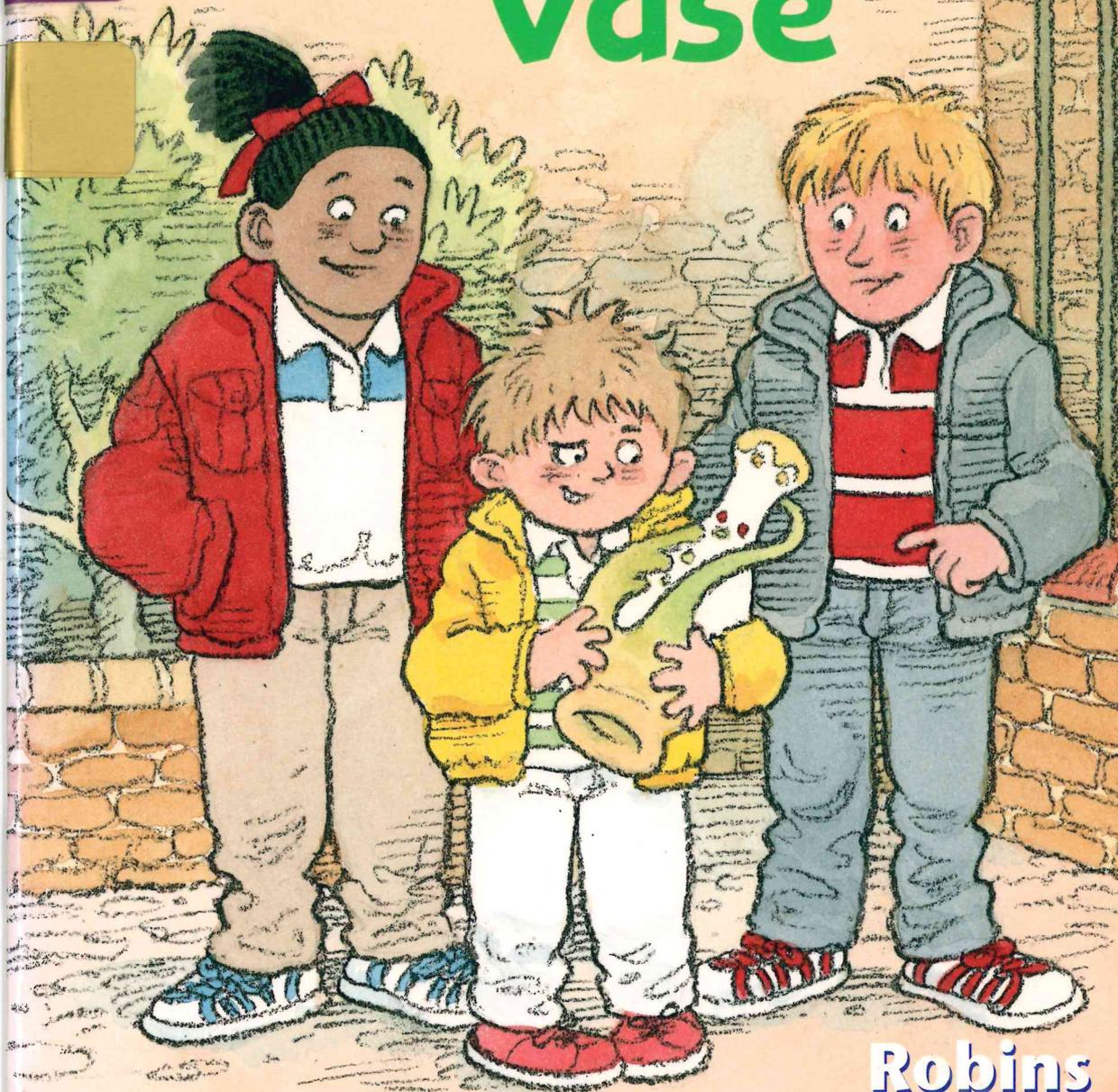




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# The Old Vase

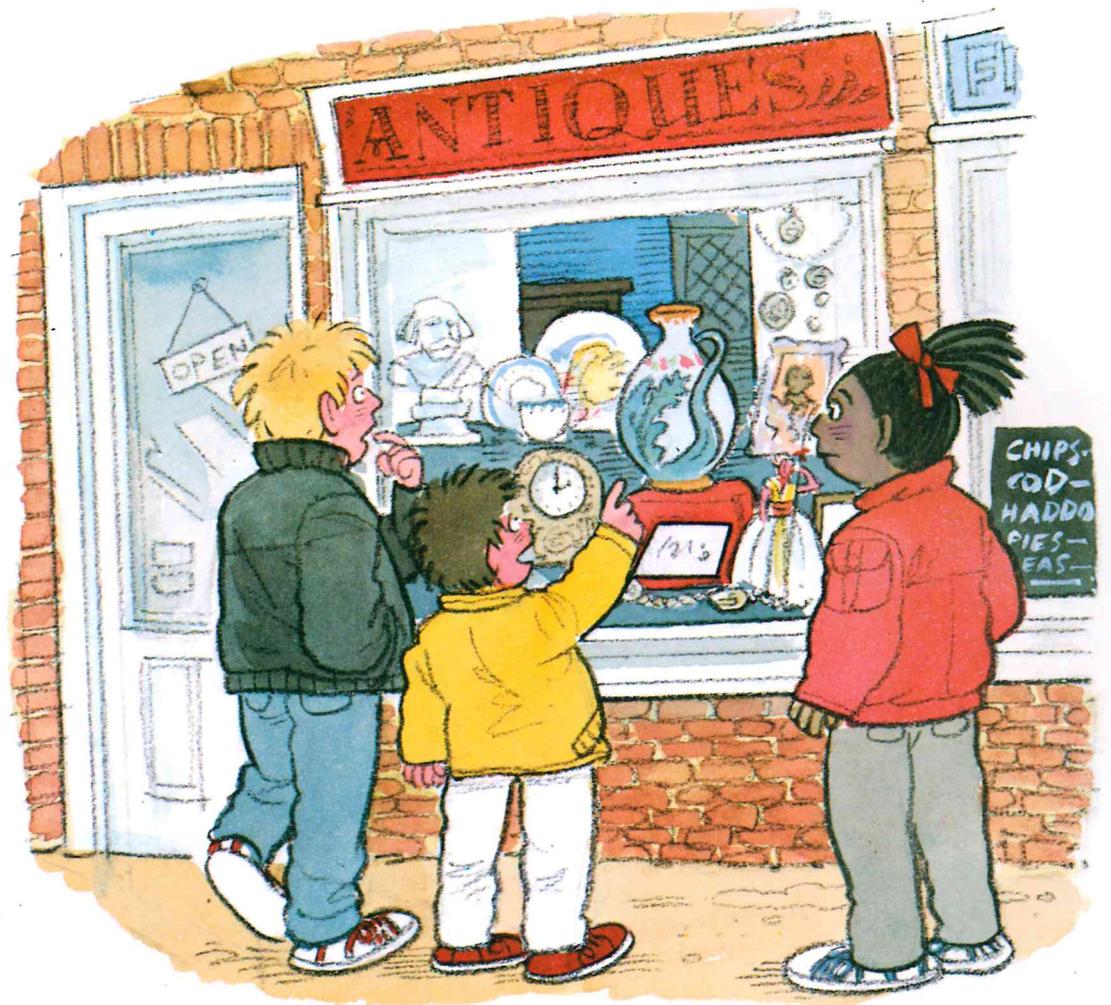


Roderick Hunt

Robins  
Pack 1



My name's Lenny – remember me? Sometimes I have to look after my cousin, Mel. Mel can be a bit of a handful so I get Tracey to help me. One day we had to go to the shops.



On the way back we saw an antique shop and Tracey made us stop to look in the window. Antique shops are full of old things.

“Look at that vase,” gasped Mel. “It costs seven pounds!”

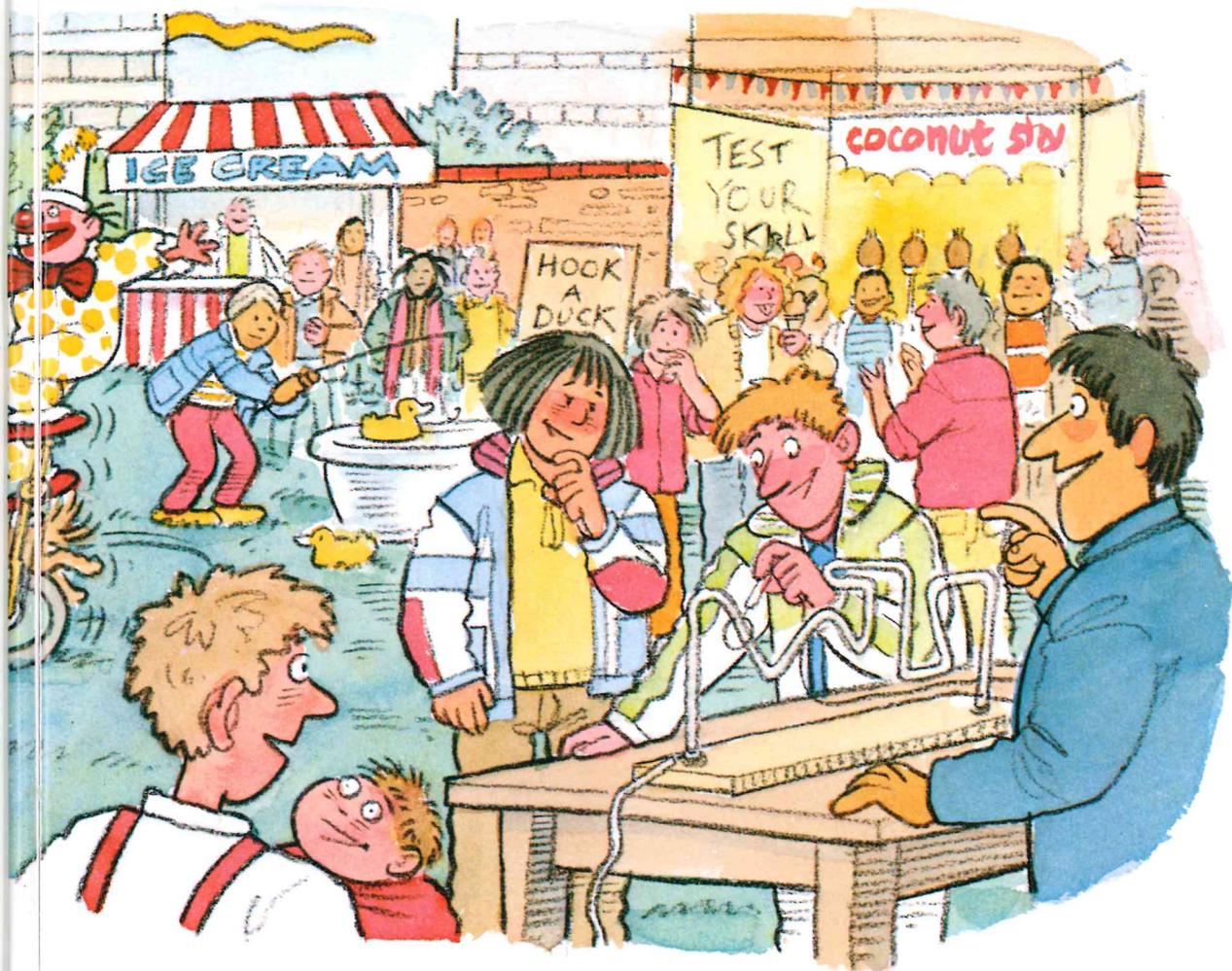


But that vase didn't cost seven pounds. It didn't even cost seventy pounds. It cost seven hundred pounds!

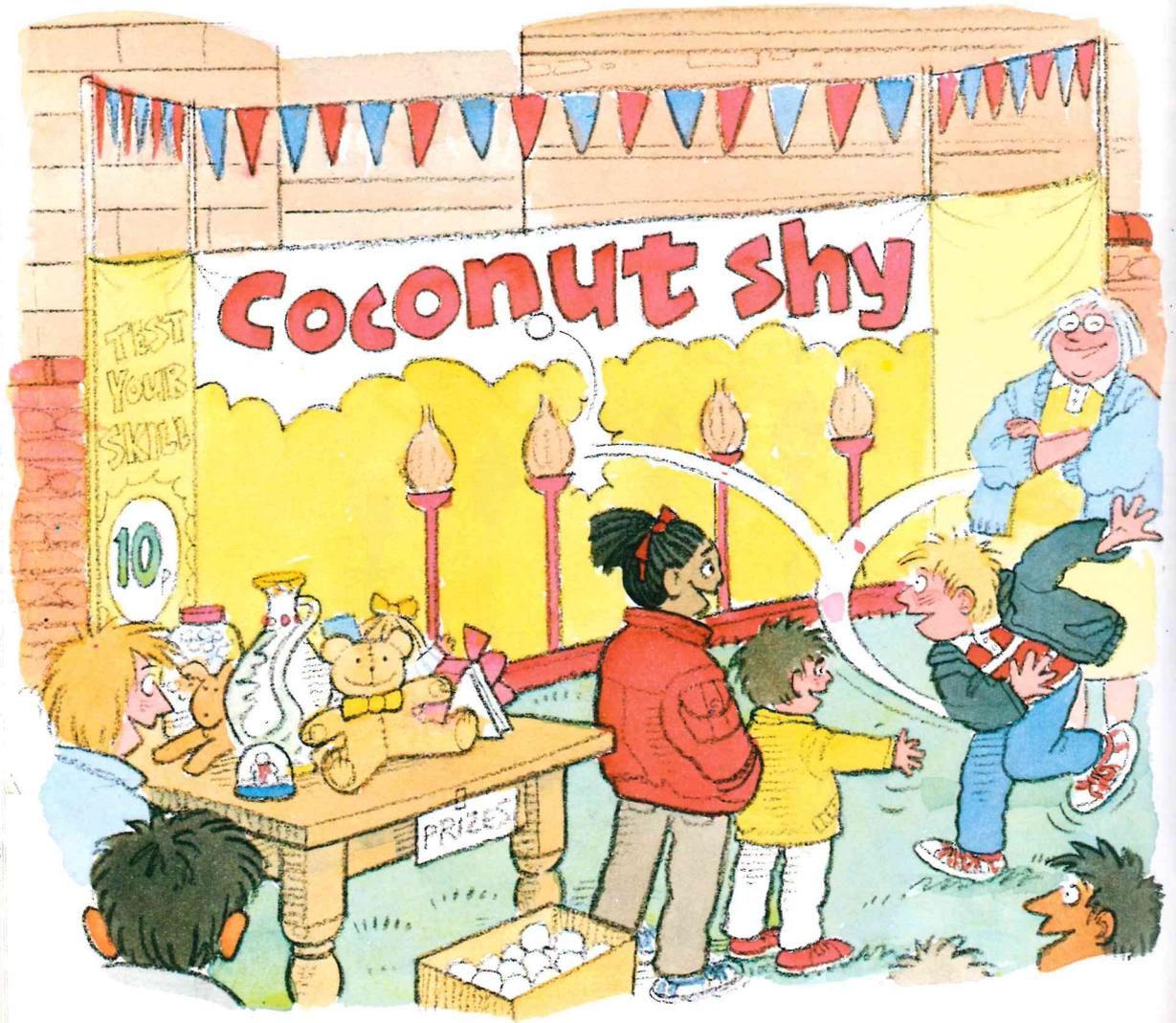
"That's about seventy years' pocket money," said Mel. "Why would an old vase cost so much?"



On Saturday there was a fair at our school. The school wanted to raise money for new books and a computer and things. Guess what? I had to take Mel to the fair. So I asked Tracey to come too.

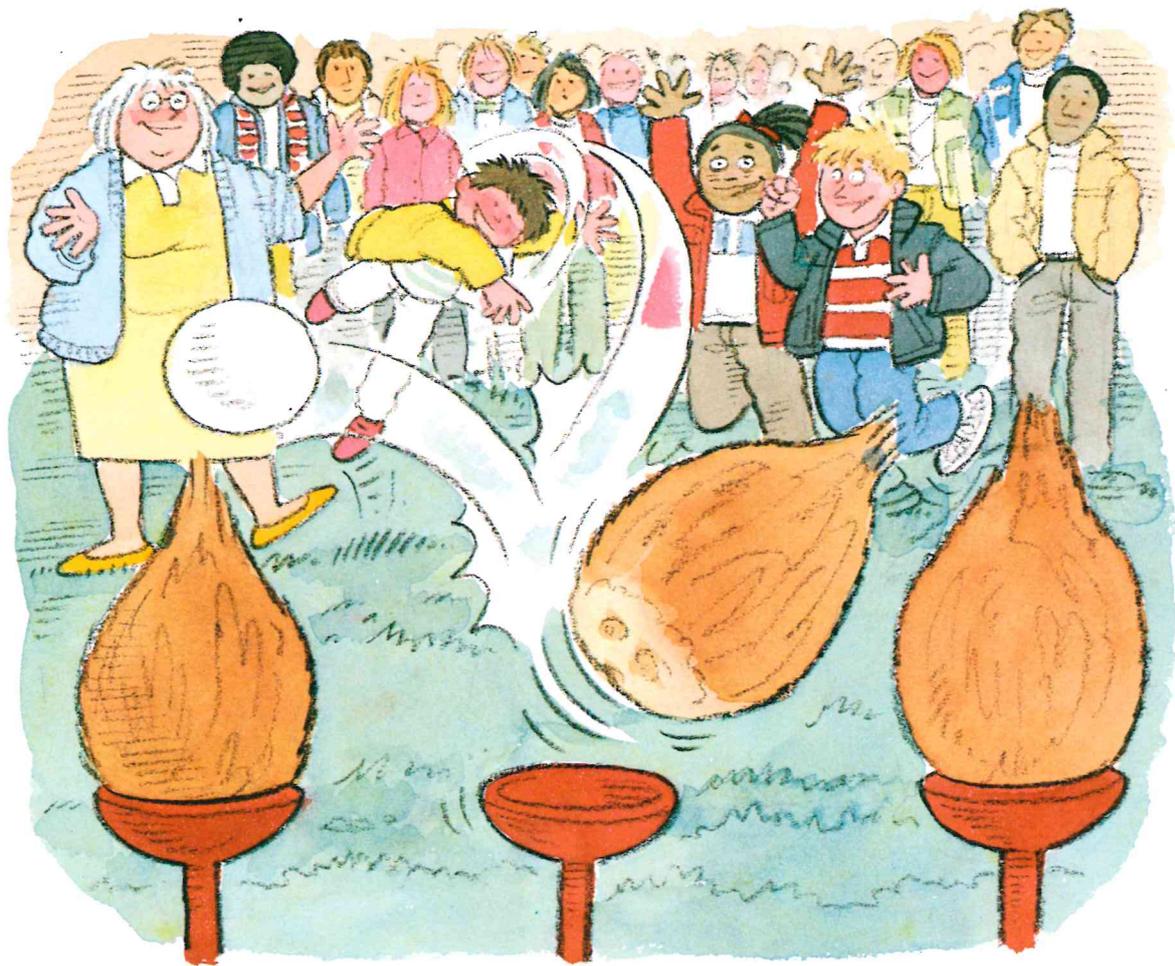


It was good fun at the fair. There were stalls selling books and cakes and plants and all sorts of things. There were all kinds of games, and you could win prizes at some of them.

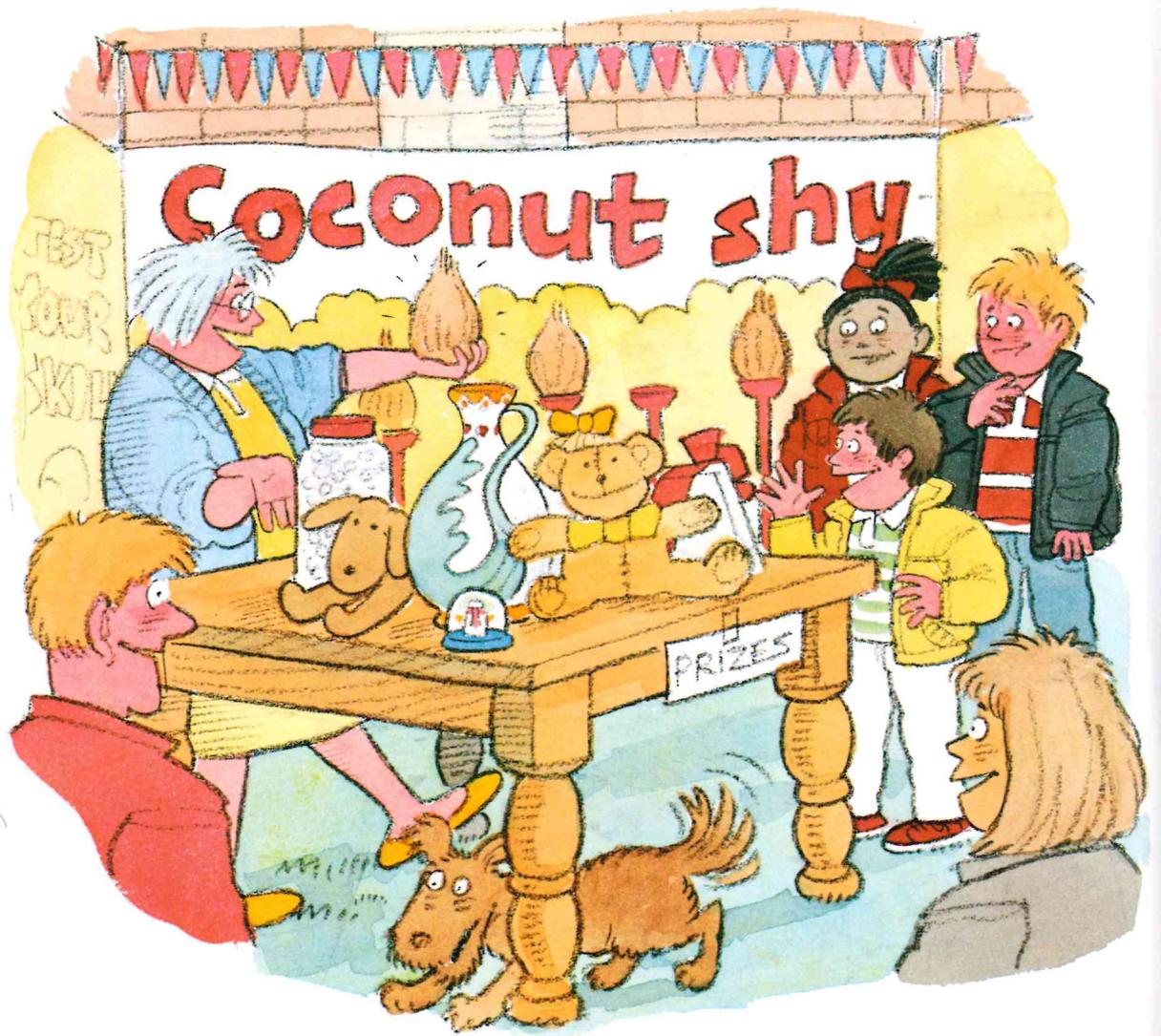


Mrs Ramage was running a coconut shy.

“Roll up, roll up!” she called. “Come on Lenny, let’s see if you can win a prize.” I paid for a go, but when I hit a coconut it didn’t drop off.



“I bet it’s glued on,” said Tracey. Then Mel had a go and he knocked off a coconut with his first ball.  
“That’s great,” said Mel, “I’ve won a coconut!”  
“I bet there’s no milk in it,” said Tracey.



“Well done, Mel,” said Mrs Ramage. “You can have the coconut, or you can choose a prize.” I looked at the prizes – and then I saw it!

“Ask for that vase,” I said. “It’s just like the one we saw in the antique shop.”



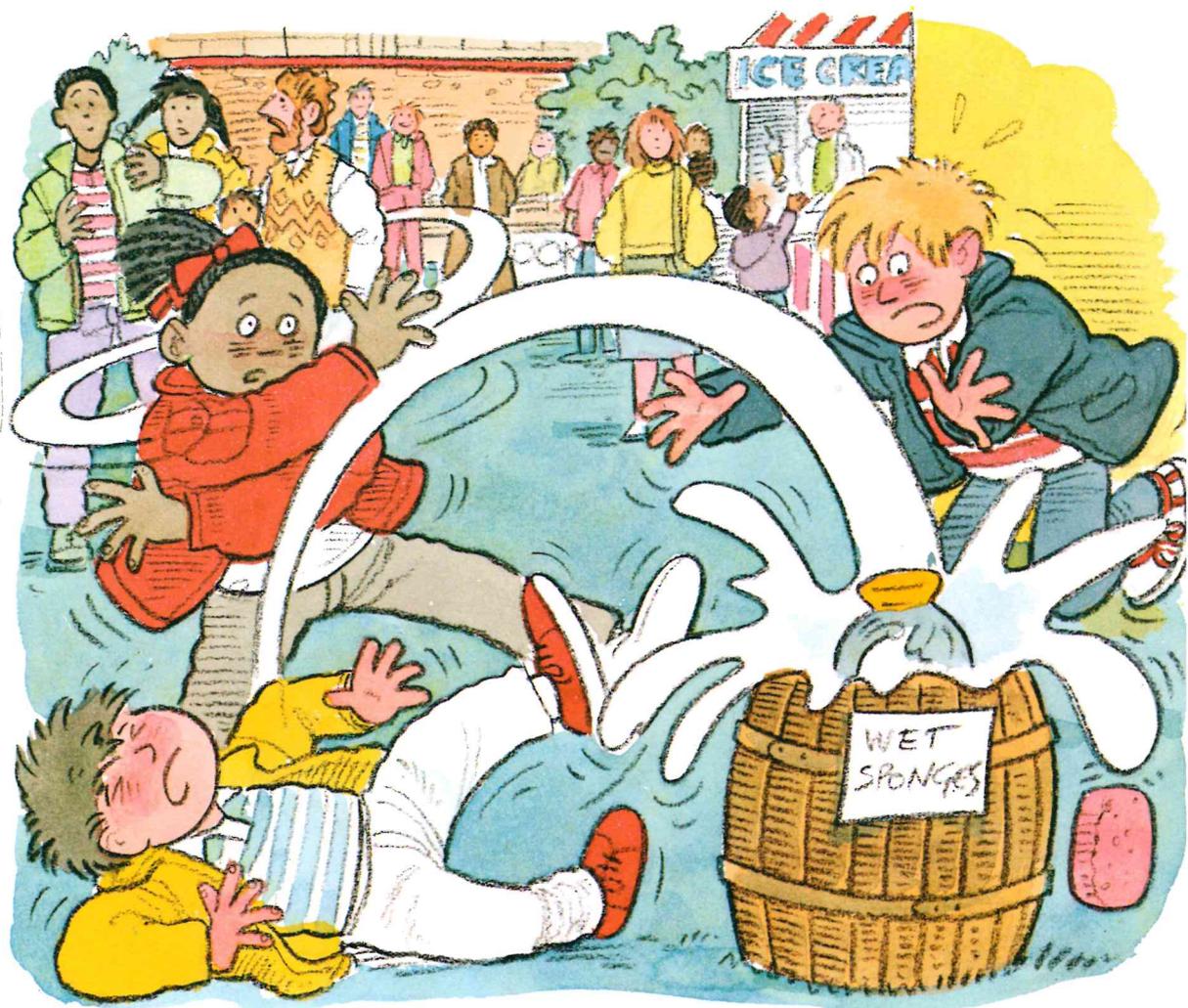
“But I don’t want an old vase. I want the coconut,” said Mel.

“Don’t you see?” I whispered. “That vase might be worth seven hundred pounds.”

“Could I have that vase, please?” said Mel.



Suddenly, everybody began to shout. Some dogs had started to fight. Two of them raced towards us and one of them knocked Mel over. The vase flew out of his hands.



“Oh no!” I thought. “We must save the vase.”

“Quick, catch it!” I yelled. Tracey tried to catch the vase but missed. I grabbed at it and missed too but it landed with a splash in a tub of water.



After that we just wanted to get to the antique shop as fast as we could. None of us liked to carry the vase but in the end Tracey carried it.

“Just mind you don’t drop it,” said Mel.



On the way to the shop we saw Ann Godfrey. She was with her horrible friends. We were scared of Ann Godfrey. Everyone was scared of her.

“I bet she’s looking for trouble,” I said.



Ann Godfrey grabbed the vase from Tracey.

“Where did you get this horrible vase?” she said. She threw it to Kenny Smith and he threw it to Maggie Bill.

“Give it to me! It’s mine!” shouted Mel.

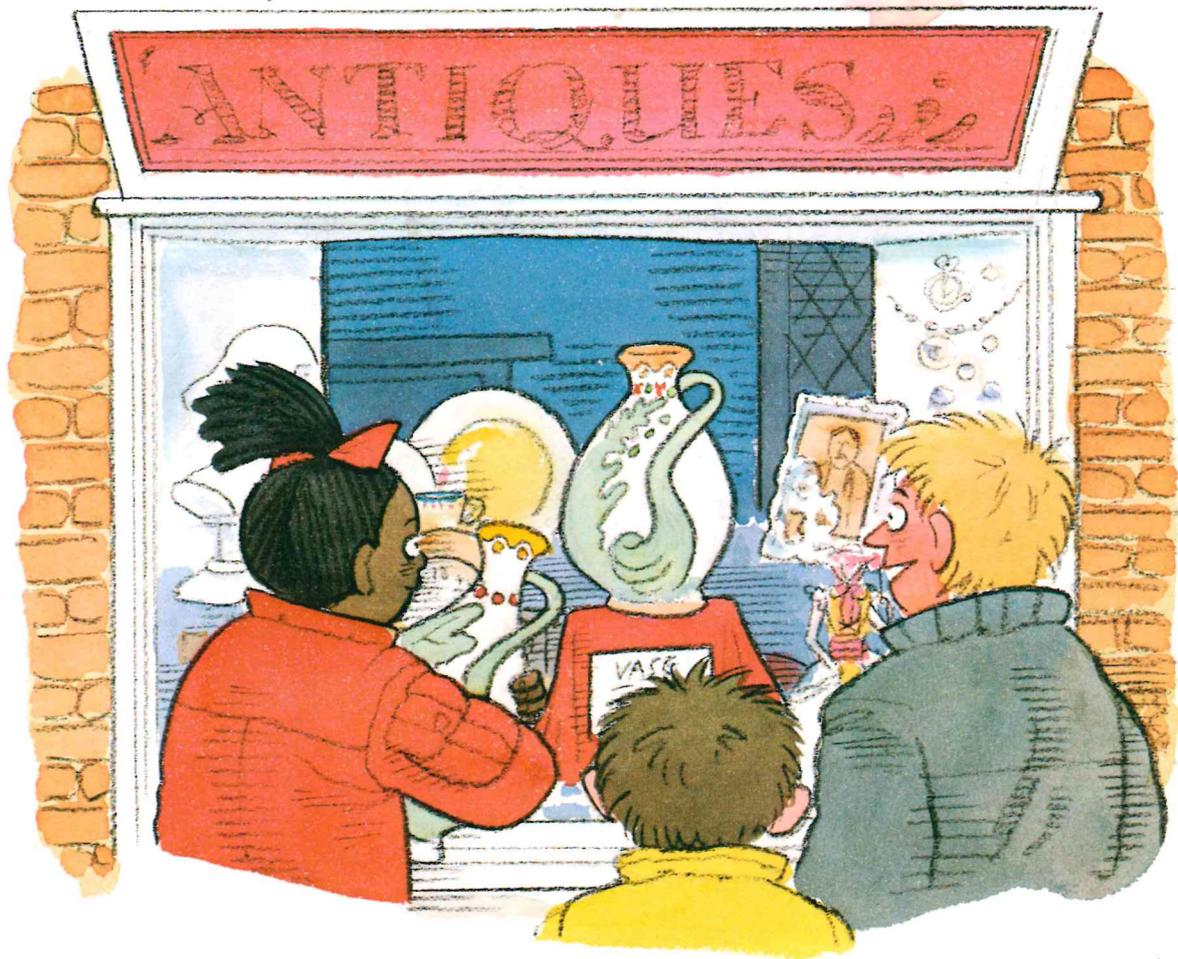


We didn't know what to do. We all held our breath. Tracey shut her eyes and Mel began to cry. Ann Godfrey held the vase over Mel's head. "Jump for it, Cry Baby!" she laughed.



Tracey felt very, very angry. She ran up behind Ann Godfrey, jumped in the air, and grabbed the vase.

“Got it!” she yelled. “Run for it, you two!” So we did.



The other vase was still in the shop window. We all looked at it.

"It's not exactly like this one," I said, "but it's almost the same."

"Let's go inside and see," said Tracey.



We went into the shop. A lady came up to us and gave us a funny look. I don't think she trusted us in her shop.

"Please be careful," she said. "Don't touch anything. I don't want my antiques broken."



“Excuse me,” I said. “Do you want to buy this old vase from us?”

“It’s just like the one in your window,” said Tracey. The lady looked at our vase very carefully.

“Let me see,” she said.



“I’m sorry,” said the lady, at last. “This vase isn’t worth anything at all.” She took her vase out of the window.

“Vases like this one are very old,” she said.  
“But your vase is quite new.”

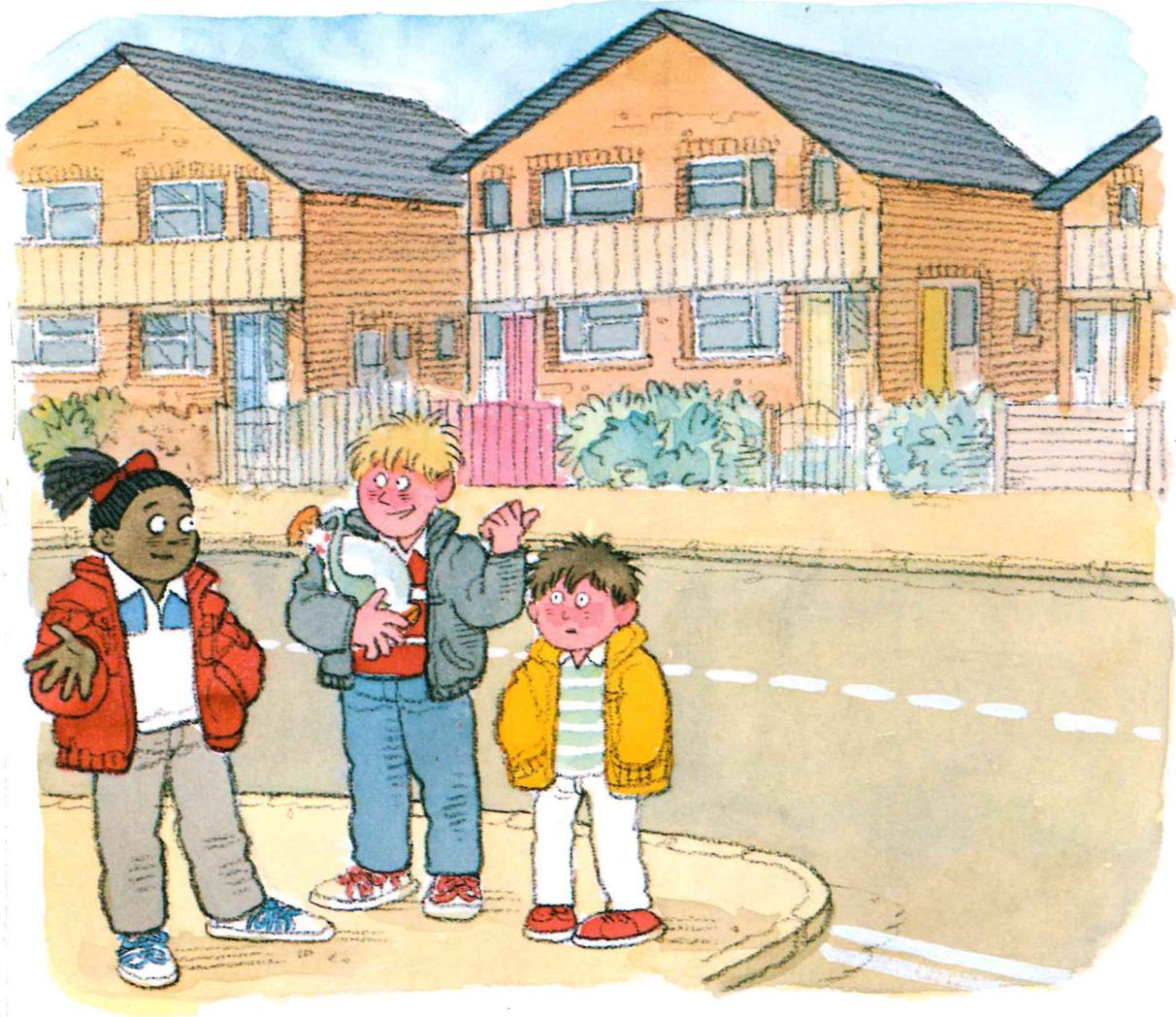


Mel was fed up.

“We didn’t get seven hundred pounds,” he moaned. “We didn’t get anything – not even a coconut. All we’ve got is a horrible vase.”

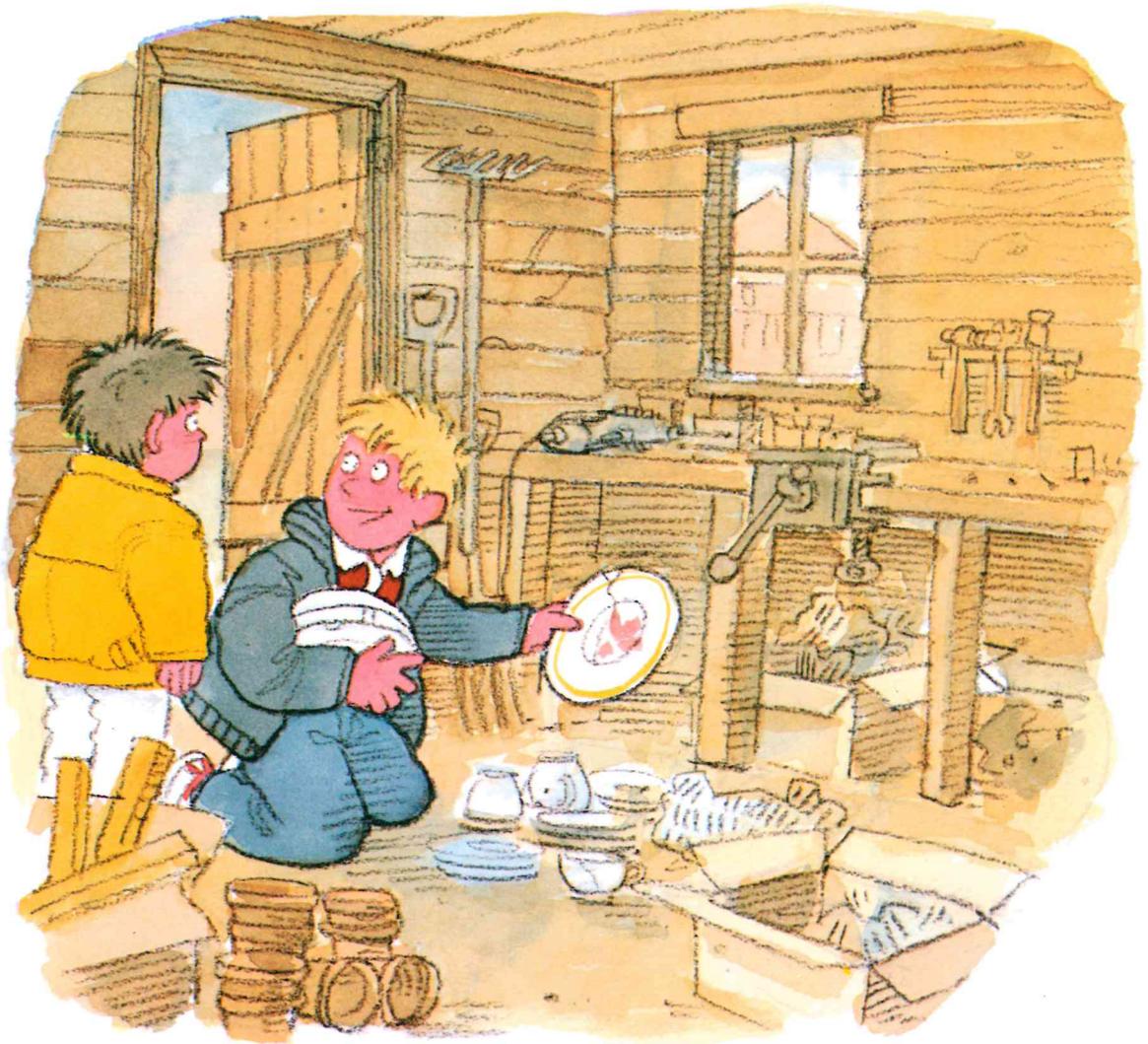
Then I had an idea.

“Come with me,” I said.



We went back to my house. Tracey didn't want to come with us. She wanted to go back to the fair.

"We'll go to the fair in a minute," I said, "but I want to get something first."

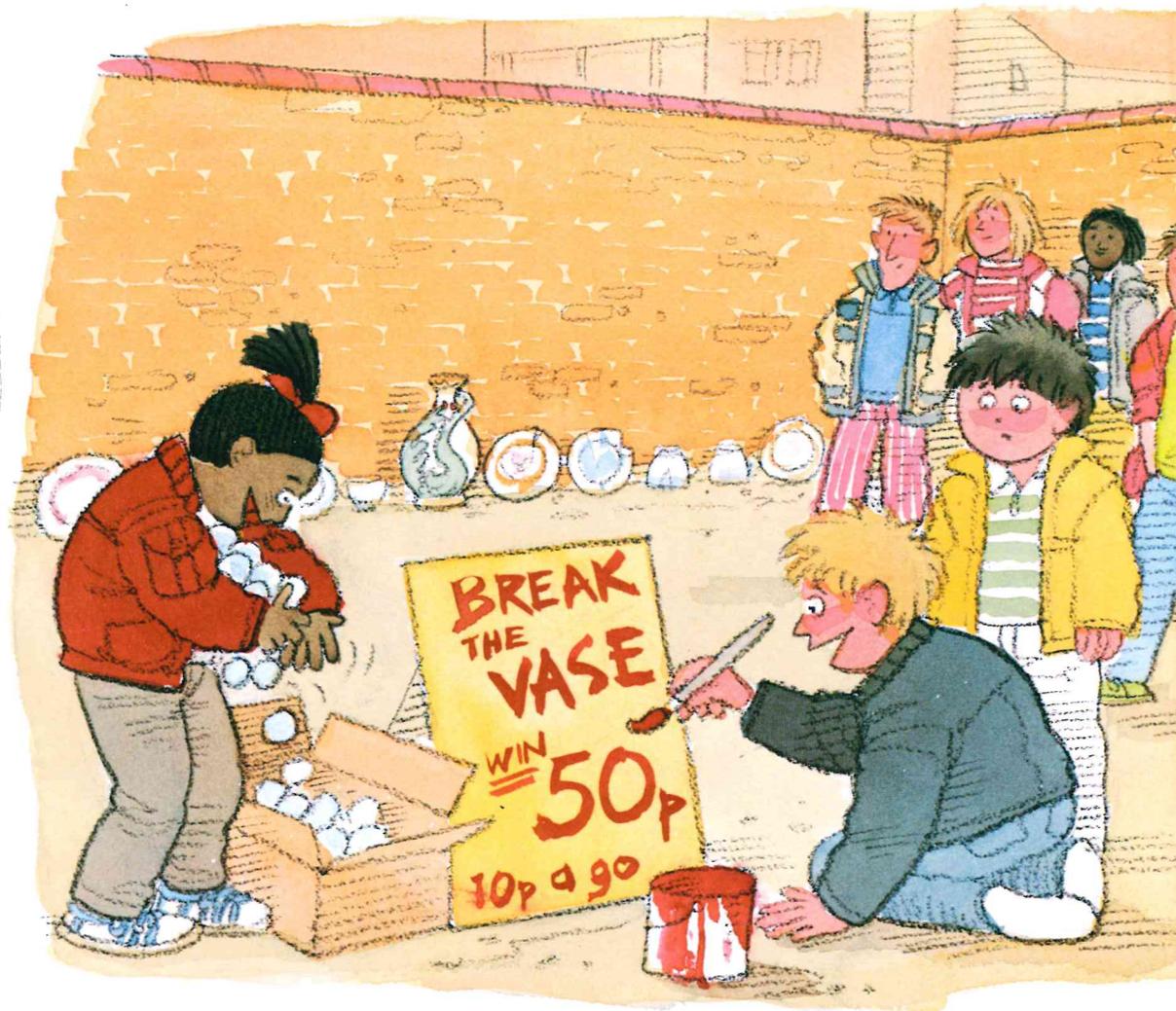


There were some old chipped plates and things that we never used in the shed.

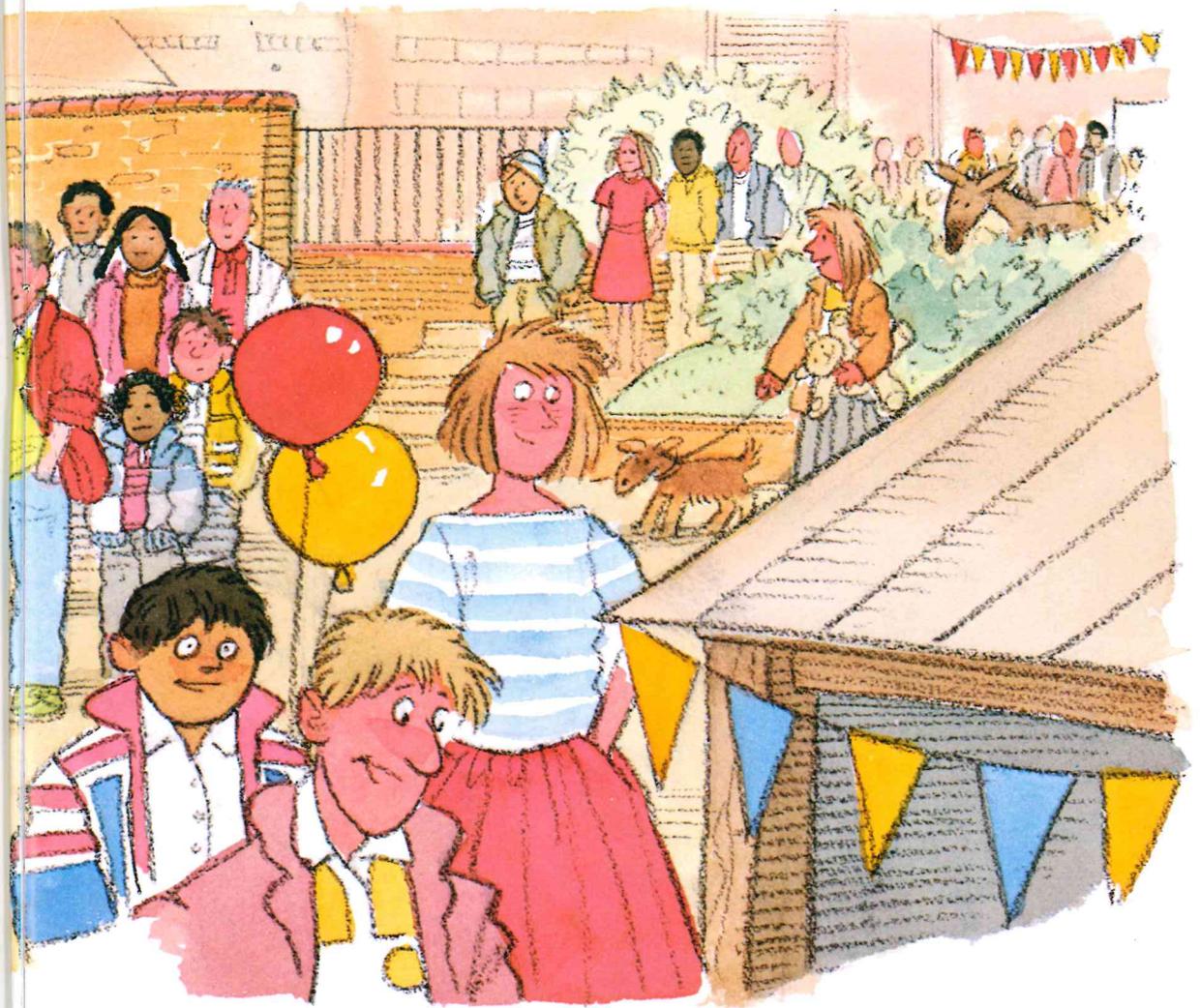
“These are just what we need,” I said.

“I can’t see why,” said Mel.

“You will when we get to the fair,” I said.



I put the plates and things in a line by the playground wall. I put the vase in the middle. Then we borrowed some balls from the coconut shy. I painted a sign saying "Break the Vase! Win 50p!"



We charged 10p a go. Mel began to grumble.

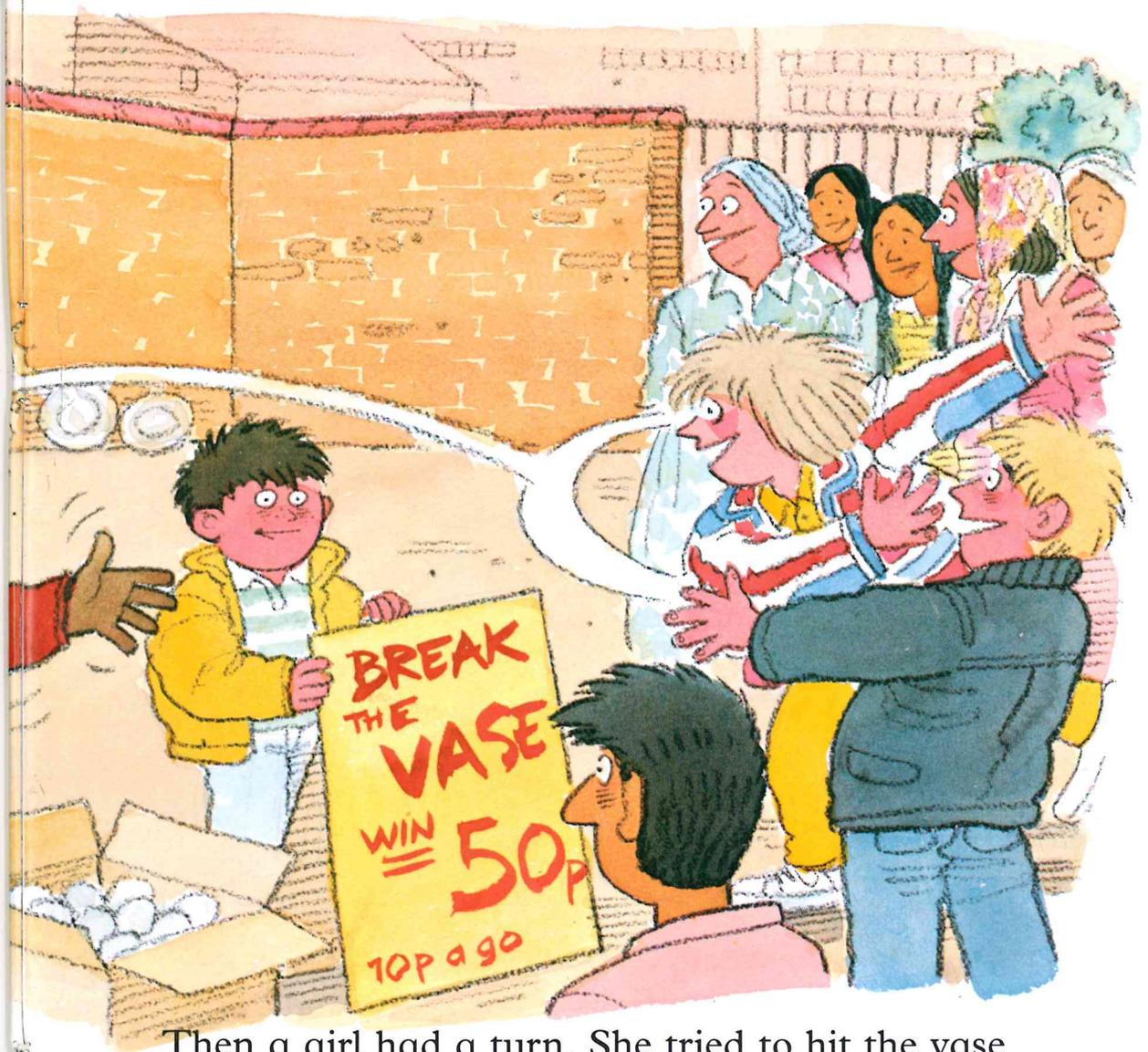
“What if somebody breaks the vase first try?”  
he said. “That will cost us another 50p.”

“I don’t think so,” I said. “It’s a long way to  
throw.”



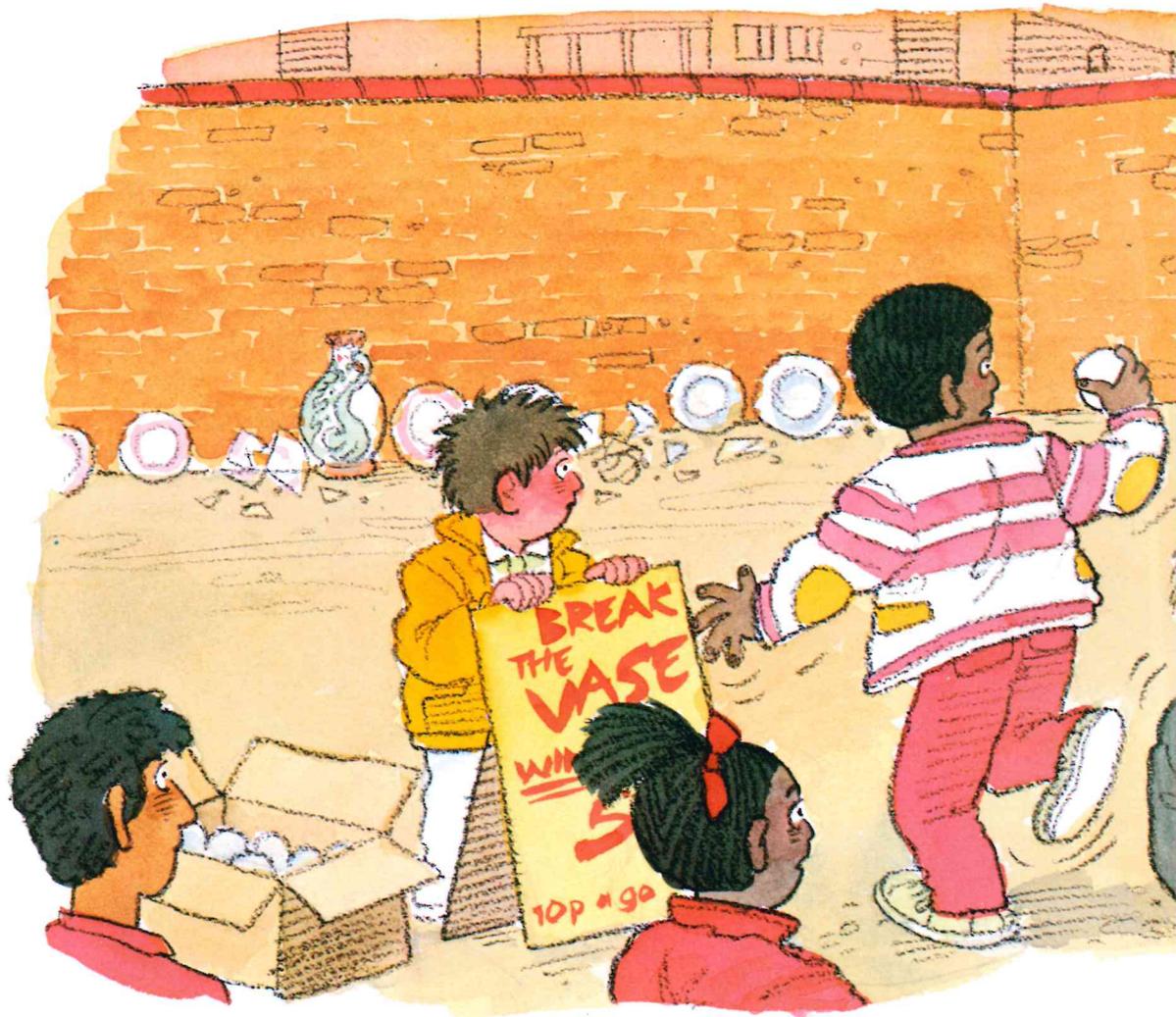
A boy was first to have a shot. He threw some balls at the vase but didn't hit anything.

“Roll up!” called Tracey. “Come and win 50p. Only 10p a go.”



Then a girl had a turn. She tried to hit the vase but she smashed a plate instead.

“Sorry,” I said, “you have to break that horrible vase to win the money.”



Suddenly we heard someone shout. At first we didn't know who it was. Then Mrs Ramage and Mr Gohil came up with the lady from the antique shop. The lady was holding a vase.



“Stop! Be careful!” she shouted. “That’s my vase. You’ve got the wrong one. The vase you’re throwing balls at is worth seven hundred pounds! I think I’m going to faint.”



When I looked at the old vase I felt like fainting too. I couldn't think how we'd taken the wrong one.

"We're very sorry," gasped Tracey. "Thank goodness it's still in one piece!"



“That’s all right,” said the lady. “It was my fault. I must have mixed them up.”

“They both look the same,” said Mrs Ramage.

“Yes,” Mel whispered in my ear, “they both look horrible.”



But it turned out all right in the end. That lady was so pleased her vase was safe that she gave us five pounds.

“We’ll never get rid of this old vase,” said Tracey.

“You want to bet?” grinned Mel.

# The Old Vase

Winning an old vase at the school fair is the beginning of a money-making idea for Lenny and his friends.



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