

# THRYNNE

*Fairy tales don't behave in the land of Thrynne. Not any more.*

*Magic was once something precious for everyone. And the magic of nature and its source, the Forever Tree, was prized above all else, because that magic made people creative, sensitive and brave.*

*But three enemies are working together to destroy the power of the Forever Tree. If they succeed, soon its magic will be gone and so will the cloud horses that nestle in its branches.*

*Who are these enemies?*

*The King Rat and his followers from the city of Troutwine fear magic. It could return them to their forest roots, and now they crave only the pleasures the city has to offer.*

*The Clockmaker of the city of Nightingale wants to control magic, using his mechanical inventions to keep power for himself alone.*

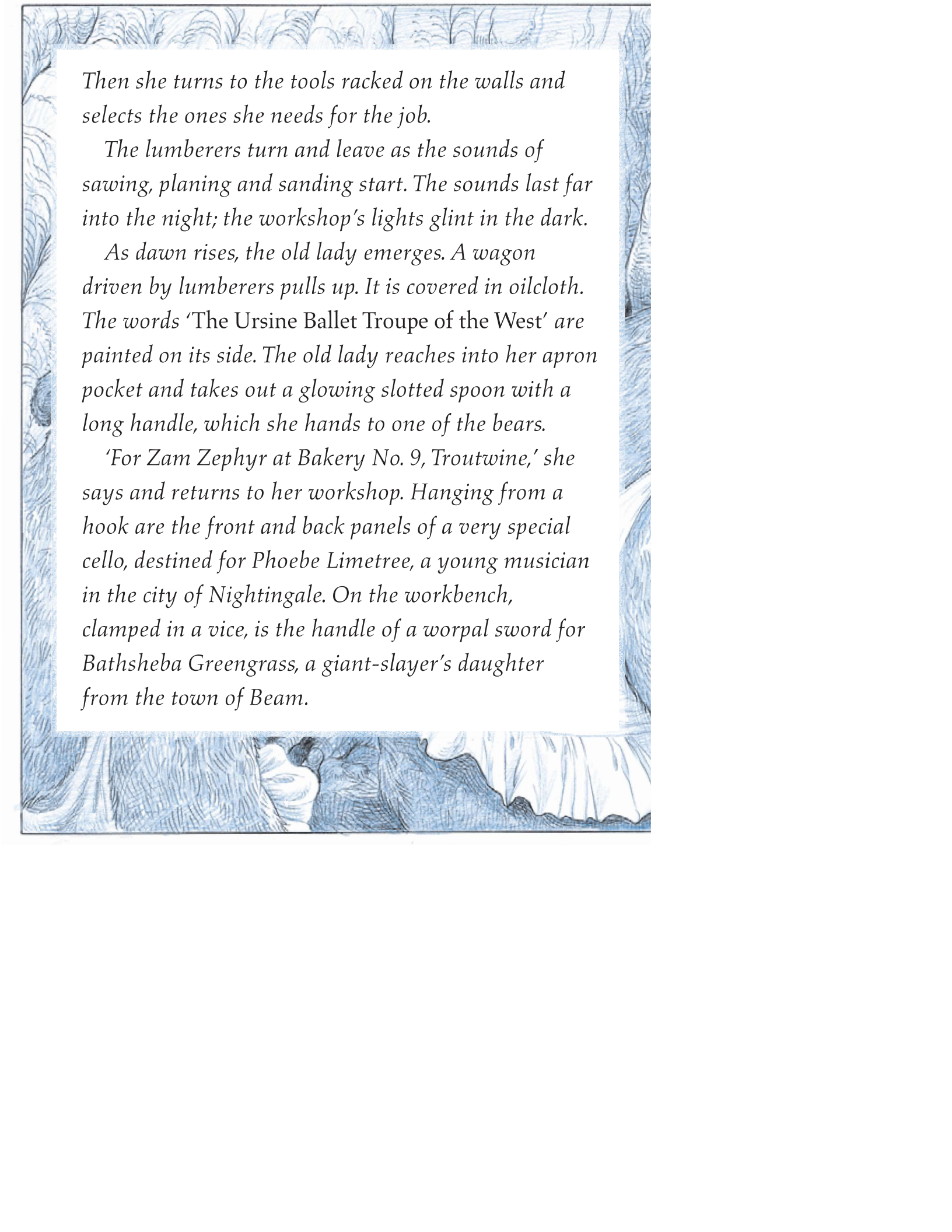


*And the Professional Princess with her crew of giant-slayers from the town of Beam is happy to work with both of them, if it brings her the fame and fortune she craves.*

*But in the heart of the Forever Tree, magical gifts are being prepared for three children who don't yet know how powerful they are . . .*

*In the depths of the Great Wood stands the Forever Tree. It is huge. The bark on its trunk is gnarled and grooved with paw-holds. Dark-furred bears, known as the lumberers, carefully prune and bundle the smaller branches, then carry them on their backs down to the forest floor.*

*A light shines from a nook deep in the tangle of roots, and the lumberers step into a tree-root workshop, laying the bundles of Forever wood on a bench. An old lady with silvery hair sorts the branches carefully into shapes and sizes she can use.*



*Then she turns to the tools racked on the walls and selects the ones she needs for the job.*

*The lumberers turn and leave as the sounds of sawing, planing and sanding start. The sounds last far into the night; the workshop's lights glint in the dark.*

*As dawn rises, the old lady emerges. A wagon driven by lumberers pulls up. It is covered in oilcloth. The words 'The Ursine Ballet Troupe of the West' are painted on its side. The old lady reaches into her apron pocket and takes out a glowing slotted spoon with a long handle, which she hands to one of the bears.*

*'For Zam Zephyr at Bakery No. 9, Troutwine,' she says and returns to her workshop. Hanging from a hook are the front and back panels of a very special cello, destined for Phoebe Limetree, a young musician in the city of Nightingale. On the workbench, clamped in a vice, is the handle of a worpal sword for Bathsheba Greengrass, a giant-slayer's daughter from the town of Beam.*

*The old lady dims the lamp and turns to find a bear holding out a bowl of porridge. She takes it, then takes the bear's arm, and they leave the workshop. 'It starts tomorrow,' she says.*





*High above the workshop, in the uppermost branches of the Forever Tree, is a nest of glowing twigs, woven together and lined with glittering moss. In the nest are eggs as white as the whitest cloud, dotted with speckles of sky blue. The eggs are stirring, hatching. Tiny lines criss-cross their surfaces, growing wider with each tremor and twitch . . .*

*Before long, a shadow falls over the leaves, and another, and there is a whooshing sound as two flying horses swoop down from the sky. Beneath them, in the tree branches, nestled in the moss, are three newly hatched tiny winged foals.*

*For as long as anyone can remember, the children of Thrynne have looked at billowing clouds in the sky and wished on a cloud horse, always hoping, but never quite believing, that their wish will come true. No one has ever seen a cloud horse. But that is about to change . . .*

