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PART 4

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

CONTENTS PART 4

Shorty the Satellite and the Lost Rocket.....85

On patrol in deepest space, Shorty discovers that one or two of his friends are in urgent need of help . . . Join him on his first adventure in this new series written by Anth Ginn.

The Wizard of Oz: Quest for the Wicked Witch.....88

Dorothy and her friends now face their most dangerous task yet. Will they be able to overcome the evil magic of the Wicked Witch of the West?

Petrushka.....94

Petrushka and the other puppets enact a very human play in the showman's theatre. But when the entertainment is over, the drama continues. Stravinsky's famous ballet is based on this haunting Russian folk-tale.

The Garden.....99

All the animals help to make a beautiful garden especially for a Princess — but soon it's time to do the weeding!

© Anita Hewett's *Animal Story Book*, published by The Bodley Head.

Master of the Lake.....103

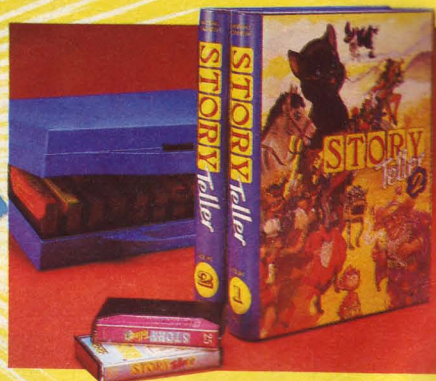
Clever young Avram pits his wits against the powerful Master of the Lake in a most unequal contest — or is it?

The Lord of the Rushie River.....106

Susan settles down happily with her foster family of swans in this last part of Cicely Mary Barker's classic. Reproduced by kind permission of Blackie & Son Ltd.

Rilloby-rill.....inside cover

Sir Henry Newbolt, poet and official Naval Historian, wrote this charming children's poem.



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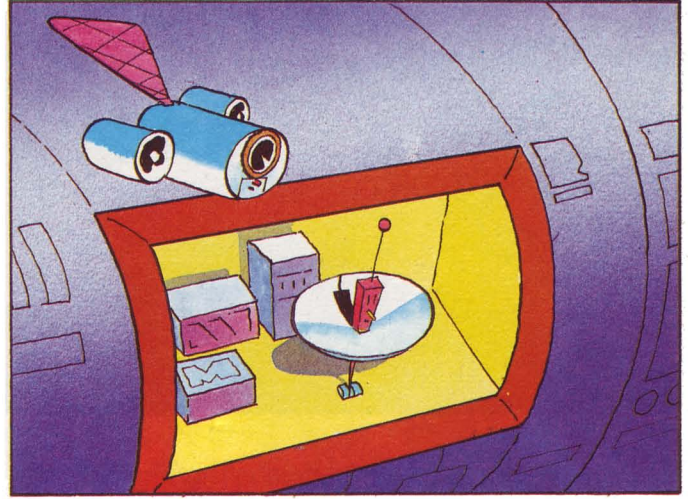
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SHORTY

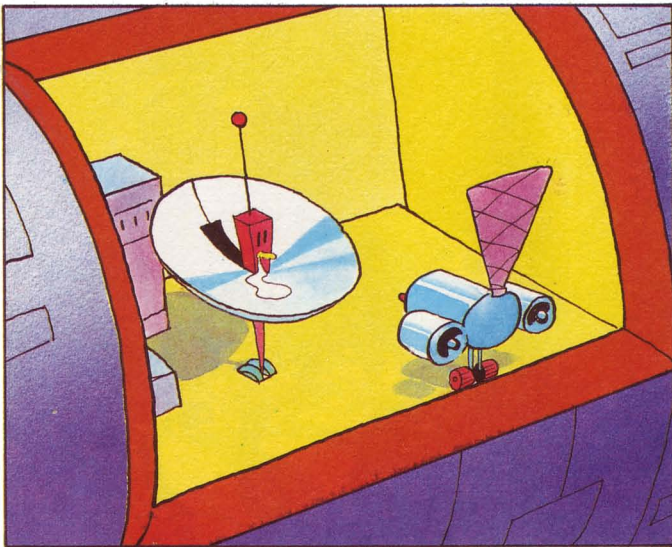
THE SATELLITE AND THE LOST ROCKET



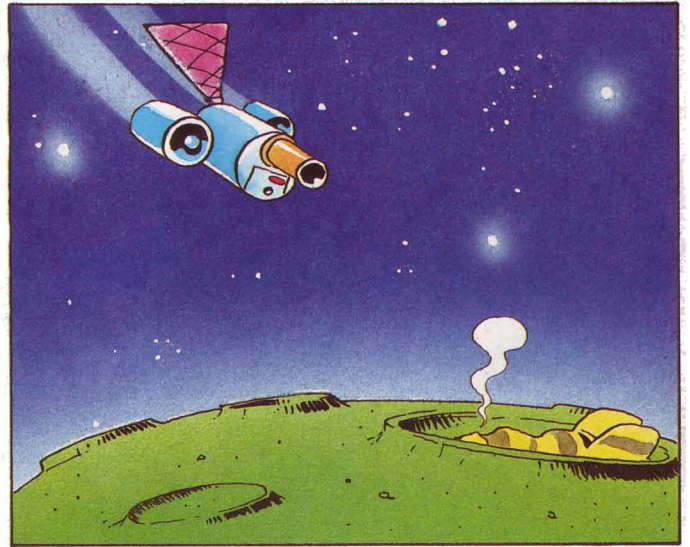
Far away, deep in space, Shorty the Satellite lived on space station Mombase. He had lots of friends who lived there too. Some were spacecraft and others were droids and robots.



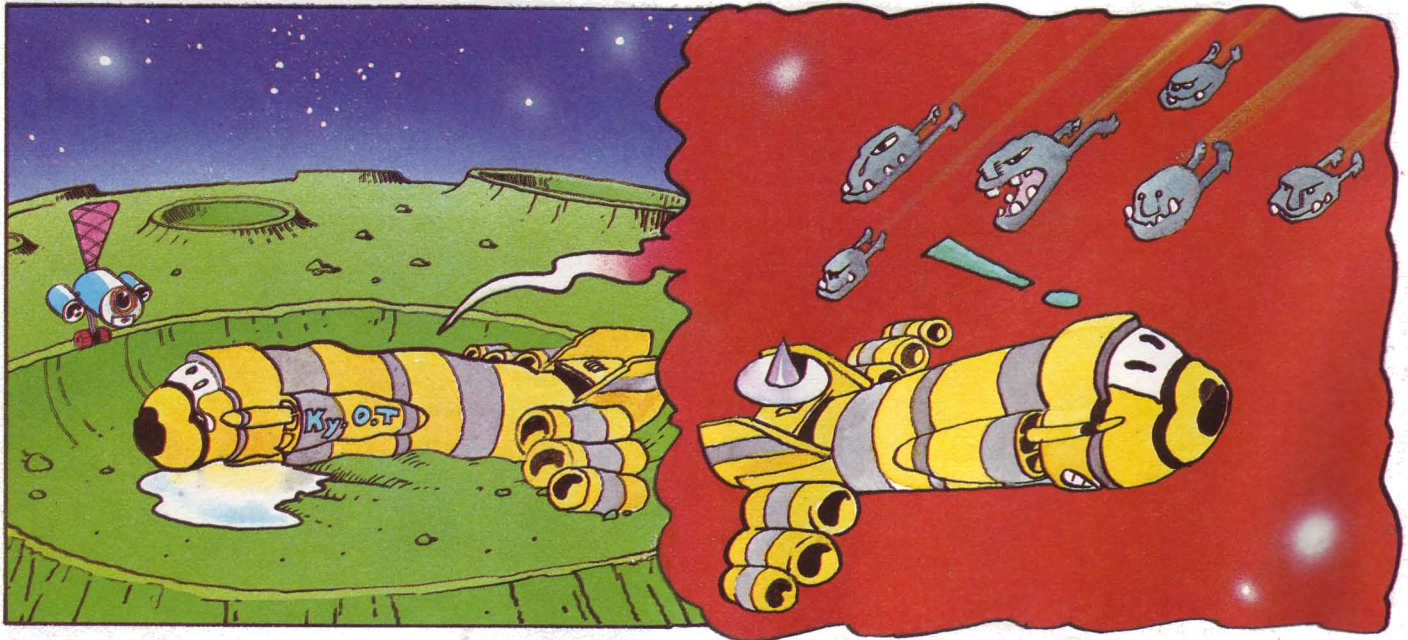
One day as Shorty was flying past the interstellar cargo terminal, he saw his old friend Ronnie radar-unit. Ronnie was standing by some cargo and looking very sad and lonely.



"What's up Ronnie?" "Oh Shorty, haven't you heard the terrible news? I'm being sent away because I'm too old. They're going to snap off my nose and use me as a dustbin lid in the space canteen." "But that's awful, Ronnie. They can't do that. There must be something we can do."



Shorty continued his patrol, thinking about what Ronnie had said. He was flying over a nearby moon when he suddenly saw something unusual through his camera-eye. It looked like an alien spacecraft. Flying down to investigate he found a big rocket, battered and dented, crying in the corner of a crater.



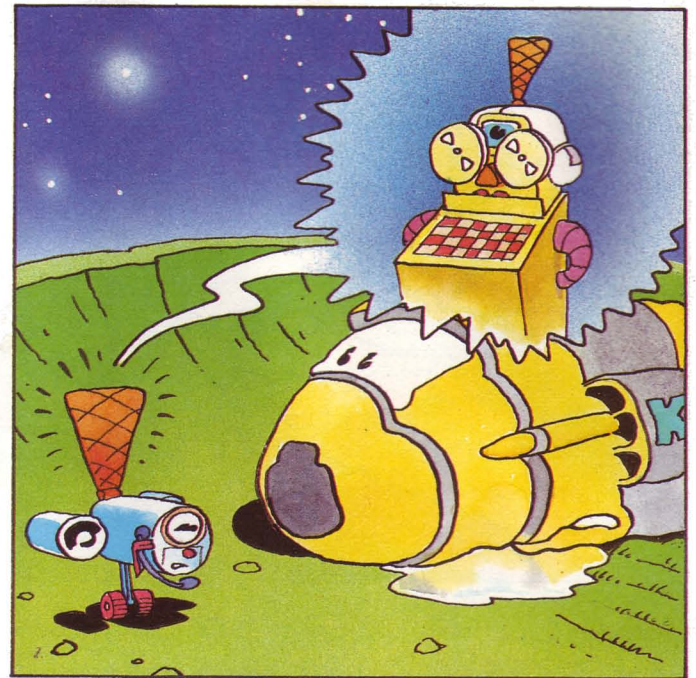
"Excuse me sir, why are you crying?" The damaged rocket looked at Shorty with tears in his eyes. "I'm lost. I'll never get home now."

"Why, what's happened to you? You're all battered and bent."

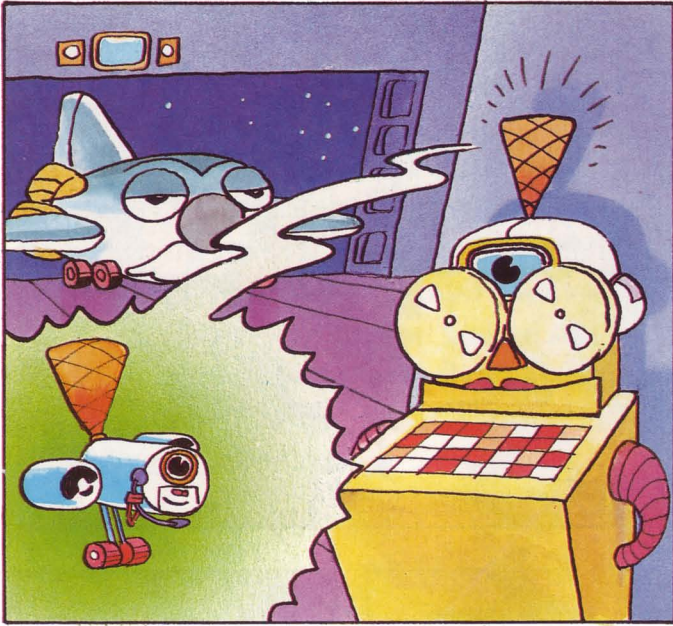
Rocket told Shorty his story. "About two weeks ago I set out on a mission from a spaceport far away. During my journey I was attacked by a gang of hooligan meteorites. They bashed into me, dented my body and loosened my nuts and bolts."



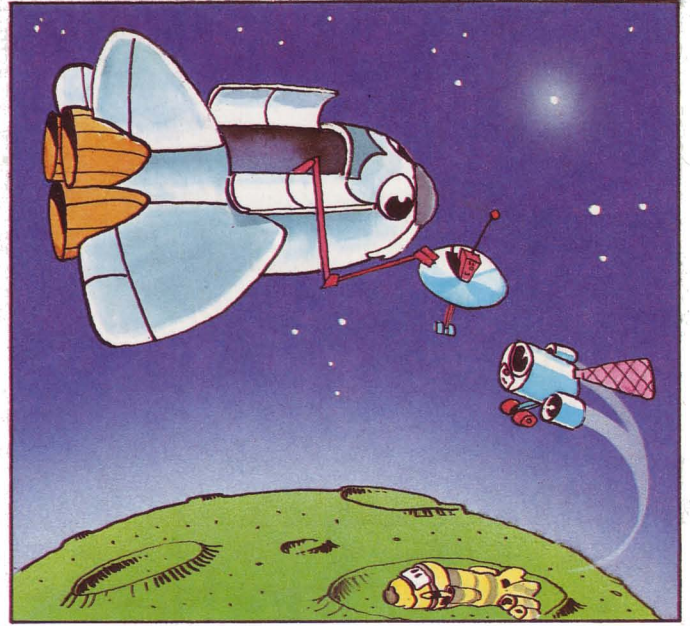
"But worst of all, they bit off my radar-unit. So now I'm lost for ever and will never find my own way home." "Oh dear, what a miserable day everyone's having," said Shorty. Then, suddenly, he had an idea.



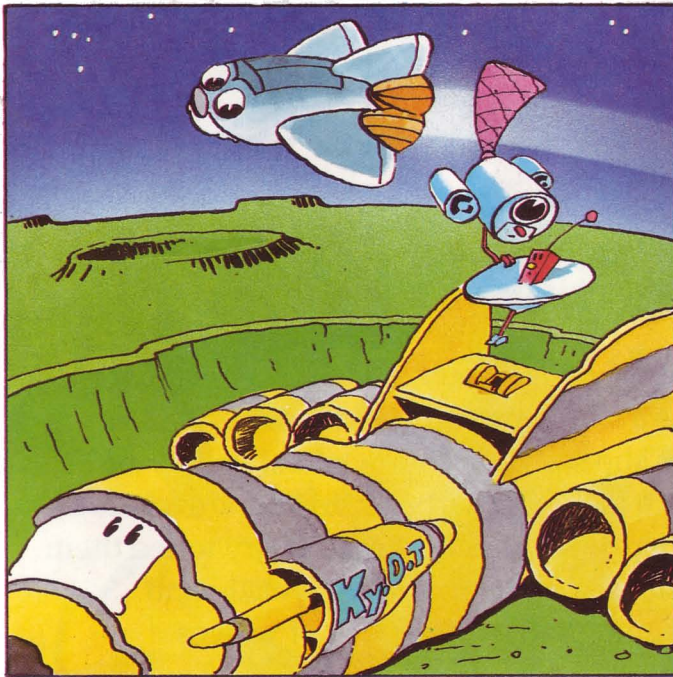
He called up Grandma Computer on his radio. Grandma lived on the space station and was very old and very wise. "Shorty to Grandma, Shorty to Grandma, are you receiving me? Over."



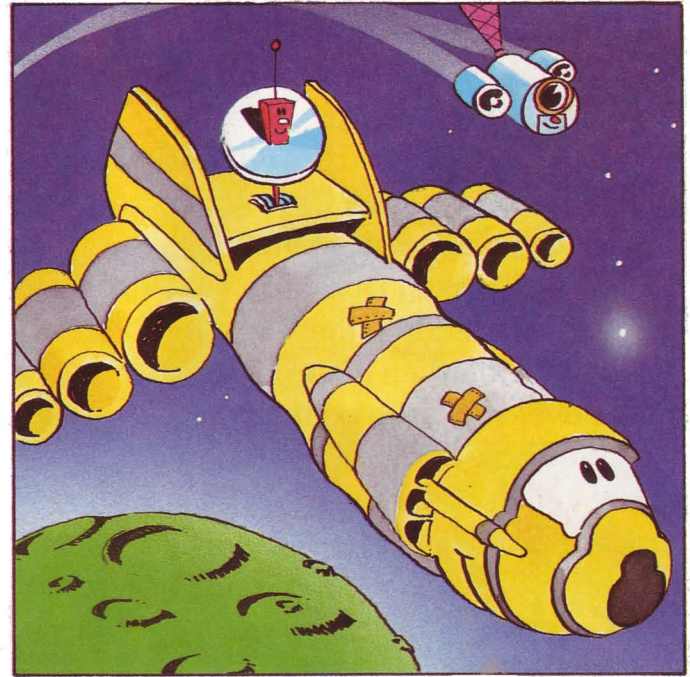
"Grandma to Shorty, receiving you loud and clear, over." "I'm on Moon TL57 Grannie, and I've found a damaged rocket." Shorty explained his plan to Grandma . . .
 "Yes Shorty, that sounds like a good idea. I'll send him with Old Zeke. Over and out."



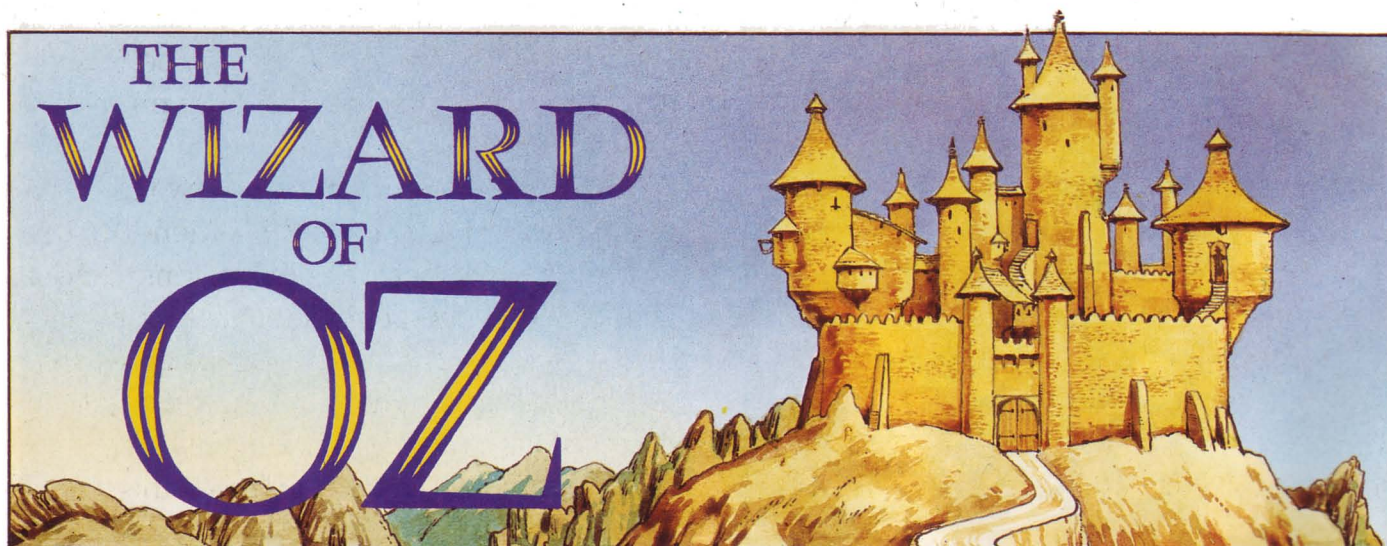
A few minutes later, Shorty heard a tremendous *whoosh!* Old Zeke the space shuttle arrived. Shorty flew up to meet him. "Hello Zeke, have you got him then?" A hatch slid open and Zeke lifted out a radar-unit. "Hi Shorty," said Ronnie, smiling.



Shorty took Ronnie and tried to attach him to the lost rocket. "I hope I'm going to fit," said Ronnie. Shorty twisted and pushed. "Ouch!" cried Ronnie . . . then *clunk*, Ronnie fell into place. "Perfect," said Shorty.



"Thanks a lot," said Rocket. "Now I can find my way home." "And I won't have to spend the rest of my life as a dustbin lid," said Ronnie. Then, with a blast from his launchers, Rocket set off with Ronnie.



Quest for the Wicked Witch

After a good night's sleep in Oz's palace, the travellers were ready to set out on their search for the Land of the Winkies and the Wicked Witch of the West. The Guardian of the Gates unlocked their spectacles and put them back in his box. Then he opened the gate of the Emerald City.

"Which road leads to the Wicked Witch of the West?" asked Dorothy.

"No road leads to the Wicked Witch," replied the Guardian of the Gates, "for no-one ever wishes to go that way."

"Well how then are we to find her?"

"If you keep walking towards the west, where the sun sets, the Wicked Witch will find *you*. She made the Winkies her slaves, and she will want to make *you* her slaves, so take care!"

With these words ringing in their ears, the friends turned towards the west. Dorothy still wore the pretty silk dress she had put on in the palace, but to her amazement now it was pure white. She and her friends walked



as fast as they could and soon left the Emerald City far behind.

Now the Wicked Witch of the West had only one eye, but that eye was as powerful as a telescope and could see everywhere. So as she sat at a window of her yellow castle, she looked round and saw the travellers a long way off. She was so angry to see them that she blew on a silver whistle and summoned a great pack of wolves.

"There are strangers in my land! They are not even fit to be my slaves, so I order you to tear them into little pieces!"

The wolves dashed away at full speed. It was lucky that the Tin Man was wide awake and heard them coming. He seized his sharp

axe and chopped off the head of the leading wolf as it leaped towards him. Then he swung his axe again and again, until forty wolves all lay dead in a heap before him.

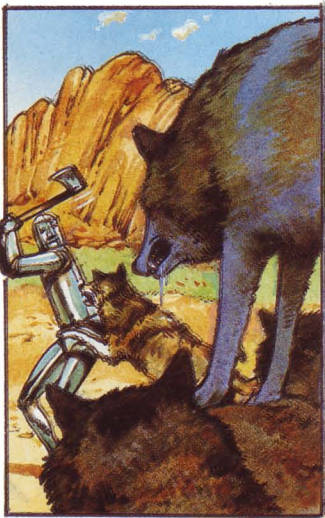
The next morning, Dorothy shivered with fright when she saw the great pile of shaggy wolves. And the Wicked Witch became angrier than ever when she looked out and saw the strangers were still alive. Then she blew on her silver whistle and summoned a great flock of wild crows.

"Fly at once to the strangers, peck out their eyes and tear them into little pieces!" she screamed.

As soon as the Scarecrow saw the crows flying towards him, he told his friends to lie down. He then stretched out his arms, caught hold of the leading crow and twisted its neck until it died. He did this to the next crow, and the crow after that, until at last, the whole flock of forty crows lay dead at his feet.

When the Wicked Witch saw this she went into a terrible rage. She called a dozen of her Winkie slaves, gave them sharp spears and told them to destroy the strangers.

But the yellow Winkies were not brave people. When they marched up to the travellers, the Lion gave such a great roar that they ran straight back to the castle.



The Witch was so angry that she stamped her feet, tore her hair and gnashed her teeth. There was now only one thing she could do: she must use the Golden Cap to summon the Winged Monkeys. She put the cap on her head and chanted, "Ep-pe, pep-pe, kak-ke, ziz-zy, zuz-zy, zik!"

There was a low rumbling sound, a rushing of many wings, a great chattering and laughing. And then, out of the sky, came a crowd of monkeys, each with an immense pair of powerful wings.

Their leader, who was much bigger than the rest, said, "This is the third time you have used the Golden Cap. Whoever owns the cap can summon us three times and give us any order they please. We will always obey. But remember, no-one can summon us more than three times."

"Why should I need you again?" snarled the Witch. "You have helped to make the Winkies my slaves and driven the Great Oz out of my land! My third and last order is that you should destroy the strangers in my land — all except the Lion. I want you to bring him to me so that I can harness him like a horse and make him work for me!"

"Your commands shall be obeyed," said the leader. And then the Winged Monkeys flew to Dorothy and her friends. Some

seized the Tin Man and dropped him from a great height on to some sharp rocks. Here he lay so battered and dented that he could not move.

Others caught the Scarecrow and pulled out all his straw. Then they made his clothes into a small bundle and threw it into the topmost branches of a tall tree.

The remaining monkeys wound so many pieces of stout rope around the Lion that it was soon impossible for him to struggle. They lifted him up and flew away with him to the castle, where he was placed in a small yard surrounded by a high iron fence.

But they did no harm to Dorothy. The leader of the Winged Monkeys flew up to her, grinning terribly. But when he saw the mark of the Good Witch's kiss on her forehead he stopped short.

"We dare not harm this little girl, nor



the dog she carries in her arms," he said. So, very gently, he picked up Dorothy and Toto and carried them to the castle.

The Wicked Witch was both surprised and worried when she saw the mark on Dorothy's forehead. And she trembled with fear when she looked down at Dorothy's feet and saw the silver shoes. It was only when she looked into Dorothy's eyes that she felt safe again.

"The child obviously doesn't know what wonderful power the shoes give her!" she thought. "I can still make her my slave!" And with a happy cackle, she led Dorothy to the kitchen and ordered her to clean the pots and pans.

In the days that followed, Dorothy had to work very hard. She lived in fear of being beaten. But in fact, the witch did not dare strike her because of the mark on her forehead.





"Give me back my shoe!" Dorothy yelled.
 "Ha, ha, ha, ha. Certainly not!" laughed the Witch. "I shall keep it, and some day I shall get the other one from you, too!"

This made Dorothy so angry that she picked up her bucket of water and threw it over the Witch.

The wicked woman gave a loud screech of fear and then, as Dorothy looked at her in wonder, she began to shrink and fall away.

"See what you've done!" she screamed. "Didn't you know that water would be the



Apart from Toto, Dorothy's only friend was the Lion. Each night she crept down to the yard where he was imprisoned and lay down beside him. She put her head on his soft shaggy mane and together they tried to plan their escape.

Now the Wicked Witch longed to have Dorothy's silver shoes and all the power that went with them. So one day she played a nasty trick on her. She put an iron bar in the middle of the kitchen floor and then made it invisible. When Dorothy next walked across the room she did not realise it was there and fell right over it. In her fall one of the silver shoes came off, and with a cry of triumph the Wicked Witch snatched it up.



end of me? In a minute I shall be all melted away! Look out — here I go!"

With these words the Witch fell down in a brown, shapeless mass and began to spread over the floor. Seeing that she really had melted away, Dorothy snatched up the silver shoe and ran to tell the Lion.

The Lion was overjoyed to hear Dorothy's news. So, too, were the Winkies. When Dorothy told them they were no longer slaves, they happily agreed to help her find the Tin Man and the Scarecrow.

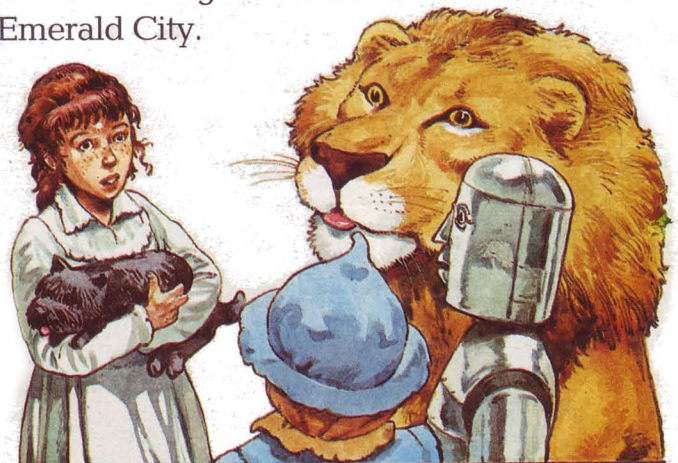


A group of them travelled all that day and part of the next, until they came to the rocky plain where the Tin Man lay all battered and bent. They lifted him gently on to a stretcher and carried him back to the castle. Here the tinsmiths hammered and twisted, soldered and polished, until the Tin Man was his old self again. He had a few patches, it is true, but he also had a new golden handle for his axe. He was so pleased that he wept tears of joy which Dorothy had to wipe away before they rusted his joints!

The next day Dorothy and her friends led a search party for the Scarecrow. At last they spotted his clothes at the top of a tall tree which was impossible to climb. So the Tin Man chopped it down and Dorothy took the clothes from the branches. She carried them back to the castle, stuffed them with nice clean straw — and there was the Scarecrow as good as ever, thanking them over and over again for saving him.

The friends spent several happy days at the castle. But Dorothy could not forget her Aunt Em and Uncle Henry and her home in Kansas. So one day she said, "We must go back to Oz and remind him of his promise to help us if we destroyed the Wicked Witch."

Her friends all agreed. The next day they would say goodbye to the Winkies and then set out again for the Emerald City.



[Will Oz keep his promise? Find out in Part 5]



PETRUSHKA

The bells were ringing out all over Moscow. A mighty pealing chorus echoed far across the city. It was Shrove Tuesday, the day of the great carnival.

Admiralty Square was packed with people, and there were entertainers everywhere — strongmen lifting massive bar-bells, bareback riders on nimble little ponies, sword-swallowers and fire-eaters, jugglers and dancers.

Most popular of all was a brightly coloured tent where a Showman was introducing his puppet show.

"The show you are about to witness, ladies and gentlemen, is a spectacle unmatched in all the Russias!" declared the Showman, his black eyes glinting beneath his fur hat. "The puppets you will see today are quite unlike any you have ever seen! They will come alive before your very eyes!"

With a flourish, the Showman flicked aside the curtain to reveal three magnificent puppets: the Moor, a dashing Moroccan prince; the Princess, a delicate ballerina; and Petrushka, a wicked-looking sailor.

"They're not alive!" came a hoarse shout from the back of the crowd, where a fat merchant was winking at two gypsy girls. "Tell us another one. Hah!"

But with a withering glance, the Showman pulled from his deep pocket a tiny silver flute and touched each puppet in turn upon the shoulder.



Instantly, they sprang to their feet, and as the Showman played a lively tune they danced and twisted about on the little stage.

At the end of the dance, the crowd cheered with delight — and with a loud guffaw, the merchant threw a pile of rouble notes high into the air! The gypsy girls jumped to catch them, but the Showman silenced everyone with a long, low note from the flute.

The puppets stood as if bewitched. Then the Showman began playing a slow, mysterious tune and the Moor stood proudly at one side of the stage, his hands on his hips. The Princess stood in the centre, smiling radiantly, and Petrushka fell to his knees, as if pleading with her.

"The ugly sailor Petrushka loves the Princess," said the Showman. "But she rejects him."

The ballerina turned to the Moor and took his arm. They strolled together at the edge of the stage, looking deep into each other's eyes. Then, Petrushka, snarling like a tiger, pulled out a cudgel and ran across the stage. He tried to attack his rival, but the Moor bravely stepped in front of the Princess and



knocked the cudgel from the sailor's hand.

Petrushka crawled back across the stage, then turned and begged for mercy. But the ballerina took the Moor's arm and walked with him to the centre of the stage. Ignoring poor Petrushka, they hugged each other and bowed deeply to the crowd.

"Thus the Moor marries the Princess and the sailor becomes their servant," boomed the Showman, and he swept the curtain back across the stage. "The last show will be at four o'clock." Then he walked through the crowd, collecting coins in his fur hat.



The Showman sat down on a bench behind the theatre, and counted his money. It had been a good day, all right! Five shows already, and plenty of coins in the hat! He gave a deep, throaty chuckle, and closed his eyes for a nap.

But behind the curtain, in their

dressing rooms, the puppets were stirring.

Petrushka the ugly sailor was in tears. "How I hate that Showman," he cried. "Why did he make me so ugly, and the Princess so beautiful? If only I was handsome, like the Moor, or I could dance like him! Then perhaps she might love me instead!" He jerked to his feet and took a few, awkward steps towards the stage. "I must learn to dance, I must! Then I will kill the Moor, and marry the Princess."

At that moment Petrushka noticed the ballerina watching him from her room. She danced towards him on the tips of her toes, as graceful and as delicate as a bird. Petrushka's heart pounded, and he tried desperately to dance beside her, but it was no good. He tripped over his feet and fell to the floor.

The ballerina soon got bored with watching his clumsy efforts. So she danced away again, along the stage.

The Moor in his dressing room was practising with his scimitar in front of a mirror. He strode manfully up and down, and cut and slashed and lunged. But when the ballerina danced in, the Moor sprang to attention. He clapped merrily





and stamped his feet as she glided towards him. Then they spun around together in a wild, Eastern dance.

Suddenly Petrushka burst in. He had been watching them from the stage and he could not bear to see his beloved ballerina dancing with the Moor. "Take your hands off my Princess!" he shouted. And he charged at the Moor, brandishing his cudgel.

Outside the theatre, a crowd was gathering for the last show of the day. The golden domes threw long shadows across the square, but many people had stayed late to see the famous puppet show. The merchant was back again, with his two gypsy girls, and there was

even a performing bear with his trainer! They all gathered in a semi-circle and waited patiently while the Showman recited his speech:

"Ladies and gentlemen, the puppets you will see today are unlike any you have ever seen. They will come alive before your . . ."

But, at that moment, the curtains burst open behind the Showman's back. Petrushka leaped down from the stage and ran away full pelt across the square. Behind him rushed the Moor, in a furious rage, waving the scimitar above his head. As the crowd turned in astonishment, Petrushka slipped and fell. Down came the scimitar in a great, flashing arc, and Petrushka lay deadly still, face down in the snow.

"They're alive!" shouted the merchant. There's been a murder!"

But the Showman snatched up the Moor and Petrushka, and shook and slapped them. A trail of sawdust trickled down from Petrushka's face. "There you are," he whined. "Just puppets. But there'll be no more shows today, ladies and gentlemen."

As the crowd drifted away, the Showman thrust the two puppets in through the back of the theatre and closed the tent. Then he walked off to a tavern, shaking his head gloomily.

Later that night he returned to the theatre. He drew back the curtain, and peered inside. There was the ballerina, sleeping in her room.

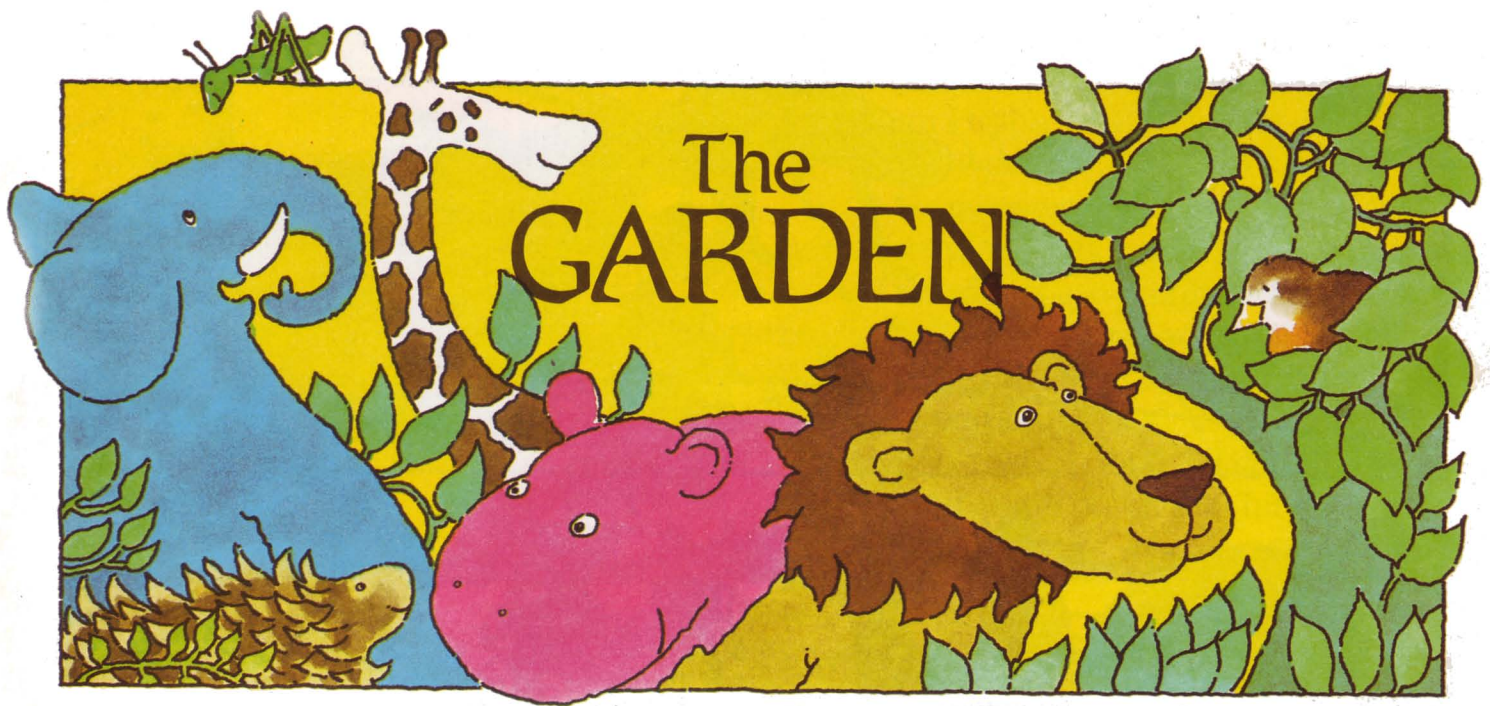
The Moor sat cross-legged on the stage, quietly polishing his scimitar. On the floor lay Petrushka, broken and torn.

"What was that?" gasped the Showman. Something was moving in the darkness above the theatre. He looked up and saw in the moonlight — the ghost of Petrushka, dancing in the air. It shook its fist and scowled at the Showman.

"You made me ugly!" it snarled. "You made a fool of me! But now it's my turn, I'm free of the body you made for me. Now I can dance as well as anyone. Watch me! My love for the ballerina has made my spirit delicate and free. But my ugliness will haunt you for the rest of your days!

And his laughter echoed in the frosty air.





"A Princess is coming to visit our country," said Lion. "How can we show her how happy we are to see her?"

"We could all bow," said Hippo. "But then some of us aren't really the right shape for bowing."

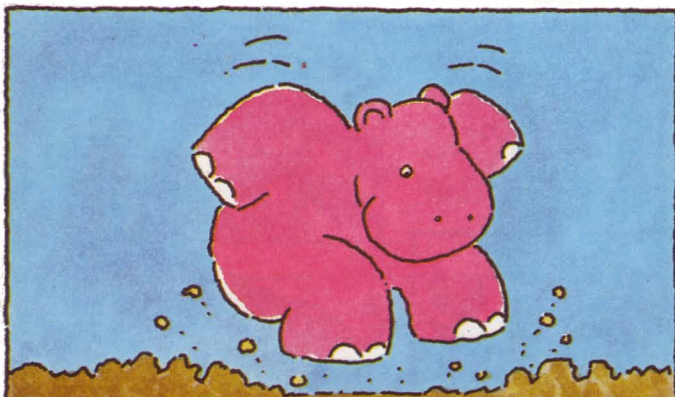
"We could all cheer," said Elephant, "but we might frighten her."

"We could dance," said Giraffe.

Lion looked at Hippo and tried to imagine him dancing. He shook his head, and all the animals sighed.

Then Brown Bird, who had listened quietly, chirruped shyly, "Couldn't we make a garden? Princesses love flowers." Everyone stared at the little bird.

"That's a very good idea," said Lion. "We can all help to make a garden."



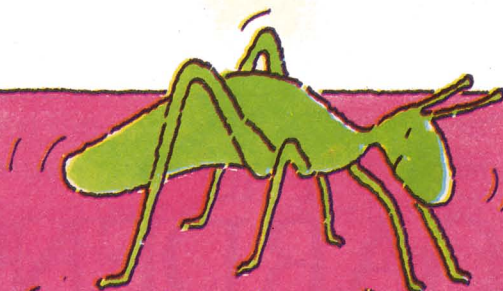
First the animals chose a piece of land. "But it's much too rough," said Lion. "We must break up the lumps of earth." "I'll do that," cried Hippo. "My feet are large and my body is heavy." So, he stamped on the earth until it was smooth and fine.



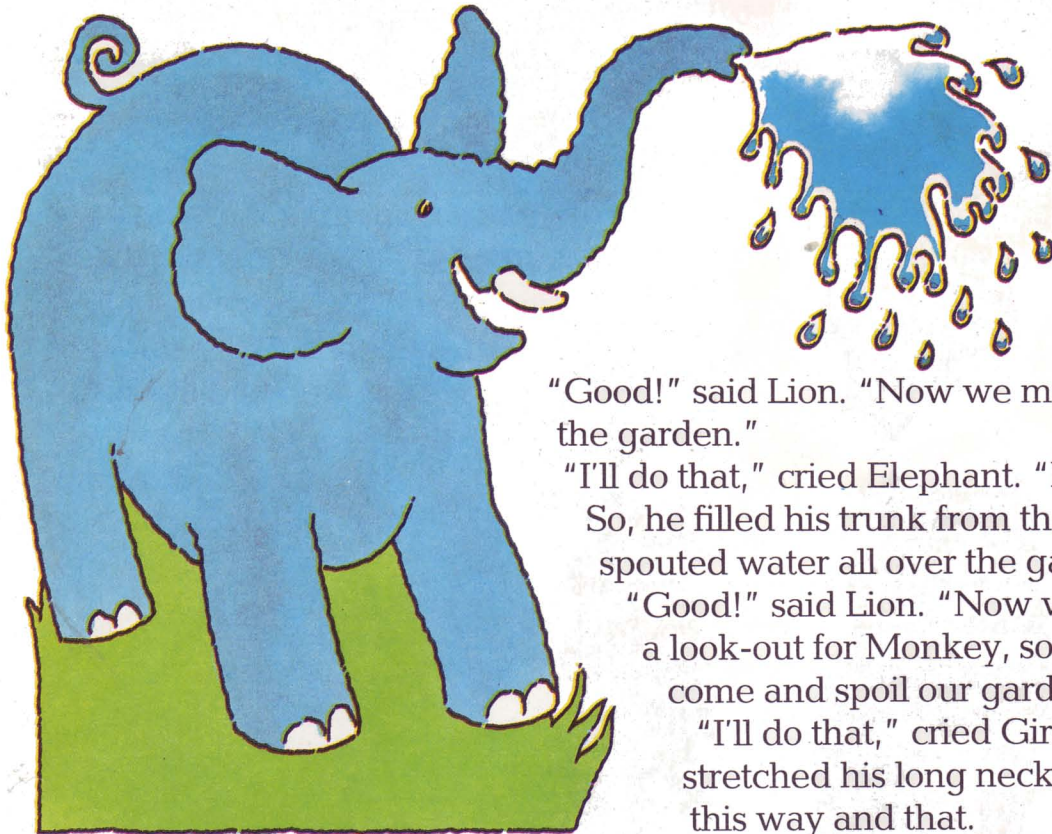
"Good!" said Lion. "Now we must make some tiny holes for the seeds."

"I'll do that!" cried Porcupine. "The spines on my back are very sharp." So, he curled himself into a prickly ball, and rolled over and over until the earth was covered with tiny holes.

"Good!" said Lion.
"Now we must plant
the flower seeds."
"I'll do that,"
cried Grasshopper.



"I'm light and quick."
So, he jumped lightly
and quickly over the
earth, planting all
the seeds.



"Good!" said Lion. "Now we must water
the garden."

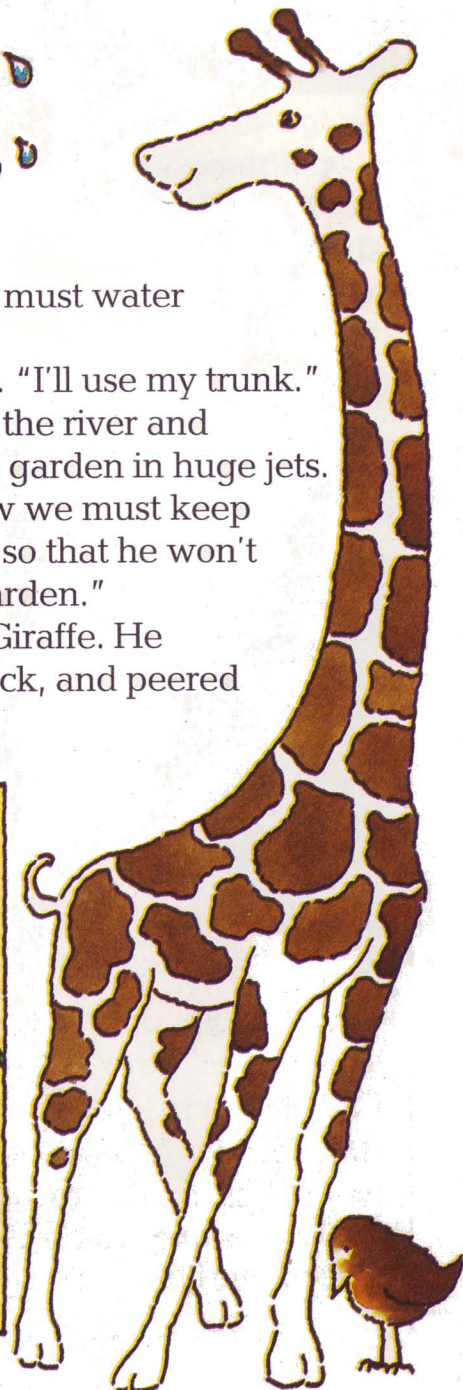
"I'll do that," cried Elephant. "I'll use my trunk."
So, he filled his trunk from the river and
spouted water all over the garden in huge jets.

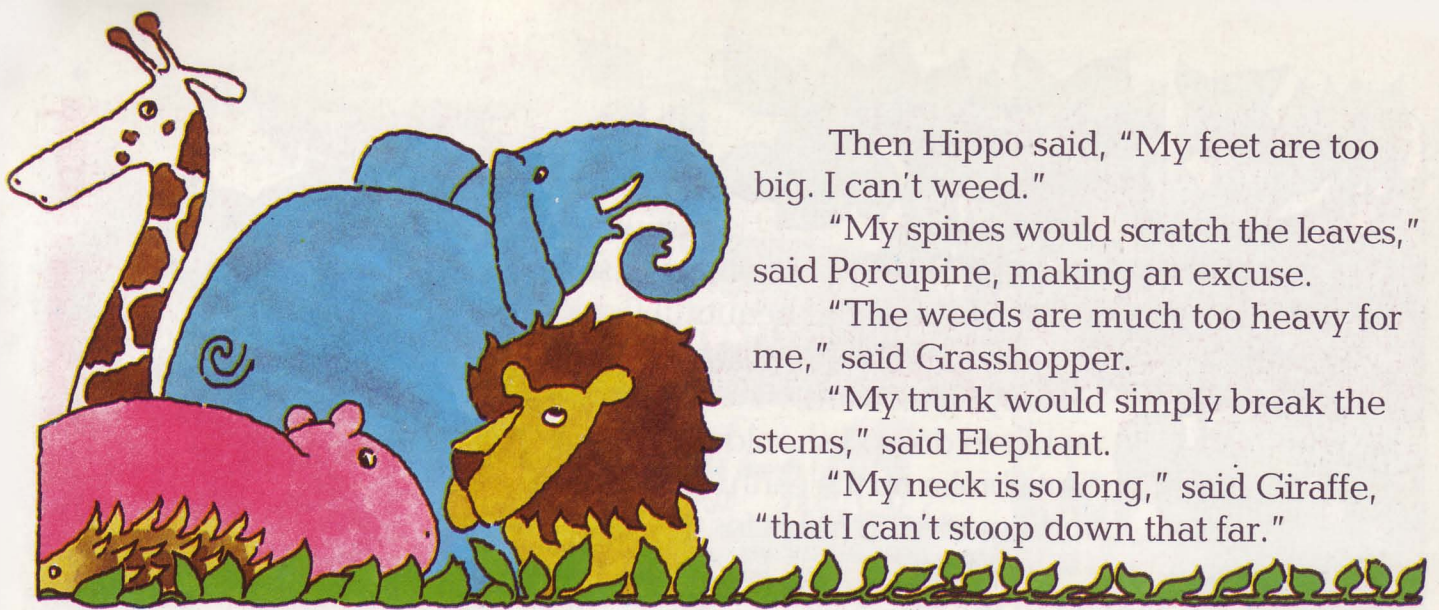
"Good!" said Lion. "Now we must keep
a look-out for Monkey, so that he won't
come and spoil our garden."

"I'll do that," cried Giraffe. He
stretched his long neck, and peered
this way and that.

Brown Bird hung his head. He had
wanted to help. But it seemed that
a small brown bird was useless.

Soon, the tiny seedlings
began to grow. And when Lion
looked one day, he shook his
head and growled. "Weeds!
They'll spoil our garden. Who
will pull them up?" None of the
animals spoke. They looked at
the ground and shuffled
their feet.





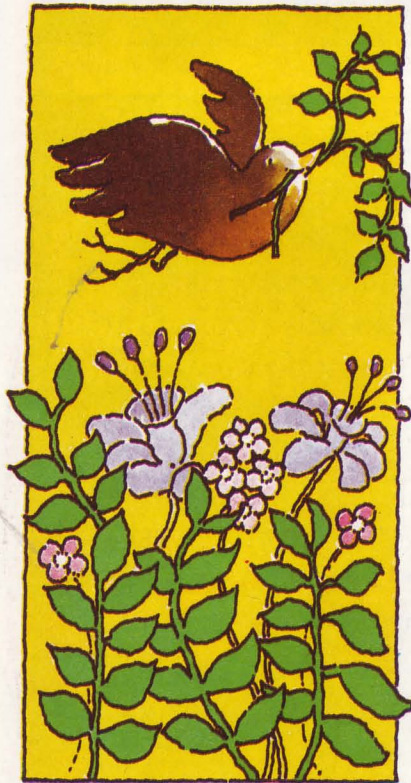
Then Hippo said, "My feet are too big. I can't weed."

"My spines would scratch the leaves," said Porcupine, making an excuse.

"The weeds are much too heavy for me," said Grasshopper.

"My trunk would simply break the stems," said Elephant.

"My neck is so long," said Giraffe, "that I can't stoop down that far."



So, the lazy animals turned their backs on the weeds. But Brown Bird flew down into the garden. With his tiny beak, he tugged at a weed, then flew away and dropped it behind a thorn bush. Then, back he flew to tug at another weed. The roots were strong and his beak was tiny, and there were times when his wings ached.

But, day after day, Brown Bird weeded the garden. At last his work was finished. Not one weed could be seen. The red, blue and yellow flowers had grown up tall and straight.



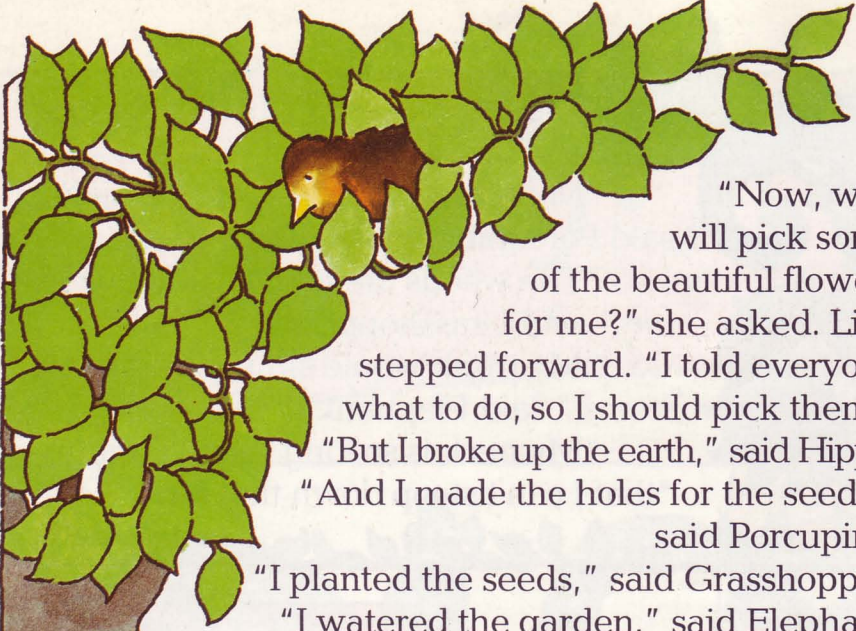
The very next day, Giraffe looked out over the trees and shouted, "The Princess is coming! I see her!"

The animals gathered around the garden. They were amazed at how tidy it was. "Perhaps the weeds all died," said Lion nervously. Brown Bird, perched in a tree, said nothing.


The Princess smiled when she saw the garden. "It's the prettiest I've ever seen. You must have worked very hard!"

"Yes, we worked very hard," said all the animals, smiling proudly.





"Now, who will pick some of the beautiful flowers for me?" she asked. Lion stepped forward. "I told everyone what to do, so I should pick them." "But I broke up the earth," said Hippo. "And I made the holes for the seeds," said Porcupine. "I planted the seeds," said Grasshopper. "I watered the garden," said Elephant. "I kept look-out," said Giraffe.



The Princess smiled. "Tell me, who weeded the garden?"

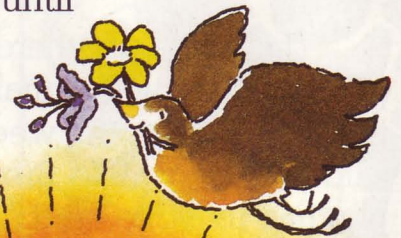
None of the animals answered at first. "Nobody did," said Lion.

Then, the Princess saw two bright eyes and a tiny beak among the leaves of a tree. "Did you do the weeding, Brown Bird?" Brown Bird nodded.

"Then you shall pick the flowers for me," said the Princess, "for you must have worked harder and longer than anyone." Brown Bird flew down to the garden. With his tiny beak he picked a flower and gave it to the lovely Princess.

He picked another and another, until she held a beautiful bunch of red, blue and yellow flowers.

Then the Princess kissed his small brown head, and smiled at him. And Brown Bird sang, as he had never sung before, until the sun went down on the lovely animals' garden.





In a small hut in a far-off land, there lived an old couple who were very poor. They had no sheep, nor horses, nor goats — not even a hive of bees to give them honey. When they died, they left their son Avram nothing but a few strands of flax scattered on the floor.

Avram took these down to the lake, dipped them into the water and set about plaiting the wet strands into a rope. While he was working, the fearsome Master of the Lake rose from its watery depths and stood before him. Though he was very frightened, Avram tried not to show it.

"What are you doing here?" the green, bearded giant cried.

"I'm plaiting a rope. When it's ready, I'm going to hang your lake from the clouds!"

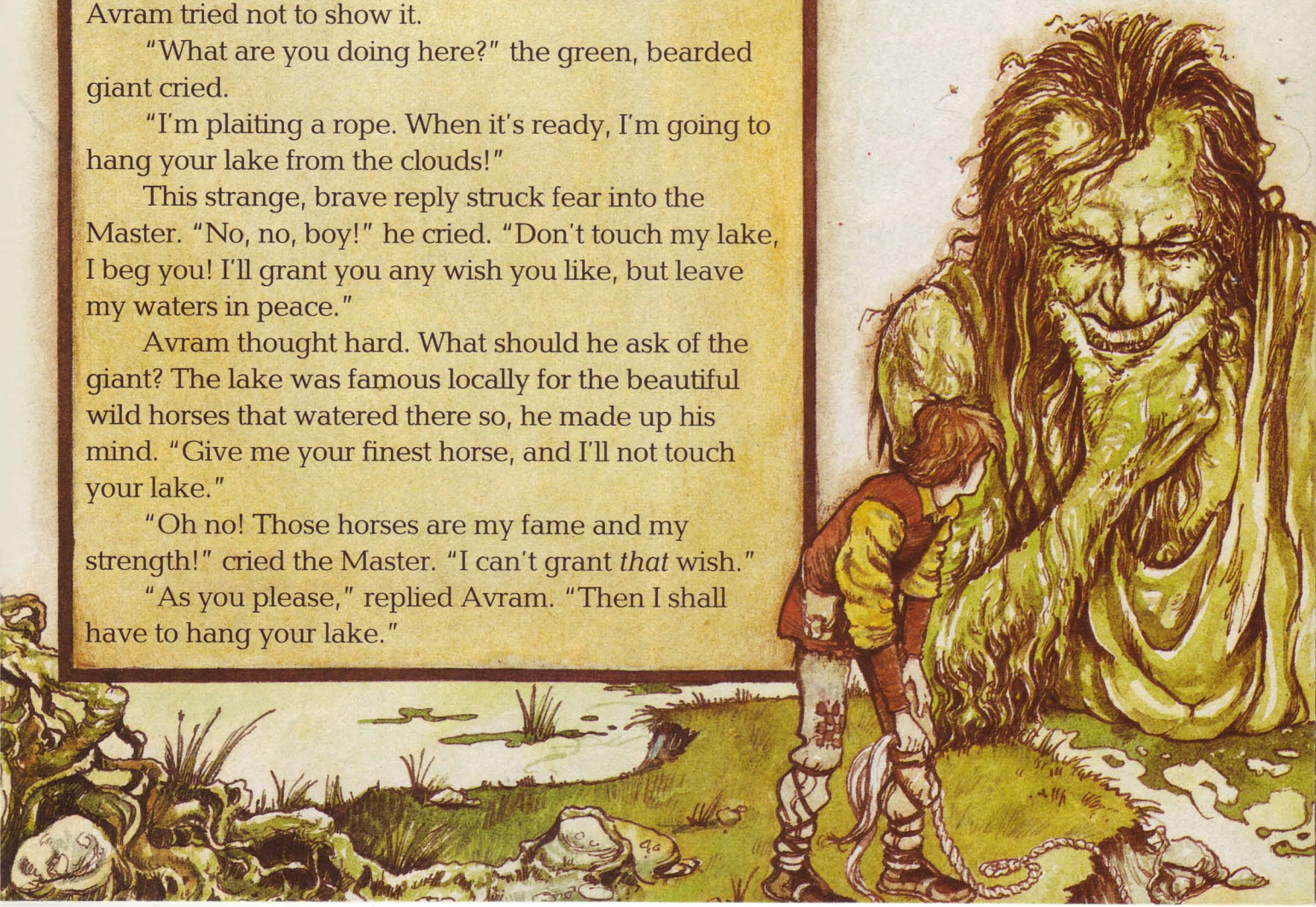
This strange, brave reply struck fear into the Master. "No, no, boy!" he cried. "Don't touch my lake, I beg you! I'll grant you any wish you like, but leave my waters in peace."

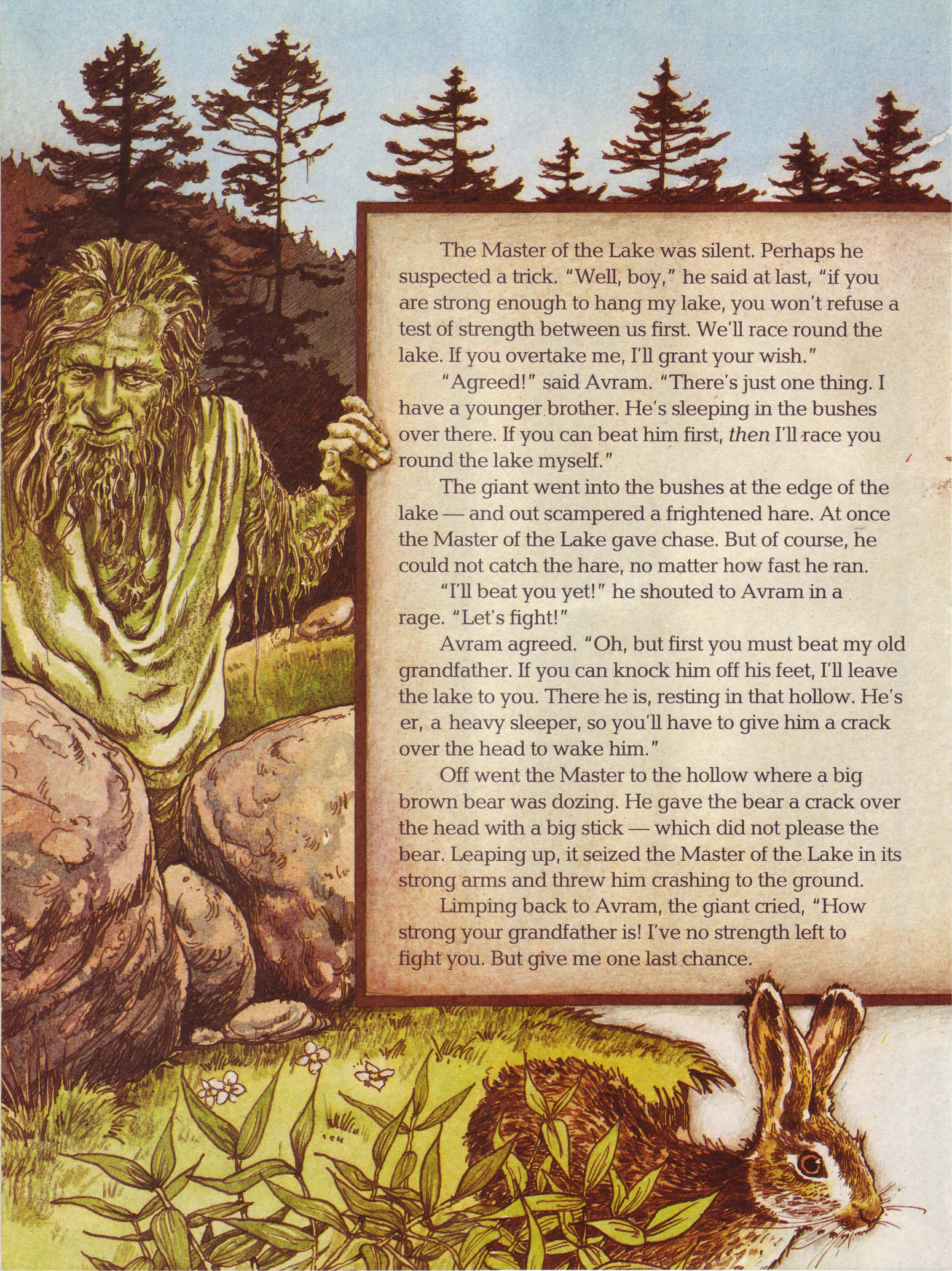
Avram thought hard. What should he ask of the giant? The lake was famous locally for the beautiful wild horses that watered there so, he made up his mind. "Give me your finest horse, and I'll not touch your lake."

"Oh no! Those horses are my fame and my strength!" cried the Master. "I can't grant *that* wish."

"As you please," replied Avram. "Then I shall have to hang your lake."

MASTER of the LAKE





The Master of the Lake was silent. Perhaps he suspected a trick. "Well, boy," he said at last, "if you are strong enough to hang my lake, you won't refuse a test of strength between us first. We'll race round the lake. If you overtake me, I'll grant your wish."

"Agreed!" said Avram. "There's just one thing. I have a younger brother. He's sleeping in the bushes over there. If you can beat him first, *then* I'll race you round the lake myself."

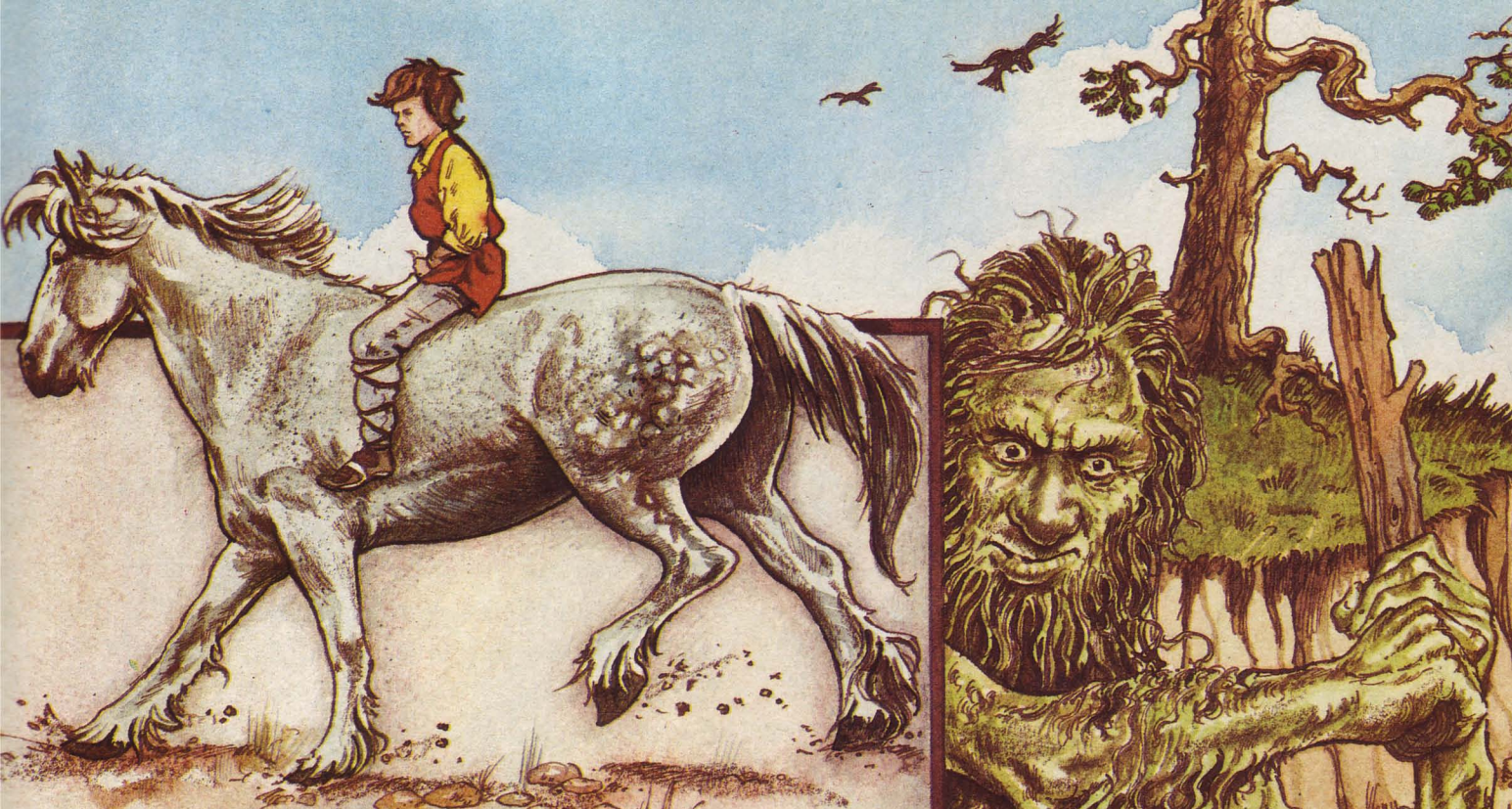
The giant went into the bushes at the edge of the lake — and out scampered a frightened hare. At once the Master of the Lake gave chase. But of course, he could not catch the hare, no matter how fast he ran.

"I'll beat you yet!" he shouted to Avram in a rage. "Let's fight!"

Avram agreed. "Oh, but first you must beat my old grandfather. If you can knock him off his feet, I'll leave the lake to you. There he is, resting in that hollow. He's er, a heavy sleeper, so you'll have to give him a crack over the head to wake him."

Off went the Master to the hollow where a big brown bear was dozing. He gave the bear a crack over the head with a big stick — which did not please the bear. Leaping up, it seized the Master of the Lake in its strong arms and threw him crashing to the ground.

Limping back to Avram, the giant cried, "How strong your grandfather is! I've no strength left to fight you. But give me one last chance.



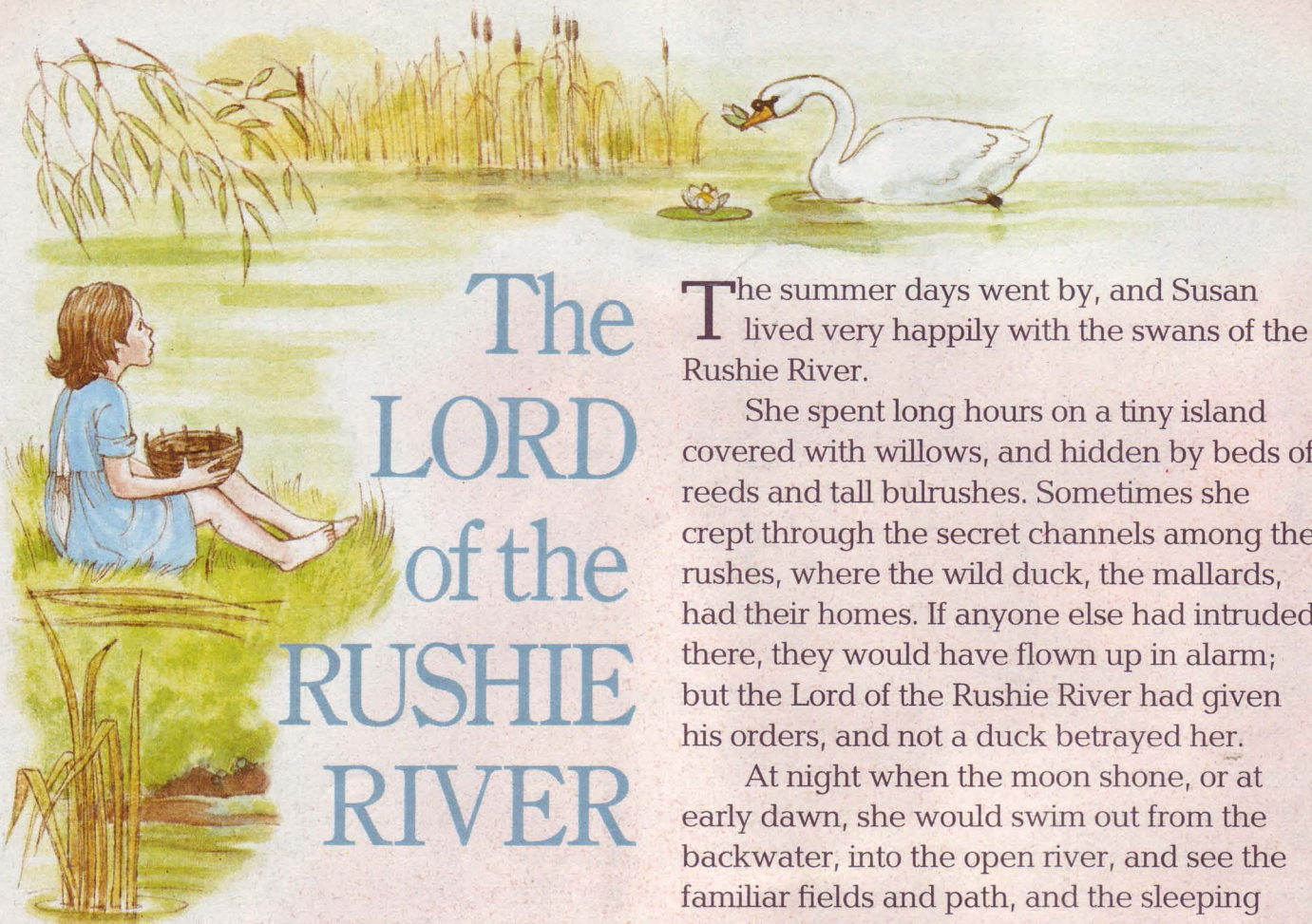
I have a dapple-grey horse — the finest in my herd. Let's see which of us can carry her round the lake."

"You try first," said Avram. So, the Master lifted the horse on to his shoulders and staggered with her round the lake. With a triumphant shout, he set her down in front of Avram. "Now it's *your* turn!"

Avram put aside his rope and went up to the horse. "Hah! You lifted the mare on your shoulders. Now watch me carry her between my knees!" And he mounted, dug his heels into her flanks, and rode round the lake at a gallop.

The giant saw he was beaten. Patting the dapple-grey mare one last time, he gave her to Avram. And what a fine horse she was, with a thick forelock, powerful legs, sharp ears, and a broad, deep chest. Avram mounted this handsome mare and galloped home.





The LORD of the RUSHIE RIVER

The summer days went by, and Susan lived very happily with the swans of the Rushie River.

She spent long hours on a tiny island covered with willows, and hidden by beds of reeds and tall bulrushes. Sometimes she crept through the secret channels among the rushes, where the wild duck, the mallards, had their homes. If anyone else had intruded there, they would have flown up in alarm; but the Lord of the Rushie River had given his orders, and not a duck betrayed her.

At night when the moon shone, or at early dawn, she would swim out from the backwater, into the open river, and see the familiar fields and path, and the sleeping village where she used to live. Every now and then, someone out late or very early, caught a glimpse of her and a tale went round that there was a watersprite in the river. But few people believed it.

Every day the Lord of the River brought food for Susan. He collected it in a basket she had made from rushes and which he carried in his beak.

Sometimes he visited the water-mill, where the miller's wife always gave him something. Or he would stop at the bridge, and catch in the basket the best of the crusts and bits of biscuit which people threw down.

Most days he called at the baker's back-yard. The baker's little daughter would sit on the low wall, looking out for him. In her lap were buns or scones or rolls or broken cakes, from yesterday's baking, and she little guessed that they would be eaten by a child like herself. The swan bowed his head courteously in thanks and swam on.





Susan became taller and plumper, browner, happier and prettier; every day. Only one thing troubled her: where could she get a dress to put on when the time came to meet her daddy? Her old frock was nothing but a shapeless rag.

At last she explained her problem to Madam Pen, the mother swan, and Madam Pen discussed the matter with the Lord of the Rushie River.

"My son says he can help you," she later announced to Susan. "Every Monday the baker's wife hangs out her washing in her back-yard. Next time he sees one of the little girl's frocks there, he will fly up,

remove the pegs, and bring the frock to you. The child is just your size. Now, isn't that a clever plan? Isn't that just what you want?"

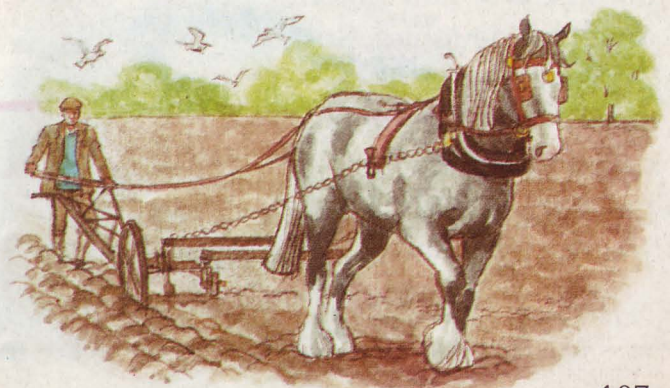
But Susan was quite distressed.

"Oh, please, Madam Pen," she said.

"It's ever so kind of him, but he mustn't do that! That would be stealing! I couldn't wear a stolen dress!"

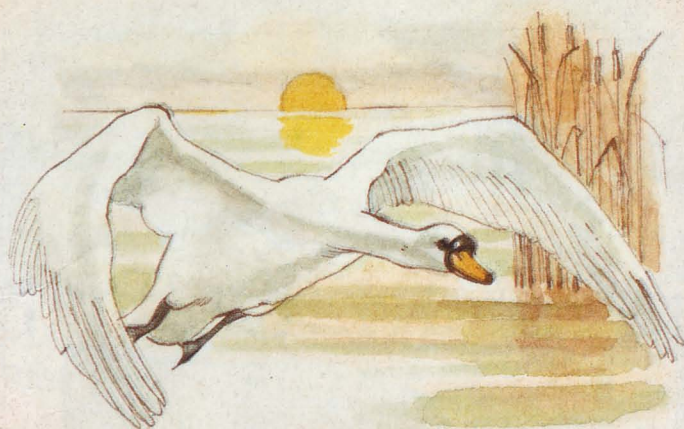
Both Madam Pen and her son were puzzled by Susan's reply. The two swans were brave, patient and kind, but they had never had to worry about right and wrong. Susan explained what was meant by stealing and persuaded them that it *was* wrong. But the Lord of the River did not give up hope of finding her a dress. On windy washing days he always kept his black eyes open for a frock blown through the air from the village clothes-lines.

As summer turned to autumn, the seagulls flew up the river to follow the plough over the fields. But they always left sentries on the coast to watch for Susan's father.



One day a big herring gull came flying from the coast, crying, "News! News!"

Wheeling in great circles, he descended to the old swan's nest where Susan and the swans had gathered eagerly to meet him. He then told the story of how he had flown far out to sea, to a ship sailing slowly to port. He had perched on the rigging and listened to the sailors talking about their families.



Susan could hardly believe that her daddy was so near. She wanted to dance and shout and sing, but the swans said she must be quiet a little longer. So she sat down with Madam Pen to consider how she might make herself tidy without a new dress.

The Lord of the River was thinking of something else. "I'm going to see for myself that this is the right man," he said. And as the sun began to set, he spread his wings and rose up in the air.

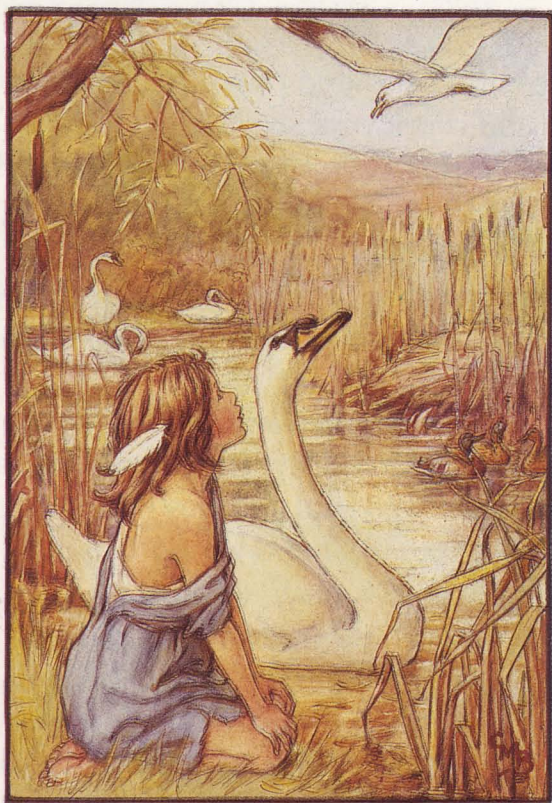
He flew to a ship which now lay at anchor outside the harbour. The wind had dropped and the tide was running out, so the ship could not enter until the morning.

A group of sailors was leaning on the rail of the deck, looking towards the shore.

"It's queer for a swan to come out to sea. I wonder what he wants?" said one, as he watched the proud bird land on the water and swim slowly round the ship.

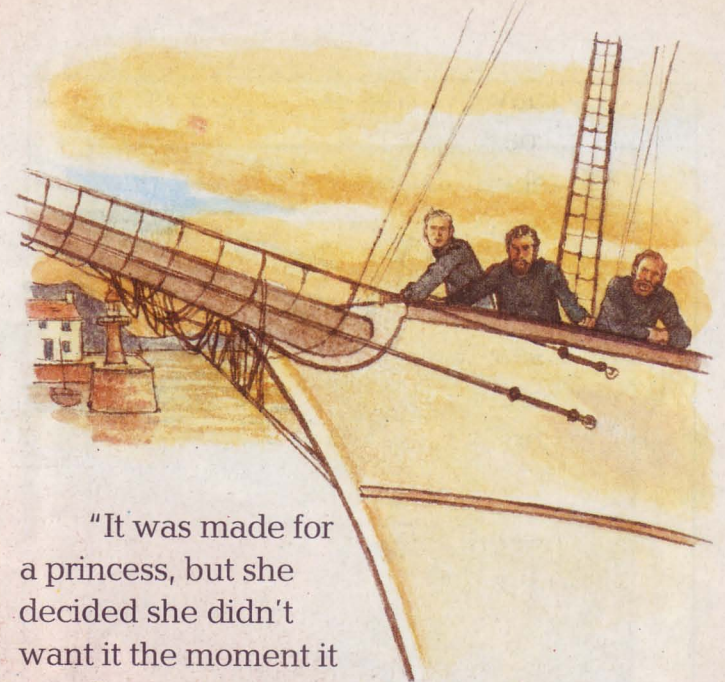
"Why, I'm sure it's John Swan," said a tall, grey-haired man.

"I looked after him when he was a cygnet with a broken leg. Perhaps he's come all the way from Rushiebanks to welcome me home!"



One of them — a tall man with thick grey hair and dark eyes — had talked about his daughter, Susan. There might be other sailors with daughters called Susan, but the gull felt sure he was the right one.



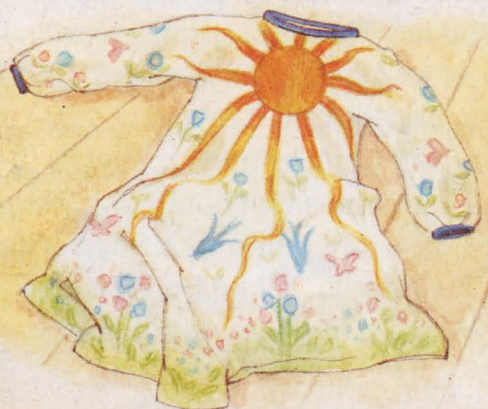


"It was made for a princess, but she decided she didn't want it the moment it was finished. I bought it in a Persian market from a poor woman who had spent months working on it. I probably paid too much — but I felt sorry for the woman, and I was sure my little girl would look bonny in it. I'm going to hang it up now to shake out all the creases."

He hung it over the rail and stood admiring it. And indeed it was a wonderful sight as the setting sun lit up its glowing colours. Around the hem was embroidered a border of leaves and flowers of every lovely hue. All over the dress, butterflies and little birds and falling blossoms were worked with delicate skill, except where, on the breast, was a great golden sun, with long rays that went glinting down between the birds and flowers.

The men all smiled and then turned to sorting and packing the treasures they were taking home for their families — beads, shells, silk shawls and handkerchiefs.

The grey-haired man shook out a beautifully embroidered garment which he had brought on deck. It was creased from having lain folded in his locker for many months. "What's that, Jim?" asked one of his mates. "My word, it looks like a present for a princess!"





The oldest sailor, a little wrinkled man, looked closely at the dress. "That's fairy stitchery," he said. "I've seen many an embroidered garment around the world; and you mark my words, Jim, it will bring you luck. She was a fairy, and no mortal woman, who sold you this."

Suddenly, as he spoke, there was a loud swish, swish of wings. The Swan had risen from the sea, and was circling above the ship. At the same moment, a breeze sprang up, caught the wonderful dress, and wafted it into the air. The men sprang after it, but the Swan was quicker. He swooped down, seized it, and carried it away.

He grew smaller and smaller in the distance, and the sailor could only stand gazing helplessly. Then he turned with a sigh to his bundle. All he had left was some beads — and a tiny amount of gold.



The day after, as the sun set, Susan sat waiting in a little thicket on the river bank, where the wild clematis made a secret harbour for her to hide in.

She had swum there early in the morning — and it was there that the Lord of the River had given her her dress. He would



not say where it came from, but Susan was so charmed that she took it without question. After all, he was a wonderful bird, so why should he not give her a wonderful gift?

She was all ready. She had said goodbye the day before to her shy friends in the backwater, but not to the swans. They were all now gathered in a group, with their eyes on the bank.

A traveller, tramping towards Rushiebanks, saw and wondered at them.



He also wondered at the seagulls who seemed to be going with him, dashing ahead every now and again, and crying and calling, and then returning and wheeling around his head.

Suddenly their cries grew louder, and a girl ran on to the path in front of him. She stood shading her eyes from the setting sun that shone full on her rosy face and bare



brown hands and feet. It shone too on her dress, and showed all its fairy colours.

The next moment she started forward, and with a cry of joy she was in her father's arms. The seagulls ceased their screaming, and the swans — all but one — glided silently away.

There was so much to talk about that when the stars came out Susan and her father were still lingering on the river bank.

The birds had told her that other people were living in their old cottage, so the sailor said they would spend the night at the inn.

"Come," he said at last. "It's time for supper and bed."

But as they turned to go, she gave a last look at the river, and saw her faithful friend waiting near, on the dark water.

"Oh, Daddy," she said, "here is the Lord of the Rushie River! We never said goodnight to him!"

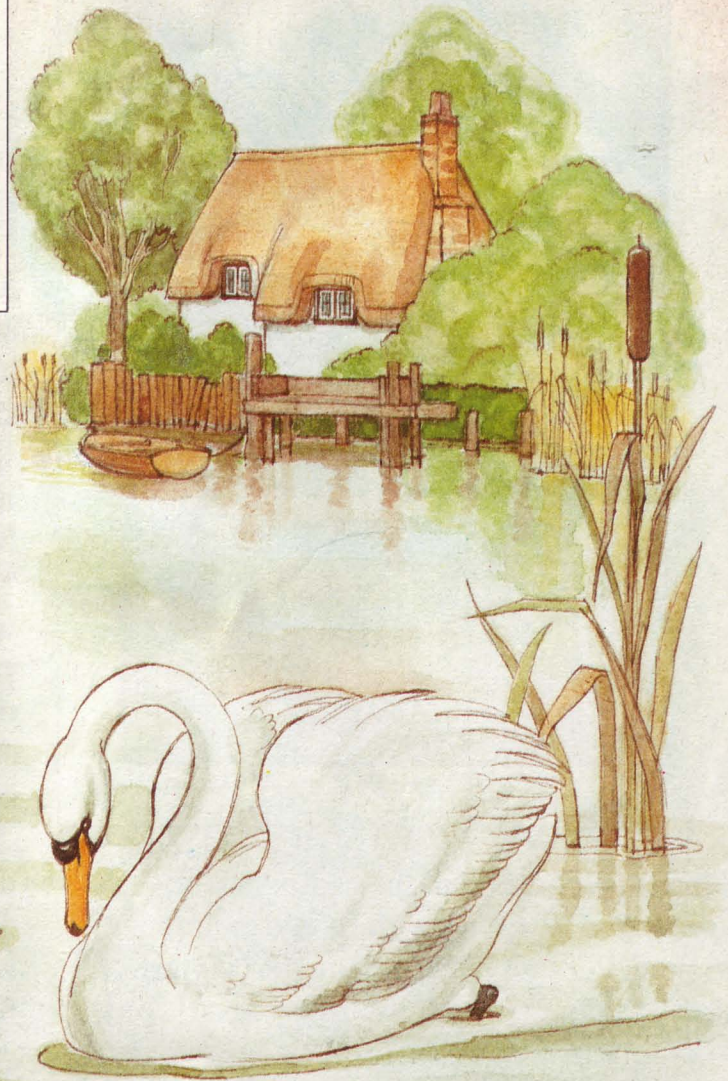




The sailor took off his cap.

"My Lord," he said, "I'm a plain man, and John Swan was the name I gave you when we met before, not knowing your title. But whatever I call you, I thank you, sir, with all my heart, for your care of my little girl."

Well satisfied, the Lord of the Rushie River bowed his head, then sailed majestically home.



Susan and her father went to the inn, but they did not have to stay there many days. At that very time the old ferryman gave up his job and the sailor took it over. The little cottage by the ferry, a mile down the Rushie River, just suited him and Susan.

In the years that followed, he never tired of telling how all his happiness was due to John Swan, the Lord of the Rushie River. And John Swan visited the ferryman and his daughter every day, and felt proud of his share in their story.



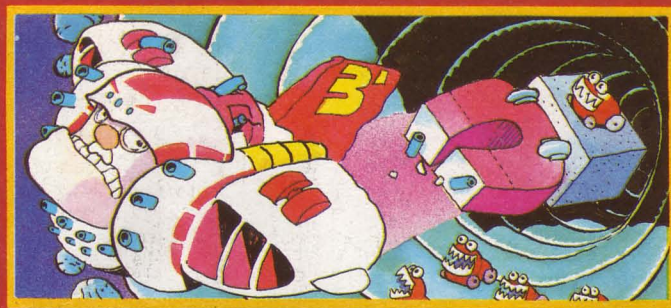
Rilloby-rill

Grasshoppers four a-fiddling went,
Heigh-ho! never be still!
They earned but little towards their rent
But all day long with their elbows bent
They fiddled a tune called Rilloby-rilloby,
Fiddled a tune called Rilloby-rill.

Grasshoppers soon on fairies came,
Heigh-ho! never be still!
Fairies asked with a manner of blame,
"Where do you come from, what is your name,
What do you want with your Rilloby-rilloby,
What do you want with your Rilloby-rill?"

"Madam, you see before you stand,
Heigh-ho! never be still!
The Old Original Favourite Grand
Grasshoppers' Green Herbarian Band,
And the tune we play is Rilloby-rilloby,
Madam, the tune is Rilloby-rill."

IN PART 5 OF STORY Teller 2



When a brown rabbit loses its brown, a bunch of bluebells lose their blue and a book loses its letters **HUGO** enlists the help of a witch to find **THE MAN WHO STOLE COLOURS**

There's danger and surprise when Trudy takes her brother Hans for a walk up to **THE SNOW BEAR**

SHORTY THE SATELLITE zooms into action when a pack of nasty droids trap the boastful brigadier in a Black Hole!

Hospitality at **THE INN OF DONKEYS** takes a very strange form – and so do the guests who stay there!



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