

FRANKIE

versus the

FOOD PHANTOM



Erik Talkin

illustrated by
Laura Ramos

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All the staff, board, and volunteers at the Foodbank of Santa Barbara
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Does a seed ball have to be round? Because mine is a mess of dirt and clay, with seeds falling out.

Ms. Alvarez says that because each seed ball has its own soil, we can throw them onto open ground and make “wild food” grow in unexpected places. It’s part of our class project on the food system. We’re looking at how our community gets food, uses it, sells it, and more.

I’m grouped with Sacha and Izaak. I haven’t hung out with them much. Still, we plan to meet Saturday and plant our seeds.



After school, Grandpa and I go shopping at Un Solo Sol Bodega.

“There’s no fresh food here,” Grandpa growls.

The owner, Mr. Zambrano, offers an old apple. “Even Snow White wouldn’t take a bite of that,” Grandpa says.



“No room to display them,” Mr. Zambrano shrugs. “So they sit around.”

A shape *swirls* past the window, startling me—and a stack of cans comes crashing down.



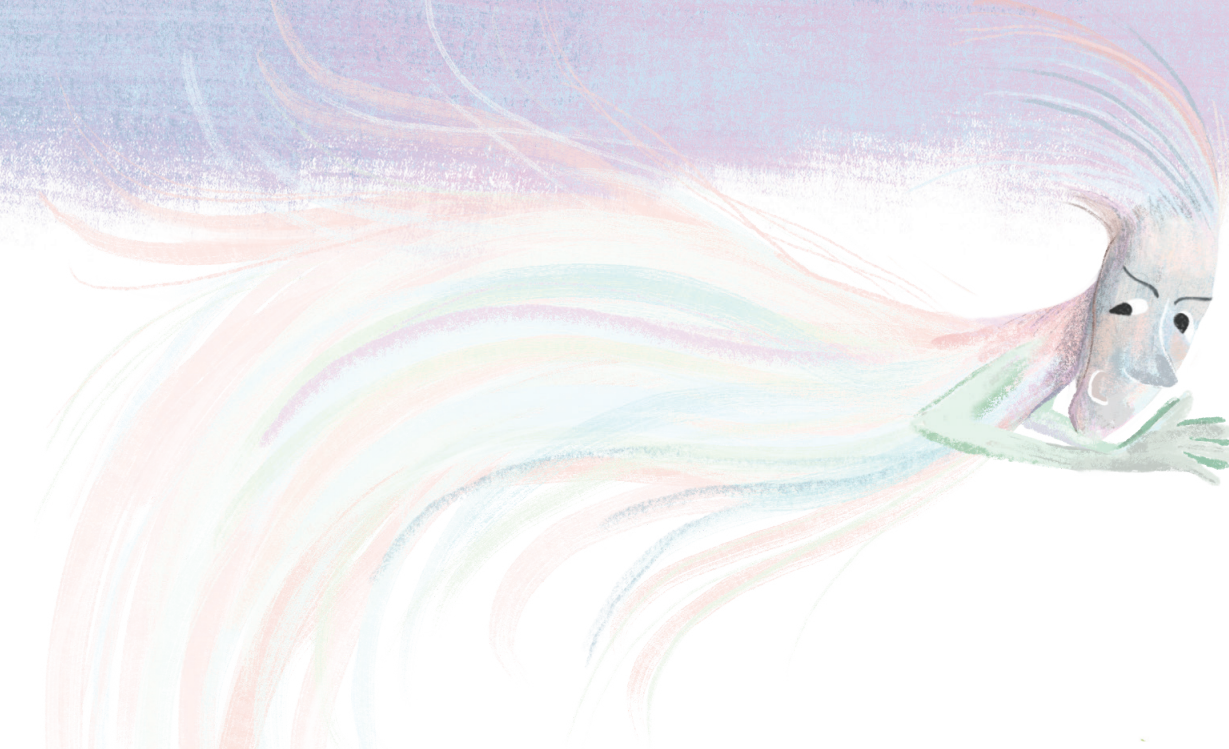
“Careful, Frankie!” Grandpa pleads.

“It’s fine, nothing broken,” says Mr. Zambrano as he rearranges the pile.

How You Can Help the Food Phantom Turn Over a New Leaf

The Food Justice Books for Kids series is all about food justice. This means having enough fresh, healthy, and affordable food, including locally grown food that is right for your culture. It also means that people who work in the food system are treated and paid fairly.

The other two books in the series help us understand how sometimes it's difficult to get enough food that is nutritious and makes you feel good. In this book, it's almost as if we travel up high, so we can see the bigger picture of how food comes to where you live and how it moves between places and people. From up here, we have the view the Food Phantom does.



Frankie has noticed that she has trouble finding healthy, affordable food near her home, but she isn't sure why. The way food is made and sold seems mysterious to her—and so does the Food Phantom.



What Frankie is struggling to understand is called the food system. This is the journey food takes to get from where it came from—like a farm or factory—to a plate in front of you. Frankie is right—it's very complicated! But we can break the food system into four main parts: production (growing crops or raising animals), processing (preparing the food by cleaning, freezing, packaging, or other steps), distribution (sending the food to different places), and consumption (eating the food).