



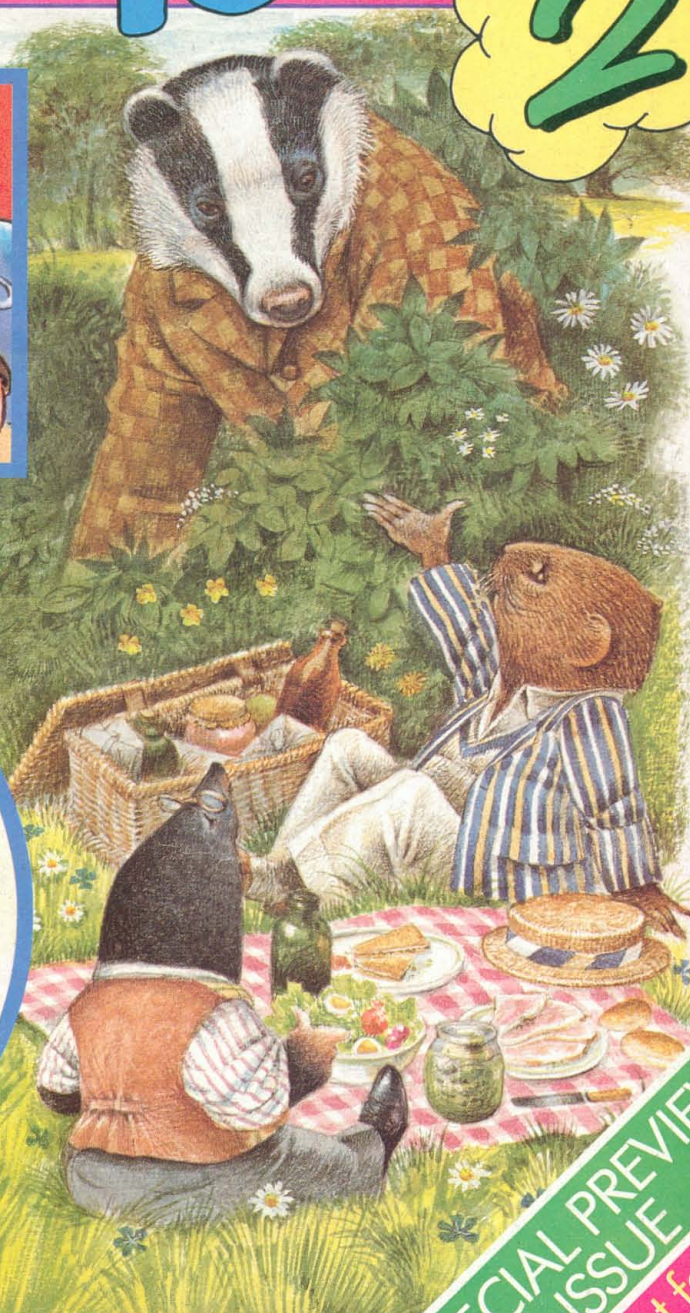
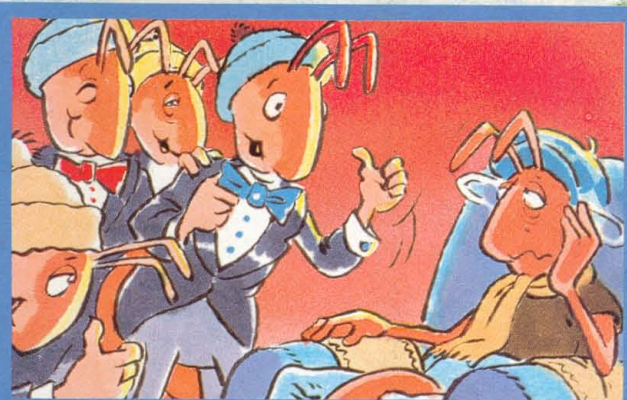
EVERY FORTNIGHT

STORY

Teller

2

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



A Marshall Cavendish Publication

SPECIAL PREVIEW
ISSUE

Not for
separate
sale



STORY

Teller 2

Dear Parent,

With this special 'bumper' issue of STORY TELLER we come to the end of the series, and your collection of stories is complete. We hope that you and your children have enjoyed listening to, and reading, all 26 parts over the last year.

STORY TELLER has had such a marvellous response from both parents and children that we are delighted to announce a brand new series of books and tapes – again with their own binders and an improved cassette box. There will be no increase in price.

STORY TELLER 2 will contain as rich a mixture of stories as you found in the first series. Some favourite characters, like Gobbolino and Grogre the Ogre, will return for fresh adventures, and several classics will be featured in serial form, including *The Wizard of Oz*, *Peter Pan* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

We hope that, if you decide to collect STORY TELLER 2, you and your children will enjoy the stories as much as you enjoyed those in the first series.

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The Magic Porridge Pot: Steven Pacey
The Lobster Quadrille: Una Stubbs

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Ruth Ainsworth's gentle story of the toys' efforts to get Jack out of a tight spot.

© Ruth Ainsworth from *The Pirate Ship and Other Stories*, published by William Heinemann Ltd.

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© Sheila Richmond 1983

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© Hilary Roberts 1983

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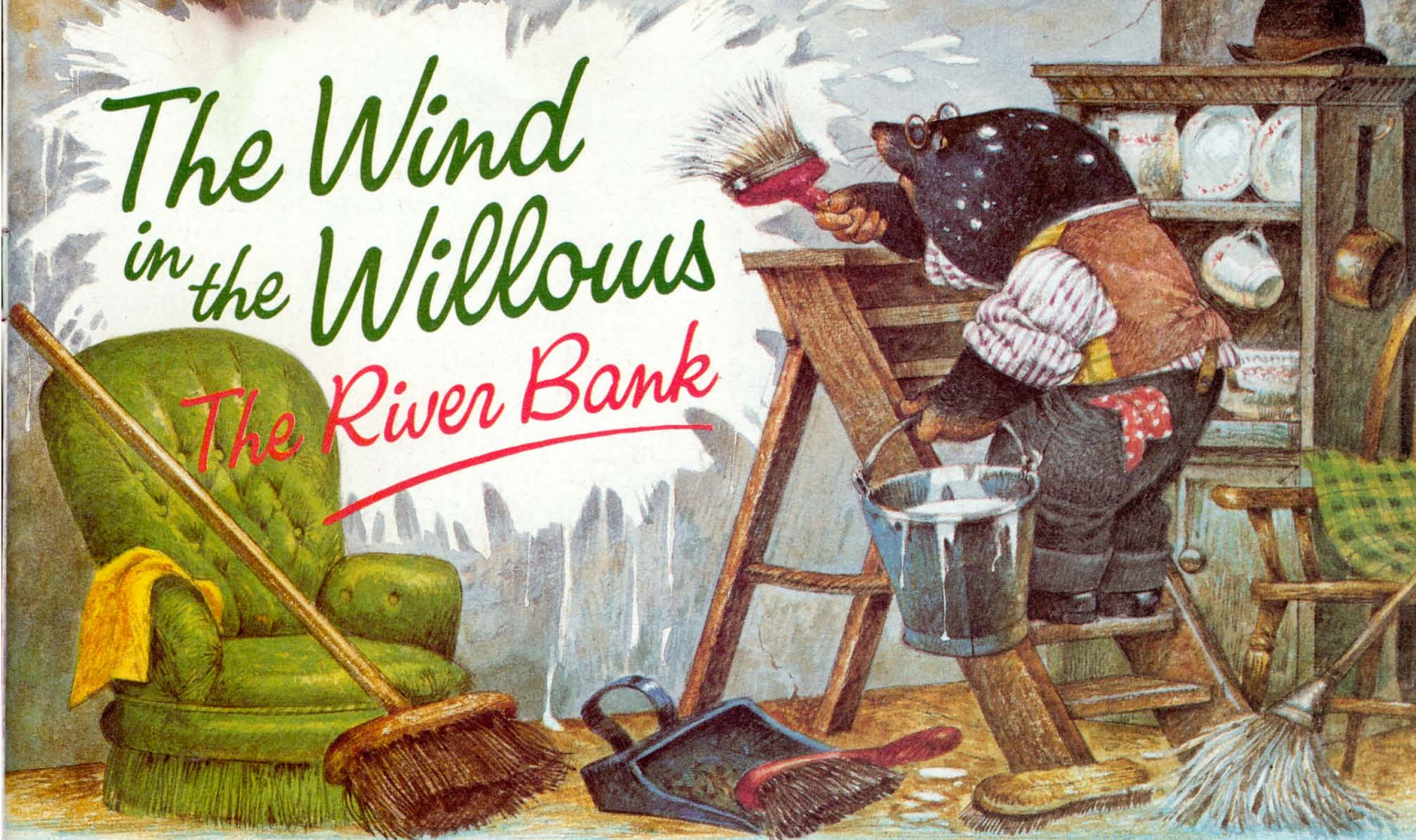
Lewis Carroll's famous piece of seaside nonsense from *Alice in Wonderland* — to be serialised in the new STORY TELLER.

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The Wind in the Willows

The River Bank



Mole had been working very hard all morning, spring-cleaning his little home. First with brooms, then with dusters and then on ladders with a pail of whitewash, until he had dust in his throat and splashes of whitewash all over his black fur. Suddenly he flung down his brush on the floor and said, "Bother and blow!

Hang spring-cleaning!" and bolted out of the house.

He scraped and scratched and scabbled and scrooged, working busily with his little paws and muttering, "Up we go! Up we go!" until at last, *pop!* his snout came out into the sunlight, and he found himself rolling in a great meadow.





He wandered along aimlessly until he stood by the edge of a flowing river. Never in his life had he seen a river before. All was glints and gleams, chatter and bubble. Mole was bewitched.

As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle in the

heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more. Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and a small brown face with whiskers appeared.

It was the Water Rat!

"Hello, Mole!" said Water Rat.

"Hello, Rat!" said Mole.

Rat said nothing more, but unfastened a rope and hauled on it; then stepped into a little boat. It was painted blue and white and was just the size for two animals.

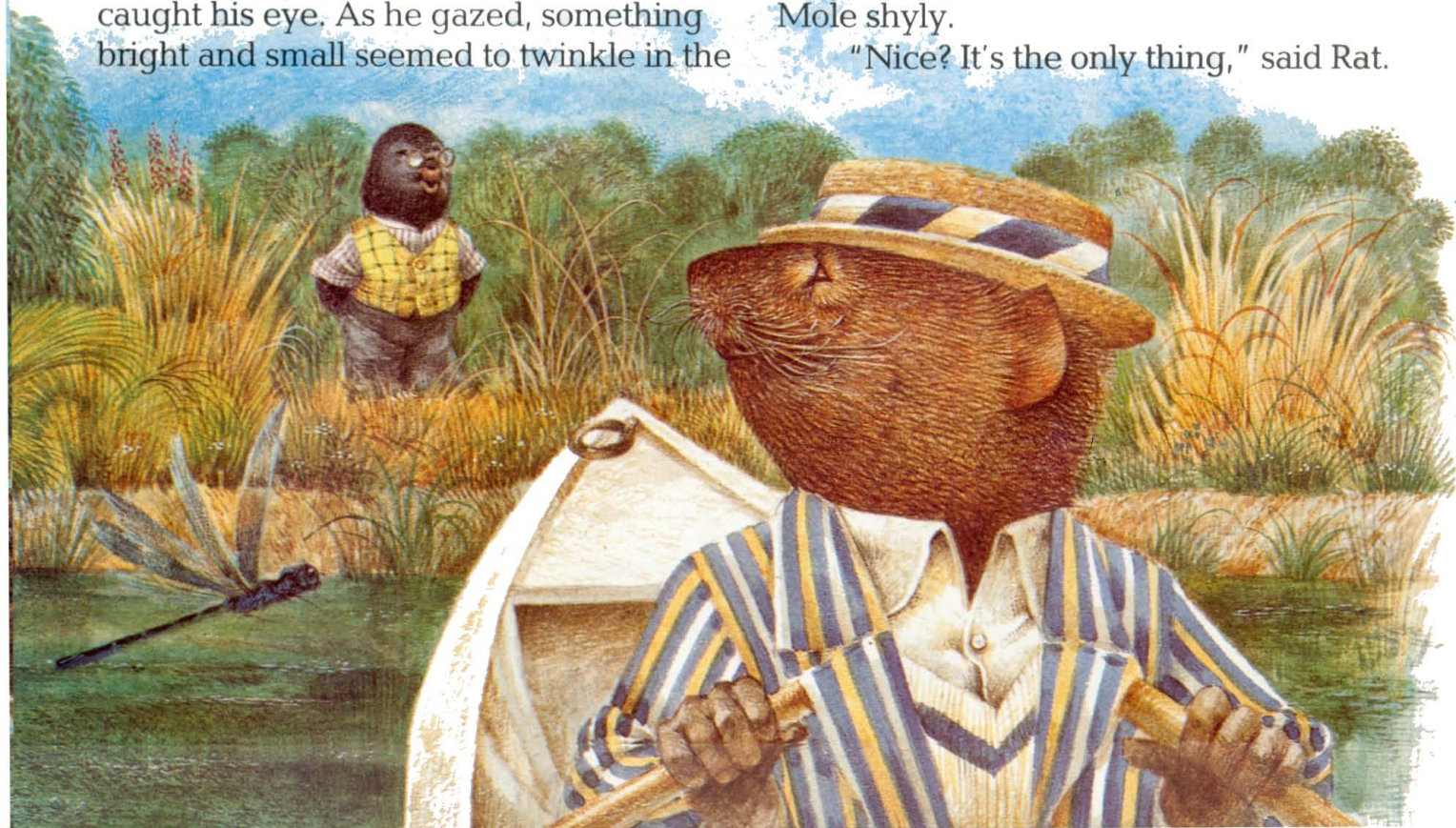
Rat rowed smartly across the river. "Lean on me!" he said, reaching the other side. "Now then, step lively!" And Mole to his surprise and rapture found himself seated in the stern of a real boat.

"This is a wonderful day!" he said as Rat shoved off and took to the oars again. "Do you know, I've never been in a boat before in all my life."

"What?" cried Rat, open-mouthed. "Never been in a — you never — well, I — what have you been doing, then?"

"Is it so nice as all that?" asked the Mole shyly.

"Nice? It's the only thing," said Rat.



"Believe me, there's nothing — absolutely nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."

"Look out, Rat!"

But it was too late. The boat struck the bank at full tilt. Rat and Mole fell on their backs into the bottom of the boat, their feet in the air.

"Look here," said Rat picking himself up with a laugh, "if you've really nothing better to do today, suppose we drop down the river together, and make a long day of it?"

Mole waggled his toes from sheer happiness.

"What a day I'm having!" he said. "Let's start at once!"

"Wait a minute!" said Rat. And he climbed up into his hole and reappeared staggering under a fat wicker basket.

"What's inside it?" asked Mole.

"There's cold chicken, cold tongue, cold ham, cold beef, pickled gherkin, salad, french rolls, scress-sandwiches, spotted meat, ginger beer, lemonade, soda water..."

"O stop, stop! This is too much!"

"Do you really think so? The other animals are always telling me that I'm a mean beast."





Mole trailed a paw in the water lazily as Rat rowed steadily on.

"What lies over *there*?" asked Mole, waving a paw towards one side of the river.

"That? O, that's just the Wild Wood," said Rat shortly. "We don't go there very much, we river bankers."

"Aren't they — aren't they very *nice* people in there?"

"W-e-ll," replied Rat, "let me see. The squirrels are all right. *And* the rabbits — some of 'em. And then there's dear old Badger, of course. He wouldn't live anywhere else. Nobody interferes with *him*."

"Why, who *should* interfere with him?" asked Mole.

"W-e-ll — there are others," explained Rat. "Weasels, stoats, foxes and so on. They're all right in a way, but you can't really trust them and that's a fact. Now then! Here's where we're going to lunch."

Rat brought the boat alongside the bank, helped Mole safely ashore, and swung out the luncheon-basket.

Having eaten and drunk their fill, they lay on the bank and dozed.

After a while they heard a rustle behind them. Turning, they saw a stripey head, with high shoulders behind it,



peering at them from behind a hedge.

"Come on, Badger!" shouted Rat.

Badger trotted forward a pace or two, then grunted. "H'm! Company," he muttered and turned his back and disappeared.

"That's just like him," said Rat.

"Simply hates people. We shan't see any more of him today."

"Well, well," said Rat presently, "I suppose we ought to be moving."

The afternoon sun was getting low as Rat rowed homeward in a dreamy mood, murmuring poetry to himself and not paying much attention to Mole.

"Ratty!" said Mole suddenly.

"I want to row, now!"

Rat shook his head with a smile.

"Not yet, my young friend. Wait till you've had a few lessons. It's not so easy as it looks."

But Mole began to feel more and more jealous of Rat rowing so strongly and easily along. He jumped up and seized the oars so quickly that Rat was taken by surprise and fell off his seat.

"Stop it, you *silly ass*!" cried Rat from the bottom of the boat. "You can't do it! You'll turn us over!"

Mole flung his oars back with a flourish, and made a great dig in the water. But he missed the water altogether, his legs flew up above his head and he found himself lying on top of Rat.

Greatly alarmed, Mole grabbed at the side of the boat, then — Sploosh!

Over went the boat,
and Mole found
himself struggling
in the river.





How cold the water was, how very wet it felt! Down, down, down, plunged the terrified Mole. Then, spluttering and coughing, he rose to the surface, before he felt himself sinking again.

Then suddenly, a firm paw gripped him by the back of his neck. It was Rat and he was laughing! He shoved an oar under Mole's arm; then he did the same by the other side of him and, swimming behind, propelled the helpless animal to the shore, hauled him out, and set him down on the bank — a squashy, pulpy lump of misery.

When Rat had rubbed him down a bit and wrung some of the water out of him, he said, "Now then, old fellow! Trot up and down the towing-path as hard as you can, till you're warm and dry, while I dive for the basket."

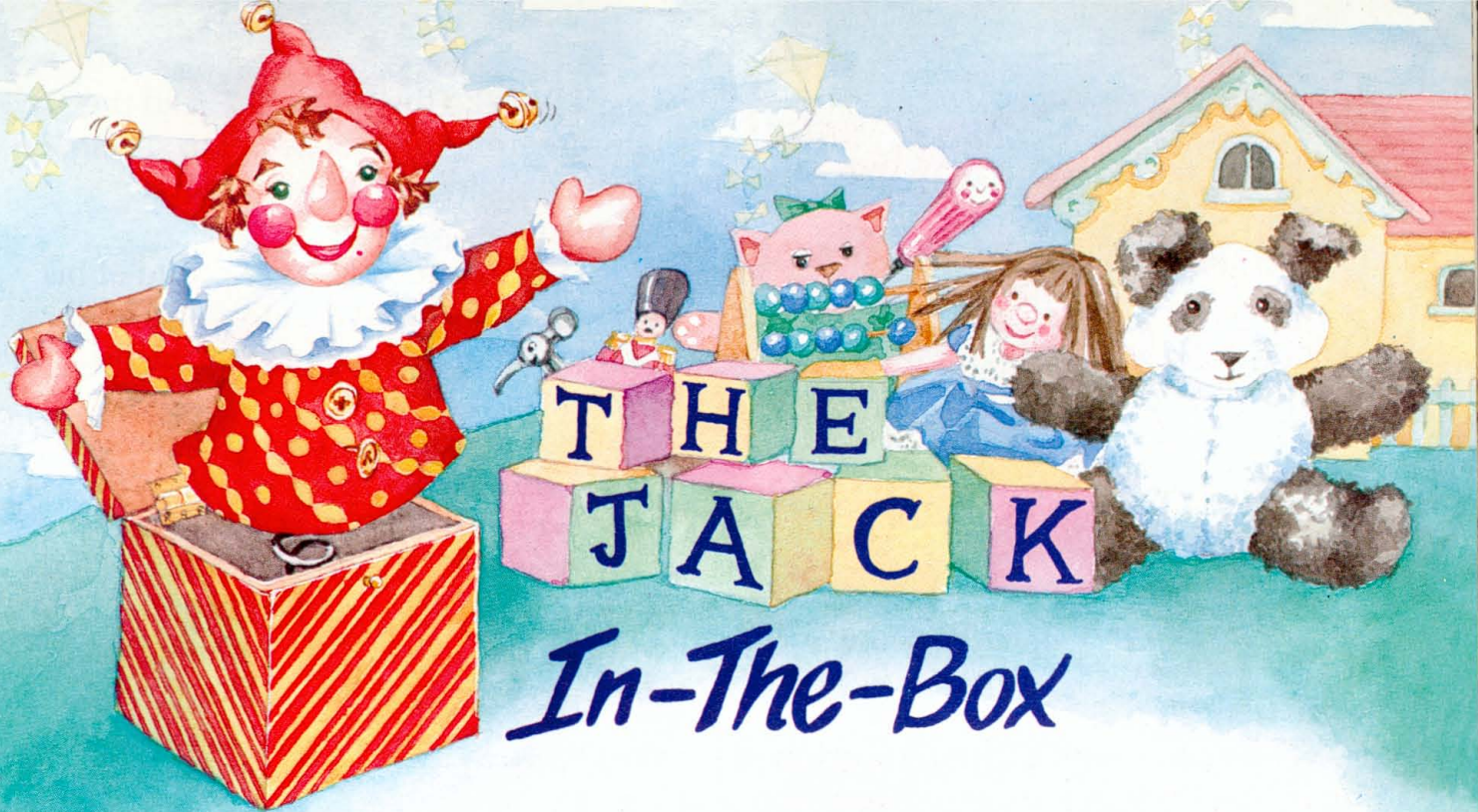
When all was ready for a start once more, Mole, limp and dejected, took his seat in the stern of the boat.

"I think," said Rat, "that you'd better come and stay with me. I'll teach you to row and to swim, and you'll soon be as handy on the water as any of us."

When they got home, Rat made a bright fire in the parlour and set Mole in an armchair in front of it, having fetched him a dressing-gown and slippers.

Shortly after supper, a very sleepy Mole was taken upstairs to Ratty's best bedroom, where as soon as he laid his head on the pillow he fell fast asleep in great peace and contentment.





There was once a jolly Jack-in-the-box. He was a very lively fellow and all the other toys liked him a lot. He always had a smile on his face. His box was striped red and yellow and when the lid was lifted and he popped up, he was dressed in red and yellow too.

Inside Jack, under his clothes, was a strong metal spring and it was this that made him jump up so high.

One day, something went wrong.

The lid of the box would not open, so Jack could not leap up, and he was very sad. He got bored and cross, shut up in the dark all day and every day. At night he used to cry, and his crying kept the other toys awake. He could not sleep himself, and they could not sleep either.

"We must do something to help poor Jack-in-the-box," said the other toys. "We must try to make his lid open again so that he can jump out and be happy like he used to be."





"I'll make the lid open," said the hammer from the tool-set. "I'm strong. I'll give the lid such a bang that it will fly open."

The hammer was very proud of his strength and gave a great thump with his hard head on the box. But the lid stayed shut.

"You've made my head ache," said Jack-in-the-box.

"I can do better than that," said the screwdriver. "I can get into cracks. I'll get under the lid and force it open."

The screwdriver got under the lid and tried to force it open. The lid began to crack across the top, but it stayed shut.

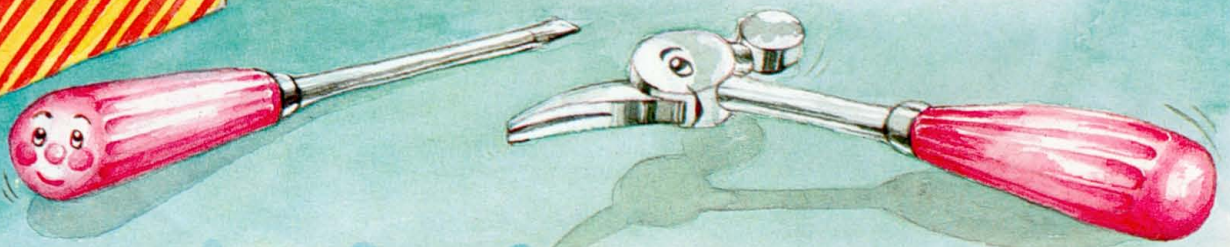
"You nearly poked my eye out," grumbled Jack-in-the-box.

"I'll give him a fright," said the donkey. "I'll creep up on him and then I'll bray loudly. He'll jump with surprise and his head will hit the lid and it will burst open."

The donkey crept quietly across the floor and when he got near the box he brayed his very loudest, "Hee-haw! Hee-haw!"

But nothing happened. Jack-in-the-box only complained that he was nearly deafened by the noise.

"I have a better plan," said the lion. "I'll roar and pretend I'm going to eat him up. He'll be so frightened and try so hard to get away that he'll burst the box open. You wait and see."





The lion roared so fiercely that all the toys were really scared. He sniffed at the box and growled.

"I'm coming to eat you up, Jack-in-the-box. Can you hear me grinding my teeth? You'll make a tasty supper."

"Don't be so stupid," said Jack-in-the-box. "Even lions can't eat metal springs. Leave me alone."

Now there was a very old monkey who lived in a corner on the top shelf of the toy cupboard. His stuffing was coming out and he had lost an eye. Nobody took much notice of him. But he climbed down from the shelf and said, "Let me try. I'm not as strong as the hammer or

as fierce as the lion, but I've got proper hands and fingers."

"You've only got one eye," said the lion.

"But it's a very sharp one," said the monkey. Then, very quietly, with no bangs or thumps or roars, he felt the box with his clever fingers and he found a little catch at the side that kept the lid down.

He unfastened the catch and the lid flew up and Jack jumped out, all smiles in his red and yellow coat.

"The catch had stuck," said the monkey. "It's all right now."

The catch never stuck again and Jack could jump up whenever he liked. And he always had a special smile for the quiet monkey on the top shelf.

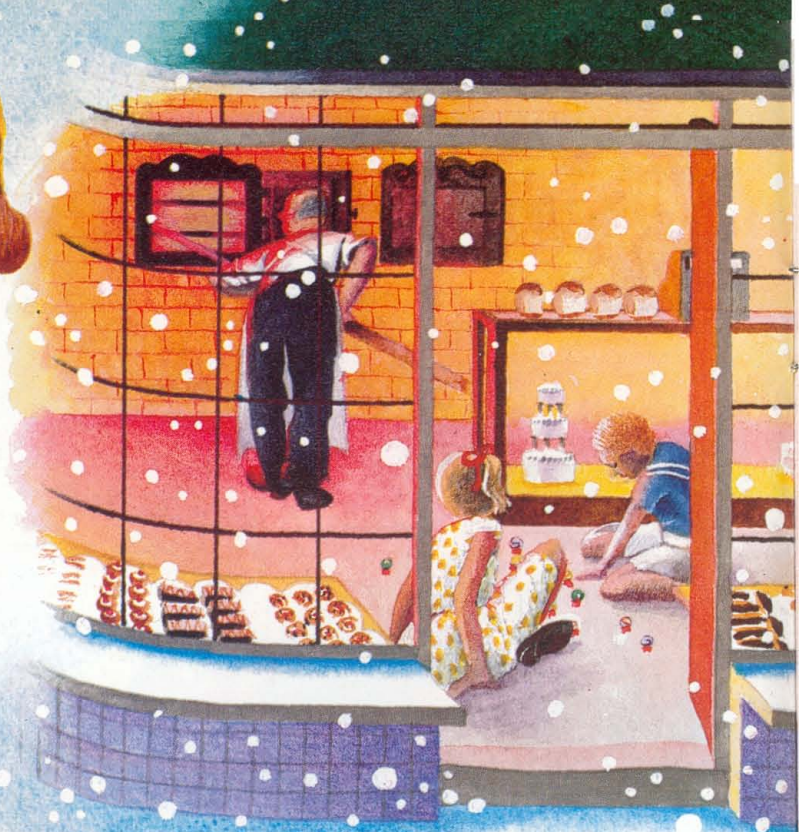
CAMPBELL

The Travelling Cat

Snow was beginning to fall as the little cat stopped at the baker's doorway. Delicious smells tickled his nostrils.

Inside, everything was warm and bright, and he gazed in wistfully. His paws were sore, and he was very tired from walking all day.

The baker, a big, jolly man, turned and saw his visitor. "Who've we got here, then?" He bent over and stroked the cat gently. "Why, you're shivering! Come right in and we'll find you some milk!"



The cat limped over to the warm oven and curled up beside it. The baker's twin children, Karl and Paula, ran off at once to fetch the milk. Campbell lapped it up gratefully — it tasted very good.

Paula picked up the little cat and cuddled him. "What's your name?"

"Campbell," said the cat proudly. And he was very surprised when all three burst out laughing.

"Do you come from Scotland, then?" grinned the baker.

"Aye, and I walked all the way!"

"Why?" asked Karl.

"I'm looking for a new home. My family went off to Australia and left me behind."

Paula hugged him. "Never mind. You can stay with us . . . can't he, Daddy?"

The baker rubbed his stubbly chin.

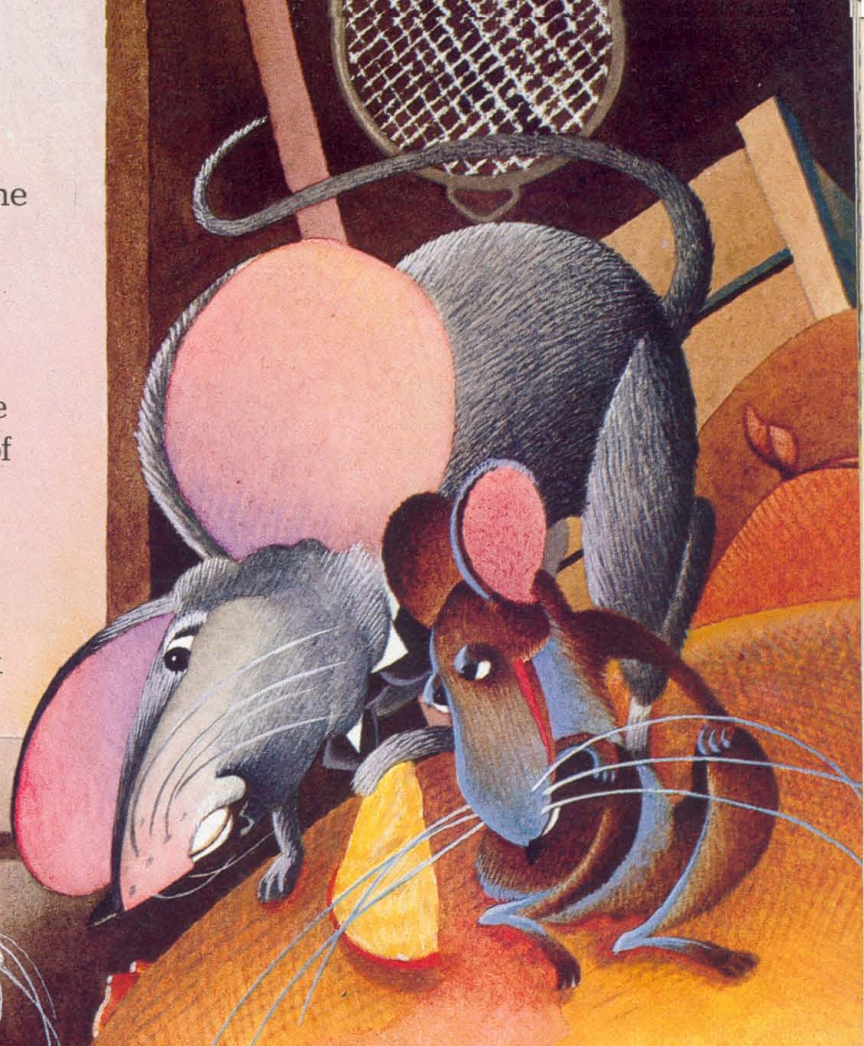
"Only if he earns his keep. There are at least fifty mice in my cellar. I want them all caught — and quickly!"

Campbell was dismayed. Because he had flat feet, he could not run very fast, so he had no hope of ever catching the mice. Anyway, he quite liked mice. Still, he liked his new home too, so he would have to *try*.

The baker showed Campbell the long wooden slope which led to the cellar. As he padded down, he heard scuffles and a lot of small noises like squeaky pencils.

"Who are you?" said a sudden voice.

Campbell looked up, startled. A grey mouse with enormous ears was grinning down at him from the top of a bulging sack of flour.



"I'm er, I'm Campbell."

"I'm Jiggs," said the mouse. He jerked his head. "And this is Musto."

A skinny, cross-eyed mouse with long whiskers popped up and stared at Campbell, who nodded to both of them.

"What are you doing here?" asked Jiggs, knowing the answer very well.

Campbell shuffled his feet. "I've been sent to . . . to chase you out."

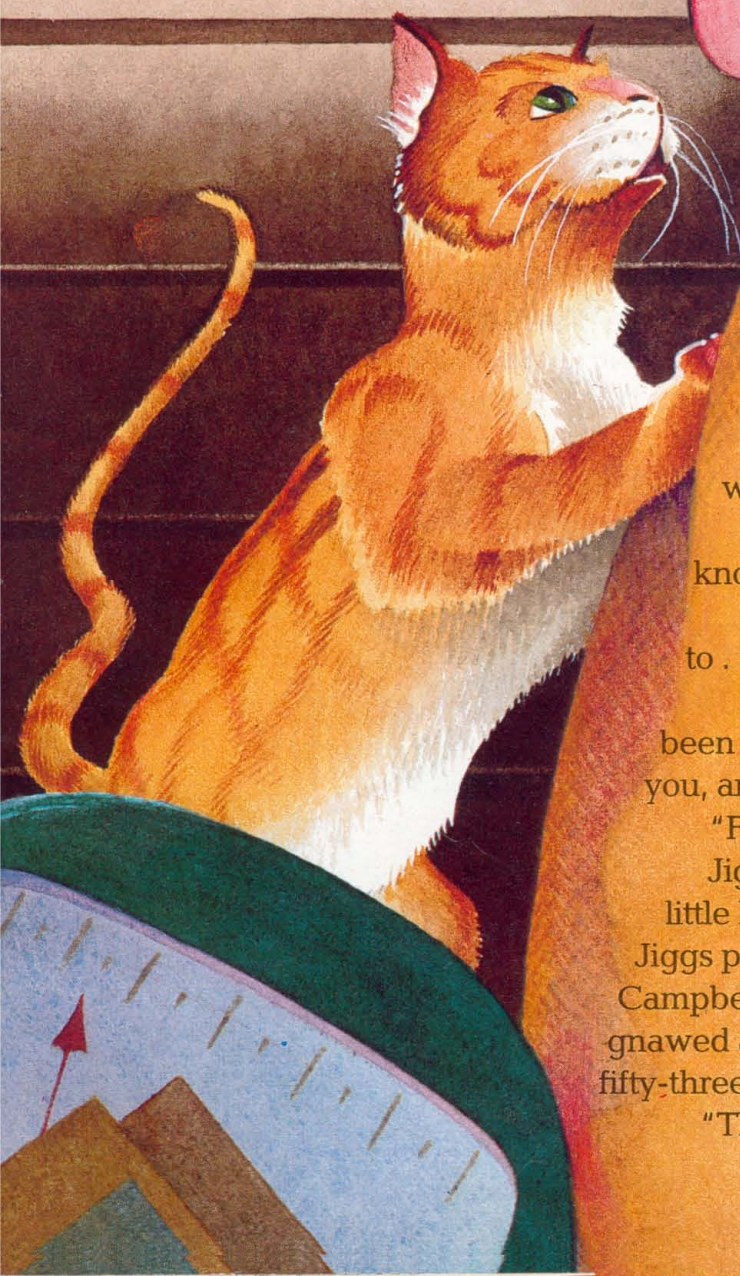
Jiggs grinned. "You'll never do it. We've been here too long. Besides, there's only one of you, and there's fifty-two of us."

"Fifty-three!" added Musto.

Jiggs turned to him. "What? Oh yes, I forgot little Bouncer. Have some cheese, Campbell."

Jiggs pushed a piece off the sack, and it landed on Campbell's head. It was hard and stale, but he gnawed at it bravely. By the time he had finished, fifty-three pairs of bright eyes were watching him.

"Thanks!" He started to clean his whiskers.





"You're welcome," grinned Jiggs.

Campbell did not know what to do next. Even if he did catch *one* mouse, what would he *do* with it? He needed time to think.

He stomped off up the slope and sat in the hallway. The sound of tittering laughter drifted up from the cellar.

Campbell knew that he could not kill *one* mouse, let alone fifty-three. No, his only hope was to trick the mice into leaving the cellar. But how?

He looked around the hall, and saw something that gave him an idea. Karl had left one of his roller-skates behind. Campbell pushed it to the top of the slope, and climbed on.


With one paw on the floor, he pushed off and whizzed down the slope, whooping, "A Campbell! A Campbell!"

The noisy clatter of wheels startled the mice. When Campbell reached the bottom, he leaned to the left to turn the skate on to the cellar floor. Dozens of mice streamed past him to escape up the slope.

But Campbell was in trouble. He was going so fast now that he could not stop — and he was heading straight for a huge sack.

With a *miaow* of alarm, he hit it. The sack burst, showering him with flour, and the last thing he heard before he was buried under a white avalanche was the sound of Jiggs laughing.



The illustration depicts a cellar scene. In the upper portion, a dark, textured ceiling is covered with numerous pairs of white eyes and whiskers, representing the mice watching Campbell. Below this, a large, bright yellow wedge of Swiss cheese is shown flying through the air, with several thin, golden-yellow lines trailing behind it. In the lower portion, a grey mouse with large pink ears is shown in profile, looking up at the cheese. To its left, a brown mouse is also looking up. In the bottom left corner, a small brown mouse is visible. The overall style is whimsical and cartoonish, with a focus on the mice's perspective.

It took Campbell ages to dig himself out. Shaking his head to get the flour out of his eyes and ears, he could see fifty-three pairs of eyes watching him. The escaping mice had been frightened by the baker's loud shouts above, and had scuttled back to the safety of the cellar.

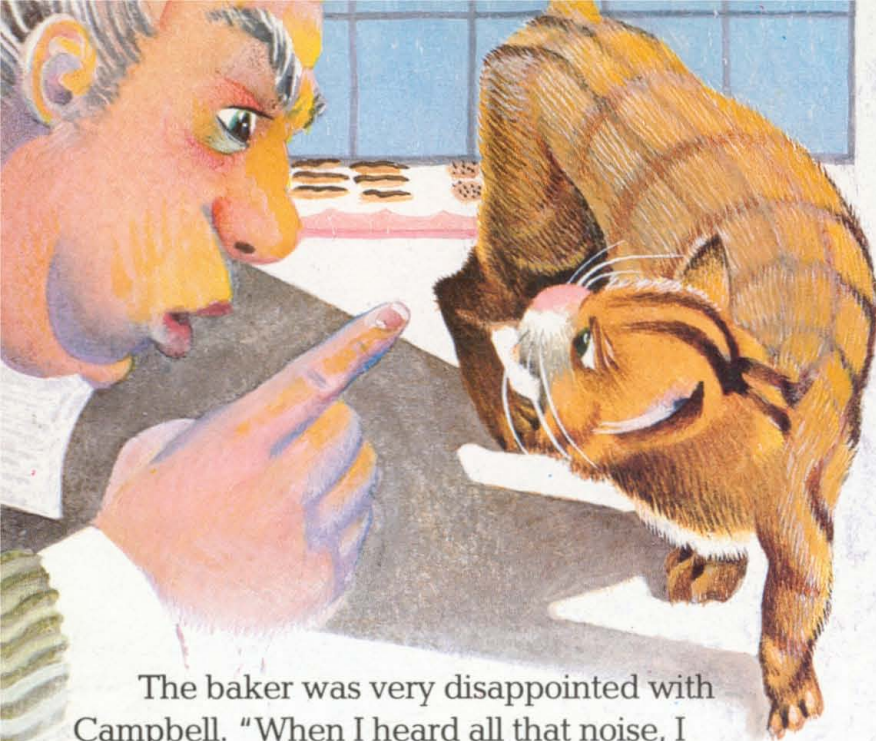
Jiggs and Musto helped Campbell to brush off the flour. "Better give up now, before you hurt yourself," advised Jiggs. "We were just going to have a cheese party before you arrived. Come and join us. A sort of Cat-of-honour, if you like."

Feeling foolish, Campbell agreed. Jiggs waved a paw, and four of the smaller mice staggered up to Campbell, carrying a large piece of cheese.

"How do you manage to get so much?" asked Campbell, nibbling the cheese.

"Easy," said Jiggs. "We take it out of the traps. I'll show you. Musto, Freddy, Bogus!" He clicked his fingers and the three mice stood on one end of a trap. Jiggs jumped quickly on and off the other end. The cheese flew up in the air — and was neatly caught by Jiggs.

"There's fifty-three traps down here — one for each of us," said Jiggs. "That keeps us in cheese for a week."



The baker was very disappointed with Campbell. "When I heard all that noise, I thought you'd got 'em!" he frowned. "I'll give you just one more day. If you haven't got rid of them by then, you'll have to go!"

Miserably, Campbell slunk outside. He walked around the cobbled town all night, trying to think of another plan.

Outside the big fancy house of the Duke, people were carrying out luggage to the oldest car Campbell had ever seen. In front of it stood a van with the back doors open. It was full of food. Campbell peered in.

"The Duke's off to Scotland for Christmas," the house cat told Campbell. "He always takes his food with him. Doesn't trust them to feed him properly up there!"

"What time's he leaving?"

"Six o'clock sharp."



Suddenly, Campbell knew what he was going to do. He looked up at the town clock. He had twenty minutes to make his plan work.

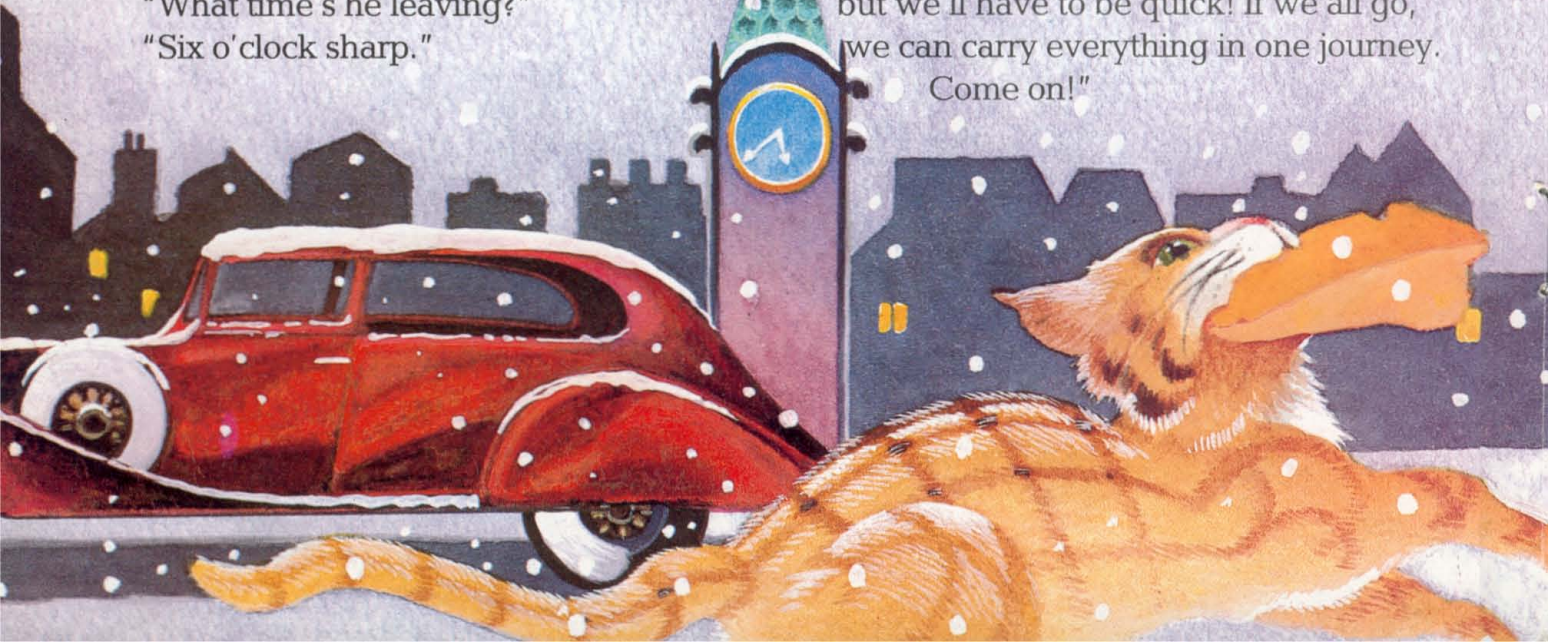
Jumping into the food van, he snatched a hunk of cheese, and raced back to the baker's cellar with it in his mouth. All the mice crowded round him, sniffing.

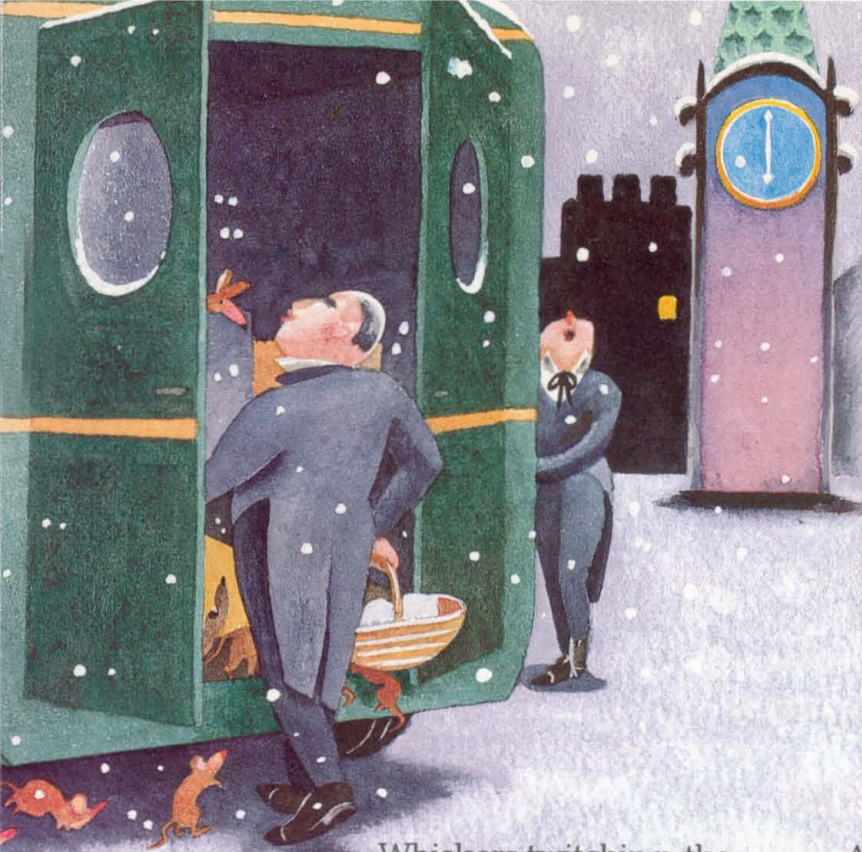
"Is that for us?" exclaimed Jiggs, feeling the lovely moist cheese.

"There's lots more!" panted Campbell.

"But I can't carry it! It's in a van across the street. The driver is at the Duke's house, but we'll have to be quick! If we all go, we can carry everything in one journey.

Come on!"





Whiskers twitching, the mice all streamed after him. They did not need Campbell to tell them which way to go. Their noses led them.

"I'll keep watch," whispered Campbell, as they jumped into the van.

Chattering and squeaking, the mice could not resist tasting the cheese right away. Some even jumped in under the noses of the two footmen bringing the last of the food!

Campbell looked at the town clock. It was six o'clock. He dodged quickly out of sight as the footmen slammed the doors of the van and locked them tight.

Smiling, Campbell walked quietly back to the baker's house.



An hour later, when the family came down for breakfast, they found an empty cellar. Campbell was sitting in the hall, cleaning his paws.

"You clever cat!" exclaimed Paula, picking up Campbell and hugging him.

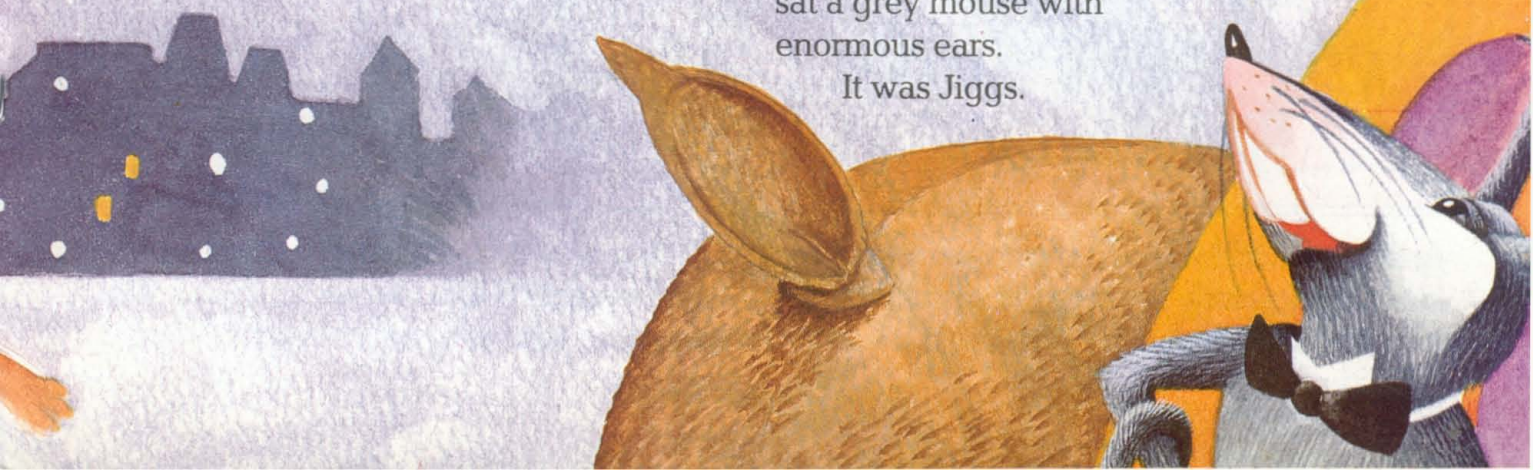
The baker was delighted. "I never thought you'd do it!" he beamed. "That deserves an extra saucer of milk!"

Campbell was really happy. He might be small and flat-footed, but he had dealt with fifty-three mice!

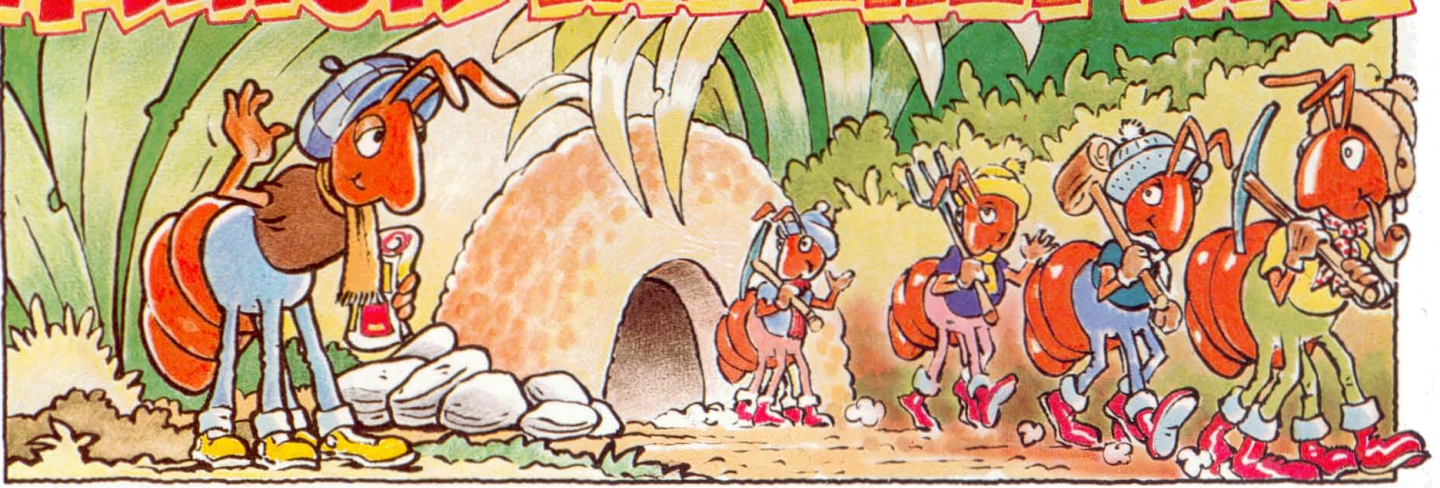
Campbell padded into the cellar to look around. He listened smugly to the silence.

Then he heard a tiny laugh, just like a squeaky pencil, and looked up. There, on the top of the biggest sack of flour, sat a grey mouse with enormous ears.

It was Jiggs.

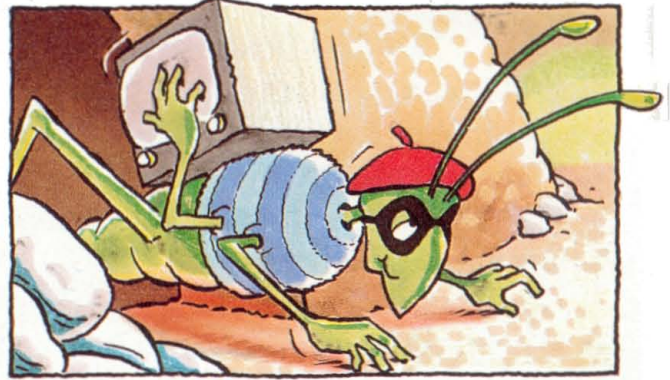


ARTHUR THE LAZY ANT



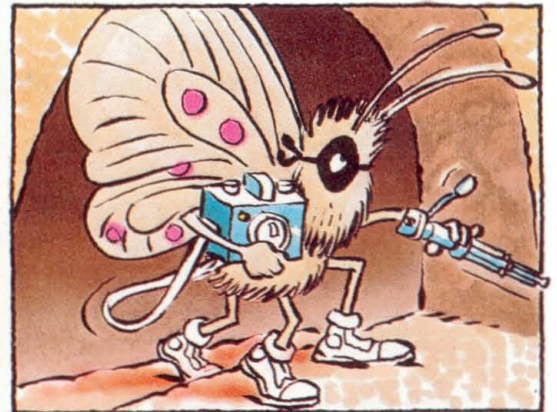
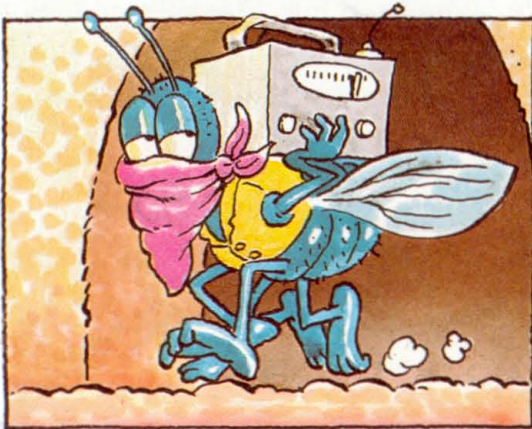
Arthur Ant was feeling specially cheerful one morning as he waved his friends off to work. Arthur was not fond of work . . .

. . . but today was different. All he had to do was guard the nest, do a little housework and cook the evening meal.



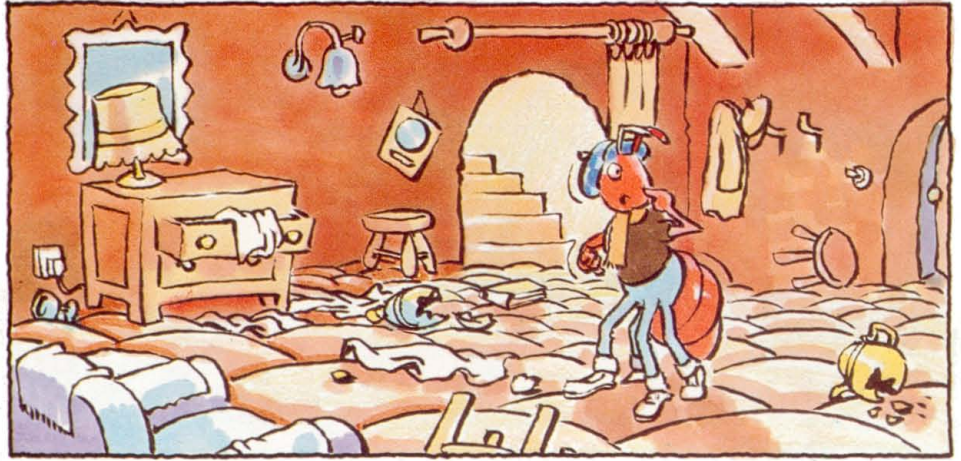
"The housework can wait," he chuckled. "Who wants to be indoors on a day like this? I'm going to read my comic in the sunshine."

Cecil Cricket was in and out of the nest in a trice. "Just what I need," he smirked. "My own television. Hee hee!"



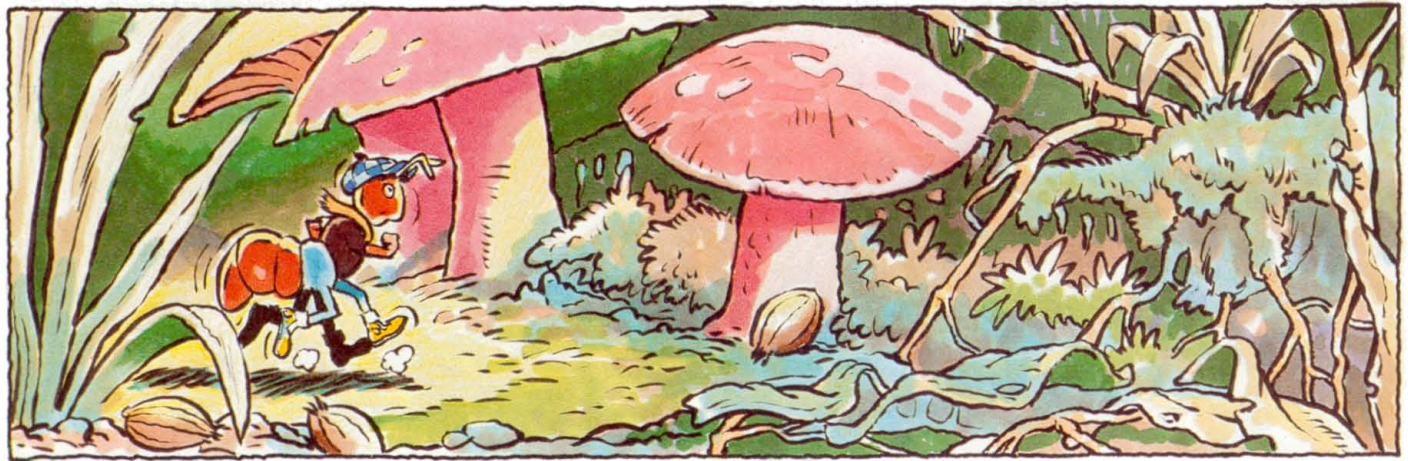
Arthur was still deep in his comic when Horace Housefly sneaked in and helped himself to the nest radio.

By the time Maurice Moth turned up, Arthur was asleep. "This is too easy!" chuckled Maurice, scurrying off with a camera.



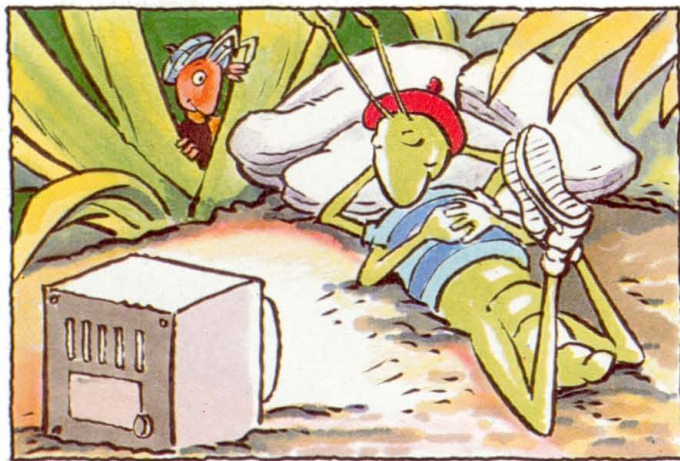
The robberies went on until, about midday, Arthur woke up feeling hungry.

"What I need now is a nice, thick leaf sandwich. Then I'll start the housework." But, inside the nest, he got the shock of his life. "Oh, no! We've been burgled!"

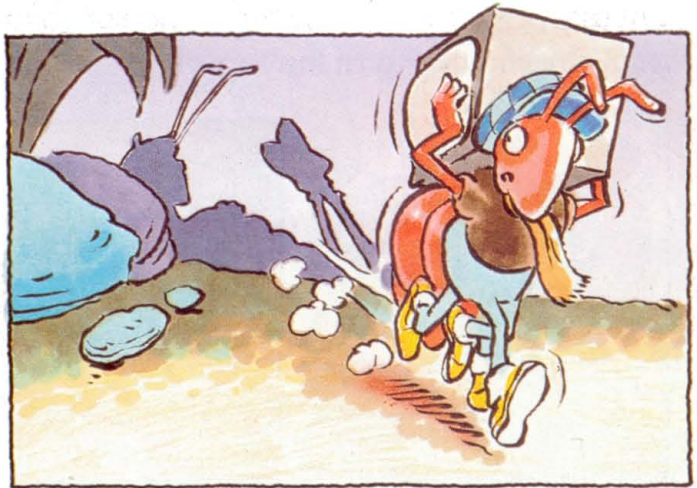


"I must get everything back before the others come home," he stuttered, and he

set off at great speed — even though he had not a clue where to start looking.



Arthur searched high and low until, at last, he spotted Cecil Cricket dozing in front of the stolen television set.



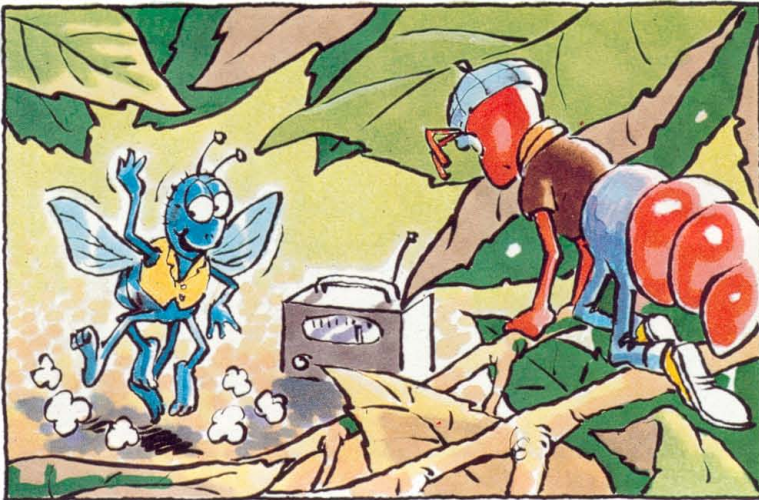
When he was sure the cricket was asleep, Arthur crept out, picked up the television and sneaked off as quickly as he could.



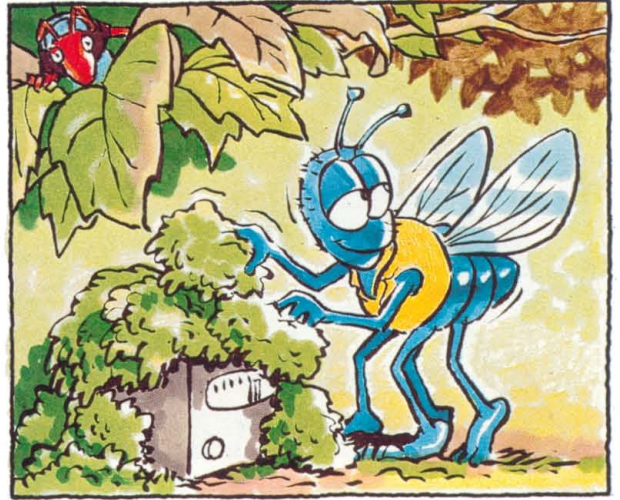
It was hard work carrying such a big object, even for an ant, and Arthur was getting very tired. So at the top of a steep hill he stopped for a rest. "This is hopeless," he mumbled.



"I'll never get it all back in time!" Then he heard music nearby . . .



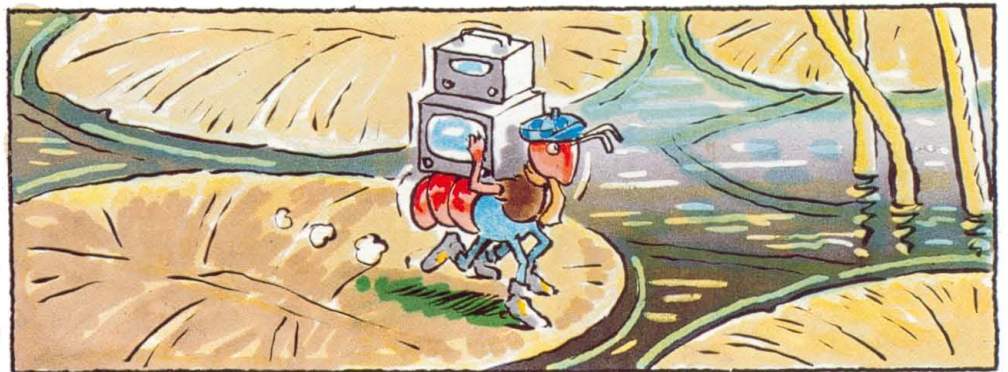
Climbing up into a tree, Arthur could see Horace Housefly dancing round and round the stolen radio, singing along at the top of his voice.



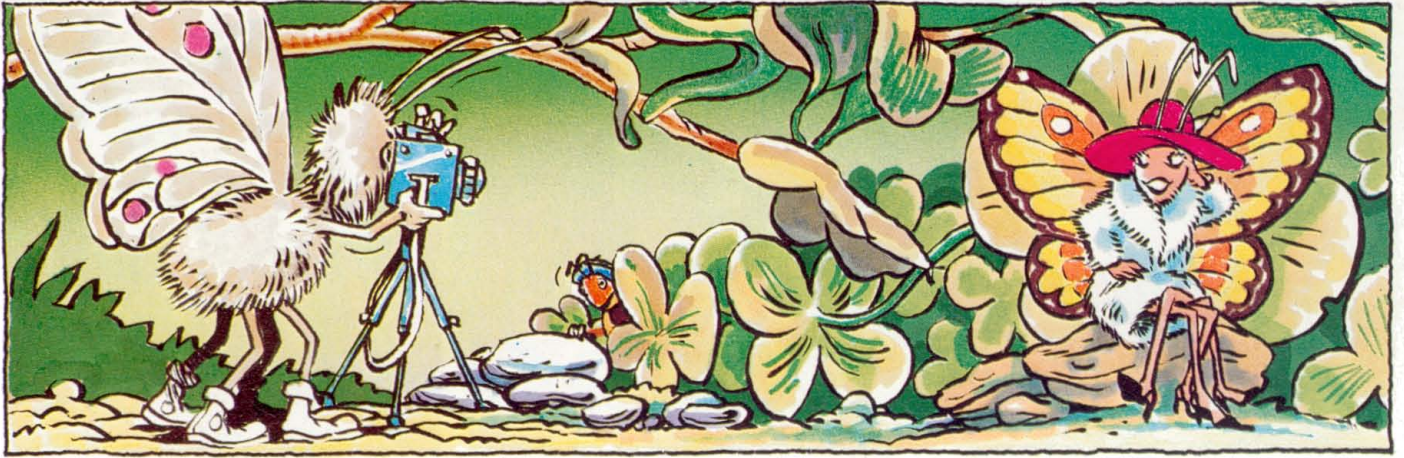
After a while the fly stopped dancing, hid the radio under some moss and went off to find something tasty to eat.



Arthur darted down, grabbed the radio, and set off once again.

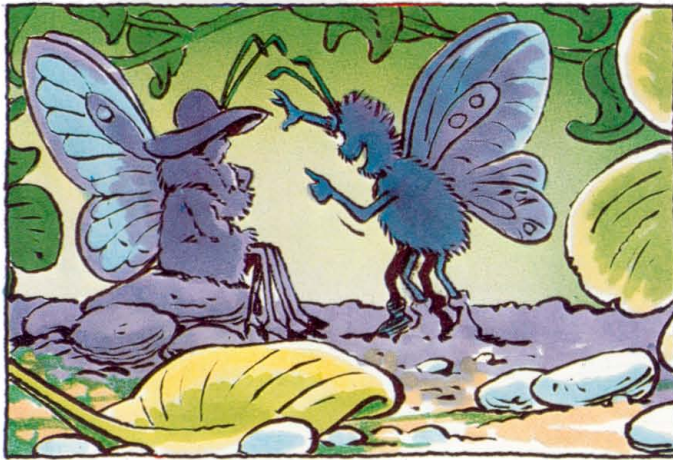


On and on he struggled with his awkward load, through dark woods, along stony paths, across slimy ponds, searching everywhere for the other bits and pieces.



Suddenly he heard a loud clicking noise. Sneaking up, he saw Maurice Moth bent

over the stolen camera, taking pictures of a very elegant butterfly friend in a fur coat.



As Arthur watched, the moth walked over to the butterfly and began to show her the pose he wanted for the next photograph.

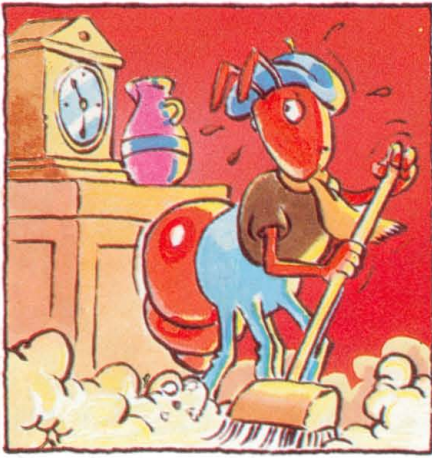


"This is my big chance," thought Arthur. He crept out from his hiding place, grabbed the camera and was gone in a flash.



It was late in the afternoon when Arthur finally found the last of the stolen goods. He was very hot and quite exhausted

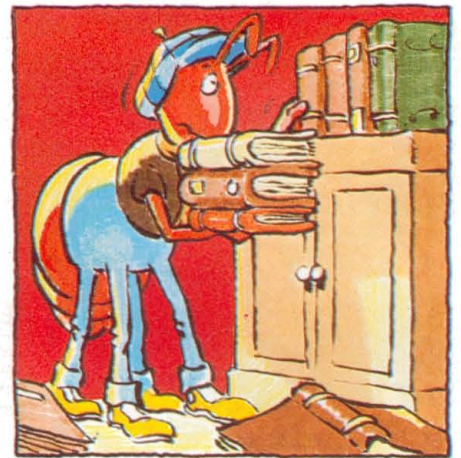
as he struggled back to the nest. But there was still more work to do there . . . and he had not got much time left!



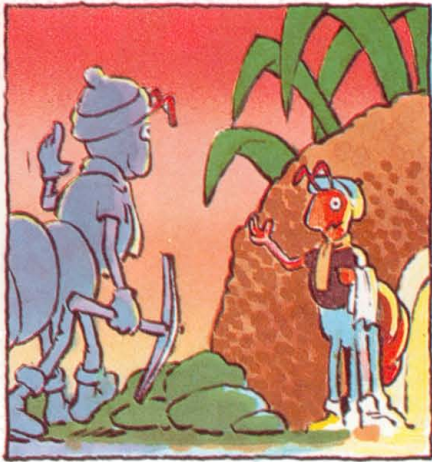
First he had to clean up the mess the burglars left . . .



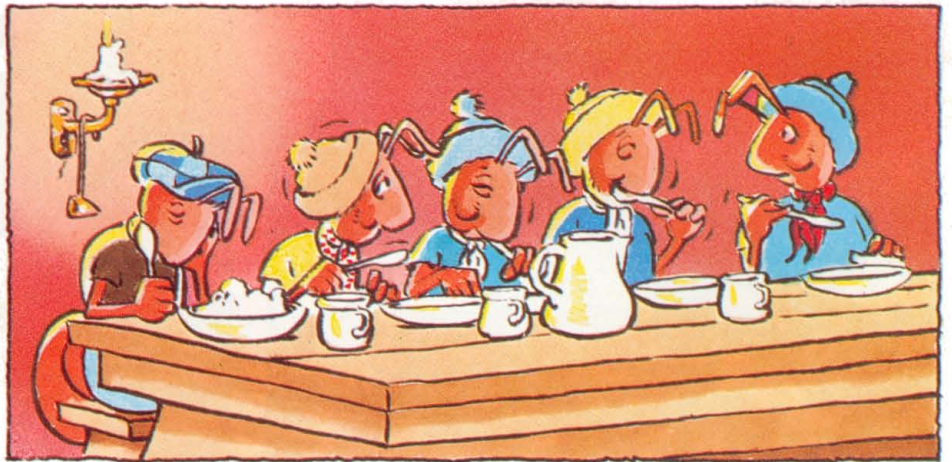
Then there were the broken pots and pans to mend . . .



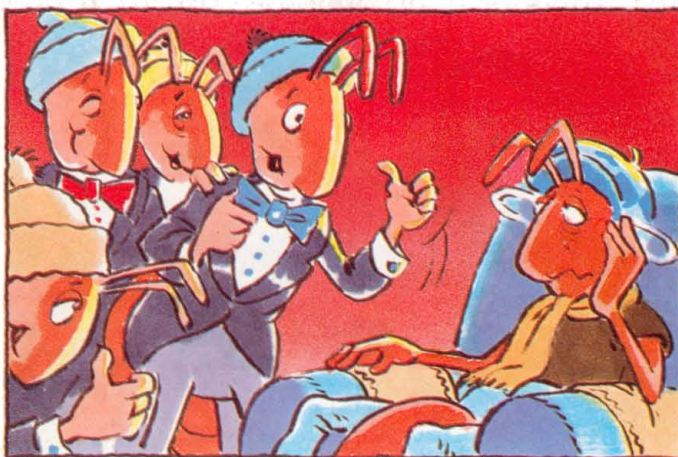
And finally he had to cook the meal and lay the table.



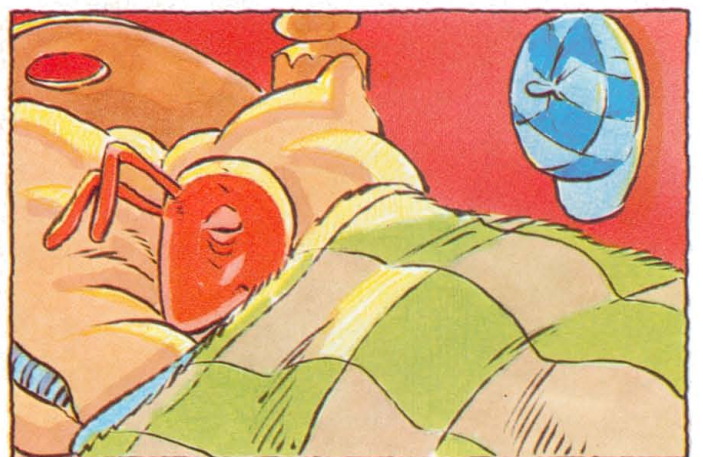
On the stroke of six o'clock the other ants returned. He had made it just in time!



His friends tucked happily into their meal, unaware that anything unusual had happened that day. But poor Arthur was too tired even to think about food.



"Aren't you coming to the grasshoppers' party tonight?" asked the others. "Er, no, I'm not feeling very well," he groaned.



"From now on," he mumbled, crawling into bed, "I'll do my job properly." And, rubbing his aching legs, he fell fast asleep.



DRAGON CHILD

There was once a young man who was a woodcutter, and very poor. He and his wife had no children, which was a great sorrow, but they were honest, hard-working folk, with kind hearts.

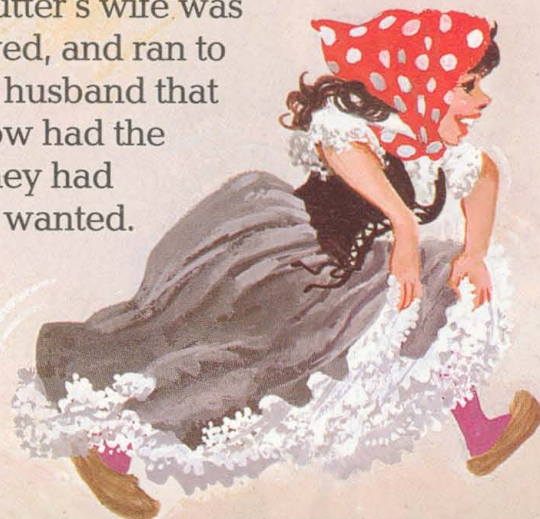
One day, the young man was working deep in the forest when he came across something very strange. Lying in a clearing, half-hidden in the wild grass, was an enormous, brown,

shiny egg — so large that he needed both hands to carry it.

The woodcutter took the egg home to his wife, who wrapped it in warm red

flannel and put it in a basket by the fire.

A few days later, as she sat sewing, the woodcutter's wife heard a *tap, tap, tap* coming from the basket, and when she looked at the egg, she saw it had a great crack in it. Then the two halves of the shell fell apart and there, lying in the basket, was a weird little baby. The woodcutter's wife was overjoyed, and ran to tell her husband that they now had the child they had always wanted.





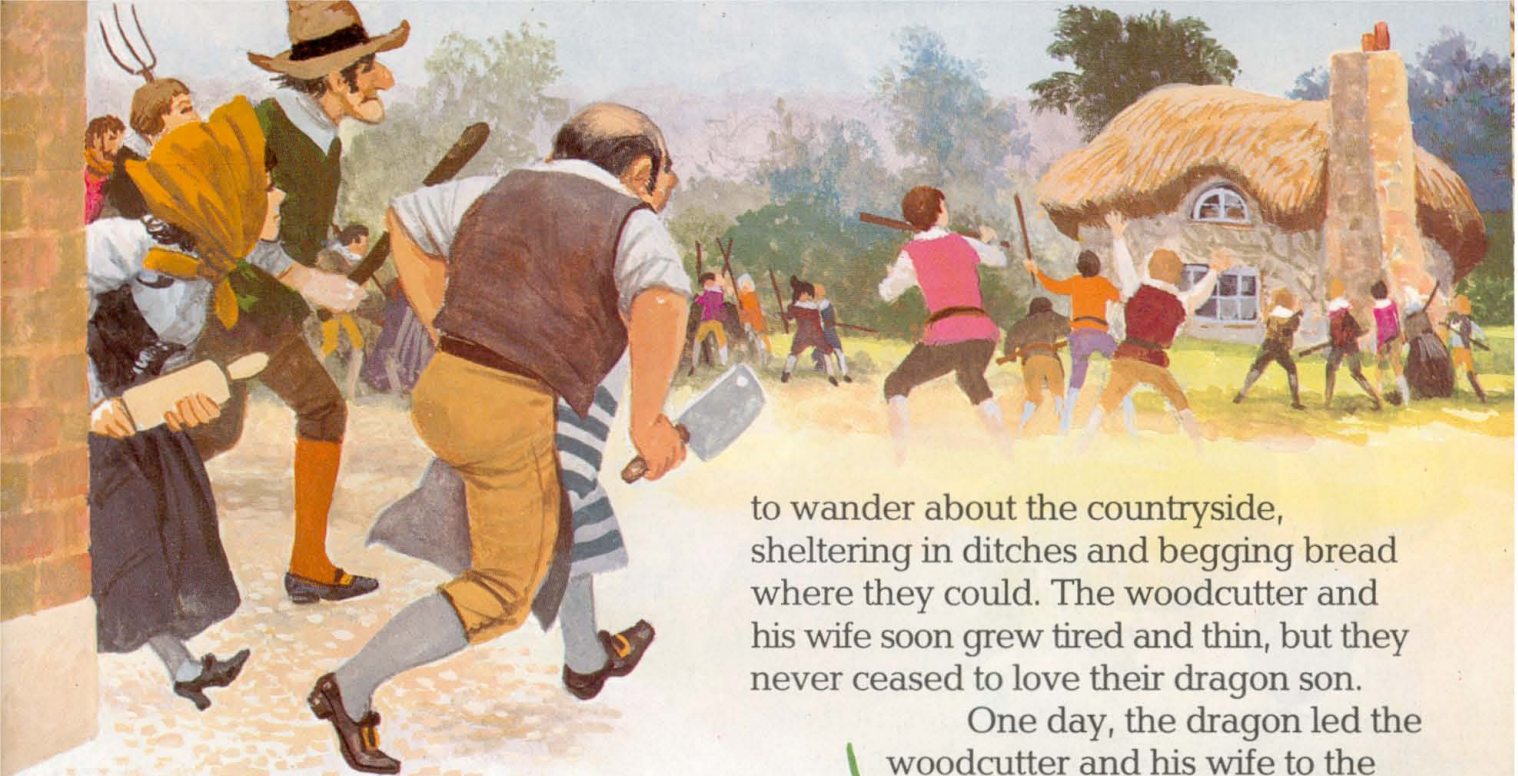
He was certainly no ordinary child. He was covered in silvery scales, had a stumpy little tail, and a face rather like a crocodile. But to the woodcutter and his wife he was the most beautiful child in the whole wide world.

Time passed, and the child grew and grew. And as he grew, he became uglier, until he was quite frightening to look at. Yet he had the sweetest, most loving nature you could imagine. Soon, the neighbours began to whisper among themselves about the woodcutter's child.



"See his long, scaly tail!" they said. "See the wings folded beneath his coat! And what a hideous face he has, with his long, snapping jaws!" But the woodcutter and his wife loved their ugly child dearly, and he repaid their love.

At last, the woodcutter's child grew to his full size, and he really was an alarming sight. He had pointed teeth and long claws, and sometimes, when there was frost about, he could not prevent a little smoke and flame from curling out of his nostrils. He treated all the village people

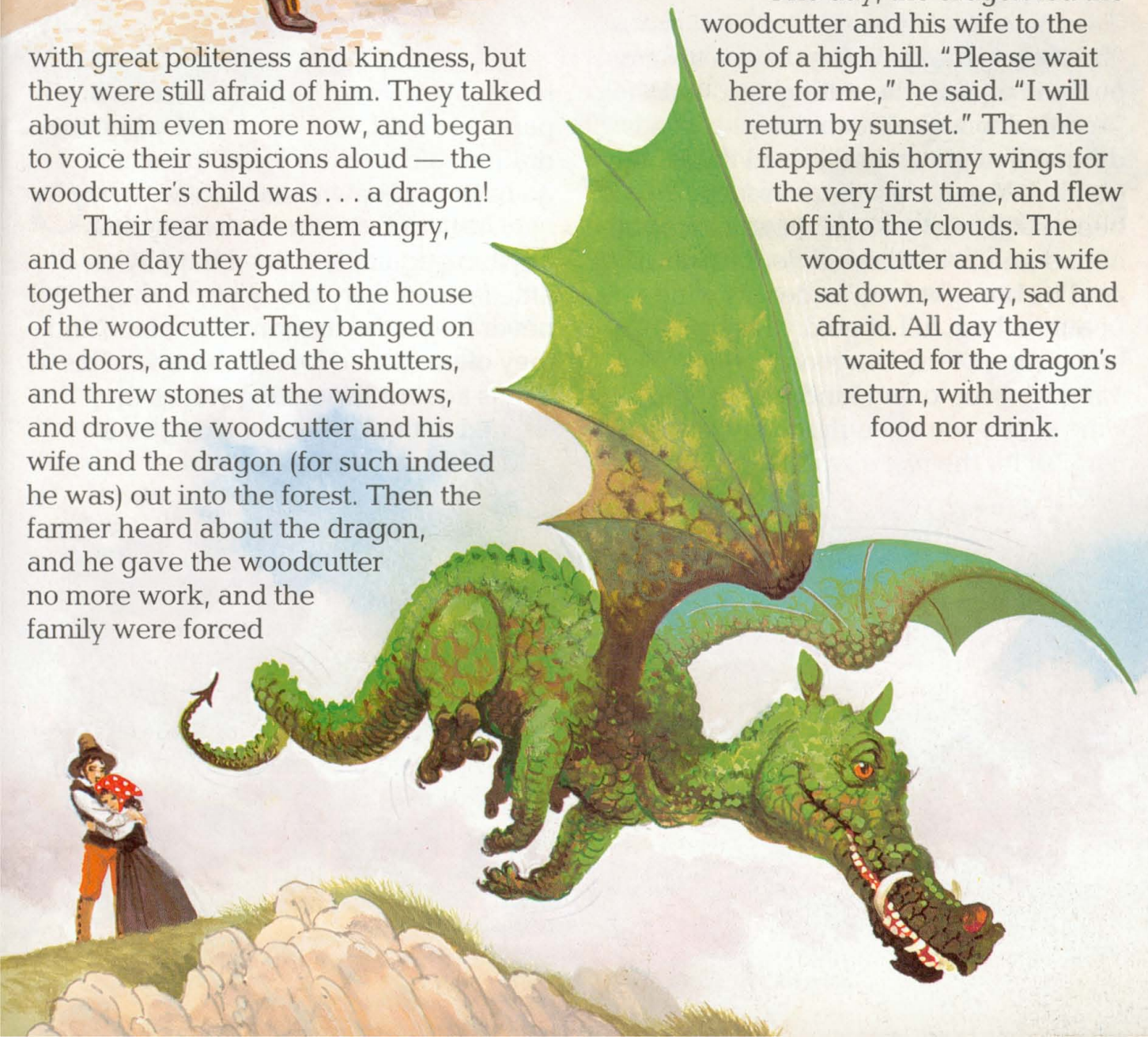


to wander about the countryside, sheltering in ditches and begging bread where they could. The woodcutter and his wife soon grew tired and thin, but they never ceased to love their dragon son.

One day, the dragon led the woodcutter and his wife to the top of a high hill. "Please wait here for me," he said. "I will return by sunset." Then he flapped his horny wings for the very first time, and flew off into the clouds. The woodcutter and his wife sat down, weary, sad and afraid. All day they waited for the dragon's return, with neither food nor drink.

with great politeness and kindness, but they were still afraid of him. They talked about him even more now, and began to voice their suspicions aloud — the woodcutter's child was . . . a dragon!

Their fear made them angry, and one day they gathered together and marched to the house of the woodcutter. They banged on the doors, and rattled the shutters, and threw stones at the windows, and drove the woodcutter and his wife and the dragon (for such indeed he was) out into the forest. Then the farmer heard about the dragon, and he gave the woodcutter no more work, and the family were forced





At last, they saw the dragon's wings outlined against the setting sun, and they prepared to welcome their child. The dragon flew down and kissed them both gently. "You have suffered much because of me," he said, "and I love you both dearly. Now here is your reward." And he brought from under his wing a beautiful bag, full of gold. "I have been to the King of the Dragons," he went on, "and for your loving kindness to me, the King sends you enough money to live in comfort for the rest of your lives."

Then the woodcutter and his wife said that they had only behaved as any parents would, and they cried when the dragon said he must leave them, and go back to his own kind.

Although they never wanted for anything again, and lived happily on a little farm for very many years, they never forgot the dragon, their child, and they often looked for the shadow of his wings against the setting sun as they fetched in the cows for milking on a cold winter's evening.





The Magic Porridge Pot

"Would you look after something for me?"

"Of course I will," said Maisie.

The witch threw open her cloak to reveal a little iron pot with three legs and a handle. "Take good care of it until I come back . . . Oh, and Maisie, if you should ever be hungry, just say to the pot 'Boil, pot, boil!' And if it should ever be full, just say the words 'Stop, pot, stop!' Can you remember?"

Maisie was just wondering how the witch knew her name when a gust of wind stirred up all the fallen leaves in a flurry. When they settled, the witch had disappeared.

One summer, long ago, the harvest failed and there was too little food to eat. In one house, in one particular village, there was no food at all.

Maisie lived there with her mother. Each day Maisie went into the wood to pick berries for supper. But winter was coming, and one day there were no berries to be found. Maisie sat down on a log, and a tear rolled down her cheek. "Whatever will become of mother and me?"

"I think you're just the person I'm looking for," said a gentle, crackly voice. There stood a crooked witch, wrapped in a bulging cloak, with only her purple face peeping out. "I'm travelling far away, and I can't carry much luggage," said the witch.





Lunchtime came, and Maisie's mother began to feel hungry. She took out the pot and looked at it greedily. "Boil, pot, boil!" she said, and at once the iron pot filled to the brim with porridge. "That's enough, thank you very much."

But the pot went on boiling. It went on boiling until it had spilled all over the table. "Oh dear! Halt, pot, halt!" But the little pot kept making porridge until the kitchen floor was covered. Maisie's mother climbed on to a chair.

Maisie walked home and set the pot on the kitchen table. "Look, Mother. We must take great care of this. I *think* it might be magic!"

"But where are the berries for supper?" asked her mother. "I'm hungry."

"So am I," thought Maisie, so she said aloud, "Boil, pot, boil!"

With a deliciously oozing, bubbling, simmering sound, the little pot filled to the brim with golden porridge laced with treacle and speckled with brown sugar!

"Stop, pot, stop!" said Maisie, and they both ate porridge until they were fit to burst. "Shall we make some for the people next door?" asked Maisie.

"No!" Her mother slipped the little iron pot under the table. "No, this is *our* secret. We won't tell *anyone*."

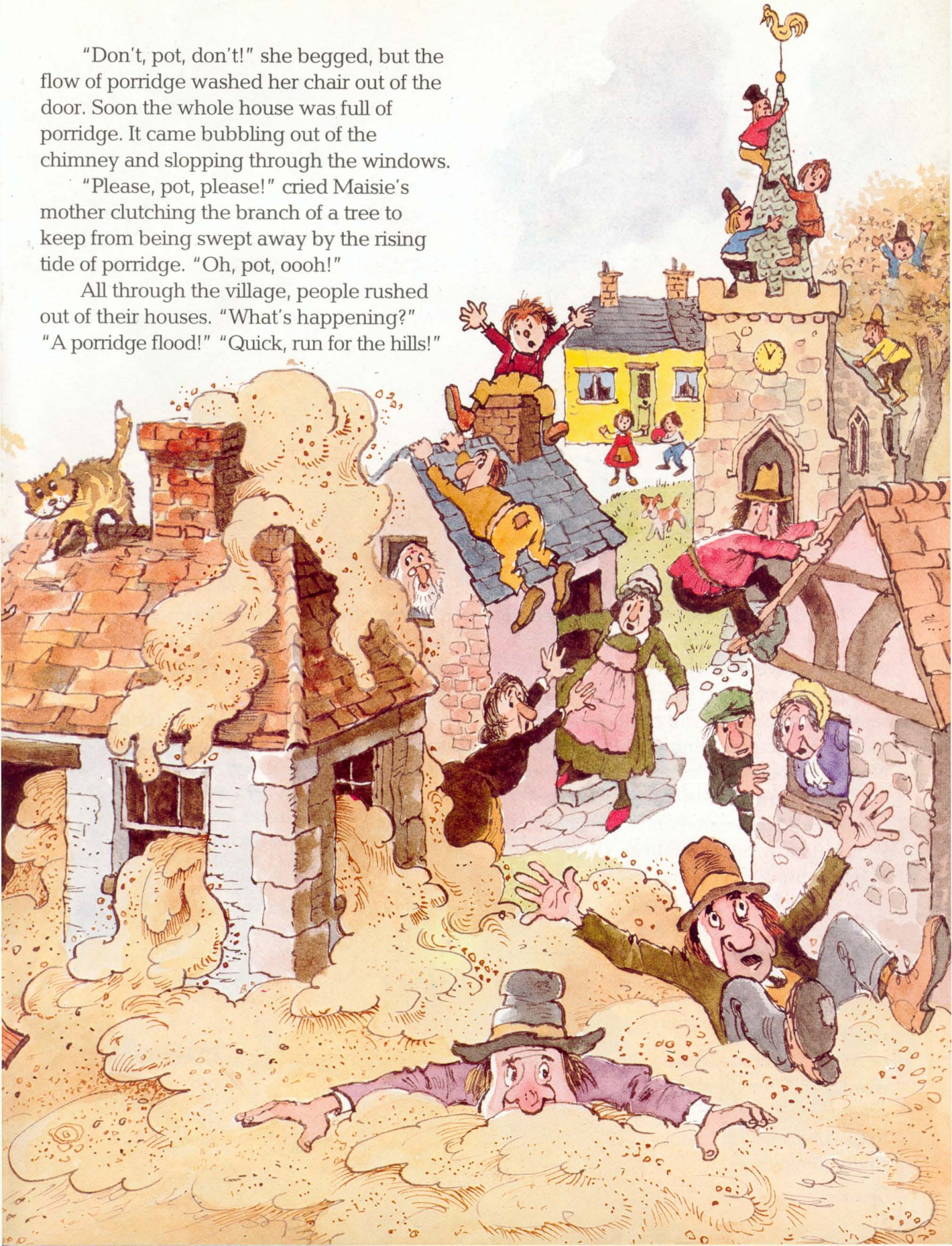
The next day, after the pot had given them both a delicious breakfast, Maisie went out to play with her friends at the other end of the village.



"Don't, pot, don't!" she begged, but the flow of porridge washed her chair out of the door. Soon the whole house was full of porridge. It came bubbling out of the chimney and slopping through the windows.

"Please, pot, please!" cried Maisie's mother clutching the branch of a tree to keep from being swept away by the rising tide of porridge. "Oh, pot, oooh!"

All through the village, people rushed out of their houses. "What's happening?" "A porridge flood!" "Quick, run for the hills!"





The noise and commotion reached the other end of the village, and Maisie ran outside. Howling villagers were clinging to the church spire and perching in the tree-tops. In the distance she could hear her mother's voice shouting: "Help, pot, help! No, pot, noooooh!"

Maisie guessed at once what had happened. She waded and swam as far as she could towards her house. Then, cupping her hands round her mouth, she called, "Stop, pot, stop!"

The little pot heard her. The bubbling stopped. And the village fell silent under a sea of cooling porridge.

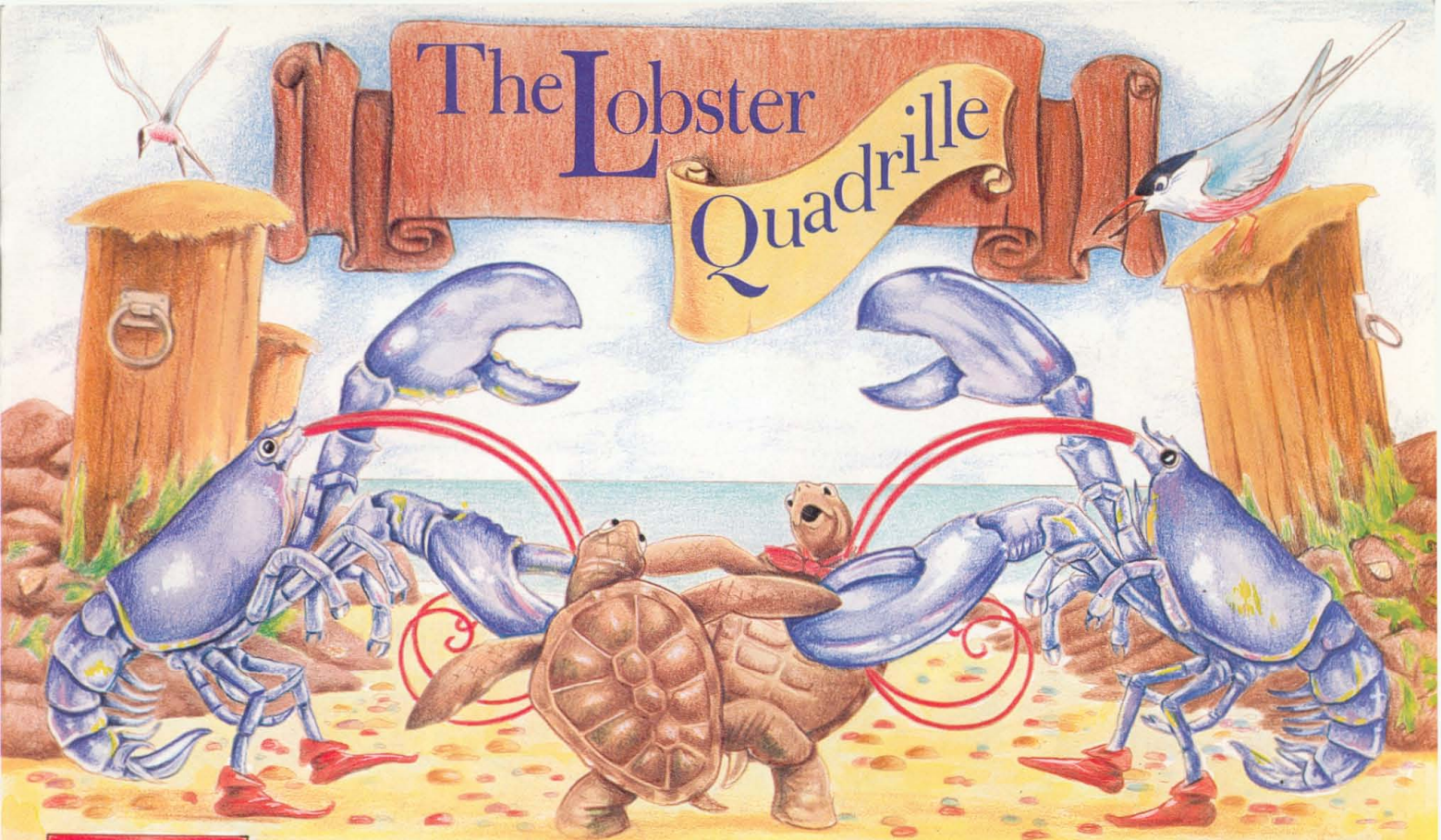
But the magic porridge tasted delicious, even cold. The villagers ate their way from the top to the bottom of it. It took them all winter!

In spring, the witch returned for her little iron pot. "Did you take good care of it?" she asked Maisie, her crinkled eyes twinkling.

"No, I didn't," said Maisie, and her eyes twinkled too. "But *it* certainly took good care of us!"



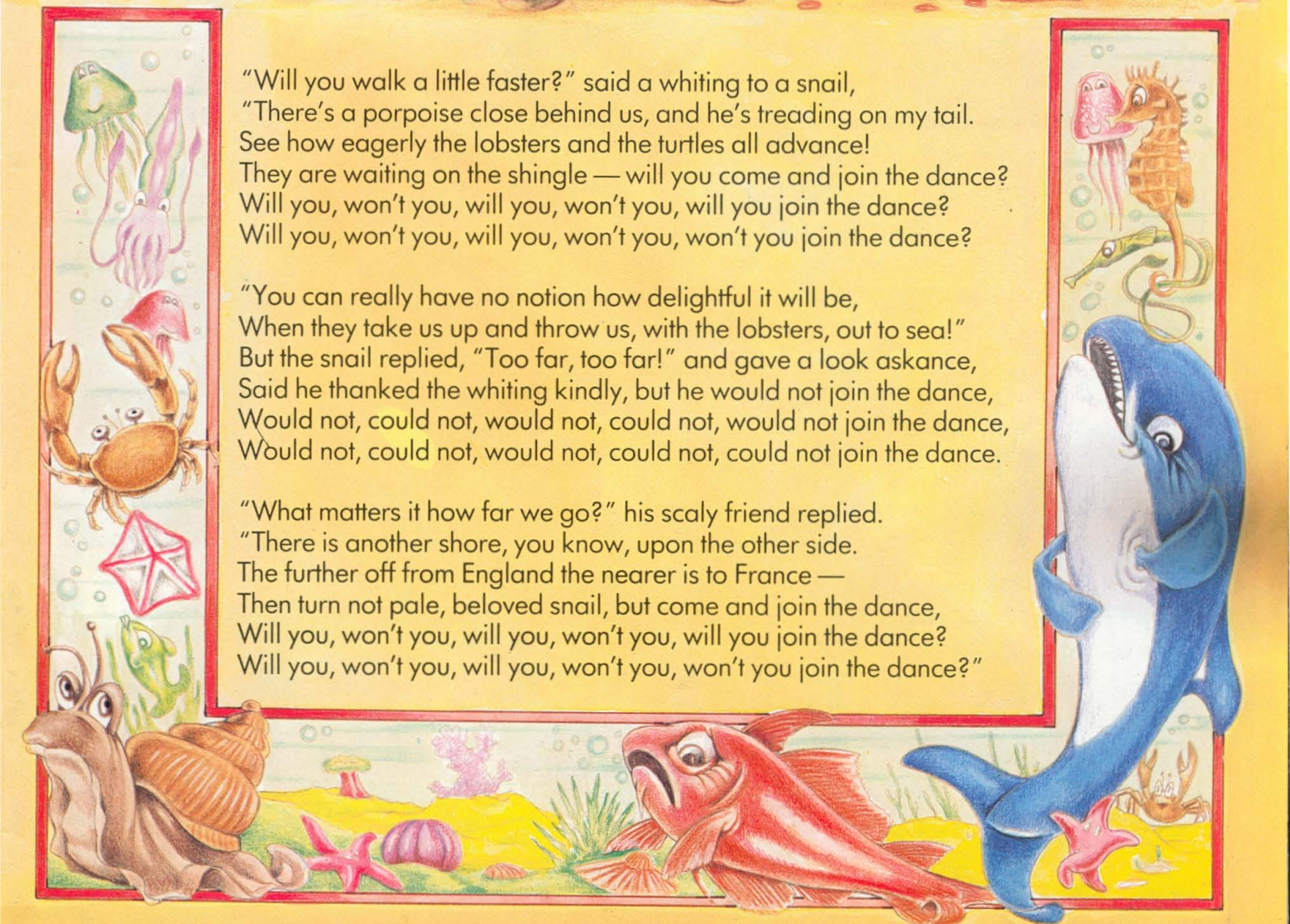
The Lobster Quadrille



"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle — will you come and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?"

"You can really have no notion how delightful it will be,
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied, "Too far, too far!" and gave a look askance,
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance,
Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance,
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

"What matters it how far we go?" his scaly friend replied.
"There is another shore, you know, upon the other side.
The further off from England the nearer is to France —
Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance,
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?"





IN PART 1 OF STORY Teller 2

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