Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch
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Tale: story

Tall tale: a story that is very difficult to believe; a greatly exaggerated story.
For example, the mosquito in the book *Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears* told a tall tale.
The mosquito said that it saw a yam the same size as the mosquito. The iguana could not believe his story.
Tall tales are often funny and told for entertainment.

Meanwhile: the period of time between two events, or while an event is happening.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch: a phrase used to indicate situations happening at the same time in different locations. This phrase was probably first used in cowboy radio shows or silent movies. Something exciting would be happening in town. At the same time, something else would be happening at the ranch or at home.

You can also say that this story has **parallel plot**s. One plot is Rancher Hicks' story. The other plot is Elna's story. "Meanwhile" is used to indicate the change in plot and setting.

The author used several verbs or verb phrases to describe how someone moves. Listen for them as you hear and read the story.

Discussion Questions:

When you introduce yourself, tell the group your first reaction to the story or one thing in the story that you find funny.

The story contains exaggerated humor. Name some examples of exaggeration.

Why did Rancher Hicks think the activities in Sleepy Gulch were so exciting?

Have you lived in a small town where small events caused great interest and excitement?

Elna did not expect the exciting events of her day. Have you had something exciting happen when you least expected it?

Elna was very lucky during her day at the ranch. Tell about a time when you were very lucky.

What would you do if you struck oil, won the lottery, or inherited a fortune?

What is your opinion of the story and the illustrations?

Is this a book you would read to a child you know? Why or why not?

Teachers: Save time for student's to re-read the story and answer any questions they have.