

The Best

Christmas
Gift



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Ivan Parvov, The best Christmas gift

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Text and illustrations by Ivan Parvov

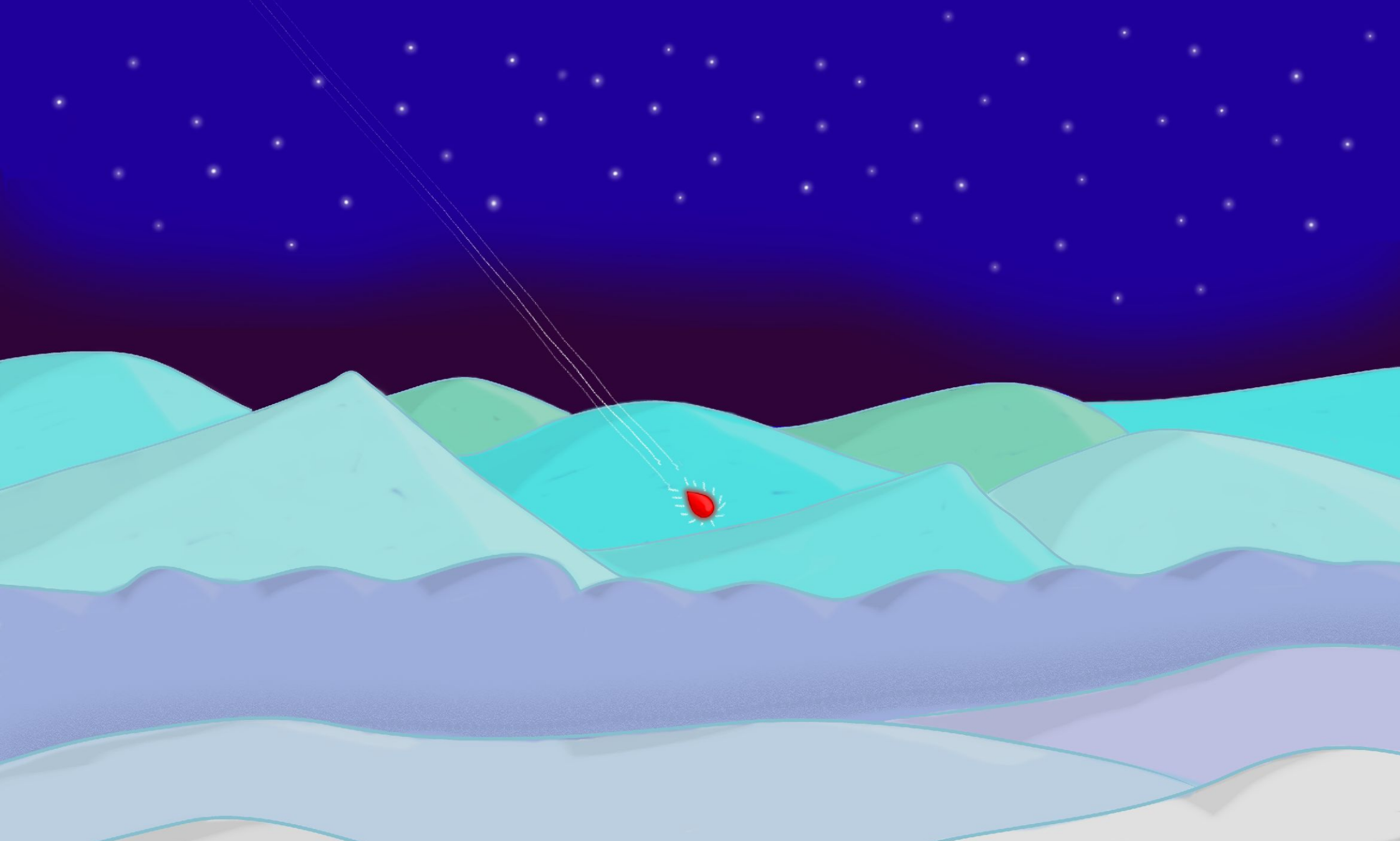
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Winter came and snow covered the valley home of the small fox, Bubu. All the animals hid in their houses. Bubu didn't like the winter much, but there was one day for which he was anxiously awaiting . . .



Tomorrow was Christmas and Bubu was so excited that he could not fall asleep. What gift would Santa Claus have for him? A new ball? Or skates? Or maybe a bicycle? Or maybe—suddenly something flashed in the sky.



What was it? A falling star? A plane? Or may be a giant bird? Whatever it was it dropped beyond the Dark Forest. Bubu jumped from the bed and put on his scarf.



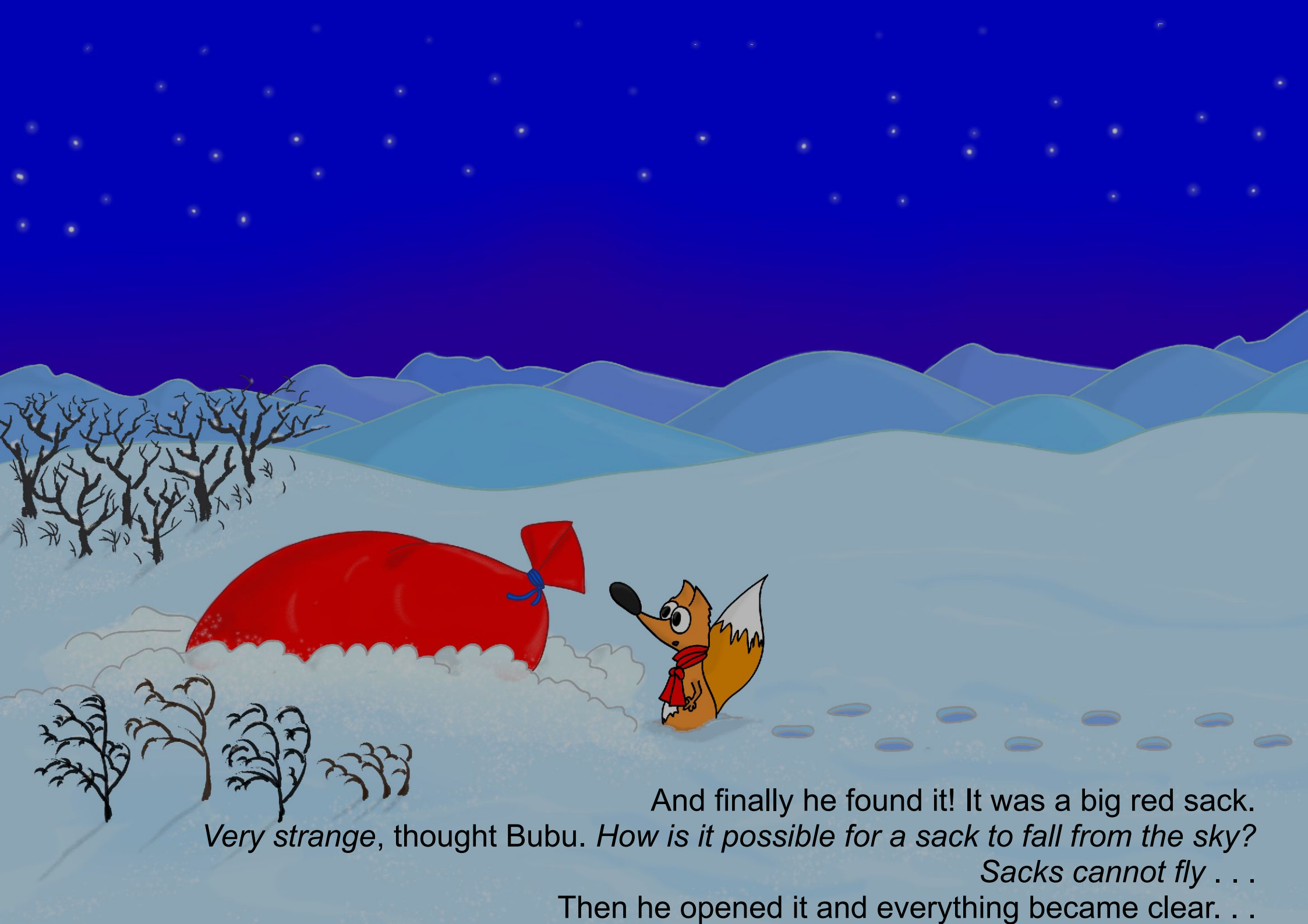
Brrr . . . it was really cold outside. Earlier in the day, Bubu and his father had cleared the snow from around the house, but the valley was still deeply covered in it.



The road ahead would be difficult and frightful . . .



He finally crossed the Dark Forest and started sniffing and looking around. Although he sniffled a bit, his nose could still smell everything—and there was a smell of something unknown.



And finally he found it! It was a big red sack.
*Very strange, thought Bubu. How is it possible for a sack to fall from the sky?
Sacks cannot fly . . .*
Then he opened it and everything became clear. . .



This was Santa Claus's sack! Here is the gift for the hedgehog, for the ducklings, for the squirrel—for everyone. Evidently the sack had fallen from the sled when Santa Claus flew above the valley.



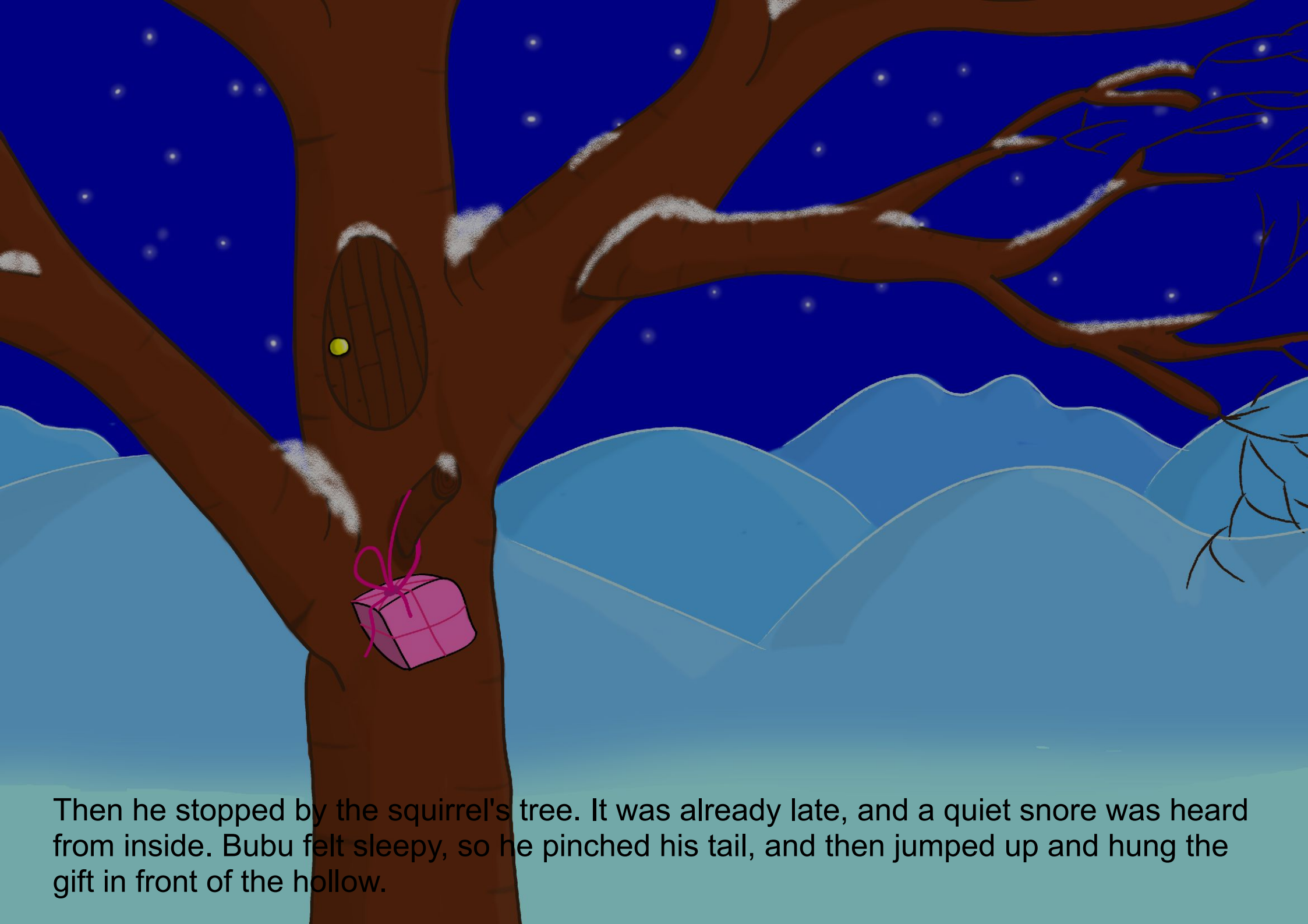
"This is great!" said Bubu. He picked up as many presents as he could and hurried up back to the valley.



He first stopped at mole's house and looked through the window. It looked so nice and inviting inside: the fire was burning in the fireplace and the Christmas tree glittered. Bubu wanted to go home, but there was no way—these gifts must make it to their intended recipients—and so, he placed the gift for mole near the door and left quickly.



Then went to the house of the two rabbits and left their gifts. There was a laugh and scuffle inside the house. Bubu enjoyed playing with the rabbits so very much, but this night he had an important task to do.



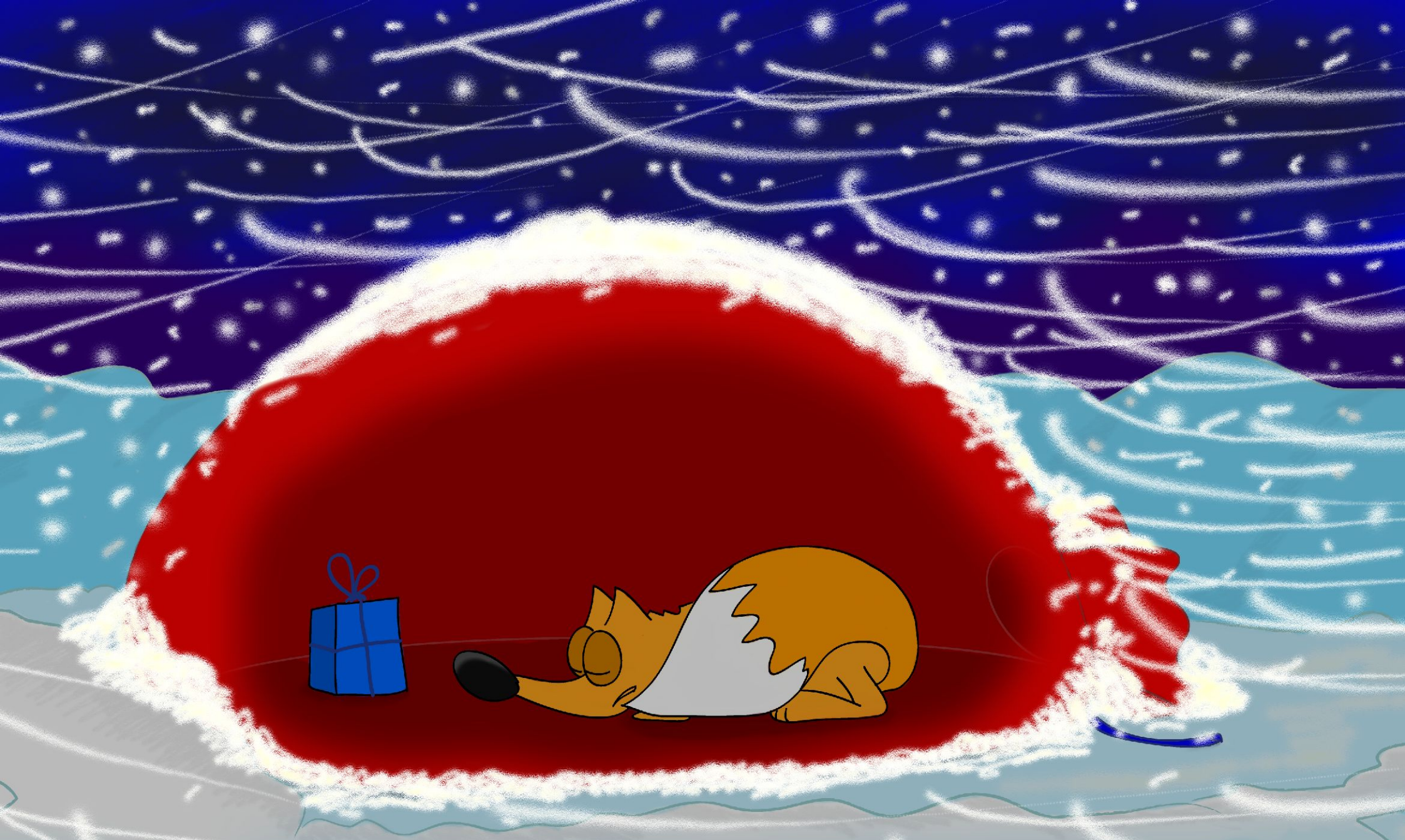
Then he stopped by the squirrel's tree. It was already late, and a quiet snore was heard from inside. Bubu felt sleepy, so he pinched his tail, and then jumped up and hung the gift in front of the hollow.



Bubu delivered gifts the whole night. It was becoming harder and harder to move forward, for a strong wind began to howl and push against him, and soon a heavy snowstorm started.



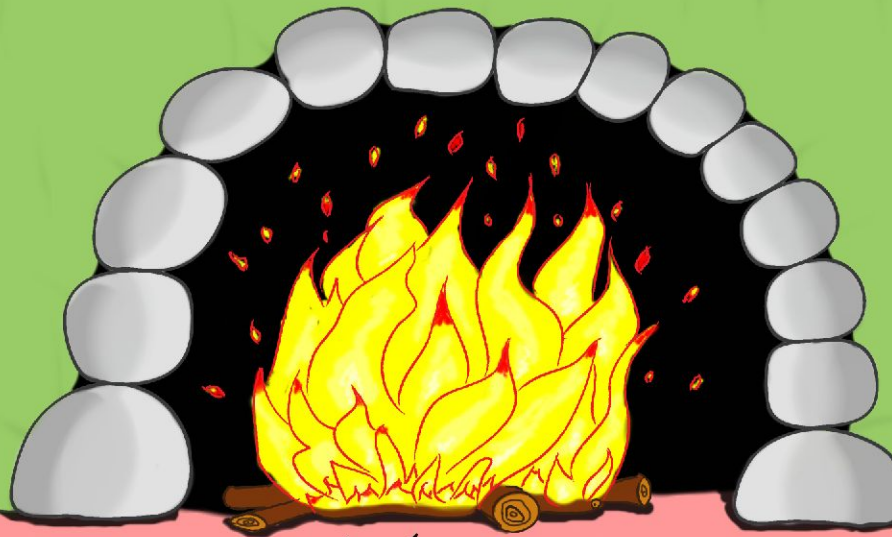
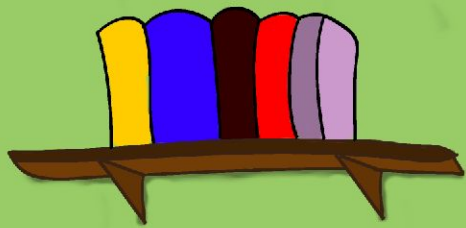
It was hard to go on in this snow storm. He couldn't see anything and only his sensitive nose helped him to keep to the track.



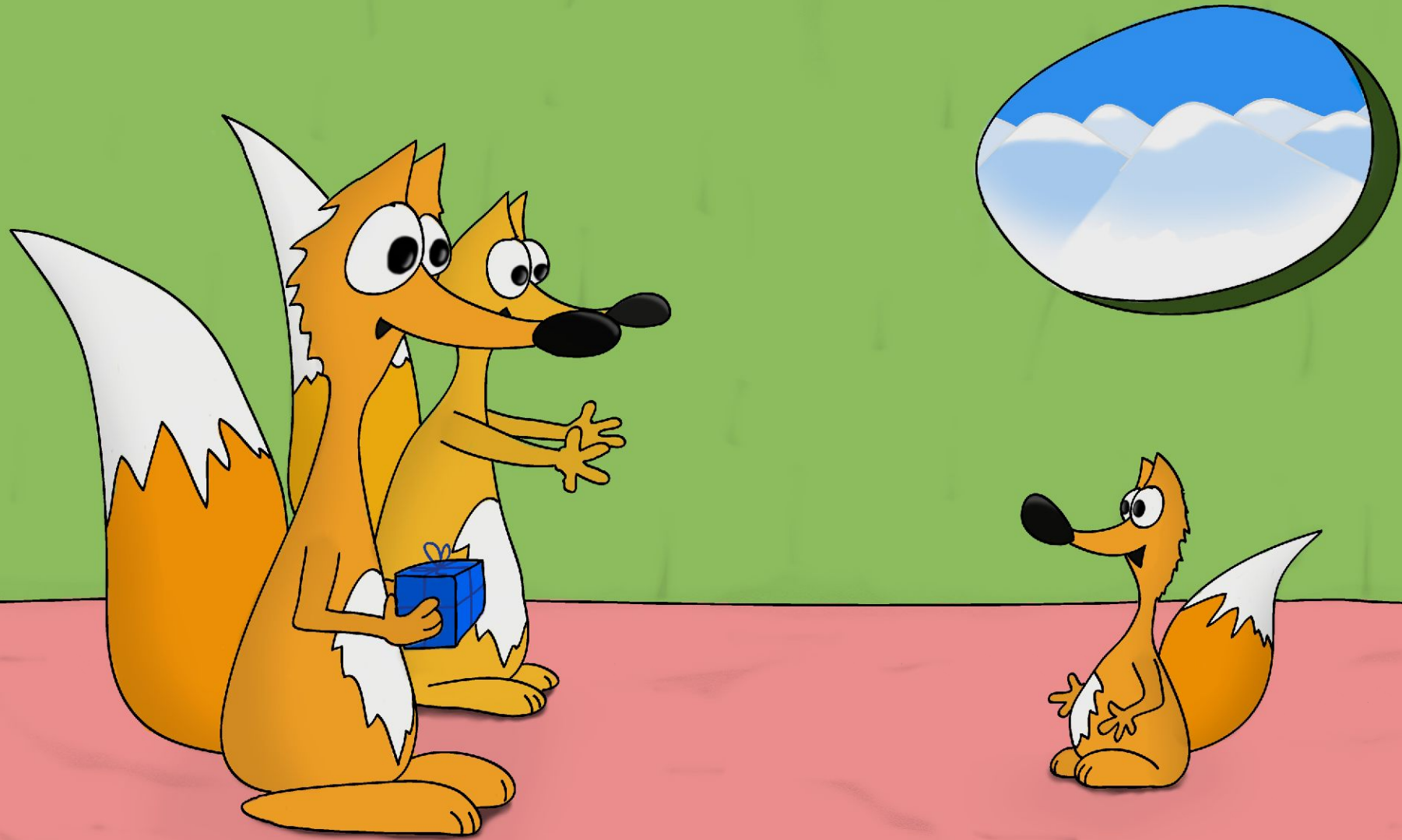
But then the snow storm become a blizzard, and Bubu, scared, frozen and weakened, hid in the sack. He wanted so much to be at home with mommy and daddy. Bubu rolled into a ball, wrapped himself with his tail and fell asleep.



The wind continued to blow even stronger. The snow was covering Bubu's footprints and Santa Claus' sack . . .



Bubu stretched his legs and woke up. He was covered with a thick blanket and was toasty warm. He looked around surprised—he was at home, near the fireplace in the living room. "Am I dreaming?" wondered Bubu out loud. "No, it is not a dream." he heard a familiar voice.



"Mommy! Daddy!" exclaimed Bubu, filled with joy.

"You scared us so much, Bubu," said his mommy. "All the animals were looking for you, but there were no footprints. We were lucky that your father's big nose finally sensed your smell and, together with the moles, we dug up the sack. The important thing is that you are safe and everyone got their Christmas gifts."

"Not everybody," said his father. "When we found you, there was one gift left in the sack: your gift. Come on, open it. Let us see what Santa brought you."



Bubu smiled and said,
"I already got the best Christmas gift. This night I found out that the only thing I want for Christmas is to be home with you and Mommy. This is better than a sack full of gifts."

THE END

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Don't miss Bubu and his adventures in "Hero of the Mountain"

