

Sophia Madouvalou



# Snow Dwarf and The Seven Merry Lads

Illustration: Despina Karapanou



Translation in english:  
Apostolia Dimitra





Sophia Madouvalou  
**Snow Dwarf**  
**and**  
**The Seven Merry Lads**

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*To my mother, here on Earth  
and my dad, in Heaven  
for loving me and teaching me how to love.  
To Elias,  
who follows family tradition...*

Translation in english:  
Apostolia Dimitra

In the heart of the forest,  
where the sheltering trees enclose the sky,  
the seven dwarfs had built their home.  
Since the day Snow White had come into their lives,  
she had been nothing but sweet and caring,  
spoiling them with her generous heart.  
“I love you, I love you all” she always told them  
and she missed no opportunity to show them her love.  
It only took one look for her to know what was in their heart, when  
they were happy and when they were sad.  
And the dwarfs loved Snow White.  
And they never failed to show it and tell her so.  
She was the sunshine in their home.  
She would stroll about wearing a long white dress tied high above her  
waist with a red ribbon, radiating joy and kindness.  
Her hair was black, just like her eyes,  
and her voice was soft like honey and clear as crystal water.

Snow White’s only wish was to make her friends happy.  
Waking up in the morning was now “party time”  
for the dwarfs.  
The whole forest smelled of freshly baked bread.  
A feather light kiss, some kind words,  
a gentle pat on the shoulder  
and lunch in a bag saw them off to work.  
And in the evening, when they came home tired and hungry,  
she would welcome them with delicious food  
and the table beautifully decorated with wild flowers.



Thanks to Snow White's warmth and care,  
the dwarfs became the most elegant forest dwellers.  
Snow White lovingly knitted all kinds of clothes for them.  
She made seven caps for them,  
each in a different colour of the rainbow.  
So, as they walked in line to work every morning,  
one could see all the sun's hidden colours on parade.  
Snow White also knitted seven colorful pairs of socks  
for her beloved dwarfs.

Every night the dwarfs would take their smelly socks off to be  
washed and... "Pfff! Pfff! Pfff!"  
they would sniff each other's feet  
and crack up with laughter.  
It took all of Snow White's time and effort to keep her friends clean  
and neat, endlessly sawing and knitting:  
a sweater for Doc, a pair of trousers for Happy,  
a pair of gloves for Sneezy, coats for Dopey, Bashful and Sleepy.  
"We should thank her"  
the dwarfs thought and gave their dear friend  
a snow-white cat to keep her company while they would be at  
work.



"Hallo Lilly", Snow White patted the kitten's head.  
"What a beautiful name!" the dwarfs thought.  
"I think we should call her Lilly White,  
to go with Snow White" Dopey suggested  
and everybody thought it was really smart idea.

Snow White loved the smell of books.

She would finish all the housework and then,  
with Lilly White on her lap, she would read for hours.  
If she hadn't been the top game planner,  
she could easily be the best story teller.

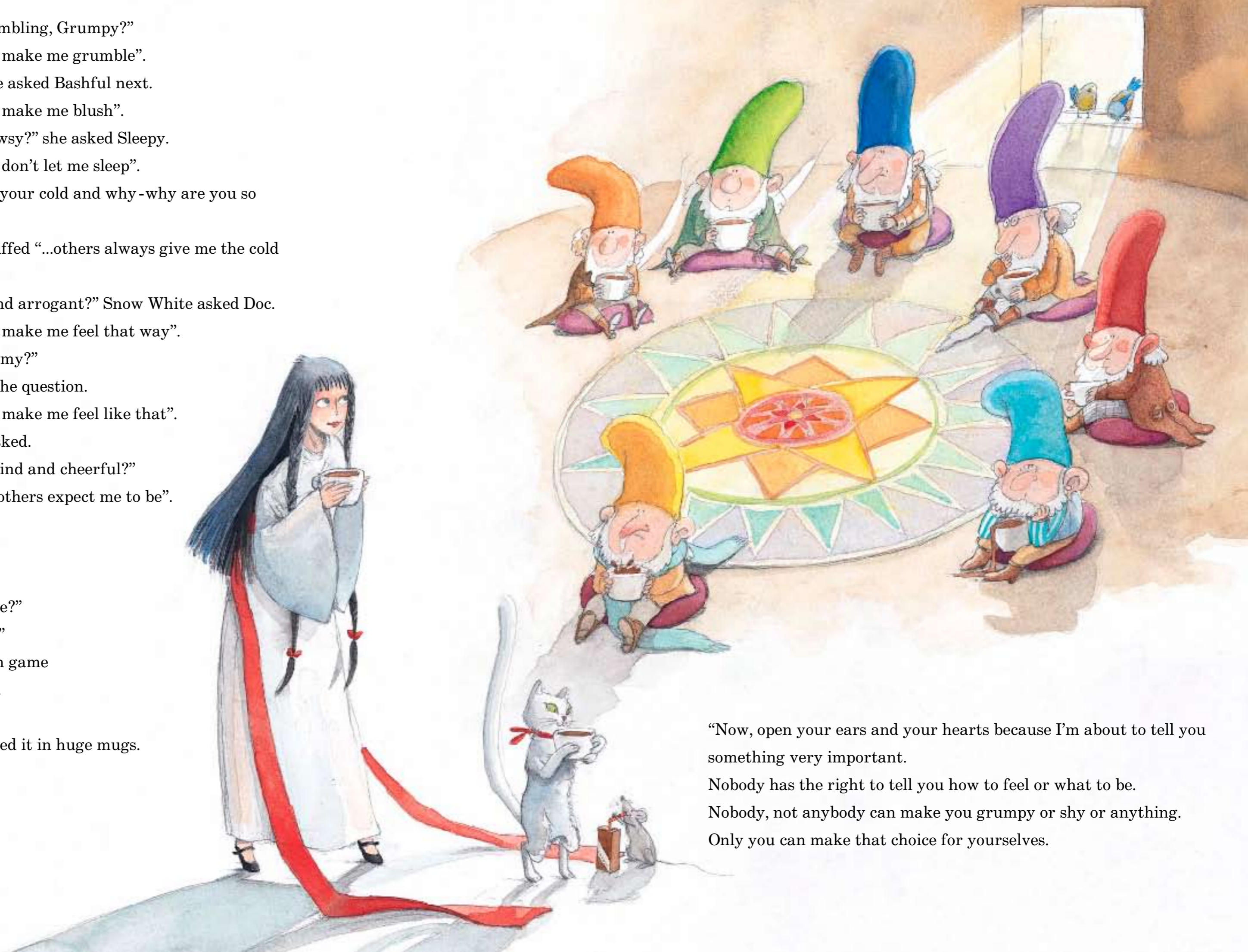
One Sunday afternoon, instead of reading her friends a story,  
Snow White suggested that they played their favorite game.

"Why-why? Because-because"  
"I'll go first" Snow White said.



“Why-why are you always grumbling, Grumpy?”  
“Because-because other people make me grumble”.  
“Why-why are you so shy?” she asked Bashful next.  
“Because-because other people make me blush”.  
“Why-why are you always drowsy?” she asked Sleepy.  
“Because-because other people don’t let me sleep”.  
“Why-why can’t you get rid of your cold and why-why are you so jealous?”  
“Because-because...” Sneezzy sniffed “...others always give me the cold and make me jealous”.  
“Why-why are you so selfish and arrogant?” Snow White asked Doc.  
“Because-because other people make me feel that way”.  
“Why-why are you such a dummy?”  
it was Dopey’s turn to answer the question.  
“Because-because other people make me feel like that”.  
Happy was the last one to be asked.  
“Why-why are you always so kind and cheerful?”  
“Because-because this is what others expect me to be”.

“And you? What about you?”  
the dwarfs asked in one voice.  
“Why are you so pretty and nice?”  
“Why do you love me so much?”  
Snow White cheated at her own game  
and disappeared in the kitchen.  
She made the hot cocoa milk  
that the dwarfs loved and offered it in huge mugs.



“Now, open your ears and your hearts because I’m about to tell you something very important.  
Nobody has the right to tell you how to feel or what to be.  
Nobody, not anybody can make you grumpy or shy or anything.  
Only you can make that choice for yourselves.



“You mean it’s my fault I’m grumbling”,  
sulked Grumpy

“and not yours, who make me do it?”

“That’s right. You are the only reason you’re  
grumpy!”

“So, if I wanted to, I could be grumpy no  
more”.

“Of course you could. It’s totally up to you”,  
Snow White said.

With a little help from Happy, Grumpy  
learned how to change his grumpiness into  
happiness.

Every time he almost grumbled – ah, ah, ah or  
oh, oh, oh – he thought of the laughing exercises  
Happy had taught him and started laughing – ha,  
ha, ha and ho, ho, ho.

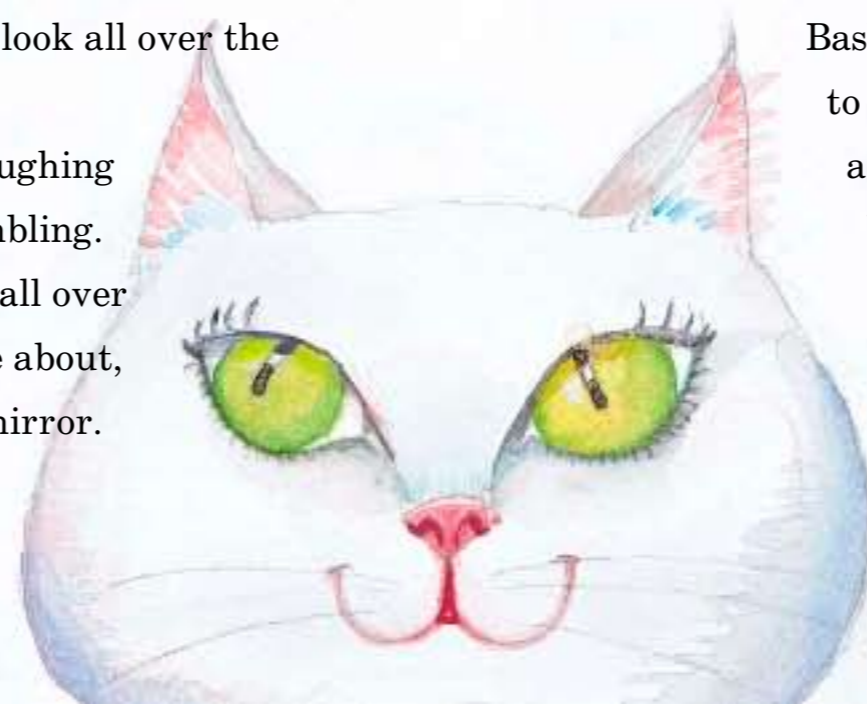
“We want to share your happiness. When you  
grumble, we share your grumpiness and start  
grumbling too”,  
Snow White scolded him gently every time he be-  
came his old grumpy self.

“Where did you leave your laughter?” she would  
ask and together they would look all over the  
house to find it.

Then Grumpy would start laughing  
and forget all about his grumbling.

One day that he was looking all over  
to find something to grumble about,  
Snow White brought him a mirror.

“Look how ugly you look  
with that grumpy face”.



Grumpy was so appalled by what he saw,  
he even stopped having grumpy dreams.

“If Grumpy could change himself, then so can I”,  
Bashful thought blushing and hid his face  
behind Snow White’s skirt.

“Of course you can” she gave him a big hug.

“The only thing to be ashamed of is hurting some-  
body on purpose. You have done no such thing”.

From that day on, whenever Snow White saw  
Bashful’s ears turn red every time his opinion was  
needed, she would hold his hand saying:  
“There there now!”, rewarding him with a kiss  
when he finally managed to speak up.

Snow White did her best  
to help him get over his shyness.

“Why are you dropping your eyes?  
Aren’t you ashamed of being ashamed all the  
time?” she would tease him  
when she saw him squirm in some corner.

Bashful thought it was a shame  
to be ashamed any more  
and he stopped hiding  
behind Snow White’s skirt.



Sneezy, who was also the Jealous one, learned how to stop sneezing and sniffing his runny nose. "Is something wrong with your nose? Maybe we should get the plumber to fix it!" Snow White teased him. She knitted a woolen sweater to keep him warm and showed him how to close his nostril with his finger, when he felt like sneezing. From then on, all the candles in the house were burning bright without him blowing them out.

Gone was Sneezy's cold but not his jealousy. Every time Snow White showed affection to another dwarf he was green with envy. "She probably doesn't love me that much", he thought. And he would pull all kind of tricks to get her attention. He would cough, pretend he was sick or just look sad. When the other dwarfs played without him he thought it was because they didn't love him. "We all love you so very much" Snow White reassured him. "Your only enemy is your jealousy. It's poisoning you".

"What is jealousy" asked Sneezy. "It's when you think something is wrong, when it isn't - and get all upset about it" Doc said. "So it's my fault I'm on my own and nobody loves me?" "Now that's jealousy. You're definitely not on you own and everybody loves you!" his friends reassured him in one voice. "Because you're worth it!" Snow White said placing a small kiss on his cheek. From then on, every time Sneezy felt jealous he thought of his friend's love and was not jealous any more.





Sleepy was drowsing all day long.

“When you don’t get a good night’s sleep, how do you expect to be fresh and breezy in the morning?”

“Or have any energy for work?” complained the other dwarfs who were left with Sleepy’s work to do in addition to their own.

“But it’s not my fault! You see, the moment I’m about to drift into sleep, the sleep slips away. And before I know it, it’s dawn and I have to get up”, Sleepy said with a big yawn.

Every morning, on their way to the mine, the dwarfs made Sleepy count his yawns, to keep him awake.

However, as soon as he counted up to 999, he fell asleep again.

One night, Snow White saw him sleep with one eye open.

“Why on earth do you keep your eye open?” she asked.

“Because I’m afraid of the dark and of scary dreams”

Sleepy snivelled with a shudder.

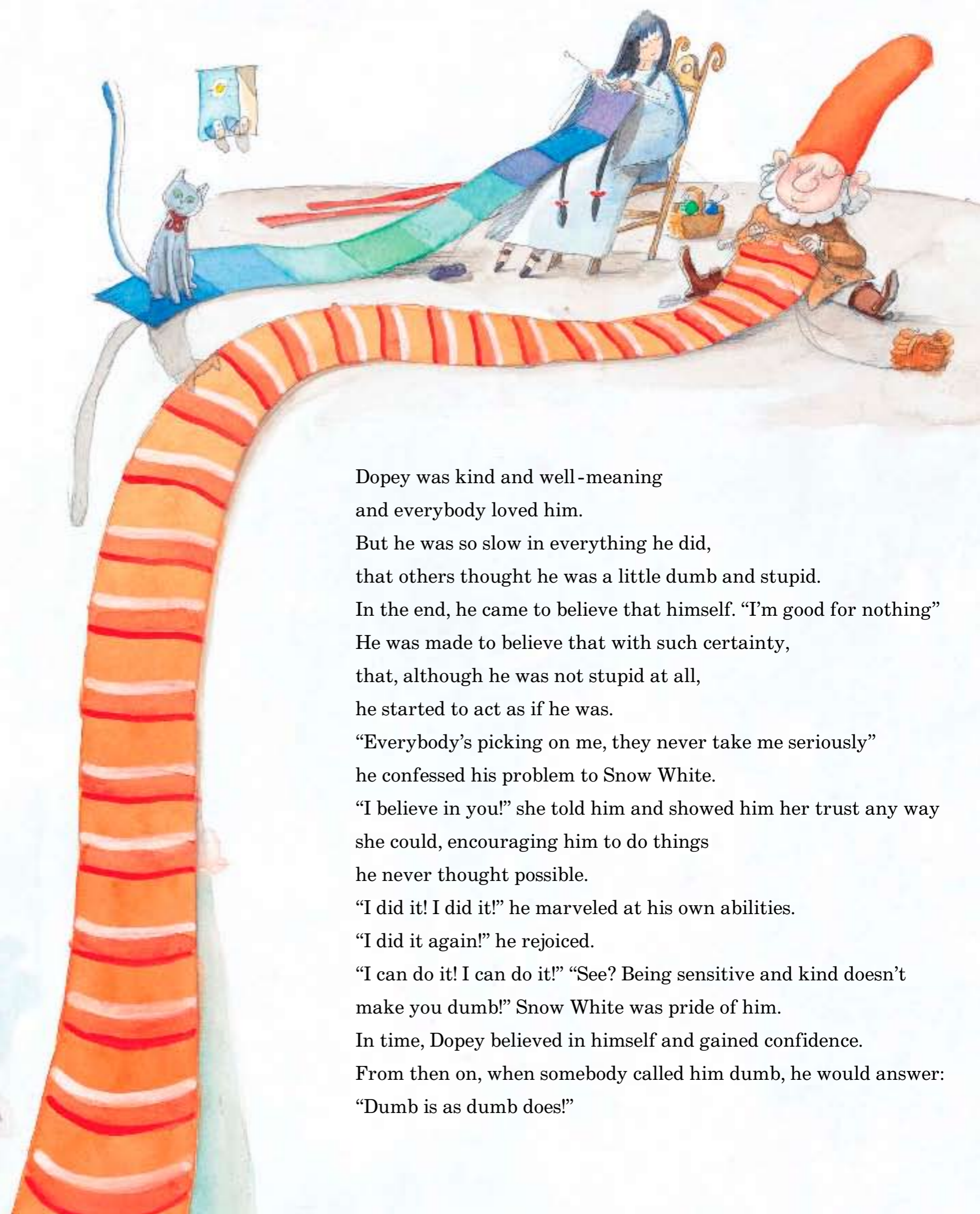
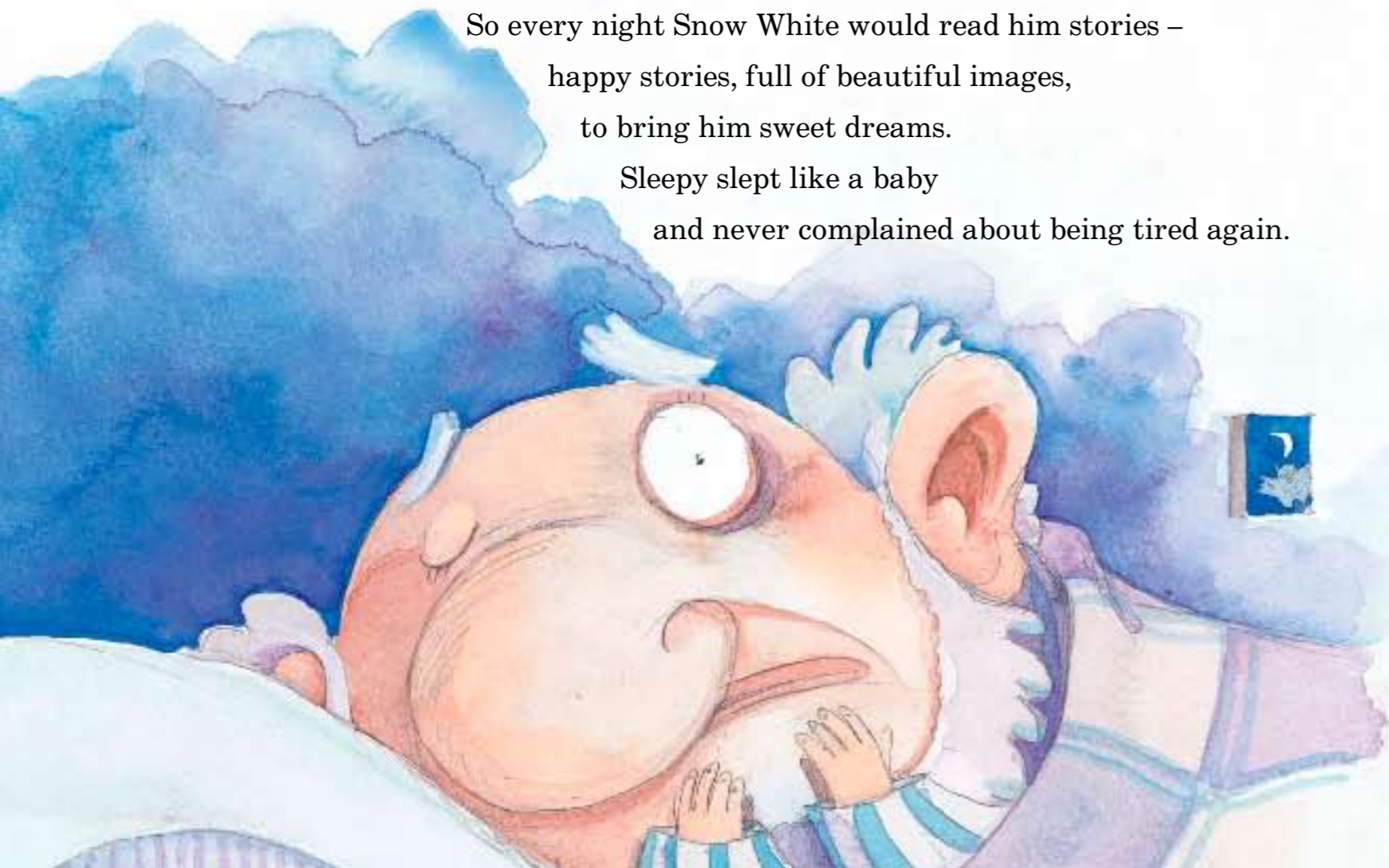
So every night Snow White would read him stories –

happy stories, full of beautiful images,

to bring him sweet dreams.

Sleepy slept like a baby

and never complained about being tired again.



Dopey was kind and well-meaning and everybody loved him.

But he was so slow in everything he did, that others thought he was a little dumb and stupid.

In the end, he came to believe that himself. “I’m good for nothing”

He was made to believe that with such certainty, that, although he was not stupid at all, he started to act as if he was.

“Everybody’s picking on me, they never take me seriously” he confessed his problem to Snow White.

“I believe in you!” she told him and showed him her trust any way she could, encouraging him to do things he never thought possible.

“I did it! I did it!” he marveled at his own abilities.

“I did it again!” he rejoiced.

“I can do it! I can do it!” “See? Being sensitive and kind doesn’t make you dumb!” Snow White was proud of him.

In time, Dopey believed in himself and gained confidence.

From then on, when somebody called him dumb, he would answer:

“Dumb is as dumb does!”



Nobody knew Doc's heart better than Snow White – and nobody was stricter with him, as well. “There you are, bursting with pride again!” she would scold him whenever he got cocky about his accomplishments.

The rest of the dwarfs all had enormous respect for Doc. They admired him for all he knew and all he could do.

Eventually, he became such a stuffed shirt he was impossible to reason with and too proud to admit he might be wrong. He had such a high opinion of himself, he started to look down on others. “They can't even tie their shoe laces without me...”

“Don't you think you're a little too arrogant?” Snow White scolded him. “It seems to me like all this leader attitude has got to your head!”

“Why not? Is there anyone who knows more or can do things better than me?”

“Well, think about it: in order for you to have the time to read your books and gain all this knowledge, your friends work overtime to make life easier for you”, Snow White suggested.

And since he was such a wise dwarf, Doc actually thought about it and realized his mistake.

From then on, he stopped showing off and became humbler.

Happy, always willing and cheerful, had a heart bigger than his body.

“A day without laughter is a day wasted”, he always said.

He would take big breaths, fill his chest with air and...

“ho, ho, ho” he would get to work.

He laughed when he was glad, to show his joy.

He laughed when he was sad, to chase sorrow away.

And he was always there for his friends, never saying no to a request.

Even if it was something he didn't want to do, he would say yes.

“What's wrong?” asked Snow White one day, when she saw him gloomy and irritated for the first time.

“Why are you so gloomy?” “Because in order to keep everyone happy, I have no time whatsoever for myself”.

“And why don't you just say you can't help them”.

“Because I can't say no unless I'm angry. And since I hate being angry, I never say no”.

“I have an idea”, said Snow White, “to help you say no with a smile”.

She made for him a sign that read: “No, ho, ho”.

So every time Happy had to say no to somebody, he would just raise this sign and feel much better about it.



Thanks to Snow White's loving care,  
the dwarfs kept changing day by day. In the end they changed so  
much, they were like different people.

"I am so proud of you, you are so special", she told them again and  
again. They dwarfs marched through the forest  
shining like a new penny.



They were neat and cheerful and confident.  
Every day the dwarfs were eager to go to work.

"Here, here they come, the seven merry lads!" twittered the birds.  
"Here, here they come, the seven merry lads!" sang the animals.  
"Here, here they come, the seven merry lads!" buzzed the bees.  
"Snow White! Here, here they come, the seven merry lads!" meowed Lilly  
when she saw them coming home late in the evening.



Snow White and the seven dwarfs spent many glorious mornings, cozy afternoons and quiet evenings together, until the day the strange visitor came to the forest. It was Sunday when she quite unexpectedly knocked on their door. Snow White was just taking the roast lamb out of the oven and was about to serve the potatoes.

“Welcome! Come join us for dinner!” Happy invited her in. He was so hospitable he didn’t even ask her name. Lilly was alarmed. *I know this smell!* -she thought getting closer to the basket the stranger was carrying.

“I sell pastry” the old lady said, giving Lilly White a kick under the table and offered Snow White an apple pie she had baked herself. Then she started gulping her food and didn’t say another word until there was nothing more left to eat.

“This is a delicious apple pie!” the dwarfs licked their fingers. Only Snow White and Doc didn’t touch the pie.

“You need a modern electric cooker” burped the bizarre visitor.

“And those stools – far too uncomfortable. You’ll need some cushy armchairs. And this cabin – far too small. You definitely need more room, a real house”, she burped again.

Lilly was worried. *I definitely recognize this stink.* “You also need a car each, so that you can drive to work... To be honest, you need almost... everything! You have nothing in here!

Clothes, to start with...”

“Err... ma’am, don’t we need an awful lot of money to buy all that stuff?” Doc said.

“Well, then I guess you’ll have to work harder to earn the money to buy the things you need!” Those were her last words. After that, she disappeared back into the woods leaving no other trace of her ever being there but the lingering stink of her viciousness.

“If you ask me, we are doing pretty well, don’t you agree?” Snow White tried to cheer them up.

“Besides, who is she to tell us what we need or don’t need? No one knows that better than us!” However, the woman’s words kept the dwarfs awake and thinking all night.

“She’s right, we need a bigger house” Sleepy tossed and tumbled in his bed.

“We need a car to drive to work” Grumpy grumbled.

“No, we need one car each!” said Bashful.

“And we need new clothes”, Sneezzy thought, envious of the stranger’s pretty hat.

“The truth is this kitchen is too small and old-fashioned” Happy dreamed of an elegant dining room.

“I really want an armchair” Dopey said.

Only Doc and Lilly agreed with Snow White that they needed nothing more than what they already had.



Since that day, the dwarfs were not their usual selves. Waking up in the morning was not fun any more. They just got up, harried to work and didn't even kiss Snow White goodbye. "Bye bye, my dear dwarfs!" she would wave to them but get no response. Days went by and nobody noticed the sadness in Snow White's eyes. Only Lilly saw that she had lost her spirit, as if the joy that used to light up her face had suddenly vanished.

One day that was Monday, the dwarfs left once more without saying goodbye. A cloud passed over Snow White's face. Her smile died on her lips and tears spilled from her eyes. Lilly was furious at the dwarfs. "Poor Snow White, doing so much for them and they don't even have a good morning kiss to spare!" She looked at Snow White and suddenly she seemed to have shrunk a little.

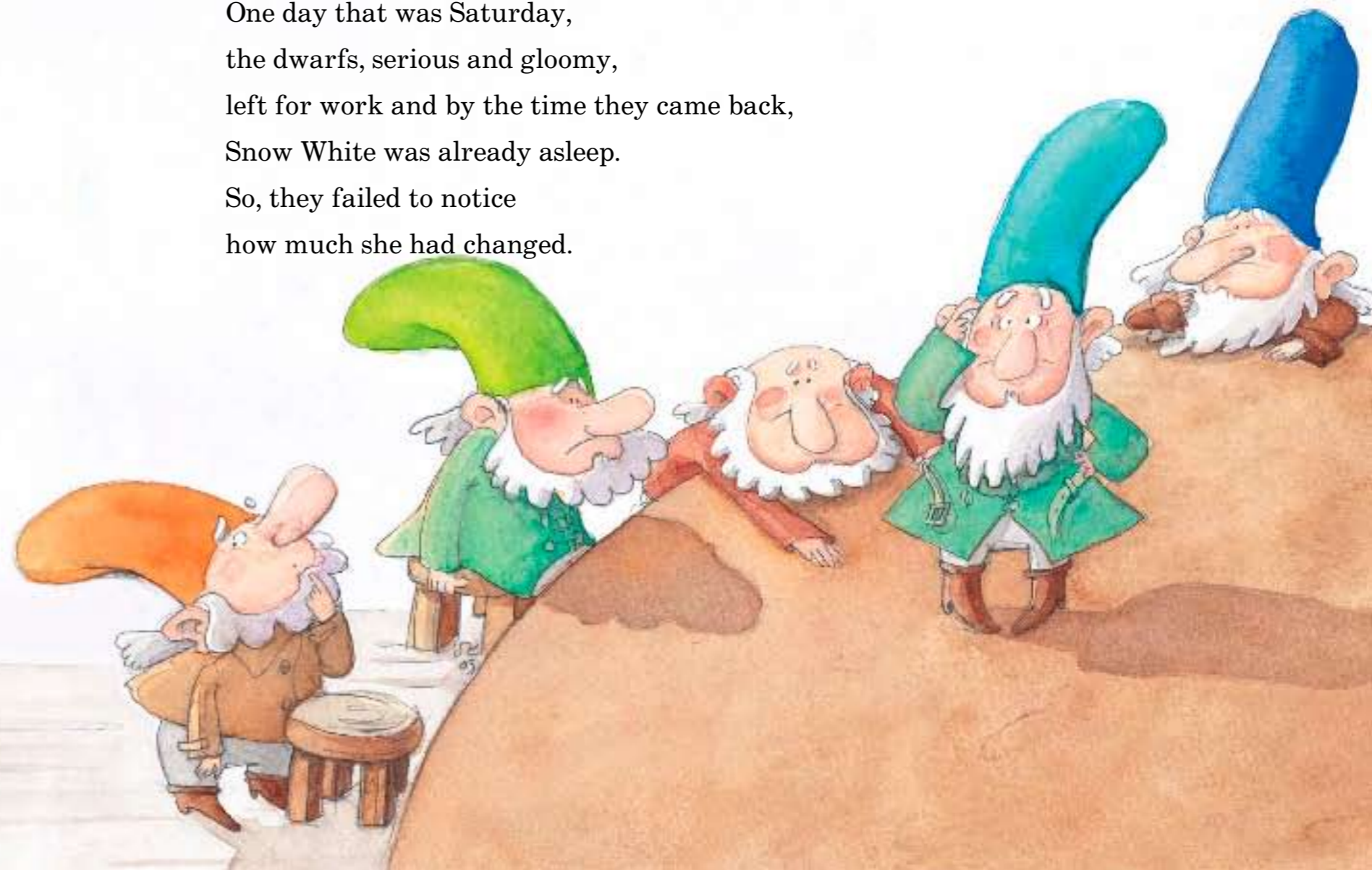
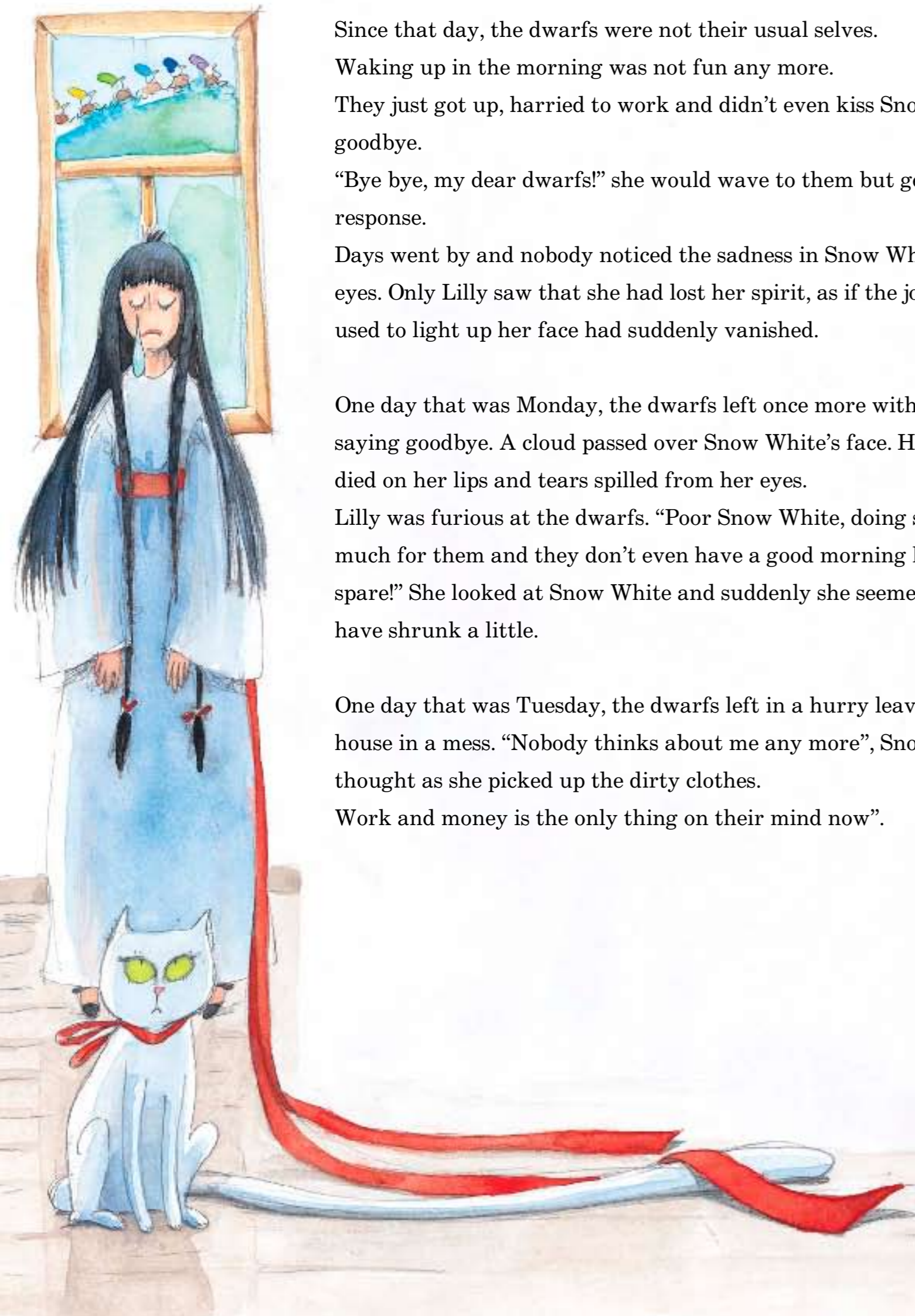
One day that was Tuesday, the dwarfs left in a hurry leaving the house in a mess. "Nobody thinks about me any more", Snow White thought as she picked up the dirty clothes. "Work and money is the only thing on their mind now".

One day that was Wednesday, the dwarfs left for work without wishing Snow White a happy birthday. Even Happy, who used to remember everybody's birthdays, forgot. Snow White waited in vain for some flowers, a birthday card or a cake to blow her candles. The dwarfs came home late that night and they were so tired they went straight to bed.

The next day that was Thursday the dwarfs came home so late, they didn't even try the food Snow White had cooked for them. "Nobody loves me any more" Snow White wept all alone.

One day that was Friday, Lilly noticed that the joy and laughter had drained from Snow White's face. And she had become even smaller.

One day that was Saturday, the dwarfs, serious and gloomy, left for work and by the time they came back, Snow White was already asleep. So, they failed to notice how much she had changed.



One day that was Sunday, the dwarfs stayed home but they still didn't have time to spend with Snow White.

"Come on, let's play!" she invited.

But no one was in the mood for games.

"At least let me read you a story", she insisted.

But no one was in the mood for stories, either.

Their eyes were not shining like before and they only talked about money.

At noon, the dwarfs stormed into the dining room.

"I'm hungry like a wolf" Grumpy said.

"I can't wait..." said Bashful. "As you can see, the table is not set", said Happy.

"That's never happened before! Where is Snow White?" asked Sleepy.

"Where is Snow White?" they all wondered. They had started to worry.

They got up and started looking for her. They looked everywhere in the house and even outside, in the garden, in the forest...

Snow White was nowhere to be found. They came home empty handed and mad with worry. "Where could she be?" said Sleepy. He remembered how kind she had been to him and he stayed wide awake all night, afraid that something terrible had happened to her. For seven nights and seven days the dwarfs looked for Snow White

and on Monday they sat in grave silence to have breakfast.

"I can't bring myself to eat a bite", Happy said glancing at Snow White's empty chair and he bent to pick up his spoon which had fallen on the floor.

However, when he looked under the table, he was in for a big surprise! A tiny little girl who looked exactly like Snow White was staring back at him.

"It's Snow White... Snow White became... Snow Dwarf!" Happy was lost for words. The others gathered around him to see for themselves. Snow White didn't say a word. She just stared, her eyes sparkling with unshed tears. "I bet the Evil Queen was here! That witch!" Sneezzy said. "Hmmm..." Doc felt her pulse. "Hmmm... her heartbeat shows she suffers from serious lack of joy. She is very very sad. Her feelings are hurt". When she heard that, Snow White burst into tears. She cried non stop for seven days and seven nights. "Isn't there any laxative for sadness?" Dopey kept asking Doc. Doc tried all kinds of herbs but Snow Dwarf could not stop crying.

On Monday morning, after the dwarfs had left for work, a young man, handsome as a prince, stopped by their house. "Is anybody here?" he called but no one answered. Lilly pushed the door open and he followed her inside. "Is anybody here?" he called again looking around. Instead of an answer, he heard a sob coming from under the table. He bent and saw this tiny figure crying hopelessly.

"Hallo, little girl, why are you crying?" he asked holding Snow Dwarf in his palm and stroking her hair.

Snow Dwarf dried her eyes and told him the whole story.



In the evening, when the dwarfs came home, the young man was still there.  
“Can you help us? Can you help Snow Dwarf become Snow White again?” they asked full of hope.  
“I’d love to!” the young man said and whispered the secret cure in Dopey’s ear.  
Dopey told Bashful, Bashful told Sleepy, Sleepy told Happy, Happy told Doc,  
Doc told Grumpy and finally Grumpy told Sneezy.

“The one and only cure is seven times seven kisses daily, seven times seven smiles every night, seven thank-yous, seven good mornings, seven good nights, seven pairs of hands helping with the housework and seven hours a day of laughter, storytelling and games!” Sneezy shouted almost out of breath.  
“How long has it been since you have showed her your love” the young man scolded the dwarfs.  
“It’s our fault Snow White became Snow Dwarf. We forgot to show her how important she is to us. That’s why she lost her joy and spirit and shrunk”, said Doc.  
It didn’t take more than one minute for the dwarfs to get back to being themselves.  
They started to look after Snow Dwarf and marvelled at her genuine joy.

“I think Snow Dwarf is getting taller”, Lilly said.



Until one day  
that was Sunday,  
Snow Dwarf became Snow White again.

The dwarfs felt their hearts beat fast with joy.  
The young man felt his burst with emotion.  
Snow White smiled at him. “Thank you” she said  
and Lilly would swear she heard her heart  
beat in the same rhythm.

**And from that day on,  
they all lived together happily ever after.**





A humorous children's story  
that takes a sensitive approach  
to human development and communication.  
How can love transform seven glum dwarves  
into seven merry lads?  
Why did Snow White become Snow Dwarf?  
All-time favourite characters from the classic tale  
of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves  
in a story about the powerful effect of love  
on those who know how to both give and receive it.

