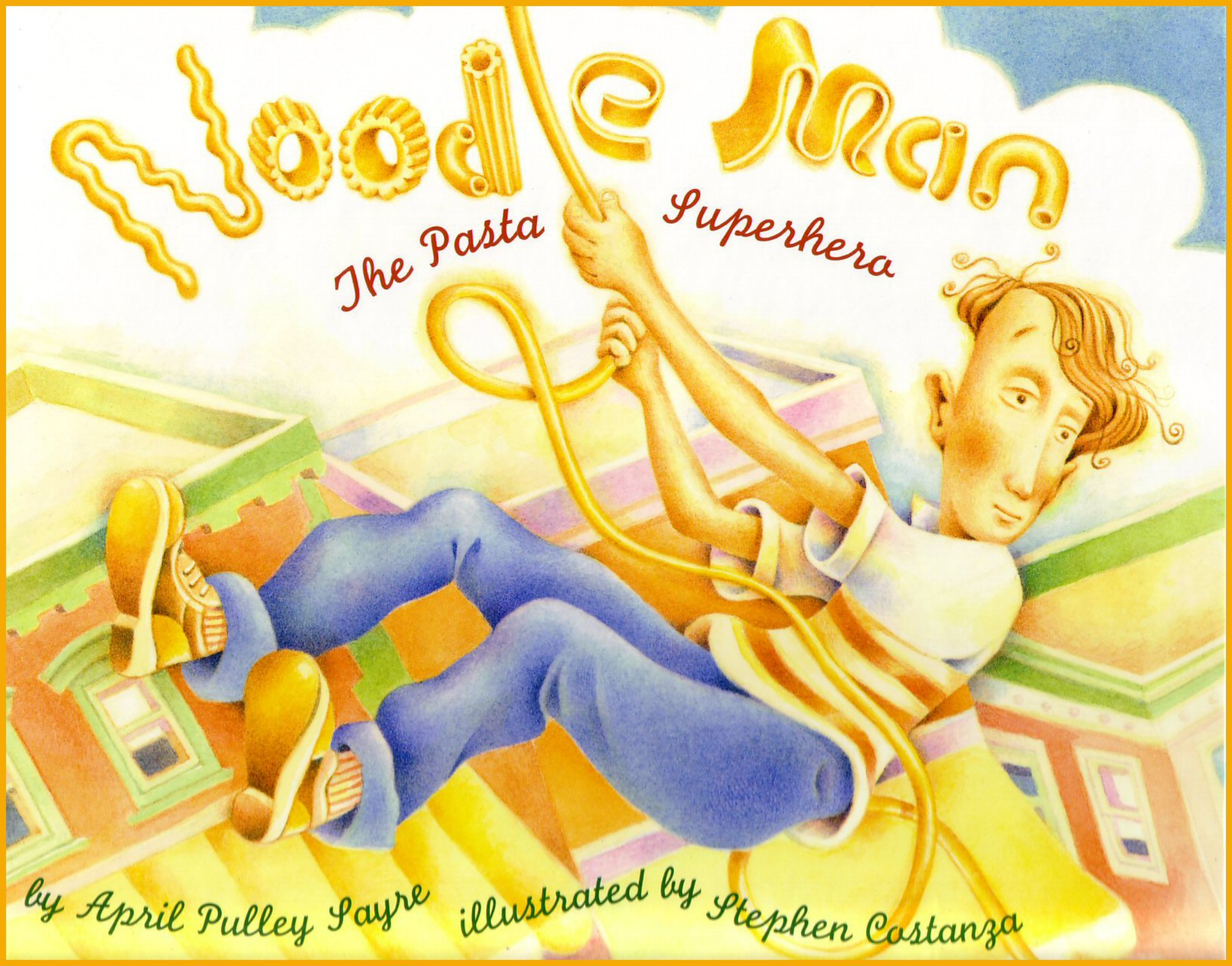


# Woodle Man

The Pasta Superhero



by April Pulley Sayre

illustrated by Stephen Castanza



penne



spaghetti



fusilli



farfalle



orzo



ravioli





fettucine



ziti



macaroni



stellini



perciatelli



tortellini

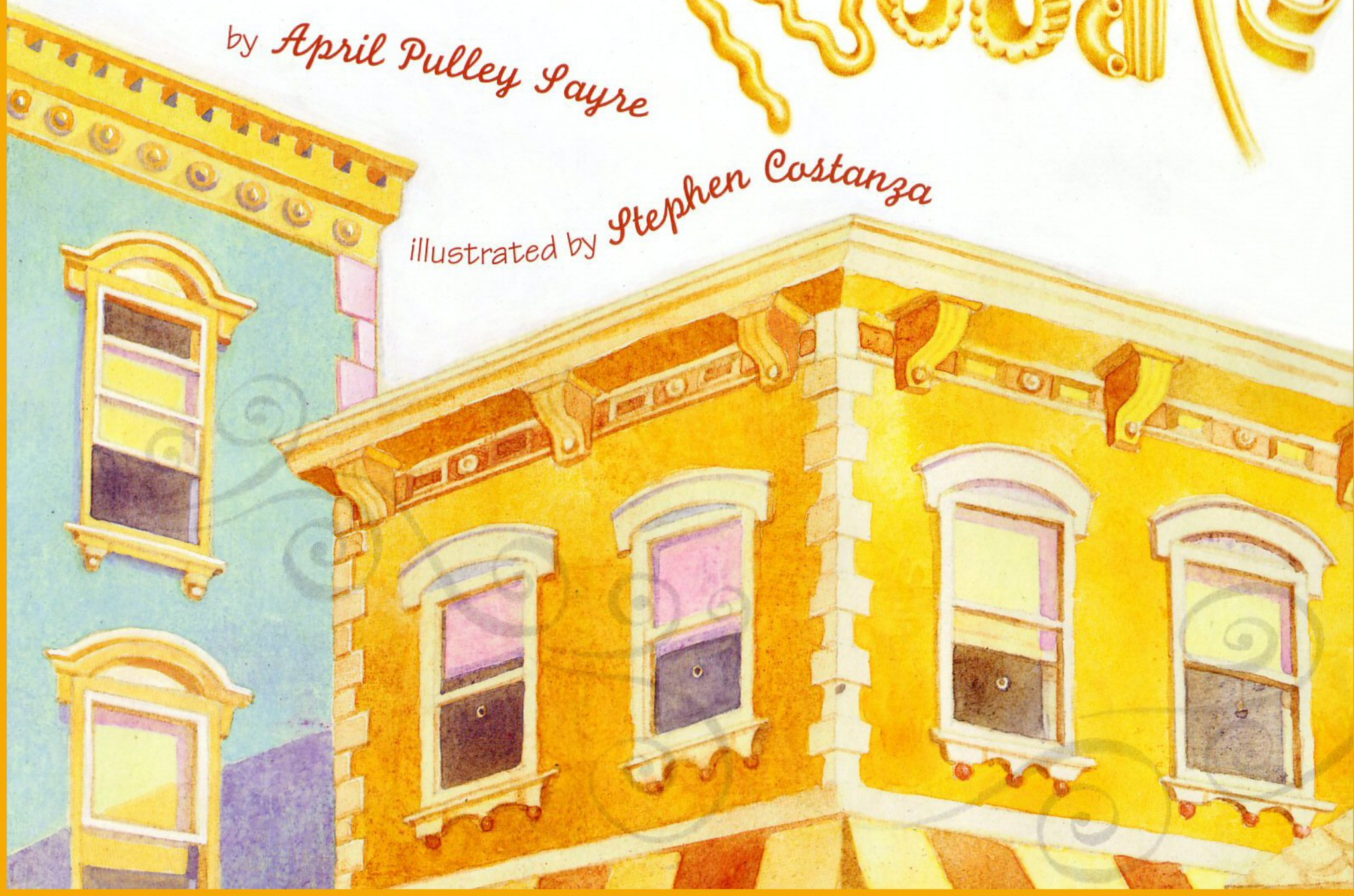




# Noodle

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Man

The Pasta Superhera







*Al Dente* was born into a pasta-loving family. His mom and dad ran a fresh-pasta deli. His grandpa invented pasta shapes. His grandma knitted sweaters from spaghetti.





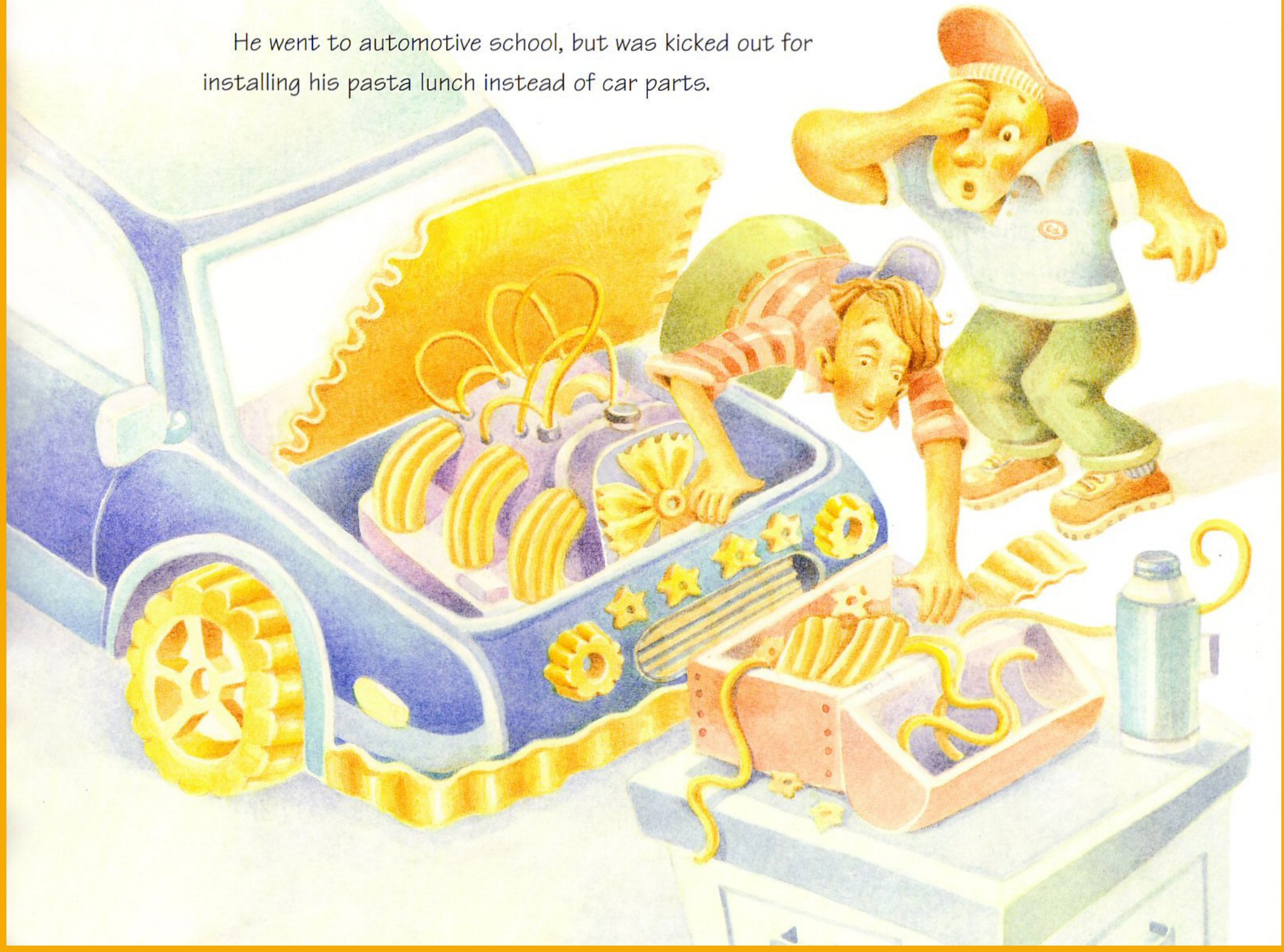




Al tried to be different.  
He trained to be a dentist, but  
the false teeth he made were  
shaped like macaroni.



He went to automotive school, but was kicked out for installing his pasta lunch instead of car parts.





Finally Al joined the family business. The only problem: it was losing money. People in the town of Durum weren't buying fresh pasta anymore. They all wanted pizza delivery. It was so easy.

"We'll have to close the deli," said Papa Dente sadly.

"No, we won't!" said Al. He couldn't bear to fail again.

"Pizza!" announced a delivery person at the door.

"Wrong house!" bellowed Grandpa Dente.



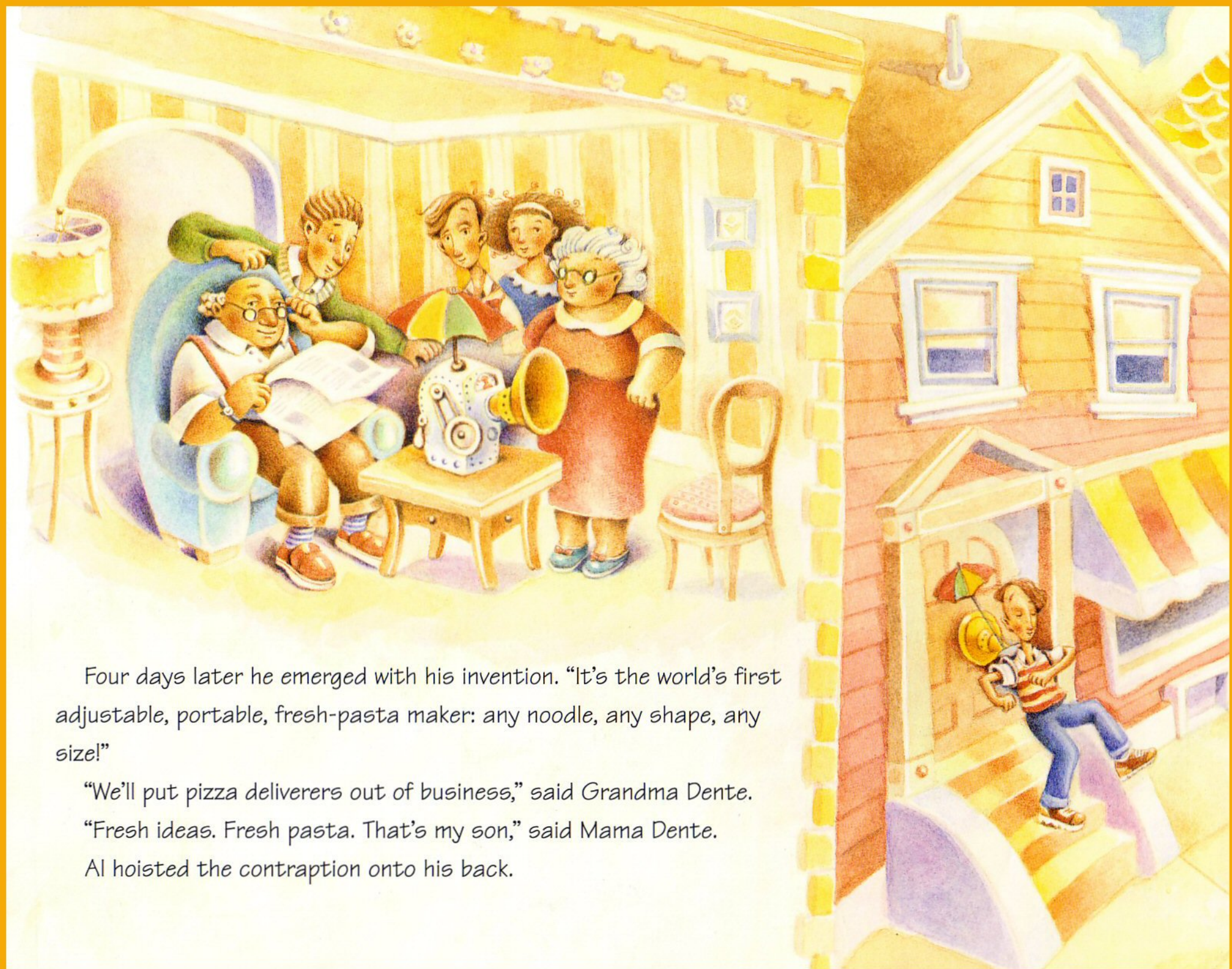




Al watched the pizza delivery person leave. There was something about her. . . .

"Wait, Grandpa. I have an idea!" said Al. He disappeared into the storeroom.





Four days later he emerged with his invention. "It's the world's first adjustable, portable, fresh-pasta maker: any noodle, any shape, any size!"

"We'll put pizza deliverers out of business," said Grandma Dente.

"Fresh ideas. Fresh pasta. That's my son," said Mama Dente.

Al hoisted the contraption onto his back.

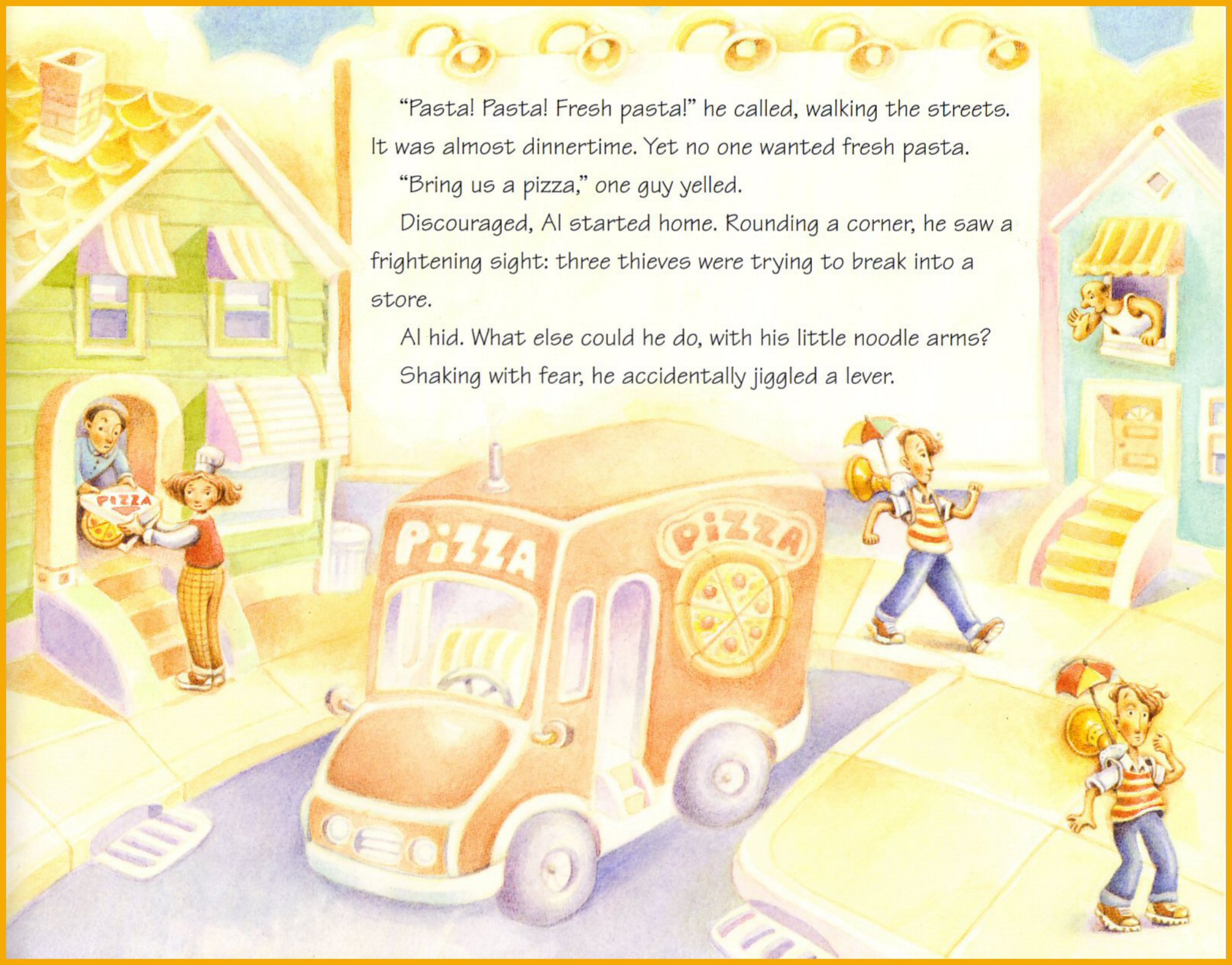


"Pasta! Pasta! Fresh pasta!" he called, walking the streets. It was almost dinnertime. Yet no one wanted fresh pasta.

"Bring us a pizza," one guy yelled.

Discouraged, Al started home. Rounding a corner, he saw a frightening sight: three thieves were trying to break into a store.

Al hid. What else could he do, with his little noodle arms? Shaking with fear, he accidentally jiggled a lever.





*Chugga, chugga, phloooomp!* Angel hair pasta came shooting out of his machine. Springy, stringy, slick, it landed on the crooks.

Terrified, Al ran.

When the police arrived, they were shocked to find the thieves tangled up in sticky pasta.











The next night, wearing his farfalle tie, Al headed out to try pasta delivery again.

“How’s the pasta selling?” asked his grandpa.

“Manicotti marvelous!” said Al cheerfully. He didn’t want to disappoint his family.







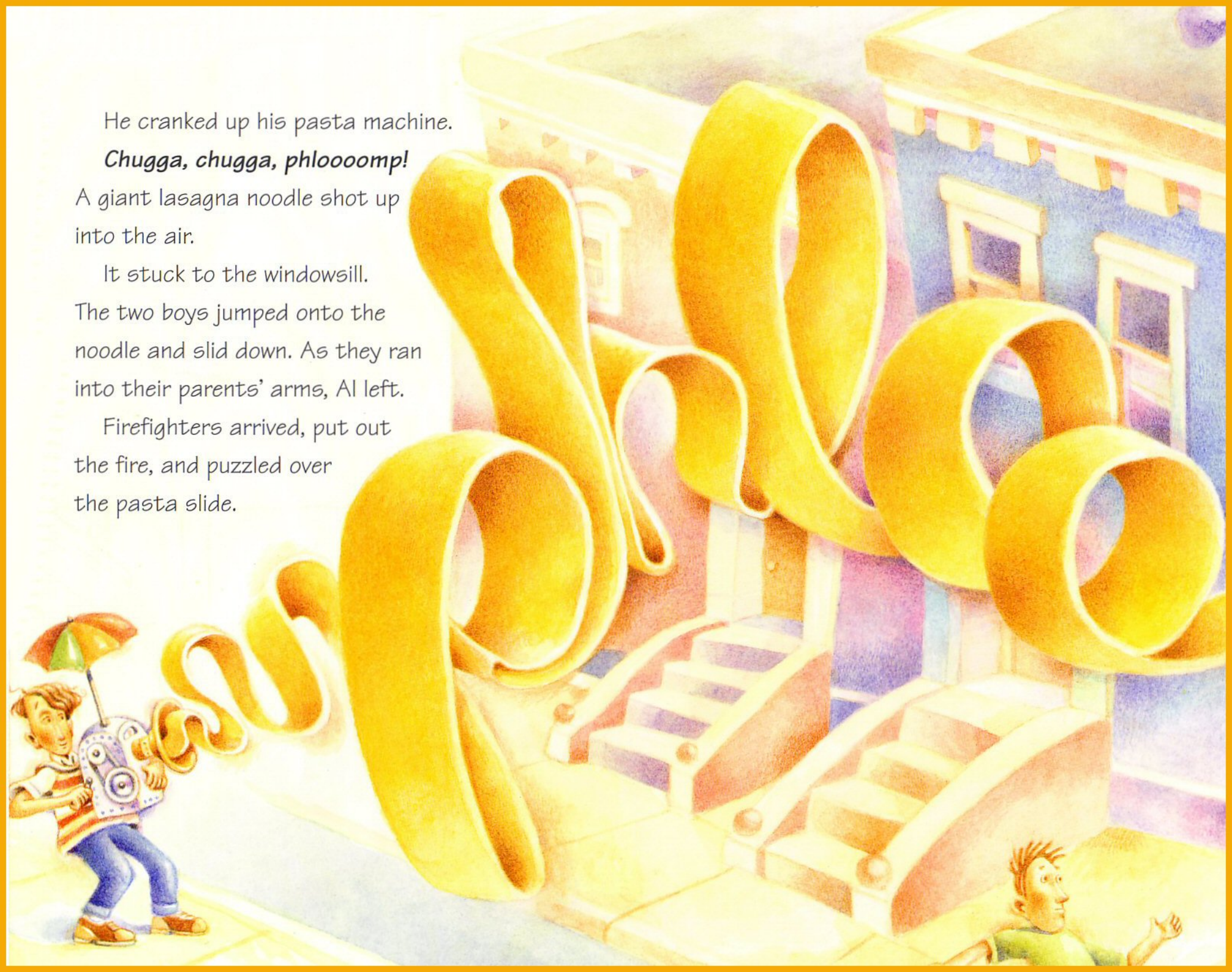
He cranked up his pasta machine.

***Chugga, chugga, phloooomp!***

A giant lasagna noodle shot up into the air.

It stuck to the windowsill. The two boys jumped onto the noodle and slid down. As they ran into their parents' arms, Al left.

Firefighters arrived, put out the fire, and puzzled over the pasta slide.





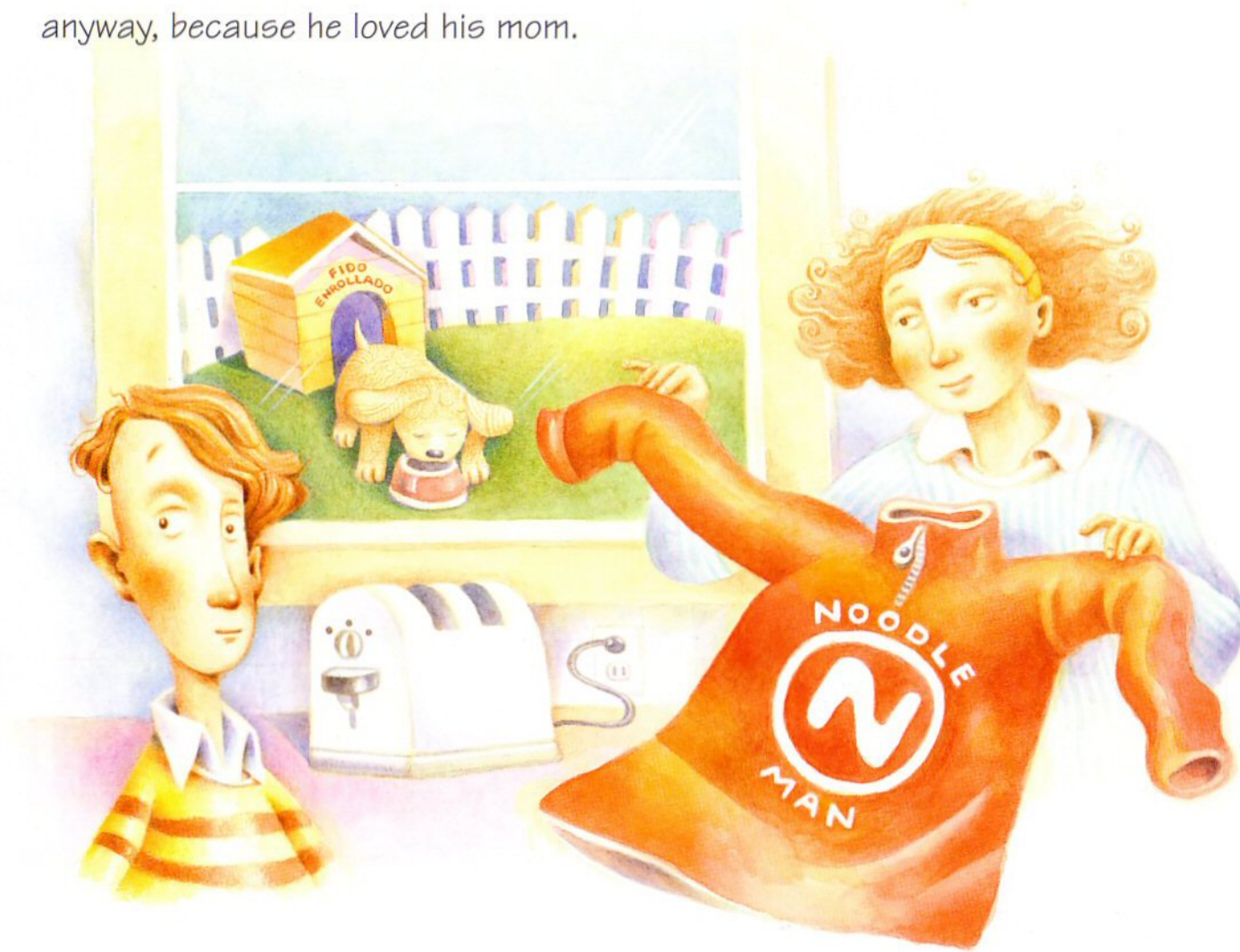




Back home, Al didn't want to tell his family he hadn't sold any pasta. He fed the leftovers to the dog.

His mother was waiting in the kitchen. She had made him a tomato-red suit that said "Noodle Man."

Naturally Al was embarrassed to wear the suit. Yet the next day he wore it anyway, because he loved his mom.







"Pasta! Pasta! Fresh pasta!" he called, walking the streets. No one responded.

He came across a crowd of people gathered on a curb. A water pipe had broken and flooded the street. The people couldn't cross.

*Hmm . . . thought Al. How about . . .*

He switched on the machine and turned a dial.









***Chugga, chugga, phloooomp!***

Out came fusilli—corkscrew pasta. People tied the fusilli to their feet.

***Sproing! Sproing! Sproing!***

They jumped across the flooded street. Al fusilli-bounced away before anyone could recognize him.



That evening rumors flew about Noodle Man. Who was he?  
“He’s a superhero!” kids said. They made up games in his honor and  
even invented new jump-rope rhymes.

“Eenie, meenie, fettucine, linguine.  
Ravioli, capelletti, tortellini, ziti, ziti,  
Ravioli, capelletti, tortellini, ziti, ziti,  
Penne, penne, penne, penne . . . yeah!”





Still, the next day, when they saw Al coming, it never even occurred to them that he was Noodle Man. His suit was in the wash, and he just didn't look like a superhero.

They didn't understand the power of spaghetti-skinny arms.

"Pasta! Pasta! Fresh pasta!" he called, walking the streets. Once again, not a noodle was sold.

Discouraged, Al went home early. His grandpa was waiting in the living room.

"We think you have the right idea, son," Grandpa said. "We decided the delivery business should expand."

In walked Uncle Orzo and cousin Mac Aroni, with two more portable pasta machines.

Al's heart sank like a raw bean in minestrone. How could he tell them that pasta delivery was a failure? He was trying to think of something to say, when . . .





***Crash! Crunch! Ka-boom!***

The lights dimmed, then died. Al, his family, and everyone else in the neighborhood ran out into the street.

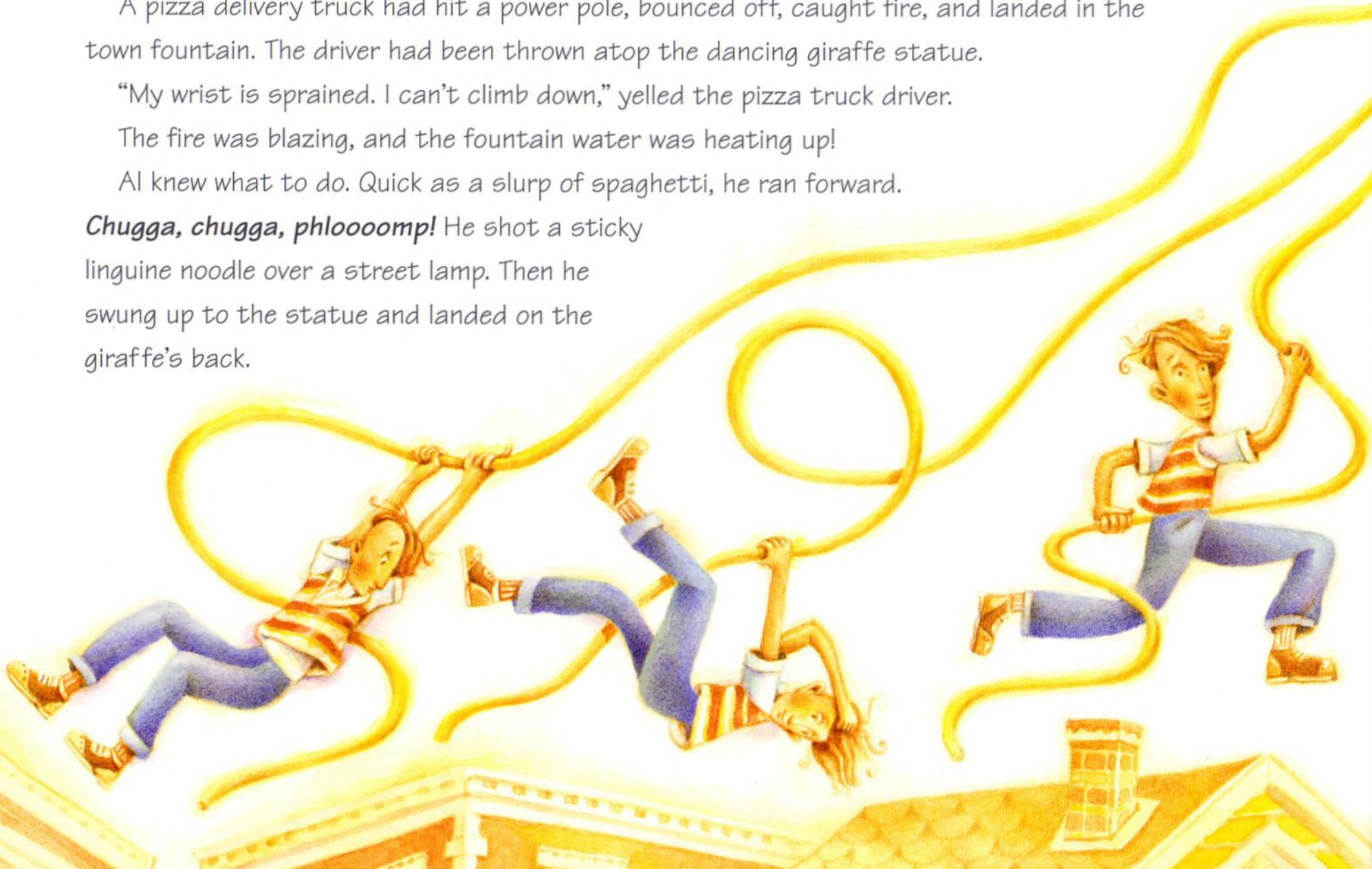
A pizza delivery truck had hit a power pole, bounced off, caught fire, and landed in the town fountain. The driver had been thrown atop the dancing giraffe statue.

“My wrist is sprained. I can’t climb down,” yelled the pizza truck driver.

The fire was blazing, and the fountain water was heating up!

Al knew what to do. Quick as a slurp of spaghetti, he ran forward.

***Chugga, chugga, phloooomp!*** He shot a sticky linguine noodle over a street lamp. Then he swung up to the statue and landed on the giraffe’s back.



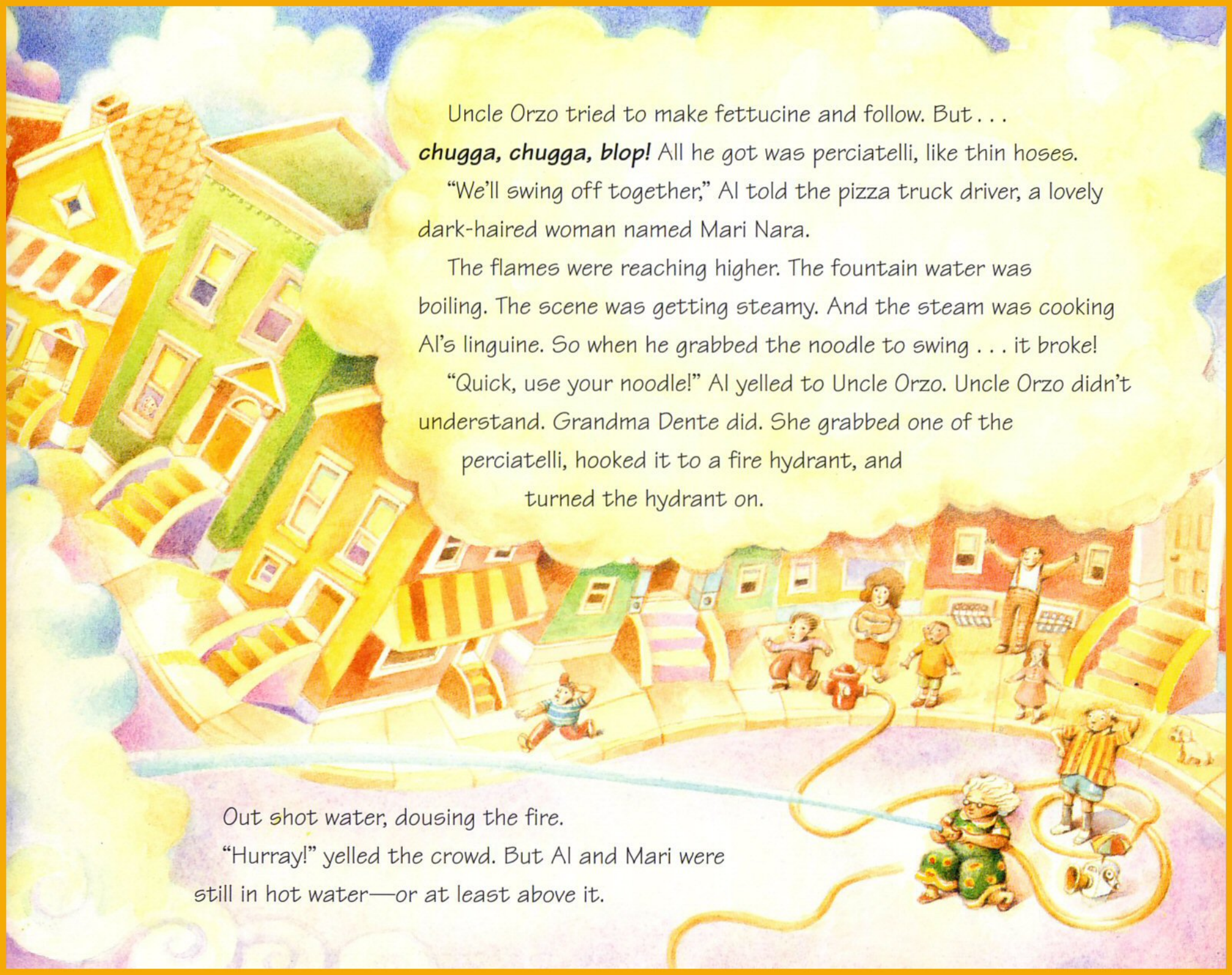












Uncle Orzo tried to make fettucine and follow. But . . .  
**chugga, chugga, blop!** All he got was perciatelli, like thin hoses.

“We’ll swing off together,” Al told the pizza truck driver, a lovely dark-haired woman named Mari Nara.

The flames were reaching higher. The fountain water was boiling. The scene was getting steamy. And the steam was cooking Al’s linguine. So when he grabbed the noodle to swing . . . it broke!

“Quick, use your noodle!” Al yelled to Uncle Orzo. Uncle Orzo didn’t understand. Grandma Dente did. She grabbed one of the perciatelli, hooked it to a fire hydrant, and turned the hydrant on.

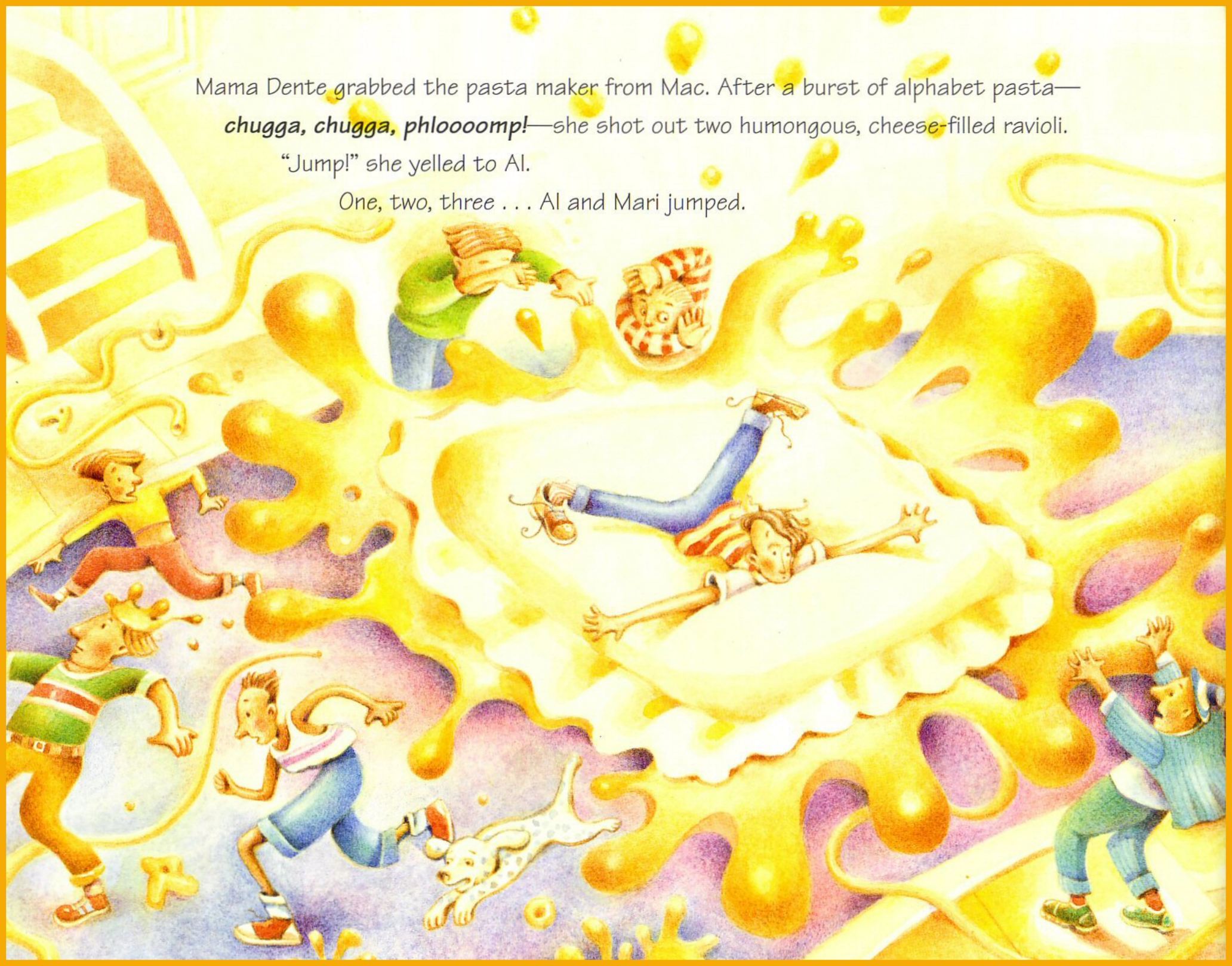
Out shot water, dousing the fire.  
“Hurray!” yelled the crowd. But Al and Mari were still in hot water—or at least above it.



Mama Dente grabbed the pasta maker from Mac. After a burst of alphabet pasta—*chugga, chugga, phloooomp!*—she shot out two humongous, cheese-filled ravioli.

“Jump!” she yelled to Al.

One, two, three . . . Al and Mari jumped.





*Splunsch! Splunsch!* They landed on the ravioli, which exploded, squirting cheese. But Al and Mari were safe and sound.





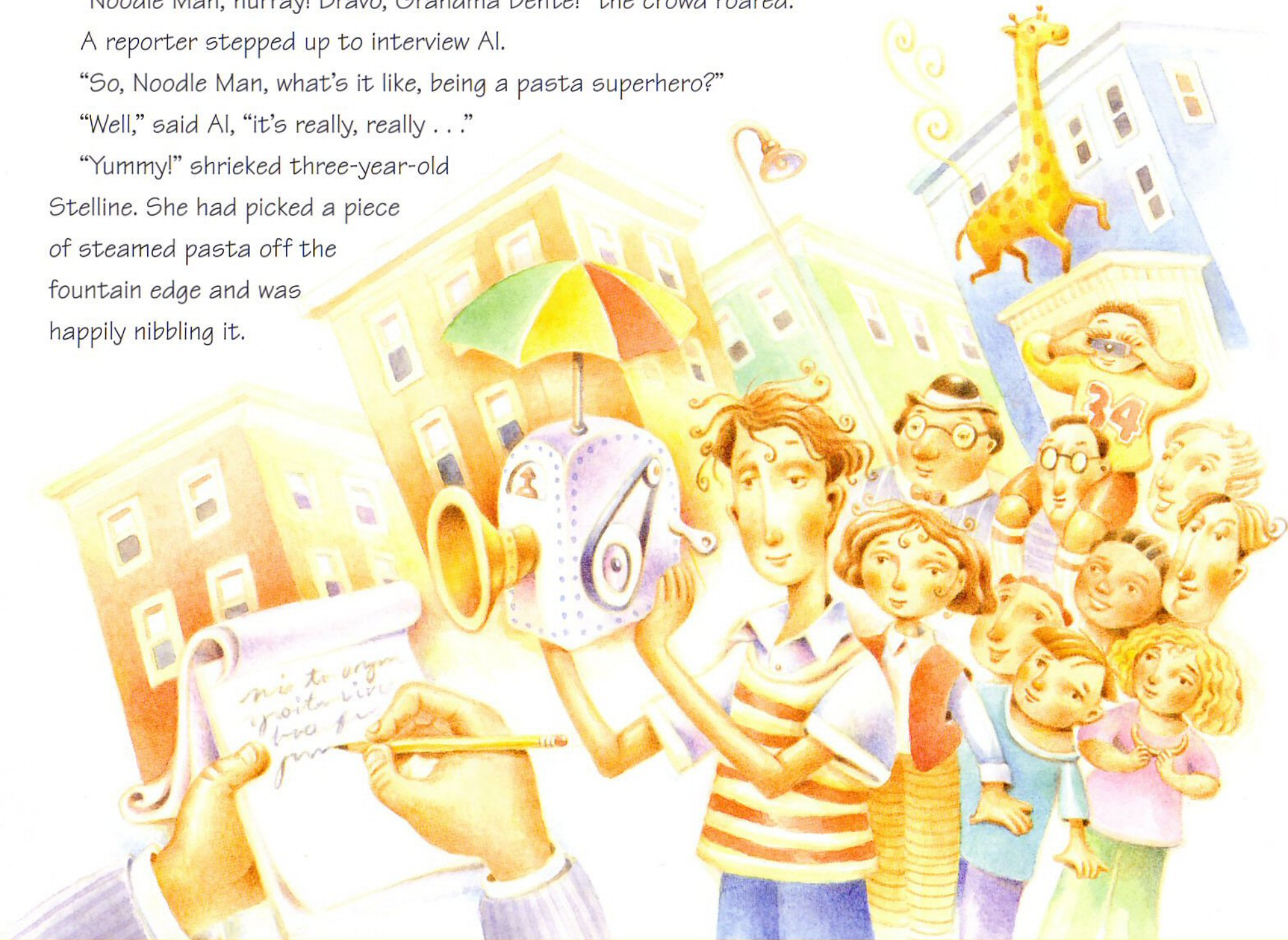
“Noodle Man, hurray! Bravo, Grandma Dente!” the crowd roared.

A reporter stepped up to interview Al.

“So, Noodle Man, what’s it like, being a pasta superhero?”

“Well,” said Al, “it’s really, really . . .”

“Yummy!” shrieked three-year-old Stelline. She had picked a piece of steamed pasta off the fountain edge and was happily nibbling it.





Believe it or not, that was how the residents of Durum rediscovered just how delicious fresh pasta can be. That night, over a bonfire, they cooked up pots of pasta. It was truly a pasta pig-out.

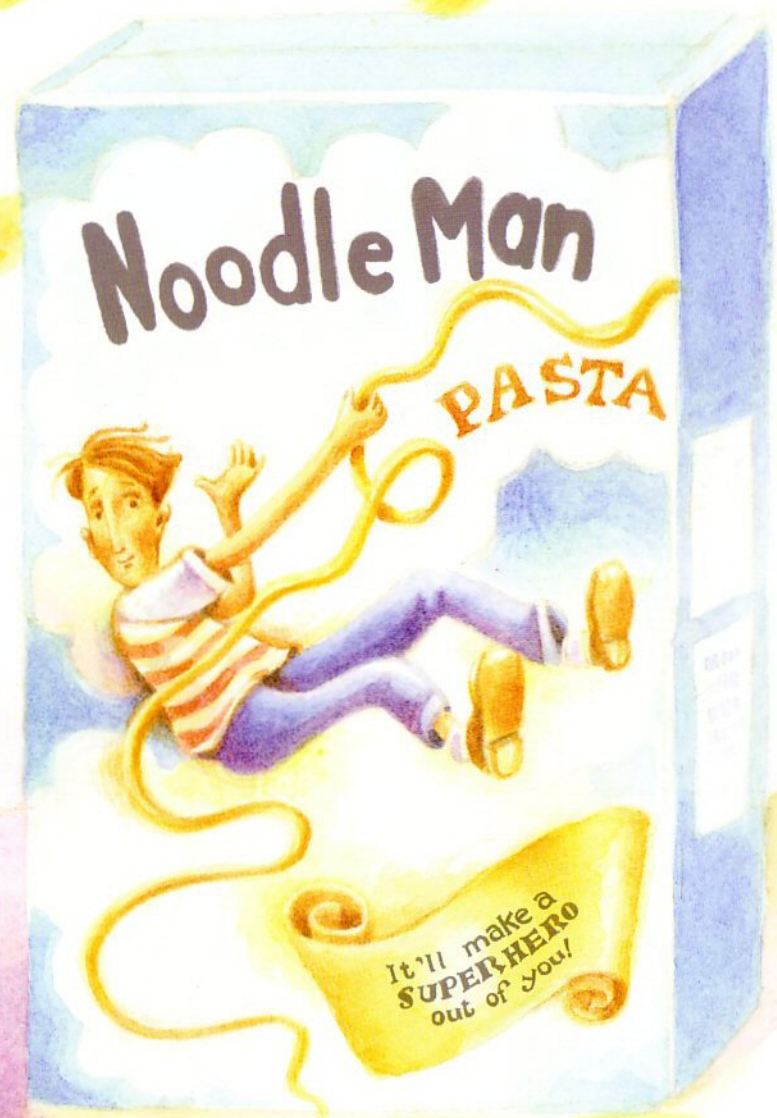




The next day everybody started buying fresh pasta. Al began training community-watch noodle brigades. At night he cooked pasta dinners for Mari at her house. (After all, she couldn't spin pizza dough with her sprained wrist.)







Meanwhile locals and tourists packed the family store. Mama Dente, who's no slouch at business, started packaging pasta in a special way. Sales went through the roof, and almost as fast as pasta boils, the family business was saved!





## *Noodle Knowledge*

Pasta is made of durum wheat mixed with water. This wheat-and-water dough is kneaded. Then it is fed into a machine that squeezes it into ribbons, tubes, sheets, stars, and other shapes. These shapes have many different names in Italian.

To cook pasta properly, put it in boiling water and cook until it is chewable but not mushy. Drain it and add your favorite sauce. Perfectly cooked pasta is slightly firm when you bite it and is said to be “al dente,” meaning “to the tooth.”



