

RUDOLF ČECHURA / JIŘÍ ŠALAMOUN

FIGS THE MEGADOG GOES TRAVELLING

I COULD GET
THINGS IN
ORDER FOR
YOU.

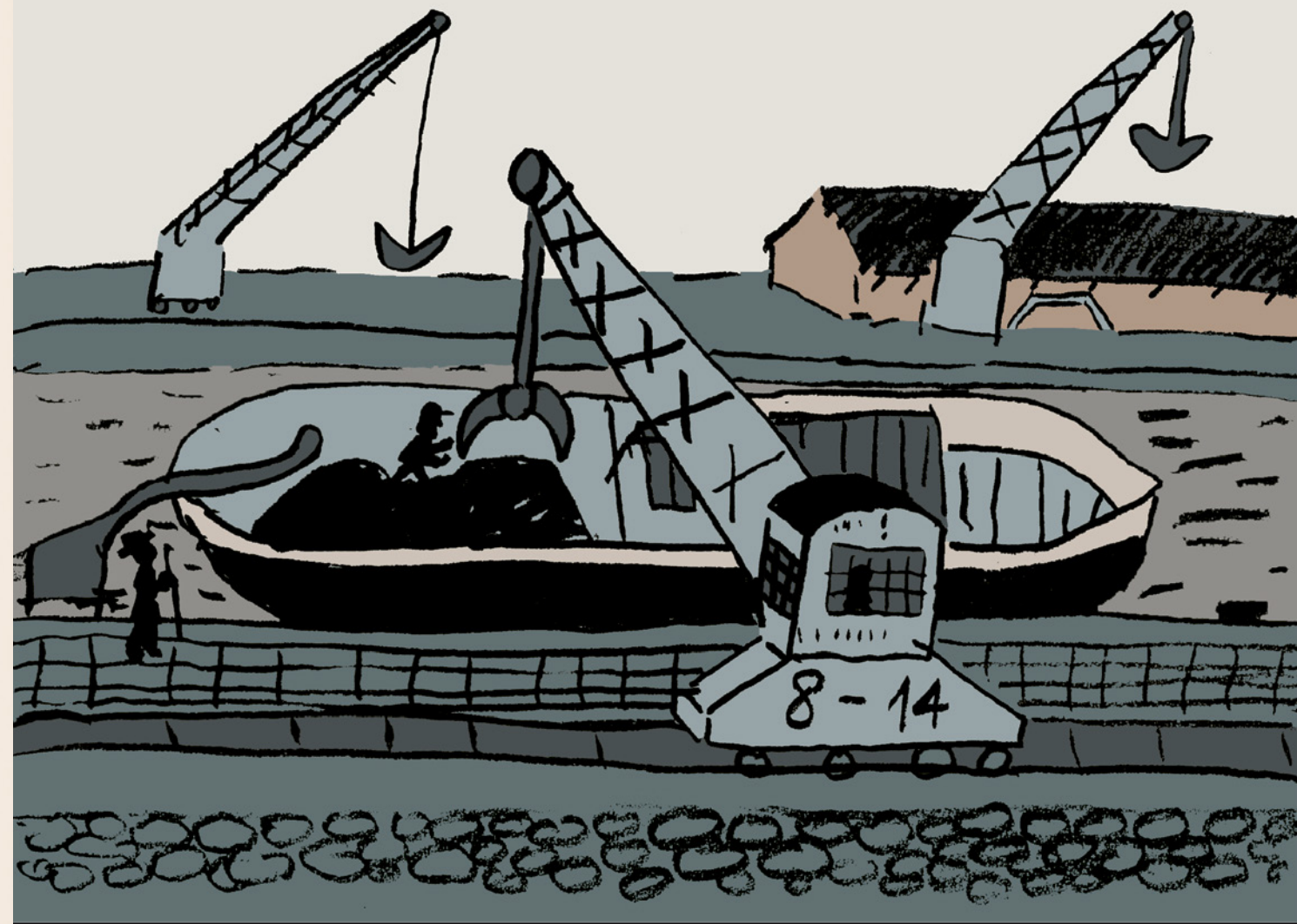
WHAT
EVEN ARE
YOU?



‘All right, then,’ said Ally. She dipped a brush in some grease and wrote “TALKING DOG” in a fine hand on Figs’s left and right sides. Then she brought him a huge bundle of poppy-seed buns. Figs said his goodbyes to all and set out into the unknown world.



He didn’t get far with that bundle. He sat down on the first grass verge he found and ate all the buns: he was mega-hungry. As he ate, he imagined himself rescuing a princess, so earning himself half a kingdom. Or a barrowful of bread at the very least...

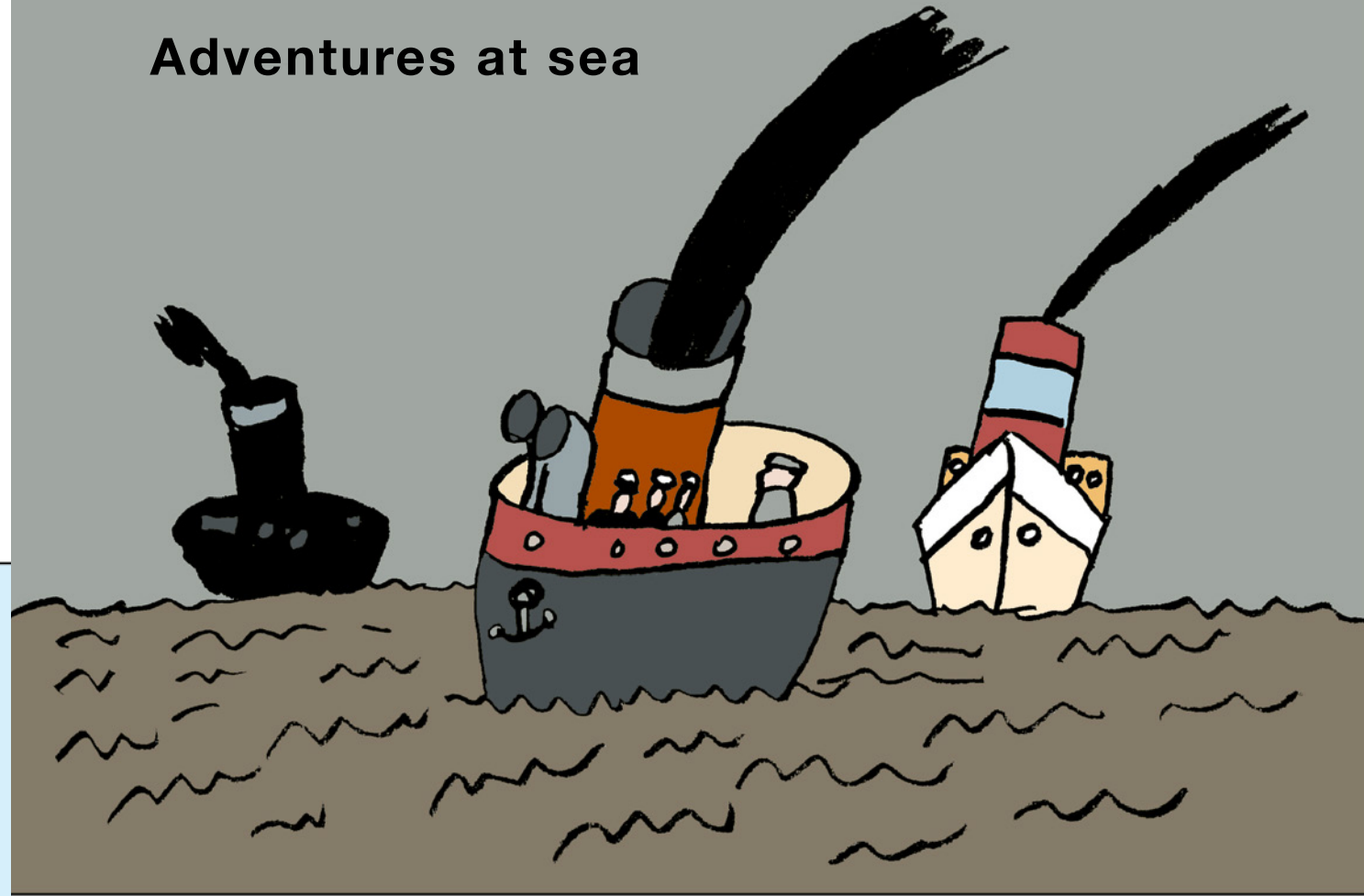


Things turned out very different. After eating the buns he was terribly thirsty. He was forced to enter the nearest tavern. He greeted the landlord, sat down at a table and said, 'I'd like a cask of milk, please.' Though surprised by the request, the landlord brought the milk. He was a good landlord.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

‘Since we’re in Hamburg,’ the sailors teased their helmsman,
‘you should have a few hamburgers!’
Figs waved a dismissive paw at the misplaced advice. He bought
a piece of salami instead. „About three metres’ worth,“ he
requested of the butcher.
From that day to this, that butcher has been seeing a psychiatrist.



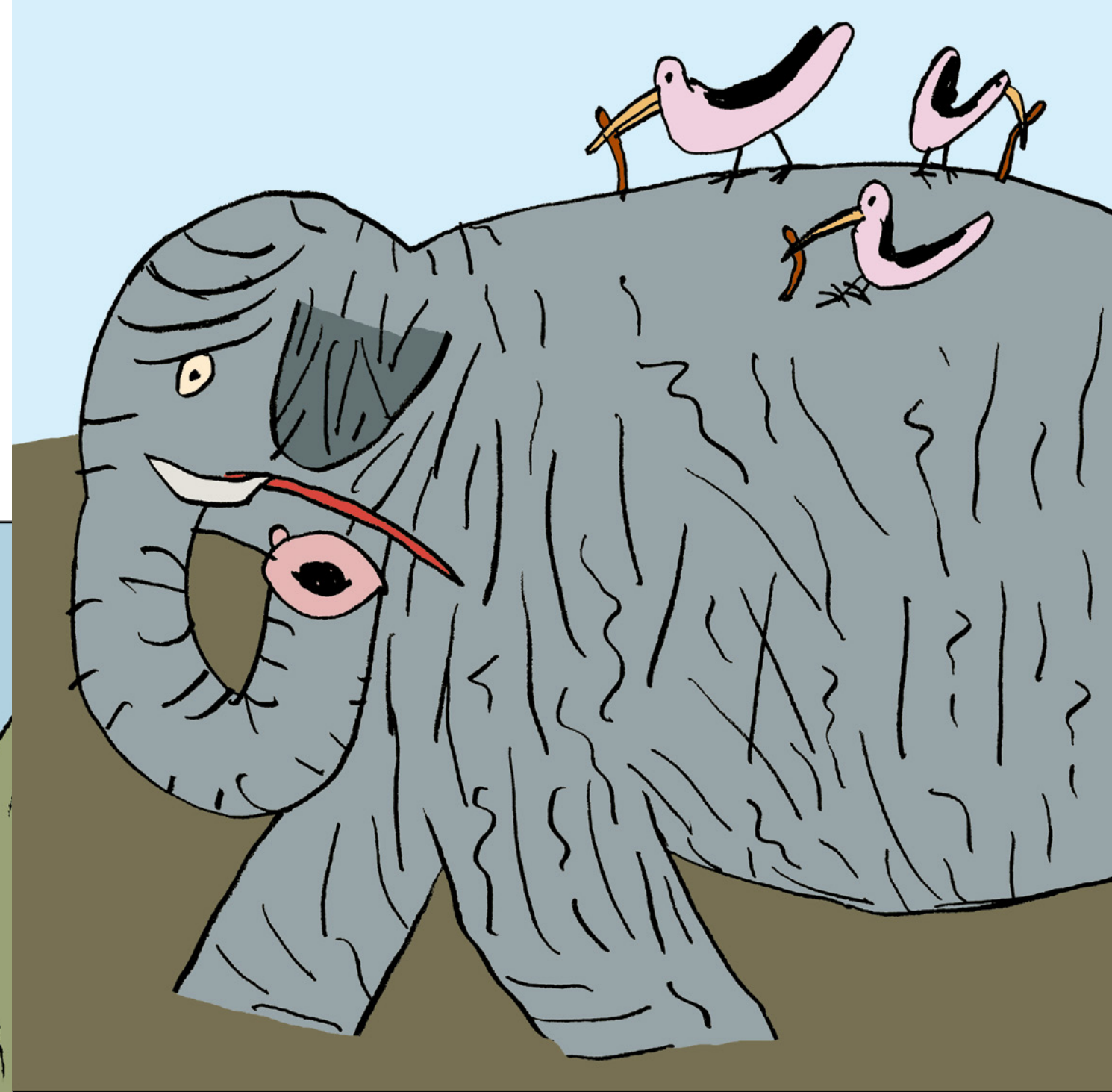
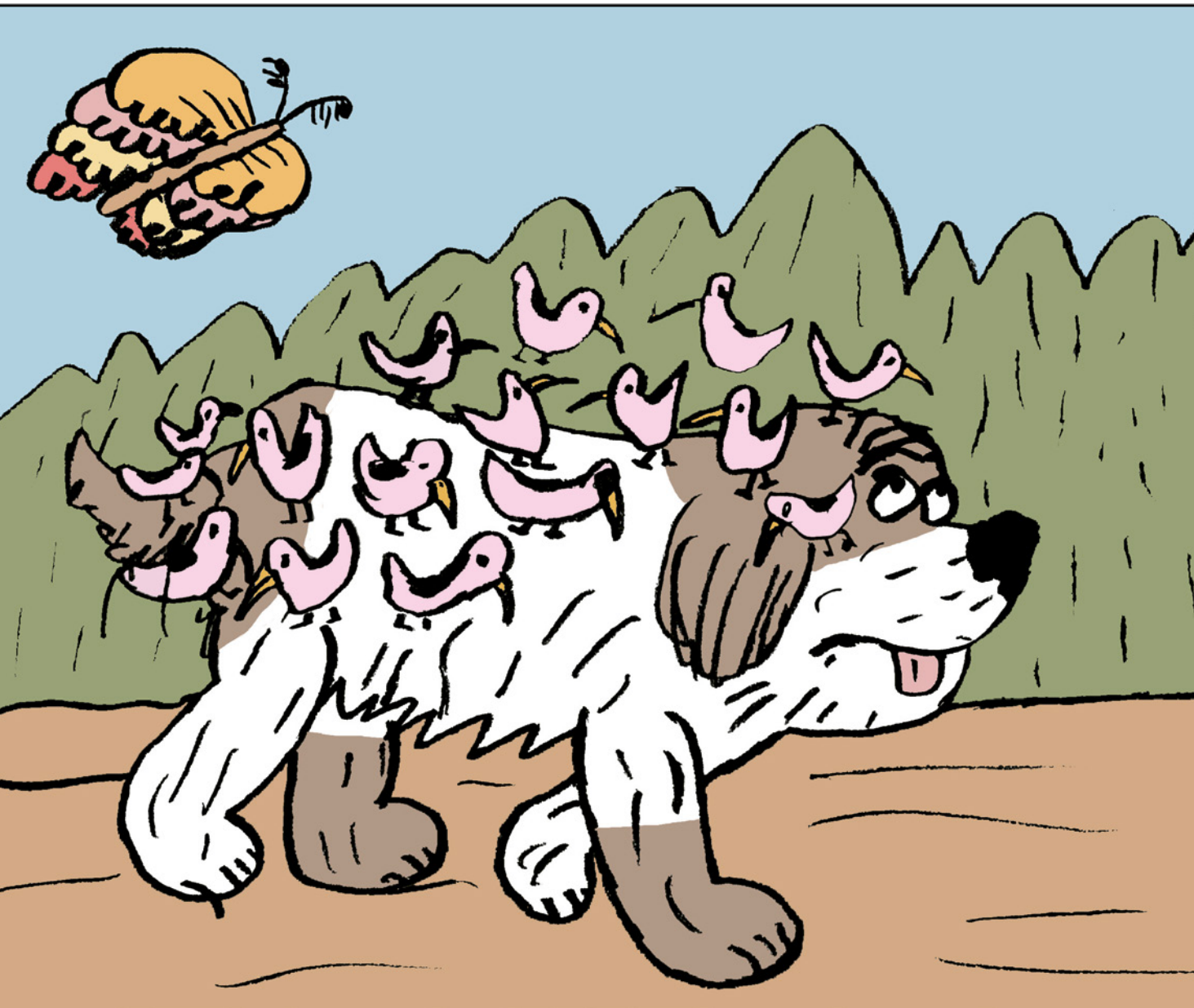
Adventures at sea



The sailors unloaded one cargo, loaded another, then set sail
for their return journey. They tuned the ship’s radio to Radio
Prague, which was playing that Megadog song everyone knows
from the bedtime story on TV.
The voice of a well-known man sang these words:

“A sailor walked along a path.
The sailor’s ears were wet.
Figs came along the other way.
And Figs knew what was what.

nothing odd about this: oxpeckers are happy to ride on elephants and hippos, paying their way by picking off troublesome insects. When a certain spotted parrot sat on Figs, however, the situation was more problematic. This bird screamed its head off like a baboon. Even so, the Megadog didn't lose his cool or get angry. This may have been because two oxpeckers were sitting in his ears. Then a rather ordinary stork swooped from the skies and said,



‘Hey, Figs, will you give me a ride too?’
And – wouldn’t you know it? – it was the stork from our pond,
here on his winter holidays!



The animals slowly got over their fear of Figs. Seeing the huge furry creature talking civilly and companionably with the strange bird, and treating everyone else with kindness, the little monkeys dared to climb onto his spacious back one by one.

Before long, the Megadog was so covered in monkeys that you wouldn't have known he was there. An invisible dog! Just a ball of monkeys and birds.

'Crikey, I've turned into a monkey bus!' exclaimed Figs, but he didn't grumble. Instead, he picked up his pace and headed

for the nearest village, where he would shed his load as soon as possible. In the African heat, it was a little too much for him. On reaching the village at last, he braked hard in its square. The natives ran from their huts, crying out for joy. 'Our village is being bussified! How lucky we are!'

A sorcerer conjured up a metal sign bearing the words "BUS STOP" and stuck it in the middle of the square.





‘There’s nothing else for it,’ thought Figs. ‘I must take the risk. My boldness may be rewarded with a pocket.’ Bravely, he entered the store.

The sight of Figs angered the master tailor. ‘What’s going on? No dogs in here! Do you hear?’ He stuck his head out of the store.





So he set their course homewards. But their breakneck take-off from the ice-bound mountain damaged the plane's right wing . You must agree that flying without a rudder *and* a right wing – well, not even an experienced pilot could manage that. And Figs the Megadog was far from being that...

He replaced the right wing with his massive, shapely ear – but how long would it hold out?

When Figs's strength started to give out, they were over the sea, or what looked like the sea. 'This flight can't continue,' he announced to the crew, 'because my wing hurts. My rudder hurts too. Crew, prepare to bail.'

They jumped one after another, with Captain Figs going last, of course. Their parachutes opened in a proper, timely manner. As it turned out, what was beneath them wasn't sea.

Nor was it land. It was the great lake where explorers are always looking for the mysterious Loch Ness monster, which no one has ever found.

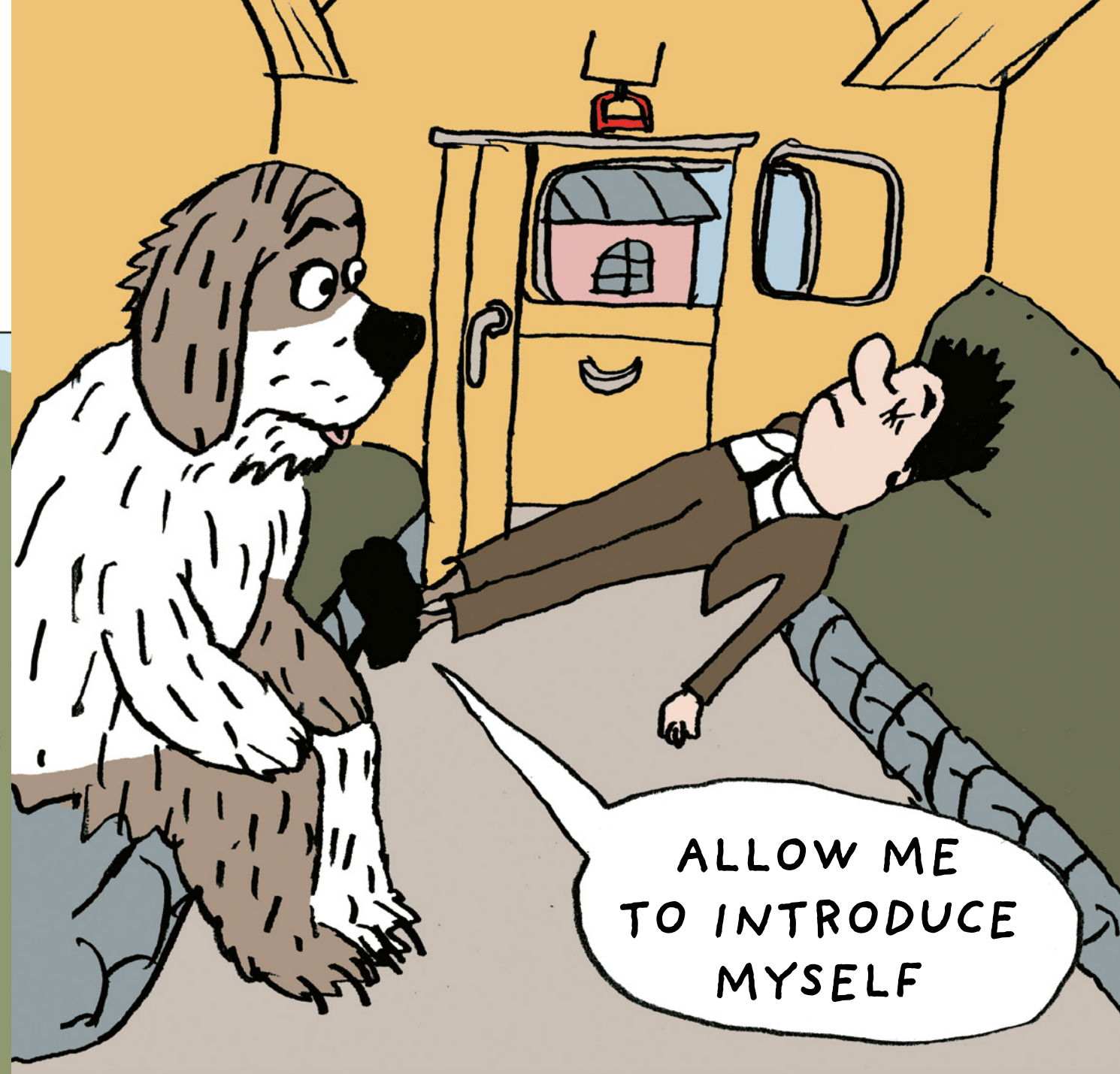
With the impact of Figs's massive body, the lake burst its banks slightly, causing the three parachutists to be momentarily lost underwater.

Figs was the first to come back up. Moments later, he was surrounded by furious reporters making a great commotion. 'Loch Ness Monster found at last!' they declared. 'Monster emerging from mysterious Loch Ness!'

Figs clambered ashore and shook himself off as dogs do. Then he growled in annoyance, 'Leave me alone! I'm no Loch Ness Monster! I'm Figs the Megadog from Ahníkov!'

All but one of the reporters grimaced with disappointment. 'So where have you come from?' asked that patient, dogged reporter. 'I've just completed an important expedition of discovery,' said Figs.

A short while later, Figs returned to the ticket window, crestfallen. 'I see you didn't catch it,' said the man in triumph. 'Oh, I did,' Figs contradicted him. 'But it got away again.' He showed the man a torn-off buffer.



Since the railways have no set fine for the tearing off of a buffer, Figs escaped without a fine. He got on the next train in orderly fashion and in good time. He chose a compartment where there was plenty of room, with just one man sitting in a corner, reading a newspaper.

Once a pup, now such a big dog that his
home kennel is too small.

It's time to see the WORLD!



ISBN

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