



As they walked, the sand crunched cold,
and their steps made soft concussions.

“What are we searching for?” asked What?.
“What are prepositions?”

“Relationships,” answered Poodle.

“Each preposition starts a phrase
(a group of words), such as *in* in *in the sky*.
In is the **pre-position**, the first word.

“Each preposition shows a relationship,
such as space, or time, or something else.

You can be *in* the desert (space),
or you can move *toward* the moon (direction).

You can wake *before* the dawn (time),
or you can be *like* a camel (similarity).

There are lots of great relationships.”



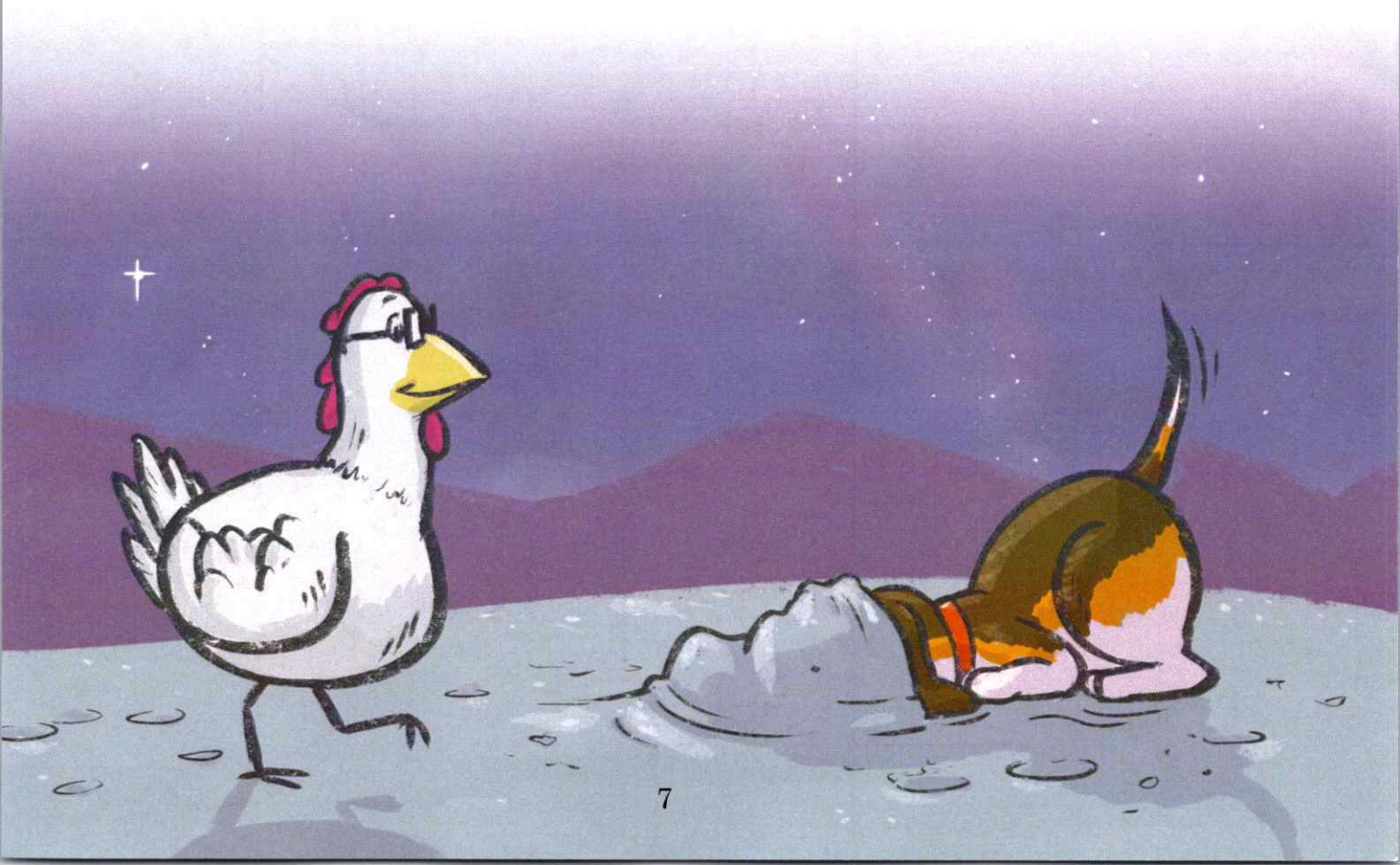
“I hide **behind** the desert,” said What?.

“**Behind**? How can you be
behind a desert?” asked Poodle.
“That’s not the right preposition.”

“Oh,” said What?.
“Then I’m **inside** the desert.”

“**Inside** the desert?” asked Poodle.
“You mean you’re **under** the sand?”

What? was silly sometimes,
Poodle thought.





As Poodle and What? walked
through the deep desert night
over blue billows of dunes,
they talked about relationships,
and their prepositions turned blue,
as the author had promised,
and the words were pretty.

The desert had been hot
during the day, but now it was cold,
and a narrow wind complained,
and cold crawled up the dunes.

They shivered.
Poodle pulled his feathers close
over his chicken-shoulders,
and What? pulled his ears down
against the night.

Something scritchky skittered
with a click behind a rock.
They were not alone.

