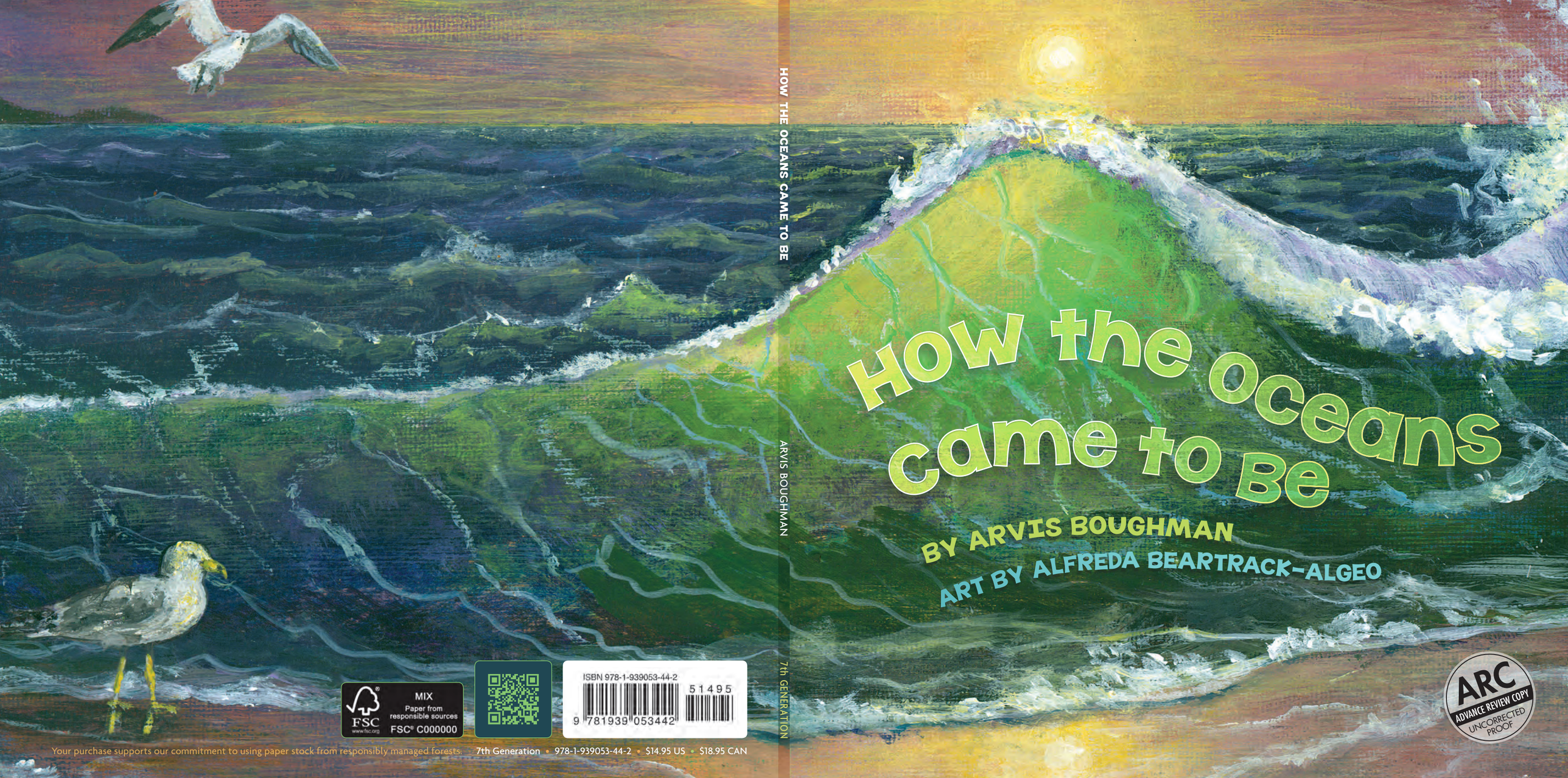
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BY ARVIS BOUGHMAN
ART BY ALFREDA BEARTRACK-ALGEO
HOW THE OCEANS CAME TO BE
ARVIS BOUGHMAN
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How the oceans came to be

A TRADITIONAL LUMBEE STORY

ADVANCED READING MATERIAL

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data available upon request.

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Printed in China

7th Generation
Book Publishing Company
PO Box 99, Summertown, TN 38483
888-260-8458
bookpubco.com
nativevoicesbooks.com

ISBN: 978-1-939053-44-2

27 26 25 24 23 22 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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How the Oceans Came to Be

A Traditional Lumbee Story

BY ARVIS BOUGHMAN

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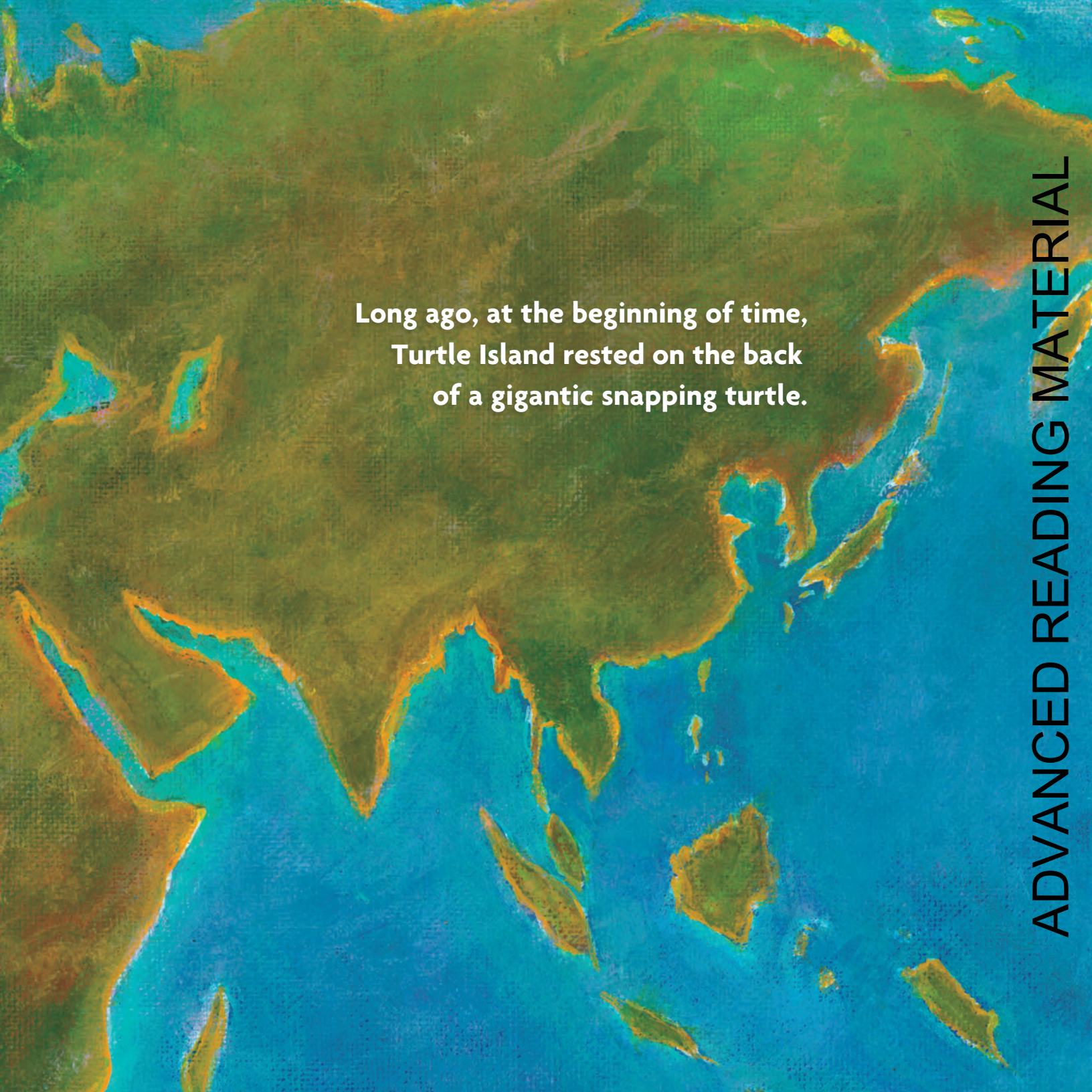
7th Generation
Summertown, Tennessee



**Long ago, at the beginning of time,
Turtle Island rested on the back
of a gigantic snapping turtle.**

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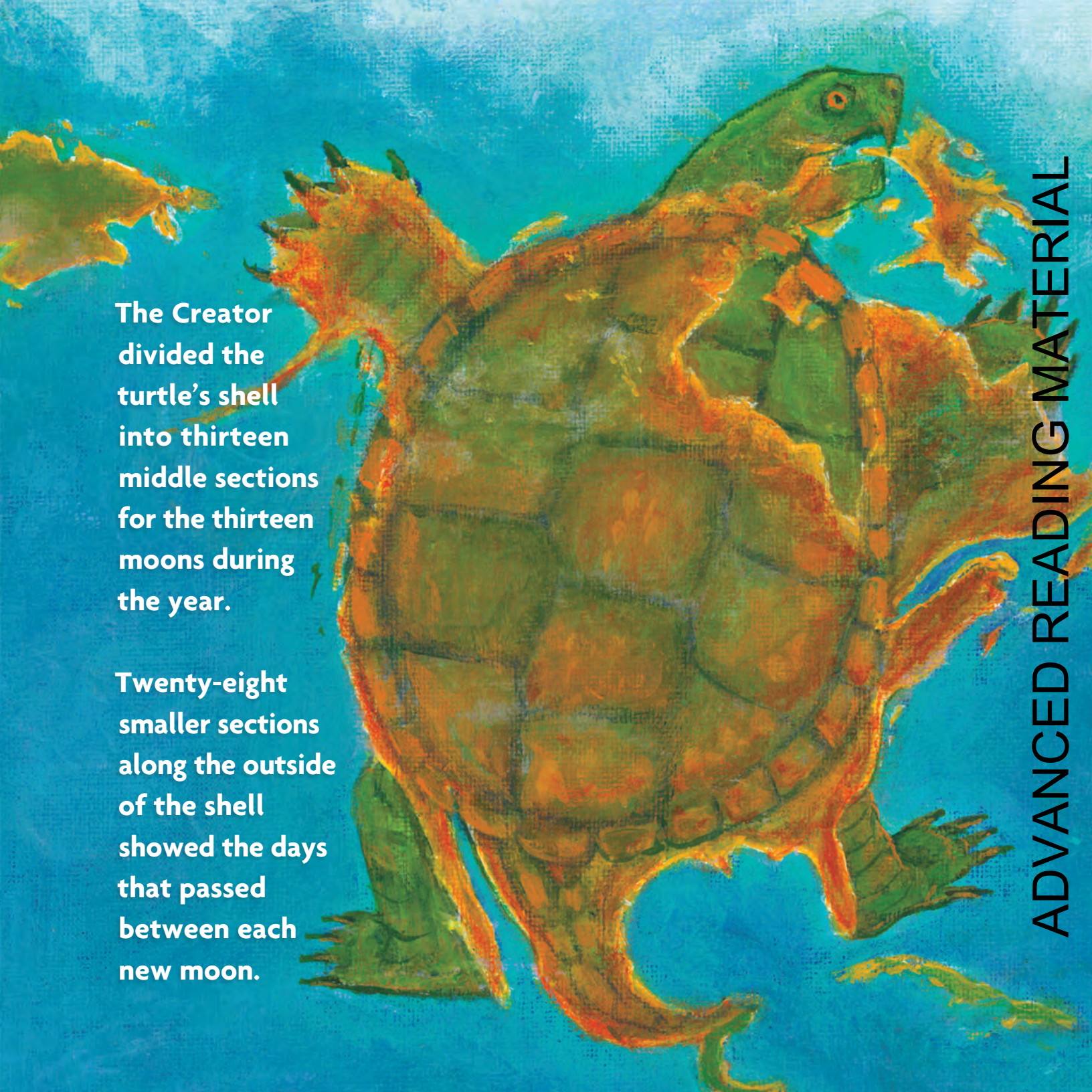

The Creator divided the turtle's shell into thirteen middle sections for the thirteen moons during the year.

Twenty-eight smaller sections along the outside of the shell showed the days that passed between each new moon.

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The gigantic snapping turtle had several hatchlings.

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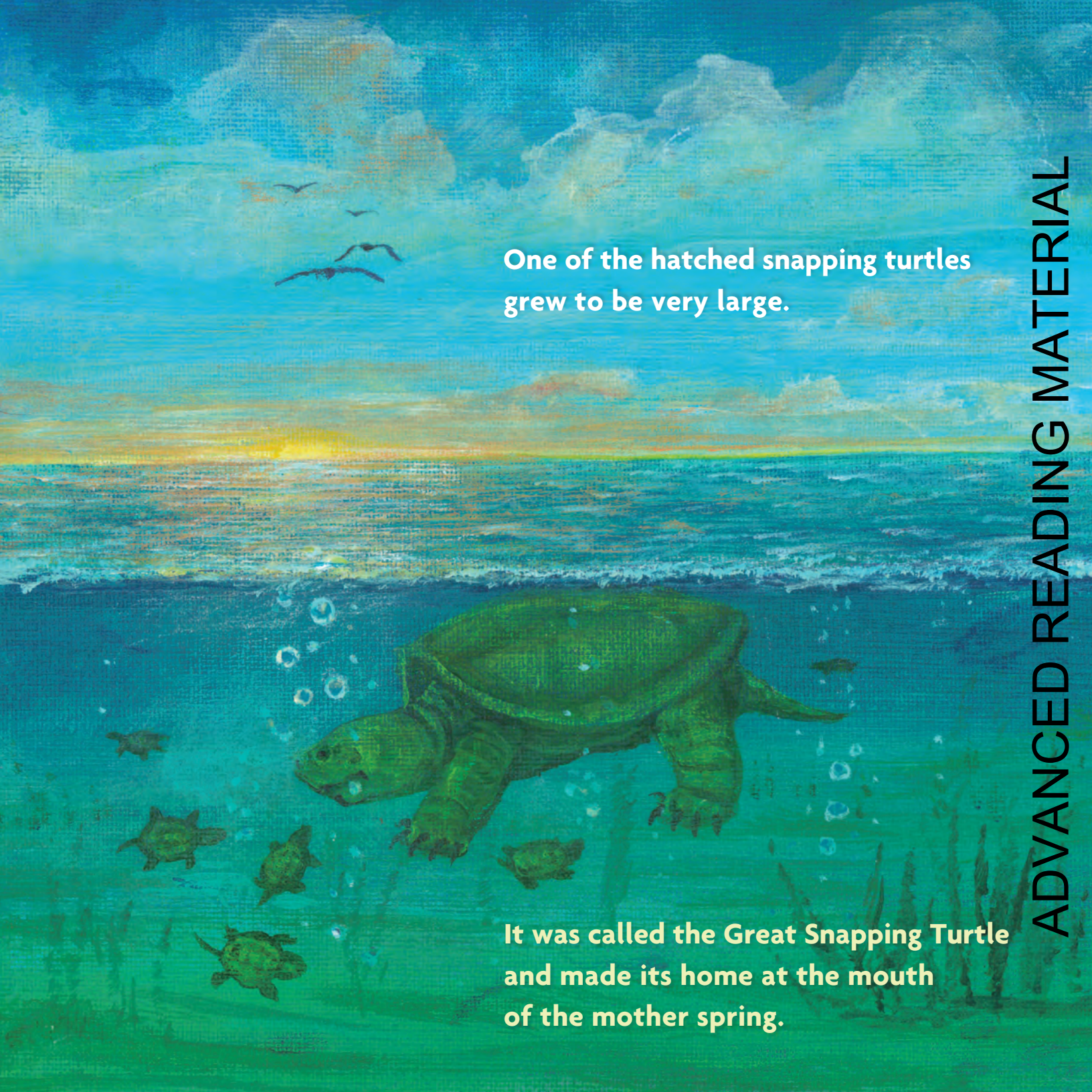

One of the hatched snapping turtles grew to be very large.

It was called the Great Snapping Turtle and made its home at the mouth of the mother spring.

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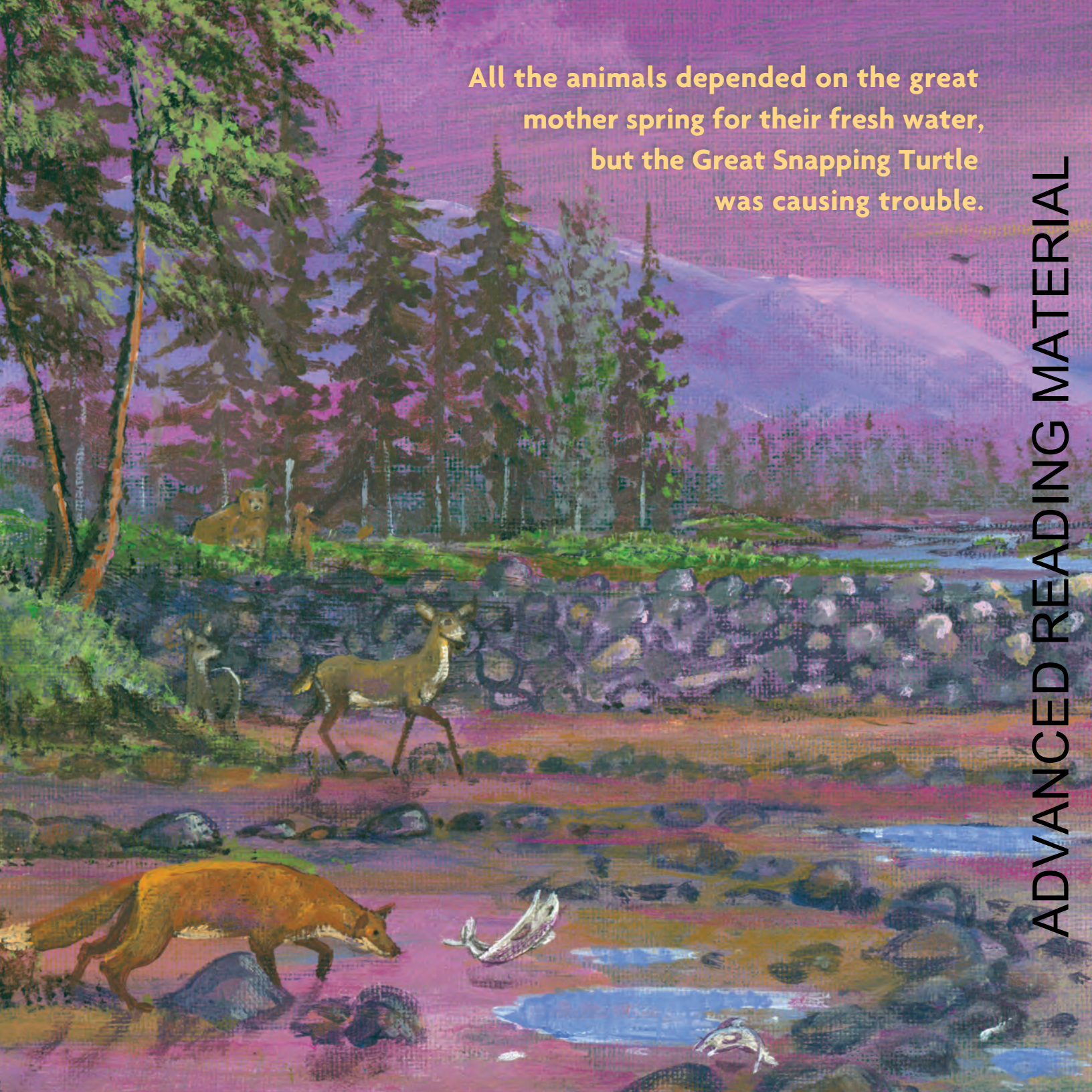

All the animals depended on the great mother spring for their fresh water, but the Great Snapping Turtle was causing trouble.

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ADVANCED READING MATERIAL

One summer's day, it was so scorching hot that the dew did not collect on the plants.

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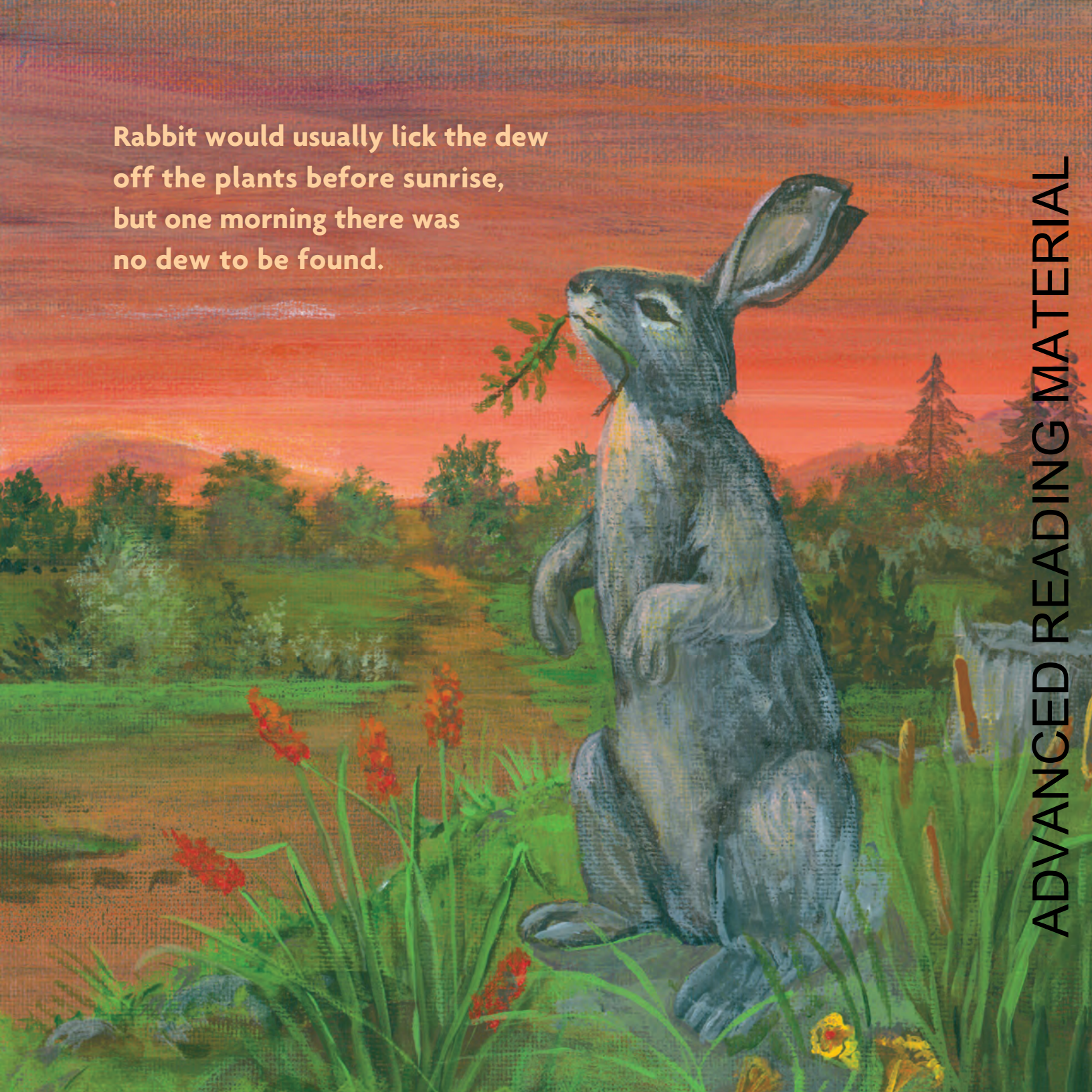

Rabbit would usually lick the dew off the plants before sunrise, but one morning there was no dew to be found.

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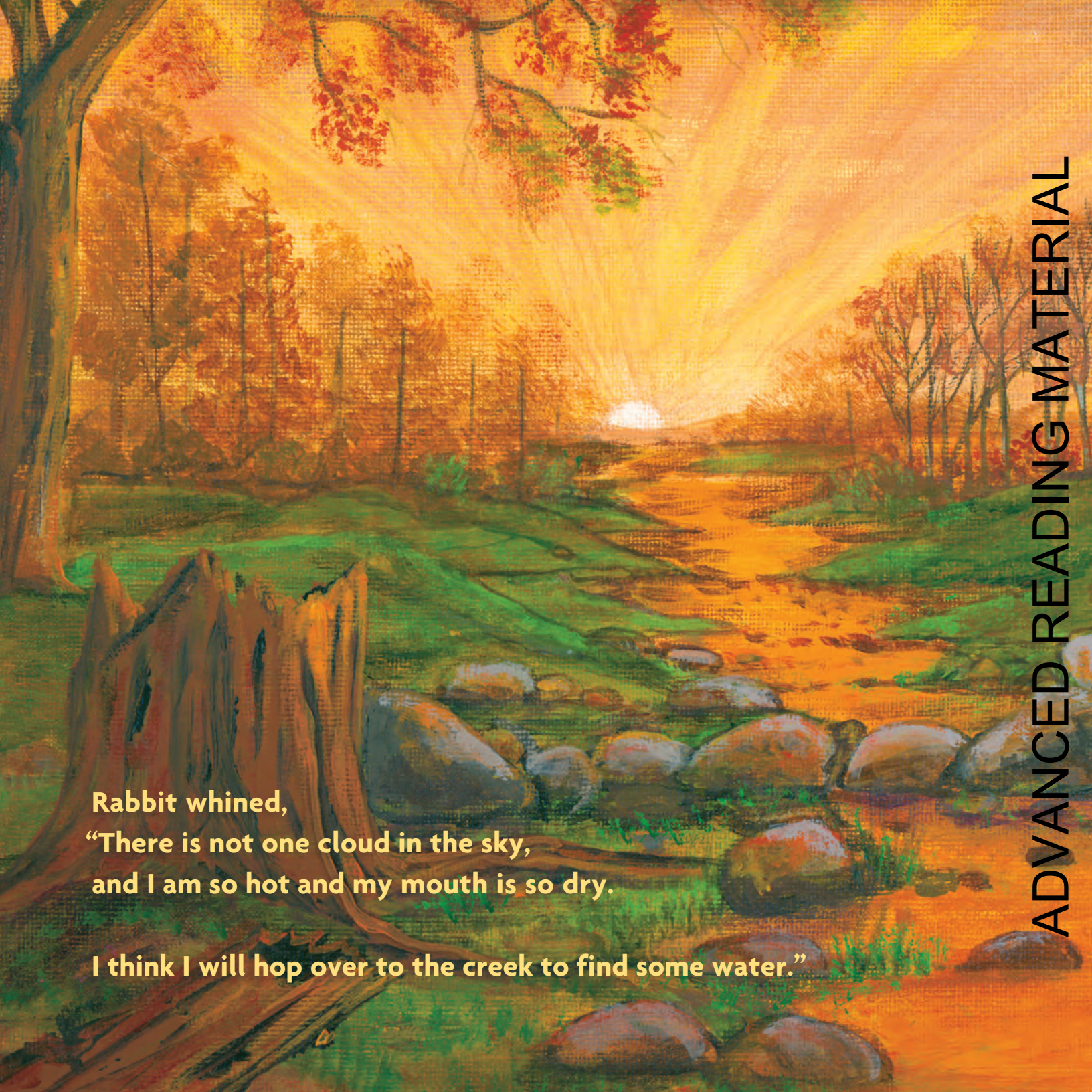

Rabbit whined,
"There is not one cloud in the sky,
and I am so hot and my mouth is so dry.

I think I will hop over to the creek to find some water."

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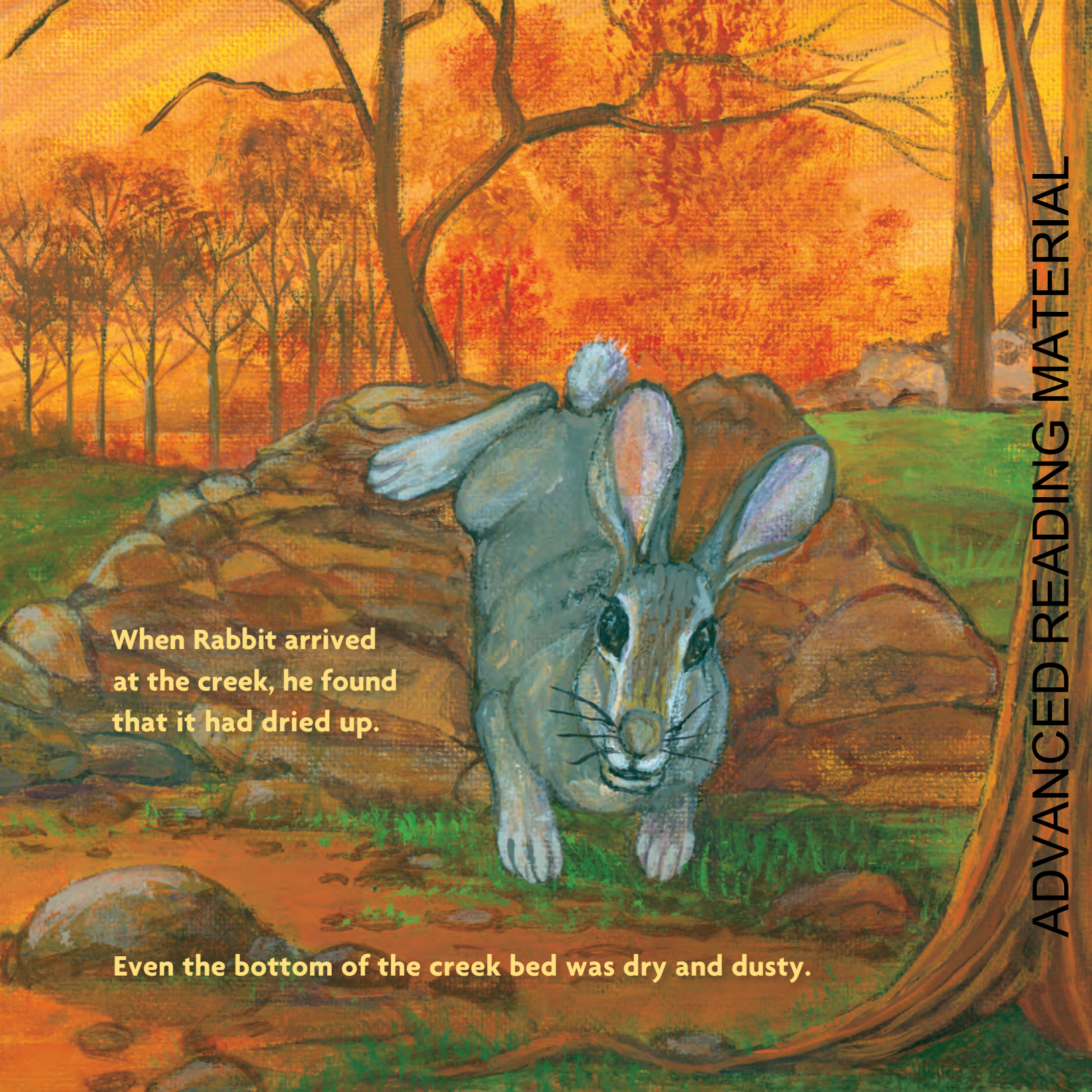

When Rabbit arrived at the creek, he found that it had dried up.

Even the bottom of the creek bed was dry and dusty.

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Rabbit thought,
"Beaver will know where I can find some water."
Rabbit followed the dry creek gully down
to Beaver's lodge.

ADVANCED READING MATERIAL

When Rabbit found Beaver's home,
Rabbit grabbed one of the sticks from the lodge
and knocked on Beaver's door, yelling,
"Beaver! Where are you?"

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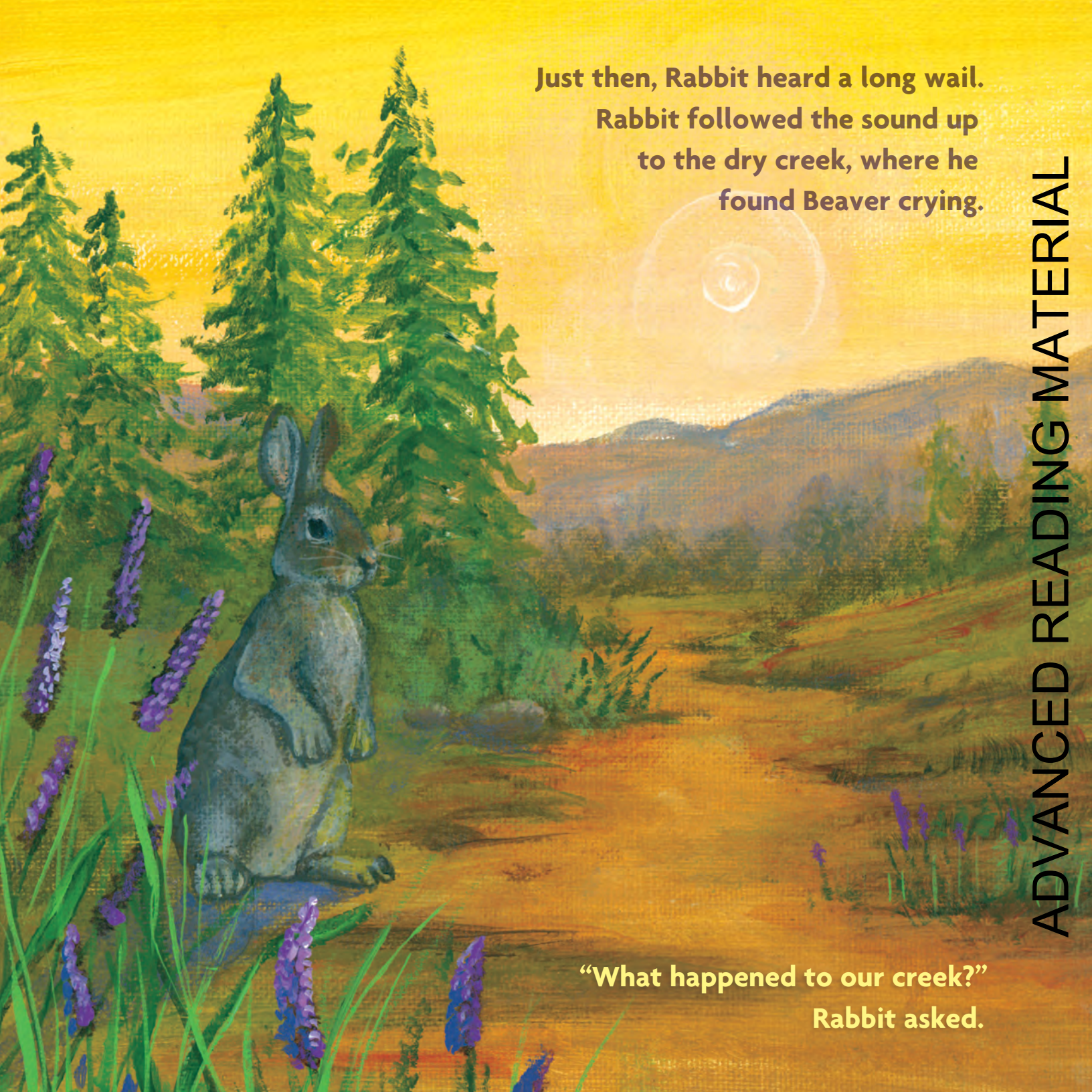

Just then, Rabbit heard a long wail. Rabbit followed the sound up to the dry creek, where he found Beaver crying.

"What happened to our creek?" Rabbit asked.

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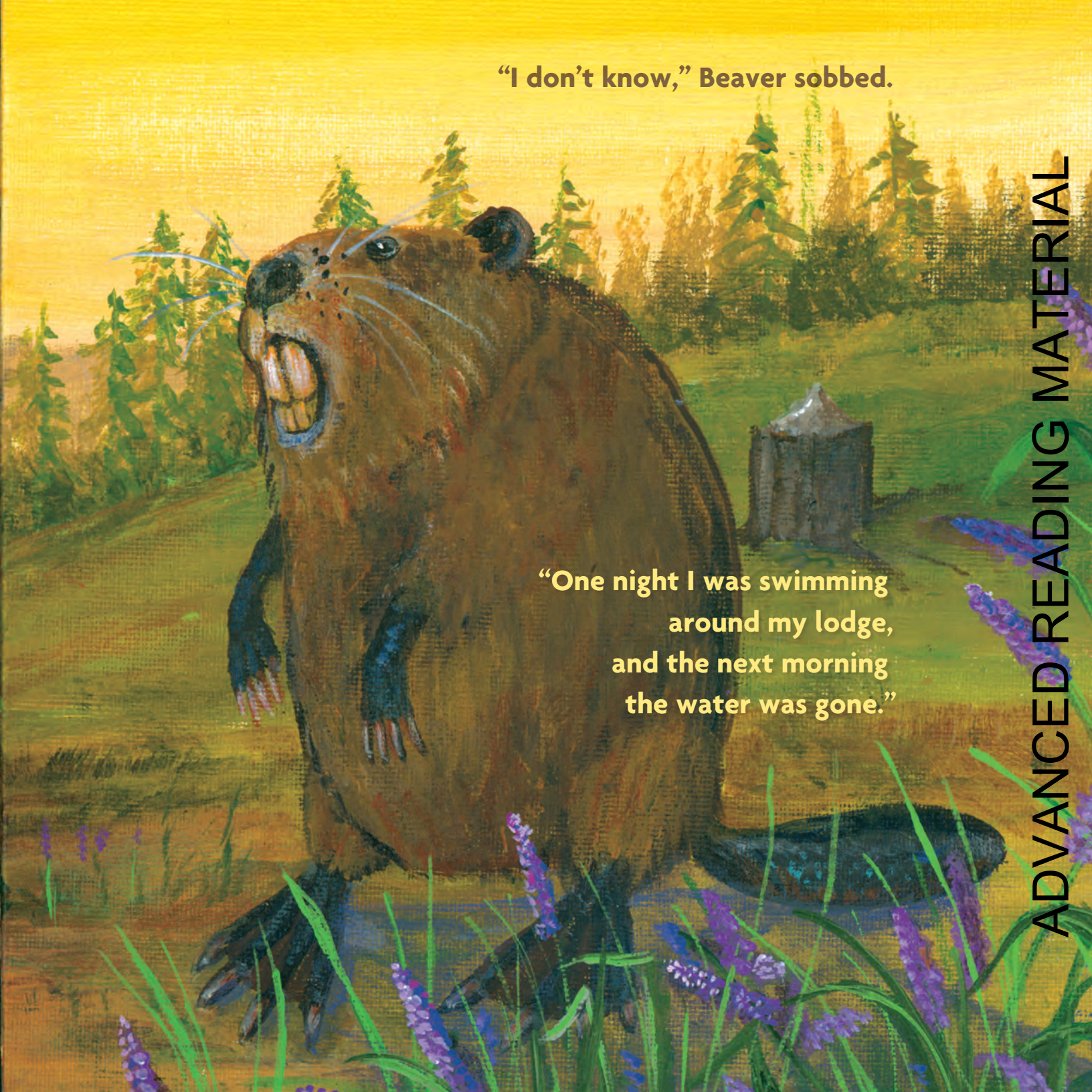

"I don't know," Beaver sobbed.

"One night I was swimming
around my lodge,
and the next morning
the water was gone."

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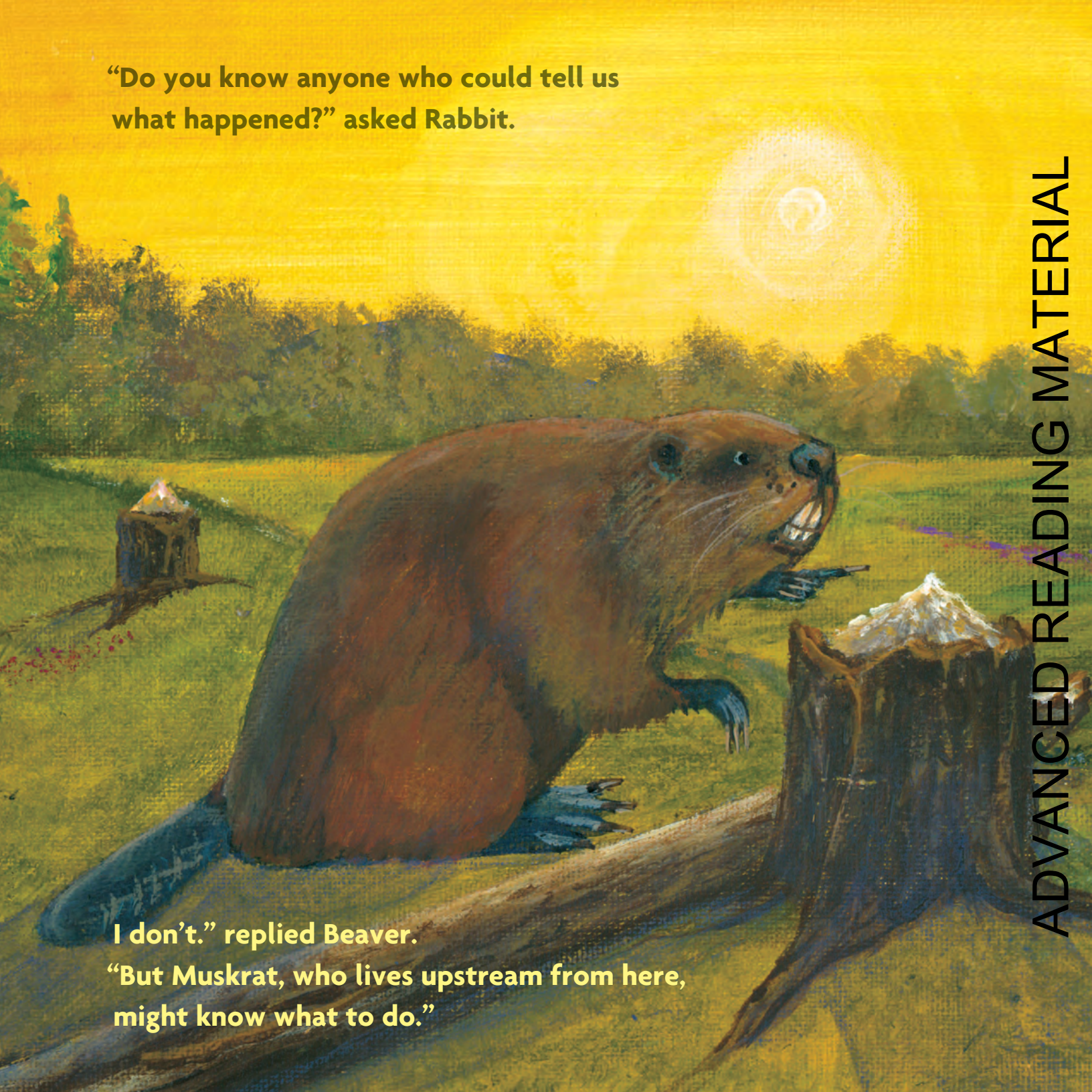

"Do you know anyone who could tell us what happened?" asked Rabbit.

I don't." replied Beaver.
"But Muskrat, who lives upstream from here, might know what to do."

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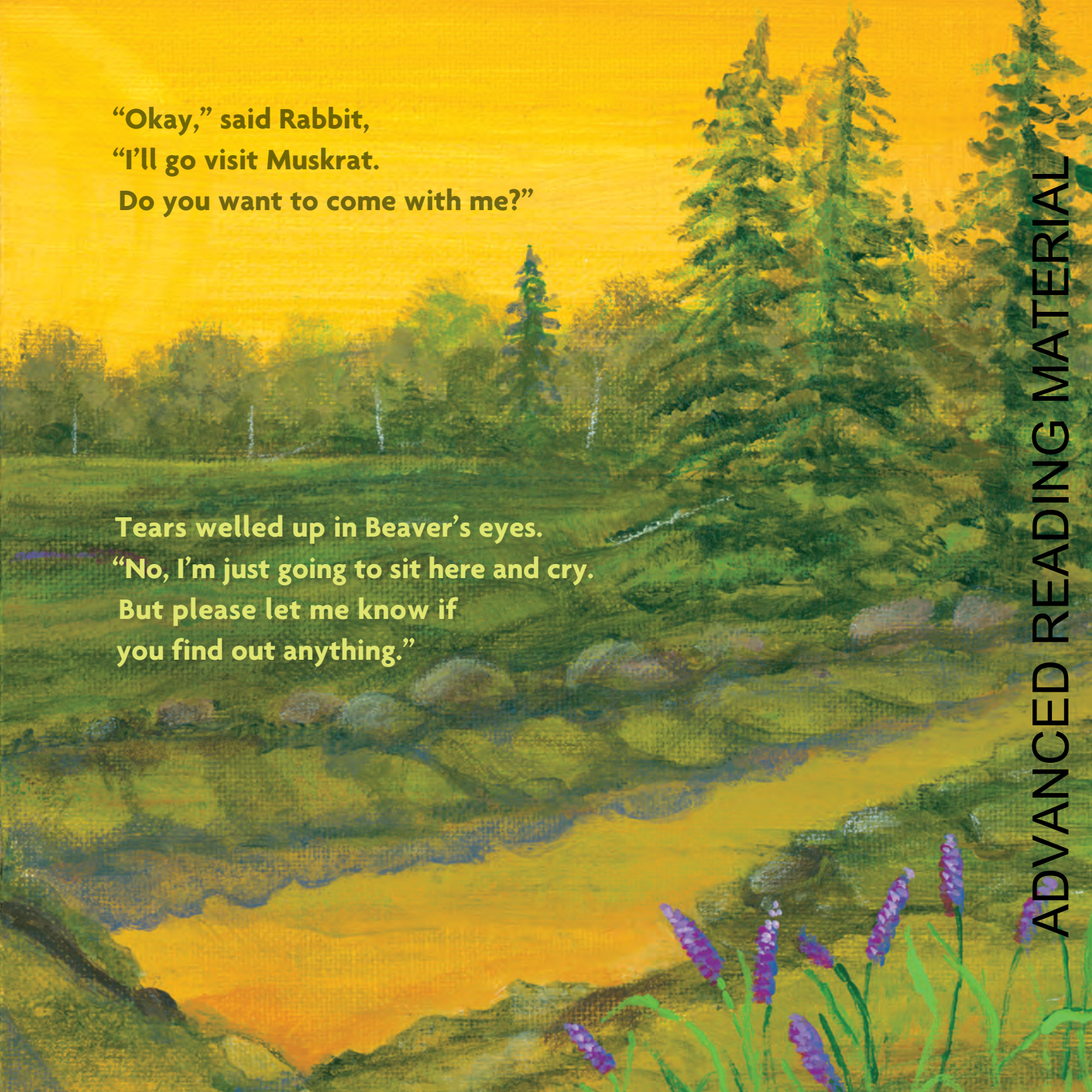

"Okay," said Rabbit,
"I'll go visit Muskrat.
Do you want to come with me?"

Tears welled up in Beaver's eyes.
"No, I'm just going to sit here and cry.
But please let me know if
you find out anything."

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Rabbit shuffled up the dry creek bed
until the sun was directly overhead.

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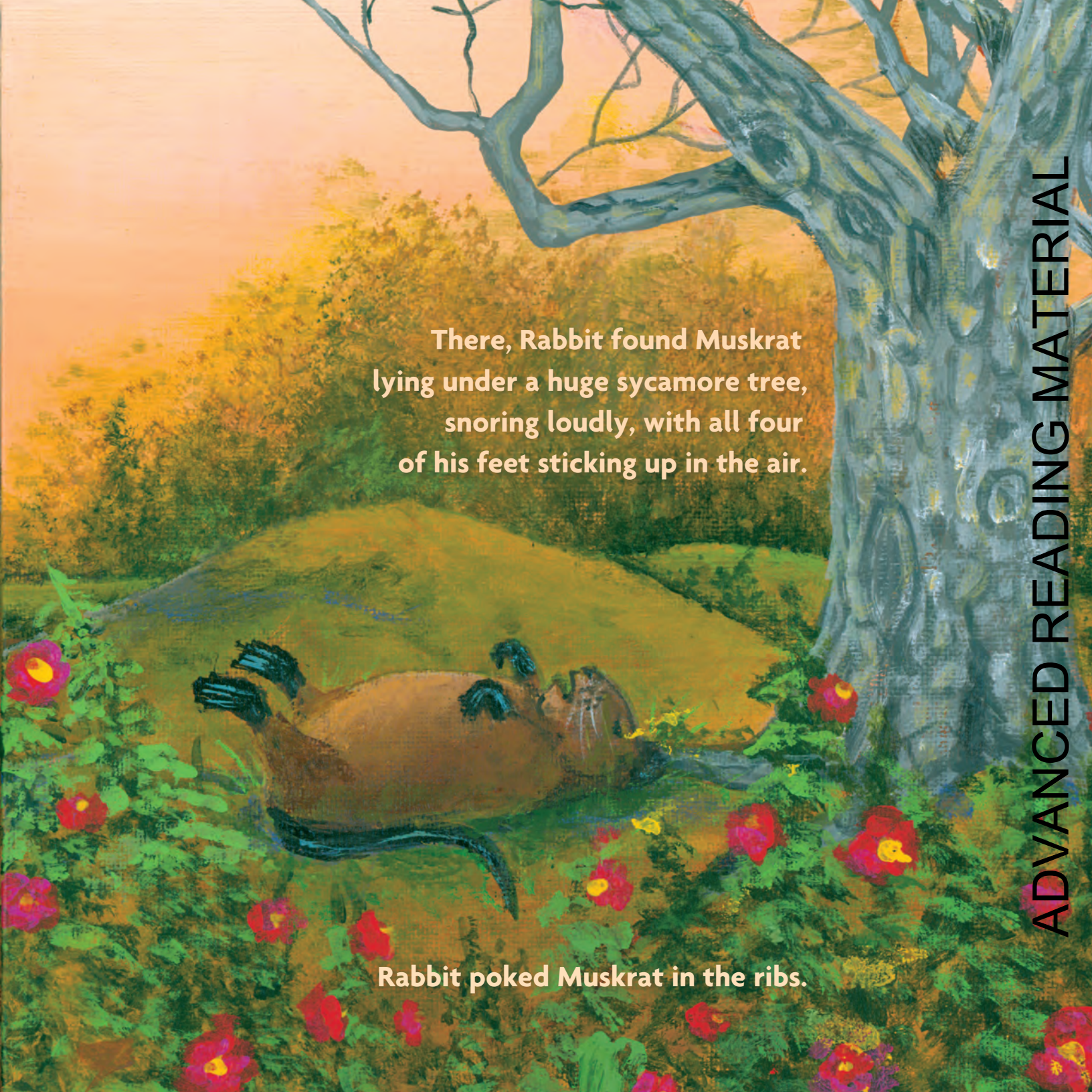

There, Rabbit found Muskrat lying under a huge sycamore tree, snoring loudly, with all four of his feet sticking up in the air.

Rabbit poked Muskrat in the ribs.

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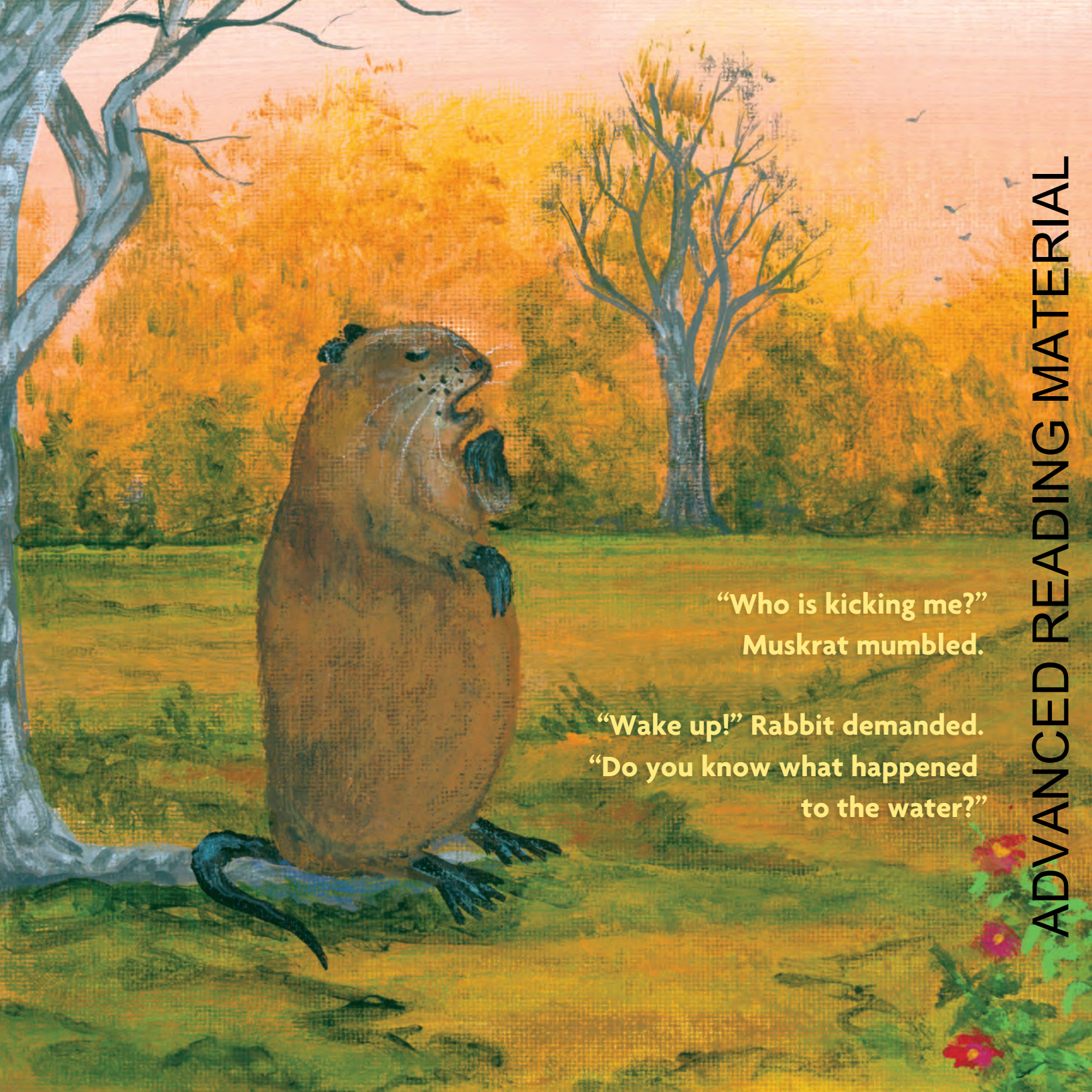
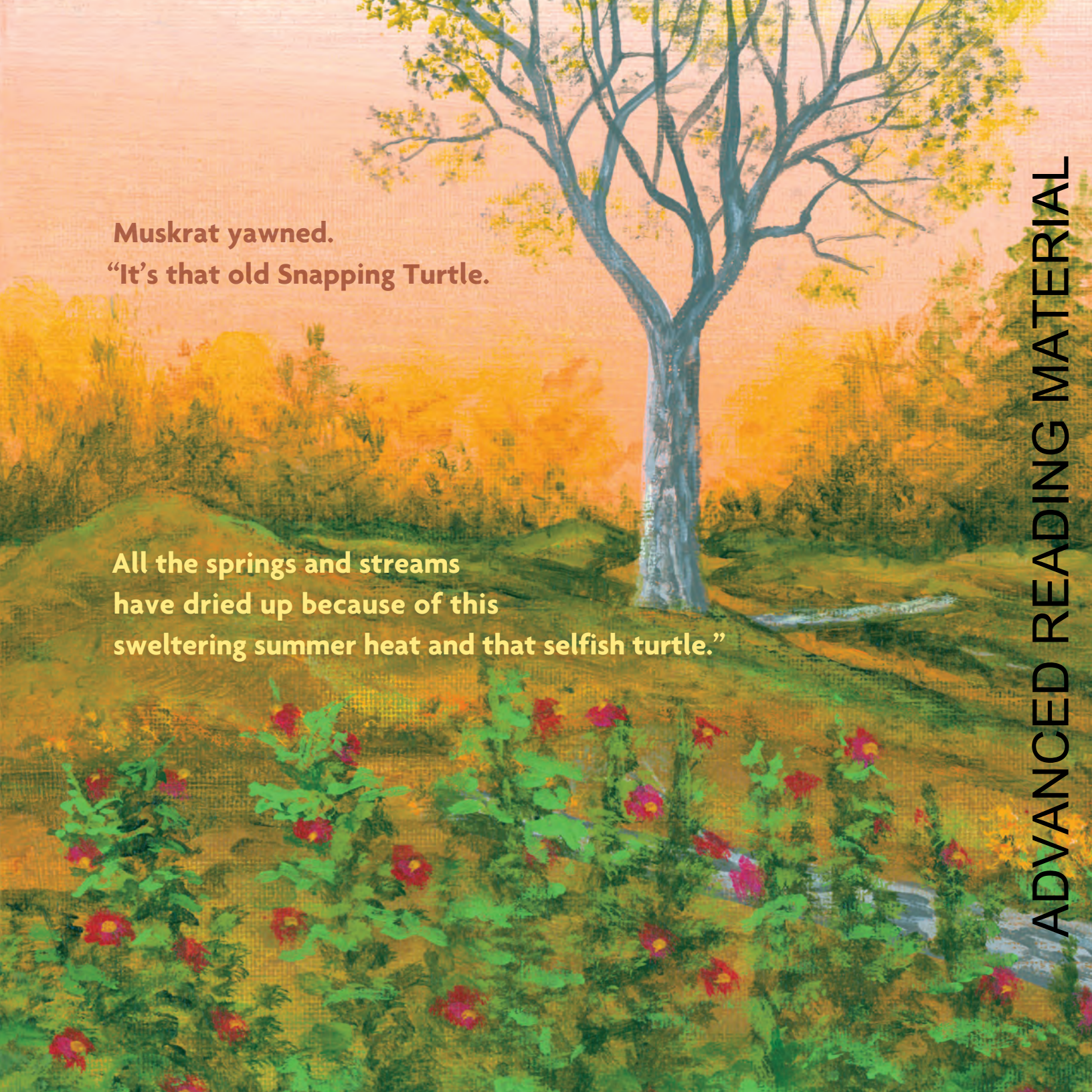


"Who is kicking me?"
Muskrat mumbled.

"Wake up!" Rabbit demanded.
"Do you know what happened
to the water?"

ADVANCED READING MATERIAL



Muskrat yawned.
"It's that old Snapping Turtle.

All the springs and streams
have dried up because of this
sweltering summer heat and that selfish turtle."

ADVANCED READING MATERIAL

Rabbit considered what Muskrat had said, then replied,

"Do you want to go with me to visit the Great Snapping Turtle?"

ADVANCED READING MATERIAL

Muskrat rolled over and sighed, "I'm sad there are no streams and springs, but I am so very sleepy.

If you stumble across any news, come and whisper it in my ear."

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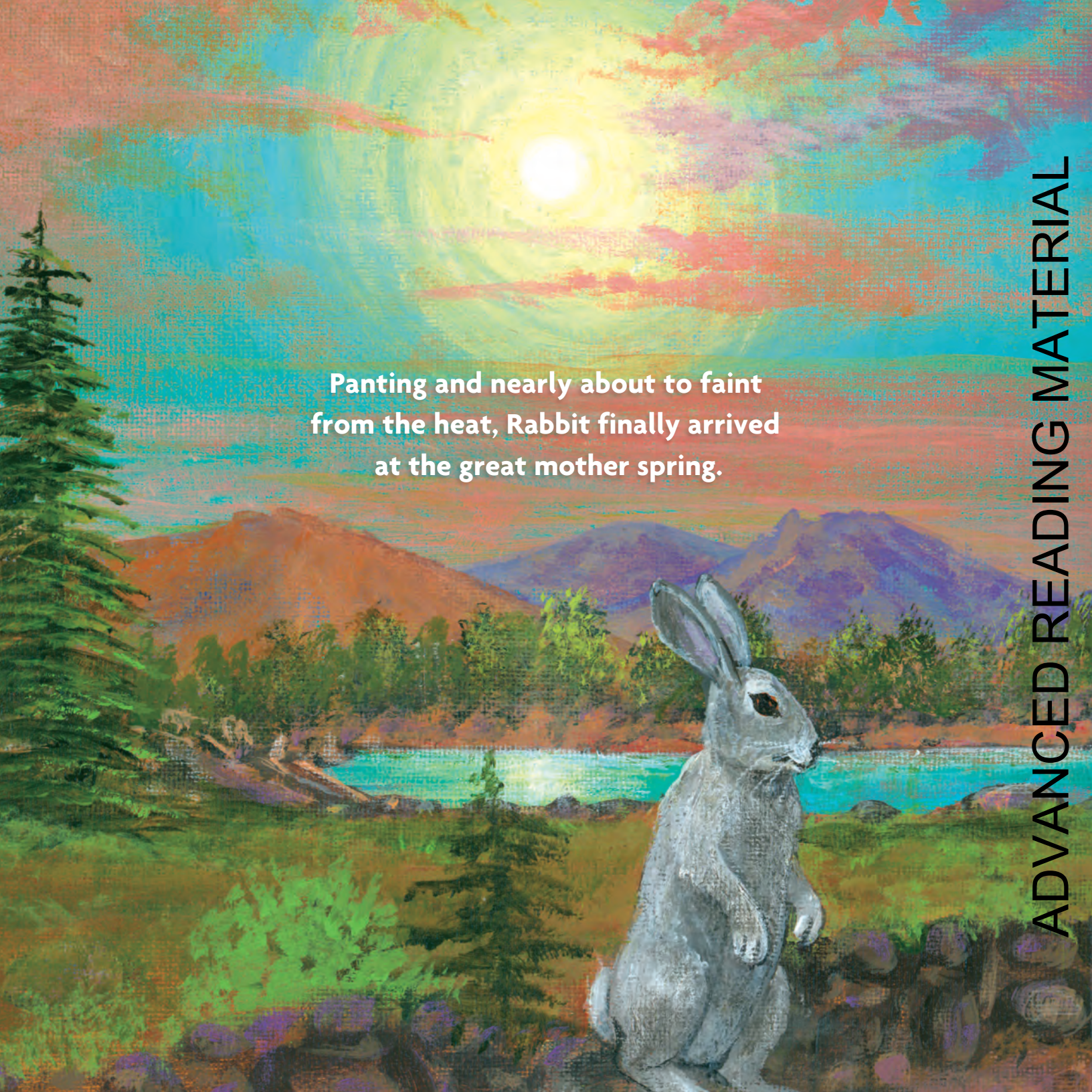

Panting and nearly about to faint from the heat, Rabbit finally arrived at the great mother spring.

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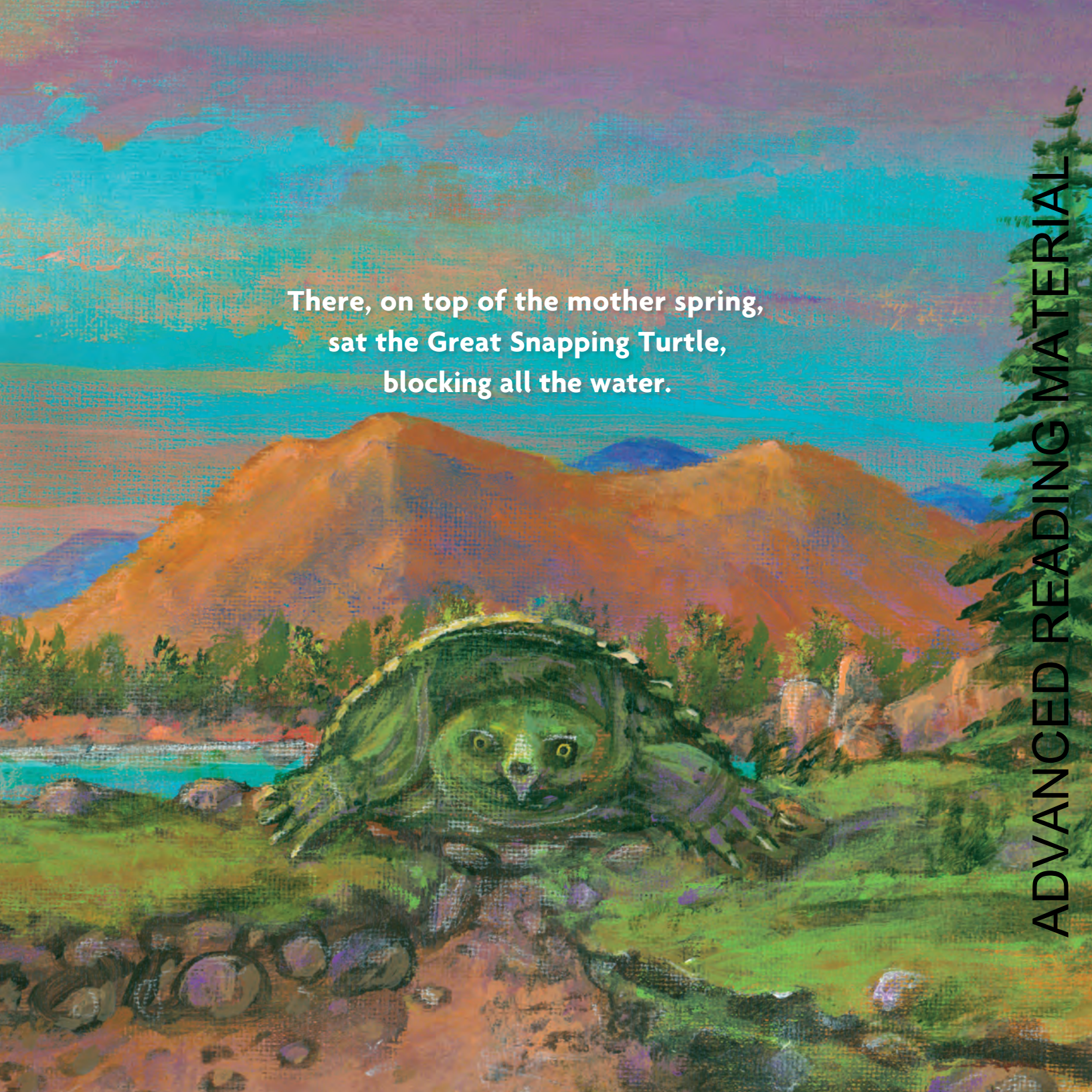

There, on top of the mother spring,
sat the Great Snapping Turtle,
blocking all the water.

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With all his might,
Rabbit shouted up at the huge turtle,

"Please, Great Snapping Turtle, let me have some water."

"I am so very hot and thirsty."

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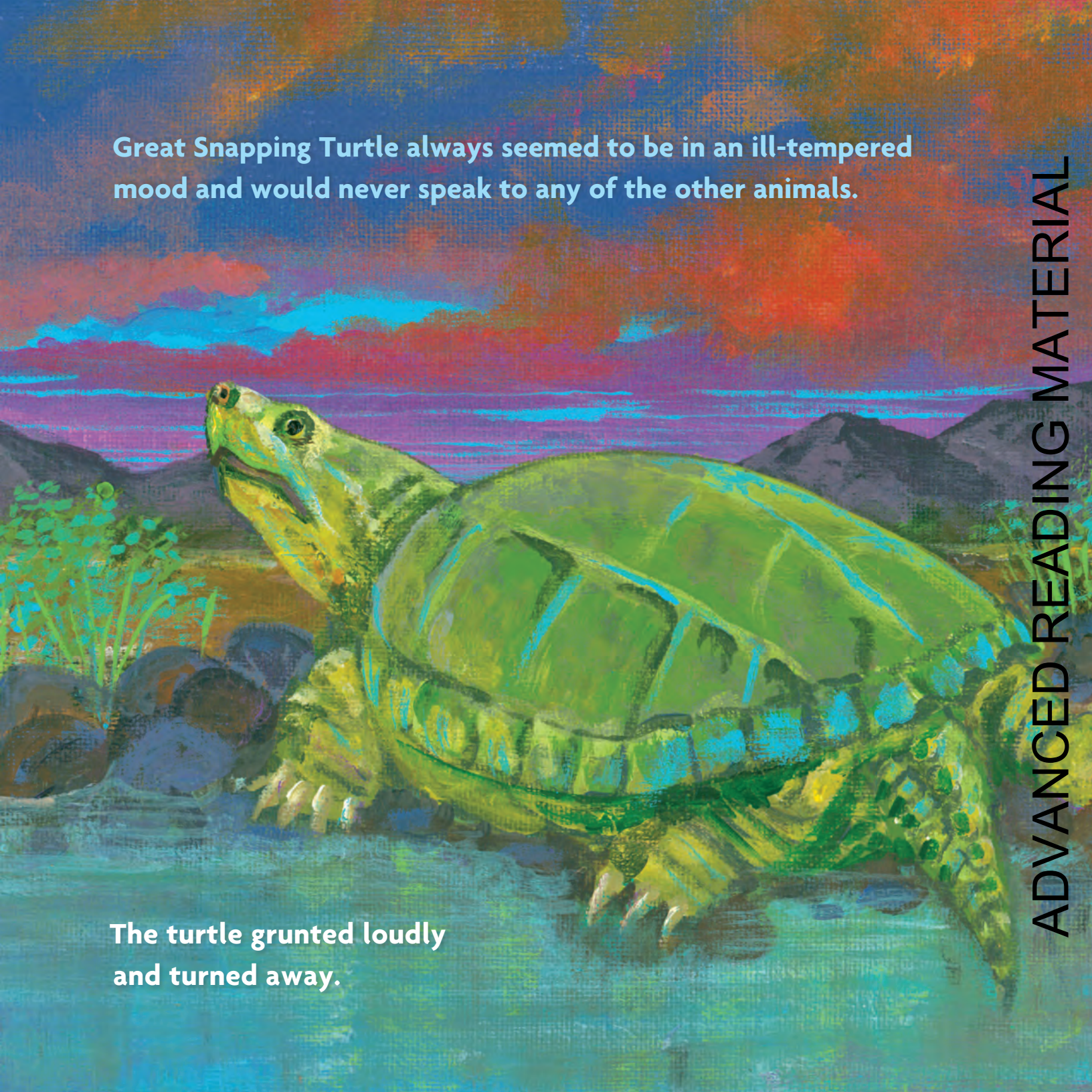

Great Snapping Turtle always seemed to be in an ill-tempered mood and would never speak to any of the other animals.

The turtle grunted loudly and turned away.

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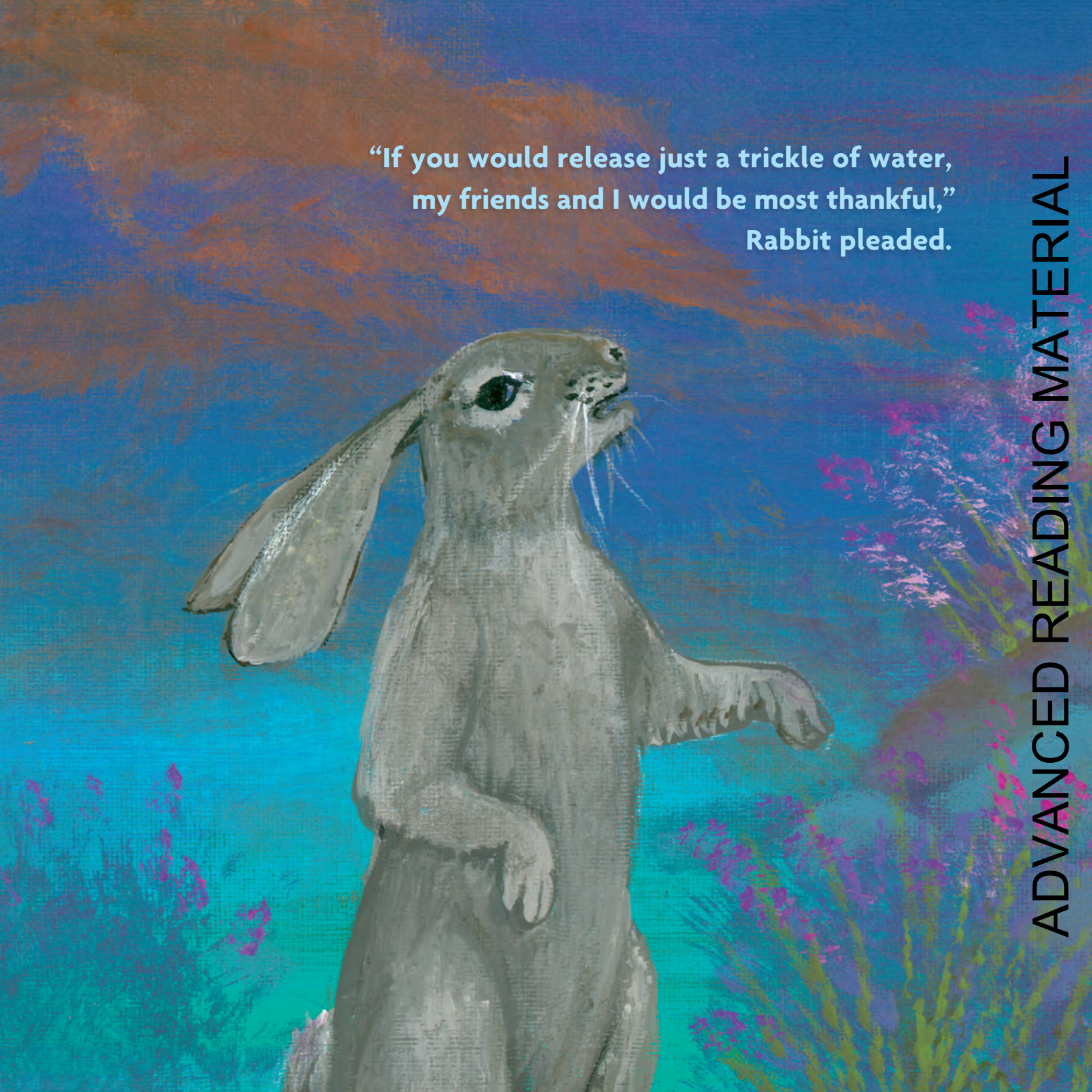

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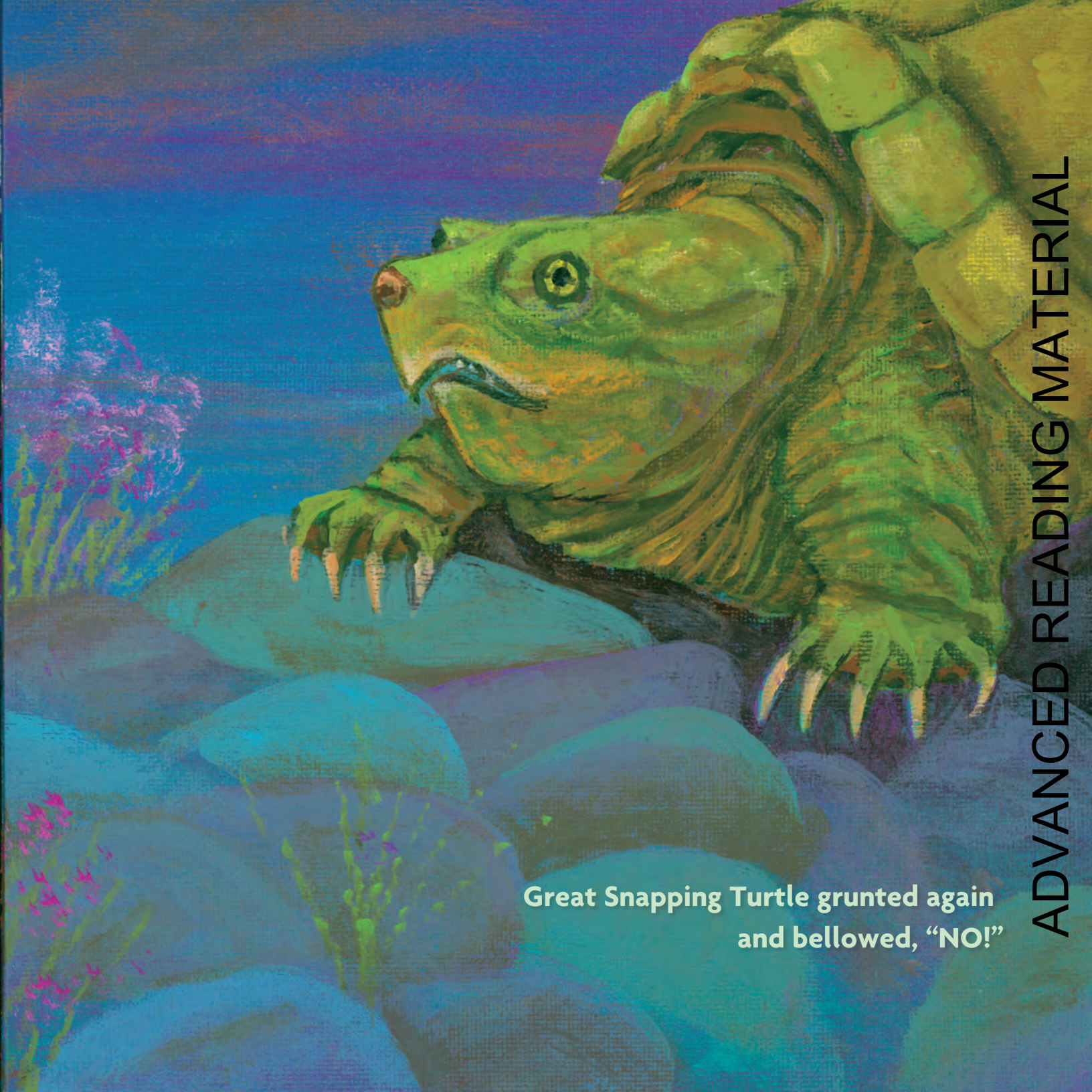

Great Snapping Turtle grunted again
and bellowed, "NO!"

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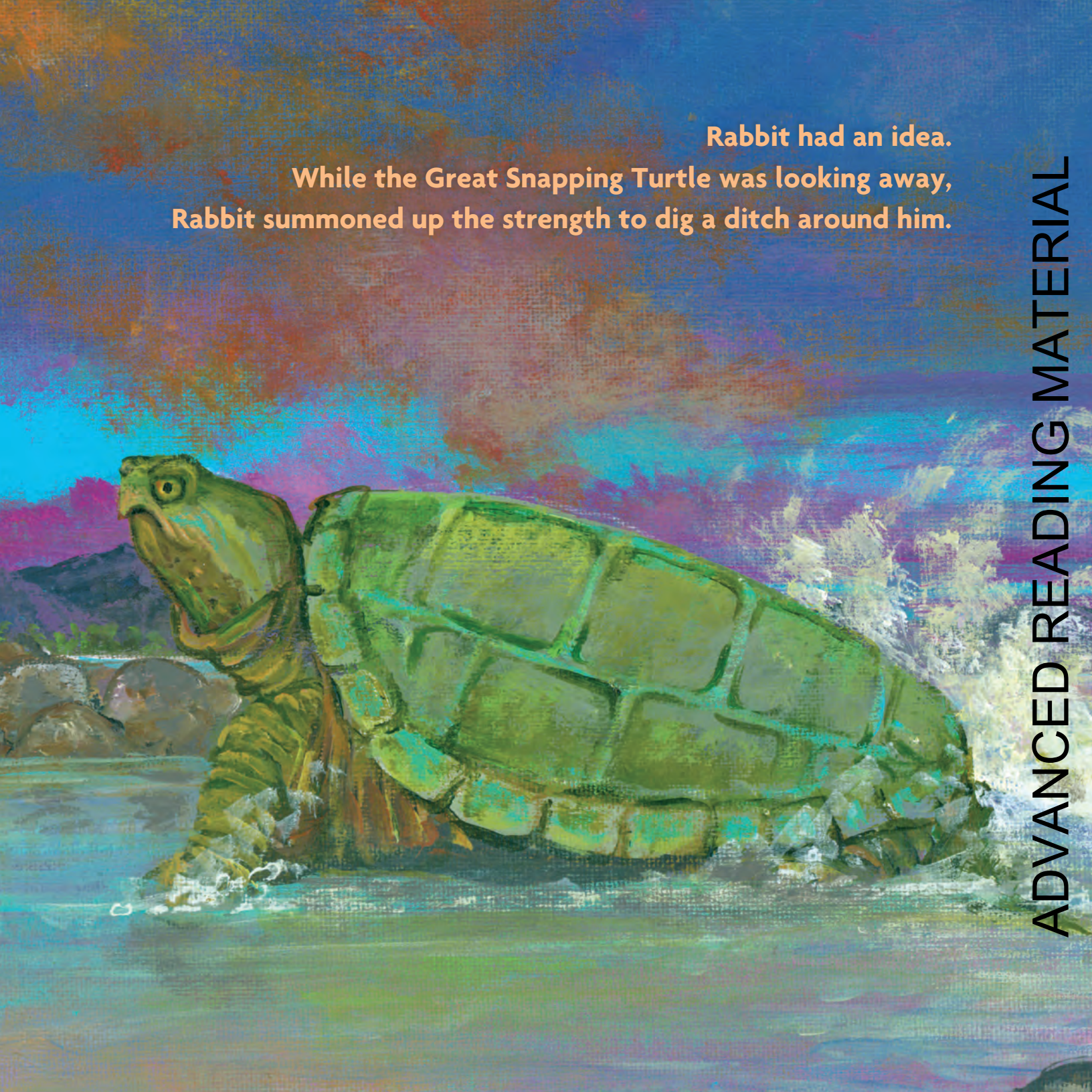

Rabbit had an idea.
While the Great Snapping Turtle was looking away,
Rabbit summoned up the strength to dig a ditch around him.

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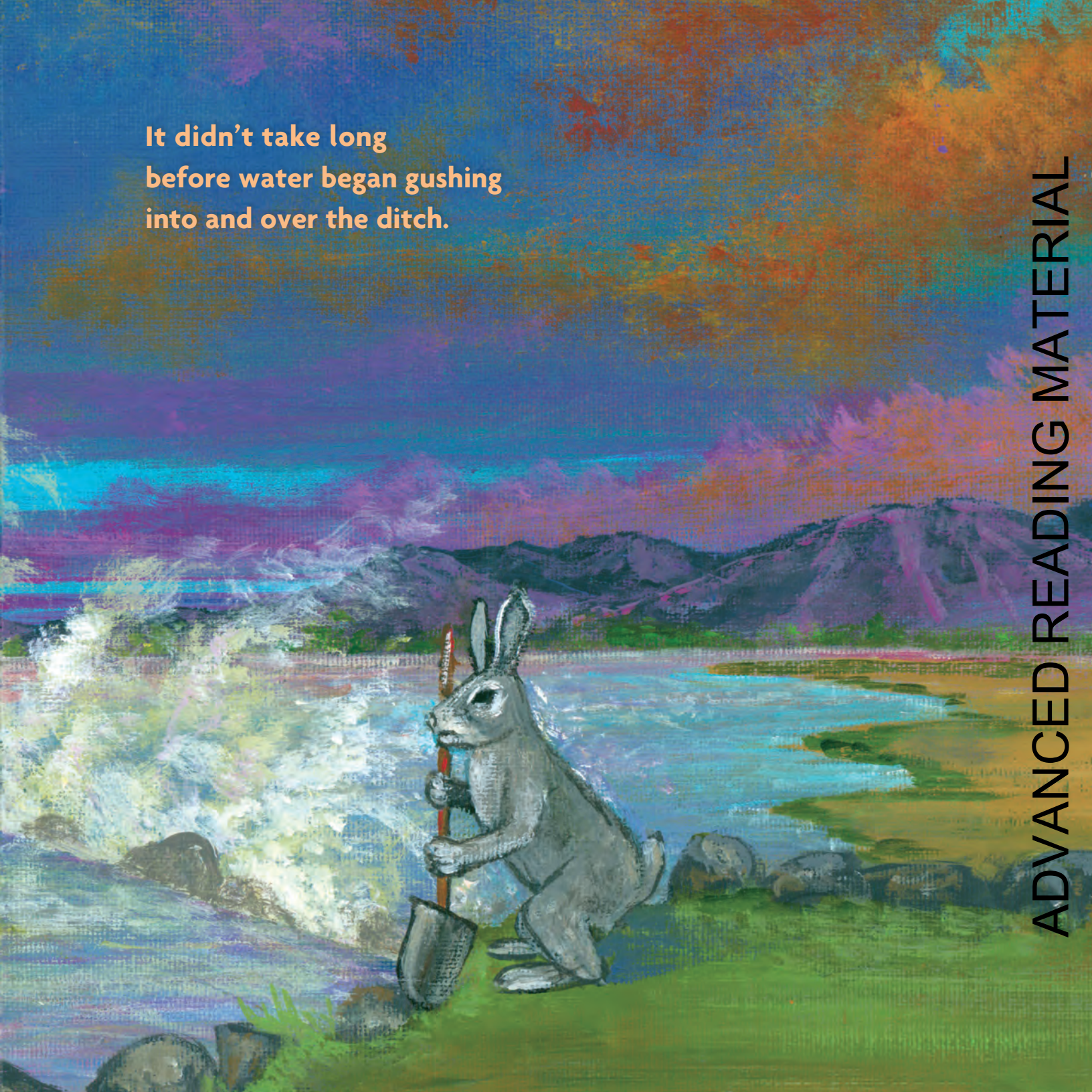

It didn't take long before water began gushing into and over the ditch.

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So much water ran out
that it made gullies.

Then the gullies became streams,
and the streams came together
to form the Lumbee River.

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The Lumbee River flowed into other rivers.

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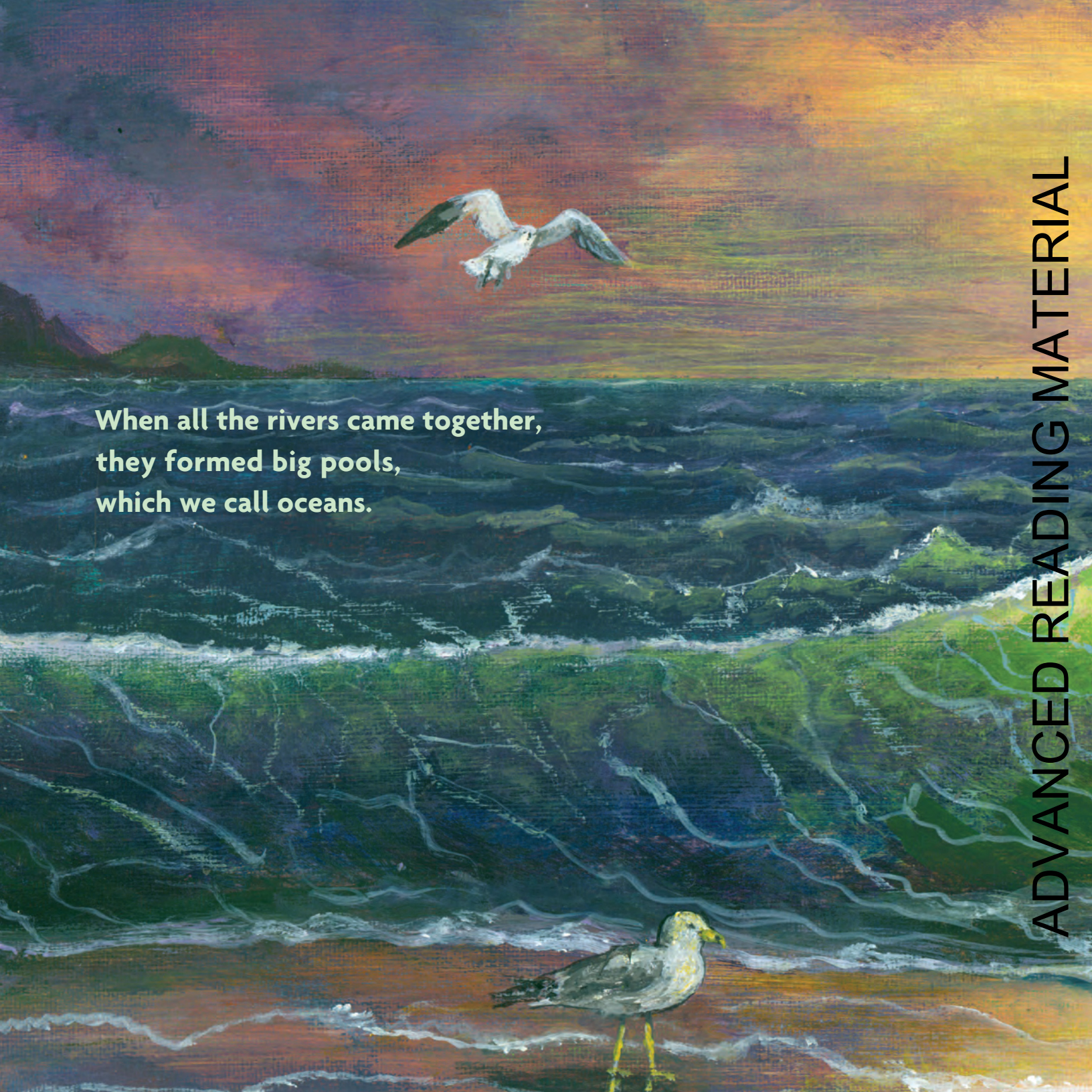

When all the rivers came together,
they formed big pools,
which we call oceans.

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Rabbit had a nice, long drink of cool water.

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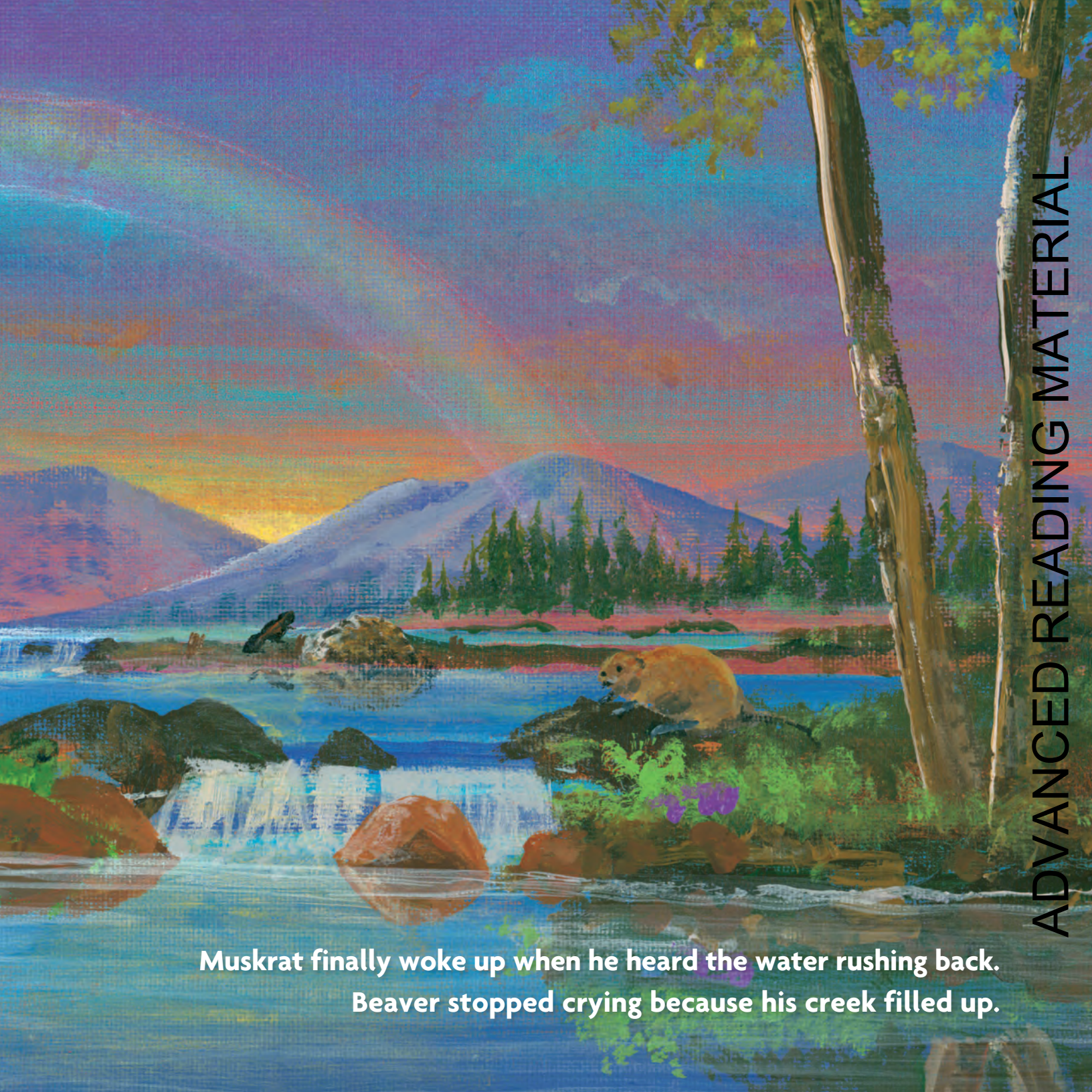

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Muskrat finally woke up when he heard the water rushing back.
Beaver stopped crying because his creek filled up.

About the author

Arvis Boughman is an enrolled member of the Lumbee Indian tribe of North Carolina. He works with adults and children as an elementary school teacher and a speech/language pathologist. He has worked with children from many different Nations, including First Nations children from the Lumbee, the Eastern Band of Cherokee, and the Sioux. He is always learning about his tribe and is an advocate for federal recognition of the Lumbee Nation. Arvis currently lives in the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina with his wife, Kim; daughter, Clara-Ann; and son, Micah.

About the illustrator

Alfreda Beartrack-Algeo is a storyteller and poet as well as an artist and illustrator. She is a member of the Lower Brule Lakota Nation, Kul Wicasa Oyate, Lower Brule, South Dakota, where she grew up surrounded by her tiyóspaye, her circle of family and friends. Alfreda uses various art forms as a means to tell her stories. Alfreda says, "As long as I have a story left to tell, I feel I have a responsibility to gift that story forward." Alfreda currently lives in beautiful Palisade, Colorado, with her spouse, David Algeo.

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