

GOOD NEWS FOR LITTLE HEARTS

WHEN YOU WANT TO HIDE

Zoe's Time to Shine

EDWARD T. WELCH — Editor JOE HOX — Illustrator





Bright white snow adorned the treetops and housetops of Mulberry Meadow. It covered the icy pond and hidden burrows, and the mouse family's bungalow.

In their kitchen, stood Mama and Papa Mouse, wearing mouse-sized sweaters and stirring a pot of porridge. They could hear their daughter, Zoe, down the hall, singing in the shower, as she did most mornings before school.

"It's just the sweetest thing," said Mama. "That voice of hers!"

Papa agreed, scooping a spoonful of porridge into a bowl.

Soon Zoe arrived and had her fill of breakfast, hugged Mama and Papa goodbye, and scampered off to school.





Zoe's friend, Layla, eagerly watched from her window each weekday morning, waiting until the last possible second to step outside.

"It's sooo f-f-f-freezing!" Layla shivered, scampering down her steps.

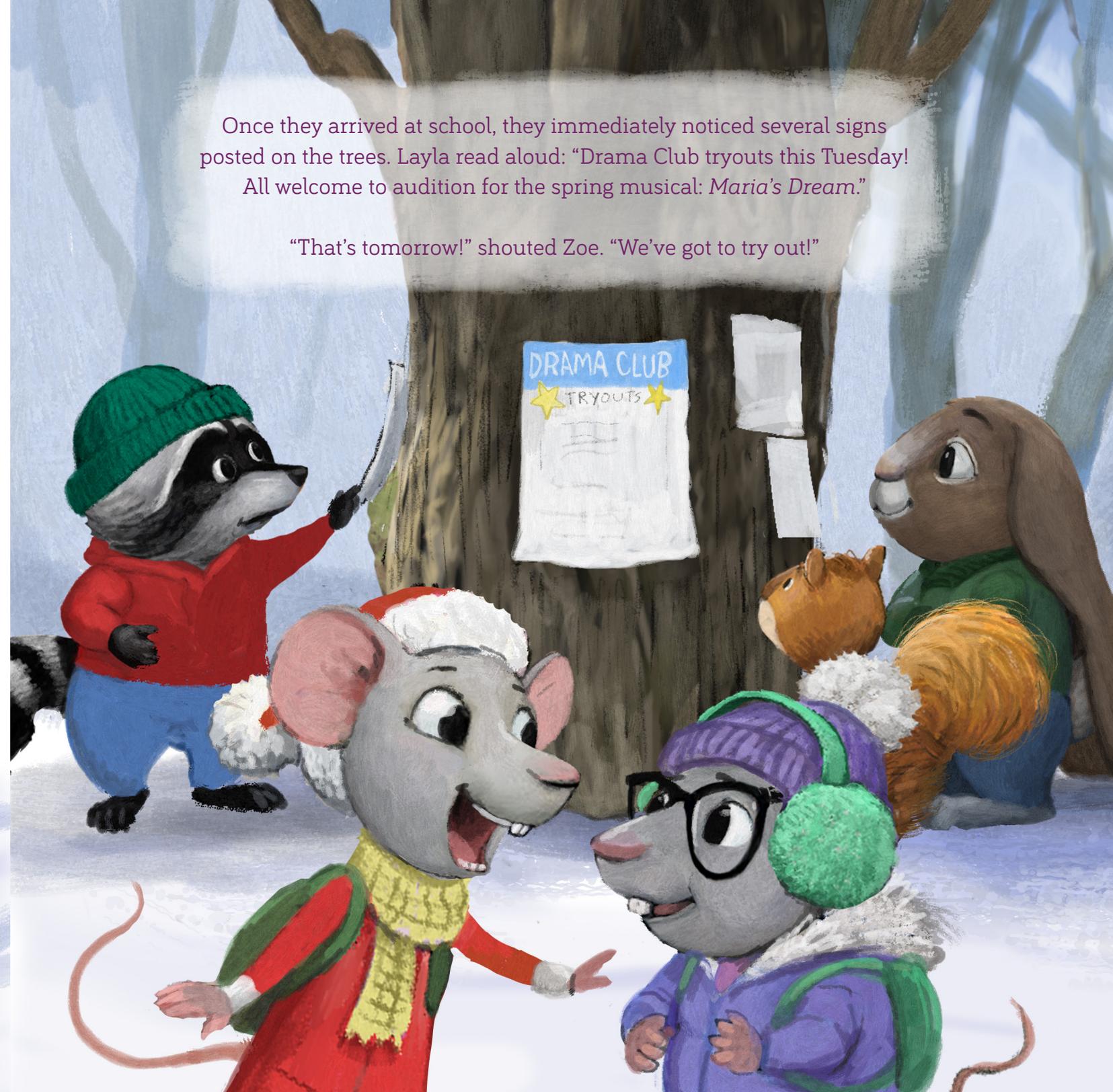
"Let's sing to keep our minds off it!" exclaimed Zoe.

So the two friends sang along the way, tromping through the snow, smiling in the brisk morning air.



Once they arrived at school, they immediately noticed several signs posted on the trees. Layla read aloud: "Drama Club tryouts this Tuesday! All welcome to audition for the spring musical: *Maria's Dream*."

"That's tomorrow!" shouted Zoe. "We've got to try out!"





That afternoon on their way home, Zoe and Layla sang every song they could think of: school songs, church songs, movie songs, and made-up songs. It kept their minds off the cold and helped them prepare for tomorrow.

As they sang together, Layla was pitch-perfect. Spot-on. Sure to earn a place in the musical! But Zoe was often too high or too low—too sharp or too flat. Never on key, but always confident she'd steal the show.



When Zoe arrived home, she sang through her chores and homework, and even sang the news of the musical to Mama and Papa.

“What a wonderful idea!”
beamed Papa.
“You’re always singing!”

At the end of the night,
Zoe wishfully sang herself to sleep.



The next morning, Mama said to Zoe, "I'm excited for your audition! You know, Papa and I have never been very musical. We can hardly carry a tune! But we sure love when *you* sing!"

"I promise I'll tell you all about it tonight!" smiled Zoe. "I'm sure I'll have to practice every night and there'll be lots of rehearsals. Having the lead in a school musical is a *lot* of pressure!"

And off she went.

In homeroom, Zoe chatted with her friends.
"Which part are you trying out for, Zoe?" asked Freya.

Wide eyed, Zoe replied, "The lead of course!
I'll make the perfect Maria! I already know all her lines.
My aunt took me to see the musical last summer."

