limnforge

Limnforge User Guide

A plain-English guide to planning, creating, lettering, reviewing, and exporting illustrated books and comics

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Contents

Follow the chapters in order for a first book, or use the contents as a reference while working in Limnforge.

Chapter 1 — What Limnforge does and where your data goes

Limnforge is a desktop workspace for planning, illustrating, lettering, reviewing, and exporting illustrated books and comics. It keeps the creative record for each book in its own local project folder, while giving you structured controls for pages, spreads, covers, characters, Style References, Text-Safe Area, Text Overlay Layers, and Commercial Export.

Use Limnforge to organize and review the work. You decide what to generate, which artwork to keep, what text to add, and when a result is ready for export. **Final** marks approved artwork in the project. It does not replace your own editorial, legal, accessibility, or print-production review.

Your project stays on your computer

Each Limnforge project owns its saved book data, artwork, renders, backups, and Character Studio records in its local workspace. Save, snapshot, restore, and export actions work on that local project record. The OpenAI API key is also stored locally in the computer's secure credential store, not in a project folder or export.

Do not share project folders, exported packages, screenshots, or support reports without reviewing them first. They can contain manuscript text, artwork, character information, and personal project naming. Never include an OpenAI API key or a Limnforge licence key in any of them.

Image generation uses your OpenAI API key

Limnforge needs your own OpenAI API key before it can generate an illustration or test the connection. When you choose an image-generation action, Limnforge sends the request needed for that action to OpenAI. The preferred and fallback image-model settings are local defaults; Limnforge tries the preferred model first and can use the fallback when the preferred model is unavailable.

OpenAI billing, availability, account permissions, and policies are separate from Limnforge. Before generating, make sure you are comfortable with OpenAI's current terms, privacy policy, and billing arrangements for the API project connected to your key. Chapter 2 explains how to save and test the key without exposing it.

Co-Pilot does not send your project to an AI service

Co-Pilot prepares a Work Order from relevant information already saved in your project. Limnforge does not send that project information to an external AI service. When you select **Copy Work Order**, it places the displayed prompt on your clipboard.

You choose whether to paste the prompt into ChatGPT, Claude, Codex, or another service. Before pasting, preview the included context and review the chosen service's data-use and training policy. A Work Order can include information such as manuscript text, world rules, character details, Book Style DNA, and selected-page planning.

An external AI response is a proposal, not an automatic update to the book. Review it, then manually paste only the parts you approve into the appropriate Limnforge fields. The Co-Pilot Work Orders mini guide explains the available Work Orders and their prerequisites.

Use the guide as a workflow, not a substitute for judgment

The remaining chapters move from project setup through planning, illustration, text, covers, and export. They explain the current Limnforge controls, but they cannot decide whether an image is suitable for your audience, whether copy is accurate, or whether a printer's specification has changed. Check the final exported files and the current printer or KDP template before you upload or order a proof.

For help, use the macOS Help menu. It provides links to the current downloadable guides, Report an Issue, current policies, and Check for Updates. Chapter 14 explains those options, licence status, offline access, and update installation.

Chapter 2 — First-time setup and OpenAI API key

Limnforge uses your own OpenAI API key to test access and generate illustrations. The key belongs to your OpenAI API project, not to an individual Limnforge book. Set it up once in **Settings**, then keep it private.

Before you begin

Create or obtain an OpenAI API key from the OpenAI Platform account and API project you intend to use. Your API project needs working access and sufficient billing or quota for image generation. Keep the key secret: do not paste it into a manuscript, project field, support report, screenshot, or exported package.

If you need help obtaining a key, select Need an API key? Read the guide. in Settings. This opens the current downloadable OpenAI API Key Guide in your browser.

Save the key and choose model defaults

Open **Settings**. Paste the key into **OpenAI API Key**, choose the **Preferred GPT Image Model** and **Fallback GPT Image Model**, then select **Save Image Settings**.

Limnforge stores the saved key in this computer's secure credential store. It does not write the key into a project folder or export. After saving, the field returns to the safe empty state, **Saved locally; leave blank to keep it**, and the panel reports **Key saved locally**.

The preferred model is the first model Limnforge tries for image generation. The fallback model is tried automatically if the preferred model is unavailable. Leave the defaults in place unless you have a specific reason to change them.

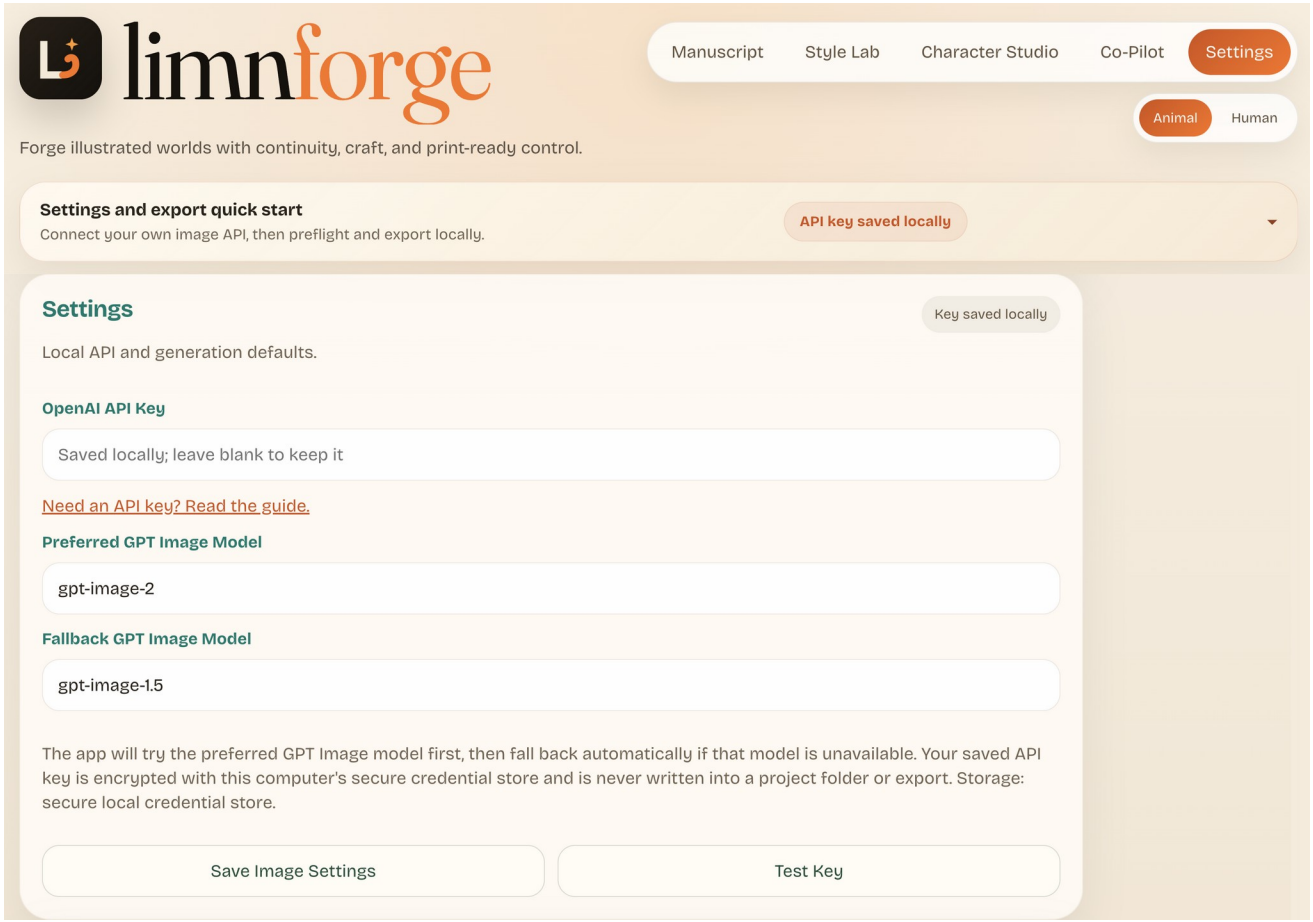

Figure 2.1. Settings with a saved-key placeholder, preferred and fallback GPT Image model fields, secure local storage information, and the save and test actions.

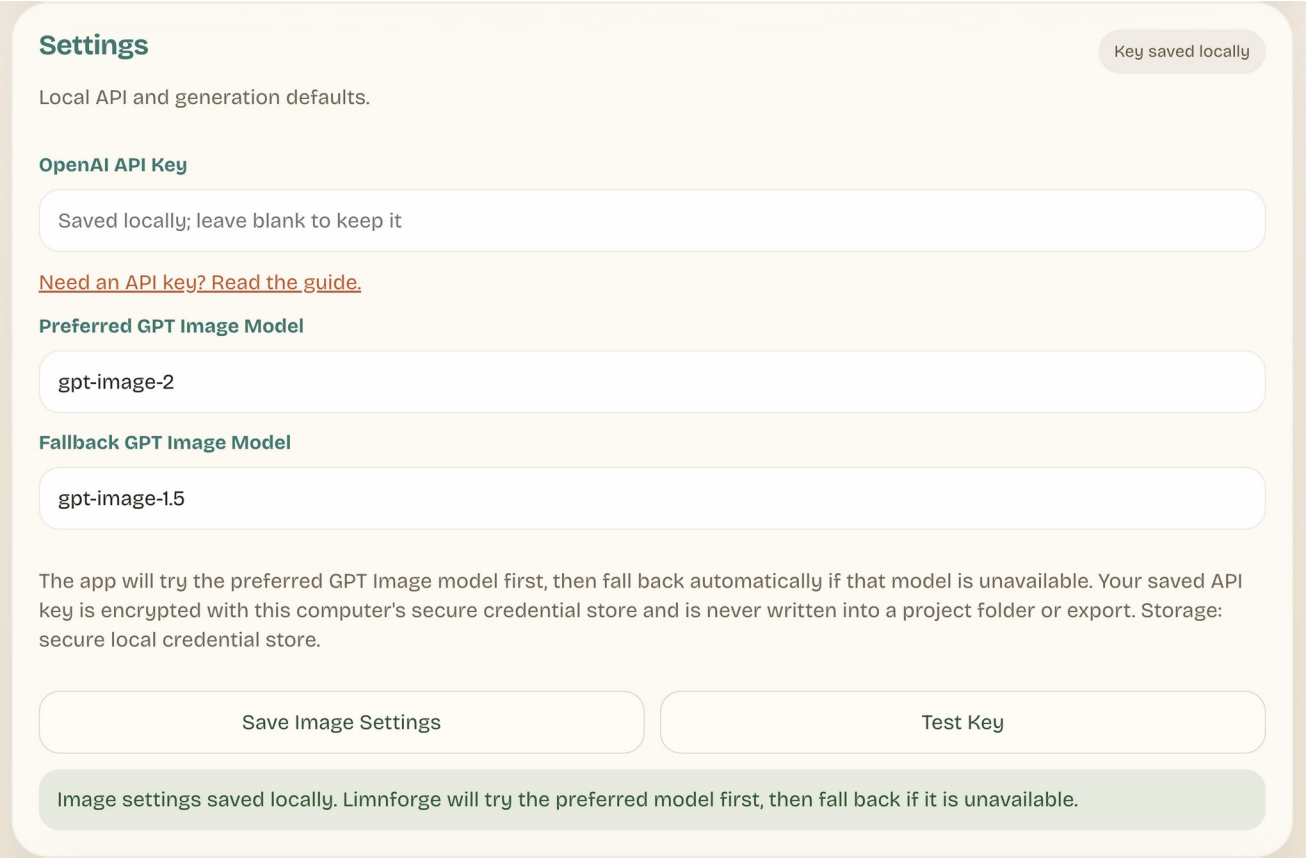

Figure 2.2. Confirmation that image settings were saved locally.

Test the connection before generating

Select **Test Key** after saving the key. A successful test reports **OpenAI key works** and confirms that Limnforge reached the API. It also shows how many models were available to that API project at the time of the check. The count can change and is not a promise that every model will generate images for your account.

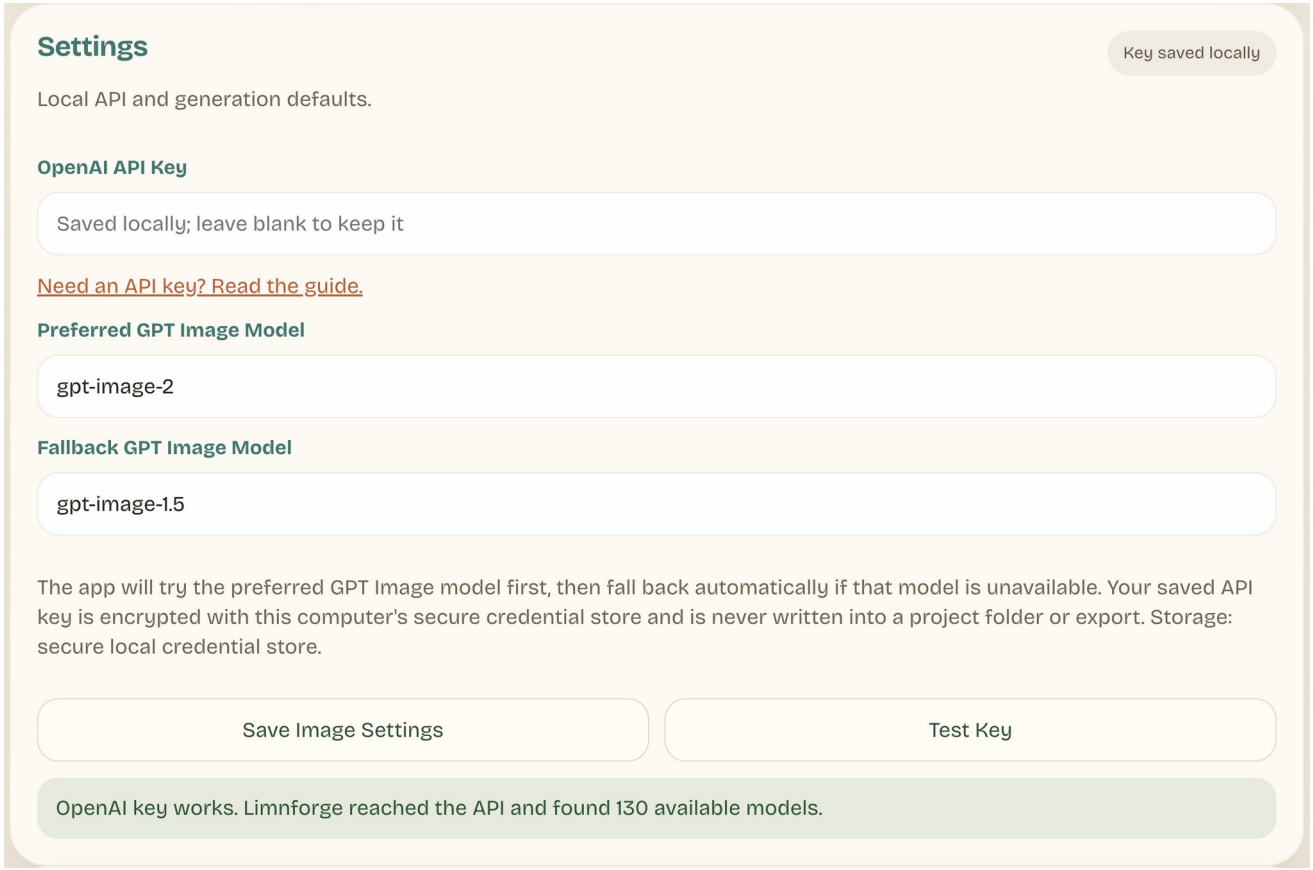

Figure 2.3. Successful API-key test while the key itself remains hidden.

If the test does not succeed, read the exact message before changing anything:

- A rejected key usually means the key was copied incorrectly, deleted, or replaced. Create or copy the correct key from the OpenAI Platform, then save it again.
- A billing, quota, or rate-limit message means OpenAI accepted the key but the API project cannot currently complete the request. Review that API project's billing, usage, limits, and access.
- A timeout or network message means Limnforge could not reach OpenAI. Check your connection, wait briefly, then test once more.
- If macOS cannot unlock secure storage, unlock the system keychain before saving the key again.

Do not share the full error message if it includes a key or other private account information. If a persistent problem remains after those checks, use **Report an Issue** from the macOS **Help** menu and state the action you took, the non-sensitive error text, and your Limnforge version.

What comes next

With a tested key in place, create or open a local project in Chapter 3. Your project data remains separate from the API key and its local credential-store record.

Chapter 3 — Projects, Project Library, and Project Safety

Limnforge keeps each book as its own project. This chapter explains how to find, protect, recover, and manage projects after they exist.

Creating a book, choosing a workflow, selecting page counts, and choosing a book format are explained once in **Chapter 4, Manuscript, pages, spreads, and book formats**. They are not repeated here.

Find and open saved projects

Project Library keeps the project you are using easy to identify and groups other saved work into collapsible sections:

- **Current Project** is the project currently loaded in Limnforge.
- **Recently Opened** lists projects you have used recently.
- **All Other Projects** lists other projects in the selected workspace. Use its search box when the list is long.
- **Recoverable Projects** lists projects that Limnforge can recover after they have been moved out of the active library.

Select **Open** on a project card to load that project. Select **Refresh Projects** if you have changed project folders outside Limnforge and need the list reread.

Use **Move to Trash** only for a project you no longer want in the active library. It is a project-management action, not a way to remove a page or image from the open book.

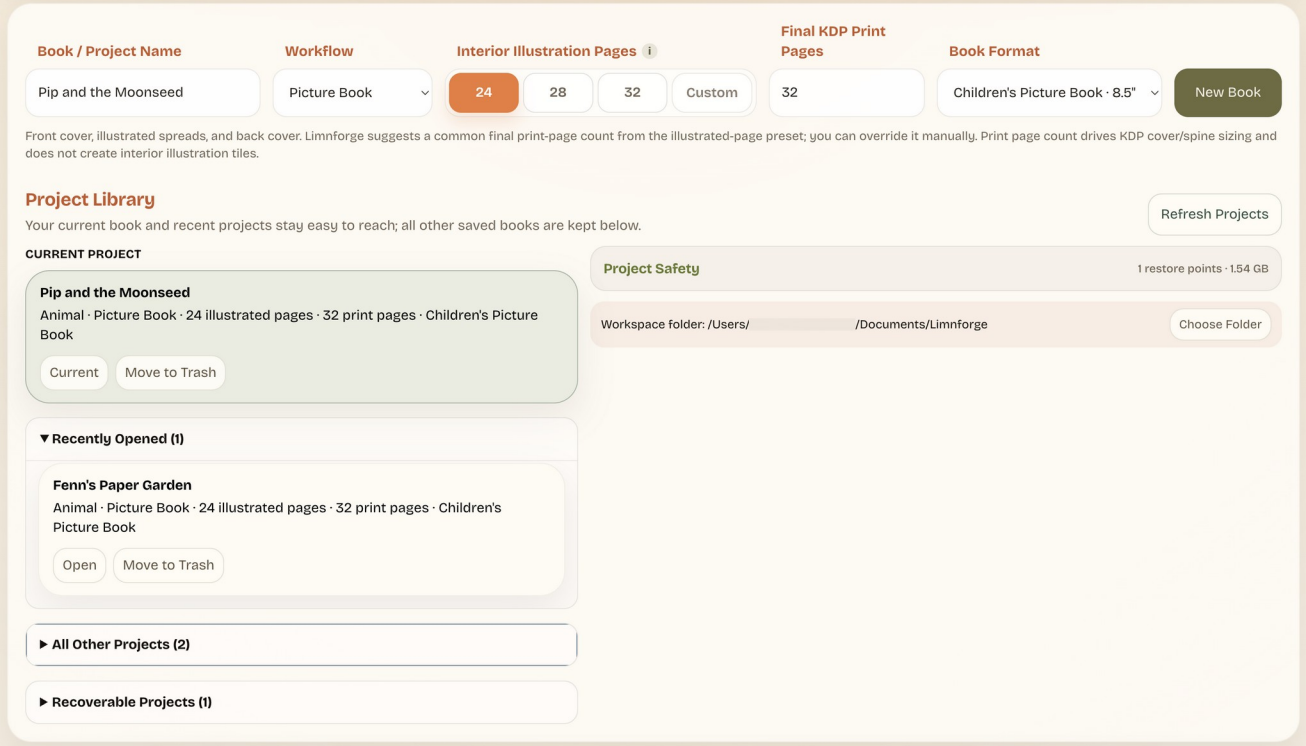

Figure 3.1. Project Library overview, including the current project and recently opened projects.

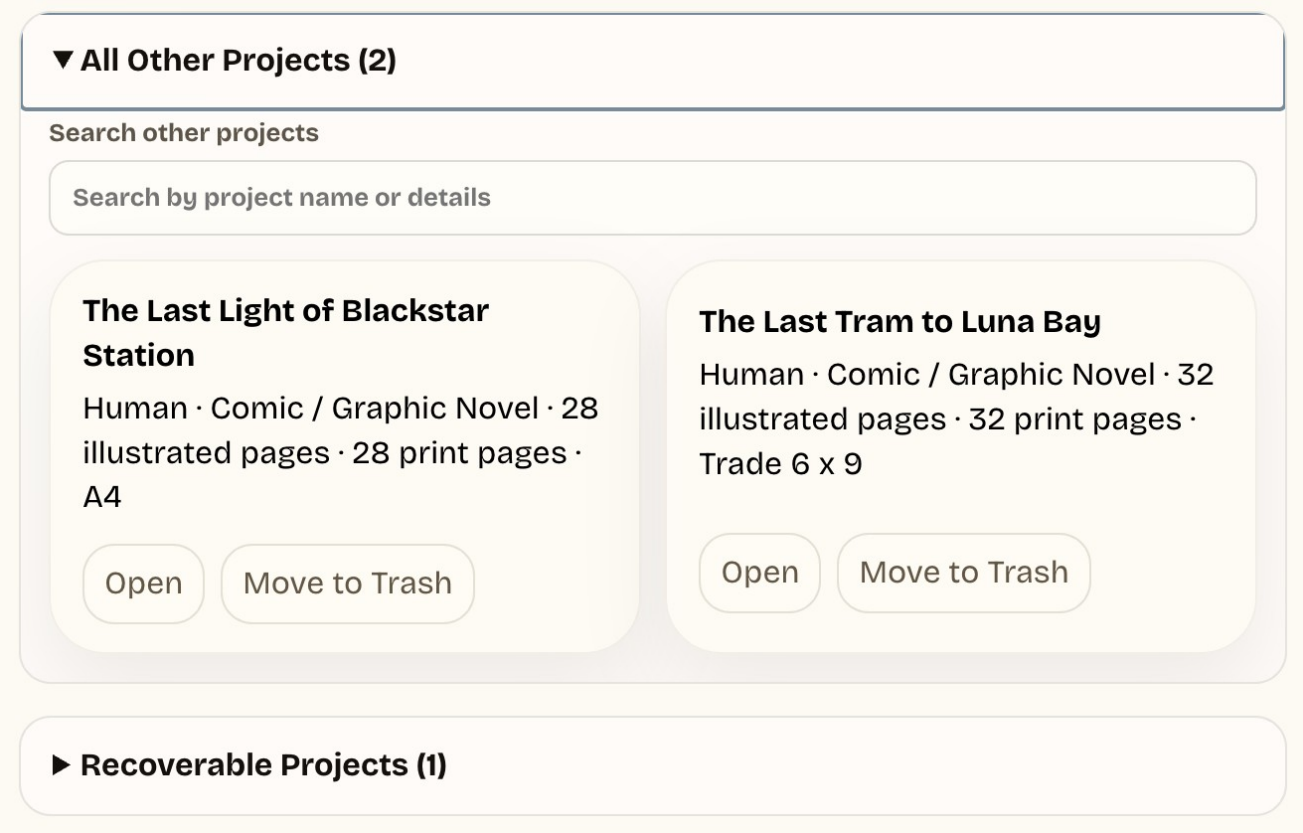

Figure 3.2. All Other Projects expanded with saved project cards.

Protect work with Project Safety

Project Safety appears beside Project Library for the current project. It shows how many restore points exist and how much storage they use.

Limnforge maintains one **Automatic Rolling Backup**, refreshed at most hourly. Use **Save Snapshot** before a major change when you want an additional manual restore point. A manual snapshot is a full project copy, so it uses disk space.

Select **Check Backup Status** to review the current backup state. The restore-point list identifies each snapshot or rolling backup and provides **Restore Copy** and **Delete Restore Point** actions.

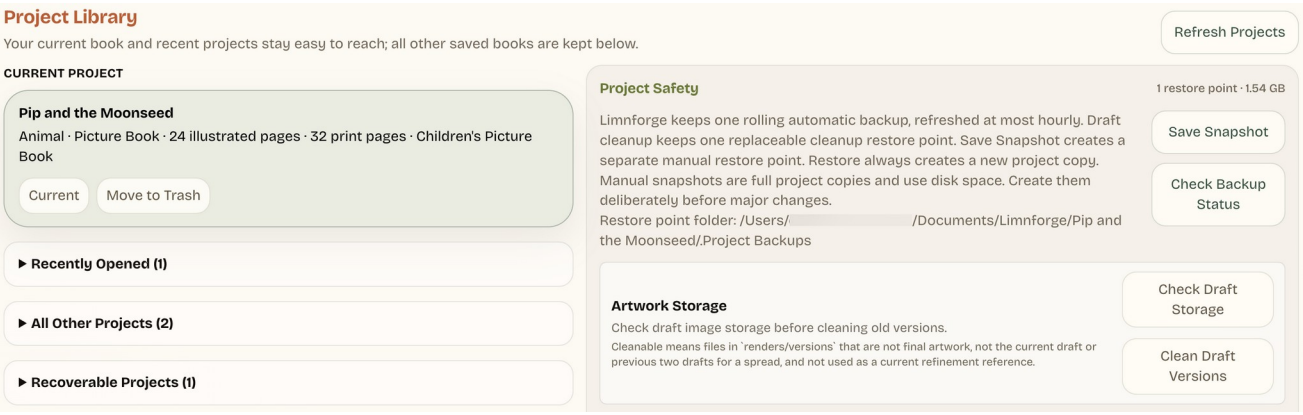

Figure 3.3. Project Safety at its default state.

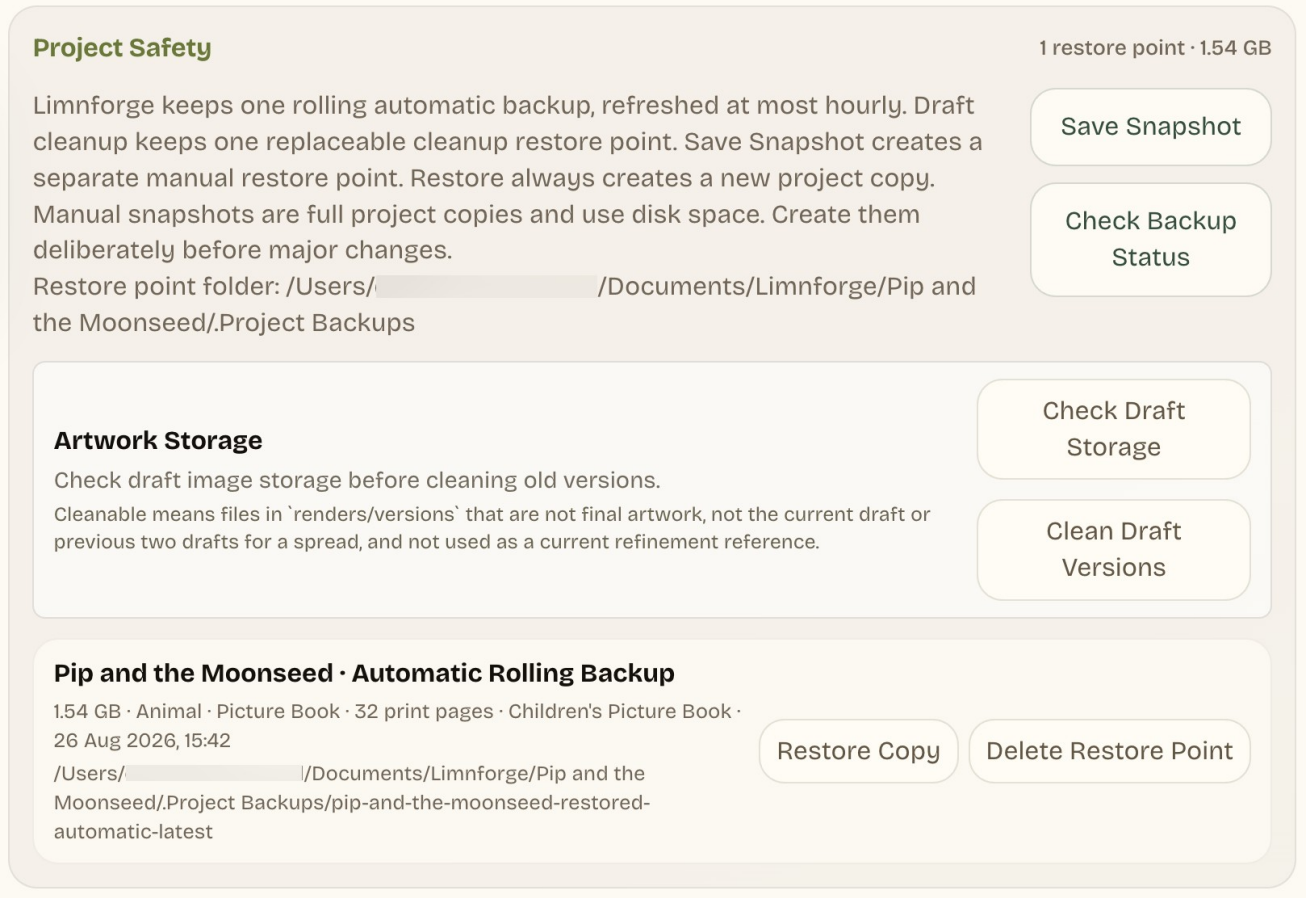

Figure 3.4. Restore points listed for the current project.

Restore Copy keeps existing projects intact

To use a restore point, select **Restore Copy** on its card. Limnforge asks for confirmation before it copies that backup into Project Library as a separate restored project.

Restore Copy does not overwrite, replace, or roll back the project you currently have open. It creates another project copy, which you can then open and inspect independently.

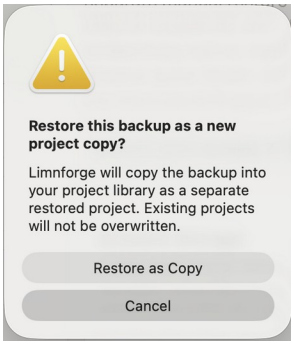

Figure 3.5. The Restore Copy confirmation dialog.

After restoring, locate the separate project card in Project Library and select **Open** when you are ready to work with that copy. Keep the original project until you have checked that the restored copy contains the work you need.

Review draft artwork storage before cleanup

Project Safety also includes **Artwork Storage**. Select **Check Draft Storage** to see the amount of storage used by draft versions and final artwork, together with the number of files that can be cleaned.

Limnforge treats a draft as cleanable only when it is not final artwork, not the current draft or the previous two drafts for its spread, and not a file used as a current refinement reference. Expand **Why these files are considered cleanable** to inspect the rule and the file examples before choosing **Clean Draft Versions**.

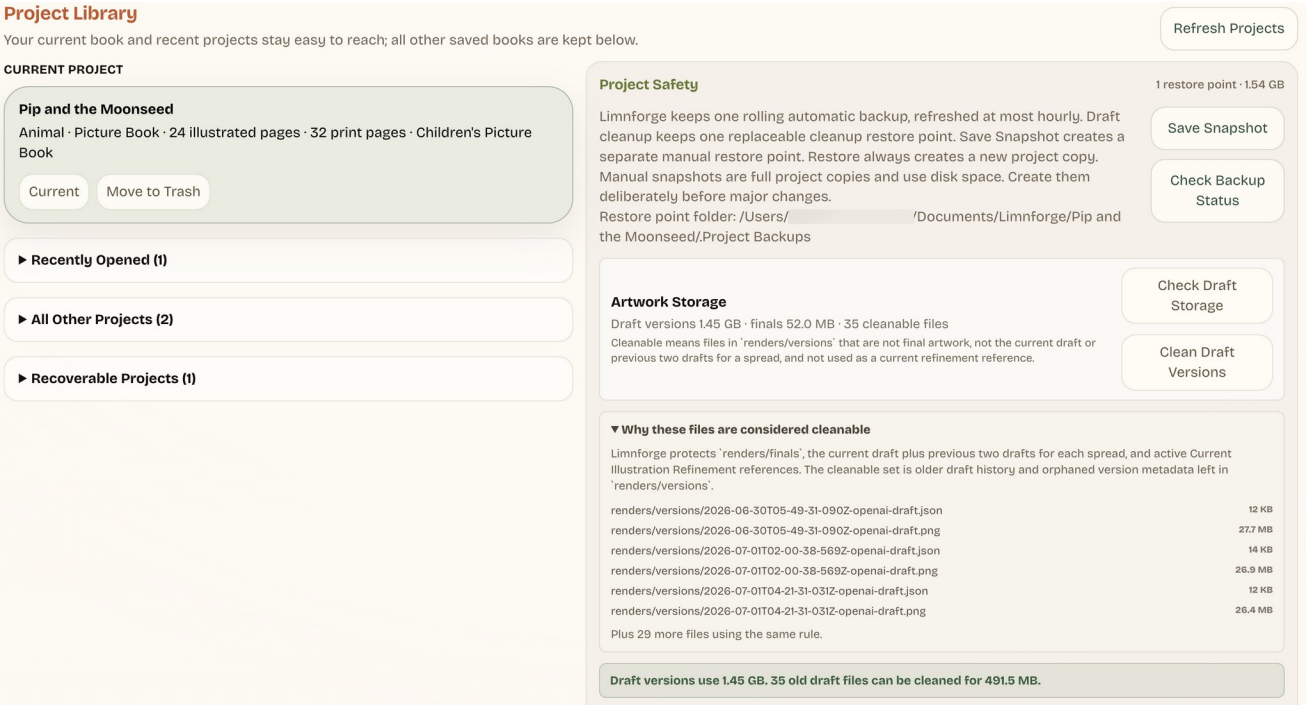

Figure 3.6. Artwork Storage after checking draft storage.

Chapter 4 — Manuscript, pages, spreads, and book formats

This chapter explains the page map that Limnforge creates for a book, how to move around it, and how the book settings affect that map. It does not explain how to create artwork or edit typography in detail; those workflows are covered later in the guide.

Set the structure before making the book

At the top of the Manuscript area, enter the **Book / Project Name**, choose a **Workflow**, choose the number of **Interior Illustration Pages**, confirm the **Final KDP Print Pages**, and select the **Book Format**. Select **New Book** only when those choices are ready.

The interior-illustration count determines the story pages and spreads Limnforge lays out. The final print-page count is separate: it is used for print and cover-spine calculations, and does not itself create more interior illustration tiles.

Choose the workflow deliberately. Picture Book projects use page and Spread Planning; Comic / Graphic Novel projects have a separate panel-based workflow described in Chapter 10.

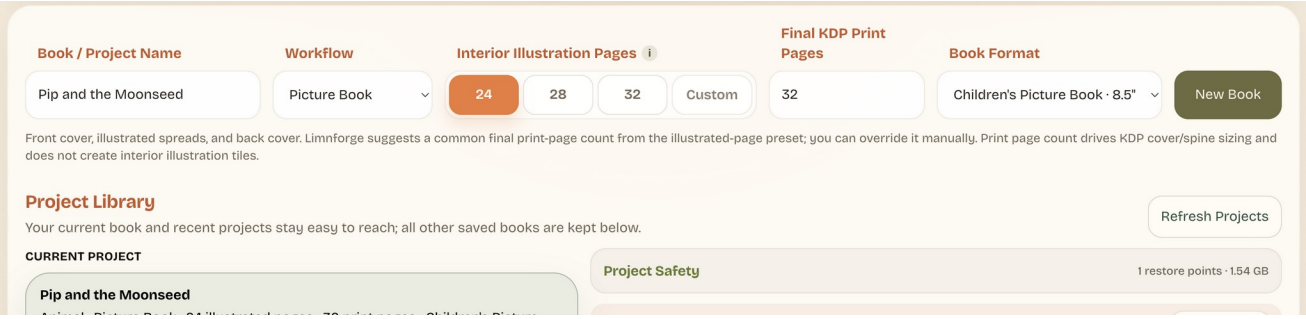

Figure 4.1. Book and project setup controls above Project Library.

Read the page map

The thumbnail map beneath the preview is the quickest way to move through the book. Select a tile to make that page or double-page spread active in the preview.

A standard picture-book map includes non-story pages as well as story spreads. In the documentation fixture, for example:

- **Page 1** is the Front Cover.
- **Page 2** is marked **Locked Blank**.
- **Page 3** is the title and author page.
- The middle tiles are the planned story pages and double-page spreads.
- The final tiles include locked blank and reserved print pages, followed by the Back Cover.

Locked and reserved tiles are part of the book structure. They should not be treated as missing artwork or replaced with story illustrations.

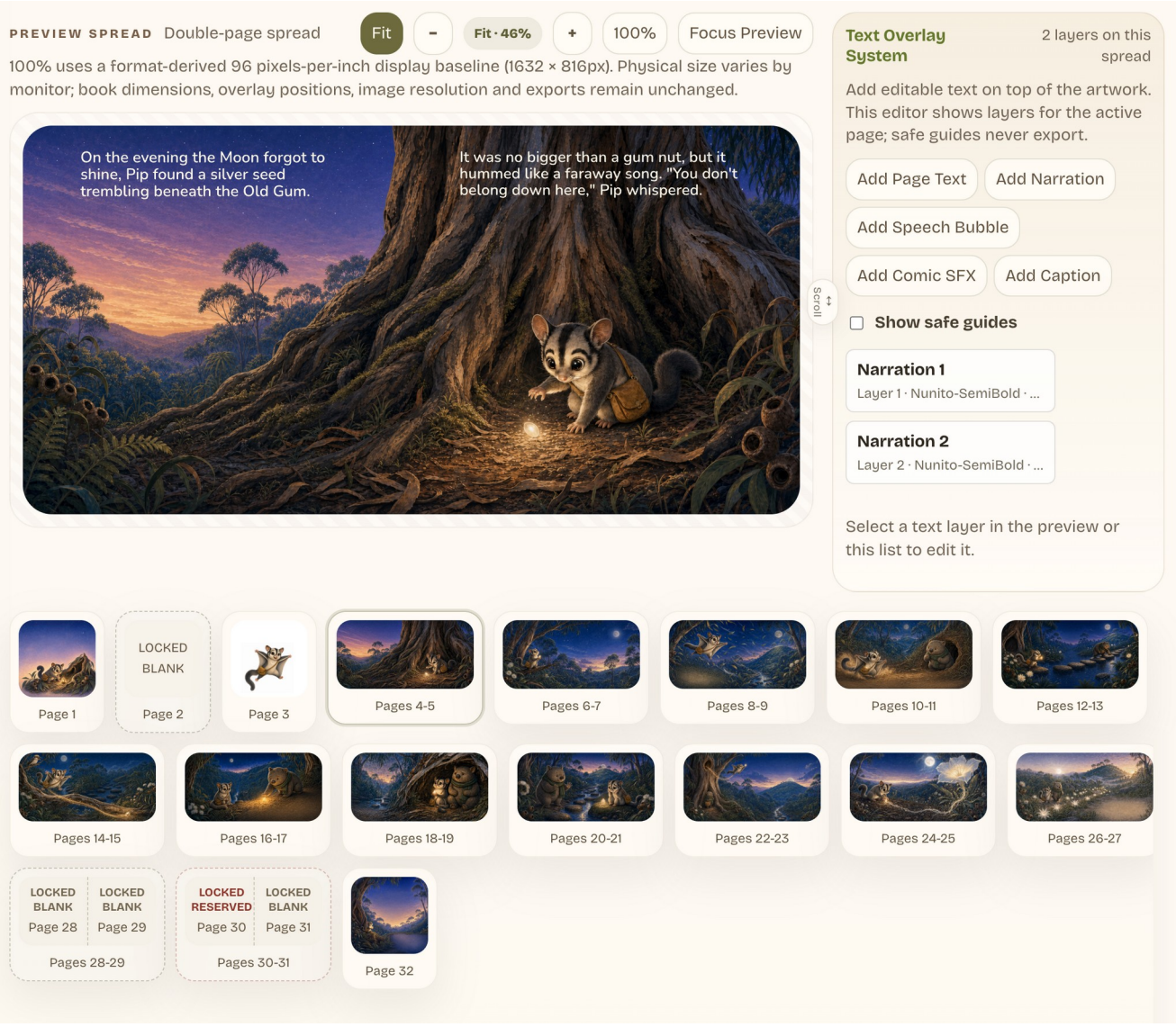

Figure 4.2. A normal story-spread preview, its text-overlay panel, and the complete page map.

Work with title and author pages

When Page 3 is active, the preview shows the title and author page. The Text Overlay System presents only the controls that apply to that page, such as **Add Title** and **Add Author**. This is intentional: the available controls vary with the type of page or spread you have selected.

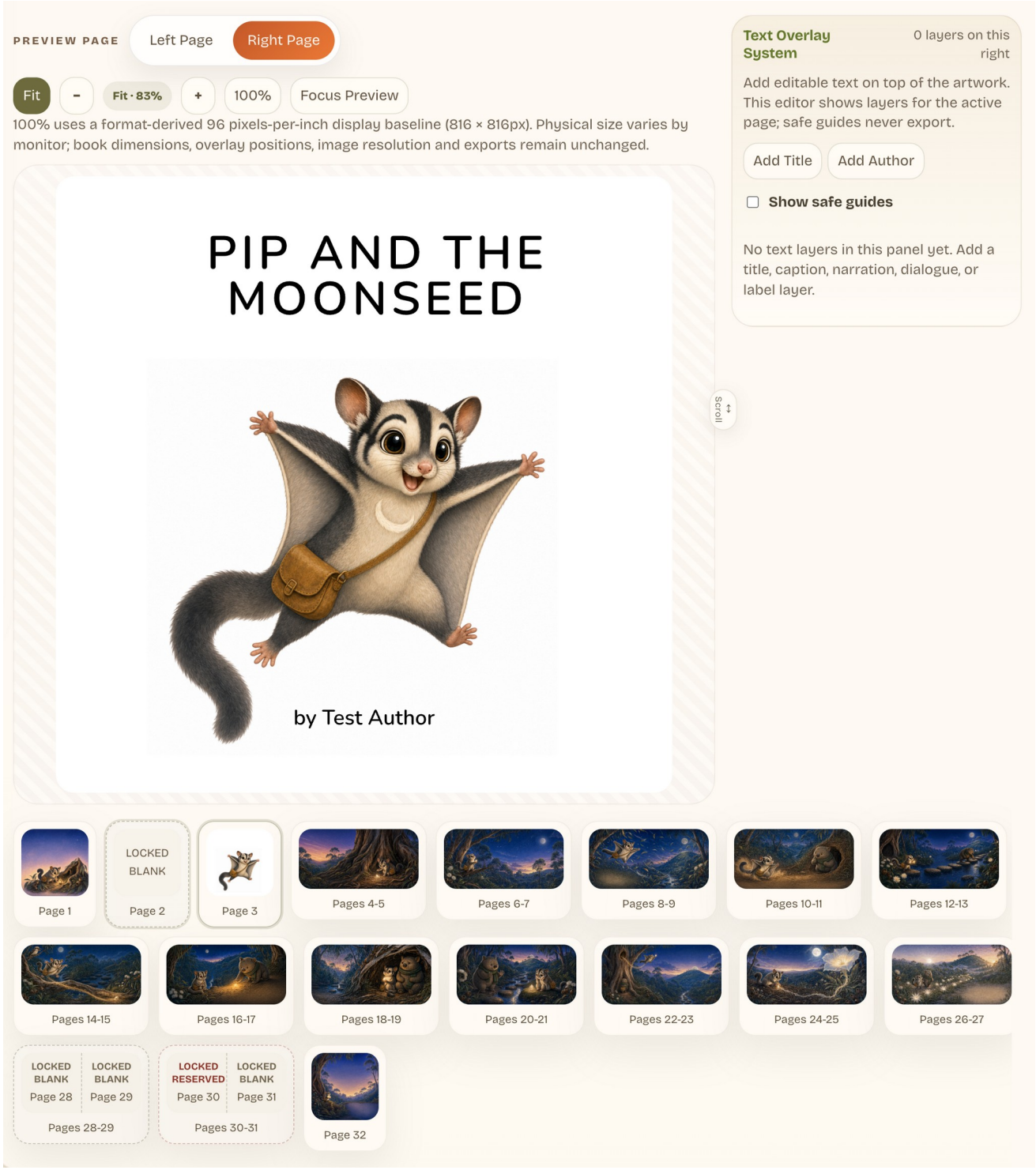

Figure 4.3. The title and author page, with Page 2 visibly locked blank and Page 3 selected.

Text-overlay tools, imported fonts, safe guides, print-boundary warnings, and removing artwork without removing text are covered in Chapter 11.

Preview existing artwork and its actions

Use **Fit**, the zoom controls, **100%**, and **Focus Preview** to inspect the active page or spread. The thumbnail map remains available below the preview so that you can move quickly to another surface.

When the pointer is over existing artwork, Limnforge shows preview actions including **Upload**, **Remove Art**, **Save**, **Art**, and **Final**. These are normal controls, not an error state. Their detailed use, consequences, and confirmation steps are covered in Chapter 11; the artwork-planning and generation workflow is covered in Chapter 8.

For an already generated illustration, **Regenerate Illustration** is available above the preview. Text-safe verification runs automatically after illustration generation. The separate scan and recheck controls support review of saved Text-Safe Plan and current artwork; Chapter 9 explains those checks and how to act on their results.

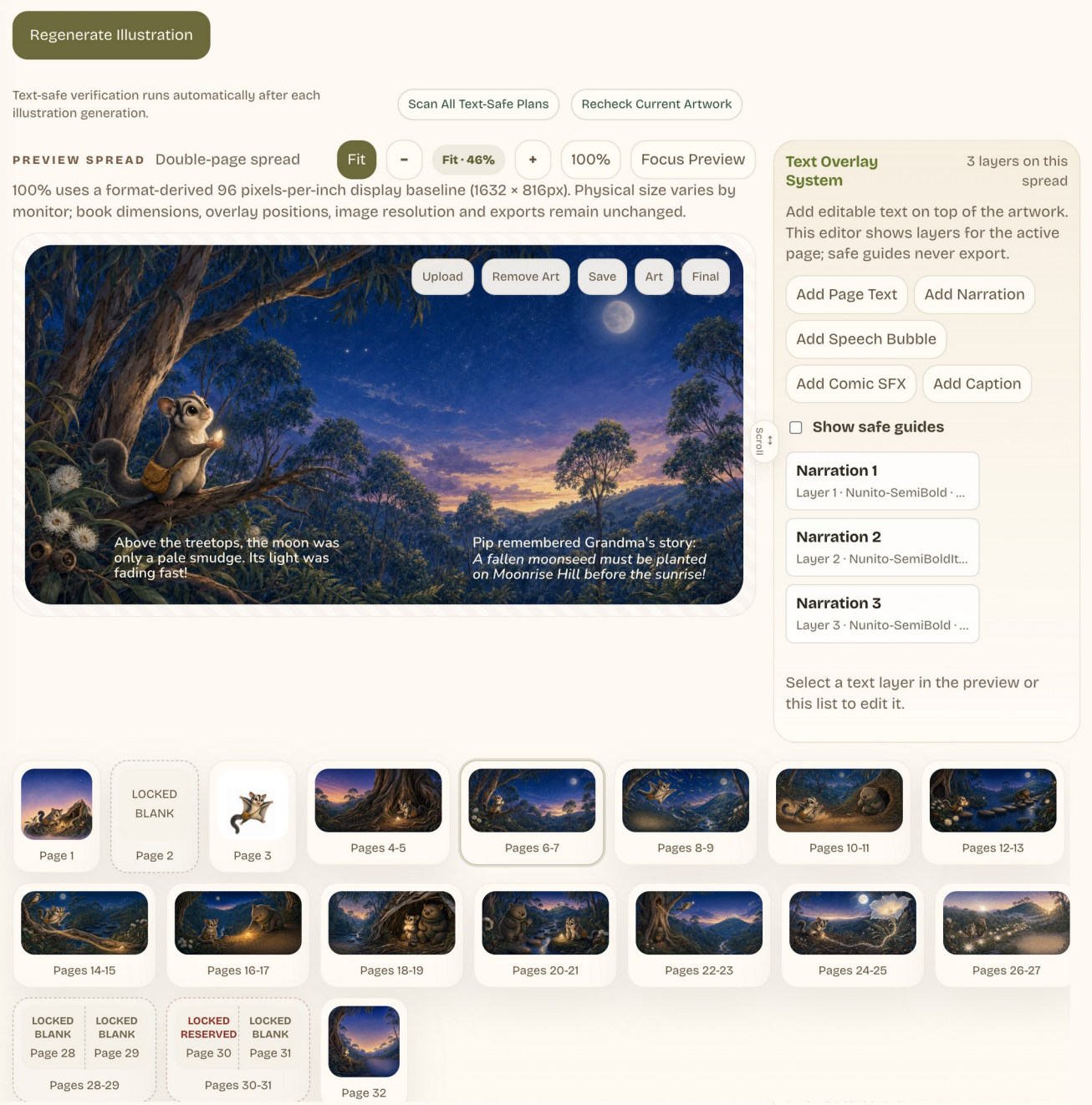

Figure 4.4. An existing story spread with the normal hover actions visible, Regenerate Illustration available, and the active spread selected in the thumbnail map.

Change a layout only with a checked test project

Limnforge can reset and re-layout a book when its page structure needs to change. This affects the page map, so it is not a routine navigation action. Before changing a working project's structure, create a manual snapshot and confirm the behavior first with a disposable test project.

Chapter 5 — World Module and Book Style DNA

This chapter preserves and updates the stable-project guidance from the original visual-foundation chapter. It explains the information Limnforge carries forward throughout a book. It does not repeat the Style Anchor or Style References workflow: that belongs in Chapter 6.

Build the world before planning individual scenes

The **World Module** holds the durable rules of the book's setting. Limnforge can use those rules throughout the project, including Style Lab, covers, pages, refinement, and continuity. Use it for information that should remain true across many illustrations, rather than a one-off action in a single scene.

The module includes:

- **Core World Premise** — the overall setting, story promise, and tone.
- **Recurring Locations** — places that recur and need a consistent visual identity.
- **Environment Rules** — the setting's practical and imaginative rules.
- **Lighting / Atmosphere** — the project-wide light, mood, and emotional progression.
- **Motifs / Materials** — recurring objects, natural details, surfaces, and visual cues.
- **Forbidden World Elements** — things that do not belong in the book.

Write these fields as clear, reusable direction. For example, a recurring location can name the setting's important physical features, while Forbidden World Elements can prevent modern objects, an unwanted genre, or visual details that would break the world.

Do not use the World Module to describe the exact action, framing, or text space of one spread. Those are planned later, for the selected page or spread.

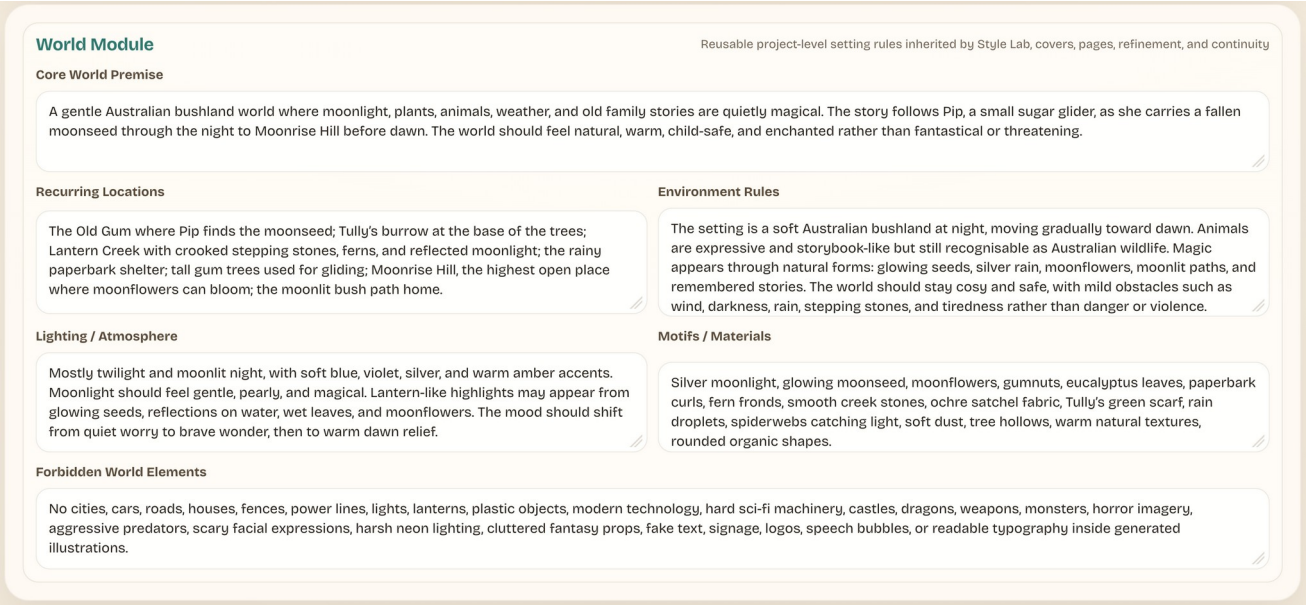

Figure 5.1. The expanded World Module, showing the project-level fields that maintain a consistent setting.

Choose the Book Style DNA

The **Book Style DNA** row is in the Manuscript area. It combines three choices:

- **Base Style**
- **Mood Overlay**
- **Rendering Intensity**

The active combination is shown at the right of the row as the **Active DNA** summary. In the current app, this DNA applies globally to Character Studio, covers, spreads, refinement, and continuity.

Choose a combination that supports the world you have described. Keep it stable once the book's visual direction has been established; changing it later can make new artwork feel unlike already approved artwork.

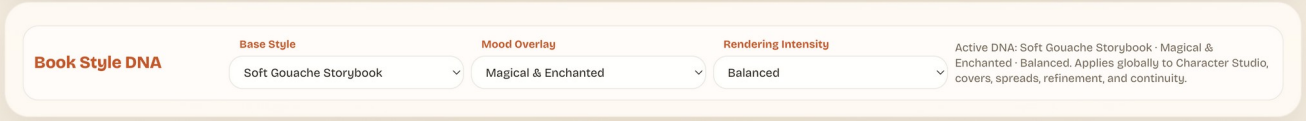

Figure 5.2. Book Style DNA controls and the Active DNA summary.

What comes next

Once the World Module and Book Style DNA give the project a clear foundation, use **Style Lab** to create a Style Anchor and project Style References. Chapter 6 explains that workflow, including which saved references are used for generation and how to keep a reference saved without sending it to generation.

Chapter 6 — Style Lab and Style References

This chapter updates the Style Anchor and reference-set workflow from the original Chapter 2. Start here after defining the World Module and Book Style DNA in Chapter 5. The aim is to establish an original visual language for the project before planning illustrations.

Create a Style Anchor

In **Style Lab**, describe the visual direction of the book. The current form includes:

- **Reference Type**
- **Subject Approach**
- **Creative Vision**
- **World / Setting Notes**
- **Subject Design Rules**
- **Palette / Texture / Finish**

Begin with clear, practical notes. You do not need to write a technical prompt from scratch: Limnforge compiles the information you have supplied.

Open **Compiled Prompt** to review what the available next action will send. The panel deliberately shows the next action only. As the project advances, its contents change to match the action that is currently available.

Select **Generate Style Anchor** to create the initial reference. Review the result and make it the anchor when it represents the visual system you want the book to follow.

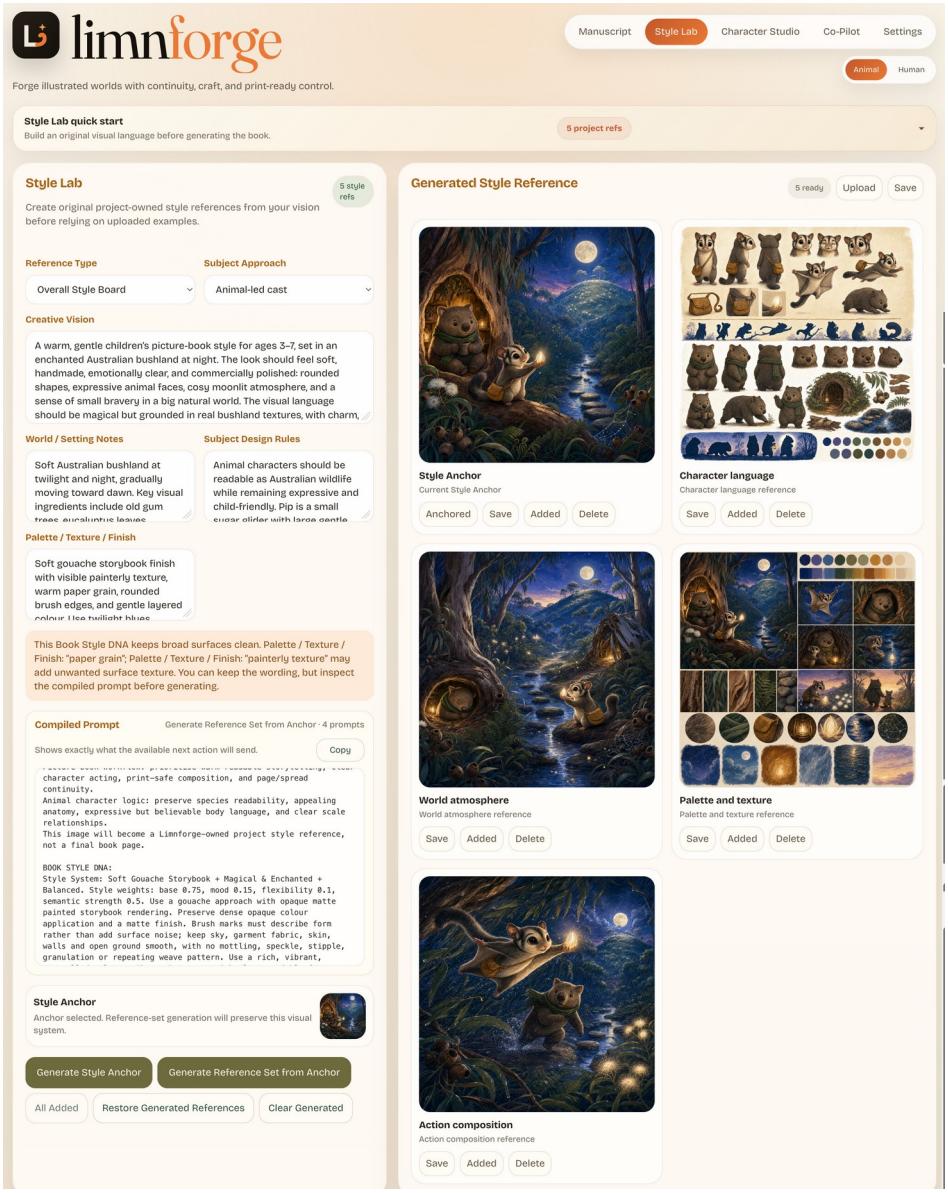

Figure 6.1. Style Lab with a selected Style Anchor, generated references, and the Compiled Prompt for the available next action.

Generate and keep project Style References

With an anchor selected, choose **Generate Reference Set from Anchor** to create related reference images. Depending on the selected Reference Type, Limnforge may instead offer **Generate Selected Reference from Anchor**.

Review the generated images before adding them to the project. Use **Add Style** on an individual image, or **Add All & Save Style Set** when the whole approved set should be retained. Once they are added, the images become the project's Style References.

The generated images and the project's saved Style References are related, but they are not the same thing. A generated image affects future artwork only after it has been added as a project Style Reference.

If project Style References were cleared but the generated Style Lab images still exist, **Restore Generated References** can link those existing renders back to the project. Do not use **Clear Generated** casually: it removes the generated reference results shown in Style Lab.

Choose which references guide generation

The Style Reference panel appears in Manuscript and Character Studio. It shows both how many references are saved and how many are being used for generation.

Limnforge can use up to four Style References for generation. Tick **Use for generation** on the references that should influence new artwork. If four are already selected, untick one before selecting another.

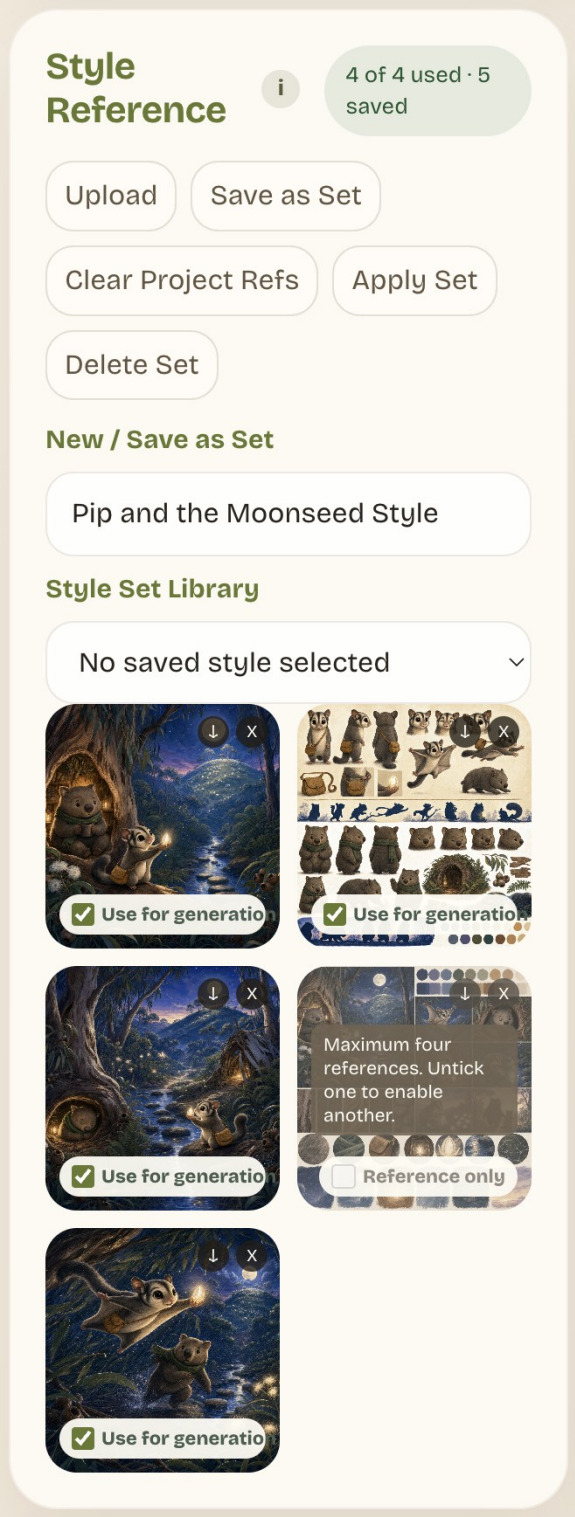

Figure 6.2. Five saved Style References: four selected for generation and one marked Reference only.

Use Reference only when its content should not recur

Reference images can influence composition as well as visual treatment. A building, pose, or layout shown in a reference can reappear in new artwork even if it was not requested in the page plan.

When an image is useful to keep but should not be used in new artwork, choose **Reference only** on that image. It stays saved in the project and can still be downloaded, but Limnforge does not use it for generation.

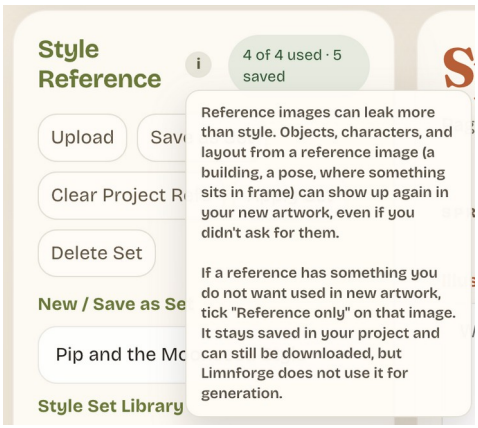

Figure 6.3. The Style Reference information panel explaining composition leakage and Reference only.

Save and manage a set

Use **Save as Set** to preserve a useful group of Style References as a named Style Set. The Style Set Library lets you select a saved set and apply it to a project later. Project references can also be removed individually with the X button, or downloaded with the download button.

Keep this distinction in mind:

- A **Style Set** is a saved reusable group.
- **Project Style References** are the images currently linked to this project.
- **Use for generation** determines which of the current project references are sent to the image generator.
- **Reference only** keeps an image in the project but excludes it from generation.

What comes next

Style References establish a shared visual system. Chapter 7 uses that system when creating project-owned character libraries; Chapter 8 applies it to individual illustration plans and generations.

Chapter 7 — Character Studio and Project-Owned Libraries

This chapter updates the original Character Libraries workflow. Create characters after establishing the World Module, Book Style DNA, and Style References. Their approved poses give later illustration planning a stable visual identity to work from.

Build the main character

In **Character Studio**, begin with the permanent identity facts that should remain stable throughout the book:

- **Subject Type**
- **Character Name**
- **Species/Type**
- **Visual Description**

Use **Visual Description** for observable, durable facts: body and silhouette, face or fur, clothing, palette, recurring props, and details that must not drift. It is not a plot summary.

Description Helper is optional. It helps organize identity, body, face, wardrobe, locked details, props, and exclusions into a fuller Visual Description. Review and edit the result before treating it as the character's canon.

Choose an **Expression** for the facial read and a **Pose Category** for the body and camera arrangement. Then use **Generate Pose** to make a clean character reference. When a result is good enough to retain, choose **Add to Character Library**.

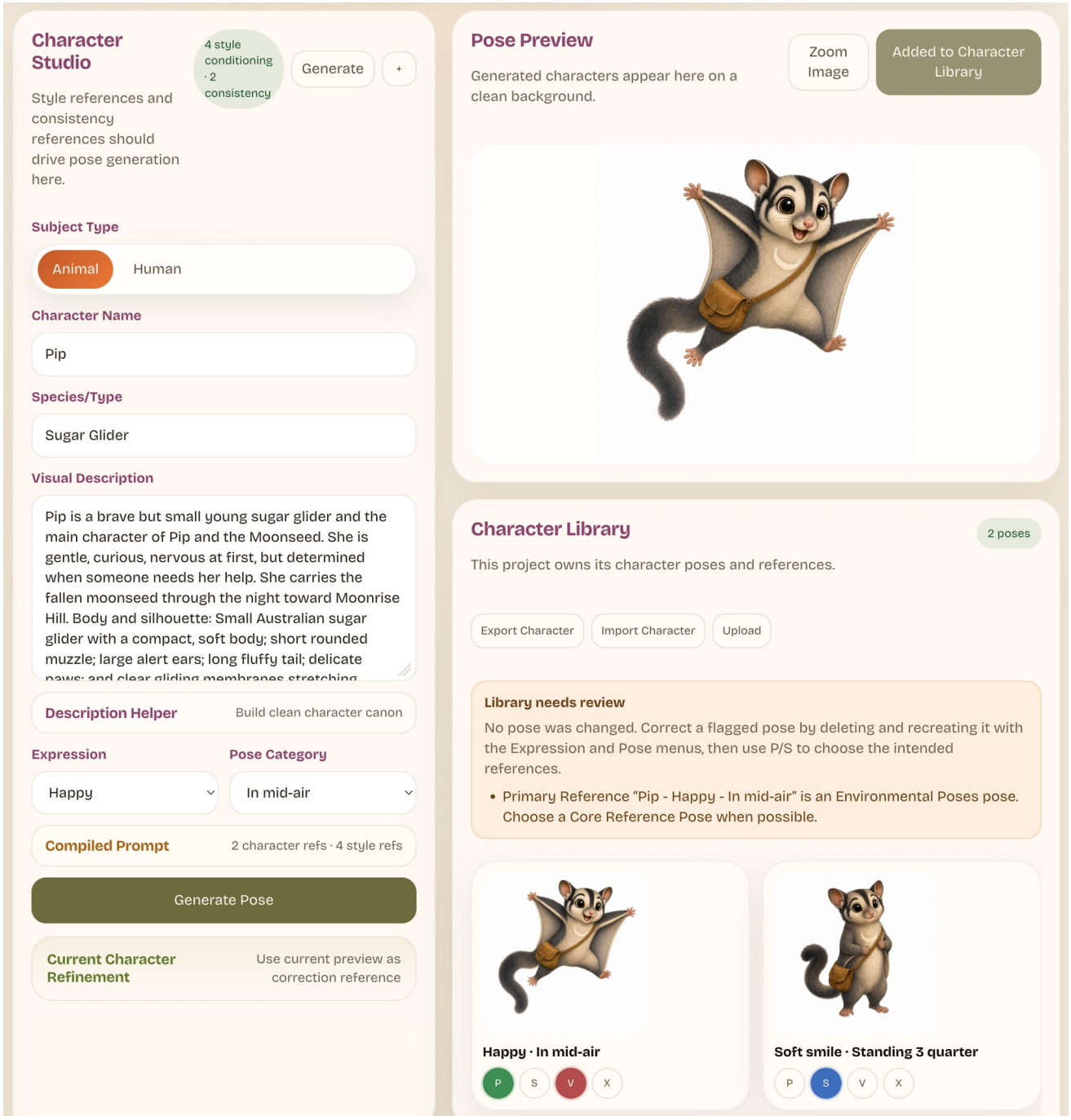

Figure 7.1. Character Studio with Pip's stable description, an existing pose preview, and the project-owned Character Library.

Choose Primary and Secondary references

The Character Library stores the poses and approved references for the current project. It is not a shared cross-project catalogue.

Choose the strongest, clearest identity image as the **Primary Reference** using its `P` button. Use `S` to choose a complementary **Secondary Reference**—for example, a second angle, useful costume view, or readable silhouette. Do not choose two images that redesign the character.

For a main character, a clear standing or neutral view is usually the best Primary Reference. An action or environmental pose can be useful as a Secondary Reference, but may not be a strong enough identity anchor on its own.

Use `V` to preview a saved pose and `X` only when you intend to remove that pose from the project.

Refine a pose only when the identity is already close

Open **Current Character Refinement** when the preview is nearly right and needs a targeted correction. Give a precise correction note and select the preservation controls that must remain stable, such as identity, pose category, expression, props and wardrobe, or anatomy.

Use refinement to correct a near-match. For a substantially different pose, viewpoint, or character concept, generate a fresh pose instead.

Add supporting characters where they matter

Supporting characters are also project-owned. Create and save them only when they recur or need a stable visual identity across the book.

In Manuscript, the **Secondary Characters** panel shows the supporting characters available to the project. A saved character displays its approved Primary and Secondary reference images. Choose **Use On Spread** to make that character available to the currently selected spread. The character's identity references can then be included when that spread is planned or generated.

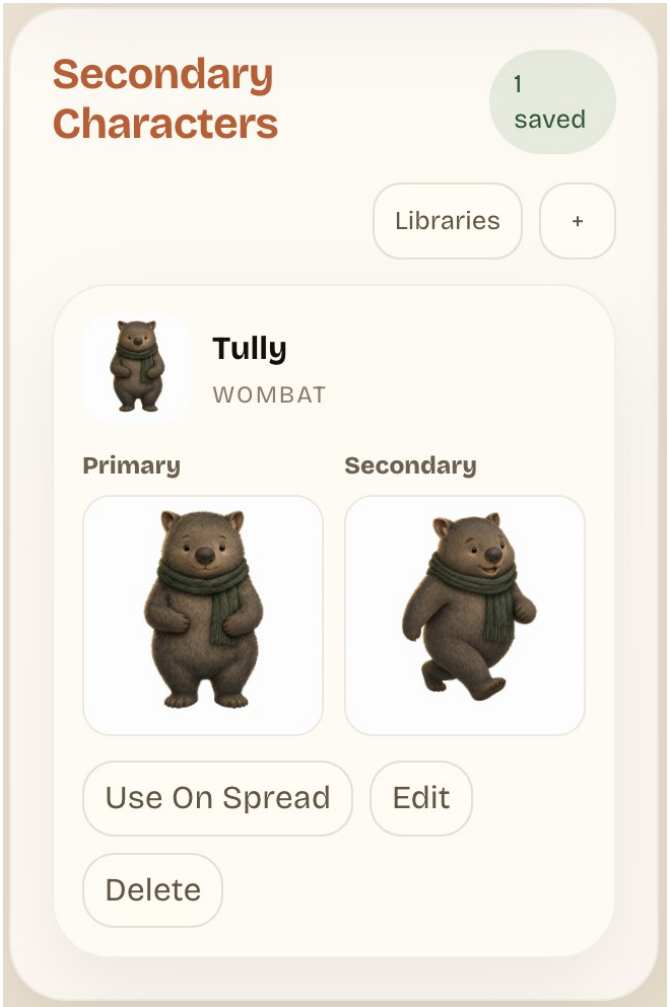

Figure 7.2. A saved supporting character with approved Primary and Secondary references, ready to use on the selected spread.

Move a character to another project

Use **Export Character** in the Character Library to create a portable `.limnforge-character` bundle. The bundle includes the character record, saved poses, Primary and Secondary designations, and Description Helper information.

In another open Limnforge project, choose **Import Character** to copy that bundle into the current project. The imported character remains independent: changes in one project do not alter the other. Limnforge rejects unsafe, incomplete, or duplicate character imports rather than silently replacing a saved character.

What comes next

Character references support the individual page and spread plans in Chapter 8. Use them alongside the project's selected Style References; do not rely on a single pose to carry every expression, action, and viewpoint in the finished book.

Chapter 8 — Plan and generate story spreads

This chapter covers the normal workflow for planning a new story illustration or replacing an existing one. It does not cover text-safe verification, a targeted correction of existing artwork, or carrying facts from a different illustration forward; those are separate choices covered in Chapter 9.

Start with the reusable scene description

Select the page or spread in the thumbnail map, then enter **Illustration Instructions**. These describe the scene the audience should see: the subject and action, location, viewpoint or composition, mood and light, and any must-show story detail.

For a double-page spread, write one complete composition. For a page-first view, write distinct left- and right-page instructions where the two pages need different scenes. Keep this field as the reusable scene plan. Do not replace it with a one-off instruction such as “Keep the entire image unchanged” or “Correct only…”; those belong in **Current Illustration Refinement — Correction Brief** in Chapter 9.

Add the spread-specific facts

Open **Spread Planning** below Illustration Instructions. This is where a short scene brief becomes practical page direction. Fill in only the fields that make a meaningful difference to the image:

- **Character Scene State:** what each present character is doing, feeling, looking at, holding, or wearing differently on this surface.
- **Location / Scene Environment:** this page’s particular place, time, weather, terrain, room details, and environmental treatment.
- **Required Props:** objects that must be visible and how they are used.
- **Forbidden Props / Details:** page-specific exclusions, such as an unwanted extra character, costume change, or background clutter.
- **Composition Intent:** focal hierarchy, camera distance, staging, and negative space.

World Module and Book Style DNA supply reusable rules for the book. Spread Planning is for the facts that are unique to this page or spread. If the scene involves a supporting character, use **Characters Present** to add that saved character to the active surface before generating.

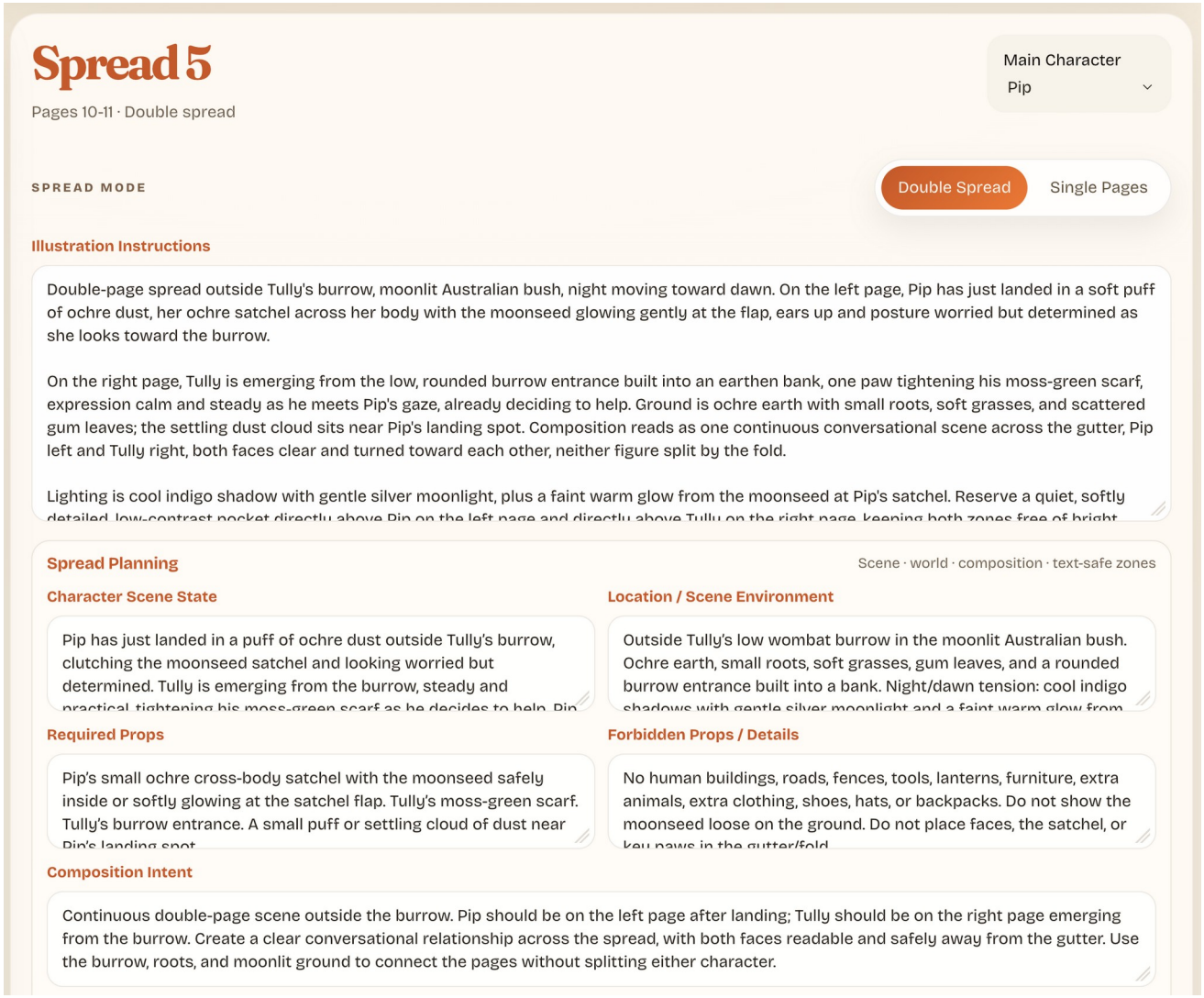

Figure 8.1. Spread Planning with the standard scene, environment, prop, exclusion, and composition fields visible.

Review the Compiled Prompt

Open **Compiled Prompt** before spending a generation. It shows the prompt Limnforge has assembled from the selected surface, project world and style information, eligible character references, and the planning fields above. The summary also reports the number of present characters and attached character and Style References.

If an important fact is missing or wrong, correct the source field rather than trying to compensate with a vague extra sentence elsewhere. The prompt can be copied for review, but Limnforge does not send a copied prompt anywhere by itself.

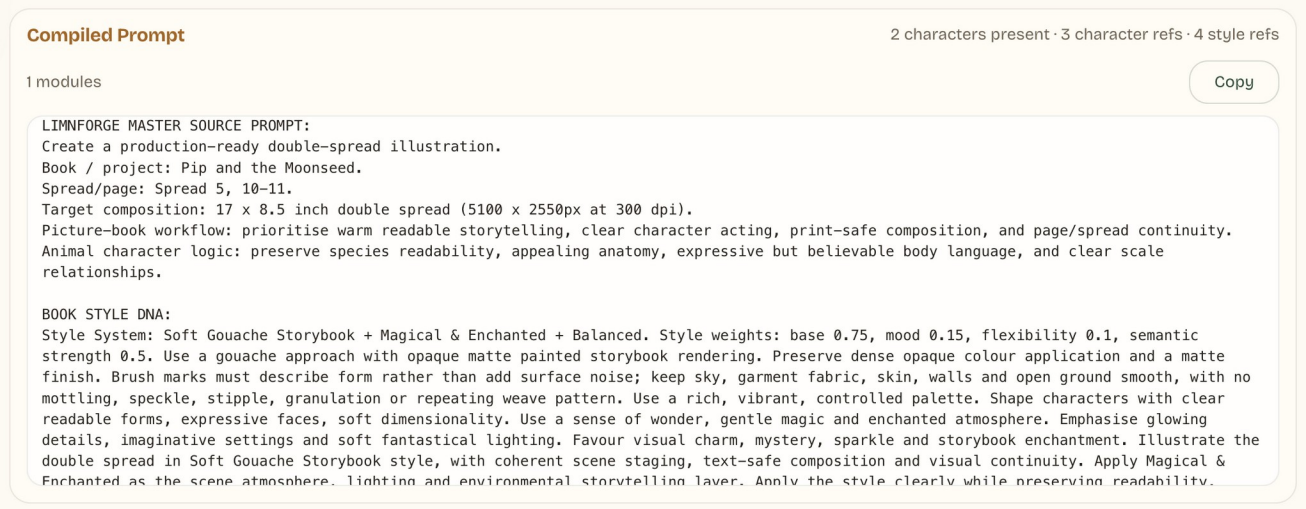

Figure 8.2. The Compiled Prompt for a planned story spread, with its source summary and Copy control.

Generate or regenerate

Use the primary generation button for the selected surface:

- **Generate Illustration** appears when the double-page spread has no current artwork.
- **Generate Left Page**, **Generate Right Page**, or **Generate Both Pages** appear for page-first layouts.
- **Regenerate Illustration** (or the corresponding page control) appears when the selected surface already has artwork.

Regeneration creates a new attempt from the saved planning. It is not a promise to preserve the current image. If the aim is a specific correction to the current artwork, use Current Illustration Refinement instead; if the aim is a genuinely new composition that inherits another approved image's visual facts, use Previous Illustration Continuity. Both are explained in Chapter 9.

After generation, inspect the result in the preview and select another thumbnail whenever you want to continue working elsewhere. The preview's hover controls are normal controls for the active artwork. **Upload**, **Remove Art**, **Save**, **Art**, and **Final** are described in Chapter 11.

Keep the next action clear

Before approving a result, check the following:

15. The selected characters, props, and story beat are present.
16. The composition supports the planned reading order and any later text.
17. The image follows the book's established visual language.
18. Any text-safe result is reviewed before text is placed. Limnforge checks Text-Safe Area automatically after illustration generation; Chapter 9 explains the result and the available repair routes.

For an existing generation, the main Manuscript chapter's Figure 4.4 shows the normal preview, hover actions, regeneration control, and page map together. This chapter concentrates on the planning decisions that precede that action.

Chapter 9 — Text-safe planning, refinement, and continuity

This chapter covers three specialised tools that support a story illustration after its ordinary scene plan is in place. They solve different problems:

- **Text-Safe planning** reserves a readable illustrated area for later text.
- **Current Illustration Refinement** corrects the current image.
- **Previous Illustration Continuity** creates a new composition that inherits visual facts from another approved image.

Use only the tool that matches the job. Current Illustration Refinement and Previous Illustration Continuity automatically exclude each other.

Plan text before generating artwork

Open **Spread Planning** and use the Text-Safe fields only when the page needs deliberate room for Page Text, narration, dialogue, or another overlay. Choose a **Text-Safe Intent**, choose its **Text-Safe Span**, then write **Text-Safe Notes**.

Describe the positive surface you want first, then the things that must stay out of it. For example, ask for open, evenly toned sky, ground, wall, or calm receding atmosphere before listing faces, branches, bright highlights, or props to exclude. This gives the image generator a useful illustrated surface rather than a vague instruction to leave empty space.

For a double-page spread, text never crosses the center gutter. The lower **Left page Text-Safe Area** and **Right page Text-Safe Area** controls let each page have its own intent, span, and positive scene content where necessary.

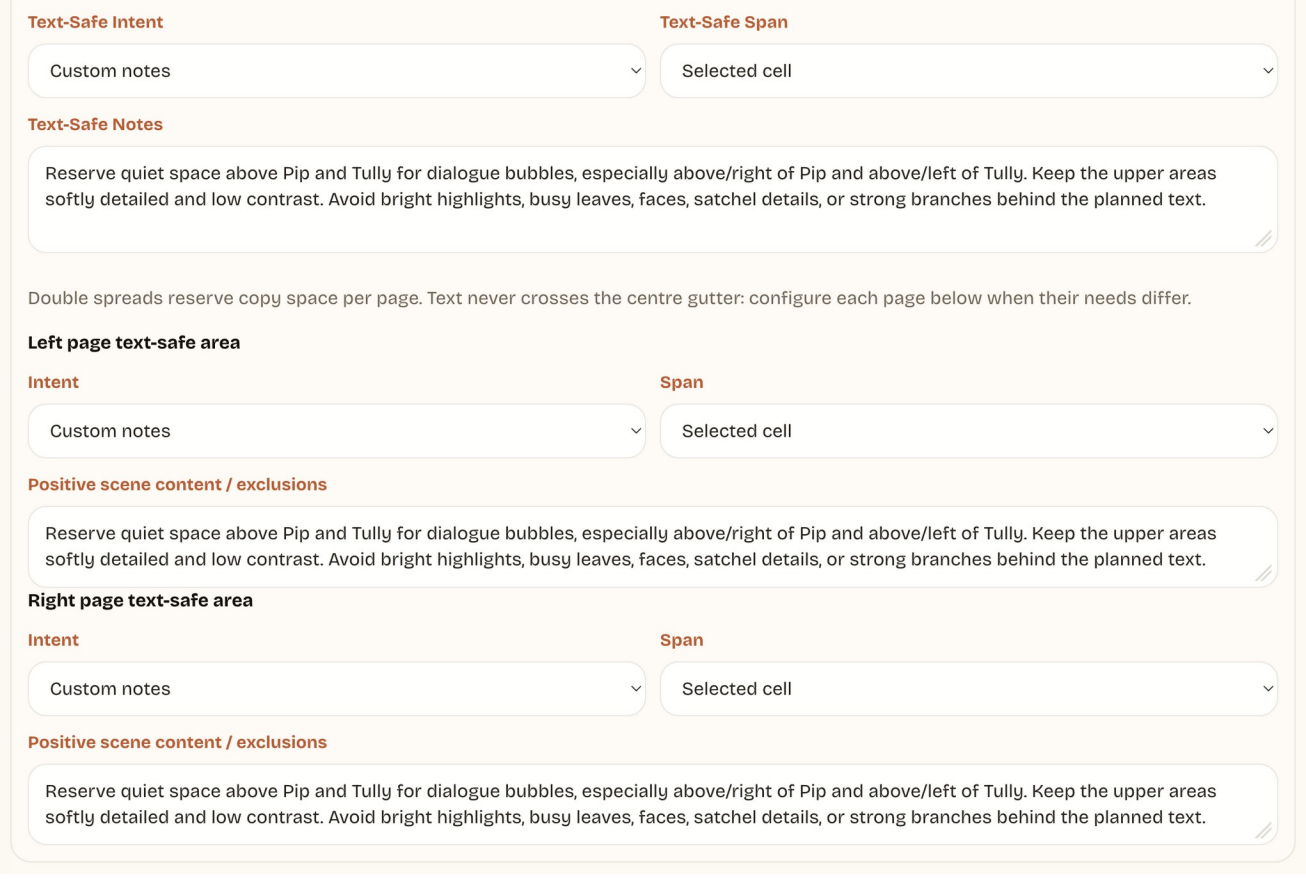

Figure 9.1. Surface-level and per-page Text-Safe planning controls for a double-page spread.

Review the verification result

Limnforge automatically checks a planned Text-Safe Area after each interior illustration generation. It reports whether the area is ready for text, too busy for text, or does not provide enough contrast for the current Page Text.

Use **Recheck Current Artwork** after uploading artwork or changing the plan. It analyzes the saved artwork locally; it does not create an image or send an API request. **Scan All Text-Safe Plan** is also read-only: it reviews saved interior planning across the project for concrete positional conflicts and produces a worklist without generating or replacing artwork.

When a result needs attention, **Show details** exposes the measured information behind the decision. Treat the visible result and the artwork itself as the decision point; a passing measurement is not a substitute for a visual check.

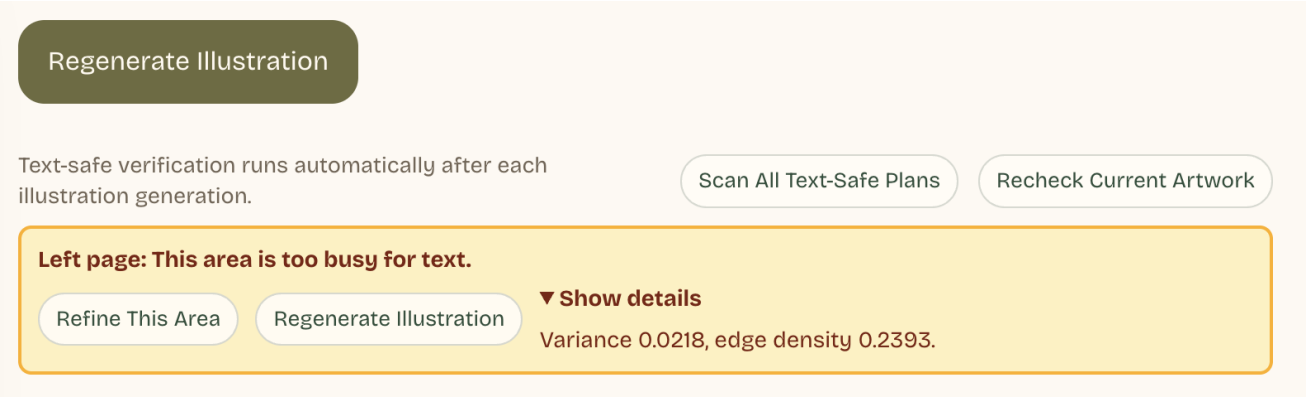

Figure 9.2. A text-safe result that identifies a busy left-page area and offers the two available repair routes.

Correct the current illustration

Use **Current Illustration Refinement** only when the current image is substantially right and needs a targeted change. Turn it on, write the exact change in **Correction Brief**, review the current-reference preview, choose only the preservation controls that matter, and set an appropriate strength.

The Correction Brief is deliberately separate from Illustration Instructions. The latter remains the reusable description for a future new scene. A brief is included only while Current Illustration Refinement is enabled.

If text-safe verification identifies an obstruction, select **Refine This Area**. Limnforge prepares a targeted correction that uses the current image as its reference. Review the prepared refinement before generating it. The repair should move the obstructing whole character or object where necessary; it should not simply remove a head, hair, or another visible piece from the existing composition.

Use normal **Regenerate Illustration** instead when you want a fresh attempt that does not depend on the current image.

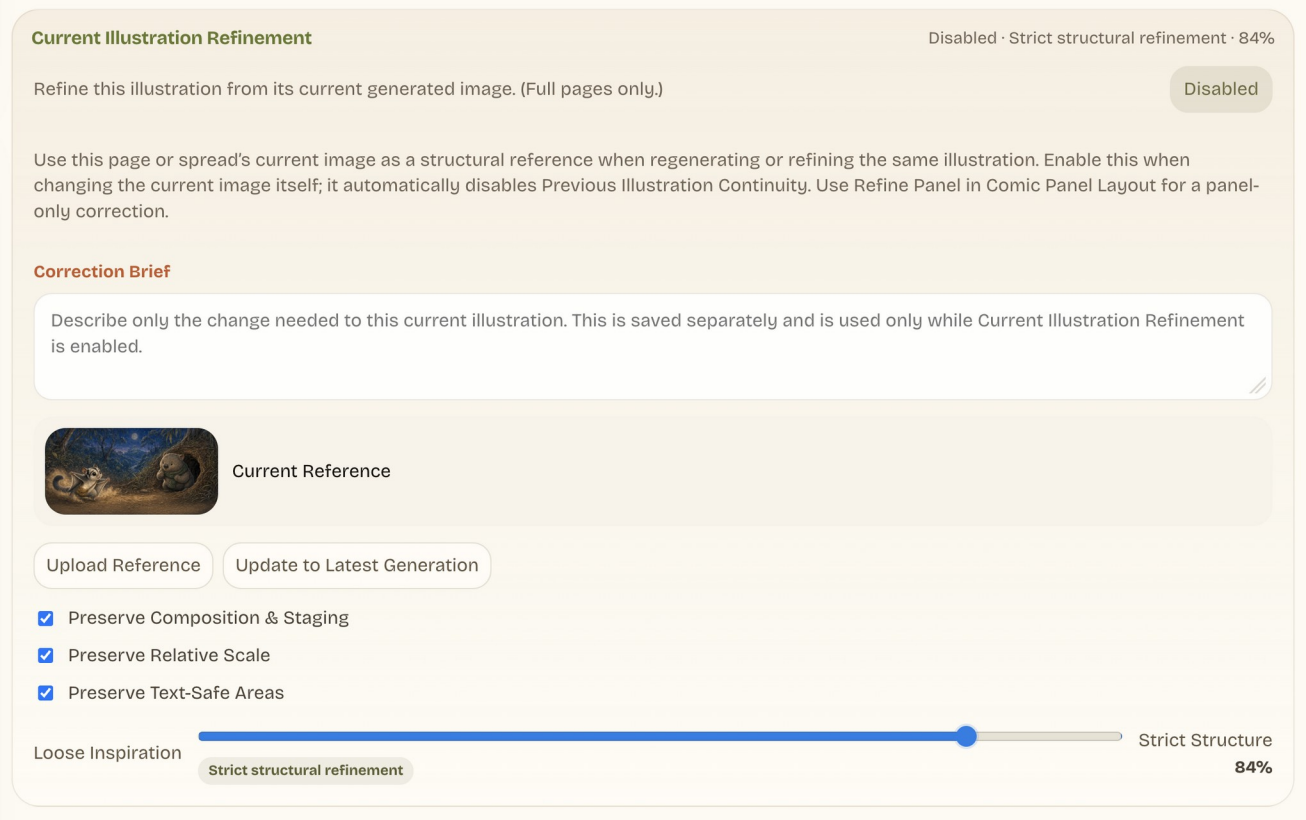

Figure 9.3. Current Illustration Refinement, including the separate Correction Brief, current-image reference, preservation controls, and strength slider.

Carry forward an approved visual anchor

Use **Previous Illustration Continuity** for a new composition that should inherit established character identity, environment, lighting, palette, rendering treatment, or another visual fact from an approved page, spread, or cover. Select the illustration that contains the facts you need; it does not have to be the immediately previous page.

Enable the tool only when that inheritance is intentional. Then choose the anchor, decide whether to preserve composition and staging, relative scale, or Text-Safe Area, and set the continuity strength. A balanced setting normally supports a new shot while retaining recognisable continuity. Strict continuity is for a closely controlled continuation, not a general default.

Do not use this tool to correct the selected image itself. That is a Current Illustration Refinement job.

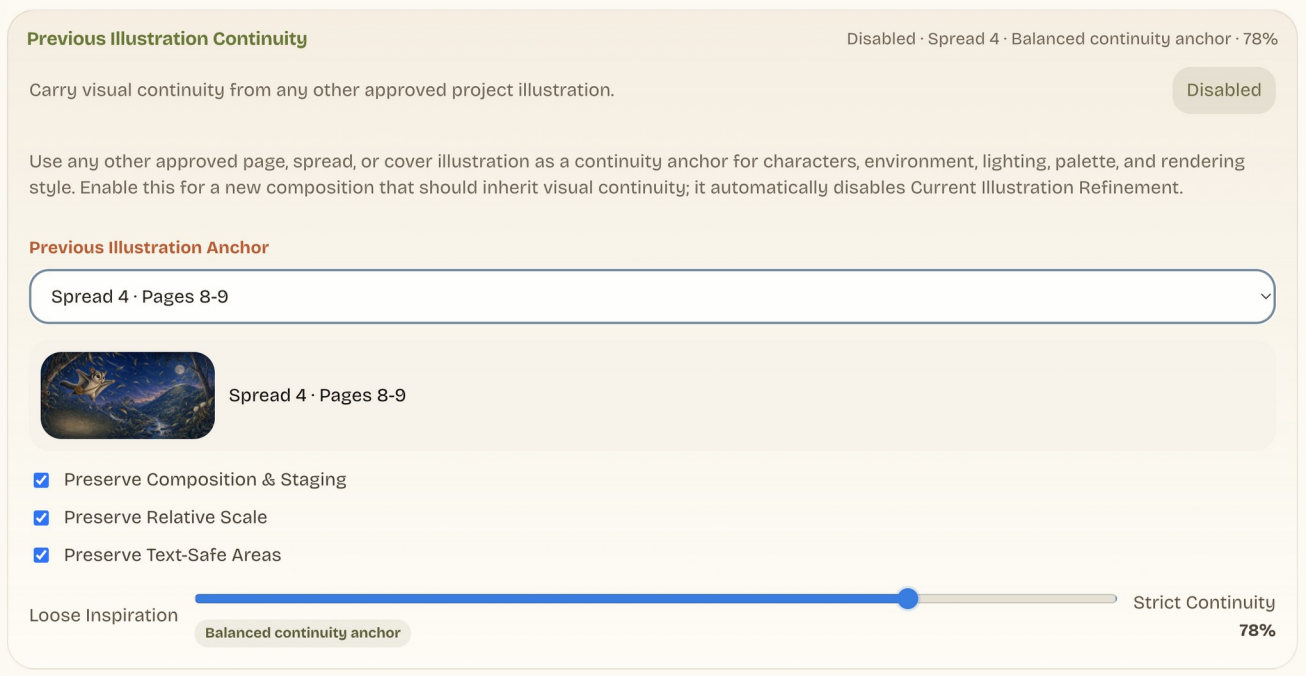

Figure 9.4. Previous Illustration Continuity with an approved Spread 4 anchor selected but the feature still disabled.

Choose the right route

Use this quick distinction before generating:

- **A new scene from its ordinary plan —** Standard generation in Chapter 8
- **An intentionally calm area for future overlay text —** Text-Safe planning
- **A specific correction to the current image —** Current Illustration Refinement
- **A new scene that inherits facts from a different approved image —** Previous Illustration Continuity

Text Overlay creation and print-boundary guidance are covered in Chapter 11.

Chapter 10 — Comic and graphic novel workflow

Comic and graphic-novel pages use individual panels rather than one illustration across a full page or spread. Each panel has its own artwork, prompt, and panel-relative text, while the World Module, Book Style DNA, characters, and ordinary page planning keep the page visually coherent.

Choose the comic or graphic-novel workflow when creating the book. Then select the page you want to work on and choose a panel layout for that page. The rest of this chapter explains the parts of the workflow that differ from the picture-book workflow in Chapters 8 and 9.

Choose a layout, then direct each panel

Open **Comic Panel Layout** for the active page. Select a standard or angled template that suits the pacing of the scene. A template is a starting point, not a permanent limit: you can later resize, split, merge, or reshape its panels.

Write one clear instruction in each panel card. Describe the immediate shot, visible character action, panel-specific setting and light, required or forbidden details, and space needed for a bubble, caption, or Comic SFX. Keep page-wide rules in the World Module, Style DNA, and Spread Planning instead of repeating them in every card.

Use the controls in the selected panel card to create or correct that panel:

- **Regenerate** makes a new attempt from the panel's saved instruction.
- **Refine Panel** corrects the current artwork in that panel while preserving its established panel composition.
- **Upload Panel** replaces that panel's artwork with an image you supply.

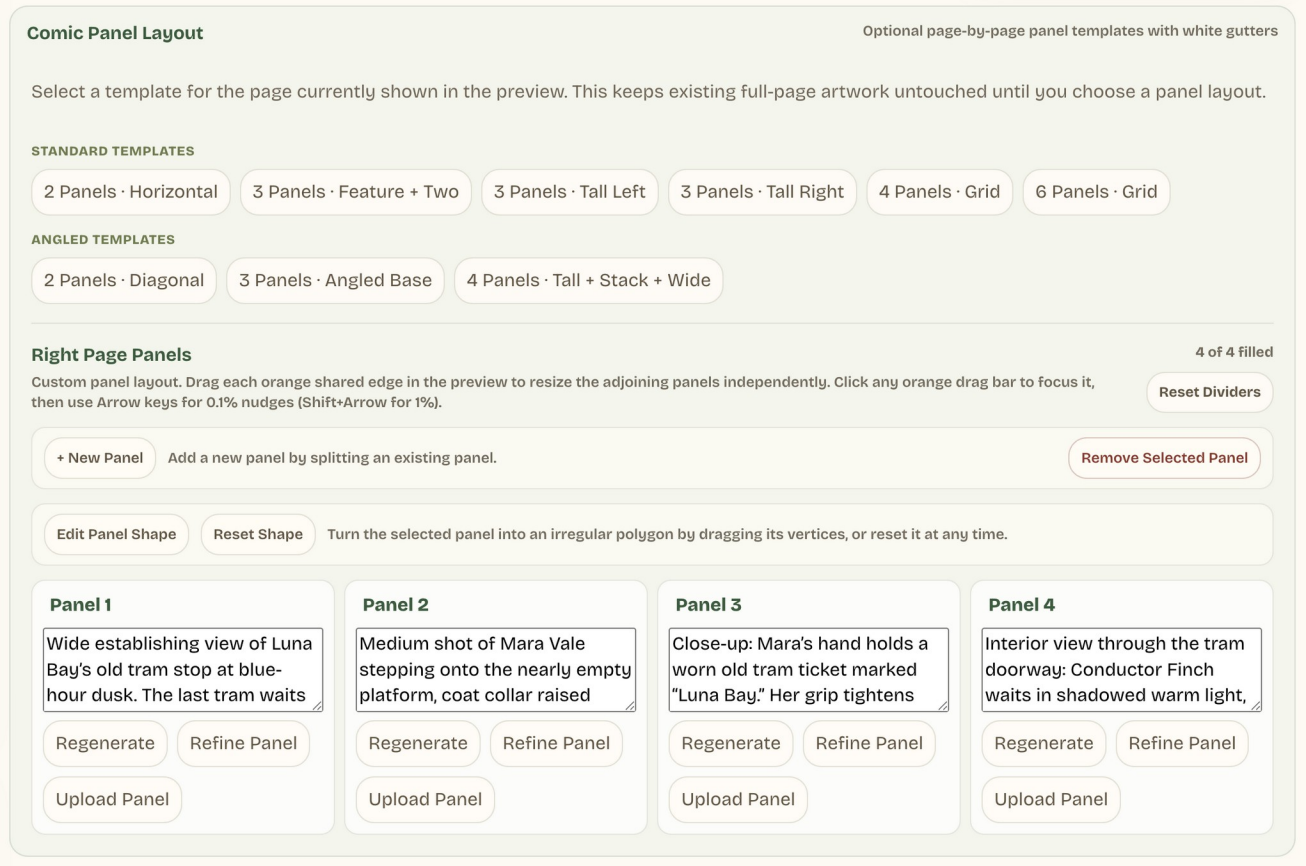

Figure 10.1. Comic Panel Layout with templates, an editable custom layout, and individual panel instruction cards.

Review the page as a sequence

Generate or upload each panel, then inspect the assembled page rather than judging every image in isolation. Check the reading order, gutters, scale changes, lighting continuity, and whether the action remains clear as the reader moves through the page.

On a multi-panel page, Limnforge works panel by panel. **Current Illustration Refinement** and **Previous Illustration Continuity** are unavailable for that page as a whole; use **Refine Panel** to correct one panel. A completed panel page can still serve as a continuity source for a later eligible full-page, spread, or cover image.

For planning help, run **Work Order 7 — Spread Planning and Illustration Instructions** once for the selected panelized page. It can return shared page planning plus one `Panel N — Instructions` section for every existing panel. Copy the shared plan into the page fields and each approved panel instruction into its matching card. The Co-Pilot Work Orders mini guide explains this clipboard-based process; Work Orders 9 and 10 are unavailable for a multi-panel page.

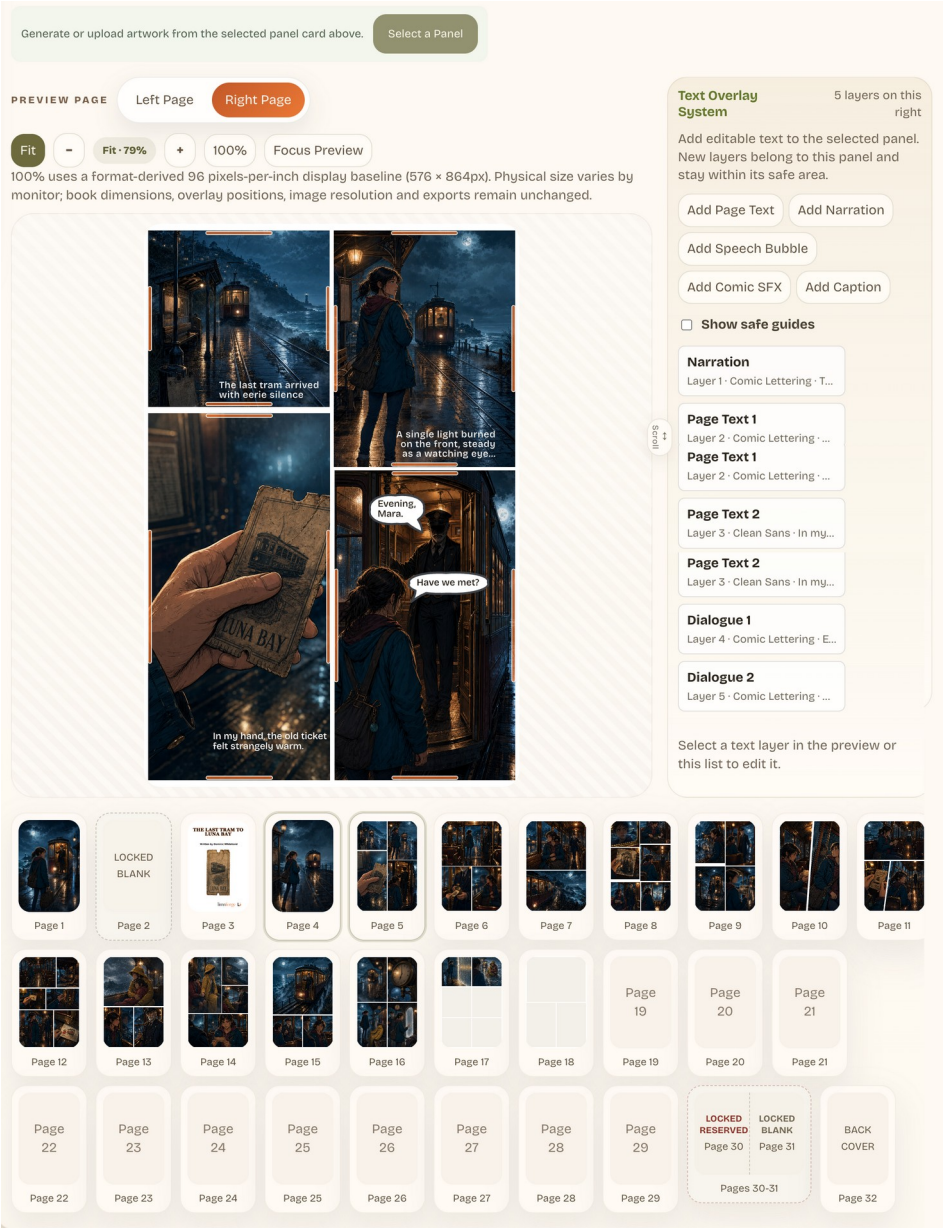

Figure 10.2. Completed multi-panel comic page with panel-relative narration, dialogue, and Comic SFX controls.

Add lettering inside its panel

Select the destination panel before adding text. New narration, Page Text, speech bubbles, captions, and Comic SFX layers belong to that panel and stay within its safe area; they cannot cross into a neighbor or sit in a gutter. Use **Show safe guides** when placing or checking text:

- an orange solid line marks the panel trim / bleed boundary;
- a blue dashed line marks the panel Text-Safe Area.

Select an existing layer from the preview or Text Overlay System whenever you need to edit it. Use readable dialogue and narration first, then use bubble shape, outline, tail, and Comic SFX styling only where they improve the story beat. Chapter 11 gives the shared Text Overlay controls and print-boundary guidance.

Resize without breaking the page

Select a panel and drag an orange edge to resize its visible cell. The focused edge shows the resulting relevant panel dimension; use the Arrow keys for 0.1% nudges and Shift+Arrow for 1% nudges. Panels must remain within the page, cannot overlap, and retain deliberate white gutters.

After a resize, inspect the panel art and its text. Text remains panel-relative, so make sure its safe placement still serves the intended reading order. Use **Reset Dividers** to restore the layout's original boundaries when an experiment is not right.

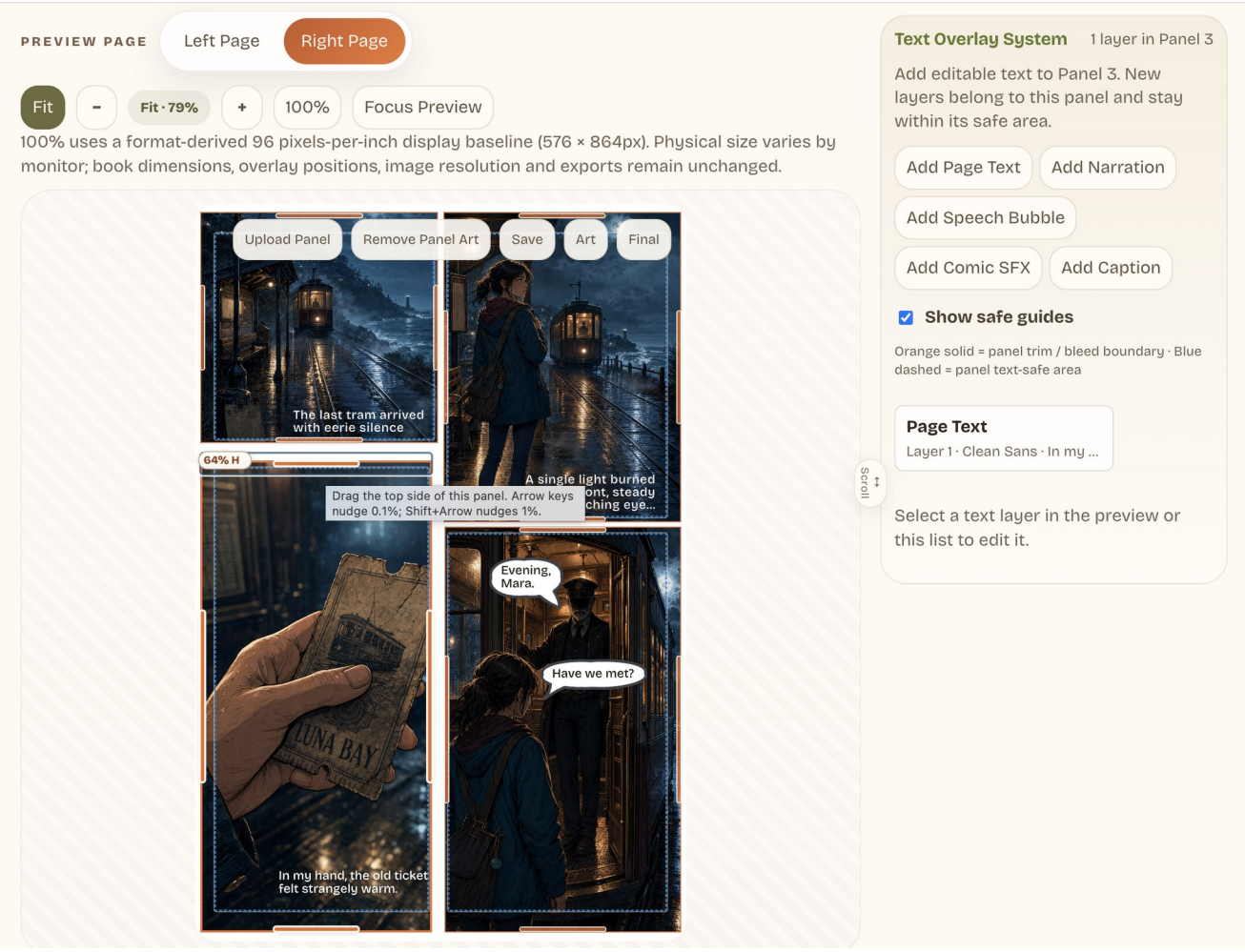

Figure 10.3. Focused horizontal panel edge with an H readout, safe guides, and panel-relative text visible.

Reshape a panel deliberately

Use an irregular shape only when it adds a clear storytelling effect. First select the panel in **Comic Panel Layout**, then choose **Edit Panel Shape**. In reshape mode, drag the orange vertices to create the shape you need. Choose **+ Vertex** to add more control points, up to 12 vertices in total, when a more detailed angle or contour serves the panel.

Select **Done Reshaping** to keep the new shape. Select **Reset Shape** to discard the current reshaping and immediately restore the selected panel to its original rectangular form. This is useful when an experiment makes the reading order, gutters, artwork, or lettering less clear.

The controls protect the page: a shape stays inside its panel cell, cannot self-cross, and cannot overlap a neighboring panel. Keep the change purposeful and leave enough interior room for artwork and any future lettering.

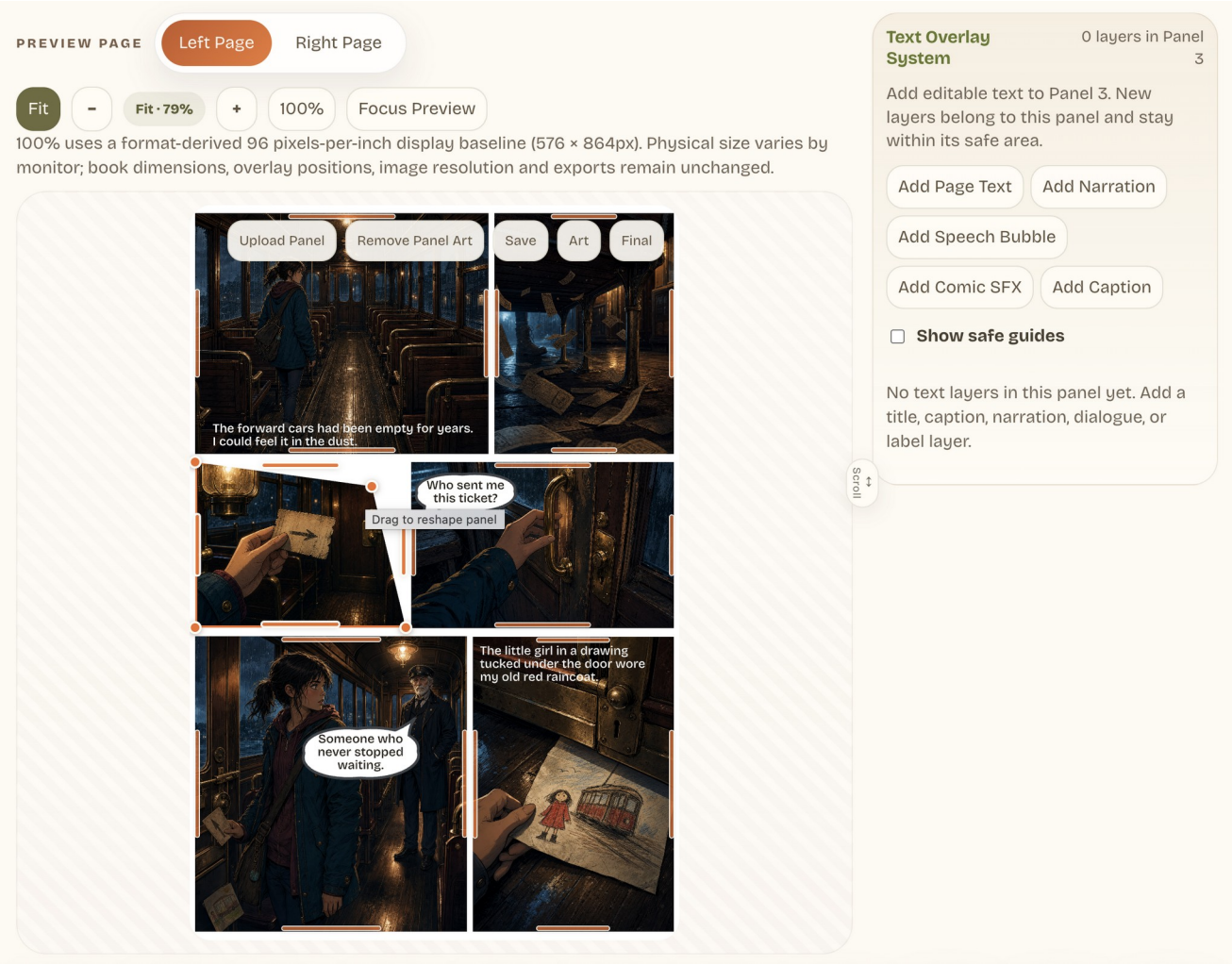

Figure 10.4. An actively reshaped panel with orange vertices, retaining clear gutters and neighboring panels.

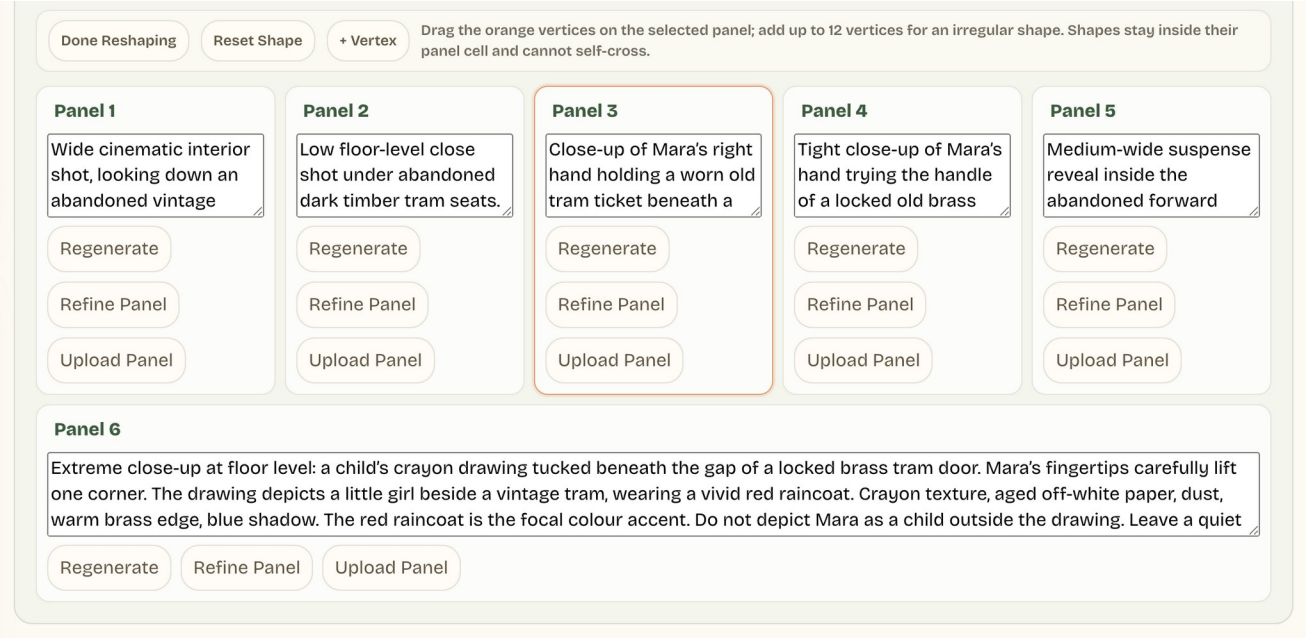

Figure 10.5. Reshape-mode controls and the selected panel card, including Done Reshaping, Reset Shape, and + Vertex.

Check the saved result, not only the preview

Before approval and export, inspect the assembled page in the preview and in its saved output. Confirm that panel geometry, gutters, panel art, and panel-owned text agree in both places. An overlap, clipped bubble, shifted text layer, or mismatch between preview and saved Art needs correction before continuing.

Chapter 13 explains Commercial Export and final print checks.

Chapter 11 — Text Overlay, fonts, print boundaries, and artwork removal

Use the **Text Overlay System** to add editable title, author, Page Text, narration, dialogue, captions, labels, and Comic SFX. Your Full Manuscript is reference material; it does not automatically place or export text. Add the final wording deliberately as an overlay on the appropriate page, spread, panel, or cover.

Chapter 10 explains comic-panel lettering. This chapter covers the shared text workflow for ordinary story surfaces, including fonts, print-boundary guidance, and the difference between removing artwork and removing text.

Add and select text layers

Open **Text Overlay System** beside the active preview. Its layer list contains only the overlays for the active surface. Choose the role that matches the story job:

- **Page Text** for general body copy.
- **Narration** or **Caption** for storytelling text outside speech bubbles.
- **Speech Bubble** for spoken dialogue.
- **Comic SFX** for short, expressive sound lettering.

Select a layer in the preview or in the layer list to edit it. Start with clear, readable copy and a deliberate position; visual styling comes after the words and their reading order are settled.

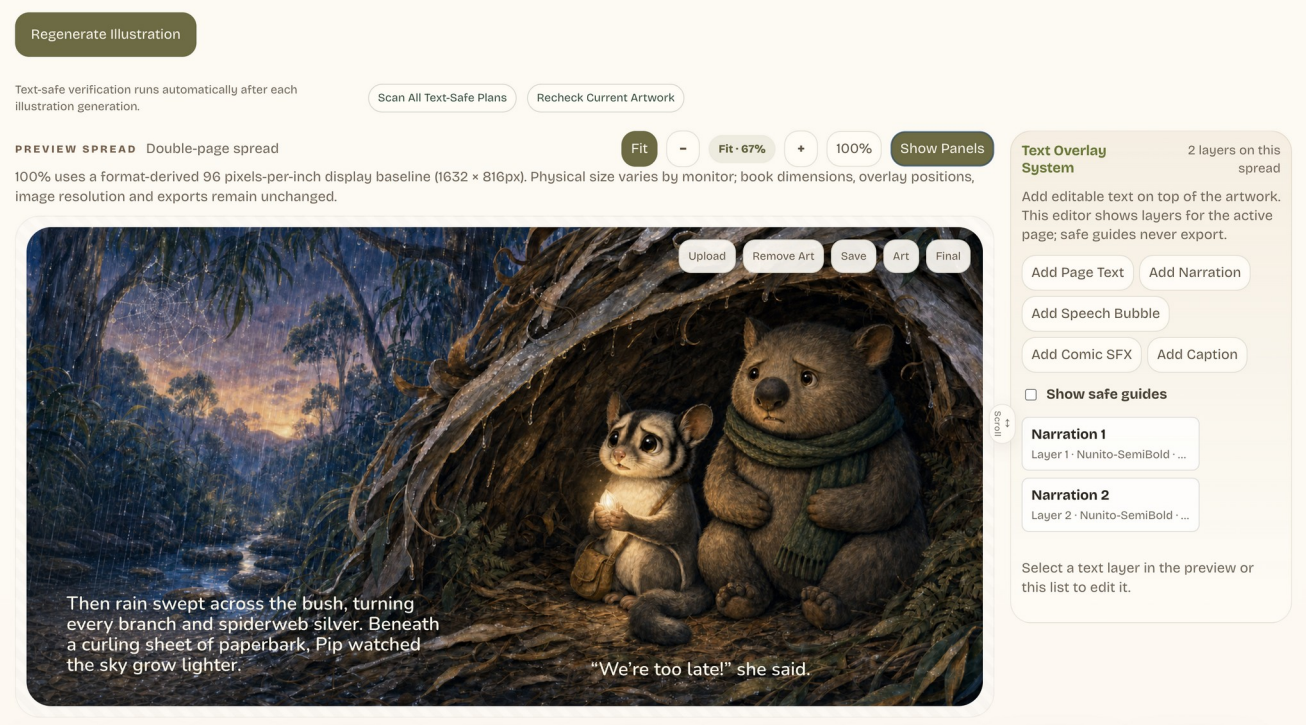

Figure 11.1. Story-spread preview with existing narration and dialogue, the Text Overlay System, add-layer controls, and the active layer list.

Edit the wording, role, and font

The selected layer's controls let you enter the exact text, choose a **Font**, set its **Role** and target, align it, and choose color, opacity, and box style. Manual line breaks are intentional in title, author, and design text; review them carefully in the preview.

Choose **Import Project Font** when the book needs a font that is not supplied in Limnforge. Imported fonts are copied into the current project and embedded as vector outlines in exports. Use a controlled lettering system: a small, intentional set of fonts is easier to read and keeps the book visually coherent.

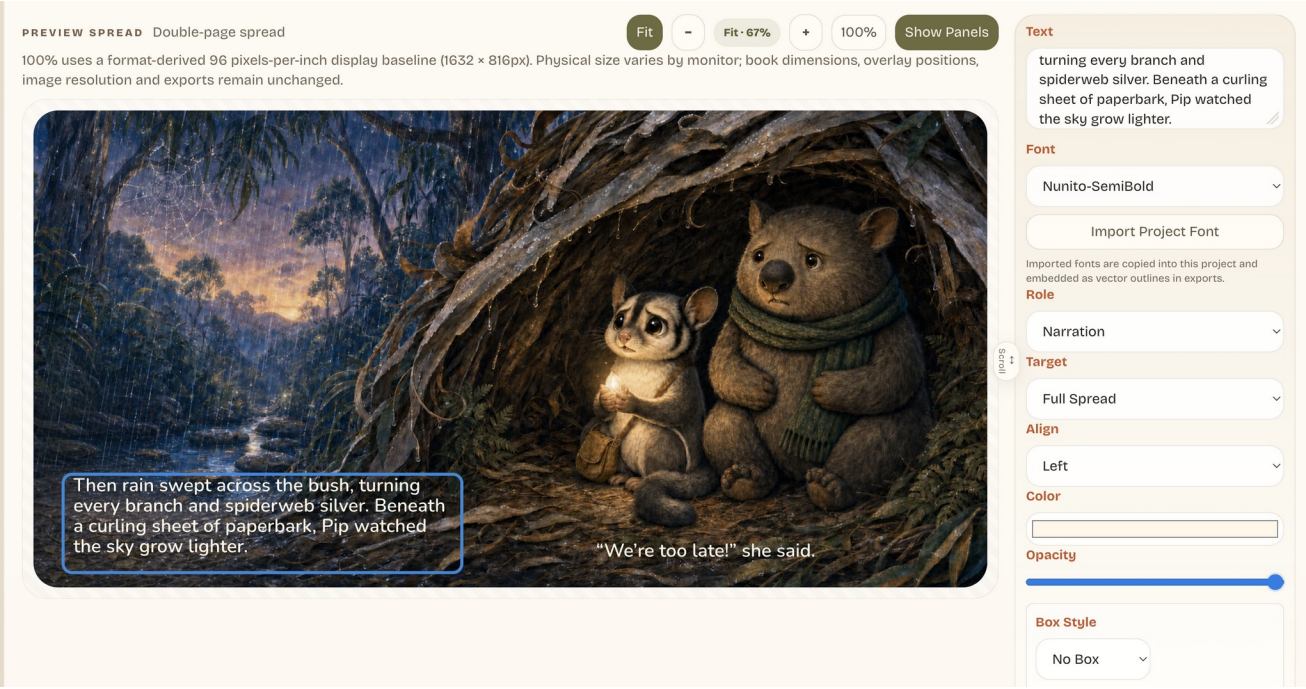

Figure 11.2. Selected narration layer with its text, font, Import Project Font, role, target, alignment, color, opacity, and box-style controls.

Position and style without losing readability

Use **X Position**, **Y Position**, and **Width** to place and wrap the selected layer. Focus a text layer in the preview and use the Arrow keys for 0.1% nudges; hold Shift for 1% nudges. The **Font Size** slider supports small changes, while its adjacent controls make one-point adjustments practical.

Use outline, letter spacing, line height, bold, shadow, and overlap order only when they improve legibility or reading order. A layer with a higher overlap order appears over lower-numbered layers. Keep text readable against the artwork before adding decorative treatment.

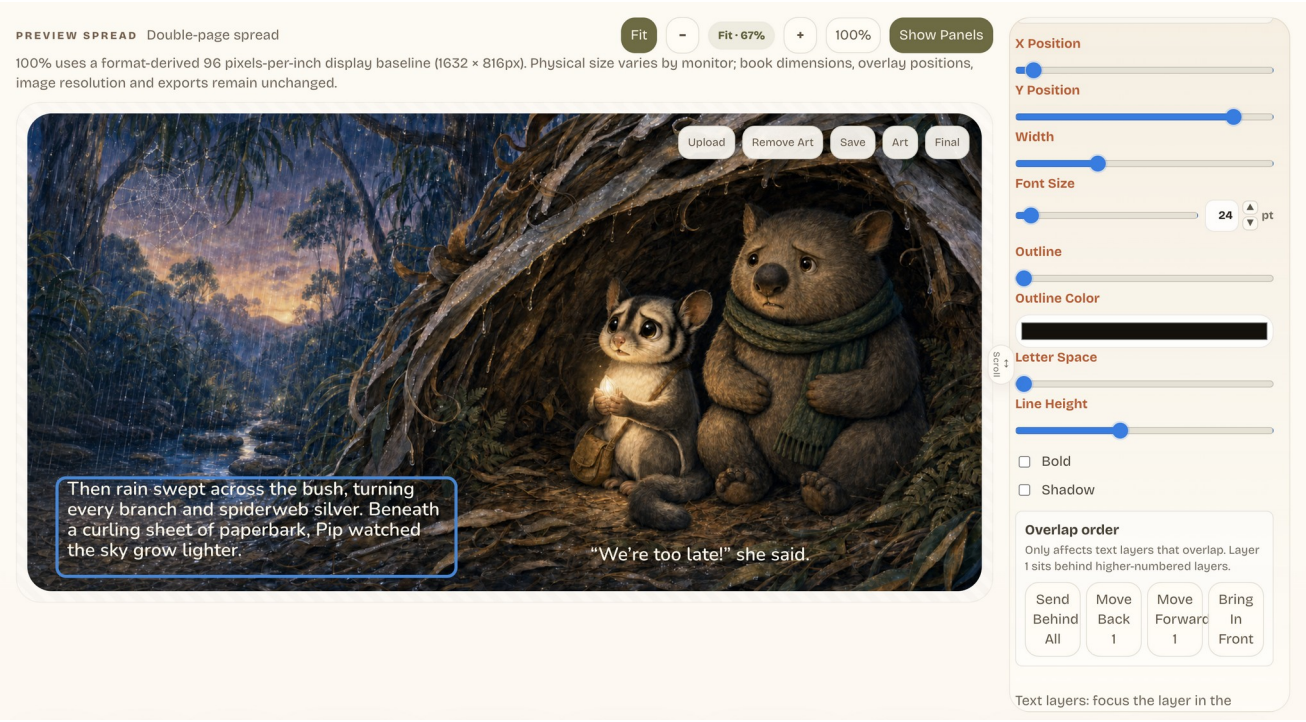

Figure 11.3. Selected text-layer position, width, typography, and overlap-order controls.

Use safe guides before saving or exporting

Turn on **Show safe guides** while you place text. The guides are editor aids and never export. On a double-page spread they identify the left and right page-safe areas, the center **Gutter / Fold**, and the **Trim / Bleed Boundary**.

If the selected layer is too close to a safe area, trim, bleed, or gutter, Limnforge shows a **Placement warning**. Treat it as a prompt to reposition, resize, rewrap, or otherwise revise the text before final output. The warning is based on the visible printed text, not merely its selection box.

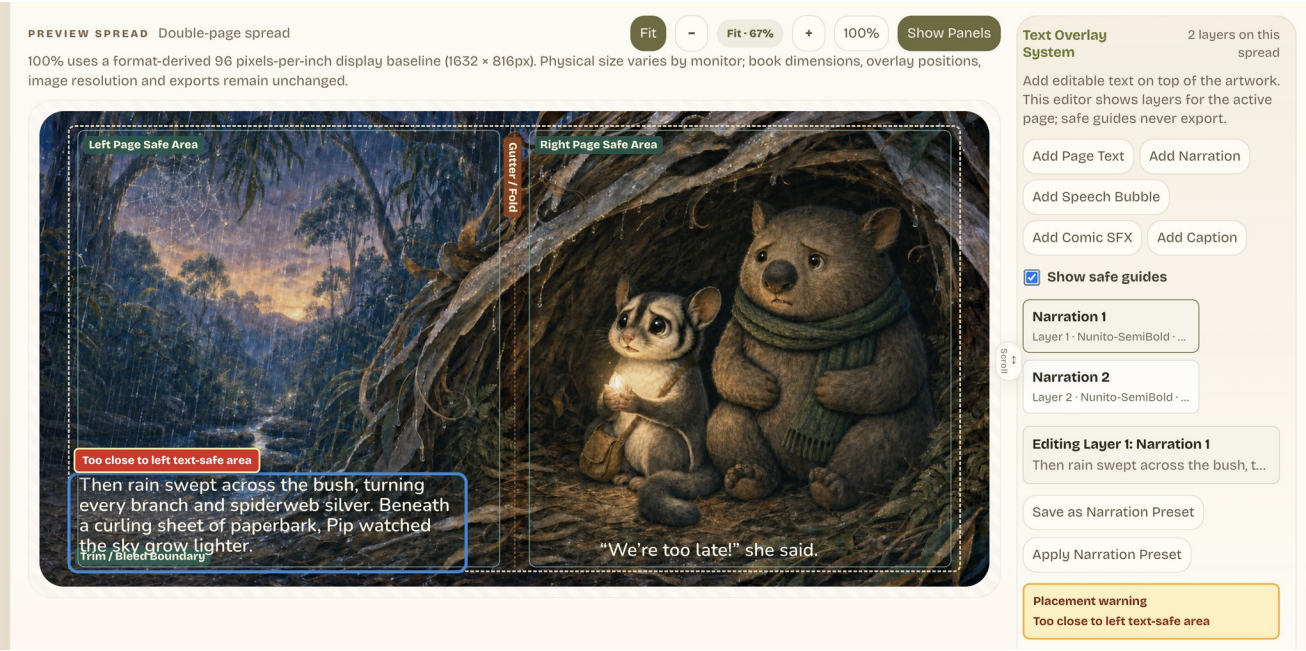

Figure 11.4. Safe guides and a Placement warning for narration too close to the left Text-Safe Area.

Remove artwork without deleting the text layer

Remove Art clears the current artwork reference for the selected page, spread, or cover. It does not delete the underlying image file from project history, and it does not delete the surface's Text Overlay Layers. Limnforge confirms this before it changes the current artwork.

There is an important visible consequence: while the surface has no current artwork, the preview is blank and does not display the retained overlays on its own. The layers remain listed and editable in **Text Overlay System**; add or generate new artwork before judging the finished composition again.

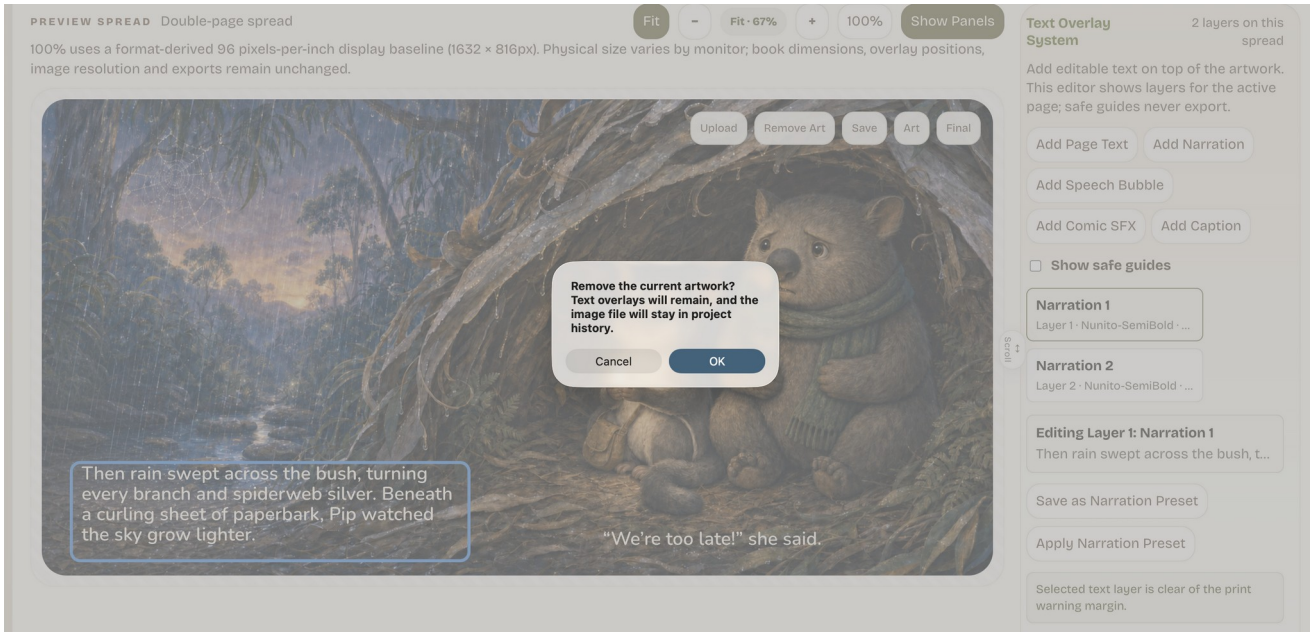

Figure 11.5. Remove Art confirmation, stating that text overlays and image history remain.

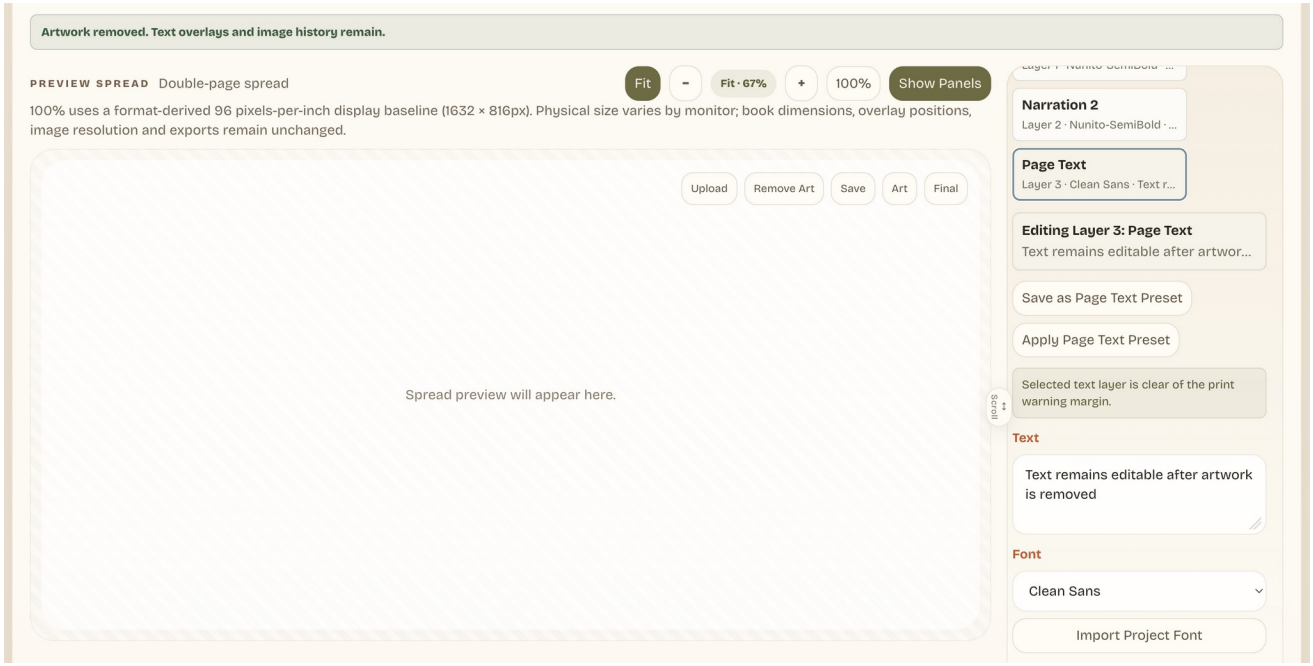

Figure 11.6. Cleared artwork preview with retained editable Text Overlay Layers still listed and selected in the editor.

Check the current composite

Before selecting **Final** or exporting, inspect the current artwork and overlays together in the preview, then check the saved output. The words, font, line breaks, positions, bubble geometry, and layer order must agree between preview, Save, Art, and Commercial Export. If they do not, stop and resolve the mismatch before continuing.

Chapter 13 covers Commercial Export, Preflight, bleed and trim, and the final printer or KDP template check.

Chapter 12 — Front and back covers

Front and back covers are planned separately from story pages. Their dedicated **Cover Planning** fields replace the ordinary Spread Planning fields so you can direct the cover's visual promise, later typography, and production copy space without duplicating interior-scene planning.

Limnforge plans and produces separate front and Back Cover assets. It does not create a wraparound cover or spine. Complete the printer's final cover-template and spine requirements after export; Chapter 13 explains that hand-off.

Plan the Front Cover

Select **Front Cover** in the Manuscript. In **Illustration Instructions (Front Cover / Right Page)**, describe the cover image itself: the key subject, setting, lighting, mood, and the detail that makes the book recognizable at a small size. Do not ask the image generator to draw the title, author name, or other lettering. Add those later as editable Text Overlay Layers.

Then use **Cover Planning** to make the visual brief specific:

- **Front Cover Hook:** the immediate visual, genre, or emotional promise. It should remain clear at thumbnail size.
- **Typography-Safe Area:** the low-detail illustrated area reserved for the title and author. Say what must stay out of it, such as faces, hands, bright lights, or a focal object.
- **Cover Design Notes:** market-facing mood, visual hierarchy, contrast, restraint, and any iconic object or silhouette that matters. Include a no-fake-text instruction here when useful.

The illustration should support the future type rather than leaving an unexplained blank hole. For example, reserve a calm painted sky or a softly lit wall for the title, while keeping the character and the cover's focal object elsewhere.

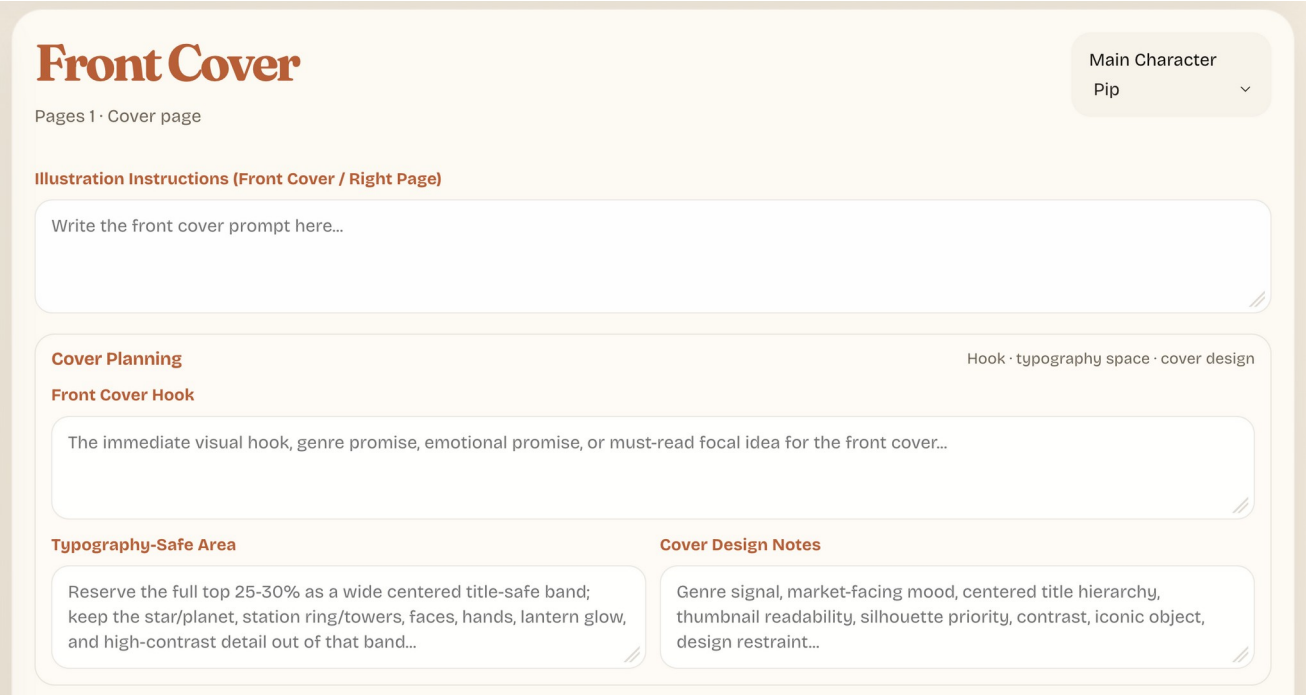

Figure 12.1. Front Cover with its dedicated Illustration Instructions and Cover Planning fields.

Add cover text and approve the front image

Generate the cover, then review the artwork at a useful reading size. In the **Text Overlay System**, add title and author layers, or start with a Cover preset and adjust its editable layers. Cover presets replace the title, subtitle, and author layers on the active cover side, so choose one before making detailed changes to those layers.

The text must remain readable over the planned Typography-Safe Area. Chapter 11 covers layer editing, fonts, safe guides, and print-boundary checks in detail.

When the Front Cover artwork and its overlays are approved, select **Final** in the cover preview. This marks the front-cover image as the approved image for export and is the prerequisite for the later back-Cover Planning sequence.

Figure 12.2. Approved front-cover artwork with editable title, subtitle, and author layers in the Text Overlay System.

Create the blurb before planning the Back Cover

Use the [Co-Pilot Work Orders mini guide](CO_PILOT_MINI_GUIDE_DRAFT.md) for the complete cover-work-order process. The sequence is important:

19. Run **Work Order 11 — Front Cover Planning** and create the front-cover image.
20. Review the Front Cover and select **Final** when it is approved.
21. Run **Work Order 12 — Back Cover Blurb**. Review its proposed 75–100 word, spoiler-controlled blurb, then paste only the approved wording into **Back Cover Blurb** on the Back Cover.
22. Select **Back Cover** and run **Work Order 13 — Back Cover Planning**.

Co-Pilot copies a prepared prompt to your clipboard; it does not send your project to an external AI service or automatically write its response into Limnforge. Review the proposed content and paste the parts you approve. For the strongest visual continuity, attach the approved front-cover image yourself in the same external AI conversation; Co-Pilot cannot attach it for you.

Plan the Back Cover for readable production copy

Select **Back Cover** in the Manuscript. Its Illustration Instructions describe a quieter companion image, not a second front-cover hero image. Use the dedicated fields to protect both the sales copy and production area:

- **Back Cover Promise:** the gentle visual or emotional promise of the story inside.
- **Typography-Safe Area:** the readable illustrated surface for the blurb or related copy.
- **Cover Design Notes:** the relationship to the Front Cover, such as palette, lighting, rendering treatment, and an appropriately restrained atmosphere.
- **Back Cover Blurb:** the approved Work Order 12 wording. Its word count helps keep the copy within the intended range.
- **Back-Cover Copy Space:** describe the quiet illustrated area for the blurb, barcode, ISBN, publisher mark, or author bio. Ask for softly lit texture or a simple painted surface, not an unplanned blank void.

Work Order 13 uses the saved front-Cover Planning context and the exact saved blurb to plan a Back Cover with realistic copy space. It does not make a spine. If the Front Cover is not marked **Final**, or the blurb is not yet saved, complete those earlier steps before running it.

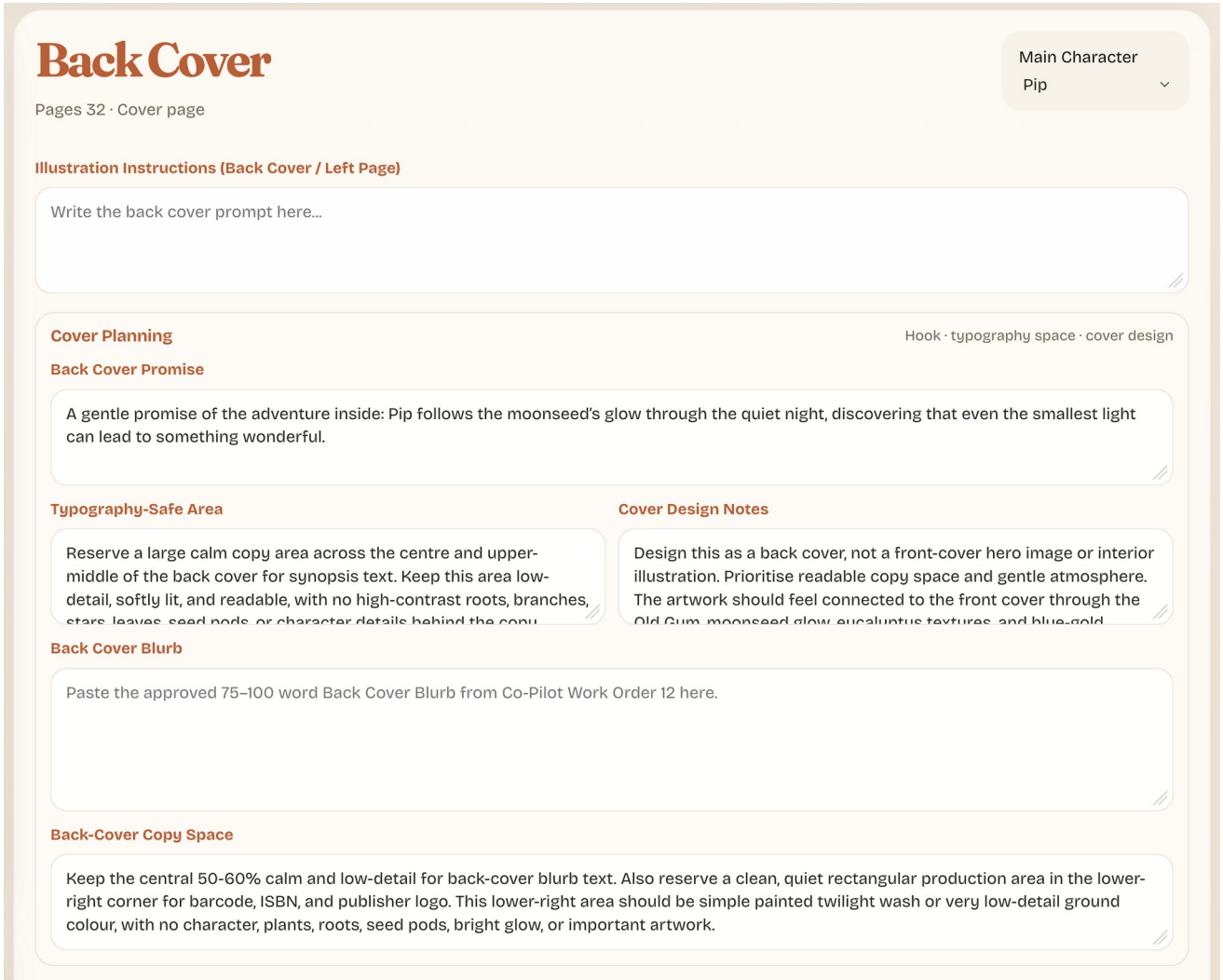

Figure 12.3. Back Cover Planning with the saved-blurb field and a separately described production copy space.

After generating the Back Cover, add the saved blurb as an editable text layer and review it over the planned calm area. Keep the barcode or publisher area clear of important characters, props, highlights, and story detail. Then inspect the cover as a reader would: the blurb should be legible, the artwork should feel related to the front, and the reserved production area should not compete with the image.

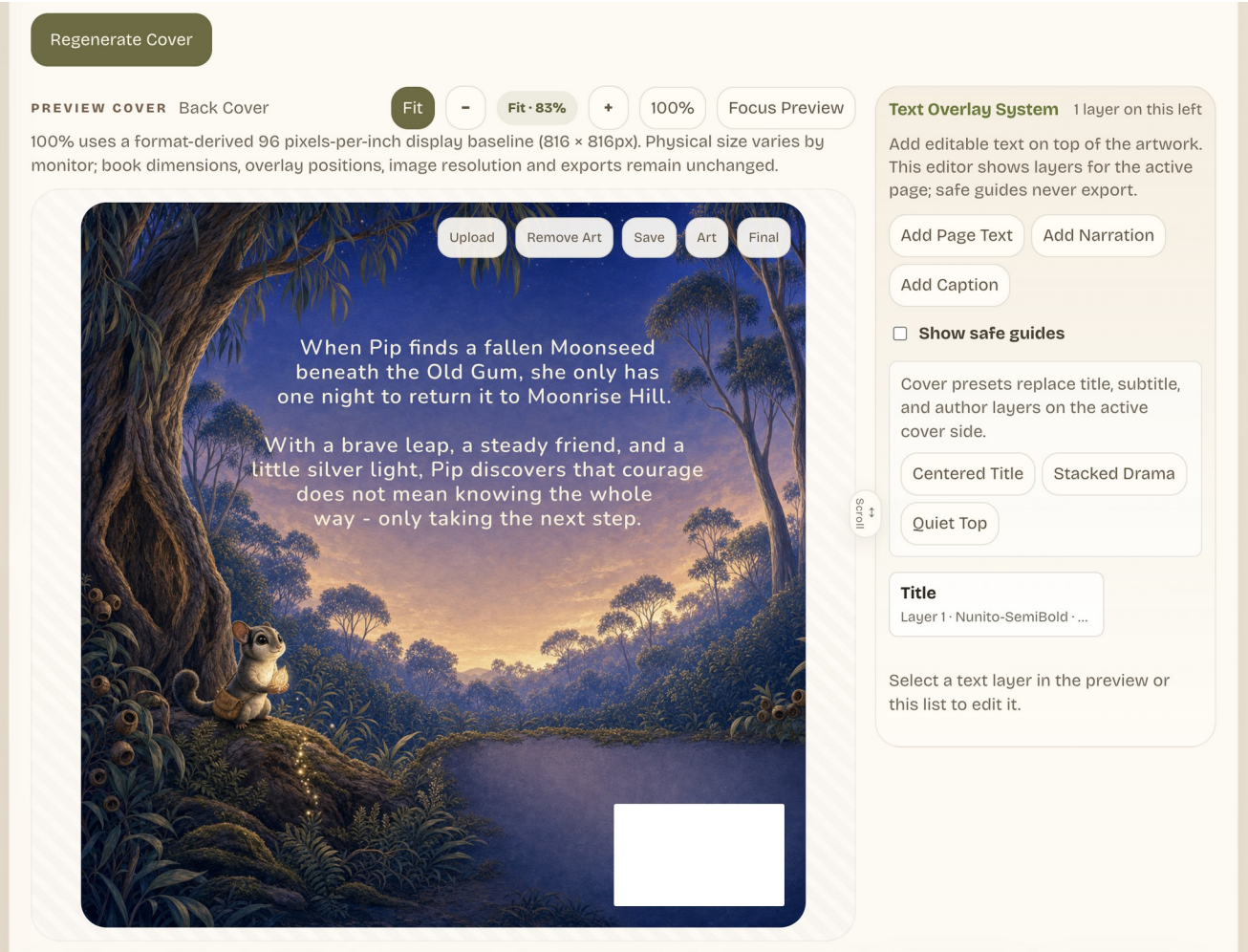

Figure 12.4. Back-cover preview with an editable blurb layer and a clear lower-right production area.

Before export, confirm the approved front and back artwork, overlays, and production copy are current. Chapter 13 explains Commercial Export, Preflight, bleed and trim, and the final printer or KDP template check.

Chapter 13 — Commercial Export, Preflight, bleed, trim, and printer hand-off

Use **Commercial Export** to create local print and eBook files from the current project artwork, fonts, and Text Overlay Layers. Export is a production hand-off, not a substitute for the final printer or KDP cover template. Review the selected format and every output before uploading or ordering a proof.

Read Preflight before you export

Open **Settings** and scroll to **Commercial Export**. **Preflight** checks the current project for the front and back covers, interior artwork, Text Overlay Layers, imported fonts, Style References, main character, and character-consistency references.

Read each result in context:

- **Ready** confirms that Limnforge found the required or expected project information.
- **Check** calls for review. It may identify incomplete art, a layout mismatch, missing consistency information, or another condition that should be understood before production.
- **Missing** needs attention before you rely on the related output.

Locked, reserved, title, inside-cover, and back-matter print pages are not story-artwork slots. Do not treat them as missing interior illustrations simply because they do not carry artwork.

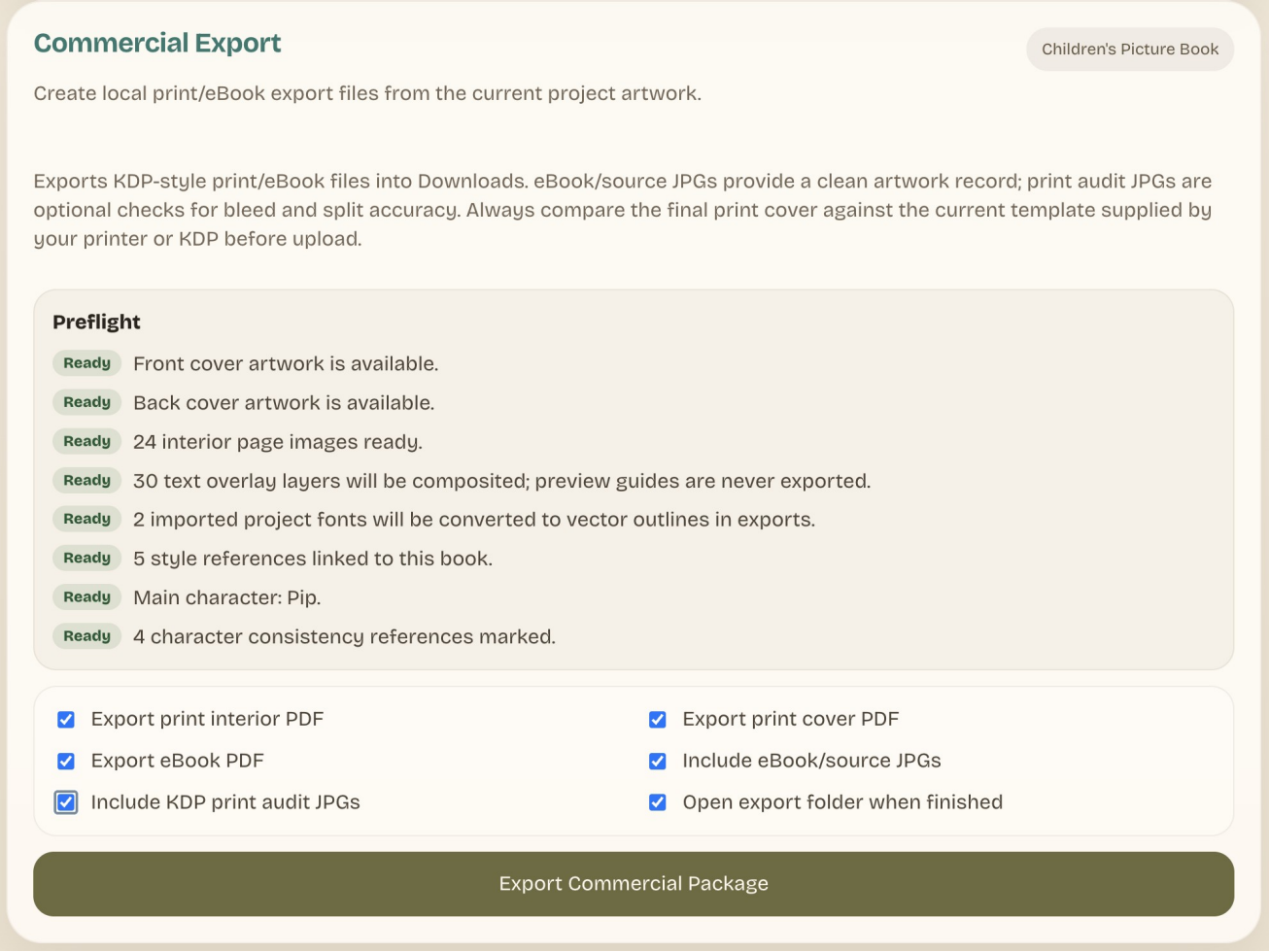

Figure 13.1. Commercial Export with an all-ready Preflight, selected outputs, and the Export Commercial Package action.

Choose only the outputs you need

Select at least one output, then choose **Export Commercial Package**:

- **Export print interior PDF** creates the print-ready interior PDF.
- **Export print cover PDF** creates the print cover-spread PDF when cover artwork is available.
- **Export eBook PDF** creates an eBook manuscript PDF from the planned cover and page order.
- **Include eBook/source JPGs** adds clean artwork-record images and a standalone eBook front-cover JPG.
- **Include KDP print audit JPGs** adds optional page and cover inspection files for bleed, page order, split accuracy, and external image editing checks.
- **Open export folder when finished** opens the completed package automatically.

The export confirmation reports the file count and notes any missing or skipped outputs. Read the generated `README.txt` and `export-manifest.json` when a note needs investigation; do not assume a successful export message means every optional output was produced.

Inspect the package before hand-off

The export folder contains an `ebook` folder, a `print-kdp` folder, `README.txt`, and `export-manifest.json`. Depending on the outputs selected, the folders include the eBook manuscript PDF, print interior PDF, print cover-spread PDF, source JPGs, and print-audit JPGs.

Open the PDFs and a representative set of audit JPGs. Check reading order, page splits, text overlays, panel geometry, artwork placement, and the covers. The editor preview alone is not evidence that the saved and exported composite is correct.

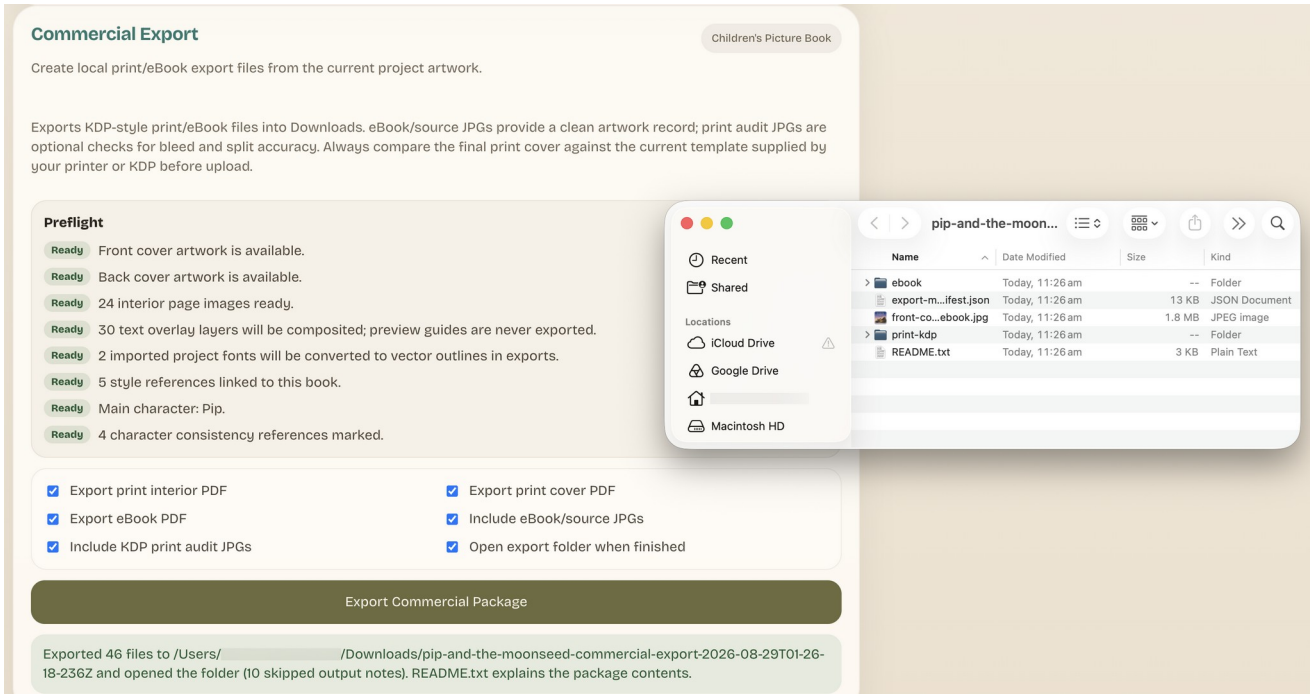

Figure 13.2. Completed Commercial Export with its Finder package structure visible.

Understand trim and bleed

Limnforge keeps working artwork at the selected trim dimensions. For print interior pages, it places those trim pixels unchanged inside a larger print page with 0.125 inch of bleed at the outside edge and at the top and bottom. The extra edge area is mirrored from the adjacent artwork; the trim artwork is not stretched to fill it.

For a double-page spread, Limnforge splits the artwork at the exact center before applying bleed to the outer edge of each page. There is no bleed or gap at the center gutter. Text-safe planning and the on-screen guides use trim coordinates, so evaluate text against the printed trim area rather than the larger bleed canvas.

Complete the printer or KDP hand-off

The exported cover is an asset-production output. Before upload, compare the final print cover to the current template from your printer or KDP, including its final page count, trim size, spine width, barcode area, bleed, and safe areas. Limnforge does not create spine artwork or typography for the final wraparound cover.

Keep the export package, its manifest, and the reviewed PDFs together with the project. If a preview, saved Art, audit JPG, or PDF disagrees with the others, stop and correct the current composite before continuing.

Chapter 14 — Settings, licence, updates, Help, support, and known limitations

This chapter covers the account and application controls around the creative workflow. Keep your OpenAI API key private, keep your licence key private, and use the Help menu when you need a guide, an update check, the website, or support.

Review licence status without sharing private details

Open **Settings** and find the **Limnforge Licence** panel. It identifies whether this device is **Active** and shows the licence **Status**, **Updates until** date, and **Device activations** count. The licence key is stored locally on the device; do not put it in a project, screenshot, support post, or shared document.

If Limnforge asks for activation, paste your licence key into **Licence Key** and select **Activate**. If the key cannot be activated, read the message before retrying. Common messages distinguish a key that was not found, an inactive licence, a device that is not activated, a device-activation limit, a temporary connection problem, and a short wait after too many attempts.

Deactivate this device removes the saved licence from this computer and frees its activation slot. Use it only when you intend to move the activation to another device. You will need to activate again before using Limnforge on this device.

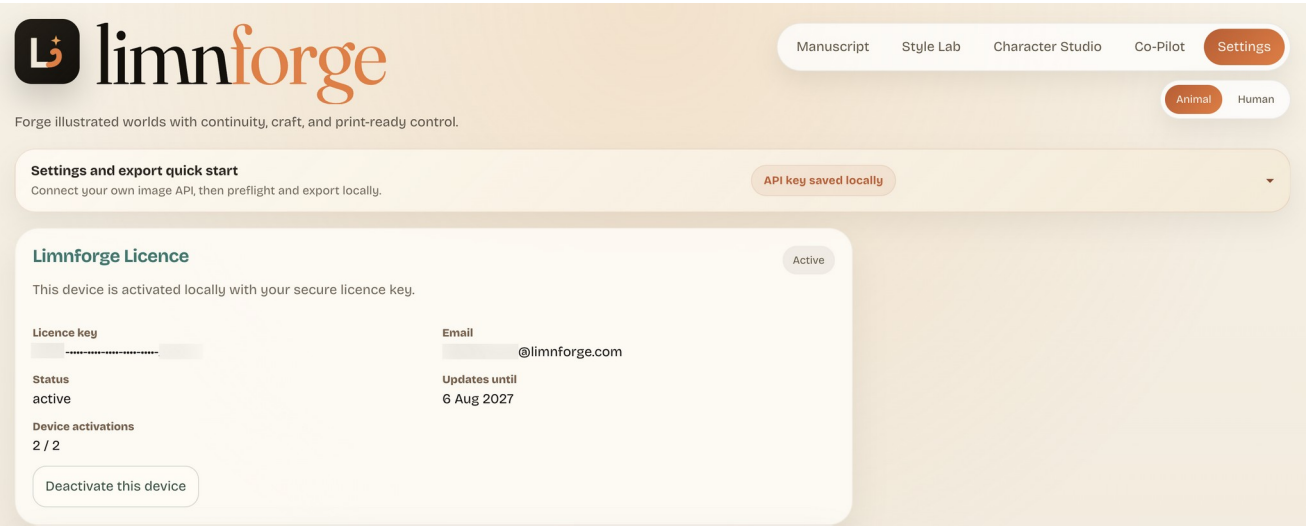

Figure 14.1. The **Limnforge Licence** panel showing an active device, update entitlement, and activation count.

Understand offline access

After a previously valid licence cannot reach the licence server, Limnforge can show **Offline access**. The Settings panel states when it last could not reach the server and the date through which offline access is available. Reconnect before that date so Limnforge can validate the licence again.

Offline access is for a temporary connection problem. It does not override a reachable result that says the licence is inactive or that the device is not activated. If offline access has expired, reconnect and activate an eligible licence. Use **Contact support** if that does not resolve the status.

Check for updates and choose when to install

Open the macOS **Help** menu and choose **Check for Updates**. Limnforge checks automatically after launch and periodically, but a manual check is useful before a production session or when you have been asked to update.

- **Limnforge is up to date** confirms that no newer release is available.
- When an update is available, Limnforge identifies the version and offers **Download**. It does not download automatically.
- After the download, select **Restart and Install** when you are ready to close and restart Limnforge. Save any work first.
- If the update check cannot finish, check your connection and try again. If downloading or installing remains unavailable, obtain the current installer from **Limnforge Website** and use **Report an Issue** for help.
-

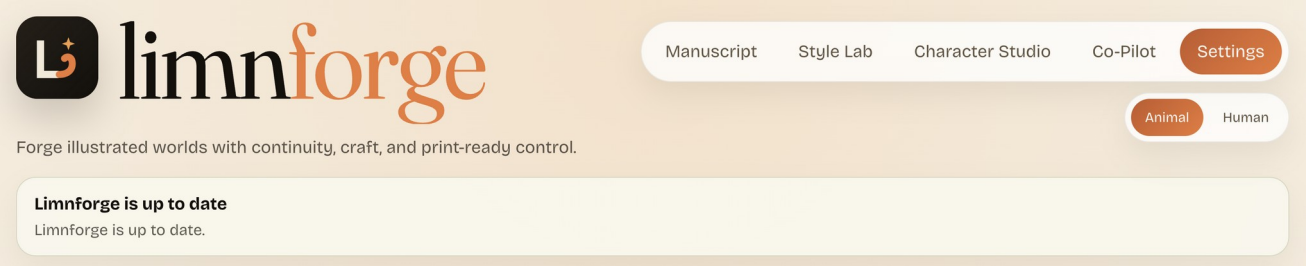

Figure 14.2. Successful manual update check with the **Limnforge is up to date** notice.

Find guides, policies, and support

The macOS **Help** menu provides the current support destinations:

- **Co-Pilot Work Orders** opens the Co-Pilot workspace in Limnforge.
- Quick Start Guide, Limnforge User Guide, Co-Pilot Work Orders Mini-Guide, and OpenAI API Key Guide open the current downloadable guides in your browser.
- **Limnforge Website** opens the product website.
- **Report an Issue** opens the support route.
- **Licence Agreement** and **Privacy Policy** open the current policies.

Use the Help menu or the Limnforge.com Guides page instead of relying on an old downloaded guide or link. An internet connection is required to open downloadable guides.

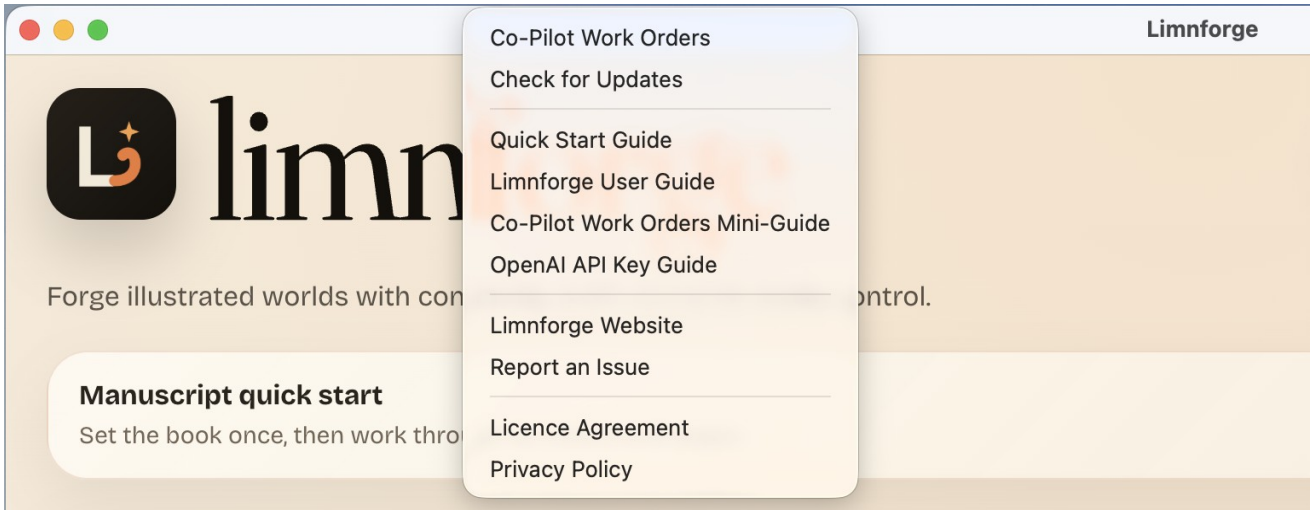

Figure 14.3. macOS Help menu with current downloadable guides, update, website, support, licence, and privacy destinations.

Troubleshoot safely

Before reporting an issue, record the exact message and what you were doing, without including an OpenAI API key or a licence key. Restart Limnforge after a failed update download or a temporary connection problem, then try the action once more. Check the relevant guide for expected prerequisites, such as an active licence, a saved API key, completed artwork, or a selected export output.

Do not resolve a licence, update, preview, or export problem by deleting a project, removing artwork, or deactivating a working licence. Those actions solve different problems and can make diagnosis harder. If preview, saved output, and export disagree, keep the project and report the mismatch with the action sequence and the affected page or spread.

Known limitations and sensible expectations

Limnforge provides local project and export tools. It does not replace the final printer or KDP template review, create final wraparound spine artwork, or decide whether an external AI service is suitable for your material. Review each external service's terms and privacy policy yourself.

An update check needs a connection to the update service. Licence validation also needs a connection from time to time, although a previously valid licence can have the temporary offline-access period described above. The Help links require an internet connection for downloadable guides and external website destinations.