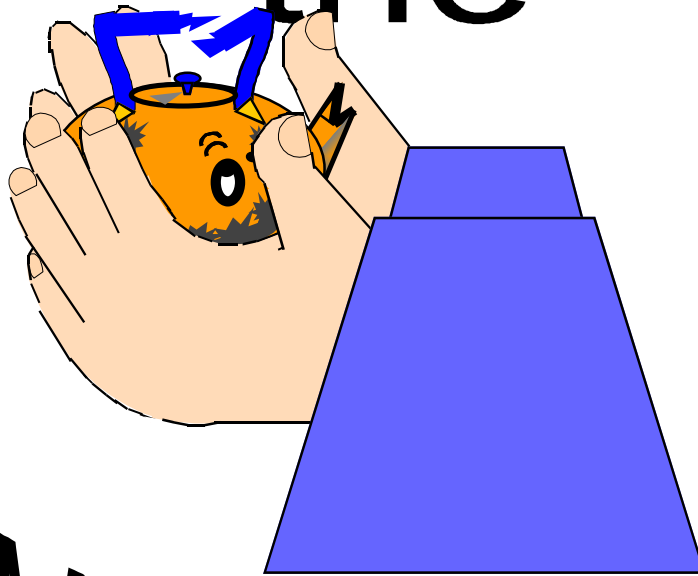


In  
the



Master's Hand

*A Parable*

*by Judith A Helms*

# **In The Master's Hand**

Written and Illustrated

by

Judith A Helms

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J.A. Helms, Arcata, CA 95521

contact: [creativesp@humboldt1.com](mailto:creativesp@humboldt1.com)

I dedicate this book to my grandson,  
Benjamin Edward Helms, and to those children who may be at this moment in the  
mind of God.



**Psalm 139:13-16**

**For You, O God, created my inmost being;  
You knit me together in my mother's womb.**

**I praise You because I am fearfully  
and wonderfully made;  
Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.**

**My frame was not hidden from You  
When I was made in the secret place.**

**When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,  
Your eyes saw my unformed body.**

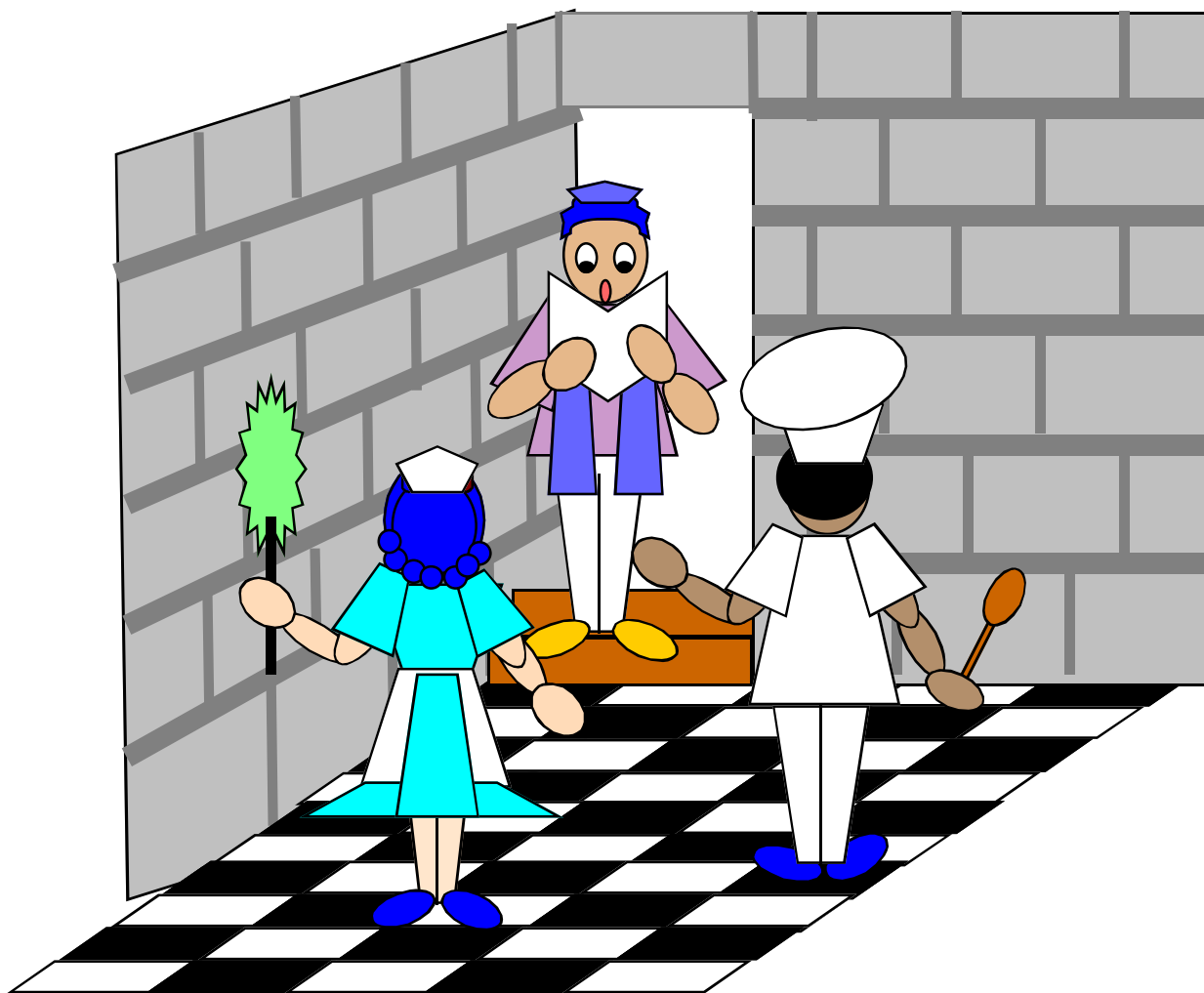
**All the days ordained for me were written in  
Your book.  
before one of them came to be.**

## Chapter 1



One day, in preparation for the banquet of the King,  
The Royal Choir practiced long, the anthems they would sing.  
Every note was tuned just so, their harmonies to blend.  
Their robes were pressed, each pleat and fold, to look their best for HIM.

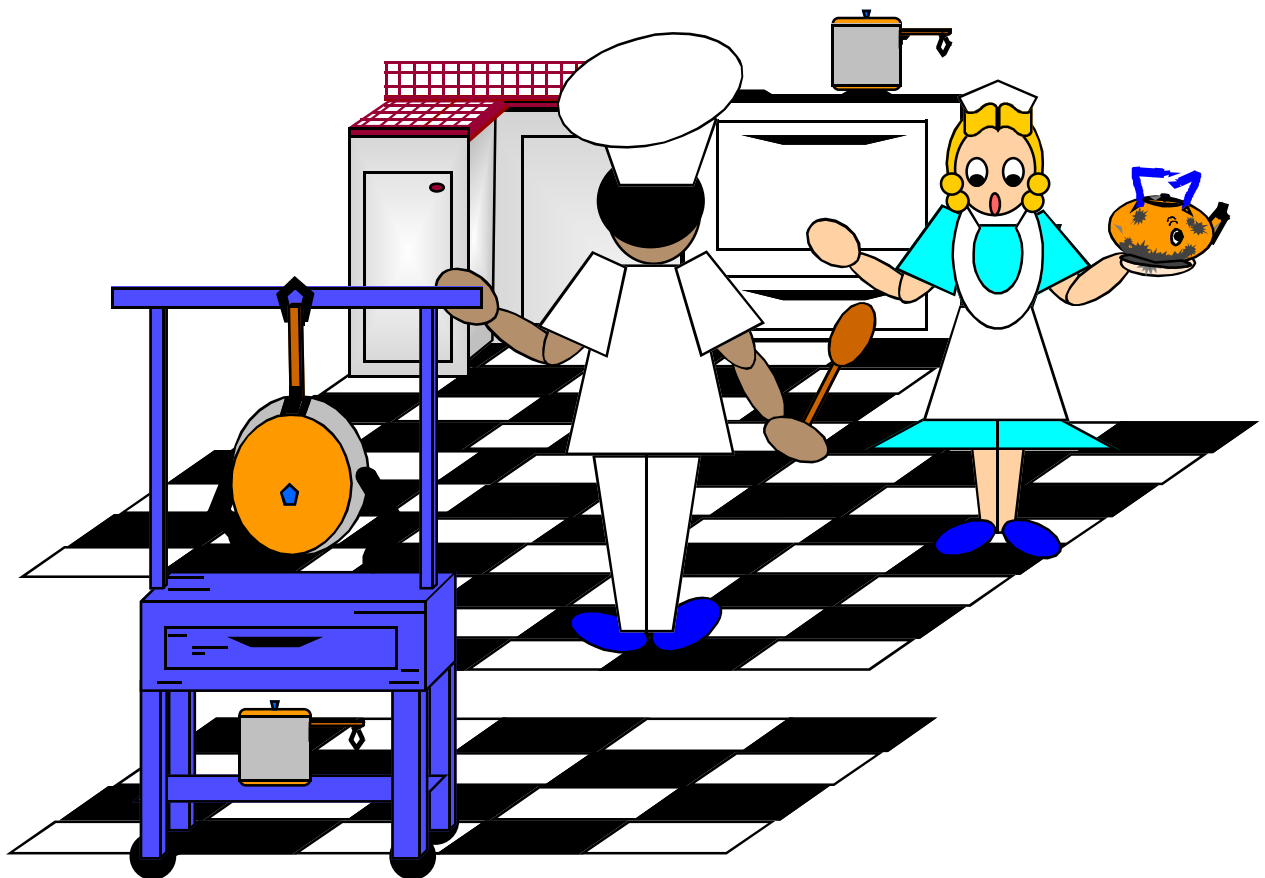
The orders to the household staff were clear as they could be,  
Every room must sparkle like the sunshine on the sea.  
And so they too, worked through the night,  
They cleaned and scrubbed with care,  
Leaving not a speck of dust to spoil the fragrant air.

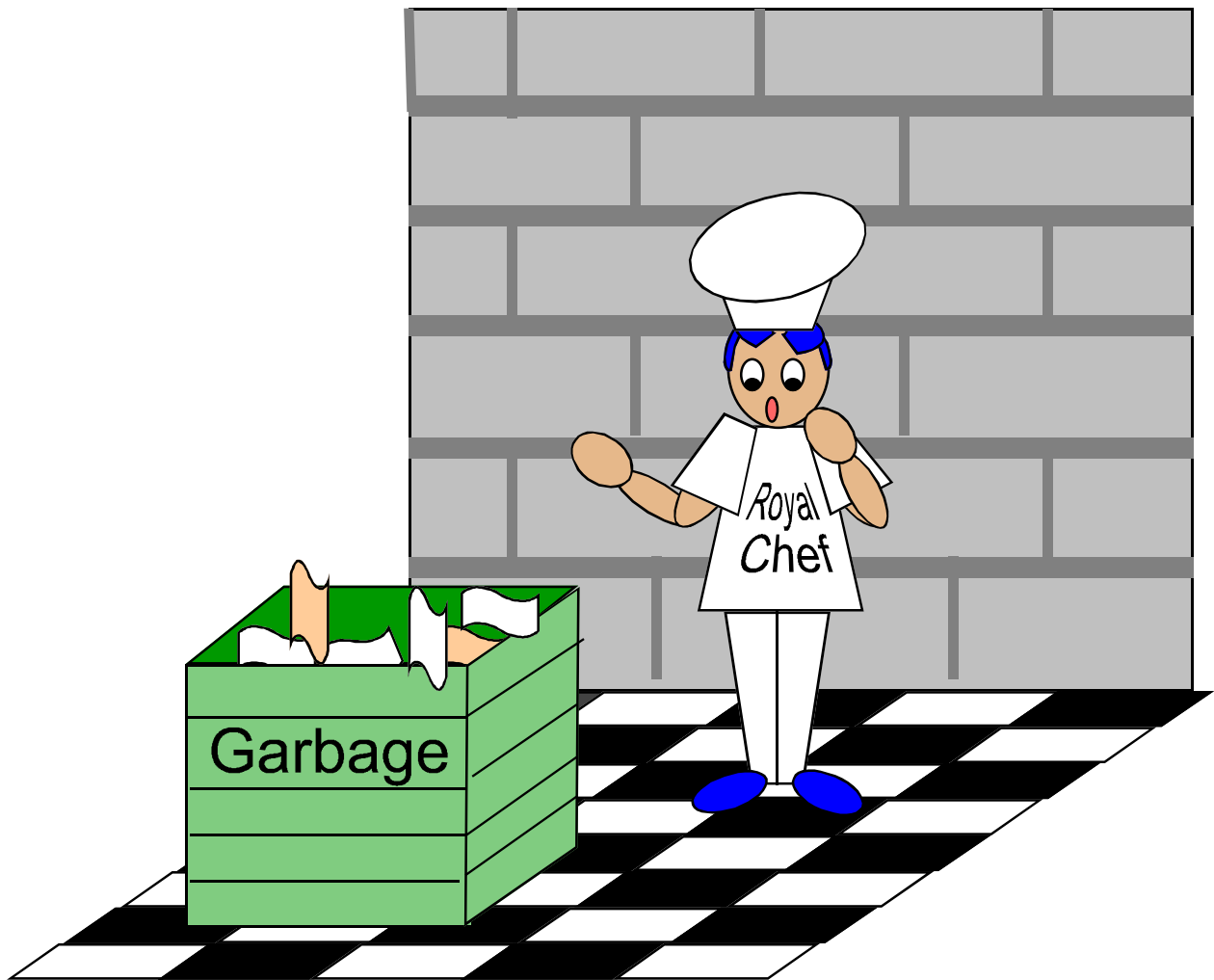




And in the kitchen of the King, maids scurried to and fro,  
As the Royal Chef, in white, set his cap just so.  
Demanding every pot and pan be cleaned and polished bright.  
And so the clang of banging pots rang throughout the night.

Each cook began his given task, each following the plan,  
As maids searched every nook and shelf, for every pot and pan.  
And then one maid cried, “Look! Look here! See what I’ve found,  
An old teapot that’s tarnished black, and slightly out of round.

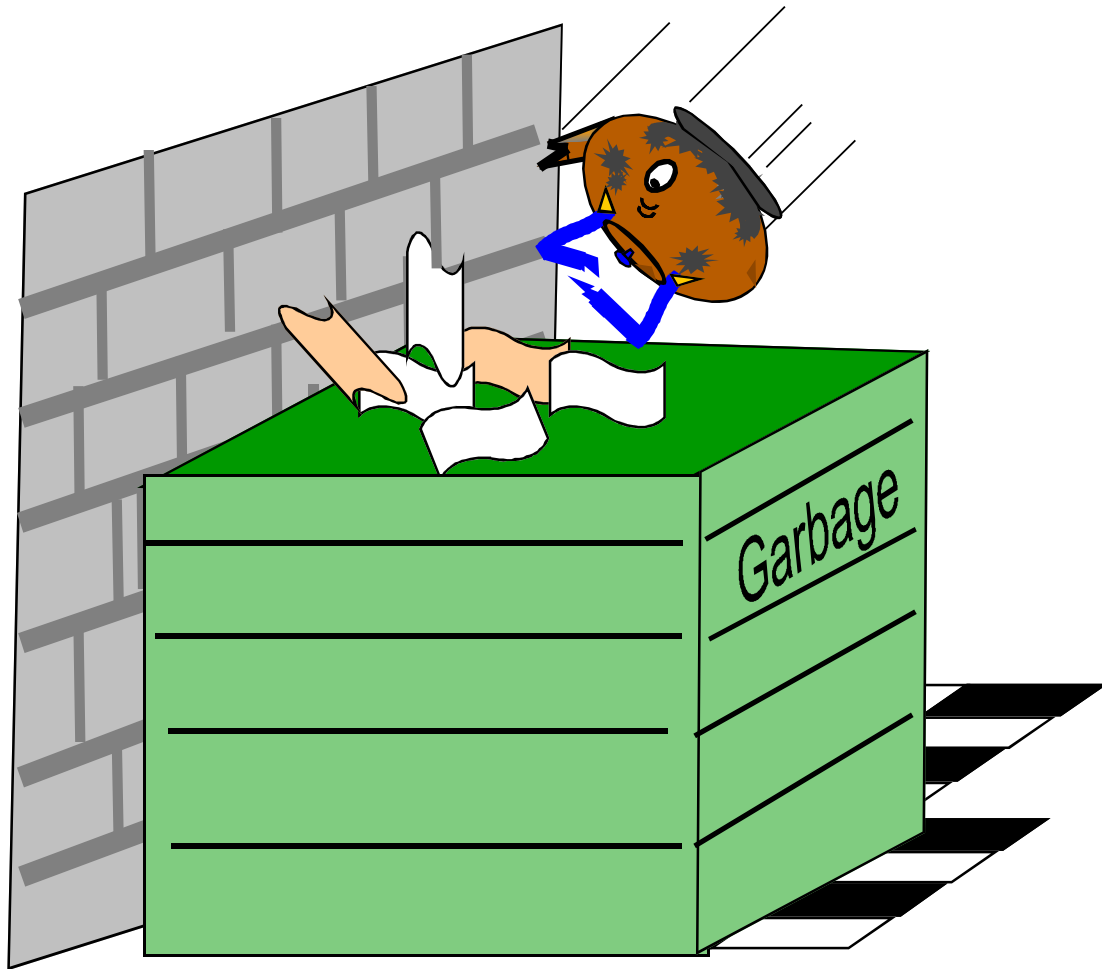




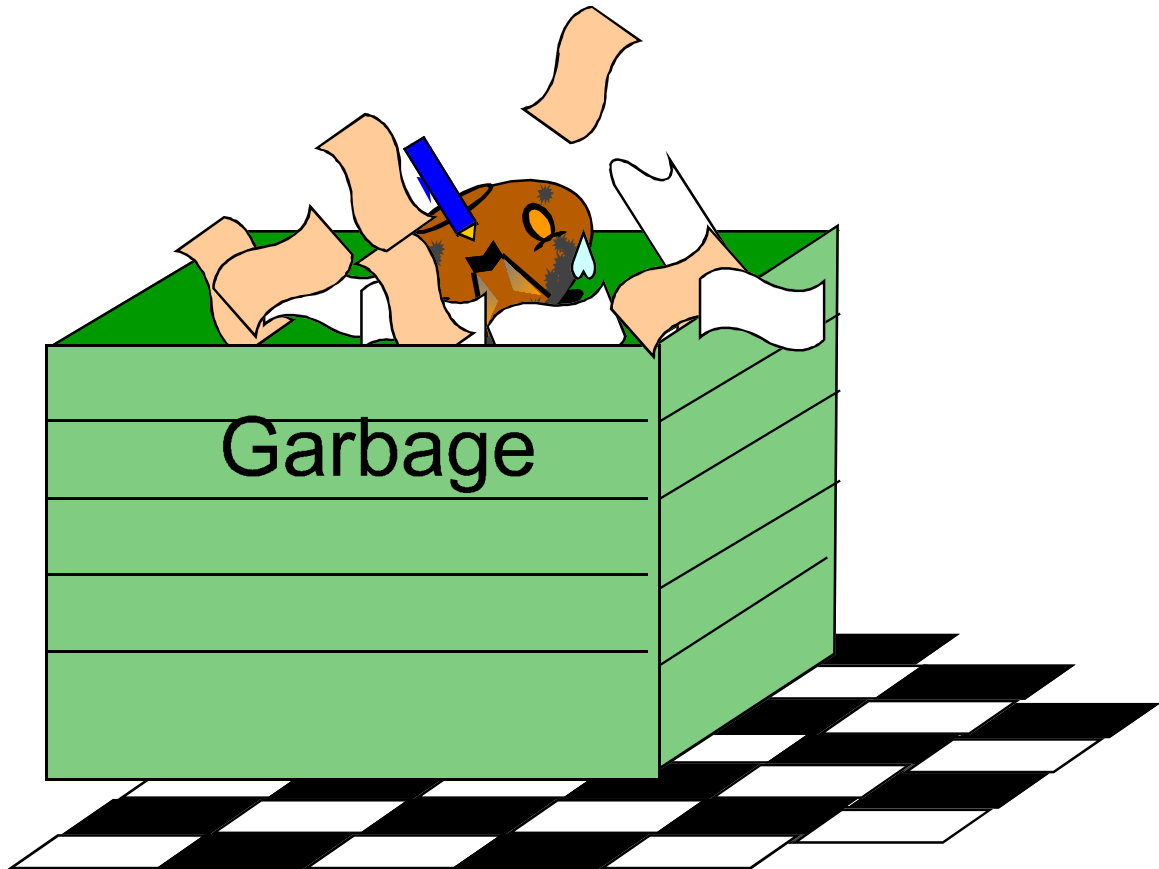
What shall I do, O Royal Chef? How can I clean this pot?”  
“You’re right! It is a problem. I must give it some thought.”  
Then his toe began to tap. His face grew rather grim,  
Until he spied nearby the door, a wooden garbage bin.



“Well....,” He said, “She is a sight, and far beyond repair.  
So don’t waste time, just clean her up and toss her over there.”  
“Oh No!” cried Tearza Teapot, as she felt herself in flight,  
And landing hard upon her lid, saw daylight turn to night.



## Chapter 2

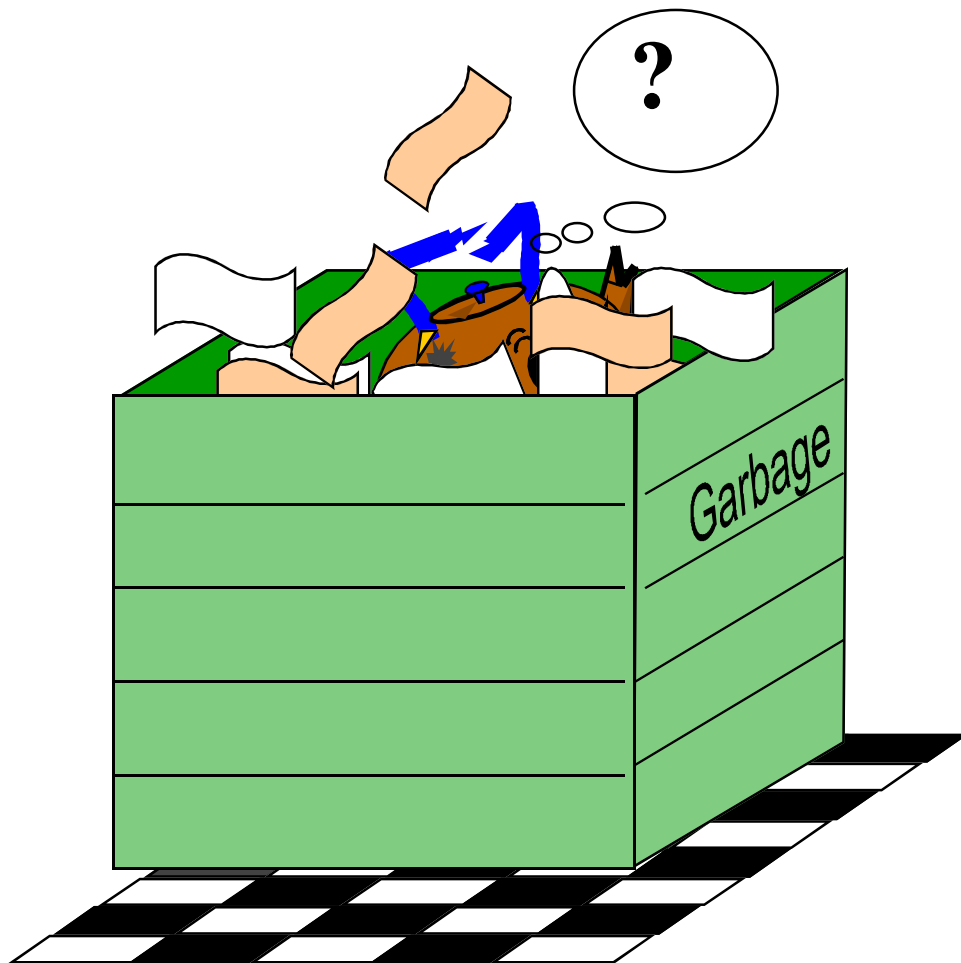


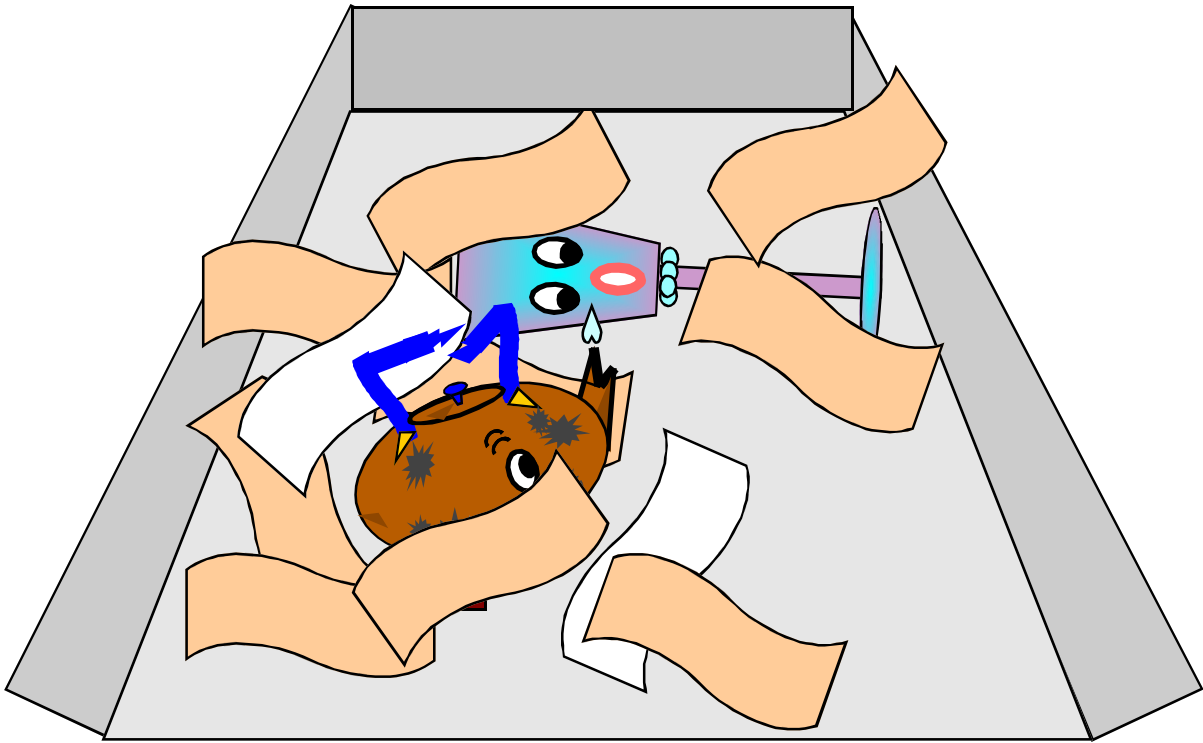
She wept un-noticed through the day, by all the kitchen crew,  
As each one labored at their task, until the work was through.  
    With food prepared, and dishes washed,  
        They then called it a day,  
    Laying down their weary heads,  
        As Miss Tearza Teapot prayed.

“O Lord, how could this happen? I served the Royal tea!”

With tears poor Tearsa cried out loud, “What will become of me?”

“ I could not scrub my own scorched sides, nor shine my copper spout,  
And so they’ve tossed me to the side, and now they’ve thrown me out!”





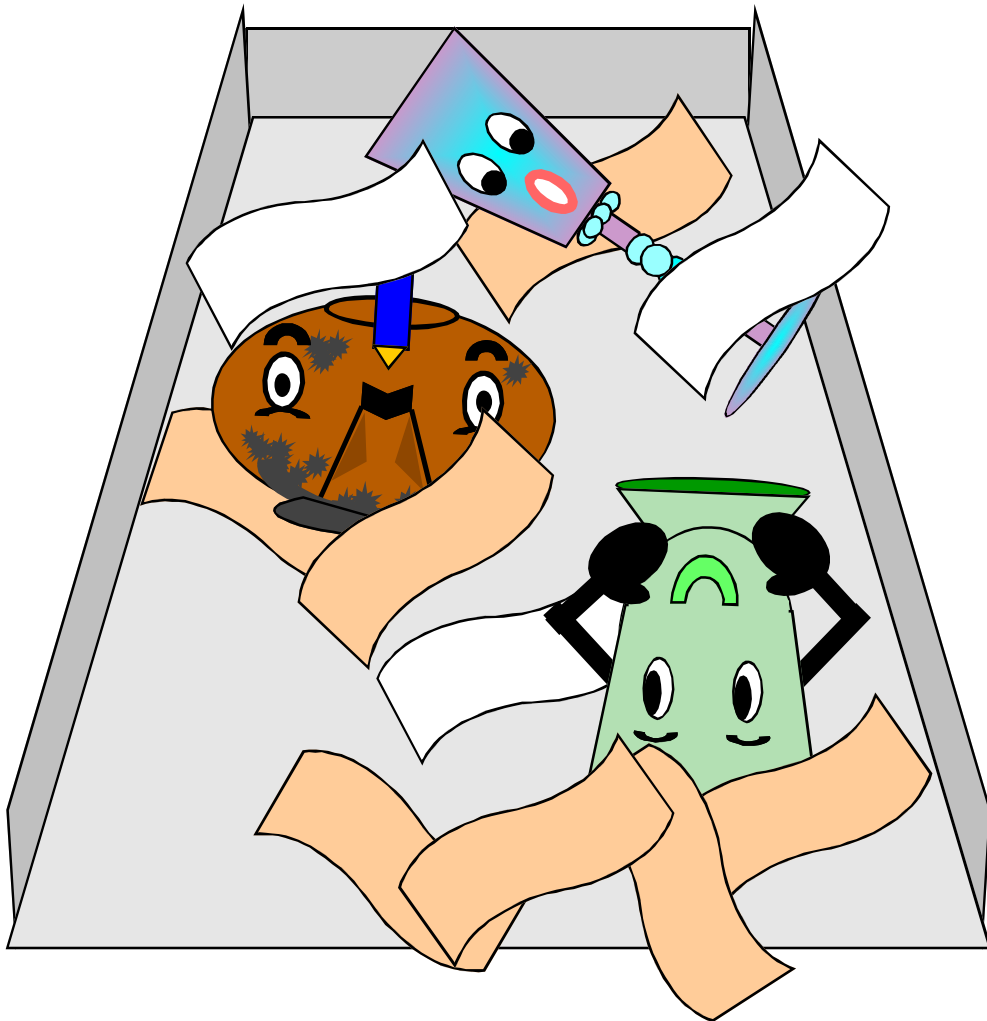
Then as her tears began to fall, she heard a mournful sigh,  
And turning slowly to the sound, she saw a glass nearby.  
Her tears choked back, she asked the glass,  
“What is your name, my friend?”  
“Glenny Glass,” is what she sobbed,  
“I’ve got too tall of stem.”

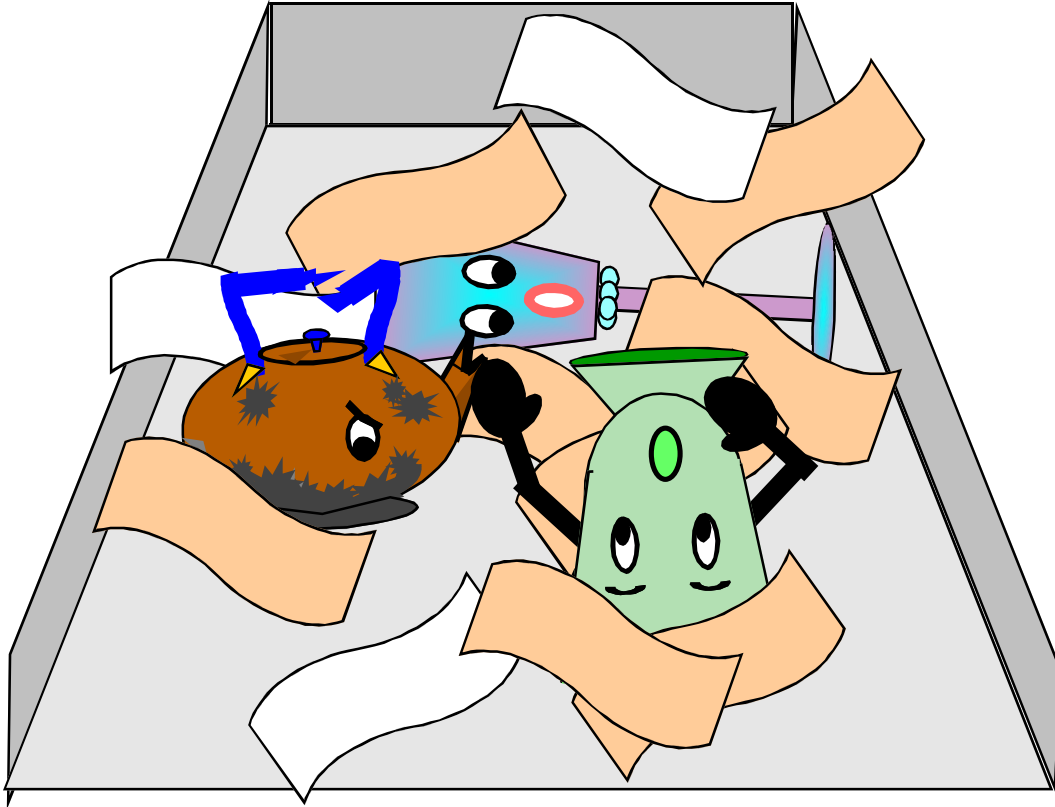
Again, she heard a rustling noise, a crunching paper sound,  
And up popped Gozzy Goblet, his bottom upside down.

“What’s going on? How come you’re here?

You both still have your shine!”

“Well, it’s like this, Miss Tearza ‘T,’ our style don’t fit the time.”





“You see, they say my styles too old to grace the royal table.”

“But that’s not fair!

You still can serve as long as you are able.”

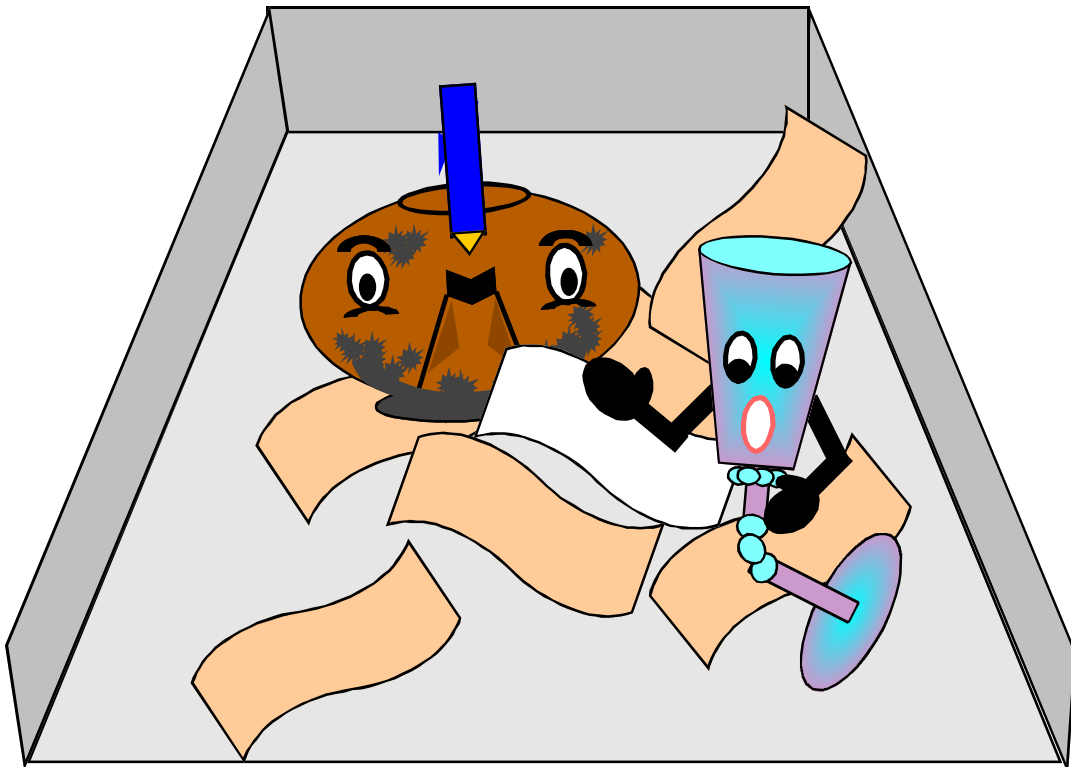
She’s right you know!”

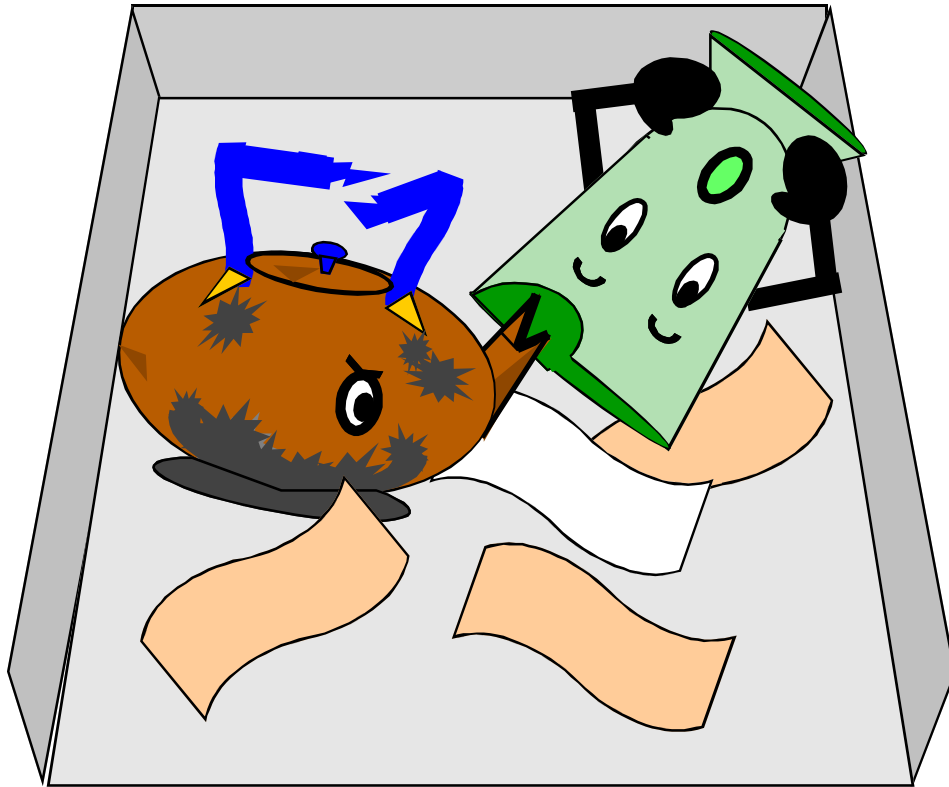
“That’s true, she is.”

“ I still can serve the King!

My pattern might be scratched a might, but I’ve never lost my ping.”

“Oh Tearza, I’m so glad you came to raise our spirits high.  
But how can our unsightly group, help yours to reach the sky?”  
“You’ve done it just by caring. But there’s one thing you can do.  
Let me take just one last peak before my days are through.”





“Why, that’s no problem,” Gozzy yelled.

“But, there's some work ahead.

So someone help me up, ‘cause I’ve an idea in my head.  
I think that if you’d balance her upon your slender stems,  
You could lift her high enough to rise above the bin.”



“Can we do it? Are we game? Now, speak up everyone!”

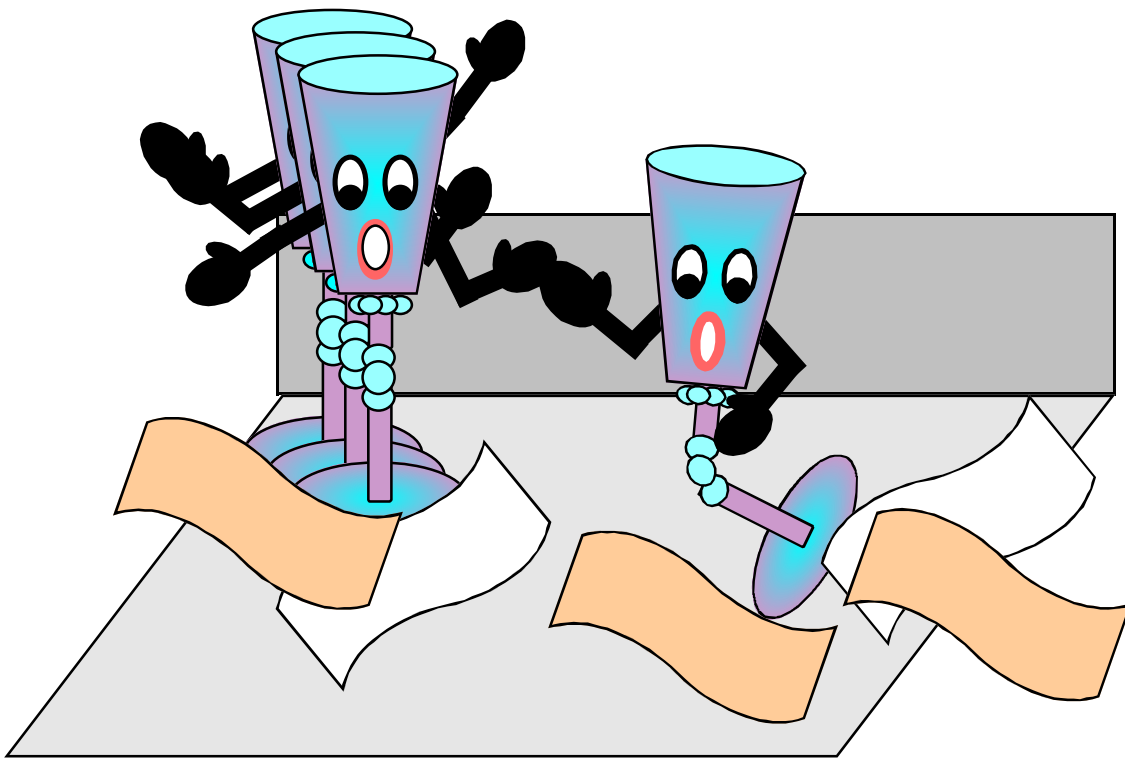
“Of course we can!”

“I like the plan.”

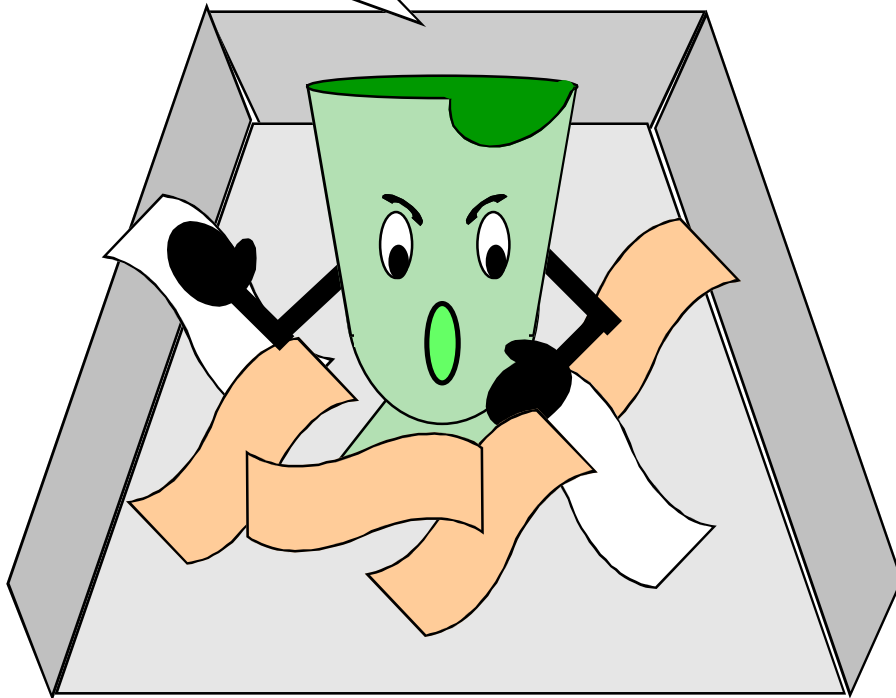
“Come on, let’s have some fun.”

“But that means that together we must move her up the side.

‘Cause just one slip, and down she’ll come, and break us open wide.”

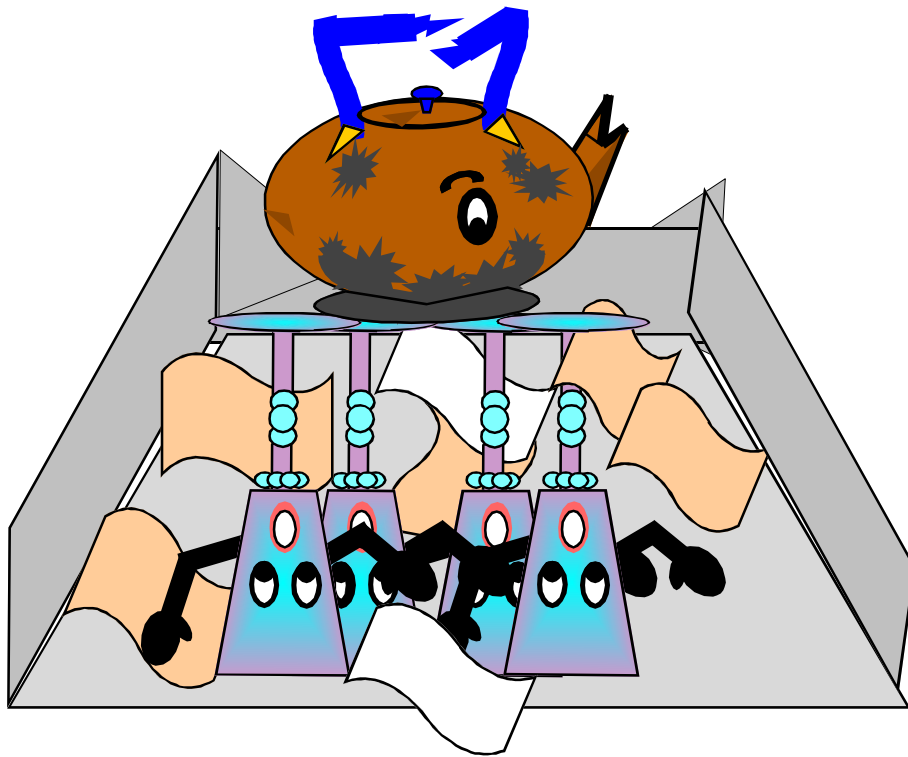


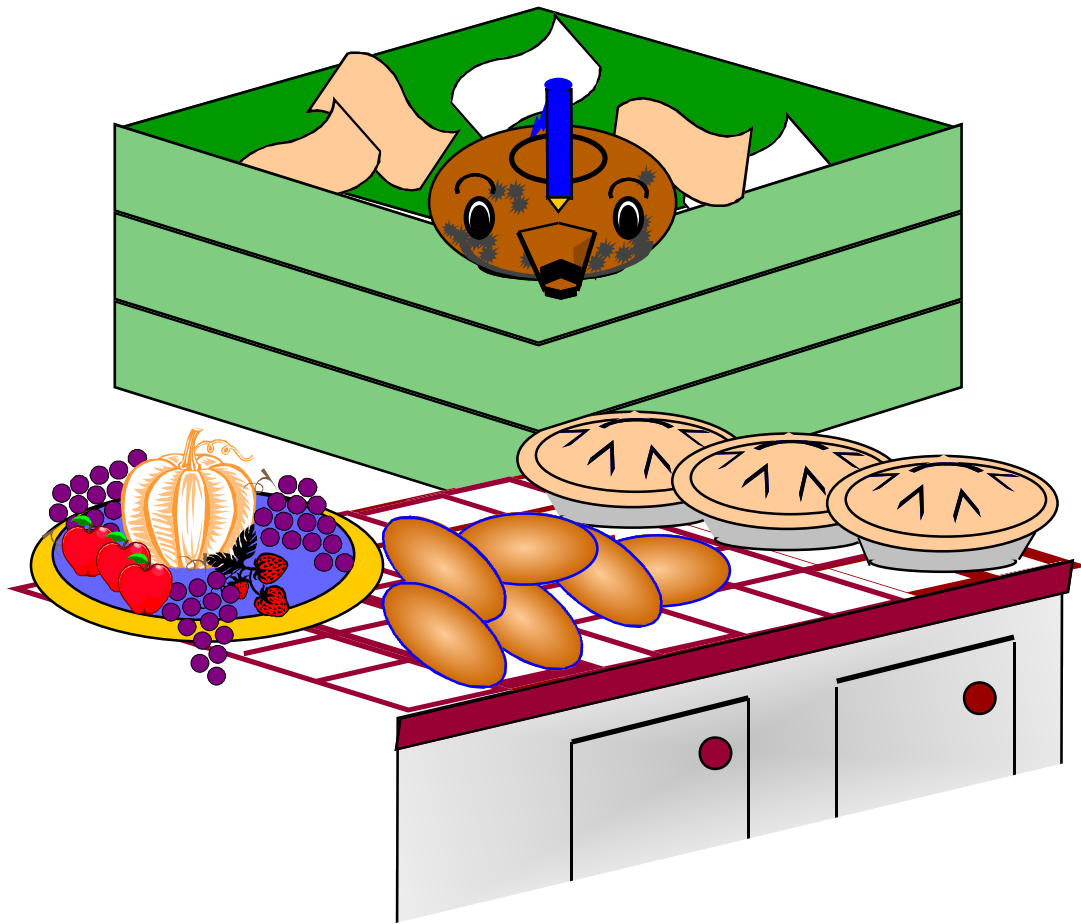
**All together Now!**



“Of course, you’ll have to lift as one, but that’s not hard to do,  
If each one will just take their place, and lift when I call two.”  
So when each piece of stemware had reached its proper place,  
Upon the count of two, they lifted Tearza into space.

“Hooray!” cried out the stemware,  
as they proudly stood their ground.  
No finer group of willing souls could at that time be found.  
“You did it!” Gozzy Goblet cried.  
“My plan worked like a charm.  
But, perhaps, just to be safe, I’ll lend an extra arm.”





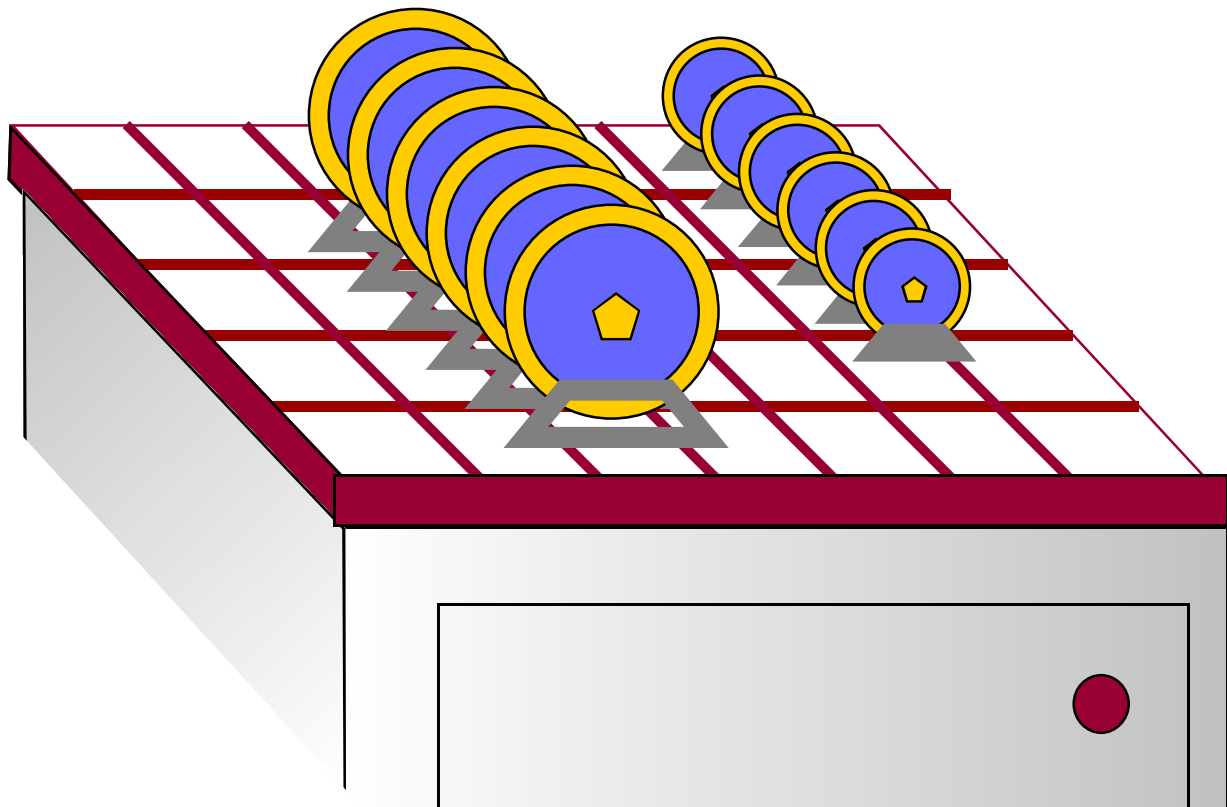
“Oh thank you! Thank you!  
Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.  
But how can I repay your help, while stuck here in this cart?”  
“Just tell us ‘T,’ what do you see? Come on now, fill us in.”  
“Well..., I see pies, and fruit stacked high, and.. tater’s in the skin.”

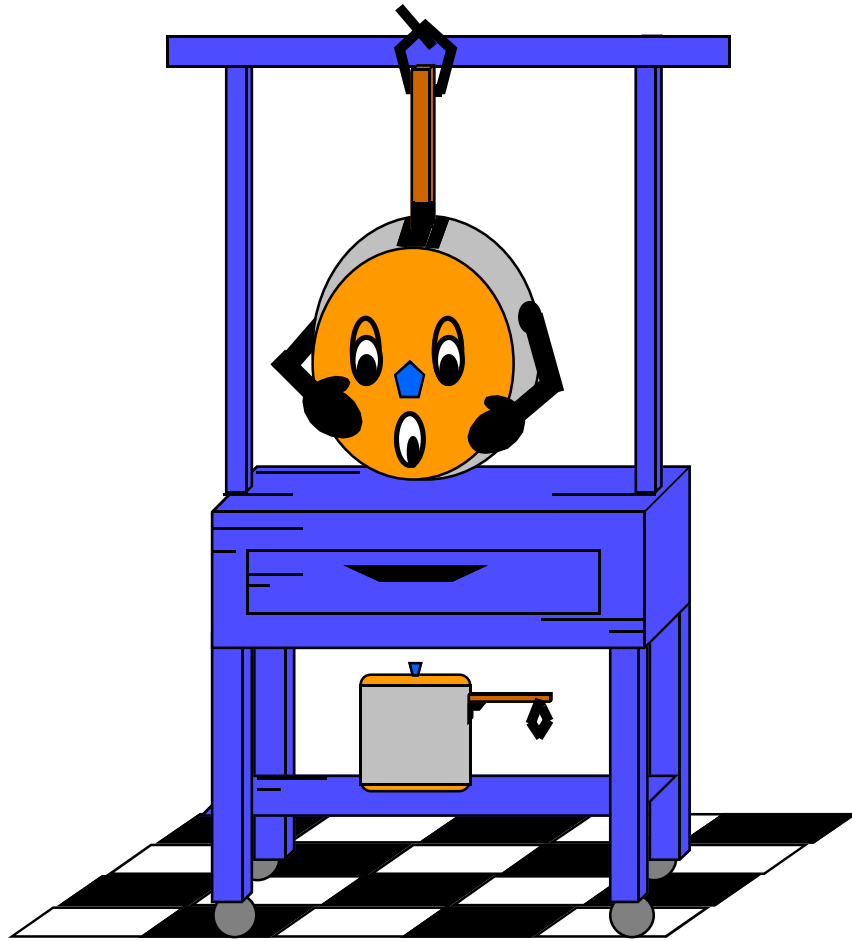
“But what about that China they’ve been scrubbing on all day?

You know, the royal dinnerware the Chef puts on display.”

“You mean the ones that have that pretty picture on their chest?”

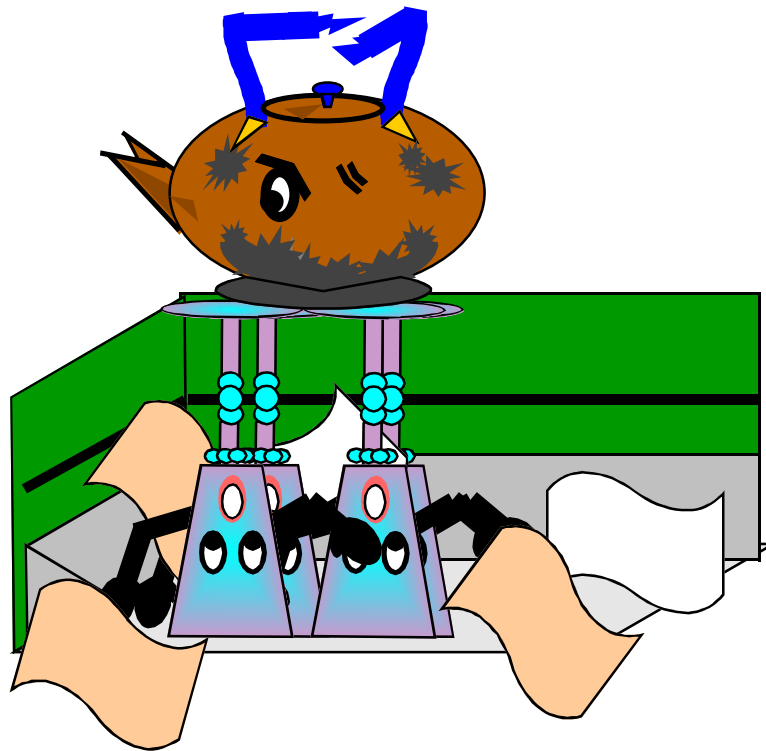
“Yep! They’re the plates imprinted with the King’s own royal crest.”

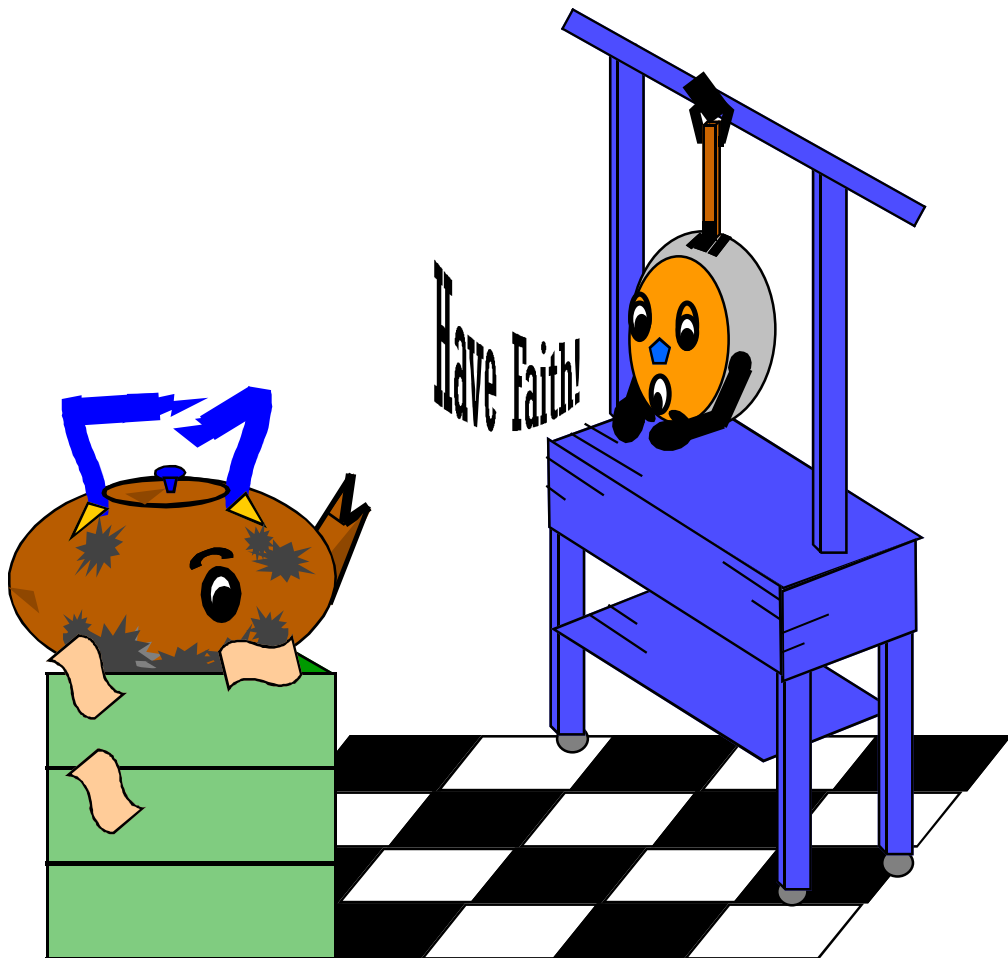




Continuing to search the room, atop the garbage bin,  
She saw a pan, named Peter Pot, turn to listen in.  
“What’s going on? What’s all that noise?  
Who’s talking over there?  
We all have got to get our rest.  
There’s not much night to spare.”

“But Peter, all I want to do is take one look about,  
And savor all the wondrous sights before they throw me out.”  
“Oh, Tearza, I’m so sorry that they’ve thrown you in the bin,  
But I will pray for your escape, on that you can depend.”





“Oh, thank you! Thank you, Peter Pot, for caring, oh so much.  
And oh, how wonderful it’s been to know your loving touch.”

“Now.., don’t give up my dear- have faith.

I know there is a plan.

You see, all things are possible, in the Master’s hand.”



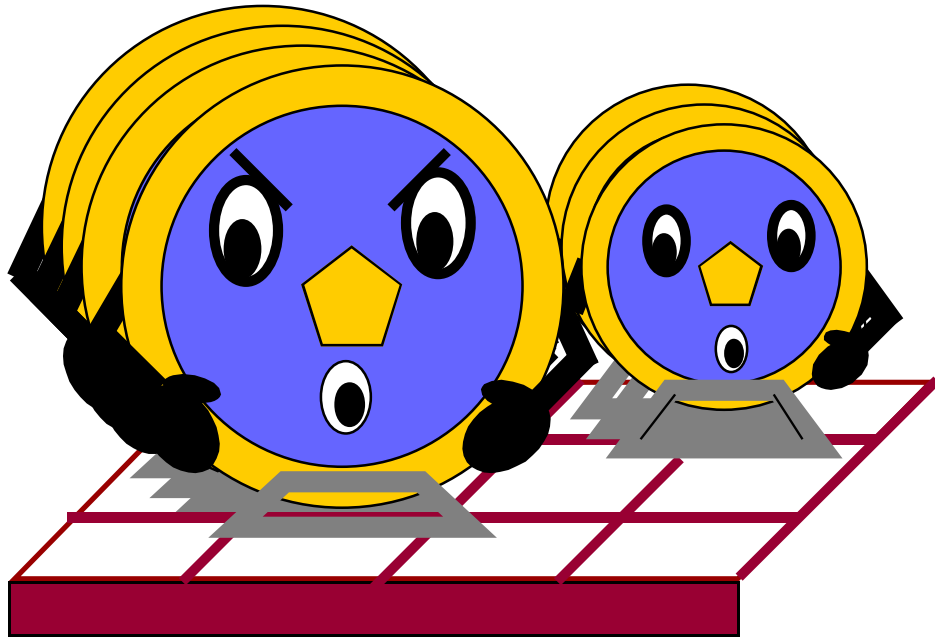
## Chapter 3

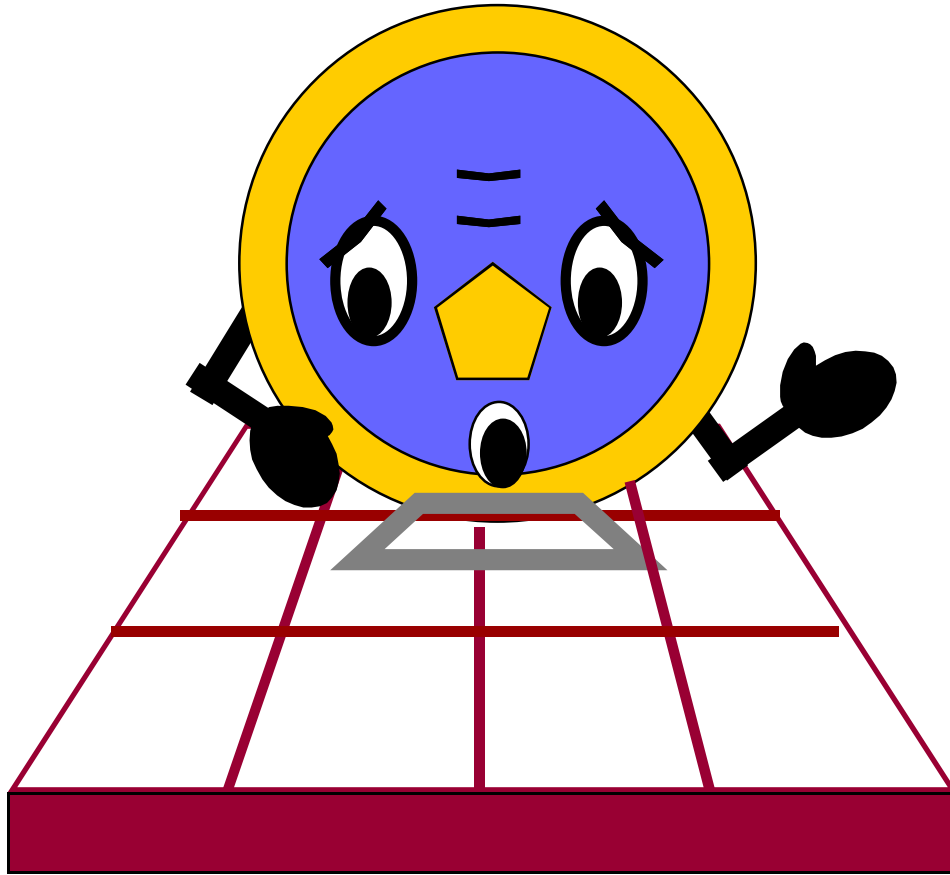
Then suddenly a stirring could be heard atop the sink,  
As rows of plates began to move, and eyes began to blink.

“My goodness, we just got to sleep.

What’s all this fuss about?”

“I think it’s coming from the bin, from those who were thrown out.”





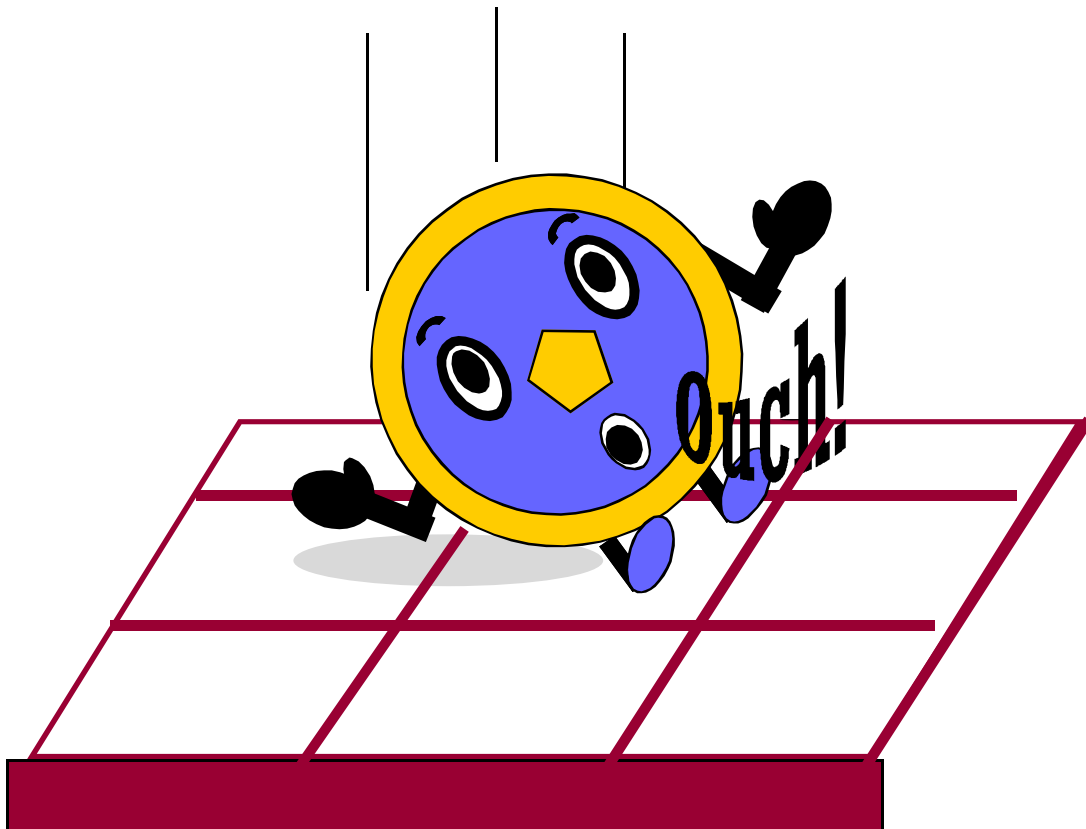
“Please... go back to sleep. We have a busy day ahead.  
And it won’t be long before the Chef is out of bed.”  
“I can’t go back to sleep, Sir Pot,” explained Miss Prissy Plate.  
I’ve got to check myself once more, before it is too late.”

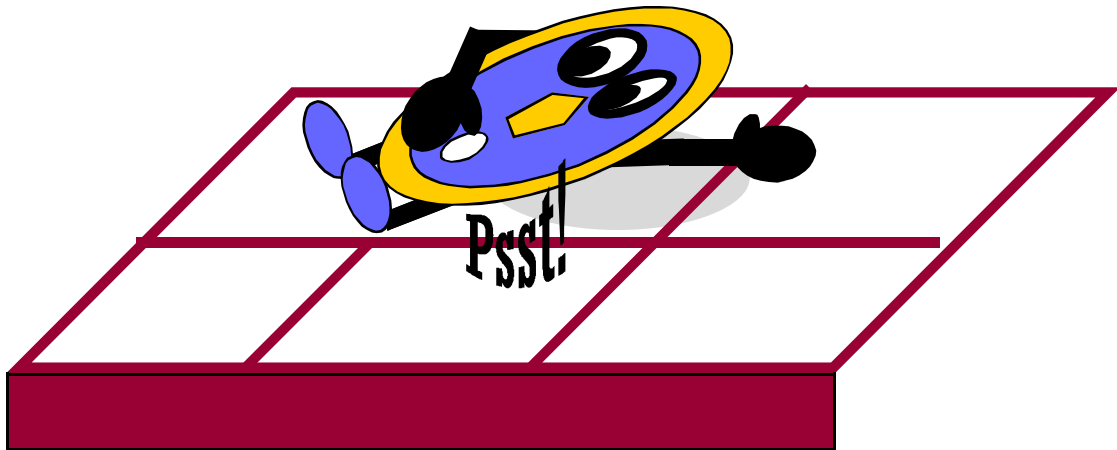
“Oh.. Pri..ssy!” called out Marty Mug.

“You know you look just fine.

So settle back upon your rack, so we can sleep till nine.”

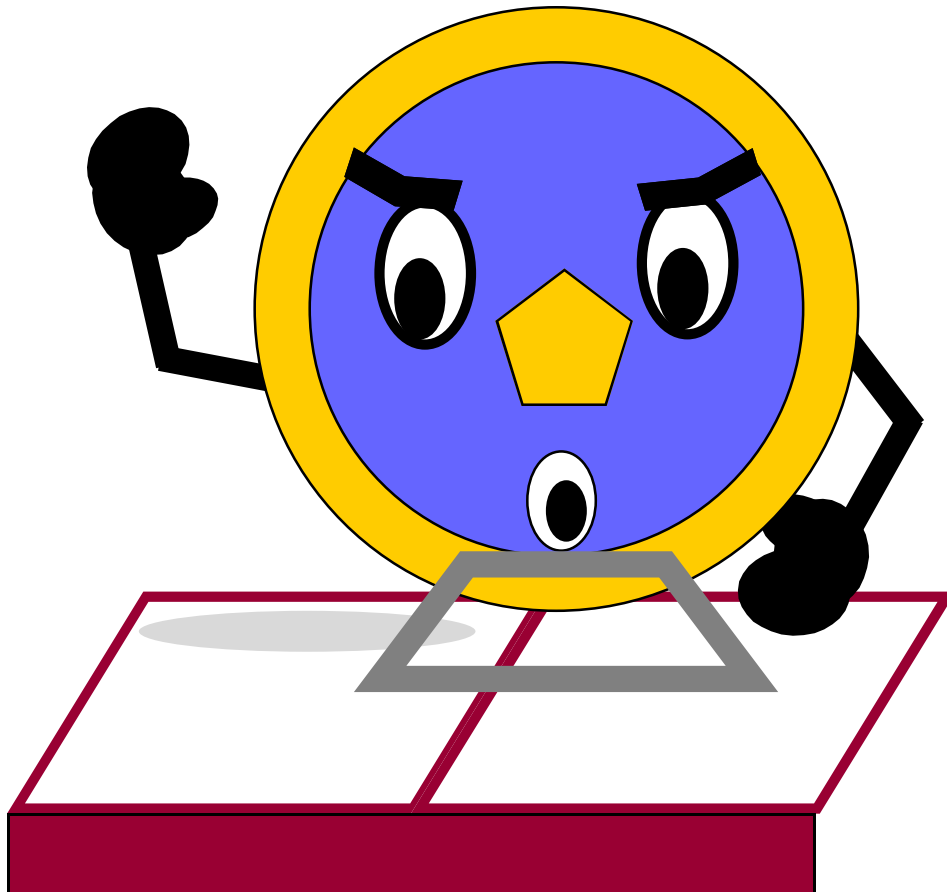
Then Susie Saucer raised her head, and slipped out from her stack,  
And tumbling to the countertop, she landed with a “smack!”

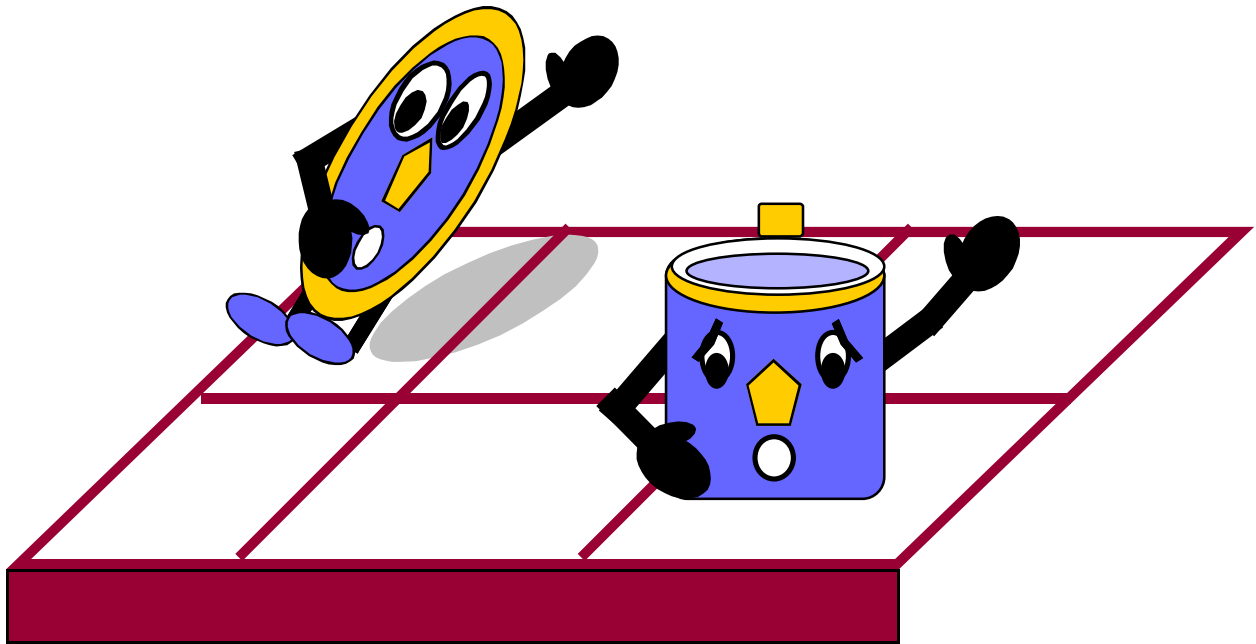




“Ouch! That’s smart!” Susie yelled, then pushing on ahead,  
Made her way to where Miss Prissy Plate had gone to bed.  
“Psst! Wake up, Miss Prissy Plate. I’ve got to speak to you.  
It’s rumored that you’ve won the prize. I say..., can that be true?”

“Of course, you silly saucer, HE wants nothing but the best.  
And MY hues of sapphire blue are just what HE requests.  
Not to mention, bands of gold painted on my rim.  
And so you see, I’ve got to be the ONE chosen by HIM!”





“Well! I am just a saucer, but my markings are the same.”

“And so are mine!”

“And mine!”

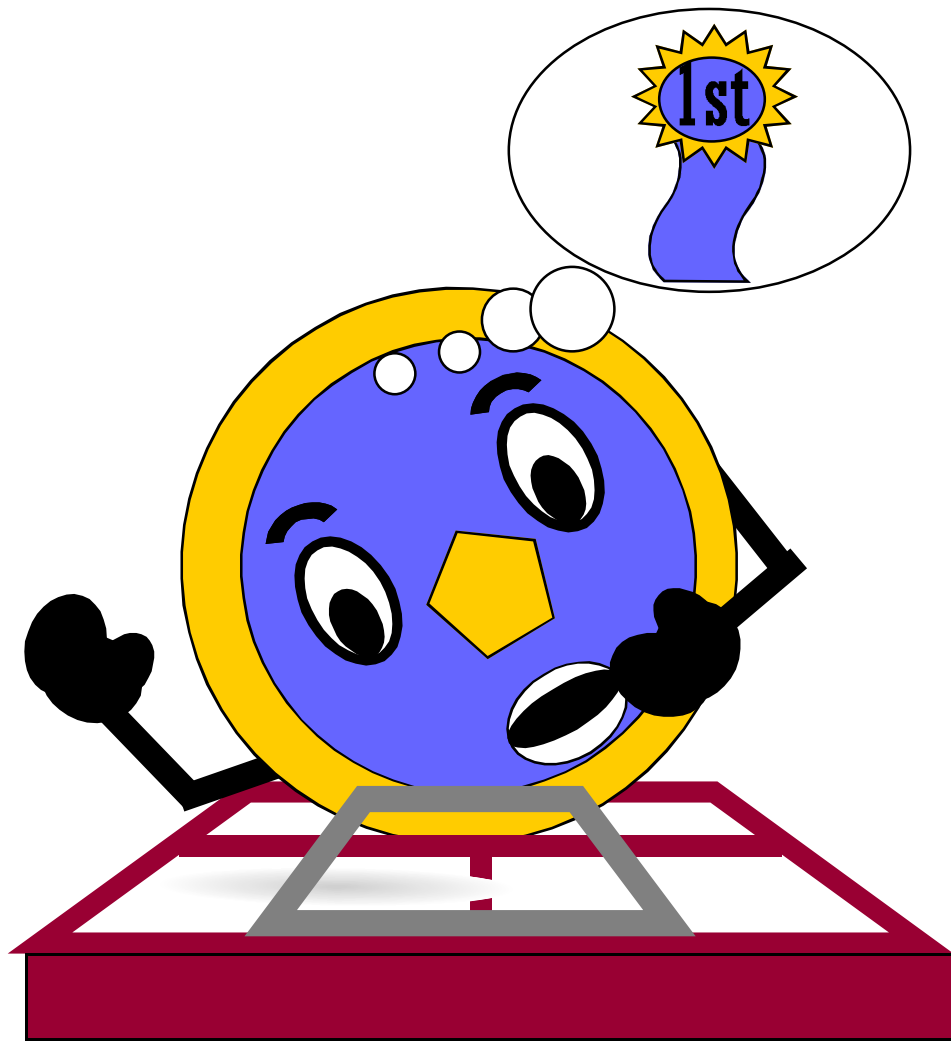
“And Mine!” the other dishes claimed.

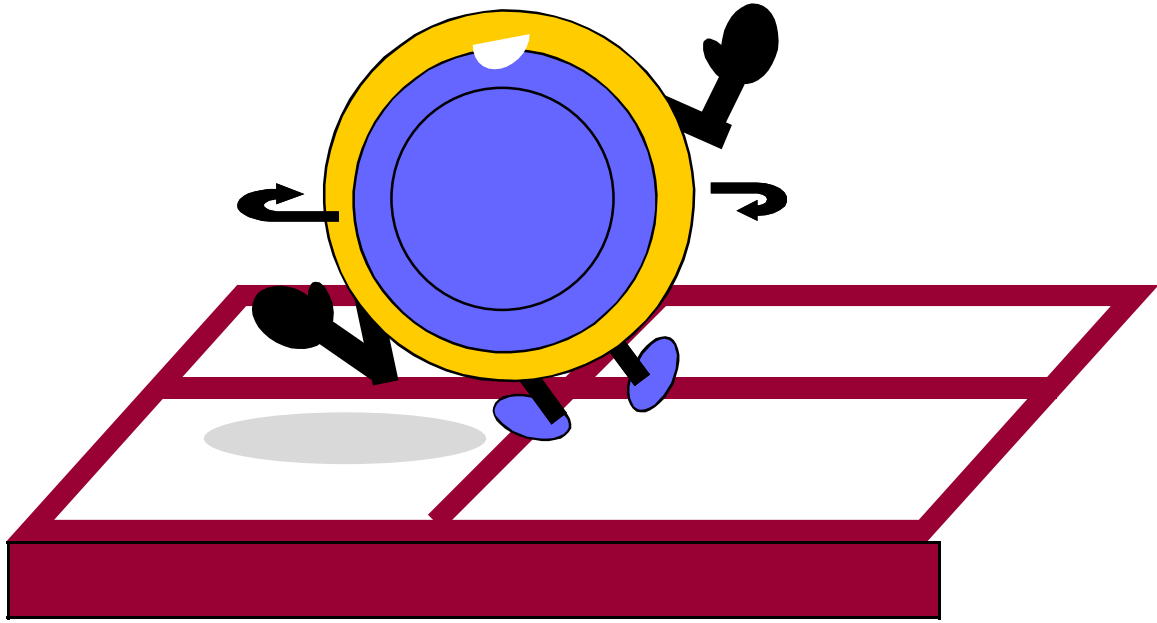
“And what about the likes of us?” Marty Mug yelled out.

“Remember, we’re a matching set, and each one of us count.”

“Well, that’s true, but everyone can’t fill that special place.  
And so that leaves just ONE of us to fill the ROYAL space.”

“But surely, you’ll pick me to sit beside you at the table?  
You’ll need a saucer,” Susie said, “to keep old Marty stable.”



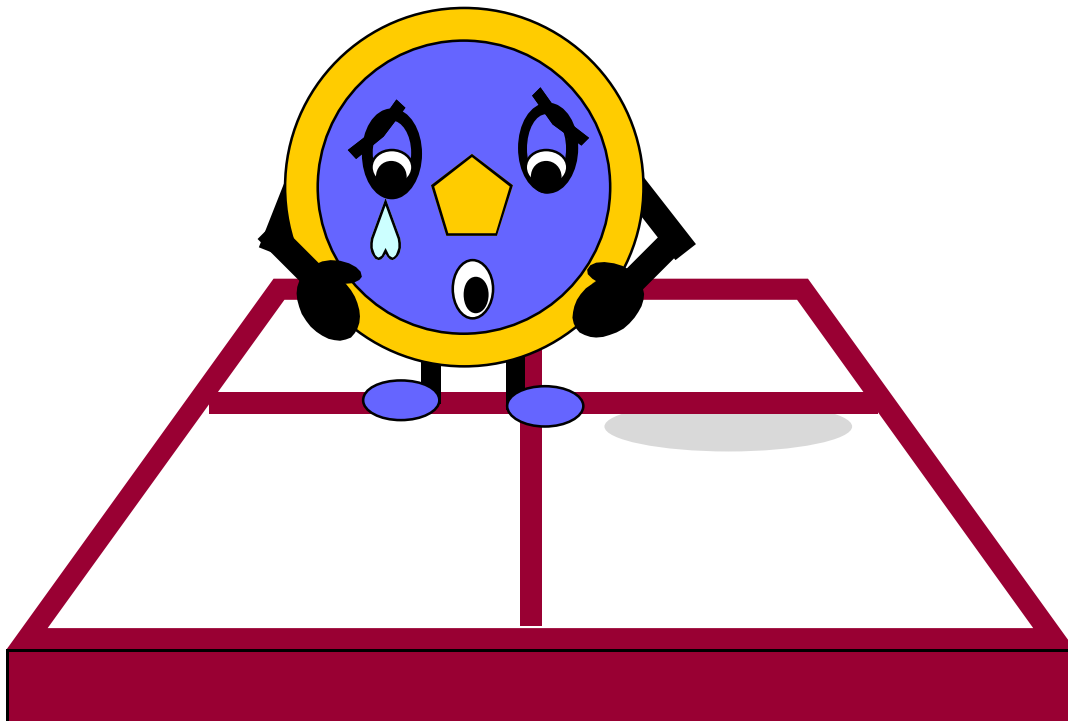


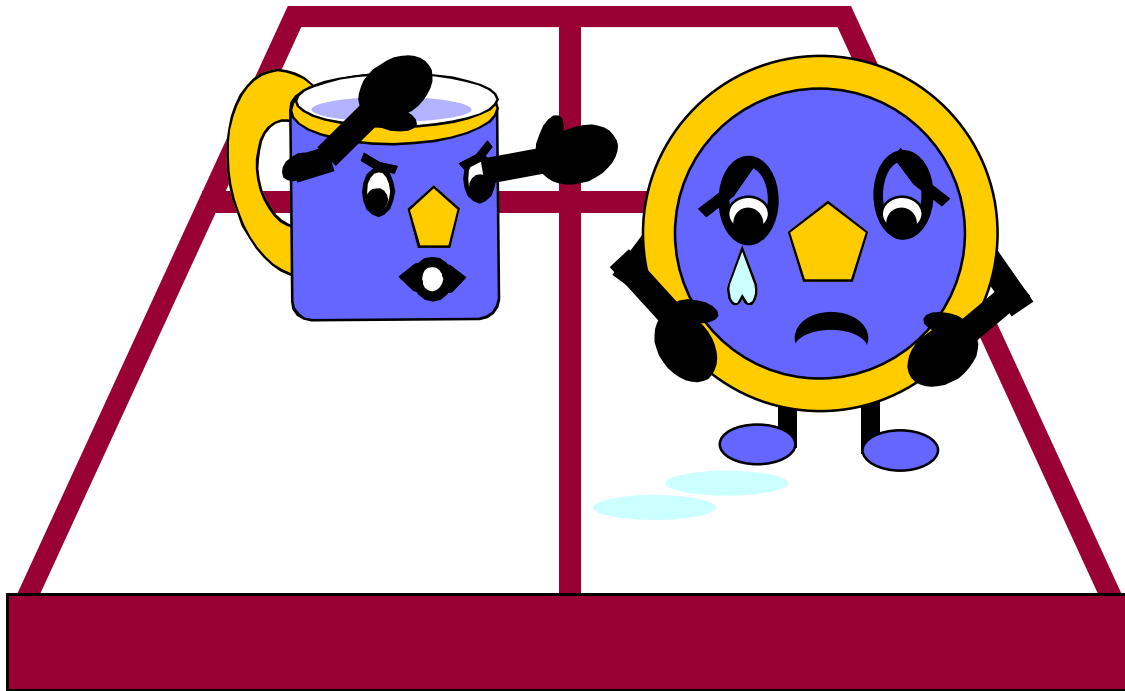
“Oh very well. Now spin around, and let me check your sides.  
I must be sure there are no flaws, and then I will decide.  
Oh my! What do I see? Is that a chip upon your rim?”  
Exclaimed the Queen of china plates,  
Her shining face turned grim.



“But go..sh, how could that be, unless it happened when I fell?  
I know it wasn’t there before. Please.., Miss ‘P,’ don’t tell.”

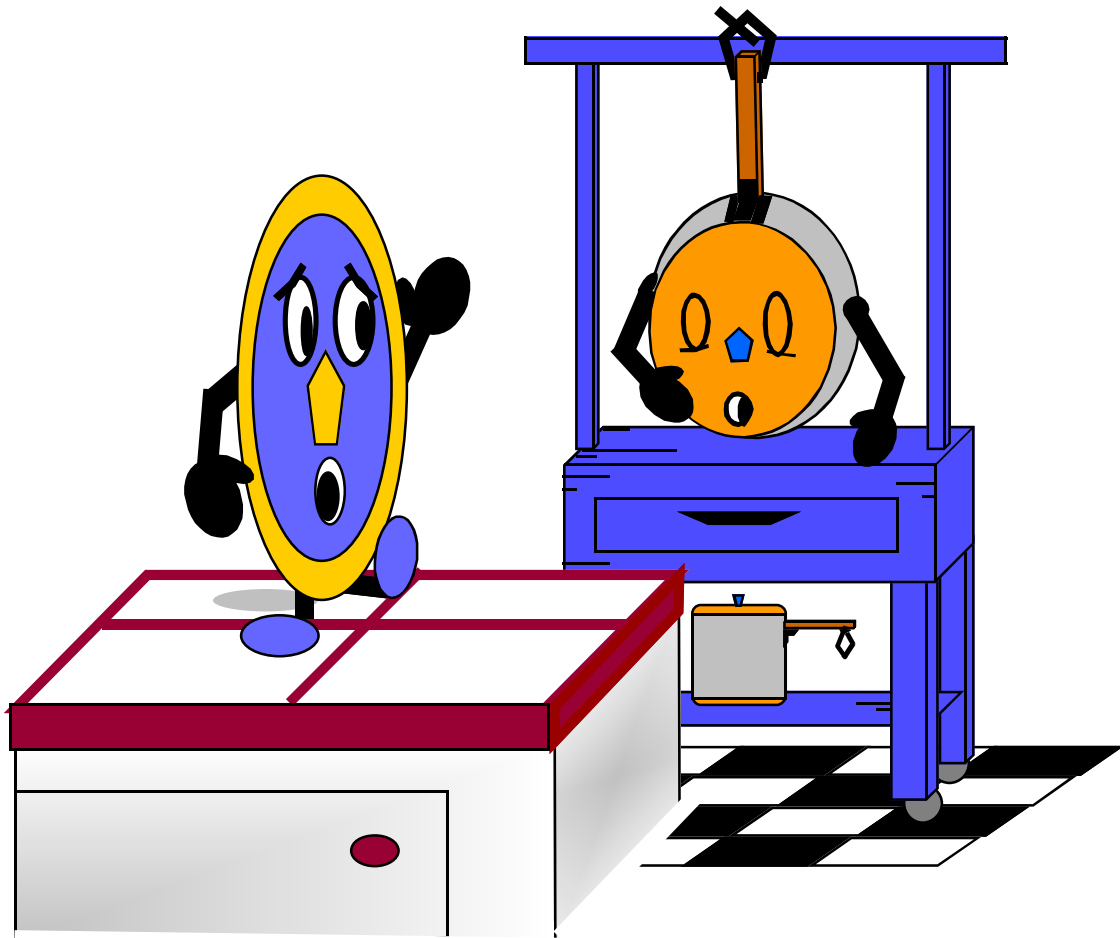
“My dear, I am so sorry, but you DO have a defect.  
And so I must tell Peter Pot. My job I can’t neglect.”

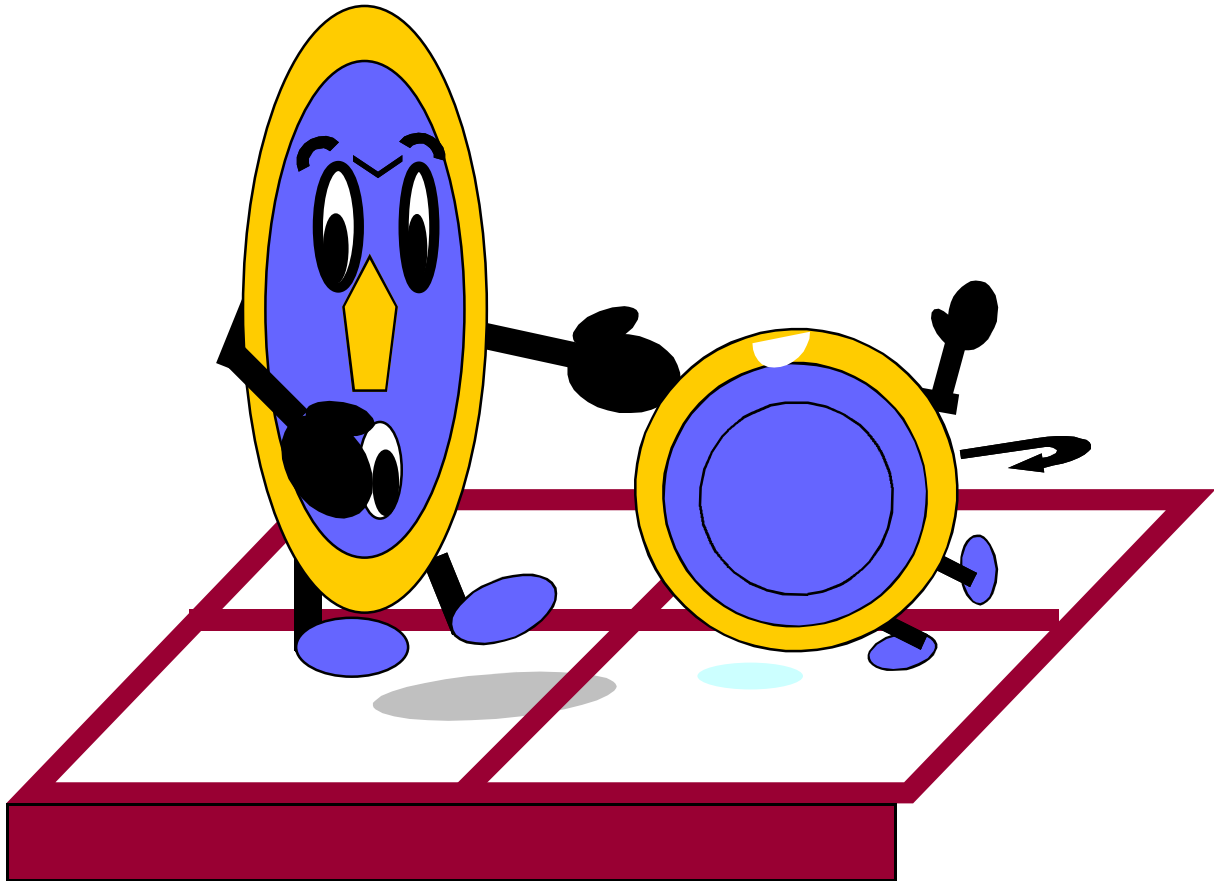




“But why?  
No one will see that tiny scratch upon my bottom.”  
“That’s right,” protested Marty Mug,  
“there’s others that have got’m.”  
“I’m sorry, but my duty’s clear, we’ve got to have perfection.”  
Then Prissy called,  
“Oh Peter Po...t,” with pride in her inflection.

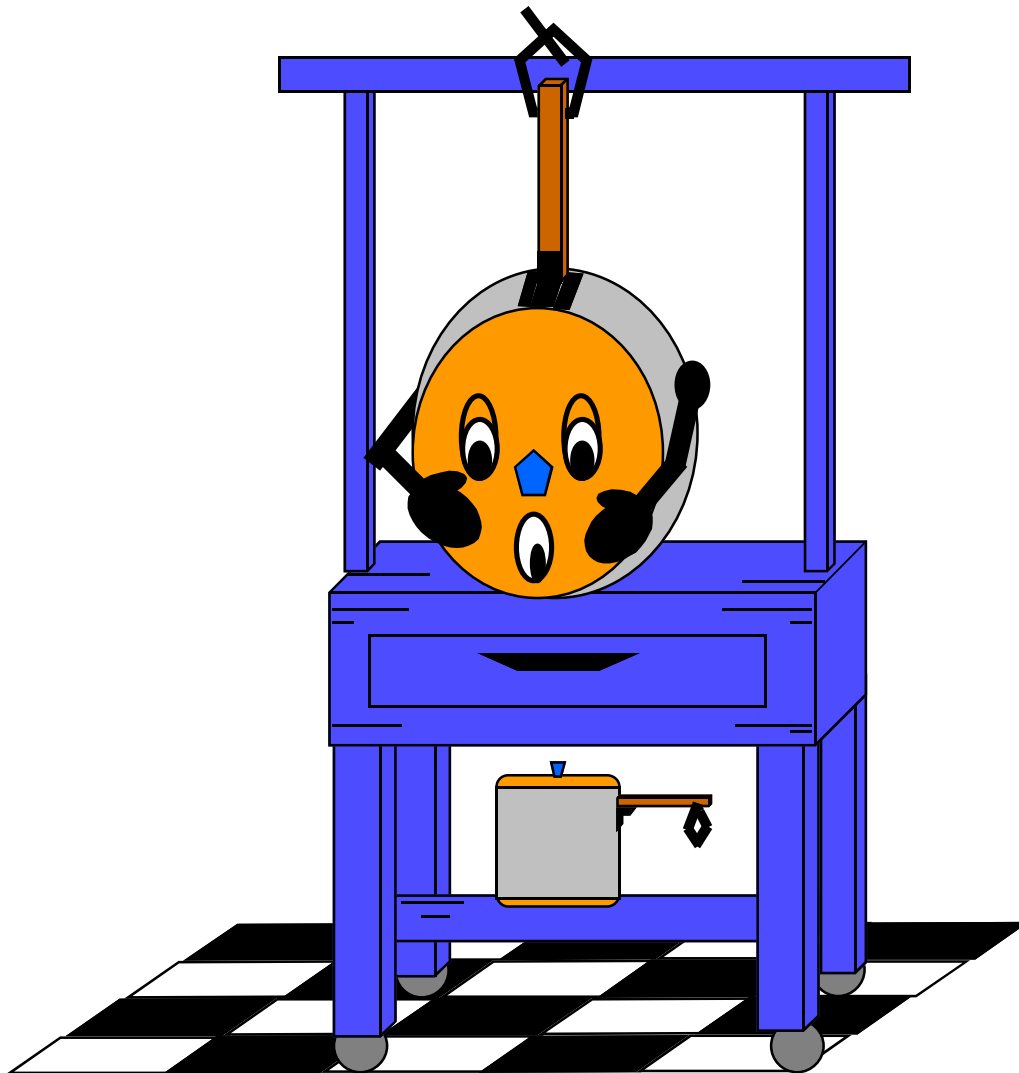
“What is it now....?” yawned Peter Pot.  
“Why this nighttime chatter?”  
“You must wake up!” huffed Prissy Plate.  
“I have a pressing matter.”  
“What is this, that cannot wait until the clock strikes six?”  
“ A Problem, Peter Pot, that I insist, RIGHT NOW BE FIXED!”

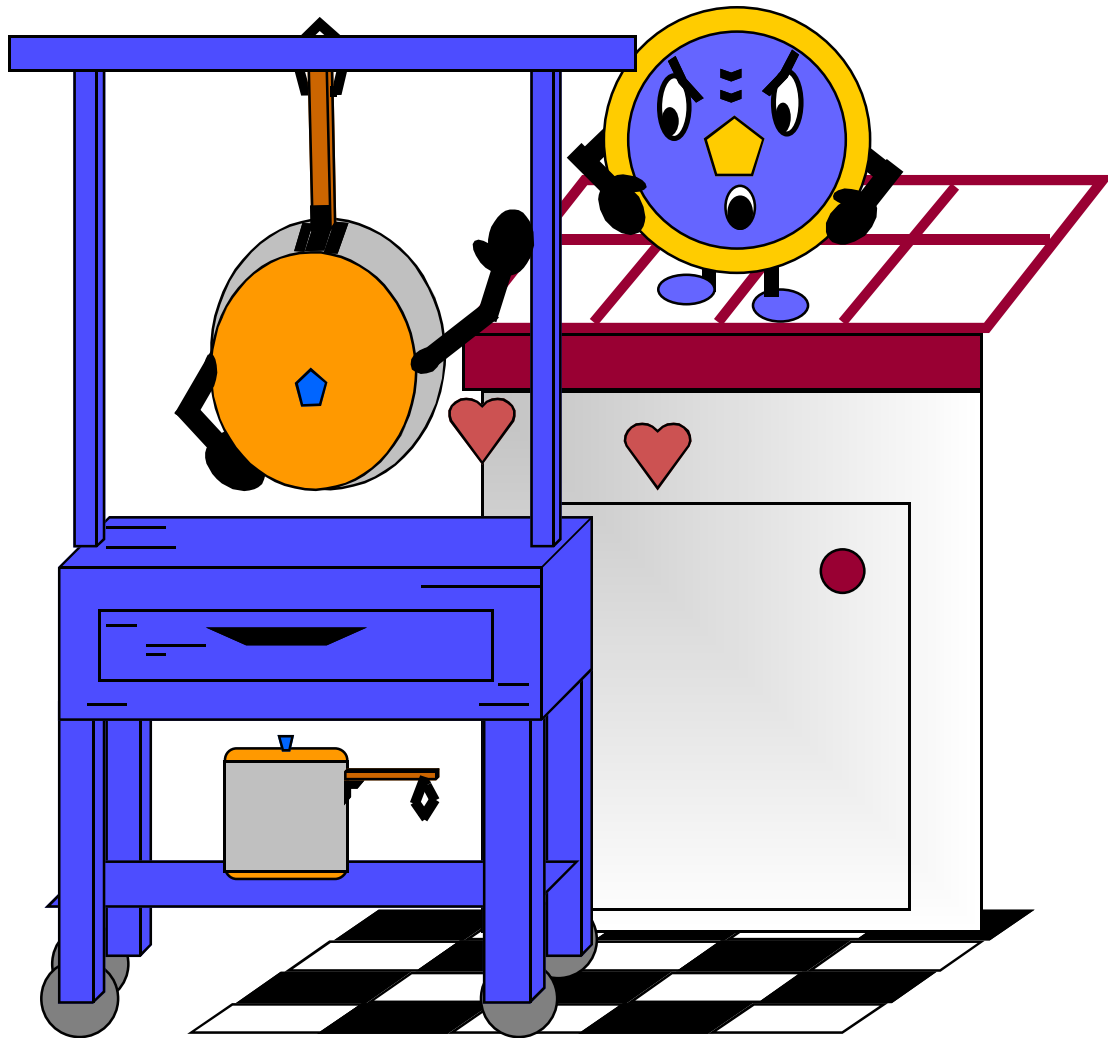




You see, I just now found a chip on Susie Saucer's rim.  
So how can I choose HER to sit beside me if I win?"  
"Win what? What is this prize that keeps you up so late?"  
"Why, don't you know?  
I'm hoping I will win "Miss Royal Plate."

“Now you know very well, Miss ‘P,’ that each year we draw lots,  
And each one has his or her turn to fill that royal spot.”  
“But what if that one chosen doesn’t suit the royal mat?”  
“Well..., just you set your mind at ease, and let me deal with that.

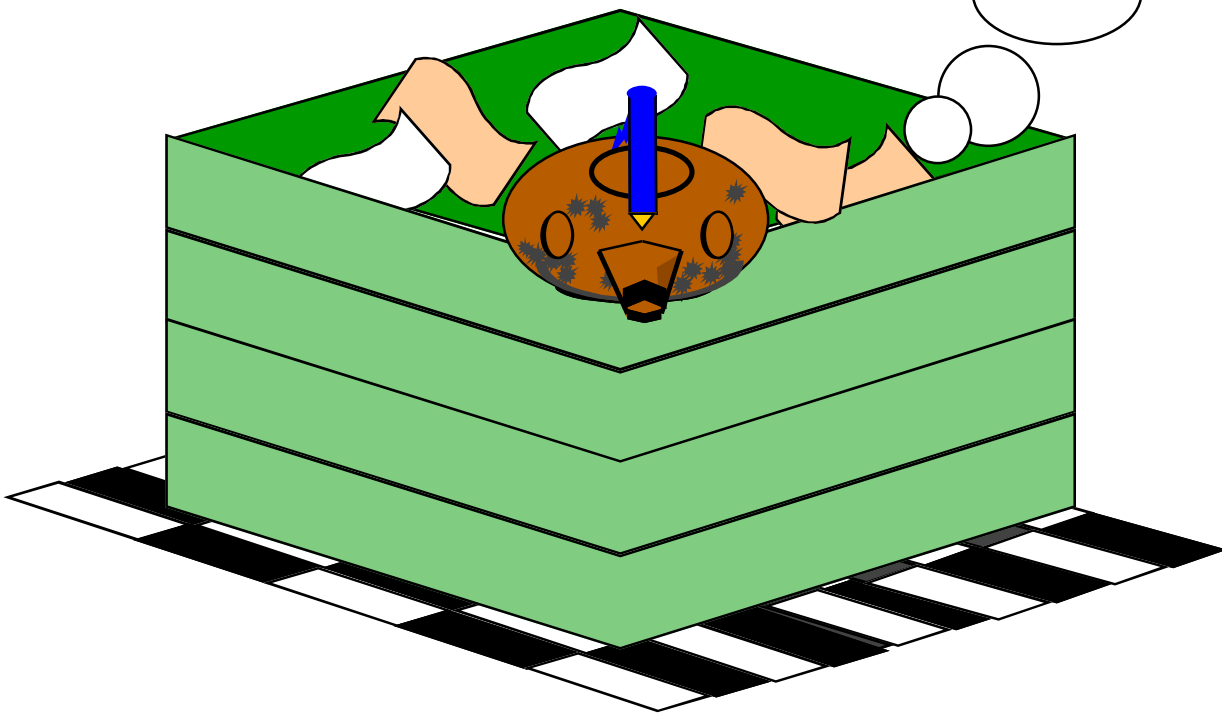


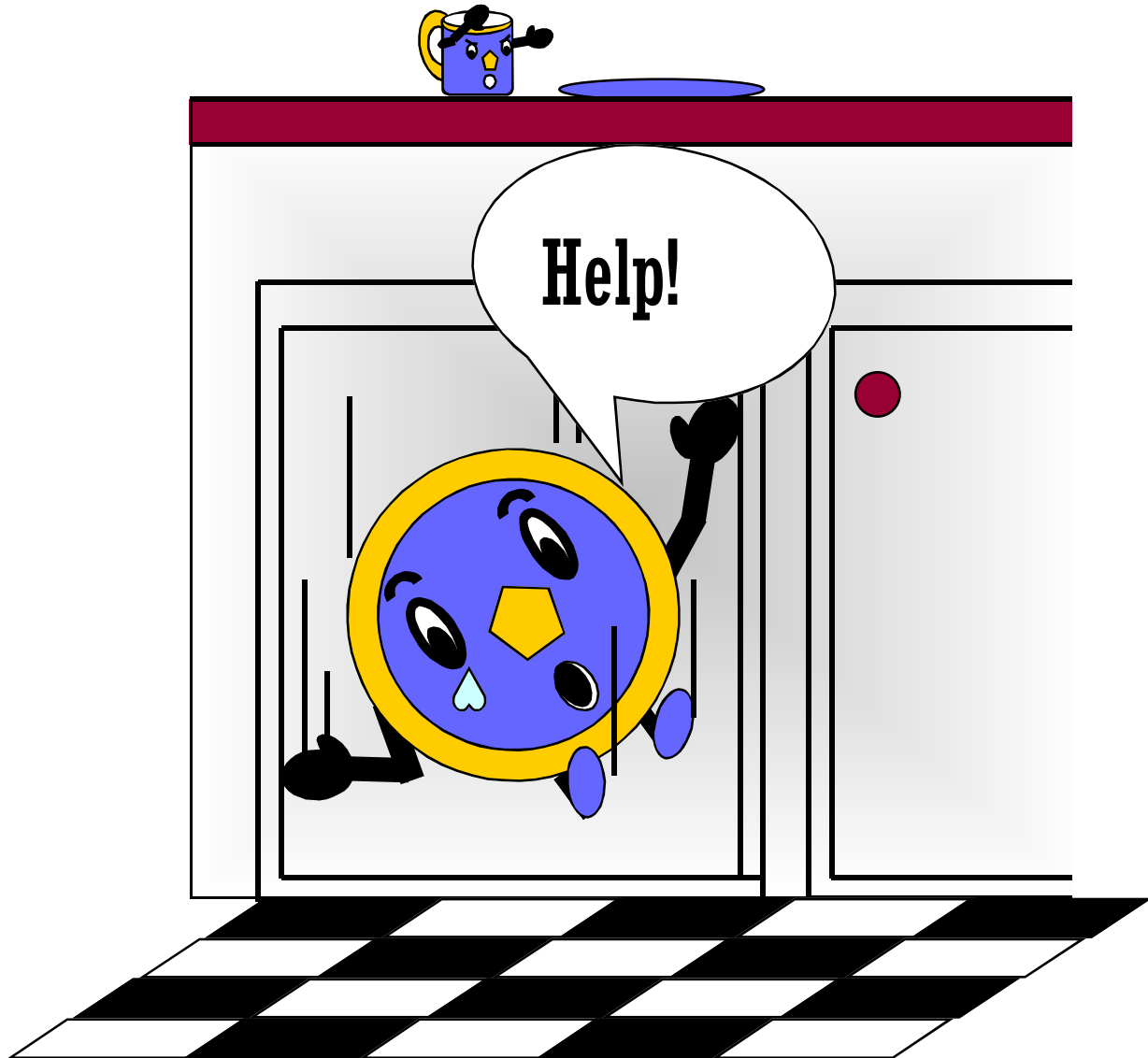


You see, Miss ‘P,’ I know that for your King you want the best.  
But just right now, that job requires that we all get our rest.”  
“Well! If you insist! But please consider what I’ve said.”  
And with those words Miss Prissy Plate was off to find her bed.

Now from the shadows of the bin, Miss Tearza heard it all,  
And shook her broken handle when she heard of Susie's fall.  
She knew how cruel some could be, and understood her plight,  
And prayed for words to reach her heart, and comfort her that night.

**Please.....help Susie Susie.**





But just then, from across the room,  
“T” heard a frightful sound,  
And thought she saw the shadow of a plate fall to the ground.  
Tumbling through the darkness, spinning uncontrolled,  
She heard it hit the cold hard floor, then to the bin it rolled.

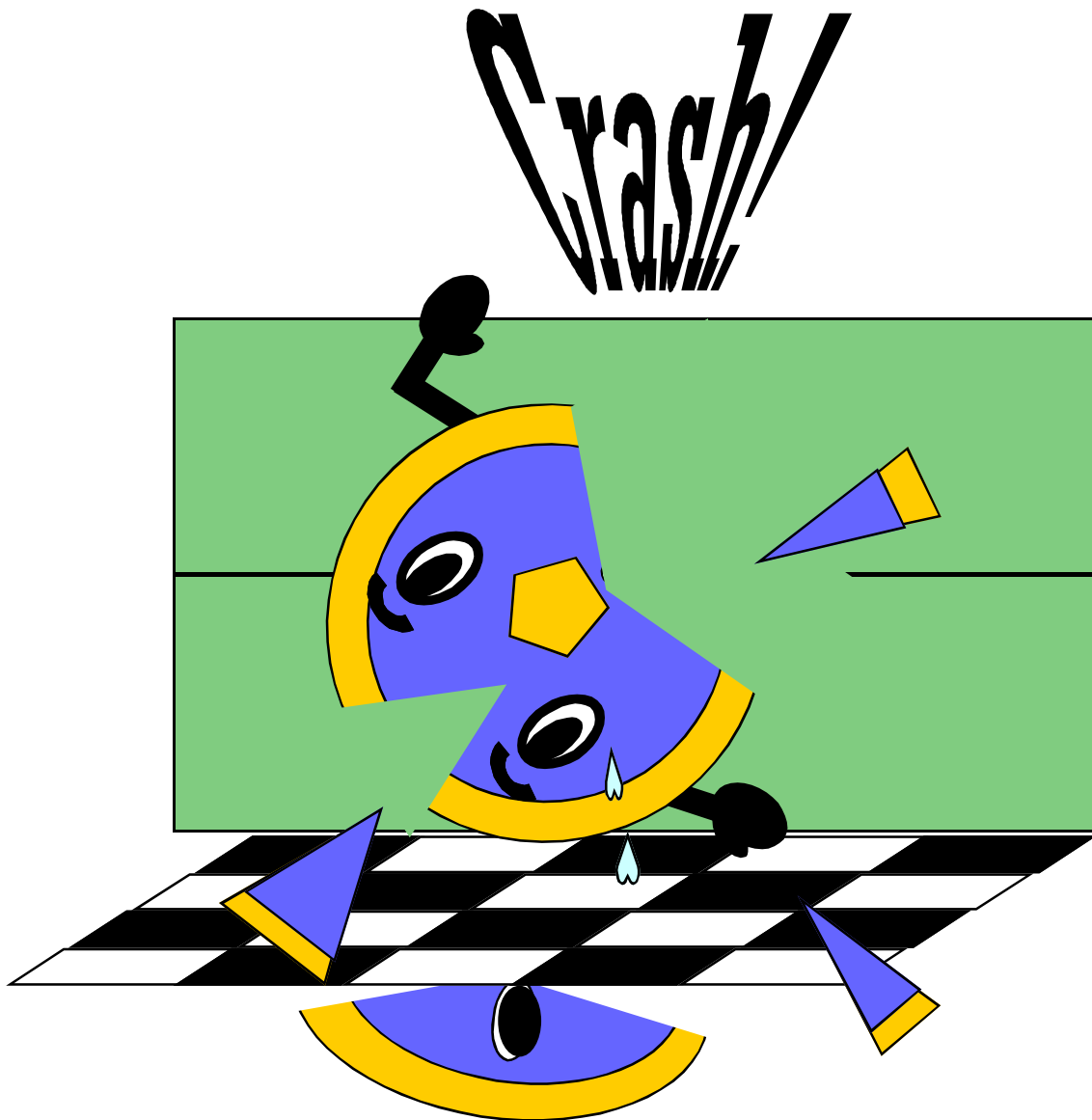


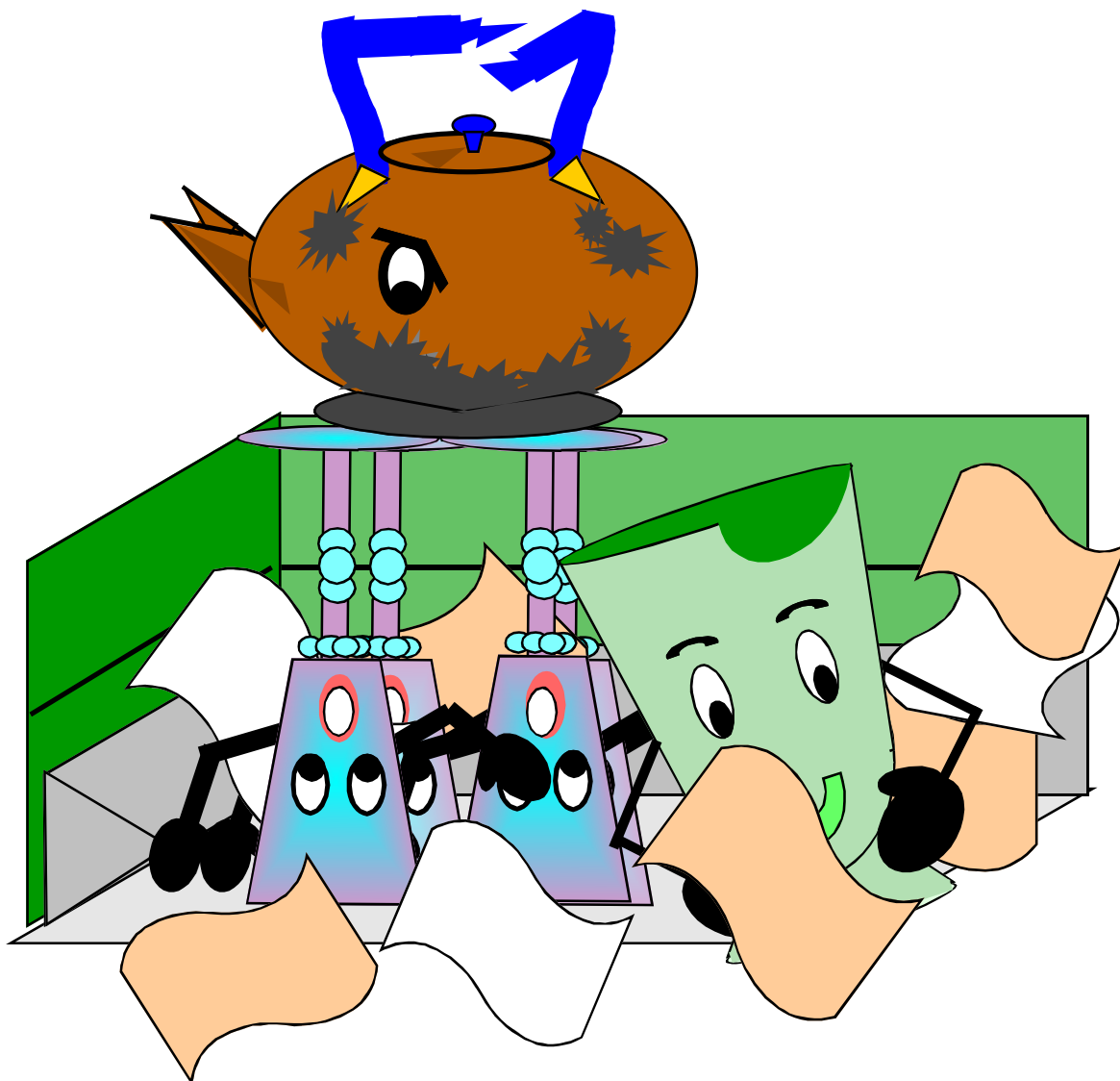
“What was that sound?”

“You mean that crash,” Tearza Teapot said.

“I can’t see much, but I think Prissy Plate fell out of bed.”

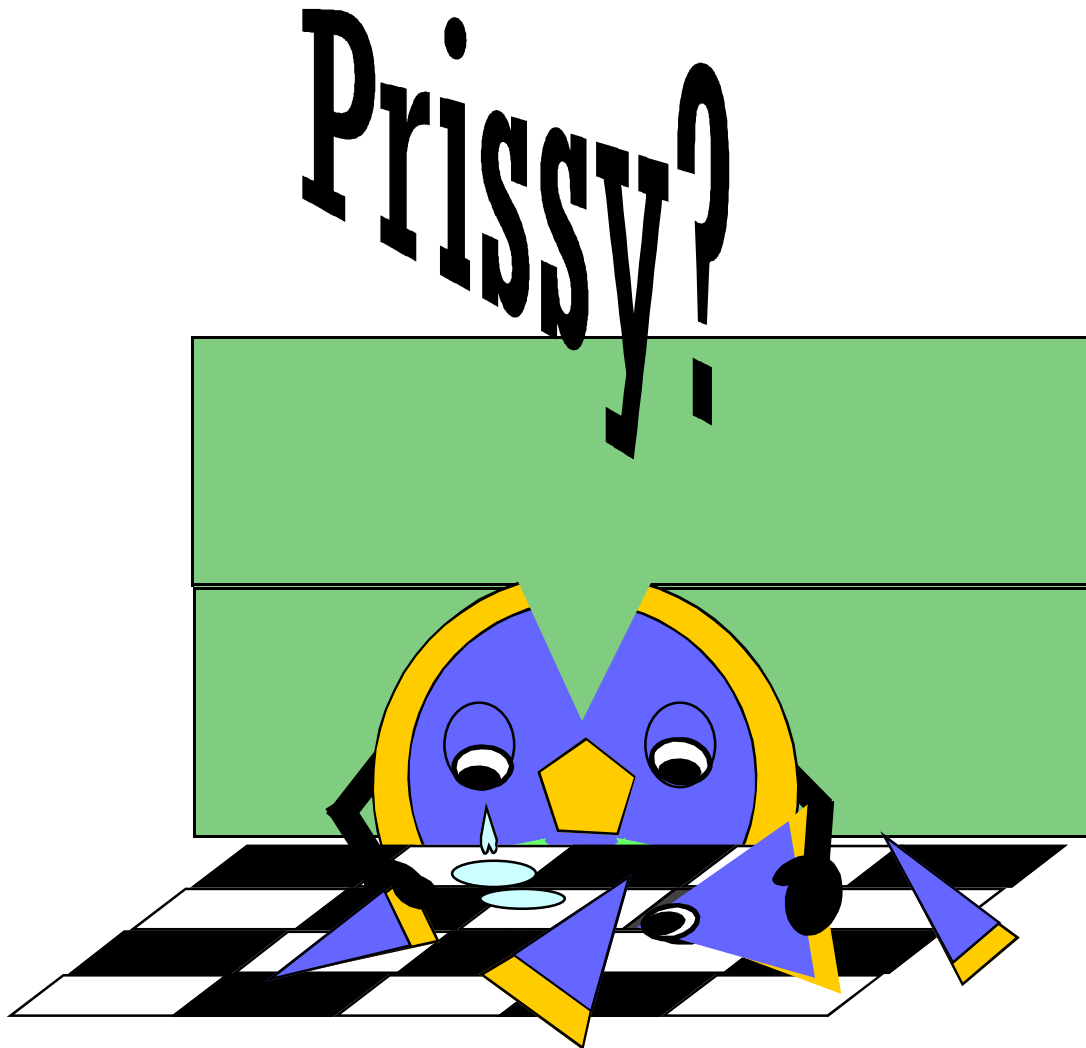
Then snickers started softly, erupting everywhere,  
As proud and proper Prissy Plate lay broken in despair.

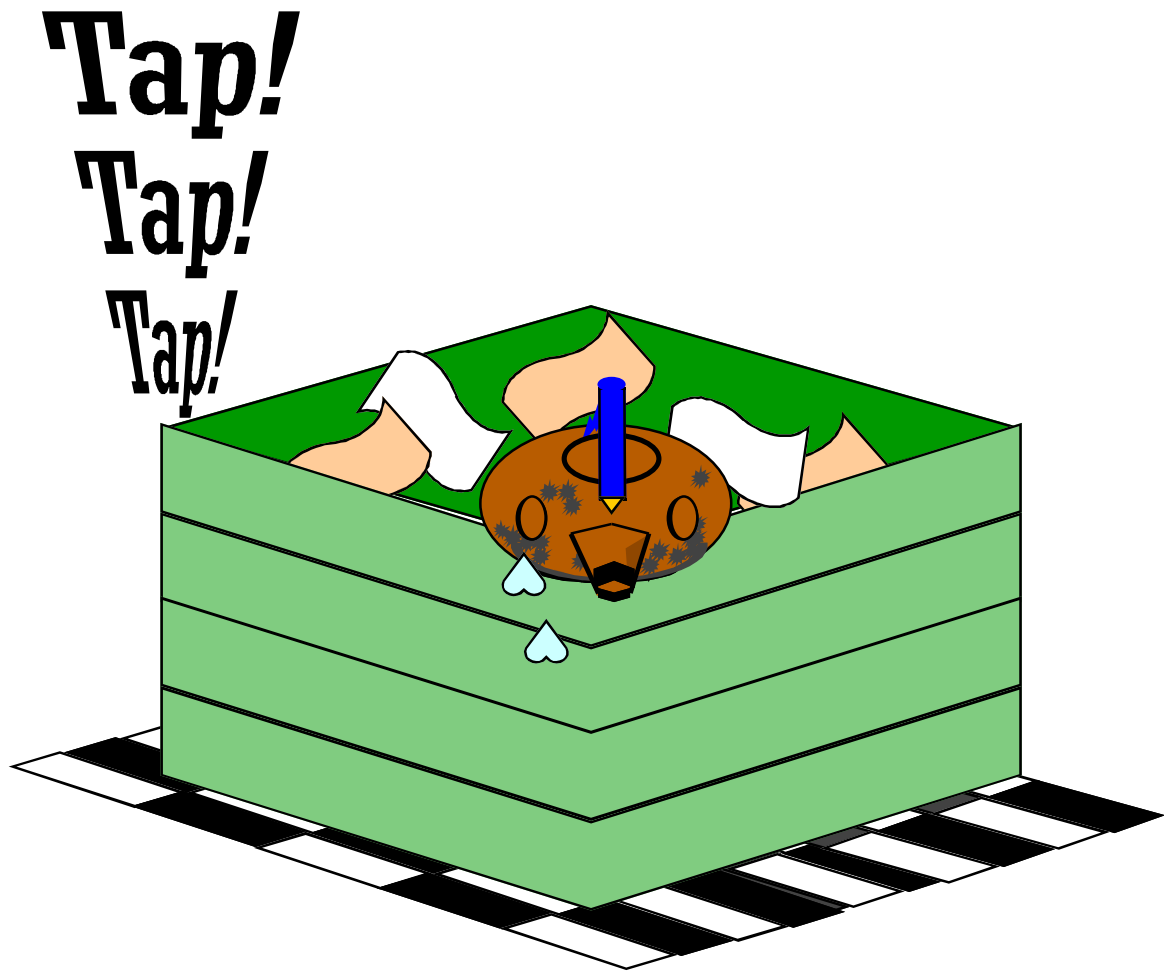




“Now guys! That isn’t very nice,” scolded Tearza ‘T.’  
She’s hurting, just like I did, in the fall that dented me.”

While others scoffed, Miss Prissy gathered all her pieces in,  
As tears began to wet her face and flood her golden rim.  
Embarrassed by her grave mistake, and saddened by her plight,  
Prissy knew she must hang on until the morning light.  
Then the sweetest voice called out, “Oh Prissy, dear, it’s ‘T’!  
If you can hear, let me know and tap the count of three.”





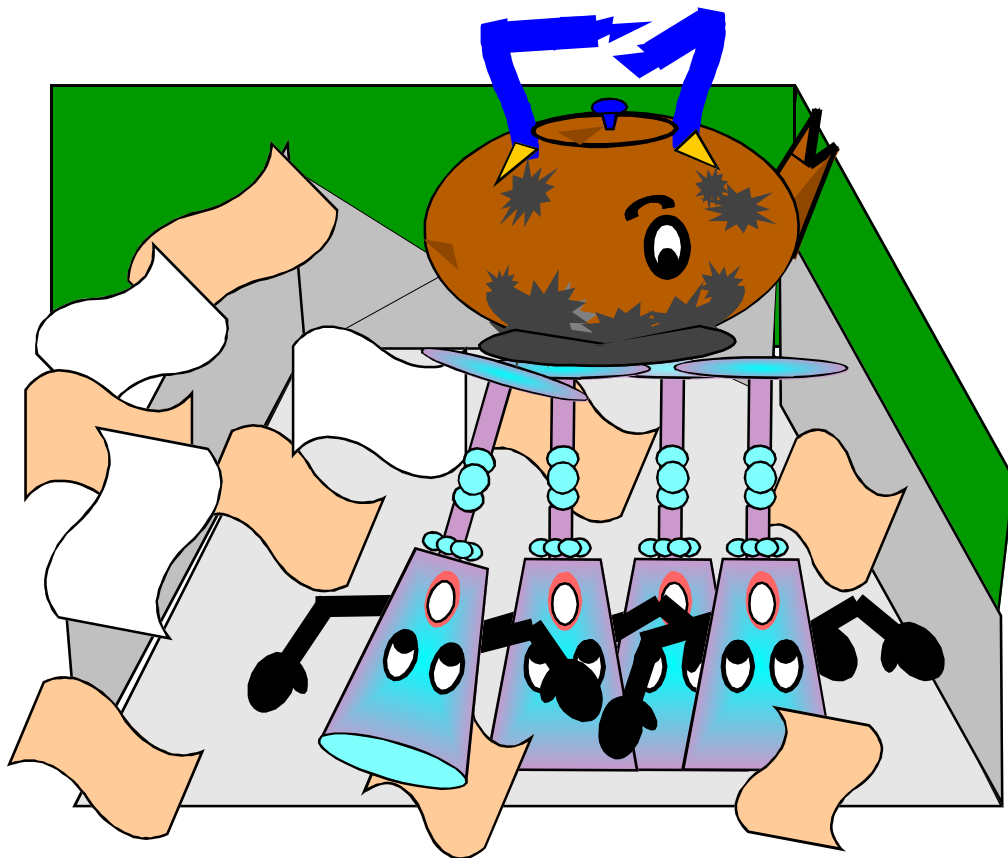
So waiting, Tearza listened, then from the floor below,  
She heard Miss Prissy calling out, with three taps in a row.

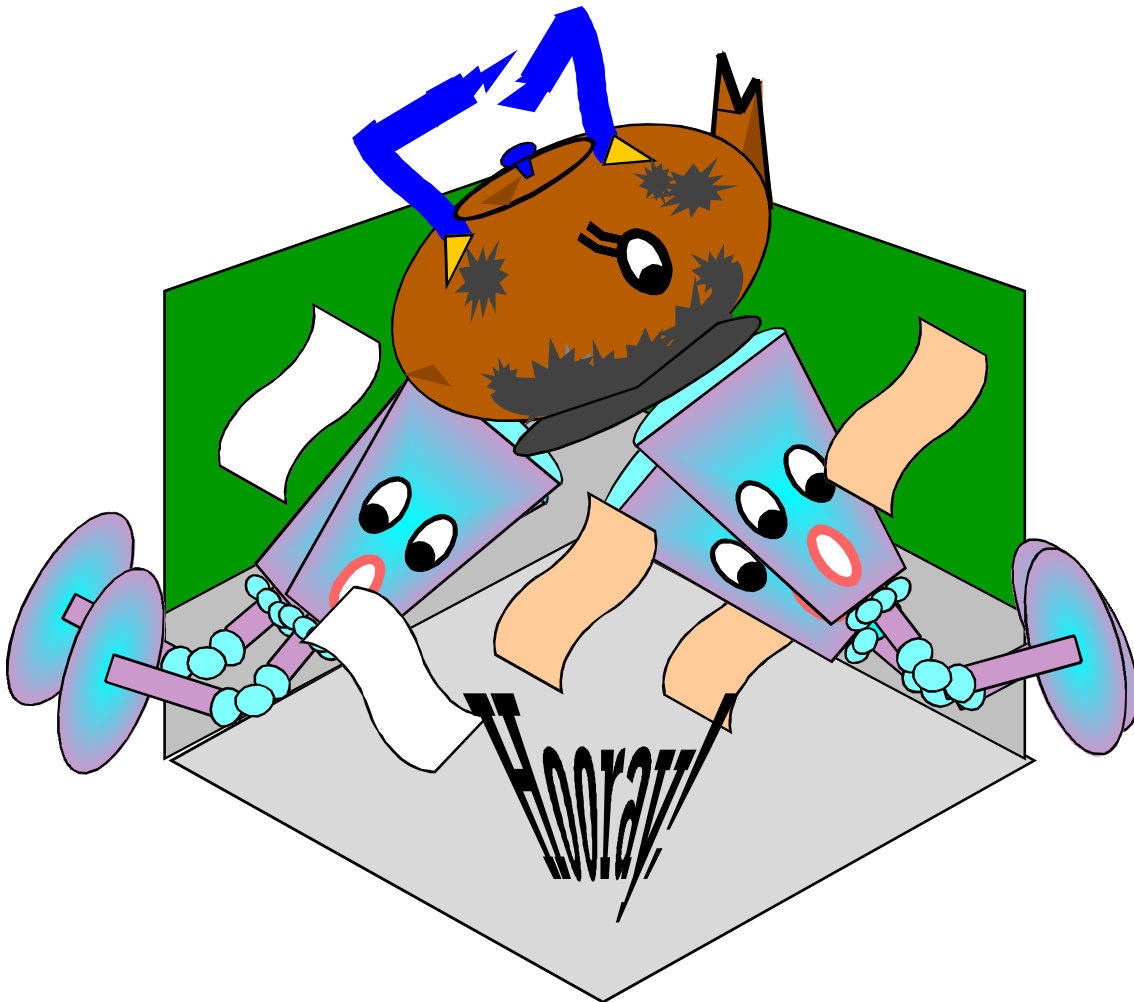
In that same moment, from behind, she heard Miss Glenny Glass.

“Oh my...! My rim is slipping, and my strength is fading fast.

I don’t know how much longer I can hold you up my friend.”

“Then let me down before you hurt yourself, or break your stem.”





“But can we do it, Gossy, just like we did before?”

“Of course we can! Now, on command,  
start down when I call four.”

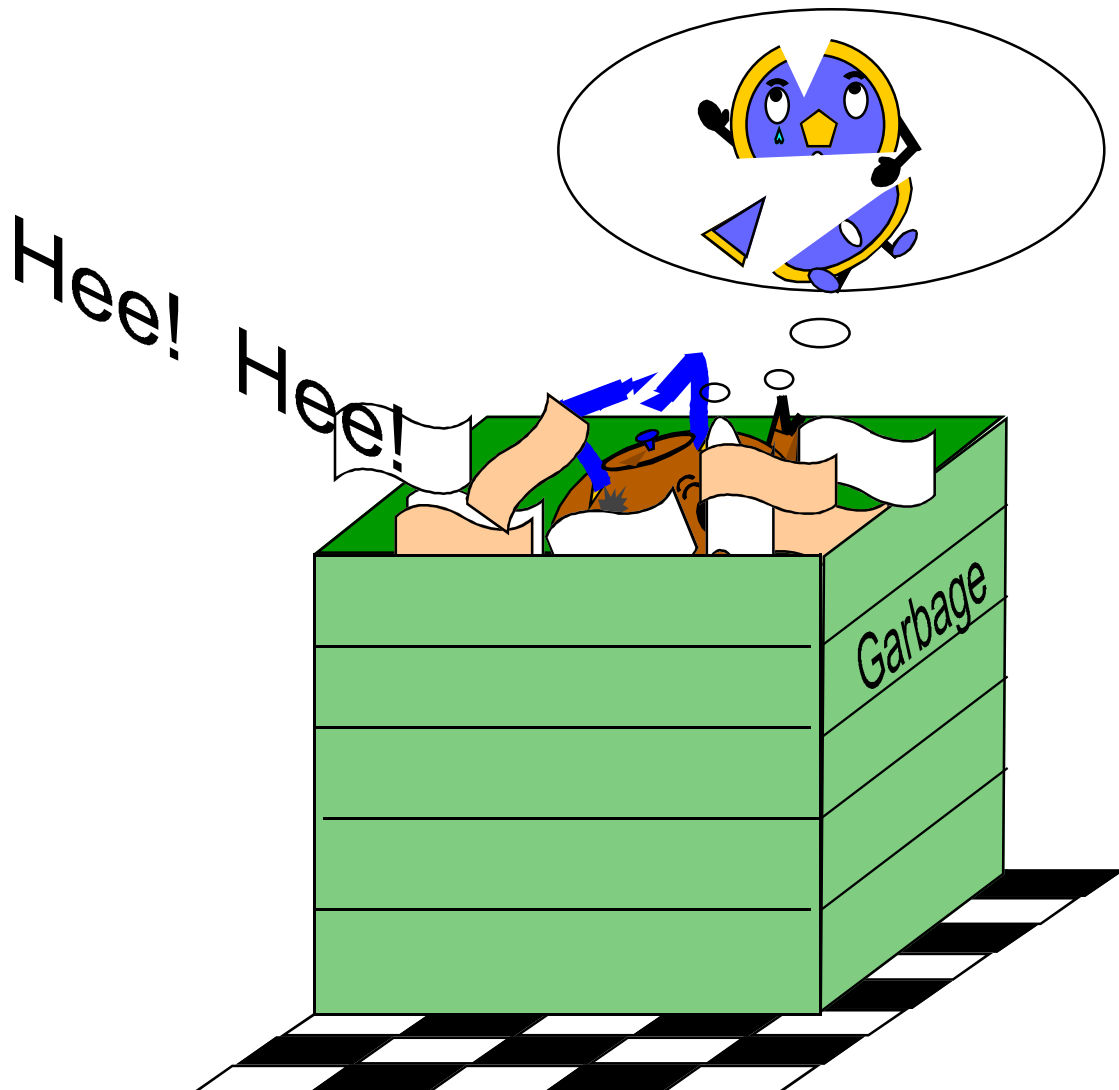
Then slowly, all together, their stems began to bend,  
And inch by inch, they lowered Tearza Teapot to the bin.

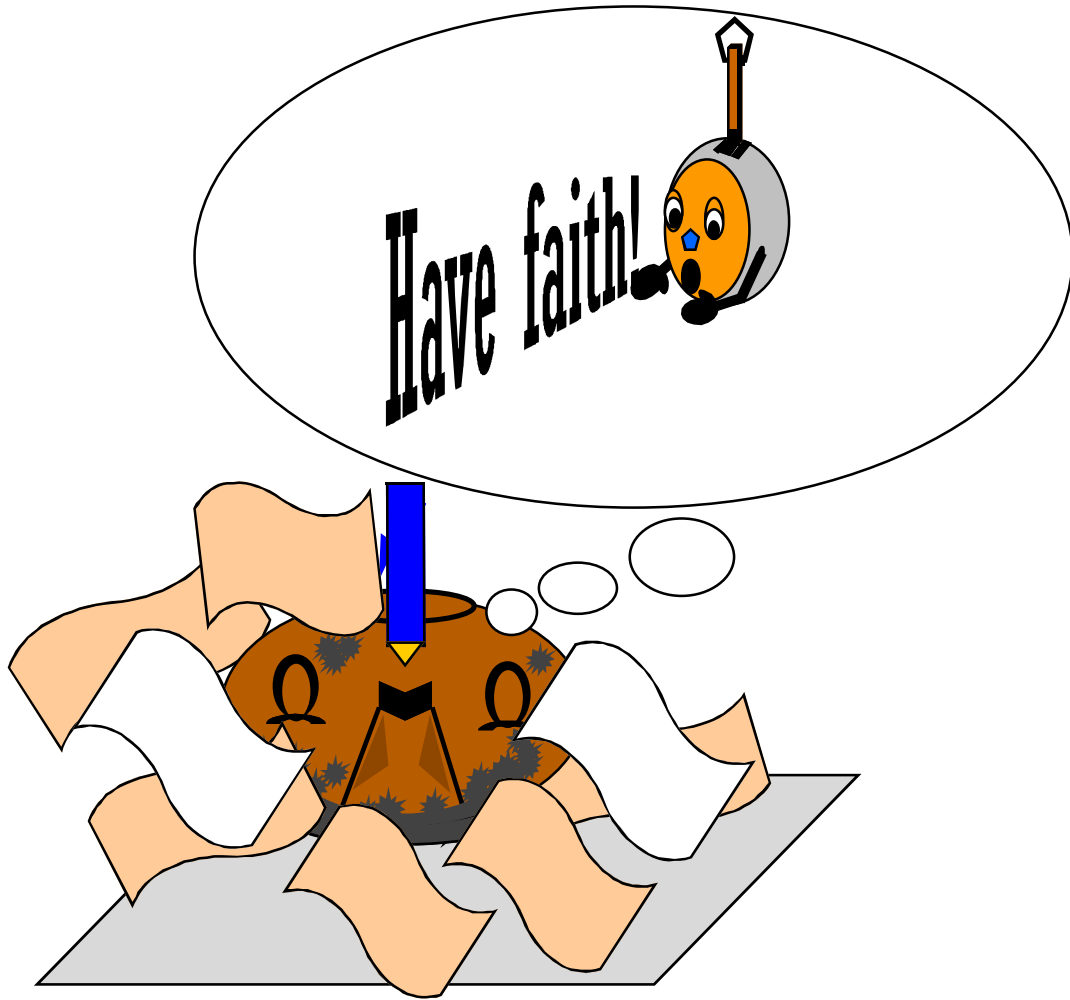
“She’s almost there,” Gossy cried. “You’ve done it!  
Hip Hooray!”

And in that wave of sudden joy, their fears were washed away.

But as each found their resting place, snuggling in the paper,  
Sounds of gigglers could be heard,  
Discussing midnight capers.

Now, Tearza tried her very best to close her eyes and sleep,  
But thoughts of Prissy down below, caused Miss “T” to weep.





Then suddenly, the voice of Peter Pot filled Tearza's head,  
As softly she repeated every word that he had said.

“Now.., don't give up my dear- have faith.

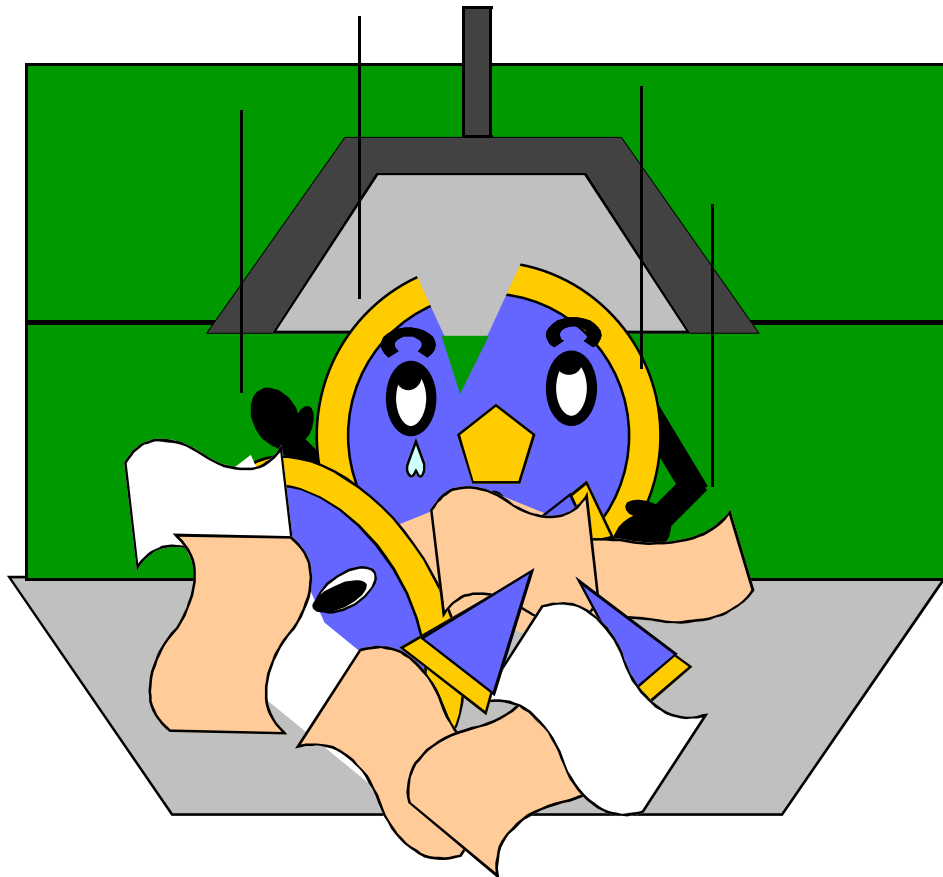
I know there is a plan.

You see, all things are possible, in the Master's hand.”

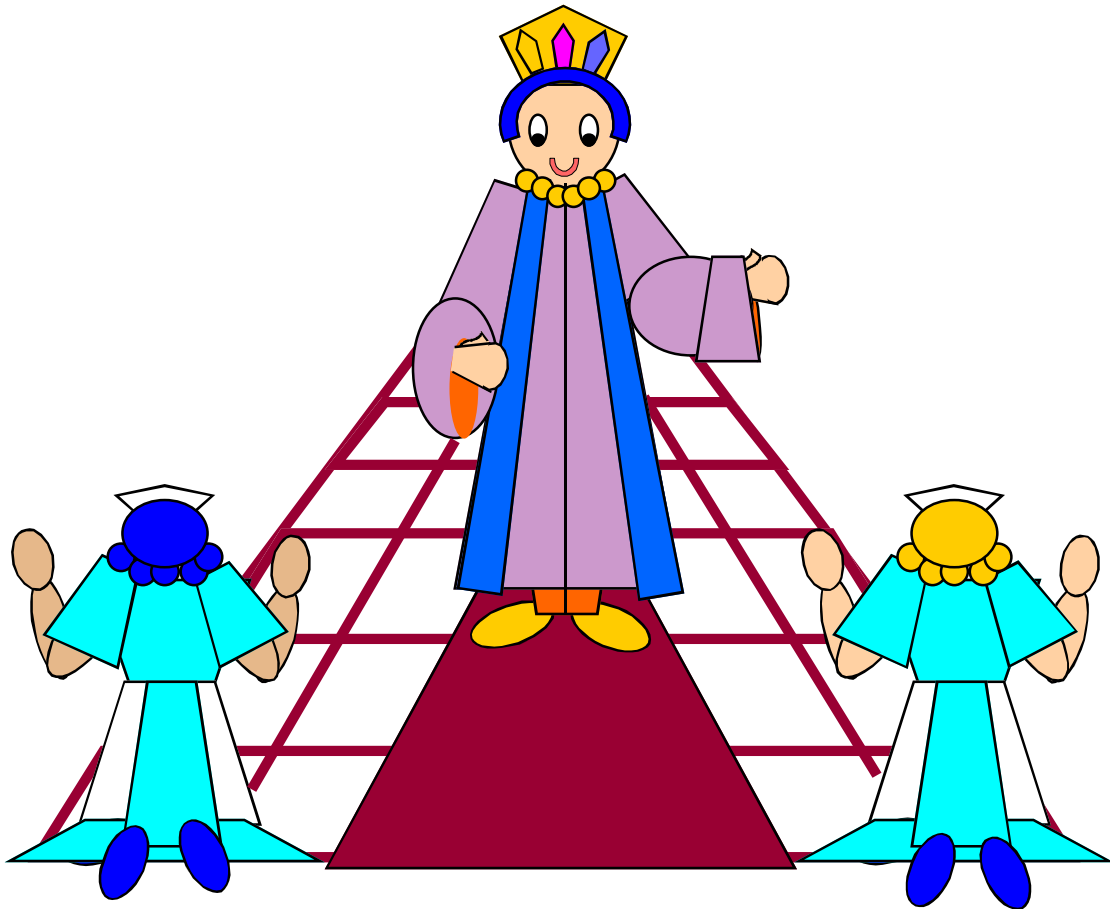
Then with that thought, she closed her eyes, trusting that tomorrow,  
Something wondrous would occur to take away her sorrow.



Meanwhile, cold and damp,  
Miss Prissy Plate felt all her cracks,  
And one by one she tried to put her broken pieces back.  
But with the sound of footsteps, she knew it was the end,  
And shattered as the morning maid dumped her in the bin.  
Then peaking out from under some broken pots of clay,  
Prissy found herself among those friends she'd pushed away.



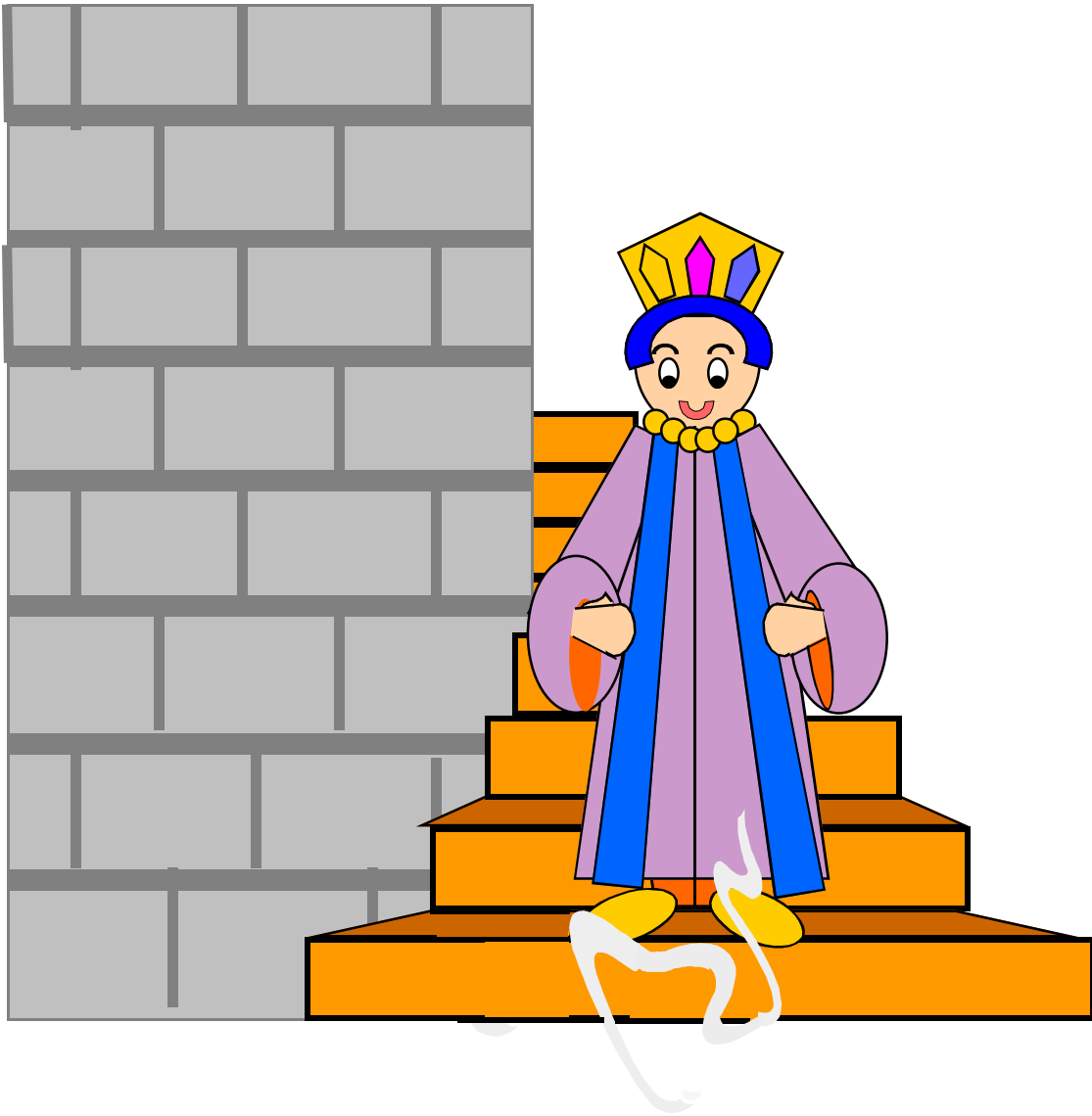
## Chapter 4



Now, in the morning, with the dawn,  
the King woke from his rest.  
And as his page cried out, “HE COMES!”  
Each waited to be blessed.

“Well done.” He said, then looking ‘round, each detail he took in.  
No single effort did he miss that showed their love for him.

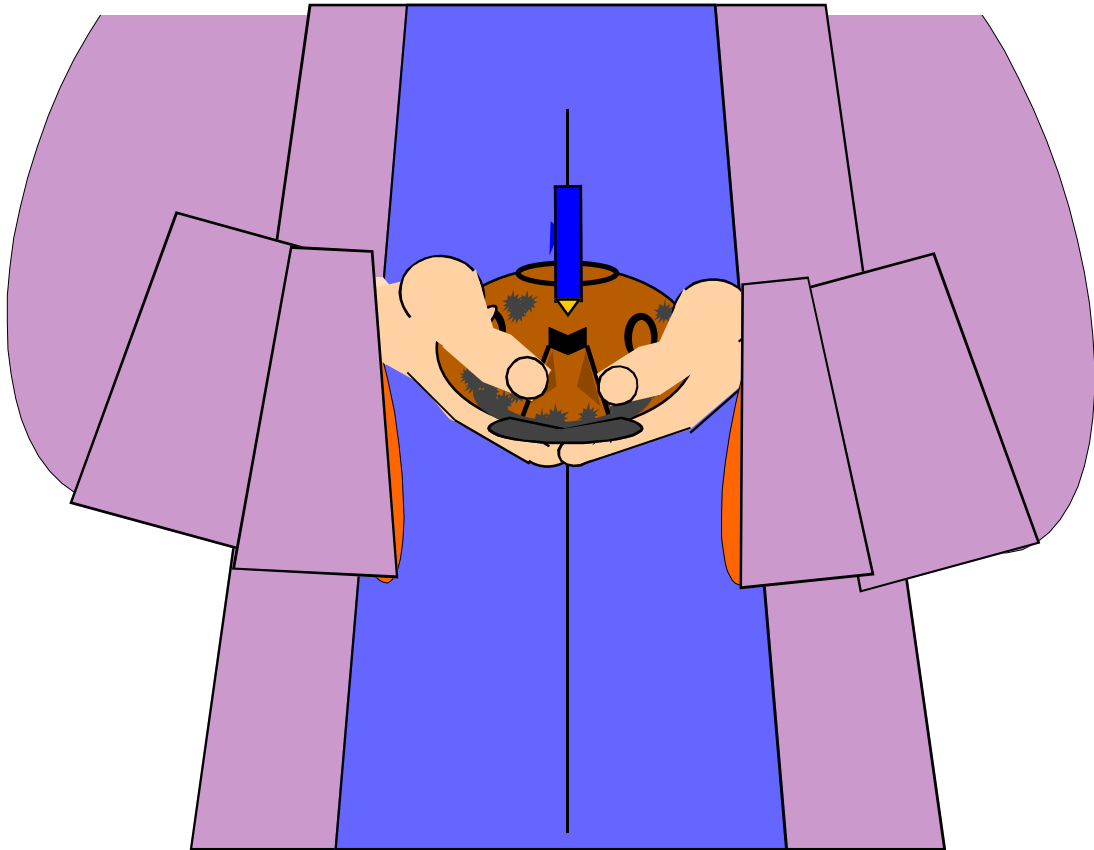
Then he headed down the stairs to check the work below,  
And with each step, the savory smells of cooking reached his nose.  
Smiling, he descended, assured, his lips confessed,  
“There could not be a greater feast to set before a guest.”

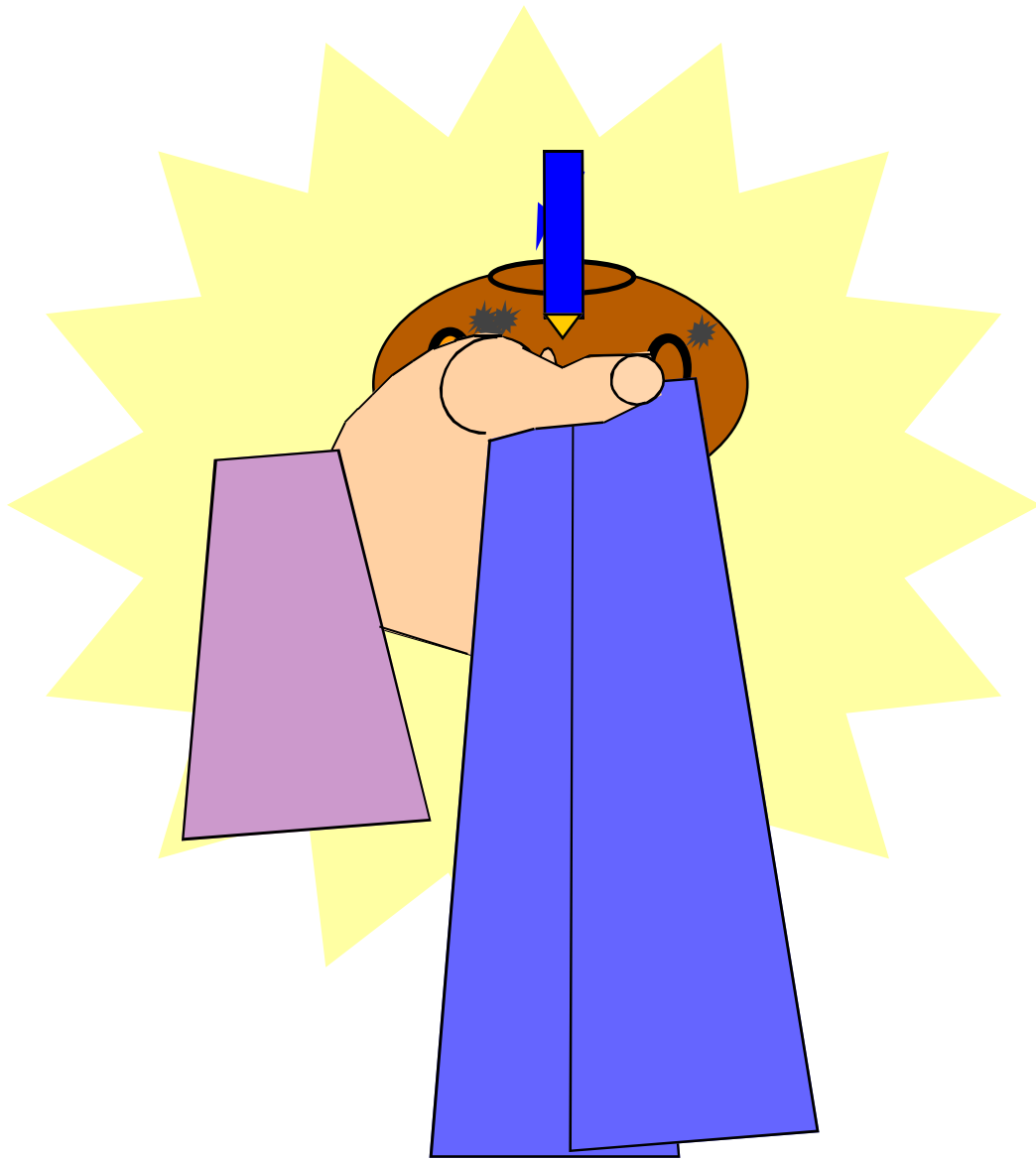




Then entering the kitchen, he took one look around,  
And spied within the garbage bin, something dark and brown.  
“What is this?” Asked the Mighty King.  
“Each pot was to be cleaned.”  
“Oh, please forgive me Master, but it has no shape or sheen.

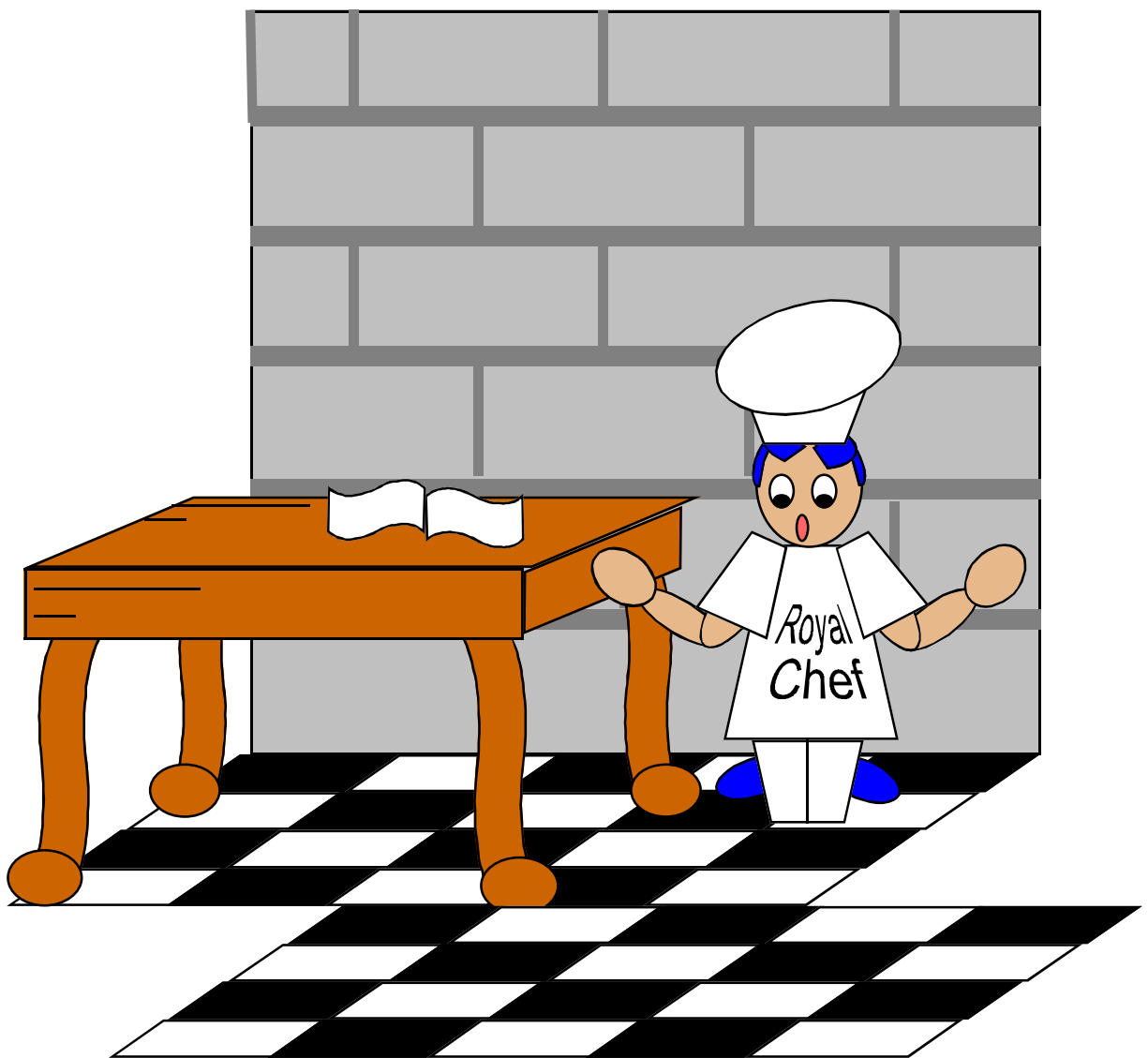
We've tried, O King, more than once, to put it back in shape.  
But its handle's cracked, it's tarnished black, and it's not fit for a Wake."  
Then horrified, all watched the King reach out to thwart their plans,  
As he grasped the tarnished pot in his mighty hands.

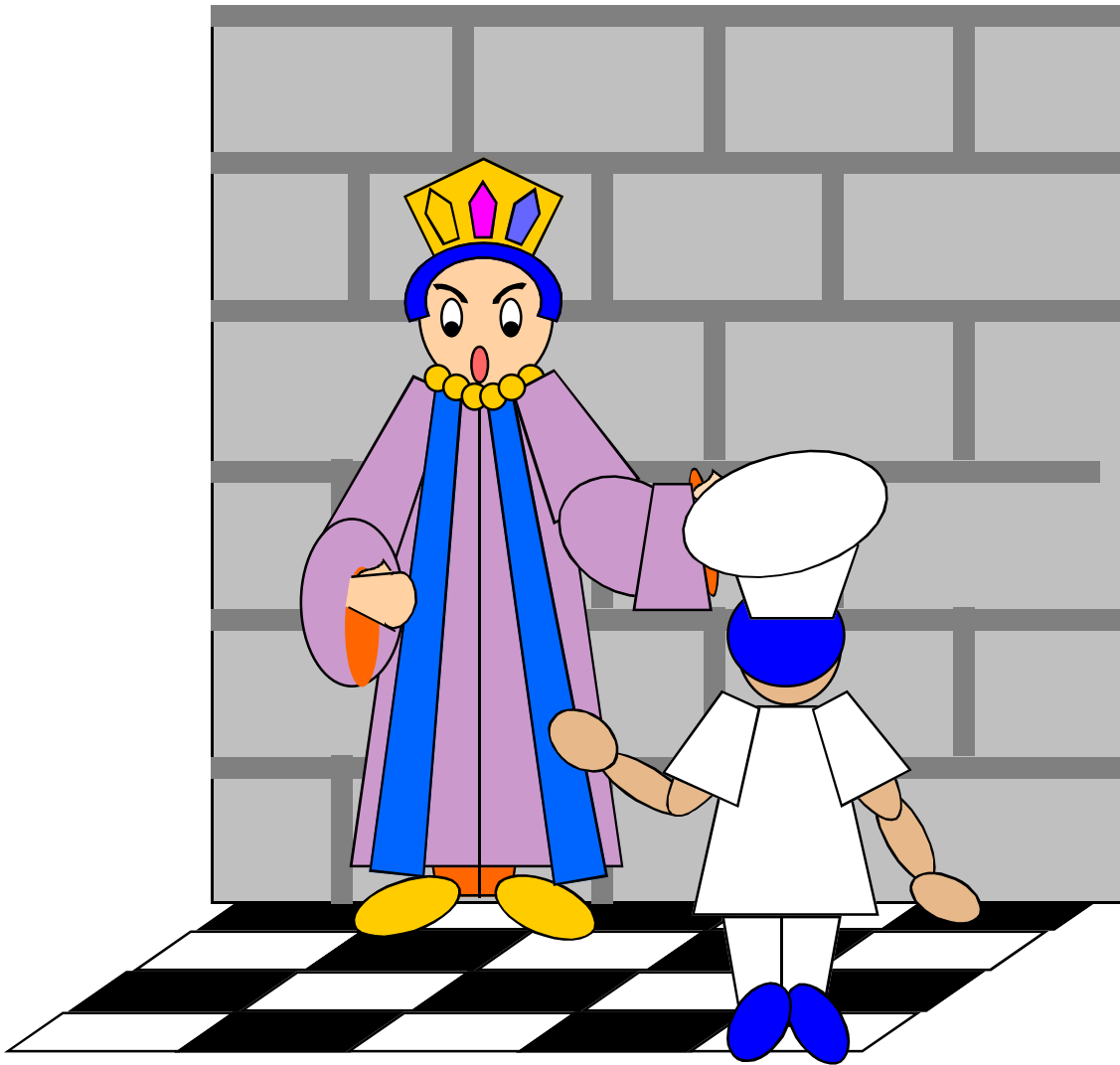




Then lifting up his royal robe of blue, he wiped its face.  
“O King,” cried out the Royal Chef,  
“Your robe, it’s a disgrace!”  
But smiling at his treasure, displayed for all to see,  
He held it high, and said to all,  
“Tonight, SHE’LL serve my tea.”

“But Master, how will it look to all those who attend,  
When they expect to see gold plates displayed from end to end?  
The tablecloth, the flowers, and the hours we’ve prepared  
Will all have been for nothing, if you should place her there.”



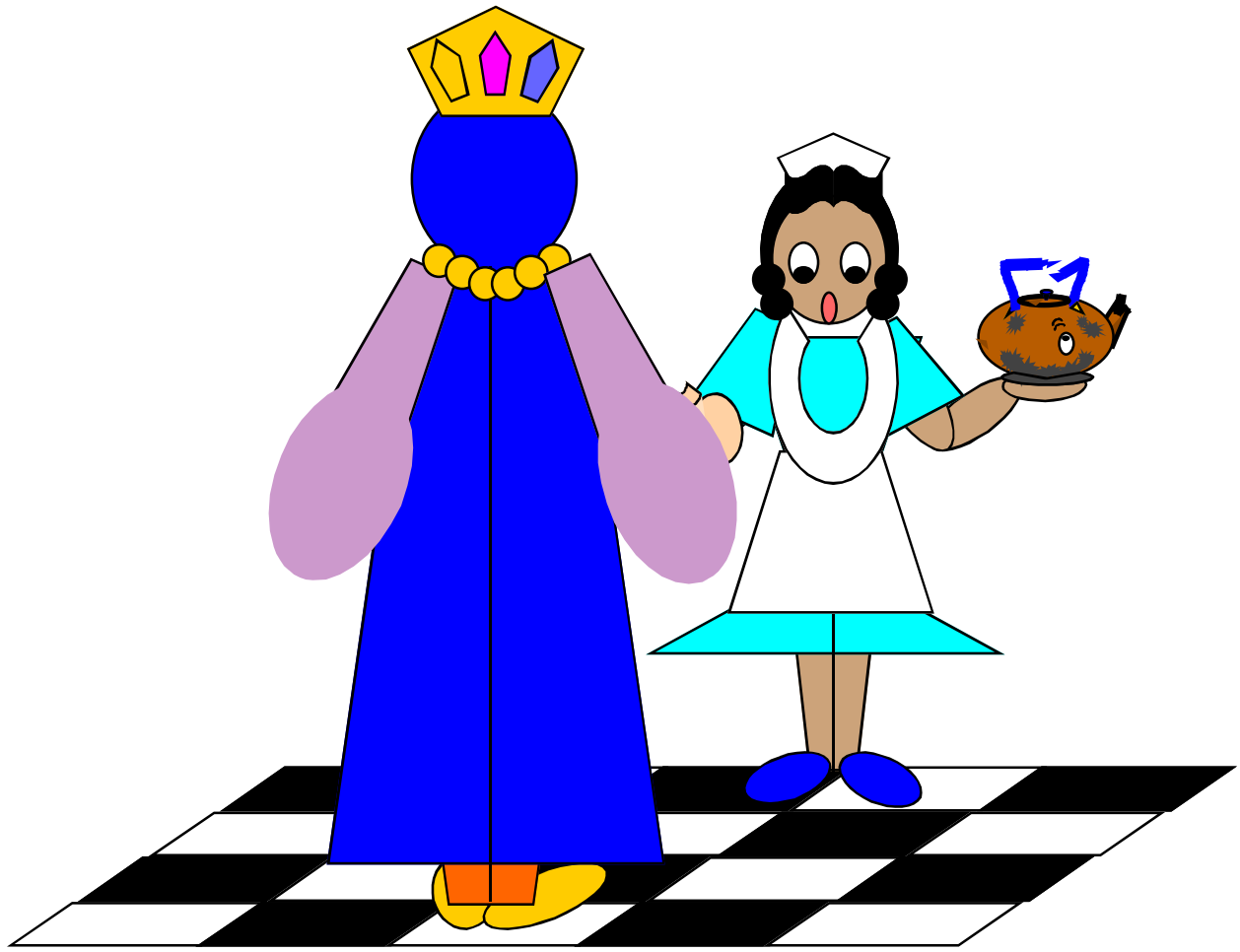


“Now my friend, how would you feel if that scarred pot were you,  
And I dismissed your years of work,  
And said your days were through?  
Or would you have me, like this pot, restore your brilliant shine,  
And declare before my guests, that you are one of mine?”



Now, see that she is polished, then fill her from MY spring,  
And warm her by the fire's light, until you hear her sing.  
Then bring her to her proper place, and let there be no doubt,  
I'll savor not her dented sides, but the tea poured from her spout."

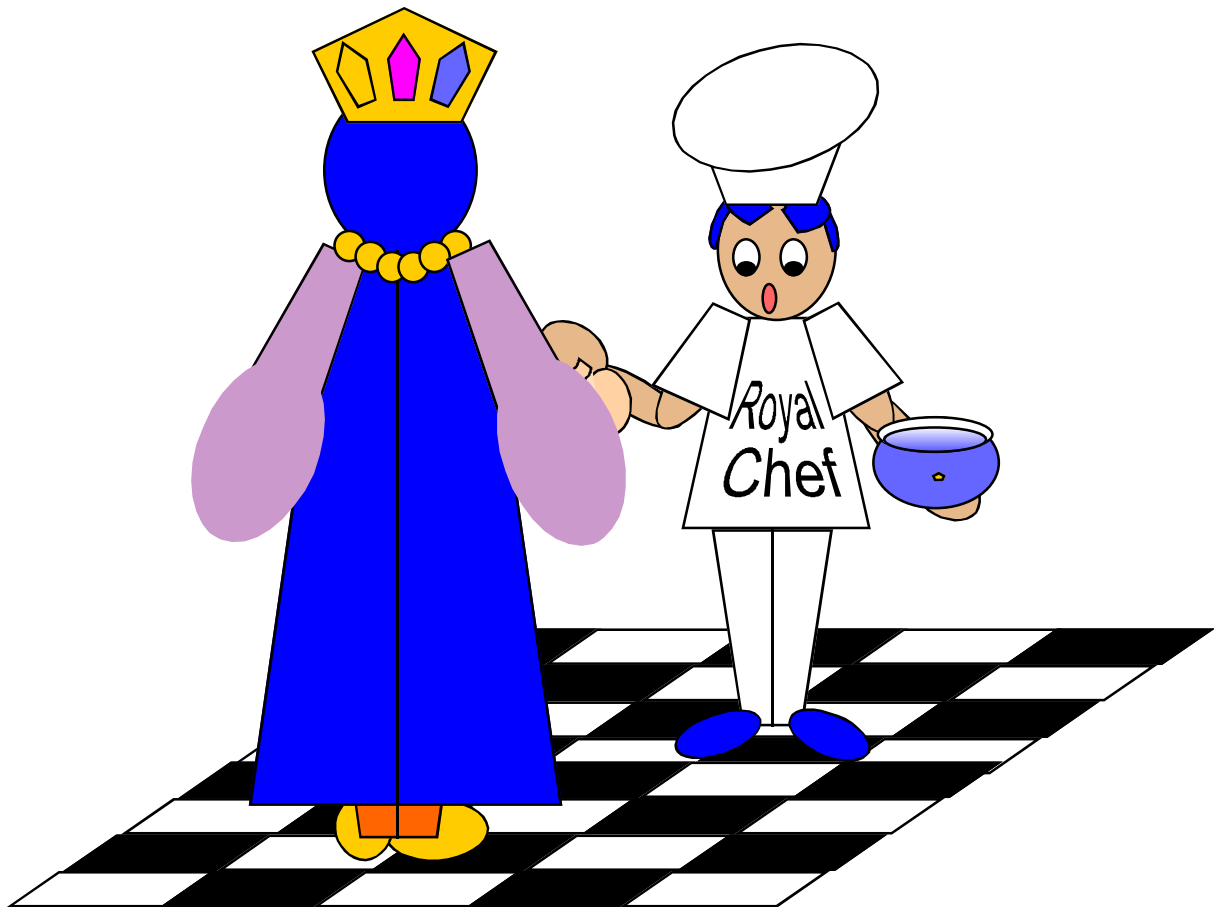




Then he handed Tearza to a kitchen maid nearby.  
But as he turned, he stopped,  
As something shiny caught his eye.  
Reaching in the garbage bin, he moved aside the clutter,  
And facing toward the Royal Chef,  
These angry words he uttered.

“And what are these?” the King requested of the Royal Chef.  
“Your Grace, that’s glassware left behind from other broken sets.”  
“Why?” The King demanded.  
“Why can’t you use them all?”  
“My Lord, you do not understand, their stems are much too tall.





And this design is much too plain to blend with all the rest.  
Besides, My Lord, how will it look to all your Royal guests?"

"Enough, with your excuses!

You know what you've to do.

So.., find all those you've thrown aside, and fix them up like new."

“But Master, that’s impossible! What you ask, can’t be done.  
Besides, there’s so much else to do before the setting sun.”

“Take heed O Chef,” the King replied,  
“And just do what I’ve asked,  
And choose a group of idle hands to start upon this task.”

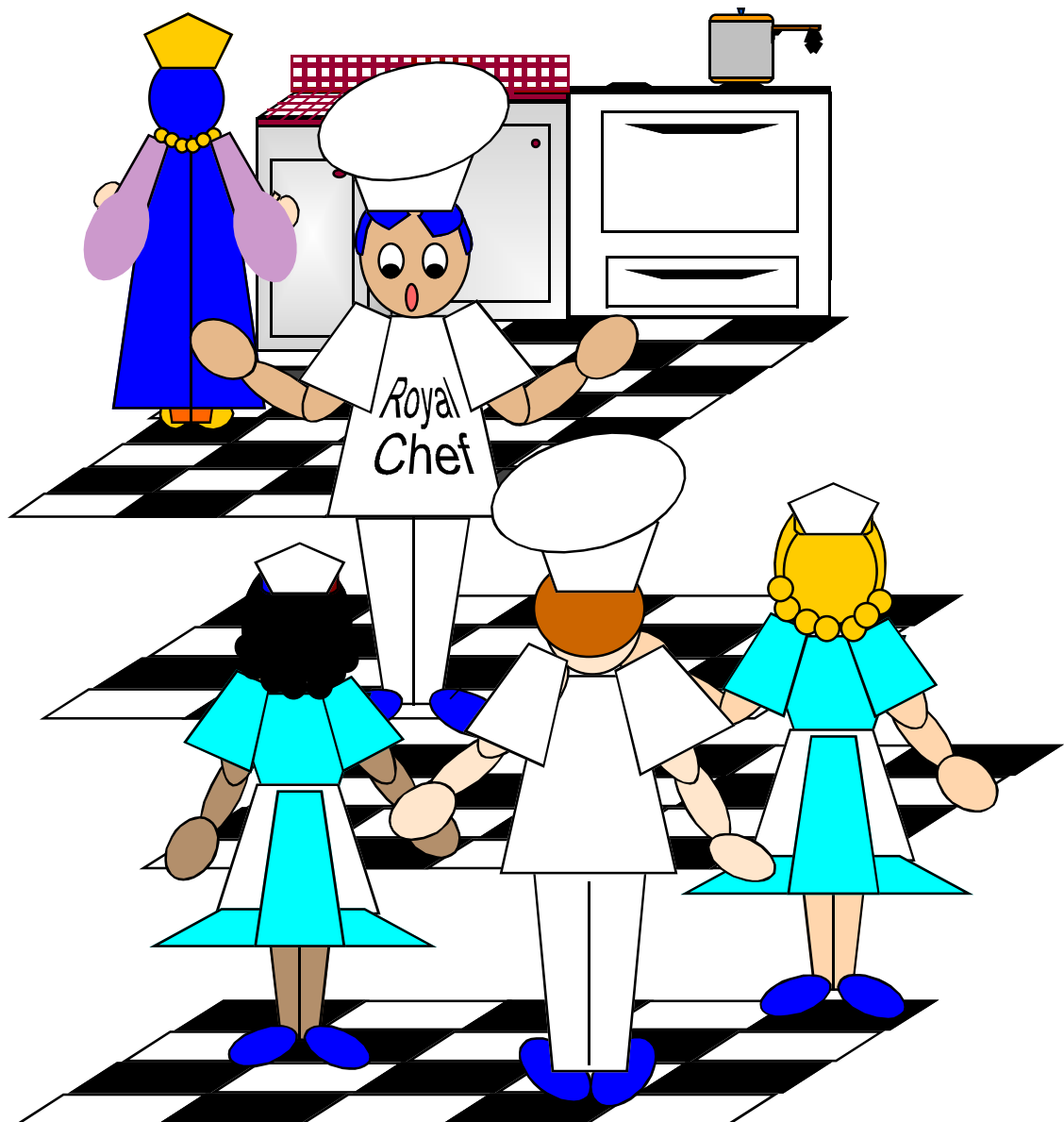


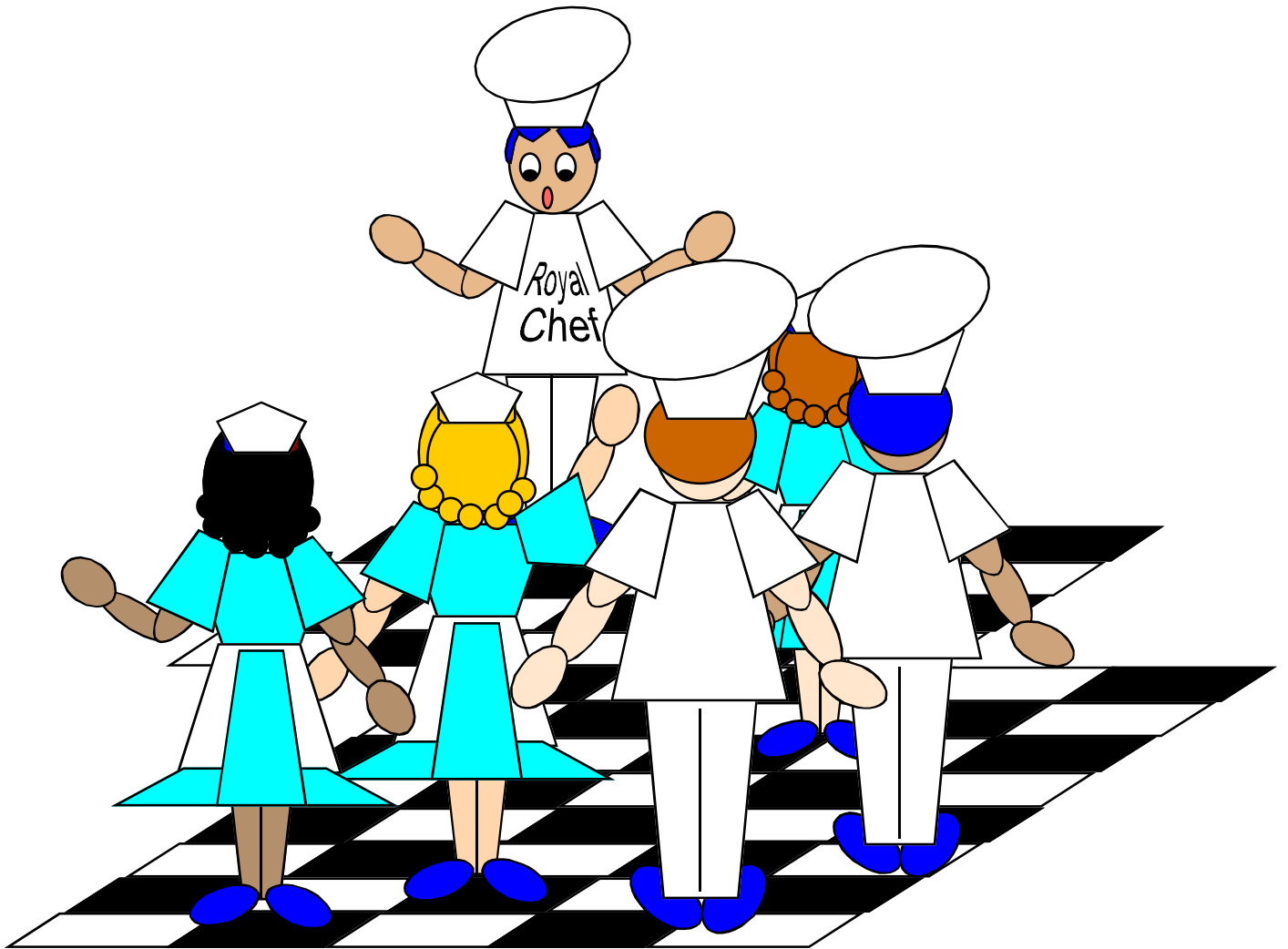


“All right, Your Royal Highness, we’ll do the best we can.  
But even if we fix them up, what of the seating plan?”

“I think, O Chef, that I am King, and I’ll say what is right!  
So set them on the royal mat, and they’ll serve me tonight.”

With shock, the Chef and all his staff watched the King depart.  
Then slowly turning to his staff, the Chef made this remark,  
“Now staff, you heard the King's command,  
So which of you is handy  
At fixing cracks and cleaning glass to look as well as can be?”

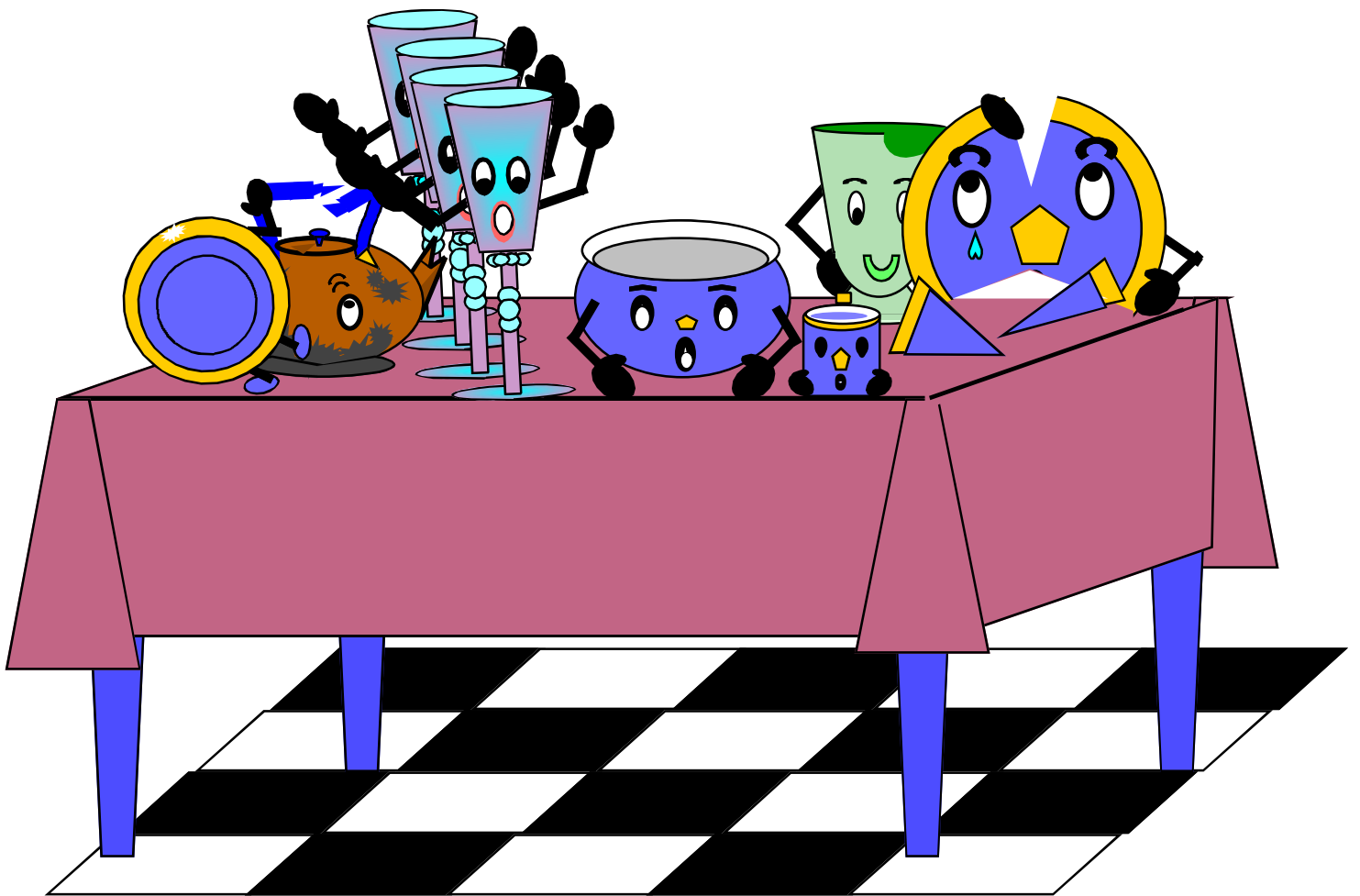


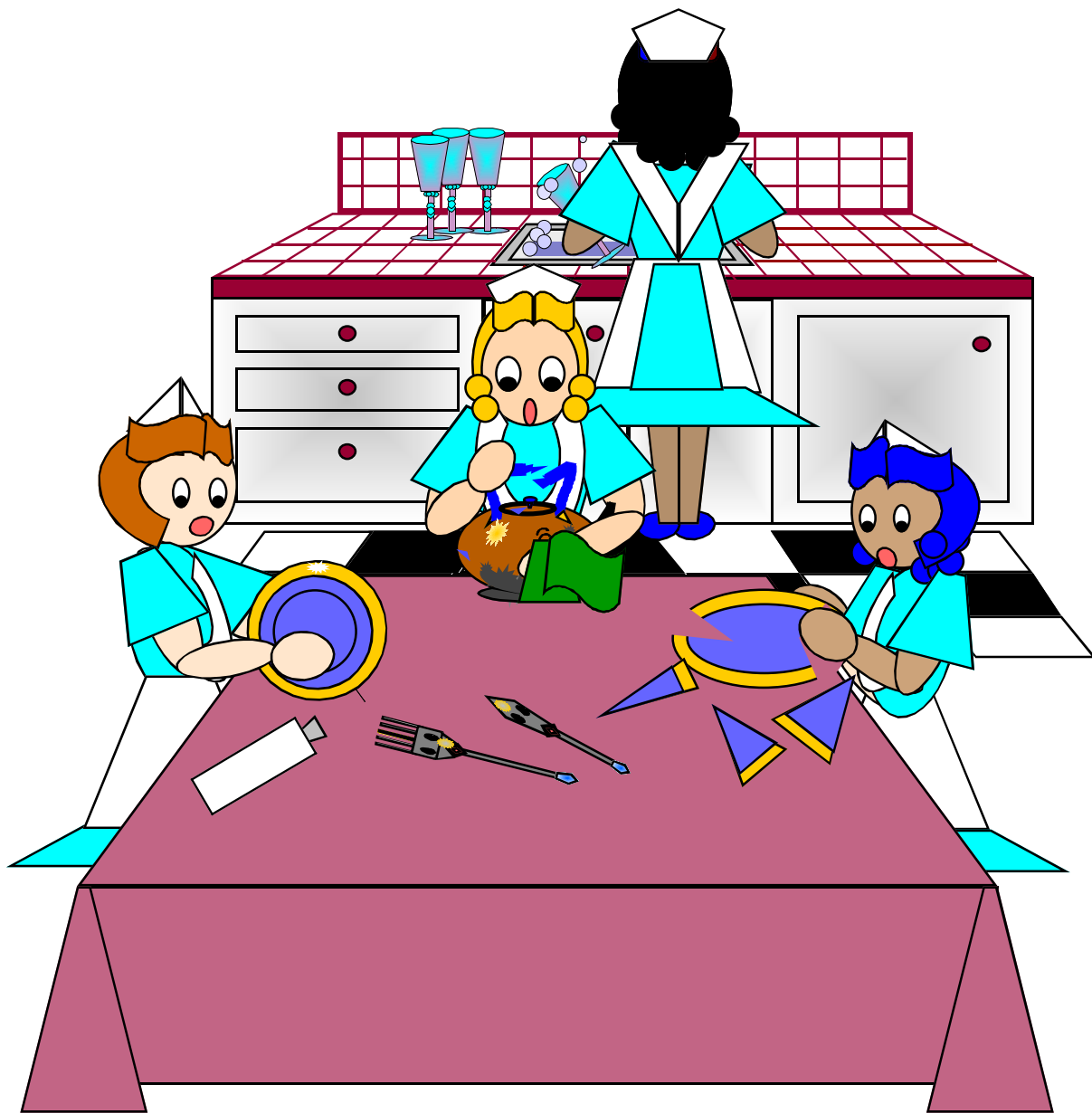


Silence met the Chef's request, until one small brave hand,  
Found the courage to be raised, and spoke,  
"I think I can."  
And then some others joined the maid,  
Committing one by one,  
Their skills to fill the King's command, until the task was done.



His chosen team, assigned their job, knew they must begin  
By finding all those thrown away, within the garbage bin.  
It took some time, but finally the table was aligned  
With all those who'd been cracked and scratched,  
And misused over time.

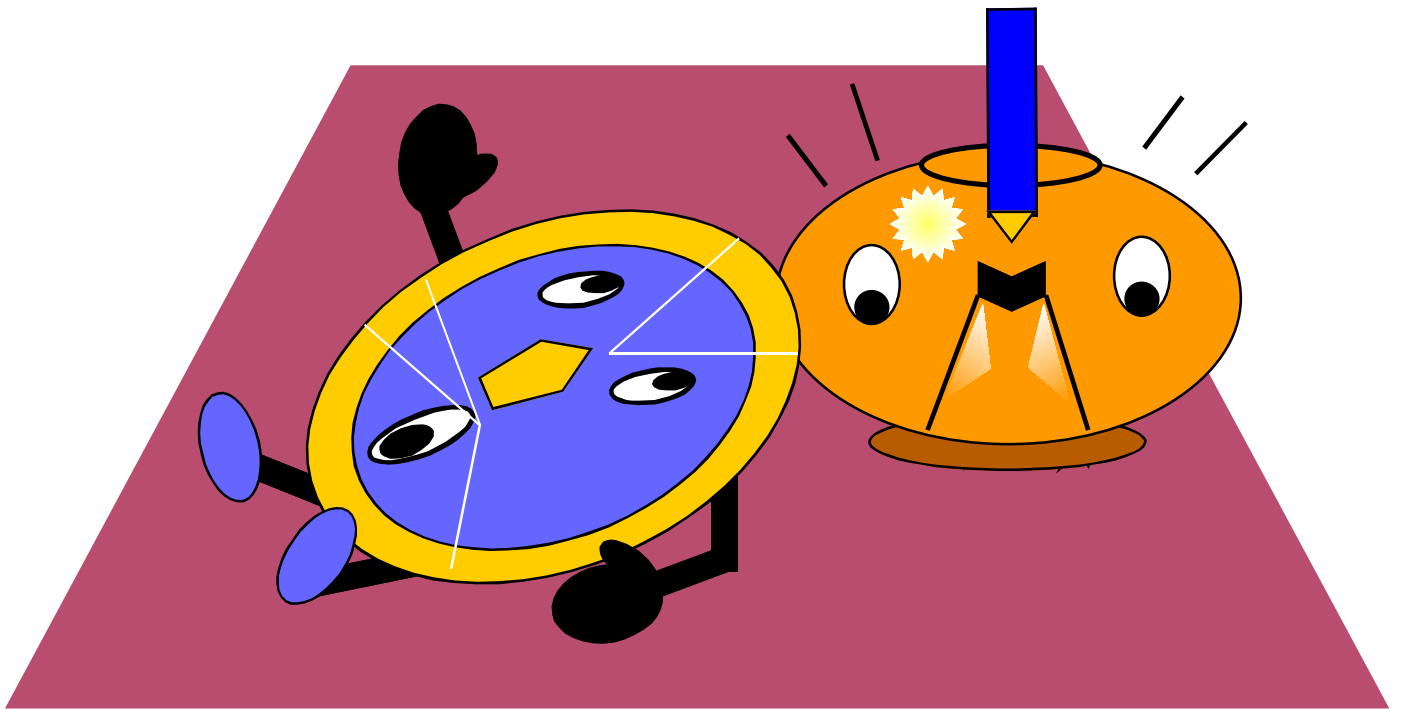


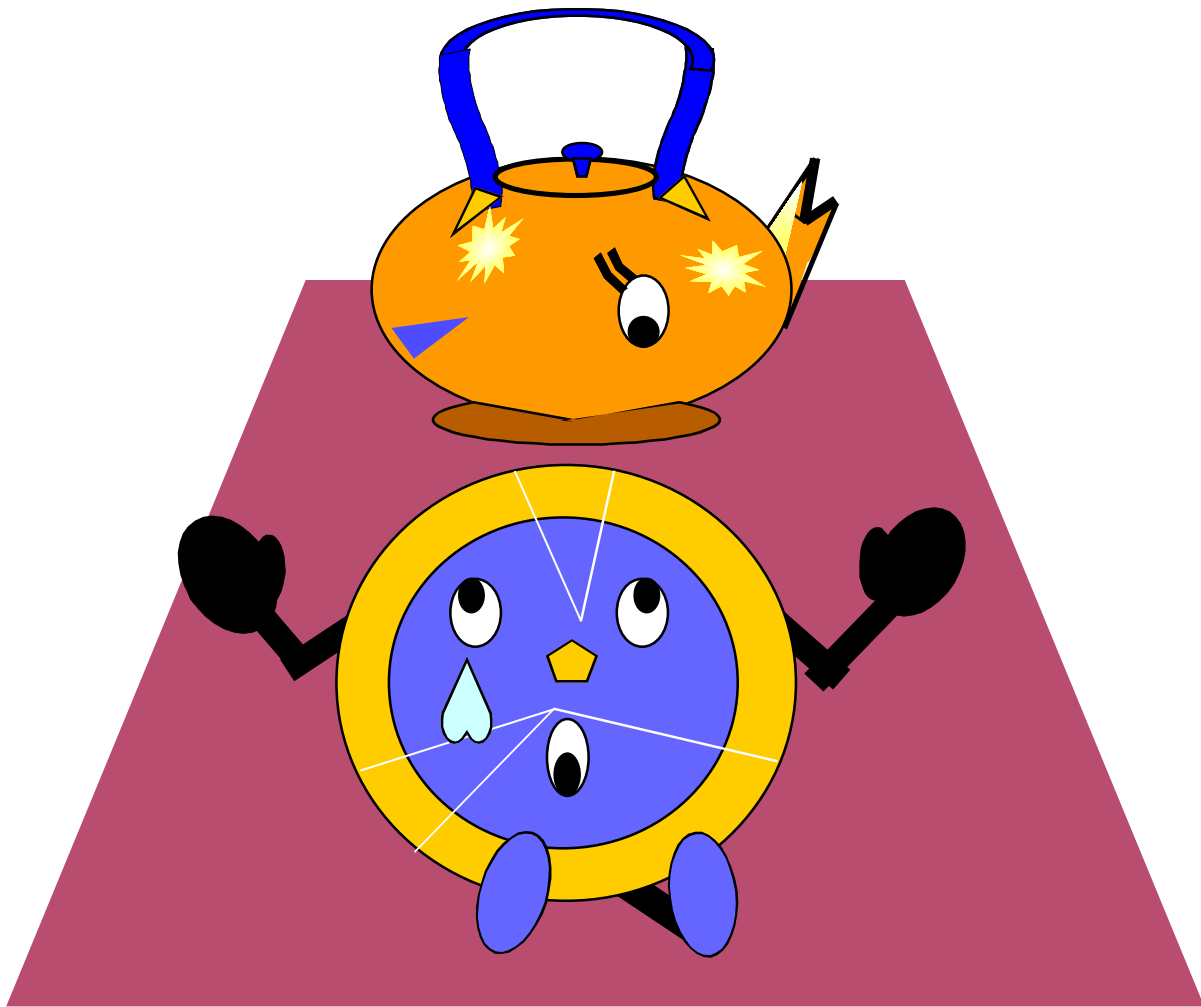


So glasses tall, one Teapot small, and dishes quite unsightly,  
Were glued and cleaned, and with great care,  
polished up quite brightly.  
Then placed just as the King commanded of the Royal Chef,  
This modest band of willing hands, smiled, and then they left.

And as the dinner hour approached, upon the royal mat,  
Miss Tearza Teapot looked around, amazed at where she sat.

Then she heard a soft, “Hello,” whispered in her ear.  
And when she looked, a plate of sapphire blue with gold drew near.





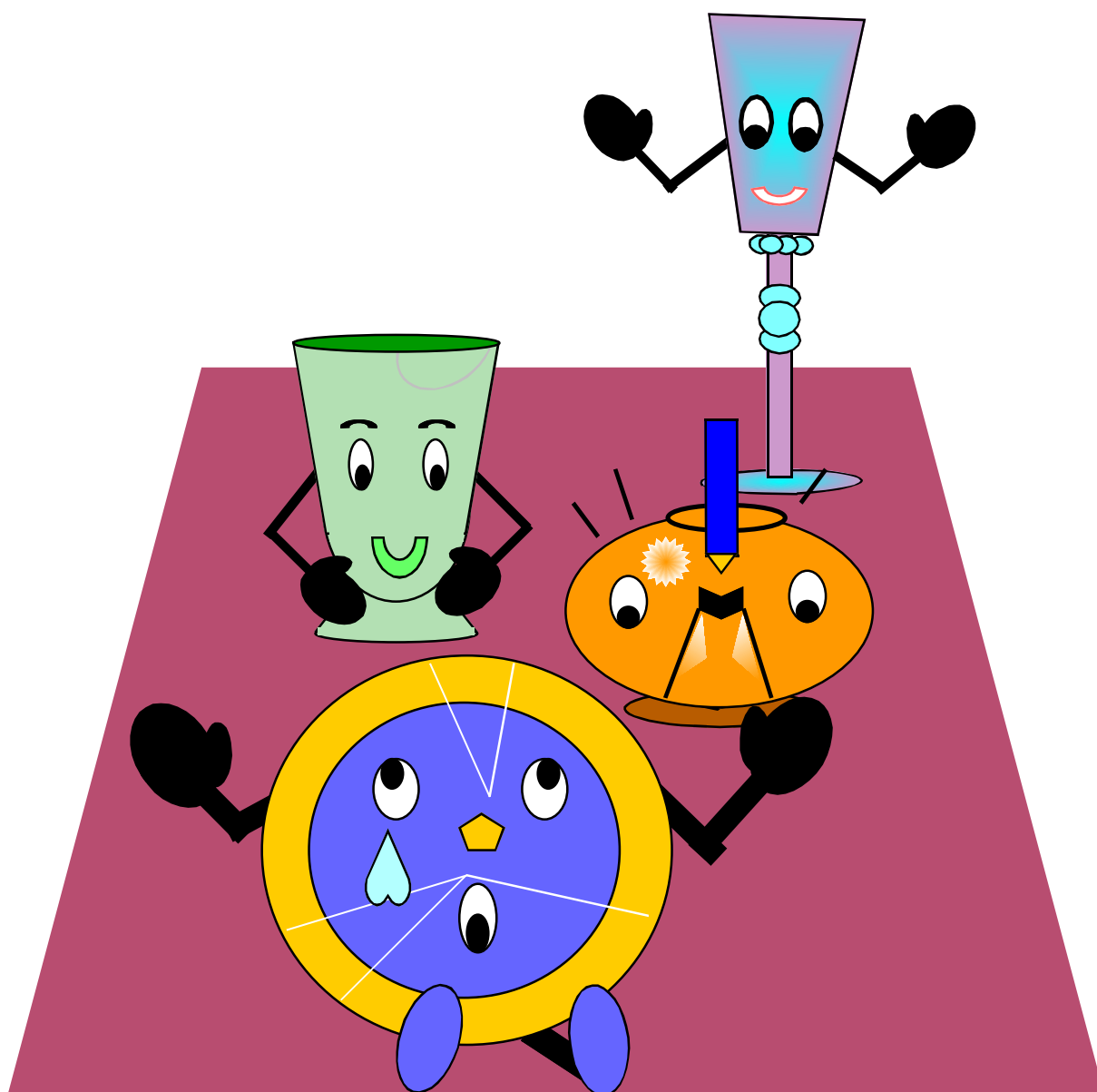
“Dear ‘T,’ I wanted you to know, I heard you pray last night.  
And as I listened to each word, my fears were set to flight.  
And even in the morning, as I landed in the bin,  
My heart felt glad, for now I knew, I truly had a friend.”

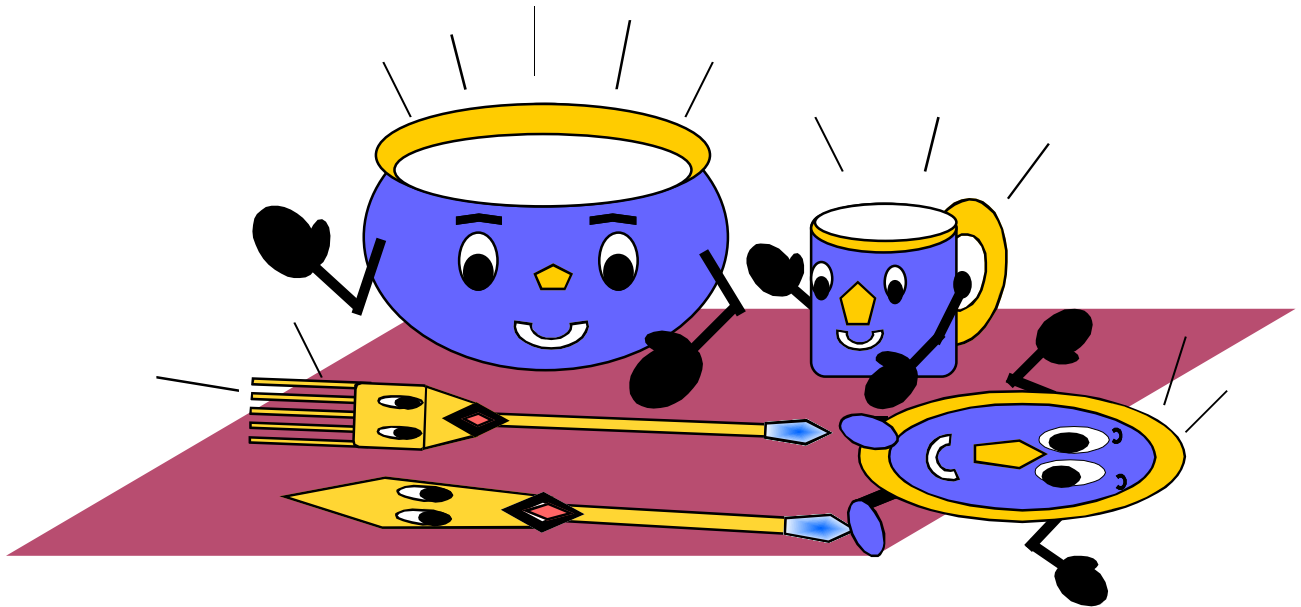
“I’m glad Miss ‘P,’” said Tearza ‘T,’ “so glad that I could help.

But you see, just like you, I’d been left by myself.

But now we’re not alone my friend. Look! They all are here!

There’s Glenny, tall and slender, and Gossy standing near.”

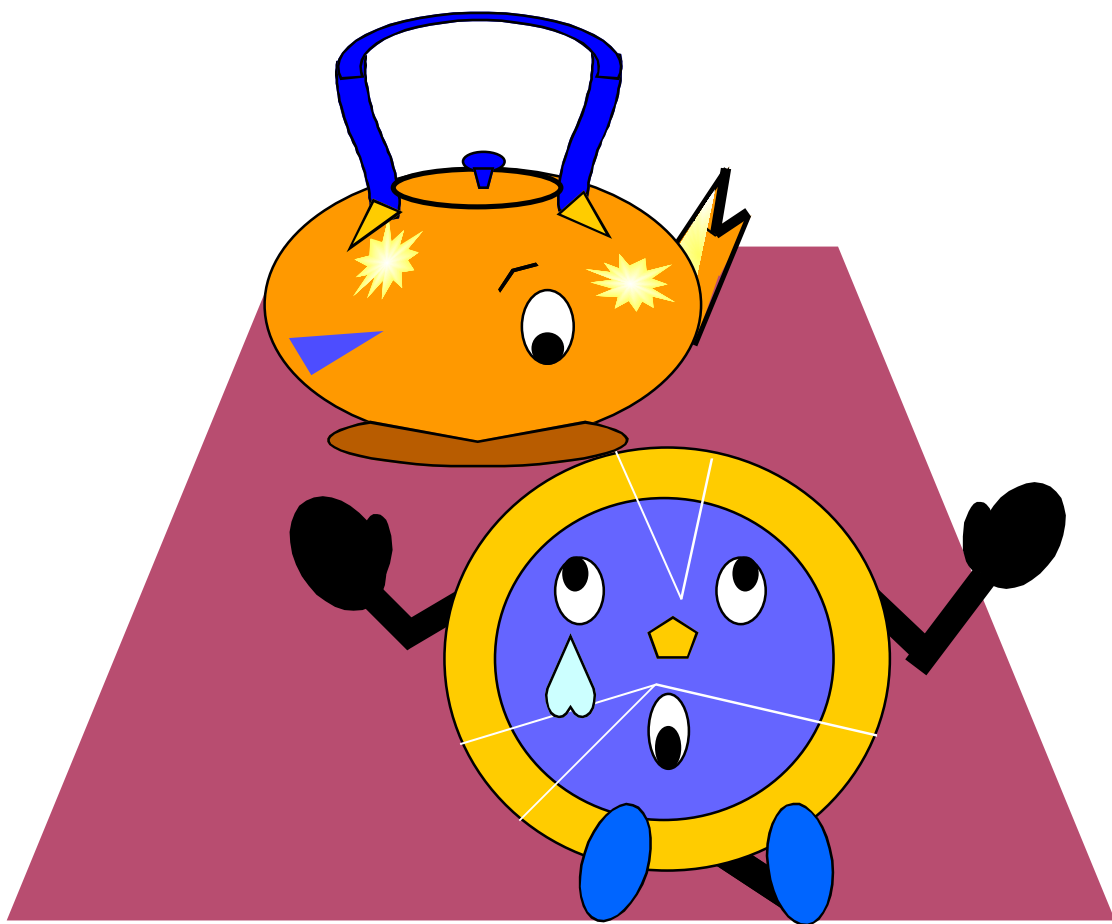


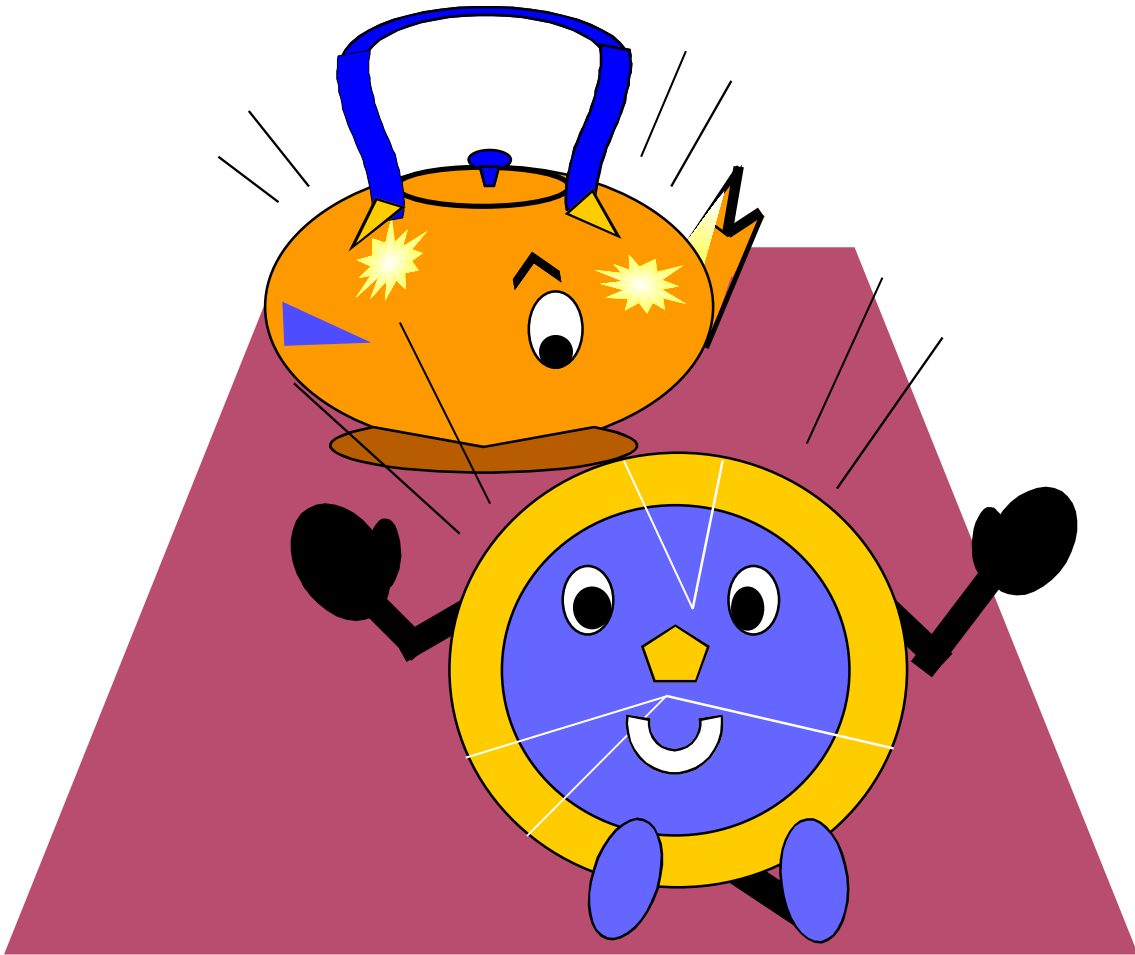


“And I’m here too!” Called Marty Mug,  
His insides scrubbed like new.  
And showing her new mended rim, Miss Susie cried, “Me too!”  
Then Benny Bowl, Franky Fork,  
And a butter knife named Norris,  
Each adding their own “Hello’s” to the thankful chorus.

“You see, my friend, there is no need to be sad anymore.  
For we’ve been chosen, cracks and all, to sit before our Lord.”

“But Tearza ‘T,’ how could I be the plate that he desires,  
When half my china chips are lost within the muck and mire?”





“Why Prissy Plate! I do declare, they’ve fixed you up just fine. Your sapphire blue still sparkles, and I love those extra lines.”  
“Well, I suppose, that you would say it adds to my complexion. But they’re not what I had in mind for ultimate perfection.”



Then silence fell upon them as they heard the dinner bell,  
That golden tone they'd heard before,  
A sound they knew so well.  
And then marched in the kitchen staff, balancing the feast  
The King had ordered served to ALL, the greatest to the least.





Then everyone began to smile, joy filling every heart,  
As each prepared to serve their King, no matter what their part.  
And singing, as he took his throne, rejoicing in his plan,  
They knew **ALL THINGS** were possible,  
In the Master's hand.