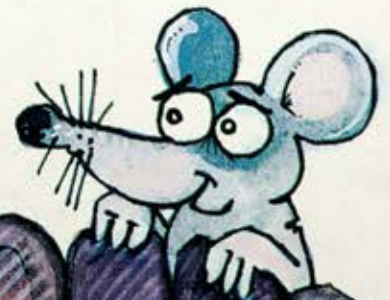
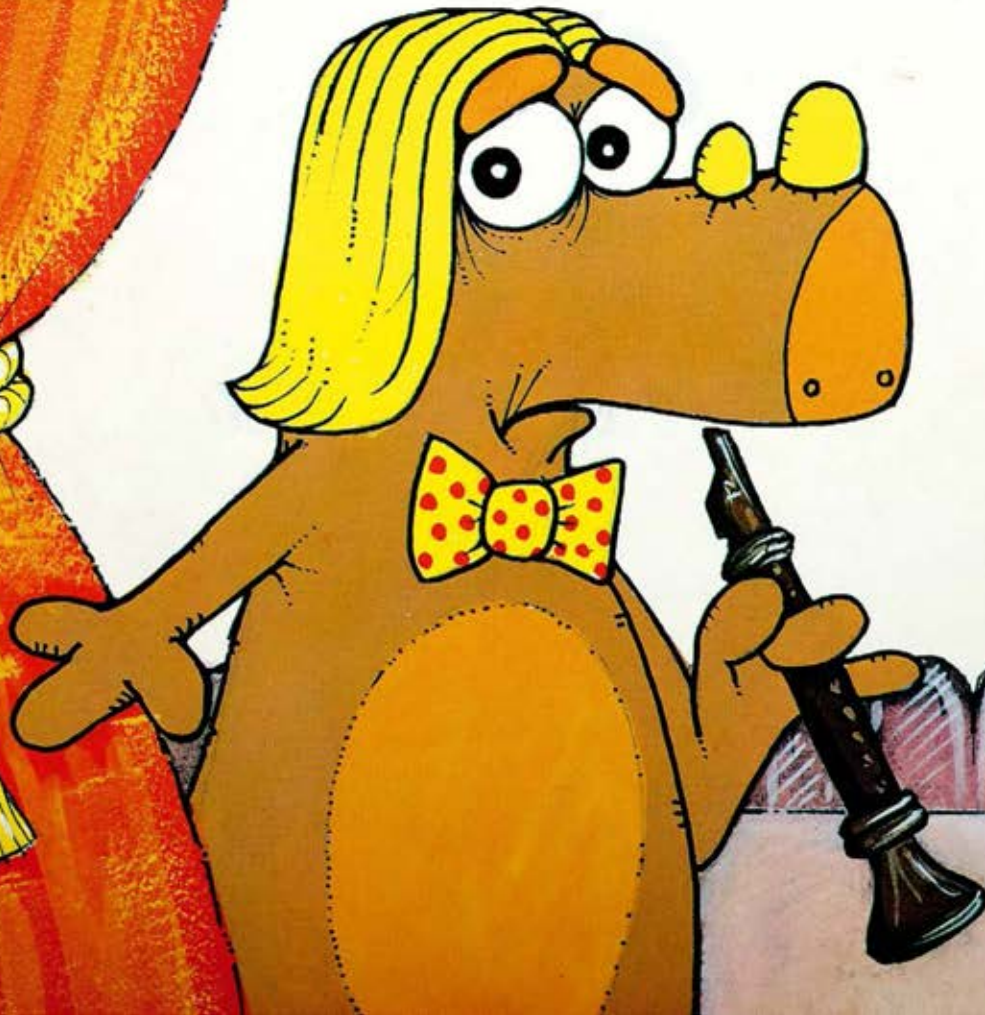


BYRON

SCAREDY?
MONSTERS?

THE MONSTER WHO DIDN'T WANT TO BE ALONE



Michael Salmon

BYRON

THE MONSTER
WHO DIDN'T WANT TO BE ALONE



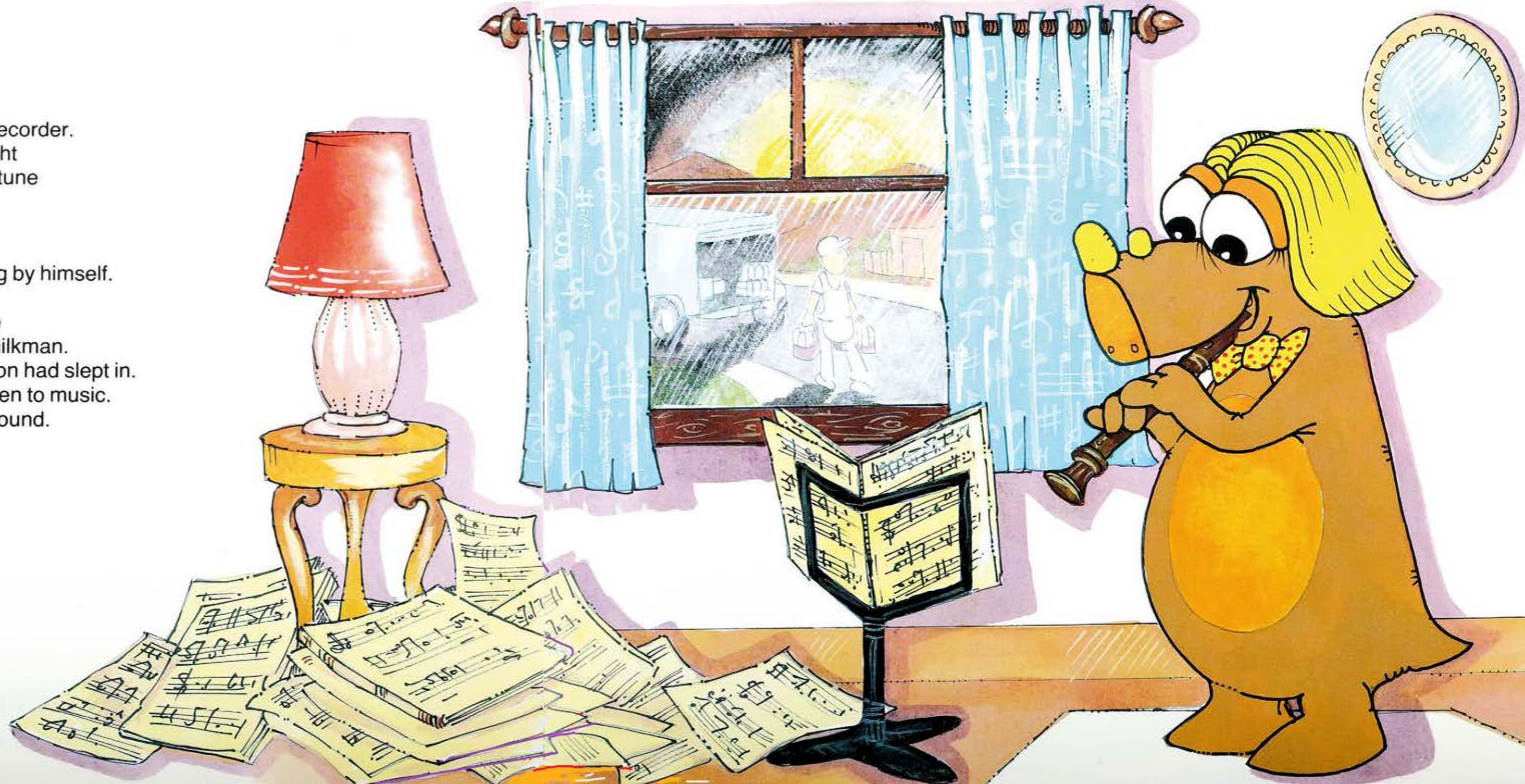
Written and illustrated by Michael Salmon

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Byron loved playing his recorder.
He practised day and night
until he could play every tune
in his music books.

But Byron felt lonely.
It wasn't much fun playing by himself.

Byron woke up at sunrise
specially to play for the milkman.
The milkman wished Byron had slept in.
He didn't have time to listen to music.
He had to finish his milk round.



Byron caught the bus into the city.
He walked along the crowded streets
and watched the people rushing about.
He stood on a corner and started to play.
But nobody stopped to listen.
They were far too busy.

A gentleman in a smart hat tossed a coin
onto the pavement as he strode by.
Byron was upset
because no one stopped to listen to him.



There was a policeman
in the centre of the road,
directing traffic.
He looked very fine in his uniform
with the shiny buttons
and the clean white gloves.

Byron liked the way he waved the cars
and trucks past.
He could stop them all
just by raising his hand.

Byron decided to play for the policeman.
But the policeman took his eyes off the traffic
and scowled at Byron.
Screech, crash, bang, smash!
There was a big traffic jam.

Byron stopped playing
and hurried away.



He passed a grand hotel with a sign saying:
INTERNATIONAL MOUSE CONVENTION.
Crowds of mice were milling around
in the lobby.

'I'm sure they would like me to play for them,'
thought Byron, as he walked past.

But it was useless.
The mice were squeaking so loudly
that Byron couldn't even hear himself play.

'Who's that big guy with the whistle?'
asked a little mouse from China.
'I don't know,' replied a mouse from Mexico.
'Perhaps he's from Australia.
They grow 'em big Down Under!'



Byron read a poster in a supermarket window:
BE HEALTHY — JOIN THE FUN RUN THIS SUNDAY.

'I can play while I'm running,'
thought Byron.
So he bought some jogging shorts
and a pair of running shoes.

Bang! The run started.
Byron tried his best,
but his little legs didn't take him very far.
He was breathless, and couldn't play a note.
He was soon left far behind.

This run wasn't much fun.



Byron was upset.
No one wanted to listen to his music.
He was still alone.

'Perhaps I should make it easier
for people to listen to me,' he thought.

So Byron hired the concert room
in the local Town Hall for one night.

He put on his best clothes,
stepped out bravely onto the stage,
and started to play.

But something was wrong.
He shielded his eyes from the bright spotlight
and peered into the darkness.
All the seats were empty.
No one had come to hear him play.



The weather turned cold,
and snow started to fall.

Byron made some snowmen
and dressed them in funny hats.
'At least *they* will listen to me,'
he thought to himself as he started to play.

But the notes that he played
froze in the cold air
and tinkled to the ground at his feet.

Byron had to wait until the weather
became a little warmer.
But the snowmen slowly melted away
as he played.



The next Friday was Byron's birthday.
No one even sent him a card.

He unwrapped the presents
that he had bought and wrapped for himself
the night before.
He tried to be surprised.

He rang the Singing Telegram company
and asked them to send the Happy Birthday man.
'At least I can play the tune
while the man sings to me,' he thought.

But the Happy Birthday man was fully booked,
so they sent the Gorillagram man instead.
And he didn't even know the words to 'Happy Birthday'.

It wasn't quite the birthday Byron had hoped for.
It made him feel lonelier than ever.



Byron was very unhappy by now. He plodded slowly along the city streets, wondering why he had no friends.

'It's because I play the recorder,' he thought gloomily. 'When I was at home practising, everybody else was out having fun and making friends.'

He bumped into a garbage bin. 'I should get rid of this stupid instrument.' But just as he was about to drop the recorder into the bin he heard a familiar noise.



It sounded very much like a recorder.
In fact, it sounded like several recorders
playing together.

Byron followed the music
down a dark little alley.
He could see a bright light coming from a window.
He peeped in, and couldn't believe his eyes.
There was a room full of people,
and they were *all* playing recorders.

Byron knocked on the door.



'Welcome to the El Sahara Recorder Club!' said the President, with a warm smile. 'You don't have to pay to be a member. You simply have to play the recorder. I see you've got yours. Good. Please come in.'

Byron was thrilled. He had never seen so many recorder players before.

He was introduced to everyone. Then he played his favourite tune and everyone clapped. They thought he was great.

Everyone wanted to play with Byron.

He played in duos.
He played in trios.
He played in quartets and quintets.

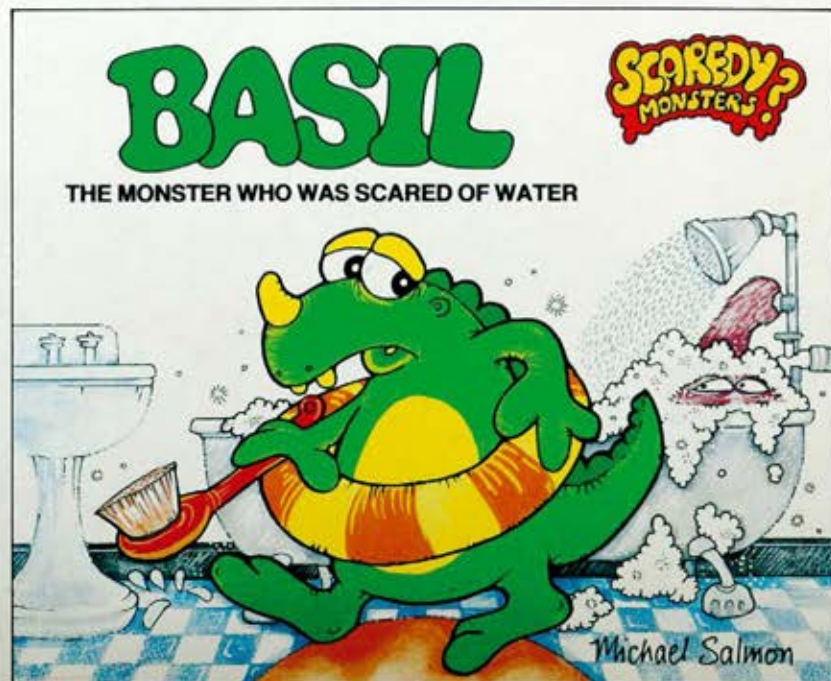
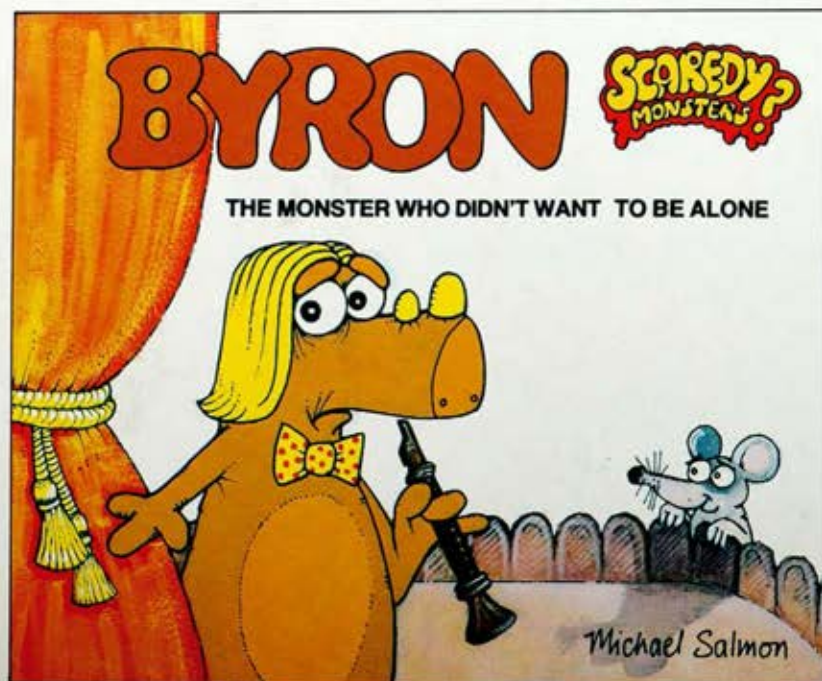
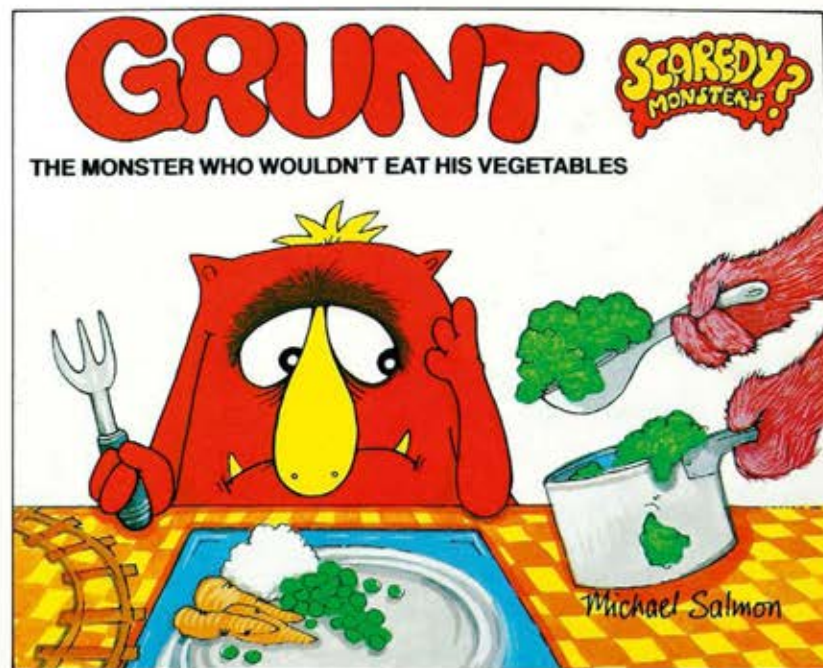
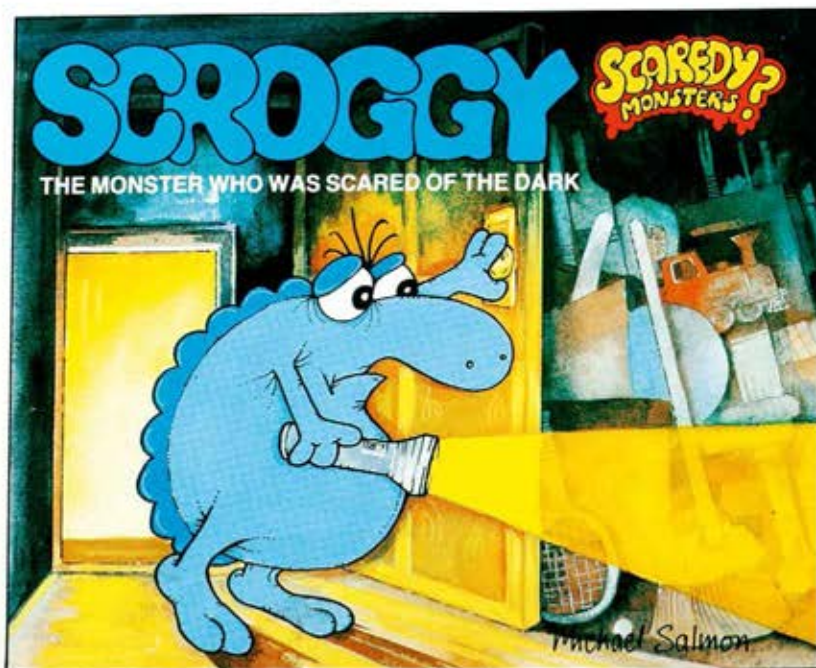
Byron was happy at last.
He would never be alone again!





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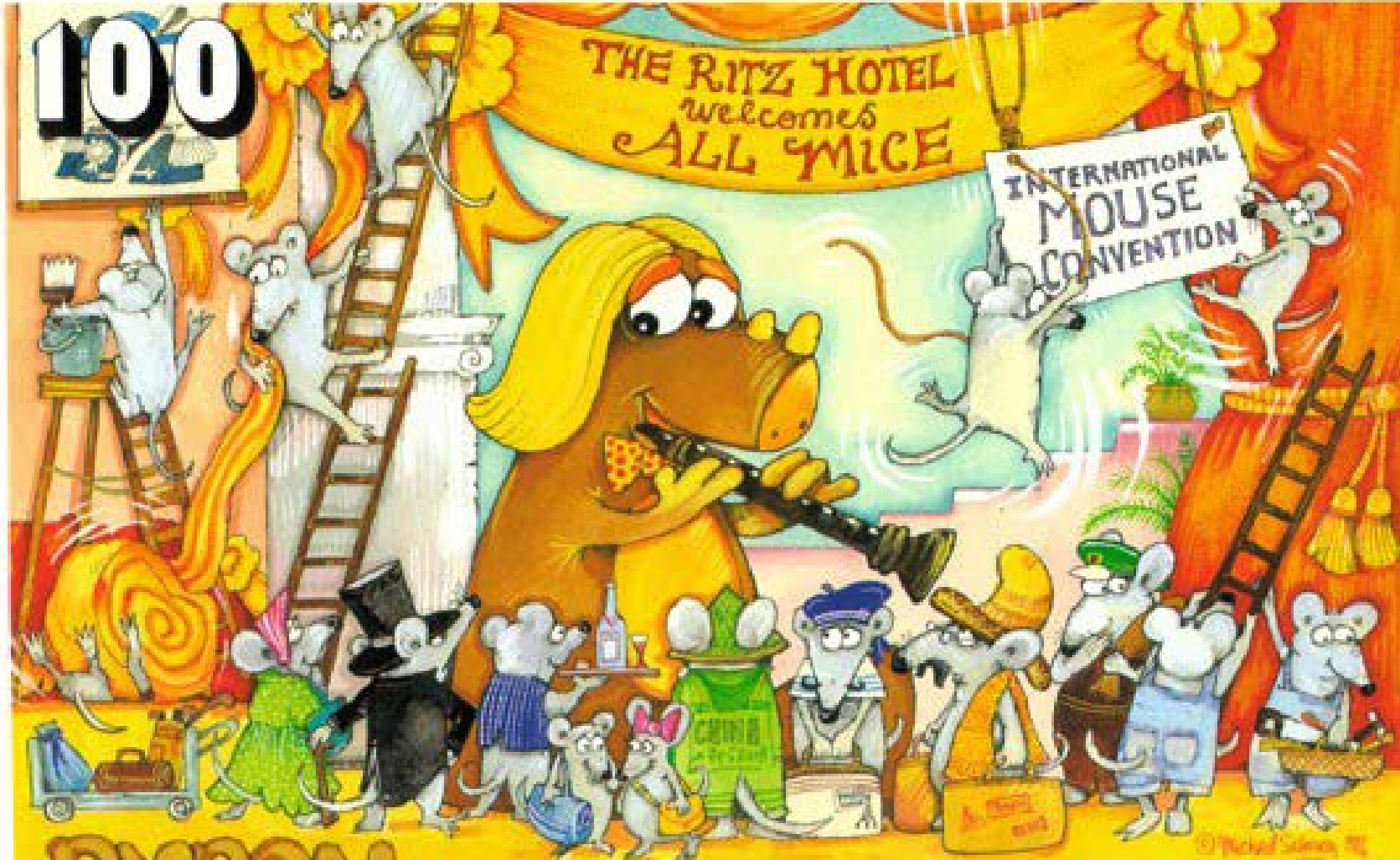
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