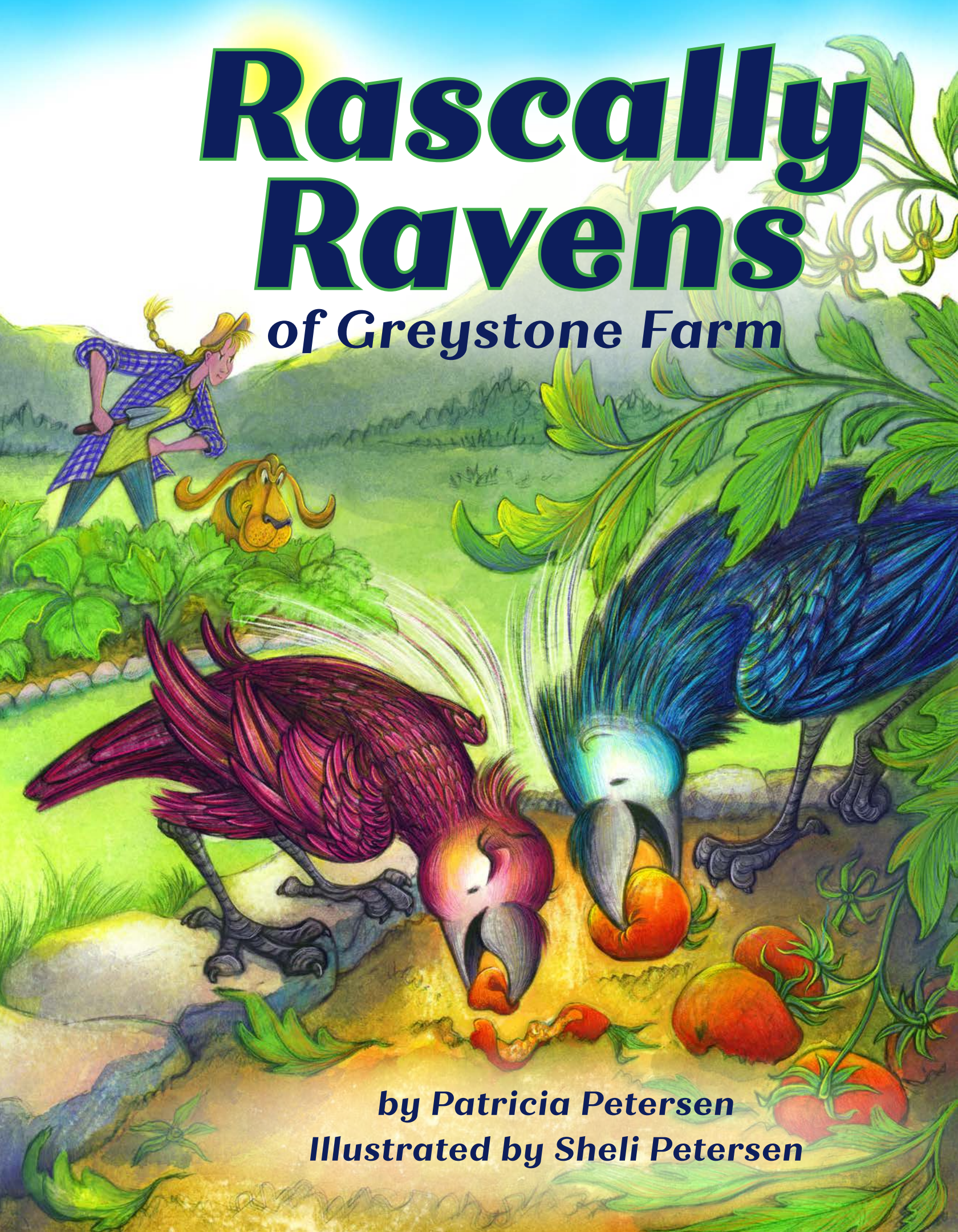
Rascally Ravens

of Greystone Farm



by Patricia Petersen
Illustrated by Sheli Petersen

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"Try catching this!" Carmen challenged Angelo to a game of stick.

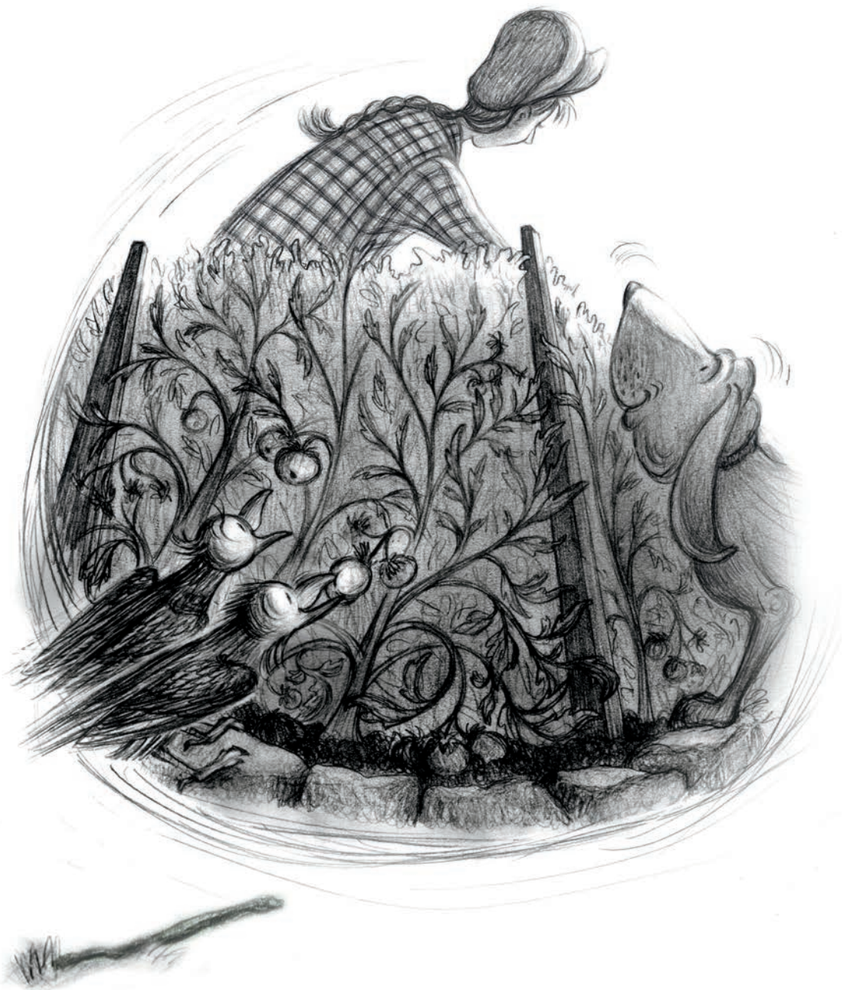
"It's mine now!" Angelo cawed.

"You mean ours." Carmen grabbed her end of the stick.

After a lively game of keep away, Angelo asked, "Say, are you hungry?"

"A little snack wouldn't hurt. Race you to Hattie's garden!"

Hattie Greystone had a big tomato garden



and a dog named Buster that the ravens loved to tease.

Angelo thought he and Carmen would be best friends forever.
She surprised him when February came.
"It's time we started a nest."

"What for?"

"My eggs, silly."

"Ooh!" Angelo took a minute to digest the news.

"We'll put it in that pine tree by the fence."

"Isn't that a little close to the house?"

"It's even closer to
Hattie's wood pile."

There was no arguing with
Carmen once she decided.

By the end of the week, the ravens
had built a large, sturdy nest.

"I like it," Angelo admired
their work. "Are we done, yet?"

"I need to plug a few holes
here and there."

Carmen flew to the chopping block where Hattie had left her gloves.

"Look! More sticks," whistled Angelo. "Come on!"

"You go ahead."

Carmen pulled the fur out of Hattie's gloves and stuffed it deep inside the nest.

"Now my eggs will be warm."

During the night, a winter storm
turned the nest frosty white.

"We need a plan," mused Angelo, watching
Hattie and Buster go for their morning walk.

"We *need* Hattie's scarf!"

"I can't lay my eggs in snow!"
Carmen fussed.

"Quick! Here they come!"
Angelo played decoy.

He tangled Hattie
in Buster's leash

—while Carmen waited her chance.

Once Carmen had the scarf,
Angelo broke off his attack, and
Hattie freed herself.

"Rascally ravens!" she shouted,
dragging Buster behind her.

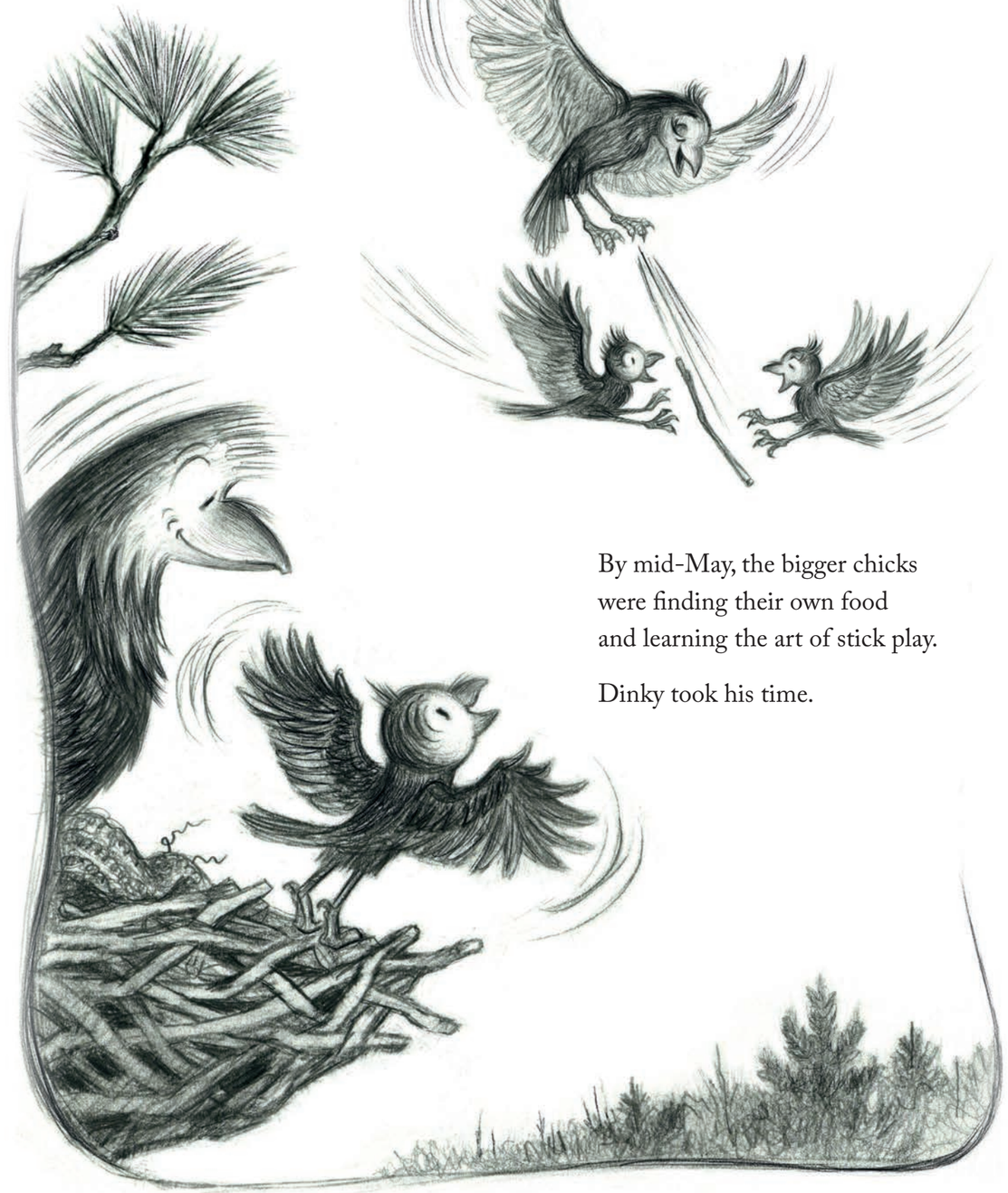
Carmen laid her eggs while Angelo kept a look out.
"Uh-oh," he spied Hattie beneath the tree.
"I think she's onto us."

"It's Okay. We'll give the scarf back
when we're done with it."

Around the middle of March, the eggs cracked open
and three gray chicks appeared.
"Why is the little guy so dinky?" Angelo fretted.

"And where are their feathers?
How will they eat if they can't fly?"

"We have to feed them."



By mid-May, the bigger chicks
were finding their own food
and learning the art of stick play.

Dinky took his time.

"Atta boy," cheered Angelo as Dink flapped his little wings.
"See if you can catch my stick."

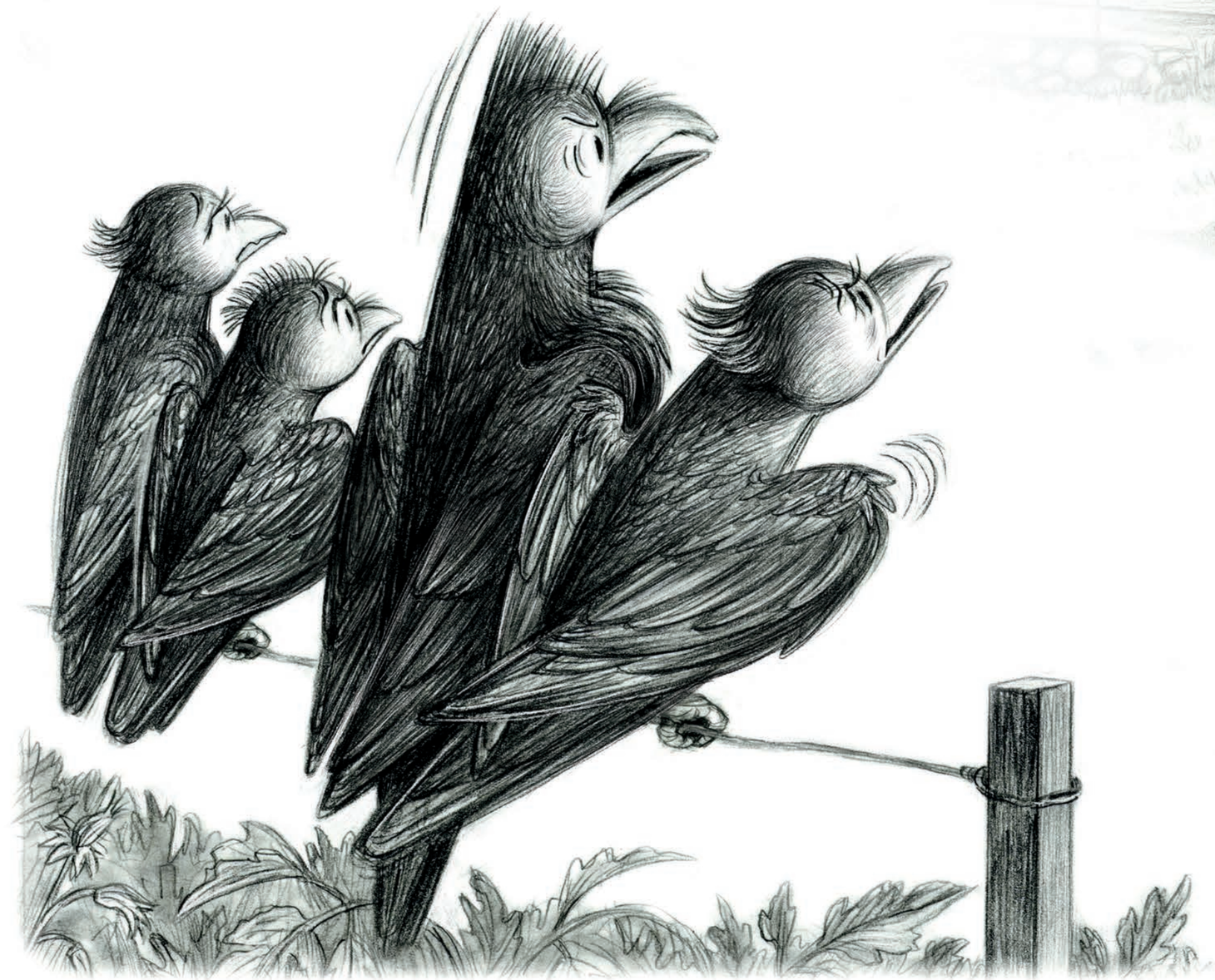
But no sooner had he taken off than
Dink fell straight to the ground—

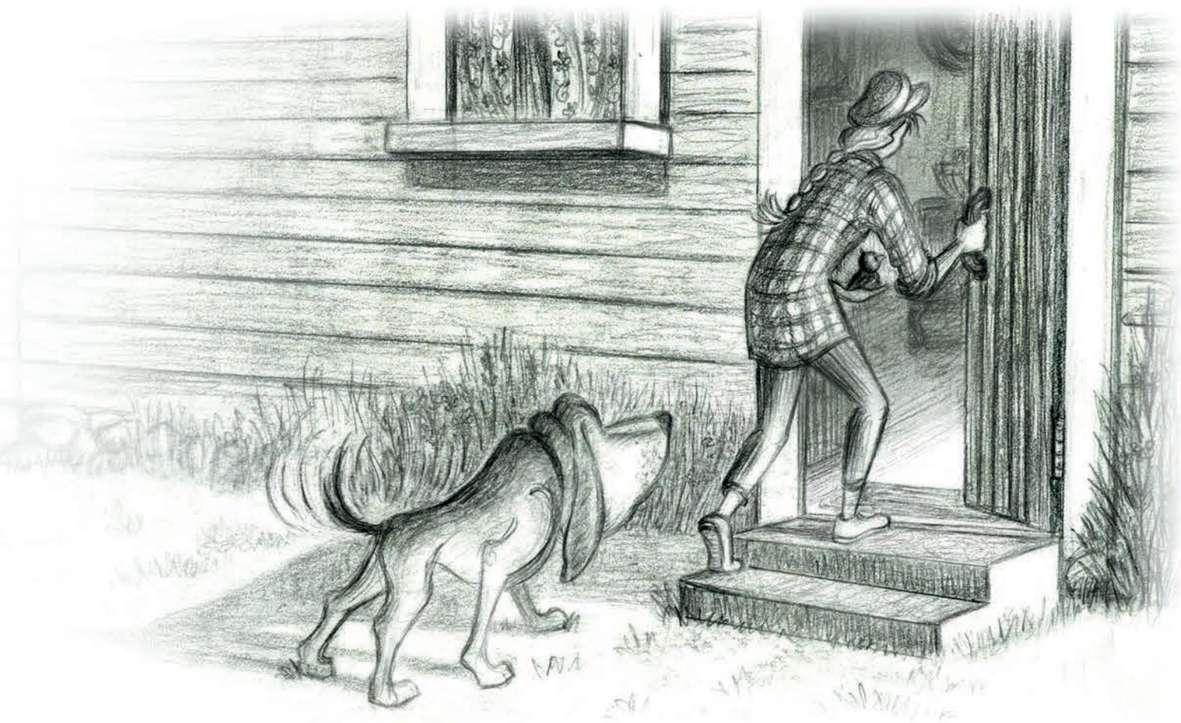
right in front of Buster.

Buster picked Dink up and the ravens flew at him, making such a racket that Hattie came running.

"Aw, poor thing," she soothed, as Buster laid Dink in her hands.

Helpless, the ravens watched Hattie and Buster take Dink inside and shut the door.





"They're taking our chick!" squawked Angelo. "Without even asking!"

"Don't worry. We'll get him back," Carmen vowed.

Weeks passed.

The bigger chicks left home.
Hattie neglected her gardens and
Buster spent most of his time indoors.

Carmen and Angelo perched on the fence,
waiting for a chance to rescue Dink.

Every morning, they flew to the house
and tapped on the glass.

Sometimes they heard Dink chirping and
called his name, but they never got a reply.

One day, they found a window open and peered inside.
"Any sign of Dink?" asked Carmen.

"Can't tell. I'll have to go in. You stay here."

"Be careful!" Carmen flitted back and forth.

All at once, there was a loud commotion and Angelo came flying through the curtains at full speed.

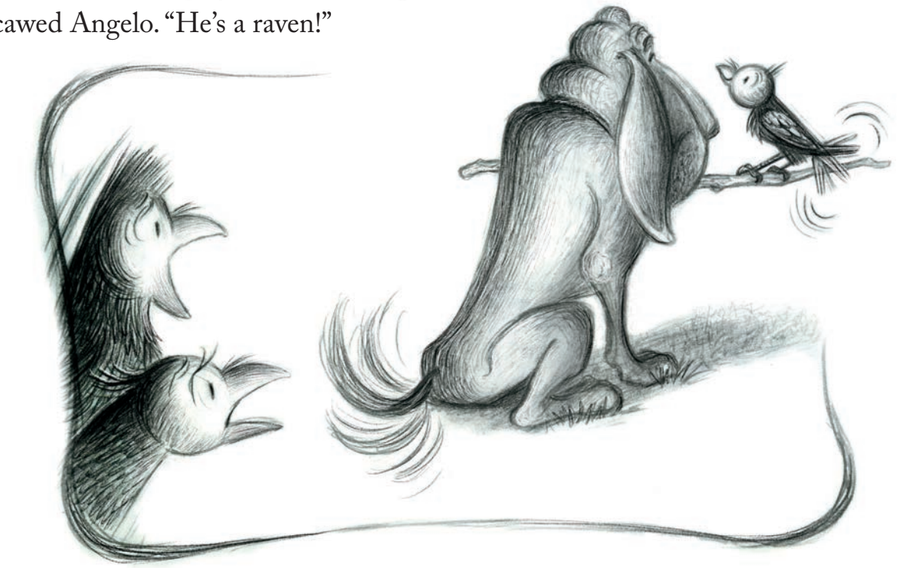
"Is Dink OK?"

"I think so. Buster raised such a rumpus, I can't be sure. This rescue thing is harder than I thought."

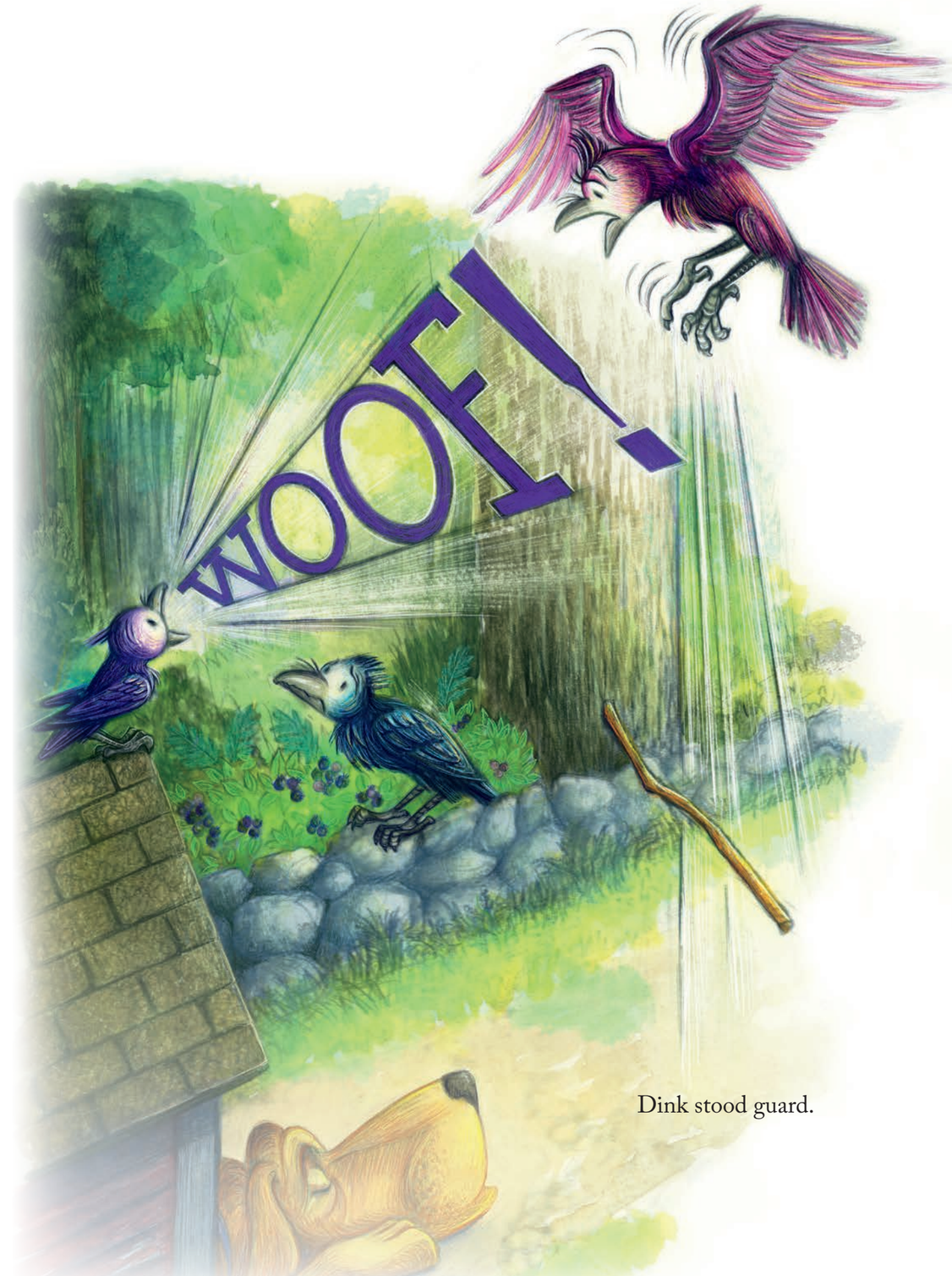
For days, the house was silent.
Just as the ravens had given up hope, they discovered
Dink and Buster playing stick in the yard.

RRRR

"We can't let him play stick like a dog," cawed Angelo. "He's a raven!"



When Buster settled in for a nap, Carmen tried again. "Hey, Dink! How about a game of catch?" she coaxed.



Dink stood guard.

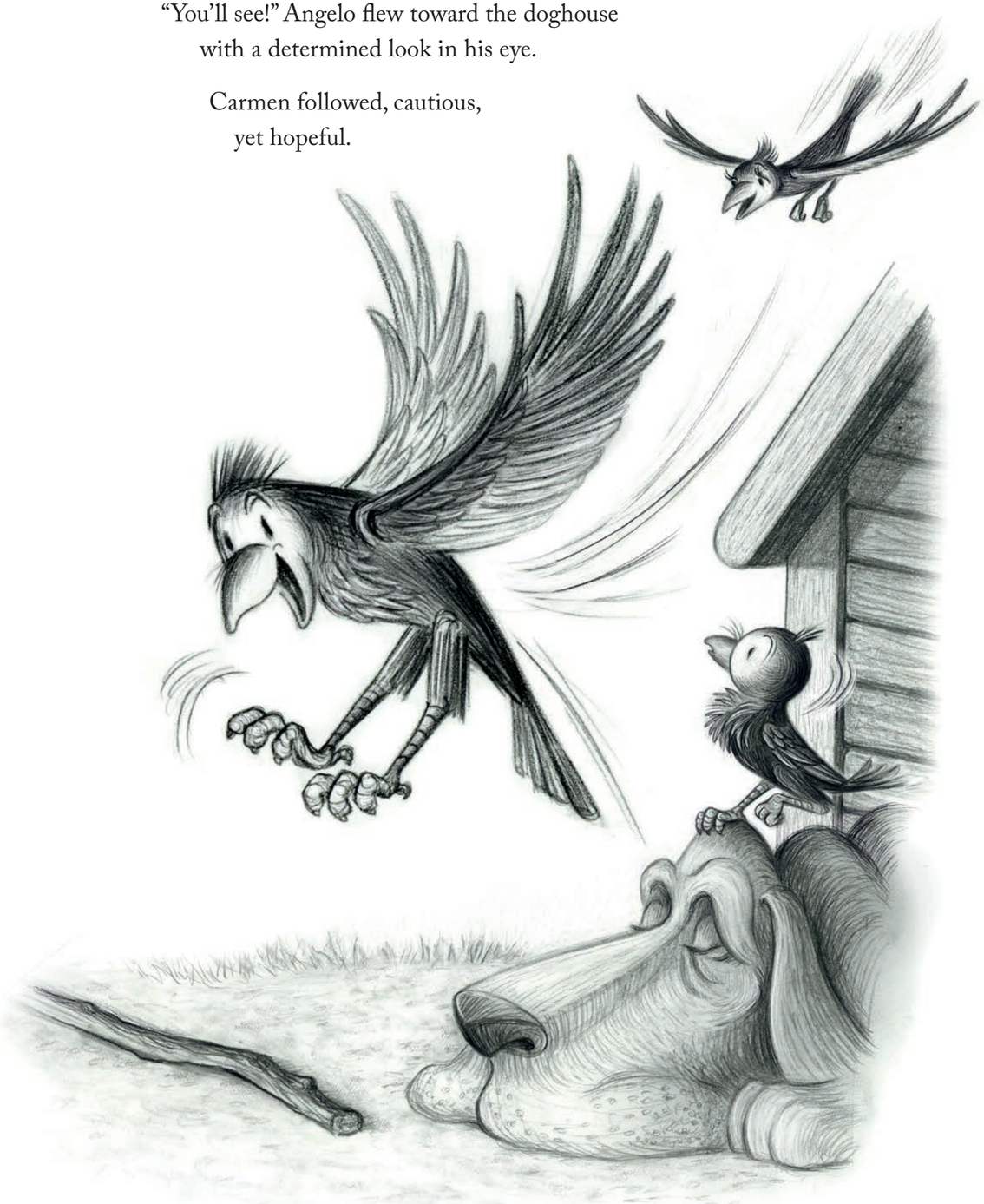
Carmen was heartbroken.
"It's like he doesn't even know me. Have we lost him forever?"

"Not if I can help it!"

"Wait! What are you doing?"

"You'll see!" Angelo flew toward the doghouse with a determined look in his eye.

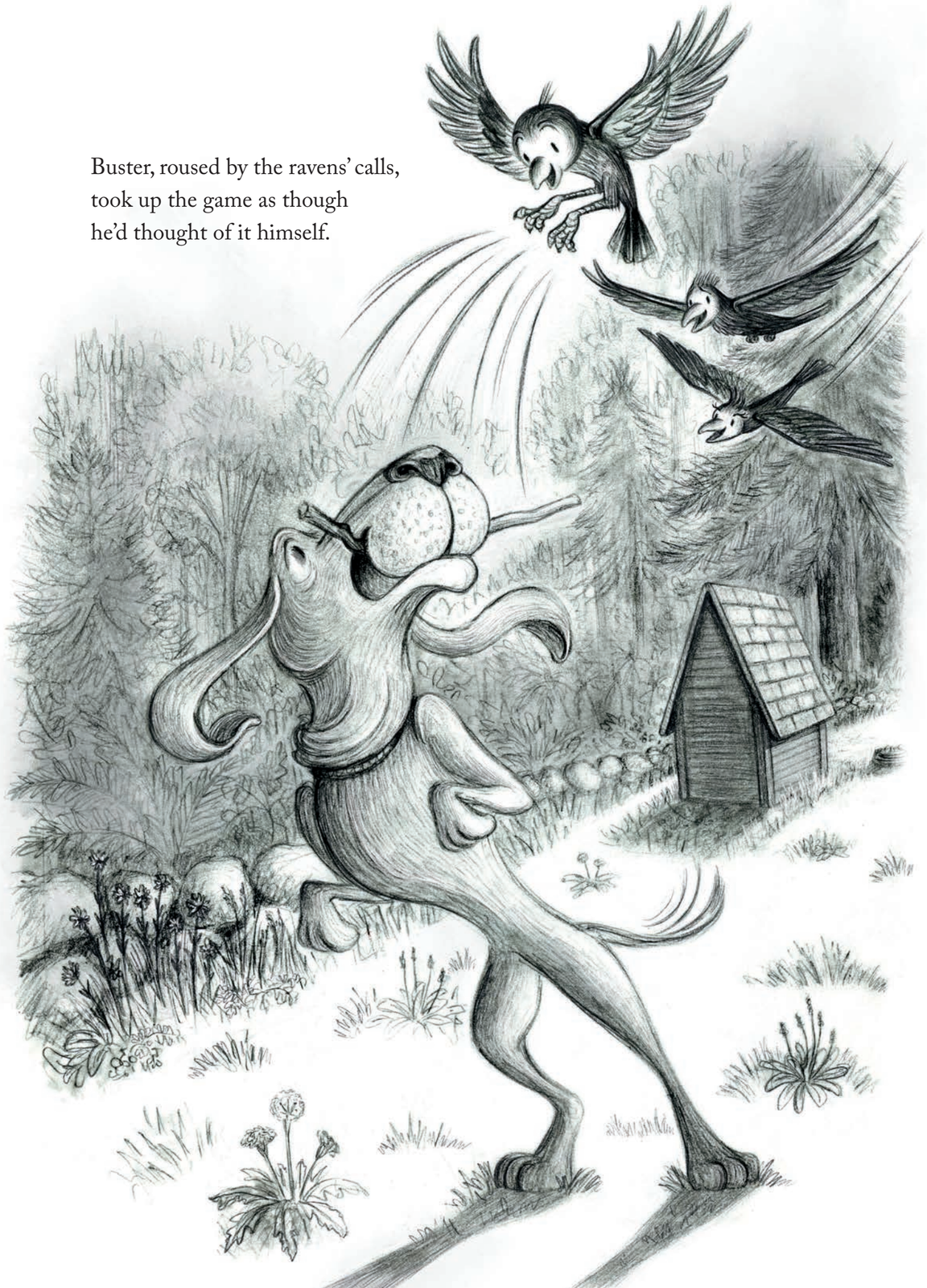
Carmen followed, cautious, yet hopeful.



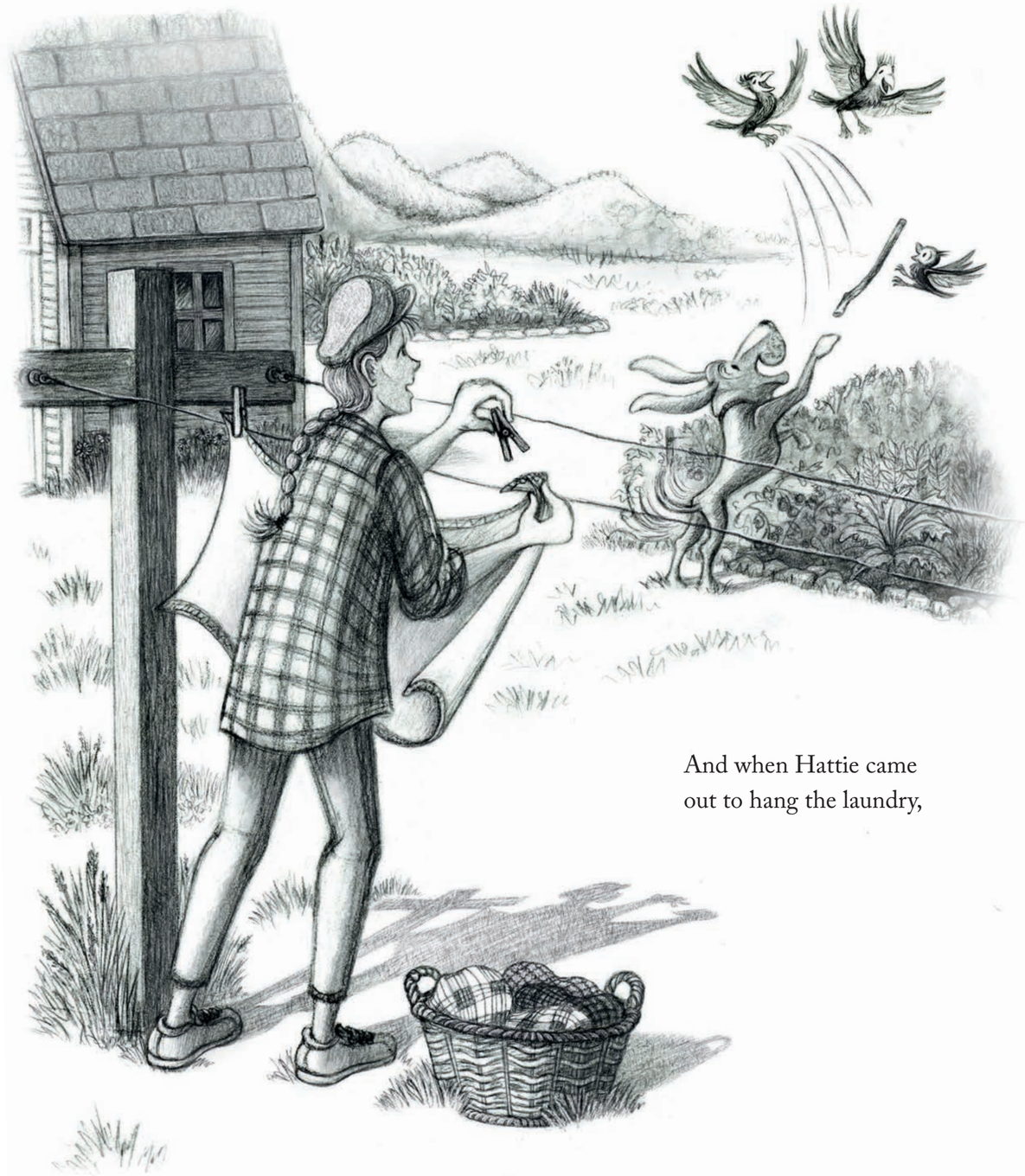
Angelo picked up a stick and tossed it to her. Carmen happily tossed it back. The ravens swooped and soared, passing the stick back and forth until Dink joined the fun and caught one of Angelo's passes.

"Go, Dink!" Carmen cheered.

"Atta boy!" Angelo whistled.



Buster, roused by the ravens' calls,
took up the game as though
he'd thought of it himself.



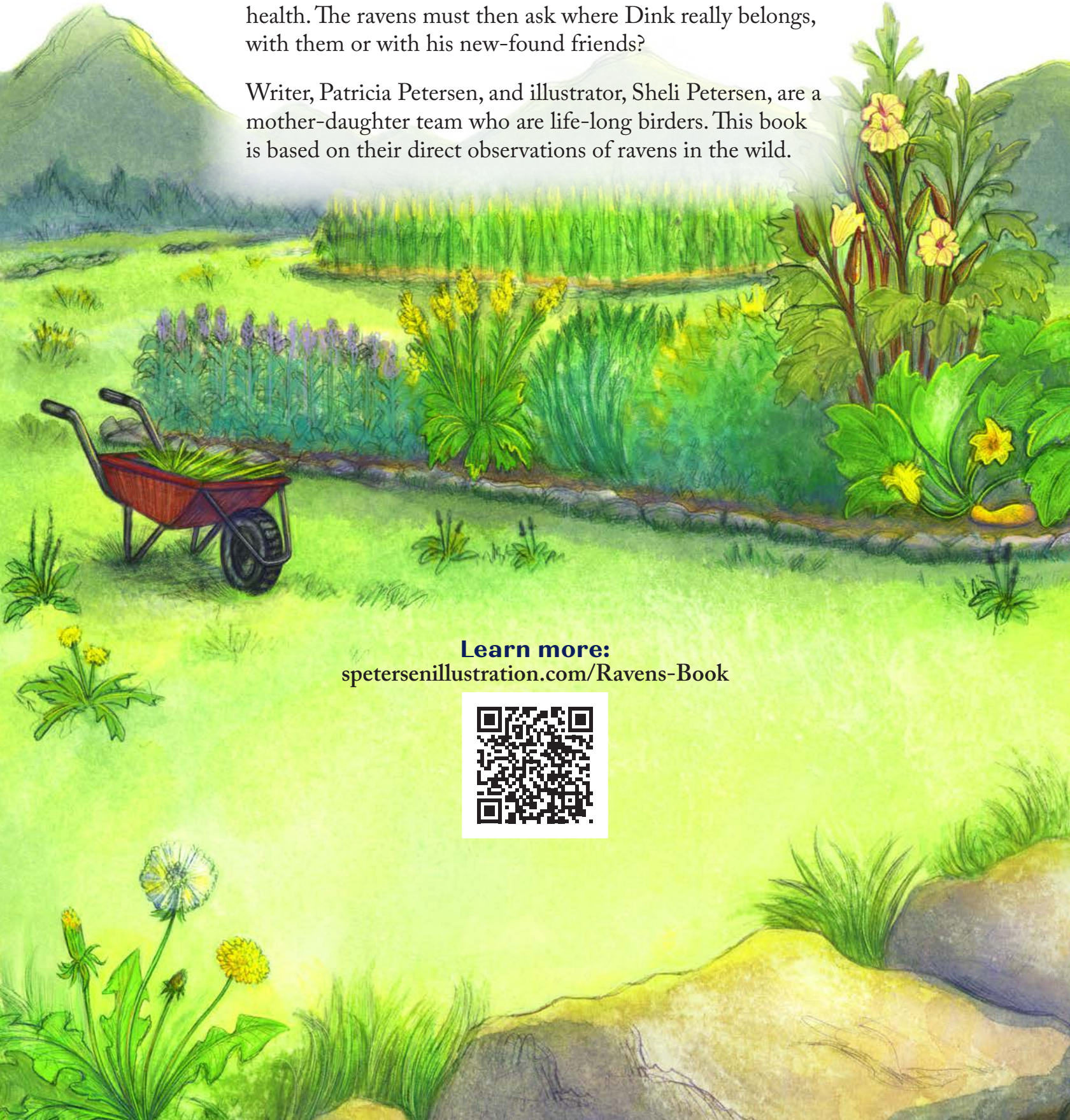
And when Hattie came
out to hang the laundry,

she played right along with them until supper time.

After that, they all thought of each other as one big family—
though none of them knew who had adopted whom.

Carmen and Angelo, a pair of rascally ravens, descend on Hattie Greystone's farm stead and take whatever they want from her garden. They tease her dog, Buster, steal kindling from her wood pile, and "borrow" her scarf to line their nest. But when Dink, the last of their chicks to hatch, falls out of the nest, Hattie and Buster nurse him back to health. The ravens must then ask where Dink really belongs, with them or with his new-found friends?

Writer, Patricia Petersen, and illustrator, Sheli Petersen, are a mother-daughter team who are life-long birders. This book is based on their direct observations of ravens in the wild.



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