The LITTLE WOODEN ROBOT and the LOG PRINCESS

TOM GAULD

There once lived a king and queen
who happily ruled a pleasant land,
but they had no children.
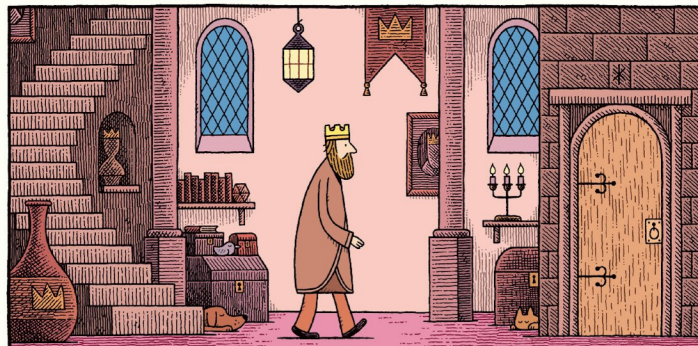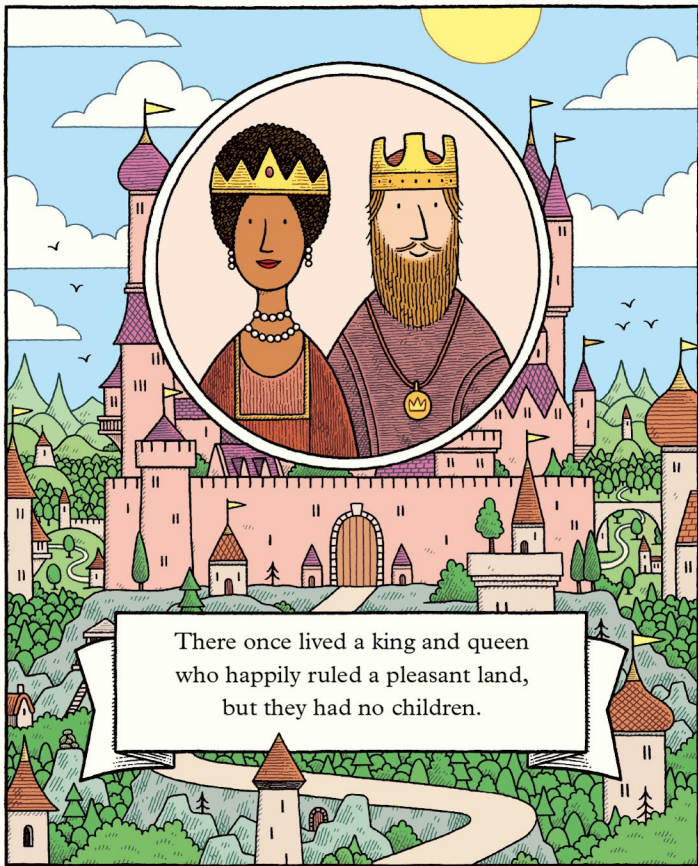
So one night the king went to see the royal
inventor, and the queen went to see a
clever old witch who lived in the woods.

They both asked for the same thing: a child.

The inventor set to work straight away. She used her finest tools and her most ingenious designs and she built a wonderful, intricate little wooden robot.

The witch took a log from the basket by her fire and used her deepest magic to bring the wood to life in the form of a perfect little log princess.

The king and the queen and the princess
and the robot all loved each other instantly.

The log princess was bold and clever,
but she had a secret: each night when she fell asleep,
she turned back into a log and would stay like that
until she was woken by the magic words,
"Awake, little log, awake."

The little wooden robot was brave and kind.
So kind, in fact, that he let a family of beetles nest
in his workings, even though it tickled sometimes.
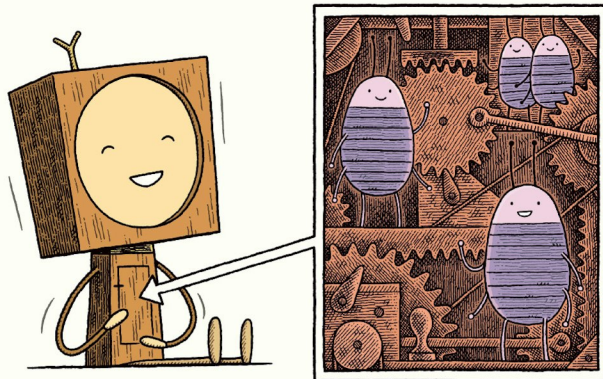
Every day, the robot would wake his log-sister and they
would play in the castle and the gardens until the sun
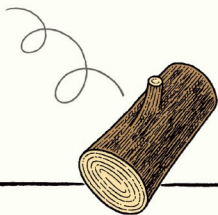went down and they were tired out.
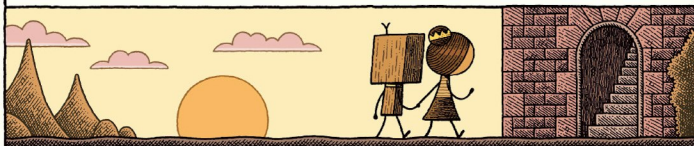
However, one morning, a travelling circus came to visit and the robot rushed down to the courtyard without waking his sister. On the stairs he passed a maid going up to tidy the princess's bedroom.
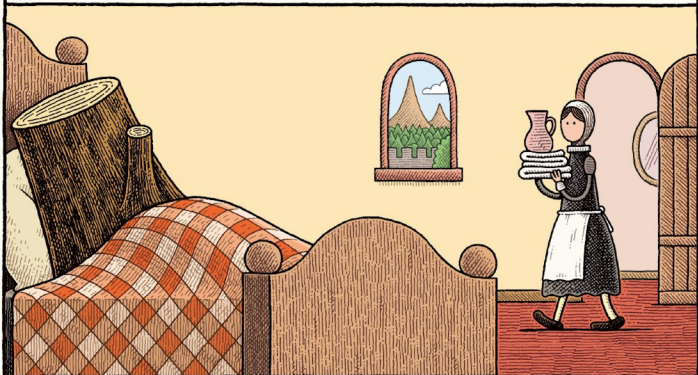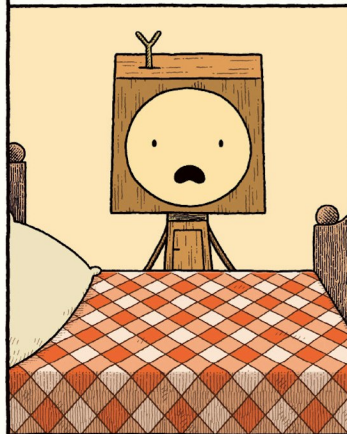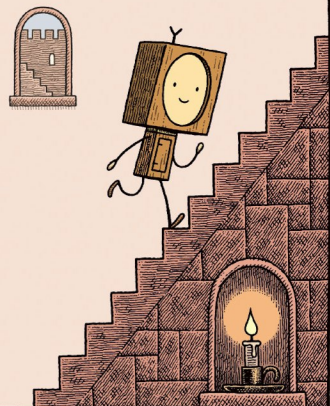
When the maid saw the log she said, "Oh dear! A plain old log, lying in the princess's bed! What a disgrace!" And threw it out of the window.

At that very moment, the little robot thought of his sister.

"How selfish of me!" he said to himself. "She's missing out on all these wonderful things." And he ran to her bedroom to wake her up.

He looked at the empty bed in horror. "Where's the log?" he cried.

"Oh, *that*," said the maid. "I threw it out of the window."