

Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Dato' Razali Ismail

LGA3103 Stories for Young Learners

APPENDIX



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Semester 2, 2013

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Appendix – Stories and Samples







The appendix contains scans of a variety of books and/or stories. These can be used as examples for considering various aspects of the course so that no student has the excuse that they lack the opportunity to look at examples.



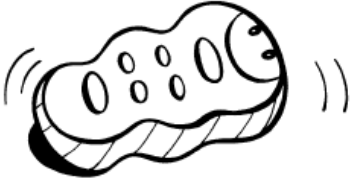

To find more examples the students could:

- Search on the Internet using the names of authors seen here, as well as authors mentioned in other parts of the module.
- Go to the library – there is a room full of books to look through there.
- Search for children's books in a particular genre, or for a particular age-group.
- Look in the primary school library.
- Flip through some books in a book shop, and then follow up by searching for those titles or authors.

Appendix 1: The School Lunch Room

This is a printable story available from www.learningpage.com

 <p>Tommy Tales are downloadable and printable books only available on the Internet from the following Web sites: www.learningpage.com www.readinga-z.com</p> <p>Tommy Tales feature the lovable rascal Tommy Tomkins and his friends.</p> <p>You can see this book in color on the Learning Page Web site.</p> <p>Supporting material is available on the Learning Page Web site, including teaching notes, worksheets, and fact files.</p> <p>Look for the next Tommy Tales adventure—coming soon from Learning Page.</p>  <p>© 2000 Learningpage.com, Inc. www.learningpage.com</p>	<p>BOOK 1</p>  <p>The School Lunch Room</p>  <p>Tommy Tales</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Thomas A. Tomkins is in third grade. His friends call him Tommy. Tommy has a dog. His name is Taffy. Taffy finds things and brings them to Tommy.</p> <p>Taffy found a hat and gave it to Tommy. Taffy found a box and gave it to Tommy. Taffy found a ball and gave it to Tommy.</p> 	<p>3</p> <p>One day, Tommy was playing with his friend Lucy. Taffy ran to them. He had found a TV remote control. It was not an ordinary remote control. It was purple with red stripes.</p> <p>“Where did you find this clicker?” asked Tommy. Taffy just wagged his tail. Tommy took the clicker and started playing with the buttons.</p> 

<p>4</p> <p>Suddenly, the clicker made a loud screeching noise. There was a flash of blue light and thick smoke. When the smoke cleared, Lucy and Taffy were gone!</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Tommy was very surprised. He stood still for a moment with his mouth open.</p> <p>He blinked his eyes and shouted,</p> <p>“Where are you, Lucy?”</p> <p>“Come here, Taffy!”</p>  <p>He looked for them behind the bushes. He looked for them under the bench. He looked for them on top of the wall. He could not find them anywhere.</p>
<p>6</p> <p>“I think I made them disappear with the clicker,” he said to himself. He tried pressing the buttons on the clicker to get his friends back. Nothing happened.</p> <p>“Perhaps the batteries are dead,” he thought.</p>  <p>But there was no place for batteries. He studied the numbers and words on the buttons of the clicker. One read “forward.” He pressed it. Nothing happened. Another read “back.” He pressed it. Nothing happened.</p> <p>“Perhaps I should point the clicker at myself and press,” he thought.</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>He turned the clicker around and pressed “replay.” Suddenly, the clicker made a loud screeching noise.</p> <p>There was a flash of blue light and thick smoke. He felt himself leave the ground. He turned upside down.</p>

8

Everything went black. Tommy fell to the ground with a bump.

He slowly opened his eyes. He looked around. He saw Lucy smiling at him.

He heard Taffy barking at him.

"Where am I?" asked Tommy.



9

"We're in the school lunch room," answered Lucy. "But I don't know how we got here," she said.

Tommy told her that the magic clicker sent them there. "We shouldn't be here on a Saturday," said Tommy. "We'll be in big trouble if someone finds us."

They looked for a way to get out. They tried the doors. They were locked. They tried the windows. They were locked, too.

"What can we do?" cried Lucy. "We can't stay here until Monday."



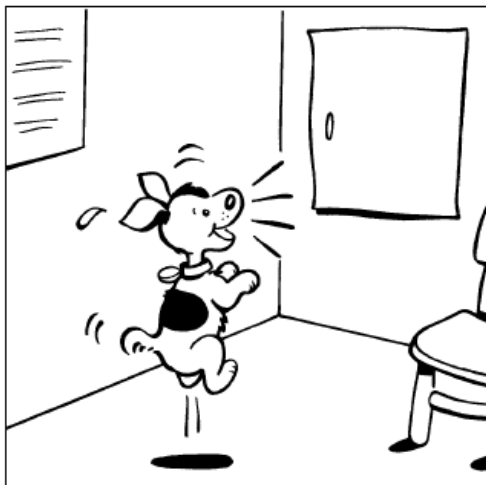
10

"We will not be hungry," said Tommy.

"We're in the lunch room. There must be lots of food here."

Taffy started barking loudly. He found a little door in the corner of the room.

"It's not locked," said Tommy. He opened the door.



11

They looked in, but it was as dark as night.

"Shall we try crawling in there?" asked Lucy.

Tommy picked up Taffy. "Let's go," he yelled. "It's the only way to get out of here."



12

Tommy and Taffy went through the door. They squeezed in. Lucy followed closely behind.

Suddenly, they were sliding down. It was like going down the playground slide, but faster.



13

At last, they reached the bottom. They landed in something soft and squishy. It was also stinky and smelly.

They looked around. They were in a big garbage bin. They were sitting in piles of smelly old food.

"Yuck, this is horrible. Let's get out of here," shouted Lucy.



14

They jumped out of the garbage bin and ran out of the school gates. After five minutes, they stopped to catch their breath.

"What are you going to do with the magic clicker? I think it makes trouble," said Lucy.

"I don't know," said Tommy.

They decided to ask their best friends. They would tell them about the clicker the next day, at the park.



15

"I'll show Andy and Kim what the clicker can do. I may even send them to the school lunch room," laughed Tommy.

They said "Good-bye" and both ran home.

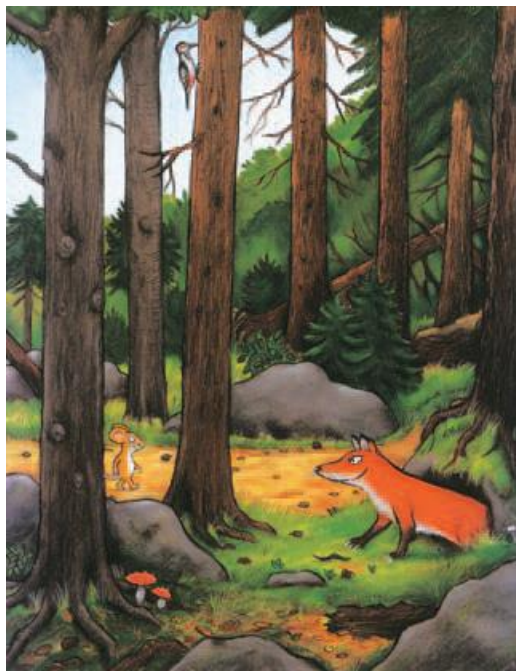
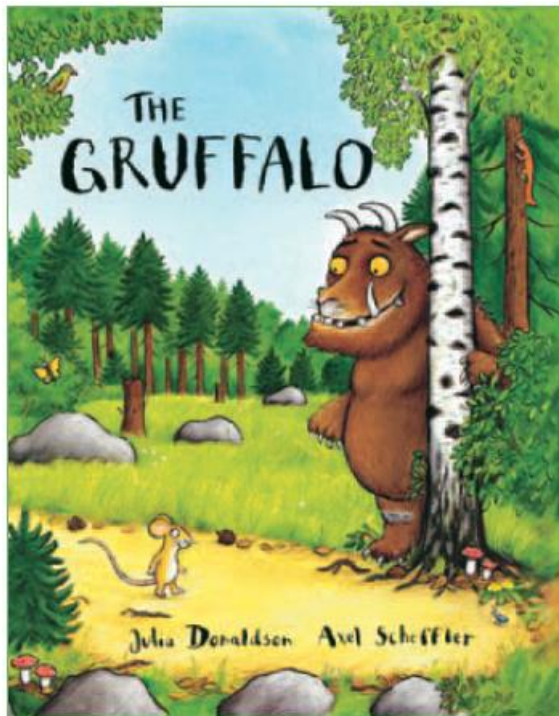
"What will I tell Mom about my stinky clothes?" he thought.

As he ran, he safely hid the magic clicker in his pocket.



Appendix: 2. The Gruffalo

This is an excerpt from the famous book by Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Alex Scheffler.



A mouse took a stroll through the deep dark wood.
A fox saw the mouse and the mouse looked good.
*“Where are you going to, little brown mouse?
Come and have lunch in my underground house.”*
“It’s terribly kind of you, Fox, but no –
I’m going to have lunch with a gruffalo.”



“A gruffalo? What’s a gruffalo?”
“A gruffalo! Why, didn’t you know?”



“He has terrible
tusks,



and terrible claws,



And terrible teeth
in his terrible
jaws.”

“Where are you meeting him?”



“Here, by these rocks,
And his favourite food is roasted fox.”

“Roasted fox! I’m off!” Fox said.
“Goodbye, little mouse,” and away he sped.



“Silly old Fox! Doesn’t he know,
There’s no such thing as a gruffalo?”

...

(This is only the first part of the story)



(Wilson, 2006)

Appendix: 3. Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf

This is from Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes*. (Wilson, 2006)

Revolting Rhymes

Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf

As soon as Wolf began to feel
That he would like a decent meal,
He went and knocked on Grandma's door.
When Grandma opened it, she saw
The sharp white teeth, the horrid grin,
And Wolfie said, 'May I come in?'
Poor Grandmamma was terrified,
'He's going to eat me up!' she cried.
And she was absolutely right.
He ate her up in one big bite.
But Grandmamma was small and tough,
And Wolfie wailed, 'That's not enough!
'I haven't yet begun to feel
'That I have had a decent meal!'
He ran around the kitchen yelping,
'I've got to have a second helping!'

Then added with a frightful leer,
'I'm therefore going to wait right here
'Till Little Miss Red Riding Hood
'Comes home from walking in the wood.'
He quickly put on Grandma's clothes,
(Of course he hadn't eaten those.)



He dressed himself
in coat and hat.
He put on shoes and
after that
He even brushed
and curled his hair,
Then sat himself in
Grandma's chair.
In came the little girl
in red.

She stopped. She stared. And then she said,
'What great big ears you have, Grandma.'
'All the better to hear you with,' the Wolf
replied.
'What great big eyes you have, Grandma,'
said Little Red Riding Hood.
'All the better to see you with,' the Wolf
replied.
He sat there watching her and smiled.
He thought, I'm going to eat this child.

Revolting Rhymes



Compared with her old Grandmamma
She's going to taste like caviare.

Then Little Red Riding Hood said, 'But
Grandma, What a lovely great big
furry coat you have on.'

'That's wrong!' cried Wolf.
'Have you forgot

'To tell me what **BIG TEETH**
I've got?

'Ah well, no matter what you say,

'I'm going to eat you anyway.'

The small girl smiles. One eyelid flickers.

She whips a pistol from her knickers.

She aims it at the creature's head

And bang bang bang, she shoots him dead.

A few weeks later in the wood,

I came across Miss Riding Hood.

But what a change! No cloak of red,

No silly hood
upon her head.

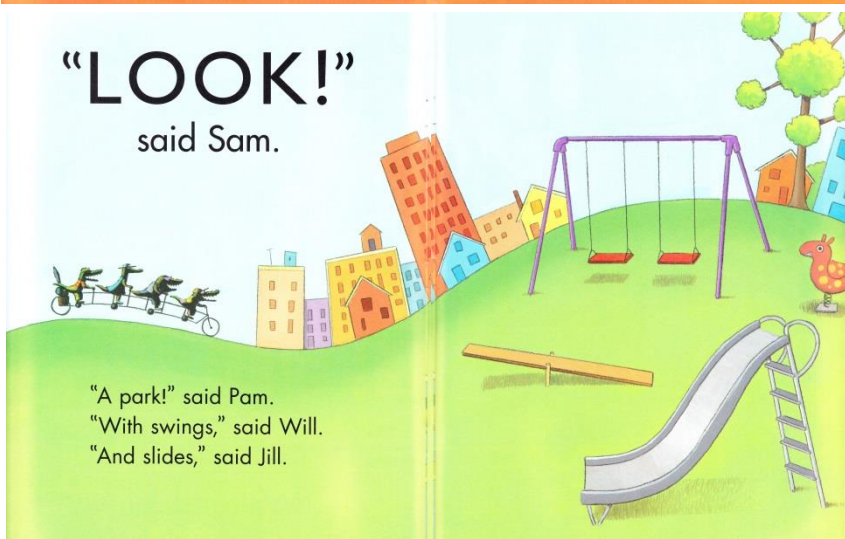
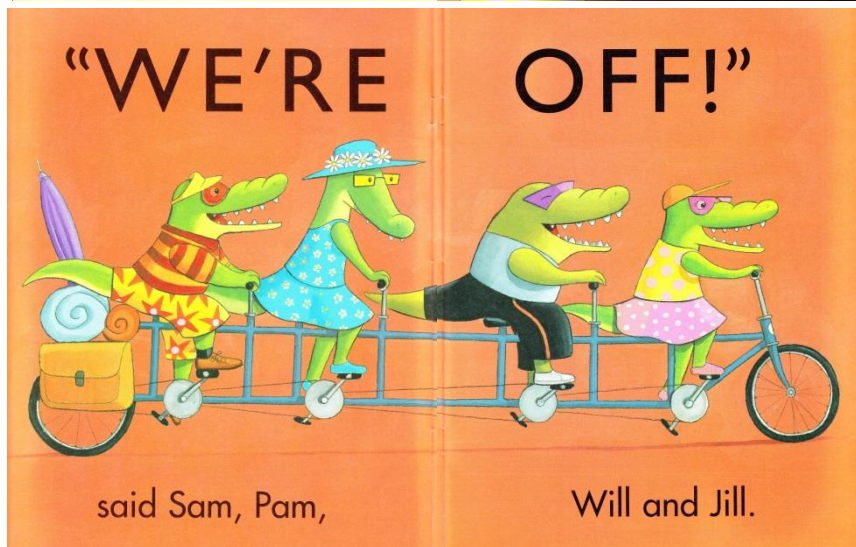
She said, 'Hello, and
do please note

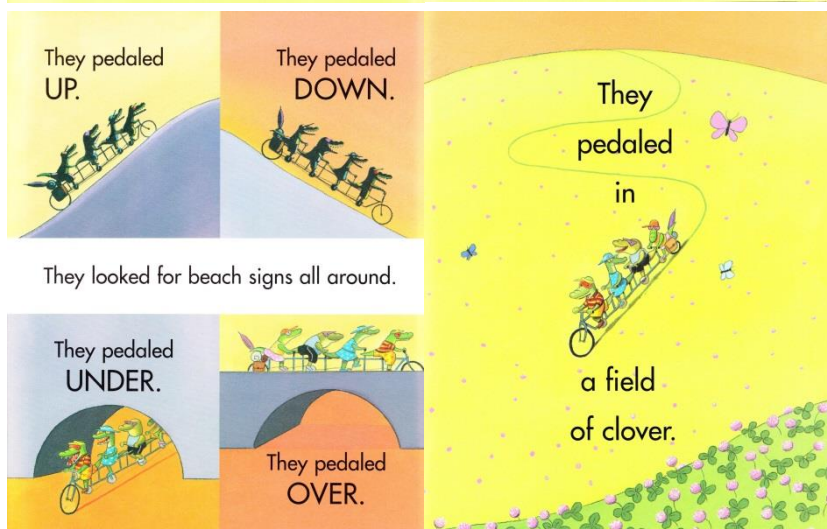
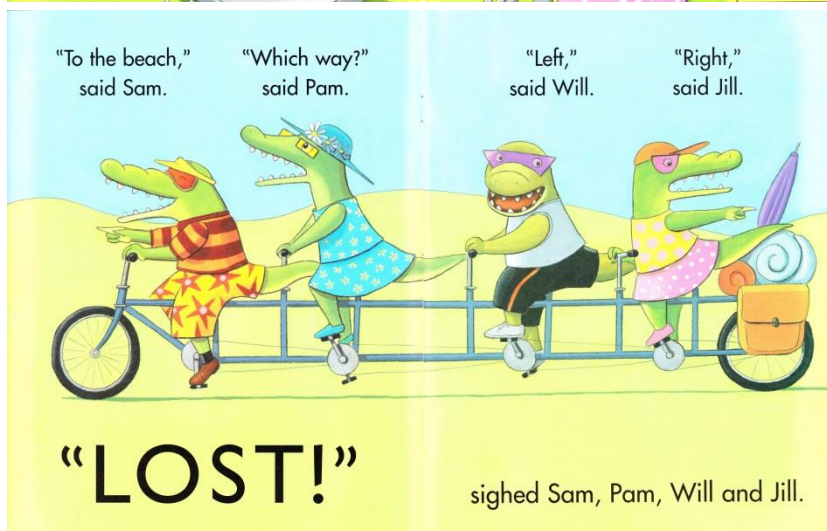
'My lovely furry
**WOLFSKIN
COAT!**



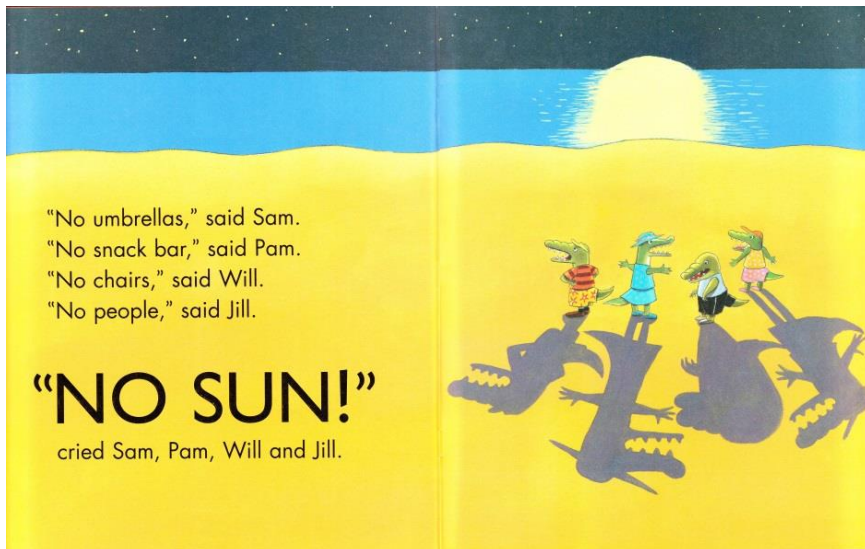
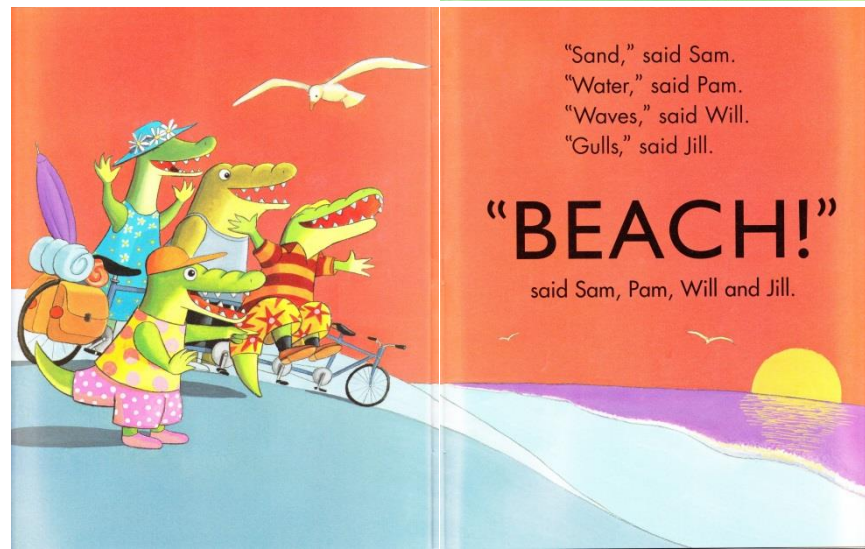
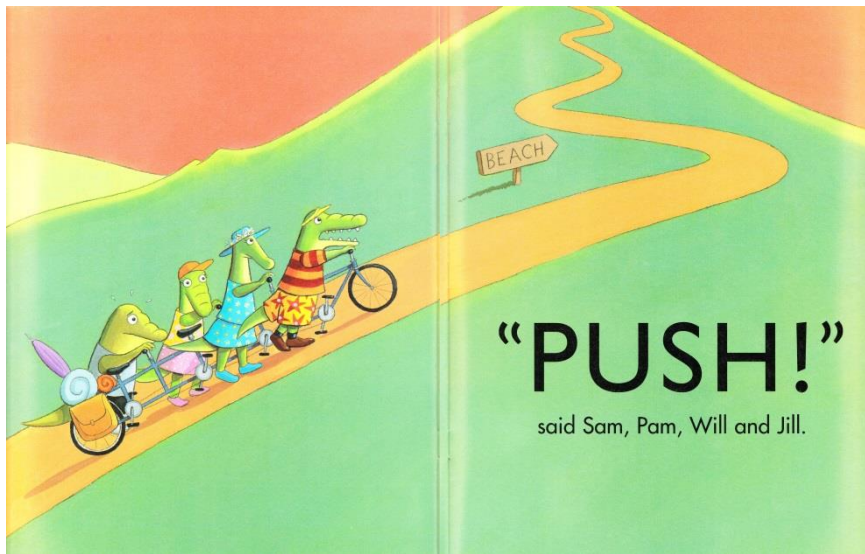
Appendix: 4. Beach Day

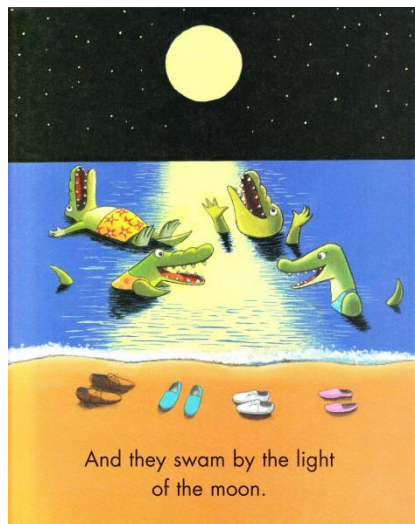
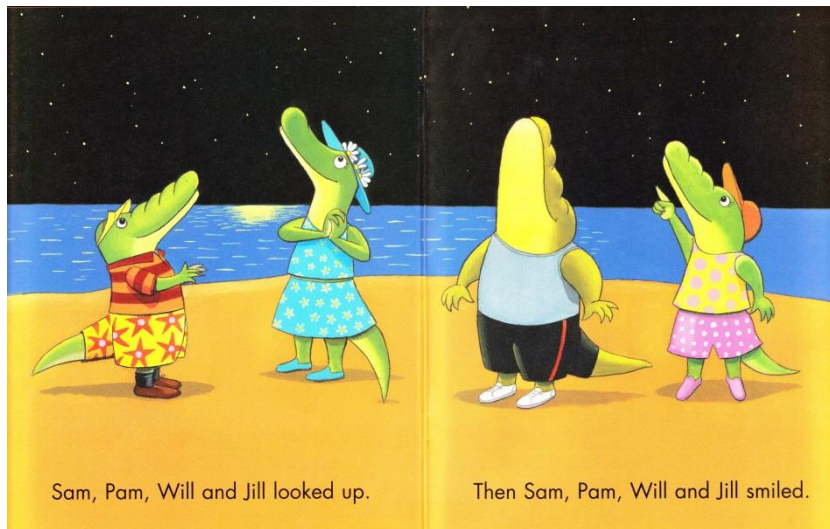












(Lakin, 2004)
Look up other books by this writer.

Appendix: 5. Goosebumps Horrorland



(Stine, 2009)

Search for other stories by this famous children's author.

No answer.

"AAAAAAAAAAGH!" A long, loud scream just ahead made me cover my ears. More shrieks and screams rang out, blaring louder... LOUDER.

I started to move again. Walking quickly now. I was desperate to get out of this creepy, dark tunnel. How long could it be?

The horrifying shrieks grew deafening. Painful. My ears throbbed. I could feel my heart racing in my chest.

The tunnel curved. Dim yellow light washed over me. I could see the shadows of people up ahead.

The deafening screams followed me.

And then I felt something sticky on my forehead. I pulled it off — a long, wet worm. I felt another one drop onto my shoulder. With a gasp, I pulled one out of my hair.

I looked up. I could see the worms dropping from the tunnel ceiling. Hundreds of them.

I tore them off my neck, out of my hair. A worm dropped into my mouth. I spit it out, gagging and choking.

The kids weren't lying, I thought. There's something wrong with this park. Everything is too SCARY and too REAL to be fun!

I started to run through the dim light, my shoes slapping the concrete tunnel floor. I slipped and slid on a thick puddle of worms on the floor.

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Slapping at the worms with both hands, tearing them off my shoulders, my hair, I ran. Ran blindly through the long tunnel, the screams throbbing in my ears.

And then... a shrill scream over my head made me stop. Made me stop and gasp in horror. Because I recognized the voice.

It was MY SCREAM!

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Panic shook my entire body. My breath caught in my throat.

Frozen in the darkness, I listened to my scream.

And then I remembered. The Horror in the entrance booth recorded me screaming when I first arrived at the park. He said it was so they could identify me later.

So...it's a joke after all. This is all a HorrorLand joke, I decided.

My legs were still trembling, but I started to walk again. A few seconds later, I saw bright daylight. The end of the tunnel!

"YAAAAAY!" I cheered as I stumbled out of the tunnel.

I blinked several times, waiting for my eyes to adjust to the bright light. I brushed a few more worms off my shoulders.

I shielded my eyes with one hand and searched for the other kids.

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No sign of them.

Maybe they went back to the hotel, I decided. I was totally eager to catch up with them and find out what was really going on.

Why did they seem so scared?

Why did they think we Very Special Guests were in danger?

I took a few steps toward Stagger Inn — when a hand grasped my shoulder.

I let out a startled cry.

I turned to see a fierce-looking Horror. His shiny purple cape fluttered in the wind. He had short yellow horns curling up from his purple furry head.

I glimpsed the brass name tag on his chest. It read: BYRON.

"Let go of me!" I shouted.

But he squeezed my arm tighter. And jerked me off my feet.

He glanced all around. "Hurry!" he whispered. "I don't want them to see."

He started to pull me into the tunnel.

"Let go! What are you doing?" I screamed. "Why are you taking me back in there?"

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5

"Let go of me!" I tried to swing out of his grasp. But he was too strong.

He pulled me into the darkness of the tunnel. I could hear the shrill screams echoing behind me. I felt like screaming, too!

"Don't be afraid," Byron whispered. "I came to help you."

"H-help me?" I stammered.

He let go of me. Then he shoved something into my hand.

"You can use this to escape," he said.

I blinked. "Escape? Escape from *what*?"

Byron's eyes darted to the tunnel entrance. He really did seem afraid of being caught.

"You've all got to get out of HorrorLand," he said. "You're not safe here."

"That's what those kids said," I told him. "But I don't understand —"

He raised a big hand to cut me off. "They

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brought you here for a reason," he said. "You've got to get to the other park."

"Huh?" I squinted at him. "Other park? But I just got to *this* park!"

He shook his head. "Listen to me, Julie. You'll all be safe at the other park. Tell the others. Tell them I will try to help."

"I — I don't understand what you're talking about," I replied. "Why?"

He was staring past me, out into the light. I turned and saw two Horrors running toward us.

"You must hurry," Byron said. "The ones who brought you here are getting impatient!"

"But — but —" I sputtered.

"If they bring you to The Keeper," Byron said, "you are DOOMED!"

Then he took off, running hard.

The two Horrors spotted him. They began waving their arms and shouting for him to stop.

But Byron ducked and dodged his way through the crowd. After a short while, the two Horrors stopped and gave up the chase.

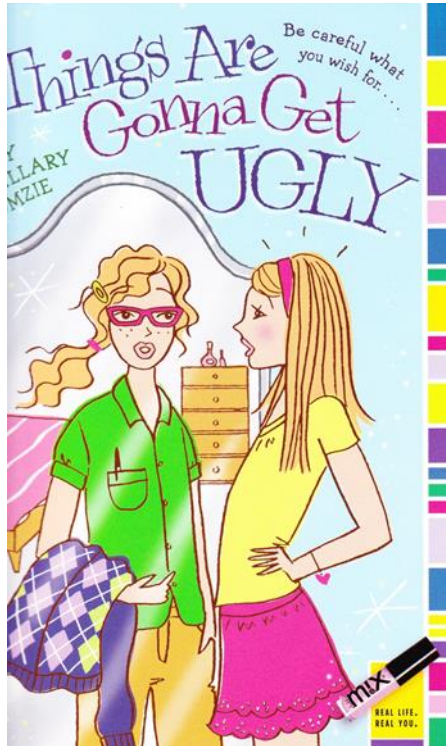
I stepped out of the tunnel. I began to follow the path that led to the hotel.

My head was spinning. I suddenly felt I was living in one of those underwater photos where everything is just a blue blur.

Byron's words kept repeating in my mind. But they didn't make any sense at all.

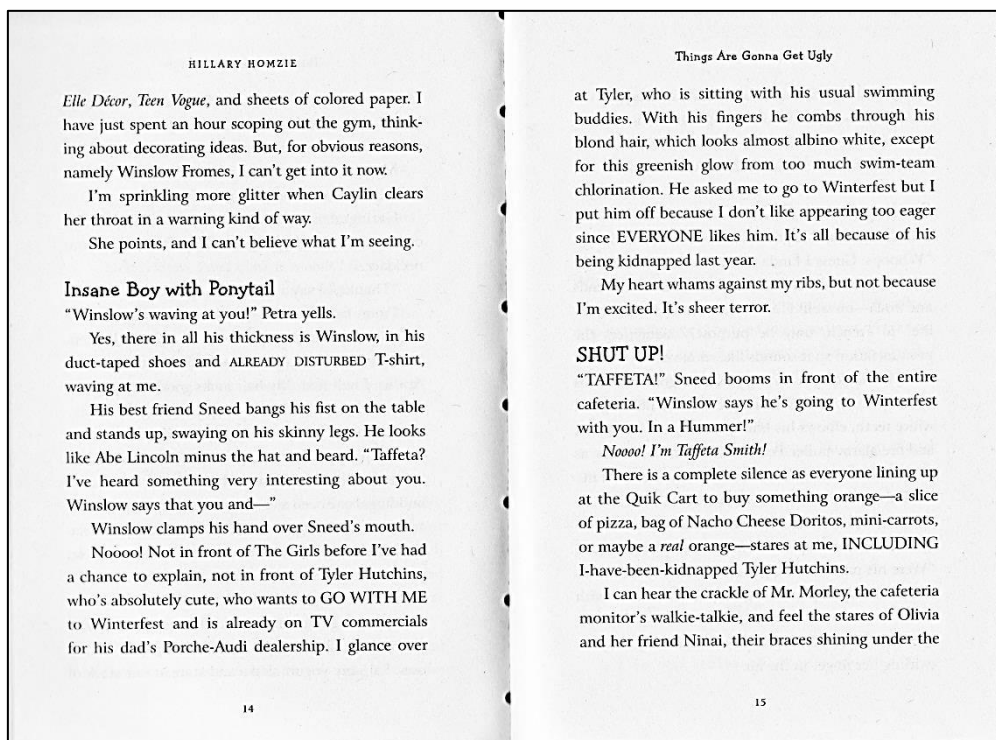
107

Appendix: 6. Things are Gonna Get Ugly



(Homzie, 2009)

Find other books by this author on the Internet.



HILLARY HOMZIE

fluorescent lights. Caylin and Petra are bugging out their eyes and Tyler, who's sitting with Justin Grodin, pulls on his beautiful hair.

My lips are *le* stuck. I can't take it anymore.

Sending Out an SOS

Winslow gets a wide grin on his wide face and shrugs. "Whoops. Guess I kinda told a few people and they told some friends and their friends told some friends and voilà—oh well! *C'est la vie!*" That means "that's life" in French, only he purposely slaughters the pronunciation so it sounds like *set la veeee*.

Tyler, looking stunningly Nordic god-like in his white polo, with his white-green hair, flashing his white teeth, elbows his buddy, Justin, the bad kisser and fire-alarm-puller. Petra and Caylin stare at me as if I've broken all of the rules we've ever believed in.

This is all much worse than I feared.

I want to scream. But that would be uncouth.

Petra throws up her arms in complete disgust. "Were his parents siblings? I can't believe he thinks you'd actually say yes to going to the dance with him."

"Can you say *hallucination* or what?" says Caylin, twirling her finger in the air.

16

Things Are Gonna Get Ugly

"So, Taf, what will you be wearing?" Winslow asks, his voice cracking with newly discovered hormones.

I can't say anything. The truth is I don't know what I'm going to wear because Mom won't buy me the \$550 Max Heeder top I picked out. She says the price is obscene.

I can tell you exactly what and who is obscene. . . .

Winslow Fromes!

To put a stop to catastrophe, I march up to Winslow, who's standing next to the Quik Food cart. Petra and Caylin shuffle after me. I stare at Winslow's freaky black notebook. He's actually flipping through the pages right now. What could possibly be in that thing? A lady elf in a bikini?

"I see you looking," says Petra, like she can read my mind. "He intrigues you, doesn't he? Admit it."

"No," I hiss, even though I know she's joking. He doesn't interest me at all. He wears a chain on his belt that clanks down the hall. Yesterday, he posted . . .

A Lame Poem on MySpace

Taffeta,
U r so sophisticated. U make me want 2

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HILLARY HOMZIE

learn French. Here is how much French
I've learned bcuz o my admiration 4
u:
Éclair
Soufflé
Omelet
Garbage
French fries
French kissing

Just kidding. Hee hee.

Winslow

Why did I ever tell Winslow Fromes that my grandfather is French? Now he thinks this French thing is the key to unlocking me.

Winslow reties his ponytail. It's like he's getting ready at all times to attend a Phish concert.

Petra, her lips in full pout, wheels toward Winslow. "Look, eighties reject, Taffeta has a few other guys in mind for Winterfest." She narrows her eyes and nods over to The Guy table that Tyler lords over. "Does the name Tyler Hutchins ring a bell?"

Of course Tyler Hutchins rings a bell. How many Nordic gods are there at one school with pearly

18

Things Are Gonna Get Ugly

teeth, good manners, and junior-Olympic green hair, in car commercials, who have triumphed over kidnapppers?

Winslow moves his brows up and down like he's Groucho Marx and puts his drinking straws in his hair like antennae. "Guess Tyler will be *jalouse* since I'm so sophisticated. *Non?*" Would he stop trying to speak French? Would he please stop talking to me in front of everyone? Winslow reaches out a hand. It's approaching my shoulder. If I don't move out of the way soon it'll be a direct hit. I sway to the left but it's too slow. His large paw grazes my shoulder.

Protocol breach!!

No!!

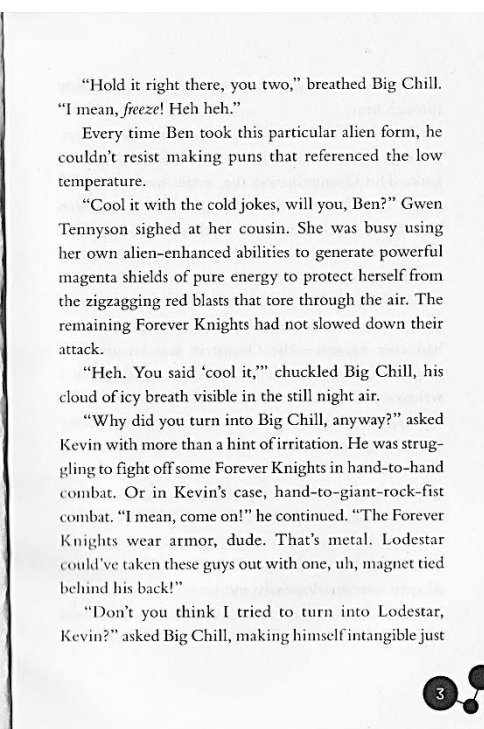
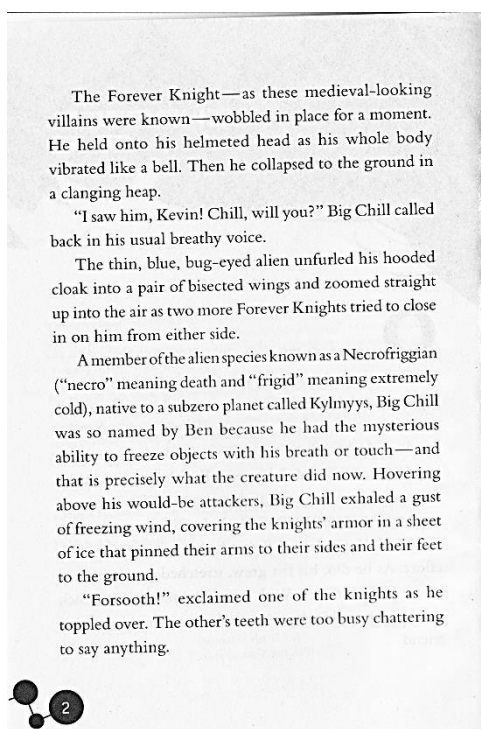
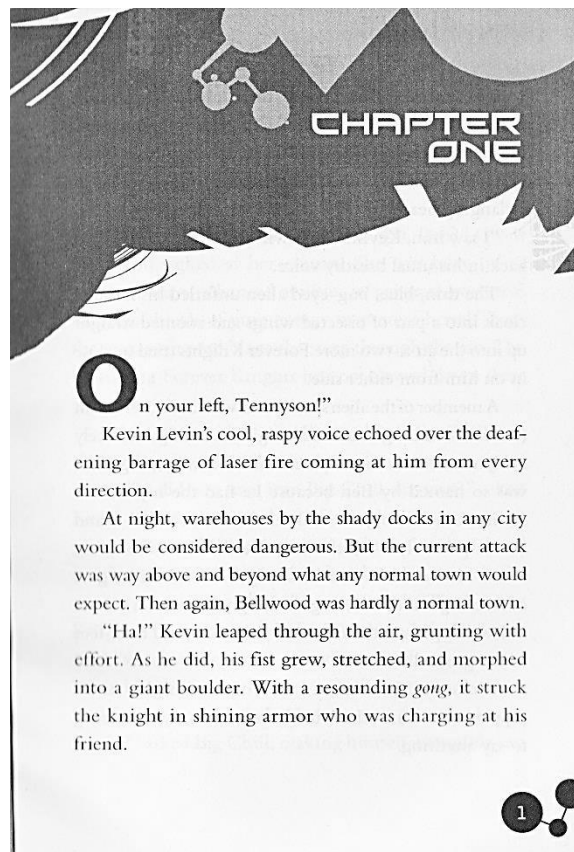
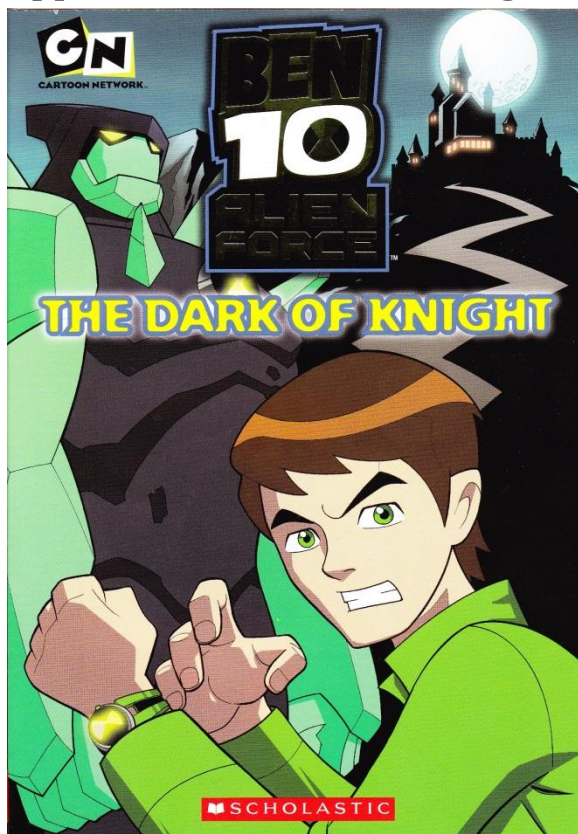
"Just get it out of your head, Winslow! This fantasy of me and you. Forget what I might have said. It's NEVER EVER happening!"

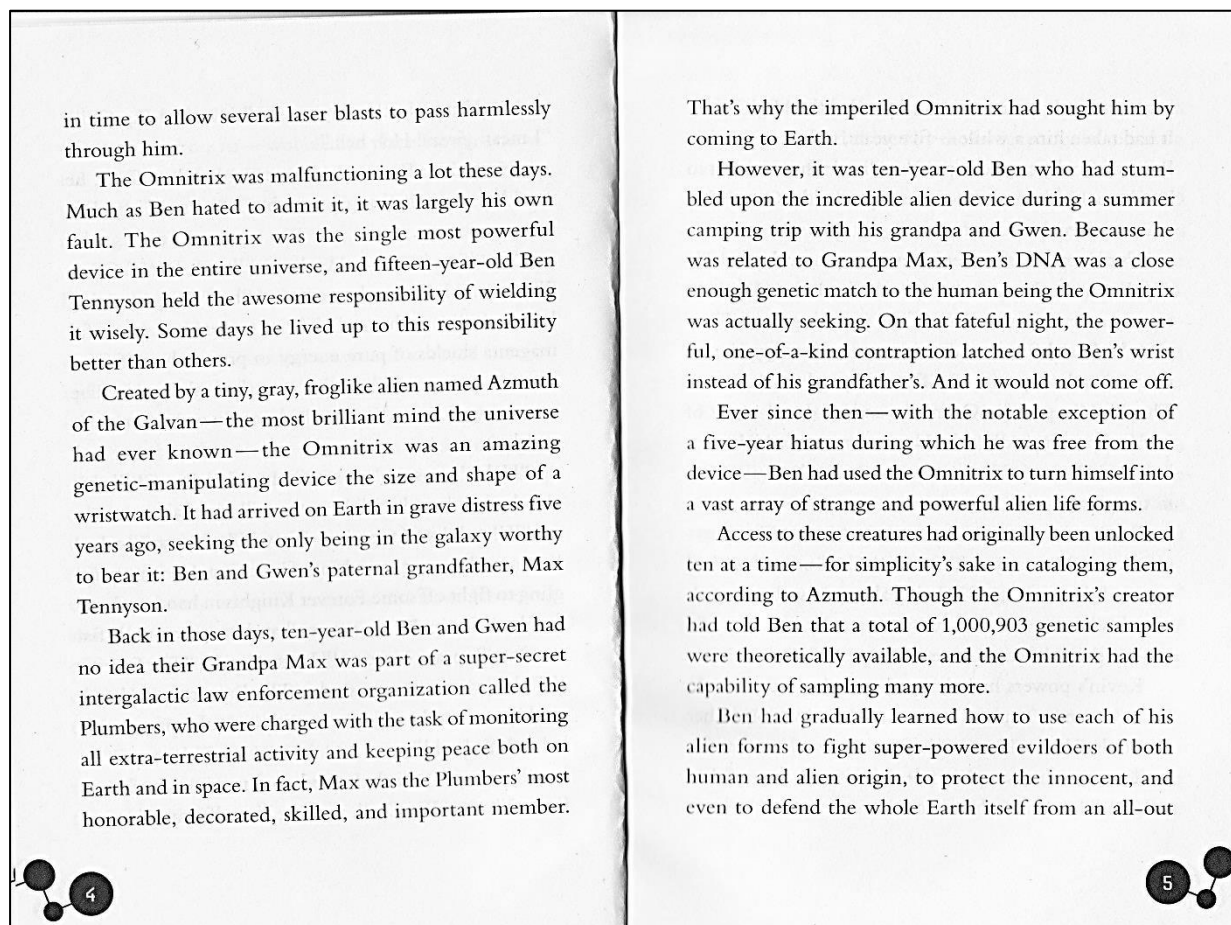
Winslow's face goes pale, and his lips fold into this pathetic upside-down *u* shape. Then he growls, leans over to me, and utters, "I'm so over you." Pressing his fingers against his nose, he lopes away.

Winslow actually looked really upset. He should have adhered to protocol.

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Appendix: 7. The Dark of Knight

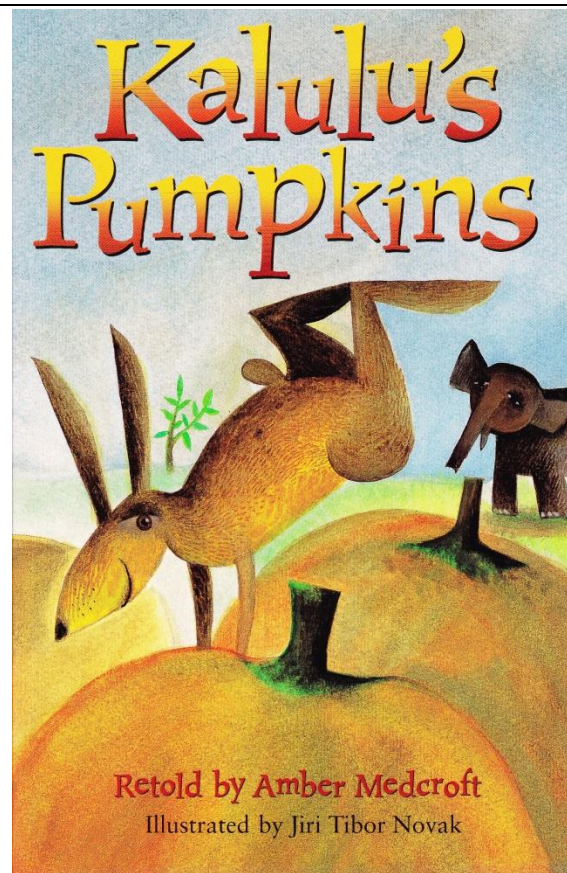




(Fullerton, 2010)

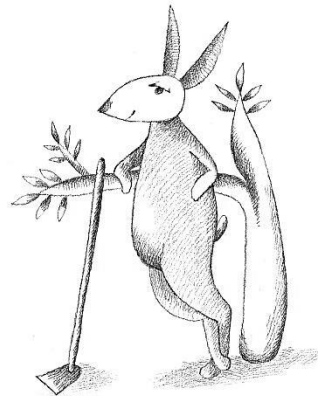
Can you find more books in this series, or more stories by this author?

Appendix: 8. Kalulu's Pumpkins



CHAPTER ONE

Good Things to Eat



Kalulu the rabbit was very wise. He knew that the best way to get good things to eat was to grow them.

1

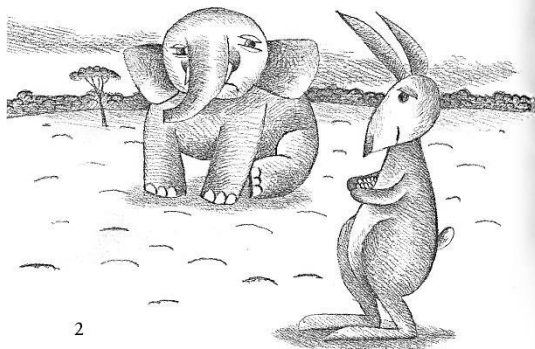
One day, Kalulu decided to grow some pumpkins.

"Hello, Buru," he said to his friend, the elephant. "I am going to grow some pumpkins."

The elephant smiled a big smile. "I like pumpkins," he said.

"Then why don't you grow some?" asked Kalulu.

"I haven't got any seeds," replied the elephant.



2

"Oh, dear," said Kalulu. "You can have some of mine." So Kalulu gave half of his seeds to the elephant.

"Is that all you're going to give me?" asked Buru. "I want more seeds than that!"

"I'm sorry," said Kalulu. "This is all I have."

"I suppose it will have to do then," grumbled the elephant. "How do I plant them?"

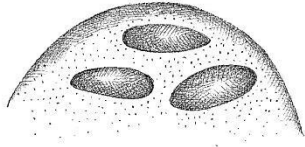
"Come to my garden early in the morning," said the rabbit. "I will show you what to do."

The elephant went away and Kalulu went to bed so that he would be ready to plant his seeds early in the morning.

3

CHAPTER TWO

Selfish Kalulu!



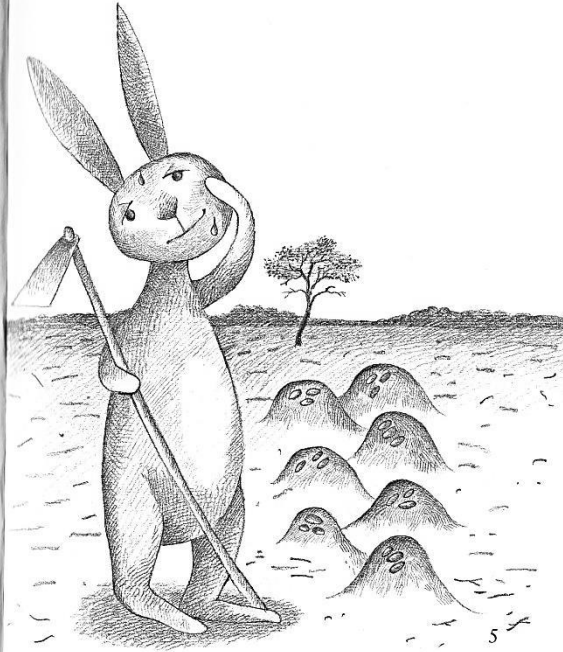
The next day, Kalulu got up bright and early. He carried his shiny new hoe to his garden. He hoed the ground until it was soft and crumbly, then he scooped the earth up into big mounds. In each mound, he planted three pumpkin seeds.

When the seeds were planted, Kalulu sprinkled them with water from the nearby river and covered

4

them with banana leaves to shade them from the hot sun.

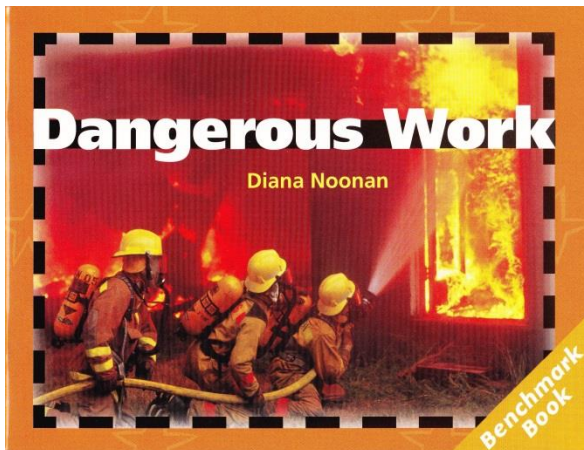
“There!” said the rabbit. “Finished at last!”



(Medcroft, 2008)

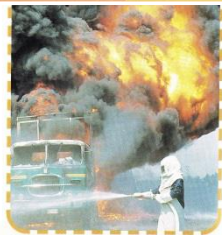
Notice that this author just ‘retold’ this story.

Appendix: 9. Dangerous Work



Introduction

Everyone should be careful when they are working. But people who have dangerous jobs must take special care.



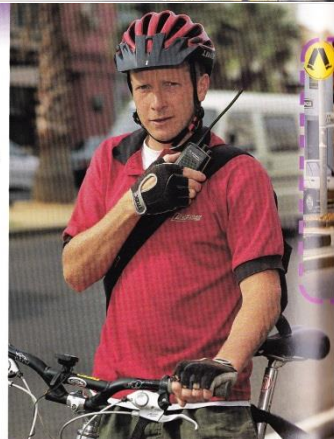
Bicycle Courier

Bicycle couriers are paid to take parcels from one place to another. On busy streets, they can travel faster than a car.



On the Road

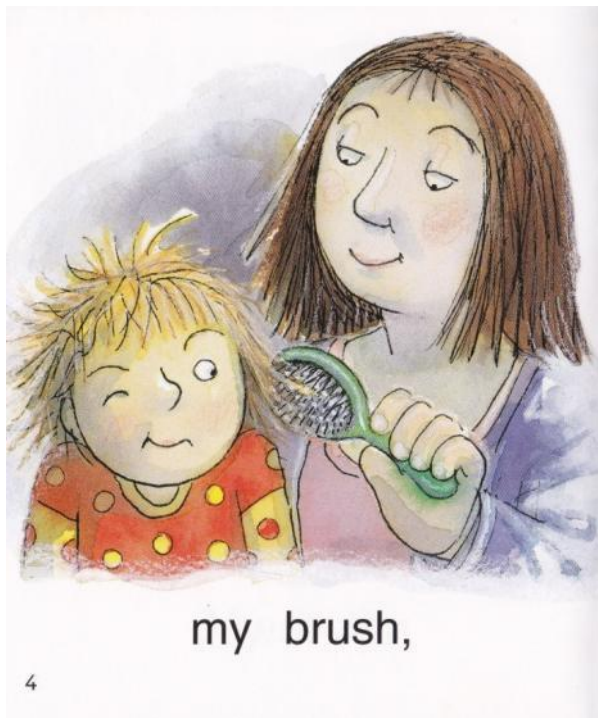
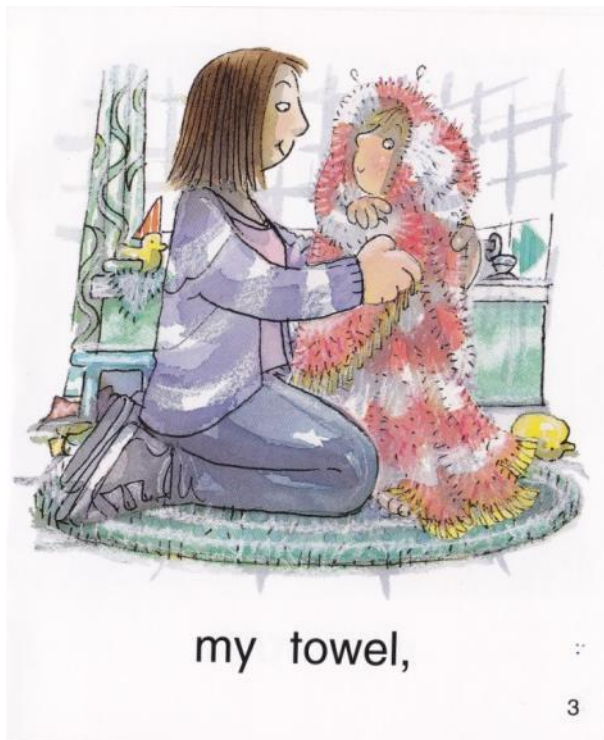
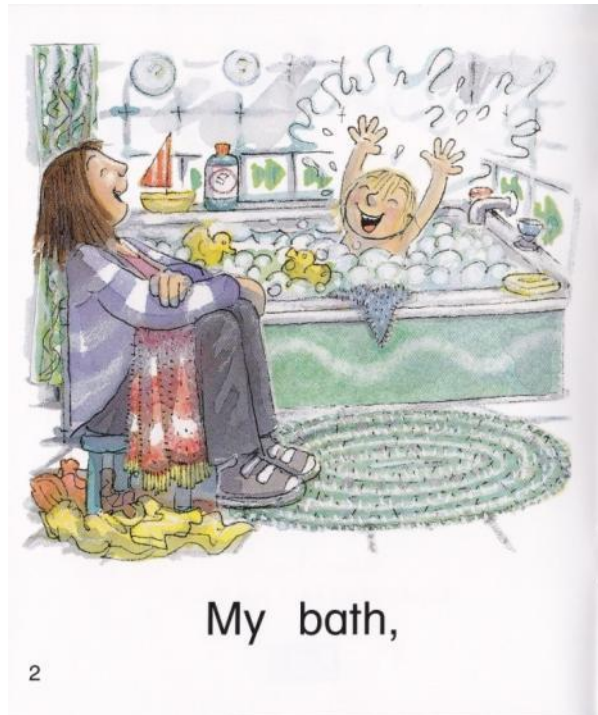
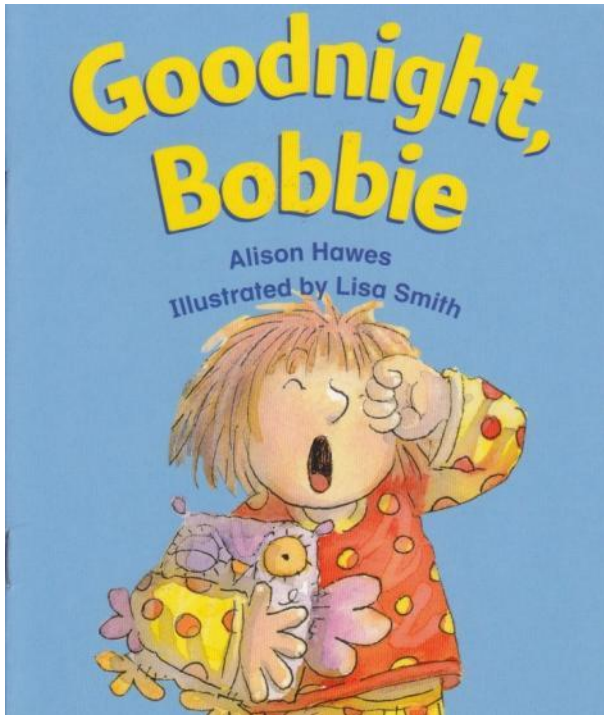
A call on the two-way radio tells the courier where to pick up a parcel. Bicycle couriers need to be fit and alert, and make sure that their bicycles are always working well.



Bicycle couriers always need to be on the lookout for danger. They don't want to be hit by vehicles, or run into people crossing the road.

(Noonan, 2000)

Appendix 10: Goodnight Bobbie





my owl,

5



my book,

6



my light,

7

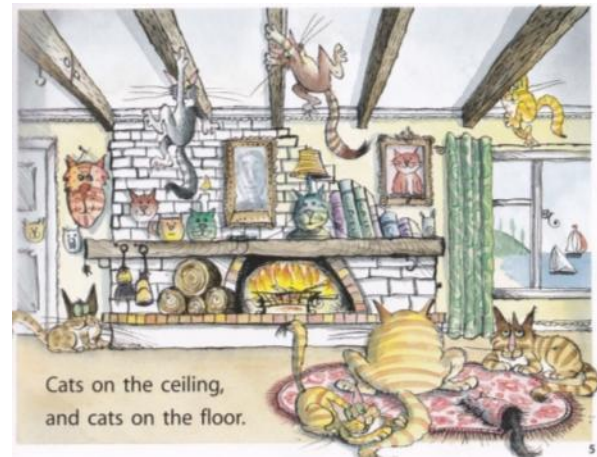
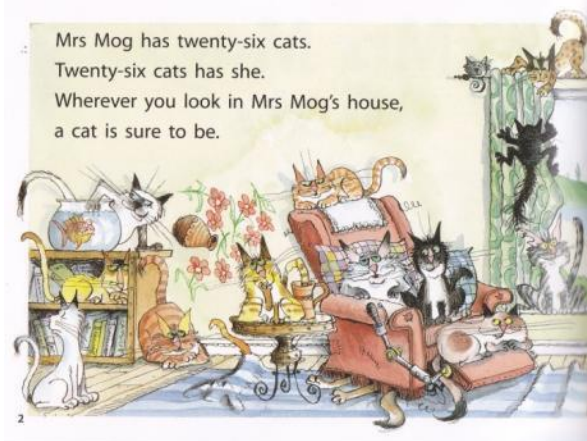
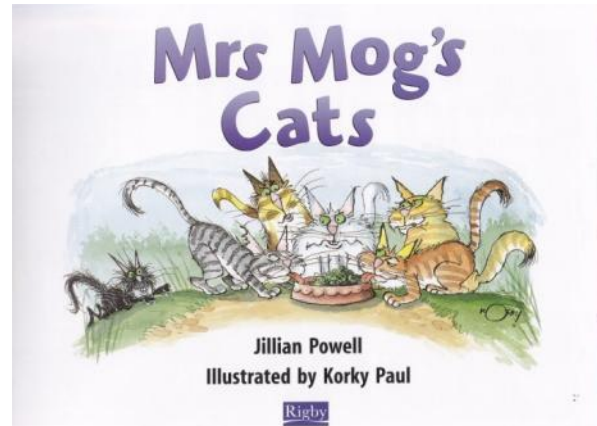
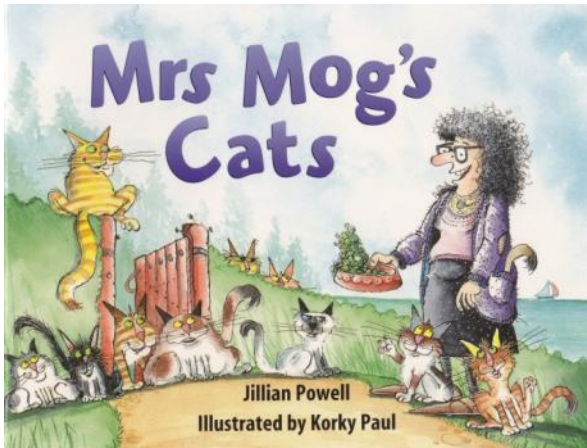


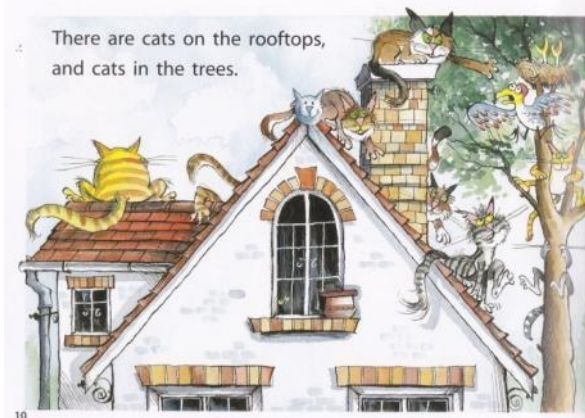
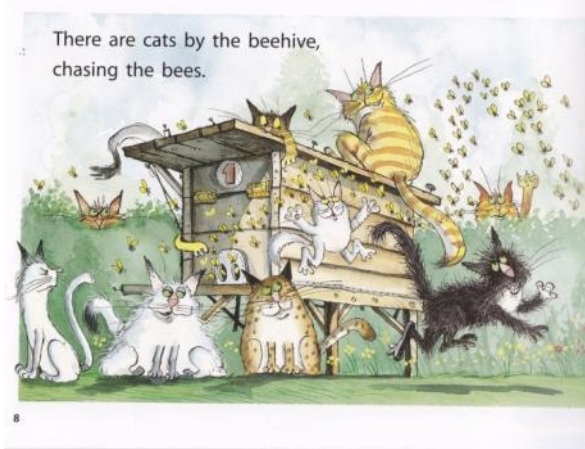
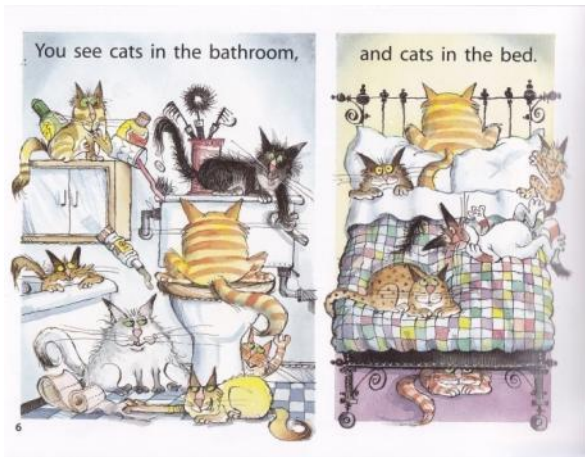
my kiss goodnight.

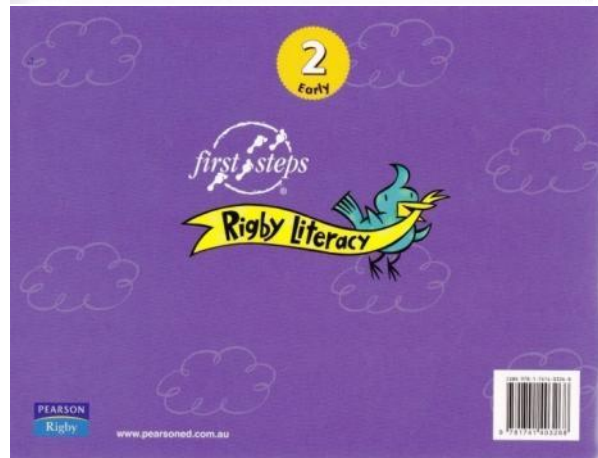
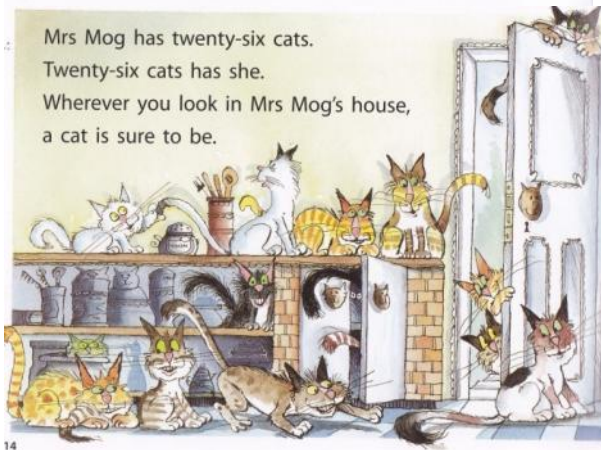
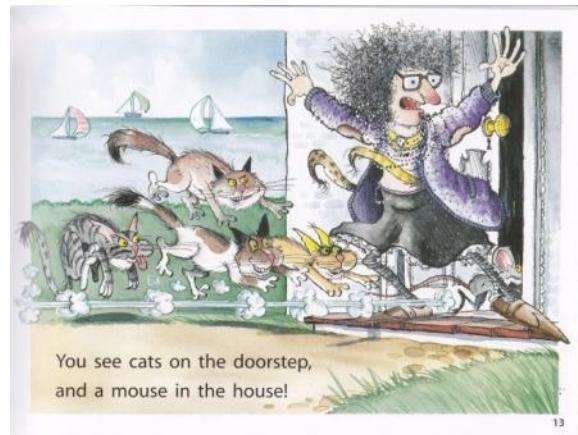
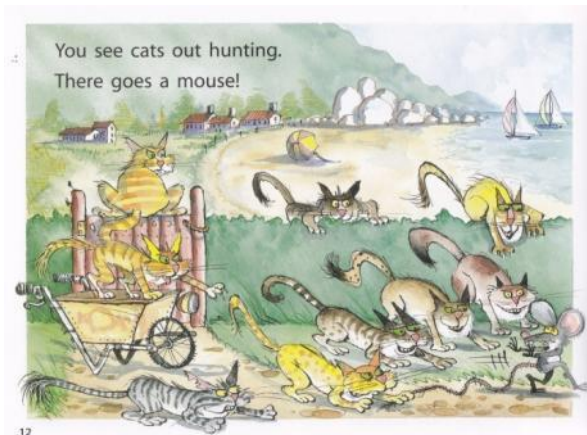
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(Hawes, 1999)

Appendix 11: Mrs Mog's Cats

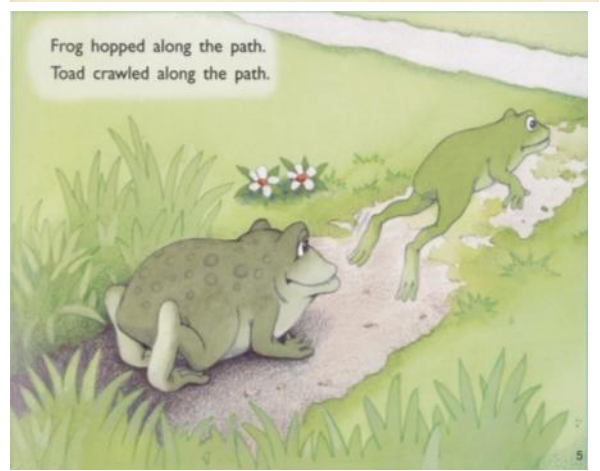
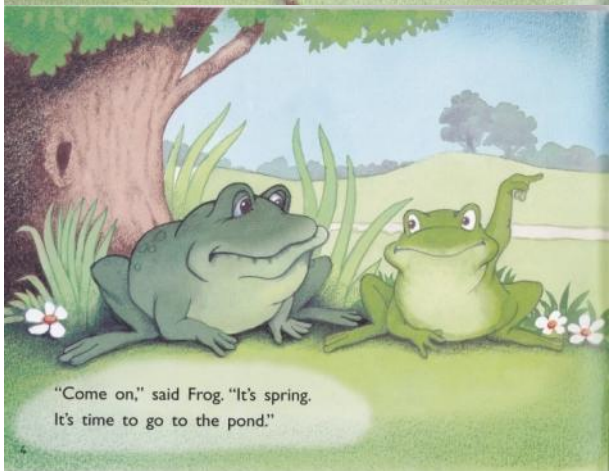
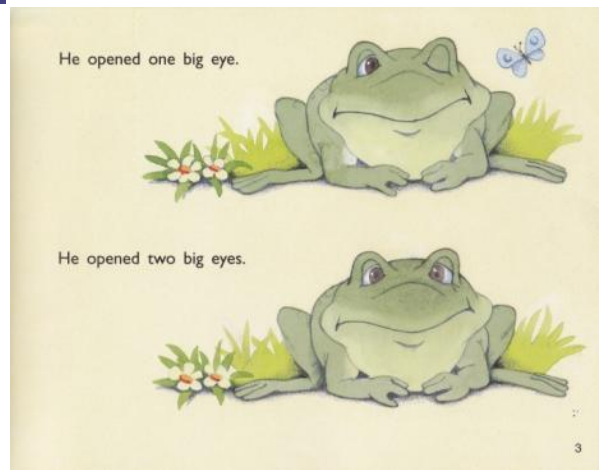
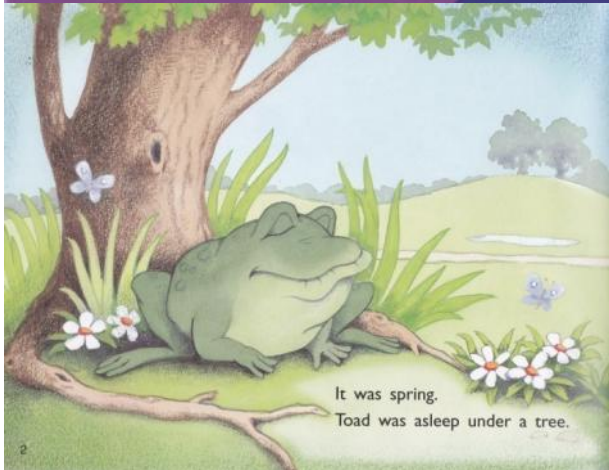
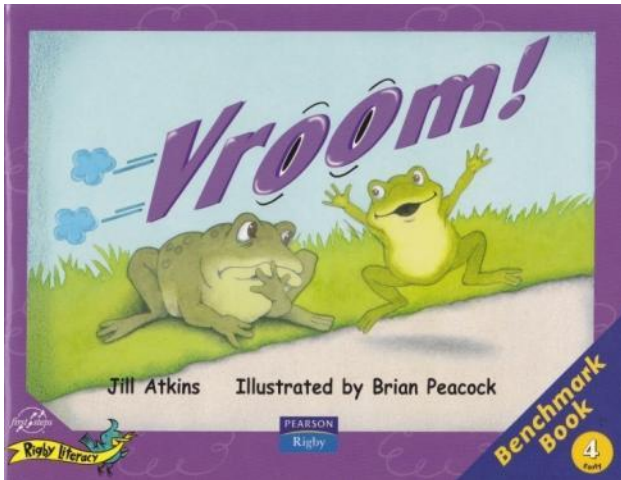


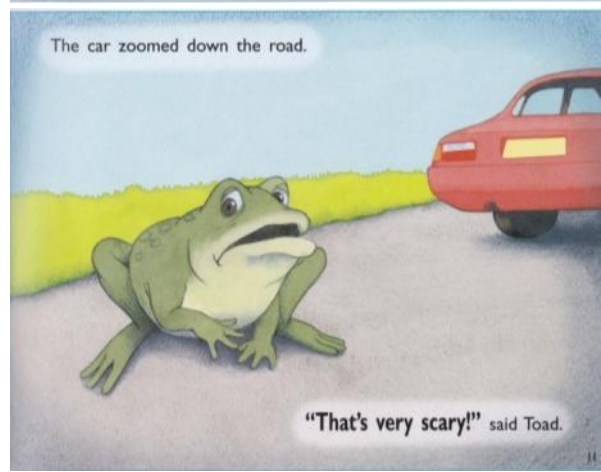
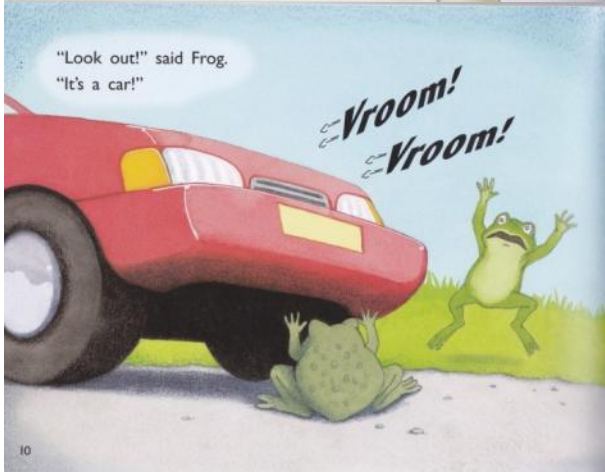
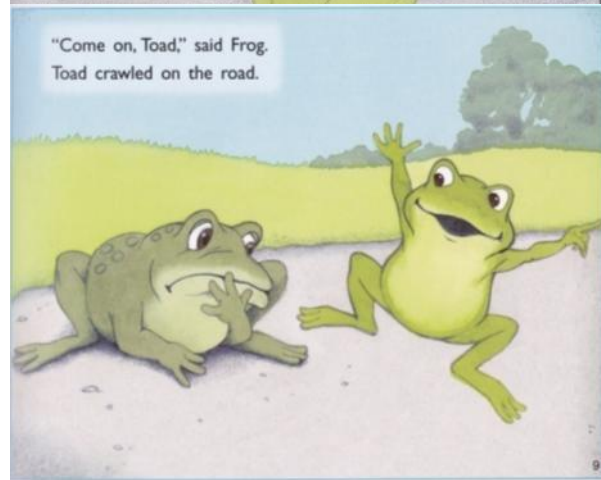
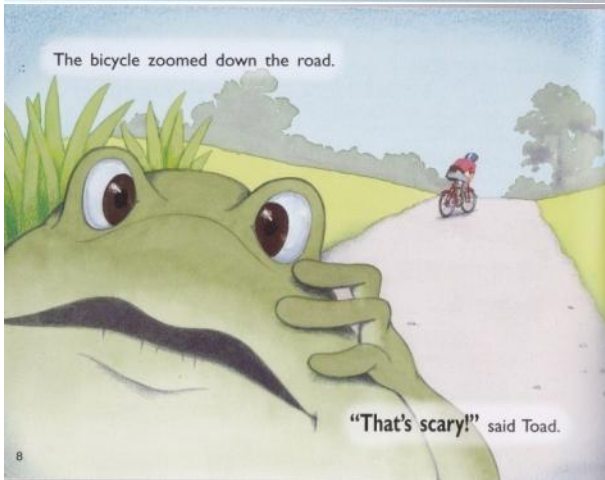
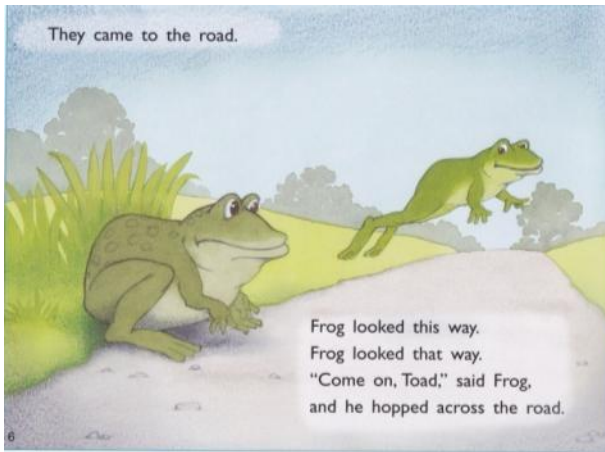


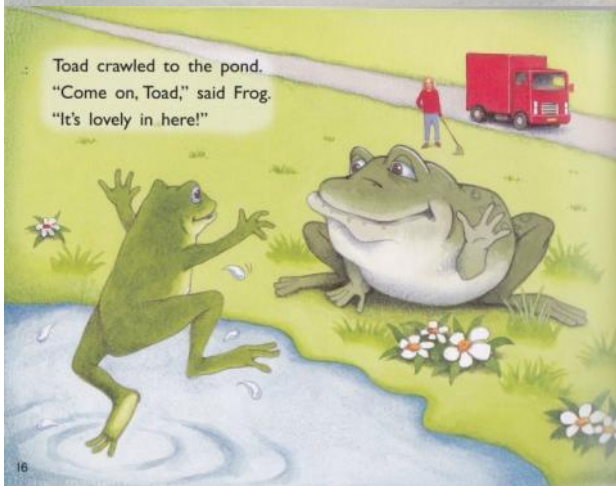
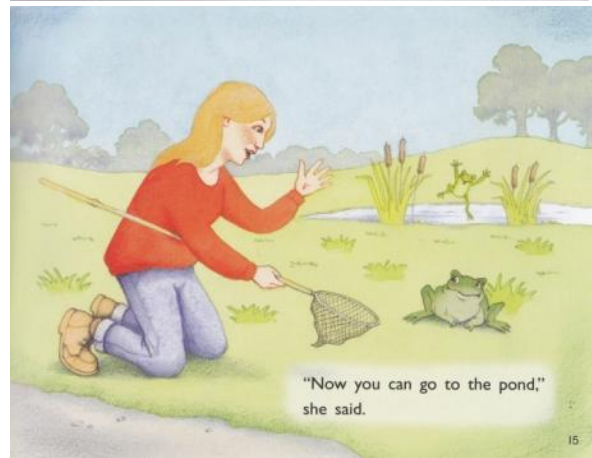
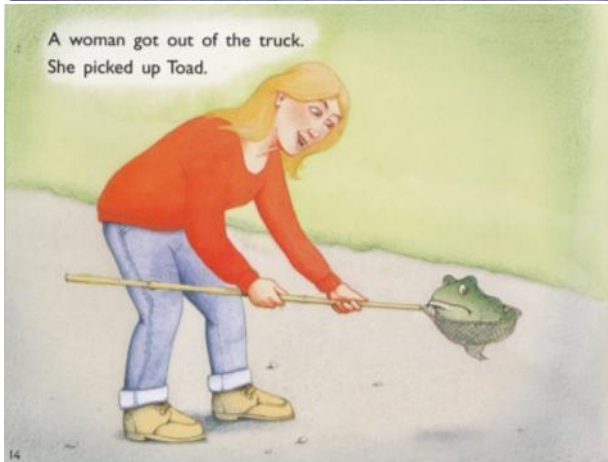
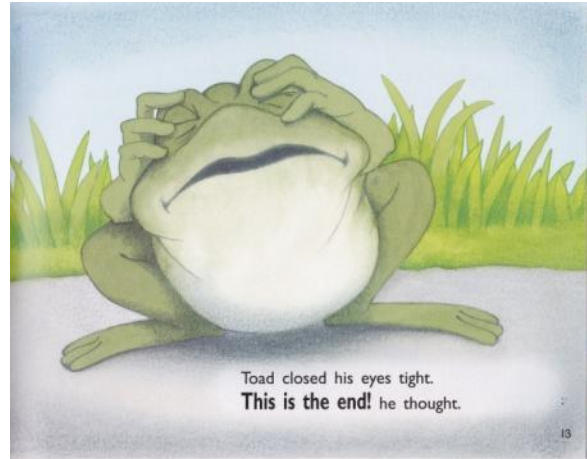
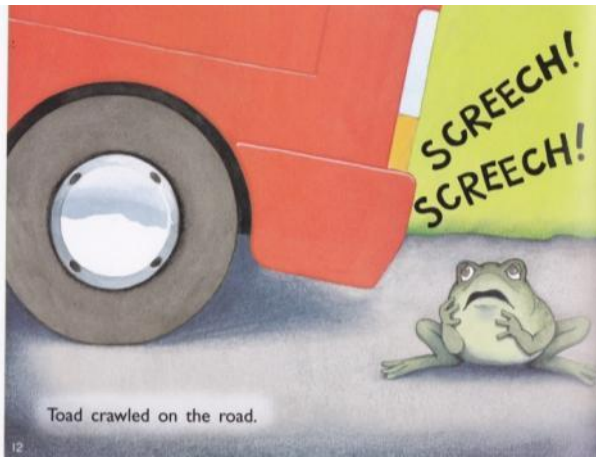


(Powell, 1999)

Appendix 12: Vroom







(Atkins, 1999)

Appendix 13: FALLING BOY by Paul Jennings

Here is a list of things I am good at. A cross means no good. A tick means excellent.

Running x
Football x
Maths x
English x
I.T. Studies x
Girls x
Looks x
Skateboarding x
Being a dork ✓
Bike Riding x
Drawing x
Washing Up x
Lawn Mowing x
Flying ✓

Being a dork gets a tick because that's what I am. People think I am weird. Even Mum (although she is nice about it). The kids at school basically avoid me. I spend most of the time at recess floating around on my own.

The other kids don't seem to see things the same way as me. For example - once, our teacher, Jenny took us all out onto the oval and told us to lie down on the grass.

'Look up at the clouds,' she said. 'Look for pictures and tell me what you see.'

We all looked up at the clouds in silence.

Straight away I could see a cloud that looked like the girl who answers the phones at the car-wash on Saturdays. I was crazy about her but she just turned away when I smiled at her through the window.

As we lay on our backs looking up I imagined lots of things. That bit of fluffy cloud up there was the car-wash girl's face. The white stuff was her hair flying out behind her. And the black cloud with the white edges was the outline of her body. She was hanging onto my back as we plunged down to earth. I was her parachute instructor and she was in love with me.

Just above that was a long stretch of thin cloud. That was a Concord jet with passengers staring out in amazement as I free-fell towards the earth with the car-wash girl on my back.

My outstretched hands were joined to a group of small clouds. In my mind they were monkeys. No one in the world had ever made a parachute ring with monkeys before. Especially the rare Chimpo-cricket monkeys with green tails and red bottoms that glowed in the dark. They communicated with chirping sounds which they made by rubbing their long ears together. Like crickets.

Jenny's voice interrupted my thoughts. 'Well,' class,' she said. 'What do you see in the clouds?'

After a bit, Sean Green spoke up. 'A duck,' he said.

'A car,' said Amanda Chow.

'A snake,' said Oliver Jones.

'They are all very good imaginings,' said Jenny. 'What about you, Ricky? What do you see?'

I made a big mistake. I told them. Everything. Even the bit about the car-wash girl.

When I had finished there was a long silence. 'That's very good,' said Jenny.

No one else thought so. Sean Green was circling his ear with one finger to show that I was crazy.

Amanda Chow just glared. This was especially hurtful. Girls didn't seem to like me. And I wanted them to. What was the trick to it? I didn't have a clue.

Oliver Jones stuck one finger in his mouth and pretended to vomit.

I just don't get it. I told them what I saw. But no one else saw it. They don't like me. I wish I was one of the crowd. But I am a loner.

I definitely get a tick for being a dork.

But there is one good thing on the list. Oh, yes, I also get a tick for flying. And that's because I can.

It all started when I was a little kid. I used to go leaping off small rocks. I would put my hands up in the air like Superman and jump up a few centimetres. I wanted to fly. Oh, how I wanted to fly. It wasn't so much for being up there with the birds or floating around in the clouds taking in the view.

I wanted everyone to see me. I wanted them to point up and say, 'Look at Ricky. He's flying.' I wanted their eyes to bug out. I wanted them to faint with surprise. I wanted to be the most famous person in the world.

Nothing ever happened though. Every time I jumped up I just landed back on my feet.

Once I tried it from the garage roof. I thought, 'Believe in yourself, Ricky'.

Dad was always telling me that. 'Go for it, Ricky' he used to say. 'Nothing ever happens unless you take a risk.'

So I climbed up the back fence and pulled myself onto the roof. It was a long way down. I closed my eyes, yelled out, 'Gigantor' at the top of my voice and leapt forward with outstretched hands.

After I got back from hospital I decided on a new approach.

From then on I tried using the power of my mind to lift myself up - levitation. I would screw up my eyes and try to fly just by thinking about it. I would imagine my feet slowly rising as I chanted. 'Fly, fly, fly.'

It didn't work. But I didn't give up. Every day I would try again. 'Fly, fly, fly.'

Once I was in the kitchen trying hard. I screwed up my and eyes and concentrated. I tried to lift my feet off the floor. Just by brain power.

'Fly, fly, fly,' I said aloud.

At that very moment Mum walked in. 'Where?' she said.

'Anywhere,' I said. 'Just up.'

Mum looked at the ceiling. 'I can't see it,' she said.

'See what?' I said.

'The fly. There's a lot of them around this year.'

'No,' I yelled. 'Not that sort of fly. I'm trying to lift my feet off the ground. I want to fly. Up in the air.'

Mum looked worried. 'Have you talked to your father about this?' she said. I thought she was going to tell me to have a talk to the school counsellor.

'I'm not, strange,' I yelled. 'Dad said you can do anything if you try hard enough.'

'Well not everything,' said Mum.

'Is he a liar then?'

'No, he just gets carried away.'

'I believe him,' I said. 'I'm going to fly.'

'I don't think that's a good idea,' said Mum.

'I'll bet you fifty dollars,' I said.

'You haven't got fifty dollars,' said Mum.

She always has an answer for everything, does Mum. It's annoying.

I wagged my finger at her like she does sometimes. 'Dad always says, "Put your money where your mouth is."'

'No,' she said. 'I'm not going to bet. 'Instead of trying to fly, why don't you go up to your room and clean it up?'

'For ten dollars?' I said.

'For nothing,' said Mum. 'It's your room.'

'I'm saving up to go to Water World and have a ride on the Super Sucker Water Slide. Every kid in my class has been to Water World except me.'

Mum snorted. 'I've heard that one a million times before,' she said. 'But I tell you what. If you stop that silly business of trying to fly I'll take you to Water World.'

I thought about it. I thought about it real hard. I really, really wanted to go to Water World and ride the Super Sucker. But something inside me told me not to. I knew that one day I would fly.

'No thanks,' I said. Mum shook her head and looked at me in a worried way and walked out of the kitchen.

I decided to try again. I closed my eyes, clenched my teeth and concentrated on rising up into the air. I could feel my brain getting hot. I felt as if my skull was going to explode. My face was burning.

'Fly, fly, fly.' I made a picture in my mind of my feet lifting off the ground. Nothing happened. I tried even harder. I could just imagine my brains splattering on the walls if I didn't stop.

Harder, harder, harder. 'Fly, fly, fly.'

Slowly my feet started to lift off the floor. It was amazing. I had lifted about fifty centimetres in the air. It felt like walking on water. 'Whoo, hoo,' I yelled. 'Look at me. Look at me. I can fly.'

Mum rushed into the room followed quickly by Dad. I dropped to the floor like a stone.

'What? What? What?' she yelled.

'I flew. I flew. Did you see it?'

'I saw you give a little jump, Ricky.' Now she had a really worried look on her face. She must have thought I was losing my marbles.

'No, no, I flew.'

'Don't do it,' said Mum. 'Join the football team or something sensible.'

'I did, I did it, I flew,' I shouted. 'Watch this.'

I closed my eyes and concentrated. 'Fly, fly, fly,' I said to myself. 'Lift off the ground. Feet rise up.'

My brain was boiling. My skull felt like the shell of a hand grenade about to go off. But nothing happened. I gave it one last, desperate try. My toes tingled but I didn't move even a millimetre. I groaned with the effort of it. But it was no use.

'Stop, it,' said Mum. 'You will do yourself an injury.'

I opened my eyes. 'I did fly,' I yelled. But even as I said the words I started to doubt. Was it a dream? Was I going nuts? Did I really lift off the ground when she left me alone in the kitchen?

'I did fly,' I said. 'My feet ...' The words trailed away.

I turned to Dad. 'Did you want to fly when you were a kid?'

He nodded slowly.

Yes said Mum. 'But it didn't work for him, either.'

'What do you mean?' I said.

'Don't,' said Dad. But Mum tightened her lips and kept talking.

'It was when you were just a baby, Ricky. You know that old lady over the back fence?'

'Mrs Briggs?'

'Yes. Her kitten got stuck up the flag pole in the front yard. She was crying something terrible and there was no one there to help. Except Dad. She rushed inside to call the fire brigade and while she was gone he shinned up the pole like a monkey.'

I stared at Dad with pride. 'You climbed a flag pole to save a kitten? You are a hero, Dad.'

Dad blushed.

‘Except,’ said Mum. ‘That when Mrs Briggs came outside, the kitten was down on the ground and your father was stuck up the top of the pole. He couldn’t get down.’

‘That’s enough, Mary,’ said Dad. ‘He doesn’t want to know all this.’

Mum kept going.

‘Everyone in the street came to look. There he was – a grown man sitting on top of a flag pole and couldn’t get down. By the time the fire brigade came to save him there were hundreds of people watching.’

‘Wow,’ I said.

Dad gave a little groan.

‘It was on the television,’ said Mum. ‘We were a laughing stock. That cat had saved itself and climbed down. And your father got stuck. The whole country knew that he climbed a flag pole and couldn’t get down. That’s how well he could fly.’

She gave a little smile and then she added. ‘But I still love him.’

‘So do I,’ I said.

‘Believe in yourself, Ricky,’ said Dad.

‘I do, Dad,’ I said. ‘I believe in myself.’

I did fly. Just a bit. I lifted myself off the ground. But no one else knew.

No one at all.

*

The next morning I put on my back pack and walked slowly to school. I went through the park so that I could try to lift myself off the ground with the power of thought. I didn’t want anyone to see me going red in the face and groaning with the effort.

I stopped half way across the park and checked things out. There was no one around – only a spotted dog with its head inside a rubbish bin. It was sniffing around for scraps.

I stood still and concentrated. ‘Fly, fly, fly,’ I said under my breath. I could feel my ears growing hot. I could feel my eyes throbbing. I could feel ... my feet lifting. I was doing it. I was really, really flying. Not high, just a few centimetres off the ground.

Now I needed someone to see me. Now I needed someone to almost faint at the sight of my amazing powers.

‘Look at me,’ I shouted to the empty park.

The dog looked. It pulled its head out of the bin and stared at me. And I plopped straight down to the ground.

I closed my eyes and tried again. I strained and strained but nothing happened.

I walked away from the dog and along the winding path. One more try. I would give it one more go. There was nothing I wanted more than to get to school and demonstrate my flying ability.

I concentrated really hard. And once again it happened. Slowly I rose from the ground. I looked around but there was no one in sight.

The word, 'forward' sprung into mind. Slowly I began to move along the path floating just a few centimetres above the ground. 'Higher,' I said to myself. I rose about fifty centimetres more. I was skating along the path and my feet weren't even touching the ground.

This was amazing. This was fantastic. Incredible. It was like skidding along on ice except there was nothing under my feet but air.

I flew around a tree. There was a sign saying, DON'T WALK ON THE GRASS. I didn't. I flew out over it, standing upright and just shooting along as if my body was filled with helium.

A gardener appeared from behind a bush. He stared at me. I fell heavily and crumpled onto the grass.

'Hey,' he yelled. 'Can't you read? Get off there you little brat.'

I ran to the other side of the lawn and disappeared into the bushes. I tried to make sense of it. Sometimes I could fly and sometimes I couldn't. I needed to show someone. I needed someone to believe in me. Then everything would be okay.

A far off beeping noise floated through the trees. It was the school bell. I was going to be late. There would be big trouble if I was late.

'Up,' I said to myself.

Up I went. Not high. Just a little bit.

'Forward,' I said. I began to skid forward on nothing.

'Faster,' I said. I went faster.

I didn't say anything to myself, I didn't have to. I just thought it. Brain power was enough.

Faster and faster I sped through the park, standing straight up and skidding forward like a bishop on a chess board. It was fantastic. The feeling of speed and power and lightness filled my head. I was dizzy with happiness.

I sped along in silence. My heart was thumping. I was so excited. This was my big chance. Everyone was going to see me fly. The school gate came into view.

There were kids all gathered around staring at something on the ground. No one was looking at me.

Except one little girl. She gave a gasp. I fell straight down and landed with a small plop. The little girl shook her head and joined the other kids. They were all staring down into the ground. There was orange netting surrounding a deep hole where workers had been digging for several days.

But there were no workers. Only kids.

'What's going on?' I said.

No one answered me so I looked for myself.

It was the spotted dog. It had fallen down the hole and was unconscious at the bottom. The little girl started to cry. It was a very deep hole.

Suddenly a voice said, 'In to school everyone. Quick. We will call the fire brigade.'

It was our teacher, Jenny. She picked up the little girl and headed for the school office.

Everyone shuffled in. Everyone except me.

I was alone at the edge of the hole.

'Up,' I said.

I floated up.

'Forward.' I was hovering over the hole. It was a long way drop to the bottom. I would die if I fell.

'Down.' I began to descend. Down, down, down.

It was dark and cold. I landed gently on my feet at the bottom of the hole. The dog was lying on its side with its eyes closed. I gently picked it up and cradled it in my arms.

'Up,' I said.

Up I went. Up, up, up - nearly half way. The dog opened its eyes and stared at me.

Shoot. I began to fall. Crash. Smash. I hit the muddy bottom. Gees it hurt. My ankle was twisted and every bone in my body jarred. I groaned in agony.

The little dog was okay, still cradled in my arms. I could hear shouting and yelling from above.

'I get it,' I said to the dog. 'Now I see.'

I had to be quick.

I took off my back pack and tipped out my books. Then I put the empty pack over the little dog's head. There was muffled barking but I ignored it.

'Up,'

Slowly I floated up. I stopped when my head was just below the top. I closed my eyes and gave myself an instruction. Up, over the edge and down. That's just what happened. To the amazement of the teachers hurrying across the yard I seemed to just plop out of the hole with the dog.

Jenny took the dog from my arms. The other teachers peered down the hole.

'How did you do that?'

'It's five metres deep and smooth.'

'Impossible.'

'The kid's a mountain goat.'

'A monkey more like it.'

They were all patting me on the back.

'You should have waited,' said Jenny. 'It was dangerous.'

'How did you do it?'

'I flew,' I said.

The teachers laughed.

'He has a sense of humour too.'

So I was a hero. Sort of. They stood me on the platform at school assembly. I was told off for climbing down the hole because it was dangerous. And I was praised for bravery and climbing skills.

Everyone was nice to me. But no one believed I could fly.

Dad was waiting for me after school. As we walked home I told him the whole story. The true story. I knew he wouldn't believe it.

We sat down on a bench just over the road from the town hall. The Australian flag flew from a pole right up on the top. It was growing late and a man was just pulling the flag down. He wrapped it up and went inside.

'I know you don't believe me,' I said to Dad. 'But I can fly.'

'How do you feel about that?' he said.

Why did Dad say that? It's the sort of thing the school counsellor asks you. Why couldn't he just believe me? I mean, I was a hero.

I thought for a bit. 'It's lonely,' I said. 'No one else can do it. Not one person in the whole world. There's no one to talk to about it. No one to share the fun. Or the scary bits. No one to help or give advice.'

Dad nodded but didn't say anything. He didn't even seem to be listening but I went on with what I was saying.

'There are lots of people in the world who play violins or lay bricks or build houses or climb mountains and they can all talk to each other about it. But I am the only one who can fly in the air. The only one. And no one believes me. Not even Mum. Or you.'

Dad stared at the footpath. Finally he spoke.

'Close your eyes.'

'What?'

He looked along the empty street. 'Just do it. Close your eyes and count to ten.'

I did as he said. When I reached ten I opened my eyes. He was gone. I looked to the left. I looked to the right. Nothing. No one. Not a soul in sight.

'Up here,' came Dad's voice.

I looked above my head. Still nothing. Then I stared at the top of the town hall. And saw him. Perched on the flagpole way up above the clock. Sitting up there and not a cat in sight.

'How did you ... ?'

'Close your eyes and count again,' He yelled.

I did what he said but when I got to five and opened my eyes I could see that he was still coming down. Slowly, slowly like an upright soldier being lowered with invisible hands. He was about two metres above the ground. As soon as my eyes took in the sight he fell like garbage bag full of rocks.

'Ouch,' he screamed as he hit the footpath.

'Dad,' I shouted. 'Sorry, I looked too soon.'

He stood up and dusted himself down. There was a moment of silence. Then he smiled at me.

'I hate that bit of it,' he said.

I grinned.

'Me too,' I said. 'The flying is fantastic...'

We both finished the sentence together. '... but we have to smooth out the landings.'

Gees we laughed.

Life was great. Really great.

*

PS Dad and Mum took me to Water World for saving the dog. The Super Sucker Water Slide was good.

But not nearly as good as flying.

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