



PART 19

STORY Teller

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

2



A Marshall Cavendish Publication

EVERY FORTNIGHT



STORY Teller 2

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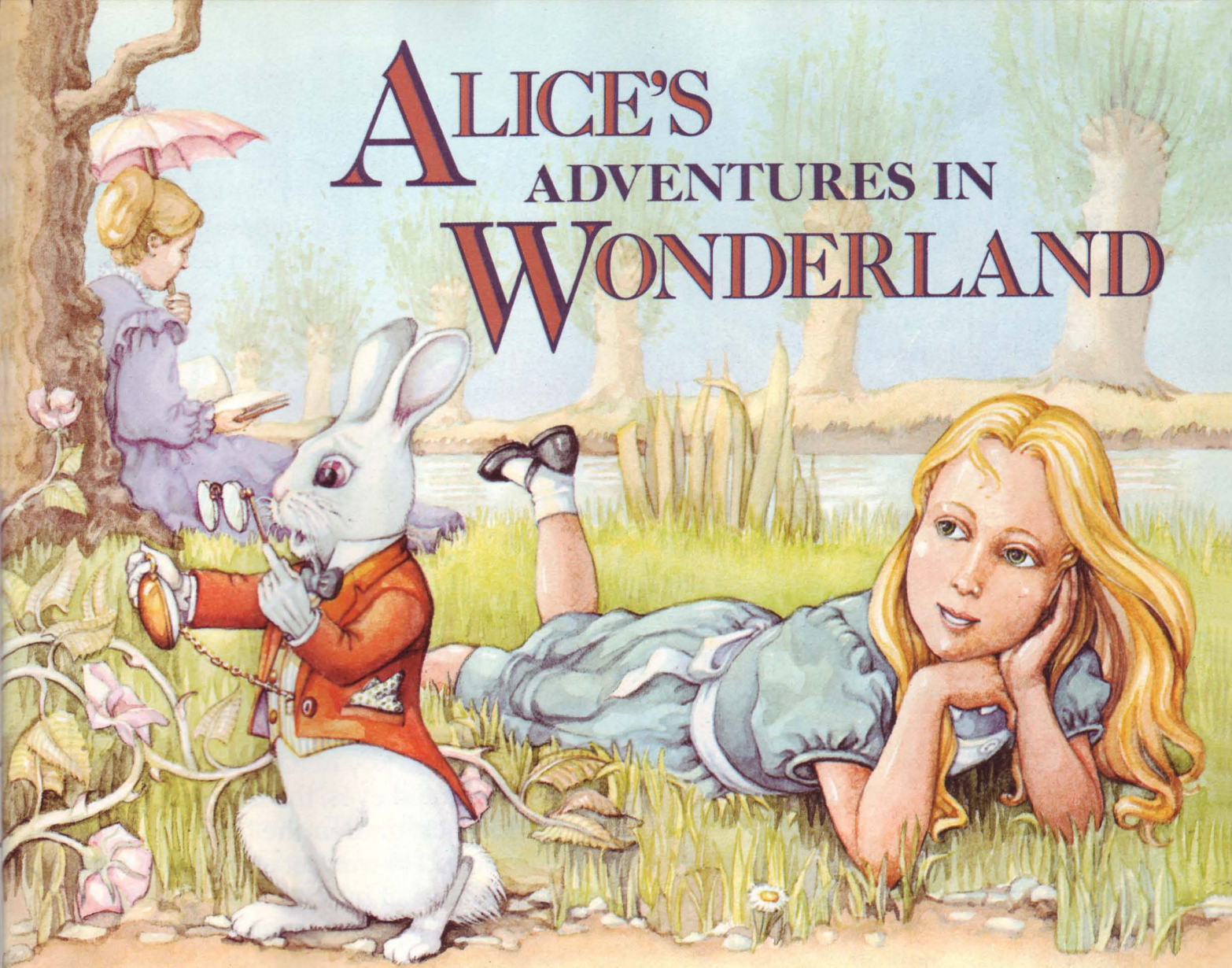
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ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN Wonderland



Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting beside her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do. Once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures in it.

"And what is the use of a book without pictures?" she thought.

It was very hot, and Alice was feeling sleepy — when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink ears ran close by her. There was nothing very unusual about that — and Alice

did not even think it particularly strange to hear the Rabbit say to himself, "Oh dear, oh dear. I shall be too late." But when he actually took a watch out of his waistcoat pocket and looked at it, and hurried on, Alice jumped to her feet.

"How curious!" she said to herself. "I've never seen a rabbit take a watch out of a waistcoat pocket before. Where can it be going?"

And she raced after him across the field, just in time to see him pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.





Alice followed without a moment's thought, but suddenly she found herself falling down a very deep well — down, down, down. It seemed that her fall would never end. "I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth?" thought Alice.

She was beginning to doze off when

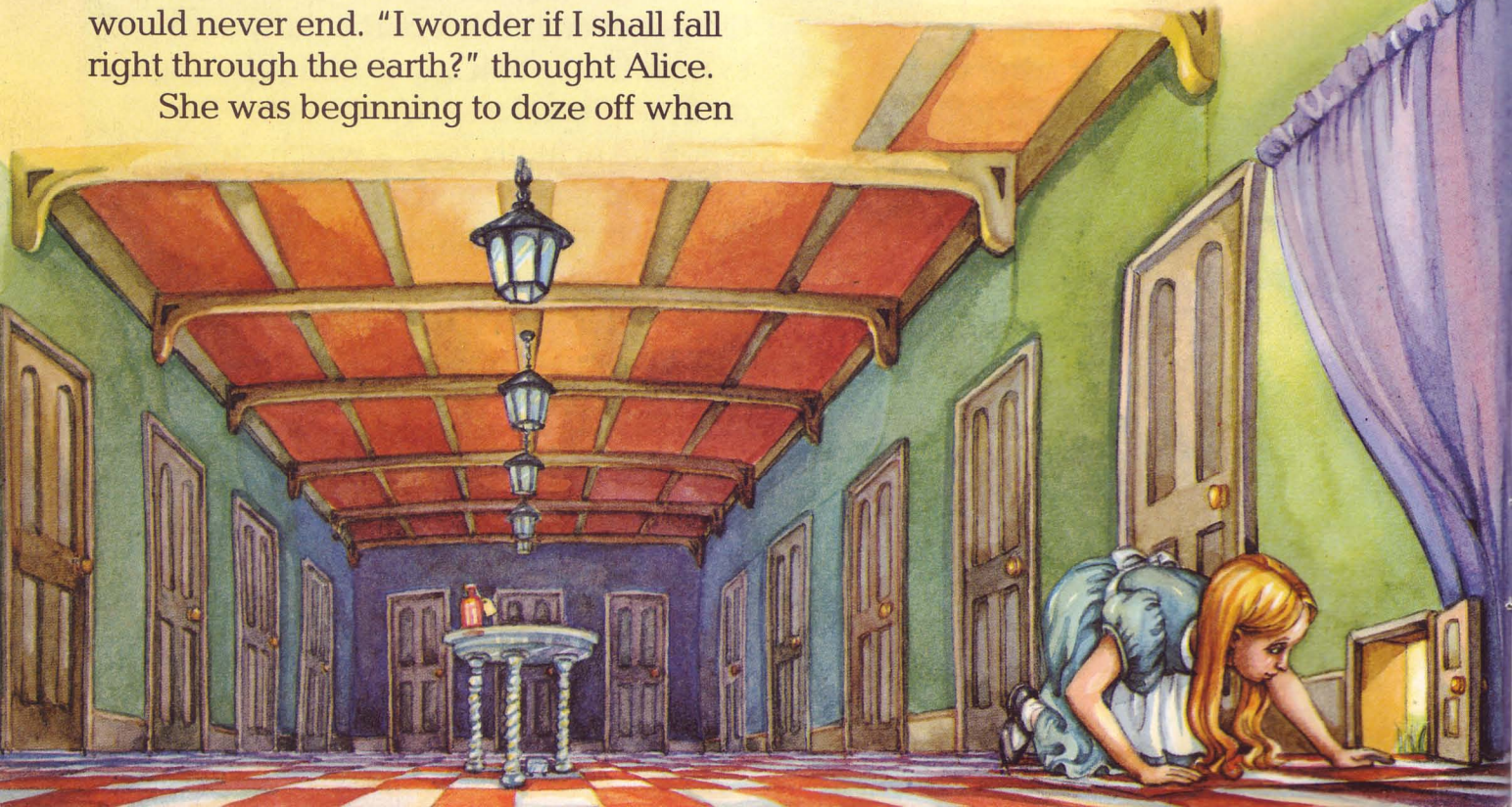
suddenly she landed with a thump, on a heap of dried leaves. She was not a bit hurt, and as she got to her feet she suddenly saw the White Rabbit disappearing down a long passage.

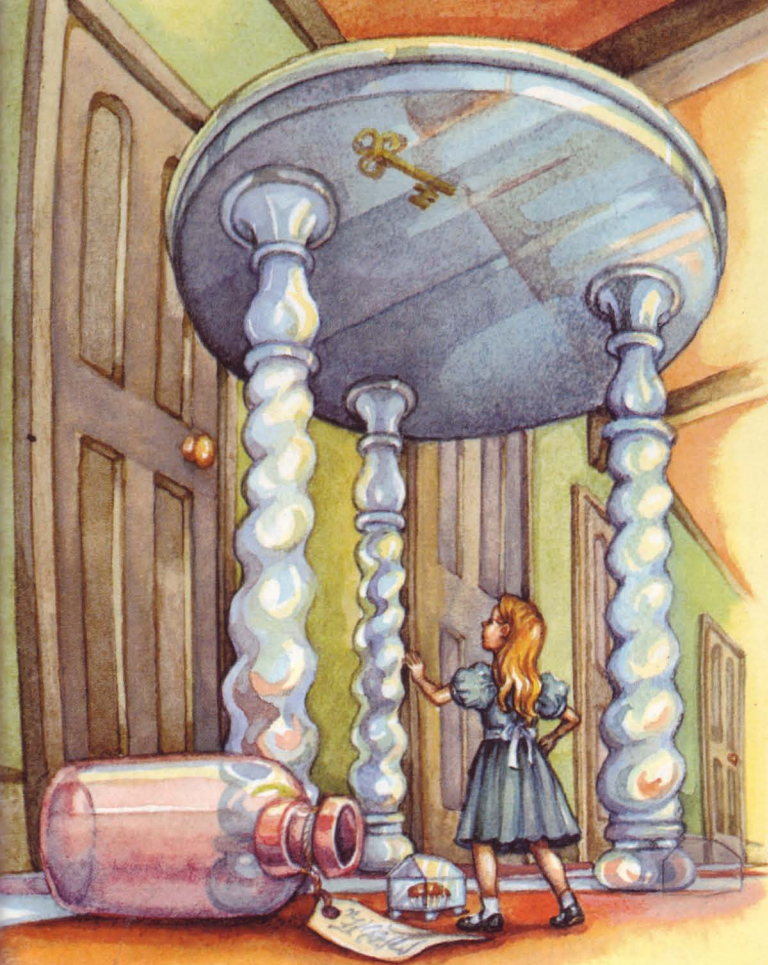
"Oh my ears and whiskers," she heard him say. "How late it's getting."

Alice ran after him, down the passage, and, turning a corner, she found herself in a long, low hall with doors on every side. The Rabbit was nowhere to be seen, but in the middle of the hall was a little table of solid glass, and on it, a tiny golden key.

Alice quickly discovered that all the doors in the hall were locked and — alas — the key would not open any of them. But then she noticed a velvet curtain, and behind it, a tiny door. She knelt down and tried the key in the lock, and before her delighted eyes, the door opened on the loveliest garden she had ever seen. She longed to wander among the bright flowers and sit by the cool fountains.

"But I can't even get my head





All she had to do was reach the golden key which was lying on top of the table.

She tried her best to climb up one of the table-legs, but it was too slippery. She was about to burst into tears when her eyes fell on a little glass box lying under the table. She opened it and found a very small cake, on which the words EAT ME were beautifully marked in currants.

Alice quickly ate the cake. "Curiouser and curiouser," she cried. "Now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was. Goodbye, feet! I wonder who will put on your shoes and stockings for you now? I'm sure I shan't be able."

Just then her head struck against the roof of the hall, and she picked up the little golden key and hurried off to the garden door.

through the doorway," she thought with a sigh. "Oh, how I wish I could shut up like a telescope."

She went back to the table, and there was a little bottle with the words DRINK ME on a label tied around its neck. She examined it to make sure it was not marked 'poison' and took a little sip. It was so very tasty that she quickly finished off the whole bottle. And then she began to have a rather curious feeling.

"It's as if I was shutting up like a telescope," she said to herself.

And so she was. In fact, she was now small enough to enter the lovely garden.





Poor Alice. It was impossible to do any more than lie on one side and look into the garden with one eye. She sat down and began to cry.

"You ought to be ashamed," she said to herself. "A great girl like you, crying in this way. Stop it this moment, I tell you."

But she went on all the same, shedding hundreds of tears, until there was a large pool all round her and reaching half-way down the hall.

After a time she heard the pattering of feet, and hastily dried her eyes to see who was coming. It was the White Rabbit, splendidly dressed, with a pair of gloves in one hand and a large fan in the other. He was obviously in a great hurry.

"Oh the Duchess, the Duchess!" he muttered. "Oh, won't she be savage if I've kept her waiting."

"If you please, sir . . ." said Alice, hoping to ask him for help. But the Rabbit was so startled that he dropped the gloves and fan, and scurried away as fast as he could go.

Alice picked up the fan and gloves, and as the hall was very hot she began to fan herself.

"I do wish that someone would put their head down the rabbit hole," she said with a sob. "I'm so tired of being all alone."



As she said this she looked down at her hands and was surprised to see that she had put on one of the Rabbit's little white gloves. "How can I have done that?" she thought. "I must be growing small again."

Alice was indeed shrinking rapidly. She quickly discovered that the cause of this was the fan, and she dropped it just in time to save herself from shrinking away altogether.

"And now for the garden," she said hopefully. But as she stood up her foot slipped and — *splash* — she was up to her chin in salt water. She was in the pool she had made with her tears.

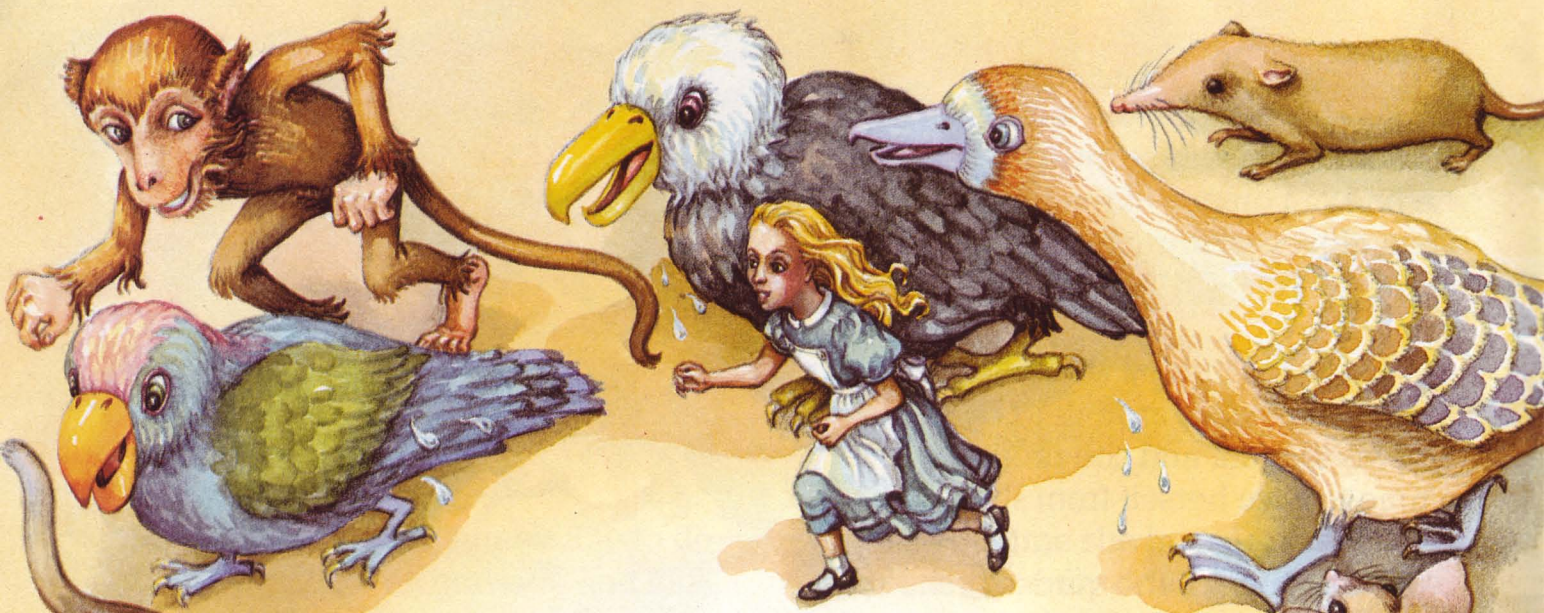
"Oh I wish I hadn't cried so much," said Alice as she swam about, trying to find her way out. "I shall be punished for it now, I suppose, by being drowned in my own tears. That will be a very queer thing to happen, to be sure. But then, everything is very queer today."

From the sounds of splashing all



round her, she knew that she was not alone. The pool was fast becoming crowded with birds and animals — a mouse, a duck, a dodo, a parrot, an eaglet, and several other strange creatures — who had fallen in. They were all anxious to get out, and with Alice leading the way, they swam to the shore. Then, feeling cross and uncomfortable, they sat down to discuss how to get dry again.





At last, the Dodo stood up. "The best thing to get us dry would be a Caucus-race," he said.

Alice was puzzled, but nobody disagreed. So the Dodo solemnly marked out a race-course in a sort of circle and placed the party of animals along it. Then he told them to run and stop whenever they liked.

After they had been running for half an hour or so, and were quite dry, the Dodo suddenly called out, "The race is over. Everybody has won. She will give the prizes." He pointed to Alice with one finger.

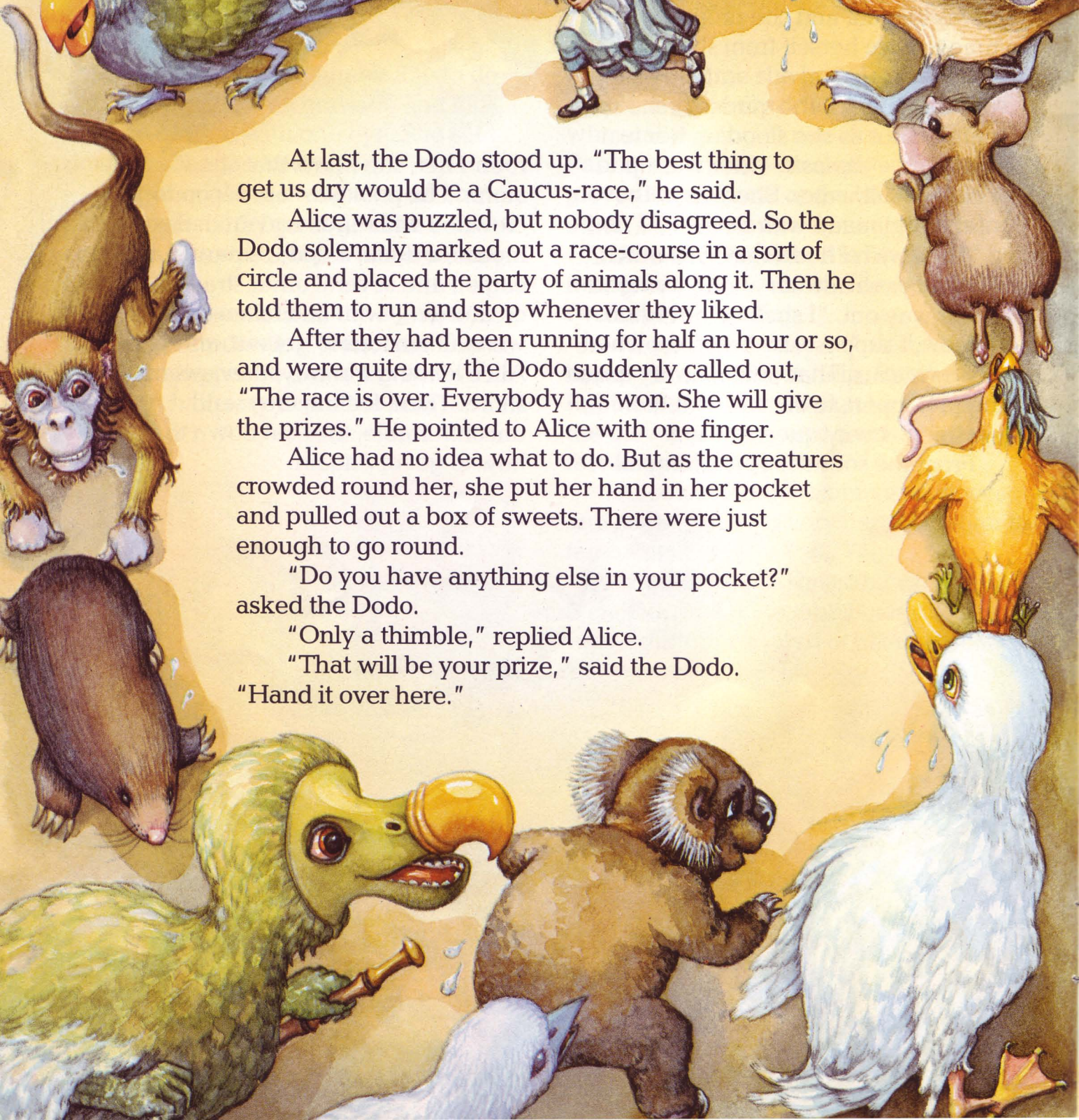
Alice had no idea what to do. But as the creatures crowded round her, she put her hand in her pocket and pulled out a box of sweets. There were just enough to go round.

"Do you have anything else in your pocket?" asked the Dodo.

"Only a thimble," replied Alice.

"That will be your prize," said the Dodo.

"Hand it over here."





The creatures crowded round again while the Dodo solemnly presented the thimble. They all looked so grave that Alice did not dare to laugh. Instead, she simply bowed and took the thimble, looking as serious as she could.

The whole party cheered, and feeling well pleased with the race, they sat down and asked the Mouse to tell them a tale. But the Mouse was tired of their company and impatiently walked away.

"I wish our Dinah was here," said Alice.

"She'd soon fetch him back."

"And who is Dinah?" asked the Parrot.

"Dinah is my cat," replied Alice. "She's the best cat in the world. You should see her chase after mice or birds. Why, she'll eat a little bird as soon as look at it."

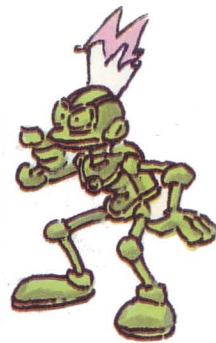
This speech caused a remarkable sensation. One by one the creatures all found an excuse to leave, and soon Alice was completely alone.

"I do wish I hadn't mentioned Dinah," she said tearfully.

"Oh my dear Dinah. I wonder if I shall ever see you again."

[Follow Alice's adventures in Part 20]





The other day a flying saucer arrived from Mars and hovered over Timothy's farm. It frightened the pigs and turned the cow's milk sour, until Timothy's Dad came out of the barn and shouted, "Go away or I'll call the police!" And to his surprise that did the trick. Now, Martians may be clever, building machines to fly them faster than light

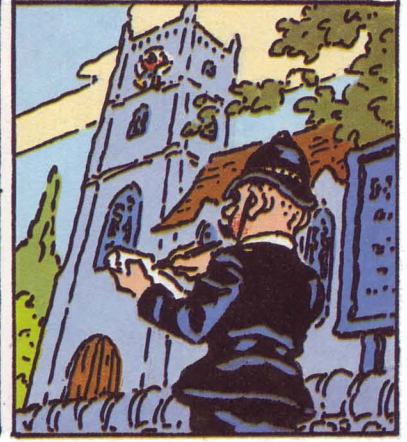
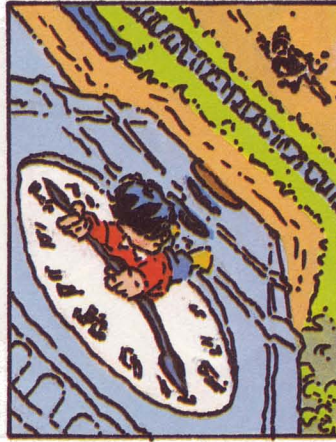
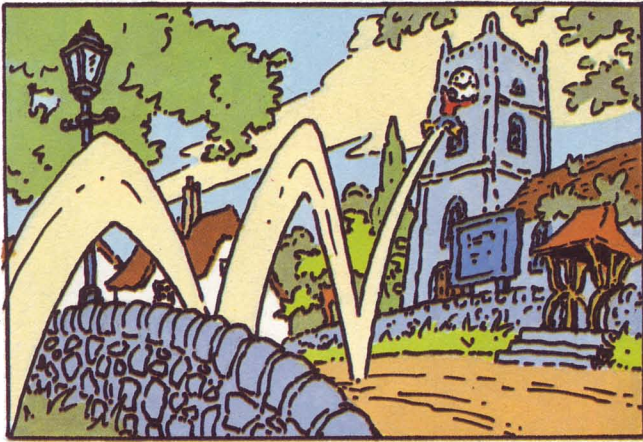
across the Universe, but send for a policeman, and they get as jumpy as Mexican beans.

Timothy watched the saucer disappear over the hill. He had never seen anything move so fast. One moment it was there, the Martian crew waving their arms and trying to talk to the pigs. And the next moment it was gone.



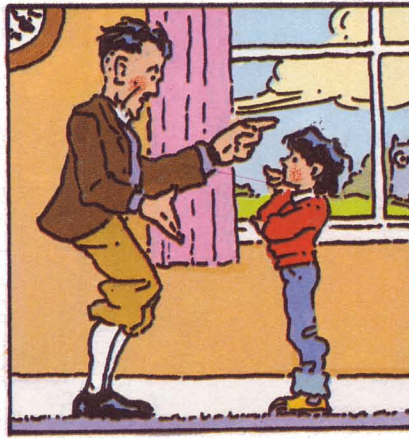
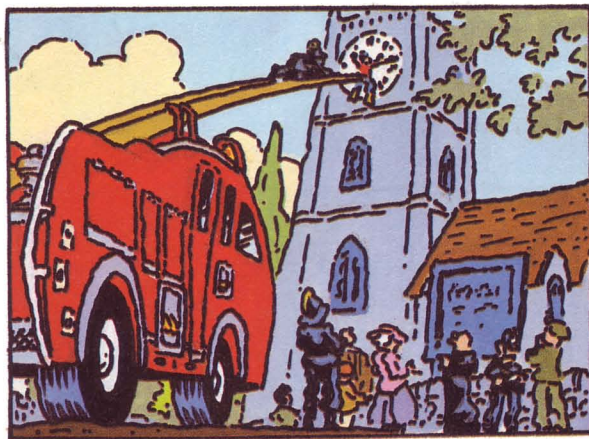
Then Timothy saw them — a pair of Martian Wonder Wellies, stuck in the mud of the duck pond. "They must have fallen out of the saucer by mistake," thought Timothy. "And they look about my size. What a stroke of luck!" But unknown to Timothy, the Wonder

Wellies were quite unlike the ordinary wellington boots you find on Earth. Timothy sat down at the edge of the duck pond and pushed his feet deep into the boots. He stood up, and to his great surprise he began to bounce about. Then he took one step . . .



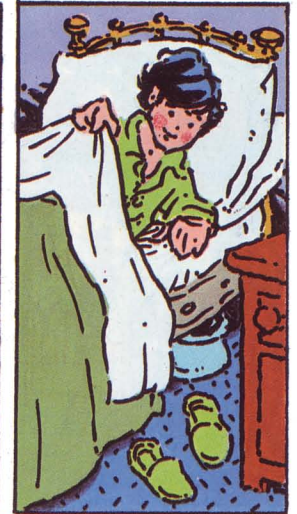
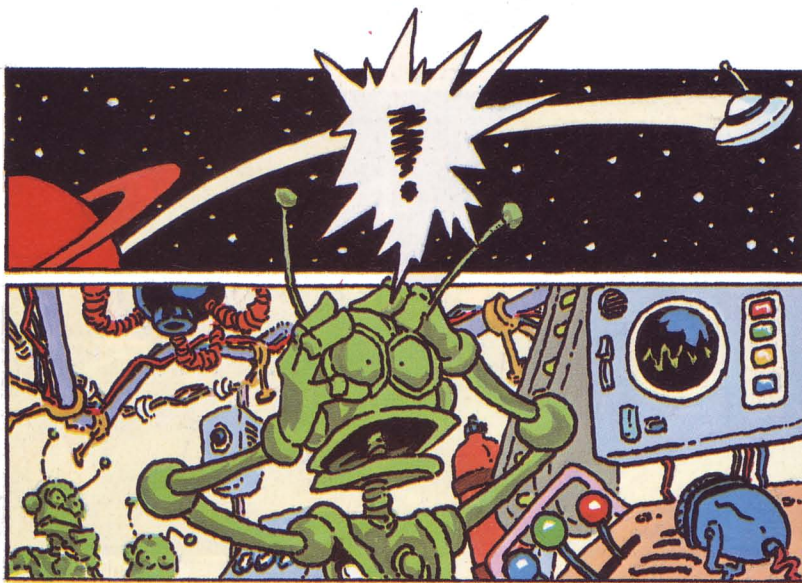
Sadly, Timothy had not read the instructions on the side of the boots. If he *had* read them, he would have seen that the wellies were set for 'Walking on the Moon of Planet Earth'. Now, one Moon step is much bigger than one Earth step. To his astonishment Timothy found himself at the top of the village church, hanging on to one hand of the clock. Just then, PC Smith came

wobbling along on his bike. He stared up at the old church clock. "Come down at once," he shouted at Timothy. "Come down. Do you hear?" "I can't! I'm stuck!" So PC Smith took out his little black book and wrote the words, 'Naughty, rude boy playing with church clock'. If you have ever been stuck on a church clock, you will know how very uncomfortable Timothy felt.



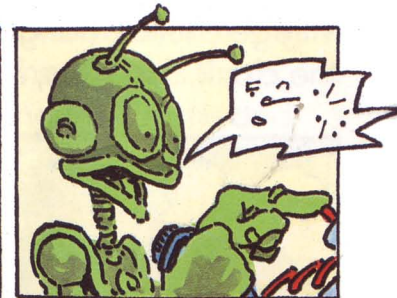
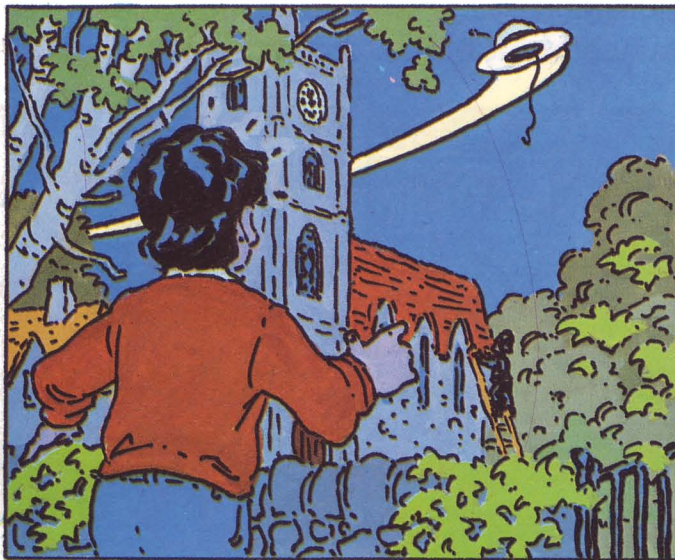
A small crowd gathered on the pavement to stare. "Really, children these days!" snorted an old lady. "I don't know what the world's coming to!" A motorist stopped, and took some photographs. PC Smith was calling for the fire brigade. Five minutes later a fire-engine arrived with a very long ladder. It took the firemen seven minutes precisely to lift poor Timothy

out of the wellies and carry him down to the ground. "The clock's twelve minutes slow now!" roared his father. "Don't you ever climb the church again, do you hear? It's straight to bed with you and *no tea!*" And the Martian wellies? Well, they lay stuck in the gutter on the church roof, completely forgotten by everybody.



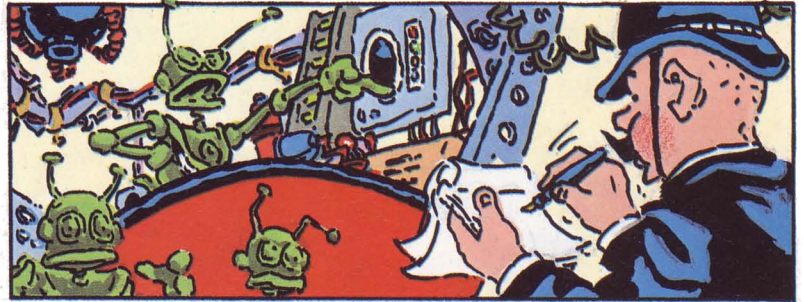
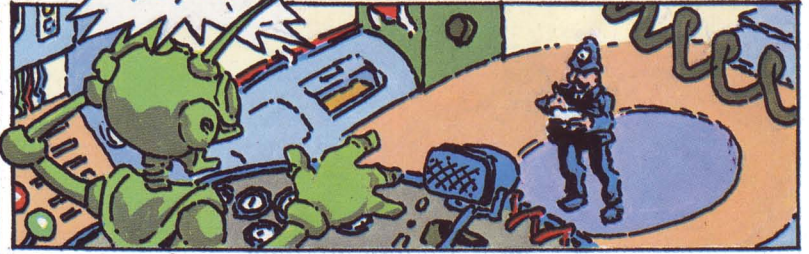
Eight million miles away, however, in the depths of darkest space, Captain Silversides, the commander of the flying saucer, suddenly put his head in his hands and said, "Oh no, we've left our Wonder Wellies on Earth! Turn round quickly. We're going back!"

On Earth, PC Smith suddenly remembered the wellies, too. He parked his bike at the old church door and fetched a ladder from the vestry. Half a mile away, Timothy was just creeping out of his warm, cosy bed. He, too, had remembered the Wonder Wellies.



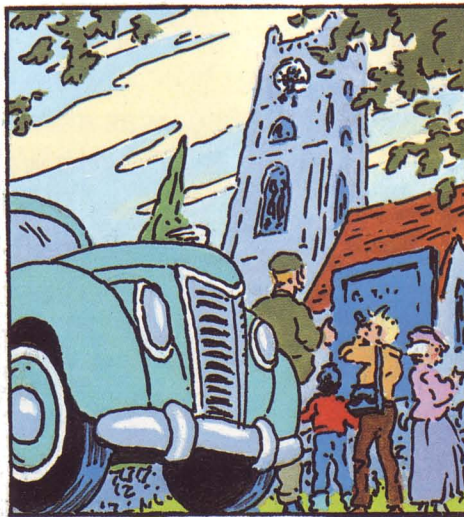
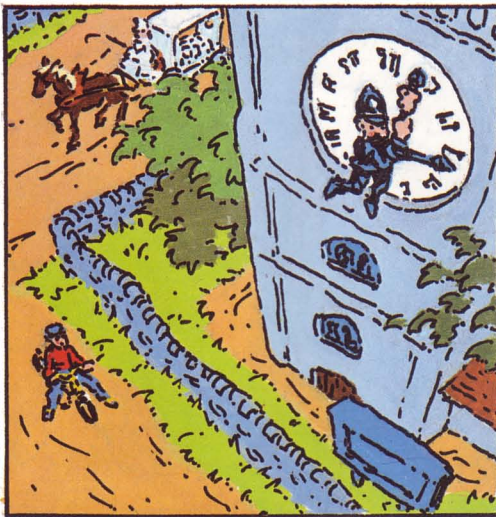
It was the strangest of meetings. The flying saucer, hovering over the church roof, sent down a wire rope with a hook on the end, to retrieve the boots. At the top of his ladder, PC Smith reached forward and groped for them. And from behind the old church wall, his mouth wide open, Timothy watched in amazement.

Just as PC Smith grabbed the wellies, the hook on the end of the wire rope caught in the back of his collar! Captain Silversides, thinking he had hooked the boots, gave the command, "Haul away!" and PC Smith, clutching the wellies, was suddenly jerked into mid-air and was swinging underneath the flying saucer.



A mile above the village, he dropped the wellies. Once more, they went spinning down to Earth. PC Smith was hauled aboard the flying saucer. Captain Silversides was not pleased with his catch. He would much rather have had the wellies. He did not like the look of

PC Smith one little bit. And when the policeman took out his book to report the flying saucer for illegal parking, the Captain liked him even less. "Send him back!" he said to his crew. "I've had enough of these interfering Earthlings."



Next morning, the village woke to a peculiar sight. The church clock had stopped altogether. And there, stuck at the top of the tower, his arms round one hand of the clock, was PC Smith. Timothy waved. The old lady snorted, "Disgusting behaviour for a policeman! I don't know what the world's coming to!" The motorist

returned and took more photographs. And the Wonder Wellies? Well, they went spinning down to Earth that night and have never been seen again. Perhaps they landed in your street? Or in your garden? But if you should ever find them, for goodness sake, take care . . . and read the instructions on the side!

Peter and the Mountainy Men

Long, long ago, in the mountains of Switzerland, there lived a rich miller who was very mean. Even when people were starving and pleading for food, he would not help them.



One cold winter's day there was a knock on the mill door. "What do you want?" barked the miller.

"Please, sir, could you give me just one small bag of flour?" pleaded a tiny man dressed in a red cap and little green suit. "We need it so badly."

"Buzz off!" shouted the miller. "I've no time for beggars!"

As the dwarf began his long walk back to the mountains, he met a young boy carrying a bag of flour in his arms. It was Peter, the miller's son.

"Take this," he whispered, "but don't let my father know I've given it to you."

The dwarf took the bag and tucked it inside his coat. "Thank you, young sir," he said. "I'll not forget your kindness." Then he continued on his way.

One spring morning, several months



later, Peter was fishing in a lake up in the mountains when he felt a strong pull on his line. He tugged and tugged, until, suddenly, a little figure appeared from out of the water. It was the dwarf!

"Why, if it isn't the miller's son!" he said, drying himself on a huge leaf. "I've been having my annual bath in honour of the Great Day."

"Great Day?" asked Peter.

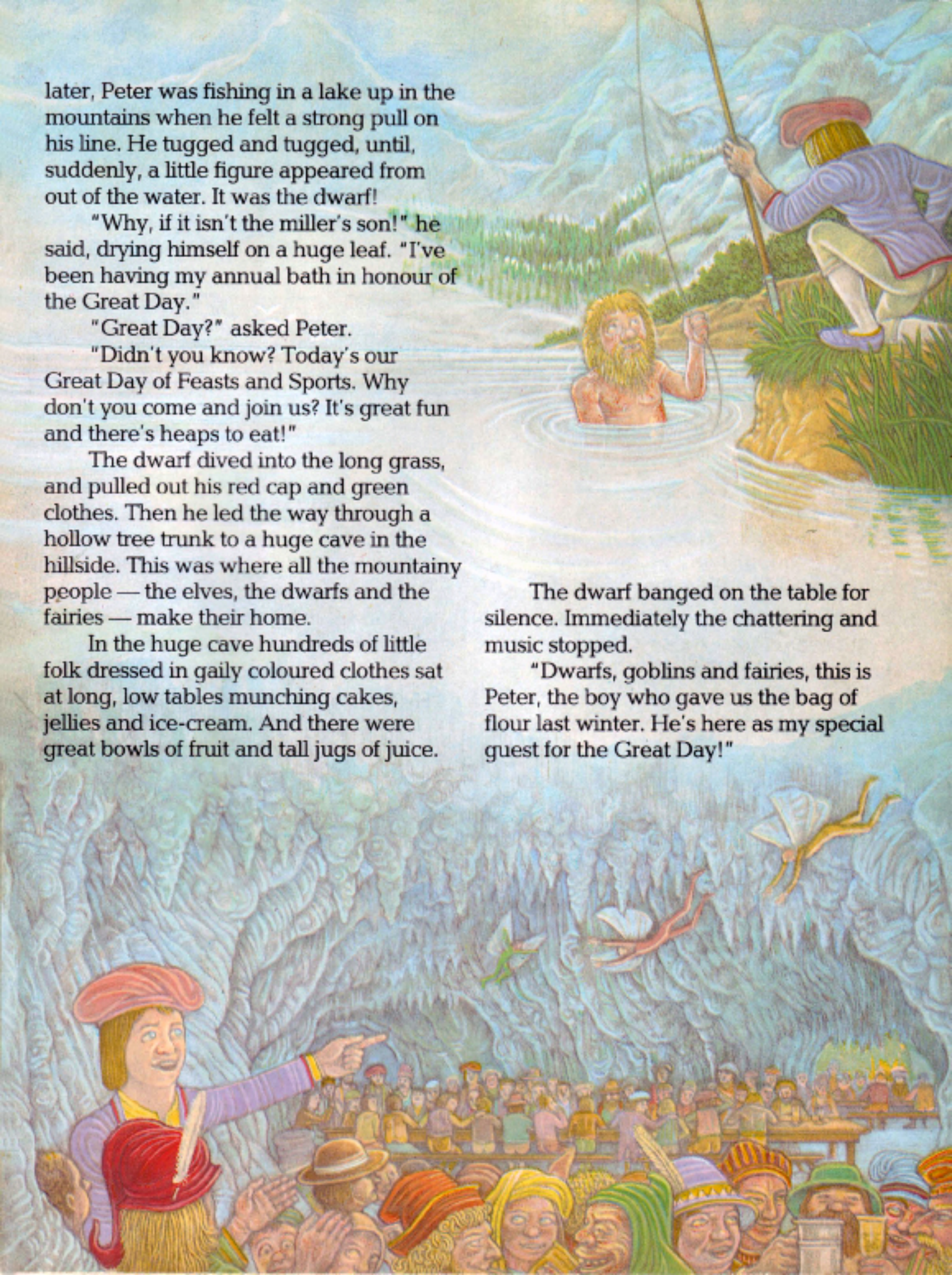
"Didn't you know? Today's our Great Day of Feasts and Sports. Why don't you come and join us? It's great fun and there's heaps to eat!"

The dwarf dived into the long grass, and pulled out his red cap and green clothes. Then he led the way through a hollow tree trunk to a huge cave in the hillside. This was where all the mountainy people — the elves, the dwarfs and the fairies — make their home.

In the huge cave hundreds of little folk dressed in gaily coloured clothes sat at long, low tables munching cakes, jellies and ice-cream. And there were great bowls of fruit and tall jugs of juice.

The dwarf banged on the table for silence. Immediately the chattering and music stopped.

"Dwarfs, goblins and fairies, this is Peter, the boy who gave us the bag of flour last winter. He's here as my special guest for the Great Day!"



The mountainy people clapped and cheered, as Peter sat down at the head table and began to eat, and eat . . . and eat. But, long before he had finished, the games began.

There was hurdling over the benches and pole-vaulting over the tables. The leprechauns played shinty, and a big crowd gathered to watch the darts match played with goose feathers. Skittles were played with a marble and big fir cones, and for javelin-throwing they used long twigs.

Peter was invited to join in the fun, but refused politely. "I don't really think it would be fair. After all, I'm so much bigger than you . . . and stronger."

"I wouldn't count on that," said a goblin — and he lifted up the bench, Peter and all!

The miller's son sat entranced as the elves rode bareback on racing mice, and the fairies used little wooden boats to race down a stream running through the cave. And all the time there were dwarfs doing handstands and somersaults, sometimes for prizes but mostly for fun. Then, after a tug-of-war between the goblins and the

gremlins, everyone ran out to the top of the mountain and back — and fell down exhausted.

Peter picked his way through the tired little bodies, taking care not to step on the fairies' wings. He crept out of the cave and climbed up the tree trunk back to the lake.

Just as he picked up his fishing rod he heard a voice calling to him. "Wait, Peter, wait for me!" It was the mountainy man. "You're leaving without your presents."


"Presents? But it isn't my birthday."

"I know it isn't. I mean your thank-you presents. You gave us flour when we were starving, so please take this whistle in return for your kindness. Just blow it loudly three times and we'll bring you whatever you want."

Amazed at all he had seen, Peter could scarcely find words to thank the little man. "And this," said the dwarf taking a bag from inside his coat, "is a flour bag for your father."





An illustration of a young boy, Peter, with a pink turban and a red and blue tunic, holding a white bag. He is looking at a man, the miller, who has a large white turban, a green tunic, and a beard. The miller is looking at the bag with a surprised expression. They are in a room with a wooden floor and a hanging lantern. The background is a warm yellow color with radiating lines.

As the sun was sinking, Peter reached the mill, gave his father the bag and told him that the dwarf had given it to him.


"You mean you sneaked out and gave one of my bags of flour to that little beggar?" shouted the miller. But then he peeped inside the bag . . . and found a hundred shining pearls, with a note:

*We hope this makes you happy not sad,
Mountainy folk return good for bad.*

The miller felt so ashamed he promised Peter that never again would he turn away anyone in need of help.

So, ever after that, when the first winter snow fell high on the mountains, all the little people visited their friends, the miller and Peter.

And they always found the miller's table laden with delicious food.

An illustration of a group of people, including the miller and Peter, celebrating. The miller is in the center, wearing his white turban and green tunic, holding a golden cup. Peter is in the foreground, wearing his pink turban and red tunic, also holding a golden cup. They are surrounded by other people, some wearing colorful hats and tunics, all holding golden cups and looking happy. The background shows a wooden interior with a window looking out onto a snowy landscape.

The Treachery of Morgan

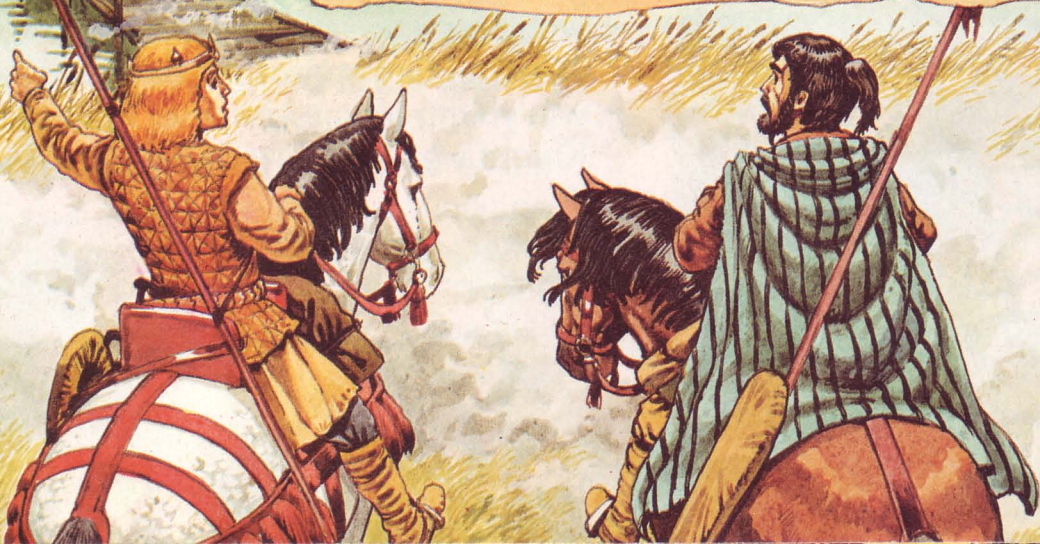
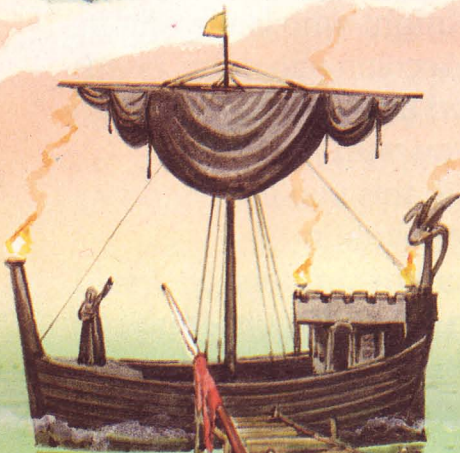


Armed with the magical sword Excalibur, King Arthur drove many invaders and evil knights out of England. But he had one enemy more deadly than all the rest — not an invading king or a murderous knight, but his own beautiful half-sister, Morgan le Fay.

Morgan was a sorceress, and her black magic was every bit as strong as the good magic of Merlin the Magician. She hated Arthur for fighting evil. And she hated Excalibur, the sword which made Arthur strong in battle and whose scabbard protected him from injury.

One day, Arthur was riding out from Camelot with one of the Knights of the Round Table — a Frenchman called Sir Accolon. "I shall show you the place where I received Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake," said Arthur, as their horses threaded their way down a tangled path to the shores of a lake. "But is this the same place?" Arthur wondered, for the lake seemed strangely different.

Moored at the end of a crumbling jetty lay a huge black ship. A veiled woman stood on the bow, beckoning to them through the lakeside mists, as if to say, "Welcome! Come aboard!"





Surprised and intrigued, the two men boarded the ship. And there they found a banquet waiting.

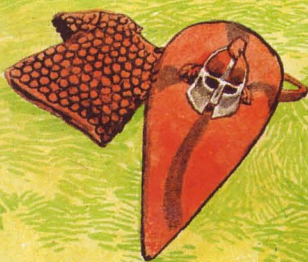
"Were you expecting us?" asked Arthur, as the woman ushered them to the table. "Where are your crew? Where have you sailed from?" But their hostess neither spoke nor lifted her veil. Instead she poured wine for them and filled their plates with the most delicious food.


Two hammocks hung at the end of the cabin. And after Accolon and Arthur had eaten, all they wanted was to climb into them and rest. The boat rocked. The hammocks swung. Both knights were asleep before the lakeside birds stopped singing.

When the morning sun shone in his face, Sir Accolon yawned and opened his eyes. He was lying in a walled garden, and a servant was offering him a sword. "Get up at once, Sir Accolon! King Arthur bids you fight the evil White Knight who is waiting in the Great Hall!" Sir Accolon shook his head sleepily. "Look!" cried the servant urgently. "He has sent me to you with his magic sword, Excalibur. With this you'll destroy the White Knight in a twinkling!"

"Well I'll . . . I'll put my armour on!" said Sir Accolon. "Tell the White Knight I shall fight him within the hour!"

Meanwhile, Arthur woke up and found himself not on the ship, nor in the walled garden but chained up in a dungeon. A woman's voice shouted through the door, "Get up! Get up, Arthur, so-called King. To win your freedom you must fight the Red Knight who's waiting in the Great Hall."





Arthur's hand went to his side. He sighed with relief. "Thank goodness. Whoever locked me up here has left me my magic sword, Excalibur." He called out, "Very well! If I must fight, I shall!"

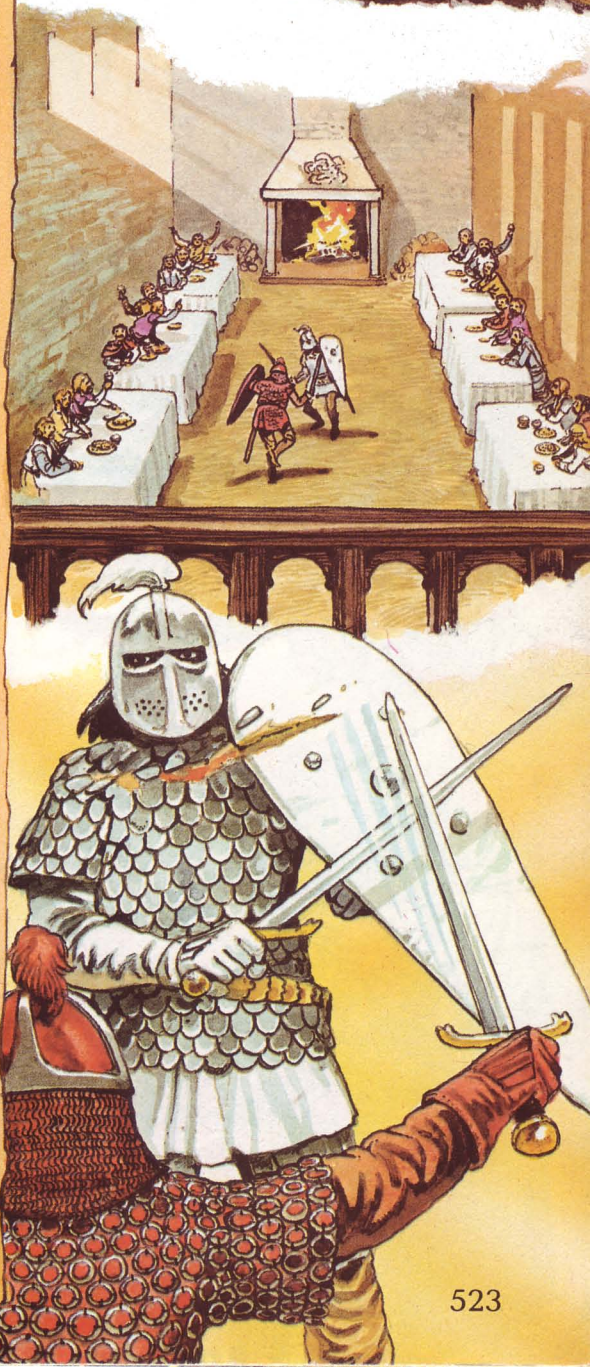
Within the hour, King Arthur had put on armour and climbed the stone stairs of the strange castle. His face was hidden by the vizor of his helmet. So, too, was his opponent's face hidden, as they met in the Great Hall. How could he know that the Red Knight was really Sir Accolon?

And how could Sir Accolon know that the White Knight was his friend and King?

Only Morgan le Fay, who had provided the meal aboard the black ship, knew that the true Excalibur hung at Accolon's waist, and that the sword by Arthur's side was an imitation without any magic.

Around the room were long trestle tables, and the people seated at them watched the fight as if it were a sport to entertain them. With every clash of shields the crowd gasped. With each swish and slash of swords they expected to see one knight fall dead.

Tables were overturned. Wine spilled on to the floor. In Sir Accolon's hand, Excalibur tore open Arthur's armour as if it were paper. Arthur's useless sword glanced off Accolon's armour. "My magic has left me!" cried Arthur. "This is not Excalibur. I cannot fight and I am not protected from hurt. This Red Knight has my sword and is killing me with it!"





As he prepared to face death at the hands of the strange Red Knight, something caught Arthur's eye. Out on to the minstrel's gallery stepped an old man, tall and grey-haired. It was Merlin the Magician.

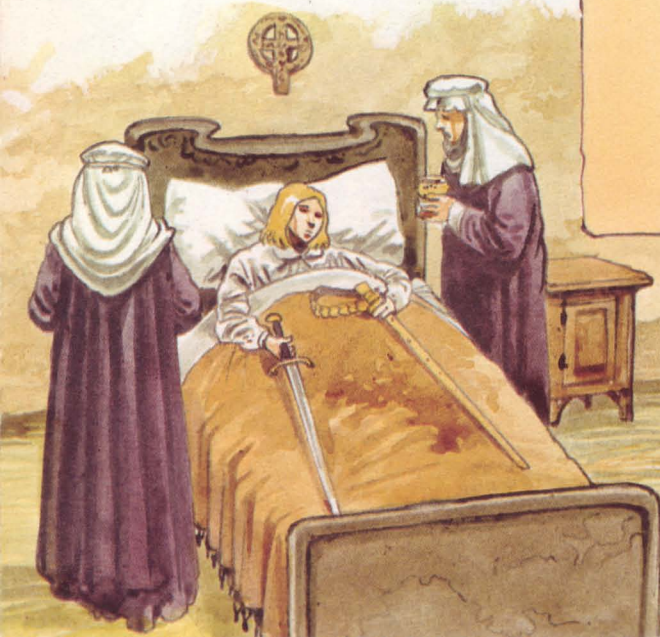
Merlin raised his gnarled old hand, knotted with purple veins. Suddenly, Sir Accolon's sword snaked and twisted out of his grip. Arthur sprang forward, seized the sword and lunged!


As Accolon fell, Arthur pulled off his helmet. "No! Accolon my friend! Who has done this?" he whispered. "Who has made me fight one of my own knights?" Then, clutching his beloved sword, he fell to the ground, weakened by his many wounds.

Merlin took Arthur to a convent where the nuns nursed him day and night. But so many were his wounds that they could not have saved his life but for Excalibur. In his right hand he held the sword by its jewelled hilt. And in his left he held the scabbard whose healing magic, little by little, made him well.

"He must have complete rest and quiet," said Merlin as he left the convent. "Let no-one visit him." The nuns promised they would not.

But when a beautiful and gentle-looking woman called one day and begged to visit Arthur, they could see no harm. "Please say 'yes'," pleaded the visitor. "Arthur is my brother, after all!" And so the scheming and envious Morgan le Fay was shown into the bedroom where Arthur lay sleeping.





His right hand was closed tight around the sword hilt. But the scabbard had slipped out of his other hand and lay on the pillow. Quickly, Morgan slipped it inside her cloak and hurried away.

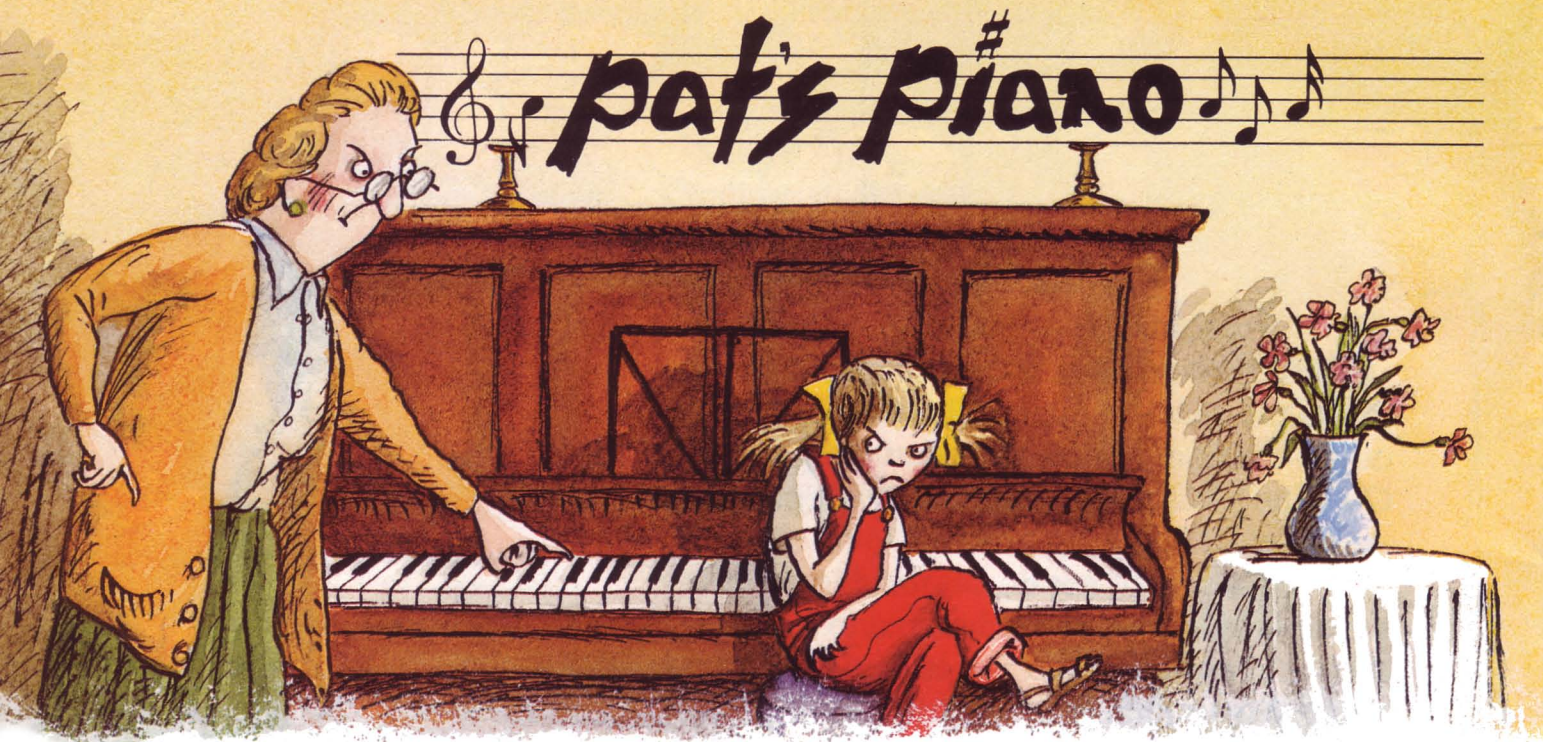
The sound of her horse galloping away woke Arthur and he reached out to touch the scabbard which protected him from harm. It was gone. "Stolen!" he cried. "Somebody saddle me a horse! I must go after the thief!"

"But your Majesty!" exclaimed the nuns. "No-one has been here except your sister, Morgan!"

Realising the truth, Arthur rode after his treacherous sister, vowing to kill her for the evil trick she had played on him and on Accolon. His horse was fast, and he gained on Morgan with every mile.

She left the cart track and rode to the edge of a swampy lake. Taking the scabbard from under her cloak, she flung it into the oozing mud where it sank out of sight. "Never again shall my brother be protected from his injuries!" And all the beauty went out of her face for ever.

Closer and closer came Arthur. But Morgan the sorceress only swirled her cloak around her head and turned herself and her horse into a white bluff of rock. Arthur glanced at it as he rode past, but galloped on, and when, after many days, he had not found his sister, he rode home sadly to Camelot. But he vowed revenge, and swore that one day he would overcome the evil magic of Morgan le Fay.



Pat was cross. She did not want to do her music practice. Miss Miggs, her teacher, was cross as well, and locked the door of the room. "And you shan't come out until you've played your scales and the Minuet in G without a mistake!"

That made Pat even crosser. She sat down at the piano and brought her hands crashing down on the keyboard in a sulky tantrum.

"Ow . . .!" said the piano. "That hurt!"

Pat stared. "Good gracious I didn't know you could talk!"

"Why should I, when you thump my keys as if you hated them? And, while we're about it, when are you going to learn something interesting? The tunes you play are so dull."

To Pat's amazement, the black and white keys began to move, although her fingers were not touching them.

"Oh! I do wish I could do that!" she said delightedly. "Can you play scales, as well?"

The piano rippled right from the bottom note to the top and back again.

"That's terrific!" Pat wondered if Miss Miggs was listening. "Will you play the Minuet in G — without any mistakes?"





flowers each week for the the piano to wear in its empty brass candle holders. In return, the piano helped her to play. The keys moved by themselves. Pat only had to put her fingers in the right places.

"You're doing so well," announced Miss Miggs one day, "that you can play in my summer concert."

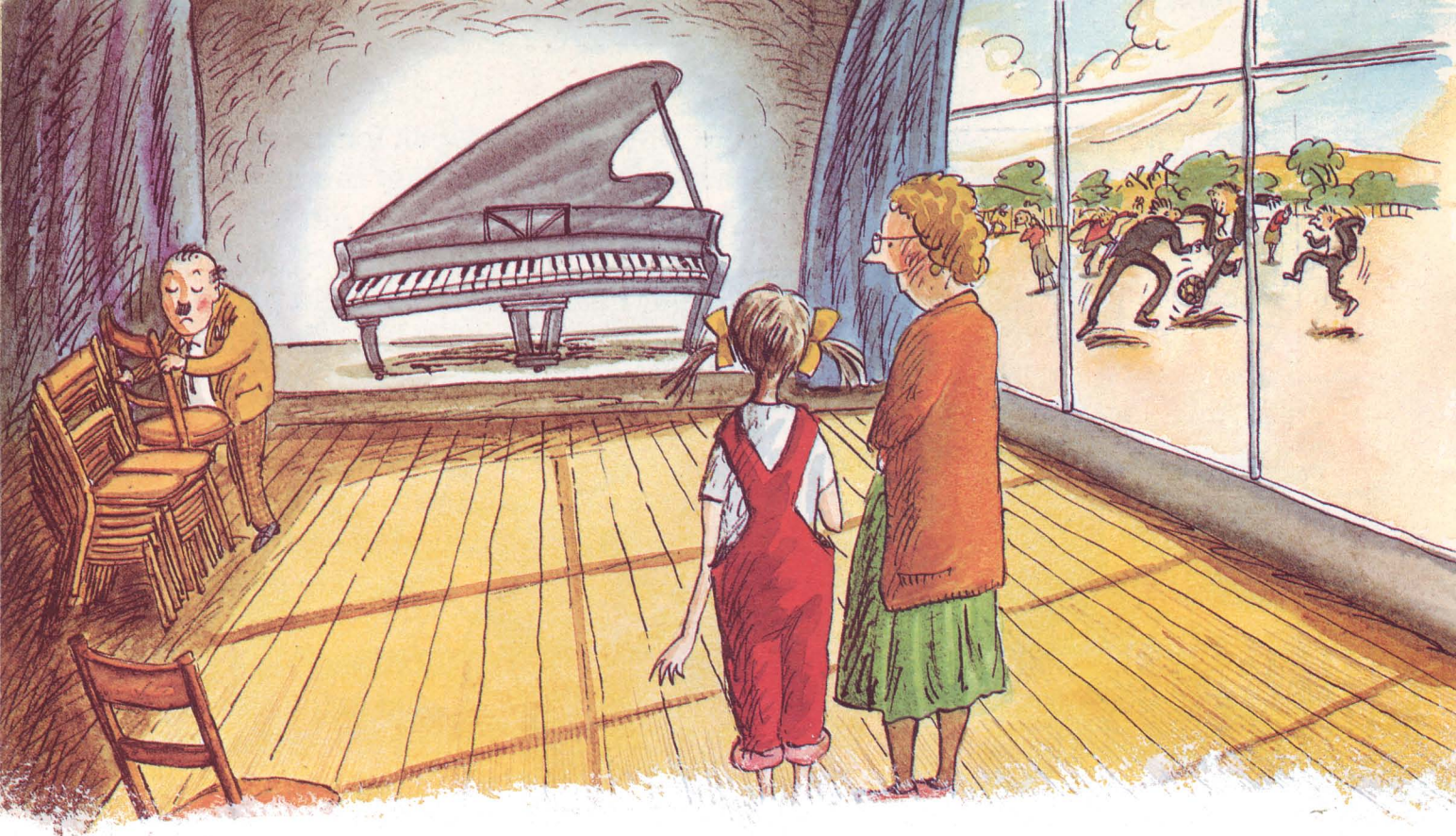
Every year, all the mothers and fathers came to listen to Miss Miggs's best pupils. Pat had never been asked to play in the concert before. "We'll be best," she said to the piano, and it gave a little trill of agreement.



So the piano played the Minuet in G. It did not thump out the tune. The notes skipped along so lightly that they made Pat dance round the room. She only just sat down in time as Miss Miggs unlocked the door.

Miss Miggs seemed very surprised. "That was excellent, Pat. Next week you can learn the Turkish Rondo."

After she had made friends with the piano, Pat began to look forward to her music lessons. She was never cross or sulky, and she stroked the keys gently, and tickled the piano under its chin. She polished its lid, and brought a sprig of



But the piano was old and shabby and never moved out of the practice room. The concert was in the school hall. On the hall platform was a grand piano — very large, beautifully polished, and with its lid held up by a golden stick.

"You'd better practice your Rondo," said Miss Miggs on the day before the concert.

Pat sat down nervously. She made a mistake at once. "I'm not very good," she whispered to the grand piano.

"Will you help me, please?"

The piano did not answer. Pat stroked its keys and tickled it under the chin. But still it would not speak to her. "Please!" begged Pat. "I can't play all the right notes by myself."

"Then you shouldn't be allowed to touch me," said the grand piano crossly. "I'm a very superior instrument." And it snarled at her with all its teeth.

Pat ran to find Miss Miggs. "The grand piano is much too grand for me! May I use the dear old upright piano from the practice room?"

"That shabby old thing in my concert? Certainly not!"

"It may *look* shabby, but it *plays* beautifully," said Pat. She knew how disappointed the old piano would be to miss the concert. They needed each other now, so Pat bit her lip nervously and said, "If the old piano can't be in the concert, I won't be in it either!"

"But your name's already printed in the programme! Oh very well, then."



So next day, the shabby old piano was pushed into the hall. When the concert began, all the other performers played the grand piano. Mothers and fathers clapped, and the grand piano looked very pleased with itself.

When it was Pat's turn, she sat down at the shabby upright piano. "Let's show them!" she whispered.

The piano played the Turkish Rondo — beautifully. Everyone clapped. Pat began to stand up. But to her horror the piano said, "Don't be in such a hurry. I don't get many chances to perform in concerts. I'm going to play an encore."

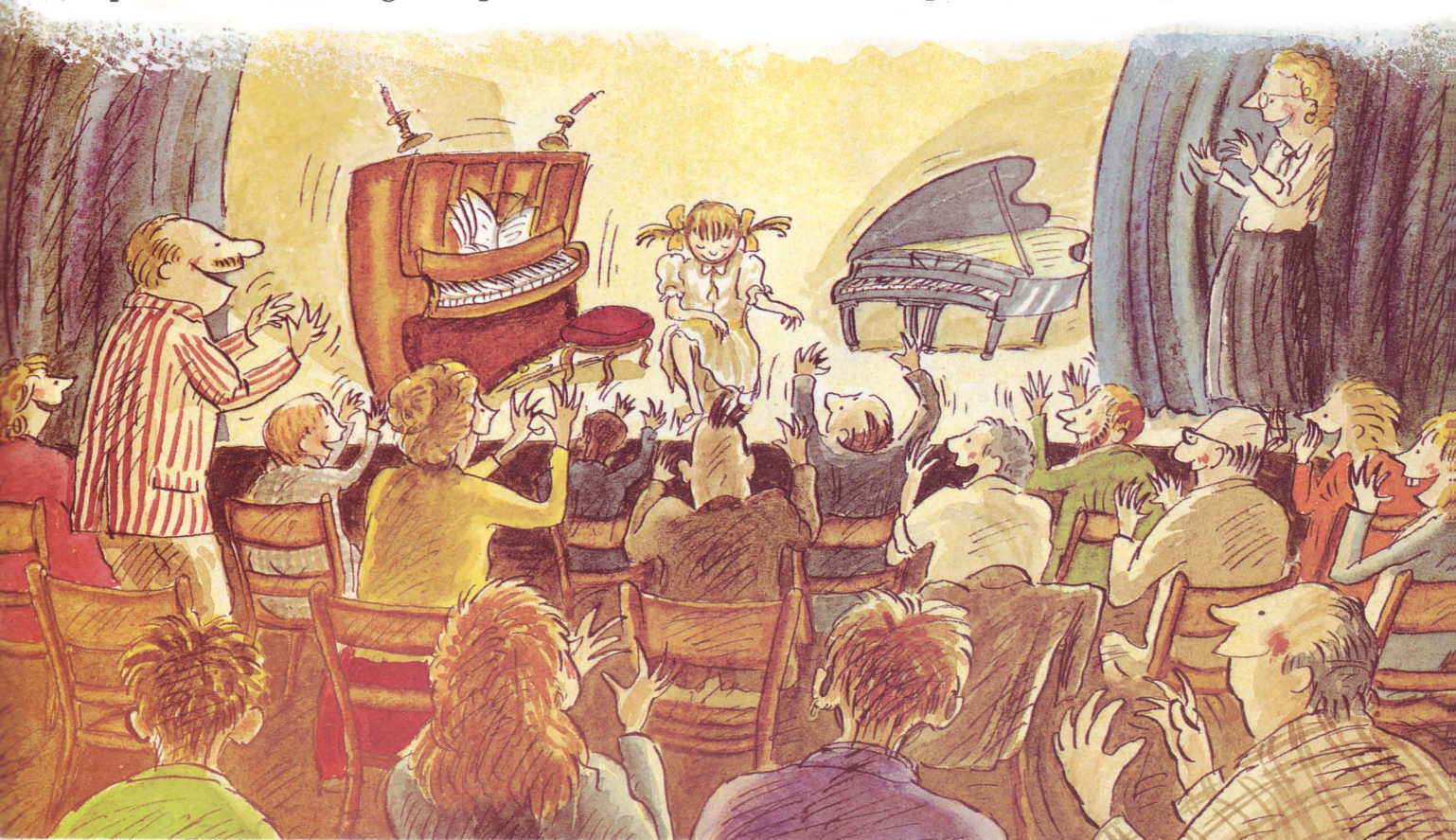
"You're what?" Before Pat could object, the piano had begun. It played a very fast piece with lots of difficult chords. Pat found it very hard to keep up, and by the end she was exhausted. "Did anyone notice?" she wondered, mopping her forehead.

But the audience were clapping and cheering. Miss Miggs looked very surprised — and the grand piano sulked.



Pat stood up and curtsied. The piano would have curtsied, too, but its hinges and joints were too old. So it trilled its highest note instead!

It almost gave the game away. Luckily nobody noticed. And when Pat was presented with a bright bouquet of flowers, she laid it at once on the piano's lid and whispered, "Thank you."



DANGER in the reeds

The warm afternoon sunlight sparkled on the lake and filtered through the water. In their home in the weed bed, two wild brown trout, Sol and Mo, were having an afternoon snooze.

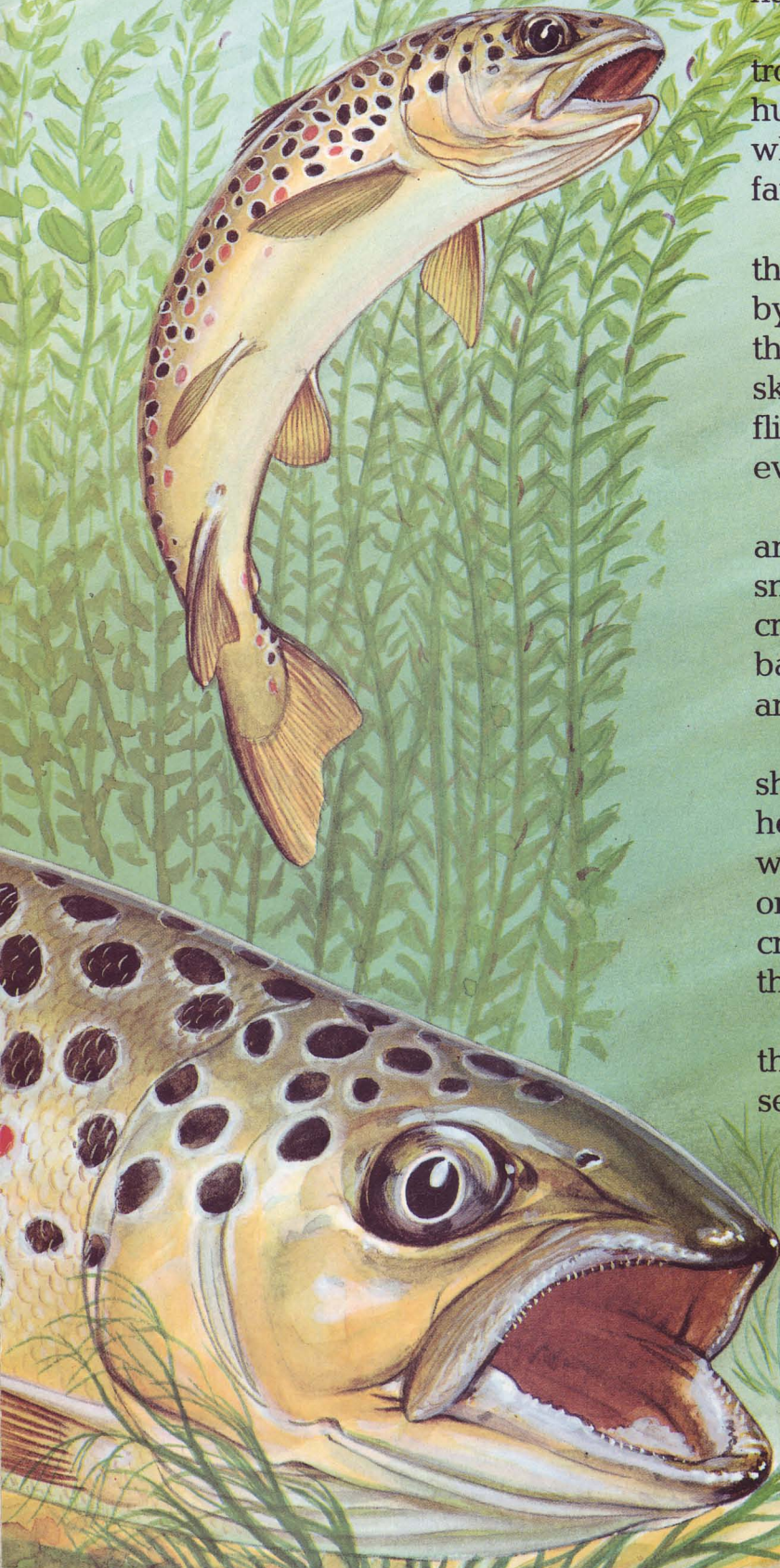
As the sun dropped in the sky, the trout stirred and began to feel just a little hungry — for this was the time of day when they always went looking for their favourite food.

From hiding places in the bottom of the lake, tiny bugs started to appear. Inch by inch, they wriggled their way towards the surface. There they would split their skins and hatch into beautiful damselflies, dancing and hovering on the evening breeze.

But before the bugs could hatch, Sol and Mo darted after them, their jaws snapping shut on the struggling creatures. With a plop and a splash, Sol's back rose out of the water as he grabbed another bug. And another, and another.

But something else had stirred in the shadows of the lake, and was slowly heading for the spot where Sol and Mo were feeding. It was old Lucius, the pike, on his afternoon cruise. Of all the creatures that lived in the lake he was the only one that Sol and Mo feared.

As they chased here and there after their tasty prey, Lucius's cold, cruel eyes searched the water for his own supper.



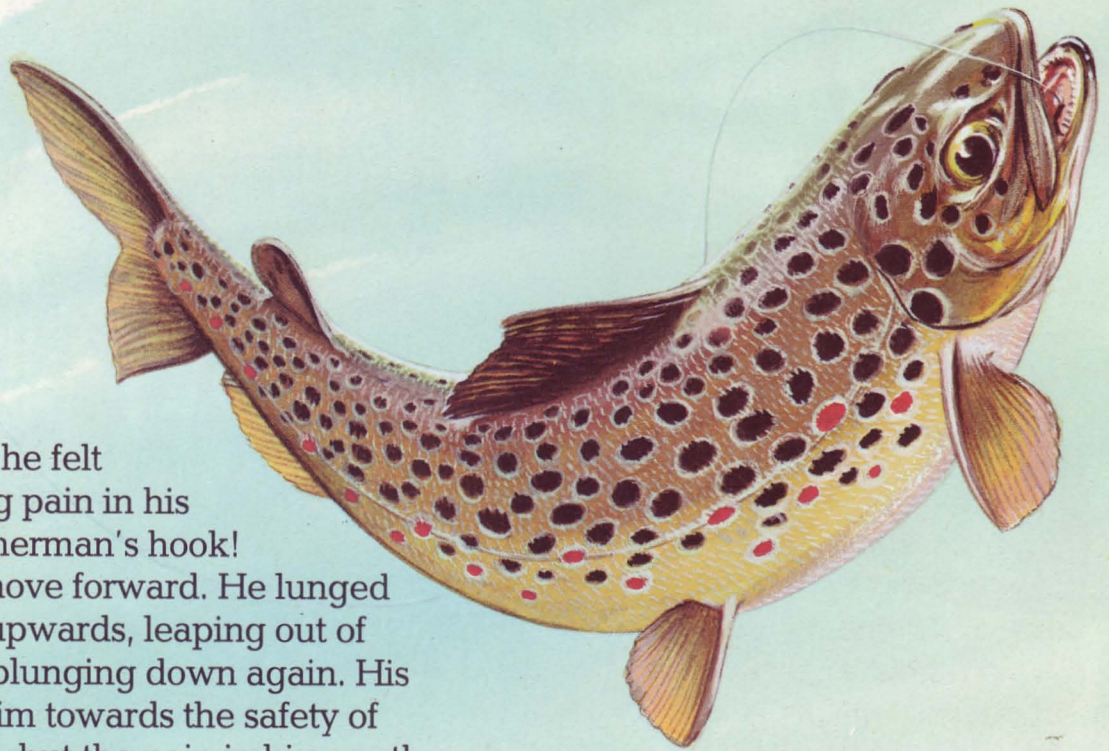


Frisky and unaware, Mo slid further and further away from his friend — and suddenly stopped short. Out of the corner of his eye he had glimpsed the sinister shadow of old Lucius. In a flash he had darted down to his weed home to hide — as quiet and still as a dappled stone.

Lucius was just turning to follow the little trout when there was a faint whir and a plop overhead. Instantly, he knew what it was — a fisherman. Noiselessly, Lucius vanished to the other side of the lake.

Still unaware of all danger, Sol veered this way and that after the juicy damsel fly bugs. He swerved and wriggled in delight as the delicious morsels slipped down his throat.



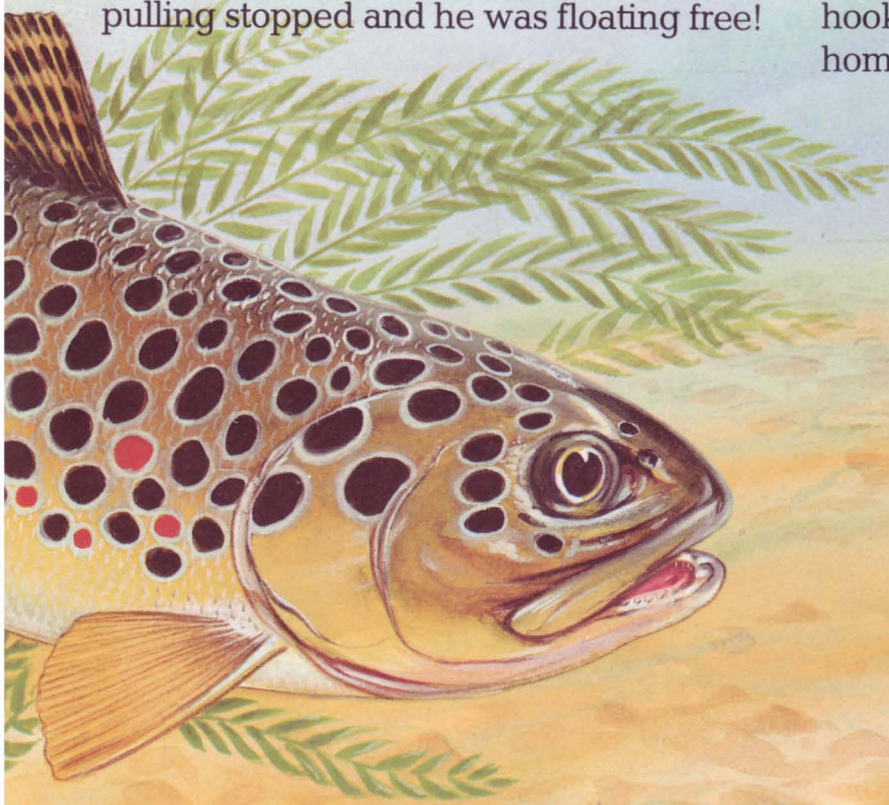


Suddenly, he felt a sharp burning pain in his mouth. The fisherman's hook! Sol could not move forward. He lunged sideways and upwards, leaping out of the water and plunging down again. His instinct drew him towards the safety of his weed home, but the pain in his mouth grew sharper as the unseen force dragged him up. Now he was being pulled through the water on his back and he could no longer breathe. Too tired to fight any more, he rolled on the surface of the water and was drawn faster and faster towards the bank.

Then, quite unexpectedly, the pulling stopped and he was floating free!

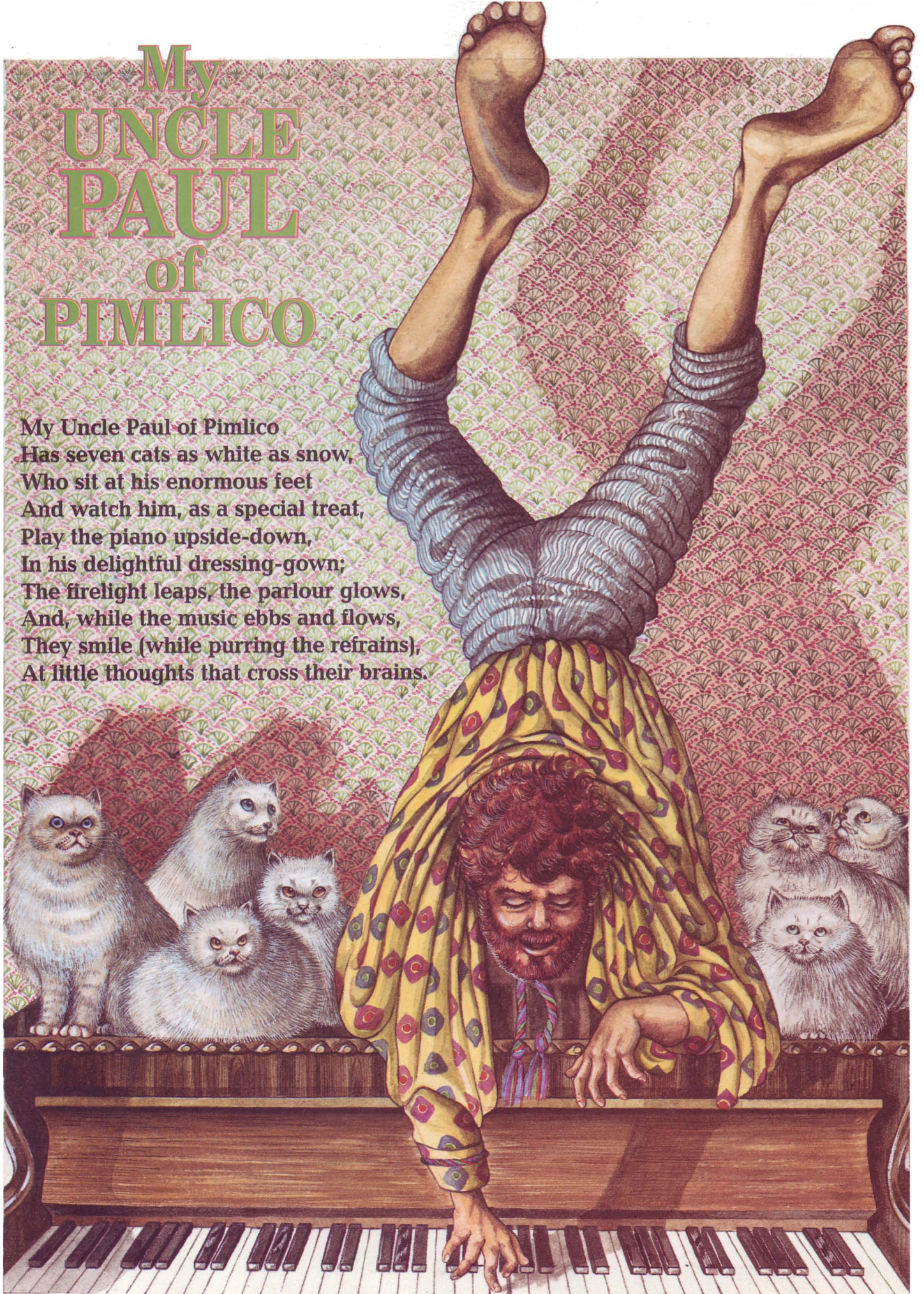
With a tired flick of his tail, Sol turned and slowly swam to the bottom. Thankfully, he slipped into the cover of his weed tunnel. Mo greeted him with a wave of his spotted fins and swam round him in welcome.

And the fisherman on the side of the lake gazed in dismay at his empty hook, then packed his bag and set off home in the cool evening air.



My UNCLE PAUL of PIMLICO

My Uncle Paul of Pimlico
Has seven cats as white as snow,
Who sit at his enormous feet
And watch him, as a special treat,
Play the piano upside-down,
In his delightful dressing-gown;
The firelight leaps, the parlour glows,
And, while the music ebbs and flows,
They smile (while purring the refrains),
At little thoughts that cross their brains.



IN PART 20 OF

STORY Teller 2

When all the evil knights are vanquished,
ARTHUR GIVES BACK HIS SWORD

Kropotkin is a clever astronomer, but can even he
find **BUTTERFLIES ON THE MOON?**

All that stand between Earth and the invading aliens
are **GINGER'S SECRET WEAPONS**

CLASSIC SERIAL **ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND**
bring her growing problems, but she makes
plenty of new friends

PLUS A great chase and A **GREAT ESCAPE**
THE MILLER AND HIS DONKEY
and Bruno the **SHEEP-DOG**

Stories read by **PATRICIA HODGE**
MICK FORD
GEOFFREY MATTHEWS
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