

Van Gogh

Paula and Vincent are friends

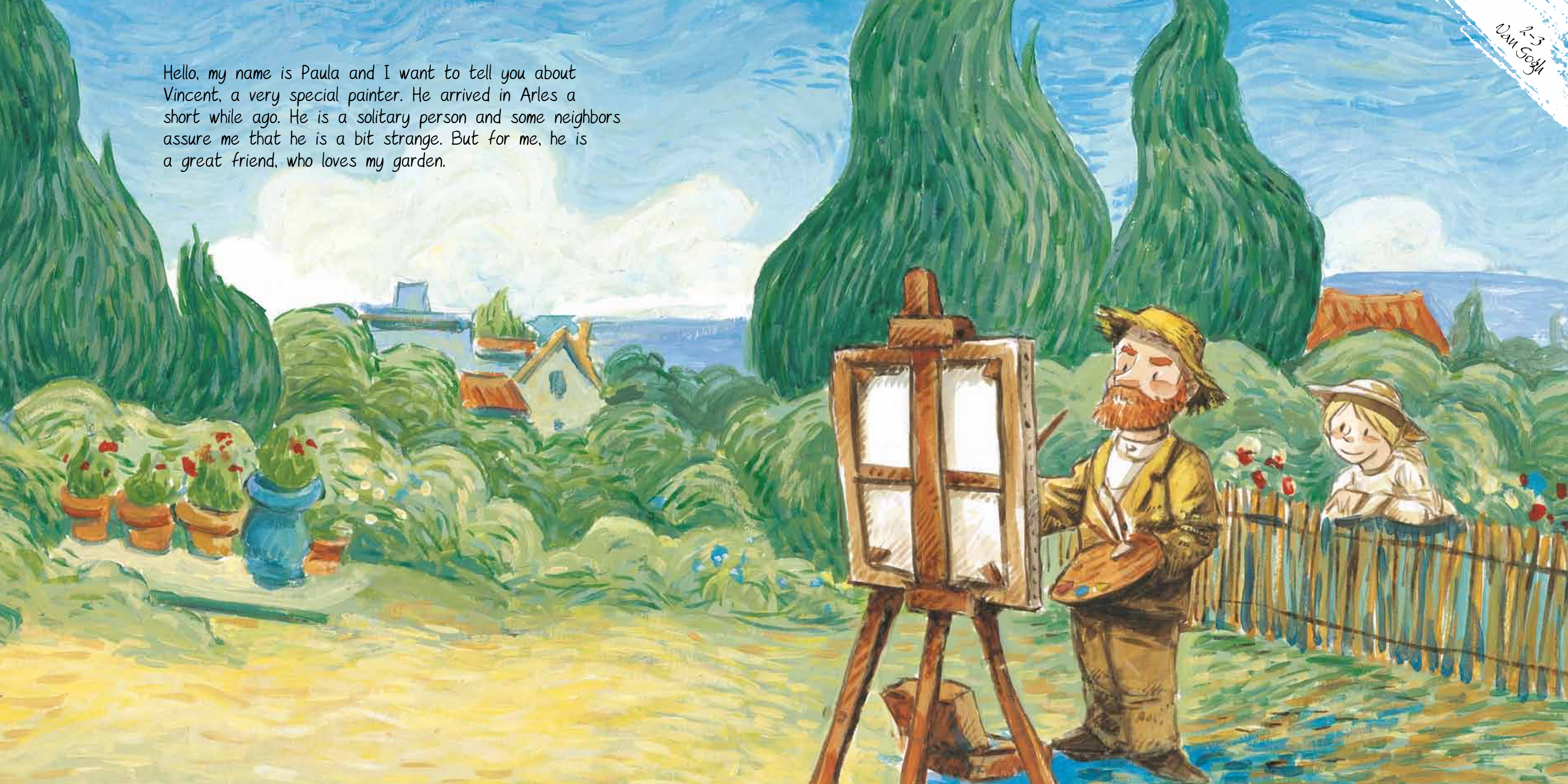


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Hello, my name is Paula and I want to tell you about Vincent, a very special painter. He arrived in Arles a short while ago. He is a solitary person and some neighbors assure me that he is a bit strange. But for me, he is a great friend, who loves my garden.



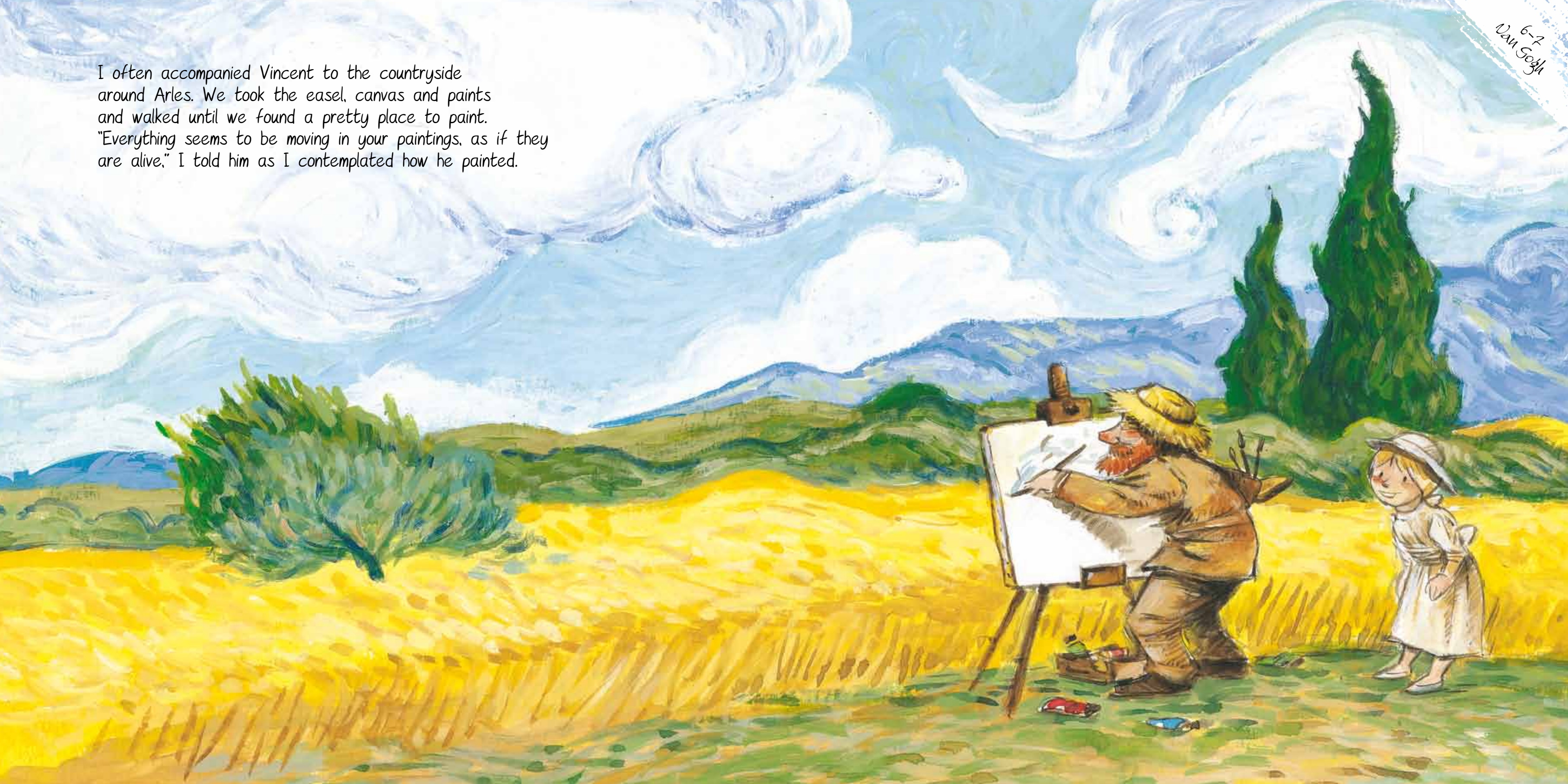


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"One day, I'd like to paint the smells and colors
of these flowers," he told me.
And so he did. "Look how lovely those blue,
white and yellow irises are!"

I often accompanied Vincent to the countryside around Arles. We took the easel, canvas and paints and walked until we found a pretty place to paint. "Everything seems to be moving in your paintings, as if they are alive," I told him as I contemplated how he painted.

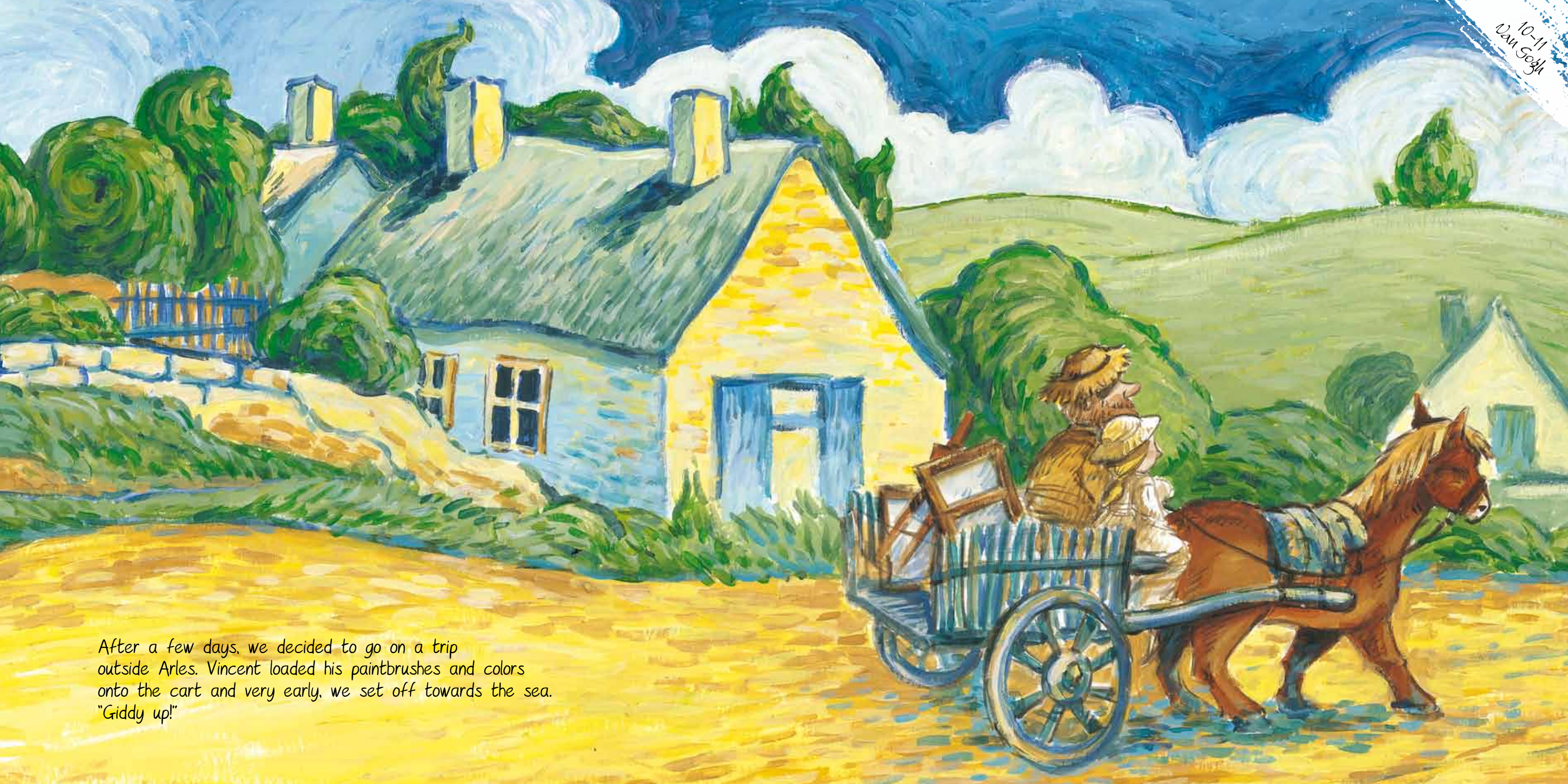
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One afternoon when we returned home, we went through a field of sunflowers. I picked a few to give them to Vincent.
"When you get home, put them in a jar of water. The yellow of these flowers has a magic light," I told him.

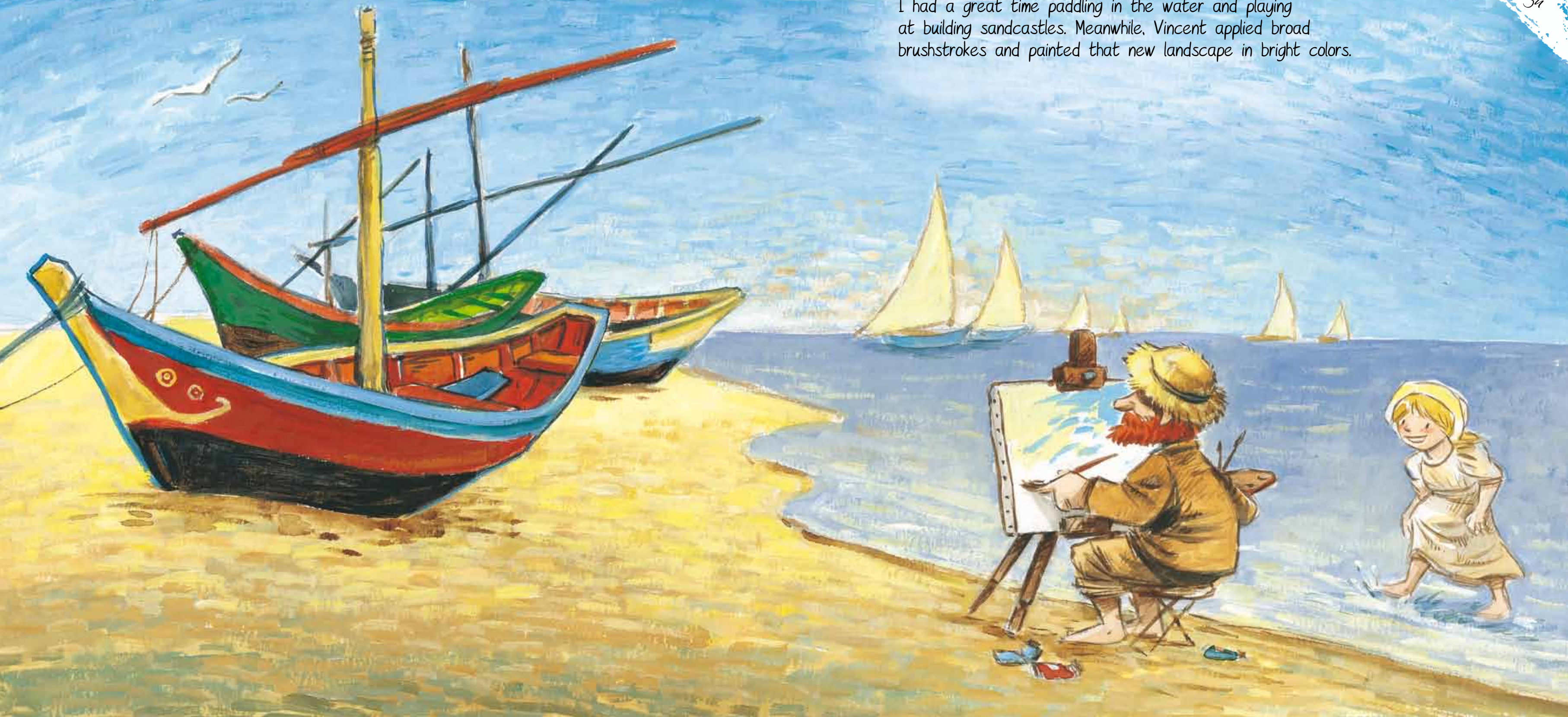
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After a few days, we decided to go on a trip outside Arles. Vincent loaded his paintbrushes and colors onto the cart and very early, we set off towards the sea. "Giddy up!"

I had a great time paddling in the water and playing at building sandcastles. Meanwhile, Vincent applied broad brushstrokes and painted that new landscape in bright colors.



When we got
back from the trip, it was
already night and we reached
Arles with the sky full of stars.
We stopped the cart in front of
the café. We said goodnight there
and we each went home.

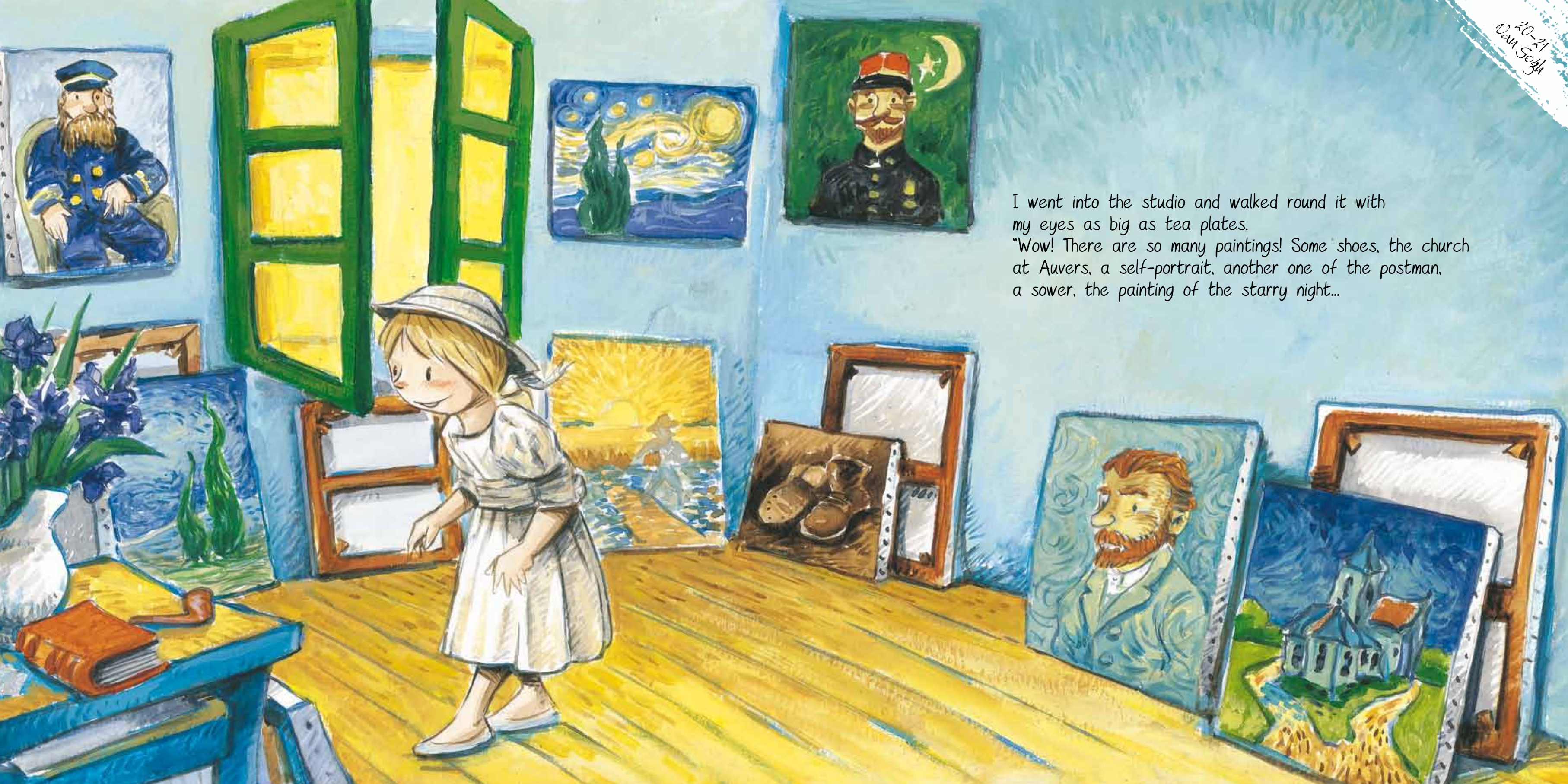


I changed my mind and decided to follow him. Vincent went past the door of his house and continued to the top of the hill. Once he was there, he unloaded one of the white canvases he was carrying and started painting that magnificent starry night. "Oooh!" I exclaimed from my hiding place.

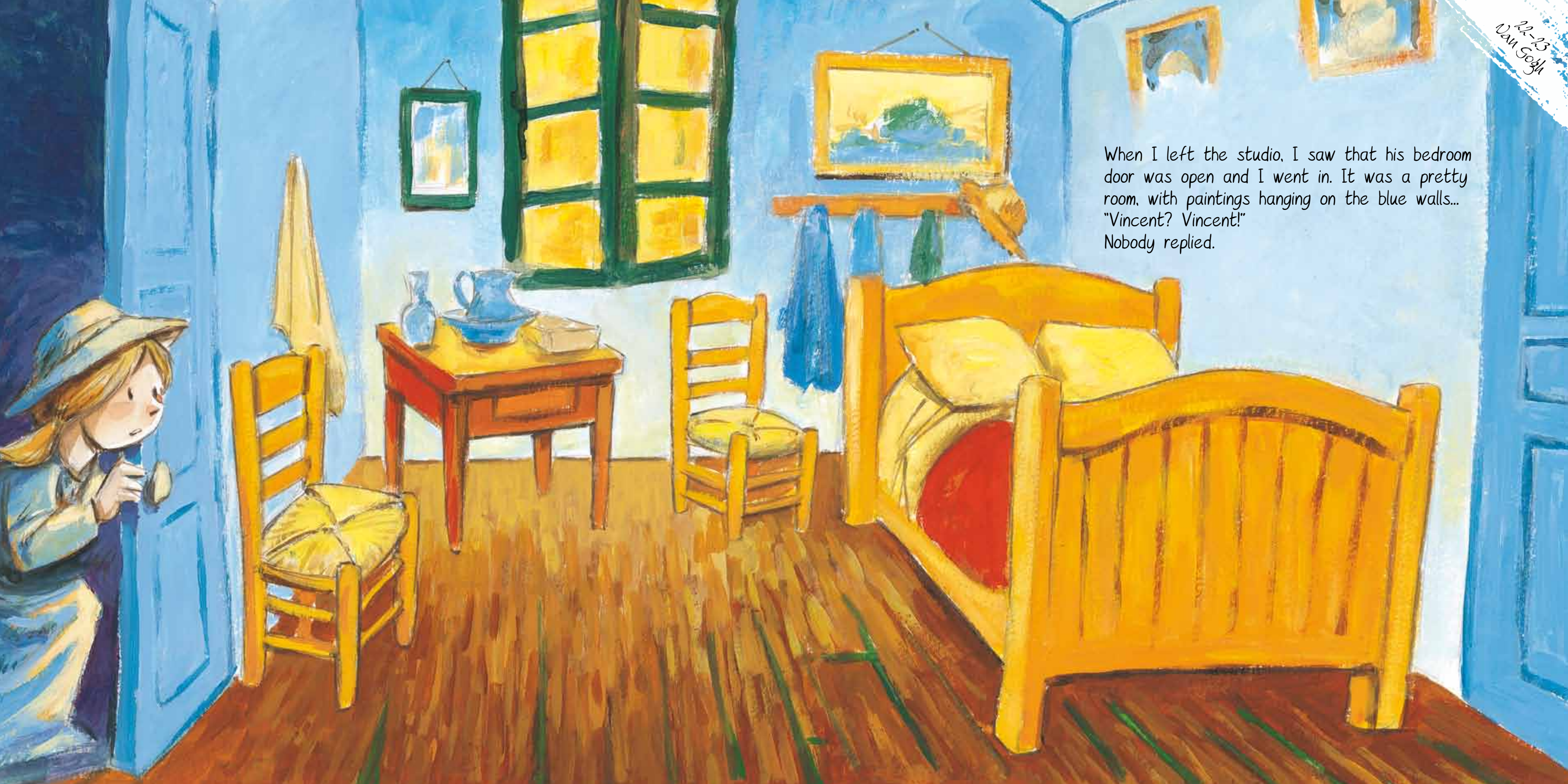




A few days later...
"I hope nothing has happened to him," I wondered to myself after a week without any news of my friend. Eventually, I went to visit him in the yellow house where he lived.



I went into the studio and walked round it with my eyes as big as tea plates.
"Wow! There are so many paintings! Some shoes, the church at Auvers, a self-portrait, another one of the postman, a sower, the painting of the starry night..."



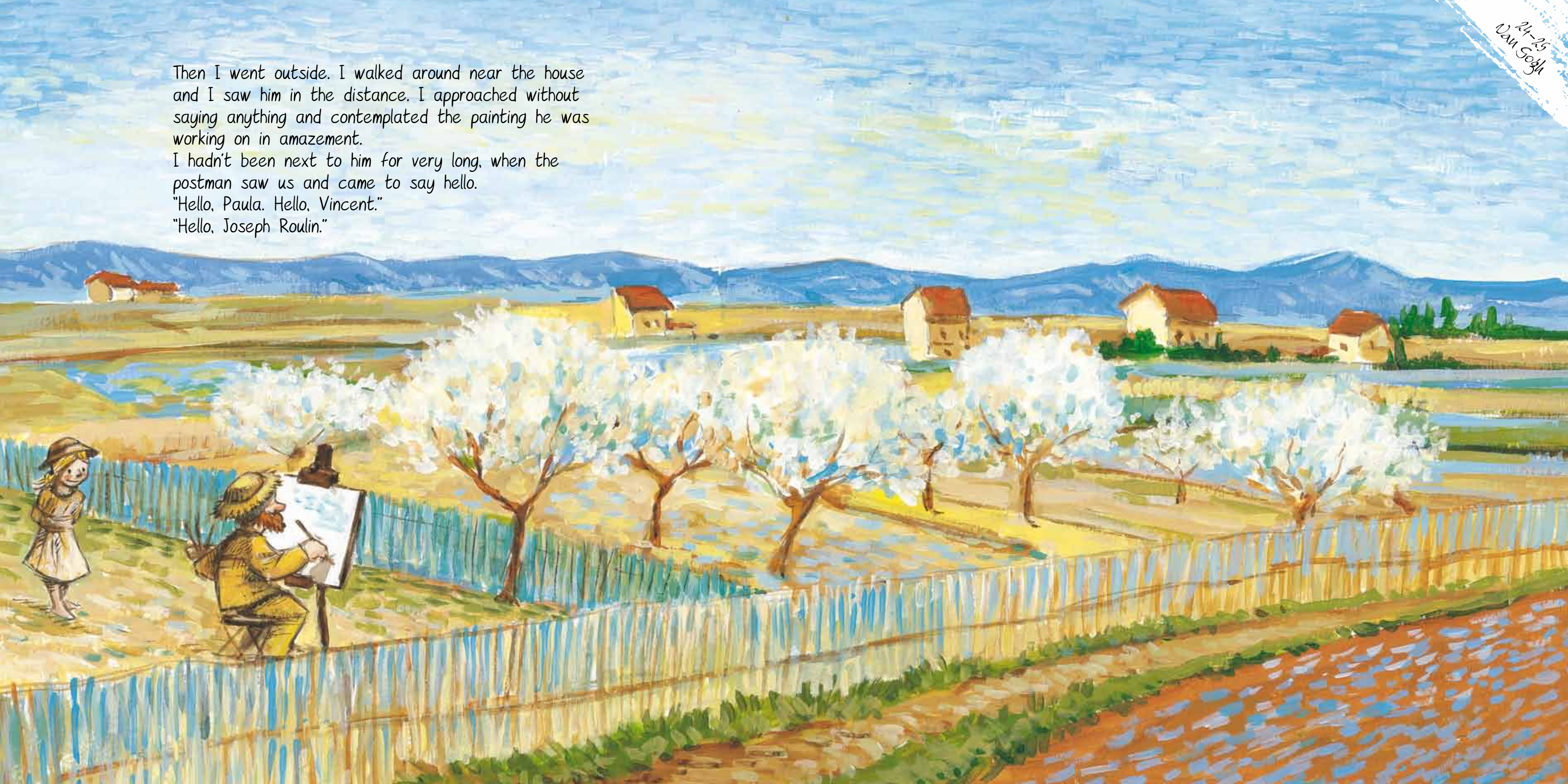
When I left the studio, I saw that his bedroom door was open and I went in. It was a pretty room, with paintings hanging on the blue walls...
"Vincent? Vincent!"
Nobody replied.

Then I went outside. I walked around near the house and I saw him in the distance. I approached without saying anything and contemplated the painting he was working on in amazement.

I hadn't been next to him for very long, when the postman saw us and came to say hello.

"Hello, Paula. Hello, Vincent."

"Hello, Joseph Roulin."



"Vincent, today you have a letter from your brother Theo,"
announced the postman.

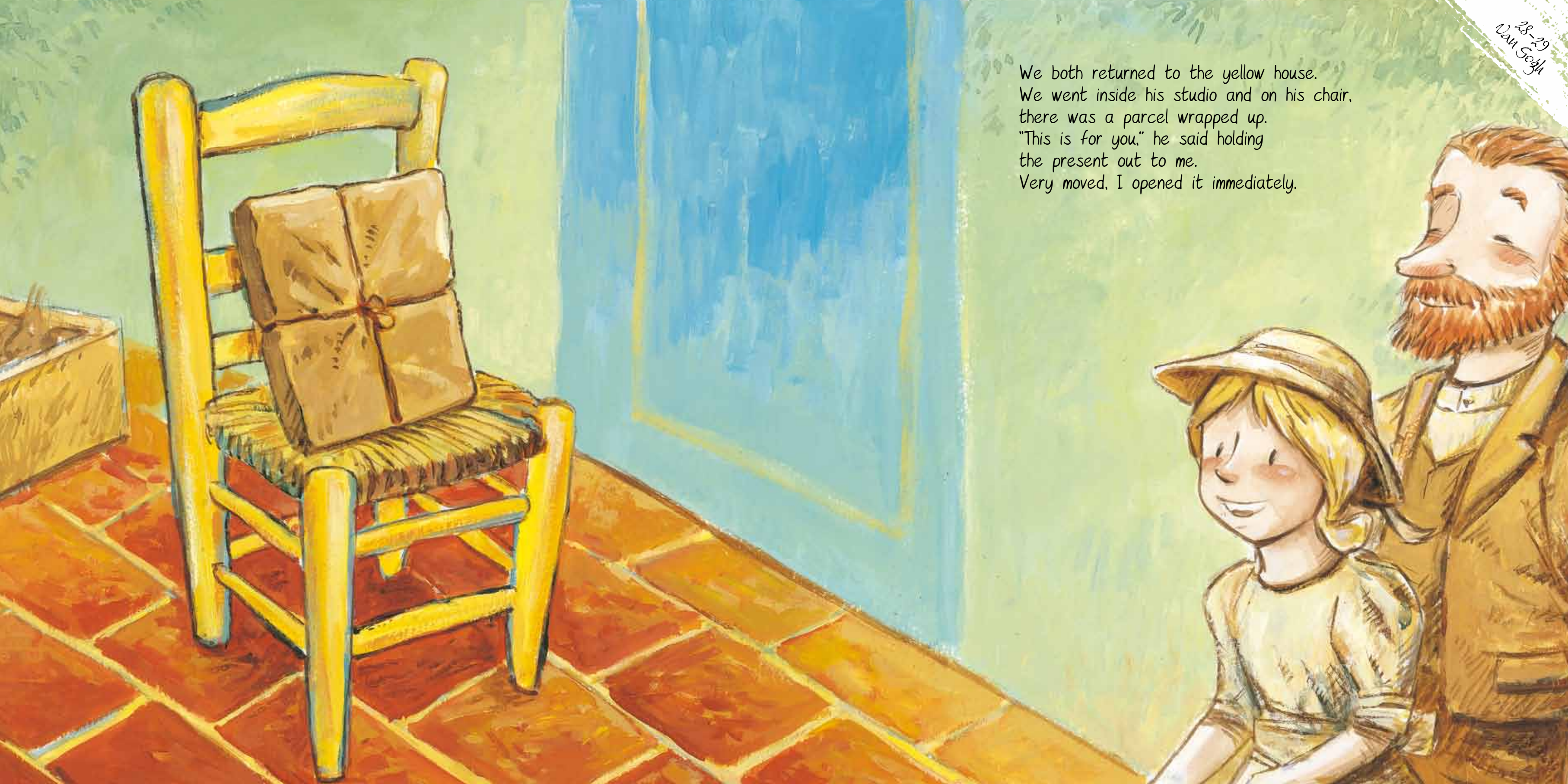
"I didn't know you were there, Paula," said Vincent looking at me.

"I thought something might have happened to you... We haven't
seen each other for days."

"I've been very busy... Come with me, I have a surprise."



We both returned to the yellow house.
We went inside his studio and on his chair,
there was a parcel wrapped up.
"This is for you," he said holding
the present out to me.
Very moved, I opened it immediately.





It was a very lovely painting. The flowers that I had picked one afternoon were now on the canvas. "Now I know what you have been doing during all week when we haven't see each other. You've been painting the sunflowers." And we gave each other one of those hugs that you will remember forever.



Biography

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Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890) was born in Zundert, a small farming village in the Netherlands, although he lived in Antwerp, London and Paris. He completed many paintings, some as well known as The Sunflowers, The Starry Night and The Room in Arles. These paintings are now very famous, they are exhibited in the most important museums and almost everybody knows them. However, while Vincent was alive, many people did not understand his paintings and some connoisseurs dared to say that his works were ugly. He was a man ahead of his time, who was not appreciated. Throughout his life, he only sold one canvas; nowadays you would need millions of Euros to be able to buy one.

We know about a large part of his work and life thanks to the letters he exchanged with his brother Theo. Theo was the only one who was always at his side, helping him financially and introducing him to other painters. Thanks to him, Van Gogh met Gauguin and the two painters lived together for a while at Arles, a town in French Provence. There, Van Gogh wanted to create a community of artists with whom to talk and reflect about painting. However, his idea was never successful. Living with Gauguin was difficult and Van Gogh got so angry that he cut off an ear during a fit of craziness. Despite everything, it was there in Arles, where he painted his most spectacular landscapes with bright colors and full of movement.



Artistic Style

The Impressionists were artists obsessed with capturing light, emotions and movement in their paintings. After them, in the late 19th to early 20th Century, the **Postimpressionists** arrived, among which Van Gogh and Gauguin stand out. Their works revolutionized the world of painting as they employed thicker and unequal brushstrokes and brighter colors. Furthermore, some of them, such as Van Gogh, attempted to express personal emotions and their moods through the paintings and they soon inspired a younger group of artists known as the Expressionists.

Van Gogh's paintings are unmistakable by their exaggerated lines and thickly applied very bright colors. The swirling and spiral brushstrokes also appear often in his canvases, in which he usually painted a very particular and personal reality.

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Illustrations: SUBI -Joan Subirana-

Design and layout: Gemser Publications, S.L.

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El Castell, 38 08329 Teià (Barcelona, Spain)

www.mercedesros.com

ISBN: XXX-XX-XXXXX-XX-X

Printed in China

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