



The
**Runaway
Beignet**



The Runaway Beignet

By Connie Collins Morgan
Illustrated by Herb Leonhard



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To my grandmother, Marie Landry Menard, who graced this life for 103 years, and to my mother, Bernice Menard Collins, who at 88 years still embodies the essence of joie de vivre.—C. C. M.

For Bill Watterson—H. L.

A special thanks to Rachel Morgan, who helped write the beignet's rhythmic refrain.

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Summary: In this version of "The Gingerbread Man," a lonely baker's freshly baked beignet comes to life and dashes through the sights of New Orleans's French Quarter to escape being eaten.

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In a city where magic was more than a simple trick, there lived a kind old baker named Marcel. In the heart of New Orleans, Marcel made an honest living making beignets. Here and there and everywhere the stars shined, people agreed that the flavor of the fried, rectangle-shaped doughnut compared to no other. Some believed there was magic in the powdered sugar that topped each beignet, creating an endless desire for its sweetness.

Many people thought that the baker could have been rich had he not given his pastries to the poor. He even wandered the cobblestone streets feeding beignets to hungry pigeons. Sadly enough, the baker had no family, and even though hundreds of people visited his shop day after day, Marcel was lonely.





One morning, a weary stranger wearing a gray coat, colorful scarf, and red shoes entered the shop. "May I please have a glass of cool water?" he asked.

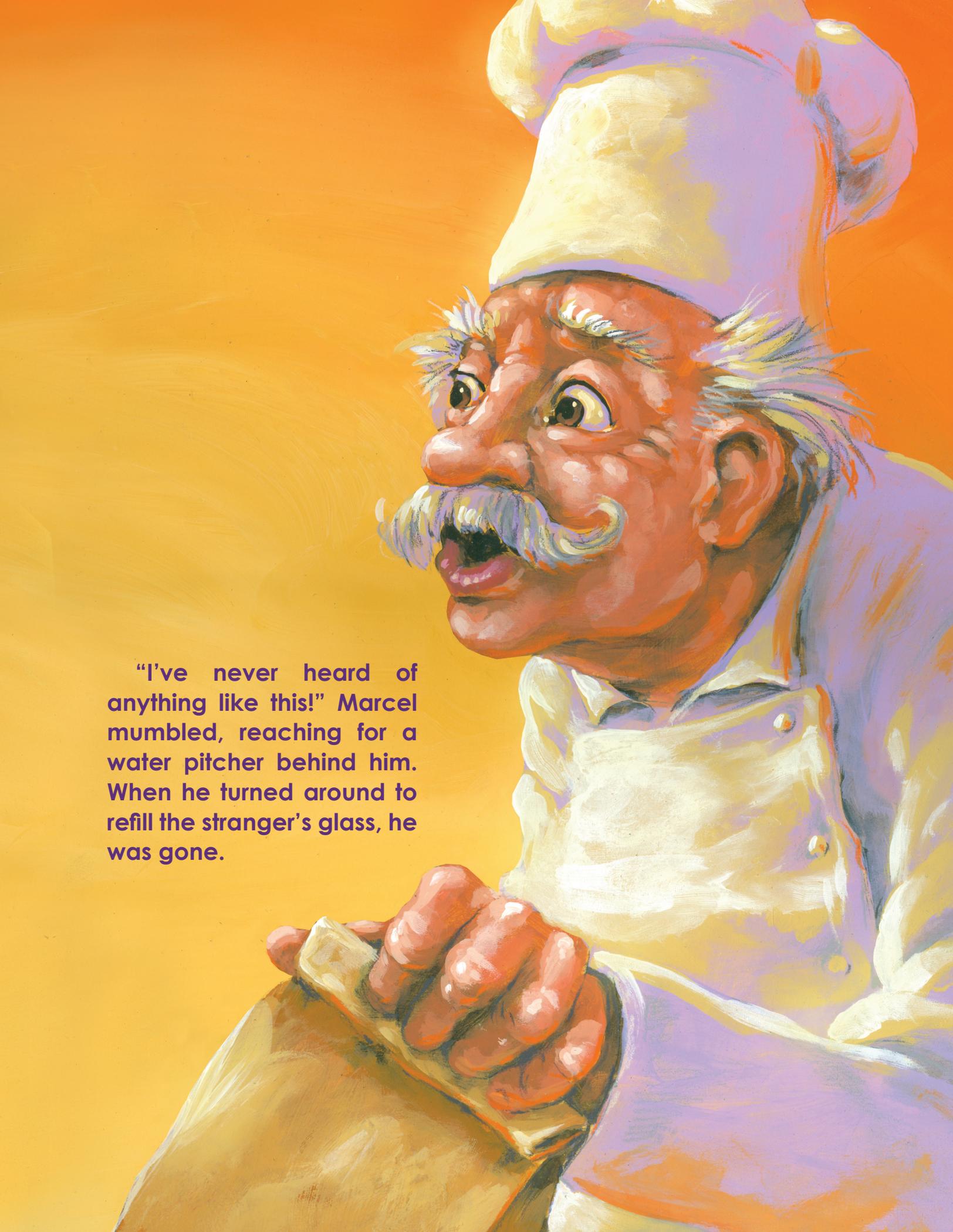
Marcel gave the stranger water and a bag of fresh beignets. "Take this with you. *Bon appétit.*"

"But I have no money to pay you," said the stranger.

Marcel smiled. "I'm not asking for any money."

“Your generosity surpasses the fine aroma of your beignets,” said the stranger. “Take this bag of sugar. When the sun welcomes the day, sprinkle it on the first beignet you cook and wish for anything you want.”





"I've never heard of anything like this!" Marcel mumbled, reaching for a water pitcher behind him. When he turned around to refill the stranger's glass, he was gone.