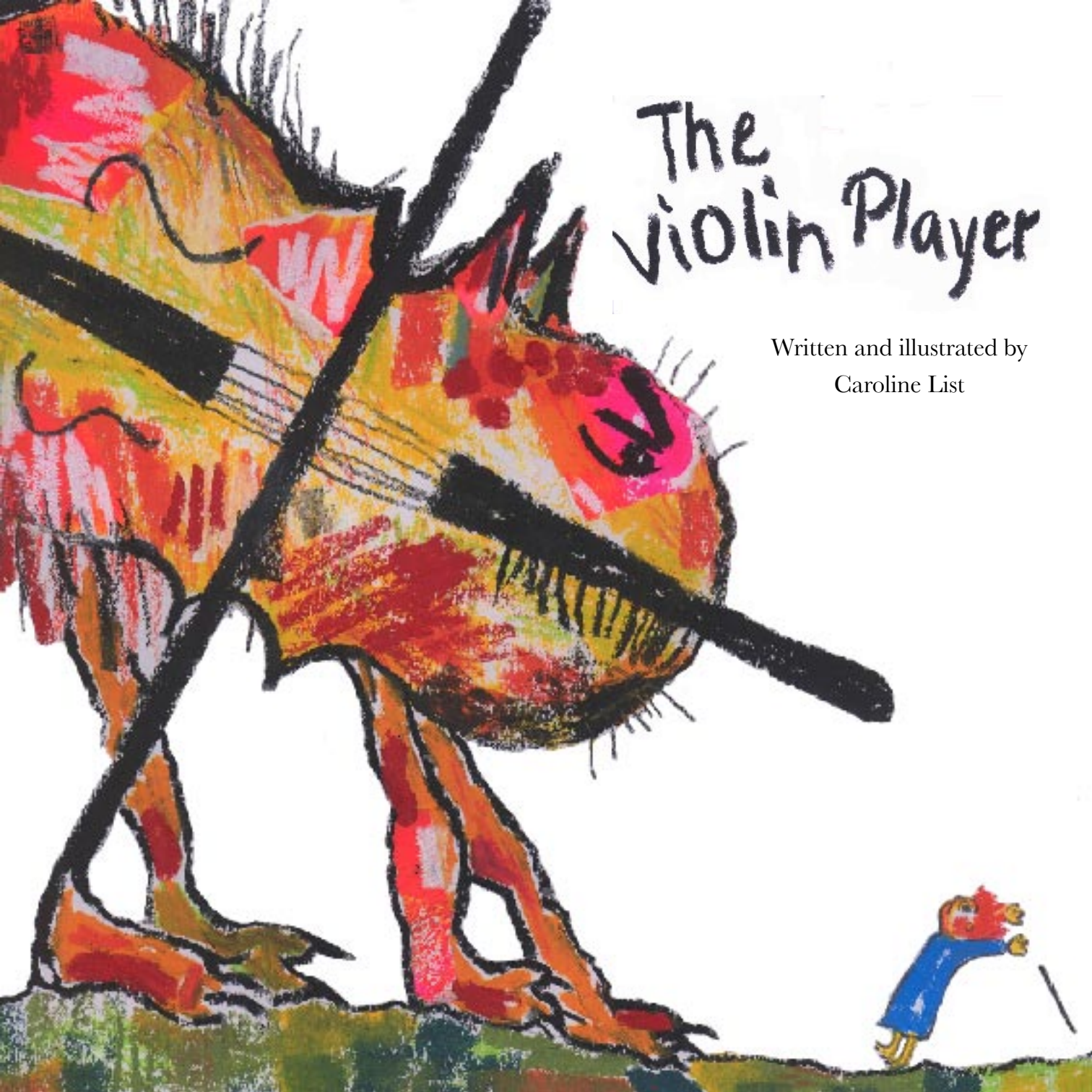


The Violin Player

Written and illustrated by
Caroline List



Once there was a beautiful little village where people were happy to work in the fields and to look after their animals. It was surrounded by a ring of small stones which were said to protect it from everything threatening, as long as someone played the violin and spoke to the stones through his music.



As long as the villagers could remember there had been a man or a woman sitting in a tree and playing the violin all day long. People heard its music in the early morning, it cheered them up when work was hard during the day and it went on until everybody was asleep at night. So the instrument was handed from grandfather to father to son to daughter and its sound kept the village safe and peaceful.



This would never have changed if the little girl hadn't found it so hard to learn to play the violin. She dreamt of becoming her father's follower and sitting high up in a tree, but often when she tried to play, the violin seemed to grow bigger and bigger until it looked like a big frightening animal.



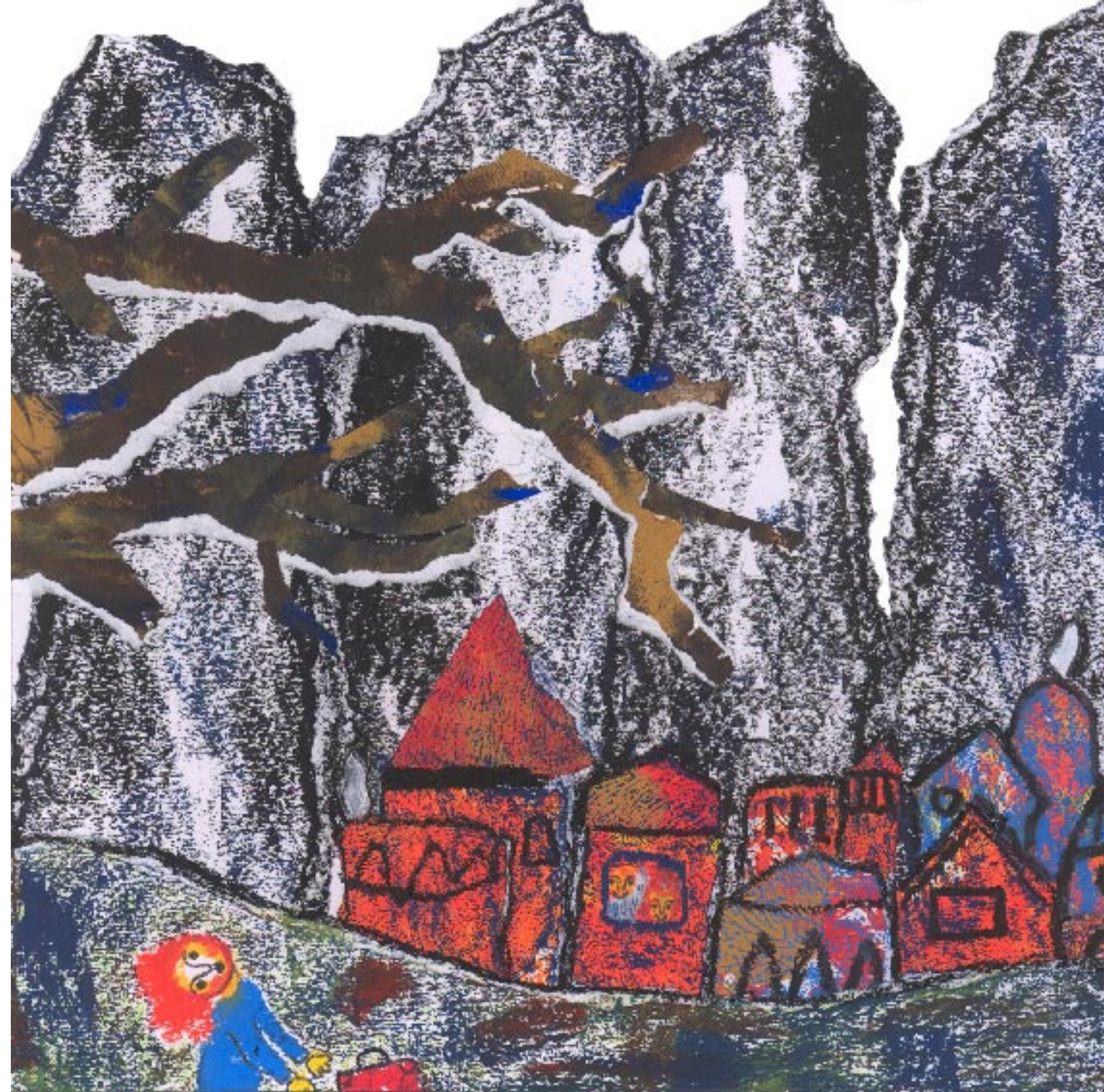
The girl decided never to become a violin player and ran away from home. While she was travelling the world she grew into a lady and saw many amazing things. But she never forgot the place where she had come from, so after many years she decided to return to her little village.



But what was this? Once there had been a ring of pebbles in the grass, but now the girl was welcomed by a wall of giant rocks which seemed to enclose the whole village. She couldn't see it from outside but finally found a little gap which she could squeeze herself through.



The girl's family was happy to see her, but as soon as she had entered the place she noticed that it had changed as well. Why did people look so sad? Why had the trees lost all their leaves? Why was the village surrounded by such cold looking rocks? And why was everything so silent?



It took the girl a while to notice that there was no music in the village. Her father was sitting in an armchair, looking sadly at his empty hands.

“There has been a lot of trouble for us”, the mother whispered to the girl “your father is too old now to play the violin, his fingers are stiff and he has been looking for a follower. He can’t find anybody who plays like he or you did. Since he has stopped playing there has been no rain and the plants are dying. If nothing happens soon we all have to starve to death. Also...have you seen the pebbles? They have turned into rocks and they keep growing. They come nearer every night. Nobody can speak to them, only a violin can do that. We are frightened that we will get squashed by them one day, terribly frightened.”



At this moment someone knocked at the door and three old men from the village came in. “We have heard you are back and you have travelled the world. You know more than us now”, “they said “and we ask you to tell us how we can stop the rocks from growing.” The girl didn’t know what to answer the men, but she promised to think about how she could help.



What could she do? After the men had left she climbed up to the attic. Among trunks and boxes and bags she found her violin. It had always looked so huge and frightening to her but now it was so tiny that it only was the size of her hand. She touched a string with her finger and a sound came out which she had not remembered for years.



Next morning when the girl looked out of the window she could see dry fields and the huge rocks which by now blocked out the sunlight. There were no children playing in the street, because parents feared they could leave the village through a gap in the wall and wouldn't find their way back in.

When the three men returned and asked her again what to do, she went out with the tiny violin in her hand and started playing in front of the rocks.



The longer she played the easier it became and all the songs she had learned came back into her mind. More and more people came out of their houses and gathered around her. Even the rocks seemed to listen.



First they bent forwards, then they stretched until ears, eyes and noses appeared and the rocks looked more and more like giant men. Suddenly there were tears rolling down their faces and splashing down onto the ground.
“Rain!” someone shouted “finally it is raining.”
Didn’t everything looked a bit greener already?



The Girl played and played the violin and the giants wept and wept. Green leaves came out of branches, the music became happier and people started dancing. What was this? The giants were smiling and waving and flapping their arms until...



