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Otto's Tales

Let's Visit The STATUE of LIBERTY

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Otto's Tales

Let's Visit The STATUE of LIBERTY

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It was a beautiful weekend! The sun was shining, the wildflowers were blooming, and Otto the bulldog couldn't wait to go outside with his best friend Dennis.

"Ruff Ruff!" Otto exclaimed, galloping into Dennis's room. "Let's go play tag!"

Dennis sat at his desk with a library book. Scattered papers, notes, and drawings surrounded him.

"I'm sorry, Otto." Dennis looked up. "I would love to play tag, but I'm researching the Statue of Liberty for our road trip."

Dennis's dad had promised to take the family on a big road trip over the summer. It was up to Dennis to discover places he'd like to visit and give a report to his parents, to help decide where their family should go. Dennis wanted to see the Statue of Liberty.

"I should have checked out more books from the library," Dennis sighed. "There aren't many pictures in this one."

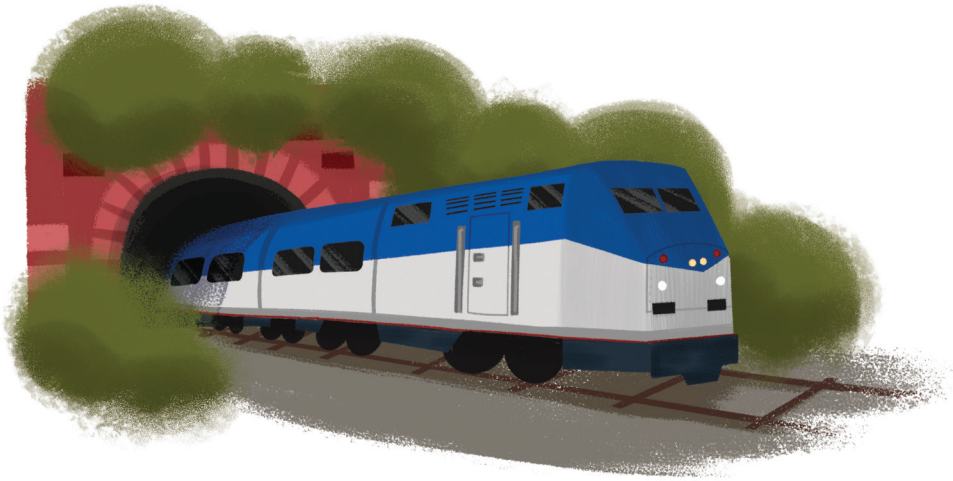
Otto wanted to cheer Dennis up, so he pounced down to the kitchen to get him a snack. The pantry door was wide open, and Otto had a feeling he knew who was inside… a teeny tiny kitten with a great big appetite.

"Smidge!" Otto barked. Smidge lived in the neighborhood; she and Otto were great friends.

"Otto! You scared me!" Smidge's fur puffed in crazy directions, which happened whenever she got excited. "I came by for snacks. Your family always has the best treats. I thought you would be outside playing tag with Dennis."

"Dennis is busy learning about the Statue of Liberty," Otto explained, "but he needs more pictures."

"I know how we can help!" Smidge's tail fluffed up in excitement. "Go grab Dennis's notes and the camera he got for his birthday. I'll grab snacks. Meet me at the train station."



"Train ride for two!" Smidge gave the conductor tickets, and she and Otto found seats by a window. The train whistled and... ZOOM! It was out of the station and on the tracks towards **New York City**. Otto pulled out Dennis's notes. Smidge pulled out a bag of cookies.

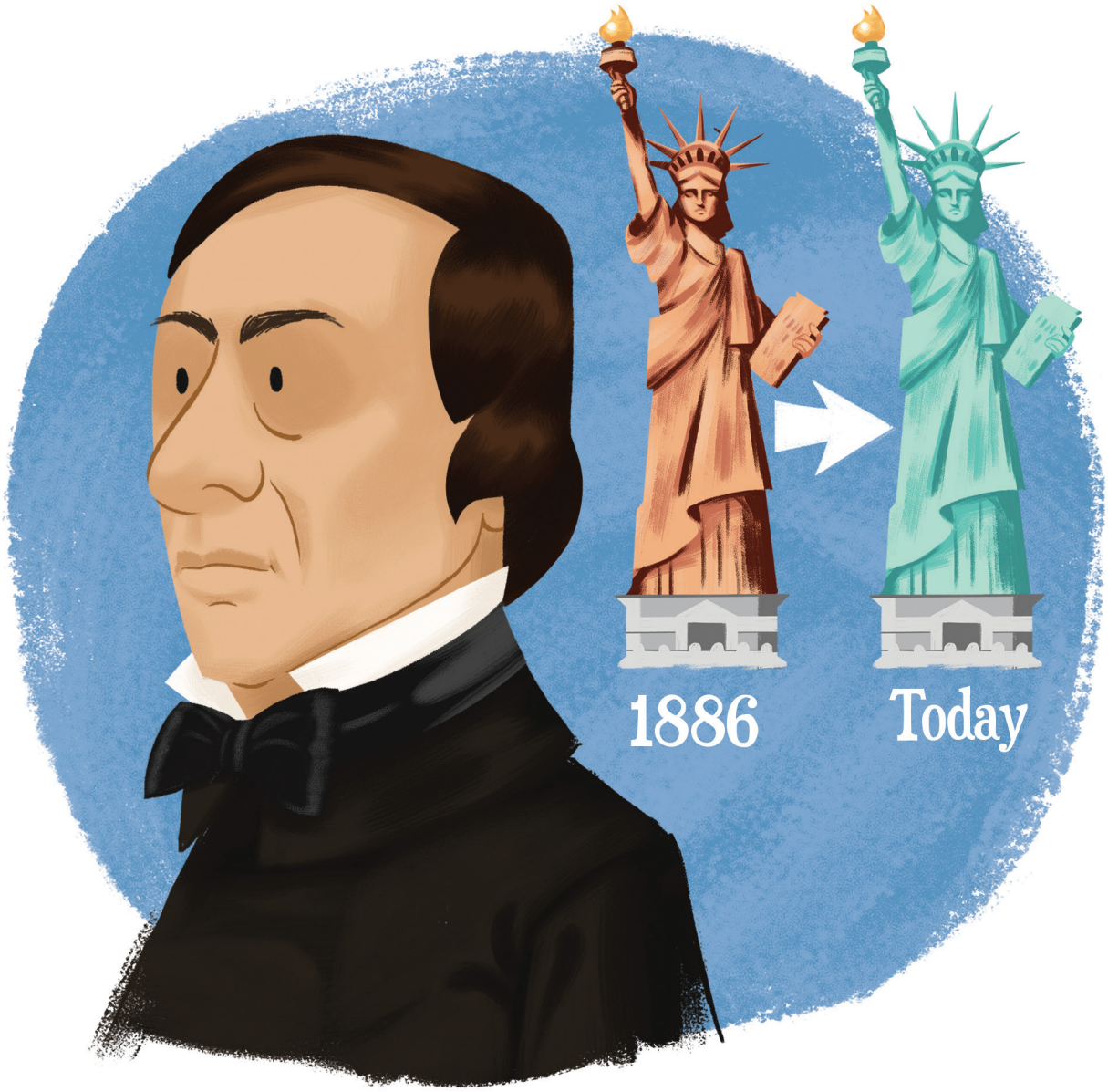
"According to these," Otto said, "the Statue of Liberty was a gift from France to the United States of America for its 100th birthday."

"Wow! That's a nice gift." Smidge leaned over, crumbs tumbling out of her mouth. "I want to invite France to my next birthday party!"

"It was **Édouard de Laboulaye**'s idea to make the statue," Otto continued. "He was a French historian and poet who was inspired by America's **freedom**."

"Freedom? That's another word for liberty," Smidge held up a penny, "just like it says on this coin!"

"And just like that penny, the Statue of Liberty is made out of copper," Otto reminded her. "That's how it got its color – it used to be brown too, but after so many years, the copper turned green. Say, why do you have so many coins?"



"I need more snacks from the dining car." Smidge scooped up the pile of coins. "Dennis's notes say that the statue is 151 feet tall, and we're going to get really hungry if we have to climb that high."

Smidge scampered to the dining car. Otto kept reading Dennis's notes… all the way to New York City!

With a swoosh and stop, Otto and Smidge arrived, and hopped onto a ferry to glide across New York Harbor to **Liberty Island**. “Dennis is going to love this!” Otto snapped pictures as fast as he could. Smidge smacked on fruit snacks.

“Lady Liberty is so tall!” Otto’s head tilted all the way up to the sky… He couldn’t believe his eyes... *Click click!* He started taking as many pictures as he could.

“I bet you can see her for miles and miles!” Smidge hopped up and down, fruit snacks flying everywhere.

Fruit Snacks
Mixed Fruit

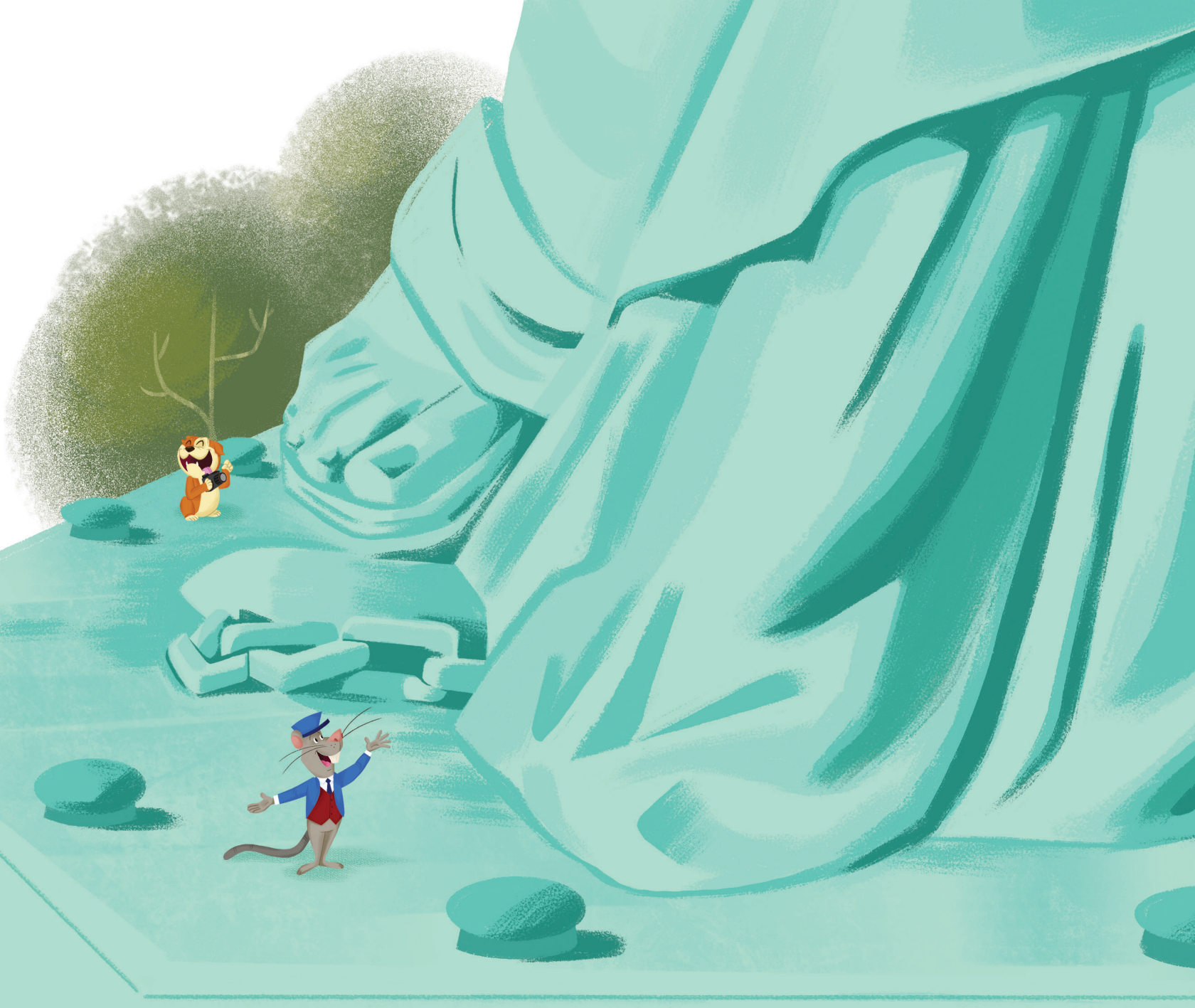
The ferry captain smiled at the friends. “You two are very smart. The Statue of Liberty was one of the first things that immigrants saw when they arrived in America and landed at Ellis Island over there. Many of them were fleeing strict governments, and they were so happy to come to our country, a place that celebrates freedom.”

"What a proud sight!” Otto shouted. The statue was unlike anything he’d ever seen.

"So inspiring," Smidge agreed. "She looks like a queen with that crown on her head. And look at that bright torch! I wonder what it's made of. And what is she holding in her other arm? It looks like a book."

"It sounds like you need a closer look," the ferry captain said. "I'll take you to Liberty Island. Look for Mr. Ratton by Lady Liberty's feet. He's an excellent tour guide."

"Thank you, Captain!"



At the foot of the statue, between two of her giant toes, Otto and Smidge found Mr. Ratton. *Click click!* Otto couldn't help taking more pictures. Lady Liberty's copper feet were so big! Smidge offered some crackers to their new guide.

"Welcome, travelers," Mr. Ratton greeted. "Have you ever seen feet as gigantic as Lady Liberty's?"

"It feels like she's going to step on us!" Otto turned in a circle under the sandal of her right foot. "Where is she going?"

Mr. Ratton lifted his head. “She’s taking a step forward to show that we are always making progress toward freedom.”

Smidge skipped around the other foot. “Why is there a big, broken chain here?”

“The broken chain,” Mr. Ratton explained, “symbolizes freedom for those who were trapped in **slavery** or oppression.”

Click click! Otto couldn't wait to show Dennis the broken chain. Freedom was a very important theme, and he knew Dennis would want to write about it in his report.

"What about the book?" Otto pointed up towards Liberty's arm. "Is that about freedom too?"

"Ah," Mr. Ratton smiled, "that's not a book, that's a stone tablet with a very important date on it. I suppose you could say that it represents freedom too..."

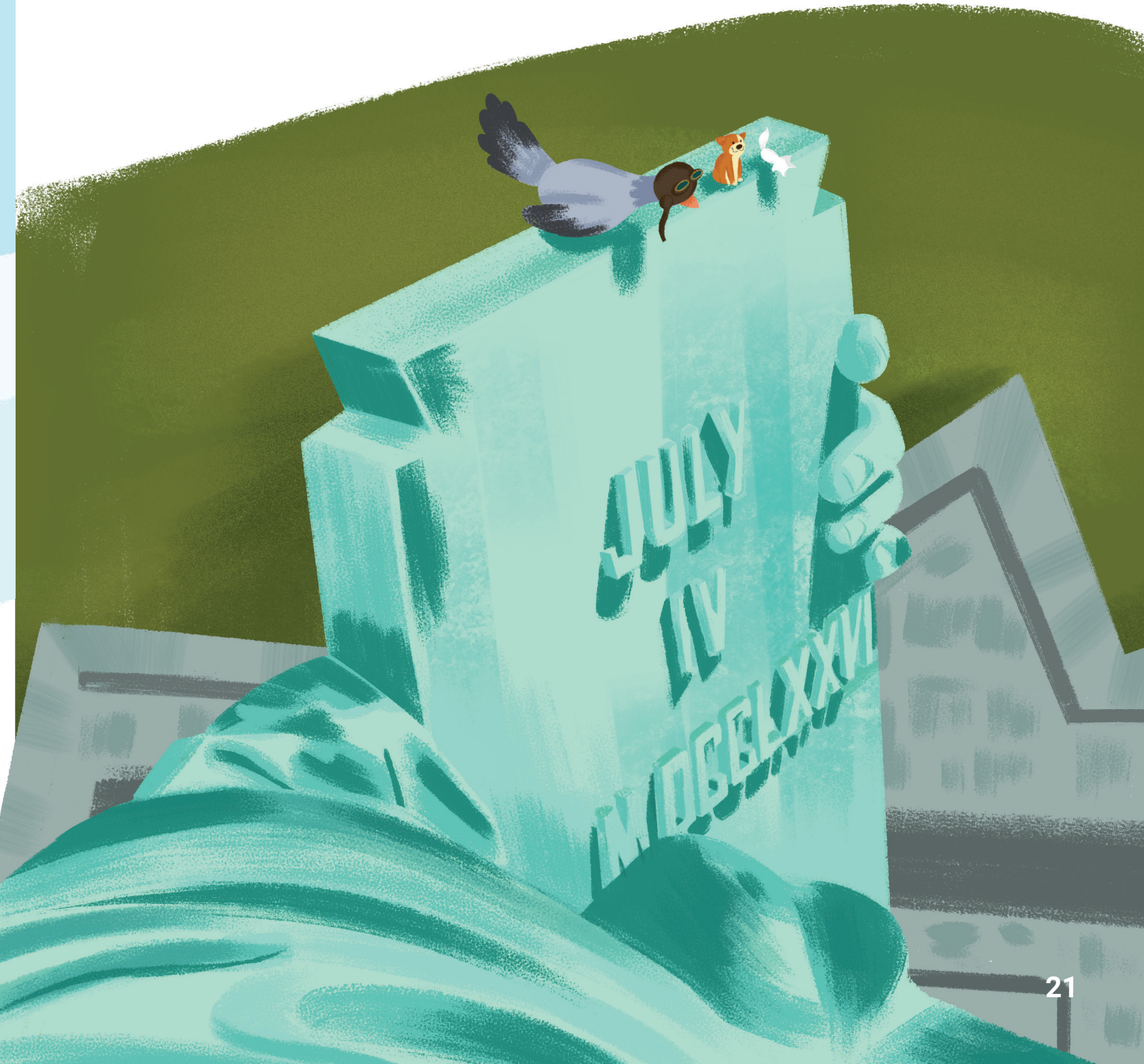
"I want to see it closer!" Smidge cried, fur puffing up tall. "How many steps do we have to climb? I bet I packed enough snacks to last us hundreds of steps!"

"No steps for special travelers like you." Mr. Ratton winked. "Mrs. Heights can take you up all the way."

With a piercing whistle from Mr. Ratton, down from the sky flew the biggest pigeon Otto and Smidge had ever seen.

"Welcome, travelers," Mrs. Heights greeted. "I trust that Mr. Ratton has started your tour on the right foot. Allow me to give you a bird's eye view of the lovely Lady Liberty. Hop onto my back and hold on tight!"

Eyes wide and a bit nervous, Otto and Smidge settled onto Mrs. Heights's back, then away they soared! Higher and higher they climbed into the sky, until at last they reached the tablet. Mrs. Heights perched at the top. Leaning over the steep edge, the friends read what was written. Carved in giant letters was the inscription "JULY IV MDCCLXXVI."



Confused, Otto pulled out Dennis's notes. "Those aren't random letters, they're Roman numerals! The date written here in Roman numerals is July 4, 1776."

"A very important date indeed." Mrs. Heights nodded. "That's the day the United States adopted the **Declaration of Independence**."

Click click! Otto took a picture of the tablet.

Smidge hopped back onto Mrs. Heights's back. "Independence, freedom, and **liberty**. Make sure Dennis has those special words in his notes, Otto!"

"I'll make sure," he promised.

Flapping her powerful wings, Mrs. Heights coasted up past Liberty's shoulders and toward her face. Otto snapped as many pictures as he could. Then they all landed on Liberty's head.

"Be careful, Smidge!" Otto called as his curious friend scampered out onto the tip top of a ray on Liberty's crown.

"Look at the view, Otto!" Smidge shouted, mouth full of animal crackers. "There's a whole other ray for you. In fact, there are 1…2…3…4…5…6…7 rays. Enough for everyone!"

Camera in hand, Otto tiptoed out to the ray and… *click click click*, snapped some pictures of the view. "Dennis's notes say that the seven rays represent the seven continents and seven seas."

Mrs. Heights stretched her wings. “That’s because liberty is important to people from every place on the planet. Some also say that her crown represents rays of light extending out to the whole world.”

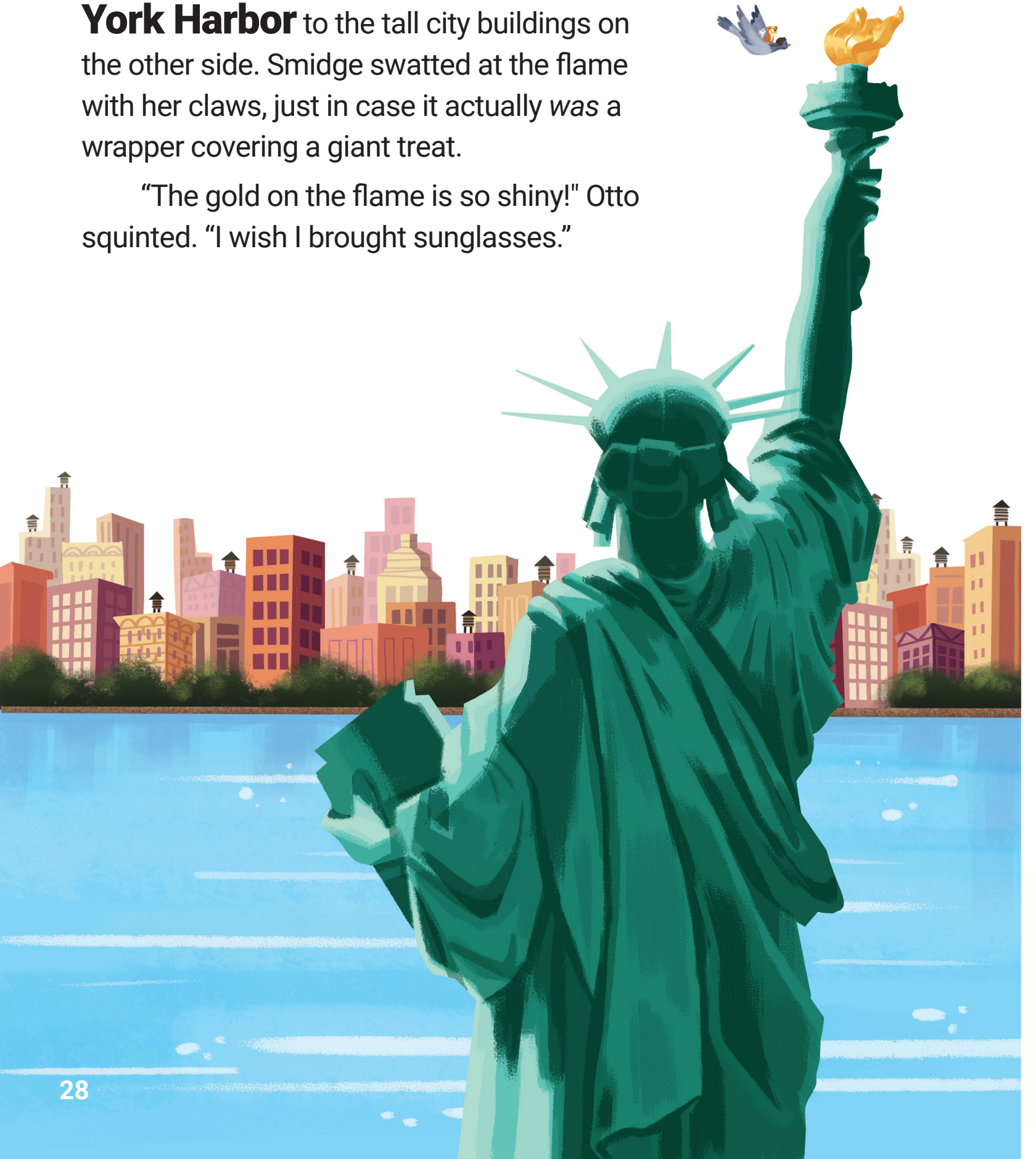
“Speaking of light,” Smidge bounded to the top of Liberty’s head and looked up, “the torch she’s holding is so shiny, like a candy wrapper! What’s it made of?”

"Is it gold?" Otto guessed.

"Very good!" Mrs. Heights praised. "The flame of her torch is covered in pure gold. Hop on, we'll get a closer look."

Mrs. Heights took them all the way to the torch. They could see everything from **New York Harbor** to the tall city buildings on the other side. Smidge swatted at the flame with her claws, just in case it actually *was* a wrapper covering a giant treat.

"The gold on the flame is so shiny!" Otto squinted. "I wish I brought sunglasses."

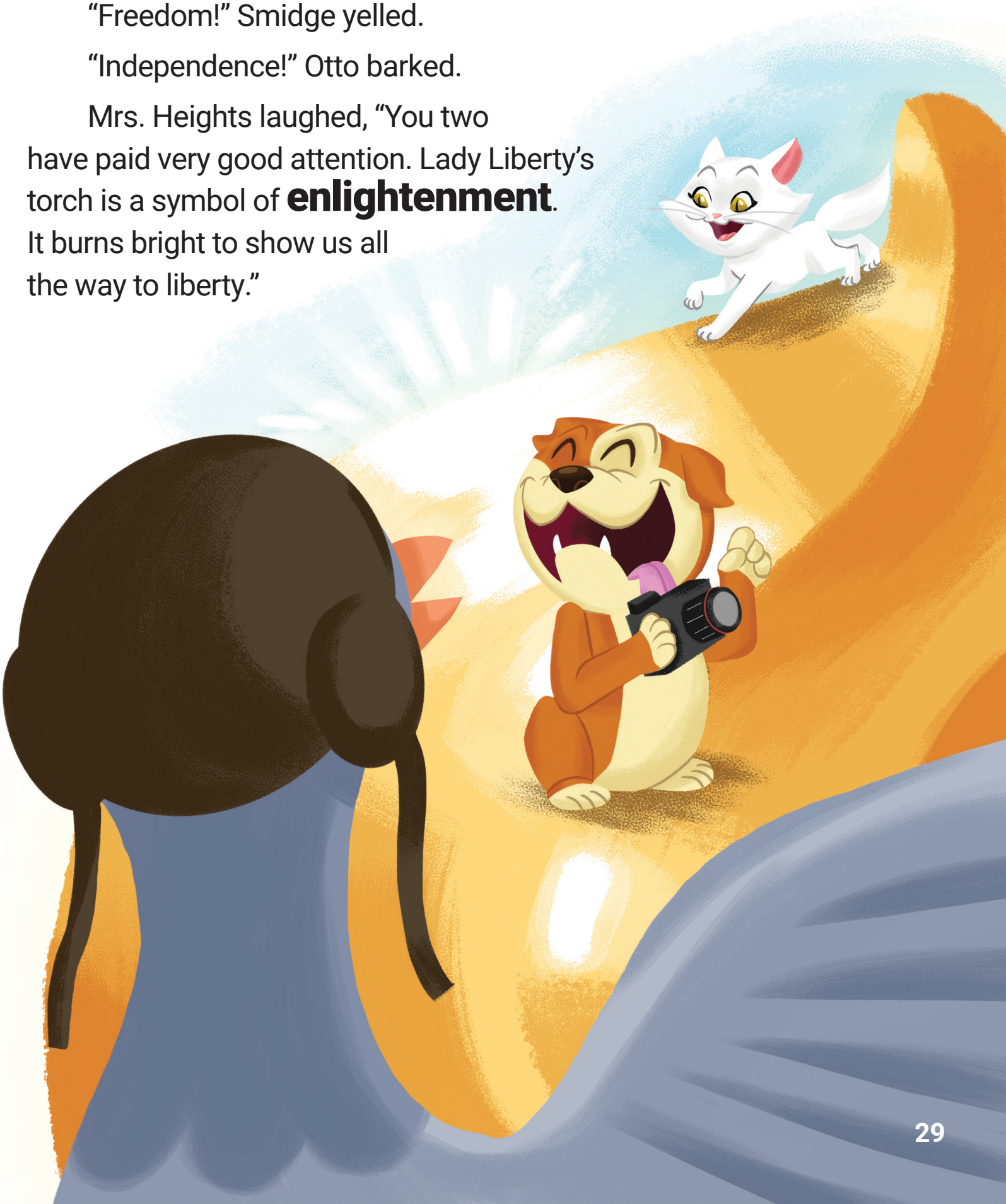


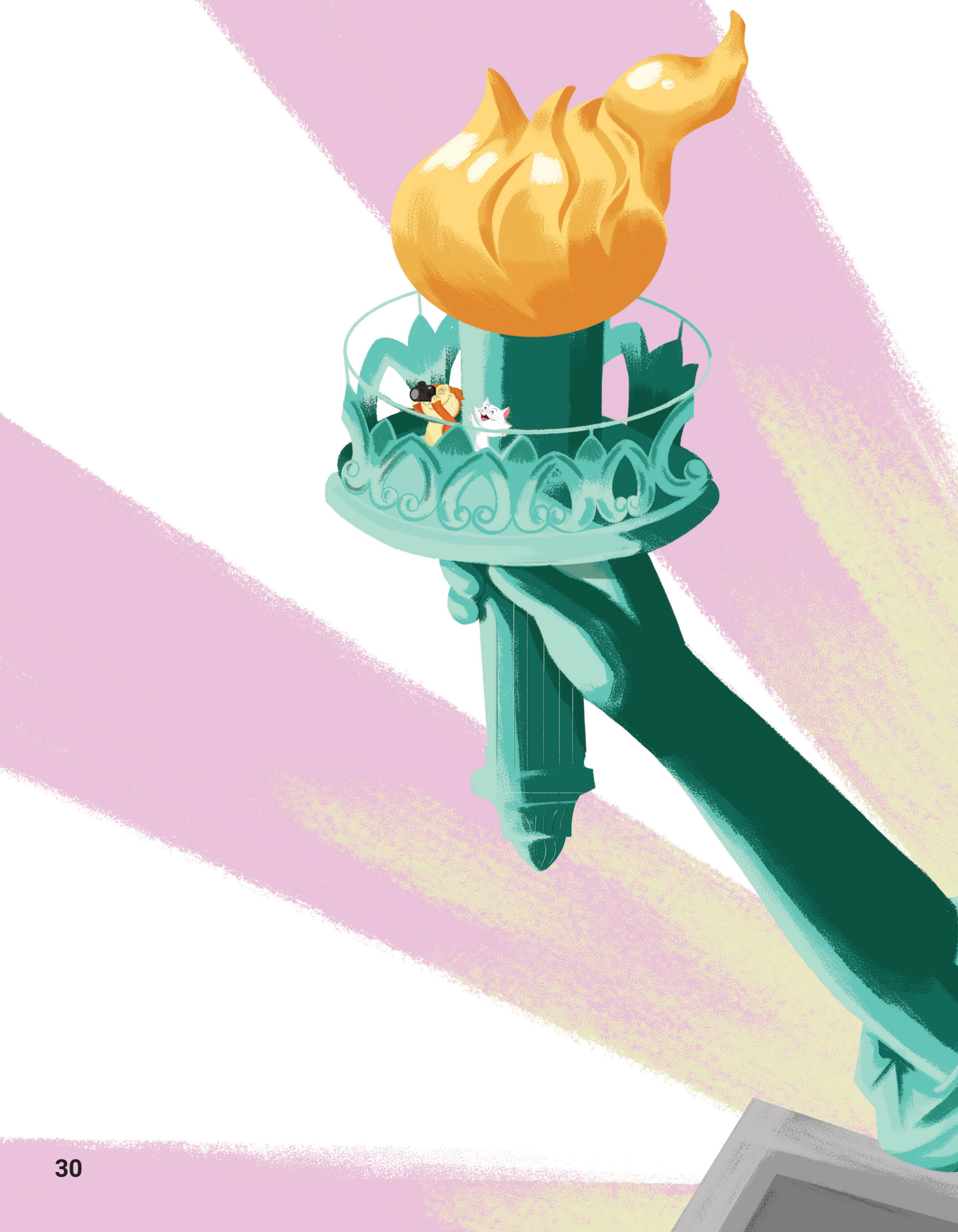
"It is very bright." Mrs. Heights nodded. "Do you want to guess what the bright light of the torch stands for?"

"Freedom!" Smidge yelled.

"Independence!" Otto barked.

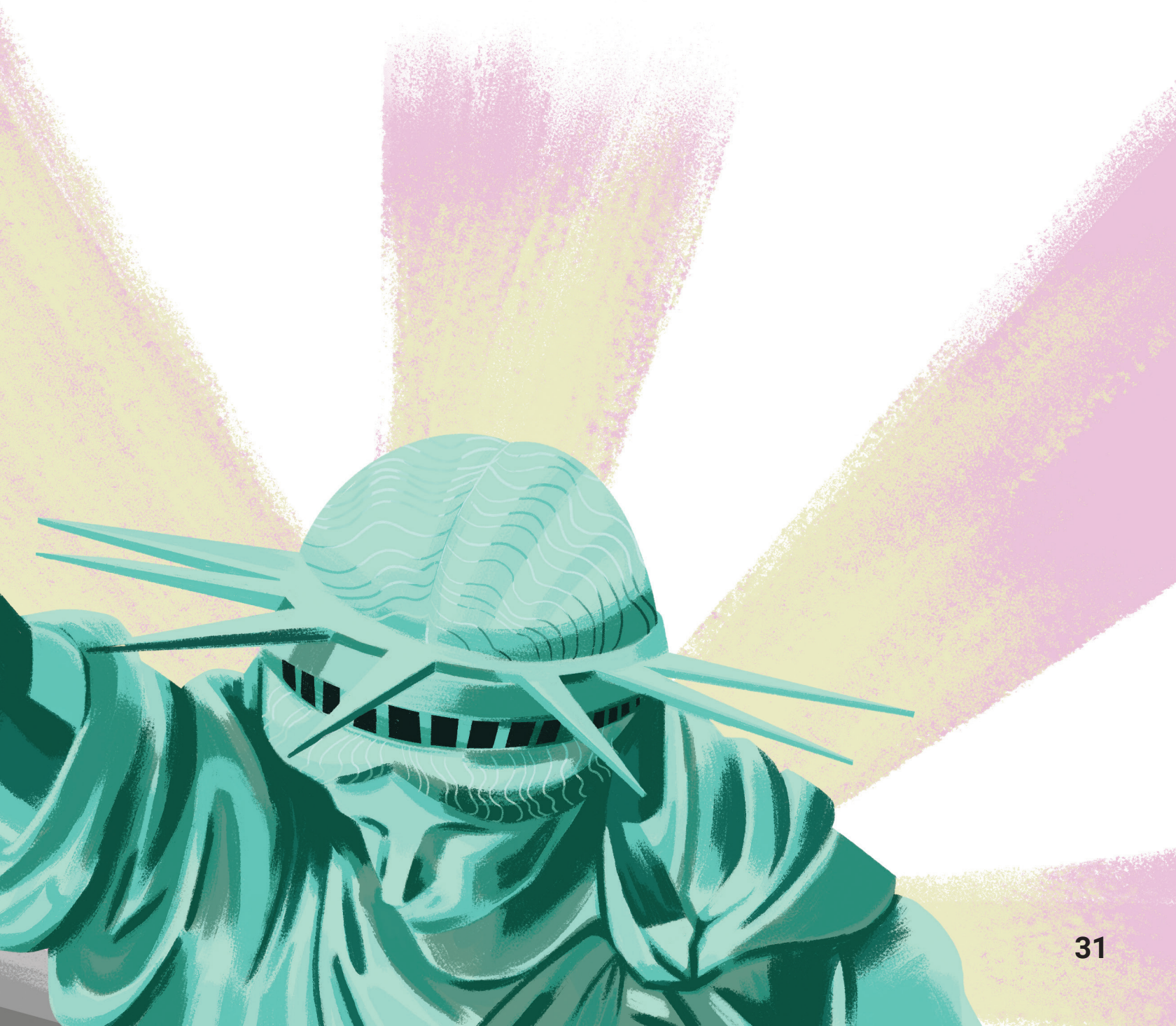
Mrs. Heights laughed, "You two have paid very good attention. Lady Liberty's torch is a symbol of **enlightenment**. It burns bright to show us all the way to liberty."





“Wow,” Otto took a few more snaps before tucking the camera away.

Smidge slid down the flame. “You got so many good pictures, Otto. Dennis will finish his report in no time.”



“And then we can play tag!” Otto's tail wagged.

Smidge's fur puffed out in every direction. “What are you waiting for? Let’s play now! You’re it!”

Round and round they ran, chasing each other all over and around the bright golden flame and green copper torch handle. Otto was just about to tag Smidge when she jumped up on the railing to get away.

“Smidge, be careful!”

With a squeal, she slipped and disappeared over the edge. “Oh, noooooooo!”

Like an eagle, Mrs. Heights swooped and caught her. “I think that’s enough exploring for today,” Mrs. Heights said. “I’ll take you two back to the train station so you can head home."

She stretched her giant wings and
glided the friends past Lady Liberty's feet.
They waved goodbye to Mr. Ratton,

the friendly
ferry captain,

and everyone at Ellis Island.

Lady Liberty looked smaller and smaller as they flew farther away, so they waved goodbye to her as well.

Landing at the station, Otto and Smidge thanked Mrs. Heights and jumped aboard their train.

“That was my favorite adventure yet!” Otto settled into his window seat.

Smidge giggled, “You say that every time, Otto.”

His tummy rumbling, Otto finished the last of Smidge’s snacks while she napped...all the way home.

A couple days later, Dennis bounded into the kitchen while Otto was eating his breakfast.

“Guess what!” Dennis exclaimed. “I presented my research on the Statue of Liberty to Mom and Dad last night, and they're adding it to our summer road trip! Your pictures were so helpful. Thank you, Otto!”

“Anytime, Dennis!” Otto's tail wagged. “I had help from Smidge and some new friends. You’re going to love seeing Lady Liberty in person! She makes you feel so proud to live in a country that shines the light of liberty across the whole world."

“I can’t wait to see her,” Dennis admitted. “Now that all my work is done, let's play tag! Not it!”

“Ruff Ruff!”

We Love Our History

New York City: A large, diverse city in the state of New York. It is the most densely populated major city in the United States and is home to many very important international businesses. Some people call it the capital of the world.

Édouard de Laboulaye: The French political thinker and expert on the U.S. Constitution who proposed the idea of creating a monument for the United States. Inspired by the American ideals of freedom and democracy, de Laboulaye partnered with a designer and raised funds from the French people to build the Statue of Liberty as a gift to the United States.

Freedom: The right of each person to act, speak, or think without being restrained by the government or another person. Freedom was an essential principle for the Founders of the United States, and it remains one of the most important values that make America a unique and wonderful nation.

Liberty Island: The island in New York Harbor where the Statue of Liberty and the Statue of Liberty Museum are located. About 4 million people per year visit the island. It can be reached by the public only by ferry.

Slavery: A terrible system practiced throughout history where some people were owned by other people and forced to work without pay. The United States of America abolished slavery in 1865 when they added the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Declaration of Independence: The document announcing the separation of the 13 United Colonies from Great Britain to form their own nation, the United States of America. It was approved by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776.

Liberty: Having freedom to live your life, believe what you want, and pursue happiness. The word appears on most U.S. coins and reminds us that, in America, people should be free.

New York Harbor: A body of water at the mouth of the Hudson River and surrounded by New York and New Jersey. It is one of the largest natural harbors in the world, and it contains several islands, including Liberty Island and Ellis Island.

Enlightenment: Having greater knowledge or understanding about a subject or situation. It's like shining a light on something that used to be in the dark.

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- Dennis, Otto,
and Smidge

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TODAY IS
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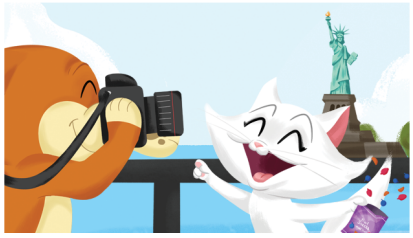

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Traveling to important locations around the United States

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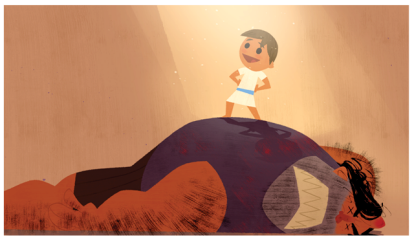

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