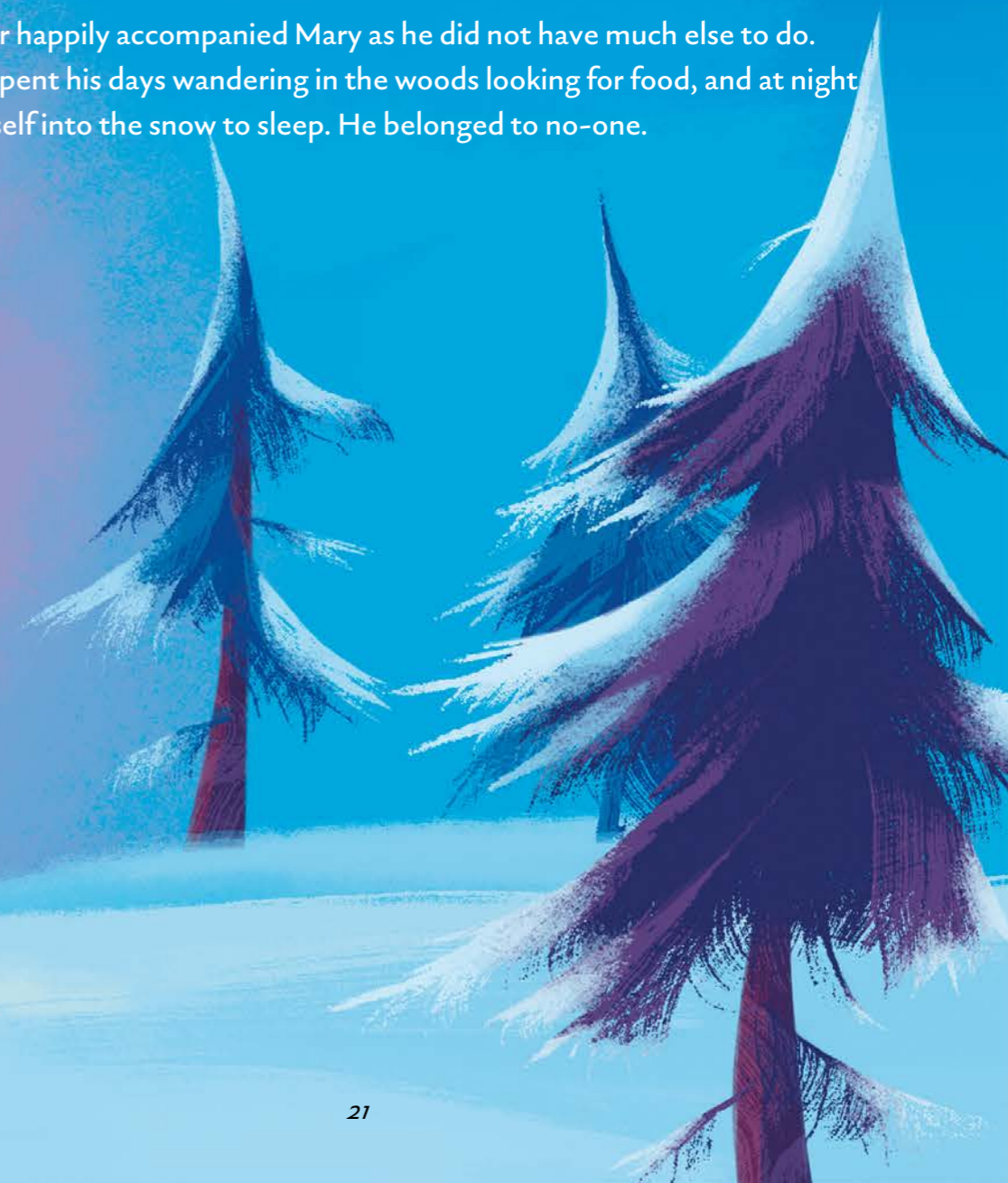
Mary's laughter tinkled in the darkness of the winter evening. The reindeer looked at the fairy with his head tilted in confusion. Colourful Christmas lights had indeed got stuck in his antlers! He shook his head and the lights twinkled. Mary took out a little bag from her pocket and emptied something on her palm.

- *Come and have some, don't be afraid! You must be starving.*

The reindeer pushed his soft snout into Mary's hand and took a piece of lichen in his mouth with great pleasure.

- *You can come along with me if you want. It would be nicer to travel together.*

The reindeer happily accompanied Mary as he did not have much else to do. He usually spent his days wandering in the woods looking for food, and at night he dug himself into the snow to sleep. He belonged to no-one.



Mary rode on the reindeer through the wintery forested hills. A cloud of snow whirled in the air behind them as they made their way further and further north. The sun had gone to sleep and would not be back for a long time. The long polar night would last the whole winter and had wrapped the land in its mysterious blanket. Faint echoes traveled through the air and some lights started to flicker on the horizon.

- You can drop me off here. It is better if I approach the human dwellings by myself. Travel safe, my brave reindeer friend!

Mary continued her journey by foot and finally reached the yard of a cabin. A river ran beside the cabin, frozen in the crackling winter air. Mary saw a dog pen at the riverside and its furry inhabitants came to sniff the fairy with wonder. They, too, had taken note of the strange night-time noises and were twitching around with nervousness.





Mary peeked in through the cabin window and saw children warming themselves up by the fireplace. She started singing at the children and they turned their heads towards the window. The smallest of the children started laughing and reached out her arms towards Mary, but the man and woman of the house continued with their chores and did not hear Mary's singing. Mary then decided to knock on the door. When the man came to open the door, she stretched up with her whole body to make herself tall and tried to explain her business.

- My name is Mary and I came to tell you that...

- Hmm there is nobody here! I could have sworn I heard someone knocking.

The man scratched his head and looked out into the darkness but did not see the fairy standing right in front of him. Mary decided to turn to the dogs for help.

- Please help me my dog friends! Tell the man that now is the time to leave!

The dogs let out a splendid chorus of barking. They howled and yelped, jumped up against the fence and ran around their pen. It did not take long before the man barged through the door and into the yard, yanking his boots on.

- *What's the matter with you dogs!?! The whole village ought to be asleep by now.*

The dogs went silent and gazed at the fell looming beyond the river. The nightly rattle and clang had started.

- *What on earth, what is this noise!?! Who goes out in the fell at night?*

The man took his phone from his pocket and made a call, speaking in an urgent tone of voice. Then he jumped on his snowmobile and drove into the distance, the engine humming. A moment later the lights of the snowmobile flickered past the river bed and headed towards the fell like a winding fire snake.

Mary clapped her hands with excitement and thanked her canine helpers.



The sun was waking up in the distance as Mary arrived at the northern border. It was the depth of winter and the trees were in deep slumber under heavy crowns of snow. The sunlight made the snow crystals glimmer on white banks and the white ground squeaked underneath her feet. The forested hills were like waves of white drawing up against the sky bathing in pastel shades. The earth was resting under the snow.

- It is so beautiful! And so very cold... I am so cold.



The banks of snow became tougher to navigate and the snow felt heavier and heavier on the fairy's feet. Mary had made many rounds, passing by cabins to sing for people, but very few heard her. Children and animals were the only ones to respond to her singing. The fairy felt absolutely exhausted.

- I cannot do this anymore. It is far too difficult!

The tired fairy snuggled into a pile of snow with her last strength. She no longer knew how to find the power to go on. Mary fell asleep, shivering from the cold and with a tear running down her cheek.



She awoke in a startle from the tickle of soft fur on her face. An arctic fox was gently poking at the fairy with its snout. The fox picked up Mary from the ground and slipped her tenderly on its back.

- How did you find me? You are as rare as me!

The tiny fairy grabbed the white fox by the neck as they galloped through the snow. Mary could barely stay awake. Through her sleepy eyes, she could only distinguish the setting and rising of the sun. The fur of the fox spread out a wonderful warmth and Mary fell into a deep slumber.

3. The Treasure of the Fell Fairy

The spring sun warmed up the earth that was waking up from beneath the snow. Sheets of ice were popping and crackling as the river tried to free itself of its winter armour. The pieces of ice tinkled like a million jingle bells as the water started flowing more and more freely through the banks. Mary opened her eyes carefully and stretched her sleepy limbs. She looked around in amazement. She could smell the scent of the soft grass under her, and a roof of deep green leaves dotted with tree needles curved above her. The arctic fox had taken Mary to rest in an open-faced shelter made of trees and branches. A herd of reindeers was grazing a bit further away and Mary could hear voices of humans around her.

- *Where am I, have I slept through the whole winter?!*

- *Mother, father, the fairy has woken up!*

- *You are so tiny! Even the reindeer's ear is bigger than you!*

Two little red-cheeked children peeked in from a corner of the shelter. They had come to check if the unusual visitor had already woken from her sleep.

- *Well good morning to you. You must be thirsty after your long sleep. Here, have some water.*

- *You must have traveled quite a distance. Where did you come from?*



Mary drank the water with gratitude. It tasted sweet and wonderful. More and more humans started to circle around her and they greeted her like an old friend. Mary told them who she is and where she came from. She also shared the news she had been wanting to spread to everyone, and the small crowd listened carefully with serious faces.

- It sounds like quite a crooked turn of events. What can we do to help you? The fox must have brought you here for a reason.

- I... I don't know. I cannot hear the terrible sound of the iron monsters here, and the water is clear and not brown. But how can you see me?

- Why not?! Perhaps we share something, we look at the sun and the moon in the same way. The people here care for the earth and the earth cares for the people. As long as we keep this balance, everyone feels good. If people stop tending to the earth and use its offerings recklessly, the earth becomes sick. This we know. And it would be awfully strange if we never encountered an actual fairy here at the Fairy Fell!



The father let out a laugh and pointed at the mighty fell. It stood taller than any other fell that Mary had ever seen.

- *The Fairy Fell! Are we really at the place where the waters are born, at the Source?!*



- *So you know that the Fairy Fell is there to protect everyone? That is a secret we keep close to our hearts. The water that rises from the spring is cleaner and sweeter than any water. It nourishes the land and helps grow the plants that feed our people and animals. As a counter service, we are committed to keeping it clean and protecting it with every means. We thank the water and it thanks us by keeping us healthy.*

- *Could I see the spring?*

- *Of course! Follow the children, they will take you there.*

The family packed the sledge with containers to bring back water, and Mary hopped onboard. The children ran with excitement the whole way over, and the sledge bounced on the bumpy path. The children laughed and played. The joy of the children was infectious and Mary felt joyful, too, as she worked hard to keep her balance in the sledge.

The path ended behind the fell. Drops of water trickled along the rocks and the surrounding ground was lush and green. The invisible spring was lined with moss-covered stones. Mary followed the children as they knelt down by an opening in the rocks that was pushing out clear water. The water popped up and flowed first in a small stream which then at a further distance grew into a river. The river divided into several new rivers that flowed through the land, forming magnificent rapids and lakes.



Mary followed closely how the children observed the flowing water in silence. The moment was so beautiful that Mary started to sing the song of her heart. Melodies of gratitude and love filled the air. The children listened for a while, and then joined Mary by humming her song back at her. They rolled up their sleeves, dunked their hands in the water and sang. And in that very moment the colour of the water changed! It glowed brighter and brighter, and the stream grew stronger. Light flowed from the hands of the children and traveled along the water. Mary stared at the sight in enchantment and her heart was bursting with joy.

- So the water becomes stronger when the children sing to it?! Now I know... now I know! People can cure the water with their love!

The villagers gathered along the stream. They kneeled down and sank their hands in the water and sang Mary's song. Slowly the song traveled through the water from one village to the next, and people flocked to the river bank in great masses. The water grew stronger every time someone joined the singing. Clear water glimmered and glistened together in the spring sun.





4. The Animal Rebellion

The earth smelled of honey and dewdrops. The gentle summer rain had moistened the ground in the nightless polar night, and now the midnight sun was glowing in all its orange-yellow splendour. Once the sun had woken up from its winter sleep, it did not care to rest even for a short nap and instead stayed up there in the sky, glowing day and night. A mist floated over the fields and sounds filled the bright night: the hooting of the owls, the chirping of the crickets, winds spiralling through the hay, and a mysterious twittering. There was fairy magic in the air.

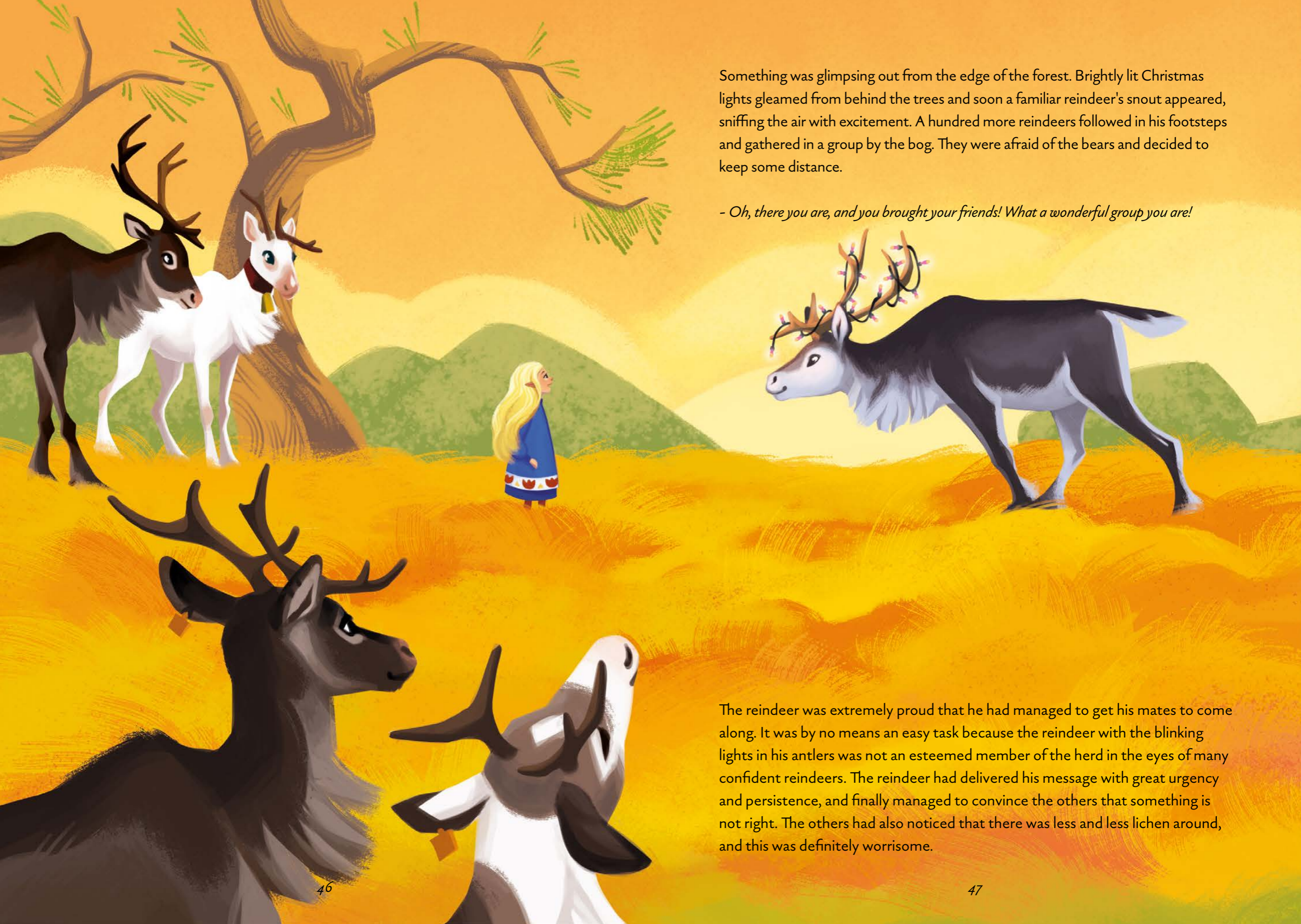
A snowy owl had carried Mary back home from the North. As they glided through the sky, they observed the winding river below them, beaming with a golden light as it spread its waterways towards the south. The fairies had been waking up humans in all directions of the wind. Some had traveled by themselves to the fells to see what was taking place, and then sent hurried messages to their chiefs. Others had noticed how the nature was suffering around them and started to take care of it collectively. There were also humans who had not even bat an eyelid and just carried on their life in their cabins as if nothing had happened. People had started doing their own part and now it was the turn of the animals.

Mary sat on a rock and gazed at the bog where little bushes of golden cloud-berries grew. A group of bears had gathered to look for berries. Normally they liked to wander around alone, but the humans had erected fences and driven them out of their own land so now the bears had to all fit on the same bog to eat. The bears glared at one another and grunted as they passed

another bear. The cubs frolicked around and competed with each other, rolling and wrestling until the mother bears got annoyed and sent them off to play further away. A faint drumming started in the forest. The fairies were beating their instruments to summon the animals.

Things were about to get started!





Something was glimpsing out from the edge of the forest. Brightly lit Christmas lights gleamed from behind the trees and soon a familiar reindeer's snout appeared, sniffing the air with excitement. A hundred more reindeers followed in his footsteps and gathered in a group by the bog. They were afraid of the bears and decided to keep some distance.

- Oh, there you are, and you brought your friends! What a wonderful group you are!

The reindeer was extremely proud that he had managed to get his mates to come along. It was by no means an easy task because the reindeer with the blinking lights in his antlers was not an esteemed member of the herd in the eyes of many confident reindeers. The reindeer had delivered his message with great urgency and persistence, and finally managed to convince the others that something is not right. The others had also noticed that there was less and less lichen around, and this was definitely worrisome.



- We are ready! When does it all begin?

- When the drumming stops, we go. Let us wait just a moment until everyone has arrived.

The reindeers were shuffling around in unease as the bears stood up on their hind legs. Some low-standing characters crept up slowly from the edge of the meadow. The wolves were the last to arrive and join the other animals. They lay down by the bog to wait for a sign from the fairies. A chatter of excitement rose up over the bog, which was flickering in the morning dew.

Suddenly the sound of a mighty horn pierced the air! The Fairy Elder blew the magic horn and all the fairies turned to face the sound. The drumming stopped.

Now also the reindeers turned around, forming a tightly packed group. They ran together towards the fell. The bears loped down towards the river, and the wolves headed for the woods. Mary jumped atop the leader of the pack of wolves. The wolves howled and she joined in. The mighty sound resonated through the whole forest!

The goblin had climbed to the top of a spruce tree and stayed there to observe the arriving pack.

- Ha ha, there they come! Goblin knew that they would come! They will chase the monsters away, shoo shoo!



The spruce was swinging and bobbing from the weight of the goblin as he excitedly swung his paws around. He saw how the herd of reindeers ran up the fell faster and faster. The ground shook from their steps and as they reached the summit, stones and gravel loosened and rolled down the hill. Bigger and bigger stones and great masses of land slid down the slope, and soon a mighty rock slide was rumbling down the face of the fell!

- REINDEER QUAKE!



The goblin was yelling with enthusiasm as the mass of rocks wiped away the iron monsters! They rumbled down the fell with great speed. The strangers took fright at the howling of the wolves and ran away as fast as their feet could carry them.

In the meantime, the bears had arrived at the river that was dammed by the strangers. They tore the dam apart with their huge paws and the dam gave in piece by piece. The now wild and free-flowing river rushed back to its natural course. The salmon rose to the surface of the water with their scales glistening in the sunlight in all the colours of the rainbow. The clean and clear water of the Source flowed through the troubled land and washed away the last remnants of scraps. Little by little, the land started to revive.



Mary stood at the top of the fell and greeted the dark blue starry sky. A full year's cycle had passed since she had first headed up north. The first snow illuminated the land and magical northern lights flared up above. The dance of these colourful lights had attracted the fairies and the animals to stare at the open sky. The mystical blast of colours painted the sky and everyone stood quietly observing it.

The sacred pond awaited the first frost, but right now its surface still reflected the endless sky, shining with a pure love for all that looked upon it. Mary understood just how wondrous all the events had truly been. It was most of all the humans who had changed. They knew now how to appreciate the animals and the surrounding nature in a different way than before. This was a great pleasure for the fairies. Even the little reindeer had found a home. Mary had taken him to visit an old man with a white beard and a red cap. Every year, the reindeer had the special task of galloping in front of a magical sleigh with Christmas lights lighting up the sky. The reindeer was very happy and proud of this task, and felt good about belonging to someone.



- The humans thought that they could own the land. But you cannot own land! The trees belong to the winds, and the rivers and fells are free. You cannot own the land, you can only love it and serve it. Land that is treated with gratitude and love will nourish its residents and reflect it all back like a star-lit sky. A light shined back from the surface of the pond that flowed from the hands of children as a pure source of joy. Humans care for the land and the land cares for the humans. Over time, both can cure themselves.

- My name is Mary, hear my heart sing!

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**The Secret of the Sea
coming out in 2022.**

Peculiar sounds are coming from the fell at night and the water of the stream has turned brown. The worried forest goblins and animals turn to the fairies for help. Mary, the tiniest of all the fairies, sets out on a voyage to awaken humans to collaborate and save the land. Mary has a mysterious gift, but can the little fairy change the minds of humans, or will the iron monsters ravage the nature completely?

Mary the Heart Singer is a music fairytale performed by voice actors. The roots of the story are in the diverse nature of Lapland, and the beautiful piano music is composed by Jean Sibelius and Leevi Madetoja. Emiel Inkeri Nikula's magical illustrations bring the fantastical world to life for readers. The fairytale travels through the changing seasons in the land of the midnight sun and the flickering northern lights.

Join the adventure, there is fairy magic in the air!



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