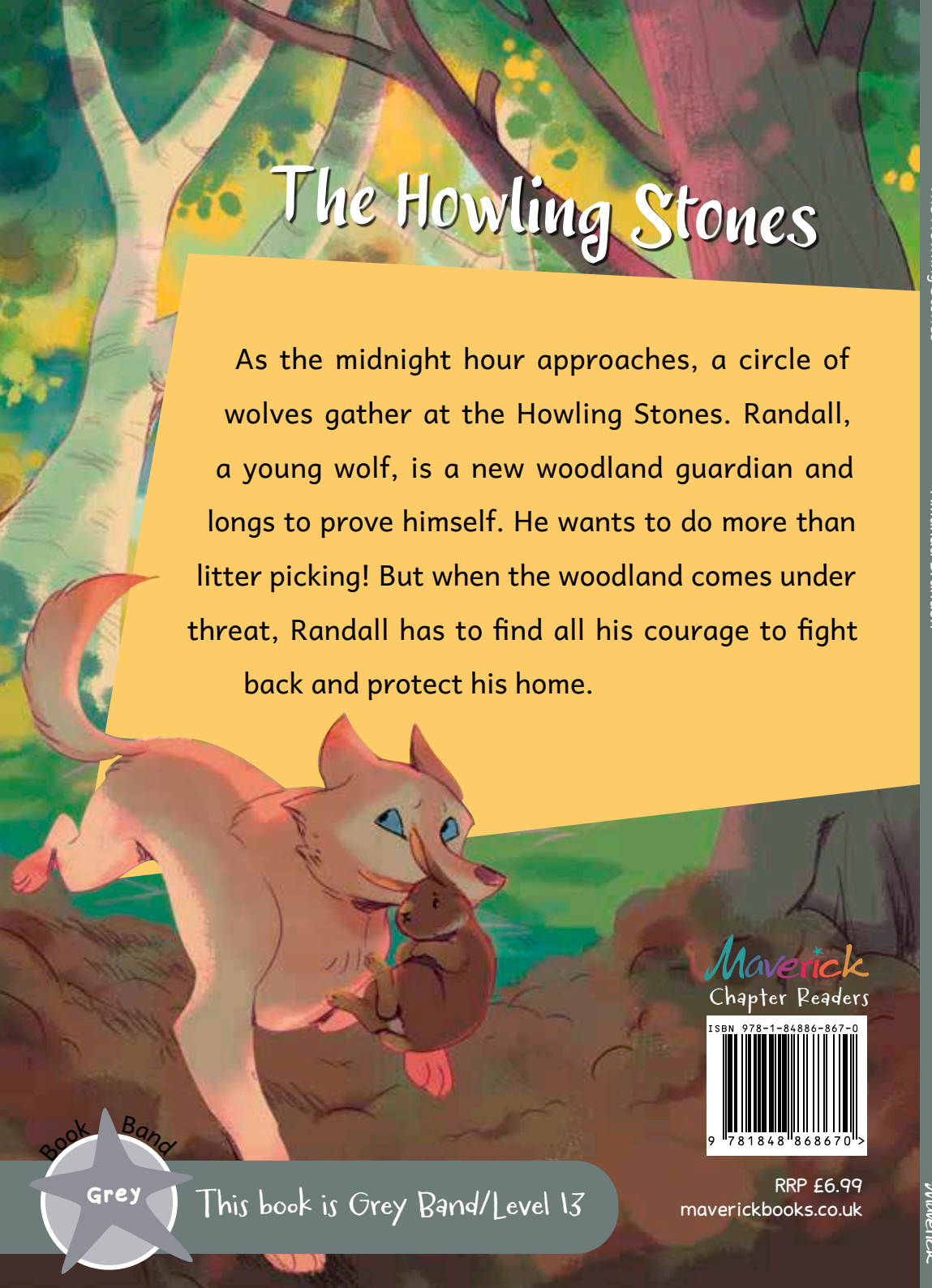


The Howling Stones

As the midnight hour approaches, a circle of wolves gather at the Howling Stones. Randall, a young wolf, is a new woodland guardian and longs to prove himself. He wants to do more than litter picking! But when the woodland comes under threat, Randall has to find all his courage to fight back and protect his home.

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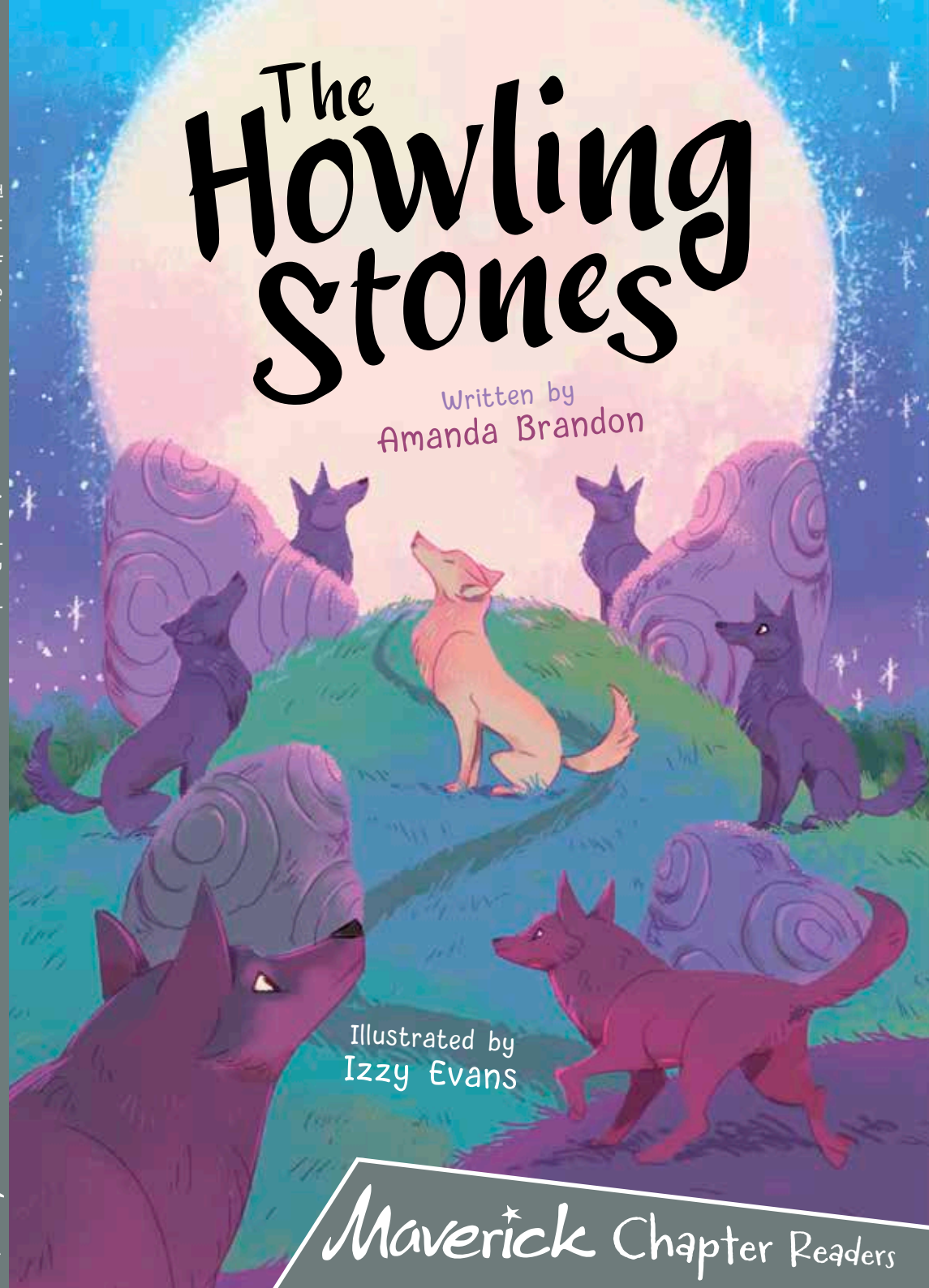
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The Howling Stones

Amanda Brandon

Maverick



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Written by
Amanda Brandon

Illustrated by
Izzy Evans

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'The Howling Stones'
An original concept by Amanda Brandon
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Illustrated by Izzy Evans

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This book is rated as: Grey Band (Guided Reading)

For Review Only

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Chapter 1

The full moon glimmered in the inky black sky. *Swish, swish!* The trees whispered as the midnight hour approached.

"AWOOOo!"

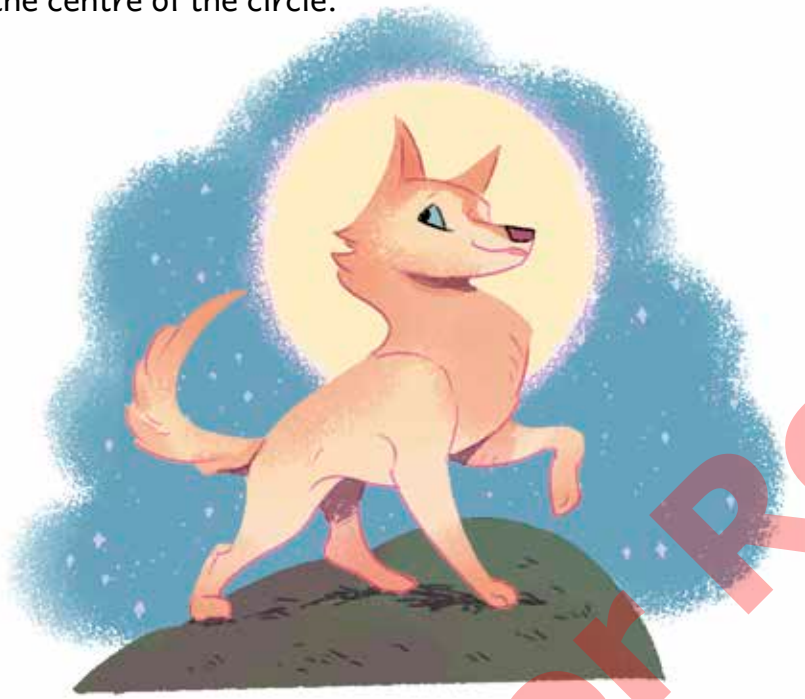
The watching woodland animals tensed. Their eyes were fixed on the seven large rocks set in a circle in the clearing below them. Twigs snapped and an owl hooted a warning. In the darkness, a pack of wolves approached the sacred Howling Stones. Their silvery fur gleamed in the moonlight. They slowly padded one by one around the Stones. They had reached their meeting place. Tonight there was a special ceremony.



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Seven wolves slipped from the pack and formed an inner circle. They were the Howling Stone Elders. All seven of them howled together. Their song echoed around the woodland.

Randall Wolf stepped out of the watching crowd into the centre of the circle.



The moon's beam highlighted his gleaming teeth. He lifted his head. His nose quivered and he let out his own loud howl in return.

Chief Wolf Quicksilver approached Randall. He was an older wolf with a patch of grey across one eye. "Welcome, Randall," Quicksilver said. "You have been given the role of being a woodland guardian."

Randall bowed his head, and Quicksilver tapped him on the head with his paw.

"Remember," Quicksilver said, "it is a great honour to look after our wonderful home. Use your skills wisely to protect it."

The woodland creatures held their breath. They watched the ceremony in awe from their hiding places in the trees surrounding the Stones. When Quicksilver stepped back, they clapped and cheered.

Randall puffed out his chest. "I won't let you down," he said.

The Elders nodded. They circled the Stones one last time before they disappeared into the wood. Randall followed. He held his head high. At last he was a woodland guardian—just like his father and grandfather before him.

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The next day, the sun shone bright and Randall woke early. He was determined to start his new duties as quickly as possible. He had to make sure the wood was clear of human rubbish which might endanger the animals.

He grabbed a sack in his mouth and set off through the wood. "Tsk, tsk," he grumbled as he spied a pile of picnic litter. "People should take this home with them."

Soon his sack was full. He decided to take a rest by an old tree stump.

"Being a guardian is hard work." He yawned and his eyes drooped. The excitement of last night had begun to take its toll. He decided to have a nap.

His eyes had just closed when he heard a cry.

"Help! Help!"

For Review Only



Chapter 2

Randall raised his head. Where had that come from?

"Help! Help! I'm trapped!"

He turned and peered through the canopy of trees to the left of him. There it was again.

"Help! Help!"

His ears strained and a stir of excitement swirled in his stomach. "Someone's in trouble. Now I'm a guardian, it's my job to help."

He called out, "Hold on! Woodland guardian to the rescue."

Randall pushed his way through some bushes. On the other side was a pile of heavy logs. He stopped.