

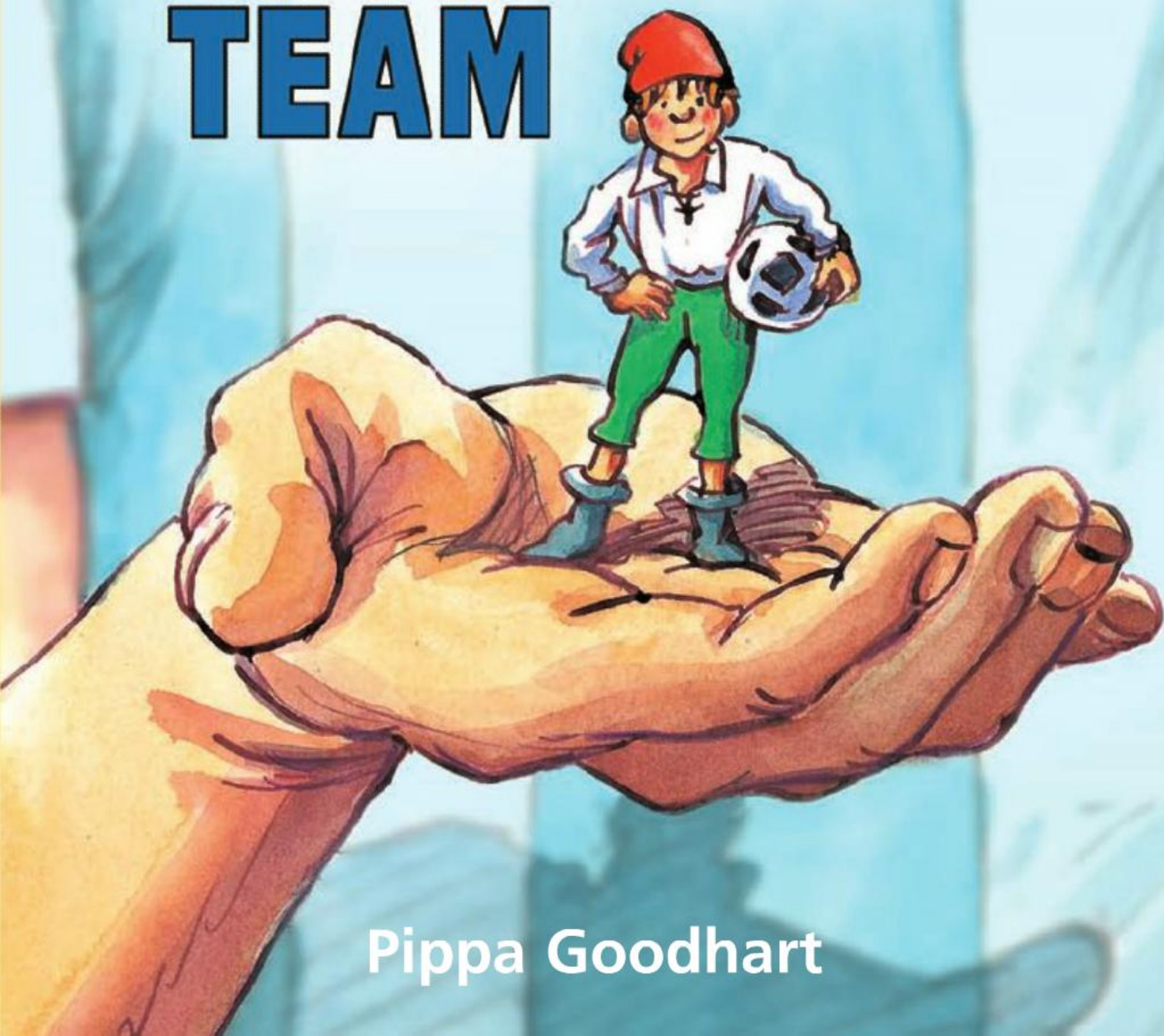


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# TOM THUMB

AND THE  
FOOTBALL  
TEAM



Pippa Goodhart



# TOM THUMB

AND THE

# FOOTBALL TEAM

*Pippa Goodhart*



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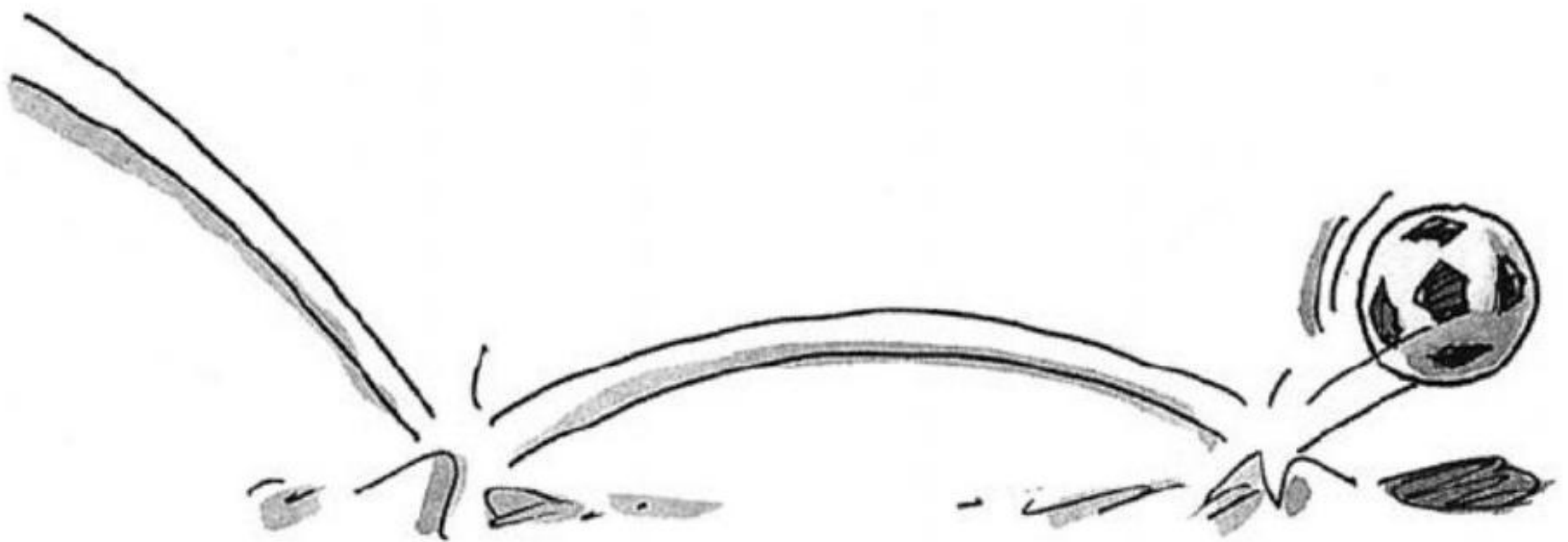
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## **Chapter 1**

### **One Teeny-Tiny Child**

There was once a man who loved his wife and he also loved football.

His wife loved the man and their home. But what she really wanted was a baby to love.

She longed for a baby as you or I might long for a drink on a hot day.



The woman said to her husband,  
"Just one teeny-tiny child would make  
me happy."

And, believe it or not, that's exactly  
what the woman got. She gave birth to  
a teeny-tiny baby boy.



"We'll call him Tom," said her  
husband. "Tom Thumb, because he's  
no bigger than my thumb."





The woman wrapped her teeny-tiny baby in her best cotton hankie. She cut the end of the finger from her finest pair of gloves to make him a bonnet. She tucked Tom into an eggshell cradle and she was happy.



Well, the years passed as years do. And Tom's mother did what mothers do. She cooked for Tom and sewed for Tom and taught Tom to crawl and walk and talk.



But as Tom grew from being a baby to being a boy, he grew to wanting more than cuddles and pretty clothes and nice food. He wanted friends and fun. He wanted to find out about the world.





## **Chapter 2**

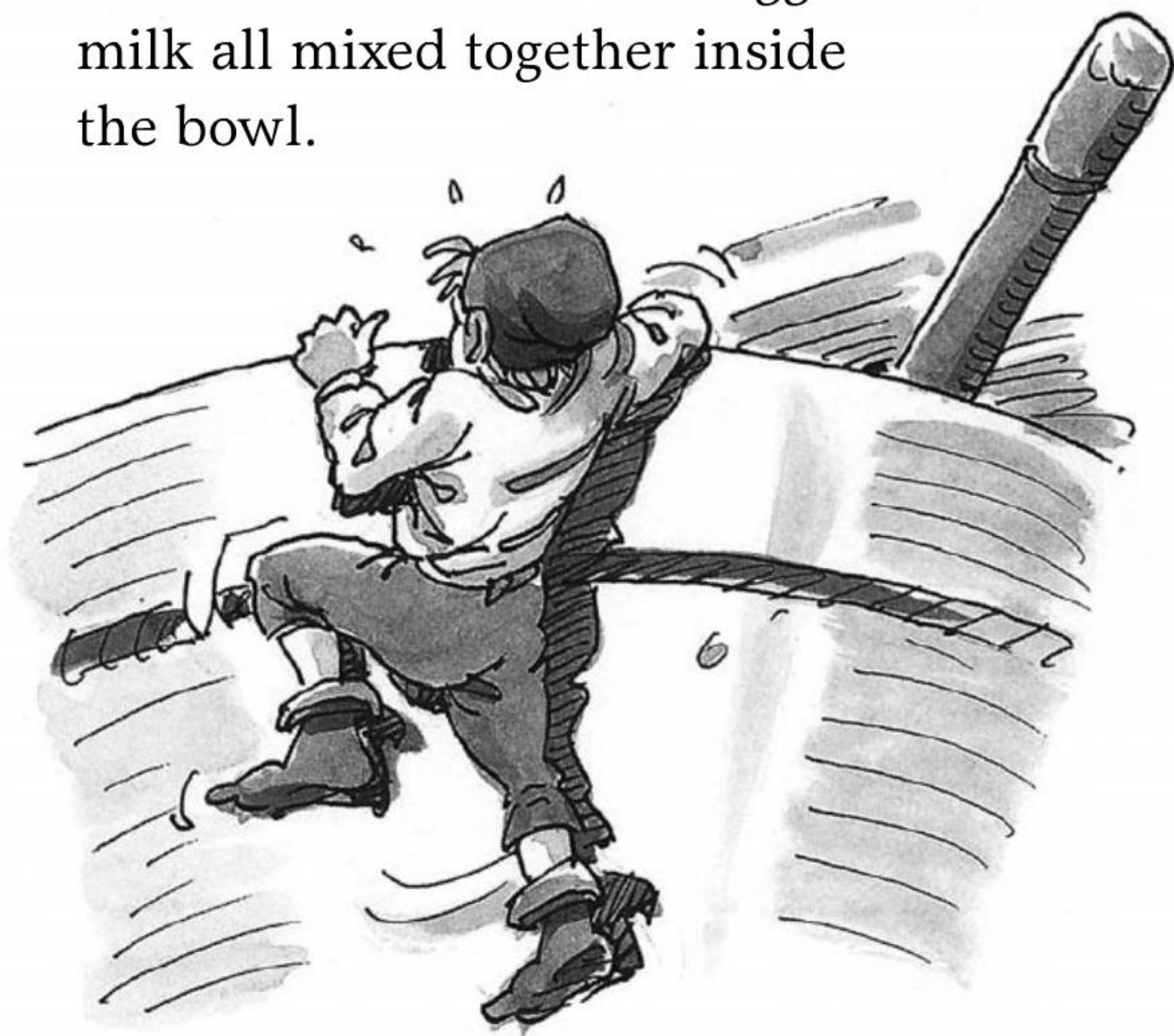
### **Let Me Out!**

"I'm bored," said Tom to his mother one day. He was kicking currants all over the table.

"Well," said his mother. "If you'll stop spoiling those currants you can see how I make a nice pudding for your father's dinner. Sit on my thimble and watch what I do."



But there's not much fun to be had in watching a spoon being stirred around above your head. Tom wanted to see how the flour and eggs and milk all mixed together inside the bowl.



So, when his mother turned to put a pan of water to boil, Tom reached his teeny-tiny hands up to the rim of the mixing bowl.



He pulled and kicked himself up so that he could look down and see and smell the spicy mixture.

"Mmnn, yum!" said Tom. He bent forward to reach a finger to take a taste ... and he toppled over the top of the bowl, plop, into the mix!





If you have ever fallen into an uncooked pudding you will know what sticky stuff it is. It clagged to Tom's arms and clogged to his legs. The more he struggled the more he got stuck in it.



His mother picked up her spoon and slap-slopped the pudding mix, knocking poor Tom dizzy.



Then she scooped the mix, dollop, drop, plop, into a cloth. She tied it tight and popped it into the water to cook.



That water was hot.

"Yeow!" yelled Tom, and he kicked and he struggled.



At last Tom's mother noticed that her pudding was jumping around and shouting.

"Bless us all!" she said. "The pudding's alive! Help!"



And she snatched the pudding from the pot and she threw it out of the house and slam-shut the door.



"Ouch!" said Tom as the pudding landed in the grass. Then "Oooer!" because somebody had picked the pudding up.



That somebody was a hungry tinker passing by.

"Well, boggle my eyes, a pudding for free! I'll have that," said the tinker.





"Put me down!" shouted Tom's teeny-tiny voice. "Let me out!"

"Well, blow me sideways!" said the tinker. "The dang pudding's alive!" And he dropped the pudding and he ran.



Tom bit with his teeth and he kicked with his feet and picked with his fingers. He tore through the pudding cloth and escaped. He wasn't far from the cottage ... but a cat was sniffing close by.







## **Chapter 3**

### **Goal!**

"Ma!" shouted Tom, and he ran on his teeny-tiny legs and he kicked the door as hard as he could, bang, bang, bang.

"Open up, Ma!" he shouted.

"Quick! There's a cat that likes the smell of me!"



Tom's mother opened the door. She looked in front of her. She looked to the left and to the right.

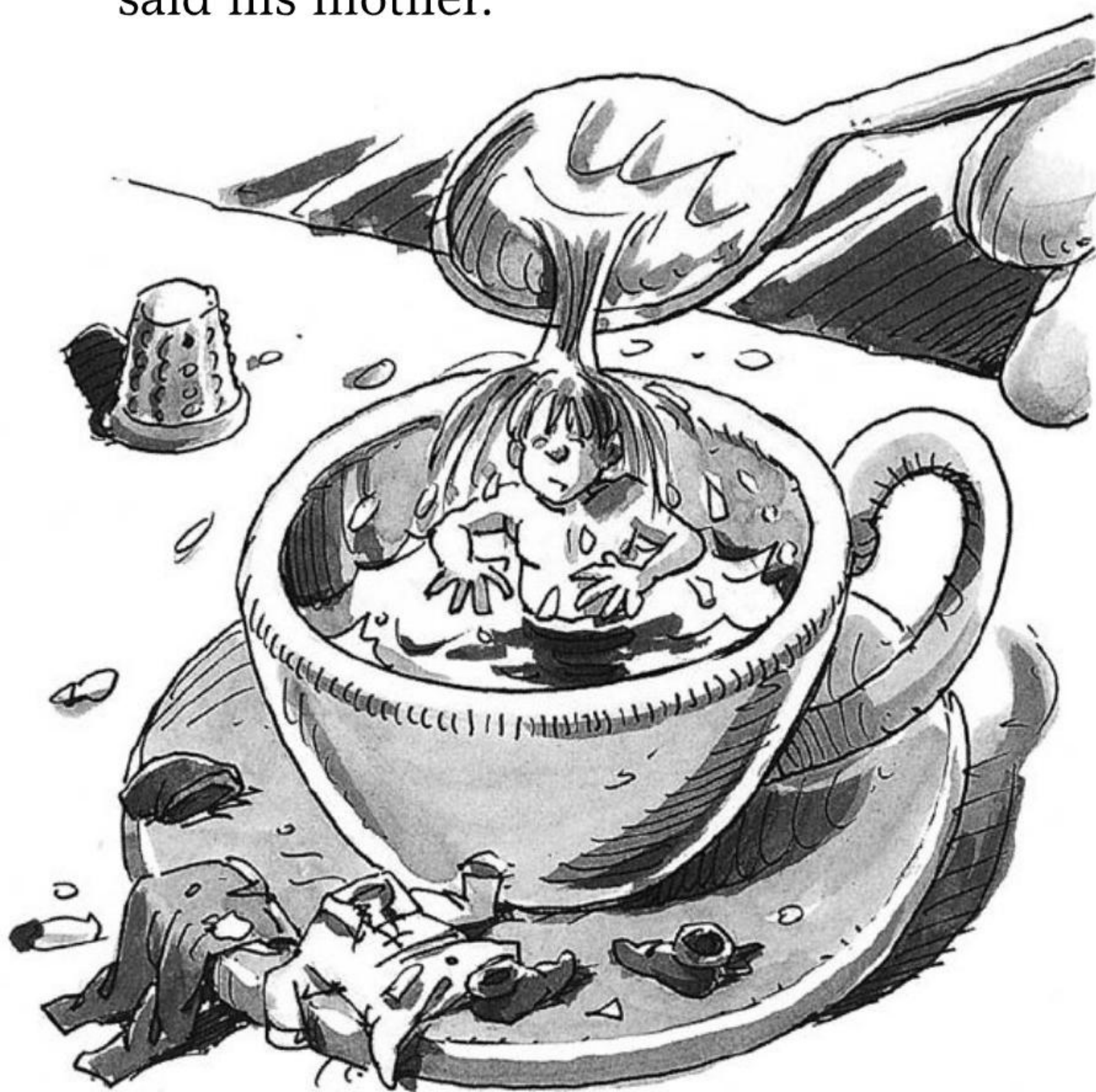


"There's nobody there!" she said.  
But Tom kicked at her ankle.  
"It's me, Ma!"





"Lord love us, it's my darling boy!"  
said his mother.



She carried Tom safe inside and she  
bathed him clean in a tea-cup. She told  
Tom, "From now on, my darling. I'll  
not let you out of my sight."



After that, Tom was kept indoors  
He got more bored than ever.

He climbed the curtains.

"Get down from there or you'll fall!"  
said his mother.



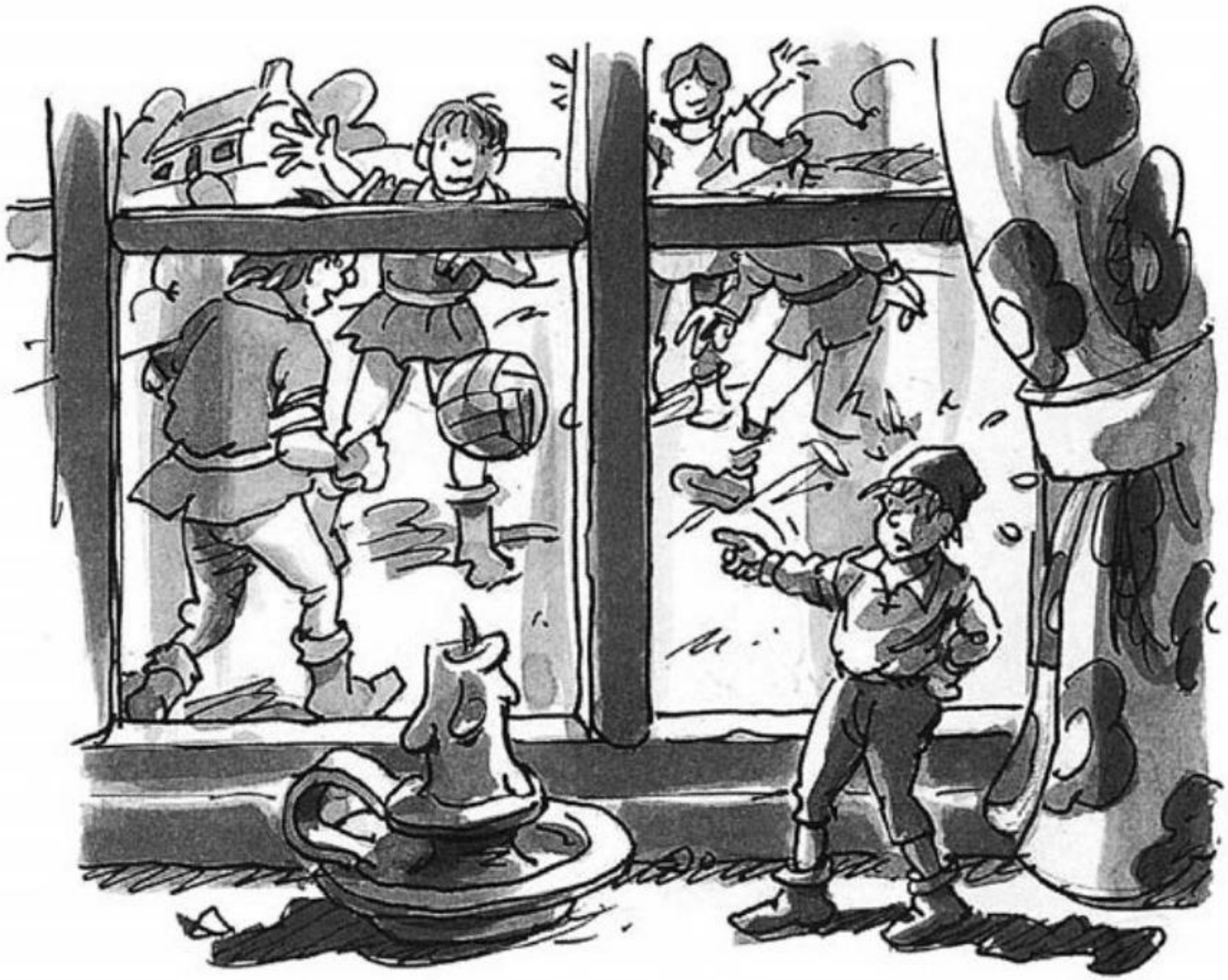
He caught a mouse and took it for  
walks on a lead.

"That thing could bite you. You  
can't keep it," said his mother.



So Tom stood at the window. The children outside were playing football.

"Can't I go out and play with them, Ma?" asked Tom.



"Oo, no it wouldn't be safe," said his mother.

Tom scowled and kicked the window, boom, boom, on the glass to make his mother as cross as he was.



But one day Tom's Dad said to him, "Tell you what, lad, why don't I teach you how to play football like the other children?"

He took a marble from his pocket and he put it, plonk, rumble-roll, onto the table.





"Here, Tom," he said. "Have a kick of this and see if you can get it between those two candle sticks. My finger will be goalie."



Now, a marble on a polished table is fast. Tom dribbled and darted and dodged and kicked and scored.

"Goal!" he shouted.



"You're good at this!" said his Dad.

They played and played.



"I want to play in a team," said Tom.

"I want to play with the children outside."

"You'll have to ask your mother about that," said his father.



"Can I, Ma?" asked Tom.

"No, my darling, you cannot."

"Why not?" asked Tom.

"Because," said his mother, "You are teeny-tiny precious. Those other boys might tread on you! No, you stay safe inside with me."







## **Chapter 4**

### **Oh, Wow!**

But one day Tom's mother was in the doorway, chatting as mothers do.

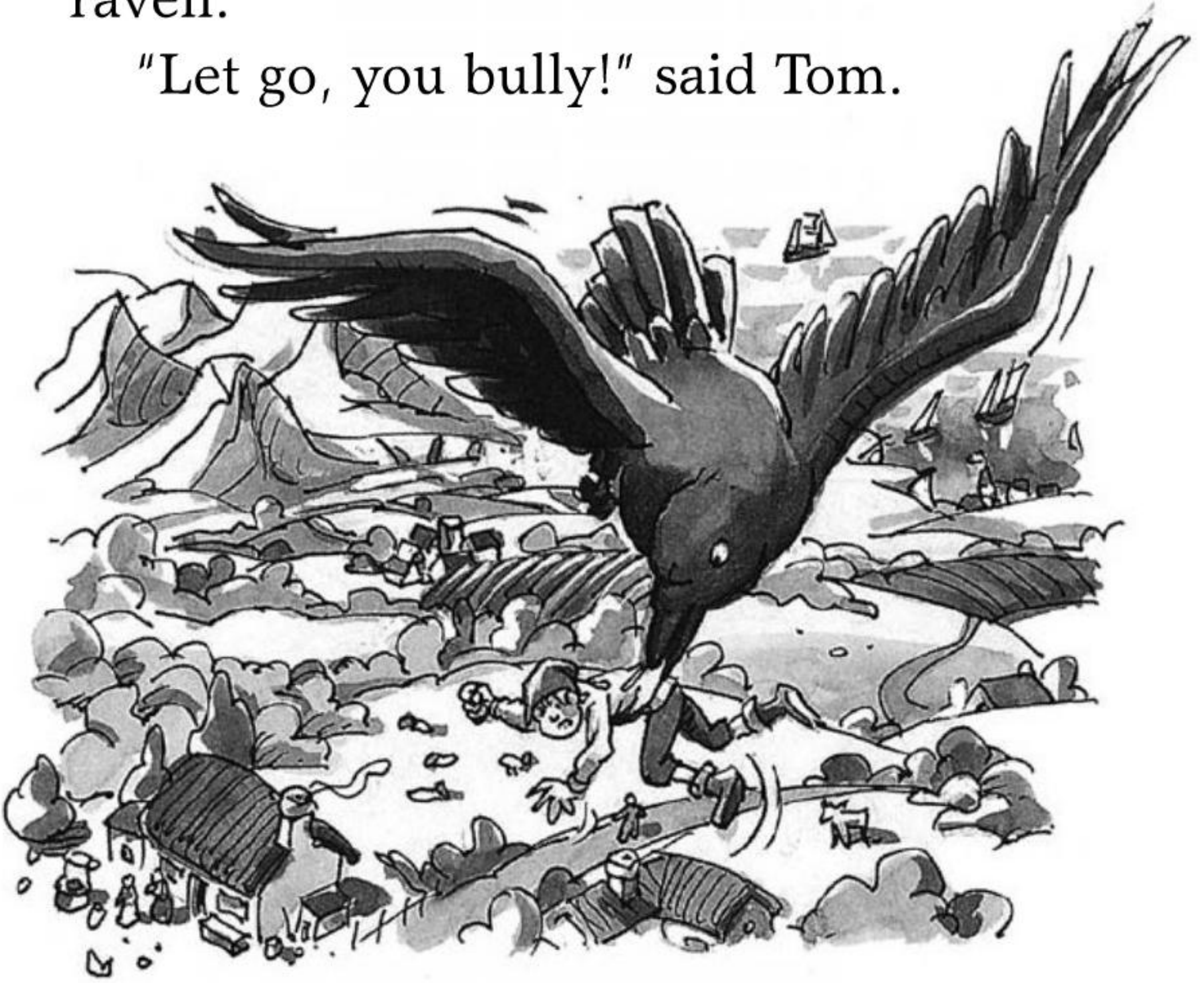
Tom sneaked out around the women's ankles.

But as soon as he got outside, something strong picked Tom up and lifted him high into the sky.



Tom struggled and twisted and saw that he was in the beak of a big black raven.

"Let go, you bully!" said Tom.



When he looked down he saw his cottage and his Ma shrunk teeny-tiny far away. And he saw great green mountains and a big blue sea that he'd never seen before.

"Oh, wow!" he said.



The raven swooped low as they got to the sea. It opened its beak and dropped Tom. He fell, splash-thrash into salty cold water.

"Oh no," thought Tom. "I'll drown!"

But, as Tom splutter-splashed, a big fish opened its mouth and gulped. It swallowed Tom right down into its dark smelly stomach.





"Oh, Ma," thought Tom. "I wish I'd stayed safe home with you!"

He curled up small and cried.



But it wasn't long before a fisherman caught that big fine fish and he sent the fish to the palace.



The palace cook took one look at the fish and said, "I'll stuff it full of herbs, just as King Arthur likes it." And he took his knife and he slit the fish - and out stepped Tom Thumb blinking in the light. He pointed at the Cook and shouted,

"Put that knife down!"





"Er, yes, Sir," said the Cook, and he put down the knife.



There was a rare fuss-flurry in the palace as people told each other the story of Tom Thumb. Even the King got to hear it.

"I want to see this teeny-tiny boy," said the King.





## **Chapter 5**

### **What's So Funny?**

So Tom was brought, fresh washed and combed.

When King Arthur saw teeny-tiny Tom on his table, he began to laugh. So Tom put his teeny-tiny hands on his teeny-tiny hips and asked, "What's so funny?"



"You are," said King Arthur. "I've never seen anything like you before."

"Well, I've never seen anything like you before either!" said Tom. And he pointed at the king and he laughed.

"Hee hee hee, look at him!"



The Palace people were shocked.

"Shall we remove the rude boy?"  
they asked.



King Arthur shook his head.

"No," he said. "Tom Thumb is right. I am just as much the only king around here as he is the only teeny-tiny boy. It can be lonely being the only one. I could do with a friend who knows how I feel."

"So could I," said Tom.





So the teeny-tiny boy and the great grand king became friends.

King Arthur taught Tom how to behave with dignity. And Tom taught the King how to have fun. He put a hazelnut onto the table.



"Flick that with your finger," said Tom. "See if you can get it past me."



King Arthur got good at dodging and darting.

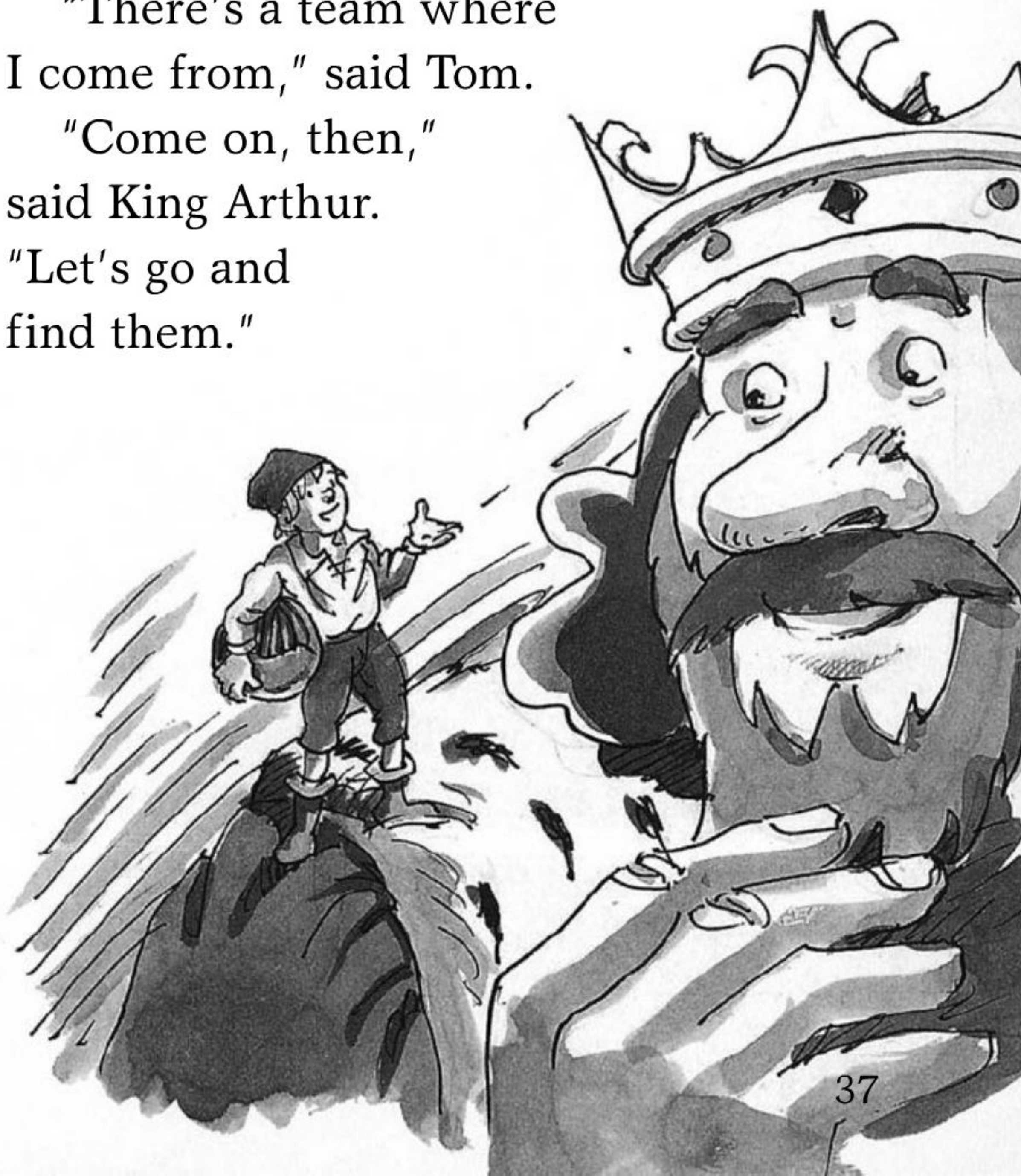
"It's even more fun with more people," said Tom. "You need two teams to play football properly."

"But where could we get two teams from?" asked King Arthur.

"There's a team where I come from," said Tom.

"Come on, then," said King Arthur.

"Let's go and find them."







## **Chapter 6**

### **Football at The Palace!**

So Tom and King Arthur rode over the mountains and fields to Tom's village.

When Tom's mother opened the cottage door she laughed and she cried. She hugged Tom welcome home and she told him off for running away.



At last Tom got free and said.  
"Ma, this is my friend, King Arthur."



"Lawks, the King!" said Tom's mother, and she started laughing and crying all over again.

The village children came to see what was going on.



Tom told King Arthur, "These are my friends, the team."



"Pleased to meet you," said the King, and the children giggled and bowed and blushed.

"And this," said Tom, "is my dad. He's brilliant at teaching football."



So the grown-ups sat and talked about the weather and drank tea as grown-ups do. And Tom told the children all about the King and the palace and how he came to be there.

"Oh, wow!" they said.





"Would you like to come and play football at the palace and see it for yourself?" asked Tom.

"Yes please!" said the children. "You be our captain, Tom."

So they all travelled back to the palace.



Tom's dad taught the palace people how to kick and tackle and dribble and shoot a ball.





Tom's mother had a chat and tea with the Queen. And Tom took his team down to the kitchen to see the knife that had cut him out of the fish.





Then it was time for the match. The shouting and cheering and arguing were much the same as at any football match you or I have ever seen. But the pitch was a big round table and the ball was a glistening pearl.





"Kids against the King? We'll easily win!" Tom told the children. And they did.

"Hooray!"

"Would you like to play again next Saturday?" asked the King.

"Yes please!"



As they trundled home, Tom's mother said, "You'll never guess what! The Queen has asked me to sew some special little clothes for her baby princess!"

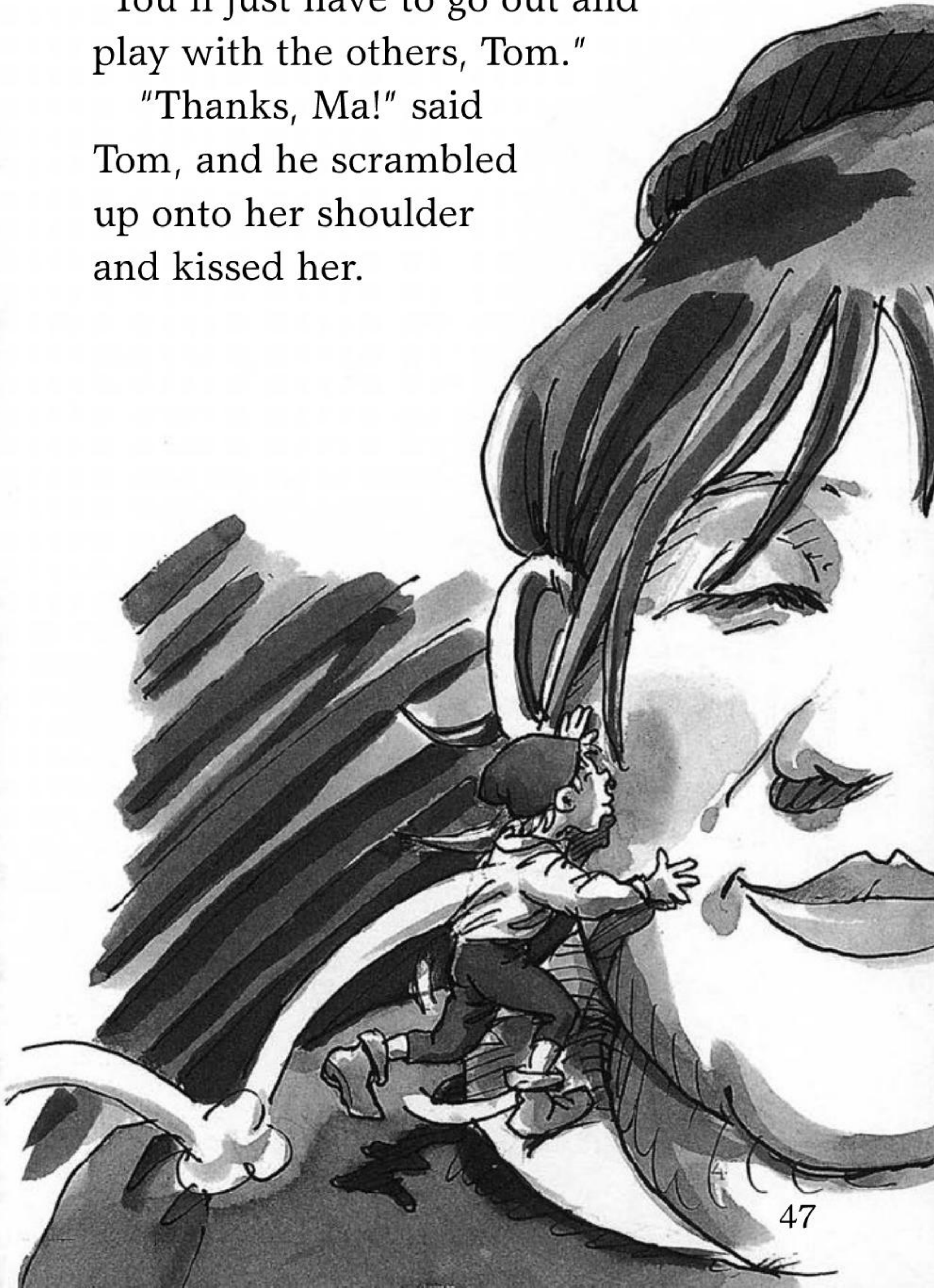


Tom's dad winked at Tom. He said to his wife, "You'll be busy then. You won't want Tom under your feet all day."



"No I won't," agreed Tom's ma.  
"You'll just have to go out and  
play with the others, Tom."

"Thanks, Ma!" said  
Tom, and he scrambled  
up onto her shoulder  
and kissed her.





## ***About the author***

The story of Tom Thumb is the oldest story for children that anybody has found written down. It is a story about a tiny boy and the adventures he has. The story has been written down again and again by different people over hundreds of years. Each of those people has made their own small changes.

I've made a change to the story, too. I've added the finger football bit. It seems to me that finger football is just the right game for a boy who is no bigger than a man's thumb!







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# TOM THUMB

## AND THE FOOTBALL TEAM



Tiny Tom Thumb wants to see the world. His mother just wants him to stay safe and sound at home. But soon Tom is off on adventures that lead him to the palace, and a very special football match!

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