

Talk About It

Why do people say, "Money can't buy happiness"?
What's your opinion?

Two Islands

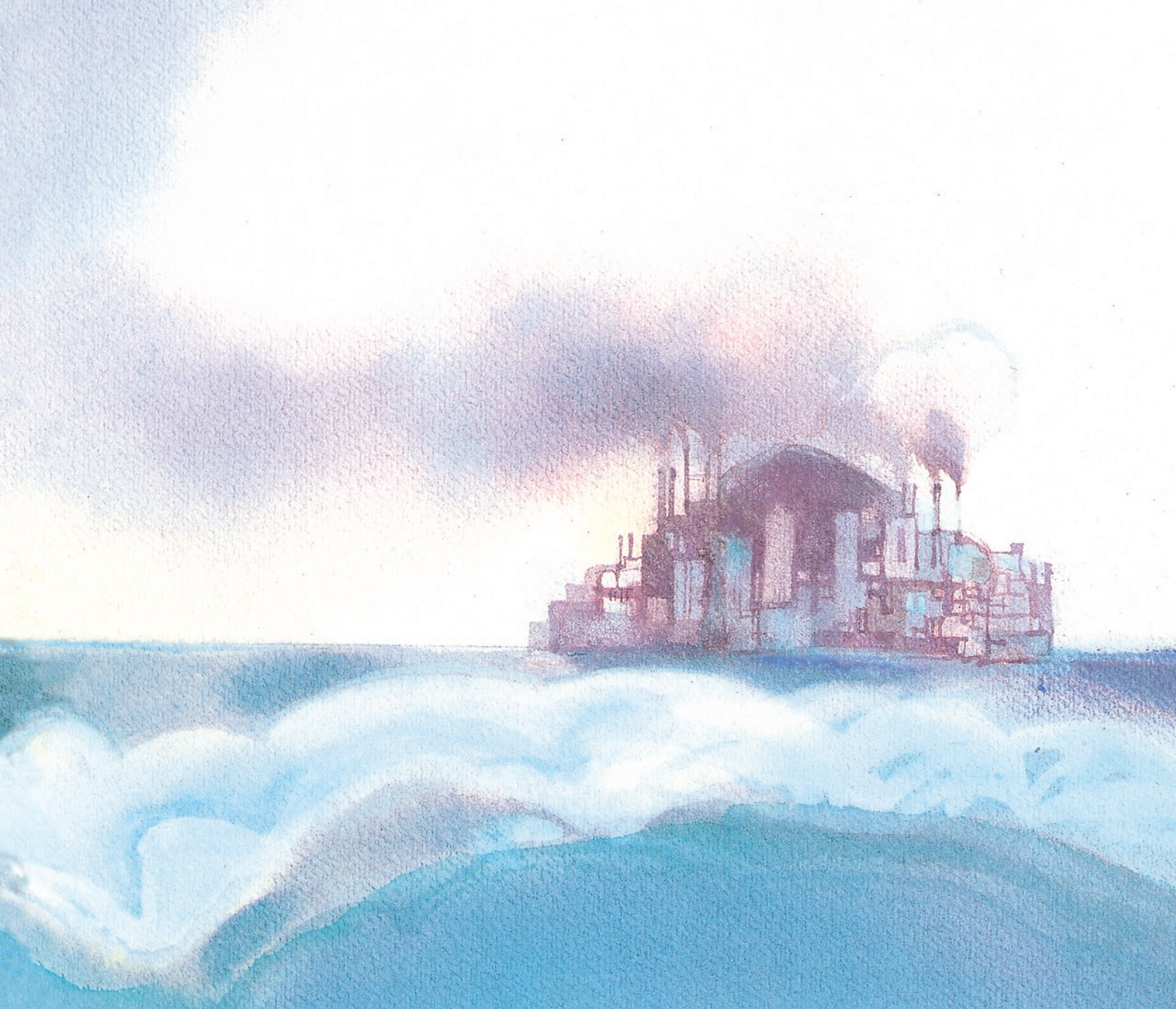
Picture Book written and illustrated by Ivan Gantschev



Once there were two islands, Greenel and Graynel. They sat in the middle of the ocean with a wide stretch of deep water between them.

The very first people who came to the island of Greenel found a peaceful place with tall green trees and dark, fertile soil. Their leaders said, "Since we are here in the middle of the ocean, and our island is only so big and no bigger, we will all have to work very hard to tend it and keep it as lovely as it is today. If we are careful and wise we will be able to grow our own food and learn to make the other things we need to be happy and comfortable."

And down through the years, that is the way it was on Greenel. Life was simple and it moved at the pace of the Sun and the Moon and the changing seasons.



The first people who ever came to Graynel found an island very similar to Greenel—quiet and green and lovely. But their leaders said: “Since our new land is here in the middle of the ocean and is only so big and no bigger, we will have to work very hard if we are to keep up with the rest of the world. We will have to build ships and factories and use all of our land very wisely or we will never be able to make and buy all the things we want.”

There were changes on Graynel, big changes. Even though the island was small, it kept up with the world, and life on Graynel moved at the pace of the shipping timetables, the factory clocks, and the traffic lights.

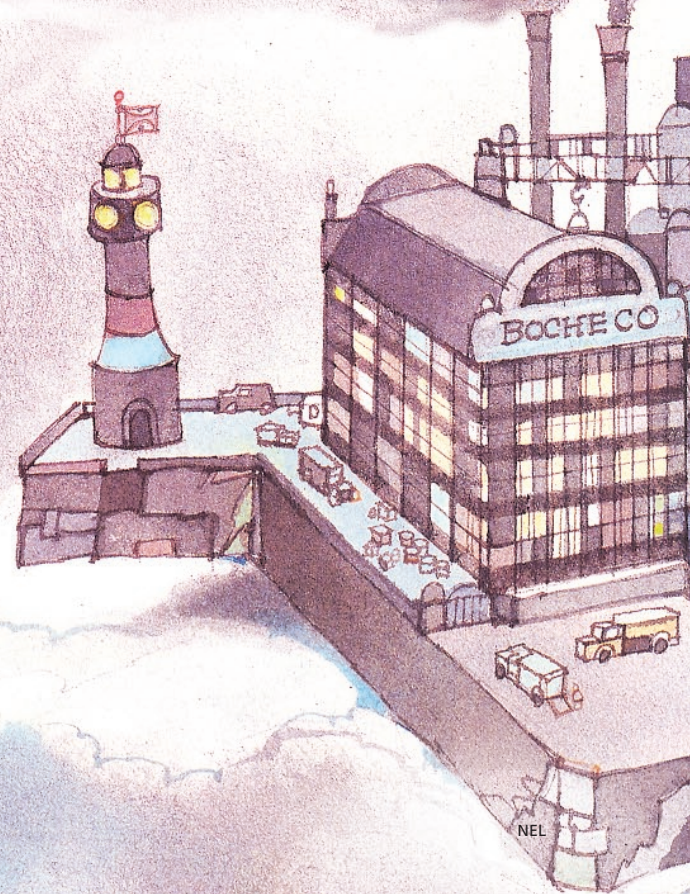
Life on Graynel became very complicated. There were so many factories to run, so many clocks to keep set on the same time, and so many highways to build, that the people of Graynel decided they needed someone who could take charge of the whole island.

And so they elected Gordon D. Warden to be The Boss. He promised that if he were The Boss, then Graynel would be the best and the richest and the busiest and the most famous little island in all the world. He also promised that there would be jobs and cars and money and plenty of everything for everyone.

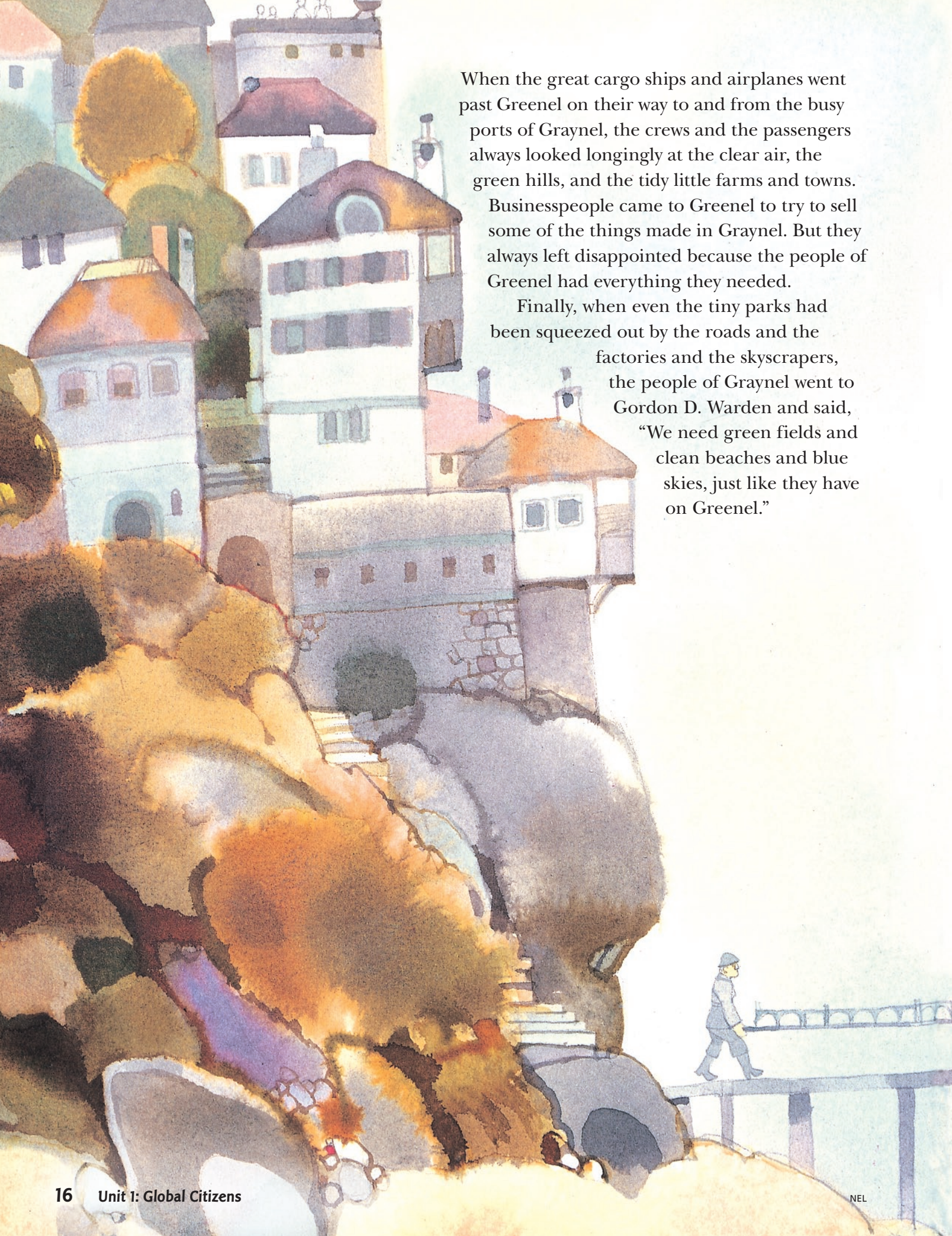
What he said was true. In a very short time there were so many more factories built that almost everyone had two jobs. The people had so much money to spend that everyone had at least one car, and they had so much money left over to save that there were more banks than there were gas stations. The citizens of Graynel were so pleased with all this progress that statues honouring Gordon D. Warden popped up all over the island.

Because all the land was needed for buildings and factories and highways, the whole island seemed like one big city. Where there used to be fields and forests, there were only a few tiny parks, just big enough for one or two people to visit at a time.

The very old people could remember when Graynel had been like a lovely garden in the sea; but the children of Graynel grew up thinking that it was normal to wear gas masks, and the only time they ever saw blue skies and green fields was when they tuned in to the Vacation Channel on TV.







When the great cargo ships and airplanes went past Greenel on their way to and from the busy ports of Graynel, the crews and the passengers always looked longingly at the clear air, the green hills, and the tidy little farms and towns.

Businesspeople came to Greenel to try to sell some of the things made in Graynel. But they always left disappointed because the people of Greenel had everything they needed.

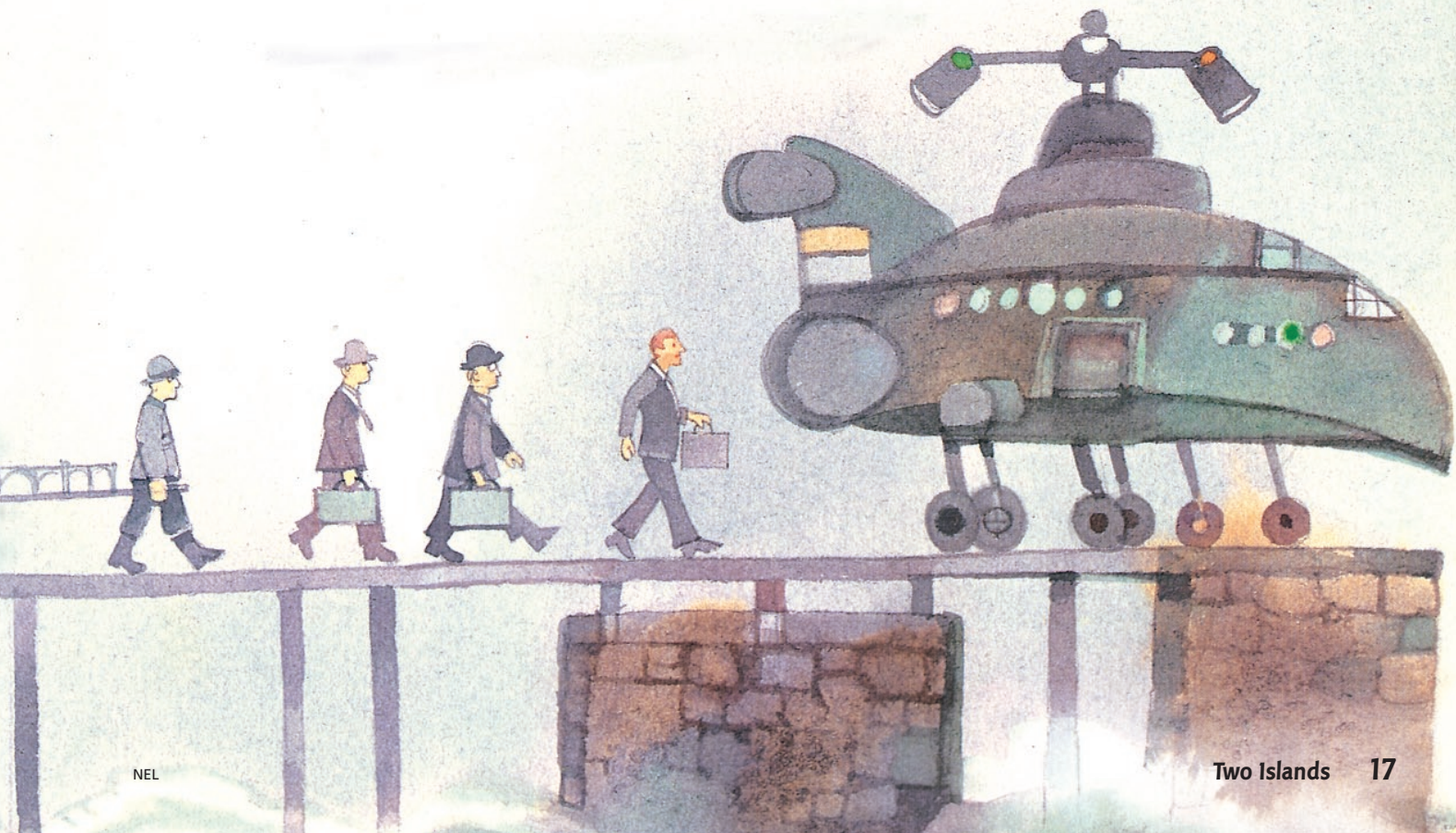
Finally, when even the tiny parks had been squeezed out by the roads and the factories and the skyscrapers, the people of Graynel went to Gordon D. Warden and said, "We need green fields and clean beaches and blue skies, just like they have on Greenel."

This was a problem for Gordon D. Warden. He was not about to tear down any factories or rip up any highways—that would cost too much money. So he came up with a plan. Because his plan involved Greenel, he went there to present it himself.

When he met with the president of Greenel, Gordon D. Warden uncovered a big model he had brought with him. He said, “This bridge is the greatest idea I’ve ever had. Your people will be able to go shopping on Graynel any time they choose, and my people will be able to drive over to Greenel whenever they need a little vacation. It will be the world’s longest bridge, so tourists will come here from everywhere just to drive their cars across it. And it won’t cost you one penny. What do you say? Is it a deal?”

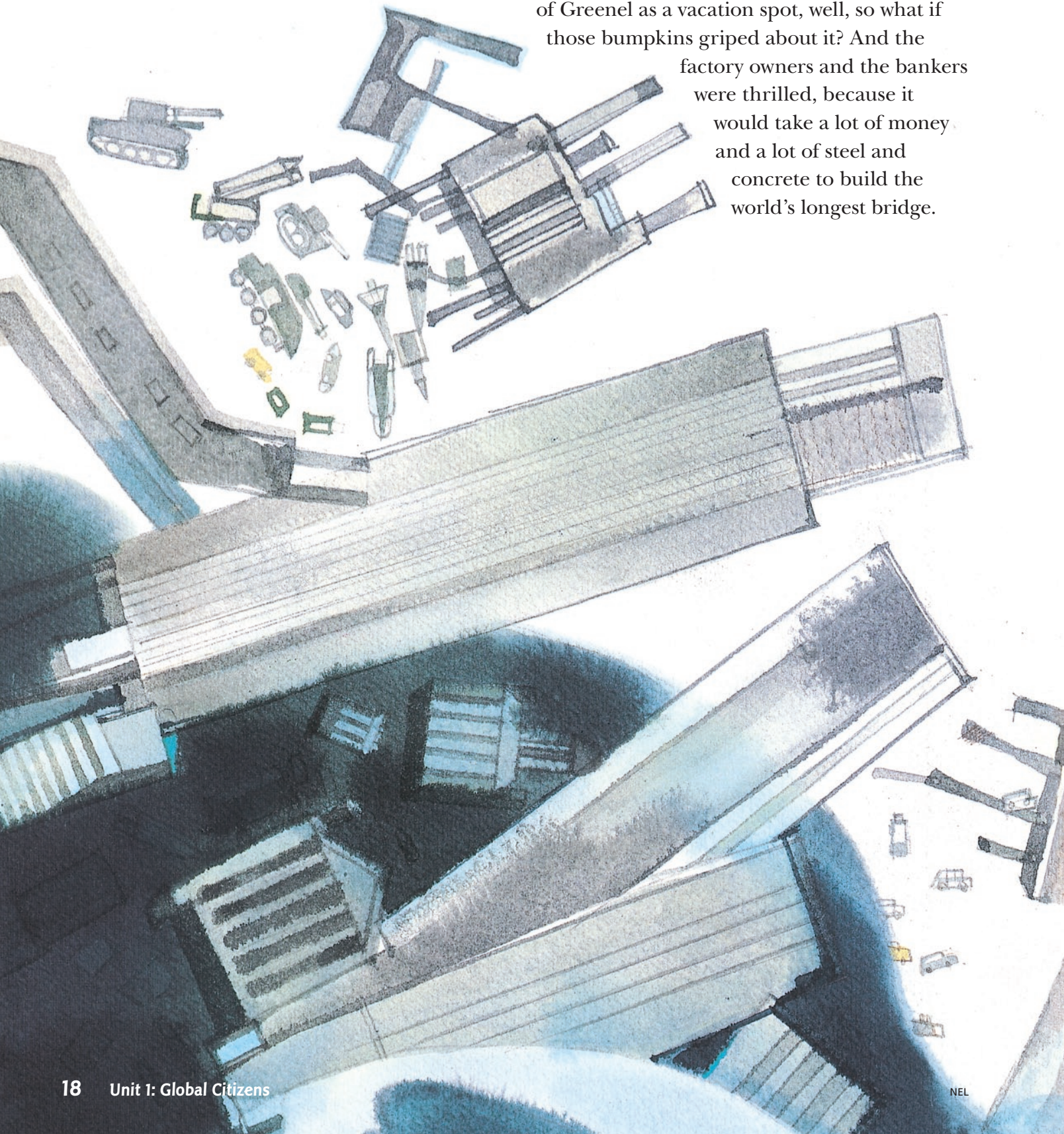
The President of Greenel thought for a minute or two, and then said, “I’m sorry, but if you built this bridge, our people would soon be building highways and gas stations and refineries and repair shops and hotels and restaurants—maybe even factories. Before long, our island would be just like Graynel. You and your people are always welcome to visit, or even to come and live as we do. But we want to keep Greenel just like it is.”

Gordon D. Warden was furious! Imagine this country boy wanting to be left out of the best idea of the century! He stood up from the table without saying a word, stomped back to his helicopter, and flew home to Graynel. And he said to himself, “We’re going to build that bridge anyway, and if they don’t like it, just let them try to stop us!”



The next day, when Gordon D. Warden announced his plans to the citizens of Graynel, some of the people felt it was wrong to build a bridge if the people of Greenel did not want it. But most of them decided that if they could have the clean beaches and the green hills of Greenel as a vacation spot, well, so what if those bumpkins griped about it? And the

factory owners and the bankers were thrilled, because it would take a lot of money and a lot of steel and concrete to build the world's longest bridge.



The people who did not think it was right to build the bridge protested and carried signs and wrote letters to the newspapers. They got to be such a problem for Gordon D. Warden that he declared them all traitors and gave them ten days to leave the island. Many of those who left went to live on Greenel.

All the ships from Graynel travelled to far-off lands, and every day they brought back load after load of wire and steel and rock and cement. Just to be sure that he got his way, Gordon D. Warden had some of the factories start building army tanks and big cannons. He told his citizens, "If those people won't listen to reason, let them listen to the sound of our guns!"

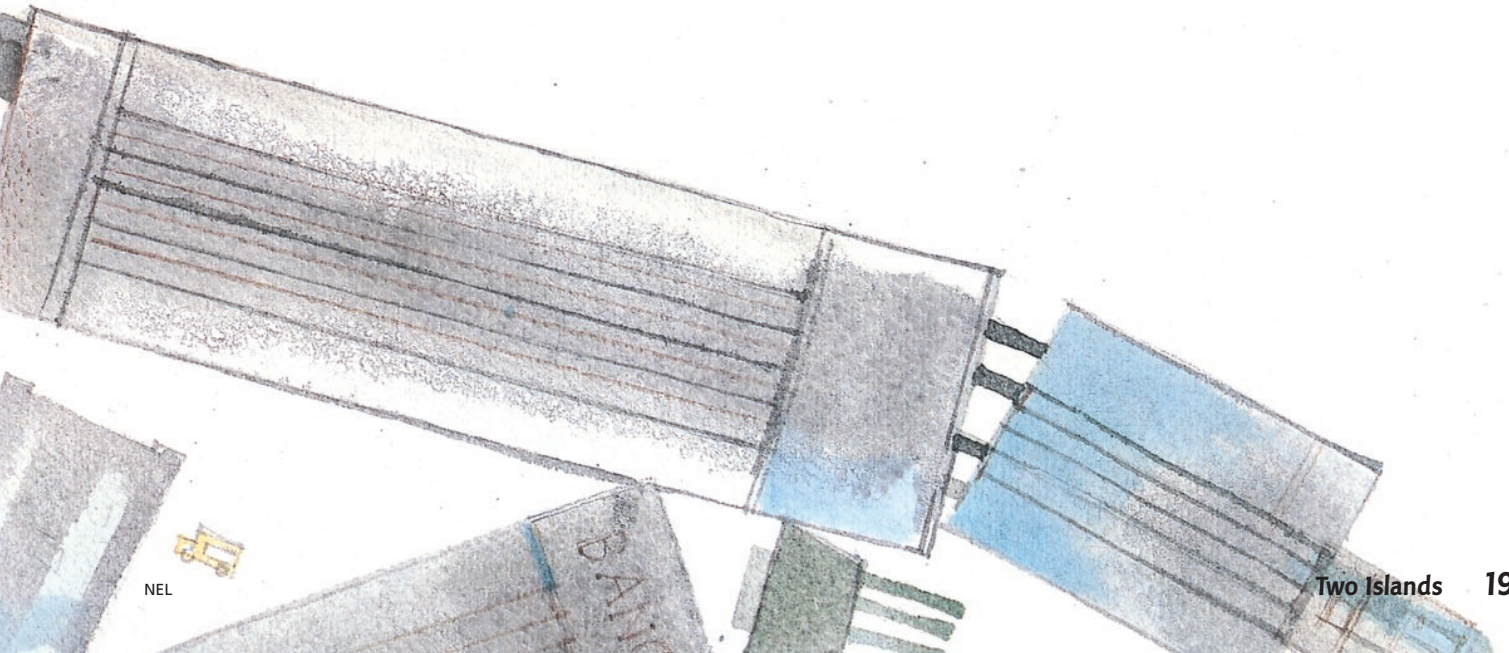
When the last fifty shiploads of steel and rocks and cement were unloaded on the shores of Warden Bay, there was a huge rally to celebrate the first day of construction. The Boss had announced that he would come and throw the first stone into the sea to signal the start of work.

Gordon D. Warden arrived in a clattery cloud of dust and exhaust. The people all began to jump up and down, yelling, "Speech! Speech! Speech!" He raised his arms to signal for silence, and a great hush settled over the crowd.

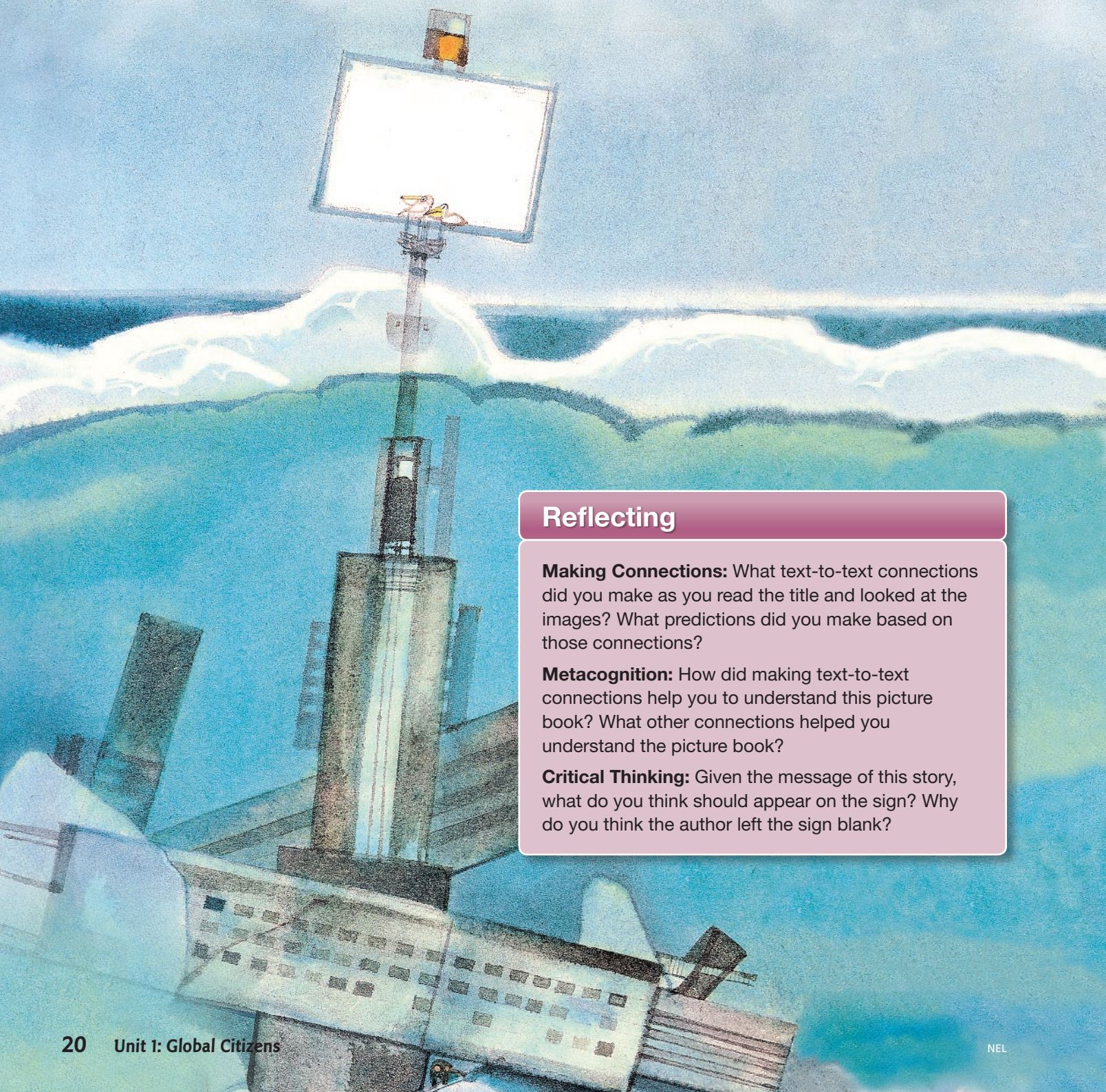
Just as Gordon D. Warden started to speak, there was a deep, shaking rumbling sound, as if a huge thunderstorm were caught inside a cave.

Crashes and screams, splashes and cracks and crumbling! Hissing steam and popping bubbles ... and then silence.

In less than a minute, the whole island of Graynel had tipped up on its edge and slid down into the oily brown water of Warden Bay. Gordon D. Warden, the heavy building materials, the weapons, and all the people and cars and factories and everything else went straight to the bottom of the sea.



Using an old, old map, Graynel can still be found. There is no noise now, no smoke, no busy port with fleets of ships. All that remains is one lone chimney, sticking up out of the sea. The people of Greenel have fastened a sign to it, and anyone who travels past in a boat can read what the sign says.



Reflecting

Making Connections: What text-to-text connections did you make as you read the title and looked at the images? What predictions did you make based on those connections?

Metacognition: How did making text-to-text connections help you to understand this picture book? What other connections helped you understand the picture book?

Critical Thinking: Given the message of this story, what do you think should appear on the sign? Why do you think the author left the sign blank?