

Cricket

Spider



Stories and Fun for New Readers



GOOD KNIGHT!

by Percival Gawain-Verde

Yes, I'm a Dragon -
Dotty Dragon.



HARK! I AM
RANDY THE BOLD,
HERE TO CHALLENGE
YOU!



Who's at the
door, honey?

Who's this
guy?



Yes! And
I challenge
you...



He says
his name
is Randy.

Randy?
I don't know
any Randys.



Who's the dude,
mom?

Dude,
Halloween
ain't for
months
still.



uh...

He said something
about a challenge.

challenge?

Why?



What for?

So!
Who is
this
canned
Ham?

Umm...

oh, dear.

So?



:gulp:

So... umm...
I'm here to challenge
you all...

...To give to the
Good Knights
Homeless
Kittens
Fund!



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art © 2021 by Christopher Cyr

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First Officer Araña,
Chief Petty Officer Sonya,
assemble the crew.

Aye, aye,
Captain Spider!

ALL HANDS ON DECK!



September 2021

Volume 28 Number 7

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SPIDER magazine (ISSN 1070-2911) is published 9 times a year, monthly except for combined May/June, July/August, and November/December issues, by Cricket Media, Inc., 1751 Pinnacle Drive, Suite 600, McLean, VA 22102. Periodicals postage paid at McLean, VA, and at additional mailing offices. For address changes, back issues, subscriptions, customer service, or to renew, please visit shop.cricketmedia.com, email cricketmedia@cdsfulfillment.com, write to SPIDER, P.O. Box 6395, Harlan, IA 51593-1895, or call 1-800-821-0115. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to SPIDER, P.O. Box 6395, Harlan, IA 51593-1895.

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1st printing Quad Sussex, Wisconsin August 2021

Printed in the United States of America.

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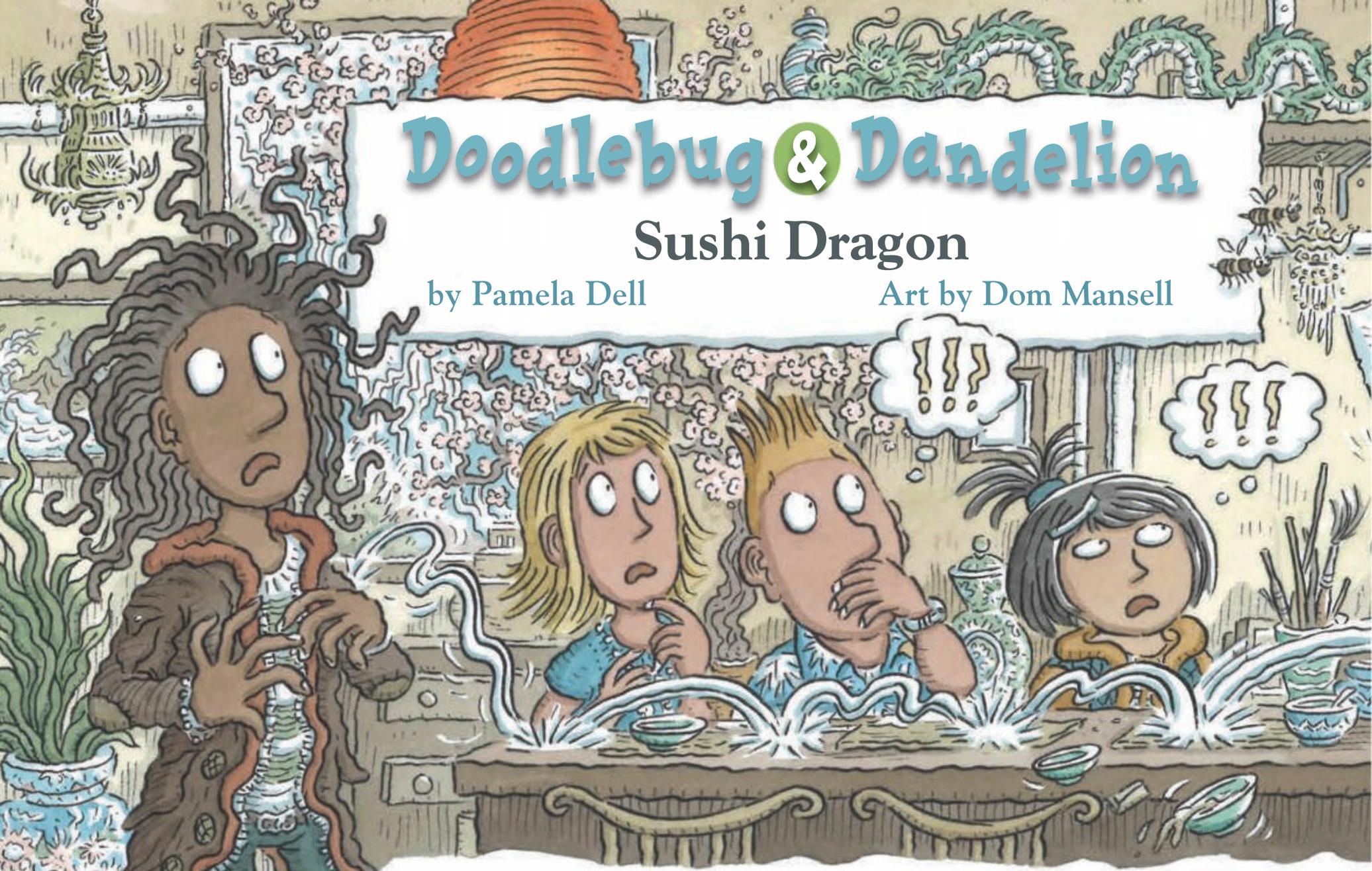


Doodlebug & Dandelion

Sushi Dragon

by Pamela Dell

Art by Dom Mansell



“THIS IS LITTLE HONEY’S chance for fame,” Bog said to his good friends Doodlebug and Dandelion Pinkley. “She’s mad for sushi!”

Little Honey was Bog’s pet bearded dragon, a big lizard. She ate differently than most of her kind. So did Doodlebug and Dandelion. Sushi, raw fish, was a Pinkley favorite, too.

“Love it!” Dandelion said.

“Me, too!” Doodlebug agreed.

The kids were outside Sushi Dragon King waiting for Tomiko, another good friend. Sushi Dragon King, the best sushi bar around, was looking for a mascot. They wanted a dragon-type animal to hang out at the restaurant sometimes.

Chief Engineer Sam, is everything shipshape?



Aye, aye, Captain Spider!
How about you, Ship’s Cook Miro?



Oui, oui—I mean, aye, aye!
And you, Sailor Bill?



Eye!





An animal that would bring luck and customers. Little Honey seemed perfect. But she needed to audition.

“Here we go,” Bog said once Tomiko arrived. Little Honey sat on his shoulder looking perfectly dragon-like and ready for the limelight.

The kids entered to find the restaurant entirely cleared out. This gave Little Honey plenty of room to roam and show off. Seeing them,

This little dear, you can be the ship's mascot — animal, human, or thing that stands for the group.

I, I want to be something, too, Ophelia!



the two chefs behind the counter bowed.

Chef Dai, the tall, skinny one, said, “*Konnichiwa!*” It was a Japanese way of saying good afternoon or welcome.

“Sushi coming right up!” said Chef Ren, the shorter, sturdier one. “Fresh pink *maguro* and *hamachi*—tuna and yellowtail—on rice for you!”

“Could we have some sticky rice balls too, please?” Tomiko asked politely.

Bog set Honey on the counter. She bobbed her head and puffed out her beard.

Dai’s eyes narrowed. “Quite a reptile,” he said. Dai was a man of strong opinions but few words.

Little Honey seemed to smile. She pranced down the counter like a runway model. Chef Ren was busy making the sushi. But before anyone could stop her, Honey jumped right up on his bald head. Her front claws dug into his striped headband.

“Aiiii!” he screamed. Then he burst out laughing. “So fierce. So graceful. A dragon must be both

The SS Sea Dragon is ready for the limelight — eager to be the center of attention.



For a submarine, it’s more correct to say “ready to launch.”

fierce and graceful.” He offered the sushi, then patted his belly with a grin.

Dai plunked down the delicious rice balls and tipped his little white cap. The kids picked up their chopsticks and dug in. They had been to Sushi Dragon King so many times that they only dropped their food every other bite.

Doodlebug was doing a good job of bringing a bit of rice ball to his mouth. But then Little Honey swooped in, grabbed both chopsticks

in her jaws, and skittered up the wall. She landed on a high shelf near the ceiling.

“Hey!” Doodlebug yelled.

Honey studied them all from above. She looked like she might be laughing. The chopsticks looked like giant wooden whiskers.

Dai shook his head. “Not what I expected.”

As if to prove it, Honey slithered along the whole shelf. She didn’t even knock over a single decorative dragon that sat there.



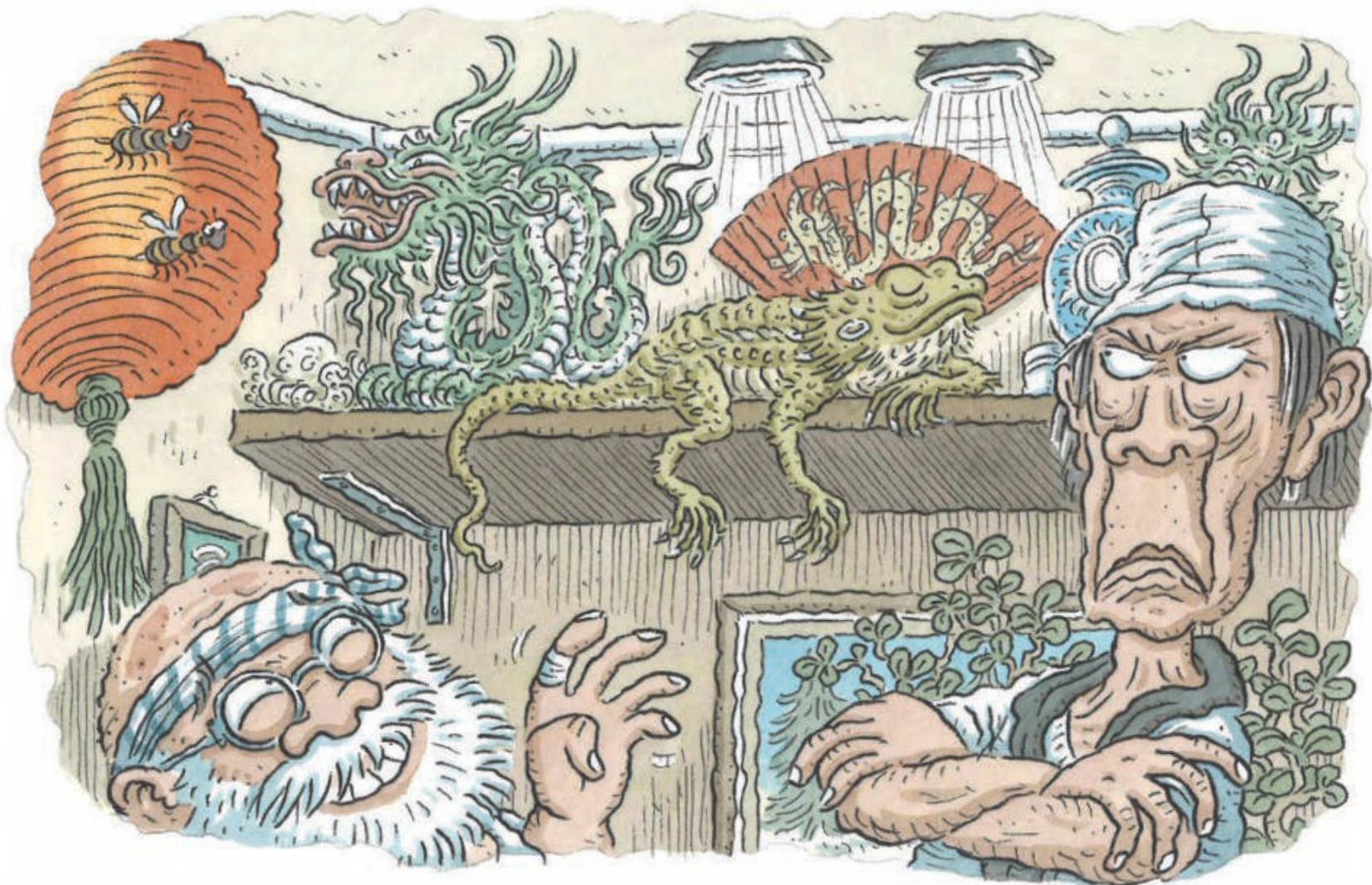
Outstanding! All hands on deck!
Let's get underway!

Attend, but ziss eez a
submarine... Shouldn't we
all be under zee deck?

That old can? It's been sitting
on the beach a long time.

Smells like old sneakers.





“That’s my beardie,” Bog said proudly. He tossed up a bit of *hamachi* to her. She caught it in her mouth. The chopsticks clattered to the floor. Honey hissed like a mad dragon.

Ren laughed and shouted, “I see good luck before my very eyes!”

But Dai scowled.

“Uh-oh,” Dandelion said, her mouth still full of rice.

“Dai’s going to vote against her,” Tomiko muttered.

Bog’s face fell. “Little Honey, get down here.”

Honey ignored him. The kids got

It clattered — crashed and rattled — a bit, but I’m pretty sure it’ll work.

Were you able to start the engine, Sam?



tense. Why couldn’t she behave?

Ren rubbed his now bright red bald head. He gulped a piece of pickled ginger. “Big flood of customers coming soon!” he roared.

Above them, Little Honey was posing, like one of the shelf dragons. Dai crossed his arms and stared hard at her. The kids watched him anxiously. Under Dai’s gaze, Honey stretched herself out on the shelf. She basked beneath the warm ceiling lights as if ready for a photo shoot.

“Not cuddly,” Dai said finally.

Err ... I wish you were more than pretty sure.



Why? We’re only going thousands of feet under the sea.



Ren nodded, bellowing with laughter.

Bog cringed. Tomiko eyed Honey with worry. Dandelion bit at her thumbnail. Unfazed, Doodlebug was gobbling down his *maguro* with a new set of chopsticks.

“*Yuiitsu muni!*” Dai suddenly burst out. He sounded angry.

Bog and Dandelion exchanged glances. Clearly, Little Honey wasn’t meant for mascot life.

But then Ren repeated, “*Yuiitsu*

muni, for sure!” He shifted his eyes from Honey to the kids and translated, “Means something like the one and only or there’s none like her!”

“Really?!” Bog exclaimed. “*Arigato!* Thank you both!”

“Yay!” the other kids shouted, knowing what this meant.

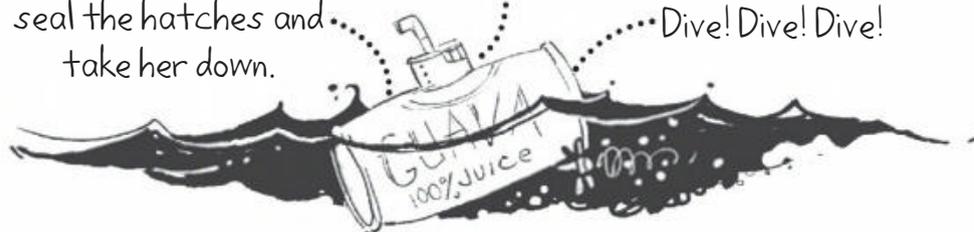
Doodlebug had been right all along. There was no reason to worry. Little Honey, honored mascot-to-be, would attract loads of diners to Sushi Dragon King. 🌟



First Officer Araña,
seal the hatches and
take her down.

Aye, Captain.

Dive! Dive! Dive!



Sticky Rice Balls

by May-May Sugihara
Art by Kali Ciesemier

What You'll Need:

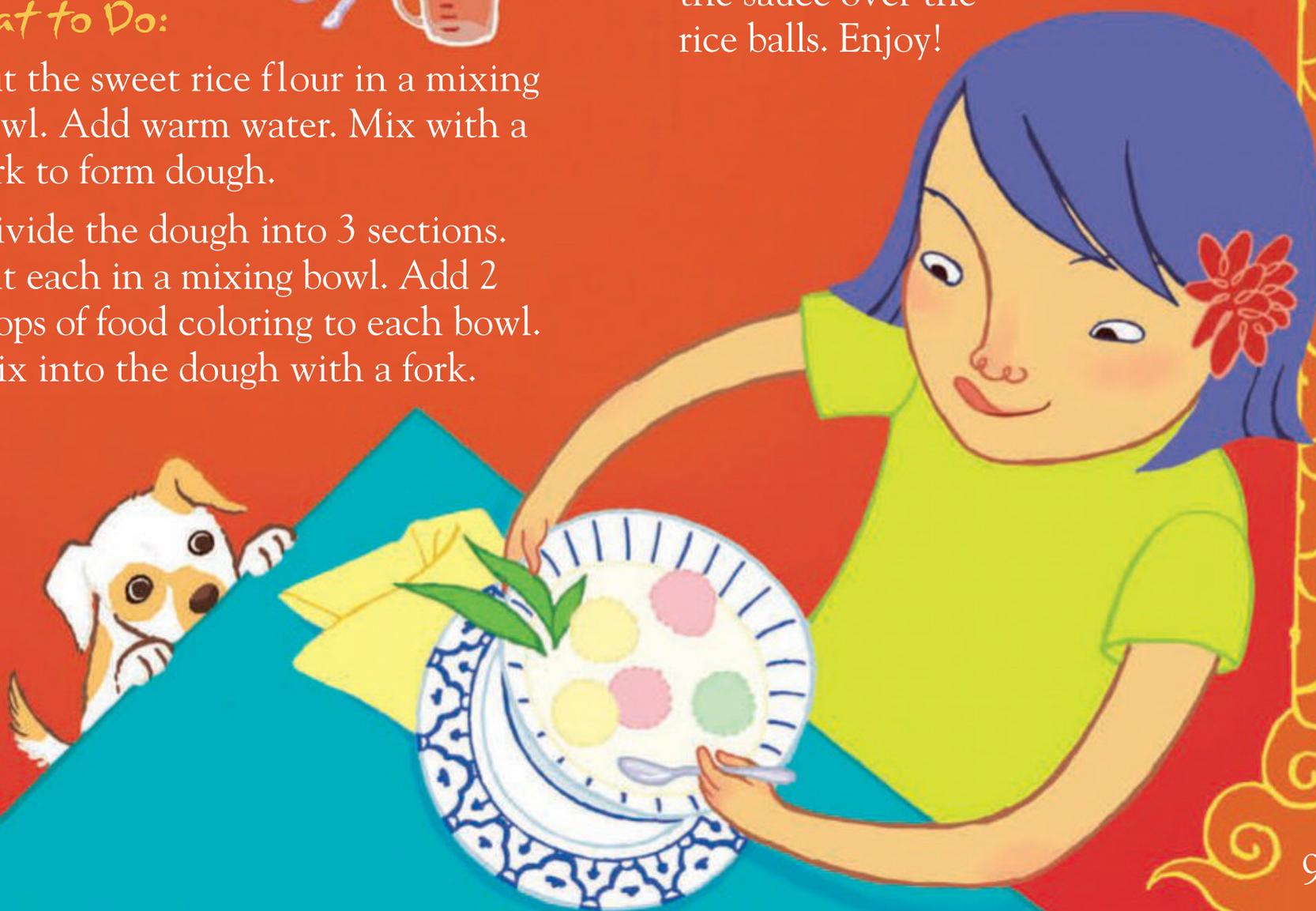
- ½ cup sweet (glutinous) rice flour
(available in Asian section of most grocery stores)
- ⅓ cup warm water
- 3 small mixing bowls
red, green, and yellow food coloring
- vegetable oil
- wax paper, lightly greased with oil
- medium saucepan
- slotted spoon
- 4 dessert bowls
- ½ cup coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- pinch of salt
- small saucepan



What to Do:

1. Put the sweet rice flour in a mixing bowl. Add warm water. Mix with a fork to form dough.
2. Divide the dough into 3 sections. Put each in a mixing bowl. Add 2 drops of food coloring to each bowl. Mix into the dough with a fork.

3. Coat your hands with vegetable oil, so the dough doesn't stick to them. Pinch off a small piece of dough. Roll it into a ball about the size of a grape. Repeat to make about 24 balls.
4. Ask an adult to bring a medium saucepan of water to a boil. Drop the balls in. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes, until the balls float. Remove the balls with a slotted spoon. Place 6 in each dessert bowl.
5. Put the coconut milk, sugar, and salt into a small saucepan. Ask an adult to heat on low on the stovetop until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is warm. (Do not boil.) Spoon the sauce over the rice balls. Enjoy!



Thanking the Moon

The Mid-Autumn Festival is a very special holiday in Asian communities. It takes place on the fifteenth day of the eighth month on the Chinese lunar calendar. The lunar calendar is based on the cycles of the moon's phases. This year, the festival falls on September 21 on the calendar that is based on the sun.



In China, a circle means being whole. So the night of the full moon is the perfect time for the whole family to come together. The celebration includes paper lanterns, dancing, and eating round foods.

Mooncakes are a favorite treat. These pastries have pictures and words pressed into their tops. Inside is a sweet filling. Often, the middles have duck egg yolks to look like moons. Mooncakes are cut into pieces to share with family.



For over three thousand years, families have taken this time to appreciate the moon and each other.

by Stacey Lane



Legend has it that on this night, Chang'e, the moon goddess, and her friend, the Jade Rabbit, can be seen looking down from the moon.



Mid-Autumn Festival

Fire dragon swerves and swoops,
Paper lanterns glow,
Silky scarves spin golden loops,
Dancing in a row.

Mooncakes passed around to share,
Festive streets for miles,
Lanterns lifted in the air,
Moon looks down and smiles.



by Diana Murray
Art by Linh My Nguyen

text © 2021 by Diana Murray, art © 2021 by Linh My Nguyen

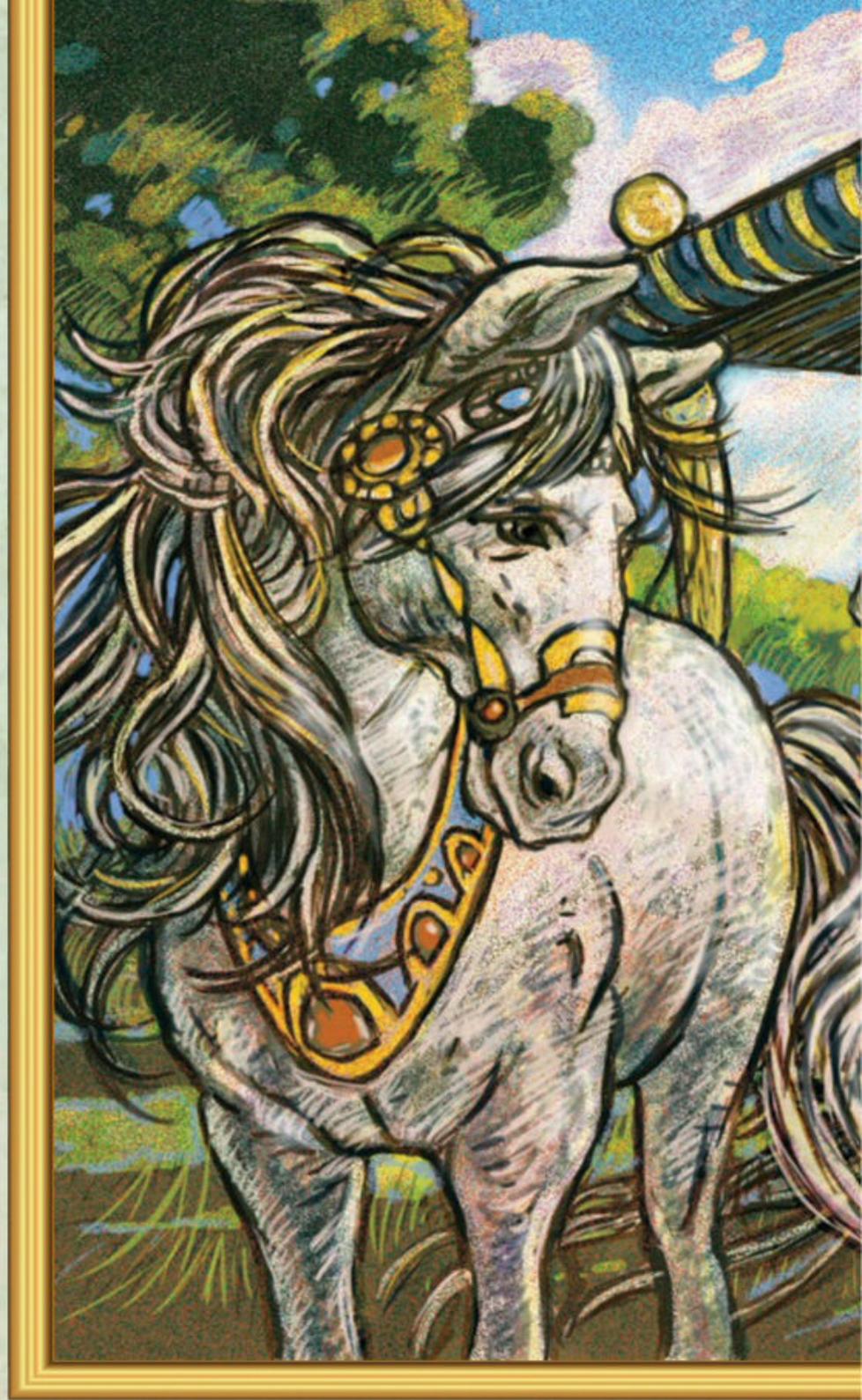
Matthias and the Dragons



by Maggie Murphy
Art by Rebecca Guay

STRIDING QUICKLY ALONG, Matthias glanced uneasily at the black stone cliffs towering beside him. Ahead, a still lake swarmed with dark clouds of midges. Finally, he spied the faraway ocean. Now I know my way back, he thought. I'd better hurry. We're leaving the inn this afternoon, and Father won't be too pleased if I'm late.

Matthias spent happy days traveling around the kingdom with his father's band of puppeteers. On village greens at showtime, he joined the puppet masters behind the brightly painted



theater. While the men pulled the puppets' strings and spoke for them, Matthias made the scenes even livelier by adding special sounds.

When the puppet princess knocked on the giant's castle door, Matthias rapped on a board. When the funny wizard brewed his potions,

Oh, dear. The engine
conked out again.



Sea Dragon eez zee perfect
name for our submarine.



¡De verdad! We're just
draggin' along the bottom.





Matthias clashed pot lids. And when the prince—he had long brown hair like Matthias!—got lost in the forest, Matthias gave wonderful bird calls.

Matthias chirped, cheeped, and whistled so well because he spent lots of time listening to wild

birds. Life on the road took him to many lonely inns surrounded by woods and meadows calling to be explored. Today, although he hadn't meant to break his father's rule about not going too far, he'd somehow wound up as lost as the puppet prince.

Open the engine cover, Bill, and let's see what's wrong.



There's your problem...



Why are midges — tiny, two-winged flies, like gnats — in the engine?





Feeling like a mouse beneath a hawk, Matthias looked around desperately for a hiding place. The open ground offered no cover, and there wasn't time to dash to the lake and dive underwater. But in the nearby cliff face, he spotted a small hole.

With his heart pounding, he darted through the opening only to find he'd entered the smoke-scented cavern of a dragon twice as large as the first! This bright red creature lazed upon its hoard of riches like a great ship at anchor in a gleaming, golden bay. Before Matthias could flee, the dragon's long, scarlet tail thumped down, sealing the hole.

Matthias saw no other door to freedom except the cave's gaping mouth, which was located beside the dragon's mouth. For a terrible moment, he thought things were hopeless. But he soon realized the monster had merely changed its tail's position while stretching and hadn't noticed him . . . yet. Matthias crept behind two tall rocks. Peeking

Now Matthias turned his steps south, eager to leave the forbidding cliffs and eerie lake, thinking, It's strange that I don't hear a single bird. An instant later, he understood why: a monstrous green dragon winged toward him, swooped, and circled.

We found this sweet-smelling cavern — big cave — on the beach.



Ziss old empty juice can, you mean.



Hey! Our submarine, you mean!



Then something slammed down behind us.



through a gap between them, he thought, When this dragon leaves to hunt, I'll—

The green dragon popped its head into the cavern's entrance. "Hello, dear," it said to the red one. "I'm just checking on the adorable egg."

"What a devoted mother," said the red dragon, smiling.

Matthias followed the dragons' tender gazes to a jewel heap right in

front of his rocky barrier. What he'd believed to be a huge pearl was in fact the shining egg.

"No joyful tap-tappings yet?" the mother dragon asked.

"Not one, my love," said the father. "I'm guessing that our little darling won't crack out early."

"It's so hard to wait." The mother sighed happily, spewing flames. "Well, I'd best soar on to pick up lunch.



The hatch! Forming a barrier — a thing blocking the path — to escape.



Whoa! That's some heavy-duty thinkin', Sonya!



And we've just lazed — passed time by relaxing — in here since.



There was peanut butter to eat.



Of course! My engine runs on peanut butter!





Would you prefer deer or wild boar?"

"Pork sounds delicious."

"Perfect. I'll grab six plump boars and flap straight back," said the mother, and she flew away.

I have to sneak off before that lady dragon returns, thought Matthias. A protective new mother has eyes in the back of her head. He wanted to groan as the father, showing no signs of moving his tail, started sorting a treasure pile.

If only the egg would hatch, Matthias thought. That would get Papa on his feet. Suddenly, Matthias knew what to do. Imagining himself back at the puppet theater, he picked up a stone and struck it on the big rock sheltering him.

Tap.

The dragon paused, a diamond-encrusted crown dangling from one claw. Matthias forced himself to wait through a long minute of

Whatever! Can you get the engine working again?



Hope so. But it's encrusted — covered with a layer of something.



Umm ... I'm gonna guess that would be dried peanut butter.



Dude! You are killin' it with the brain skills today.



silence, thinking, Go slow. This performance must sound natural.

Tap.

“I did hear something!” cried the dragon. “Daddy’s coming!”

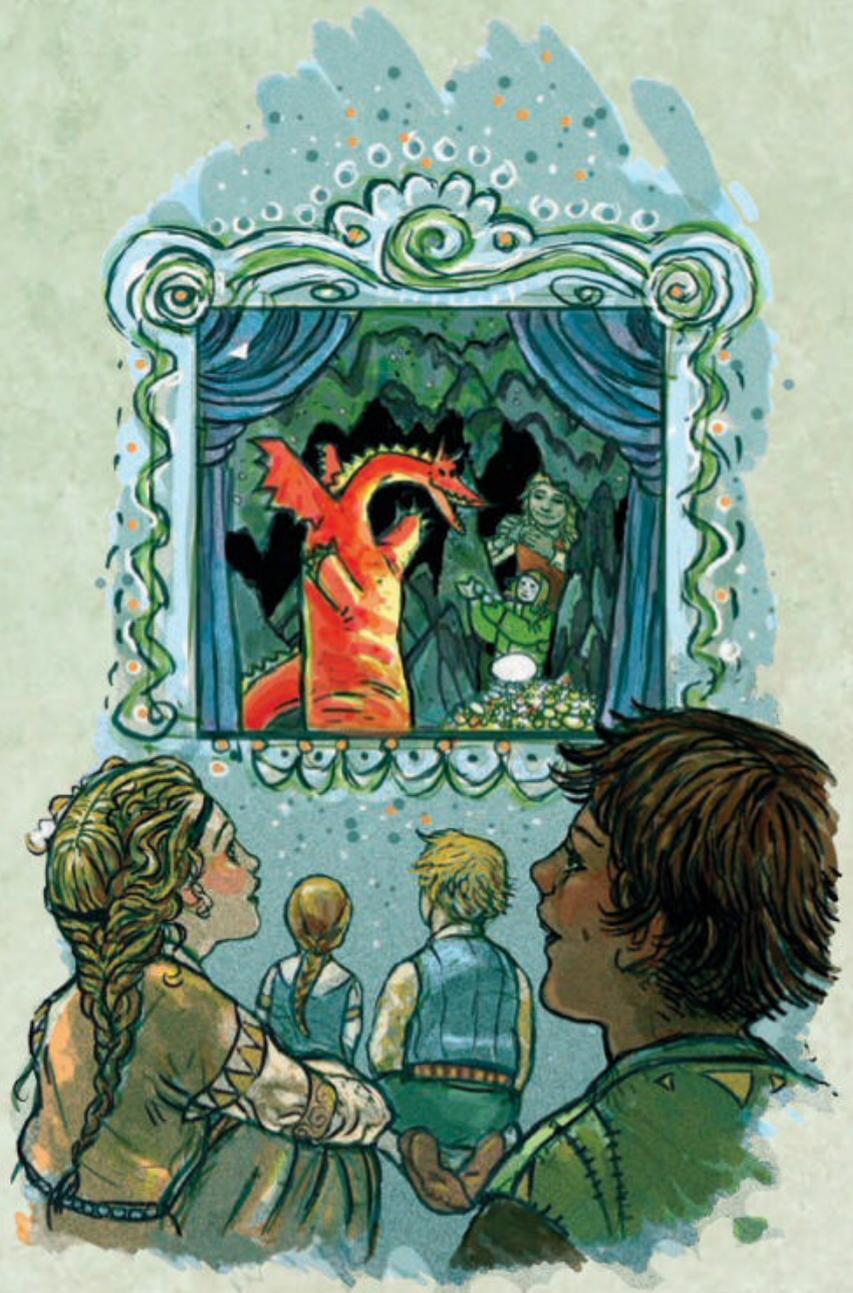
As he lumbered toward the egg, his tail slid away from the hole. But Matthias couldn’t risk tiptoeing off until he felt sure the dragon wouldn’t look up.

Tap-tap.

“Old Dad’s here, sweetie, ready to greet you,” the excited dragon told the egg. “And Mommy’s flying home soon, bringing nice, fat piggy-wiggies!”

Matthias gave a last *tap-tap* before slipping out of the cave, scanning the empty sky, and running away. When he drew near the inn, he thought, My adventure’s the kind of thing that happens to the puppet prince. Maybe we could . . .

A week later, Matthias sat behind the puppet theater’s cave scene with his noisemaking tools ready. He grinned as the trapped prince told the audience, “I’ll fool the



dragon into believing the egg is hatching!”

The prince tapped with a fake stone; Matthias tapped with a real one. The crowd laughed loudly as the dragon puppet’s pointed ears shot up and his head swiveled toward a wooden egg.

Matthias looked at his smiling father, thinking, Everyone loves our new show!

Tap-tap. 🕸

*Mi nombre es Araña.
What’s yours?*

*Midge. We’re all
named Midge.*

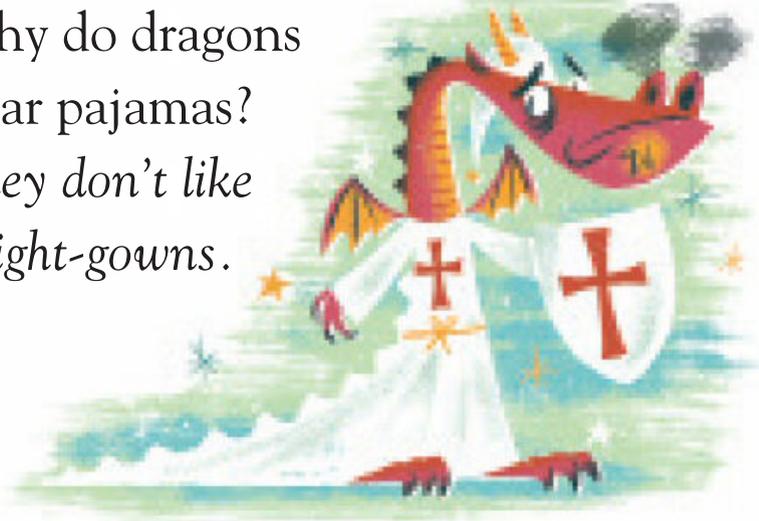
*That’s why
we’re midges.*

Obviously.

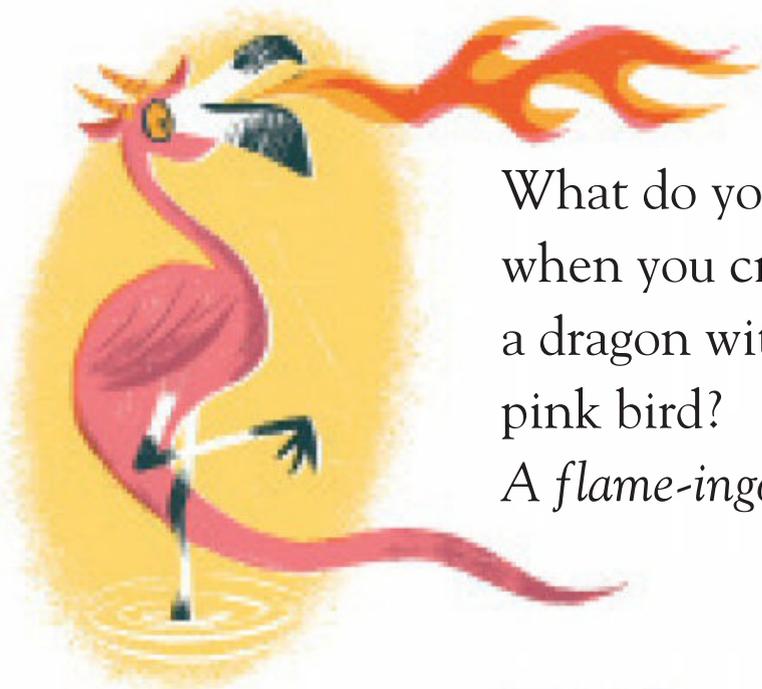
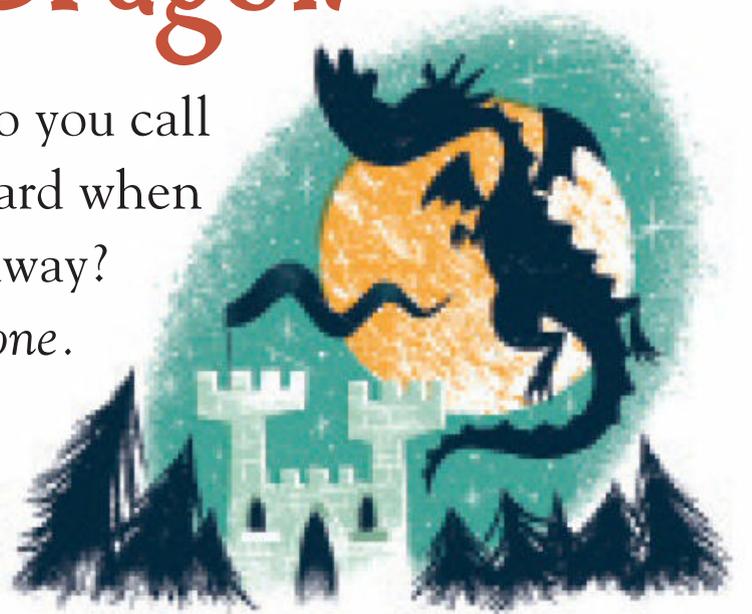


Wisecracking Dragon

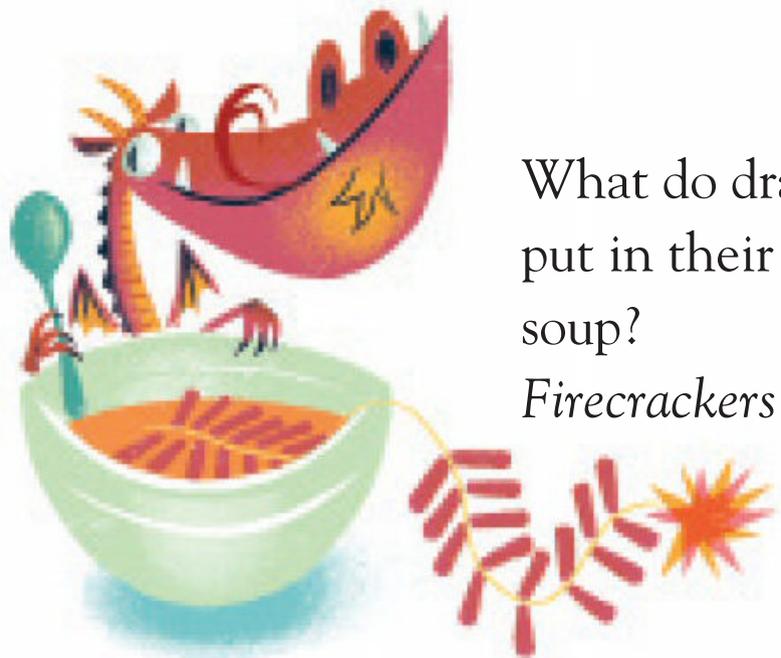
Why do dragons wear pajamas?
They don't like knight-gowns.



What do you call a big lizard when it flies away?
A dra-gone.



What do you get when you cross a dragon with a pink bird?
A flame-ingo.



What do dragons put in their noodle soup?
Firecrackers.



What do you call a dragon who doesn't have a razor?
A bearded dragon.



Why do knights get bored when dragons tell stories?
They have long tails.

by Chester D. Jester

Art by Christopher Nielsen

THEY MAY NOT breathe fire, but these real dragons are really cool!

Dragonet

A little dragon is known as a dragonet. But in the animal world, a dragonet is a fish. Many kinds of dragonets swim in tropical waters from Hong Kong to Australia. Lots are brightly colored and live around coral reefs. Others are brown, like sand, and stay on the ocean floor. A dragonet spreads out its fins to help it move along the seafloor almost as if it is walking.



But this dragon doesn't have scales. Instead, a dragonet is covered in a coat of smelly slime. Slimy skin makes the dragonet less tasty and keeps off biting parasites.



text © 2021 by Tracy Vonder Brink

I was hoping to see some coral reefs — underwater ridges made of little animals called polyps. *Qué pena.*



It's more than a shame! We're trapped in a sunken submarine with midges! This stinks!



No kidding. They are parasites — irritating living things that live inside or on other living things.



Ahh! Stop biting me, Midge!





Blue Dragon Sea Slug

This blue dragon is mighty, even though it's about the size of a fingertip. The blue dragon sea slug floats in an unusual way through tropical waters in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. It keeps an air bubble in its stomach. Often, the blue dragon sea slug floats upside down to use its color as camouflage. When birds look down, the sea slug's bright blue belly blends in with the waves. When fish look up, the sea slug's dull gray back blends in with the sunlight shining through the water. This sea slug feeds on the stinging, poisonous tentacles of the man-of-war, a relative of the jellyfish. But the poison doesn't hurt the sea slug. Instead, the blue dragon sea slug stores the poison inside its body. If an enemy bothers the sea slug, it delivers a powerful sting with the borrowed poison. This is one dragon that should be left alone!



Better make it quick with the repairs. The crew grows restless.



Pickles! Have you any idea how complex Peanut Butter Technology is, Spider?



It's cutting edge.



Like a butter knife?





Sea Dragon

The sea dragon is found in tropical waters around Australia. It is shaped like a seahorse, but it looks as if there are leaves growing all over its body. Those leafy-looking parts act as camouflage that help hide the sea dragon in the seaweed and kelp. It uses its straw-like snout to suck up tiny shrimp and plankton. The sea dragon spends most of its time hunting for something to eat. Why does this dragon eat so much? Because it doesn't have a stomach to hold food.



Dragon Snake

The dragon snake has three rows of large, rough scales down the middle of its back, like a dragon. In the dark of night, the dragon snake slithers along the rain forest floors and rice fields of southeast Asia. It hunts for frogs. During the day, this skinny snake burrows into the ground to sleep. It might look like a dragon, but this snake is not venomous or dangerous. The dragon snake usually doesn't bite when touched. Instead, it protects itself by making its body as stiff as a board.



Maybe you could whip us all up something for lunch, Miro.



Moi? I shall never cook with zee peanut butter ... Yuck!



Hey! Who is biting my butt?



I'm not so hungry anymore.





Flying Dragon

In the jungles and forests of southeast Asia, the flying dragon lizard leaps from tree to tree. As the lizard jumps, it pushes out its ribs. Its loose skin spreads and catches the air like wings. But the flying dragon doesn't flap. It glides. In fact, it can glide up to thirty feet. That's as long as a school bus! If the flying dragon can't find ants or termites to eat on one tree, it jumps and glides to a different one. Gliding also keeps this dragon safe from enemies on the ground.

Backyard Dragons

You don't have to travel far to find dragons. Just look in your own backyard. In flower beds, brightly colored snapdragons bloom from spring to fall. Gently squeeze the flower's sides to make this dragon's jaws "snap" open. In pots on porches, dragon wing begonias show off their red or pink flowers and shiny dark green leaves. The leaves are shaped like dragon wings. They are about as



There! It's fixed!



At last! First Officer Araña, full speed ahead!



Aye, aye, Captain. ¡Ay ay ay!



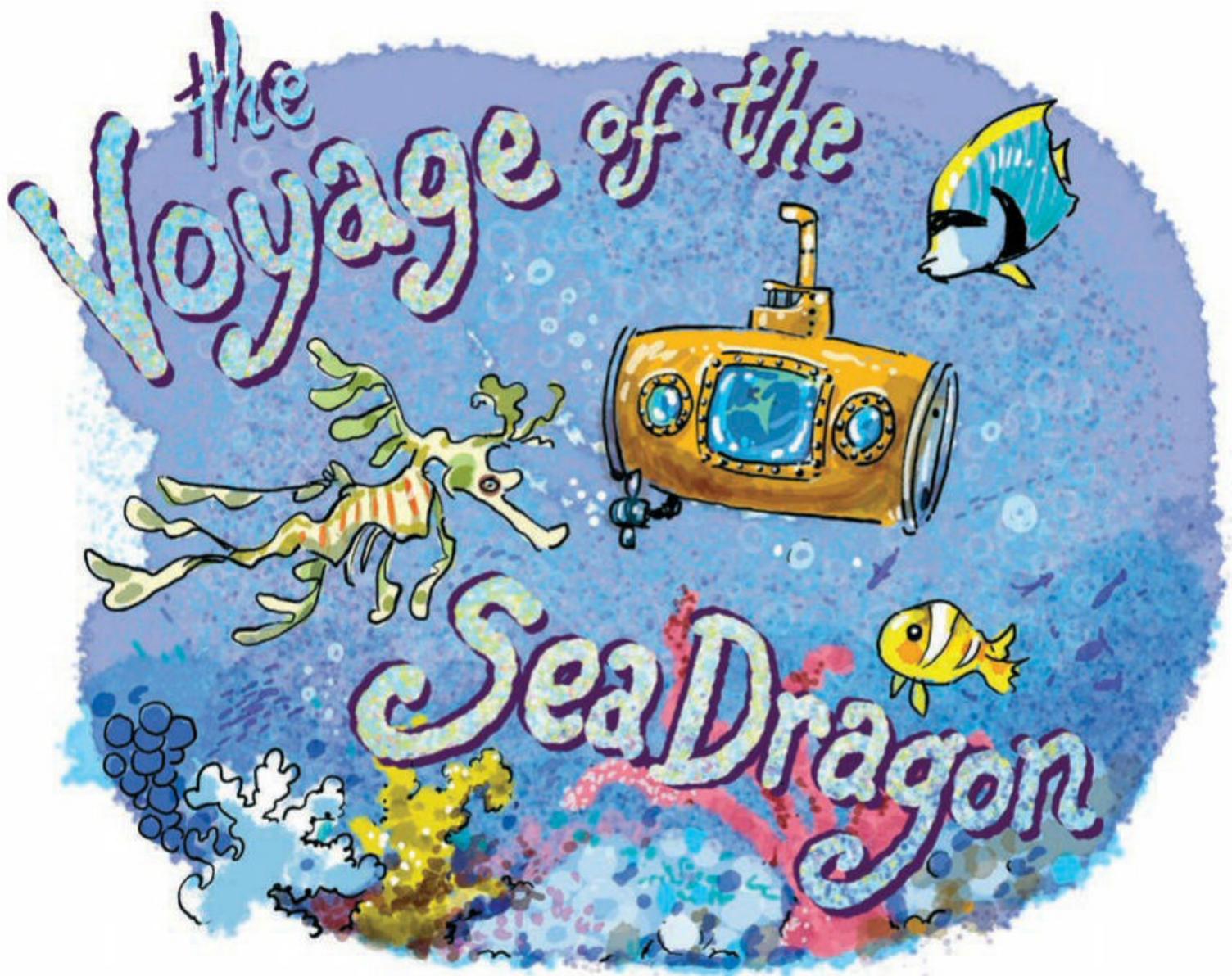


long as a pencil. Watch for dragons in the sky! A dragonfly's four wings help it fly straight up and down. It can even hover like a helicopter. Its big eyes see really well. It may see color even better than we do. This dragon uses its sharp eyes to find bugs. Then it snatches up its prey with its feet.



ON LAND AND sea, in the air and on the ground, so many dragons are all around us! 🐜

Some kids even have pet dragons. Check out this friendly bearded dragon lizard.





Use Your Noodle!

by Kathleen Bahr
Art by Ziti Child

Letters are swimming
in alphabet soup.

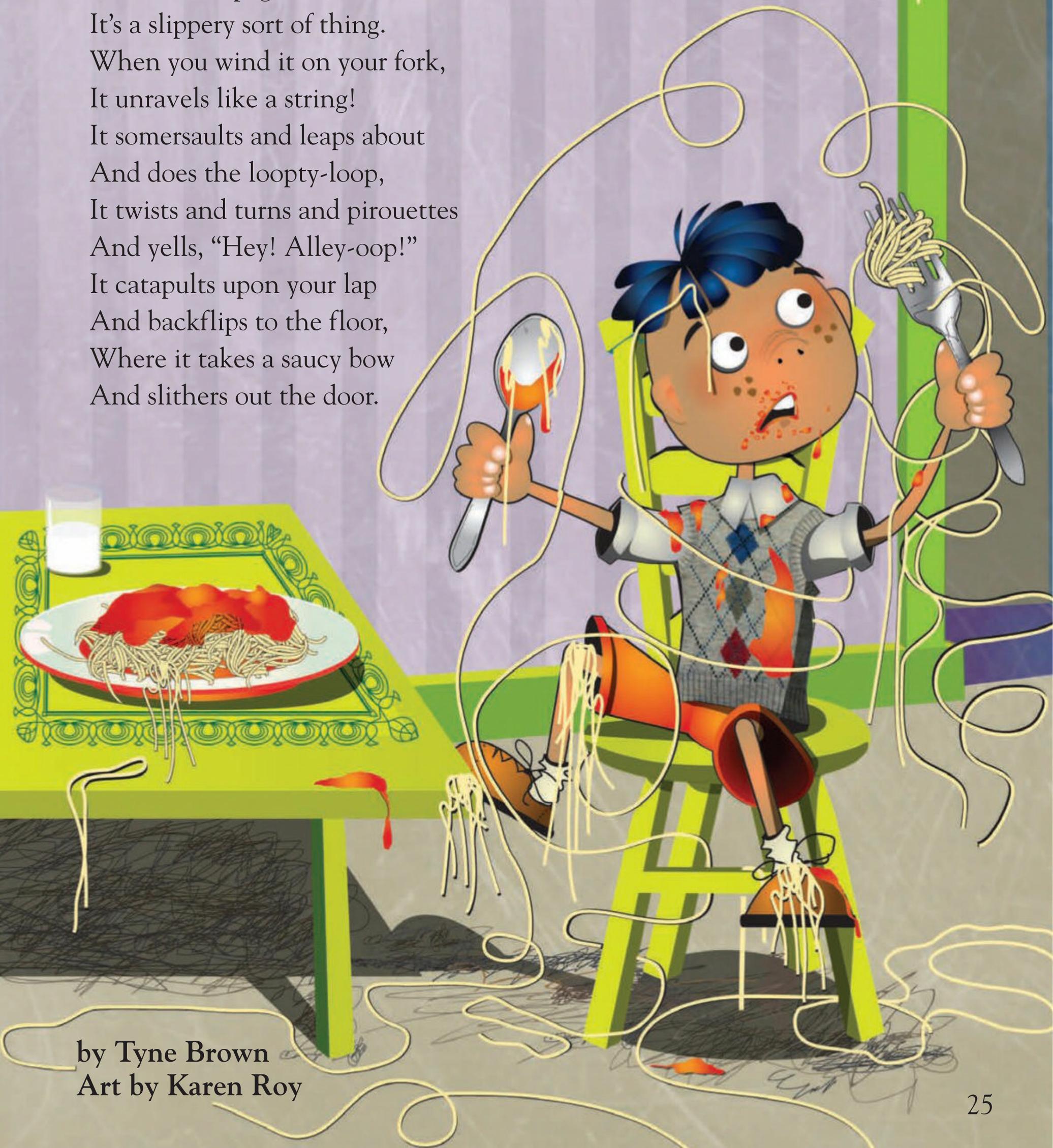
What words can you slurp
with one giant scoop?

D A B C E N O T

What words can you spell
with these letters?

Never Trust Spaghetti

Never trust spaghetti,
It's a slippery sort of thing.
When you wind it on your fork,
It unravels like a string!
It somersaults and leaps about
And does the loopy-loop,
It twists and turns and pirouettes
And yells, "Hey! Alley-oop!"
It catapults upon your lap
And backflips to the floor,
Where it takes a saucy bow
And slithers out the door.



by Tyne Brown
Art by Karen Roy



Chopsticks



by Grace Kang
Art by Julie Kim

text © 2021 by Grace Kang
art © 2021 by Julie Kim

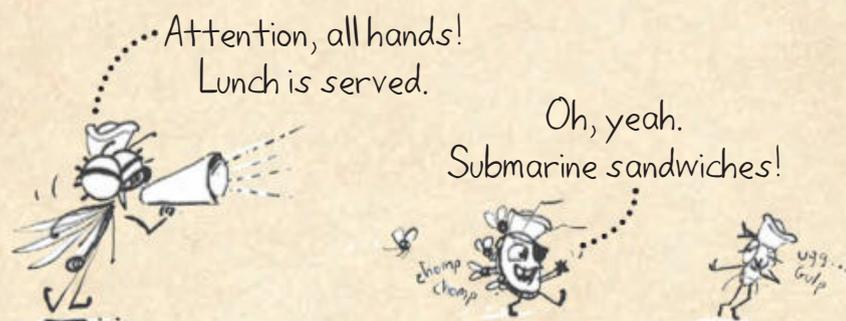
SHAY CAN NEVER hold her chopsticks properly. When she uses them, they crisscross and make an X, and sometimes she cannot quite pick up the slippery pieces of tofu. Her mother laughs.

“Jiā Jiā.” She calls Shay’s Chinese name, holding out her own chopsticks. There’s a soft noise as she clicks them together, no crisscross at all. “Zhè yàng.” *Like this.*

Shay tries, but it’s clumsy, even worse than the crisscross. She makes a face. “I don’t want to,” she says and reaches for a spoon.

“That’s cheating,” her brother says.

Shay pouts. “No, it’s not! Everyone at Abigail’s house uses spoons and forks!”



“Yes,” her father says, “but you live here. It’s traditional, Jiā Jiā.”

“I don’t want traditions,” says Shay. She’s too annoyed to see the twinkle in his eye. “I want to use a spoon.”



The next day, Shay’s mother packs noodles for her lunch. Chopsticks, too. Only chopsticks.

“I have an extra fork,” Abigail says. “You can borrow it if you like.”

Abigail can’t use chopsticks at all, not even the crisscross way.

But she doesn’t have to. Abigail is pretty and blond and has a last name that isn’t Chinese. Sometimes, Shay wishes she lived like Abigail. Just sometimes.

“Yes, please,” Shay says. “Thanks, Abigail!”

Shay eats her noodles like they’re spaghetti, twisting them round and round. Much, much easier.



I do hope you didn’t use any of that old, crusty peanut butter.



Absolument pas! No! I used fresh tofu — soft white blocks of food made from soybeans, often used in Asian and vegetarian cooking.





That night, Shay uses a fork again. A spoon, too.

“I don’t want to use chopsticks anymore,” she proclaims over their meal. “I can’t eat properly with them at all.”

Her mother shares a look with her father, then shrugs. “*Suí nī biàn,*” she says. *Up to you.*

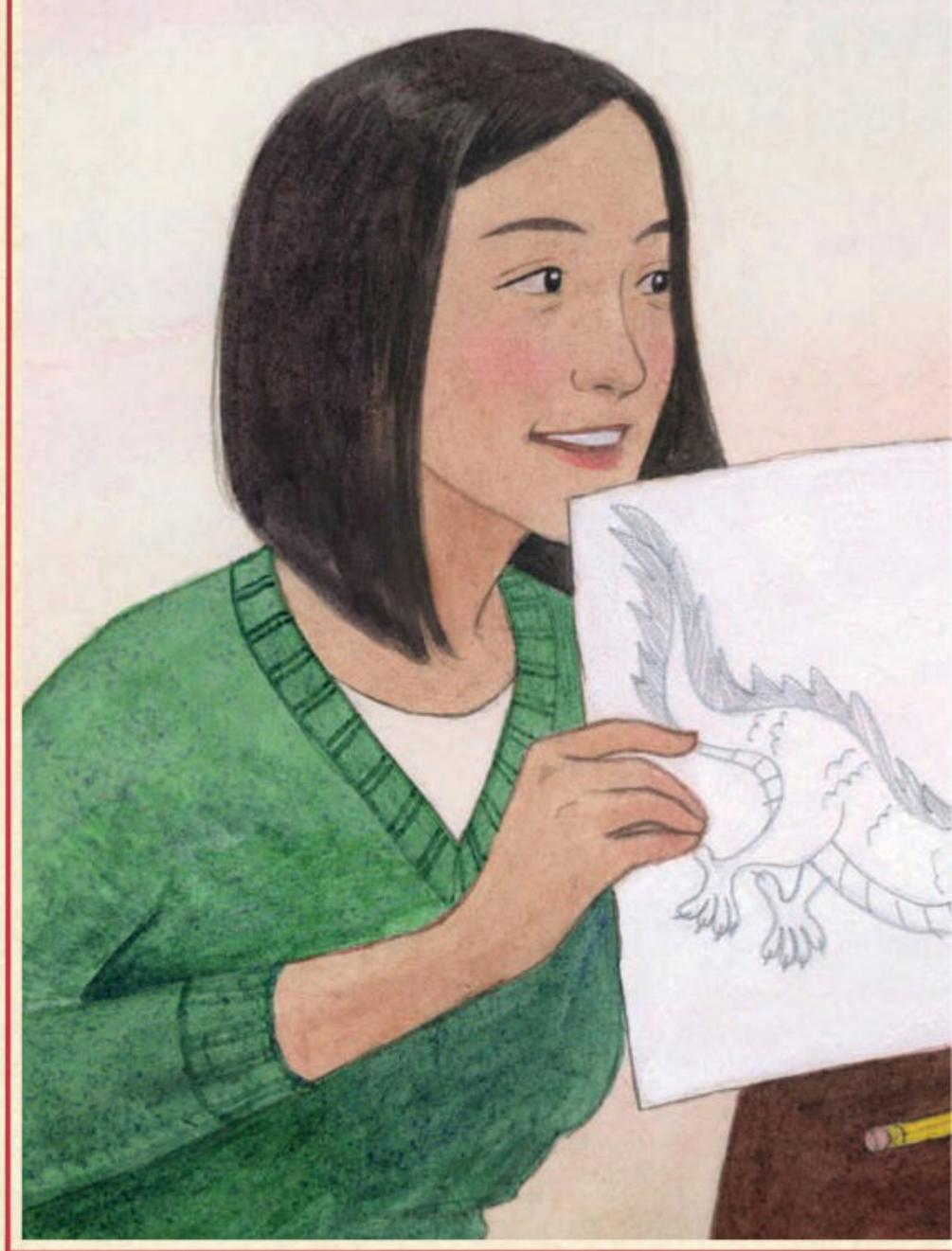
“Cheater,” her brother whispers. Shay steals a piece of duck off of his plate.



After dinner, Shay sits with her mother at the desk as she works on her homework. Sometimes, her mother will help Shay a little, but most times, she makes Shay figure it out on her own. “*Dòng dòng nǎo jīn,*” she’ll say. *Think about it.* It’s hard, but Shay does her best because she knows she can have fun afterward.

When she finishes, she pats her mother’s arm. “I’m done. I’m done. Can we draw now, Mom?”

“*Hǎo, hǎo,*” her mother says, smiling. *Alright, alright.* She takes



out some drawing supplies from the desk drawer and passes some to Shay. “*Nǐ xiǎng huà shénme?*” *What do you want to draw?*

“A dragon!” Shay exclaims. At school, her class is reading fairy tales, and her favorite characters are always the dragons. They’re big and strong, and they breathe fire.

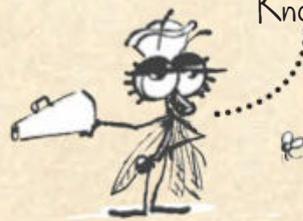
“*Xíng,*” her mother says. OK. She picks up a pencil.

They draw quietly together, side

Excuse me! It is the captain who proclaims — announces — when lunch is served!



Go ahead, Spider. Knock yourself out.





by side. Shay draws a fire-breathing dragon, a huge lizard with big wings. Then she turns to see her mother's drawing: a snakelike creature with impressive antlers and big teeth. Shay recognizes it from the calendar that hangs in the kitchen. It's a Chinese dragon, a *lóng*.

"That's pretty, Mom!" Shay says. She likes the big teeth. "I wish *lóng* had wings, though. Then they could fly like my dragon does."

"They do fly," her mother says, in English this time. "They even swim. *Lóng* are the rulers of the skies and seas."

"Really?" Shay blinks. "That's kind of weird for a dragon."

Her mother chuckles. "The *lóng* is a dragon as I know it," she says. "And this," she points to Shay's drawing, "is a dragon as you know it. But they're both dragons. Neither is wrong."

Attention, crew of the *Sea Dragon*.
This is your captain. Lunch is served!!!



Must we all use a
bullhorn in a submarine?



Can't hear you. Eating!



“Oh,” says Shay. “So kind of like how I know forks, and you know chopsticks?”

“Yes, Jiā Jiā,” her mother says, laughing. “Just like that. There really is no wrong way to eat. You can use forks, or you can use chopsticks.”

“But,” Shay says, “chopsticks are so much harder than forks.”

“Yes,” her mother says. “Though

they’re fun too, once you learn.”

Shay nods, thinking. The little Chinese dragon grins up at her with its big teeth.



The next day, she gets noodles again, but this time, there are both chopsticks and a fork in her lunchbox. Shay smiles and reaches for the chopsticks. 🦗



HEY!!! Who just bit me!



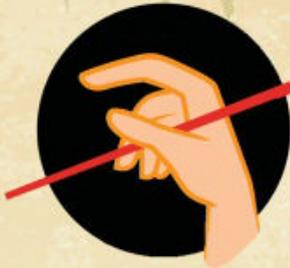
Midges don't eat
tofu, silly.

HOW TO EAT WITH CHOPSTICKS

HERE ARE SOME tips for using chopsticks.

Before you begin, however, you need to know a few important rules:

- Never lay your chopsticks across one another.
- Never use your chopsticks as drumsticks at the table.
- Never point with your chopsticks.
- Never leave your chopsticks upright in a bowl of rice or noodles.



1. Clasp your thumb and last three fingers together, with your index finger up in the air. Place one chopstick along your straightened middle finger and against the base of your thumb, holding it firmly with your middle finger.



2. Place the other chopstick on top, holding it between your index finger and the top of your thumb.



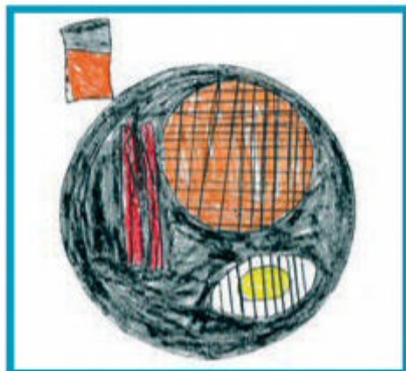
3. Now move the top chopstick up and down while holding the bottom one still.

4. Try picking up a small bite of food. If you drop it, just start over again!



by Nancy J. Valentine
Art by Dai Nishimura

Best Breakfast



Simeon P., age 6
Omaha, Nebraska



Penelope H., age 8
Baton Rouge, Louisiana



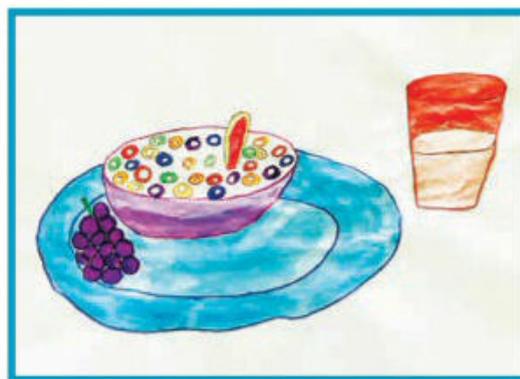
Beatrice W., age 8
Leawood, Kansas



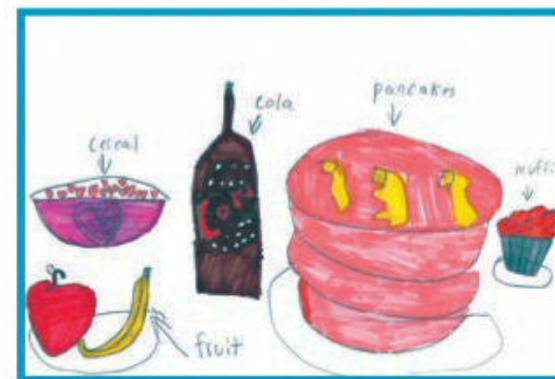
Marlow Larmore, age 6
Iowa City, Iowa



Madilynn M., age 9
Chino, California



Deeya N., age 8
Chapel Hill, North Carolina



Emily S., age 9
New Rochelle, New York



Dear Spider,

Please tell Ophelia I looooooove her recipes! Will you please adopt Orkeyana? She is part dragon, part mermaid, and part T. rex (because of the arms and legs)! She loves Ophelia's recipes, too! She also loves s'mores. She uses her flames to roast marshmallows. She loves cupcakes and cookies.

Johanna Frisk, age 9
Chicago, Illinois



Dear Everybuggy,

Hi! Can you adopt my pet tiny red dragon? Her name is Red. Don't worry. She doesn't eat bugs! She is the size of a cat and loves pepperoni pizza. Miro, can you make her some? Bill, what's your favorite color? Thistle, you are so cute! Do you like to draw?

Faewyn Silvi Whealdon, age 11
Graton, California



Dear Faewyn,

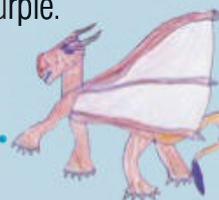
I don't like to draw. I LOVE to draw! Bill's favorite color is yellow. Miro is cooking up Red's personal pepperoni pizza right now.

Love,
Thistle

Dear Ophelia,

Please adopt Skyfire. She is a dragon. Skyfire is a sand/sky hybrid. Feed her four pigs every day, and she won't burn you. Have you ever heard of the Wings of Fire book series? My favorite character from it is Glory. My favorite color is purple.

Caroline, age 10
Penngrove, California



Dear Spider,

I love your magazines. My mom just started buying them. Will you adopt my pet dragon? His name is Smaug. He eats four times a day. He only eats chicken.

Kate, age 8
Fairfield, Connecticut



Dear Miro,

Bonjour! You are my favorite buggy. I like to cook, like you, and I'm learning French. Here is a recipe I made for pork salad: Wash lettuce. Pull pork. Cut carrots, tomatoes, and radishes. Spread the lettuce. Pile the pork on top. Then add the tomatoes, carrots, and radishes. Feel free to add dressing.

Au revoir for now,
Hazel
Watertown, New York

OPHELIA'S LAST WORD DAZZLING DRAGON

A DRAGON MIGHT be lurking in your recycling bin, just waiting for a crafty wizard like you to bring it to life.

What You'll Need:

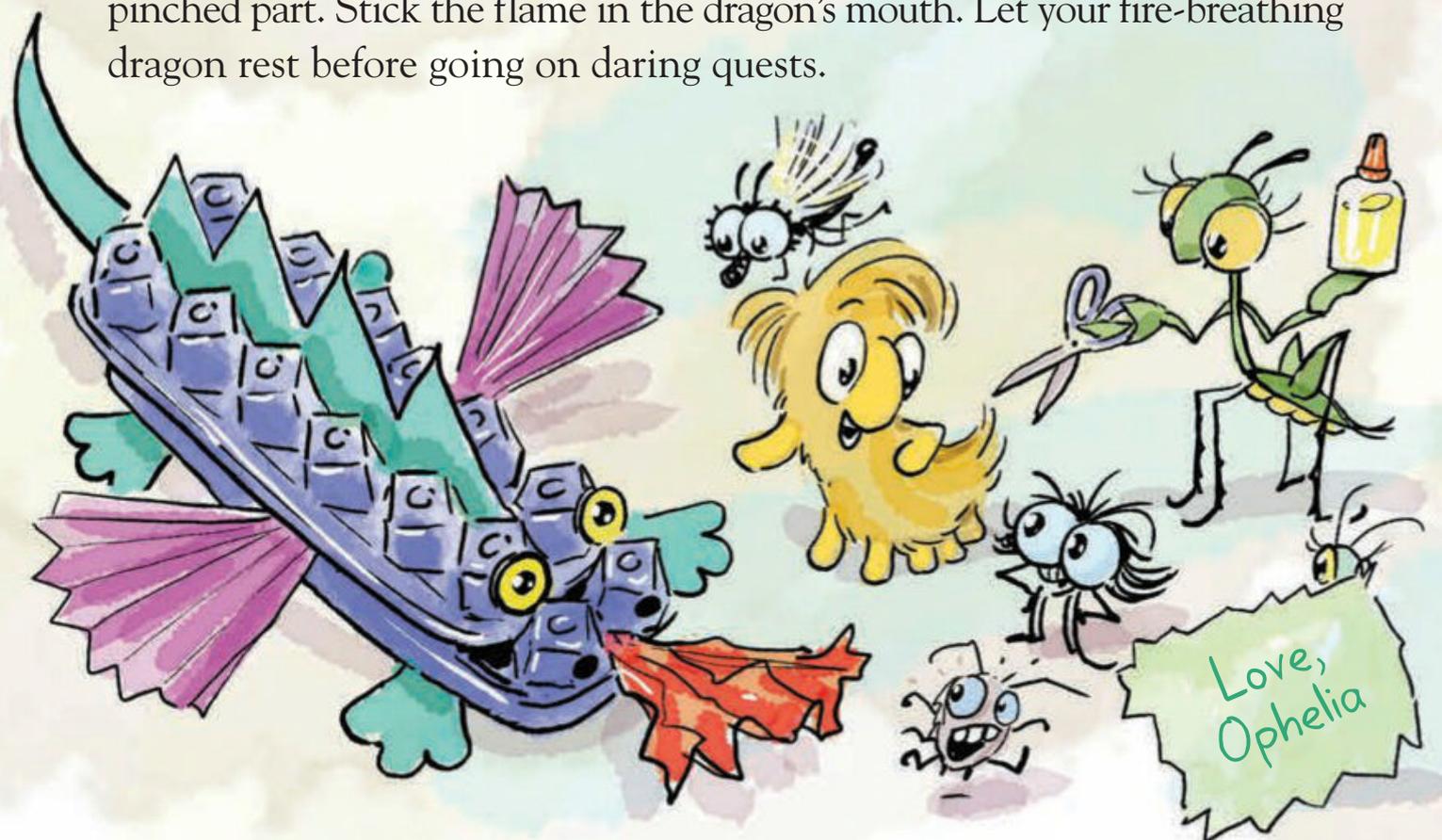
2 cardboard egg cartons
construction paper
red tissue paper
paint and paintbrush

pencil and markers
scissors
glue and tape

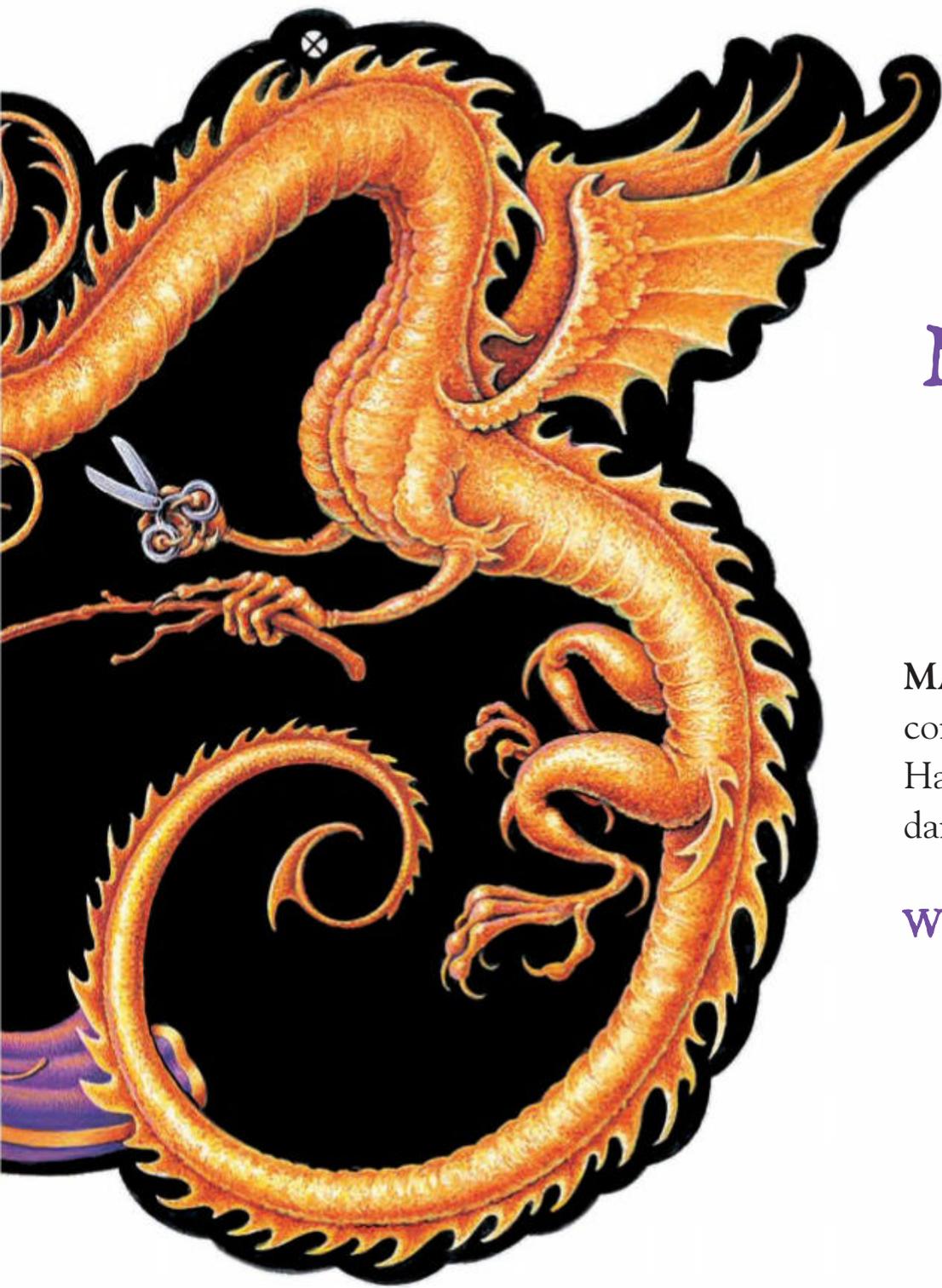


What to Do:

1. Have a grownup help cut one egg carton along its two bending parts. Recycle the top and the tab. Keep the bumpy bottom.
2. Turn the second egg carton upside down. Put glue on every bump, except for the first two. Lay the cut-off piece on top, stacking its first bumps onto the lower egg carton's second bumps. Paint your dragon's body.
3. Draw legs, a tail, eyes, and spikes on construction paper. Cut them out. For wings, make accordion folds. Fold the fan in half. Cut in the middle.
4. Once the paint is dry, flip over your dragon's body. Glue on the legs. Tape on the tail. Flip it back over. Draw nostrils on the first bumps. Glue eyes to the second bumps. Glue spikes down the middle. Add glue to each wing's end. Stick a wing on each side in between the two cartons.
5. Pinch the center of the tissue paper, and scrunch it up. Put glue on the pinched part. Stick the flame in the dragon's mouth. Let your fire-breathing dragon rest before going on daring quests.







Mauger's Mysterious Magical Mobile

Art by Leah Palmer Preiss

MAUGER THE MARVELOUS Magician conjured this magnificent mobile just for you! Hang it near a window, and watch the figures dance.

What You'll Need:

- scissors
- pencil
- tape
- 6 pieces of yarn or string of different lengths
- a stick from the enchanted forest
(or your backyard or neighborhood)

What to Do:

1. Cut out each figure along the solid lines.
2. Reinforce circled Xs with tape.
3. With a pencil, poke holes through circled Xs.
4. Tie a piece of string through each hole.
5. Tie the other end of each string at different spots along the stick.
6. Add a piece of string to hang the mobile from a fixture, doorframe, or ceiling. It may take a few tries to find the spot that will balance the mobile.







Spaghetti Eddie



This slippery, twisty, mouthwatering maze might look im-pasta-able. But noodle around until you've found the perfect path from Eddie's empty plate to the best bowl.



September 2021 Volume 28 Number 7 cricketmedia.com \$6.95

