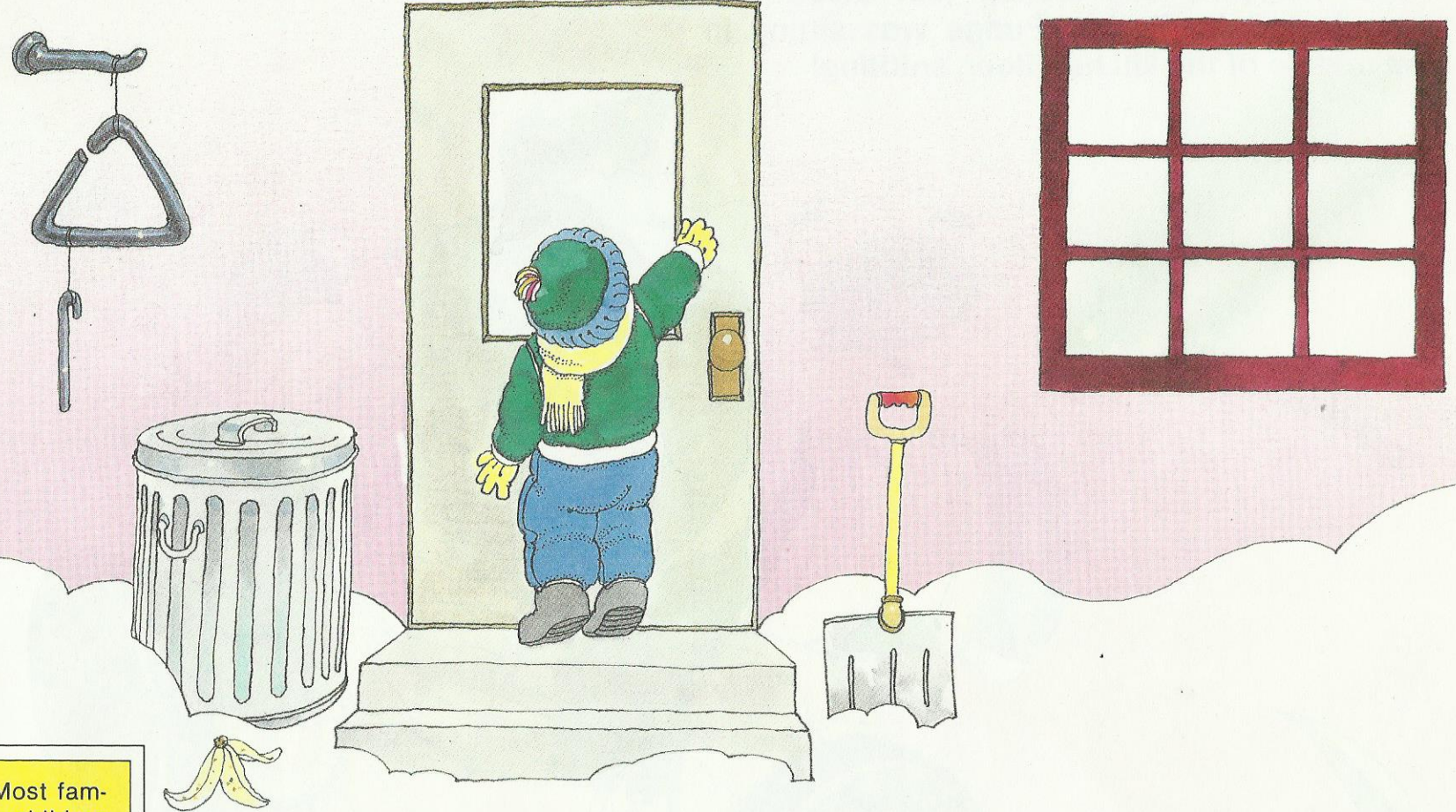


Michael and the Missing Mittens



Parent Notes: Most families with young children have spent time looking for lost mittens, as the Rhinos do in this story.

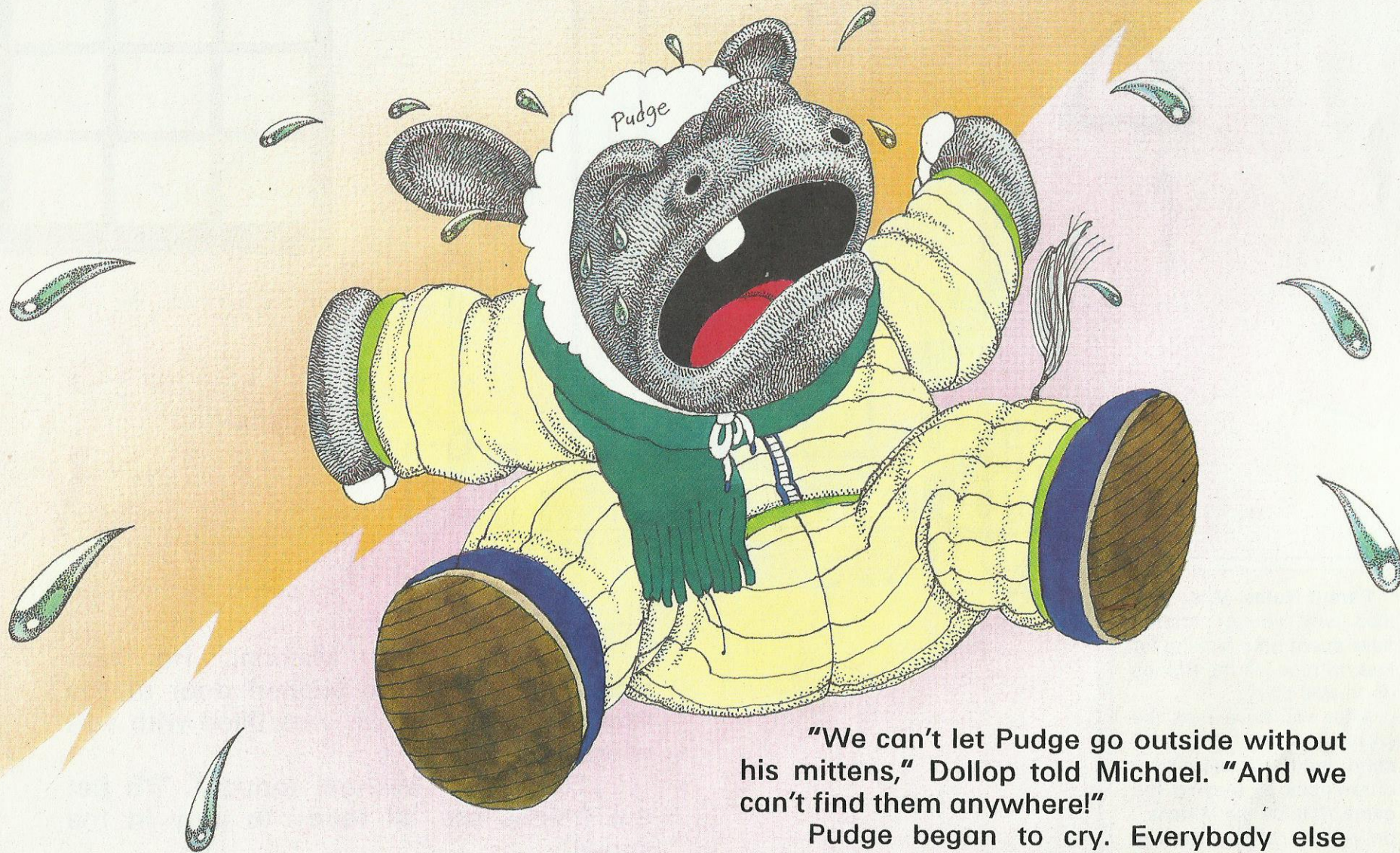
After you have read the story, you can help your child learn to see visual differences by playing the game, "Match the Mittens," on page 2 of the **Activity Guide**.

"SNOW!" said Michael. He was standing outside the kitchen door of the Rhinos' house. The air was filled with soft white snowflakes.

"Oh, boy!" Michael thought. "I'll bet the Rhinos are all ready to play in the snow!"

But when he stepped into the Rhinos' kitchen, Michael found trouble!

All the Rhinos were in the kitchen, dressed and ready to go outside. But Mama, Papa, Ruggles, and Dollop just stood and stared at Baby Pudge. Pudge was sitting in the middle of the kitchen floor, sniffing!



"We can't let Pudge go outside without his mittens," Dollop told Michael. "And we can't find them anywhere!"

Pudge began to cry. Everybody else looked sad, too.

"Come on!" said Papa. "We'll search the house again!"

"But we've already looked in all the right places for mittens," Mama said. "The closet, Pudge's sock drawer, everywhere!"

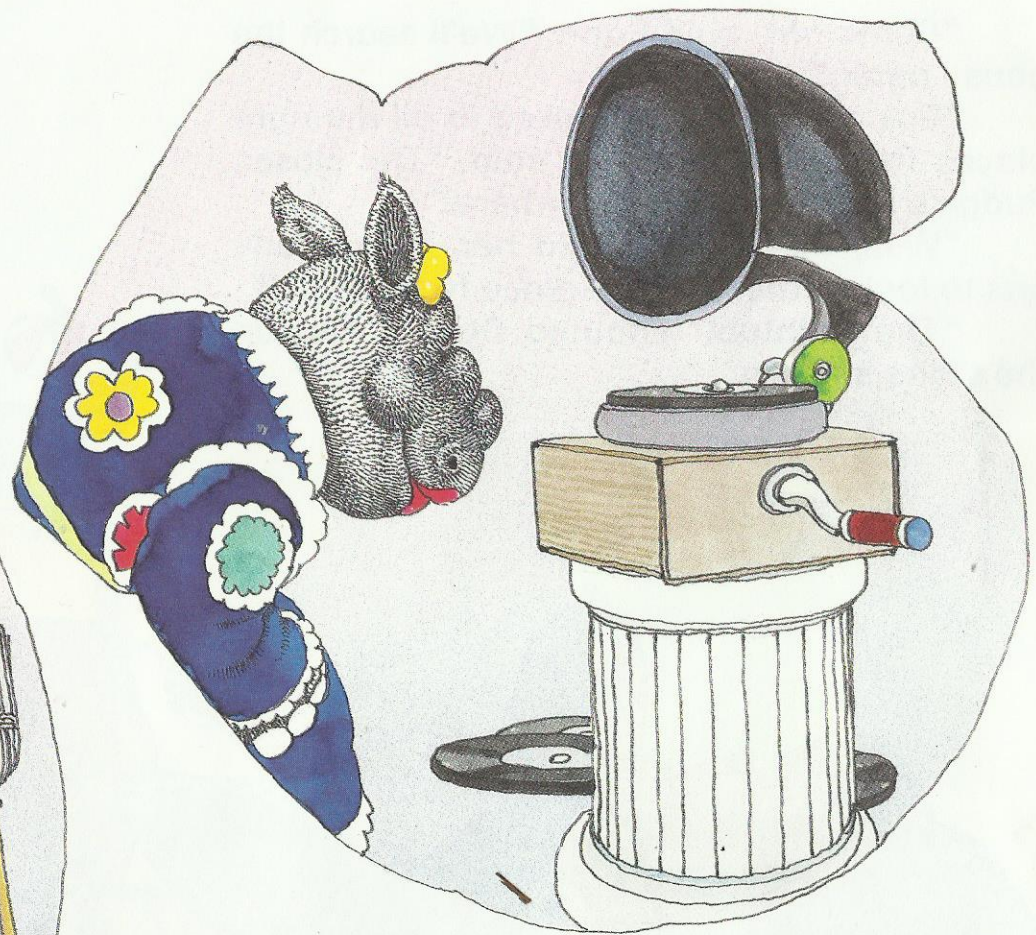
"Well, then," Papa told her, "everybody has to look in the **WRONG** place for mittens!"

"The bathtub!" shouted Dollop. And up the stairs she ran.



"I know!" Ruggles said. "Mittens **COULDN'T** be in between the pages of my airplane book. I'll go look there!" He raced after Dollop.

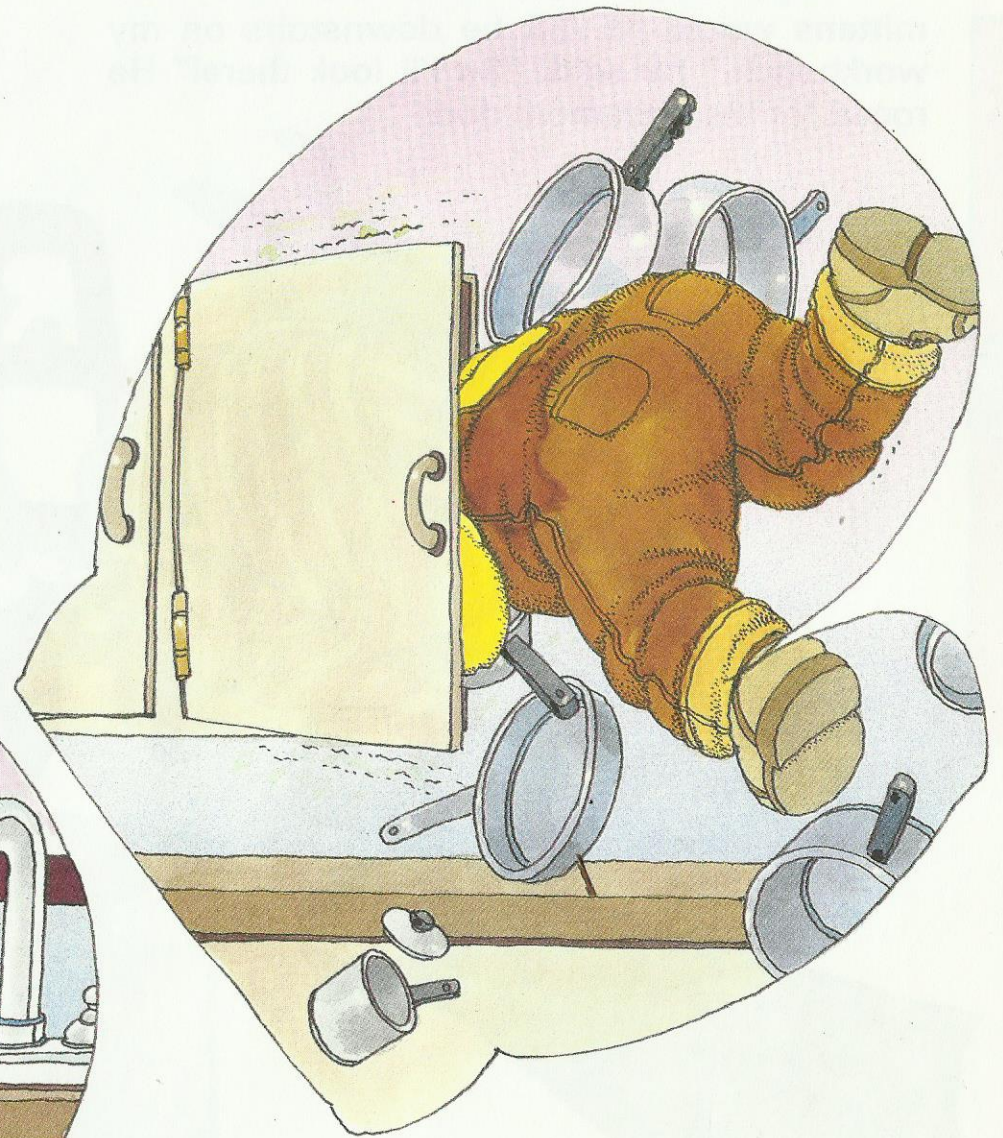
"Hmmm," Papa was thinking. "The shelf where we keep extra light bulbs is the **WRONG** place for mittens. I'll try there!" So he went into the hall.



Mama Rhino looked around the kitchen. "I think this is a little silly," she said, "but I'll look behind the record player anyway!" And she went into the living room.

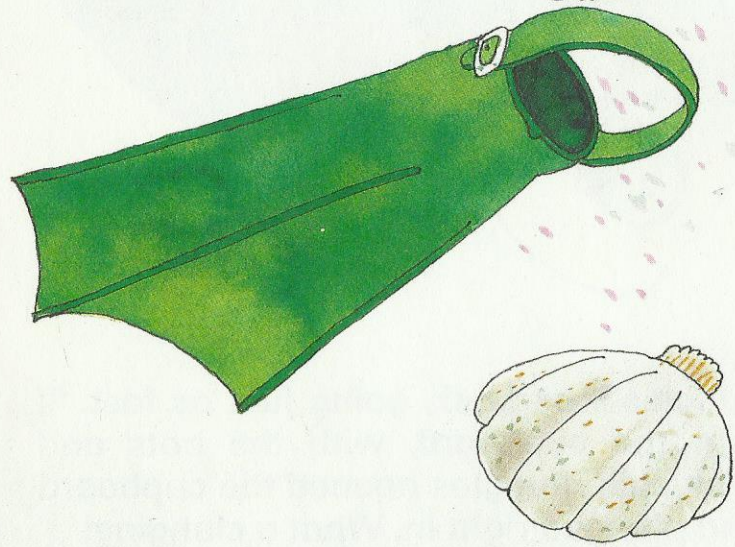
Just then Dollop came crashing downstairs. She didn't have any mittens.

"The popcorn popper!" she called as she ran by. "That would be a REAL dumb place for mittens!" Dollop ran to the pantry for the popcorn popper.



Ruggles was back, going just as fast. "I know! In the cupboard, with the pots and pans!" he said. Ruggles opened the cupboard door and plunged right in. What a clanging!

Papa came back from the hall. "The mittens would NEVER be downstairs on my workbench," he said. "So I'll look there!" He raced for the basement door.



Mama came back in with a big box of beach toys. "We haven't used these since summer," she said. "The mittens couldn't POSSIBLY be in here!"

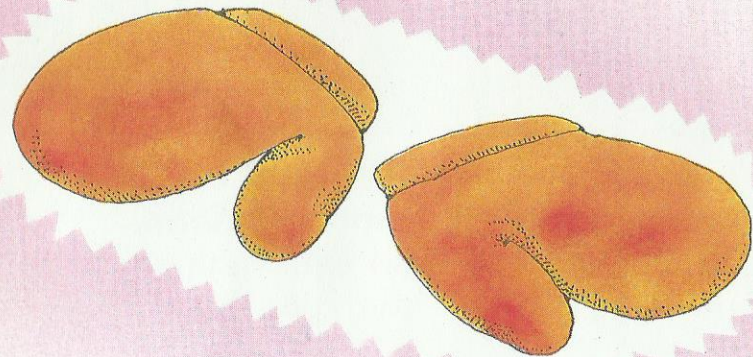
She opened the box and started looking. Beach toys went flying!

Michael looked at Pudge and thought, "What's another WRONG place to look for mittens?"

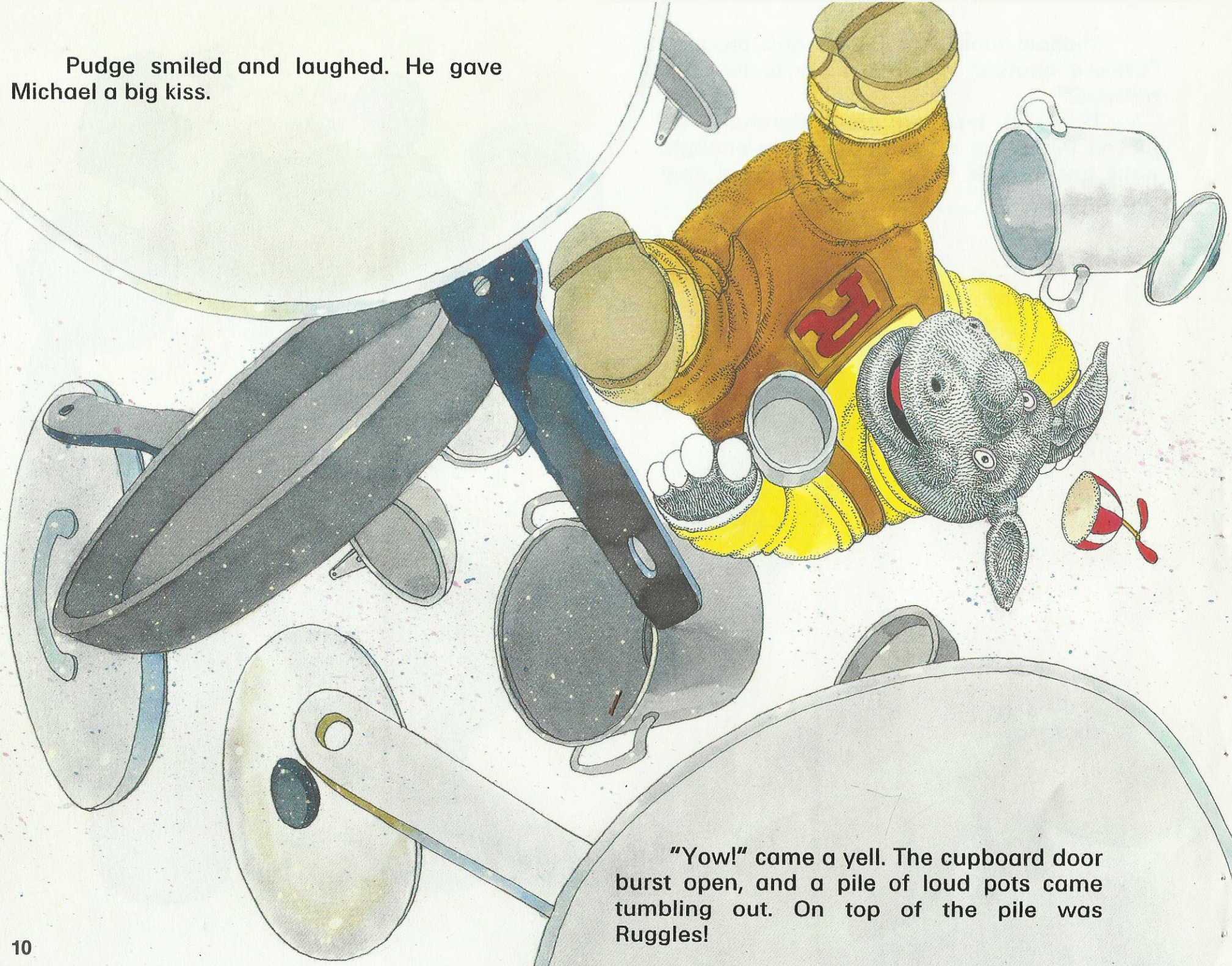
Then he had an idea! Carefully, he picked Pudge up off the floor. Sure enough, right underneath Baby Pudge, Michael saw the mittens!



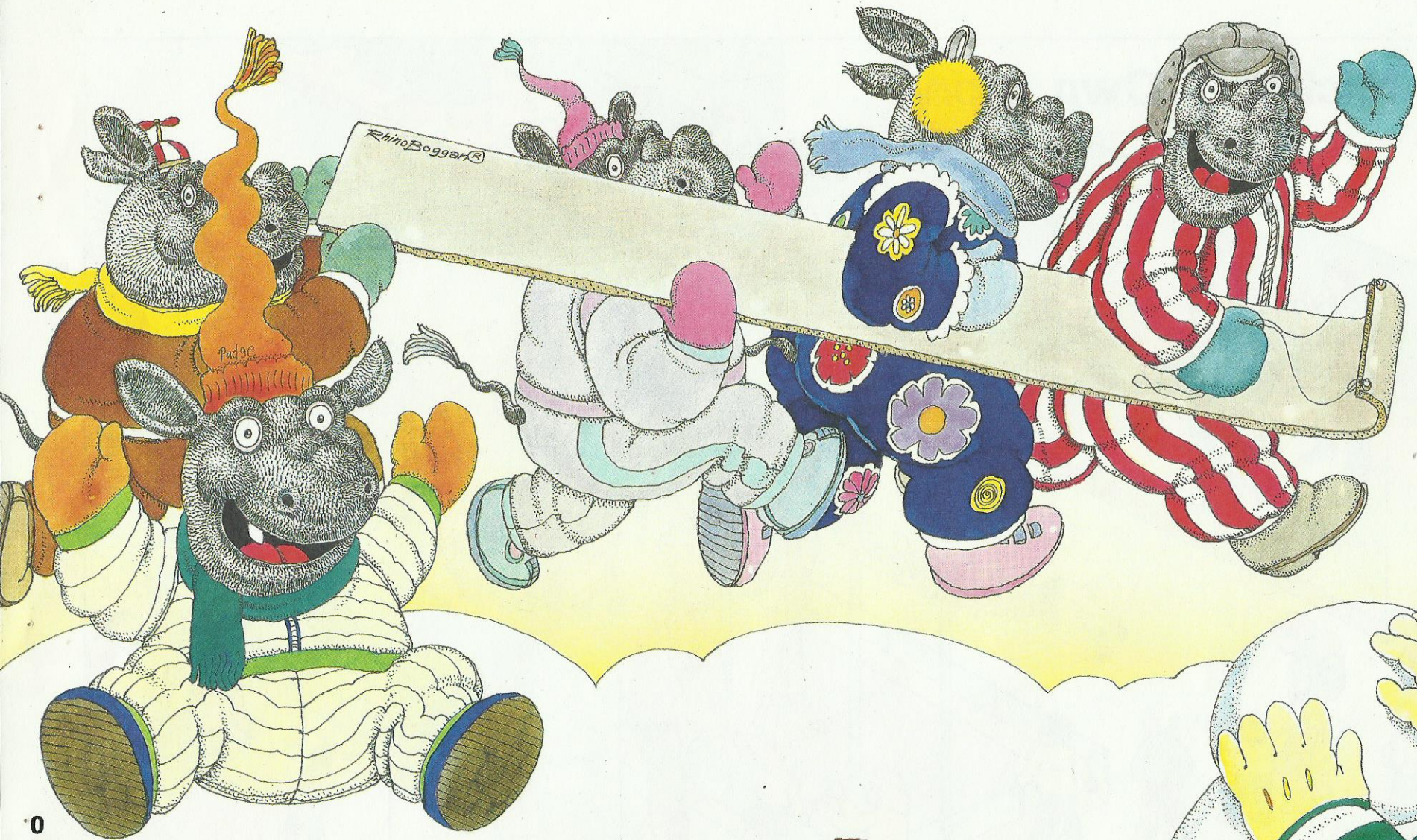
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7
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4



Pudge smiled and laughed. He gave Michael a big kiss.



"Yow!" came a yell. The cupboard door burst open, and a pile of loud pots came tumbling out. On top of the pile was Ruggles!



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The noise brought the rest of the family running. The first thing they saw was a very happy Pudge, jacket, mittens, and all! The Rhinos stared for a second. Then they all laughed and said to Michael: "LET'S GO!" And out into the snow they went! □

