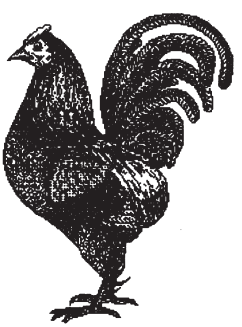
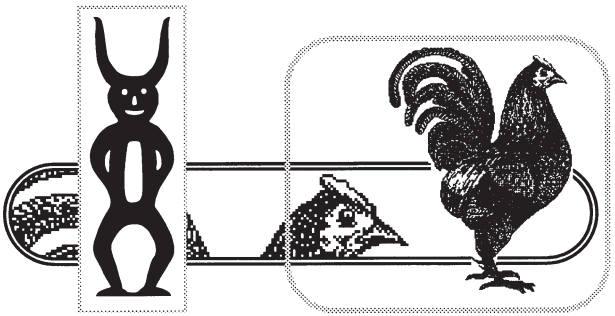
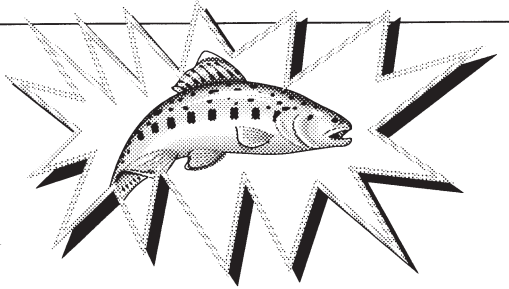
How the Elephant Got its Spots



A Devil Bunny Fairy Tale FROM ***Ernest Graphics Press***

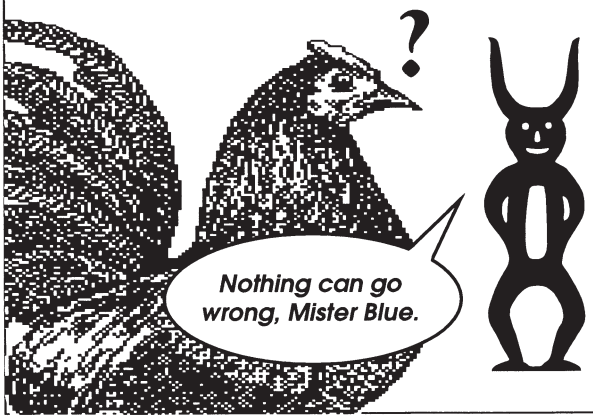
Once there was a cheerful chicken called Mister Blue. Mister Blue was a friend of Devil Bunny, and lived in HappyVille with all of his friends.





One day, Devil Bunny said to Mister Blue, "Let us travel to the Lake at the Edge of the World. There we can fish, and picnic, and enjoy the beauty of Nature."

Mister Blue was worried, for he had never been to the Edge of the World. But Devil Bunny assured Mister Blue that nothing could go wrong.



Mike and Steve talk on the Phone.

"Hello, Phone," says Mike.

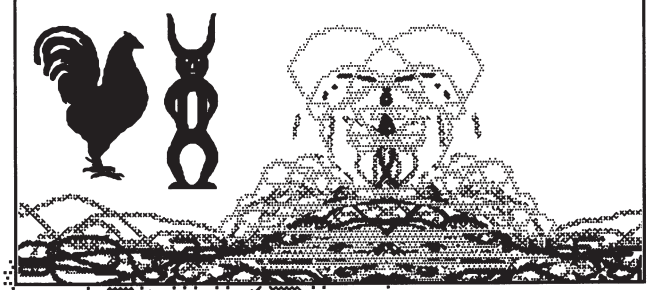
"Well, that is certainly a feather in your cap," says Mike.

"How is your wife?" asks Mike.

When Devil Bunny and Mister Blue reached the Lake of Fire, Mister Blue was frightened. "I will never survive," said Mister Blue, "For my feathers will surely be burned away."

But Devil Bunny calmed the chicken. "Many chickens walk through the Lake of Fire," he said, "And they are never burned at all."

"Are you speaking truly, Devil Bunny?" asked the worried Mister Blue.



"Of course I am, " quoth he.

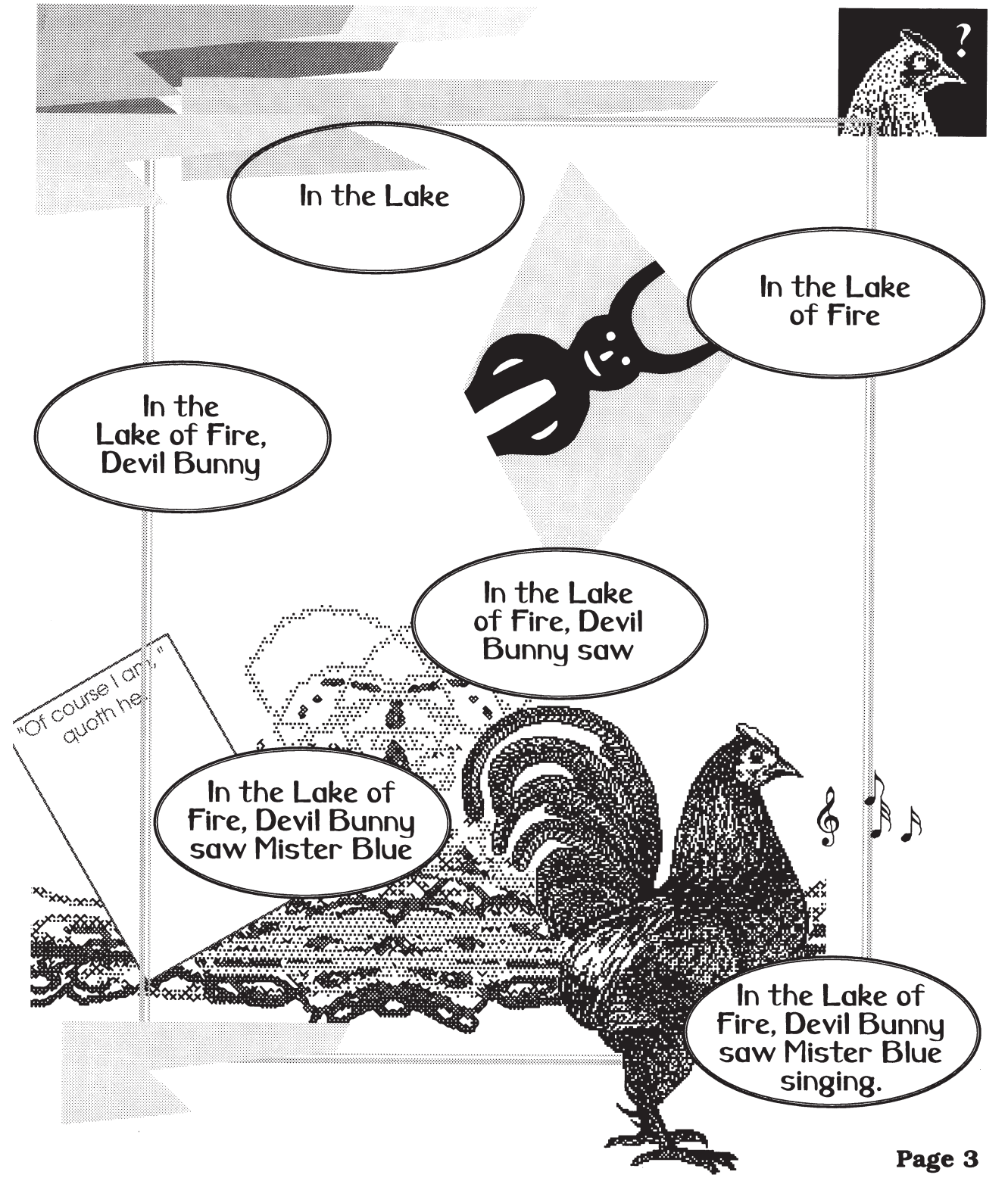
"Of course I am."

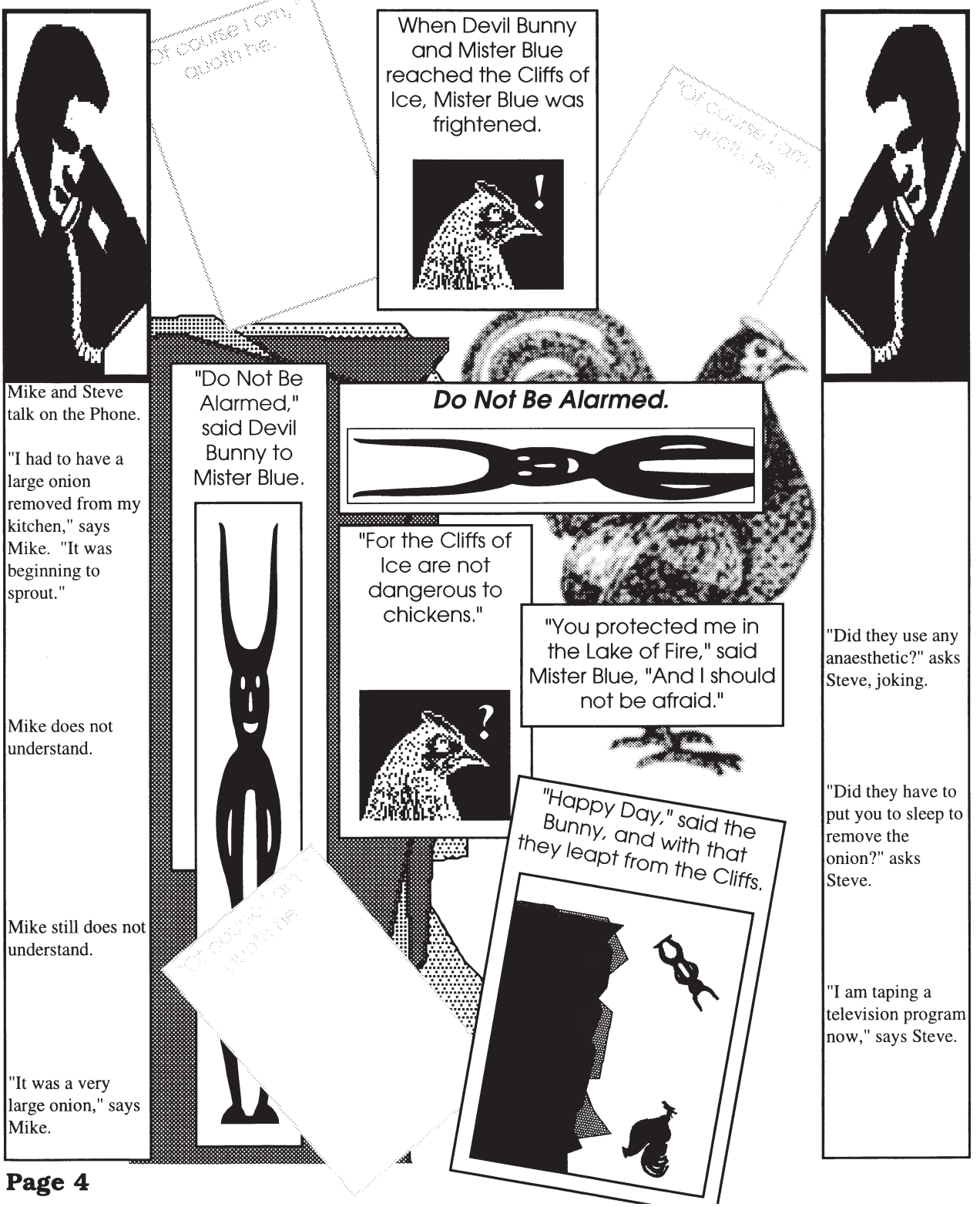
"Hello, Mike," says Steve.

"I have blown up a building," says Steve.

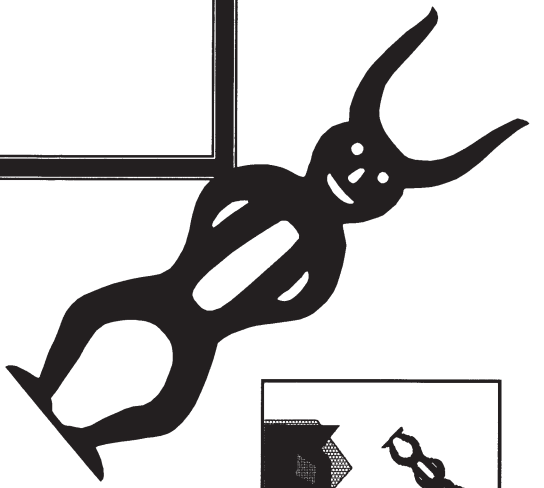
"It was a pleasant sight," says Steve. "The air was filled with a twisting spiral of black and orange smoke, and pellets of burning matter rained down upon the wet city streets."

"She is fine," says Steve. "She has been cooking a pie."


In the Lake
In the Lake of Fire
In the Lake of Fire, Devil Bunny
In the Lake of Fire, Devil Bunny saw
"Of course I am," quoth he
In the Lake of Fire, Devil Bunny saw Mister Blue
In the Lake of Fire, Devil Bunny saw Mister Blue singing.

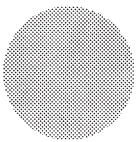

Mike and Steve talk on the Phone.
"I had to have a large onion removed from my kitchen," says Mike. "It was beginning to sprout."
Mike does not understand.
Mike still does not understand.
"It was a very large onion," says Mike.
"Do Not Be Alarmed," said Devil Bunny to Mister Blue.
When Devil Bunny and Mister Blue reached the Cliffs of Ice, Mister Blue was frightened.
!
Do Not Be Alarmed.
"For the Cliffs of Ice are not dangerous to chickens."
?
"You protected me in the Lake of Fire," said Mister Blue, "And I should not be afraid."
"Happy Day," said the Bunny, and with that they leapt from the Cliffs.
"Did they use any anaesthetic?" asks Steve, joking.
"Did they have to put you to sleep to remove the onion?" asks Steve.
"I am taping a television program now," says Steve.

Down, Down,
Down they Fell



Down, Down,
Down they Fell

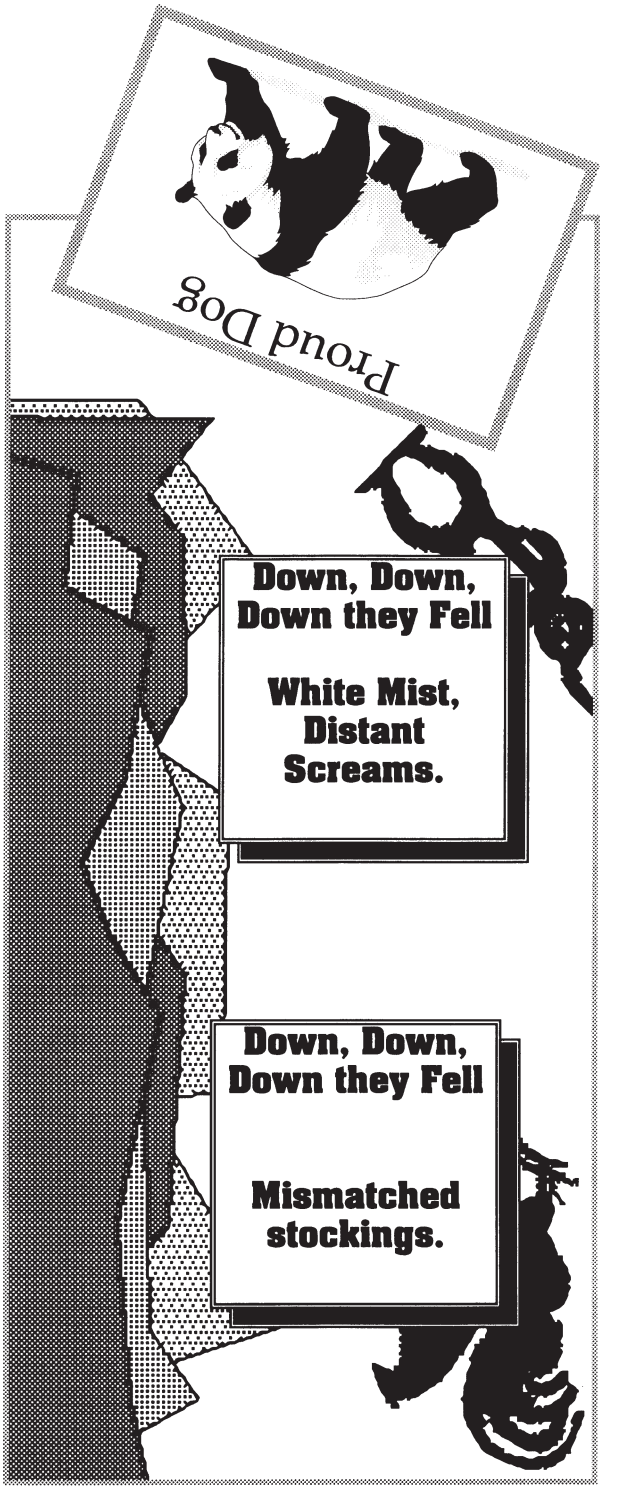
Cold wind that chaps the skin and cracks the teeth.



Down, Down,
Down they Fell

Still falling, breathing is shallow, unable to see.

S P L A S H !



Old Mam Panny
wears mismatched
stockings.

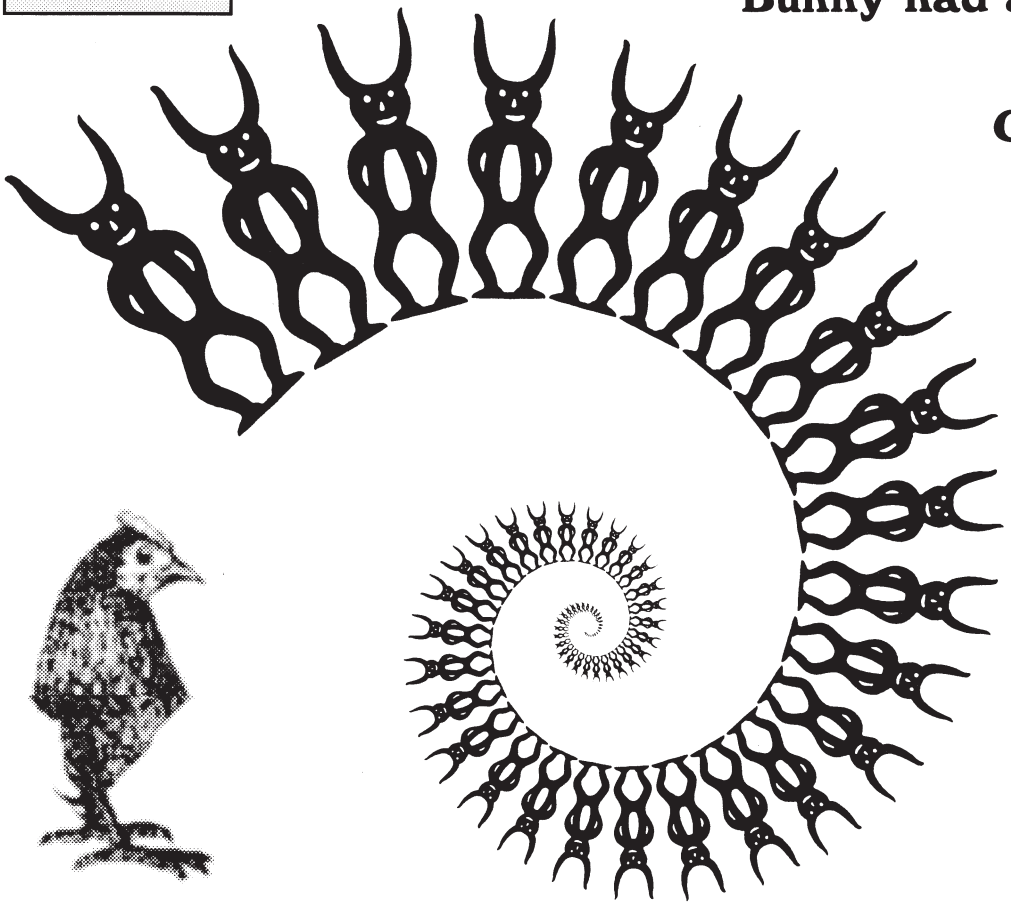
His wife tells him,
you shouldn't wear
mismatched ladies'
stockings.

So he only wears
them when she is
not home.

And he waves them
in the air.

Next, They came to the Forest of Darkness

When Devil Bunny and Mister Blue reached the Forest of Darkness, Devil Bunny had a dream.



Of falling.

Falling

Down.

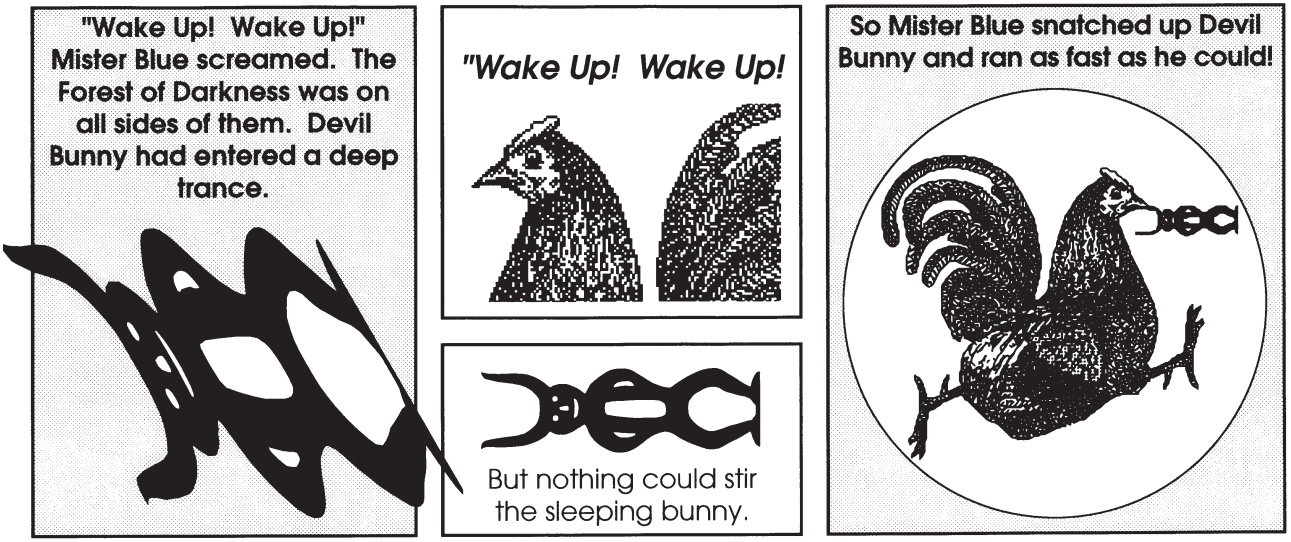
or maybe

just

getting

very

small.



Devil Bunny Dreams...

Sylvia has something to say. She's not exactly sure what it is, but she wants to say it very much.

Sometimes she will call the telephone numbers of people she does not know, and try to speak to them. But nothing is said. After ten seconds, most people hang up.

Sylvia writes stories full of interesting characters who do interesting things. But she never lets anyone read her stories because she is not sure if they say what she wants to say. Sometimes she burns a story after she has written it. She gazes at the rising ashes of her burning story and wonders if God will read it.

Sometimes Sylvia spends all day watching television. Sometimes she reads a book. She is looking for someone else who wants to say the same things she wants to say, as if this will help her discover what those things are.

Sylvia can see things that her friends can't see. She has an acute sense of smell. Sylvia perceives the world around her like no other human can. At least, she likes to think so.

Sylvia communicates with her cats. She tells them how much she loves them. They tell her what they have seen on their trips around the neighborhood. She feeds them whatever they ask for. Sometimes they ask for whatever is on sale.

Sylvia has something to say. She's not exactly sure what it is, but she wants to say it very much.

Henry found himself standing outside a rusty little diner in the pouring rain, hammering his fingertips on the glass of his watch. There was a thick smell of fried food that even this rain couldn't beat out of the air, and Henry couldn't resist going back inside.

She'll find me in here, he told himself, sliding into a booth by the front window. She wouldn't expect me to hang around outside in this rain.

His jacket dripped a little water on the red vinyl seats every time he drew breath; there was a puddle forming around his shoes. He looked at his watch again, and the tiny beads of sweat inside the foggy glass told him that it was broken.

Now the drowsy sleep almost came over him again, and he wondered for just a moment where he was. He shook his head. A cup of coffee to warm him up. And then he'd go outside again. If he could get a waitress.

There was a shape outside, a woman in a long coat. Henry remembered that she had a long coat, tied tight with a belt and draped over her crossed legs. He remembered that she told him about the cafe outside of town, and there was only one cafe outside of town, and this was it. And when she stood up, he remembered how the coat looked around the shoulders. No, this woman was coming closer now, and it wasn't her at all. She came into the restaurant and sat down at a booth alone. It wasn't her at all.

Just a cup of coffee, Henry thought to himself. The thought echoed in his head, like a little leaf caught in an eddy. There was another leaf for this diner. There was a leaf for the train. There was a leaf for the woman in the long coat, and they swirled around and came around again and he never let go of them. Now this little coffee leaf was there with them all, and there were four of them. Henry counted the leaves in his eddy.

The waitress had dusty green eyes and she wore thick glasses that made her look old. Henry told her, when she came to the table, that he wanted some coffee, and when she handed him the menu he handed it back. No, thanks, he said, just coffee for me. I'm waiting for someone. A pretty woman in a long coat.

If the waitress heard him she didn't seem to care, about the woman in the long coat. He saw her going over behind the counter and talking to another customer.

Mike and Steve talk on the Phone.

"I am afraid of the Dark," says Mike.

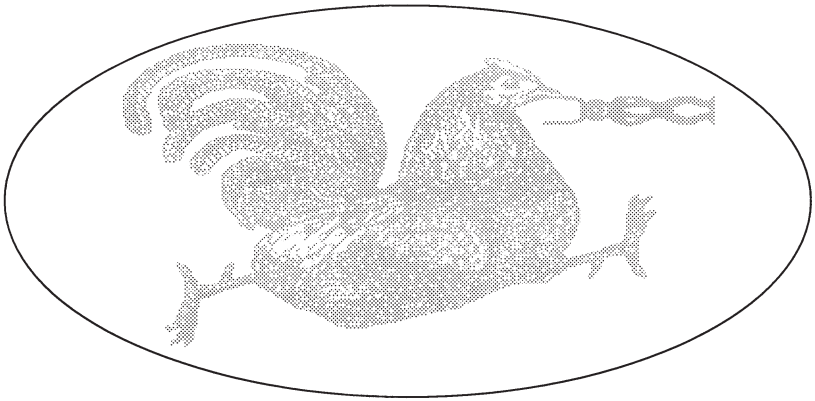
"I do not understand," says Mike.

"Why would you do this," asks Mike.

"Steve, why do I talk to you on the phone?" asks Mike.

Hey, you alright? was the voice he heard, and it was hers again. The waitress had come back with his coffee, and he was dozing off. Now he took a sip of it, and the hot steam danced around in his face and fogged up his glasses.

The woman who had come in was getting up again now, and she walked to the front of the diner, and she looked out through the two glass doors into the rain. She looked around the diner. She looked past Henry. She turned away and pushed the door and she was gone outside.



Then Henry thought that that might have been her, looking for him and leaving, because she didn't recognize him. He got up and his wet overcoat splashed on the red vinyl seat again and his sleeve dripped oily water into the hot coffee. He was through the doors quickly, and following her shadow into the misty rain.

Under the gaze of a dim streetlight by the curb he caught up to her, and tapped her shoulder. Excuse me, ma'am, and she turned around, and he saw her face closely, and he said, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I thought you were the lady. And he left her there, and the waitress was standing in the door looking at him. Don't make me come after you, mister, out in that rainstorm, but I will. Henry walked back and apologized and paid for his coffee. His eyes were droopy as he turned back around and surveyed the street. He sat on the brick wall and watched the rain fall, and he looked at the bricks and the purple cabbages near the restaurant door, and he thought about going back inside.

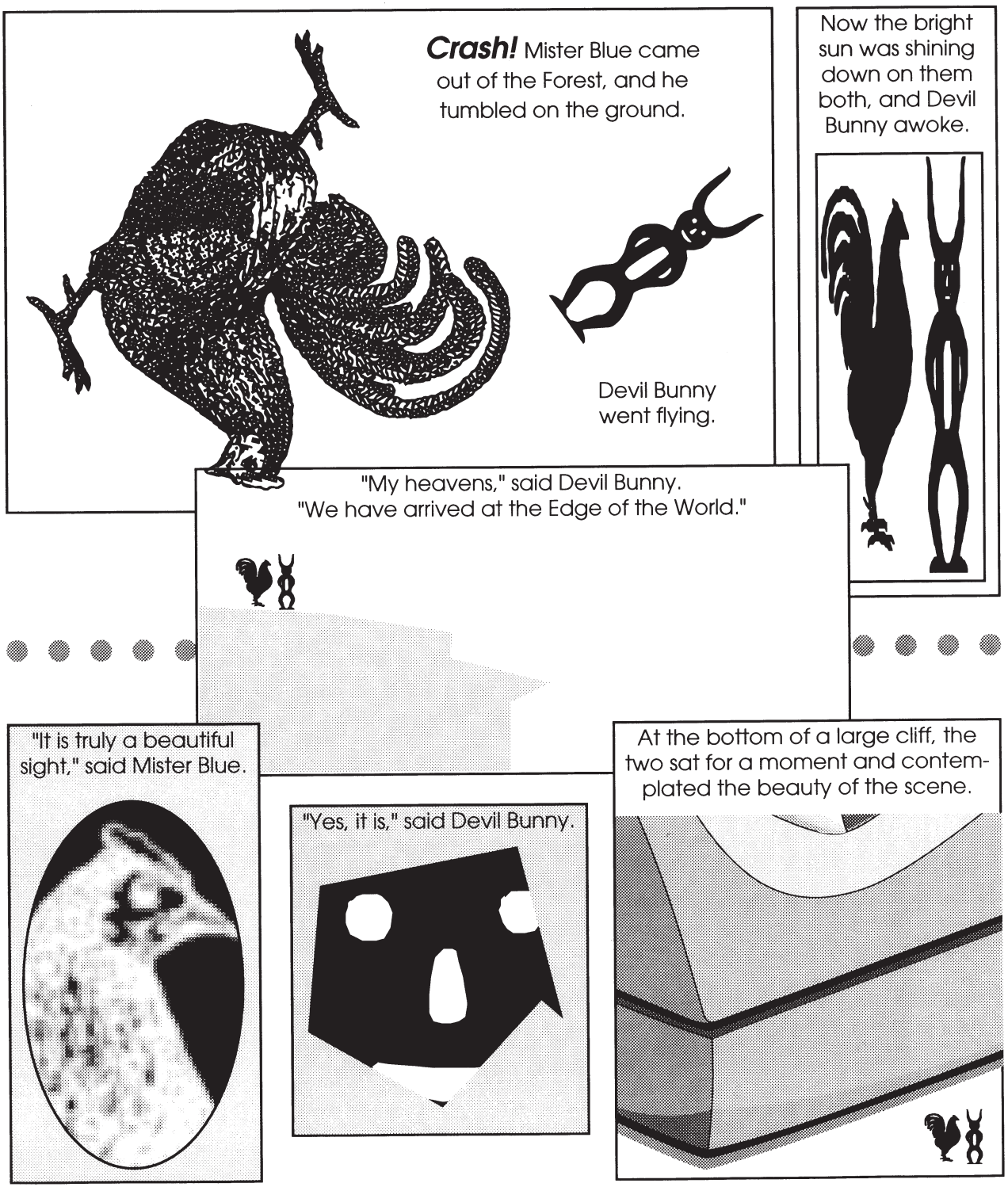
"It is a nice day," says Steve.

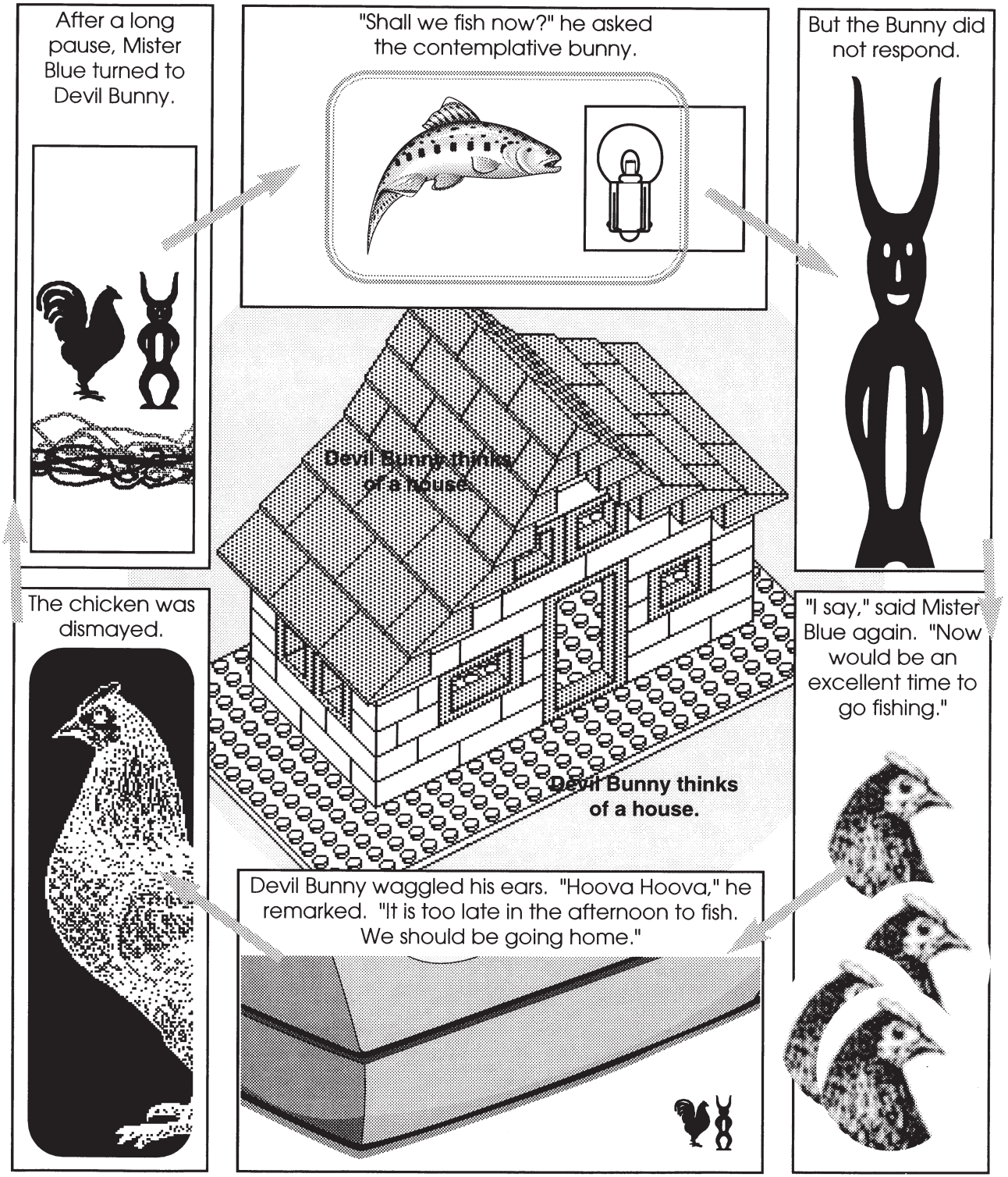
"I will remember that," says Steve.

"When you are in a dark place, I will scare you," says Steve.

"It will amuse me," says Steve.

"I do not know," answers Steve.


Crash! Mister Blue came out of the Forest, and he tumbled on the ground.
Devil Bunny went flying.
Now the bright sun was shining down on them both, and Devil Bunny awoke.
"My heavens," said Devil Bunny. "We have arrived at the Edge of the World."
"It is truly a beautiful sight," said Mister Blue.
"Yes, it is," said Devil Bunny.
At the bottom of a large cliff, the two sat for a moment and contemplated the beauty of the scene.


After a long pause, Mister Blue turned to Devil Bunny.
"Shall we fish now?" he asked the contemplative bunny.
But the Bunny did not respond.
Devil Bunny thinks of a house.
The chicken was dismayed.
"I say," said Mister Blue again. "Now would be an excellent time to go fishing."
Devil Bunny thinks of a house.
Devil Bunny waggled his ears. "Hoova Hoova," he remarked. "It is too late in the afternoon to fish. We should be going home."

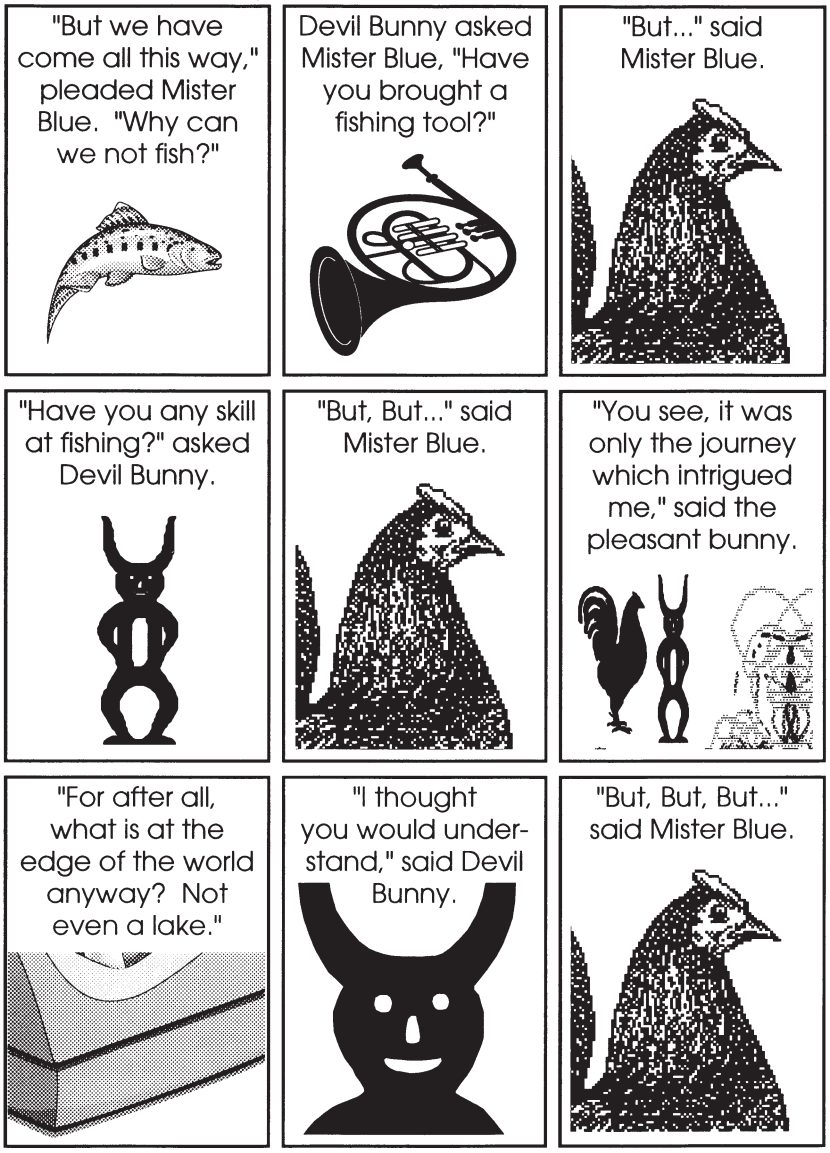
Mike and Steve talk on the Phone.

"I have a fifteen-pound cat," says Mike.

"It is a heavy cat," says Mike. "I think I will have to put it on a diet."

"No," says Mike.

After a pause, Mike says, "Maybe she will call you."



THE END

How the Elephant Got its Spots was created by James Ernest. No part of this cheeful document may be reproduced in any form without the consent of the publisher, except for purposes of review. First version © 1995 James Ernest, except *Henry at the Diner*, © 1992 James Ernest. **This PDF edition © 2019 James Ernest.** After Devil Bunny went home, Mister Blue went fishing without him.

"How nice for you," says Steve. "I have called you to get Sylvia's number."

"Do you have the number I need?" asks Steve.

Steve does not speak.

"Maybe she will," agrees Steve.