

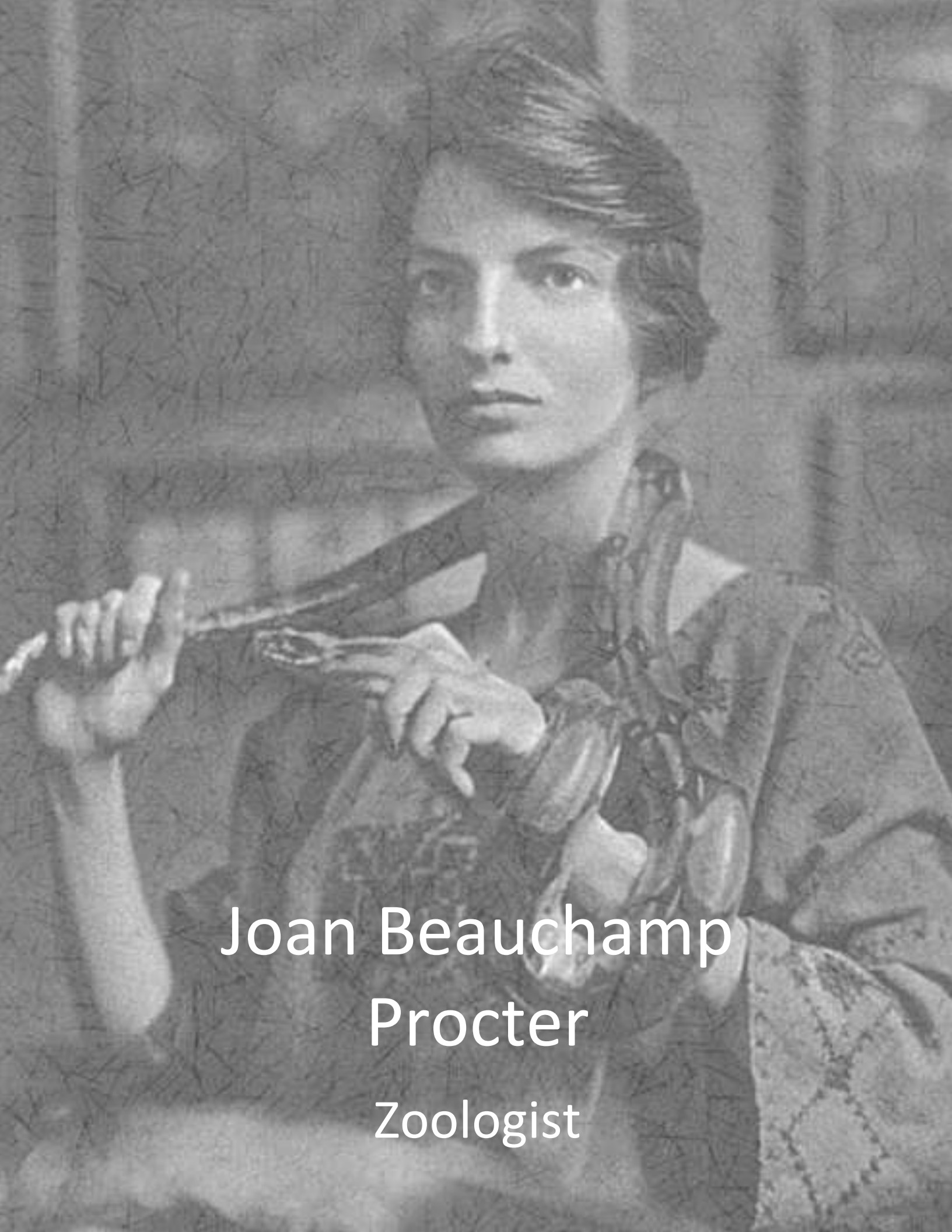
Girls Who Grew Up to Change the



Joan Beauchamp
Procter

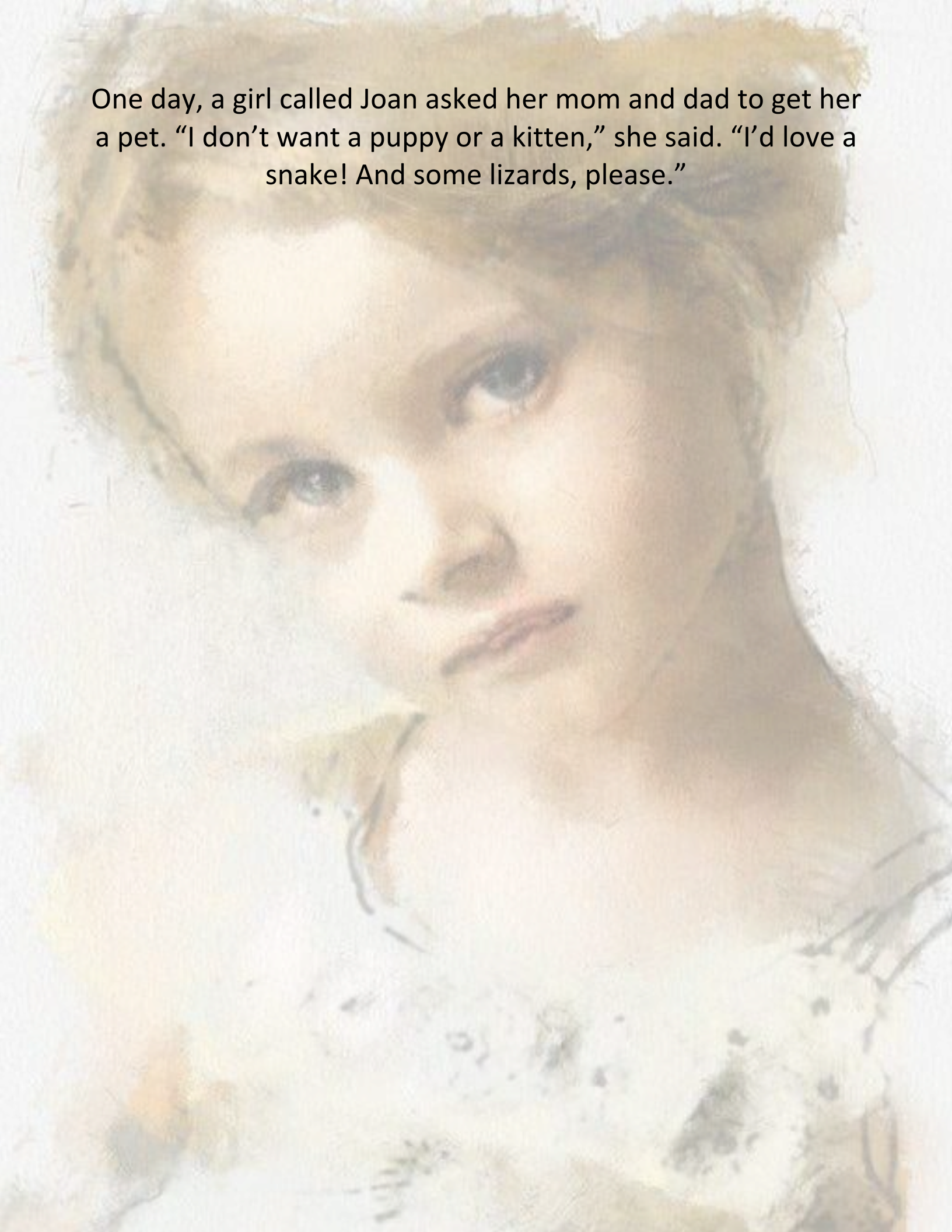


Lilian Bland



Joan Beauchamp
Procter
Zoologist

One day, a girl called Joan asked her mom and dad to get her a pet. "I don't want a puppy or a kitten," she said. "I'd love a snake! And some lizards, please."



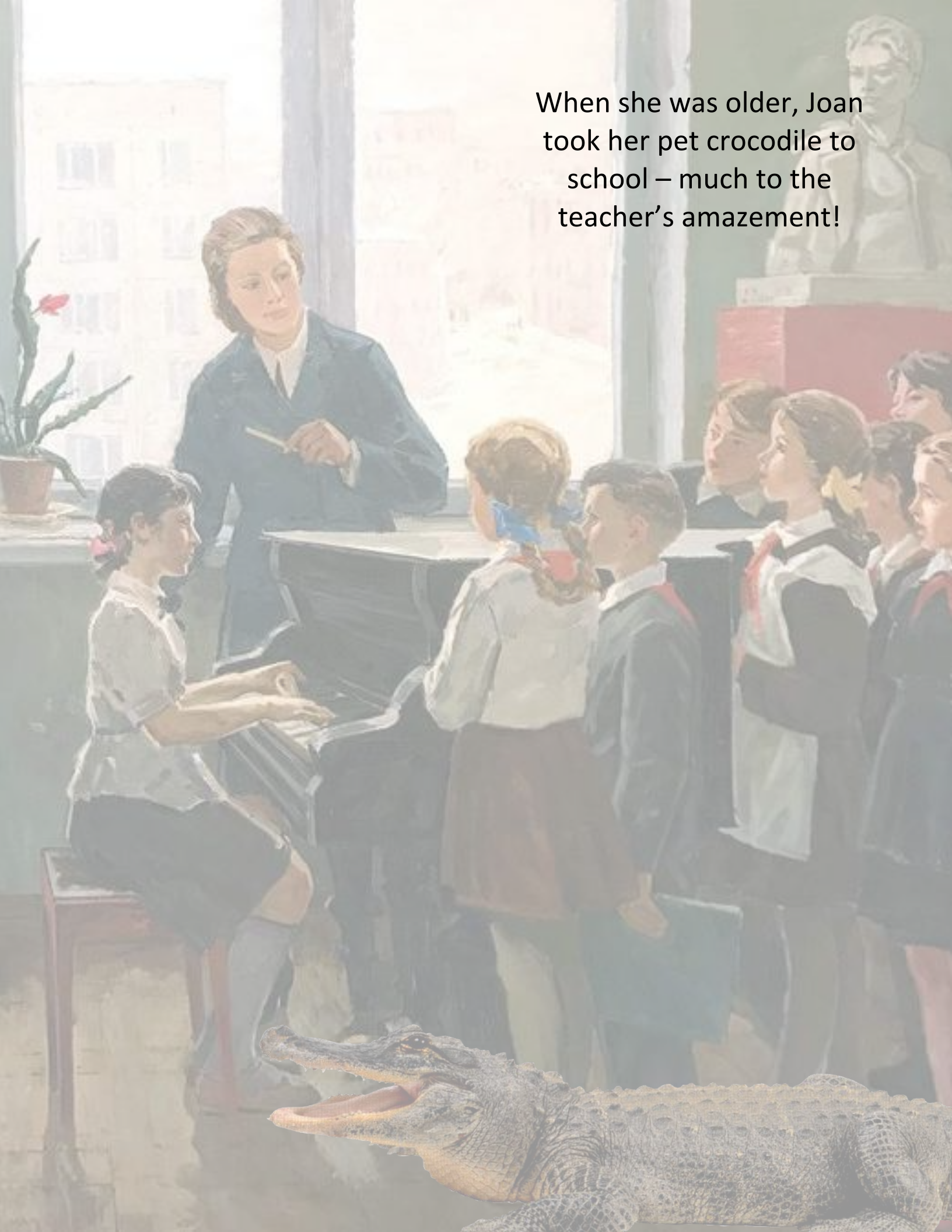
By the time she was ten,
Joan was looking after lots
of reptiles.



One of them, a large
Dalmatian wall lizard, was
her favourite, they
travelled everywhere
together, and even sat side
by side at mealtimes.



When she was older, Joan
took her pet crocodile to
school – much to the
teacher's amazement!



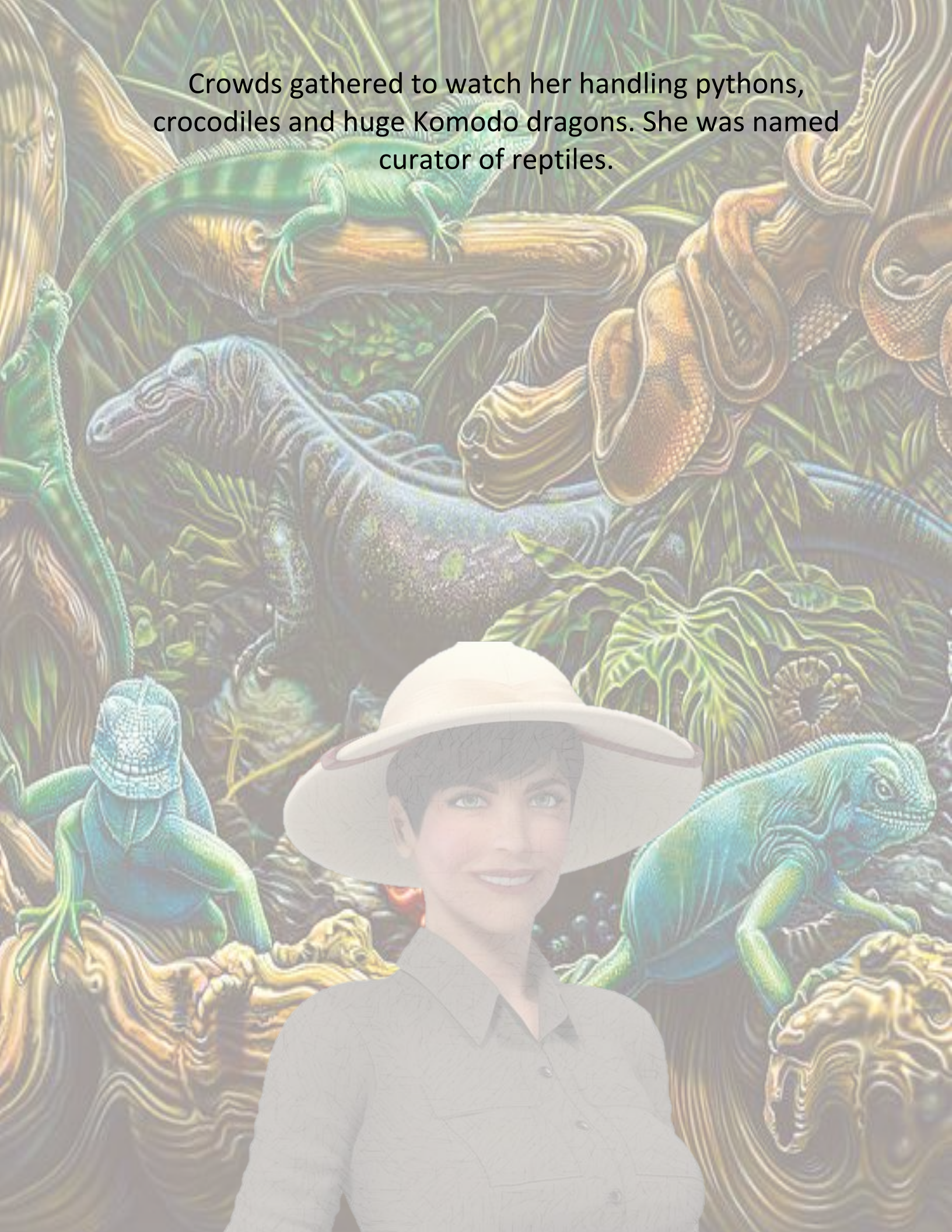
These creatures fascinated Joan. She became a world expert in herpetology – the branch of zoology dealing with reptiles and amphibians – and got a job at the British Natural Museum.



Then one day, London Zoo asked her to design a new reptile house. She did an excellent job and became something of a celebrity.



Crowds gathered to watch her handling pythons,
crocodiles and huge Komodo dragons. She was named
curator of reptiles.



A Komodo dragon named Sumbawa became Joan's special pet. Sumbawa followed her everywhere. Joan would stroke and pat her, and feed her chicken, pigeon and eggs. Sometimes, she "steered" the dragon along by holding her tail.



Joan understood these animals so well that she knew when they were sick and exactly what to do to make them better.



Her own health problems, however, were harder to cure. She was constantly in pain and had been for much of her life. But this didn't stop her from following her passion – even when it meant going to work in a wheelchair, with Sumbawa lumbering along happily behind her.



Lilian Bland

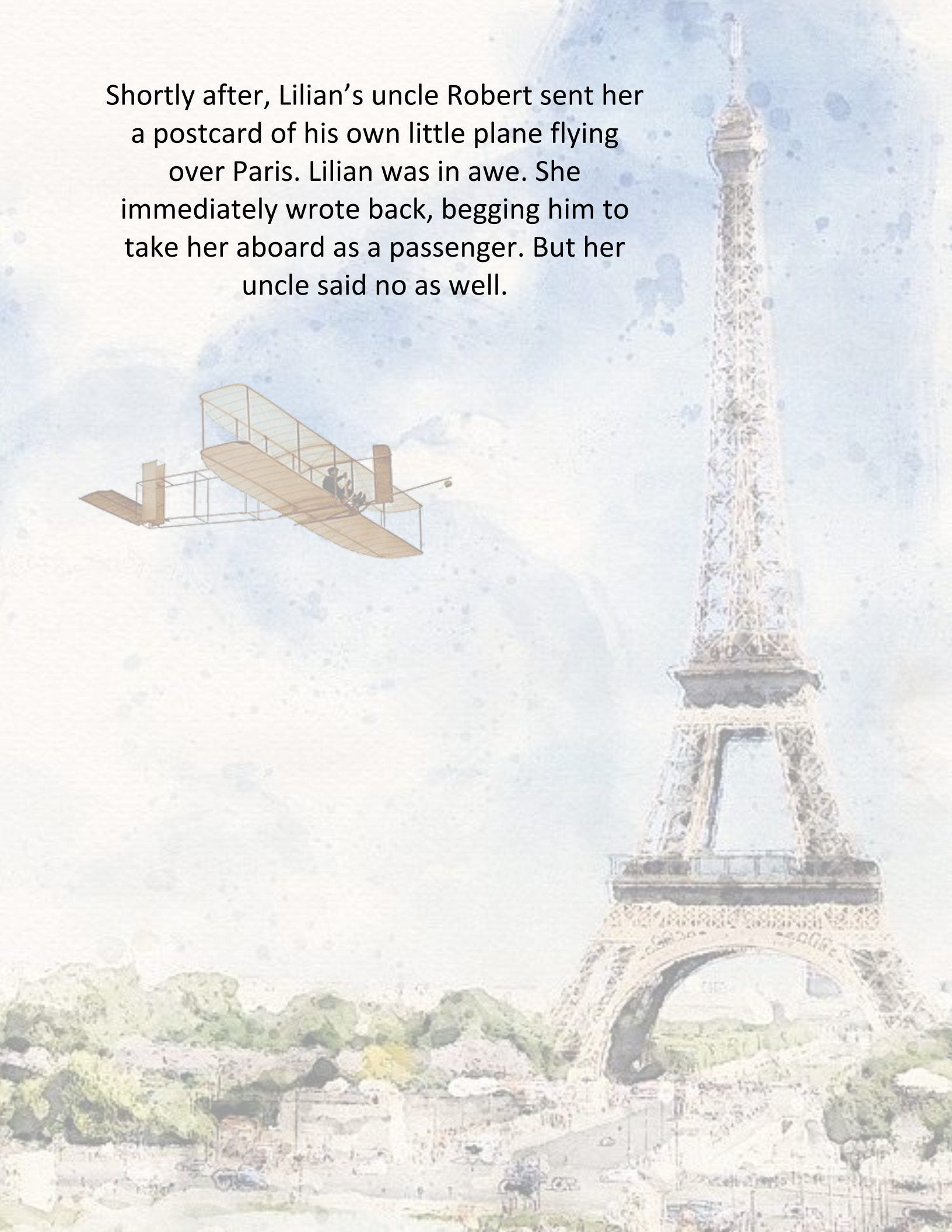
Aviator



The first time Lilian was in a plane, it was with her boyfriend. He took her up in his glider, but when she asked, "Can I fly it?" he said no, and Lilian got really mad.



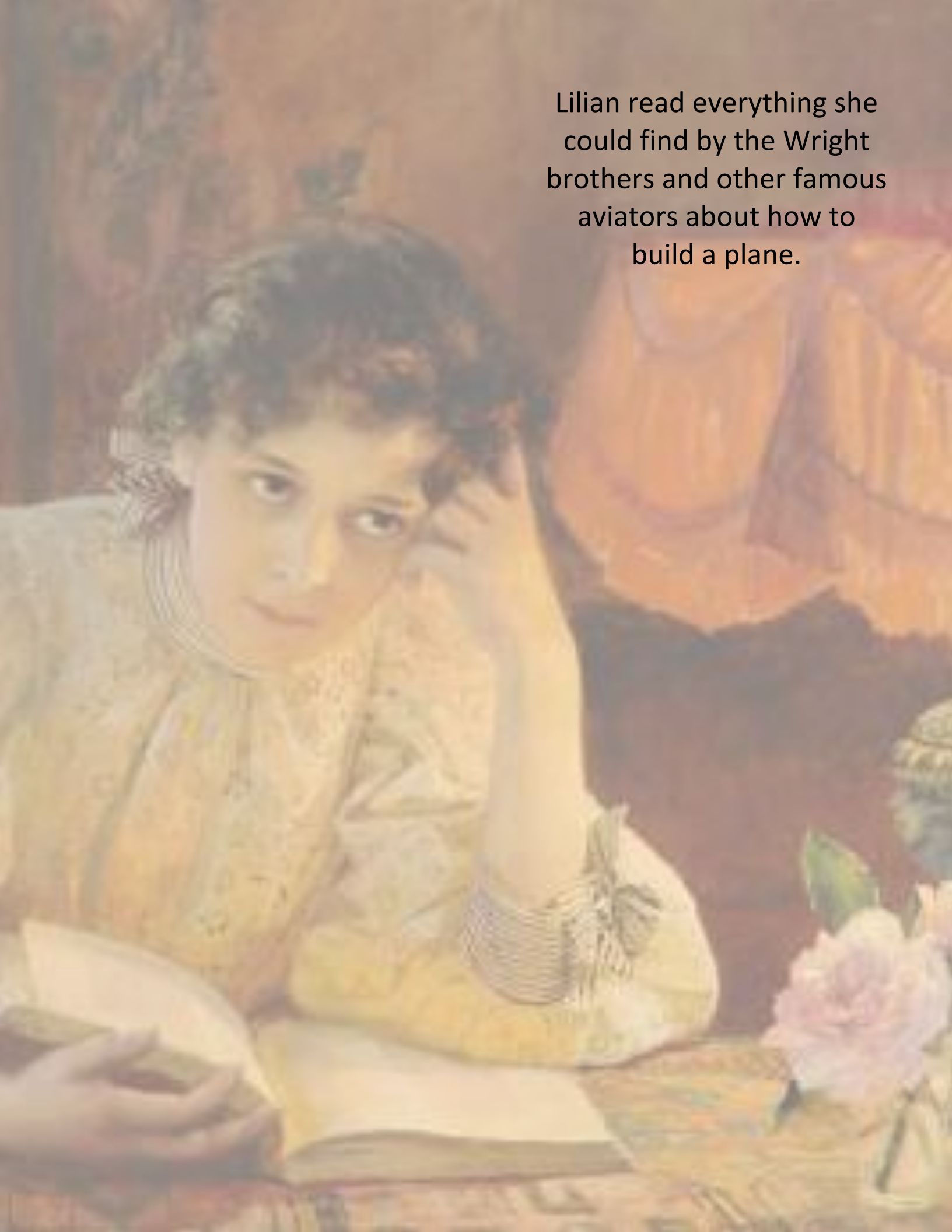
Shortly after, Lilian's uncle Robert sent her a postcard of his own little plane flying over Paris. Lilian was in awe. She immediately wrote back, begging him to take her aboard as a passenger. But her uncle said no as well.



“All right, I will have to do this by myself,” Lilian thought. But at that time, it wasn’t easy to find a plane in Ireland. “No problem,” she said to herself. “I’ll build one



Lilian read everything she
could find by the Wright
brothers and other famous
aviators about how to
build a plane.

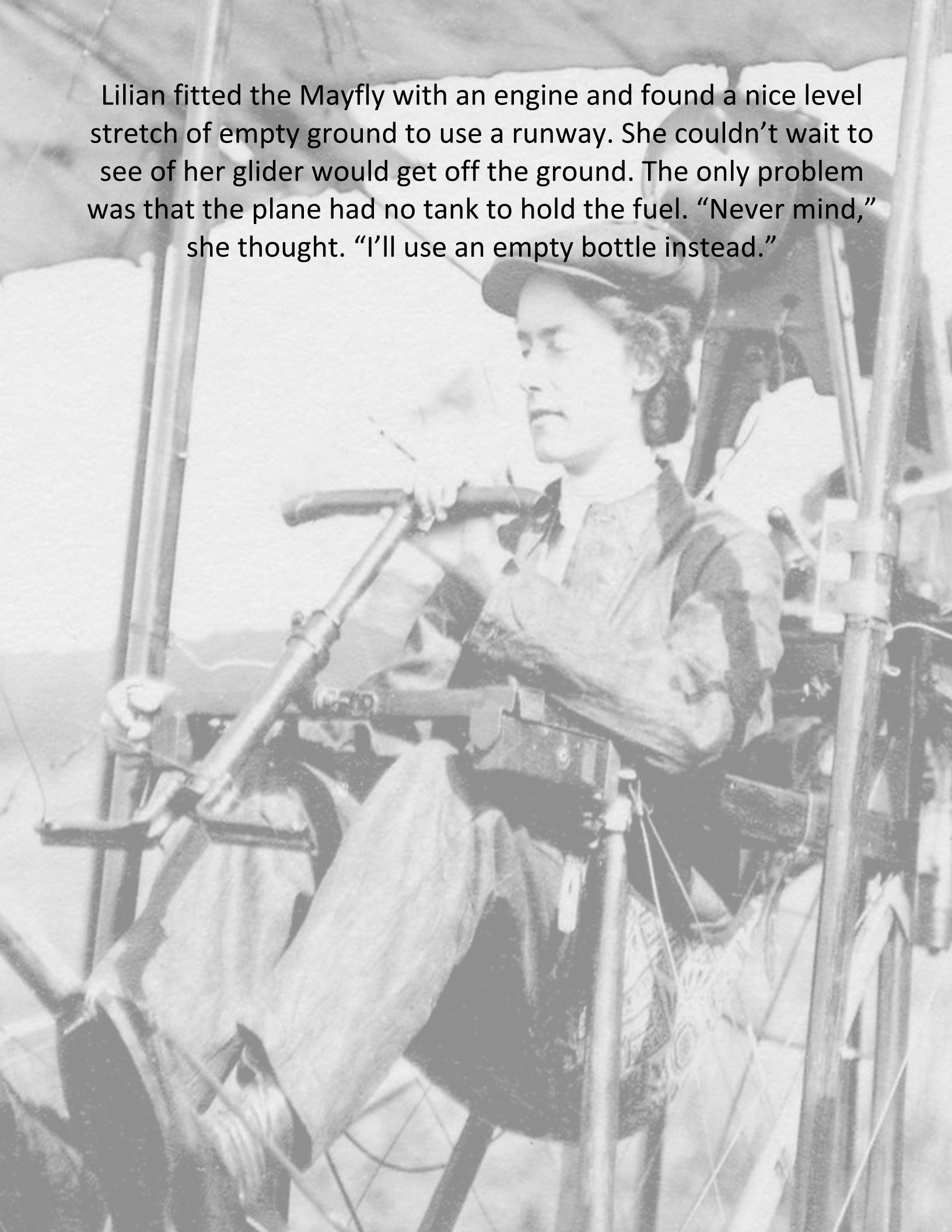


She succeeded in building a flyable biplane – an aircraft with two pairs of wings – then went on to build a full-scale glider, just like the one her boyfriend hadn't let her fly.

She called her glider the Mayfly – because, as she said, “It may fly, (or) it may not!”



Lilian fitted the Mayfly with an engine and found a nice level stretch of empty ground to use a runway. She couldn't wait to see if her glider would get off the ground. The only problem was that the plane had no tank to hold the fuel. "Never mind," she thought. "I'll use an empty bottle instead."



She did just that – and the plane soared along for about ten seconds.

The Mayfly – designed, built and flown by the amazing, inventive Lilian Bland – was the first powered aircraft in Ireland.

