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PART 26

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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COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION

This is the last issue of Story Teller 2. Why not preserve your complete collection of children's stories by ordering binders and cassette boxes. And if you've missed any issues, don't worry. All the information about back numbers, binders, cassette boxes and copies by post can be found on the inside cover of any previous issue of Story Teller 2, parts 1-25.

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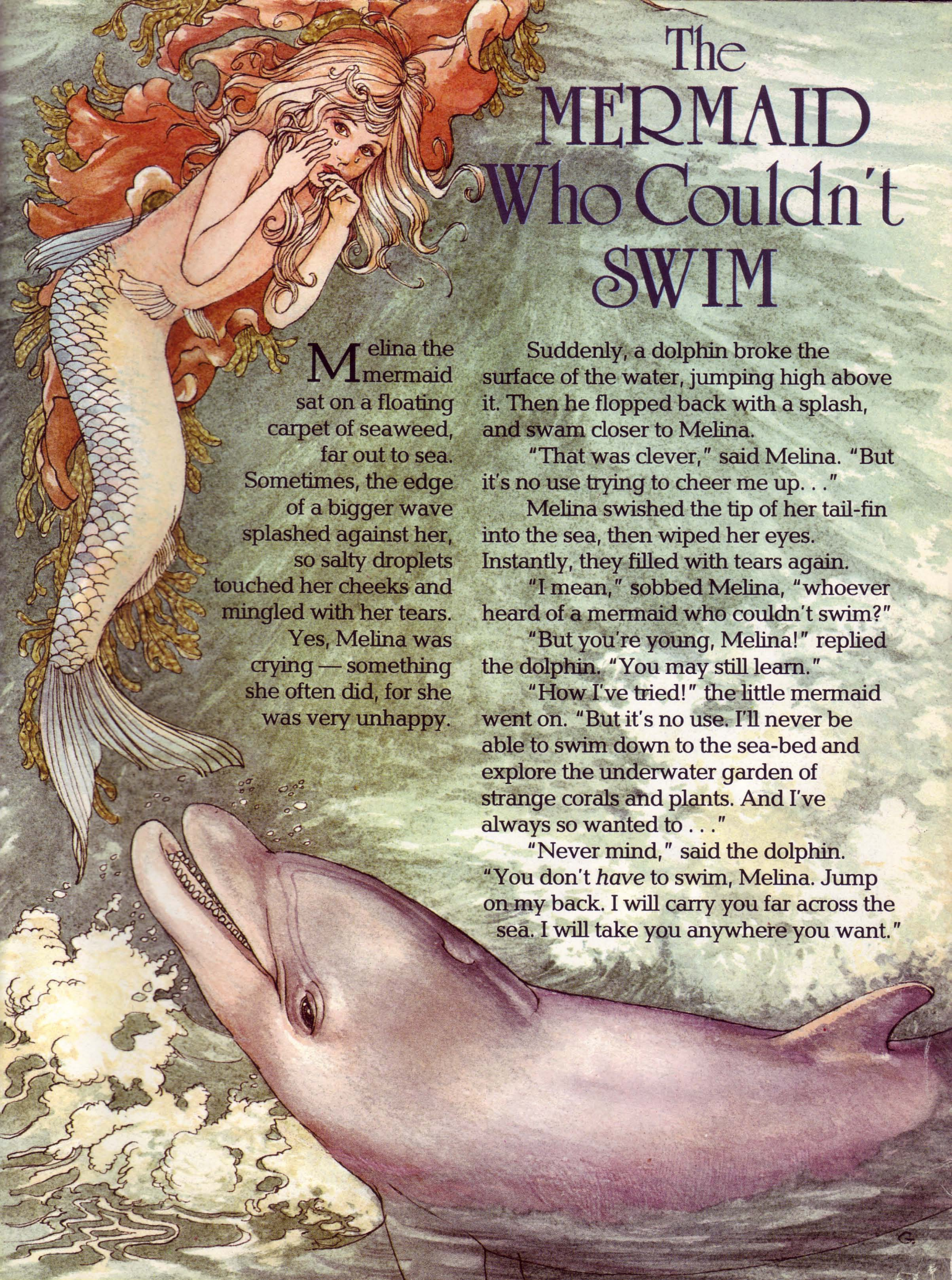
Noggin and the Money: **Oliver Postgate**

Harlequin and Columbine: **Leonard Rossiter**

Dear Reader,
Here comes part 26, and your collection of stories, poems, tales and fables is now complete. I hope you have enjoyed reading the magazines, looking at the pictures and listening to the tapes as much as I have enjoyed choosing them for you.
Love from *Story Teller*

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A colorful illustration of a mermaid with long, flowing blonde hair and a yellow and white scaled tail, sitting on a red and orange seaweed carpet. She has a sad expression, with her hands near her face. In the foreground, a large, friendly-looking purple dolphin is swimming towards her. The background is a soft, greenish-blue water scene with some bubbles.

The MERMAID Who Couldn't SWIM

Melina the mermaid sat on a floating carpet of seaweed, far out to sea. Sometimes, the edge of a bigger wave splashed against her, so salty droplets touched her cheeks and mingled with her tears. Yes, Melina was crying — something she often did, for she was very unhappy.

Suddenly, a dolphin broke the surface of the water, jumping high above it. Then he flopped back with a splash, and swam closer to Melina.

"That was clever," said Melina. "But it's no use trying to cheer me up. . ."


Melina swished the tip of her tail-fin into the sea, then wiped her eyes. Instantly, they filled with tears again.

"I mean," sobbed Melina, "whoever heard of a mermaid who couldn't swim?"

"But you're young, Melina!" replied the dolphin. "You may still learn."

"How I've tried!" the little mermaid went on. "But it's no use. I'll never be able to swim down to the sea-bed and explore the underwater garden of strange corals and plants. And I've always so wanted to . . ."

"Never mind," said the dolphin. "You don't *have* to swim, Melina. Jump on my back. I will carry you far across the sea. I will take you anywhere you want."

A mermaid with long, flowing blonde hair is riding a purple dolphin. They are moving quickly through the water, creating a large splash. The dolphin is smiling and looking forward. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color with a bright sun or moon in the upper right.

Sometimes, he would disappear under the surface for a full minute or more, before emerging again, swimming easily between the rocks and surging currents.

As the mermaid and dolphin approached, Spedwin chanced to be sitting on a craggy rock, which overhung the water's edge. He had been swimming all day and was about to return home.

Just then, as the rain and wind lashed at the waves, Melina lost her grip on the dolphin and was swept away.

"Ohhh! Help!" she cried. "I can't swim!"

The poor dolphin searched frantically, dipping under the waves, then up again. But the current was fierce and Melina had gone.

At last beginning to smile, Melina hung on tightly as the dolphin raced over the waves.

They travelled farther and farther, to strange coastal waters where even the dolphin had never been before. Above, a silver moon cast their shadows on the sea. Then dark clouds hid the moon and a strong wind blew.

"There's going to be a storm," called Melina. The dolphin was so pleased to help the mermaid, he had not noticed the weather changing.

"I hope we can get back safely," he thought.

The swell of the ocean carried them towards a tiny cluster of cottages, which hugged the steep coast of Faraway Island. There, lived young Spedwin, who could swim so well some said he was almost more fish than boy!

Even the fittest, strongest men were amazed by the way he could dive, then twist and weave in the water.





She was swept closer to the island, her cries carrying in the wind. Spedwin saw the mermaid's golden hair, her grasping hand reaching above the sea. Spedwin dived, and in no time he was beside Melina. "Hold on! I've got you!" And with a firm grip, he held the mermaid and swam with all his strength to the old wreck, whose upturned bows always

remained above even the roughest sea.

Then, Spedwin stared in wonder, as he saw that Melina had no ordinary legs but a beautiful, shiny-green fish-tail from her waist down.

"A mermaid!" said Spedwin. "Then how . . . why?"

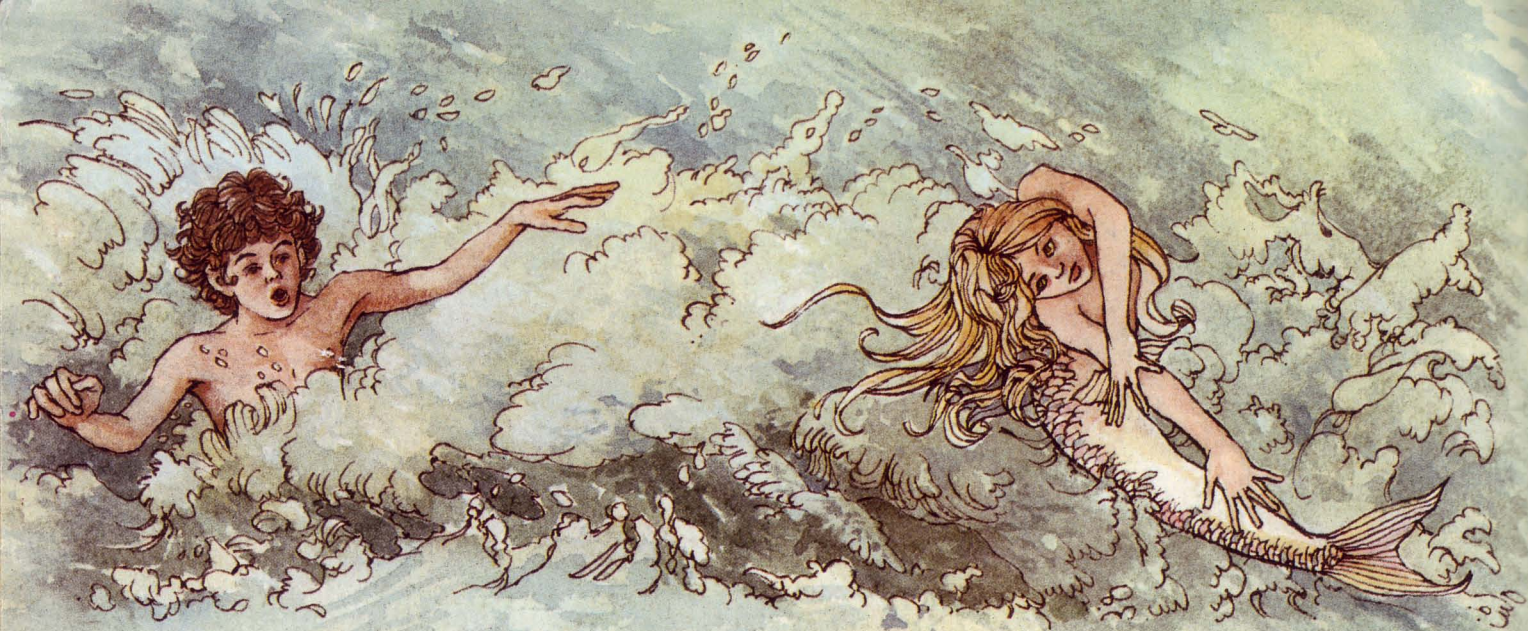
"I can't swim!" answered Melina, bursting into tears again.

"I shall teach you then!" said Spedwin.

Within the wreck was a pool of calm water, and Spedwin swam in it, to and fro. He showed Melina how to move her arms, cutting through the water.

"Kick with your fish-tail," said Spedwin. "Trust me. It's easy!"





Melina was nervous and a little frightened. But finally, she slid into the water. Hardly had she done so, when a huge wave washed against the wreck.

A wall of water surged through it, and swept Melina away. She let out a piercing cry of fear, but Spedwin could do nothing. Farther and farther away she skimmed on the great wall of water, until at last he was alone.

Many years later, Spedwin had become the finest fisherman in the village. He took his boat farther out to sea than any of the others in the small fleet. It was almost as though he were searching.

Spedwin had never married, though many would have chosen to be his wife. But the memory of Melina, his little mermaid, was still dear to him. *Had* she perished that night, long ago?

Spedwin was to find out. It began with a storm — the like of which Faraway Island had never seen before.





It came from nowhere and struck with a great rage. Even Spedwin was caught unawares. As he clung to the helm of his fishing-boat, the sea closed over him.

Spedwin and the fishing net at his feet were washed away. The net closed round him as he struggled in the heaving water, and in a moment, he was hopelessly entangled. Spedwin began to sink. He could not breathe.

Suddenly, hands took him — pushed him to the surface. Dark water grew lighter and . . . there was air! So he was held, caught within the net, floating on the raging sea, until the storm eased.

"Melina!" cried Spedwin. "So you *did* learn to swim. You've saved my life!"

"Just as you saved mine," came the sweet sound of the mermaid's voice. Soon she cut through the net with a sharp sea-shell. "Now we shall never lose each other again."

And so it was that Spedwin often made trips in his little boat to parts of the ocean where no others dared to follow.

Even now that Spedwin is an old man, he has never taken a bride from among his village. But it is said that on many a moonless night, he has slipped down into the waters — far out to sea — to swim with a figure with golden hair!





Inside the Santos Stadium, everyone's eyes were on the pitch. It was easy for Zico to creep into the changing rooms and hide his football boots in one of the lockers.

"I can't play in boots," he muttered to himself. "Of course I can't. I've never played

in boots." He was still muttering this when he bumped into his friends, Donelia and Frederico. They looked very sad. They had seen him make a fool of himself out on the pitch.

"What happened out there, Zico?" said Donelia. "Were you nervous, was that it?"

Zico grinned. "No, it was the boots! I can't play in boots. But it'll be all right now. They've gone. Thank you for buying them, Frederico, but next time I'll play barefoot. Can't stop." He leaped off along the terraces, as agile as a mountain goat, on his bare brown feet.

Frederico groaned deeply. "Oh, he's got rid of the boots! Now I can't put them back where I took them from. I'll go to prison. I wouldn't mind — I wouldn't, really . . . if only Zico could have played for Santos. I could have said, 'My friend is the famous Zico!'" Frederico put his head in his hands, and wept.

In the manager's dugout, the Santos coach sat watching the game. "No," he said, "there's nobody here with any *real* talent."



"Excuse me, sir," said Zico.

"Don't bother me, boy. I'm busy. You were number 20, weren't you? Go home. We can't use you."

"Please, sir, I can't go home."

"What do you mean, you can't?"

"I can't go home because somebody has stolen my boots, and if I go home without them, my cruel father will beat me and my little mother will break her poor heart."

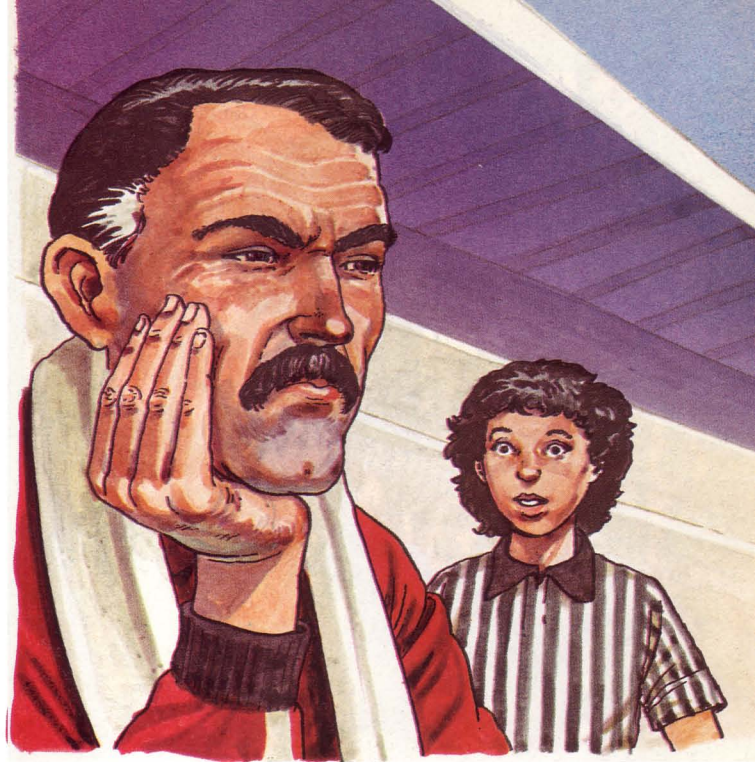
"I can't worry about boots now," said the manager. "Hang about until the trials end and I'll send for the police."

"Yes, sir," said Zico and sat down timidly. After a moment he coughed and said, "Couldn't I just go and kick the ball about with the other boys while I wait?"

"What, in your bare feet?"

"I'll manage," said Zico — and before the coach could say no, he ran on to the pitch.

He took the ball from the boy in white boots and snaked round two other players. He passed quickly to the wing, and as the ball was crossed back to him, he headed it



firmly into the top corner of the net.

In the manager's box, the coach got to his feet.

After that, the other side had hardly a chance to touch the ball. It spun between their knees, it looped over their heads, it disappeared from the very toes of their boots, as Zico smacked it goalwards.





In the dugout, the coach stood on his seat to get a better view.

The boy in white boots tried to stamp on Zico's bare feet, but was spotted by the referee, and sent off. Before he reached the stand, Zico had scored another goal.

The coach jumped up and down so hard that his seat broke. "Sign that boy!

Sign that barefoot boy!"

"Now I can go to prison happy!" declared Frederico, and marched indoors.

"I'll go with you," said Donelia. "We'll go to prison together!"

The Santos first team were in the changing room, putting on their kit. Donelia and Frederico stood in the doorway, waiting for the robbery to be discovered — waiting to admit to stealing boots from a Santos locker.

"Eh, Enrico! What are your boots doing in my locker?" said the Santos goalkeeper.

"Search me," said the centre half, and took the black and yellow boots, and began lacing them on. "You kids shouldn't be here," he said noticing Frederico and Donelia in the doorway.

"No. I mean, um . . . I . . . we, um . . ." stammered Frederico.

"We just want your autograph," said Donelia quickly, then they both fled.

It was in all the newspapers. Zico was the youngest Brazilian ever to play in the first division. And of course, he was the first ever to play barefoot in a cup final.



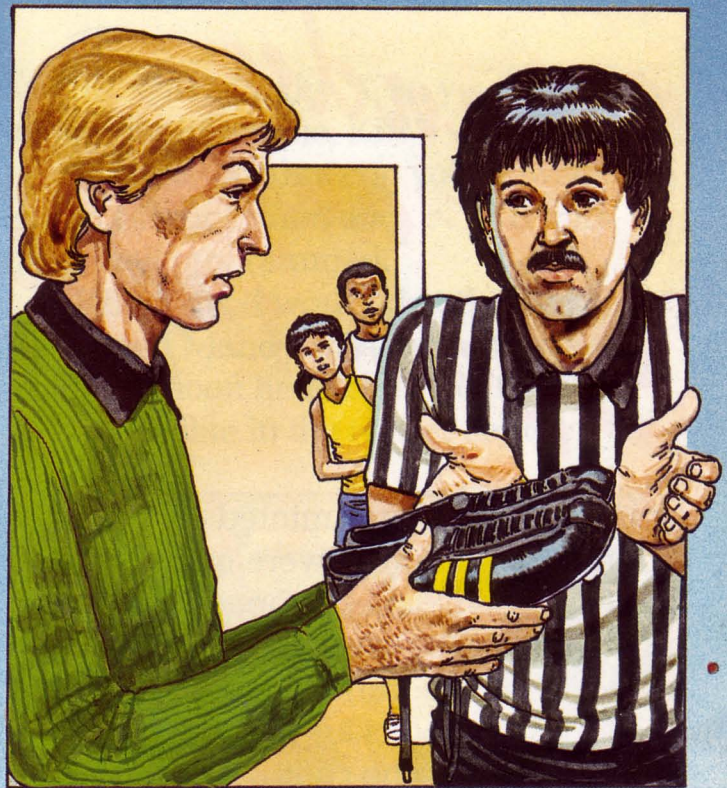
On the day of the match, his parents, his sister and all his friends from the beach were in the stands. They waved flags, blew whistles and sang songs. But mostly they shouted: "Zico! Zico! Give it to Zico!"

Donelia nudged Frederico during half-time, and said, "He looks so tiny beside all those great big men." But Frederico called her a silly girl and said that it did not take muscles to be a footballer.

Zico pelted up and down the field, tackling, passing the ball, heading it across the goal-mouth and shadowing a player twice his size.

It was an even, desperate match. The crowd were on the edge of their seats. Then Zico heard a Santos player shout his name. He saw the ball at his feet and the open goal. He did not have time to shift his weight. Instinctively, he hit the ball.

There was a thunderclap as every seat in the stadium folded shut and the entire crowd leaped to their feet. Then the roar built up until it seemed to shake the sky. "A goal! A goal! Zico has scored!"



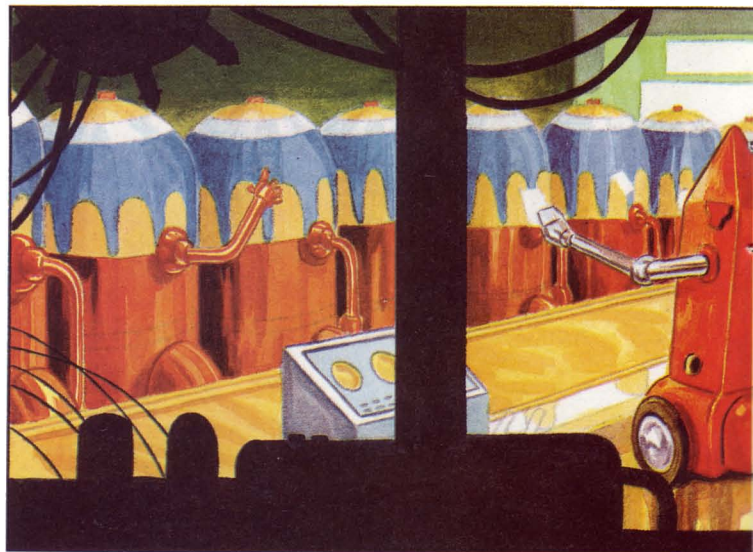
Mandy and the Space Race

Shining like newly minted coins, forty-eight robots were ready to leave the factory on Planet Kappa. The brand new robots in Batch KB were Home Help robots — all programmed to clean, cook, pilot rocket-copters and baby-sit.

"Programming complete at last!" said KB 10 to his friend KB 11. He was happy to leave the factory. He wanted to use his bright computer brain, and most of all, he wanted to meet humans. "Where are you going, KB11?"

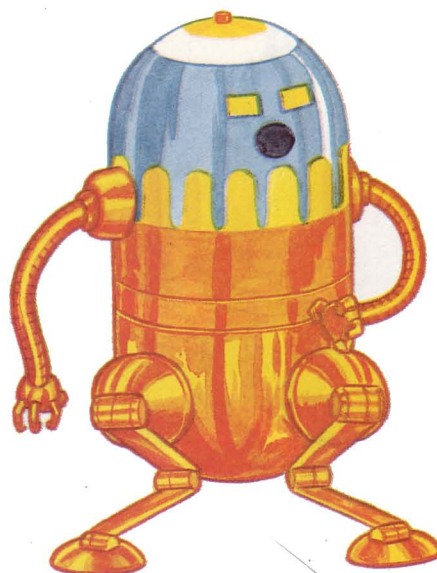
KB 11 squeaked with excitement. "Heep! Heep! I'm going to planet Vac."

"Planet Vac. A large and beautiful



planet in the Blue Galaxy." KB 10 knew about all the planets and galaxies in the System. He was going to a human family called Brown who lived in New Croydon, United Kingdom, Planet Earth. The robots reached Dispatch and KB 10 disappeared inside a dispatch tube.

Soon he found himself sitting among packing foam and looking up at three grinning faces. Humans! The Browns! KB was very excited. "Greetings. My





name is KB 10. I am your Home Help."

"You can help me with my homework," said the smallest of the three humans. "My name is Mand . . ."

"Mandy, daughter of Mr and Mrs Brown. Address, Apartment 21, Blossom Brook, Green Belt 8, New Croydon . . ."

"Please help Mandy," Mrs Brown interrupted, "then prepare supper. The food capsules are in the freezer, KB."

"Oh, not food capsules again,

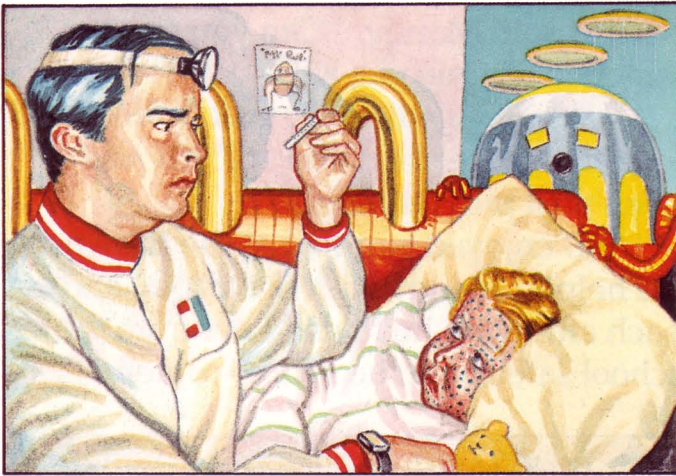


Mum!" said Mandy. "Can you make lemon meringue pie, KB?"

"Whisk together egg yolk powder and lemon essence, then add . . ." KB *had* been well programmed.

KB enjoyed working at the Browns'. He helped Mandy with her tables, and each afternoon he fetched her from the school satellite in the rocket-copter.





But one day, a teacher brought Mandy home early and she went straight to her hover-bed. Her mother called the Medic at once.

When the Medic came out of Mandy's room, he was looking worried. He left his computer on a table and started talking quietly to Mandy's parents. "I'm afraid Mandy needs special treatment. And she needs it soon . . ."

KB 10 looked at the screen of the Medic's computer:

ONLY TREATMENT FOR THIS ILLNESS —
MARMOREA PANATELLA TO BE ADMINISTERED
WITHIN 36 HOURS

"And marmorea panatella is a very rare plant. It only grows on Planet Vac." Mandy's mum was in tears. "How can we get hold of this



plant in time to save her?" she sobbed.

KB's computer brain was working fast. Suddenly he remembered KB 11 — his friend worked on Planet Vac! The robot plugged into the Browns' big computer and contacted KB 11.

On Planet Vac, there was a fancy-dress parade. The streets were full of holiday-makers wearing their fanciest, brightest spacesuits. But KB 11 had only one thing on his computer brain — he





had to find the marmorea panatella.

Just then his radar's beam spotted the plant. Marmorea panatella! There it was, swaying on top of a dancer's helmet, half-hidden between a pineapple and a plastic parrot. KB 11 pushed his way towards the dancer, gently pinching a few people's bottoms with his pincers to make them step aside. He snapped off the plant and quickly put it inside his freeze pocket. Then KB 11 hurried to the



Space Terminal. With the help of a friendly computer, he got the plant on the next space shuttle to London's Intergalactic Spaceport.

At Apartment 21, Mandy was getting weaker and weaker, and the Medic was working hard to keep her alive.

The screen over the door flashed. A robot postman appeared. "Special delivery. Plant from Planet Vac for Mandy Brown."

"Just in time," muttered the Medic, programming his plant-juice extractor.

The red light on the top of KB 10's head flashed in delight, as Mandy grew stronger by the minute.

"What are you so happy about, KB?" asked Mandy. KB did not reply, but his red light went on flashing happily.





SOMEWHERE SAFE

Large, cold drops of rain rattled on the roof of the wood and dripped through on to the bracken below. "Oh dear!" thought the little bird. "Winter is on its way! Where shall I shelter against the wild wind?"


High in the sky, a flight of birds was passing overhead. "Fly south!" they called. "You're late, you lazy creature! Come with us and fly south to the warm places!"

"I can't!" cried the little bird. "My wing is broken. I *can't* fly south with you! Where shall I shelter against the wild wind?" But the others were already out of sight, and the little bird was alone.

Now, the bird came from a town. He knew how to build a nest under house-eaves and how to peck beetles off garden lawns. But he knew nothing of woods. He hopped to the river and said to the Weeping Willow, "Please may I shelter under your beautiful arms until springtime?"

The Willow did not look up, but went on staring at his reflection in the water. He sighed piteously. "Haven't I troubles enough of my own, you selfish little bird?"

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said the little bird. "What's wrong?"



"I have too few admirers!" groaned the Willow, and his long leaves trembled most elegantly. The little bird hopped sadly away, trailing his hurt wing.

He crept to the foot of the lovely Birch, whose slender trunk was white and silver and fawn, and whose leaves hung like slants of rain. "Please may I shelter under your beautiful arms until spring?"

"Ergh! Certainly not!" exclaimed the Silver Birch. "An ugly dark thing like you? Besides, I know you birds. You peck and peck, and before I know it, my bark is in shreds. Go away!"

So, the little bird dragged its hurt wing as far as the spreading Sycamore tree — three times as tall as the Willow and three times as strong as the Birch. "Please may I shelter under *your* strong arms until spring?"

"No! No! No!" said the Sycamore. "I know you birds. You eat and eat, and before I know it, you've robbed me of all my seeds. Go away!"

A sad, sighing sound made the wood shiver. The wind was coming! The rain fell faster and faster, and the squirrels and mice mustered a winter larder, then curled up in their shelters and went to sleep until spring.

The little bird put his head under his good wing, and huddled up on the forest floor. Then a voice said, "Jump up among my branches and shelter from the wild wind, or you'll die, little bird!"

It was a small, smart Spruce tree with soft green fronds — far shorter than the Willow, far thinner than the Birch.

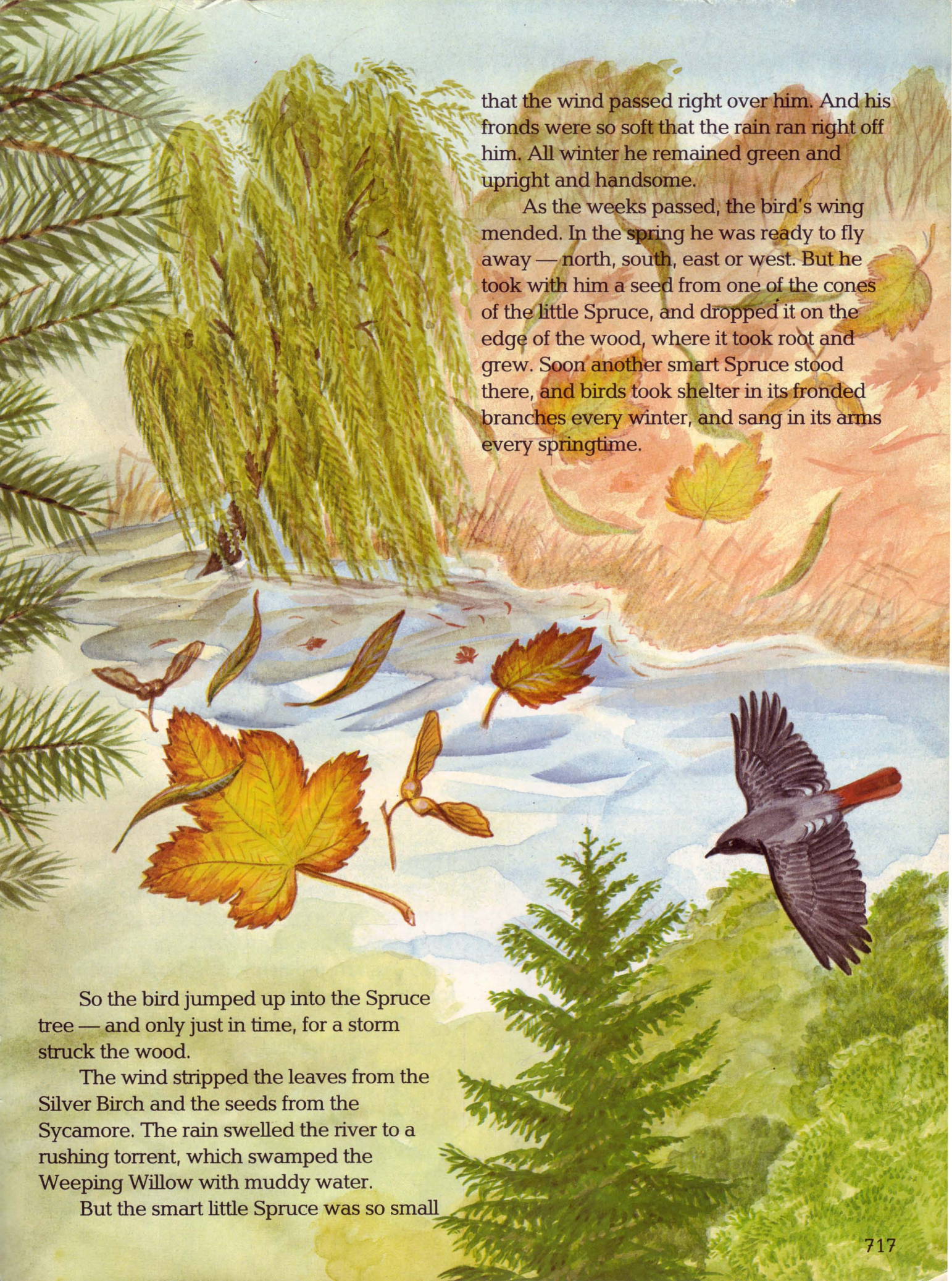
"Won't I weigh too heavily in your arms?" asked the little bird.

"What? You're no heavier than one of my own fir cones!" laughed the Spruce. "And talking of fir cones, if you look inside mine, you may find a supper of seeds."

"Are you sure you can spare them?" asked the little bird.

"Good gracious! If *all* my seeds were to grow, the world would be full of Spruce trees! Quickly now! The wind is coming!"





that the wind passed right over him. And his fronds were so soft that the rain ran right off him. All winter he remained green and upright and handsome.

As the weeks passed, the bird's wing mended. In the spring he was ready to fly away — north, south, east or west. But he took with him a seed from one of the cones of the little Spruce, and dropped it on the edge of the wood, where it took root and grew. Soon another smart Spruce stood there, and birds took shelter in its fronded branches every winter, and sang in its arms every springtime.

So the bird jumped up into the Spruce tree — and only just in time, for a storm struck the wood.

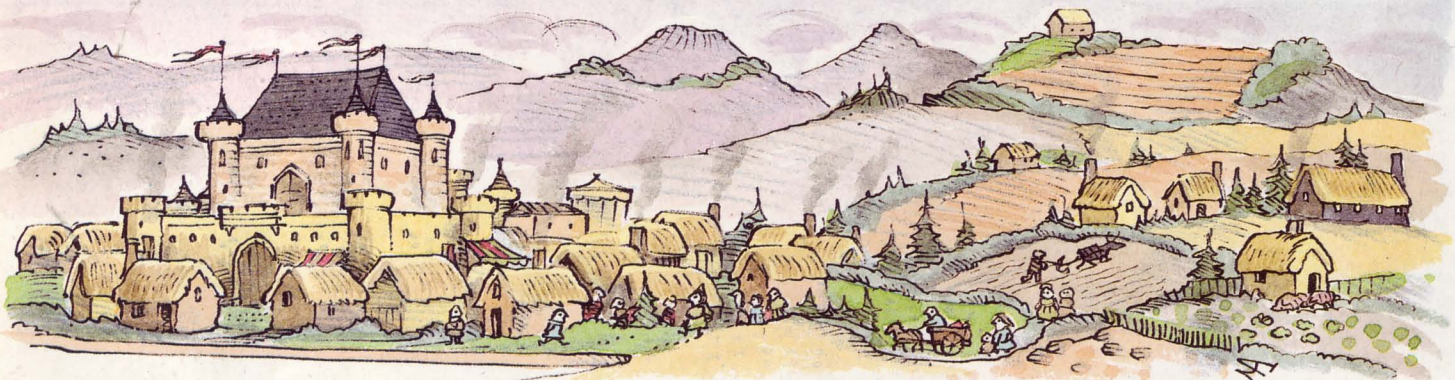
The wind stripped the leaves from the Silver Birch and the seeds from the Sycamore. The rain swelled the river to a rushing torrent, which swamped the Weeping Willow with muddy water.

But the smart little Spruce was so small

Noggin and the money

Listen, I will tell you a tale. Be still and I will tell you of Noggin, Prince of the Nogs, the young king who ruled over a land of mountains, ice and snow in the far north. The mountains all around the

Land of Nog were steep and cold and snowy, but the farms in the hills and valleys were neat and fertile, and the little town that clustered around Noggin's castle was bustling full of life.



There was the market place where the Nogs came to exchange the things they had for the things they needed. They exchanged eggs for onions or boots. They exchanged fish for bread, or turnips for tunics. It was a good market.



Olaf the Lofly, the Court Inventor, looked down on the market. He did not think it was good. "All that exchanging is clumsy. I will invent something to make it easier. I will invent money."

Olaf took his tools and made six round pieces of copper with holes through the middle.



"These are money," he explained.

"You use money to buy things."

"I do not understand," said Noggin.

"Tell me how . . ."

But Olaf had run to the market. There he met Thor Nogson carrying six onions. He was going to the Egg Nog to exchange them for six eggs.



"Don't exchange them, *buy* them!" said Olaf. "I will pay you six copper coins for your onions. Here you are."

"What are these things?" asked Thor Nogson.

"Money!" said Olaf. "Each of these coins is worth one egg . . . or one fish . . . or one onion . . . whatever you want!"





"Marvellous!" shouted Thor Nogson, and he ran to the Royal Kitchen and gave the money to the Royal Cook. The Royal Cook was waiting to cook scrambled eggs for the Royal Dinner. "Where are my eggs?" she asked.

"Each of these is worth one egg!" cried Thor Nogson. "Isn't that a good idea!" "No, that is a bad idea!" shouted the Royal Cook. "I cannot cook copper coins. I want eggs and I want them now! Fetch me eggs!"



She beat Thor Nogson with her ladle and drove him from the kitchen. Thor Nogson ran to the market. "Egg Nog!" he shouted. "I will give you six pieces of copper for six eggs." The Egg Nog shook his head.



"I don't want pieces of copper. I would like six onions," he said. Then, as Thor Nogson looked so sad, he added, "If you could find something to mend the torn canvas cover of my stall I would give you six eggs."

Thor Nogson went to the Nog-smith. He had no eggs but he said Thor Nogson could have a brass pot in exchange for two fish.

Thor Nogson met a boy with a barrow.



The boy had no eggs but he said he would give Thor Nogson three feathers and a bag of clothes-peg in exchange for a real warrior's helmet.

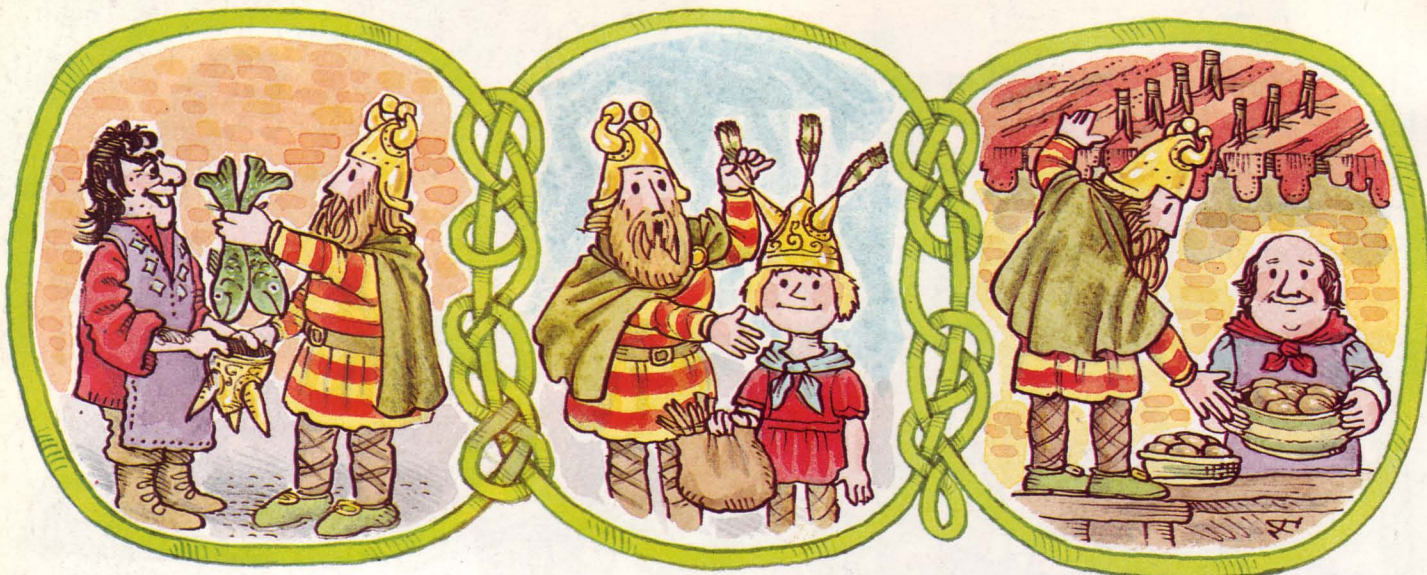
Thor Nogson could not find anybody to give him six eggs for six pieces of copper. He leaned on the harbour wall and watched the fishermen, thinking how simple it was just to fish for your food. Suddenly a fisherman's line broke. He fell back and bumped into Thor Nogson, spilling the bag of coins.



"What lovely fishing weights!" shouted the fisherman.

"You can have them, they're no good to me," said Thor Nogson.

"Oh no," said the fisherman. "They are good weights. I will give you two fish for them!"

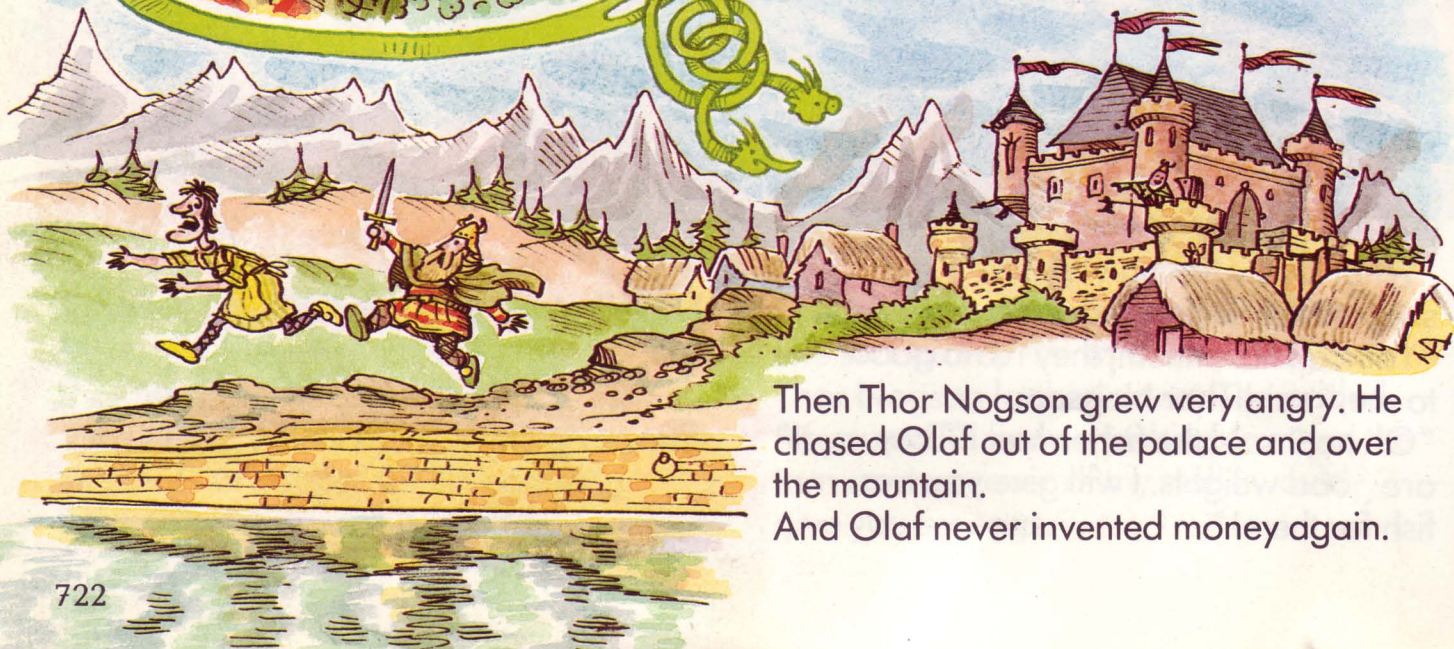
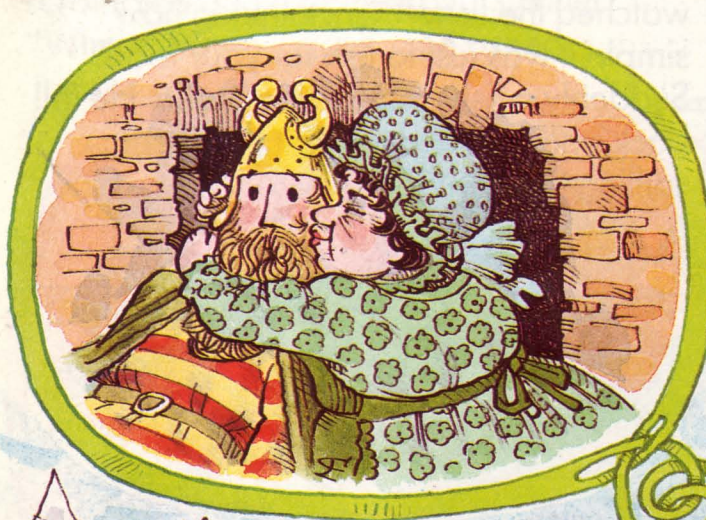


Thor Nogson ran to the Nog-smith who gave him the brass pot in exchange for the two fish. He put the brass pot on the boy's head for a helmet in exchange for the three feathers and the bag of clothes-peg.

"Proper warriors have wings on their helmets," said the boy. Thor Nogson stuck the three feathers in the feet of the brass pot.

"Now you are a proper warrior," he said. He ran to the Egg Nog and mended the canvas cover with the clothes-peg. The Egg Nog gave him six eggs. The Royal Cook gave him a big kiss and made scrambled eggs for the Royal Dinner and everybody was happy . . . except Thor Nogson.

"I want my onions back!" he said. "They are my onions now," said Olaf. "I bought them with my own money."



Then Thor Nogson grew very angry. He chased Olaf out of the palace and over the mountain. And Olaf never invented money again.

Harlequin and Columbine



"It's useless to cry, Columbine!" declared Pantalone. "My mind's made up." He mounted his horse. "I'm going to search the world until I find my cousin's son, Malo. He was stolen by bandits when he was three days old. But I'll find him! I'll adopt him! Malo will get all my money — and you'll get nothing! You, Columbine, will marry Stenterello the poet!"

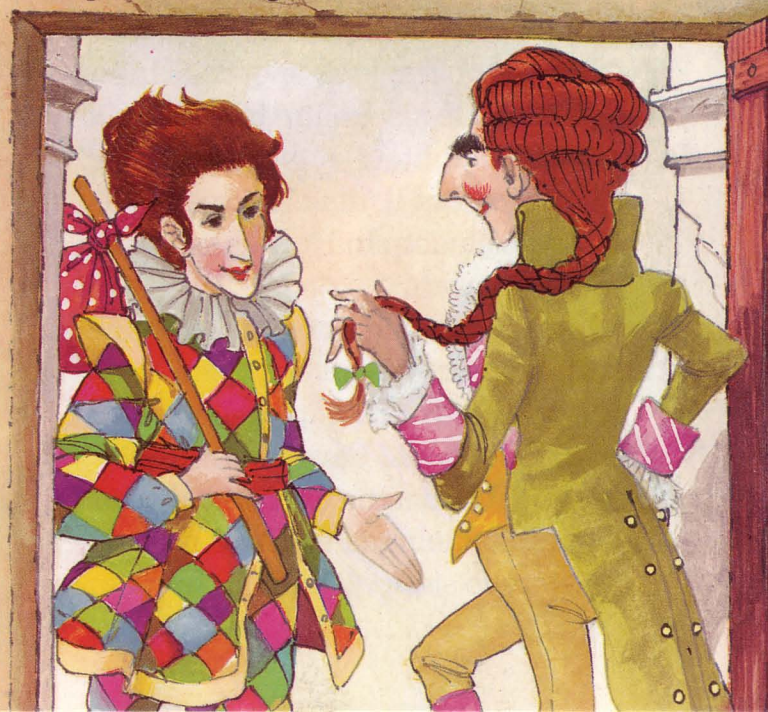
Poor little Columbine clung to her father's hand and wept. "I don't want your money, Father! But don't marry me to Stenterello! I love Harlequin!"

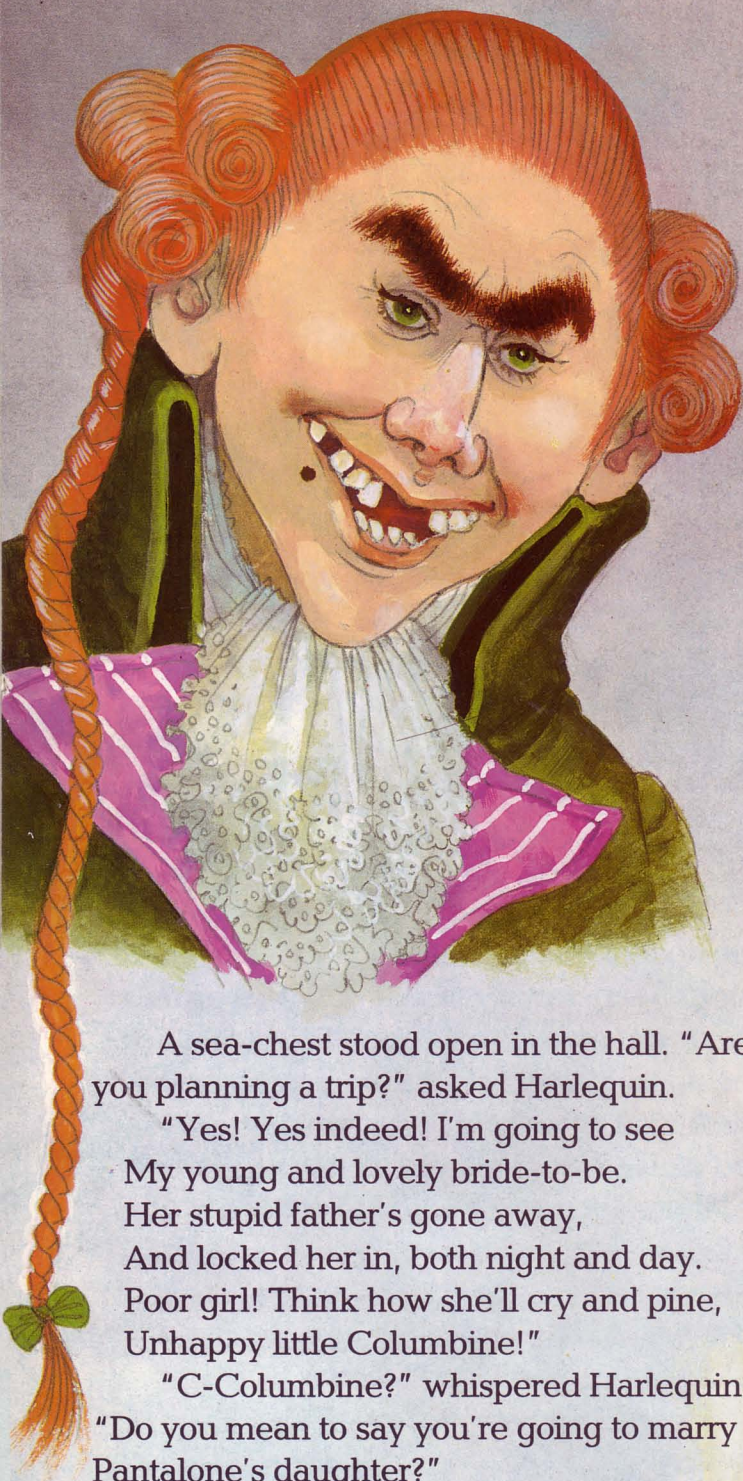
"The wedding will take place the day I get back. And while I'm gone, you'll stay locked in your room. As for Harlequin, I forbid you ever to see that rogue again!"

So Pantalone rode away to search for the long-lost Malo. Columbine was locked in her bedroom. And Harlequin, who loved her, roamed the streets with no home to call his own.

As evening fell, Harlequin knocked at

the door of the last house in town. "I can cook, clean, run messages and do washing. Have you any work for me?" The owner of the house peered at Harlequin from under thick black eyebrows, and twitched his long red plait. "A servant, eh? To fetch and carry? I'll need a servant when I marry. Come inside and say hello: My name is Signor Stenterello."





sat down. "Take this chest, with me inside
As a present for my bride.
Say it comes from Stenterello —
And do be quick, you lazy fellow!"

Harlequin closed the lid. "Are you in
love, master?"

A muffled voice replied,
"I'm in love devotedly
With that splendid fellow, me.
Careful!" Harlequin swung the trunk on to
his shoulders and, bumping his way out of
the house, walked slowly back to town.

He stopped on a bridge, and looked
down at the water. "Shall I throw it into the
canal and let the current carry it down to the
sea?" he thought. But Stenterello had given
him a job, and kind-hearted Harlequin did
not want him to float on the ocean for ever.

A sea-chest stood open in the hall. "Are
you planning a trip?" asked Harlequin.

"Yes! Yes indeed! I'm going to see
My young and lovely bride-to-be.
Her stupid father's gone away,
And locked her in, both night and day.
Poor girl! Think how she'll cry and pine,
Unhappy little Columbine!"

"C-Columbine?" whispered Harlequin.
"Do you mean to say you're going to marry
Pantalone's daughter?"

"The moment Pantalone comes home!"
Tears welled up in Harlequin's eyes.
"Does she love you?"

"Perhaps not yet; but love will grow
Just look at me! I'm quite a beau."

His grin showed a gaping hole where
his front teeth should have been.

"And you, my little chequered friend
Are going to help me to my end!"

Stenterello stepped into the trunk and



So he carried the chest to Pantalone's house and knocked on the door.

"Go away, Harlequin," snapped the new servant. "No-one's allowed in here — especially you."

"But I've brought a present for Columbine from my new master."

The servant looked suspicious, but he opened the door. "Will you take it up to her?" said Harlequin, clutching his aching back.

"It's too heavy for me," said the lazy servant. "You take it up! Here's the key."

So Harlequin bumped the chest upstairs. He stood it on end, he shook it, he thumped it down on the landing, and unlocked Columbine's door. At the sight of Harlequin, her face lit up.

"Madam," said Harlequin, bowing low.



"I bring a present from your fiancé, Stenterello. This chest contains the thing he loves most in all the world." And then he winked.

Columbine put her head on one side. Then a smile spread over her face and she said, very loudly, "Whatever can it be? He loves it best, you say? Perhaps it's his horse. But I don't want a horse, Harlequin. Take it away and sell it to the army."

"Oh, but it might be his fine red velvet cloak," said Harlequin loudly.

"In that case it will be full of fleas. You had better take the trunk downstairs at once and burn it!"

"But it might not be his cloak," said Harlequin, trying not to laugh. "It might be a fortune in gold!"

"We can soon find out," exclaimed Columbine. "Take it down to the canal and throw it in. If it's full of gold, it will sink at once, and you may pull it out."



A squeaky snort came from inside the trunk, and it shook.

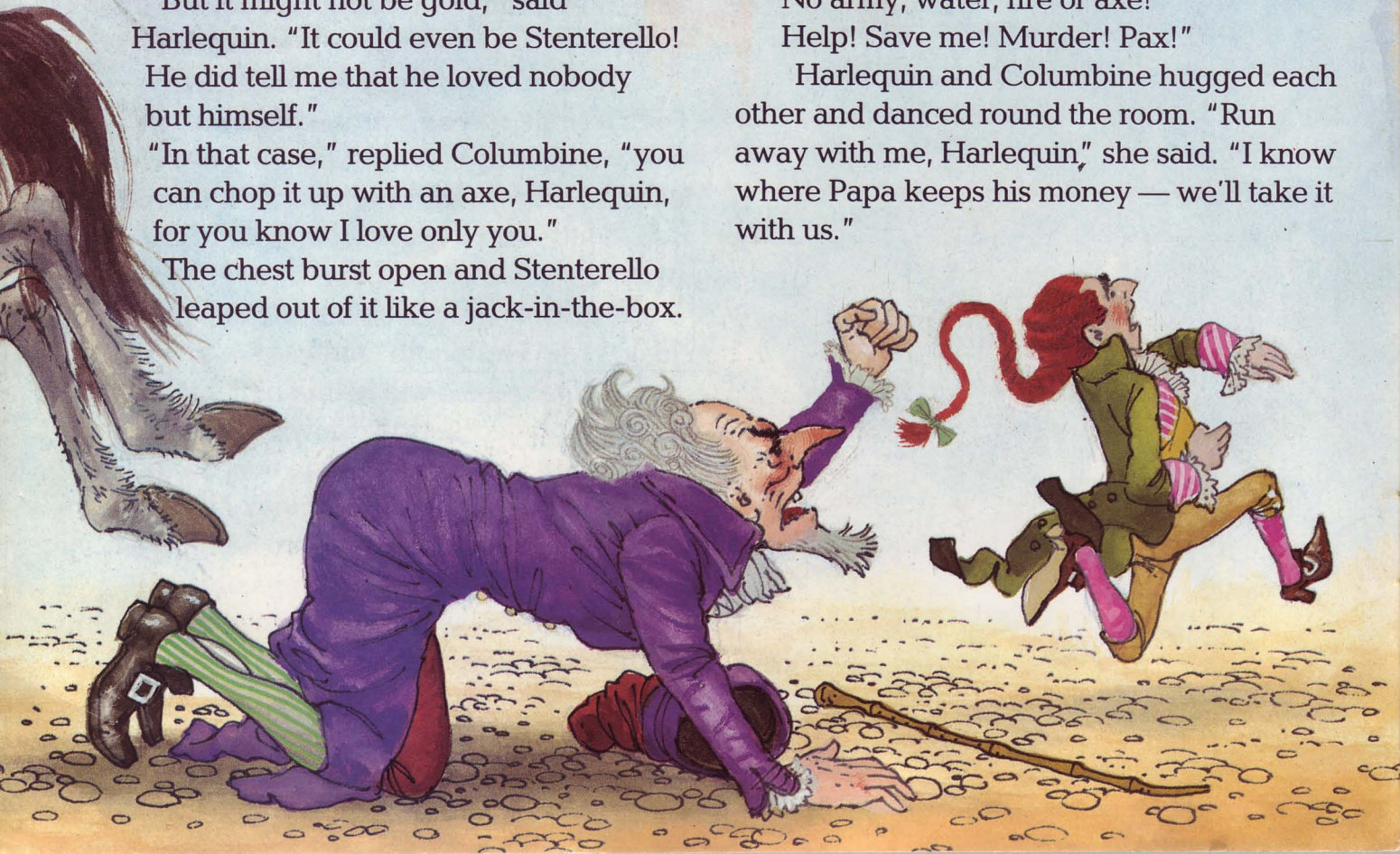
"But it might not be gold," said Harlequin. "It could even be Stenterello! He did tell me that he loved nobody but himself."

"In that case," replied Columbine, "you can chop it up with an axe, Harlequin, for you know I love only you."

The chest burst open and Stenterello leaped out of it like a jack-in-the-box.

He did not stop to open the door, but jumped straight over the balcony shouting, "No army, water, fire or axe! Help! Save me! Murder! Pax!"

Harlequin and Columbine hugged each other and danced round the room. "Run away with me, Harlequin," she said. "I know where Papa keeps his money — we'll take it with us."



Harlequin shook his head. "I won't rob your father. But we will give a party before we go. And we'll call it Pantalone's Party, because Pantalone will pay for it — and we'll invite all the poor people and servants who never get invited to parties. Now where's that money?"

But down in the street, below the balcony, Pantalone was picking himself up off the ground. He had come home just in time to be jumped upon and squashed flat. "What's the meaning of this?" he thundered.

"By earth and air, fire and water! Harlequin can keep your daughter!" shrieked Stenterello, and ran off home.

Pantalone did not go indoors. "I'll finish that Harlequin once and for all. If he spends one penny of my money, I can have him thrown in jail for ever!" And away he went, muttering.

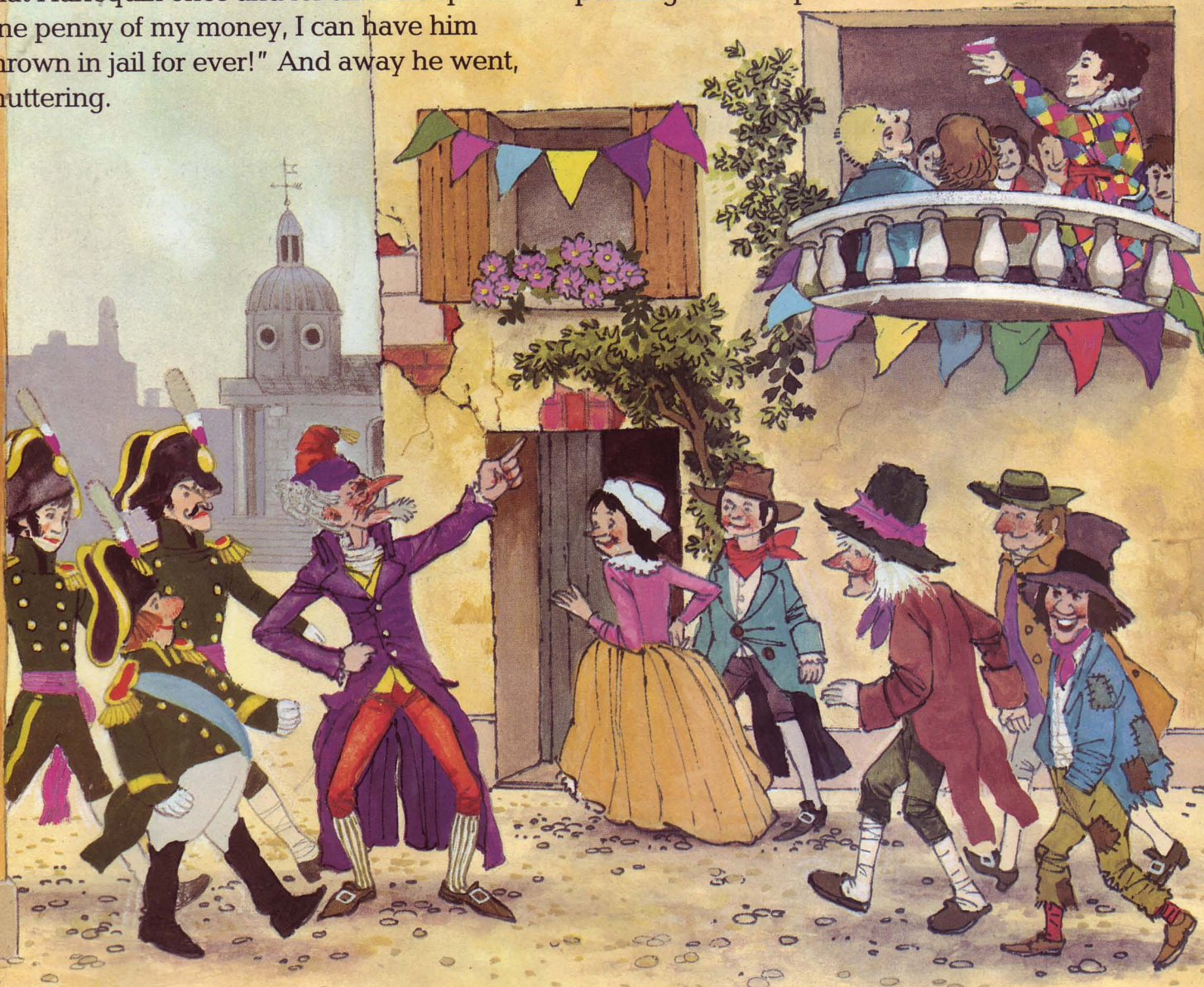
For a whole day he waited. Then he came back with the police. But he could hardly believe his eyes. His run-down house was decked with flags and flowers, and music was pouring out of the windows.

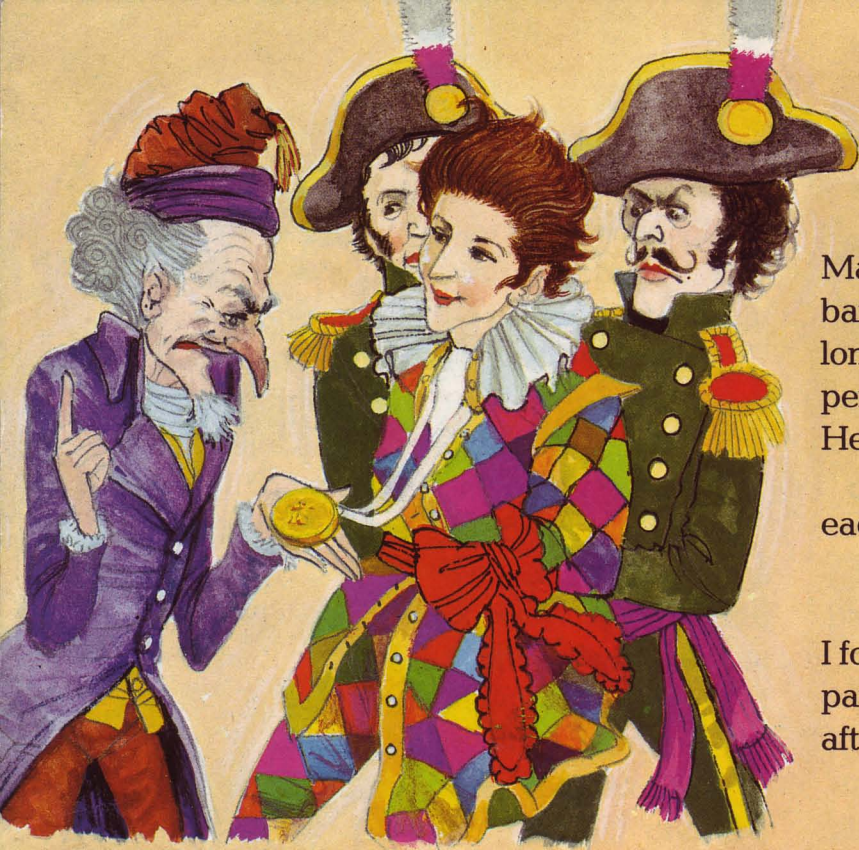
Threadbare servants and ragged beggars were trooping in through the front door. Some saw him and waved and called, "So generous, Signor! A thousand thanks!"

The hungry guests sat down at table, and Harlequin gave a toast. "To happiness, fun and love! And to Pantalone who paid for all this! May he one day find the long lost Malo and live happily ever after!"

"Hurrah!" said all the guests.

"Arrest that man!" barked Pantalone, pointing at Harlequin.





The officers fell on him, and in the struggle tore his patchwork suit. A medallion that Harlequin wore under his shirt shone in the sunlight for a moment.

"Wait!" said Pantalone. He snatched at the chain round Harlequin's neck. "Where did you steal this, you rogue?"

"I've had it always," said Harlequin, "ever since I was a baby."

"But I gave this medallion to the baby Malo, the day before he was stolen by bandits! Officers, let this boy go! He's the long-lost son of my cousin, and he has a perfect right to spend my money as he likes. He's like a son to me!"

Harlequin and Columbine looked at each other, hardly daring to hope . . .

"Then may I marry him, Papa?"

"Well of course you must marry him! I forbid you to marry anyone else. Let the party continue. We'll have the wedding this afternoon. Oh, oh but Malo . . ."

"Yes, uncle," said Harlequin obediently.

"If another person jumps out of a window on top of me, I'll beat you till your ears wag. Is that perfectly understood?"

"Perfectly, uncle," said Harlequin.

"Hurrah!" shouted the guests.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed the Officers of the Watch. And everybody sat down to the feast.



STORY

Teller

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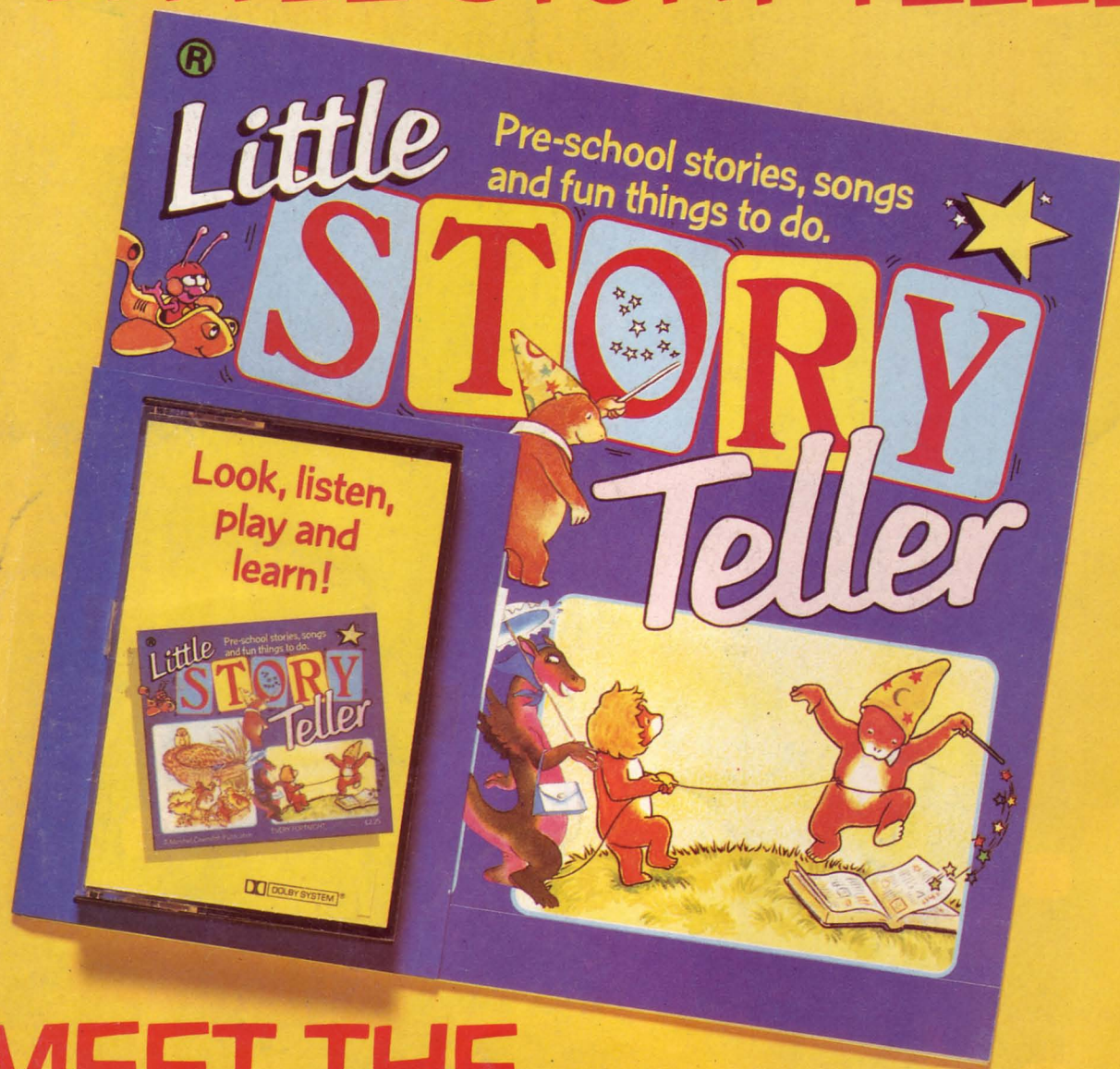
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