



Embarking on a trip across the sea always got Trevi's blood pumping. There was a thrill of excitement in the air, and she knew this would be a trip filled with surprises. Their family trips always were.

Leaning over the railing of the long freighter ship, Trevi turned to her brother, Sphinx. They giggled with excitement as they turned back to gaze at the turbulent waters of the vast ocean.

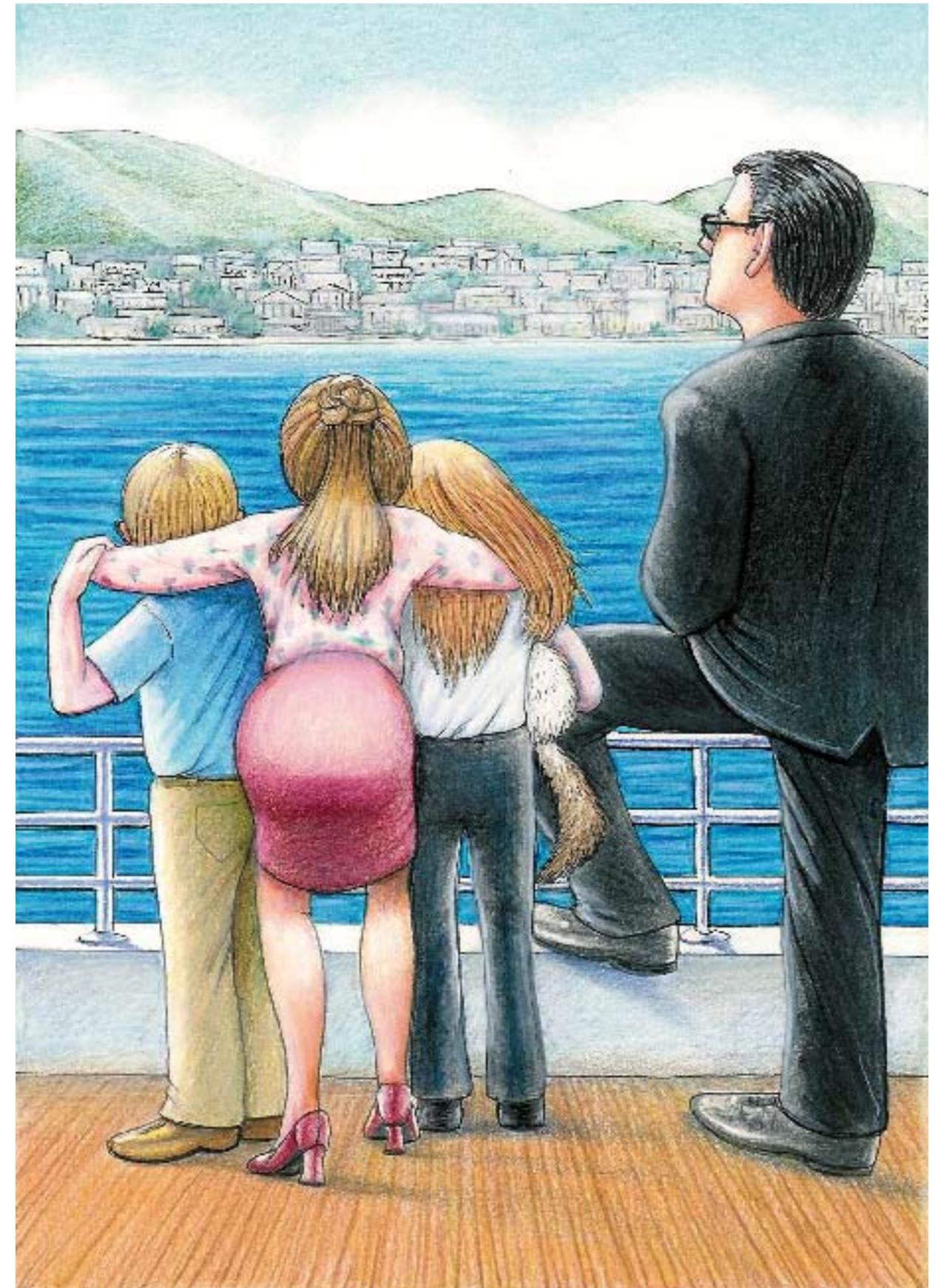
While Daddy was off at an archeological expedition this spring, Mommy had thought it would be lovely to take the children to Spain. Sphinx and Trevi were excited because trips with Mommy were filled with wonder and enchantment as they explored history and culture all over the world. Mommy thought a trip to explore the culture of Spain would be just the thing to expand the horizons of her children.

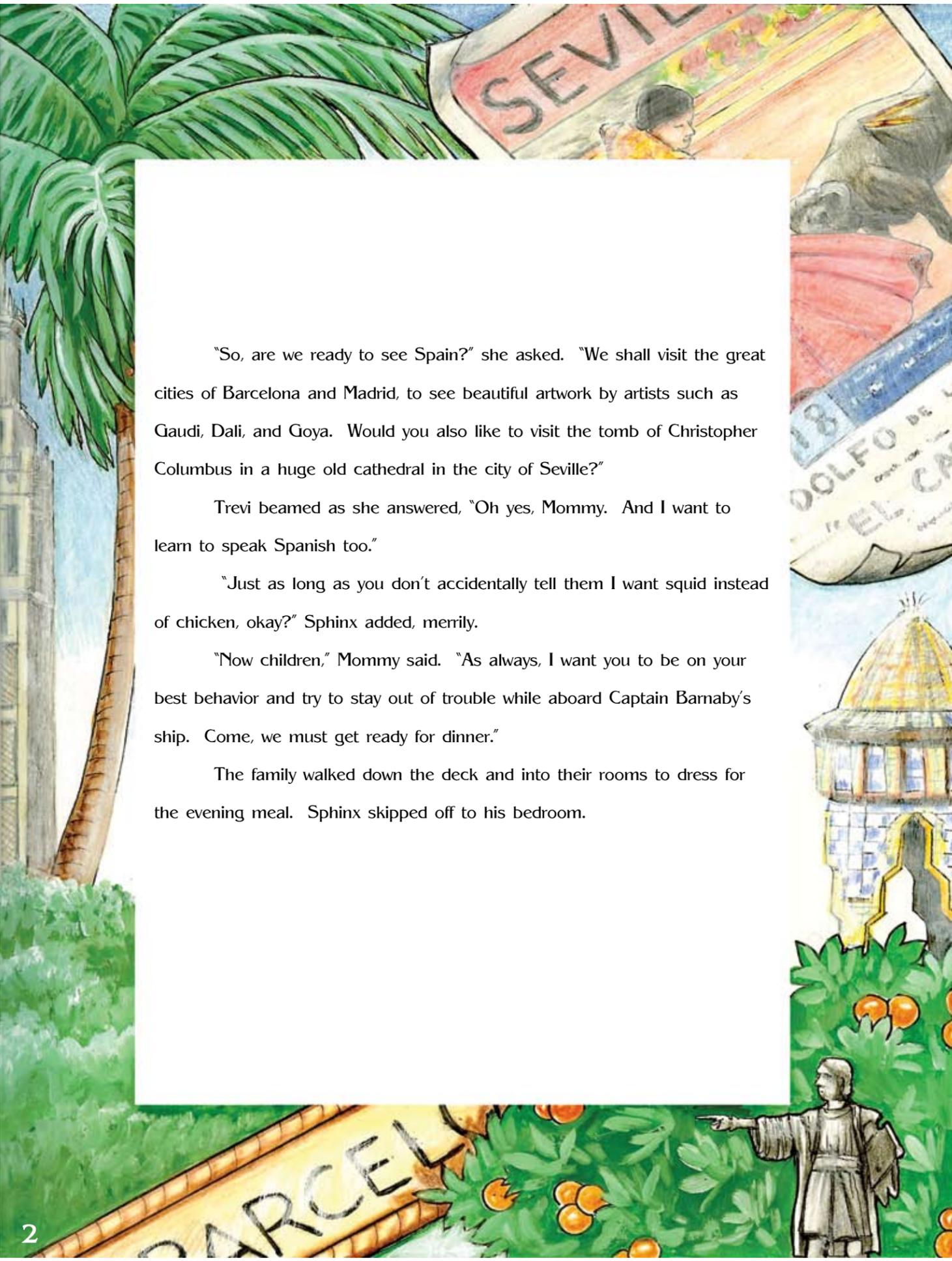
Mommy and Daddy spent as much time with Sphinx and Trevi as possible. But when the world sped up too fast to allow a break, the Monje family acquired the assistance of Marseille — a French kick boxer who retired young after an especially excruciating fight in a Chinese kickboxing ring. Marseille did not mind the career change from ex-fighter to bodyguard. He had even spent some time as a stunt man in Hollywood movies. The Monje children were special to him, and treated Marseille like family. A trip without him just wasn't complete.

Marseille was especially helpful to Mommy when Daddy was away on one of his archaeological digs. Then Marseille's help was invaluable to her, because he knew how to care for children who were as filled with energy and spirit as Sphinx and Trevi were.

As a special treat, Mommy had let the children bring along their beloved cat, Nefertiti, knowing that Marseille would help care for the cat on the long ocean journey.

Mommy came up from behind them and hugged her two children, as they peered out at the ocean.





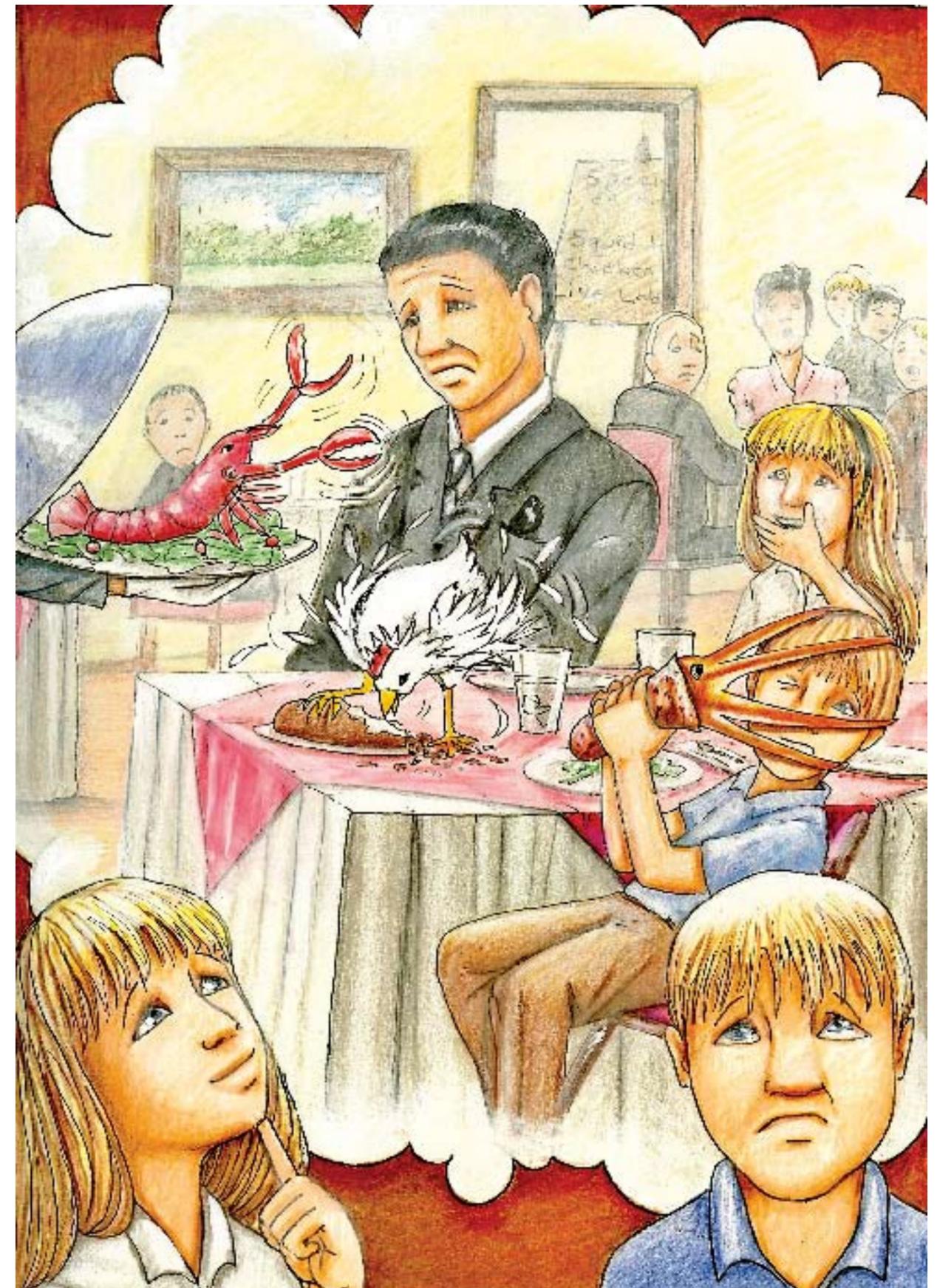
"So, are we ready to see Spain?" she asked. "We shall visit the great cities of Barcelona and Madrid, to see beautiful artwork by artists such as Gaudi, Dali, and Goya. Would you also like to visit the tomb of Christopher Columbus in a huge old cathedral in the city of Seville?"

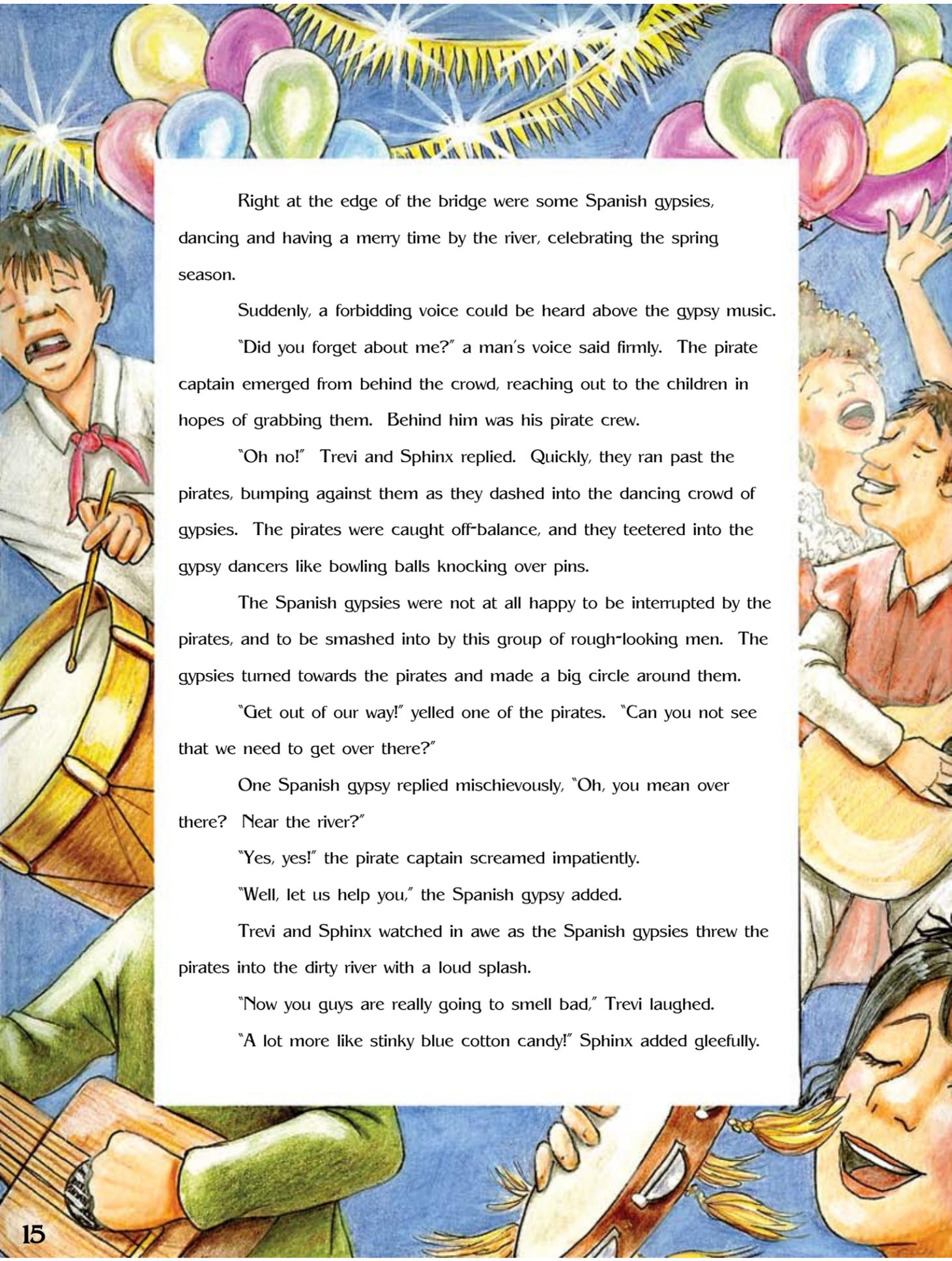
Trevi beamed as she answered, "Oh yes, Mommy. And I want to learn to speak Spanish too."

"Just as long as you don't accidentally tell them I want squid instead of chicken, okay?" Sphinx added, merrily.

"Now children," Mommy said. "As always, I want you to be on your best behavior and try to stay out of trouble while aboard Captain Barnaby's ship. Come, we must get ready for dinner."

The family walked down the deck and into their rooms to dress for the evening meal. Sphinx skipped off to his bedroom.



A colorful illustration of a festival scene. On the left, a boy in a white shirt with a red bow tie is playing a large drum. On the right, a girl with a yellow headscarf is playing a guitar. The background is filled with colorful balloons (yellow, purple, green, blue) and a string of yellow starburst decorations. The scene is set outdoors, possibly near a river as mentioned in the text.

Right at the edge of the bridge were some Spanish gypsies, dancing and having a merry time by the river, celebrating the spring season.

Suddenly, a forbidding voice could be heard above the gypsy music.

"Did you forget about me?" a man's voice said firmly. The pirate captain emerged from behind the crowd, reaching out to the children in hopes of grabbing them. Behind him was his pirate crew.

"Oh no!" Trevi and Sphinx replied. Quickly, they ran past the pirates, bumping against them as they dashed into the dancing crowd of gypsies. The pirates were caught off-balance, and they teetered into the gypsy dancers like bowling balls knocking over pins.

The Spanish gypsies were not at all happy to be interrupted by the pirates, and to be smashed into by this group of rough-looking men. The gypsies turned towards the pirates and made a big circle around them.

"Get out of our way!" yelled one of the pirates. "Can you not see that we need to get over there?"

One Spanish gypsy replied mischievously, "Oh, you mean over there? Near the river?"

"Yes, yes!" the pirate captain screamed impatiently.

"Well, let us help you," the Spanish gypsy added.

Trevi and Sphinx watched in awe as the Spanish gypsies threw the pirates into the dirty river with a loud splash.

"Now you guys are really going to smell bad," Trevi laughed.

"A lot more like stinky blue cotton candy!" Sphinx added gleefully.

