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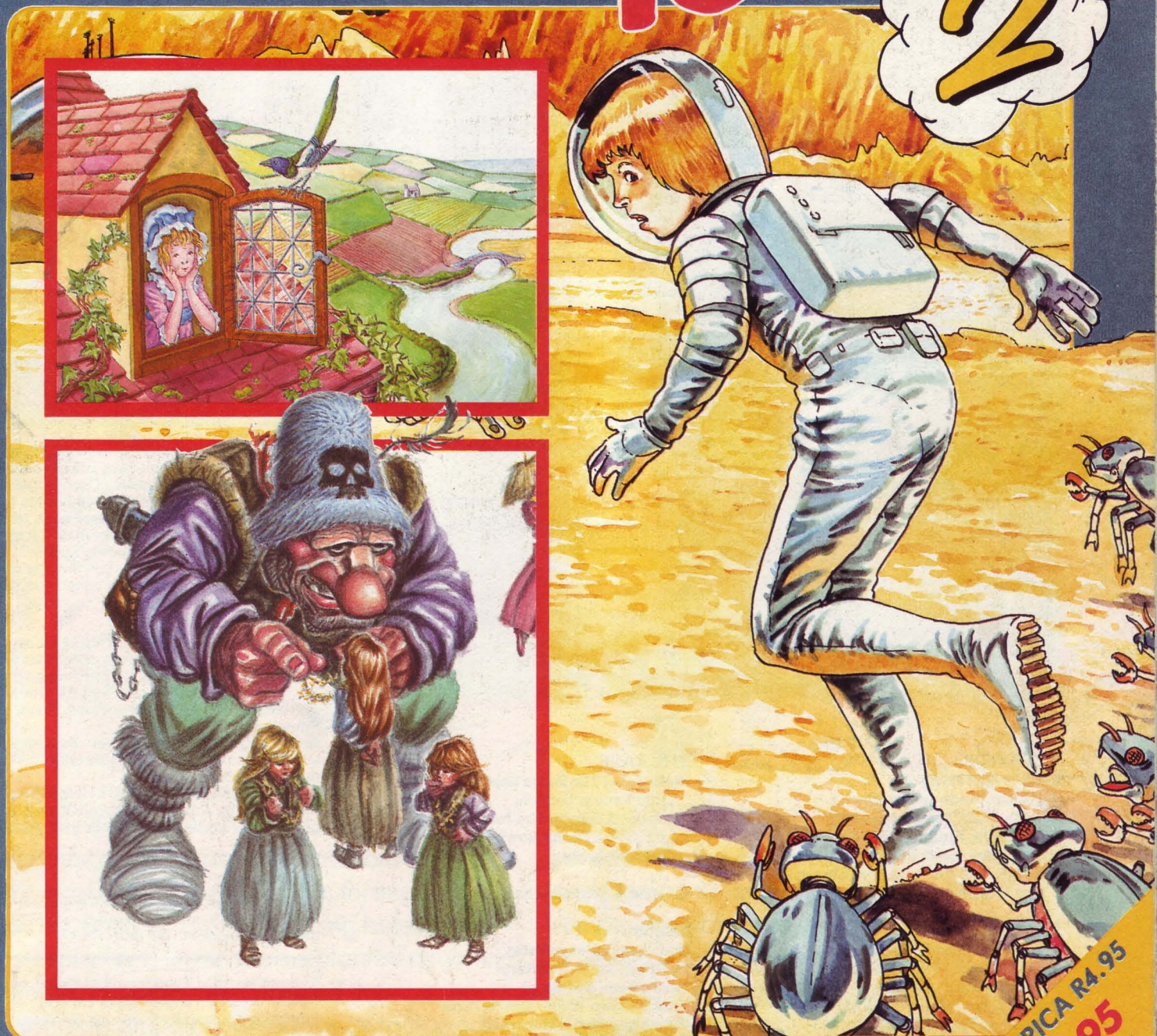
PART 9

STORY

Teller

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

2



A Marshall Cavendish Publication

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STORY Teller 2

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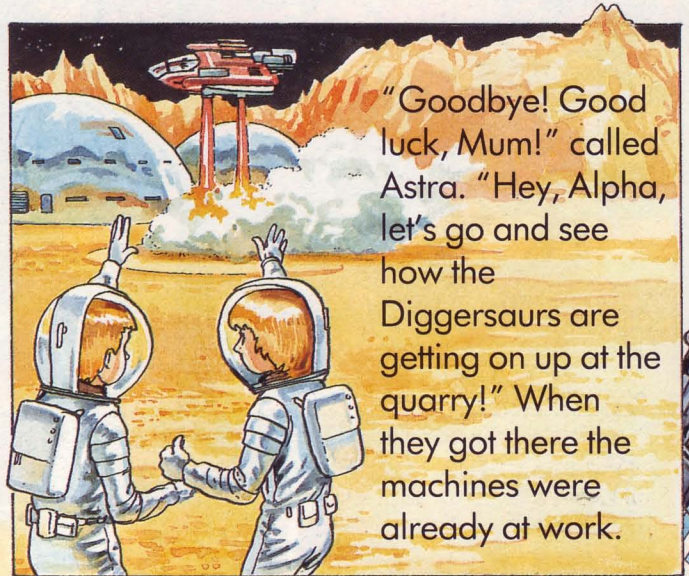
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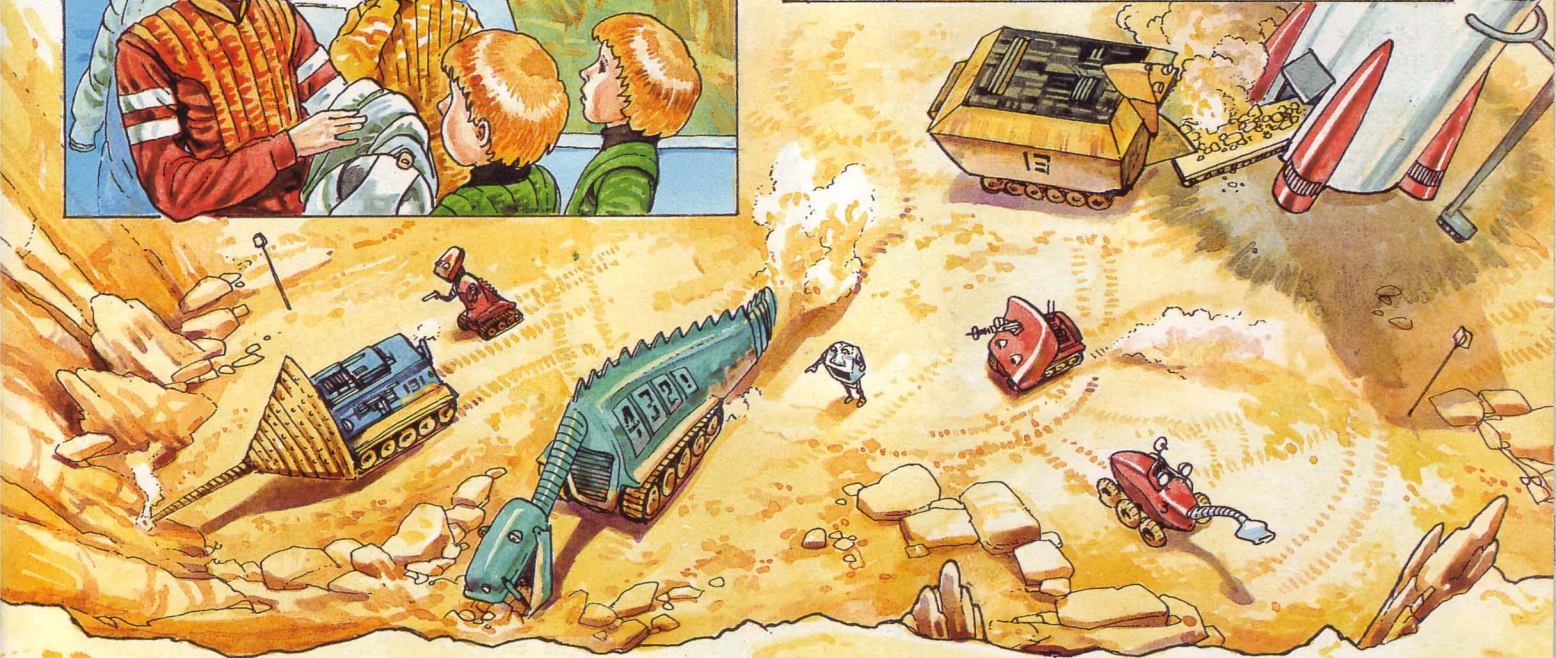
DIGGERSAUR

THE PLACE - A LONELY PLANET IN A FAR-OFF GALAXY
THE TIME - JUST A FEW HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW

"Alpha! Astra! Come here!" Mining engineer Orion Belt called his children. "Your mother has dreadful toothache — I must fly to Space Station Dentifon. The Terror-dactyls haven't given us any trouble for a while, but stay near the Homedome."
"Okay, Dad."



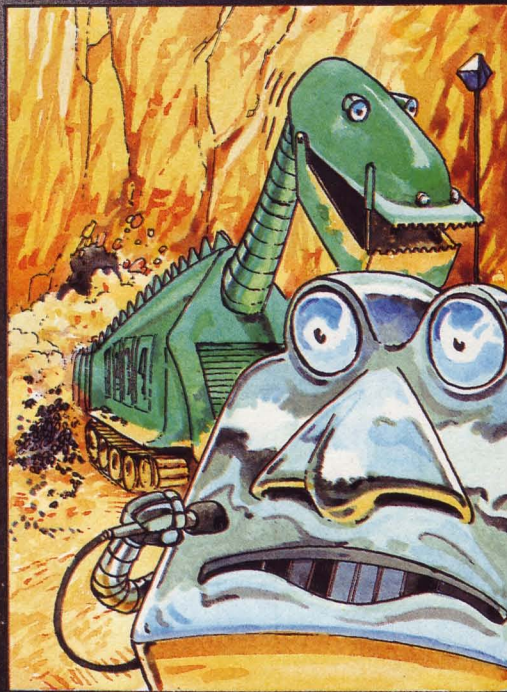
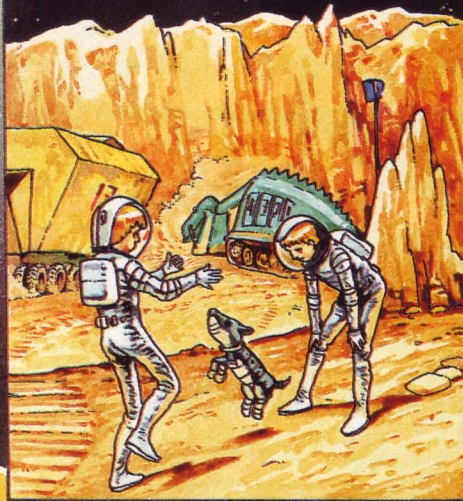
"Goodbye! Good luck, Mum!" called Astra. "Hey, Alpha, let's go and see how the Diggersaurs are getting on up at the quarry!" When they got there the machines were already at work.



With his X-ray eyes, Archie Opterix was searching out the rare and valuable crystals that made their planet famous throughout the galaxy. Borsaurus was boring holes for the explosives, Dynersaurus planted dynamite in them. Triggersaurus pressed the detonator, and a hundred tons of rock were

shattered. Sabre-tooth Gruber the Grab scooped up the crystals in his metal jaws, and Dumpersaurus carried them to the remote-control container-rockets which took off every hour. High on his spindly legs, Braintosaur the snooty computer watched all the machines and gave them their orders.

At a safe distance, Alpha and Astra played with their robot-hound, Diggedy Dog.



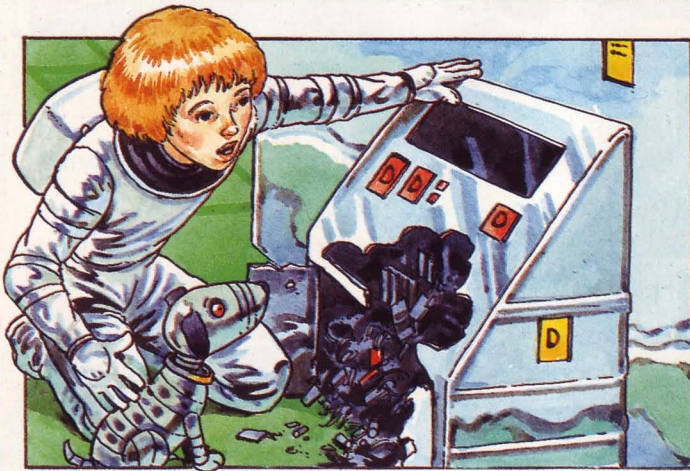
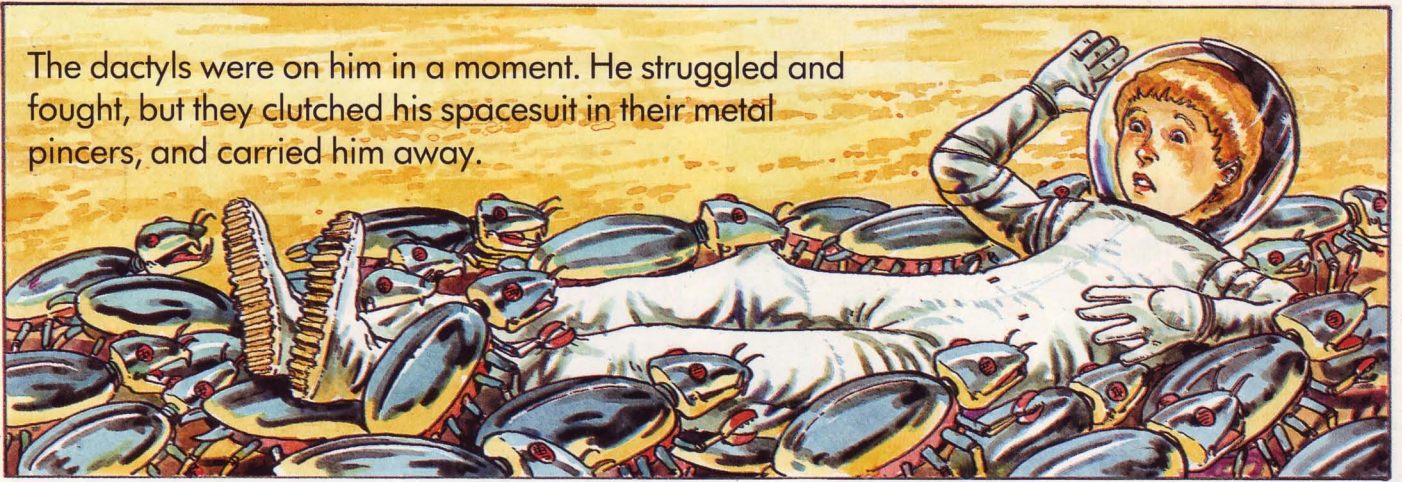
But as one Diggersaur dug in a far corner of the quarry, it uncovered a crevice in the mountainside. Out swarmed a plague of small, metal insects. Each one had ten legs. "Evacuate! Evacuate!" barked Braintosaur's voice over the loudspeakers. "Terror-dactyls!" cried Astra. "Millions of them! Run for the Homedome, Alpha!"



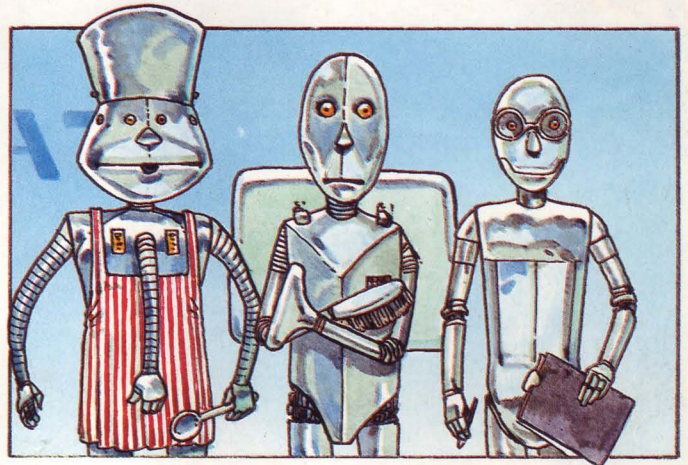
The shiny insects crawled and hopped up the quarry cliff — a sea of shining backs, writhing with legs. They came rushing towards Astra and Alpha. Diggedy Dog barked, snarled, whimpered, then turned tail and ran. Even the Diggersaurs retreated.

Astra was quick on her feet. With the dactyls close behind her — clicking like a thousand knitting needles — she sped over the planet dust, and the door of the Homedome slid open to greet her. Diggedy was right behind. But Alpha had tripped!

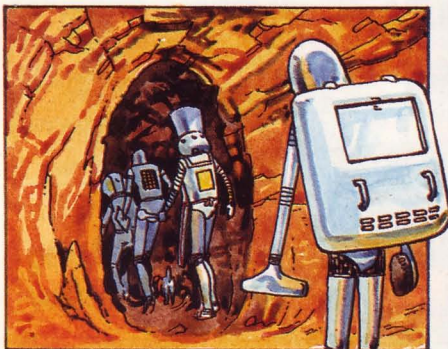
The dactyls were on him in a moment. He struggled and fought, but they clutched his spacesuit in their metal pincers, and carried him away.



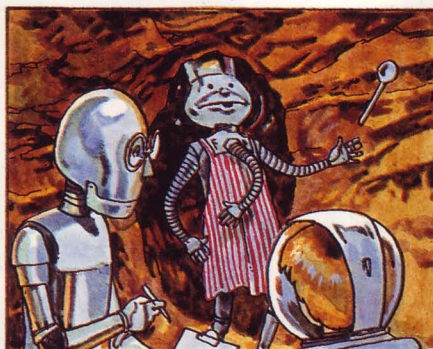
One dactyl even found its way into the Homedome. When Astra ran to the radio to call up her father, the insides had been gnawed away! "We'll have to save Alpha by ourselves, Diggedy!" she declared.



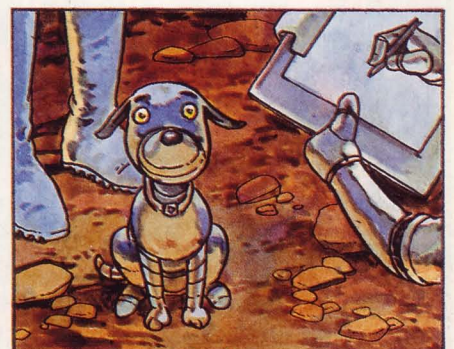
But when they set out, they were not alone. The Homedome robots came too: the chef-robot and the cleaning-robot and even the secretary. Diggedy sniffed out the dactyl trail. It led right back to the quarry.



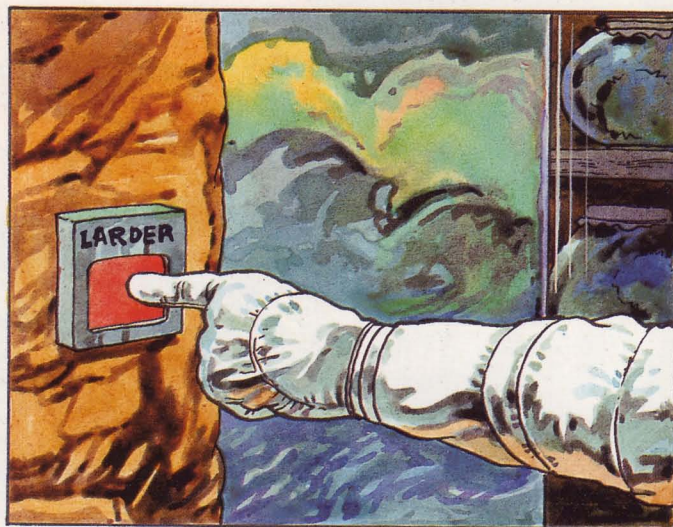
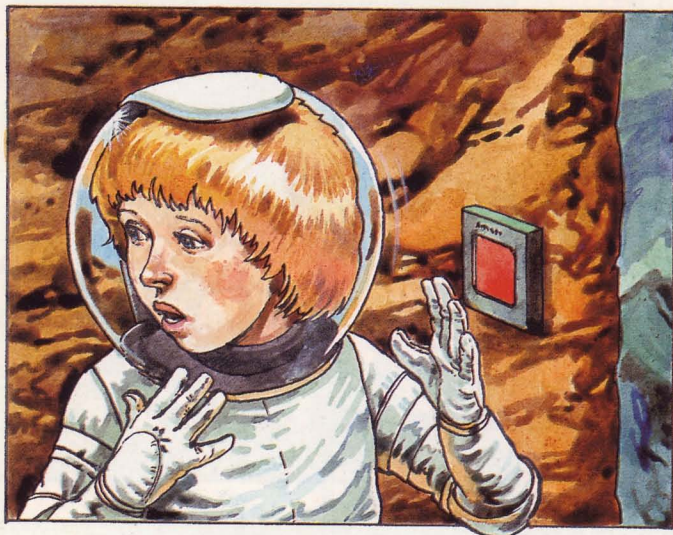
There was no sign of dactyls at the mouth of the nest. But the entrance was too narrow for the cleaning-robot who had to stay outside.



A little farther down the passage-way, the roof became too low for the tall chef-robot and he, too, had to turn back.

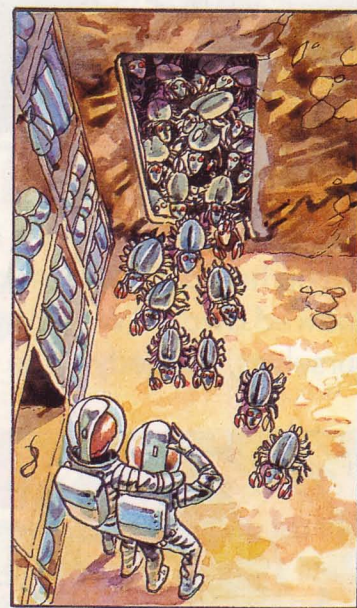
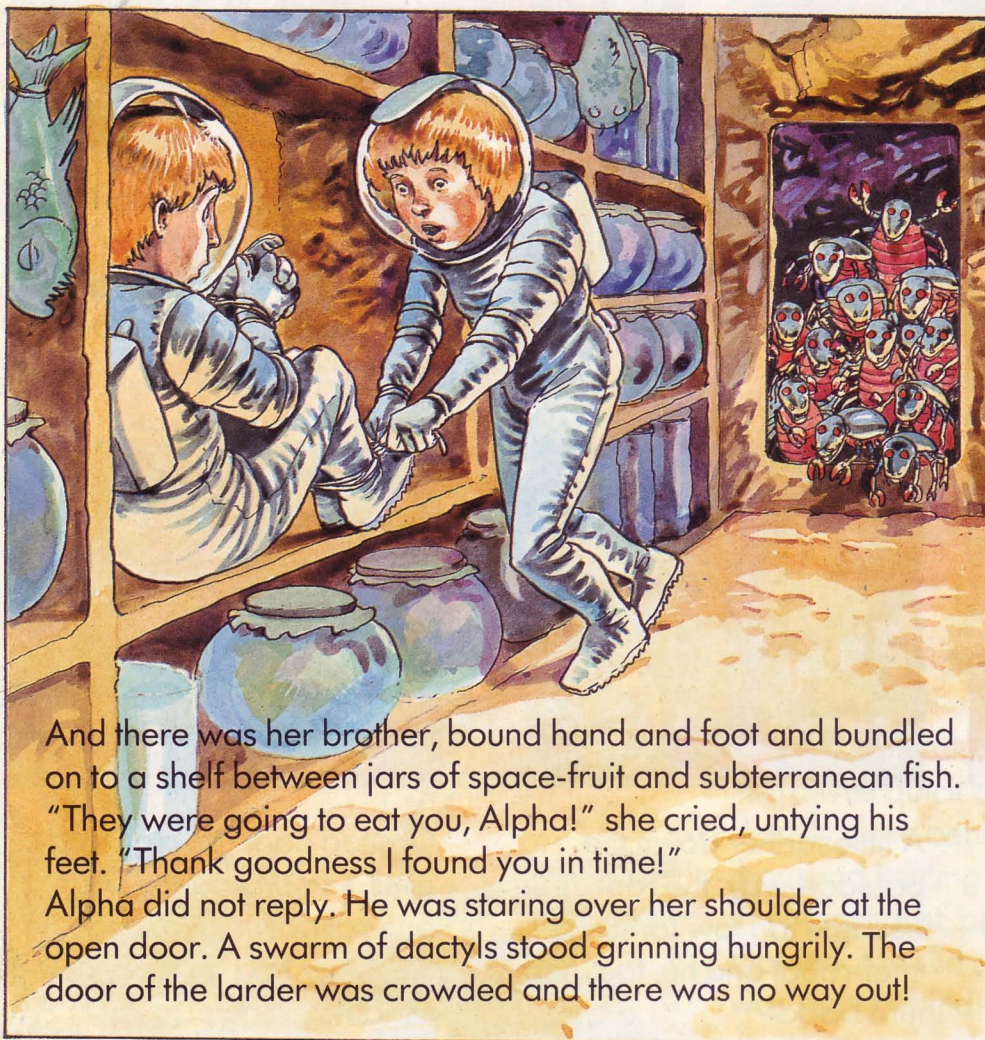


"It's too dark now for robot eyes," said Diggedy Dog, and sat down. Suddenly, the secretary had an idea, and scribbled a note.



Before Astra could ask what the note said, the dreadful click of dactyl legs echoed down the passages. "They're coming!" she gasped. "Oh Alpha, where are you? What have they done to you?"

"I'm here!" called a familiar voice from behind a metal door. Searching for the switch which would open the door, Astra saw the word LARDER. Her fingers triggered the switch. The door slid open.



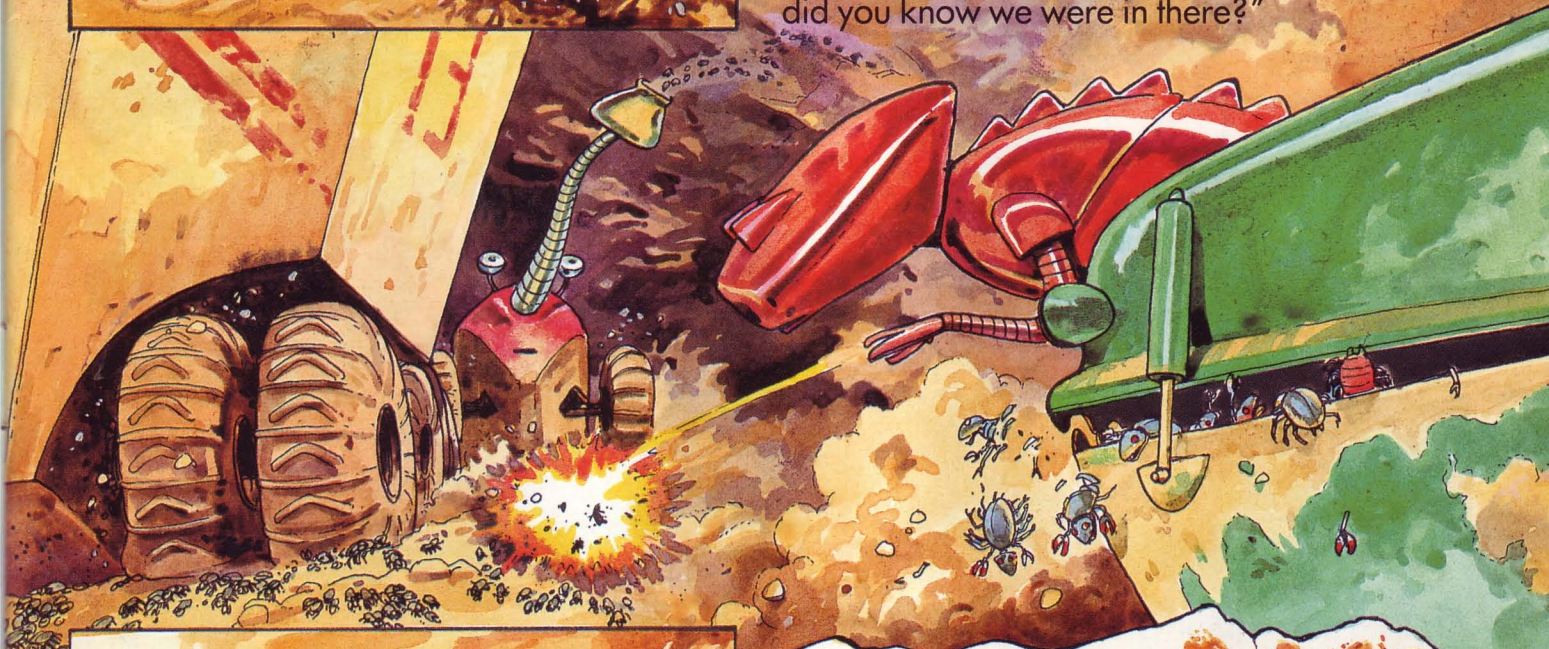
And there was her brother, bound hand and foot and bundled on to a shelf between jars of space-fruit and subterranean fish. "They were going to eat you, Alpha!" she cried, untying his feet. "Thank goodness I found you in time!" Alpha did not reply. He was staring over her shoulder at the open door. A swarm of dactyls stood grinning hungrily. The door of the larder was crowded and there was no way out!

Astra put a comforting arm round her brother. "Perhaps Dad will come back, and guess what's happened, and rescue us." But she knew it was not true. "Anyway, I hope Mum's toothache is better."

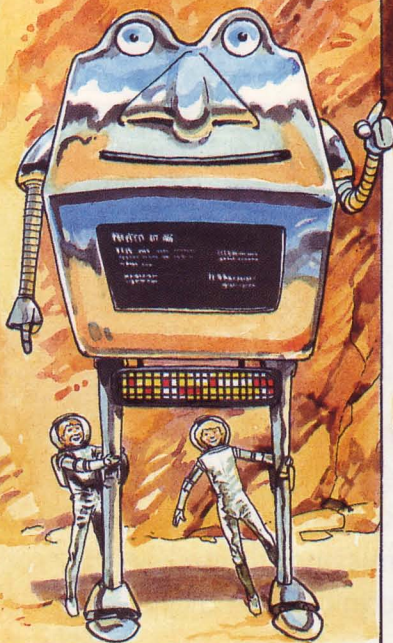
Just then, there was a noise like a dentist's drill, and with a splutter of rock and earth something came boring through the wall! "It's Borersaurus!" cried Alpha. "And Gruber's with him!"



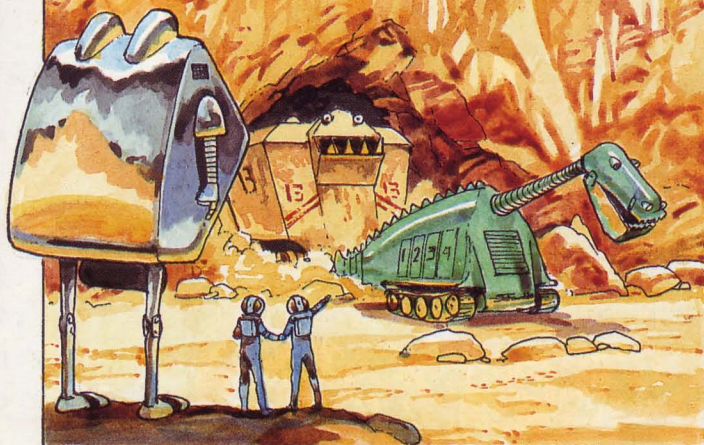
So were Dynersaurus and Archie Opterix and Triggersaurus. Gruber demolished the metal door with one bite of his iron jaws. Then the Diggersaurs were in among the dactyls — crushing, scooping, trampling, blasting, tearing, munching and crunching. Leaving the noise of battle behind them, Astra and Alpha ran down the passages towards daylight — out between the spindly legs of Braintosaur who was shouting commands to the Diggersaurs inside. "How did you know we were in there?"



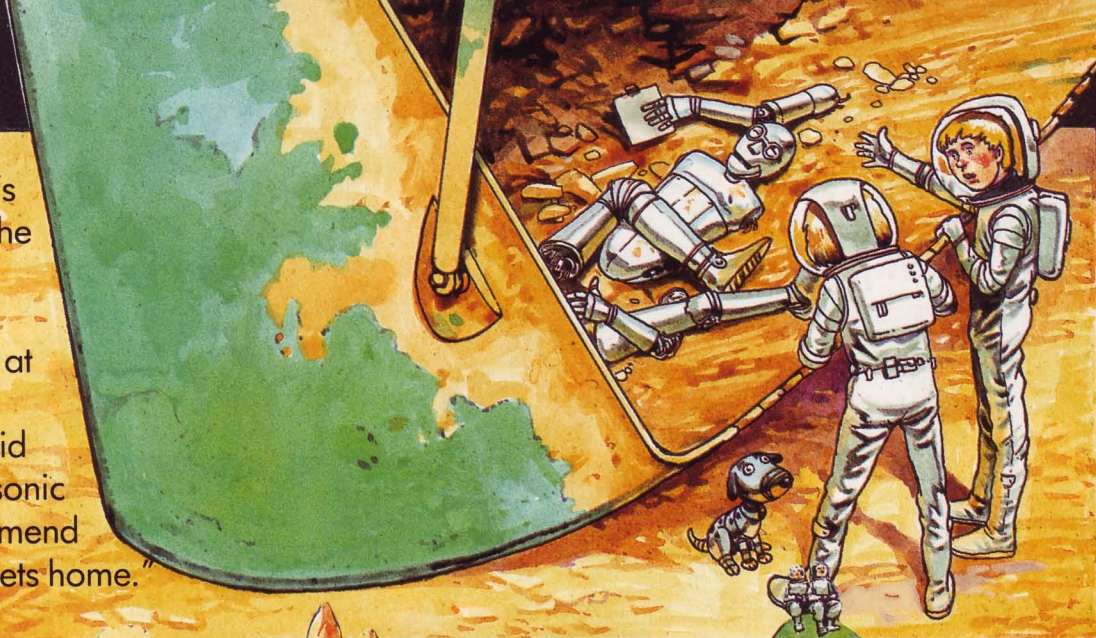
They hugged the computer's giant metal knees. "Diggedy Dog brought a message in his collar," said Braintosaur in his flat, unexcited voice. "Then Archie Opterix spotted you with his X-ray eyes. Where's the secretary-robot?"



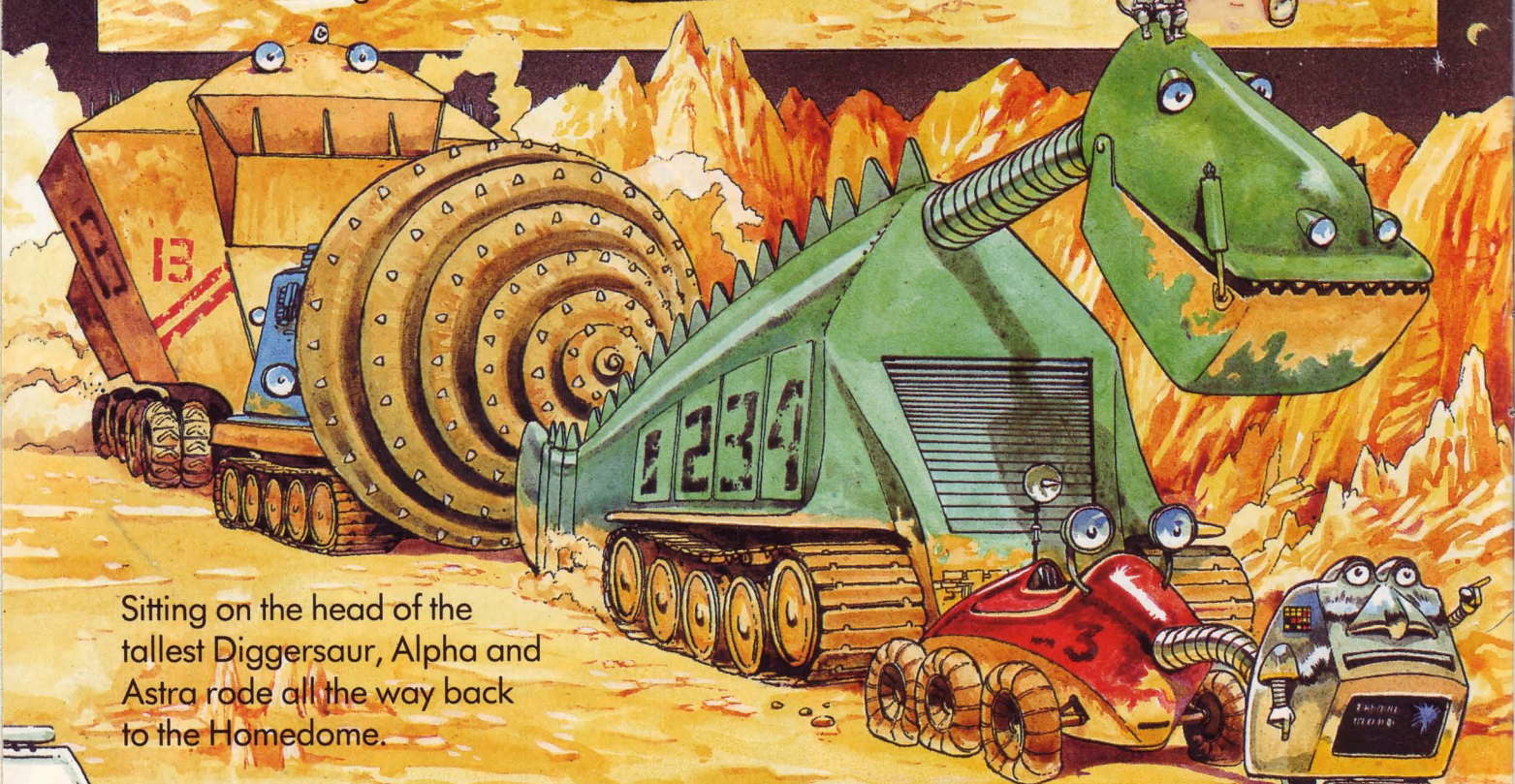
A dreadful silence fell within the quarry. Then, a deep rumbling heralded the return of the triumphant diggersaurs. They trundled out of the mountainside: the Terror-dactyls were vanquished.



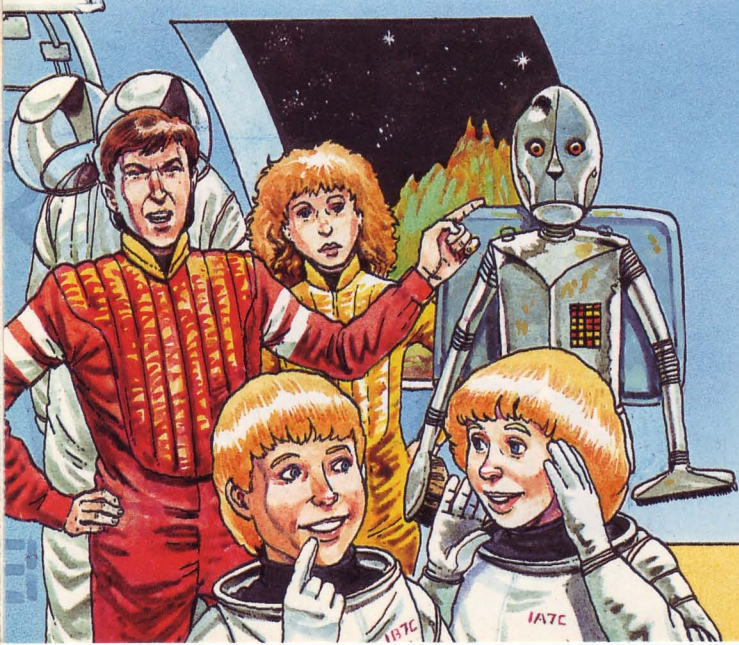
But inside Gruber's metal grab were the pieces of the secretary. He laid them down neatly at the children's feet. "Don't worry!" said Alpha. "With my sonic screwdriver I can mend him before Dad gets home."



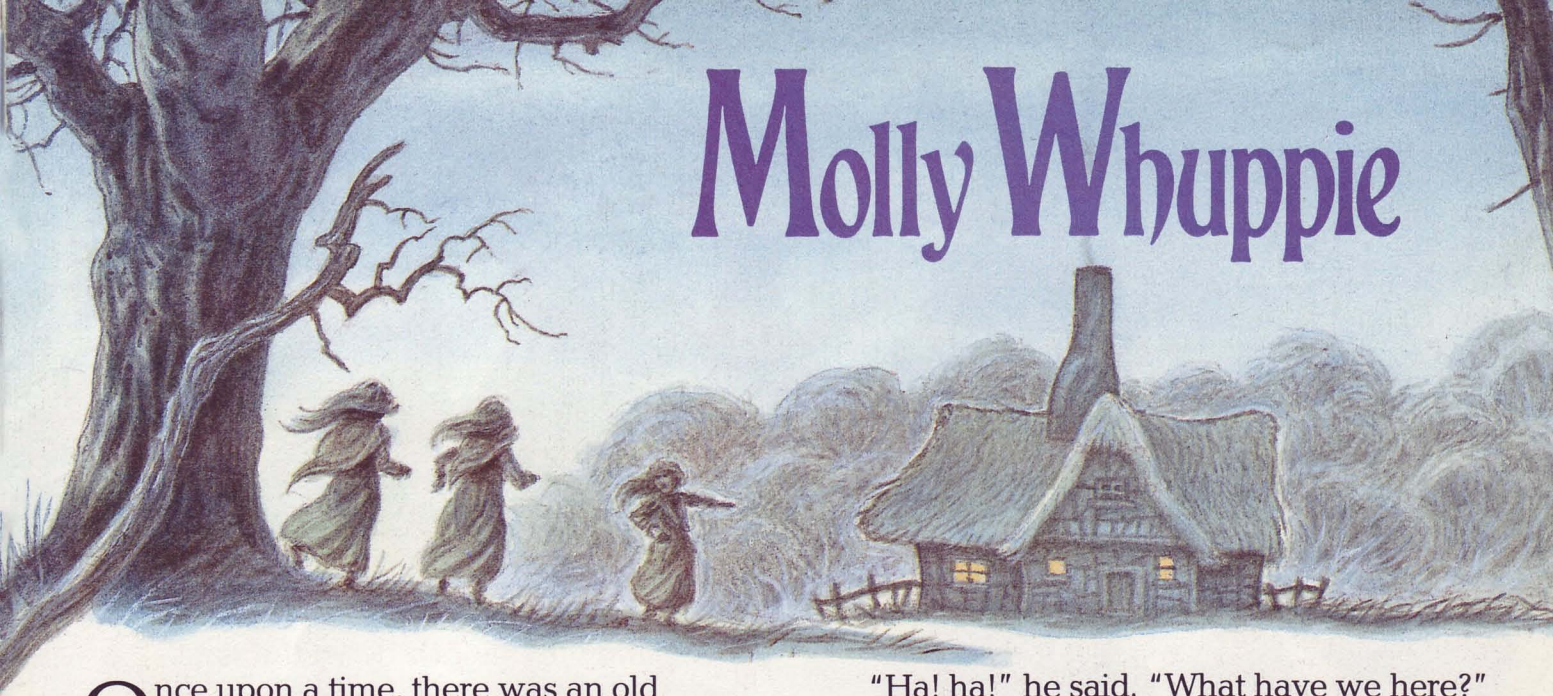
Sitting on the head of the tallest Diggersaur, Alpha and Astra rode all the way back to the Homedome.



On the step stood Diggedy Dog, wagging his metal tail. But there, too, stood Orion Belt's shuttle. Mum and Dad were already home. "Whatever have you been doing to the robots?" their father demanded. "The chef's spoons are all muddy, the cleaner's got a dent in his head, and the secretary is missing altogether. Honestly! You children can't be left alone for a moment..."



Molly Whuppie



Once upon a time, there was an old wood-cutter who had many children. Work as he might, he could hardly feed them all. One day he gave the three youngest a slice of bread and treacle each, and sent them into the forest to gather wood.

They went deep into the trees, and when they turned to go home, they had forgotten the way. They ate the bread and treacle and walked and walked until they were worn out and utterly lost. Then, just as it was getting dark, they spied a small and beaming light chinkling out from a window. So the youngest of them, who was called Molly Whuppie and was by far the cleverest, went and knocked. A woman came to the door and asked them what they wanted. Molly Whuppie said, "Something to eat."

"Eat!" said the woman. "Eat! Why, my husband's a giant, and soon as say knife, he'd eat you." But they were tired and famished, and Molly begged the woman to let them in. So at last the woman sat them at the table and gave them some bread and milk. Hardly had they taken a sup of it when there came a thumping at the door. No mistaking that — it was the giant come home.

"Ha! ha!" he said. "What have we here?"

"Three poor, cold, hungry, lost little lasses," said his wife. "You get to your supper, my man, and leave them to me." The giant said nothing, sat down and ate up his supper — but between bites he looked at the children.





Molly thought it high time she and her sisters were out of that house. So she woke them, and they slipped down the stairs together and out into the forest, and never stopped running till morning.

At daybreak, lo and behold, they came to another house. It stood beside a pool of water full of wild swans, and stone statues, and a thousand windows — and it was the house of the King. So Molly went in, and told her story to the King.

The King listened, and when it was finished, said, "Well, Molly, that's one

Now the giant had three daughters of his own, and the giant's wife put all six of them into the same bed. For so she thought she would keep the strangers safe. But before he went to bed the giant, as if in play, hung three chains of gold round his daughters' necks, and three of golden straw round Molly's and her sisters'.

Soon the other five were fast asleep in the great bed, but Molly lay awake listening. At last she rose up softly and changed over one by one the necklaces of gold and straw. So now it was Molly and her sisters who wore the chains of gold, and the giant's three daughters chains of straw.

In the middle of the night the giant came tip-toeing into the room and, groping with finger and thumb, he plucked up out of bed the three children with the straw necklaces, carried them downstairs, and bolted them up in his great cellar.





thing done and done well. But I could tell another thing, and that would be better." The King knew the giant of old, and he told Molly that if she would go back and steal the giant's sword that hung beside his bed, he would give her eldest sister his eldest son for a husband.

Molly smiled and said she would try.

So that very evening she muffled herself up and made her way back through the forest to the house of the giant. First she listened at the window, and heard the giant eating his supper. So she crept into the house and hid herself under his bed.

In the middle of the night Molly climbed softly up on to the great bed and unhooked the giant's sword that was dangling from its nail in the wall. Lucky it was for Molly this was not the giant's fighting sword, but only a little sword. It was heavy enough for all that, and when she came to the door, it rattled in its scabbard and woke up the giant.





Then Molly ran, and the giant ran, and they both ran, and at last they came to the Bridge of the One Hair, and Molly ran over. But not the giant, for over he could not. Instead, he shook his fist at her across the chasm in between, and shouted:

*"Woe betide ye, Molly Whuppie,
If ye e'er come back again!"*

But Molly only laughed and said:
*"Maybe twice I'll come and see ye,
If so be I come to Spain!"*

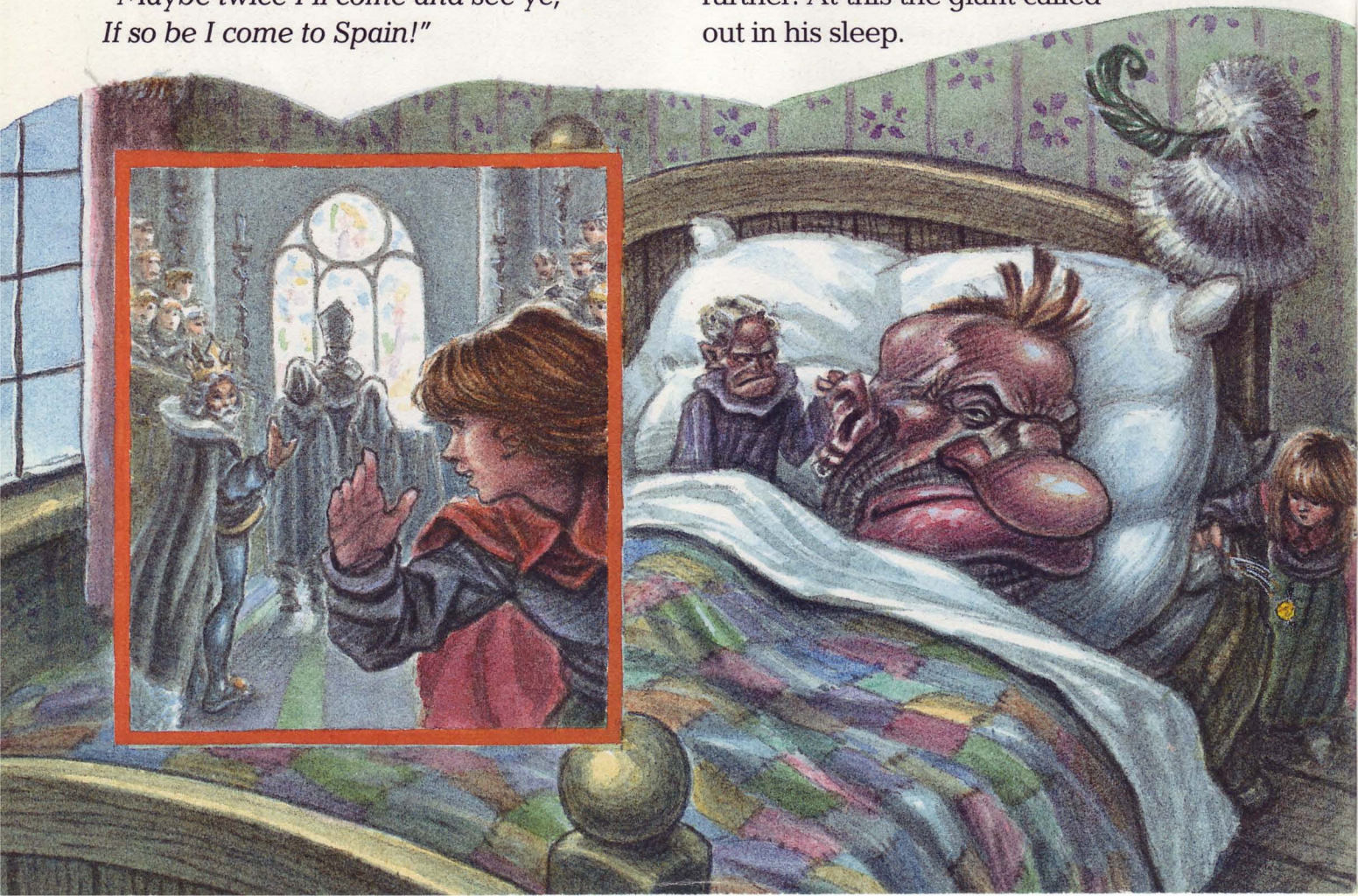
Then Molly carried off the sword to the King, and her eldest sister married the King's eldest son.

"Well," said the King, when the wedding was over, "that was a better thing done, Molly, and done well. But I know another, and that's better still. Steal the purse that lies under the giant's pillow, and I'll marry your second sister to my second son."

Molly laughed and said she would try.

So she muffled herself up, and stole off through the forest to the giant's house, and there he was, guzzling as usual at supper. This time she hid herself in his linen cupboard. A stuffy place that was.

About the middle of the night, she crept out, took a deep breath, and pushed her fingers just a little bit between his two pillows. The giant stopped snoring and sighed . . . but soon began to snore again. Then Molly slid her fingers in a little bit further. At this the giant called out in his sleep.





And his wife said, "Lie easy, man! It's those bones you had for supper."

Then Molly pushed in her fingers a little bit further, and they felt the purse. But as she drew out the purse, a gold piece dropped out of it and clanked on to the floor, and at the sound of it the giant woke.

Then Molly ran, and the giant ran, and they both ran. And they both ran and ran until they came to the Bridge of the One Hair. And Molly got over, but the giant stayed, for get over he could not. Then he cried out across the chasm:



*"Woe betide ye, Molly Whuppie,
If ye e'er come back again!"*

But Molly only laughed and called back:
*"Once again I'll come to see ye,
If so be I come to Spain!"*

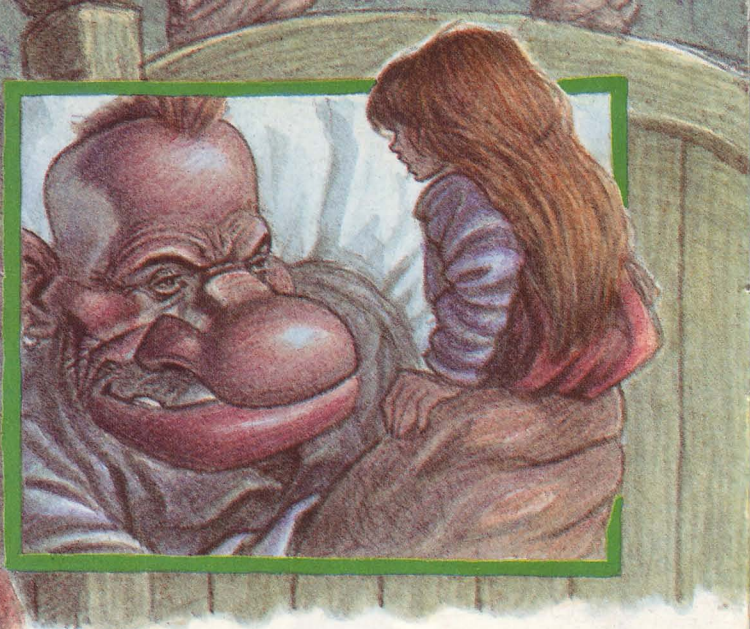
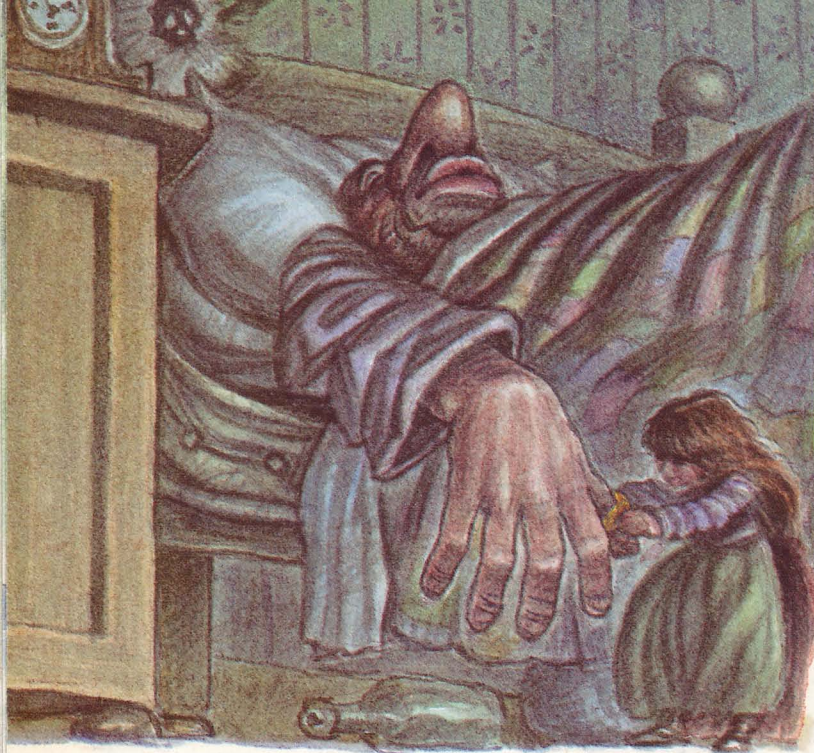
So she took the purse to the King, and her second sister married his second son. There were great rejoicings.

"Well, well," said the King to Molly, when the feasting was over, "that was yet a better thing done, and done for good. But I know a better yet, and that's the best of all. Steal the giant's ring for me, and you shall have my youngest son for yourself."



Molly laughed and looked at the King's youngest son, frowned, then laughed again, and said she would try. This time, when she had crept into the giant's house, she hid beside the chimney.

At dead of night, when the giant was snoring, she stepped out and crept towards the bed. By good chance the giant lay on his back, with his arm hanging down out over the bedside, and it was the arm that had the hand at the end of it on which was the thumb that wore the ring.



First Molly wetted the giant's thumb, then she tugged softly and softly at the ring. Little by little it slid down — but just as Molly slipped it off the giant woke with a roar, clutched at her, gripped her, and lifted her clean up over his head.

"Ah-ha! Molly Whuppie!" says he. "Once too many is never again. Aye, and if I'd done the ill to you as the ill you have done to *me*, what would I be getting for my pains?"

"Why," says Molly, "I'd bundle you up in a sack, and I'd put the cat and dog inside with you, and a needle and thread and a great pair of scissors, and I'd hang you up on the wall, be off to the wood, cut the thickest stick I could get, come home, take you down, and beat you to a jelly. *That's* what I'd do!"

"Ha-ha-ha! And that, Molly," says the giant, chuckling to himself, "that's just what I'll be doing with you." So he rose and fetched a sack, put Molly into the sack, and the cat and dog besides, and a needle and thread, and a stout pair of scissors, and hung her up on the wall. Then away he went into the forest to cut a club.

When he was well gone, Molly, stroking the dog with one hand and the cat with the other, sang out in a high, clear, happy voice, "Oh, if only *everybody* could see what I see!"

"See, Molly?" said the giant's wife. "What do you see?"

But Molly only said, "Oh, if only *everybody* could see what I see. Oh!"

At last the giant's wife *begged* Molly to let her see what Molly saw. Then Molly took the scissors and cut a hole in the corner of the sack, jumped out, helped the giant's wife up into it, and, as fast as she could, sewed up the hole with needle and thread.





It was pitch black in the sack, so the giant's wife saw nothing, and she soon asked to be let out again. Molly never answered her, but hid behind the door.

Home at last came the giant, with a wood club in his hand. And he began to thump the sack with the club. His wife cried, "Stop, man, stop! It's me, man. Oh, oh, man, it's me, man!" But the dog barked and the cat squalled, and he did not hear her voice.

Then Molly crept softly out from behind the door. But the giant saw her. He gave a roar. And Molly ran, and the giant ran, and they both ran, and they ran and they ran and they ran — till they came to the Bridge of the One Hair. And Molly skipped over it. But the giant stayed, for he could not. And he cried out after her in a dreadful voice:



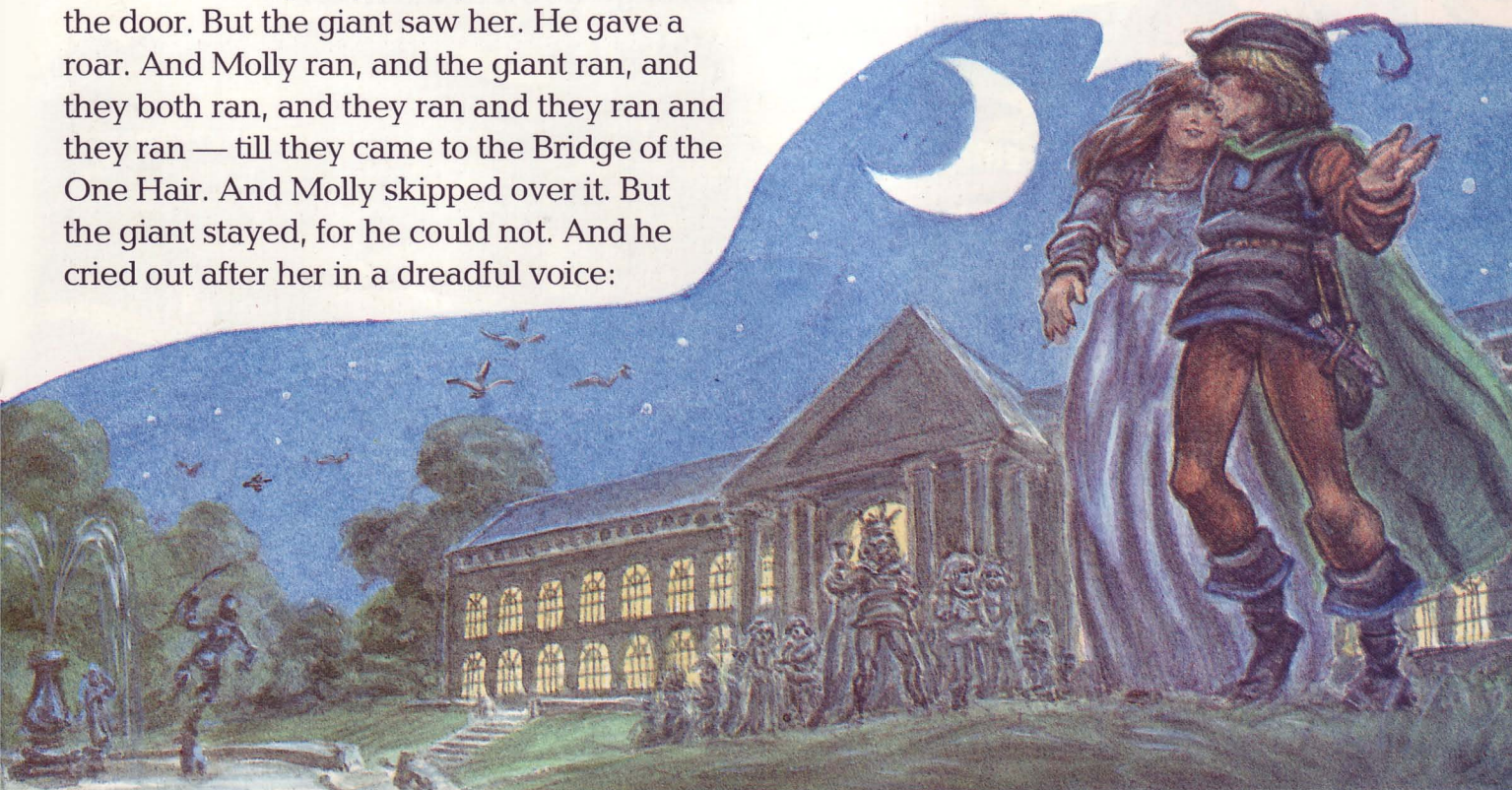
*"Woe betide ye, Molly Whuppie,
If ever ye come back again!"*

But Molly waved her hand at the giant and flung back her head:

*"Never again I'll come to see ye,
Though so be I come to Spain!"*

Then Molly ran off with the ring in her pocket, and she was married to the King's youngest son, and there was a feast that was a finer feast than all the feasts that had ever been in the King's house before, and there were lights in all the windows.

Lights so bright that all the dark long the wild swans swept circling in space under the stars. But though there were guests by the hundred from all parts of the country, the giant never so much as gnawed a bone!





YOUNG KATE

A long time ago old Miss Daw lived in a narrow house on the edge of the town, and young Kate was her little servant. One day Kate was sent up to clean the attic windows, and as she cleaned them she could see all the meadows that lay outside the town. So when her work was done she said to Miss Daw, "Mistress, may I go out to the meadows?"

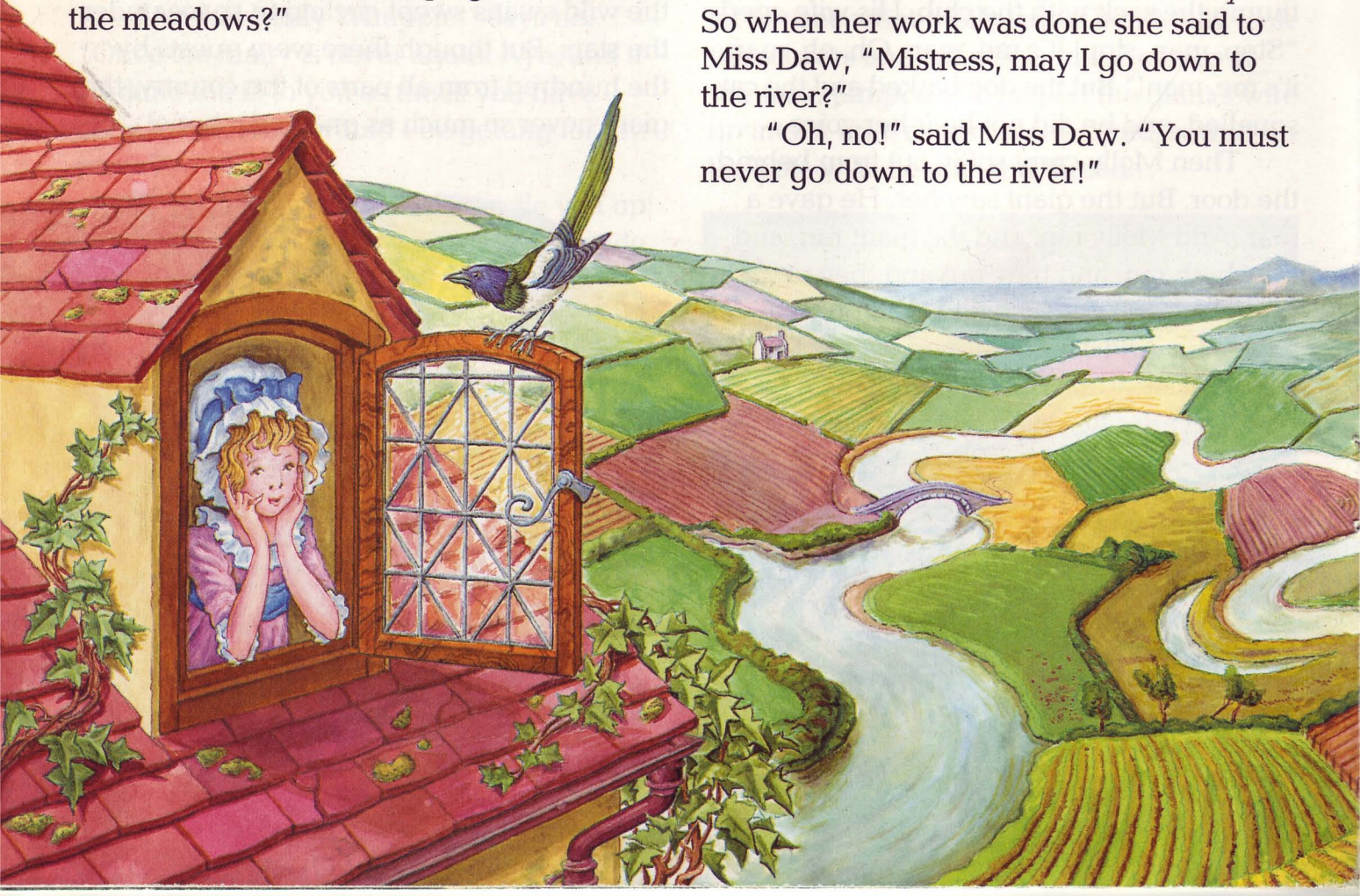
"Oh, no!" said Miss Daw. "You mustn't go in the meadows."

"Why not, Mistress?"

"Because you might meet the Green Woman. Shut the gate, and get on with your sewing."

The next week Kate cleaned the windows again, and as she cleaned them she saw the river that ran in the valley. So when her work was done she said to Miss Daw, "Mistress, may I go down to the river?"

"Oh, no!" said Miss Daw. "You must never go down to the river!"



"Why ever not, Mistress?"

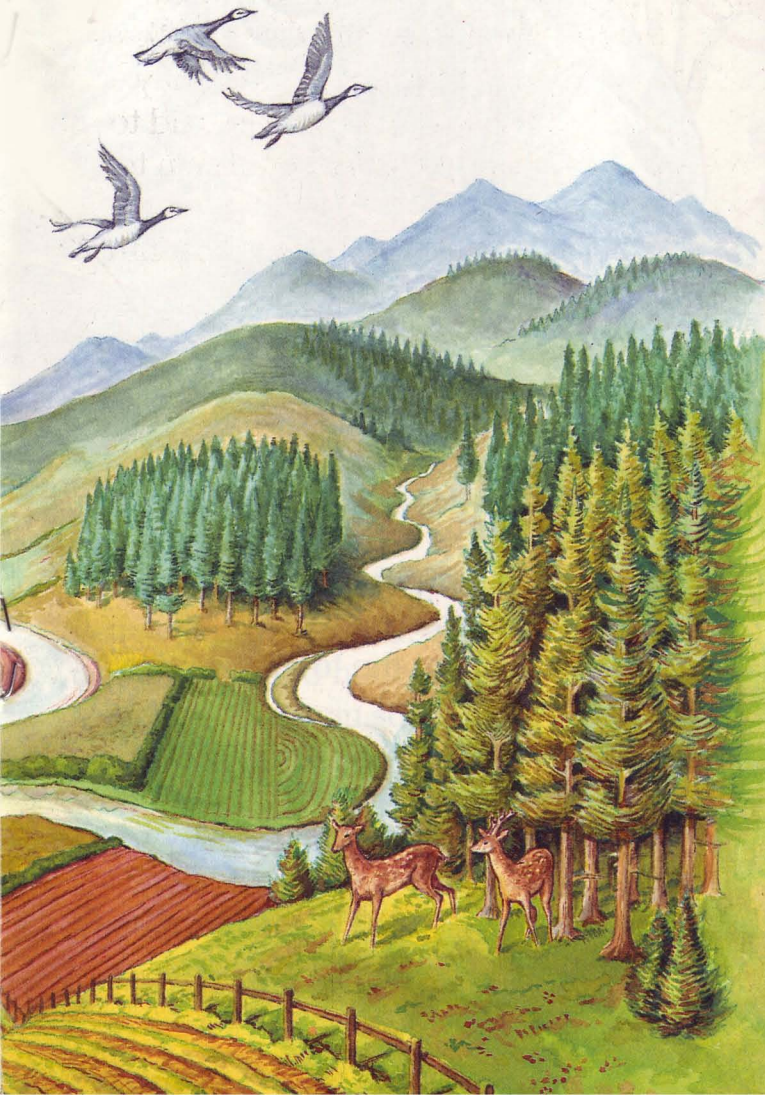
"Because you might meet the River King. Bar the door, and polish the brasses."

The next week when Kate cleaned the attic windows, she saw the woods that grew up the hillside. And after her work was done she went to Miss Daw and said, "Mistress, may I go up to the woods?"

"Oh, no!" said Miss Daw. "Don't ever go up to the woods!"

"Oh, Mistress, why not?"

"Because you might meet the Dancing Boy. Draw the blinds, and peel the potatoes."



Miss Daw sent Kate no more to the attic, so she stayed in the house and mended the stockings, and polished the brass, and peeled the potatoes. Then Miss Daw died, and Kate had to find another place to live.

Her new home was in the town on the other side of the hills, and as Kate had no money to ride, she was obliged to walk. But she did not walk by the road. As soon as she could she went into the fields, and the first thing she saw there was the Green Woman planting flowers.



and the Green Woman said, "For every flower you plant, you shall always pluck fifty."

Then Kate went on to the valley where the river ran, and the first thing



"Good morning, young Kate," said she. "And where are you going?"

"Over the hill to the town," said Kate.

"You should have taken the road, if you meant to go quick," said the Green Woman, "for I let nobody pass through my meadows who does not stop to plant a flower."

"I'll do that willingly," said Kate, and she took the Green Woman's trowel and planted a daisy.

"Thank you," said the Green Woman. "Now pluck what you please."

Kate plucked a handful of flowers,

she saw there was the River King in the reeds.

"Good day, young Kate," said he. "And where are you going?"

"Over the hill to the town," said Kate.

"You should have kept to the road if you're in anything of a hurry," said the River King, "for I let nobody pass by my river who does not stop to sing a song."

"I will, gladly," said Kate, and she sat down in the reeds and sang:

Early one morning
Just as the sun was rising,
I heard a maiden sing
In the valley below:
O, don't deceive me,
O, never leave me,
How could you use
A poor maiden so?



"Thank you," said the River King,
"now listen to me."

And he sang song after song, while
the evening drew on, and when he had
done, he kissed her and said, "For every
song you sing, you shall always hear fifty."

Then Kate went up the hill to the
woods on the top, and the first thing she
saw there was the Dancing Boy.

"Good evening, young Kate, where
are you going?"

"Over the hill to the town."

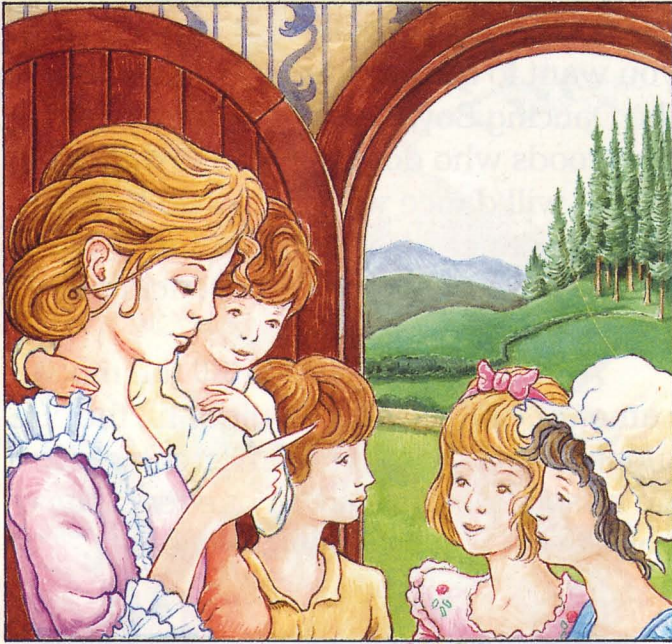
"You should have kept to the road if
you want to be there before morning," said
the Dancing Boy, "for I let nobody through
my woods who does not stop to dance."

"I will dance with joy," said Kate,
and she danced her best for him.

"Thank you," said the Dancing Boy.
"Now, look at me."

And he danced for her till the moon
came up, and danced all night till the
moon went down. When morning came
he kissed her and said, "For every dance
you dance, you shall always see fifty."





Young Kate then went on to the town, where in another little narrow house she became servant to old Miss Drew, who never let her go to the meadows, the woods, or the river, and locked up the house at seven o'clock.

But, in the course of time, young Kate married, and had children and a little servant of her own. And when the day's work was done, she opened the door and said, "Run along now, children, into the meadows, or down to the river, or up to the hill, for I shouldn't wonder but you'll have the luck to meet the Green Woman there, or the River King, or the Dancing Boy."

And the children and the servant girl would go out, and presently Kate would see them come home again, singing and dancing with their hands full of flowers.





Willie had just learned to stand on his head. Yesterday he had wobbled about but today he was as steady as if he had been born that way.

"Look, Mum, I can do it." He had practised for days and at last he had mastered it.

"So you can," his mother said, absently, busy with the baking.



"No, Mum, you're not really looking."

His mother lifted her floury hands out of the basin and turned and looked at Willie, feet in the air, his hands where his feet ought to be, his face very red, his hair dusting the kitchen floor. "Silly boy," she said, "you'll turn your brain."

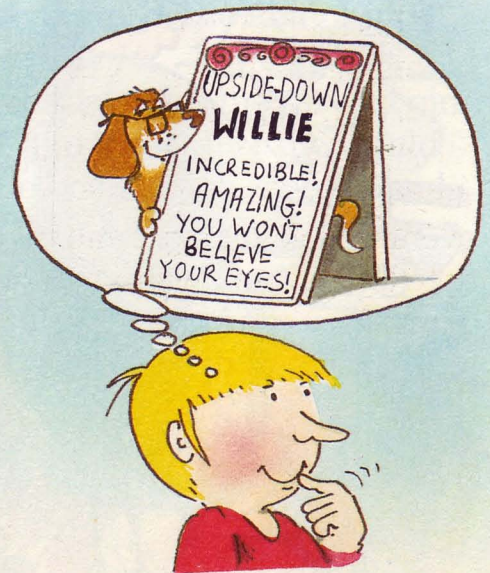


Willie flopped back and sat on the floor. The room spun round and then came to a standstill. "My brain didn't turn — but the room did," he said.

Willie came rightside up again, his red face beaming delightedly. "Do you really think so?"

"I certainly do," the postman said. "Anyone who can stand on their head for hours is wasted with their feet on the ground."

"It would be fun, working in a circus," thought Willie. He would be as good as the man on the high wire and the man on stilts. He would be Upside-Down Willie



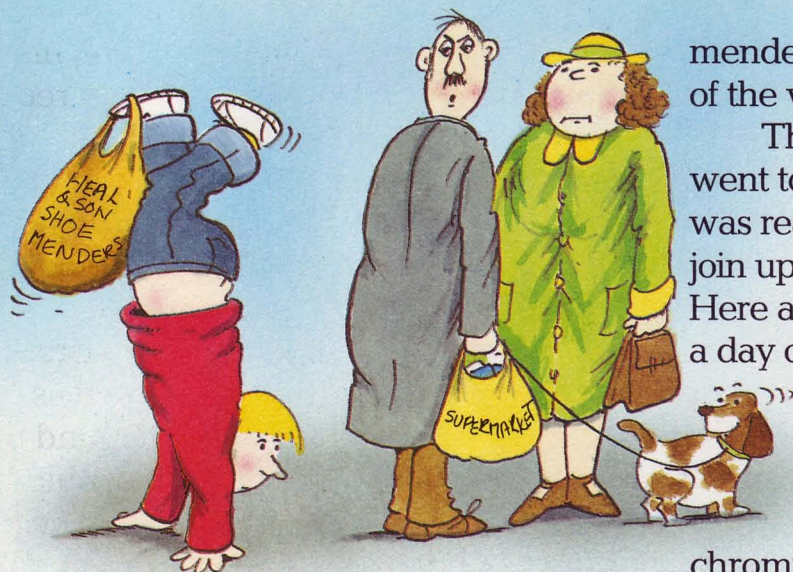
He kicked his way round the garden and then went off to play in the street. He wished there was someone he could show off to . . . and presently there was. Coming down the street towards him was the postman.

He looked at Upside-Down Willie in amazement. "That's good," he said. "That's very good, that is."

"I can stay like it for hours," Willie said. He meant minutes really, but when you are upside down time goes much slower and minutes seem like hours.

"I don't ever remember being able to do that," the postman said. "You ought to be in a circus."





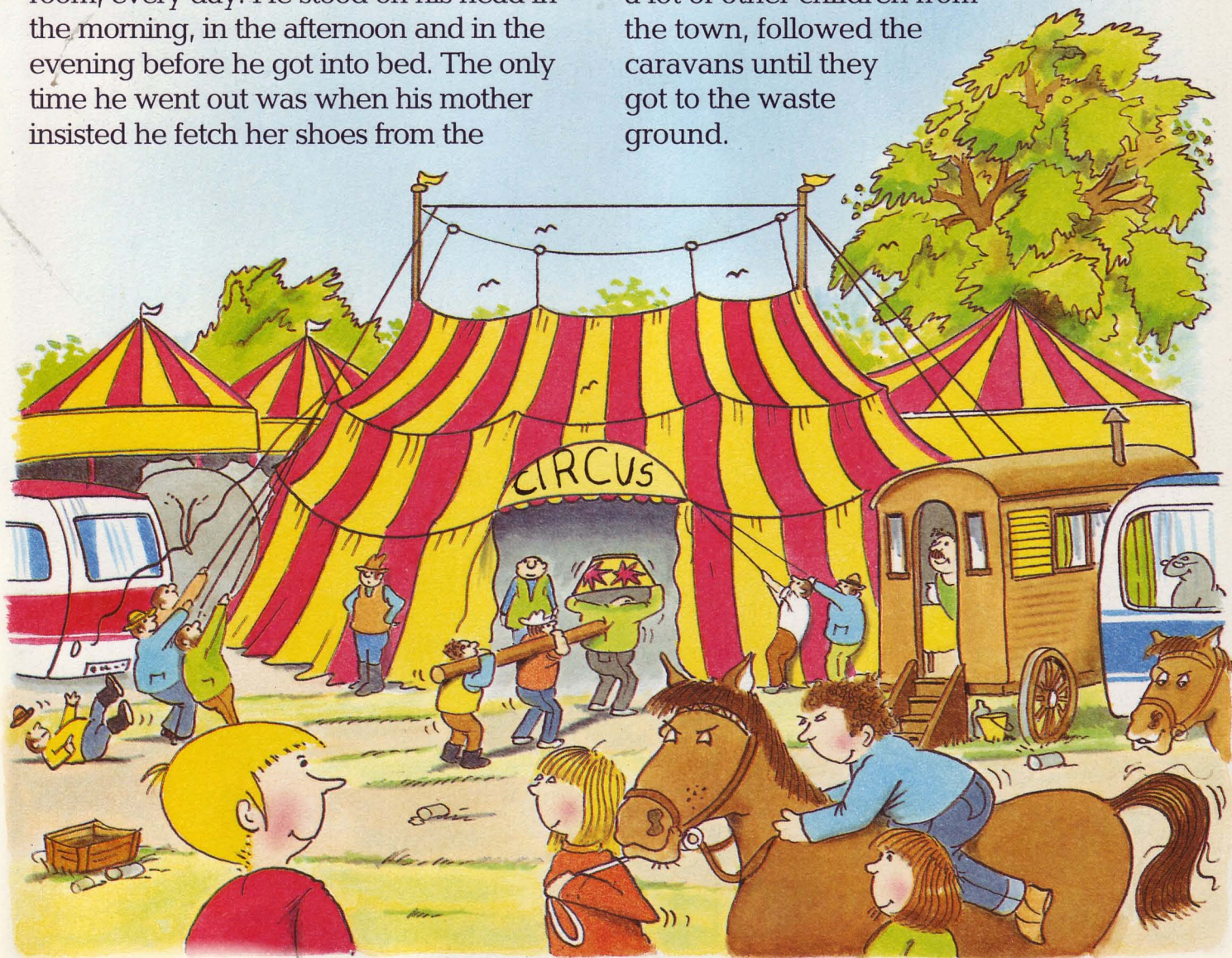
and his name would be written up in big letters on the posters outside.

All that week Willie practised in his room, every day. He stood on his head in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening before he got into bed. The only time he went out was when his mother insisted he fetch her shoes from the

menders — and even then he went most of the way on his hands.

Then, on the Friday evening, Willie went to see the circus come into town. It was really a very small one, on its way to join up with a larger one outside a big city. Here and there on their way, they stopped a day or two and put on a few performances. The money they took helped to pay their travelling expenses.

First came a string of caravans, chromium shining like silver, curtains at the tiny windows; then a few ponies ridden by boys and girls who did not look very much older than himself; and after them came two trailers. Willie, along with a lot of other children from the town, followed the caravans until they got to the waste ground.



He watched them for a long time, long after the other children had got bored and gone home. He watched while the trailers were emptied and the roundabouts were fixed and tested. He watched while the Big Top went up and the canvas walls came down round it to



make a proper little theatre. He stayed there so long that at last one of the men spoke to him. "Isn't it time you went home, sonny?"

"I want to join the circus," said Willie.

"Oh, you do, do you? And what can you do that's special?"

"I can stand on my head," replied Willie, "like this . . ." And he leaned forward, put both hands flat on the ground, gave a little spring and there he was, upside-down and straight as the pole that held the Big Top.

"Not bad," said the man slowly.

"Not bad at all."

"Can I stand on my head in the circus, then?"

"Come back tomorrow," said the man. "Right now I'm too busy to think."

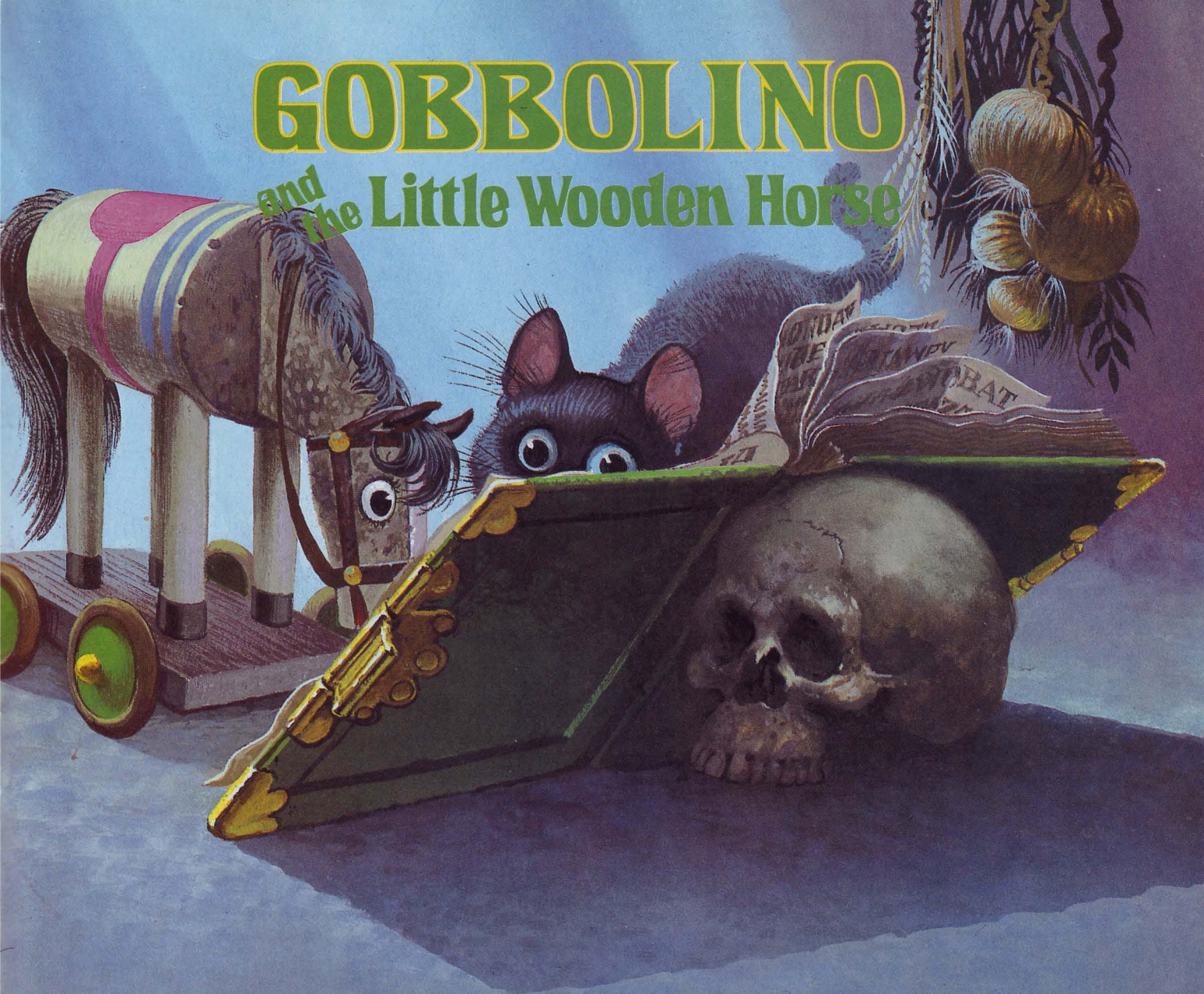
Willie went home and practised harder than ever. He could now do things like eating upsidedown — he tried drinking water that way, too, but it came down his nose and made him sneeze. But this did not stop Willie from practising. He was determined to join the circus — the very next morning.



[Join Willie at the circus in Part 10]

GOBBOLINO

and the Little Wooden Horse

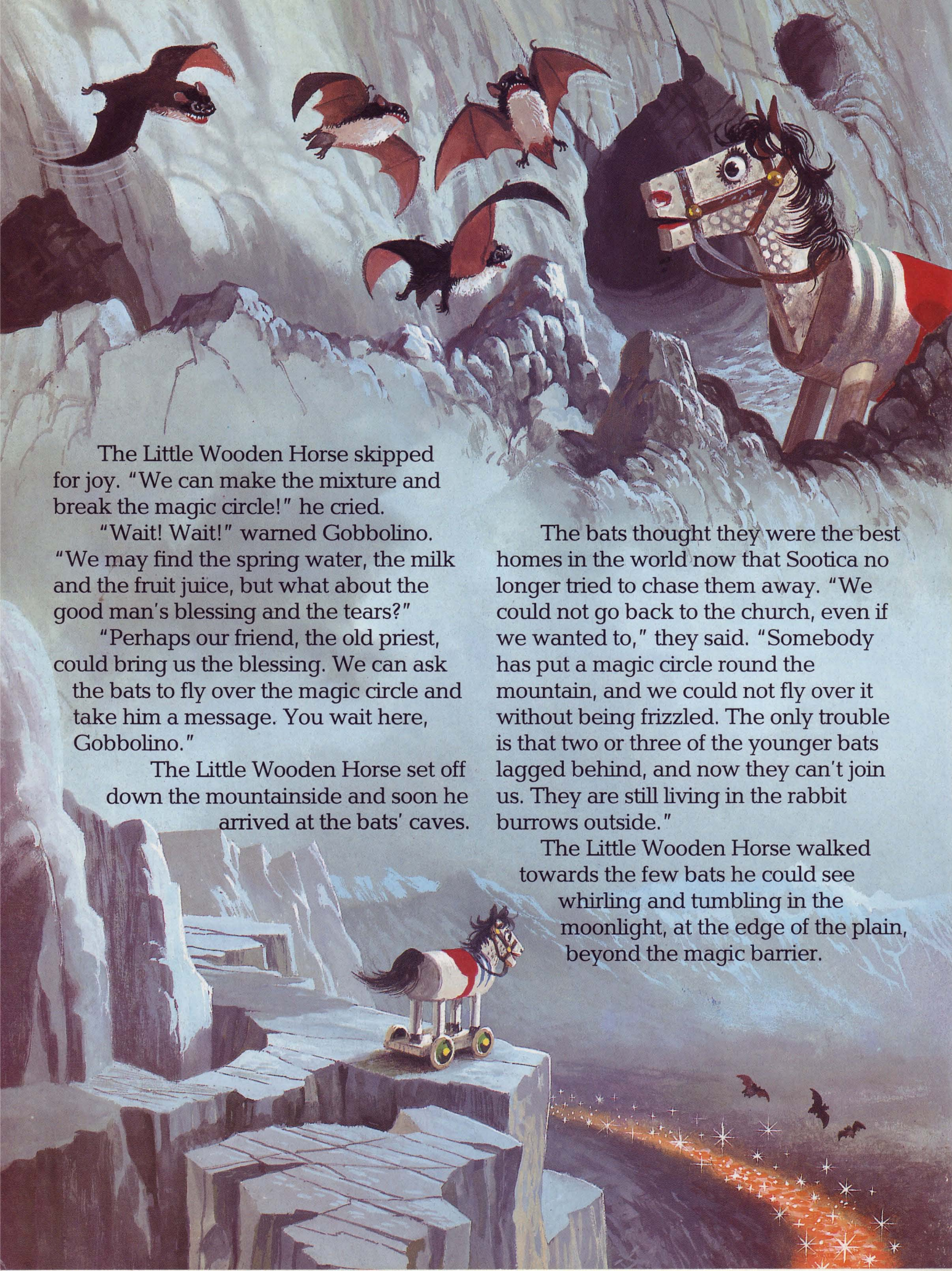


As daylight faded and the stars appeared in the sky, the witch became more and more cheerful. She tried to tempt Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse with all sorts of tasty food from her cauldron. But the two little friends were not hungry. All they could think of was the magic circle round the bottom of the mountain. The witch had told them that anyone who tried to cross it would frizzle and never be heard of again!

"I am going out for the night on my broomstick," she said, and with a cackle flew out of the cave.

The moment she was gone, Gobbolino dragged the witch's book of spells into a pool of moonlight. Together, the two friends began to read. They read every page until, at the very end, they came to some lines in tiny print:

To undo a spell use eight parts clean spring water and four parts fresh fruit juice and eight parts clean new milk. Mix all together and stir with a clean left hand, together with the blessing of a good man and five tears of true sorrow. Splash this on the spell and it shall be broken.



The Little Wooden Horse skipped for joy. "We can make the mixture and break the magic circle!" he cried.

"Wait! Wait!" warned Gobbolino. "We may find the spring water, the milk and the fruit juice, but what about the good man's blessing and the tears?"

"Perhaps our friend, the old priest, could bring us the blessing. We can ask the bats to fly over the magic circle and take him a message. You wait here, Gobbolino."

The Little Wooden Horse set off down the mountainside and soon he arrived at the bats' caves.

The bats thought they were the best homes in the world now that Sootica no longer tried to chase them away. "We could not go back to the church, even if we wanted to," they said. "Somebody has put a magic circle round the mountain, and we could not fly over it without being frizzled. The only trouble is that two or three of the younger bats lagged behind, and now they can't join us. They are still living in the rabbit burrows outside."

The Little Wooden Horse walked towards the few bats he could see whirling and tumbling in the moonlight, at the edge of the plain, beyond the magic barrier.

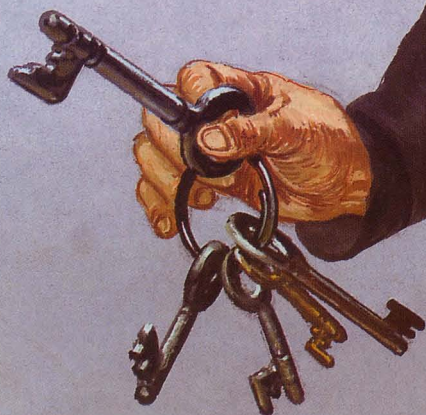
"Listen to me!" he called. "With your help the magic circle can be broken and you can come to live in the caves. All you have to do is to take a message to the old priest. Tell him that Gobbolino and I are trapped on Hurricane Mountain by a terrible magic. We need his blessing to break it."

The young bats did not want to return to the church, but finally one of them agreed to go. She arrived in the grey light of dawn, just as the priest was unlocking the door. She flew down and perched on the priest's shoulder. Then, to his amazement, she began to twitter in his ear.

At first, the twittering made no sense, but gradually the priest began to hear the words 'blessing' and 'Gobbolino'. He could not understand much more, but he could see that the bat was nervous and worried.

And then he remembered meeting Sootica the previous day! She had paused for breath as she ran past the church, and told him how Gobbolino had taken her place with the witch.

"If he is lucky, he'll escape, too, before the witch finds out. But I think I should get to the other side of the stream. You see, witches can't cross over running water. Once I'm on the other side, I'll be safe. If all goes according to plan Gobbolino will meet me there. He should come past here about midday."





But Gobbolino had not come past at midday. Perhaps the plan had gone wrong. Perhaps the bat was trying to tell him that the little cat needed his help.

"If Gobbolino has not come by noon," the priest decided, "I will set out for Hurricane Mountain."

On the Mountain, Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse were busy collecting all the things they needed to

break the spell. The witch had returned at dawn and had immediately fallen asleep. She was snoring loudly. They found an empty pumpkin which would make a good mixing bowl for the ingredients. They pushed it into the darkest corner of the cave. Then, taking two jugs and a small clay cup, they walked out on to the mountainside.

They met some wild goats who willingly filled the clay cup eight times with milk and showed them the way to a valley full of bilberry bushes. By mid-afternoon, they had crushed enough berries to fill the cup four times over with fruit juice. Then, as the sun went down, they found a spring which supplied the eight measures of clean water.

With both jugs full to the brim, the two friends began to stumble back to the



witch's cave. Long before they arrived, they could hear the witch angrily calling for them.

"Why have you been dawdling out there?" she demanded. "Didn't you hear me calling for you? I want the Little Wooden Horse to come for a ride on my broomstick."

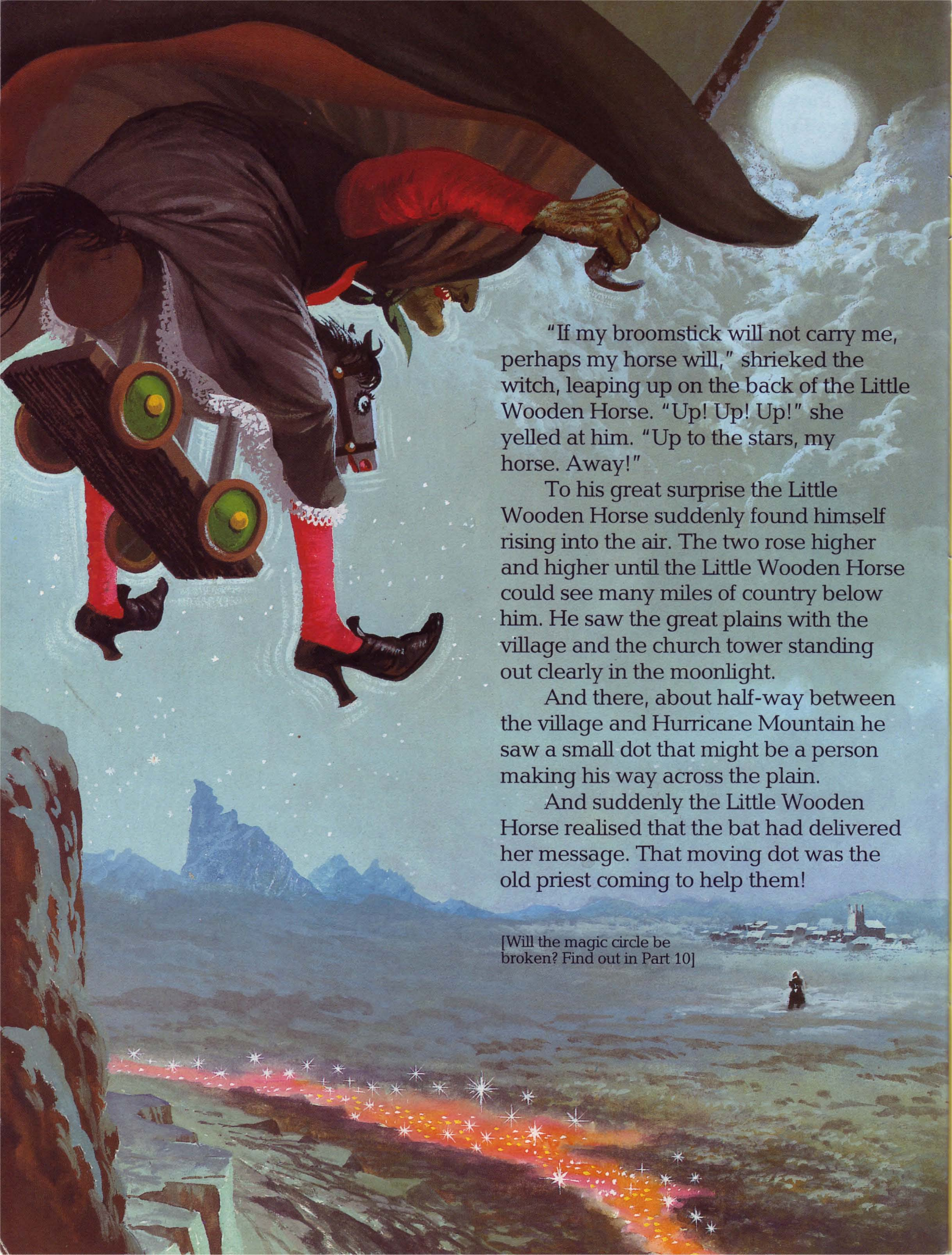
The witch went to fetch her broomstick and while her back was turned the two friends tried to empty their jugs into the pumpkin. But they were too slow. Despite her bad eyesight, the witch saw that they were up to something. She came and poked at the pumpkin which promptly fell over and emptied its contents on the floor.

"Well, you have been busy," she said as Gobbolino and the Little Wooden Horse wept tears of disappointment and sorrow into the pink mixture. "Now come along, Dobbin. Jump up behind me."

Very reluctantly, the Little Wooden Horse climbed up behind her, but the broomstick would not leave the ground.

The witch shook it and cursed at it and kicked it and finally flung it on to the floor. Only Gobbolino noticed that the spilt spell-breaker had touched the end of the broomstick! Even without a blessing, the mixture was strong enough to rob the broom of its magic.





"If my broomstick will not carry me, perhaps my horse will," shrieked the witch, leaping up on the back of the Little Wooden Horse. "Up! Up! Up!" she yelled at him. "Up to the stars, my horse. Away!"

To his great surprise the Little Wooden Horse suddenly found himself rising into the air. The two rose higher and higher until the Little Wooden Horse could see many miles of country below him. He saw the great plains with the village and the church tower standing out clearly in the moonlight.

And there, about half-way between the village and Hurricane Mountain he saw a small dot that might be a person making his way across the plain.

And suddenly the Little Wooden Horse realised that the bat had delivered her message. That moving dot was the old priest coming to help them!

[Will the magic circle be broken? Find out in Part 10]

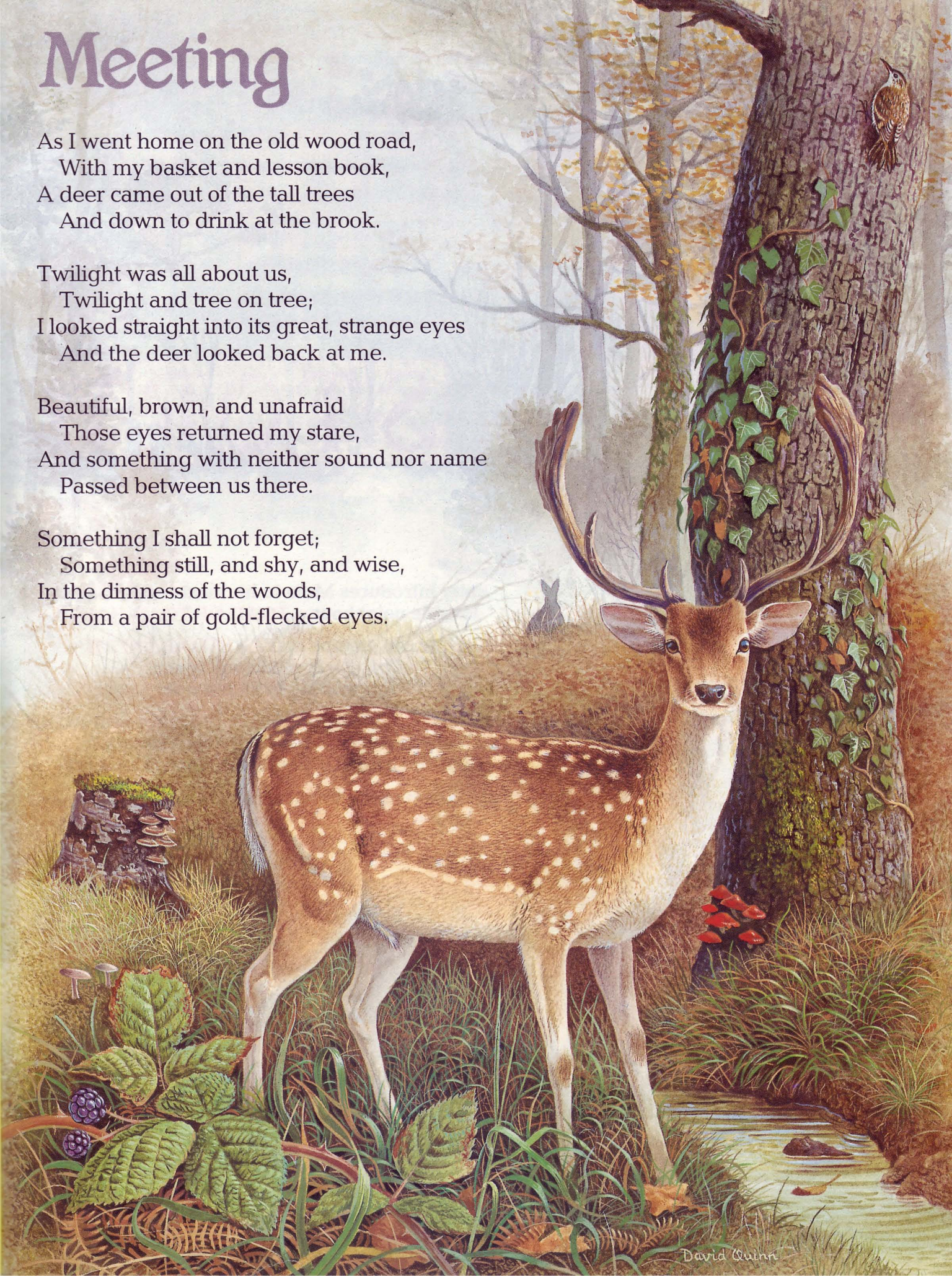
Meeting

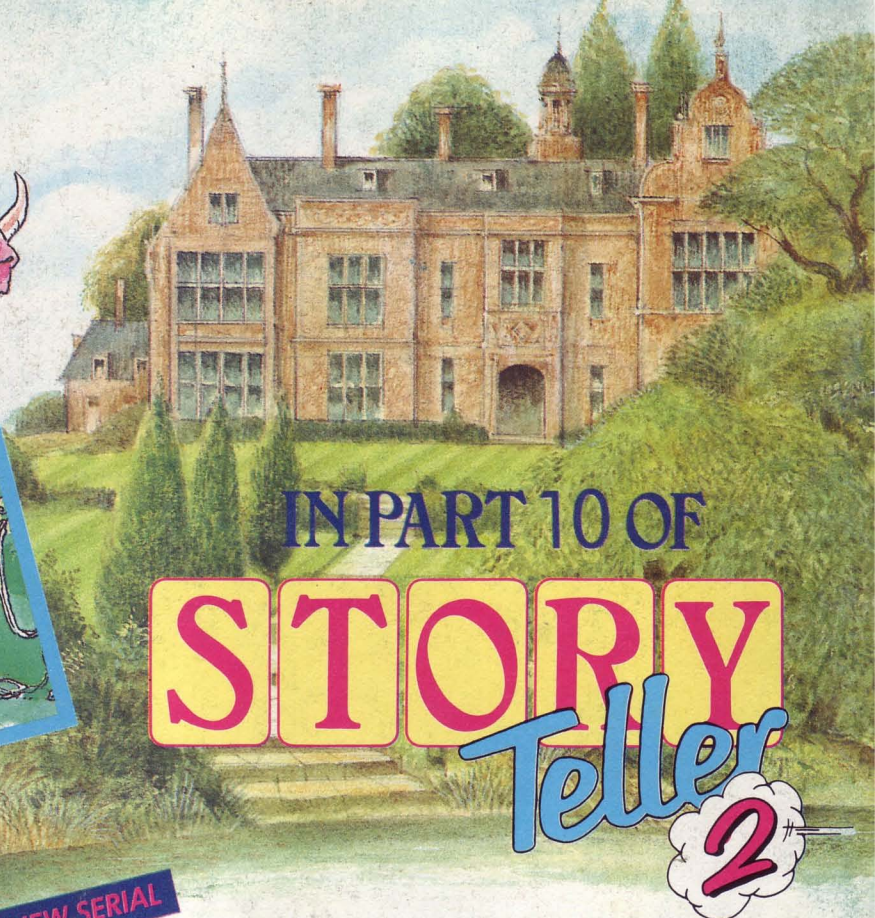
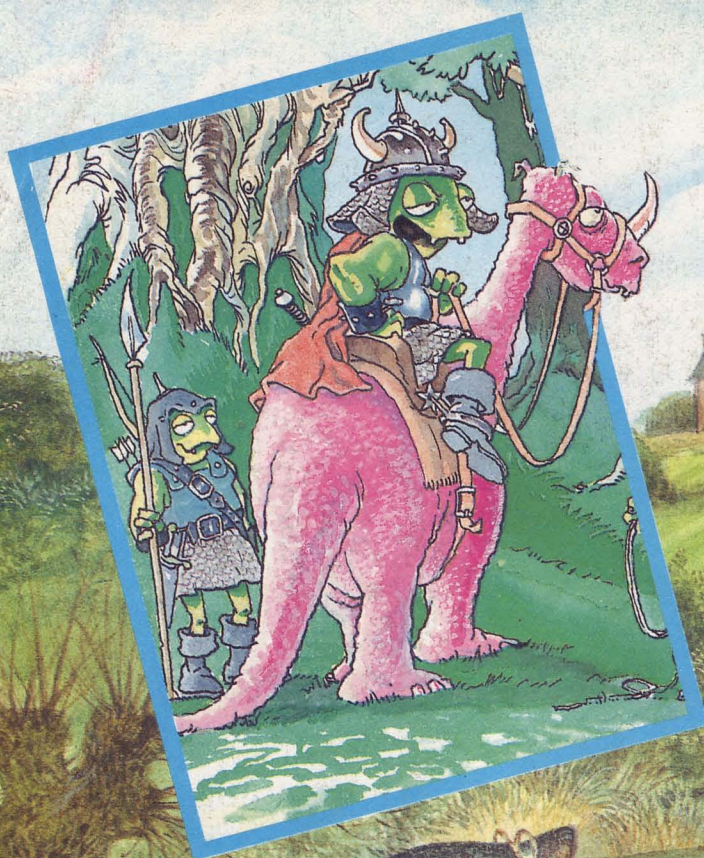
As I went home on the old wood road,
With my basket and lesson book,
A deer came out of the tall trees
And down to drink at the brook.

Twilight was all about us,
Twilight and tree on tree;
I looked straight into its great, strange eyes
And the deer looked back at me.

Beautiful, brown, and unafraid
Those eyes returned my stare,
And something with neither sound nor name
Passed between us there.

Something I shall not forget;
Something still, and shy, and wise,
In the dimness of the woods,
From a pair of gold-flecked eyes.





IN PART 10 OF

STORY Teller 2

NEW SERIAL

Ratty introduces Mole to his most reckless and lovable neighbour – **TOAD OF TOAD HALL**

How can anyone make a **STONE DRUM**?
The chief's challenge seems impossible to all but one

SIMEON THE SORCERER'S SON cannot wait to do his own magic. But it's not good enough to save him from the clutches of Baron Kroaker!

It takes cunning to outwit a man-eating snake – that's how **ANANSI AND THE PYTHON** come to meet

PLUS

GOBBOLINO AND THE LITTLE WOODEN HORSE
UPSIDE-DOWN WILLIE
HANNIBAL

Stories read by
RICHARD BRIERS,
SHEILA HANCOCK,
GEORGE LAYTON,
STEVEN PACEY &
YSANNE CHURCHMAN

