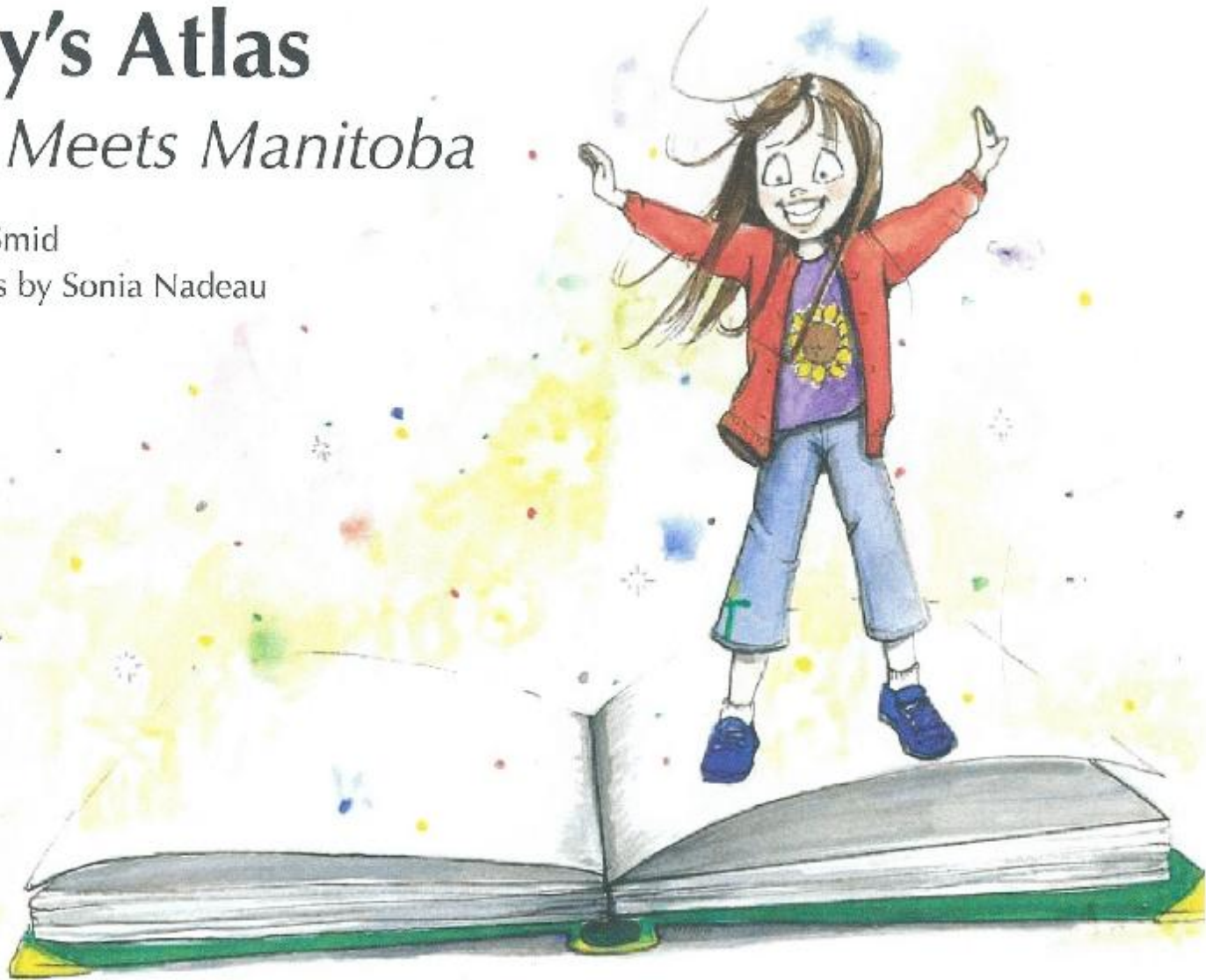


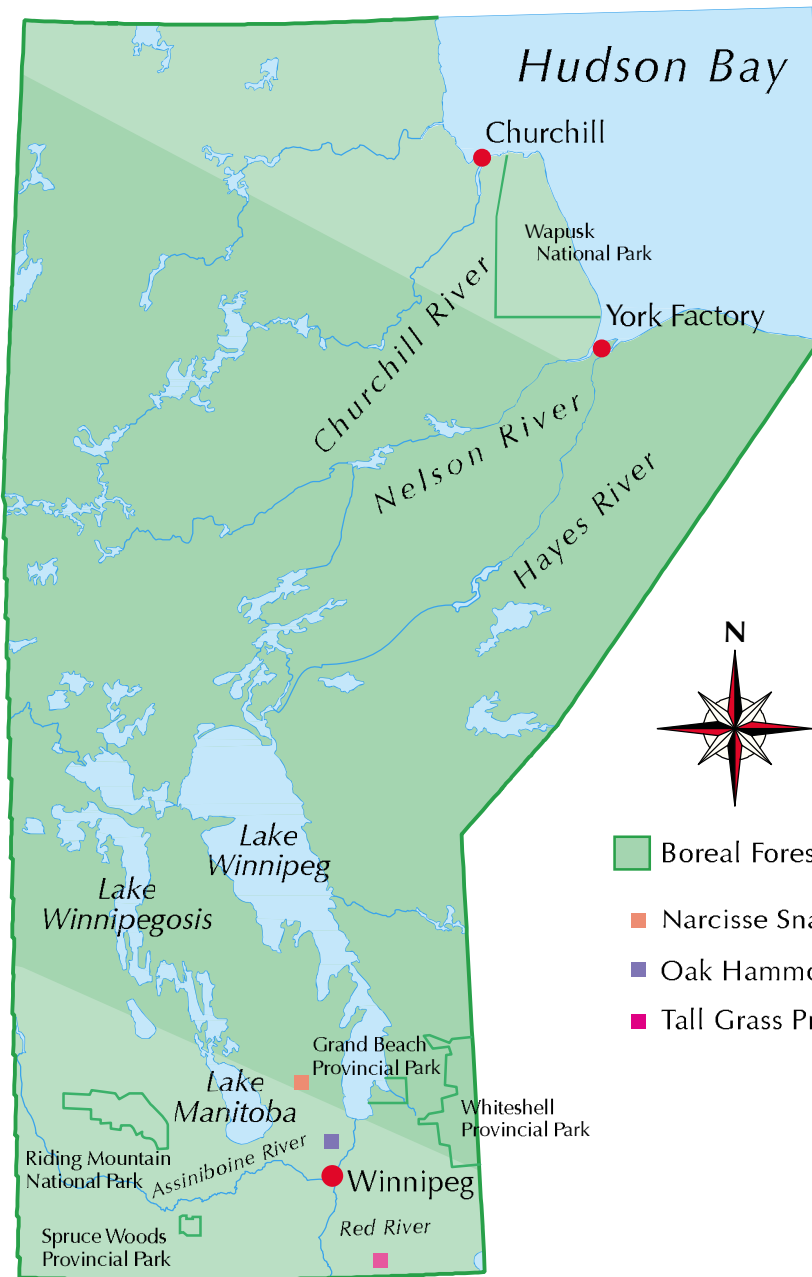
# Mary's Atlas

## *Mary Meets Manitoba*

By Gwen Smid

Illustrations by Sonia Nadeau





- Boreal Forest
- Narcisse Snake Dens
- Oak Hammock Marsh
- Tall Grass Prairie Preserve



CANADA

## MAP OF MANITOBA

Zip and zoom with Mary and Bou from southern Manitoba to Hudson Bay.

Dedicated to my mom, Mary Matyas, and my dad, Leslie Matyas, for introducing me to the joys of reading.

Also dedicated to my husband, Borden Smid, for zipping and zooming with me through life.

– *Gwen Smid*

To my boys, Timothy and Christian, for being my inspiration.

– *Sonia Nadeau*

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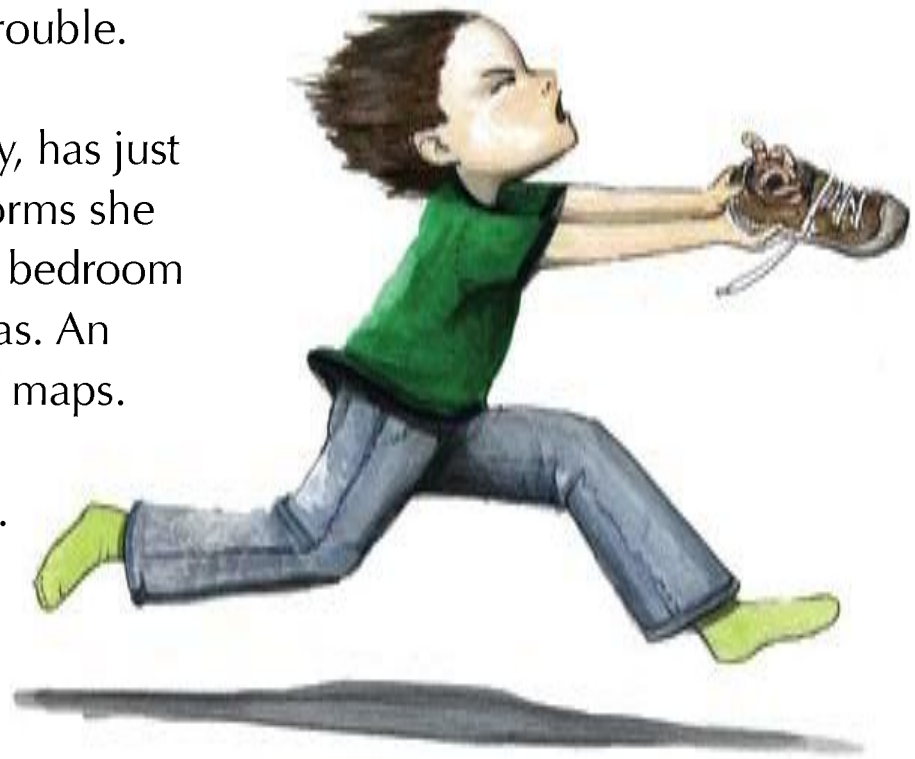




Eight-year-old Mary is in trouble.

Mary's twin brother, Murray, has just discovered the slimy gob of worms she put in his shoes. Mary is in her bedroom frantically searching for her atlas. An ordinary atlas is a collection of maps.

This isn't an ordinary atlas.

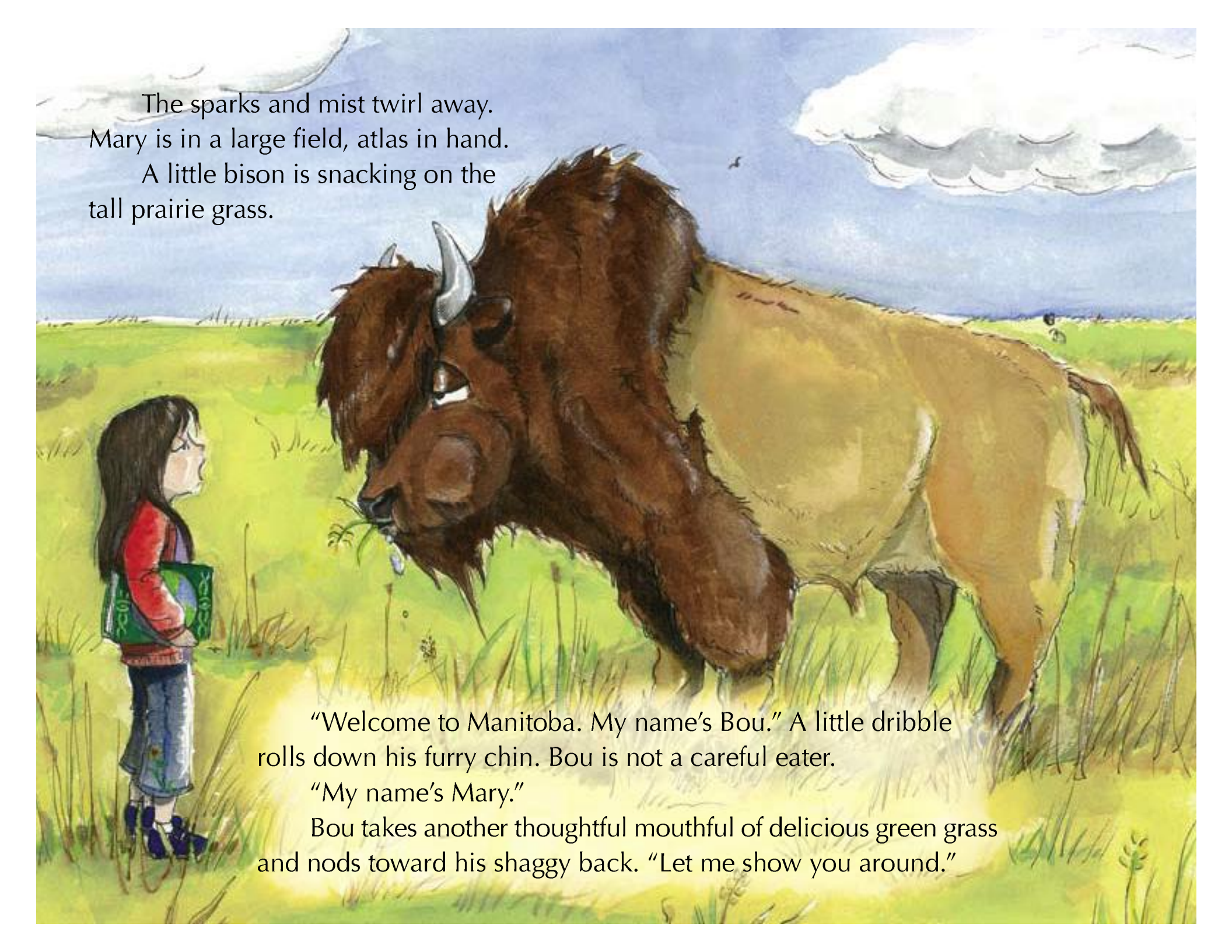


When Mary taps the cover three times, she can enter any map. She finds her atlas just in time and – *tap tap tap* – whips it open. The province of Manitoba is staring up at her.

The atlas fizzes and sizzles. It splutters and splatters. It bubbles and pops. Mary shrinks smaller and smaller, tinier and tinier, itsy bitsier and itsy bitsier. In a flurry of sparks and mist, Mary vanishes.



The sparks and mist twirl away.  
Mary is in a large field, atlas in hand.  
A little bison is snacking on the  
tall prairie grass.



“Welcome to Manitoba. My name’s Bou.” A little dribble  
rolls down his furry chin. Bou is not a careful eater.

“My name’s Mary.”

Bou takes another thoughtful mouthful of delicious green grass  
and nods toward his shaggy back. “Let me show you around.”

They zip and zoom over southern Manitoba's fields of yellow canola and blue flax. Farmers are hard at work swathing and baling, their tractors rattling and bouncing over the wavy wheat fields.

*In Cree, "Manitou bou" means "the narrows of the Great Spirit." The bison, Manitoba's provincial animal, is on the province's flag and coat of arms.*





“I’ll introduce you to the Golden Boy,” says Bou. “He stands on top of Manitoba’s Legislative Building in Winnipeg. He’s a super nice guy.”

But the super nice Golden Boy is super duper upset.

The Golden Boy sniffs. “The tricky North Wind stole my torch. If I don’t get it back, I can’t watch over Manitoba at night.”

“We’ll find the North Wind!” declares Mary.

*The Golden Boy was created in France in 1918. His arrival in Winnipeg was delayed due to World War One.*



Mary and Bou swish and swoosh over The Forks Market, located at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers.

“There are lots of fun things to do at The Forks all year round,” Bou informs Mary.

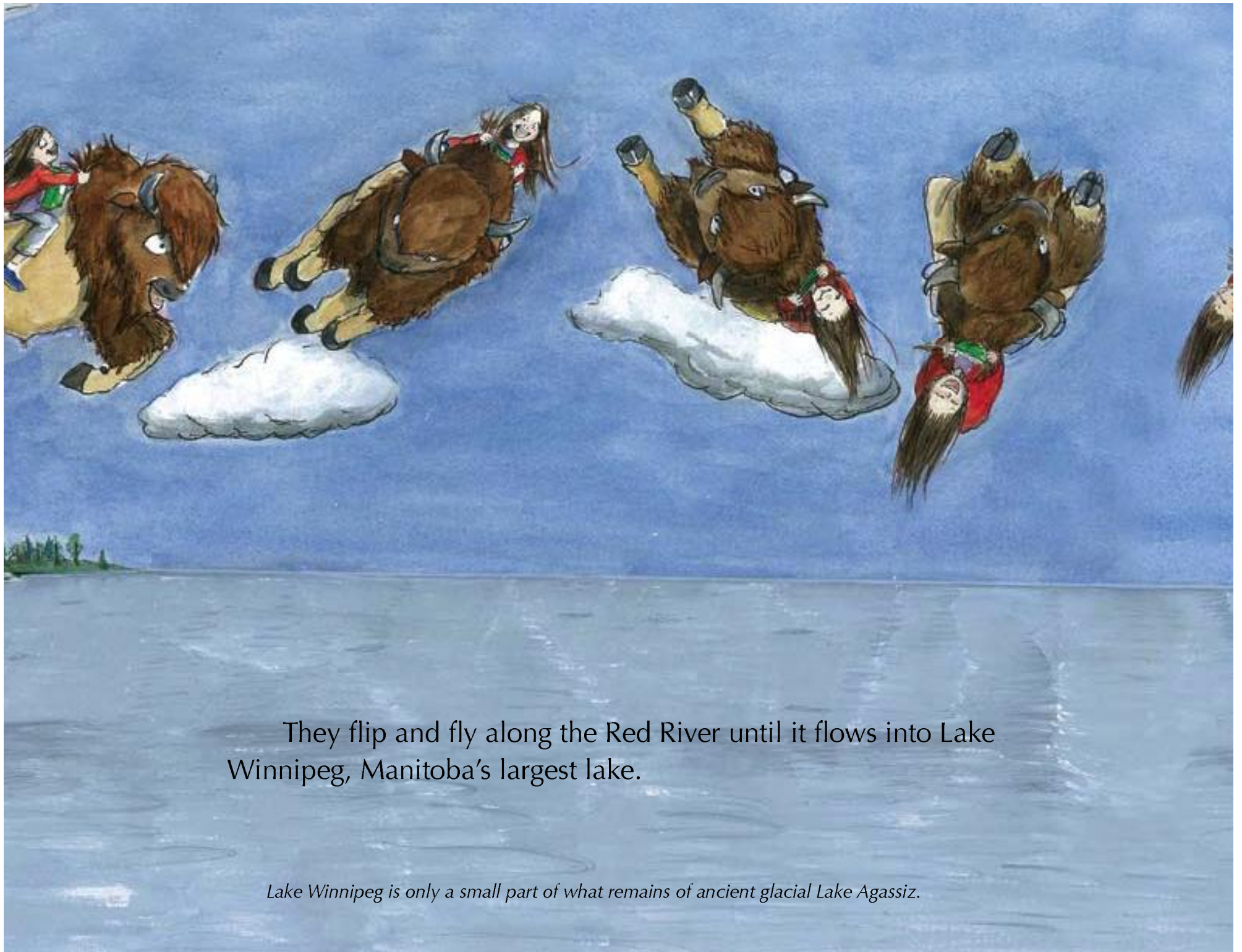
*The Forks is a National Historic Site of Canada. It was an Aboriginal meeting place, and over time various groups of people have passed through or settled here.*

The tricky North Wind is pestering pedestrians at Portage and Main, Winnipeg's windiest corner. He flaps the flags on the flagpoles. He gusts Granny's groceries out of her hands. He even picks up a pudgy puppy and floats it along like a kite.

"What have you done with the Golden Boy's torch?"  
Bou demands.

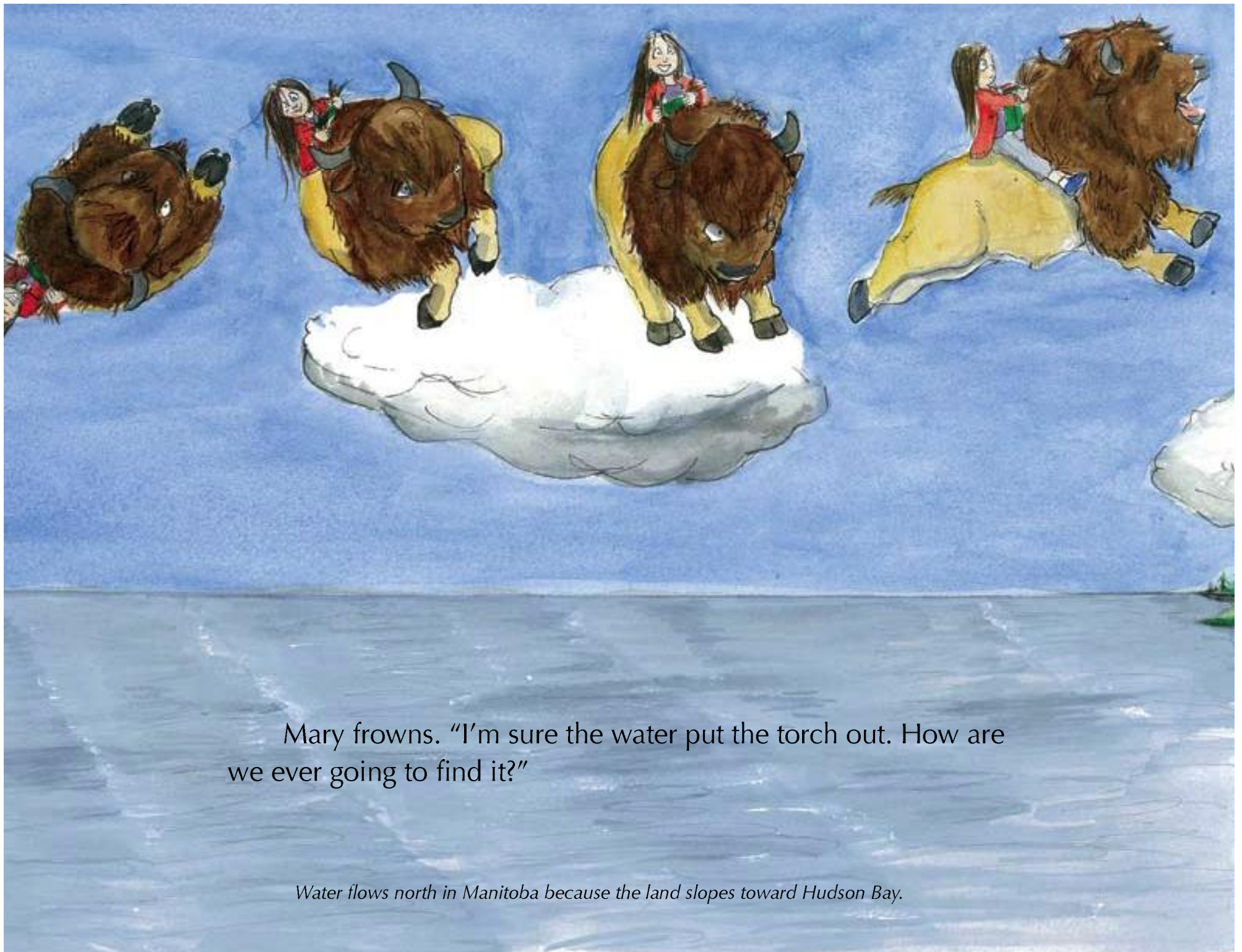
The North Wind howls with laughter. "I blew it into the Red River. If you want to find it, follow the current." Then he disappears.





They flip and fly along the Red River until it flows into Lake Winnipeg, Manitoba's largest lake.

*Lake Winnipeg is only a small part of what remains of ancient glacial Lake Agassiz.*



Mary frowns. "I'm sure the water put the torch out. How are we ever going to find it?"

*Water flows north in Manitoba because the land slopes toward Hudson Bay.*



The North Wind returns, whisking the waves into frothy, ferocious peaks. With an extra strong whoosh, he sweeps Mary off Bou's back and she tumbles into the choppy water below.

Mary is sloshed around like juice in a blender.

Something slippery brushes by her icy toes. An enormous sturgeon with nose plugs pops out of the water and helps Mary to shore.

"What's a little girl doing in Lake Winnipeg?" asks the sturgeon.

"What's a fish doing with nose plugs?" asks Mary, curiosity overcoming her chilliness.

The sturgeon grins. "It just so happens that I don't like getting water up my nose."

"Well, it just so happens that we're looking for the Golden Boy's torch!" states Bou. He snuggles up to Mary, his thick brown fur quickly warming her and drying the atlas.



"I saw a torch floating downstream," the sturgeon says.  
They thank him and wave good-bye.

*A sturgeon is a prehistoric fish that can live to be 100 years old.*

Mary and Bou sail and swoop over Lake Winnipeg until they reach the Nelson River.

“I’ve never seen so many pine trees,” says Bou. “Where are we?”

Always particularly practical, Mary consults her atlas.

“We’re in the boreal forest.”

“What’s that?” Bou asks.

Overhead, an owl, of the Great Gray variety, clears her throat and fluffs her plumage. “A boreal forest has mainly coniferous trees.”

“Coniferous trees?” they both ask, puzzled.

The Great Gray adjusts her horn-rimmed glasses.

“Coniferous trees are trees with cones. Just remember: C is for coniferous and C is for cones.”

“Thanks for the info,” replies Mary, “but we’re looking for a torch.”

“I saw a torch floating downstream,” the owl hoots. They thank her and wave good-bye.



*The Great Gray Owl is Manitoba's provincial bird.*



They dipsy-doodle north down the Nelson River where they see huge hydroelectric dams. Generating stations capture the energy of fast-moving water and turn it into electricity so power lines can carry it to homes, schools, and businesses.

It is getting colder and colder and the trees are getting smaller and smaller.

“I learned in Bison School that as you go farther north, the trees look like little sticks and the ground stays permanently frozen. It’s called permafrost.” Bou is a gold-star student.

