

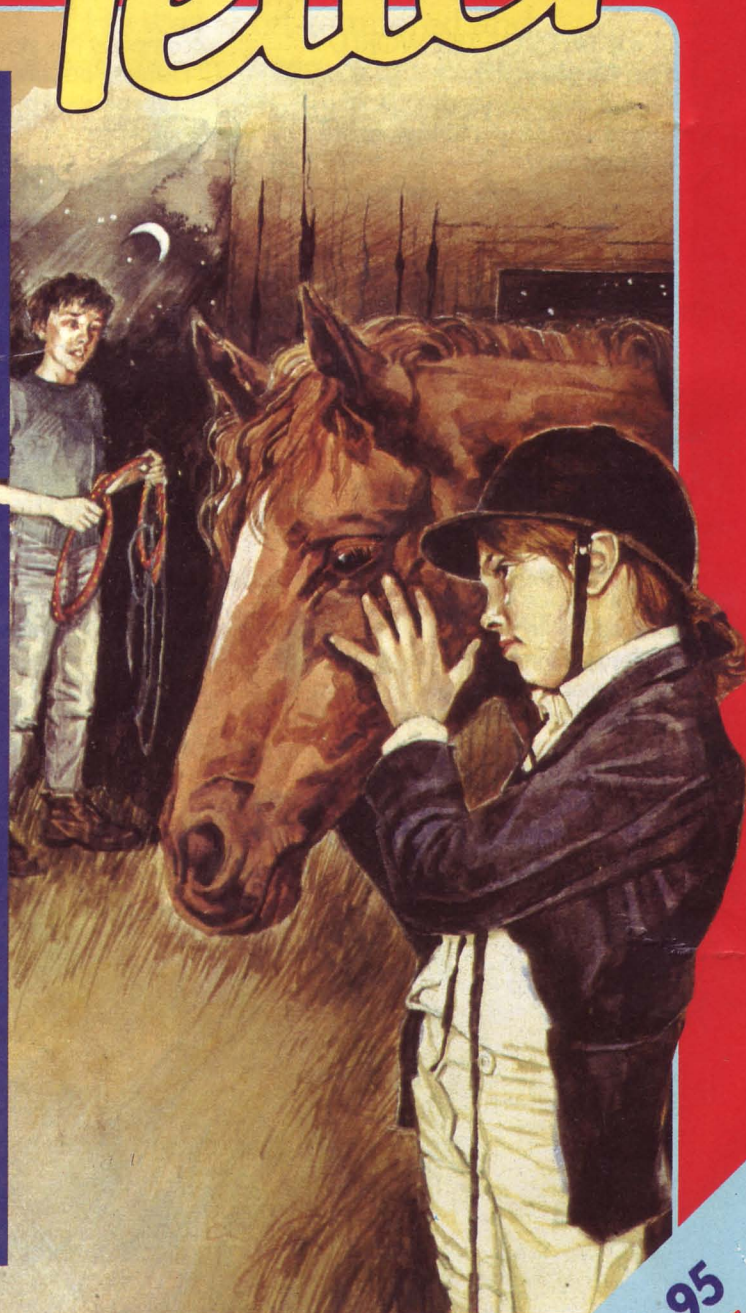
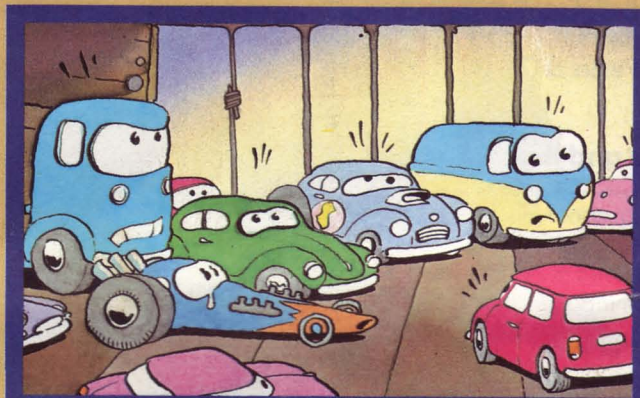
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PART 12

STORY

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Teller



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STORY Teller

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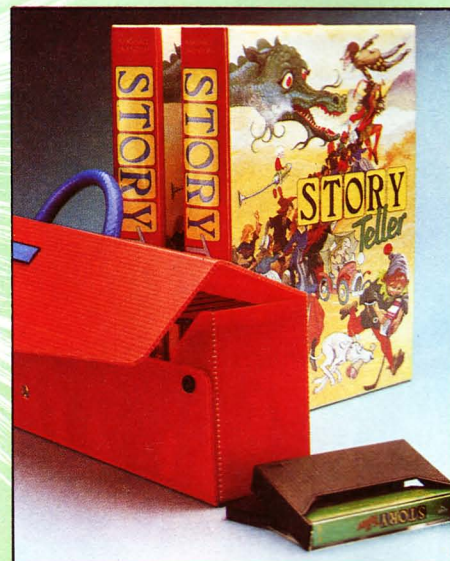
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Long ago, in Japan, there lived a great Prince. He was rich and powerful, and his people were good and loyal. Yet the Prince was an unhappy man.

He was short-tempered and impatient. He was always angry and often cruel. He bullied his subjects until they cringed with fear.

One year he waged war on a neighbouring country. At his word of command his troops hurled themselves into battle, their spears thrust out before them, their cruel Prince behind. They fought bravely and won a great victory for him, but still he was not satisfied. Still he was unhappy.

The army returned home with the victorious Prince at their head. Day after day wonderful victory parades were held, and at night the skies glowed with fireworks and lanterns as the people praised their Prince and celebrated his great deeds.

THE MIGHTY PRINCE





But the people soon grew sad. The Prince noticed their long faces, and he blazed with anger.

"Speak!" he roared as he rode through the streets on his great war-horse. "Why are you so sorrowful?"

His subjects bowed low but no-one had the courage to tell him the truth — that they were tired of war, tired of victories. So they stayed silent.

Later that day, as he rode slowly through the countryside, he heard a soft humming, like a shower of rain on dry ground. The Prince stopped and listened. He looked around and listened again.

It was a little girl singing as she worked in her small garden. So busy was she, planting her seeds, that she did not realise the great Prince was standing behind her.

At first he was angry that she did not notice him. Why should he, a proud and mighty Prince, humbly beg for her attention? But something in her singing made him wait quietly. After some time, he coughed and shuffled his feet.

The little girl slowly turned her head and saw the Prince in his rich, silk robes.



The Prince looked down at her and met her clear, calm gaze, and felt his anger at the people's silence melting away.

The child rose to her feet. Bowing humbly, she offered the Prince a bag of seed. For a moment he felt offended that one of his subjects should offer him such a humble gift, but then he found himself taking the bag. He did not say "thank you", or even smile, but turned away from the little girl. The mighty Prince felt





puzzled as he rode slowly back to his palace, and that night he slept with the bag of seed by his pillow.

The next morning he woke full of strength and energy, as if he were ready for war. But there was to be no war today. No, today the Prince had very different plans.

"Planting is no work for princes," he mumbled as he took up the bag of seed. "But it is better than fighting people who do not know how to fight back."

The people were astonished to see the Prince working in the palace gardens. And day after day, week after week, month after month, he tended his plants. Through heat and cold, he laboured over his task.

Then, one morning, Spring suddenly arrived! The garden burst into flower and fragrance. Bees and birds hummed. The people gathered in the streets, smiling in the sunshine. But where was the Prince? He had worked so hard to create the garden, why was he not rejoicing in it with his people?

The Prince stood apart, holding in his hand a spray of blossom. And as he

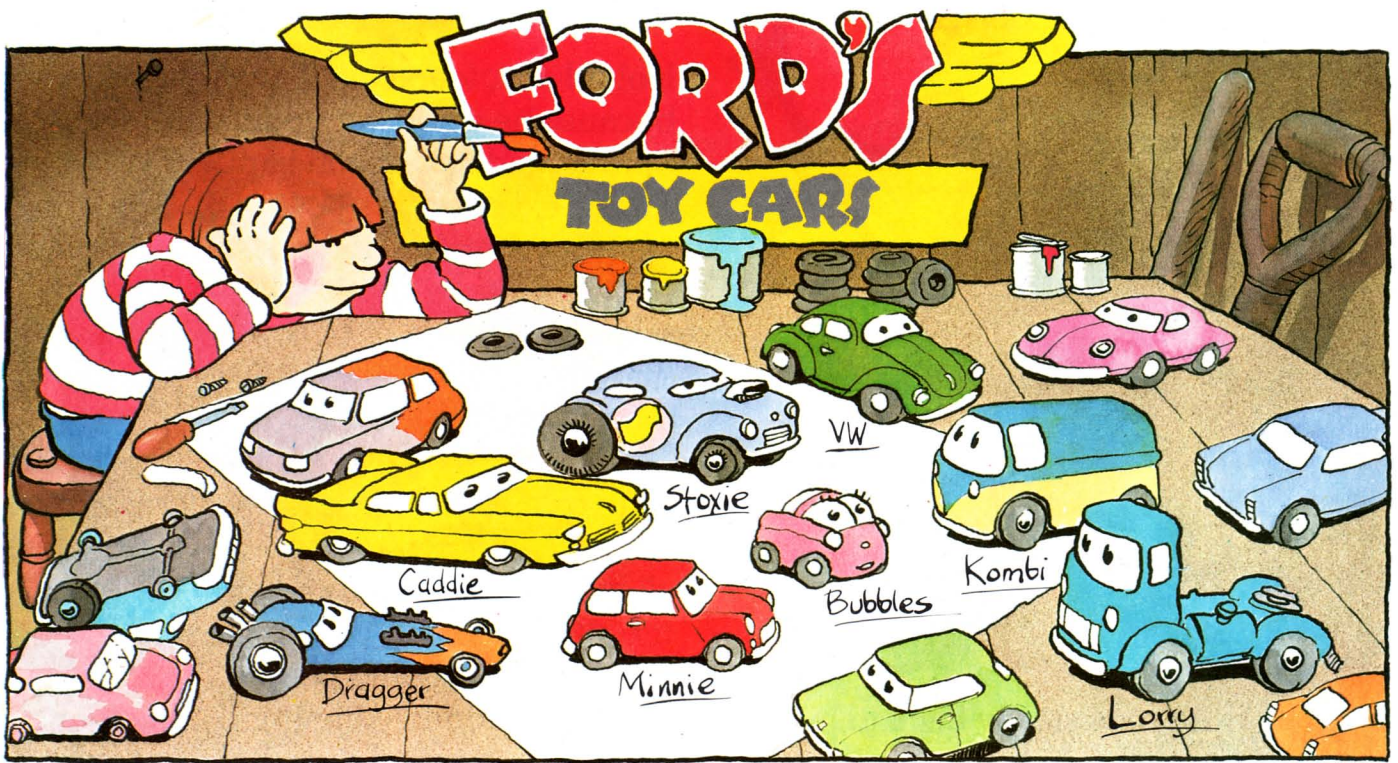
looked at it, tears rolled down his face, because he could not understand why Spring made everyone happy. Everyone, that is, except him.

He never had understood, of course, but this year he cried because he had worked so hard to create a beautiful garden and he wanted so much to know the secret of happiness.

Then, quietly, he seemed to hear the soft voice of the little girl speaking to him. It was telling him to look — to look with all his heart at the flowers and the grass, the sky and the birds, the busy insects and all the laughing people.

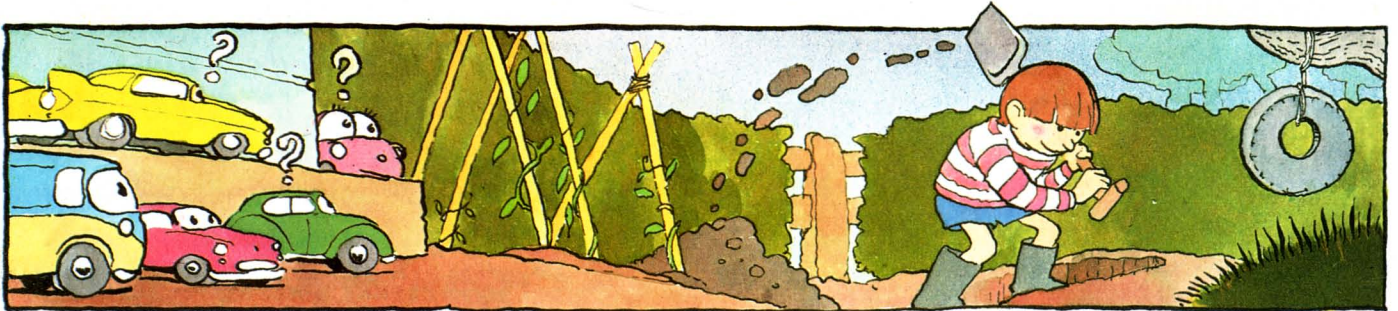
And suddenly the Prince saw them all as he had never done before. A great joy flooded his heart, and he saw the colours sparkling in the sun and he smelled the scent of a million flowers. And for the very first time, he felt happiness and a real love for his people.





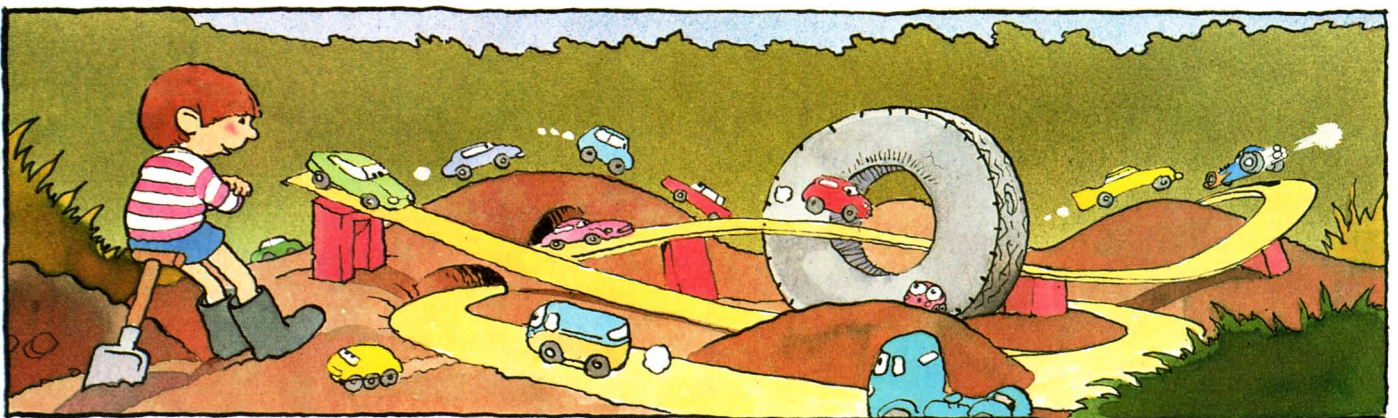
Ford loved toy cars. He used to collect them. He would take any old car and paint it up and put on new rubber tyres.

And they all had names — Minnie and Bubbles and Kombi and Dragger and Lorry and VW and loads of others.



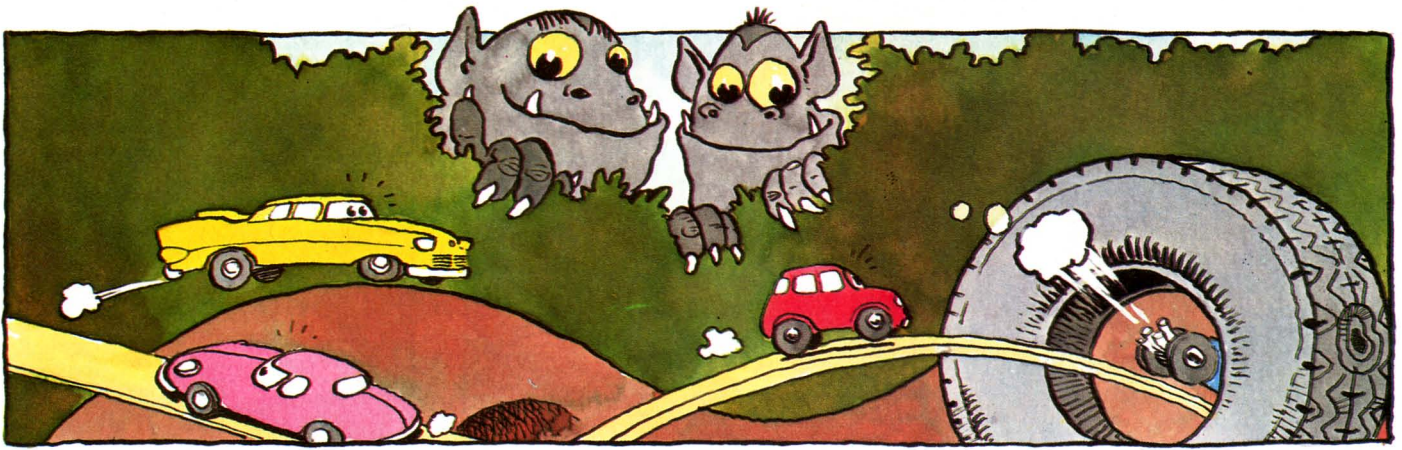
One sunny afternoon Ford started digging away at the end of the garden, near the

woods. He worked for ages, and all the cars wondered what he was making.



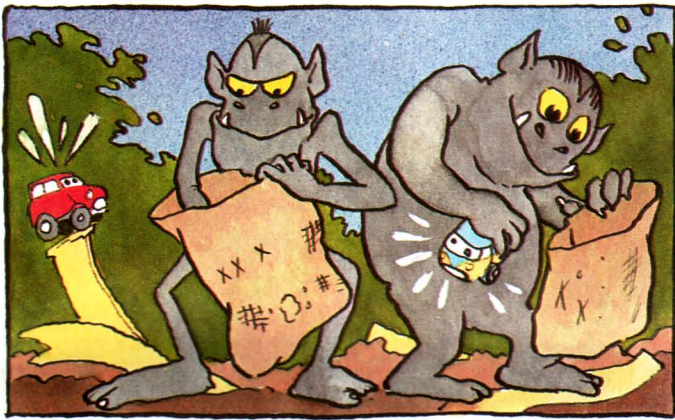
It turned out to be a fantastic adventure roadway for toy cars . . .

. . . with tunnels and flyovers and junctions and roller-coaster hills.

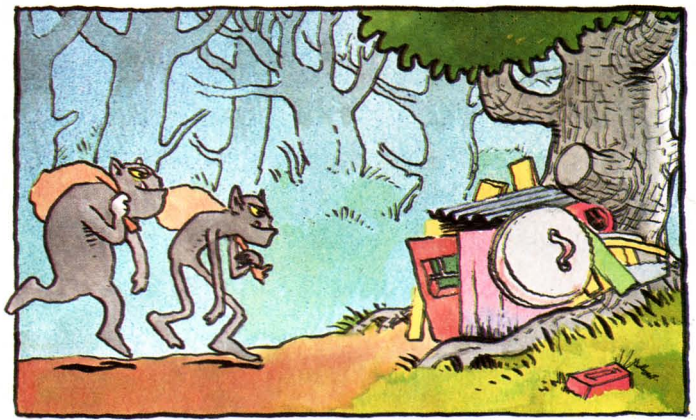


While the cars zoomed happily round their new playground, Ford's mum called

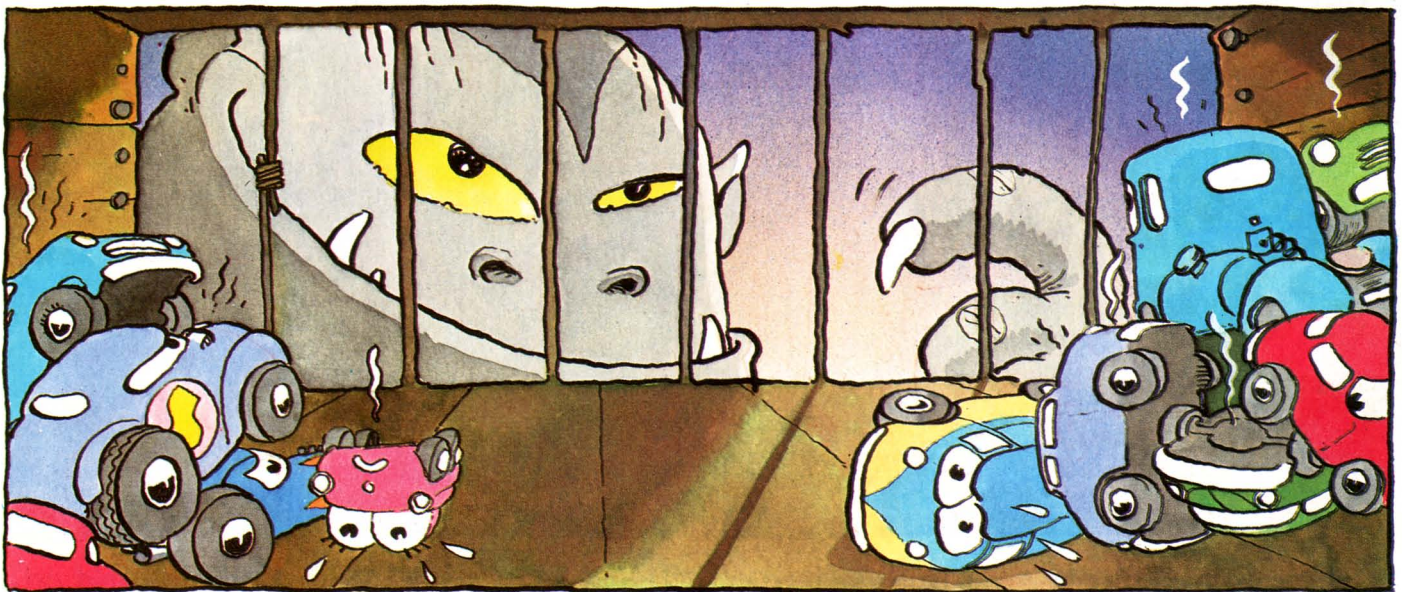
him into tea. Now, behind the hedge were two goblins, watching everything.



As soon as Ford was gone they crashed through the hedge, grabbed all the cars, and stuffed them into two filthy sacks.

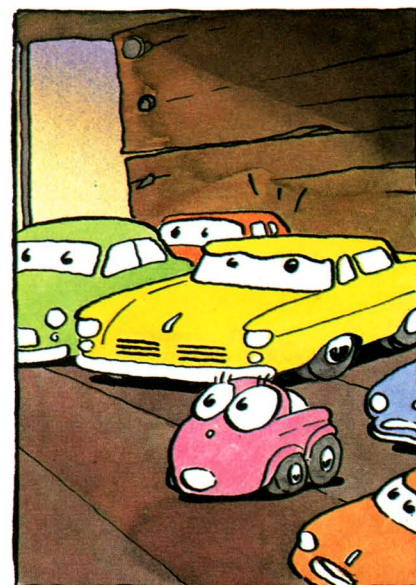
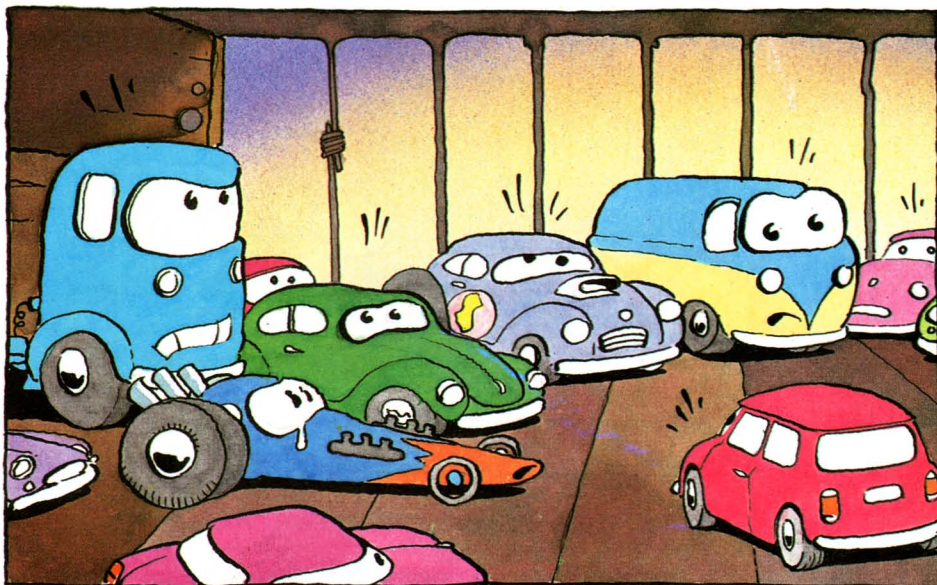


Then they charged back through the hedge and carried the sacks off to their tumbledown shack deep in the woods.



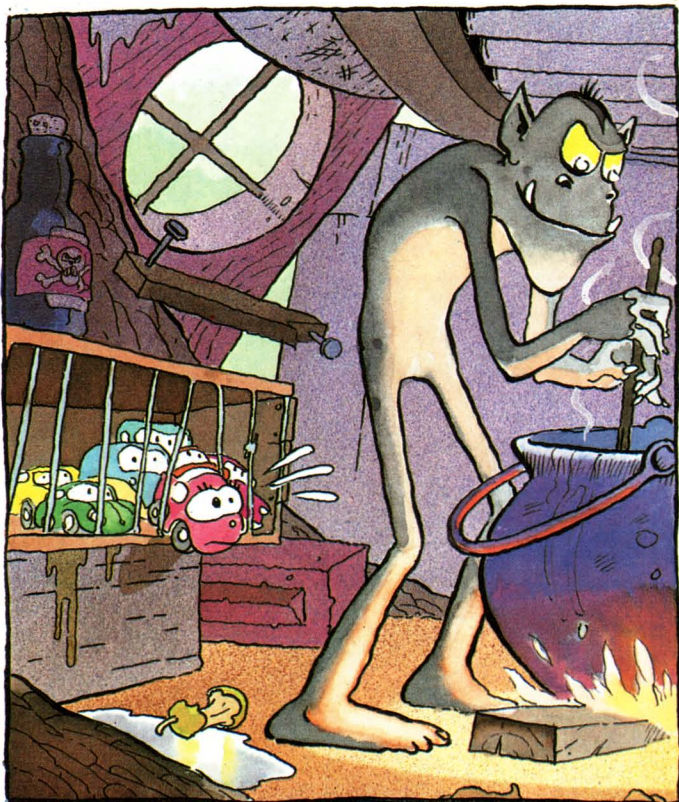
The goblins threw all the cars into a horrible cage and stood gloating over

their catch. "Pull off tyres," they kept droning. "Pull off tyres. Eat tyres."

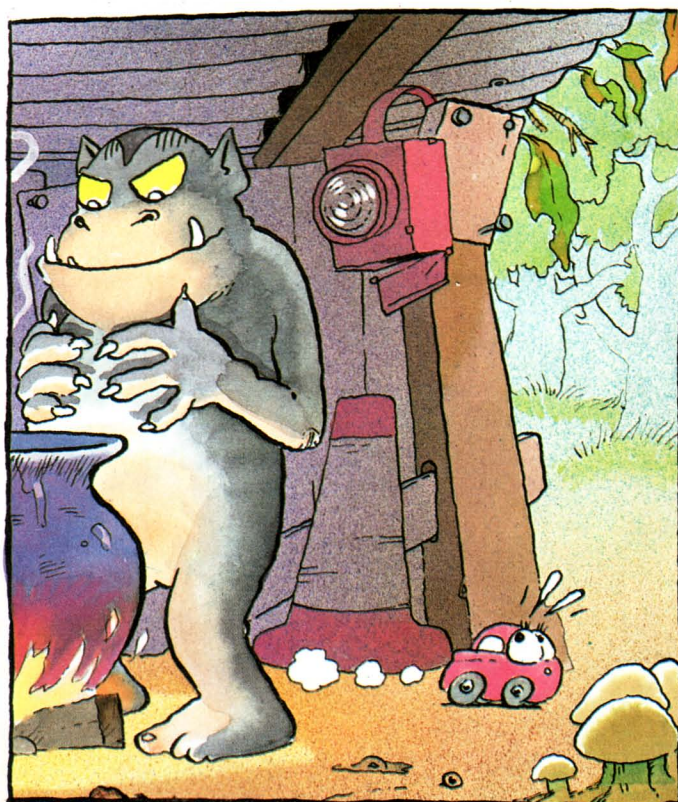


The cars huddled together. "Oh dear, what are we going to do?" asked Minnie. "I could try and smash the bars down," grunted Lorry. "It's no use," sighed VW. "I wish Ford could come and help us."

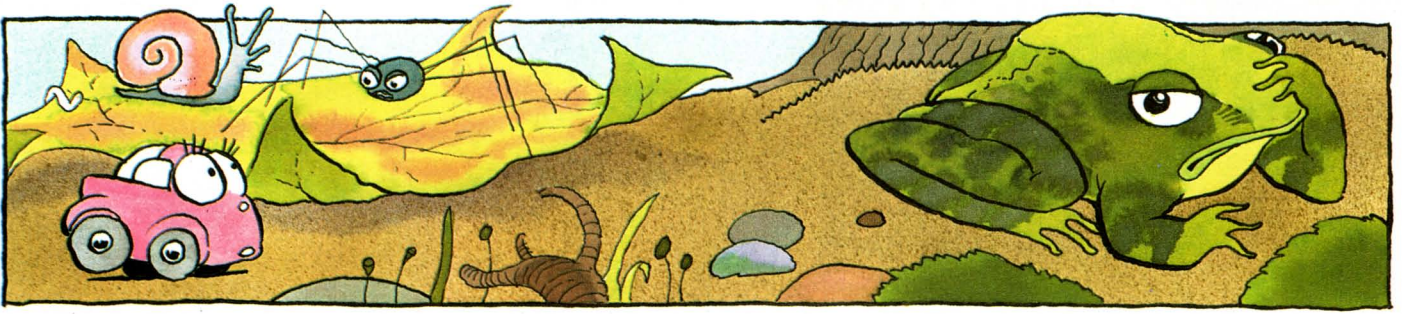
"Somebody has got to sneak out and get Ford," replied Kombi. "I'll go!" said Dragger. "I'm the fastest!" "Yes, but I'm the *smallest*," squeaked Bubbles, "I can get through the bars!" "Gosh!" said Minnie, "that's jolly brave!"



So all the other cars heaved and pushed as Bubbles squeezed herself through the bars and crept quietly across the floor.

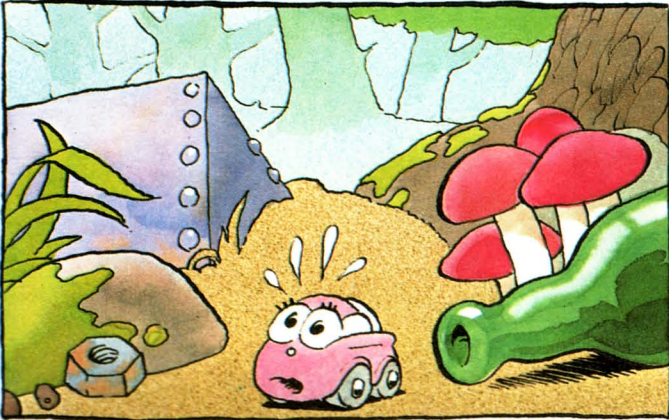


The goblins were stirring their pot and chanting . . . and they did not see the little French car as she slipped out of the door.

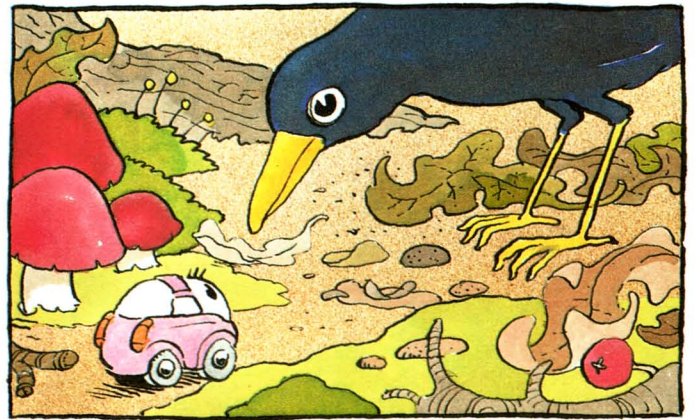


Bubbles made her way slowly through the woods, past huge leaves and ugly spiders and slimy slugs. It was a scary place, and she did not know which way to go.

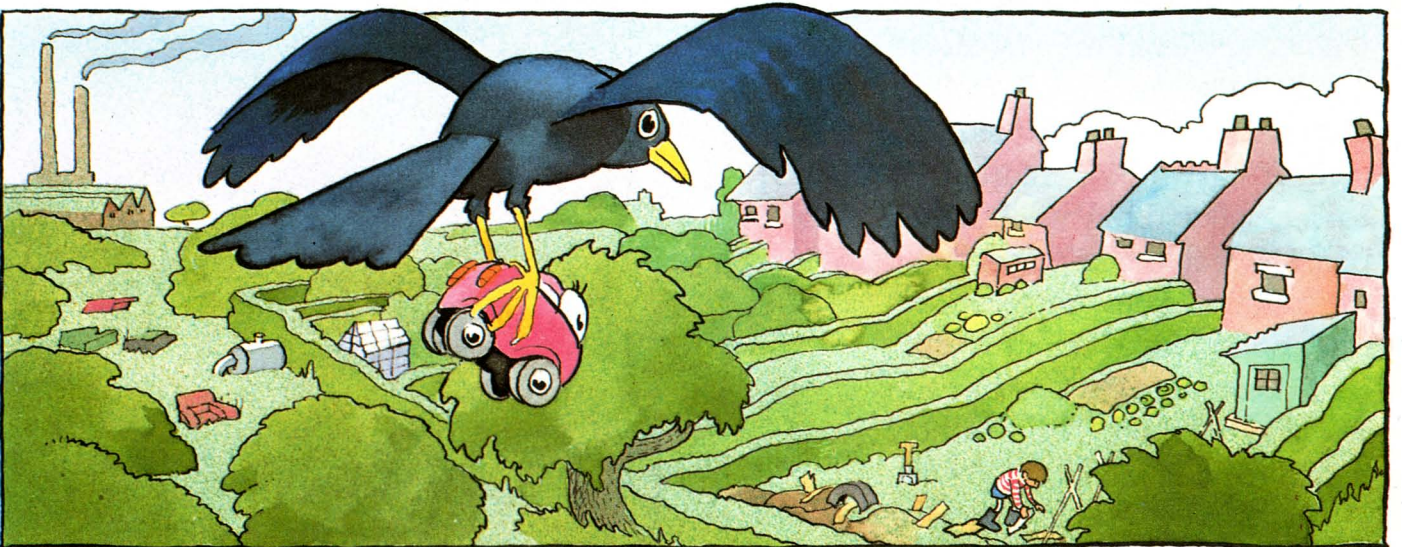
After a while she drove up to a great green frog. "Do you know where Ford's house is, please?" "No, I don't," boomed the frog. "Sorry!" And he hopped off.



Bubbles felt really miserable. "I'm lost! What am I going to do?" But just then, she saw a blackbird poking about and raced up to him. "Excuse me, please, but do



you know where Ford's house is?" "Of course I do. Flown over it many a time. I'll take you there if you like. Let's see . . . this might hurt a bit."



The blackbird picked Bubbles up by her boot and soared into the air and out of the woods. Soon Bubbles could see the house

— and there, at the bottom of the garden, was Ford, still searching everywhere for his lost friends . . .

[Follow Ford's brave rescue attempt in Part 13!]

DRUMMERBOY RACES FOR HIS LIFE

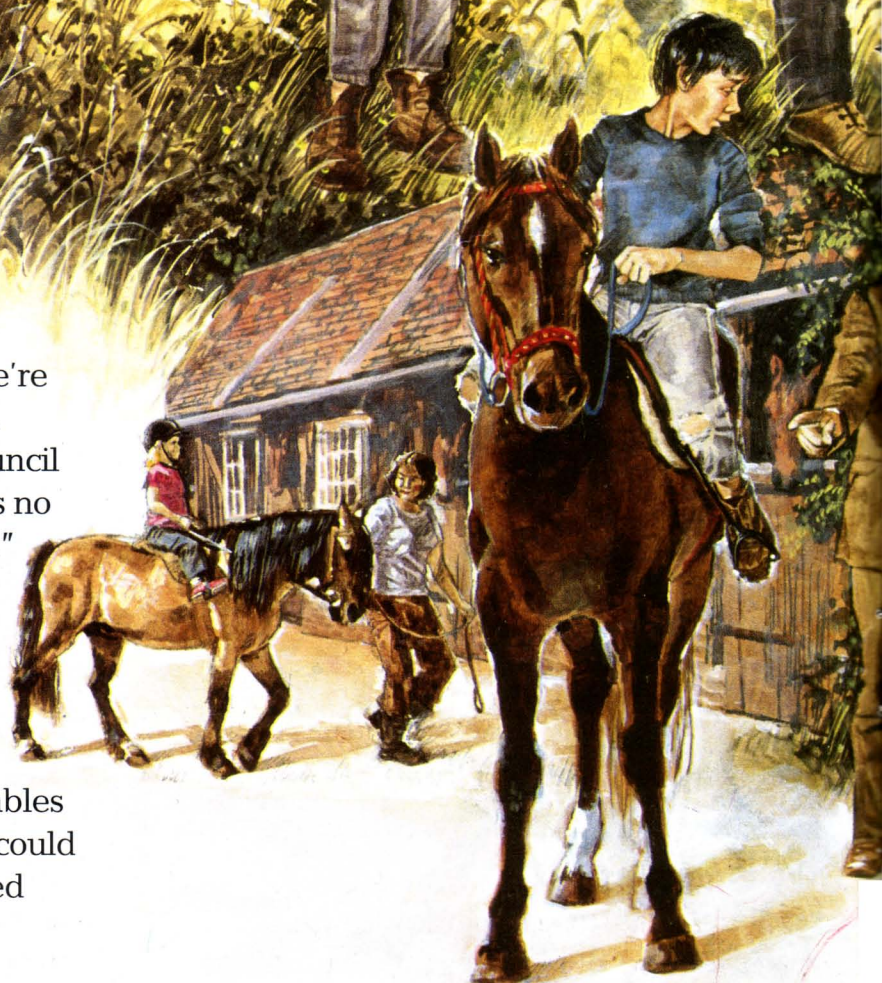
Billy Smith ran along behind his father, tugging at his donkey jacket. "But we can't move away from here!" he cried. "I wouldn't be able to work at Applegate Stables at the weekends. I'd never see Drummerboy again!"

His father turned to face him. "We're gypsies, Billy. We're travelling people. Besides, that Mr Fawcett from the Council has decided to throw us off the site. It's no good, lad. You'd best forget that pony."

"But we're entered for the cross-country race on Sunday!"

"Then you'd better make the most of it, Billy. We'll be moving on at the end of the month."

When Billy went to Applegate Stables that Saturday morning, Drummerboy could sense something was wrong. He looked forward to seeing the young gypsy boy — he was always so cheerful.



But today, Billy hardly spoke a word.

The Saturday morning ride was all ready to leave the stable yard, and Billy was riding Drummerboy, as usual. Just as the line of horses was about to move out, a big red car swept into the yard. The horses all snorted and whinnied with fright.

Out of the car stepped a fat, smartly dressed man with grey hair — and then a young girl. She was wearing the most expensive white jodhpurs, navy blue hacking jacket and brand new riding hat.

"That one looks the best," said her father, pointing at Drummerboy. "You don't mind if my Emma takes your pony, do you boy? Good." He turned to Madge Summers, the owner of the stables, who was leading the ride. "Fawcett's the name, Councillor Fawcett. Emma will be riding here every Saturday. See to it that she gets the chestnut pony each week, will you?"

He pushed a wad of money into Madge's



hand, then drove out of the yard.

"I'm afraid you'll have to give up your ride on Drummerboy this morning, Billy," said Madge. He isn't yours, after all, and Councillor Fawcett is a very important person. He's the man who's presenting the trophy at tomorrow's cross-country race."

So Billy got off and mounted a young black colt, while Emma rode Drummerboy that morning. She did not speak once as the line of horses trotted through the fields and walked along the country roads. After an hour, Madge turned the ride for home

"You're a good rider," Billy said to Emma as his pony drew level with Drummerboy, not far from the stables.

"Daddy paid for lots of lessons," said Emma, but she did not smile or look Billy in the face. "Here he comes now, to give me a lift home."



The big car came roaring over the brow of the hill. When Councillor Fawcett caught sight of his daughter among the riders, he sounded the car horn two, three times.

All the horses were frightened, and Drummerboy reared up, his nostrils flaring. Emma was sent flying over his tail, and landed on her back. The car screamed to a halt and the man ran towards his daughter.

"I'll have that horse destroyed!" he bellowed. "Stupid animal — it's obviously a killer. Look at its rolling eyes! My daughter

could have been killed! I'll have that horse put down tomorrow, I promise you."

"I'm perfectly all right, Daddy," said the girl, getting to her feet. "Please! I'm *all right*."

But it was no good. Drummerboy's fate was sealed. He was to be destroyed as a dangerous animal as soon as the vet could call at Applegate the next morning.

Billy went home to his grandmother's caravan on the gypsy site and, for the first time in years, he cried.

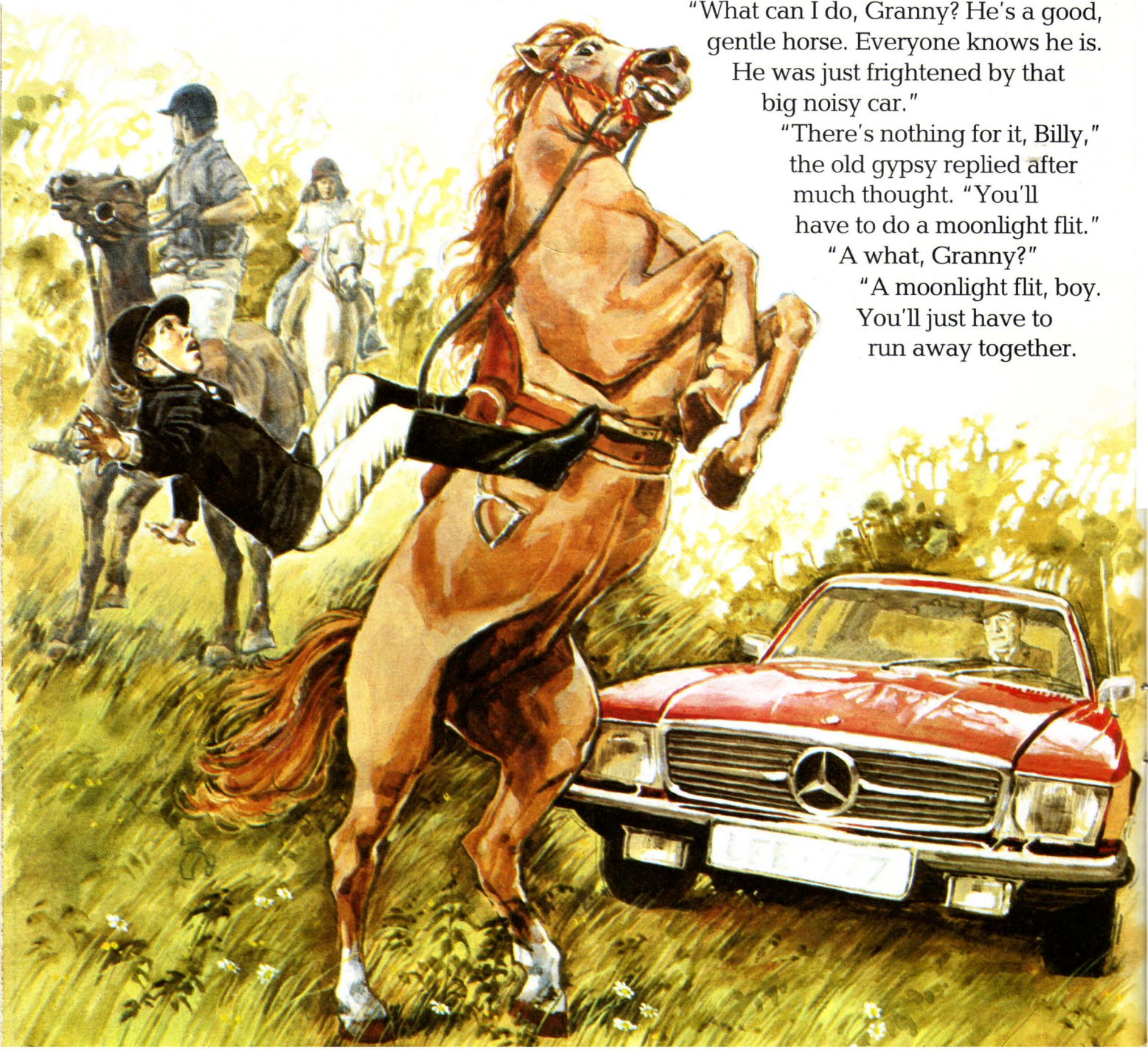
"What can I do, Granny? He's a good, gentle horse. Everyone knows he is.

He was just frightened by that big noisy car."

"There's nothing for it, Billy," the old gypsy replied after much thought. "You'll have to do a moonlight flit."

"A what, Granny?"

"A moonlight flit, boy. You'll just have to run away together.





A gentle sobbing was mixed with the sound of Drummerboy's gentle breathing. Emma, her expensive clothes all crumpled and dirty, was holding the pony's head in her arms and crying.

"Oh Billy!" she whispered when she saw him. "Why must Daddy be so cruel? He always wants me to be the *best* at everything. He always wants me to *win*. I came here to try and save him. I thought I'd . . . I'd . . ."

"Do a moonlight flit?" said Billy. "Yeah, that's why I'm here, too. But listen, I've got a plan. You're a good rider. But are you *brave* — and can you ride over jumps?"

The two of them sat down on the straw bales in Drummerboy's box and worked out their plan. The pony, who had been frightened and restless since the disastrous ride, listened to their soft voices and felt safe again now . . . and loved.

We gypsies will be moving on soon, anyway — thanks to that Councillor Fawcett."

Billy stayed awake all night thinking about what his Granny had said. Then in the morning, before it was light, he slipped out of the gypsy site and ran all the way to Applegate, clutching Drummerboy's bridle in his hand.

It was still dark when he got there, and nothing stirred in the stable yard. But, as he opened the door of Drummerboy's stall, he could hear that someone was already in there!



Just as dawn was breaking over Applegate, they saddled him up and led him out of his stall. Drummerboy didn't make a sound. Then Emma rode him to the woods.

At midday, riders from all over the area gathered for the annual Luckton cross-country race. There were tough, wiry little ponies and tall, lanky horses. There were farmers, and riders from the local hunt. A few older boys had entered, but the course was too hard for children.

At the last minute a small chestnut pony joined the other competitors on the starting line. A pale young girl sat in the saddle, scratching the pony's head between his ears.

People in the crowd said, "She's *much* too young. Whoever is she?"

The flag dropped. The race was on. A hundred hooves thundered over fields, grassy tracks and round Applegate Hill. The

brushwood jumps were battered down as the sweating horses leaped them. Some riders fell off as the horses galloped across the river in a storm of spray.

Drummerboy had never been in a proper race before, and he was thrilled. But Emma's hands were gentle on the bridle. Billy had entrusted her to Drummerboy. Now the pony was determined to carry her safely past the finish — and get there first.

Councillor Fawcett waited anxiously at the winning post. He had no idea that Emma was in the race. He was worried sick because she had not been seen all morning.

He saw the leading horse in the race when it was still a good way from the finish — a little chestnut pony with a tiny jockey on its back in a navy blue hacking jacket and dirty jodhpurs.

"Emma!" he exclaimed. And before he





could say much more she thundered past him to the cheers of the crowd.

Councillor Fawcett hardly knew what to say as he presented the trophy to his own daughter, and pinned the blue rosette on Drummerboy's lucky gypsy bridle.

"I know how you like me to win, Daddy," said Emma in a whisper.

Madge Summers stood close by and Emma's father turned to her. "I'll buy that pony from you. He's a good little racer."

By now Madge had heard the whole story from Billy. She was very proud of the boy for giving up his chance of racing — and saving Drummerboy's life for a second time!

"Oh, I'm afraid the horse doesn't belong to me," she said, beckoning Billy over. "He belongs to Billy here. But I'm sure he'll let Emma ride the pony every Saturday."

Billy gulped in amazement. Madge had given him the pony! Madge had given him Drummerboy for his very own! But he thought quickly. He looked up at Mr Fawcett, who was trying to smile now and be friendly. "I'm terribly sorry, sir. But I'll be taking Drummerboy away at the end of the month. I'm a gypsy and the Council is closing our caravan site."

The Councillor turned pale. "Oh, um, well we, er, we can't let that happen, can we? Not when my Emma is so fond of the pony. I'll see what I can do . . ."

In the end, the gypsies did not have to leave their site — and Billy did not have to leave Applegate. He went on working there — and Emma became as good a friend to Billy as Drummerboy. Well, almost as good.



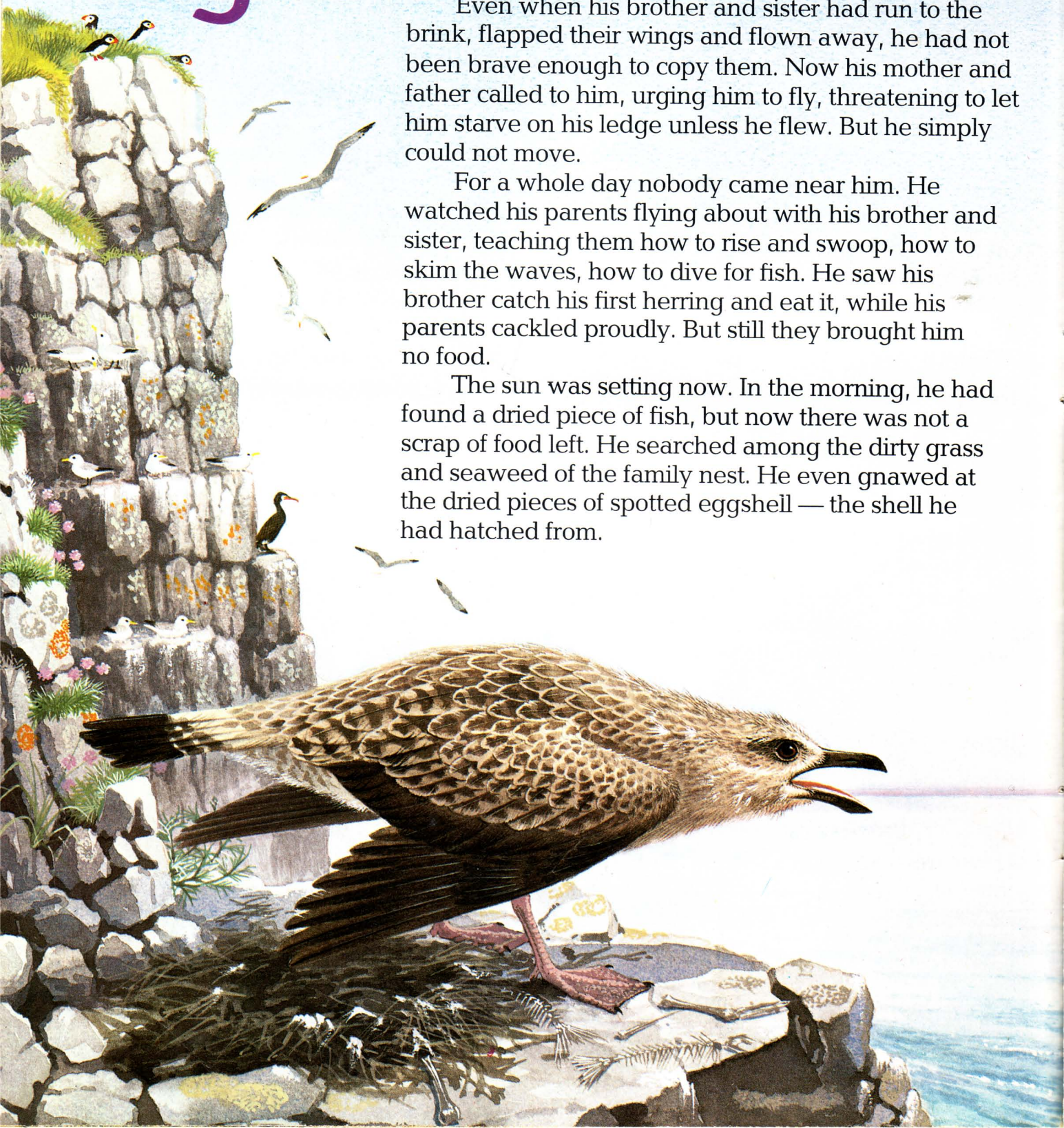
First Flight

The young seagull stood on his ledge, afraid to fly. He took a little run forward to the brink of the ledge and flapped his wings. But the great expanse of sea stretched out far below, and he was sure that his stubby brown wings would never support him. So he turned away and ran back to the nest where he was born.

Even when his brother and sister had run to the brink, flapped their wings and flown away, he had not been brave enough to copy them. Now his mother and father called to him, urging him to fly, threatening to let him starve on his ledge unless he flew. But he simply could not move.

For a whole day nobody came near him. He watched his parents flying about with his brother and sister, teaching them how to rise and swoop, how to skim the waves, how to dive for fish. He saw his brother catch his first herring and eat it, while his parents cackled proudly. But still they brought him no food.

The sun was setting now. In the morning, he had found a dried piece of fish, but now there was not a scrap of food left. He searched among the dirty grass and seaweed of the family nest. He even gnawed at the dried pieces of spotted eggshell — the shell he had hatched from.



His brother and sister dozed on the cliff opposite. His father was preening the feathers on his white back. His mother was standing on a little jutting rock, her white breast thrust forward. She tore at a piece of fish that lay at her feet, then scraped each side of her beak on the black rock.

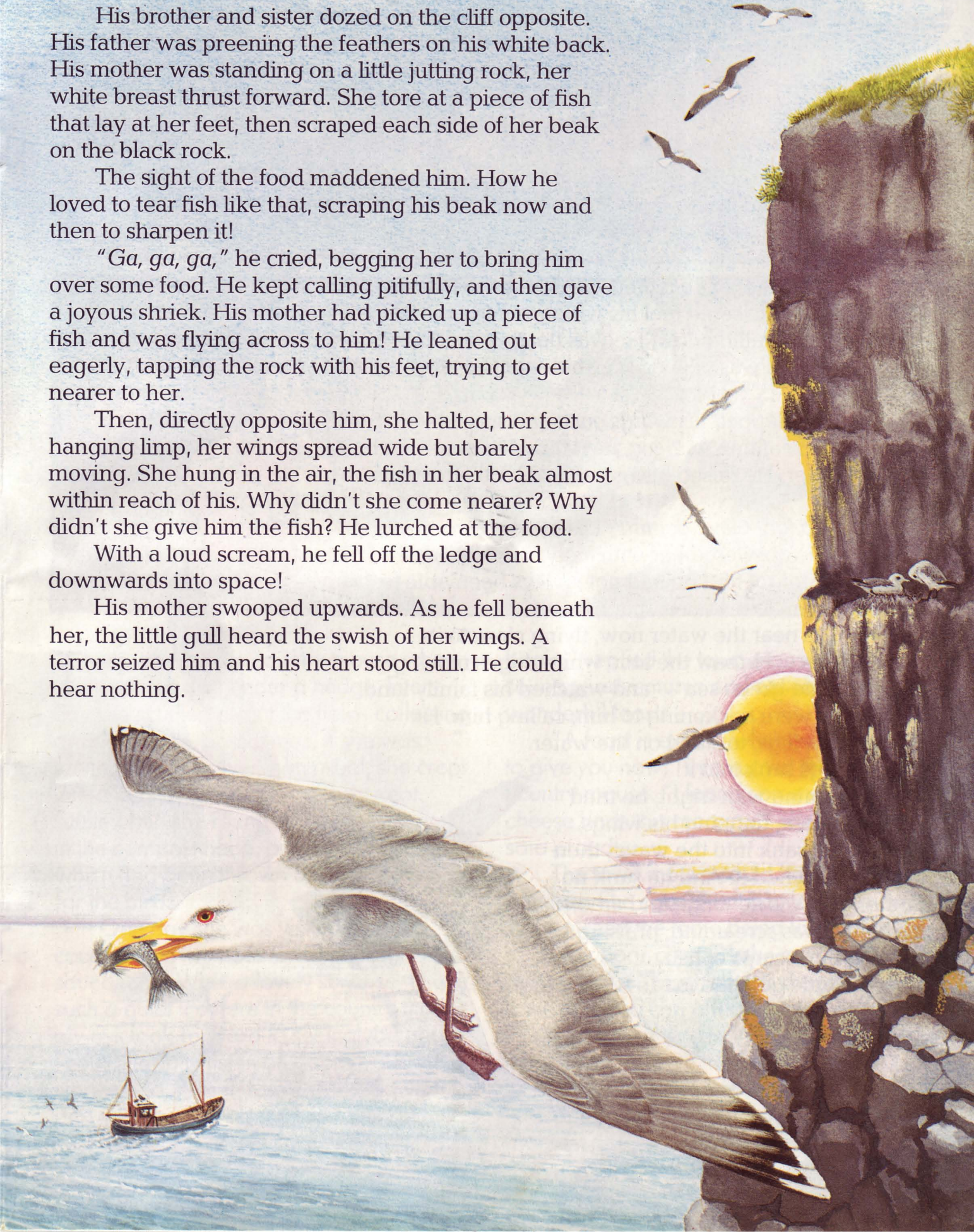
The sight of the food maddened him. How he loved to tear fish like that, scraping his beak now and then to sharpen it!

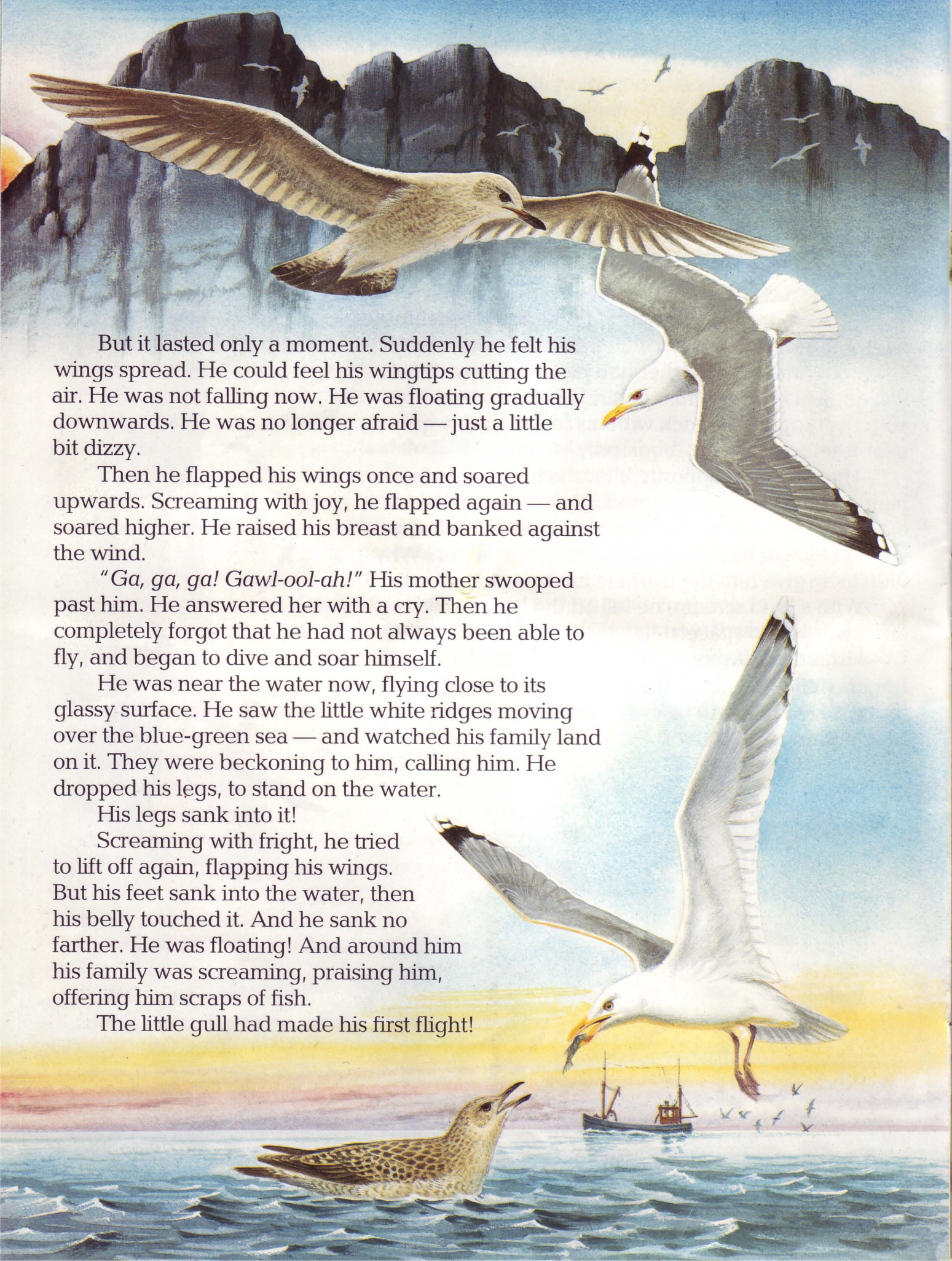
"Ga, ga, ga," he cried, begging her to bring him over some food. He kept calling pitifully, and then gave a joyous shriek. His mother had picked up a piece of fish and was flying across to him! He leaned out eagerly, tapping the rock with his feet, trying to get nearer to her.

Then, directly opposite him, she halted, her feet hanging limp, her wings spread wide but barely moving. She hung in the air, the fish in her beak almost within reach of his. Why didn't she come nearer? Why didn't she give him the fish? He lurched at the food.

With a loud scream, he fell off the ledge and downwards into space!

His mother swooped upwards. As he fell beneath her, the little gull heard the swish of her wings. A terror seized him and his heart stood still. He could hear nothing.





But it lasted only a moment. Suddenly he felt his wings spread. He could feel his wingtips cutting the air. He was not falling now. He was floating gradually downwards. He was no longer afraid — just a little bit dizzy.

Then he flapped his wings once and soared upwards. Screaming with joy, he flapped again — and soared higher. He raised his breast and banked against the wind.

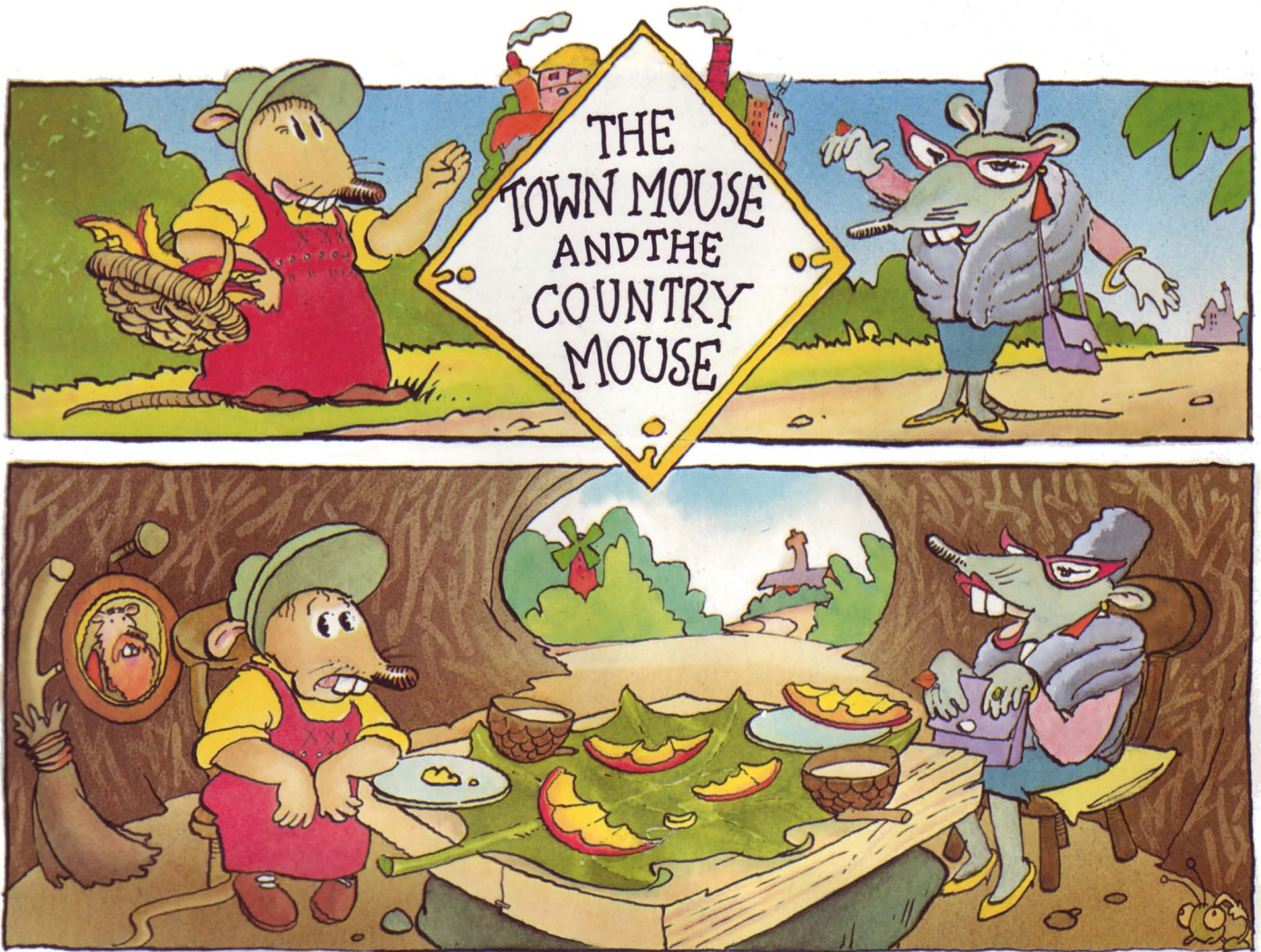
"Ga, ga, ga! Gawl-ool-ah!" His mother swooped past him. He answered her with a cry. Then he completely forgot that he had not always been able to fly, and began to dive and soar himself.

He was near the water now, flying close to its glassy surface. He saw the little white ridges moving over the blue-green sea — and watched his family land on it. They were beckoning to him, calling him. He dropped his legs, to stand on the water.

His legs sank into it!

Screaming with fright, he tried to lift off again, flapping his wings. But his feet sank into the water, then his belly touched it. And he sank no farther. He was floating! And around him his family was screaming, praising him, offering him scraps of fish.

The little gull had made his first flight!



There was once a country mouse who lived in a nest under a hedge. Every day she scuttled about the fields collecting grains of corn. Sometimes, if she was feeling a little braver than usual, she crept into a nearby garden for a tasty treat. Quite often she found bits of cheese rind in the compost heap, or crusts of bread which had been thrown on to the lawn for the birds.

One day she was visited by her cousin the town mouse. "O cousin," she squeaked. "What a lovely surprise. I have such a quiet life here in the country that I always look forward to seeing you again. I could happily listen all day to your stories about life in town. Do sit down and tell me what's been happening."

"Well, I hardly know where to

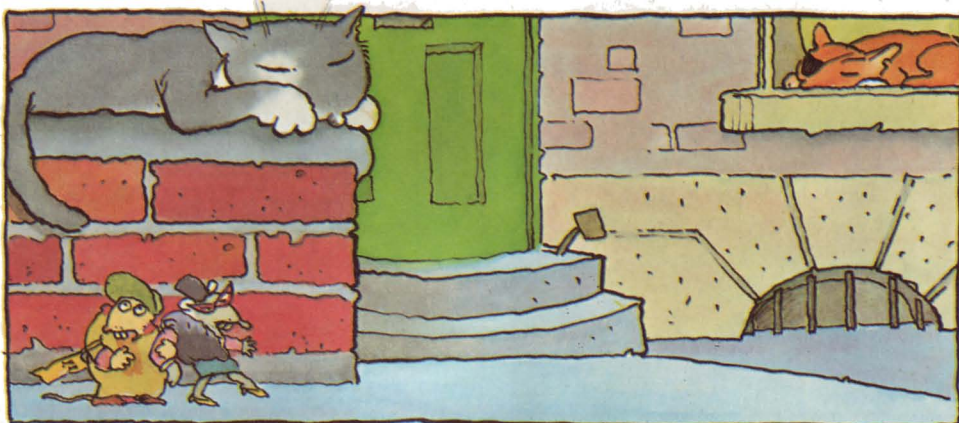
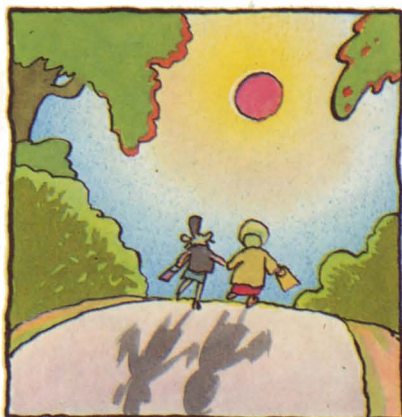
begin," replied the town mouse. "I have so many adventures and eat so many wonderful feasts . . ."

"A feast is exactly what I'm going to give you now," interrupted the country mouse. "I found some very tasty cheese rinds this morning," she said proudly.

The town mouse could hardly believe her ears. She squeaked with laughter as she watched the table being laid.

"My poor cousin," she said. "What a dreary life you must lead. If cheese rinds is the best you can offer, I think I'll go home right now. Why don't you come and stay with me for a while? Everything is so exciting in town."

And, after some thought, the country mouse agreed to go with her.



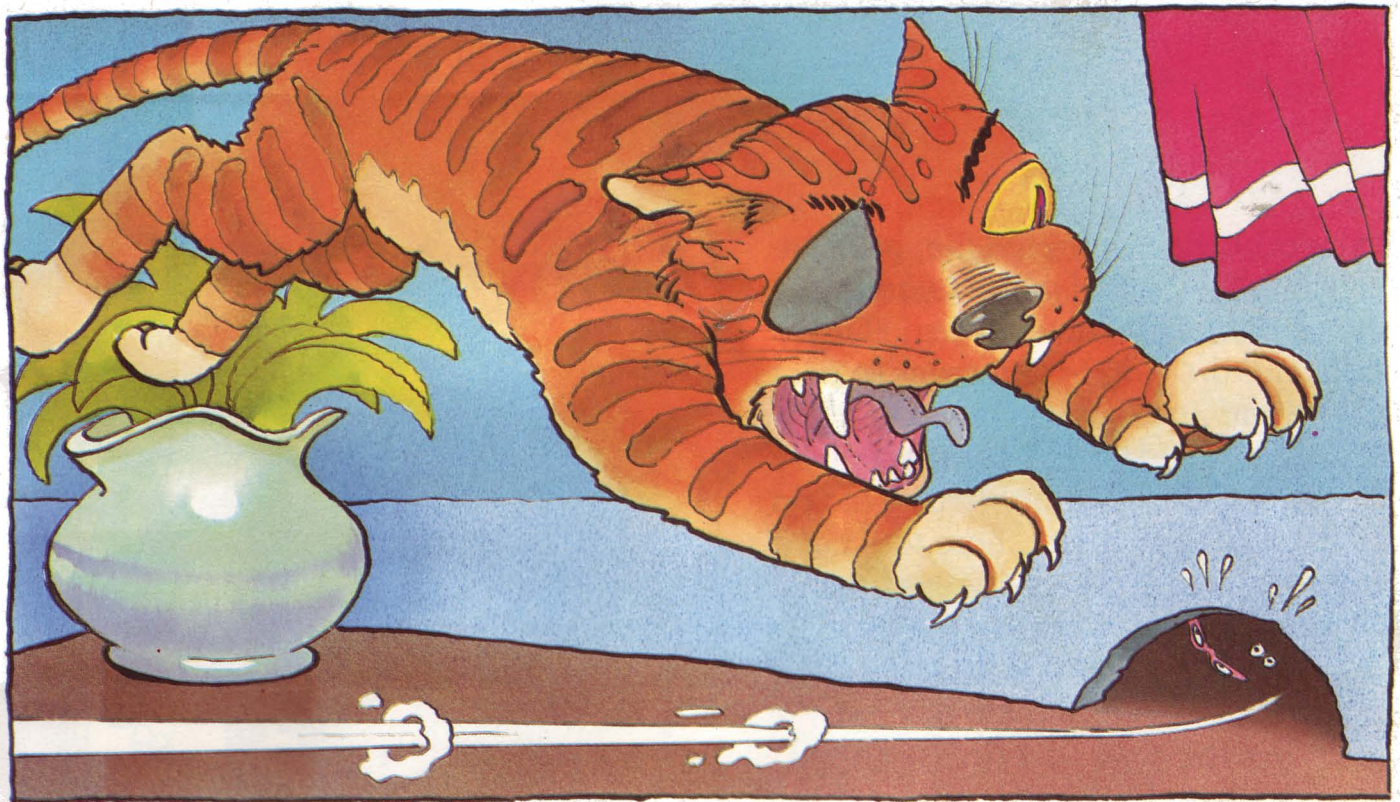
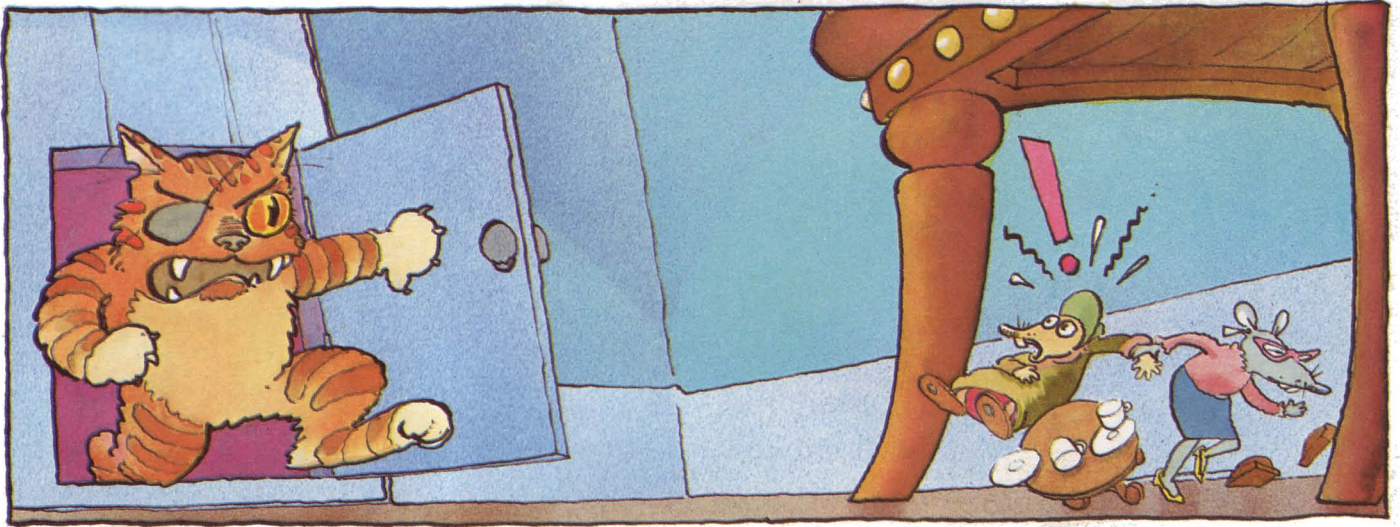
It was a long and frightening journey to the town mouse's home. When they reached the town they kept to the back streets as much as possible, but there were still an awful lot of people around — and even worse, an awful lot of cats.

The poor country mouse was shaking with fear by the time they reached the house where her cousin lived. "I don't think I should have come," she whispered

as they tip-toed into the huge kitchen.

"You'll soon change your mind," replied her cousin cheerfully. "Just look what's in here."

The country mouse looked up — and there above her was a table laden with food. It was such a wonderful sight that she immediately forgot all her fears. "I've never seen so many goodies," she sighed happily.



"And we've got the pick of them all," said her cousin. "Now, sit yourself down and I'll bring you the most delicious feast you've ever had."

A few minutes later the two mice had an enormous pile of chocolate in front of them. But before they could take a single nibble, the door swung open and a big tabby cat burst into the room.

They almost flew to the town mouse's

hole in the skirting board. And even then, they only just missed being crushed by the cat's great paw.

"It's all part of the excitement of living in town," chuckled the town mouse.

"Well, it's the sort of excitement I can do without," replied her cousin. "My life may be dull, but at least it's safe. As soon as the coast is clear I'm going back to the country — and I'm staying there for good."



Pinocchio

The Puppet Theatre

Pinocchio had promised Geppetto he would be a good puppet and go to school. But first he needed a spelling book, and the wood-carver was so poor that he had no money to buy one. Geppetto pulled out his pockets one by one. Then he looked in the rusty old tin on his work-bench. But there was not a penny anywhere. With a deep sigh, he put on his coat and went to the door. "Wait for me here, Pinocchio," he said, and disappeared round the corner.

A few minutes later he was back with a spelling book — but without his coat. He had sold it in exchange for the book.

Pinocchio kissed his father again, and thanked him. Then he hurried off to school.

As Pinocchio marched along, all sorts of grand ideas ran through his head.



"Today I shall learn to read," he said to himself, "then tomorrow I'll learn writing, and the next day arithmetic. Then I'll earn lots of money and buy my dear father a beautiful new coat." There was no end to his good intentions — until he heard the sound of drums and trumpets in the distance.



The music was coming from a brightly painted building, and a large sign announced *Puppet Theatre*. At the entrance stood a man beating a drum to announce the start of a performance, and crowds of people were pushing their way into the hall.

Pinocchio could not wait to join them. "How much does it cost to go in?" he asked. "Only two pence to a young lad like you," replied the man outside

Within seconds Pinocchio had sold the schoolbook to a street trader, bought a ticket and dashed into the theatre.

Imagine his delight when he saw the actors! There were Harlequin and Punch, quarrelling as usual and whacking each other with big sticks. The audience was roaring with laughter. Then Punch caught sight of Pinocchio and there was almost a riot. "It's our little wooden brother," he shouted. "Come up here and join us!" And all the other puppets rushed on to the stage to greet Pinocchio.

What a sight it was! They hugged him and kissed him, gave him friendly pats and pinches, and ended up carrying him in triumph across the stage.

But the audience was not amused. They set up a tremendous racket. "We want the play! We want the play!"





Suddenly, silence fell. The puppet-master, a ferocious looking giant called Fire-Eater with a long beard as black as ink, had burst on to the stage. His eyes were like burning coals, and in his hand was a hideous whip made of snakes and foxes' tails.

"Why do you dare to come into my theatre?" he bellowed. And he seized Pinocchio and threw him into a log basket in the kitchen. The play started again, and when it finished Fire-Eater called to Punch, "Bring that puppet here and throw it on the fire! I must have a good blaze to get my meat well roasted for supper!"

Pinocchio was brought in, struggling for his life and calling for help. Then his brother Harlequin went down on one knee. "O Fire-Eater," he cried, "spare our little brother. He's much too young to die."

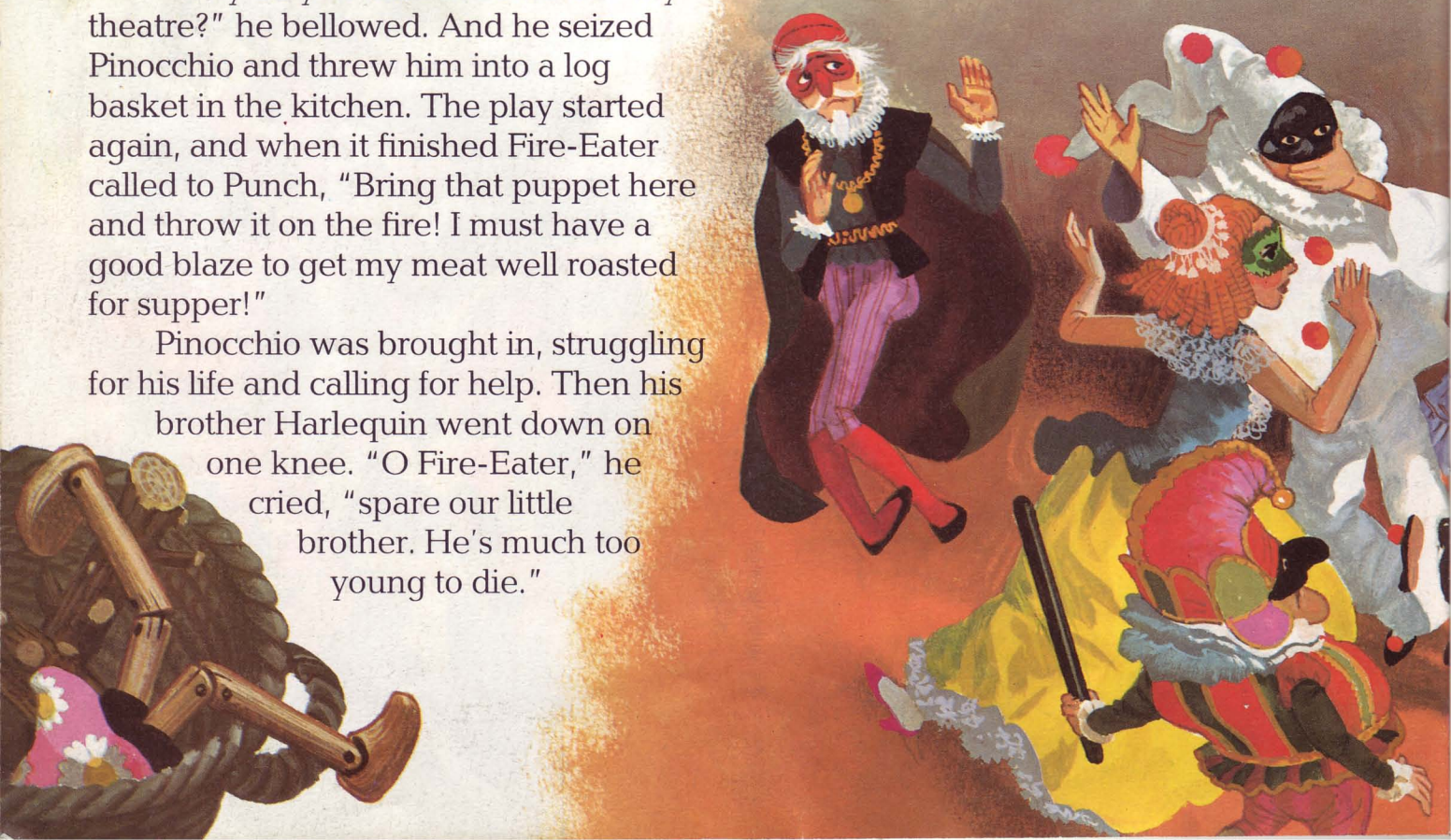
Fire-Eater looked hard at Pinocchio, and he suddenly sneezed. It was a sure sign that his pity had been aroused.

"All right, free him. And throw Harlequin on the fire instead. I must have my meat well roasted!" Just think of poor Harlequin! He had saved Pinocchio, only to die himself! His knees buckled under him, and his head flopped forward. Two of the soldier puppets seized his arms and dragged him towards the flames.

At this awful sight, Pinocchio threw himself down before the puppet-master. "Have pity, Sir Fire-Eater! Pardon brave Harlequin. He has done you no wrong!"

"Impossible! The fire is already low and I must have my meat well roasted."

"In that case," said Pinocchio, "I know my duty. It's not right that



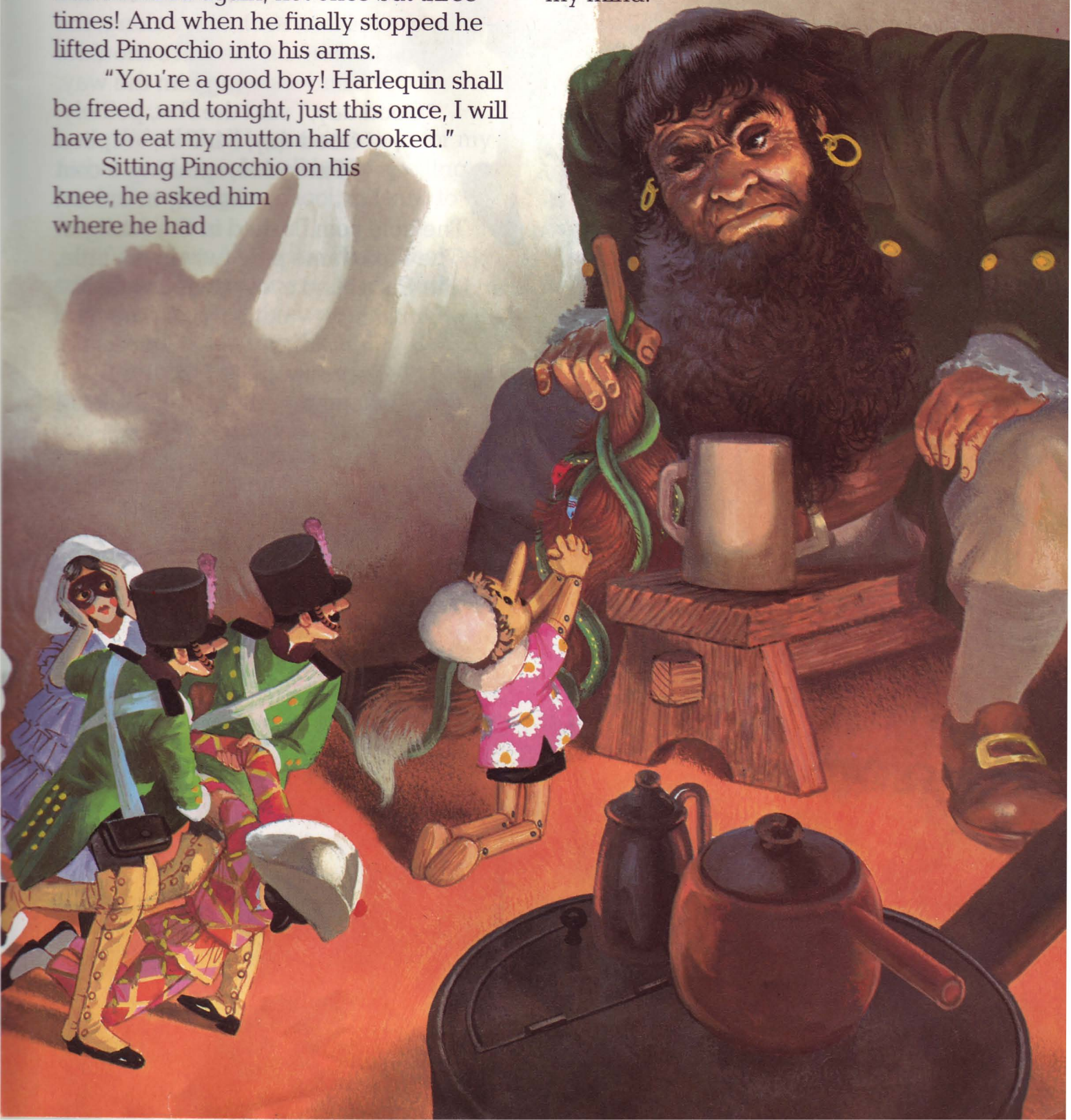
Harlequin should die for me. Puppets, bind me and throw *me* into the flames!"

At these words, all the puppets burst into tears. How noble Pinocchio was! And how dreadful that he should come to a bad end! Then, suddenly, the room echoed to a deafening noise. Fire-Eater had sneezed again, not once but three times! And when he finally stopped he lifted Pinocchio into his arms.

"You're a good boy! Harlequin shall be freed, and tonight, just this once, I will have to eat my mutton half cooked."

Sitting Pinocchio on his knee, he asked him where he had

come from, and who his father was. And when he heard that Geppetto was just a poor wood-carver, he began sneezing all over again. "Here, take these five gold pieces and give them to your father. And tell him to keep a better eye on you in the future! Now get home before I change my mind."



Pinocchio left the hall with the cheers of the puppets ringing in his ears. He was as happy as could be — now he could buy another schoolbook *and* give Geppetto a brand new coat. He whistled cheerfully as he marched back along the road, and at every step he tossed a coin high into the air, catching it as it fell.

He could hardly wait to see Geppetto's face!

Little did he know what fate had in store for him, or how long a journey he had begun. For he had not gone far when he met two travellers — a Fox, who was lame in one foot, and a Cat, who was

blind in both eyes. These unfortunate creatures were helping each other along, the Fox leaning on the Cat's shoulder and showing him the way. "Good day," said the Fox, politely. "Good day, Mr Fox," replied Pinocchio, spinning a coin casually in the air.

The gold coin flashed in the sunlight. The Fox's lame paw twitched a little, and the Cat's blind eyes opened wide like two green lamps — but only for a fraction of a second.

"I say!" said the Fox as they all walked along together. "What a lot of money you have. And what will you spend it on, if I may ask?"





"First I shall buy a new coat for my father, and then I shall buy a spelling book. I'm going to school, to learn to be good."

"Oh dear," said the Fox. "Look at me. Through my long years of study I have lost the use of my paw."

"And look at me," said the Cat. "Through my long years of study I have gone blind!"

At that very moment, a blackbird perched in the hedge called out a warning. "Pinocchio, don't listen to those bad men . . ." But before he could finish, the Cat sprang on the bird and gulped him down in a single mouthful, feathers and all.

"Nothing but trouble, blackbirds," sneered the Cat.

They were all halfway to Pinocchio's house when the Fox suddenly stopped. "How would you like to double your money?" he asked.

Naturally Pinocchio was very interested, especially when the Cat explained that doubling your money was child's play. If you knew how, you could easily turn five gold coins into 500, or even 5,000!

"All you have to do," the Cat continued, "is to bury your money in the Field of Miracles. You water it, salt it, leave it for two hours, and then what do you find? Your money has grown into a magnificent tree, laden with hundreds of bright new coins."

Instantly, Pinocchio forgot all about his father, the new coat and the schoolbook. All he could think of was the wonderful Field of Miracles. He just *had* to see it. And at the very next turning the Fox and the Cat led him away down a narrow winding lane and out into the country.



[See what Pinocchio finds at the Field of Miracles in Part 13]



THE GINGERBREAD MAN

A little old woman and a little old man once lived together in a little old house. One day, the little old woman baked a Gingerbread Man with raisins for buttons, currants for eyes and a sliver of orange peel for a mouth. And she put him on a baking tray to cook.

But when the gingerbread was cooked, and the little old woman opened the oven door, the Gingerbread Man jumped off the tray, out of the door, and ran off down the street. The little old woman and the little old man ran after him as fast as they could, but he only laughed and called over his shoulder:

*"Run, run as fast as you can,
You can't catch me,
I'm the Gingerbread Man!"*

And they could not catch him.

Soon the Gingerbread Man passed a cow in a field. "Stop, stop, and I'll eat you up," mooed the cow.

But the Gingerbread Man laughed out loud and called over his shoulder:

*"I've run away from a little old woman,
I've run away from a little old man.
Run, run as fast as you can,
You can't catch me,
I'm the Gingerbread Man!"*

And the cow could not catch him either.





So the Gingerbread Man ran on through the fields until he passed a horse. "Stop, stop, and I'll eat you up!" neighed the horse.

But the Gingerbread Man only laughed out loud and called over his shoulder:

*"I've run away from a little old woman,
a little old man and a cow.
Run, run as fast as you can,
You can't catch me,
I'm the Gingerbread Man!"*

The horse could not catch him either.

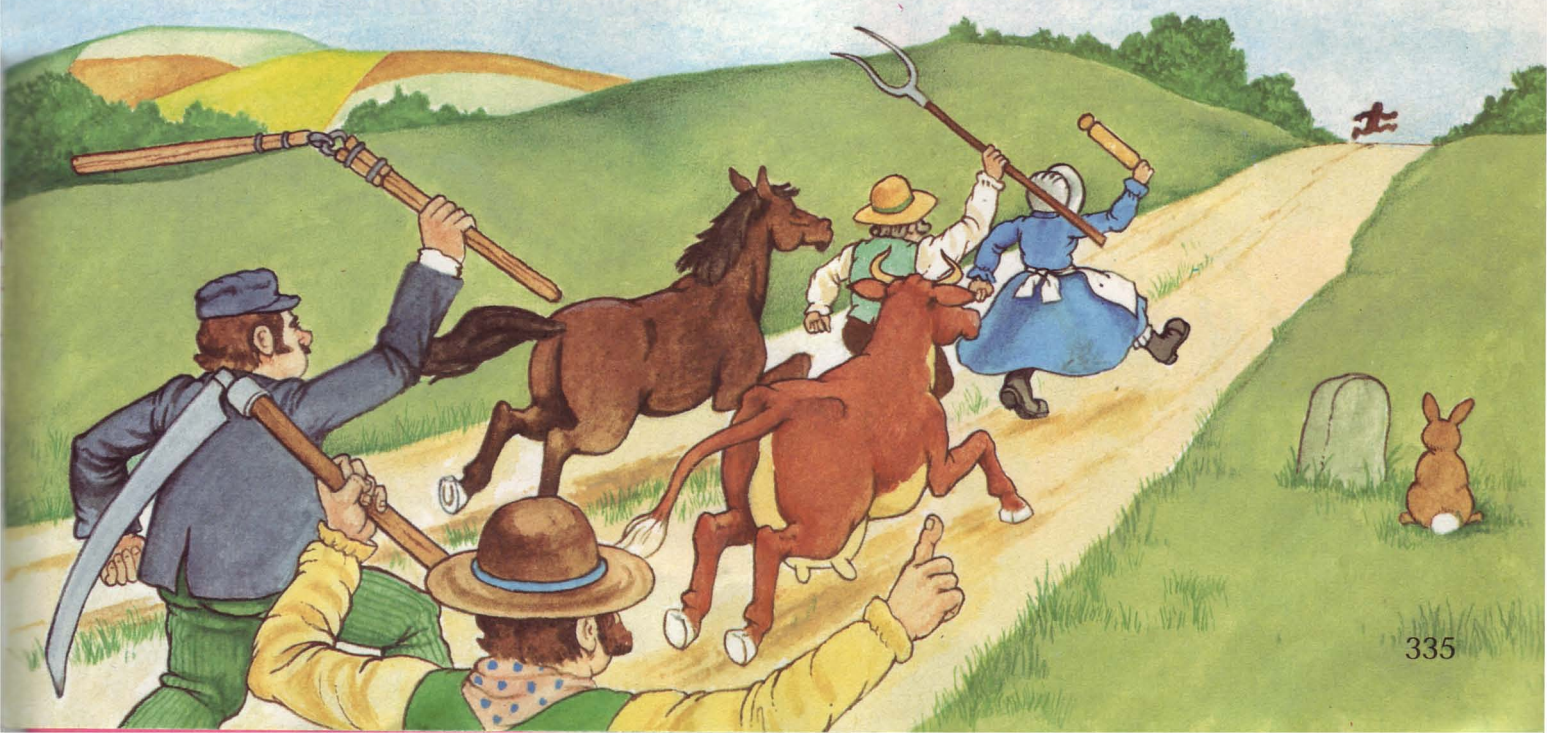
At the end of the field, the Man ran past a barn full of men threshing corn.

When they smelled the hot, delicious gingerbread, they dashed out of the barn to catch him.

"Stop, stop and we'll eat you up!" shouted the threshers. But he dodged through their legs and laughed and called over his shoulder:

*"I've run away from a little old woman,
a little old man,
a cow and a horse.
Run, run as fast as you can,
You can't catch me,
I'm the Gingerbread Man!"*

And the threshers could not catch him either.





By this time the little Gingerbread Man thought he was the cleverest biscuit ever to hop out of a pan, and he laughed and crowed and danced about. "No-one can catch me!" he thought.

And when a fox came running towards him, the Gingerbread Man only laughed and ran away, calling over his shoulder:

*"I've run away from a little old woman,
a little old man,
a cow, a horse and
a barnful of threshers.
Run, run as fast as you can,
You can't catch me,
I'm the Gingerbread Man!"*

"But I don't want to catch you," said the fox, now running a little faster. "I'm being chased myself by huntsmen. But if we can get across the river, we'll both be safe."

At the edge of the river, the fox said to the Gingerbread Man, "Jump on to my tail and I'll carry you across."

So the Gingerbread Man jumped on to the fox's tail and the fox plunged into the water. But as he struck out from the shore he turned his head and said, "You're too heavy on my tail. Climb on to my back or you may get wet."

So the Gingerbread Man jumped on to the fox's back.

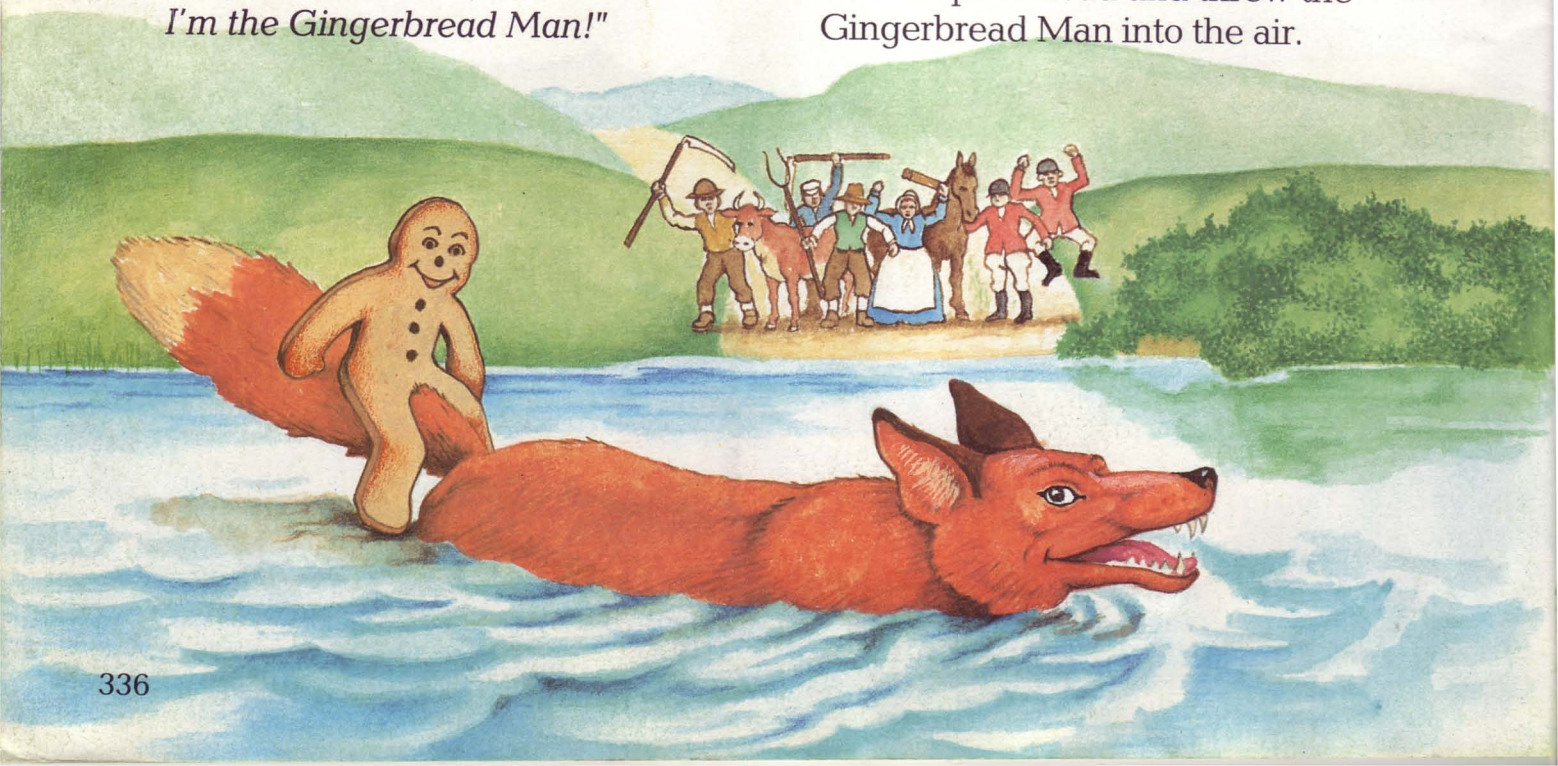
"You're too close to the water on my back," said the fox when he had swum a little farther. "Jump on to my shoulder."

So the Gingerbread Man jumped on to the fox's shoulder.

In the middle of the river, the fox called out, "Oh dear, I'm sinking. Jump on to my nose, Gingerbread Man."

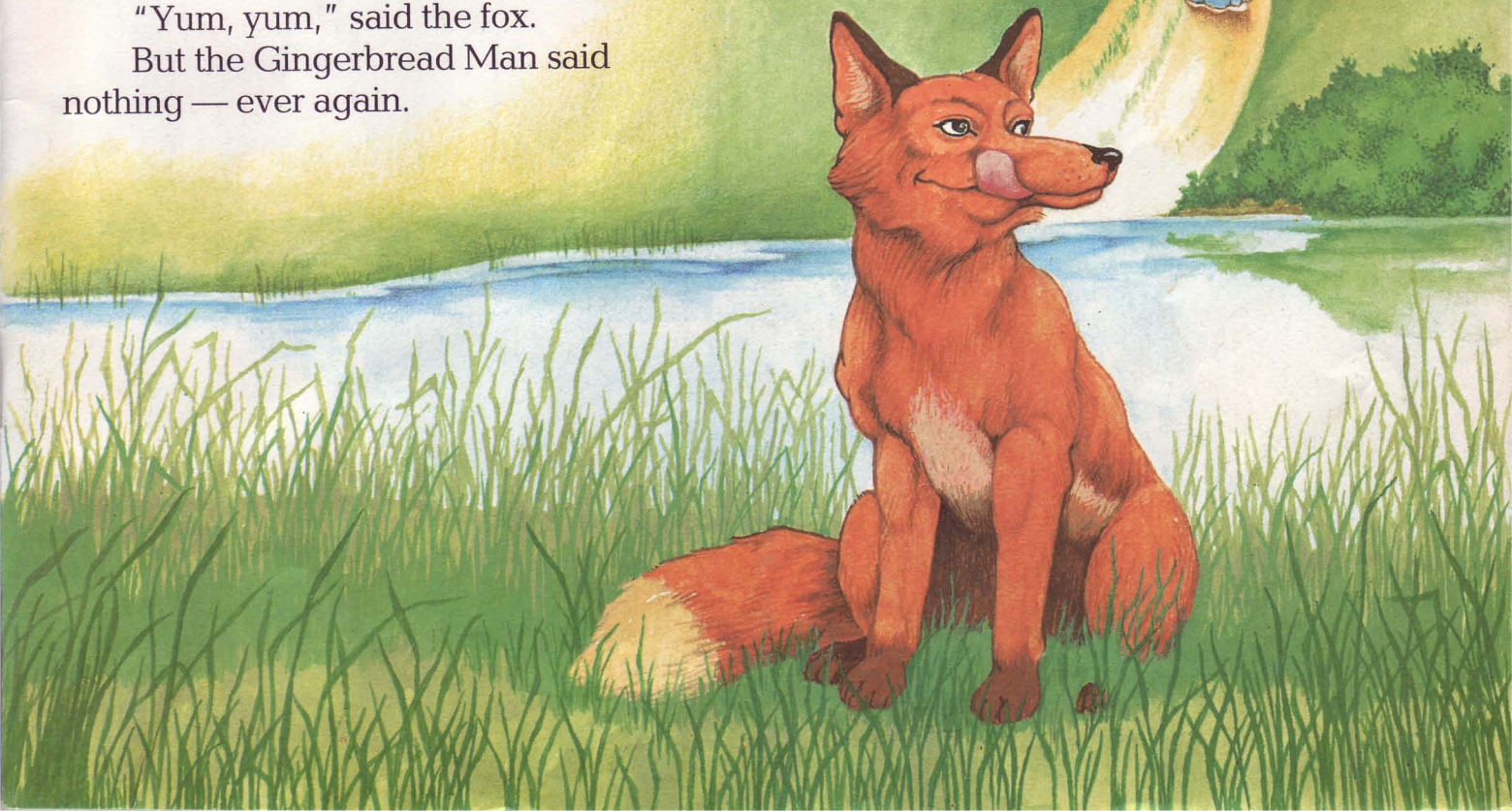
So the Gingerbread Man jumped on to the fox's nose, and they both got safely across the river.

But, as the fox climbed ashore, he tossed up his head and threw the Gingerbread Man into the air.





Snap went the fox's jaws.
Slurp went his wet, red tongue.
"Dear me!" said the Gingerbread Man. "I'm a quarter gone!"
Snap went the fox's white teeth.
Slurp went his wet, red tongue.
"Well, well!" cried the Gingerbread Man. "I'm half gone!"
Snap! Slurp! went the fox.
"Oh my goodness!" yelled the Gingerbread Man. "I'm three-quarters gone!"
"Yum, yum," said the fox.
But the Gingerbread Man said nothing — ever again.





IN PART 13 OF **STORY**Teller

Everyone has a welcome somewhere—
even the **UGLY DUCKLING**

PINOCCHIO escapes from the jaws of
death...but his greed lands him in prison

Marty's shy friend doesn't want to
go to his party because of his
THREE BALD SPOTS!

The courage of Tombi the African
WARRIOR GIRL saves her tribe from disaster

A soldier, a witch, a princess—and three very
weird dogs: Hans Andersen's **THE TINDER-BOX**

Bubbles and the blackbird lead the way to
FORD'S TOY CARS

Readers include **SIAN PHILLIPS**

**IAN LAVENDER &
CAROLE BOYD**

