

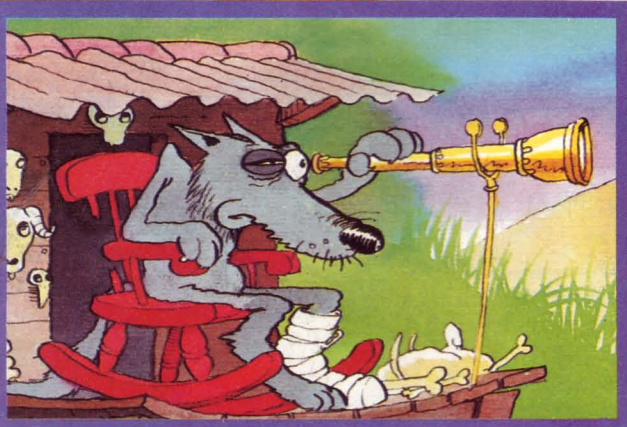


PART 21

STORY

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

Teller



A Marshall Cavendish Publication EVERY FORTNIGHT

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STORY Teller

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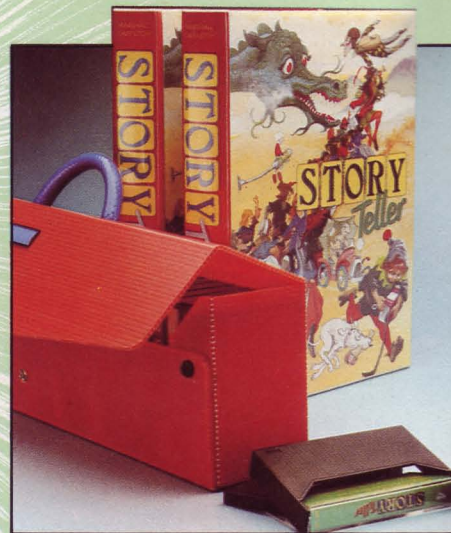
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Typeset by ABM Typographics Limited, Hull. Colour work by Melbourne Graphics, London. Printed in England by Varnicoat, Pershore.

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The Bold Little Tailor



One hot summer's morning, a little tailor sat sewing a shirt by the open window of his shop. He was a very ordinary little tailor, and he led a very ordinary life, but he was always dreaming of fame and adventure. "One day," he said to himself, "I'm going to make my mark in the world!"

The mere thought of adventure made him feel quite hungry, so he cut himself a chunk of bread and spread it thickly with strawberry jam. Taking a huge bite, he put the bread and jam down beside him and went on sewing.

Just then a swarm of bluebottles flew in through the window and made straight for the jam. "Buzz off!" shouted the little tailor — and picking up the shirt, he gave a mighty flick. Instantly, seven fat flies lay dead on the floor.

"What a feat!" he cried. "Seven at one blow! The world must hear of *this*!"

So taking up his needle and thread he embroidered on his belt the words *Seven At One Blow*. "Perfect!" he said. "Now I'm off to make my fortune!" And he packed some bread, cheese and a soft-boiled egg in his bag, and hurried off.

The little tailor had not gone far when he found a tiny sparrow tangled up in a thorn-bush. Freeing the bird, he put it gently in his pocket and walked on.



A few hours later, he was striding along a winding mountain road when he suddenly bumped into the toecap of a huge shoe. Looking up, he saw a terrifying giant glaring down at him. "You walked into me!" roared the giant. "I've a good mind to stamp on you, you miserable little nobody!"

"Well, Giant, I'm sorry I bumped into you," said the little tailor. "But you shouldn't leave your big foot in my way." And he stood defiantly with his hands on his hips so that the giant could see the writing on his belt.


"Seven at one blow!" read the giant. "I don't believe it! You're such a little fellow! But if you really are so strong let's see you do this." And he picked up a boulder in his giant hand and squeezed it until his knuckles cracked. The rock shattered into dust and the giant sprinkled it carelessly over the ground.

"That's easy," said the little tailor and pretended to hunt around for a stone. But when the giant was not looking he took the egg from his pocket and closed his hand around it. The yolk oozed through his fingers as he crushed the egg in his fist.

"Pah!" said the giant, pretending to be unimpressed. "I bet you can't throw a stone as far as I can." And he picked up another boulder and hurled it down the mountainside.

"Easy!" laughed the little tailor. But instead of picking up a stone, he slipped the bird out of his pocket and released it



A colorful illustration depicting a scene from the fairy tale 'The Tailor and the Giant'. A giant with a large, bushy beard, wearing a green cap and a yellow and white striped tunic, is shown from the chest up, carrying a massive, gnarled tree trunk under his arm. He has a determined, slightly grumpy expression. In the background, a small figure of a tailor in a red tunic and hat is seen running away from the giant, holding a long stick or staff. The scene is set in a lush, green landscape with rolling hills and a blue sky. The giant's feet are visible at the bottom, showing he is walking on the ground.

into the air. Up, up it soared, high into the sky, and disappeared into the branches of a distant wood.

The giant whistled with admiration, then invited the little tailor home to meet his giant brothers. "Just help me carry some firewood, will you?" he said, pulling a massive oak tree out of the ground with his bare hands.

"All right, Giant. You take the trunk, and I'll carry the branches."

But when the giant had tucked the trunk under one arm, the little tailor hopped up into the branches. He let the giant carry the whole tree all the way to the door of his mossy mountain cave!

"I'm putting my end down now," shouted the giant. "All right, I'm setting down the branches," said the little tailor, jumping to the ground.

The giant and his brothers gave the little tailor a splendid meal and a big bed to sleep in. But the mattress was so lumpy that he just could not get to sleep. So he got up and lay on the floor beneath the bed.

On the stroke of midnight the little tailor was suddenly woken by the sound of the giants' voices. "*Seven at one blow!* Ha! We'll give him seven at one blow." And they all raised their clubs and



smashed them down savagely on to the mattress.

Curled up under the bed, the poor little tailor was afraid to make a sound. Then the giants went away, and his courage returned. When they were safely tucked up in their beds and fast asleep, he burst into their room, drew himself up to his full height and, putting his hands on his hips, shouted, "So, you thought you could kill me, did you? I, who have killed seven at one blow!"



The giants woke with a start, and were so terrified to find the tailor still alive that they leaped out of bed, ran out of the cave, and were never seen again.

The local people were so pleased that the giants had gone that news of the tailor's exploits soon spread throughout the land. Even the king read about the giant-slayer.

"If he can kill seven at one blow," thought the king, "then he can easily kill those two ogres running riot in the Royal Forest. Bring him here and I'll make him commander of the army."

Three days later, the little tailor led the king's army to the edge of the Royal Forest. Then he took off his jacket, rolled





up his shirt-sleeves and marched into the forest alone.

The two ogres were lying fast asleep under a tree in the middle of the forest. When the little tailor found them, he filled his pockets with stones, and climbed into the branches above them.

Then he dropped the heaviest stone on to the chest of the biggest ogre.

"Who do you think you're hitting?" growled the ogre to his friend.

"I never touched you," yawned the other, and promptly fell asleep again.

Then the little tailor dropped a stone on to the other ogre.

"What are you hitting me for?" grumbled the ogre. "I said I never touched you."

Then the tailor dropped another stone on to the first ogre.

With a furious grunt, he stumbled to his feet and dragged the other ogre up by his braces. "That's twice you've hit me, you brainless ox!"

"I didn't hit you," bellowed the second ogre. "Of course you did," roared the first. And they ranted and raged and swung their arms around like the sails of windmills. Then one tore up a tree to use as a club — and the other grabbed him round the waist and pulled him to the ground.



Far away at the edge of the Royal Forest, the soldiers could hear a terrible banging and roaring. They trembled to imagine the state of the bold little tailor. But at dusk, the forest fell silent and a clear voice rang out, "You can come in now, men. I've finished with these weedy ogres of yours."

And when the soldiers found him, the little tailor was standing in triumph, with one foot on each ogre!

The fame of the bold little tailor spread like wildfire. But when the king heard the news, he began to be afraid of his giant killer. "What if he should decide he wants my crown?" he thought. "Nobody could stop him." He decided to send the tailor to certain death.

"I want you to capture the ferocious unicorn, which has killed so many of my best soldiers. Of course, if you bring it home alive, I'll give you half my kingdom and you can marry my daughter."

"No problem, your majesty," said the little tailor and, taking an axe and a coil of rope, he set out alone to capture the unicorn.

It was twilight when he reached the wood where the unicorn lived. Stepping softly through the undergrowth, he could see nothing at first. But then he heard a





menacing scrape of hooves on the forest floor. And suddenly, from behind a huge stone, the unicorn appeared.

With a hideous whinny, the ferocious beast lowered its head and began to charge. Closer and closer it galloped, its long, sharp, twisted horn gleaming in the last rays of sunlight.

At the very last moment, the little tailor jumped aside — and the unicorn thundered straight into a sturdy oak tree! Its horn stuck fast in the trunk.

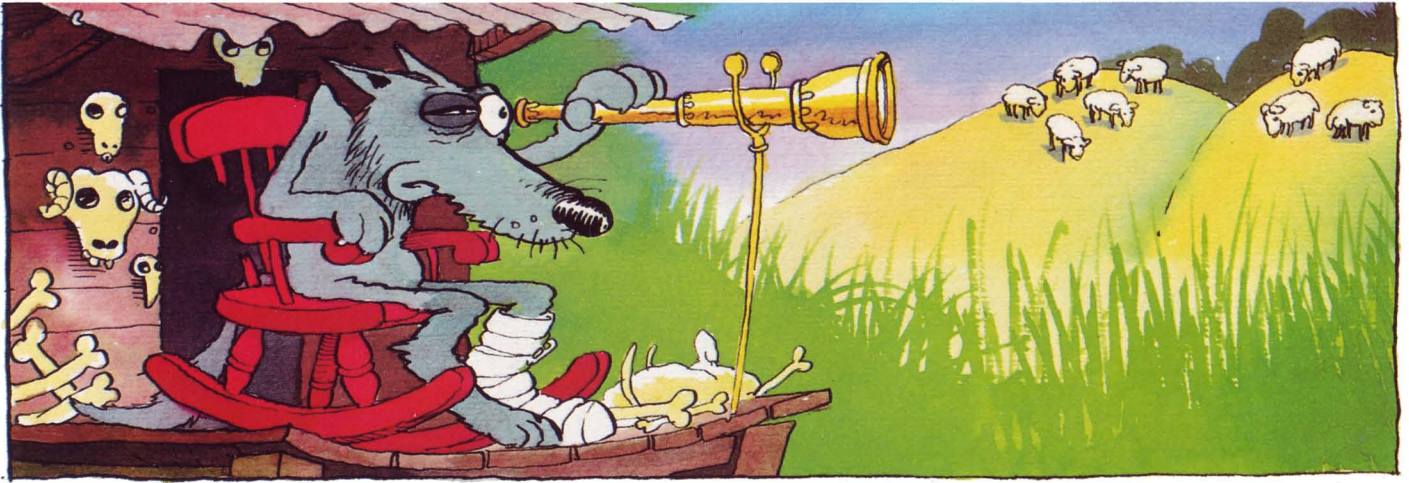
The ferocious animal struggled for an hour, but finally gave in. Then the little tailor chopped the wood away from the horn, tied the rope around the unicorn's neck and led it slowly back to the palace.

It is hard to say now which horrified the king more — the sight of the bold little tailor safe and sound or the sight of the fearsome unicorn standing quietly in the courtyard. But he had to keep his

promise. He gave him half the kingdom, and the tailor married the king's daughter. After seven years they had seven sons, and when the old king died the bold little tailor ruled over the land for the rest of his days — without anybody troubling him.



THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

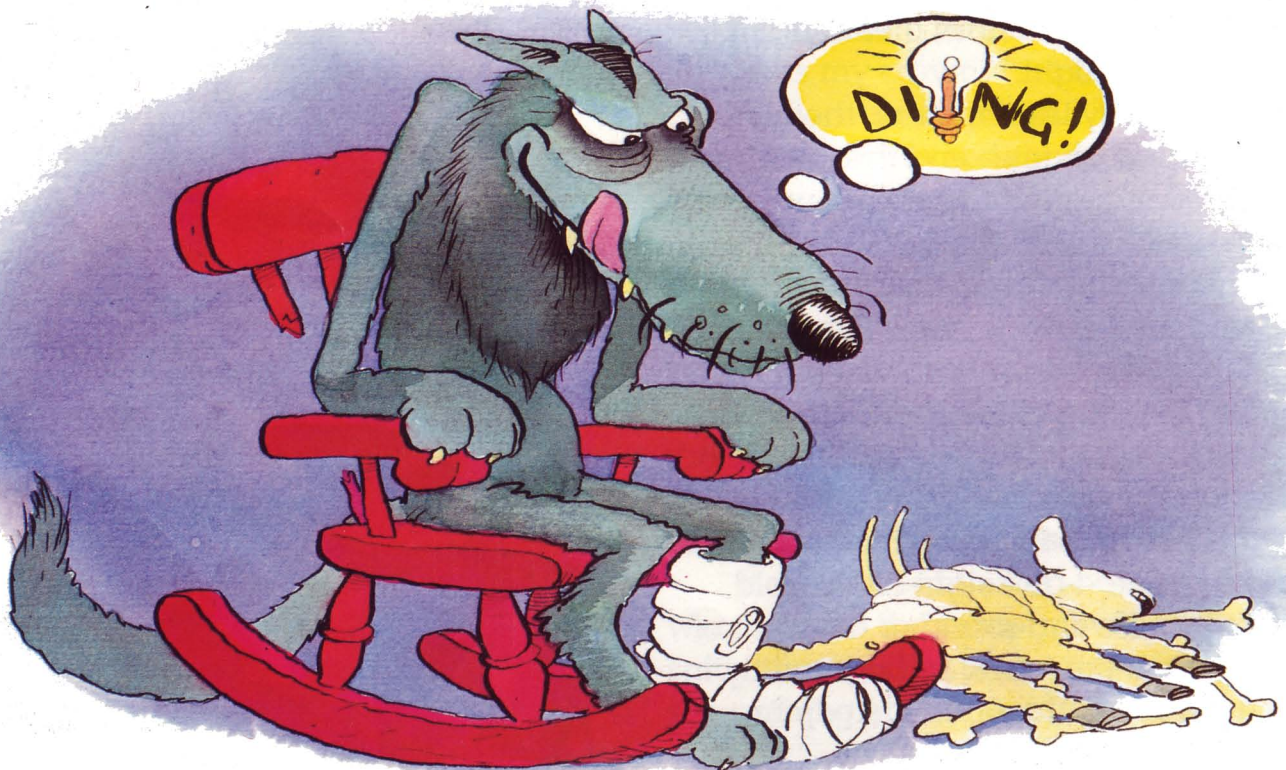


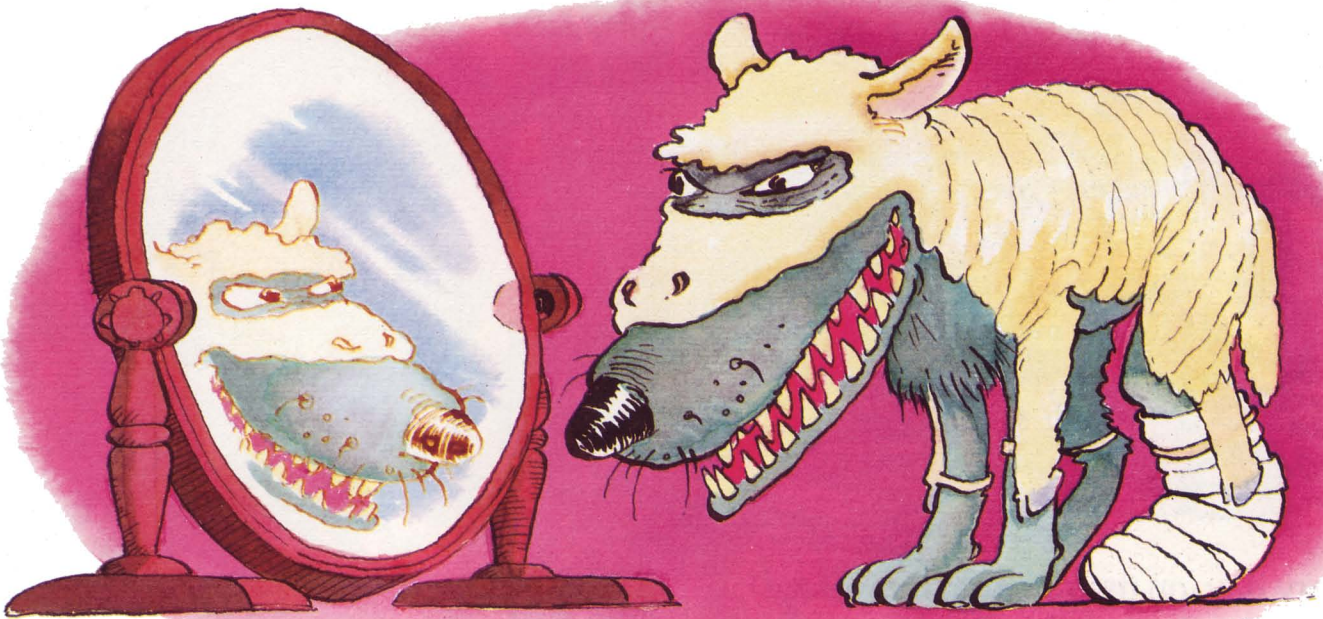
The old wolf was as gloomy as could be. He had hurt his leg, and for a whole week now had been laid up in his lair, unable to go hunting. There was no food left at all and the wolf's stomach was rumbling furiously. To make things worse, a flock of tasty young lambs was grazing in the meadow, right under his nose!

He looked down at the remains of his last meal — just a dirty fleece and a few old bones which he had chewed a

hundred times. "They don't even *smell* of food now," he moaned. And he kicked the fleece in disgust.

But at that instant, a wonderful idea came to him. "That's it! Why didn't I think of that before! If I dress up as a sheep, I won't need to hunt! I'll just crawl into the sheep-pen and choose a fat young lamb at my leisure." And he grinned from ear to ear as he draped the fleece over his shoulders.



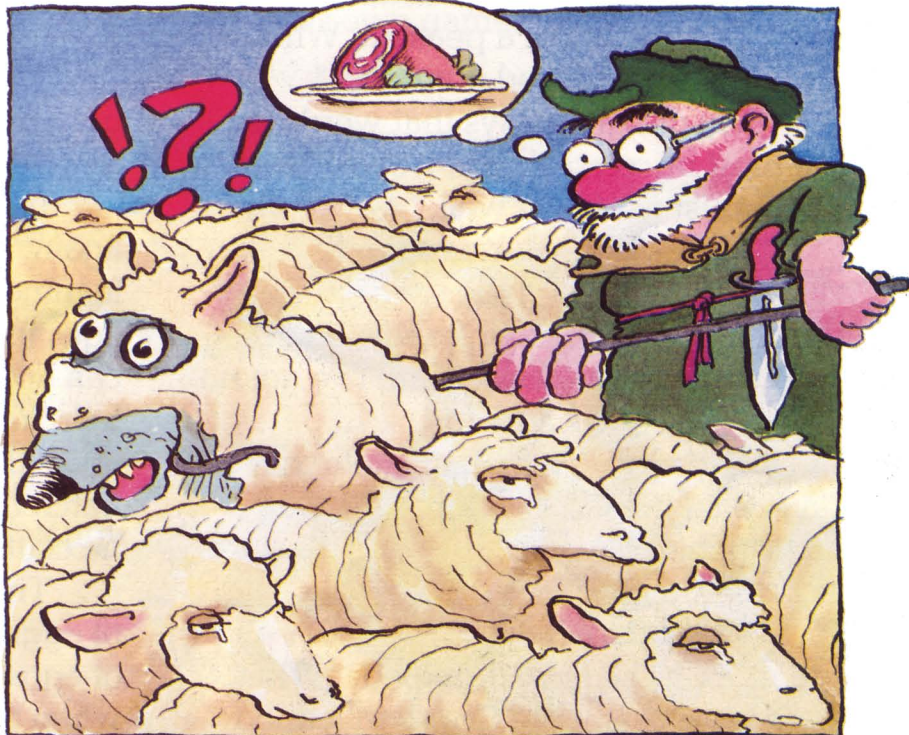
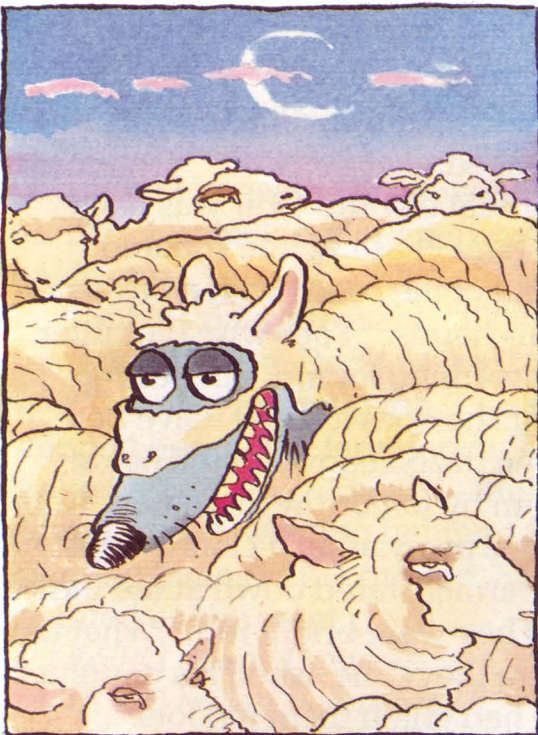


Late that afternoon, the wolf hobbled painfully down to the meadow. He crept in amongst the flock, and waited for nightfall. And sure enough the ploy worked! The shepherd drove the wolf into the pen with all the real sheep.

But the old wolf kept his head down so low that he did not notice the big knife tucked into the shepherd's belt. The shepherd fingered the blade. "It's a long time since my family tasted fresh mutton,"

he was thinking. "Tonight I'll give them a feast fit for a king." With a sudden lunge, he seized the largest animal in the pen and slit its throat.

When he turned the dead animal over he saw that it was his old enemy, the wolf! The shepherd was amazed. "Well you old rogue," he chuckled. "You fooled both of us that time. But I don't think I'll be eating you for supper. You're still a wolf, whatever you're wearing."



WISER Than The CZAR

Every day, on its way from the palace to the cathedral, the Czar's coach passed a poor tumbledown farmhouse. But on one particular day, the Czar saw the farmer leaning on the fence smoking a pipe and he stopped the coach to speak to him.

The farmer fell to his knees. "Your most gracious royal highness. You do the greatest honour to me, to my farm, to the smallest pebble in the last clod of earth in stopping your coach here and setting foot on my humble land."

The Czar was taken aback. "You don't talk much like a peasant. Who taught you such good manners?"

"My daughter says that words are the most priceless things we own, and that I must use them well."

"A wise girl, your daughter."

"Oh sire!" cried the farmer. "She's the wisest person in all Russia. I don't know where she gets it from. I've got no brains myself to speak of."

"The wisest person in all Russia, you say?" said the Czar, twirling his long moustache.

"Yes, sire!"

"Wiser than me?"

"Oh." The farmer gulped. "What have I said?" But the Czar had leaped



back into his coach and was driven away at great speed.

Later that day the Czar was back again. "Here! Peasant!" he shouted, leaning out of the coach with a basket of eggs in his hands. "Your wise daughter can do something for me. But heaven help her if she does it badly. Give her these three dozen eggs and tell her to hatch them by tomorrow morning." And he clattered away amid a cloud of dust.

The farmer stared down at the basket of eggs. They were bright red. "What kind of eggs are they?" he asked his daughter when he had taken them indoors.



"Your father said you were wise," called the Czar. "But you must be an idiot to plant *boiled* beans. What kind of harvest do you expect from them?"

"Exactly the same as the good Czar expected when he asked me to hatch hard-boiled eggs, Sir. Good morning."

The Czar blushed and hurried off, knowing that the peasant girl had beaten him at his own game.

She took one in her hand and felt its weight. "They're hard-boiled eggs, father, that's what they are. I can't hatch these."

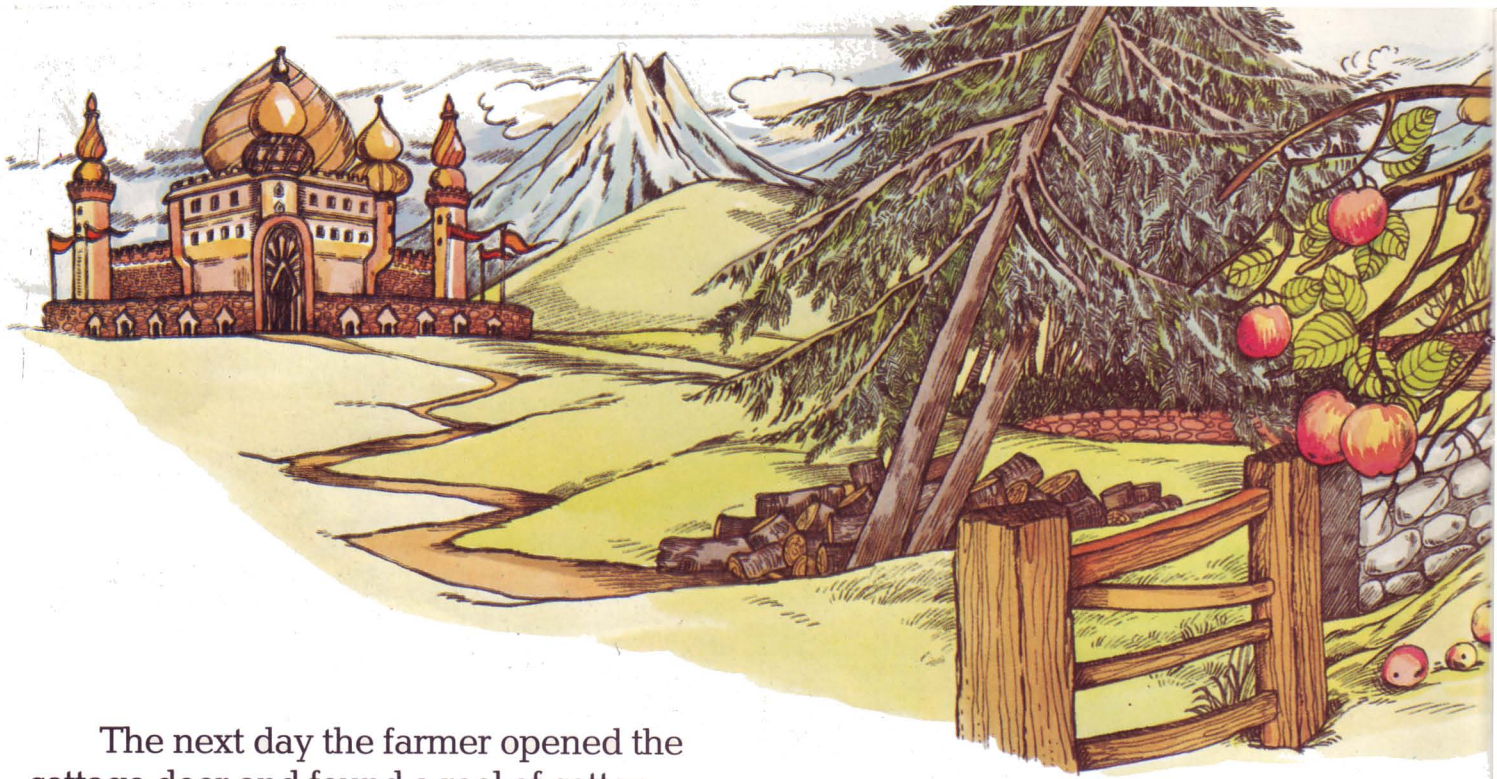
"Oh! I knew the Czar would punish us. He's just looking for an excuse to banish us."

But his daughter said, "I'll think of something, Papa. Don't worry."

The next morning the Czar's coach stopped beside the farm fence. The Czar looked out in amazement — the farmer's daughter was walking behind the plough planting beans in the ground. She chanted as she went,

*"Boiled beans I sew
But will boiled beans grow?"*





The next day the farmer opened the cottage door and found a reel of cotton on the doorstep. Alongside it lay the Czar's gilt-edged visiting card. The message on it read:

Tell your WISE daughter to make me two sails for my sailing ship out of this cotton by tomorrow — or I shall banish you both to Siberia.

The old farmer tore his hair. "Oh whatever shall we do, daughter?"

His daughter put the reel of cotton in her apron pocket. "Don't fret, father,"

she said, writing a note on the back of the visiting card. "Take this message to the palace."

She broke a twig off the apple tree and put it with the card. The note read:

I am sure you know how poor my father is. I am afraid he cannot afford to buy me a spinning-wheel and a loom. But if the good Czar will make me a spinning-wheel and a loom out of this twig, I will be most happy to make sails for his sailing ship out of a single reel of cotton.

When the Czar got her message, he laughed out loud. "By heaven, she's a clever girl!" And he called his messenger. "Take this wine glass to the miserable little farm on the north road. Tell the girl who lives there that if she can empty the sea with this wine glass by morning, I'll marry her!"

When the girl heard the message, she laughed out loud. She picked up the little stool from under the kitchen table, and, borrowing the messenger's horse she rode all the way to the palace.





Curtseying deeply to the Czar, she set down the stool.

"Most dear Czar," she said. "All Russia loves you and I love you more than all Russia. Nothing would please me more than to do as you ask. But I have one slight problem in emptying the sea overnight."

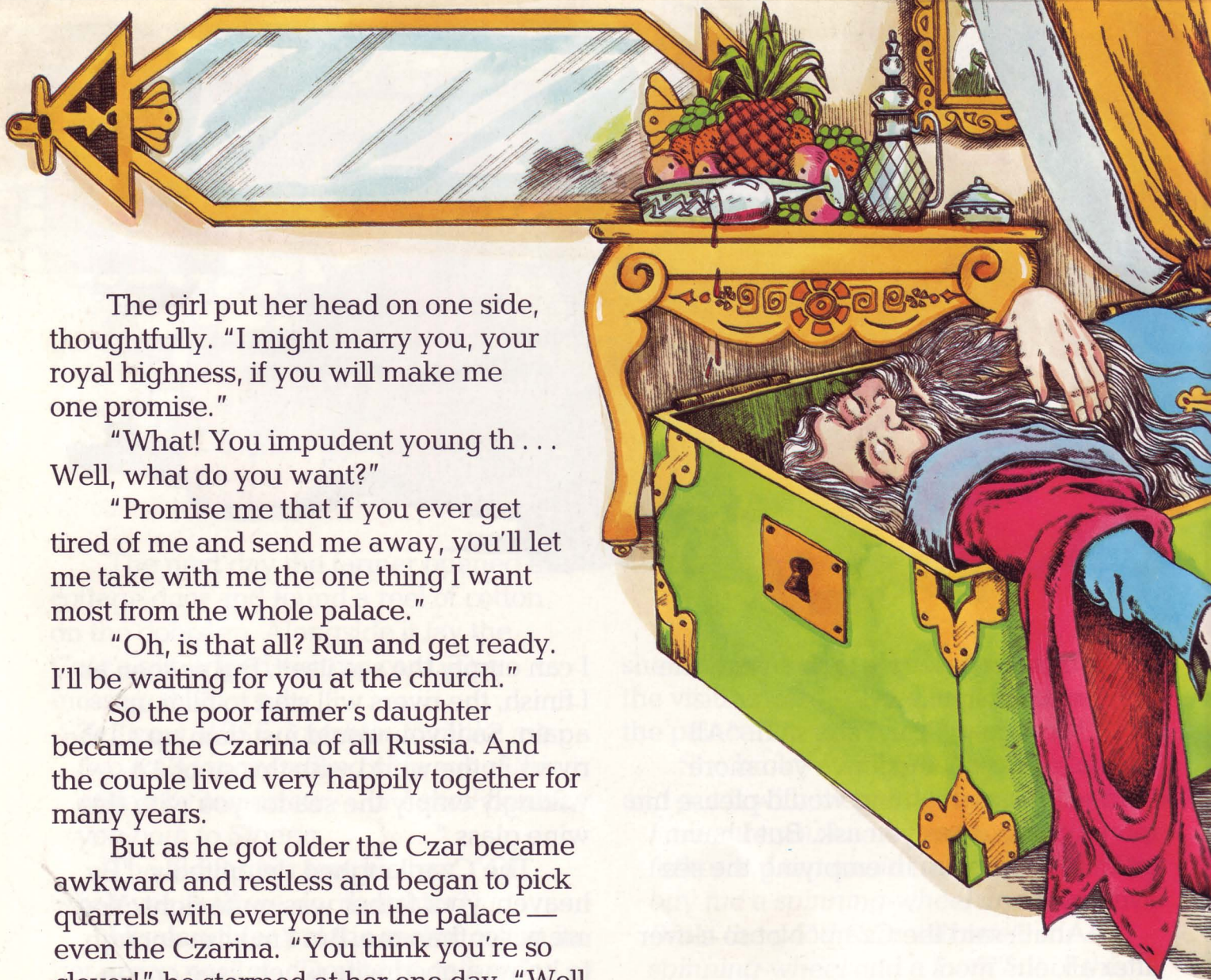
"Aha!" said the Czar. "Not so clever after all, eh?"

"No, no, not clever at all. Of course

I can empty the sea itself. But as soon as I finish, the rivers will start to fill it up again. So if you would just dam up all the rivers in the world with this stool, I'll willingly empty the sea for you with this wine glass."

The Czar laughed delightedly. "By heaven, your father was quite right. You *are* wiser than me. But I'm wise enough to know a good wife when I see one — and to prove it I'll marry you this very day!"





The girl put her head on one side, thoughtfully. "I might marry you, your royal highness, if you will make me one promise."

"What! You impudent young th . . . Well, what do you want?"

"Promise me that if you ever get tired of me and send me away, you'll let me take with me the one thing I want most from the whole palace."

"Oh, is that all? Run and get ready. I'll be waiting for you at the church."

So the poor farmer's daughter became the Czarina of all Russia. And the couple lived very happily together for many years.

But as he got older the Czar became awkward and restless and began to pick quarrels with everyone in the palace — even the Czarina. "You think you're so clever!" he stormed at her one day. "Well go back where you came from and take your wisdom with you! I'm sick of you. Get out!"

The Czarina curtsied to her husband and took off her crown. "Very well, my dear. Anything you say. But won't you drink a last glass of wine with me?"

When the glasses were brought, she slipped a sleeping potion into the Czar's wine. A minute later, he was sprawled across his throne, snoring.

The Czarina called for a large trunk and put the Czar into it and locked it fast. Then she called the palace servants, and had them load the trunk on to a cart. She took off her fine gown and put back on her patched, farming clothes. Then she





drove the cart back to the farm on the north road.

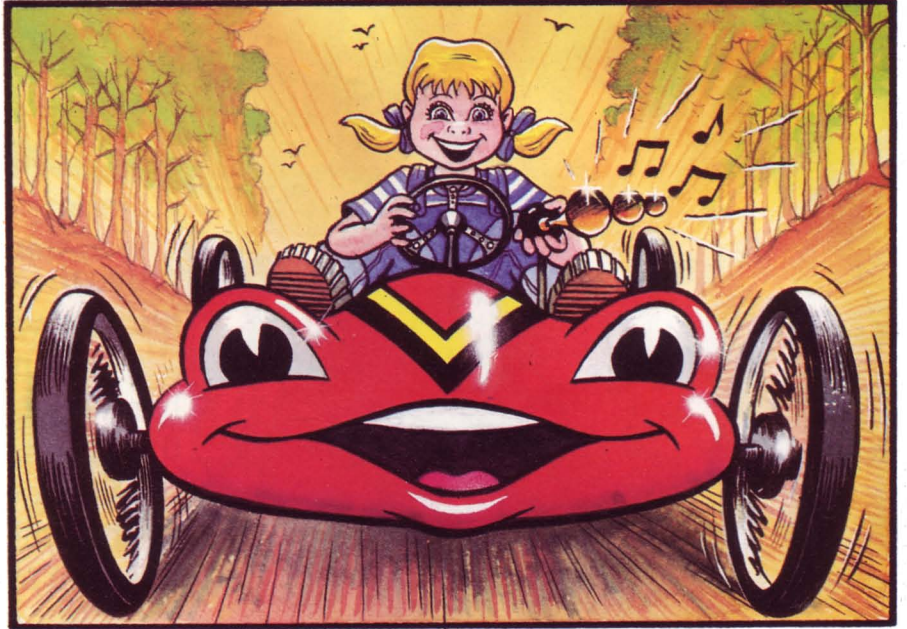
When the Czar woke up, he was lying on a straw mattress on the floor of the miserable shack. "What am I doing here? How dare you kidnap the crowned head of all Russia. I'll have your head for this, you insolent woman!"

"But my dear husband," said his wife, looking up from her sewing. "You made me a promise on our wedding day that if you were ever to send me away, I could take with me the one thing I wanted most from the whole palace. And I wanted you."

And only then did the Czar realise just how lucky he was to have found such a wise and wonderful wife.

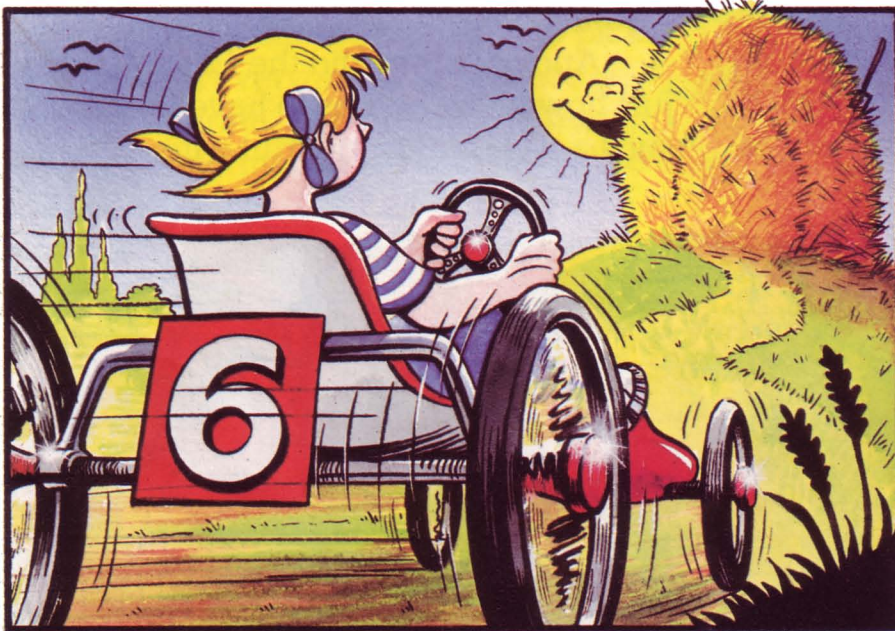


Bobbie and the Magic Go-Kart



For her sixth birthday Bobbie was given a brand-new shiny Go-kart. "I can't wait to have a ride,"

she said. So after breakfast she zoomed off down the road, tooting the horn. Then something very strange happened . . . the Go-kart suddenly turned into a lane. "Stop! Stop!" cried Bobbie as they drove into a field.

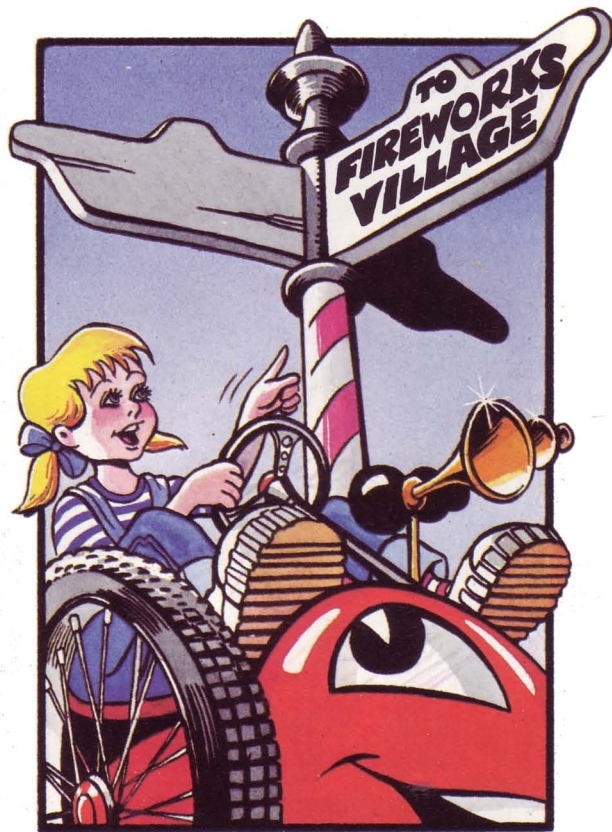


They halted in front of an enormous haystack. "That'll teach you not to go so fast!" "A Go-kart that can *talk*!" gasped Bobbie. "I'm not an ordinary Go-kart and this is a magic field."

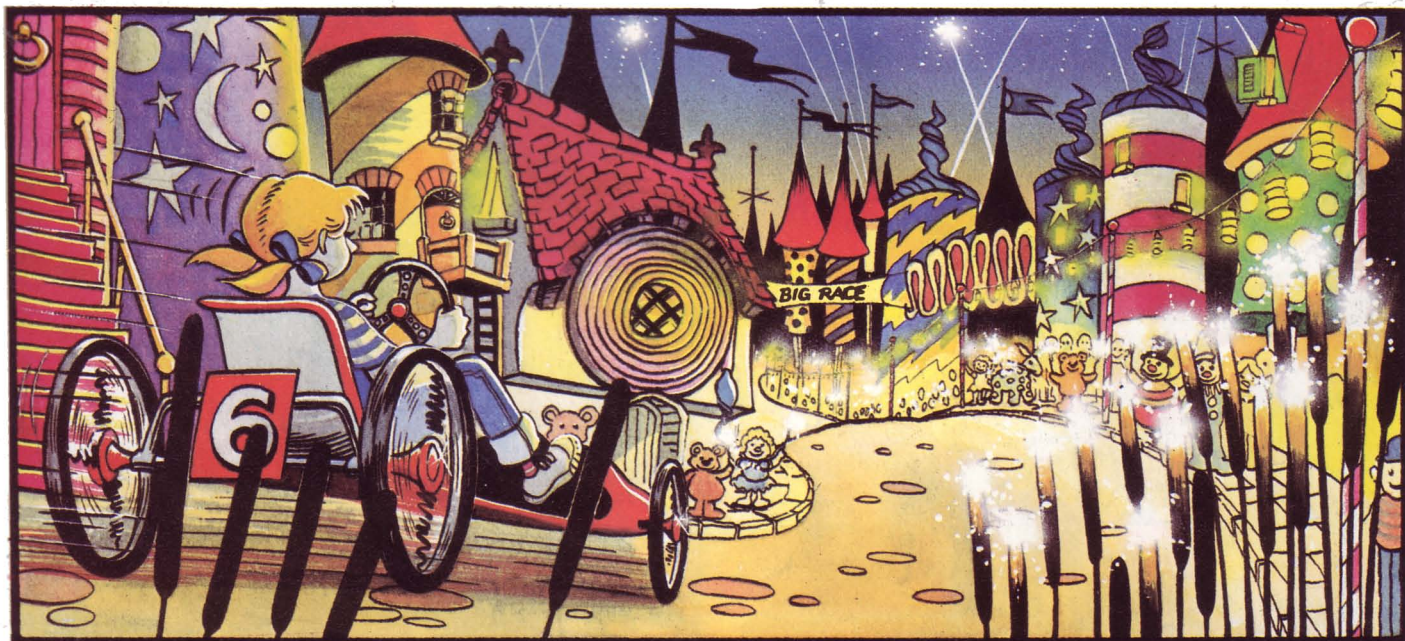
He played a tune on his horn and a door in the haystack opened. Bobbie and Go-kart raced through.



Bobbie looked around. All the trees were pink and blue. Brightly-coloured fruit hung from the branches. "I must pick one," said Bobbie. "All right," said Go-kart, "but be quick."

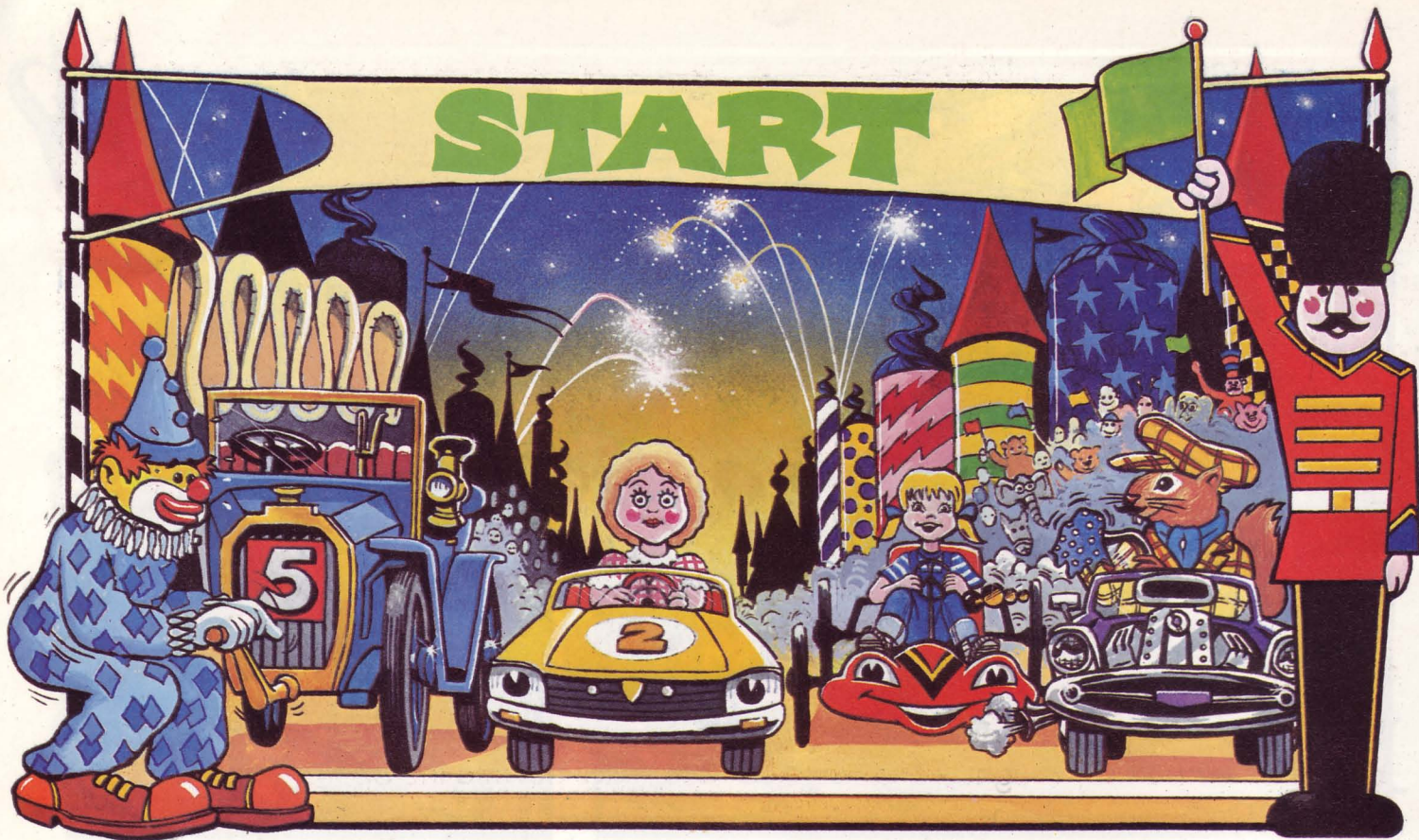


Then she saw a sign: *To Fireworks Village*. "Come on Go-kart, let's go there." So off they went.



As they approached Fireworks Village the sky grew darker and darker until . . . Whoosh! Bang! . . . a huge rocket exploded overhead, leaving a trail of silvery stars.

Everywhere Bobbie looked there were banners and flags and fairy lanterns. Hundreds of toys lined the street waving brilliant sparklers.

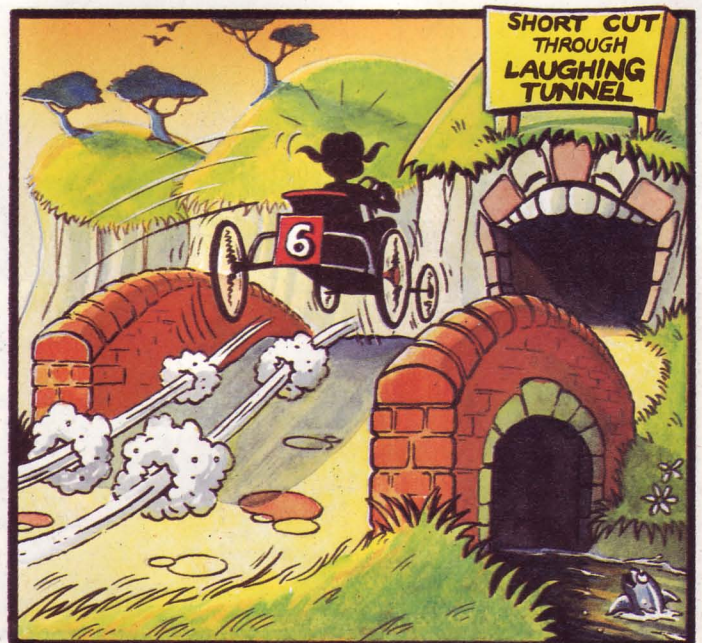


Then Bobbie saw a China Doll seated in a gleaming yellow car and a Clown starting up his engine. "Look, Go-kart, there's going to be a race!"

Bobbie and Go-kart lined up next to a Squirrel in a funny hat, who was busily polishing his driving spectacles. A Toy Soldier waved a flag and off they roared.



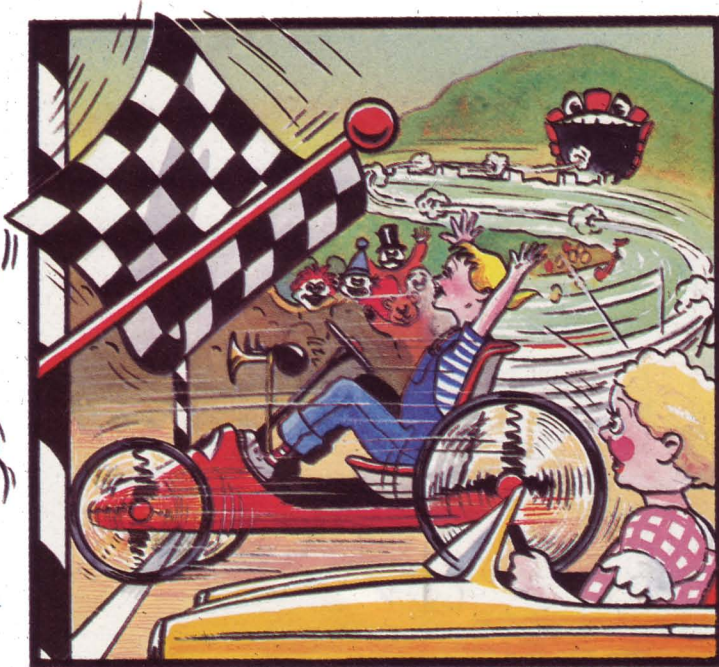
Vroom! Vroom! Down the High Street they raced at top speed, past crowds of cheering toys. Then Squirrel's car broke down and China Doll took the lead.



"We're losing the race!" cried Bobbie. But Go-kart sped over a bridge and turned left into a tunnel marked: *Short Cut through Laughing Tunnel*.



Inside the tunnel Bobbie and Go-kart began to laugh. They laughed and laughed so much that by the time they reached the end the whole tunnel was shaking.



"We're in second place!" said Bobbie, as they shot out into the open. With a final burst Go-kart overtook China Doll and crossed the finishing line.



How the crowd cheered! "May I present you with a box of everlasting fireworks," said a Puppet Prince to Bobbie, and he pinned a rosette on Go-kart's bonnet.

"That means your box will never run out of fireworks," said Go-kart to Bobbie as they set off for home. It was easily the best birthday Bobbie had ever had.



HEIDI

Together in the Mountains

The bells rang up from the valley and the birds were singing in the trees when Heidi woke up in Uncle Alp's chalet. After breakfast she set out to visit Peter's Granny. Faster and faster she ran down the mountain path until at last she saw the little cottage.

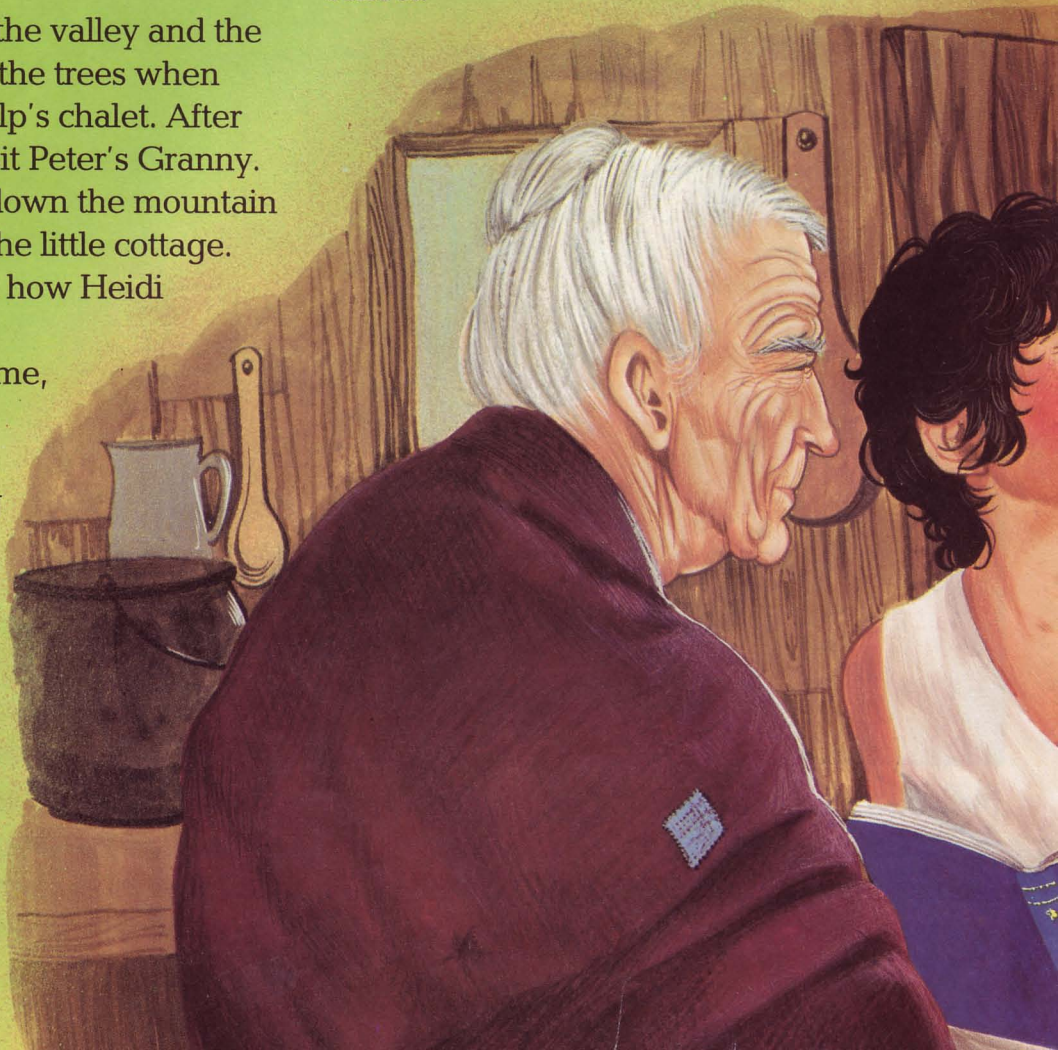
"Gracious! That's just how Heidi used to come rushing in."

"It's me, Granny! It's me, Heidi," she said racing inside, hugging the old blind lady and smothering her with kisses.

Granny refused to believe it until her old hands had felt every curl of Heidi's hair. And all the while the child chattered about Frankfurt. "There were no trees — imagine! — and no flowers or

goats or mountains. Just big stone buildings with windows that wouldn't open. No wonder Clara was always poorly."

"You don't look so rosy-cheeked yourself," said Ursula. "Peter won't recognise you when he gets home from school."



"Oh, I'm all right. I've just had homesickness, but I'll be better now I'm back with Grandfather."

Then without a word, Heidi lifted down the book of songs from the shelf and blew the dust away.

"What would you like me to read, Granny?" asked Heidi.

"Anything you like, child, anything you like. But can you really read, Heidi?"

"Here's one about the sun, I think I'll read that.

*The golden sun
His course doth run,
And speaks his light,
So warm and bright,
Upon us all."*

"Why, Heidi, you *can* read!" Heidi went on reading until the cottage door banged suddenly . . . and there stood Peter.



Heidi was so pleased to see him she ran over and kissed him. She told him everything that had happened to her since she had last seen him and how she had learned to read and, really, how easy it was.

And when Peter had to admit that he still could not read, Heidi said, "We'll go up to Hawk's Peak tomorrow and I'll give you your first lesson. *I'm going to teach you to read.*"

"Do you really think you can teach me?" Peter asked.

"Of course I can, you'll see."

All summer, Heidi and Peter and the goats roamed about on the alps high above Grandfather's cottage. Heidi saw the flowers and the birds again, and all those things she had so missed and longed for while in Frankfurt. No-one in the world was happier — except perhaps Peter. With her help, day by day, he learned to read — first letters, then words, then sentences, until he could read quite well from Granny's book of songs.

Then one day, while playing outside the chalet Heidi saw a party of strangers coming up from the village. She gave such a loud cry that Grandfather came rushing out to see what had happened.

"They've come. Oh they've come at last! Look, Grandfather. Look!"

The procession was making its way slowly up the mountain path. In front, two men carried a chair on two long poles with a girl huddled up inside covered with blankets and shawls. Behind them rode a lady on a fine white horse. And behind her came a man pushing an empty wheelchair and a man with a bundle of coats and parcels.

When they reached Grandfather's chalet, Heidi rushed up to them and kissed the girl in the chair. It was Clara, her friend from Frankfurt. And on the horse sat Clara's Grandmamma.

"What a wonderful house you have, Uncle," said the old lady, getting off her horse. "No wonder Heidi longed to return!"



"Do you like it, Clara?" asked Heidi excitedly. Clara looked around her in wonder. She had never seen anything so beautiful.

"Can I stay here for ever?" she asked her Grandmamma.

"Well I don't know about for ever, but if Uncle Alp agrees you *can* stay for a while."

"Oh please say yes," said Heidi.

The old man smiled.

"Of course you can, Clara."

Then, after they had all eaten a meal of toasted cheese





But Peter did not feel happy. He felt that Heidi had abandoned him for Clara. And when he came the next morning he only grudgingly agreed to help Heidi push Clara's wheelchair up the mountain path. He saw Heidi show Clara all the things he had shown her, and felt betrayed.

And when they stopped to eat their lunch, Peter's jealousy grew so strong that, when the girls were not looking, he rushed over to the wheelchair, released the brake and gave it a violent push. The chair rolled over the brow of the hill, faster and faster. In a flash it was over the edge, breaking up into fragments on the jagged rocks below.

"Oh my chair!" cried Clara in horror. "How shall I ever get down! Oh, if only I could walk."

"We'll just have to help you down as best we can," said Heidi. "Put one arm round my neck and the other through Peter's arm. Now lean as hard as you can and we'll carry you down."

But Clara was not light and they soon tired of carrying her.

and milk it was agreed that Grandmamma would return for Clara after four weeks.

That night as the sun was going down, Grandfather carried Clara up the ladder to the hayloft where Heidi slept. "It might seem strange to a young lady like you," he said, "but I think you'll be comfortable."

"It's like a dream," said Clara. "I've heard Heidi talk about her haybed and the round window cut in the wall. But I never thought I'd be here myself, looking down the valley. It's just as you told me, Heidi — but twice as beautiful. And tomorrow I'll meet Peter and Granny and all the goats. Oh, I'm so happy!"





"Put your foot down firmly," said Heidi. Clara did as she was told. She placed one foot on the ground, then the other. Then, supported by Heidi and Peter, she tried to take a little step.

"I think I can do it, Heidi." Slowly, painfully Clara put one foot down, then another. "I can make proper steps! Look, look, I can make proper steps!"

Clara held on firmly to Peter and Heidi, but she found she *could* make proper steps! She was *walking*!

Heidi was beside herself with joy. "If only Grandfather and Grandmamma could see you! Now we can come to the mountains every day!"

They walked on a little further, then stopped to rest. The sun was warm and soon, what with the exertions of the morning and the heady scent of the flowers, they all fell fast asleep.

There they lay as the afternoon sun mellowed until Grandfather, anxious to know what had happened to them, suddenly arrived, calling to them.

Heidi woke up and rushed towards him. "Grandfather! Grandfather! Clara can walk!"

"What? What do you say child? Surely not." But he smiled and, supporting Clara, encouraged her to walk. Slowly, carefully, the girl took a few steps supported by Uncle Alp's strong arm. "That's wonderful," he said. "But we mustn't overdo it." And he lifted Clara up into his arms and carried her back to the hut.

Early next morning, Grandfather said he would write to Clara's Grandmamma inviting her to visit them because they had something very special to show her.

The days that followed were perhaps the happiest Heidi had known. Every day Clara woke up knowing she was getting better and stronger. And every day she was able to walk further.



Several days passed before Grandmamma wrote back saying she would arrive the next day with Mr Sesemann, Clara's father.

Seated on the bench outside Uncle Alp's hut, the next day, Heidi and Clara waited for their guests. At last they came.



"What's this?" said Grandmamma when she saw Clara. "Why aren't you in your chair?"

Then, aided by Heidi, Clara got up and embraced her Grandmamma. Mr Sesemann just stared at Clara — tears coming to his eyes.

"Don't you know me Papa? Have I really changed so much?" laughed Clara.

"Clara!" His daughter, her face glowing with health, her hair bleached gold by the sun, was walking down the path towards him. He ran forward and caught her up in his arms. "Is it *really* you, my darling?"

"It is Papa! *Really!* My chair got broken so Peter and Heidi had to carry me. It made them so tired I just *had* to walk. I *had* to." Then Heidi, Grandfather, Grandmamma and Peter joined them.

Together they all went down to Peter's cottage to celebrate. The noise of their laughter rang across the valley and echoed off the mountains. Uncle Alp, shy and awkward in his best suit, sang a song from Granny's book.

"You have a fine voice, Uncle," said Grandmamma Sesemann. "You should sing in the church choir."

And to everyone's astonishment Uncle Alp said, "I think I might, if the church in Dorfli will have me. I'm thinking of taking Heidi to school down there next winter, anyway."

Only Peter felt unable to join in the laughter. He still felt guilty at having pushed Clara's wheelchair over the mountain.

"Come here, boy," said Grandmother Sesemann, "and stand in front of me. You

helped Clara to walk again and you shall have a reward, too."

"No," he said, almost in tears.

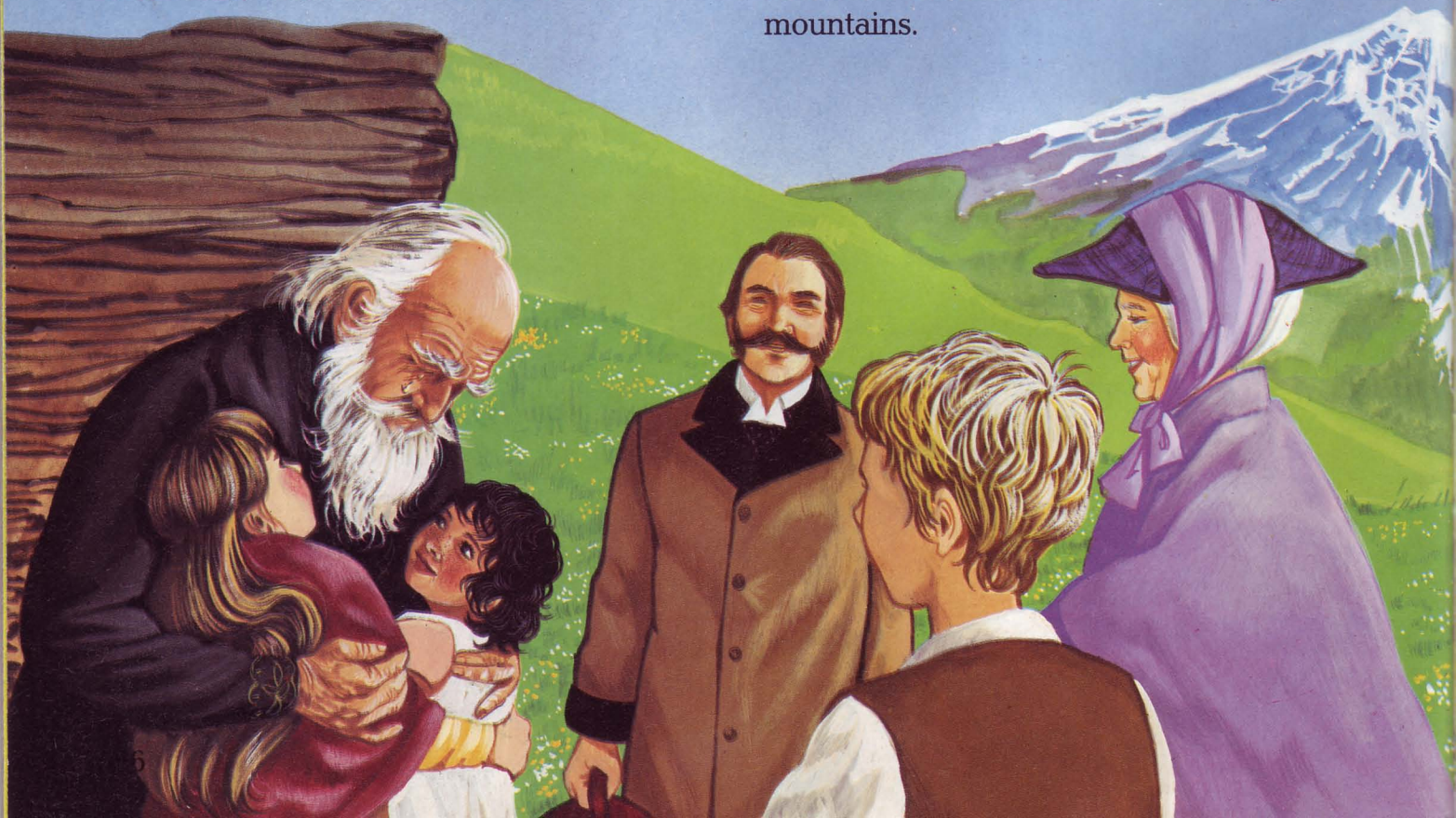
"I *had* to help Clara. I . . . I . . .

I pushed her wheelchair over the cliff because

I was jealous. Heidi knows, but hasn't told anyone because she's my friend. But I know now that I did wrong and I'm very sorry for it."

Shaking and trembling, Peter stared at Grandmamma Sesemann. "Well yes, it was very wicked to push the chair away," said Grandmamma, "but it made poor Clara walk. So there's no need to feel sad anymore."

Soon, too soon, it was time for everyone to leave. Herr Sesemann and Grandmamma had already decided that Clara must go with them. Many tears were shed when they had to say goodbye, but Grandmamma said that summer would return and Clara could once again come to stay with Uncle Alp and Heidi and Peter in their beautiful home in the mountains.





THE MIGHTY RABBIT

Can you imagine anything so absurd as a tug-of-war between a rabbit and an elephant? Well, one day, long ago, Rabbit *did* challenge Elephant. "I may be small but I'm just as strong as you." Of course, Elephant just laughed through his long grey trunk, and went on bathing in the river. "If I bring a rope with me tomorrow," said Rabbit, "will you test your strength against mine in a tug-of-war?"

"Run away and fetch your rope, then," said Elephant, and he went on sharpening his huge white tusks against a rock.

But before Rabbit fetched the rope, he had one more visit to make.

Hippopotamus was grazing on the mountainside — as was the way of hippos in those days. "Careful where you sit," she said when she saw Rabbit, "I might tread on you by mistake."

"Don't you worry about me," replied Rabbit. "I may be small, but I'm immensely strong. If you like, I'll prove it tomorrow in a tug-of-war."

Hippo yawned lazily. "I'd hate to hurt you, but if your heart's set on it . . ." And she moved to a fresh hill, having trampled the first one flat.





The next day, Rabbit arrived on the plain, staggering under the weight of a very long rope.

Elephant was already there. Rabbit gave him one end of the rope and

Elephant coiled it

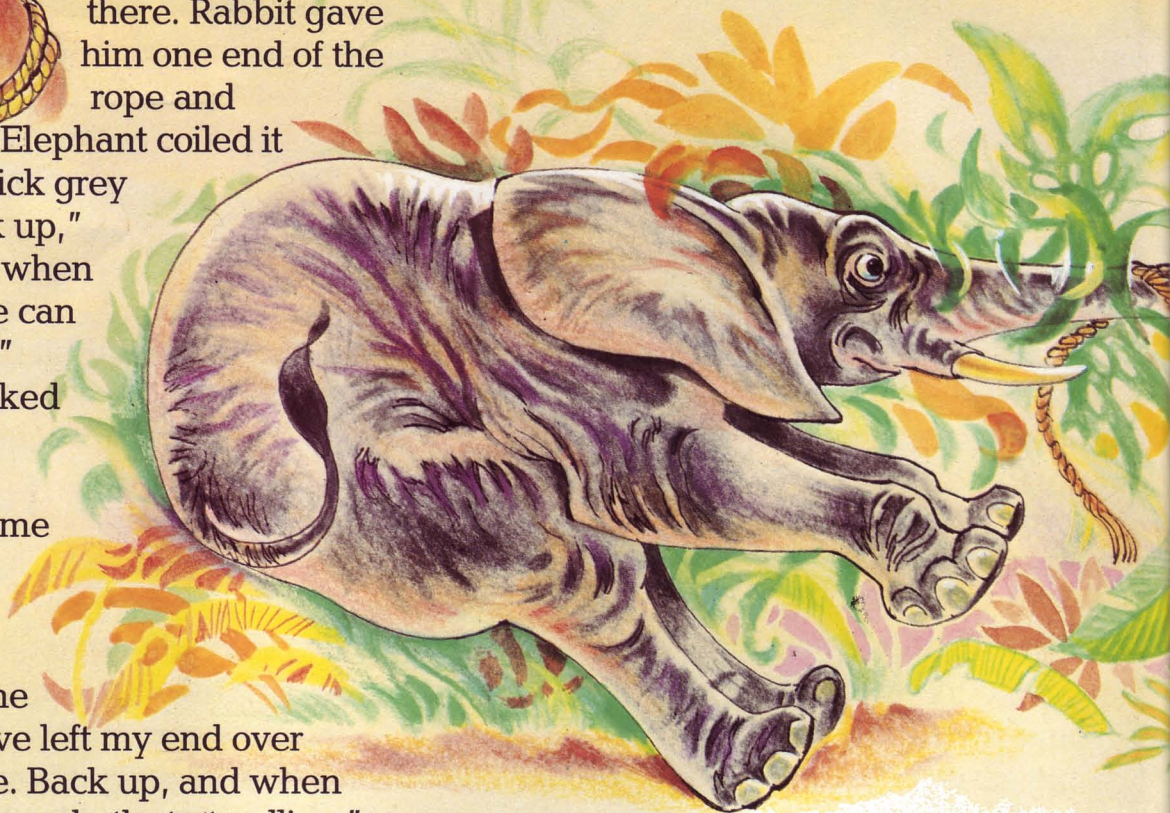
round his thick grey trunk. "Now back up," said Rabbit, "and when the rope's taut, we can both start pulling."

Elephant backed off deep into the jungle . . . just as Hippopotamus came lumbering across the plain.

Rabbit gave the other end of the rope to Hippo. "I've left my end over there in the jungle. Back up, and when the rope's taut, we can both start pulling."

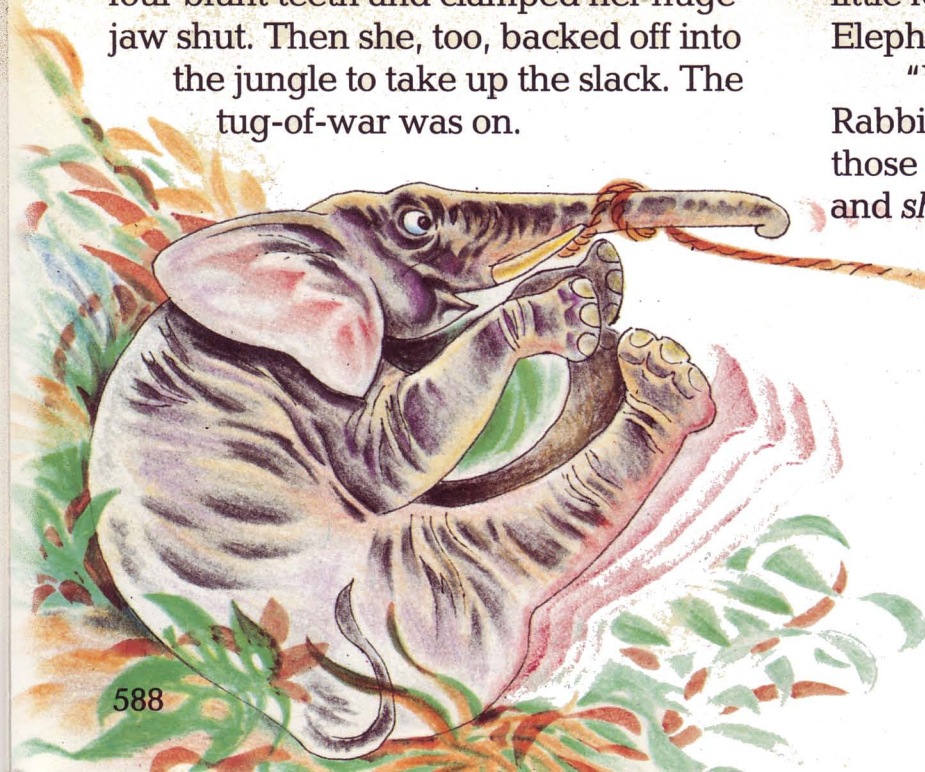
So Hippo tied the rope round her four blunt teeth and clamped her huge jaw shut. Then she, too, backed off into the jungle to take up the slack. The tug-of-war was on.

At his end of the rope, Elephant leaned back gently, not wanting to hurt Rabbit. At *her* end of the rope, Hippo leaned back gently, not wanting to hurt Rabbit. The rope twanged off the ground.



"Well, who would have guessed the little fellow was so strong!" thought Elephant, and he pulled a bit harder.

"Whoever would have guessed Rabbit could grip the ground so well with those small, furry feet," thought Hippo, and *she* pulled a bit harder.



"What's this? He nearly had me off balance!" cried Elephant. "I'd better use my full strength!"

"What's this? He nearly toppled me over!" cried Hippo. "I'd better use my full strength!"

From that day to this, Elephant can be seen rooting up trees in search of the Mighty Rabbit who wounded his pride —

and his bottom — in the

thorn-bush.

Hippopotamus hides in the river all day, and blows bubbles.



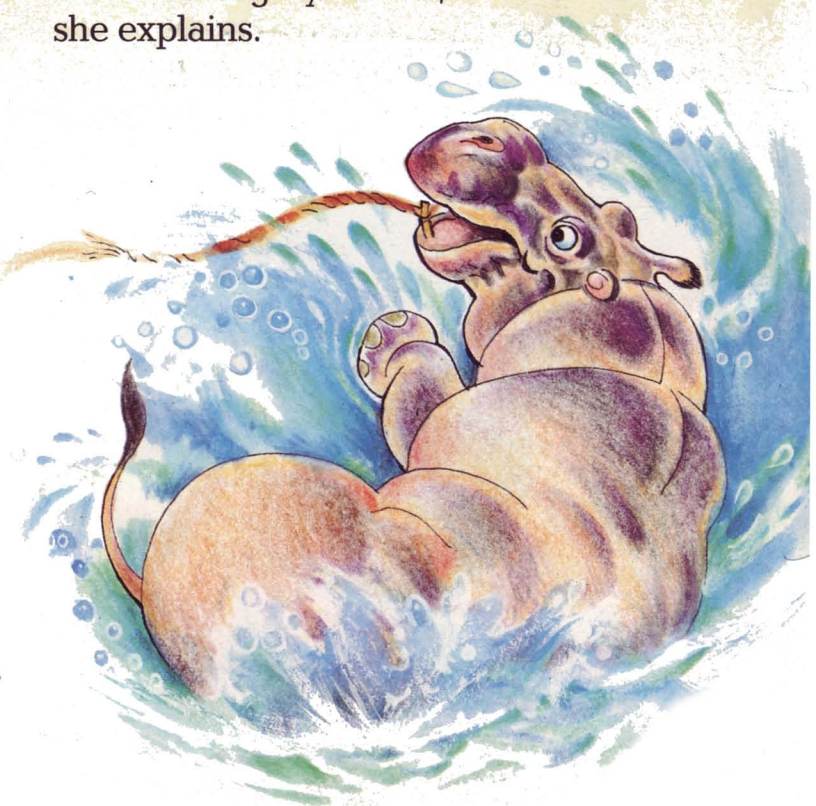
So Elephant and Hippo pulled with all their might. They strained and grunted and panted and bellowed, but neither could gain the advantage. For three whole days their tug-of-war went on, with the two great beasts anchored to the ground where they had planted their big feet.

At first Rabbit enjoyed the sport, but after three days he got bored. Then he nibbled through the rope.

A loud crack rang out through the jungle as the last strand snapped apart. Elephant flew backwards and crashed into a thorn-bush. Hippo hurtled through the air and landed — squuck — in the muddy river.

The jungle has never been the same.

Ever since the tug-of-war, she has refused to come out before dark. "It's in case I meet the Mighty Rabbit," she explains.



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