

Laura Owen and Korky Paul

Winnie's Big Cackling Book

Open the book,
listen to me
laugh!

Ten
spellbinding
stories!



For Jenna Moxley – K.P.
For David Goodhart, with love – xx

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Winnie's Big Cackling Book



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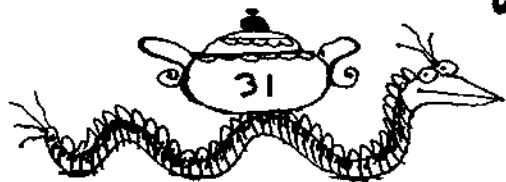
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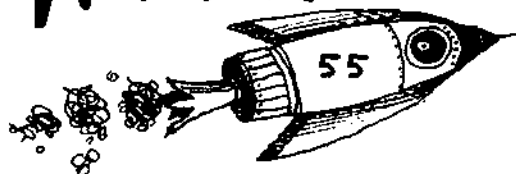
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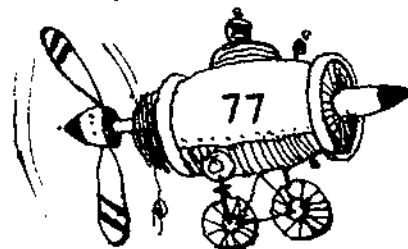
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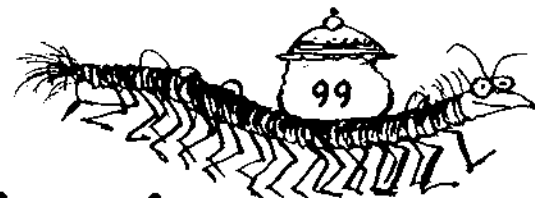
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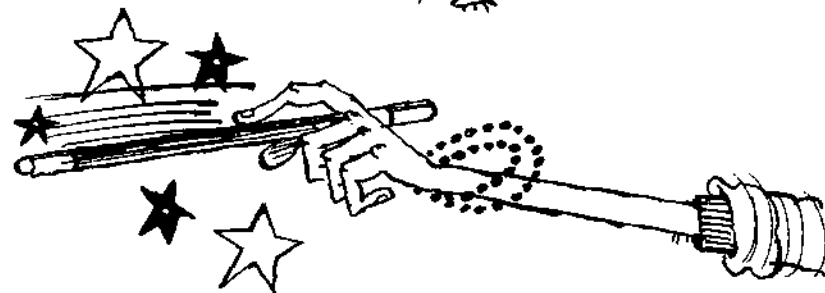
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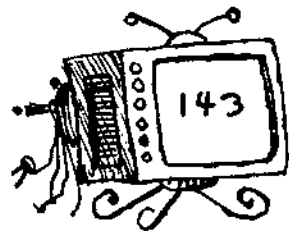
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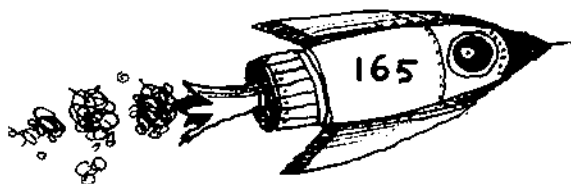
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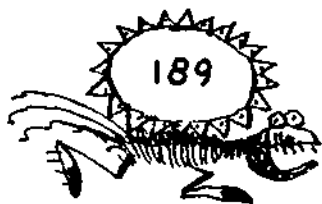
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Winnie
and the
Ghost in the Post



Mini
Winnie



Get
Cackling!



And Look
Out For...





Winnie's garden was as hot as a cauldron.
 Wilbur lay under a rhubarb leaf with his
 legs stretched and his tongue hanging out.
 Along came Winnie wearing such dark
 sunglasses that, **TRIP!**—

'Mrrrow!'



'Whoops! Blooming cat!' said Winnie,
 rubbing her nose.

'Mrrow-ow-ow!' said Wilbur.

'Well, I'm hot too, you know!' said Winnie.



'I'm a hot cross witch and you're a hot cross cat. We need to cool down.'

Winnie picked up the watering can and watered her feet.



'Oo, that's nice!' she said, wiggling her steaming toes. 'I wish, I wish . . .

Oo, I've got an idea!' said Winnie, and she pointed her wand at the watering can.

'Abracadabra!' she shouted.

Instantly, there was a giant watering can up in the sky, spilling down a great showering waterfall of cold water.

'Lovely!' said Winnie, dancing in the shower. 'Come on, Wilbur!' But Wilbur was thrashing his wet tail and scowling at Winnie. 'Whoopsy warts,' said Winnie. 'I forgot that cats don't like water!'



'Abracadabra!'



In another instant the watering can was gone. Winnie stood there, dripping and steaming.

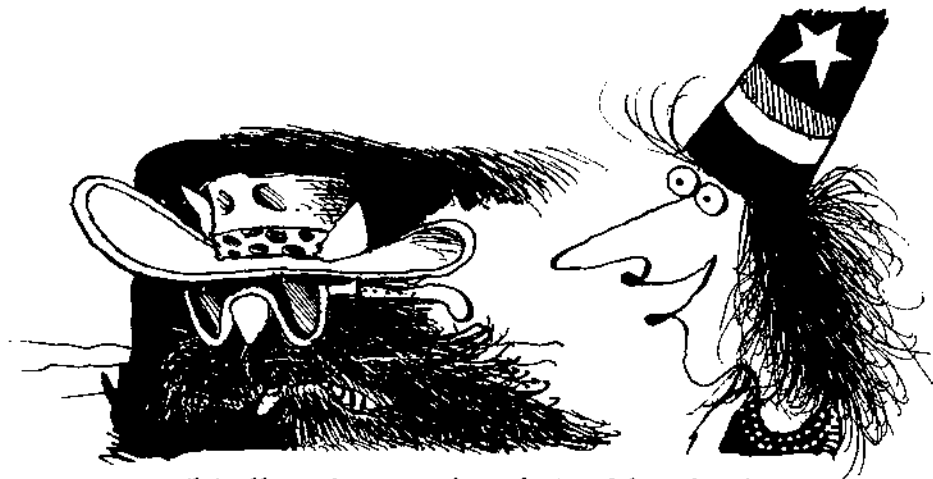
'I'm sorry, Wilbur. Sorry, sorry, sorry. Now, can we be friends again?'

Wilbur closed his eyes.

'I'll magic you a sun hat. I'll magic you some sunglasses!' said Winnie.

'Abracadabra Abracadabra!'

Now Wilbur looked a dude, but he was still cross.



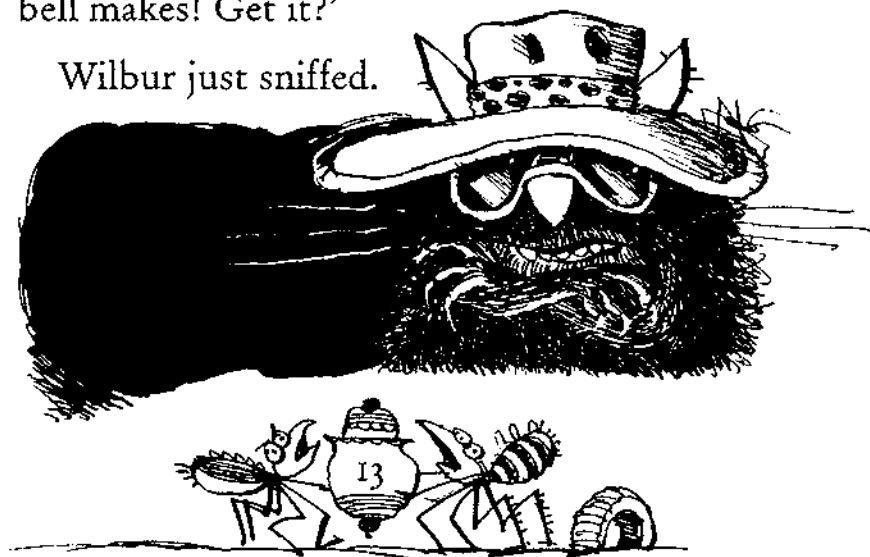
'This'll make you laugh!' said Winnie.

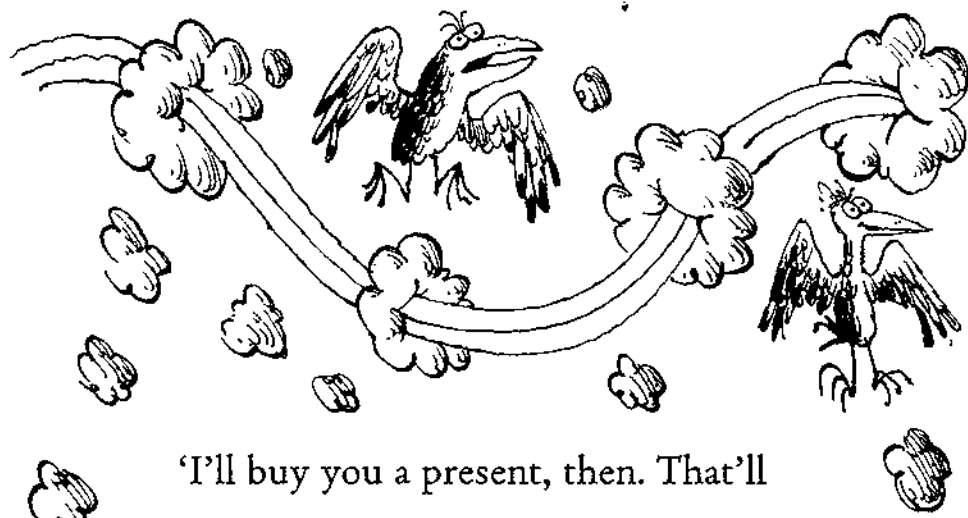
'What's brown and sticky and sounds like a bell?'

Wilbur looked the other way and pretended not to listen.

'Dung!' said Winnie. 'Dung's brown and sticky and "dung" is the sound a big bell makes! Get it?'

Wilbur just sniffed.



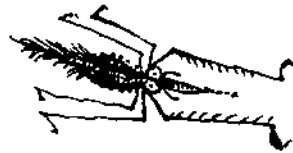


'I'll buy you a present, then. That'll cheer you up,' said Winnie. She got her broom.

'Jump up, Wilbur!'

Wilbur's ears flattened on his head, but he climbed on board.

It was hot, flying.



'Let's go faster to make a breeze,' said Winnie. *Abracadabra!*

In an instant, Wilbur had to cling on to the broom with every claw. He lay flat and he closed his eyes, his tail whizzing out behind the broom.

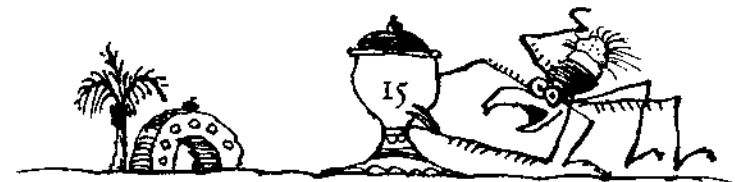


'Wheeeee!' said Winnie. 'This is fun!'

'Mrrrow!' wailed Wilbur.

'Honestly! You just can't please some blooming cats!' said Winnie.

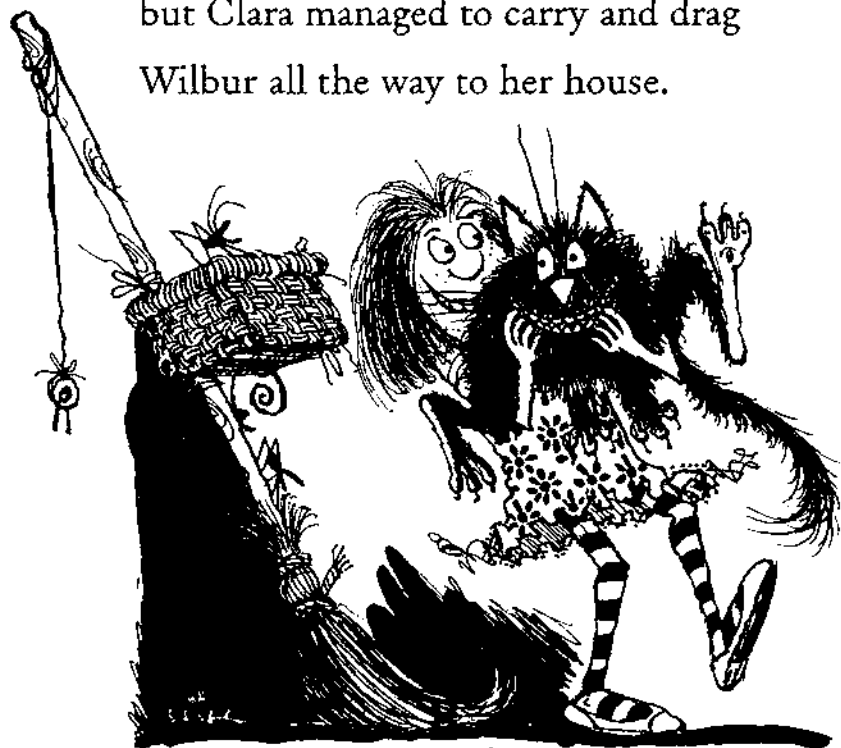
They got to the shops and parked the broom. But, 'Stop!' said Winnie. 'You wait in the broom basket, Wilbur, or you'll spoil your surprise.'





Wilbur was just climbing into the basket when a little girl called Clara noticed him.

'Hello, Pussykins!' said Clara. 'Are you hot, Pussykins? Are you hungry? Come with me!' Clara hauled Wilbur out of the basket. Wilbur was almost as big as Clara, but Clara managed to carry and drag Wilbur all the way to her house.



Clara's house was shady and cool. Clara's fridge had cat food in it. Clara's sisters all fussed over Wilbur and told him what a very fine cat he was. Wilbur purred so much that his whiskers sparked. Wilbur was cool. Wilbur was being spoilt. Wilbur was happy.





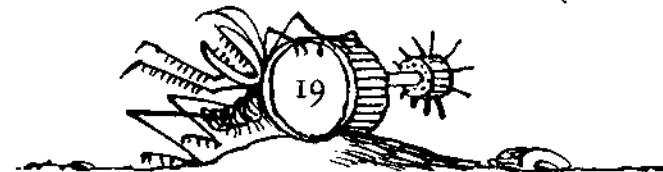
Winnie was feeling happier, too. As she stepped into her favourite shop, a draught of cool smelly air from a drain lifted her hair and her dress and her spirits.

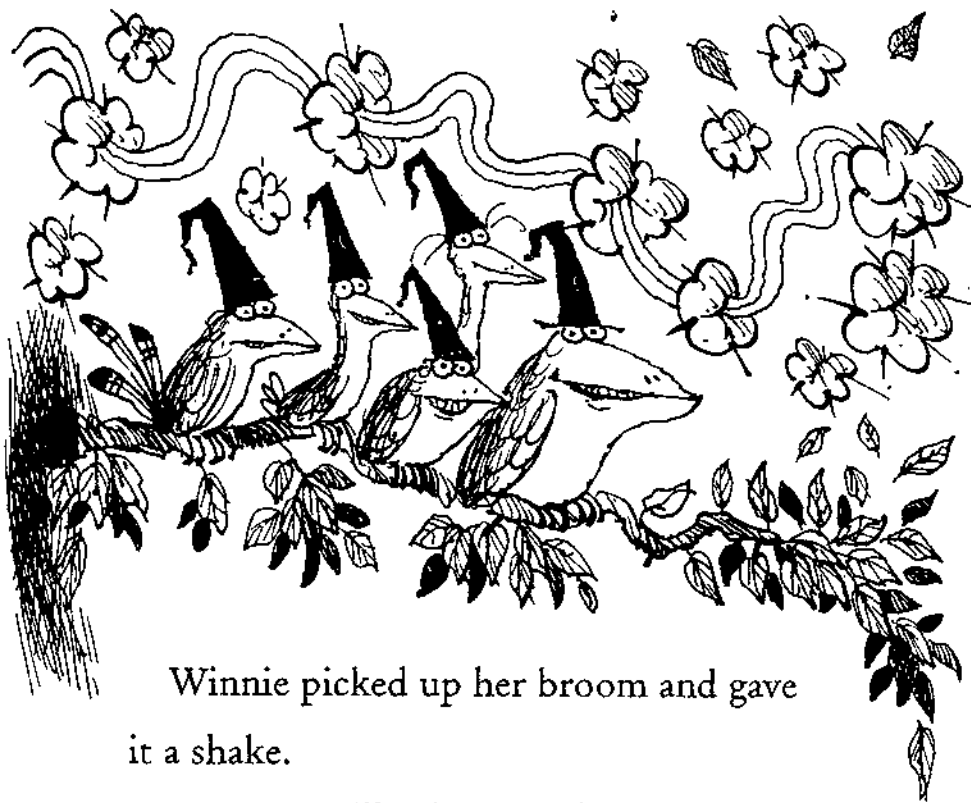
‘Ooo!’ giggled Winnie. ‘This is lovely!’



Winnie looked at toad toasters and mouse mincers and maggot mashers and filth frothers and cockroach crushers and bat broilers before she found what she was after. She took her parcel back outside.

‘Here I am, Wilbur!’ said Winnie. ‘Time to go home.’

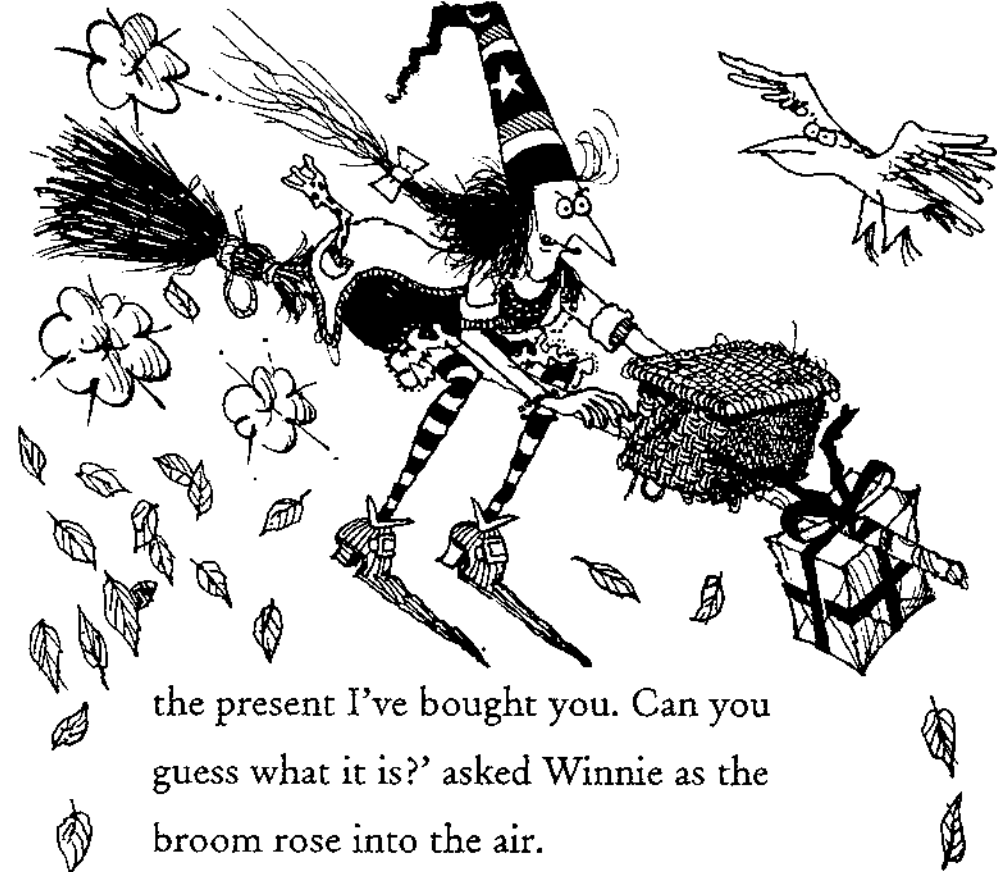
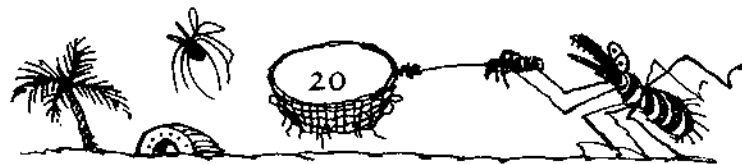




Winnie picked up her broom and gave it a shake.

'Are you still sulking? Oh, stay in the basket if you want to.' Winnie hung her shopping from the front of the broom and climbed on board.

'Oooer!' said Winnie as the broom tipped forwards because of the weight of the parcel. 'You're heavy, Wilbur. And you'll get even heavier after you've used



the present I've bought you. Can you guess what it is?' asked Winnie as the broom rose into the air.

Wilbur said nothing.

'You mardy old mog!' said Winnie.

'Don't you want to know?'

Still nothing.

Winnie was getting hot again. She was getting cross too. So she didn't say anything else to Wilbur all the way home.



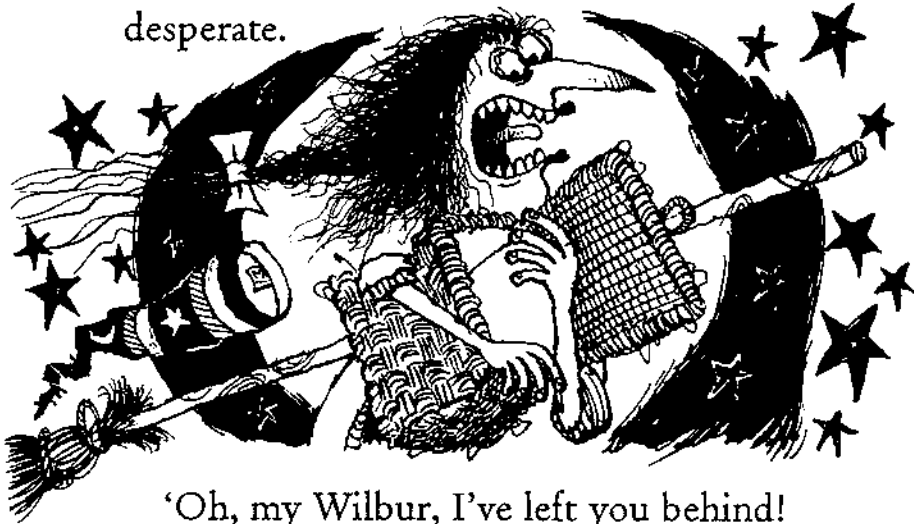
Winnie parked her broom.

'We're home! Out you get!'

Winnie lifted the lid of the basket.

'WILBUR!' wailed Winnie . . . for the basket was empty.

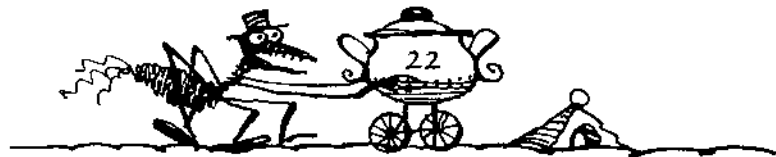
Winnie felt empty too. Winnie felt desperate.



'Oh, my Wilbur, I've left you behind!
Don't worry, Wilbur, I'm coming!'

Winnie jumped back onto her broom.

'Abracadabra!' she shouted.



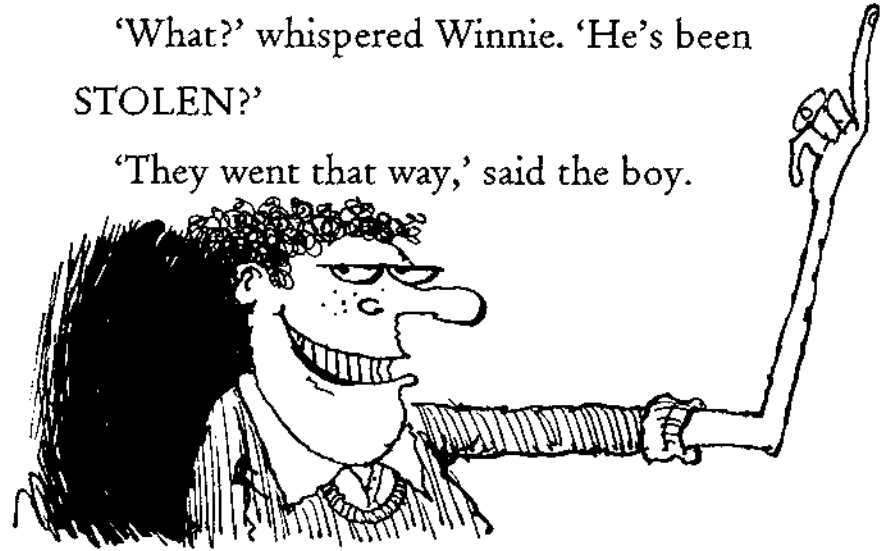
Quick as a flash she shot through the sky, back to the shops. Winnie looked wildly all around.

'Where is he?' wailed Winnie.

'That black cat?' said a boy. 'Clara took him.'

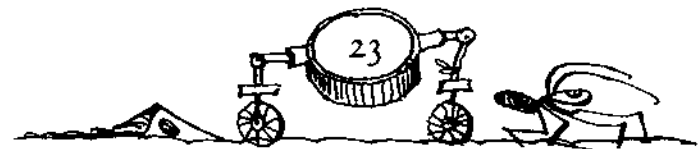
'What?' whispered Winnie. 'He's been STOLEN?'

'They went that way,' said the boy.



Winnie waved her wand.

'Abracadabra, take me to Wilbur!' begged Winnie.



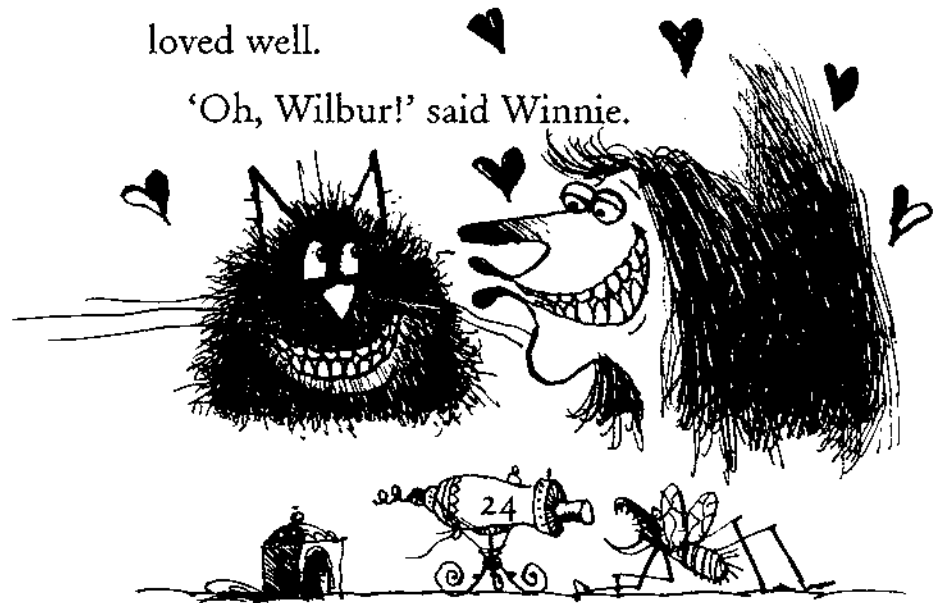


In an instant Winnie was inside Clara's house, landing on Clara's dad's lap.



'A witch!' he yelped, and he leapt up, dropping Winnie to the floor. And suddenly Winnie was face to face with a grinning, drooling face that she knew and loved well.

'Oh, Wilbur!' said Winnie.



'He's going to live with me for ever and ever,' said Clara. 'Aren't you, Pussykins?'

Wilbur was purring and dribbling and working his claws as six small hands brushed him and put hair-clips in his fur.

'But he's my friend!' said Winnie.

'Look, I bought him a present!'



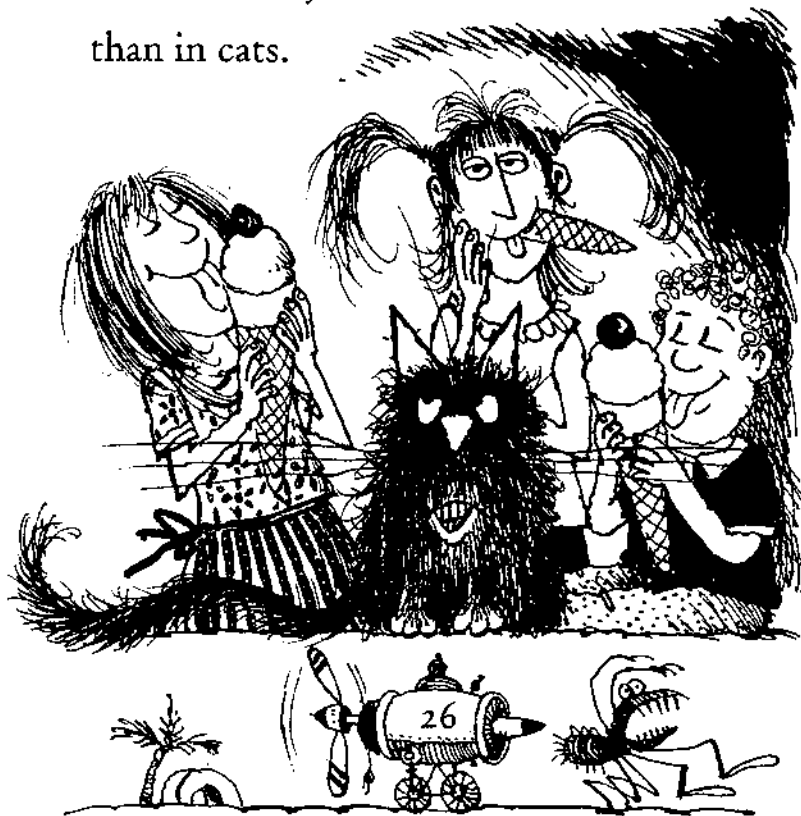
It was the little girls who ripped open the present and found . . .





'An ice-cream machine!' said Winnie.
'Do you like it, Wilbur? I thought we
could make maggot-flavour ice cream with
flea sprinklies to cool us down.'

But Clara's mum had other ideas. She
made strawberry ice cream with hundreds
and thousands on top. Clara and her sisters
were suddenly more interested in ice cream
than in cats.



'Quick, let's go home,' whispered
Winnie.

Without the ice-cream machine, the
broom was balanced just right. Winnie
and Wilbur flew at normal speed, calmly
over the countryside, and it was nice.





They landed in Winnie's garden.

'What shall we do now?' asked Winnie.

Wilbur grinned and pointed at the rhubarb patch. 'Prrrmeow,' he said.

'Good idea!' said Winnie.

Winnie and Wilbur lay under the shade of a big rhubarb leaf, watching the sun go down. Winnie held a stick with a bit of string tied to it with a centipede on the end which she waved up and down. As she flicked the centipede upwards, the toad on the leaf jumped for it, bouncing the leaf under him. So the leaf fanned Winnie and Wilbur till they were cool and comfortable and kind to each other again.

'I've got another joke for you,' said Winnie.



'Mrrow?'

'What's brown and sticky?'

Wilbur smiled. Wilbur pointed.

'Yes!' said Winnie. 'A stick is brown and sticky!'





Winnie Gets Cracking



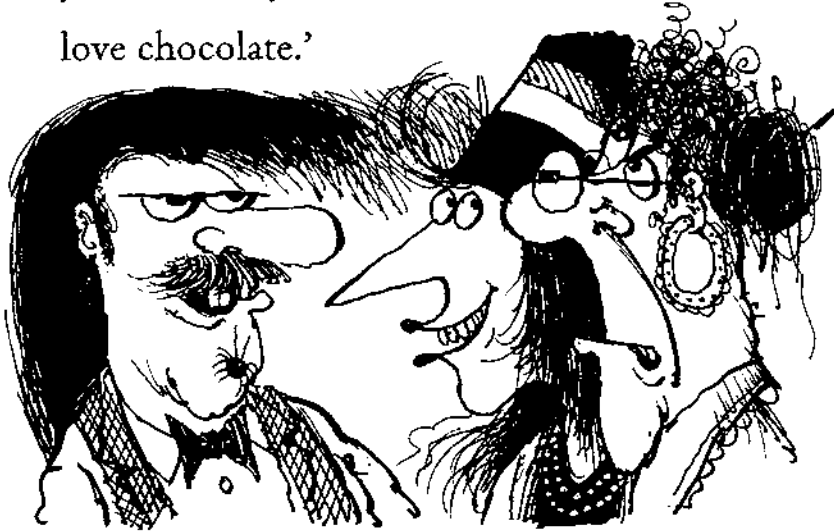
When Winnie and Wilbur were queuing in the shop to buy their weekend sherbet bombs and gummy worms and liquorice rats' tails and pickled gherkins, they overheard Mrs Parmar, the school secretary, talking to the shopkeeper.

'I'll have a small box of cheap chocolates,' said Mrs Parmar.

'Special occasion, is it?' asked the shopkeeper.



'It's my birthday today,' said Mrs Parmar. *Sniff!* 'Not that anyone takes any notice of that. I can't afford much, but I do buy myself a little bit of chocolate each year. Nobody else will bother, and I do love chocolate.'

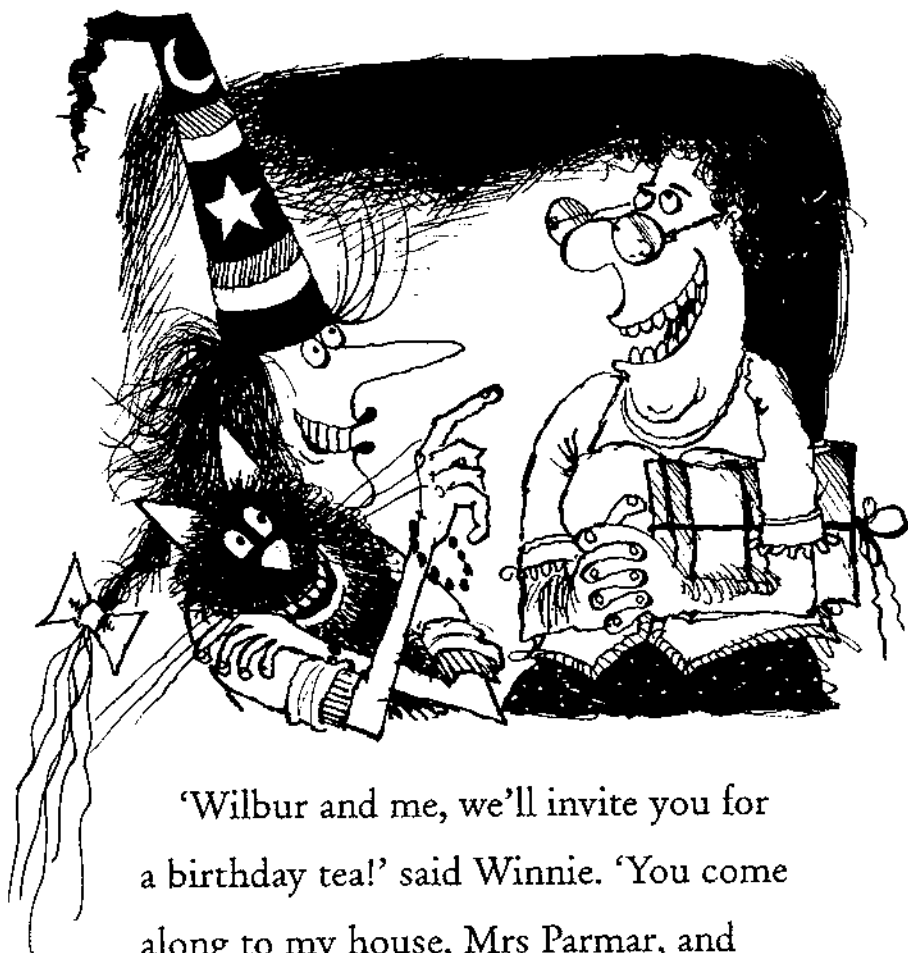


'That's as sad as a soggy guinea pig with no umbrella!' said Winnie, sticking her large nose in between Mrs Parmar and the shop man.



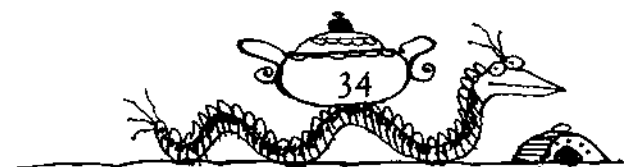
'Oh, it's you, is it, Winnie?' said Mrs Parmar. 'I'm still trying to forget the times you cooked and cleaned at the school!' She clutched her box of chocolates and backed away.





‘Wilbur and me, we’ll invite you for a birthday tea!’ said Winnie. ‘You come along to my house, Mrs Parmar, and we’ll give you a real treat!’

A weak wobbly smile spread over Mrs Parmar’s face. ‘Well, I suppose that is kind of you, but ...’



‘See you at four, then,’ said Winnie. ‘And there’ll be a present as well as lots to eat!’

‘Food?’ said Mrs Parmar, looking into Winnie’s shopping basket. ‘Oh, dear!’ And she fled from the shop.





Winnie and Wilbur went home and began to plan.

'What can we give her for a present?' said Winnie. 'She's a smart lady. Would she like some of that nice haggis hand cream?'

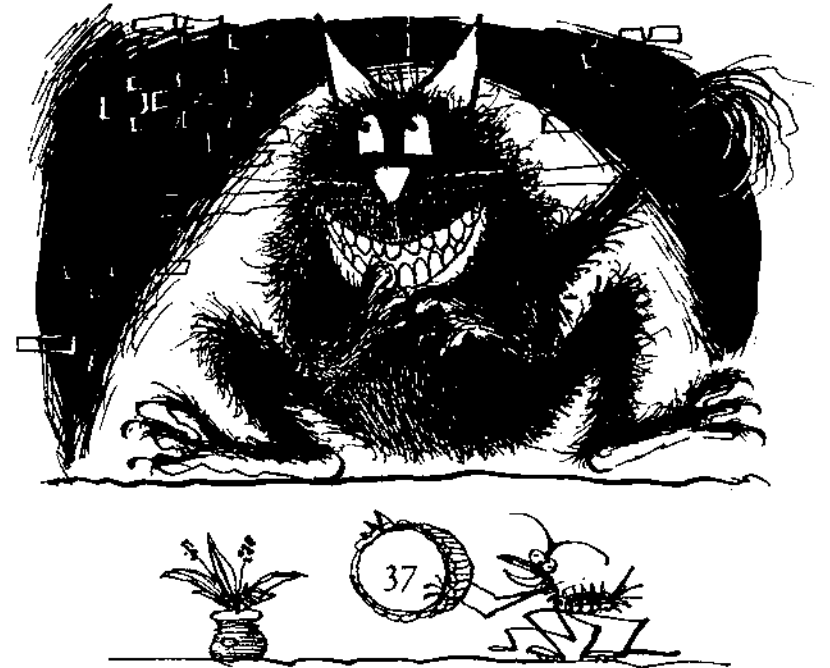
'Mrro!' Wilbur shook his head.

'Well, what about a big black bar of squashed slug soap?' Wilbur shook his



head even harder. 'No? Something pretty, then. What about a cowpat paperweight? Or maggot earrings? No? Or . . . or . . . I've got it!' Winnie clapped her hands in excitement. 'Remember that story about some thingy or other that lays a golden egg every day? Well, if we could get one of those for Mrs Parmar she would soon get rich! She could buy chocolate every day!'

Wilbur grinned his agreement.

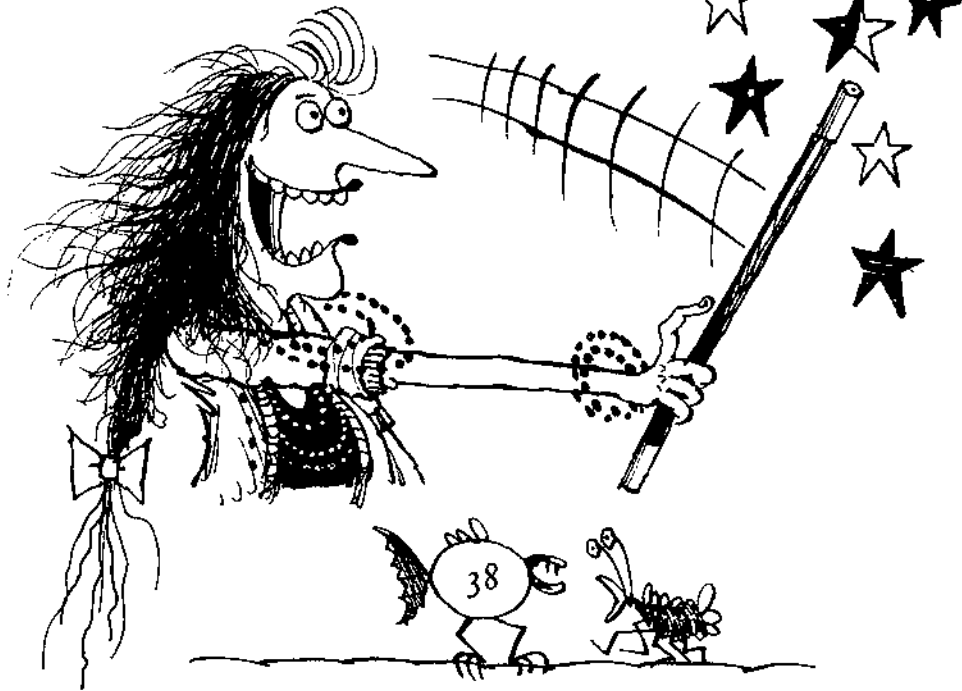


'What exactly was it that laid the golden egg, Wilbur?' wondered Winnie.

'What came before the egg?'

Wilbur shrugged.

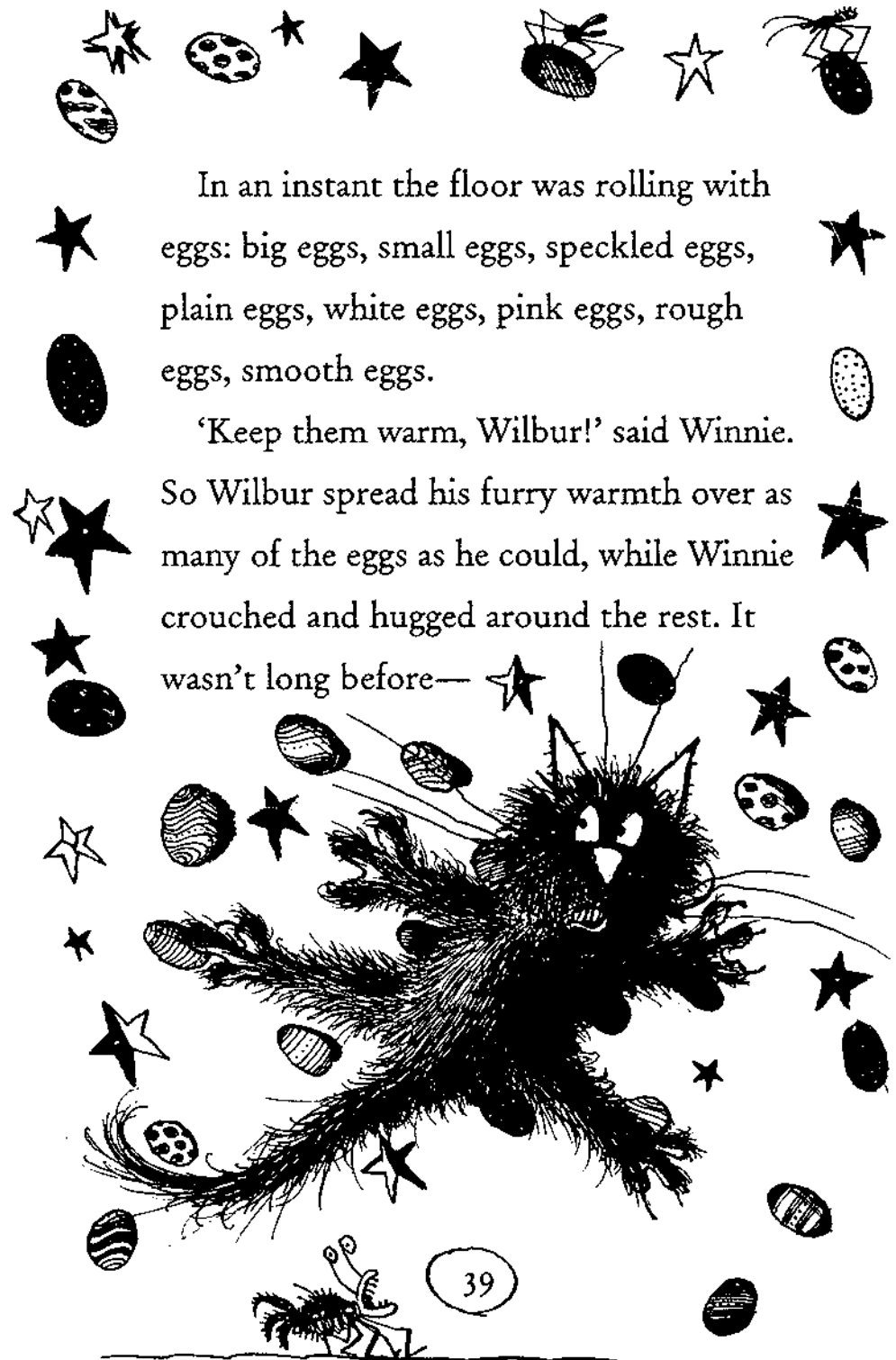
'Whatever laid the egg must have come out of an egg, mustn't it?' Winnie scratched her head. 'And whatever it was that laid *that* egg must have come out of another egg. And whatever . . . Oh, I know what! *Abracadabra!*'



In an instant the floor was rolling with eggs: big eggs, small eggs, speckled eggs, plain eggs, white eggs, pink eggs, rough eggs, smooth eggs.

'Keep them warm, Wilbur!' said Winnie.

So Wilbur spread his furry warmth over as many of the eggs as he could, while Winnie crouched and hugged around the rest. It wasn't long before—



Crack!

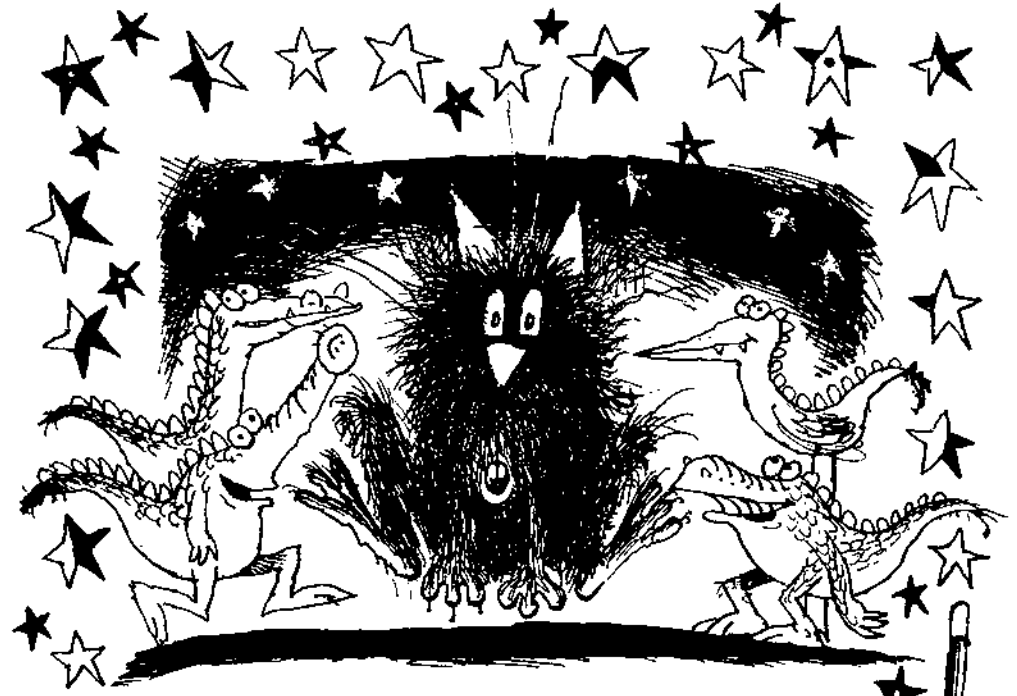
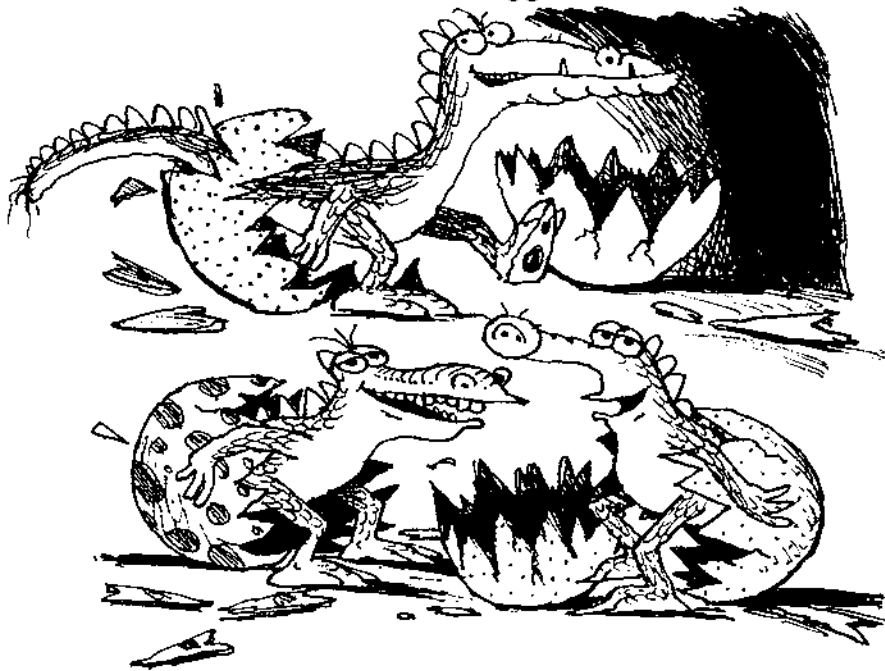
'Whoops!'

Crack!

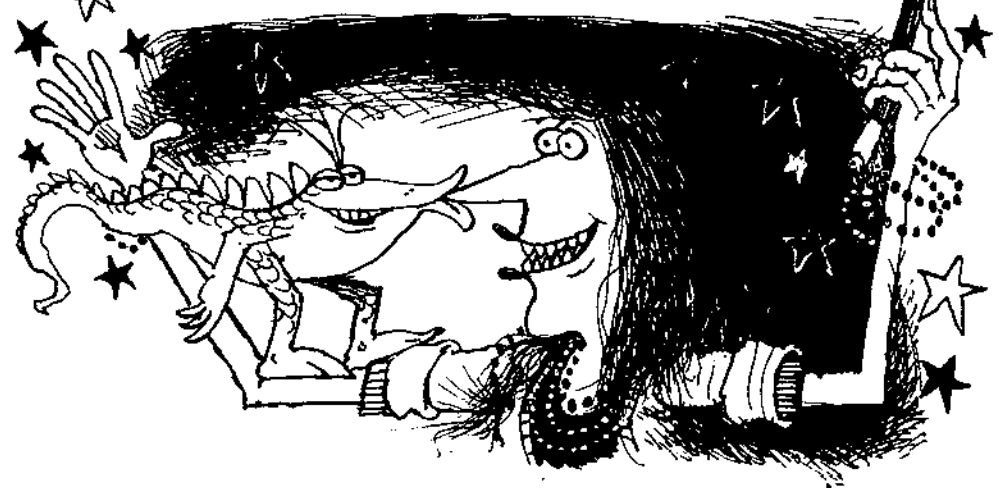
'Meeow!'

Crack-crack-crack!

—the eggs began to hatch. Out of this egg came that. Out of that egg came this. And out of the other eggs came those.



'Aren't they sweet? But I'd better grow them up fast, so that they can lay their eggs in time for tea. *Abacadabra!*' went Winnie.



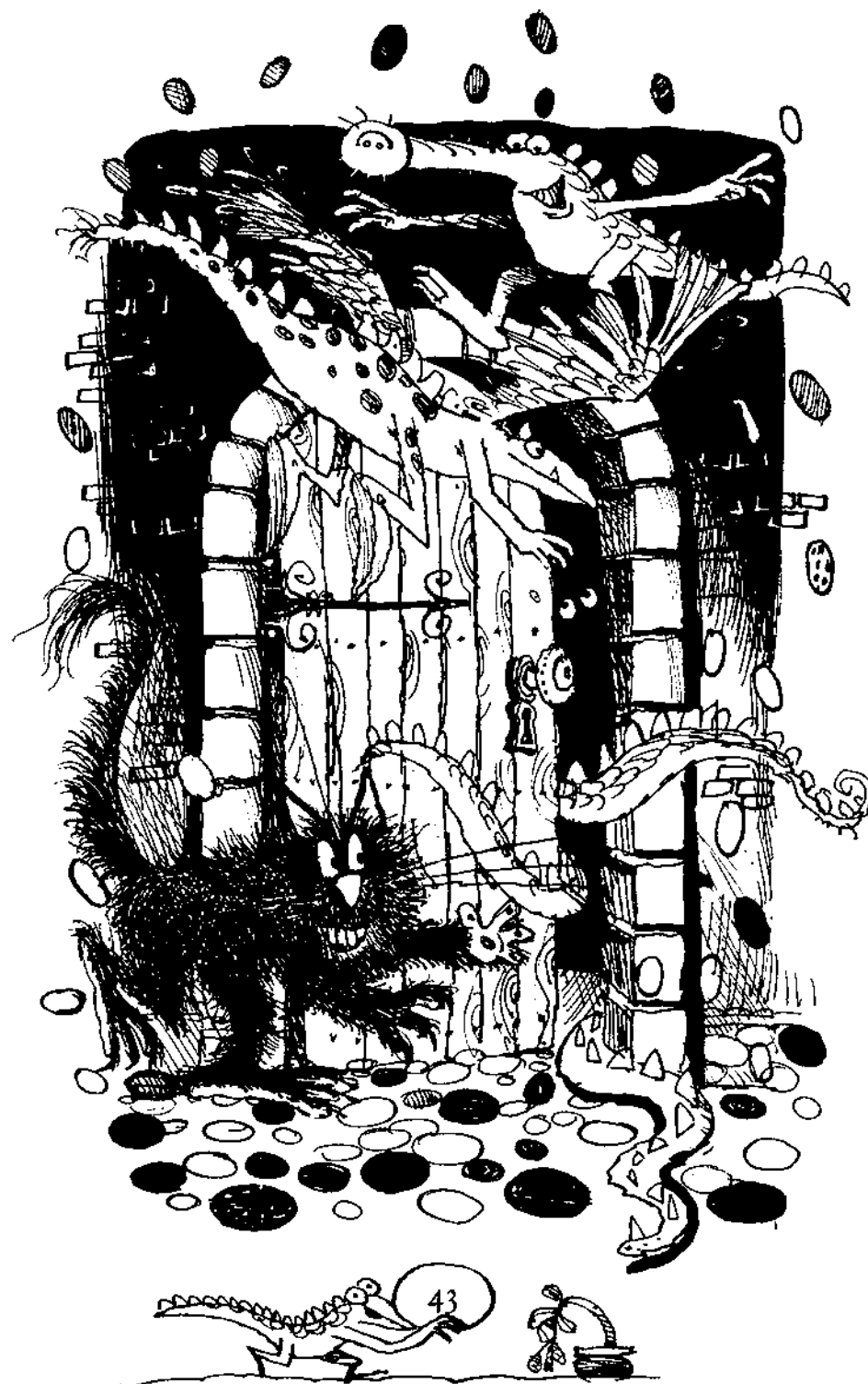
And instantly the room was full of flapping and clucking and squawking and croaking and hissing. Then—**bump, splat! Crash, squish!** There were eggs being dropped all over the place.

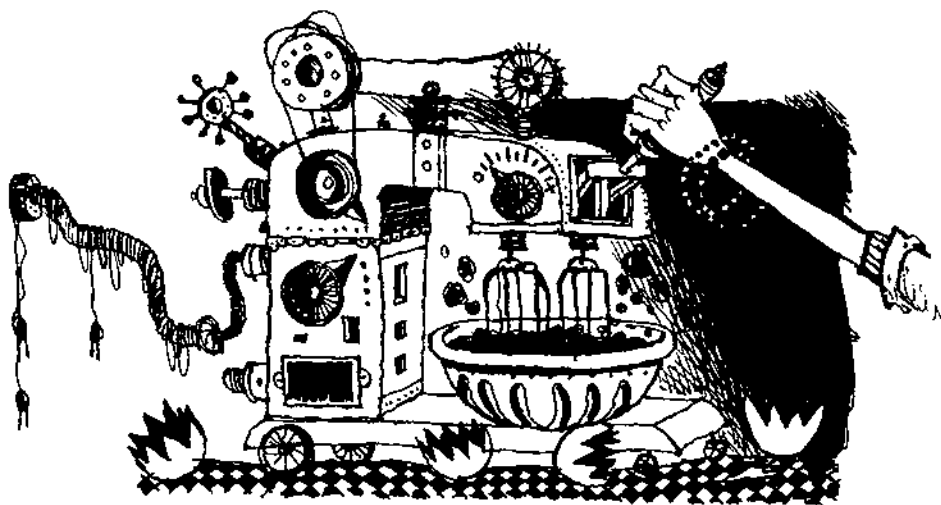
‘Can you see any golden ones, Wilbur?’ asked Winnie. ‘Oh, blooming rhubarb, what can we do with all these eggs?’

‘Mrrow!’ suggested Wilbur, miming eating with a knife and fork.

‘Clever you, Wilbur!’ said Winnie. ‘We’ll cook eggs for Mrs Parmar’s birthday tea. Now, shoo all this lot out into the garden, will you, while I get cooking?’

With a hiss and a pounce, Wilbur soon had them all flapping and slithering and lumbering for the door and windows.





'Better get cracking!' said Winnie. She broke eggs and eggs and eggs and got whizzing with her mixer.

Winnie made woodlouse crunch soufflé. She made omelettes with toad tongue fillings. She made hard-boiled lizard egg and pondweed sandwiches.

'What a feast!' said Winnie. 'Set the table, Wilbur, it's nearly time. Put out proper napkins and everything because she's a very particular lady.'



Then Winnie stopped licking the mixing spoon as she remembered. 'Ooo, but we still haven't got her a present. And I *promised* her one! Oh, poor Mrs Parmar!'

'Ding-dong! Wiiiiinnnniiiiieeee!' went the dooryell.

'It's her!'





Wilbur opened the door. There stood a rather nervous looking Mrs Parmar in her best dress.

'Come in!' said Winnie. 'Sit down! We've made you a feast. There's even a sponge cake with gherkin filling and lots of candles. I wasn't sure how many candles, so I just put on lots!' said Winnie.



'Oh!' said Mrs Parmar, looking at the table. 'I'm not very hungry, you know.'

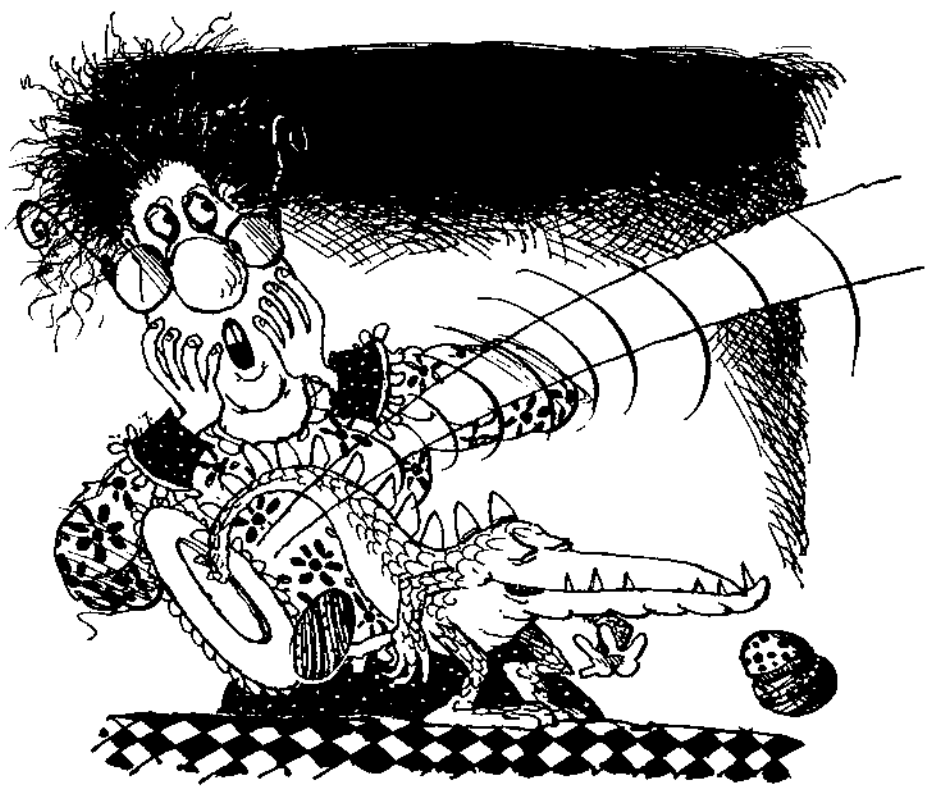
'We might play some party games after, if you like!' said Winnie.

'I can't stay very long,' said Mrs Parmar, brushing some spiders off a chair and sitting down very carefully.

'Sandwich?' asked Winnie.

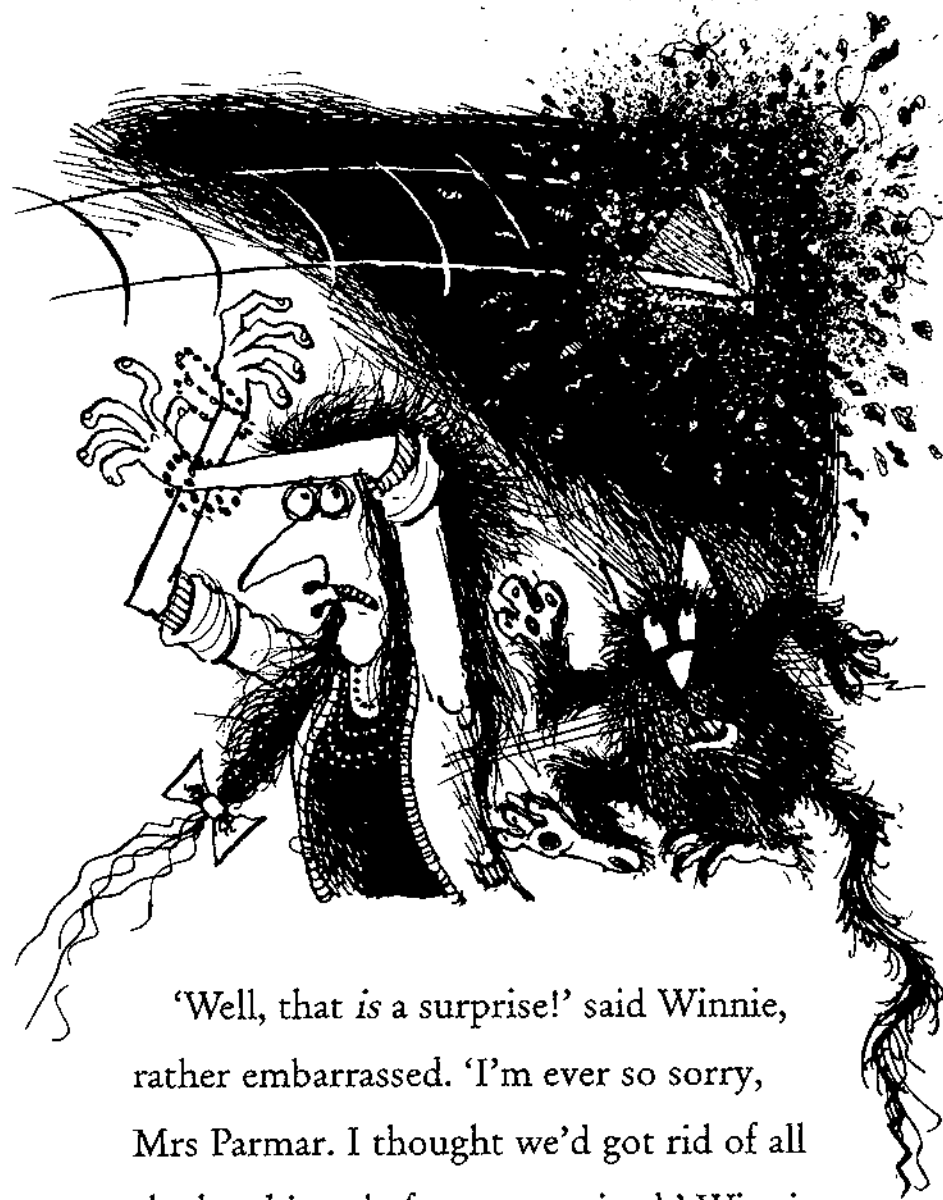
'Oh, those *do* look nice!' said Mrs Parmar in surprise. She took a sandwich and was about to bite into it when . . .





Clump-clump-clomp-plop!

A big brown creature walked across the table, lifted its tail, and laid an egg on the edge of Mrs Parmar's plate, catapulting the lizard egg and pondweed sandwich—**splat**—on to the far wall.



‘Well, that is a surprise!’ said Winnie, rather embarrassed. ‘I’m ever so sorry, Mrs Parmar. I thought we’d got rid of all the hatchings before you arrived.’ Winnie glared at Wilbur.





But Mrs Parmar had picked up the egg.
She looked at the egg. She sniffed the egg.
Then she nibbled the egg. And she smiled.

'Mrs Parmar?' said Winnie.

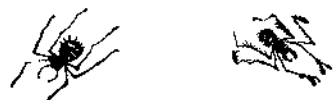


'This is wonderful!' said Mrs Parmar,
relaxing and laughing. 'I can't think of any
present I'd rather have than a freshly-laid
chocolate egg!'

'I did want you to have a golden one,'
said Winnie.

'But you can't eat golden eggs!' said
Mrs Parmar, taking another nibble.
Wilbur nodded his head to agree with
such wisdom, so rarely found
in people.

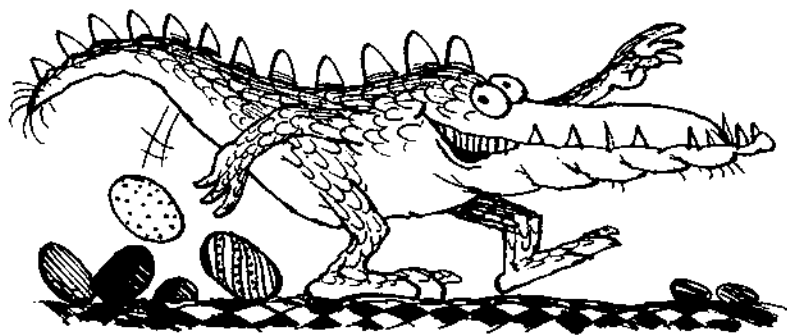




Mrs Parmar was too full of chocolate to eat anything else. But, once the tea was finished, they played 'Hunt the Chocolate Egg' because the chocodile had laid eggs all over the place.

'So many!' said Mrs Parmar. 'I can share them with the children at school. Then, perhaps, they might like me a little. That would be the best birthday present of all. Oh, thank you, Winnie!'

'You're welcome,' said Winnie. 'And you can take the chocodile as well, if you like.'



As she closed the door, Winnie said to Wilbur, 'Whoever would want chocolate, anyway, when they could have my trifle surprise?'





Whizz-Bang Winnie

‘Ooo, look at that! Fancy hanging your washing all over the street!’ said Winnie as she and Wilbur flew over the village. ‘Ooo, no! It’s not knickers and socks, it’s flags and bunting! There must be something going on in the village. Hold tight, Wilbur, let’s go and find out what!’

They landed beside a man on a ladder, tying up the bunting. *Whoops!* He wobbled when he saw them.





'I didn't scare you, did I?' said Winnie.

'What's going on?'

'Big race, this afternoon,' said the man.

'What sort of a race?' asked Winnie.

'Proper one,' said the man, tying the last knot of the bunting string to the lamp post, and climbing down his ladder.

'Drivers in helmets and zip-up suits. Low down cars with big fat wheels that squeal and smoke when they go round corners.'



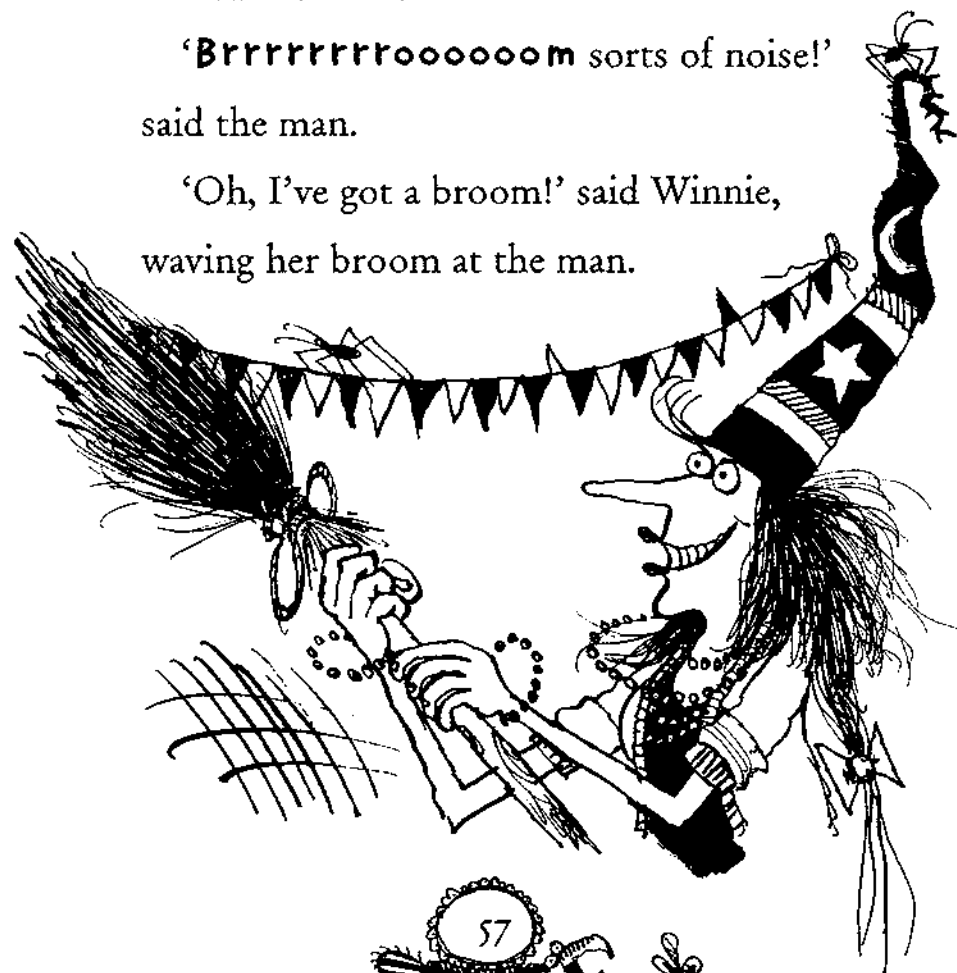
The man rubbed his hands together and smiled happily. 'It'll be a really proper race. Lots of noise. A few crashes.

Tea afterwards.'

'What sort of noise?' asked Winnie.

'**Brrrrrrrrroooooom** sorts of noise!' said the man.

'Oh, I've got a broom!' said Winnie, waving her broom at the man.





The man laughed. 'That's a woman's kind of a broom, that is. That's a broom for cleaning, not for racing!'

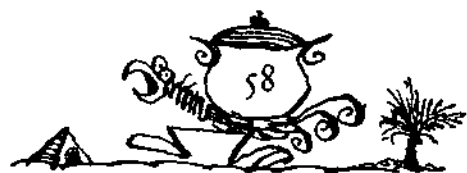
'I could race you on this broom and beat you any day of the week!' said Winnie.

'Mrrow!' agreed Wilbur, flying a paw fast past the man's eyes to show him what Winnie's broom could do.

'Well,' said the man, 'if you take my advice, darling, you'll keep that broom in the kitchen and leave racing to the men and the machines.'

'Huh!' said Winnie. 'I'll see you this afternoon!'

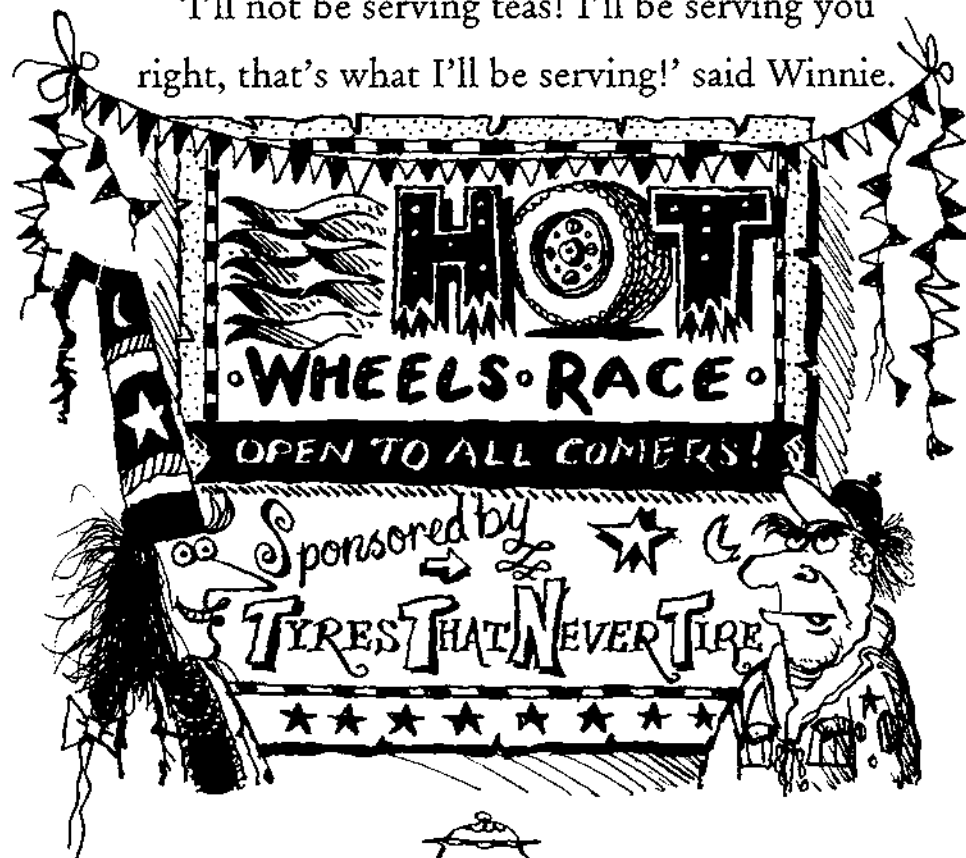
The man shook his head. 'You can't go in for the race if your vehicle hasn't got wheels.' He pointed to a poster.



*Hot wheels race! Open to all comers.
Sponsored by Tyres That Never Tire.*

'No, love. You'd do best to help out with serving the teas. I'm sure the ladies could lend you a pinny.'

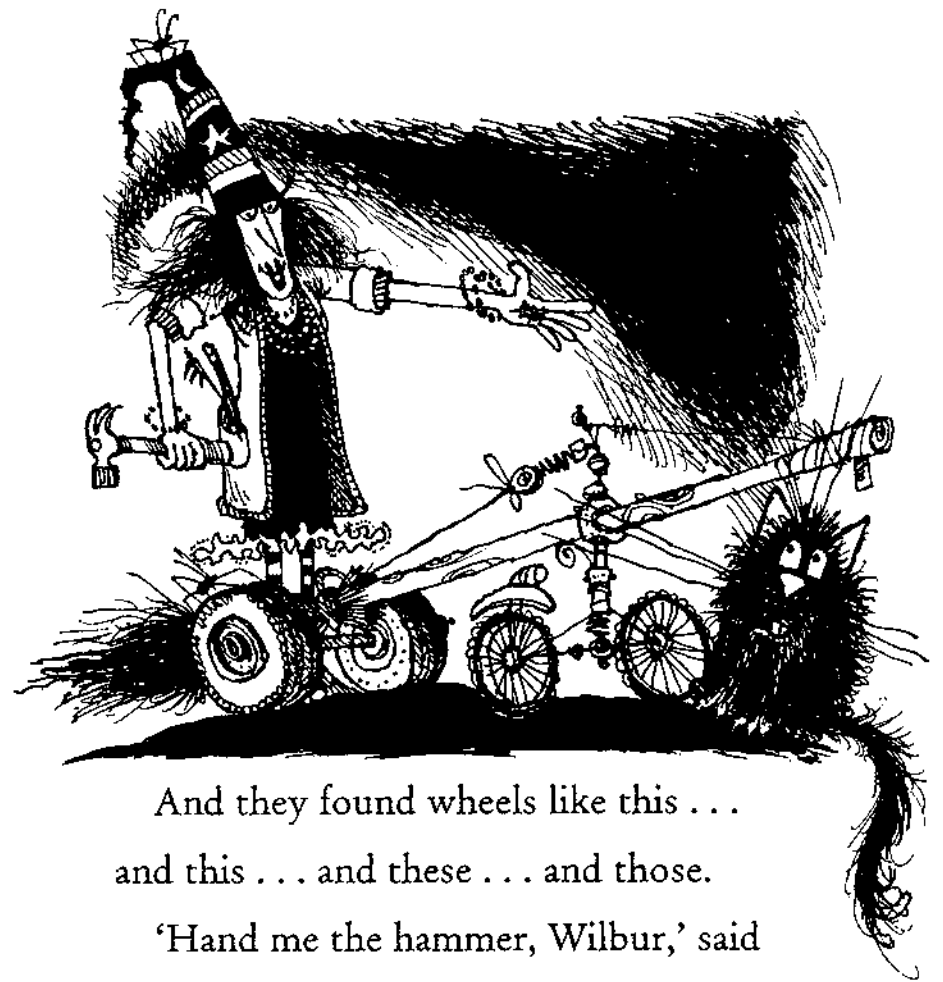
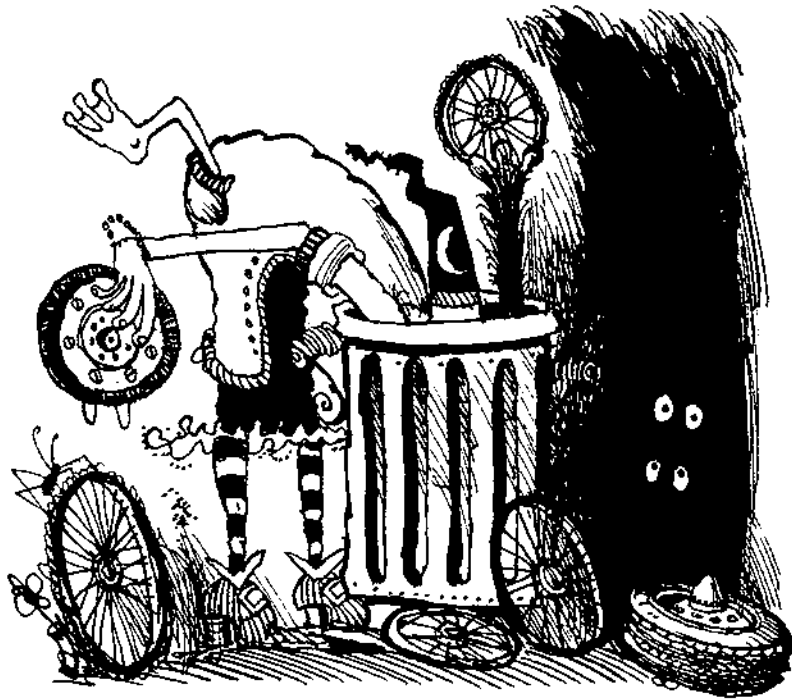
'I'll not be serving teas! I'll be serving you right, that's what I'll be serving!' said Winnie.



'Hadn't you better get back to hanging up your washing, mister? There's nothing to stop a broom having wheels, is there? Let's go on a wheel hunt.'

'Mrrow!' said Wilbur.

They looked in there. She looked under that. He looked inside those.



And they found wheels like this . . .
and this . . . and these . . . and those.

'Hand me the hammer, Wilbur,' said Winnie. Then she began **bang-bang-banging** the wheels onto her broom.

'There, Wilbur! Isn't that the best wheelie broom you've ever seen? Hop on, you can try it out, Wilbur!'

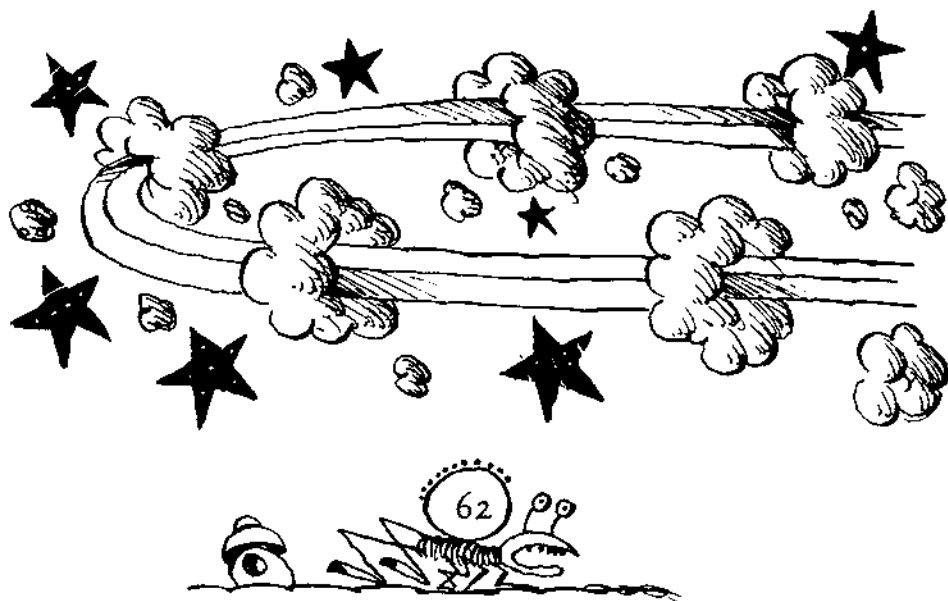


Wilbur's knees were knocking. Wilbur's ears were flat on his head.

'Put on your helmet.' Winnie rammed a bucket onto Wilbur's head.

'Hold tight!' said Winnie. Wilbur closed his eyes. He clung tight with his claws.

Abracadabra! shouted Winnie, waving her wand to make the broom go fast. Instantly rocket fire flared from the broom's bristles, and the broom shot



forward . . . and round in a circle. Round and round and round and round so fast it was just a blur of stick and twigs and fire and frightened cat.

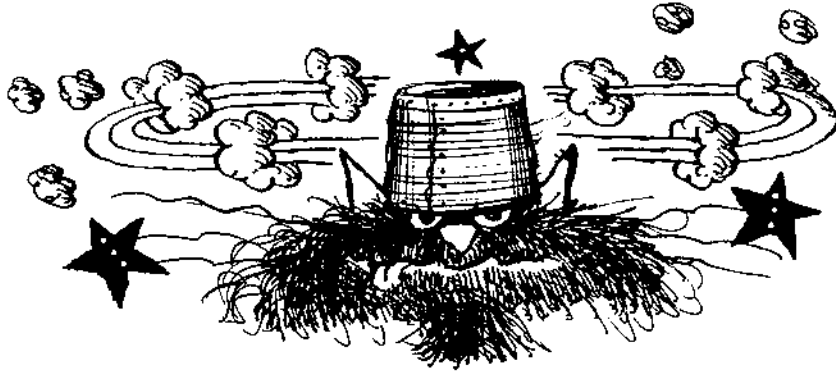
'Oh, botherarmarations!' said Winnie. 'We'll never win the race like that!'

'Mrrrrrrroooooowwww!' wailed Wilbur.

'Oh, poor Wilbur!' said Winnie, snatching up her wand. *Abracadabra!*

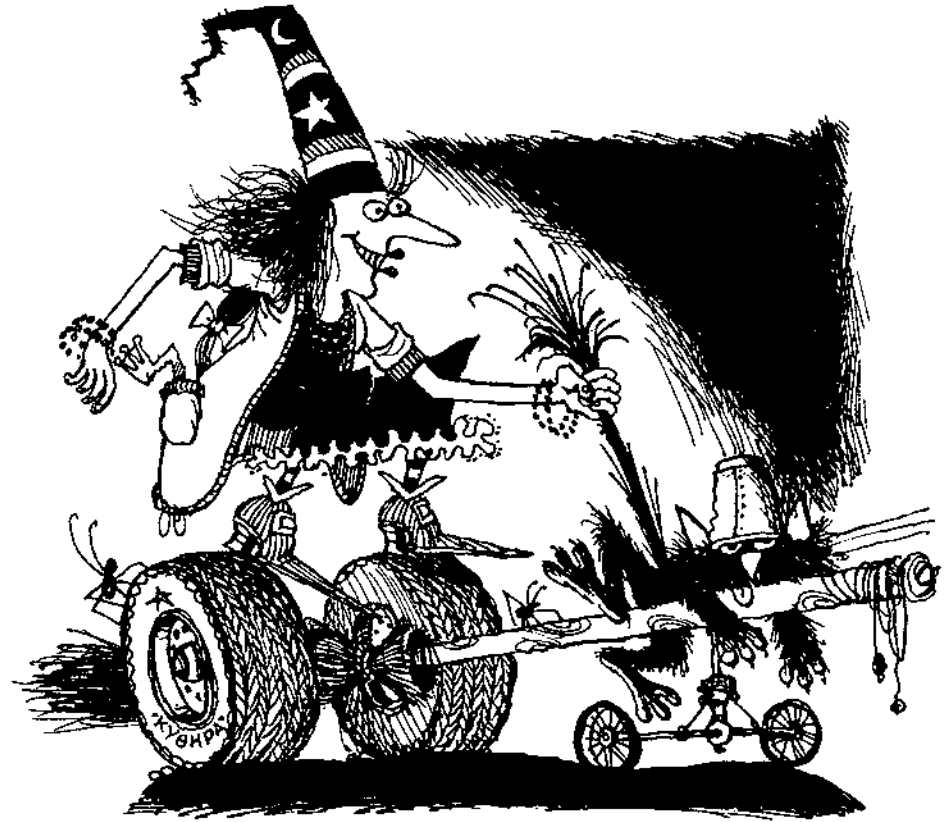
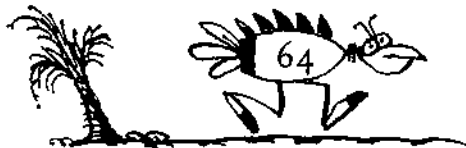


Instantly the broom stopped still.
But Wilbur didn't. He shot forward
and landed, with his head still spinning
round and round and round.



Winnie tried again. **Bang! Bang!**
Bang! 'Ouch, ouch ouch! Blooming
botherarmarations and fleas' fingernails,
I've banged my thumb!'

Winnie fixed the wheels again: this time
with bigger wheels at the back and smaller
wheels at the front.



'Hop on, we'll try again,' said Winnie.

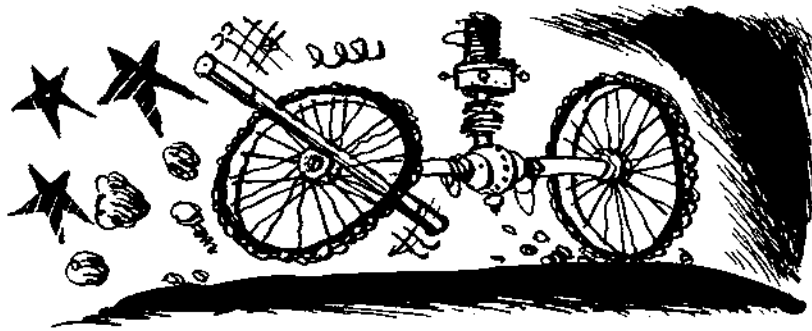
'Mrrow!' Wilbur tried to run, but
Winnie caught him by the tail and plonked
him on the broom. 'Don't worry, I'm
coming with you this time! And I'm not
going to magic it fast.'



Winnie pulled the broom to the top of the hill. She sat on it, then pushed off . . .
whee-hup-bump-down—
‘Mrrow!’—**whee-hup-bump-down—**‘Yeouch!’—**whee-hup—**

‘Stop!’ shouted Winnie, but the broom didn’t stop. It went faster, and the **hup-bump** got faster too. ‘Where’s my wand?’ screeched Winnie. *Abra—!* But Winnie’s wand caught in one of the spokes of the wheels.

Lurch-skid-clatter-bang!



‘Ouch!’

‘Meowch!’

Bumped and bruised and banged and biffed, they got to their feet and looked at the scatter of wheels and the broken broom.

‘We won’t win any races on that!’ said Winnie.



Just then they heard the loudspeakers down in the village announcing the race.

'It's about to start!' said Winnie. 'Come on, Wilbur! Even if we can't go in for the race, we can watch it! How are we going to get down there fast? I know . . .

Abracadabra!

In an instant, Winnie had roller skates on her feet. **Crash!** The next instant she'd fallen.



'Ouch!'

Holding on to Wilbur and rubbing her bottom, Winnie wobbled upright.

'You too, Wilbur!' she said.

Abracadabra!

Splat! Wilbur instantly had castors under each paw, and those castors had gone in different directions. Out went his legs. Down went Wilbur.



‘Mrrow!’

‘Come on, Wilbur! We’re off!’

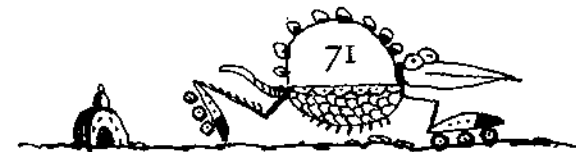
Winnie and Wilbur wobbled, then strode, getting a little braver all the time. Soon Winnie was bent over, one hand behind her back, the other arm swinging to speed her faster as she swished along like a champion. There was a sound of engines revving.

‘Weeeeeeee! Speeeeeddy meeeeee!’ went Winnie.

With a great roar, the cars were off and racing!

‘Come on, Wilbur!’

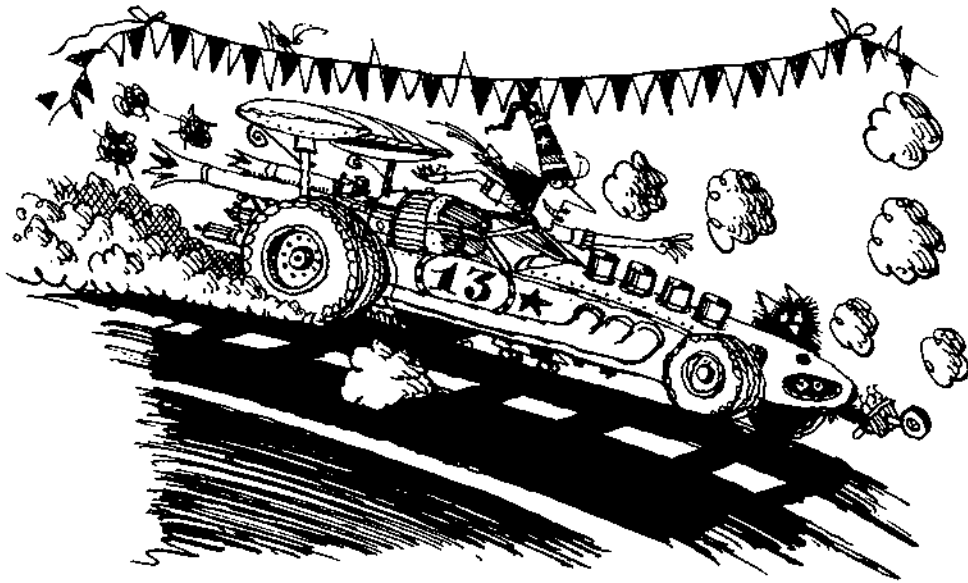
Wilbur copied Winnie’s skating style and managed to stay on his paws.



They got to the hill that ran down into the village just as the cars came around the corner.

'Weeeeeee Oooooooo, Wilbuuuuuuuurrr,
this is a bit tooooooo faaaaaast!'

‘Mrrrow!’ wailed Wilbur. Faster and faster they shot onto the road, whizzing past roaring cars. They were going a bit too fast.



‘Wiiiiiiiiiibbbbuuuurrrrr!’ shouted Winnie. ‘How do I make the skates stop?’

But Wilbur didn’t know either.

'Mmmeeeeeeooooowwww!'

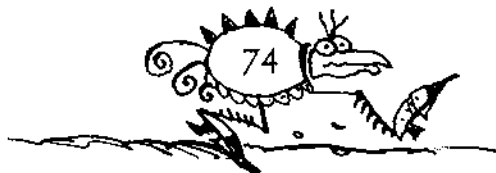
And suddenly both of them were tripped and tangled in tape.

'HOORAY!' shouted the crowd.

‘Why are they cheering?’ said Winnie.
‘I’ve never had so many bruises in my life!’



‘They’re cheering because you won the race, missus!’ said big Jerry from next door, stepping out of the crowd. ‘Shall I carry you and Wilbur home?’



‘That would be lovely,’ said Winnie. ‘I’ll make us all a nice cup of garlic blossom and ditchwater tea. Then it will have been a proper race, with lots of noise, a few crashes, and tea afterwards.’

‘Lovely!’ said Jerry.





Winnie and the Toof Fairy



Winnie and Wilbur were watching a wrestling match on telly and sharing a few snacks.

‘Pull him over!’ shouted Winnie at the telly. She jumped up from the sofa. ‘Go on, grab him!’ She shot out an arm to grab the air to show the wrestler how he should be doing it, but unfortunately Wilbur was in the way. **POW!**

‘Mrrow!’



Wilbur's paw was over his mouth.
There was a look of panic in his eyes.

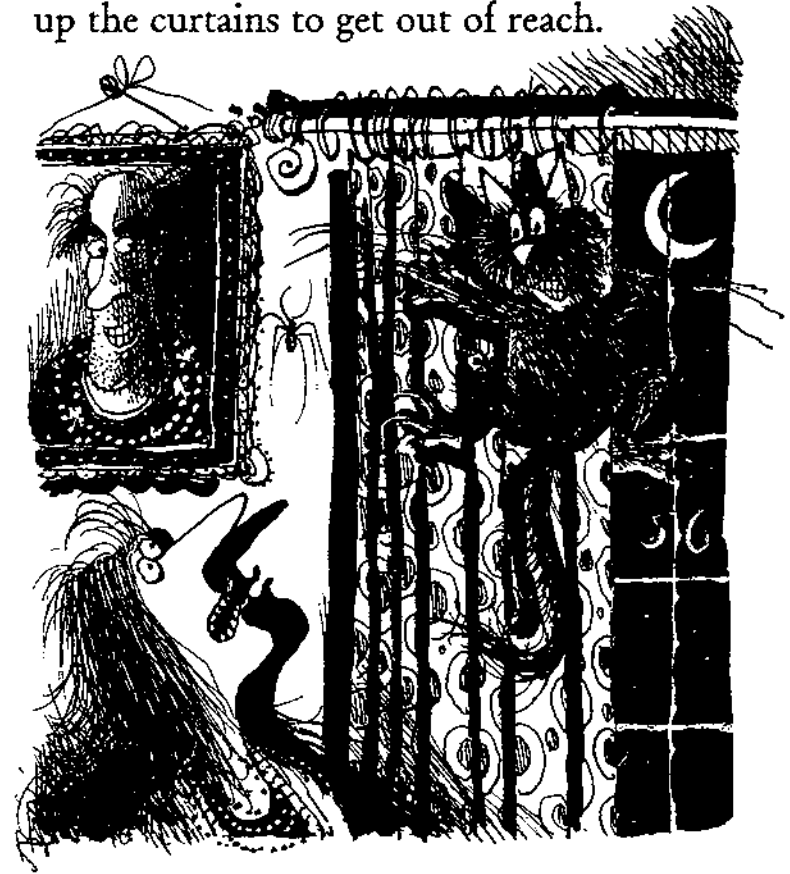
'Oh, heck, Wilbur!' said Winnie. 'Have I punched all your teeth out?'

Wilbur slowly took his paws away from his mouth. He opened his mouth and felt for each tooth with his tongue. They were all still there.



'Thank stinky cheese for that!' said Winnie. 'Shall I take you to Mr Drillikins the dentist, just to check you over?'

'Mrow-ow-ow!' said Wilbur, hurrying up the curtains to get out of reach.






'All right, all right!' said Winnie. 'But you be careful. Those teeth might be loose. You suck a nice warm-worm and frogspawn smoothie through a straw. I'll finish off the nibbles by myself.'

Winnie settled back on the sofa.

'Trip him up! Pull his hair!' she shouted while she dipped an elephant's toenail into stinkwort sauce and popped it into her mouth. Chew-chew. 'Tickle him!' she screamed as she took a liquorice rat's tail and began to chew-chew-chew on that.

But, suddenly, 'Mnnn!' mumbled Winnie, her hand to her mouth. She stuck long fingers into her mouth and pulled out . . .


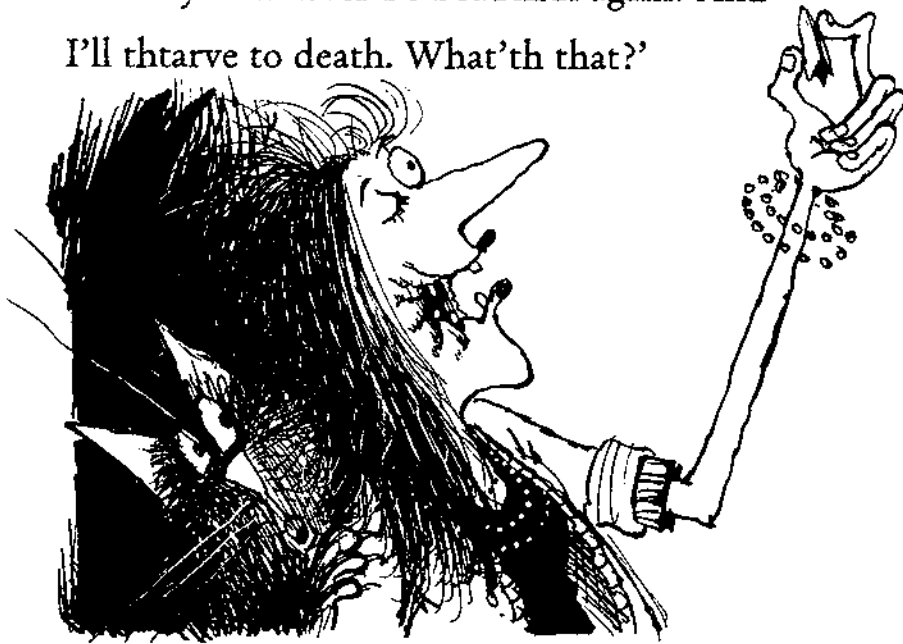





'A toof!'

'Meeow!' said Wilbur, looking with interest.

'What am I going to do without thith toof?' asked Winnie, holding it up. 'I need thith toof! I can't talk properly wivout it! I'll look like one of them wrethlerth on the telly! I'll never be beautiful again! And I'll thtarve to death. What'th that?'

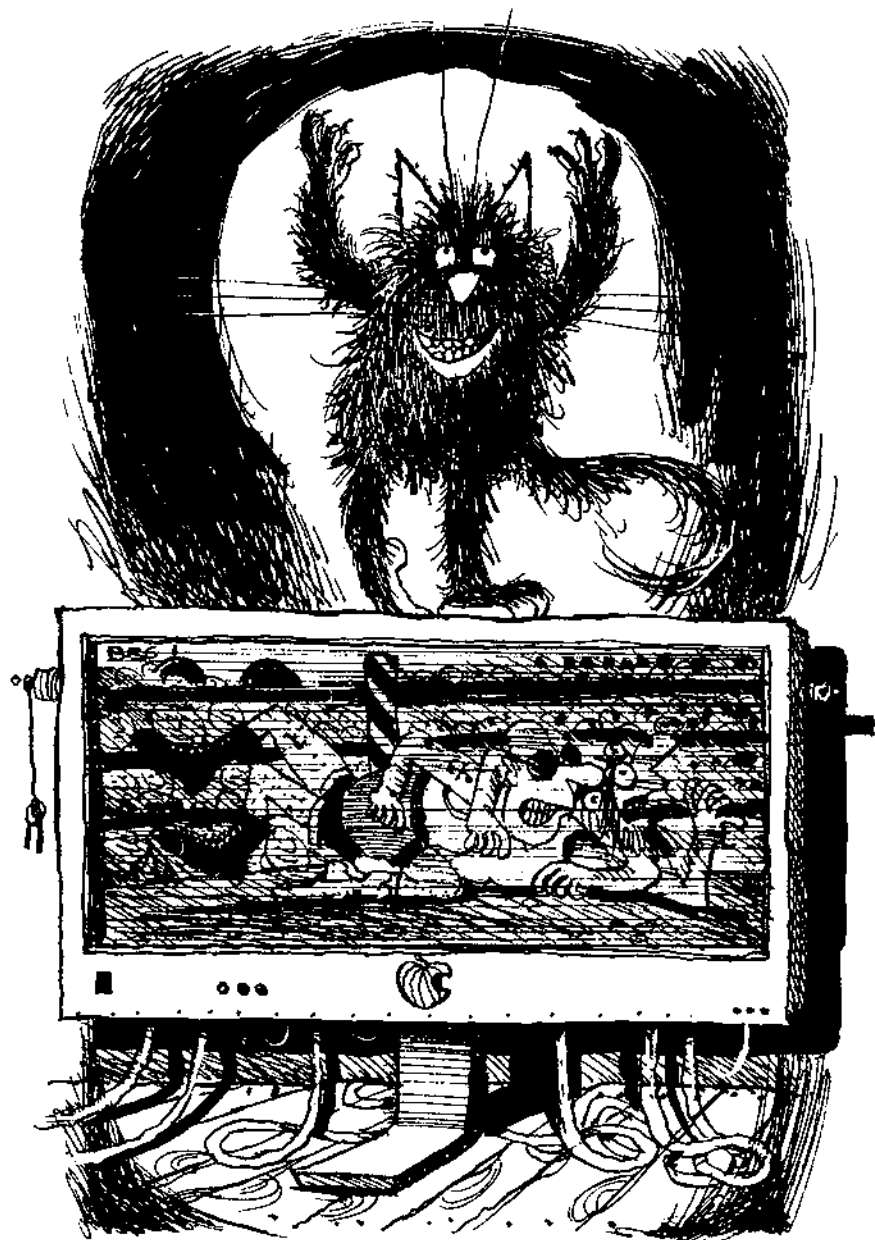


Wilbur was nudging Winnie, offering her his straw.



'No!' wailed Winnie. 'I don't want thmoothies thucked through a thtraw!' But Wilbur had grabbed hold of the telephone book and was pointing at a phone number. 'NO, no, no!' wailed Winnie, even louder. 'I'm not going to Mr Drillikinth! Never!'





But Wilbur had one more helpful hint to try. He was pirouetting on his toes, his arms curved above his head and a soppy look on his face.



‘What on erf?’ asked Winnie. Then she got it. ‘Oh, I know! You’re being a fairy!’ Wilbur nodded enthusiastically. ‘Of courth!’ said Winnie. ‘I can leave my toof for the toof fairy and get a wifth from her in ecthchange for the toof. Oooo, what thall I chooth for my wifth, Wilbur?’



Actually, choosing her wish was easy. There was one thing more than any other that Winnie wanted just then.

‘I mutht write a note to tell the fairy my wifth,’ said Winnie. ‘Where’th my pen, Wilbur?’

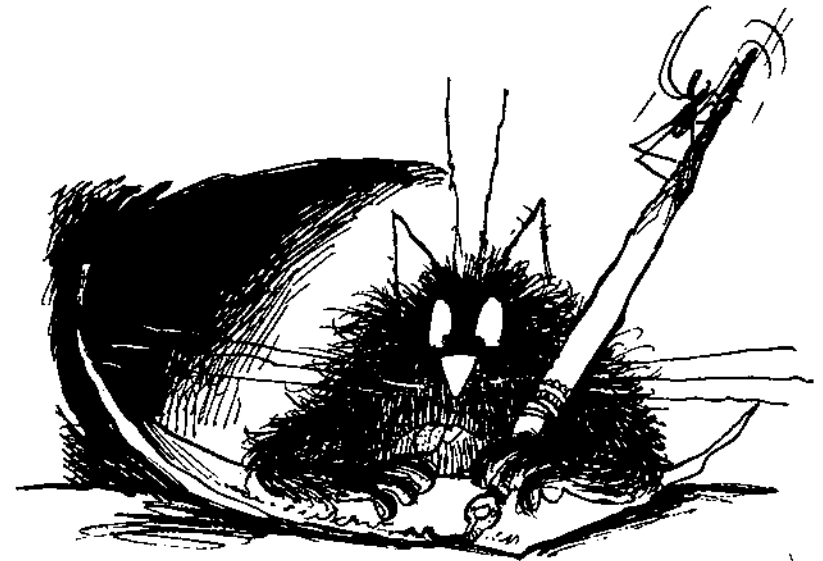


Winnie scrawled with her pen.

'There! Lookth good, doethn't it!'

Wilbur curled a lip and shook his head.

'Oh, thtop looking at me like that, cat!' said Winnie. 'You know I'm not very good at writing. I jutht thought a fairy might underthtand. Will you write it for me, pleathe, Wilbur?'



Wilbur did write it, in his best paw-writing. He wrote it very tiny and just right for a fairy. It said:





'Thweet dreamth, Wilbur,' said Winnie.

Winnie was woken in the night by something tickling around her face.

'Atithoo!' sneezed Winnie. Then, 'Poo!' she shouted. 'What'th that 'orrible thmell?' Then she sank back into snoring, *Snooore, phiew, snooore, phiew.*



The little-wittle tooth fairy smelt of summer breezes wafting over dew-fresh meadow flowers sprinkled with icing sugar and love. Nobody had ever said 'poo' to her before. She put her tiny fists on her teeny pink waist. She stomped weeny green-slipped feet across Winnie's pillow.





She grabbed hold of a titchy handful of Winnie's tangle of hair, and heaved herself up onto Winnie's cheesy-white cheek. Then she took her wincy little wand and—**WHACK!**—she walloped it hard onto Winnie's great snoring mountain of a nose.

'Eh? What?' said Winnie, sitting up.



The fairy tumbled, but she flapped her incy-wincy mauve wings to flutter to where the tooth and the note were waiting for her.

The tooth fairy held her meeny-miny-mo wand to glow over the note, and she read Winnie's wish. And a minuscule wicked grin came on to her fairy face. **Zip-zap** went the wincy yellow wand and—



Gulp! 'Eh, what was that?' said Winnie, feeling for her mouth. 'Hey, Wilbur! Guess what? I've got my new tooth! I can say, "Six silly slugs sat sipping sausage syrup through straws!" My wish has come true! Here, let me have a look!'

Winnie jumped out of bed and grabbed her wand.

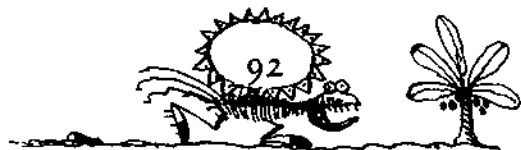
'Abracadabra!'



Instantly the candles were lit and a mirror was gleaming with a come-hither look. Winnie arranged herself into a charming pose in front of the mirror. Then she smiled, and . . . oh, dear.

'Mrrow-hissss!' Wilbur scabbled under the bed covers.

'Oh, heck!' cried Winnie as she saw



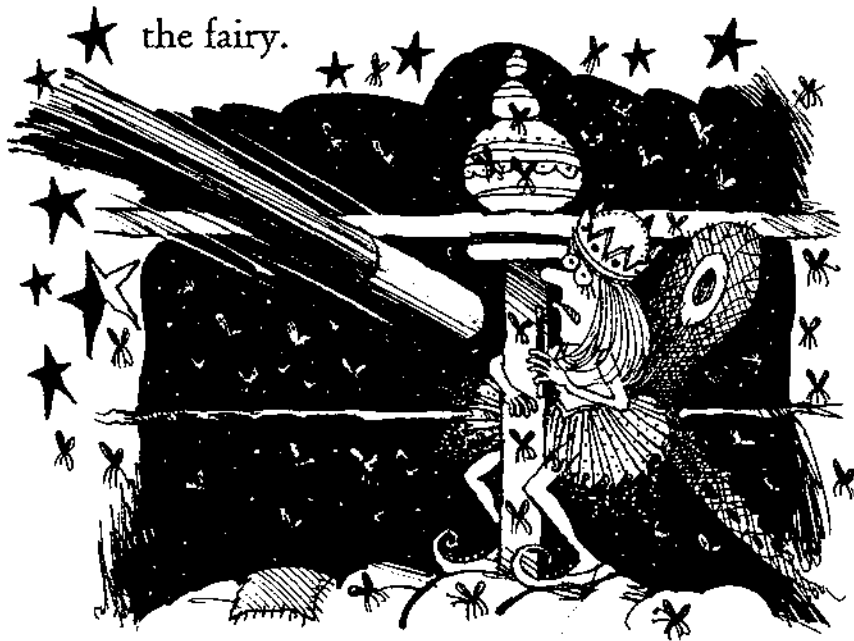
herself. 'Whatever has that blooming fairy done? She's given me a fearful fang! I look a right fright!'



Winnie's eyes were darting here and there, looking for a fairy twinkle . . . and she spotted it, still on her pillow.

'There it is!' shouted Winnie. She swung her wand to swat it, 'Abracadabra!'

Instantly the twinkle around the fairy was replaced by a buzz of midges around the fairy.



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But . . . **zip-zap** went the tiddly tooth fairy wand. And instantly Winnie was covered in warts.



'Abracadabra!'

The fairy smelt of manure.

Zip-zap!

Winnie's skin turned blue.

'Abra—'



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'MMEEEEOWWW!' interrupted Wilbur. He'd poked his head out from the covers and found something nestling under the pillow. It was something as tall as the tooth fairy and not perhaps quite as white as it might be, but Wilbur knew just what it was and where it was needed. He held it out to Winnie.

'My tooth!' said Winnie. 'My very own dear tooth! Oh, *Abracadabra!*'

And instantly Winnie's own tooth was back in her head, and the fang and the warts and blue had all gone. And so had the tooth fairy.

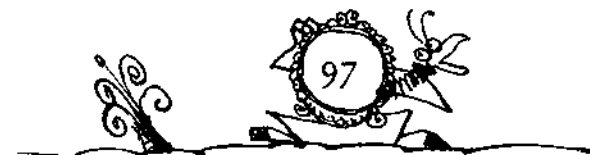
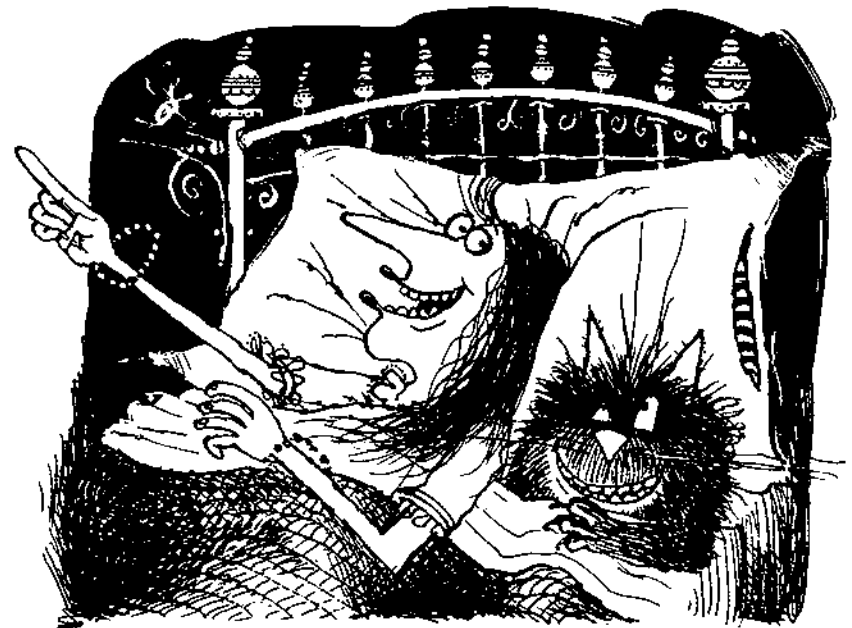


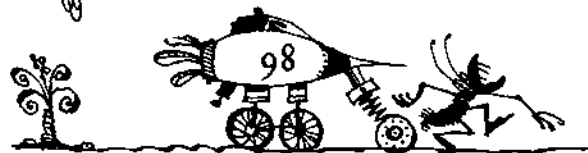
'Well,' said Winnie as she snuggled back into bed. 'That just goes to show, doesn't it?'

'Meow?' asked Wilbur.

'It shows that if you want a wish doing, you'd better just blooming well do the wish yourself,' said Winnie.

'Meeow,' agreed Wilbur.





Winnie's One-Witch Band

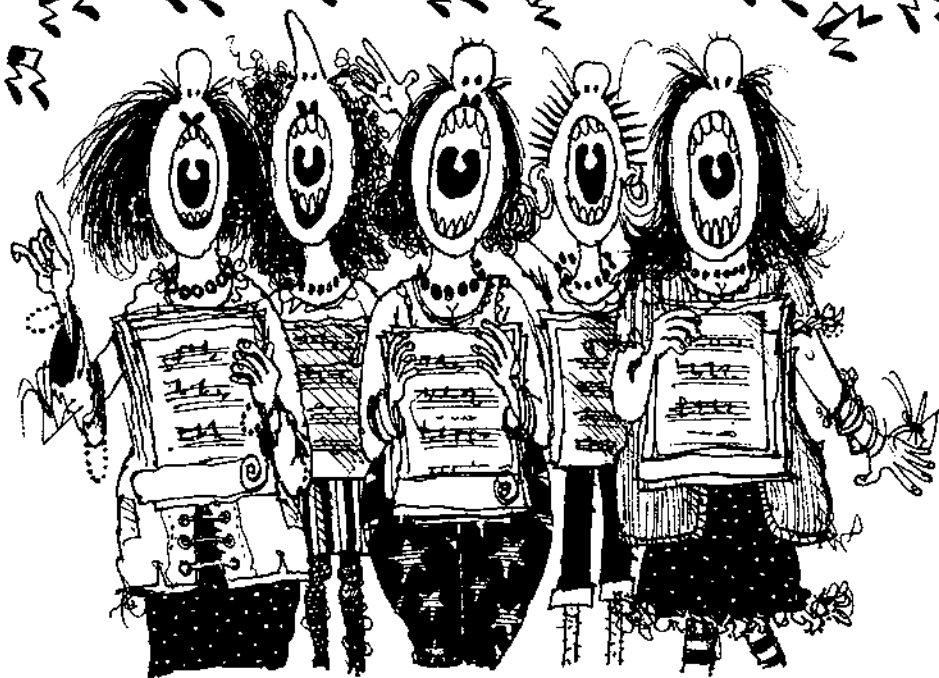
Winnie was just pegging out her washing when she heard music coming from the village. Winnie stopped still, a pair of bloomers held up in the air, and she listened.

'Who can it be?' Winnie asked Wilbur. 'It sounds the way my tummy sounds after I've eaten one of your snake sausage and chilli stews then drunk a fizz-pop pond cordial sucked through a straw,' said Winnie.



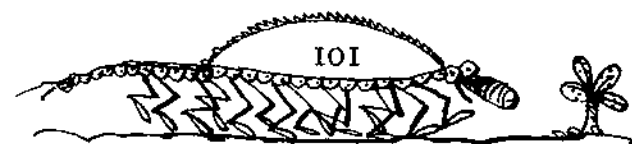
‘Except that this sound is less gurgly.
Let’s go and find out where it’s coming
from!’

So Winnie and Wilbur went down into
the village, and they found the sound
coming from the library.



‘They’re all singing!’ said Winnie, as she
peeped through the window.

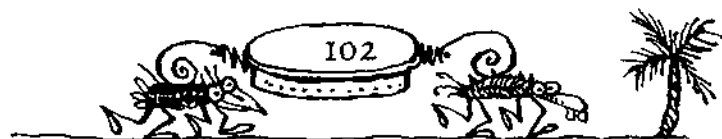
‘La la laaa!’ warbled the ladies’ high-up
voices. ‘Bom boom-boom-bum,’ sang the
low-down men’s voices. ‘Traliddle-
traloddlle,’ they all sang together. ‘Tra . . .





AHHHHH!' they shrieked as they suddenly saw Winnie's and Wilbur's faces squashed against the glass.

'Why ever have they stopped?' asked Winnie. She soon found out why.



The conductor came to the library door.
'Go away!' he said. 'You're frightening my choir and spoiling my rehearsal! We have a concert to prepare!'

'What concert?' asked Winnie.

'The library concert,' said the conductor.
'To raise money to buy more books for the library.'

'And who's in the choir?' asked Winnie.

'Anybody who wants to sing,' said the conductor.



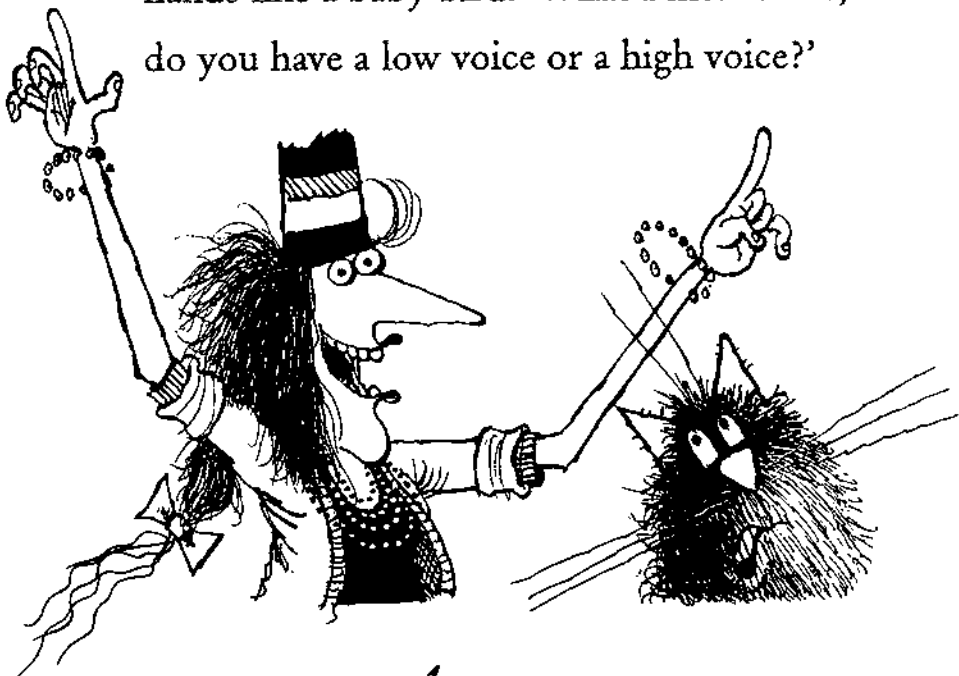


'Ooooo, goody-goody!' said Winnie, pushing her way into the library. 'Where do I stand?'

'Well,' said the conductor, looking worried. 'Um . . . what kind of voice do you have?'

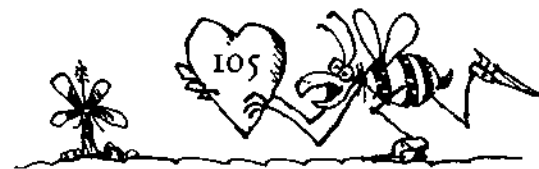
'A good loud one!' said Winnie.

'No, no,' said the conductor, flapping his hands like a baby bird. 'What I meant was, do you have a low voice or a high voice?'



'Oh, I can go up and down like a kangaroo in a lift!' said Winnie.

'Perhaps I'd better try you out,' said the conductor wearily. He sat down at a piano and played—**plink-plonk-plink-plonk-plink-plonk-plink**—up and down. 'Now, sing that back to me, please,' he told Winnie.

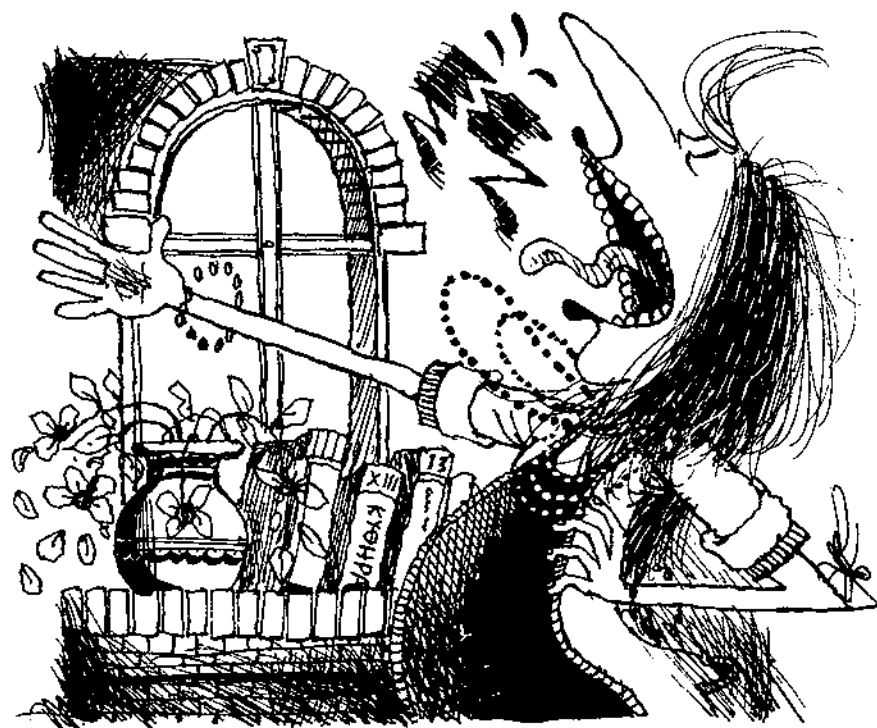
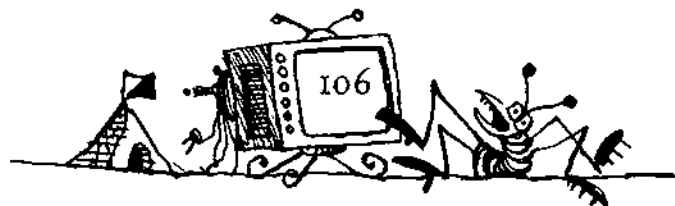




Winnie opened her mouth and—
croak-moan-honk-screechety-
croak—down and up, sang Winnie.

Wilbur had his paws over his ears. The choir winced. The conductor had gone pale. 'Er . . .' he said. 'I don't think we can use you in our choir, Winnie.'

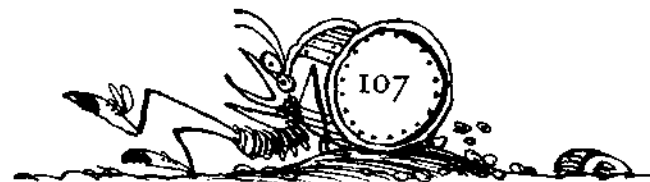
'Why not?' asked Winnie. 'Wasn't I loud enough? I can go louder. Listen!'



CROAK-MOAN-HONK-
SCREECHETY-CROAK!



Books fell from the shelves all around. The flowers in the vase wilted. Mice ran for their holes. Bookworms buried themselves deep into the fattest volumes they could find. And the choir all fainted—**thunk!**





'Er . . . no,' said the conductor weakly holding on to a bookcase. 'I'm afraid that really wasn't good enough.'

'Oh,' said Winnie. 'So you don't want me?'

The conductor shook his head.

There was silence for a moment, then . . .

'Ooo, but I've got a good idea!' said Winnie. 'My cat, Wilbur, he's got a lovely voice. You listen to him!'

'Must I?' said the conductor.

'Go on, Wilbur!' said Winnie.

Wilbur looked bashful. His toes turned in, he looked at the floor with a silly grin on his face, and shook his head.

'Go ON, Wilbur!' urged Winnie.

Wilbur meow-giggled.



But then he sat up straight and opened his mouth and everyone in the choir covered their ears.





But what came out of Wilbur's mouth was beautiful. 'Meeeeeow! Mew-mew-mew, miow-wow!'

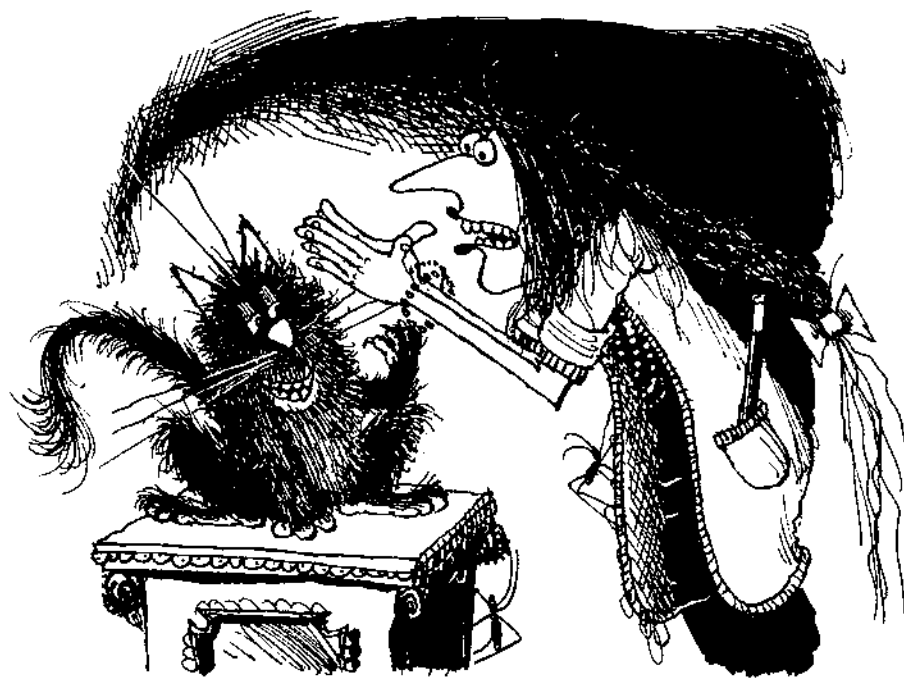
As Wilbur sang, the choir took their hands from their ears and joined in.

'Oh!' said the conductor, clapping his hands together. 'Oh, Wilbur, that was *dee-vine!*' Then the conductor frowned. 'But won't it look rather odd if we have a cat in our choir?'



'Oh-oh, I know what we can do!' said Winnie, jumping around in excitement.

'If I wear a long skirt, then Wilbur can hide under it and sing and I'll just open and close my mouth and everybody will think it's me who is singing. It'll look quite normal! I'll show you how. Sing, Wilbur!'





Wilbur sang—‘Meeeeoow! Mew-mew-mew, miow-wow!’—while Winnie silently opened and closed her mouth and waggled her eyebrows. She waved her hands expressively, knocking the few books left on shelves—**thump thumpety-thump**—onto the floor.

‘Good, wasn’t it?’ said Winnie, when they’d finished. ‘Shall I go and find a long skirt?’

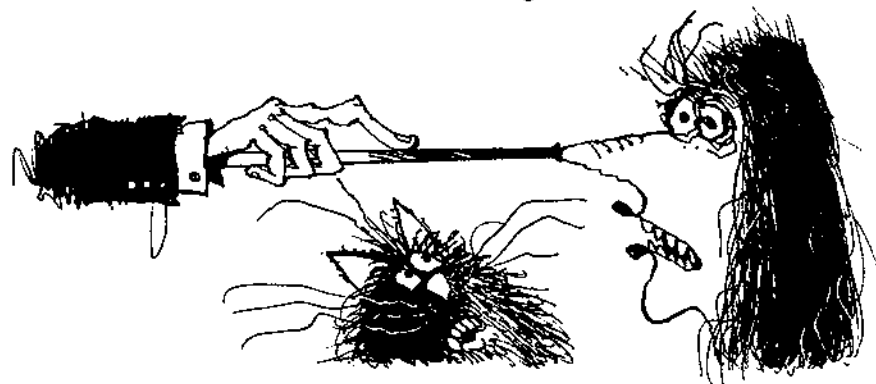


‘Er . . . no,’ said the conductor. ‘I have a better solution! Wilbur can be our soloist! He can perform *with* the choir while not being part *of* the choir. Would that suit you, Wilbur? Do you have your own bow tie?’

Giggle, went Wilbur. ‘Meow.’ And he put a paw to his mouth and pretended to be embarrassed.

‘Show off!’ said Winnie.

The conductor pointed his baton at Winnie. ‘You had better go!’



So Winnie went, stamping her feet crossly



stomp-stomp

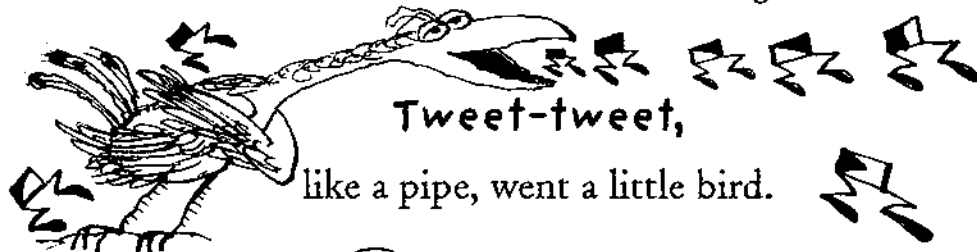
like a drum—out of the library. She went
home and cooked herself some tea



crash! bang! clang!

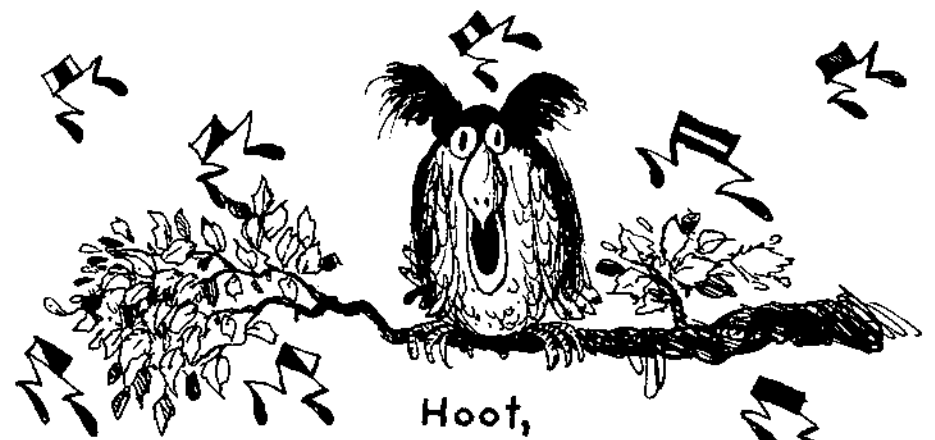
went the pots and pans,
sounding like cymbals.

Winnie took her tea out into the garden.



Tweet-tweet,

like a pipe, went a little bird.



Hoot,

like an organ, went an owl.

Winnie stopped eating and listened.



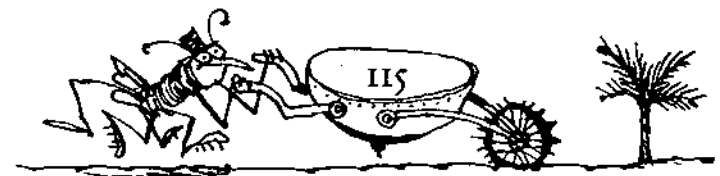
Croak-croak-belch,

like no musical instrument
ever invented, went a toad.

‘That has given me a brillaramaroodle
idea!’ said Winnie suddenly. ‘Where’s my
wand, Wilbur?’ But Wilbur wasn’t there.

‘Oh, I’ll get it myself,’ said Winnie.

Then she waved it, *‘Abracadabra!’*



In an instant, Winnie was outside the library, covered in sounds. She had hooting owls of different sizes on her shoulders and head. She had a toad in her pocket which could be squeezed for a croak. She had a rat in another pocket with a tail hanging out to be pulled when she wanted a squeal. She had saucepan-lid cymbals strapped to her knees, and clackety clogs on her feet.

'I'm a one-witch band!' she said, and the wand conducted, all on its own.

**Crash-clang-croak-squeak,
hoot-hoot-hoot-hoot-ping!**

That last ping wasn't really part of the music. It was the elastic going on Winnie's knickers.



Inside the library, Wilbur and the choir were performing to people who had bought tickets.

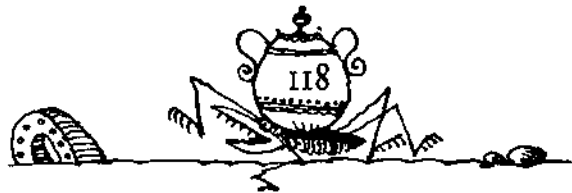
'Meeoww! Tra-la-la-la-la, boom-boom-boom!'

Outside the library, Winnie played while the children gathered to hear and cheer her. And when the choir concert finished, Wilbur came outside and joined Winnie.

'Abracadabra!'



Instantly, Wilbur had clogs on his paws, and all the right moves. Wilbur tap-danced to Winnie's band. He held out her hat and collected lots more money for the library. And everybody danced.



As they—clank-crash-croak
tappety-tap-parp-whoops!—
walked home in the moonlight, Winnie
said to Wilbur, 'Life is a kind of music,
when you think about it.'

'Meeow,' agreed Wilbur happily.





Winnie Says Cheese



‘Oo, look at little you with your pink nose and fluffy-wuffy coat!’ said Winnie, showing Wilbur a photo in an album. ‘You were such a sweet ’ickle kitten in those days!’

Wilbur smiled and rubbed his face against Winnie. He gazed up at her. ‘Purrr!’

Winnie had a soppy look on her face. ‘Do you know,’ she said, ‘I remember the day I chose teeny little Wilbur out of all



those little fluff-ball kittens in the cave. I chose you instead of any of those others because . . .’ Winnie’s face changed. ‘Oh, yes, you dug your claws into my cardigan and you wouldn’t let go and the goblin grabbed my broom and wouldn’t give it back until I paid for you and promised to take you away.’

‘Mrrow!’

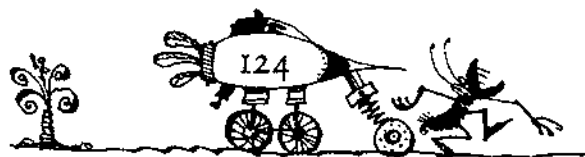


‘Oh, but you were as cute as a newt in those days, Wilbur!’ Winnie sniffed. ‘Of course you’ve grown big and shaggy and smelly since then.’ Winnie looked at the wet patch on her sleeve where Wilbur had drooled. ‘And a bit disgusting, if you don’t mind me saying so, Wilbur.’





Wilbur did mind her saying so. Wilbur turned the pages of the album until he came to some photos of Winnie when she was a titchy little witchy girl. Wilbur nudged Winnie to show that he thought that she was sweet when she was little too. And she was. Little Winifred Witch had gappy teeth in a plump face and lots of frizzy black hair.



'Ah!' said Winnie. But Wilbur hadn't finished. He kept turning the pages, and Winnie saw herself growing older and stringier and tattier and more wrinkly with each one.



'Oh, where's my wand, Wilbur?' shouted Winnie. 'I can soon sort this.' She pointed the wand at her face. 'Abracadabra!' She pointed it at her hair. 'Abracadabra!'





The next instant Winnie didn't look like Winnie any more. Winnie fingered her face and her hair.

'It feels funny,' she said. She could hardly move her mouth because her skin was so tight. 'It's as smooth and soft as an eel's eyeball. Am I beautiful, Wilbur?'

'Hisss!'

'Let's have a look see,' said Winnie, and she marched over to the mirror in the hall.

'AAAAH! Ooo, no!' said Winnie, clutching her face. 'It's Mask Woman! That's not me! Ooo, quick, get me back to being real, even if real does mean wrinkles! *Abracadabra!*'





And real Winnie was back again, but still frowning at the mirror. 'Mouldy maggots, I've just realized something!' she said. 'Look at that!'



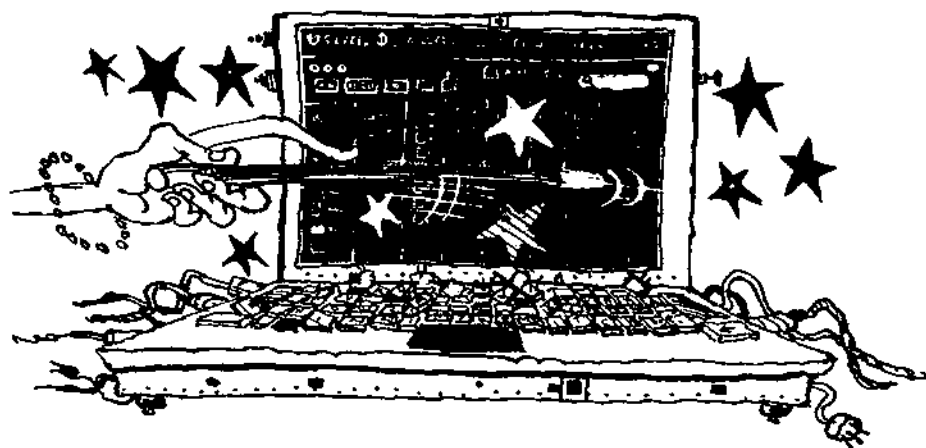
Winnie grabbed a photo. 'Mildewed midges, Wilbur! I'm wearing exactly the same outfit now as I was then, and that photo was taken umpteen years ago! It's time I changed what I wear, even if I don't change me! I want some smart new photos for the album.'



So Winnie looked for witch clothes on the internet.

'I'll have one of those!' said Winnie. 'Ooo, and them in the orange with silver trimmings! And I'd look a treat in that one!'

Click, click went Winnie, then she scowled. 'What size am I, Wilbur? Oh, heck, I can't be doing with all this. Pass my wand over!' Winnie zapped the computer screen with her wand. *Abacadabra!*





Instantly there appeared one of these . . .
and two of those . . . and some of them . . .

'I'm going to try them all on!' said
Winnie.

Winnie stripped down. She pulled on the
hot pants.

Wilbur sniggered into a paw.



'My legs look like twiglets!' said Winnie.
'What would cover them up?'

Winnie pulled the ball gown over her
head and let it cascade down her.

'Oo, this feels as gorgeous as a trifle
surprise with creamed worm topping!'

Wilbur spun his paw, so Winnie did a
twirl to make the skirt stick out. But she
twirled a bit too fast.

'Oooer, I've come over all dizzy!'



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CRASH!

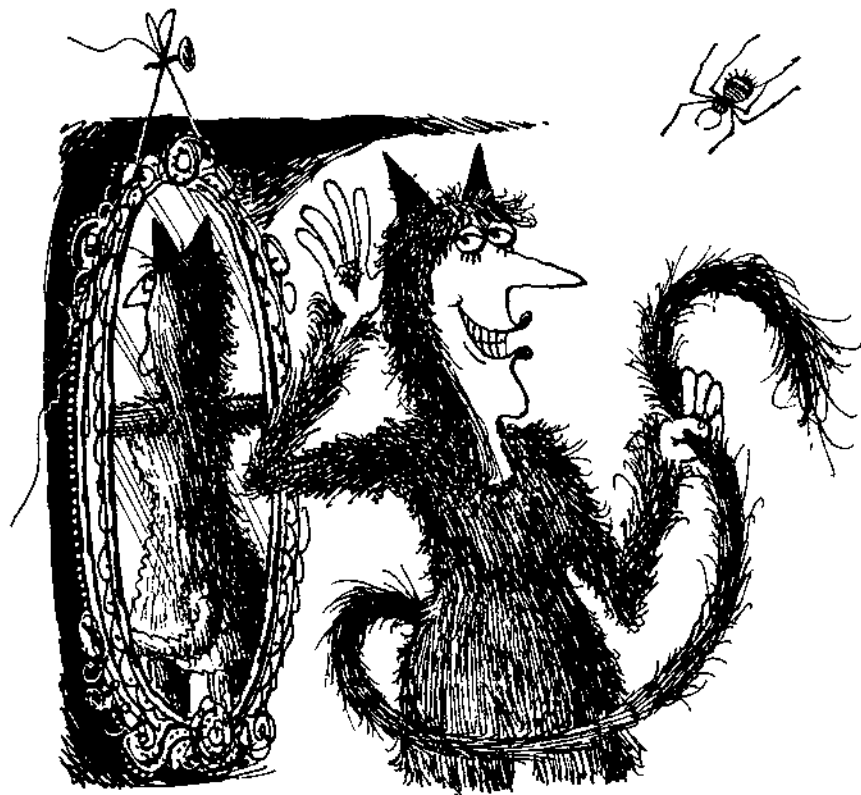


Winnie fell on her bum, her twiglet legs in the air.

'Did I look like Cinderella?' Winnie asked Wilbur as she got herself up. Wilbur made a face. 'More like an ugly sister, I suppose,' said Winnie. 'Botherarmarations. Nothing really suits, does it?'

Winnie put her fists to her skinny hips. 'I wish I was like you, Wilbur,' she said. 'You wear the same old black fur every blooming day, and it somehow looks just right.' Then Winnie brightened. 'Hey, that's a thought, Wilbur! Why don't I try black fur like yours?' Winnie snatched up her wand, just as there was a thumping at the front door. '*Abracadabra!*' shouted Winnie.





Instantly, there was Winnie, dressed top to toe in a kind of black furry hooded Babygro with added ears and a tail.

‘Lovely and warm!’ said Winnie, admiring and stroking herself in the mirror and giving her tail a twirl before she hurried to answer the door.



Thump, screech, creeeeak!

Winnie opened the door and . . .

‘Woof woof woof yap-yappety yap!’

Wilbur watched in amazement as Winnie shot back into the house, closely followed by the dog from next door that was snip-snapping at her tail.

‘Wilbur, HEEEELLLLPPPP!’ shouted Winnie.



'Scruff!' called the voice of Jerry, Winnie's giant neighbour. 'Bad boy, come back, Scruff!' Jerry folded himself over at the waist so that he could fit into Winnie's house. 'I'm ever so sorry about him, missus!' said Jerry. 'Scruff!'

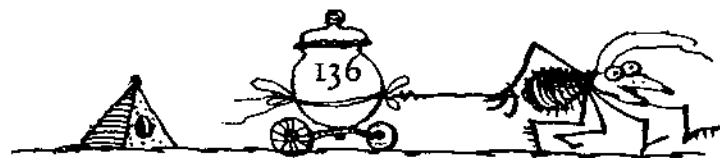
Winnie had clambered on to the top of the dresser and was balanced there, but the dresser was swaying. The plates on it were swaying too.

'Grrrrr!' said Scruff.



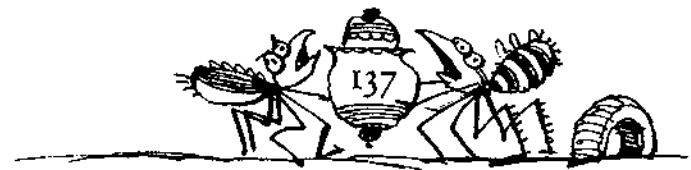
'He don't know who you are, looking like that, missus! He's only being a good guard dog,' said Jerry.

'Well, I don't want to be blooming guarded!' said Winnie, grasping her tail to get it out of dog-teeth reach.



Jerry scratched his head. 'Why are you dressed like that, missus, if you don't mind me asking?'

'Grrrr-yap!' Scruff jumped up, his paws on the dresser.





'Oooer!' wailed Winnie as the dresser began to tip in slow motion, plates falling and smashing one by one. Winnie was falling too. 'Because . . .'

Smash! 'I wanted . . .'

Smash-smash! 'DIFFERENT!'

Smash-smash-smash!

Winnie landed in the pile of broken crockery. For a moment there was stillness and silence.



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Then Winnie pushed back her hood.

'YAP-ya—oh!' said Scruff, and his tail went between his legs.

Winnie sat amongst the mess, but suddenly she smiled. Then she cackled with laughter.

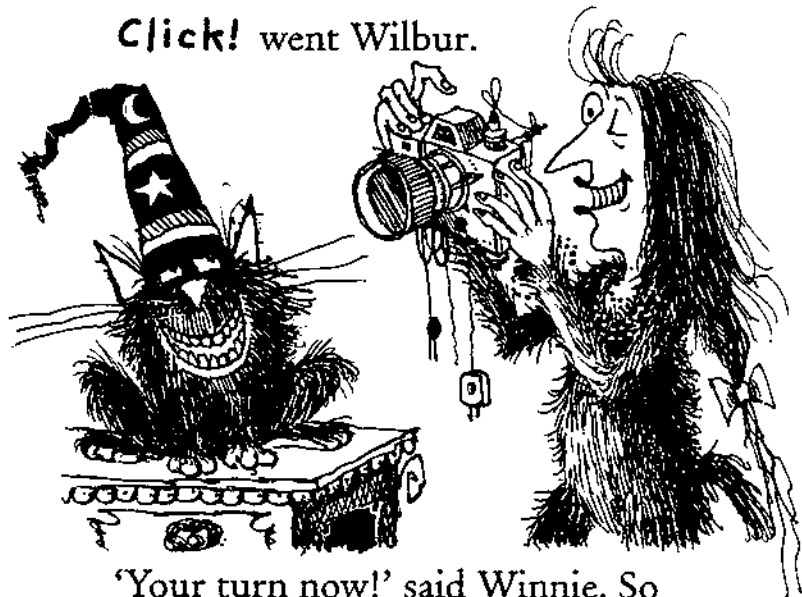


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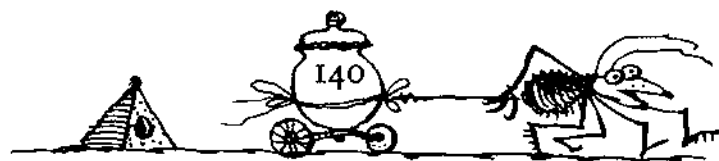


'Well, I suppose I do look different,
don't I? Fetch the camera, Wilbur!
Cheddar-Lancashire-Red Leicester-
Wymeswold-Stilton . . . hurry up, Wilbur!
. . . Double Gloucester-Stinking Bishop-
Cheshire-Wensleydale-CHEESE!'

Click! went Wilbur.



'Your turn now!' said Winnie. So
Wilbur stuck Winnie's hat on his head,
and grinned his best grin.



'Mrreee-ow!'

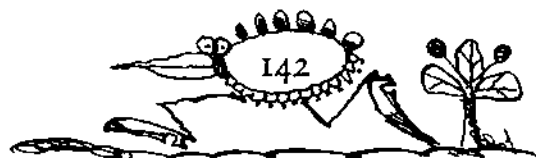
Click! went Winnie. Then **Click!**
Click! because Jerry's and Scruff's faces
looked so funny and she wanted them in the
album too. 'There,' she said. 'Plenty of new
photos, and every one of them as daft as a
knotted noodle. Now, what shall we do?'

'Play frisbee?' suggested Jerry.

'With all these cracked plates!' said
Winnie. 'Good idea!'

So they went and played in the garden,
and had a smashing time.





Winnie's Awful Auntie

'Ding-dong! Winniiiiieee!' went the dooryell.

'What? Who? Where am I?' Winnie sat up in bed, suddenly awake. 'Did you hear something, Wilbur?'

Wilbur rolled over, stretched, yawned, and flopped back into sleep.

'Just a dream then,' said Winnie. She lay down, stretched, yawned and . . .

'Wiiiiinnnniiiiieee!' went the dooryell.





'Oh, nits' knickers, there really is somebody there,' muttered Winnie. 'I'd better have a look.'

Winnie went to the window and peeped out. 'Oh, gnats' kneecaps, it's Auntie Aggie. Look at all that luggage! She's planning to stay!'

Wilbur buried his head under the sheets.

'It's no good hiding,' said Winnie. 'She always knows.' Winnie called out of the window, 'I'll be down in the shake of a maggot's bottom, Auntie Aggie.'





Winnie picked up her wand. 'I'd better make the place smell right for aunts. Brace yourself, Wilbur. *Abracadabra!*'

And instantly the lovely comfortable smell of mildew and mould was replaced by the sweet-tweety-neaty smell of pink petally rosy-posy pong.

'Mrrow!' complained Wilbur, putting a paw to his nose.

'I know!' said Winnie. 'Here, have a clothes peg.'

'Winifred Isaspell Tabitha Charmaine Hortense, will you please open this pesky door?!' Auntie Aggie's voice made Winnie's house shake.

'Deep breath, Wilbur. I'm going to let her in.'



Auntie Aggie seemed to fill the house with pinkness. She looked at Winnie, pointed at the clothes peg on her nose, and said, 'What in the witchy world is *that* for?'

'Oh, didn't you dow dat dese are da noo fashion?' said Winnie.

'How silly you young people are!' said Auntie Aggie. 'Take it off at once!'



'Yes, Auntie Aggie,' said Winnie.

Auntie Aggie pulled a hanky from her sleeve, spat on it, then wiped it over Winnie's face.

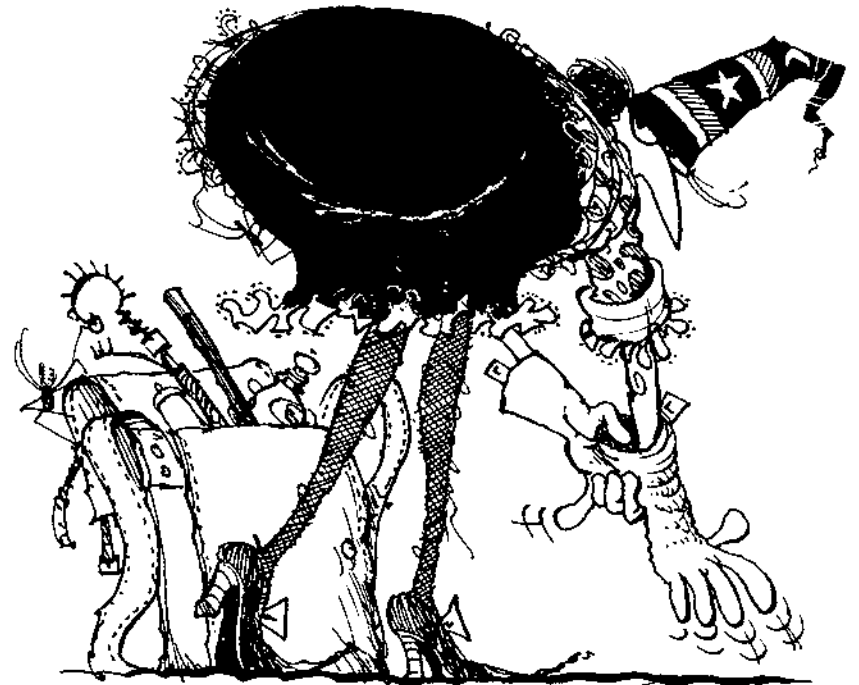
'Yeuch, get off!' said Winnie.

'I've come to sort you out, young lady,' said Auntie Aggie.



'But I don't—' began Winnie.

'Don't argue!' said Auntie Aggie. 'Now, where to begin?' She looked around the kitchen and tutted. 'Dear, oh dear!' She bent over, sticking her large pink-frocked bottom in the air, as she took rubber gloves from her bag, and pulled them on.





Then she waved her wipe-clean between-every-wish wand. 'Spit spot!' she commanded, and instantly all Winnie's stuff leapt up onto shelves and into cupboards.

Slam-slam-slam went the cupboard doors.

'Now I won't know where anything *is*!' wailed Winnie.

'Nonsense!' said Auntie Aggie. 'I'll smarten you up next.'

'But I don't—' began Winnie.

'Spit spot!' went Auntie Aggie, and instantly Winnie was swallowed in a smart business suit and her hair neatly styled.

Wilbur was tittering into his paws.

'Me-he-he-ow!'





Auntie Aggie looked at Wilbur. 'That stinky cat has got to be changed!' she said, and she raised her wipe-clean-between-every-wish wand and—

'No!' said Winnie. She leapt towards Wilbur, but her suit skirt was tight and her legs went **wang!** and she fell **bang!** onto the floor.



Suddenly Wilbur wasn't a cat any more.

'What have you done, you silly old sponge pudding?' wailed Winnie. 'Where's my Wilbur?'

'He's become a sweet little clean little wabbit,' said Auntie Aggie.

'But I want *Wilbur!*' wailed Winnie. 'My *Wilbur!* I'm a witch, not a magician! Give Wilbur back!'





‘Er . . . no,’ said Auntie Aggie. ‘You young people don’t know what’s best. You’ll soon love Wilbur the wabbit more than you ever loved that stinky cat. He can live in a nice pink cage.’

‘Never!’ said Winnie. She was gazing into the wabbit’s eyes. She could see real Wilbur trapped inside the silly face with floppy ears.

Auntie Aggie wagged a plump finger at her. ‘You wait, Winifred. When I’m an old witch I won’t have the energy or magic to help you like this, and then you’ll be sorry!’

Twitter-twee twitter-twee.

‘It’s my phone,’ said Auntie Aggie. ‘I’ll take it outside and be back in a jiffy.’



Out bustled Auntie Aggie.

‘Don’t panic, Wilbur!’ said Winnie. ‘I’ll have you out of there in one snail-second, but first I’m going to magic Auntie Aggie!’

‘Snuffle?’ asked Wilbur.





‘Yes,’ said Winnie. ‘Did you hear Auntie Aggie say that she’d not be able to do magic on us once she’s an old lady? So I’m going to turn her into an old lady, just for as long as she stays here. Then I’ll get you back, my Wilbur, my friend, my companion cat!’

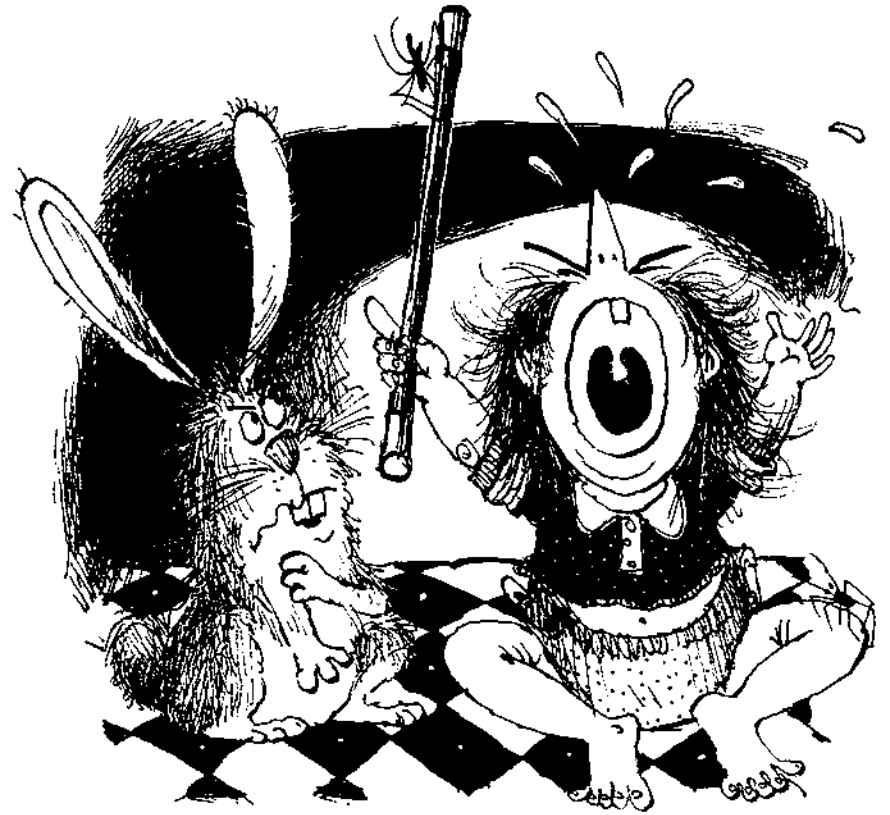
As Auntie Aggie came back into the room, reaching for her wipe-clean-between-every-wish wand, Winnie waved her own wand. She shut her eyes tight and wished with all her might, ‘Make Auntie Aggie much much older than me—*Abacadabra!*’

Gasp! went Auntie Aggie.

Gasp-nibble! went Wilbur the wabbit.

‘**Waaaaaaa!**’ went a little Winnie baby on the floor.

Wilbur glared at Winnie’s wand, but



there was nothing wrong with the wand’s magic. Auntie Aggie was much much older than Winnie, because Winnie had gone backwards and become her baby self!

‘Is that you, Winnie?’ said Auntie Aggie.

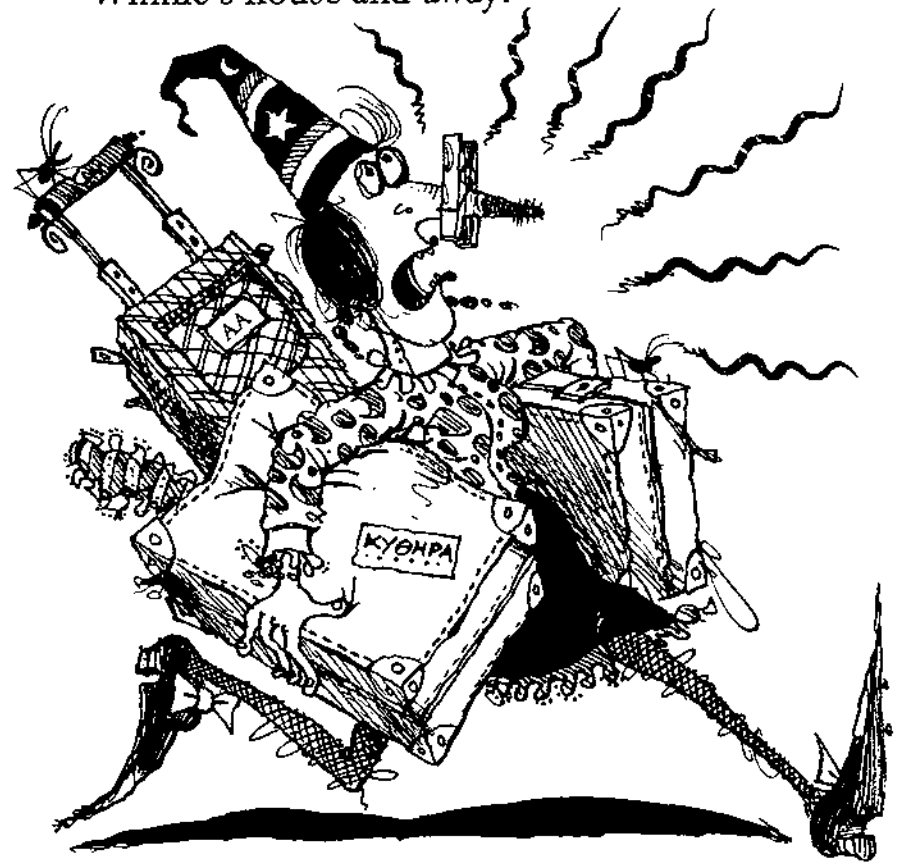


She moved towards the door. 'Oo, I can't abide babies! Noisy smelly nasty things! I had to wait so many many years until you were old enough for me to work on you, Winnie, and now look what you've done!'

'Waaaaa!' went baby Winnie, kicking her legs and waving her fists. Then suddenly baby Winnie went quiet. A look of concentration came over her face. And a stinky smell filled the room.

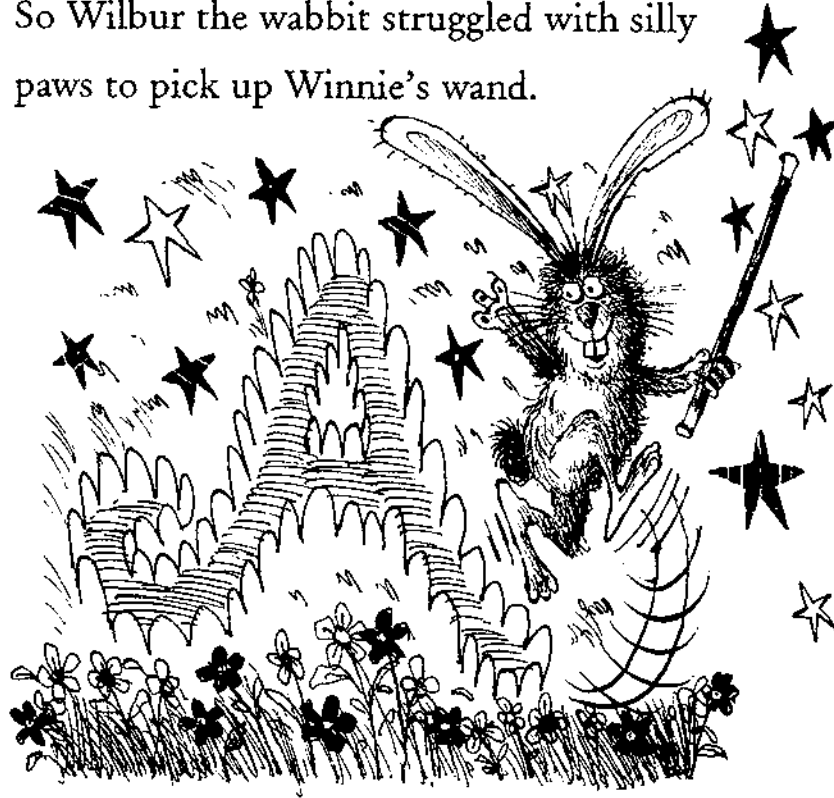


'Poooooey! Ooo, dear!' said Auntie Aggie. 'Quick, where's that clothes peg? That's it, I'm off!' And off she went, grabbing her bags and hurrying out of Winnie's house and away.

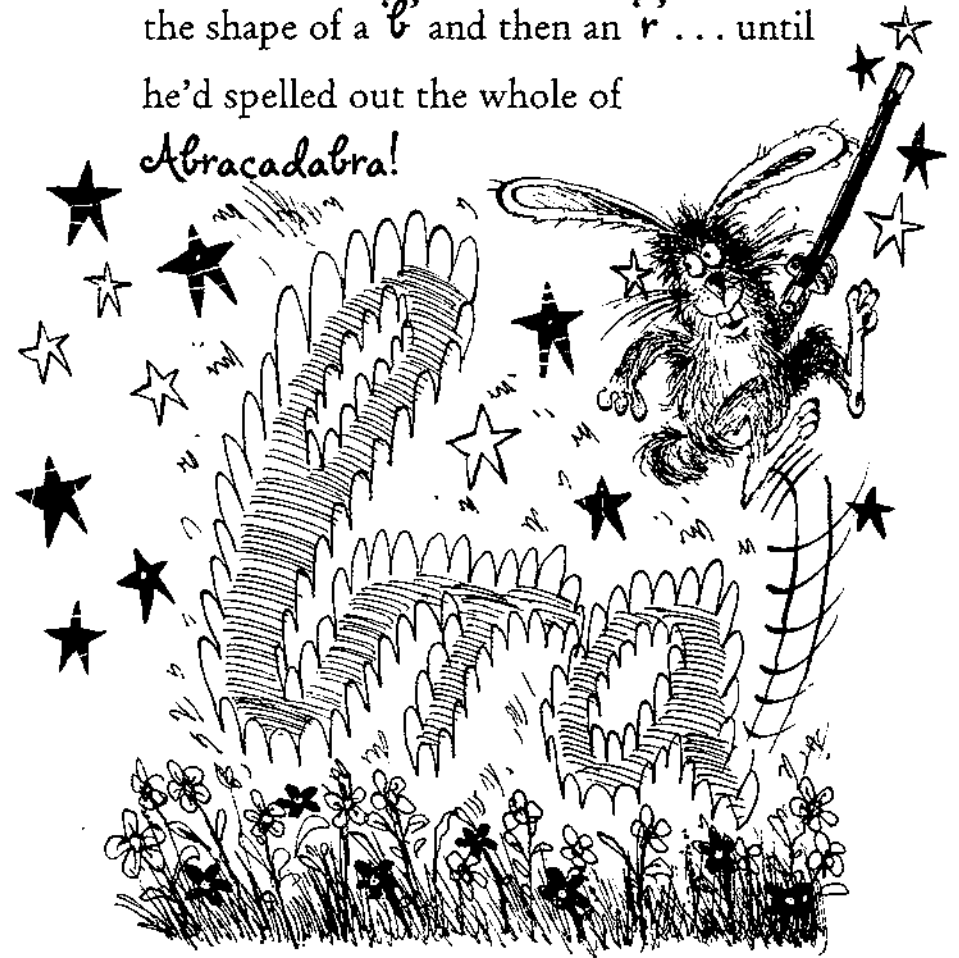


Meanwhile, baby Winnie had got on to her hands and knees and was crawling at top speed out of the door.

Snuffle-nibble! went Wilbur the wabbit, but baby Winnie took no notice. So Wilbur the wabbit struggled with silly paws to pick up Winnie's wand.



Then he hopped the wand all over the lawn—boing! boing!—hopping in the shape of an *A* and—boing! boing!—in the shape of a *B* and then an *r* . . . until he'd spelled out the whole of *Abacadabra!*



Then, instantly, Winnie was back to her old self.

'Wilbur, you're a genius!' she said. Then she waved the wand. *Abacadabra!*

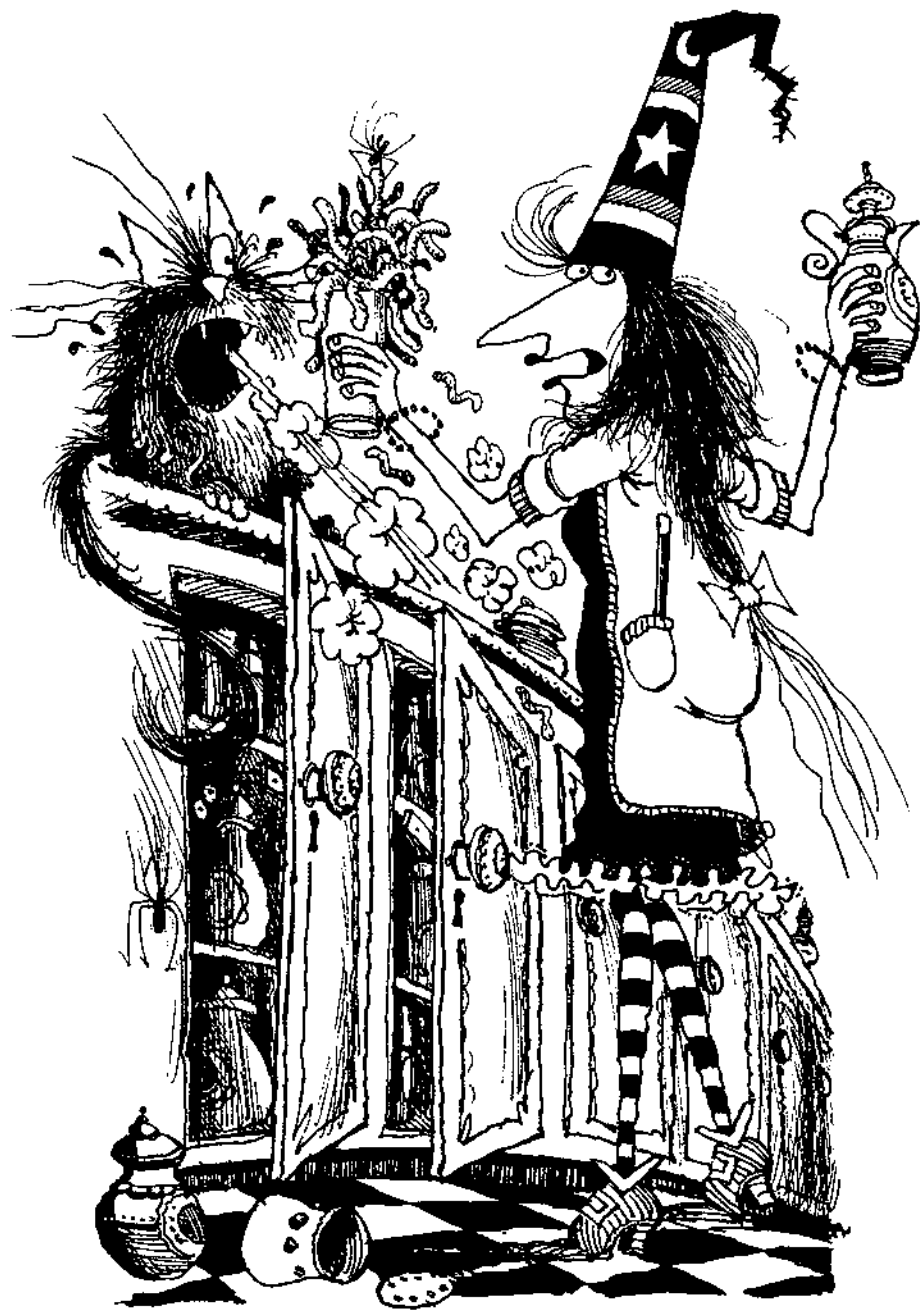


And instantly Wilbur was back to being proper Wilbur the cat again.

'Meow!' said Wilbur. 'Meow meow meow!'

'I know,' said Winnie. 'I'll be more careful what I wish for next time! But I don't think we'll see Auntie Aggie for a while!' Winnie patted Wilbur's tatty head. 'Oo, Wilbur, I'm so very very glad you're not really a wabbit!'





Winnie Goes Cleaning



‘Tishoo!’ *Sniff-sniff*, went Wilbur.

‘Use that bat as a hanky,’ said Winnie.

‘What d’you want for lunch?’

Wilbur opened his mouth, but no sound came out.

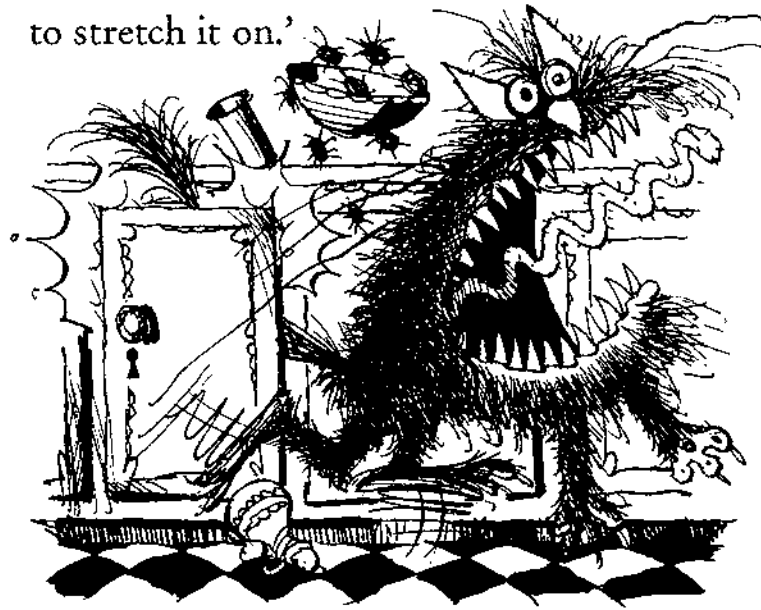
‘You’ve lost your voice!’ said Winnie.

‘I know a cure for that!’ Winnie opened cupboards. She grabbed this and that and a few of those.



Chop, slice, grate, bash,
squeeze, slurp-slop, ready for the
oven.

'Out of the way, Wilbur! I need a rack
to stretch it on.'

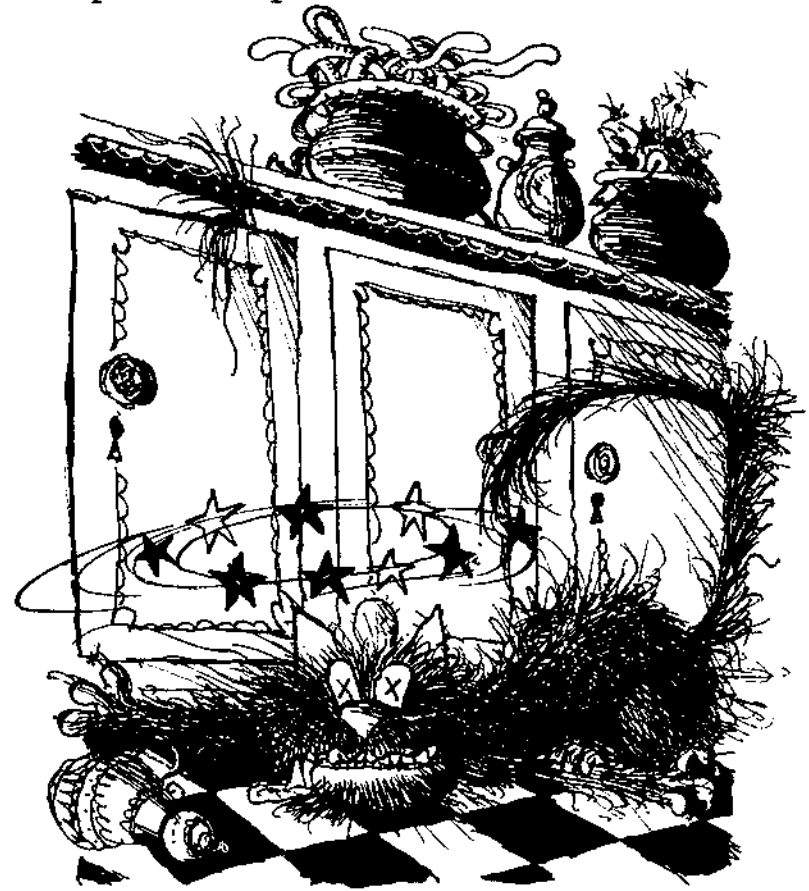



But Wilbur didn't move fast enough.
His tail was caught in the cupboard door.

Wilbur's fur stood on end, and he
yelled a silent big yeeeeoooww!!



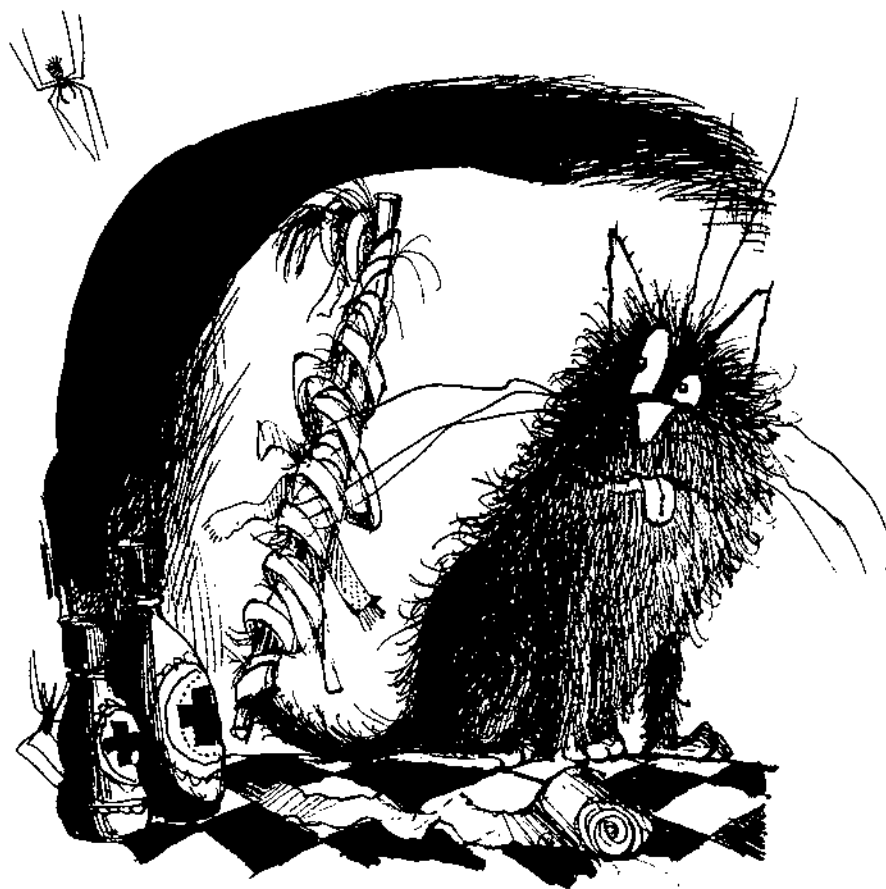
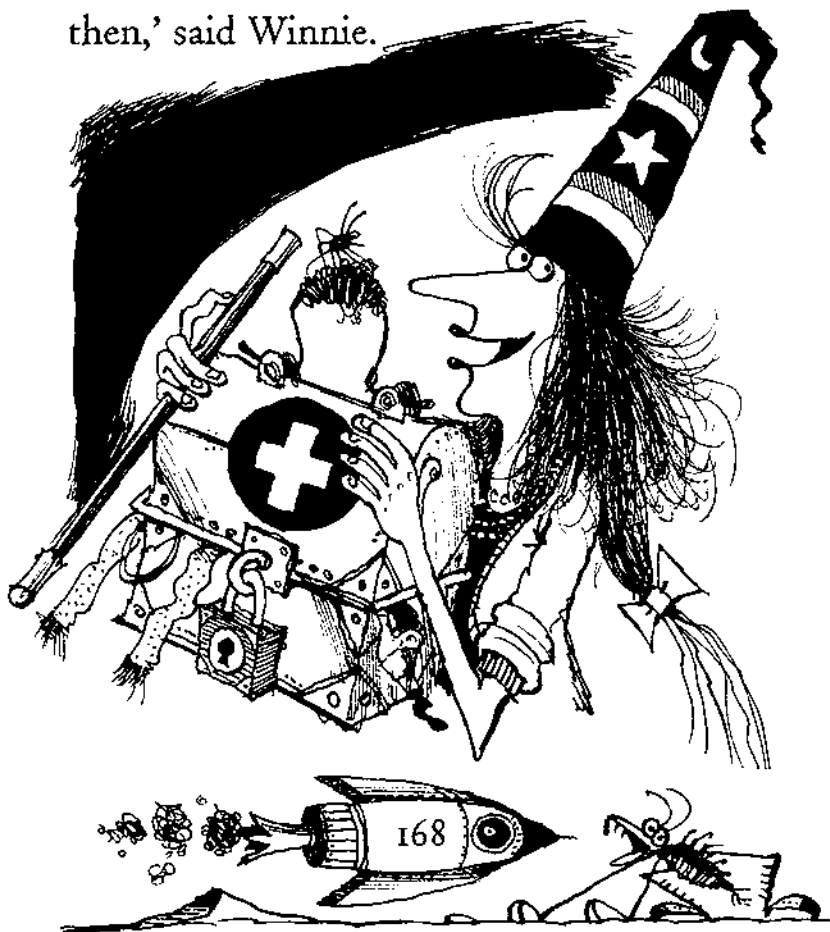
He hit the ceiling then crashed to the
floor. His tail was bent and there was a
large lump on his head. Wilbur's mouth
opened in a pitiful silent meow.





'Blooming heck!' said Winnie. She wiped sticky hands down her front and went to fetch her first aid box.

'Nice fresh leeches?' she said, but Wilbur shook his head hard. 'Just crushed earwigs for the headache and a bandage, then,' said Winnie.



Winnie found something to use as a splint. She wound sticky plaster round Wilbur's tail to hold the splint in place.

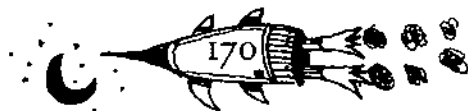
'There!' she said. 'I'm good at this, aren't I? I should have been a doctor instead of a witch!'

Later, down in the village, Winnie noticed something outside the school.



'Cleaning Operative urgently required for village school'

'Ooo, look, Wilbur!' said Winnie. 'It says ...'
Winnie ran a finger slowly along the word beginning with 'O'. "O." "P." "E." "R ..."
It says "operations", doesn't it? Ooo, Wilbur, they want somebody to do operations! Here's my chance to be a doctor!'



Wilbur put out a paw to try and grab hold of Winnie's cardigan, but Winnie was already at the door, pushing a button and talking to the wall.



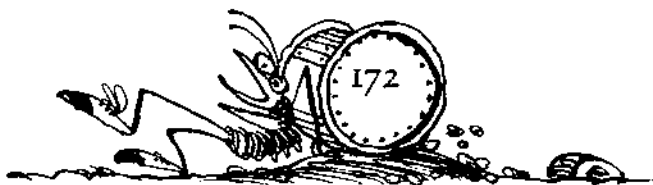


'You again!' said Mrs Parmar, the school secretary, when she opened the door. 'I remember you from when you cooked our school dinner. Out!'

'But I've come for the job,' said Winnie. Mrs Parmar sagged. 'Well,' she sighed. 'I am desperate.'

'Where does it hurt?' asked Winnie.

'Don't touch me!' said Mrs Parmar. 'Just follow me.'



Mrs Parmar gave Winnie a pinny to wear.

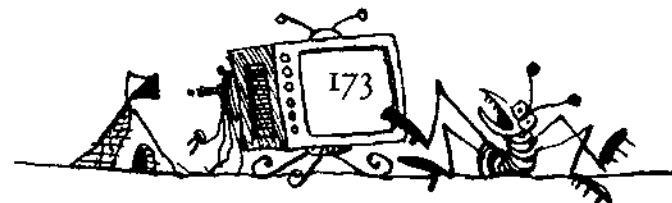
'Here's your equipment,' she said, opening a cupboard.

'Really?' said Winnie. 'I can understand the bucket, but when does a doctor need spray polish?'



'Doctor?' boomed Mrs Parmar. 'The job is for a *cleaner*!'

'You want to waste my skills on dusting?' said Winnie.

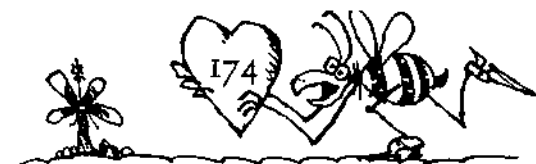


'Oh, please do it, Winnie!' said Mrs Parmar, suddenly wilting. 'It's Parents' Evening tonight. If the school isn't clean they'll all take their children away and the school will close and I'll be out of a job and I'll have no money and I'll have to live in a cardboard box and I'll starve so thin I'll slip down the drain grating and then the sewer rats will get me and they'll nibble me and I don't like being nibbled and ...'

'I don't like being nibbled myself, Mrs Parmar,' said Winnie. 'I'll do it.'

'Marvellous!' said Mrs Parmar. 'Everywhere must be clean by the end-of-school time.'

'Easy-peasy lemon squeezy!' said Winnie.

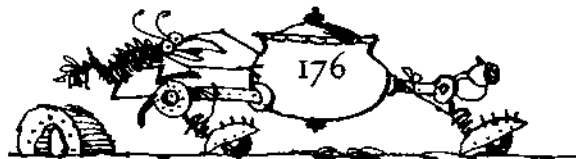


'I don't think much of this kind of broom,' said Winnie. 'Where's my proper broom, Wilbur?'

Winnie's broom swept double-quick. It brushed floors and walls and ceilings. It even tried to brush teachers' hair.

'Sorry about that!' said Winnie.

At last everywhere was clean except for the Hall.



'Come on, Wilbur,' said Winnie, and she barged into the Hall with her mop and bucket and dusters and vacuum cleaner and sprays. The Hall was full of children sitting on the floor. They turned and smiled at Winnie. Winnie smiled back.

'Hello, little ordinaries!' said Winnie.





But the head teacher was standing in front of the children, and he didn't smile. He pointed at Winnie.

'OUT!' he said.

'But Mrs Parmar said . . .' began Winnie.

'OUT!' said the head teacher again. So Winnie and Wilbur shuffled out of the Hall.

'Now how are we going to get the cleaning done in time?' asked Winnie.

Wilbur shrugged.

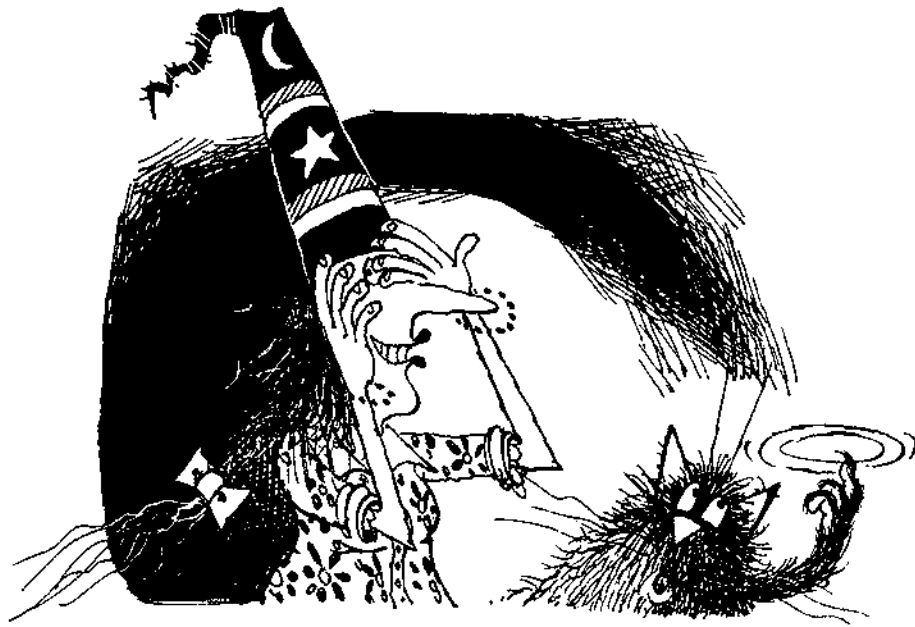


'I know!' said Winnie. 'I'll do a spell to make myself invisible! Then I can clean and they won't see me. Where's my wand?'

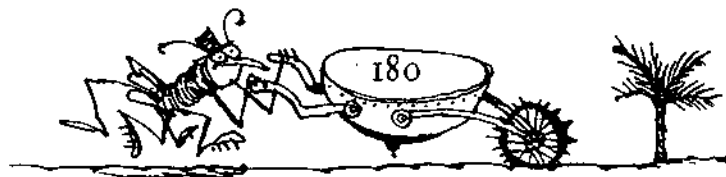
They looked in the bucket of dirty water, in Winnie's pockets, under Winnie's hat.

'I've lost my wand! I've lost my magic!?' wailed Winnie.





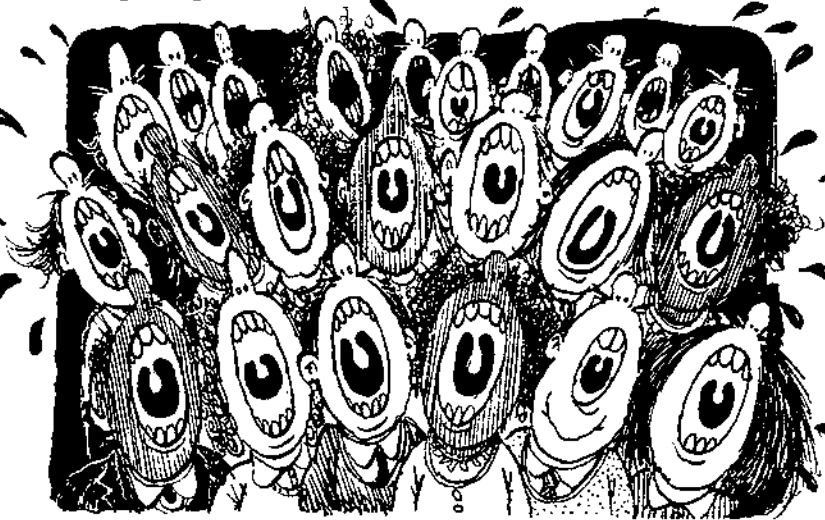
Then she had a thought. 'Ooo, I've remembered something from when I was little, Wilbur,' she said. 'I don't need magic to be invisible! I just need to cover my eyes with my hands. Come on, we'll go through the back door to the Hall so that the head teacher doesn't see the door opening. Hey, do you think they have arm and leg teachers as well as a head one, Wilbur?'



With a hand over her eyes, Winnie lugged the vacuum cleaner and the ladder and all the other bits into the Hall, behind the head teacher. The children laughed.



'Yes,' said the head teacher, not turning round. 'Yes, my story was rather amusing, wasn't it! Let me tell you another about the time I . . .' On he went with his boring story while the children laughed more and more. They cried. They held their tummies. There was even a puddle on the floor because they were laughing so much. On went the head teacher, but what the children were really laughing at was Winnie.



With a hand over her eyes, Winnie couldn't see anything. She tried to spray and polish the curtain, thinking it was a window.

'I'll have a go at those cobwebs next, Wilbur,' whispered Winnie.



She put the ladder up against the curtain and began to climb, still with one hand over her eyes. It was only Wilbur, holding with all his catty might, who stopped the ladder from crashing to the ground. Then Winnie bent over, and she showed her witchy bloomers.

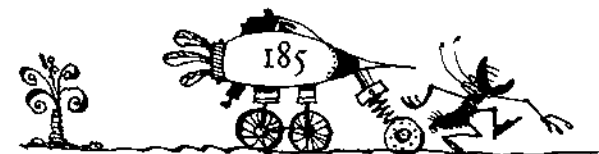
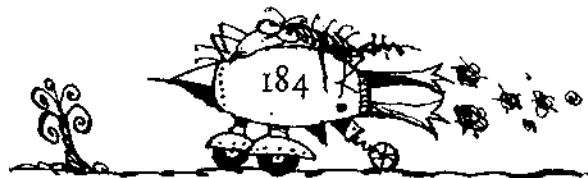
‘Yay!’ cheered the children.

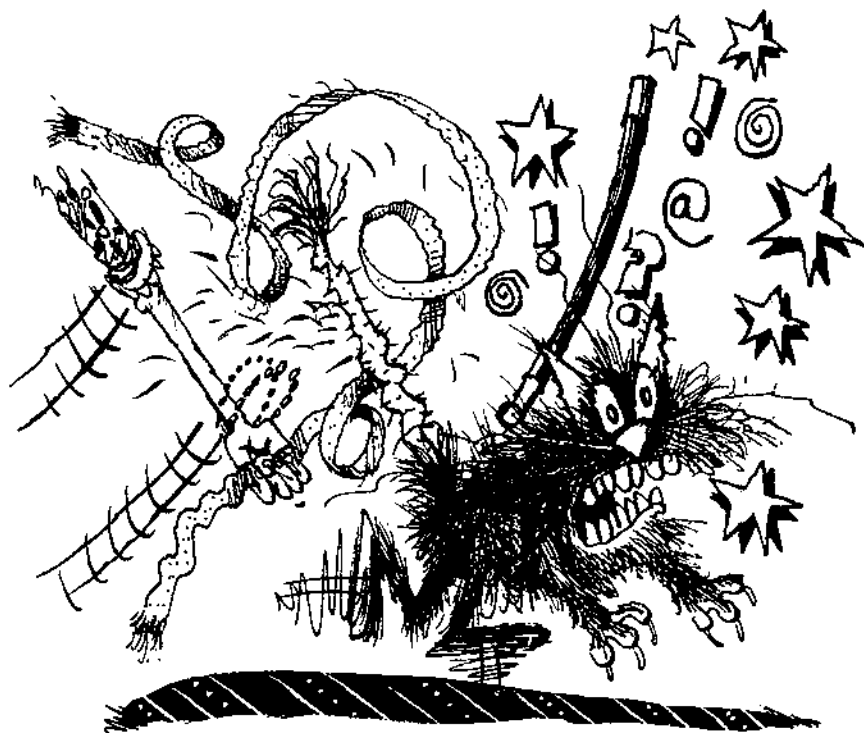
‘What?’ said Winnie, taking her hand from her face and realizing that she was balanced in the air. ‘Oh, gnats’ knickers! Don’t let go, Wilbur! Ooooo! Noooo!’

CRASH! Wilbur wobbled, the ladder fell, and so did Winnie . . . right into the head teacher’s arms.

‘Hooray!’ shouted the children, and they clapped and cheered.

The mess was terrible.





‘Oh, where where where is my wand?’
wailed Winnie . . . and suddenly she
remembered. ‘Your tail, Wilbur!’

Winnie grabbed the end of the sticky
plaster on Wilbur’s tail and she pulled.

‘YEEEEEOOWWL!’ yelled Wilbur,
clutching his tail that was now balder than
the head teacher’s head.

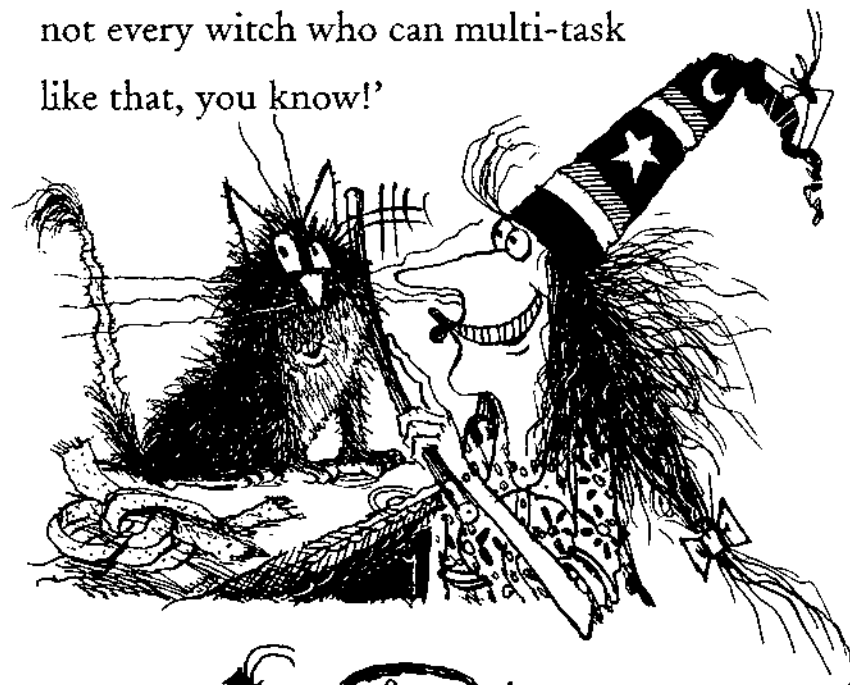


But Winnie had her wand back and she
waved it around the room.

‘Abracadabra!’

And instantly the place was tidy. The
glass glinted, the floor gleamed, and the
head teacher smiled.

‘There!’ said Winnie. ‘All clean, and
you’ve got your voice back, Wilbur. It’s
not every witch who can multi-task
like that, you know!’



Winnie and the Ghost in the Post

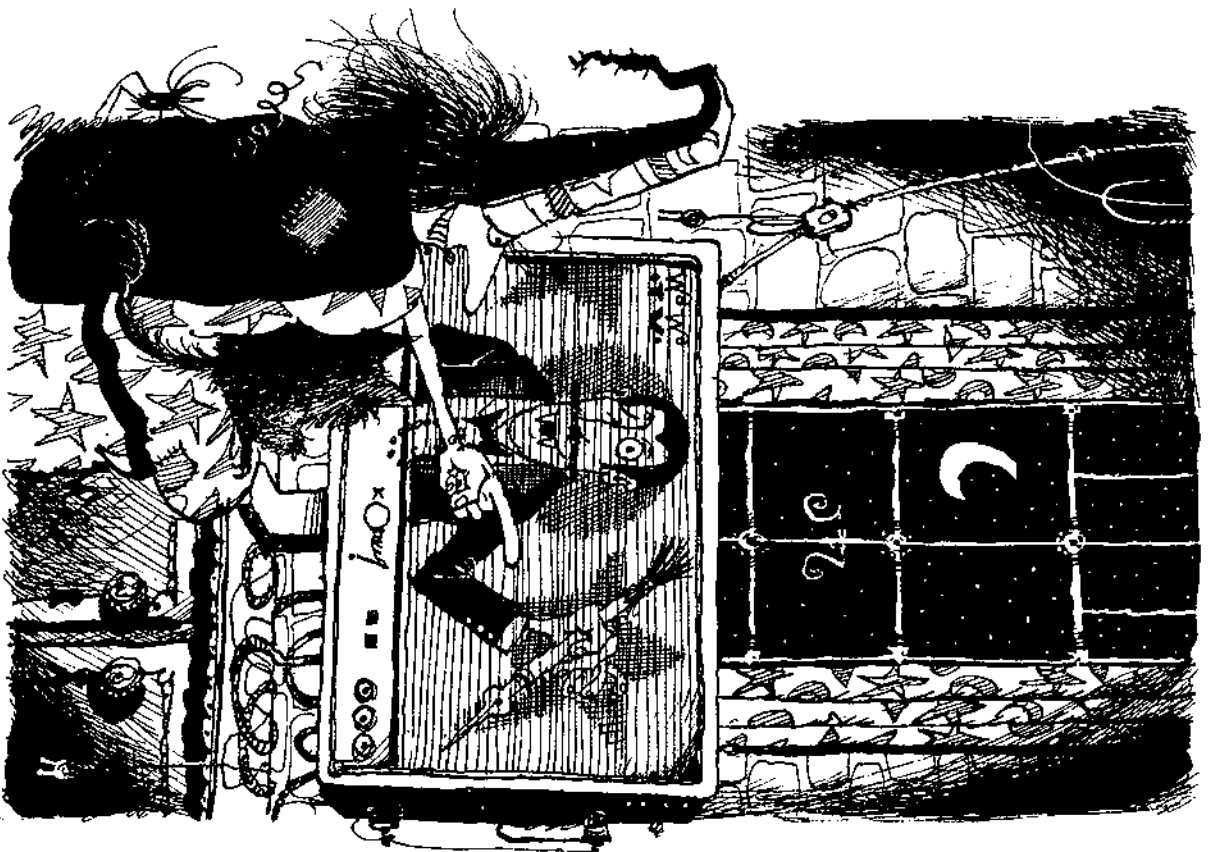


'I want that!' said Winnie, pointing to the telly. A smarmy vampire was lovingly holding up a pen in the shape of a mini broomstick.

'This pen can be yours!' said the vampire. He seemed to be gazing straight into Winnie's eyes.

'Can it really?' said Winnie. 'How's that then?'

The vampire chuckled and winked.



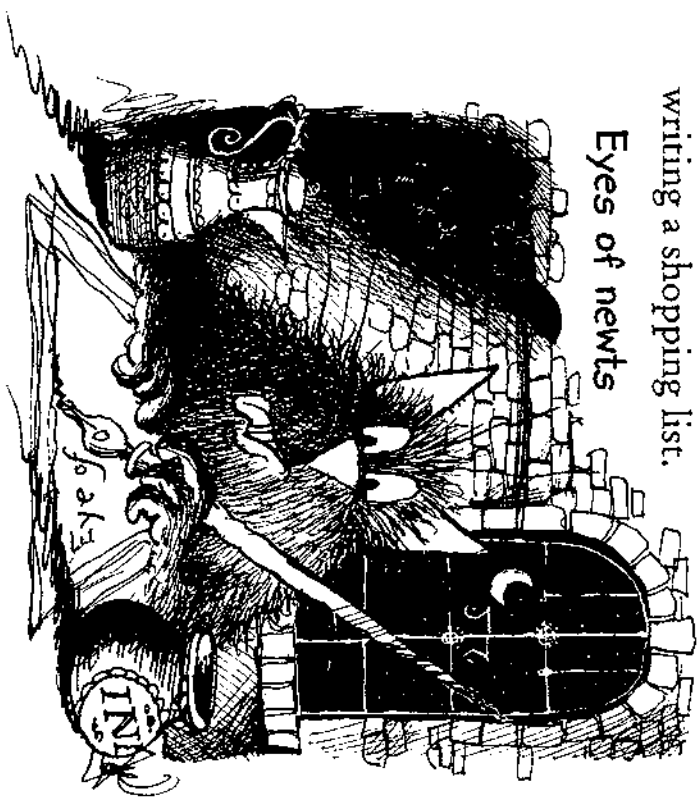


'This pen is no ordinary pen. No! This pen doesn't need to be pushed over the paper. This pen will do the writing for you!'

'Ooo, that's wonderful!' said Winnie, clasping her hands together. 'Isn't it wonderful, Wilbur? Just what I need!'

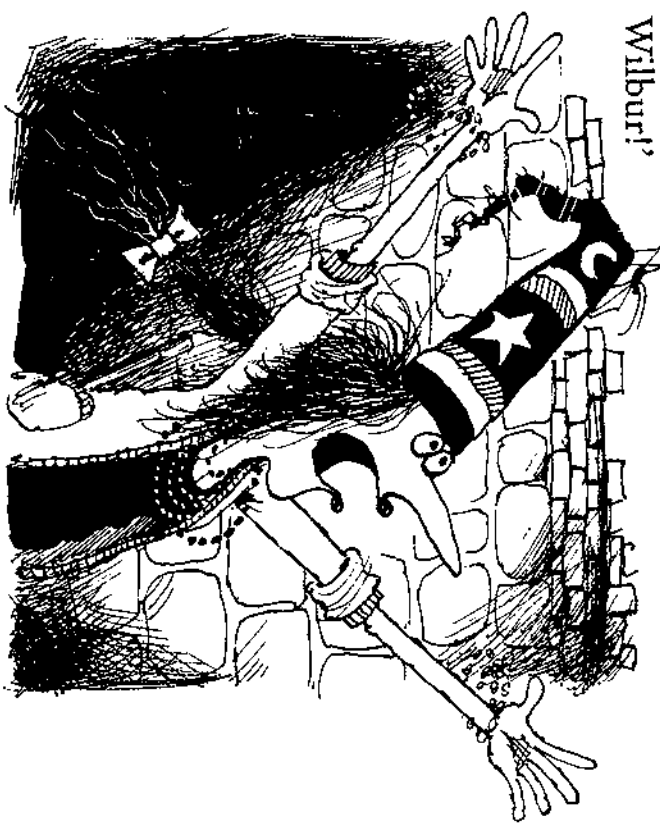
Wilbur wasn't listening. He was busy writing a shopping list.

Eyes of newts



The vampire went on, 'This pen is the prize for our new poetry competition. Send in your poem and we'll choose which of you will win the pen.'

'Oo!' said Winnie, jumping up. 'Where's a pencil? Where's a bit of paper? I've got to get poetic, and you've got to help me, Wilbur!'





Wilbur glanced at Winnie's feet, then
he wrote:

Polish for boots

Winnie waved her wand.

'Abracadabra!'

Instantly there appeared piles of paper
and stacks of pens.

'I'm all ready!' she said. 'Now, what
shall I put for my poem? I know! "The cat
sat on the mat".'

Wilbur rolled his eyes.



A packet of tea

'But it's true,' said Winnie. 'Poetry
should be about truth! You are a cat and
you are sitting on a mat!'

Winnie tried to write down 'cat' and
'mat', but she couldn't even manage that.



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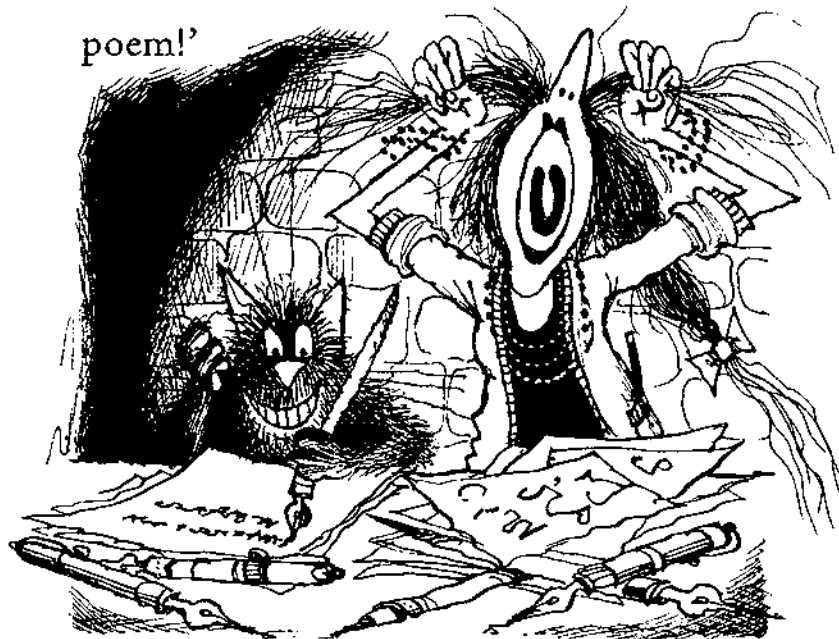


‘Oh, earwig belly buttons! You see, that’s why I need that pen! Pleeese write it for me, Wilbur!’

But Wilbur was still busy with his list.

Some fish for me

‘Oh, my talents are wasted, that’s what they are!’ Winnie tugged at her hair. ‘If only somebody would write down my poem!’



Then Winnie had a thought. ‘Oh, I know, I’ll get one of those ghost writers!’ she said. ‘Where’s that website for ghosts by post? Here it is!’

Winnie clicked the mouse to make the computer talk to her.



'PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING,' said the computer.

'KIND OF GHOST REQUIRED:

1) TO SCARE UNWANTED GUESTS

A) DRAGGING CLANKING CHAINS

B) HEADLESS

C) MOANING GREY WOMAN

2) TO ATTRACT VISITORS TO HISTORIC

BUILDINGS

(A) , (B) , OR (C) , AS ABOVE.

3) TO DO SOME WRITING FOR YOU

A) THRILLERS

B) ROMANCES

C) POETRY'

'Definitely a 3(c),' said Winnie.

'Although I might try a 1(b) next time Auntie Aggie comes to stay!'



'SIZE OF GHOST WANTED

1) SMALL

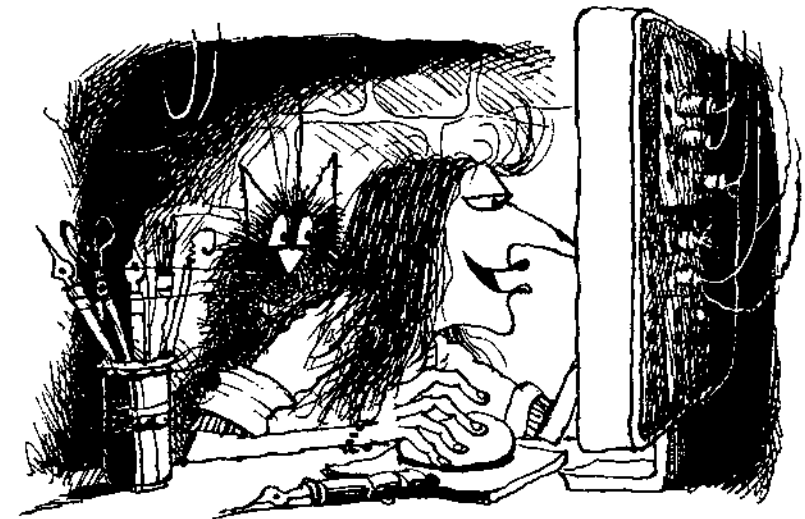
2) MEDIUM

3) LARGE'

Winnie click-ticked (1). 'A small one can write as well as a big one, and it'll cost less.'

She got Wilbur to fill in the address.

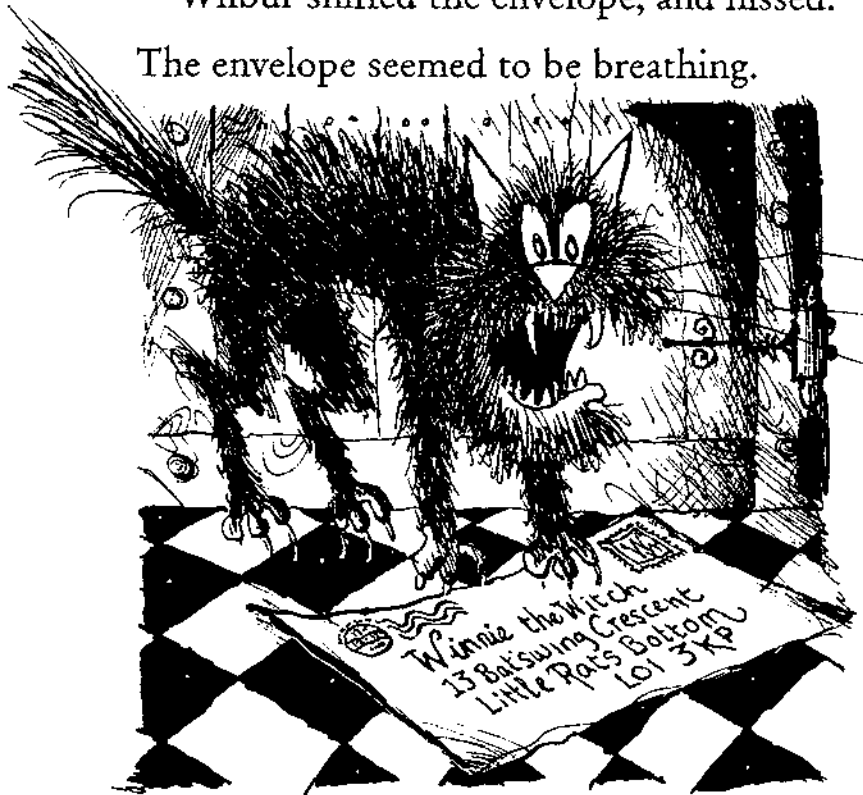
SEND TO: Winnie the Witch, 13 Bat's Wing Crescent, Little Rats Bottom, L01 3KP.



Winnie sent the form by witchmail,
which is fast. Next instant there was a
snap of the letter box and a slim envelope
fell onto the doormat.

‘My ghost in the post!’ said Winnie.

Wilbur sniffed the envelope, and hissed.
The envelope seemed to be breathing.



‘Give it to me!’ said Winnie. She tore
open the envelope, and tipped out . . .

‘It looks like an old hanky!’ said
Winnie, disappointed. ‘Is it dead?’ She
poked at the white thing. ‘Oo, no it isn’t!
Look, Wilbur!’



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The flat white thing quivered. Then it rose elegantly into the air and bowed to Winnie and then to Wilbur.

‘Good afternoooooon!’ it said. ‘I am your poetic spooook. What do you desire me to dooooooo?’

‘Oh, dear little Post Ghost!’ said Winnie. ‘May I call you PG? I just want you to write a poem to win a competition.’

PG shuddered. ‘Did you say “just write a poem”?’

‘Er . . . yes,’ said Winnie.

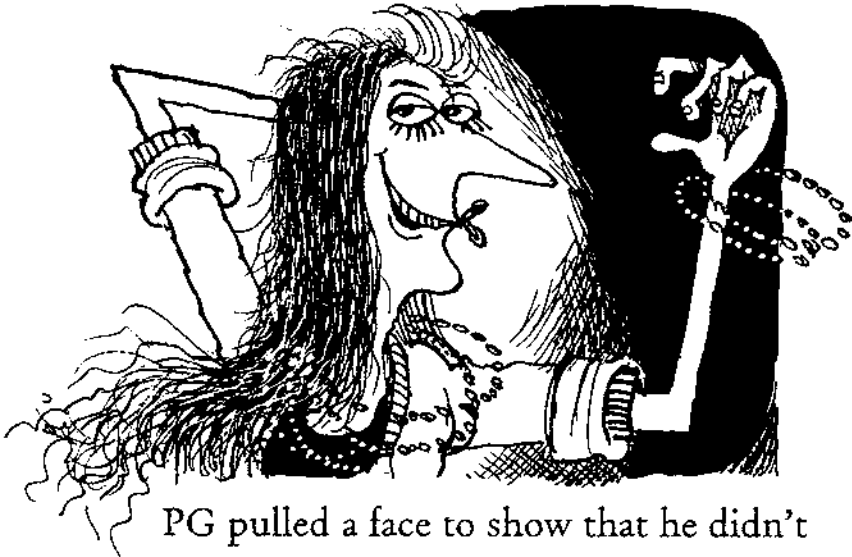
‘My dear modom,’ said PG in a quivering voice. ‘There is no “just” about writing a poem.’ PG put his ghostly hand to his ghostly brow. ‘I have to be inspired before I can write!’



'Have you?' said Winnie. 'How do we do that then?'

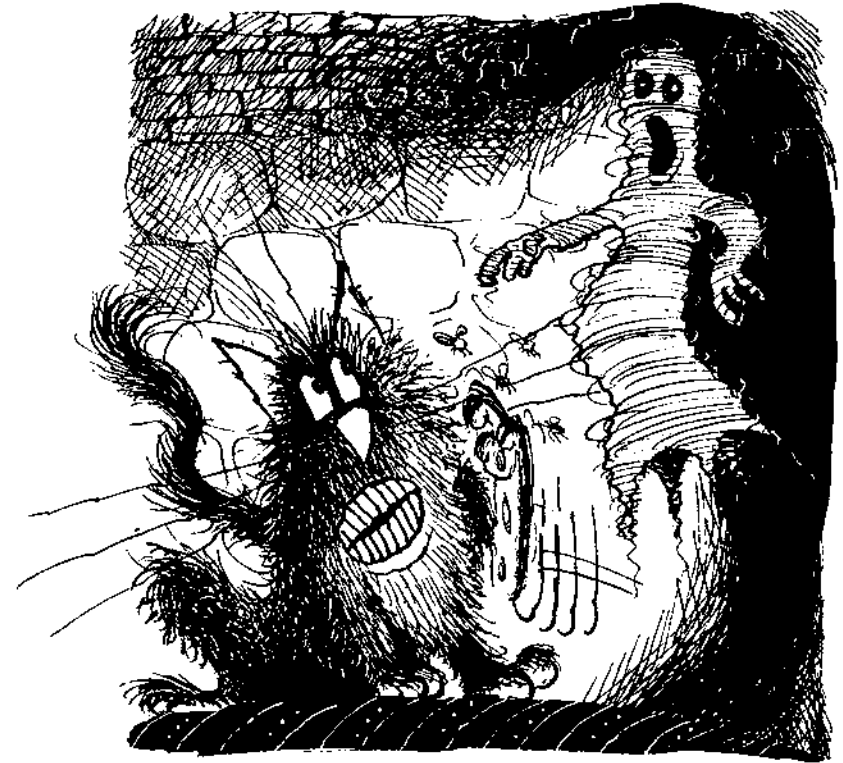
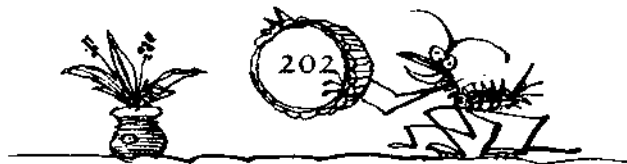
'Show me something beauoooootiful,' said PG.

Winnie simpered and patted her hair.

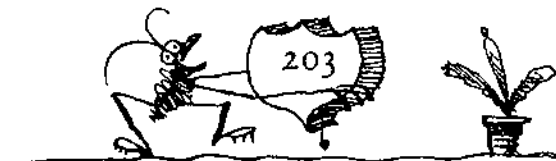


PG pulled a face to show that he didn't think Winnie fitted the bill.

'What about Wilbur then?' said Winnie. 'Wilbur's beautiful. I'd like a poem about him.'



'I couldn't write about a smelly old cat!' PG looked around the room. 'Dear, oh dear. Nothing at all that I could uooooooooose. Is there, outside, perhaps, a lovely viewoooooo? Glistening with dewooooo? That would dooooooo.'



'Ooo, I can hear the poem coming already!' said Winnie, excited. 'Come outside, PG.'

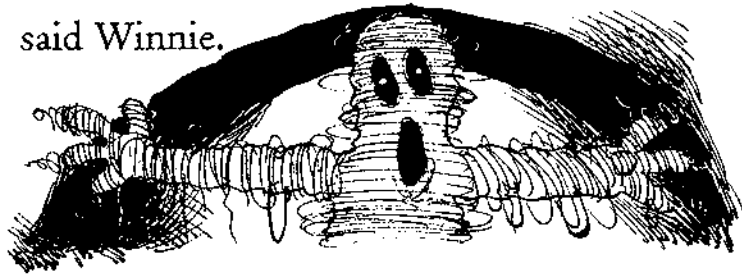
It was a sunny day, but . . .

'I have it!' said PG. 'Hand me my quill.'
He began to write—

Oh, moooon, moooon

Beauoooootiful moooon!

'You sound like a cow with belly ache!' said Winnie.



The little ghost flounced. *Sniff.* 'I was going to go on with, "You look like a silver spooon". But I can't create when I'm upset. I'm sensitive. I need ambiance and atmosphere and appreciation to doooo my work . . .'



'Oh, I'm ever so sorry!' said Winnie. 'It's just that I haven't been to school and I don't know much about poetry. I'll shut up, shall I?'

So PG wrote about June (even though it was April) and a balloon and a tune. And Winnie tried very hard not to yawn.



Meanwhile, Wilbur was ready to go shopping.

‘Ooo, wait, Wilbur!’ called Winnie.
‘I’ve got to put my poem in the post. And PG’s got to be sent back toooo. And I do just need to go to the loooo before we go. Oh, heck, poetry seems to be catching!’

Winnie stuffed the poem into one envelope and the ghost into another.

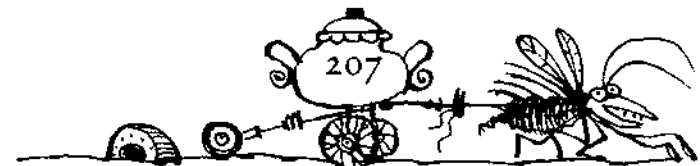
‘Quick! Let’s get them posted!’



In the shop, Winnie and Wilbur looked at their shopping list. It said—

Oh, moooon, moooon,
Beauoooootiful moooon!

‘Oh, newts’ nosedrops!’ said Winnie.
‘We’ve posted the wrong bit of paper!’

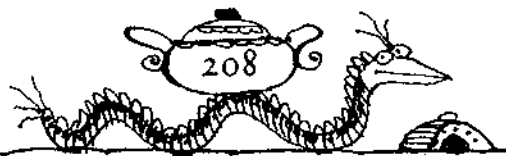


So Winnie and Wilbur went home
feeling cross. They slumped on sofas and
switched on the telly. There was the
vampire with the smile, just announcing . . .

‘The winner of our pen competition is . . .
Winnie the Witch!’

‘Oh! Oh! Oh!’ Winnie was jumping up
and down as if she’d got ants in her pants.

‘I won!’



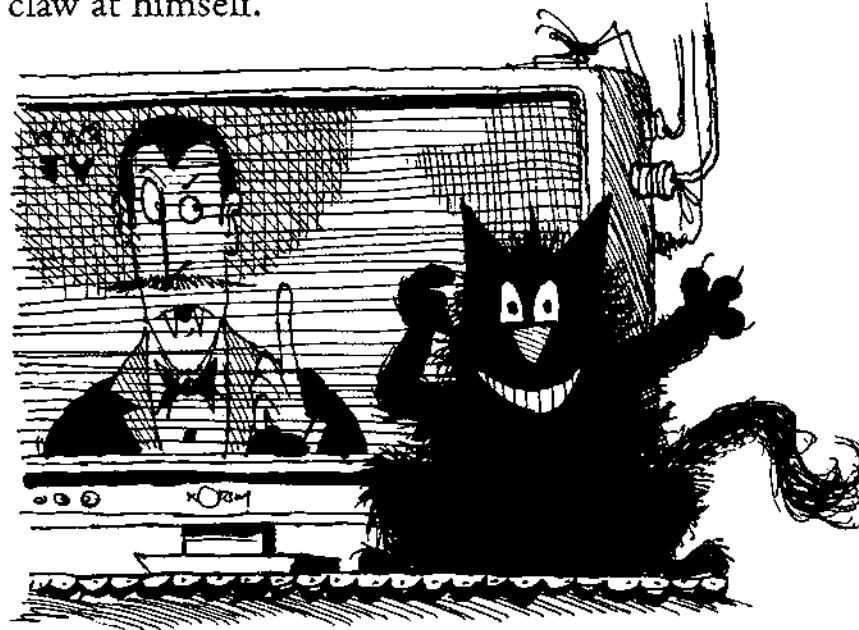
The vampire read the winning poem:

‘Eyes of newts
Polish for boots
A bag of tea
Some fish for me
Swede for the stew
A smell-fresh for the loo.’

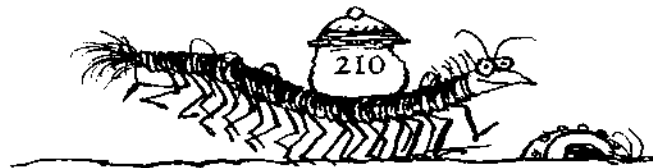


'It's those "ooo" sounds that make this a truly poetic poem,' said the vampire.
'Well done, Winnie.'

Wilbur cleared his throat. He pointed a claw at himself.



'Oh, yes,' said Winnie. 'You wrote that, Wilbur. But will you still let me use the pen? Pretty please?'



The first thing Winnie used the pen-that-writes-on-its-own for was to write a poem for Wilbur.

*The fat cat sat on the mat
He isn't a bat or even a rat
He is Wilbur, my cat
And I love him for that!*





Mini Winnie



'Oh, Wilbur, I'm all of a doo-dah,' said Winnie.

'Mrow?' asked Wilbur.

He was mashing worms, ready for tea.

'Wendy's coming round. I've ripped my dress trying to reach for the best croakery in the top cupboard. I've got nothing smart to wear now, and you know what Wendy's like!'



Winnie pulled all her pockets inside out to reveal a grey bit of slug gum and a couple of cross snails.

'I've not got any money, so I can't buy anything new. And, anyway, look at the clock! There's no time!' Winnie stroked her chin. 'Hmmn,' she said. 'But I have got a lot of old clothes in the attic. They say that fashions come around if you give them time. Come on, Wilbur! Let's see what we can find!'

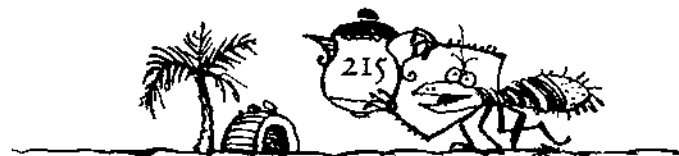
Winnie pushed open the attic trapdoor and pulled down the attic ladder, and up she went. The attic was hot and dark and full of boxes and bags and suitcases. 'You use the torch, Wilbur, and I'll use the jar of glow-worms. See what you can find.'



Wilbur opened drawers and doors while Winnie stuck her bottom in the air and searched in bags and boxes. Soon there were hats and hankies, bats and slippers, books and flippers flying everywhere.

'Aha!' said Winnie, waving something.

'Mreow?'



'Oo, look, Wilbur! The shoes I wore on the day I fell in the duck pond! And the poncho I wore to that witches' disco. And see this? I bought it in a sale at Witch Wardrobe, but I've never worn it. That might do nicely, don't you think?' Winnie thrust a musty dusty fusty old skirt with labels still on it at Wilbur.

Wilbur stepped back.

'Meowatchoo!' he sneezed.

Winnie took a sniff.

'choo!' she went. She gave the skirt a shake and some purple and yellow moths flew out of it.

Wilbur was washing, licking a paw and then wiping the paw over his head.



'Heck, I need a wash too!' said Winnie, brushing cobwebs off her cardigan. Winnie licked her hand, then wiped it over her head, then licked it again.

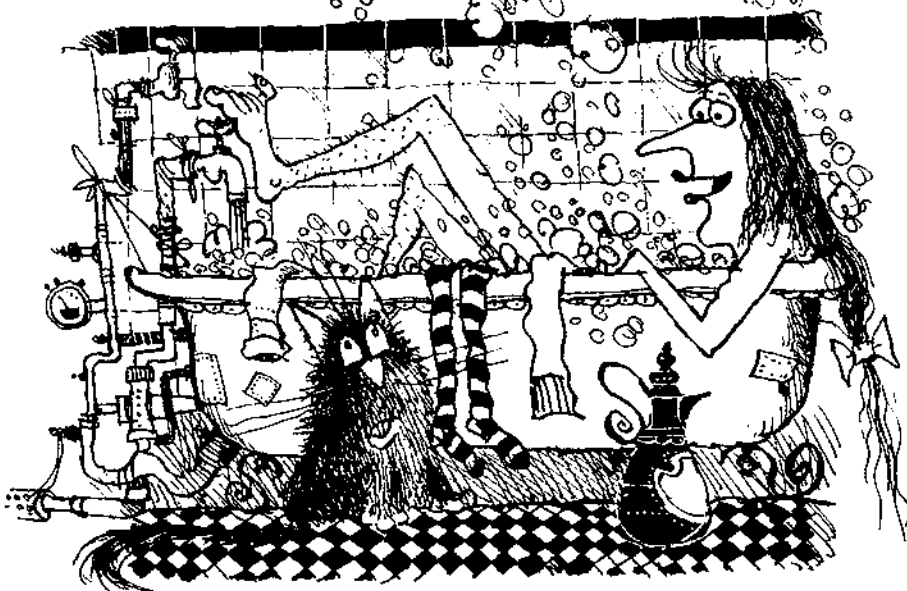


'Yuck!' she said. 'I don't know what cat tastes like, Wilbur, but witch tastes disgusting!' She stuck out her tongue and licked the skirt. 'Euch! All hairy! It's like licking a Highland cow!'



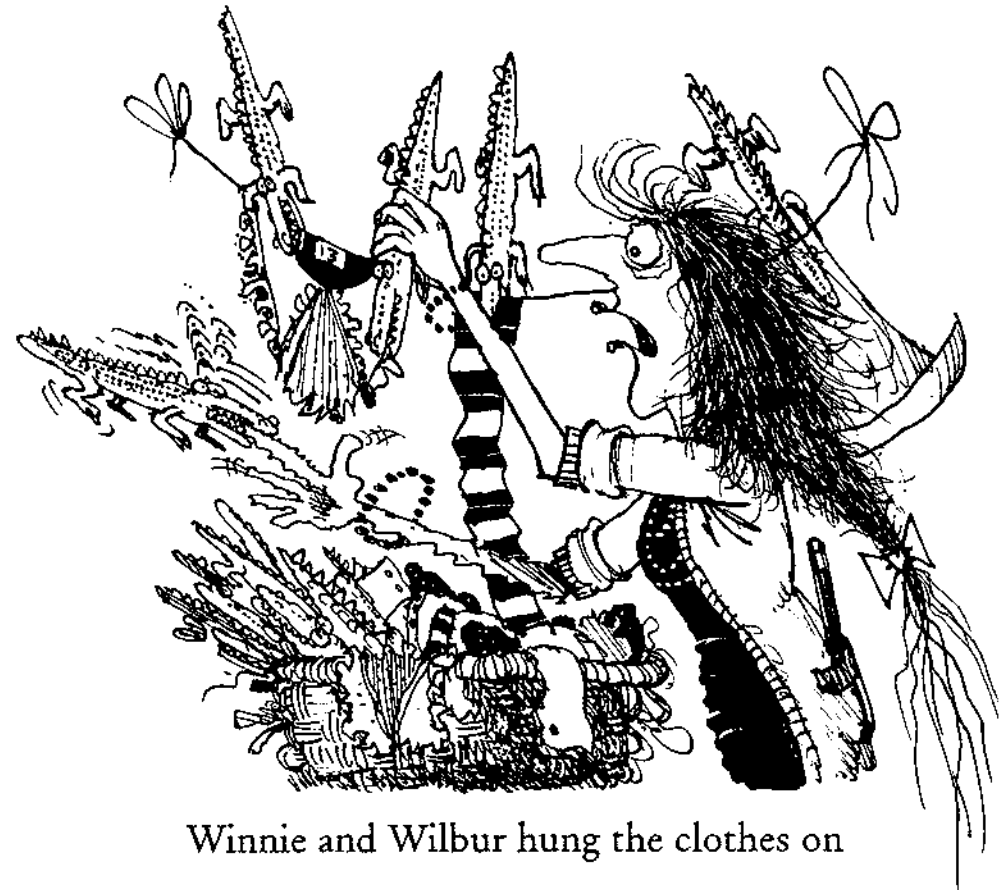
Winnie bundled all the old clothes together. 'They can have a bath with me.'

Winnie ran a bath and tipped in frogspawn bubble bath. She threw in the clothes. Then she got in herself and splashed around.



'Tra la la! Are you coming in too, Wilbur?'

'Mrrow!'



Winnie and Wilbur hung the clothes on the line, clipping them in place with baby alligators.

'Yeeow!' yelled Winnie. 'These pegs bite!'

Then they went inside for a snack of elephants' toenail crisps and eel slime tea.





'How long do clothes take to dry?' asked Winnie.

Wilbur shook his head and pointed out of the window.

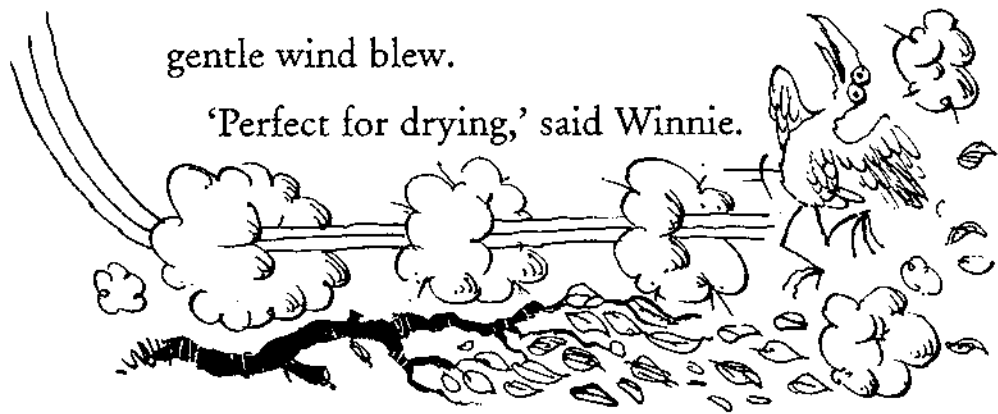
'Oh, cockroach crusts!' said Winnie.
'It's raining!'

Winnie waved her wand angrily at the window.

'Abracadabra!'

Instantly the rain stopped. The grey clouds went. The sun came out and a gentle wind blew.

'Perfect for drying,' said Winnie.



But the wind began to blow harder. It blew so hard the birds couldn't cling to the trees. Winnie's knickers were in knots, her tights in a tangle, her dress in a mess, and her cardigan in a—

'Blooming heck!' said Winnie.

It blew so hard that the big man next door's washing came flying over.

'Cor, look at that!' said Winnie.



But Winnie's washing was escaping too. Wilbur ran outside and tried to catch the vests and socks, the bonnets and skirts.

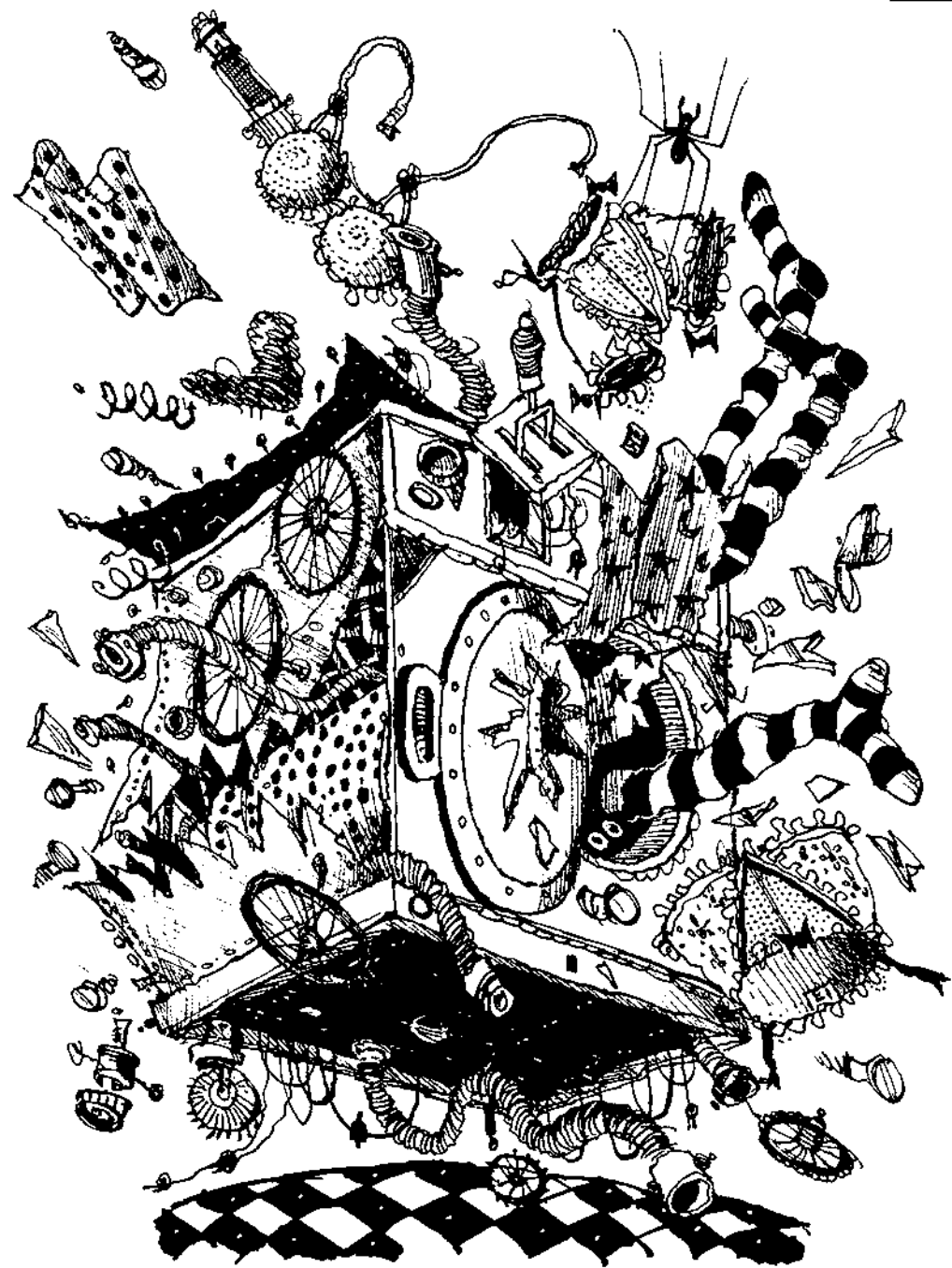
'Abracadabra!' shouted Winnie, waving her wand. The wind stopped, but it was too late. Winnie's washing had fallen, splish-splosh, into muddy puddles.

'Oh, botherarmarations!' said Winnie. *'Put them all in the washing machine, Wilbur.'*

Winnie filled the machine drawer with flea powder.

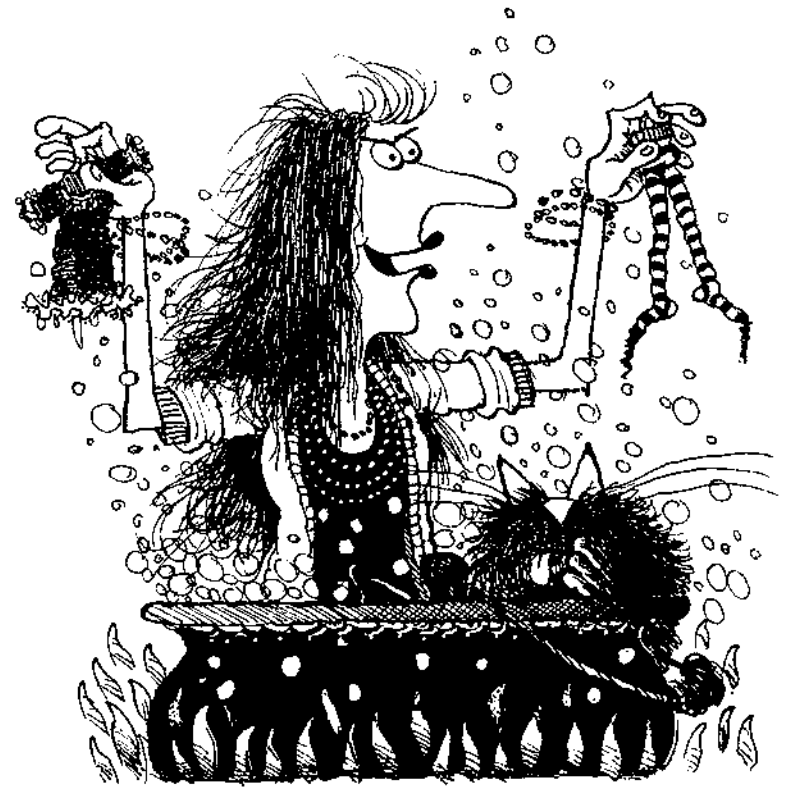
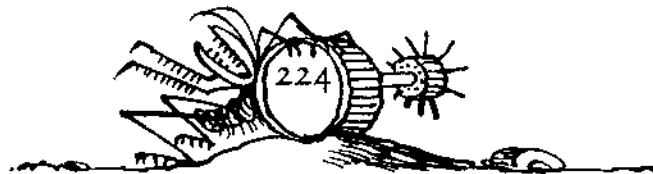
'Stand back!' said Winnie.

She pushed the button and . . . **kerpowowowowow!** The machine coughed and collapsed. It spat out washing and springs and powder all over the place.



'Fleas' flippers! We'll have to do a proper witch wash. Quick!' said Winnie, looking at her watch. 'Where's the big cauldron?'

They put water and powder and the clothes into the cauldron. Wilbur found sticks and Winnie lit a fire. Then they both stirred the pot with old wands. Steam began to rise. The water began to bubble and boil.



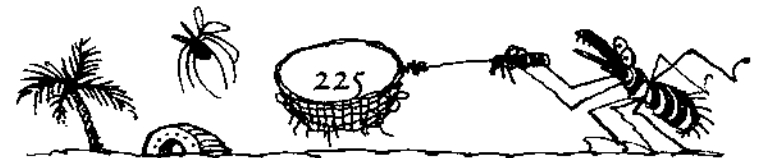
'That'll get them clean,' said Winnie.

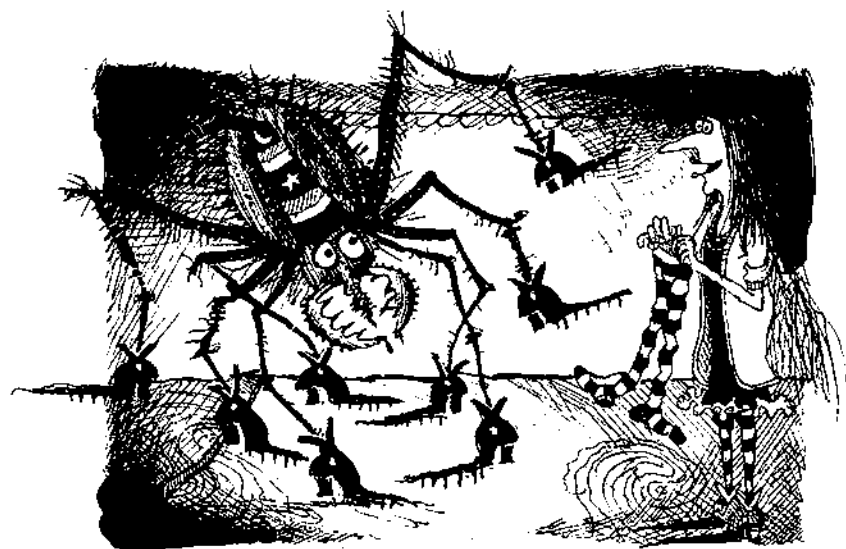
The clothes did get clean, but . . .

'They've shrunk!' wailed Winnie. 'I won't fit in any of them! I'm too blooming big! Pass my wand over, Wilbur.'

Winnie pointed the wand at herself.

'Abracadabra!' she shouted.

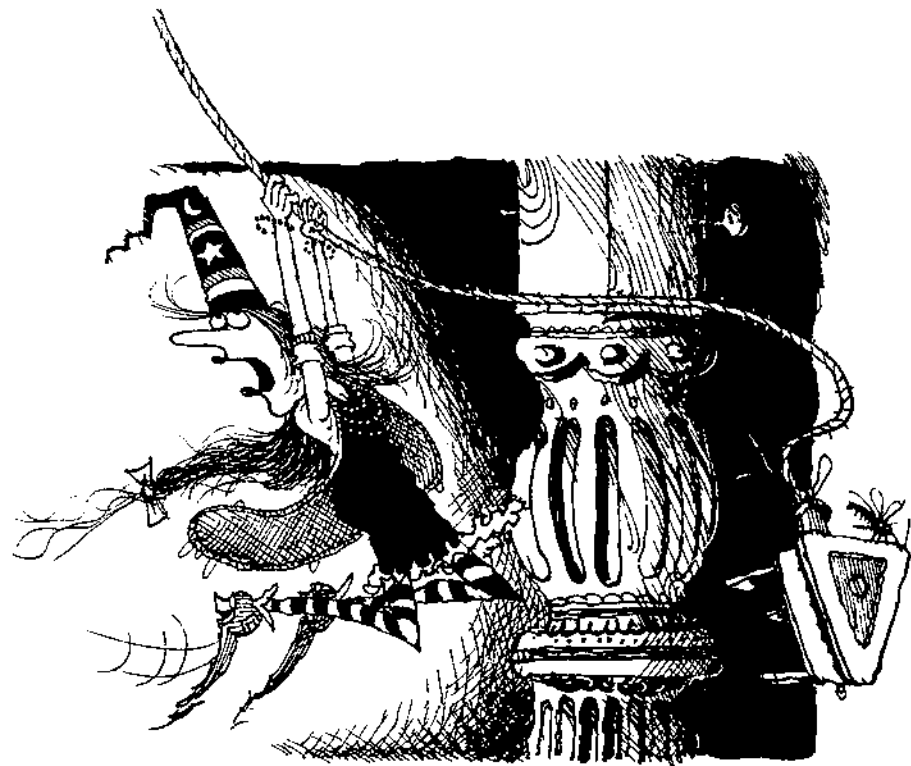




And in an instant there was empty air where Winnie had been the moment before. And there, on the floor, was a mini Winnie, no bigger than a teaspoon with scruffy hair.

'Ooer,' said mini Winnie. 'Aren't spiders BIG! But at least I can wear the clothes now!'

Winnie tried on this . . . and that . . . and those. 'This is the outfit, I think, Wilbur. Look at the clock! I must make the tea.'



But mini Winnie couldn't reach the work surface or the tap or the teapot. She tried climbing up a chair leg. She tried swinging up on the kettle flex.

'Brrriing! Let me in!'

'It's the dooryell!' said mini Winnie. 'Wendy's here! Quick! Where's that wand? *Abacadabra!*'



Instantly Winnie was back to normal size.
And standing in just her undies.

‘Oh, double-heck!’ she shrieked.

‘**Brrriing brrriing!** Let me in!’

‘What shall I do, Wilbur?’ panicked Winnie.

Wilbur handed Winnie the patchwork
tea cosy.

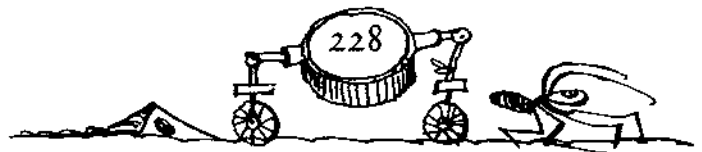
‘It’s too small to cover me!’ said Winnie.

‘And, anyway, which bit of me goes through
which hole?’

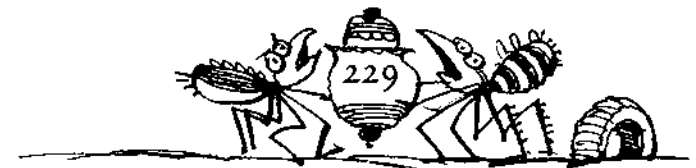
But Wilbur was shaking his head and
pointing.

‘Oh, I see!’ said Winnie. ‘Brillamaroodle
idea, Wilbur!’

Winnie quickly pointed her wand at the
pile of tiny clothes.



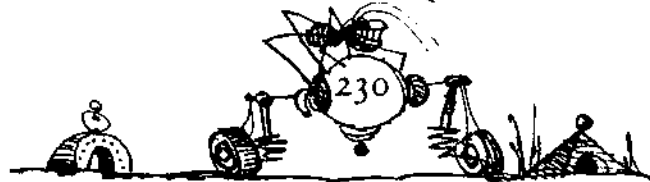
‘**Abacadabra!**’ she shouted, stirring
the clothes together into a sparkling whirl
that settled to reveal one new dress; a
patchwork dress that used all Winnie’s
very favourite old clothes from all time.
‘Oh, I love it!’ said Winnie, slipping the
dress on. ‘A perfect fit!’



'Brrrrriiinggg! Are you deaf, you silly witch?' yelled the dooryell.

'Coming!' said Winnie.

In came Wendy, bursting out of a tight brand-new outfit. 'Do you like it, Win?' she said. 'I bought it this morning from Frights. I suppose you're in your usual . . . oh!'



She stopped still. 'You're wearing something new! Where's it from?'

'From W & W,' said Winnie, doing a twirl. 'Do you like it?'

'Well, it is . . . um . . . unusual,' said Wendy. 'You know, there is something strangely familiar about it.'

'Never mind that,' said Winnie. 'Come and have some pond tea and toasted toadstools.'

And they all had tea together.

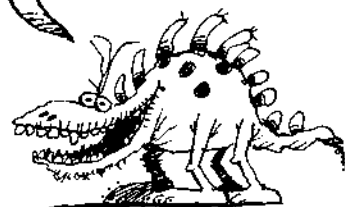


★ Get Cackling! ★

How does an intruder get into Winnie's house?



Intruder windows.



When is it bad luck to have a black cat follow you?



When you're a mouse.



Knock knock.



Who's there?



A man who can't reach the doorbell.



Why did Winnie give up tap dancing?



She kept falling in the sink.



What card game do crocodiles like to play?



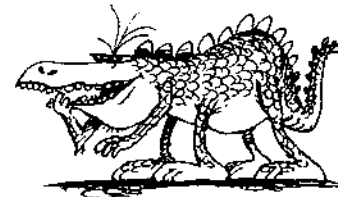
Snap!



Why did Winnie lose her voice?



She had a frog in her throat.



Why do
bees hum?



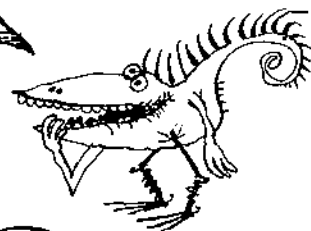
Because they
don't know
the words.



Why does
Winnie ride on
a broom?



Because a
vacuum cleaner
is too noisy.



What do cats eat
for breakfast?



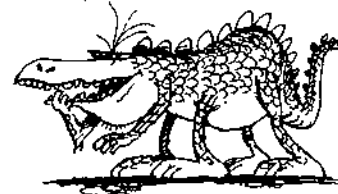
Mice Krispies.



What does an
Australian witch
ride on?



A broomerang.



Why couldn't the
skeleton go the
party?



He had no body
to go with.



What do you call
Winnie when she's
at the seaside?



A sandwich.

