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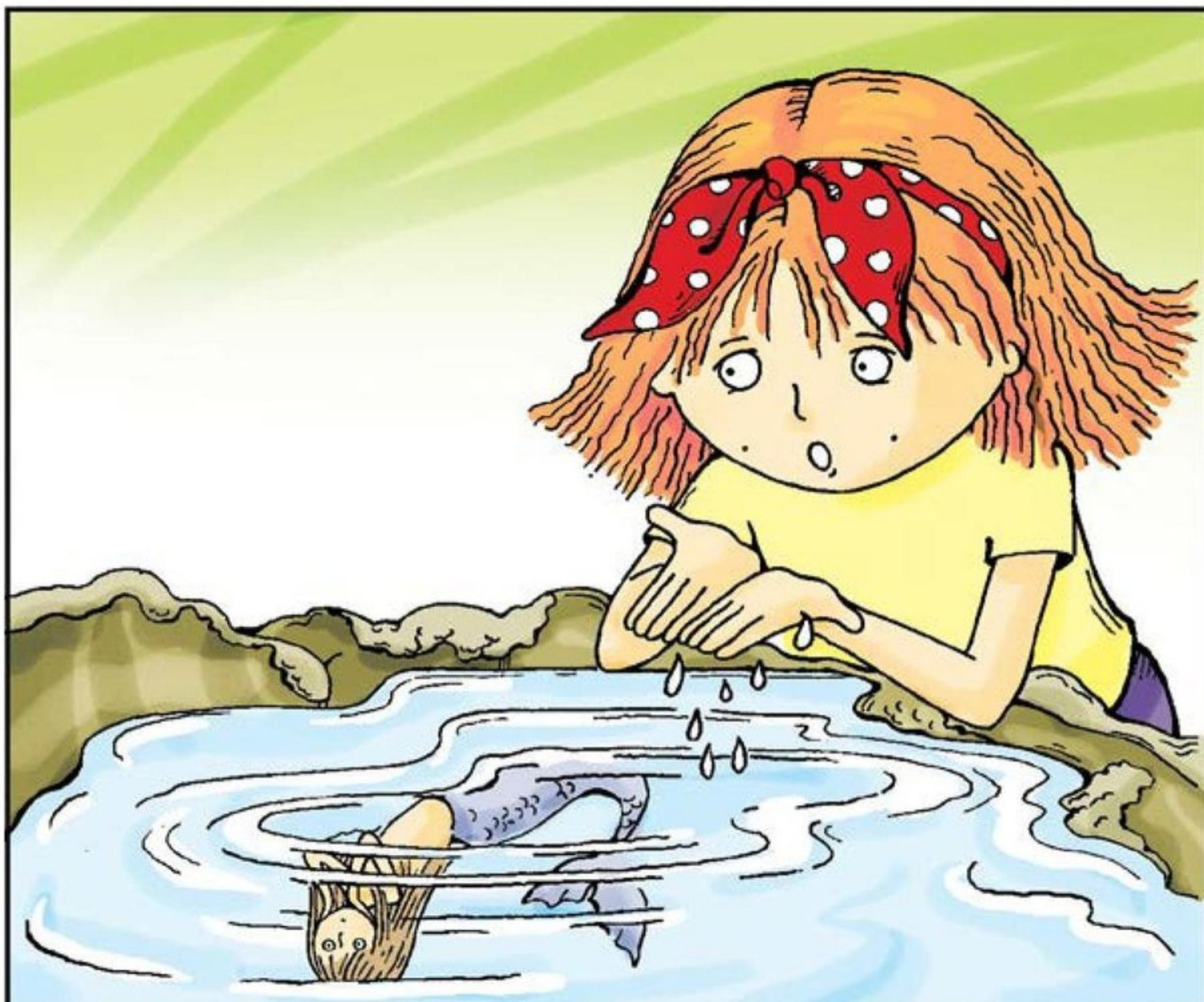
# MERMAID IN A TEACUP



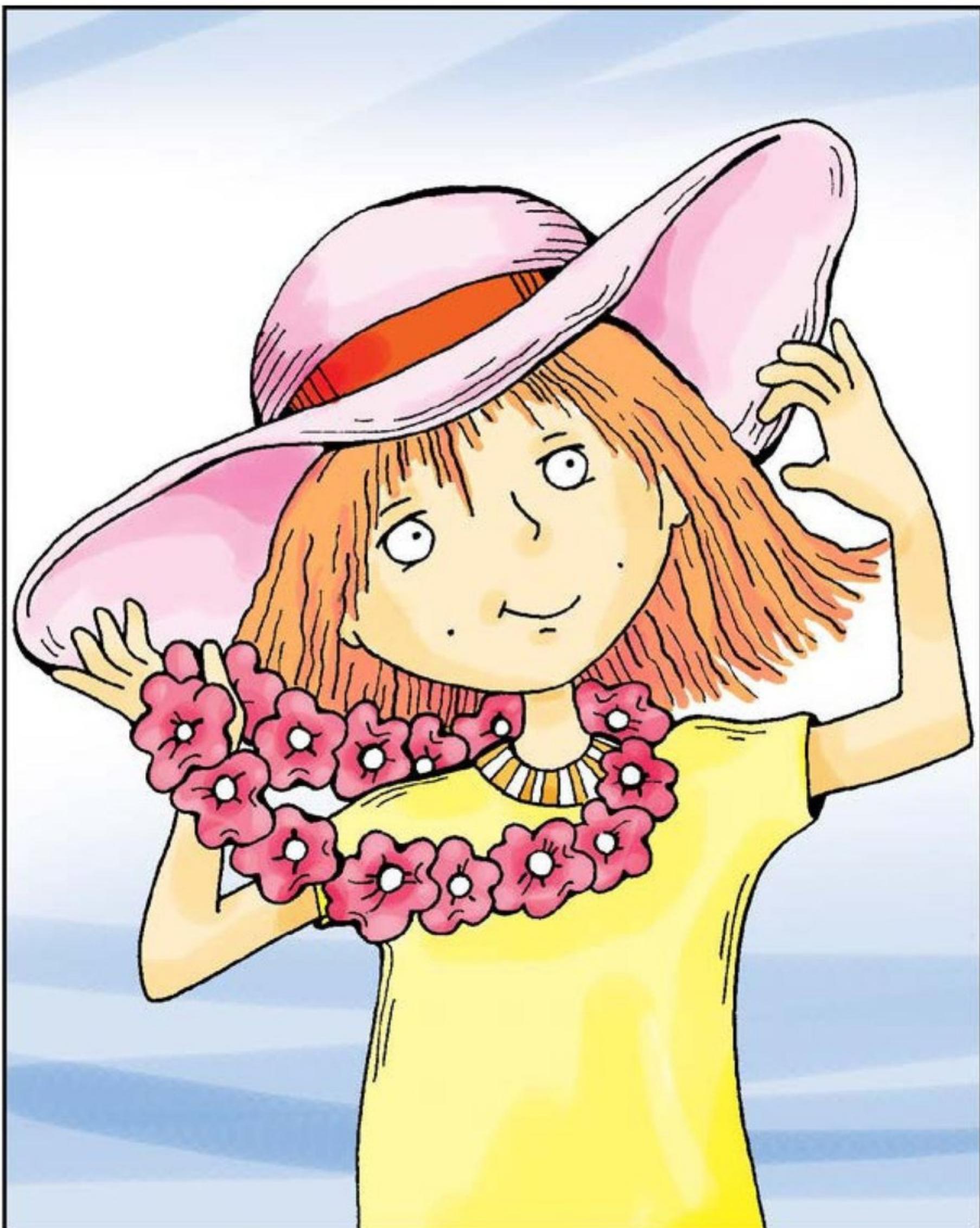
Written by Stephen Cosgrove  
Illustrated by Carolyn LaPorte

# MERMAID IN A TEACUP

*A story from Hattie MacGruder's diary*



Written by Stephen Cosgrove  
Illustrated by Carolyn LaPorte



My name is Hattie MacGruder, and I found  
a mermaid!

I found a real, live mermaid that is only  
three inches long.

I am telling the truth.

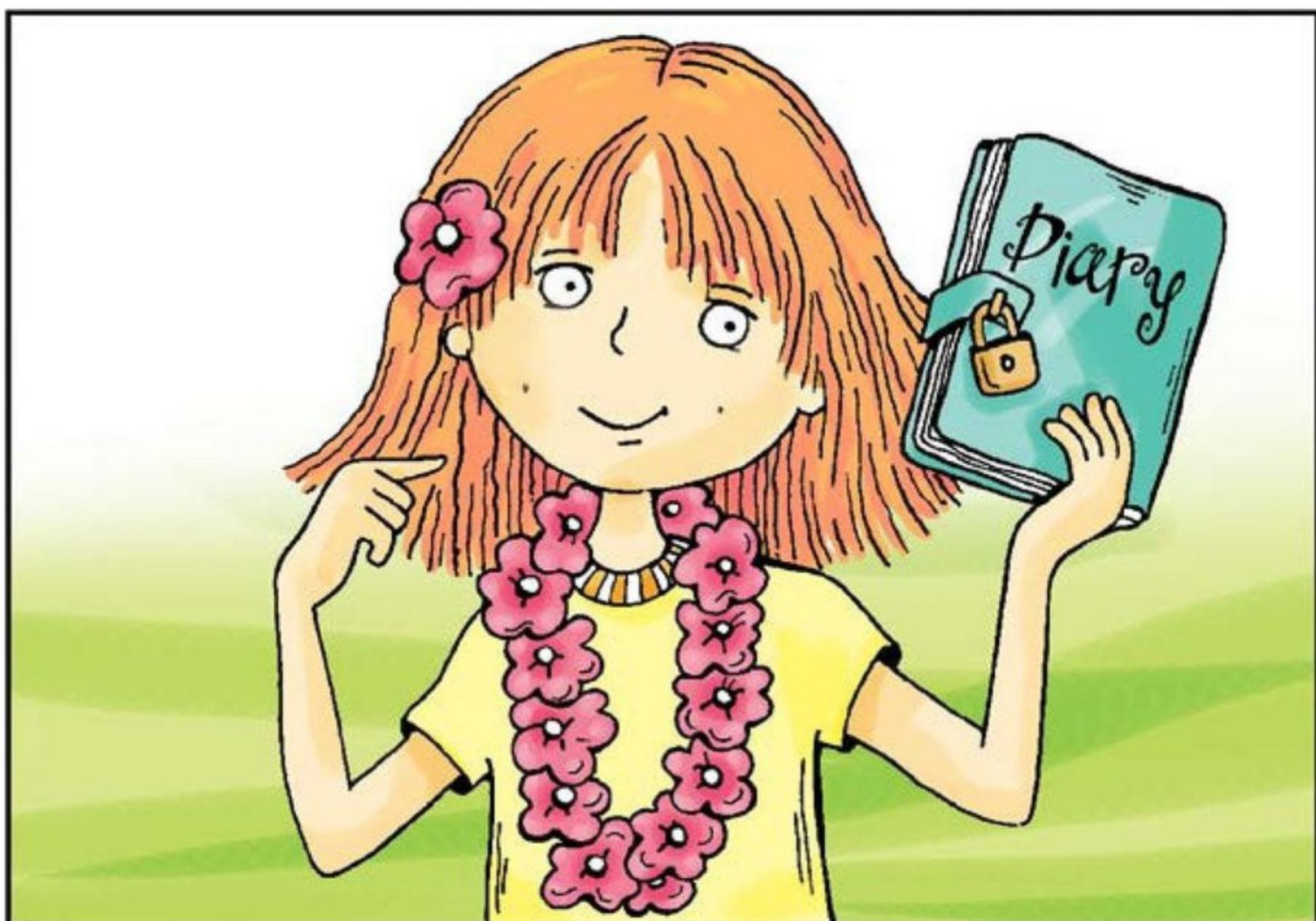
There are others who are not telling the truth.

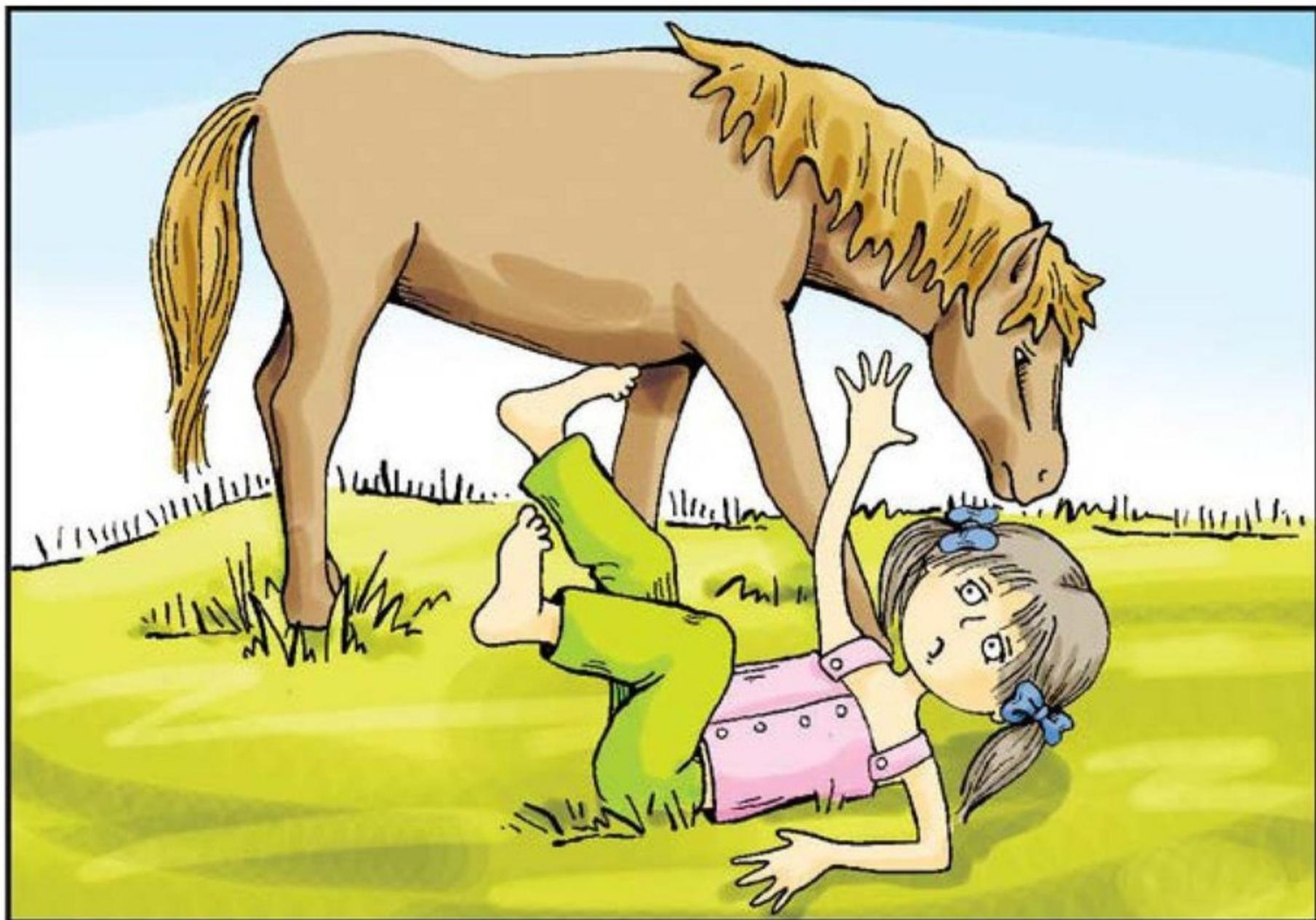
Sybil and Sarah are liars and fibbers and tellers of untruth.

They said that the mermaid was nothing more than a silly toy that wasn't ever alive. They said that I made it all up. That's why they are liars, fibbers and tellers of untruth.

I have proof that I found a mermaid.

The proof is in my diary, and I'm going to let you read it exactly as I wrote it three weeks ago when I found the tiny mermaid.





## Special Note:

I am only going to show you the parts of my diary that are about the mermaid. I won't let you read that Sarah really didn't go to see the movie *Harry Potter* with Danny Buckman—she went with her mom, who didn't think she was old enough to sit by herself. And I definitely am not going to let you read about “super equestrian” Sybil when she fell off her little sister's pony.

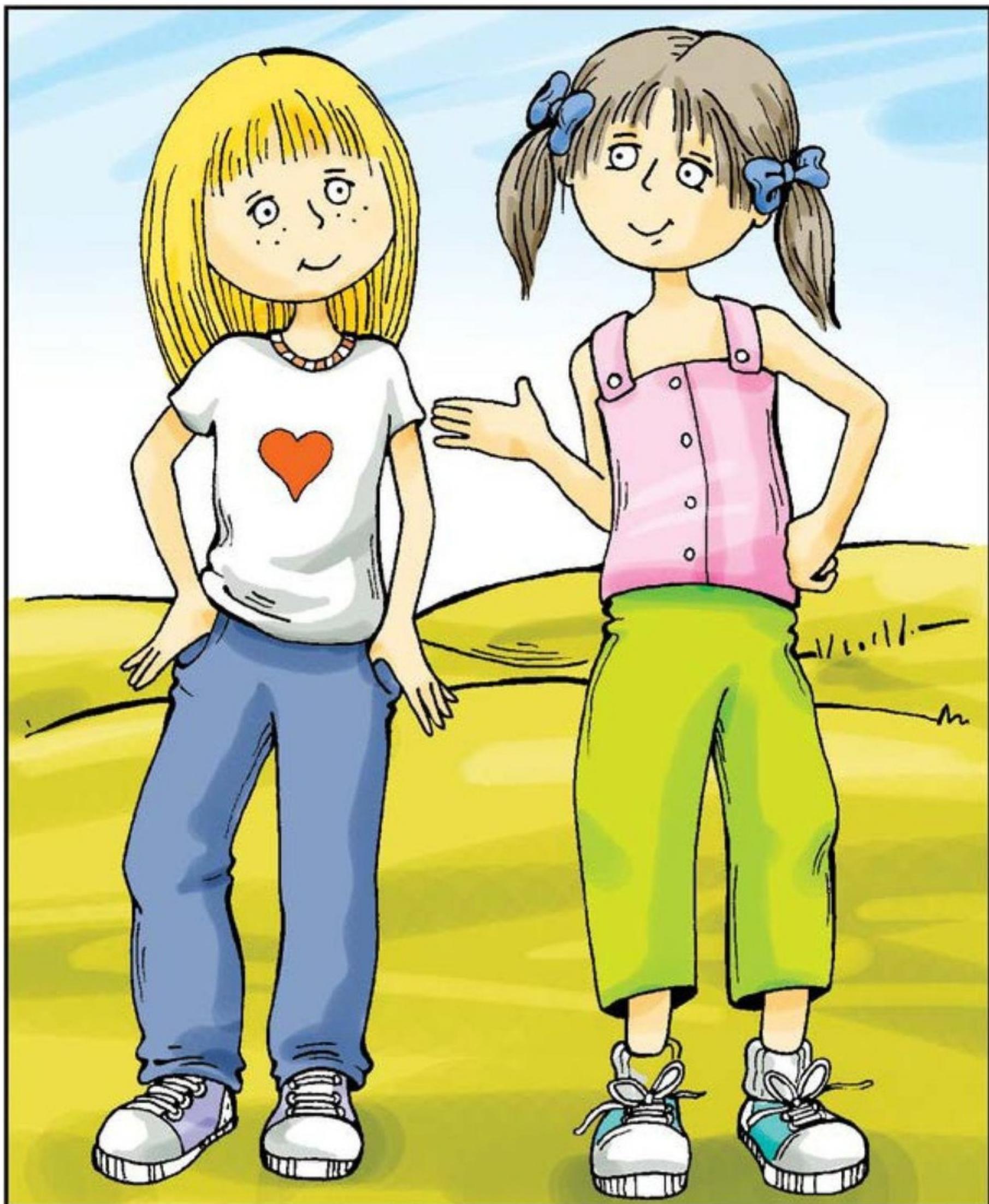
So don't think that I'm leaving out something about those fibbers, Sybil and Sarah, when I skip some stuff.

## The Proof:

*Diary, Day 93*

*Sybil and Sarah are coming over today for our third annual back-to-school picnic.*

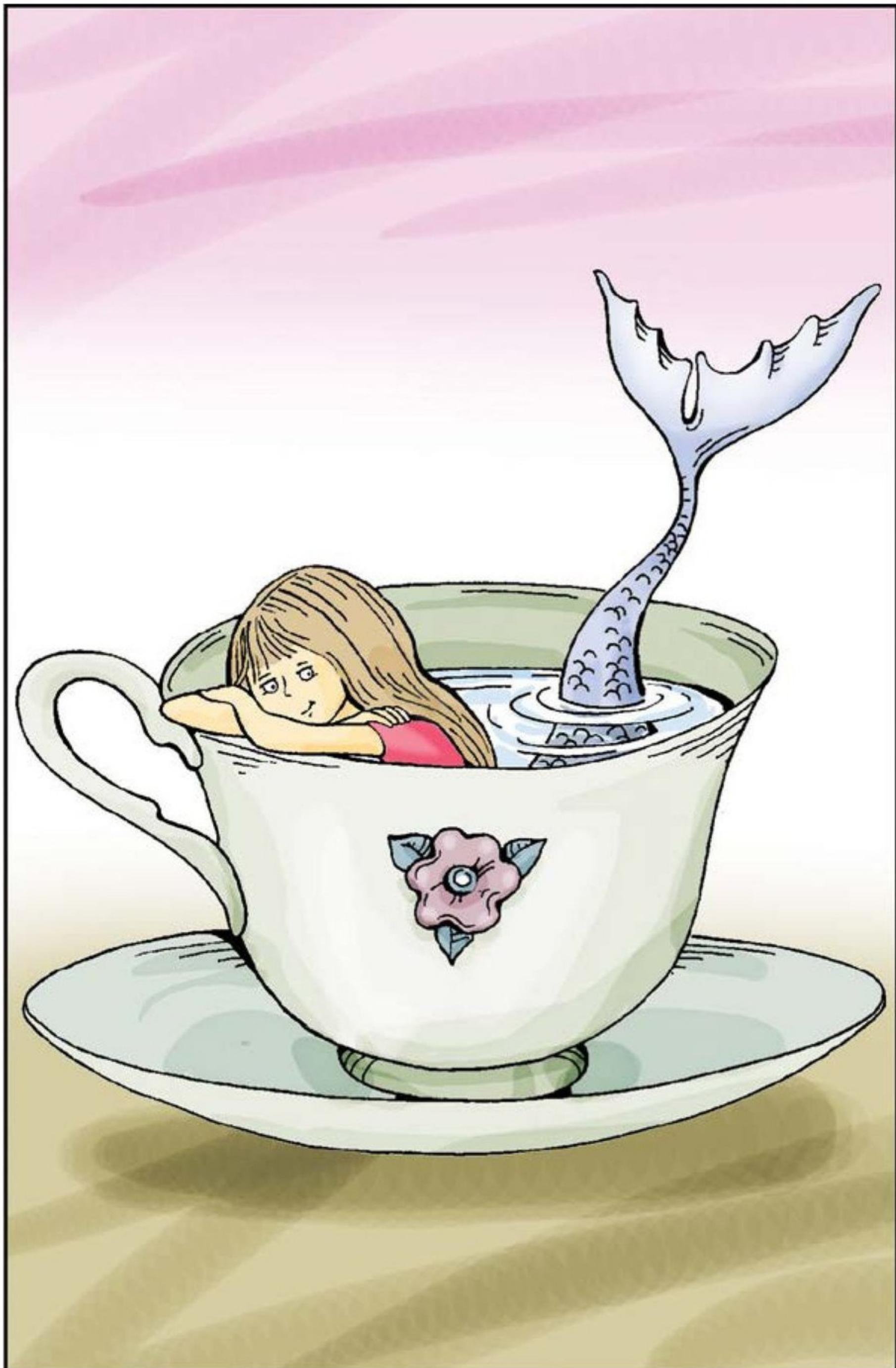
*Hey, they're here! I'll write longer later.*





*Diary, Day 93 (continued later)*

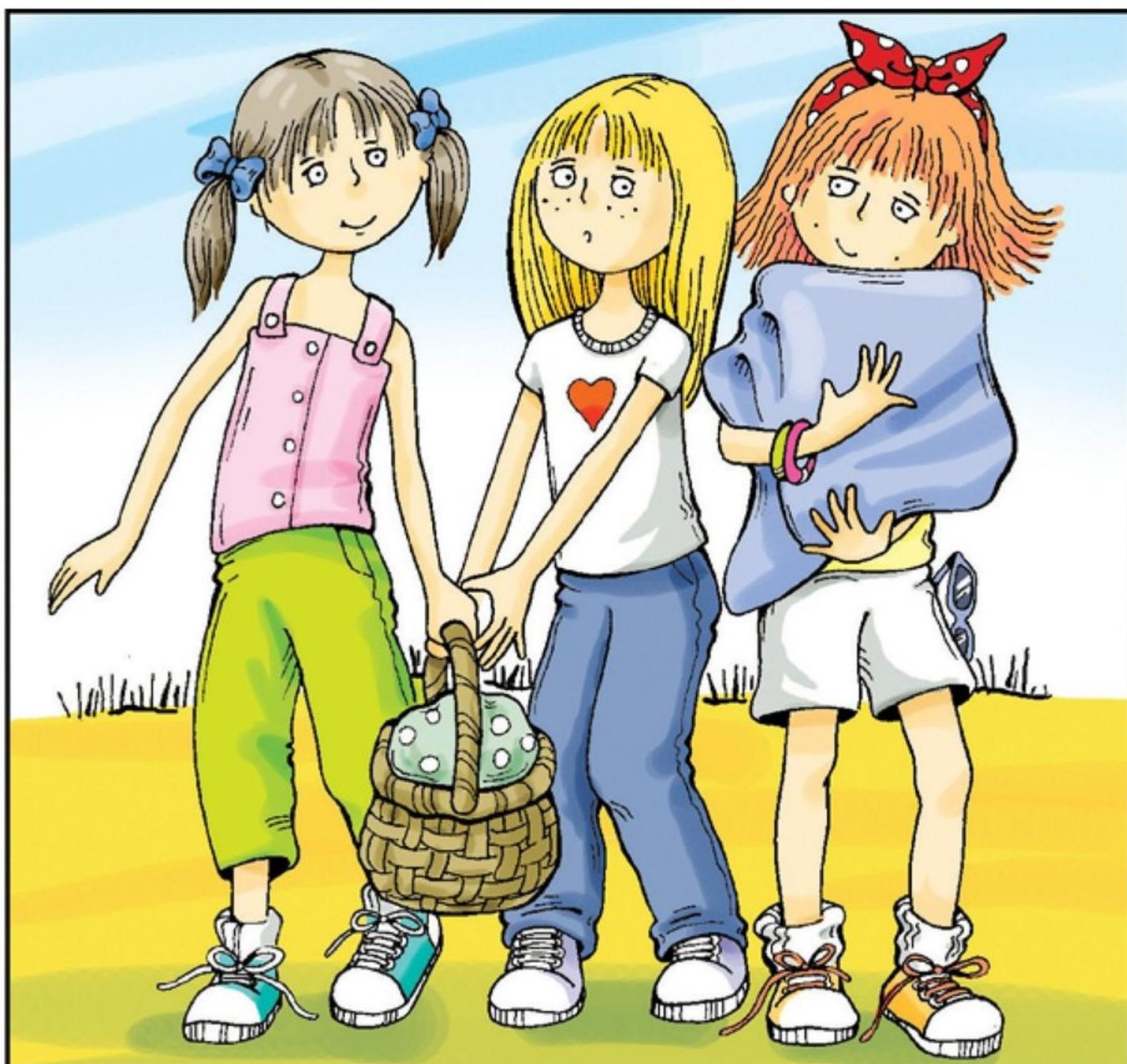
*You will never in a billion years guess what happened. I found a mermaid! She is the coolest little thing you have ever seen. She's only about three inches long and is a real, real mermaid. I dressed her in some Barbie clothes. They fit her perfectly. She didn't need any jeans or anything.*



*Right now, she is sitting in a teacup filled with water on my bedside table, watching me write.*

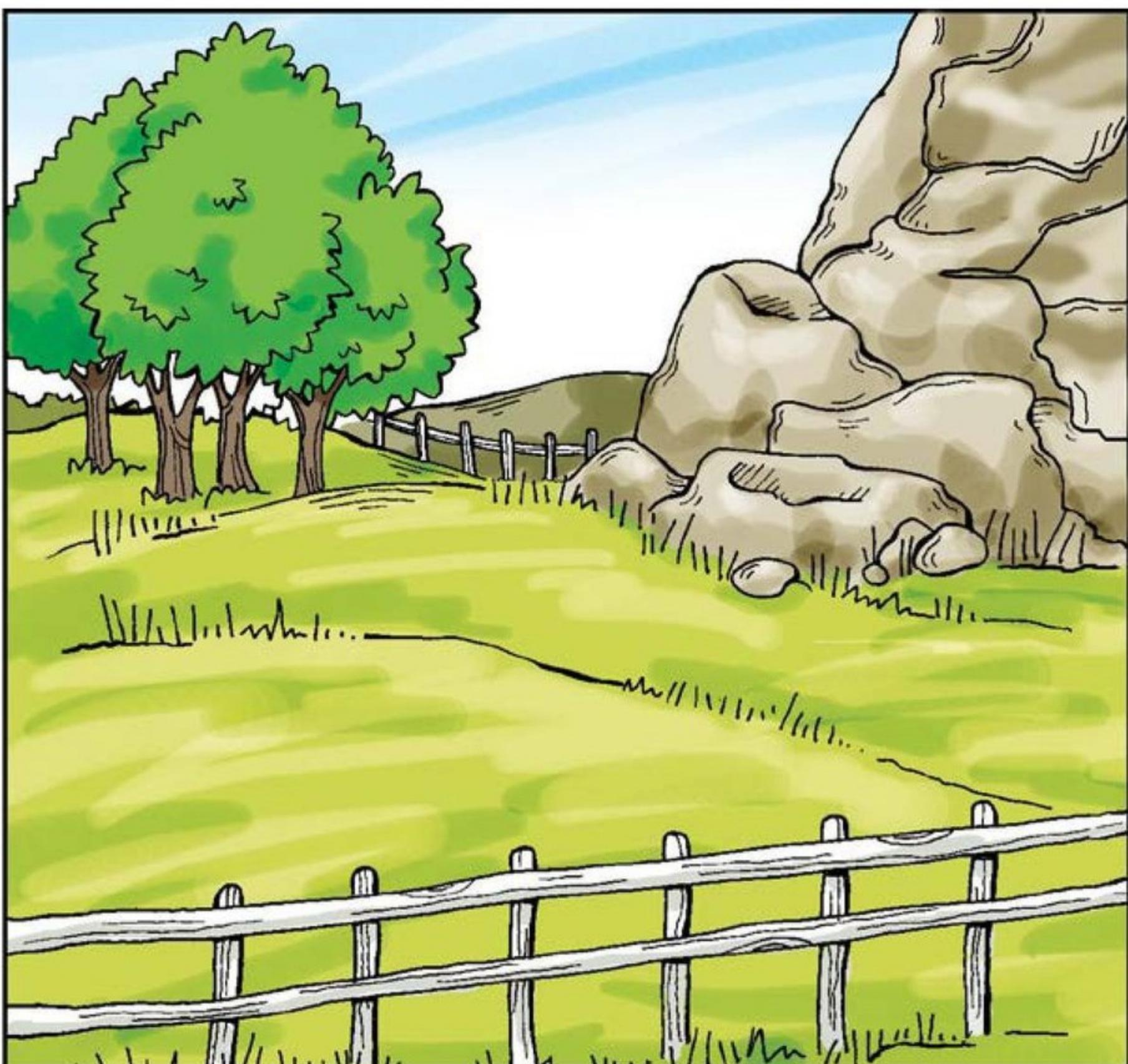
*Wait a minute! I'm getting too far ahead.*

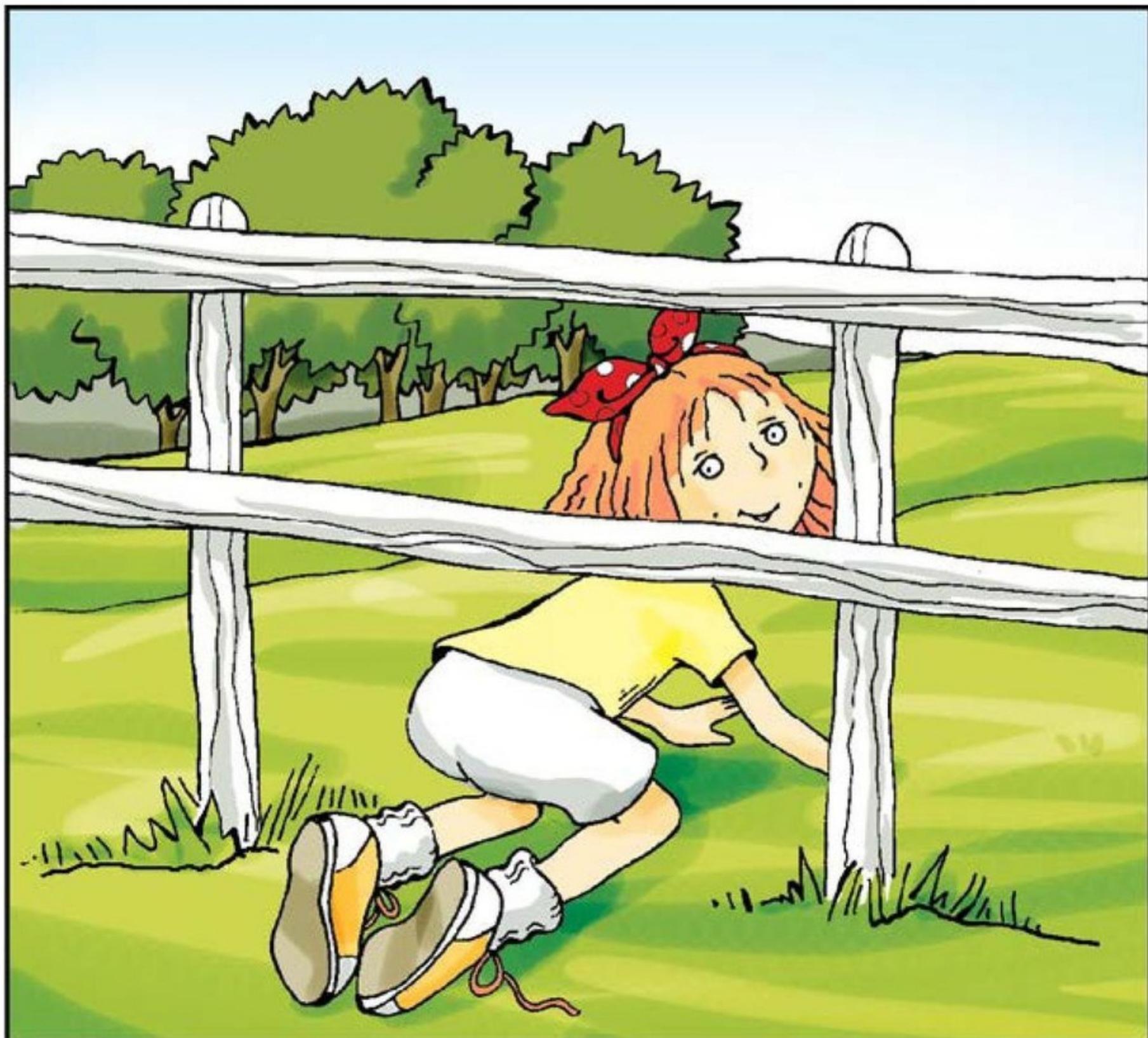
*The whole thing started when Sybil and Sarah came to get me for the picnic. Ever since we were in the first grade, we have had a picnic on the first weekend after school starts. Now we're third graders, and this time we were going to actually go somewhere besides my backyard. This year, we were supposed to go to River Park. My dad was going to take us, but he got stuck in a meeting or whatever.*



*None of us wanted to just eat our picnic in my backyard—that is so second grade. Now, the good thing about my yard is that it backs up to the Ledbetters' dairy farm. They have hundreds of acres for their cows to graze on.*

*At the edge of their pasture is a monstrous boulder called Crying Rock. They call it Crying Rock because water seeps down from the mountain and drips over the rock. It makes the rock look like it is crying.*



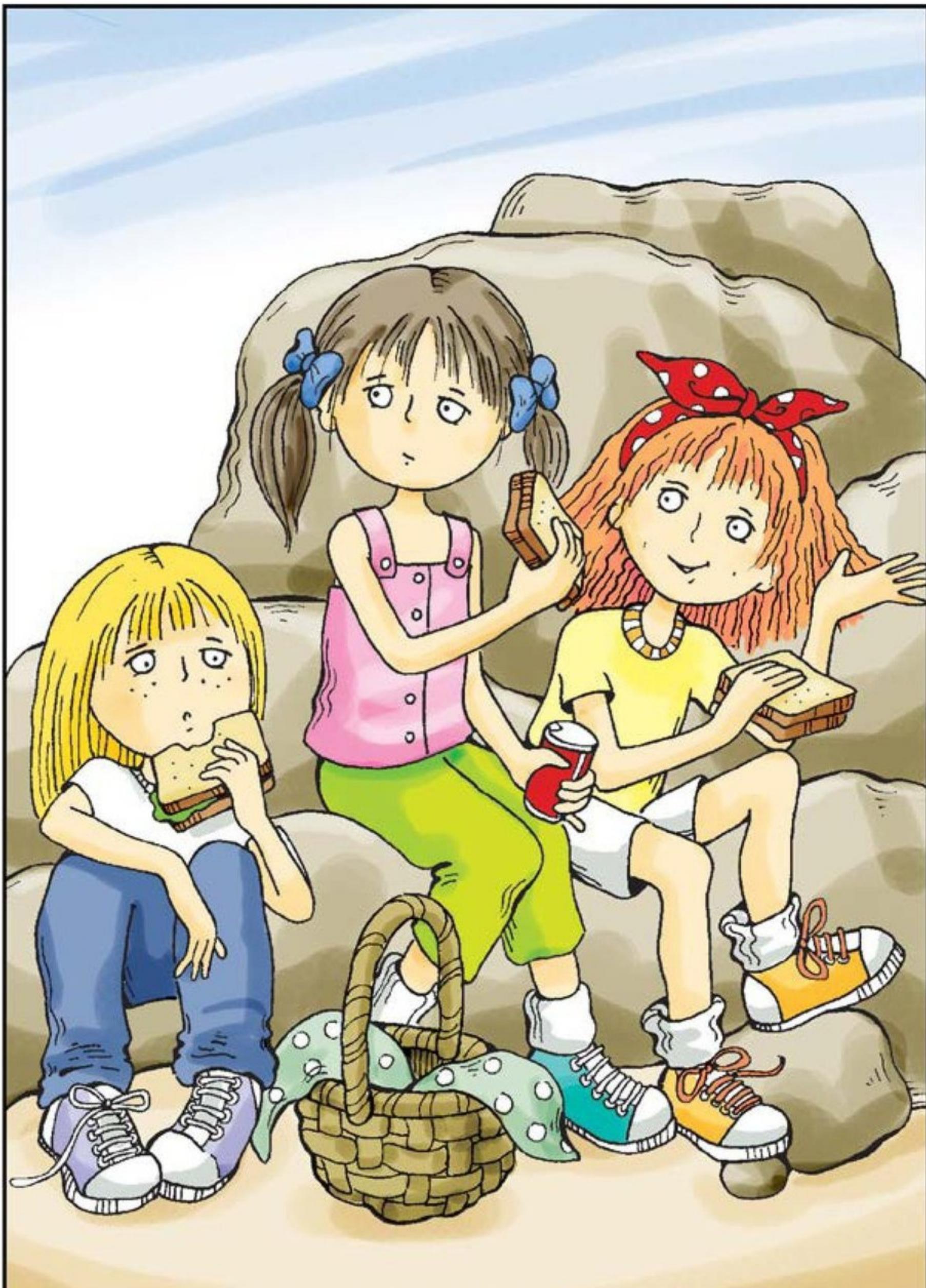


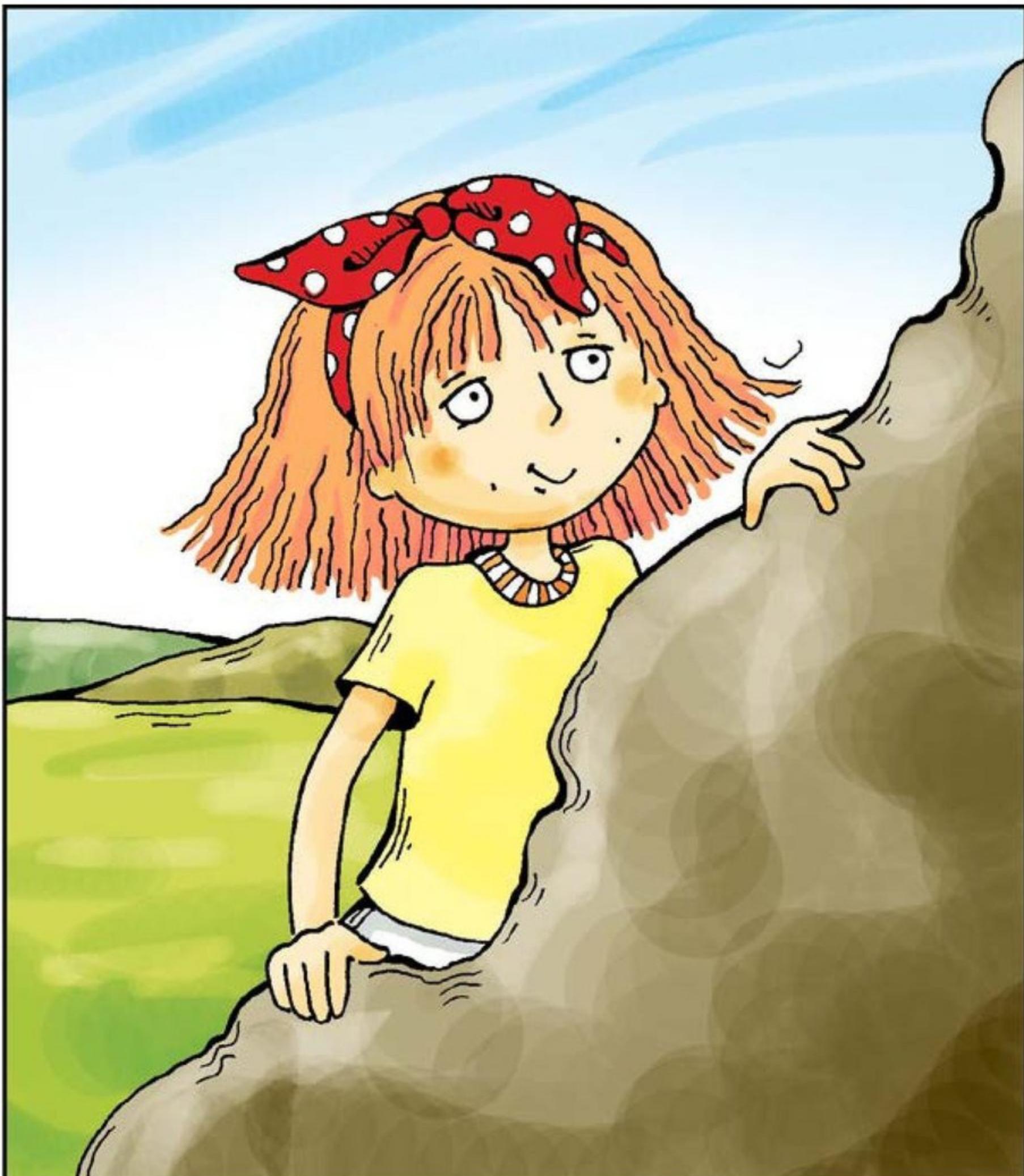
*So we decided to have our annual picnic in the middle of the pasture. Nobody said we couldn't go, even though we've been told not to go through the fence when the cows were in the field.*

*There weren't any cows out today, and nobody said we couldn't go under the fence.*

*So we ran all the way to Crying Rock because we didn't want crotchety Mr. Ledbetter to see us. We got the giggles, which didn't help at all.*

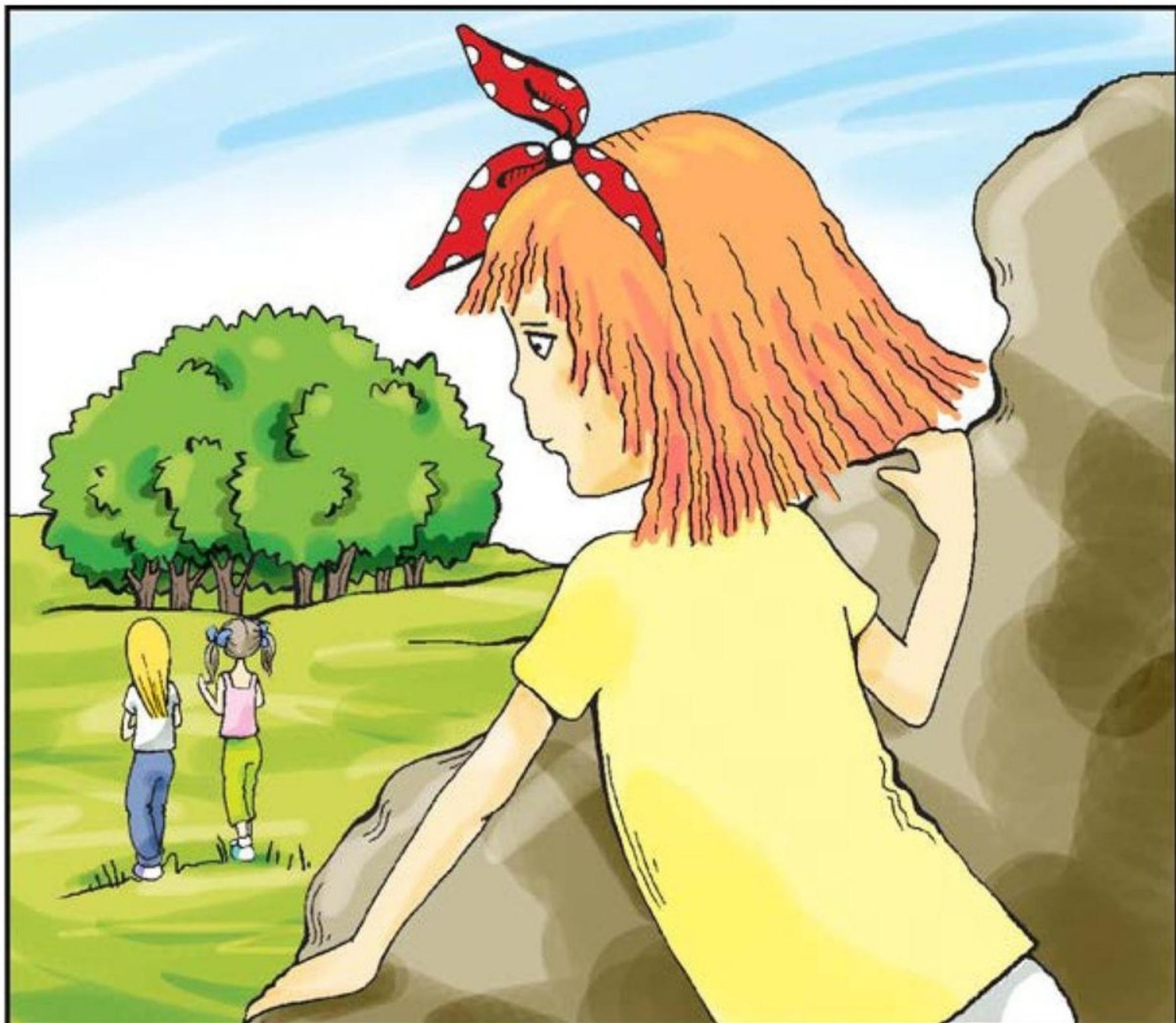
*Sarah was worried that we were going to get in trouble. She just wanted to eat and go home. Sybil always did what Sarah wanted, so we ate our sandwiches really fast.*





*I probably wouldn't have found the mermaid at all if Sarah hadn't had to go to the bathroom. Sybil always goes wherever Sarah goes. The two of them climbed down from the rocks and ran over to a bunch of trees.*

*While they were gone, I decided to climb higher on the rock to see if I could see them.*



*I climbed and climbed. There was almost a path that led up around the crying part of the rock. When I got nearly to the top, I stopped and looked down. Way off to the side, I could see Sarah and her shadow, Sybil, walking into the trees.*

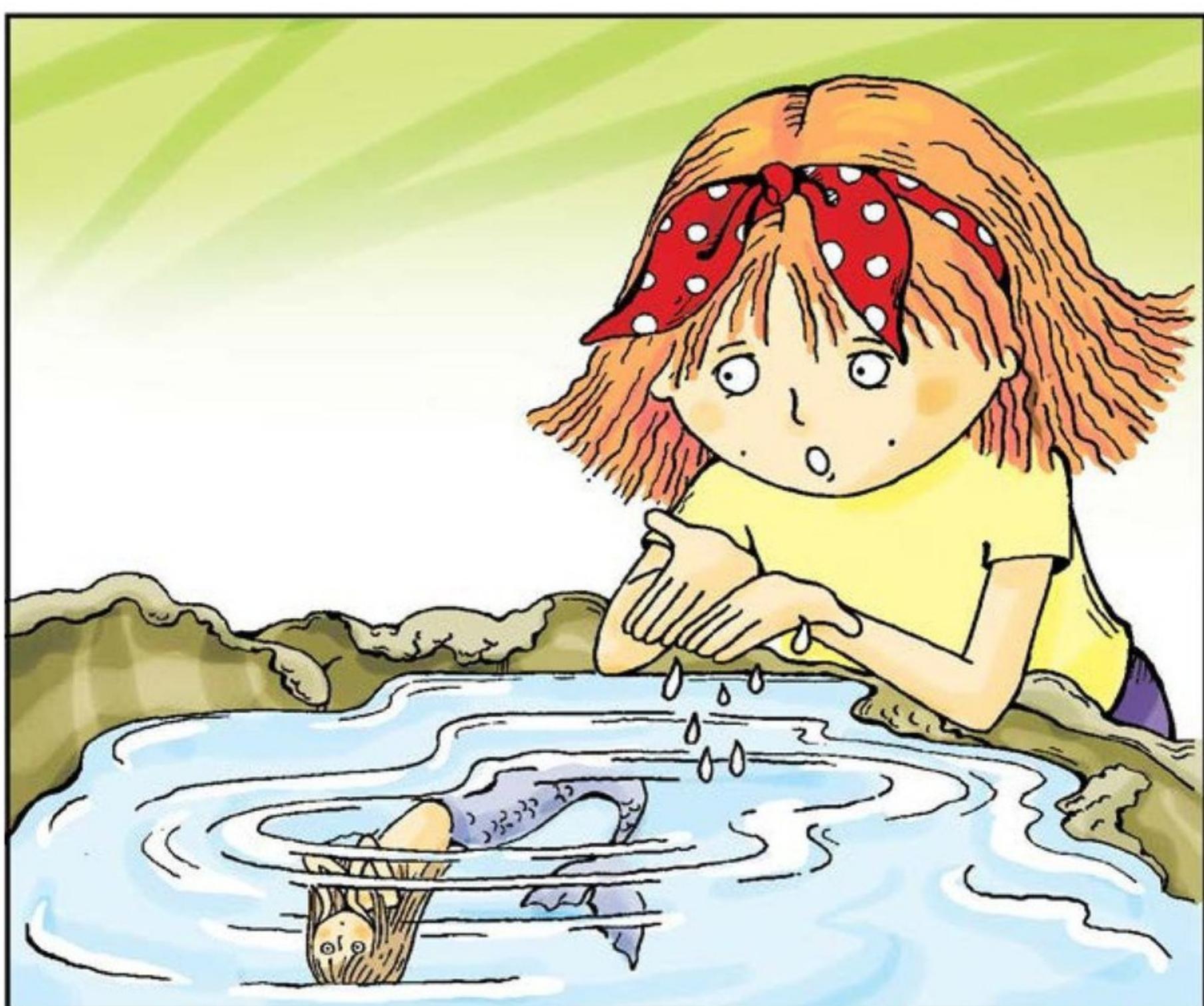
*I was just starting down when I heard a sound coming from high above me. I listened carefully. I couldn't understand the words, but it sounded like someone was singing. It was really pretty.*

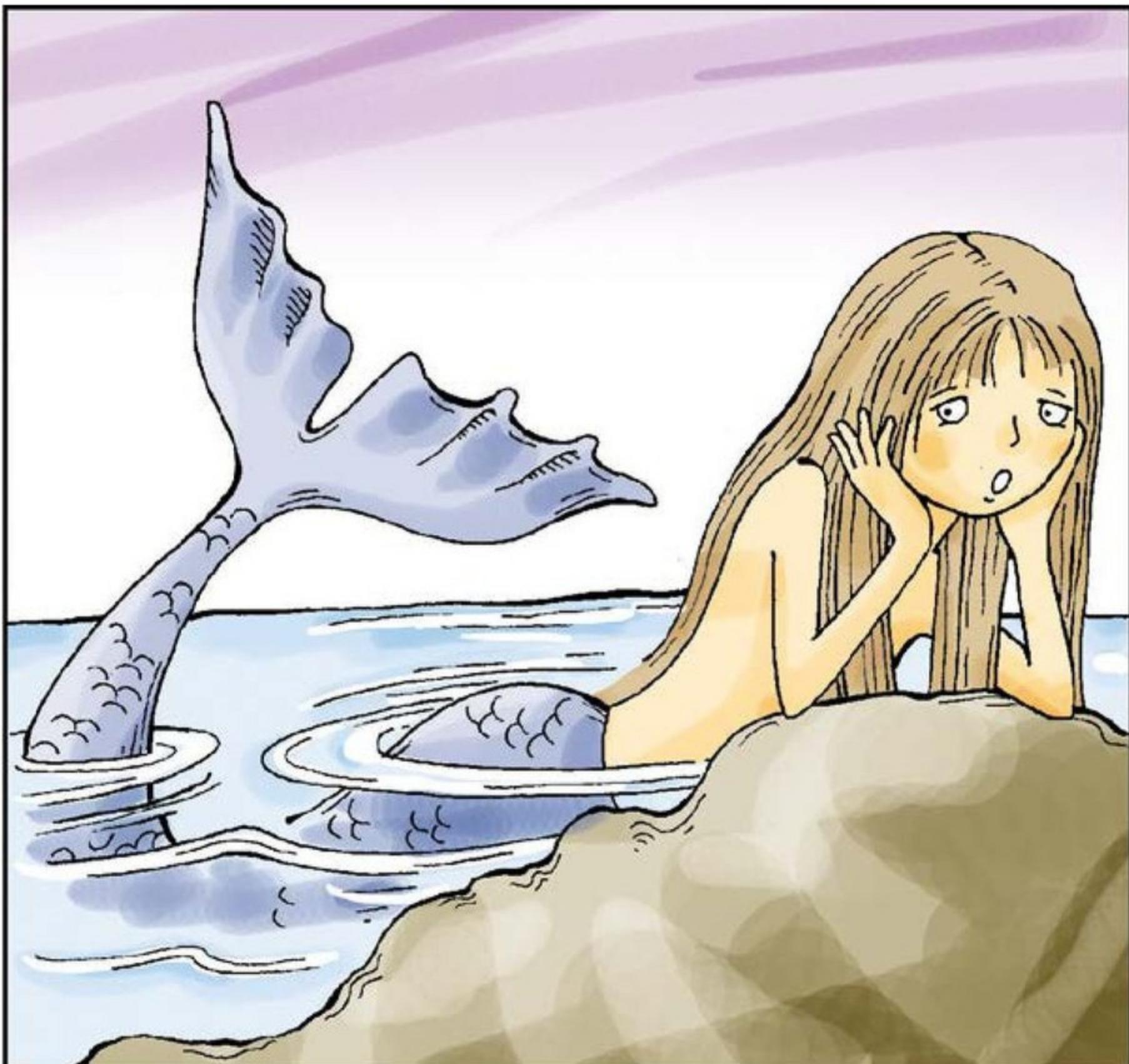
*There were little notches in the face of the rock, and I started climbing. It wasn't easy, but going up is always easier than coming down. The singing was louder now, and I could tell that it was coming from the ledge just above my head.*



*I pulled myself up and over the top.  
The ledge was covered in a mossy carpet.  
In the middle of the ledge was a small pool  
of sparkling, clear water. The climb up the  
rock and the salty chips I had eaten earlier made  
me thirsty. I crawled over to the pool on my  
hands and knees, bent over, and took a big sip.*

*I had just leaned down to take another  
drink when I saw an odd reflection in the water.  
At first I thought it was a frog, and I almost  
screamed.*





*My heart in my throat, I looked and then  
looked again.*

*It wasn't a frog.*

*It was a tiny mermaid sitting half in the  
water, leaning over a rock with her back toward  
me. She held her head in her hands, and she was  
singing softly.*

*I didn't say a word. I just lay there, hanging  
out over the water.*



*My nose couldn't have been more than 12 inches from her back. I don't know why I did it, but I just reached over and carefully grabbed her with my hand. She twisted and squirmed like a fish, which was to be expected since she was half fish and half human.*

*I pulled back from the water, sat back on my heels, and looked at what I held in my hands. She looked at me, and I looked at her.*

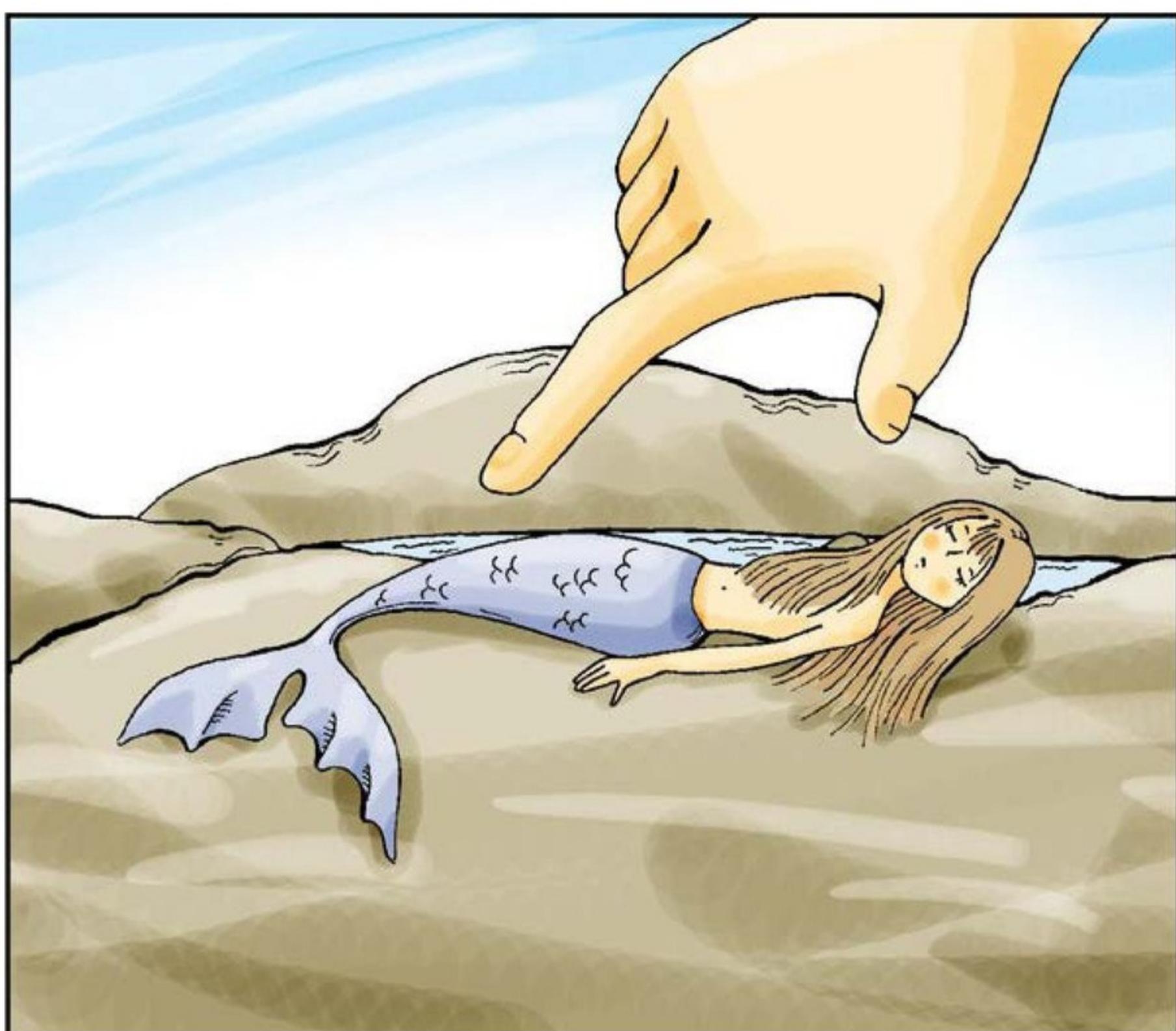
*Then her eyes kind of went blank. She closed her eyes, and her body went stiff in my hand.*

*I thought I had killed her or something.  
I laid her down on the ledge and ran my finger  
down her fish tail. Right then she looked more  
like a toy doll than a real mermaid.*

*I felt really bad, thinking maybe I had killed  
her, but then she opened her eyes. She looked up  
at me and blinked a couple of times. She looked  
over toward the water and then back at me.*

*Then she closed her eyes and went stiff again.*

*I wondered what was going on.*



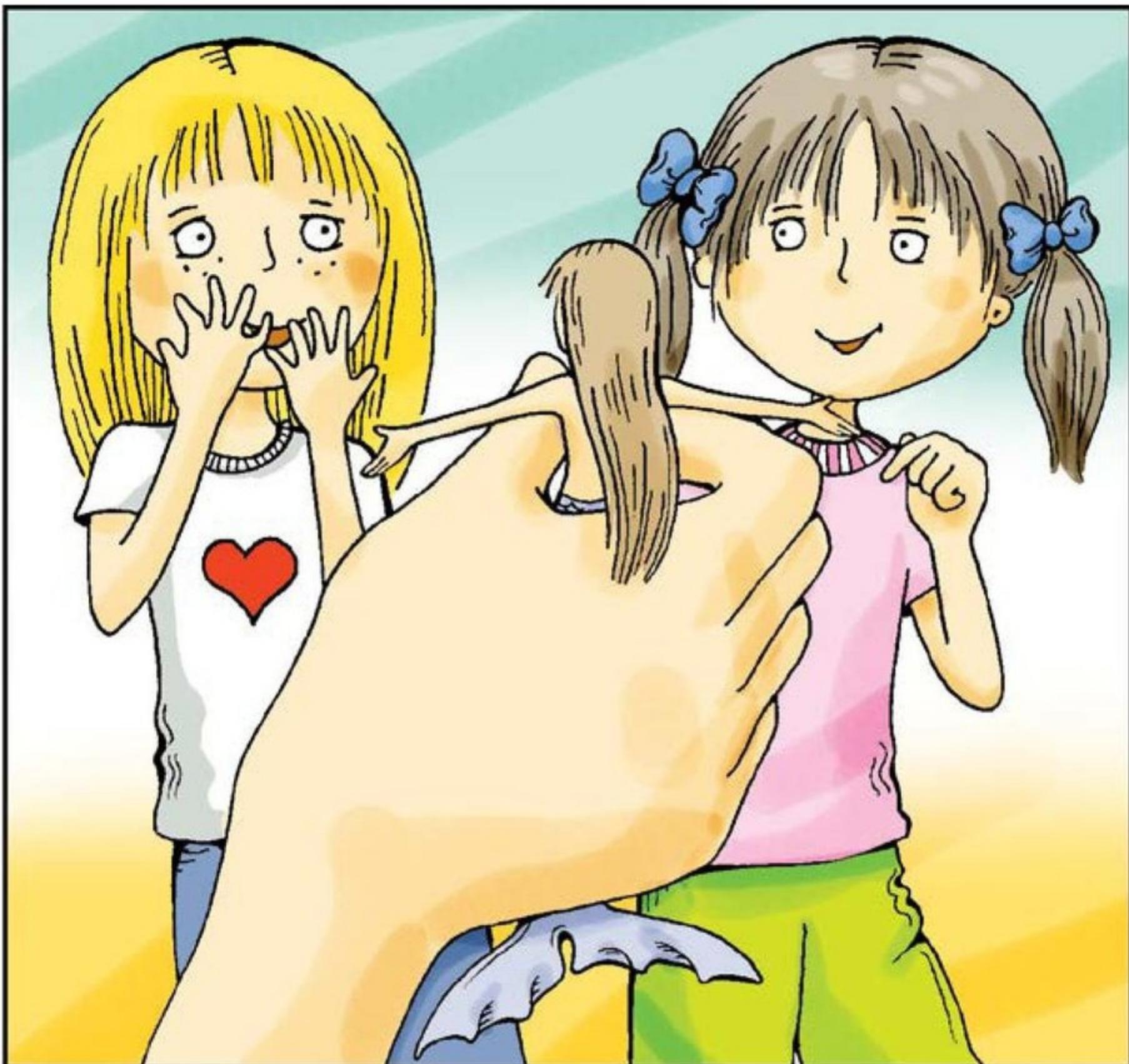
*In the distance, I could hear Sarah and Sybil calling my name.*

*“I’m up here!” I shouted excitedly. “I’m coming down. Wait until you see what I found.”*

*With the mermaid gripped tightly in my hand, I climbed down from the rock. I was so excited. It’s not every day you find a three-inch mermaid.*

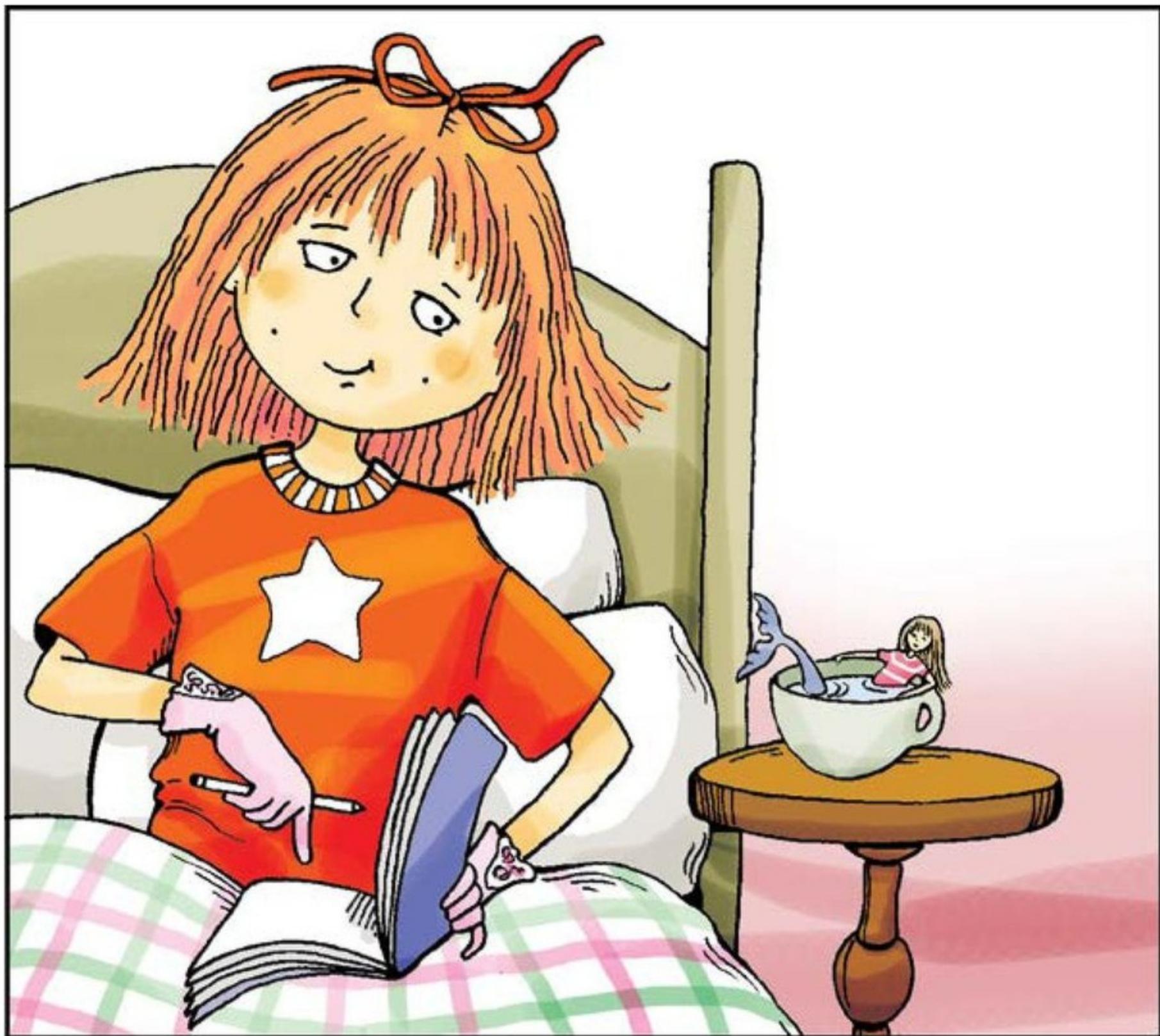
*This is where the trouble started with Sybil and Sarah.*





*I showed them what I had found, but the mermaid wouldn't wake up. The two tellers of untruth laughed at me. They said the mermaid was nothing more than a silly doll. Then they grabbed their backpacks and ran laughing back to my house.*

*Since then, they have told everyone that I carried one of my "dollies" on the picnic. They said that when they caught me playing with it, I made up the story about the mermaid.*



*And there it is—my proof. Now you've read it, too! But now what do I do? I've got a mermaid in a teacup, but every time I show her to someone, she gets stiff like a doll.*

*I think I'll get my dad's video camera and make a movie. Everybody believes the movies, almost as much as they believe what they read in diaries.*

Love,  
Hattie MacGruder

Mermaid in a Teacup  
Level Q Leveled Book  
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