

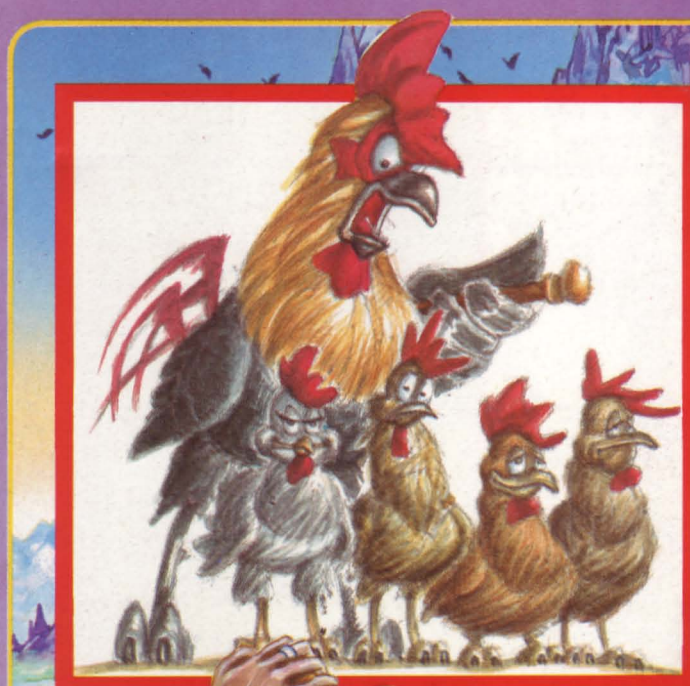
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PART 16

STORY

A collection of the world's
best children's stories

Teller



A Marshall Cavendish Publication

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STORY Teller

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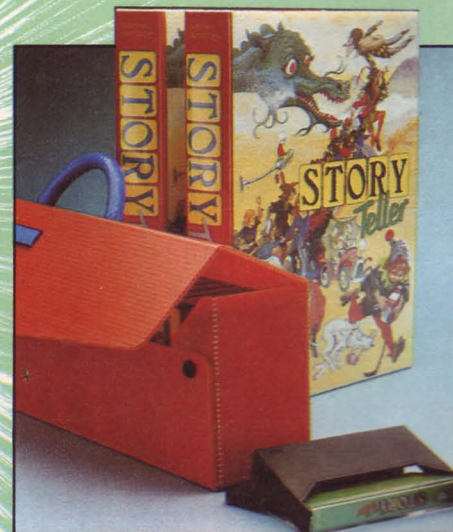
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SAM'S BIG BREAK

Sam wanted to be different. He wanted to be bigger and stronger. In fact, he wanted to be like Rory.

Rory was the leader of the gang. He ran the football games, he knew which old houses were empty and how to climb over walls into exciting tangled gardens. And he knew how to talk to grown-ups, so that they stopped being cross and laughed.

But Sam was only six. He could not climb over walls, footballs just whizzed past him, and grown-ups terrified him.

"Hey, come on everybody. No cars around to bother us now. Let's play football." Sam heard Rory calling the gang together. "Come on, Sam. Come on out and join us."

But Sam shook his head, dumb with fear of footballs and the other boys. He hated it when the other kids took up Rory's call for Sam to join them. They turned it into a horrible chant. "*Come on Sam, silly, silly Sam. Come on Sam, silly, silly Sam.*"

One day, when Sam was sitting by himself, wishing he was different, wishing he was Rory, he heard the others whispering and planning. They were going to climb into Number 40. Sam was amazed! Number 40 was the house where the *builders* were. The builders were huge, dusty men with roaring voices and they had forbidden the boys to come anywhere near their cement-mixers and sand-heaps and barrows.

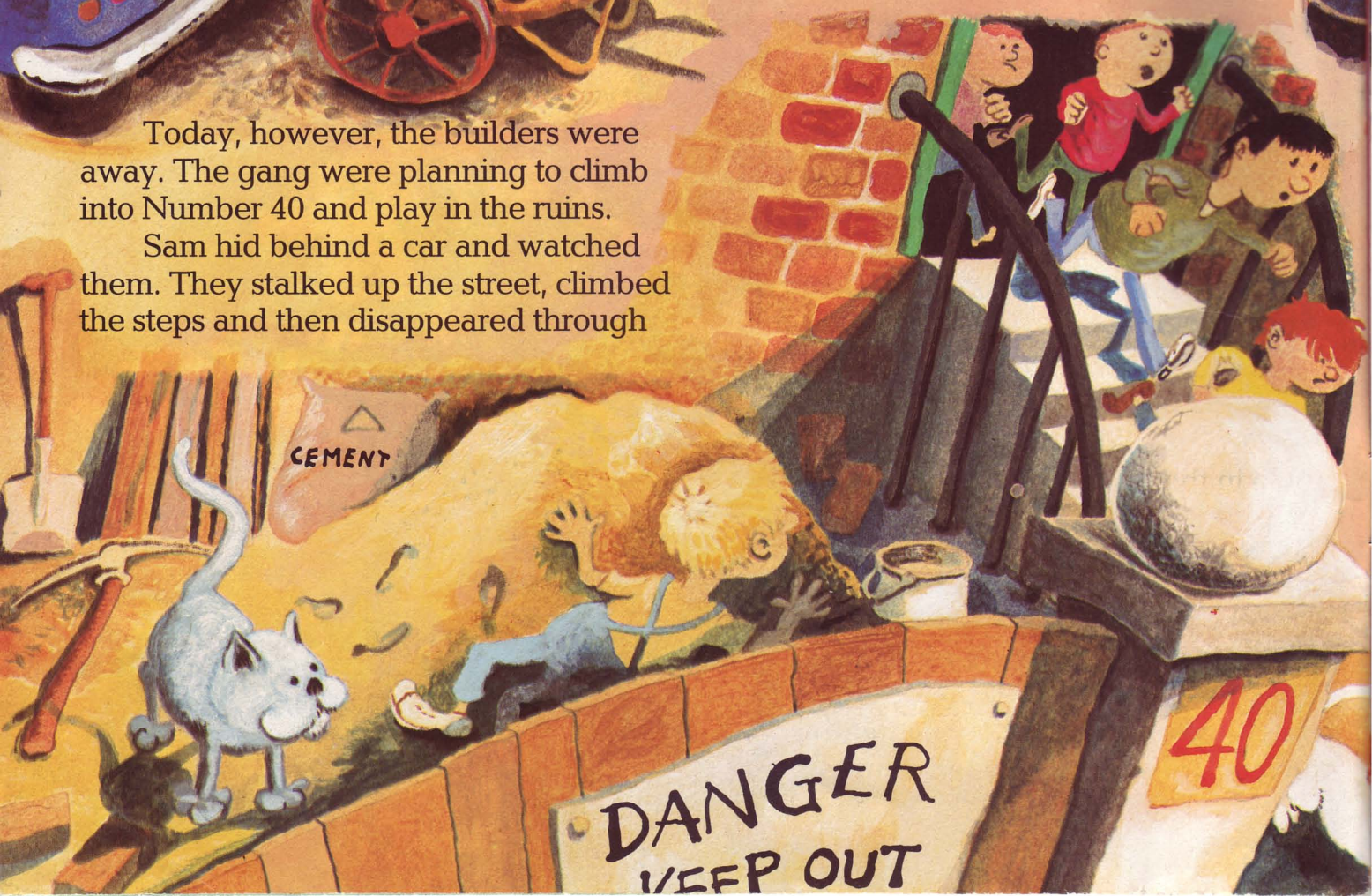




the door of Number 40. Sam could not believe they were so daring. He crept up to Number 40 and could hear the gang, giggling and whispering as they explored the front room. Then there was a long silence. Sam heard a small, sharp scream. He sat rigid on the sand-heap. Then he saw the gang all tumble down the steps of Number 40. Josh, Mike, Jerry, Peter, Paddy, Bippin — they all ran off down the street, their faces shocked and frightened. But where was Rory? Why had they left Rory behind? Why was there a scream? Sam knew he had to find out. But he was terrified. Trembling, he crept up the front steps and into Number 40. It was a terrible mess of dust and broken walls, with wires hanging from the ceiling. Sam heard a groan — a strange, deep sound. He did not dare move. Then the

Today, however, the builders were away. The gang were planning to climb into Number 40 and play in the ruins.

Sam hid behind a car and watched them. They stalked up the street, climbed the steps and then disappeared through





groan came again, only this time it was far clearer. "Help! Mammy. Daddy. Help!"

It was Rory — and he was in trouble. Sam tried to shout back, but he was so scared that only a squeak came from his mouth. He heard the moan coming from under the floor. Then Sam saw that along the passage was a jagged hole in the floor.

"Rory! Are you down in that hole?"

"Sam, get me out of here." Why, Rory was crying — big, strong Rory.

"Rory, what happened?"

"Listen Sam, ooh," Rory groaned. "I done hurt myself. Quick, Sam, help me."

Sam was in a panic. What could he do?

"Ooh, Sam. Hurry. Where are

Jerry and the others?"

"They ran away. But I'm here and I'll help you."

"Sam, you be careful now. The floor just broke and I fell into this big black hole." Rory was crying again. "I hurt my leg, Sam."

Sam crawled on his belly along the floor. He peered down the hole. It was very dark, and he could hardly see Rory.

"Rory, you're too black to see," said Sam. "What can I do?"

"No time for jokes, Sam. I don't want you falling in this hole. No, you go call my dad. Go on! Quick!"

"Are you sure, Rory? I can jump down this hole and talk to you."

"Sam, *please*, just call my dad."

"Okay. You just keep still. I'm going for your dad. Now don't you worry, Rory. Your dad and me — we'll rescue you."



Sam ran to Rory's house. He felt so slow, and it seemed miles. He banged on the door, and rang on the bell. There was Rory's dad, huge and terrifying, like all grown-ups.

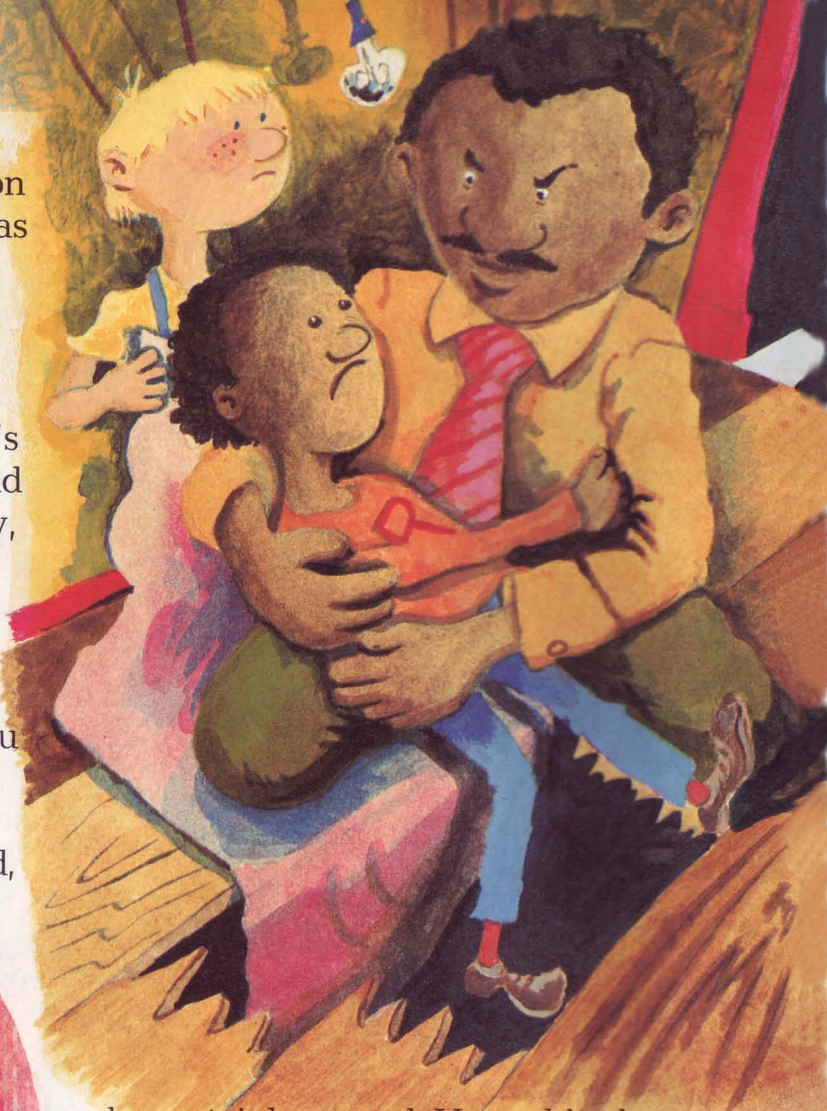
"Quick, Mr Johnson, quick! Rory's in trouble. He's stuck down a hole!"

Of course, like all grown-ups, Rory's dad did not understand. He asked stupid questions, like where and how and why, and then Sam did not understand because Rory's dad was from Jamaica and talked funny.

"What you sayin', little boy?"

"Quick, quick, at Number 40 — you know, where the builders are — got to rescue Rory."

But when Mr Johnson did understand,



he certainly moved. He grabbed a blanket and raced to Number 40.

He asked Sam to hold the blanket over the jagged edges of the hole. Then Mr Johnson climbed down the hole and, after a few moments, pushed Rory up through the gap. The blanket protected Rory from the splinters, and Sam wrapped it round Rory's shoulders while Mr Johnson climbed out of the hole. Poor Rory. His ankle was broken and his dad had to take him to the hospital. Mrs Johnson gave Sam a huge piece of cake, and said how brave and sensible he was.

After that, Sam was Rory's best friend in the gang — which was almost as good as being Rory himself. And Jerry, Mike and all the others were so ashamed that they never, ever chanted "Sam, silly, silly Sam," ever again.



The Mango-Seller

There was once a prince in India who was very, very lonely. In his search for a wife he had travelled from the most northern borders to the most southern tip of India. But although he had met many rich and beautiful young women — any one of whom would have happily agreed to marry him — he had always returned to his palace alone.

His courtiers could not understand it. "But your majesty," they would say. "You have been introduced to the richest and most beautiful women in India. Why are you still not married?"

"The answer is simple," the prince would reply sadly. "I have not yet met a woman I could love."

Each morning the prince sat by a window overlooking the market square. Occasionally a troupe of acrobats or jugglers brought a smile to his lips, but usually he just sat in gloomy silence listening to traders and shoppers haggling over prices.

Then, one day, he heard a voice which rang out clear and sweet above all the others. "Mangoes, fresh mangoes! Who'll buy my lovely, ripe mangoes?"

Rousing himself, the prince leaned out of the window and saw a girl carrying a basket of mangoes on her head. She was very poor, and her clothes were in tatters, but a smile lit up the prince's face as he watched her walking gracefully through the jostling crowd.





unhappy for the rest of my life if you do not agree to marry me."

"But of course I will agree," Rashida replied — and the prince immediately ordered preparations for a magnificent wedding.

"Surely, your majesty," the courtiers said. "You don't really mean to marry a common mango-seller?"

But the prince refused to listen to them. And within a few days he was a married man.

At first the couple were very happy. But then, as the months passed, Rashida began to change. When the prince told her how beautiful she was and how much he loved her she would just shrug impatiently and say, "I know, I know. You've told me the same thing every day since we were married." And she never, never smiled.

"How beautiful she is," he sighed. "And although she holds her head up high, how meek her eyes are. I must meet her straight away."

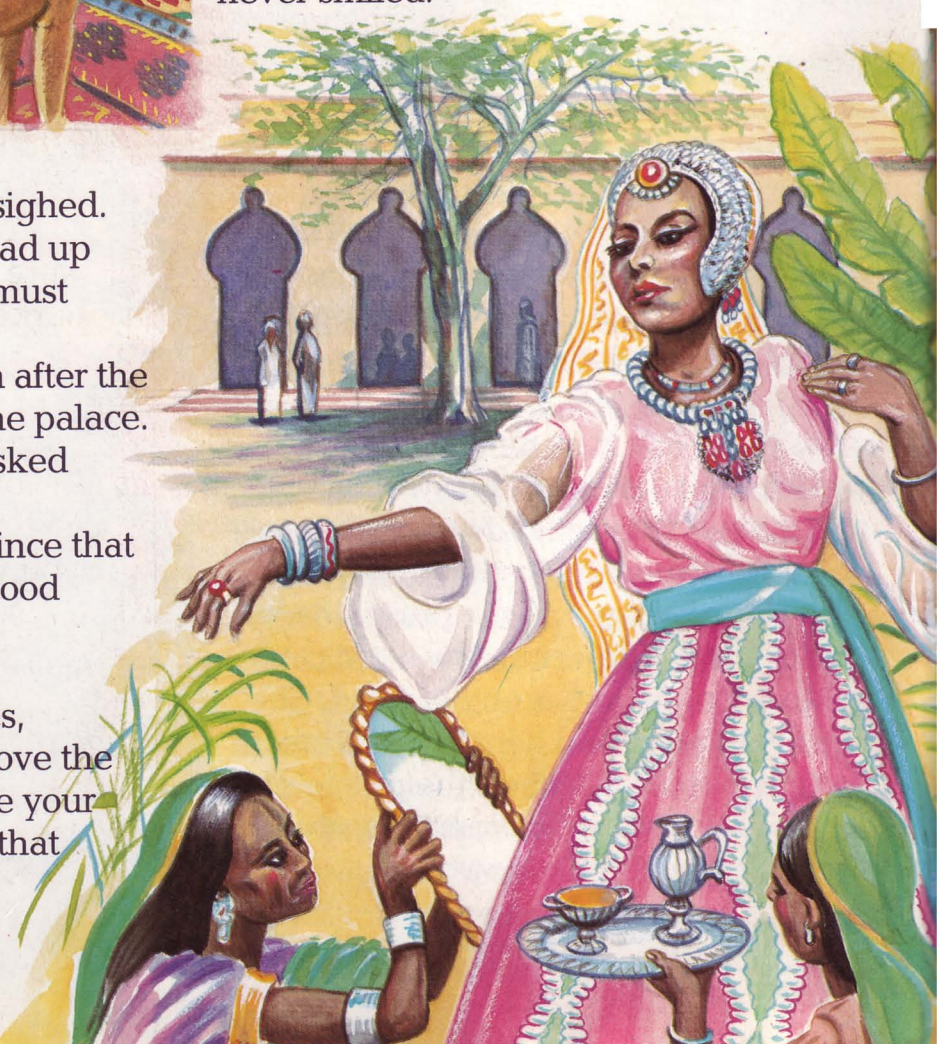
He ordered a courtier to run after the mango-seller and bring her to the palace.

"What is your name?" he asked eagerly.

She was so in awe of the prince that she dared not look at him and stood gazing at the floor.

"Rashida," she whispered.

"Please let me see your eyes, Rashida. They made me fall in love the moment I saw you. They told me your beauty hasn't made you proud, that you are indeed the woman I've been looking for. I will be





The months turned to years and Rashida became a woman whom the prince could hardly recognise. She was still beautiful, but she was also proud and haughty. She expected the highest compliments to be paid to her every day and all her commands to be obeyed instantly. She was cold and unfriendly to everyone — including her husband.

Desperate to see her smile again, the prince decided to celebrate their third wedding anniversary with a great banquet. At the end of the meal he took a mango from a platter of fruit and presented it to Rashida.

She stared at him in disbelief. "Surely you don't expect me to eat *that*?" she said.

The prince's eyes clouded with anger. "You've obviously forgotten you were once happy to sell mangoes in the market-place. Perhaps it's time you sold them again and forgot your proud, new ways."

"If you no longer love me I will not stay in your palace another moment," replied Rashida proudly. "I shall make sure you will never have to see me again." And without another word she swept out of the room.

In the weeks that followed the prince tried hard to keep himself busy so that he would not have time to think about Rashida. But it was no good. He could not forget the moment when he had first seen her and fallen in love.

One day he was riding through the market-place of a city, far from his palace, when he heard a clear voice. "Mangoes, fresh mangoes! Who'll buy my lovely, ripe mangoes?"

He recognised the sweet tone immediately, and he turned round to see Rashida walking through the crowd with a basket of mangoes on her head. She looked poor and hungry, but as beautiful as ever. He leaped off his horse and ran after her.

"Oh Rashida," he called. "How I

regret the day I sent you away. Will you come back with me to my palace?"

Rashida lowered her eyes in shame. "Can you ever forgive me for being so proud?" she asked.

"I have already forgiven you," the prince said gently.

"Then I will gladly come with you." And, smiling, Rashida took the prince's hand and kissed it. Never again was she to lose her smile and become cold and proud. And she and the prince lived happily together for the rest of their lives.





HEN-HUSTLER KLUK

Farmer Jolly had a farm where all the animals did exactly as they pleased. The cows roamed around the meadow chatting to the horses, and the pigs slept happily in their sty. But merriest of all were the hens. There were five of them: Henrietta, Prunella, old Aunt Feather and Beatrice Bird, who rather fancied herself because she had a pretty face. The head hen was Bantam, who was the smallest of the lot. She sat on her perch playing her penny whistle while the rest of the chickens were in their nest-boxes laying eggs.

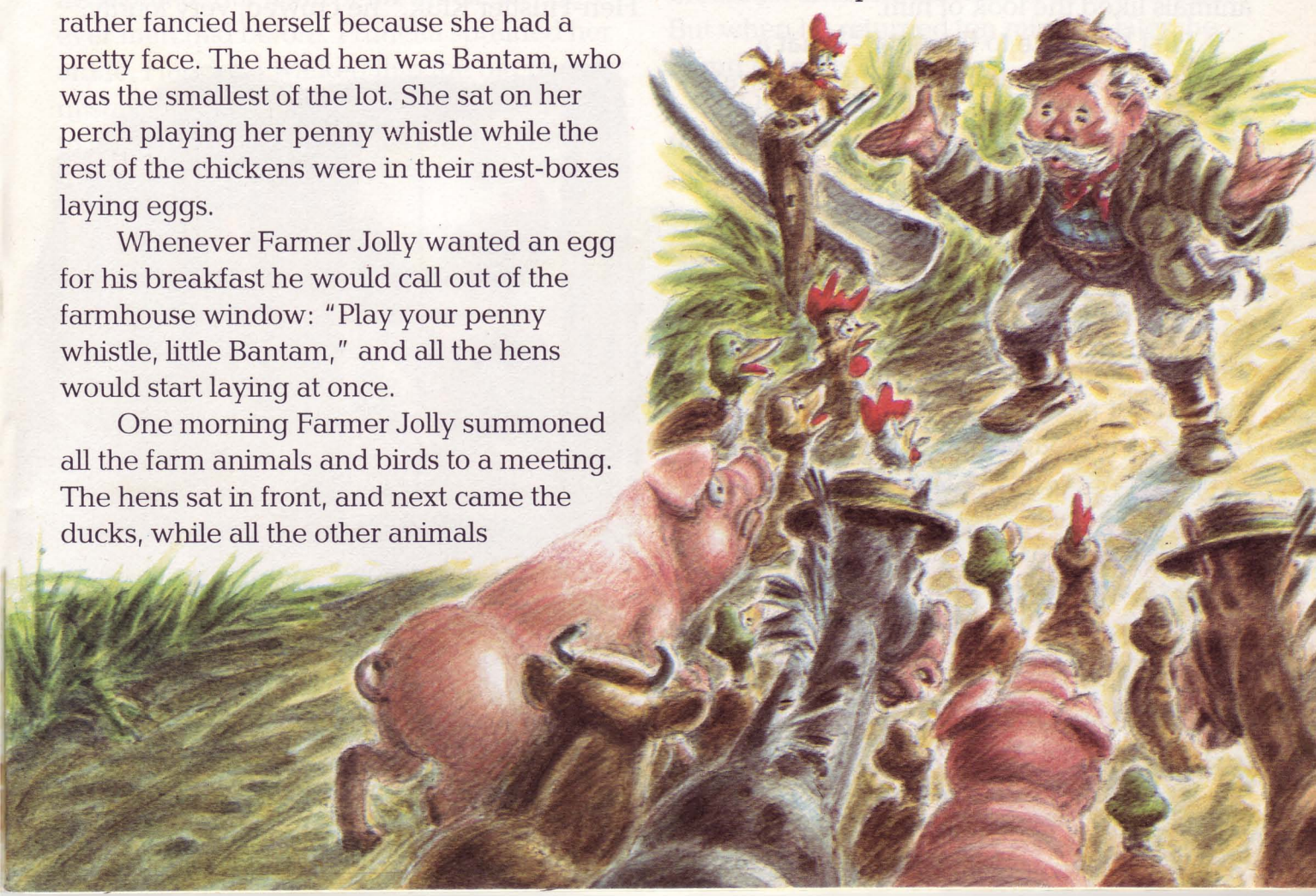
Whenever Farmer Jolly wanted an egg for his breakfast he would call out of the farmhouse window: "Play your penny whistle, little Bantam," and all the hens would start laying at once.

One morning Farmer Jolly summoned all the farm animals and birds to a meeting. The hens sat in front, and next came the ducks, while all the other animals

stood in a group behind them.

"I have bad news," said Farmer Jolly. "I'm sorry, my friends, but I've had to sell the farm. From tomorrow morning you will be working for Mr Moan."

"Oh dear," they all muttered to each other. "I do hope he will be kind to us."





The animals were very worried when Mr Moan arrived to inspect the farm the next morning. He was thin and ugly and never smiled. He wore shiny boots and carried a big knobbly stick. None of the animals liked the look of him.

First he spoke to the pigs. "What a messy sty. Get scrubbing brushes and water and clean up the place at once."

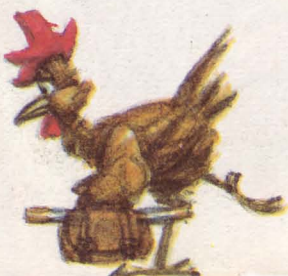
Next he went to the horses. "You're all too fat. I'll soon get you in shape pulling the big cart to market and back." Then he told off the cows for looking so sleepy.

Last of all he visited the hen-house, where the chickens were sitting quietly in their boxes waiting for Bantam to start playing her penny whistle. When he saw Bantam, Mr Moan went red in the face. "This is supposed to be a hen-house, not a concert," he yelled. "Be off, Bantam. I don't want to see you or your penny whistle on this farm ever again. Tomorrow there will

be a new head chicken to wake up all you lazy birds." So Bantam packed her little bag and left the farm.

Early next morning,

Henrietta looked through the hen-house window and saw a huge cockerel marching up and down. He had a bright red comb and long shiny spurs and he carried a brass-tipped swagger stick under his wing. "I'm Hen-Hustler Kluk," he crowed, very loudly.



"Wakey, wakey, you lot. Time to get up and lay some eggs."

The chickens were told to line up while Kluk inspected them. First he shouted at Henrietta: "You haven't preened your feathers today. They're filthy." Then he screamed at Prunella: "Tomorrow morning, first thing, you must polish your claws. They're appalling."

And he was very rude to poor old Aunt Feather. "Take that silly smile off your beak," he said, "or I'll give you a whack with my swagger stick."

Then he made them all march up and down the yard until they were tired. All, that is, except Beatrice Bird — Kluk had taken a real fancy to her. "Stay where you are, my dear," he said. "You're far too pretty to wear yourself out marching up and down."

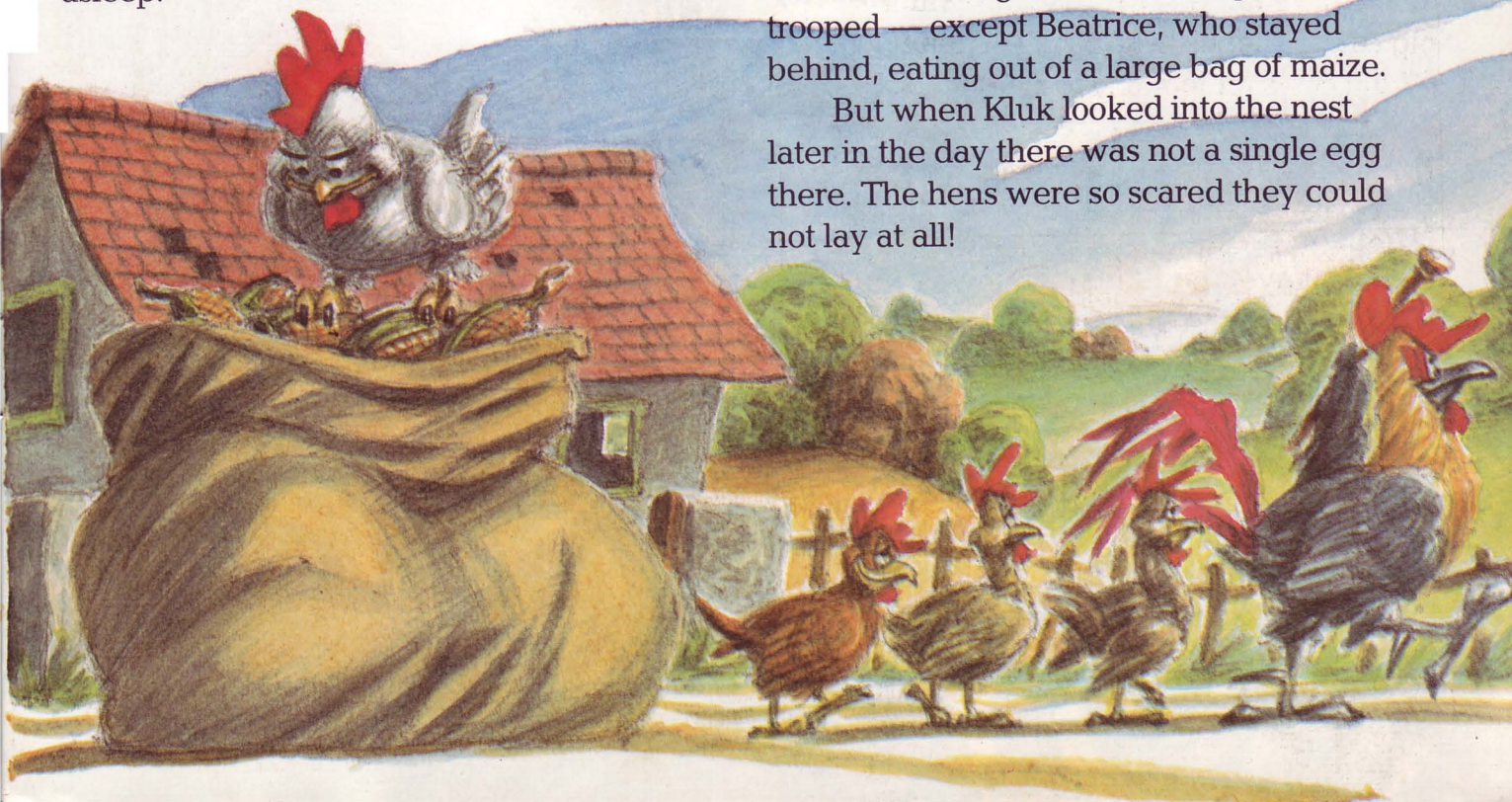
The other hens marched behind Kluk. "Left, right, left, right, about turn, left, right," he shouted. But none of the chickens had ever marched before. Prunella sprained her ankle, Henrietta walked into the big barn by mistake, while poor Aunt Feather sat down to rest among the cabbages and fell fast asleep.



Next morning, at daybreak, they were all woken up by the sound of Kluk crowing at the top of his voice. "How many eggs have you laid this morning? No hen gets any breakfast until she has laid at least one egg." But when he returned ten minutes later, he found no eggs.

"Out into the yard, everyone. We're off on another long march — this time up the hill and down again." So off they all trooped — except Beatrice, who stayed behind, eating out of a large bag of maize.

But when Kluk looked into the nest later in the day there was not a single egg there. The hens were so scared they could not lay at all!





All this time Bantam was thinking of ways to help the hens, and she asked Oliver the owl for advice. "Just say nothing and keep on watching," he said.

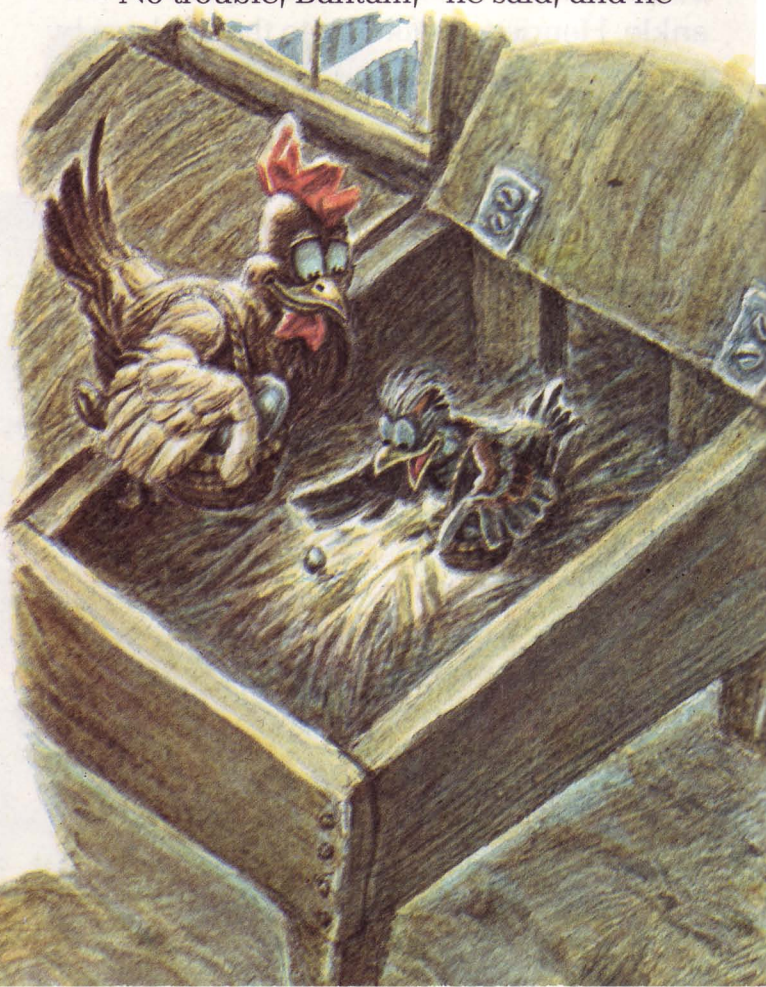
Then, one morning, she heard Mr Moan yelling at Kluk. "Unless I get some eggs very soon," he was grumbling, "you'll have to go. I'll get another hen-hustler."

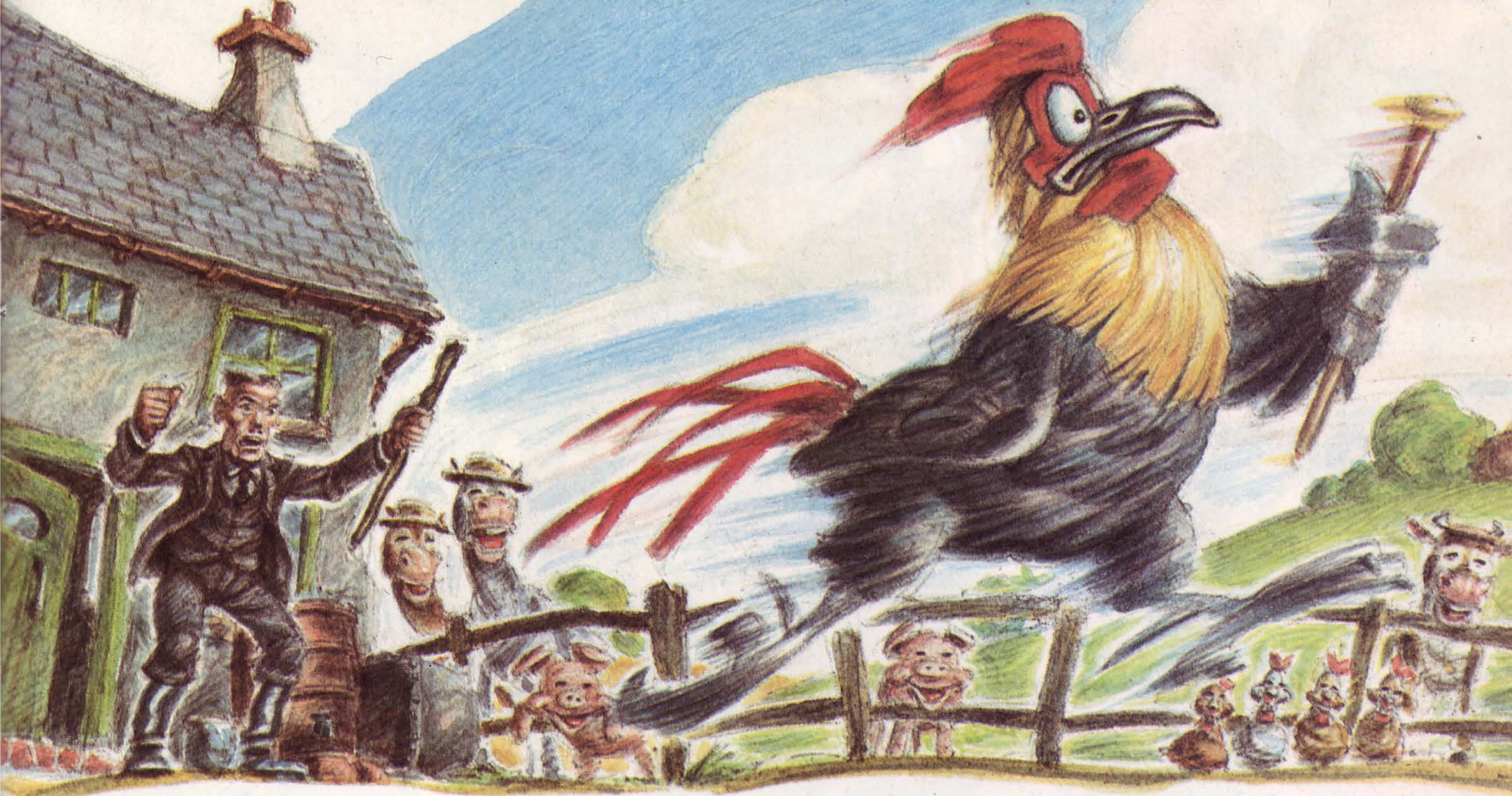
Kluk looked very miserable. "Just give me one more chance, sir," he pleaded. "I promise you they'll be laying by tomorrow morning."

That evening Bantam followed Kluk as he sneaked off to the pond and stole all the ducks' eggs he could find. He quietly placed them in the nest-boxes while the chickens were asleep. Then he called at the farmhouse and told Mr Moan that at last all the hens had started laying. "Good," said Mr Moan. "I'll inspect the nests first thing tomorrow. If there are enough eggs there you can keep your job."

When Kluk had gone happily to bed Bantam went to find her friend, old Cock Sparrow. "Can you lend me four very small sparrows' eggs just for one night?" she asked. "You can have them back tomorrow morning."

"No trouble, Bantam," he said, and he





gave her four tiny sparrows' eggs. While no-one was looking they both removed all the ducks' eggs and left the sparrows' eggs in their place. Then they slept until dawn, when the whole farm was awakened by Kluk crowing very cockily. "Wakey, wakey, everybody. Mr Moan himself is coming to inspect your eggs today." Before the hens could get to their nest-boxes, Mr Moan strode into the hen-house. "Right, let's see those eggs."

The next thing everyone heard was a loud screech. "You've tried to cheat me, Kluk. These are sparrows' eggs, not hens' eggs. Now get off my farm at once. How dare you play a trick like that on me."

Kluk fled the farm as fast as he could while all the animals and birds laughed and laughed and laughed. Then little Bantam came out from behind the hen-house and began to play her penny whistle — and at once all the hens jumped into their nest-boxes and began to lay.

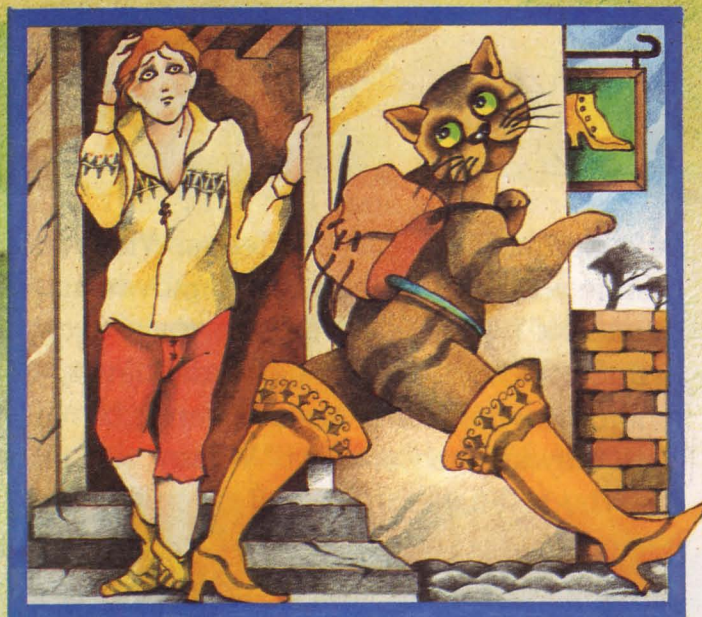
"Why, this is wonderful," said Mr Moan, smiling for the first time as he saw fresh hens' eggs. "You can have your

job back as head hen, Bantam. From now on just keep on playing, and you chickens keep on laying and I'll be a very happy man. It's music while you work and double rations for breakfast from now on!"

Then all the hens clucked merrily, the cows mooed contentedly, the horses neighed and whinnied, and Bantam, the musical head hen, played her penny whistle for sheer joy.



Puss in Boots



When the old miller died, he left his mill to his eldest son, his house to his second son, and a sleek cat called Puss to his youngest son, Jack.

The two older brothers were very content, but Jack looked sadly at the cat and said, "Well, you're not good for much, are you?"

"Oh I wouldn't say that," said the cat with a wink of his green eye. "Give me a pair of boots and knapsack and I may even bring you luck."

There was obviously something to be said for a cat that could talk, so Jack took him to the leather shop, and Puss chose a pair of tall, yellow, cavalier boots and knapsack. As soon as he had put the boots on, he was off.

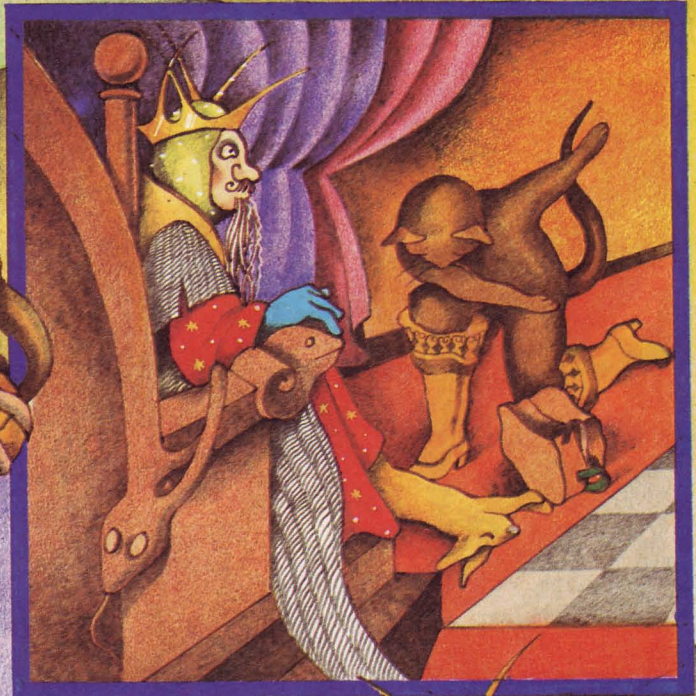
"I suppose that's the last I'll see of him," thought Jack. "And I've spent nearly all my money on those boots. What a fool I am!"

Meanwhile, out in the fields, the cat planted a long row of lettuces and placed

the last lettuce in the open knapsack. Then he lay down beside the bag like the deadest cat you ever saw. Before long, a rabbit bobbed across the field and nibbled its way, lettuce by lettuce, towards the knapsack.

As it reached the last lettuce, Puss drew the cords of the knapsack over it with a snatch of his paw. Then he hurried off with it to the palace of the King of Sabarac.

"My master sends you this tiny gift," said Puss, presenting the rabbit and bowing so low that his whiskers touched his boots. "He hopes soon to offer you much richer fare at his castle."



The King of Sabarac raised an eyebrow and thought, "What a remarkably courteous cat."

Next day, Puss went to the field again and laid a trail of corn leading to the foot of a big oak tree. Then he hid in the branches. Two pheasants pecked their way to the foot of the tree and Puss leaped down, his knapsack open wide. He was soon back at the Palace of Sabarac, where he presented the two pheasants to the King.

"My master sends you this small present," said Puss, bowing so low that his furry forehead touched his boots. "He hopes to dine you royally at his own castle very soon."

The King raised both eyebrows and said, "Who is your master, pussy cat?"

"Why, the Marquis of Carabas!"

"Well, please take this small bag of gold back to your master as a token of my thanks, and say that my daughter and I will dine with him tomorrow. Now, will you give me directions to his castle?"





Puss in Boots scampered off with the money and bought himself a fine cavalier's hat with ostrich plumes and a red ribbon. In the morning, he went home to his master.

"Where have you been?" snapped Jack. "I haven't eaten for two days. I warn you, cat-meat would taste very good!"

The cat waved an impatient paw. "Do as I tell you, and by tonight you will be dressed in the clothes of a Marquis and be dining in a castle of your very own. But what you need now is a bath!" And he took Jack to a nearby river. "Take off your clothes and jump in."

Grumbling and shivering, Jack did as he was told. "It's dreadfully cold! And I don't see how it's going to get me a castle . . ." But Puss did not listen. He was busy burying Jack's raggedy clothes. Then he was off to the road to



wave down the King's coach. "Help! Help! My master is drowning! The Marquis was attacked by thieves and they took all his clothes and threw him into the river. Help! Oh help!"

The King, of course, sent all his coachmen to rescue such an important person. And he insisted on giving Jack his own ermine cloak.

"Climb in, Marquis. I was just on my way to your castle to dine with you."

Now, this should have puzzled Jack. But he had just caught sight of the King's daughter, and could think of nothing but sitting with her in the coach.

Nobody noticed that Puss in Boots did not get into the coach. He ran off towards a distant castle. On the way, he met some reapers, cutting the corn.

"Let me warn you, friends!" hissed Puss. "The evil Marquis of Carabas is coming! If you don't tell him this land is his, he'll cut you to pieces for certain!"

Moments later, the King's coach passed and the King leaned out of the window. "Who owns these fields?"

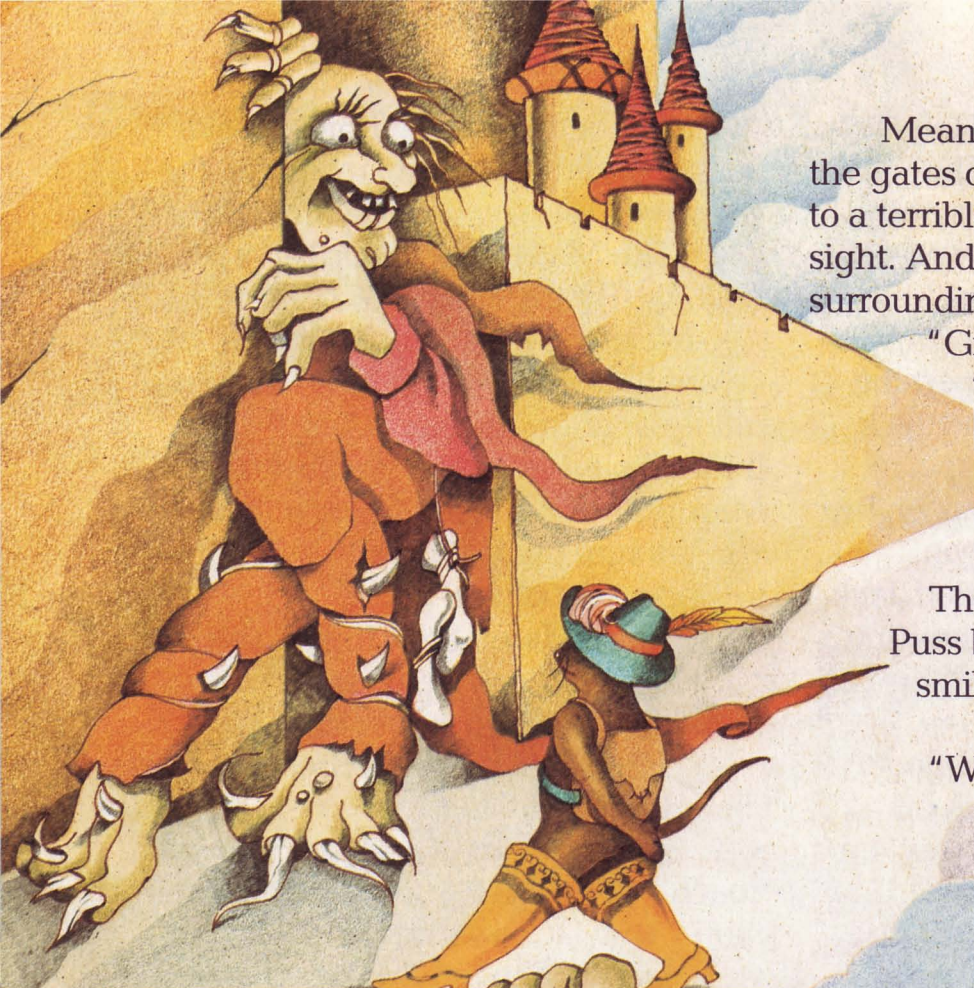
"The Marquis of Carabas," said the reapers. The King was most impressed.

Meanwhile, Puss in Boots had run on another five miles before meeting a man ploughing. "Let me warn you, friend," panted Puss. "The murderous Marquis of Carabas is coming! Unless you tell him this land is his, he'll cut you to pieces for certain!"

Minutes later, the King's coach passed. The King leaned out to ask the ploughman, "Who owns this field?"

"The Marquis of Carabas," said the ploughman, bowing very low. The King was most impressed, and sat back in the coach. "What vast lands you have, young man." But Jack was not listening. He was staring deep into the eyes of the princess — and she was gazing into his.





Meanwhile, Puss in Boots reached the gates of the castle. It really belonged to a terrible ogre who ate everybody in sight. And it was he who owned all the surrounding fields.

"Greetings," said Puss to the ogre.

"I've travelled a thousand miles to visit you because I've heard that you can turn yourself into all kinds of animals. Tell me — is it true?"

The ogre, who had been dangling Puss by the tail over his open mouth, smiled smugly. "Of course it's true.

I'm a very remarkable ogre."

"What, can you even turn yourself into a lion?"





princess and Jack. Puss opened the gates to them. "I've prepared a meal for your highness," he said, bowing until the feathers of his hat swept the ground. And they all ate the ogre's dinner — which was delicious, and quite enough for four.

But the King had to talk to Puss all meal long, because the princess and Jack were so busy gazing lovingly into each other's eyes.

When the King could catch Jack's attention, he dubbed him Sir Jack of Carabas so that he could marry the princess. That made everyone happy.

Puss in Boots became Sir Puss, The Mousecatcher Imperial, but since the ogre had eaten all the mice in the castle, he never had to do another day's work in his life.

"Of course I can." And seconds later Puss was being chased over the roofs and battlements of the castle by the ogre, who had turned himself into a ferocious lion. Finally, Puss hid up a chimney and called, "Very clever! But I bet you can't become a *mouse*!"

"Of course I can," roared the lion. "I'm a very remarkable lio . . . ogre." And with a lot of puffing and grunting, the ogre turned himself into a mouse.


Then, with a crunch and a swallow, Puss in Boots ate the mouse-ogre and so captured the entire castle and estate for his master.

And who should arrive a few minutes later but the King, the




GROGRE the OGRE

Grogre was trapped. The Slime Monster had woken up! Its thick, dripping tentacles were twisting upwards from the churning ooze below. Grogre had no time to cross the stone bridge and reach the ledge that led down close to the monster's heart. He thought of what Zagon had said to him: "Be brave and *think!*" Far below him was the dark, pounding heart of the monster. "Think, think," Grogre said to himself. Closer and closer came the tentacles. "Think, Grogre, think."




The tentacles tore up towards him like lashing whips. It was now or never. Grogre jumped! He jumped down towards the monster with his father's sword aimed at the middle of its terrible red heart.



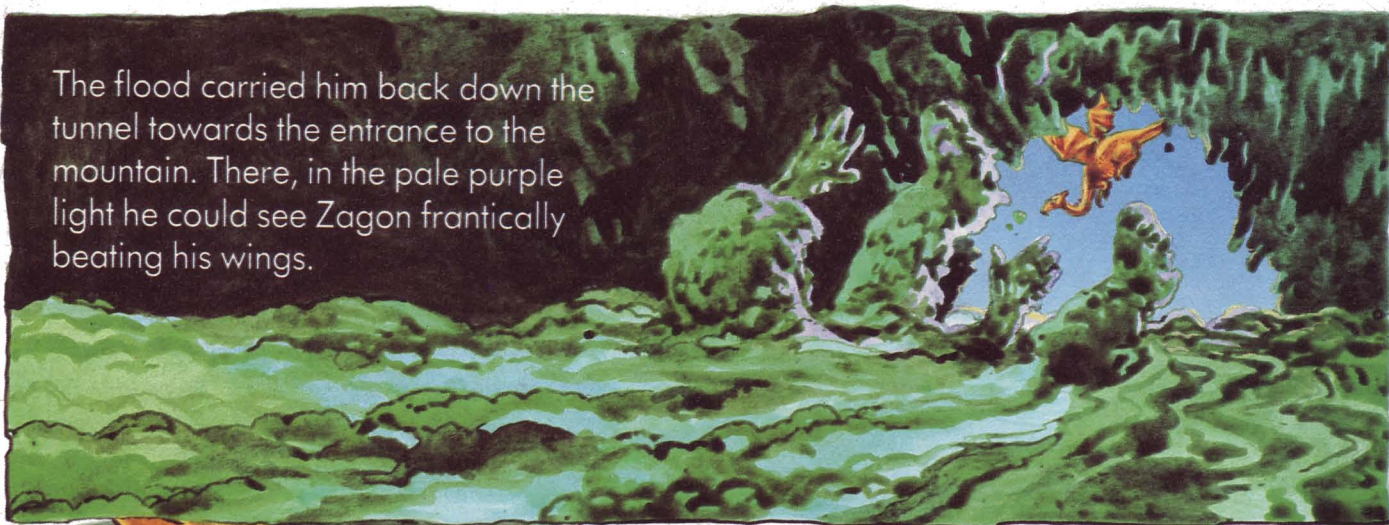
The illustration depicts a character with red hair and a red tunic falling into a large, green, tentacle-like mouth. The character is holding a sword, which is plunged into the monster's interior. The scene is dynamic, with green and yellow brushstrokes representing the monster's body and the surrounding environment. Red splatters are visible at the bottom of the frame.

As he hurtled down, the heart-beat boomed like thunder. Grogre closed his eyes as he crashed into the bubbling dark centre. He felt the sword plunge deep into the monster's soggy heart. There was a deafening explosion. A huge jet of slime came gushing and rushing out of the monster. Its body began to shrivel up, growing smaller and smaller, going down like a wrinkled old balloon.

A smaller illustration shows the character's head and one arm floating in a sea of thick, green, swirling slime. The character has a surprised expression. The background is a mix of green and yellow, suggesting a chaotic, slimy environment.

Grogre fell headlong into the thick, swirling torrent. In an instant he was floating on top of a wave of slime.

The flood carried him back down the tunnel towards the entrance to the mountain. There, in the pale purple light he could see Zagon frantically beating his wings.



Down, down Grogre plunged towards the sharp, black rocks below. Then, he heard a sudden *whoosh!* It was Zagon soaring upwards. In a moment, he caught Grogre safely in his strong claws. "Well my boy, you've killed the Slime Monster! I knew you would. You're a hero. But I think you ought to wash that horrible slime off."



So climbing on to Zagon's back, Grogre flew to the lake. "Now Grogre, wash your hands. You might have a surprise." Grogre dipped his hands in the cool, clear water of the lake. And beneath the dark green slime, his hands were not hard and pale and pink, but soft and gleaming — and gold!



He was completely golden from head to foot! The sun glowed on his golden body. "I'm a . . . I'm a gold . . . I'm a Golden Ogre!" he said to Zagon at last. "Yes, my boy. You're a Golden Ogre — because you were brave and did not kill the monster from hate, but from wisdom. And look, Grogre, see how the desert is turning into a beautiful, lush garden.

You have killed the Slime Monster, and life can now return to this terrible barren land. And remember that you will stay golden only if you do not kill things unless you really have to." "But my father will be angry with me if I don't kill things," said Grogre. "No, he'll be proud of you. Proud to have a Golden Ogre for a son!"

Pinocchio

Journey into Playland



"Just think, Pinocchio," said the Fairy. "At midnight you'll become a *real boy*! We must have a party to celebrate. Run out now and invite all your friends to come round. But don't be long. Make sure you're back before dark."

"I'll be back. I promise!" shouted the happy puppet, and he raced out of the house, jumping and dancing as he went.

Pinocchio ran from door to door, spreading his good news. Everyone promised to come to the party. But his very best friend — a lazy scamp they all called Candlewick because he was so thin — was nowhere to be found.

Pinocchio kept on searching. He ran right through all the streets three times — and eventually found his friend sitting just outside the village.

"What are you doing here?" asked Pinocchio.

"I'm waiting for the magic coach, which comes past here at nightfall. And then I'm going far, far away."

"But I've come to invite you to my party. Haven't you heard? At midnight I shall become a *real boy*!"

"Much good that will do you," sneered Candlewick. "Look, forget your silly party and come with me to Playland. It's the best place in the world. There are no schools and no teachers, and all you do is play from morning to night!"

"No, no, I can't. I'm late already, and I promised the Fairy I would be home before dark."

"Don't worry about her. All she ever does is scold you, anyway." And Candlewick told Pinocchio all about the fabulous land where summer holidays last all year.

But twilight was falling now, and Pinocchio turned to walk home. Then, suddenly, in the distance, there was the sound of a bugle. The coach was coming! Lights twinkled in the darkness, and there it was — pulled by four donkeys, all wearing white leather boots!

Dozens of boys were packed inside, all chatting excitedly. The jolly coachman — a little round man with a face like a tomato and a laughing mouth — hauled





Candlewick on board, then turned to Pinocchio. "And what about you, my lad? Are you coming with us, or are you staying behind?"

"I must go home, sir. I'm already late, and the Fairy will be cross with me."

"No, no! Come with us to Playland!" called the boys from the coach.

"Remember, no more school! No more teachers! Fun and games from morning to night!"

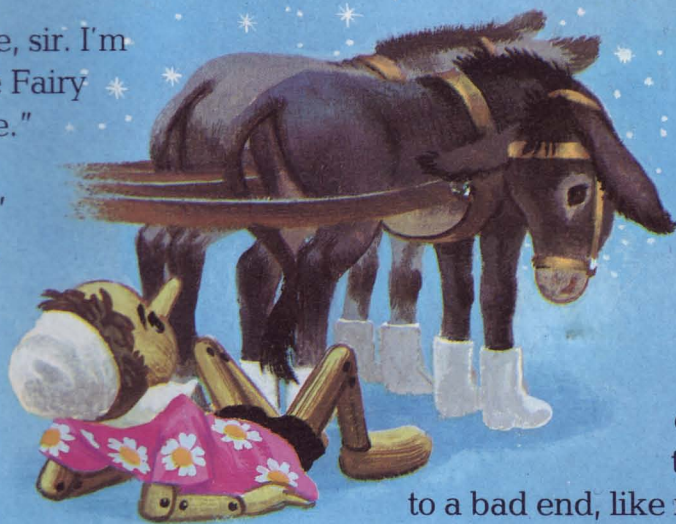
Pinocchio just could not resist. He gave a deep sigh, then said quietly, "All right, *I'll come!*"

The coach was so crowded that there was no room inside, so Pinocchio tried to climb on to a donkey. At once the animal reared up and kicked him into the road! All the boys giggled as Pinocchio angrily climbed up again from the other side. And again the donkey kicked

him off! The coachman was furious. He jumped down into the road and gave it a hearty whack with his stick. Then he

lifted Pinocchio on to the animal's back.

All through the long night's journey the poor donkey was in tears, and it kept whispering to Pinocchio, in a voice rather like a small boy's: "You stupid puppet! One day you'll be crying too. You never listen to good advice. You'll come to a bad end, like me. Just you wait and see!"





The coach rattled along hour after hour until, just after sunrise, it rolled into Playland. What a fabulous sight it was! There were boys playing everywhere you looked — running and jumping, shouting and laughing, playing with toys and balls and skates and bicycles. Some were dressed as soldiers, others made up like clowns. There were playgrounds and carousels, sandpits and theatres. The whole place was such a riot of fun that the new boys jumped straight down from the coach and plunged into the thick of it! How happy they all were!

The weeks passed like lightning. Pinocchio spent every minute playing, and never once regretted leaving home. "What a wonderful life!" said the puppet each time

he met his friend. "And to think you wanted to go back to the Fairy," laughed Candlewick. "You're lucky to have me for a friend."

Then, one morning, after months of bliss, Pinocchio woke up to the most unpleasant shock he had ever had. His ears were long and brown and hairy — just like a donkey's!

The poor puppet was so ashamed that he burst into tears, and beat his head against the wall.



But the more he cried, the longer his ears grew! Finally, in despair, he pulled a long cotton cap right over his head to hide his ears and rushed off to find Candlewick.

At first his friend would not let him in and Pinocchio had to wait outside. But after half an hour the door slowly opened. And there stood Candlewick with a cap just like Pinocchio's, pulled right down over his long, hairy ears! You can imagine how foolish the two boys felt. For a few moments they stood in the middle of the room in silence. But then, instead of crying or consoling each other, they burst out laughing! At the count of three, they tore off their caps and threw them into the air! And they started capering around the room, giggling and wagging their long hairy ears.

They laughed and laughed, until suddenly Candlewick stopped laughing and fell to his knees. Pinocchio looked down at him in amazement, then collapsed himself. Kneeling on the ground, they watched in horror as their hands turned into hooves, their faces lengthened into muzzles, and their backs sprouted coats of thick hair. And, worst of all, they each grew a long tail!

Then came a loud knock at the door. "Open up at once!"



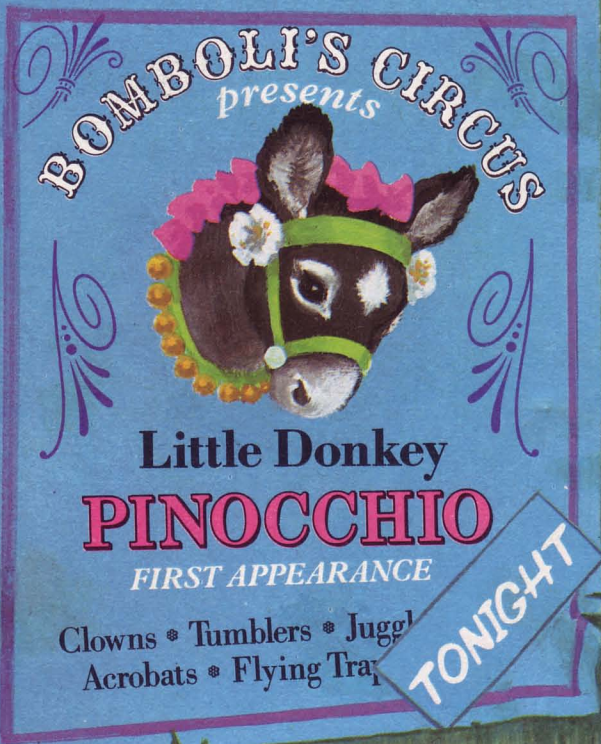
You donkeys belong to me!" And the coachman just kicked open the door and marched in.

He put bridles around their necks and led them off to the market place.

Candlewick was bought by a farmer, who sent him to work in the fields. And Pinocchio was sold to a circus.

The circus ringmaster was not a cruel man, but he would not stand for any nonsense. When his new donkey refused to eat hay, he struck him with a whip. And then he drove Pinocchio into the circus ring and taught him to jump through hoops, to dance waltzes and polkas, and to stand upright on his hind legs.



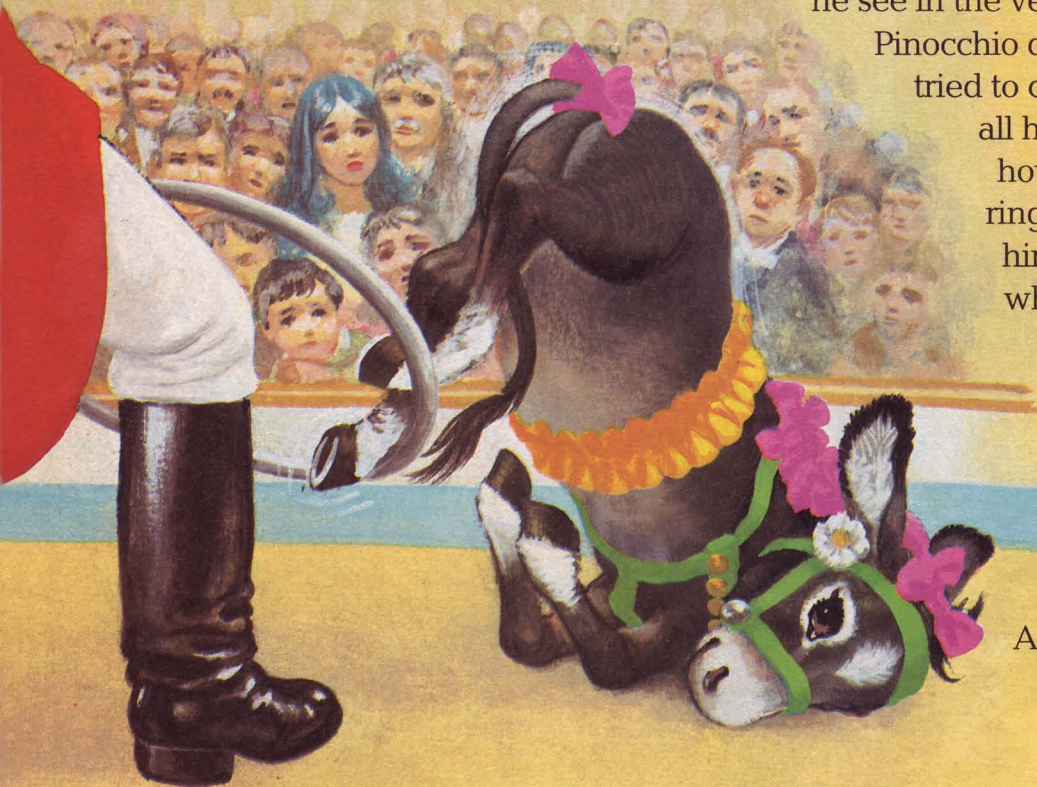


After three months of hard training — with a sound thrashing whenever he jumped badly — Pinocchio gave his first public performance. People came from miles around to see the amazing donkey, and the circus was packed an hour before the start.



The ringmaster cracked his whip, and in ran Pinocchio, the star attraction. He went round and round the ring, trotting, cantering, galloping. As the crowd cheered wildly at his wonderful performance, Pinocchio raised his head in pride and looked round the audience. And who should he see in the very first row but the Fairy!

Pinocchio dashed across the ring and tried to call to her, but being a donkey all he did was bray. The audience howled with laughter . . . but the ringmaster was furious, and gave him a crack on the nose with his whip. The blow brought tears to Pinocchio's eyes, and by the time he could see again, the Fairy seemed to have gone! Imagine how desperate poor Pinocchio felt! He tried twice to dive through the hoop, but failed both times. And at the third attempt, he fell so badly that he hurt his leg.



It was a disaster for the circus. The very next day, the ringmaster sent him straight back to the market, where a drum-maker who wanted a donkey skin to make a drum bought poor, hungry Pinocchio for just ten pence. Then the man led the crippled donkey down to the sea-shore. Tying a rope to his muzzle, he pushed him into the water to drown.



He was free again, and safe. Now if only he could find the dear Fairy . . .

[Pinocchio's final adventure is in Part 17]

After half an hour the drum-maker hauled in the rope, thinking the donkey must be quite dead by now. But when he gave one final tug, instead of a dead donkey, he pulled out Pinocchio struggling and wriggling like an eel!

The poor man could not believe his eyes. He had thrown in a donkey — and pulled out a puppet.

"Where's my donkey?" he yelled.

"I'm your donkey!" laughed Pinocchio.

"The fishes nibbled away at the carcass — and left only me! They must have been summoned by the Fairy!"

And with a cheeky wave, he slipped the rope from his nose and dived into the sea.





IN PART 17 OF **STORY**Teller

CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET? Three pretty sisters think they can, but find it's not so easy!

In **JOJO'S JIGSAW PUZZLE**, the last piece goes missing – and turns up in the most extraordinary place!

Wherever there's mischief on the islands of the West Indies, you can be sure **ANANSI** the spider-man is mixed up in it.

I SAW A SHIP A-SAILING – and aboard it a most remarkable crew!

PINOCCHIO seems bound to come to a bad end, as everyone predicted. Or perhaps his dream will come true in the last episode...

WILLIAM TELL was the best archer and sailor in all Lucerne. But would his skill and bravery be enough to save his little son's life?

PLUS THE LION AND THE PEACOCK

Readers include **TOM BAKER**
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