

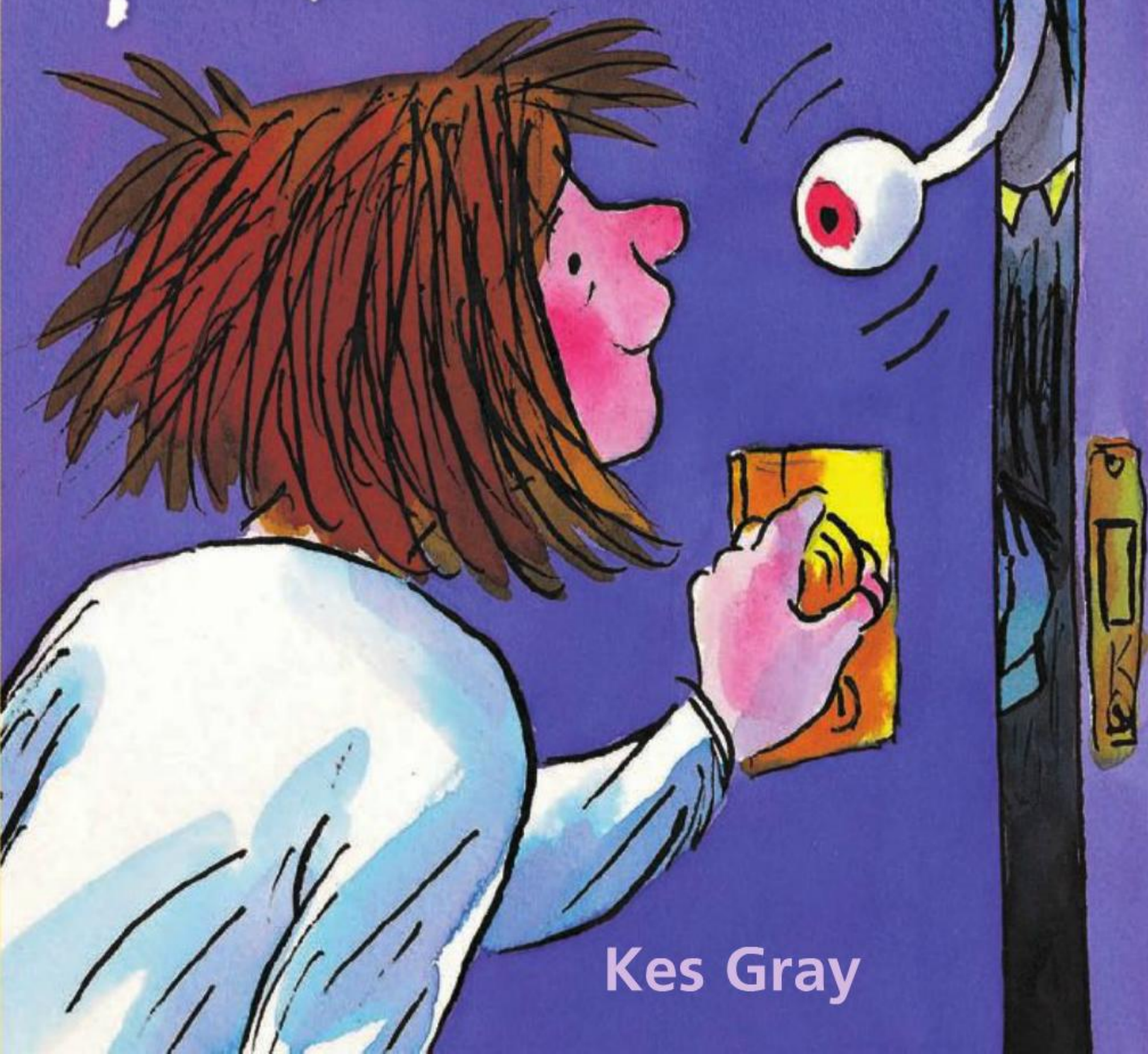


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ALL
STARS

MELLY

The Monster-Sitter



Kes Gray

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Illustrated by
Tony Ross

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To Deb, Al, Ant and Rob

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Chapter 1

Monster-sitting

"Are monsters real?" said Nelly, looking up from her comic.

"Yes," said her dad.

"Well, I've never seen one," said Nelly.

"That's because they never go out," said her dad.

"Why don't monsters ever go out?" asked Nelly.

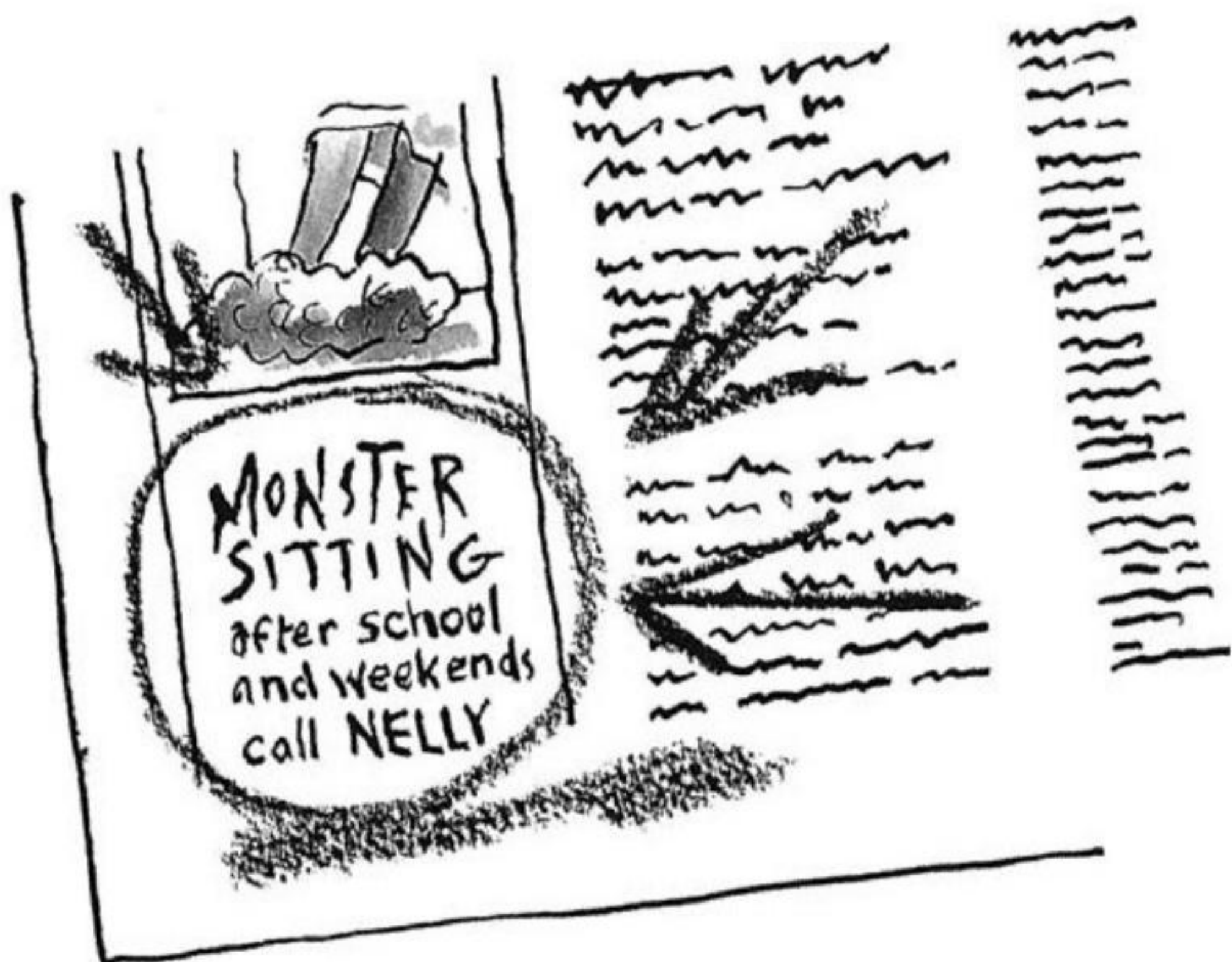
"Because they can never get a baby-sitter," said her dad.

Nelly thought about what her Dad had said. It certainly seemed to make sense. After all, her mum and dad never went out unless they could find a baby-sitter.

"I wouldn't mind being a monster-sitter," thought Nelly.

The next day, Nelly put an ad in the local newspaper.

It read: *Monster-sitting. After school and weekends. Call Nelly.*



That evening, Nelly was eating her tea when the phone rang.

"Hello," said Nelly in a bright and cheerful voice.

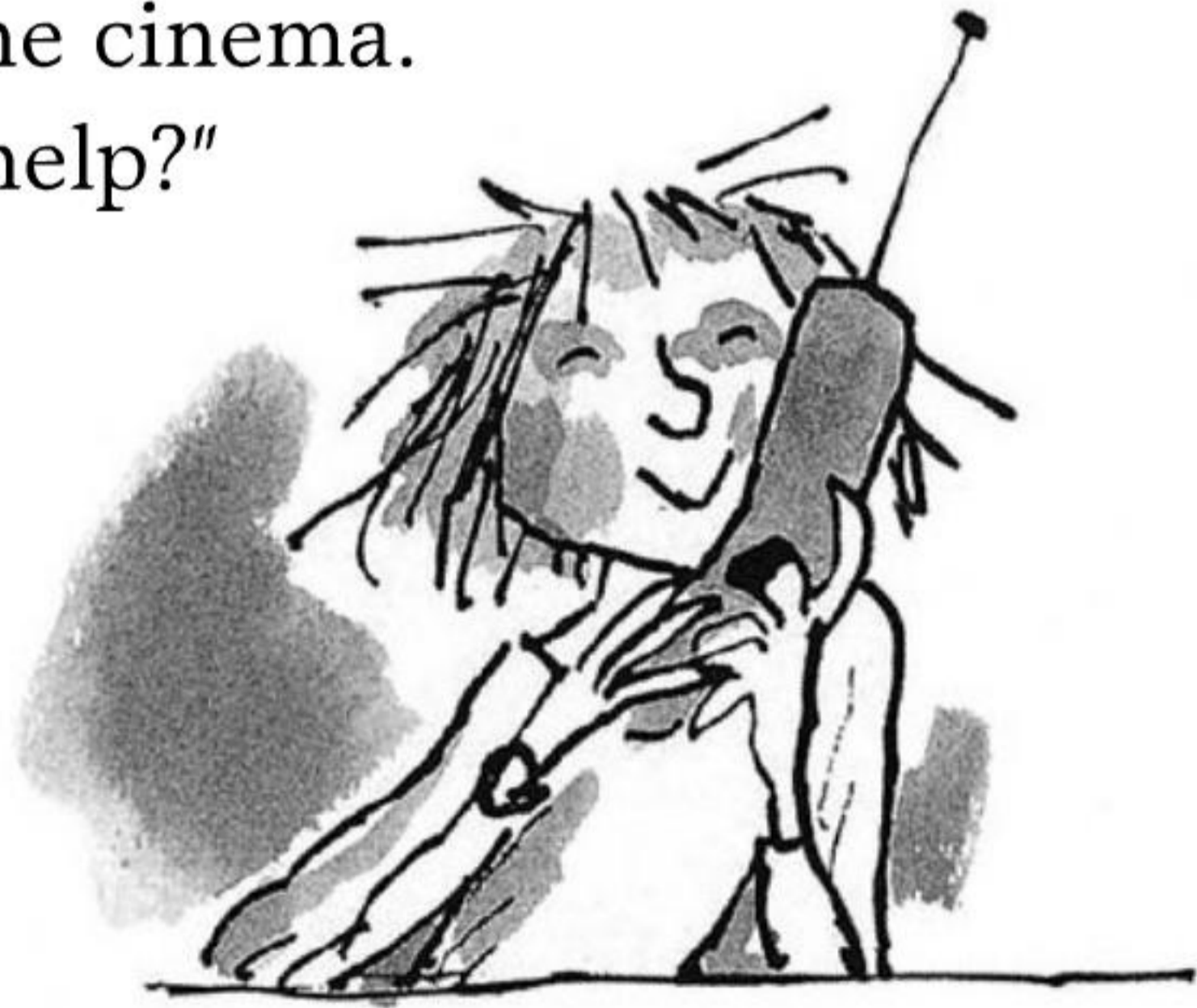


"Hullo," growled a monster in a deep, scary voice. "Can I speak to Nelly the monster-sitter please?"



"That's me!"
said Nelly.

"We were wondering if you might monster-sit for us?" growled the deep, scary voice. My wife and I haven't been out since our lovely, furry baby was born. We'd so like to go to the cinema. Can you help?"



"Of course I can," said Nelly.

"Where do you live?"

"Number 42," said the monster.

"I'll be there in an hour," said Nelly.

At 7 o'clock, Nelly knocked on the door of Number 42.



The door opened with a creak and a big red eye looked out.

"Are you Nelly, the monster-sitter?" asked the deep, scary voice.

"That's me!" said Nelly. "Can I come in?"

"Aren't you frightened?" asked the monster, "I'm pretty scary to look at."



"My dad says it doesn't matter how people look on the outside," said Nelly. "It's the way they are on the inside that counts."

"My name is Grit," said the monster. And this is my wife, Blob." Nelly looked down the hallway. A blue, shaggy monster with green, dangly earrings was approaching.



"Pleased to meet you," said Nelly, shaking Blob's middle paw.

"Come and meet our daughter, Freeb," said Grit, leading Nelly into the lounge.





Chapter 2

A Good Start

Freeb was doing a jigsaw on the carpet.

"She's very hairy, isn't she?" said Nelly.

"Thank you," said Blob proudly.

"We think she's got her dad's eye, too."

Nelly sat down with Freeb and began looking for some edge pieces.

"O.K." said Nelly. "You go and have some fun. Please be back by 9.30."

The two monsters left Nelly with Freeb and came back at nine o'clock with a big tub of popcorn in their paws.

"This is for you, Nelly," said Grit.



"The film was really good," smiled Blob, "We've had a lovely time."

"So have I," said Nelly, kissing Freeb on the forehead.



"If you want to go out again, just ring me," said Nelly, waving goodbye.

The next evening, the phone rang again.

"Hello," said Nelly.

"Hillooo," said a growly, snarly voice. "Are you Nelly, the monster-sitter?"

"That's me!" said Nelly. "Where do you live?"

"Number 76," said the monster.

"I'll be round at 6.30," said Nelly.



At 6.30, Nelly rang the doorbell of Number 76.

The door opened slowly and two large, spiky heads peeped nervously round the door.



"Hello," said Nelly. "I'm Nelly the monster-sitter. Can I come in?"

Green, scaly fingers pulled the door open and Nelly stepped inside.



Chapter 3

Lump, Blotch, and Bog

"I like your two heads," said Nelly with a smile.

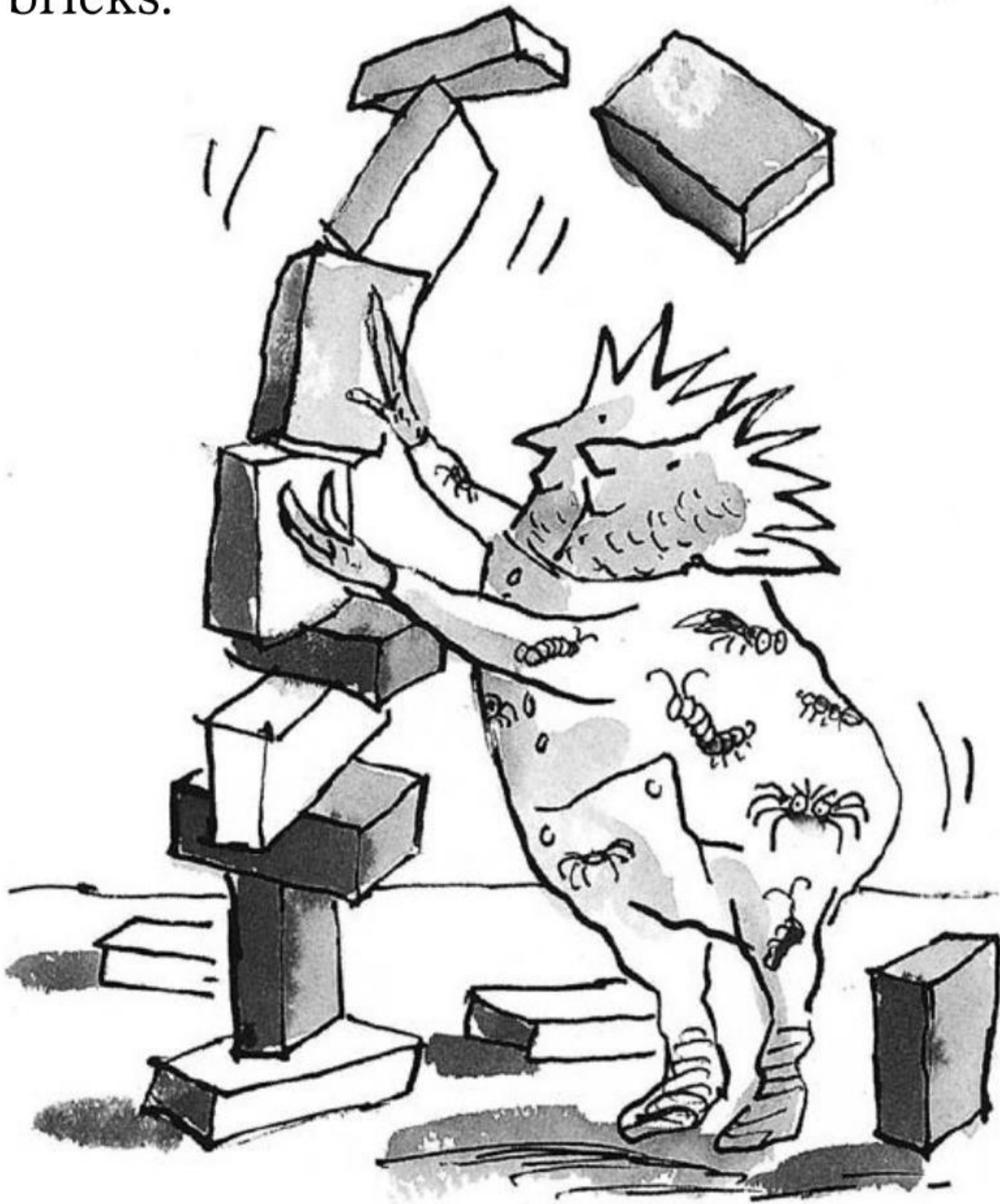
"Really?" said the monster. "We thought you might be frightened."

"Two heads are better than one, my mum always says," smiled Nelly.

The green, scaly, two-headed monster took Nelly inside to meet his yellow, scaly, two-headed wife and pink, scaly, two-headed daughter.



"Her name is Lump," said the green, scaly monster. "She loves building with play bricks."



"I'll see what we can build together, then!" chuckled Nelly.

The two monsters left Nelly with Lump and went to have some fun.

"Be back by 8.30," said Nelly.

At 8.15, the two monsters returned with a big stick of pink candyfloss in their hands.



"This is for you," said Lump's mum.
"We've been to the fair. We've had a super time."

"I've had a super time too," said Nelly, kissing Lump on both foreheads.

The next evening, Nelly's phone rang again.

"Hello," said Nelly.

"Hellope," said a sucking, thwucking voice.



"Can you monster-sit for us, too, please?" said the monster from Number 93.

"I'd love to!" said Nelly. "I'll be round at 7.15."

At 7.15 Nelly knocked on the door of Number 93. The door opened and a purple, rubbery head poked out.



"Are you Nelly the monster-sitter?" asked the monster with a suckery thwuck.

"That's me!" said Nelly. "Can I come in?"

The purple, rubbery monster
opened the door and Nelly
went inside to meet her purple,
thwuckery husband.



They had thwuckery, suckery twins.
"How can you tell the difference?"
asked Nelly.

"Blotch has a tiny, orange birth mark behind her fourth ear," said the monster mum lovingly. "And if you look closely, Bog's fourth eye is slightly greener."



"I'll remember that!" said Nelly. "You go and have fun. Be back by nine o'clock."

Just before nine o'clock, the monsters arrived home with a napkin full of mints.

"These are for you, Nelly. We've been out for a meal and we've had a lovely time."



"So have we, haven't we, girls!" said Nelly.

Blotch and Bog gave Nelly a monster hug and Nelly waved goodbye.



Chapter 4

A Monster Problem

The next day, Nelly had her own phone plugged into her bedroom.

All the monsters in the neighbourhood had heard about Nelly.

Nelly the monster-sitter was very much in demand.

On Monday,
she sang
songs to
Curdle,
the prickly
baby monster
at Number 16.



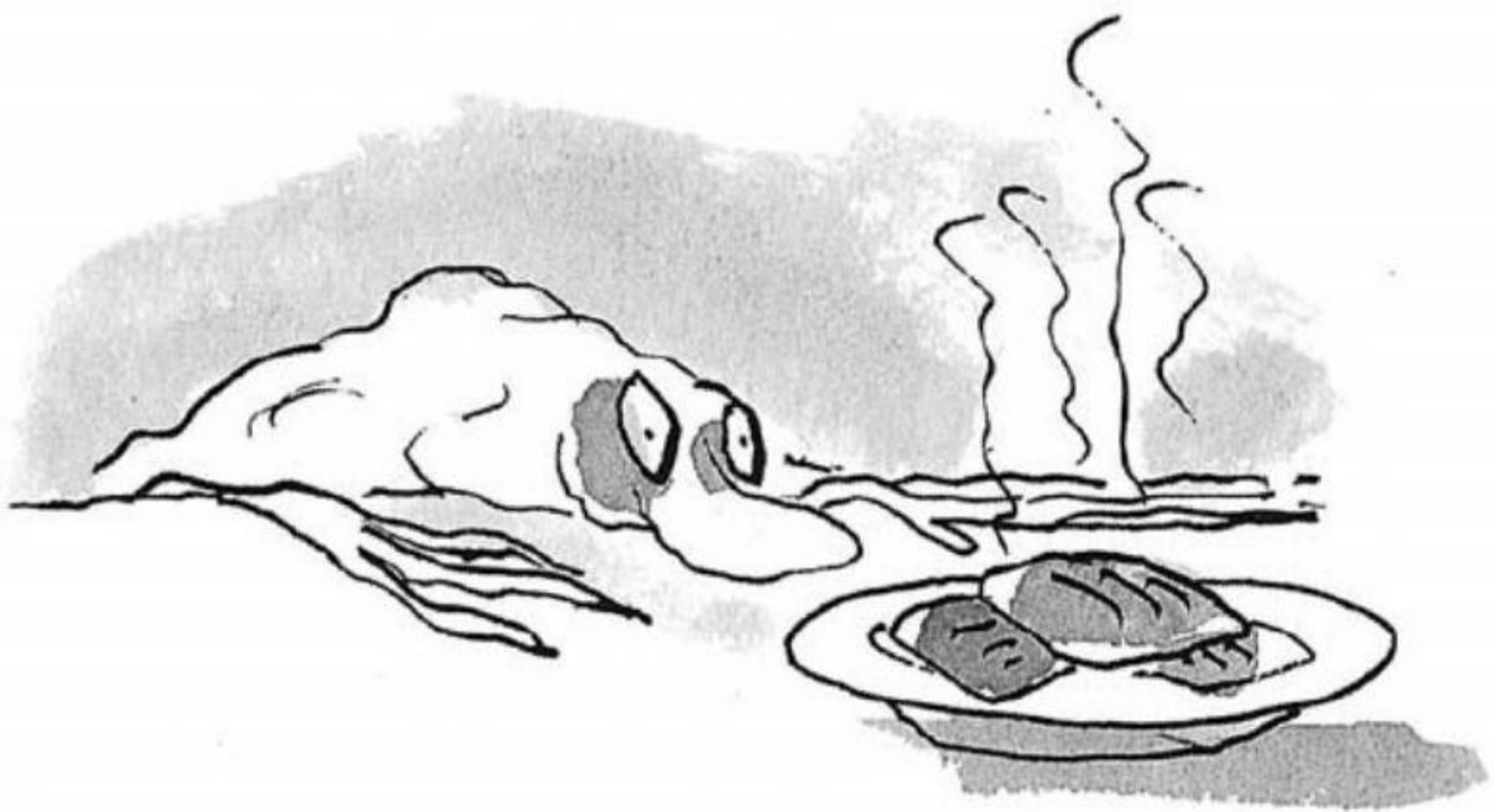
On Tuesday, she played hide-and-
seek with Gunk, the slimy little
monster at Number 7.



On Wednesday, she did some colouring with Grimp the half-hairy, half-feathery monster at Number 81.



On Thursday, she made muffins for Sludge, the slithery little monster at Number 38.



And on Friday, Nelly monster-sat
the Squidlets at Number 2.



"I like being a monster-sitter,"
thought Nelly, happily.

It was Saturday evening at 5.45 when Nelly's phone rang again.

"Hello," said Nelly.



"Hello," said a faint and whispery voice. "Are you Nelly the monster-sitter?"

"That's me!" said Nelly.

"Could you please, please, please monster-sit for us this evening?"

"We'd so, so, so like to go out and have some fun," croaked the voice.

"Of course I will. Where do you live?" said Nelly.

"Number 28," said the voice.

"I'll be round as soon as possible," said Nelly.



At 6.30, Nelly walked up the garden path of Number 28.

She pressed the doorbell. "I had no idea so many monsters lived in the street!" she smiled.

It was some minutes before Nelly heard footsteps shuffling towards the door.



The door handle turned and the door opened slowly. Two bloodshot eyes peered round the door at Nelly.

"Are you Nelly the monster-sitter?"
said the voice.

"That's me!" smiled Nelly. "Can
I come in?"



The door opened wide to reveal
two, stooping, drooping figures.

They had two arms, two legs and
one head each, just like Nelly's mum
and dad.

In fact they didn't look like
monsters at all.

Slowly and wearily they turned and shuffled down the hallway.

"My name is Paul," whispered the man.

"My name is Caroline," groaned the woman.



Nelly followed them to the doorway of the lounge, where Paul lifted his arm weakly and pointed.

"And this is Rowan."

Nelly stepped into the lounge and saw a little boy. He was standing on the table with a play brick in his hand.



He looked at Nelly with wild eyes, growled like a lion and threw the play brick at her with a roar.

Nelly ducked as the play brick flew over her head and into the hallway.

"That's not all he does," groaned Paul. "He screams, shouts, bites, kicks, scratches and punches."



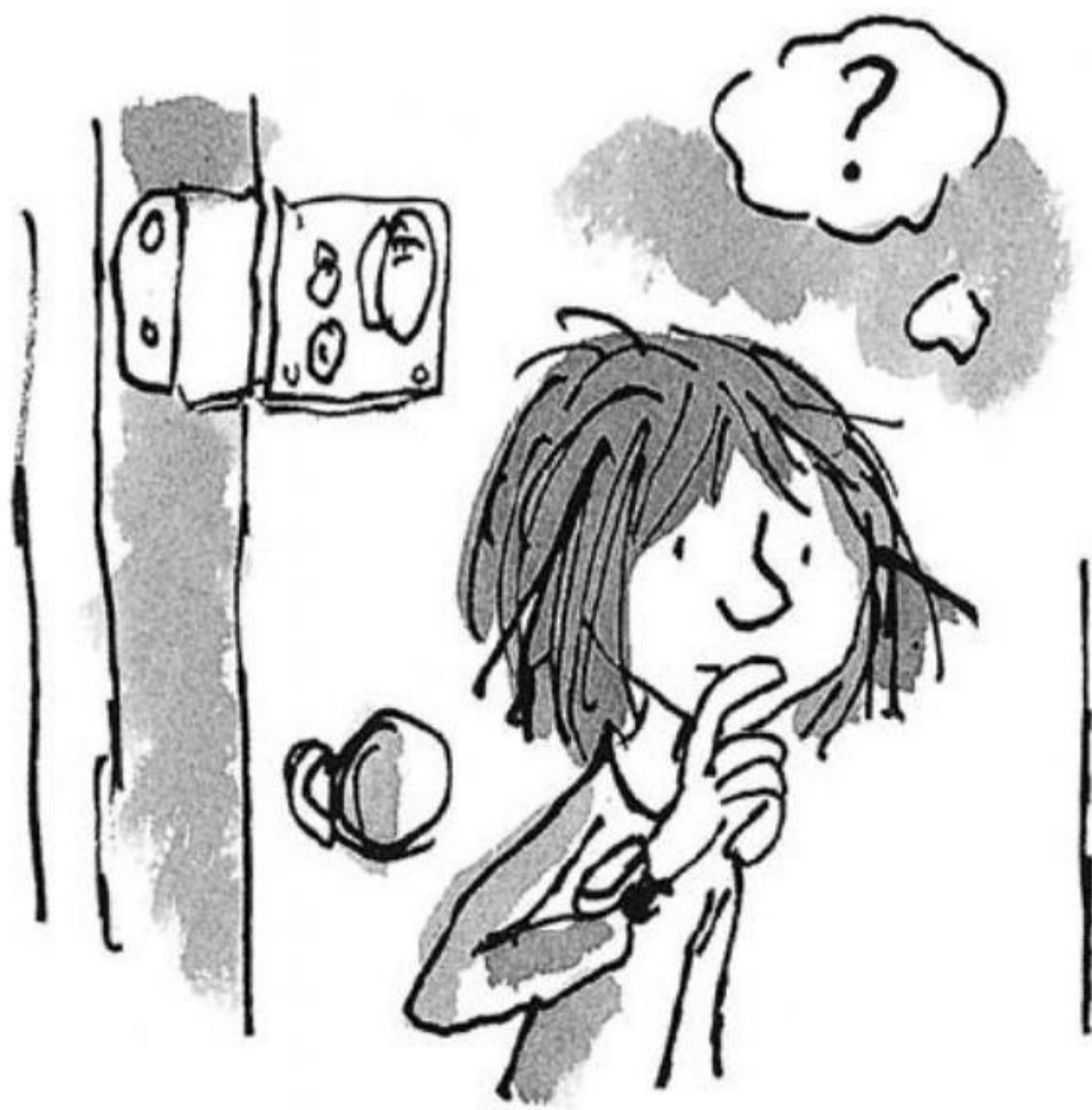
"The only thing he doesn't do," said Caroline, "is sleep."

"Mmmm," smiled Nelly. "You go and have a lovely time, I'll be fine with Rowan."

"Are you sure?" said Rowan's mum and dad.

"I'm sure," smiled Nelly. "Can you be back by nine o'clock?"

Nelly watched Rowan's mum and dad leave the house. When they had turned the corner at the end of the street, she closed the door.



She scratched her head for a moment and frowned. She had never baby-sat a monster like Rowan before.

She thought really hard. She scratched her head three more times.

Then she made a few phone calls on her mobile.



She was just sweeping up a vase that Rowan had thrown at the wall when the doorbell rang.

Nelly answered the door.

"Hullo, Hillooo, Hellope,
Hollollolloo, Nelly," said the monsters.
"How can we help?"





Chapter 5

Monsters to the Rescue

Nelly took the monsters into the lounge to meet Rowan.

When Rowan saw them he picked up a toy car to throw at them.

"I can throw bigger things than you," said Freeb, picking up the armchair with one hand. "But I much prefer to do jigsaws."

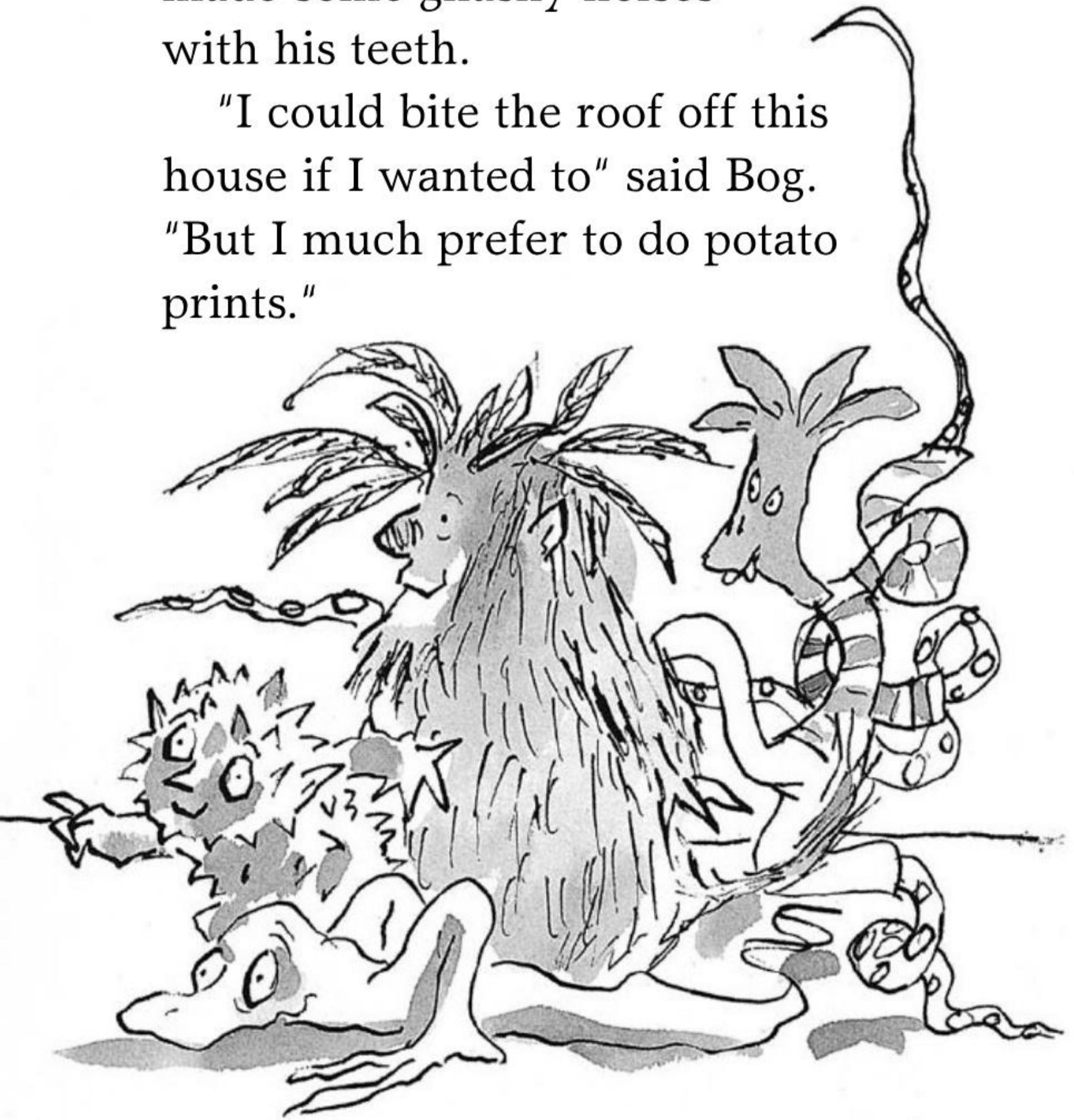
Rowan put the toy car down
and growled.



"I can growl twice as loud as you,"
said both of Lump's heads. "But I
much prefer to play with bricks."

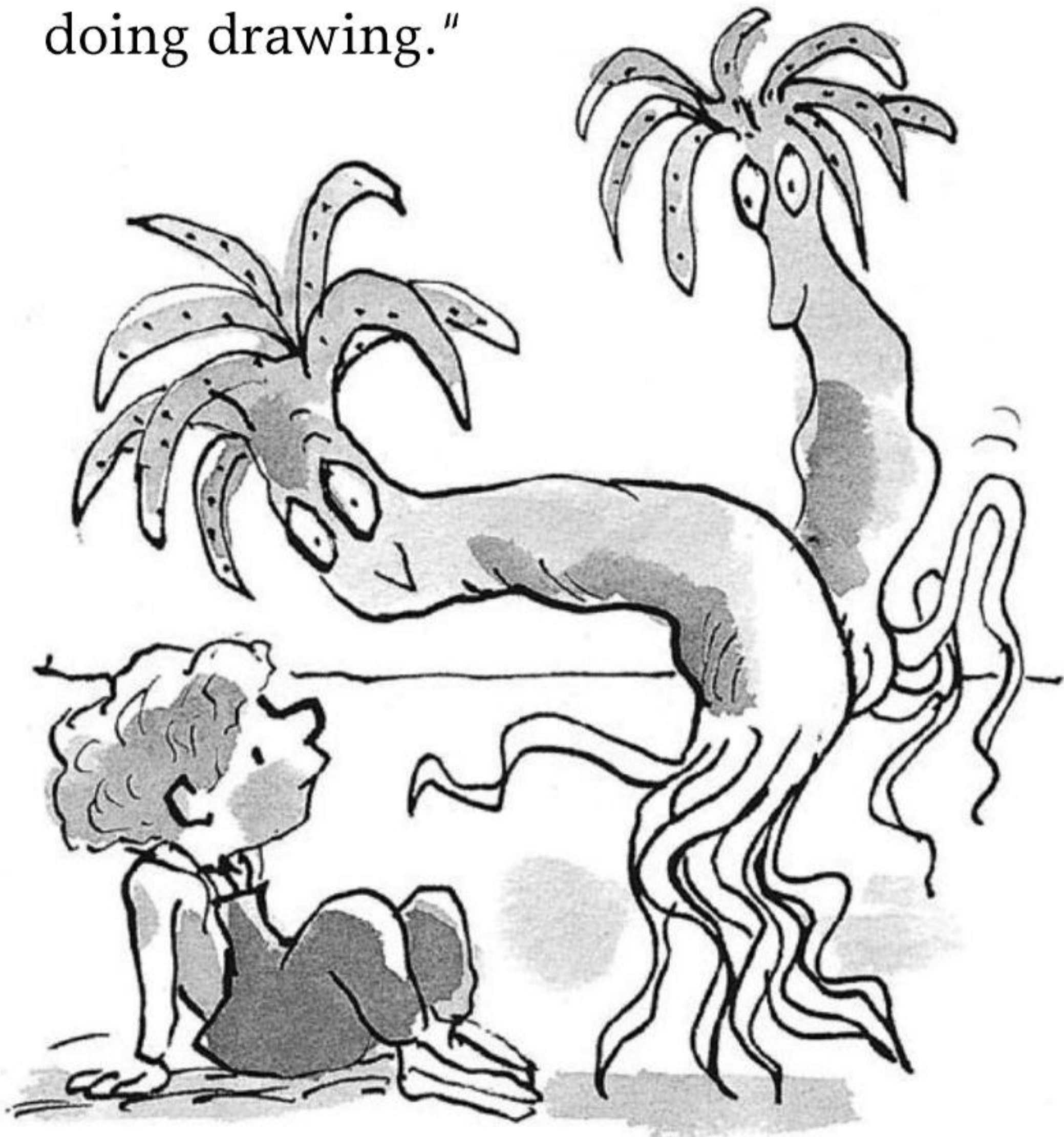
Rowan stopped growling and made some gnashy noises with his teeth.

"I could bite the roof off this house if I wanted to" said Bog. "But I much prefer to do potato prints."



Rowan stopped gnashing and kicked out with his foot.

"We can kick, big time," said the Squidlets, lifting up their seven legs, "but we much prefer doing drawing."



Rowan stopped kicking and sat quietly down on the carpet.
Nelly smiled and went to get some gel pens.

At 8.30, Rowan's mum and dad returned home.

"These are for you," said Rowan's mum, handing Nelly a big packet of plasters and some bandages.



"I don't need those," said Nelly with a smile. "Have you had a lovely time?"

"We've had a lovely, lovely, lovely time. We went to the library and sat in wonderful, wonderful, wonderful peace and quiet."

"We've had a lovely, lovely, lovely time too," said Nelly, taking Paul and Caroline by the hand. She led them into the lounge.

Paul and Caroline looked at Rowan in amazement. He was sitting on the carpet doing a jigsaw.



When he saw his mum and dad he jumped up, ran to them with a smile and gave them a great big kiss and a giant hug.

"Rowan!" said Caroline "you're not a monster any more!"

"Nelly!" said Paul, "You're a miracle-worker, you're a marvel, you're an angel. You're the best monster-sitter in the world!"

Nelly smiled and blew them a monster kiss from the door.



"That's me!"

About the author

Is there a freckle on the back of your head? Are there faeries at the bottom of your garden? Are there gnomes living under your carpet? Are there goblins in your sock drawer? Are there monsters living in your street?

Just because you haven't seen them doesn't mean that they're not there.



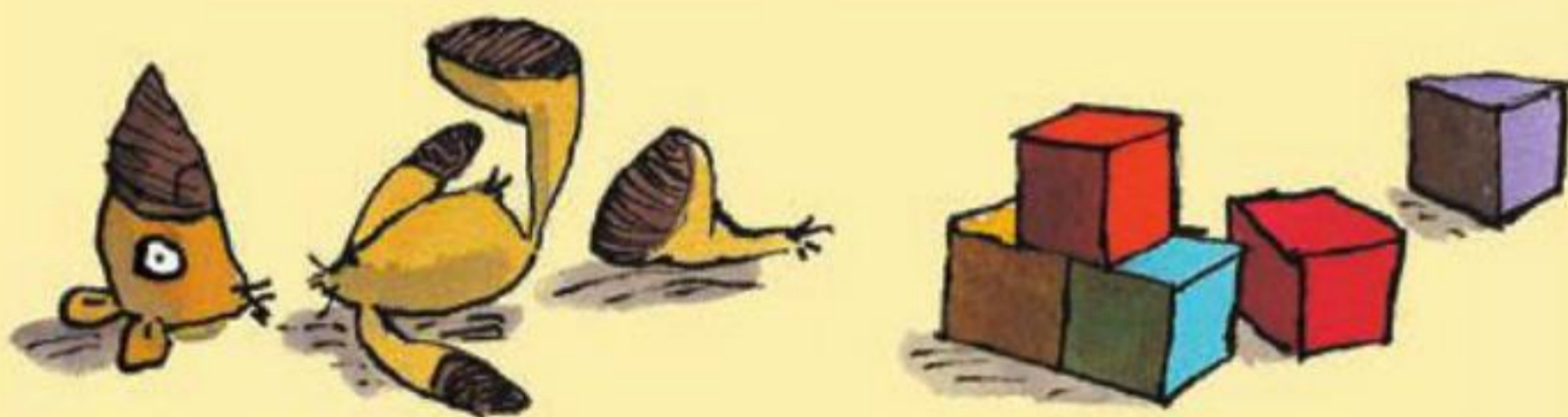


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NELLY

The Monster-Sitter



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“Why don’t monsters ever go out?” asks Nelly.

“Because they can never get a baby-sitter,”
says her dad.

Nelly decides that she would like to be a
Monster-sitter. But how will she handle the
monster of all monsters?

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