



*... There were trees  
all around the edge,*

## **A WALK IN THE PARK**

It wasn't a very big park, only about the size of a football pitch. There were trees all around the edge, and four paths, all leading to the War Memorial in the centre. There was a path all around the trees on the outside as well, and it was covered in dead leaves, orange and yellow, and red and brown.



*... she started to run and kick her way  
through the piles of leaves.*

And there were chestnuts too, and small twigs.

Poppy loved all the colours and she started to run and kick her way through the piles of leaves. Some were still falling from the trees, scattering in the wind, swirling around her, making her almost dizzy.

‘It’s snowing leaves!’ she shouted, and she kicked and kicked with her pinkish boots.

A tall woman leading a dog went past and gave Poppy a disapproving look. The dog strained towards Poppy, but the woman pulled him back. The dog didn't seem happy. He probably wanted to play with the leaves too, thought Poppy. She liked dogs. She hoped she might get one for herself when her

mum got better. She marched around the outside path, enjoying the sound of the leaves rustling in the wind. It sounded like they were whispering secrets to one another.

Poppy was just turning up the path towards the



*The dog didn't seem happy.*





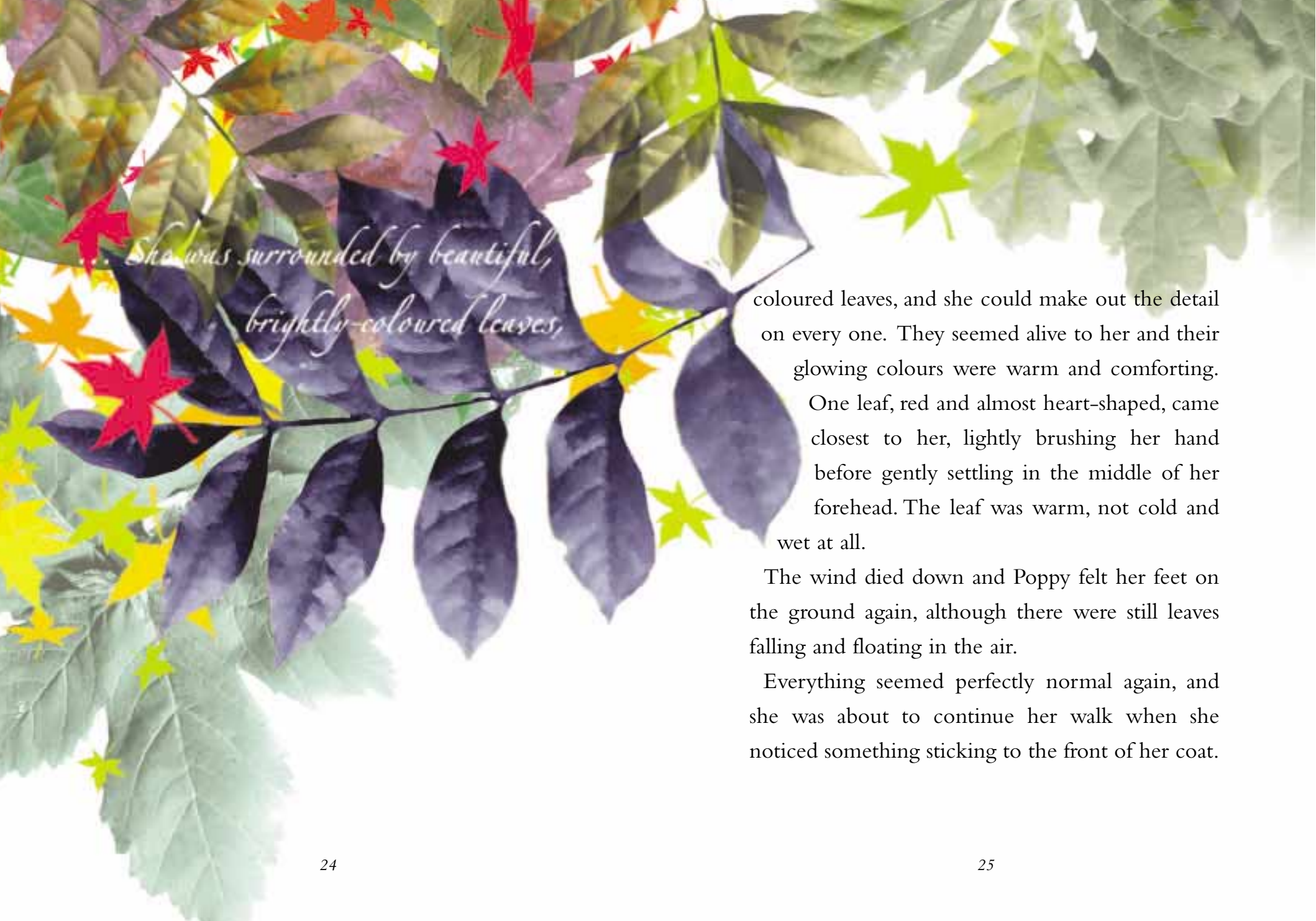
*the wind suddenly became very strong*

War Memorial when the wind suddenly became very strong. She tried hard to keep walking, but she couldn't. She leaned into the wind as hard as she could, one hand on her pink hat to keep it from blowing away, but she couldn't move her feet at all. Leaves rushed into her face, thousands of them, hit-

ting off her, sticking against her, until they were pushed away by even more leaves.

Poppy shut her eyes and gritted her teeth and all of a sudden she felt as if she'd been lifted off the ground into the air. She was sailing in slow motion through the flying leaves, but she couldn't feel the wind. Up in the air she floated, she was above the trees, above the park, above the town.

She was surrounded by beautiful, brightly-

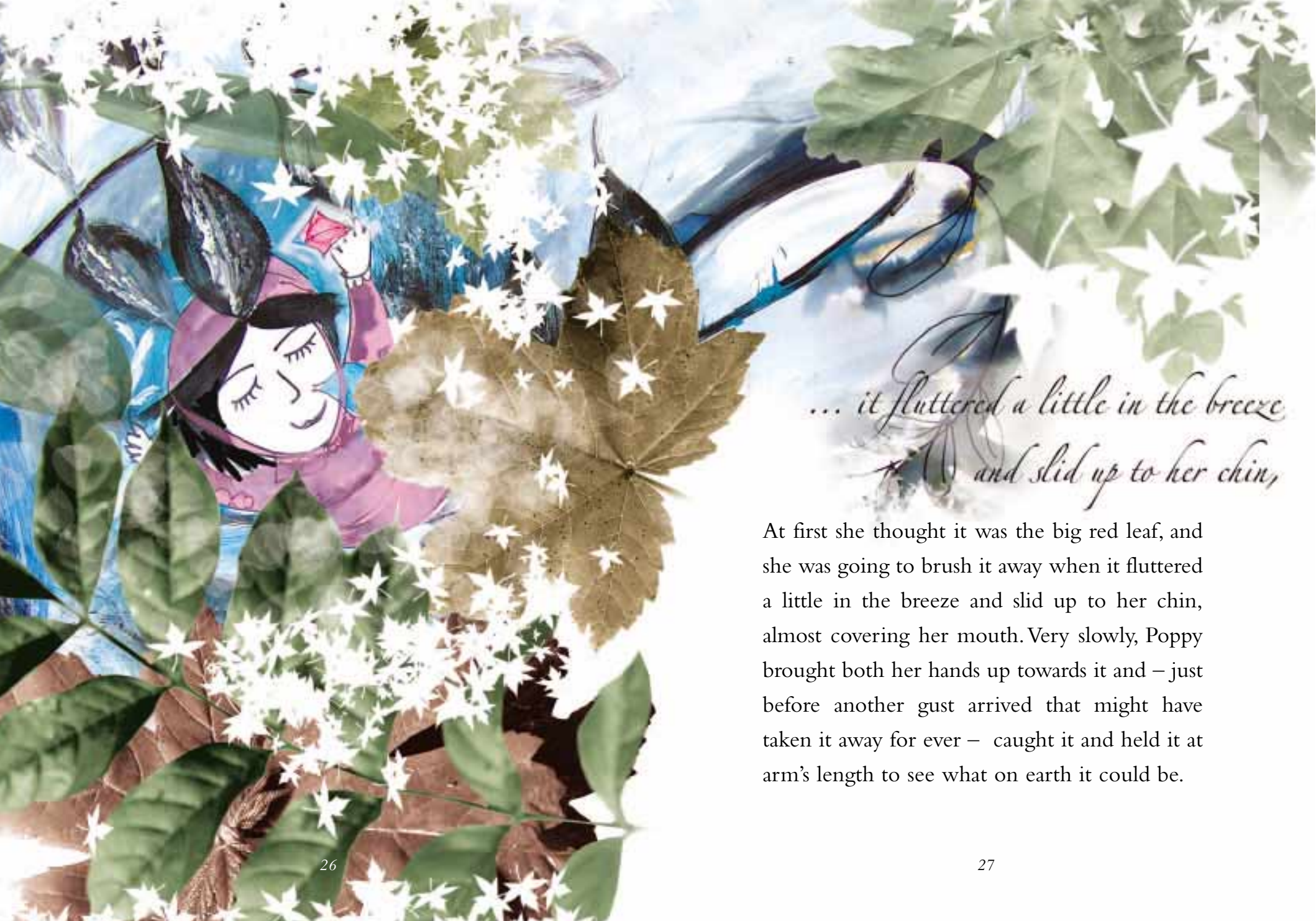


*She was surrounded by beautiful,  
brightly-coloured leaves,*

coloured leaves, and she could make out the detail on every one. They seemed alive to her and their glowing colours were warm and comforting. One leaf, red and almost heart-shaped, came closest to her, lightly brushing her hand before gently settling in the middle of her forehead. The leaf was warm, not cold and wet at all.

The wind died down and Poppy felt her feet on the ground again, although there were still leaves falling and floating in the air.

Everything seemed perfectly normal again, and she was about to continue her walk when she noticed something sticking to the front of her coat.



*... it fluttered a little in the breeze  
and slid up to her chin,*

At first she thought it was the big red leaf, and she was going to brush it away when it fluttered a little in the breeze and slid up to her chin, almost covering her mouth. Very slowly, Poppy brought both her hands up towards it and – just before another gust arrived that might have taken it away for ever – caught it and held it at arm's length to see what on earth it could be.