

“Latin American Trickster Tales”

A literature-based curriculum unit
with Internet connections



Spirit Games

Juan Bobo and the Cooking Pot

The Shifty Seamstress

This unit includes:

- Black-and-white copy masters for creating your own picturebooks
- Sites with hyper-linked picture dictionaries and full-color illustrations
 - Geographical and cultural connections with realia
 - Pre-reading, reading and post-reading activities
 - Culminating project ideas and suggestions

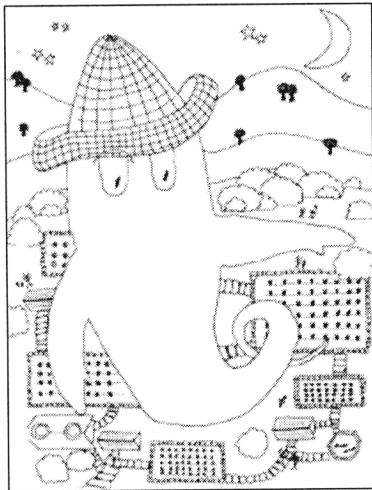
by **Lori Langer de Ramirez, Ed.D.**

Latin American Trickster Tales

Curriculum Suggestions

Introduction

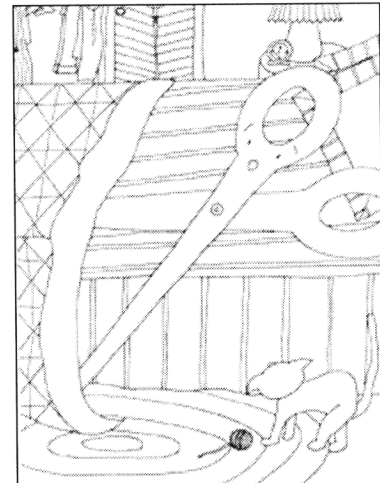
The stories in this unit are trickster tales (one of the characters plays tricks on other characters in the story). The main themes that might be explored in a curriculum unit linked to these tales are: tricks, right and wrong, laziness, punishments, and Latin America (Argentina, Colombia and Puerto Rico).



In "**Spirit Games**" (Colombia), the main character can change form in order to fool people into thinking he's just like them. If you're a child, he comes to you in the form of a child. He is a playful spirit, whose games are not so enjoyable for his human playmates.



In "**Juan Bobo and the Cooking Pot**" (Puerto Rico), Juan Bobo does anything to get out of having to do work. When his mother asks him to borrow a cooking pot so she can make his favorite dinner, he obliges her, but ends up acting foolish and getting out of future chores.



In "**The Shifty Seamstress**" (Argentina), the main character steals clothes from her customers. She shows no regret or remorse, until she is taught a good lesson and suffers the unusual punishment of being turned into a pair of scissors.

Story #1: “Spirit Games”



Vocabulary:

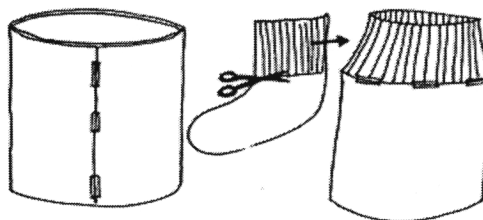
1. Copy the vocabulary cards onto card stock and cut each one out. Have students (or pairs of students) illustrate each vocabulary word in the space provided (Note: there are blank vocabulary cards available for you to add vocabulary words to the list if needed).

- capture (to): to trap; to hold captive
- character (a/the): a person or animal in a story
- get ready (to): to prepare yourself for something
- gift (a/the): a present
- hilarious: very funny
- human being (a/the): a person
- impressive: striking; very good
- jewel (a/the): something valuable
- kid (a/the): a child; a teenager
- passtime (a/the): a hobby
- set a trap (to): to make a trap
- sweet: melodious, nice
- transform (to): to change
- trick (to): to play a joke on someone

2. Pre-teach the vocabulary by using a magic box*.

- Place the vocabulary cards into the magic box.
- Ask for volunteers to pull the cards from the magic box.
- As each card is pulled from the box, ask students to act out the vocabulary word.

***Make a magic box:** Cover an oatmeal container or other cylindrical container with colored or contact paper. Attach the top part of a large sock or leg warmer to the top portion of the container. Decorate.





Pre-reading activities:

1. Have students read the introduction and discuss the origin of the story.



Weblink: *You can have students read the introduction on the website. Have them follow these links: www.miscositas.com/spirit.html*


2. Divide the students into pair groups. Provide each pair with three black-and-white illustrations and three text pages from the story. Ask the students to try to match the text with the pictures.



Reading:

Copy the story text and illustrations for your students. You might want to create a booklet with the pages by photocopying the image on the left and the story on the right.



Weblink: *You can have students read the story on the website: www.miscositas.com/spirit1.html (click  through the story)*

SPIRIT GAMES Story text:

- 1) In Colombia there is a spirit who transforms himself into different characters.
2. If you're a kid, he'll change himself into the nicest kid around just to be your friend.
3. If you're an adult, he'll change himself into the most impressive adult around, just to be your friend.
4. If you like music, he'll sing sweet songs and play the guitar for you.
5. If you like the finer things in life, he'll give you gifts of elegant clothes and jewels.
6. The spirit loves to play games, but his favorite passtimes are no fun for human beings.
7. He loves to set traps for kids and capture them. He thinks it's pretty funny.
8. He loves to trick adults and confuse them. He thinks it's really hilarious.

9. Get ready! Maybe the spirit will try to trick you one day!



Post-reading activities:

1. Check for understanding by asking comprehension questions:
 - How does the spirit convince people that he's a friend?
[he appears to each person in a familiar form]
 - What are some of the spirit's favorite games?
[he likes to trap people and confuse them]
 - Why do you think that the author warns the reader to "get ready"? *[because the spirit might try to trick the reader one day]*
2. Discuss the story with students by asking their opinions about the events:
 - Is the spirit bad or good?
 - Why do you think that the spirit gives gifts to adults and sings to children?
 - Would you like to meet the spirit? Why, or why not?

Story #2: "Juan Bobo and the Cooking Pot"



Vocabulary:

1. Copy the vocabulary cards onto card stock and cut each one out. Have students illustrate each vocabulary word in the space provided (Note: there are blank vocabulary cards available for you to add vocabulary words to the list if needed).
 - big, bigger, biggest: opposite of small, smaller, smallest
 - careless: not careful
 - chore (a/the): something you have to do; a small task
 - favor (a/the): something you do to help someone
 - ground (the): the earth or the floor

- grumble (to): to complain
- heavy: weighing a lot; hard to carry
- huge: very big
- kick (to): to hit something with your foot
- lazy: not wanting to work
- lend (to): to give to someone for a short time
- mad: angry
- piece (a/the): a small portion of the whole
- rest (to): to relax and do no work
- right away: immediately; now
- saying (a/the): a proverb
- sweetheart:: darling; dear
- worn out: very tired; exhausted

2. Pre-teach the vocabulary by using the cards as flash cards.



Pre-reading activities:

1. Have students read the introduction and discuss the origin of the story.



Weblink: You can have students read the introduction on the website:
www.miscositas.com/pot.html


2. Divide students into small groups. Have the students predict the story by arranging the black-and-white illustrations into the correct order. Ask one member of each group to tell their version of the story to the class. Vote on whose version of the story might be right.



Reading:

Copy the story text and illustrations for your students. You might want to create a booklet with the pages by photocopying the text and pictures so that the image is on the left and the story on the right.



Weblink: You can have students read the story on the website: www.miscositas.com/pot1.html
(click  through the story)

JUAN BOBO AND THE COOKING POT Story text:

- 1) Everyone in town knew Juan Bobo. He was so lazy that he would always hide from his chores. One day, his mother needed his help...
- 2) Juan's mother called him: "Juan, come here!", but Juan didn't come. She called him again: "Juan, sweetheart!" but Juan still didn't come. Finally she shouted: "Juan, I'm making your favorite soup!" Sure enough, Juan came running.
- 3) Juan's mother needed a bigger cooking pot for the soup. So she sent Juan to Doña Clarina's house to borrow the biggest pot she had.
- 4) Juan grumbled all the way to Doña Clarina's house. When he got there, he was worn out and tired. He asked for the pot for his mother.
- 5) "O.K., Juan", said Doña Clarina. "I'll lend you my pot. But be careful with it." Doña Clarina was worried because she knew how careless Juan could be.
- 6) Juan started to walk home with the pot. He got tired right away because the pot was so big and heavy.
- 7) Juan stopped to rest. He remembered a saying that said: "everything with legs can walk." "What could that mean?" Juan asked himself. "Cats have legs... and THEY walk. Dogs have legs... and THEY walk."
- 8) Juan looked at the pot and counted: "One, two, three. This pot has three legs - I bet it can walk!" Juan put the pot on the ground and waited. Nothing happened. He waited some more. Nothing happened.
- 9) When Juan saw that the pot wouldn't move, he got mad and kicked it as hard as he could.
- 10) The pot broke into two big pieces! Since that day, Doña Clarina won't lend anything to Juan Bobo and his Mom doesn't ask him for any more favors.



Post-reading activities:

1. Check for understanding by asking comprehension questions:

- Why did Juan finally answer his mom's calls?
[his mother said she was making his favorite soup]
- Why did Juan think that the pot could walk?
[because it had three legs and things with legs can walk]
- How did Juan break Doña Clarina's pot? *[Juan kicked it]*

2. Discuss the story with students by asking their opinions about the events:

- Is Juan foolish or smart? Why do you think so?
- Why do you think that Juan got so angry?
- Is it fair that now Juan doesn't have to do any more favors for his mother? Why or why not?

Story #3: "The Shifty Seamstress"



Vocabulary:

1. Copy the vocabulary cards onto card stock and cut each one out. Have students (or pairs of students) illustrate each vocabulary word in the space provided (Note: there are blank vocabulary cards available for you to add vocabulary words to the list if needed).

- deed (a/the): an act or action
- mistreat (to): to treat badly
- punishment (a/the): something done as a result of bad behavior
- seamstress (a/the): a woman who sews clothes

2. Pre-teach the vocabulary by asking students to predict each word based on the accompanying illustrations.



Pre-reading activities:

1. Have students read the introduction and discuss the origin of the story.



Weblink: You can have students read the introduction on the website:
www.miscositas.com/seamstress.html


2. Show students the illustration from the story. In a round, ask each student to describe one thing they see in the picture.



Reading:

Copy the story text and illustrations for your students. You might want to create a booklet with the pages by photocopying the text and pictures so that the image is on the left and the story on the right.



Weblink: You can have students read the story on the website: www.miscositas.com/seamstress1.html
(click  through the story)

THE SHIFTY SEAMSTRESS Story text:

There once lived a seamstress who mistreated her costumers. One day she stole a beautiful dress from a poor old woman. The next day the seamstress woke up and felt her legs hard and shiny. As punishment for her bad deeds, she was changed into a pair of scissors!



Post-reading activities:

1. Check for understanding by asking comprehension questions:
 - How did the seamstress mistreat people? [*she stole their clothes*]
 - What was the poor old woman's dress like? [*it was beautiful*]
 - What did the seamstress turn into? [*a pair of scissors*]

2. Discuss the story with students by asking their opinions about the events:

- Was it fair what happened to the seamstress?
- Why do you think that the seamstress turned into a pair of scissors?
- Is it ever acceptable to steal? Explain your answer.

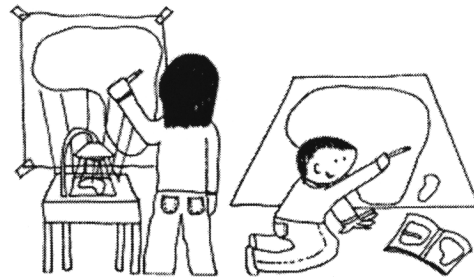


Culminating activity suggestions:

1. Have each student choose four black-line drawings from their favorite story. Ask them to color them and arrange them onto a piece of oak tag to create their own short story. After a rough draft on scrap paper, they can write their text directly onto the oak tag below the drawings and put a title to the story above.
2. Have students write and illustrate original trickster tales.
3. Ask students to find more trickster tales from different Spanish-speaking countries. Have a “tell-off” in which students tell their stories to the class. Using a floor map of Latin America*, have students tell their story standing on their story’s country of origin.

***How to make a floor map**

Using a shower curtain liner, trace the shape of Latin America freehand, or project the image onto the sheet using an overhead projector and trace. Be sure to use permanent markers!



4. Take a “fantasy trip” to the countries of origin of the three stories. Use the realia provided as you “visit” sites of interest.



Weblink: You can have students view the realia on the website: www.miscositas.com/colombiarealia.html and www.miscositas.com/cariberealia.html

Vocabulary Cards

VOCABULARY CARDS – *Latin American Trickster Tales*

<p><u>capture (to):</u> to trap; to hold captive</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”</i></p>	<p><u>character (a/the):</u> a person or animal in a story</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”</i></p>
<p><u>get ready (to):</u> to prepare yourself for something</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”</i></p>	<p><u>gift (a/the):</u> a present</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”</i></p>
<p><u>hilarious:</u> very funny</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”</i></p>	<p><u>human being (a/the):</u> a person</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”</i></p>
<p><u>impressive:</u> striking; very good</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”</i></p>	<p><u>jewel (a/the):</u> something valuable</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”</i></p>

VOCABULARY CARDS – *Latin American Trickster Tales*

kid (a/the):
a child; a teenager

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”

passtime (a/the):
a hobby

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”

set a trap (to):
to make a trap

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”

sweet:
melodious, nice

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”

transform (to):
to change

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”

trick (to):
to play a joke on someone

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Spirit Games”

VOCABULARY CARDS – *Latin American Trickster Tales*

big, bigger, biggest:
opposite of small, smaller, smallest

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

careless:
not careful

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

chore (a/the): something you
have to do; a small task

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

favor (a/the): something you
do to help someone

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

ground (the):
the earth or the floor

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

grumble (to):
to complain

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

heavy:
weighing a lot; hard to carry

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

huge:
very big

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

VOCABULARY CARDS – *Latin American Trickster Tales*

<p><u>kick (to):</u> to hit something with your foot</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”</i></p>	<p><u>lazy:</u> not wanting to work</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”</i></p>
<p><u>lend (to):</u> to give to someone for a short time</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”</i></p>	<p><u>mad:</u> angry</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”</i></p>
<p><u>piece (a/the):</u> a small portion of the whole</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”</i></p>	<p><u>rest (to):</u> to relax and do no work</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”</i></p>
<p><u>right away:</u> immediately; now</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”</i></p>	<p><u>saying (a/the):</u> proverb</p> <p><i>Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”</i></p>

VOCABULARY CARDS – *Latin American Trickster Tales*

sweetheart::
darling; dear

worn out:
very tired; exhausted

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

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Latin American Trickster Tales – “Juan Bobo”

VOCABULARY CARDS – *Latin American Trickster Tales*

deed (a/the):
an act or action

Latin American Trickster Tales – “The Shifty Seamstress”

mistreat (to):
to treat badly

Latin American Trickster Tales – “The Shifty Seamstress”

punishment (a/the): something
done as a result of bad behavior

Latin American Trickster Tales – “The Shifty Seamstress”

seamstress (a/the):
a woman who sews clothes

Latin American Trickster Tales – “The Shifty Seamstress”

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Latin American Trickster Tales – “The Shifty Seamstress”

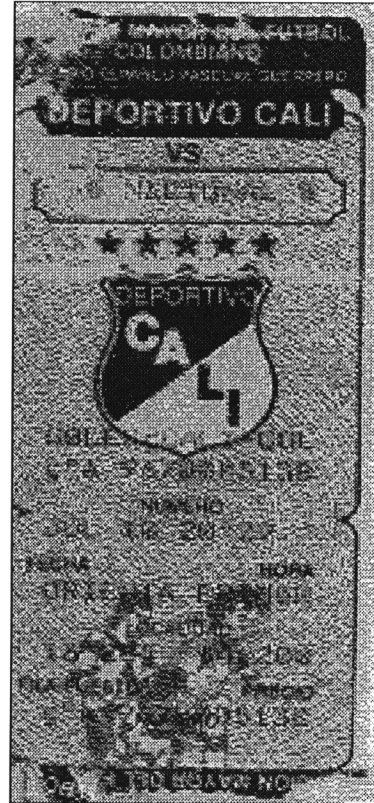
Latin American Trickster Tales – “The Shifty Seamstress”

Realia

REALIA – Latin American Trickster Tales

For color versions of this realia, visit
www.miscositas.com

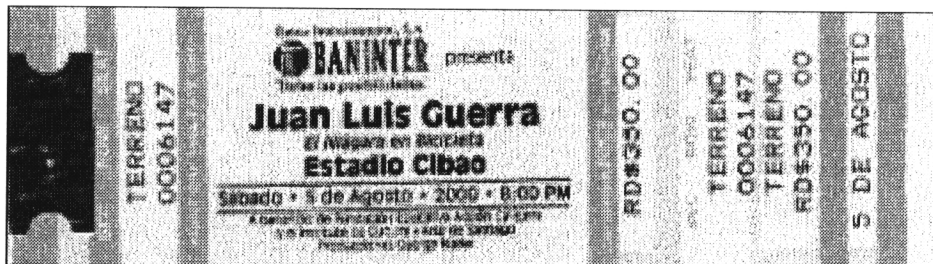
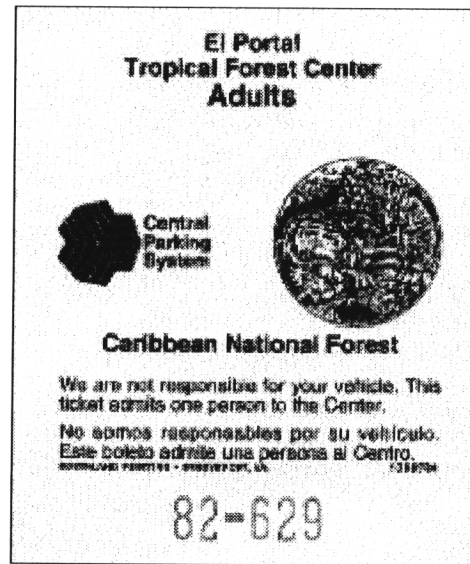
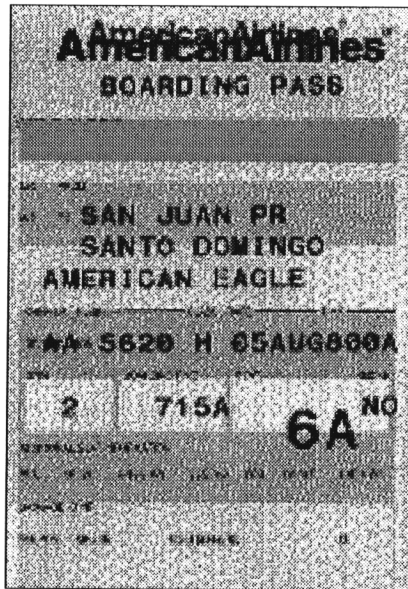
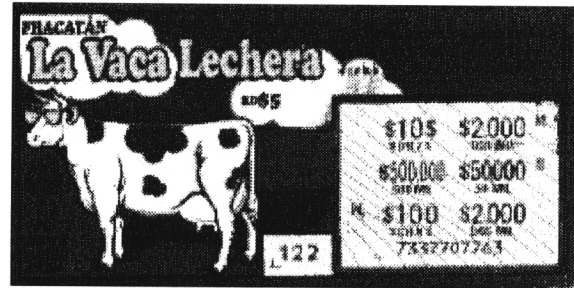
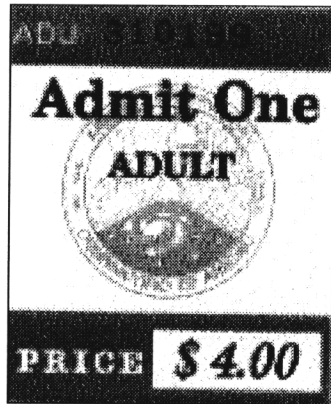
REALIA from COLOMBIA



REALIA – Latin American Trickster Tales

For color versions of this realia, visit
www.miscositas.com

REALIA from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic



REALIA – Latin American Trickster Tales

For color versions of this realia, visit
www.miscositas.com

REALIA from ARGENTINA

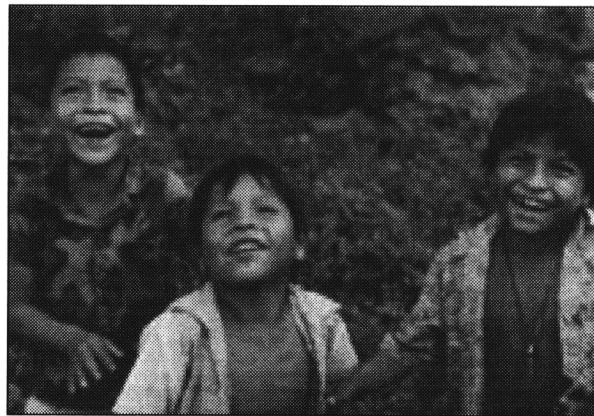
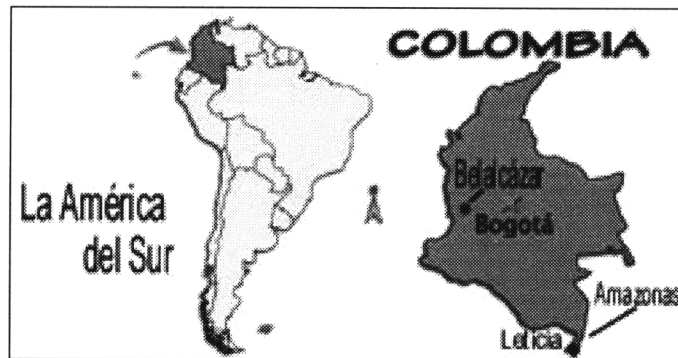
<p>PRESUPUESTO Menú a Bordo de Il Piccolo Vapore</p> <p>1er. Plato</p> <p>Asfinao IL PICCOLO VAPORE Fianfiras asfidos Ensalada Russa Galamars a la Provenzal Lengua a la Vinagreta Ensalada Primavera Berenjena en Escabeche</p> <p>2do. Plato</p> <p>Papas Caseras Espaguetis al Nuovo Tortallita</p> <p>3er. Plato</p> <p>Pollo al Horno con Papas Doradas</p> <p>Bebidas</p> <p>Vino y Soda</p> <p>Postre</p> <p>Helados mixtos</p>	<p>CENA - SHOW BAILABLE</p>  <p>Cantina Il Piccolo Vapore</p> <p>NECOCHEA 1100 Tel. 21-4455</p> <p>Un lugar diferente en la República de la Boca</p>
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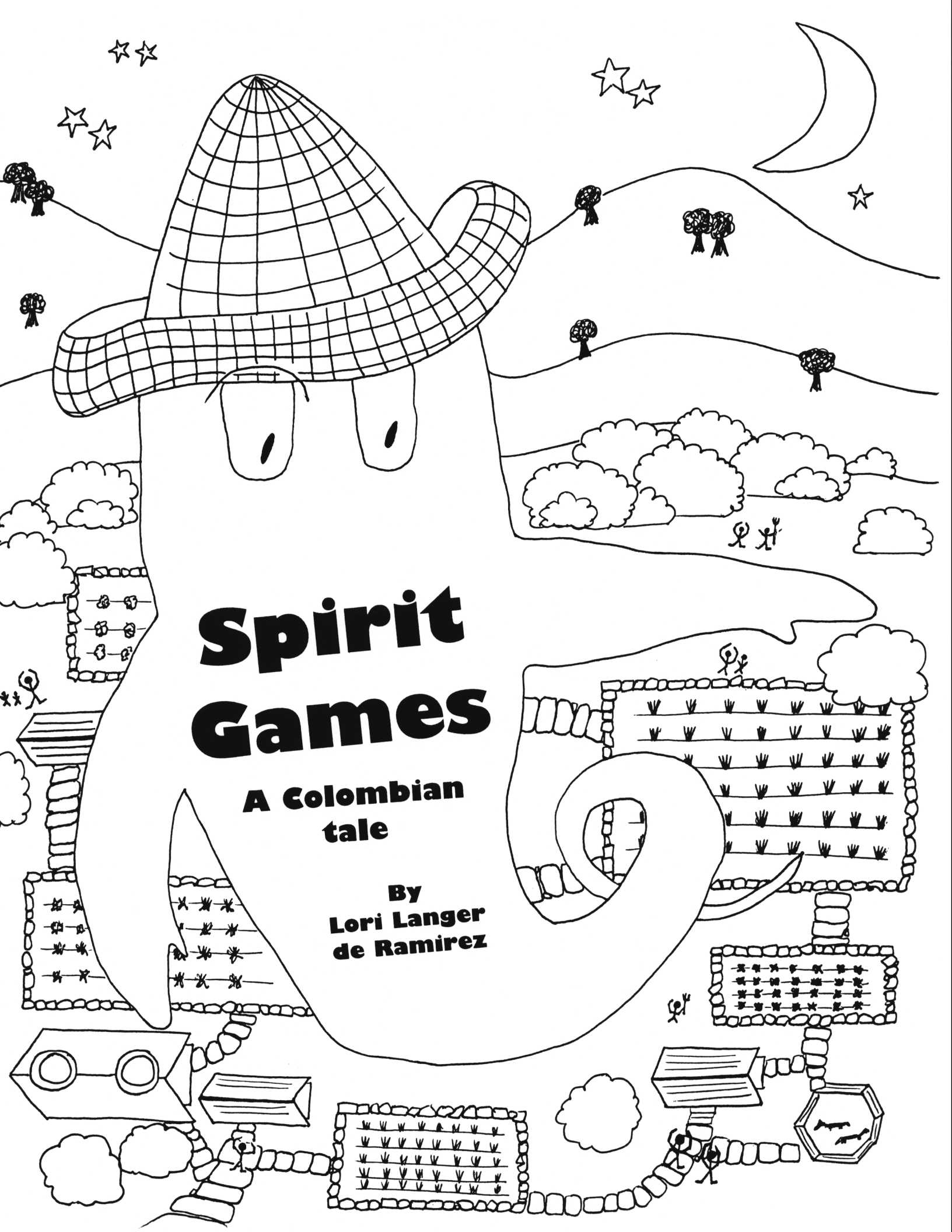
Copymasters

Introduction: "Spirit Games"

"Spirit Games" tells the story of a popular character from Colombian folklore.



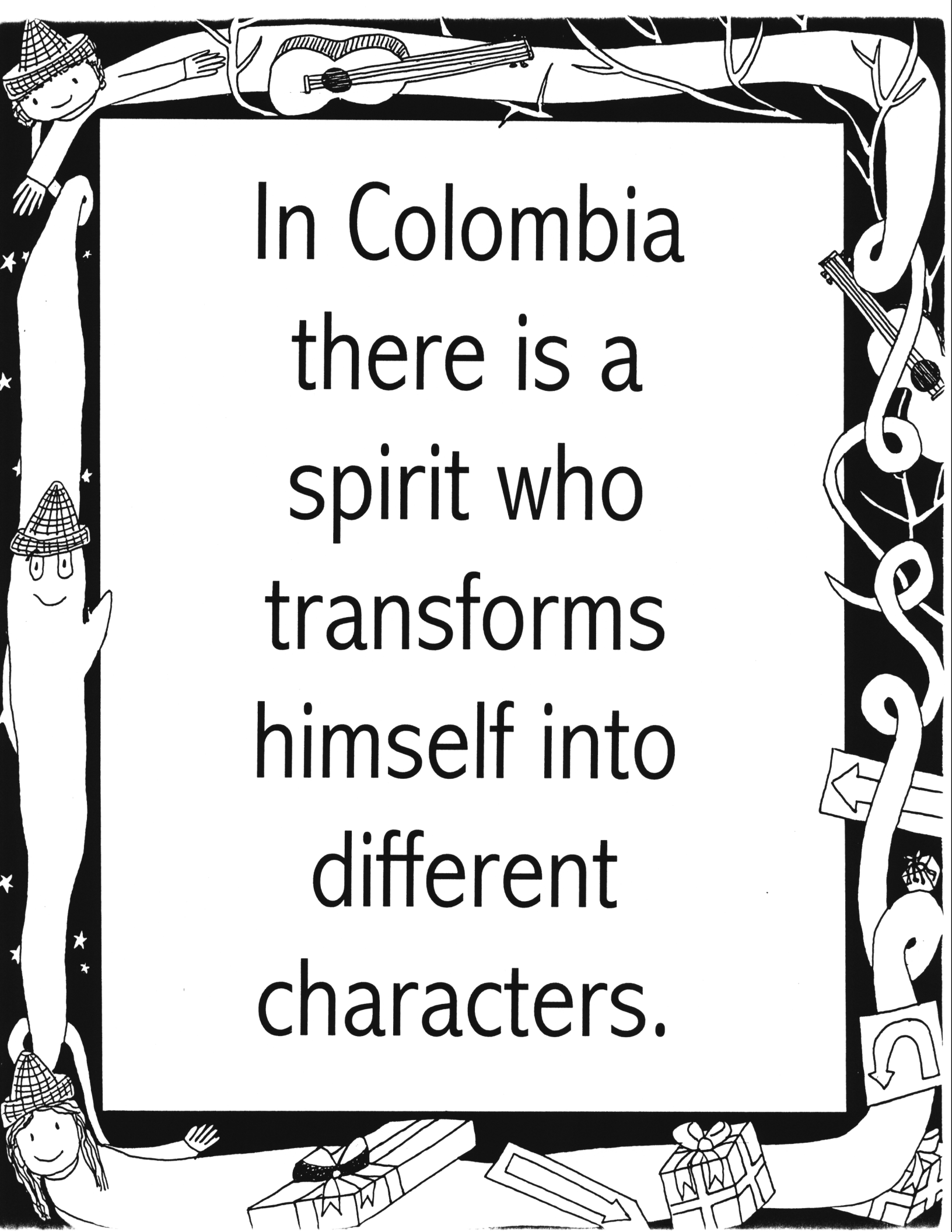
The spirit in the story has the power to change into different shapes and loves to play tricks. Do you know anyone who likes to play jokes on other people?



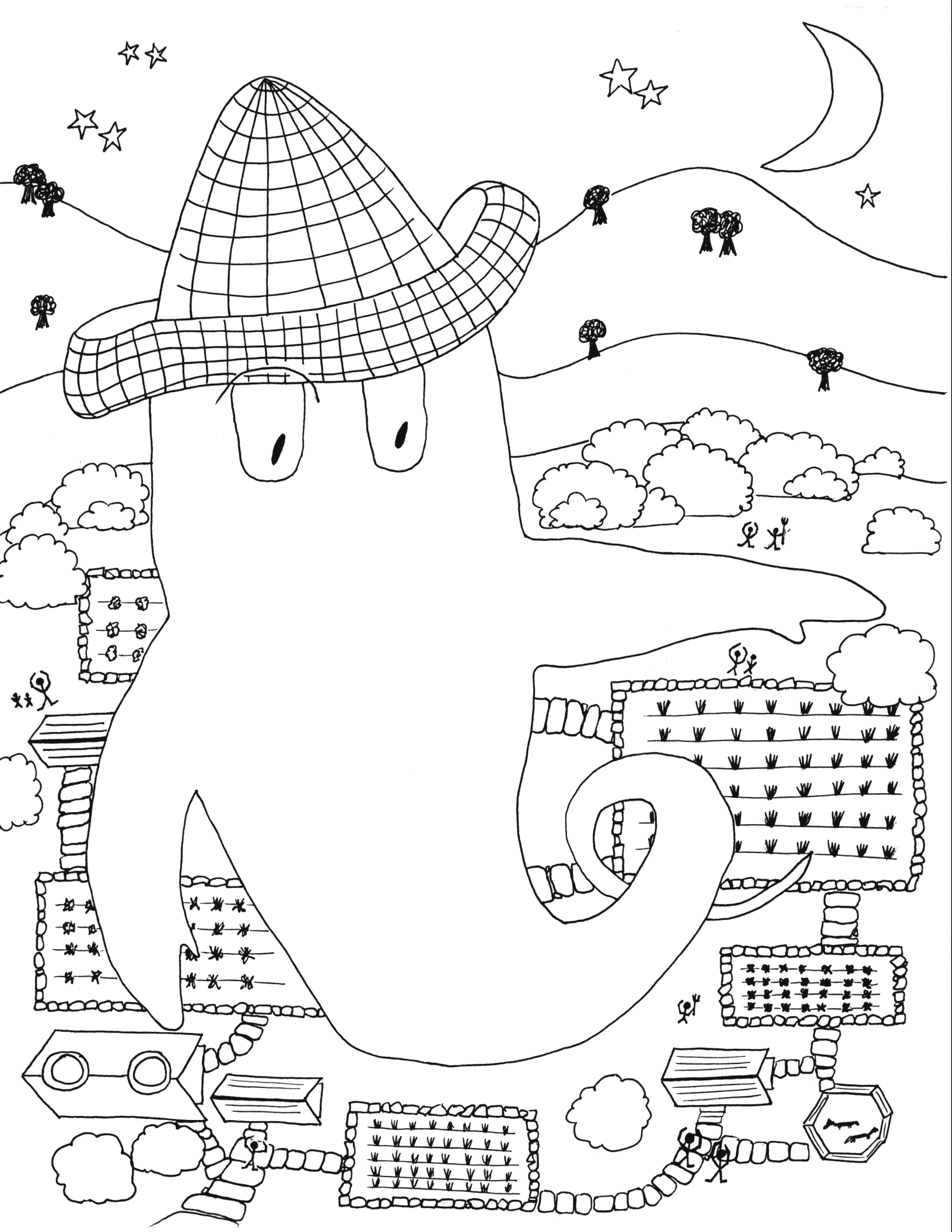
Spirit Games

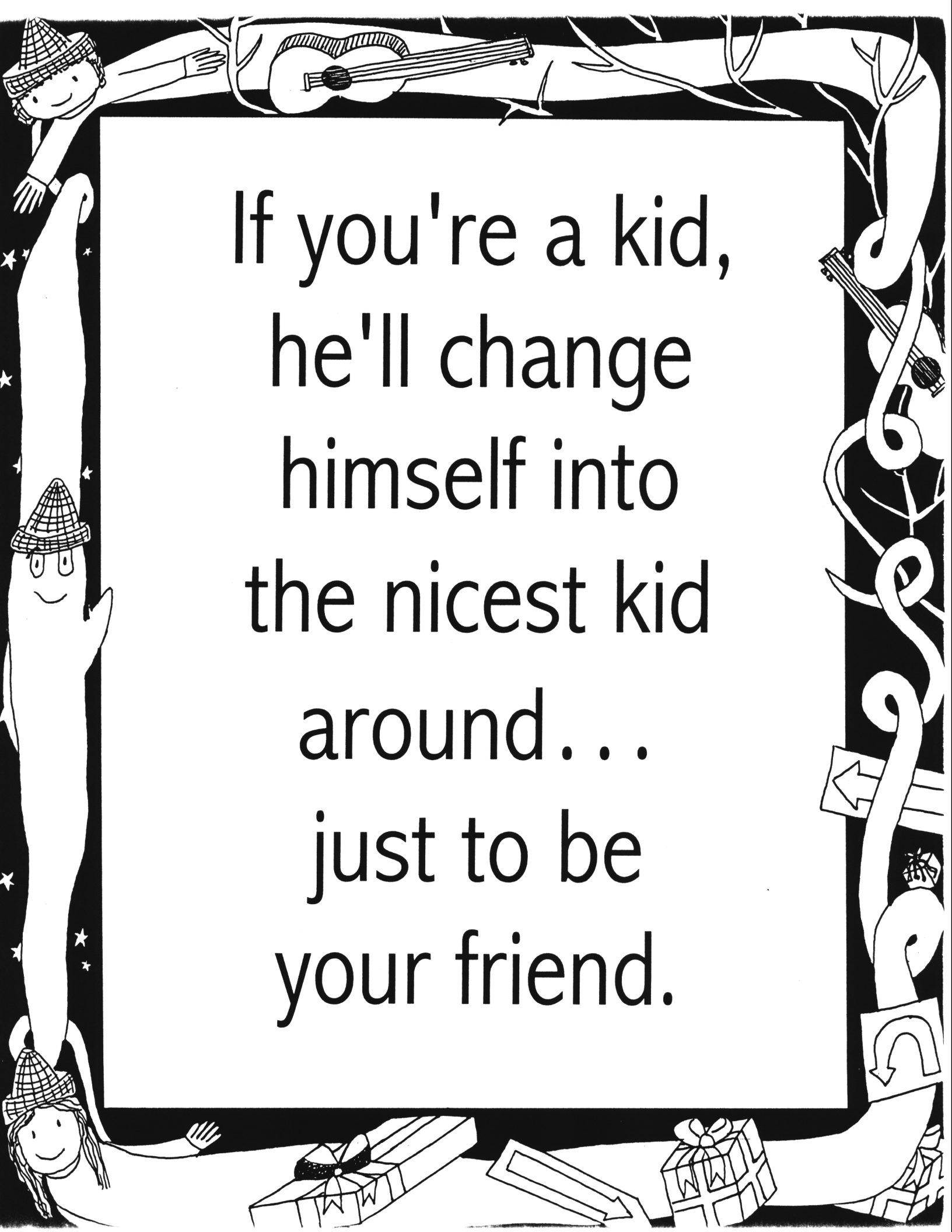
A Colombian tale

By
Lori Langer
de Ramirez



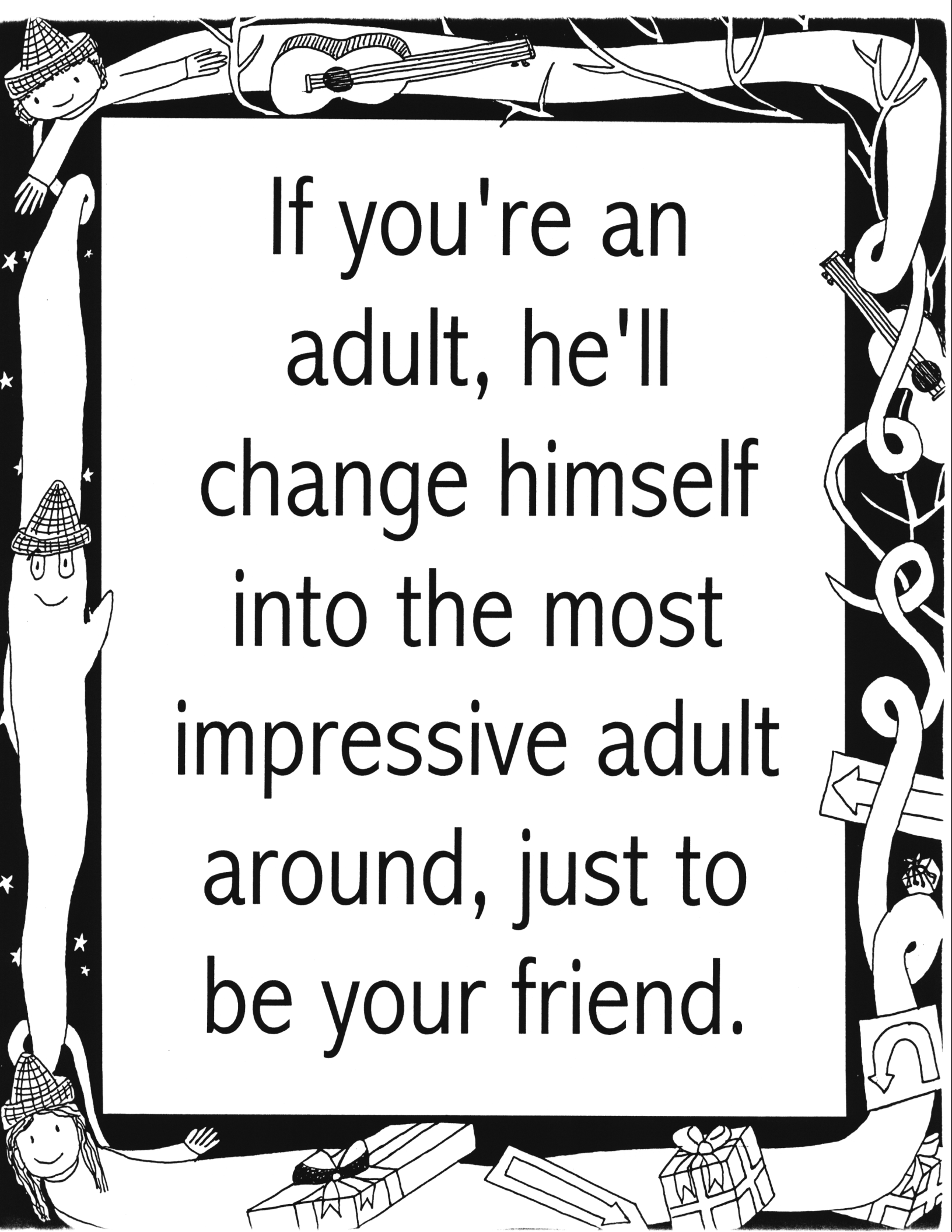
In Colombia
there is a
spirit who
transforms
himself into
different
characters.





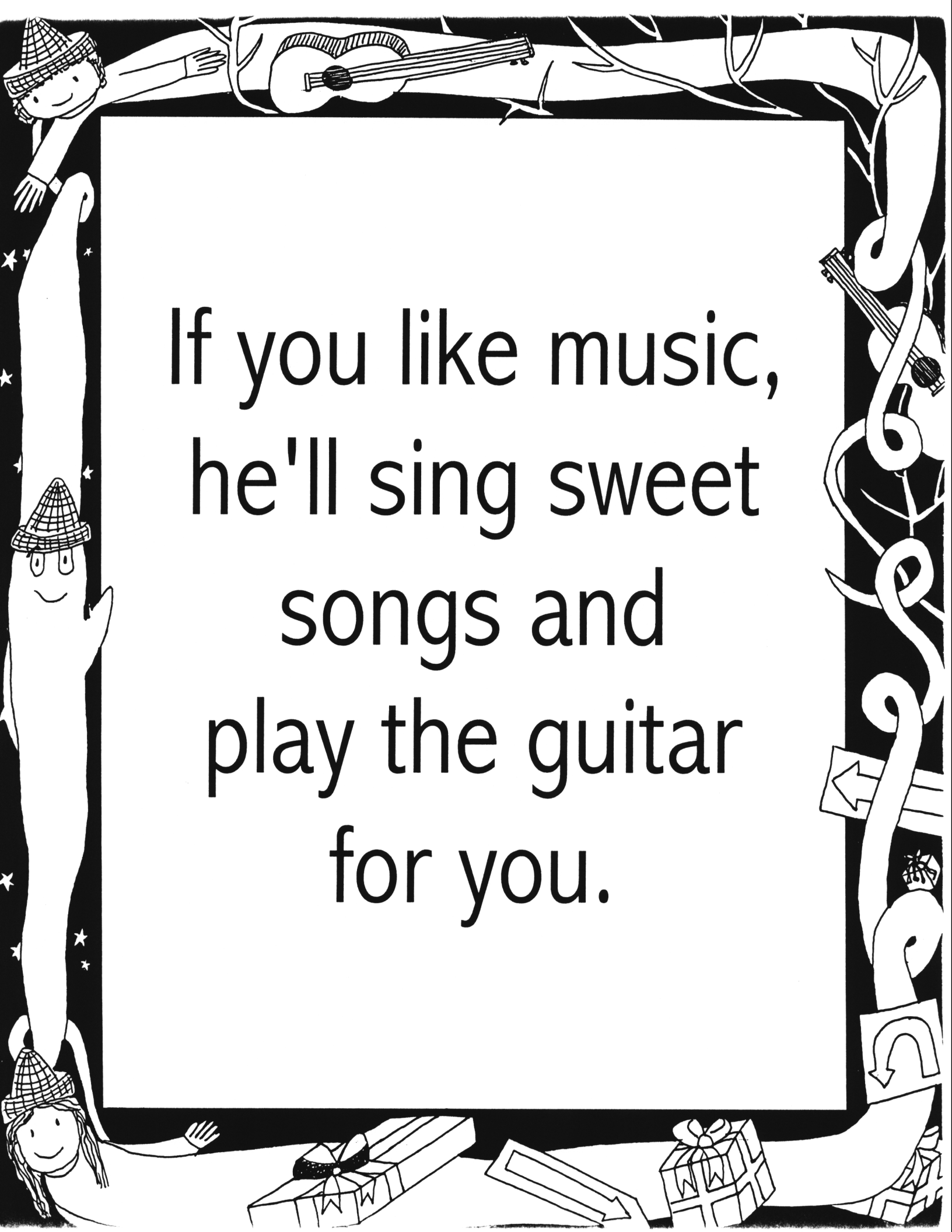
If you're a kid,
he'll change
himself into
the nicest kid
around...
just to be
your friend.



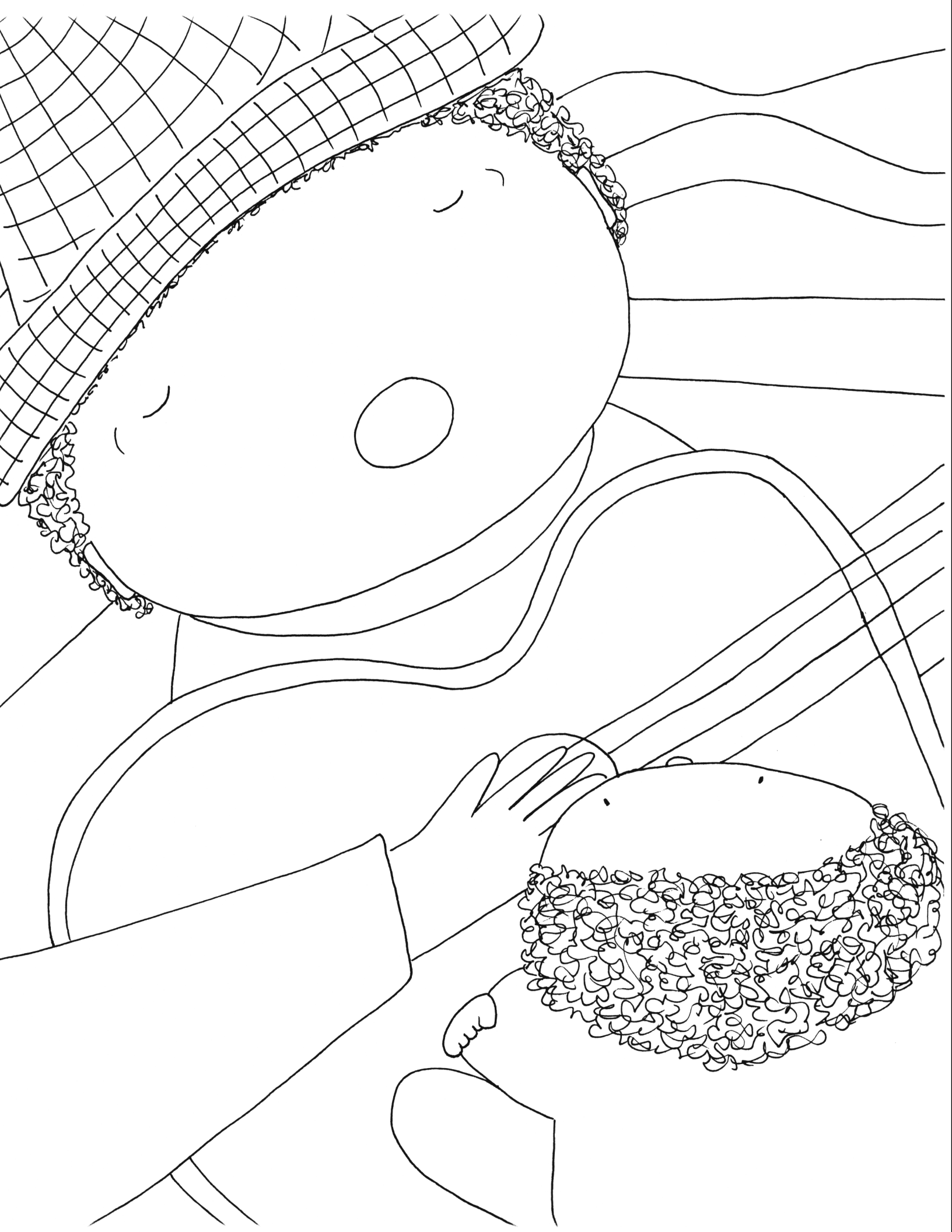


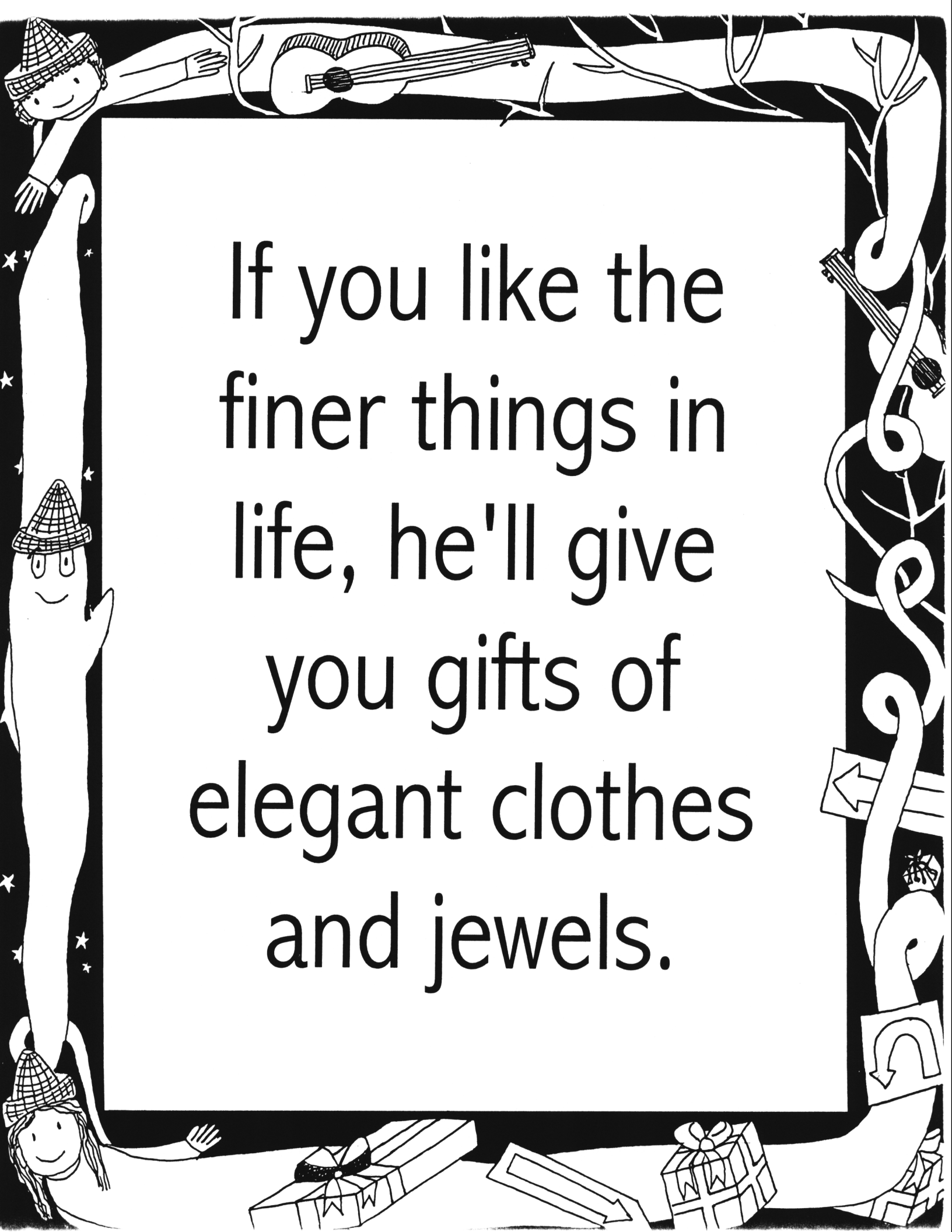
If you're an
adult, he'll
change himself
into the most
impressive adult
around, just to
be your friend.





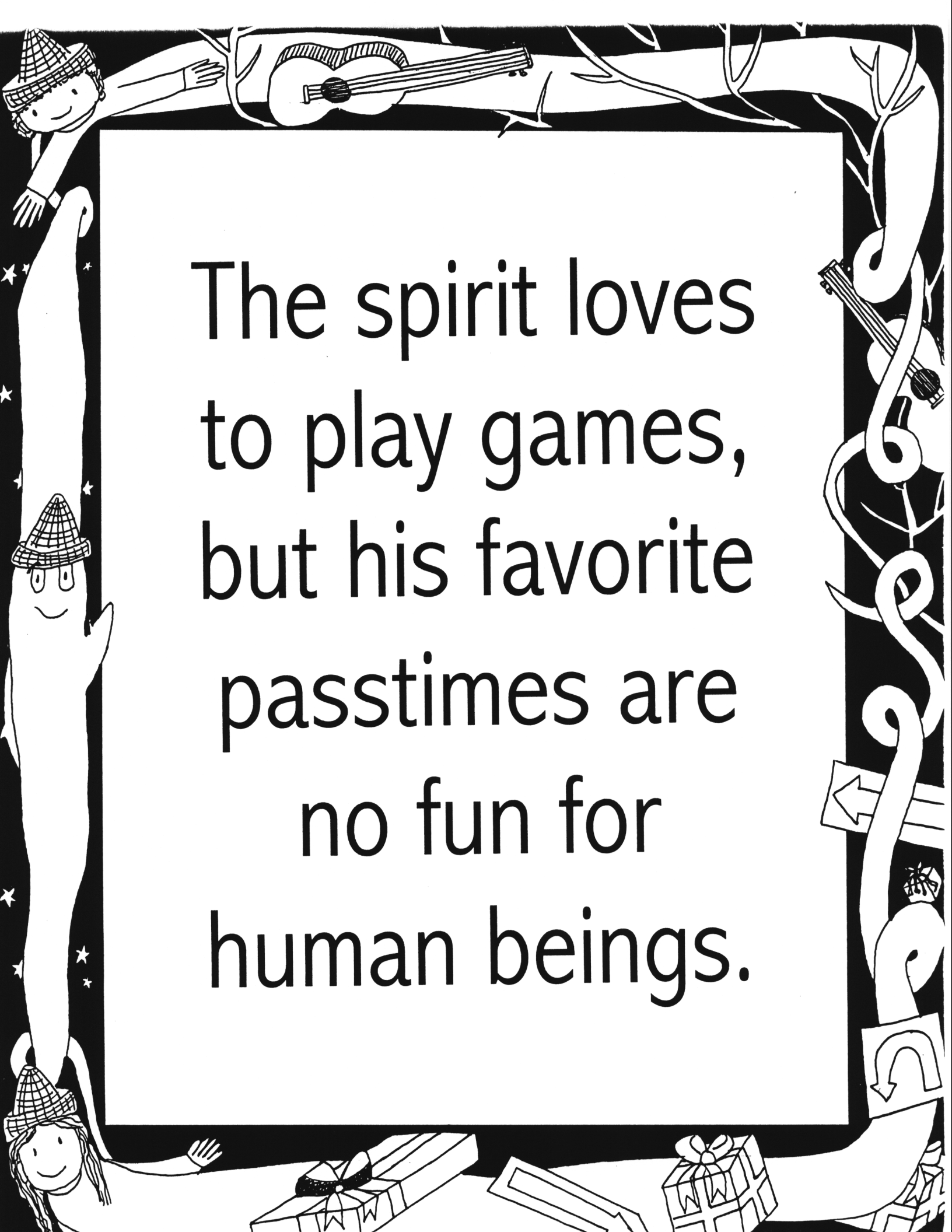
If you like music,
he'll sing sweet
songs and
play the guitar
for you.





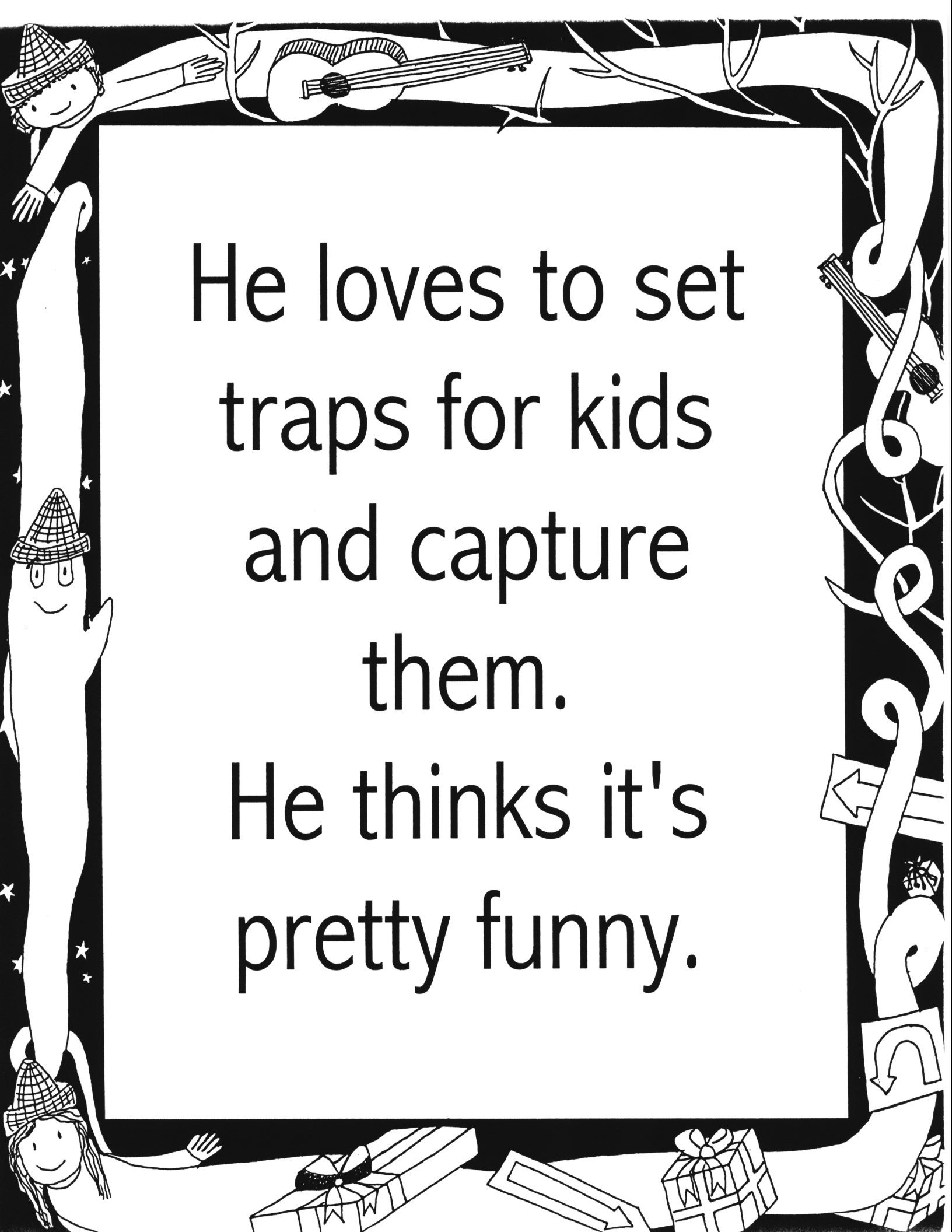
If you like the
finer things in
life, he'll give
you gifts of
elegant clothes
and jewels.





The spirit loves
to play games,
but his favorite
passtimes are
no fun for
human beings.

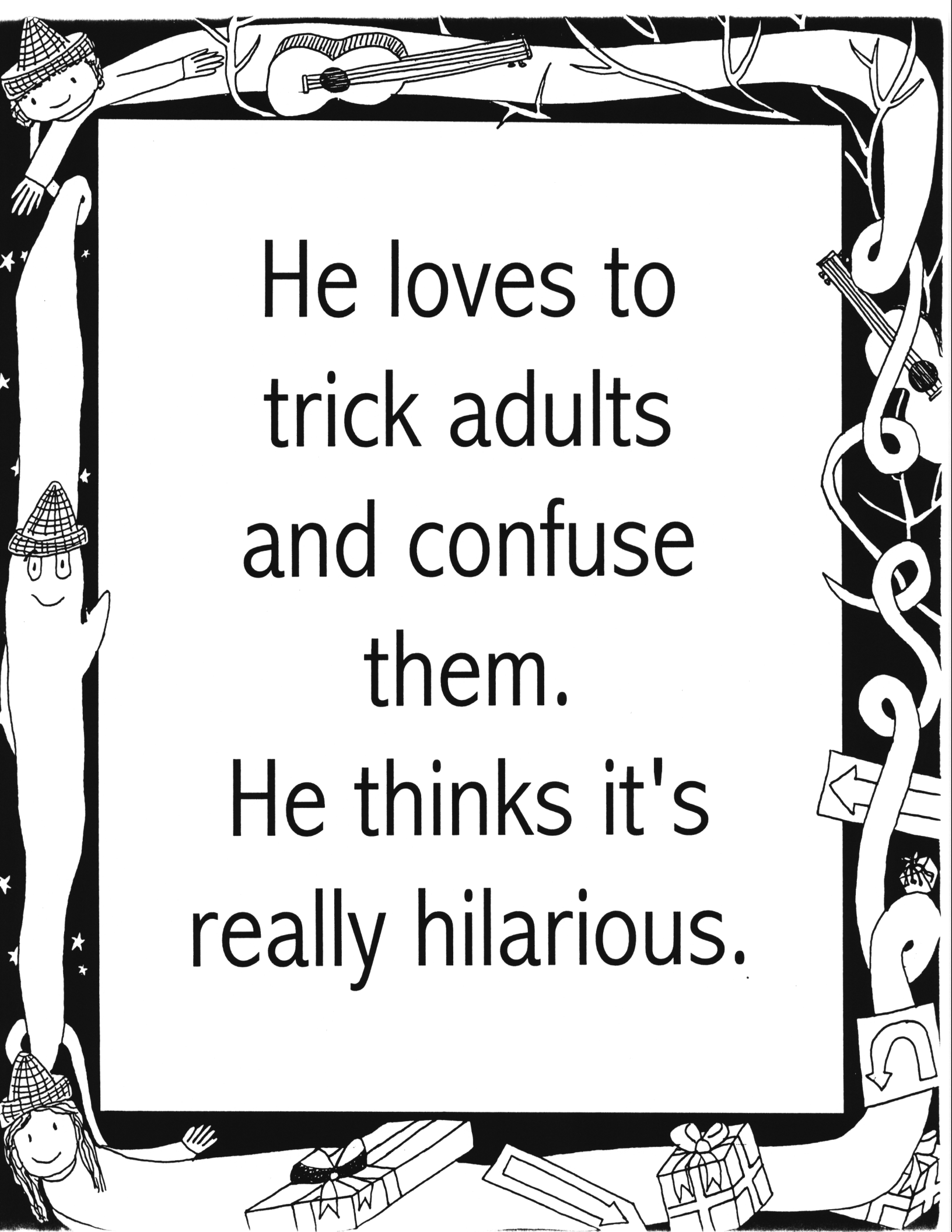




He loves to set
traps for kids
and capture
them.

He thinks it's
pretty funny.





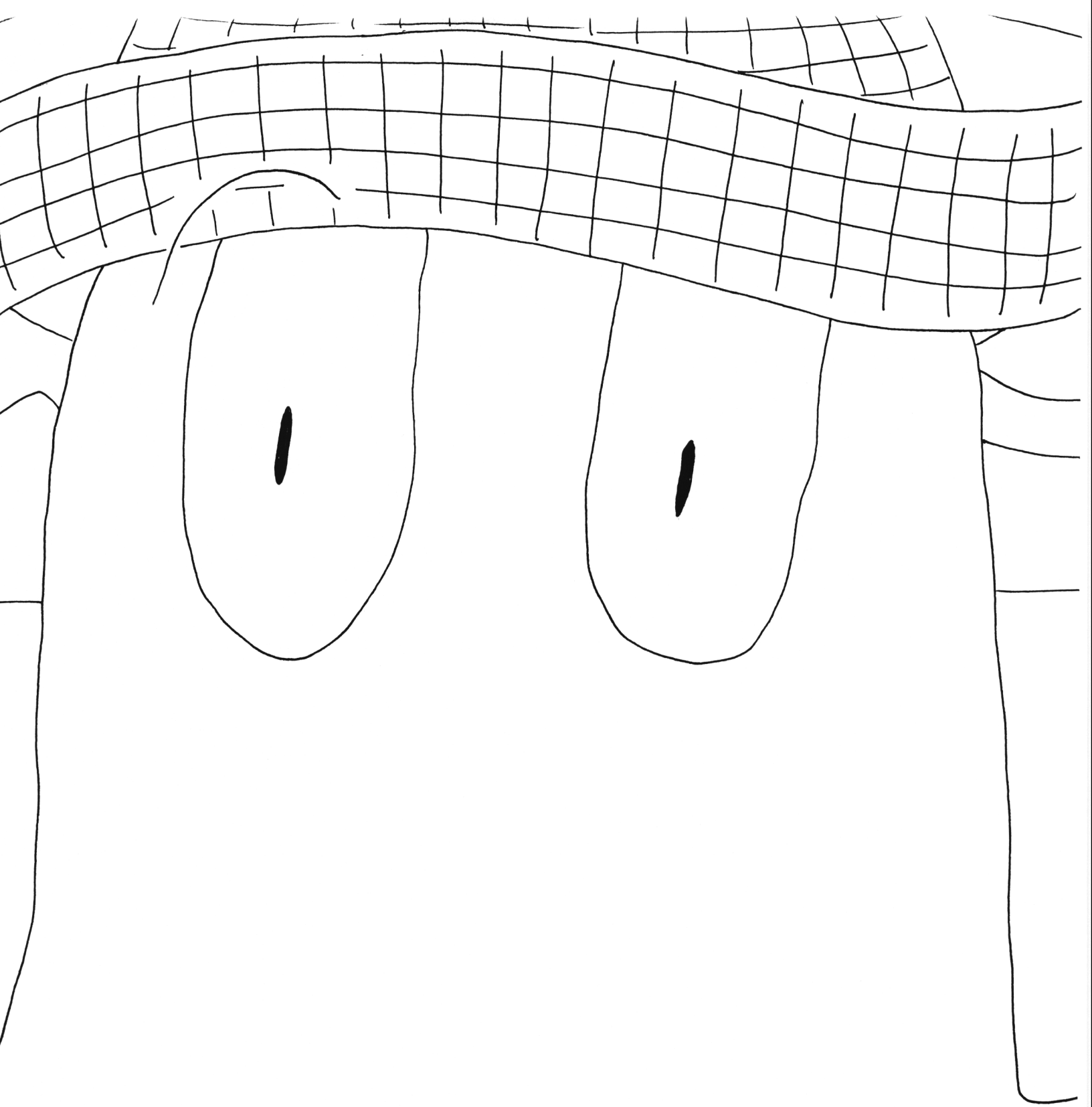
He loves to
trick adults
and confuse
them.
He thinks it's
really hilarious.





Get ready!

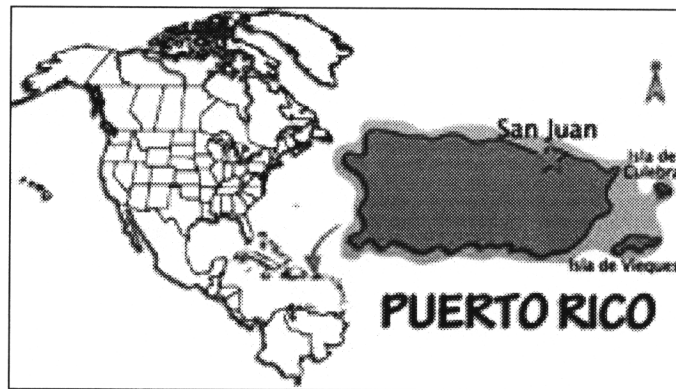
Maybe the spirit
will try
to trick you
one day!



Introduction:

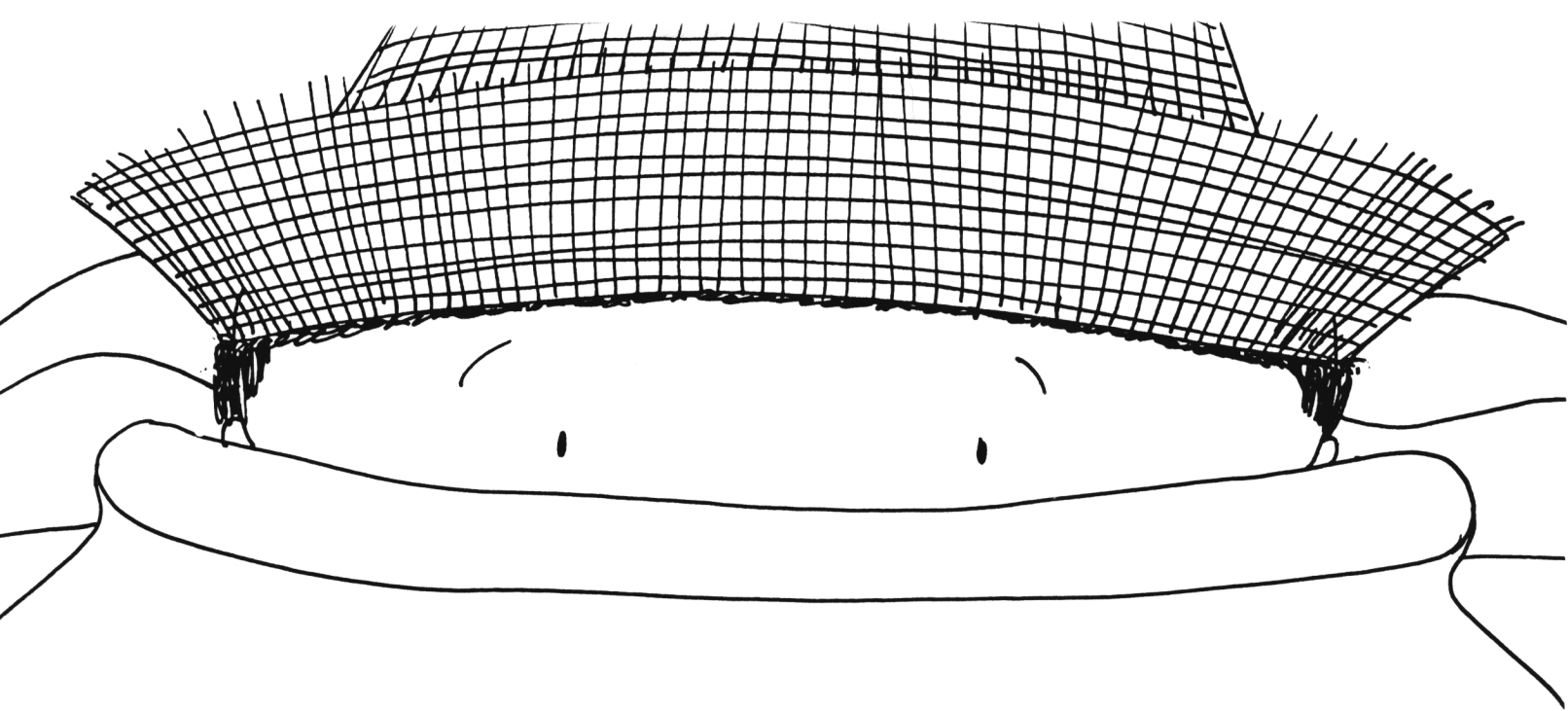
"Juan Bobo and the Cooking Pot"

The story of "Juan Bobo and the cooking pot" comes from Puerto Rico.



Juan Bobo is what is known as a *jíbaro* - a character who lives in the Puerto Rican countryside. Below is a photo taken in the central mountainous region of Puerto Rico. Have you ever been to a similar place?





Juan Bobo
and the
Cooking Pot

A Puerto Rican story
by Lori Langer de Ramirez

Everyone in town
knew Juan Bobo.

He was so lazy
that he would
always hide from
his chores. One
day, his mother
needed his help...



Juan's mother called him:

"Juan, come here!",
but Juan didn't come.

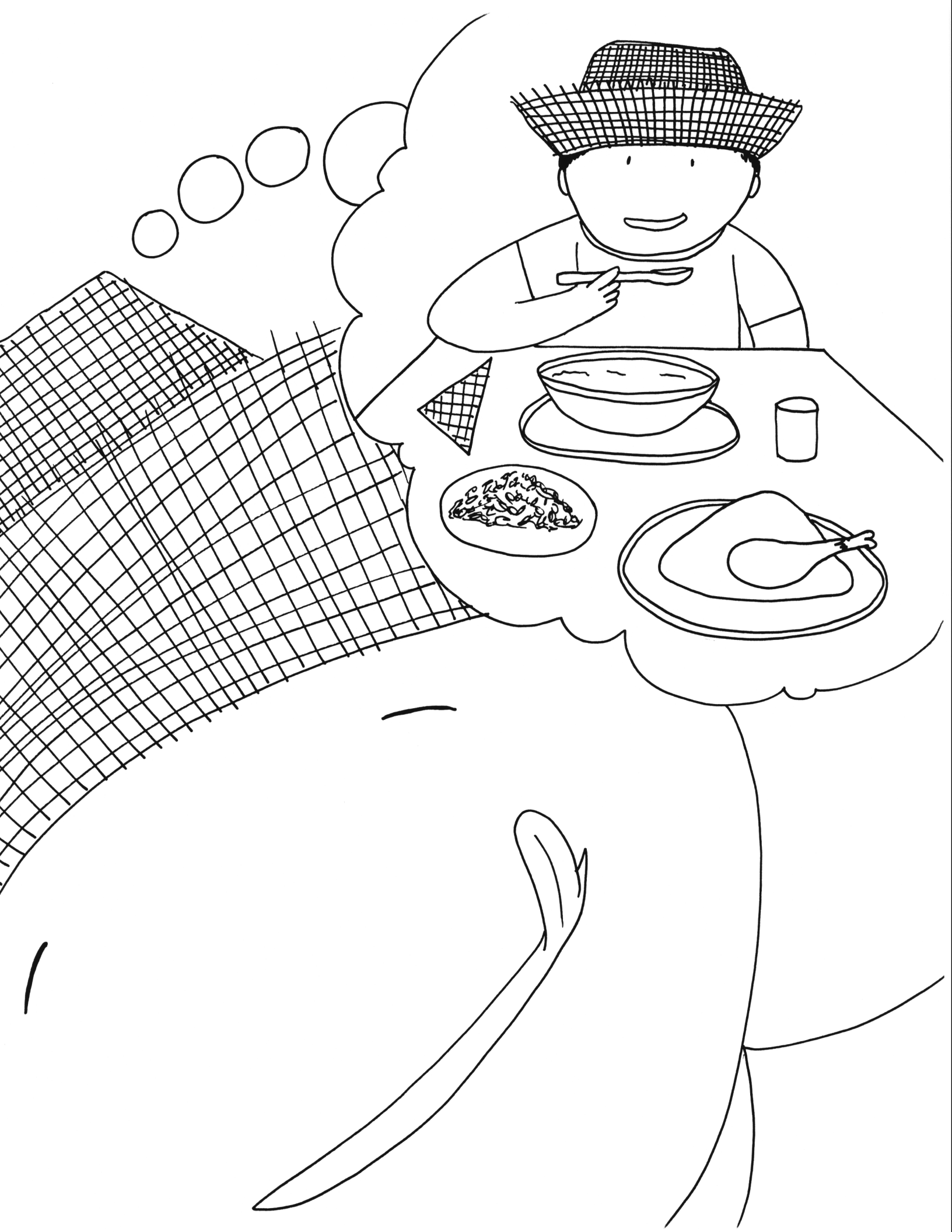
She called him again:

"Juan, sweetheart!"
but Juan still didn't come.

Finally she shouted:

"Juan, I'm making your
favorite soup!"

Sure enough,
Juan came running.



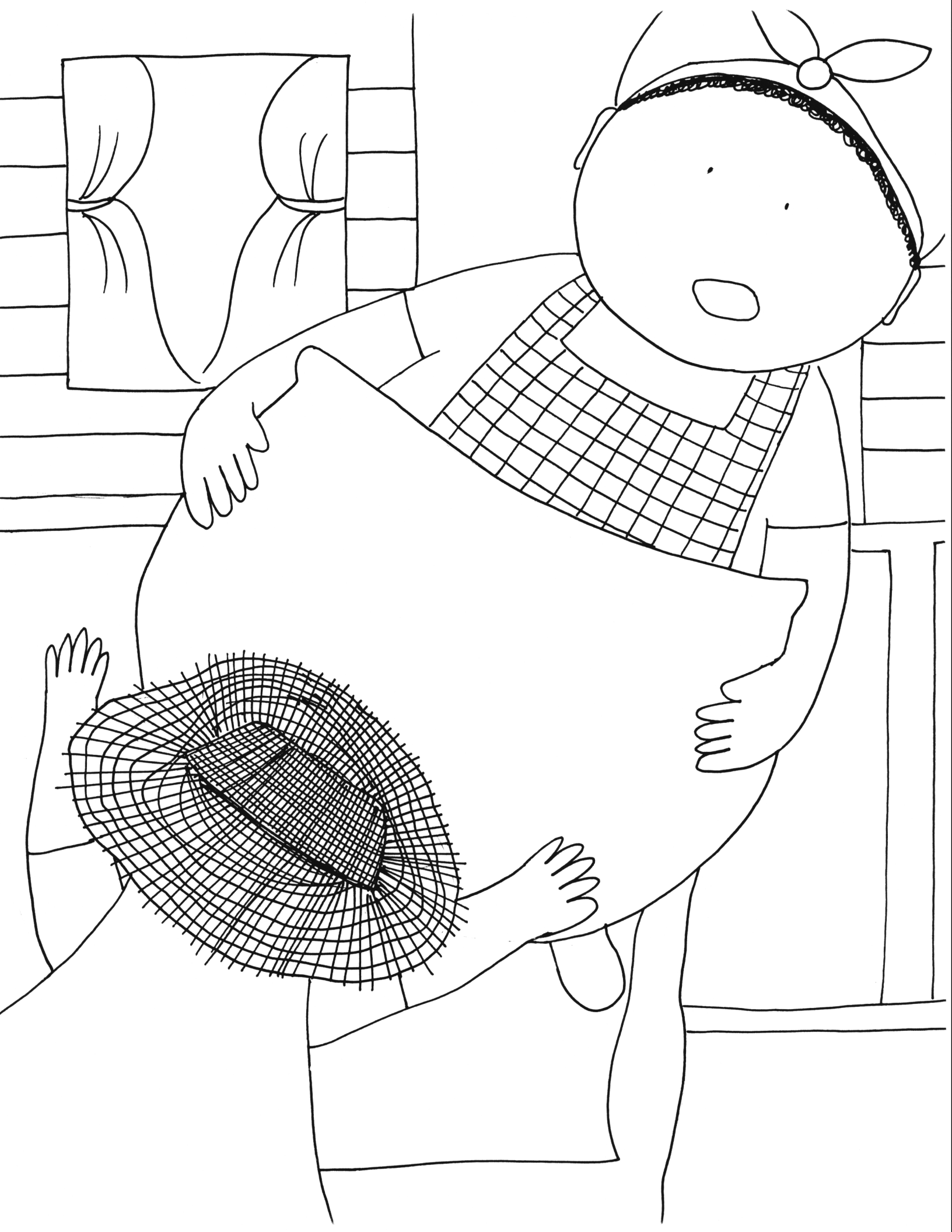
Juan's mother
needed a bigger
cooking pot for
the soup. So she
sent Juan to Doña
Clarina's house to
borrow the biggest
pot she had.



Juan grumbled all
the way to Doña
Clarina's house.
When he got there,
he was worn out
and tired.
He asked for the
pot for his mother.

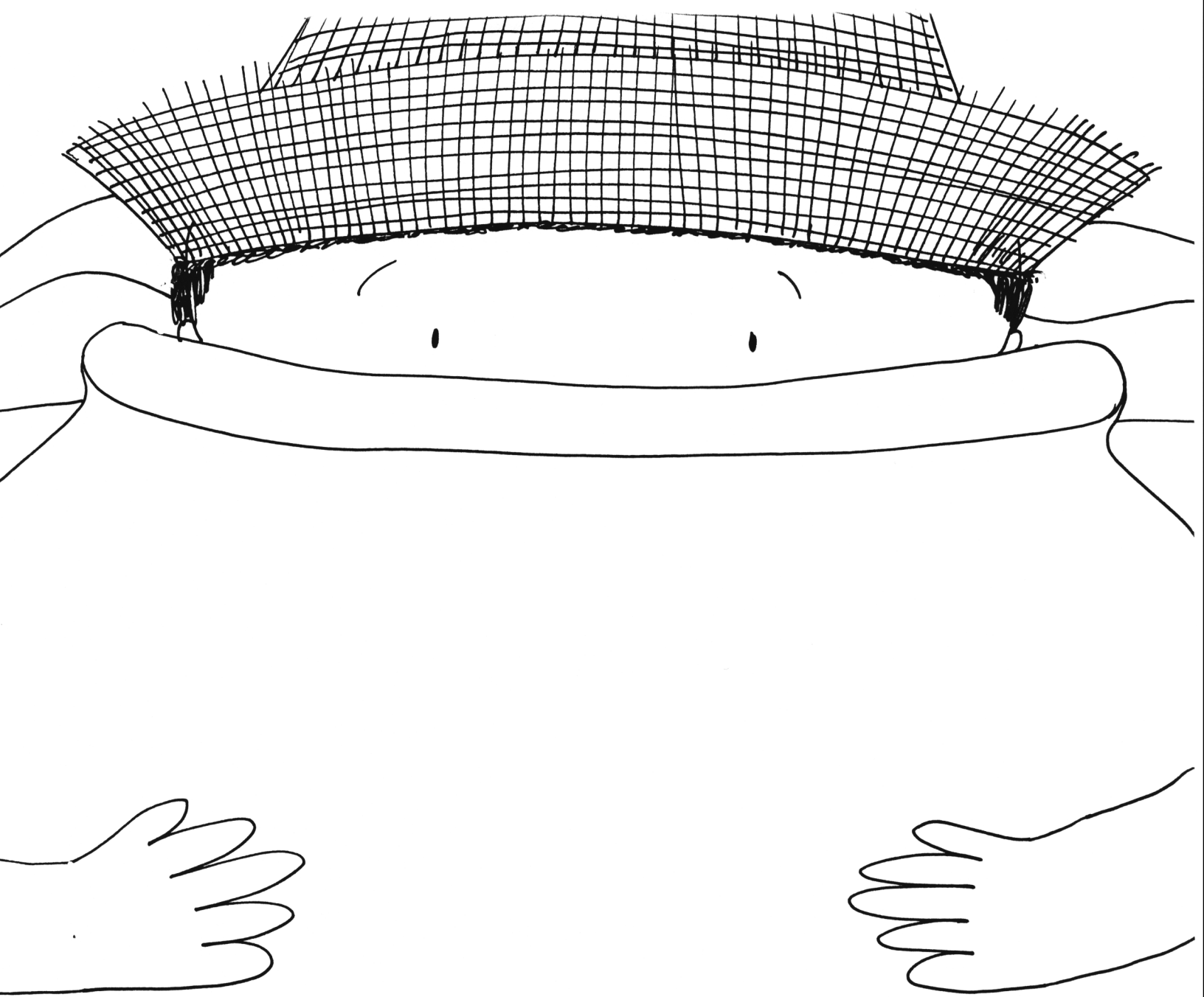


"O.K., Juan", said Doña Clarina. "I'll lend you my pot, but be careful with it." Doña Clarina was worried because she knew how careless Juan could be.



Juan started to
walk home with
the pot.

He got tired right
away because the
pot was so big
and heavy.



Juan stopped to rest. He remembered a saying that said: "everything with legs can walk."

"What could that mean?"
Juan asked himself.

"Cats have legs... and **THEY** walk. Dogs have legs... and **THEY** walk."



Juan looked at the pot
and counted:

"One, two, three.

This pot has three legs -
I bet it can walk!"

Juan put the pot on the
ground and waited.

Nothing happened.

He waited some more.

Nothing happened.



When Juan saw
that the pot
wouldn't move,
he got mad
and kicked it
as hard
as he could.



The pot broke into
two big pieces!

Since that day, Doña
Clarina won't lend
anything to Juan
Bobo and his Mom
doesn't ask him for
any more favors.



Introduction:

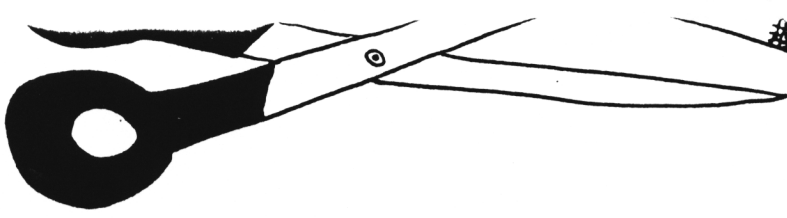
"The Shifty Seamstress"

The story of the seamstress was told to me by students of the Arguello Academy - a school in Cordoba, Argentina.



The photo below shows a typical class at the academy. How is it different from your school? How is it similar?





The Shifty Seamstress

There once lived a seamstress who mistreated her costumers. One day she stole a beautiful dress from a poor old woman.

The next day, the seamstress woke up and felt her legs hard and shiny. As punishment for her bad deeds, she was changed into a pair of scissors!

