

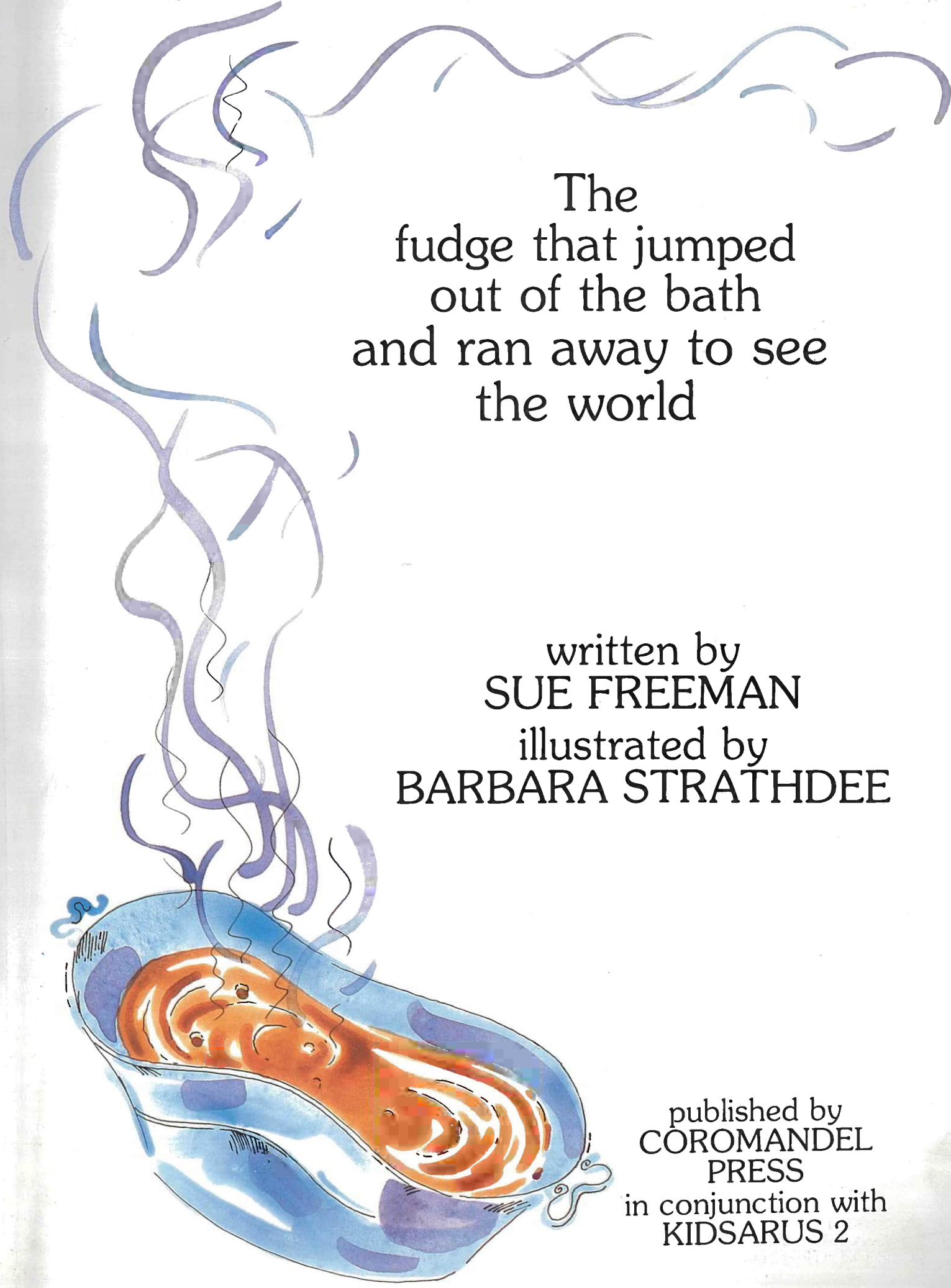
Sue Freeman

illustrated by Barbara Strathdee



The fudge that jumped
out of the bath
and ran away
to see the world





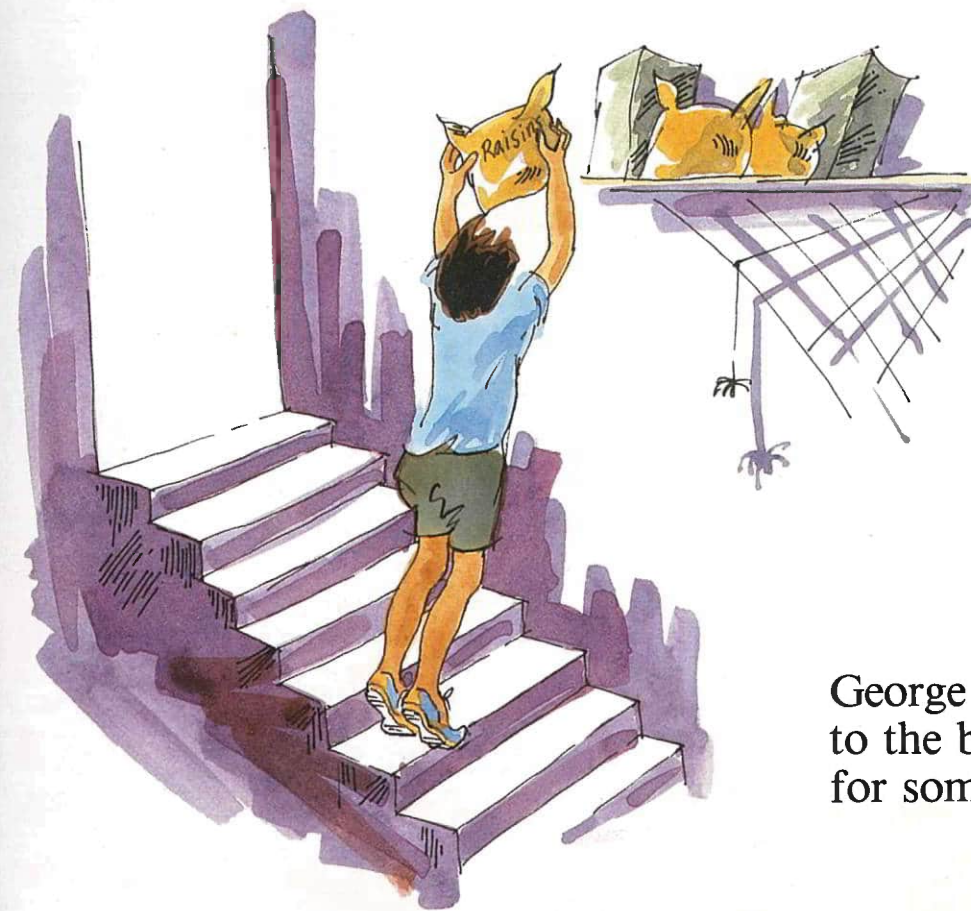
The
fudge that jumped
out of the bath
and ran away to see
the world

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Rangi and George were making fudge to eat at the party. They wanted lots so they put the bath on the stove and cooked up the fudge in that.



George ran down to the basement for some raisins,

Rangi went to the washhouse for walnuts,

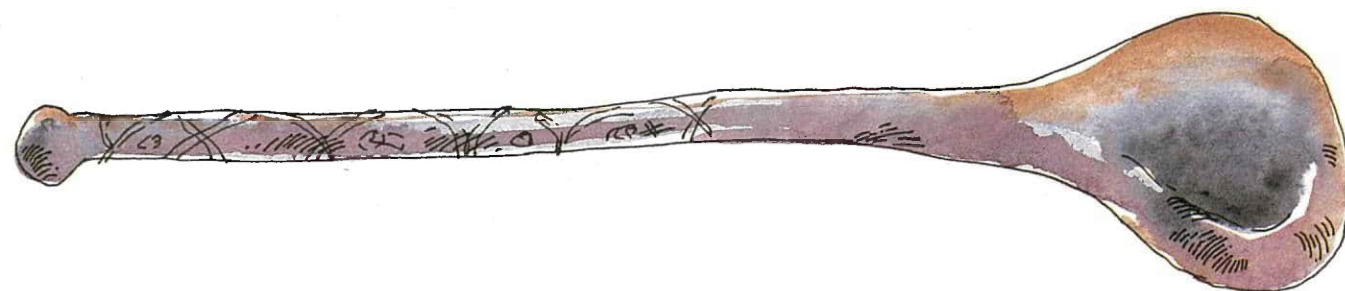
and the fudge began to burn.

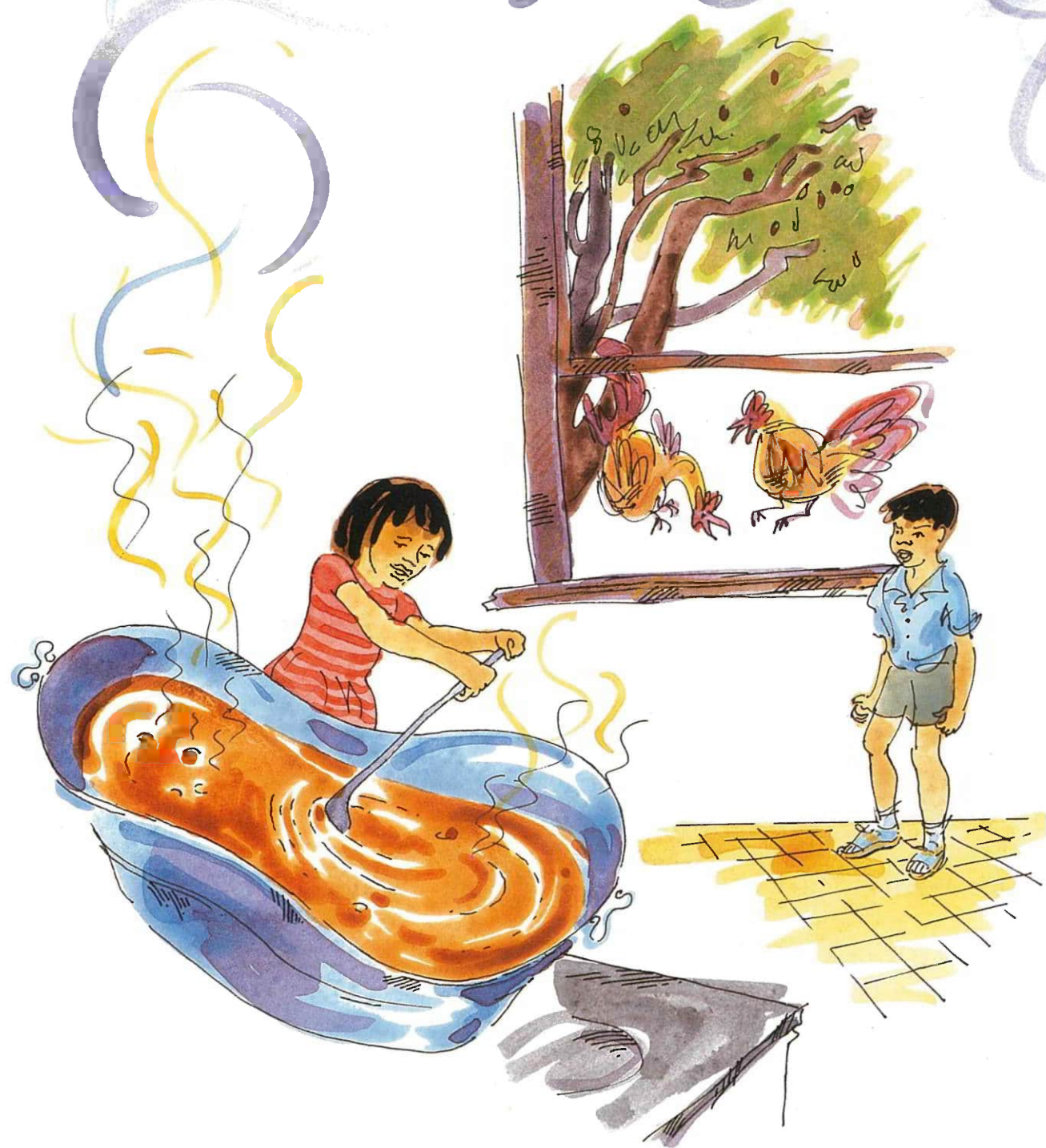


"Ooh, quick, it's burning," shouted George.
"Give it a stir!" shouted Rangi, from outside.
"What with?" said George.
Rangi rushed in with a big black wooden spoon
and stirred the fudge hard
to stop it burning.
"Where'd you get that funny spoon?" said George.



"It's just Nana's witchy spoon off the top of the wardrobe,"
said Rangi, giving the middle a good scrape.
"You're not allowed to get into that stuff," said George.
"Well I am, aren't I?" she said, stirring furiously.
"Nana won't know. She's down the beach."
"I hope nothing terrible happens," said George.

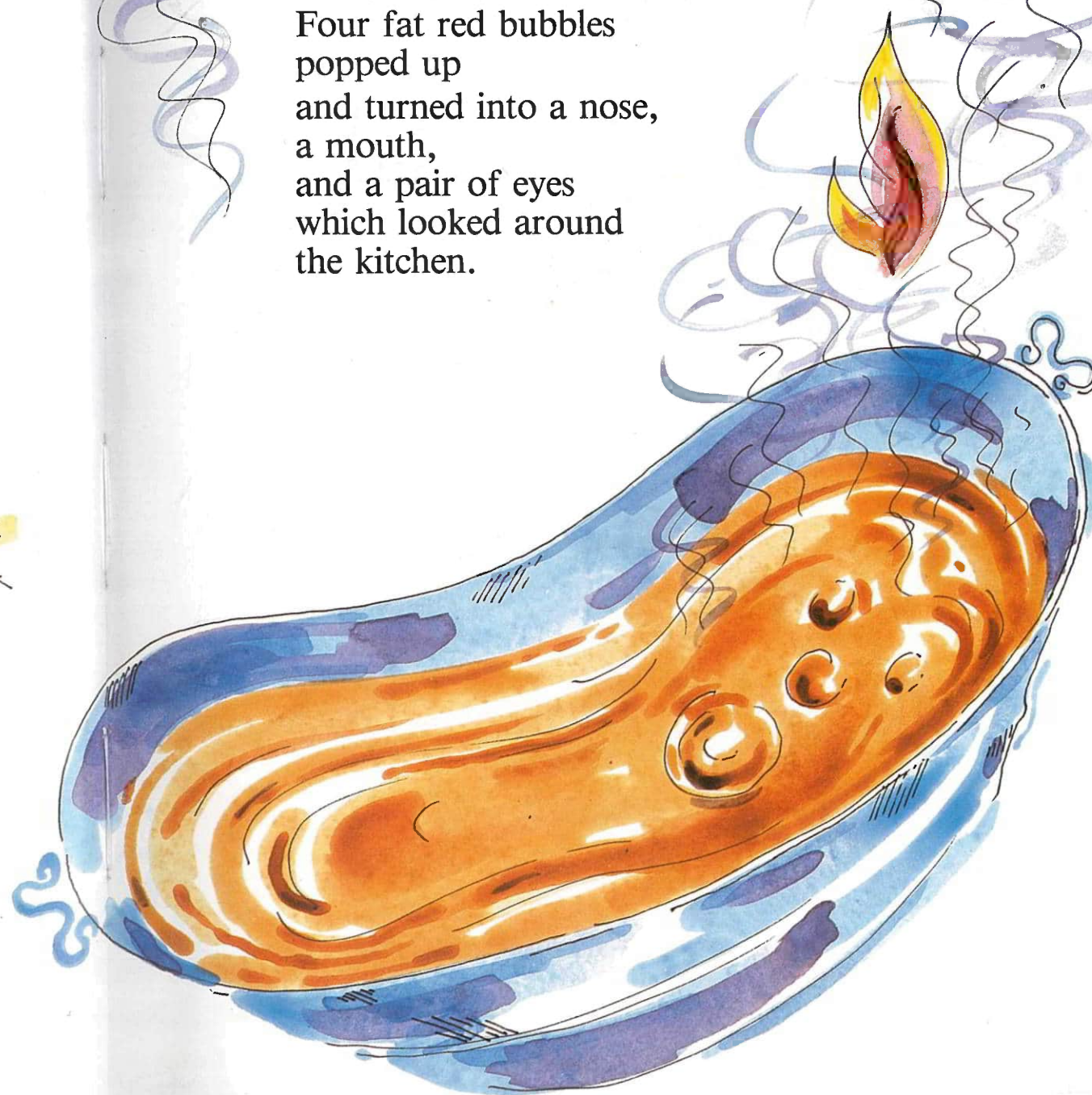




Just then funny yellow smoke started coming out of the fudge.
“Uh-oh,” said Rangi.
The kitchen was very quiet for a moment and they could hear the chooks yakking away in the yard.

“BOOM!”
went the bath
and a flame shot out.

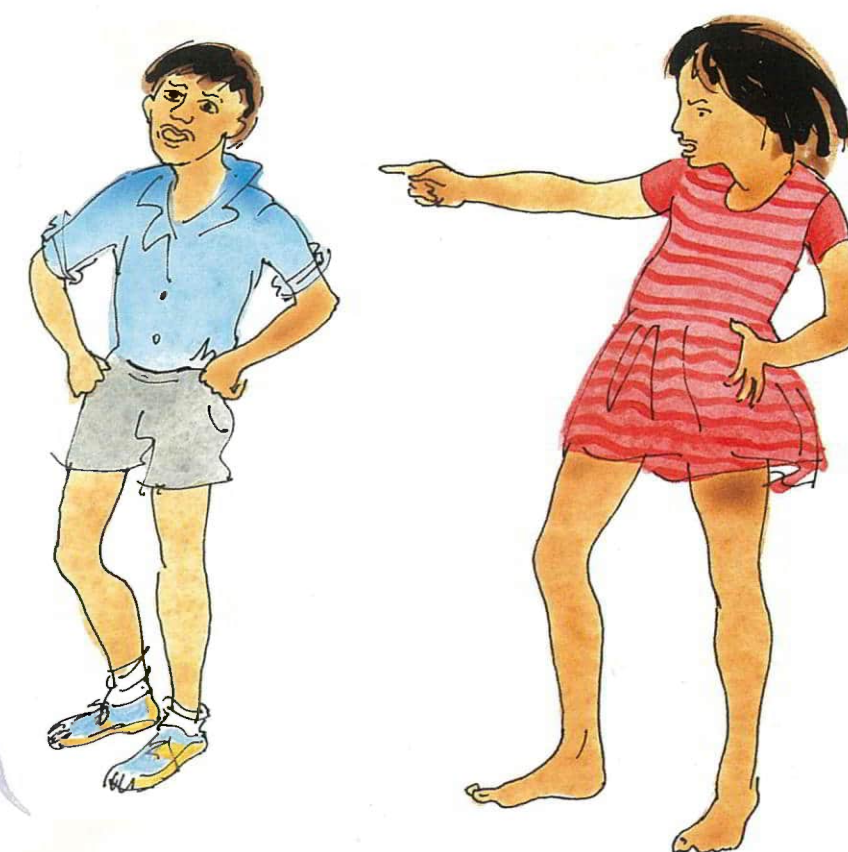
The smoke swirled round.
Four fat red bubbles
popped up
and turned into a nose,
a mouth,
and a pair of eyes
which looked around
the kitchen.



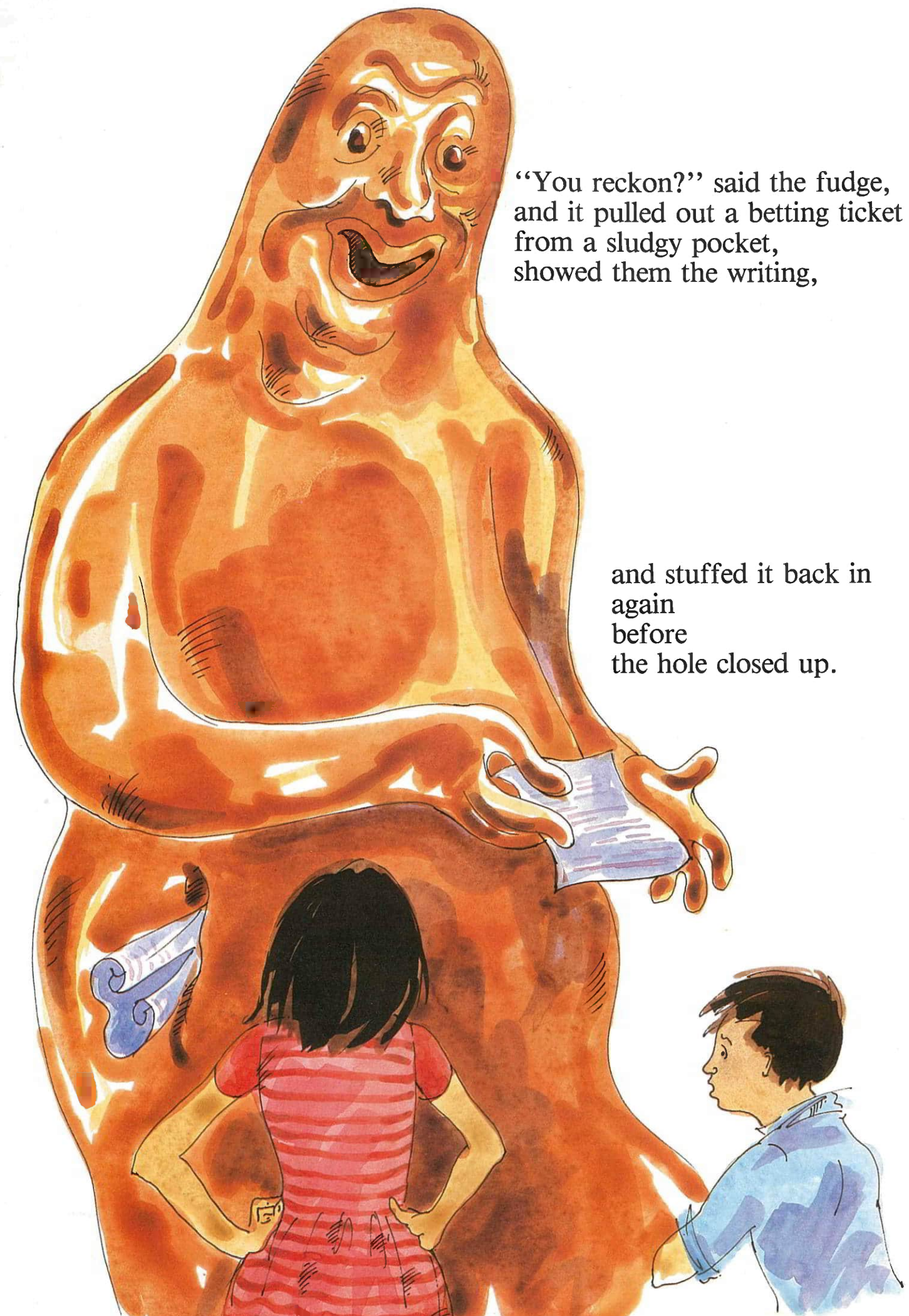


And it squelched across the floor a bit,
like a snail, and it left
a sticky brown trail
on the lino.

“Think you’re smart, don’t you?” said Rangi.
“Now get back in that bath.”
“Oh no,” said the fudge. “I’m off to see the world.
I think I’ll go down to Waihi and watch the races.”
“You can’t, you’ve only just been born,” said George.



The fudge heaved up in a lump and jumped out on to the floor
with a noise like “Sklurp!”
It was nearly as big as Nana’s wardrobe.
“Wow!” said the fudge.
“I’m alive!”



“You reckon?” said the fudge,
and it pulled out a betting ticket
from a sludgy pocket,
showed them the writing,

and stuffed it back in
again
before
the hole closed up.



“You’re not going,” said Rangi. “We want to eat you
at the party.”

“Not likely!” said the fudge, and picking up the two kids
with warm sticky fingers it sat them on a tea tray
and slid them down the steps to the basement.

They landed at the bottom
on a pile of sacks.

"You can just stay there while I make my getaway,"
it said. "I'm sending down the Christmas cake
and a bottle of Fanta
to keep you going. Ta ta for now!"

There was a clatter
as the washing basket slid
down the steps with the doggie tin
and the bottle of drink in it.
The basement door closed
above them.

The key ran round
in the lock.



"Hell's teeth!" said Rangi.

"We might be prisoners in here for years.

We'd better have a snack
to keep our strength up."

So they ate hunks of Christmas cake
and drank a lot of Fanta.

"We could feel round the walls," said George.

"There might be a secret tunnel."

They walked round the basement
in the dark, knocking on bricks
and feeling in holes.

They found a sack of something lumpy
that was probably potatoes
but there wasn't a tunnel.





Suddenly the door opened
and someone came
down the steps.

"What are you banging round down here for?"
said the someone.

It was Mary from next door.

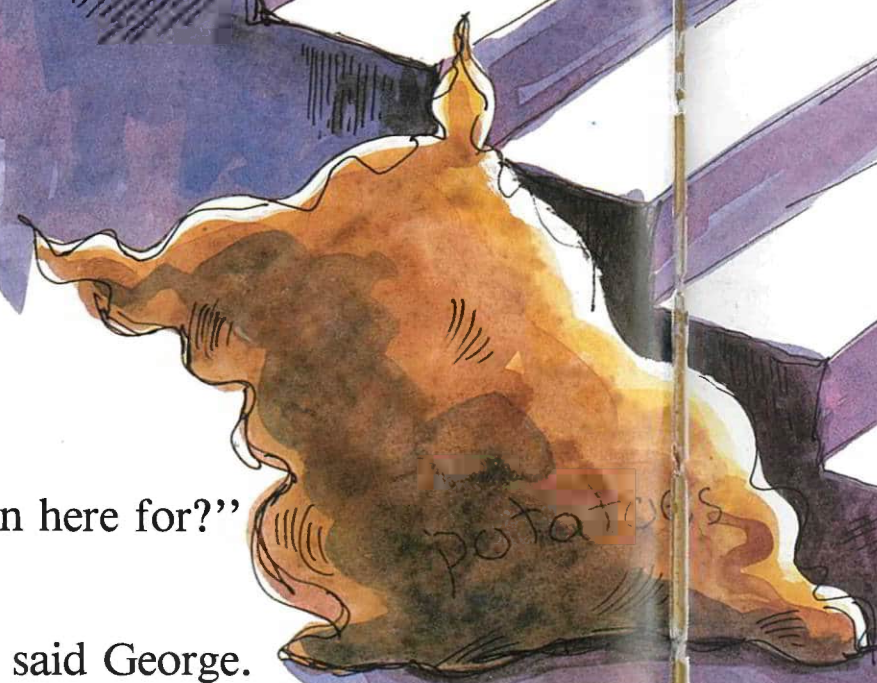
"How did you get in here, Mary?" said George.

"Through the door, dumbo. It's not locked."

"How funny," said Rangi,

"I thought the fudge had locked us in.

Come on George!"



They rushed up the steps
to the kitchen.

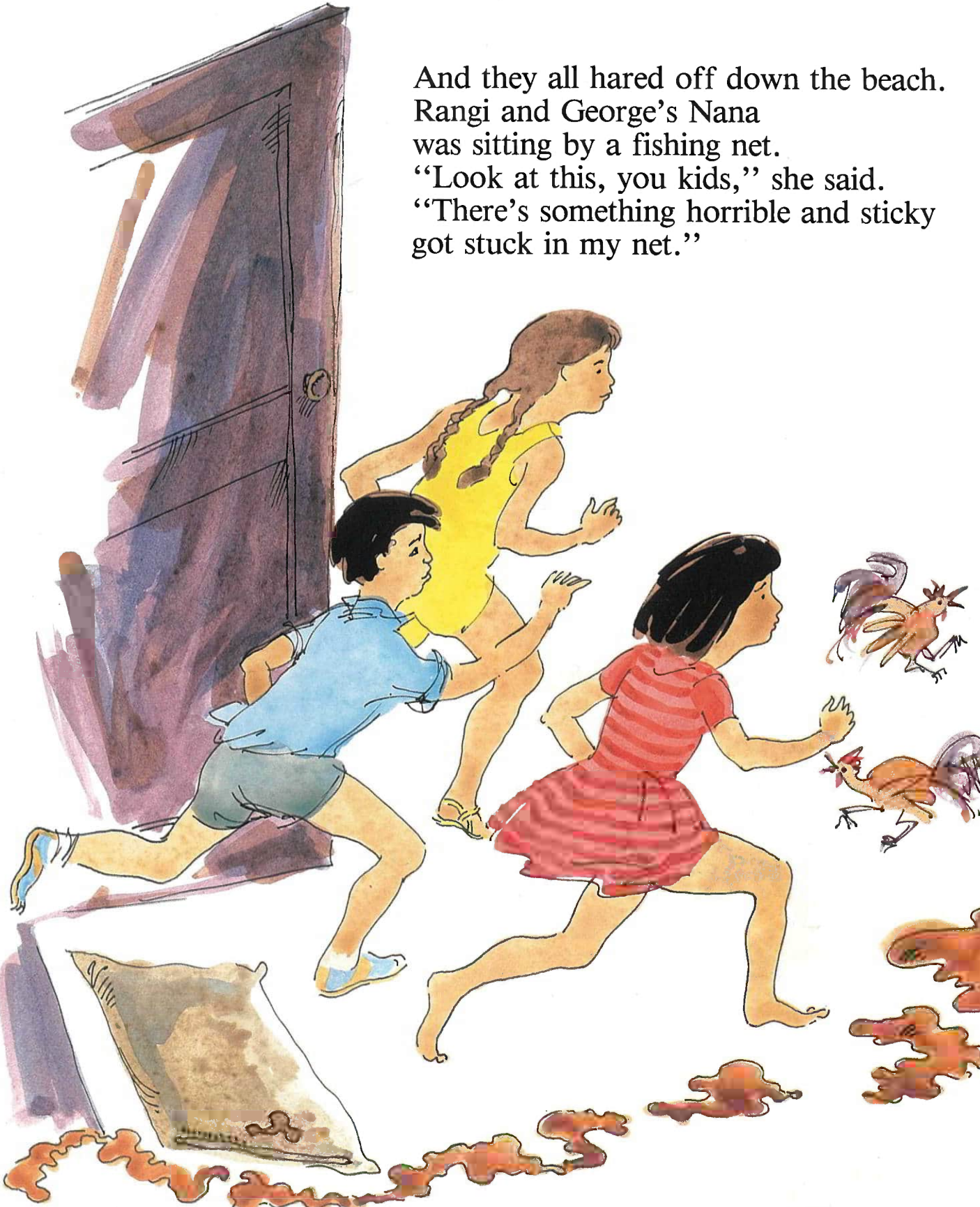
"It's gone," said George.

"Mary, did you see our fudge anywhere?
Big brown thing."

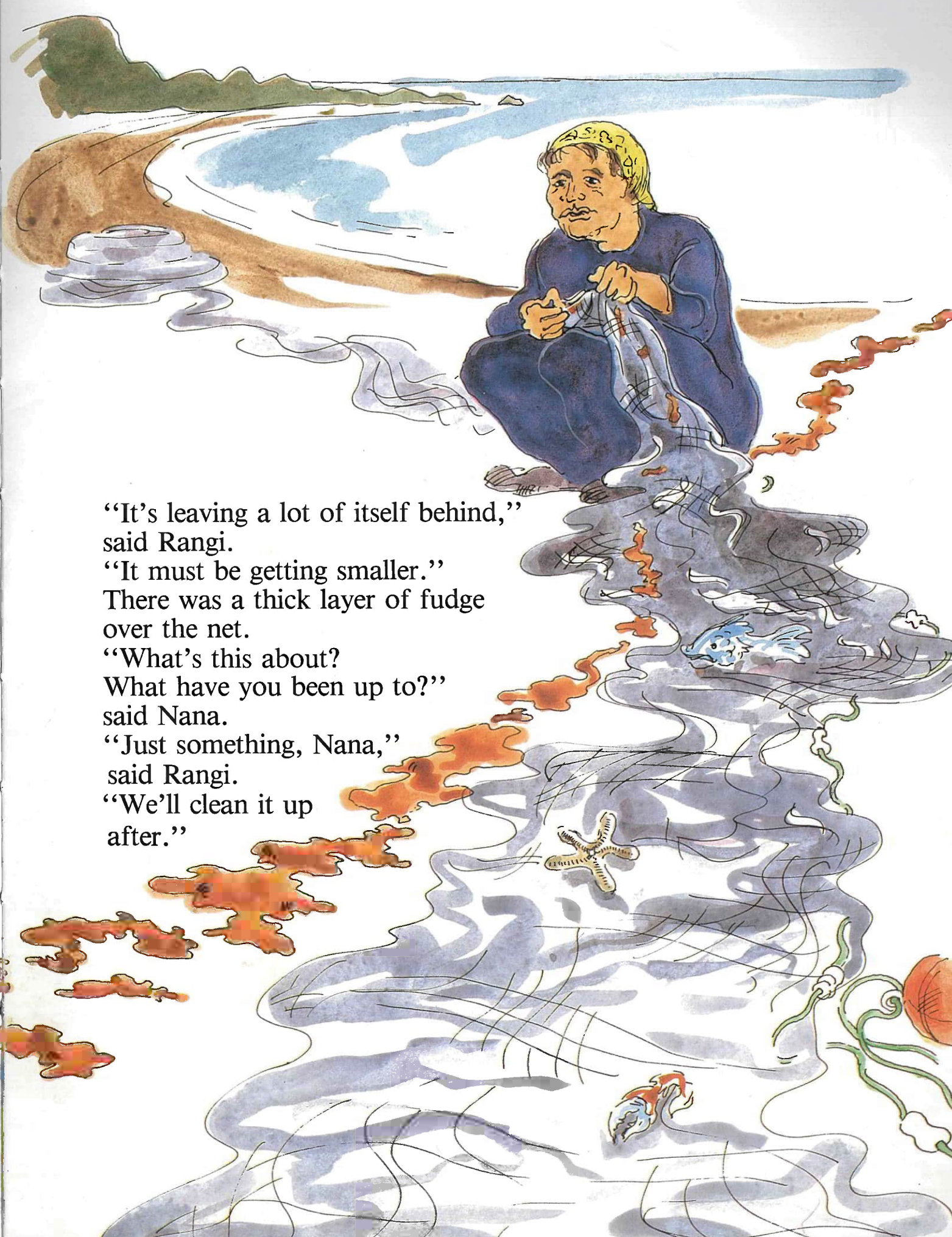


"Is that what it was? It's gone down the beach."

"Let's get it," said Rangi.



And they all hared off down the beach.
Rangi and George's Nana
was sitting by a fishing net.
"Look at this, you kids," she said.
"There's something horrible and sticky
got stuck in my net."



"It's leaving a lot of itself behind,"
said Rangi.

"It must be getting smaller."
There was a thick layer of fudge
over the net.

"What's this about?
What have you been up to?"
said Nana.

"Just something, Nana,"
said Rangi.

"We'll clean it up
after."

They followed
the fudge trail
to the boat ramp.
The red boat
was sitting
on the sand.
Witi and Lorna
had been painting
the seats.
The other boat,
the green boat,
had gone.

Witi and Lorna were standing there
with their mouths open.
Rangi flicked her fingers in front of them.
“Wake up,” she said.



“Hey,” said Lorna.

“Did you see that thing? It took the green boat.

There it is out there.”

A hundred metres out to sea the fudge was rowing furiously.

Even from the shore,

Rangi could see it wasn't so big now.

“That's the fudge for our party,” she said.

“We'll have to stop it.

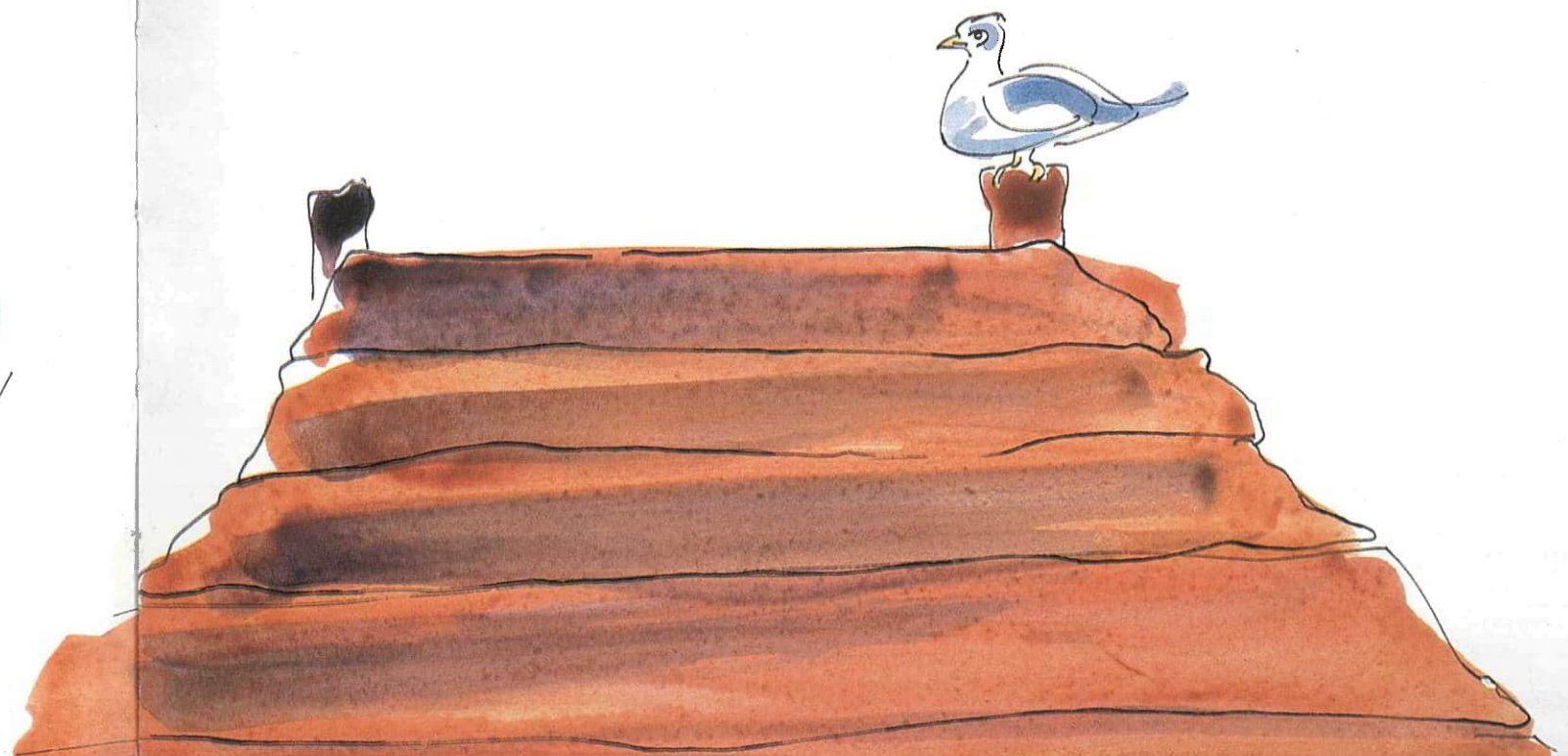
We'd better take this boat.”



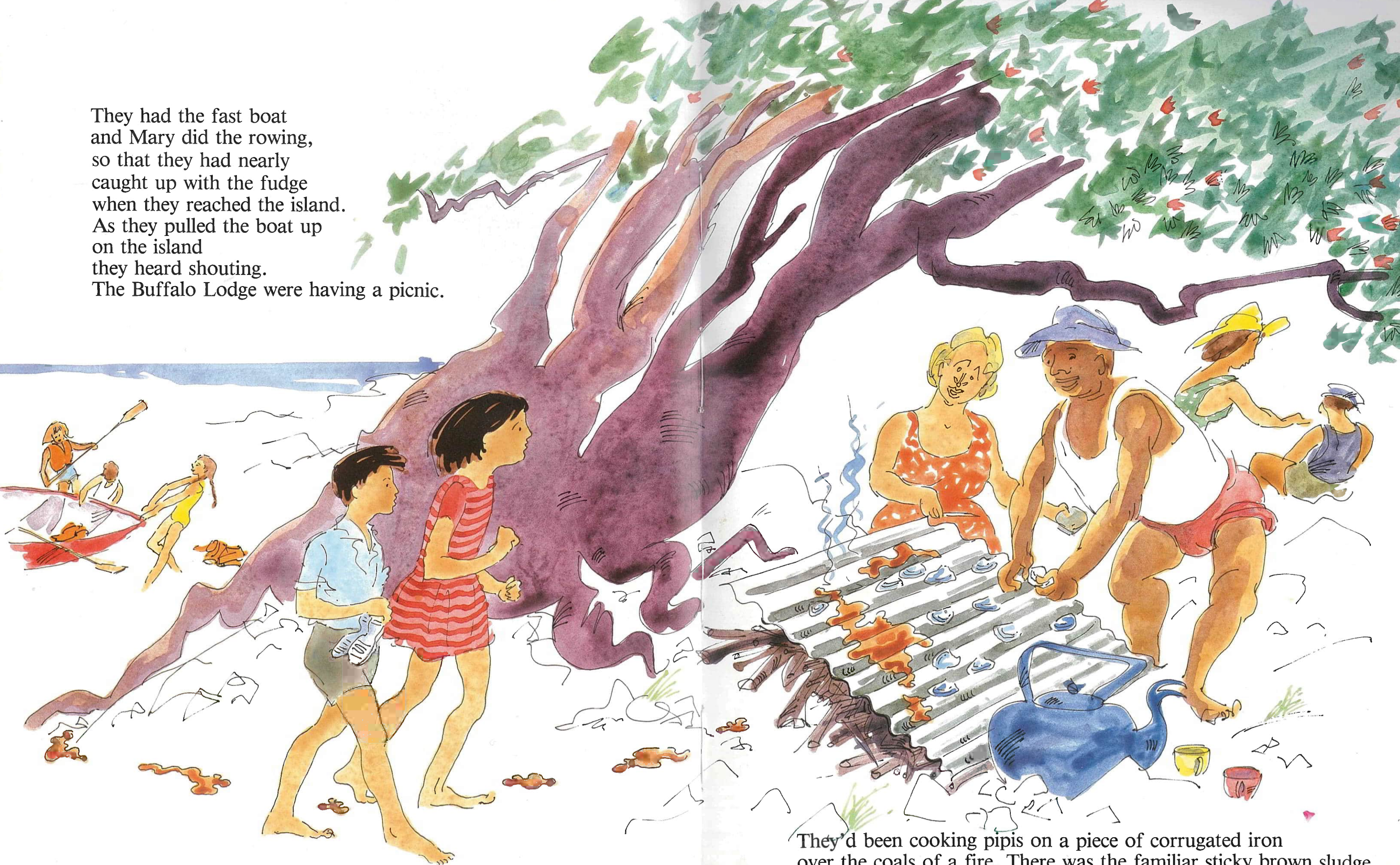
“The paint's wet,” said Witi.

He chucked some fish sacks over the wet paint and they pushed the boat to the water and jumped in.

“Quick, it's going to the island!” shouted George.



They had the fast boat
and Mary did the rowing,
so that they had nearly
caught up with the fudge
when they reached the island.
As they pulled the boat up
on the island
they heard shouting.
The Buffalo Lodge were having a picnic.



They'd been cooking pipis on a piece of corrugated iron
over the coals of a fire. There was the familiar sticky brown sludge
on the corrugated iron.

Under a pohutukawa tree
the fudge was lying,
quite little now.
It would have fitted
into a bucket.
It was panting with exhaustion,
and its sides were heaving.

"Take you back home and eat you up,"
said Rangi.

They all looked at each other.

"Do we have to?" said George.

"I kind of like it running round."

"It was for the party," said Rangi.

"What party is that?"

said the Buffaloes.

"I can't run any more," it said,
mopping its face
with a copy of *Best Bets*.
"What are you going to do with me?"

"Our party," said Rangi,
"but the fudge jumped out of the bath
and ran away."

"Couldn't we eat something else?"
said George.

"We could bring the pipis and some fish,"
said the Buffaloes.

"Plenty of potatoes in the basement,"
said George.

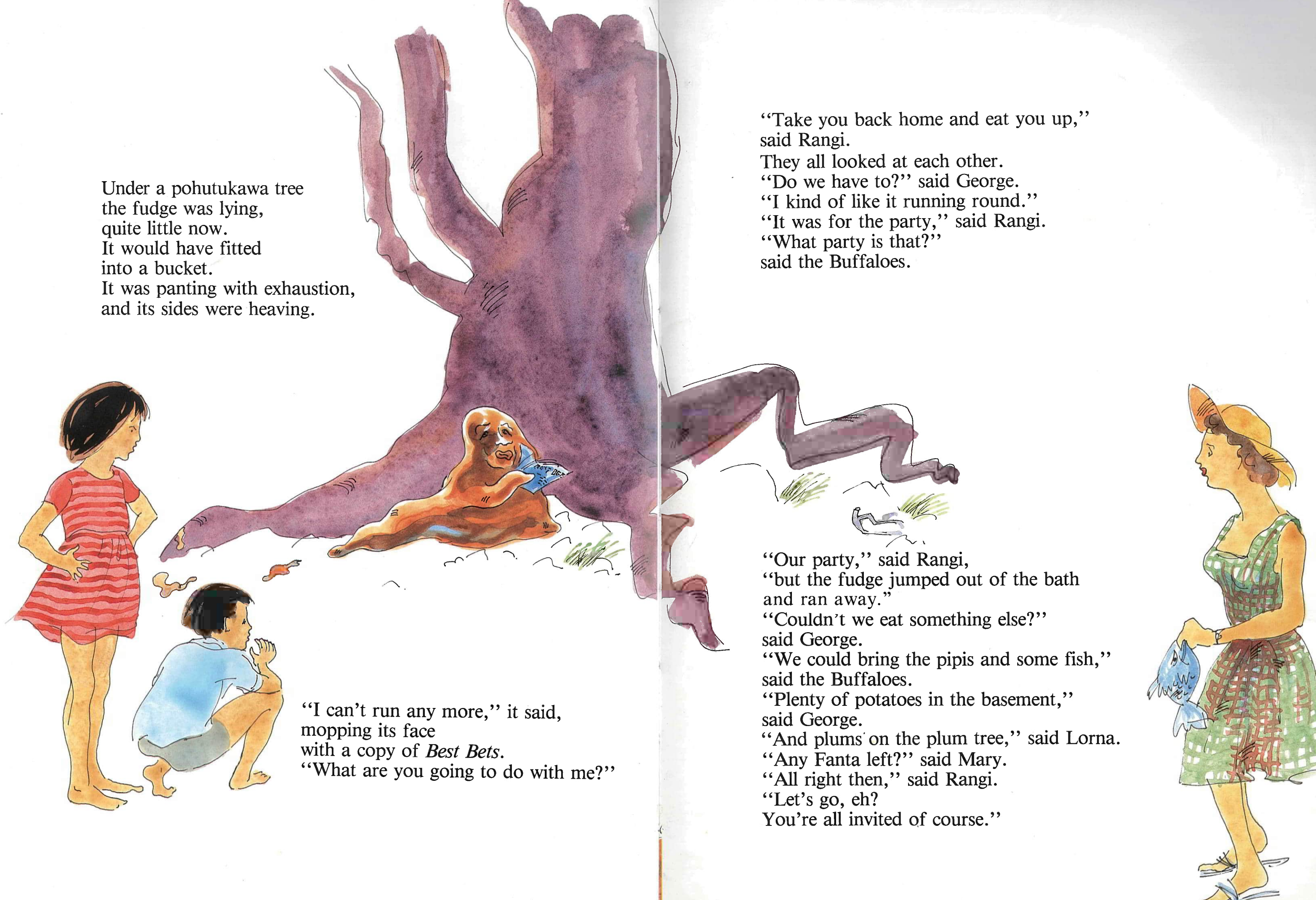
"And plums on the plum tree," said Lorna.

"Any Fanta left?" said Mary.

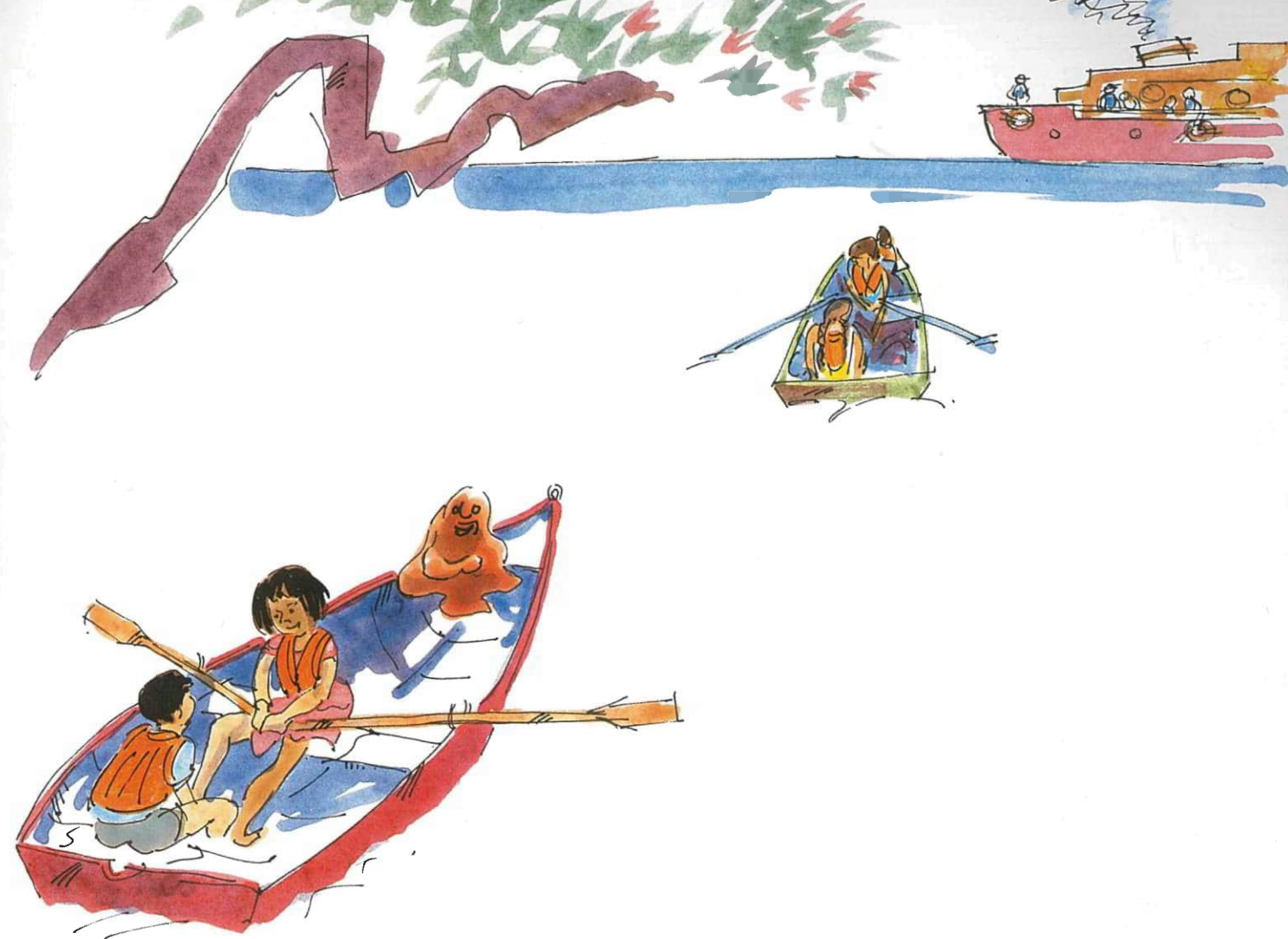
"All right then," said Rangi.

"Let's go, eh?"

You're all invited of course."

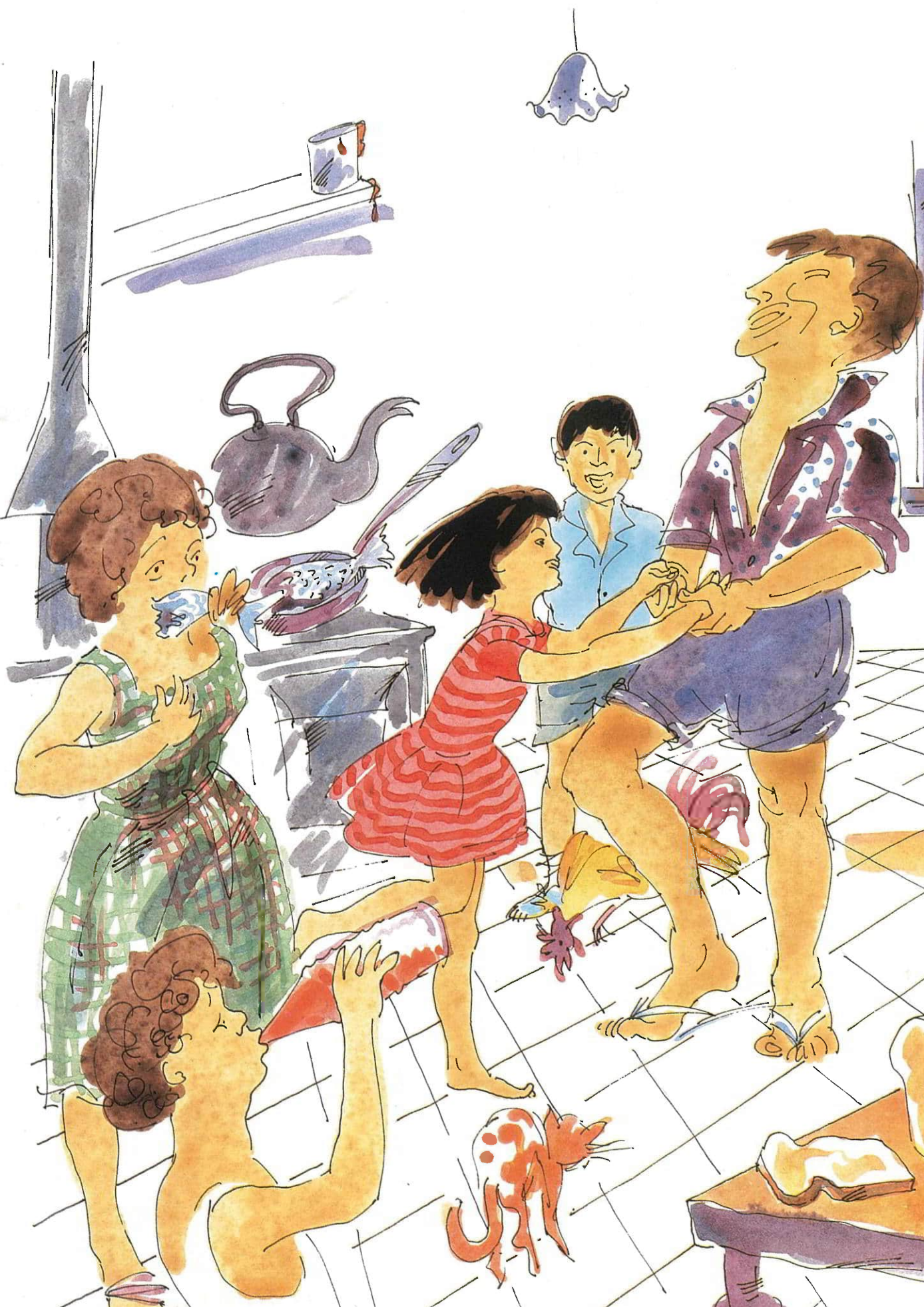


So they packed up the pipis and the fish
and the teapot and the cups
and the bottles of beer and the leftover lunch
and the towels
and the fishing rods,
and carried them to the boats.
They moved the hot iron with sticks
and poured water on the fire
to put it out.

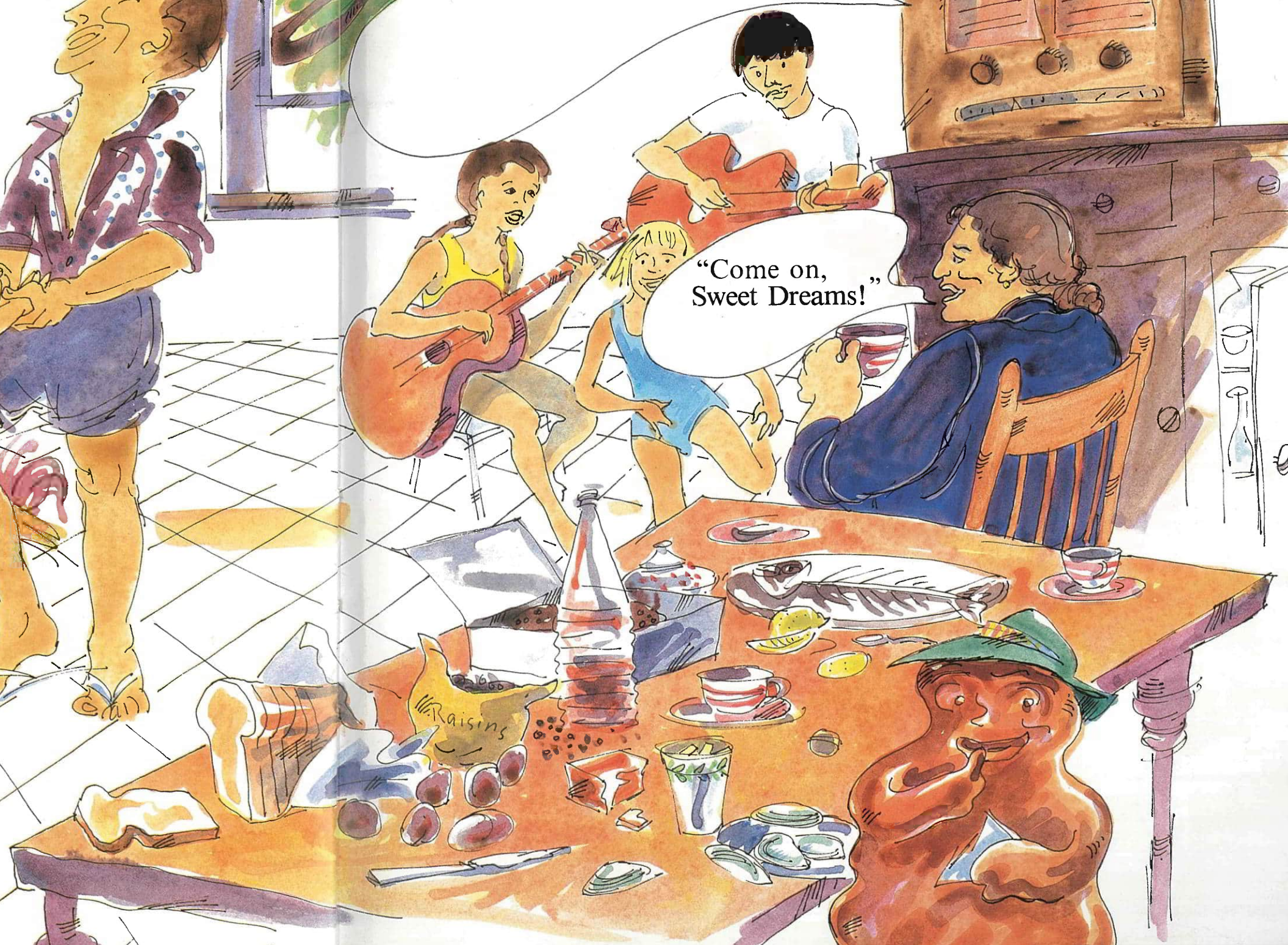


“You coming to the party, fudge?”
said George.
The fudge had a think.
“I could go and see the world tomorrow,
couldn’t I?”
“Yes.”
“Okay then, I’ll come.”
They pushed the boats out
and rowed home for the party.
And the Buffaloes
came in their steamboat.

P.S. They listened to the three o'clock race on the radio.
The fudge's horse won.



And it's Sweet Dreams
coming up
on the outside,
taking over
from Sunny Day,
and a length further back
to Miss Muffet . . .





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