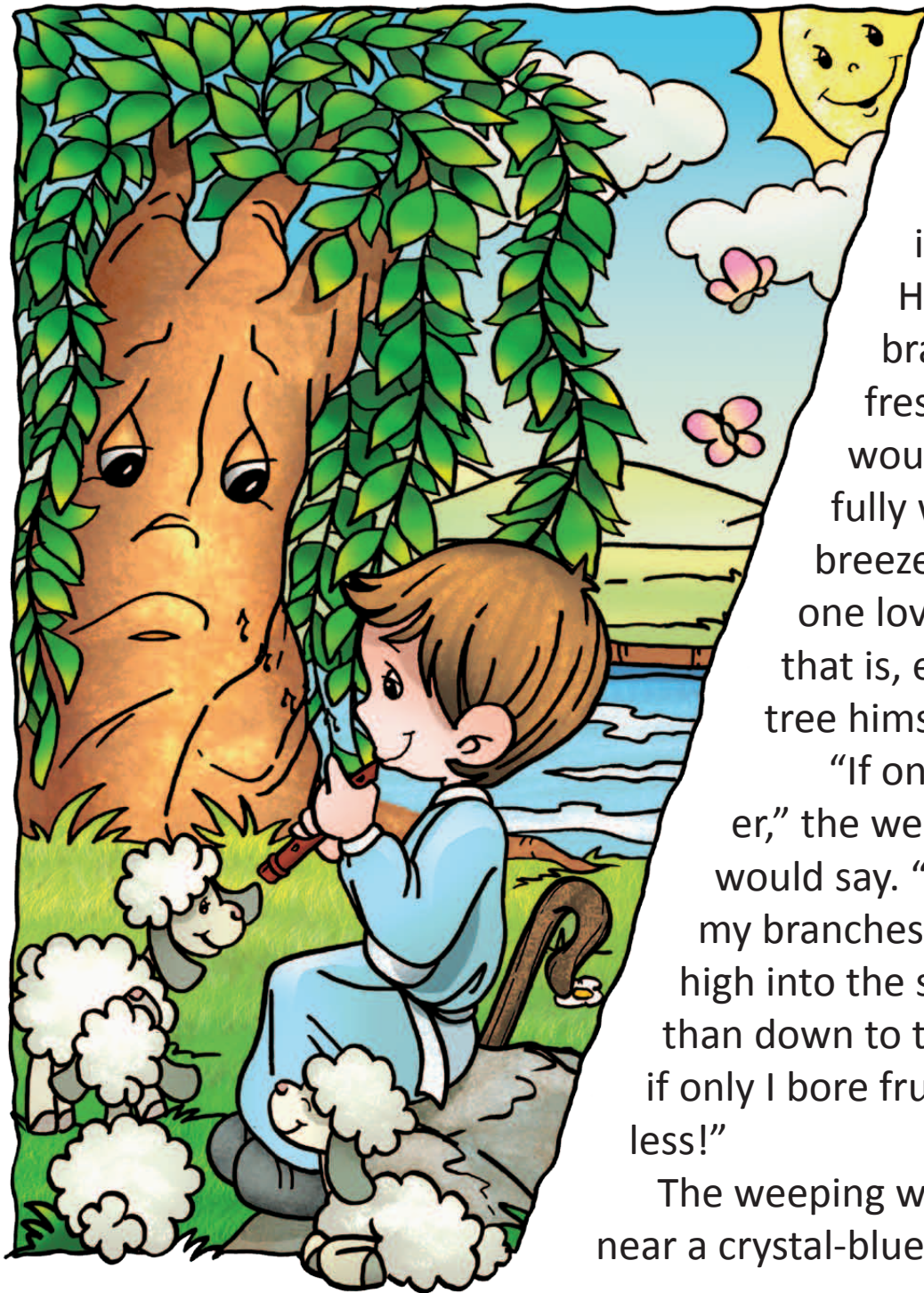


Weepy Willow





A beautiful weeping willow stood in a garden. His drooping branches were a fresh green, and would sway gracefully whenever the breeze blew. Everyone loved the tree—that is, except for the tree himself.

“If only I were taller,” the weeping willow would say. “And if only my branches stretched high into the sky, rather than down to the earth! And if only I bore fruit! I’m so useless!”

The weeping willow lived near a crystal-blue stream.

The stream seemed to sing as it rushed over the pebbles in its bed, and joyously watered the thirsty flowers that stood on its banks. Often, the weeping willow would complain to the babbling stream.

A kind shepherd boy often found shade under the weeping willow’s branches, while his sheep grazed in the field nearby and drank from the stream. The shepherd boy noticed the tree’s sadness, and tried to cheer him up by singing and playing his flute.

But nothing worked. The weeping willow only grew more miserable. His branches hung lower to the ground. Finally, the shepherd boy gave up; it was no use trying to make the weeping willow happy when he refused to think of anything but his supposed misery.

The shepherd boy visited the tree less and less often, and finally stopped visiting altogether.

Soon people started to call the tree “Weepy,” because he was always depressed and unhappy. And Weepy, too, grew weary with loneliness. If only he could see the cheery shepherd boy again! Now life was truly sad for him.

Then one day, something took place that changed Weepy’s outlook. A raging storm pelted the surrounding hills and valley where Weepy stood. The wind blew fiercely and rain poured down. In the midst of the storm, Weepy saw a little girl stumbling through the pouring rain. He could hear her crying as she tried to make her way through the storm.

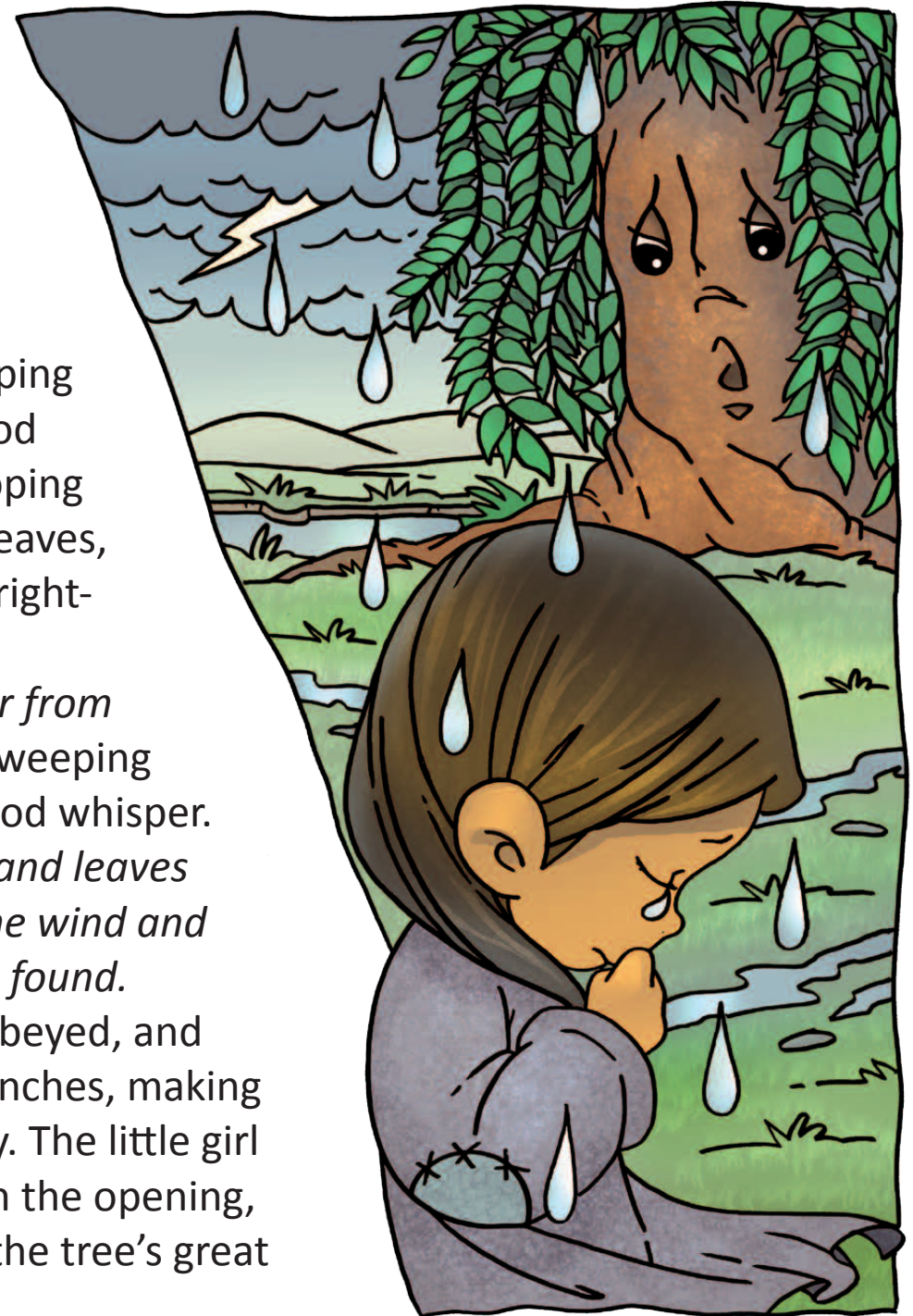
She must be lost! Weepy thought. I want to help her, but what can I do? Dear God, show me

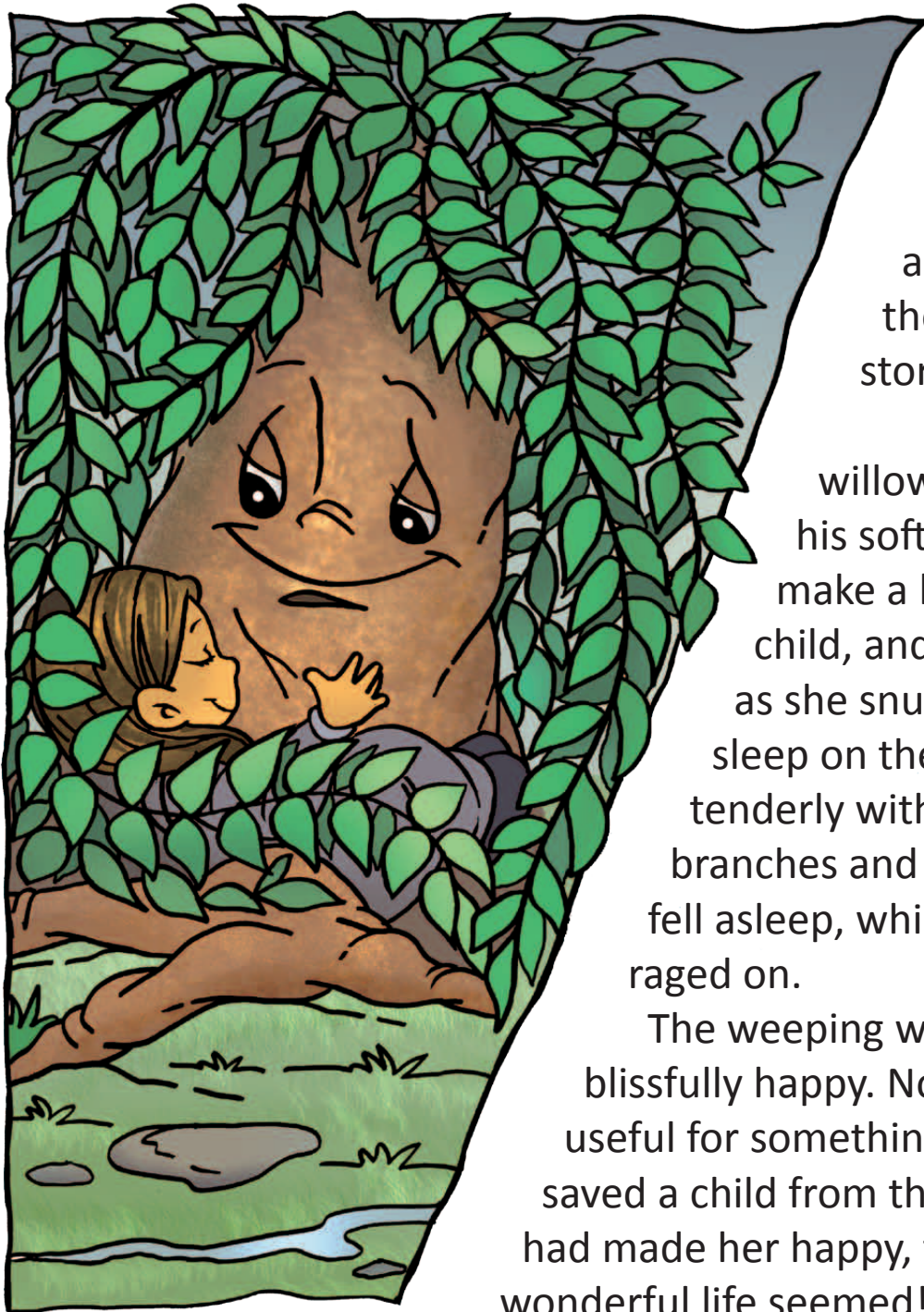
how I can help this poor child.

The little girl made her way slowly towards the weeping willow and stood before his drooping branches and leaves, shivering and frightened.

Protect her from the storm, the weeping willow heard God whisper. Your branches and leaves will keep out the wind and rain until she is found.

The tree obeyed, and opened his branches, making a little doorway. The little girl walked through the opening, and sat under the tree’s great leafy branches.





It was quiet and peaceful there, and safe from the terrible storm.

The weeping willow dropped his softest leaves to make a bed for the child, and watched as she snuggled to sleep on them. Covered tenderly with Weepy's branches and leaves, she fell asleep, while the storm raged on.

The weeping willow was blissfully happy. Now he was useful for something! He had saved a child from the storm and had made her happy, too. How wonderful life seemed! Even the

howling wind now seemed to hum a melody in his branches and leaves.

By morning, the storm had ended. The tree smiled as the girl woke up. She yawned, rubbed her eyes and smiled back at the weeping willow.

The weeping willow then saw the shepherd boy who used to sit under his branches before, running frantically toward them. The boy looked like he was searching for something. *Or is it someone?* thought Weepy.

The weeping willow opened its leaves, and the girl ran to her brother's arms. They both hugged the weeping willow tightly and kissed his bark.

"Thank you," the girl said sweetly.

"You protected me from the storm."

How wonderful the weeping willow felt! God had heard his prayer

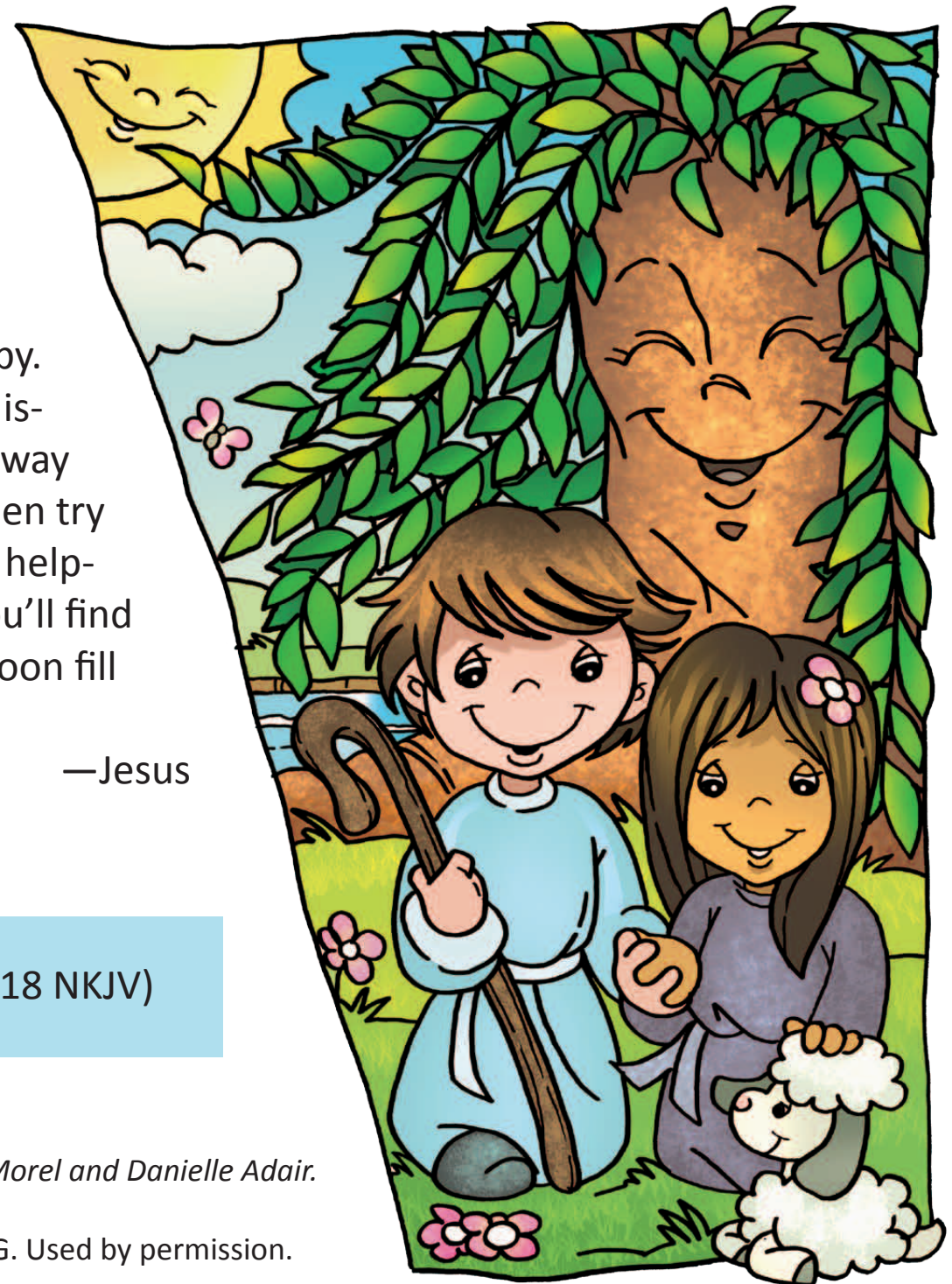
to help a lost little girl, and through it, he had found another secret.—His sadness was forgotten as he helped someone in need.

The sun shone warmly, glistening on the raindrops that still lingered on the weeping willow's branches. The stream splashed playfully at his roots as it sang its happy tune. The weeping willow watched as the two children walked away together. He smiled with joy.

Life was indeed wonderful for him!

Moral: The way to be happy is to make others happy. If you're feeling discontent with the way I've made you, then try reaching out and helping others and you'll find that My joy will soon fill you.

—Jesus



In everything give thanks. (1 Thessalonians 5:18 NKJV)

*Authored by Natacha Delacour. Illustrations by Philippe Etienne Morel and Danielle Adair.
Design by Christia Copeland.*

Featured on My Wonder Studio. © 2009 Aurora Productions AG. Used by permission.