

THE PAINTER AND THE JUDGE

illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura

Once there was a judge who was very mean. Everyone knew that to get him to listen to you, you had to go to him secretly and give him huge amounts of money. And even then he might just take the money and still not give you a fair hearing. People often felt that he had cheated them.

One day the judge heard there was a painter in town who could paint the most wonderful pictures. The judge found the man and gave him a roll of white paper to get working on.

"Paint me a beautiful picture," said the judge.

At first the painter didn't want to. He knew how mean the judge was and said to himself, "I might do a lot of work on this painting and end up not getting paid."

"I'm very busy at the moment," he said. "I just don't have the time."

But the judge begged him,

saying, "I shall put it up in a place where all the most important people in town will see it."

In the end the painter said he would do a picture for the judge.

The next day, he came to the judge's house with the roll of paper.

"Wise One, I have finished the painting."

The judge was delighted but when he unrolled the paper, he couldn't see any picture on it. Instead, there were a few words: "Cows on Grass".

The judge stared at the blank piece of paper.

"But where's the grass?" he said.

"The cows have eaten it," answered the painter.

"But then where are the cows?" said the judge.

"Well," said the painter, "seeing as they'd eaten all the grass, there wasn't much point in them hanging around any more, was there? So they went."

