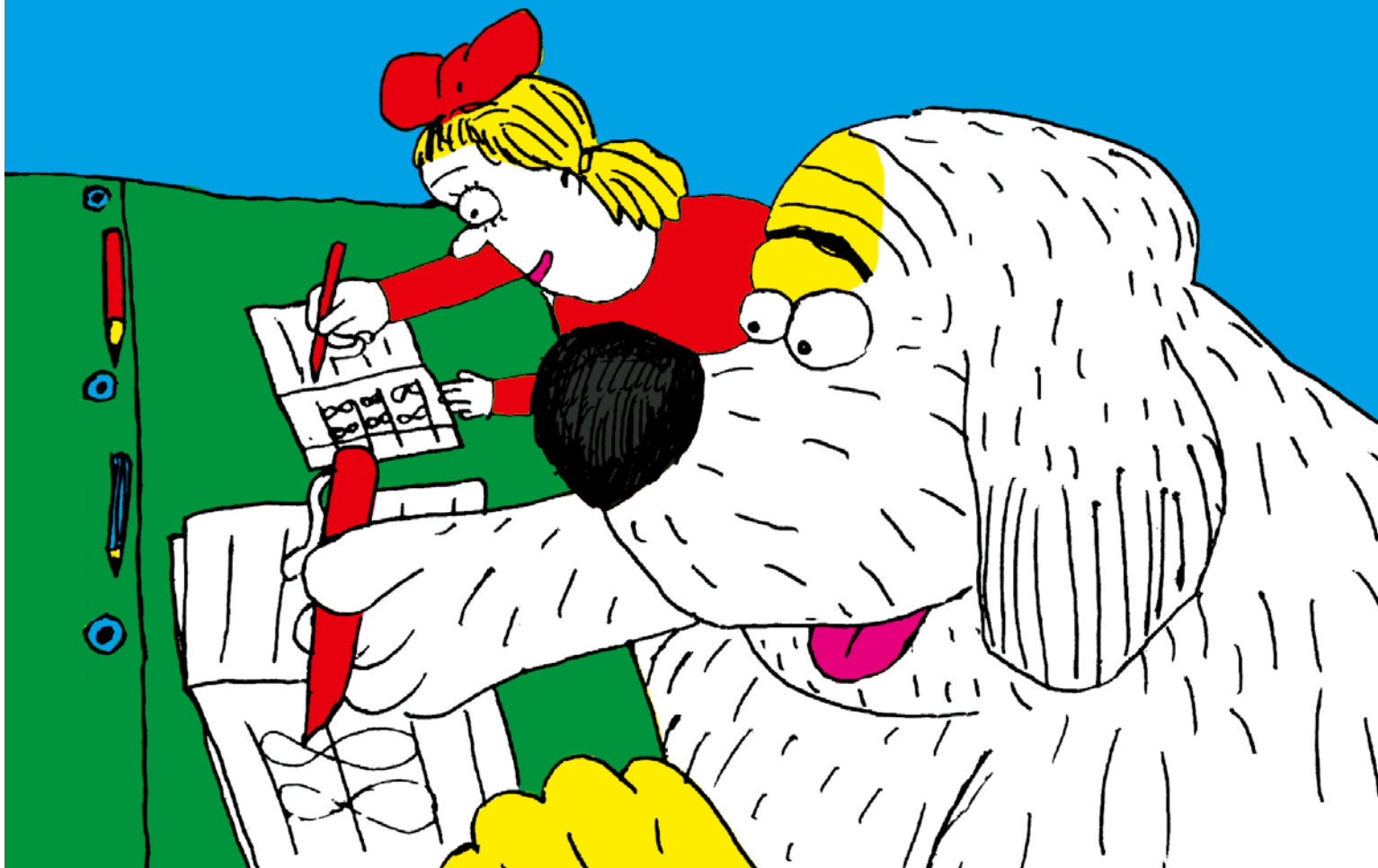


RUDOLF ČECHURA / JIŘÍ ŠALAMOUN

THE ADVENTURES OF FIGS THE MEGADOG



Rudolf Čechura / Jiří Šalamoun / The Adventures of Figs the Megadog

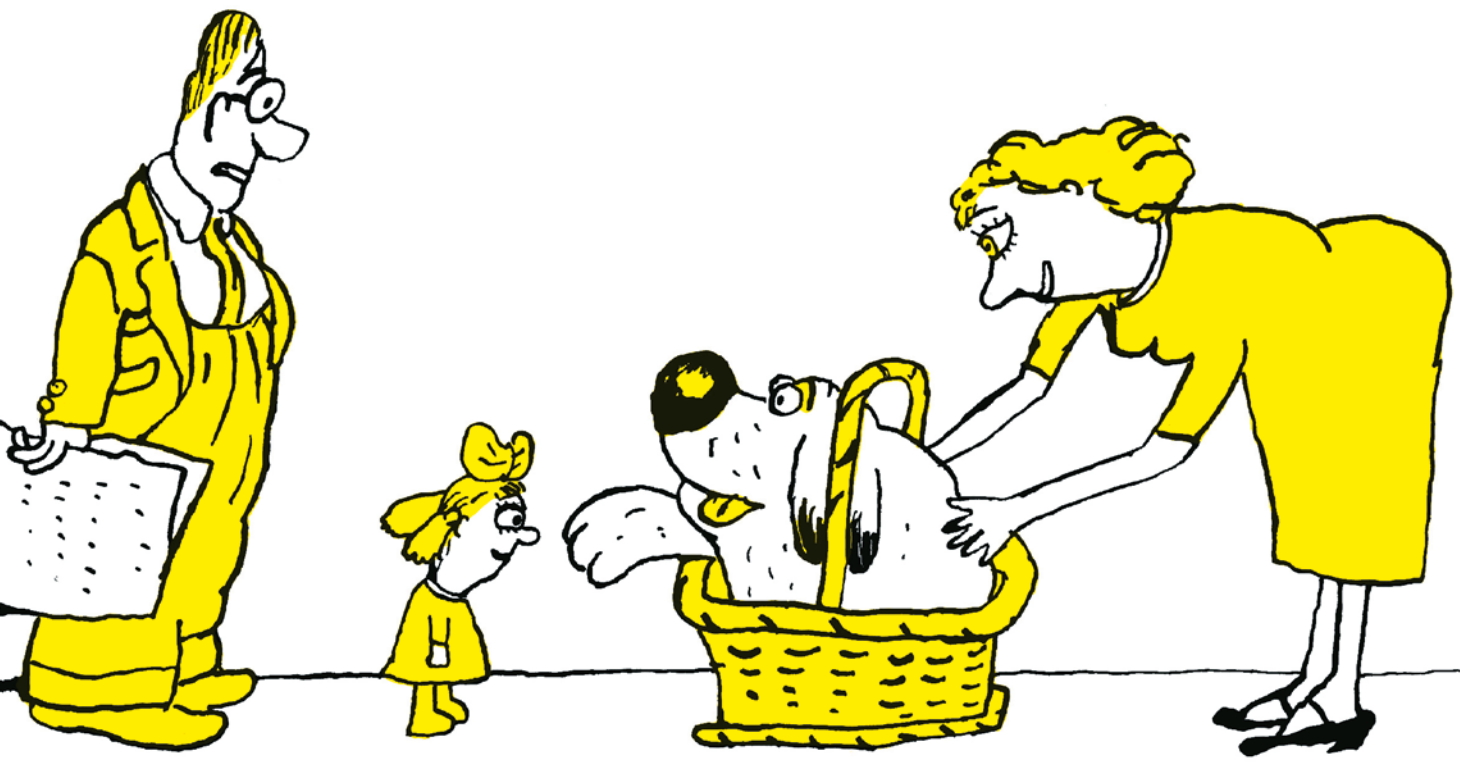


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tankards of milk in a single day. He grew and grew. From one moment to the next, they could call him Figlet no longer. He was always Figs.

No one would have guessed that he was still a puppy.

The basket was soon too small, of course. Dad built him a wooden kennel. Figs liked this a lot because it was big enough to wag his tail in.



He lived in it for three days and three nights.

On the fourth night, a mighty creaking, groaning and cracking came from the yard.



‘Thieves!’ exclaimed Dad. He grabbed his shotgun and, still in his pyjamas, ran out into the darkness. ‘Hands up!’

But it wasn’t thieves. It was Figs. Figs’s kennel, to be precise. It was cracking because it was already too small for him.

Figs walked about the yard clothed in the shattered kennel. He had to knock himself against the fence to dislodge it.

flooding the green. No one minded – the main thing was, Figs was soon climbing from the water with Ally on his back.

‘Dad! Dad!’ Ally called, as her dad ran towards her. ‘Figs saved me!’

‘No way will I give such a dog away!’ said Dad gratefully. He grabbed the sign and tore it into small pieces. ‘If I must, I’ll build him a stable.’



Which is exactly what he did.

‘What’s all this?’ their neighbour asked. ‘Have you bought a horse?’

‘No,’ replied Dad. ‘A dog. Quite a big one.’

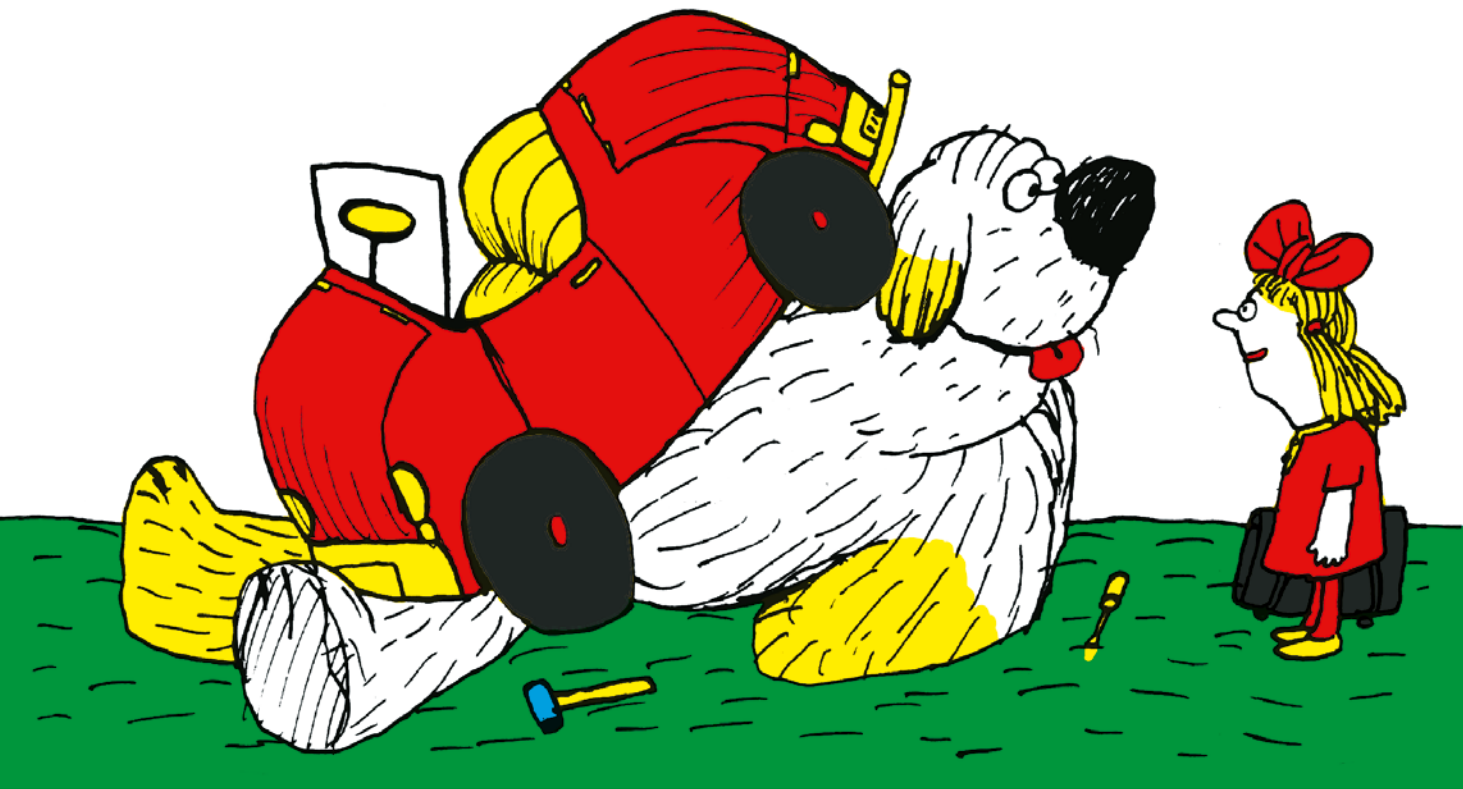


The neighbour laughed at this. Figs laughed too – with delight at his new stable.

We say stable, but it was more like a cottage.

In it, Figs had a sturdy bed with a striped duvet. He snuggled up under the duvet and fell asleep.

‘Figs! What are you doing there? Come out, right now!’
Figs clambered to his feet and rubbed his eyes. ‘What’s wrong?
Did I fall asleep? I wanted to fix the car. To do that, you have to
crawl underneath it. And not fall asleep.’



‘It’s as well you did. You might have broken something. What if
Dad had seen you? Don’t do it again!’
‘I’d love to learn how to do it, though.’
‘Well you can’t. Cars aren’t for dogs. Or cats. Just ask Dad.’
‘But I really want to learn something new,’ whined the eager
Megadog.

Ally gave the matter some thought. Then she said, ‘I wonder if
they’d let you go to school.’

‘What’s school?’

‘A place where they teach you new things. Reading, writing,
counting, things like that.’

‘But I know how to count! Two at the front and two at the back
makes four.’

‘At school, you could learn to count to ten, or even higher!’

‘What for? No one has ten legs.’

‘Yes they do. Part of a centipede does.’





‘But I’d like to learn to read. And write. Now, when Dad tells me to take note, I can’t.’

At school, Ally asked the teacher if Figs could come with her. ‘Is he your brother?’ asked the teacher.

‘He’s a dog, sir. But he knows how to speak properly.’

The teacher scratched behind his ear. ‘But wouldn’t he make a doggone mess of things here?’

‘He’s a very orderly dog, sir.’

The children liked the idea. ‘Please let him come! Please let us have him in class!’



A boy pupil pointed out that with a dog in class, there would always be larks.

‘No there wouldn’t!’ Ally objected.

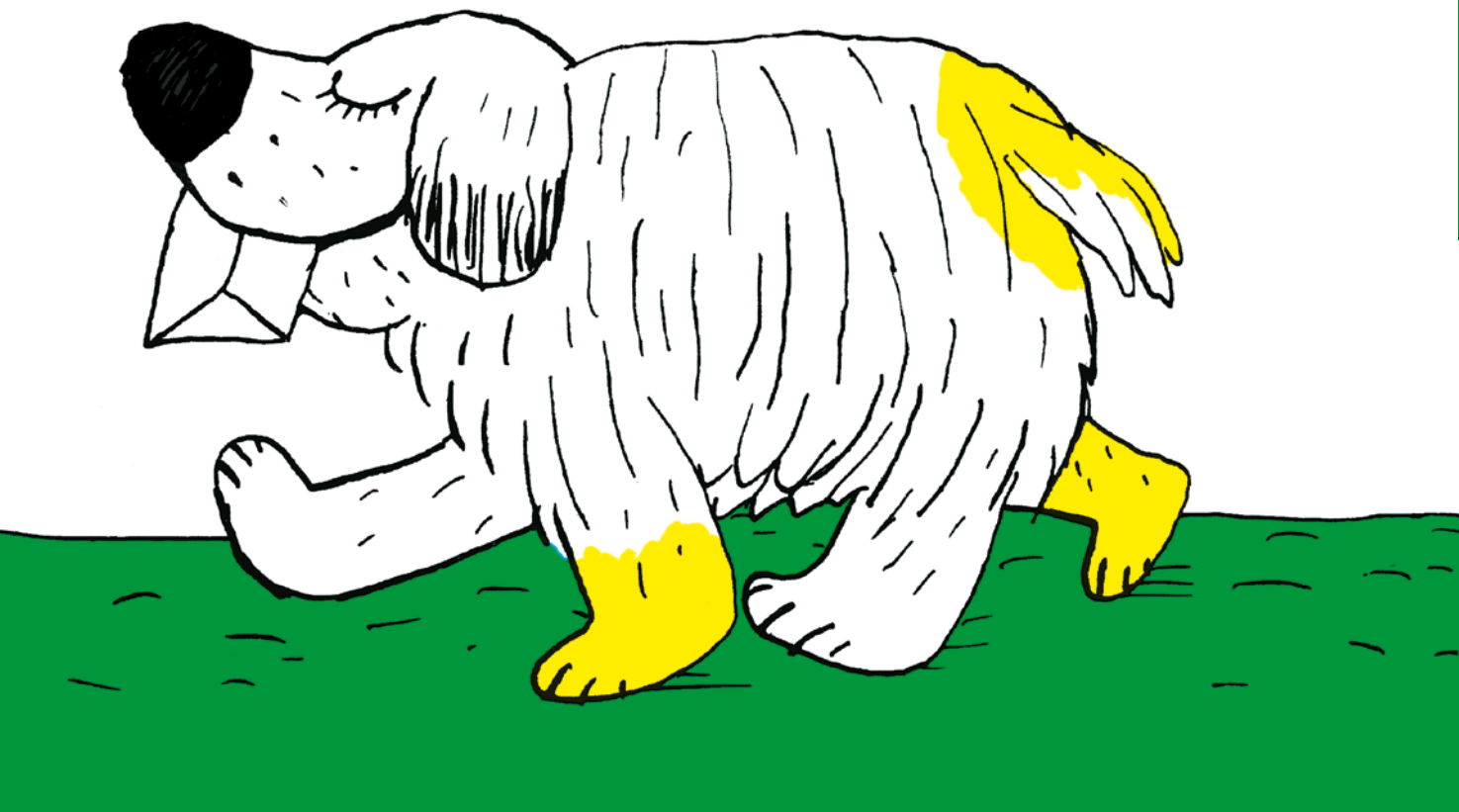
‘There would be megalarks. Because Figs is a Megadog.’

Then he needed a drink. He was so thirsty that he drank all the water in the pipe, so that when the children finished their snacks and came to wash their hands, no water came from the tap. All that did come out was a little frog, which dashed away to the stream.

Later, they learned “T”, “G” and “S”. How glad Figs was to now be able to read!

Then the children picked up their satchels, said goodbye to the teacher and went home. Skipping along next to Ally, Figs shouted happily, ‘Hey, everyone, I can now sign my name! I can sign my name!’

He left his signature on every post and pillar they passed. Dogs will be dogs!



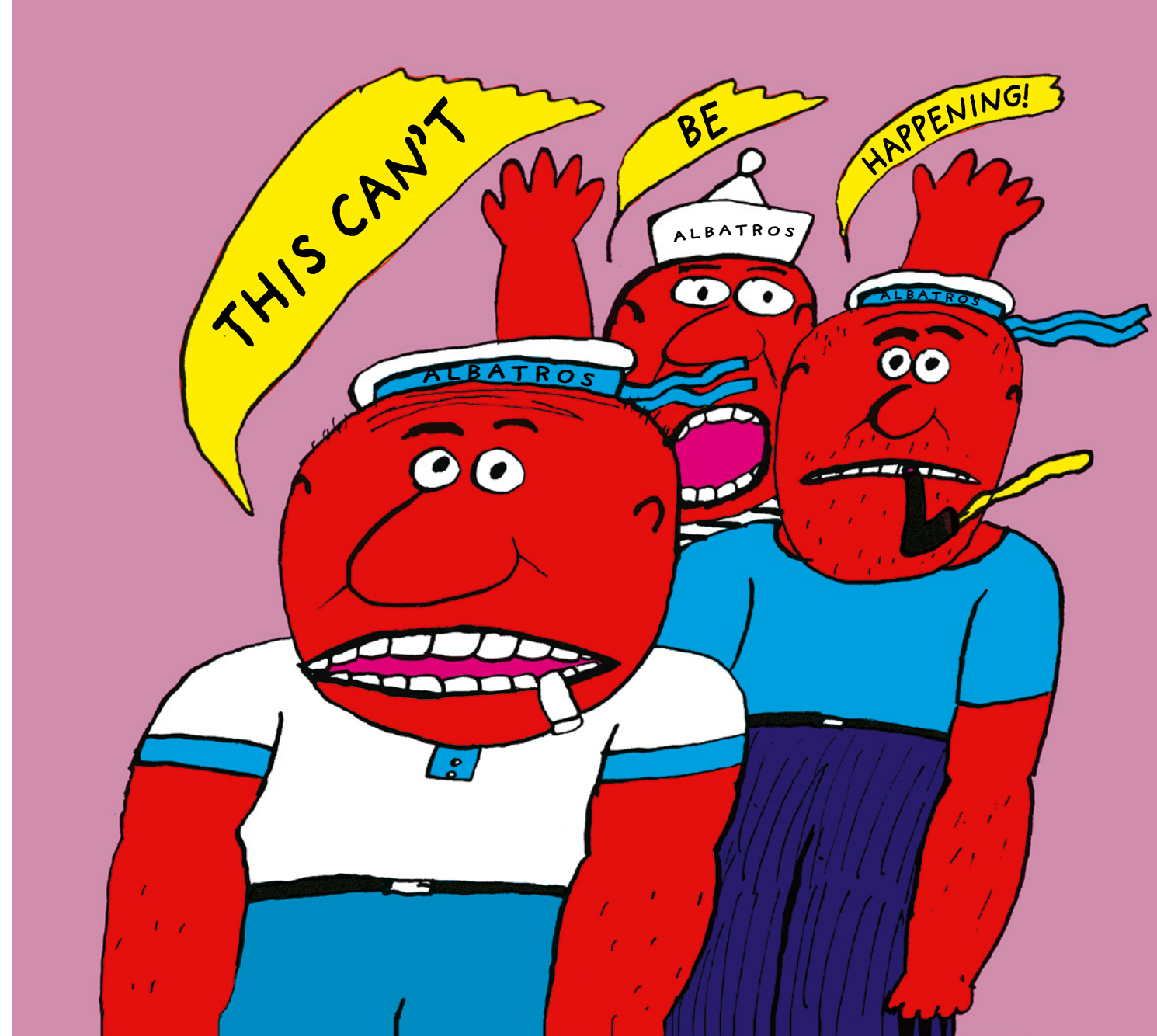
Figs the Megadog at the wheel



Once, the midday sun was so hot that Ally’s dad’s car started up on its own. At first it just babbled and sputtered, but before long the engine was properly started.

‘As it’s started,’ Figs said to himself, ‘I may as well take it for a spin.’

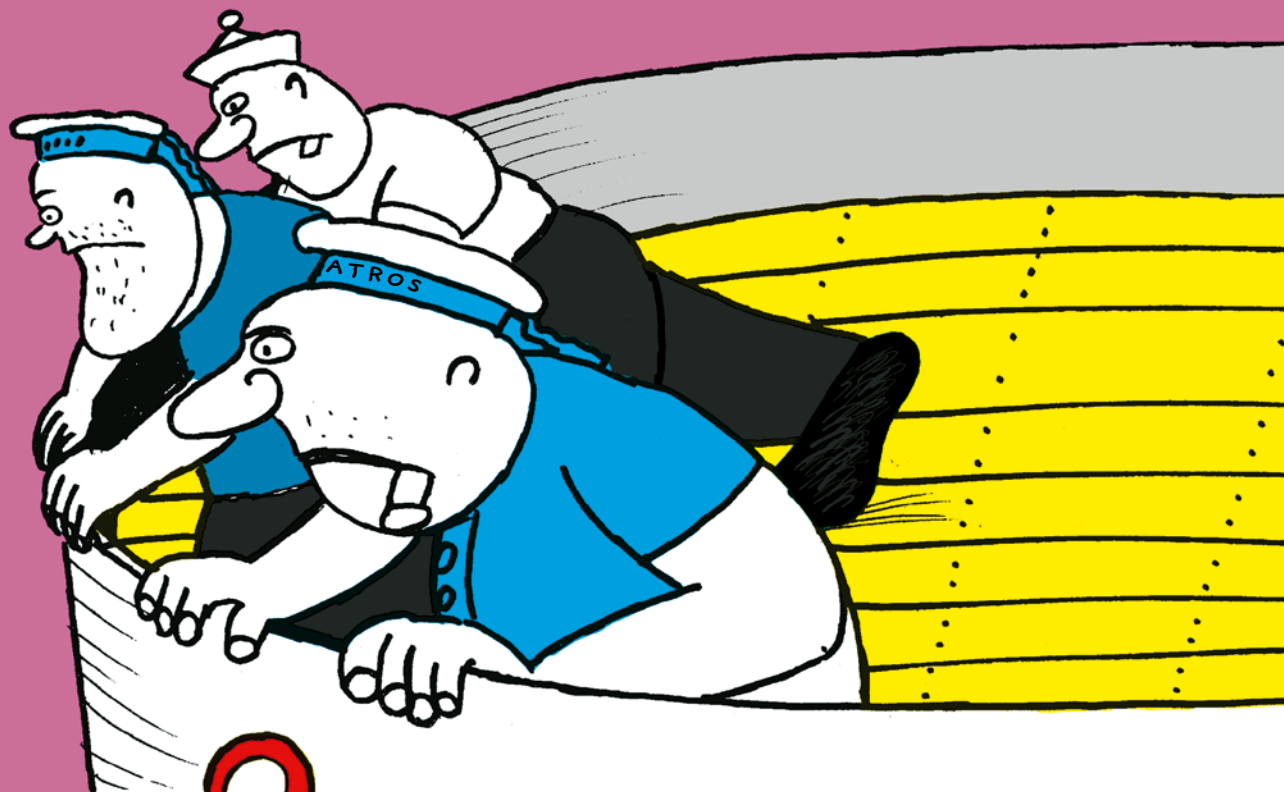
Things turned out very different. After eating the buns he was terribly thirsty. He was forced to enter the nearest tavern. He greeted the landlord, sat down at a table and said, 'I'd like a cask of milk, please.'



Though surprised by the request, the landlord brought the milk. He was a good landlord. Three sailors were sitting at the next table. Their boat had sailed in down the river. They were drinking rum and remarking that their captain was a sea dog.

But Figs didn't stay a lifeguard for long. The work didn't suit him: all that swimming meant he couldn't wear the beautiful sailor's cap. Once Figs had proven himself in service, the captain promoted him to helmsman.

After that, Figs never removed his lovely ribboned sailor's cap. He stood proudly at the wheel, looking intently ahead, very glad that the boat was moving so slowly that he got a good look at everything on the bank.



The sailors said to each other, 'Our captain may be a sea dog, but he's no match for our helmsman! That, my friends, is a Megadog!'

Once upon a time there was a pup.

The pup became a doggy.

The doggy became a little dog.

The little dog became a dog.

The dog became a Megadog.



ISBN

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