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**Tommy Tales feature the lovable rascal
Tommy Tomkins and his friends.**

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BOOK 20



Tommy and the Mew-Coo-Coo Birds

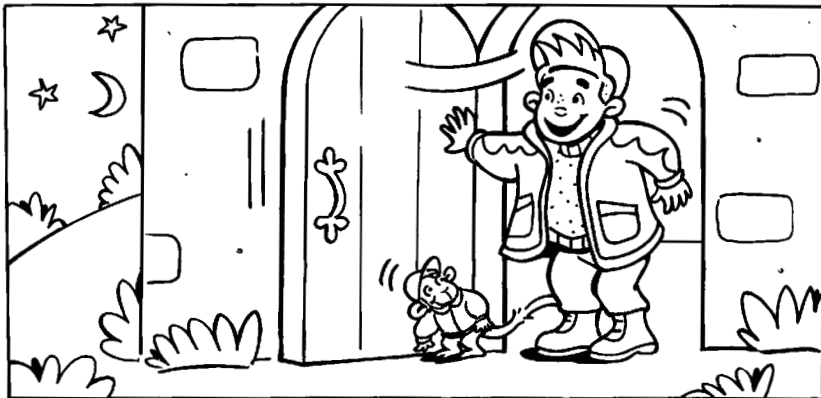


Tommy Tales

Tommy's friends were locked in a dungeon, but Tommy had escaped, and he was going for help.

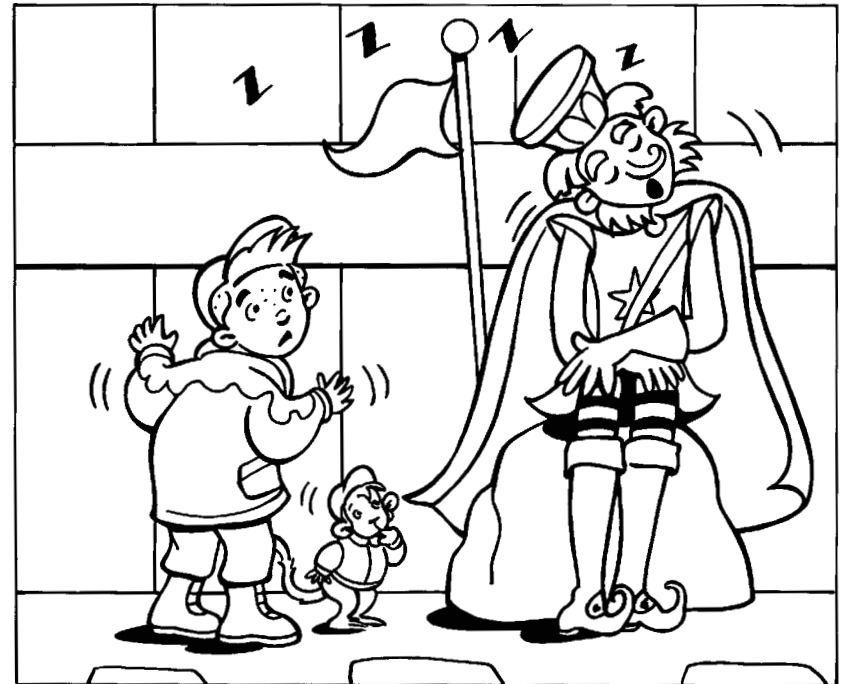
Tommy followed Bongo up the steep stone steps. Tommy was sad to be leaving his friends locked up in a cold, damp cell. But he had to find RK-5. Only RK-5 could get them back to Earth.

Bongo directed Tommy to a little door. The door squeaked as Tommy pushed it open. When Tommy looked outside, he was pleased to see that it was dark. It would be easier for them to leave Big Town in the dark.



Nobody was in the streets. Everyone was asleep. Tommy was careful and stayed in the shadows. He made his way to the town gate.

When they reached the gate, Tommy found it was locked. A soldier sat in front of the gate. He was supposed to be guarding the gate, but he was sound asleep. He snored loudly.



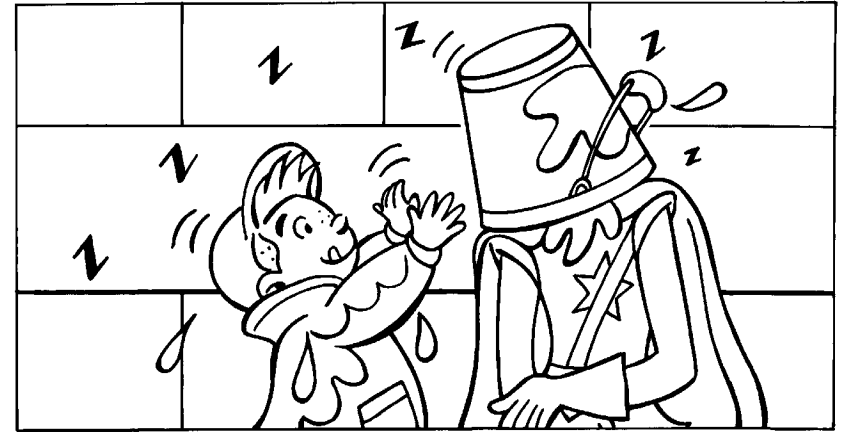


Tommy spotted a ladder that a painter had left leaning against a wall.

We can use that ladder to get over the gate, thought Tommy.

He carefully pulled the ladder from the wall. Unfortunately, he didn't notice the bucket of paint on top of the ladder. The bucket dropped from the ladder right on Tommy's head. Both Tommy and Bongo were covered in blue paint.

Tommy was afraid that the soldier would wake up. He put the bucket on top of the soldier's head so he wouldn't see them if he woke up.



Tommy and Bongo climbed the ladder. They jumped down to the other side of the gate. At last, they were outside the town walls. Now all they had to do was to go back to the place where they had been captured. RK-5 would be waiting there.

It began to get light as Tommy walked away from the town. He knew it would take them about an hour to get to RK-5. He began to walk faster.

Tommy's heart beat faster when he saw two soldiers riding toward him.

*Oh, no! he thought. Here comes trouble.
I'm going to be captured again.*

He stopped as the soldiers came near him. But an unexpected thing happened. The soldiers just rode past Tommy and Bongo. The soldiers even waved as they went by.

Tommy looked at Bongo and then understood why the soldiers didn't bother them. "We're both blue," Tommy laughed. "It was a good thing that paint fell on us."

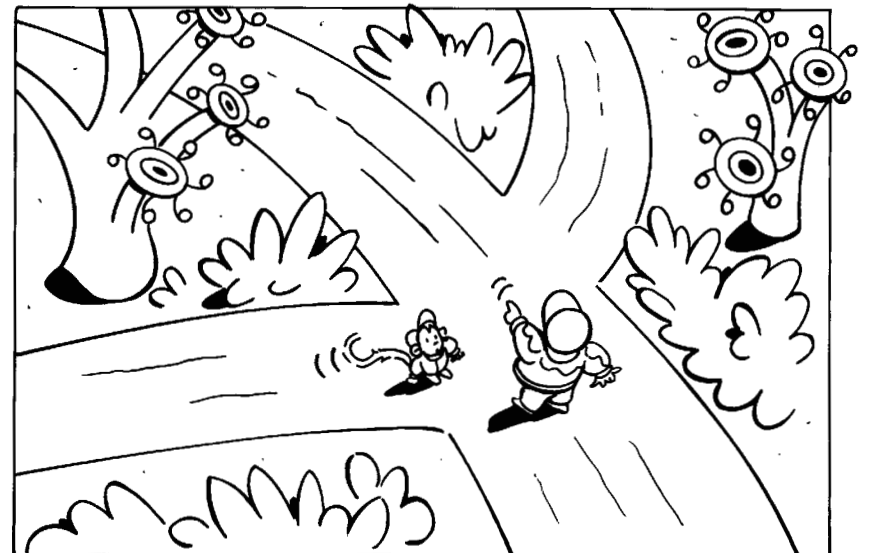


They continued walking and soon came to a crossroads. The road was divided into three separate paths.

I can't remember which path we should take, thought Tommy.

Bongo looked puzzled, too. Tommy scratched his head and finally said, "Eenie-meanie-minee-mo, down which path must we go?"

The middle path was the one. Tommy hoped it was the correct one.



They went only about 50 paces down the middle path when they heard a strange noise. It sounded like something shrieking, “Mew-coo-coo. Mew oodle-oop-coo-coo.”

Tommy stopped and tried to find out where the noise was coming from. Before he could discover the source of the noise, a bird-like creature flew down from a tree. It landed right on top of his head.

“Mew-coo-coo!” it called, right into his ear.



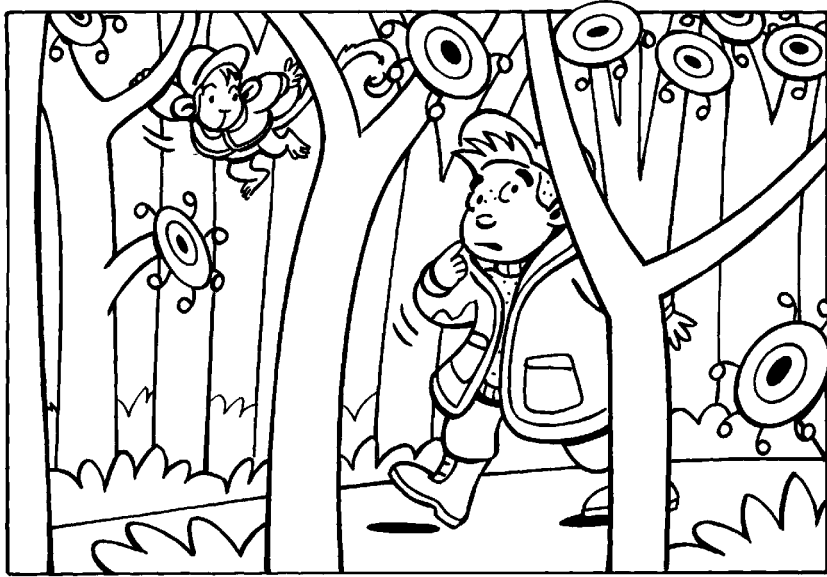
This was a strange-looking bird indeed. It had wings and a tail like a bird, but it had the face of a cat. It didn't have feathers. It had light blue fur with dark blue stripes.

The mew-coo-coo bird flew off Tommy's head and landed about 20 paces in front of him.

I think it wants us to follow, thought Tommy. Maybe it knows where RK-5 is.

They kept following the mew-coo-coo bird. Eventually, they came to a forest. There were blue trees as far as the eye could see.





When the mew-coo-coo bird flew into the forest, Tommy wasn't sure if they should follow. What else could he do? He was truly lost, so he followed the bird into the dark forest.

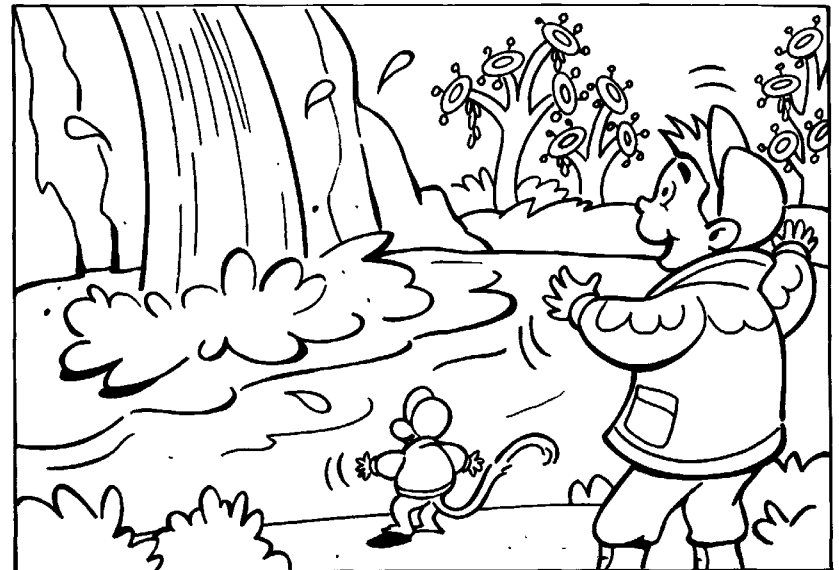
The blue-striped bird led them deeper and deeper into the forest. The forest got darker and thicker.

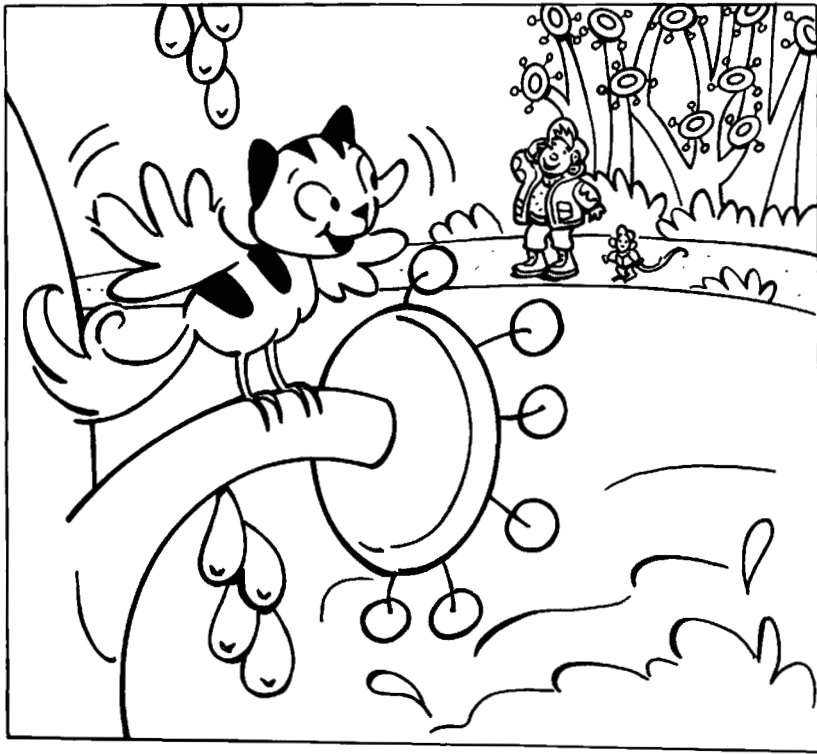
After about half an hour of walking, Tommy heard water running. Bongo got ahead by swinging through the trees. He excitedly motioned to Tommy to join him.

When Tommy caught up, he saw a beautiful waterfall. It was flowing down into the wide river in front of them.

"Wow, this is cool!" said Tommy. "I wish the others could see this."

Then he noticed something was strange. The water closest to him was blue. But the water near the opposite bank was yellow. He looked over to the forest on the other side of the river. The trees weren't blue there—they were all different shades of yellow.





From one of the tallest yellow trees,
Tommy heard the familiar song.

“Mew-coo-coo. Mew-oodle-oop-coo-coo.”

Tommy looked up. He expected to see the blue bird that had guided them. Instead, he saw a bird that was almost exactly the same. But this one was pale yellow with bright yellow stripes.

Tommy and Bongo were very hungry. They had done a lot of walking, and they hadn’t eaten breakfast. Tommy saw the masses of yellow fruit on the trees beyond the river.

“We must cross this river,” said Tommy.

“But how?”



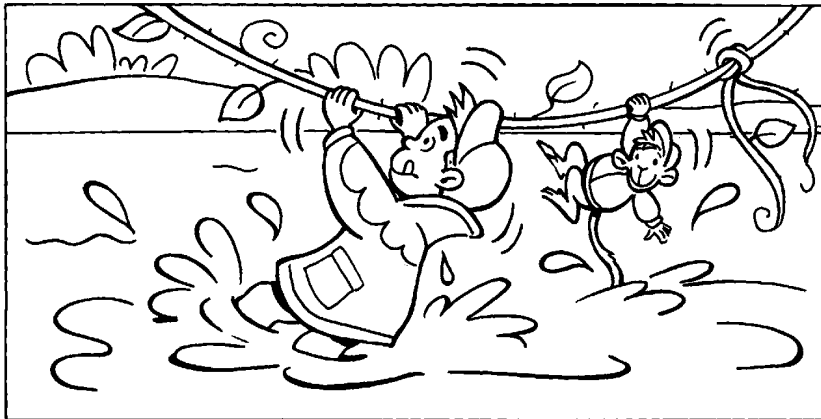
Just then, the blue mew-coo-coo bird landed on Tommy’s head. It let out a few mew-coo-coos and flew into a tree near the river. Tommy watched as the bird grabbed a couple of vines from the tree.

The blue bird flew over the river carrying the long vines. When it reached the center of the river, it was met by the yellow mew-coo-coo bird.

The yellow bird was carrying a similar vine in its mouth. They flew around each other in circles until the two vines were tied together.

Tommy then understood what the birds had done. They had created a way for him to cross the river.

Tommy grasped the strong vine and jumped into the river. Bongo followed close behind.



It was quite a struggle, but they were soon on the other side of the river. They were wet but happy. They were also clean again. The blue paint had completely washed off.

Tommy and Bongo rushed to the fruit trees. They were soon eating the most delicious fruit they had ever tasted.

They didn't notice a pair of eyes looking at them from a yellow bush just behind them.

