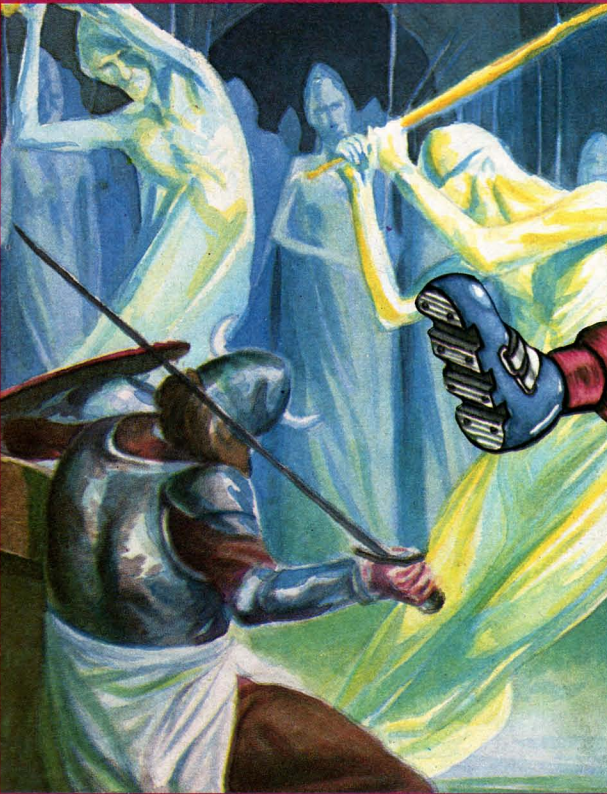




PART 23

# STORY Teller

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



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# STORY Teller

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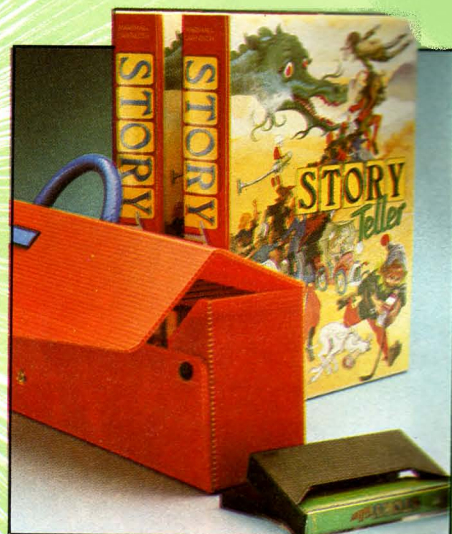
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The Faery Flag: **Annette Crosbie**

The Runaway Piano: **David Ashford**

The Little Red Hen: **Annette Crosbie**



# TIMBERTWIG'S Birthday

One clear summer night down in Wiggly Wood, when all the animals were fast asleep, Granny Knot slipped into her dressing-gown and tip-toed down the stairs to the kitchen. She lit a candle and began to write invitations to a very special party.

When Timbertwig woke the next morning he found Abigail dangling in front of his face, smiling broadly.

"Happy birthday!" she announced, giving him a spider-sized kiss on the end of his nose.

"Oh, thank you, Abigail," replied Timbertwig, looking in the mirror.



"Do you think I look any bigger?"

Abigail chuckled. "Just a little bit, perhaps. Look, I've made you a present. I hope you like it."

"Why thank you, Abigail," said Timbertwig as he opened the small parcel. "But what is it?"

"It's a scarf," she said.

"But it's so small!"

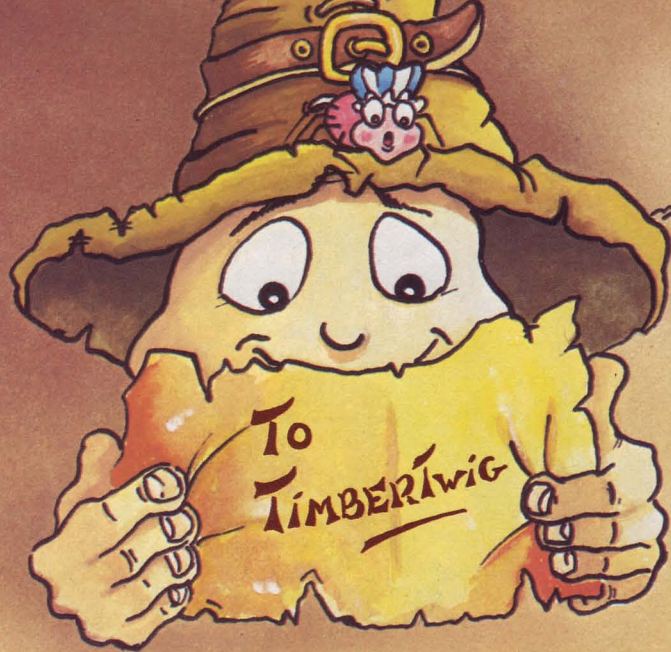
"Well, I had a bit of an accident," began Abigail. "I knitted a really long scarf, but it was too thin. So I tried magic to make it wider, but it shrank to fit a spider!"

"Never mind. It's the thought that counts. You wear it instead."

So Abigail did.







Meanwhile, Granny had prepared a surprise of her own. She sneaked outside the house and posted an envelope through the letter-box, then knocked on the door and hid behind a tree. "Oh look!" cried Timbertwig when he saw the envelope. "It's addressed to me." He tore it open and began to read the letter.

'Dear Timbertwig,  
I have prepared a special surprise for your birthday, but to find it you will have to follow the clues.

All my love,  
Granny'



Timbertwig turned the paper over, and there was the first clue:

*To start your search, you must find  
The little one who's almost blind.*

"I know who that is!" said Timbertwig. "It must mean Muddle the Mole!"

Timbertwig ran quickly into Wiggly Wood as Granny Knot looked on from behind the tree.

"Good, my plan has worked," she cackled. "Now I can carry on in peace."

Timbertwig and Abigail soon reached Muddle's house, and knocked impatiently on the door.

"All right, all right, what's the hurry?" called a voice from within the mound. "No need for all that knocking! I can hear you."







Muddle opened the door and tripped over his own doorstep, scuffing his nose on the ground.

"Oh, bother!" he mumbled. "That's the tenth time today." He picked himself up, and shook off the dirty soil. "Now, what can I do for you?"

"Do you know anything about Granny's riddle, to help me find my birthday surprise?" asked Timbertwig.

"I don't really remember," replied

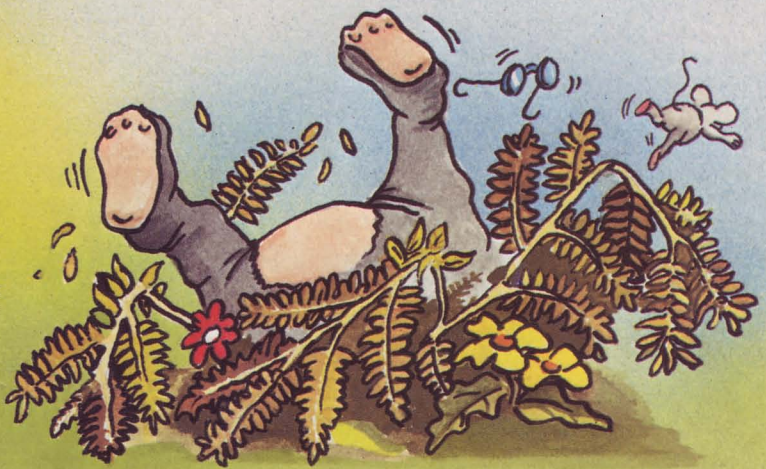
Muddle, bumping into Timbertwig's shoe. "Now let me think."

Old blind Muddle was so busy thinking that he stubbed his toe on a tree root and rolled down the hill into a large fern bush.

"I remember now!" said Muddle as Timbertwig lifted him out from the bush, "Listen carefully:

*If your surprise is to come true,  
Before a stool you'll find a clue."*

And he stumbled back up to his home.



Timbertwig was bewildered. "Oh Abigail, what could it mean?"

Abigail had been far too engrossed in her book of spells. "What could what mean?" she replied.

"What comes before a stool?" he asked.

"It depends upon the type of stool," said Abigail. "For all I know you could mean a toadstool!"

"Of course, that's it!" cried Timbertwig. "A toad! It must mean Tippy Toad. Come on!"







Thanking Muddle the Mole, Timbertwig ran off towards Puddly Pond, where he found Tippy Toad sitting on a huge water-lily.

"Hello Tip . . ."

"Sssh!" interrupted Tippy. "Do you see that fly on the bullrush over there?"

"Yes," whispered Abigail, "he looks delicious."

"I've been stalking him all day," continued Tippy, "and I think he's just dozed off."

"Do you want Abigail to help?" asked Timbertwig. "She can catch all sorts of insects."

But this fly belonged to Tippy Toad. With a tremendous spring he leaped towards his prey but before he was close enough, the fly buzzed lazily away, leaving Tippy to fall open-mouthed into Puddly Pond.

"Are you all right?" called Timbertwig.

Tippy appeared coughing and spluttering with a soggy green lily on his

head. "Sure I'm all right," he spluttered. "That was one of my better attempts."

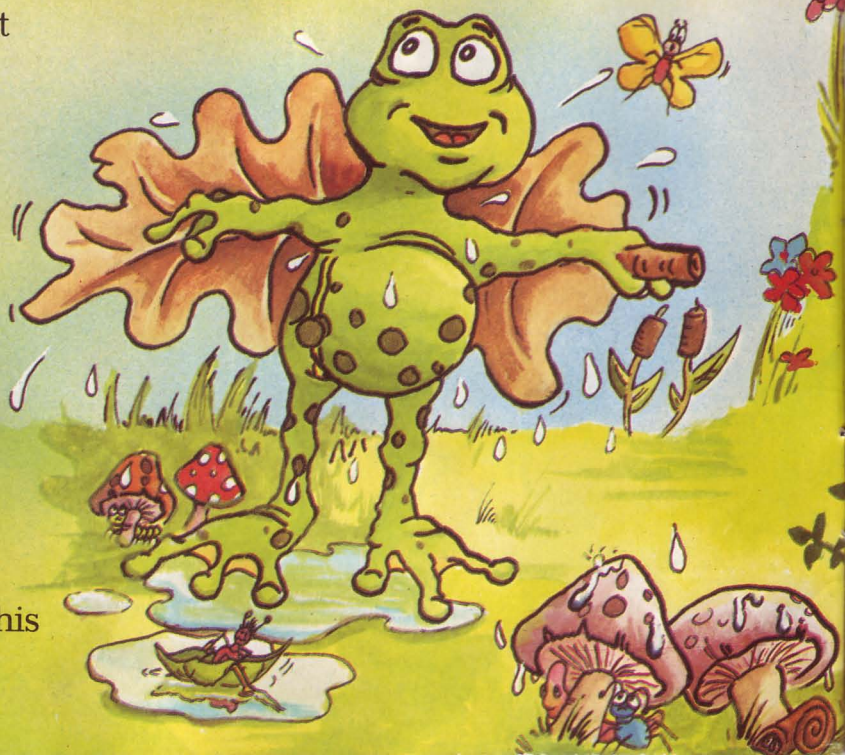
Timbertwig helped him on to the bank and asked him if he knew the next clue.

"Of course," replied Tippy, drying himself with a large oak leaf.

*"Who will help you find the loot?*

*The bird that doesn't give a hoot!"*

"That can only mean one person!" said Timbertwig. "It's Seamus O'Twit, the dozy old owl."





Off they ran once more, to the old tree trunk where Seamus O'Twit was sleeping.

"Hello Seamus, are you at home?"

Seamus appeared, still half asleep.

"Oh hello, Timbertwig, hello," he hooted.

"Did you have a nice party?"

"What party?" asked Timbertwig.

"Oooohh, what day is it?" said the silly owl.

"It's my birthday!"

"Oooohh dear!" said Seamus. "Wait there. I've got something here for you from Granny Knot."

Seamus O'Twit disappeared into his tree trunk and returned with a large

envelope. Timbertwig quickly opened it to find an invitation — to his own birthday party!

"Abigail, look! It's my surprise!

Granny is giving me a birthday party!

We must hurry home!"





Timbertwig rushed back to the tree house, and ran into the kitchen.

"Surprise, surprise!" called all his friends.

Timbertwig was delighted, for Granny had prepared a special tea, and everybody had been invited.

There was Down-in-the-dumps Dennis, Tippy Toad, and Muddle the Mole. Mr Misfit was playing merry music on his home-made trombaphone as the Mushroom Man sang along.

Granny lit the candles on top of the cake, which was so high that Timbertwig had to climb on to a stool to blow them out.

Just then, there was a knock at the door and who should enter but dozy old Seamus O'Twit.

"Hello everybody," he yawned. "I'm sorry to be late, but I think I must have dozed off while I was getting ready."

"You're just in time for a piece of my birthday cake," laughed Timbertwig.

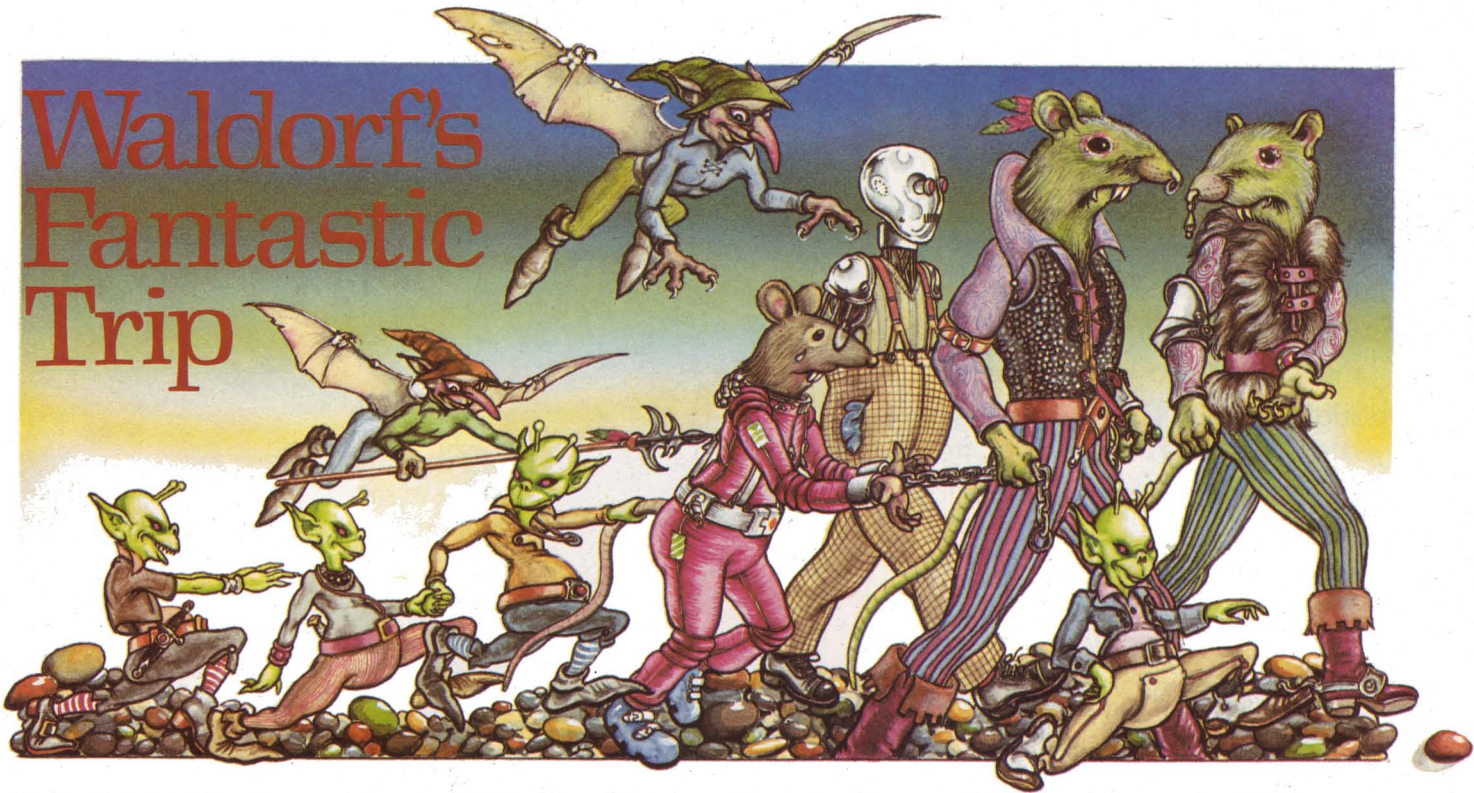
Seamus sat down next to Granny Knot as they all sang *Happy Birthday*.

Even Abigail was allowed to invite her friends for their own little celebration. Everyone agreed that it was the best surprise party ever held in Wiggly Wood.



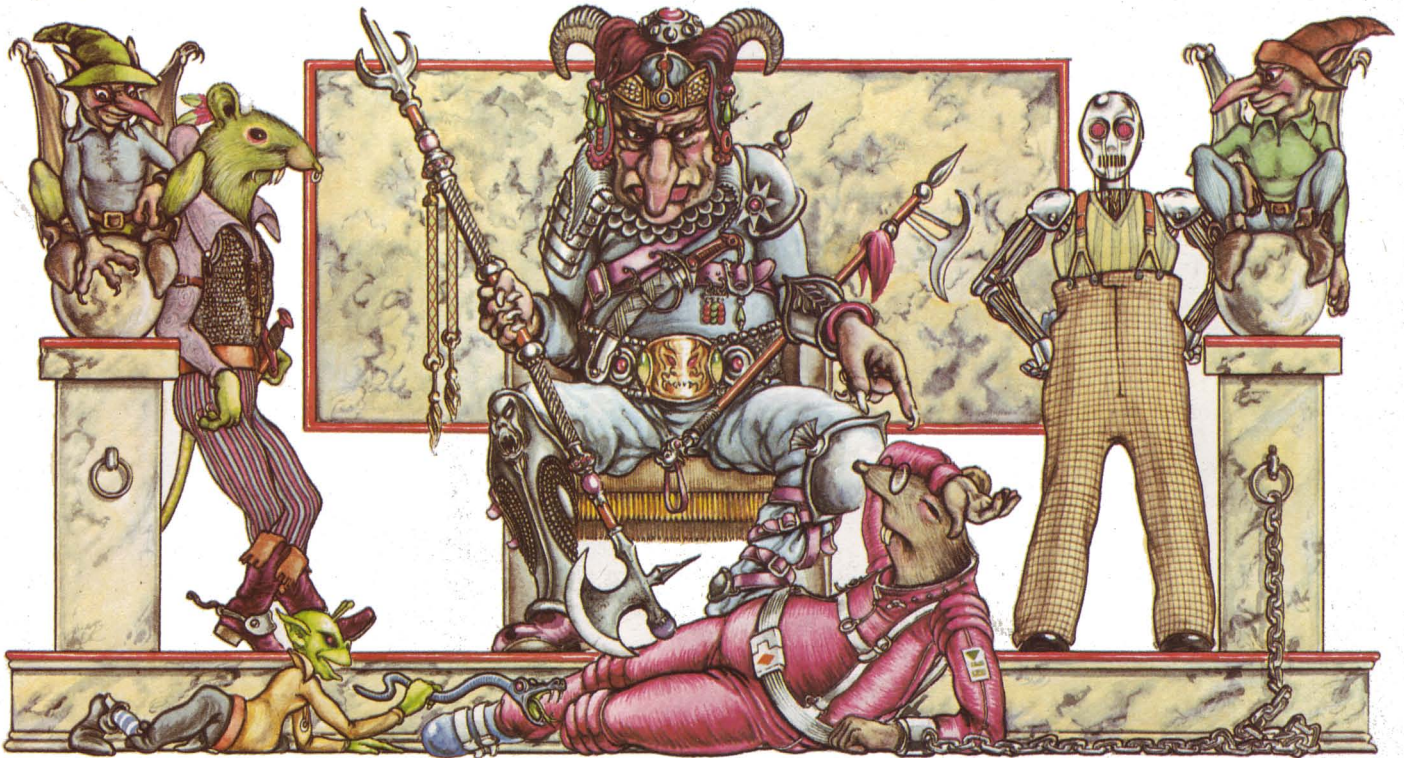


# Waldorf's Fantastic Trip



Waldorf had never been so frightened. He was now the prisoner of moon-rats and gremlins, who marched him off to their

king, jeering and hissing . . . and all because he had come to the moon looking for cheese to take home.



They threw him down before their king. "Please let me go," whimpered Waldorf. "Glob! Trudak nacdoff!" said the king. "I'll never come back, I promise."

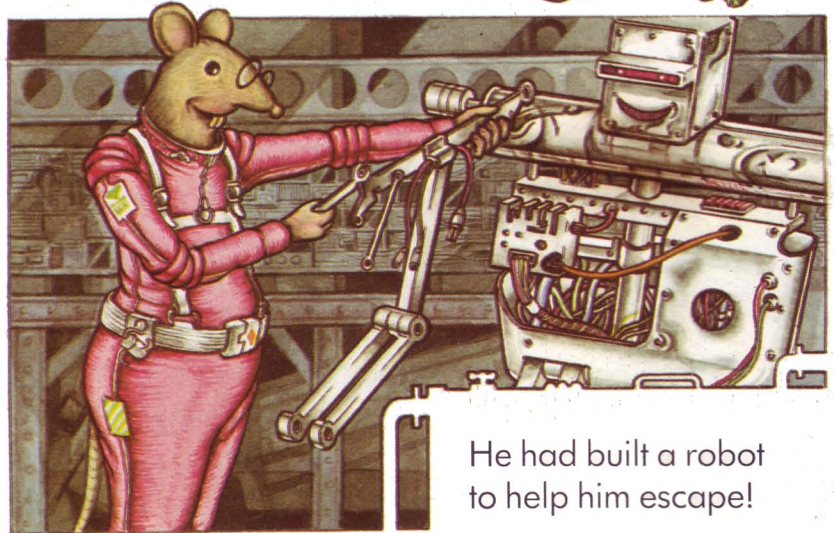
"Nickthrop digdon?" asked the king. But it was no good — Waldorf could not speak their language. At a sign from the king, the creatures dragged him away.



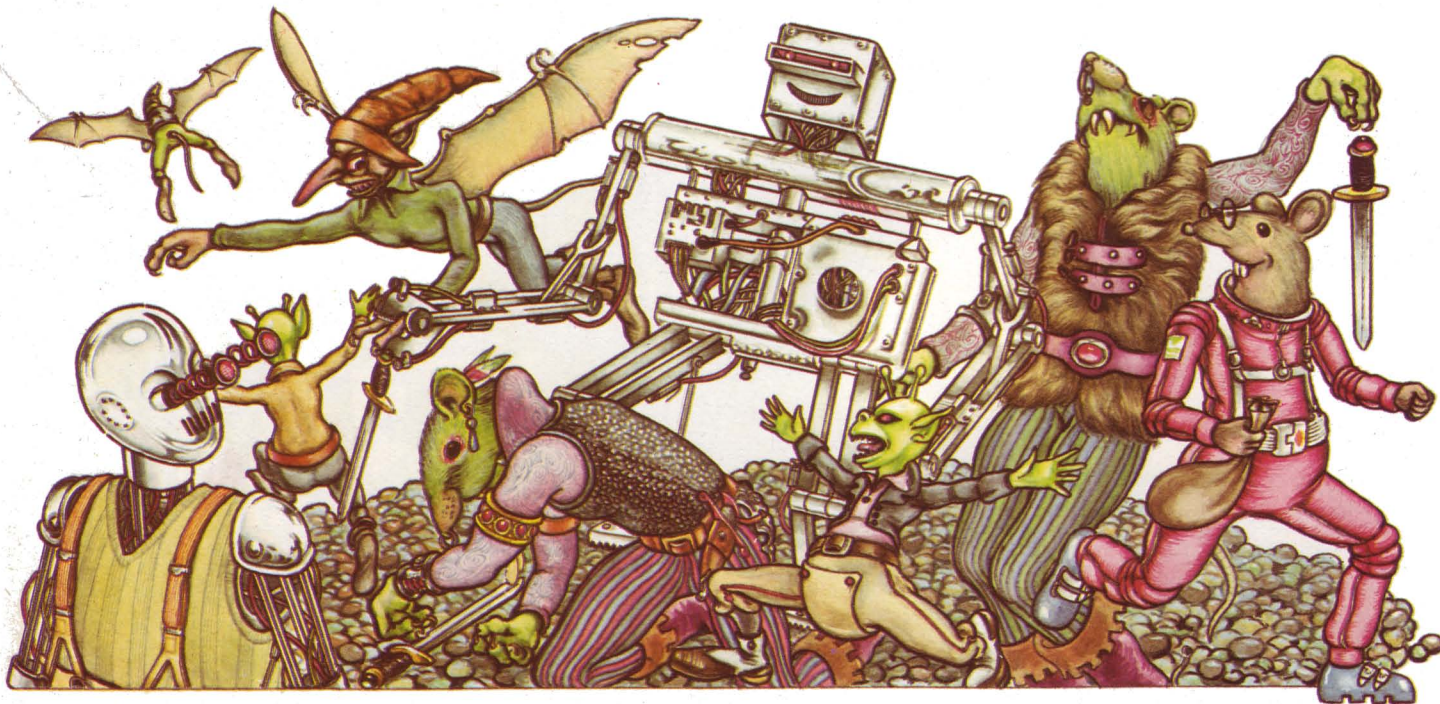
They fed him some sickly soup which tasted just like cough medicine, but he was so hungry he ate it all. Then they set him to work down a dark, damp emerald mine, digging and scratching for jewels to please their greedy king. "I must find a way to escape," thought Waldorf.



That night they locked him in a dingy room where the mining machines were repaired. He was so miserable he could not sleep a wink, but as he looked at the tools and machines he had an idea. "Hmm. I'll need some parts from this and a bit off that, some wire from here and a motor from there . . ." Waldorf worked all night and by daybreak he had finished.



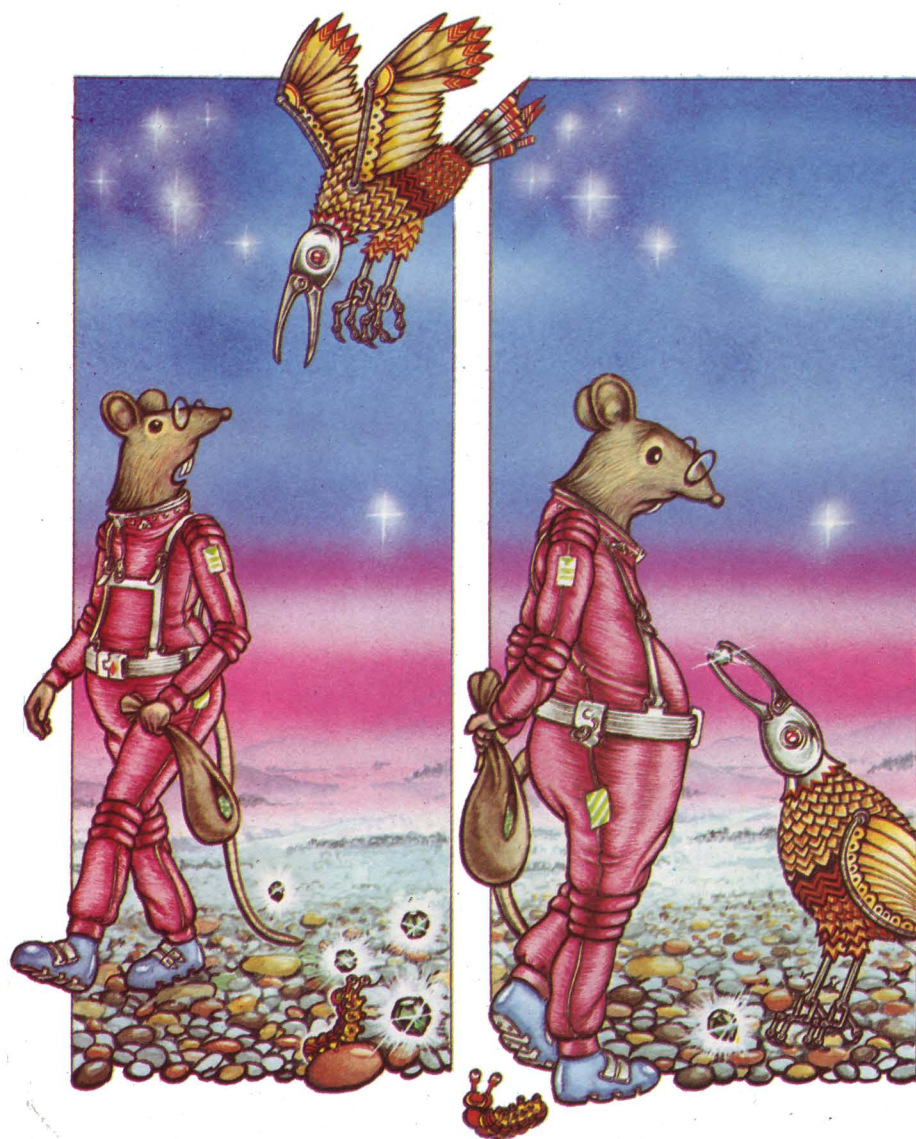
He had built a robot to help him escape!



That morning when the creatures came to fetch him, Waldorf set the robot loose on them. It ran wild, thumping and nipping, and they scattered in all directions, squealing and

shrieking. Waldorf seized his chance. Snatching a bag of precious emeralds, he raced off like the wind. "Aha! That'll teach them a lesson!"

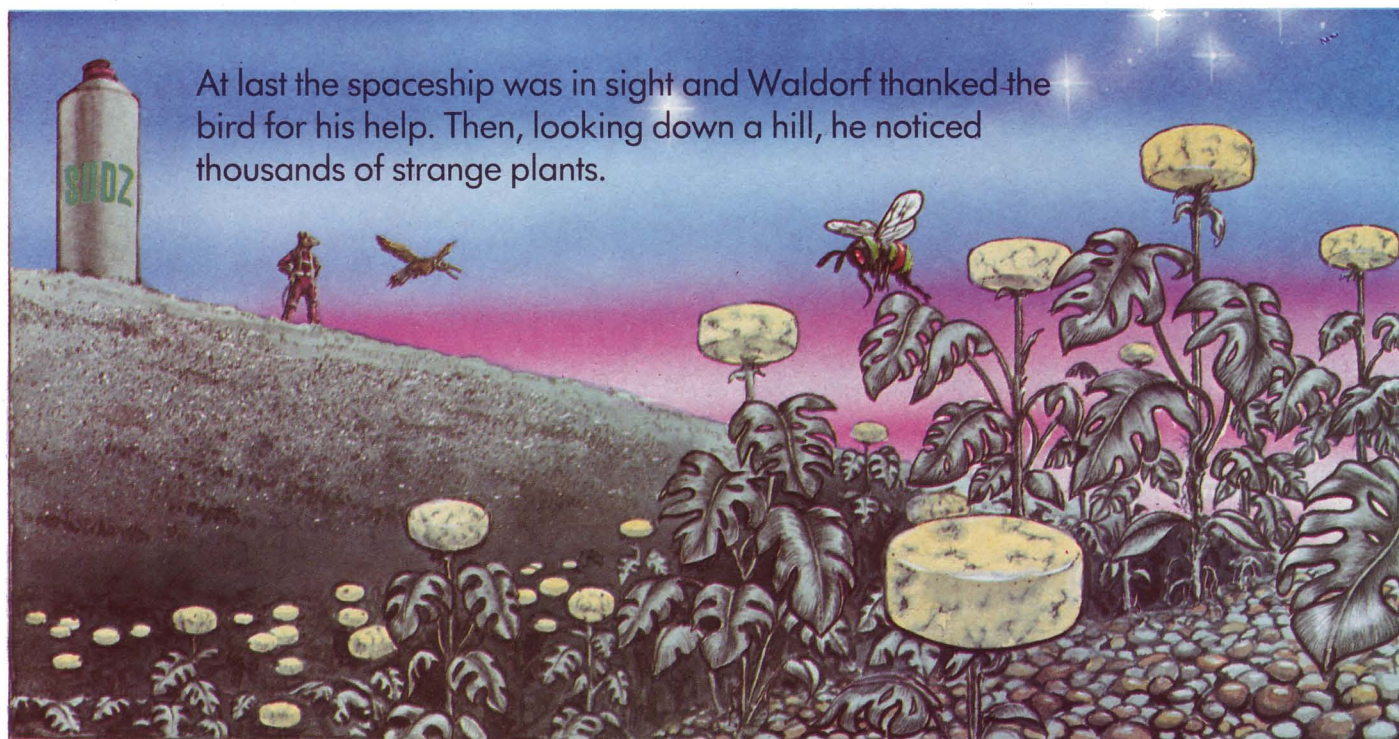




Waldorf ran and ran until he was out of breath. When at last he stopped, he realised to his horror that he was lost! He could not remember the way back to his spaceship. His memory had let him down again.

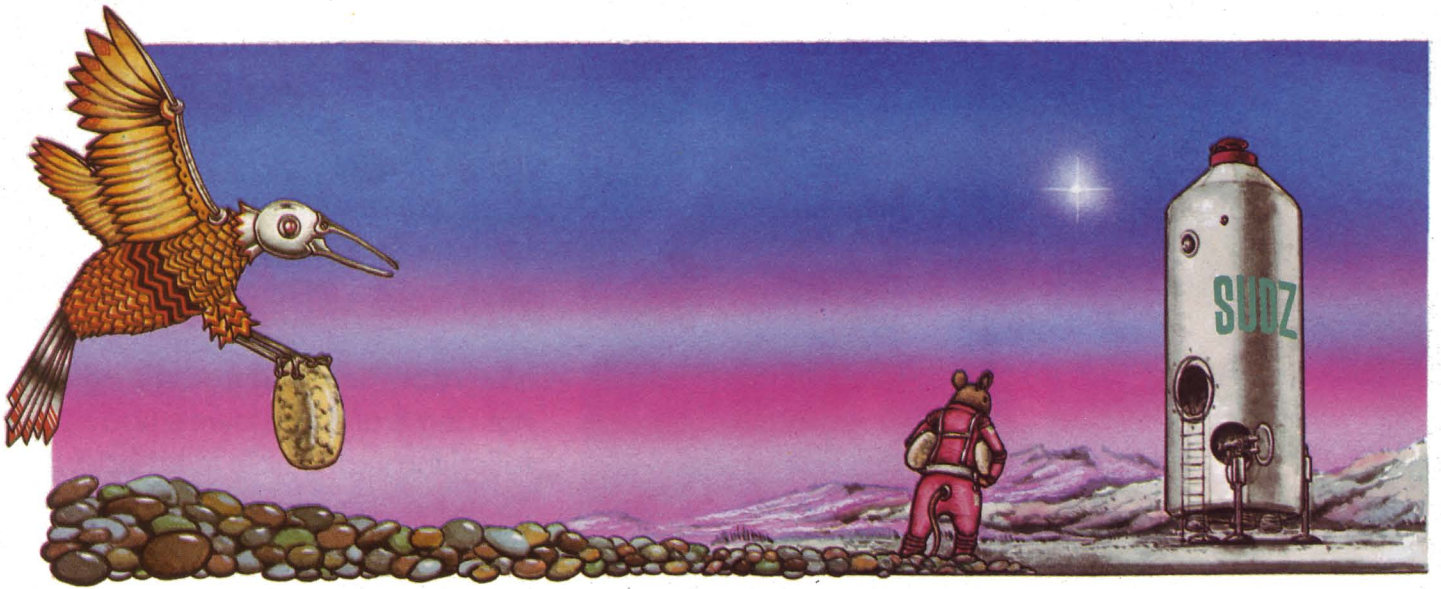
Miserably he wandered on, not noticing that some jewels had fallen through a hole in his bag. "Squawk! Squawk!" All at once a strange metal bird flew down and started pecking at them. "Mmm, these are nice and crunchy. I've never tasted such beauties. Hey, you look a bit sad — what's wrong?" Waldorf explained his problem.

"That's easy!" croaked the bird. "I flew over a spaceship yesterday. Give me the rest of the jewels and I'll lead you there." Waldorf had to agree.



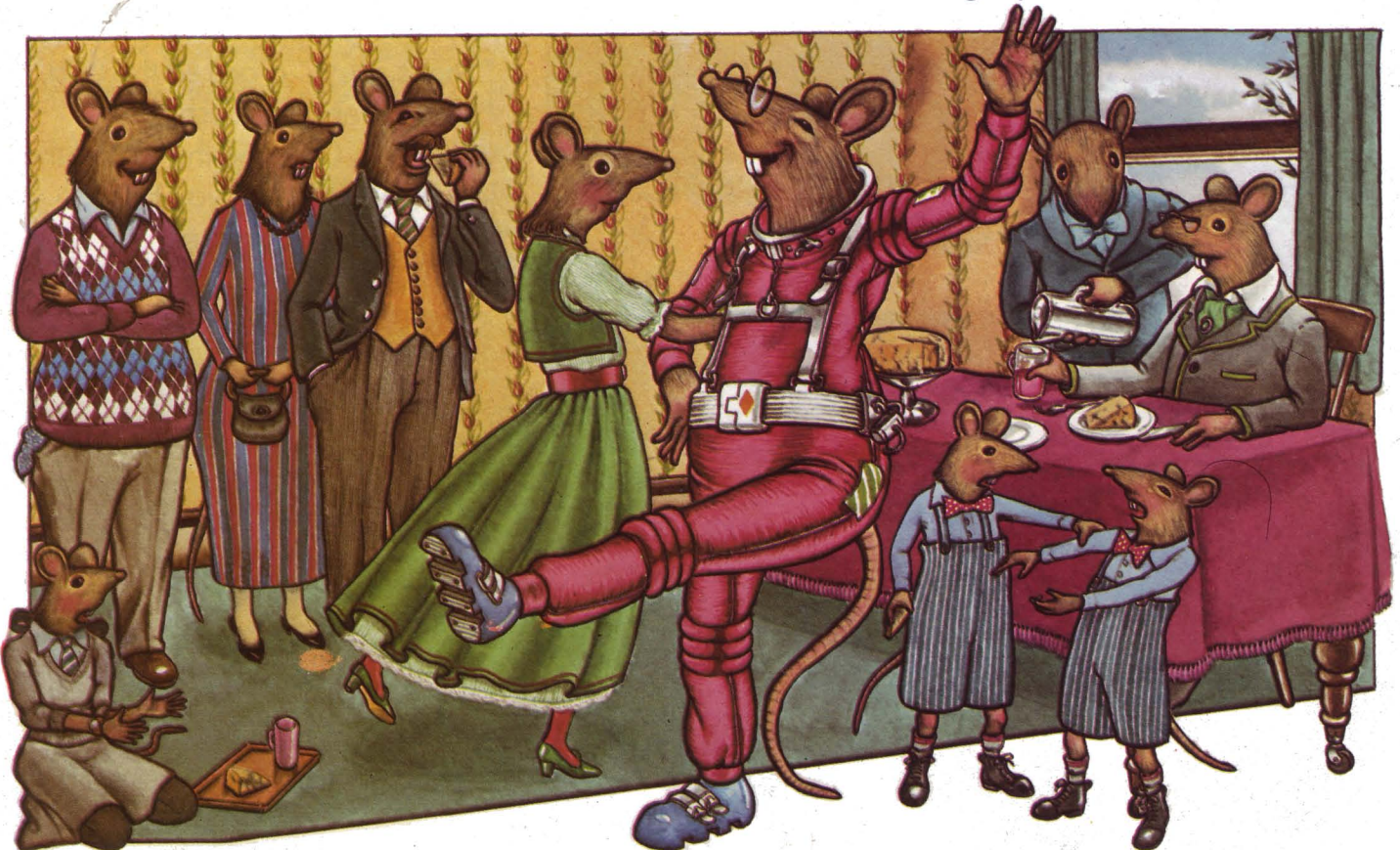
At last the spaceship was in sight and Waldorf thanked the bird for his help. Then, looking down a hill, he noticed thousands of strange plants.





"What are they?" asked Waldorf.  
 "Cheese plants, of course. Everybody knows  
 cheese plants grow on the moon."  
 Waldorf was delighted. His trip had not been  
 wasted after all!

With the bird's help, he loaded the spaceship  
 until it was bursting at the seams and could  
 hold no more. His friends would be very  
 impressed. And, thanking the bird again, he  
 set off on the long trip home.



Waldorf's friends gave him a hero's  
 welcome! They danced, sang and feasted on  
 the delicious cheese from the moon.

All except Waldorf. He danced and made  
 merry — but somehow he had suddenly gone  
 right off the taste of cheese . . .





# GOLDILOCKS

Once upon a time, there was a little girl who lived in a house near a big, dark wood. Her hair was so shiny and golden and curly that people called her Goldilocks. Every day, she played in the garden. And every day her mother told her, "Don't go into the wood!"

But Goldilocks often stood on the edge of the wood and peered between the trees. It was full of such delicious smells, such strange noises and such wonderful flowers. One morning, before breakfast, Goldilocks just could not resist stepping into the wood. She walked a little way, and picked a bunch of bluebells. Then she chased a red squirrel. But when she turned back, there was no sign of her house. She was lost in the wood. She called and called, but nobody answered. She began to cry, but then she came to the edge of a clearing and saw a little cottage with a low thatched roof.





and a small one. "Oh, I'm so tired, and there's nobody here but me to sit in these chairs."

So she sat in the biggest chair. But though she wriggled and squirmed, she could not get comfortable. "This chair's much too big." So she tried the middle-sized chair. "This chair's much too hard." Then she tried the smallest chair. But when Goldilocks sat down, the little chair gave way and broke into tiny pieces!

Picking herself up, Goldilocks went upstairs. In the bedroom, she found three beds — a big one, a middle-sized one and a small one. "Oh, I'm so sleepy, and there's nobody here but me to lie on these beds."

Goldilocks knocked and knocked. Nobody answered . . . but the door suddenly swung open. Inside she saw a big wooden table, and on it three bowls of porridge — a big one, a middle-sized one and a small one.

"Oh, I'm so hungry," thought Goldilocks creeping indoors, "and there's nobody here but me to eat this porridge."

So she tasted the porridge in the biggest bowl. "Ow! That's much too hot." She tasted the porridge in the middle-sized bowl. "Ooh, that's far too cold." Then she tasted the porridge in the smallest bowl — it was just right. In fact, it tasted so good that she ate it all up!

Looking round, she saw three chairs — a big one, a middle-sized one







So she lay down on the biggest bed where she tossed and turned for a while. "No, no. This bed is much too hard." Then she lay on the middle-sized bed and almost sank out of sight. "This bed is much too soft!" So she lay on the smallest bed — and that was just right. In fact it was so comfortable that she soon fell fast asleep.

Meanwhile, the family who lived in the cottage came back from walking in the wood: Father Bear, Mother Bear and Baby Bear!

"Our porridge will be cool enough to eat by now," said Father Bear.

"I do hope so, my dear," said Mother Bear.

"And so do I," said Baby Bear. "I'm very hungry."







But as soon as they opened the cottage door, they saw that something was wrong. Their three spoons had all been dipped into the breakfast bowls!

*"Who's been eating my porridge!"* roared Father Bear.

*"And who's been eating my porridge!"* exclaimed Mother Bear.

*"And who's been eating my porridge,"* squealed Baby Bear, *"and eaten it all up!"*

"Never mind," said Mother Bear. "Daddy will give you some of his. Let's sit down and eat."

*That was when they*

*noticed the chairs. "Who's been sitting in my chair!"* roared Father Bear.

*"And who's been sitting in my chair!"* exclaimed Mother Bear.

*"And who's been sitting in my chair,"* squealed Baby Bear, *"and broken it all to pieces!"*

So the three Bears began to prowl around the house, looking for the thief who had eaten Baby Bear's porridge and broken his chair. Slowly they climbed the





stairs. Father Bear went first. Mother Bear went second. And Baby Bear went third. With his huge paw, Father Bear opened the bedroom door.

*"Who's been sleeping in my bed!"* he roared.

*"And who's been sleeping in my bed!"* exclaimed Mother Bear.

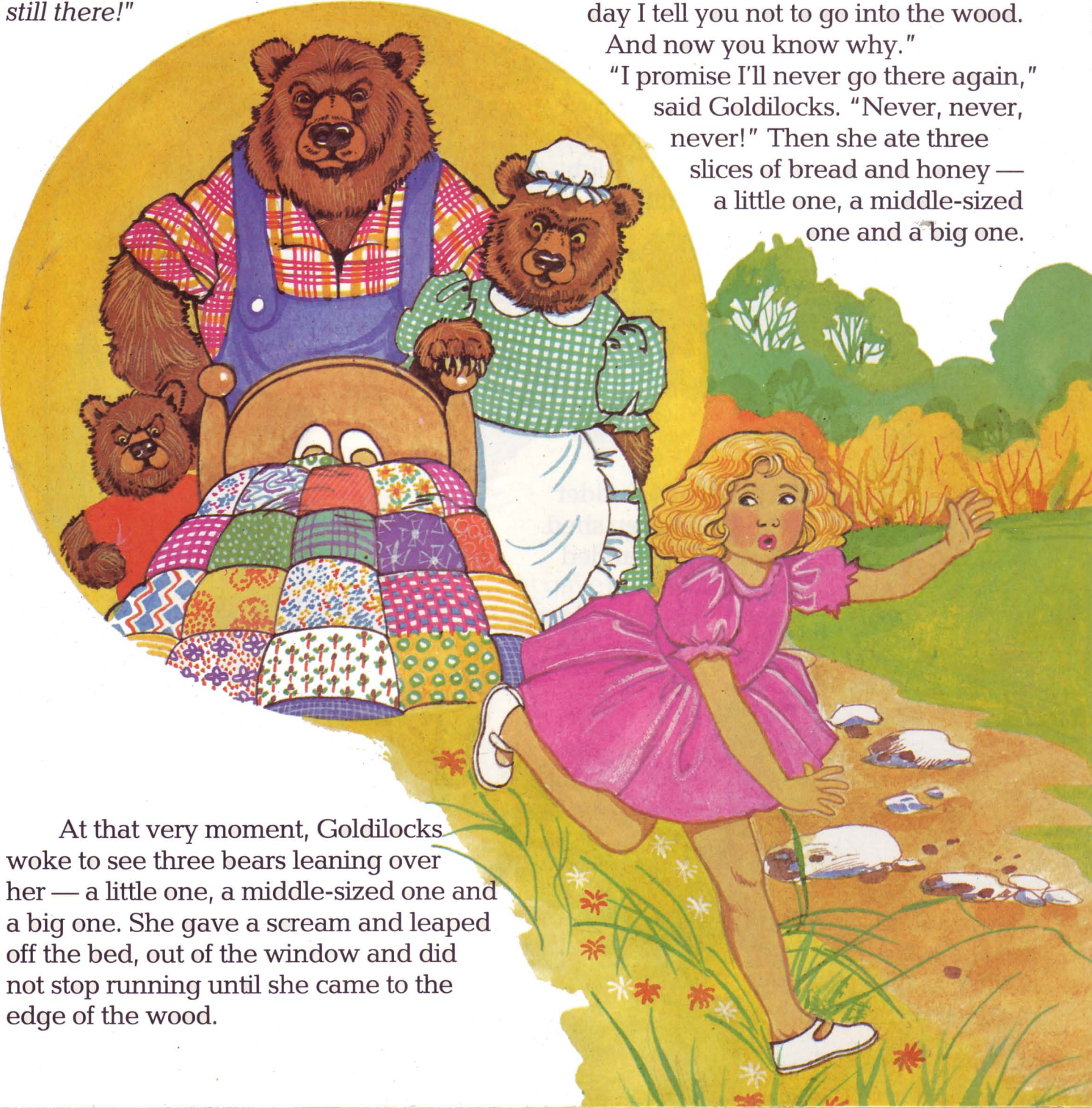
*"And who's been sleeping in my bed,"* squealed Baby Bear. *"And she's still there!"*

There stood her own little home, and her mother on the kitchen step anxiously calling her name.

*"Oh Mother! Mother! It was awful! It was terrible! It was dreadful!"* sobbed Goldilocks, and she told her the story of the three bears.

Her mother dried her tears and gave Goldilocks a breakfast of bread and honey. But she said rather sternly, "Every day I tell you not to go into the wood. And now you know why."

*"I promise I'll never go there again,"* said Goldilocks. "Never, never, never!" Then she ate three slices of bread and honey — a little one, a middle-sized one and a big one.




At that very moment, Goldilocks woke to see three bears leaning over her — a little one, a middle-sized one and a big one. She gave a scream and leaped off the bed, out of the window and did not stop running until she came to the edge of the wood.






# DAD AND THE CAT AND THE TREE




This morning a cat got  
Stuck in our tree.  
Dad said, "Right, just  
Leave it to me."

The tree was wobbly,  
The tree was tall.  
Mum said, "For goodness'  
Sake don't fall!"



"Fall?" scoffed Dad,  
"A climber like me?  
Child's play, this is!  
You wait and see."




He got out the ladder  
From the garden shed.  
It slipped. He landed  
In the flower bed.

"Never mind," said Dad,  
Brushing the dirt  
Off his hair and his face  
And his trousers and his shirt,

"We'll try Plan B. Stand  
Out of the way!"  
Mum said, "Don't fall  
Again, O.K?"



A colorful illustration of a man in a striped shirt and blue trousers falling backwards from a tree branch. A red cat sits on a nearby branch, watching him. The scene is set in a lush garden with green trees and a blue sky with a small bird flying in the distance.

"Fall again?" said Dad.  
"Funny joke!"  
Then he swung himself up  
On a branch. It broke.

Dad landed wallop  
Back on the deck.  
Mum said, "Stop it,  
You'll break your neck!"

"Rubbish!" said Dad.  
"Now we'll try Plan C.  
Easy as winking  
To a climber like me!"

He gave a great leap  
And he landed flat  
In the crook of the tree-trunk —  
Right on the cat!

Then he climbed up high  
On the garden wall.  
Guess what?  
He *didn't* fall!

The cat gave a yell  
And sprang to the ground,  
Pleased as Punch to be  
Safe and sound.

So it's smiling and smirking,  
Smug as can be,  
But poor old Dad's  
Still

Stuck  
Up  
The  
Tree!



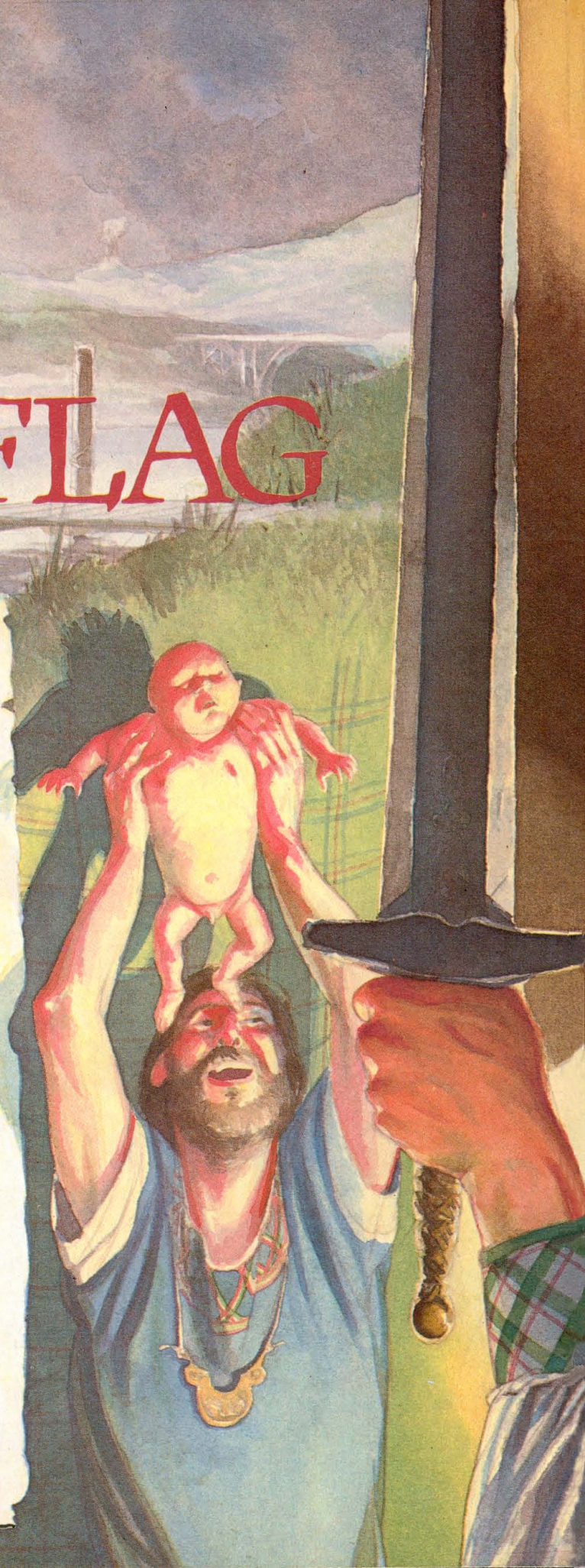
# THE FAERY FLAG

Do you want to see a real faery flag? Then you must go to the Isle of Skye, where the ancient castle of Dunvegan is washed on three sides by the cold, grey sea. For hundreds of years this castle has been the home of clan chieftains — the Macleods of Macleod.

The clan has many treasures, but the one they prize above all others is a strip of pale, yellow silk. It is as delicate as the wings of a butterfly and is marked here and there with the faint red spots which only elves can make.

This faery flag has belonged to the clan Macleod since a night far in the past when a baby chieftain was born. There was great rejoicing on the island, and so many bonfires blazed on the hilltops that the people of neighbouring isles thought the Isle of Skye was on fire!

Inside the castle, the clansmen gathered to celebrate the birth with feasting and dancing. The skirling of the pipes resounded through the night — and the music was so loud that it could be heard even in a little turret room, right at the top of a long, spiral staircase.

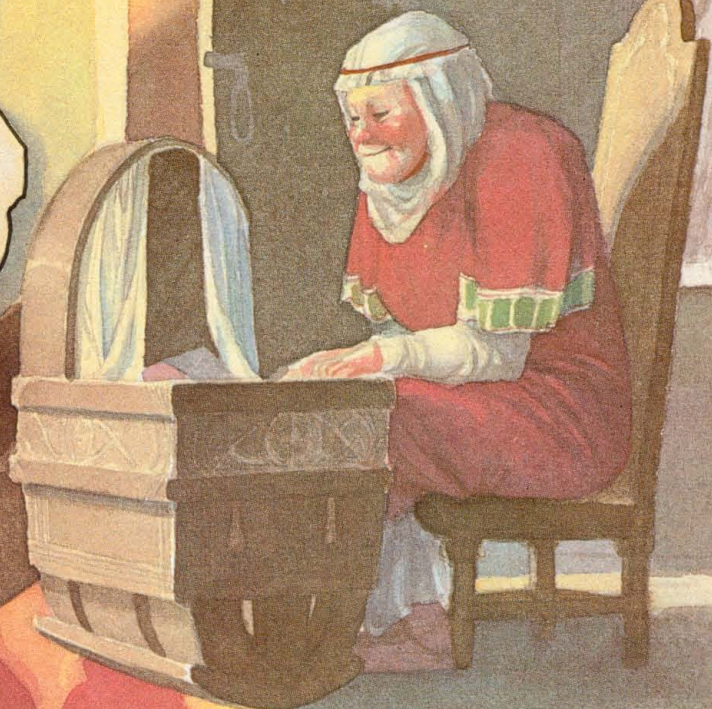




Here Morag, the old nurse, sat rocking a wooden cradle as she tried to settle the restless baby. "What a din!" she grumbled. "What chance has the wee bairn to sleep with all this racket?"

Suddenly her young niece Janet slipped into the room. "Oh Auntie," she whispered. "It's so exciting! You must go down and take a peek yourself."

Morag was horrified. "What!" she chided. "Leave the heir to Macleod alone and unprotected?"



But Janet was determined. "The baby won't be left alone! I'll sit and watch him while you're gone."

Old Morag hesitated.

"Well," she said. "I might not live to see another night such as this. But call me if the baby wakes. Call me at once."

Janet sat obediently rocking the cradle gently to and fro, and tapping her foot to the rhythm of the music. She did not notice when the warm woollen shawl, which Morag had carefully draped over the cradle, slipped to the stone floor.

In the chill autumn air, the baby began to cry and Janet could not soothe him. The baby's crying grew louder, until Janet hurried to the door and called down the spiral staircase for Morag to return.

But the music drowned her voice. Leaving the door ajar, she ran down the staircase to look for the old nurse.







With that, the two flew up to the window and peered in. They saw immediately that there was no shawl draped over the cradle.

"Poor wee thing!" cried the faery woman. "There's a sharp cold wind blowing in from the loch! But I've the very thing to keep him warm."

With that, she wriggled into the room and darted across to the cradle. Unwinding a strip of yellow silk from around her waist, she gently picked up the baby and wrapped it around him.

"But that's our faery banner," cried the other from the window ledge.

"Fiddlesticks! We can easily weave another. Be quiet now, while I sing him to sleep."

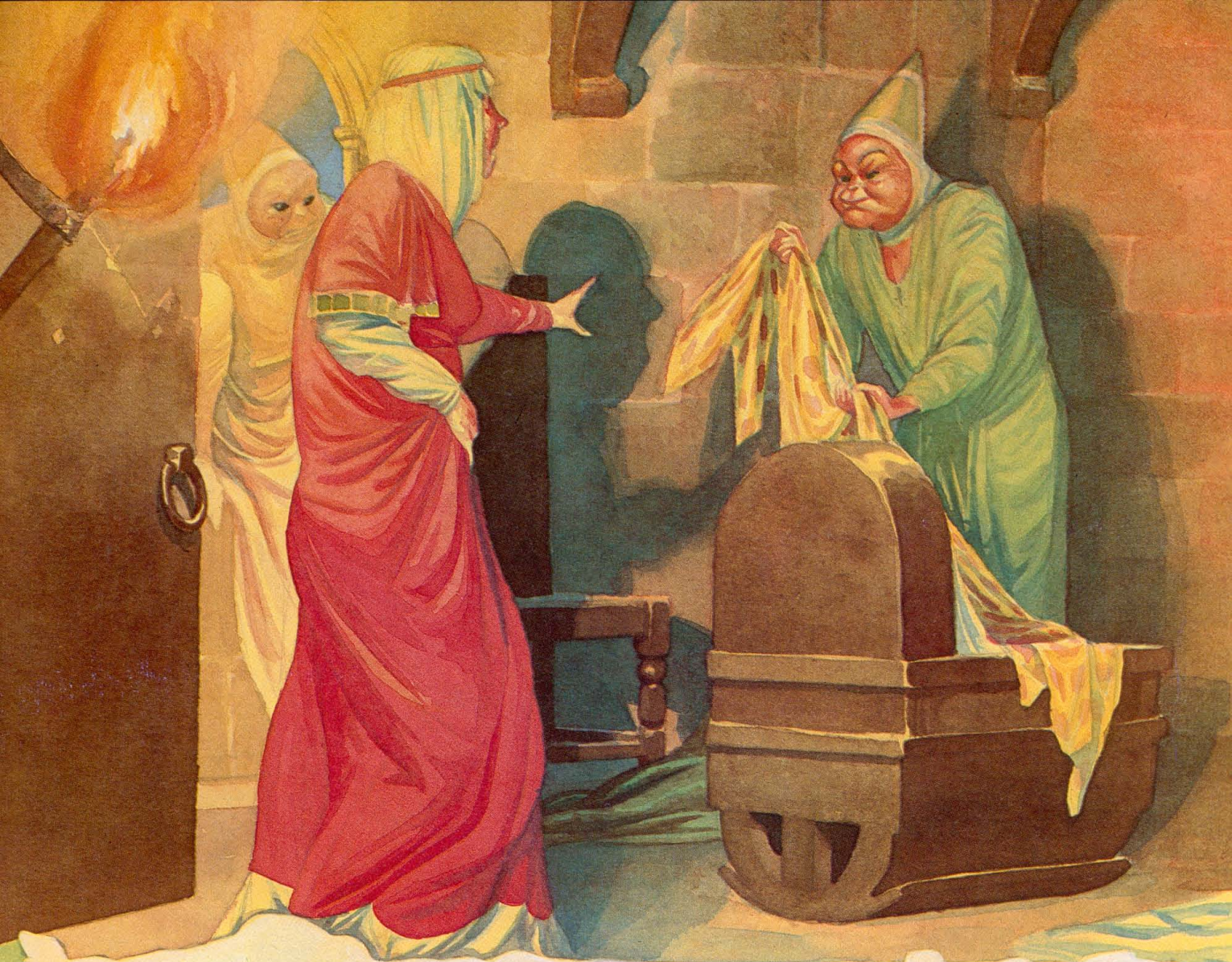
Then, rocking the cradle with her foot, she sang:

*"My magic spell now gently falls  
Upon Dunvegan's ancient walls.  
This is for you, at witching hour,  
For in this flag is magic power.  
Sweetly sleep, and do not cry,  
Lulla-lulla-lulla-bye."*

At that very moment a faery woman and her friend, who were hurrying past the castle, heard the crying and paused for a moment. "Do you hear that?" asked the faery woman crossly. "The young heir to Macleod cries and no-one attends to him!" She glanced up at the turret room and her sharp eyes fixed on the tiny lancet window. "Look! There's just enough room for me to squeeze through. You can wait on the window ledge."







As the last note faded away, old Morag returned to the room.

"Mercy me!" she gasped. "Who . . . who are you?"

She noted the faery's shaggy cloak and pointed hat, her green dress and shoes as purple as the heather. Then, with a twinge of fear, she caught sight of the strip of yellow silk wrapped around the sleeping baby. She stepped forward to tear it away . . . but the faery woman stopped her.

"No, Morag!" she said. "The flag will not harm him. It is warmer than the stoutest blanket — and more than that, it will keep him safe from any harm."

Morag listened breathlessly as the

faery told her of its magic power.

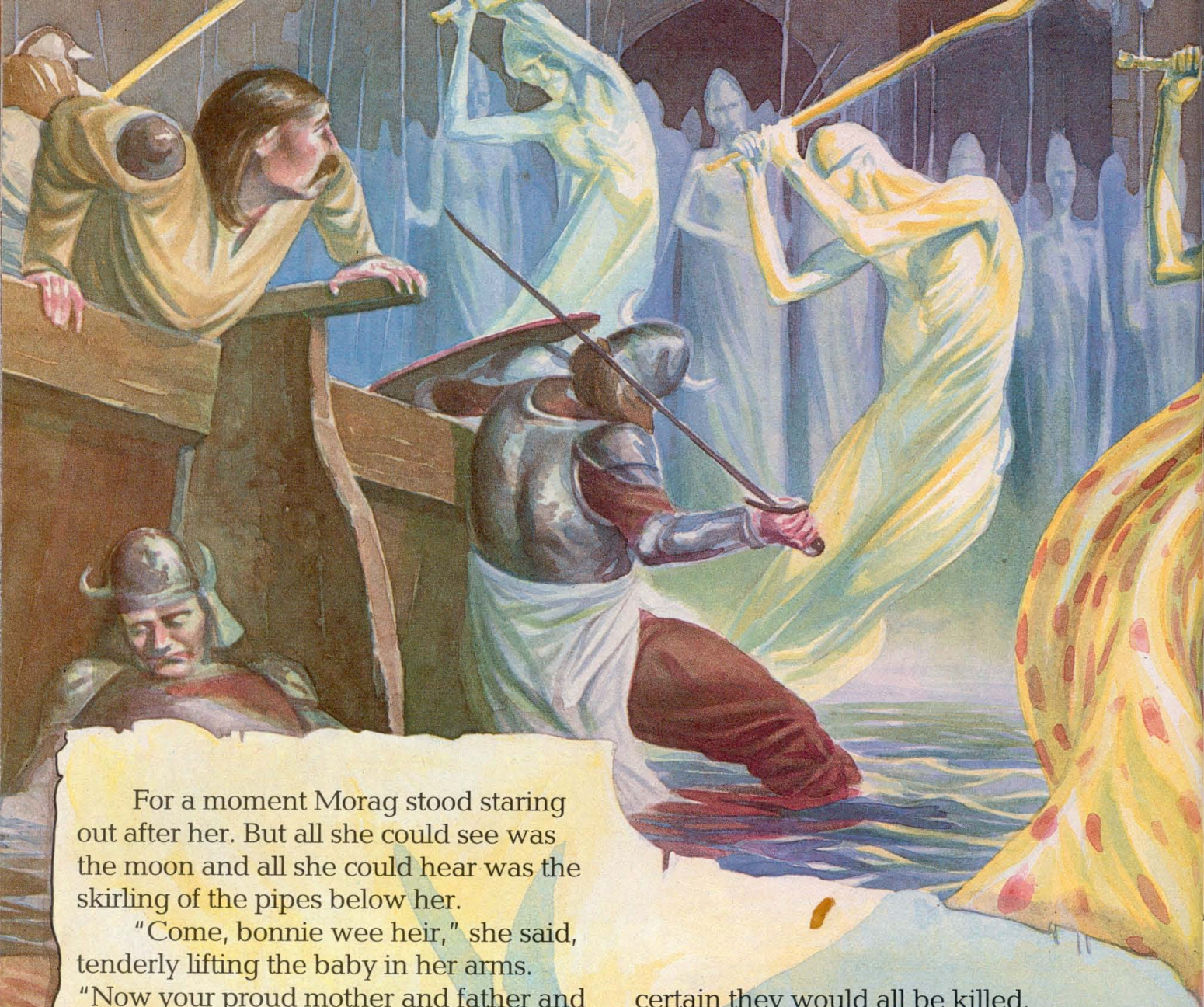
"This flag will save the heir to Macleod in times of terrible danger. But be warned. It must be used sparingly! Three times the flag can be waved. Then the faeries will claim it back."

The faery woman moved silently to the window and repeated: "Three times only. Remember, Morag, to tell Macleod of Macleod what the faery woman said."

She was about to leave when Morag cried, "And the lullaby . . . won't you teach me the lullaby?"

"I will, Morag," said the faery, "and it will never fail to make the baby sleep." Then the faery sang the lullaby one more time before disappearing into the night.





For a moment Morag stood staring out after her. But all she could see was the moon and all she could hear was the skirling of the pipes below her.

"Come, bonnie wee heir," she said, tenderly lifting the baby in her arms.

"Now your proud mother and father and all your fine kinsmen must see what the faery woman has given you."

The clansmen marvelled when they heard Morag's story. Then the clan chieftain, Macleod of Macleod, held up his wee son for all to admire, and vowed that the faery flag would be treasured above everything else in the castle.

It was a treasure indeed, for the faery's prophecy *did* come true.

Many years later, in the fifteenth century, the castle of Dunvegan was attacked by fierce warriors who invaded Skye from the outer isles. The Macleods were vastly outnumbered, and it seemed

certain they would all be killed.

At the last moment, their handsome young chieftain remembered the legend. "Bring out the faery flag!" he thundered. "It's our only hope!"

As the flag was waved from the battlements, a mysterious band of warriors charged from a castle gate. They brandished their huge swords with a terrifying noise and the fierce invaders ran desperately for their lives. But not one managed to escape. Then, leaving the Macleods safe and victorious, the warriors disappeared into thin air.

One hundred years later the castle was attacked again, at night under cover





of a thick mist which swirled in from the sea. The Macleods fought back valiantly, but again they were almost overwhelmed when the chieftain called for the magic flag. Then the grey mist changed into row upon row of warriors, who fought like demons to win a stunning victory. But when the young chieftain Macleod of Macleod stepped forward to greet them, they vanished back into the mist.

Twice the flag has been raised. Once more it can reveal its magic power. So to this very day, the faery flag is treasured at old Dunvegan — while in their secret nooks and crannies the faeries wait patiently for its return.



# THE RUNAWAY PIANO



There were so many things in Mr Dick's junk shop that he had quite forgotten what some of them were. There were tables with funny legs, chairs with wobbly backs, beds with broken springs and all kinds of other useless items.

"What a muddle!" Mrs Dick would grumble. "Why don't you get rid of some of it?"

"Yes, yes, all right my dear, I will," Mr Dick would murmur. But he never did.

Tucked away in a dark and dusty corner, behind the shop door, was an old piano. It had once belonged to a famous pianist and its name had been written across the front in gleaming gold letters: 'Trumpelmetzel'. But over the years the lettering had faded until only the word 'Trumpel' remained.

There was no-one to play Trumpel now — only Grey-Whisker Mouse, who ran over the keys at night-time. And there was no-one to listen to Trumpel's

music either — except for Jumbo, the white wooden elephant with only one tusk, who stood near the piano in the dark corner. He loved to hear the sounds that Trumpel made when Grey-Whisker Mouse ran over the keys.

"What wonderful music," he would say. "Please Trumpel, let's have that tune again."

One day when Mrs Dick was in the shop, she scolded Mr Dick yet again.

"It's about time you turned out all this rubbish. That old piano should be chopped up for firewood. And as for that dreadful white elephant — just look at it, it's only got one tusk."

"I suppose you're right, my dear," sighed Mr Dick. "Nobody seems to want things like that nowadays. I'll see about it tomorrow."

That night, when the pale moonbeams were shining into Mr Dick's



shop, Grey-Whisker Mouse came out to scamper over the piano's ivory keys. But the piano played a very sad tune.

"What's wrong, Trumpel?" asked Grey-Whisker Mouse.

"Didn't you hear what Mr Dick said?" wailed Trumpel. "I'm going to be chopped up for firewood tomorrow."

"Why don't you run away?"

"How can I?" cried the piano. "I may have legs but I can't move them."

"I wish I could help," boomed Jumbo. "Real elephants are so strong. If only I could move!"

A blue moon had risen in the sky and was shining full on the white



elephant. And in the magic moonlight something very wonderful happened.

"Look! Look at Jumbo! He moved! I'm sure he moved!" squeaked Grey-Whisker Mouse excitedly.

"Yes," boomed Jumbo, "but I'll have to act fast. This kind of magic only happens once in a blue moon and doesn't last long."

The piano started to move, slowly at first, then faster and faster and faster until with a tremendous crash it burst through the doorway and landed out in the street.

"Oh no," groaned Trumpel. "Now you've done it, Jumbo. You'd better escape while you can."

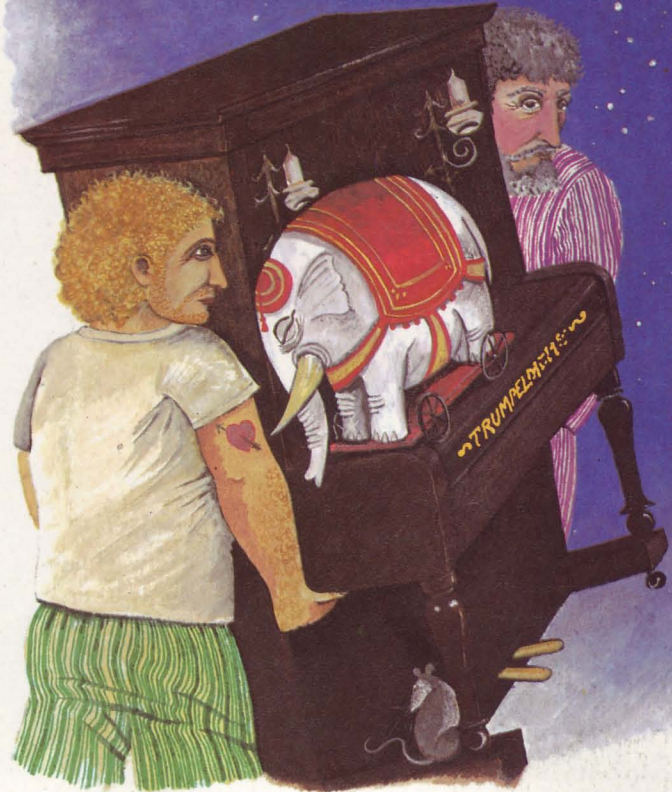


At that very moment the moon disappeared behind a cloud. "Oh dear," said Jumbo. "I knew this magic wouldn't last. I can't move at all now."

Lights came on in the shops and houses round about, and soon people were running up the street. Mr Dick rushed downstairs to see what had happened. "How *did* the piano get there?" he said, rubbing his eyes. "And that elephant!" With a neighbour's help, Mr Dick carried the piano and the elephant back into the shop. Then, still feeling very puzzled, he went to bed.

Next morning, the story of the night's strange happenings soon spread through the town. One neighbour told another that Mr Dick's shop had been broken into — and someone else suggested that he must have some really priceless antiques. When Mrs Dick heard this suggestion, she said, "Oh yes, he has, oh of course he has. He has lots of priceless antiques."

After that, people began coming to the shop, first in ones and twos, then in



threes and fours, eager to have the pick of Mr Dick's priceless antiques. Soon there was almost nothing left for Mr Dick to throw out or chop up. But still no-one seemed to want the old piano or the white wooden elephant with only one tusk.

Mr Dick was just about to close his shop at dinner-time when a young man





rushed in, clanging the doorbell.

"What can I do for you, young sir?" asked Mr Dick. He recognised the young man as a music student who lived in a tiny little room down the street.

"I heard you have a piano for sale," said the young man. "Is it still here? Can I see it?"

"Mr Dick will let you have it cheap," said Mrs Dick hastily, "if you take that elephant as well."

The young man hesitated. He was not sure that he had room for an elephant as well as a piano. He ran his fingers thoughtfully over Trumpel's keys. "I do like the sound it makes." Then he looked at the white elephant. "All right. The elephant goes with the piano. I'll take them both."

Jumbo was so happy — and so was Trumpel! And inside the piano Grey-Whisker Mouse did a little dance of joy — for he had no intention of being left behind by his two friends.

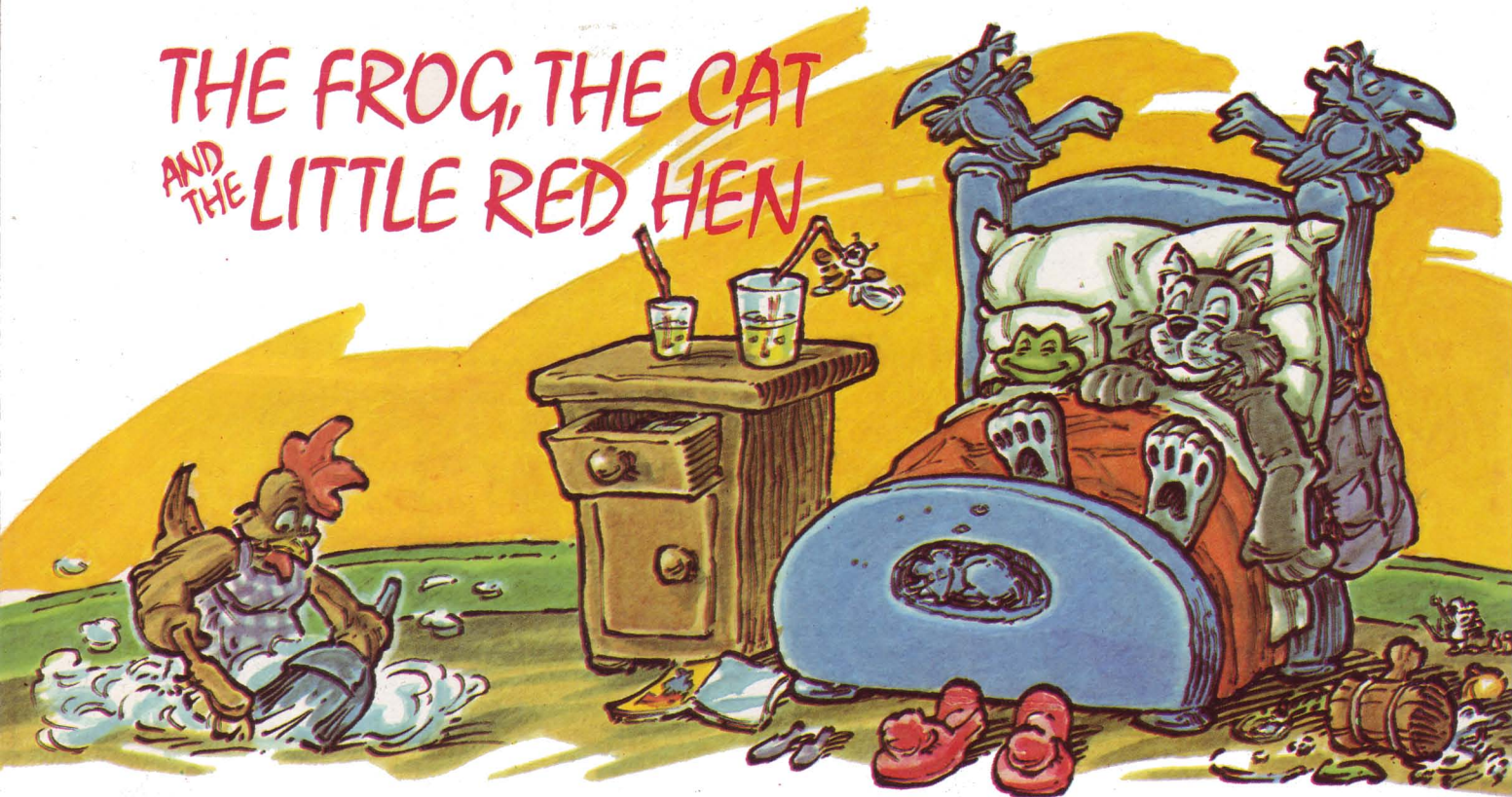
"You won't regret it, young man," said Mr Dick. "This piano used to belong to a famous pianist. So I'm sure that with its help you too will be famous one day!"

And do you know — he was!





# THE FROG, THE CAT AND THE LITTLE RED HEN



At the back of the farmyard, the frog, the cat and the little red hen lived together in a snug wooden house. It was cosy and clean — but no thanks to the frog or the cat! The little red hen did all the work, while *they* lazed in bed. She tidied the house, lit the fire, did the

washing and cooked the meals.

"Why don't you get up?" she cried one morning. "The weather's lovely. You could be painting the house or chopping wood or mending the gate." But the frog just turned over and put his head under the covers. And the cat said, "How can I sleep with you squawking?"

Then the little red hen fetched a bag of flour. "Today I'm going to bake a loaf. Who'll light the stove for me?"

"Not me!" yawned the cat, stretching out on the bed.

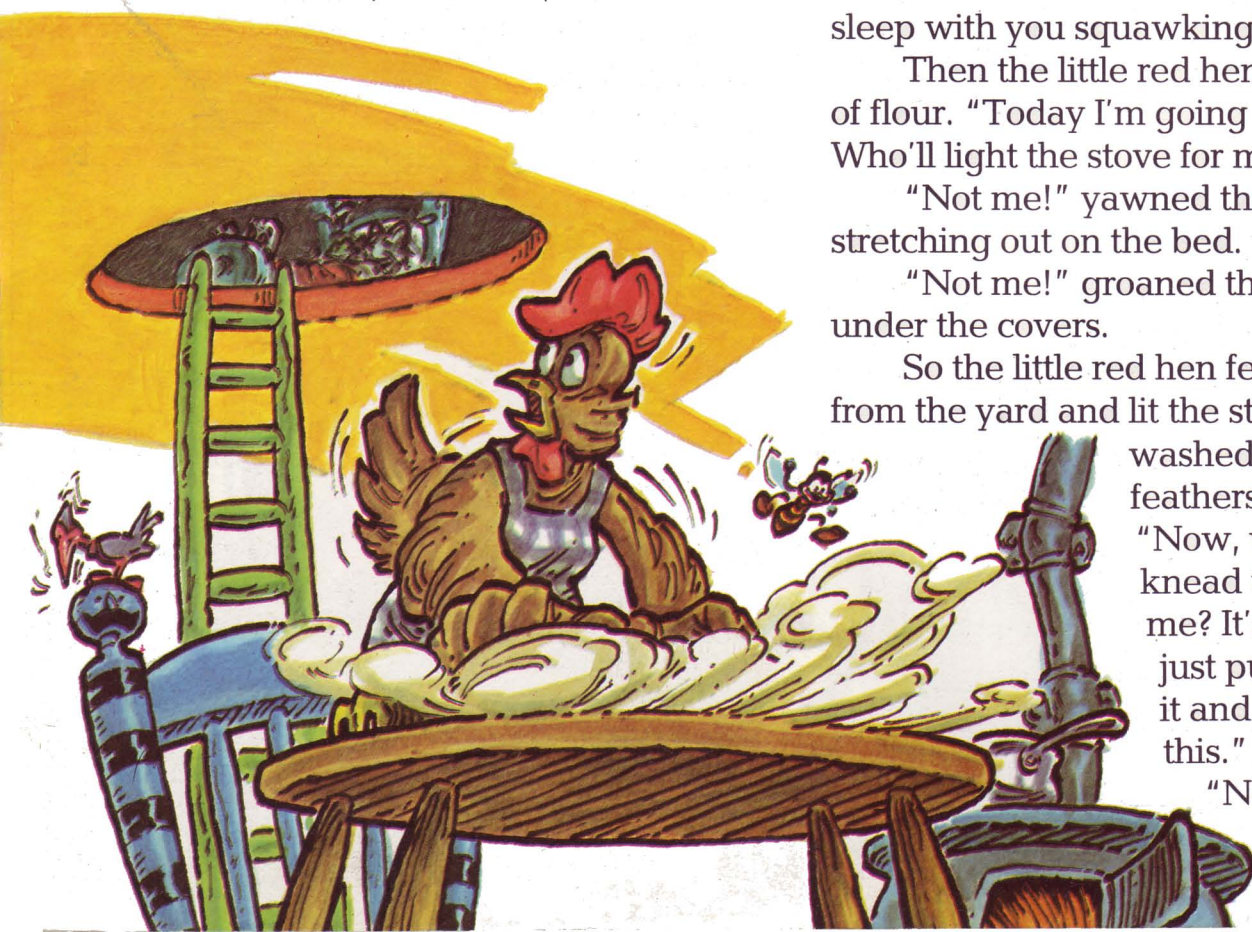
"Not me!" groaned the frog from under the covers.

So the little red hen fetched wood from the yard and lit the stove, then

washed her sooty feathers in the sink.

"Now, who's going to knead the dough for me? It's easy — you just pull it and fold it and press it, like this."

"Not me!"





snapped the cat. "It looks like hard work!"

"Not me!" grumbled the frog. "I didn't see what you did."

So the little red hen kneaded the dough herself and pushed the loaf into the oven. Soon, the glorious smell of baking bread wafted through the house.

"Now, who's going to fetch the butter?"

"Not me!" sighed the cat.

"I'm still asleep."



leaping out of the bed.

"Oh, please don't trouble yourselves," said the little red hen.

Then, tucking the loaf under one wing and the butter under the other, she ran out of the house into the barn.

And she ate the bread all by herself!

"Not me!" moaned the frog.

"I'm too tired."

So the little red hen went down to the dairy and asked the cow for her yellow butter. Then she carried it back to the house.

"Now, who will cut the bread for me?" she asked, putting the loaf on the table.

"My paw's sore," wailed the cat.

"I might cut myself," whined the frog.

"But who will help me eat the loaf?" asked the little red hen.

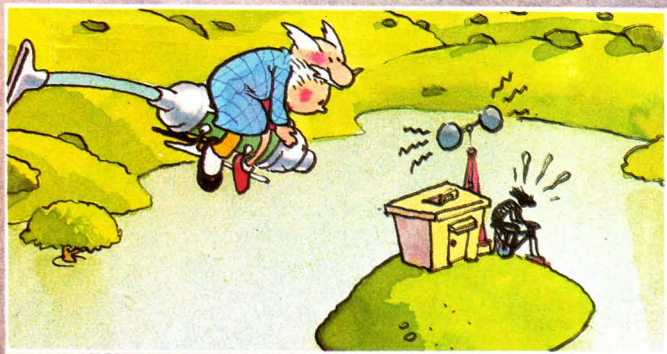
"I will!" cried the cat scampering down the ladder.

"So will I!" yelled the frog,





# IN PART 24 OF **STORY**Teller



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