




Morris Lessmore loved words.

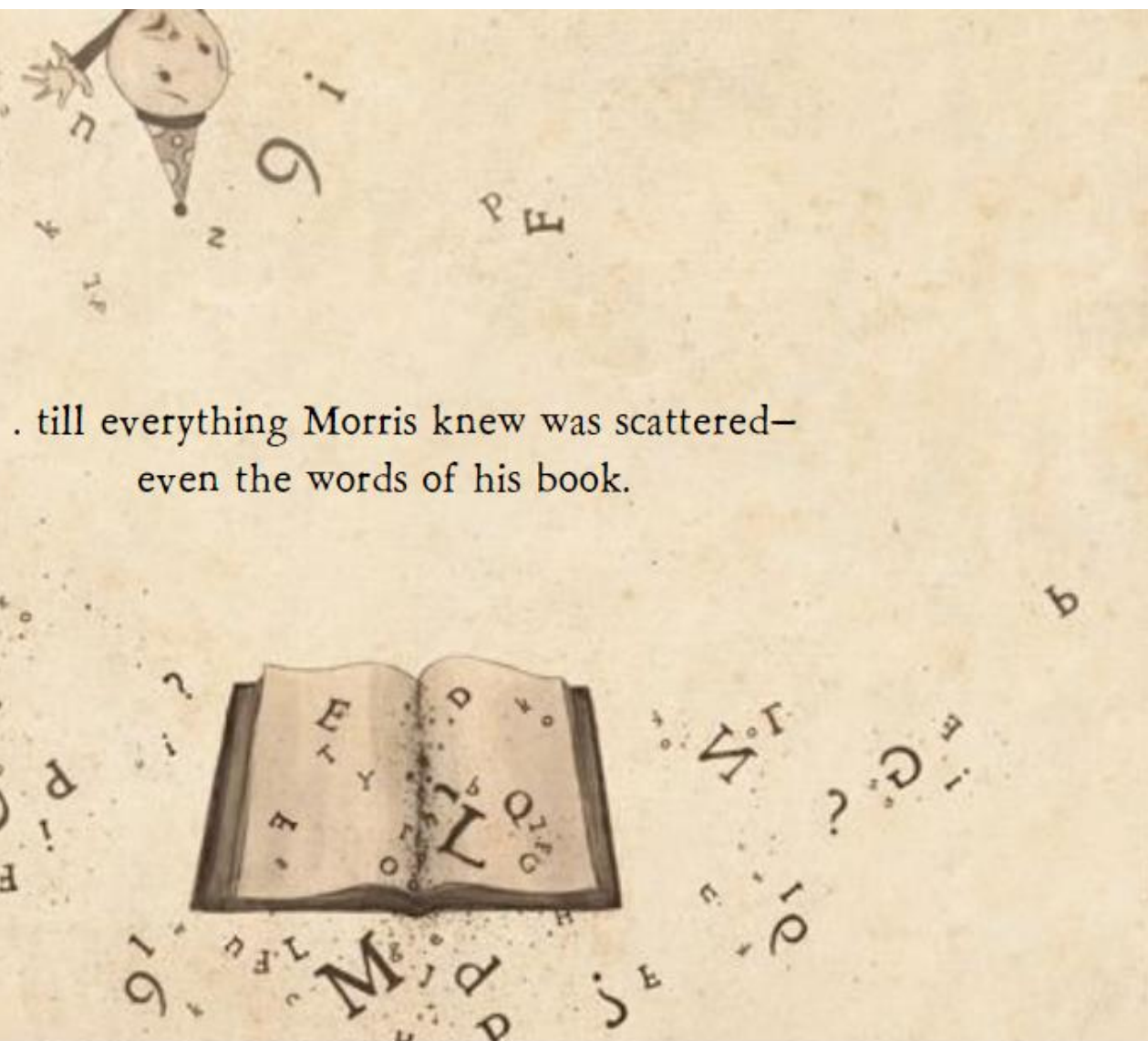
He loved stories.

He loved books.

His life was a book of his own writing, one orderly page after another. He would open it every morning and write of his joys and sorrows, of all that he knew and everything that he hoped for.



But every story has its upsets.
One day the sky darkened.
The winds blew and blew . . .



. till everything Morris knew was scattered—
even the words of his book.





He didn't know what to do or which
way to go. So he began to wander.

And wander.

Then a happy bit of happenstance came his way.
Rather than looking down, as had become his habit,
Morris Lessmore looked up. Drifting through the sky
above him, Morris saw a lovely lady. She was being pulled
along by a festive squadron of flying books.



Morris wondered if *his* book could fly.
But it couldn't.
It would only fall to the ground with a depressing thud.

The flying lady knew Morris simply needed a good story,
so she sent him her favorite. The book was an amiable fellow,
and urged Morris to follow him.



The book led him to an extraordinary building
where many books apparently “nested.”



Morris slowly walked inside and discovered
the most mysterious and inviting room he had ever seen.
It was filled with the fluttering of countless pages,
and Morris could hear the faint chatter of a thousand
different stories, as if each book was whispering
an invitation to adventure.

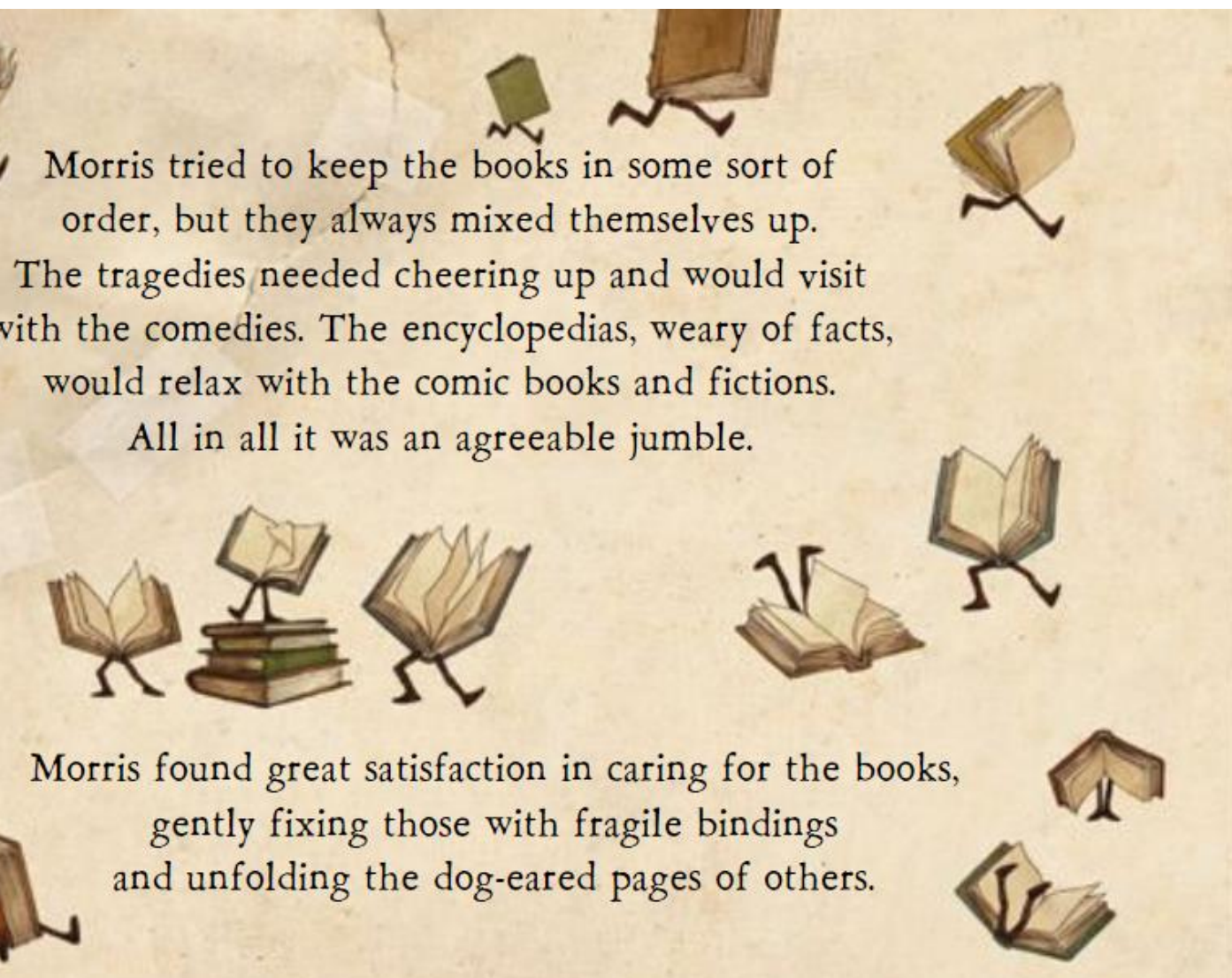




Then his new friend flew up to him and landed on his
arm. It held itself open, as if hoping to be read.
The room rustled to life.

And so Morris's life among
the books began.





Morris tried to keep the books in some sort of order, but they always mixed themselves up. The tragedies needed cheering up and would visit with the comedies. The encyclopedias, weary of facts, would relax with the comic books and fictions. All in all it was an agreeable jumble.

Morris found great satisfaction in caring for the books, gently fixing those with fragile bindings and unfolding the dog-eared pages of others.



Sometimes Morris would
become lost in a book
and scarcely emerge
for days.



Les histoires ont enchanté son esprit avec
tant qu'elles ont
le monde le plus fantastique
que la vie et les idées qui lui ont apporté tant
attrapée et l'expérience était



Morris liked to share the books with others.
Sometimes it was a favorite that everyone loved,
and other times he found a lonely little volume
whose tale was seldom told.

“Everyone’s story matters,” said Morris.

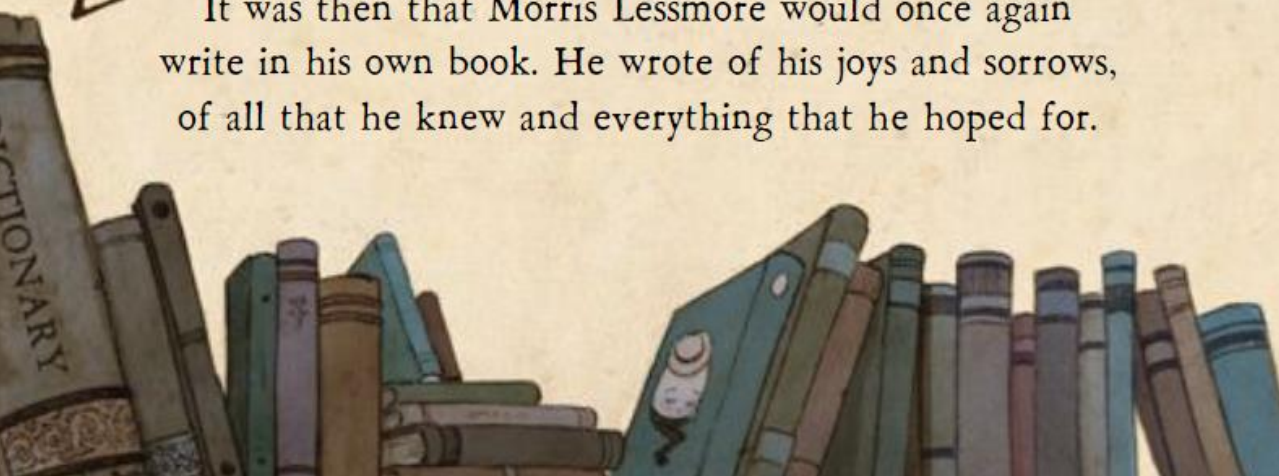
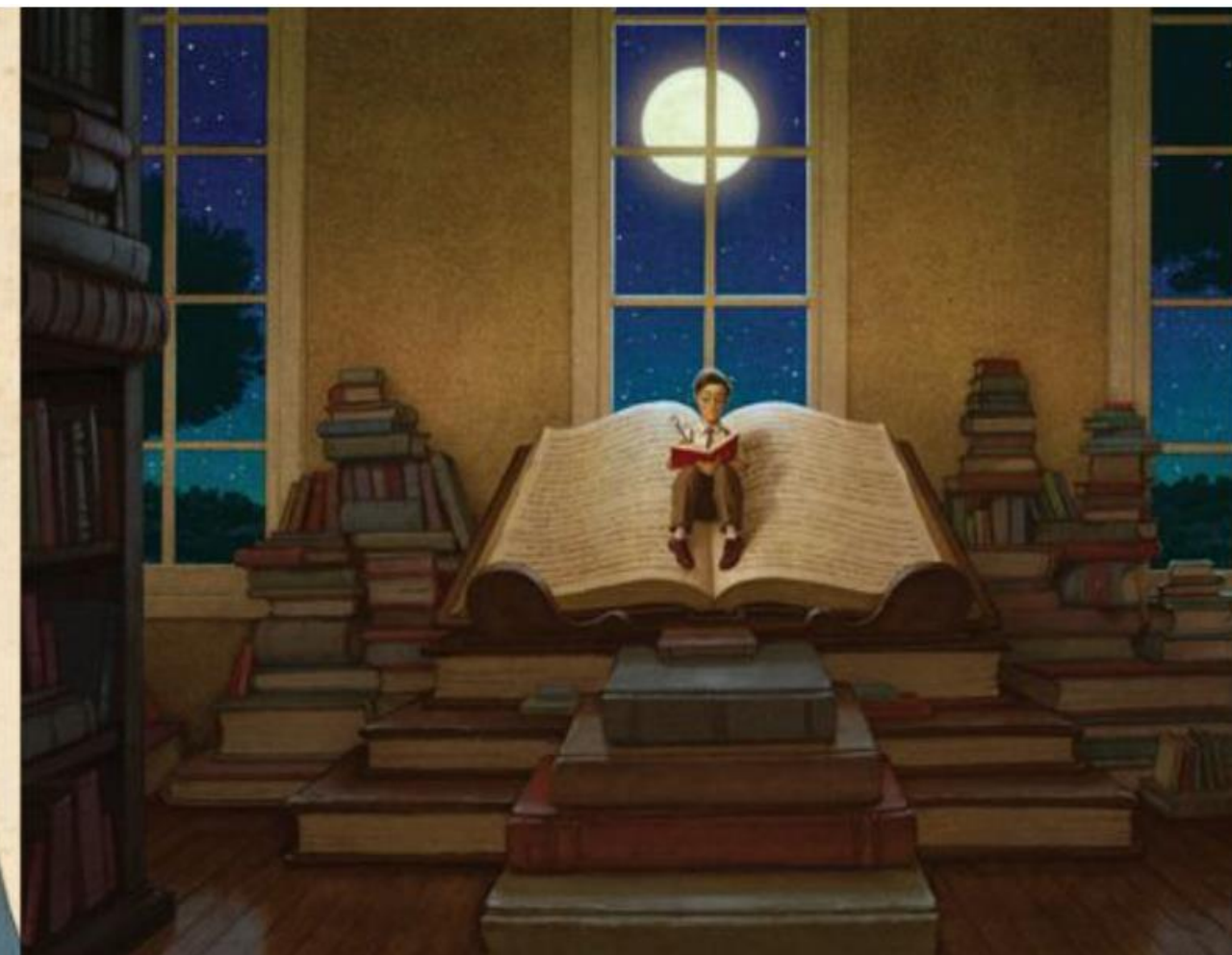
And all the books agreed.

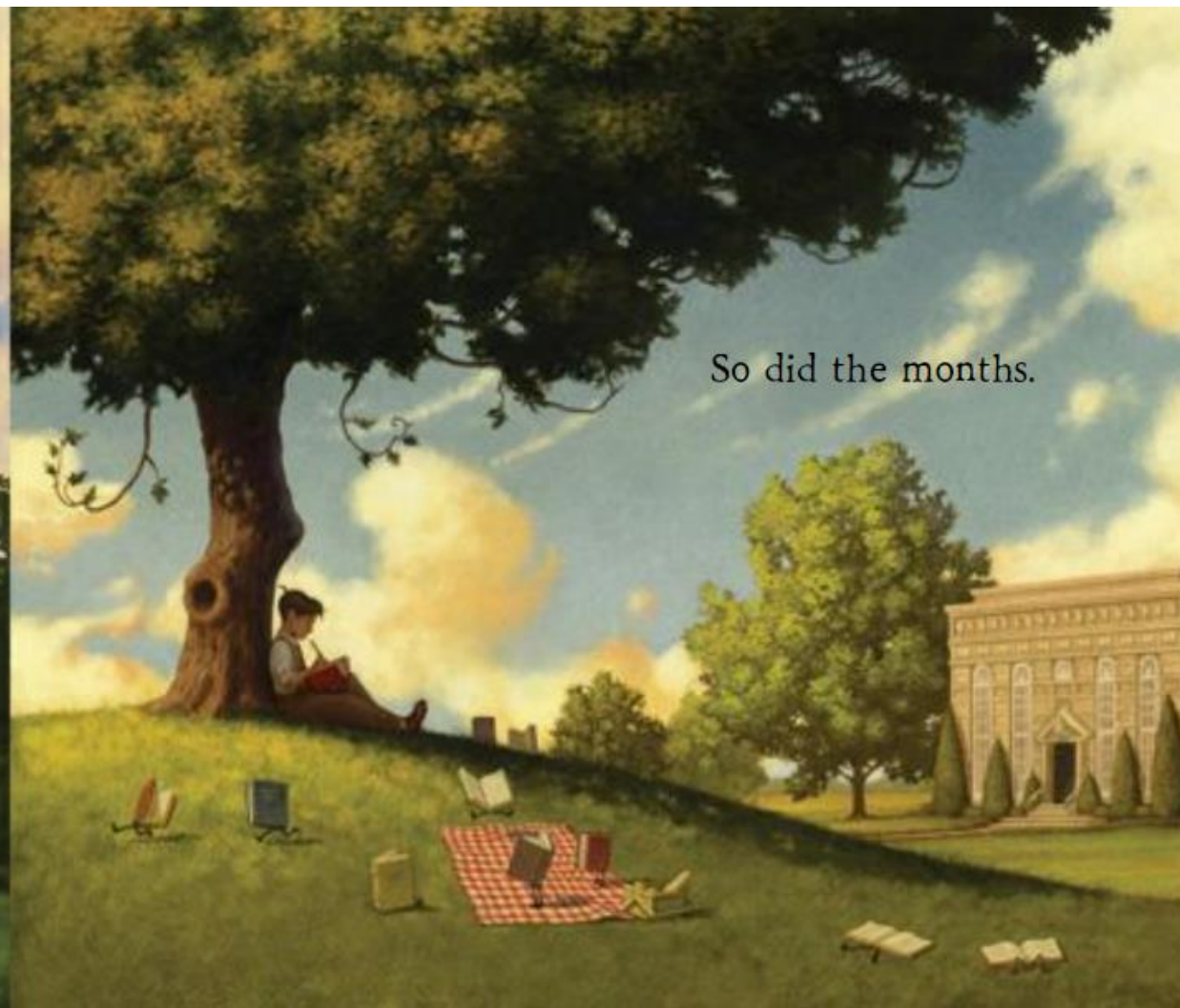


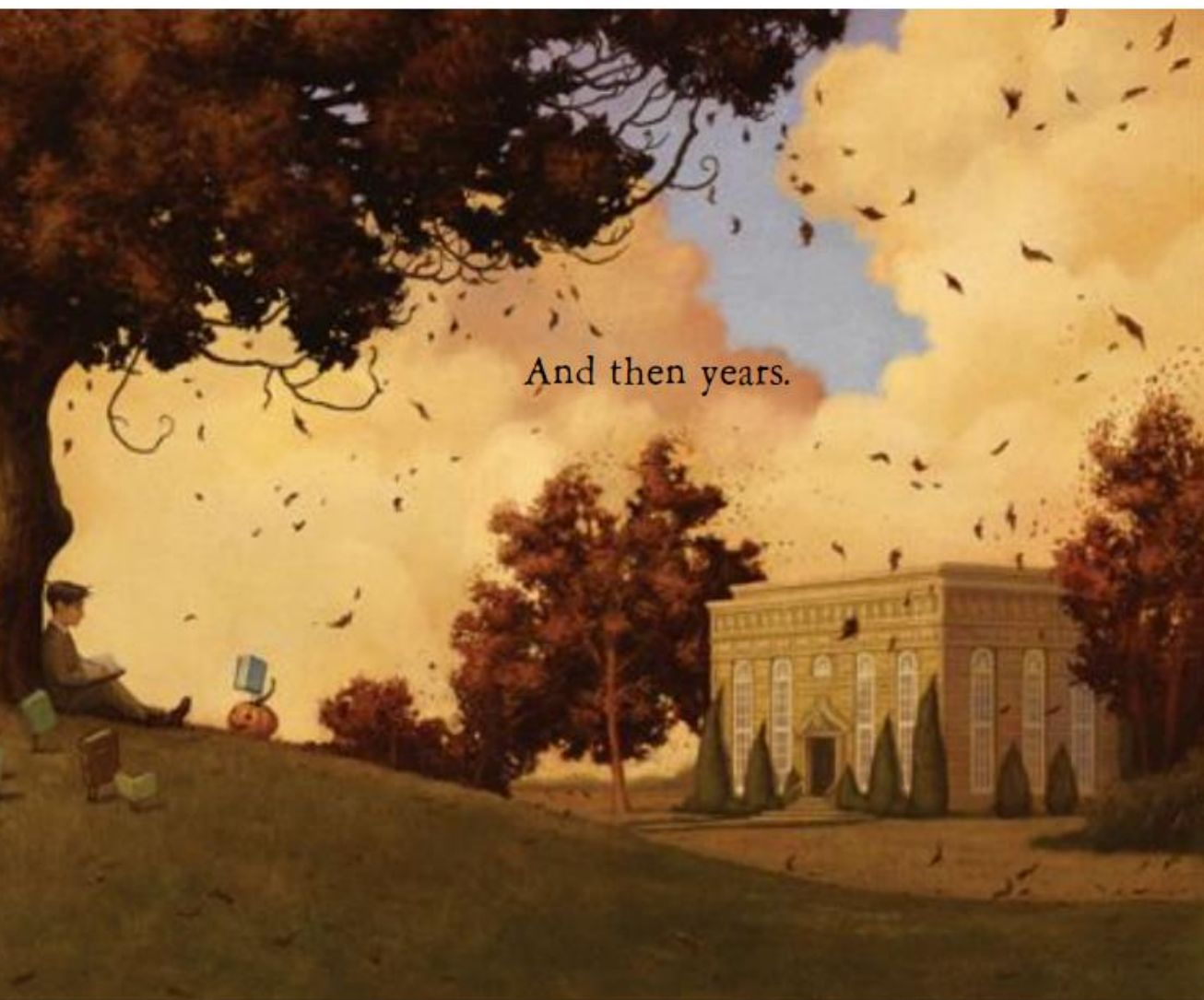
At night, after all the stories that needed telling had been told and everyone had settled down to their proper places on the shelves, the great big dictionary would get in the last word:

Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z

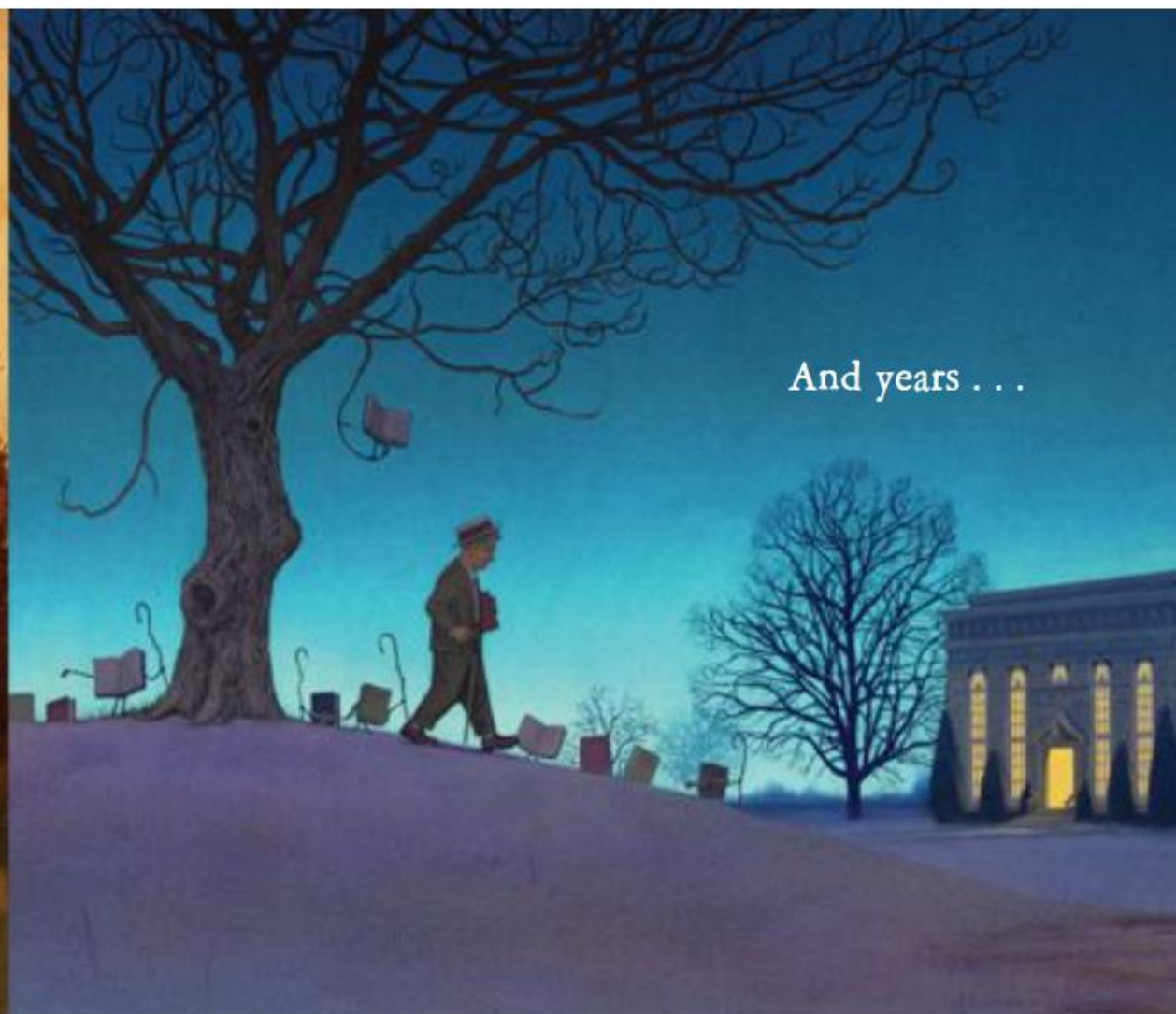
It was then that Morris Lessmore would once again write in his own book. He wrote of his joys and sorrows, of all that he knew and everything that he hoped for.

A detailed illustration at the bottom of the page shows a row of books. On the far left, a large, thick book is standing upright, its spine facing the viewer. The word "DICTIONARY" is printed vertically in a serif font along the spine. To the right of this dictionary are several other books of various sizes, colors (including shades of blue, green, and brown), and thicknesses, some standing upright and others slightly leaning. The books are set against a plain, light-colored background.





And then years.



And years . . .

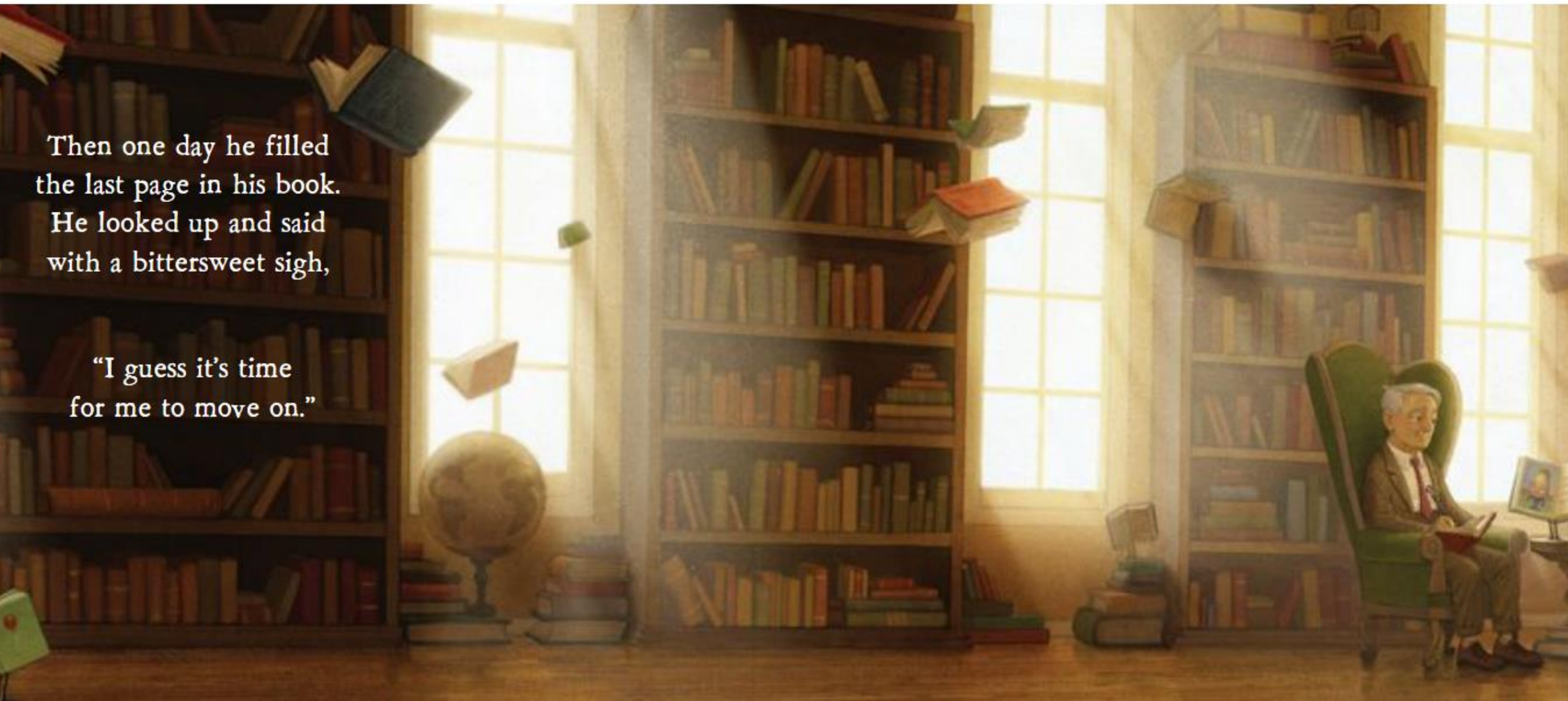
... and Morris Lessmore became
stooped and crinkly.

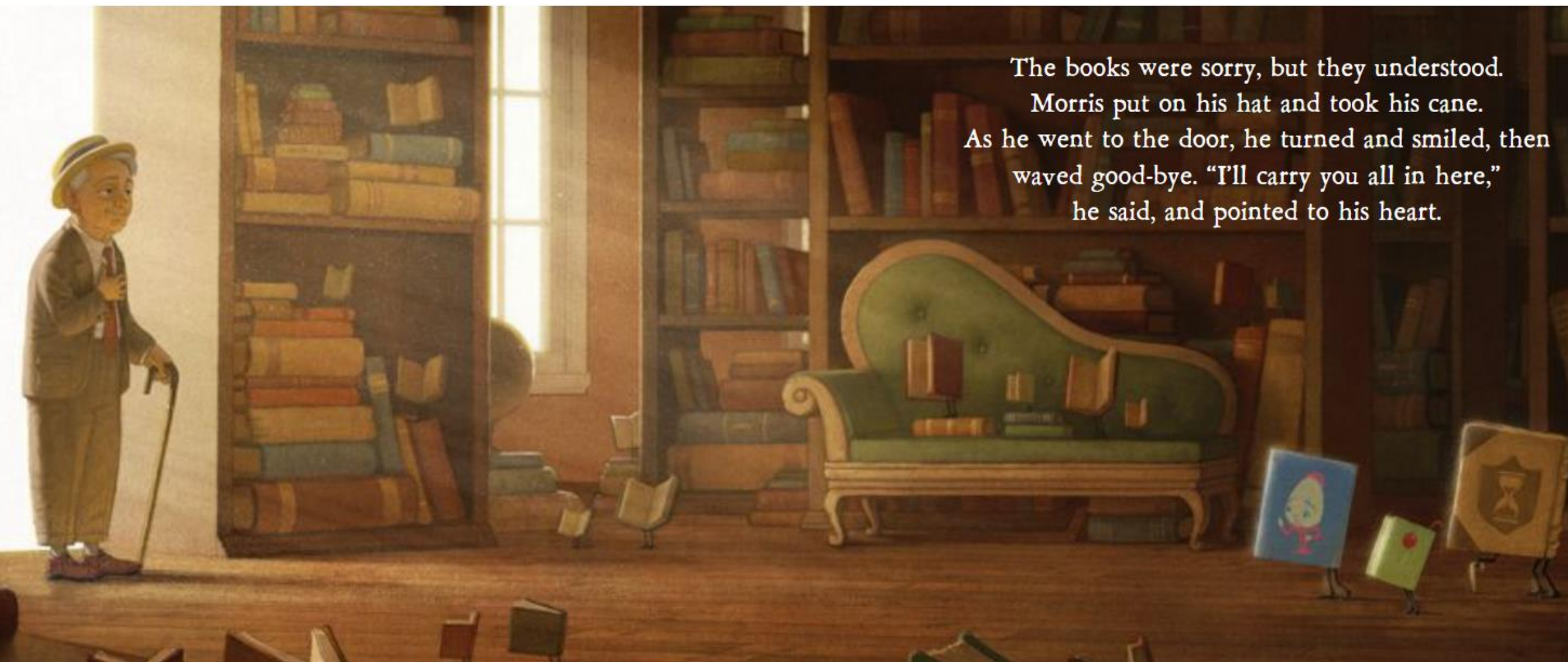
But the books never changed.
Their stories stayed the same.
Now his old friends took care of him
the way he had once cared for them,
and they read themselves to him
each night.



Then one day he filled
the last page in his book.
He looked up and said
with a bittersweet sigh,

“I guess it’s time
for me to move on.”





The books were sorry, but they understood.
Morris put on his hat and took his cane.
As he went to the door, he turned and smiled, then
waved good-bye. "I'll carry you all in here,"
he said, and pointed to his heart.

The books waved their pages, and Morris Lessmore flew away.
And as he flew, he changed back to the way he'd been
that long ago day when they'd all first met.



The books were quiet for a while. Then they noticed
that Morris Lessmore had left something behind.
“It’s his book!” said his oldest friend. Inside was Morris’s story.
All of his joys and sorrows,
all that he knew
and everything that he hoped for.





Then the books heard a small, expectant sound. There in the doorway was a little girl. She looked around with wonder. Then something fantastic happened. Morris Lessmore's book flew up to her and opened its pages.



The girl began to read.
And so our story ends as it began . . .



. . . with the opening of a book.



Next to all around to:

*Brandon Oldenburg
Adam Tante Volker
Vanessa Del Rey
Christina Ellis
Kenny Callcott and
Petter Lundb*

*For Bill Morris and Coleen Salley,
who devoted their lives to books*

&

*To the memory of
Mary Katherine Joyce,
whom the jealous Fates
took too soon*

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