


To my sister, Annabelle, and all present, past and future educators.
A kid-friendly book to inspire and engage the youthful minds of our future.

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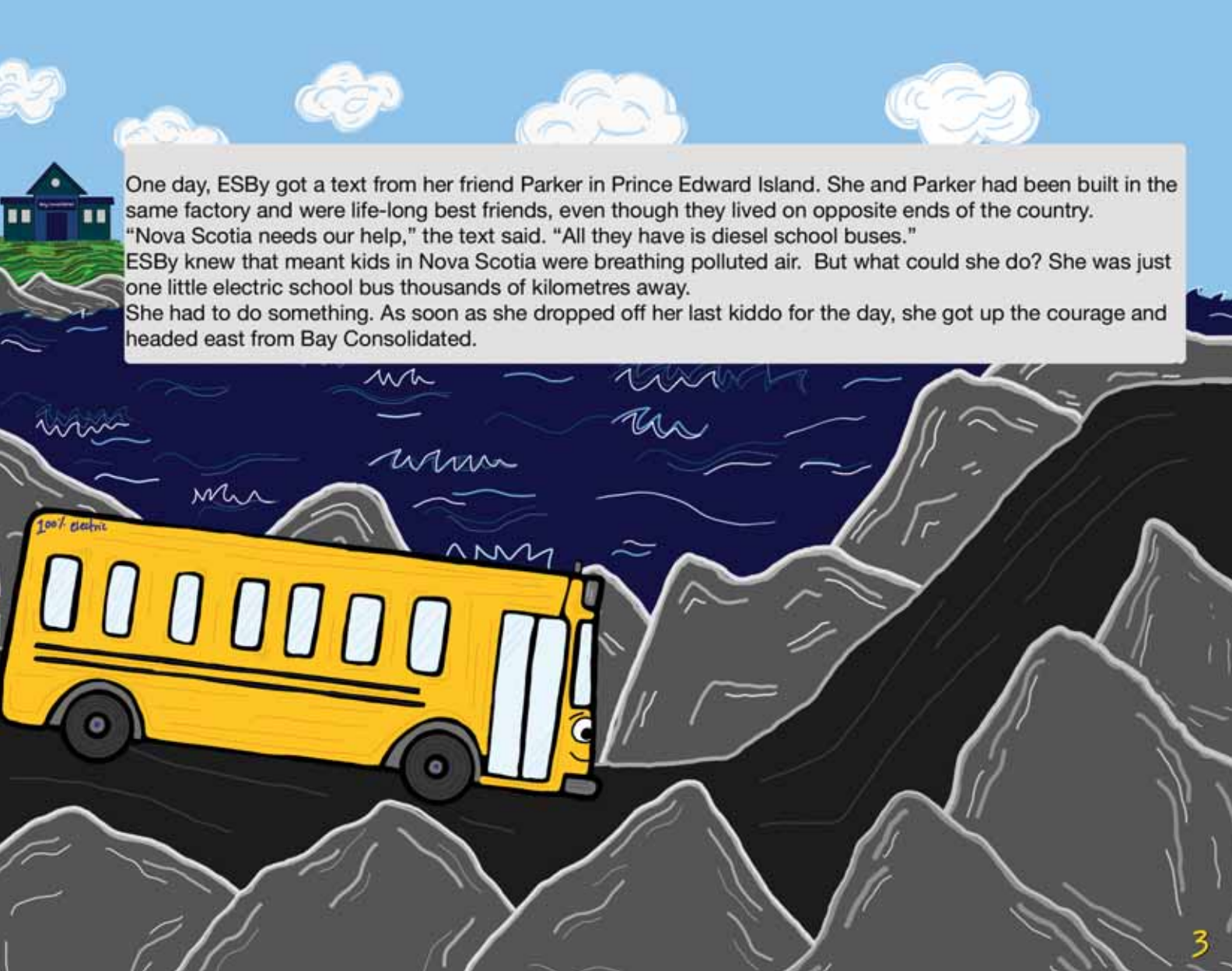
ESBs, or electric school buses, are the future of student transportation in Canada. The Ecology Action Centre's Senior Energy Coordinator Chris Benjamin and Energy Coordinator Abbygail Lefebvre wrote and illustrated this book to underscore the importance of getting ESBs in Canada, specifically in Nova Scotia. It's the story of a brave little electric bus, ESBY, who gathers her electric school bus friends on an exciting journey across Canada to electrify Nova Scotia's school transportation.





ESBy the electric school bus lives in the big West Coast city of Vancouver. She loves taking children to school, and every day she sees the Pacific, the world's biggest ocean. She also loves that her electric battery doesn't pollute the air like gas- and diesel-powered engines do. Every night, ESBy enjoys charging up with her friends at Bay Consolidated Elementary School.

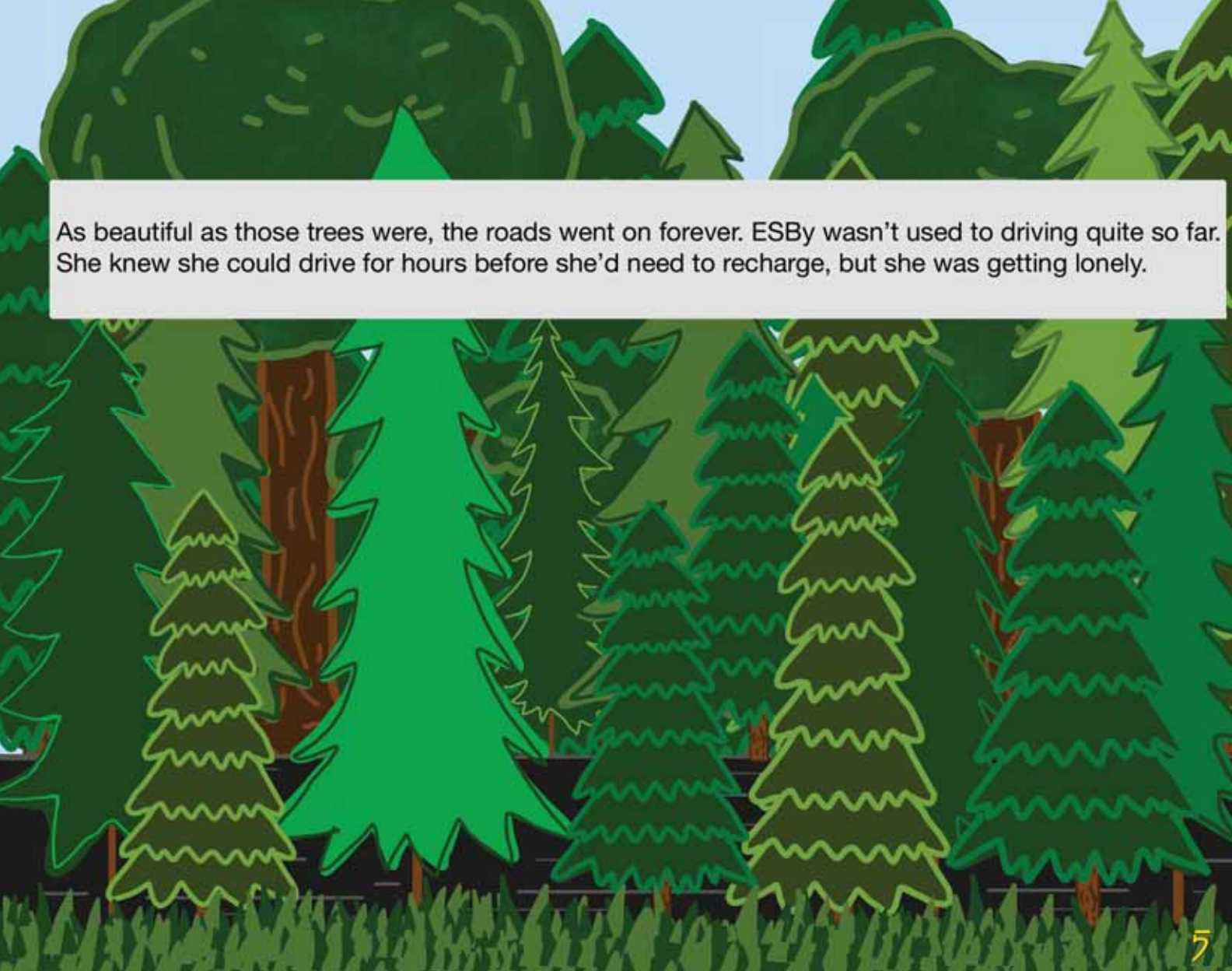




One day, ESBY got a text from her friend Parker in Prince Edward Island. She and Parker had been built in the same factory and were life-long best friends, even though they lived on opposite ends of the country. "Nova Scotia needs our help," the text said. "All they have is diesel school buses." ESBY knew that meant kids in Nova Scotia were breathing polluted air. But what could she do? She was just one little electric school bus thousands of kilometres away. She had to do something. As soon as she dropped off her last kiddo for the day, she got up the courage and headed east from Bay Consolidated.

ESBy drove and drove and drove, and the buildings got smaller and the trees got bigger. They smelled like the air freshener at the charging station, only they smelled....MORE!!



A stylized illustration of a forest. The top half shows a dense canopy of dark green trees against a light blue sky. A white rectangular text box is centered in the upper half. The bottom half shows a closer view of several tall, conical evergreen trees with brown trunks, set against a dark green background. The foreground is filled with a dense layer of smaller, lighter green foliage.

As beautiful as those trees were, the roads went on forever. ESBY wasn't used to driving quite so far. She knew she could drive for hours before she'd need to recharge, but she was getting lonely.



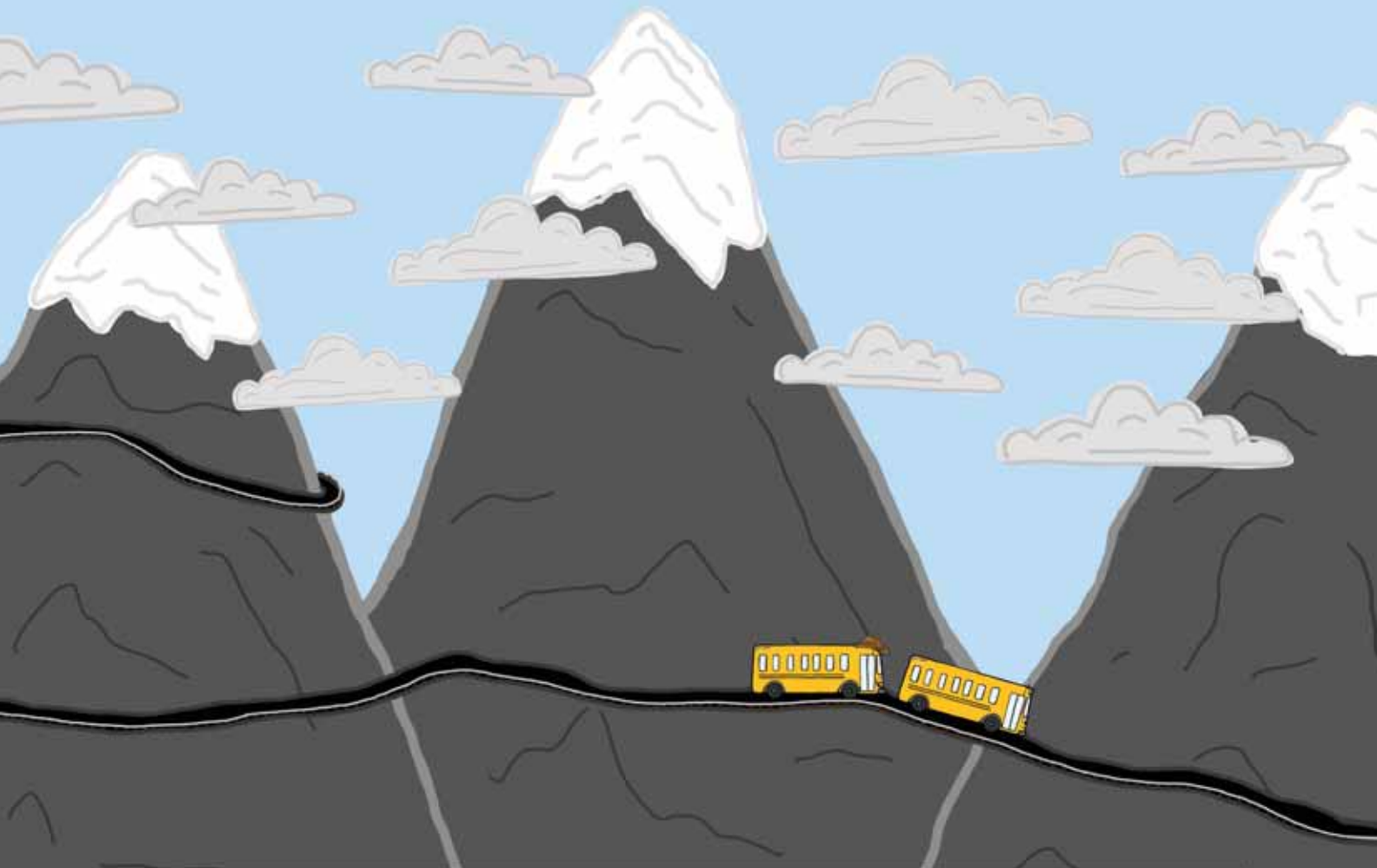
When ESBY reached the high white-capped mountains, she got a wonderful surprise.



She tooted her horn hello at the electric school bus she saw in the other lane. "Hi hi hello! My name is ESBY!" She cried "From British Columbia." "I'm Alex," said the other electric school bus, "the pride of Alberta."




“I’m headed to Nova Scotia,” ESBy said. “They don’t have any of our kind there.”
“Oh my gosh. Well we’ll just have to see about that,” Alex said



ESBy was overjoyed. She just had to do a little dance.

“You mean you’ll come with me? I could use a travel buddy.”

“Yes, I’ll come with you! It’s fun to share adventures with someone else,” Alex said.



Alex led his new friend to his school, where they plugged in for the night. It was awfully hard to sleep. They were so excited for the journey ahead.

“So what’s the plan in Nova Scotia?” Alex wanted to know.
ESBy blushed. She didn’t have a plan at all.
Alex Spoke up.
“I say we find the person in charge and ask him to give our kind a chance”.
ESBy was relieved, now they had a plan.



They passed endless golden fields and the bluest skies ever seen. They stopped for a rest near some grazing cows when they met Sam. "Howdy!" Sam greeted them. "What a fine sight you are to see. I am the only electric school bus in all Saskatchewan, and I do get lonesome."



“You should join us”, ESBY said. “We’re on our way to Nova Scotia!
“Poor Nova Scotia doesn’t have any electric school buses,” Alex said.
“We’re going to change that.”



Sam really wasn't sure. Without Sam, Saskatchewan would only have diesel buses. In fact, one drove past them as they chatted, spewing fumes and making them cough. "I better stay," Sam said, "but I can show you where to plug in tonight."





Sad as they were to say goodbye to Sam, ESBY and Alex spent the next day driving through forests, which rolled on forever. They passed time sharing jokes. That is until ESBY told a joke and Alex didn't make a sound. ESBY slowed down and played her soft electric school bus jingle. "Alex?" She called.



Alex slowed and stopped.

“Sorry ESBY,” he said. “I’m getting tired and we haven’t seen a school in ages. Alex was right. Where were they going to plug in tonight?”

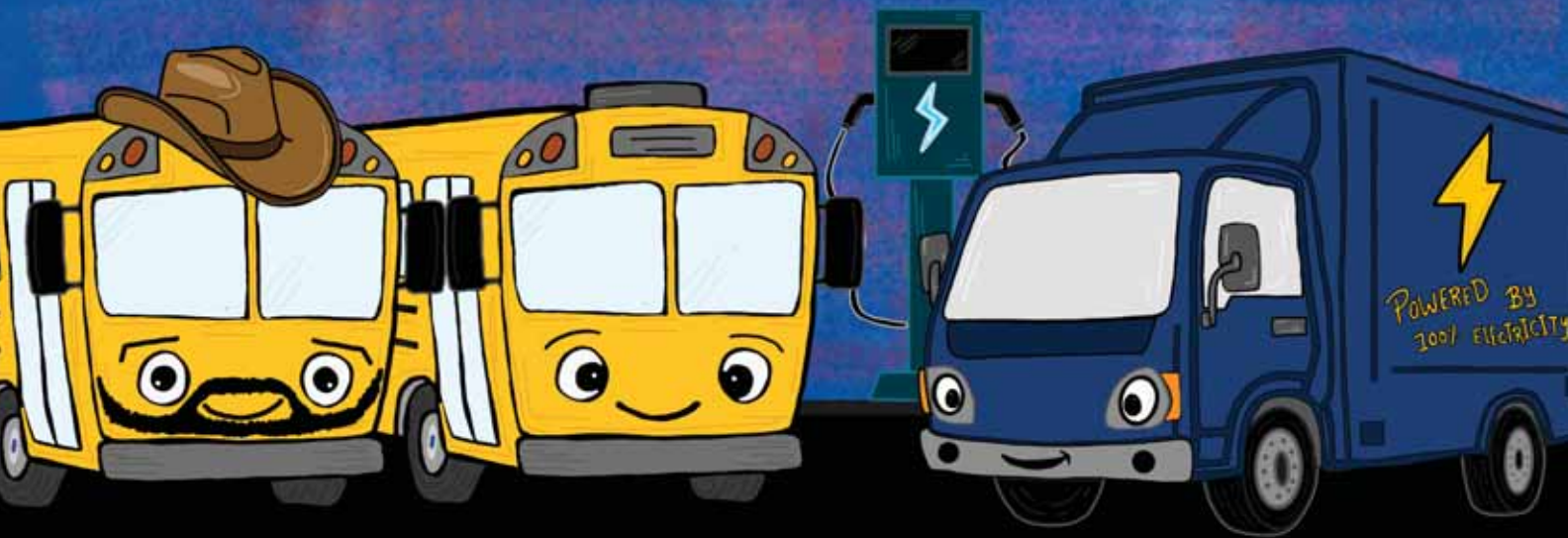


The buses slowed down, taking an exit into a small town. They drove by gas stations and a small hospital, then they came across a friendly electric car who mentioned a big charging facility down the road past the gas station. "There!" She said.



The buses drove up to a big parking lot filled with sleeping electric vehicles. They were welcomed by Tully the Electric Truck. "Toot toot" he said. "You don't look like any of my bus friends." "I'm ESBY from British Columbia." "And I am Alex from Alberta we're on our way to Nova Scotia."

Tully greeted them with a smile and told them they should keep an eye out for Oli, Tully's best school bus buddy. Tully tooted them goodnight and plugged in to get some sleep.



In the morning ESBY and Alex hit the road and eventually came to a cliff as big as hundreds of schools. Blue water crashing over the cliff. It sounded like thunder. "Welcome to Niagara Falls" a friendly bus cried. "I'm Oli. Tully told me you were making your way to the east coast, can I join you?" ESBY and Alex tooted their horns in joy and welcomed their new friend to join them on their adventure!



The second surprise was Sam!

“I decided to tag along if you’ll still have me!” Sam told them.

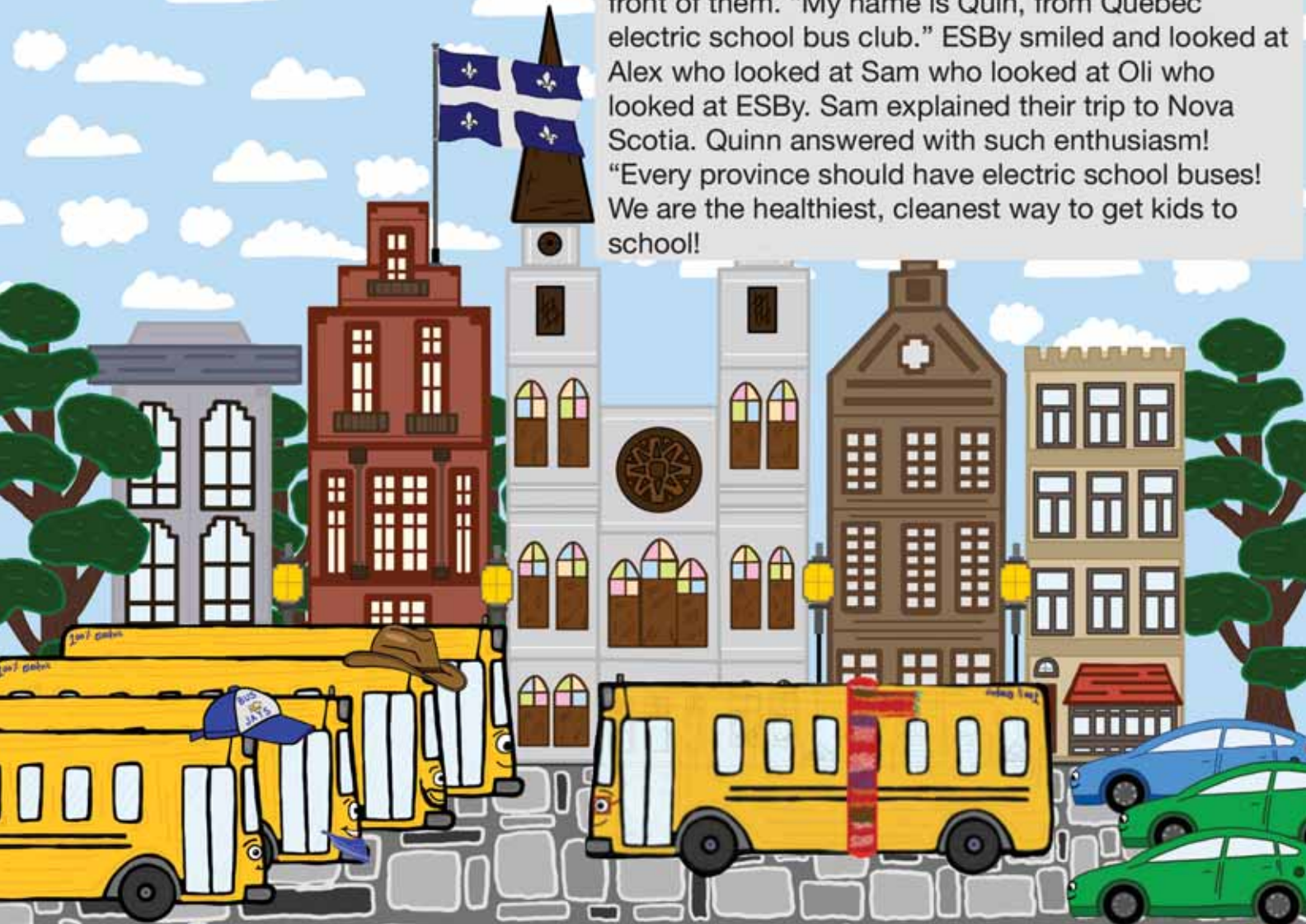
“At least Saskatchewan has me, Nova Scotia doesn’t have any Electric school buses, Nova Scotia needs us!!!” The four buses cried in joy!




The growing convoy soon came to beautiful, historic Quebec City. The four friends were careful while taking turns down the narrow cobblestone streets. They smiled politely as cars honked and said, "Voici, les autobus scolaires électriques!"

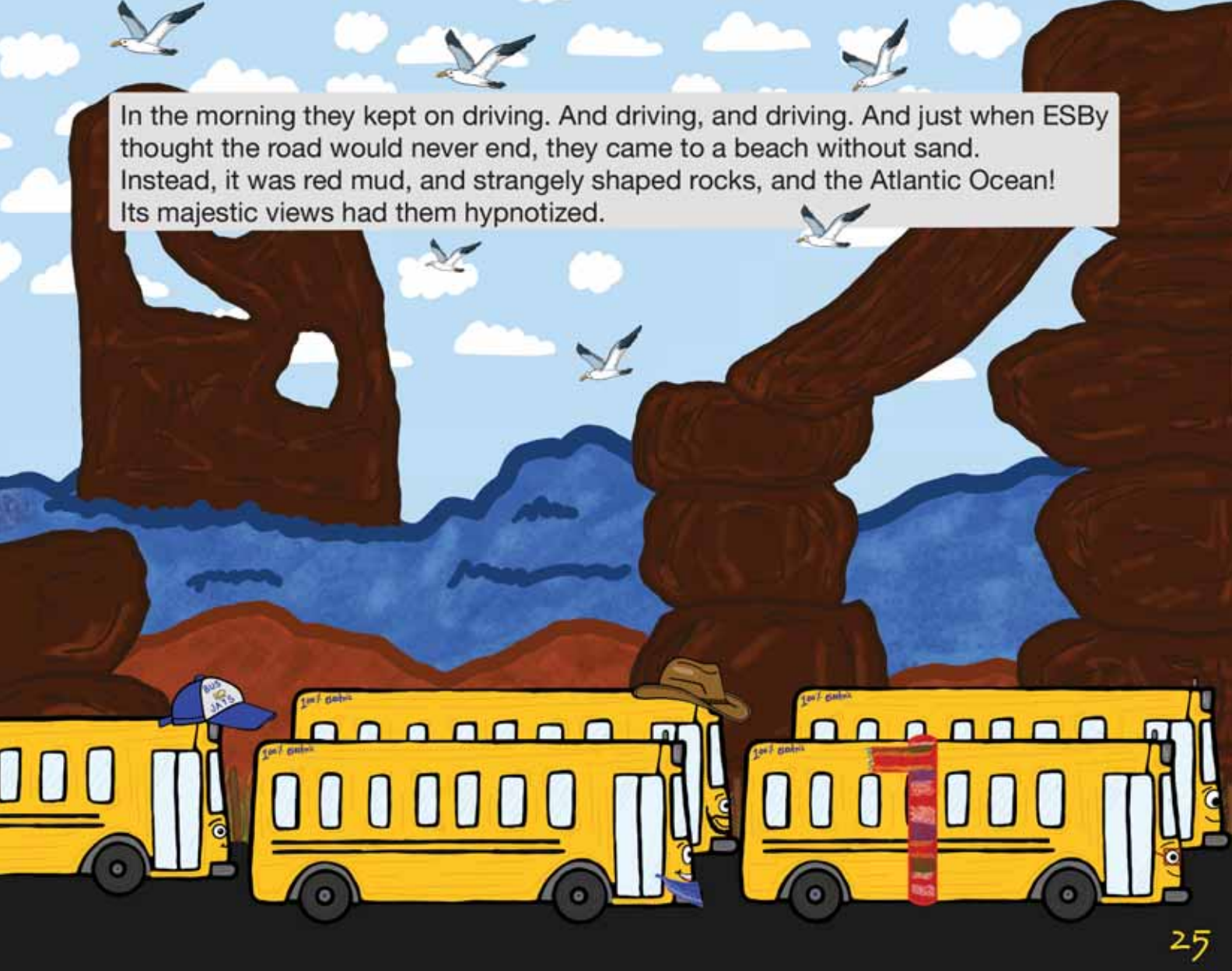


The cars cheered when yet another school bus cut in front of them. "My name is Quin, from Quebec electric school bus club." ESBY smiled and looked at Alex who looked at Sam who looked at Oli who looked at ESBY. Sam explained their trip to Nova Scotia. Quinn answered with such enthusiasm! "Every province should have electric school buses! We are the healthiest, cleanest way to get kids to school!"







Quin insisted on leading the way, driving along confidently.
“I know how to get to these government people in charge.”
They found a school charging station just before the New Brunswick border, which gave Quin a chance to brag a little.
“Quebec has the most electric school buses in all of Canada. We really want cleaner healthy transportation for our kids!”



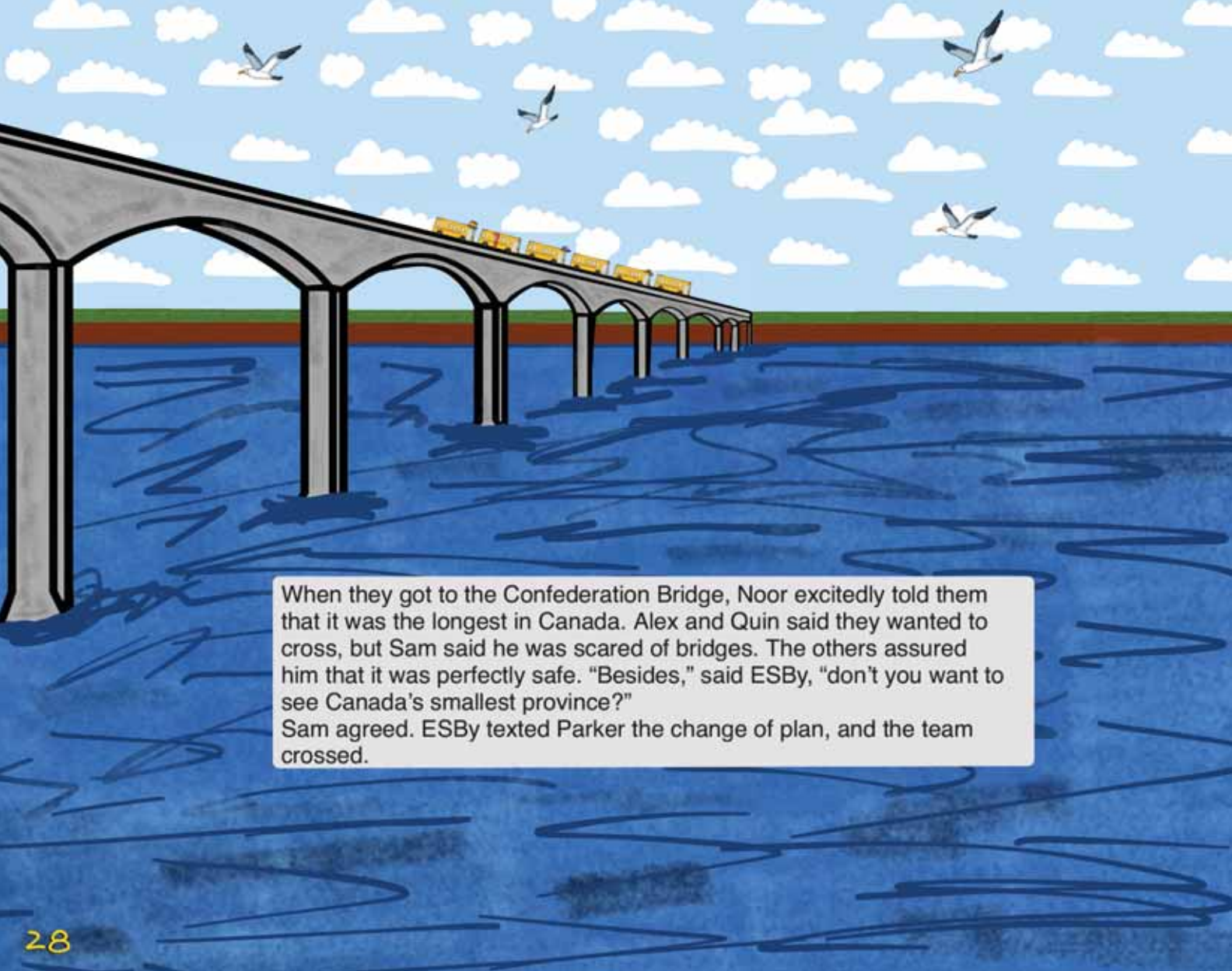
In the morning they kept on driving. And driving, and driving. And just when ESBY thought the road would never end, they came to a beach without sand. Instead, it was red mud, and strangely shaped rocks, and the Atlantic Ocean! Its majestic views had them hypnotized.



“Welcome to New Brunswick” cried a voice from across the beach. It was another of their kind! They all sang their school bus song in unison. “I’m Noor, from New Brunswick!”
“Follow me. I have somewhere we can all recharge!”

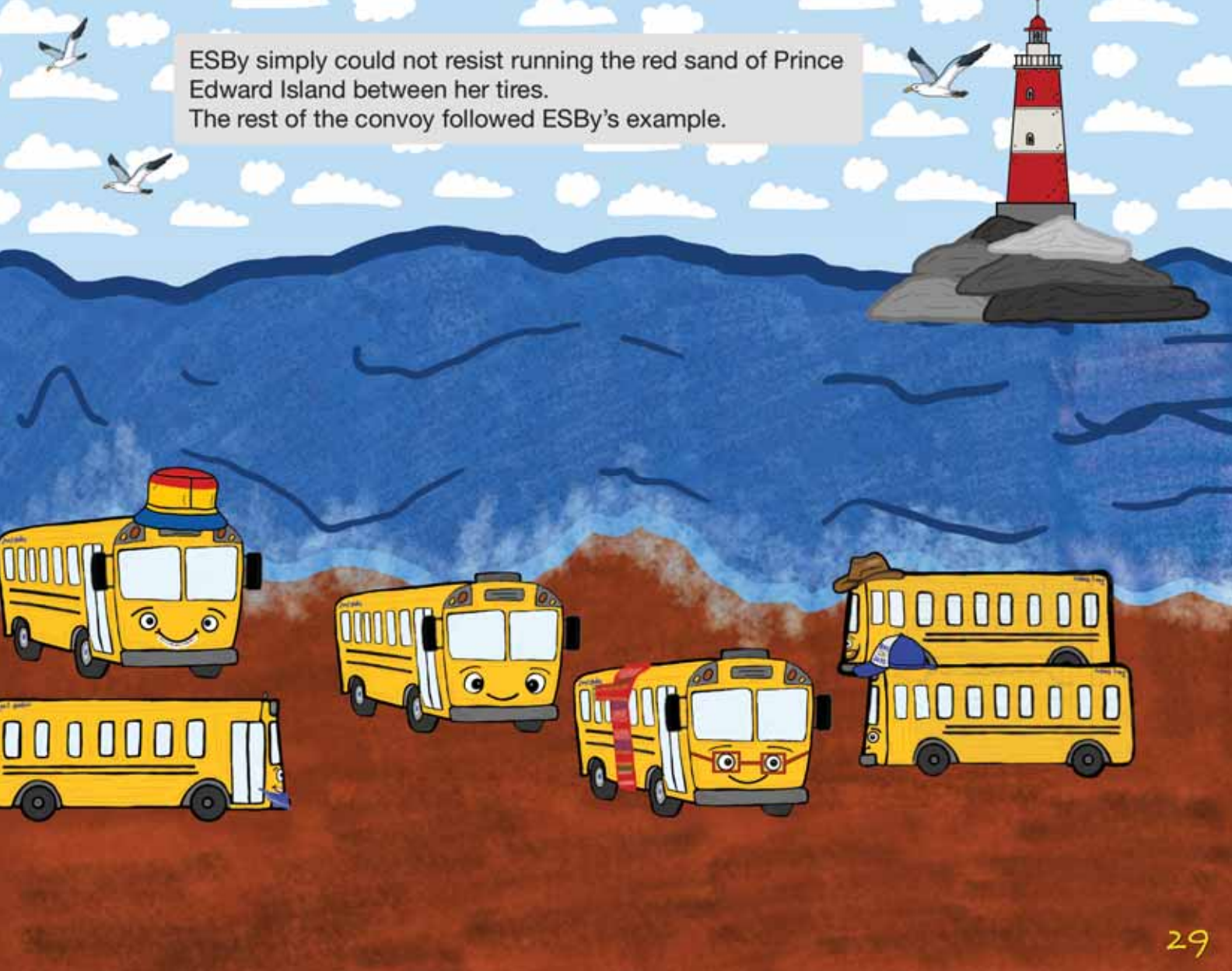


After a good night's sleep, they left the charging station, and ESBY texted Parker.
"Meet us on the New Brunswick side of the Confederation Bridge!"
Parker texted back right away:
"Who's 'us'?"
"You'll see," ESBY texted back, with a big grin.



When they got to the Confederation Bridge, Noor excitedly told them that it was the longest in Canada. Alex and Quin said they wanted to cross, but Sam said he was scared of bridges. The others assured him that it was perfectly safe. "Besides," said ESBY, "don't you want to see Canada's smallest province?" Sam agreed. ESBY texted Parker the change of plan, and the team crossed.

ESBy simply could not resist running the red sand of Prince Edward Island between her tires. The rest of the convoy followed ESBy's example.

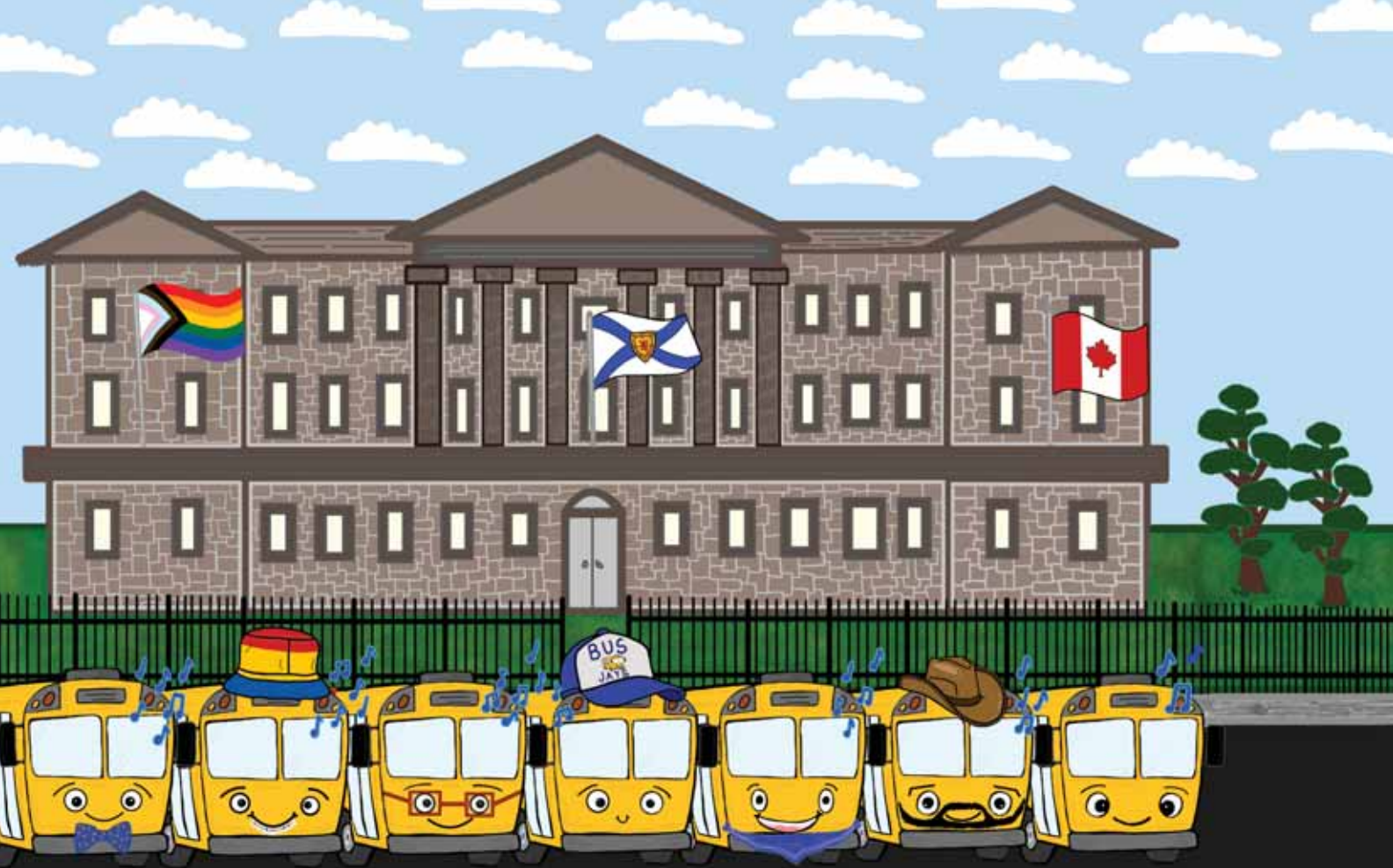




As they enjoyed the sand, a voice cried out, "Welcome to PEI, home of the best potatoes!" It was Parker! After quick introductions, the buses crossed back over to New Brunswick and then into Nova Scotia. They stared in awe at the silent windmills, generating clean energy. "Someday we'll be able to plug right into those," said Parker. ESBY explained that Parker always had big dreams for the future. ¹



The clean and mighty electric school bus convoy rolled silently to Halifax. As they got close to the city, everything moved slowly. “They call this rush hour?” said ESBY. “More like slow hour,” said Sam.



They rolled up to a fancy building made of old grey stones with colourful flags flying in front: white & blue, red & white, and rainbow. "This seems like a friendly place," Sam said. They played their electric school bus song to announce their arrival, and they waited. And waited. And waited.



Quin blasted his horn in frustration. “THAT’S got to get someone’s attention,” he said. An important looking man came outside. “I’m Thomas Timberland, and I am the premier of Nova Scotia. What’s all that racket about? What do you lot want?”



They had come all this way. Now was their chance. ESBy was nervous about speaking, but Quin rolled forward and said, “We are electric school buses from all across Canada. Where I come from there are thousands of us!”



"I come from a tiny island that has over a hundred of us!" Parker said. "We just think it's time Nova Scotia gave our kind a chance," ESBy said. "We are clean, quiet, and healthier for your children," Sam added. "And we aren't expensive," Oli said. "Cheaper actually," Alex said. "We don't use any fuel, only electricity and we are very efficient," said Noor.



The man nodded quietly. "Well" he said. "I hadn't thought of it that way." "How had you thought of it?" said ESBY. The man laughed so hard his belly shook like Santa clause. But ESBY was serious. They all were. "Well I will think about what you said," the premier said. He reached out his hand but none of them knew how to shake it. He nodded and wished them a safe journey home.



The buses rolled down by the harbour and watched children playing on a statue shaped like a wave. "Did we win?" Alex wanted to know. "Not yet," said Quin. "These things take time, they don't just happen in an instant."



"How long will it take?" ESBy said. She had come so far and just wanted to help Nova Scotia. "Don't worry, electric school buses are the future," Quin said. "But we have to keep working. Write letters. Get our friends back home to write letters too. Keep telling Nova Scotia to give electric school buses a chance!"

THE END



It was time for the convoy to head home and get back to taking the children to school, safely and cleanly. They agreed they would all stay in touch and would keep sending letters to Nova Scotia, reminding them that electric school buses are cleanest safest healthiest way to get to school.



But wait! It's not the end, Nova Scotia still needs our help! They still need electric school buses! So here's what you can do, with the permission of an adult like your parent or teacher you can help us buses write letters! Share your letters or drawings with your school principals, local government officials like MLAs and MPs or directly with the premier of Nova Scotia. Your letter or drawing should include your first name, age or grade, and school. Then explain why you want your school or hometown to get electric school buses! Maybe it's because we are cleaner, quieter, don't have smelly gases, maybe you think we are cool. Once your letter or picture is done send it off! Thank you for helping us on our mission.

MEET
THE
BUSES



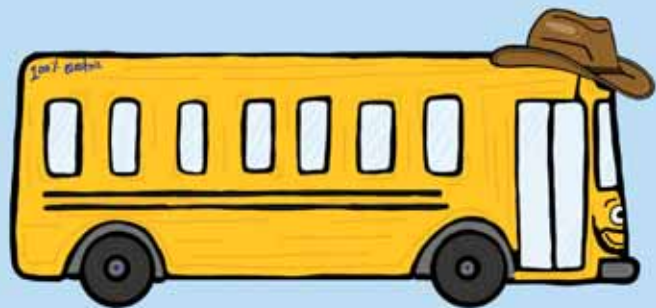
ESBY

FUN FACT

Electric School Buses have no tailpipe emissions, meaning they don't release any fumes like regular buses.



BRITISH COLUMBIA



ALEX

FUN FACT

Like tablets, laptops, and cellphones, electric school buses have a battery and are rechargeable.

ALBERTA

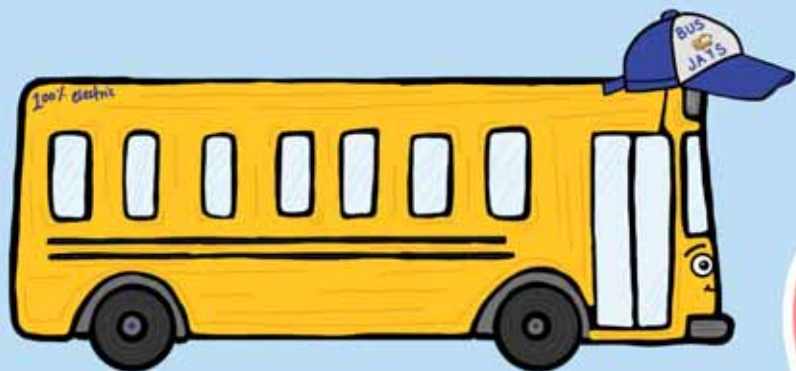


SAM

FUN FACT

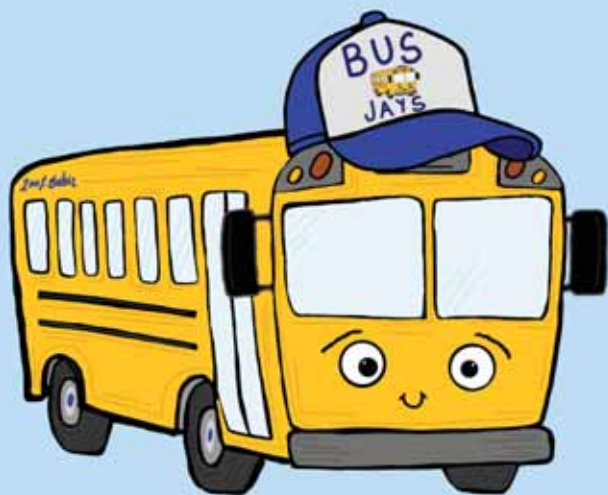
Electric school buses cost less to drive, because electricity is cheaper than gas or diesel!

SASKATCHEWAN



OLI

FUN FACT



Electric school buses are smoother and quieter than regular buses because they use a smart battery instead of a loud engine.

ONTARIO



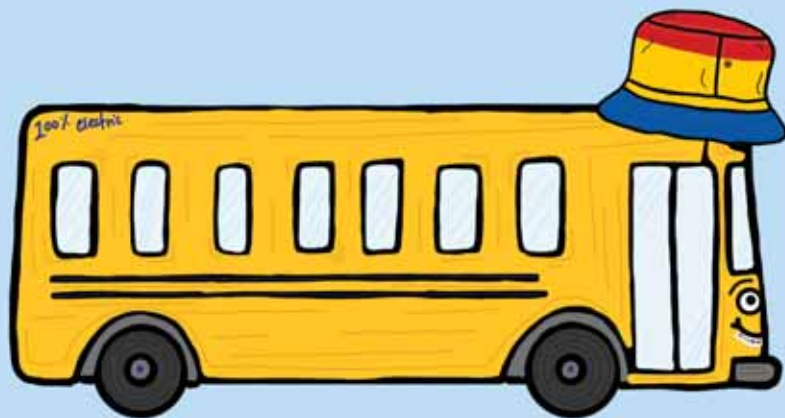
QUIN

FUN FACT

Electric school buses can plug into your school and power your school when the power goes out.



QUEBEC

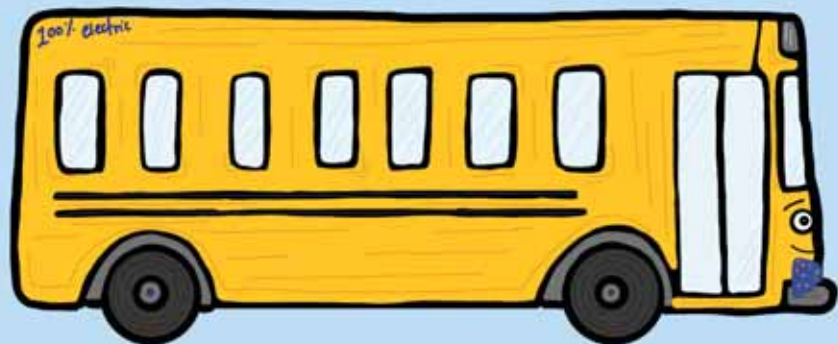


NOOR

FUN FACT

Electric school buses play a jingle just like an ice cream truck!

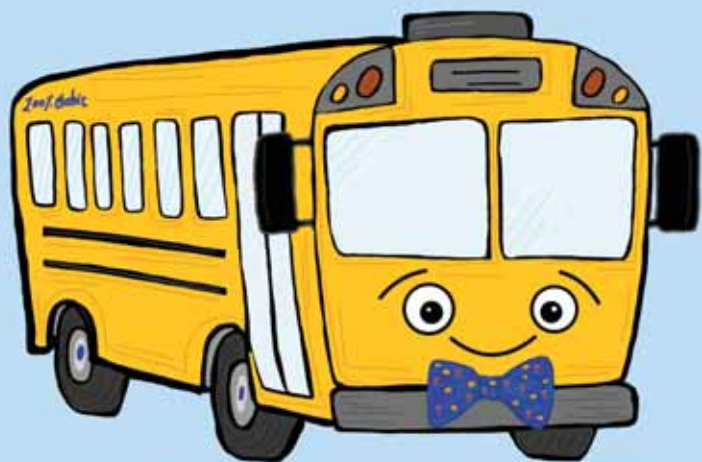
NEW BRUNSWICK



PARKER

FUN FACT

Some electric school buses have blue rims or blue paint, a way to spot them!



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

WE HOPE

TO BE IN

NOVA SCOTIA

SOON

CHRIS BENJAMIN - AUTHOR

Chris is a communications professional and experienced environmental campaigner with two decades of experience. He was a regular writer for The Coast for many years and has written six books. At Ecology Action Centre, Chris mostly works to make sure buildings use as little energy as possible because buildings are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. He lives in Halifax with his partner, two children and a 90-pound lapdog.



ABBY LEFEBVRE - ILLUSTRATOR

Abby is an environmental professional from Halifax and has a background in sustainability. At the Ecology Action Centre, Abby works on getting Nova Scotia's electricity grid and cars greener and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Abby has always had a passion for illustration and storytelling.

