

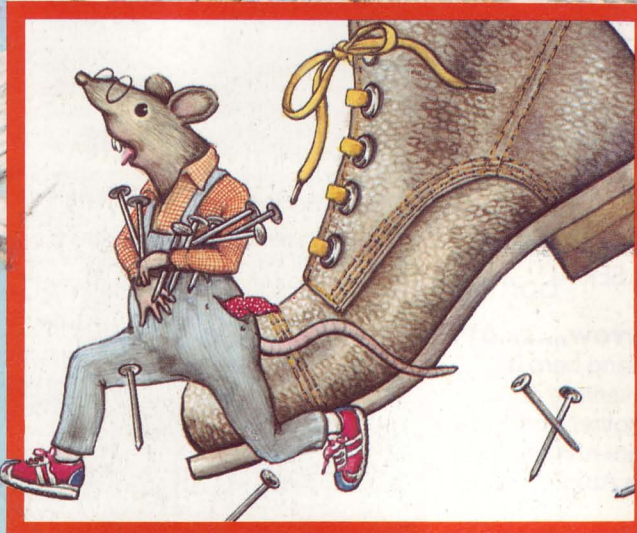
®

PART 22

# 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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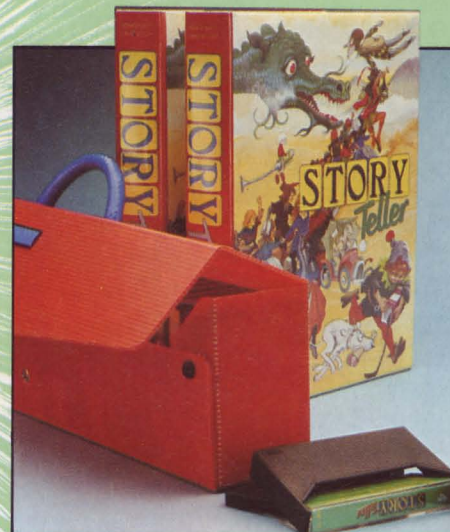
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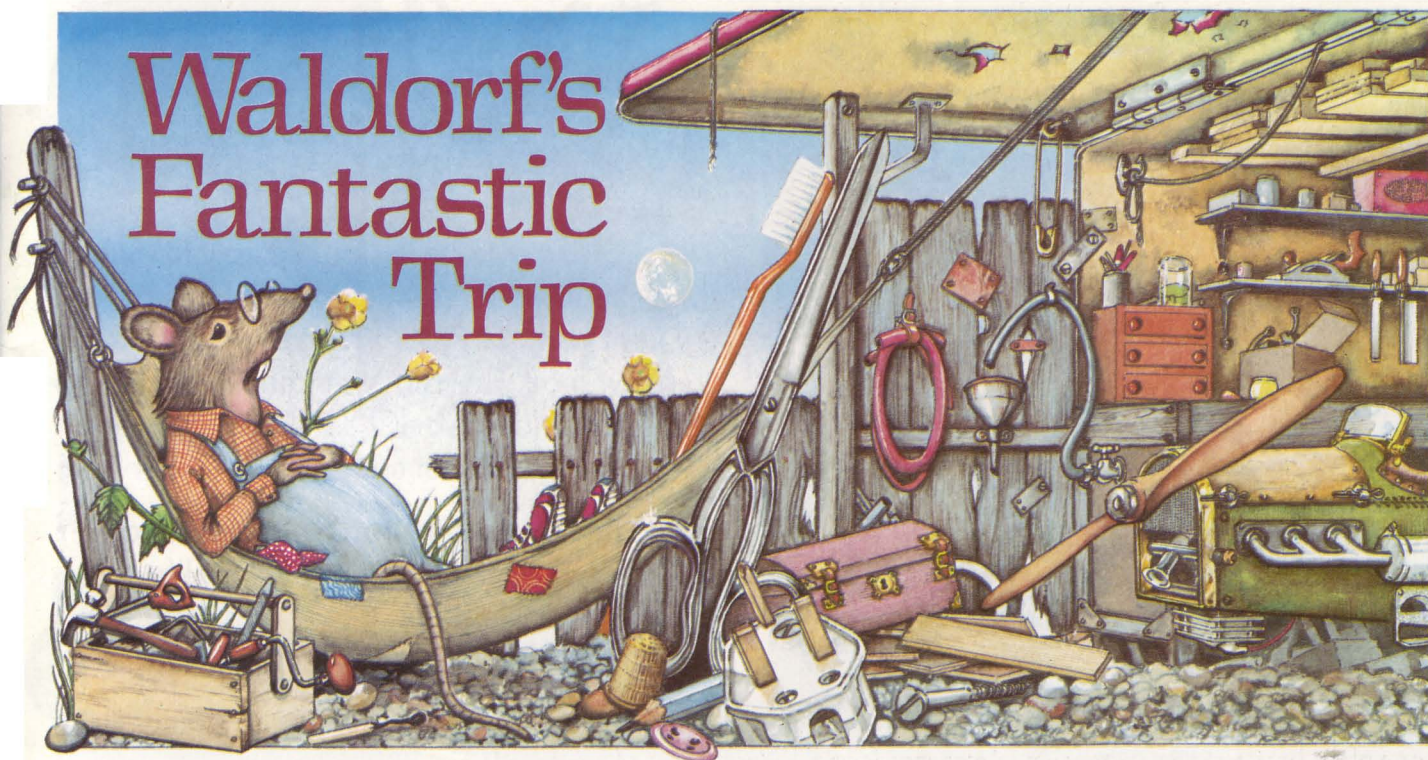
*A Creative Radio Production*

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Eleven Wild Swans: **Joanna Lumley**  
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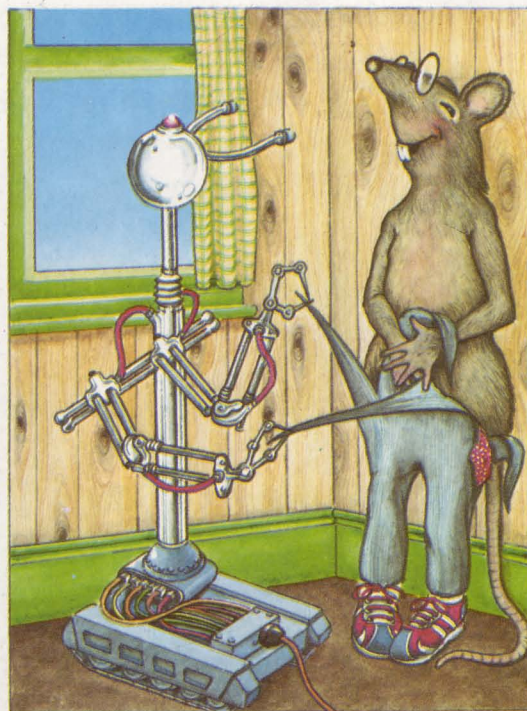
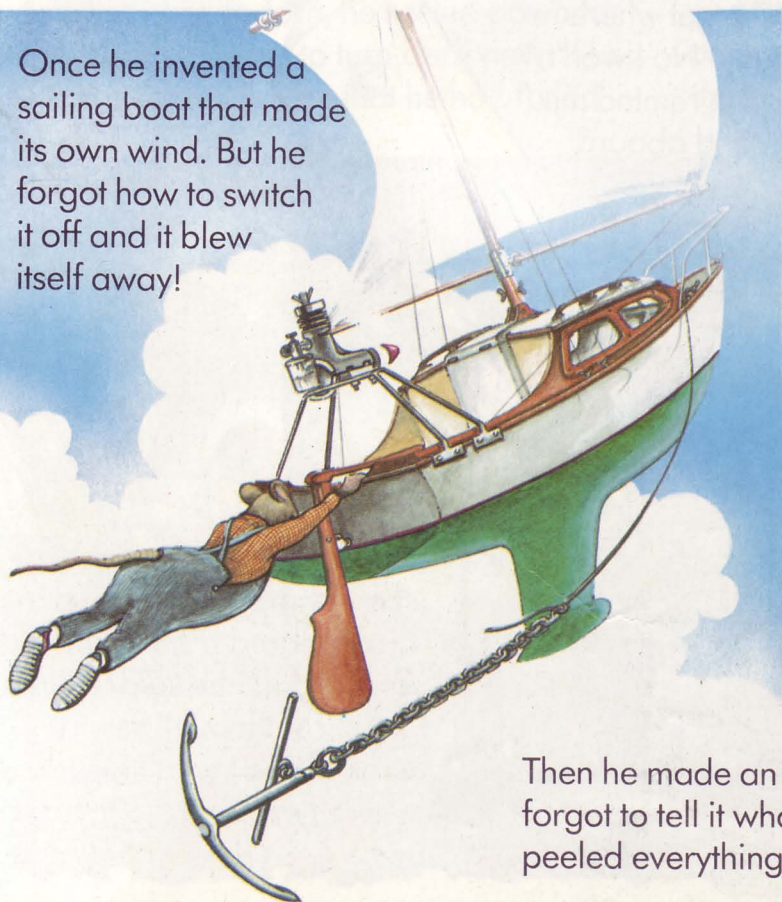
# Waldorf's Fantastic Trip



One day Waldorf was sitting outside his workshop wondering what to invent next. He was a very clever mouse and had made all kinds of wonderful machines.

But he was also very forgetful and this brought him no end of trouble. Whatever he did went wrong — and all because of his dreadful memory.

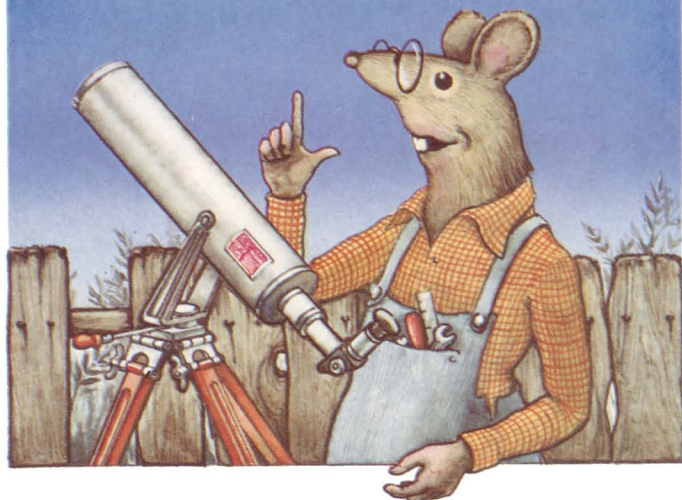
Once he invented a sailing boat that made its own wind. But he forgot how to switch it off and it blew itself away!



Then he made an electric banana peeler. But he forgot to tell it what a banana looked like — and it peeled everything in sight!

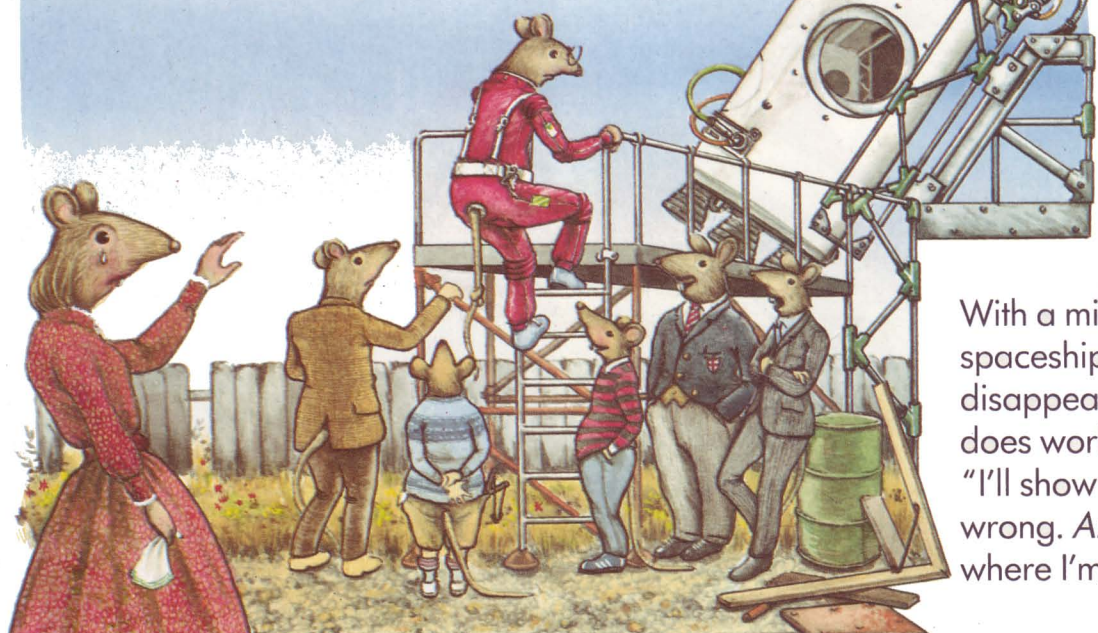


At last, as day turned into night, Waldorf had an idea. "Um, they say the moon is made of cheese. I know, I'll build a spaceship and bring some back. I'll be famous!"



And so he set to work, borrowing bits and pieces wherever he could. He risked life and limb, for people did not always want to lend him just what he needed. At last, the machine was ready.

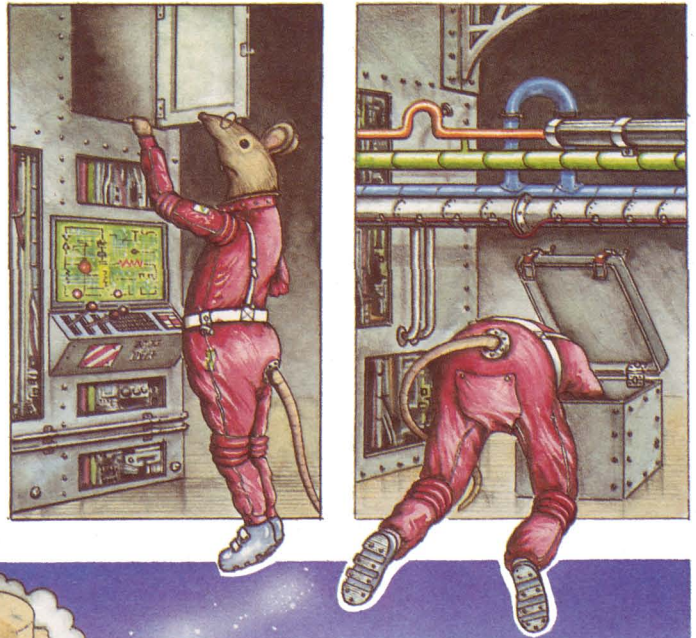
When the great day came some of his friends called round to say goodbye. But none of them had much faith in poor Waldorf — not even his sister Kate. "Even if it works," she wept, "you'll forget where you're going." Waldorf was very hurt. "No I won't," he replied. "I've tied a knot in my tail to remind me." Bravely holding back a tear, he climbed aboard his magnificent spaceship.



With a mighty roar the spaceship shot skywards and disappeared from view. "It does work!" he said to himself. "I'll show them all they're wrong. And I won't forget where I'm going..."

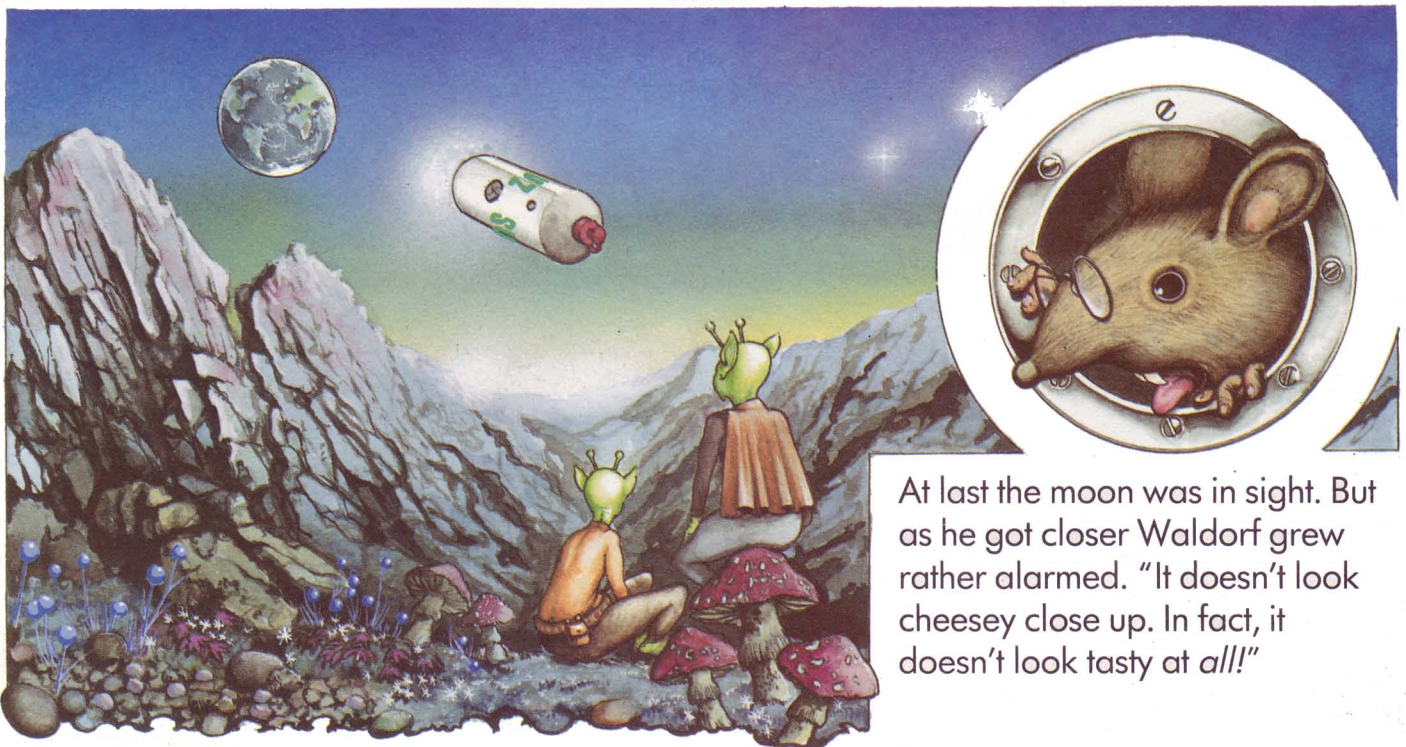


Waldorf felt very excited as he zoomed through space all by himself. He set course for the moon and planned how he would fill the spaceship's hold with strong, green cheese. The thought of cheese made him hungry. It was obviously time for tea. He looked in cupboard after cupboard, but could not find a single crumb. He searched the whole rocketship from top to bottom while his tummy rumbled. "Oh dear, oh dear," he moaned. "I've forgotten to bring any food!"



So, foodless and forlorn, he settled down for the trip. It was too late to turn back now. If he did his friends would see that he had failed

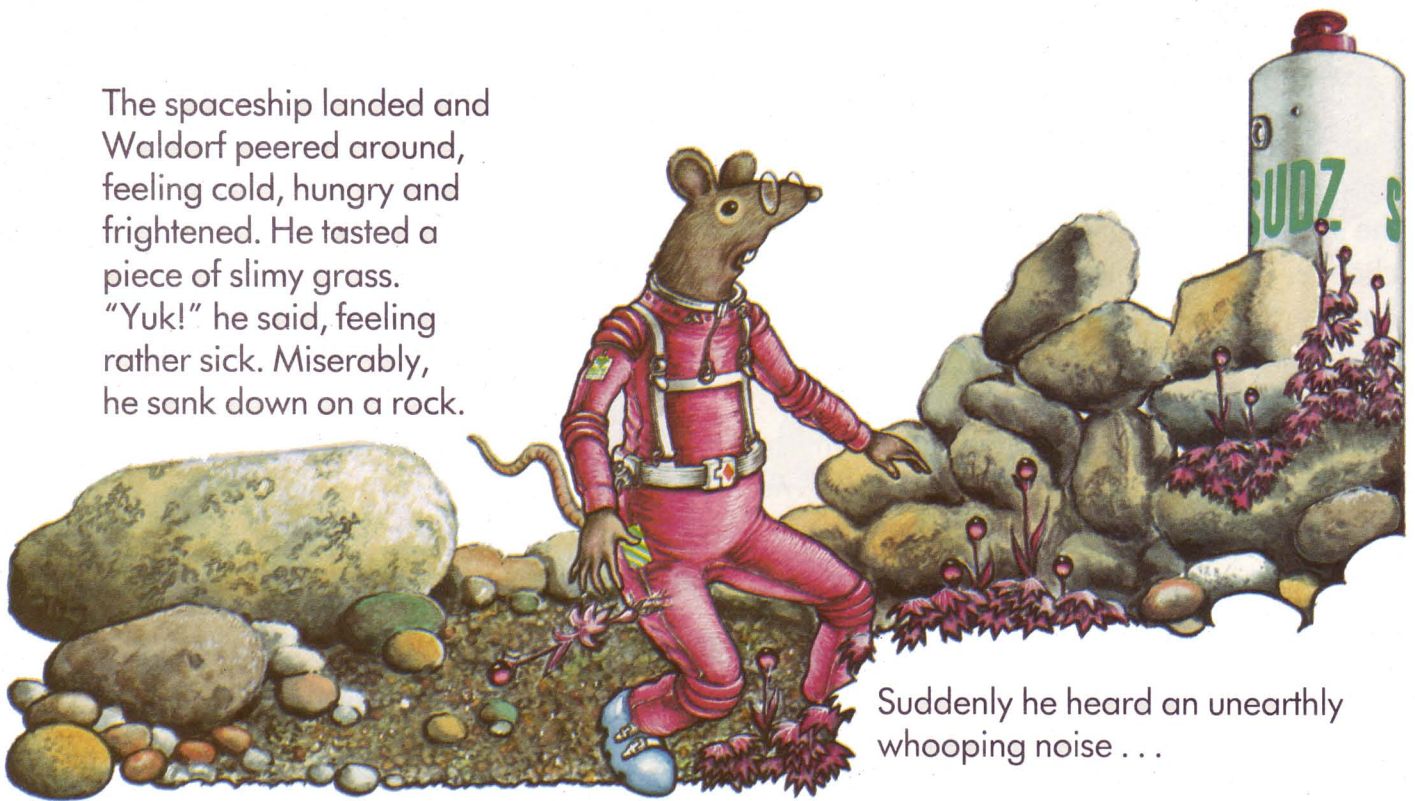
and that would be unbearable. He journeyed on and, as he went, he could not help dreaming of hunks of cheese.



At last the moon was in sight. But as he got closer Waldorf grew rather alarmed. "It doesn't look cheesy close up. In fact, it doesn't look tasty at all!"



The spaceship landed and Waldorf peered around, feeling cold, hungry and frightened. He tasted a piece of slimy grass. "Yuk!" he said, feeling rather sick. Miserably, he sank down on a rock.



Suddenly he heard an unearthly whooping noise . . .

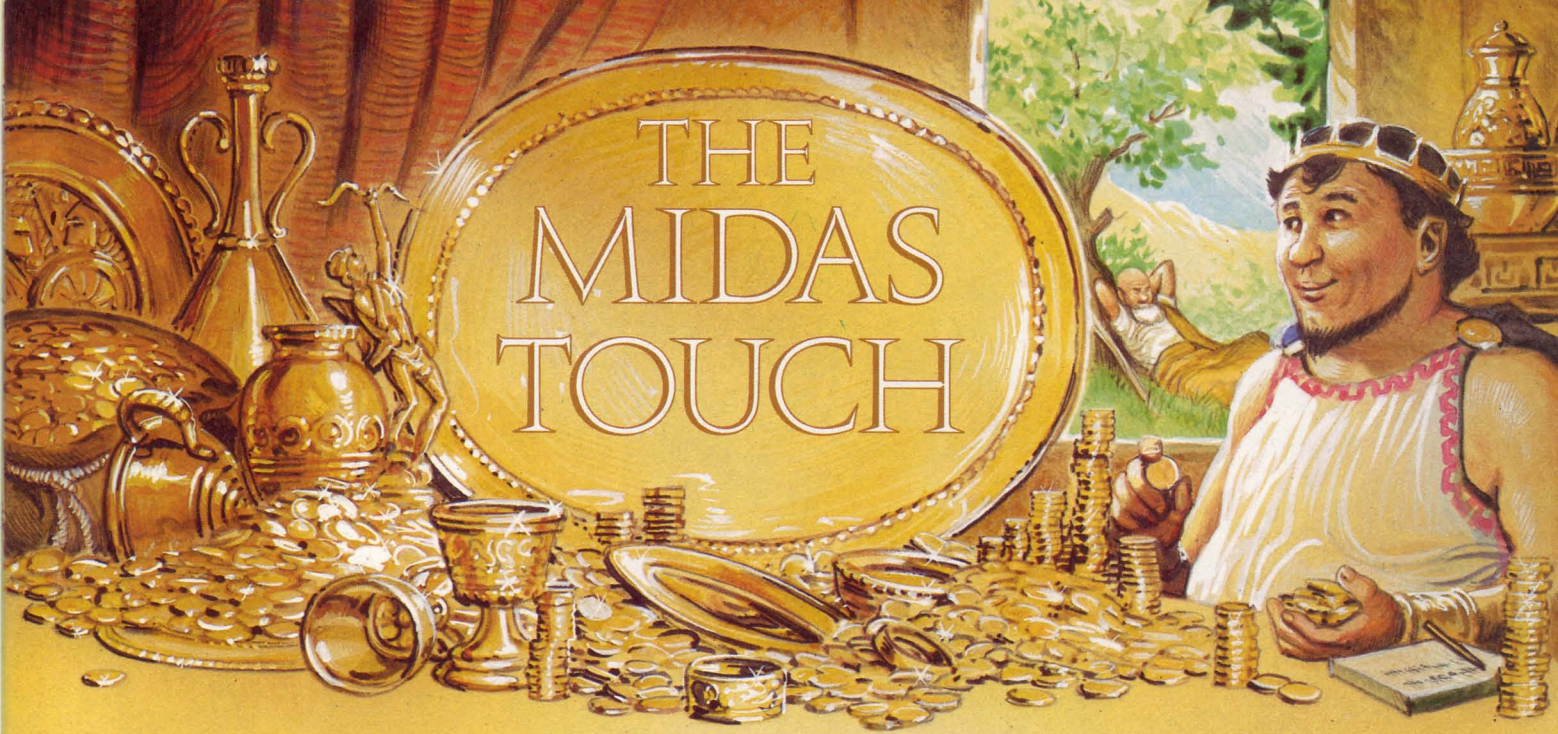


"Eek!" shrieked Waldorf as a band of weird, frightening creatures leaped out from among the rocks, yelling hideously.

"Hey!" squealed Waldorf. "Let me go!" But the gremlins and moon-rats just laughed and tightened their grip . . .

[Will Waldorf escape and accomplish his mission? Find out in Part 23]





**K**ing Midas sat in his treasure-house, counting out his money. He was surrounded by gold, for Midas was one of the richest kings in all Greece and thought there was nothing in the world better or more beautiful than gold.

Suddenly, through the window, he saw an old man sleeping under a tree. The stranger stirred and sat up. He was Silenus from the court of Dionysus, God of Wine. Midas was honoured to have such a guest, and feasted Silenus for ten

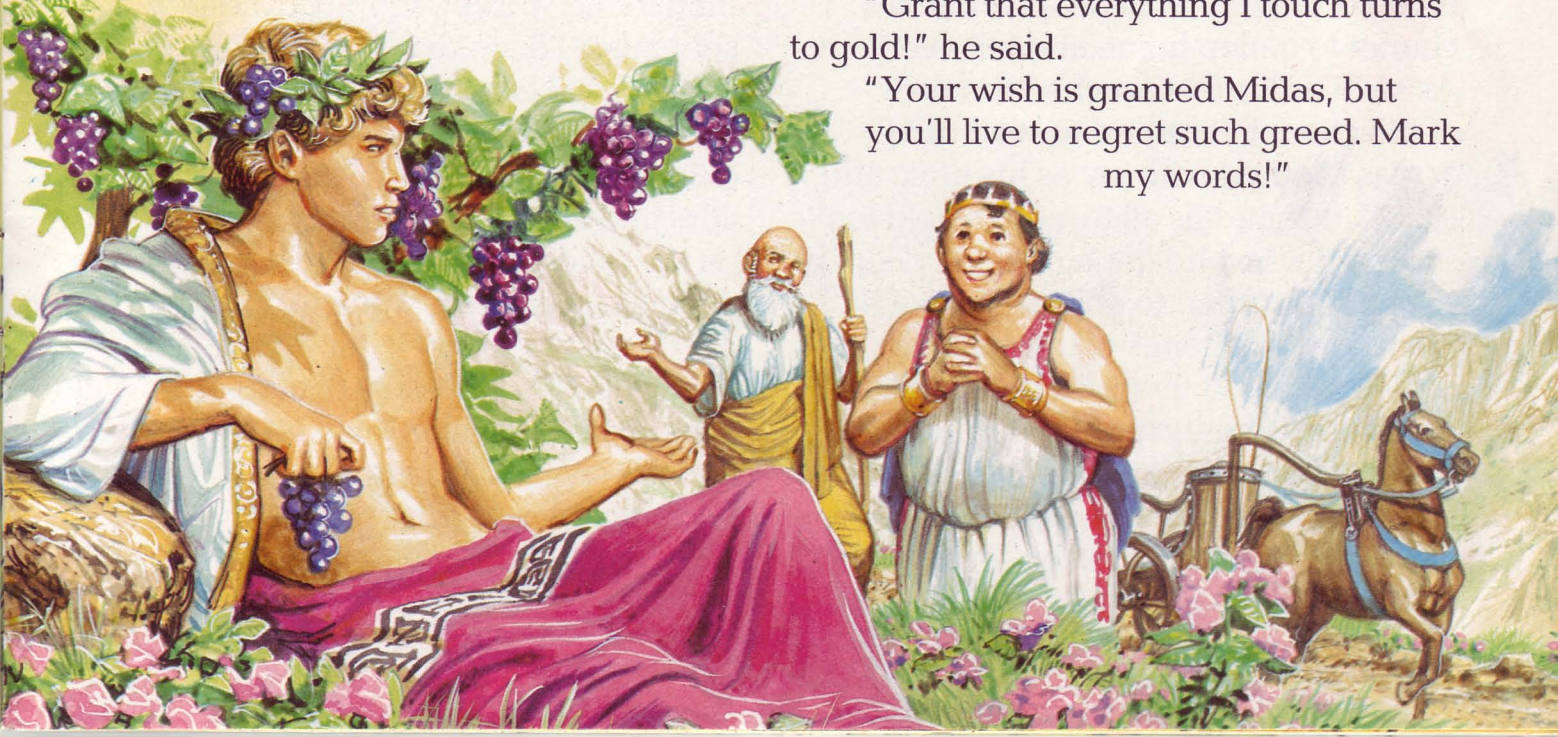
days before taking him back to Dionysus on Mount Olympus.

They found Dionysus resting in his vineyard, eating a bunch of grapes. "I'm very grateful to you, Midas," he said. "Silenus is a dear old friend, and you have shown him great kindness. Ask your reward and I shall grant it."

Now the King knew that Dionysus could grant all manner of wonderful things, and at once his thoughts turned to gold. Gold was what he wanted — gold and more gold and yet more gold.

"Grant that everything I touch turns to gold!" he said.

"Your wish is granted Midas, but you'll live to regret such greed. Mark my words!"







Midas was so excited at his wish being granted that he leaped into his chariot to gallop home and tell everyone. As soon as his feet touched the floor of the chariot, it turned to solid gold! Midas shouted with joy as his tunic and cloak and sandals all turned to gold too!

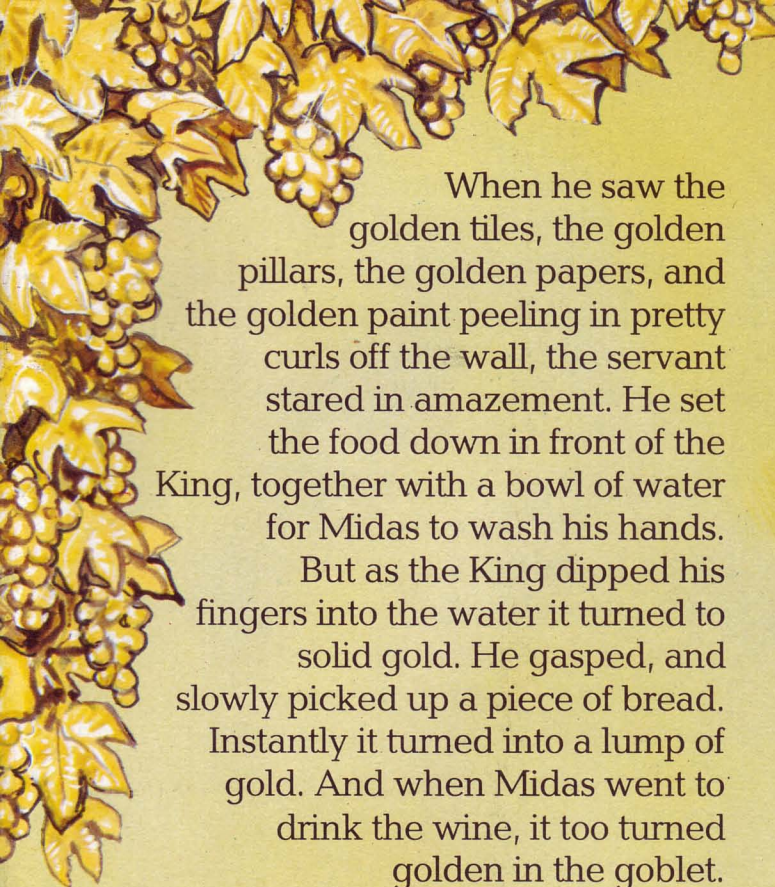
And when he got home, the doors of the palace turned to gold at his touch. So did the cobblestones of the courtyard as his feet touched them. So did the flower he picked from the palace garden. It lost its scent and colour immediately, but Midas did not care. He would keep it in his treasure-house for ever — more precious than a hundred garden flowers.

"I'm rich, I'm rich! I'm the richest man in the world!" shouted Midas to his servants. "I'll make you all rich, if you like! Look! I can turn this wall into gold. I can turn the whole palace into solid gold!" And he gave his horse an affectionate pat. Its hooves clattered once on the golden cobbles, then it was still — as still as a golden statue.

Slowly walking to his library — for his golden clothes were beginning to feel very heavy — Midas touched the shelves and the scrolls with his fingers. They all turned golden in front of his very eyes.

"Bring me some food," he called to a servant, with a chuckle.





When he saw the golden tiles, the golden pillars, the golden papers, and the golden paint peeling in pretty curls off the wall, the servant stared in amazement. He set the food down in front of the King, together with a bowl of water for Midas to wash his hands.

But as the King dipped his fingers into the water it turned to solid gold. He gasped, and slowly picked up a piece of bread. Instantly it turned into a lump of gold. And when Midas went to drink the wine, it too turned golden in the goblet.

Midas reached out and snatched the servant's arm. "What will I do? I can't eat or drink!"

The servant did not reply. He stood as still as a statue, staring at Midas with hard, golden eyes, set in a golden face. He was gold from head to foot.

"Father! Father! Make my wagon golden." "And my dish and spoon!" The



King's young son and daughter ran into the room, their arms outstretched.

Midas tried to warn them, but as they ran up to him and kissed him and hugged him, they turned into two solid lumps of gold.

Tears fell from his eyes. *Tink, tink, tink* — the beads of water fell in golden droplets down on to the floor.







By the time Midas returned to the vineyards on Mount Olympus, he was bowed down with weariness under the weight of his golden clothes. How he longed to be free of his golden touch! How he longed to eat the glistening

purple grapes that hung in clusters on the vines! But he knew that it was impossible.

"Well, Midas?" said a loud, laughing voice. "Do you have enough gold yet to satisfy your greed?"

"I hate the sight of gold," said Midas, groaning in despair. "Why did you ever grant my foolish wish. I cannot eat or drink and my poor dear children have turned into solid gold. I beg you, Dionysus, rid me of this terrible curse."

Dionysus laughed to see how Midas had changed in one short day. But at last he took pity on him. "Go to the River Pactolus and wash yourself from head to foot," he commanded.

Midas stood beside the river, and hesitated. Would the muddy water turn to gold and crush him to death?

Slowly, he knelt down and scooped up a handful of water. Raising his hand





to his head he let the water trickle through his hair and over his golden body. Slowly, little flakes of gold fell into the river, and settled on the river bed. Again and again Midas scooped up handfuls of water and bathed himself until he saw he was no longer golden. And when he ran his hands over the green grass growing on the river bank it did not turn to gold. He saw a tall water jug lying by the river. Filling it with water, Midas ran frantically back to his palace.

There he bathed the two golden statues that were his children. As he did so, his daughter put her arms around his neck and kissed him and his son went on chattering as if he had never been turned into gold . . . "And can you make the earth gold, and the sea and the sky?"

"Hush now," said Midas. "Don't speak to me of gold. I never want to see gold again. Now help me fetch some water from the river. I'm going to wash every inch of the palace."

And so he did. First his servant, then his horse, then the walls and the floors, and finally the pillars, shelves and doors of his library. Soon the only gold left in Midas's kingdom lay locked in his treasure-house. Apart, that is, from the scattered little flakes of gold lying undiscovered on the bed of the River Pactolus.





# A MEAL WITH A MAGICIAN

I have had some very strange meals in my time. If I liked I could tell you about a meal in a mine, or a meal with a millionaire. But I think you would like to hear about a meal I once had with a magician.

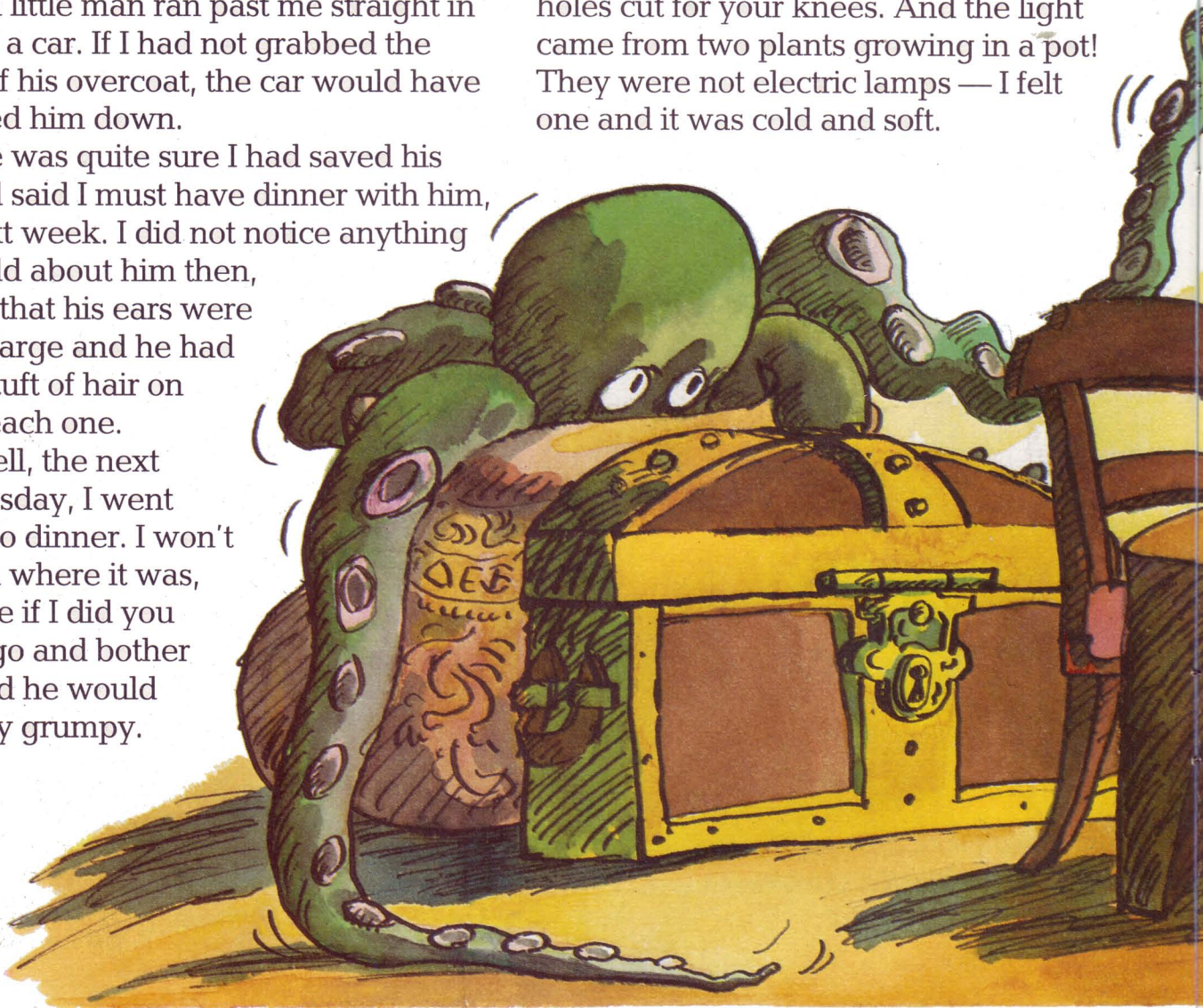
When I first met Mr Leakey, I never guessed he was a magician. I was crossing a crowded street one afternoon when a little man ran past me straight in front of a car. If I had not grabbed the collar of his overcoat, the car would have knocked him down.

He was quite sure I had saved his life and said I must have dinner with him, the next week. I did not notice anything very odd about him then, except that his ears were rather large and he had a little tuft of hair on top of each one.

Well, the next Wednesday, I went round to dinner. I won't tell you where it was, because if I did you might go and bother him and he would get very grumpy.

He might make one of your ears as big as a cabbage leaf, or change over your right and left feet.

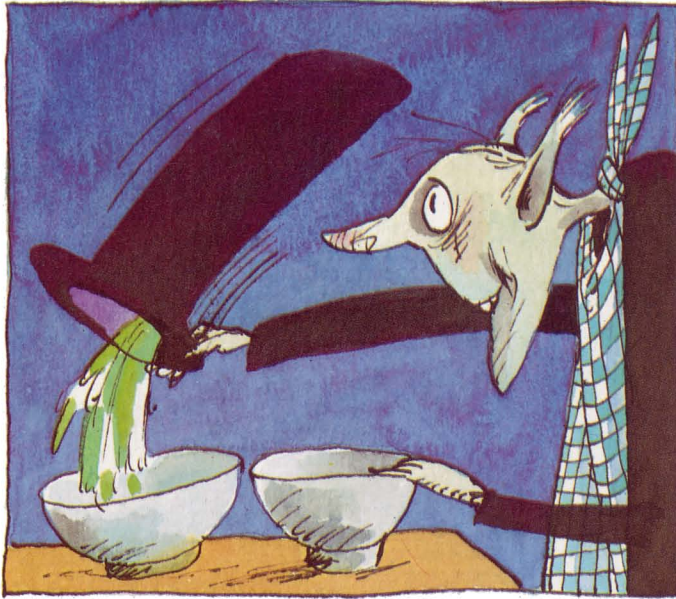
I knocked at a very ordinary door. But when I got inside, it was one of the oddest rooms I have ever seen. There were two tables. One was made of copper, with a huge crystal globe on it. The other was a solid lump of wood with holes cut for your knees. And the light came from two plants growing in a pot! They were not electric lamps — I felt one and it was cold and soft.











Instead of wallpaper, there were curtains all round the walls, embroidered with pictures of people and animals. I know they were embroidered because I touched them. But it must have been a very funny sort of embroidery because as long as you looked at the pictures they stayed still, but when you looked away and back again, they had changed.

"Look here," said Mr Leakey, "you aren't easily frightened, are you?"

"Er, not very easily," I said.

"All right, then, I'll call my servant. But I must warn you, he's rather odd."

At that, Mr Leakey flapped the tops of his ears against his head. It made a noise like clapping, but not so loud.

Out of a big copper pot in the corner came what I thought at first was a large, wet snake. Then I saw it had suckers all down one side. It was the arm of an octopus. Slowly, the whole creature came out and crawled up the wall. Then it slithered along the ceiling, holding on by its suckers.

When it was above the table, it held on by one arm and with the other seven it got plates and knives and forks out of the cupboards and laid the table.

"That's Oliver," said Mr Leakey. "He's much better than a butler. He has more arms to work with."

"Now what would you like for dinner? You can have whatever you like. Pumpkin pie . . . or spinach soup?"








"Thank you. I'll have soup."

I was not surprised to see that Mr Leakey was wearing a top hat. I did think it queer, though, when he took it off and poured two platefuls of soup out of it.

"Ah, we want some cream don't we? Come here, Phyllis."



A small green cow, about the size of a rabbit, ran out of a hutch, jumped on to the table and stood in front of Mr Leakey, who milked her into a silver cream jug, which Oliver handed down for the purpose. The cream was excellent and I enjoyed the soup very much.

"What would you like next?" said Mr Leakey.

"Oh, I leave it to you."

"All right, we'll have grilled fish," said Mr Leakey. "And turkey to follow. Catch us a fish please, Oliver, and be ready to grill it, Pompey."

I heard a noise in the fireplace, and Pompey came out. He was a small, cheerful-looking dragon.

He had been lying on the burning coal and was red-hot. So I was glad to see that, as soon as he got out of the fireplace, he reached for a pair of fireproof boots.

"Now, Pompey," said Mr Leakey. "Hold your tail up. If you burn the carpet again, I'll pour cold water over you."

Then he added in a low voice which only I could hear,

"Of course I wouldn't really do that. It's very cruel to pour cold water on a dragon."

So Pompey waddled along on his hind legs, holding up his tail.

I was so busy watching the little dragon that I never saw how Oliver caught the fish, but when I looked at him again, he had finished cleaning it and threw it down to Pompey. Pompey caught it in his front paws, which were just about the right temperature for grilling things.

Oliver handed him a plate, and he served the fish sizzling hot.

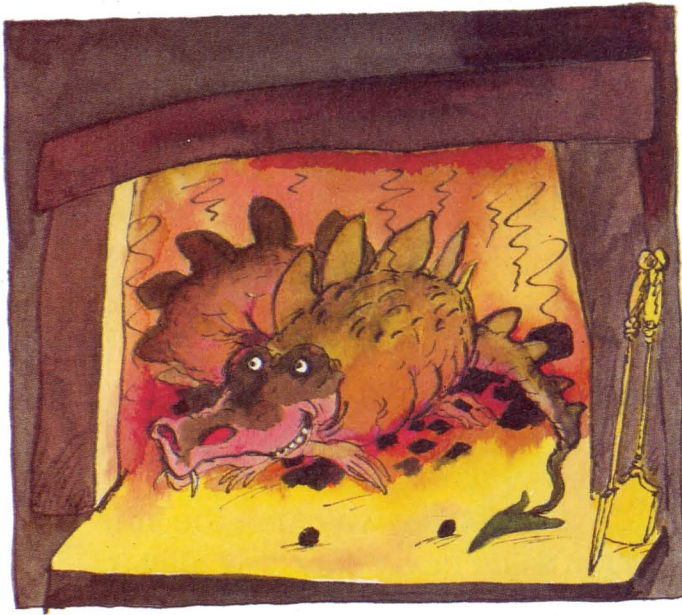
Mr Leakey said, "A dragon can be very useful. Better than a dog for dealing with burglars, don't you think?"

"Well, do you know, Mr Leakey," I'm ashamed to say that Pompey's the first dragon I've ever seen."

"Of course, of course. How stupid of me. But perhaps you've already guessed that I'm a magician?"







By now, Pompey was feeling the cold, and his teeth were chattering, and he gladly scampered back to the fire. Then, Oliver let down a large roast turkey on a china plate.

Mr Leakey took a pipe out of his pocket and blew into it. Six large sausages came out of the other end. Oliver handed down the vegetables — but I don't know where they came from. The gravy came out of Mr Leakey's hat.

"I'll prepare some fruit while we're eating," he said.

He stood up and tapped the corners of the table with his wand. At each corner the wood swelled, then cracked, and little green shoots came out and started growing. While we ate the turkey, the green shoots grew into small trees with ripe juicy fruit.

One tree had beautiful golden fruit, which Mr Leakey called mangoes.

"The only proper place to eat a





mango," he said, "is in the bath. They're so messy. You see, they have a tough skin and a squashy inside, so once you get through the skin all the juice squirts out. But I'll charm this one so that it won't splash you." He made a short spell and then I ate the mango. It was wonderful. Later on he gave me five mangoes to take home, but I had to eat them in the bath because they were not charmed.

While we were having coffee — out of the hat, of course — we talked for a while about magic and football and dogs. Then I said I must be getting home.

With two of his arms, Oliver fetched my coat and helped me on with it.

"I'll take you home now," said Mr Leakey, "but when you have a day to spare, we might go over to India or China or somewhere for the afternoon. Let me know when you're free. Now stand on this carpet and shut your eyes or you might get giddy. People often do, the first time they travel by magic carpet."

We got on to the hearthrug and I shut my eyes. My friend told the carpet my address and flapped his ears. I felt a cold rush of air on my cheeks and a slight giddiness. Then the air was warm again, and Mr Leakey told me to open my eyes. I was in my sitting-room in my own home, on the other side of town. As the room was so small, the carpet could not settle down properly and stayed about a foot up in the air. I stepped down off it and thanked the old magician.

"Goodnight," said Mr Leakey, as he bent down to shake my hand. Then he flapped his ears again and the carpet vanished. I was left in the room with nothing but a nice warm feeling — and a parcel of five mangoes — to prove to myself that it had not all been a dream.







# Eleven Wild Swans

**I**n the beginning, there was no-one happier than the Princess Eliza and her eleven brothers. Their mother and father loved them all dearly. But then the Queen died, and the King took a second wife. He chose unwisely — a beautiful but wicked sorceress who hated the twelve children. She sold all their toys, and would gladly have sold them too.

Still, the children were happy, because they had each other. As the years passed the princes grew up kind and good, and Eliza grew more beautiful every day.

The new queen's jealousy was terrible to see. She could not bear to have such children near her. So early one morning, she woke the eleven princes and led them, sleepy and yawning, down to the dewy





garden. There she touched each boy in turn upon the cheek. "Now! Become black crows and fly away for ever!"

But the wicked queen's magic was blunted by their goodness. Instead of ugly crows, the princes turned into wild, white swans. "Fly!" she shrieked in fury. "May huntsmen shoot you down!"

And they flew away in silence — because, of course, a swan has no voice.

Next, the Queen woke Eliza. "It's time to get up," she said. "Your bath is ready." But when Eliza lay back in the tub, the Queen poured dark brown dye into the water! The Princess's white skin and golden hair were stained as brown as wood.

Later that morning, when the King found out that his sons had disappeared, he was sick with worry. Then the Queen said, "The gypsies must have stolen them. You should banish all gypsies from your kingdom!"

So the King issued a decree, banishing all gypsies. And when he glimpsed a brown-faced, dark-haired girl in his own hallway, he had her driven straight out of the house. "Get out of my land!" he shouted. And his own, dear daughter, the Princess Eliza, hurried away in tears.

Outside the palace gates, Eliza dried her eyes. "I must find my poor brothers. What *can* the Queen have done to them? Where can they be?"

For days she walked down long, dusty roads, asking everyone she met if they had seen eleven princes. Finally she reached the sea. She washed herself in the surf and the brown dye on her skin and hair bubbled away into the sand. As she did so, she heard the heavy beat of birds' wings. Eleven white swans were flying overhead.







Eliza hid among the dunes and watched as the great white birds landed majestically on the beach. To her amazement, each swan wore a small, gold crown! And when the sun dipped below the horizon, and the stars came out, each swan in turn shook off its feathers — to reveal one of her brothers! Soon all eleven princes stood talking together at the water's edge.

Eliza ran down from the dunes to join them. "Is it you? Is it really you?" And the princes crowded round her in joy.



"Eliza! Thank God! The wicked queen hasn't destroyed you, after all!"

Eliza hugged and kissed each of her brothers. Then she said, "Let's go home."

The swan-princes looked at each other sadly. "We can't, Eliza. Only at night are we human. In the daytime, the Queen's magic makes us swans again, and we must fly across the ocean to escape the hunters. Across the water is a beautiful land where the rivers are full of fish to eat. We only come back each night to look for you."

"Then take me with you," Eliza said. "Don't leave me here alone."

Before dawn, the eleven princes made a hammock for their sister out of an old fishing net left on the beach. Then, as the sun's first rays sparkled on the sea, their bodies disappeared under feathers, and they were transformed into swans. Eliza stepped on to the net, and the swans picked it up with their beaks.

To either side of her, the huge white



wings beat the air, and they began their long journey over the sea. Carrying Eliza, the swans could fly only slowly, and at dusk they were still miles from land. At any moment, the swans would turn back into humans, and fall from the sky!

Far below them, one small rock, no bigger than a table, rose out of the rolling sea. The eleven swans dived as one, and at the very moment they landed, their feathers disappeared. All night long, the brothers and their sister clung tightly to one another to keep from being washed off by the pounding sea.

In the morning, the swan-princes flew on to their new homeland. They set Eliza down outside a warm cave and she stroked their heads as they lay wearily on the sand.

Each day the swans went in search of food. Sometimes they would come home

trembling. "Today the Duke who rules this country almost shot me down. Look where his arrow grazed my back!" Then Eliza would tremble, too. She longed for some way of saving her brothers from their terrible half-life.

One day, Eliza was walking to the nearby city when she passed an ancient graveyard. There she met a wise old woman, and decided to ask her advice. "Please help me," she begged when she had told her story. "Sooner or later they will all be shot by hunters."







The old woman looked hard at Eliza, then smiled sadly. "Calm yourself, child. There is a way of saving your brothers. But you will need to be very brave."

"I'll do *anything*."

"Then listen carefully. With your bare hands, you must pick nettles from the graveyard behind this house. Then you must pound the nettles into flax with your bare feet, and weave the flax into eleven shirts. When all eleven are finished — not before — give them to your brothers, and they will be men again. But from the moment you grasp the first nettle until the last shirt is put on, you must not speak one word. If you do, all your brothers will die."

Eliza was already running towards the graveyard. She tore up handfuls of cruel nettles, and her poor hands were soon burning and blistered. But she did not even glance at them. She carried the nettles back to the cave, and trampled them with her bare feet. By the time the swans flew home

at sunset, she was already spinning thread.

When her brothers saw what she was doing, they understood and wept for her sacrifice. Their tears fell on to her blisters, and eased the pain.

Day after day, Eliza picked more nettles and trampled, wove and spun them into cloth. Then, one day, when she had almost finished the task, the Duke himself caught sight of her lovely face. She was in the graveyard, gathering nettles. "Who are you,







maiden?" he asked, taking her bundle from her — and dropping it in pain. She longed to tell him the whole story, but dared not speak. "You must come to the palace with me. I'll have the royal doctor look at your poor hands — then I'll dress you in velvet!"

The Duke walked with Eliza as far as the cave, pleading in vain for answers to his questions. He grew impatient. "Even if you are dumb, by heaven, I *will* take you with me!"

Eliza just had time to snatch up the ten shirts she had made — and the eleventh which was almost finished — before the Duke lifted her on to his horse and rode to the palace. Her wide eyes implored him to let her go. But she was so lovely that the more he looked at her, the more he wanted

her. He took her to a gorgeous room, locked the door, and sent for the royal doctor.

"She is dumb and her hands and feet are burned! Can she be cured?"

"Perhaps, perhaps," replied the doctor. "Take me to her. At least I can give her lotions to ease the pain."

But as the two men climbed the stairway to her bedroom, they heard the clatter of a window. Eliza was escaping! "I *must* finish!" she told herself as she fled. "I *must* finish the eleventh shirt!"

The Duke and the doctor followed Eliza to the graveyard. From behind the headstones they watched her picking nettles. "She's a witch!" hissed the doctor. "She picks them for her potions and spells! A witch! A witch!"



Soldiers came, and Eliza was dragged off to prison. The Duke begged her to explain. "You will be burned at the stake tomorrow unless you tell us why you were picking nettles in the graveyard!"

But Eliza could not explain — she had to stay silent. She was thrown into a dark cell, with her bundle beside her. And there, that night, she trampled and span the nettles for the eleventh shirt. At dawn the executioner came to fetch her.

The prison cart swayed and bumped along the road, but Eliza saw nothing of the angry crowds or the waiting stake — she was still sewing the pieces of the eleventh shirt. As she was pulled from the cart, she clutched the work to her. Then the

executioner led her towards the stake.

The fire was just being lit when the sound of beating wings was heard in the sky. The crowd gaped up as eleven wild swans flew low over their heads, and landed in a circle round the stake.

One by one, Eliza threw the nettle shirts over each narrow head and long neck. As the coarse green cloth touched the white feathers, the swans were transformed into princes.

The crowd gasped in amazement, and Eliza poured out the whole story of her struggle to save her brothers. Then the Duke stepped forward and led her from the stake. "Now speak, Eliza! Will you marry me?"

And the Princess Eliza looked up at him, took his hand, and softly said, "I will."





# TIMBERTWIG

## Catches a Marrow



One fine morning Timbertwig strolled into the kitchen to find Granny Knot preparing the dinner.

"Now let me see," she muttered.

"I need a good sprinkling of frog's eggs, a pinch of soil and some mouldy green mushrooms. Mmm, lovely."

"Yuck!" said Timbertwig. "What do you call it?"

"I call it 'The Granny Knot not-so-Hot-Pot'. And it's no good screwing up your face, my lad — only the best bits go into my hot-pots!"

Timbertwig picked up a long,

thin dish. "What's this for?"

"It's for serving a marrow."

"Oh, I've never seen a marrow. How do you cook it?"

A wicked gleam came into Granny Knot's eye. "Cook it? You've got to catch it first," she said, sniggering to herself.

"What do they look like?" asked Timbertwig excitedly. "Do they have six horns, three eyes and a wooden leg?"

"Oh dear, what an imagination! No, a marrow looks like a great fat sausage and it's green and yellow. Perhaps you'd like to catch one for me?"

"Yes, please!" replied Timbertwig.

"Then we can cook it for dinner."

"Here's a cardboard box to catch it in — and take that horrible pet spider of yours with you."



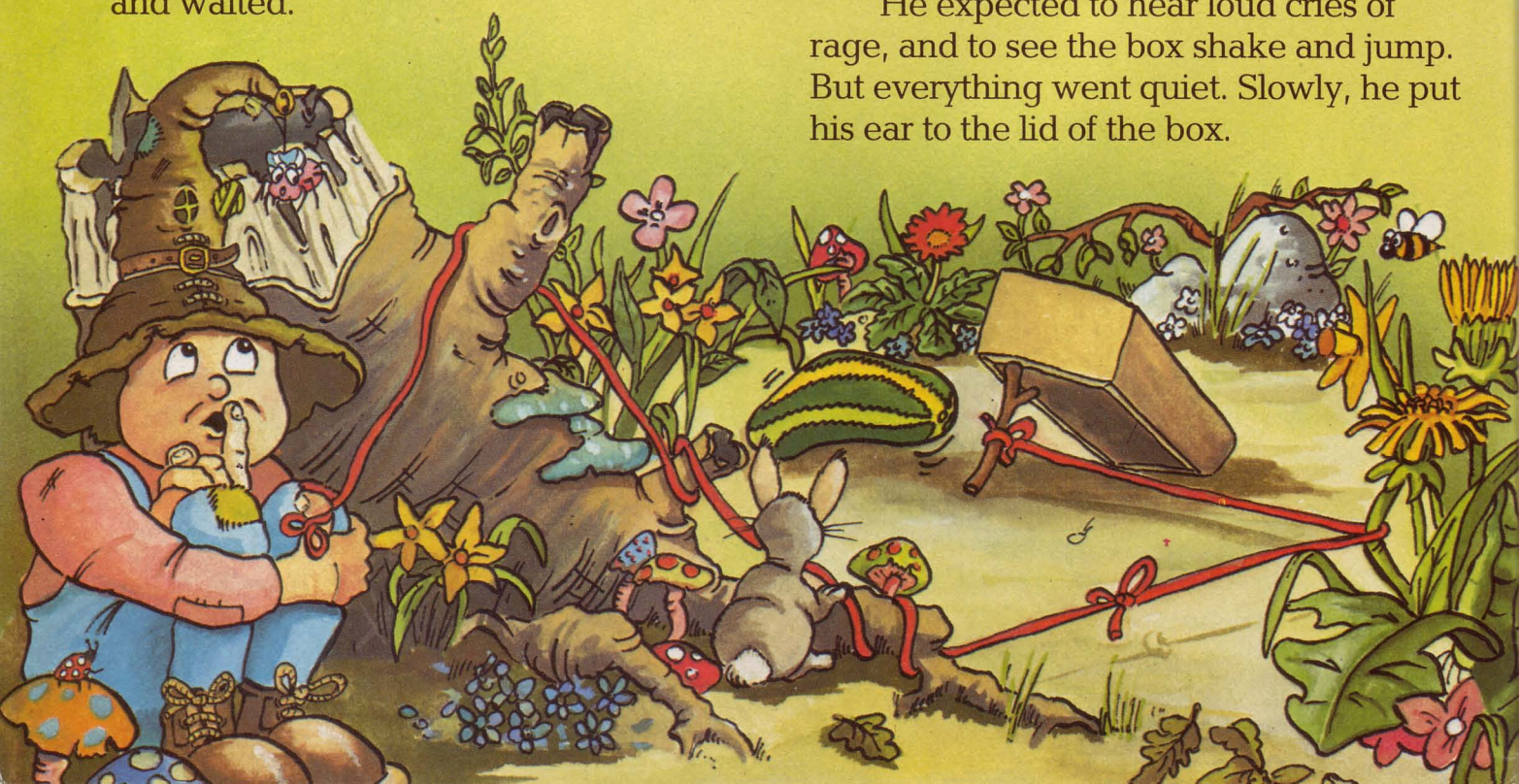
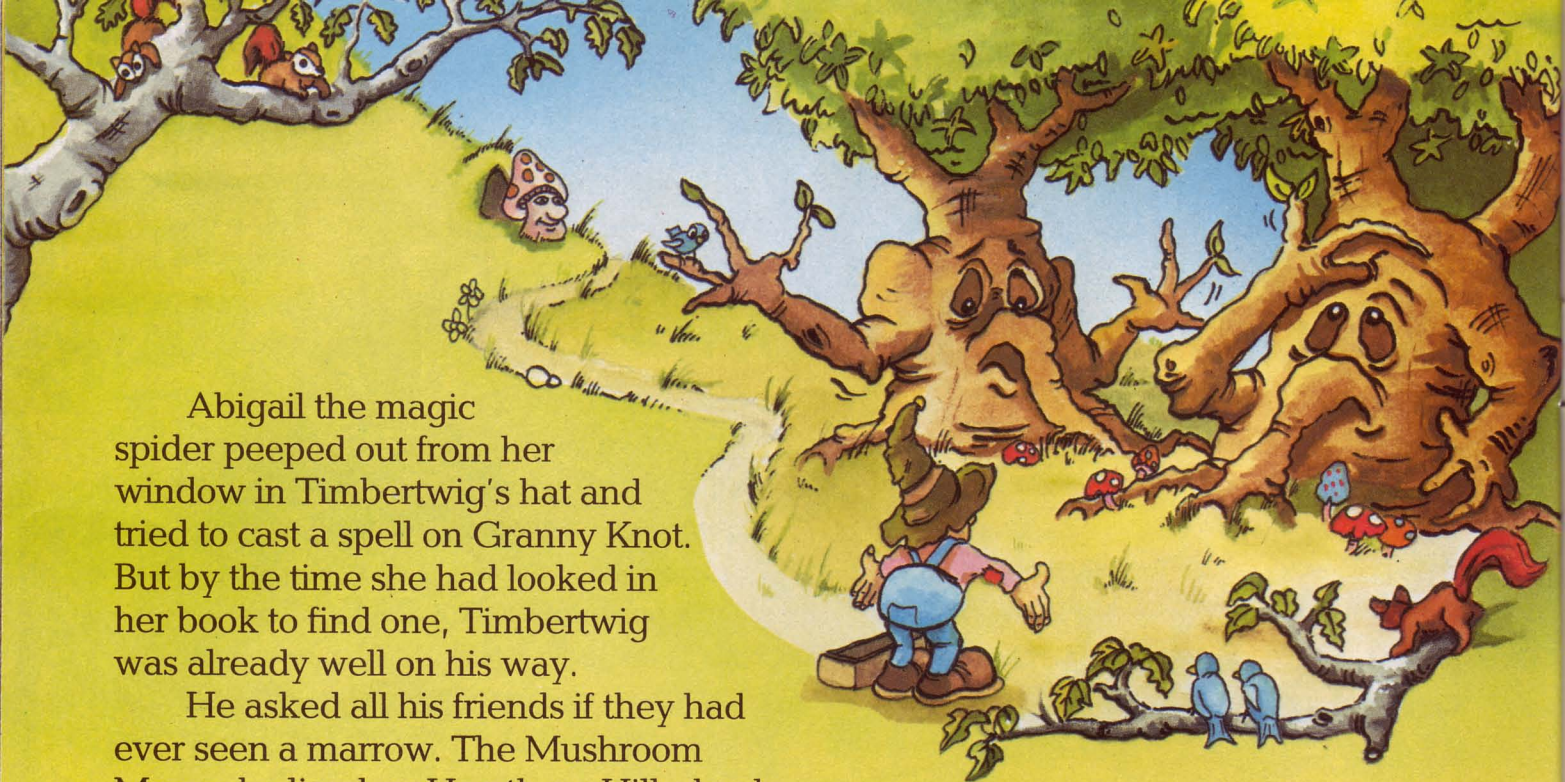
Abigail the magic spider peeped out from her window in Timbertwig's hat and tried to cast a spell on Granny Knot. But by the time she had looked in her book to find one, Timbertwig was already well on his way.

He asked all his friends if they had ever seen a marrow. The Mushroom Man, who lived on Hawthorn Hill, shook his spotty head from side to side, and the Tickling Trees in the Valley shrugged their shoulders.

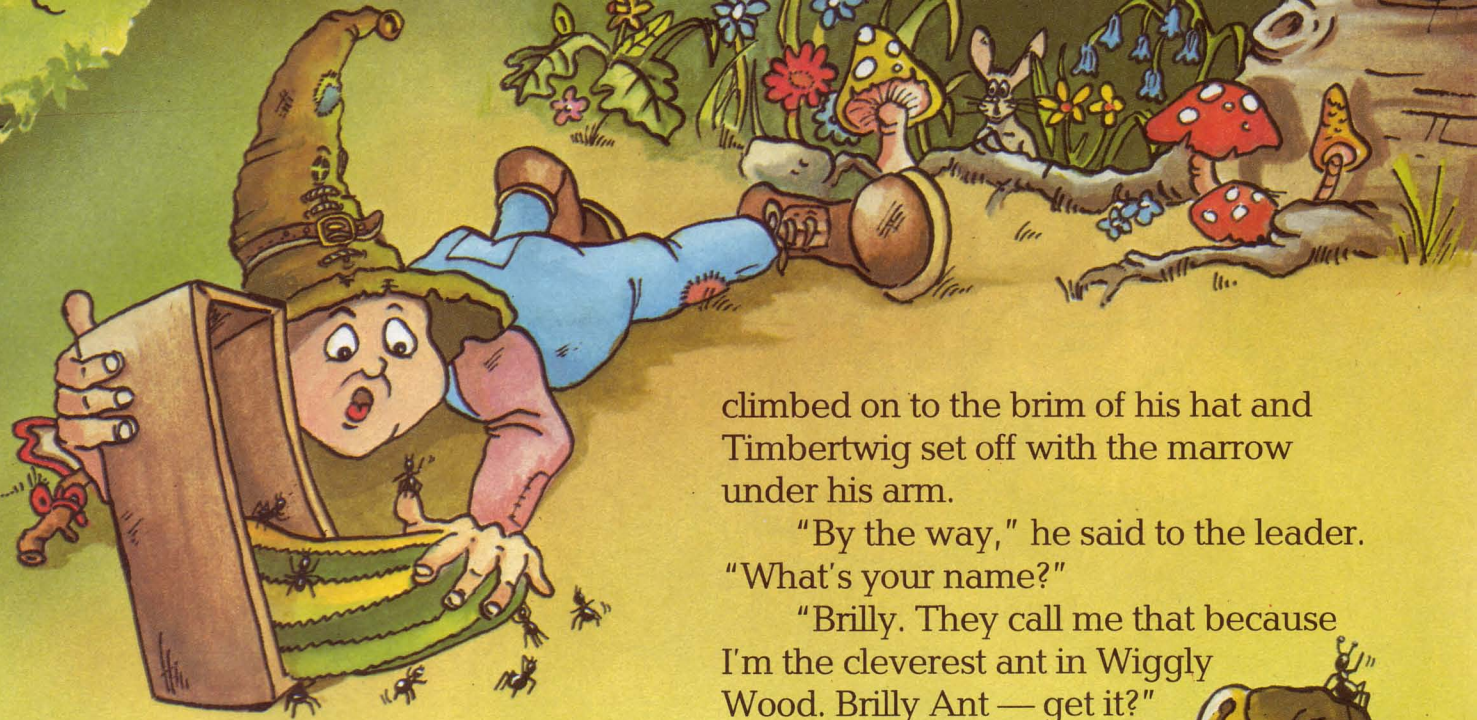
Just when he was about to give up he heard a rustling sound as something approached from the nearby bushes. Timbertwig quickly set his trap. First, he propped up the box with a stick. Then, holding the end of a length of string tied to the stick, he hid behind a fallen tree, and waited.

The rustling of the bushes grew louder and louder until finally a large green and yellow marrow moved into the clearing. First it ran one way, and banged into a tree stump, then it backed away and tripped over a root. Finally it headed towards the trap, nearer and nearer, until . . . "Got you!" Timbertwig pulled on the string and sprang the trap.

He expected to hear loud cries of rage, and to see the box shake and jump. But everything went quiet. Slowly, he put his ear to the lid of the box.







"Oh help us, help us!" cried high-pitched voices from inside. "What's happening?" Timbertwig lifted up the box to find a family of tiny ants climbing round the marrow.

"Aargh! Look out! Run for your lives," they all screamed.

"Don't worry, I'm not going to hurt you," said Timbertwig. "I only wanted to catch the marrow!"

The ants all started chuckling, and rolling off the top of the marrow with laughter. "You can't *catch* a marrow!" said the ant leader. "It's a vegetable and we were carrying it. Someone has been pulling your leg!"

Then Timbertwig remembered how Granny had laughed — and blushed to think how silly he had been.

"Well, what do a family of ants need a marrow for then?"

"We'll show you," replied the leader, "down at Bilberry Brook." All the ants

climbed on to the brim of his hat and Timbertwig set off with the marrow under his arm.

"By the way," he said to the leader. "What's your name?"

"Brilly. They call me that because I'm the cleverest ant in Wiggly Wood. Brilly Ant — get it?"

All the ants began to chuckle again — and this time it woke Abigail.

"Eeek!" she screamed as she poked her head through her little door. "I'm not having my hat turned into a home for stray insects." And she slammed her door.







Timbertwig saw the ants' problem as soon as they reached Bilberry Brook. Because of heavy rain the water had risen higher and higher until the banks were nearly overflowing. And right next to the river stood a tall ant-hill.

"So you wanted the marrow to help you dam the brook," said Timbertwig. "Before your home was flooded."

"That's right" replied Brilly. "It was the biggest thing we could carry!"

"I know just the person to help you," said Timbertwig, tapping on Abigail's door.

"Go away," she cried. "I'm not having my home overrun by ants!"

"But Abigail, if you can help, the ants will stay here in Bilberry Brook," said Timbertwig, and he explained the problem.

"Oh, all right then." And Abigail produced her book of spells. "I've found just the thing," she announced, and began waving her magic wand.

*"Diggledy, doggledy, daggledy, dote  
Make for the ant-hill  
a clean-flowing moat."*

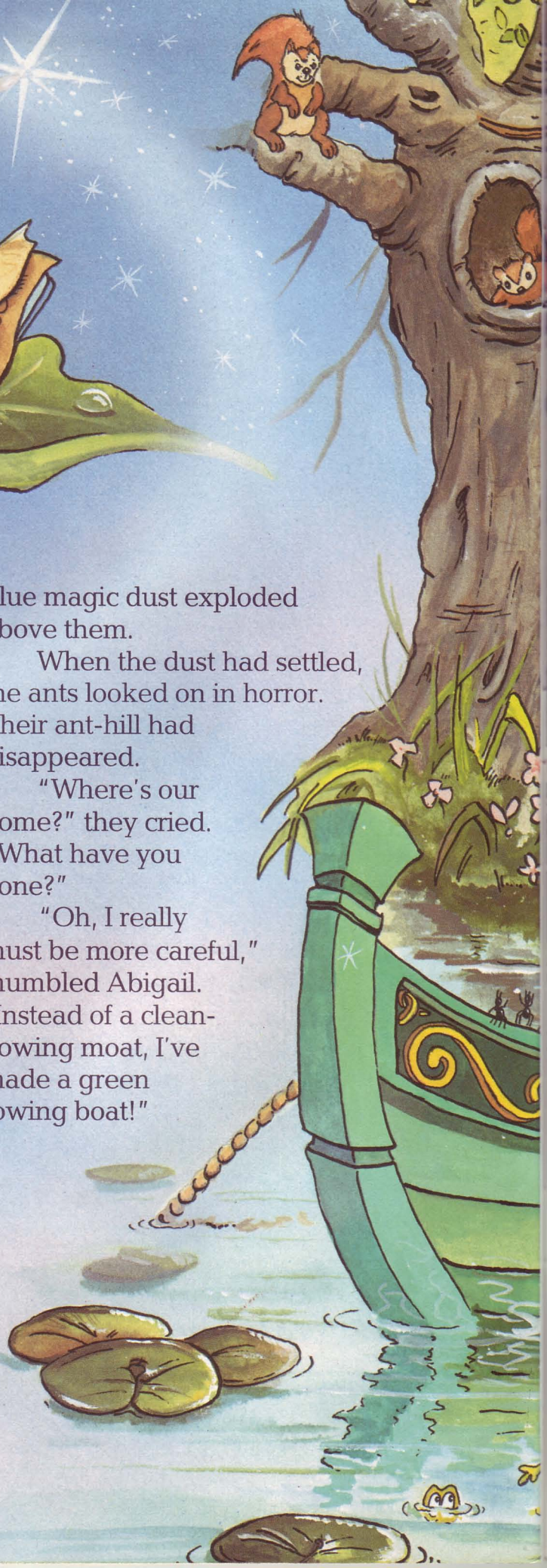
The little ants shrieked as sparkling

blue magic dust exploded above them.

When the dust had settled, the ants looked on in horror. Their ant-hill had disappeared.

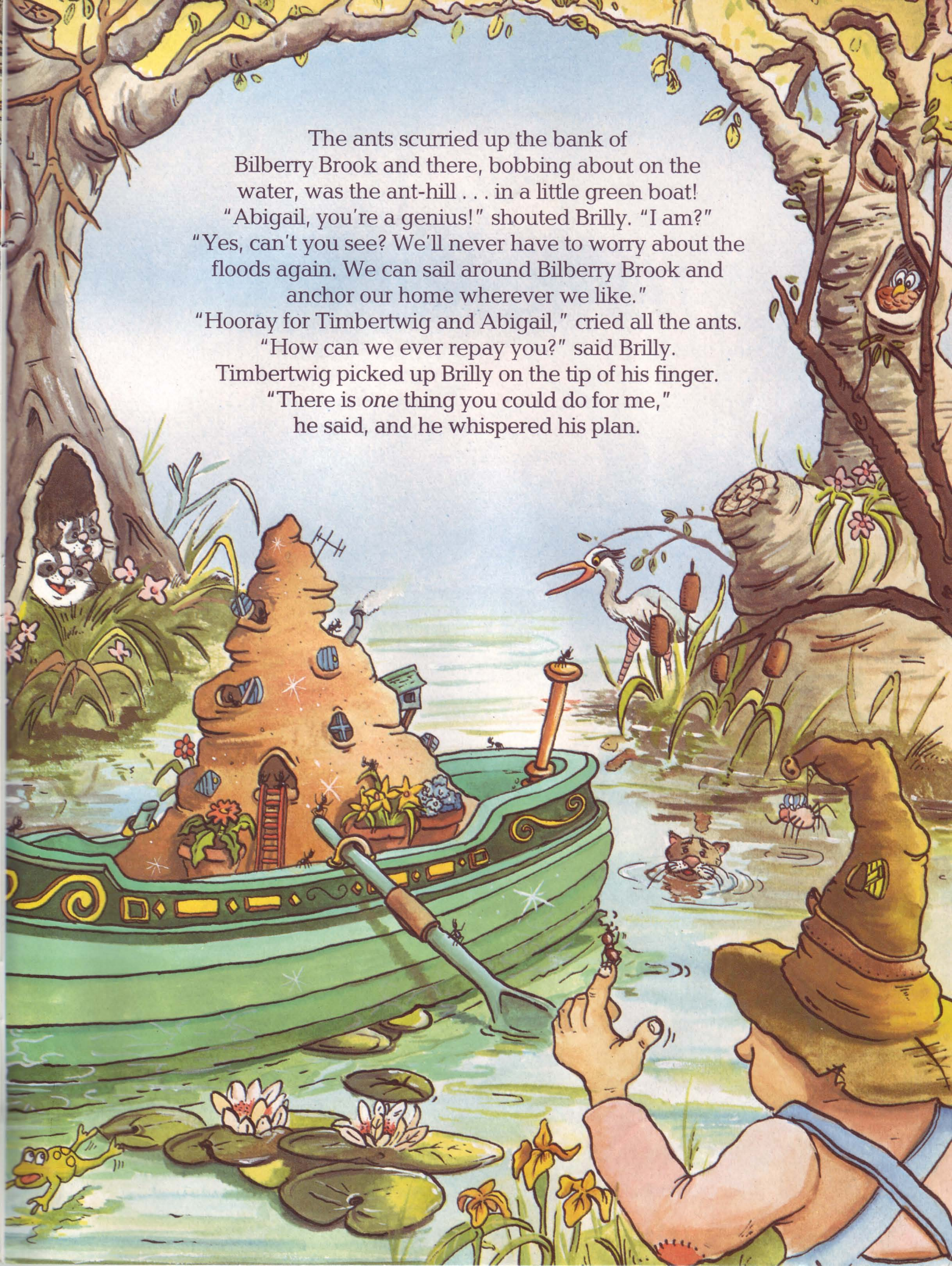
"Where's our home?" they cried. "What have you done?"

"Oh, I really must be more careful," mumbled Abigail. "Instead of a clean-flowing moat, I've made a green rowing boat!"





The ants scurried up the bank of  
Bilberry Brook and there, bobbing about on the  
water, was the ant-hill . . . in a little green boat!  
"Abigail, you're a genius!" shouted Brilly. "I am?"  
"Yes, can't you see? We'll never have to worry about the  
floods again. We can sail around Bilberry Brook and  
anchor our home wherever we like."  
"Hooray for Timbertwig and Abigail," cried all the ants.  
"How can we ever repay you?" said Brilly.  
Timbertwig picked up Brilly on the tip of his finger.  
"There is *one* thing you could do for me,"  
he said, and he whispered his plan.





"Ah, there you are," said Granny Knot as Timbertwig came in with his cardboard box. "Well, did you catch a marrow?"

"Yes Granny, I did," he replied, placing the box on the floor.

"This I must see," she chuckled as she opened the box. But Granny Knot was in for a surprise. The marrow jumped out and chased her round the kitchen, knocking over pots and pans, buckets and brooms as it ran riot.

"Take it away!" she shrieked,

jumping on to a stool. "Take it away!"

Finally the marrow ran straight into the stool and tipped Granny Knot, bottom-first, into the hot-pot.

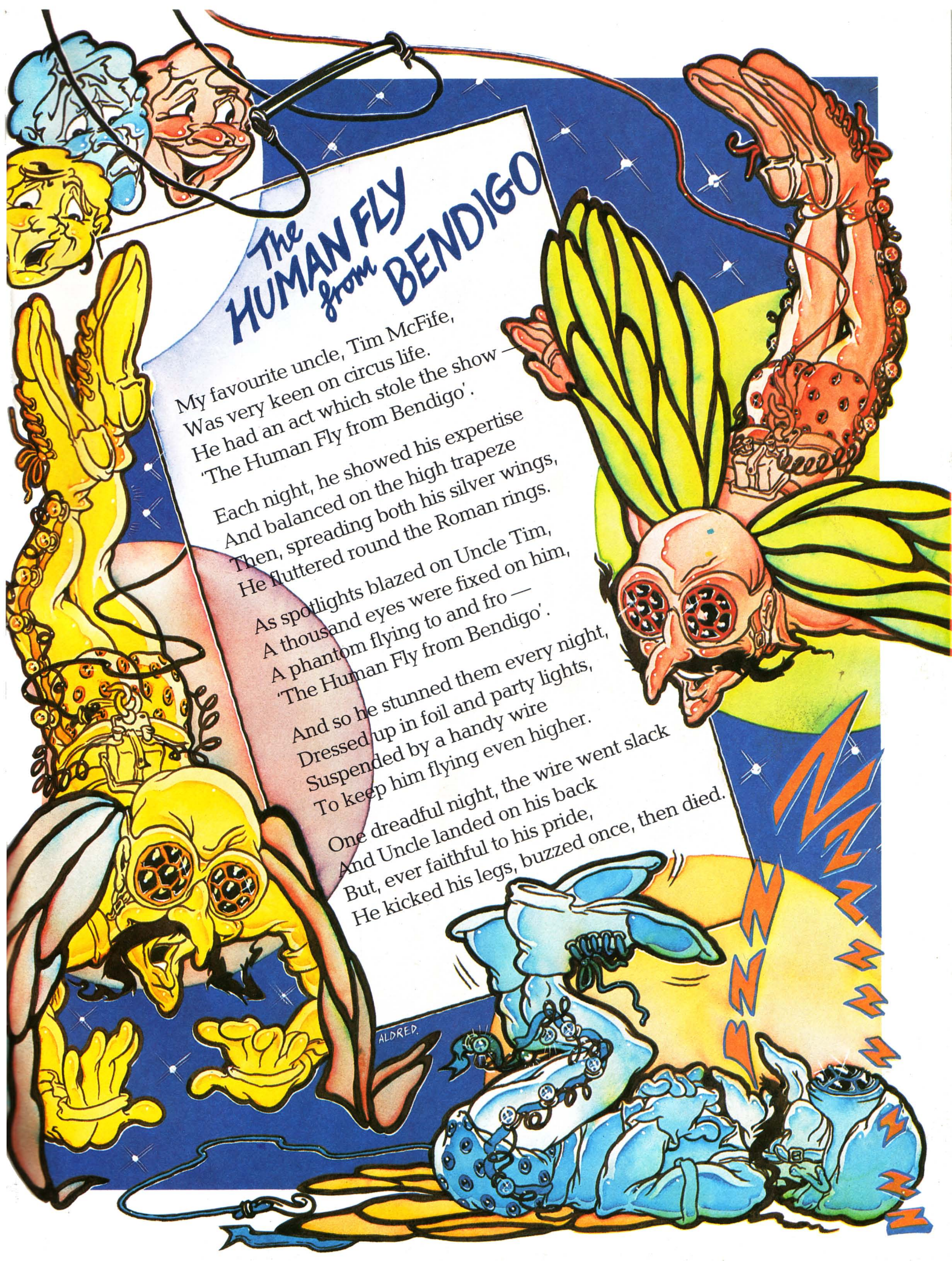
Timbertwig and Abigail laughed until they cried as Brilly and the other ants scurried off into Wiggly Wood.

"What's so funny?" snapped Granny Knot. "Get me out of here at once!"

"I just remembered what you said," laughed Timbertwig. "Only the best bits go into your not-so-hot Hot-Pots!" And Granny Knot began to laugh as loud as anyone in Wiggly Wood had ever heard.







# The HUMAN FLY from BENDIGO

My favourite uncle, Tim McFife,  
Was very keen on circus life.  
He had an act which stole the show —  
'The Human Fly from Bendigo'.

Each night, he showed his expertise  
And balanced on the high trapeze  
Then, spreading both his silver wings,  
He fluttered round the Roman rings.

As spotlights blazed on Uncle Tim,  
A thousand eyes were fixed on him,  
A phantom flying to and fro —  
'The Human Fly from Bendigo'.

And so he stunned them every night,  
Dressed up in foil and party lights,  
Suspended by a handy wire  
To keep him flying even higher.

One dreadful night, the wire went slack  
And Uncle landed on his back  
But, ever faithful to his pride,  
He kicked his legs, buzzed once, then died.

ALDRED



# IN PART 23 OF **STORY**Teller

**GOLDBLOCKS** goes down to the woods —  
and she's in for a big surprise!

You, too, can join in **WALDORF'S  
FANTASTIC TRIP**. But be warned!  
Waldorf is a mouse with a very  
bad memory...

Fair shares for **THE FROG, THE CAT  
AND THE LITTLE RED HEN**

The castle of Dunvegan prizes one treasure  
above all others — a pale yellow strip of  
silk... a magical **FAERY FLAG**

**DAD AND THE CAT AND THE TREE** —  
a rhyming recipe for disaster

It's **TIMBERTWIG'S BIRTHDAY**, so come and  
join him and all his friends one last time  
in Wiggly Wood

Once in a blue moon, the most extraordinary  
adventures can happen to a **RUNAWAY PIANO**

Readers include  
**ANNETTE CROSBIE, DAVID ASHFORD  
& GAY SOPER**

