

# L4-20,000 Baseball Cards Under the Sea(2-1)

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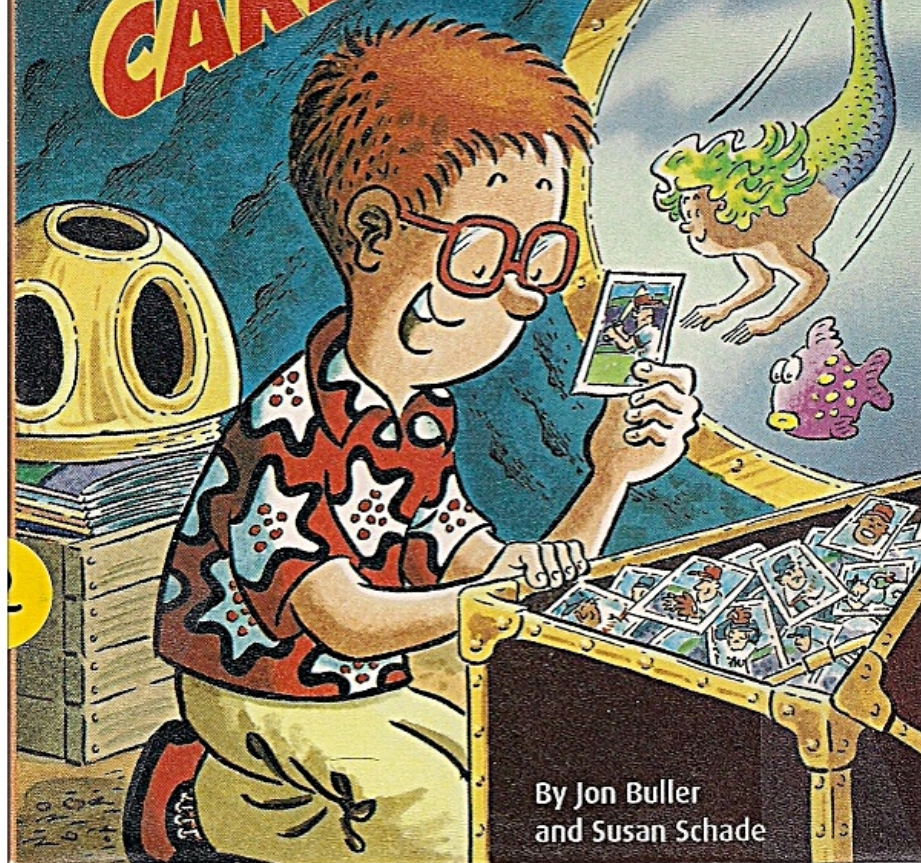
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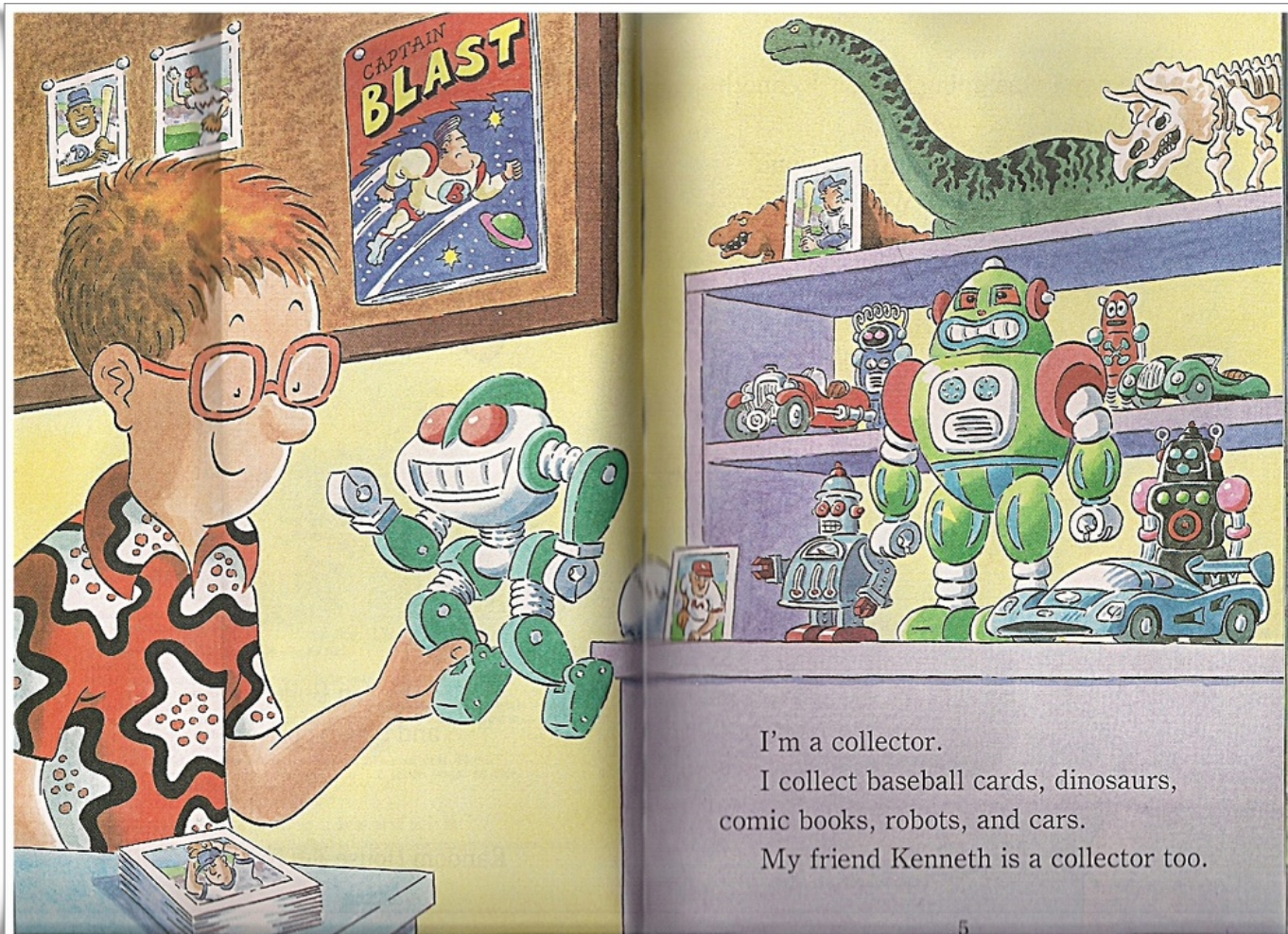
# 20,000 BASEBALL CARDS

## UNDER THE SEA



By Jon Buller  
and Susan Schade

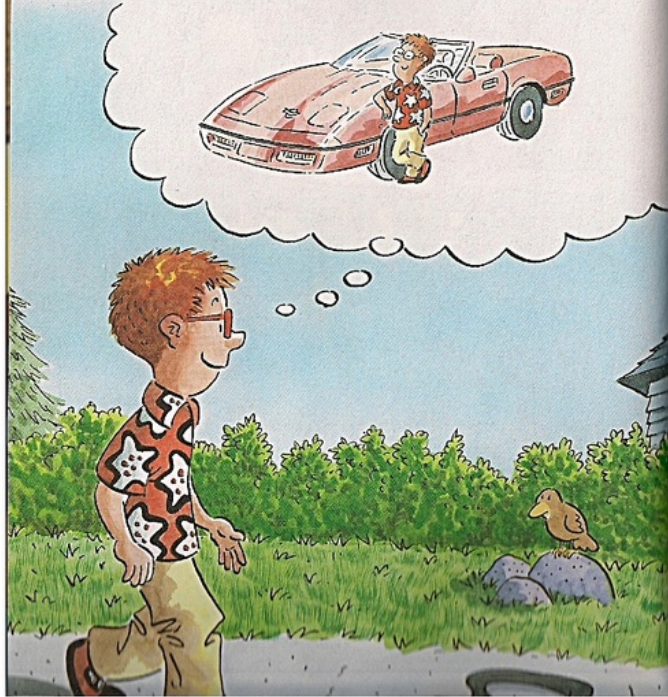






One day I was going to visit Kenneth after school.

I was dreaming about what I could buy if I won the lottery. Would I buy a Corvette, a Rolls-Royce, or a Jeep?



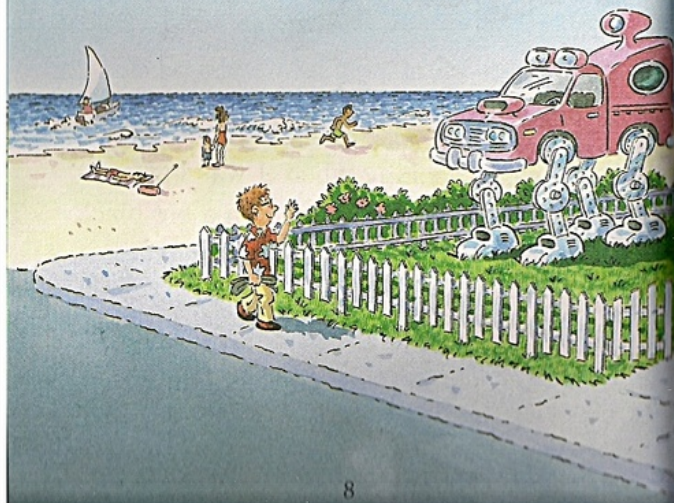
I wasn't looking where I was going.

Yikes! I almost stepped on a big black snake! At least it looked like a snake. But it was nothing but an old strip of rubber.

I decided to give it to Kenneth. He would find a use for it.



What Kenneth collects is junk. He  
likes to make stuff out of it.  
Kenneth is into recycling.







He was really happy when I brought him the strip of rubber.

"I can use that," he said, and he hung it over a hook.

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We went into the kitchen.

Kenneth always makes me fish cakes with maple syrup. He knows how much I like them. He likes them too.

"So, Roger, how was school today?" he asked me.

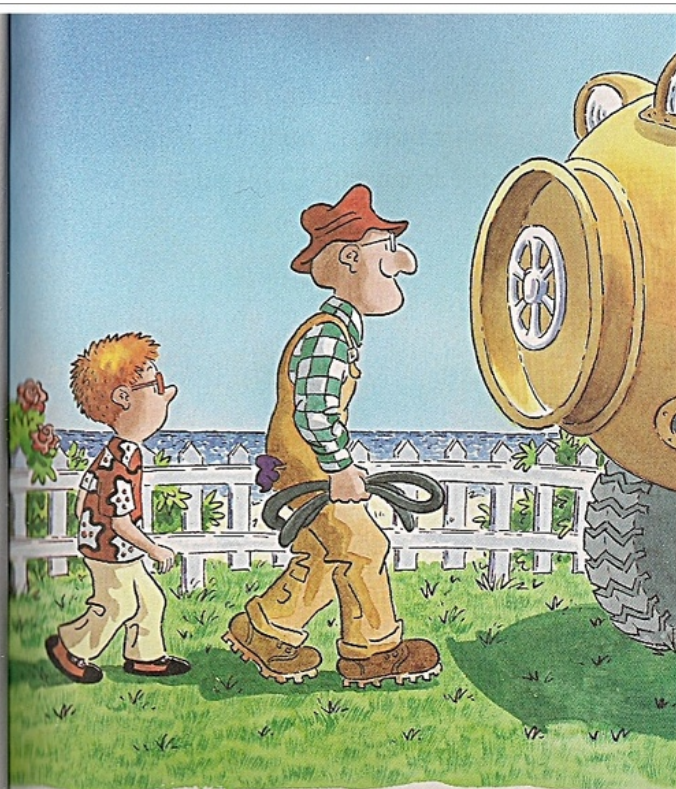
I always tell him about my troubles in school. "I was the last kid picked for basketball," I said. "Even after the girls. And the lunch was ravioli."





Then Kenneth tells me about his troubles.

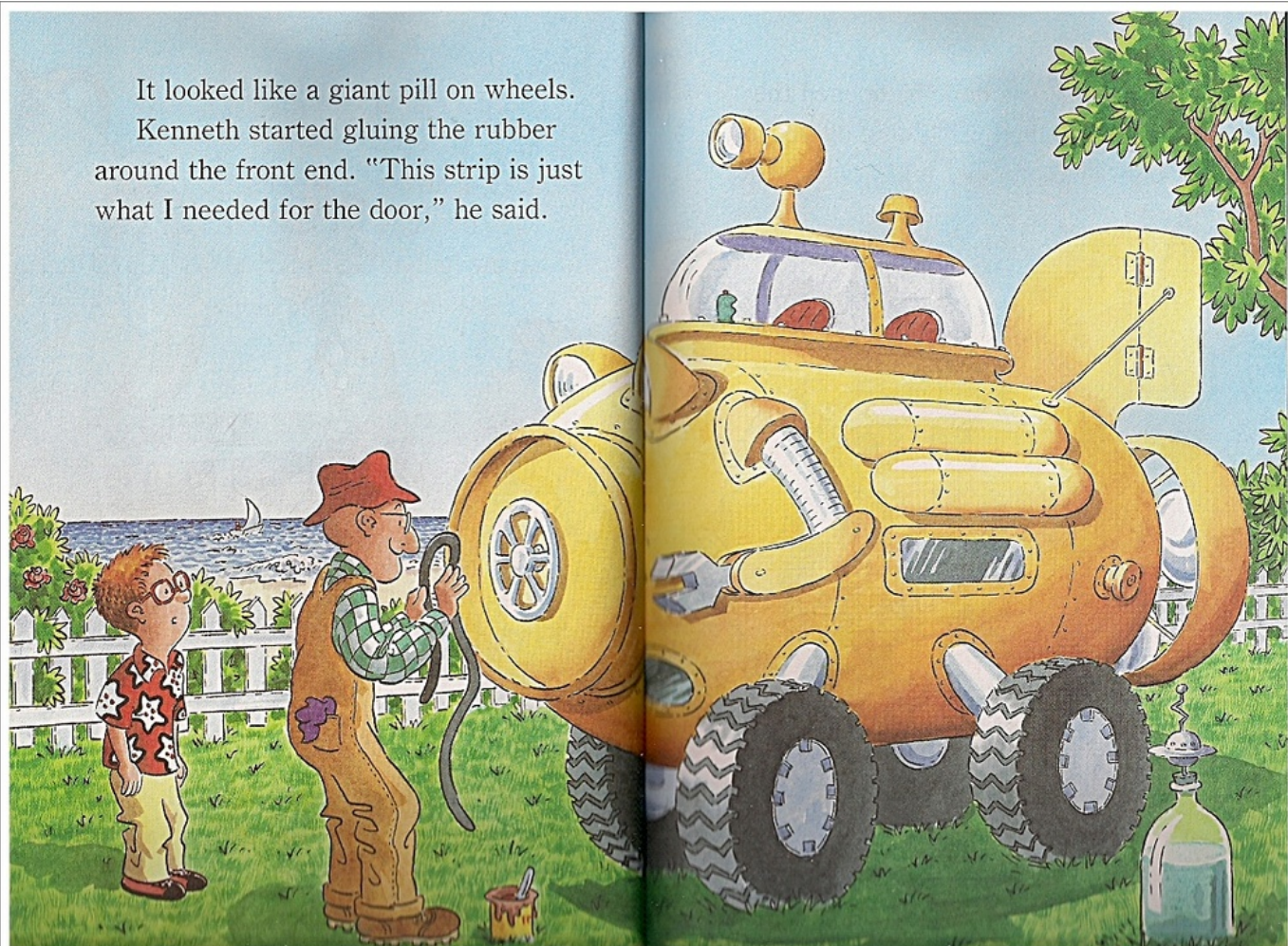
"Do you know they raised my taxes to \$2,000? Where am I going to get \$2,000? This country is in bad shape. In fact, this whole planet is a mess."



After we ate we went outside. Kenneth brought the strip of rubber and we went to look at his latest project.

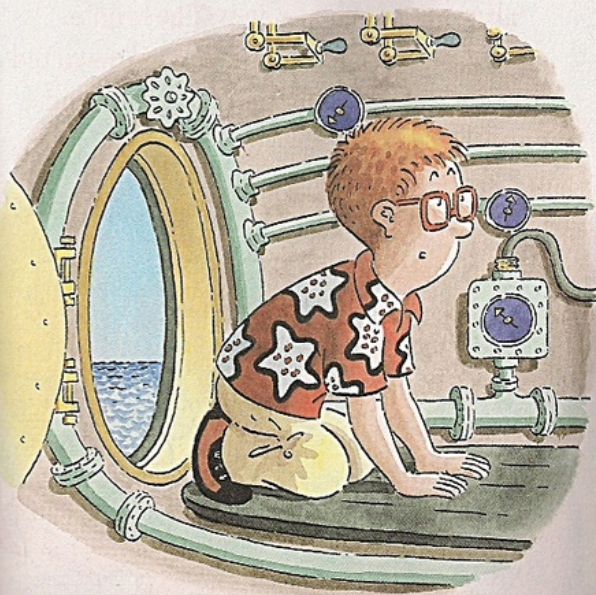


It looked like a giant pill on wheels.  
Kenneth started gluing the rubber  
around the front end. "This strip is just  
what I needed for the door," he said.





When he was done he opened the door and climbed in. "Come on, Roger," he said, "let's try her out!"

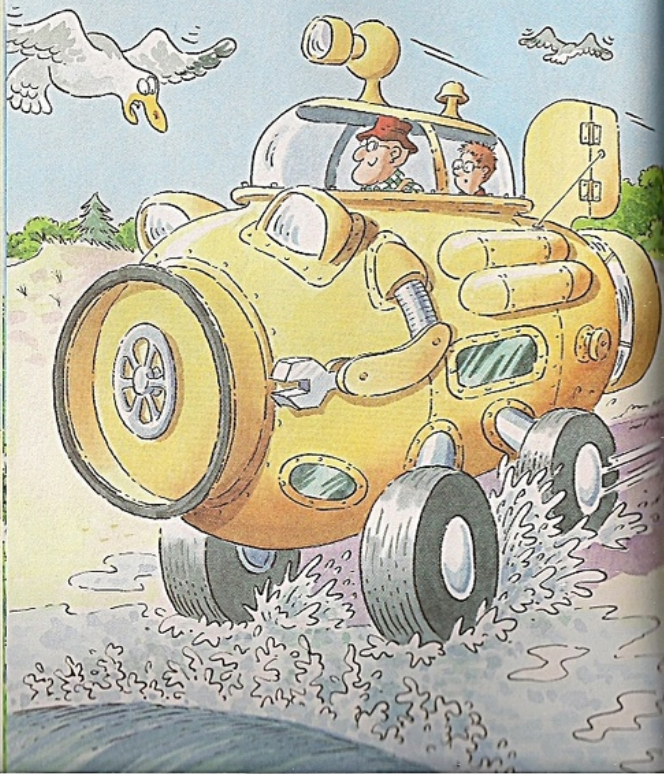


I had never tried any of Kenneth's contraptions before.

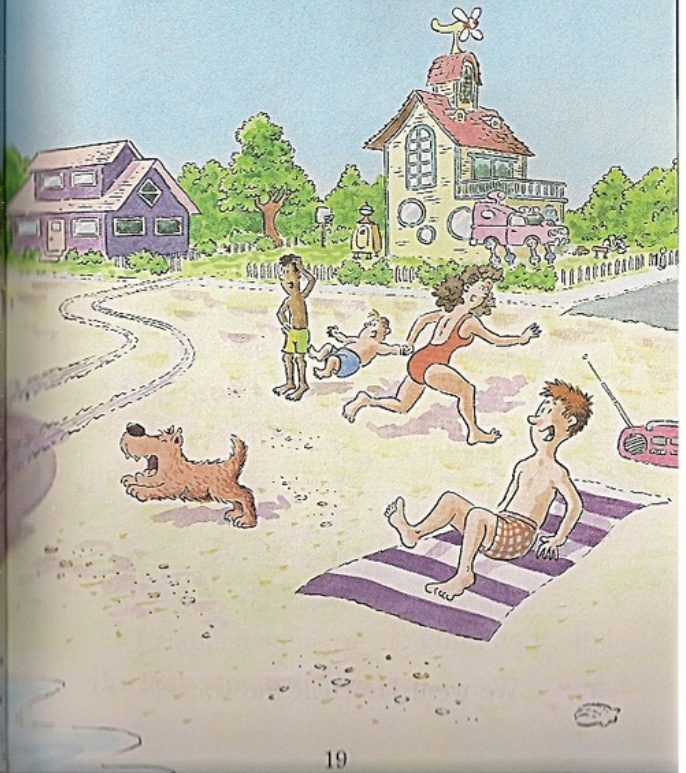
I wasn't sure I wanted to. But I crawled inside anyway.



Kenneth turned a key. The whole contraption rattled and shook. We started moving out of Kenneth's backyard and onto the beach.



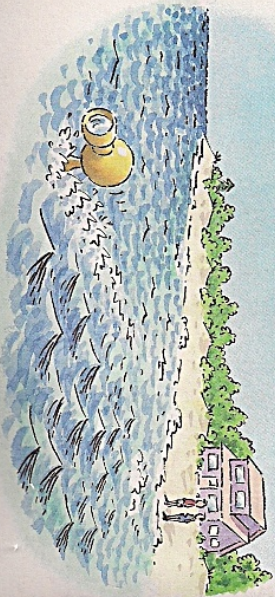
Uh-oh! We were headed right for the water.







We went into the water.



We went UNDER the water!



I was under the sea in a homemade submarine.

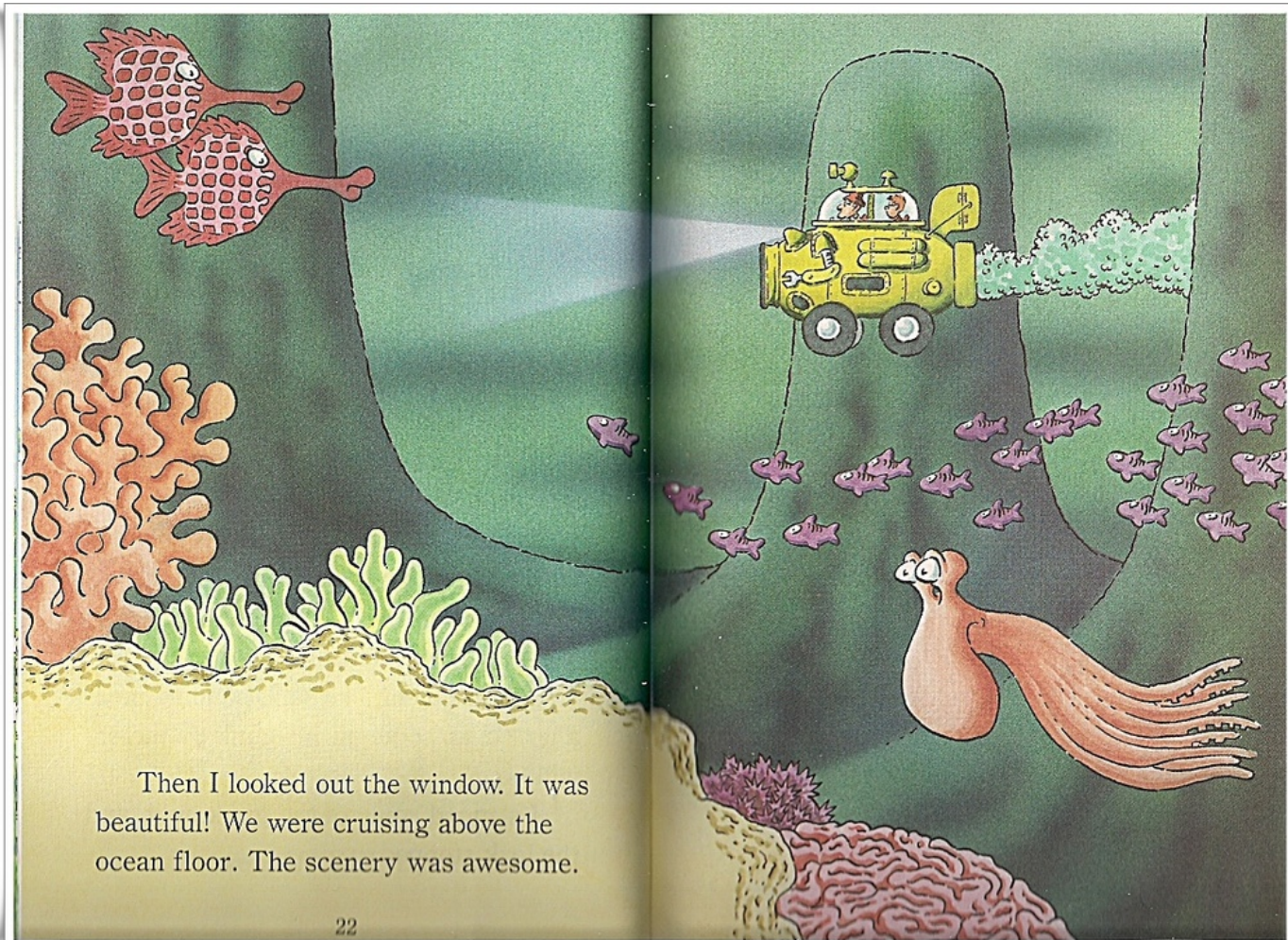
A little stream of brownish water bubbled through a crack in the wall.

"Uh, Kenneth." I touched his sleeve and pointed to the leak.

"No problem," he said, handing me a jar. "Slap some of this gunk on there, will you?"

I slapped some of the gunk on it, and the leak stopped.





Then I looked out the window. It was beautiful! We were cruising above the ocean floor. The scenery was awesome.



Light rays rippled through the water.  
Plants swayed back and forth. A mermaid  
swam past the window. A MERMAID?

"Hey!" I cried. "That was a..."

"I know," Kenneth said. "Lots of  
them down here."

I kept looking. He was right.





# L4-20,000 Baseball Cards Under the Sea(2-2)

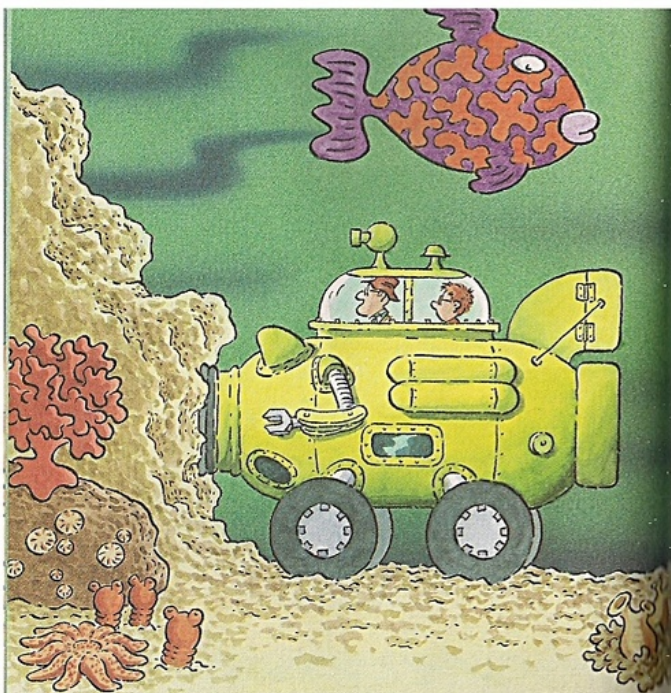
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After a while we ran right into a rocky wall and stopped.

"Uh-oh!" I said.

"Uh-oh, nothing," said Kenneth.

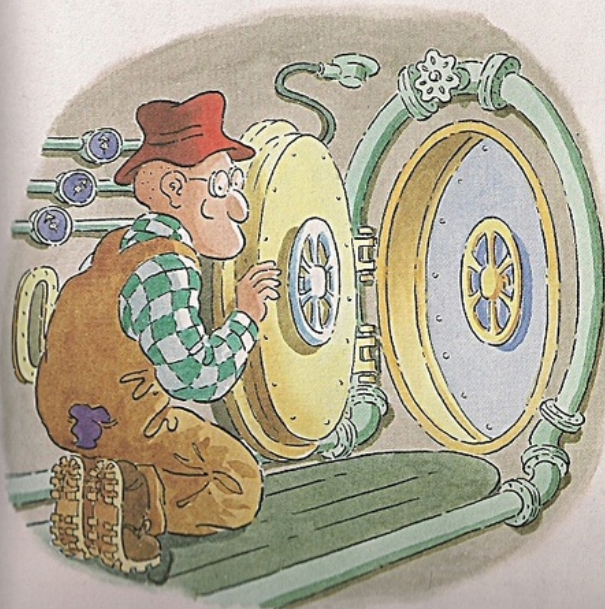
"This is where we get out."

26

He opened the door.

"Hey!" I cried. I expected a big flood, but nothing happened. The rubber strip made a tight seal against the wall.

We were looking at another door. It was fitted into the rock wall.





Kenneth opened it, and we crawled into an underwater cavern.

It was full of junk! "How do you like my storage shed?" Kenneth asked me.

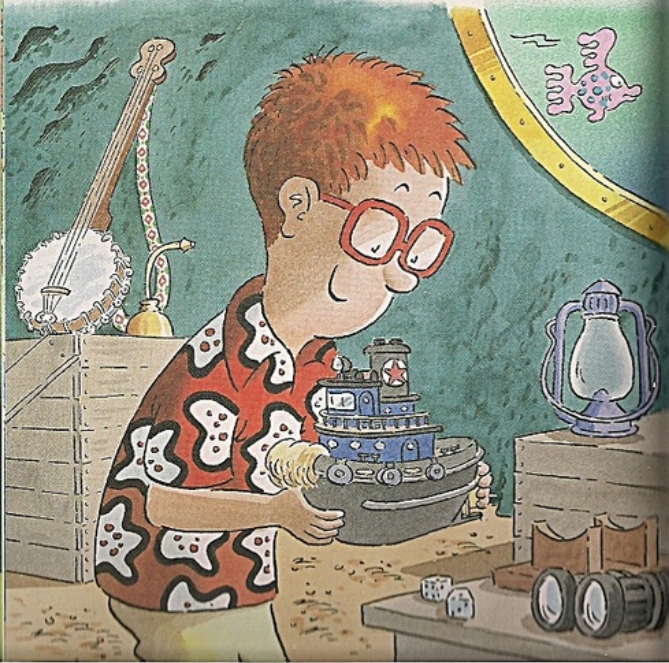
I was speechless.





"Where does all this stuff come from?"  
I finally asked. "How did it get here?"

"It comes from old shipwrecks. The merpeople collect it for me. And I make things for them. We have a nice arrangement."



I looked out the window. Some of the merpeople were driving by in funny contraptions. I recognized Kenneth's work.

"Have a look around, Roger," he said. "Let me know if you see anything you want."

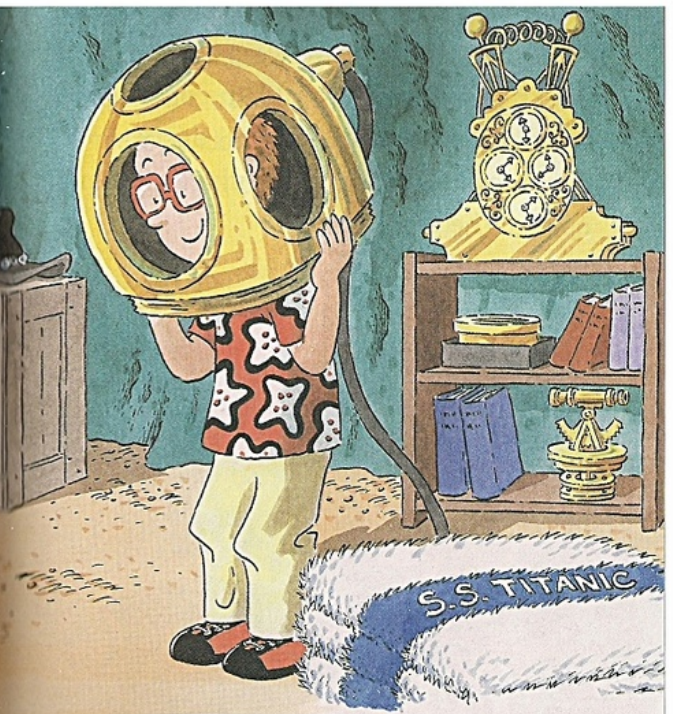
OH BOY!





There was a lot of neat stuff. Hats and boots and fishhooks. And towels and books and big ropes and diving gear. And propellers and broken chairs and a tuba.

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There were ships' instruments made of polished wood with gears and dials. I wasn't sure what they were for, but I liked them a lot.

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In one corner there were some old books and magazines piled up on a big wooden trunk. They were all dusty.

I moved the books and magazines and opened the trunk.



It was full of unopened packs of baseball cards! I had found something I wanted all right.

I opened one of the packs.







The bubble gum was pretty stale.  
But the top card was the 1951 Tony Pudnik  
rookie card!

Can you believe it?

In my baseball-card catalog there's  
a whole page on that card. It's worth  
\$5,000! No kidding.

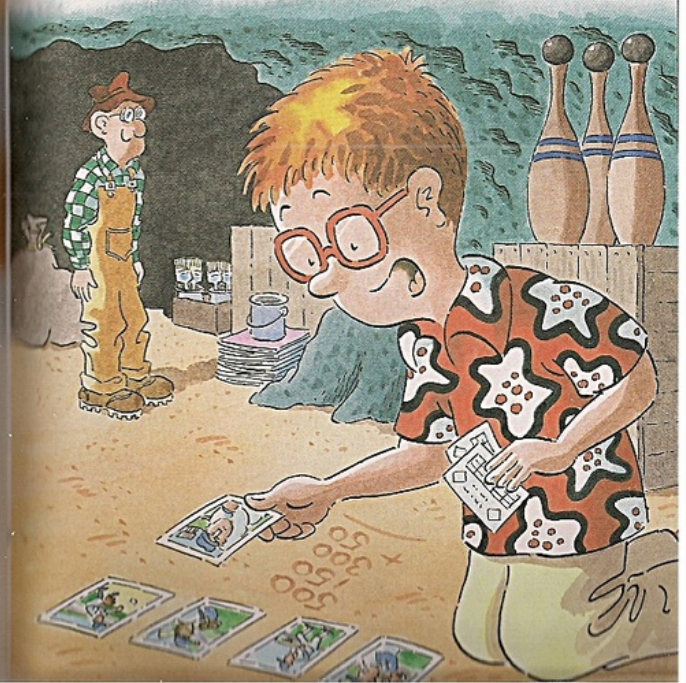
I almost swallowed my gum.

I was counting out the packs and  
scratching numbers in the sand when  
Kenneth called me.

"Hey, Roger!"

"Just give me five more minutes!"

I shouted.





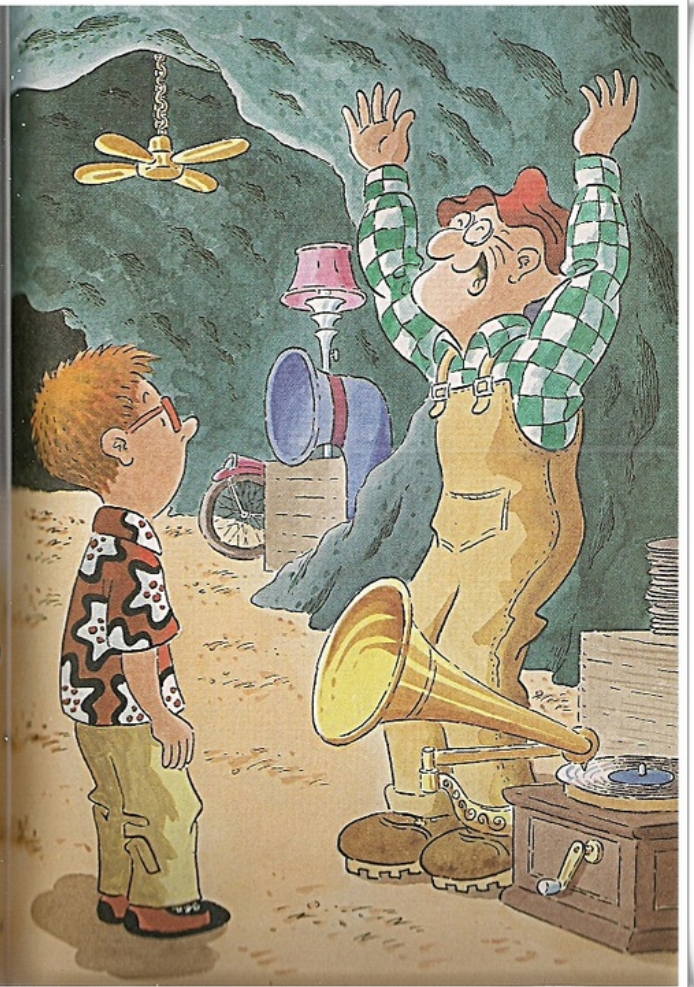
"Five minutes?" said Kenneth. "You can have fifty years! We're staying!"

"Staying? You mean underwater? FOREVER?"

"Why not?" said Kenneth. "Think about it. No more taxes! No more worries. Mermaids. Plenty of junk. No more school."

No school. That did make me think. Except...

"Are there other kids down here?" I asked.

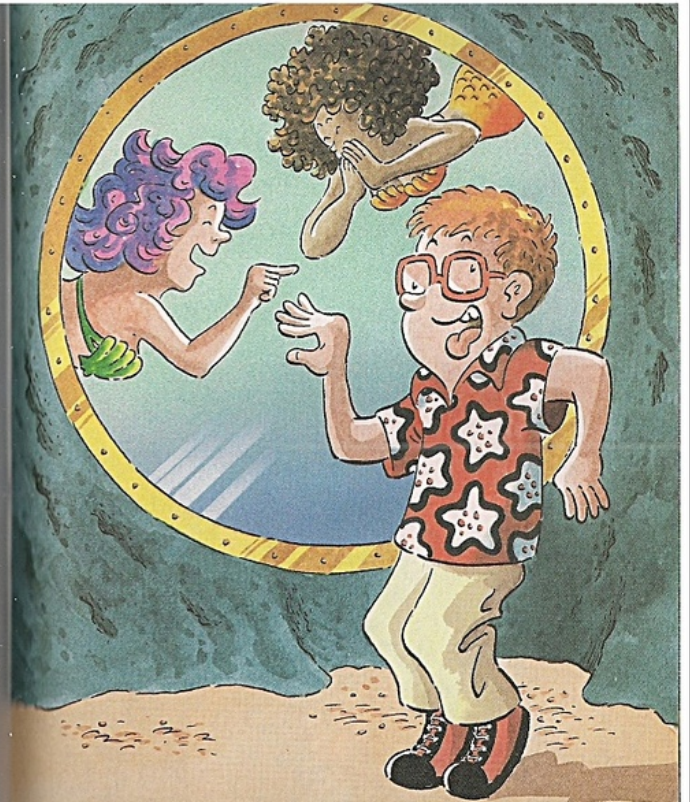




"Sure," said Kenneth. "Merkids!"

He waved his hand toward the porthole.  
A mermaid girl was swimming by.

She saw me. She called her friend  
over. They were both looking at me and  
pointing and laughing.



I danced the hokey-pokey for them.  
They loved it.



I was thinking maybe it would be okay to live underwater for a while. Of course I would have to call my mother.

Then I remembered the baseball cards. "Oh heck," I said. "I was going to sell some of these cards and buy a Corvette."

Kenneth laughed and laughed.







"No, really," I said. "Don't you know what these are worth? Tony Pudnik is going for \$5,000! And you could probably get \$1,500 for this one, maybe \$2,000. You've got about 20,000 cards here, and even if they sold for only \$10 apiece, that would be \$200,000!"

Kenneth looked sort of excited.

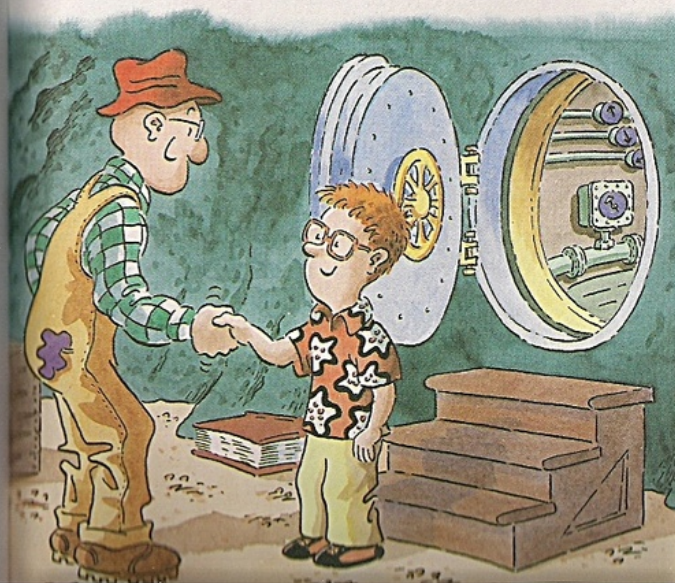
"You've got a lot of valuable stuff down here," I said. "These old comics are worth a lot too."

"So I could pay my taxes," he said slowly.

"No problem," I said.

"I could keep my house and still visit the merpeople," said Kenneth. "Okay, we'll go fifty-fifty."

I thought that was pretty generous. We shook hands on it.





So that's how I got my Corvette.



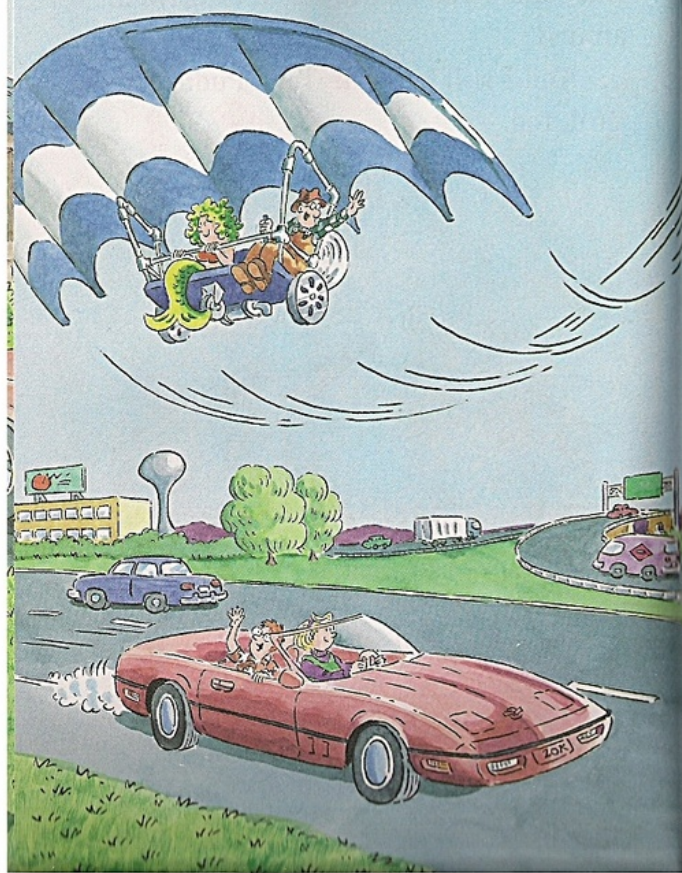
Of course I don't have my license yet. But sometimes I let my mother drive me around.

And I still have the Tony Pudnik rookie card, too.





Some things are worth more than money.



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