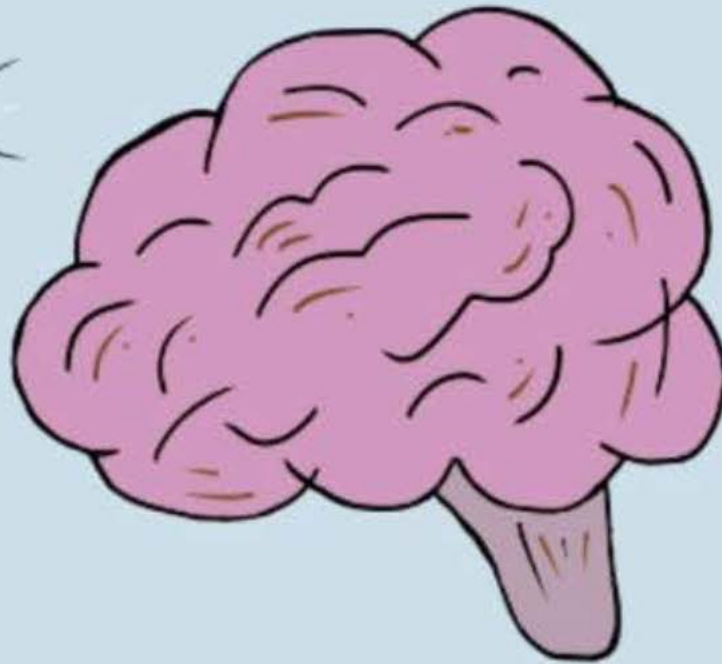


Anya's Magical Brain Adventure



By: Eleanor Day
Illustrated By: Anne Zhu

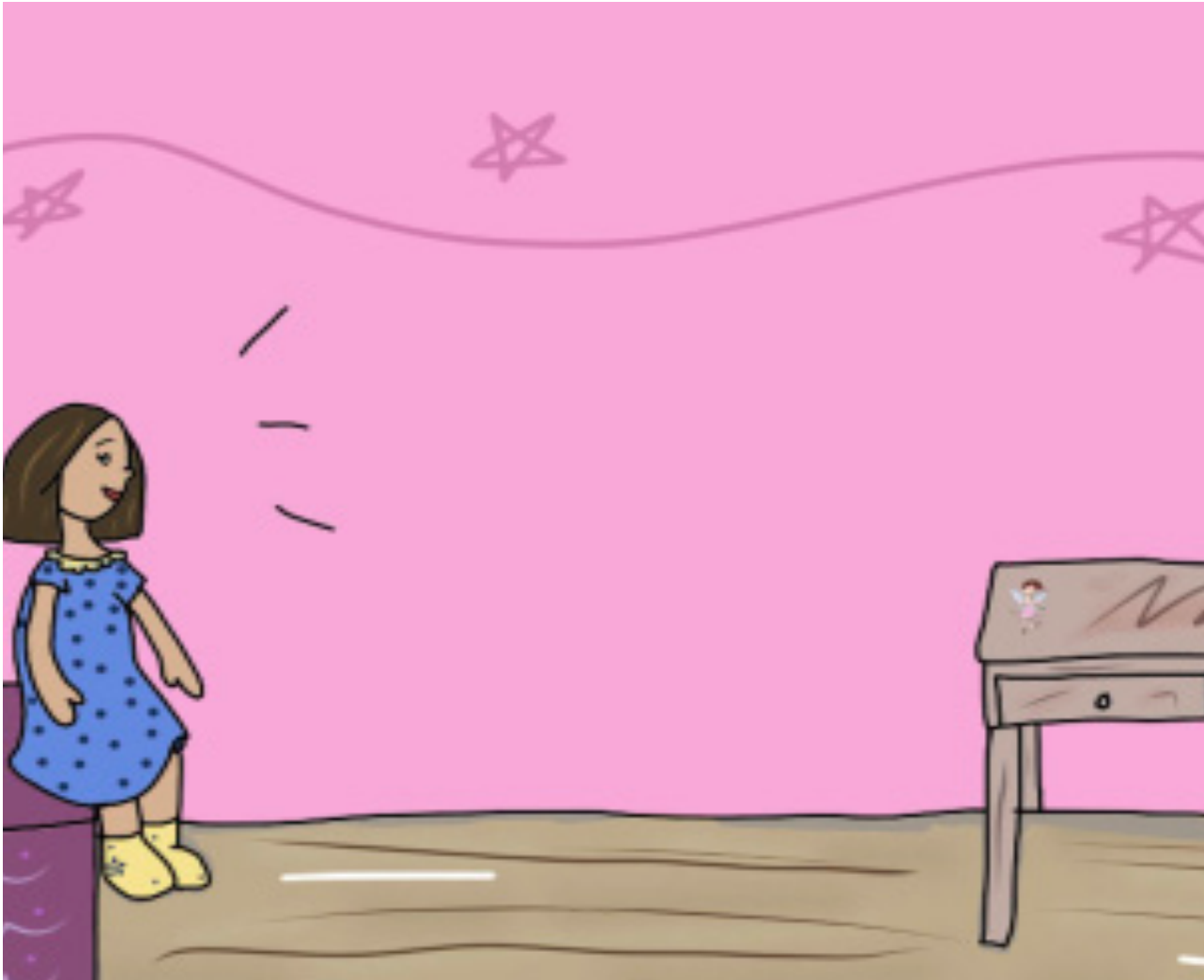
Anya's Magical Brain Adventure

By: Eleanor Day
Illustrations By: Anne Zhu

I would like to thank my English teacher, James Foster, for being my project advisor and helping me edit this book. I would additionally like to thank Sally Kinsey for her help in planning and executing this book project.



It was a rainy night and Anya laid in bed unable to fall asleep. A mysterious noise was coming from her dresser and, try as she might, she could not seem to spot what or who was causing the racket. Curious, she turned on her night light, put on her slippers, and crept closer to the sound.



As she approached the desk, a small object came into display. As she got closer, she was surprised to see that it was not an object but rather a small fairy, no taller than a fly.

“Anya,” the fairy said, “have you ever wondered how your mind works the way that it does?”



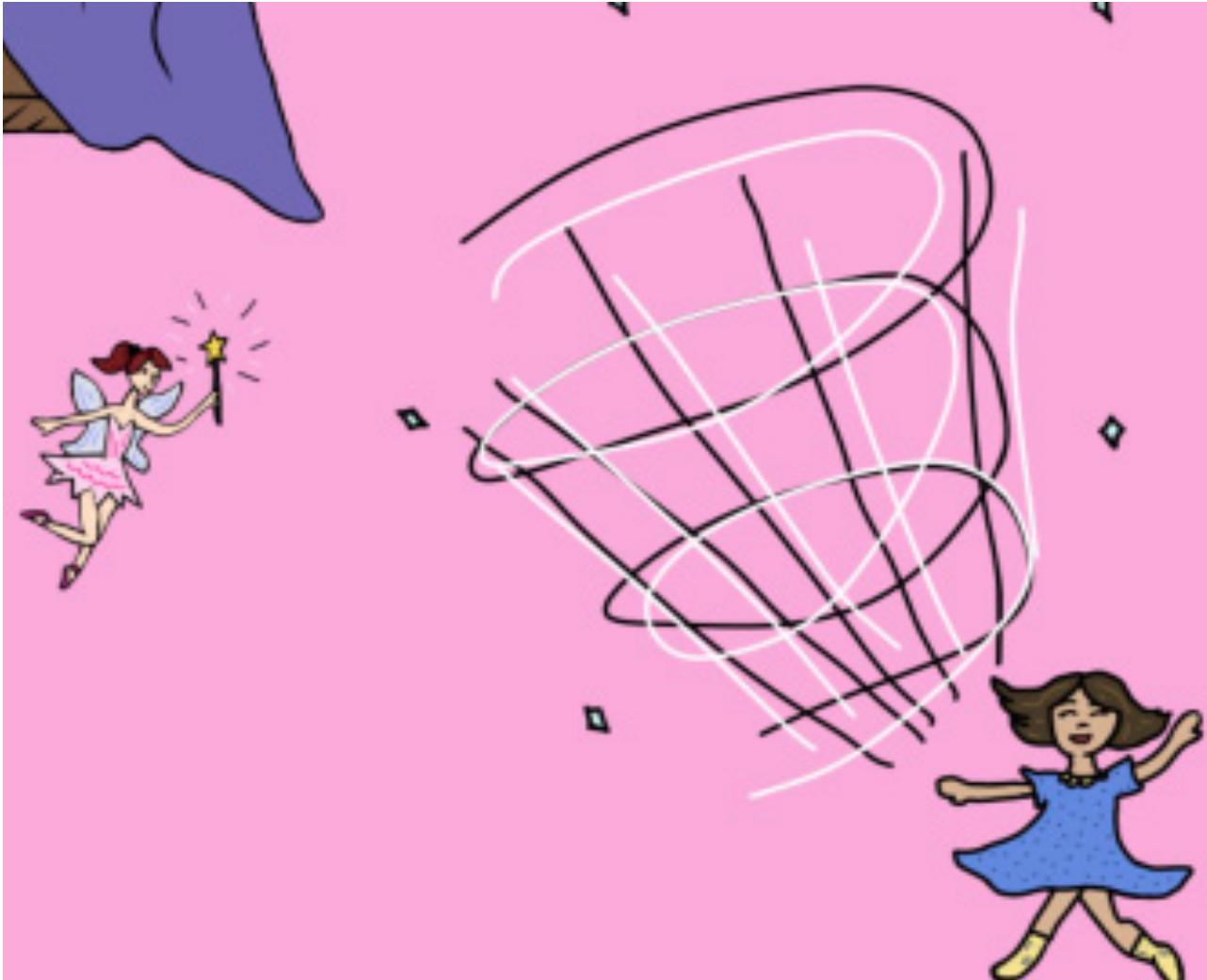
Surprised and stunned by the magical being before her, Anya gasped in disbelief.

“Who are you?” she exclaimed.

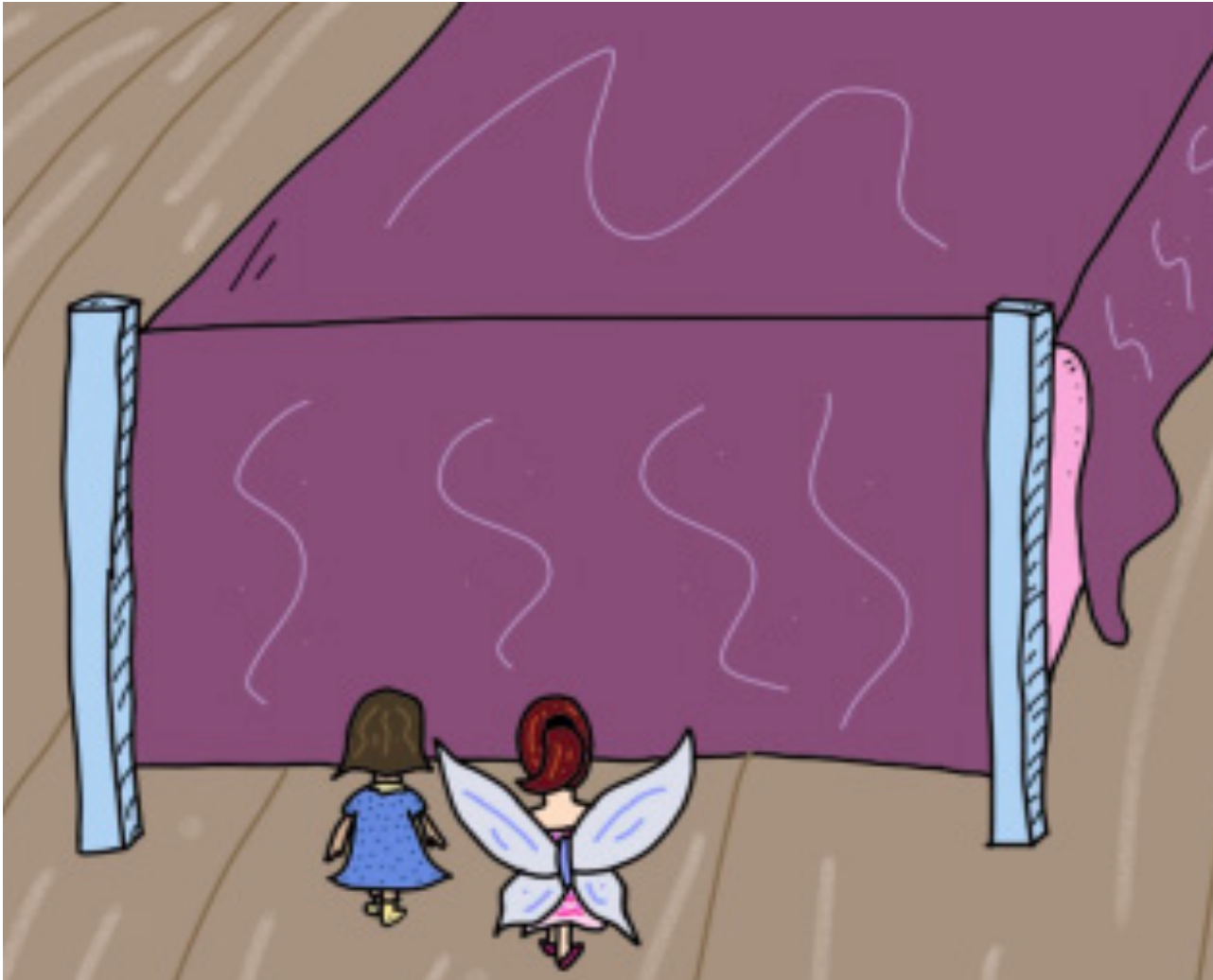
The tiny fairy, smiling up at her as if having heard this reaction before, replied, “I am Minerva, the official fairy guide of the brain. Would you like to take a tour of yours?”



Anya crept closer. “I am too big to fit inside of my brain,” she said. Minerva shook her head. “That is an easy fix,” she replied. Astonished, Anya thought to herself, would she want to tour her brain? She had always been curious about how her brain was able to control so many things in her body. Anya nodded her head smiling. “Yes, I would like a tour of my brain,” she said excitedly.



Within an instant everything around Anya grew hazy as the furniture around her grew and grew in size.

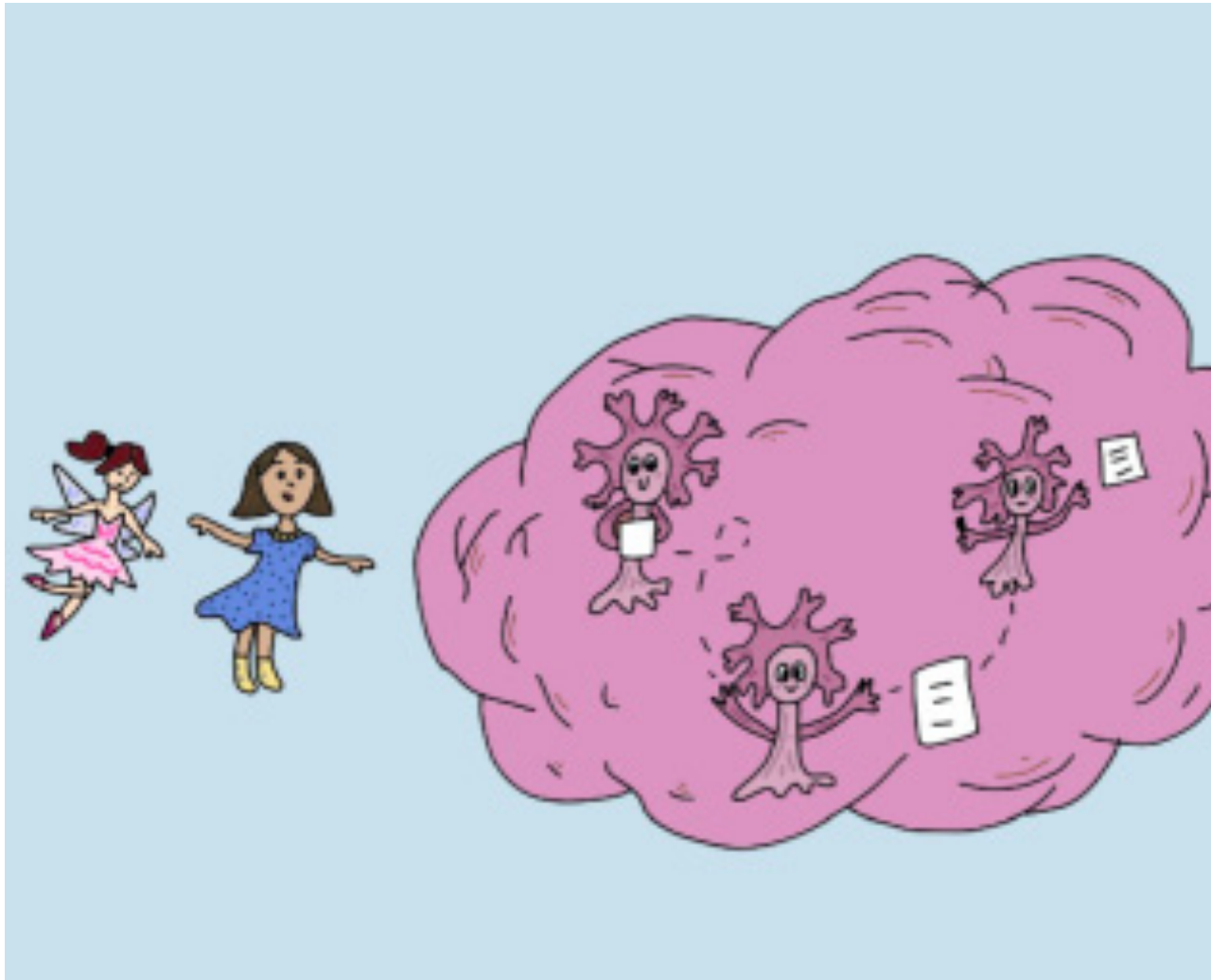


When Anya's surroundings finally stopped changing, she looked around. She could see herself still sleeping in bed. But, if she was in bed, then how could she be here on the floor?

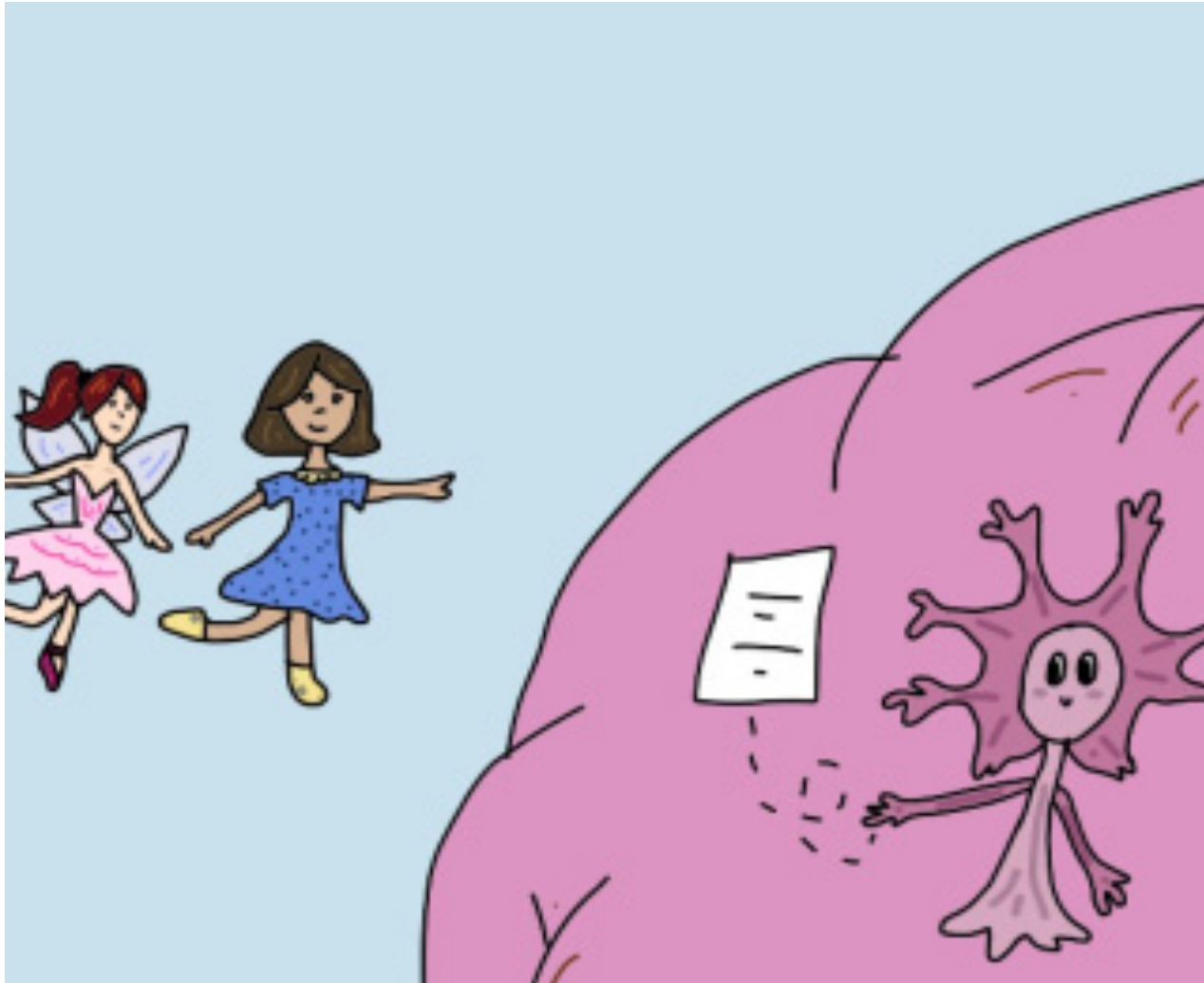


“Follow me,” said Minerva, “Do not worry, you will get you back in your body after we are finished with the tour.”

With that, Minerva flew them over to Anya’s sleeping self and with the help of brain fairy magic, they entered into Anya’s skull.



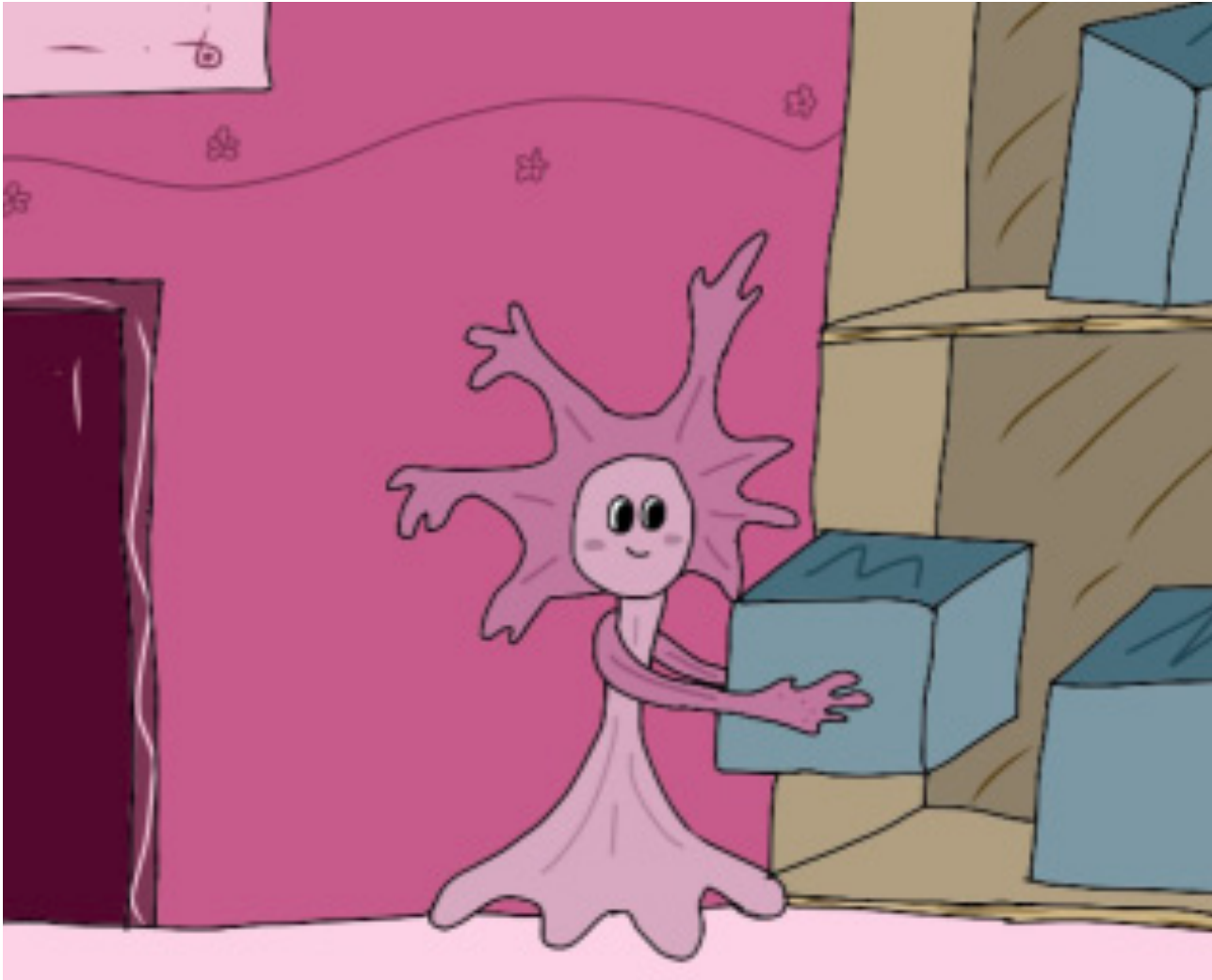
Within her head, the pair flew to the surface of Anya's brain. The organ was pink and wrinkly, like Anya had seen in pictures, but scattered around the surface of the brain were humans of sorts - just about the size of them presently. They were each crowded around a piece of paper, pens in hand, scribbling away. "Is that my brain?" Anya asked. Minerva nodded, "This is the outside of your brain."



Minerva continued, “You can see your cerebral cortex.” “What is a cerebral cortex?” Anya wondered, excited to learn. “The cerebral cortex is important for information processing. The people, or neurfolk as they are called, are reading information given by the senses and writing down notes so that the brain can process the information,” Minerva said.



After walking around the cerebral cortex for a couple of minutes, the pair entered the brain, arriving at the hippocampus. Here, the walls of the room were lined with shelves of stacked boxes. “What is this place?” inquired Anya, “Is the hippocampus a storage facility?”



“Sort of,” Minerva explained, “The hippocampus helps store memories and learned information. Right now, the neurfolk workers are packaging these bits into boxes so that you can remember them for later.”

“Cool!” Anya exclaimed, excited for the next stop.



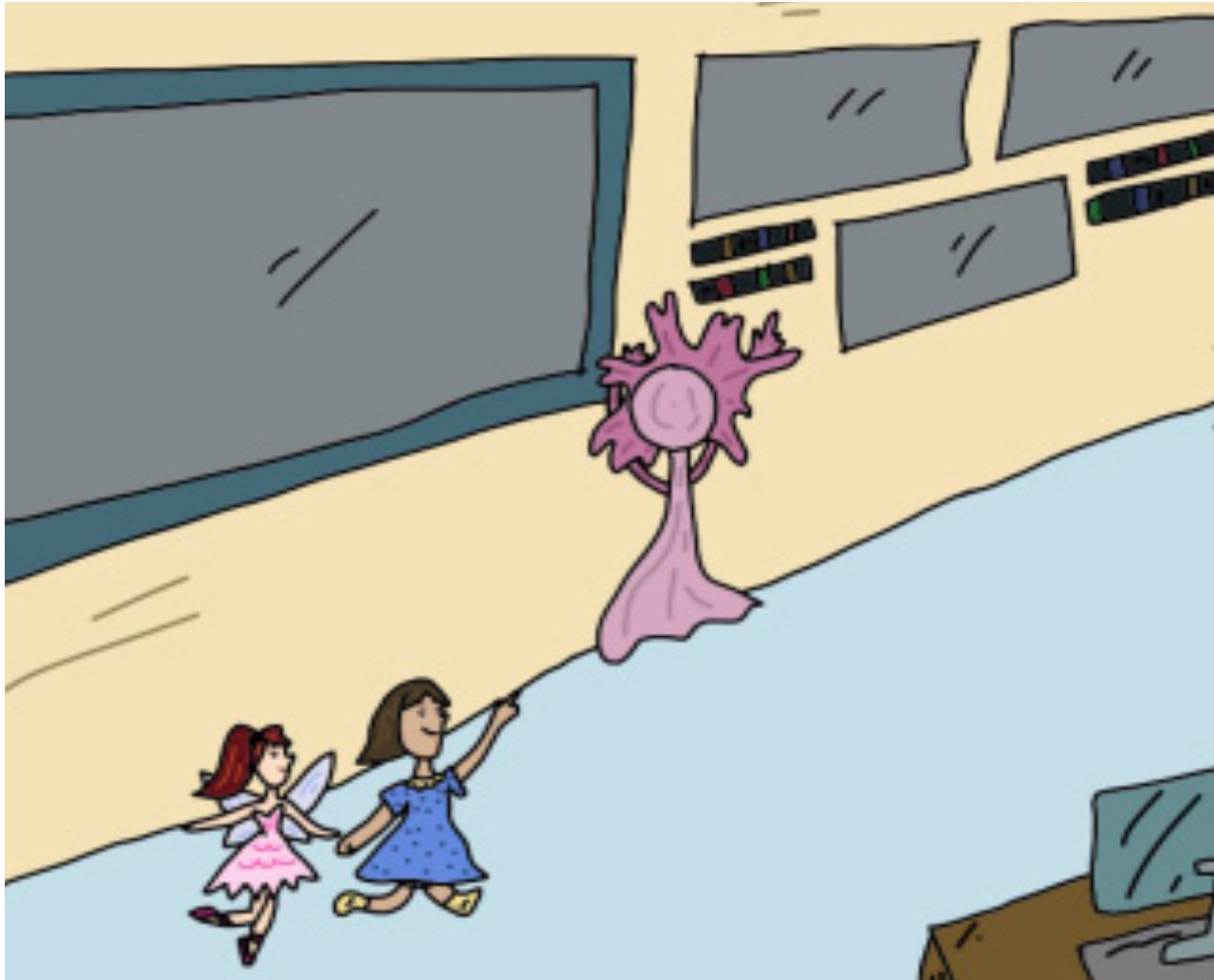
Their next stop was a room full of several neurfolk. Each of them were quivering with fright as they paced about the room. “Why are they so anxious?” Anya pondered. “We are in the amygdala,” said Minerva, “The amygdala controls emotions like fear, which is why so many of them seem to be so frightened.” “Ah, I see,” exclaimed Anya as they continued towards their next stop.



Soon, they approached what appeared to be a bustling circus. Inside, they found a grand performance full of animals and clowns and tight rope walkers. At its center, a ringmaster directed the show.



“There,” Minerva pointed at the ringmaster, “is the cerebellum. Just like he ensures everything runs smoothly in the circus performance, he also makes sure that all of your body’s actions flow flawlessly. He controls your balance and coordination!” Anya looked on in excitement. It was so interesting how the brain could control so many things!



The next stop was a control center, filled with buttons and high-quality security cameras. Plenty of neurfolk stood pressing buttons and talking to each other through walkie-talkies. “Is this like the brain’s security?” questioned Anya. “It’s more like the control team,” said Minerva. “This is the brain stem. In here, the neurfolk make sure that your critical life functions are running smoothly!”



As they approached their next stop an obstacle stood in their way – they had to cross a balance beam to continue their journey on the path!



“This is the hypothalamus,” explained Minerva. “It helps the body find balance in things such as body temperature, hunger, and thirst so that it can function properly.” Nodding in understanding, Anya stepped forward and crossed the beam. Together, the pair progressed to their next destination.



Their final stop was a sleep chamber. Within this room, the lights were dimmed and pillows and blankets were strawn on the ground. Yawning after an exhausting journey, Anya layed down on the floor next to one of the cushions. “Is this a nap room?” she questioned. Minerva smiled, “Similar! This is the reticular network. It is in charge of regulating sleep and wake transitions.”



“Hmm,” Anya hummed tiredly, “That’s cool. This journey has been wonderful! I think I might have to take a quick nap though.” Smiling, almost as if anticipating this, Minerva nodded in understanding. “Yes, no worries, I am glad I got to teach you about your brain and the different functions of its structures,” she said. “Thank you,” Anya murmured as she fell into a deep slumber,



When Anya woke up, she expected to find herself still in the reticular network next to her newfound friend. However, to her surprise she was tucked within the covers of her bed at home. Confused, she sat up, looking around. Had her journey just been a dream?



Just then, Anya noticed a piece of paper with black ink writing on her dresser. “Thank you for letting me be your tour guide,” the message read. Although there was no signature, Anya knew who had written the note. She smiled to herself and began getting ready for the day with a newfound appreciation for her brain.