

ANNA FIENBERG AND KIM GAMBLE

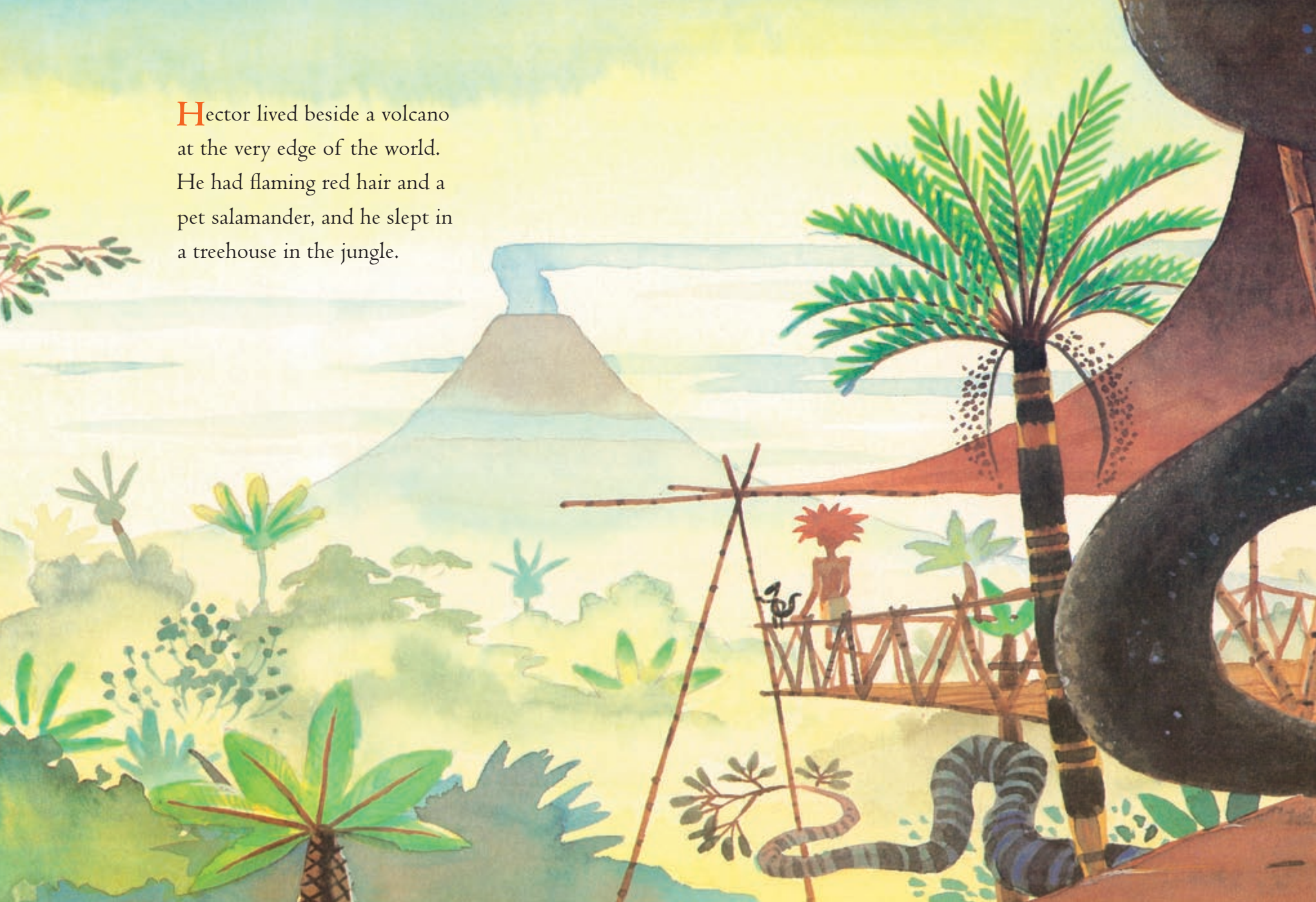
# The Hottest Boy Who Ever Lived



ALLEN & UNWIN



**H**ector lived beside a volcano  
at the very edge of the world.  
He had flaming red hair and a  
pet salamander, and he slept in  
a treehouse in the jungle.







**H**e ate mangoes for breakfast and pineapples for lunch, and nobody told him when to go to bed. But Hector was sad.

He was unbearably, bone-achingly sad.

‘No offence, Minton,’ he said to his salamander, ‘but I would give up my mangoes, my treehouse, even my view of the volcano, just for someone to talk to.’



‘**W**hat about me? You can tell *me* anything,’  
said Minton.

‘Yes, but one salamander is just not enough.’

Minton was a loyal pet, and in his heart  
he agreed.

‘It is a terrible shame, Hector, especially  
when you have such a great talent for

conversation. But who else could ever be  
your friend? I mean, with *your* problem.’

For Hector, you see,  
was the hottest boy who ever lived.  
Inside, he burned like a bonfire.  
When he sighed, the grass turned brown.  
Hector sighed now, and the grass smoked.





**L**iving on the edge of the world, as he did, Hector had never known a family, or friends. Minton, who could dance through fire, was the only creature that could bear to be near him.

‘The first time I saw you,’ Minton told him, ‘you were shooting right out of the volcano.’ Hector couldn’t remember back that far, but he had always known Minton.



**I**'d give anything for a hug,' Hector whispered to Minton one day. 'I'd settle for a cuddle from an octopus, a squeeze from a boa constrictor, even a lick from a lion.'

Minton looked at him sadly.

He could hardly fit around Hector's big toe.

'I know,' said Minton, 'but even the mosquitoes won't come near you. Believe me, I've been around, and this is the best place for you. Really, Hector, you are just too hot to handle.'