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### The Island Merry-Go-Round

Ruth S. Sargent

Pam Devito

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SARGENT

# the Island Merry-Go-Round



WRITTEN  
BY  
RUTH SARGENT

Illustrated  
BY  
Pam Devito



# the Island Merry-Go-Round



WRITTEN BY RUTH SARGENT

Illustrated by Pam Devito

A Windswept Book  
Windswept House • Mount Desert, Maine



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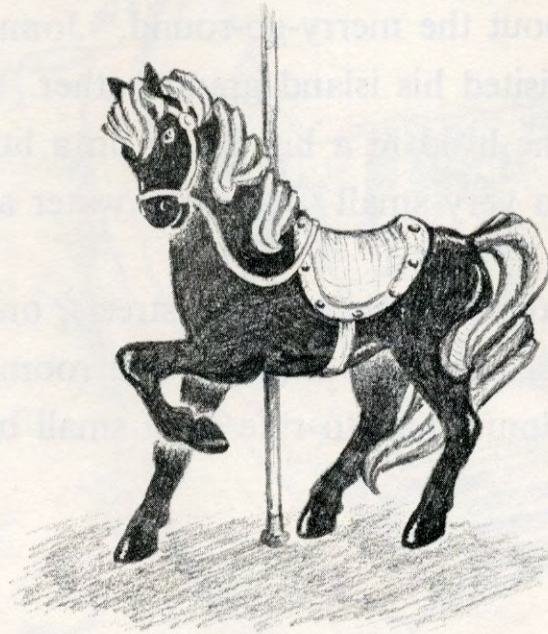


# *the Island Merry-Go-Round*

*Dedicated To Bea,  
the "really-truly" little girl  
who loved Jewels and now owns him.*



# the Island Merry-Go-Round





“T ell me about the merry-go-round,” Jonny begged whenever he visited his island grandmother. He called her that because she lived in a big house on a little island. This island is a very small town with water all around it.

Grandmother’s island had ten streets, one store, two churches, and a little school (all in one room) that she had gone to. Jonny had to ride on a small boat to get there.







**H**e always asked Grandmother to tell him about the merry-go-round with the black wooden horse named Jewels.

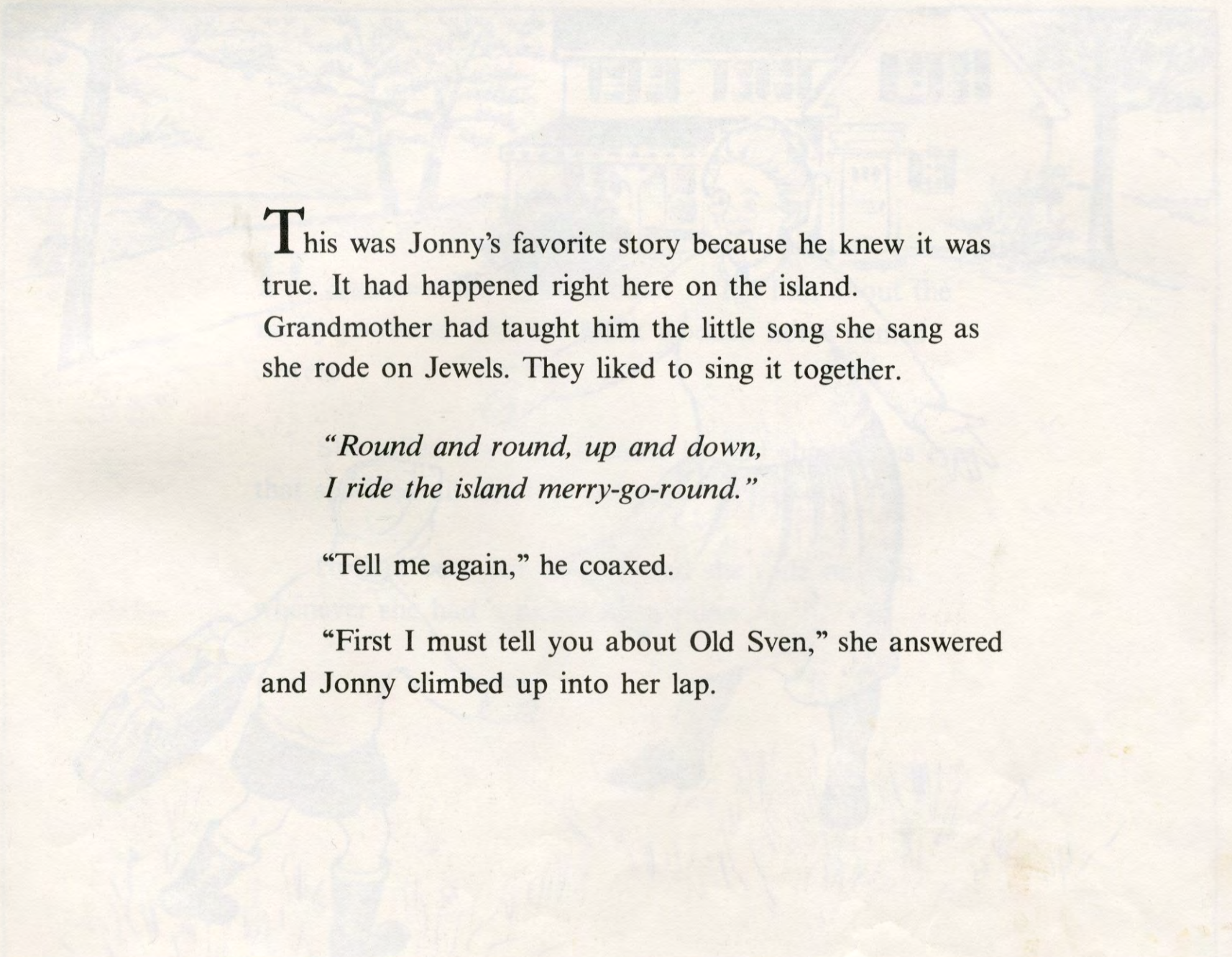
She called him that because he had shiny glass eyes that sparkled all different colors.

He had been her favorite and she rode on him whenever she had a nickel for a ride.









**T**his was Jonny's favorite story because he knew it was true. It had happened right here on the island. Grandmother had taught him the little song she sang as she rode on Jewels. They liked to sing it together.

*"Round and round, up and down,  
I ride the island merry-go-round."*

"Tell me again," he coaxed.

"First I must tell you about Old Sven," she answered and Jonny climbed up into her lap.







**“H**e lived in Norway, far across the ocean, in a house by the sea. He liked to sit, look out at the water, and watch the waves come rolling in. His old hands were always busy carving animals from pieces of wood. Sometimes he would carve a little horse, other times a cow; and often a seagull like those he saw flying in the air.

“Sometimes he would imagine what a lion or a tiger looked like and then he’d try to carve one. Children liked to come and sit with Old Sven and watch him. It seemed like magic to them.

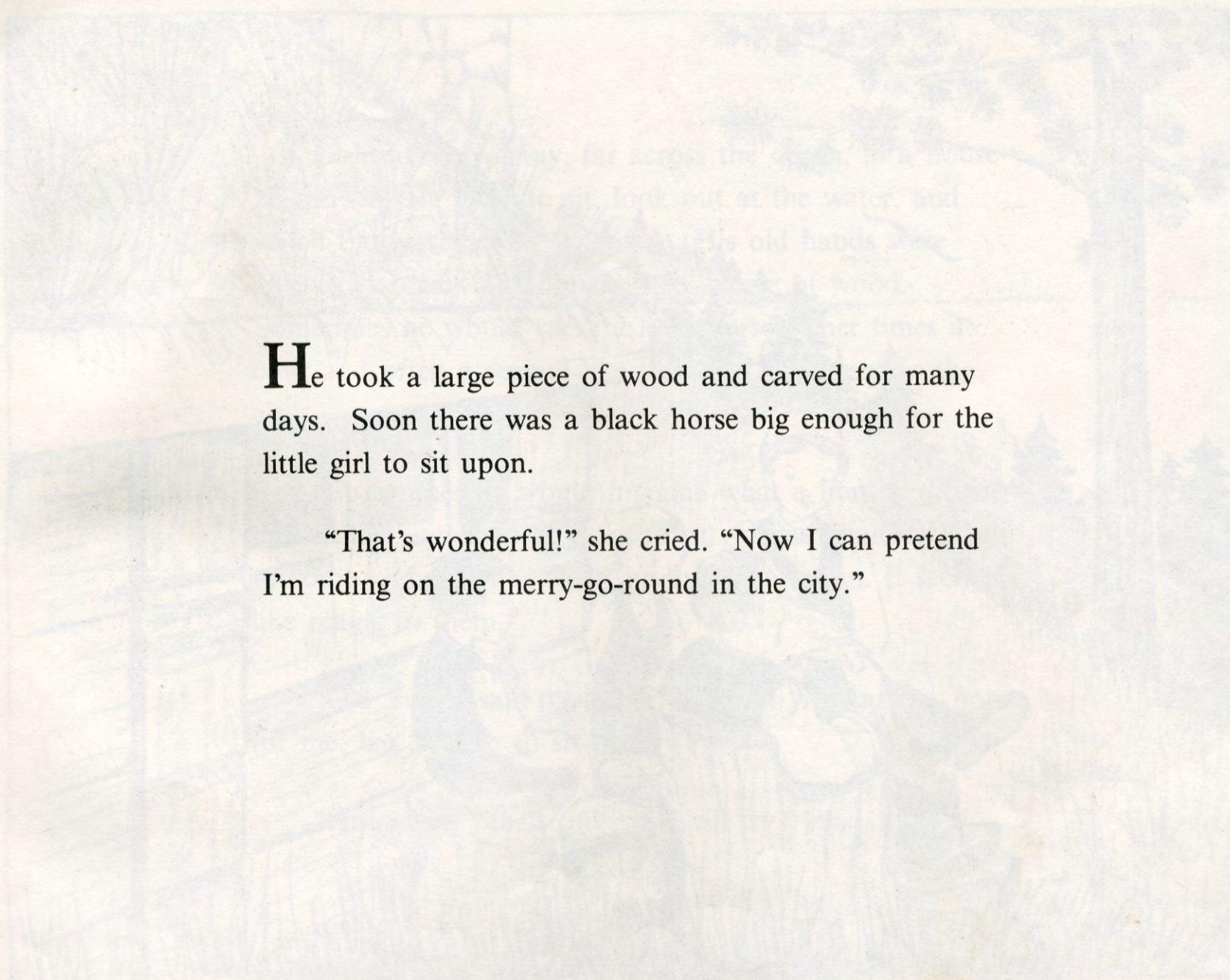
“Old Sven,” said a little girl, “could you carve a horse for me, big enough to sit on?”

“Hmmm, yah. I tink so. I vill try.”









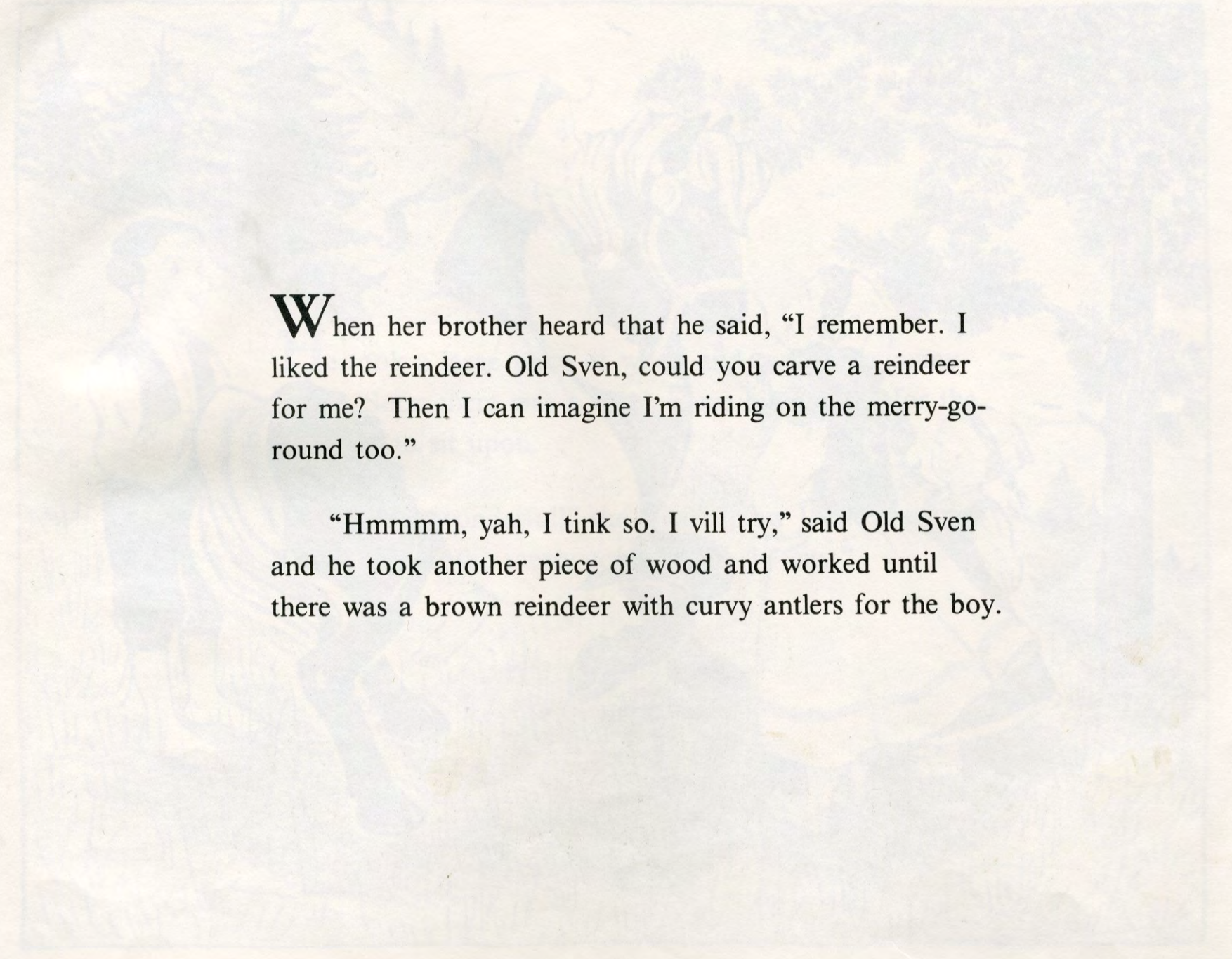
**H**e took a large piece of wood and carved for many days. Soon there was a black horse big enough for the little girl to sit upon.

“That’s wonderful!” she cried. “Now I can pretend I’m riding on the merry-go-round in the city.”









**W**hen her brother heard that he said, "I remember. I liked the reindeer. Old Sven, could you carve a reindeer for me? Then I can imagine I'm riding on the merry-go-round too."

"HMMMM, yah, I tink so. I vill try," said Old Sven and he took another piece of wood and worked until there was a brown reindeer with curvy antlers for the boy.







**F**inally his yard was filled with animals and children on their backs pretending it was a merry-go-round. It really looked and sounded like one as they all sang,

*“Round and round, up and down,  
We love to ride the merry-go-round.”*

Soon other children came and watched him carve. They asked for bears, goats, even a big gray elephant. But the first one he had carved, the black horse with the sparkly eyes, was always his favorite.







One day Old Sven received a letter from his son in America on the other side of the ocean. He was asking him to come and live there with him. But Old Sven did not want to leave the sea, his carving, his animals and the children.

But his son told him, "You can sit in my yard on an island, watch the sea right here and carve. You can bring your wooden animals. I will get a big wheel and fasten them on it. I will get a music box that will play. Then you will have a real merry-go-round and the children on the island will come and ride on it."







So Old Sven packed his animals, locked his house, said good-bye to the children and sailed on a big ship to America. When he arrived, sure enough, his nephew had the wheel waiting and as it turned, it played a tune.

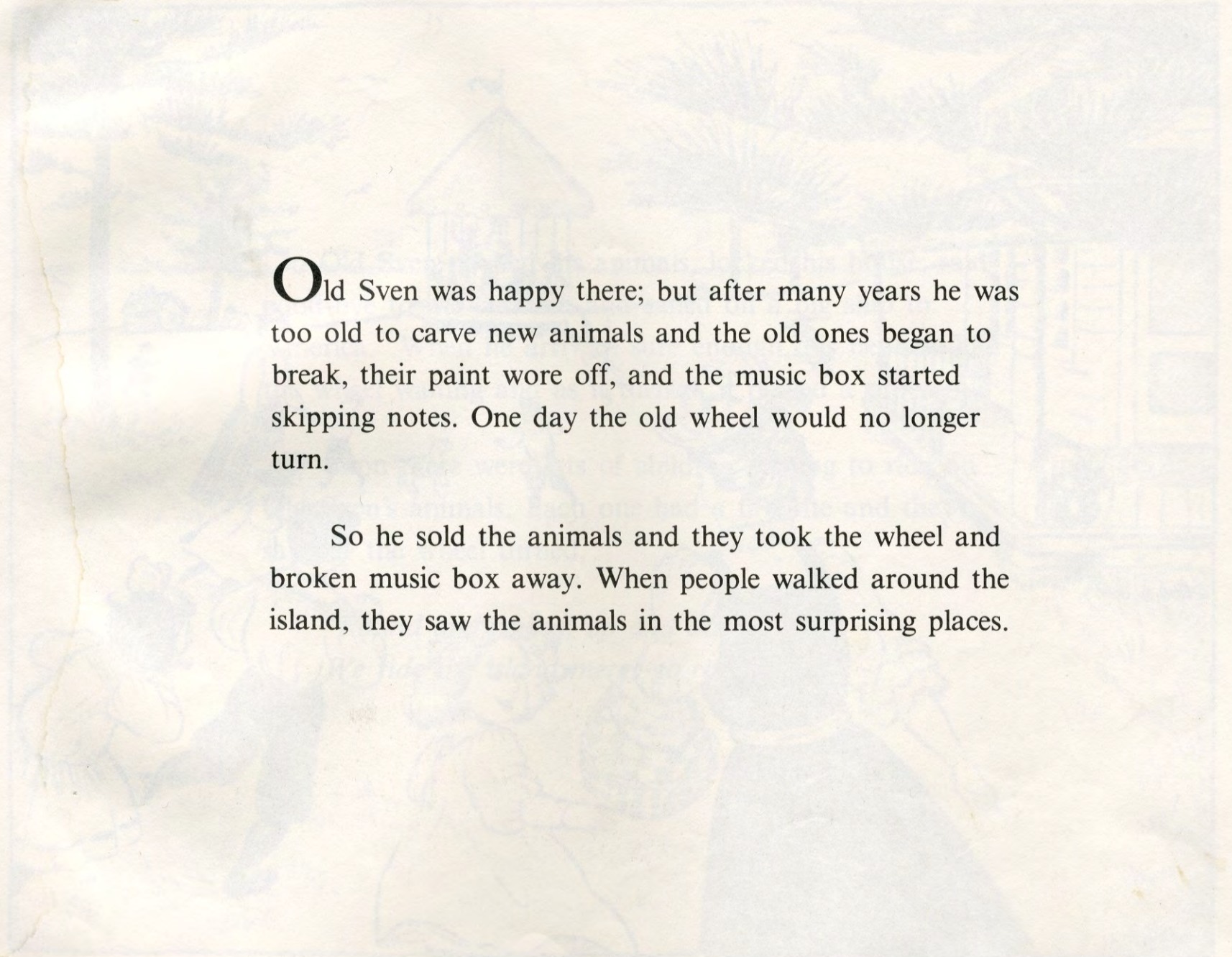
Soon there were lots of children coming to ride on Old Sven's animals. Each one had a favorite and they sang as the wheel turned,

*"Round and round, up and down,  
We ride the island merry-go-round."*







A faint, light blue background illustration depicting a village scene. In the center, there is a church with a tall steeple. To the left, a group of people is gathered, possibly in a market or a public square. The scene is set in a hilly area with some trees and buildings in the background. The illustration is very light and serves as a backdrop for the text.

Old Sven was happy there; but after many years he was too old to carve new animals and the old ones began to break, their paint wore off, and the music box started skipping notes. One day the old wheel would no longer turn.

So he sold the animals and they took the wheel and broken music box away. When people walked around the island, they saw the animals in the most surprising places.







One lady bought the striped tiger and put it in her apple orchard under the trees. It had always been her favorite.

A man bought the brown bear and put it in front of his house.







The faded gray elephant stood in front of the new gift shop. Someone else had bought the little white pony, put red rockers on its feet and made it into a rocking horse for their children's playground.

But after the animals were exposed to the rain, sun, and wind in the orchard, by the boathouse and the gift shop, and on the playground; they gradually fell apart. Now all that was left were the memories people had and the little song they had sung.

"Grandmother, what became of Jewels, the black horse you always rode on." He wondered about that whenever he walked around the island. He was always looking and searching for it, but he had never seen Jewels nor any of the other animals.







One day when Jonny came to the island to visit, her eyes were twinkling and her smile was large and wide.

"I have a surprise for you, Jonny," she told him. "Go up to your room and look."

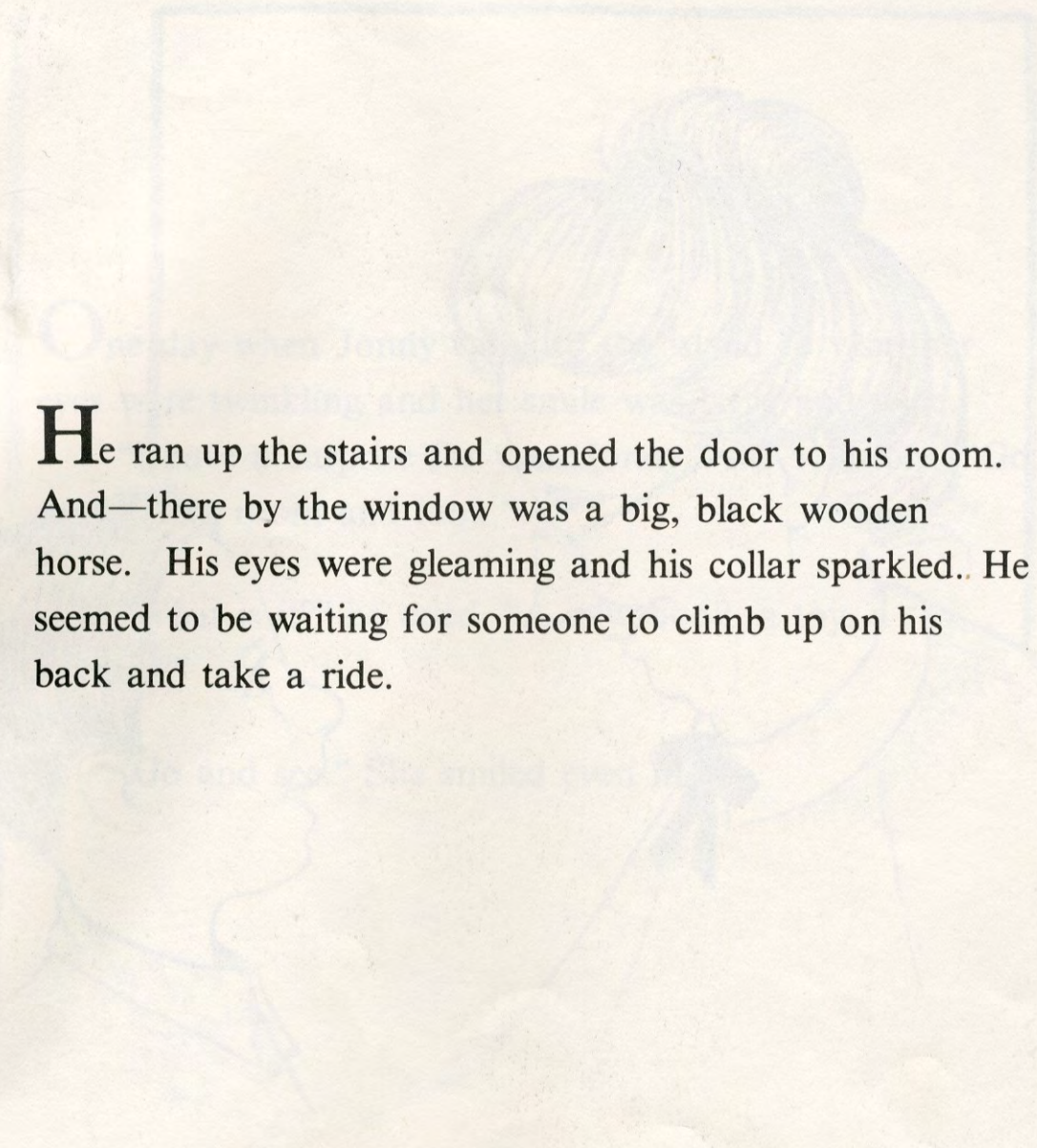
"What is it?" he cried. "A new book, a toy, a sweater?"

"Go and see." She smiled even more.



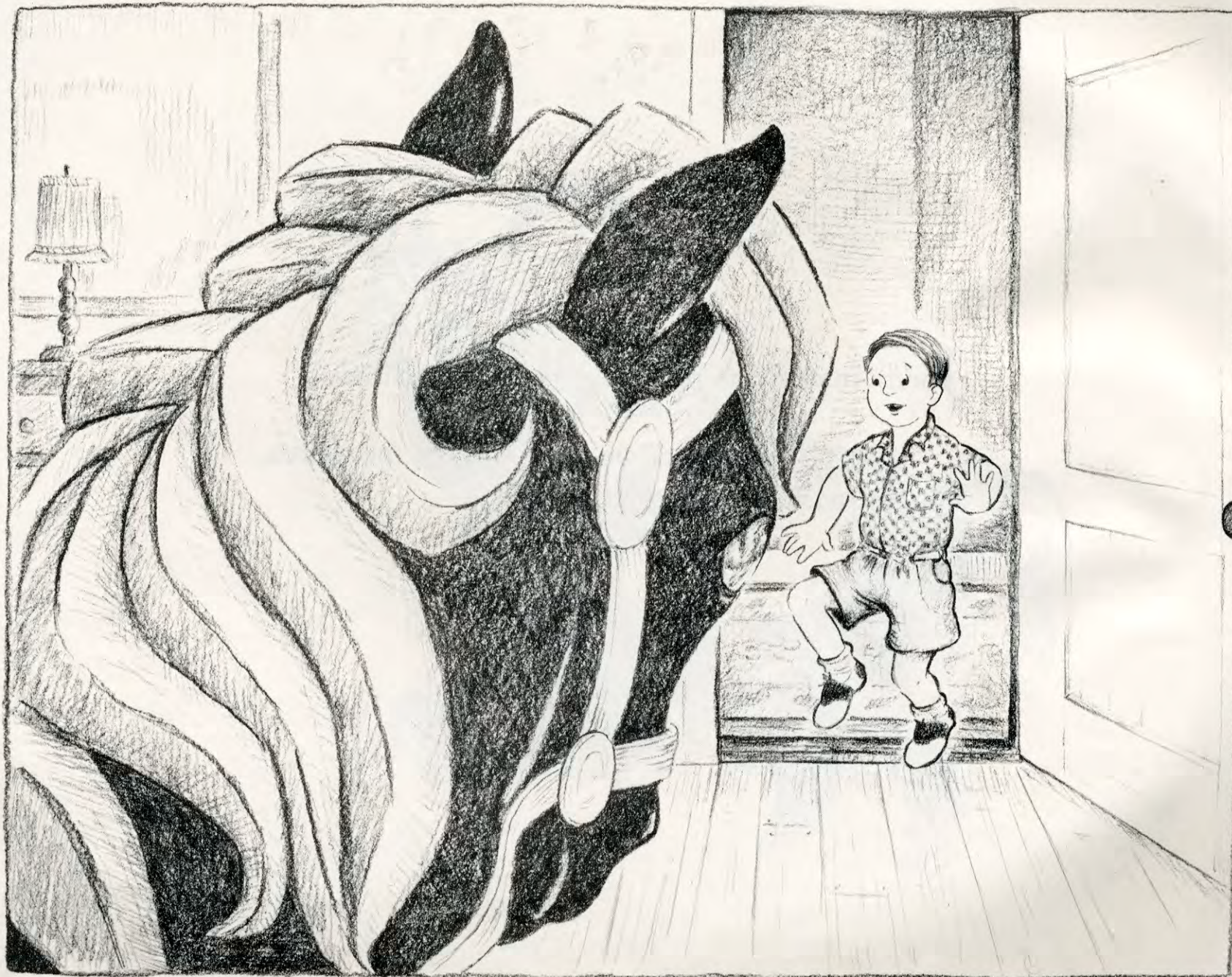




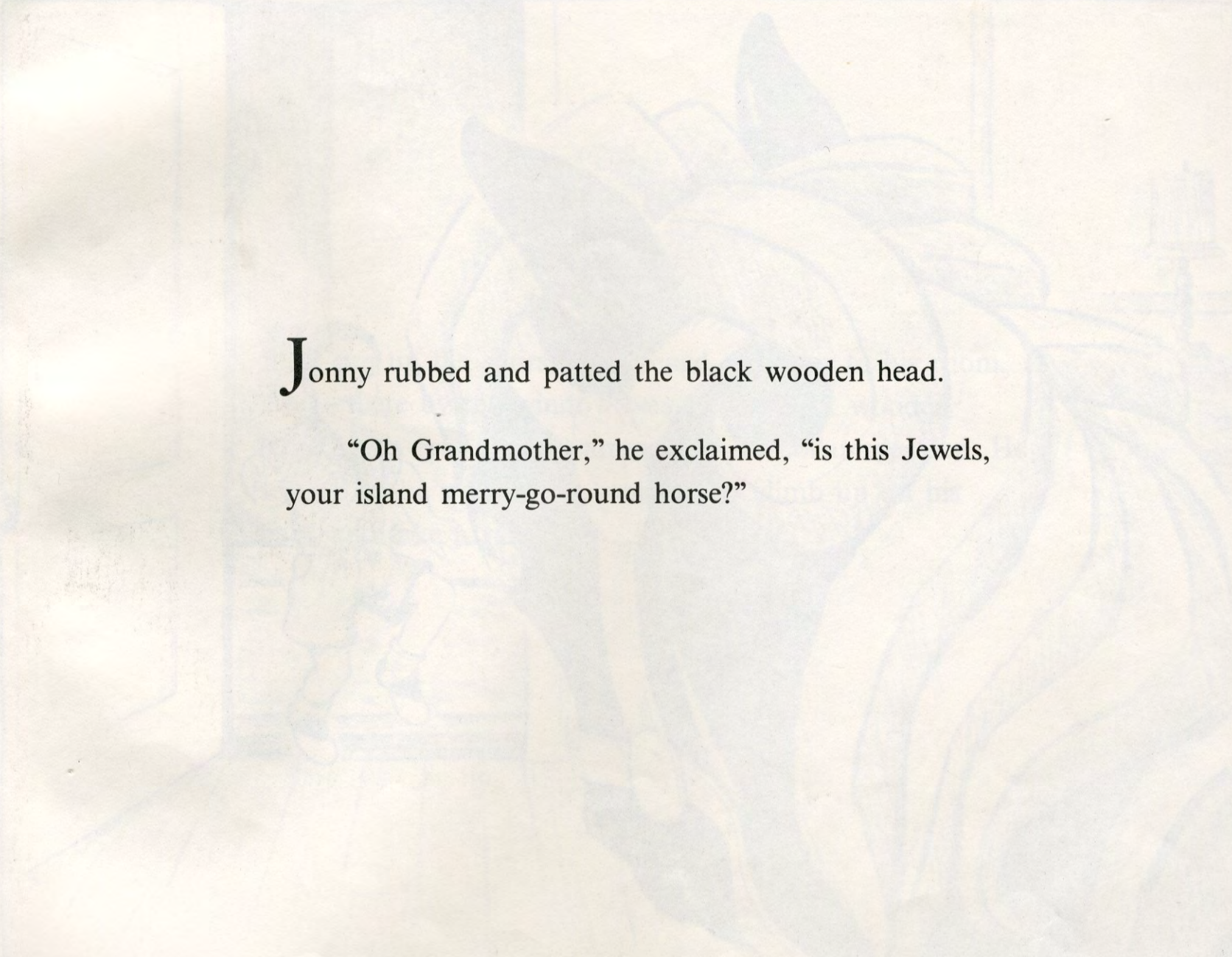


**H**e ran up the stairs and opened the door to his room.  
And—there by the window was a big, black wooden  
horse. His eyes were gleaming and his collar sparkled.. He  
seemed to be waiting for someone to climb up on his  
back and take a ride.









Jonny rubbed and patted the black wooden head.

“Oh Grandmother,” he exclaimed, “is this Jewels,  
your island merry-go-round horse?”



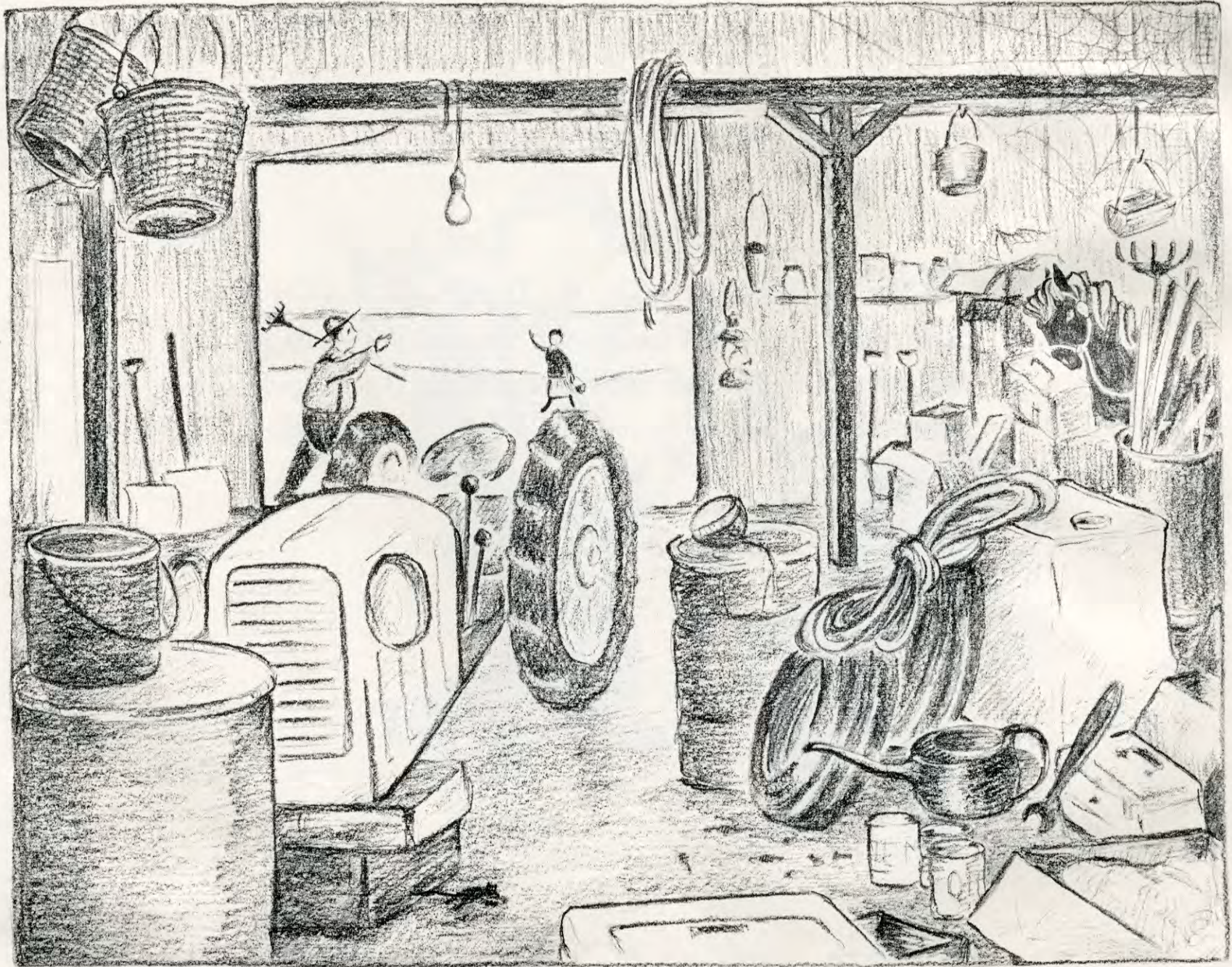




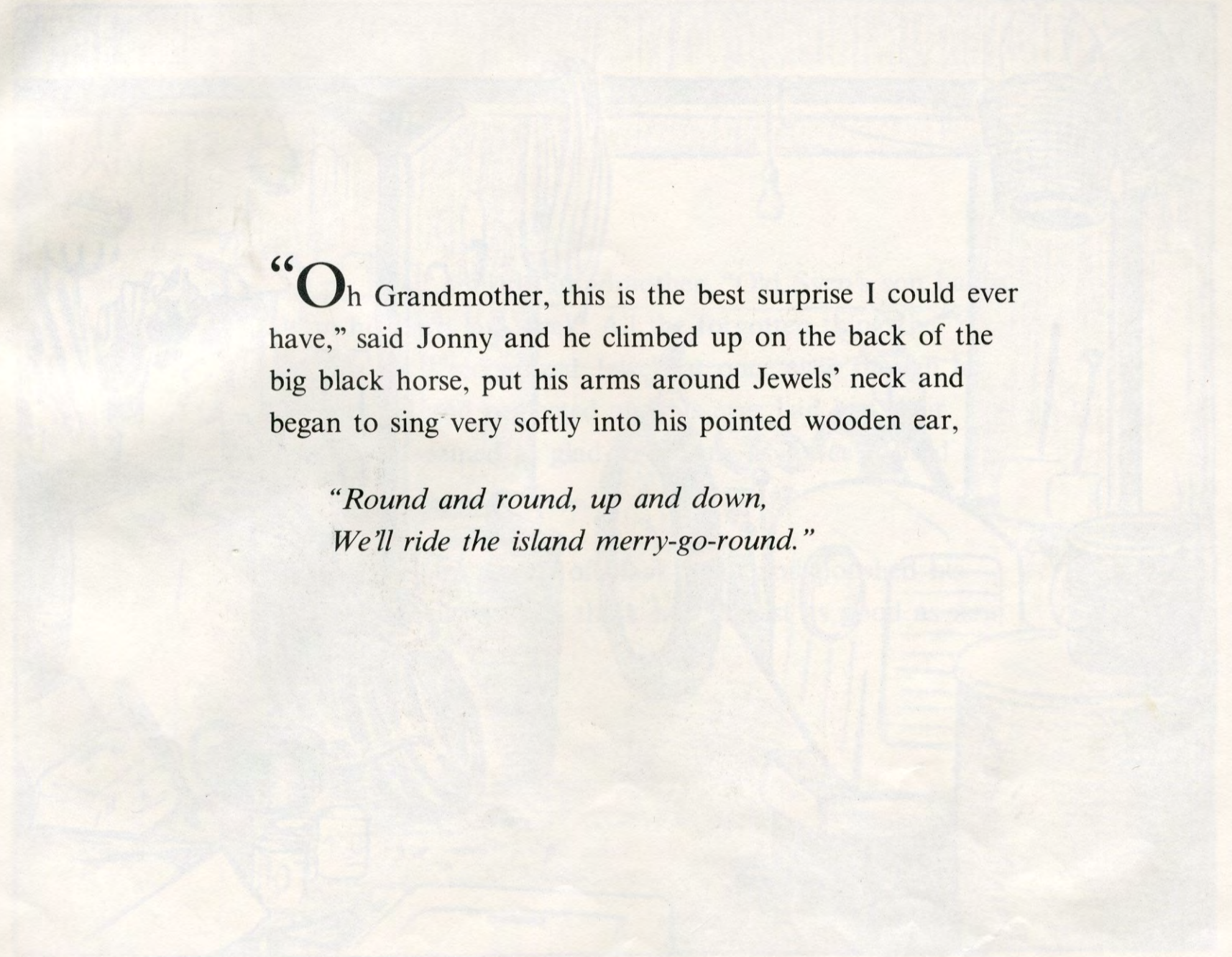
**“Y**es, it is,” smiled Grandmother. “Old Sven’s son had a sale in his barn last week. All the forgotten things he couldn’t use. I recognized Jewels at once even though he was battered and neglected and his eyes had lost their sparkle. He seemed as glad to see me as I was to find him.

“I gave him a coat of black paint and polished his eyes with special soap. I think he’s almost as good as new and ready for a ride.”









“Oh Grandmother, this is the best surprise I could ever have,” said Jonny and he climbed up on the back of the big black horse, put his arms around Jewels’ neck and began to sing very softly into his pointed wooden ear,

*“Round and round, up and down,  
We’ll ride the island merry-go-round.”*









photo: Elinor Clark

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**RUTH SARGENT** has lived on Peaks Island, Maine for thirty-four years. From her windows she sees the boats, ships, islands, and lighthouses that she writes about, using her "salt-tipped" pen.

Her books for children include *The Littlest Lighthouse*, *The Nautical Alphabet*, *Abbie Burgess: Lighthouse Heroine* (co-authored with Dorothy Holder Jones) and *Always Nine Years Old: Sarah Orne Jewett's Childhood*.