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by Alma Flor Ada • illustrated by Kim Howard

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by Jack Prelutsky • illustrated by Paula Pindroh

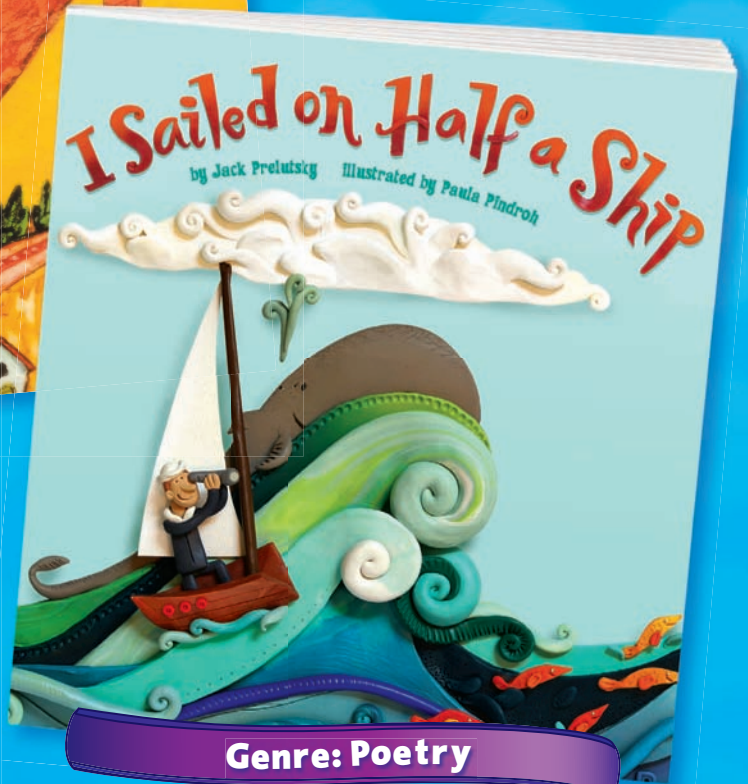
Read a funny poem.

Connections 140

- Compare texts.
- Review vocabulary.
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Lesson 19

Genre: Folktale



Genre: Poetry



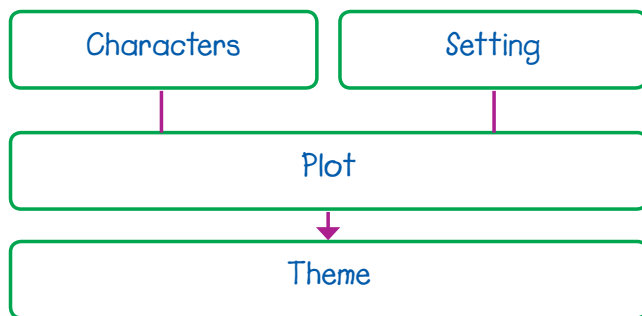


Focus Skill



Theme

Every story has characters, a setting, a plot, and a theme. The **theme** is the message of a story. It is what the author wants the reader to understand. Sometimes, the author tells you the theme. Most of the time you have to decide what the theme is, based on what happens in the story.



Tip

Think about the important events in a story. What message do they give?

Read the short story below. Use the story details to help you figure out and tell the theme of the story.

A hungry fox walked through a grove and stopped under an orange tree. High above him was a tasty orange.

He jumped and jumped, but he could not reach the orange. He turned around and saw a small rabbit watching him. Suddenly the rabbit jumped up and knocked down the orange. The rabbit started to hop away.

“Wait,” said the fox. “You helped me. Let’s share the orange.”



Characters
fox, rabbit

Setting
orange grove

Plot

A fox wants an orange but can't reach it.
A rabbit helps him. The fox shares the orange.

Theme

Try This!

How would the theme change if, at the end, the fox went after the rabbit?



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Vocabulary

Build Robust Vocabulary

suggested

enormous

exclaimed

swift

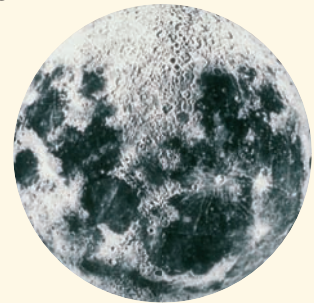
vain

overheard

Mexican Folktales

Many Mexican folktales have animal characters such as coyotes and rabbits. Here are three stories.

One night when the moon was full, Coyote met Rabbit by a pond. Rabbit **suggested** that Coyote swim out to eat an **enormous** circle of cheese floating in the pond. Coyote discovered that the “cheese” was really the reflection of the moon. “You tricked me!” Coyote **exclaimed**.



Rabbit tricked Coyote again. Coyote chased Rabbit, but **swift** Rabbit raced to the moon, where he was safe. Coyote was angry and howled at the moon. He still howls at the moon sometimes.

Cuckoo was very **vain** and loved her beautiful feathers. One day, she **overheard** Owl tell all the birds to collect seeds. That night, there was a fire. Cuckoo put out the fire and saved the seeds. But the fire damaged her feathers. She had nothing to be vain about anymore.



▲ Cuckoo



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Word Detective



Your mission this week is to look for the Vocabulary Words in folktales from the United States and other cultures.

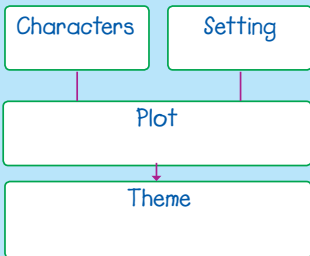
Each time you read a Vocabulary Word, write it in your vocabulary journal. Don't forget to tell where you found the word.



Genre Study

A **folktale** is a story that has been passed down through time. Look for

- an explanation of how something came to be.
- a theme in the story that teaches a lesson.



Comprehension Strategy



Use story structure to help you follow the flow of the folktale.



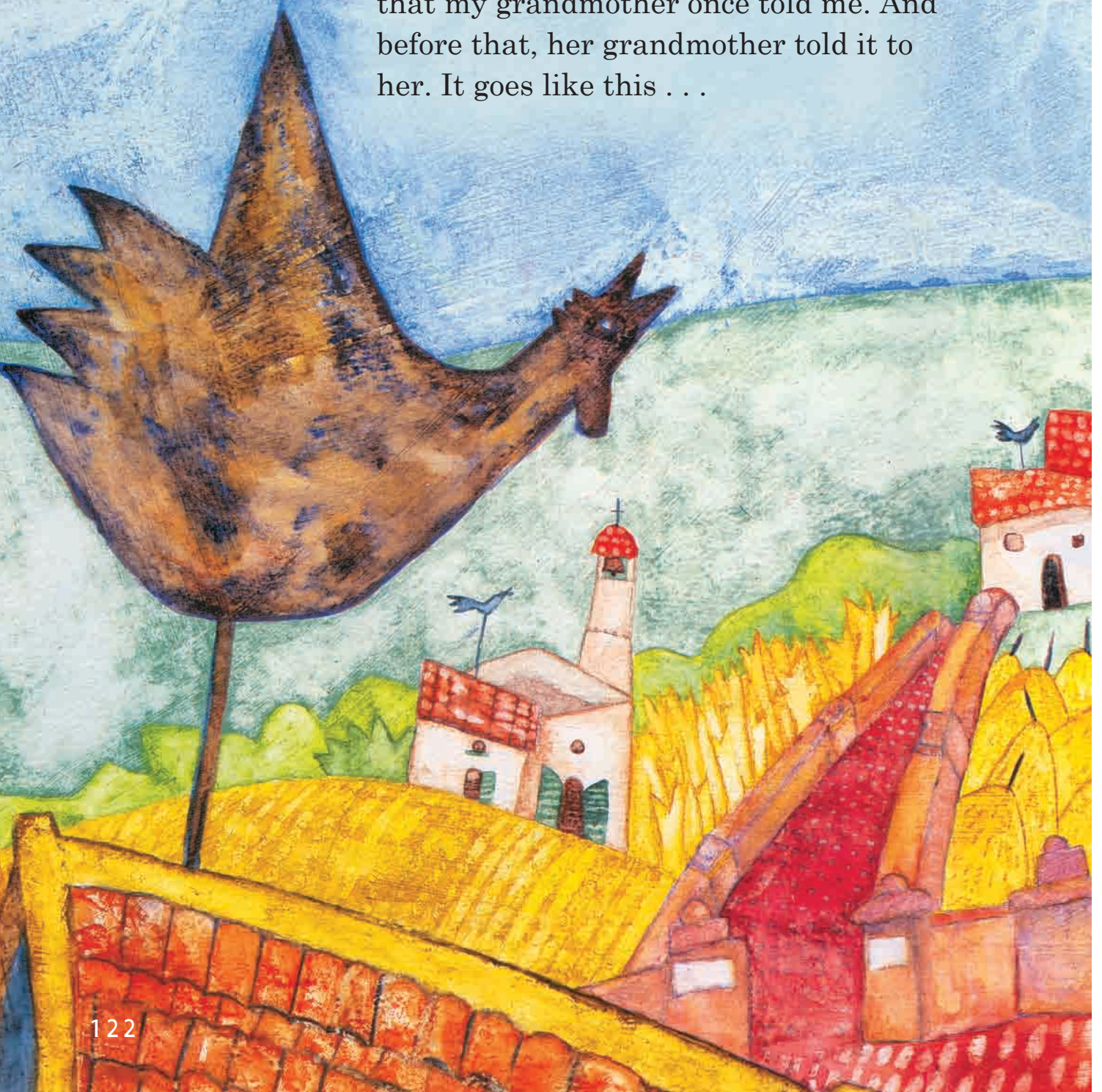
Half-Chicken

by Alma Flor Ada
illustrated by Kim Howard



Have you ever seen a weather vane?
Do you know why there is a little rooster
on one end, spinning around to let us
know which way the wind is blowing?

Well, I'll tell you. It's an old, old story
that my grandmother once told me. And
before that, her grandmother told it to
her. It goes like this . . .



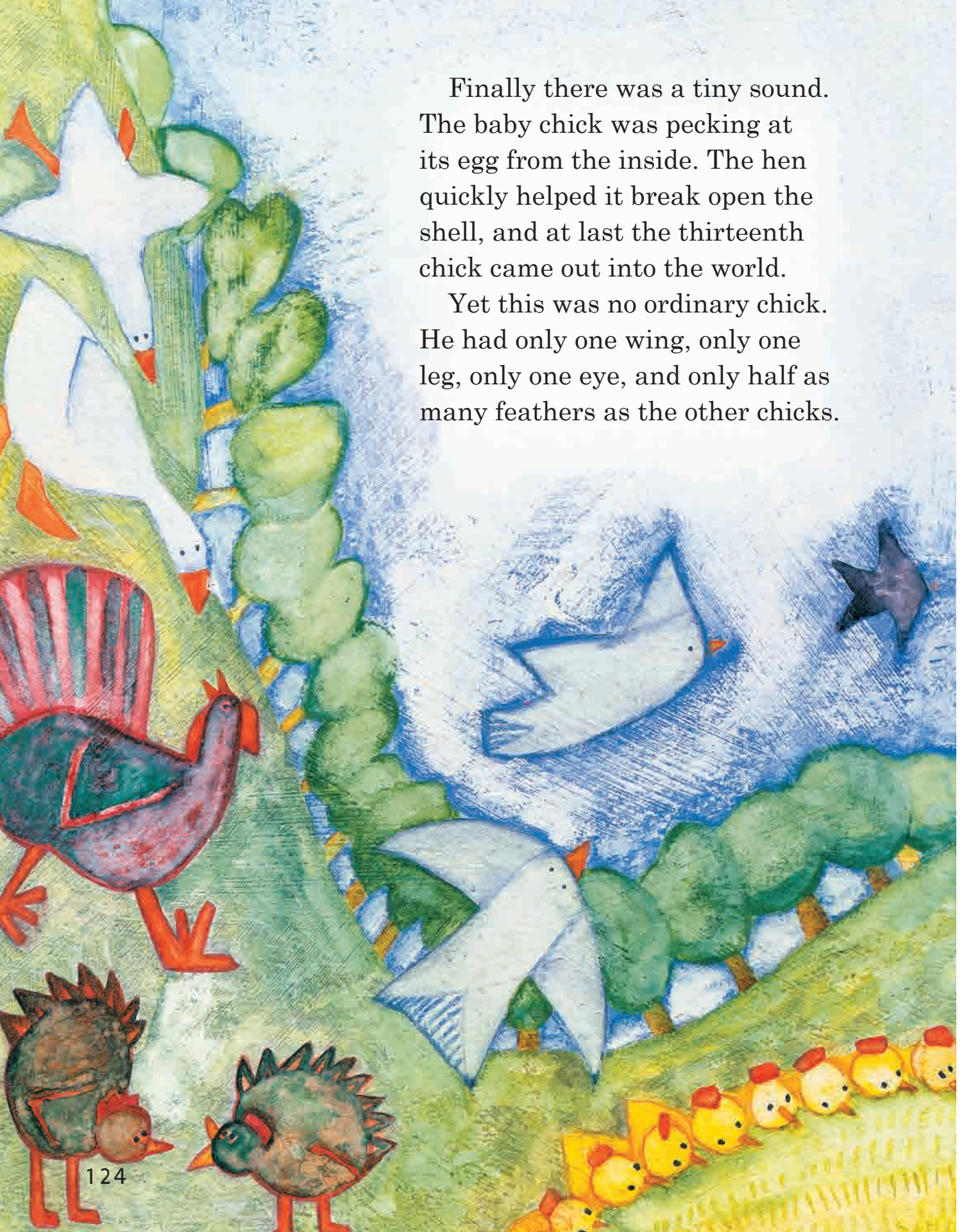
A long, long time ago, on a Mexican ranch, a mother hen was sitting on her eggs. One by one, the baby chicks began to hatch, leaving their empty shells behind. One, two, three, four . . . twelve chicks had hatched. But the last egg still had not cracked open.

The hen did not know what to do. The chicks were running here and there, and she could not chase after them because she was still sitting on the last egg.



Finally there was a tiny sound. The baby chick was pecking at its egg from the inside. The hen quickly helped it break open the shell, and at last the thirteenth chick came out into the world.

Yet this was no ordinary chick. He had only one wing, only one leg, only one eye, and only half as many feathers as the other chicks.



It was not long before everyone at the ranch knew that a very special chick had been born.

The ducks told the turkeys. The turkeys told the pigeons. The pigeons told the swallows. And the swallows flew over the fields, spreading the news to the cows grazing peacefully with their calves, the fierce bulls, and the **swift** horses.



Soon the hen was surrounded by animals who wanted to see the strange chicken.

One of the ducks said, “But he only has one wing!”

And one of the turkeys added, “Why, he’s only a . . . half chicken!”

From then on, everyone called him Half-Chicken. And Half-Chicken, finding himself at the center of all this attention, became very **vain**.

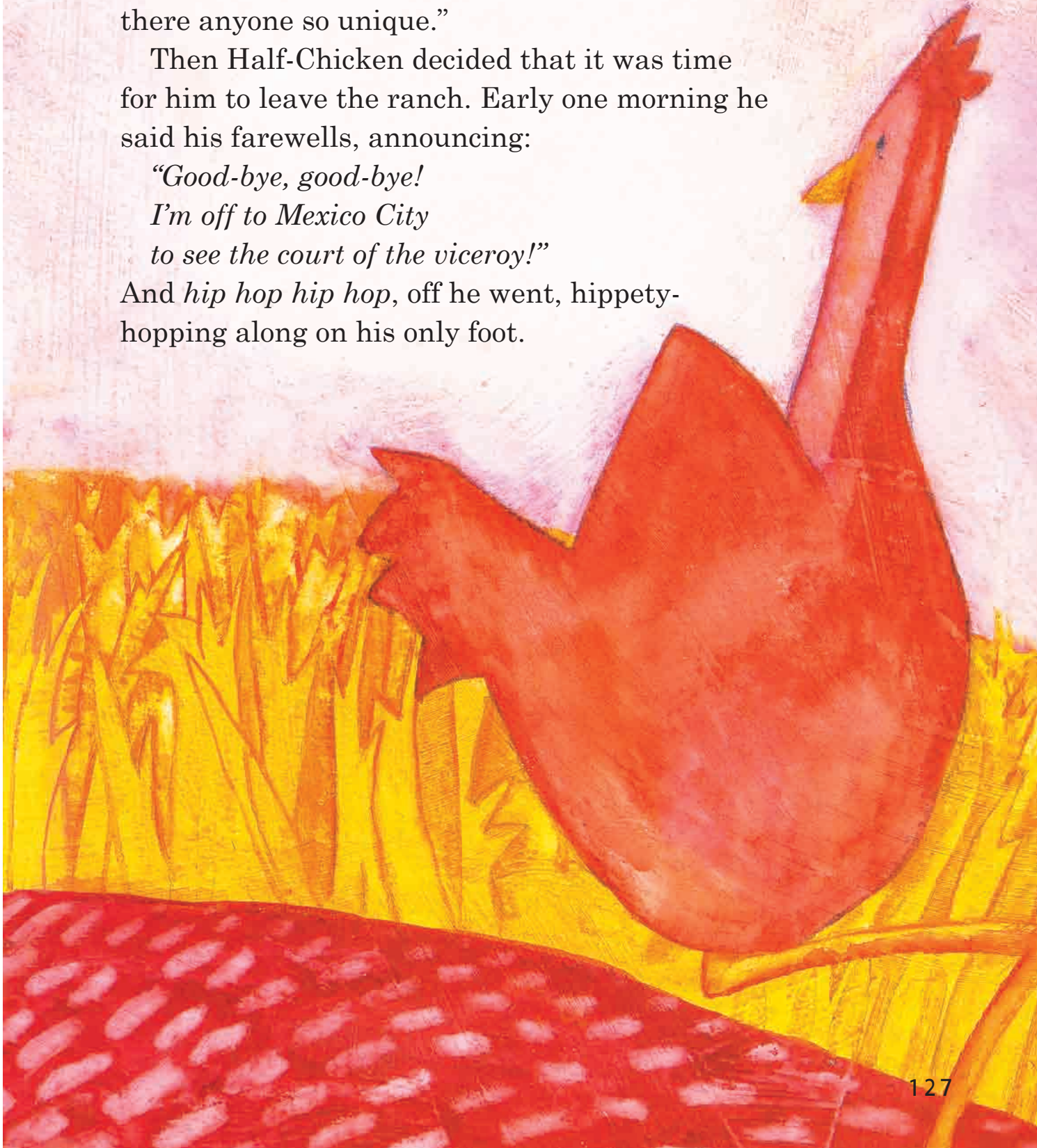


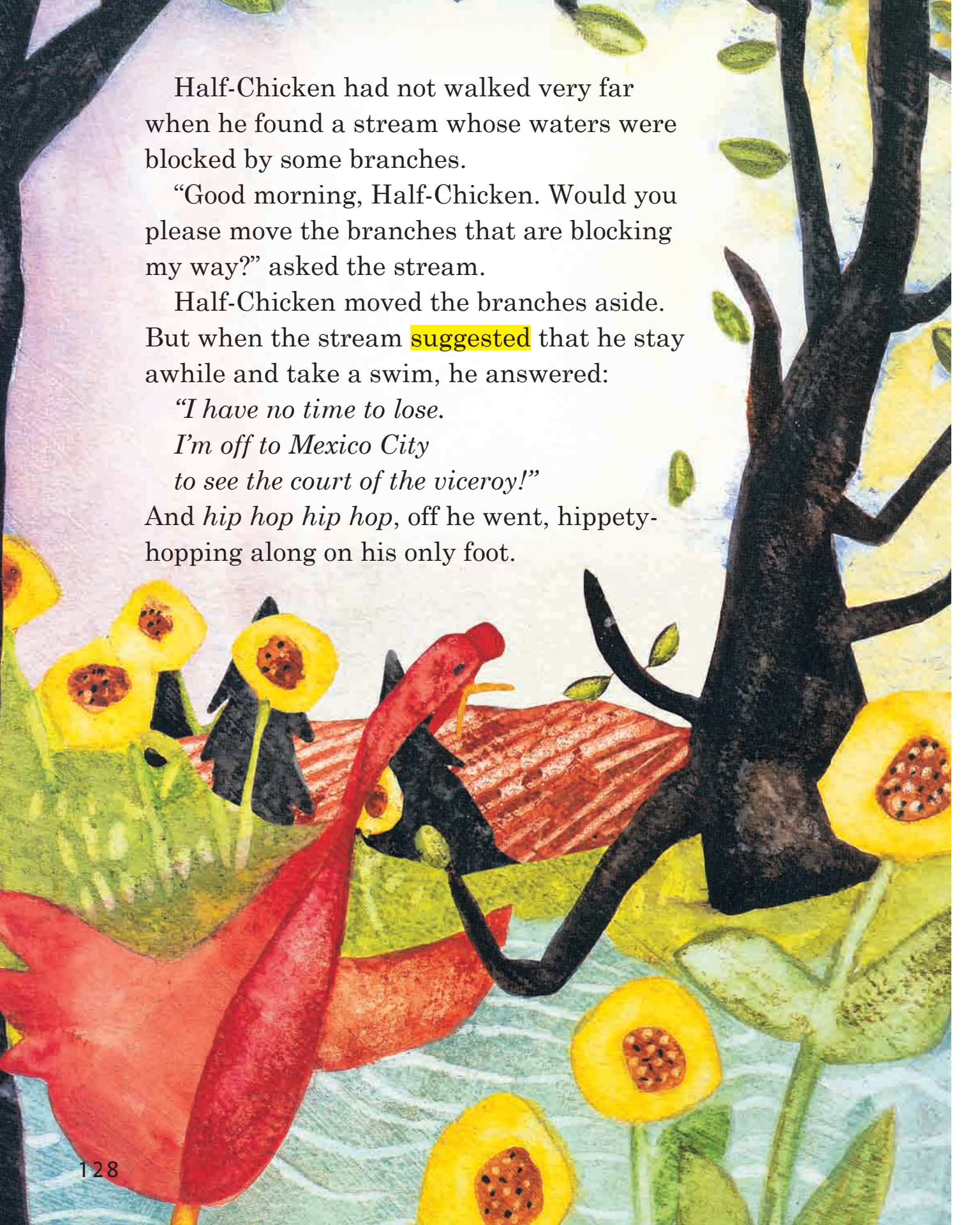
One day he **overheard** the swallows, who traveled a great deal, talking about him: “Not even at the court of the viceroy in Mexico City is there anyone so unique.”

Then Half-Chicken decided that it was time for him to leave the ranch. Early one morning he said his farewells, announcing:

*“Good-bye, good-bye!
I’m off to Mexico City
to see the court of the viceroy!”*

And *hip hop hip hop*, off he went, hippety-hopping along on his only foot.





Half-Chicken had not walked very far when he found a stream whose waters were blocked by some branches.

“Good morning, Half-Chicken. Would you please move the branches that are blocking my way?” asked the stream.

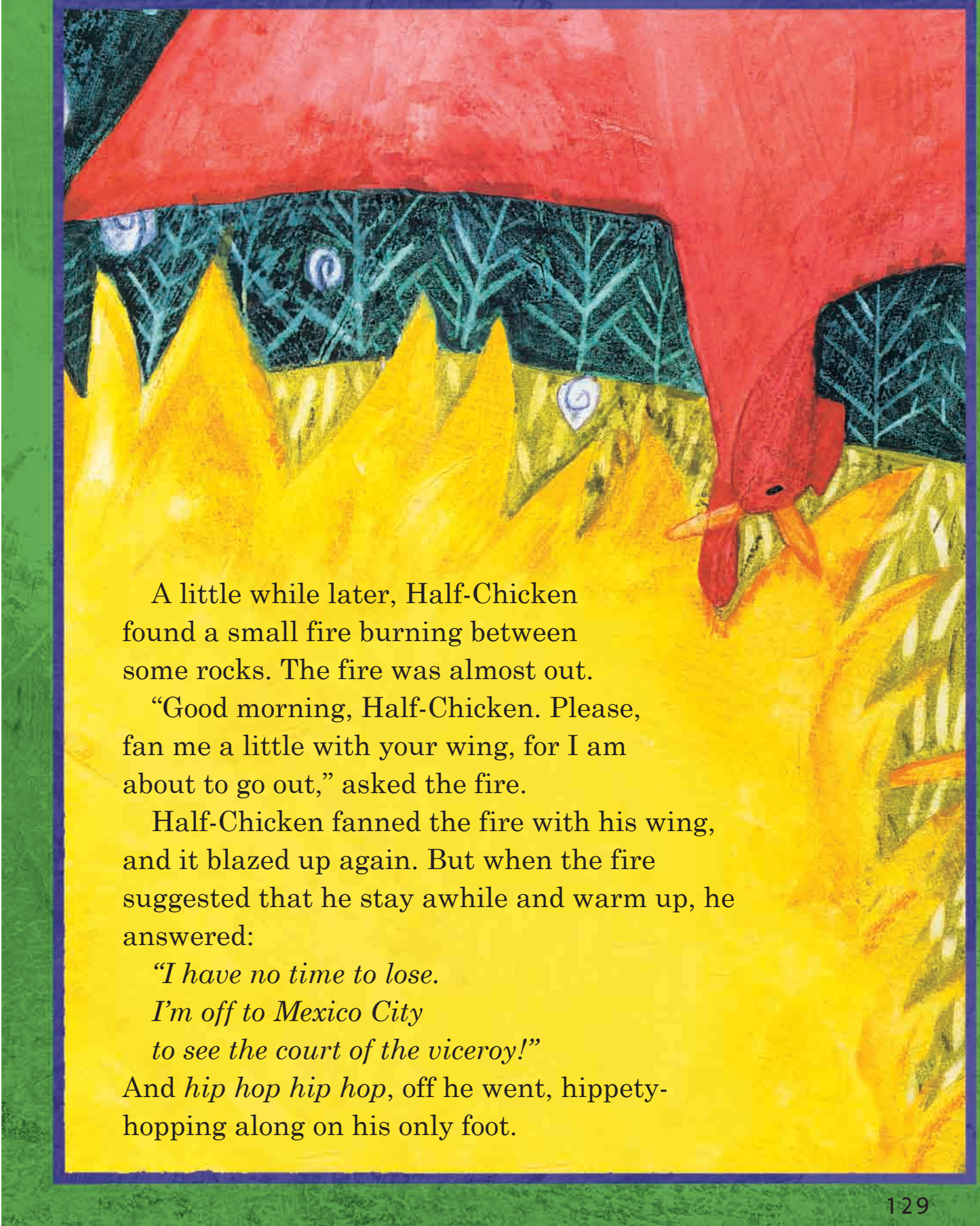
Half-Chicken moved the branches aside. But when the stream **suggested** that he stay awhile and take a swim, he answered:

“I have no time to lose.

I’m off to Mexico City

to see the court of the viceroy!”

And *hip hop hip hop*, off he went, hippety-hopping along on his only foot.

A vibrant illustration featuring a red cardinal perched on a bright yellow flame. Above the flame is a dark green band with a repeating pattern of stylized trees and circular motifs. The background is a solid, bright red. The entire scene is framed by a dark green border.

A little while later, Half-Chicken found a small fire burning between some rocks. The fire was almost out.

“Good morning, Half-Chicken. Please, fan me a little with your wing, for I am about to go out,” asked the fire.

Half-Chicken fanned the fire with his wing, and it blazed up again. But when the fire suggested that he stay awhile and warm up, he answered:

*“I have no time to lose.
I’m off to Mexico City
to see the court of the viceroy!”*
And *hip hop hip hop*, off he went, hippety-hopping along on his only foot.

After he had walked a little farther, Half-Chicken found the wind tangled in some bushes.

“Good morning, Half-Chicken. Would you please untangle me, so that I can go on my way?” asked the wind.

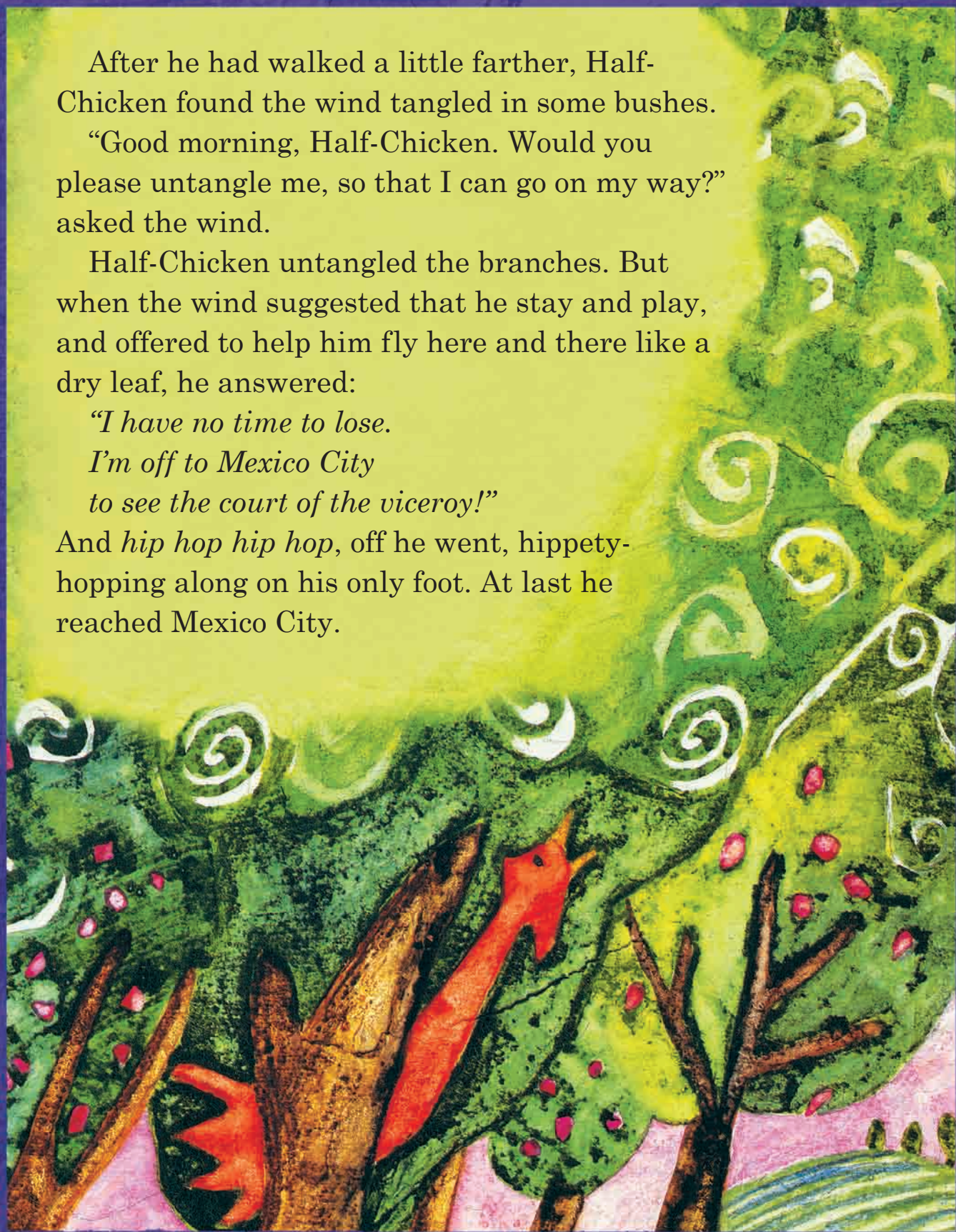
Half-Chicken untangled the branches. But when the wind suggested that he stay and play, and offered to help him fly here and there like a dry leaf, he answered:

“I have no time to lose.

I’m off to Mexico City

to see the court of the viceroy!”

And *hip hop hip hop*, off he went, hippety-hopping along on his only foot. At last he reached Mexico City.

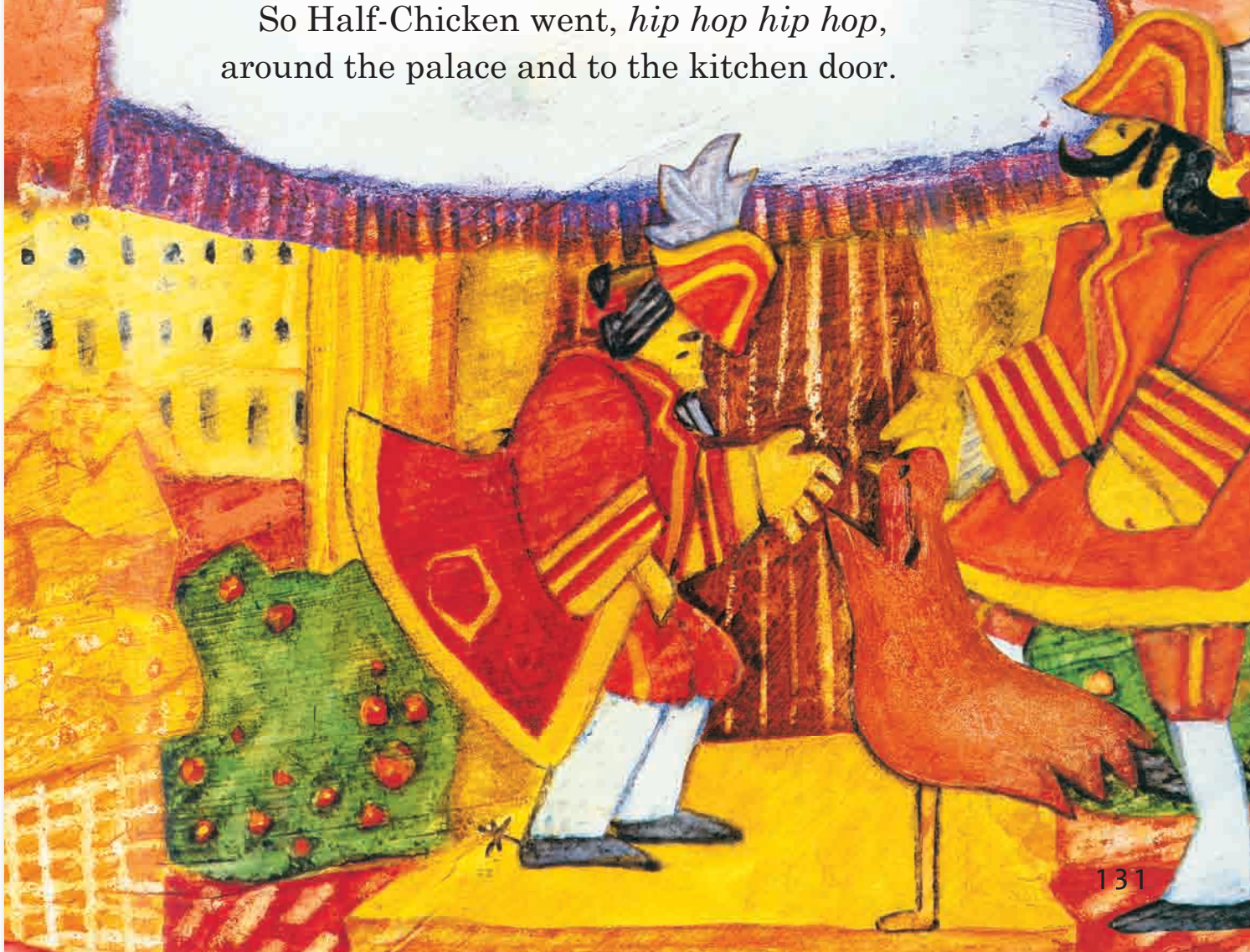


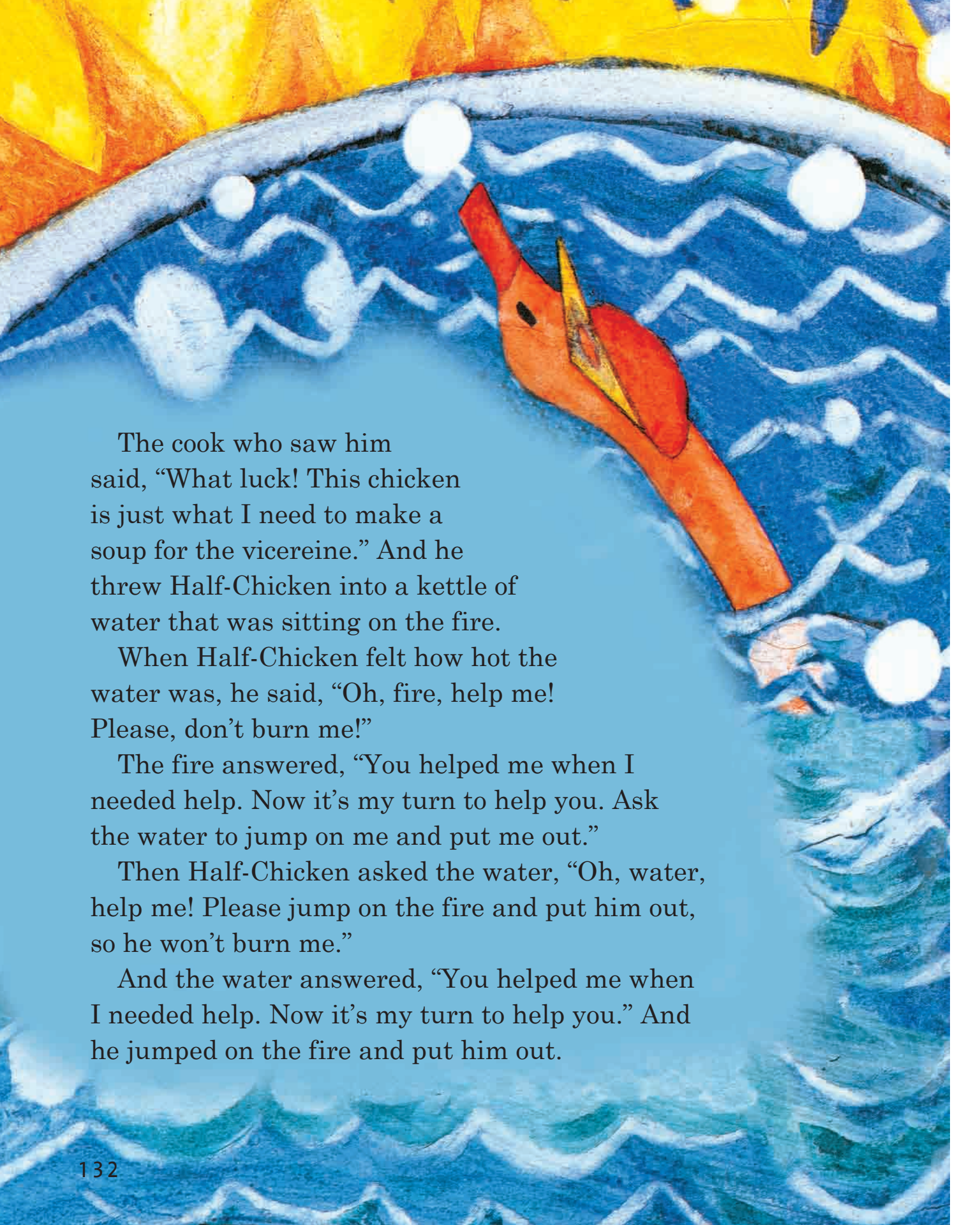
Half-Chicken crossed the enormous Great Plaza. He passed the stalls laden with meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, cheese, and honey. He passed the Parián, the market where all kinds of beautiful goods were sold. Finally, he reached the gate of the viceroy's palace.

“Good afternoon,” said Half-Chicken to the guards in fancy uniforms who stood in front of the palace. “I’ve come to see the viceroy.”

One of the guards began to laugh. The other one said, “You’d better go in around the back and through the kitchen.”

So Half-Chicken went, *hip hop hip hop*, around the palace and to the kitchen door.





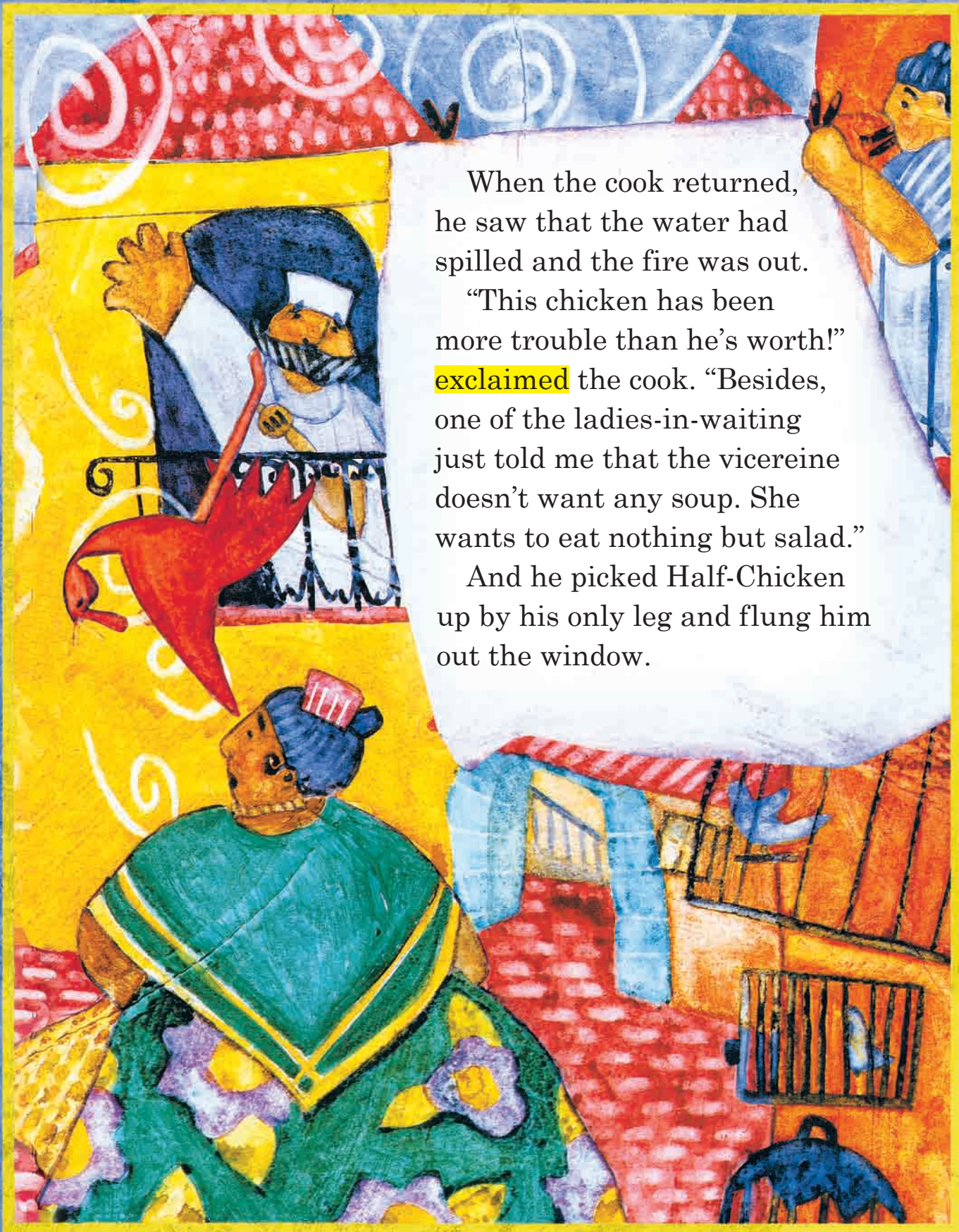
The cook who saw him said, “What luck! This chicken is just what I need to make a soup for the vicereine.” And he threw Half-Chicken into a kettle of water that was sitting on the fire.

When Half-Chicken felt how hot the water was, he said, “Oh, fire, help me! Please, don’t burn me!”

The fire answered, “You helped me when I needed help. Now it’s my turn to help you. Ask the water to jump on me and put me out.”

Then Half-Chicken asked the water, “Oh, water, help me! Please jump on the fire and put him out, so he won’t burn me.”

And the water answered, “You helped me when I needed help. Now it’s my turn to help you.” And he jumped on the fire and put him out.



When the cook returned, he saw that the water had spilled and the fire was out.

“This chicken has been more trouble than he’s worth!” **exclaimed** the cook. “Besides, one of the ladies-in-waiting just told me that the vicereine doesn’t want any soup. She wants to eat nothing but salad.”

And he picked Half-Chicken up by his only leg and flung him out the window.

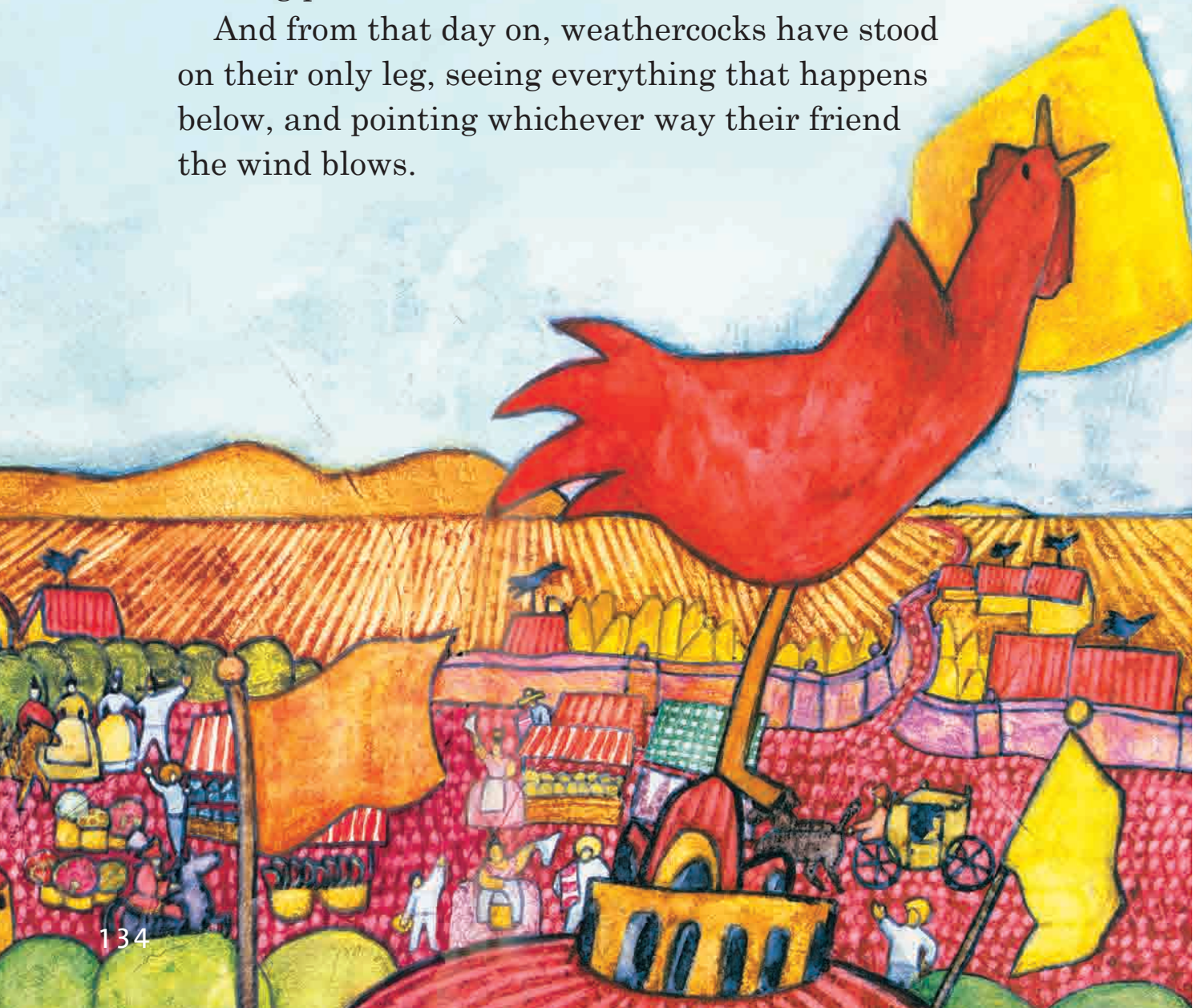
When Half-Chicken was tumbling through the air, he called out: “Oh, wind, help me, please!”

And the wind answered, “You helped me when I needed help. Now it’s my turn to help you.”


And the wind blew fiercely. He lifted Half-Chicken higher and higher, until the little rooster landed on one of the towers of the palace.

“From there you can see everything you want, Half-Chicken, with no danger of ending up in the cooking pot.”

And from that day on, weathercocks have stood on their only leg, seeing everything that happens below, and pointing whichever way their friend the wind blows.



Think Critically

- 1 What is the theme of “Half-Chicken”? **THEME**
- 2 Where does the wind put Half-Chicken at the end of the story? **IMPORTANT DETAILS**
- 3 What do you think Half-Chicken likes best about where the wind takes him at the end of the story? Explain. **EXPRESS PERSONAL OPINIONS**
- 4 How does the author let you know that you will be reading a folktale? **DRAW CONCLUSIONS**
- 5 **WRITE** Half-Chicken helps a stream, a fire, and the wind. Write about a time when you helped someone.  **SHORT RESPONSE**

Meet the Author

Alma Flor Ada

Alma Flor Ada comes from a family of storytellers. Her grandmother told folktales, her uncle told family stories, and her father told bedtime stories that taught her about history. With all these storytellers around her, it is not a surprise that she became a writer!

Alma Flor Ada's grandmother first told her the story of Half-Chicken. Now she looks for unique weather vanes wherever she goes.



Meet the *Illustrator*

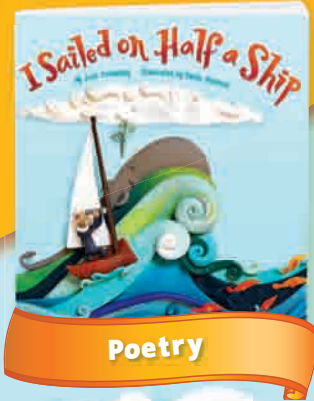
Kim Howard

Kim Howard has illustrated more than twenty-five children's books. Her illustrations are full of color and detail. When she is not illustrating books, she is painting watercolors and making collages about village life, nature, and adventure. She also teaches painting to students around the world.



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I Sailed on

by Jack Prelutsky

I sailed on half a ship
on half the seven seas,
propelled by half a sail
that blew in half a breeze.
I climbed up half a mast
and sighted half a whale
that rose on half a mighty wave
and flourished half a tail.

Each day, with half a hook
and half a rod and reel,
I landed half a fish
that served as half a meal.

Half a Ship

illustrated by Paula Pindroh

I ate off half a plate,
I drank from half a glass,
then mopped up half the starboard deck
and polished half the brass.

When half a year had passed,
as told by half a clock,
I entered half a port
and berthed at half a dock.
Since half my aunts were there
and half my uncles too,
I told them half this half-baked tale
that's half entirely true.

Connections

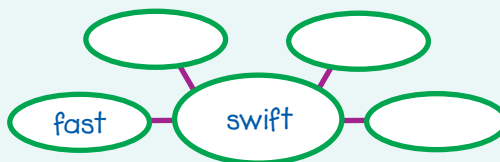
Comparing Texts

1. How are Half-Chicken and the narrator of “I Sailed on Half a Ship” alike and different?
2. Would you suggest this story to a friend who likes folktales? Why or why not?
3. What lesson could you learn from reading “Half-Chicken”?



Vocabulary Review

Word Webs



Work with a partner. Choose two Vocabulary Words. Create a word web for each word. Put the Vocabulary Word in the center of your web. Then write related words in the web. Share your webs with your partner.

suggested

enormous

exclaimed

swift

vain

overheard

Fluency Practice

Readers' Theater

Meet with a group. Choose roles from “Half-Chicken,” including the narrator. Choose a section of the story to read as Readers’ Theater. Group words into phrases to make your reading smooth. Ask for audience feedback.



Writing

Write a Review

Would “Half-Chicken” make a good movie? Write a review to tell why or why not. Describe the characters and setting. Summarize the problem, important events, and solution. Don’t forget to include the theme.

My Writing Checklist

Writing Trait

Voice

- ✓ I use a story map to plan my story.
- ✓ I support my opinion with story details.

Characters

Setting

Plot

Theme