

Flight of the Termidors

by Leonie Norrington & Marnie Jay



First illustration

The First Rains

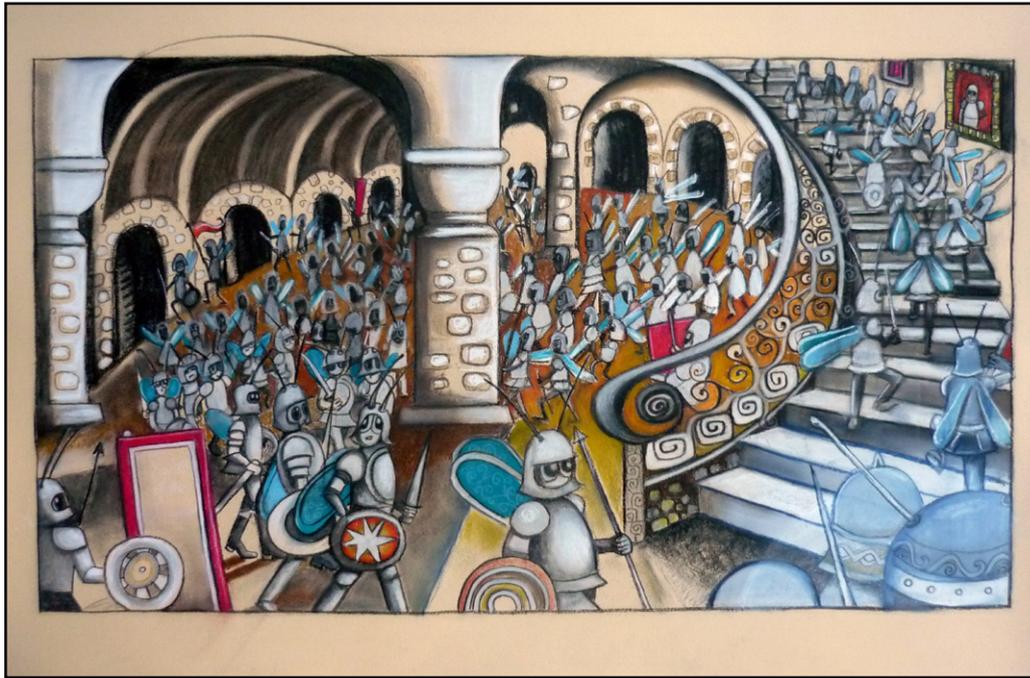
When the first Wet season rains fall, skidding across puddles and melting into the parched grey earth, an age-old ritual begins under the ground.



Second illustration

Leonard

The fittest are chosen, their bodies burnished to steel. They are given sight and wings of turquoise and silver. 'Great riches await you,' they are told. 'Take them they are yours.'



Third illustration *They March as One*

Then on a humid night, just after a storm,
they march as one to an opening.

Fourth illustration

Lift Off

Some try to stop afraid,
but the eager crowd
presses them out. Out
to where the moving air
lifts them. Out into a
vast and infinite sky.

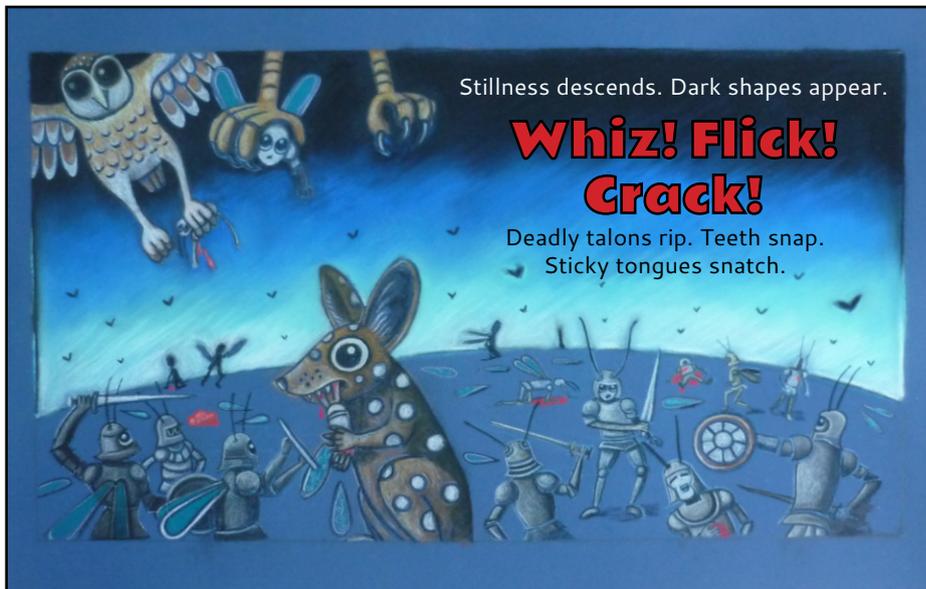




Fifth illustration

Beyond the Mound

The world lies defenceless before them.



Sixth illustration *The Battle Field*

Stillness descends. Dark shapes appear.
Whiz! Flick! Crack! Deadly talons rip.
Teeth snap. Sticky tongues snatch.



Seventh illustration

The Wounded

One survives and finds another. They throw down their weapons, rip off their wings and burrow deep underground vowing never to go above again.



Eighth illustration

Earth's Embrace

The great, safe darkness of the earth shelters them, screening their eyes, hushing their voices, turning their bodies pale and soft.



Ninth illustration *The Termite Kingdom*

Their children are born blind and hardworking. They gather food and treasure. Their storerooms fill. Their lands and influence extend beyond the horizon.

Tenth illustration

Tripple 000

If the light creeps in it is isolated. Talk of colour and light are silenced. Children are told, 'Stay away from the light. Deadly talons. Sharp teeth. Sticky tongues.'





As the elders age, and new generation takes care of the young. 'Tell them about the razor sharp teeth, the stabbing talons,' the old people say.



Eleventh illustration

The Queens Chambers

As the elders age, and new generation takes care of the young. 'Tell them about the razor sharp teeth, the stabbing talons,' the old people say.

Twelfth illustration *The Dress Up Box*

But the stories go limp with retelling. The glory and riches endure, the turquoise wings and burnished steel as well. But the monsters and dragons, do they really exist?



Thirteenth illustration

The Bugle

So one evening as the first rains melt into the earth, the young prepare their bodies again. 'This night,' they understand 'The world's riches are there for the taking.'





Fourteenth illustration

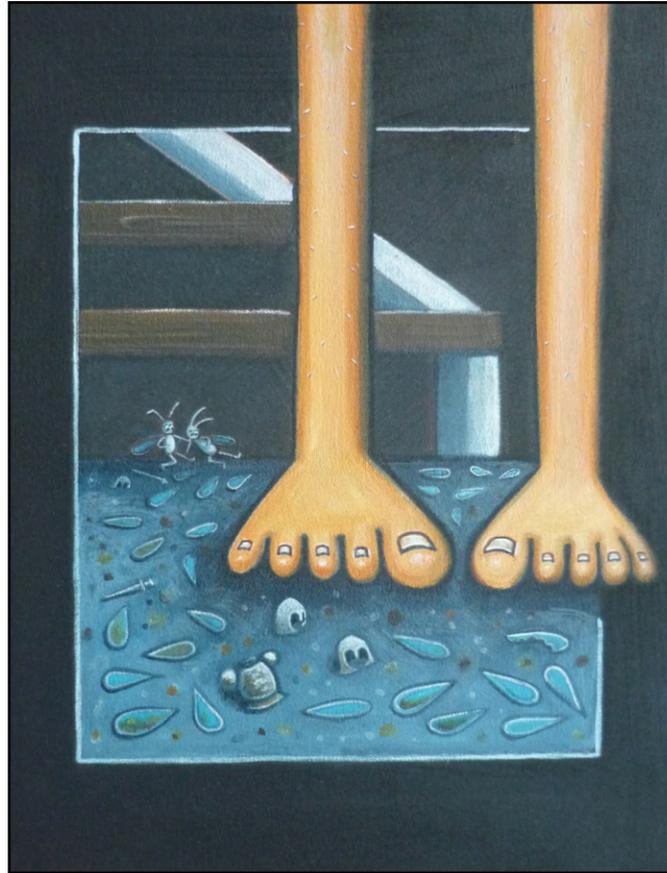
The Monsters! The Dragons!

The elders hear the preparations and scream, 'Stop! The monsters! The dragons. The sharp talons and sticky tongues.' But no one can hear them.



Fifteenth illustration *The Banner*

The young march as one into the light. Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori



Sixteenth illustration

Rusted Armour & Broken Wings

And if you go out early on a wet season morning
you will find a battlefield heavy with rusted
armour and wings, thrown away as they ran back
to safety under the ground.