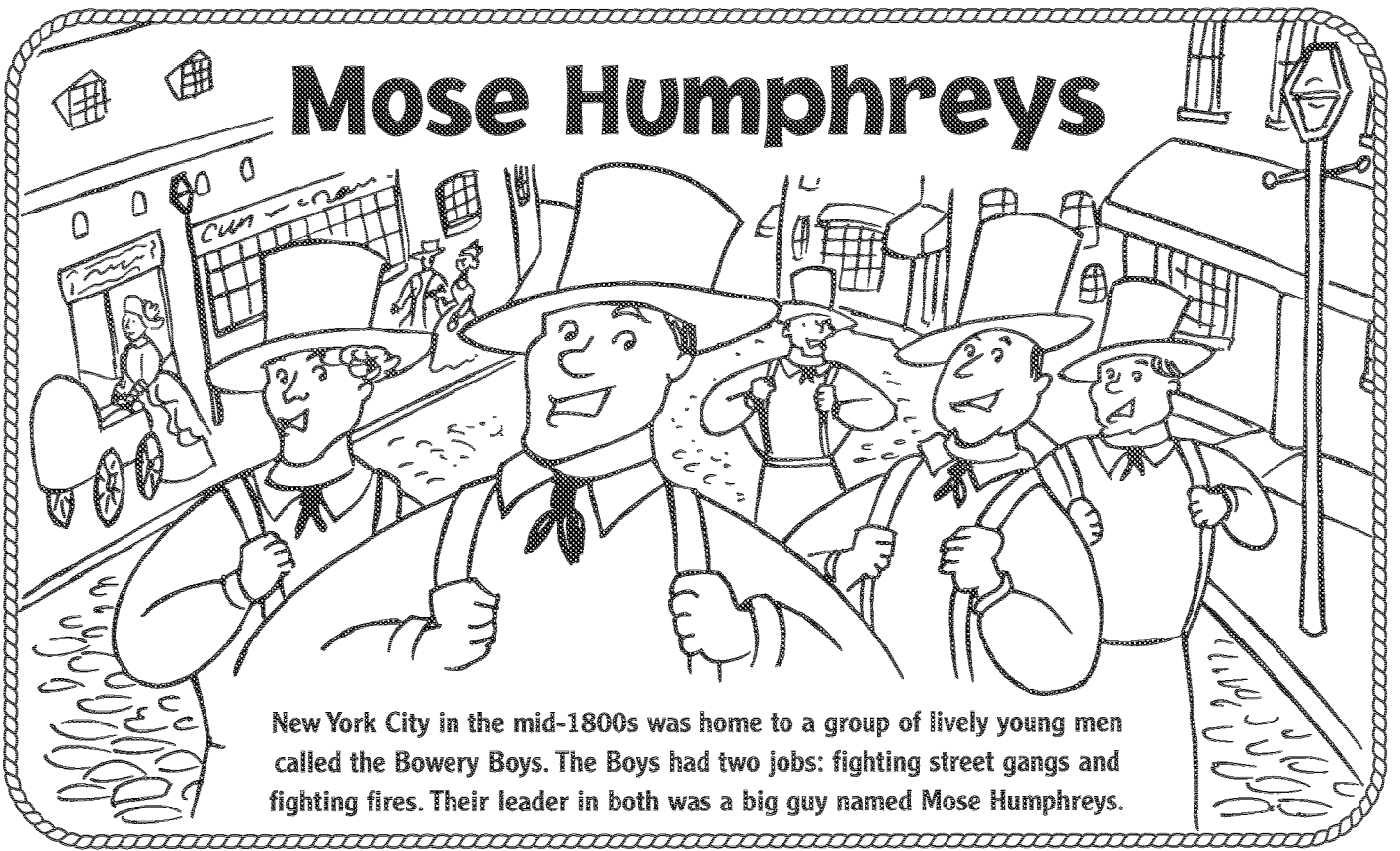


Mose Humphreys



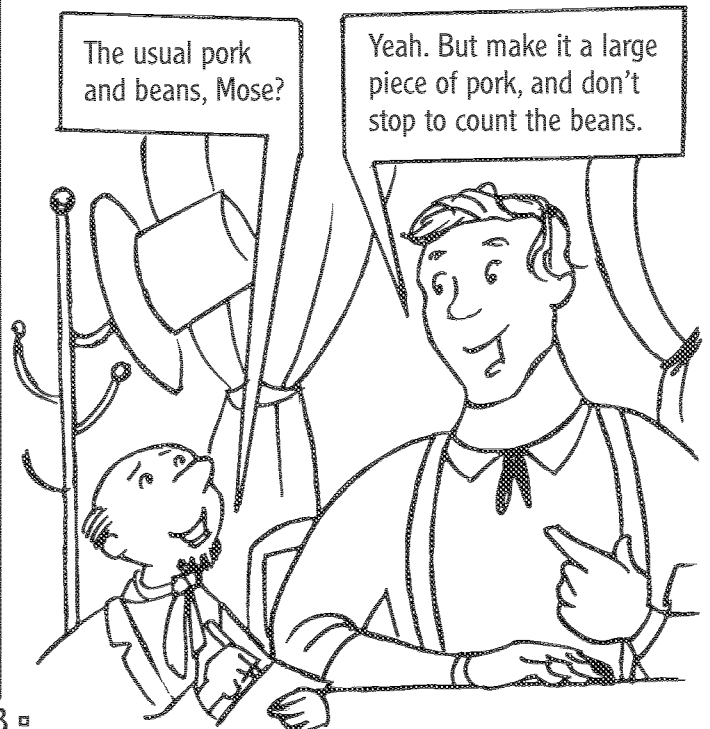
New York City in the mid-1800s was home to a group of lively young men called the Bowery Boys. The Boys had two jobs: fighting street gangs and fighting fires. Their leader in both was a big guy named Mose Humphreys.

□ 1 □

Mose and his Boys spent part of each day fighting gangs like the Plug Uglies and the Dead Rabbits. When fists weren't enough to get the gangs to toe the line, Mose would hurl lampposts and paving stones at them.

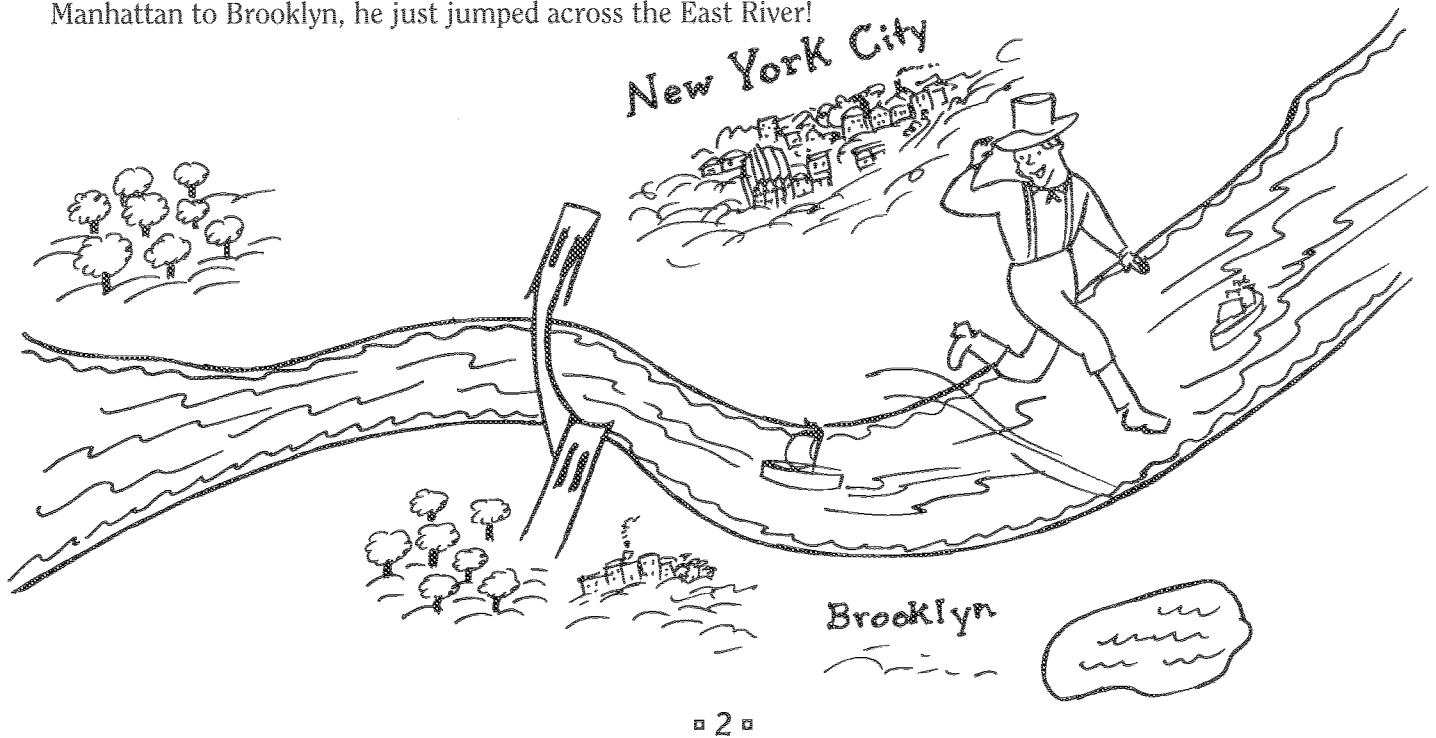


After a muss, Mose usually headed over to his favorite soup house for a plate of pork and beans. He was a big man and had a big appetite.

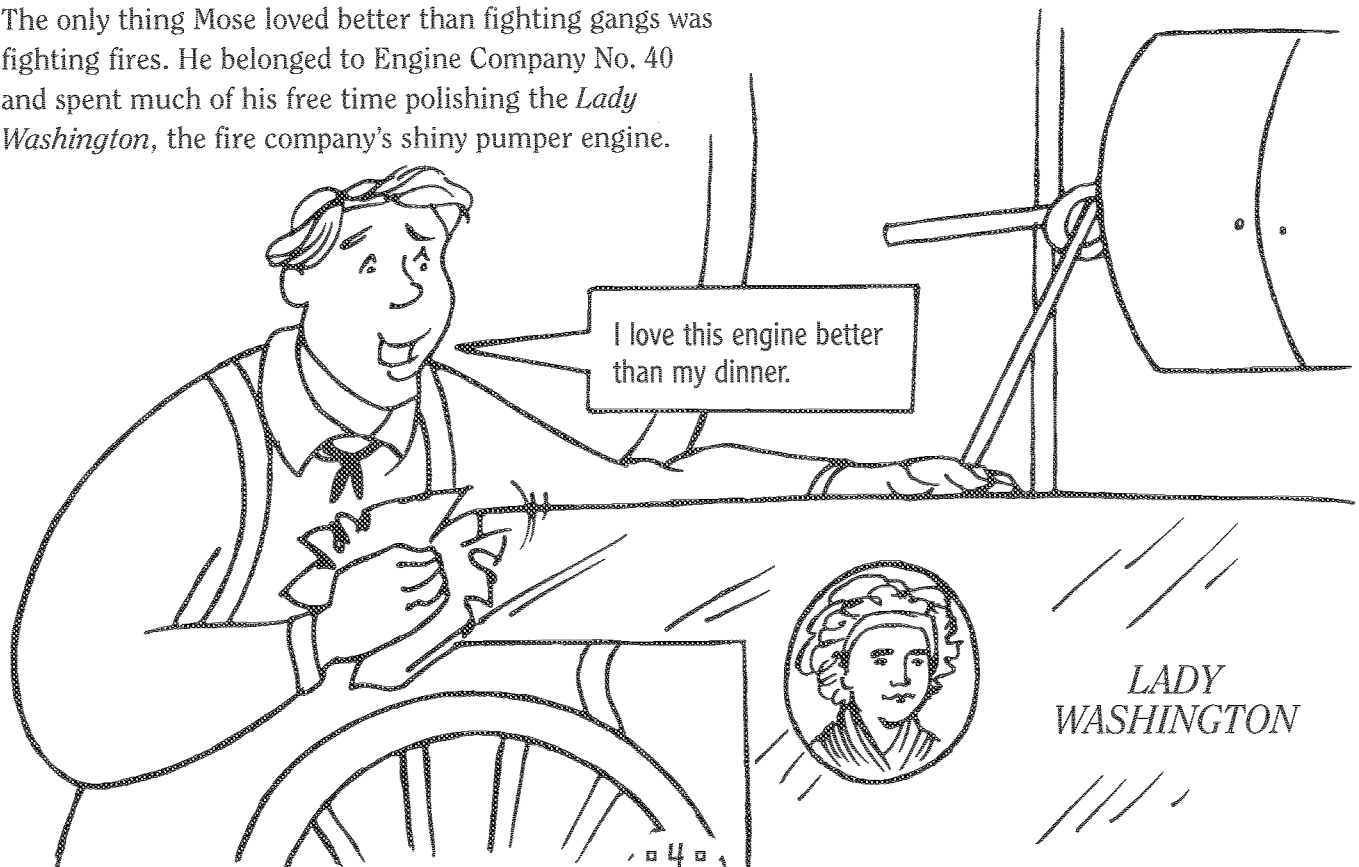


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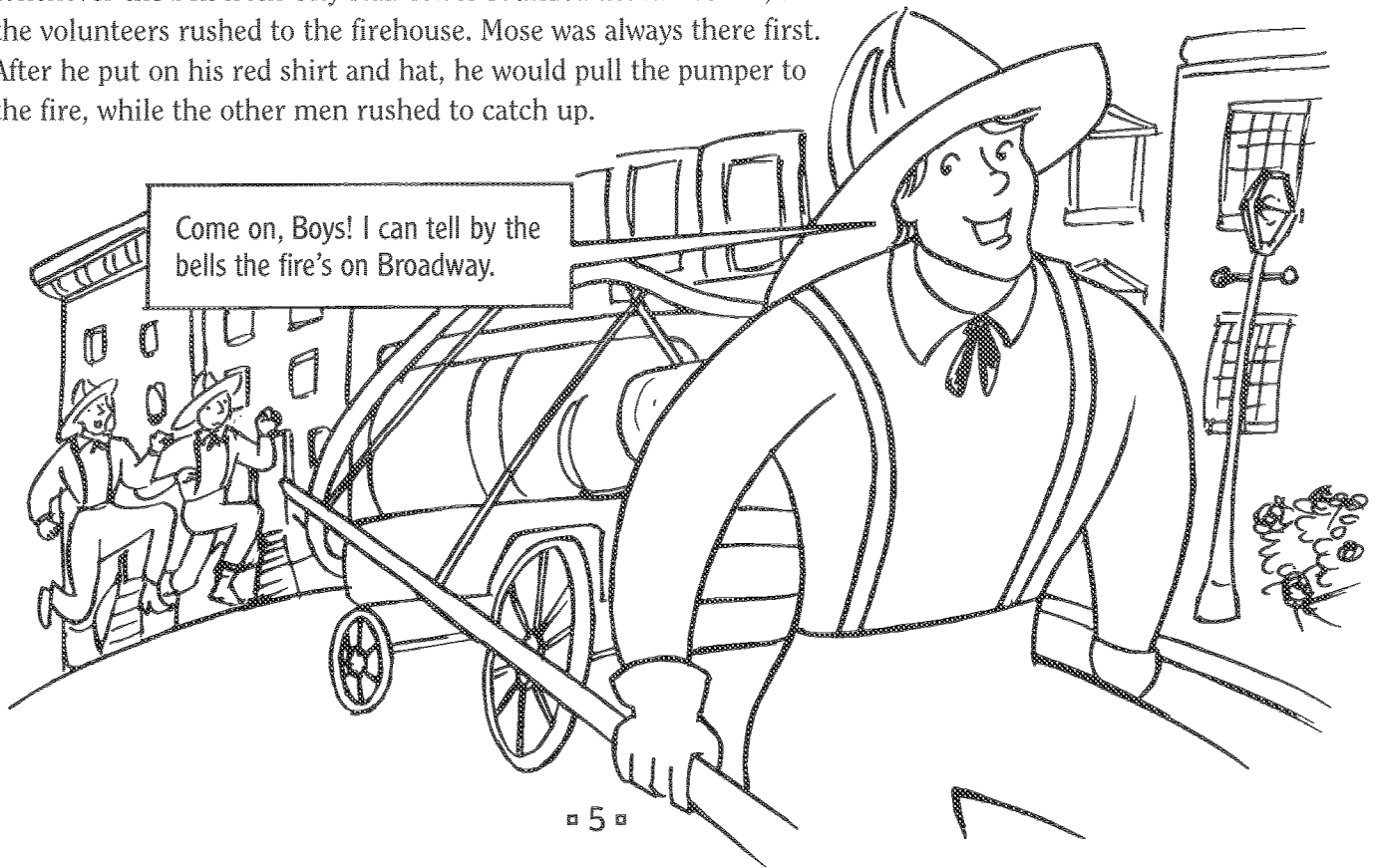
Mose was 12 feet tall. He had hands as big as hams and feet as big as barges. He could swim the Hudson River in two strokes and circle the island of Manhattan in six. When he wanted to get from Manhattan to Brooklyn, he just jumped across the East River!



The only thing Mose loved better than fighting gangs was fighting fires. He belonged to Engine Company No. 40 and spent much of his free time polishing the *Lady Washington*, the fire company's shiny pumper engine.



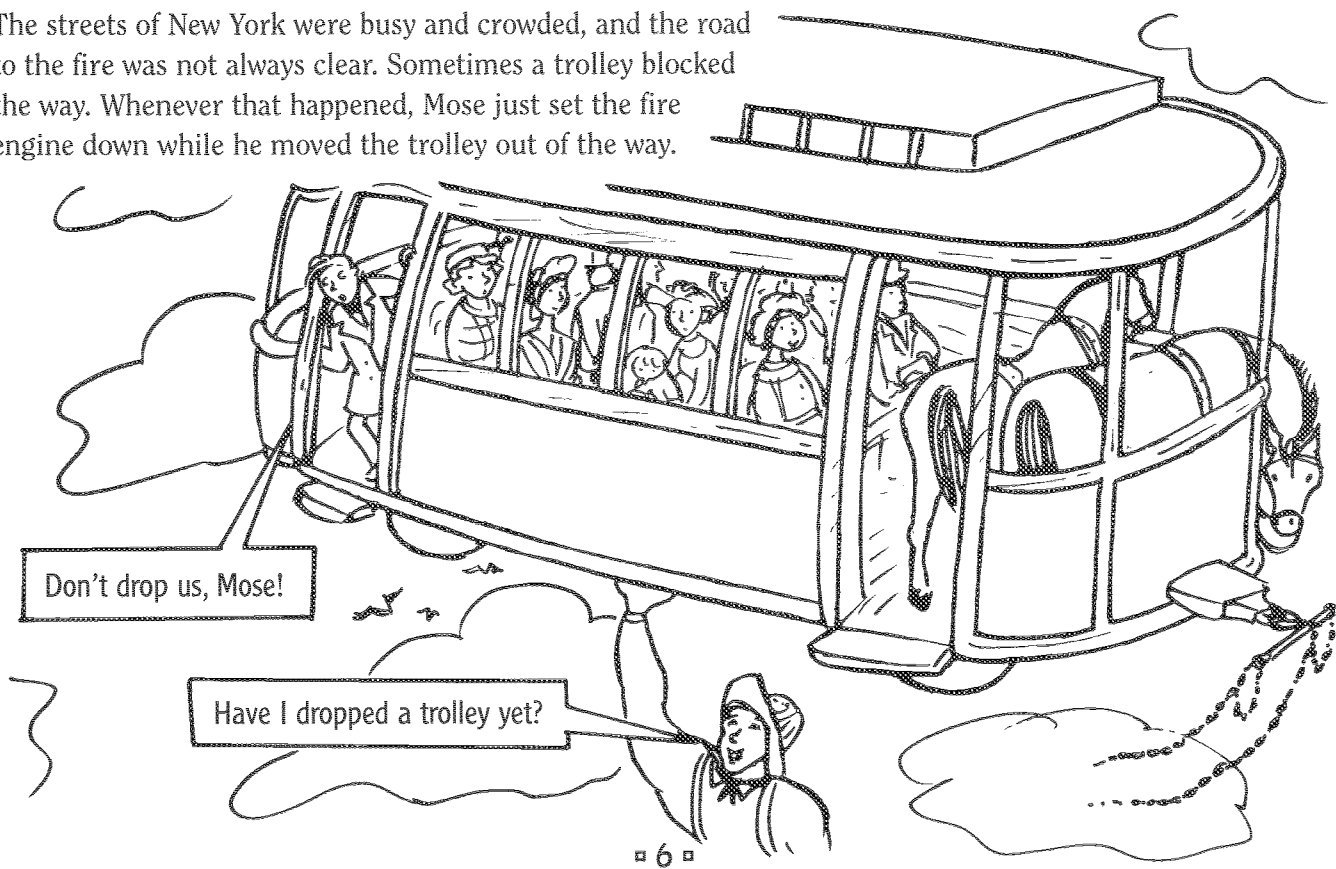
Whenever the bell from City Hall tower sounded the fire alarm, all the volunteers rushed to the firehouse. Mose was always there first. After he put on his red shirt and hat, he would pull the pumper to the fire, while the other men rushed to catch up.



Mose put out fires at mansions, tenements, soup houses, and churches. He rescued barbers, bankers, bakers, and babies. Mose especially loved to rescue babies.



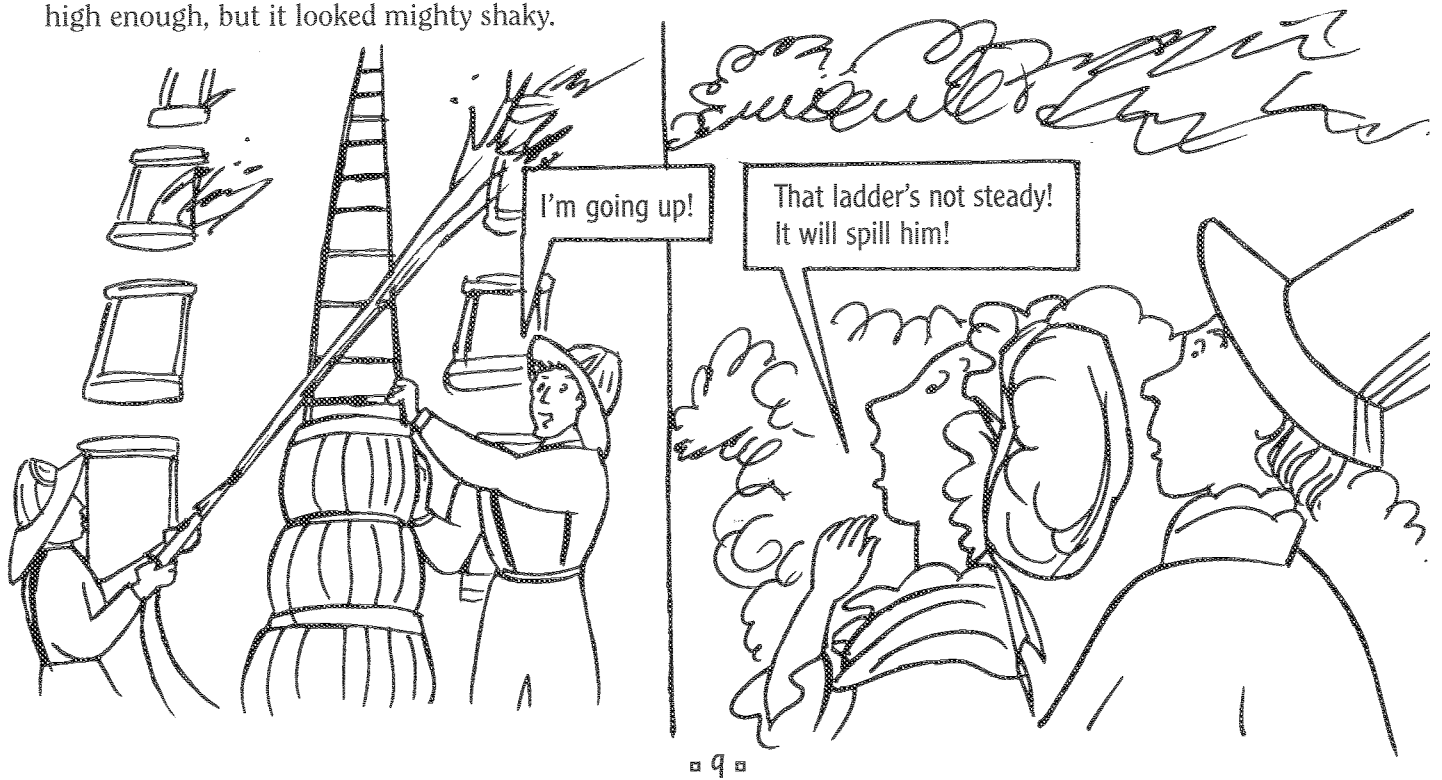
The streets of New York were busy and crowded, and the road to the fire was not always clear. Sometimes a trolley blocked the way. Whenever that happened, Mose just set the fire engine down while he moved the trolley out of the way.



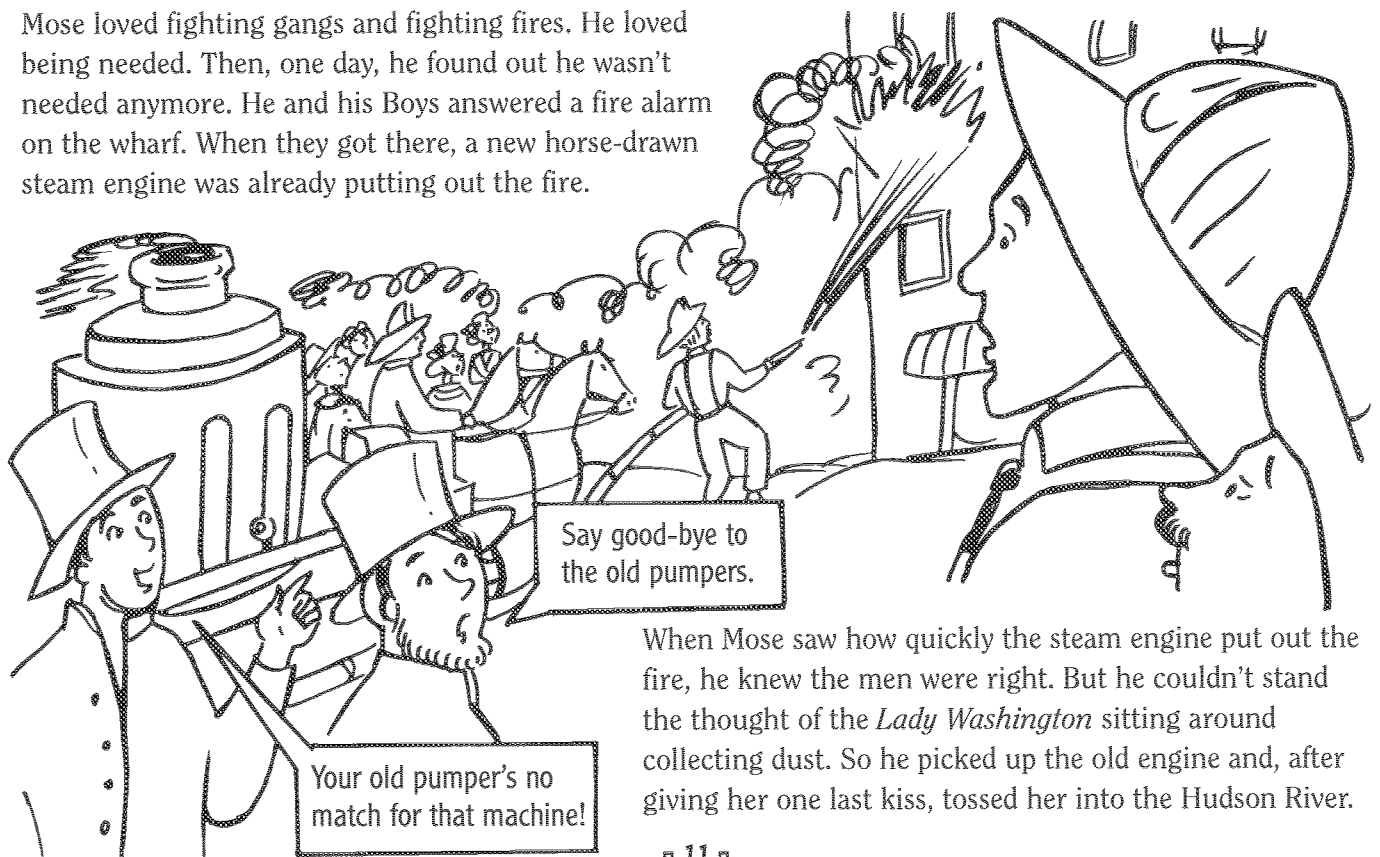
Mose's most famous rescue was of a baby trapped on the fourth floor of a burning tenement. When the baby's mother told the firefighters her baby was up on the fourth floor, the Boys got their longest ladder. But it reached only the third floor!



Mose quickly piled three whiskey barrels one on top of the other. Then he put the ladder on top of the barrels. The ladder reached high enough, but it looked mighty shaky.

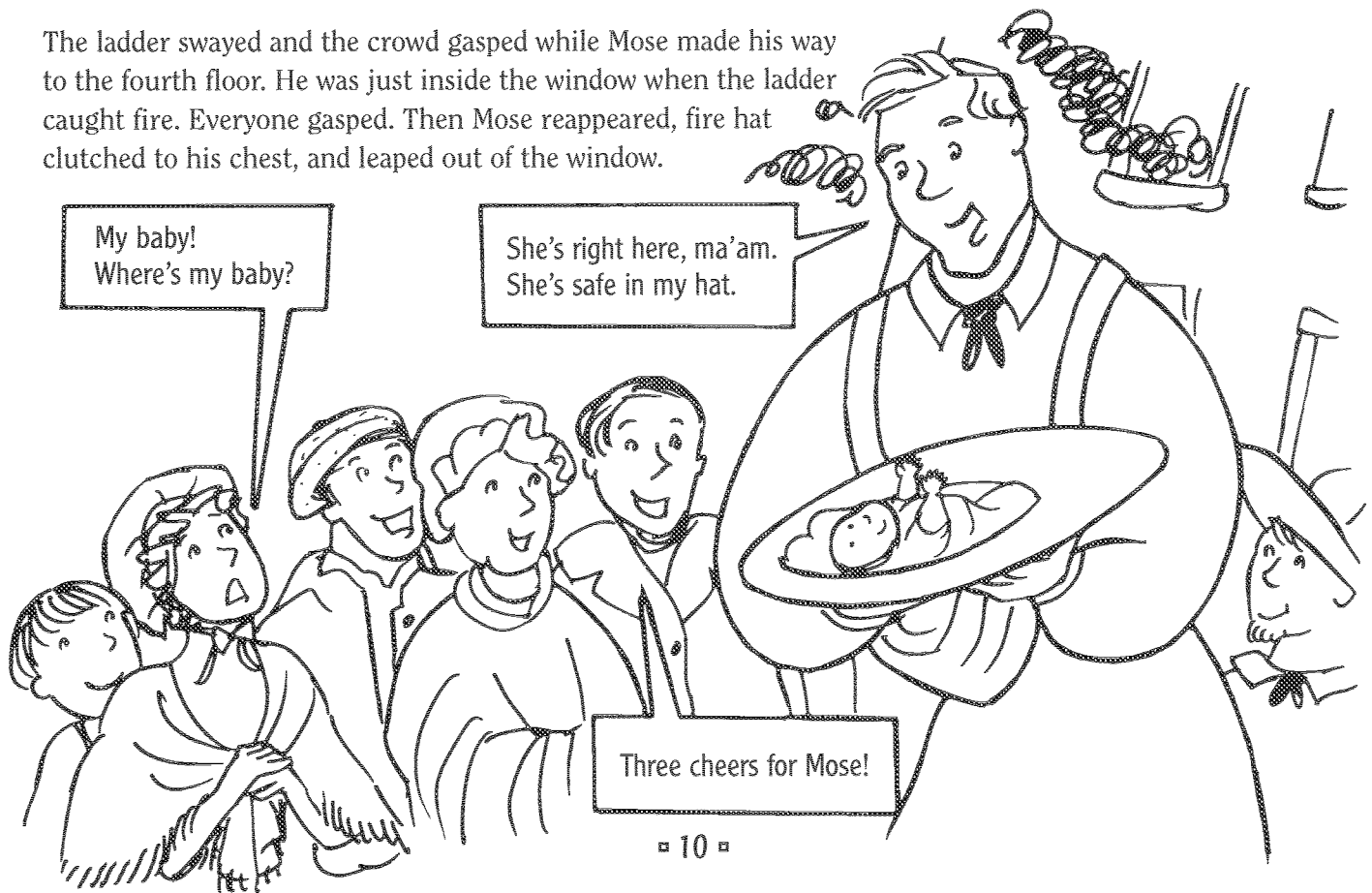


Mose loved fighting gangs and fighting fires. He loved being needed. Then, one day, he found out he wasn't needed anymore. He and his Boys answered a fire alarm on the wharf. When they got there, a new horse-drawn steam engine was already putting out the fire.



When Mose saw how quickly the steam engine put out the fire, he knew the men were right. But he couldn't stand the thought of the *Lady Washington* sitting around collecting dust. So he picked up the old engine and, after giving her one last kiss, tossed her into the Hudson River.

The ladder swayed and the crowd gasped while Mose made his way to the fourth floor. He was just inside the window when the ladder caught fire. Everyone gasped. Then Mose reappeared, fire hat clutched to his chest, and leaped out of the window.



Mose still fought street gangs, but he missed fighting fires. He missed having a big, fierce, dangerous enemy. Then he read a newspaper headline about bears attacking gold diggers in California. Bears and gold! California sounded like the place for Mose. So he moved to California and quickly found enough gold to fill his old fire hat and then some. Finding gold made Mose happy, but fighting bears made Mose even happier. The bears were big and fierce and dangerous, and all the prospectors were glad to have Mose around.

