

# The Wrong Stone

Digital Version

A story by Russell Deal

Illustrations by Ray Bowler

*Dedicated to Chris Jones*

*5/6/1951 to 25/10/2001*

Jonsey was always a wrong stone.

Born with cerebral palsy, speech and mobility were a constant struggle.  
But more of a struggle were the indifference, prejudice and intolerance he faced  
as he asserted his right for a meaningful place and  
a voice in our community.

Jonsey preferred the term 'differently abled' to the label 'disabled'.  
With his keen intelligence and wit, he became an activist for fairness,  
employment opportunities and more equitable public transport.  
He was killed when his powered wheelchair was caught in rail lines at a level crossing in  
Nunawading, a suburb of Melbourne. Despite efforts to free him,  
he was run down by a train.

While ignored and overlooked like many of his differently abled friends,  
Jonsey nevertheless touched many lives. His funeral was attended by at least  
500 people and his obituary was published in *The Age* newspaper.

Wrong stones can be inspirational.

# The Wrong Stone





St Luke's  
**Innovative**  
Resources

62 Collins Street Kangaroo Flat  
Victoria 3555 Australia  
p: + 61 3 5446 0500 f: + 61 3 5447 2099  
e: info@innovativeresources.org  
w: innovativeresources.org  
ABN: 97 397 067 466

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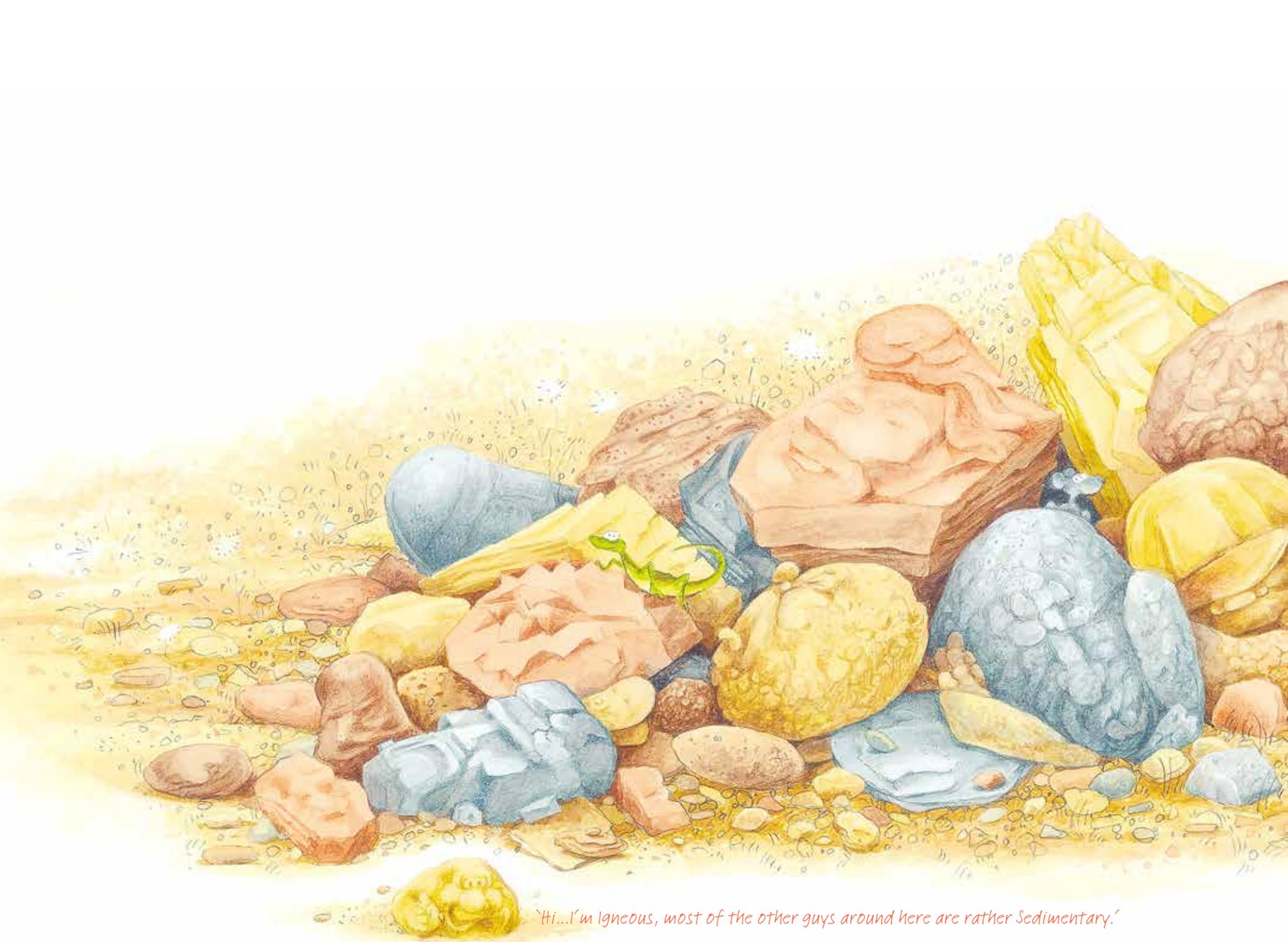
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# The Wrong Stone

A story by Russell Deal

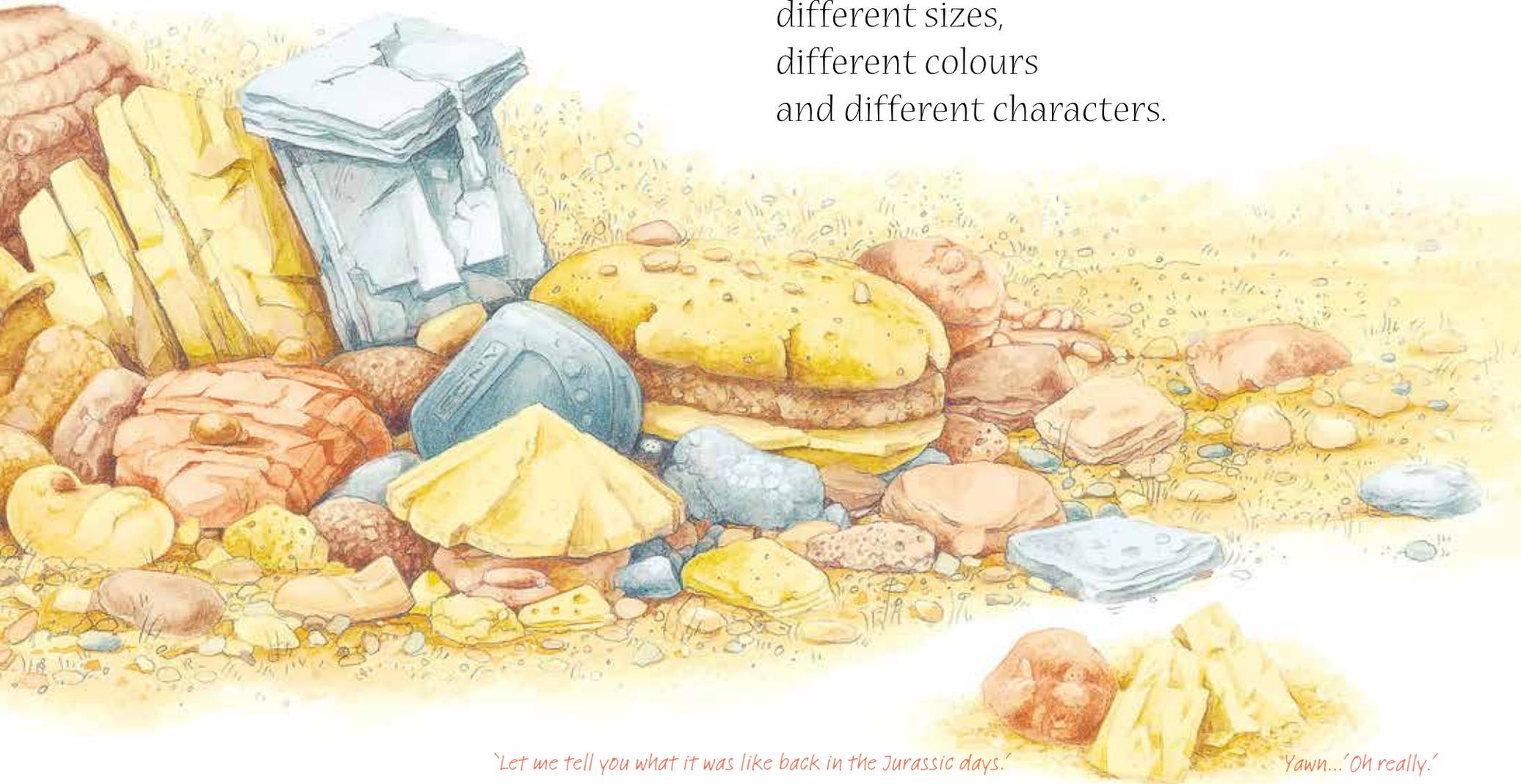
Illustrations by Ray Bowler





*'Hi...I'm Igneous, most of the other guys around here are rather Sedimentary.'*

The stone pile was a ragtag razzamadazzle of different shapes, different sizes, different colours and different characters.



*'Let me tell you what it was like back in the Jurassic days.'*

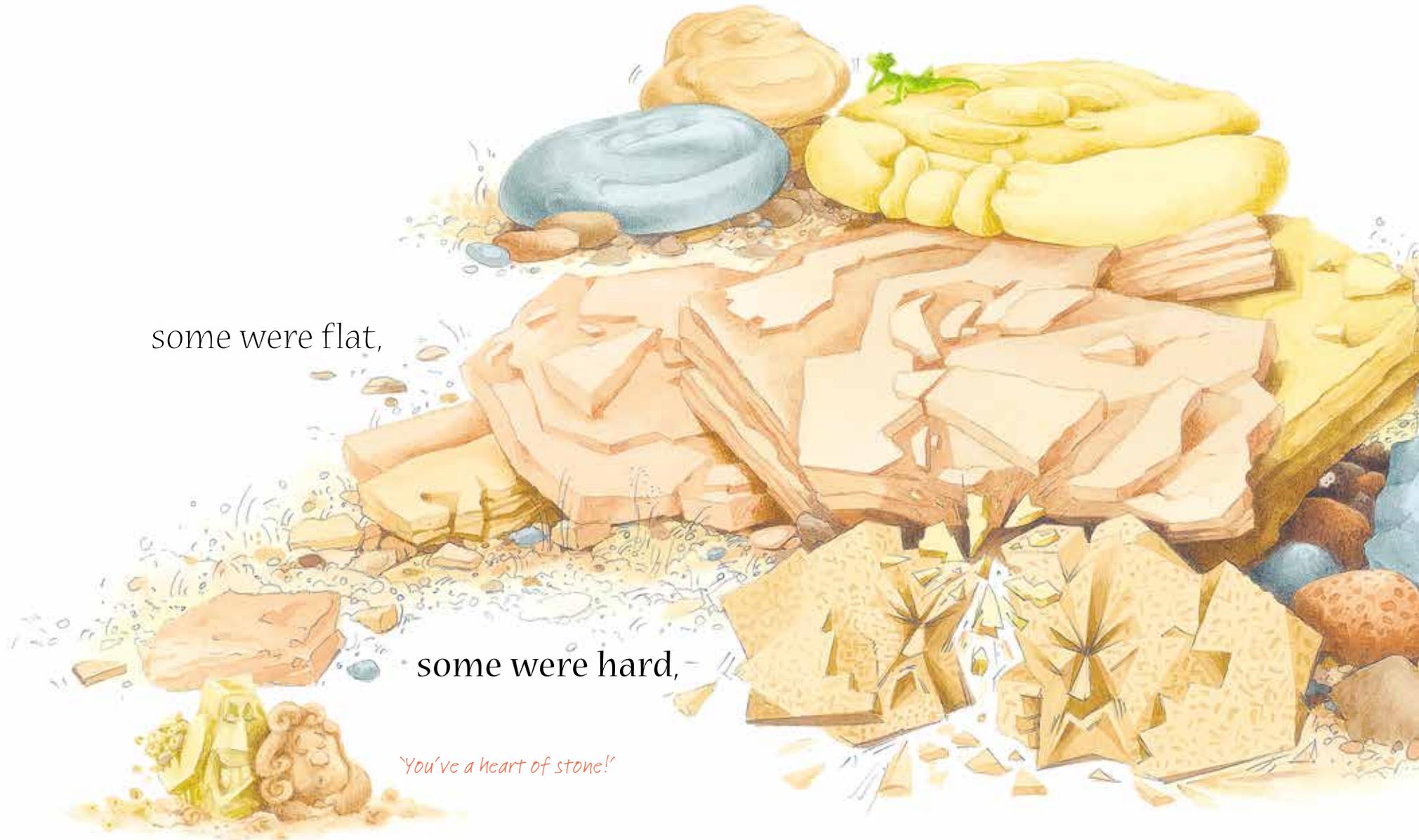
*'Yawn... 'Oh really.'*

Some stones were smooth,

some were flat,

some were hard,

*You've a heart of stone!*



some had chips on their shoulders,



some had  
rough edges

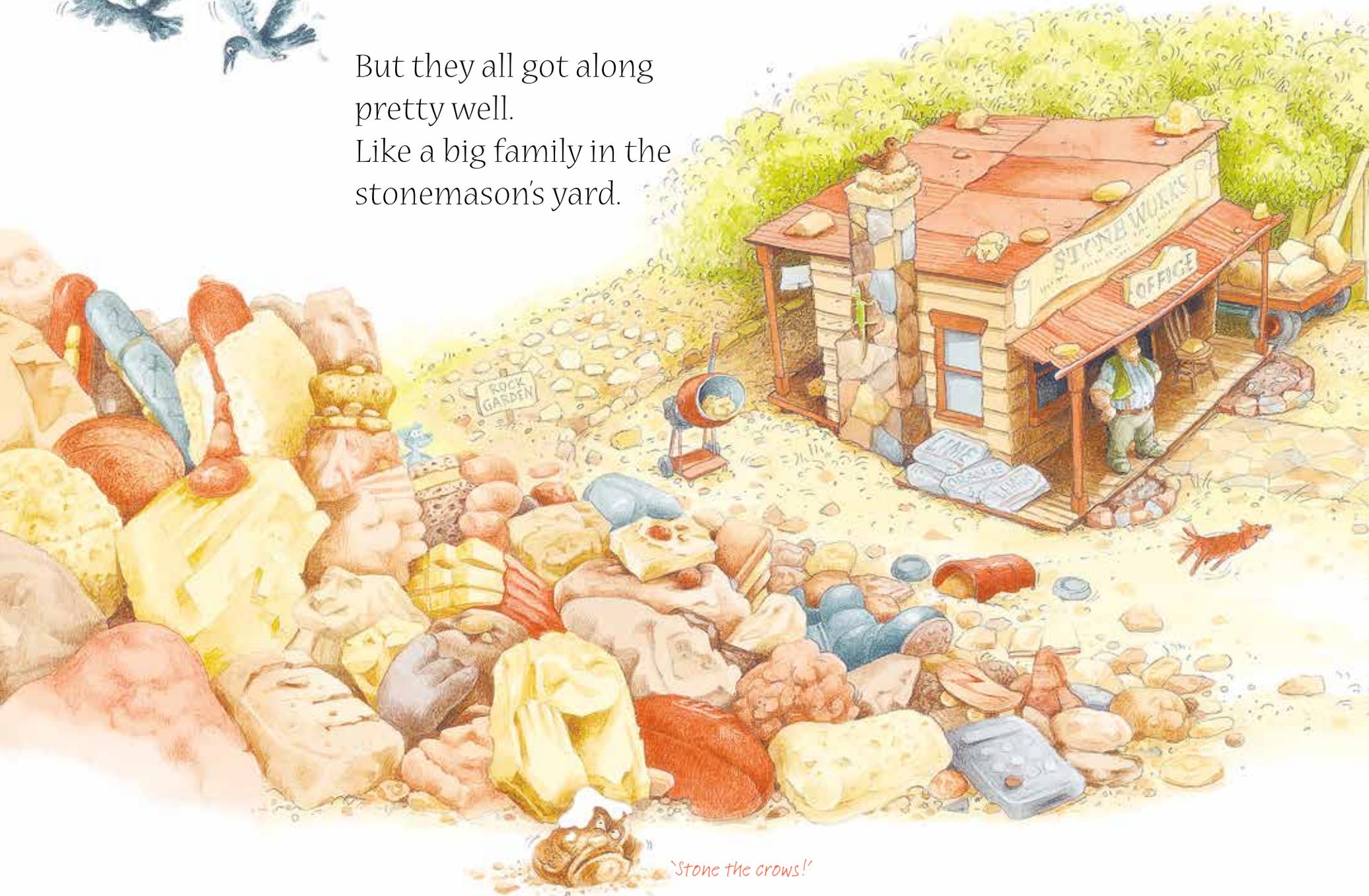
and some were  
a little cracked.

*'You can't get blood from a stone!'*





But they all got along  
pretty well.  
Like a big family in the  
stonemason's yard.



*'Stone the crows!'*

Until the day the big architect came.



*'Let's beat a path to the door.'*

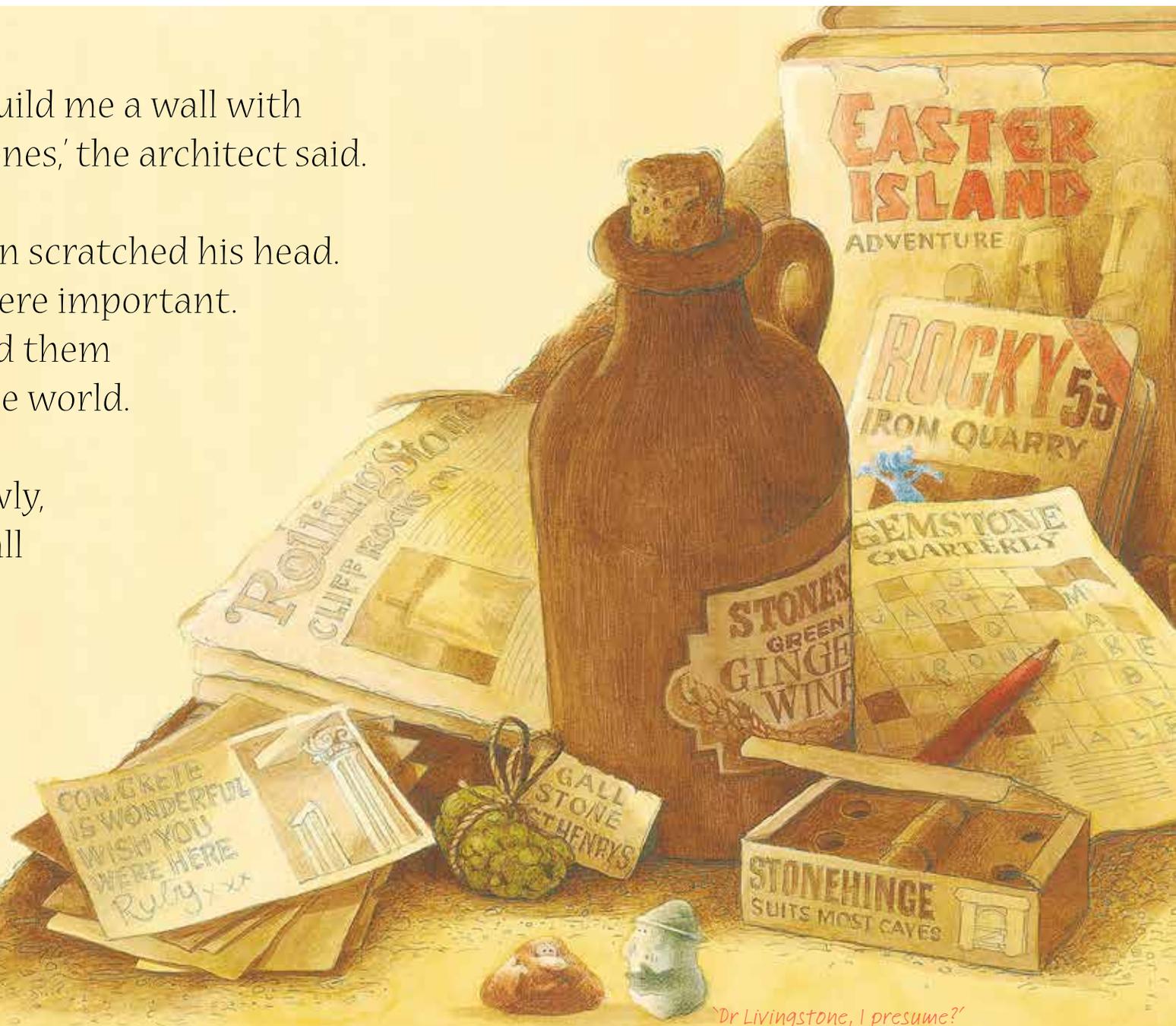


*'You've got rocks in your head.'*

'I want you to build me a wall with only perfect stones,' the architect said.

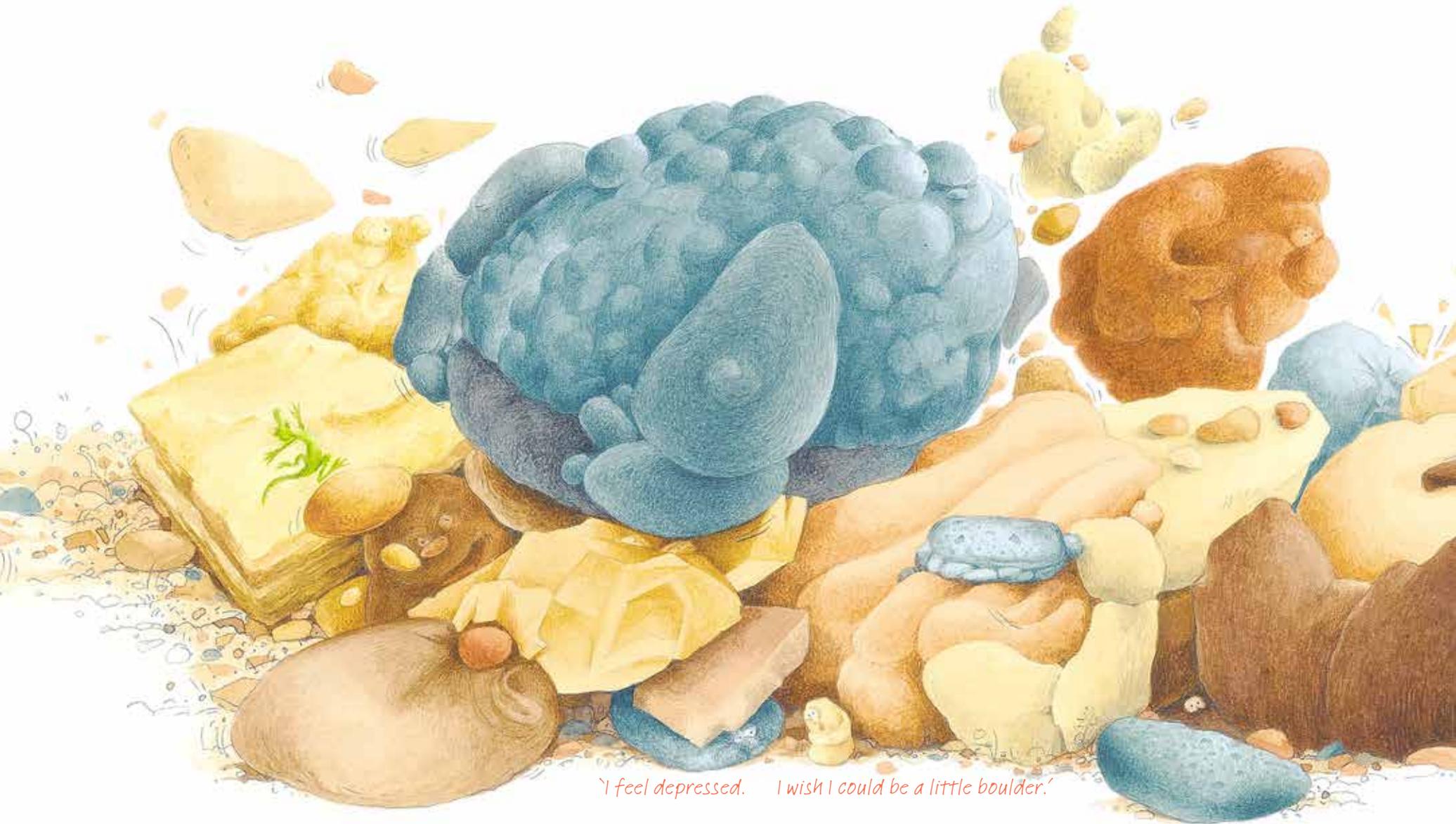
The stonemason scratched his head.  
All his stones were important.  
He had collected them from all over the world.

'OK,' he said slowly,  
'I will build a wall with only my BEST stones.'



*'Dr Livingstone, I presume?'*

But now all the stones wanted the stonemason to think they were the best.



*'I feel depressed. I wish I could be a little boulder.'*

They put their best faces forward.  
They hid their ugly bits.  
They tried to climb to  
the top of the pile.



*'I'm just a stepping stone.'*

They formed into gangs who argued:

'Square stones are  
the neatest.'

'Flat stones are easy to lay.'

*'A stalagmite reach the ceiling one day...*

*and a stalagmite has to hold on really tight!'*





'White stones are  
the most beautiful.'

'Triangles look zany.'



*'My mum was a volcano.' 'Who cares? Mine was a meteor.'*

The stonemason started work but the stones had become a rabble of rubble. As each stone was selected one by one, a stony silence descended.



*'Hi...I'm a chip off the old block.'*



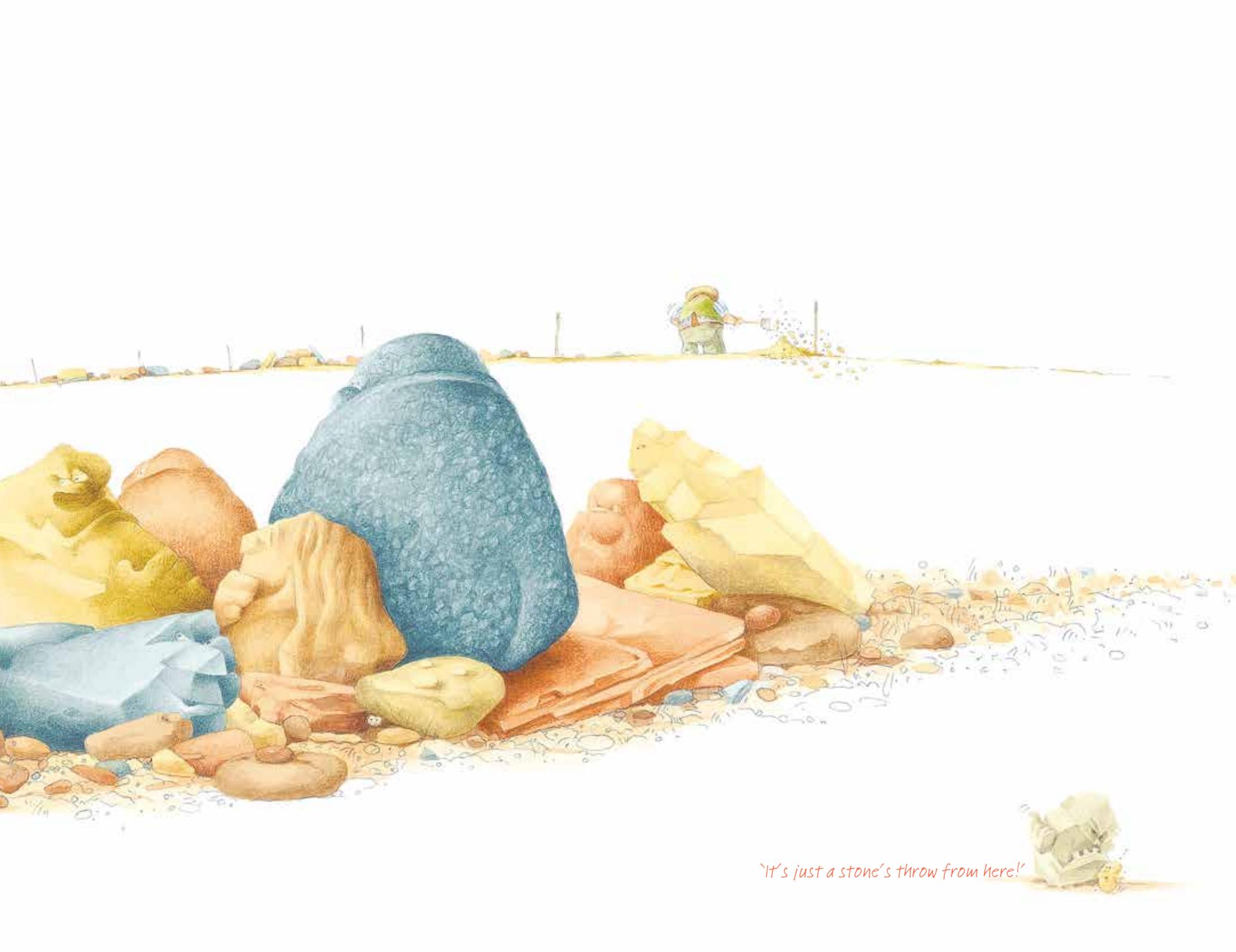
*'It's carved in stone.'*



One stone began to feel very lonely.  
He was a strange shape.  
He was odd.  
He didn't seem to fit anywhere.



*"I'm thick as a brick!"*

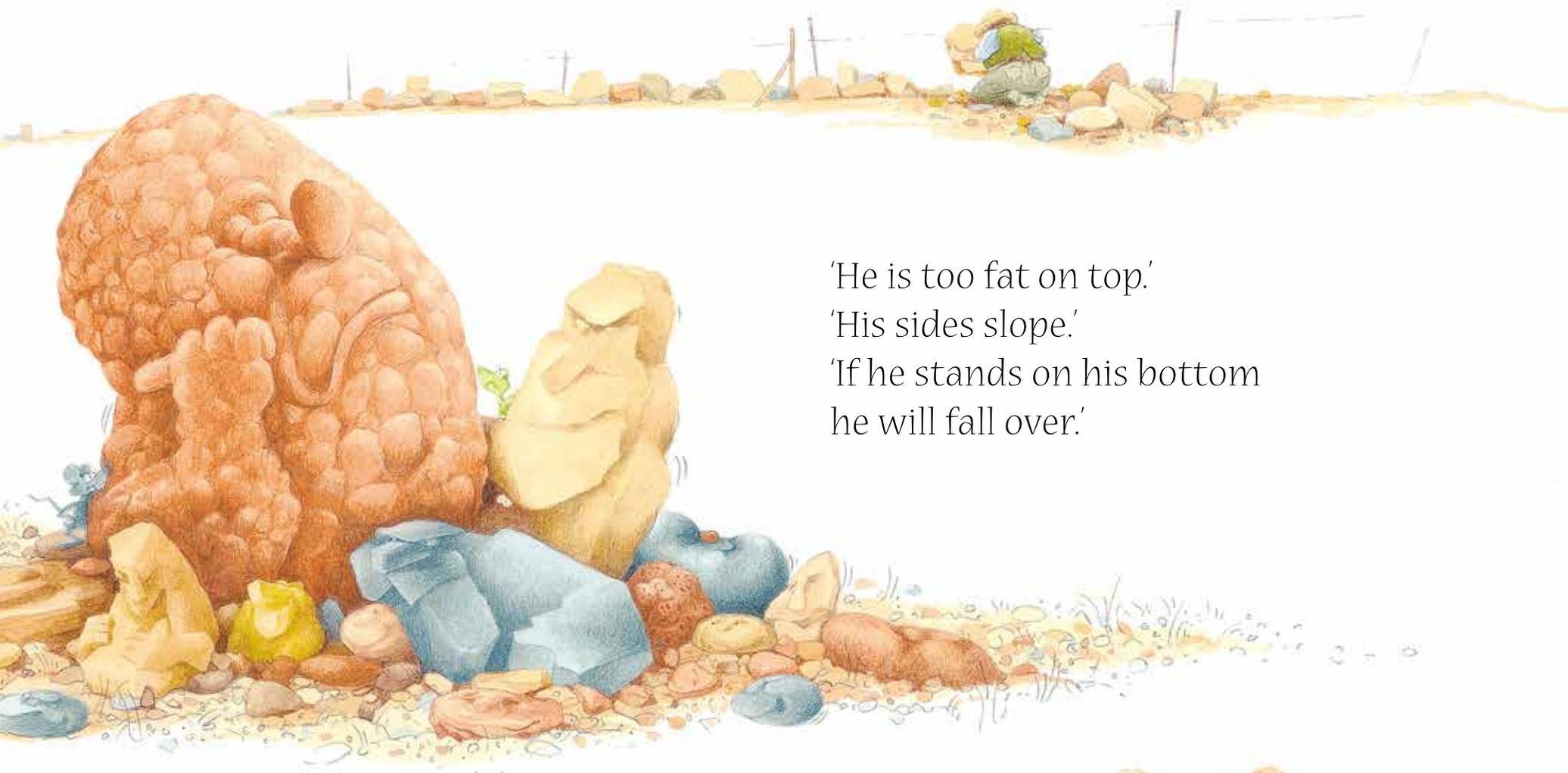


*'It's just a stone's throw from here!'*



The stonemason worked fast.  
Soon the stones started to see that  
there was a place for everyone.  
Except the wrong stone.

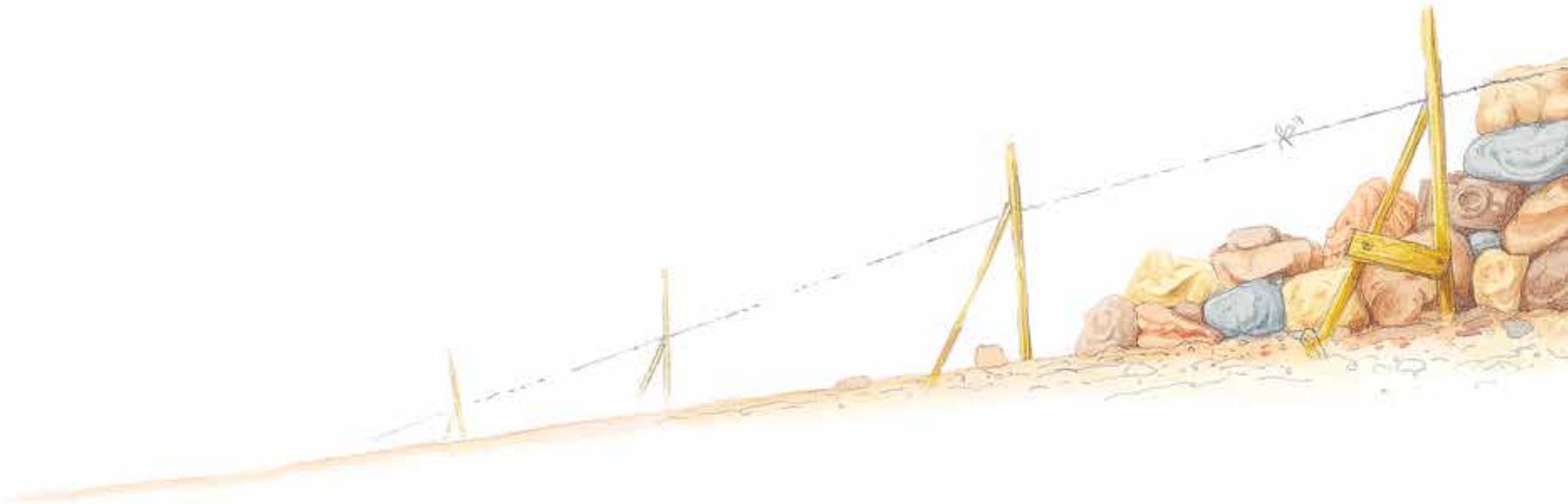




'He is too fat on top.'  
'His sides slope.'  
'If he stands on his bottom  
he will fall over.'



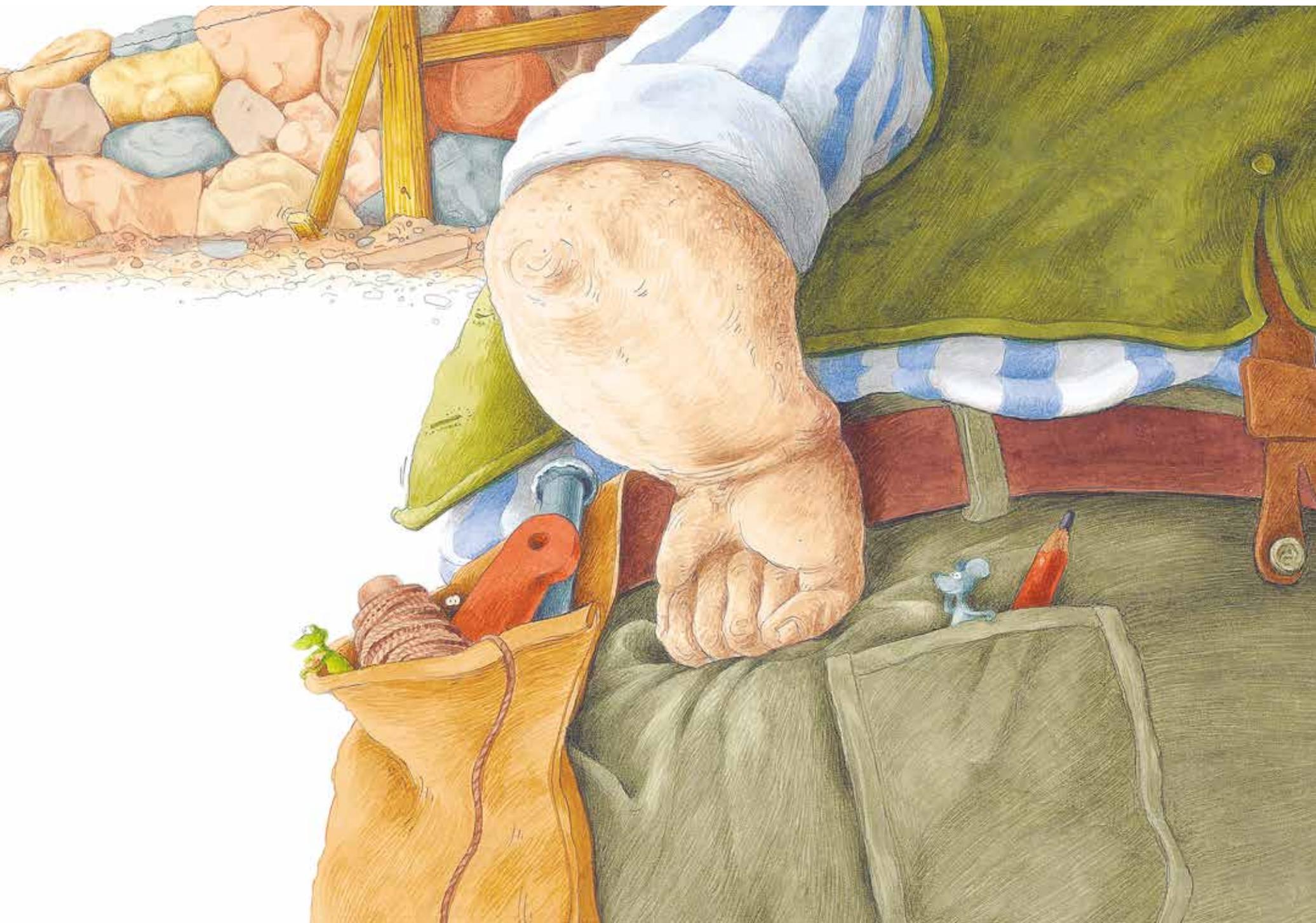
*'It's Rock 'n' Roll.'*



The wrong stone felt bad.  
He knew the others were  
laughing at him.  
'The stonemason thinks  
I'm useless,' he thought.  
'It looks like the crusher  
and the end of the road for me.'

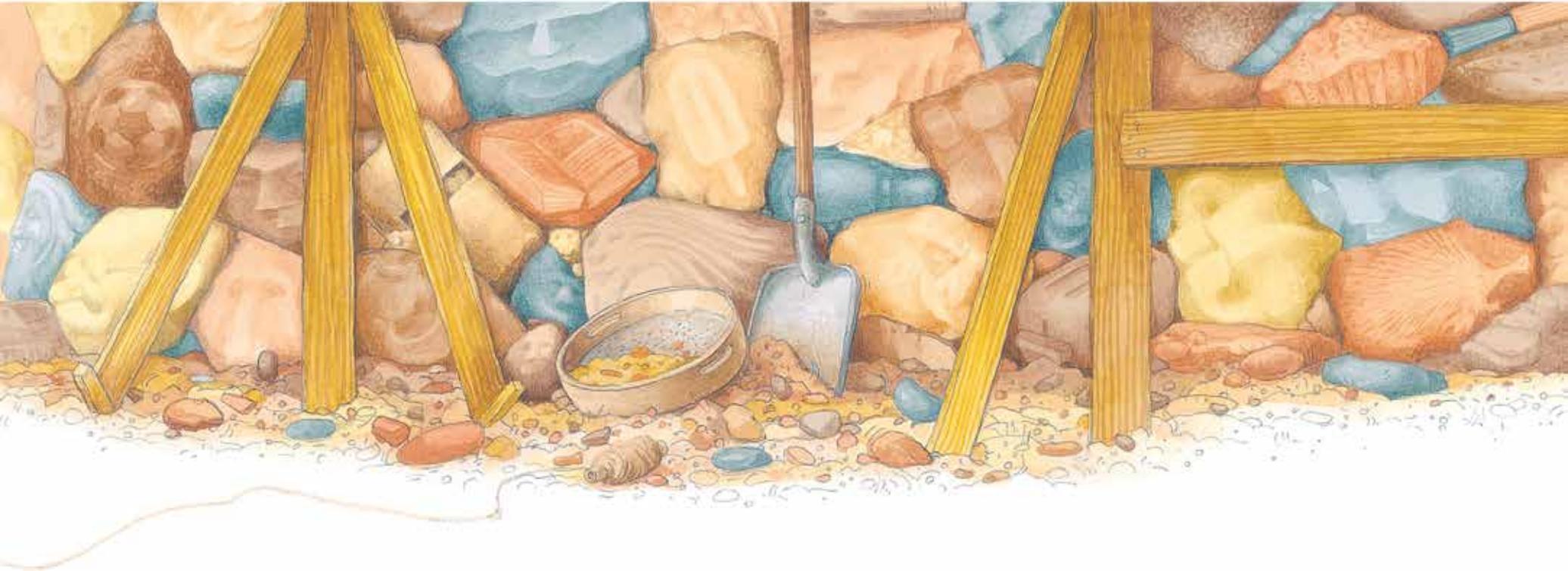


*'I've hit rock bottom.'*





*'He's off his rocker!'*

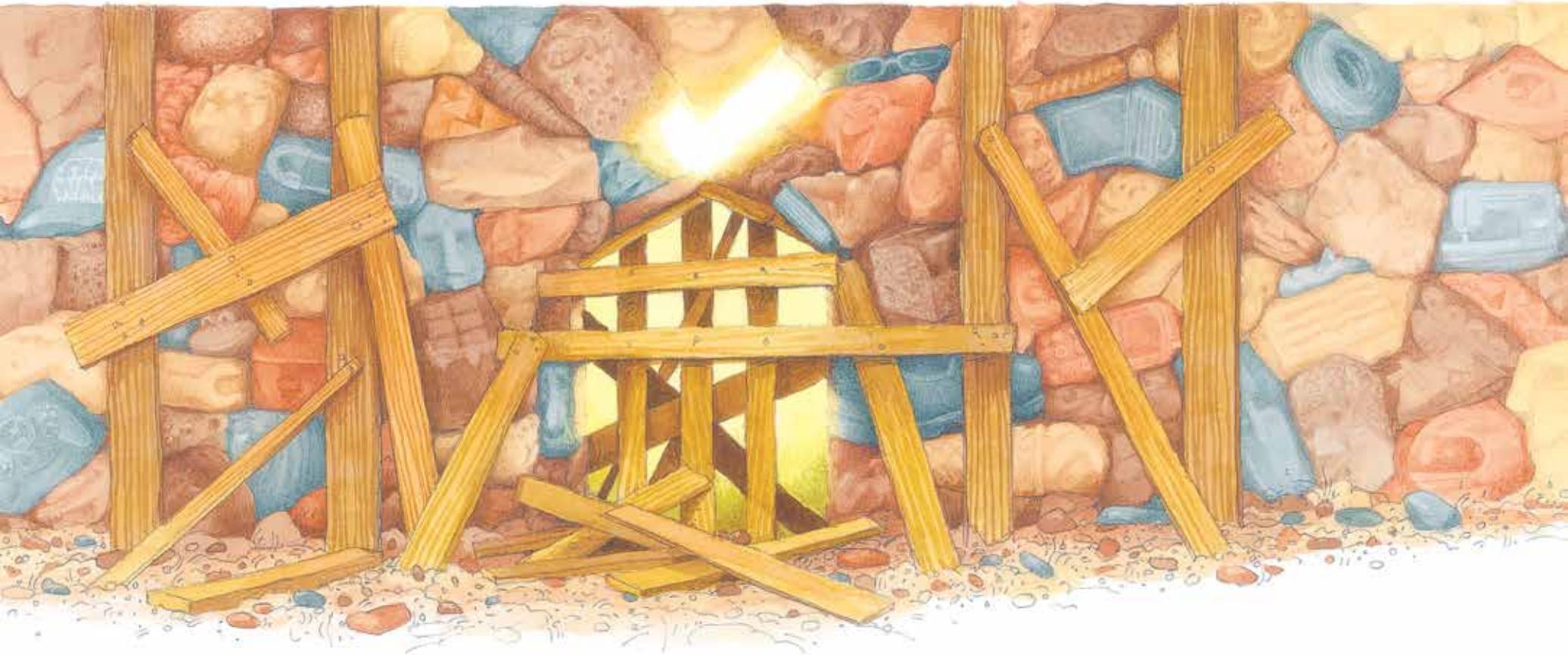


But then, miracle of miracles...  
the stonemason picked him up!  
'I've been saving you for  
the perfect spot,' he said.



*'Sedimentary, my dear Watson, sedimentary!'*





'It's your job to keep the whole wall together.'

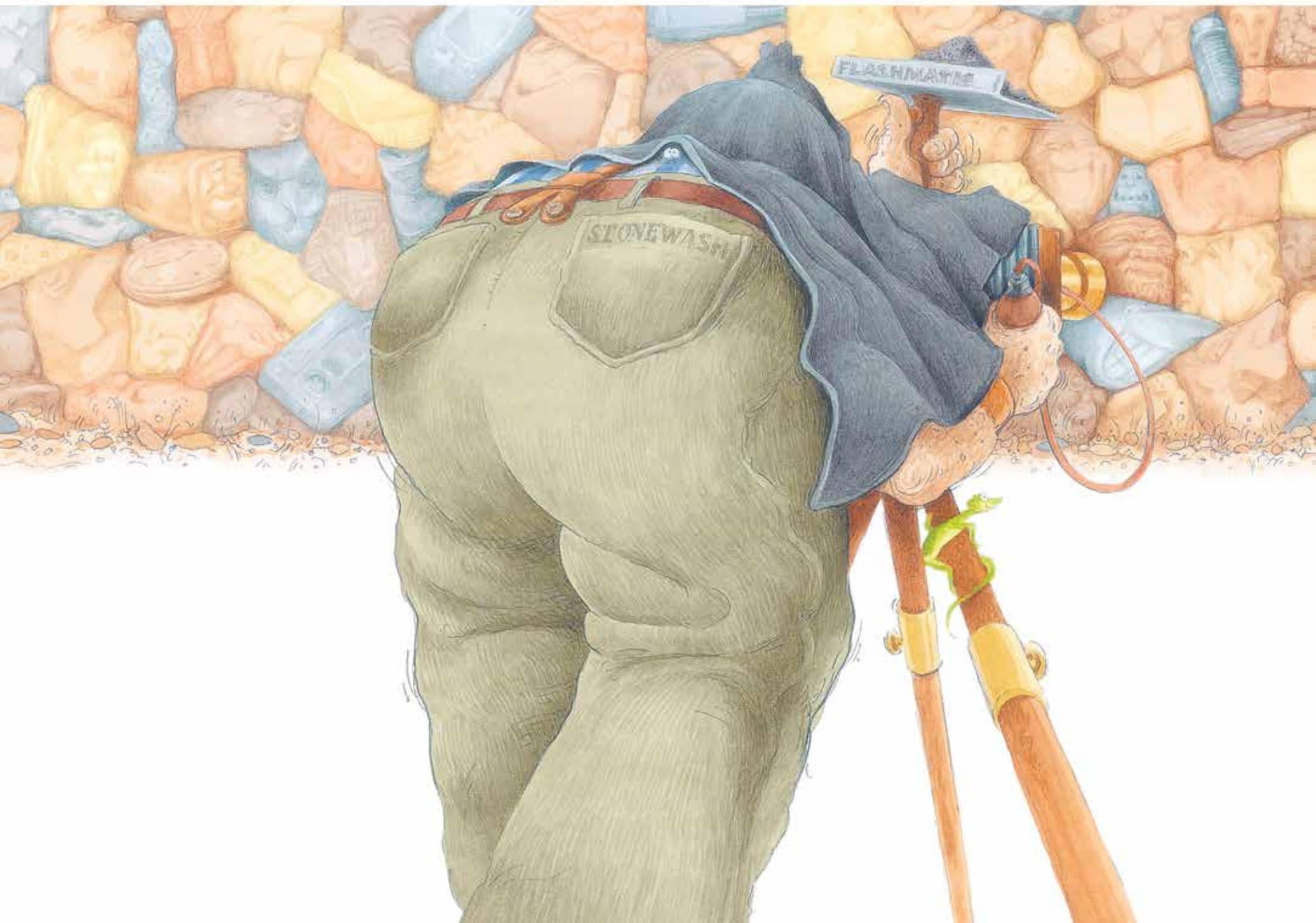


The wrong stone had become the very right stone!

*'I'm well balanced, I've got a chip on both shoulders!'*

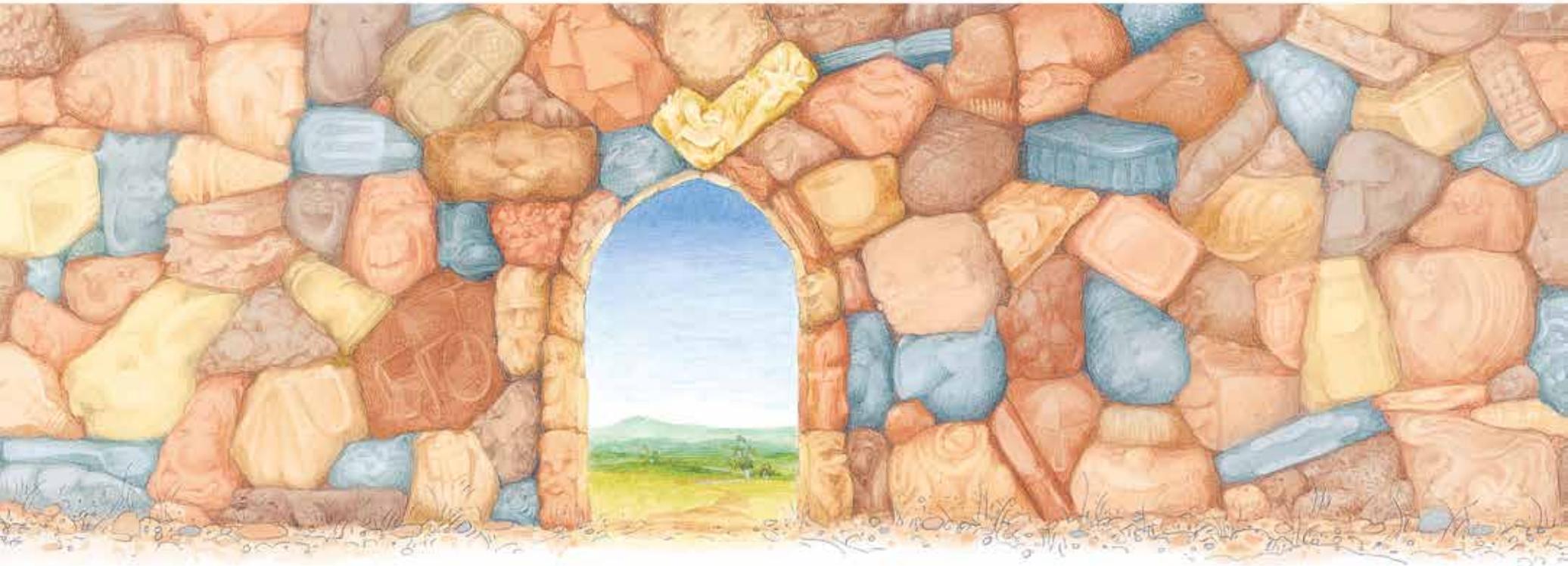






FLASHMAYNE

STONEWASH



All the stones could see there was a perfect spot for each of them.



### **About the Author**

Russell is the founder and former creative director of Innovative Resources where he contributed to over sixty publications and ran over six hundred interactive workshops. In 2013 he was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for his contribution to social work education and the community. Russell dedicated *The Wrong Stone* to the memory of Chris Jones who played a key role in Russell's commitment to social justice. In his spare time Russell can still be found in and around his home in Castlemaine building more stone walls.

### **About the Illustrator**

Melbourne-based graphic designer and illustrator, Ray Bowler, has worked with local and overseas publishers on children's picturebooks. Ray is a long-time collaborator with Innovative Resources. His projects include *Stones Have Feelings Too!*, *Storycatching* and *Ups and Downs*.

Whenever work allows, he can be found kayaking amongst the mud, mozzies and mangroves of Cannons Creek at the top end of Western Port Bay.



I have learned a lot from stones. I have learned that stones can be very beautiful. They have different personalities. Generally, they are very forgiving and patient. They are good listeners and when I am tired and grumpy and fed up with people, stones can be really good to talk to.

When building with stones I have learned that it is easy to take them for granted; to think that all stones will fit just where we want. Stones need to be respected. Sometimes when I am careless in how I position my stones, they will move and a section of wall collapses. All stone walls need tender loving care and the occasional bit of maintenance.

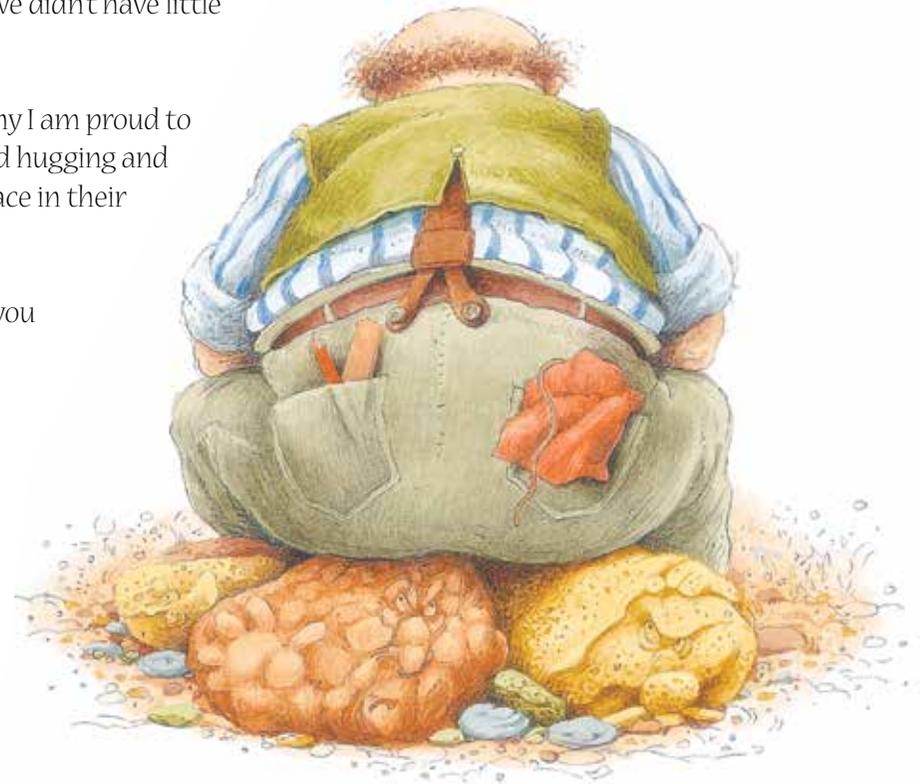
I have also learned that there is a place for every stone; that all stones are important. There are some big stones whose size alone makes them important. Uluru in Central Australia is the most impressive stone I have ever met. Millions of people from all around the world come to see it—and walk on it—which is really sad because to the Aboriginals who have been Uluru's custodians for thousands of years, it is a sacred place and not meant to be climbed.

But little stones are important too. Just ask Goliath. Well, you can't because he was killed by a tiny stone. Or think about what our houses, streets and cities would look like if we didn't have little stones to put into concrete.

There is a lot about stones we can contemplate and appreciate, which is why I am proud to be called a 'rock hugger'. I enjoy hugging rocks. I also enjoy hugging trees and hugging and being hugged by people I love. Many people don't seem to be able to find space in their lives for hugging.

Perhaps you could hug a rock today. Find a special stone, one that reminds you of what is truly important in this world; one that reminds you that you are important; that there is a special place in the world for everyone.

*Russell Deal*



***'I want you to build me a wall with only perfect stones,'  
the big architect said.***

All the stones tried to put their best faces forward.  
They hid their ugly bits. They tried to climb to the top of the pile.  
But there was one stone that didn't seem to fit...anywhere.  
He was the 'Wrong Stone' and all the others were laughing at him.

What is it like to be different? To stand out? To feel unwanted?  
The Wrong Stone knows.

Will it be the crusher and the end of the road for him?

Join this delightful, ragtag, razzamadazzle pile of stones and find out.

