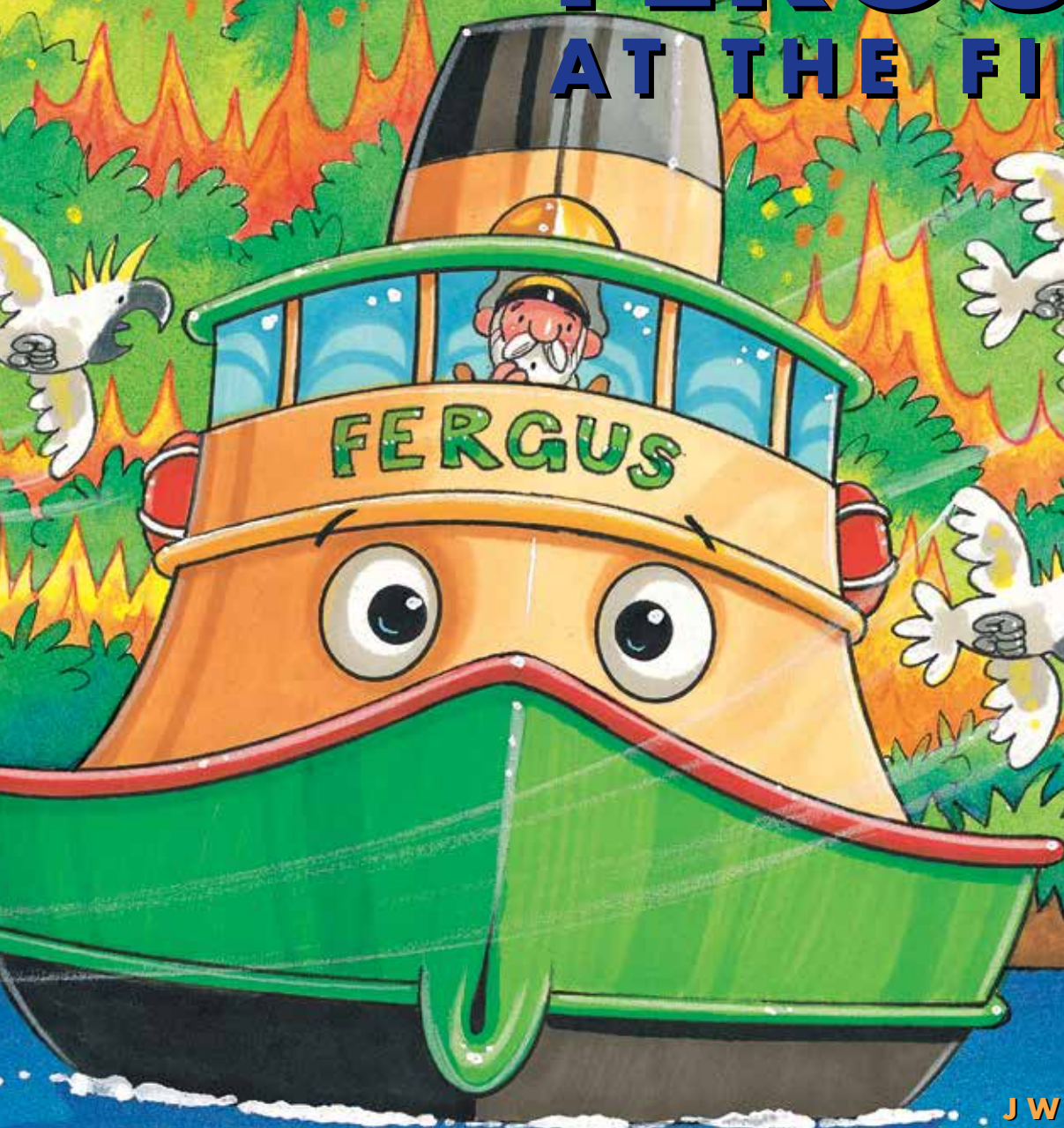


FERGUS

AT THE FIRE



J W Noble
Peter Townsend



FERGUS AT THE FIRE

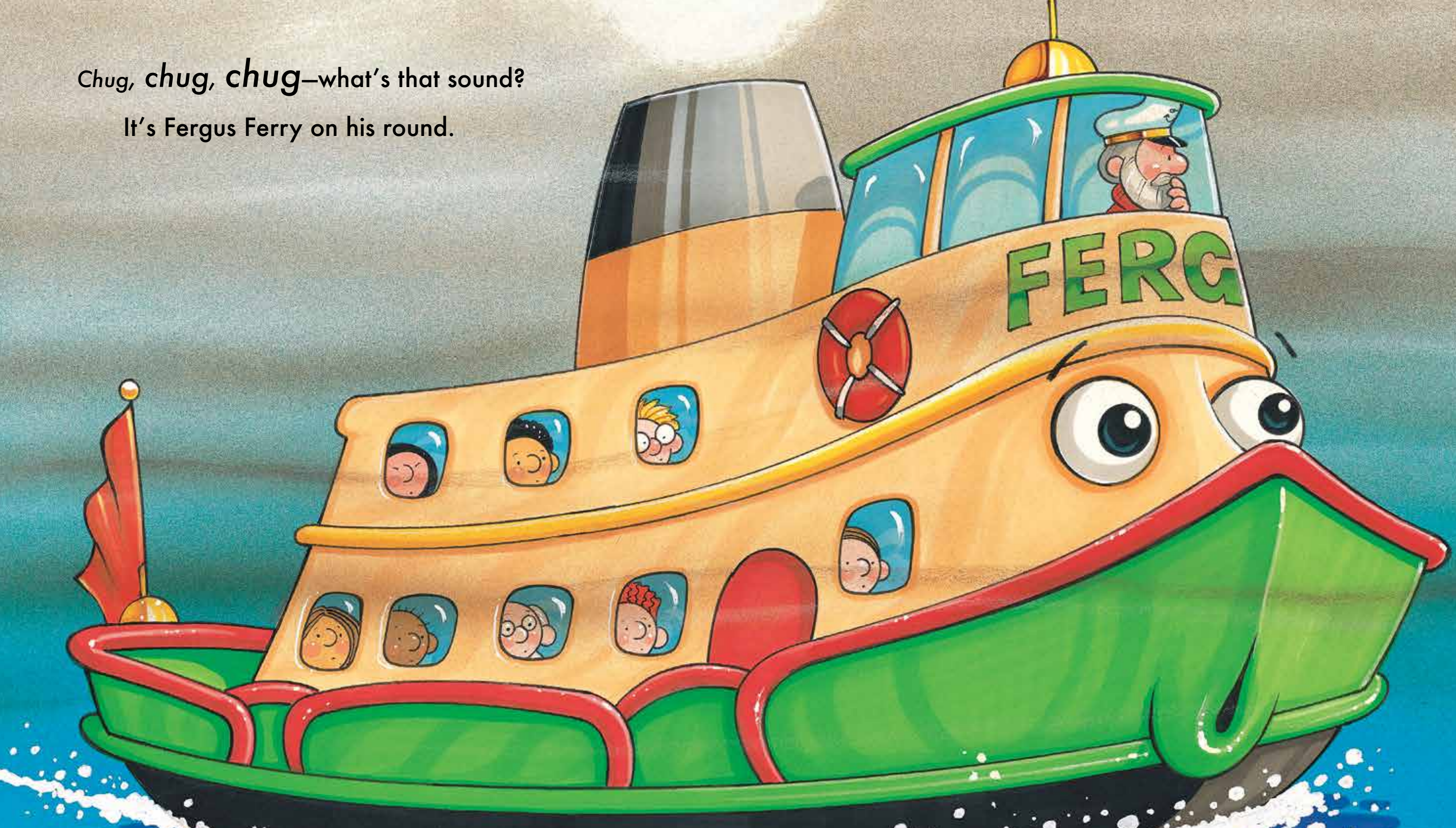
**J W Noble
Peter Townsend**

Snwball
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Chug, chug, **chug**—what's that sound?

It's Fergus Ferry on his round.

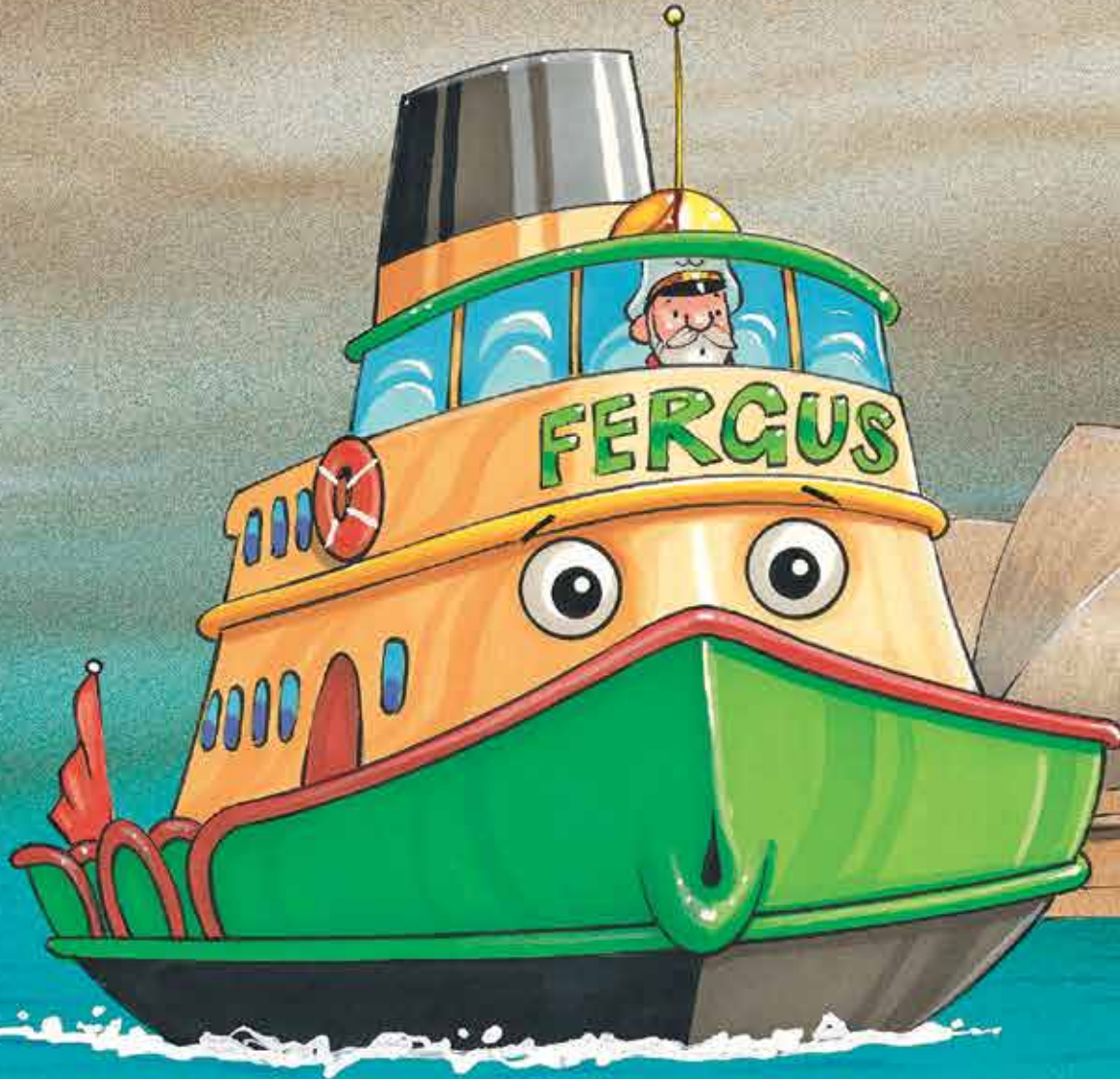


All over the harbour there's a murky haze.

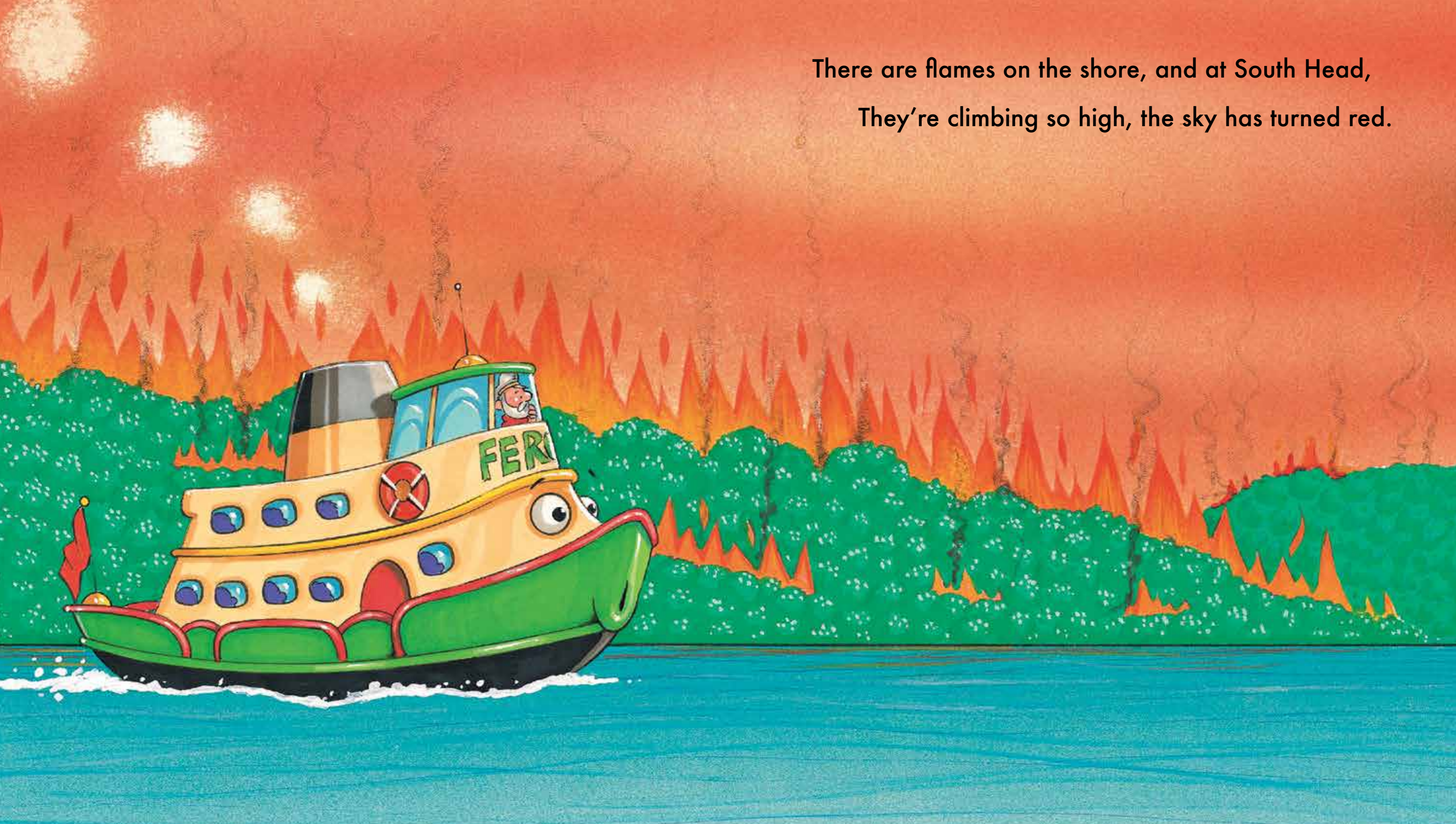
Bushfires have been burning for days and days.

The sky is covered by a cloud of smoke.

It's getting so thick, it's making people choke.



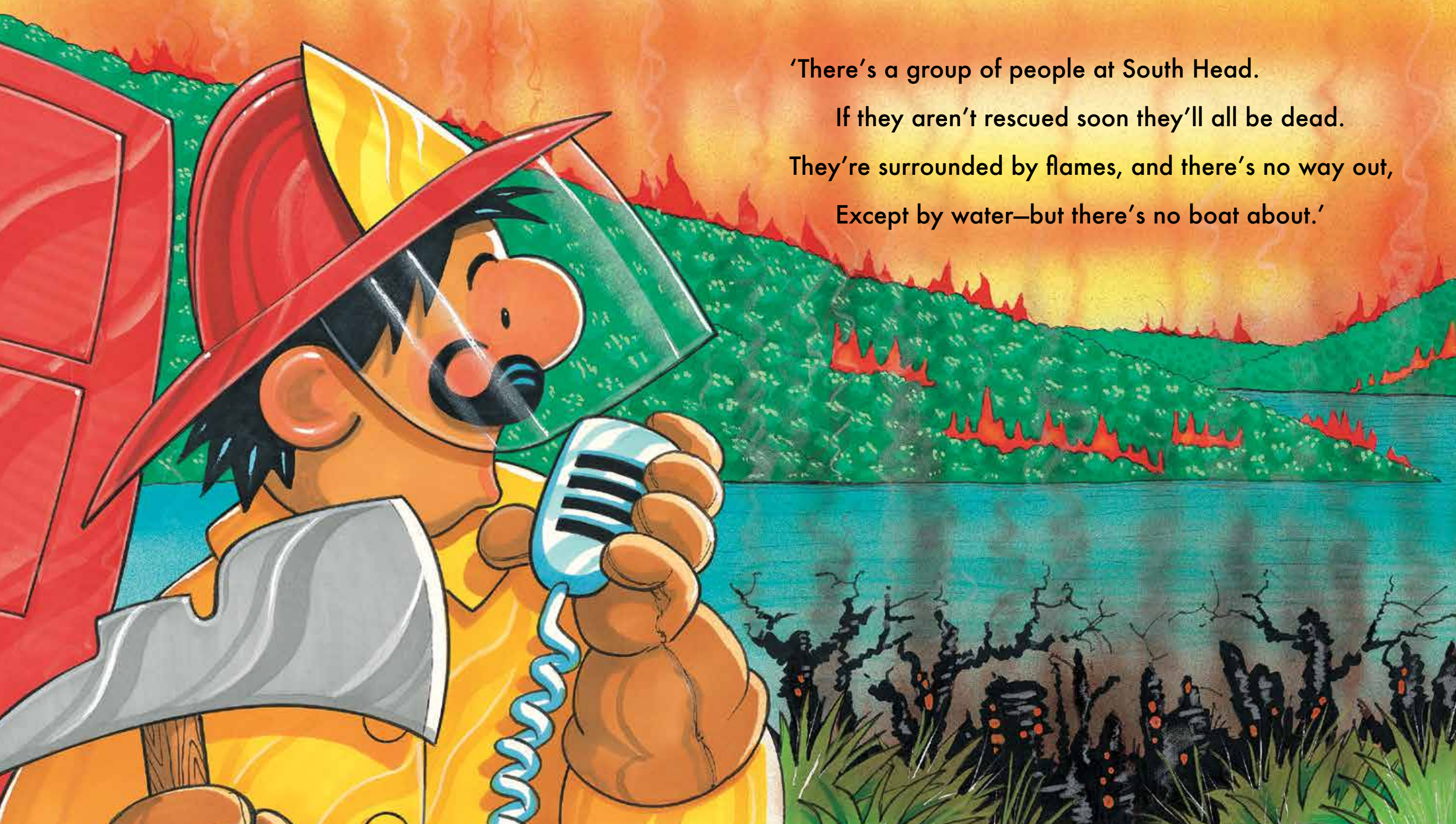
There are flames on the shore, and at South Head,
They're climbing so high, the sky has turned red.



A radio crackles with a call of distress.

‘Can anyone help—we’re in a terrible mess.’



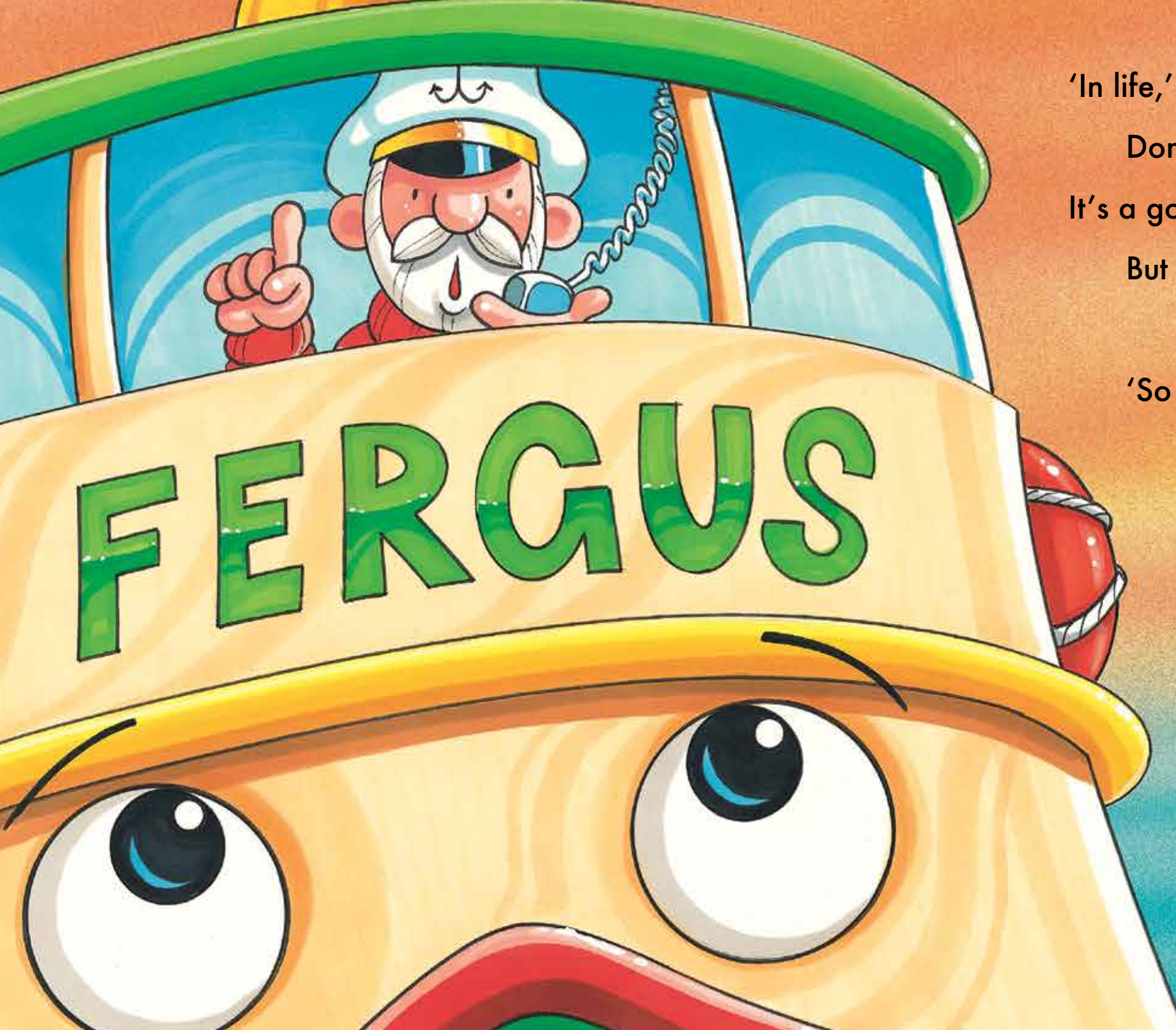


'There's a group of people at South Head.

If they aren't rescued soon they'll all be dead.

They're surrounded by flames, and there's no way out,

Except by water—but there's no boat about.'



'In life,' says Joe, 'there's one thing I've learnt.

Don't play with fire or you'll get burnt.

It's a golden rule that I never break;

But this is different—there are lives at stake.'

'So I'll help,' he offers 'We're at Rose Bay,

And South Head isn't too far away.'

'Thanks, Captain Joe.

You have always been brave.

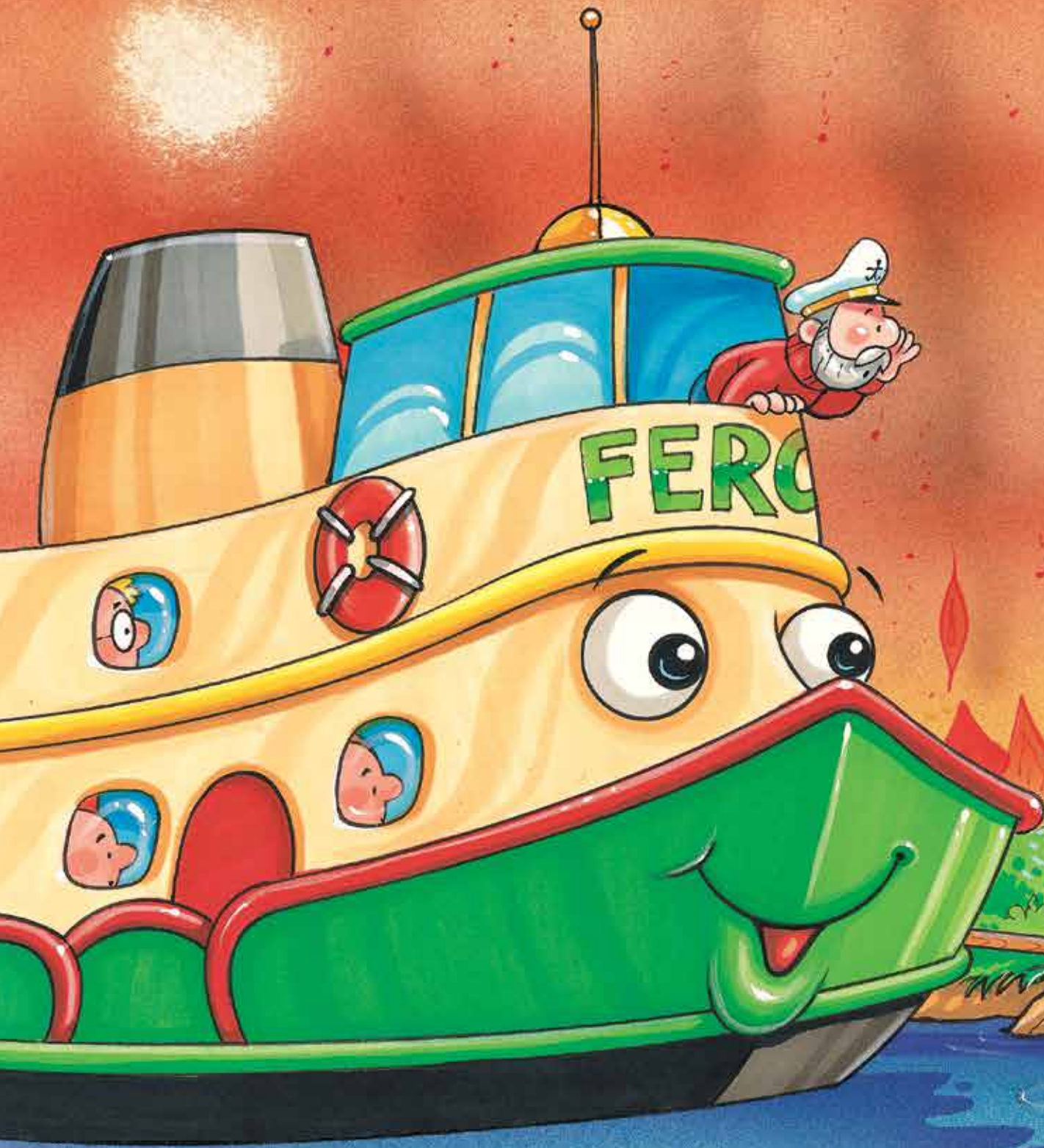
We can count on you

when there are lives to save.'

The flames close in, flickering red.

'If no-one comes, we'll all be dead.'



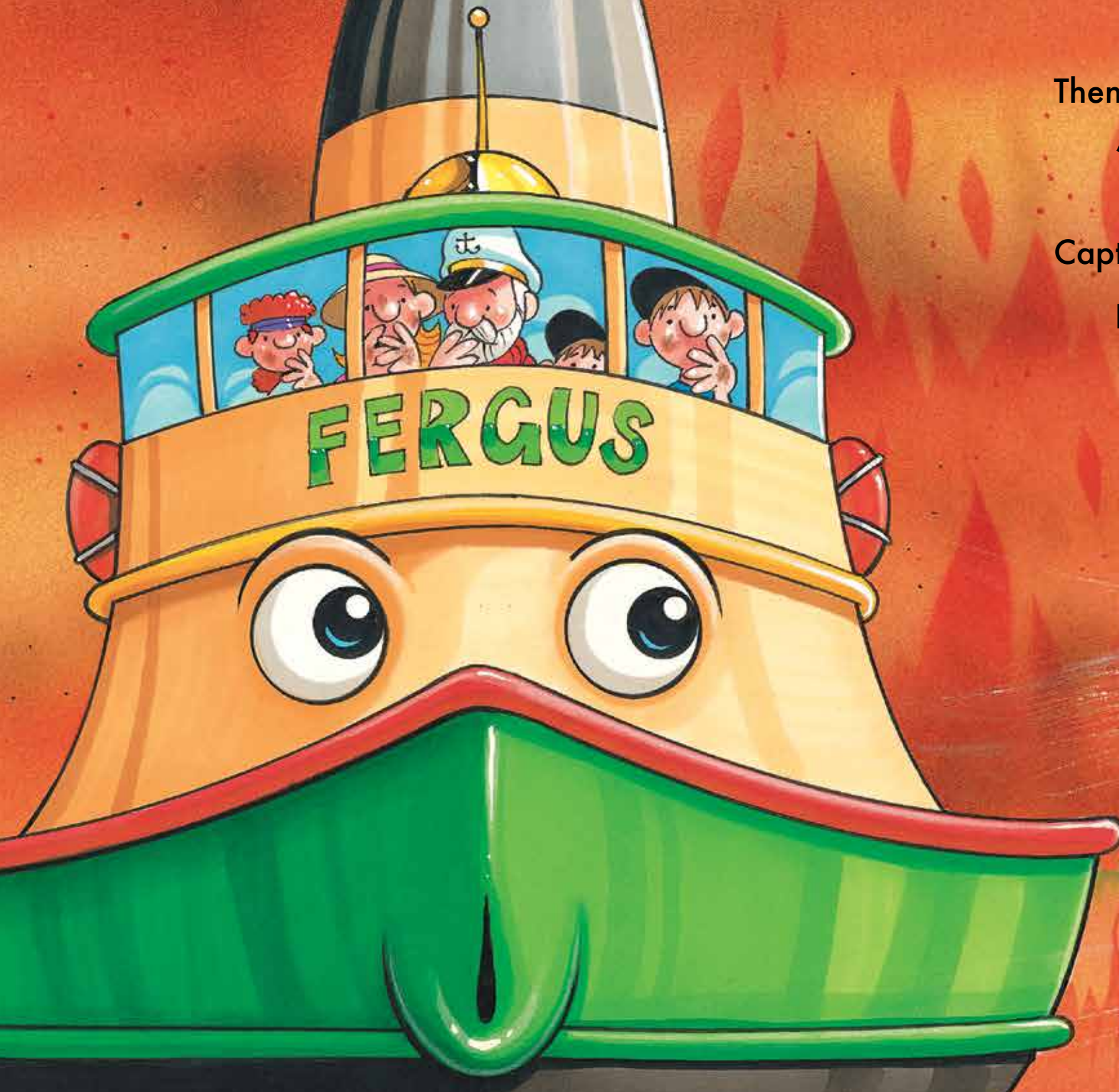


Chug, chug, chug—what's that sound?

'It's Fergus Ferry. Hooray! We've been found!'

'Jump aboard,' shouts Joe, 'and we'll hurry off.'

This smoke is so thick,
it's making me cough.'

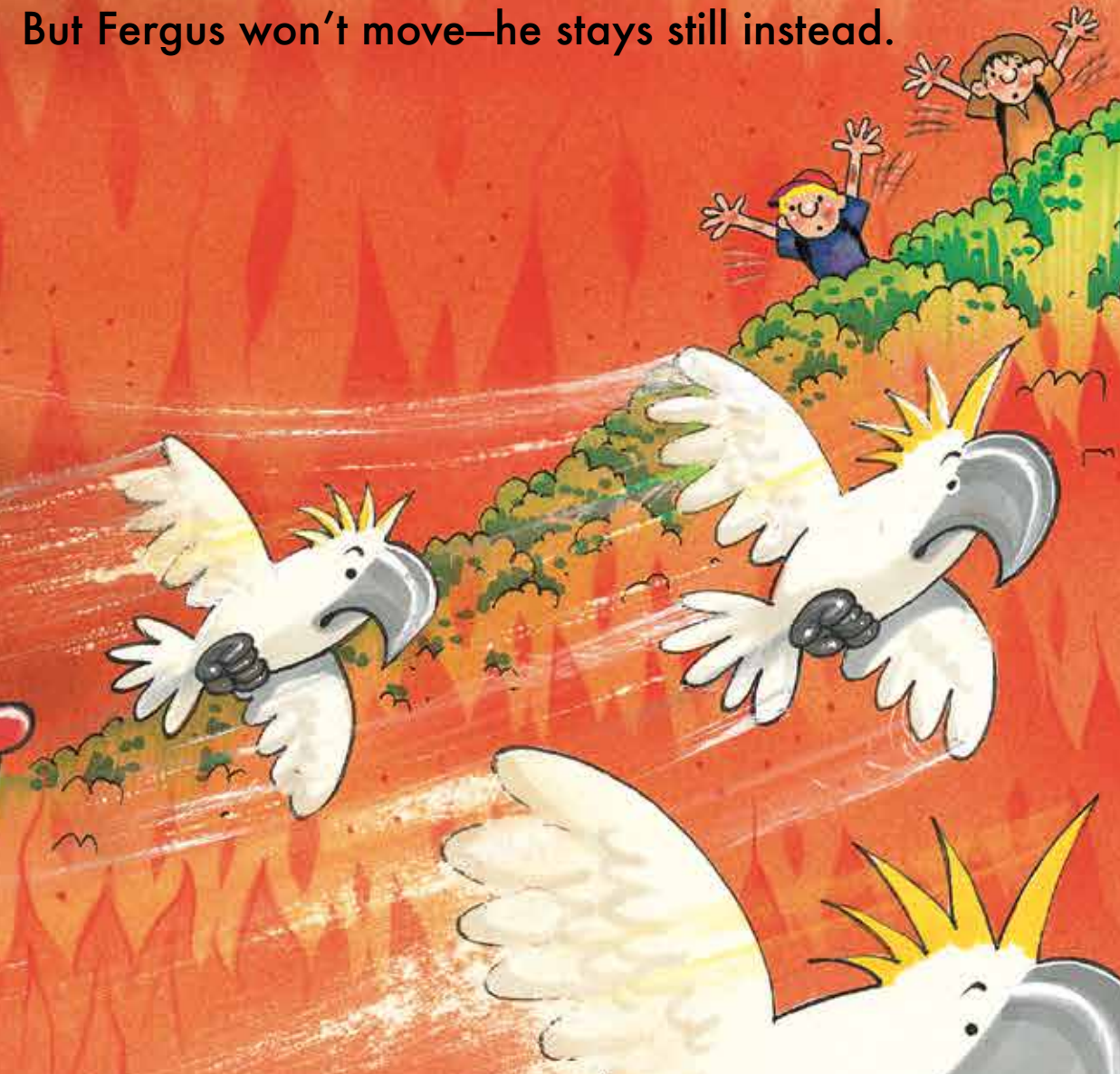


Then suddenly Fergus hears a faint shout:

‘We’re still on the shore! Don’t go! Help us out!’

Captain Joe throws the lever to full steam ahead.

But Fergus won’t move—he stays still instead.

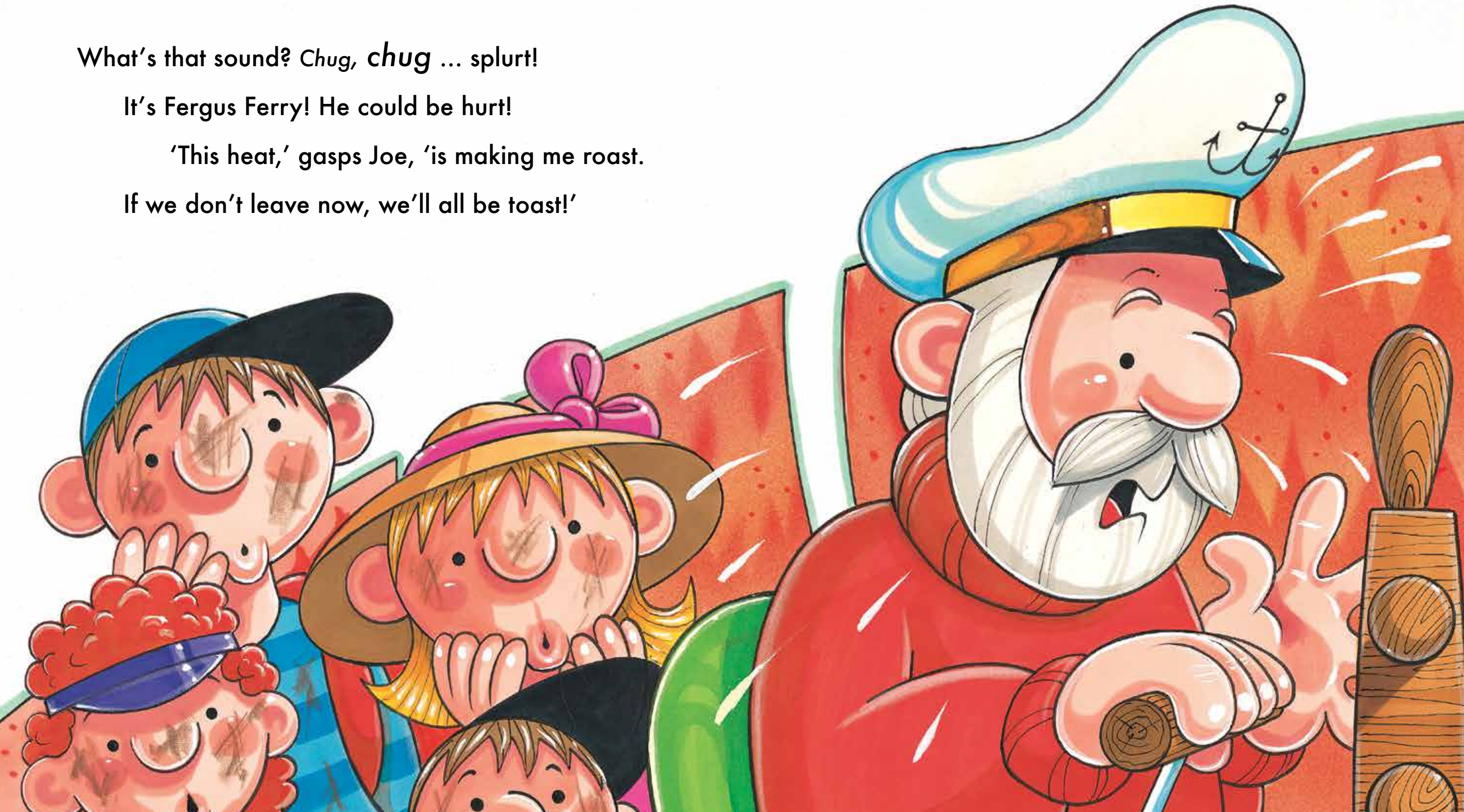


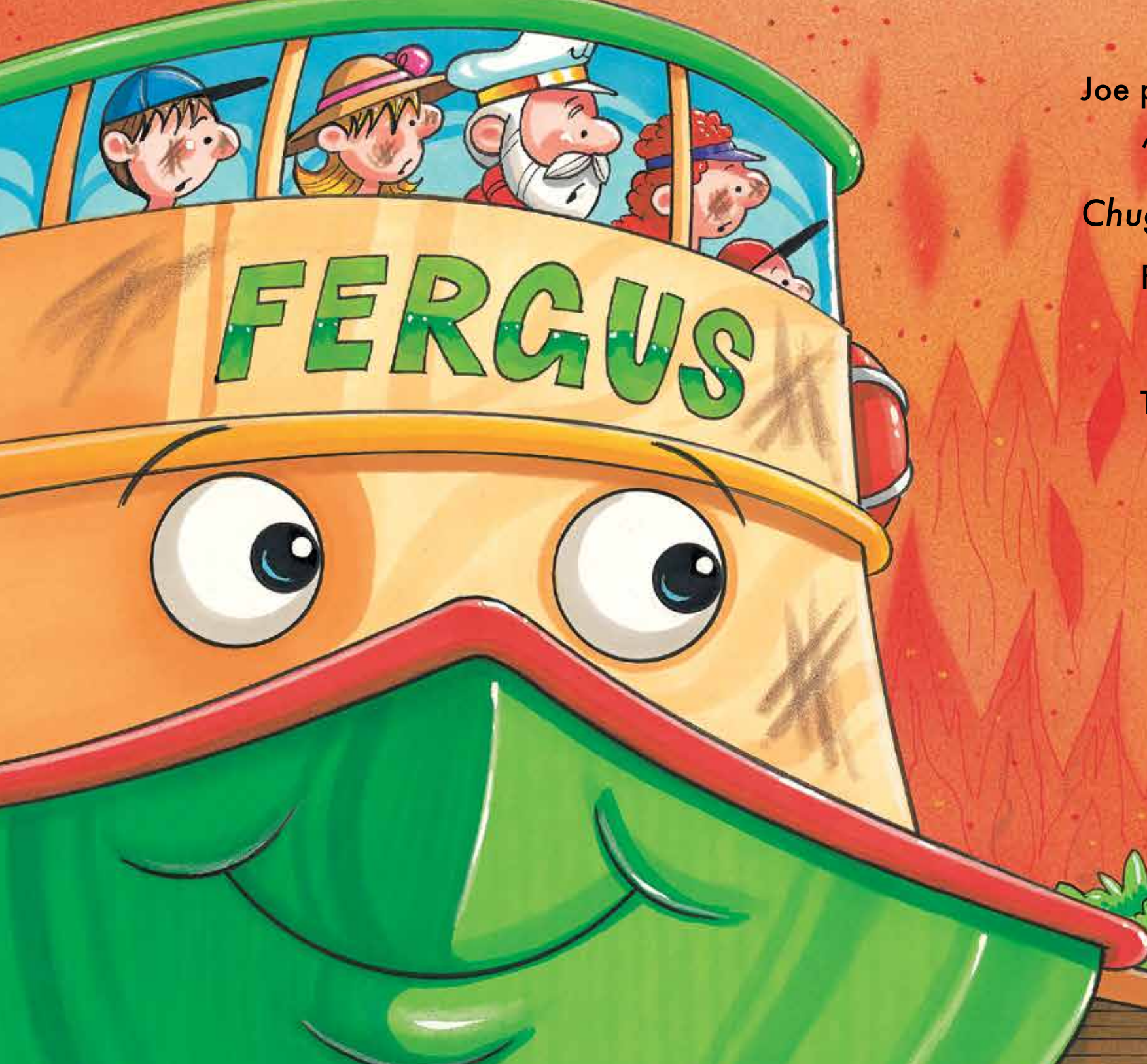
What's that sound? *Chug, chug* ... splurt!

It's Fergus Ferry! He could be hurt!

'This heat,' gasps Joe, 'is making me roast.

If we don't leave now, we'll all be toast!'



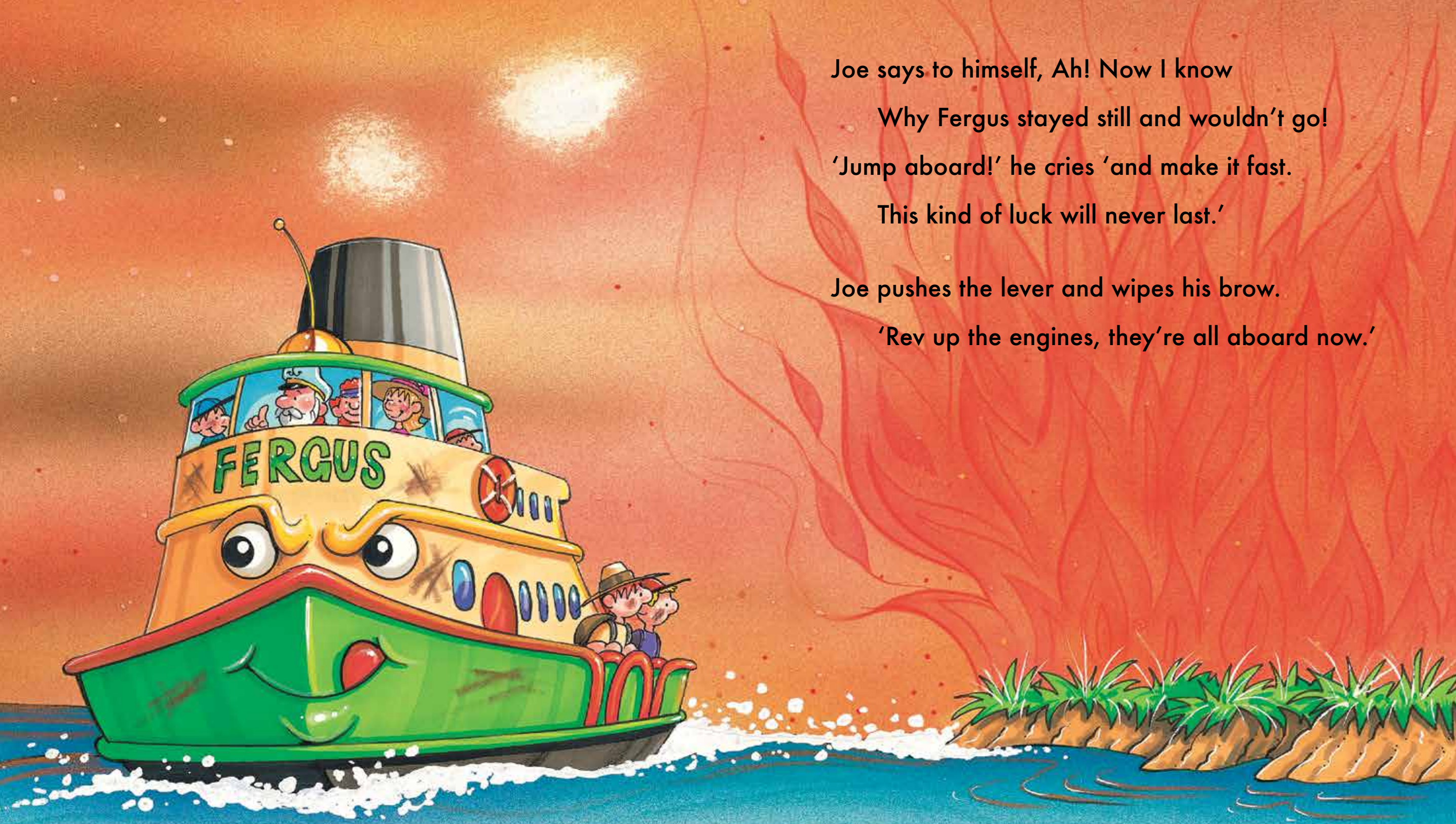


Joe pushes the lever with all his might.

'I want those flames right out of my sight.'
Chug, splurt, splurt. Chug, cough, cough.

Fergus stays still. He won't move off!

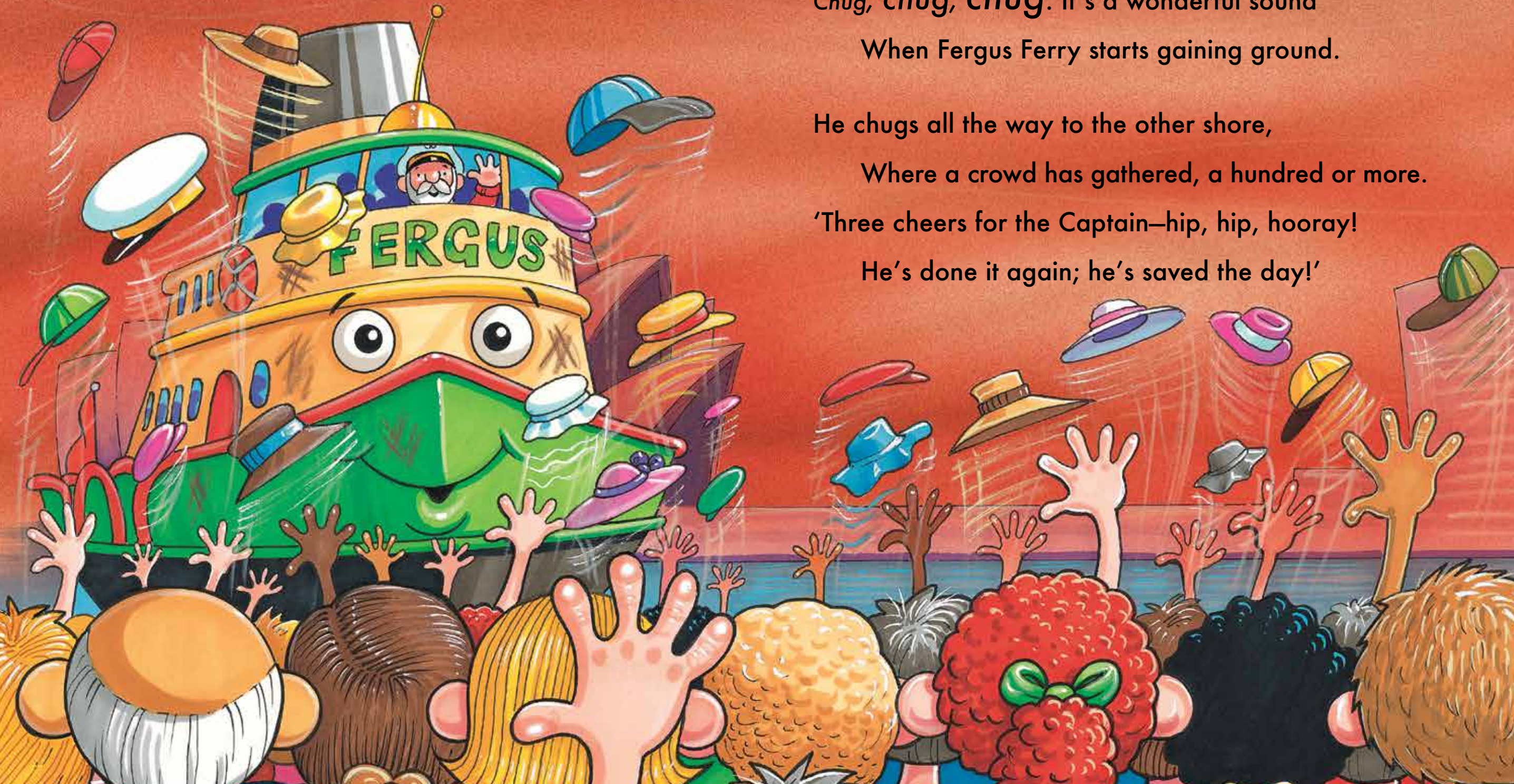
Then over the noise Joe hears a shout:
'Thanks for staying to get us out!'



Joe says to himself, Ah! Now I know
Why Fergus stayed still and wouldn't go!
'Jump aboard!' he cries 'and make it fast.
This kind of luck will never last.'
Joe pushes the lever and wipes his brow.
'Rev up the engines, they're all aboard now.'

Chug, chug, chug. It's a wonderful sound
When Fergus Ferry starts gaining ground.

He chugs all the way to the other shore,
Where a crowd has gathered, a hundred or more.
'Three cheers for the Captain—hip, hip, hooray!
He's done it again; he's saved the day!'



The people all cheer and shout with glee.

Later Captain Joe stands alone at the Quay.

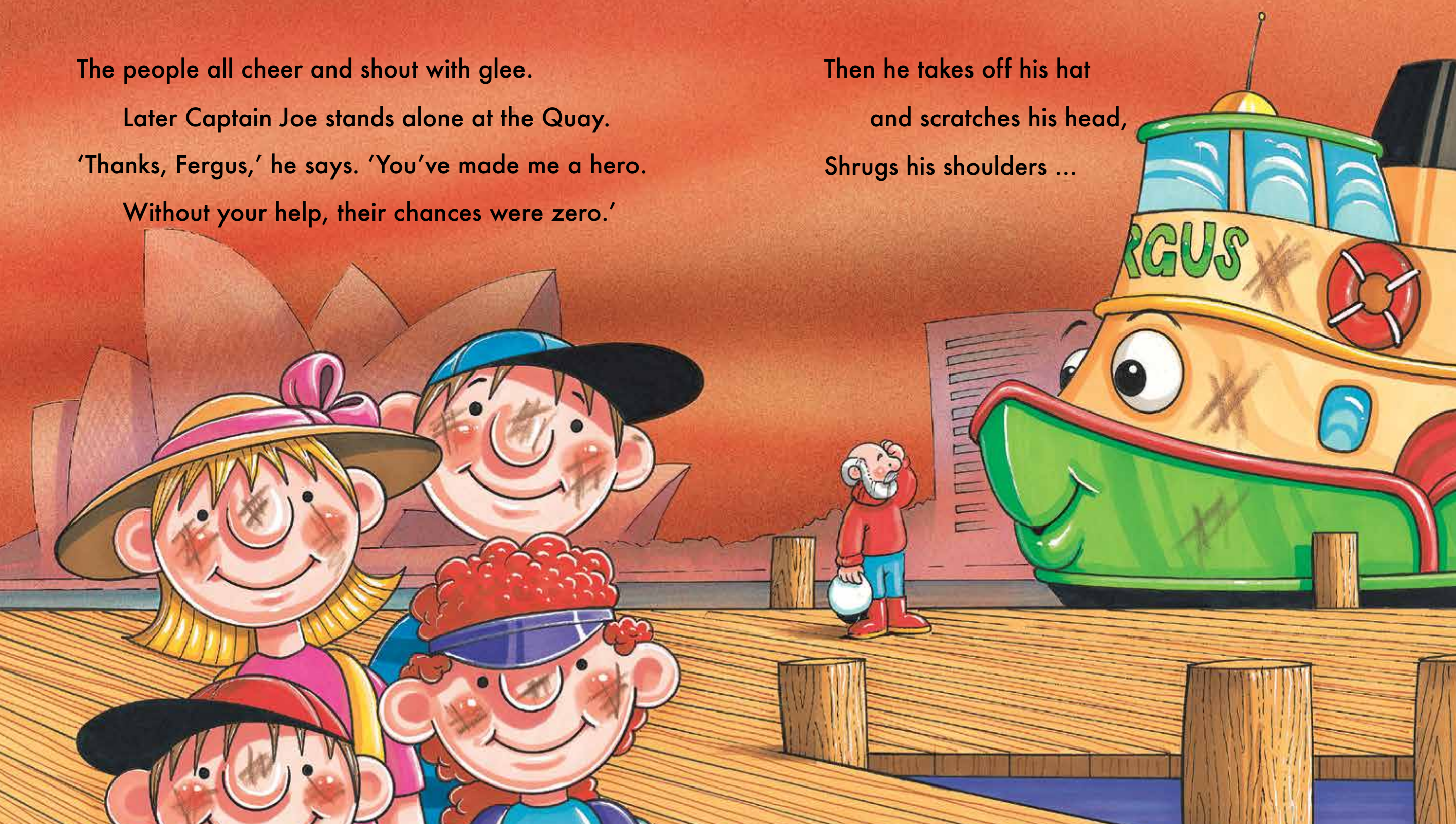
'Thanks, Fergus,' he says. 'You've made me a hero.

Without your help, their chances were zero.'

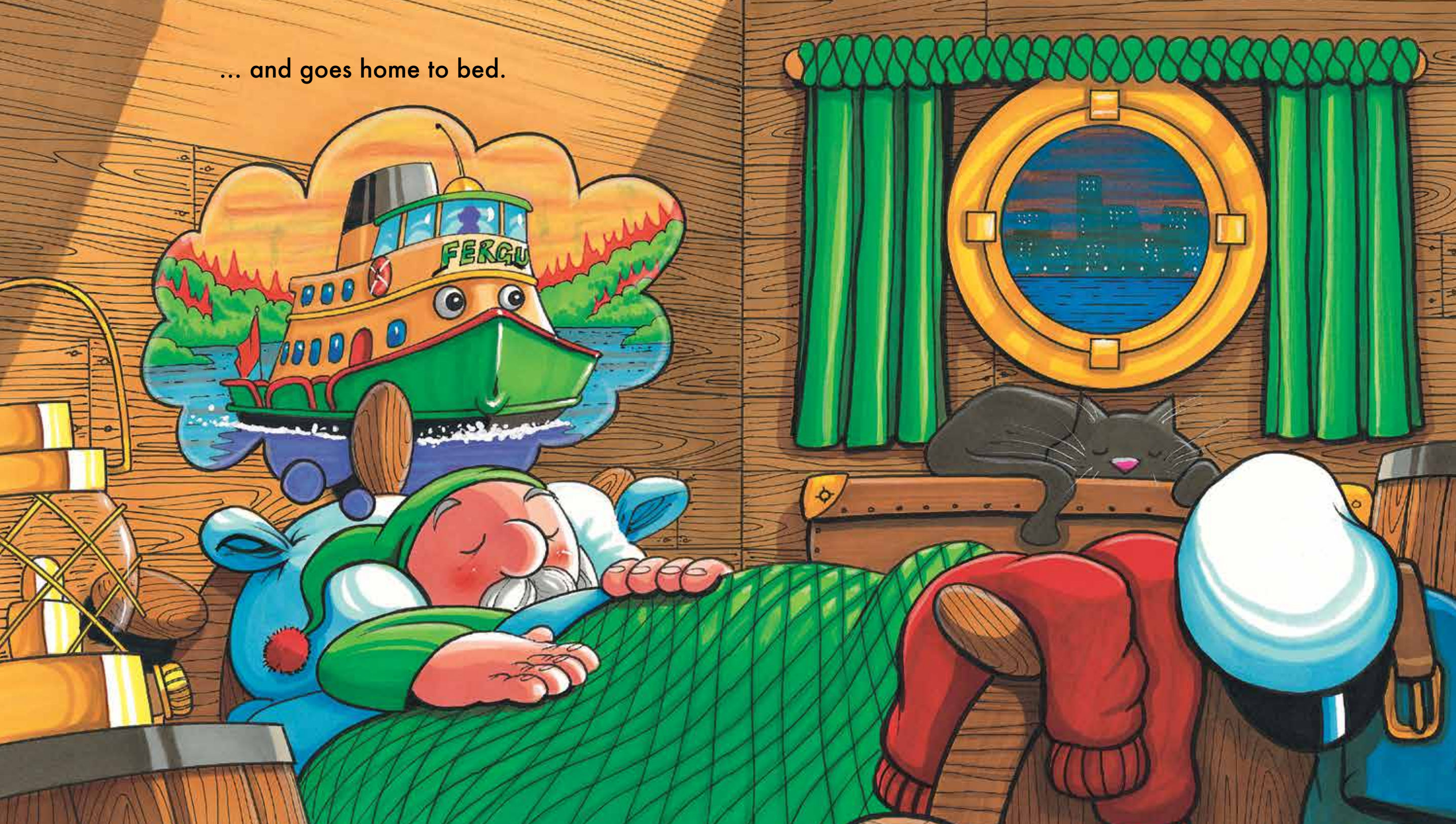
Then he takes off his hat

and scratches his head,

Shrugs his shoulders ...



... and goes home to bed.



Don't play with fire.

For Kathryn Davis

JWN

For Pamela

PT

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