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Opening extract from

Russell Brand's Trickster Tales: The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Written by

Russell Brand

Illustrated by

Chris Riddell

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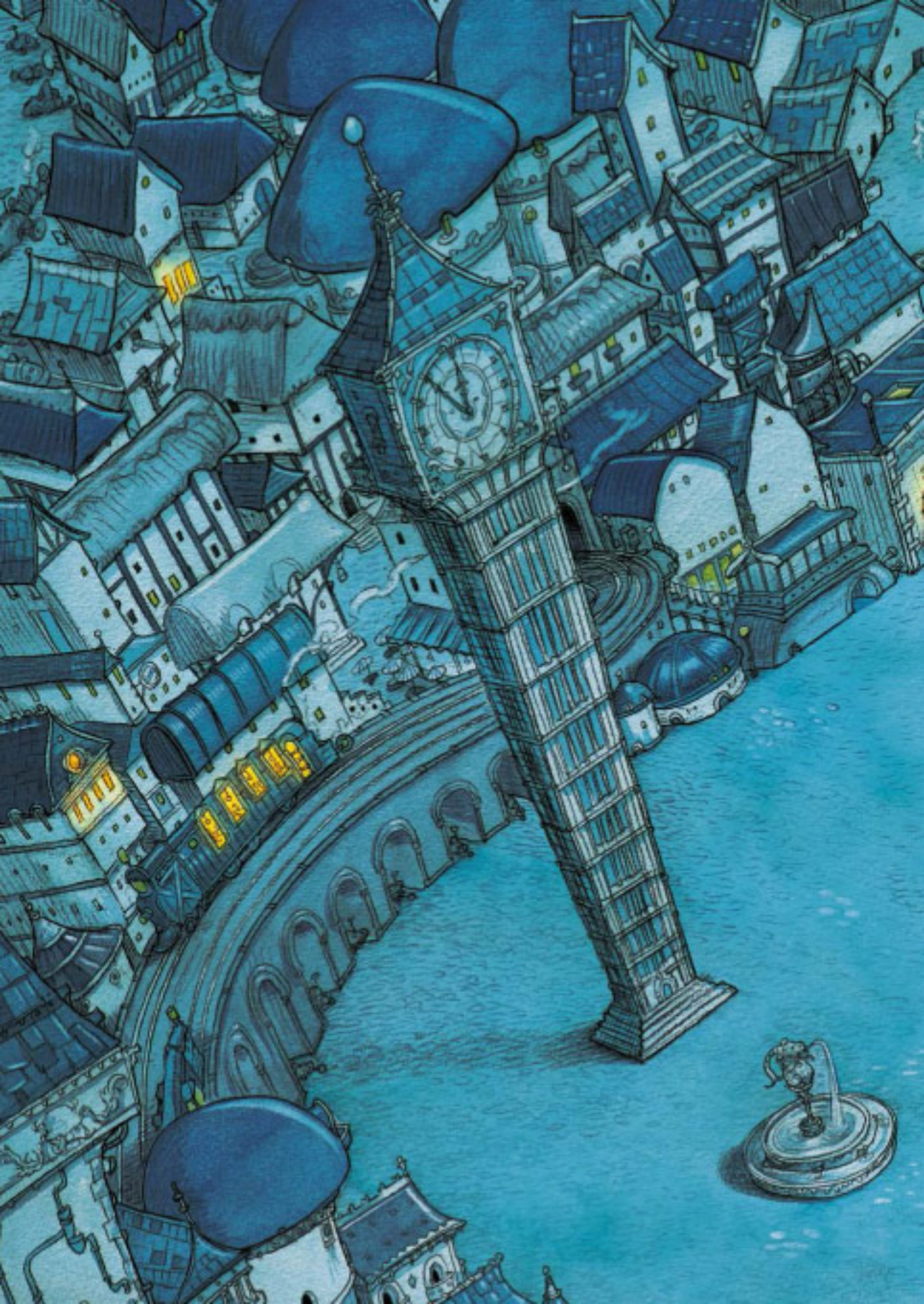




THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Russell Brand

Illustrated by Chris Riddell

CANONGATE
Edinburgh · London



NCe upon a time, a mysterious time that exists through a window in your mind, a time that seemed, to those present, exactly like now does to us, except their teeth weren't so clean and more things were wooden, there was a town called Hamelin.

The people of Hamelin were a pompous bunch who loved themselves and their town so much that if it were possible they would have spent all day zipped up in a space suit smelling their own farts. But space suits hadn't been invented in their dimension so they couldn't.

Instead they held endless puffed-up competitions and parades to see who grew the best vegetables or had the nicest garden, or whose pig had the prettiest teats, but the most prestigious of the contests was the annual pageant for **The Most Gorgeous Child in Hamelin**.

The pageants were a good way of checking that things were nice and neat and normal. The Hamelinians liked things nice and neat and normal. They liked Hamelin the way it was: tidy and trim and controlled. They didn't like anyone or anything coming in to Hamelin and upsetting its perfect borders and lines. Not ideas, not strangers, not animals. If they needed new people, the Hamelinians thought, they'd make them themselves: Hamelinian children, perfectly fashioned in Hamelin.

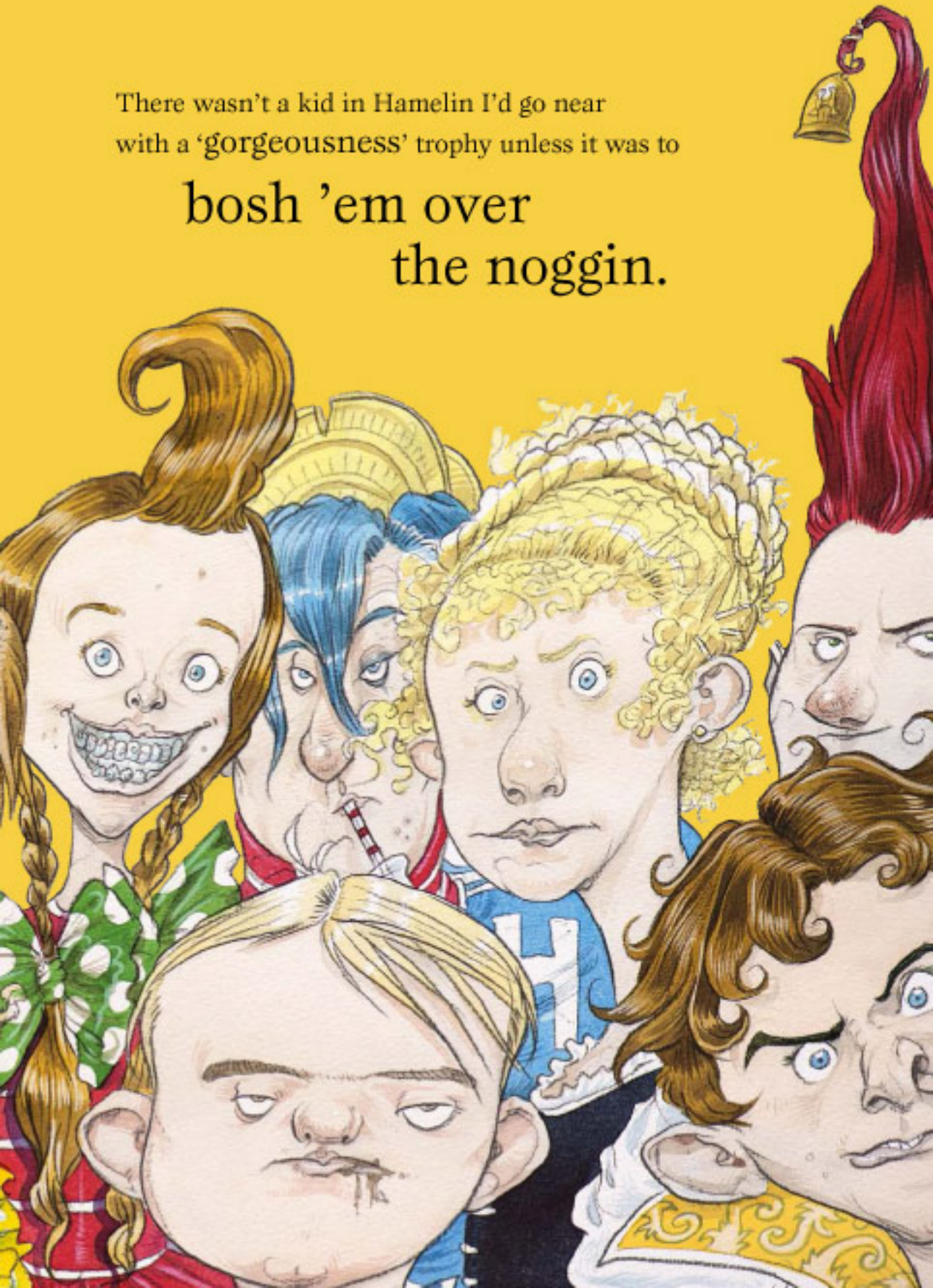


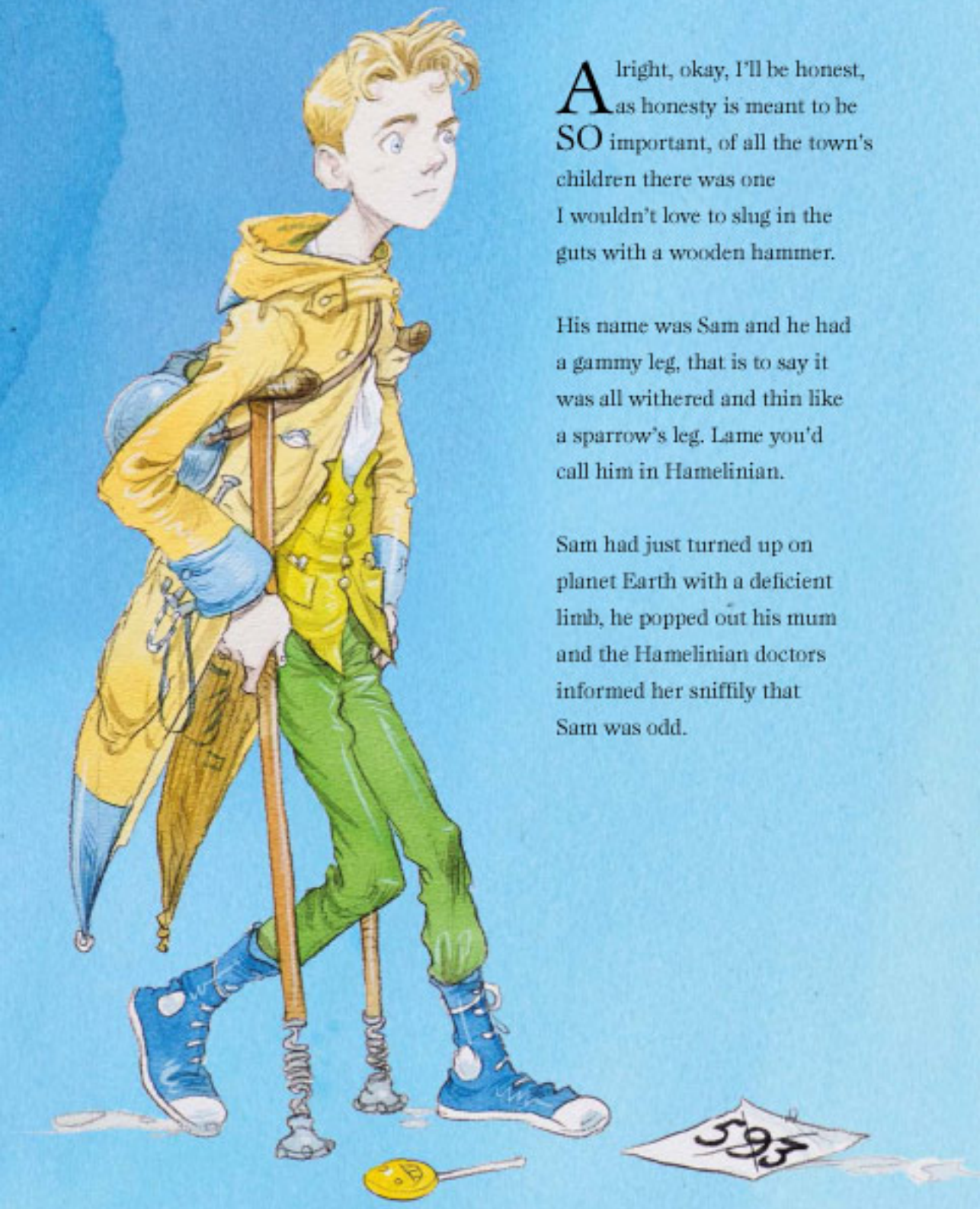
Now if you ask me, the children of Hamelin were
a wretched posse of pink-cheeked snot-sacks;
guzzling chocolate and gurgling lemonade,
belching up grog with
pockets full of mulch
and bottoms
full of stink.



There wasn't a kid in Hamelin I'd go near with a 'gorgeousness' trophy unless it was to

bosh 'em over the noggin.





Alright, okay, I'll be honest,
as honesty is meant to be
SO important, of all the town's
children there was one
I wouldn't love to slug in the
guts with a wooden hammer.

His name was Sam and he had
a gammy leg, that is to say it
was all withered and thin like
a sparrow's leg. Lame you'd
call him in Hamelinian.

Sam had just turned up on
planet Earth with a deficient
limb, he popped out his mum
and the Hamelinian doctors
informed her sniffily that
Sam was odd.

"I shall love him just as much or maybe more," she chirped. The doctors, unprofessionally, it should be said, rolled their eyes.

"There's a place for kids like him on the outskirts of town; for nausedup nippers with bulging eyes, with skin too yellow or blue or not pink enough, with thin legs or too much fingers. We can fling him in the cart and he'd be there by tea time," said the top doctor, checking his giant, fancy watch that could do things he never needed it to do.

Sam's Mum, even though she'd lived in Hamelin for ages and knew people could be right divs, was pretty appalled.

"No way! I love this lad! He's stopping with me. His name is Sam," she pulled Sam in all tight like a jacket potato.

"Maybe he'd be happier in a bizarre depository for unfinished kids on the outskirts of town," said Sam's Dad, who was tugging on a fag out the window, just below the 'No Smoking' sign.

