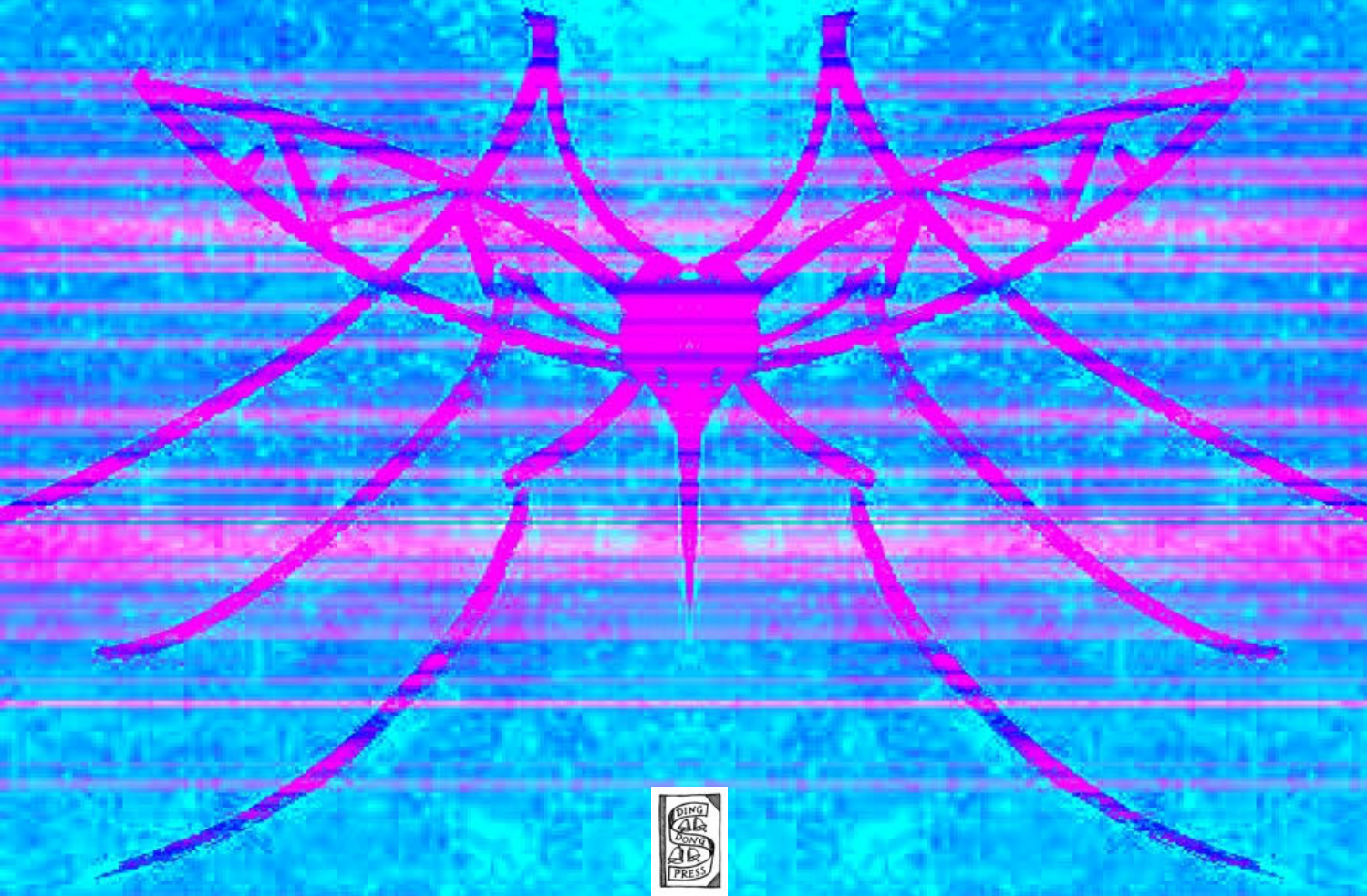


Amelia Rate is only eight, but she knows how to stamp her foot all right!  
When she loses her brooch, an old beetle called Mylor gets all his insect friends to help find it.



But what Amelia really finds is far more than just her brooch ... she's now happier than ever  
after her magical encounter with Mylor and his incredible six-legged friends!

“I’m Amelia Rate



Simon Bell

and *no one else!*”



“I’m Amelia Rate

Written, illustrated and designed  
by Simon Bell



and *no one else!*”





"I'VE LOST IT! I've lost it! It's somewhere in this flower bed and it's getting dark and I'll never find it now and tomorrow my friends will think I'm totally stupid and ... GNAAARGH ...!" Amelia Rate bellowed, stamping her foot really hard. She was only an eight-year old girl, but boy! could she make the ground shake!

"Can I help at all?" asked a small, polite voice by her foot. "I know I'm just a beetle, but we insects are a tough old bunch, been around for millions of years. *'Tiny or huge, we'll see the job through!'* That's my motto. Clever, innit?"

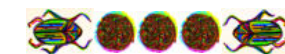
"Yeah. Modest, too!" retorted Amelia, a little rudely, and ungraciously. But she was taken aback. "I didn't think you lot could even *speak*, let alone *help*."

"Ah! Now, we can't *all* speak. But then again we can't all *hear*, so there's not much point in us all *speaking*," reasoned the beetle. "And then of course those of us that *can* speak don't all speak the Queen's English, like what *I* can do. But I'm forgetting my manners. My name's Mylor Scruggins - how do you do?"

("What an odd name!" thought Amelia.) "And I'm Amelia Rate. And I'm *not* OK and I've lost my new brooch and I'm really, *really* upset about it," she moaned.

"So I gathered. But what's the *real* reason you're upset?" asked Mylor, wisely.

"Well," she confessed, "... I just want to impress my friends, really, and to have what they have (only better), and to be part of their group, and to have tons of followers, like they have ... and to be amazing, like they are," she added, sadly.





“Why don’t you just be yourself?” asked Mylor, quietly.

“Because I don’t really *like* myself and I never *do* anything useful and I want to *seem* better than I think I am ... and ... I just want to be happy,” Amelia replied.

“Oh dear, Amelia, let’s see what we can do. A new brooch isn’t the answer to everything, you know - but let’s see what we can do,” said Mylor, rather kindly.

“Right, well, OK, apart from sounding just like my parents, what sorts of things can you lot do, exactly?” sniffed Amelia, rather *unkindly*.

“Well, let’s see ... bees make honey - look, don’t roll your eyes, it’s pretty hard work! We pollinate flowers - or some of us do, I can’t claim that one myself - without “us lot” there’d be no apples or blueberries or cucumbers or ... or ... well, lots of other nice, healthy stuff to eat anyway,” Mylor replied, happily.

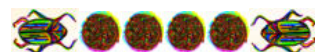
“Phew!” whistled Amelia, closing her eyes and clenching her fists.

“Impressed?” smiled Mylor up at her.

“No, I’m just glad you didn’t try to go through the full A to Z of food!”

“I probably could, you know, let’s see now —”

“NOT NOW!” Amelia said loudly, gritting her teeth. “P - E - R - L - E - A - S - E ! It’s getting dark, I’ll have to go to bed soon, and I need that brooch *tonight!*”







“Fair enough, fair enough. Let’s get moving, then. Now, I’ll need help, special forces, lights, guards, divers, lifters, flyers, earth movers, organisers —”

“What are you talking about?” shrieked Amelia. “This isn’t NATO, you know, this is just a brooch, lost in the garden! Stop showing off! Start looking!”

“You want it back or not?” snapped Mylor, suddenly cross as well.

“Sorry!” giggled Amelia. “But come on... you’re not all chilled super-heroes!”

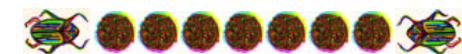
“Well, yes, actually I think we *are*! Flies have the eyes, fleas jump over anything, rhino beetles can lift their own weight over and over, dragonflies are air aces, water scorpions go *under* water and water striders *on* it, bugs can dig for England and termites’ll build you a ventilated skyscraper in a matter of hours.”

For once, Amelia didn’t have a quick-fire answer to all this. She thought for a moment, then she asked “OK, well, what about wasps then? They’re not so smart, are they? Always falling into my dad’s beer ... what happens to them?”

“They go home and lie down for a while!” Mylor smiled. “The thing is, they get thirsty in summer, slip on the glass and fall in. They can’t swim well. You should rescue them. They may sting, but they’re scared, so you have to forgive them.”

“We all do our own thing,” he went on. “Scarab beetles even play with dung.”

“That’s horrible!” said Amelia. “You wouldn’t catch *me* doing that, NO WAY!”





"Me neither!" agreed Mylor. "Scarabs roll dung into a ball and push it around. Ancient people thought scarabs were gods, that the ball of dung was the sun and pushed by scarabs across the sky. Scarabs are hi-tech, too ... that GPS —"

Amelia looked at Mylor, very suspiciously now. "GPS? Are you having a laugh?"

"No! Their brains take a photo of the sky and use it to work out where they are so they don't get lost. Something like that. I don't quite know how it works, but it's impressive. Makes up for their smelly feet, up to their ankles all day in —"

"OK! OK! Too much information! But you're not *all* wonderful, are you?" she persisted. "What about cockroaches ... useful? *Really?* And spiders ... whoah!"

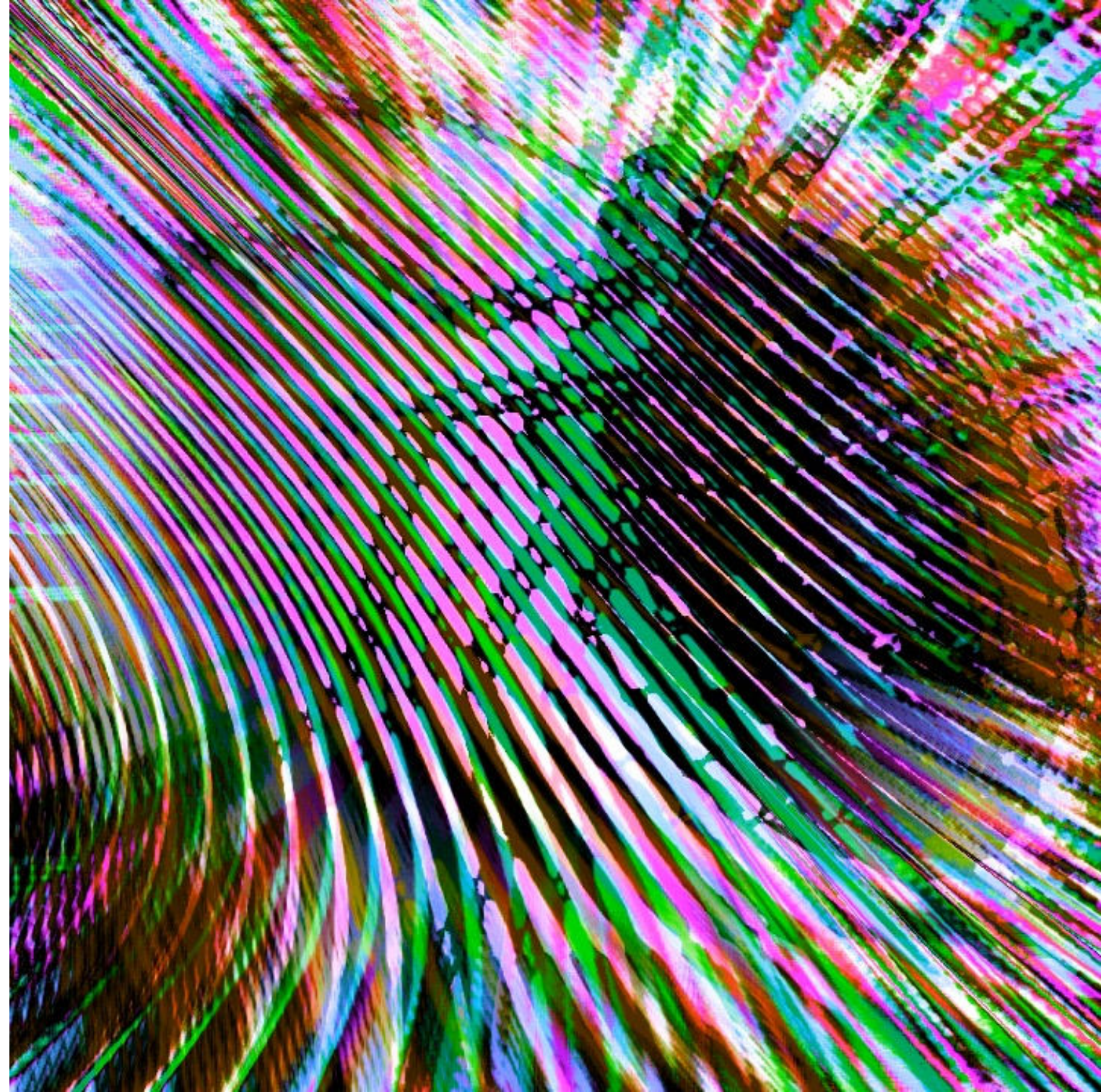
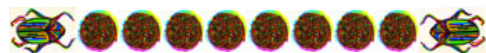
"Yes, well, we're all scared of spiders. They're not technically insects, of course, (too many legs)." Mylor shuddered. "Cockroaches aren't so bad either, really, once you get to know them properly. They eat up tons of junk food waste."

"Yuk! I bet they come home really fat!" said Amelia, wrinkling her nose.

"Most of them come home really *flat*, actually," replied Mylor. "They're always getting stepped on, scuttling around buildings and dustbins in the dark."

"Well, why do they do it then?" she asked, not unreasonably (ignoring his pun).

"Because they're built that way, that's why! They like it and they're good at it. Years of practice. And no one else is going to do it. You have to respect them!"







Amelia was astonished! “So you don’t think they’re horrible, or blank them?”

“Oh no, no, no, we let them get on with it! Loads of us do night shifts. We may not see each other much, but we’re still a proper community. 100% organised!”

“Yes, but how do you get organised?” persisted Amelia. She was now seriously interested in all this. “I mean, have you got a brain?”

“I beg your pardon!” replied Mylor (rather sharply). “Of course I’ve got a brain! It’s not like yours, but that’s OK. Our brains are all different, and we use them differently. Now you take ants, they’ve got organising brains,” Mylor continued.

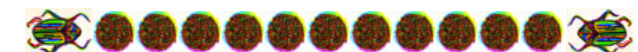
“Have they?” asked Amelia, fascinated now. “In what way? What do they do?”

“They live in colonies. Soldier ants guard worker ants, and their teamwork and discipline is tip-top,” Mylor said. “Food in, rubbish out! You try getting beetles to do that,” he added, wistfully. “If a job’s worth doing well, get an ant to do it, they say. Which reminds me, we’ll need a few dozen ants later on, I reckon.”

“What on earth for?” asked Amelia, surprised.

“Erm ... your brooch” Mylor reminded her. “Have you forgotten? The brooch?”

“Oh, *that*! ... no, of course not!” Amelia replied. But she *had* forgotten: she was thinking about the incredible things these different insects could do, and how they didn’t bother *trying* to impress: they were awesome just being themselves.





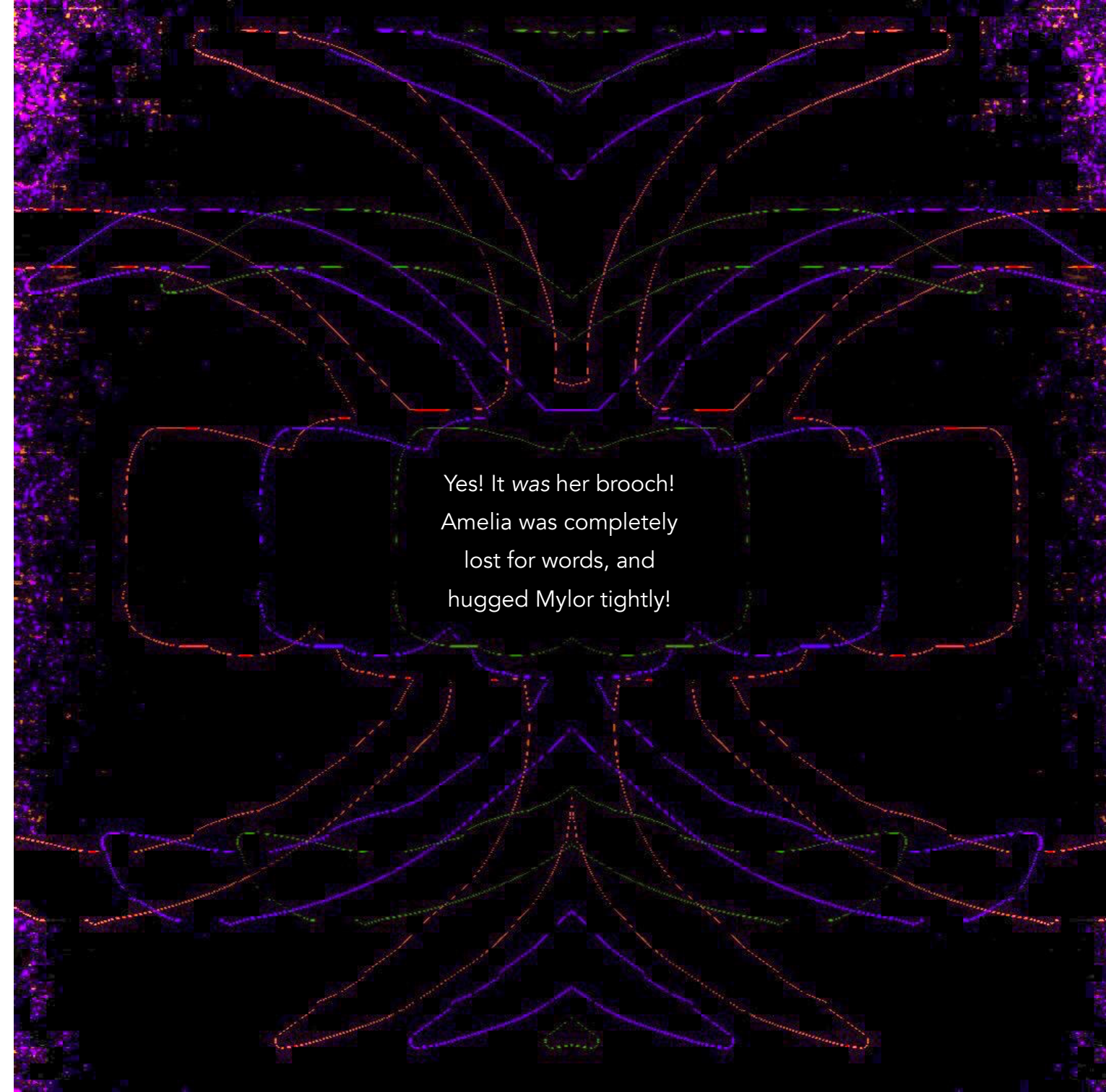
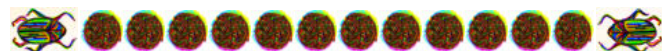
"Right! Let's get started!" Mylor said. "First, I must make some arrangements, so why not sit here on the grass and wait for me? I won't be too long." Mylor scuttled off and, after a few minutes, Amelia could hear him being really bossy!

"Over here, guys - we need light over here, please - that's it, a bit to the left - the LEFT, I said - thank you, fireflies - now, the rest of you, you know what to do ... go over the ground carefully - has anyone looked in the puddle? Well, why NOT? Dragonflies, would you please fly around the edges of the flower bed?"

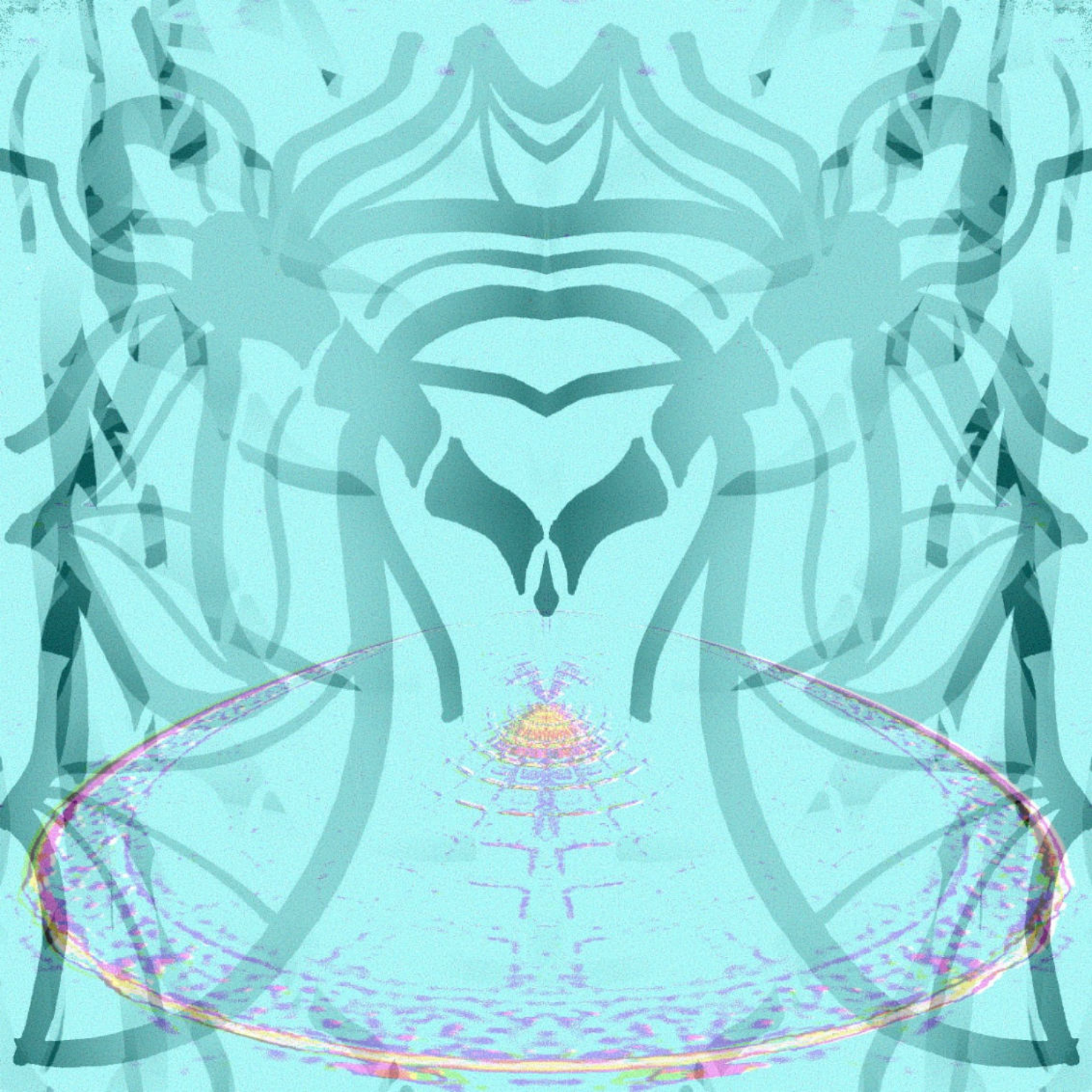
Amelia couldn't believe her eyes ... insects of all shapes and sizes were at work, and they all seemed to know exactly what to do, as if they'd been practising for ages! They were like a big, social community, each doing what each did best. She could see bugs digging, caterpillars smoothing bits of earth, ants in lines, each carrying a minuscule piece of leaf, moths pointing helpfully, beetles taking messages back and forth ... and even cockroaches dragging rubbish away!

The glow of the fireflies reflected all the colours of the rainbow off the insects, and dragonflies made ghostly shadows as they buzzed, dived, stopped in mid-air, and swept away again. Tiny, busy feet crunched noisily over the flower bed.

Suddenly, a voice cried "Quick, over here!", and then another shouted "We've found something!" Amelia heard Mylor call out "Result! Well done, team!" He beckoned to Amelia and, pointing, asked her "is that your brooch, Amelia?"







“Oh, Mylor, thank you for everything!” said Amelia. “You did such an amazing job back there! But ... where’s your team gone? I wanted to thank them too!”

“I’ve already sent them all home,” replied Mylor. “This changing climate makes life hard for us, and so time becomes really precious. We do our best. We don’t think of time like you do ... why, a whole day’s a whole life for some dragonflies. I’ve had a couple of summers myself, so I can’t complain. Goodbye, Amelia.”

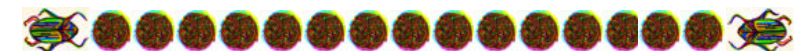
“Goodbye, Mylor.” As he ambled off, Amelia added softly: “I won’t forget you. You’ve done more than find my brooch - you’ve shown me how to be happy.”

Amelia ran back inside, and straight up to her room, without even stopping to tease her little brother Ferdinand about being Ferd Rate! She jumped into her pyjamas, pushed the brooch under her pillow, got into bed and shut her eyes. “I’m Amelia Rate and *no one else* - and I was Amelia Rate-d by an old beetle!”

She thought of Mylor, and of his funny motto ‘*Tiny or huge, we’ll see the job through!*’, and of his lovely team. She knew now that she needn’t try to impress anyone ... her friends would be impressed by her if she was happy with herself.

Mylor was resting too - he had worked hard that evening! Some of his friends were still out and about that night until dawn, playing in the dew and listening to the birdsong ... but Amelia slept on, never once dreaming of her brooch.

It was going to be a beautiful day, especially for one lucky little girl ...





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