

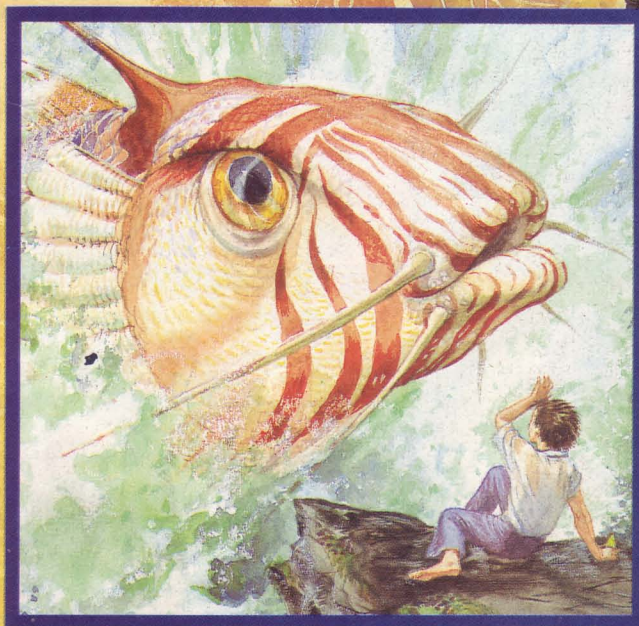
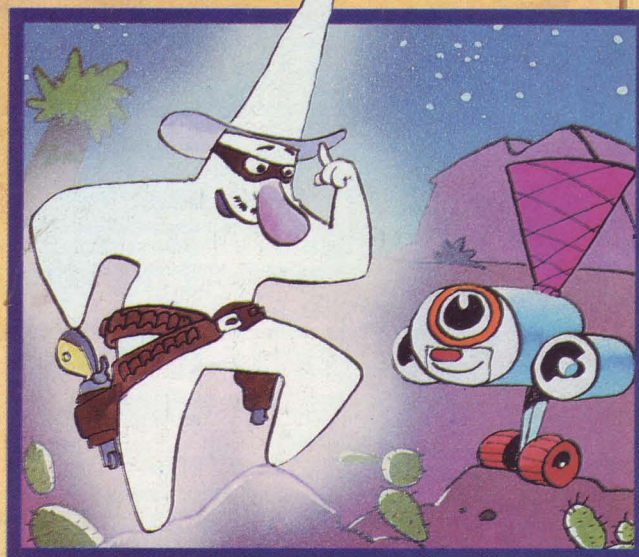
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PART 6

STORY Teller

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

2



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STORY Teller 2

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© Ursula Moray Williams 1984.

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Fearing that she may be stranded in Oz for ever, Dorothy and her friends set out on another incredible journey. In the Land of the Quadlings she discovers magical powers she never dreamt of, and her amazing adventures come to an end in the sweetest place of all.

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Sprinting down the runway of Spike Milligan's imagination is one very ambitious baboon. This poem, from *A Book of Milliganimals*, is reproduced by permission of Dobson Books Ltd.

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GOBBOLINO

and the Little Wooden Horse

One evening in late summer, Gobbolino the kitchen cat was basking on the steps of his happy home, listening to the sounds of the farm-yard.

"How lucky I am to have such a wonderful home," he thought. "And I hardly deserve it, for I was born a witch's cat."

As the rim of the sun dipped behind the far-off purple mountains, an owl flew silently up the lane and dropped a leaf on the farm-house steps.

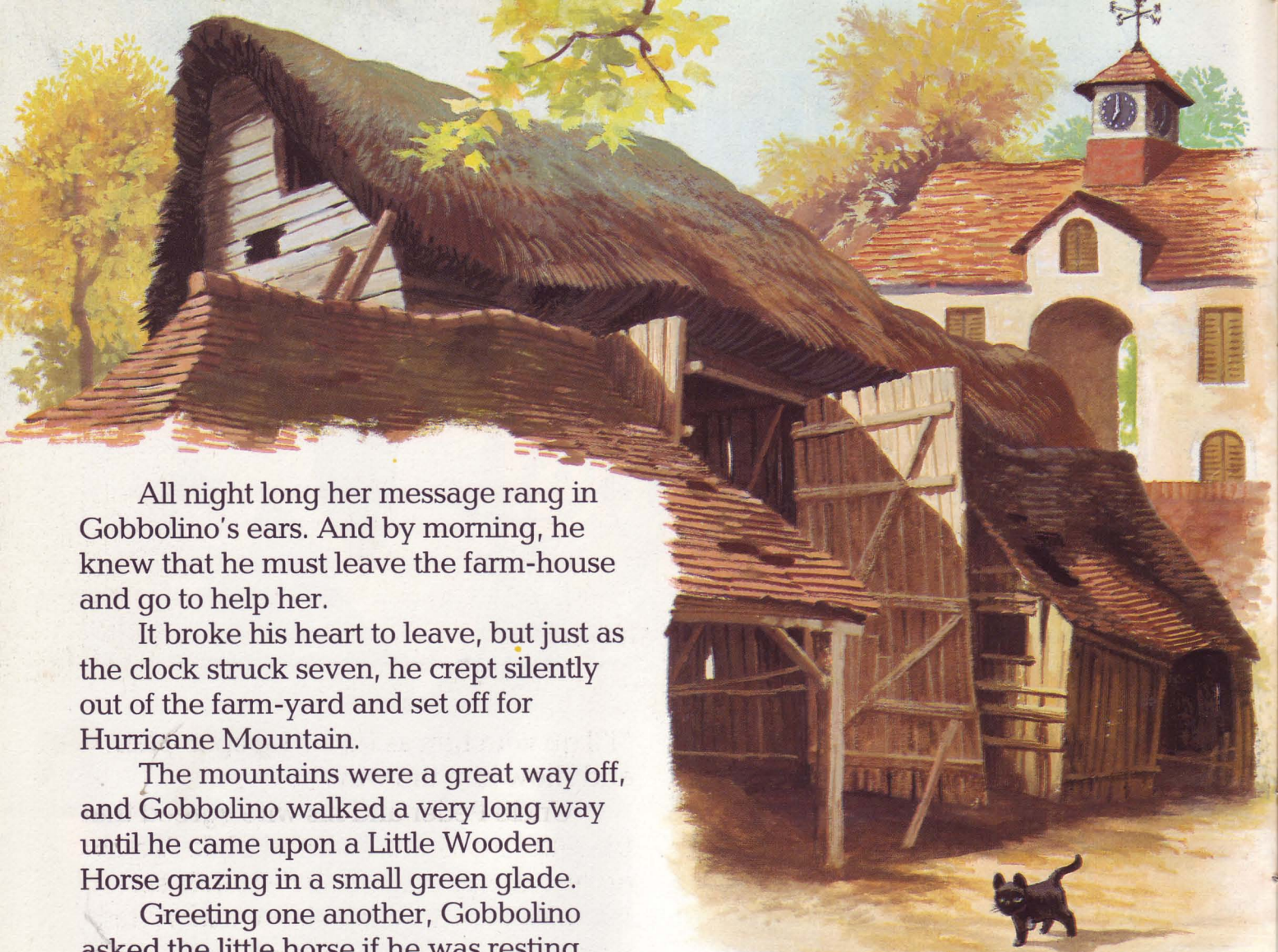
The little cat lifted his paw and in the last rays of sunshine saw some words written across the leaf.

"PLEASE COME AND HELP ME, BROTHER! OH PLEASE DO! OH DO! DO!"

For a moment Gobbolino's heart almost stopped beating. There was only one person in the world who had the right to call him brother, and that was his little sister, Sootica.

Gobbolino shivered as he remembered the days he had spent on Hurricane Mountain, when he was still a witch's cat. He had longed to leave the witch's cavern and be an ordinary kitchen cat, with a home of his own. But Sootica had been very happy learning how to cast wicked spells and inventing naughty tricks to play on people. What could have happened to make her call for help?





All night long her message rang in Gobbolino's ears. And by morning, he knew that he must leave the farm-house and go to help her.

It broke his heart to leave, but just as the clock struck seven, he crept silently out of the farm-yard and set off for Hurricane Mountain.

The mountains were a great way off, and Gobbolino walked a very long way until he came upon a Little Wooden Horse grazing in a small green glade.

Greeting one another, Gobbolino asked the little horse if he was resting from a long journey.

"Oh no. I live close by with my master, Uncle Peder, the toymaker, and his wife."

"Do you think your master has a shed where I could spend the night?" asked Gobbolino. "I'm very tired and have had nothing to eat all day."

"Jump on my back and I'll take you home at once. I'm sure my mistress will give you something nice to eat and a comfortable bed."

Gobbolino was only too grateful to jump on the back of his kind friend, and before very long they arrived at a white-painted house.





A tall, handsome old man and a rosy-faced woman were sitting inside. They smiled happily when they saw the Little Wooden Horse, and before many minutes had gone by Gobbolino was lapping a saucer of rich, yellow milk. He was then lifted gently on to a cushion by the fire and asked where he was going.

He told his new friends that he was on his way to Hurricane Mountain to help his sister, Sootica, a witch's cat.

"Your sister's a *witch's* cat?" the old woman asked in horror. "Then what are you?"

"I'm a kitchen cat," said Gobbolino.

"And a good cat, if ever I saw one," said Uncle Peder.

"He's also a cat who needs my help," said the Little Wooden Horse.

"I'll go with him as far as the open plain and show him the way."

Uncle Peder and his wife agreed that the Little Wooden Horse should do this, so early next morning the two friends set out through the forest. Gobbolino trotted along until the Little Wooden Horse persuaded him to ride.

At last, it seemed the trees were thinning out. Hurricane Mountain did not look so far away after all.





"I'll get there by evening," said Gobbolino, leading his friend on to a vast plain. They trotted along quickly until they reached a stream. They were just lowering their heads to drink when Gobbolino heard a strange noise in the distance.

"It sounds like wild birds crying," he said, "only different, quite different. Can't you hear it?"

The Little Wooden Horse raised his head and sniffed at the air. "I can!" he said. "I think we ought to go back to the forest as quickly as we can!"

"What!" exclaimed Gobbolino in horror. "When we have come so far? We're more than half-way to the mountains already!"

The Little Wooden Horse jumped to his feet and stood looking westward with his ears pricked.

"I really do think we should go back to the forest!" he repeated.

"What are you afraid of?" asked Gobbolino in astonishment.

"Supposing it's dogs?"

"Dogs?" screeched Gobbolino, jumping three feet into the air.

Together they crouched and listened to every sound that came across the plain, but there came only the trilling of larks above, the bubbling of the water and the chirping of a water-bird.

"I must go on if I'm to reach the mountains before sunset," said Gobbolino. "But you, my friend, must go home. It's time we said goodbye."

"Very well Gobbolino, I'll do as you say. I'll go home to my master and mistress and wish you the very best of luck and protection from every danger.



For I'm very much afraid there will be danger."

Gobbolino thanked the little horse over and over again for helping him. Then with tears in their eyes, the two friends set off in opposite directions.

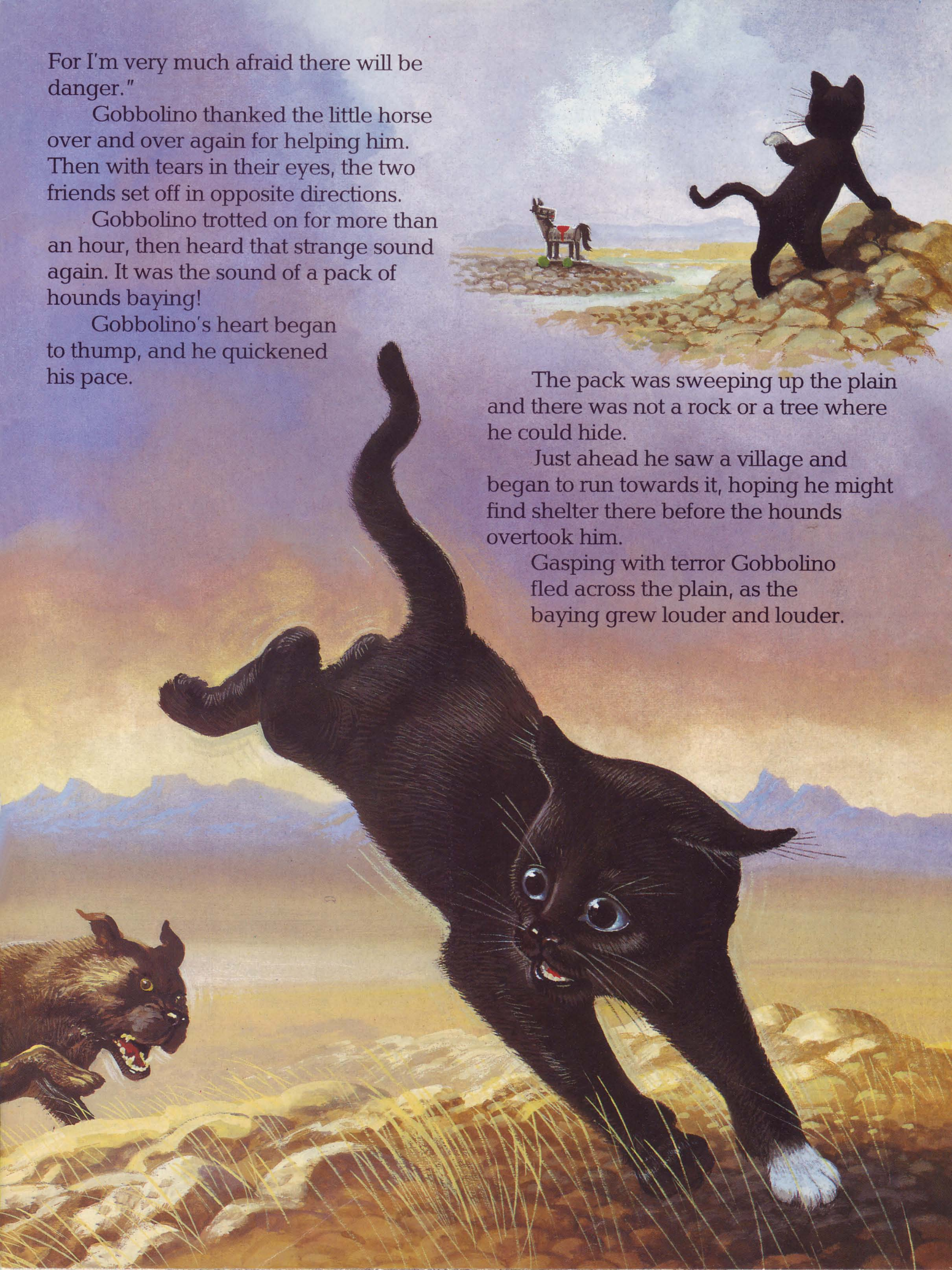
Gobbolino trotted on for more than an hour, then heard that strange sound again. It was the sound of a pack of hounds baying!

Gobbolino's heart began to thump, and he quickened his pace.

The pack was sweeping up the plain and there was not a rock or a tree where he could hide.

Just ahead he saw a village and began to run towards it, hoping he might find shelter there before the hounds overtook him.

Gasping with terror Gobbolino fled across the plain, as the baying grew louder and louder.



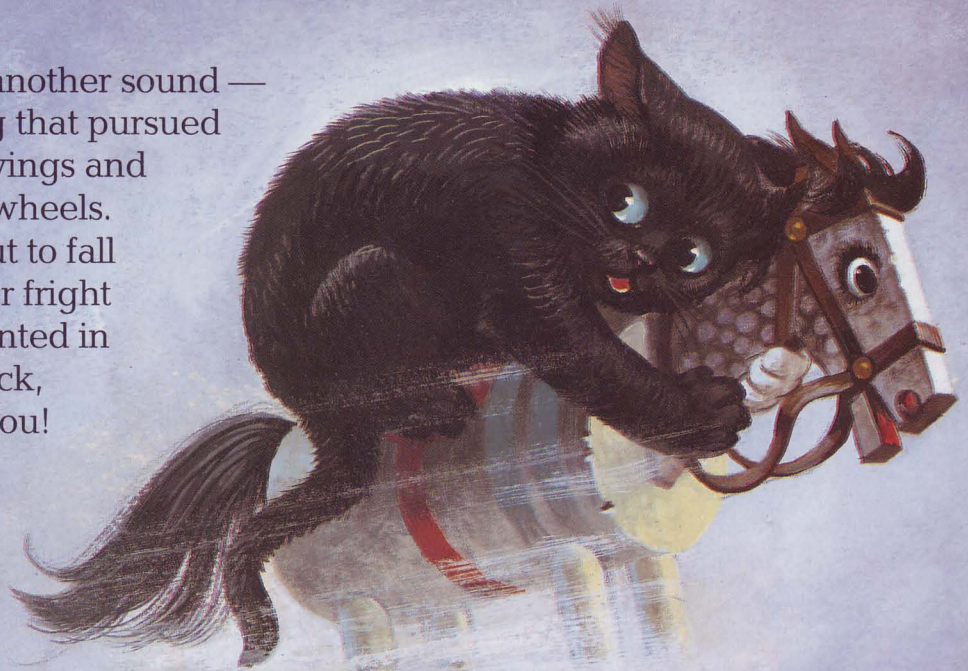
And then he heard another sound — a rattling and a clattering that pursued him with snorts and blowings and the thunder of spinning wheels.

Gobbolino was about to fall flat on his face from sheer fright when a familiar voice panted in his ear, "Jump on my back, Gobbolino! Jump, I tell you! Jump!"

The Little Wooden Horse overtook him at full gallop and with a desperate leap, Gobbolino gained the painted saddle and clung on tight.

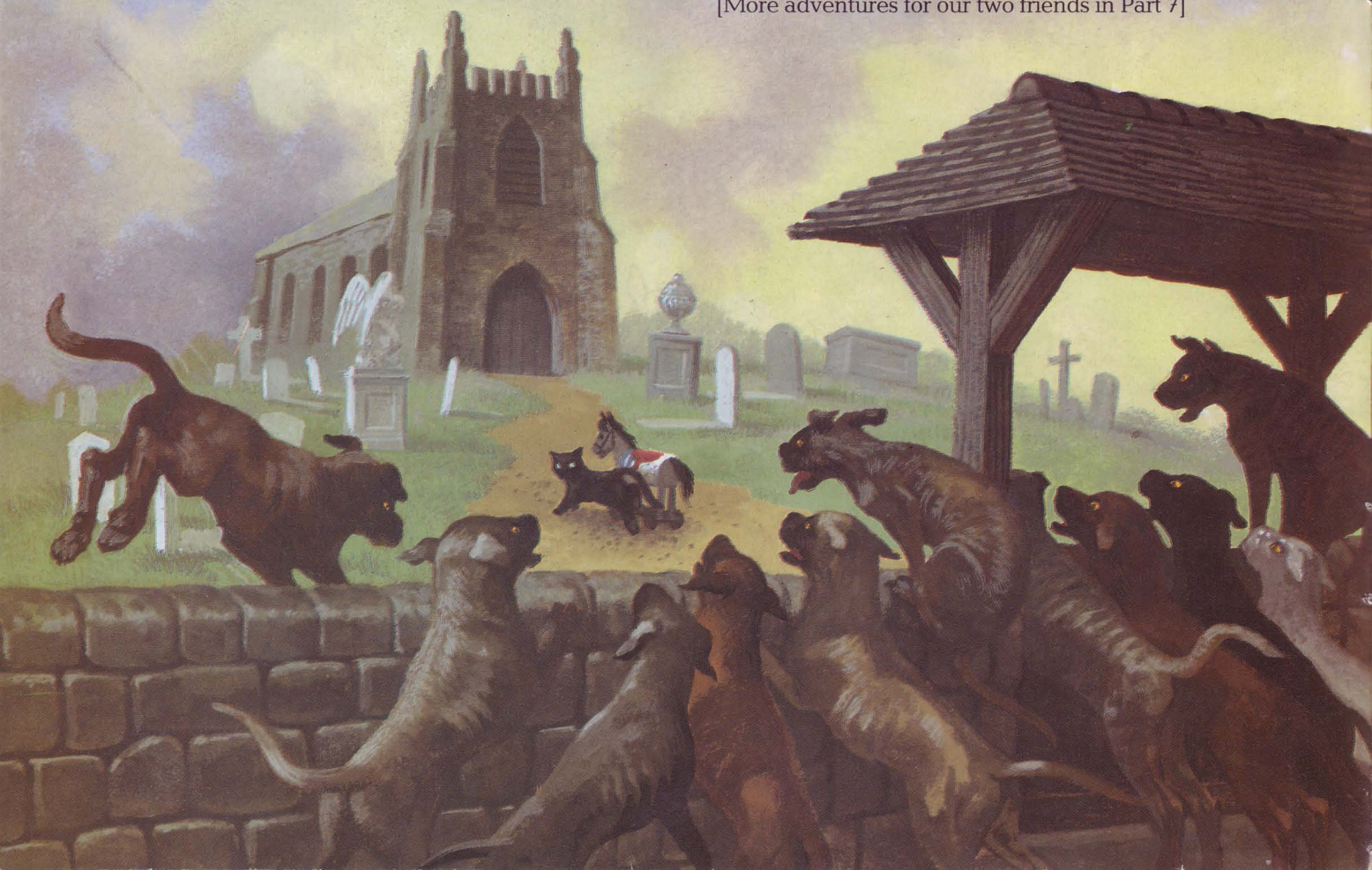
Together they sped along like a streak of lightning with the hounds gaining on them fast.

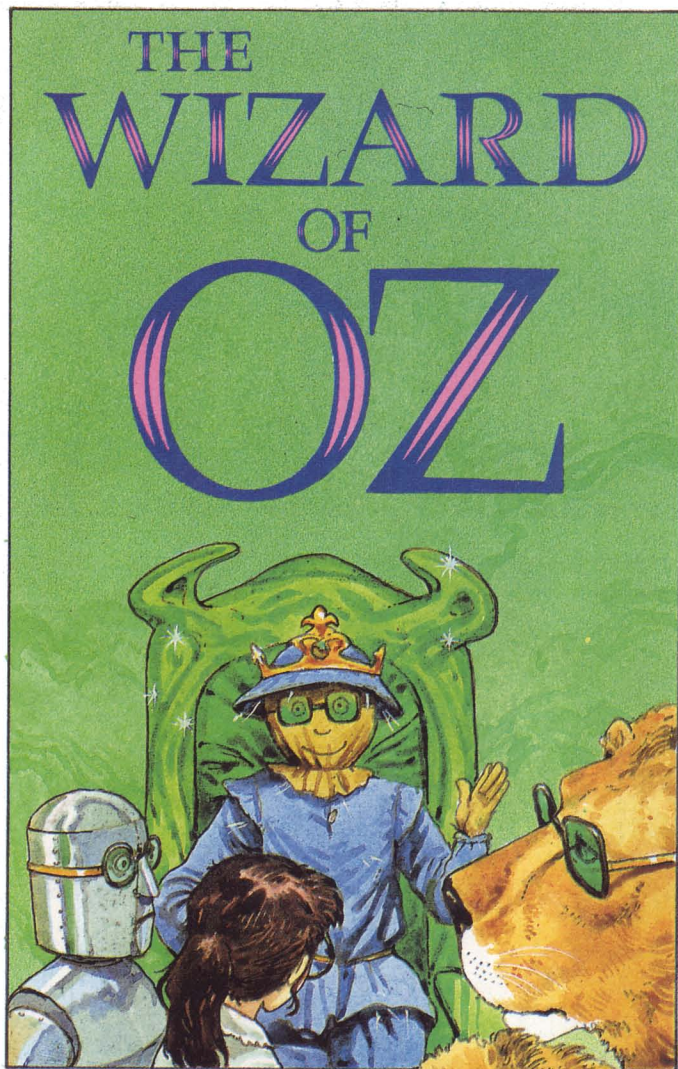
"Put me down and let me run," pleaded Gobbolino. But even side by side they could not outpace the hounds.



When both were at the end of their strength and about to turn and face the pack, they arrived suddenly at the gate of an ancient church, and slipping quickly through the gate, they found themselves in a deserted churchyard.

[More adventures for our two friends in Part 7]





The Final Journey

The people of the Emerald City were very sad to lose the wonderful Wizard. But they were also proud that the Scarecrow was now their ruler. "What other city," they said, "is ruled by a stuffed man?"

The morning after Oz had gone up in the balloon, the four travellers met in the throne room. The Scarecrow sat on the big throne and the others stood respectfully before him. "When I remember that just a short time ago I was up a pole in a farmer's cornfield," said the new ruler, "I am quite satisfied with my lot."

"I wish I were," said Dorothy. "But all I want is to live in Kansas with Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. I don't know how I shall get back now that Oz has disappeared."

"Hm, I've been thinking," said the Scarecrow. "Why don't you call the Winged Monkeys and ask them to carry you over the desert to Kansas?"

"What a good idea!" said Dorothy joyfully. She put the golden cap on her head and spoke the magic words. "Ep-pe, pep-pe, kak-ke, ziz-zy, zuz-zy, zik!" Soon the band of Winged Monkeys was standing beside her.

"Please take me to Kansas," she said.

The Monkey King shook his head gravely. "That cannot be done. We belong

to this country alone, and cannot leave it. We shall be glad to help you in any way in our power, but we cannot cross the desert."

With a bow, the Monkey King spread his wings and flew away through the window, followed by his band.





Dorothy could have cried, she was so disappointed. But the Scarecrow had been thinking again, and he now suggested that they call in the soldier with green whiskers and ask for his advice.

"There is only one person who might be able to help Dorothy," said the soldier, "and that is Glinda, the Witch of the South. She rules over the Quadlings and is the most powerful of all the witches. She's also a good witch. What is more her castle stands on the edge of the desert, so she may know a way to cross it."

"How can I get to her castle?" asked Dorothy.

"The road is straight to the south, but it's full of dangers to travellers."

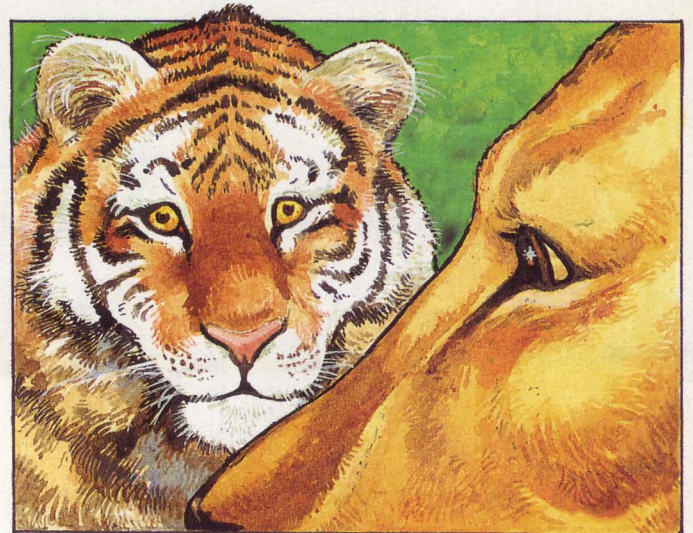
"Hm, it seems," said the Scarecrow, "that despite the dangers, Dorothy must travel to the Land of the South."

"I will go with her," said the Lion, "for she will need someone to protect her."

"Then I will go too," said the Tin Man.

"And I," said the Scarecrow. "I'll never leave Dorothy until she starts back to Kansas for good and all."

So, early next morning, the travellers set out across the green fields that surrounded the Emerald City. They walked until they entered a great forest where the trees were



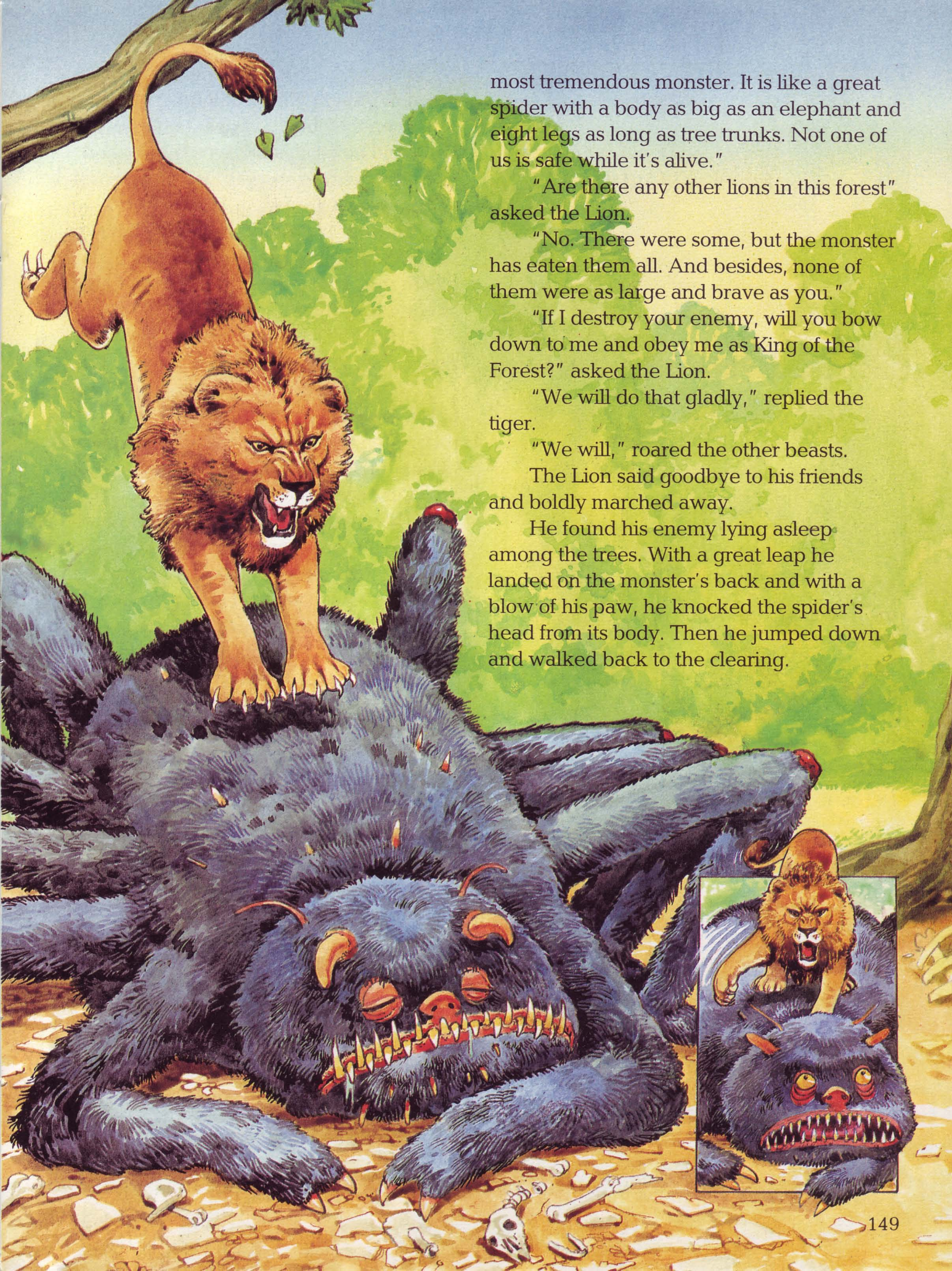
bigger than any they had ever seen.

"What a delightful place," declared the Lion. "I should like to live here all my life."

At that moment they heard a low rumble, like the growling of many wild animals. And there, in a clearing, were hundreds of beasts. There were tigers and elephants and bears and wolves and foxes, and for a moment Dorothy was afraid. But the Lion explained that the animals were holding a meeting, and he judged by their snarling and growling that they were in great trouble.

As he spoke the animals fell silent and the biggest of all the tigers came up to him.

"Welcome, O King of Beasts. You have come in good time to fight our enemy. It is a



most tremendous monster. It is like a great spider with a body as big as an elephant and eight legs as long as tree trunks. Not one of us is safe while it's alive."

"Are there any other lions in this forest" asked the Lion.

"No. There were some, but the monster has eaten them all. And besides, none of them were as large and brave as you."

"If I destroy your enemy, will you bow down to me and obey me as King of the Forest?" asked the Lion.

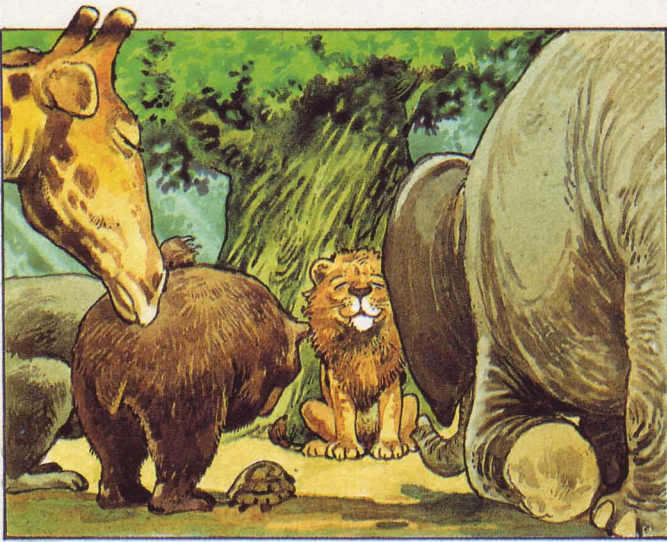
"We will do that gladly," replied the tiger.

"We will," roared the other beasts.

The Lion said goodbye to his friends and boldly marched away.

He found his enemy lying asleep among the trees. With a great leap he landed on the monster's back and with a blow of his paw, he knocked the spider's head from its body. Then he jumped down and walked back to the clearing.





"You need fear your enemy no longer," the Lion proudly told the beasts.

Then they bowed down to him as their king, and he promised to come back and rule over them as soon as Dorothy was safely on her way to Kansas.

The four travellers walked on through the forest. When they finally came out of its gloom they saw a steep hill covered from top to bottom with great rocks.

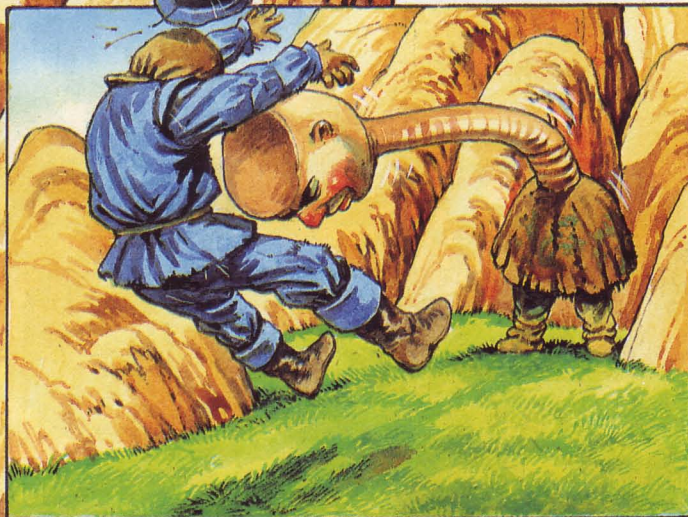
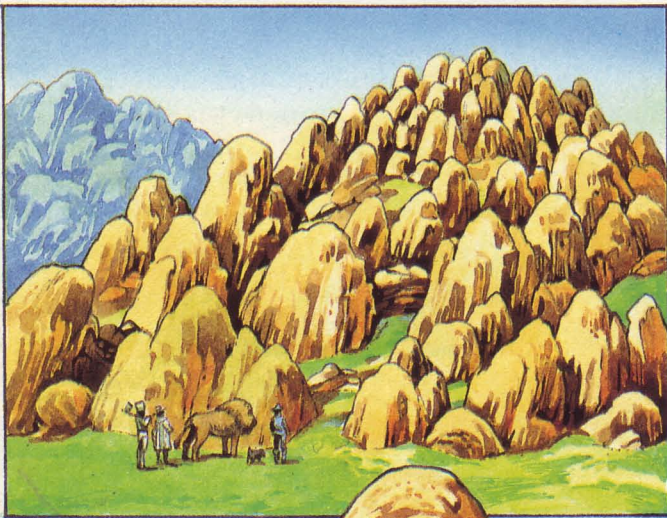
"Hm, this'll be a hard climb," said the Scarecrow, "but we must get over the hill."

So he led the way and the others followed. They had nearly reached the first rock when they heard a rough voice cry out, "Keep back. This hill belongs to us and we won't allow anyone to cross it."

The strangest man the travellers had ever seen then stepped out from behind the rock. He was quite short and stout and had a big head, which was flat at the top and supported by a thick neck full of wrinkles.

But he had no arms at all. So the Scarecrow walked forward and said, "We must pass over your hill whether you like it or not."

As quick as lightning the man's head shot forward and his neck stretched out until the top of his head struck the Scarecrow and sent him tumbling down the hill. Almost as



quickly as it came, the head went back into his body. "It isn't as easy as you think," said the man with a harsh laugh.

And then the travellers heard a chorus of boisterous laughter as hundreds of armless Hammer-Heads stepped out from behind the rocks.

With a loud roar that echoed like thunder, the Lion dashed up the hill.

Again a head shot out, and the great Lion went rolling down the hill as if he had been struck by a cannon-ball.

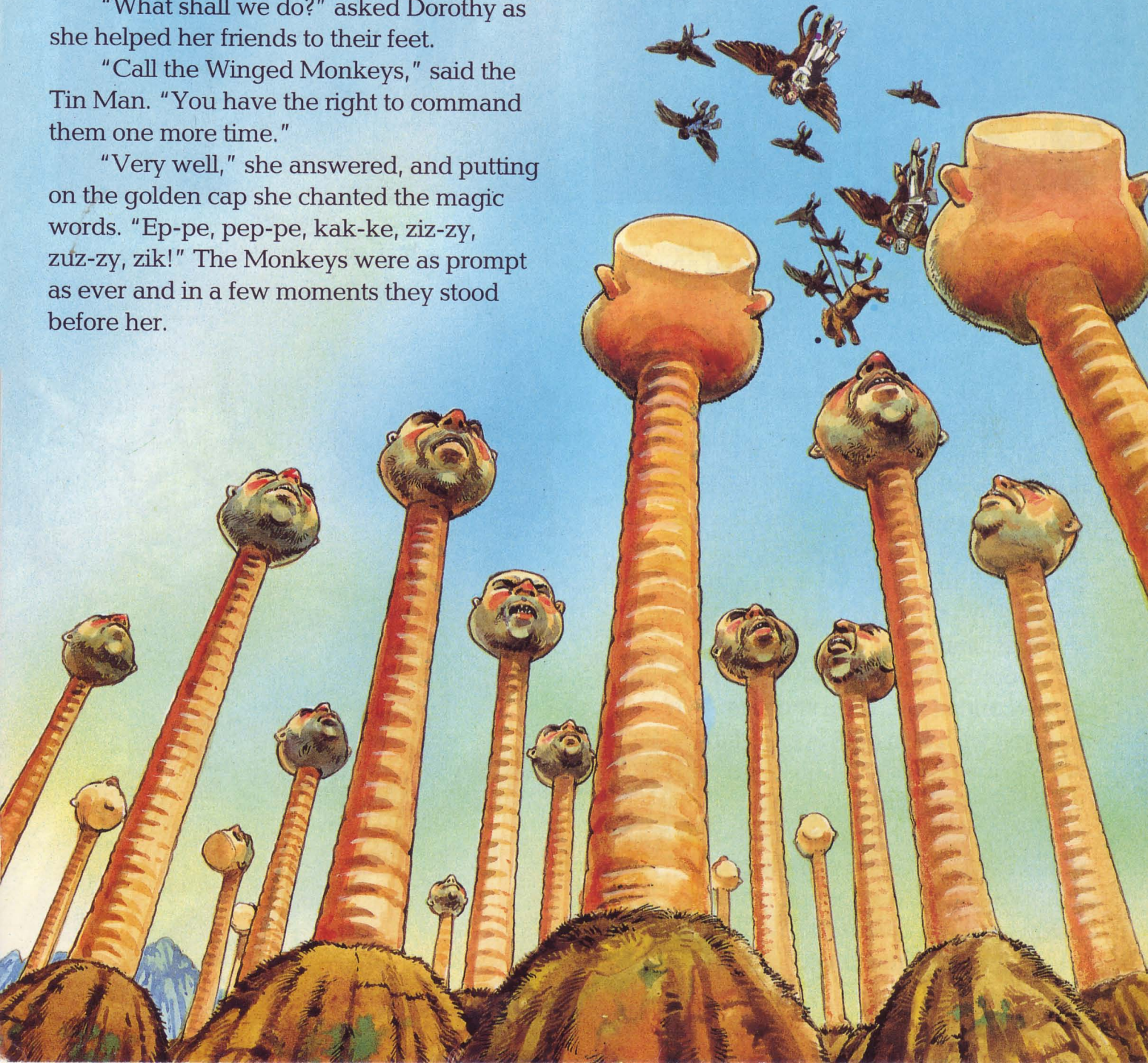
"What shall we do?" asked Dorothy as she helped her friends to their feet.

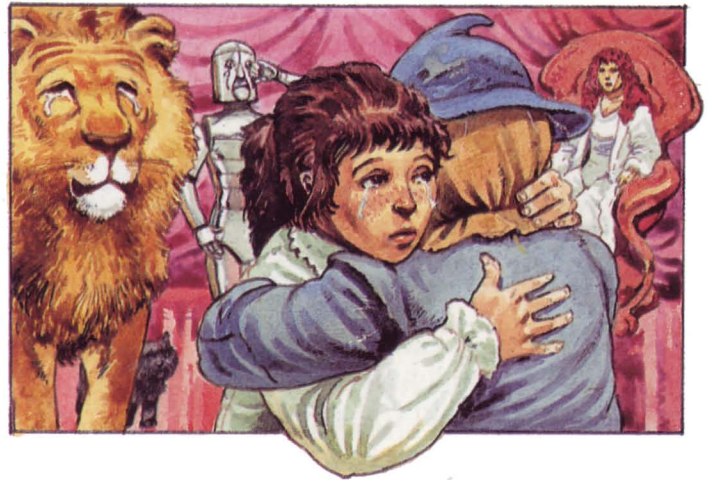
"Call the Winged Monkeys," said the Tin Man. "You have the right to command them one more time."

"Very well," she answered, and putting on the golden cap she chanted the magic words. "Ep-pe, pep-pe, kak-ke, ziz-zy, zuz-zy, zik!" The Monkeys were as prompt as ever and in a few moments they stood before her.

"Carry us over the hill to the country of the Quadlings," commanded Dorothy.

"It shall be done," said the King, and at once the Winged Monkeys caught the travellers in their arms and flew away with them. As they passed over the hill the Hammer-Heads yelled angrily and shot their heads high in the air. But they could not reach the Winged Monkeys, and soon Dorothy and her friends were standing in the beautiful country of the Quadlings.





Pretty rippling brooks burred among fields of ripening corn. The fences, houses and bridges were all painted red and the short, fat Quadlings were dressed in red clothes. They gladly showed Dorothy the way to Glinda's castle.

The gates of Glinda's castle were guarded by three young girls dressed in handsome red uniforms. They led the travellers to a big room where the young and beautiful Glinda sat upon a throne of rubies. "What can I do for you, my child?" she said, smiling kindly.

Dorothy told the story of her adventures in the Land of Oz. Then she said, "My greatest wish is to get back to Kansas, for Aunt Em will surely think something dreadful has happened to me."

"I am sure I can help you. But in return you must give me the golden cap."

"Willingly!" exclaimed Dorothy. "It means you can command the Winged Monkeys just three times."



"And I shall need their services those three times — to carry the Scarecrow to the Emerald City, the Lion to the forest and the Tin Man to the Winkies. The silver shoes will carry *you* over the desert, Dorothy. If you had known their power you could have gone back to your Aunt Em the day you came to this country."

"But then I should not have had my wonderful brains," said the Scarecrow.

"And I should not have had my lovely heart," said the Tin Man.

"And I should have lived like a coward for ever," declared the Lion.

"This is true," said Dorothy. "And I'm glad I've helped all my friends. But now I should like to go back to Kansas."

"All you have to do," said Glinda, "is knock the heels of the shoes together three

times and command them to carry you wherever you wish. You will get there in the twinkling of an eye."

"Then it's time for me to say goodbye," said Dorothy. She threw her arms around the Lion's neck and kissed him, patting his big head tenderly. Then she kissed the Tin Man who was weeping in a way most dangerous to his joints. Finally, she hugged the soft, stuffed body of the Scarecrow and found that she was crying herself.

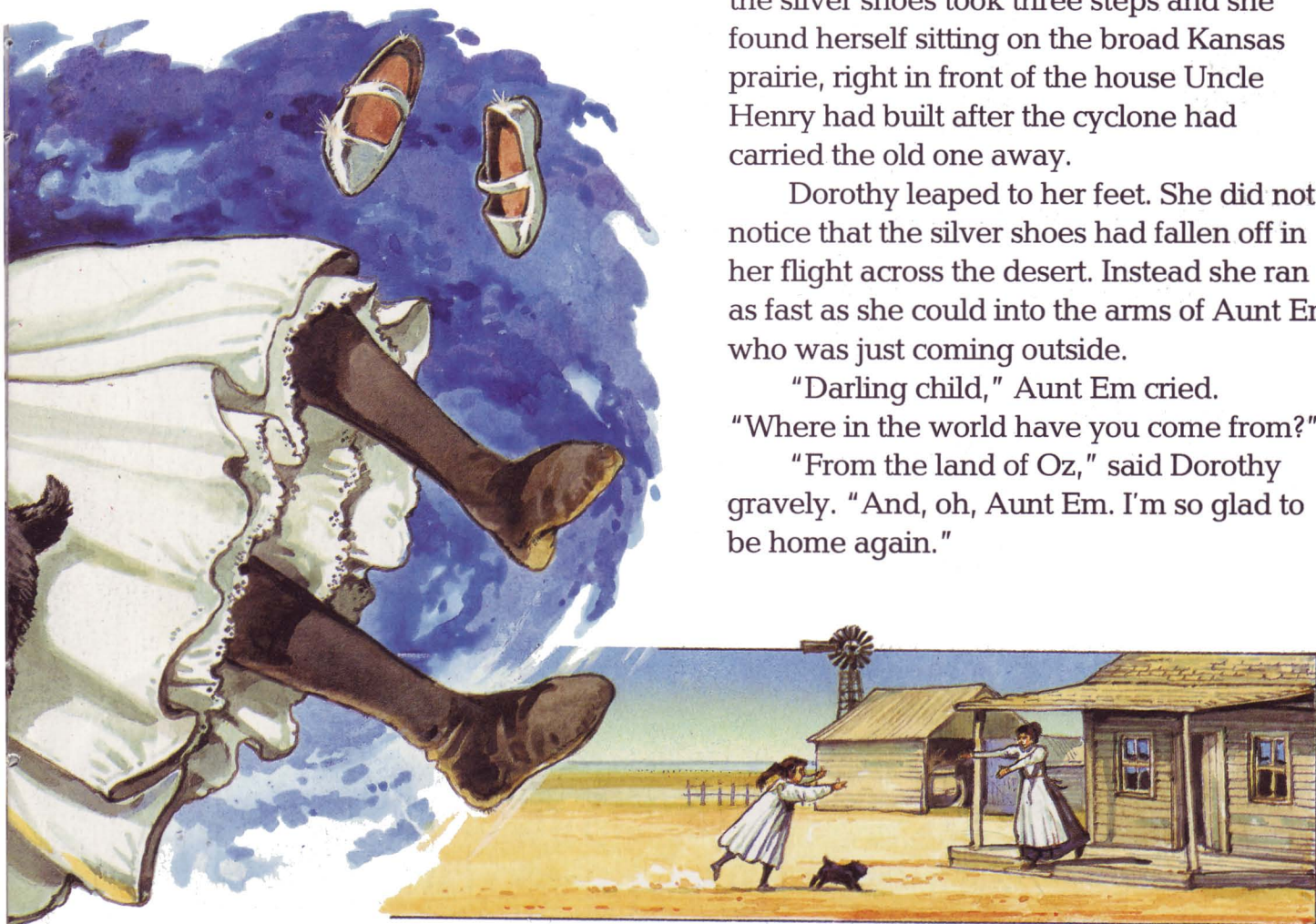
Glinda stepped down from her throne and gave the little girl a goodbye kiss. Then Dorothy picked up Toto, clapped the heels of her shoes together three times and said, "Take me home to Aunt Em."

Instantly she was whirling through the air, so swiftly that all she could see or feel was the wind whistling past her ears. Then the silver shoes took three steps and she found herself sitting on the broad Kansas prairie, right in front of the house Uncle Henry had built after the cyclone had carried the old one away.

Dorothy leaped to her feet. She did not notice that the silver shoes had fallen off in her flight across the desert. Instead she ran as fast as she could into the arms of Aunt Em who was just coming outside.

"Darling child," Aunt Em cried. "Where in the world have you come from?"

"From the land of Oz," said Dorothy gravely. "And, oh, Aunt Em. I'm so glad to be home again."



THE FARMER, THE TOMT AND THE TROLL



There was once a Swedish farmer who was so mean that no-one would work for him. In the end he was forced to advertise for a Tomt — which is what Swedish dwarfs are called — to gather in the harvest.

Only one Tomt applied for the job. He was three feet tall, very old and very wrinkled. And his long white beard trailed all the way down to the ground.

"I may not look much, but I can work very fast," said the Tomt. "If you pay me well, I'll cut all your corn in a single night."



"You're hired," replied the farmer, and he crossed his fingers behind his back. "Two bags of gold will be ready for you at eight o'clock tomorrow morning."

Before the Tomt set off for work, he sang a song:

"I shall scythe and I shall reap
While the farmer's fast asleep.
In the morning, draw my pay,
And hop, skip, jump, I'll be away."

All night long the little Tomt toiled and by seven o'clock in the morning the entire wheat crop had been harvested and neatly stacked in the barn.

"Finished at last," said the Tomt, and at eight o'clock he knocked on the farmer's door.

He knocked once, he knocked twice, he knocked three times — but there was no reply.

He bellowed through the letter-box. He threw pebbles at the shutters. At last the farmer poked his head out of a window and shouted, "What's all the fuss about?"

"I want my pay," said the Tomt.

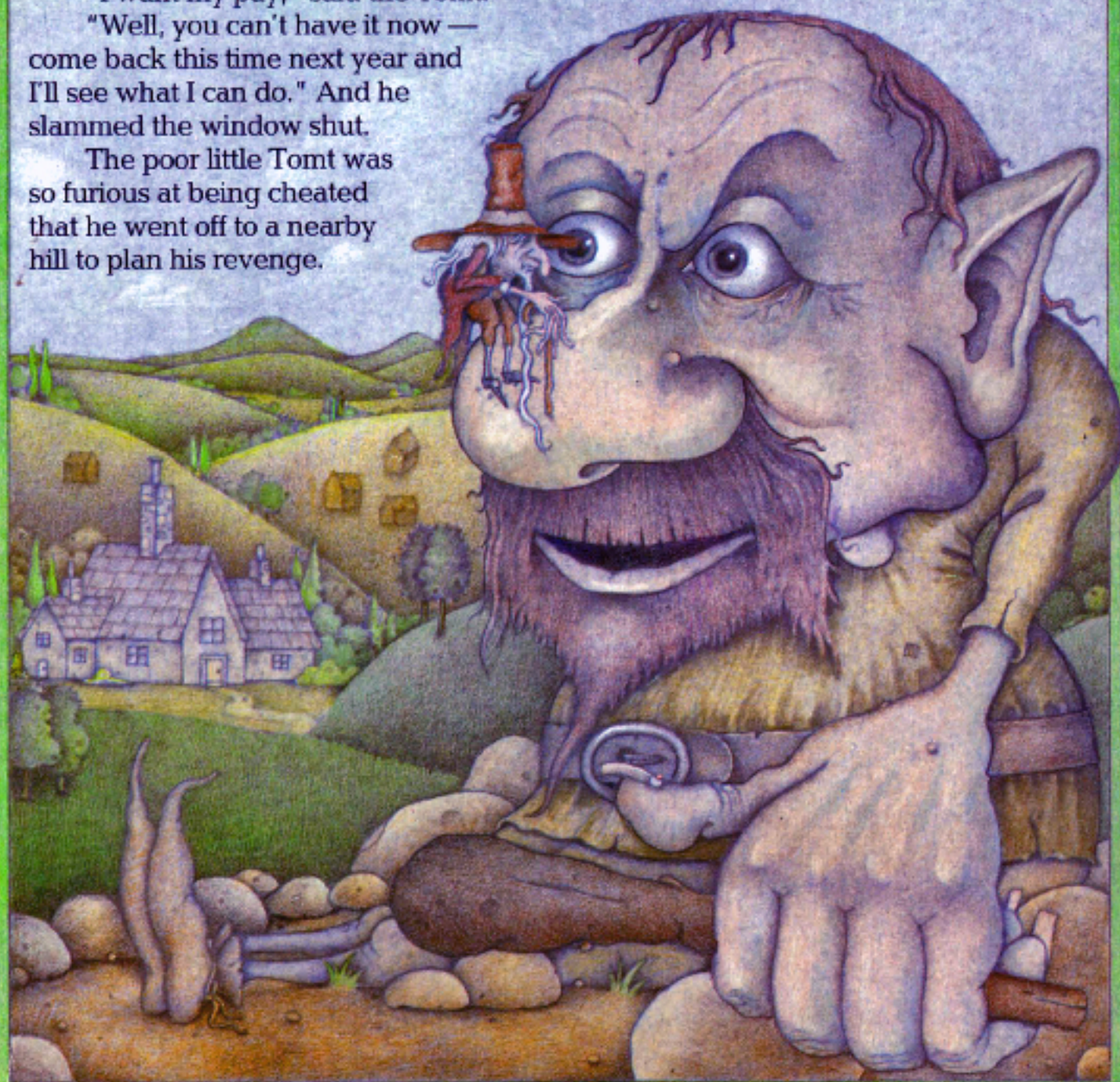
"Well, you can't have it now — come back this time next year and I'll see what I can do." And he slammed the window shut.

The poor little Tomt was so furious at being cheated that he went off to a nearby hill to plan his revenge.

It was a very odd shaped hill and when the Tomt reached the top, he found he was standing on the end of a huge nose.

"Good heavens," he said to himself. "This isn't a hill at all, it's a Troll! And I have been trampling all over him with my dusty shoes!"

"I don't mind," said the Troll. "It's lonely up here and I like a little conversation now and then."





So the Tomt told the Troll his sad story, and the Troll was absolutely furious. "Fancy cheating a poor little Tomt like you."

Then the Troll had an idea. "Let's visit the farmer together. I'm sure he'll pay up when he sees you've got a big brother like me." So they marched off to the farm.

The farmer was eating his dinner when he heard a loud knock at the door. "Who's there?" he growled.

The Tomt shouted through the letter-box, "Will you please pay me my wages. Get the money and be prompt. Do not make me wait for ages. It's bad luck to cheat a Tomt."

"Go away," growled the farmer. "I won't pay." Then he looked out of the window and saw a gigantic Troll armed with a wooden club standing outside.

"If you don't pay, you'll lose your hay," said the Troll, and with a mighty puff he blew all the farmer's haystacks into the pond. Then he leaned on the roof until it creaked and said very quietly, "Pay or I'll crack your chimney stack."

But frightened as he was, the farmer was too mean to hand over any money, so the Troll lifted the roof and peered inside.

The farmer was sitting on the kitchen floor, hugging his bags of gold.

With a trembling hand, the farmer held up one bag, "Will this do?" he asked.

"Not enough," said the Tomt.

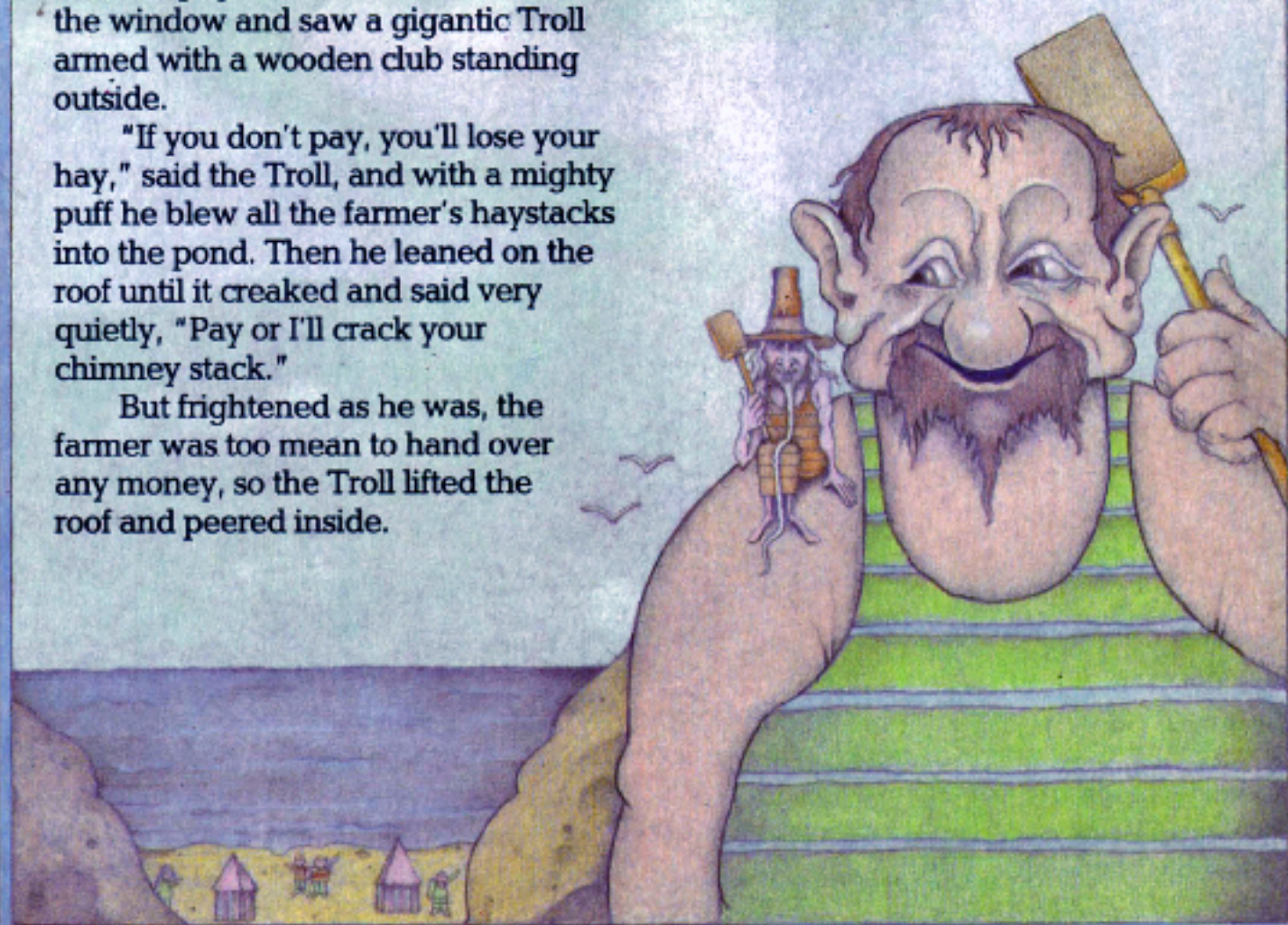
"Two bags?"

"That's right," said the Tomt, grabbing his wages.

"And one for me," said the Troll, stuffing another bag of gold into his pocket.

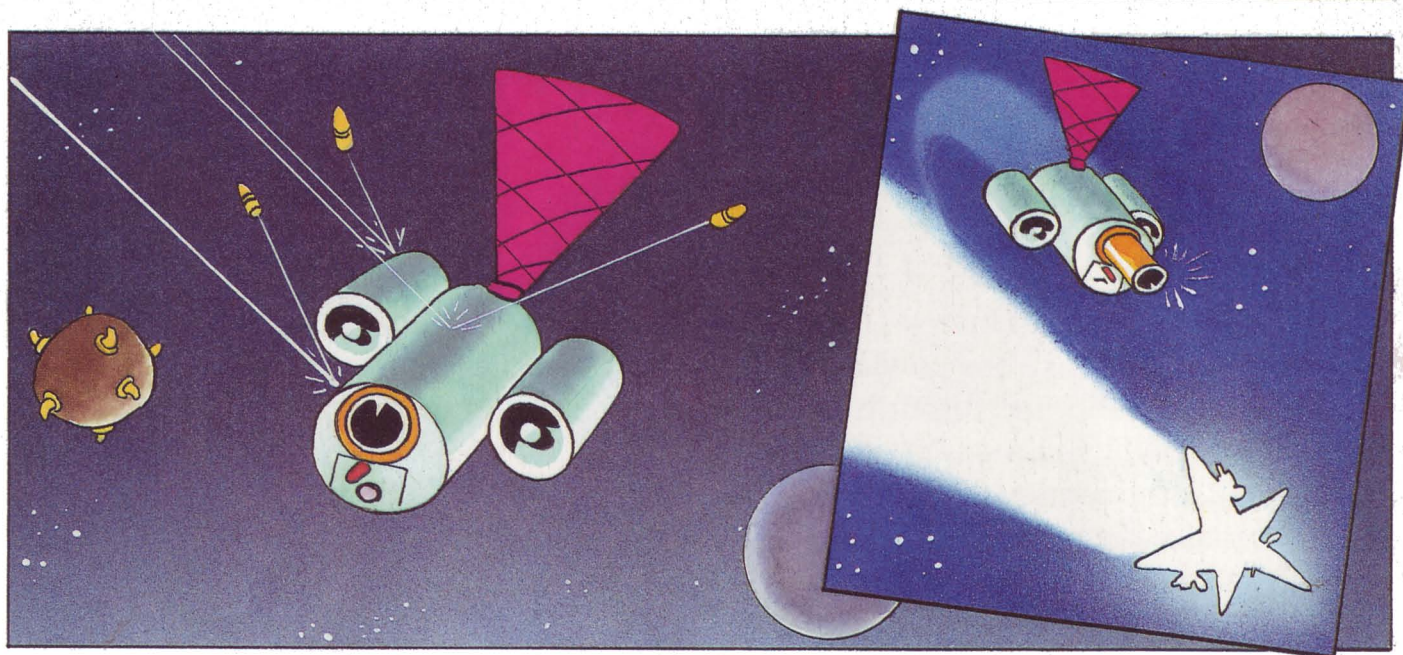
Then the Tomt climbed on to the Troll's huge shoulders and they marched away, singing a victory song:

"Tomts and Trolls must stand together,
If they are to get their way.
Now we're off to spend the money
On a seaside holiday."



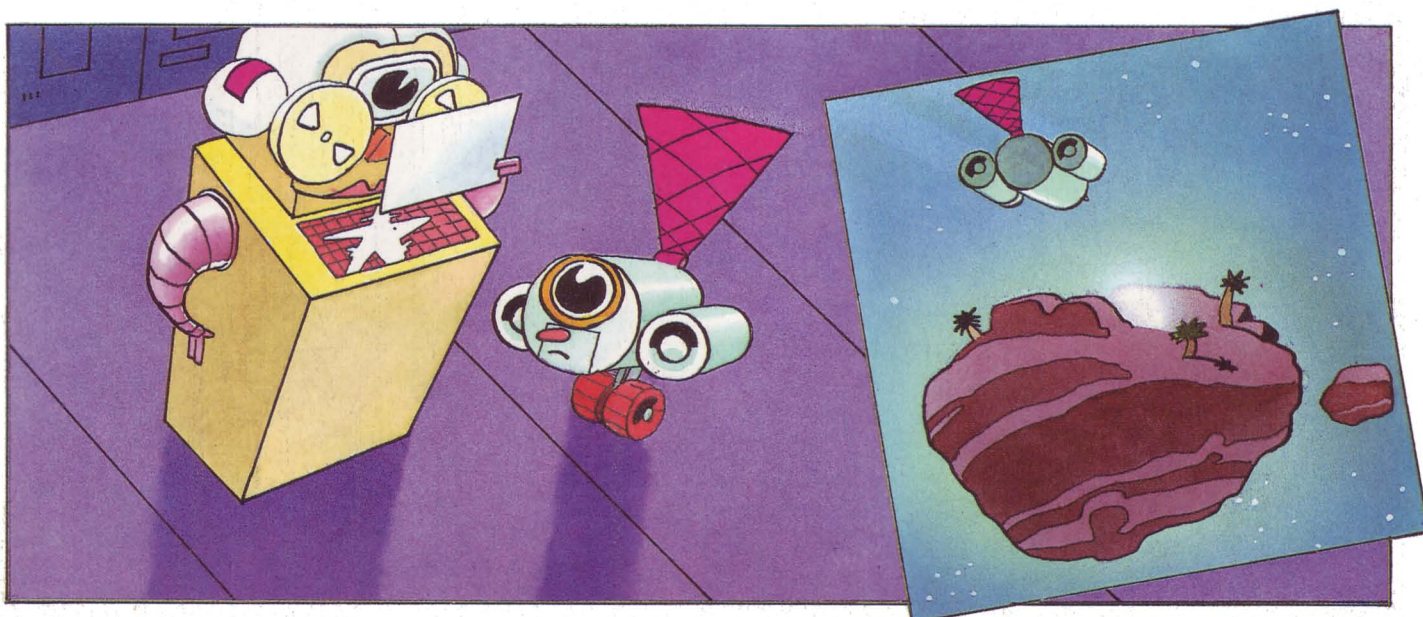
SHORTY

THE SATELLITE AND THE SHOOTING STAR



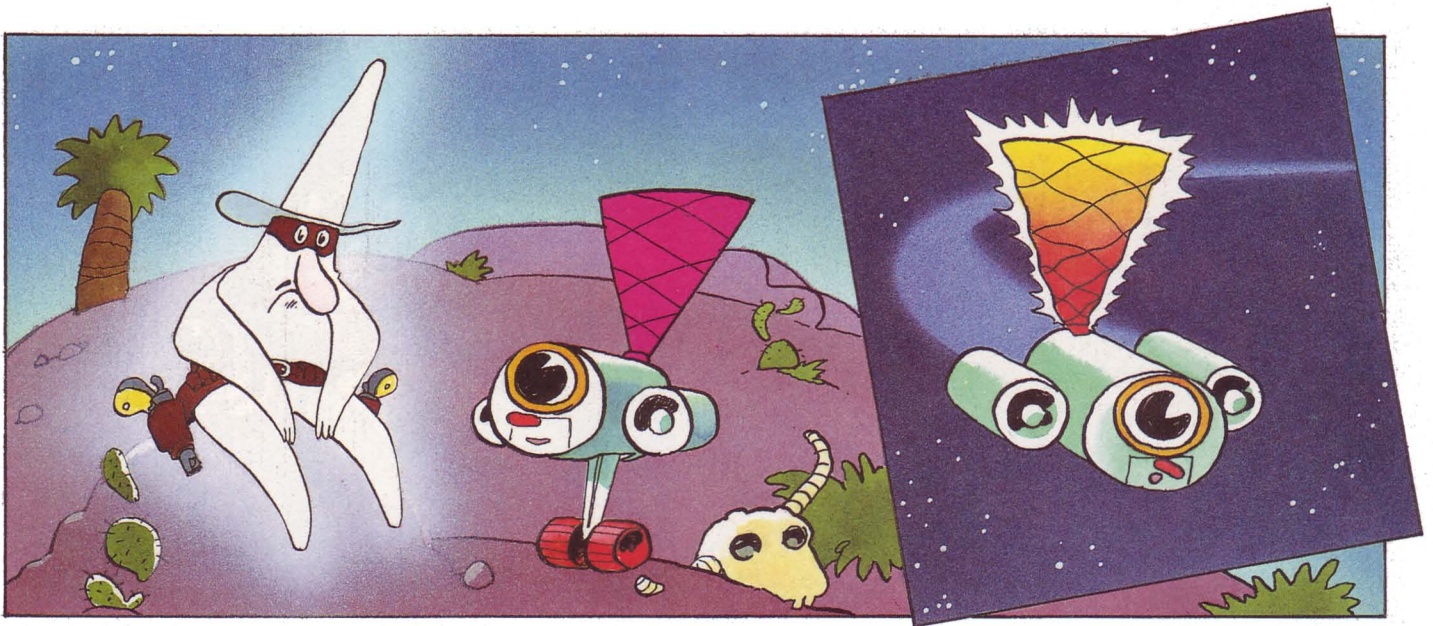
One day as Shorty was flying through space, he felt a sudden ping on his skin, then heard a funny clatter. "Ouch, ouch! What's that? Stop it! Get off!"

"Come back!" yelled Shorty as the thing whizzed past. But before it vanished, he took a picture of it.



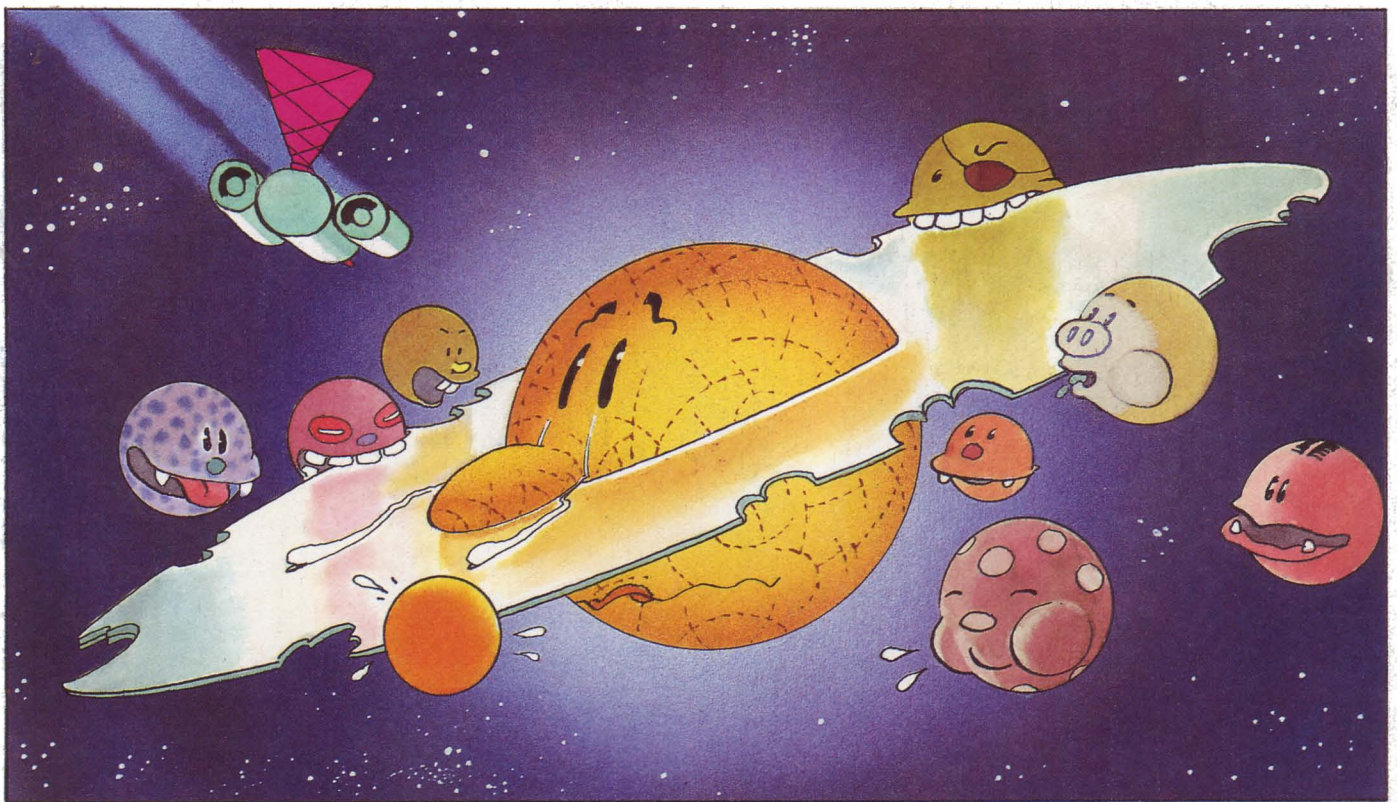
"That's a Shooting Star," said Grandma Computer when she saw the photograph back at Mombase Space Station. "I haven't seen one of those in years. It's very lucky to see one, Shorty. And the pings you felt on your skin were probably its golden bullets."

A little later Shorty was flying near an asteroid when he saw something shining below him. Zooming down to investigate he found it was the Shooting Star.



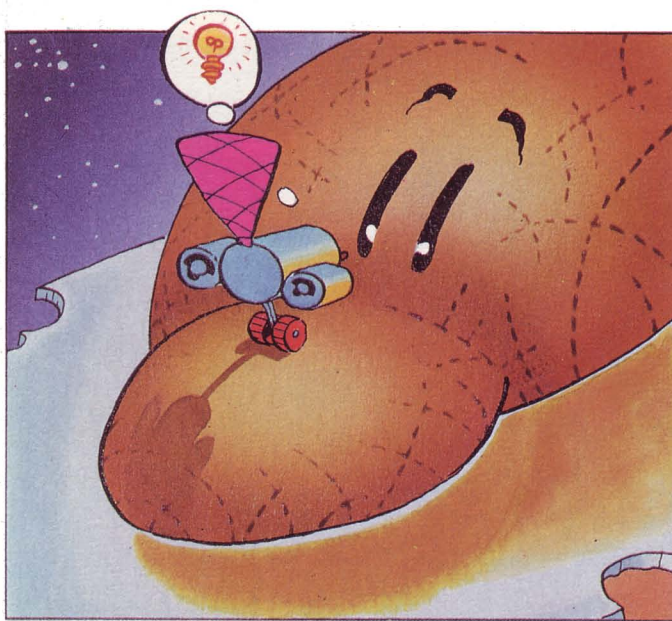
"What are you doing here?" asked Shorty when he landed on the asteroid. "Go away, you silly satellite. I'm fed up. I've run out of golden bullets." "Good job, too," said Shorty. "You really hurt me." "Sorry," mumbled the Star.

Shorty took off and continued his patrol. Later that day he picked up some cries on his sensors.

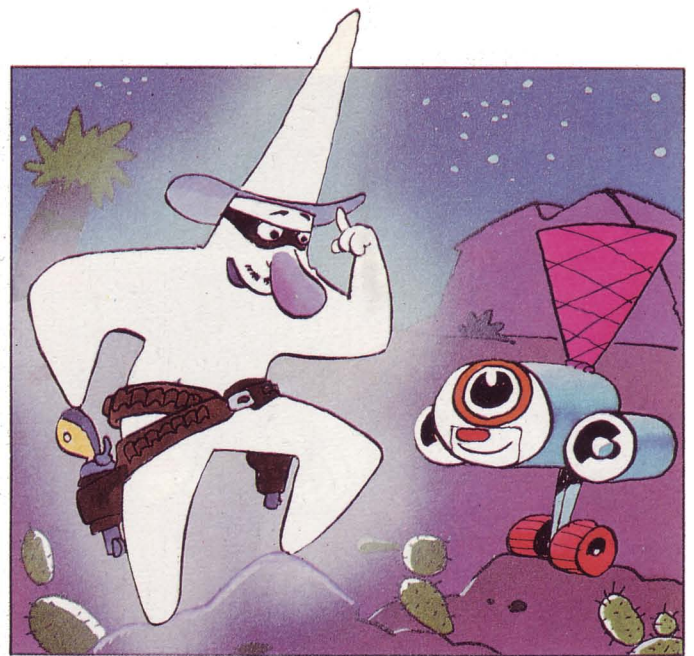


Flying off to see who was making all the noise, he found it was the Golden Planet. She was crying because nine naughty moons were eating her silver ring. "Look out gang," cried the moons, "there's a satellite coming!"

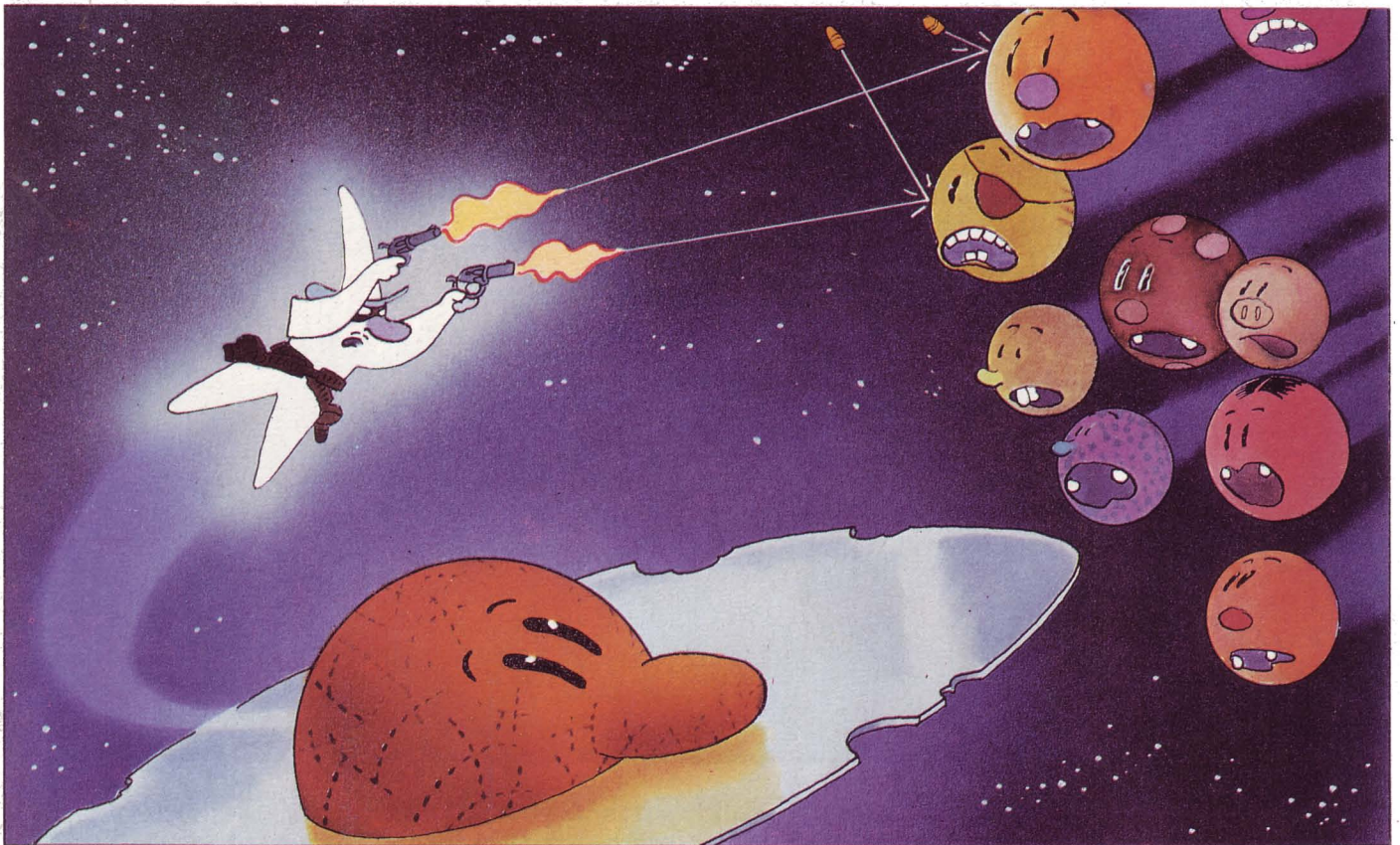
Back to your orbits."
"It's terrible," sobbed the Golden Planet, "those horrible little moons keep eating my engagement ring. There'll be nothing left soon. I don't know what to do."



"I know someone who can help you," said Shorty thinking of the Shooting Star, "but he might need some of your gold."
 "Oh, that's all right. I've tons of it. He can have as much as he wants."

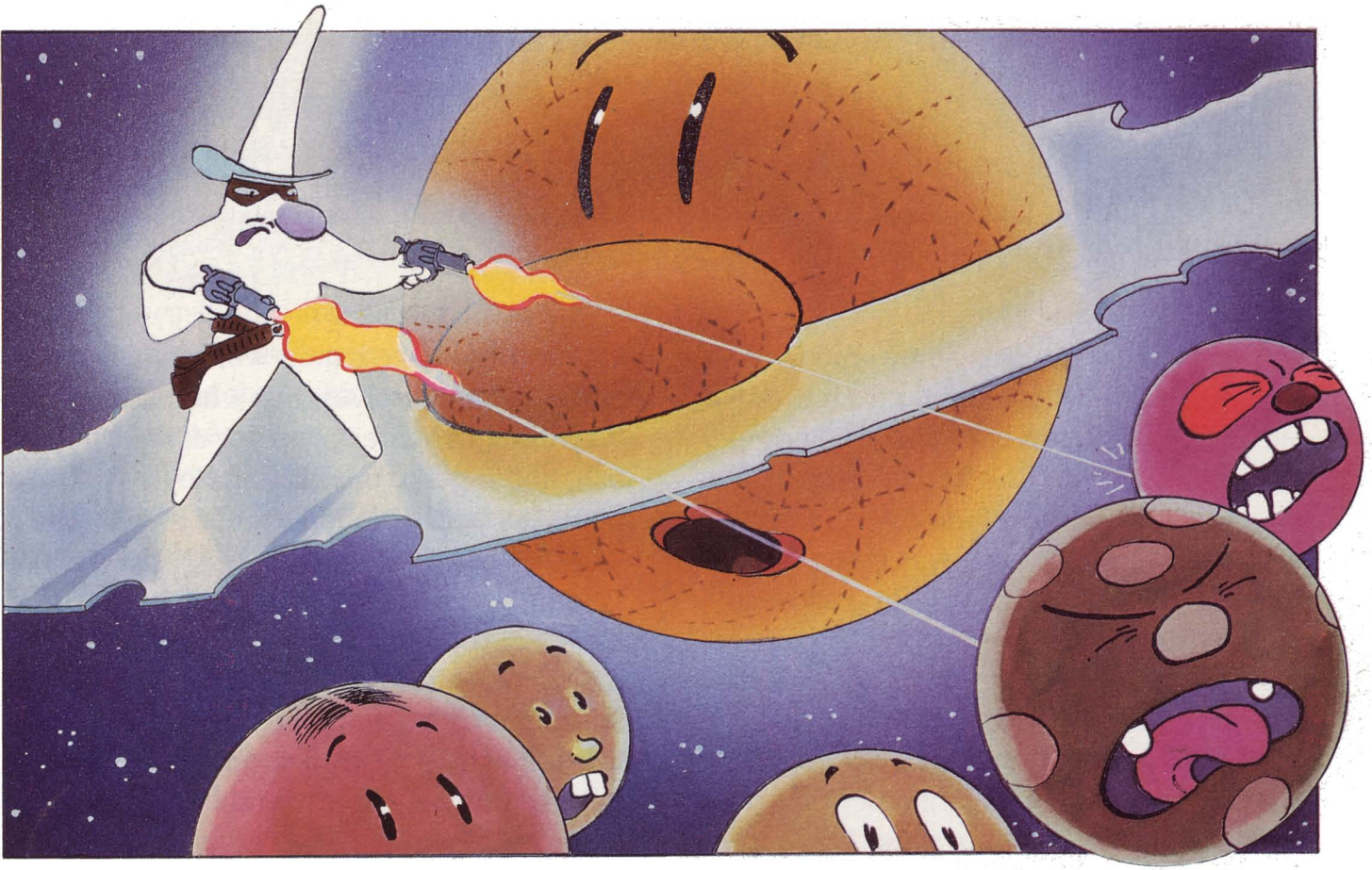


In no time at all Shorty was back on the asteroid where the Shooting Star sat sulking. "Yup," said the Star when he heard Shorty's plan. "I think I can manage that. It sounds like it might be fun."



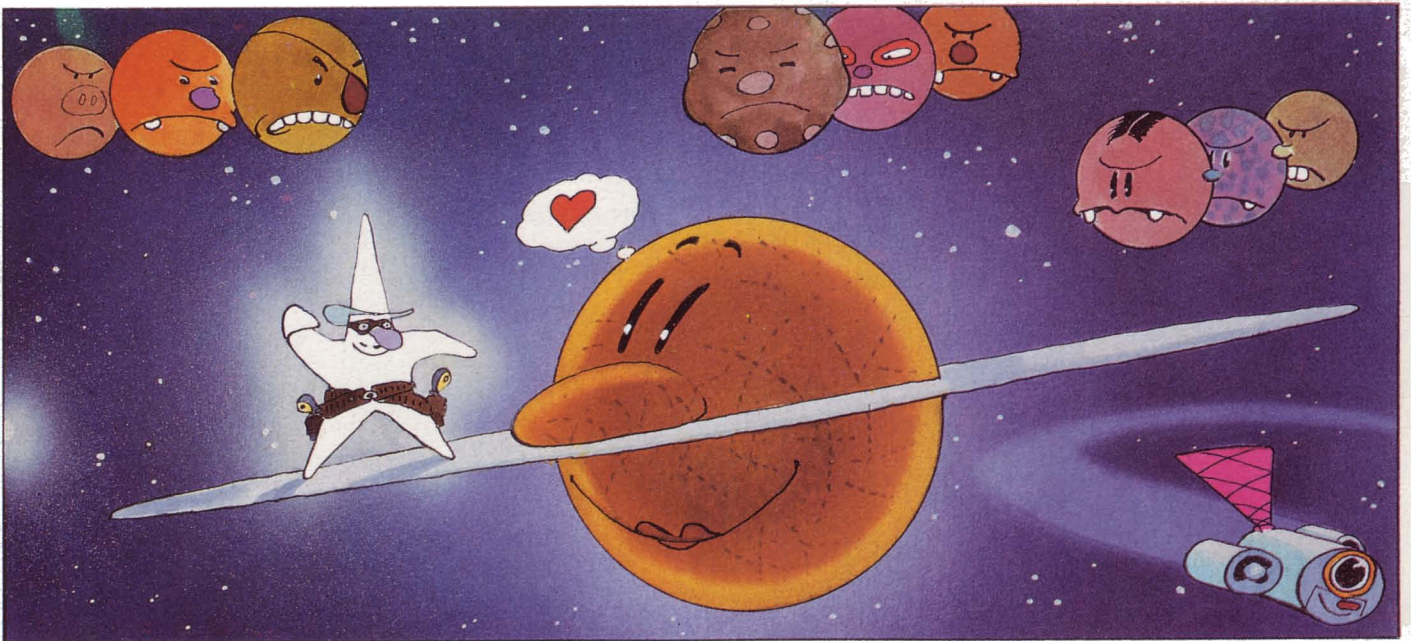
All day long the Star lay in wait. Then suddenly out of space zoomed the nine naughty moons. With a swoosh, the Star flew

into action. "Ouch, ooh," squealed the moons as golden bullets pinged their skins. "Stop, help! No, no, please stop, stop!"



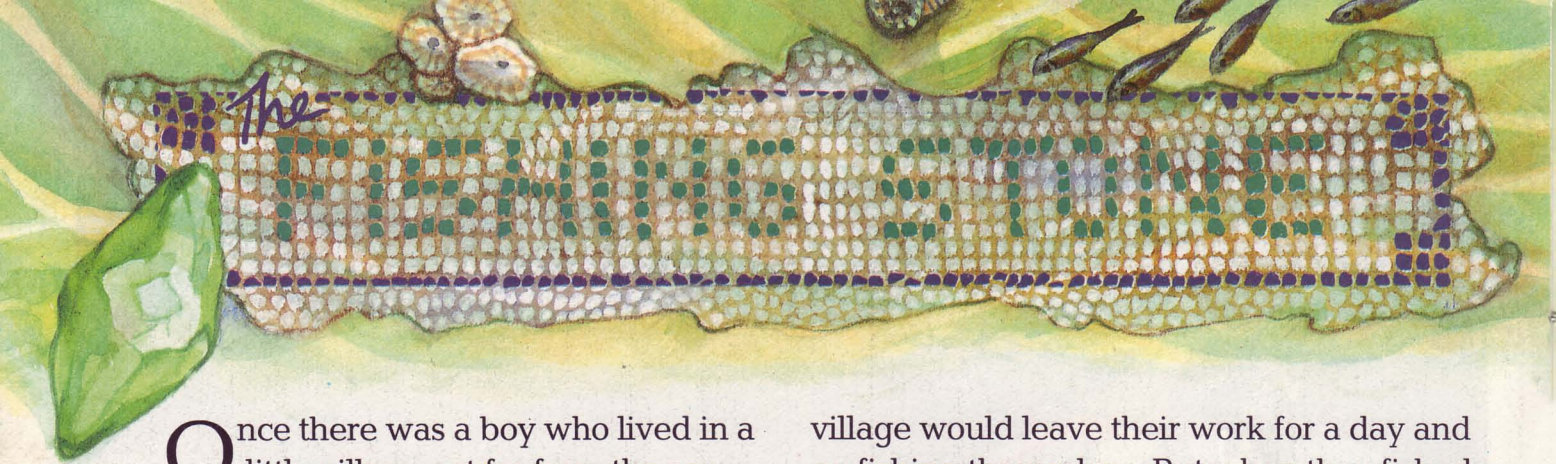
The Shooting Star landed on the silver ring. "Get out of town and don't come back, you no good little moons," shouted the Star

waving his guns. Terrified, the naughty moons rushed back to their orbits as fast as they could, grateful to be alive.



And in return for a constant supply of gold for his bullets, the Shooting Star agreed to protect the Golden Planet. "The Shooting

Star certainly brought good luck for the Golden Planet, but bad luck for the moons," said Shorty with a smile.



Once there was a boy who lived in a little village not far from the sea. He lived alone in an old hut on the edge of the village. Because he had no parents, he had no name either. When the villagers talked about him, which was not very often, they called him the Fishing Boy, because that is what he did.

Every morning he would get up before the sun and walk two miles to the river, carrying a large, empty sack. Two hours later he would come back to the village with the sack full of gleaming, silver fish. These he traded with the villagers for everything he needed, bread and milk and clothes.

Sometimes the men and women of the

village would leave their work for a day and go fishing themselves. But when they fished they brought home only a few of the smallest fish, nothing like the Fishing Boy's sackful of good, tasty fish. Nobody could understand it.

"It must be his little magic," they said. And they were right.

Everybody in the village had a little magic, all of their own. Some of them could light fires with a word, or sing songs to make the crops grow tall and strong. Some could tell what the weather would be like tomorrow, or what herbs would cure someone's sickness.

But the boy's little magic was quite different, and he kept it a secret from everyone.

His little magic was not a song, or a word of power, like everyone else's. His was a real thing, a thing he could hold in his hand, a beautiful jade-green stone which dazzled his eyes when he let the sun play across its sharp edges.

He called it the Fishing Stone.

Every day, when he went fishing, he took the Fishing Stone with him, wrapped in an old cloth and tucked inside his shirt.

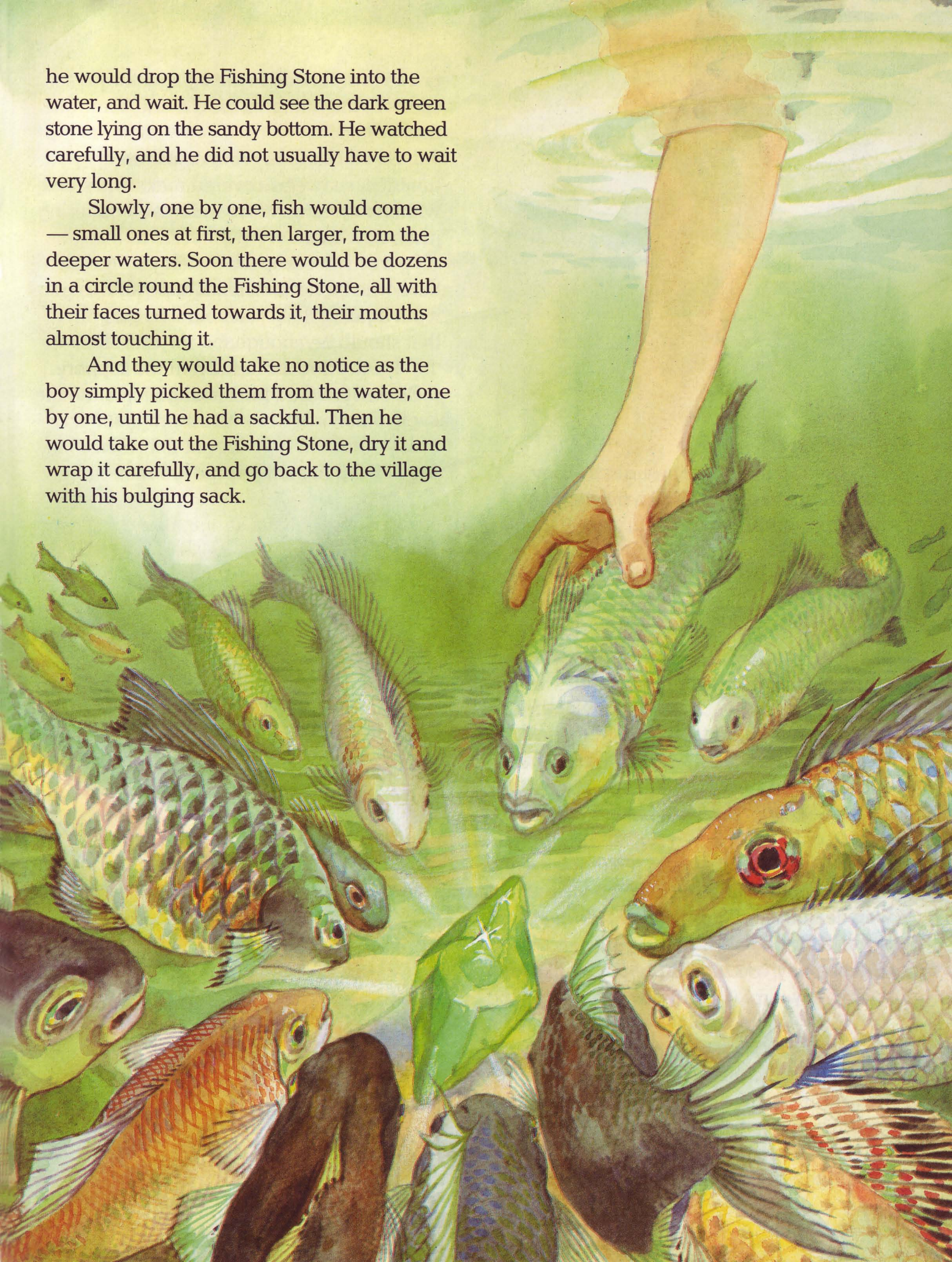
When he came to the river, the boy would find his favourite spot, where the water was shaded from the sun by an overhanging tree. There



he would drop the Fishing Stone into the water, and wait. He could see the dark green stone lying on the sandy bottom. He watched carefully, and he did not usually have to wait very long.

Slowly, one by one, fish would come — small ones at first, then larger, from the deeper waters. Soon there would be dozens in a circle round the Fishing Stone, all with their faces turned towards it, their mouths almost touching it.

And they would take no notice as the boy simply picked them from the water, one by one, until he had a sackful. Then he would take out the Fishing Stone, dry it and wrap it carefully, and go back to the village with his bulging sack.





tasty sea-fish back to the village, they'd speak to me and give me a name, I know they would."

So he clambered out across the tumbled, seaweed-covered rocks and stood with the great waves foaming and battering just below him.

"I mustn't drop the Fishing Stone in here," he thought. "I'd never be able to get it out again. I must just hold it in the water, that should be enough."

He lay down carefully on the slippery rock, and lowered the Fishing Stone into the

The Fishing Stone brought the boy everything he needed, fresh fish for his evening meal and trade with the villagers. But it could not bring him a name, or someone to talk to.

The other children in the village would never play with him, because he was different from them — he had no mother and father, and he had no name.

He had always made a secret of the Fishing Stone, his little magic, because it was a thing and not a word or a song that only he could sing. He was frightened that someone bigger than he was might take it away from him.

But because he would never tell them of his little magic, the people of the village were jealous and never spoke to him except to trade for his fish.

The boy was often unhappy and always very lonely.

One day, he went for a walk by the sea. He had the Fishing Stone with him as usual and as he stood on the beach, watching the waves run up the sand, he had an idea.

"There are fish in the sea," he said to himself, "many fish, far bigger than the ones in the river. If I could take a big,



sea. The water was cold and the waves were strong. He could feel them tugging, trying to get the stone away from him. He tightened his grip, wincing as the sharp edges cut into his fingers, but determined not to let go.

For a long time nothing happened, except that his hand grew numb from the cold, and the salt in the sea-water stung his cuts. At last, his patience was rewarded. He saw a big, dark shadow moving slowly towards him, far beneath the surface.

As it swam nearer, the boy swallowed nervously. This was no fish that he could pick out of the water and carry home. It was enormous! Far bigger than he was — far bigger than the biggest man in the village!



And still it grew, looming larger and larger beneath him. The boy was trembling now, afraid of what he had done, but still he held the Fishing Stone in the sea, waiting. He wanted to know why this great and splendid fish had come to him.

A cold, hard snout, which looked to the boy quite as large as the rock he was lying on, nudged once at his hand. Then the great head of the fish burst out of the water, and the boy found himself staring into an enormous, unblinking eye. For a second it hung there, motionless, and as it sank back beneath the waves, the boy knew what he must do.

Clutching the Fishing Stone, he slipped into the water and on to the silvery back of the fish, clinging to one giant fin with his free hand. The fish paused, as if allowing the boy one final breath of fresh sea air, then, dived deep into the oncoming waves.



The boy held his breath for as long as he could, feeling the water rush past his face; but at last he had to let it go. To his surprise he found he could breathe perfectly under the sea. He was certain now that it was magic that was taking him for this strange sea-ride — his own little magic, the magic of the Fishing Stone!

Deep, deep they swam together, the giant fish and the boy, leaving sunlight and sky far behind them.

On the way they passed shoals and schools and swarms of fish — and as they passed, each one turned to watch, respectfully, almost seeming to bow to them.

Surely, the boy thought, this fish he was riding must be the greatest of all sea-creatures, the king of the deep. He felt honoured, and strangely ashamed, remembering all the little fish he had caught for the village.

They swam into the great, dark deeps of the ocean; and at last, when the boy thought that he would never see anything but darkness and shadow again, a soft green light appeared below them on the sea-bed.

As they came nearer, it divided into two great pillars of green stone, shining like candles in the water.

The great fish swept majestically between them, with the boy clinging to his back, and suddenly they were in a different world, a world filled with colour and light and beauty.

The fish took him into a vast cave, like an underwater temple. The walls, roof and floor were covered with designs and mosaics in bright colours, even the smallest fragment of stone or shell shone with its own clear light. The boy gaped at the dazzling, shifting patterns.

The fish did not pause, it swam directly to the far end of the temple. Here the boy



could see shapes in the mosaics, all kinds of sea-creatures set in a great circle. At the centre was the image of a fish, picked out in all the colours of the rainbow. The boy felt certain that this must be the god of all those who live below the water. But looking closely, the boy could see something wrong. Where

the eye of the fish should have been there was nothing but a rough, grey patch.

Now the fish stopped and the boy knew what to do. He swam forward slowly, till he could touch the mosaic, and the raw place like a wound in the eye of the god-fish. And there he laid the Fishing Stone.



At last he joined them under the high, arching cave mouth. The woman threw her arms round him and hugged him tightly, crying with joy.

"Ansel!" she wept. "Oh, Ansel, my son . . ." And the boy whose name was Ansel, laughed for the first time that he could remember.

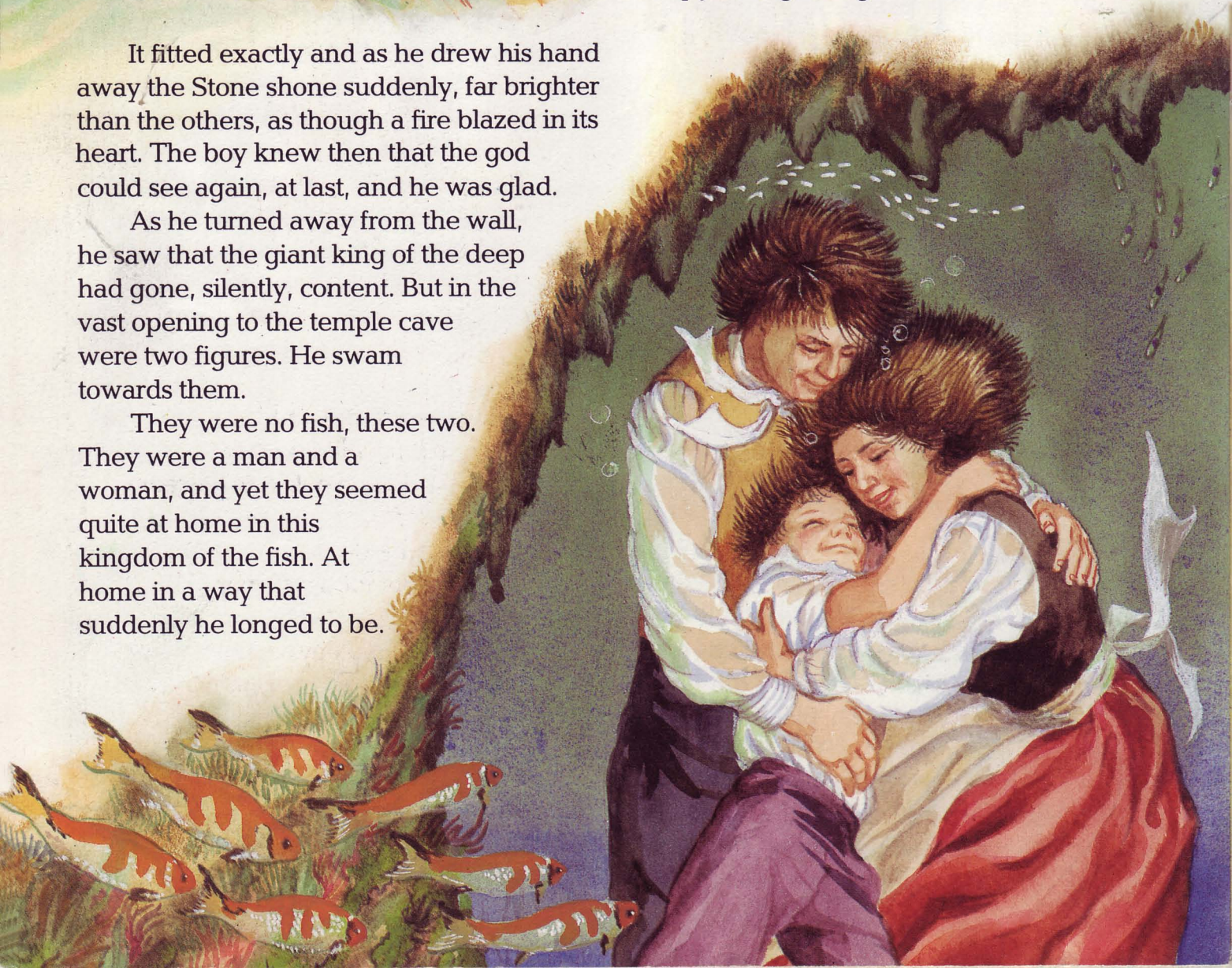
"Mother! Father!" he shouted, knowing that it was true.

And as they led him away from the temple, to his new home and his new life under the sea, he realised that he had been wrong all this time. The Fishing Stone was not his little magic after all — it was a great magic, the greatest of all magics, and it was only just beginning.

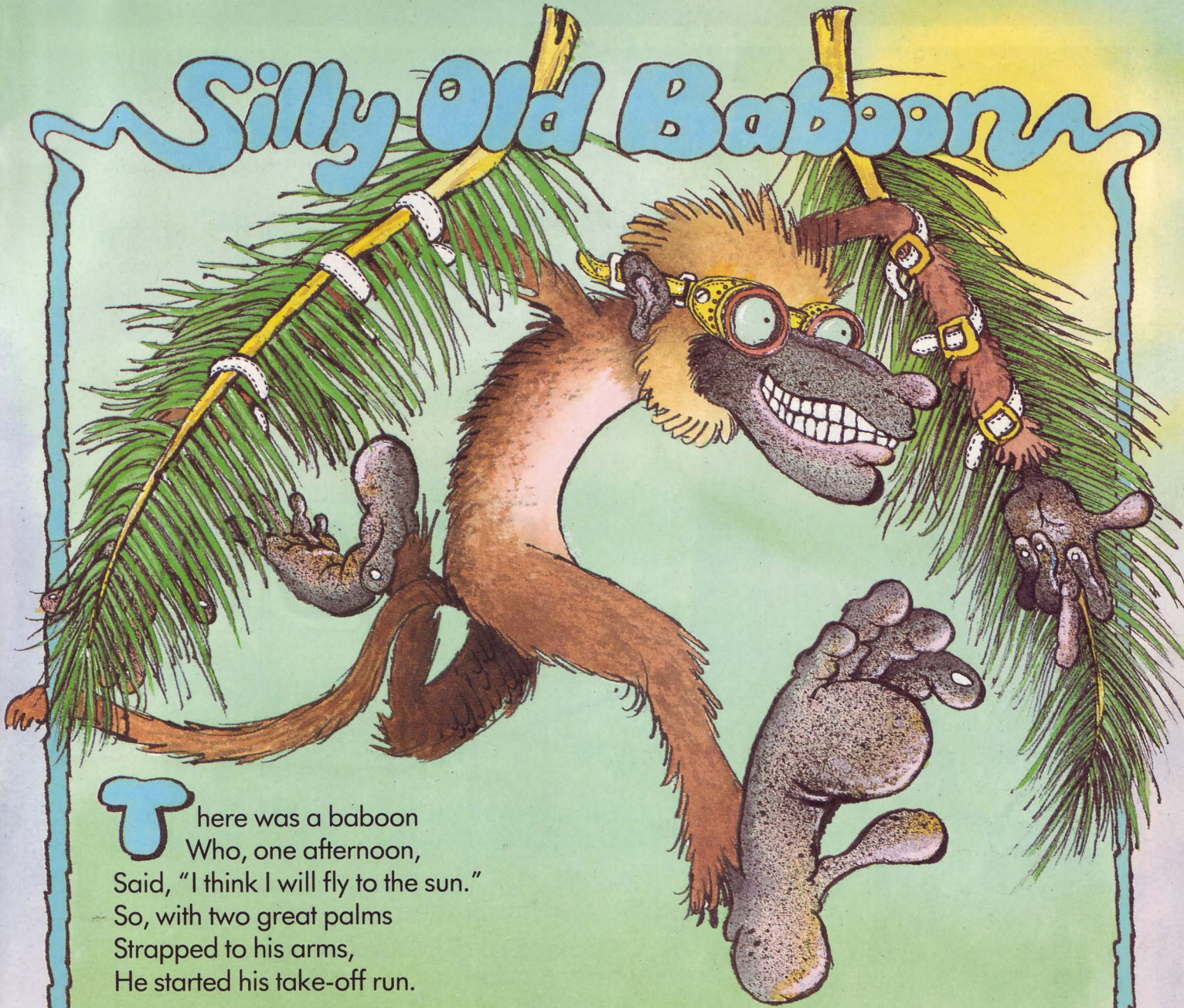
It fitted exactly and as he drew his hand away the Stone shone suddenly, far brighter than the others, as though a fire blazed in its heart. The boy knew then that the god could see again, at last, and he was glad.

As he turned away from the wall, he saw that the giant king of the deep had gone, silently, content. But in the vast opening to the temple cave were two figures. He swam towards them.

They were no fish, these two. They were a man and a woman, and yet they seemed quite at home in this kingdom of the fish. At home in a way that suddenly he longed to be.



Silly Old Baboon



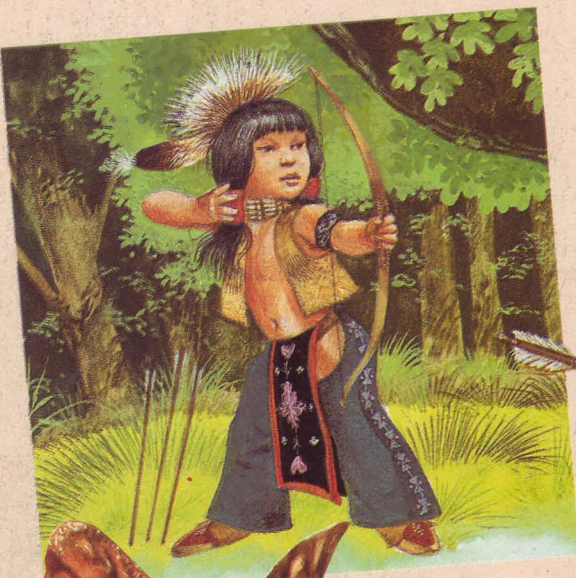
There was a baboon
Who, one afternoon,
Said, "I think I will fly to the sun."
So, with two great palms
Strapped to his arms,
He started his take-off run.

Mile after mile
He galloped in style
But never once left the ground,
"You're running too slow,"
Said a passing crow,
"Try reaching the speed of sound."

So he put on a spurt —
By gosh how it hurt!
The soles of his feet caught fire.
There were great clouds of steam
As he raced through a stream
But he still didn't get any higher.

Racing on through the night,
Both his knees caught alight
And smoke billowed out from his rear.
Quick to his aid
Came a fire brigade
Who chased him for over a year.

Many moons passed by.
Did Baboon ever fly?
Did he ever get to the sun?
I've just heard today
That he's well on his way!
He'll be passing through Acton at one.



IN PART 7 OF

STORY Teller 2

Stories read by
SHEILA HANCOCK, IAN LAVENDER,
FLOELLA BENJAMIN & MORAG HOOD

Watch out! or **THE JU-JU MAN** might use
his black magic to lure you into his cave

A little Indian brave takes aim with his
bow and arrow—but a more fearsome hunter changes
everything for **LITTLE BEAR AND THE BEAVER**

A young fairy forgets to frown and remembers
to be kind: and that's how
LARKSPUR GETS HER WINGS

Blackbirds sing. Ladybirds and Robins
have songs sung about them. So why
isn't there **A SONG FOR SLUG?**

PLUS
GOBBOLINO AND THE
LITTLE WOODEN HORSE
TRAVELLER NED
WINDY NIGHTS

