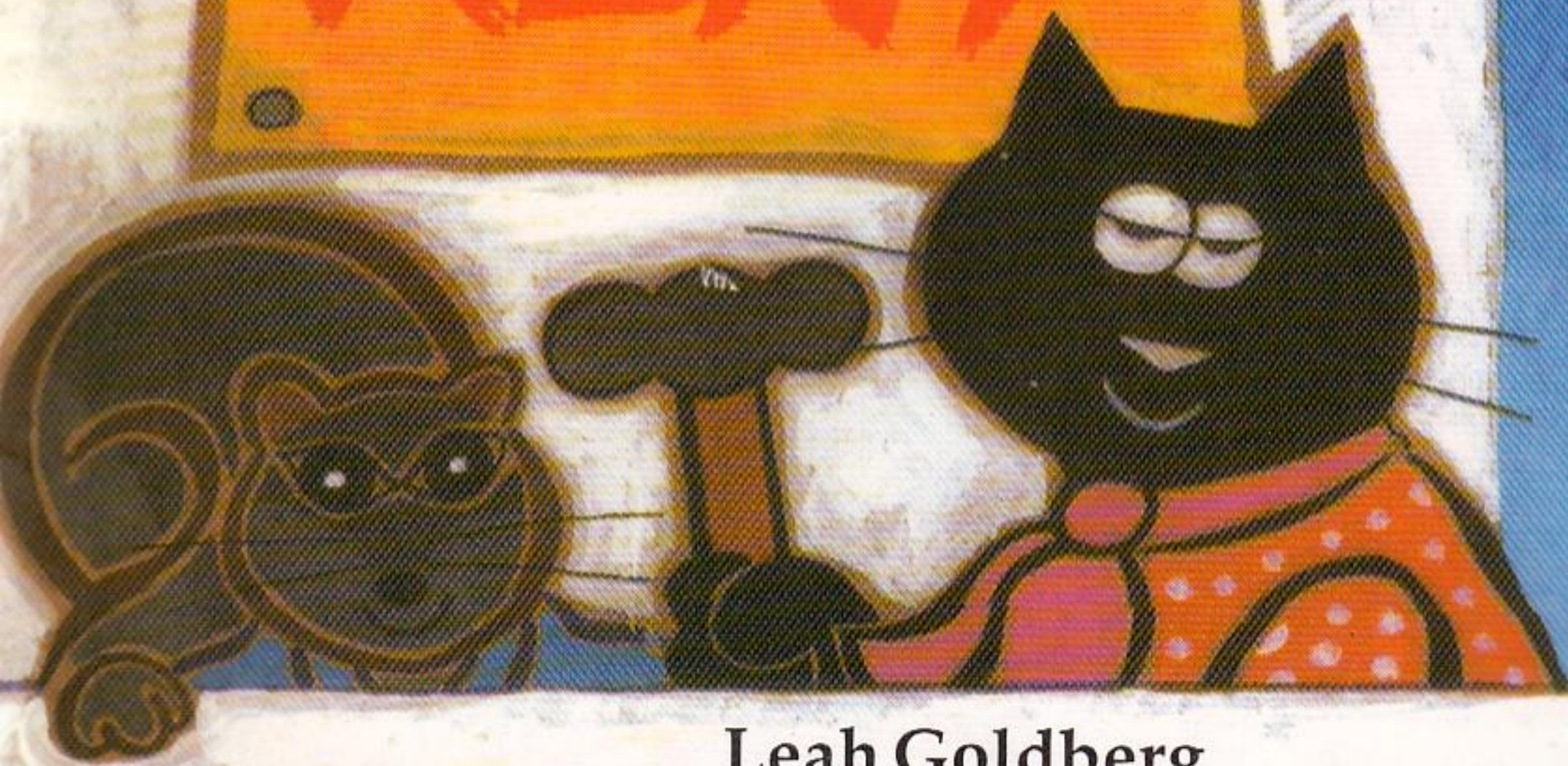




A
FLAT
FOR
RENT



Leah Goldberg

Translated by

Bracha Kaplan

Illustrated by

Harinder Singh

Nehru Bal Pustakalaya

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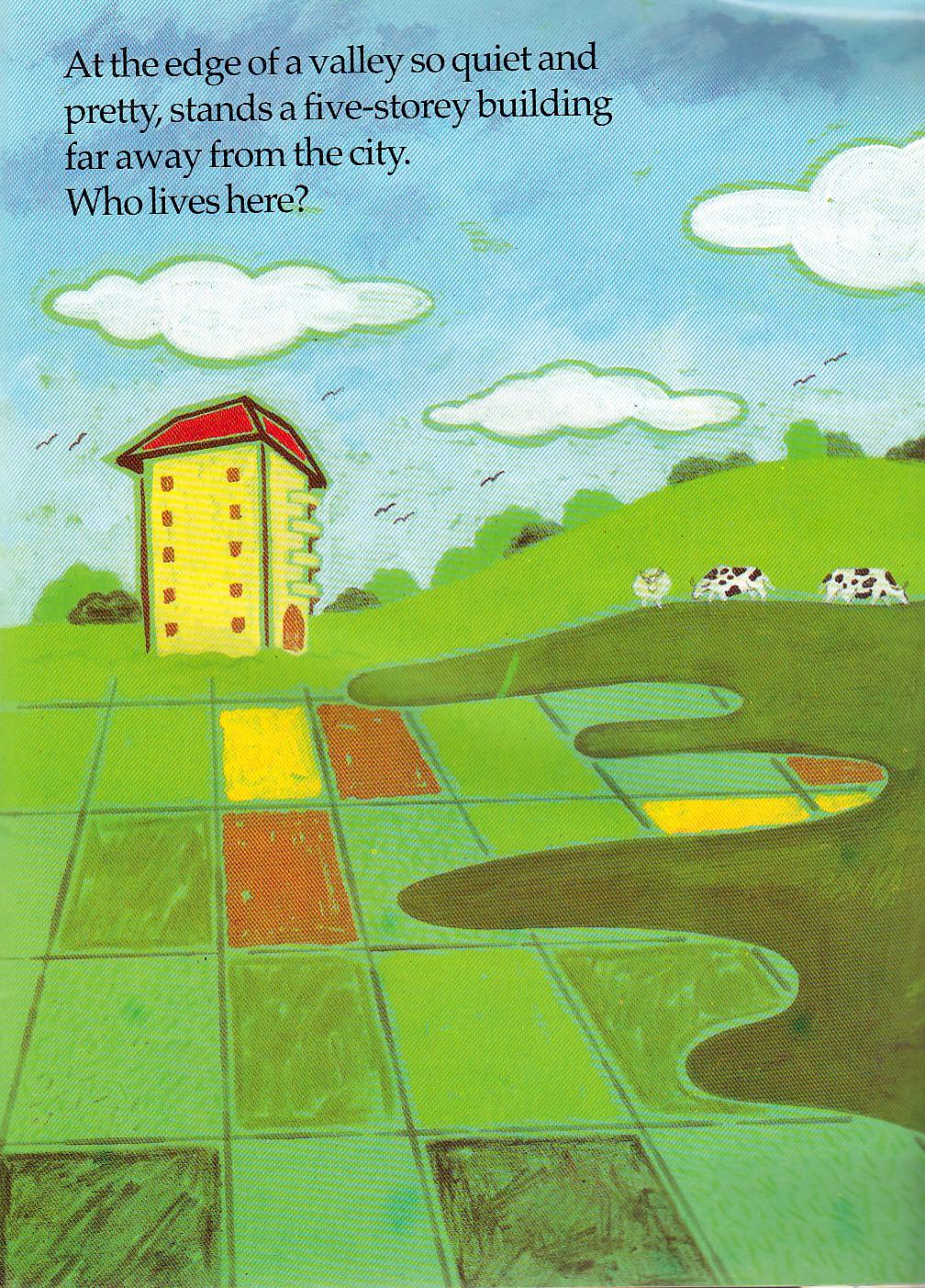
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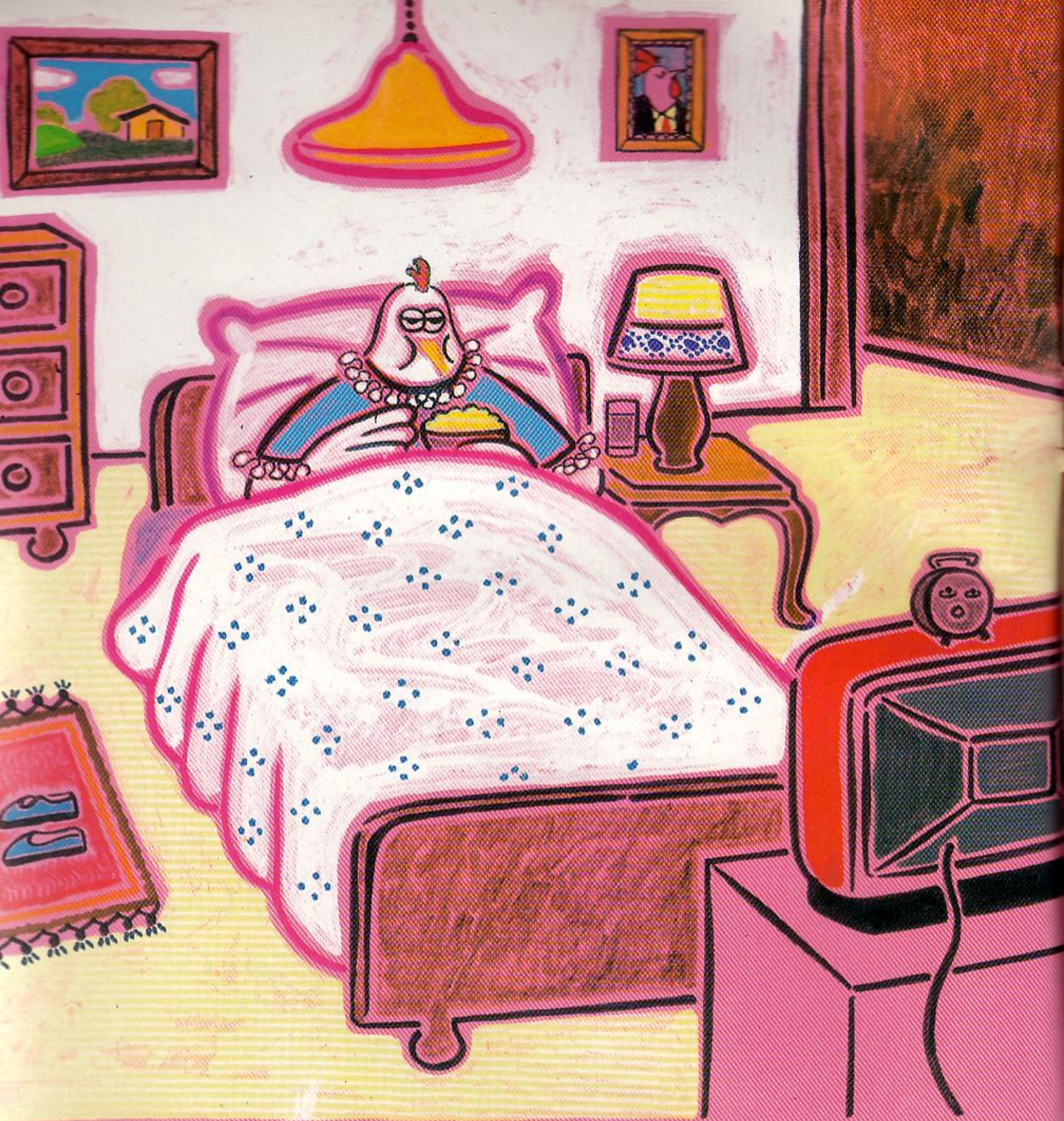
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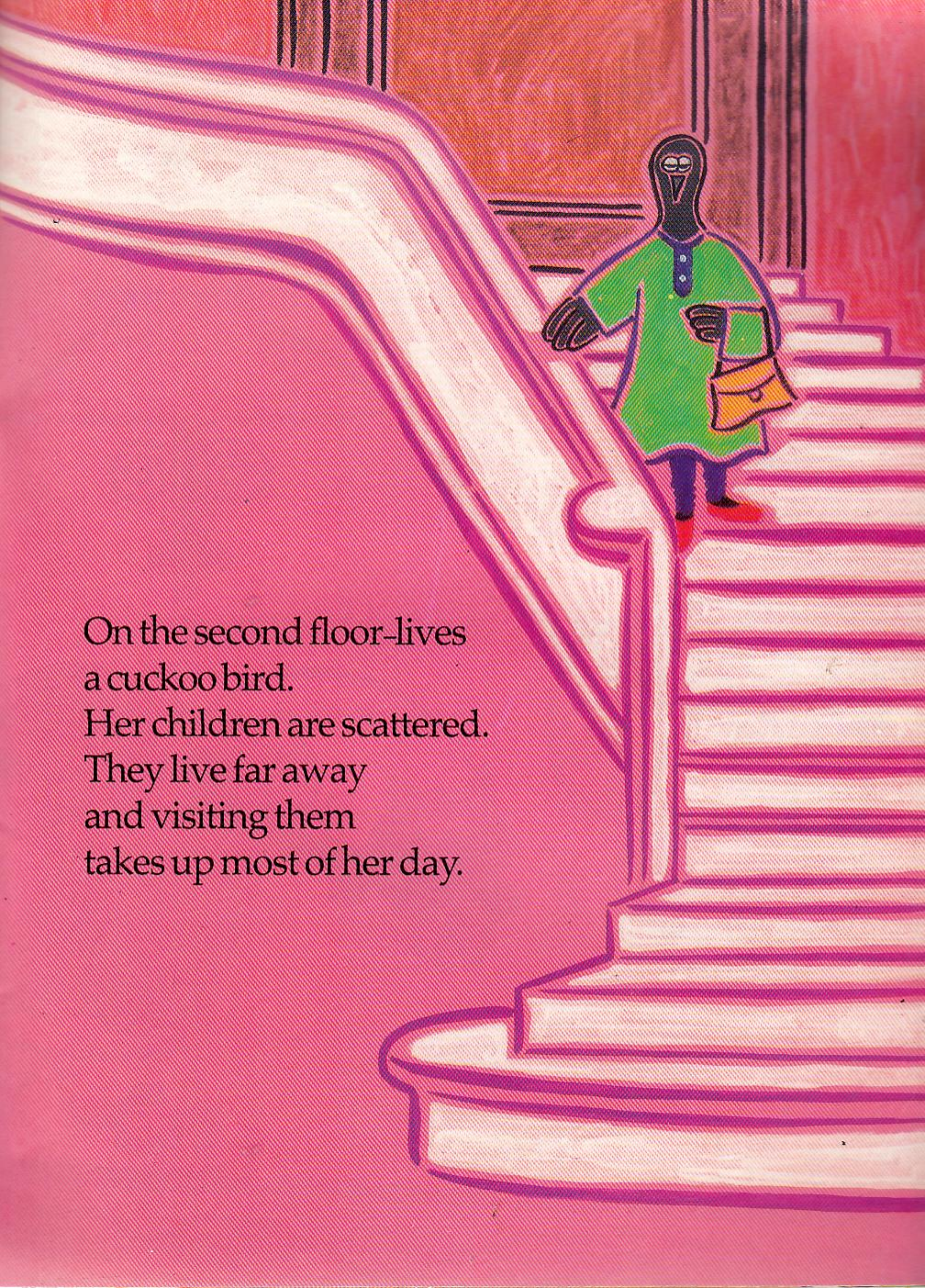
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At the edge of a valley so quiet and
pretty, stands a five-storey building
far away from the city.
Who lives here?



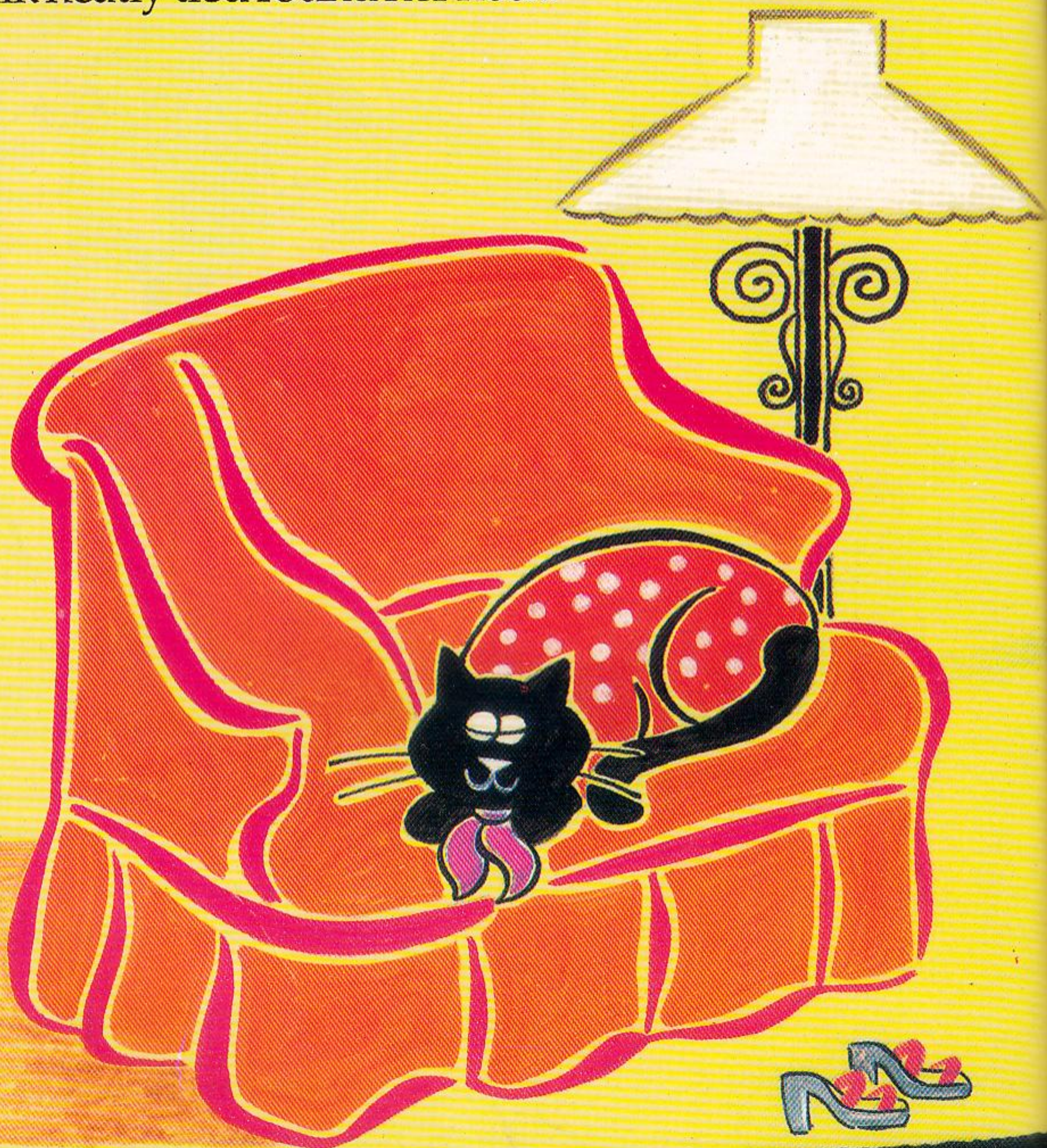


On the first floor-lives a big, fat hen.
She's at home all day long,
never leaving her bed, hardly able to walk,
she's so very well fed.



On the second floor-lives
a cuckoo bird.
Her children are scattered.
They live far away
and visiting them
takes up most of her day.

On the third floor-lives a black cat.
Very pampered and clean
with never a speck. There's a ribbon of
silk neatly tied round her neck.



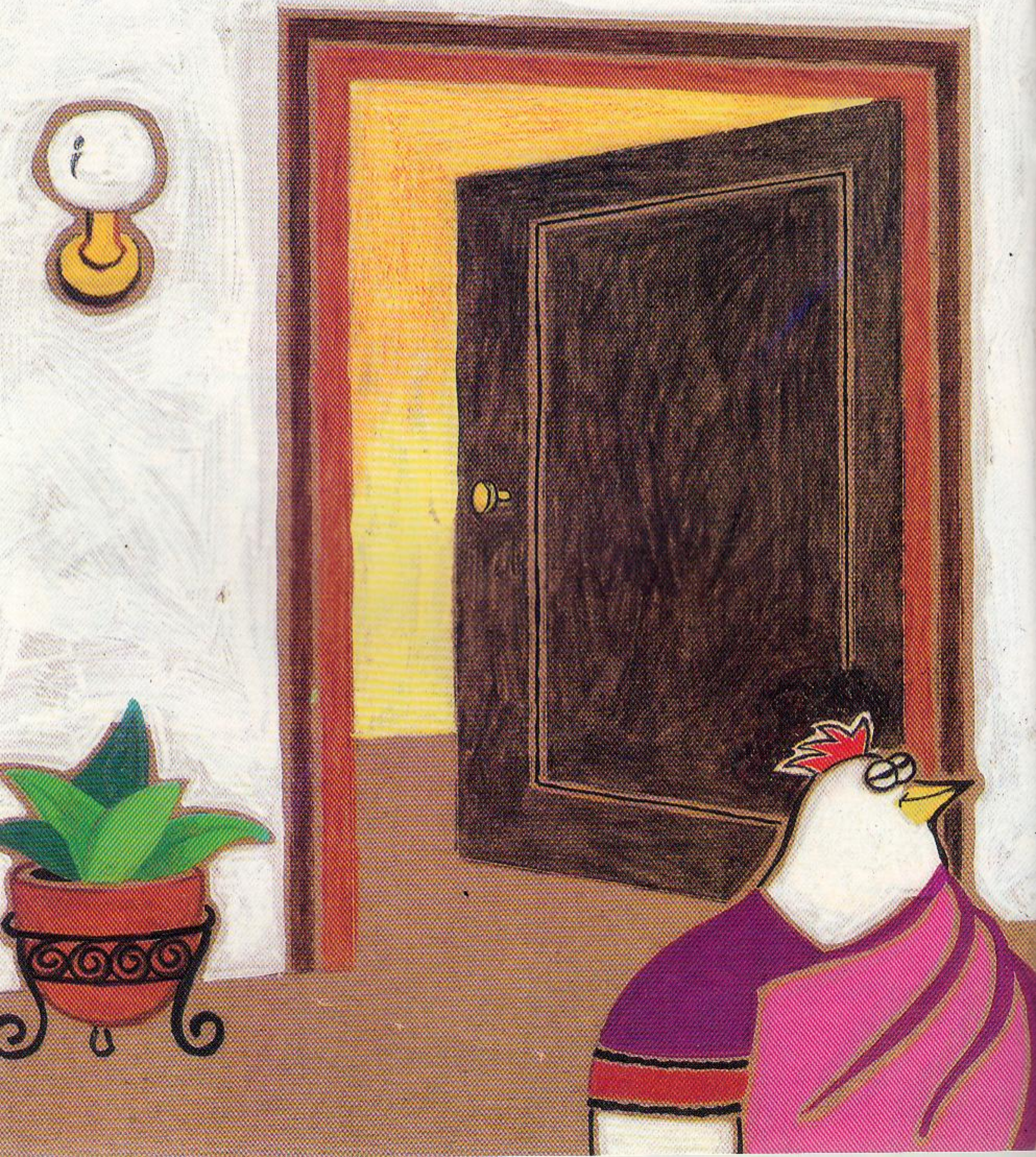
On the fourth floor-lives
a squirrel.

Cracking nut after nut,
oh my-what a sight!

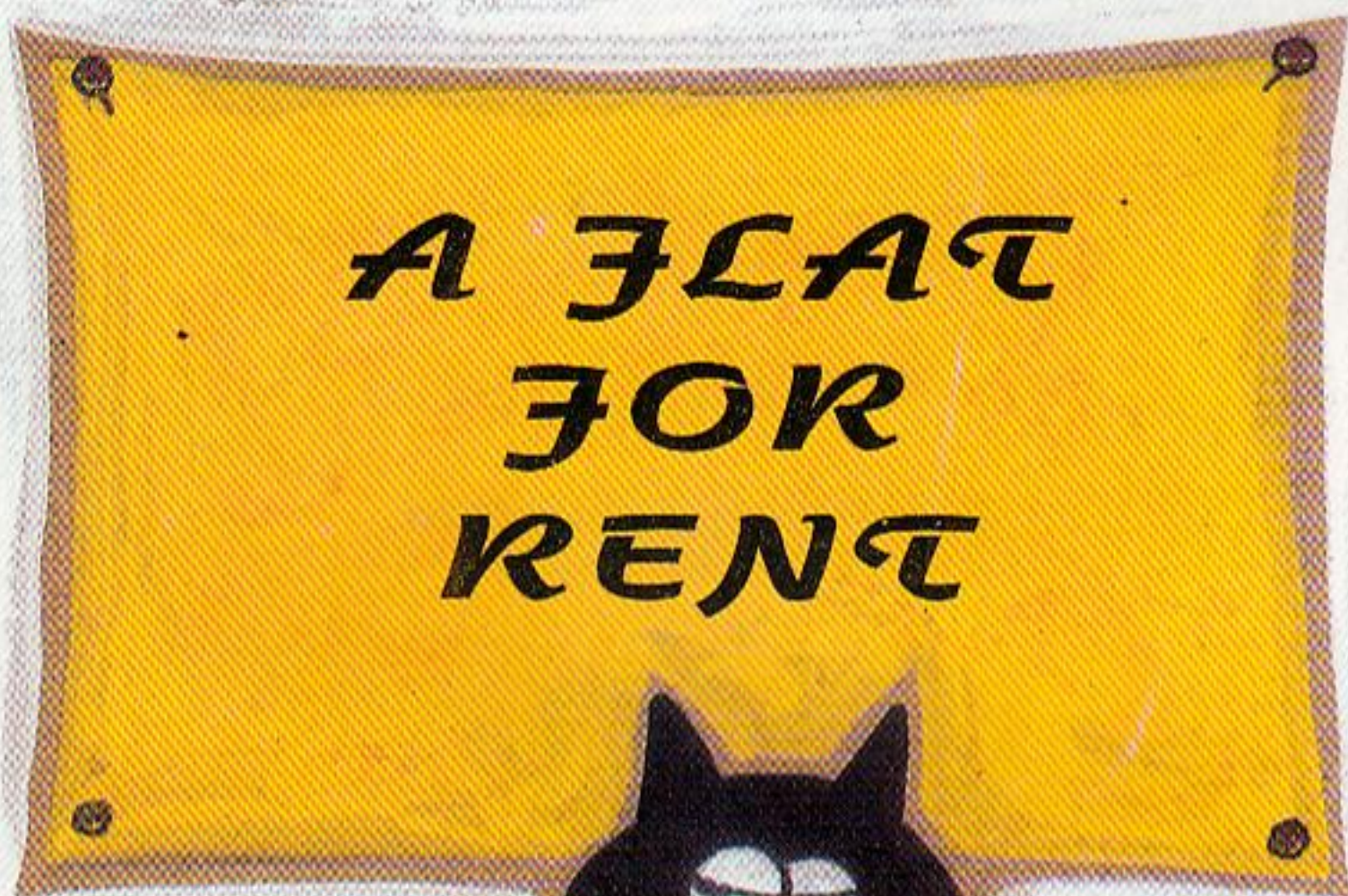
He enjoys every minute
from morning till night.



And on the fifth floor-Mr. Mouse.
But a few days ago without saying
goodbye he just packed up and left
and no-one knows why.



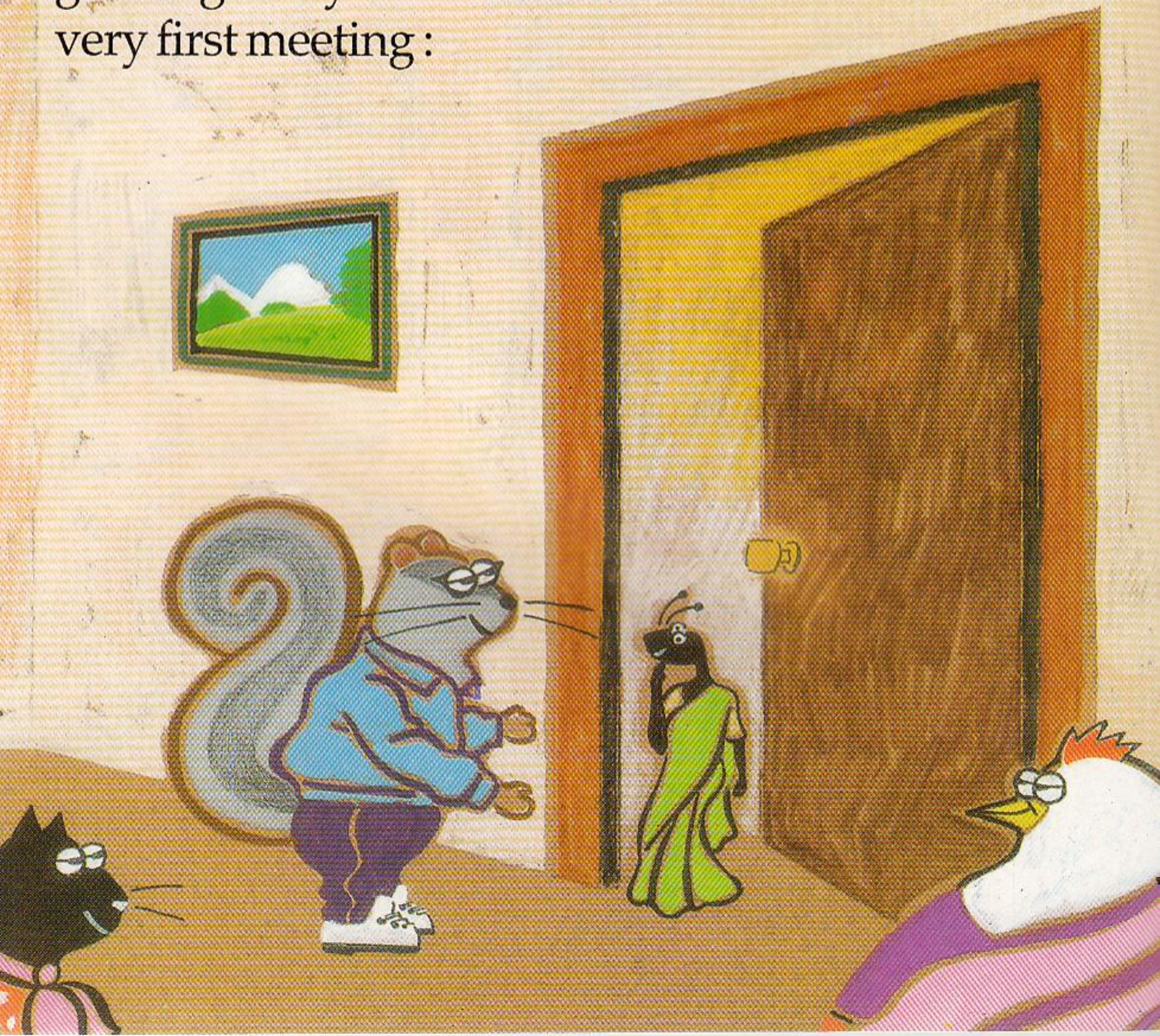
So, with paper and crayon
and a nail, slightly bent
they hung up a sign
"A Flat for Rent"



From all over the town they began to arrive to see the apartment on floor number five.

First, came an ant. With keys in hand and hardly a sound she opened the door and looked around.

Everyone came with a smile and a greeting. They tried to be nice at this very first meeting :



"Do you like the rooms?"

"Yes, I do."

"Do you like the kitchen?"

"It looks so new."

"Do you like the hallway?"

"I like that, too."

"Then of course, you'll stay!"

"No, no, no!"

"Why not?"

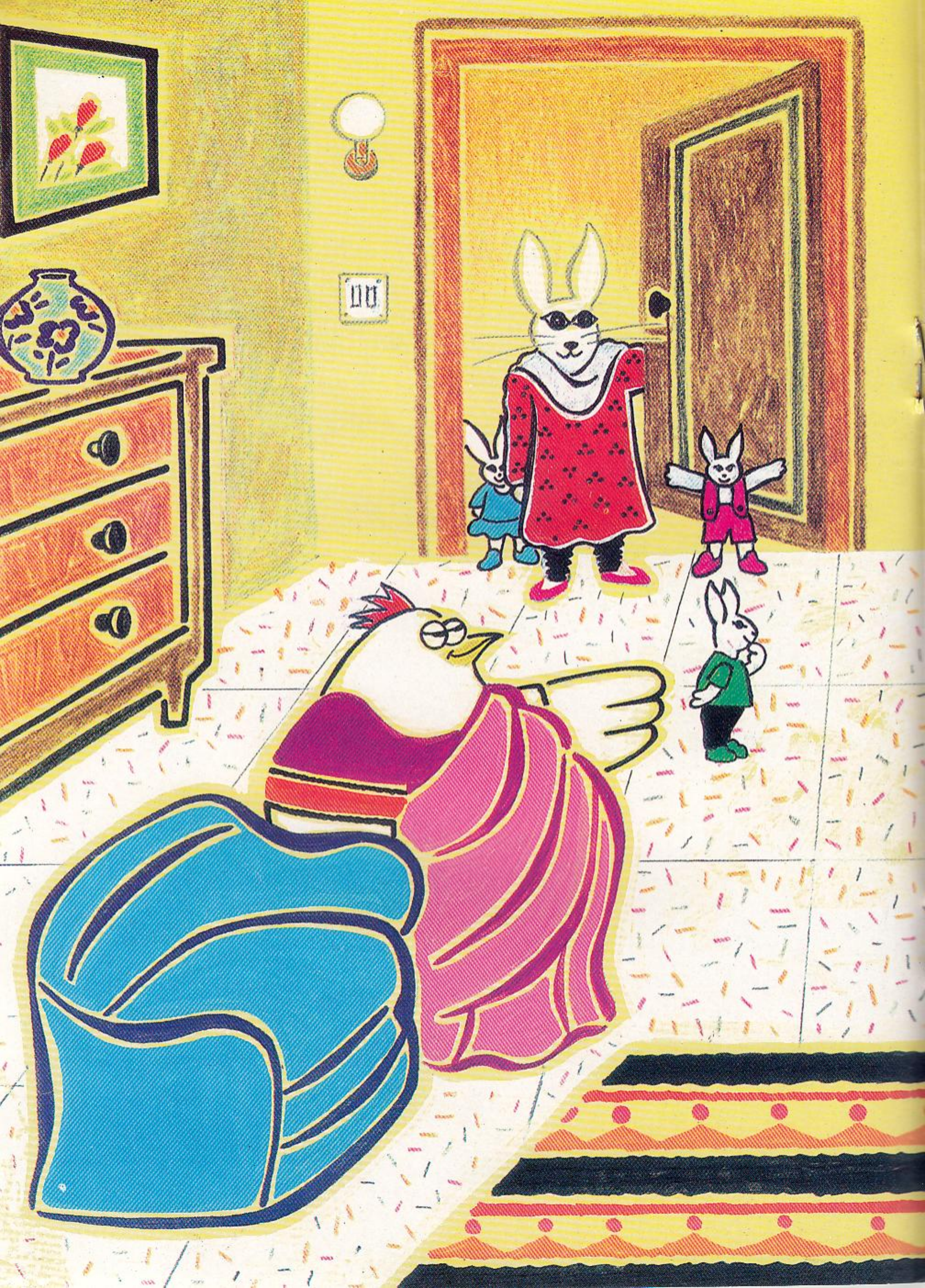
The ant explained:

"I don't like the neighbours. I'm always so busy and running like crazy. How can I live near a hen who's so lazy?"

She's at home all day long, never leaving her bed, hardly able to walk, she's so very well fed."

What an awful thing to say!

And the ant...went away.



Next came a rabbit
with children a-plenty.
How many were there?
May be fifteen or twenty.
She hopped up the stairs and
with hardly a sound,
just opened the door and
looked around.

Everyone came with a smile
and a greeting. They tried
to be nice at this very
first meeting.

"Do you like the rooms?"

"Yes, I do."

"Do you like the kitchen?"

"It looks so new."



"Do you like the hallway?"

"I like that, too."

"Then of course, you'll stay!"

"No, no, no!"

"Why not?"

I don't like the neighbours.

To live near the cuckoo

Would make me upset.

She can't even find all her children,

I'll bet. That's not what I want

all my bunnies to see.

I love all my children

and keep them near me."

What an awful thing to say!

And the rabbit...went away.

Next came a pig. He noticed the sign

and thought to himself,

"This might suit me just fine."



He rolled up the stairs and with hardly a sound.

Just opened the door and looked around.

Everyone came with a smile and a greeting. They tried to be nice at this very first meeting.

"Do you like the rooms?"

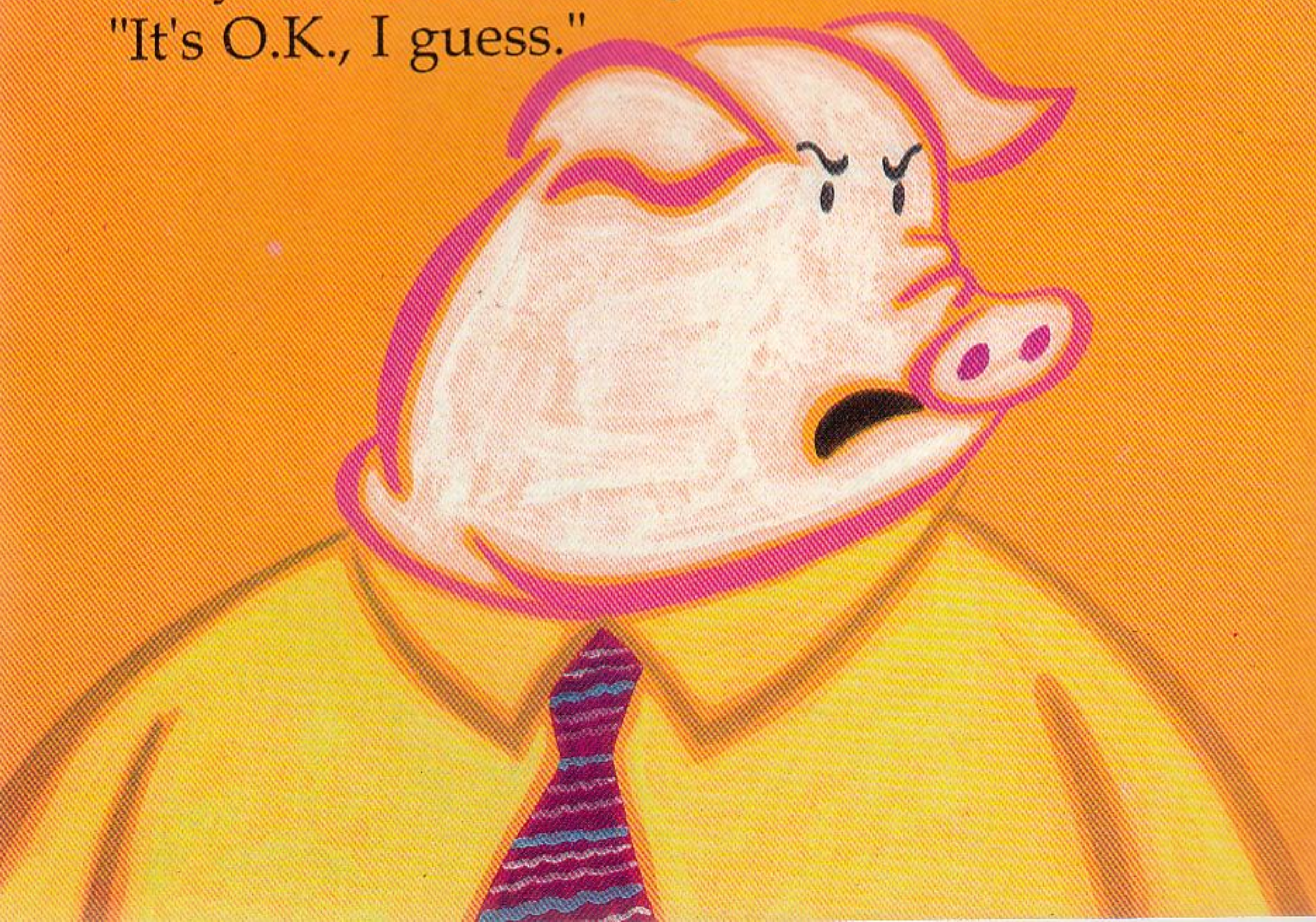
"Oh yes, Oh yes!"

"Do you like the kitchen?"

"I'd like more of a mess."

"Do you like the hallway?"

"It's O.K., I guess."



"Then of course, you'll stay!"

"No, No, No!"

"Why not?"

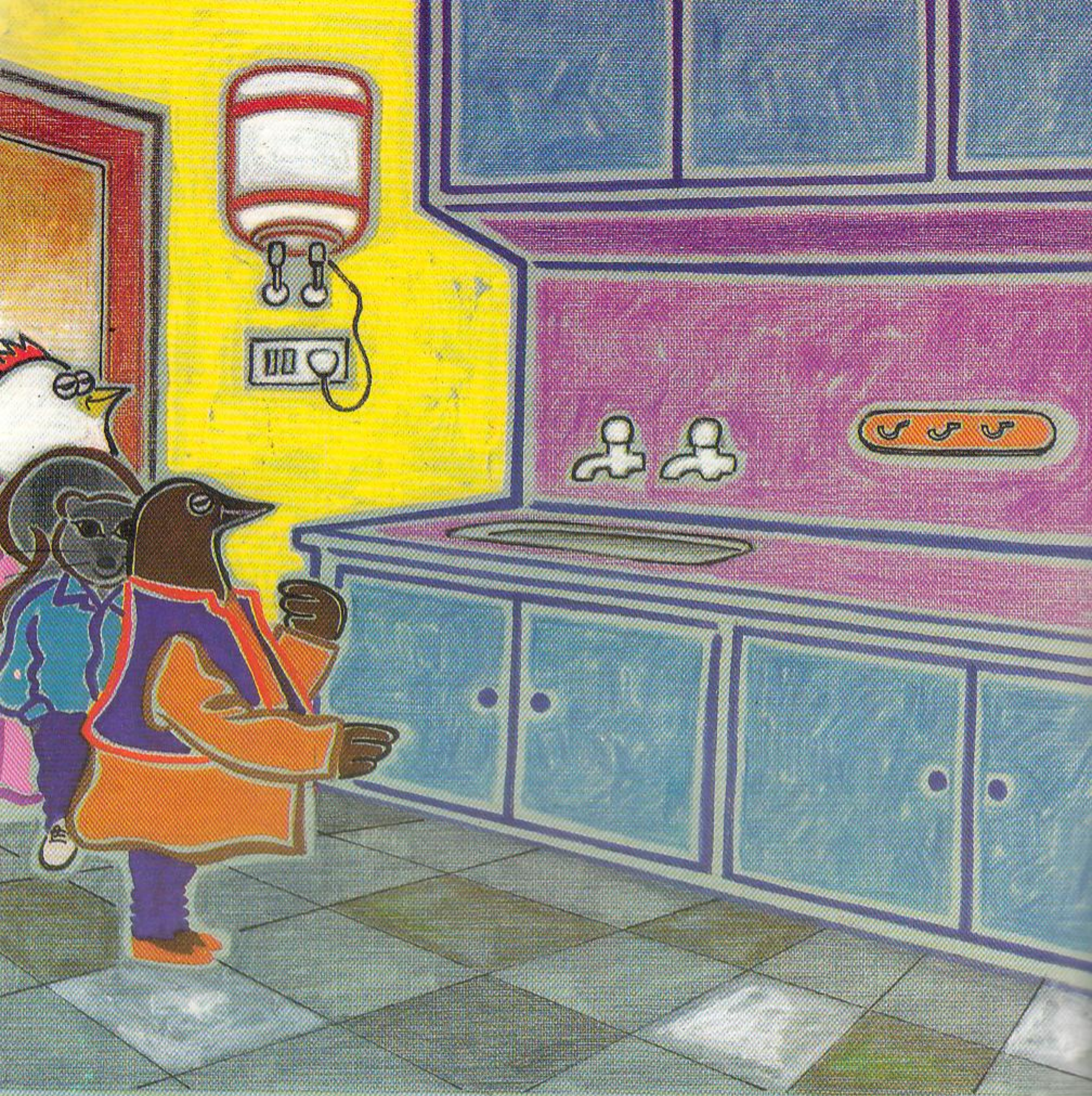
"I don't like the neighbours. Look at my skin, it's so pure and so white. Now look at that cat who's as black as the night. I can't share a roof with a creature so low. If I move in here, then she'll have to go!"

The poor cat was shocked.
All the neighbours were, too.

"You don't want us, Pig
and we don't want you!
Now get out of here
without further delay!"

And the rude pig... went away.





Next came a nightingale with a voice
oh, so sweet.
He sang as he flew up the stairs.
What a treat!

He opened the door and with hardly a sound.

Just stepped inside and looked around.

Everyone came with a smile and a greeting.

They tried to be nice at this very first meeting:

"Do you like the rooms?"

"Mmmm...yes!"

"Do you like the kitchen?"

"Mmmm...yes!"

"Then of course, you'll stay!"

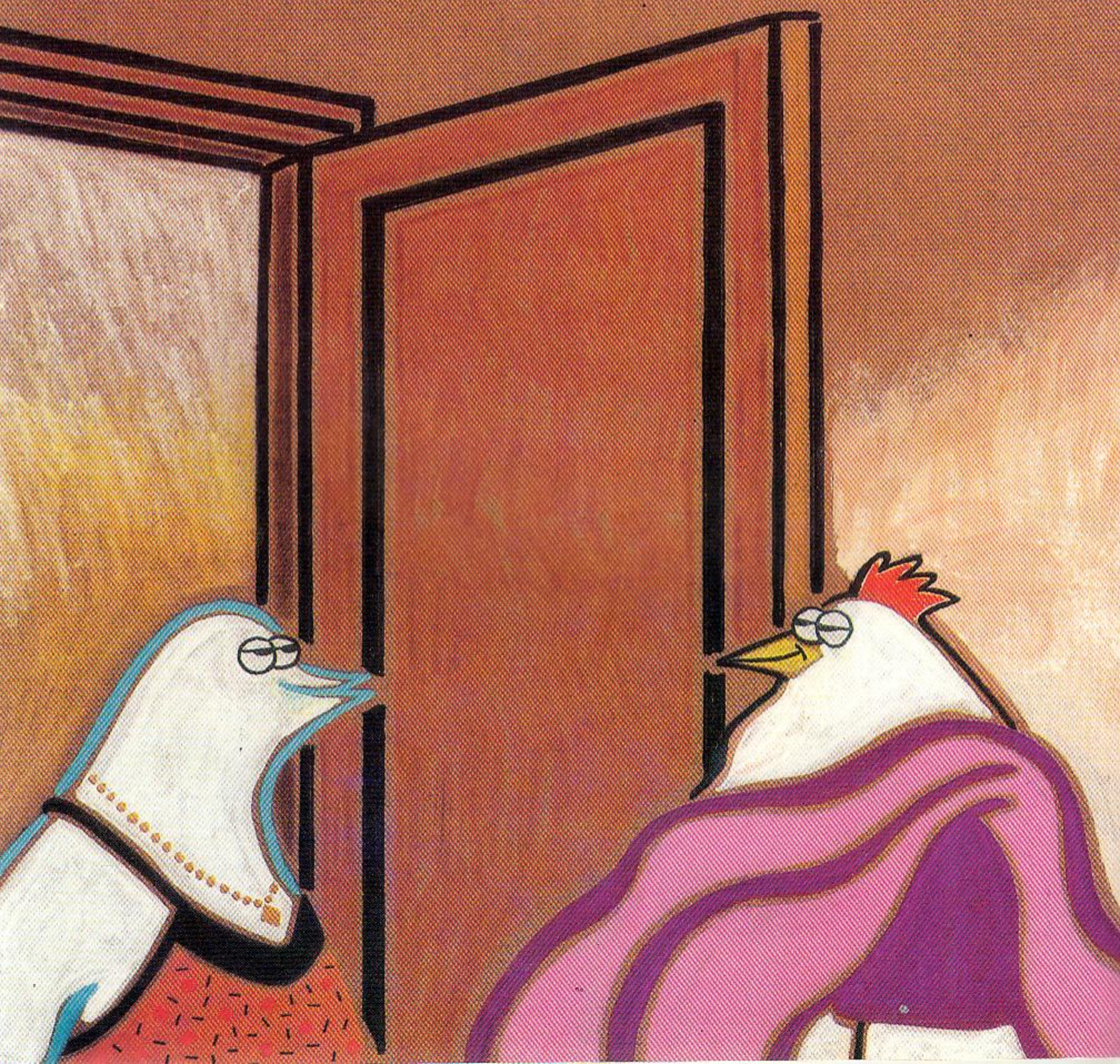
"No I won't stay. I don't like the neighbours.

The squirrel cracks nuts from morning 'till night.

It makes such a racket.

It's really not right.

What would I hear when I open the door? A deafening noise and thundering roar! I need to hear music so sweet and so clear and such noise is not good for my sensitive ear."



Next came a dove,
as polite as you please.
She flew up the stairs
with the greatest of ease.
She opened the door and with hardly
a sound just stepped inside and
looked around.

Everyone came with a smile and a
greeting.
They tried to be nice at this very first
meeting.

"Do you like the rooms?"
"They're very narrow."
"Do you like the kitchen?"
"Its not very roomy."





"Do you like the hallway?"

"It's dark and it's gloomy."

Then of course, you won't stay!"

"Oh, but I will! This apartment's just

right and having such
neighbours will
be a delight.

The hen has such a
beautiful crown.

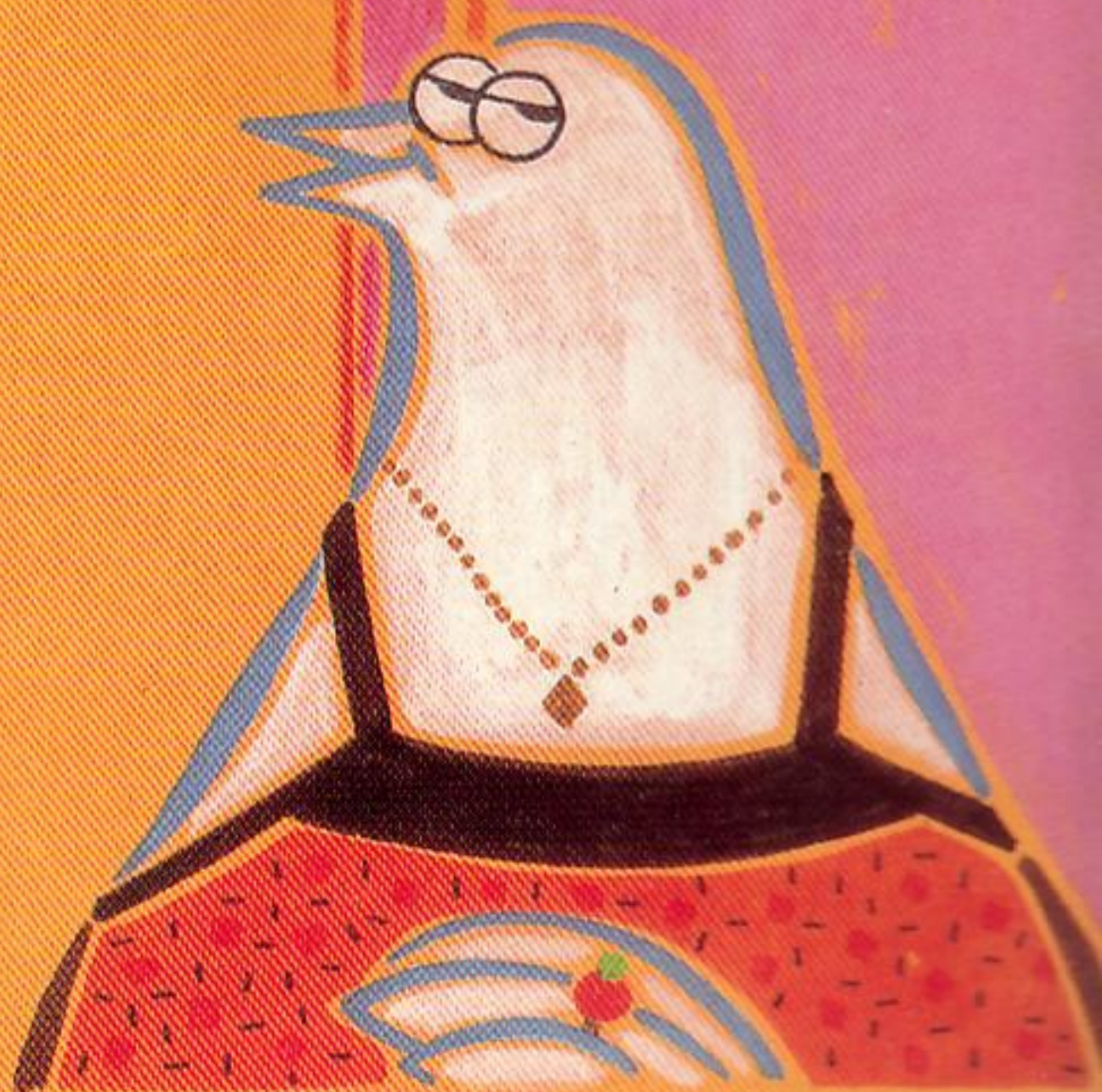
And the cuckoo's the
loveliest bird in town.

The cat's black coat
is shiny and bright.

And the fun-loving
squirrel cracks
nuts day and night.

It seems to me
we can all live together.

As good friends and
neighbours in all
kinds of weather."



So the dove moved in.
The apartment's just fine.
She hums and she coos
nearly all of the time.

At the edge of a valley
so quiet and pretty.
Stands a five-storey
building far
away from the city.

There the cuckoo and
squirrel, the hen,
cat and dove,
live together in peace,
in friendship and love.





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