

The Tiger In The Tower

By Sycamore Class





A very long time ago, in 1662, a few years before the Great Fire, there lived a tiger at the Tower of London



He didn't belong there. But there he was.

He was there to impress visiting dignitaries and politicians, and to terrify and amaze the gasping crowds.



He *belonged* to King Charles II.
But the tiger didn't feel like he *belonged* anywhere... not really.

He spent some days
trying to play, but he had
no friends to play with.



He spent some days
staring at his bowl, which
was filled with revolting
food.

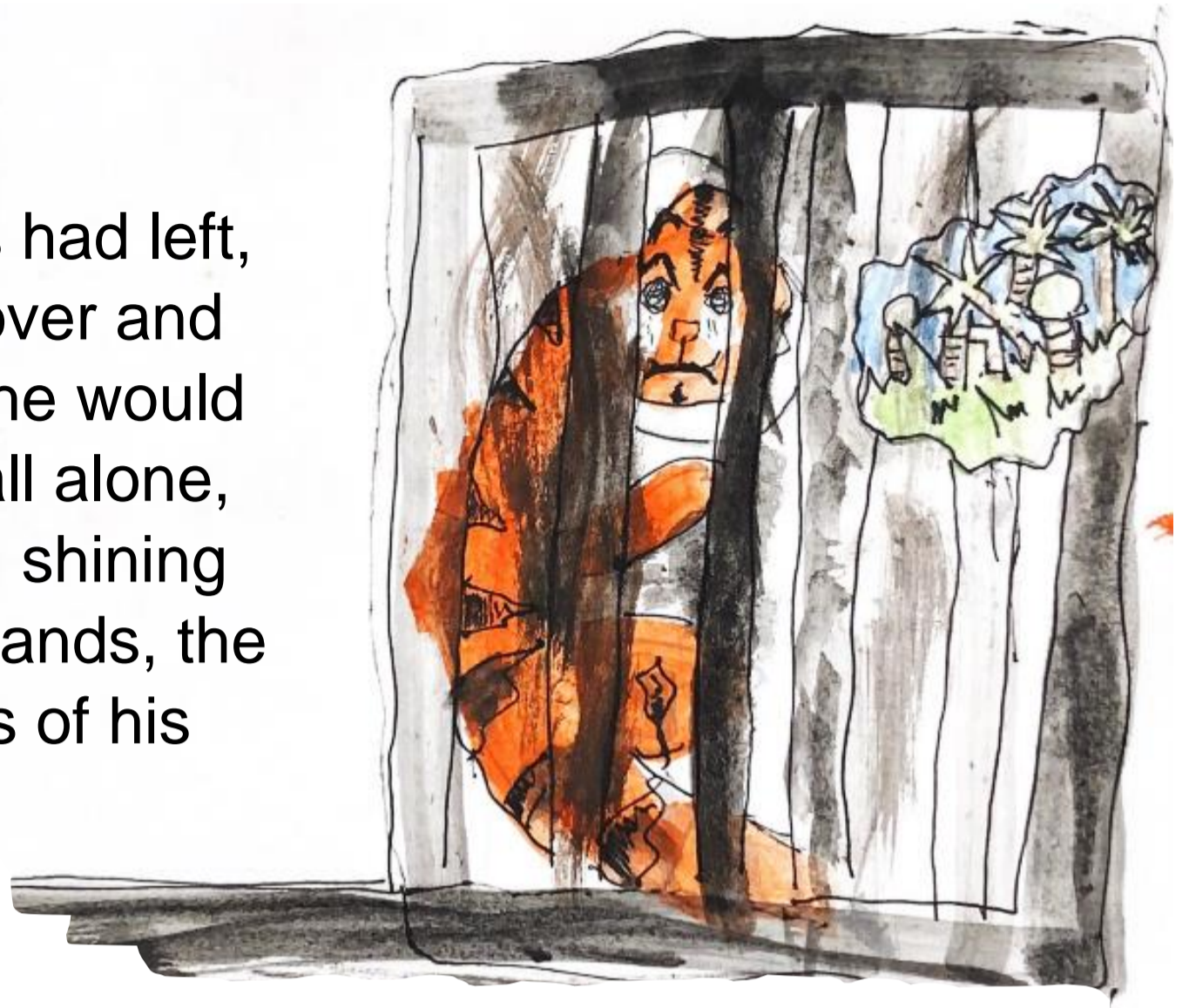
He spent some days wondering about his family, who were so very far away.



No one thought much about the tiger. He felt more like an ornament than a creature.

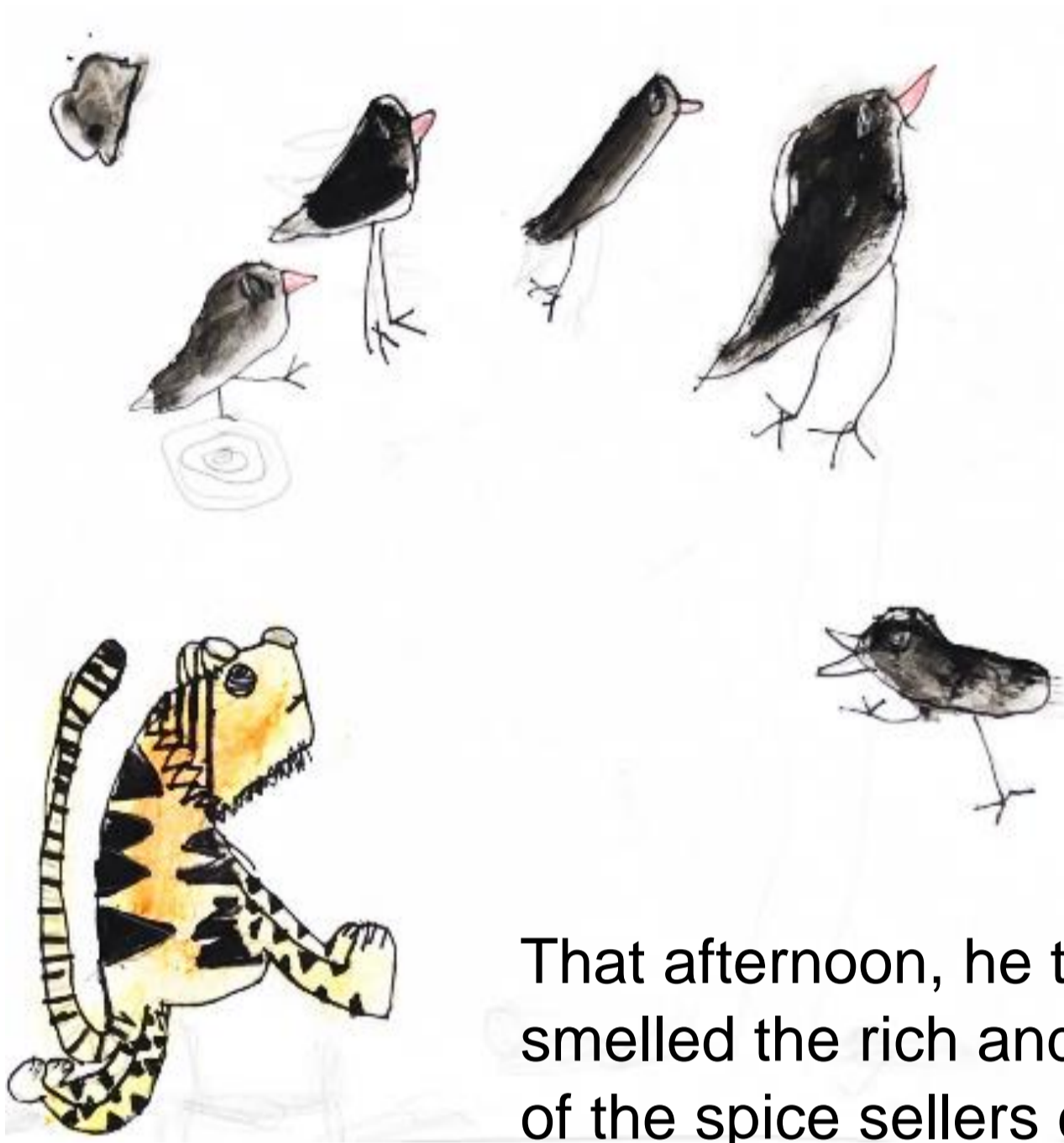


And after the visitors had left, after the show was over and the tower fell silent, he would curl up in his cage, all alone, and dream colourful, shining dreams of the grasslands, the rivers and the forests of his home.



Then one morning, he thought he heard a familiar squawk and a rush of water! The sound of parrots singing to welcome the monsoon rain. He rushed towards the sound but when he got there...





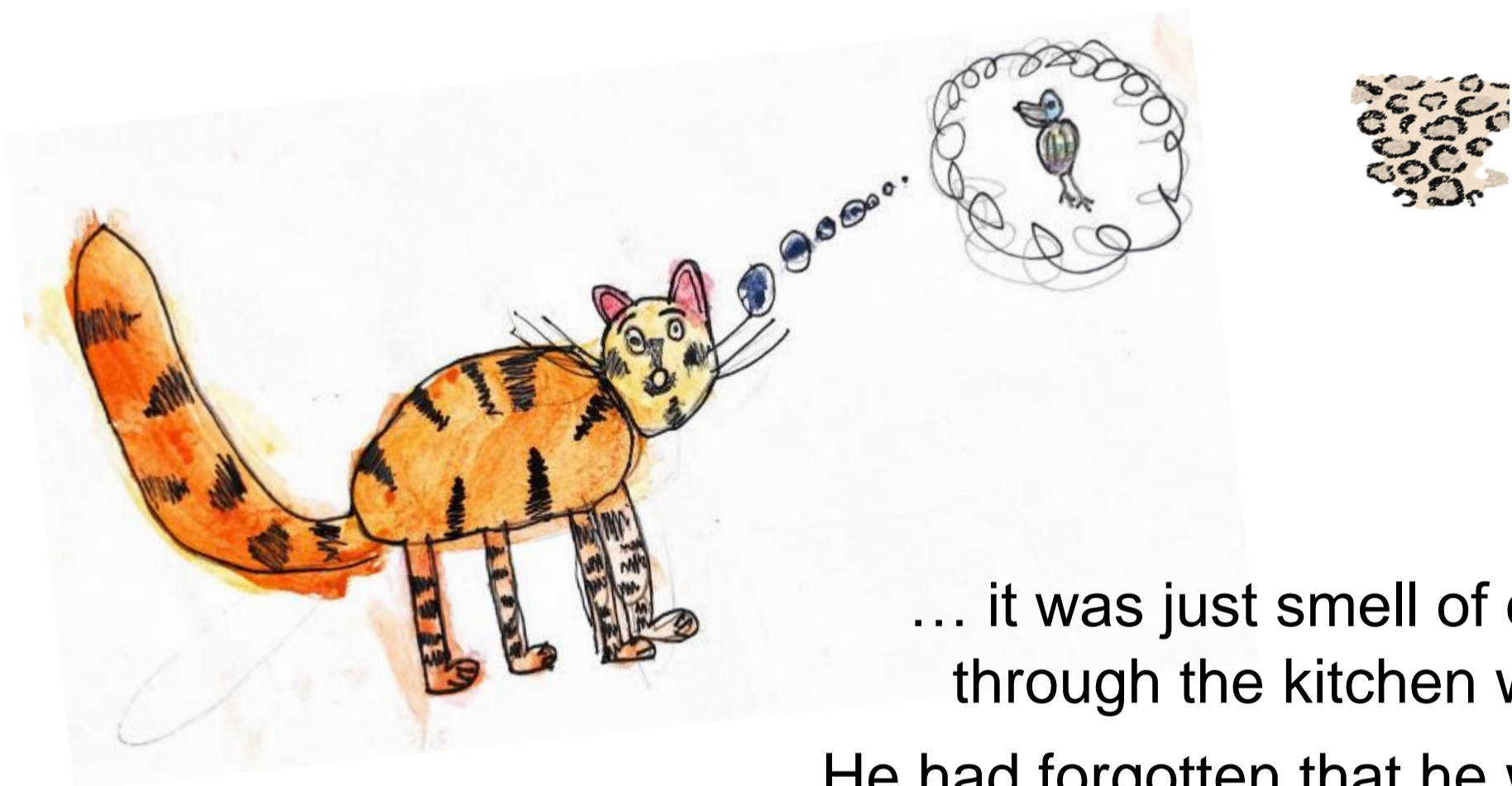
That afternoon, he thought he smelled the rich and inviting smells of the spice sellers cooking and peddling their wares at the village market. He rushed towards the smell, but when he got there...

... it was just ravens, jabbering in the grey drizzle.
He had forgotten that he was the Tiger in the Tower.





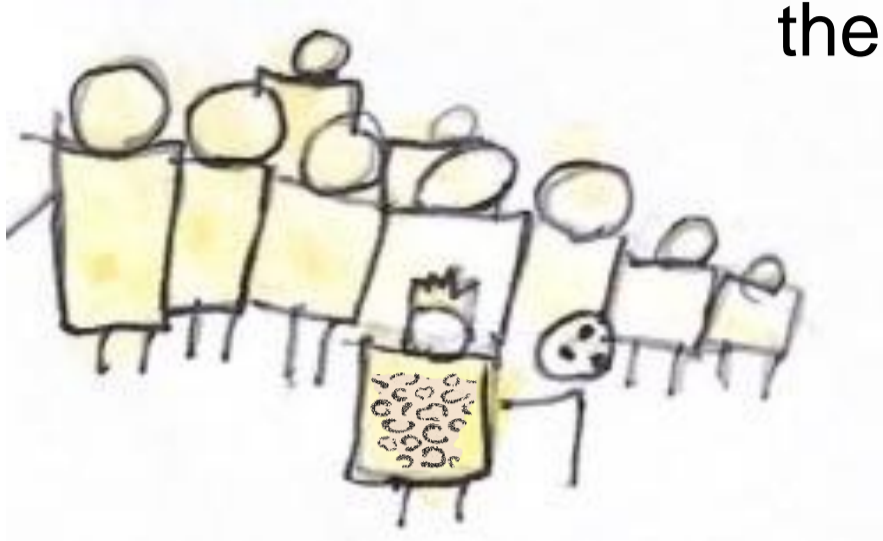
That evening, he thought he saw the flash of a leopard's coat stalking the grass in the Tower gardens. He rushed towards it, but when he got there...



... it was just smell of cooking through the kitchen window. He had forgotten that he was the Tiger in the Tower.

... it was just a coat among another crowd of visitors come to gawp at him.

He had forgotten that he was the Tiger in the Tower.



Then later that night, when he was locked back in his cage, he overheard the Beefeaters talking of a spice trader's ship bound for India.





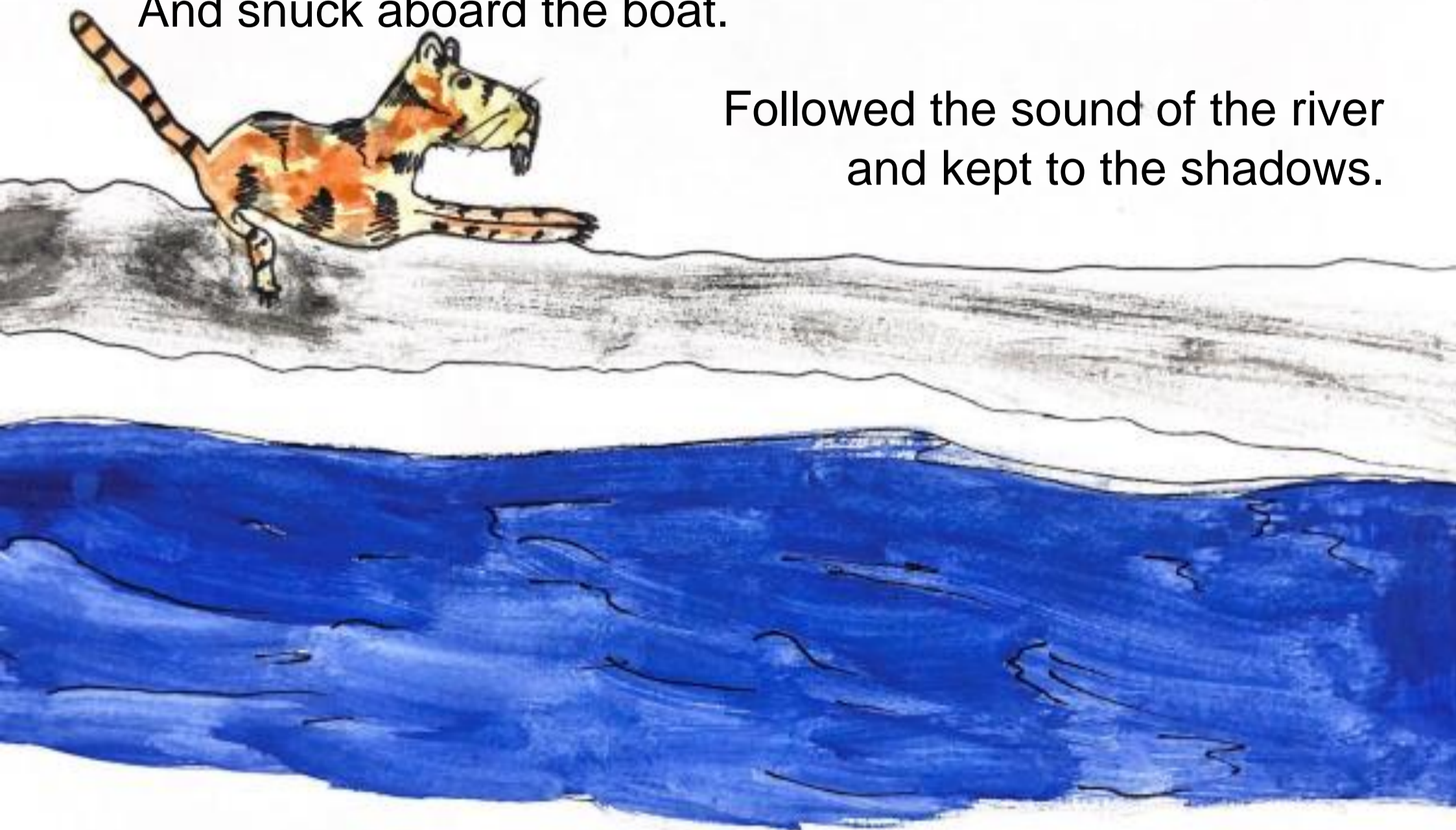
It was then that he hatched his plan.

He squeezed between the bars and kicked down the wooden door. His nose twitched in the cool night air.



And snuck aboard the boat.

Followed the sound of the river
and kept to the shadows.



And no one ever saw or heard from him
ever, ever again.



