



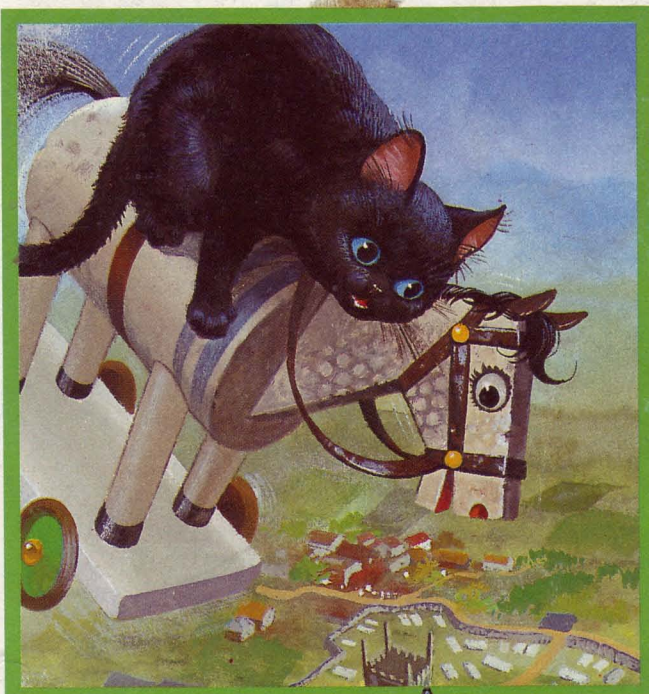
PART 10

STORY

Teller

2

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



A Marshall Cavendish Publication

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STORY Teller 2

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GUARANTEE

The price of this publication will remain unchanged throughout the series, unless there are changes to the rate of VAT.

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

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Toad of Toad Hall



"Ratty," said Mole one bright summer morning. "I want to ask you a favour. Will you take me to visit Toad? I've heard so much about him."

"Why certainly," said Rat. "Get the boat out, and we'll paddle up the river at once. Toad's a good-natured animal, though perhaps not very clever and a bit boastful and conceited. But he's very amusing and generous and has some great qualities."

Rounding a bend in the river they came in sight of a handsome old house of mellowed red brick, with well-kept lawns reaching down to the water's edge.

"There's Toad Hall," said Ratty. "The stables are over there to the right. And that's the banqueting hall. Toad's rather rich, you know, and this is really one of the nicest houses in these parts, though don't tell him I told you, he's conceited enough as it is."



They tied up their boat and strolled across the flower-decked lawns in search of Toad. They found him resting in a wicker garden chair, with a large map spread across his knees.

"Hooray!" he shouted, jumping up on seeing them. "This is splendid." And he shook them both by the paw. "You don't know how lucky it is, you turning up just now! Come with me Ratty — and your friend also, if he will be so very good — just as far as the stable yard and you'll see what you shall see!"

Toad led the way, Rat following behind with a most distrustful expression. And there, drawn out of the coach-house into the open, they saw a gypsy caravan, painted canary-yellow picked out with green and red wheels.

"There you are!" said Toad. "Come inside and look at the arrangements. Planned 'em all myself, I did!"

A very excited Mole followed Toad into the caravan, but Rat only snorted and thrust his hands deep into his



pockets, remaining where he was.

It was indeed very compact and comfortable. Little sleeping-bunks — a little table that folded up against the wall — a cooking-stove, lockers, bookshelves, a bird cage with a bird in it; and pots, pans, jugs and kettles of every size and variety.

"All complete!" said Toad, pulling open a locker. "You'll find that nothing whatever has been forgotten, when we make our start this afternoon."

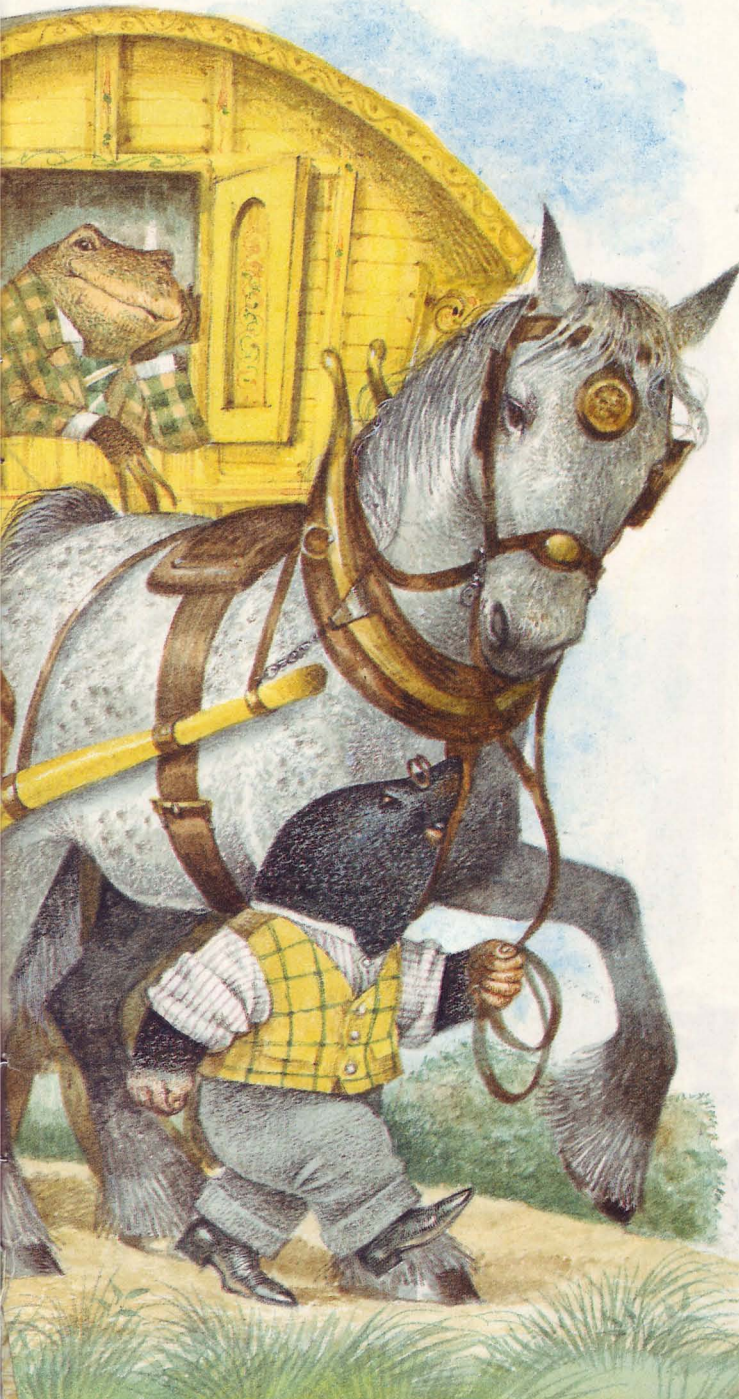


"I, er, beg your pardon," said Rat slowly as he chewed a straw. "But did I overhear you say something about we and *start*, and this afternoon?"

"Now, you dear, good old Ratty," said Toad. "Don't begin talking in that stiff and snuffy sort of way, because you know you've got to come. I can't possibly manage without you, so please consider it settled and don't argue — it's the one thing I can't stand. You surely don't mean to stick to your dull old river all your life and just live in a hole in a bank and boat, do you? I want to show you the world! I'm going to make an animal of you, my boy!"

Somehow it soon seemed taken for granted by all three of them that the trip was settled and Rat, though still unconvinced in his mind, allowed his good nature to override his personal objections.

When they were quite ready, and the old grey horse was harnessed, they set off, all talking at once, each animal either trudging by the side of the caravan or sitting on the shaft. It was a golden afternoon, and rabbits, sitting at their front doors in the hedgerows, held up their fore-paws and waved.





shook him hard and shouted, Toad just would not wake up. So Mole and Ratty trudged off to a farm to buy some butter and eggs and all the other things that Toad had forgotten to provide.

After breakfast Mole led the horse by the reins, while Rat and Toad strolled along behind. They had not gone very far, however, when they heard a faint hum like the drone of a distant bee. Then, in an instant, there was a blast of

Late that evening, tired and far from home, they stopped and ate a simple supper on the grass. Toad talked big about all he was going to do in the days to come, while the stars grew fuller and larger all around them. Then they turned into their little bunks and soon fell fast asleep.

When the sun rose in the morning, Mole and Rat got up, made a fire and washed last night's plates and cups while Toad slept soundly. And though they



wind and a whirl of sound that made them jump for the ditch. With a loud *poop-poop* a magnificent red motor-car, all plate-glass and shining, swept past throwing up great clouds of dust into the air, choking and blinding them.

The old grey horse reared up in terror, and in spite of Mole's efforts to hold him, plunged backwards — sending the canary-coloured caravan hurtling into a ditch.



"Villains! Road-hogs! Highwaymen!" shouted Rat. "I'll, I'll report you! I'll have the law on you!"

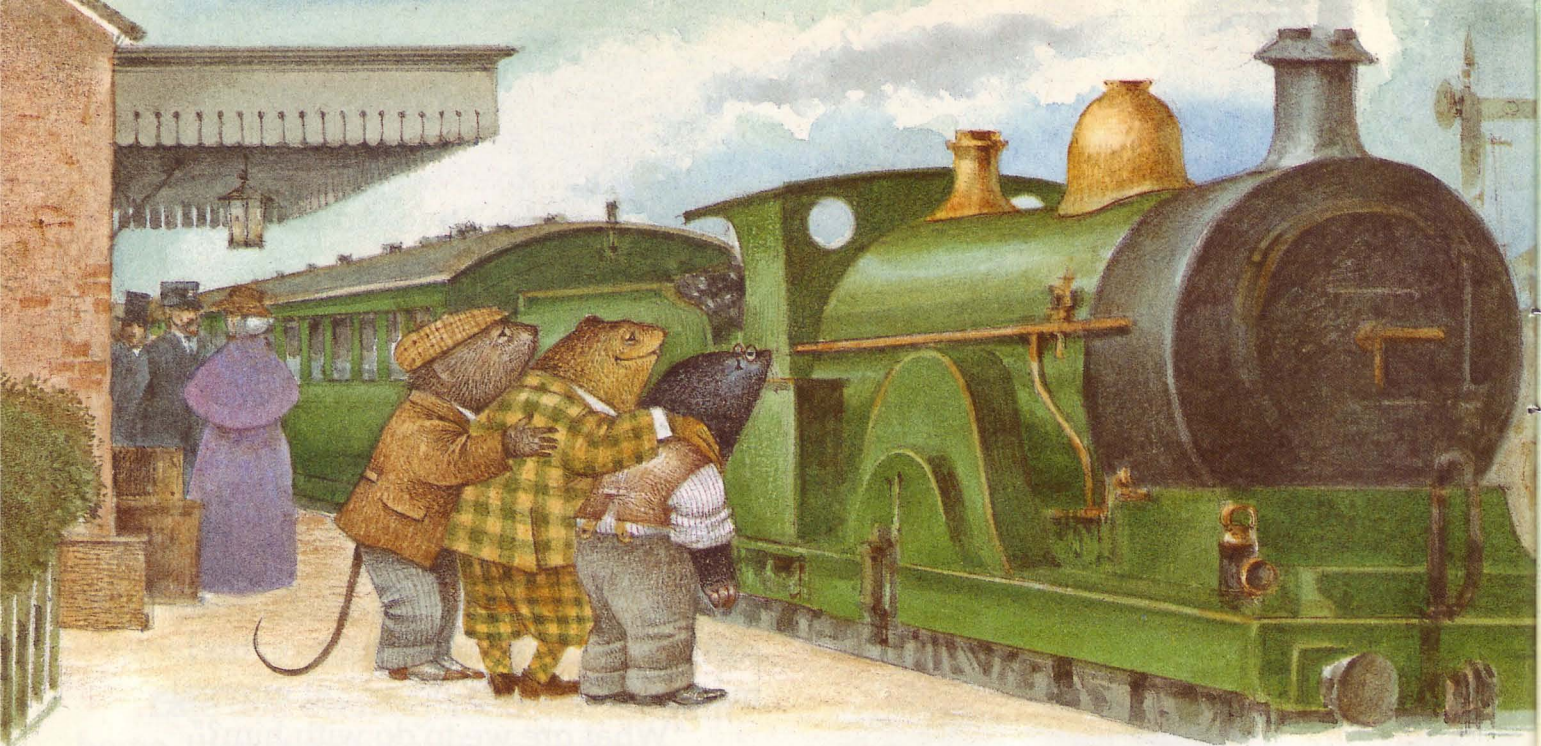
When Mole finally managed to quieten down the horse, Rat tried to set the caravan right. "Come on, Toad, you silly, conceited ass, come and lend a hand." But Toad did not answer a word, nor move from the middle of the road, so Rat and Mole went to see what was the matter with him. They found him in a sort of trance, a happy smile on his face, murmuring "*poop-poop!*" at intervals.

"What *are* we to do with him?" asked Mole.

"Nothing at all," replied Rat firmly. "I know him of old. He's possessed. He's got a new craze, it always takes him that way in its first stage. He'll continue like that for days now. Never mind him. Let's go and see what's to be done about the caravan."

But it was hopeless. The caravan lay shattered on its side in the ditch, its windows smashed, axles bent, one wheel off and food and broken crockery scattered everywhere.





Rat tied the horse's reins over his back and took him by the head.

"Come on!" he said to Mole. "It's five or six miles to the nearest town, we shall just have to walk."

"But what about Toad? We can't leave him sitting in the middle of the road. It's not safe."

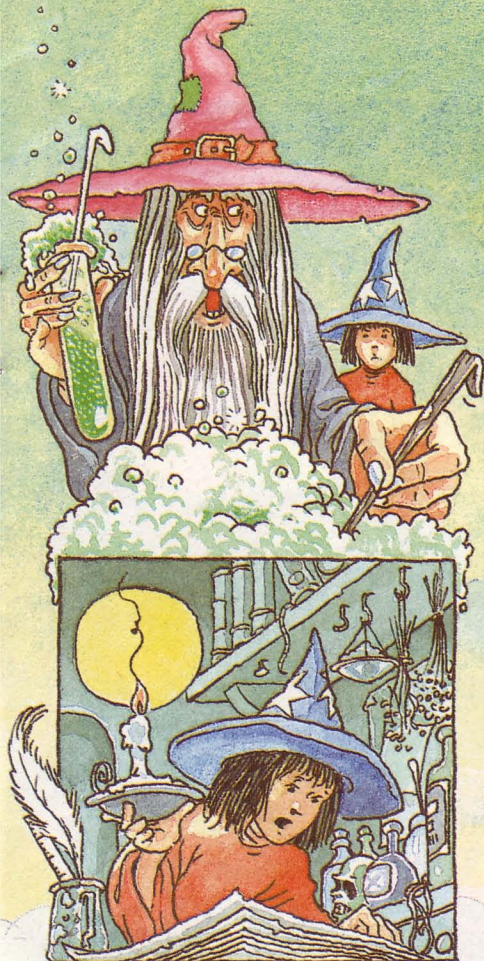
"Oh, *bother* Toad."

Moments later, however, they heard a pattering of feet behind them. Toad caught them up and thrust an arm inside the elbow of each of them, still staring into space and muttering something about motor-cars.

When they reached the town they went straight to the railway station. There they left Toad in the waiting-room, and took the horse to a stable, giving instructions about the caravan and its contents. Then, catching a slow train, they eventually reached the station not far from Toad Hall. There they left the muttering, sleep-walking Toad and set off for home in their boat. Very late and very tired they finally sat down to supper in their own cosy riverside home.

[Toad's new craze lands him in trouble in Part 11]





SIMEON

the sorcerer's son

Simeon's father, the great Wizard Walburg, was always too busy practising important spells to have much time for his young son. "When you're older, I'll teach you all the magic I know," he would say. "Now run off and play. I've got work to do."

But Simeon did not want to wait. He wanted to learn about magic *now*. So every night he sneaked down to his father's study to read the *Great Spellbook*. Back in his room, he wrote down as much as he could remember into his very own book of spells.

Simeon was not good at writing, and his spelling was even worse. But at last his book was full, and the time had come to try some magic of his own. He crept out of the Wizard's tower.

"I must find somewhere quiet to practise my spells," he thought. "Father mustn't find out what I'm doing. Ah, just the place!"





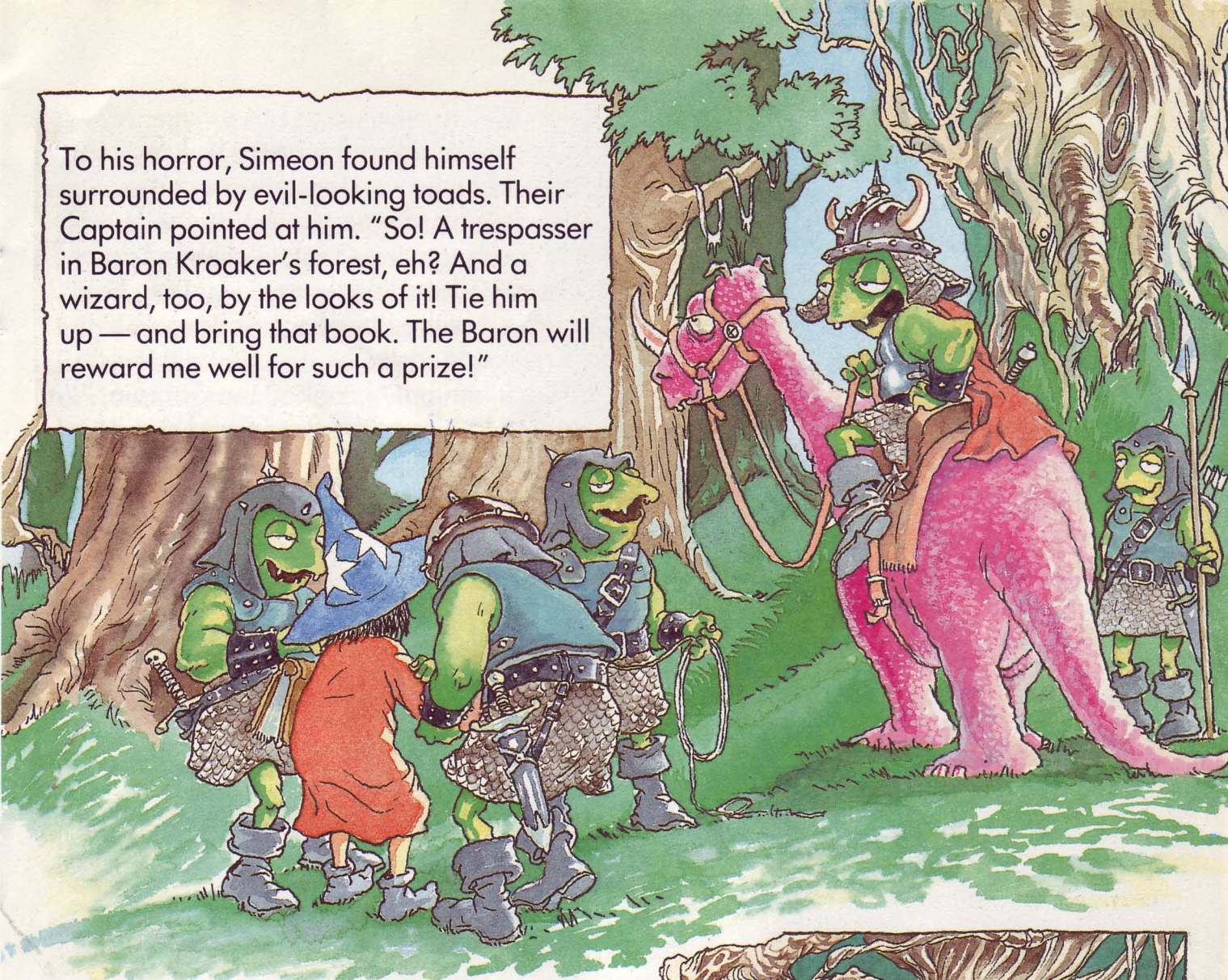
He had come to the edge of a clearing among the trees. "Perfect! Now for some magic!" And he opened his book. The first spell was for turning mushrooms into black bats. Excitedly, Simeon began to read out the magic words. "Knit one and knot one and purl two together. Pick one and pluck one and grasp the secret feather."

Nothing happened at first. Then there was a flash of light. The mushroom had changed into something very black — but it was not exactly a bat. "Oh well," muttered Simeon, "not bad for my very first spell. Let's see what I can do with this one." And he turned the page.



The next spell was for changing rocks into sticky buns. And he was just about to utter the magic words, when the stillness of the forest was shattered by a blood-chilling voice that made Simeon's hair stand on end and his heart thump with terror. "Don't move! You're under arrest!"

To his horror, Simeon found himself surrounded by evil-looking toads. Their Captain pointed at him. "So! A trespasser in Baron Kroaker's forest, eh? And a wizard, too, by the looks of it! Tie him up — and bring that book. The Baron will reward me well for such a prize!"



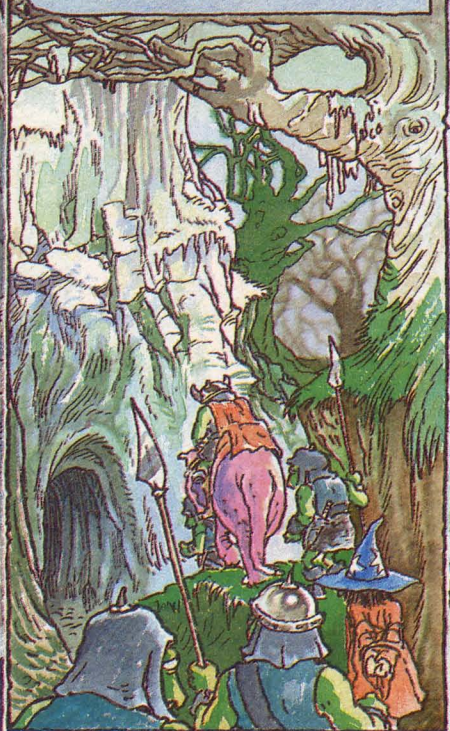
Without his spellbook, Simeon could do nothing but follow his captors. He was bound tightly and made to follow the toads deep into the darkest depths of Baron Kroaker's forest.



After many weary hours they came to a giant archway in the base of a cliff. It led underground!
"I don't like the look of this one little bit!" muttered Simeon under his breath.

Down and down the passage led, threading its way through giant caves that made their footsteps echo. At the end of the passage, the Captain climbed down from the beast he was riding. They had arrived at the dungeons of Baron Kroaker's castle.

"Lock him up!" croaked the Captain. "I'm going to inform the Baron and show him this book!"



Simeon was pushed into a dark, damp-smelling cell containing one other prisoner.

A bedraggled old man peered up at Simeon through the darkness, and, after the cell door had been barred and bolted again, helped to untie him. As he did so, he explained his own sad story.

"I'm just a woodcutter. One day I went into the forest to cut firewood. But the Baron's captain accused me of spying and locked me up here. I've been in this horrible dungeon ever since."

When Simeon said what *he* had been doing in the forest, the old man's eyes lit up. "Ooh, if you know magic, you can get us out of here in a moment. Just say a spell and open that locked door!"

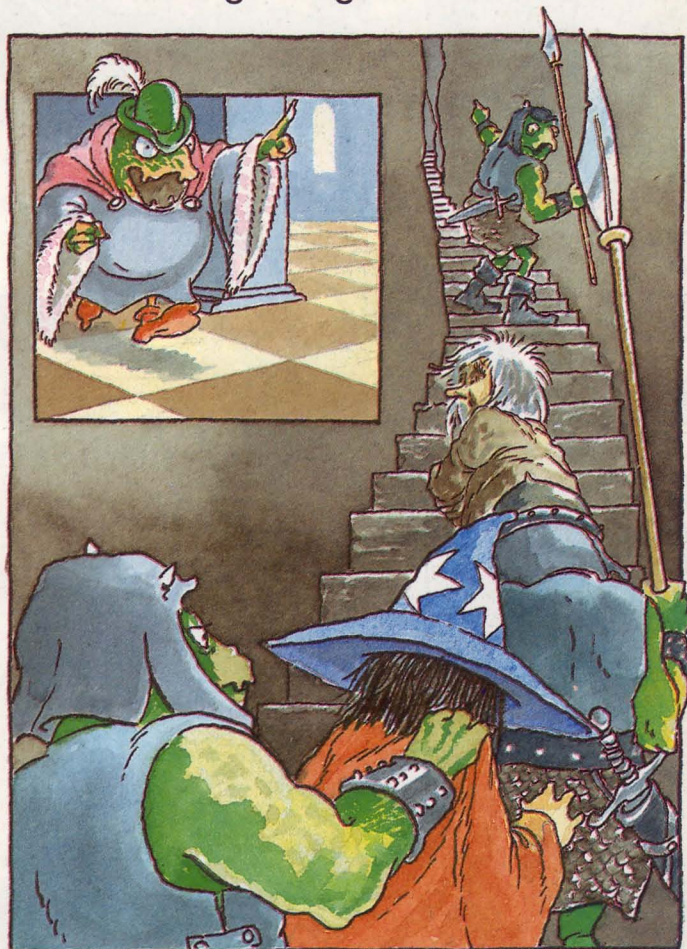


"You've earned your reward, Captain. Now leave me."

Alone in his chamber, he opened the book. "I've always wanted to be taller. That will be my first spell. But what's this? I can't read a word of it!" Try as he might the Baron just could not read Simeon's awful hand-writing.



"Well . . . er . . . it's not that easy. You see . . . I'm only a beginner. Besides, they took my spellbook to the Baron. Goodness knows what he'll do with it . . ." Meanwhile, up in the castle, Baron Kroaker was gloating over the book.



"Guards! Bring that young wizard here at once . . . and that woodcutter, too. We'll soon see if this magic works!"

[What dreadful magic does Kroaker have in mind? Find out in Part 11]

ANANSI AND THE PYTHON

Deep in the jungle, on the muddy banks of the River Niger, lay an enormous snake — a coiling, hungry python. He ate the jungle animals, he ate the village cows, and he ate anyone who strayed too close to the river.

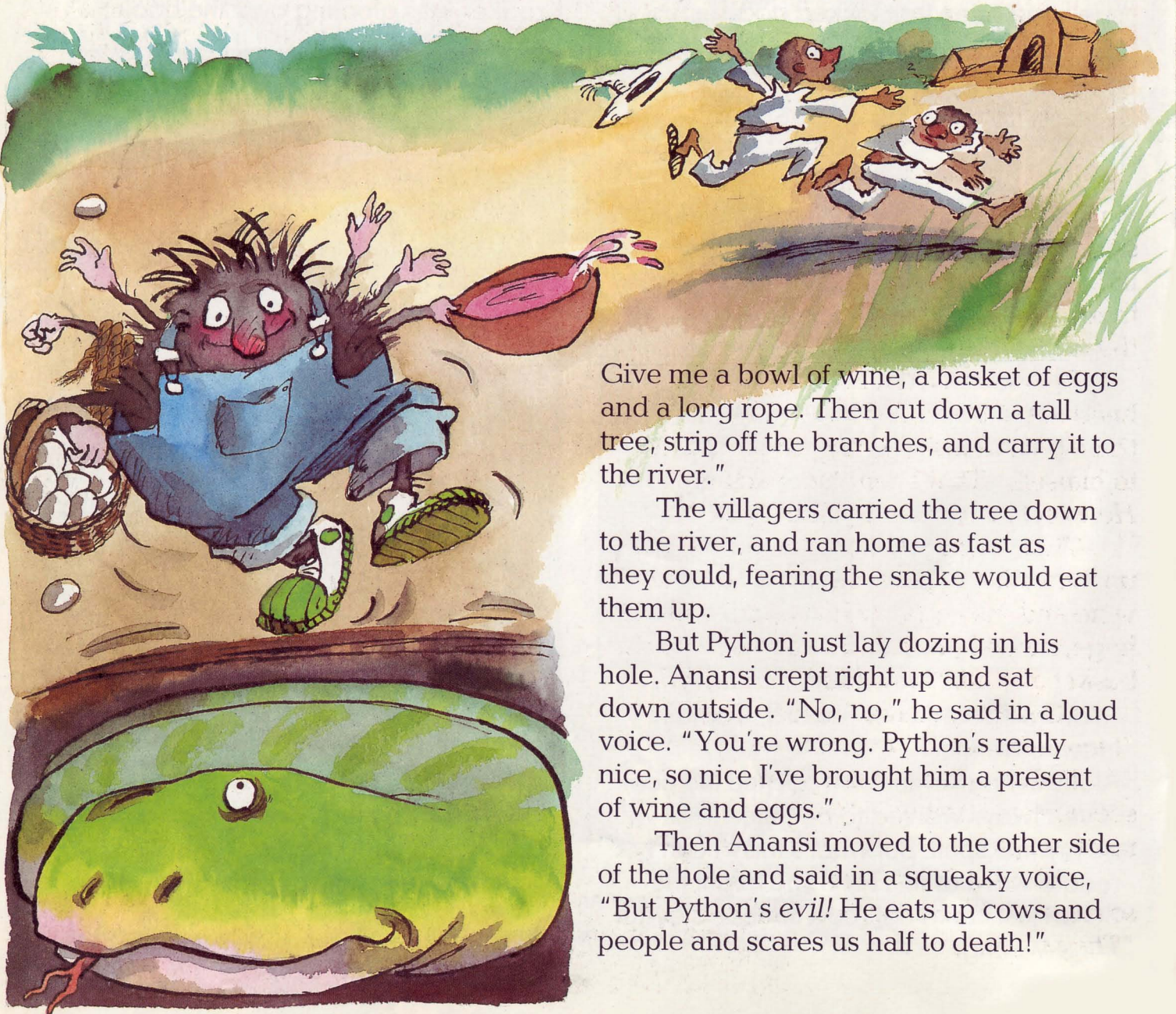
The villagers were so terrified that they called out to the Sky god, "Save us from the monster, man-eating Python!"

"No," said the god of the Sky.

"I made Python. I won't unmake him. But if anyone can put a stop to his murderous ways, I'll reward them with a present."

The villagers threw up their hands and groaned. "Who's clever enough to destroy Python? Who's brave enough to try?"

Close to the village lived Anansi, the spider-man. When he heard the Sky god's words, he said, "I'll tackle Python."

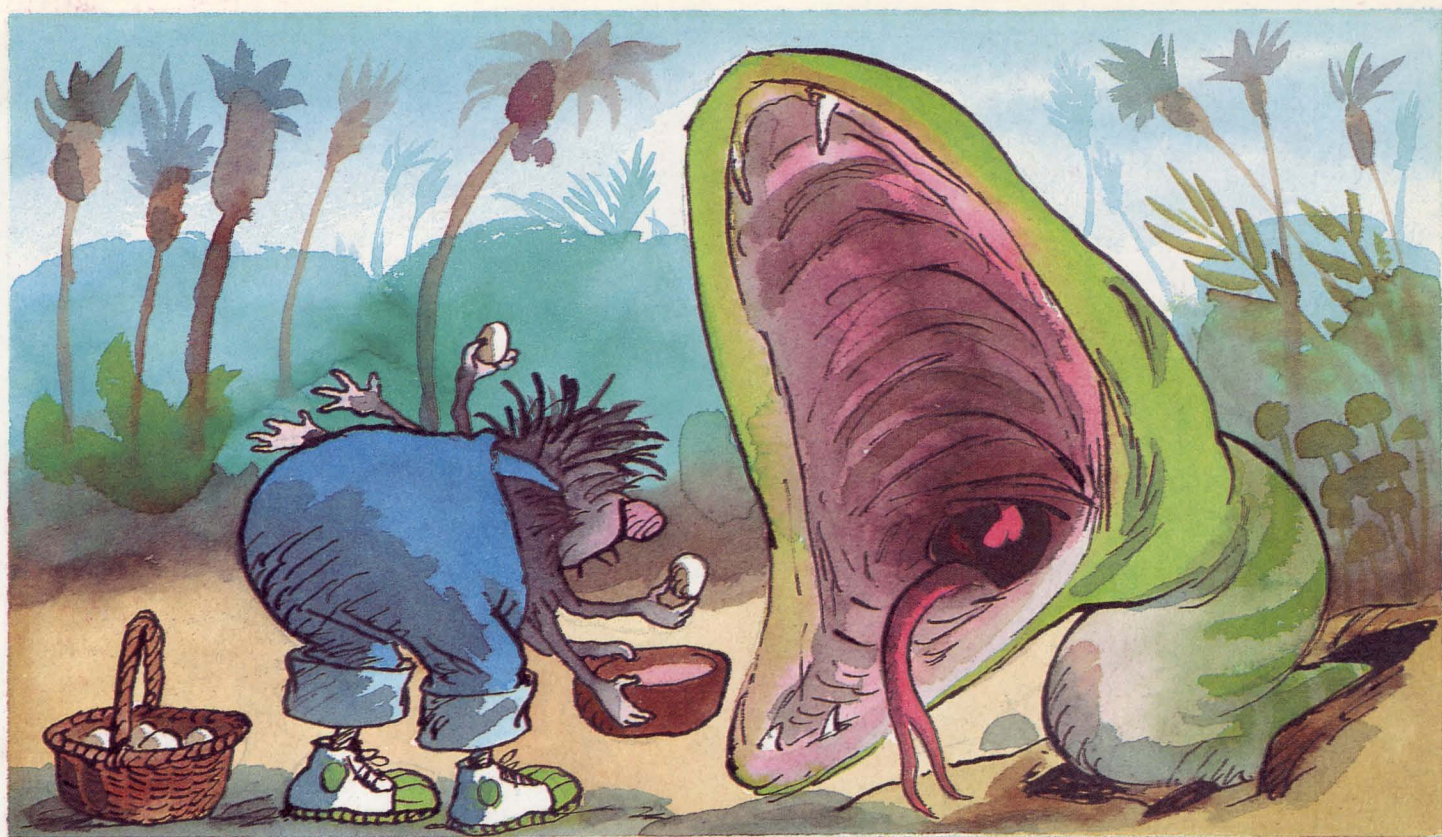


Give me a bowl of wine, a basket of eggs and a long rope. Then cut down a tall tree, strip off the branches, and carry it to the river."

The villagers carried the tree down to the river, and ran home as fast as they could, fearing the snake would eat them up.

But Python just lay dozing in his hole. Anansi crept right up and sat down outside. "No, no," he said in a loud voice. "You're wrong. Python's really nice, so nice I've brought him a present of wine and eggs."

Then Anansi moved to the other side of the hole and said in a squeaky voice, "But Python's evil! He eats up cows and people and scares us half to death!"



Creeping back to the other side, Anansi said out loud, "Rubbish! I won't sit here and listen to you insulting my friend! Take that, you liar! Take that! And that!" And he jumped and thumped on the mud. "Ugh! Oh! Ow! Take *that!*"

Python roused himself and poked his head out of the hole. He saw no-one there but Anansi, panting and muttering to himself, "That's sent *him* packing. He won't insult dear Python again!"

Then seeing Python, Anansi leaped up, bowed, and presented him with the wine and the eggs. Python opened his huge, hinged jaws, and swallowed bowl, basket and all. "How kind," he hissed.

"O mighty snake!" cried Anansi, "I am so honoured to meet you."

Python gave a smirk. "You seem more intelligent than most people."

"Oh yes! People are so stupid," Anansi agreed. "They say you're only

long enough to coil round a cow . . ."

"What?" hissed Python.

"Well, *I* tell them you're easily long enough to coil round a hut . . ."

"A what?"

". . . or even a whole village.

Exactly how long are you, Mr Python?"





Python shuffled a short way out of his hole. He was monstrously big. But Anansi hid his fear and said, "I still can't judge. Come right out and let me measure you."

Python slid, coil after glistening coil, out of his hole. Anansi gulped, but said, "You see this tree? If you lie beside it, I can measure you."

The eggs and wine were making Python very sleepy, so he grinned

foolishly and slithered over to the tree.

"Okay, if you like."

"Now," said Anansi, "if I tie a piece of rope round you every ten paces, I can count up the ropes and work out how many paces long you are . . ."

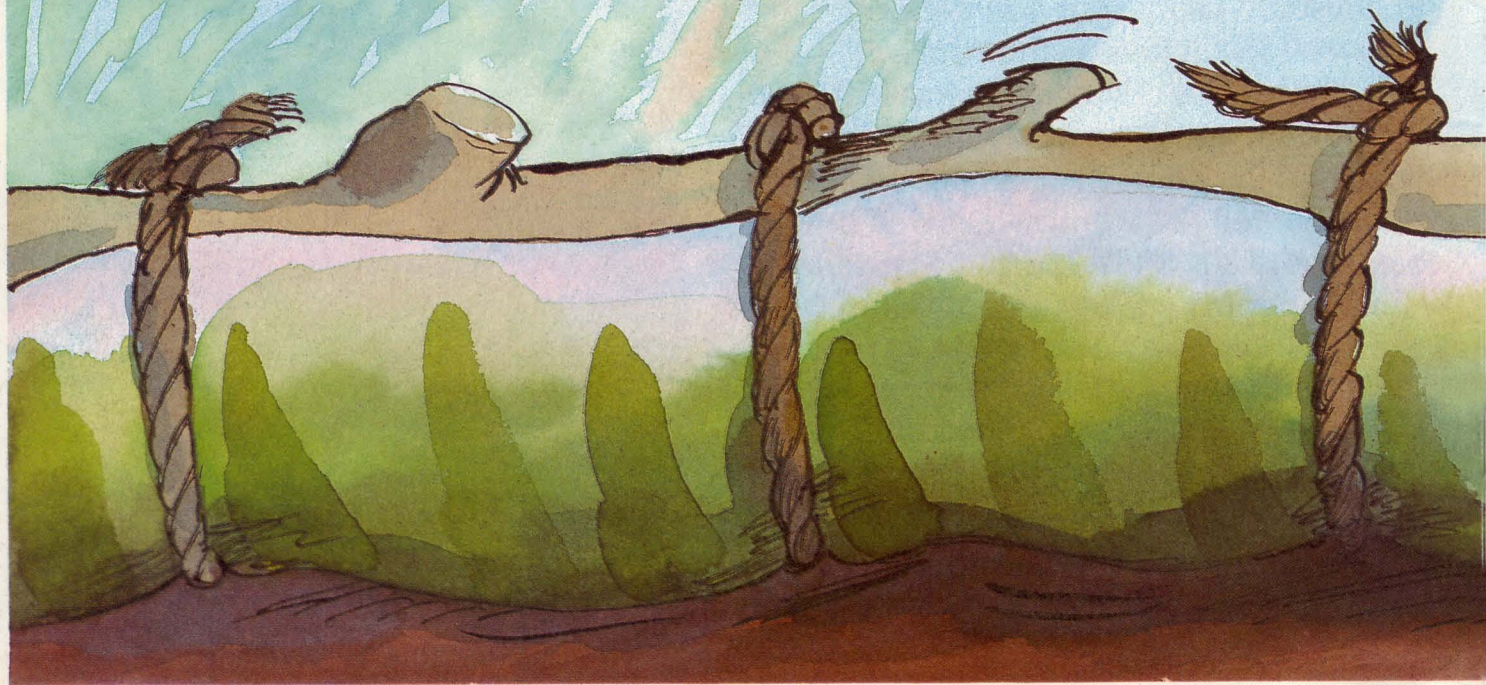
"Okay," said Python yawning. Anansi tied the first rope round his tail and round the tree. "Your knots are rather tight," grumbled Python, as Anansi went on tying rope after rope.


"Stop complaining," Anansi scolded. "Stretch out as long as you can — don't you want to be known as the Longest Python in the World?"

So Python stretched and strained, and Anansi went on tying knots. Last of all he tied Python's neck to the tree, and stood back to admire his handiwork.

"Well? How big am I?" asked Python. "Hurry up and measure me!"

"I can see from here," sniggered Anansi. "Your body's awfully big, but your brain's very, very small. How will you eat your next villager, Mr Python? How will you swallow your next cow? I've put a stop to you and your murderous ways for ever!"



Anansi, a small, dark, hairy spider-like creature with a large red nose, is shown in mid-air, jumping away from a large green snake. He is wearing blue overalls and green shoes. The snake is coiled around a tree trunk, with its mouth open, showing sharp fangs and a red tongue. A small yellow box with a lock is floating in the air above Anansi. The background is a light blue sky with some green foliage at the bottom.

When Python saw Anansi dancing triumphantly up and down the tree trunk, he struggled and strained to get free. His tongue flickered wickedly. But he was tied so tight that he could not move a muscle.

"Did you see that?" called Anansi, grinning up at the sky. "Did you see how I put a stop to Python?"

"I saw, Anansi, and I remember what I promised," replied the Sky god. "Here is your reward." And the Sky god leaned down out of the heavens and gave Anansi a small box. "Inside is wisdom — enough for a lifetime. Your cleverness will make you famous, and your trickery will keep you safe."

So that is how Anansi, the spider-man, came to be the cleverest person in the whole jungle — even cleverer than he had been before.

And Python? Well, he just floated away on his tree trunk, down the River Niger, deeper and deeper into the deep, dark jungle.

STONE DRUM

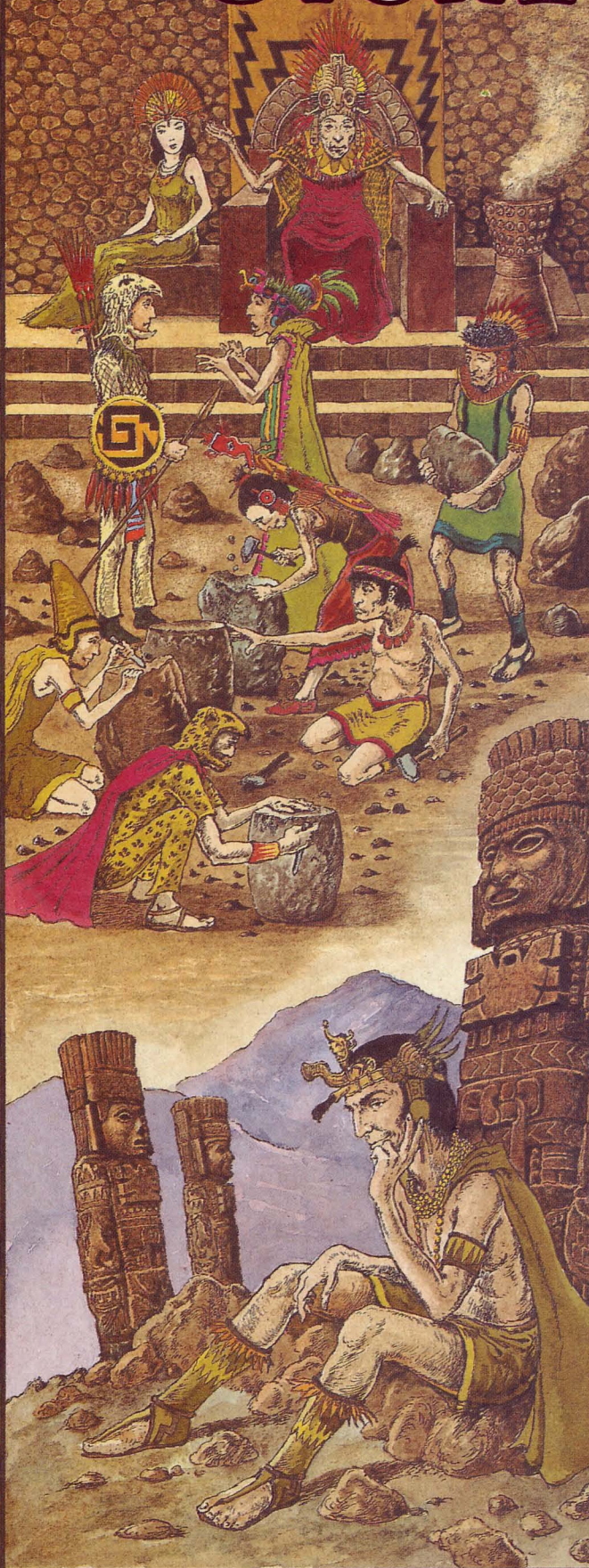
A chief once had a daughter called Tahulha, and the older she grew, the lovelier she became. When the chief saw this, he said to himself, "Who is worthy to be her husband?" And he himself answered, "Nobody!"

Young men brought the chief presents every day, and begged for Tahulha's hand in marriage. But though he wanted their presents, he did not want to part with his daughter. So he set a test — an impossible task for all the young men. "He who makes a drum out of stone may marry Tahulha."

When they heard this, the young men were too afraid to say, "It's impossible! No-one can do that!" So they chipped and scraped and hammered at hard, grey rocks, and tried to make a stone drum. But no-one succeeded.

Now one young man, Chilam, loved Tahulha more than the rest. So he thought longer and harder about the challenge. Each day he would leave the village, saying, "I'm going to the Place of Rocks to carve my stone drum."

Then one evening he returned to the chief's house. "I've made a stone drum," he said, "and long to play it to you, so that I may marry Tahulha. But it's heavy. Give me a cushion of smoke, so that I can carry it here on my head."



The chief stared at Chilam, then at the camp fire and its clouds of smoke billowing towards the sky. Then he called his sons, and told them, "Gather smoke!"

The boys chased the smoke, and snatched at it and tried to trap it under blankets. But they all failed.

The chief tried himself. But though he chased the smoke all round the camp and flung his cloak over it, he could not even catch one handful. "It's impossible!" he cried, wheezing and coughing and flopping down in his chair. "Why do you ask me to do what's plainly impossible? Do you mean to make a fool of your own chief?"

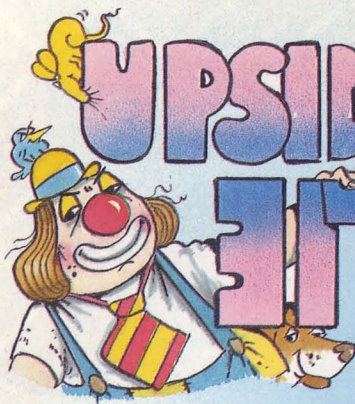
Then Chilam bowed deeply. "Why then did you ask the young men to make a drum of stone? That, too, is impossible. Did you mean to make a fool of your own daughter? For now she will surely grow old alone."

The chief leaped from his chair, his eyes narrow with fury. But then he saw how wise and how brave Chilam had been to say such a thing. "Tahulha!" he called. "Come and meet the husband who has won you by telling the truth. I like him. Do you think you can love him, daughter?"

Then Tahulha came out of her father's hut and took Chilam's hand. "That's not impossible," she said.



UPSIDE-DOWN JITIM



Willie could not get to the waste ground quickly enough the next morning. Now it looked like a real circus, with side-shows and shooting galleries and coconut shies spread around the Big

Top. There was a lovely smell too — of horses, and

sawdust, and hot oil, and smoke from the outdoor cooking stoves.

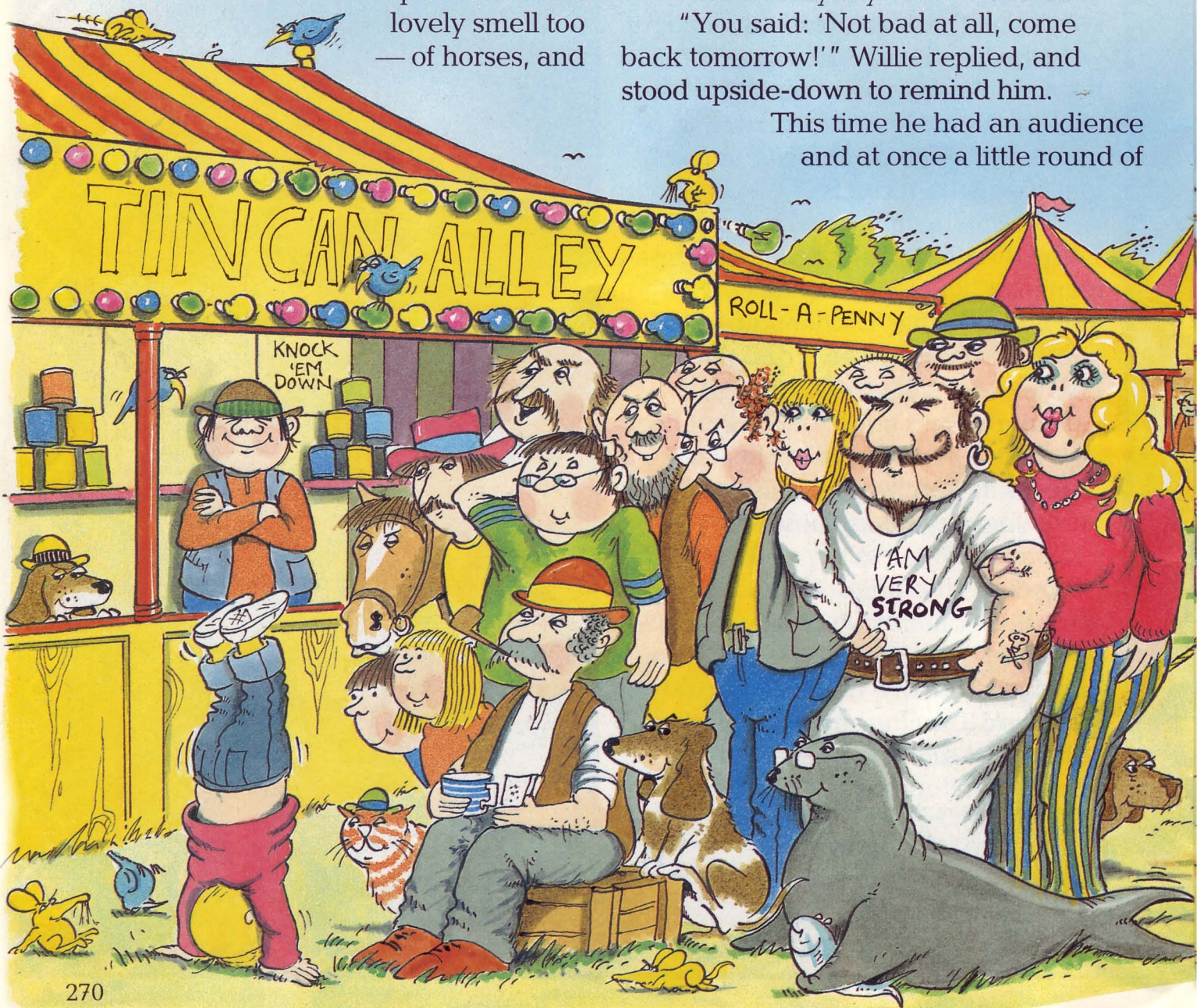
Willie followed the cooking smells round to the back of the Big Top and there were the circus people, the boys and girls who had ridden the ponies, the men who had driven the caravans and the trailers — and the man who yesterday had said: "Come back tomorrow."

The man was sitting on an upturned orange box, a mug of tea in one hand and a large piece of bread and cheese in the other. He was not too busy to think now.

"Did I really say that?" he said.

"You said: 'Not bad at all, come back tomorrow!'" Willie replied, and stood upside-down to remind him.

This time he had an audience and at once a little round of



applause and cheering broke out.

"He's good. As good as any of you," said one of the grown-ups across to the boys and girls.

"And a lot younger!" said another. "What else can you do?"

Willie came rightside-up again. He had not thought he would have to do anything else.

"I mean — could you do it on the High Wire? Or on horse-back?"

"I can do it on one hand — but not for long," Willie said.

"Let him hand out tickets at the tent — upside-down," called a voice.

"That's right," called another. "The show that starts before you get inside."

"All right," said the man. "Can't pay much, mind you, but it'll keep you in ice-cream."

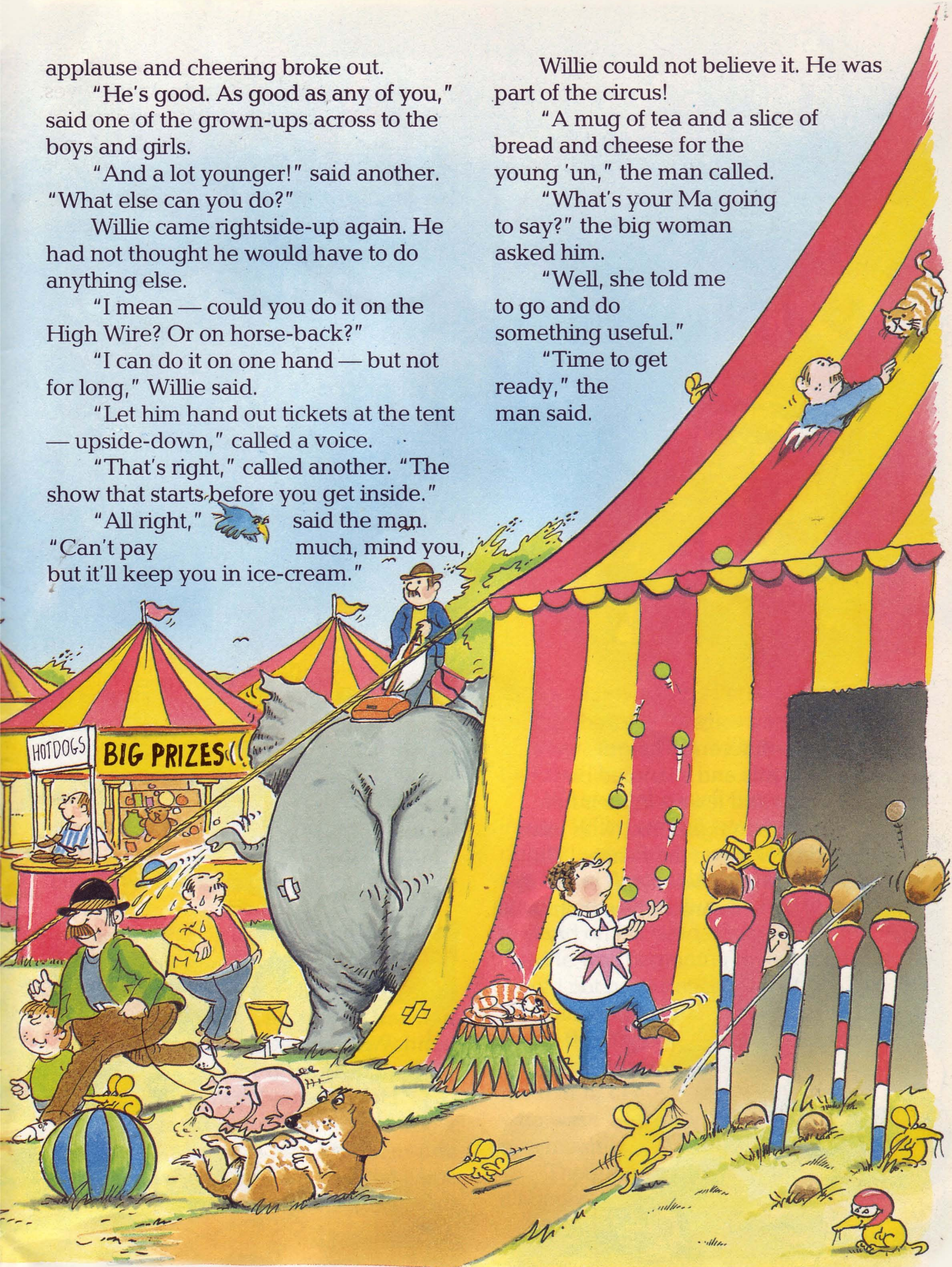
Willie could not believe it. He was part of the circus!

"A mug of tea and a slice of bread and cheese for the young 'un," the man called.

"What's your Ma going to say?" the big woman asked him.

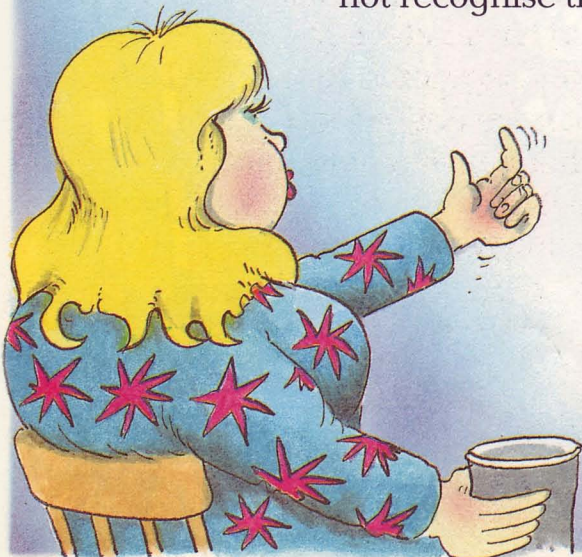
"Well, she told me to go and do something useful."

"Time to get ready," the man said.





When they were all dressed up they looked quite different. The girls were dressed in tights and spangled bodices, with feathers and jewels in their hair. The boys were in tights, too, with satin shirts and buckles on their shoes. The clowns had painted faces and Willie did not recognise them at all.



The man who seemed to be the boss now wore a red coat and a silk top hat, and he carried a long whip in his hand. Willie could not wait to see them perform their tricks.

"Hey, Upside-Down Willie," the big woman called. "Your job is at the entrance with me." She was sitting at a small table by the tent flap, a tin to hold the takings beside her and a box full of

tickets which she was now putting down on the ground beside her and in front of Willie.

Willie had not stopped to think that his part in the circus was outside the Big Top — and not inside where all the fun was going on. He hesitated only a moment, though, and then obediently tipped himself up to stand by the table.

"Roll up! Roll up!" the big woman cried. "Take your tickets from Upside-Down Willie and see the big show inside. Born standing on his head he was. What you do on your feet, Willie does on his head. Roll up! Roll up!"

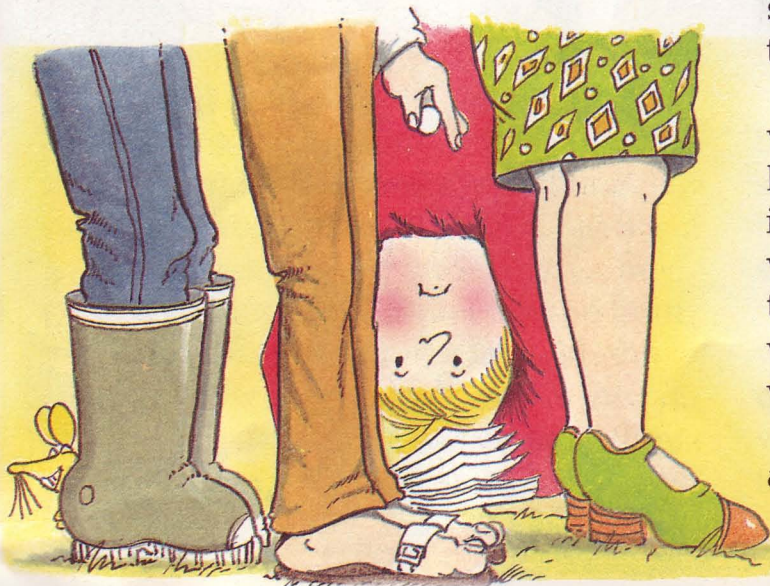
And people began rolling up: big boots, little boots, shoes and slippers, sandals and Wellingtons, because that was all Willie could see of the customers. He would not have been able to tell you what else they wore, he could only guess from what the big woman was crying out. "Two for the gentleman in the blue

shirt," she shouted. "Three for the lady in the yellow jumper," and "Four for the soldier with medals on his chest."

When all the customers had gone inside, Willie was allowed to take a rest — rightside-up. But he was not allowed to slip inside the tent in case a late customer should come and then he had to be ready to stand on his head again.

He was beginning to feel tired. He would not have noticed it so much but he could hear all that was going on inside the Big Top — the crack of the whip, the thud of the horses' hooves, the roar of delight from the customers who were watching all the fun he was missing.

There was a break for tea and then it all began again.

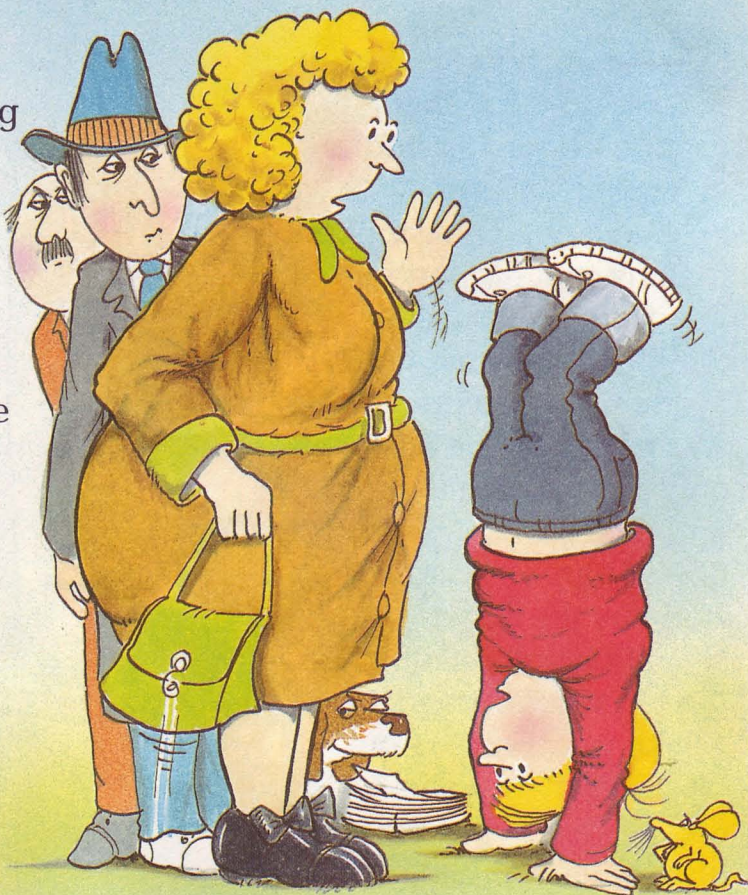


"Roll up! Roll up! Take your tickets from Upside-Down Willie and see the big show inside. Born standing on his head. What you do on your feet Willie does on his head. Roll up! Roll up! One for the lady with the black silk bows on her shoes," the big woman cried.

Willie recognised the shoes at once. They were black and shiny and had little black silk bows on them . . . the same shoes he had carried home from the menders two days before!

"Willie! Stand up! At once!"

Willie was so thankful to be told to stand up that he did not mind at all that his mother was angry. He came rightside-up and stood there, waiting.



Willie thought the circus lady was very kind. He also thought that being upside-down was very uncomfortable.

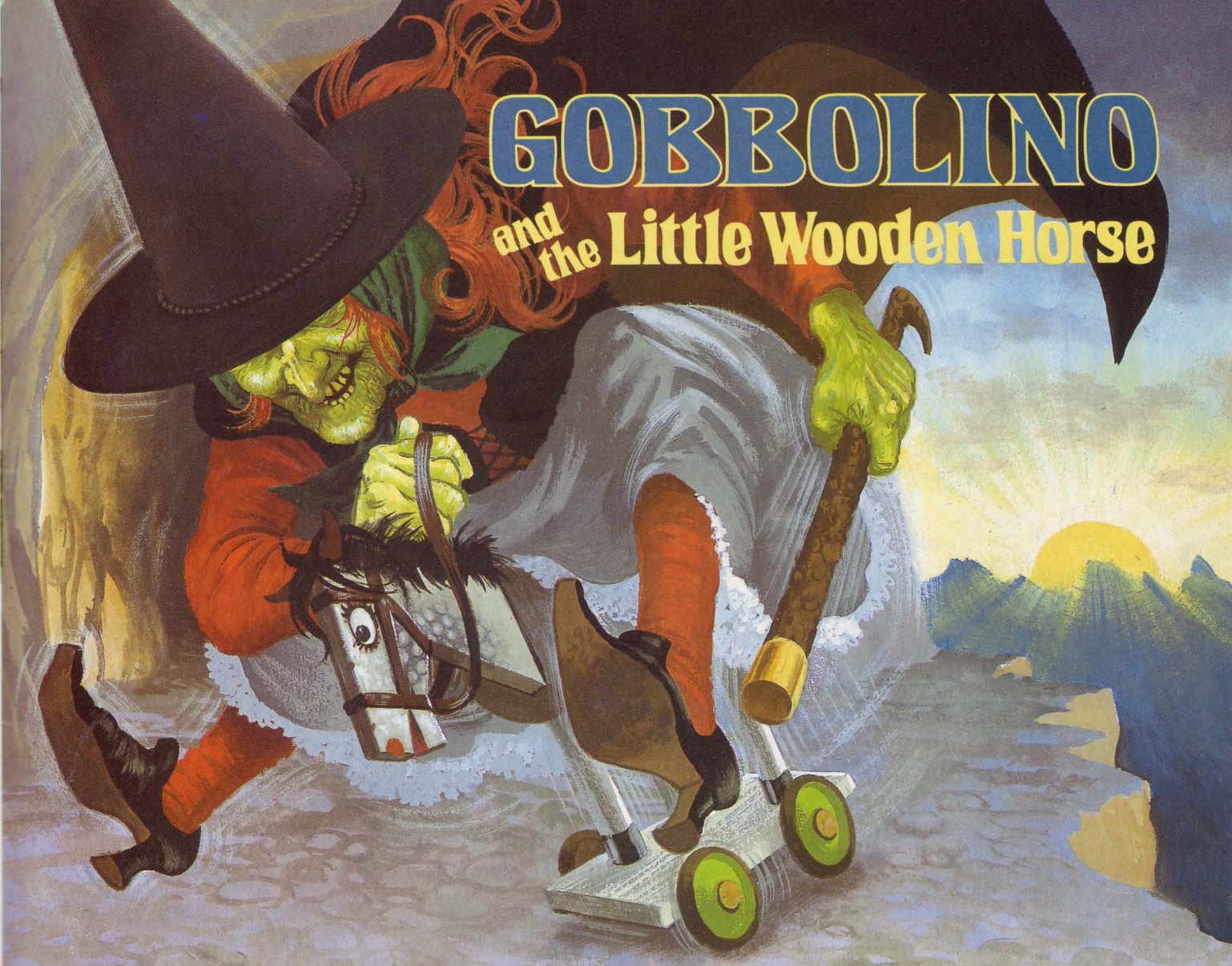
And, as they walked away from the Big Top, Willie said to his mother, "I think I'll be a postman when I grow up."



"Willie — how could you?" his mother demanded.

"Doing very nicely he was too. Clever boy, that one," the big woman said. "You should be proud of him." And she dipped a hand into the box of money on her table. "Here," she said to Willie, "that's for doing your best."



A colorful illustration of a witch with green skin, a large black pointed hat, and long red hair, riding a small white wooden horse. The witch is holding a large wooden staff with a golden ring. The horse has a white body, a brown mane, and a brown bridle. They are flying over a landscape with a yellow sun setting or rising behind blue mountains. The title "GOBBOLINO and the Little Wooden Horse" is written in large, stylized letters at the top. "GOBBOLINO" is in blue with a yellow outline, and "and the Little Wooden Horse" is in yellow with a black outline.

GOBBOLINO

and the Little Wooden Horse

With the witch on his back, the Little Wooden Horse whirled round and round the night sky, dashing past countless stars.

"Let's go higher," screamed the witch. And up they soared above Hurricane Mountain, until the Little Wooden Horse could see the whole of the magic circle. At night it burned with a fire that was completely invisible at sunrise. It was a beautiful sight, but it was also terrifying, for it meant that he and Gobbolino could never escape from the witch. Their only hope lay with the priest who was on his way across the plain. With the help of his blessing, they might break the magic circle.

The Little Wooden Horse was beginning to feel very tired, but the witch would not hear of stopping until the sun's first rays appeared in the sky. Then, with a magnificent swoop, she brought the Little Wooden Horse down on to the mountain, right beside her cave.

"A wooden horse is better than a broomstick to ride," she cackled. "We shall have some magnificent journeys together." And sitting down on her chair, she fell fast asleep.

The Little Wooden Horse ran to waken the sleeping Gobbolino. "Come quickly, quickly! The good priest is on his way and we must stop him before he tries to cross the magic circle."



The two friends rushed down the mountainside until, rounding the last bend in the path, they saw the priest hurrying towards them.

"No! No!" cried Gobbolino. "Don't come any nearer. You will be burned by the witch's magic circle."

"Say a blessing, say a blessing," called the Little Wooden Horse.

"It will help us to break the circle."

At this moment the bats came flying out of their caves and their shrill screams almost drowned the words of the Little Wooden Horse. But at last the priest understood what was wanted and, crossing himself, he uttered a blessing.

Then, stepping forward, he found himself in a warm invisible glow.

Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse could hardly believe their eyes: the priest was standing on the magic circle without being frizzled or burned! They went forward to meet him and found that they too could comfortably stand on the circle.

"You can go through the witch's fire because you are perfectly good," explained the bats. There was no time to lose if the three friends were to escape from the witch. So, with tired feet, they began to walk across the plain, not daring to look back until they reached the priest's house. Then, in



the setting sun, they saw tongues of fire flashing around Hurricane Mountain — and Gobbolino's eyes filled with tears. He could not forget that although the witch cast terrible spells she was also a lonely old woman. She had been deserted by everyone — not even her cat Sootica was still with her.

After a good night's sleep, Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse were eager to begin the last stage of their journey home.

"I feel I could trot a thousand miles," said Gobbolino as they waved goodbye to the priest.

"We'll be in the forest before sunset," cried the Little Wooden Horse joyfully.

The witch now seemed so far away that as they crossed the stream they laughed at the sparkling ripples and pretended to chase the water-rats.

And then they suddenly heard a familiar sound — the far-off cry of hounds which was rapidly coming nearer. Their hearts pounding with fear, they hid among the rocks. It was only when the pack was almost within sight that they burst out of their hiding place, clambered

to the top of the bank, and had to gallop back across the plain.

Panting, gasping and limping — never pausing to look around or behind them — they ran until they reached Hurricane Mountain.





They did not notice when the hounds stopped baying. They did not even notice that the magic circle no longer glowed in the darkness. More dead than alive, they flung themselves into the first cave they came to and fell into an exhausted sleep.

When they woke it was daylight and they could see bats flying on and off the mountain, as if there had never been a magic fire at all.

"The witch is finished," the bats called. "When she knew you were gone she had a fit and fell down screaming. Her magic circle just vanished."

Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse sprang to their feet and galloped up the mountainside to the witch's cave. At first they thought the cold, still cave was empty, but then they saw something move in the shadows and a long, sad face

looked towards them.

"You've come back! You've come back!" a voice cried. "I thought you'd left me for ever and I was going to die of a broken heart. But I'll get better now. I'll never be lonely again."

Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse did not tell her that they still wanted to go back home. Instead they gave her some food and lit a fire under the cauldron — and by evening she was almost her old self. She was just picking up her book of spells when all three heard a *miaow* from the entrance of the cave. It was Sootica.

The witch shrieked with joy, and the next moment Sootica was in her arms.

"Oh my dear mistress," cried Sootica. "You look so thin, so old, so pale. Hardly a witch any longer."



"I don't want to be a witch any more. All I want is a little love and affection and a nice warm cave to live in."

"That's exactly what I want," said Sootica. "I had a dreadful time in the outside world trying to find a home. Nobody wanted a witch's cat like me."

Then Sootica turned to Gobbolino. "So you're still here brother! Have you enjoyed being a witch's cat after all?"

"These good friends have come to live with me for ever," said the witch. "And I shall reward them as they deserve. Tell me my little friends, what



At these words Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse bolted out of the cave and hurtled down the steep path.

"Stop!" shrieked the witch. And standing at the entrance of the cave, she hurled something from a wooden spoon. A thousand rainbow-coloured drops fell on the back of the Little Wooden Horse — and all at once a most extraordinary sensation filled his body.

would you like me to do for you?"

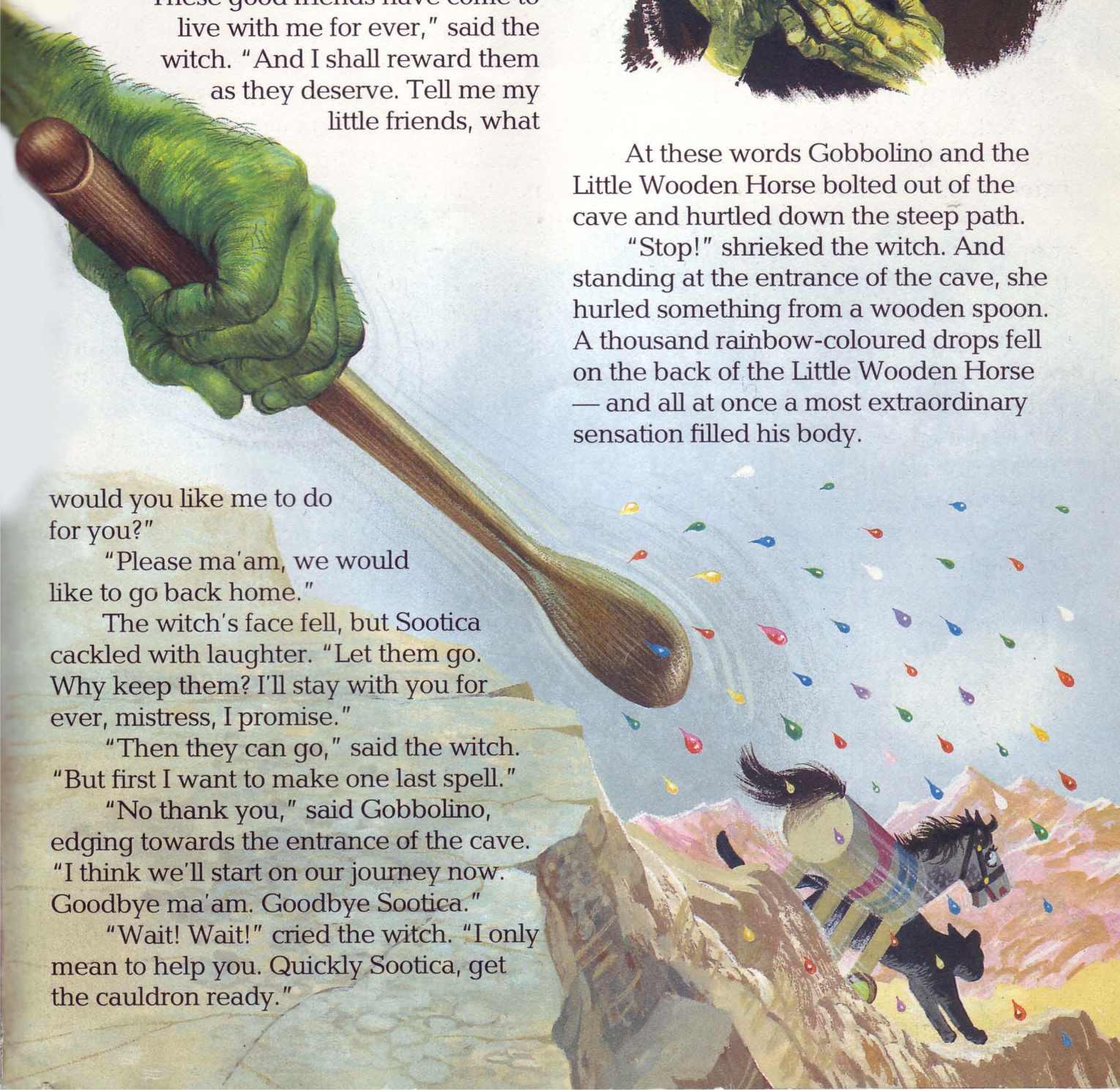
"Please ma'am, we would like to go back home."

The witch's face fell, but Sootica cackled with laughter. "Let them go. Why keep them? I'll stay with you for ever, mistress, I promise."

"Then they can go," said the witch. "But first I want to make one last spell."

"No thank you," said Gobbolino, edging towards the entrance of the cave. "I think we'll start on our journey now. Goodbye ma'am. Goodbye Sootica."

"Wait! Wait!" cried the witch. "I only mean to help you. Quickly Sootica, get the cauldron ready."





He found himself lifting his wheels from the path.

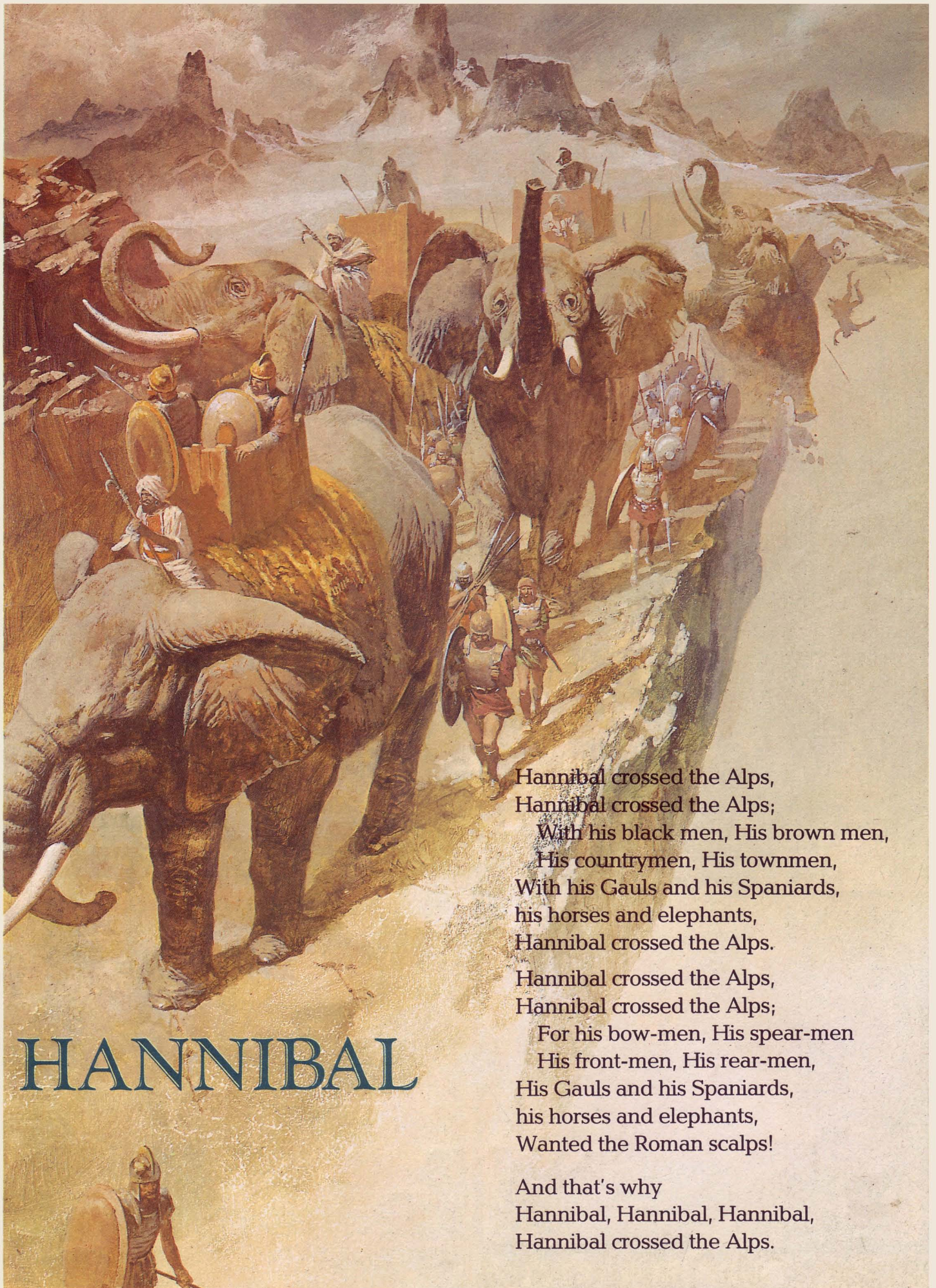
"Gobbolino," he called. "I'm flying. Quickly, quickly, jump on my back."

Gobbolino leaped on to his back and he soared high into the air. As the witch and Sootica called goodbye, he headed off towards the plain. Soon they were flying over the church, the stream, and the circling pack of hounds. Then just as the spell was beginning to wear off, they reached the forest. They landed on a carpet of pine needles and settled down to sleep, under the watchful eyes of an owl.

Towards morning, she left them, to fly with a message to Uncle Peder, the kind master of the Little Wooden Horse.

She carried another to Gobbolino's farm. So the very next day, when the two friends were walking through the forest, they heard a sound which made them stop in their tracks — it was the sound of children singing. With a cry of happiness Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse bounded forward and galloped along the path, straight into the loving arms of Uncle Peder and the farm children. They were safely home at last!





HANNIBAL

Hannibal crossed the Alps,
Hannibal crossed the Alps;
With his black men, His brown men,
His countrymen, His townmen,
With his Gauls and his Spaniards,
his horses and elephants,
Hannibal crossed the Alps.

Hannibal crossed the Alps,
Hannibal crossed the Alps;
For his bow-men, His spear-men
His front-men, His rear-men,
His Gauls and his Spaniards,
his horses and elephants,
Wanted the Roman scalps!

And that's why
Hannibal, Hannibal, Hannibal,
Hannibal crossed the Alps.

IN PART 11 OF STORY Teller 2



TOAD OF TOAD HALL develops a new craze—
for motoring!

SIMEON THE SORCERER'S SON needs all the
magic he can muster... but can he read his own
handwriting?

A quest of extraordinary danger faces
GROGRE THE GOLDEN OGRE in a brand
new series

If you've a year or two to spare, come and join
in the **TORTOISES' PICNIC**

What is **MISS PRISCILLA'S SECRET**? Could it
have something to do with the carrier pigeon
on her roof and a tunnel to the lighthouse?

ANYA'S GARDEN is so beautiful that she
never wants to leave it—not even to marry

BIG GUMBO couldn't stop growing to
save his soul!

Stories read by

RICHARD BRIERS
GEORGE LAYTON
NIGEL LAMBERT
CAROLE BOYD
DAVID ADAMS

