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PART 1

STORY

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Teller



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STORY Teller

The fascinating world of children's stories, with its adventure, fantasy and humour, is an important part of growing up. Every child needs to discover the delights of traditional tales like Sleeping Beauty and Sindbad, explore the exciting myths and legends of other lands, and enter the imaginative realm that so many writers have created for them over the years.

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THE BOOK

Editors: Richard Widdows & Nigel Flynn

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Designers: Paul Morgan & Fran Coston

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Gobbolino: Francis Phillipps

The Hare & The Tortoise: Malcolm Livingstone

The Shoe Tree: Kevin Maddison

The Emperor's New Clothes: Anna Dzierzek

The Red Nightcaps: Gillian Chapman

Aldo: Malcolm Livingstone

The Forest Troll: Peter Richardson

THE CASSETTE

Recorded at The Barge Studios

London:

Produced by Joa Reinelt

Engineered by John Rowland

Directed by Tony Hertz/Joa Reinelt

A Creative Radio Production

Readers

Gobbolino: Sheila Hancock

The Hare & The Tortoise: Bernard Cribbins

The Shoe Tree: Sheila Hancock

The Emperor's New Clothes: Bernard Cribbins

The Red Nightcaps: Marise Hepworth

Aldo: Robert Powell, Nigel Lambert & John Brewer

The Forest Troll: Nigel Lambert

EXTRA!

Every issue of

STORYTeller

includes a four-page
colouring section!

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Poor Gobbolino—he did so want to be a kitchen cat, curled up peacefully by the fire or playing happily with the children. But it's no easy matter when you're born a witch's kitten, and trouble seems to follow you everywhere you go.

Gobbolino is the best-loved of Ursula Moray Williams' charming stories and his adventures, adapted for STORYTELLER, are told in four

instalments by
Sheila Hancock,
with illustrations by
Francis Phillipps.

© Ursula Moray Williams 1982



FAMOUS FABLES

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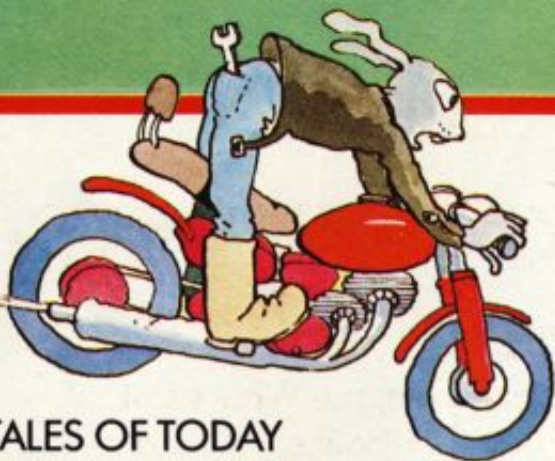
First written in the sixth century as lessons in life for the people of Athens, Aesop's classic tales are still enjoyed by young and old alike for their strong storyline and simple moral. The fable in each issue of STORYTELLER will be illustrated by Malcolm Livingstone.

KAYE WEBB – Editorial Consultant to STORYTELLER

One of the best-known editors working in children's publishing, Kaye Webb was formerly director of Puffin Books and for 20 years was their editor-in-chief. In 1967 Kaye founded the Puffin Club, with its popular magazine Puffin Post, which she edited until 1982. A talented writer herself, Kaye has provided invaluable knowledge and advice in creating the team of writers whose work you can now read in the pages of STORYTELLER

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Penny Ayers was following the local Cornish custom of burying an old boot under the rhubarb when the idea came to her for a story. The result is the first in a unique collection of modern adventures written by top contemporary authors. The illustrator is Kevin Maddison.

© Penny Ayers 1982



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*Says Storyteller,
Funny feller,
"I don't want you to miss a turn.
So listen closely, listen well,
For the Storyteller's bell!"*



GOBBOLINO

The Witch's Cat



On a dark and cloudy night, two tiny kittens crept out of the cave where they had been born. It was the first time they had set foot outside the cave. It was so dark that Gobbolino could barely see his twin sister, Sootica. She was as black as the night itself.

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" asked Gobbolino.

"Oh, I'll be a witch's cat like Ma," said Sootica. "I'll learn magic and how to ride a broomstick and turn mice into frogs and frogs into guinea-pigs. I'll fly on the night wind with the bats and the owls saying *Mee-eee-ow!* And people will say *There goes Sootica, the witch's cat!*"

Gobbolino was silent for a long time. Then he said: "I'll be a kitchen cat. I'll sit by the fire with my paws tucked under my chest and purr. When the children of the house come in from school they'll pull my ears and tickle and tease me. I'll mind the house and chase the mice and watch the baby. And when all the children are in bed I'll climb on to their mother's lap.

And they'll call me Gobbolino, the kitchen cat."



"Don't you want to be bad?"

"No," said Gobbolino. "I want to be good so that people will love me. People don't love a witch's cat."

Just then a ray of moonlight fell across the kittens. Sootica hissed and arched her back. "Brother! Brother! One of your paws is white!"

Everyone knows that witches' kittens are black all over, from head to foot, with eyes as green as grass. In the deep, dark cave, nobody had noticed. But now the moonbeam lit up a pure white sock. And his lovely round eyes were . . . blue!

Sootica rushed into the cave. "Ma! Gobbolino has a white sock! And blue eyes! And he wants to be a kitchen cat!"

Her mother came to the mouth of the cave. The witch was not far behind.



They knocked Gobbolino head over heels, cuffed his ears, pulled his tail and threw him into the darkest, dampest corner of the cave, among the witch's toads.

Later he heard the witch talking to his mother: "Sootica will make a clever little witch's cat. But what shall we do with Gobbolino?"

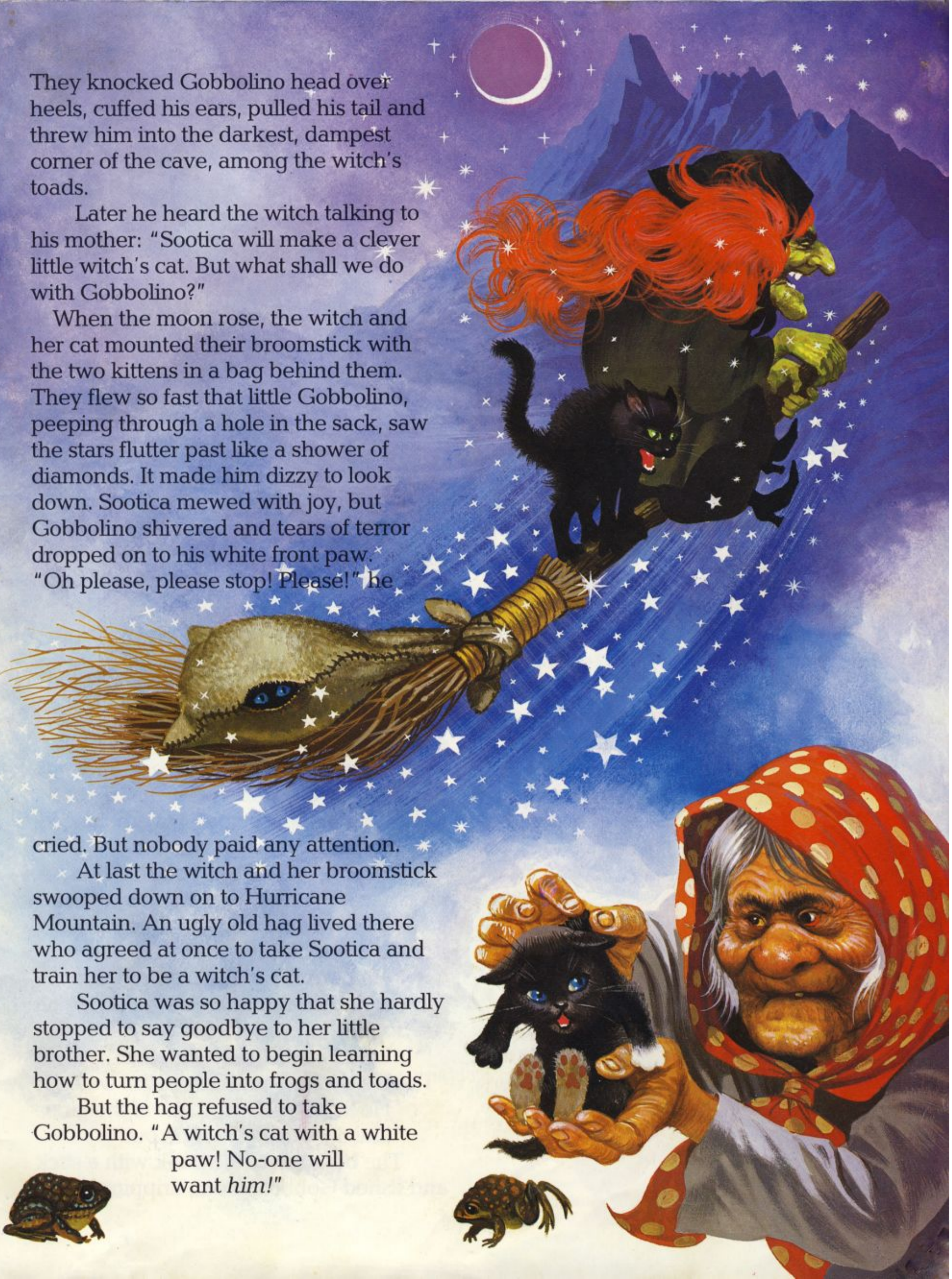
When the moon rose, the witch and her cat mounted their broomstick with the two kittens in a bag behind them. They flew so fast that little Gobbolino, peeping through a hole in the sack, saw the stars flutter past like a shower of diamonds. It made him dizzy to look down. Sootica mewed with joy, but Gobbolino shivered and tears of terror dropped on to his white front paw. "Oh please, please stop! Please!" he

cried. But nobody paid any attention.

At last the witch and her broomstick swooped down on to Hurricane Mountain. An ugly old hag lived there who agreed at once to take Sootica and train her to be a witch's cat.

Sootica was so happy that she hardly stopped to say goodbye to her little brother. She wanted to begin learning how to turn people into frogs and toads.

But the hag refused to take Gobbolino. "A witch's cat with a white paw! No-one will want *him*!"



So Gobbolino rode away on the broomstick, behind his mother and the witch. They visited fifty caves, but none of the other witches wanted Gobbolino because of his white paw and blue eyes. They flew home again, and the witch flung Gobbolino back among the toads.

In the morning he woke up and found himself all alone. The witch and his mother had gone. "Suppose they never come back. Oh, what shall I do?"

But then an idea struck him. "Now I never have to be a witch's cat. I can go and find a happy home to live in for ever and ever!" And he stopped crying.

The witch's cave was on the edge of a forest, not far from a river. Gobbolino washed his face and coat very carefully, and then trotted through the fields till the forest was out of sight. In front of him was the bubbling river, with bright fishes in it that made his mouth water.

Quite soon, a lovely trout—pink and

gold and blue—swam slowly towards him. Gobbolino trembled with excitement and lifted a front paw. At the same moment the trout saw him and flashed by with a swish of its tail. The kitten made one wild grab, overbalanced, and tumbled into the water.

There was a terrible splash. Then he began to swim, as only a witch's cat can. He swam and swam as the river carried him far from the cave where he was born. He swam until the river ran into farmland. Some children were playing on the bank.

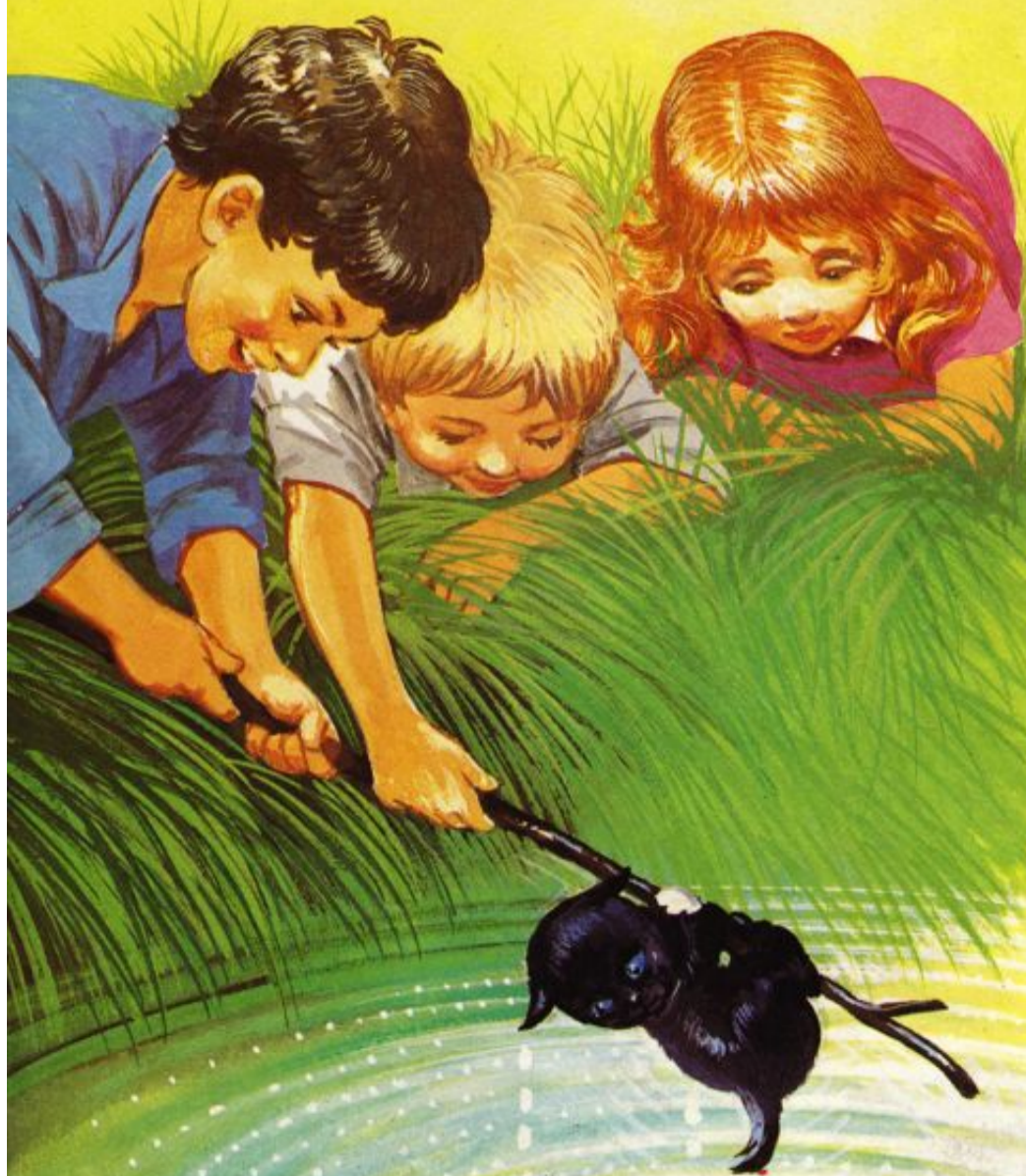
"Look! Look!" they shouted.

"There's a kitten out there in the water!"

"He'll drown!" cried one of the girls.

"Quick! Quick! Get him out!"

The boys ran to the bank with a stick and fished Gobbolino out, dripping wet.



"What bright blue eyes!"

"He's got three black paws . . ."

"And one pure white!"

The children took Gobbolino home to the farm to show him to their mother. And it had the kind of kitchen little Gobbolino had dreamed of! There were bright pans on the shelves, a blazing fire, and a baby in a cradle . . .

"Oh what a lucky cat I am!"

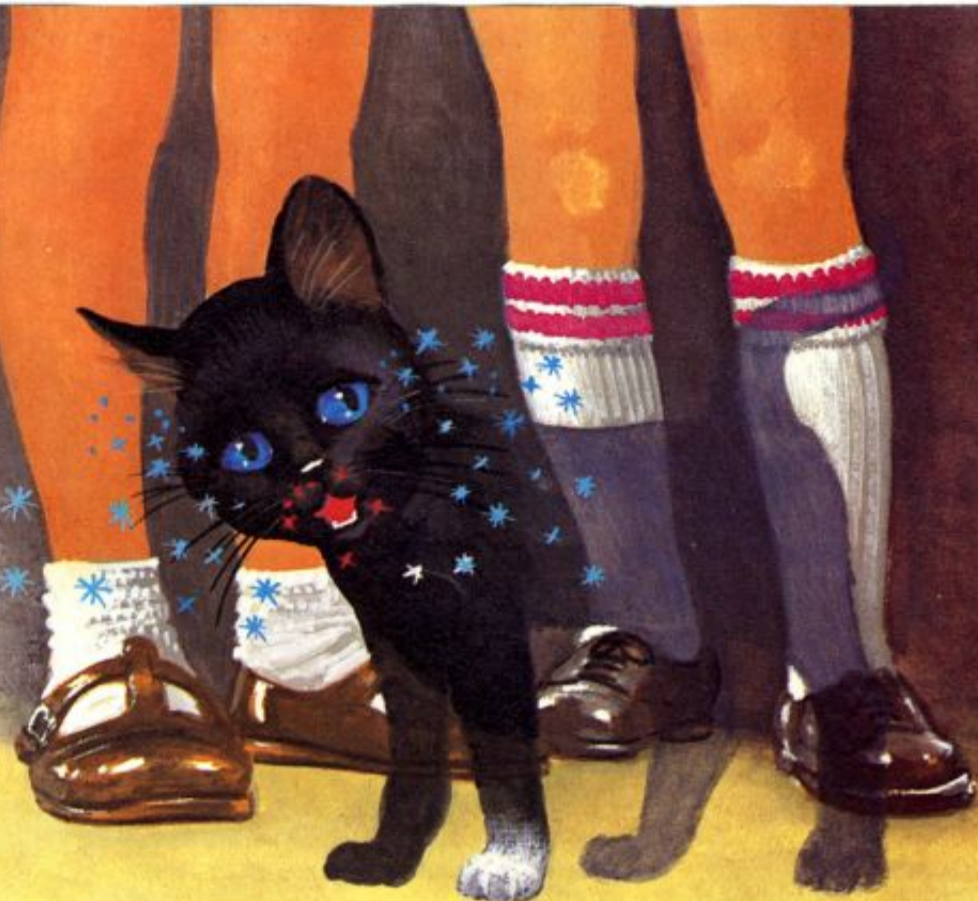
Gobbolino thought. "Now I can settle down and be a kitchen cat for ever."

The farmer's wife took Gobbolino on her lap and wiped his wet fur with a warm cloth. "Now where do you come from, little cat? How did you come to fall in the river? You might have been drowned."

"Mee-ee-ow!"

When his fur was dry, the farmer's wife gave him a drink of warm milk. And when she went to milk the cows, he played with the children. Every witch's kitten knows all sorts of tricks, and though Gobbolino wanted to be a kitchen cat, he knew them all. He made blue sparks come out of his whiskers and red ones out of his nose. And to the children's delight he made himself invisible, then reappeared, hiding himself in all sorts of strange places.

In the middle of all his fun, the farmer came in to tea. He saw Gobbolino's tricks, but said nothing.

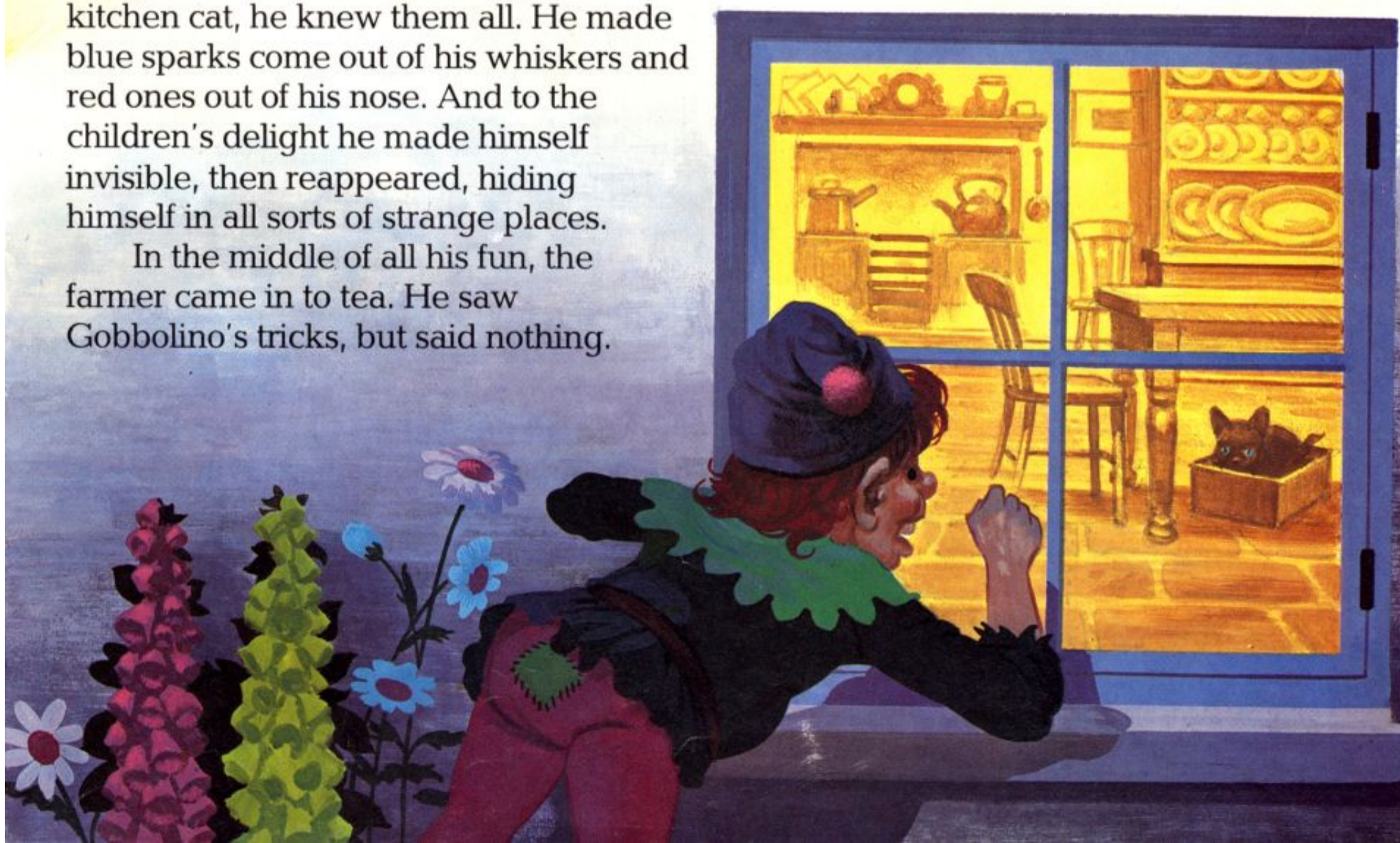


The children were sent off to their beds, and the little cat curled up in a box under the kitchen table.

The fire died down. Gobbolino slept peacefully, dreaming and purring. Then, suddenly . . .

Tap! Tap! Tap! A hobgoblin peered in at the window. Gobbolino sat up and whispered, "Who's there?"

"Come and let me in, little cat!" said the hobgoblin.





Gobbolino sat and stared at him.

"What a lovely kitchen. What bright dishes! What a pretty cradle! What a warm fire. Won't you let me come in?"

But Gobbolino only sat and stared at him. The hobgoblin began to rattle at the window. "You kitchen cats are all the same. Look at you, all warm and safe. Look at me—lonely and cold outside!"

When Gobbolino heard this, he remembered being lonely and lost. He trotted to the window. "You can come in and get warm for a little while," he said.

The hobgoblin jumped through the window and left dirty wet footmarks all across the kitchen floor. "How are you? How are your family?" he asked, giving Gobbolino's tail a pull.

"My mother has gone away with my mistress the witch!" replied Gobbolino. "And my little sister Sootica has been

apprenticed to a hag on Hurricane Mountain. I don't know how they are."

"Oho!" grinned the hobgoblin. "So you're a witch's kitten?"

"Oh no! Not any more. This afternoon I became a kitchen cat and I'll be a kitchen cat for ever and ever."

The hobgoblin laughed loudly, and turned head over heels. He knocked some knitting off the chair and it became tangled round the table legs.

"Oh, do be careful!" cried Gobbolino. But the hobgoblin ran into the larder and shut the door. The kitten trotted round trying to pick up the stitches. But it was no good. The hobgoblin bounced out of the larder. He had eaten all the cream.

"Well, I'm going! Goodnight, little witch's kitten!" said the hobgoblin, jumping out of the window.



Gobbolino trotted back to his box and slept. Early in the morning, the farmer's wife came downstairs. She found her knitting in a tangle and all the cream stolen from the larder. Written across the floor in milky letters were the words:

GOBBOLINO IS A WITCH'S CAT!

"Look at this mess," she yelled.

"I told you so!" said the farmer.

"He's a witch's cat, and no good to anyone. I'm going to drown him!"

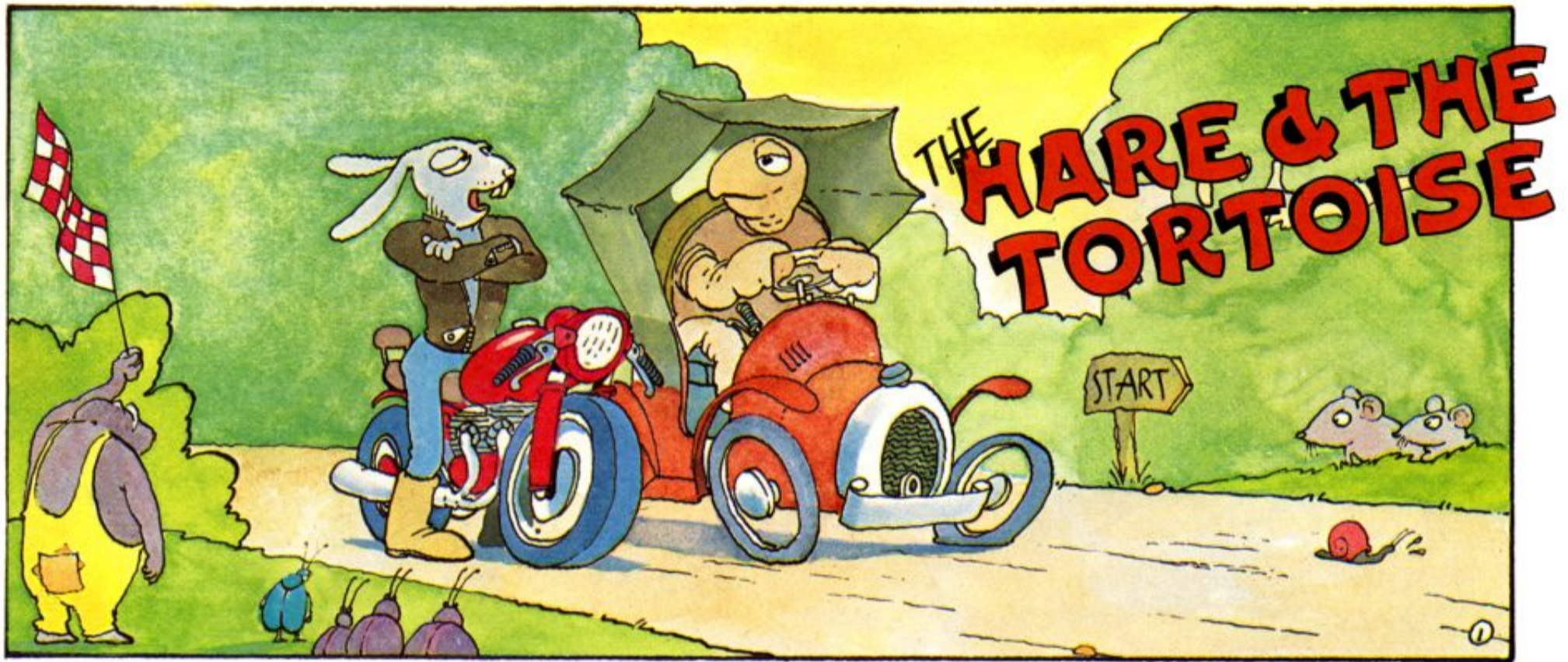
When Gobbolino heard the farmer's angry voice he was out of his box in one bound and out of the kitchen door,

across the cobble-stones, past the hayricks, and up the hill.

"Yesterday I was a witch's cat," thought Gobbolino. "Last night I was a kitchen cat. Now it looks as if I'll have to be some other kind of cat. I wonder what kind it will be?"



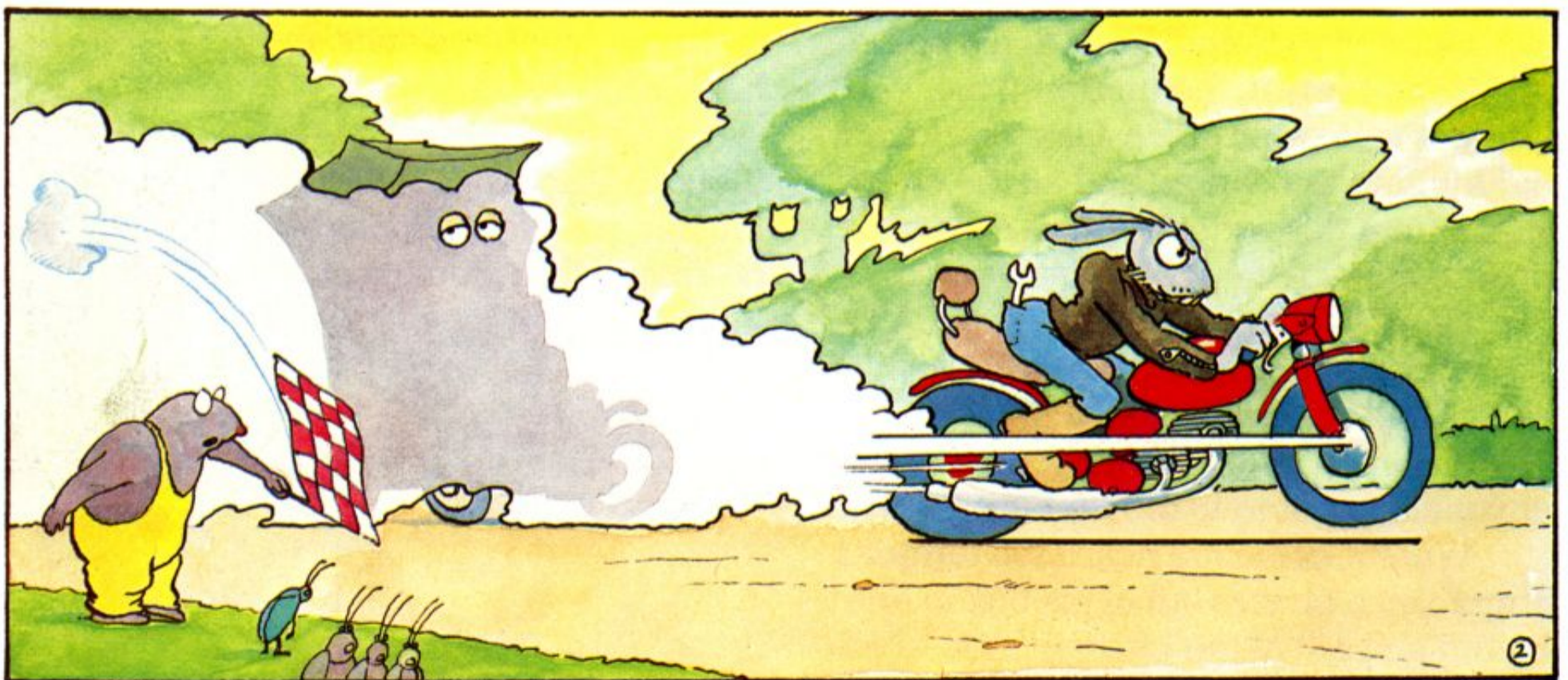
[Follow the fortunes of Gobbolino again in Part 2]



Hare was always laughing at Tortoise for being so slow. "I really can't think why you bother moving at all," he said. "Well," said Tortoise, "I may be slow, but I always get there in the end. I'll tell you what, I'll give you a race."

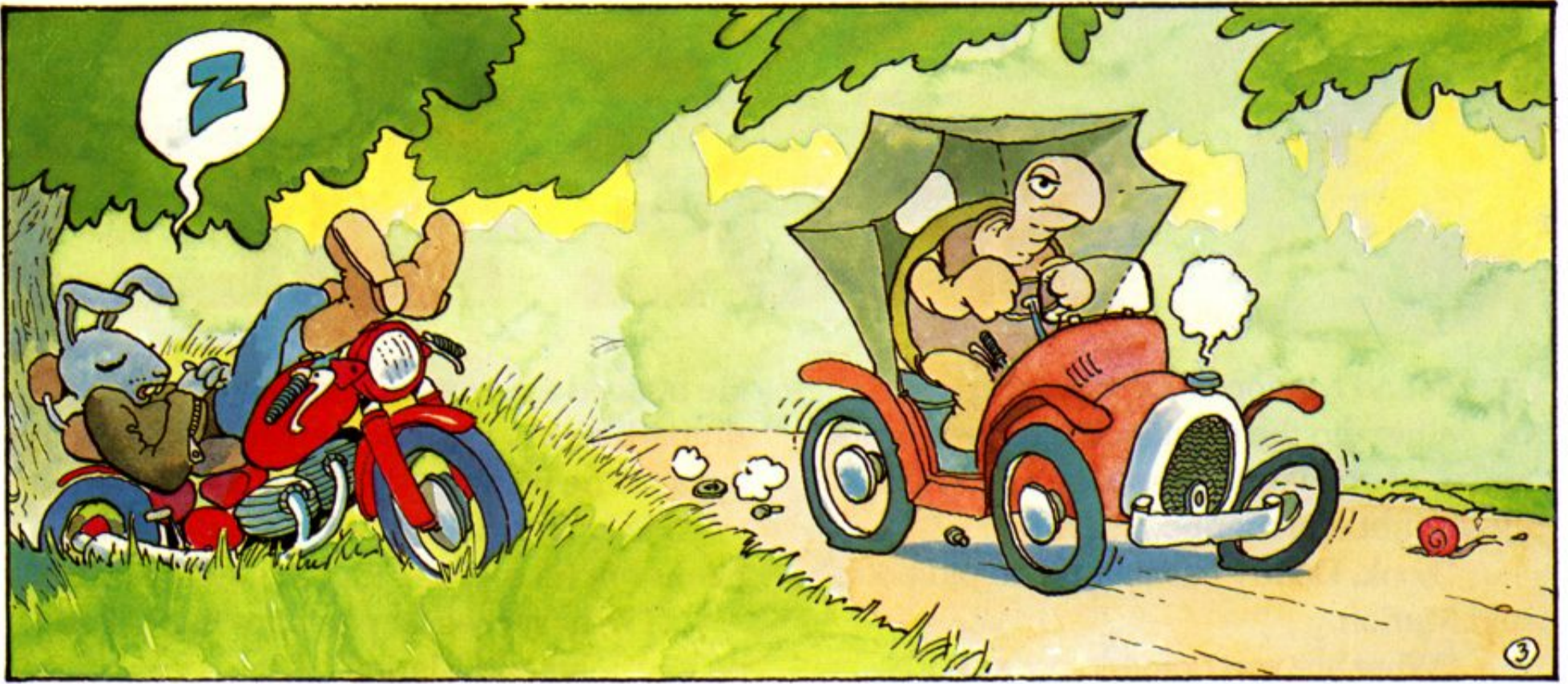
"You must be joking, you silly slow-coach," sneered Hare. "But if you really insist . . ."

So one hot, sunny day, all the animals came to watch the Great Race. Mole lifted the starting flag and said: "Ready, Steady, Go!"



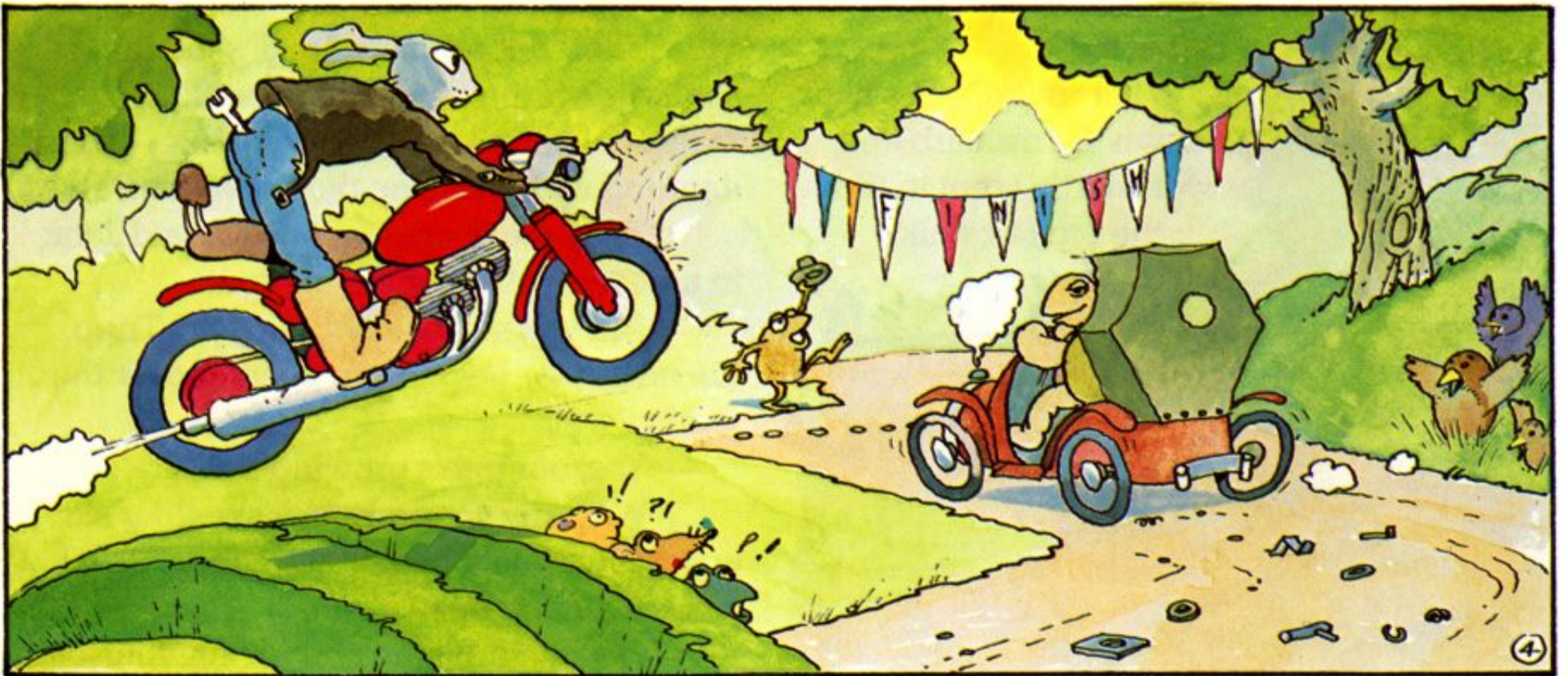
Hare raced away, leaving Tortoise coughing in a cloud of dust. Then Tortoise moved off—slowly, very, very slowly. Hare was already out of sight. "It's hopeless," said the Grasshoppers. "What chance does poor Tortoise have?"

"That silly Tortoise," thought Hare, looking back. "He's so slow, I can't lose. Why should I rush? In fact I think I'll just have a little rest . . ." So he lay back in the warm sun and was soon fast asleep, dreaming of cheers and prizes.



All the long morning Tortoise moved slowly, slowly along the route. Most of the animals got so bored they went home. But Tortoise just kept on going. At noon he passed Hare dozing gently by the roadside. He didn't stop to wake him. He just kept going.

Eventually, Hare woke up and stretched his legs. The sun was low in the sky. And looking back down the road, he laughed. "No sign of that silly Tortoise!" With a great leap, he raced off in the direction of the finish line to collect his prize.



But then to his horror who should he see in the distance but that silly Tortoise creeping slowly over the finish line. The flag was down. The Tortoise had won! Even from the top of the hill, Hare could hear the cheering and the clapping.

"It's not fair," whined Hare. "You cheated. Everyone knows I'm much faster than you, you old slow-coach." "Ah," said Tortoise, looking back over his shoulder. "But I told you, I always get there in the end. Slow and steady, that's me."



The SHOE TREE

John and Marion were watching their father dig the garden. It was hard work and after one very big spadeful he stood up straight and mopped his brow.

"Look, Daddy has dug up an old boot," said Marion.

"What are you going to do with it?" asked John.

"I'm going to bury it right here," said Mr Martin. "There's an old wives' tale that says if you put an old shoe under a rhubarb plant it grows much better."

Marion giggled. "Will the boot grow?"

"Well, if it does,
we'll have stewed boot for tea."
And he buried it.

Later in the spring, gales blew down the rhubarb and Mr Martin went to pick the broken stalks.

He noticed a new plant growing in the rhubarb patch. He didn't pull it up, though, because he wanted to find out what it was.

He looked all through his gardening books but he couldn't find anything like it.

"I've never seen a plant like this before," he told John and Marion.

It was rather an interesting plant, so although it had soon pushed away what was left of the rhubarb, the Martins left it to grow. It grew very well and by the following spring it was like a little tree, over a metre high. In the autumn greenish-white fruit appeared and very strange it was—all knobbly and funny shapes.

"That fruit reminds me of something," said Mrs Martin. Soon afterwards she realised what it was. "It's like boots—boots hanging up in pairs by their heel-tabs!"

"They really are like boots," said John in amazement, touching the fruit.

"Did you say *boots*?" said Mrs Tripp, the next-door neighbour, peering over the garden wall.

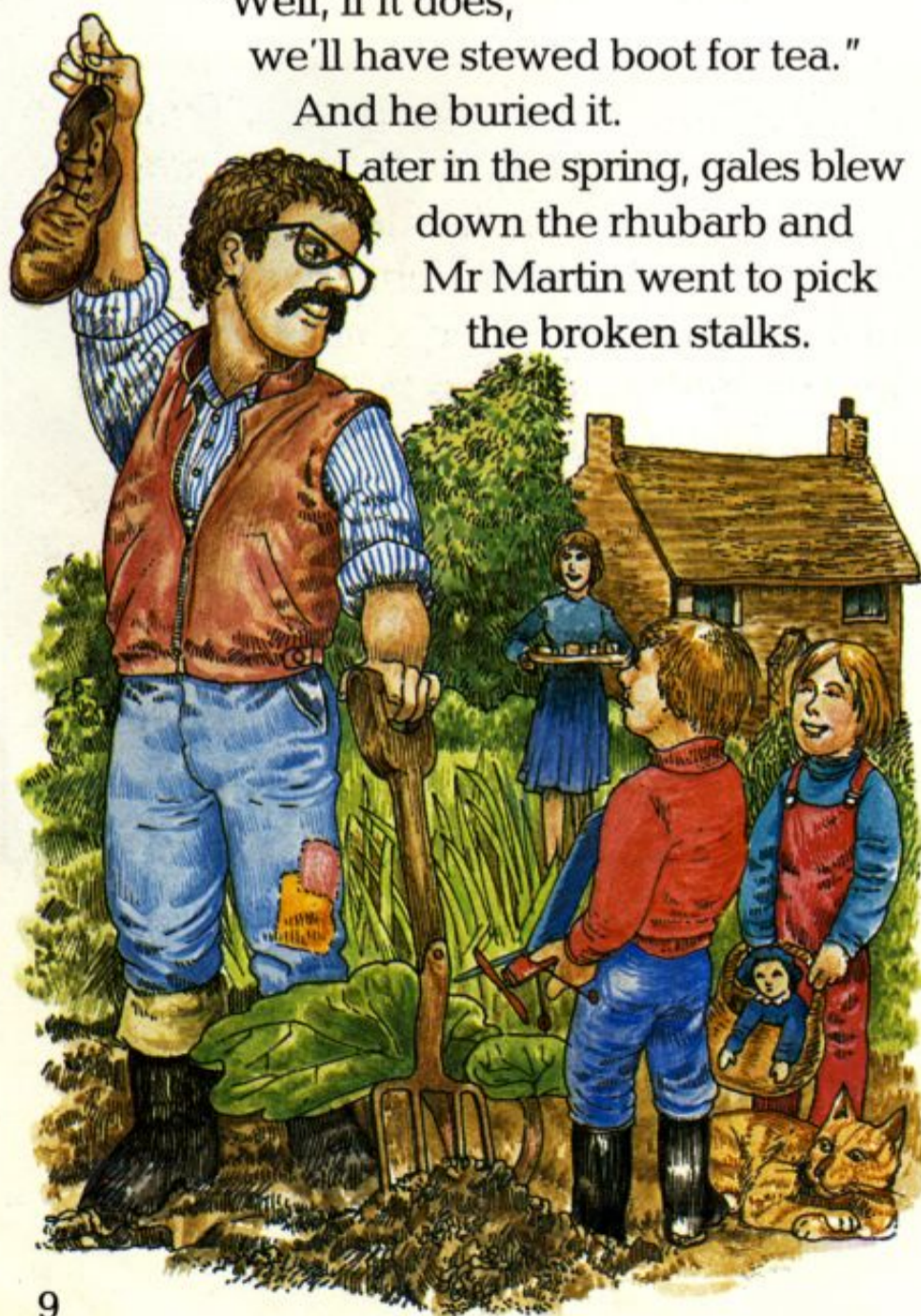
"Yes, our tree's growing boots!"

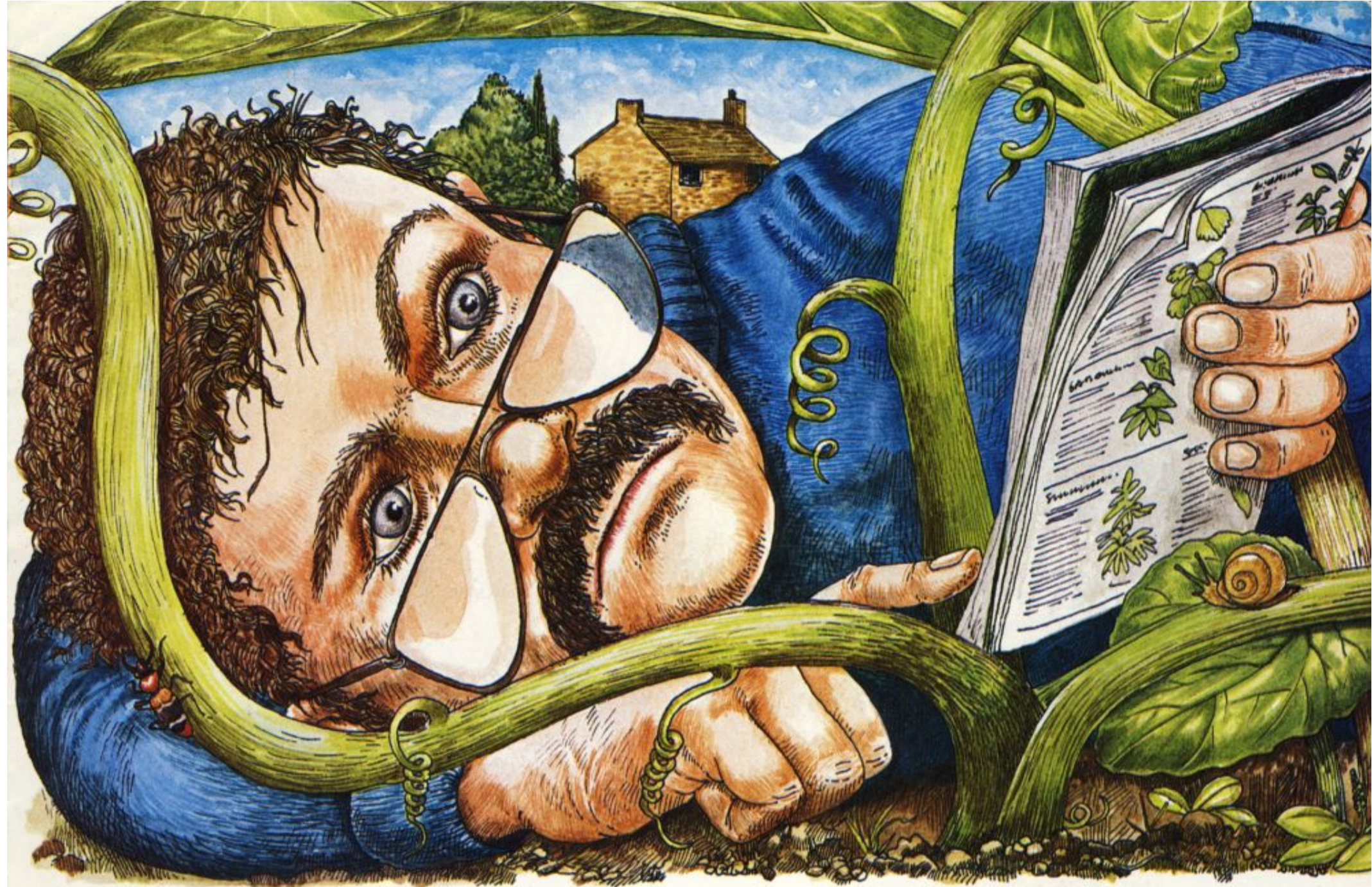
"Why, my young Bobby's getting old enough for boots," said Mrs Tripp. "Can I come over and have a look?"

"Of course. Come and see for yourself."

Mrs Tripp came round with her baby in her arms and held him up under the tree, upside down. John and Marion held a pair of the fruit against his feet. "Not quite," said John. "Why not come back tomorrow and see if they've grown any more."

Mrs Tripp brought Bobby round the next





day but the fruit was still too small. By the end of the next week, though, all the fruit was beginning to ripen to a shiny brown and one day a pair seemed just the right size for Bobby. So Marion picked them and Mrs Tripp put them on his feet. They were the perfect fit, and Bobby toddled up the garden path.

John and Marion told their parents about it, and Mr Martin said that anyone with babies who needed boots should come and pick a pair from the tree.

Everybody in the village soon heard about the amazing shoe tree and the next day there were crowds of women jostling through the garden gate with their children. Some lifted their babies up high so their little feet could be eased into the shoes to see if they fitted. Others held their children upside down to measure their feet against the fruit. John and Marion picked those that were left over and laid them on the lawn so they

could put them in matching pairs. Then the mothers who had come late sat down with the children on their laps and John and Marion went back and forth, bringing pairs to be tried on, until every child was fitted and every shoe fruit was taken. By the end of the day the tree was stripped bare.

One of the mothers, Mrs White, brought her triplets and fitted each one with a pair of shoe fruits. When she arrived home, she showed them to her husband.

"I got them free from the Martins' tree," she said. "Look, the skin's tough like leather but inside it's really soft so the shoes are good for children's feet. Isn't that clever?"

Mr White stared long and hard at his children's feet. "Take those shoes off them," he said at last. "I've got an idea."

The next year the tree produced bigger fruit, and because the children's feet had grown, they all found shoes to fit.

And that's what happened every year—the shoe fruit grew to match the growing feet of the children. Then, one year a huge sign appeared outside Mr White's house: WHITE'S HOMEGROWN SHOES LIMITED it read, in large brown letters.

"He's been very secretive about that field at the back of his house," Mr Martin said to his family. "And now I see why. He's planted all those shoes we've given his children in the past few years and now he's got dozens of trees, the sly old fox."

"They say he's going to make a fortune out of it," said Mrs Martin bitterly.


It certainly seemed as if Mr White was going to make a lot of money. That autumn he hired three women to pick the shoes from the trees and sort them into different sizes. Then the shoes were wrapped in tissue paper, packed in boxes and sent to the nearest town to be sold at £5 a pair.

Mr Martin gazed out of the window and he saw Mr White drive past in a brand new car. "I never thought of making money out of my tree."

"You never have been much of a businessman, love," said Mrs Martin kindly. "Anyway, I'm glad all the village children can have free shoes."

One day John and Marion were walking in the field beside Mr White's orchard. Mr White had built a high wall to keep people out, but on top of the wall a boy's face suddenly appeared. It was their friend, Ricky. He lifted himself over the wall and jumped down beside John and Marion.





"Hello, Ricky," said John. "What were you doing in Mr White's garden?"

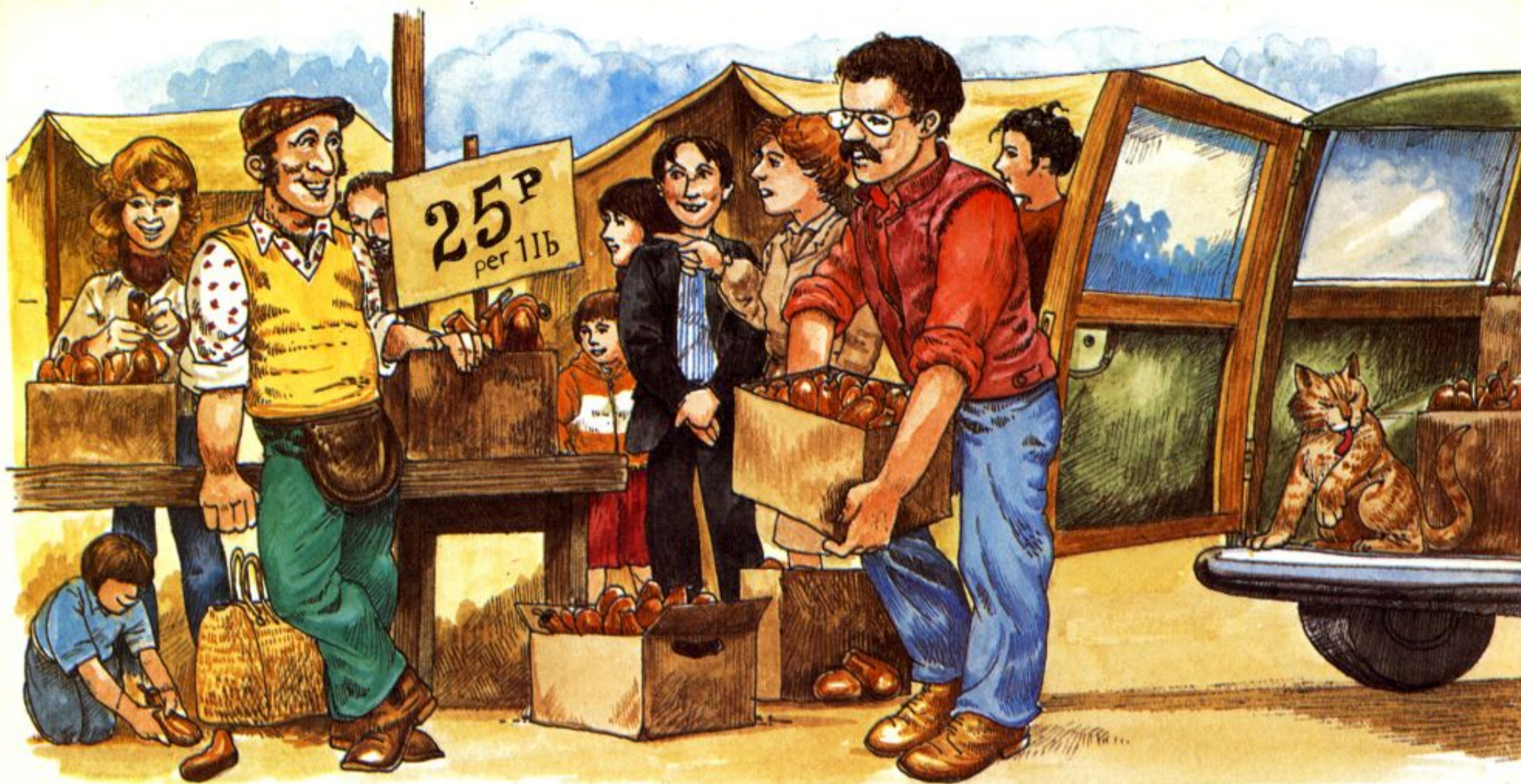
The boy grinned. "You'll see." And he ran about in the long grass, picking up shoe fruit till his arms were full. "They're windfalls from the orchard. I threw them over the wall and I'm going to take them home to my Gran. She's going to make another shoe fruit pie."

"A pie?" said Marion. "I've never thought of eating it. What's it like?"

"Well, the skin's a bit too tough. But if you cook the inside with lots of sugar it's very nice. My Gran makes lovely pies with it. Come round and have some if you like."

So John and Marion helped Ricky carry his shoe fruit round to his grandmother's caravan, and they all had a piece of her pie. It had a rich sweet taste, stronger than apples and very unusual. John and Marion thought it tasted lovely and when they went home they picked some of the fruit that was left on the tree in their garden.

"Let's bake it," said Marion. "I've just learned how to make baked apples at school." Marion and John cooked their shoe fruit with raisins stuffed inside, and when their parents came home from work they served it up, topped with cream. Mr and Mrs Martin liked the fruit as much as the children did. As he finished, Mr Martin began to chuckle.



"Here, I've had a marvellous idea!"

The next day he drove his old car into town, the boot filled with boxes of shoe fruit. He stopped at the street market and spoke to a stall-holder. Then he began to unload the car. The stall-holder wrote something on a large sign and stuck it on his stall.

Soon a crowd of people had gathered round. "Look at that." "Shoe fruit, twenty-five pence a pound."

"I paid five pounds a *pair* for my little boy," said one woman. And she lifted up her child and pointed at the shoe fruit he was wearing. "Look, I paid five pounds for those at the shoe-shop. And here they are selling the same thing for twenty-five pence."

"Only twenty-five pence a pound!" shouted the stall-holder. "Peel off the skins and eat the tasty flesh inside. Lovely in pies, baked or stewed."

"Well, I certainly won't go to the shoe-shop and pay five pounds again," said another woman.

By the end of the day the stall-holder was very happy. Mr Martin had given him the fruit for nothing and now his wallet was bulging with money.

The next morning Mr Martin drove into town again. He saw the signs in the shoe-shops that said: "*White's Natural Shoes—they grow with your children.*" But new signs had been added underneath: "*Huge reductions! Prices down to 25p a pair!*"

After that, everyone was happy: the village children still got their shoes free from the Martins' tree and people in the town didn't mind paying 25p a pair in the shoe-shops. And anyone could eat the fruit if they liked. Only Mr White wasn't happy; he still sold some of his shoes, but he made less money than before.

"Do you think I should feel guilty about Mr White?" Mr Martin said to his wife.

"I don't really think so. After all, fruit is for eating, isn't it?"

"And anyway," said Marion, "wasn't that what you thought when you first buried that old boot? Don't you remember—you promised us stewed boot for tea!"



THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES



"The Emperor has to be told!" cried the Chancellor. "There's no money left in the Exchequer. He's spent it all on clothes!"

But the soldier at the door of the Emperor's bedroom would not let the Chancellor in. "I'm sorry, your worship, but the Emperor's in his wardrobe again, choosing something to wear. You can't go in." Then the door burst open and the Emperor appeared, followed by the Prime Minister. "I tell you I *can't* see *anyone* today. I haven't got a *thing* to wear. Oh Chancellor, there you are! Put the taxes up another ten per cent. I *must* have another suit."

"But you already have so many clothes, your majesty, and I can't raise income tax again. The people can't pay any more money."

"I don't care," said the Emperor. "I want another one. I'm the Emperor. I can have what I want!"

Nobody could argue with that. So, when two foreigners arrived that day at the palace gates saying they were tailors, they were allowed to see the Emperor. The tailors said that they made the finest clothes, from the most gorgeous and delicate cloth in the whole world.

"Where is this cloth? Let me see it! I want to see it!" the Emperor demanded.

"We haven't woven it yet," said one of the tailors. "You supply the materials, a loom, a large, bright room, and we'll get weaving. We only supply the skill—and of course the magic."

"Magic? Magic? What magic?" said the excited Emperor.

"No-one mean or stupid, no-one unfit for their job, no-one unworthy of their place in the royal household will be able to see the cloth we weave."

"Really?" cried the Emperor.

"Amazing! Wonderful! Begin right away! I'll wear them tomorrow for the big parade through the city. Chancellor, give these men *everything* they need." And he strode back upstairs to his dressing-room.

The tailors were taken to a big, comfortable room in the palace and left to start work on the large loom. But all they did was sit down and put their feet up on the royal chairs. And when the materials were brought—silk and mohair and pearls and cloth-of-gold—they hid them out of sight.



The Emperor sat in his throne-room thinking about the wonderful cloth being woven downstairs. Suddenly he grinned wickedly. "I'll use this chance to find out if any of my ministers are mean or stupid or unfit for their jobs." And so he sent for the Chancellor.

"Ask how soon it will be ready. Then come back and tell me how it looks. Of course, you may not see anything at all . . ."

So the Chancellor knocked on the sewing-room door and one of the tailors opened it. "Come in Chancellor, come in. As you can see, it's almost finished."

In the centre of the room stood the

big weaving loom, completely empty. The Chancellor just stared at it. "What!" he thought. "Am I stupid? Or mean? Am I unfit for my job? I can't see anything. This is dreadful!"

"Er . . . very nice, lovely," he mumbled. "Um, I like the pattern."

"I can see you have good taste," said one of the tailors. "Tell the Emperor his clothes will be ready early tomorrow—but we need some cloth-of-gold."

So the Chancellor went back to the Emperor, trembling and close to tears.

"Well, well, how does it look?"

"Oh superb, sire. I've . . . I've never seen anything quite like it."





The Emperor rubbed his hands gleefully at the thought of his lovely new clothes—and told himself that he had been right to appoint the Chancellor.

"Good man. Good man. Now send the Archbishop along to have a look at my new clothes."

The Archbishop was sent in to see the magic cloth on its loom. After him it was the Prime Minister, and then the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. They all stared at the empty loom and thought how dreadful it was not to see any beautiful cloth.

"Am I mean?" thought the Archbishop.

"Am I stupid?" thought the Prime Minister.

"Am I the wrong man to be in charge of the Army?" thought the Commander-in-Chief.

And to hide their doubts, they all threw up their hands and admired the cloth.

"I particularly like the fringe," said the Archbishop.

"What unusual colours," said the Prime Minister.

"Excellent, first-class," said the Commander-in-Chief.





They all trooped upstairs to tell the Emperor how wonderful the cloth was, and then the Emperor went down to be fitted for his new clothes. But as he entered the room he was suddenly gripped by fear. "Oh my goodness! I can't see a stitch of cloth! Am I more mean or stupid than all my ministers put together? Or am I not fit to be Emperor? Nobody must know I can't see the magic cloth."

"What do you think of it, your majesty?" asked the tailors, busily unrolling tape measures.

"Um, splendid. Yes, quite splendid," he stuttered unhappily. And they pretended to measure the Emperor, undressing him right down to his underwear and fitting the loose cloth. He stood royally in front of the mirror. "Well, *they* think I'm dressed," he thought, "so I *must* be."

"Feel the quality," said one tailor.

"It's all fully lined, you know," said the other. "We'll work all night to make them a perfect fit."

The two tailors did nothing, of course. They just slept.



The next morning the Emperor walked to their room to put on his new clothes. While his courtiers stood around and clapped, he went through all the actions of getting dressed.

"You look magnificent, your majesty," said the Chancellor, anxious to keep his job.

"Very regal, I must say," said the Archbishop.

"The people will love it," said the Prime Minister.

"The buckles are pretty," said the Commander-in-Chief.

News of the Emperor's magic clothes had spread through the whole city. Crowds were forming outside the palace, and the streets were lined with people waiting to see the Emperor in all his splendour. Children sat astride their fathers' shoulders with flags in their hands. Everybody had turned out to see the Emperor's new clothes.

Slowly, solemnly, behind the royal banner and a band of trumpeters, the

Emperor's procession set out through the streets. Everyone had heard how the magic cloth could not be seen by anyone mean or stupid or unworthy of their job. And nobody wanted to admit to being that.

"Hooray! Hooray!" shouted the crowd. But there were many unhappy faces as people decided they must be more mean or stupid than everyone else. "You can see them, can you?" "Well of course I can see them. Do you think I'm stupid?"

Meanwhile, back at the palace, the two crafty tailors packed up their store of



rich materials and sneaked out of the city as fast as horses would take them.

Bowing to right and left, the Emperor wished that the magic cloth was not so beautifully light. He was bitterly cold. And he wished that the magic boots were not so wonderfully thin. The stones in the road were hurting his feet.

"Look! Look!" said a father to his little boy. "The Emperor's coming."

"Which one is he, Daddy?"

"The one in the wonderful clothes."

"But he isn't wearing anything, Daddy. Look, he's shivering. Why isn't he wearing any clothes?"

People nearby in the crowd stared at the little boy.

"I'm sorry. He's too young to know any better," the child's father apologised.

"He's too young to be fooled, you mean," said his mother. "The Emperor's stark naked. Someone is making a fool of the Emperor. And of us!"

One by one, the crowd realised that the person to either side could no more see the new clothes than they could.

"Can you see them?" "Of course I can't. Do you think I'm stupid?"

"The Emperor's stark naked!" they shouted. "The Emperor's dressed in nothing at all."

The Emperor blushed with embarrassment. He had been fooled by the tailors and now, here he was, parading in front of all the people without a stitch of clothing. The poor Emperor turned and fled back to the palace—and never again did he waste money on new clothes.





THE RED NIGHTCAPS



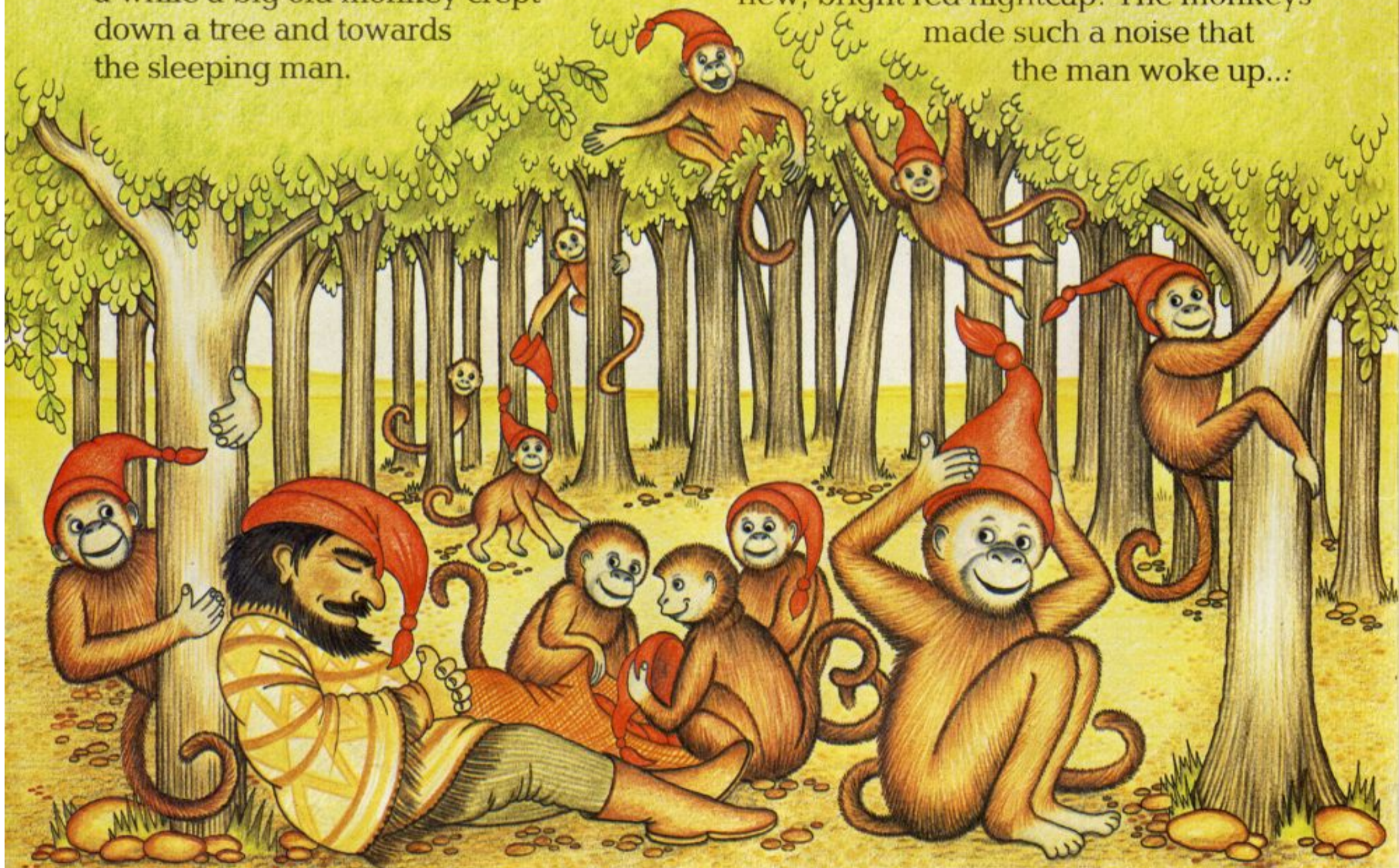
There was once a man who had fifty red nightcaps to sell at a fair. His wife put them in a sack and he set off on his journey.

He travelled along the hot, dusty road until he came to a shady wood. The cool trees looked so inviting that the man threw his sack on the ground and sat down to rest. Then, feeling very sleepy, he took one of the red nightcaps out of the sack, put it on his head, leaned back against a tree and fell fast asleep.

Unknown to the man, a troop of monkeys lived in the wood. After a while a big old monkey crept down a tree and towards the sleeping man.

Very gently he pulled one of the nightcaps out of the sack and popped it on his head. Then he ran back up to the top of the tree and sat there grinning. How monkeys love to copy people!

Seeing what the old monkey had done, a young one came swinging down through the trees. He sneaked up to the man, took a nightcap, then ran up to the top of a tree. Then another monkey took a nightcap, then another, and another. Soon there were forty-nine monkeys all sitting high in the trees chattering and grinning at each other. And on every head was a new, bright red nightcap! The monkeys made such a noise that the man woke up...





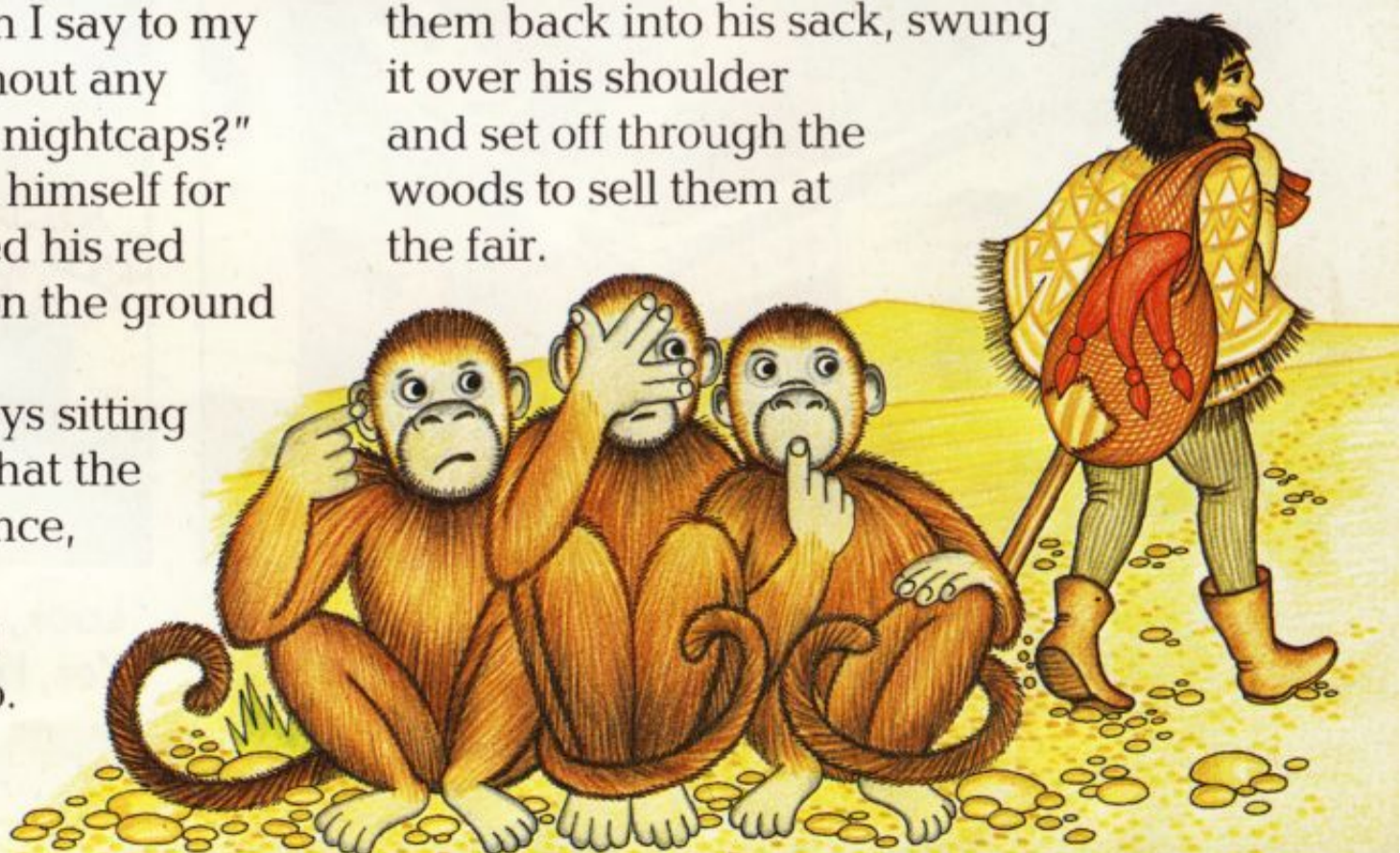
and saw the empty sack in front of him. He was in despair.

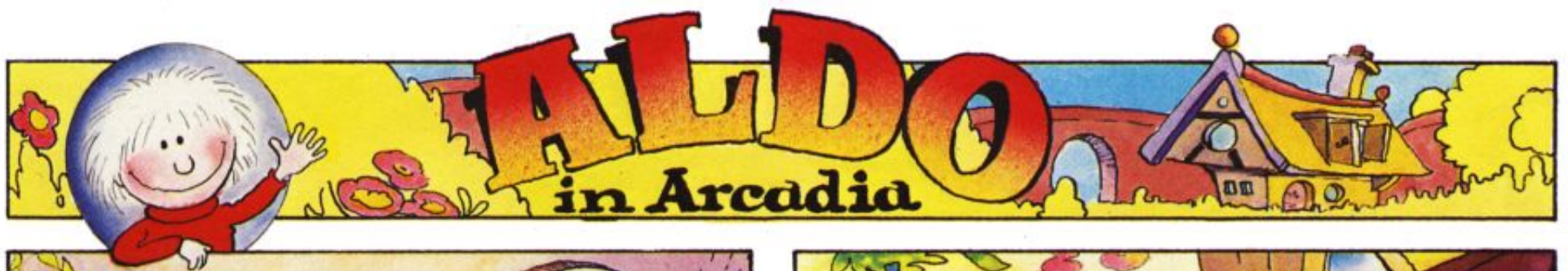
"Oh, what shall I do?" he cried. "What *shall* I do? What can I say to my wife when I get home without any money—and not even the nightcaps?"

He was so angry with himself for falling asleep that he pulled his red nightcap off and threw it on the ground in a rage.

The forty-nine monkeys sitting high in the trees all saw what the man had done. So, all at once, they pulled off *their* red nightcaps and threw them down on to the ground too.

The man just could not believe his good luck. But he was very, very pleased. He picked up the fifty red nightcaps, put them back into his sack, swung it over his shoulder and set off through the woods to sell them at the fair.

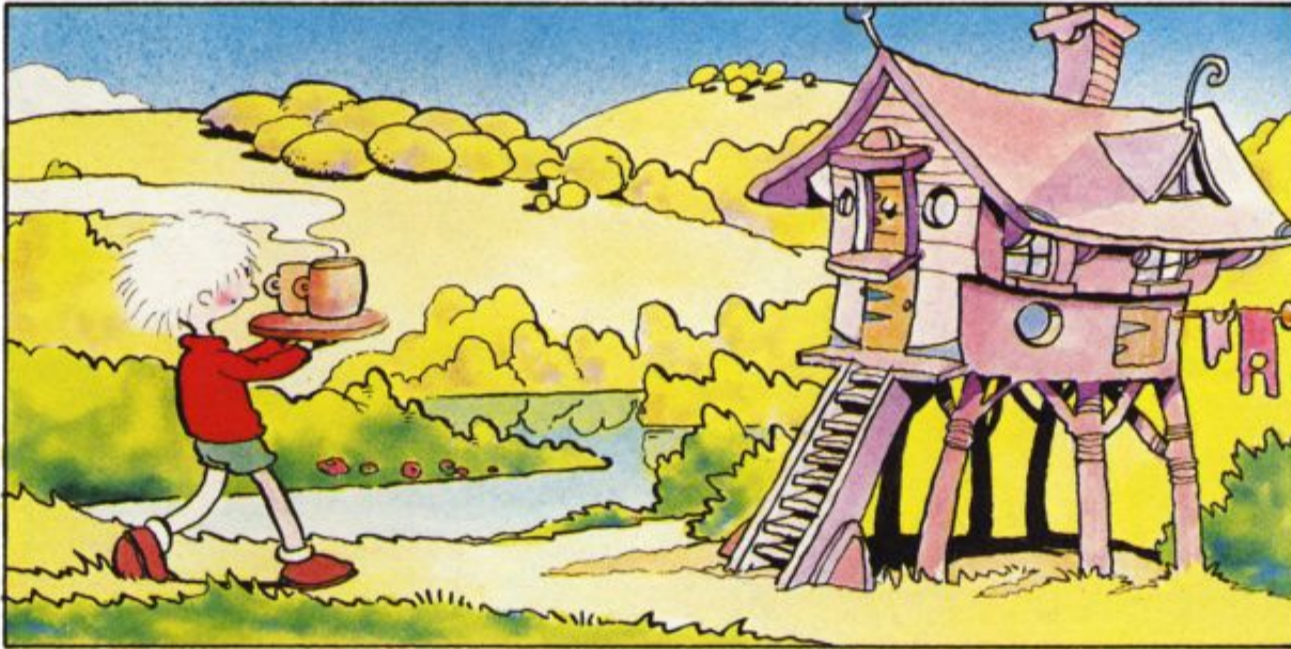




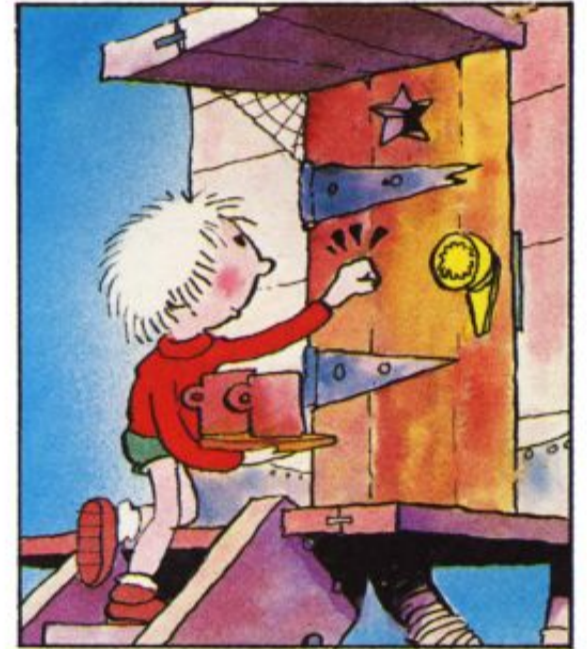
One sunny morning Aldo was cleaning the windows of his little cottage.



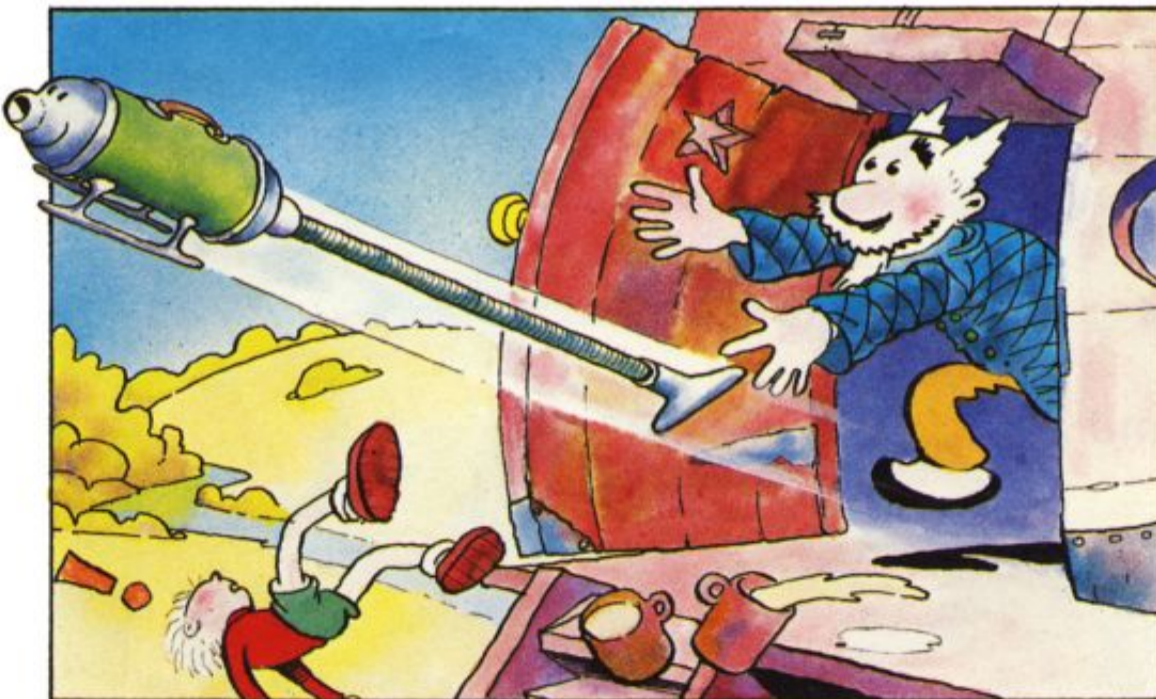
But he could not reach the ones upstairs. "Oh, those are too high for me."



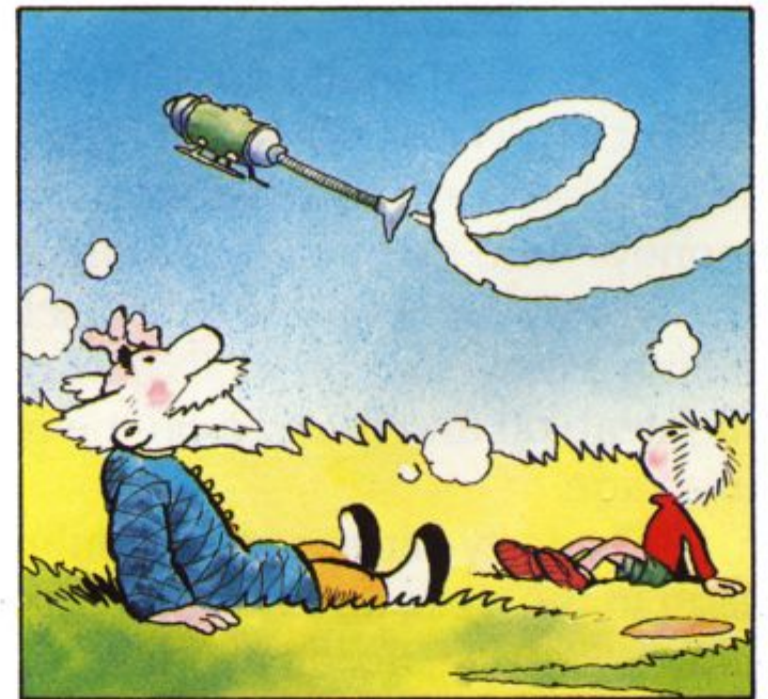
"Anyway, I think it's time for tea. I bet Uncle Emo would like a cup."



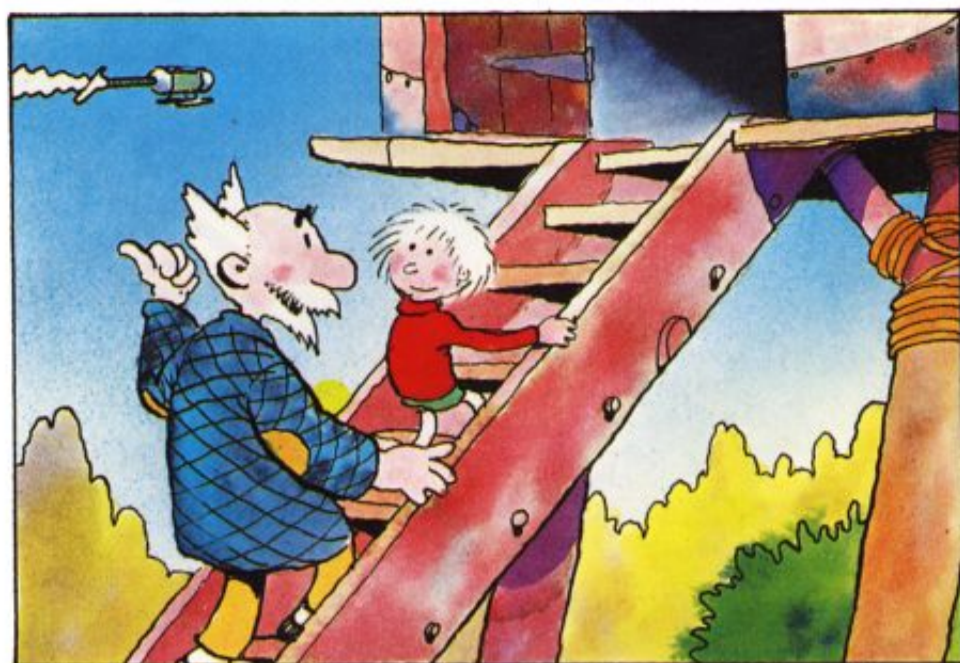
"Uncle Emo! Uncle Emo! Are you in there?"



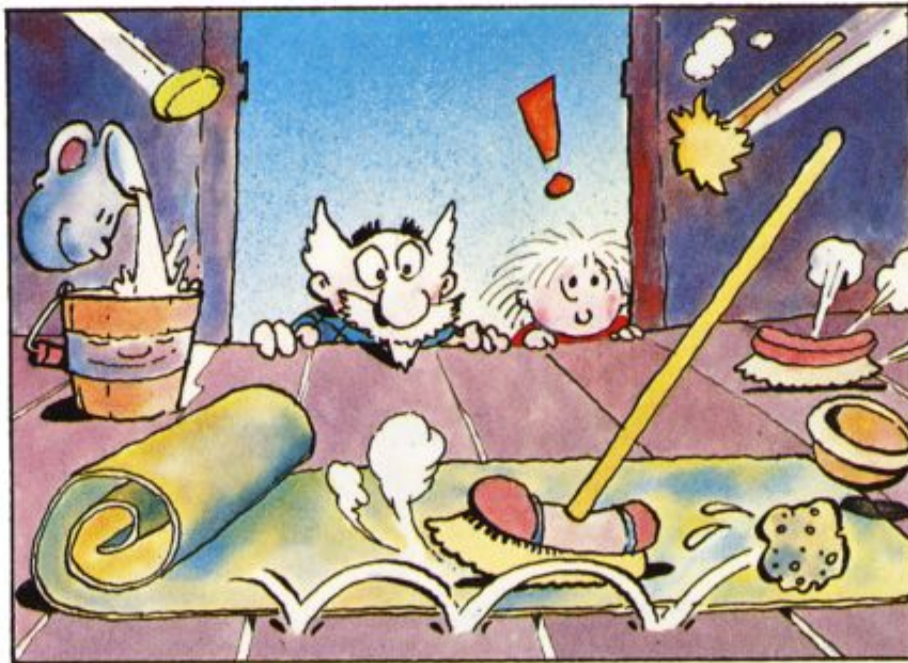
"Hey! What's happening?"
"Quick, catch my vacuum cleaner! Oh, too late."



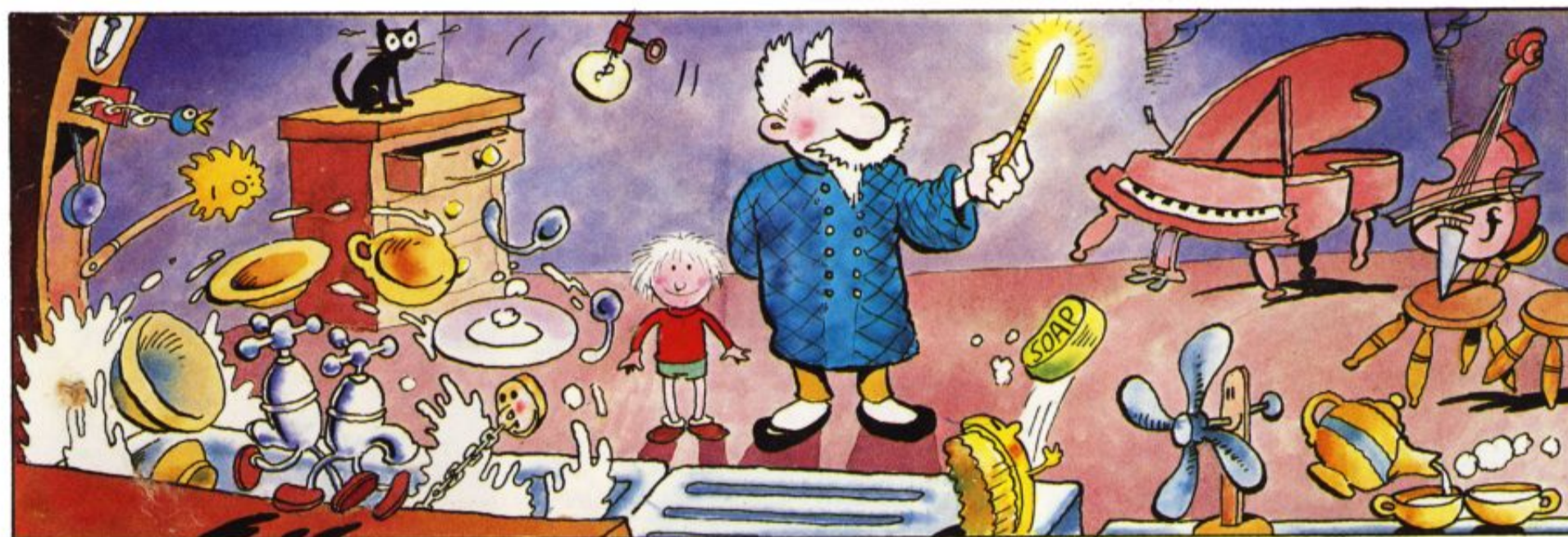
"Look, it's flying!"
"Yes, I did it with a magic spell."



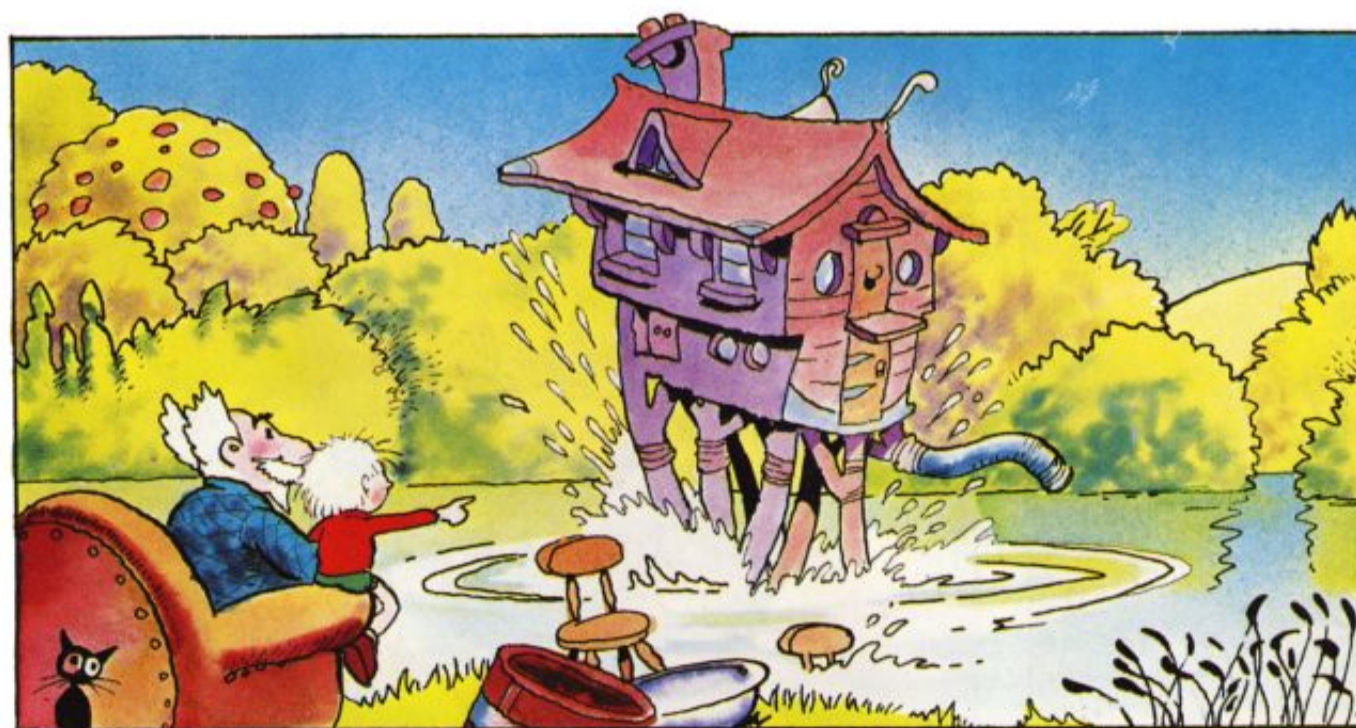
"What for?"
 "I wanted it to clean the house, of course."



"Gosh, look! The house is alive!"
 "Perhaps that spell was a bit too strong."



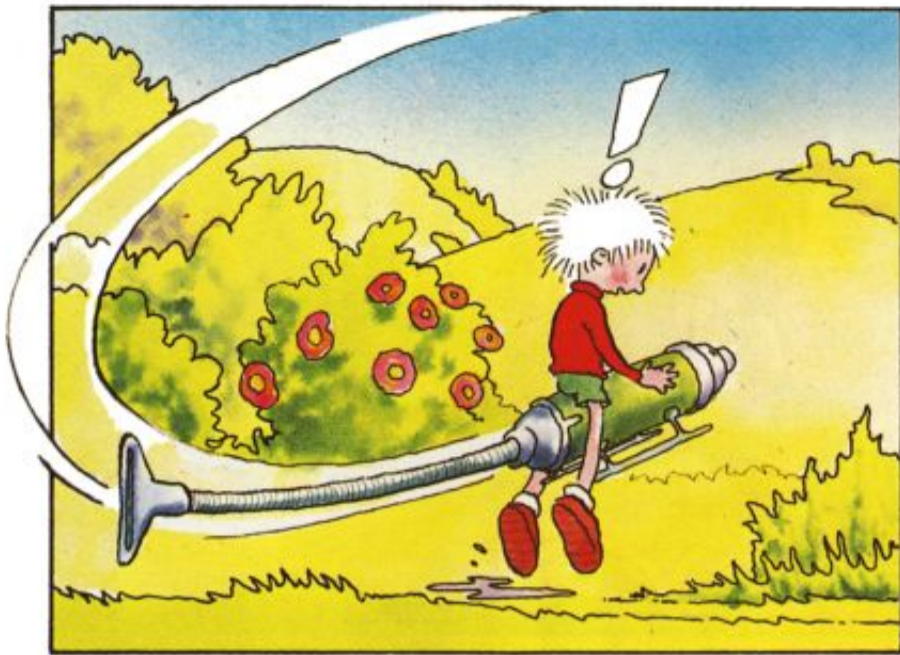
"All the things are cleaning by themselves. This isn't so bad after all, Aldo."
 "Now you don't need a vacuum cleaner."
 "Let's go outside and watch the house."



"Look, the house is washing itself in the river. Wow!
 Well, I'd better be going, Uncle Emo."



"Thanks for the tea,
 Aldo . . . Goodbye."



"It's the vacuum cleaner coming back. Hey, put me down!"



"This is fun. I can see my cottage—and there's Uncle Emo's house."



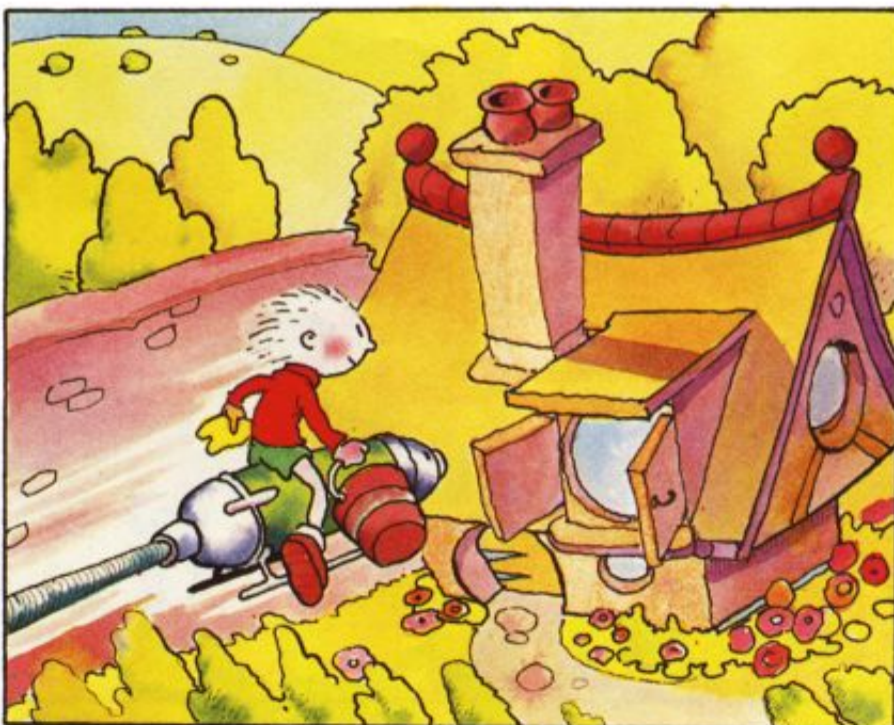
"Mind the trees! We're getting closer to the river..."



"Told you we were getting close to the river."



"That was amazing! Hey, I've had a great idea!"

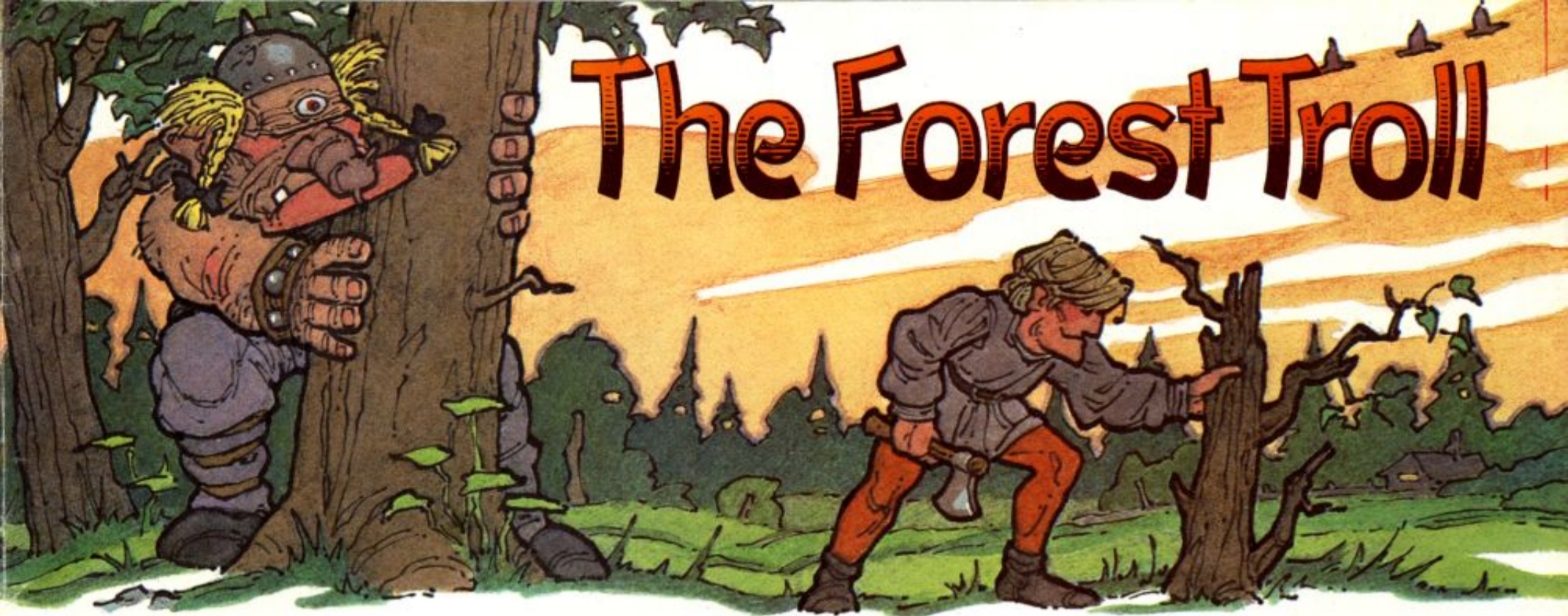


"You can help me with my windows if you like. We'll be finished in no time."



That night, Aldo and his new friend went up to bed. "Goodnight, vacuum."

[Another Aldo adventure appears in Part 2]



The Forest Troll

Once upon a time there was an old woman who lived with her three sons in a little wooden house on the edge of a dark forest.

One year when winter was coming the old woman asked her eldest son to go into the forest and chop down a tree for firewood.

"Do I *have* to?" the oldest boy asked. "When it gets really cold we could all go to bed. Then we wouldn't need to build a fire."

"Don't be so lazy!" the old woman said. "We can't stay in bed all winter. You're the strongest of my sons, so go and fetch some wood."

The oldest boy didn't like hard work, but he finally set off for the forest, carrying the smallest axe he could find. When he got there he went to the most rotten tree he could see.

"This shouldn't be too hard," and he lifted up the axe to start chopping. He had just tapped the tree once when he felt a thump on his shoulder. He turned around and behind him he saw the ugliest, most revolting troll you could ever imagine. The creature had one red eye in the centre of his forehead and his purple nose was knobbly and twisted like the root of an old tree.

"Hey, you, superman!" shouted the troll. "If you chop down one tree in my forest I'll break you into fifty pieces."

The boy threw down his axe. He ran home as fast as his legs could carry him and he told his family all about the giant.

"Fancy being afraid of a stupid old troll!" sneered the second son. "I wouldn't be afraid."

The next morning the second son picked up a bigger axe and set off to fetch some wood. As soon as he got to the forest he found a large tree that looked like it would make enough wood to last the whole winter.

Thwack! Thwack . . ack!
Whaaa . . ack! The sound of his axe echoed through the forest.



But before he'd got halfway through the tree the troll appeared.

"Hey, you, muscles! What do you think you're doing? You lift that axe once more and I'll break you into a hundred pieces."

"Don't think I'm s-scared of an old t-t-troll like you." "You c-can't f-frighten me. I'm going to chop down this t-tree."

"We'll see about that!" And he lifted a long arm up into the tree and pulled off a big branch. He snapped it across his knee and started breaking it into tiny twigs.

The second brother saw how strong the troll was and ran off home as fast as he could. He was shaking with fear when he arrived home and his elder brother greeted him.

"Well, where's all the wood then?"

"I met the nasty troll. He chased me out of the forest. He was much too strong to argue with. Why, he was fifty feet . . ."

Just then the old woman's youngest son butted in. "I wouldn't be scared of him. I'm sure I wouldn't. I'll go and fetch the wood."

"What, you? You're *much* too young to chop down a tree with that troll you wouldn't stand a chance."

"Oh please, please let me go."

In the end, despite her fears, the old woman said her youngest son should be allowed to try his luck in the forest.

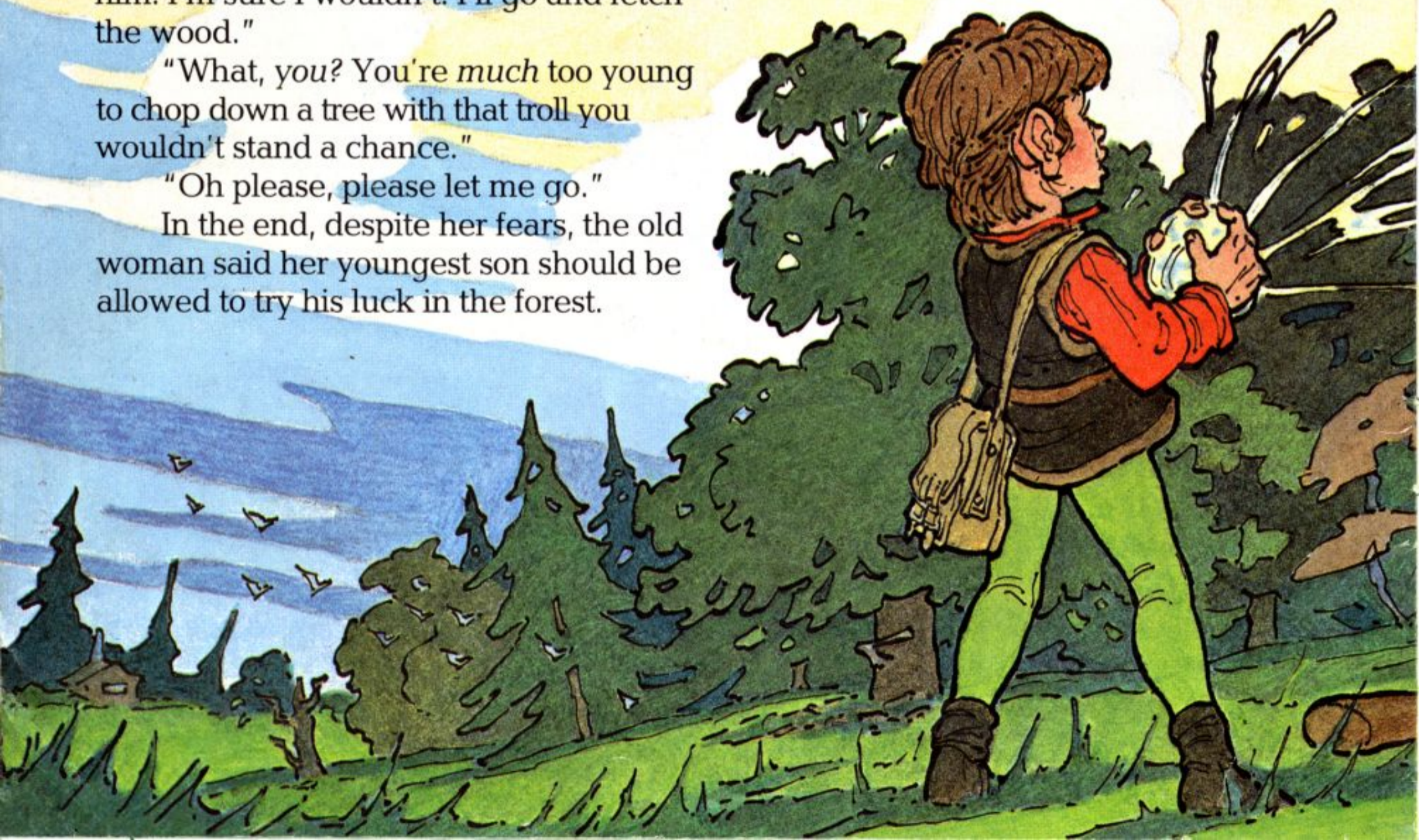
So the next day the third son picked up the biggest axe in the house. It was so heavy he could hardly carry it. He went to the kitchen cupboard and took out a firm white ball of cheese. When the brothers saw him putting the cheese into his bag they laughed.

"What do you want that for? Are you going to have a picnic with your friend the troll?" But the young boy did not answer, and he went off to the forest, dragging the huge axe behind him.

When he reached the forest he went to the biggest tree he could find. It was about twenty feet thick and so tall he could not see the top. He struggled to lift the huge axe, but he had to let it drop . . . and yet again the sound brought the troll pounding through the forest.

"Oh no! Not *another* one! And no more than a boy! If you chop that tree I'll break you into a *thousand* pieces."

The boy looked straight at the ugly troll. "You just try it and I'll crush you like



I'll crush this stone." As he spoke the boy took the big white cheese and squeezed it hard between his hands. The cheese squirted everywhere—and the biggest blob hit the troll in his great red eye.

"All right! All right!" shouted the troll. "That's enough. Don't crush me like that stone. You can chop down any trees you want—no, I'll chop them for you if you like. I'll, I'll cut them into logs and take them back to your house."

From that day on the troll made sure that the old woman and her family had all the firewood they needed.



IN PART 2 OF

STORY Teller

ALDO continues his exploits with the flying vacuum cleaner...and meets the man in the moon!

GOBBOLINO is back with more adventures—he wins a cat show and goes to sea!

Weasel teaches THE GREEDY FOX a lesson

Jason wins and loses his prize in THE LAST SLICE OF RAINBOW

THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER: a classic fairy story from the Brothers Grimm

SINDBAD tells the tale of his greatest escape

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