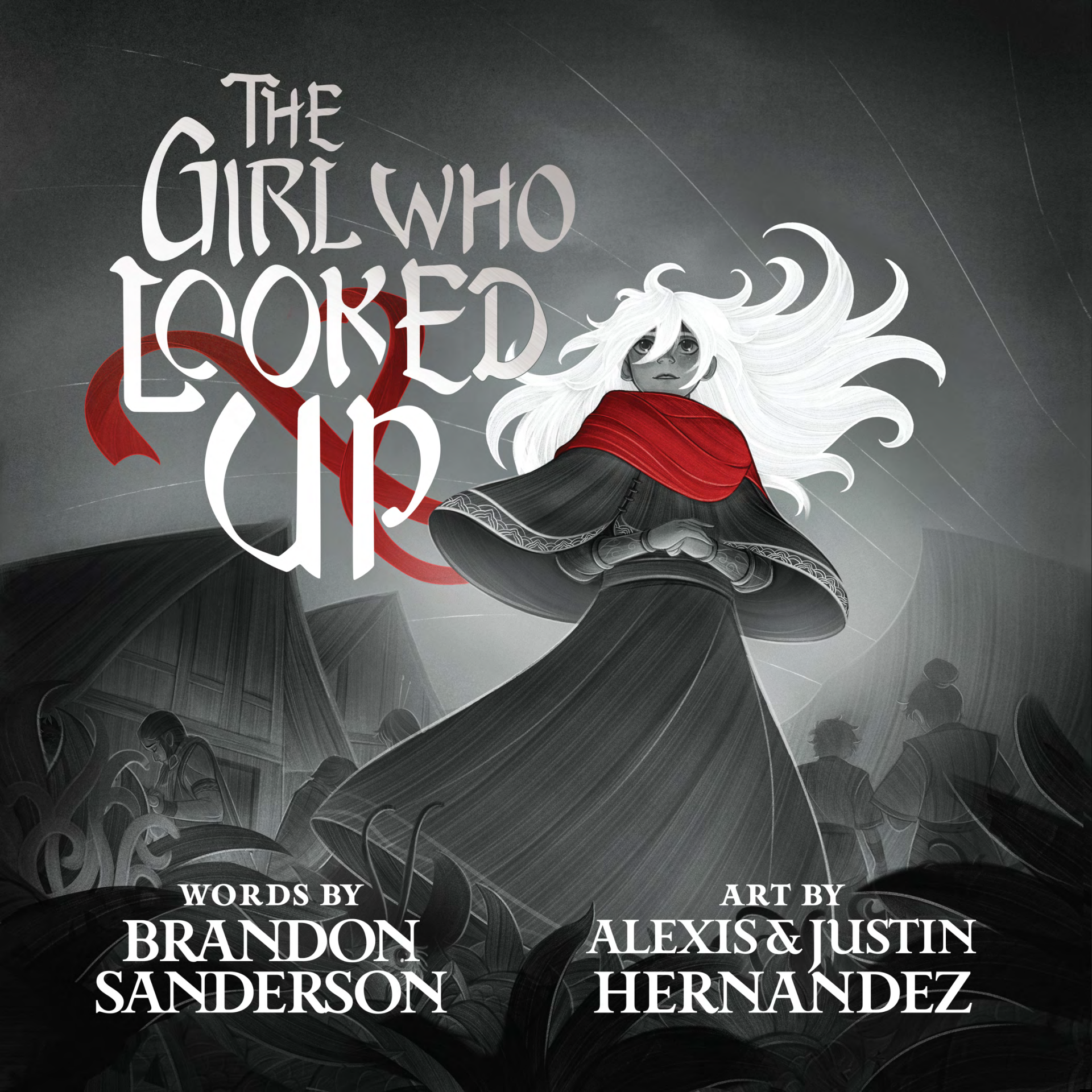


THE GIRL WHO LOOKED UP



WORDS BY
**BRANDON
SANDERSON**

ART BY
**ALEXIS & JUSTIN
HERNANDEZ**

For Alan Layton

Who was cheering for Dalinar

(And me)

Before Stormlight even existed.

—B. S.

For our Abuelo, Fil, Addie and Boo.

—A. H. & J. H.

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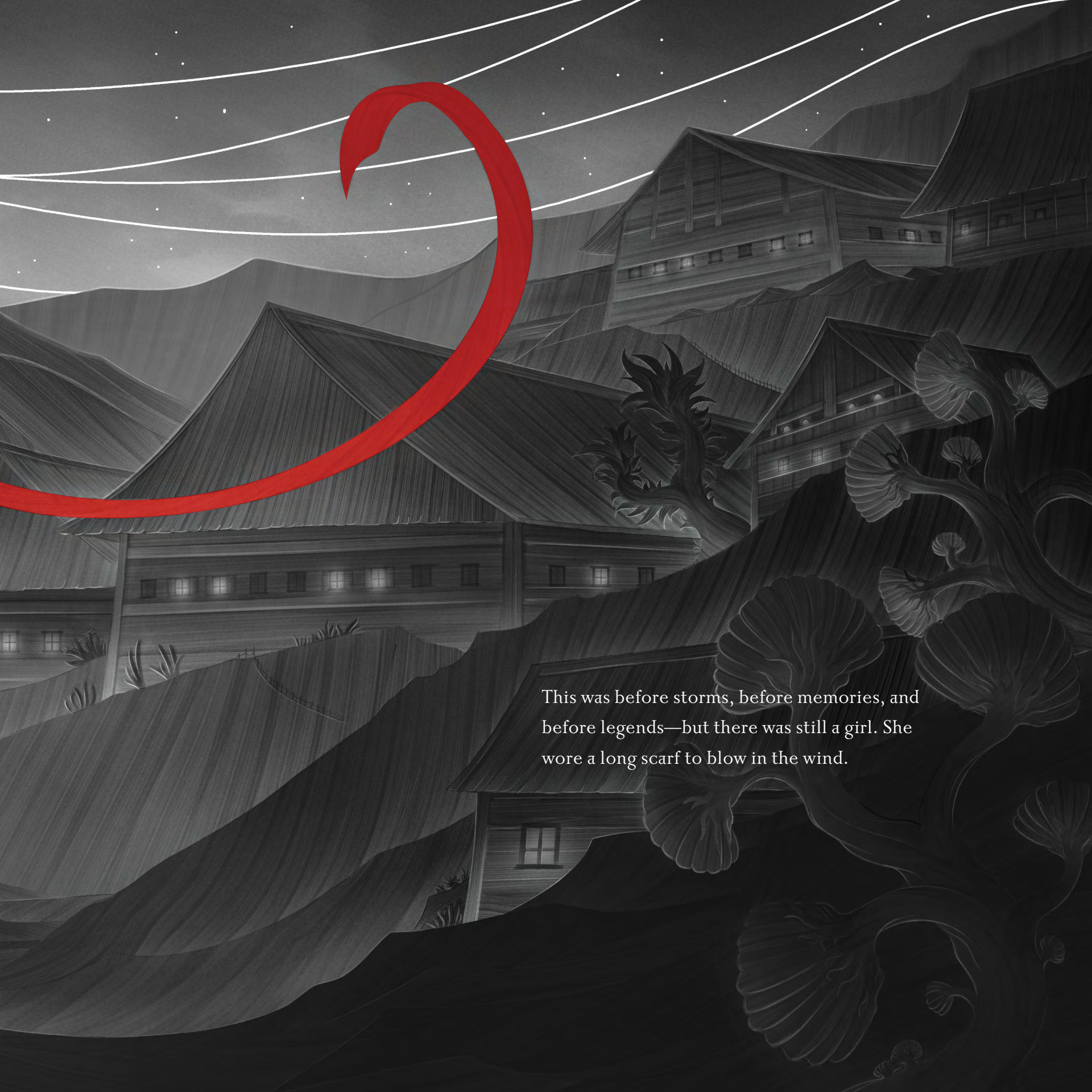
**THE
GIRL WHO
LOOKED
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ART BY
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There was a girl.



This was before storms, before memories, and
before legends—but there was still a girl. She
wore a long scarf to blow in the wind.

The girl in the scarf played and danced,
as girls do today.





In fact, most things were the same then as they are today.
Except for one big difference.





The wall.

You see, in those days, a wall kept out the storms. It had existed for so long, nobody knew how it had been built. That did not bother them. Why wonder when the mountains began or why the sky was high? Like these things were, so the wall was.





The girl, though. She was curious when others were not.

“Why is there a wall?” she asked the man selling fruit.

“To keep the bad things out,” he replied.

“What bad things?”

“Very bad things. There is a wall. Do not go beyond it, or you shall die.”



“Why is there a wall?” she asked
the woman tending her child.
“To protect us,” the woman said.
“To protect us from what?”
“Very bad things. There is a wall.
Do not go beyond it, or you shall die.”

A girl with long, flowing white hair and a vibrant red scarf is perched on a dark, gnarled tree branch. She is pointing her right index finger towards a boy who is sleeping lazily in a nest of branches below her. The boy has dark, curly hair and is wearing a light-colored tunic. The background is a dark, swirling mass of leaves and branches, creating a sense of a dense, mysterious forest. The lighting is soft, highlighting the girl's hair and scarf against the dark background.

The girl climbed a tree, peeking out the top, her scarf streaming behind her. “Why is there a wall?” she called to the boy sleeping lazily in the nook of a branch.

“What wall?” the boy asked.

The girl thrust her finger pointedly toward the wall.

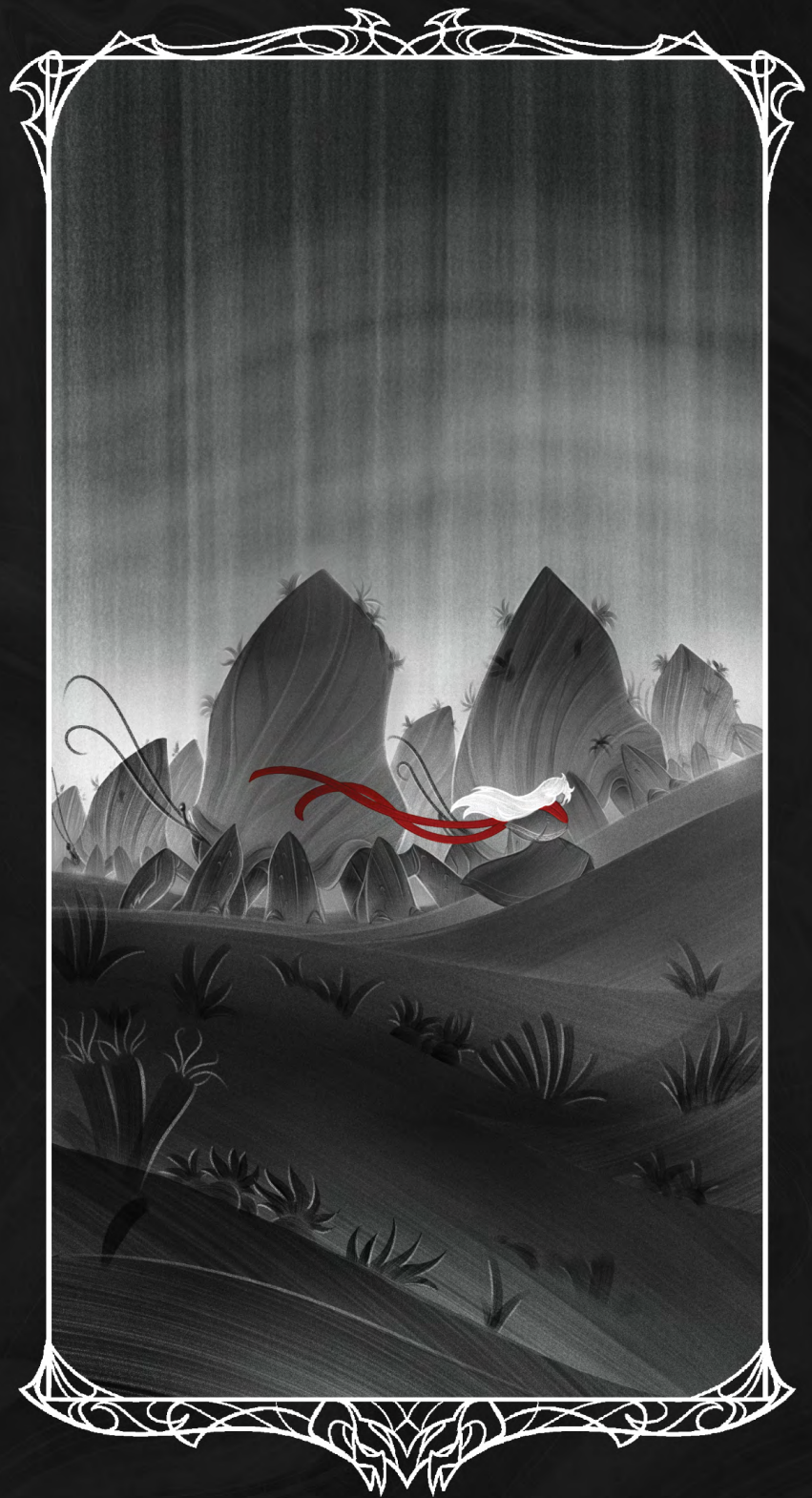
“That’s not a wall,” the boy said, drowsy. “That’s just the way the sky is over there.”

“It’s a *wall*,” the girl said. “A giant wall.”

“It must be there for a purpose,” the boy said. “Yes, it is a wall. Don’t go beyond it, or you’ll probably die.”



Well, these answers did not satisfy the girl who looked up. She reasoned to herself, if the wall kept evil things out, then the space on this side of it should be safe.



So, one night while the village slept, she sneaked from her home with a bundle of supplies. She walked toward the wall, and indeed the land *was* safe.



But it was also dark. Always in the shadow of that wall. No sunlight ever directly reached the people. The girl traveled far.



No predators hunted her, and no storms assaulted her. The only wind was the pleasant one that played with her scarf, and the only creatures she saw were the cremlings that clicked at her as she walked.

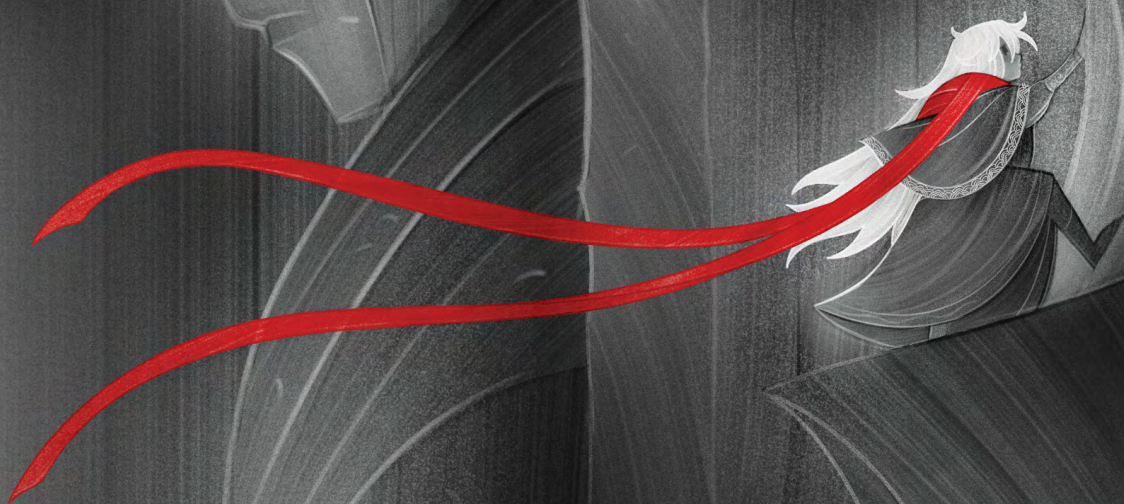


At long last, the girl in the scarf stood before the wall. It was truly expansive, running as far as she could see in either direction. And its height! It reached almost to the Tranquiline Halls!

Of course, she didn't turn back. She *climbed*. There were outcroppings in the wall, and strange statues to use as handholds. She had climbed the highest trees all through her youth. She could do this.



As the girl climbed,
she remebered a
story she'd been told.





Of a woman, told never
to open a certain door.

That woman could not contain her curiosity, however, and eventually
cracked the door open to peek—letting out demons who brought pain,
sickness, and grief to the world.



The wall was tall, and her climb took days,
letting her remember another story.

In it, a different woman found
a well in the enchanted forest,
with a sign saying,

DO NOT DRINK.

Again, the woman was tempted to drink,
and could not resist.

In doing so, she cursed all.





The girl thought of these stories, and how they always seemed to involve women or girls going against what they'd been told, and causing suffering.



But somewhere, someone made up these stories.
Somewhere, someone left these cautions.



Together, the stories did not seem intended to warn
of actual danger, but to teach those who heard
them a specific idea:



Do not ask questions.
Do not disobey.
DO NOT LOOK UP.





This is not one of those stories that warns
about being too curious. But neither is it a
story telling you to always disobey.



Sometimes, the sign **DOES**
warn of a poison inside the well.

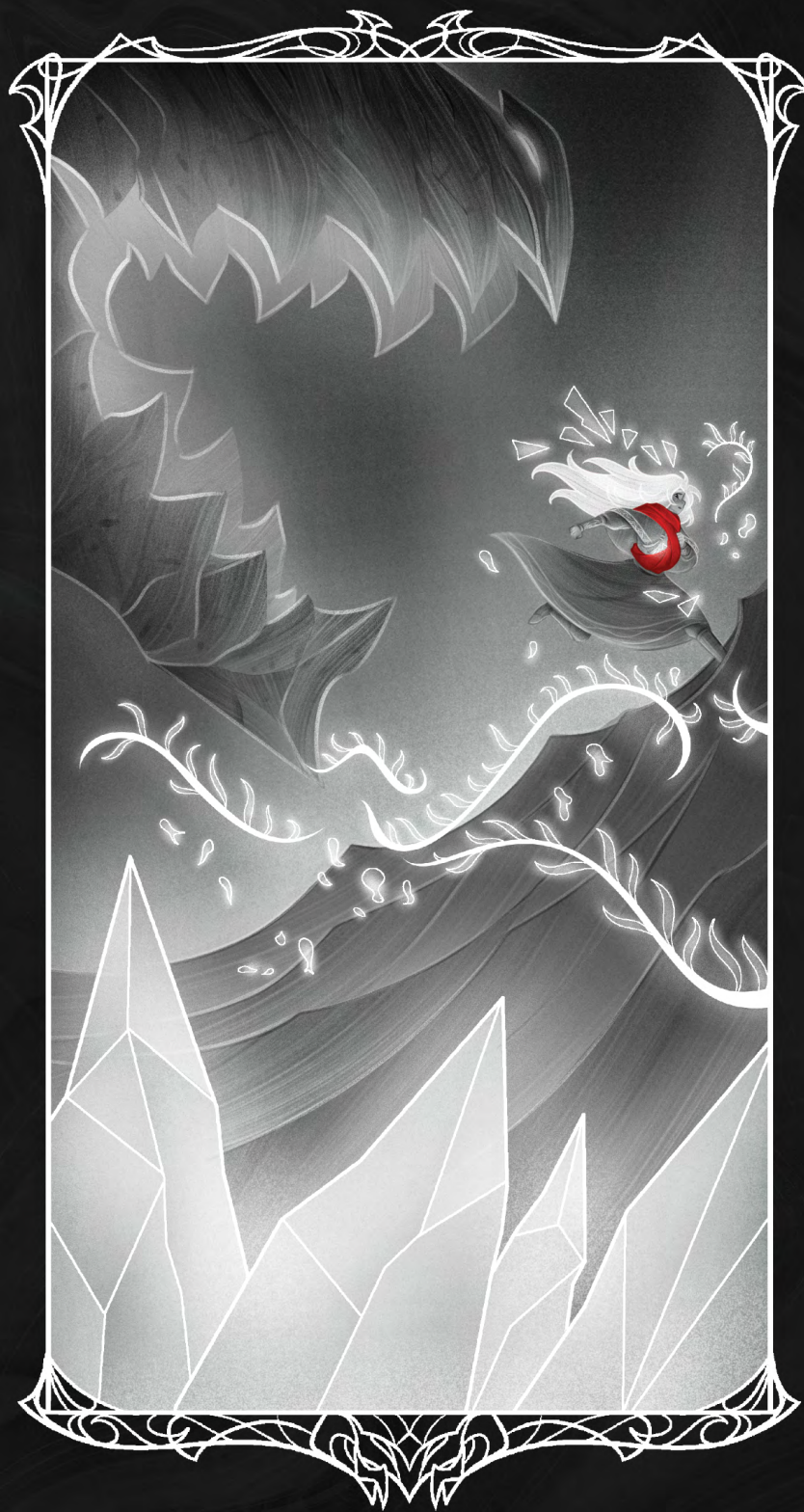
Sometimes, a door **SHOULD**
remain closed.

Sometimes, a wall **IS**
built to protect.





The moral is not to ignore the wisdom of those who have come before.



I always say, it is not my job—as the storyteller—to give answers, but to give you questions to think upon.



Truth is, that's a lie. My stories are not just about asking you questions.



They are about teaching you to ask questions yourself.



WHY is there a door nobody is supposed to open,
and why—if it is so important—is it unlocked?



WHY is there a sign, and who wrote it, for what purpose?



Because sometimes, that wall exists not to keep evil out . . .
but to keep you from looking beyond.





And from daring to look up.



