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Opening extract from

Goth Girl and the Wuthering Fright

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For Connie

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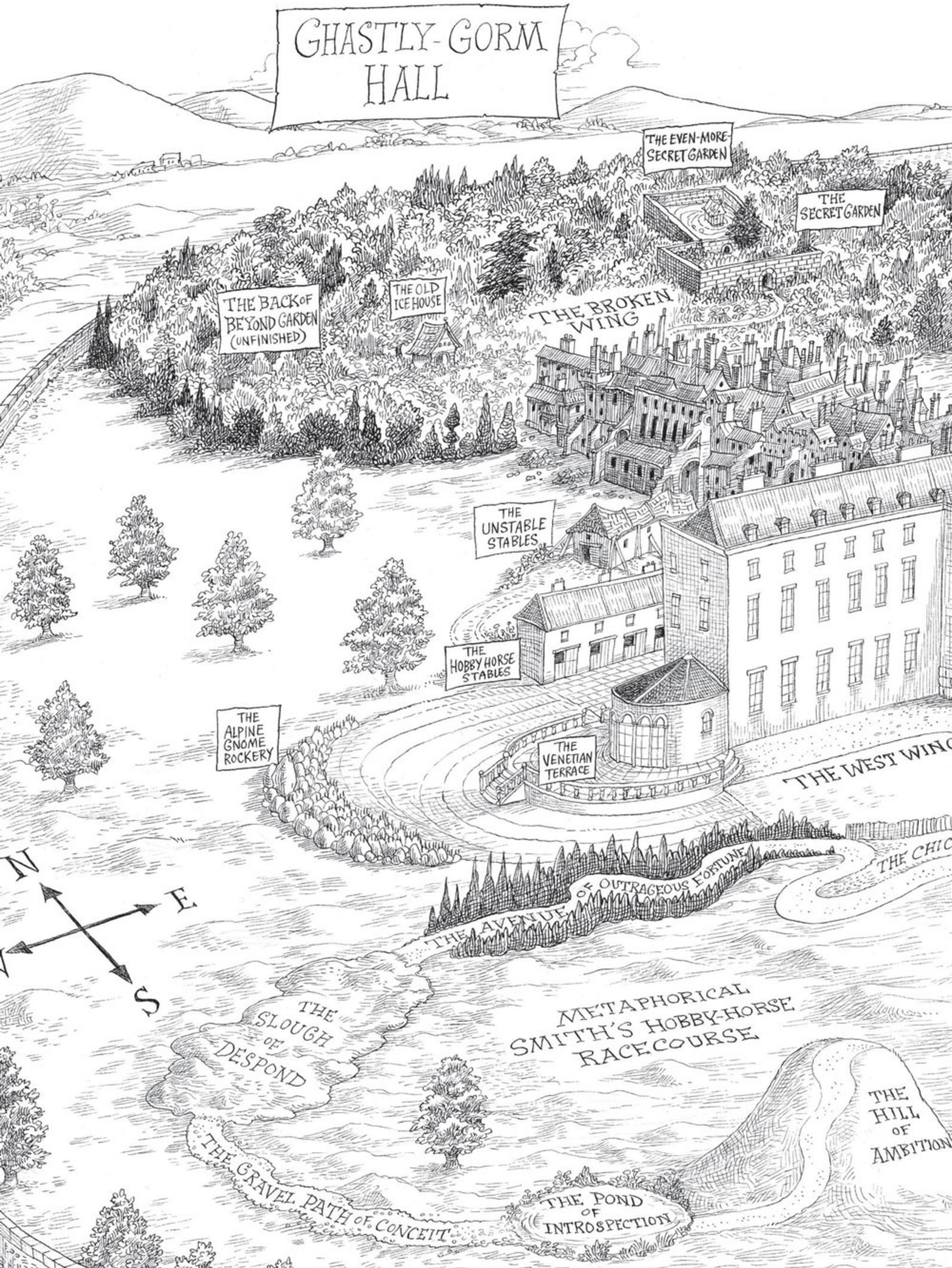
Chapter One

Sitting in one of the wing-back chairs in the library of Ghastly-Gorm Hall, Ada Goth was reading her father's latest book. She smiled to herself as she turned the page. Leather-bound volumes lined the carved mahogany bookcases that were built into the walls of the library, and each bookcase had a ladder on brass wheels, for reaching the higher shelves. Busts of Roman emperors with interesting haircuts looked down from the very top, the firelight glinting on their curls and ringlets. Not that Ada noticed. She was engrossed.

Ada was the only child of Lord Goth, England's foremost cycling poet. He was away in London, giving a talk and having his hair styled at the literary hair salon of Scribble and Quiff's, but he would be back for Christmas.


GHASTLY-GORM HALL
THE EVEN-MORE-SECRET GARDEN
THE SECRET GARDEN
THE BACK OF BEYOND GARDEN (UNFINISHED)
THE OLD ICE HOUSE
THE BROKEN WING
THE UNSTABLE STABLES
THE HOBBY HORSE STABLES
THE ALPINE GNOME ROCKERY
THE VENETIAN TERRACE
THE WEST WING
THE AVENUE OF OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE
METAPHORICAL SMITH'S HOBBY-HORSE RACECOURSE
THE CHIC
THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND
THE GRAVEL PATH OF CONCEIT
THE POND OF INTROSPECTION
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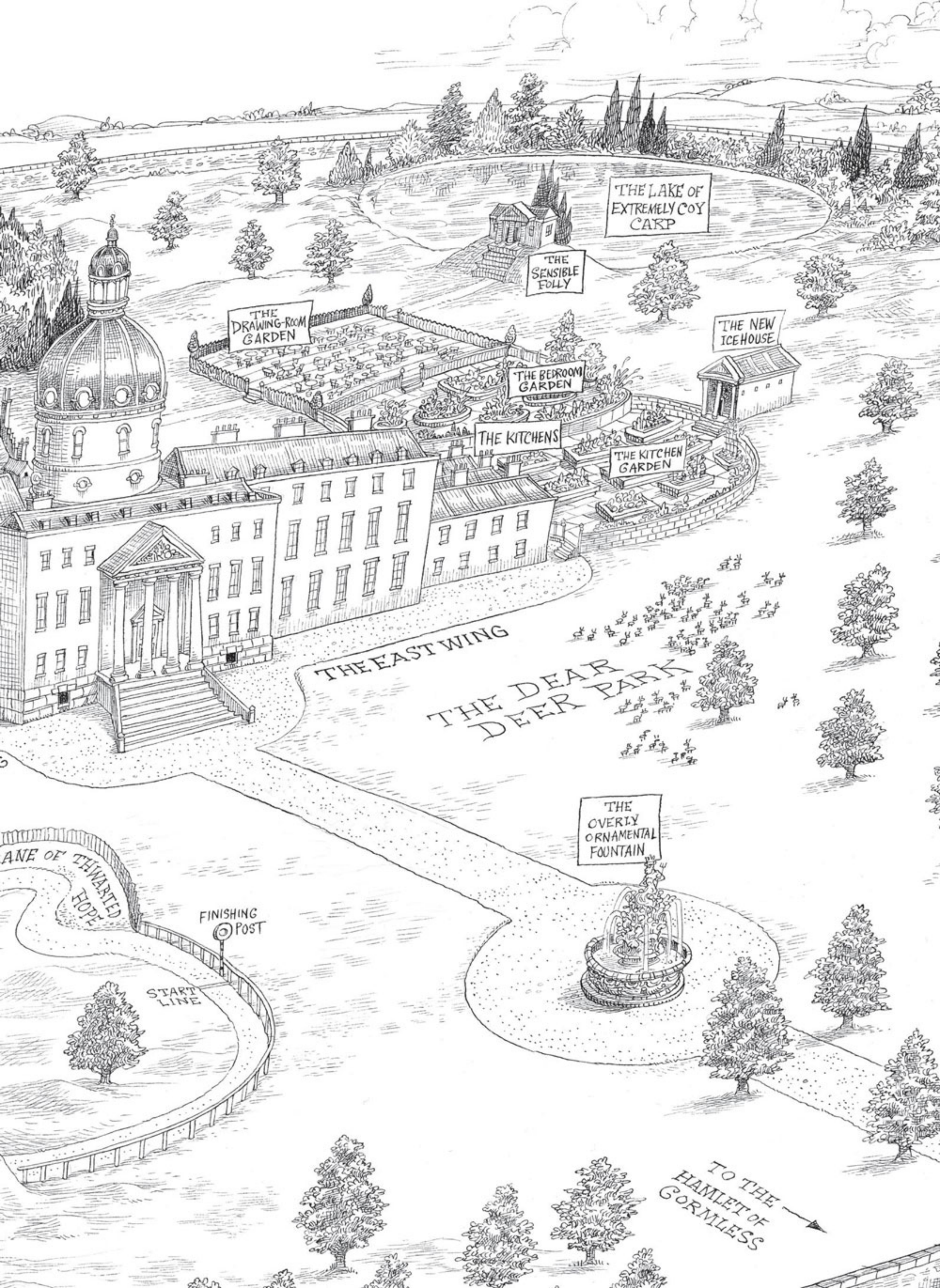
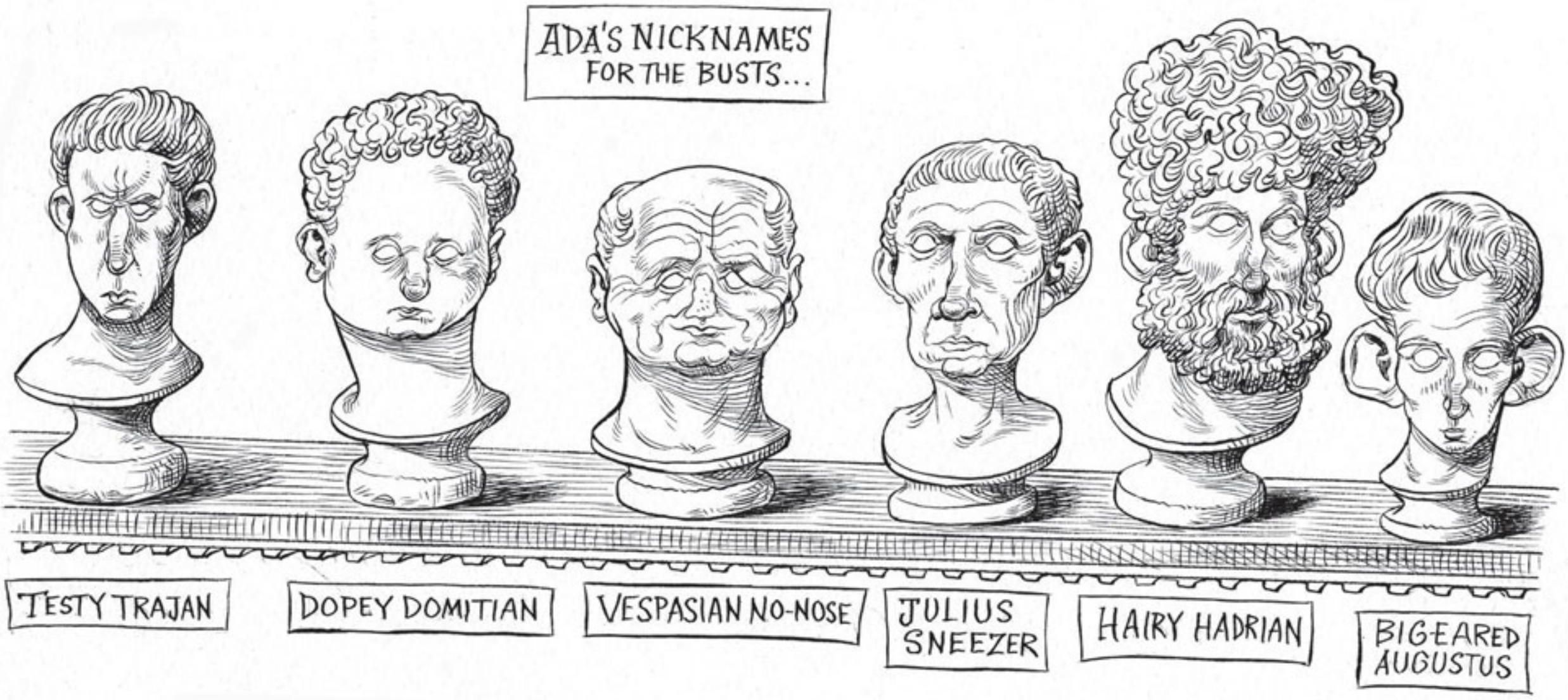

THE LAKE OF EXTREMELY COY CARP
THE SENSIBLE FOLLY
THE DRAWING-ROOM GARDEN
THE NEW ICEHOUSE
THE BEDROOM GARDEN
THE KITCHENS
THE KITCHEN GARDEN
THE EAST WING
THE DEAR DEER PARK
THE OVERLY ORNAMENTAL FOUNTAIN
LANE OF THWARTED HOPE
FINISHING POST
START LINE
TO THE HAMLET OF GORMLESS



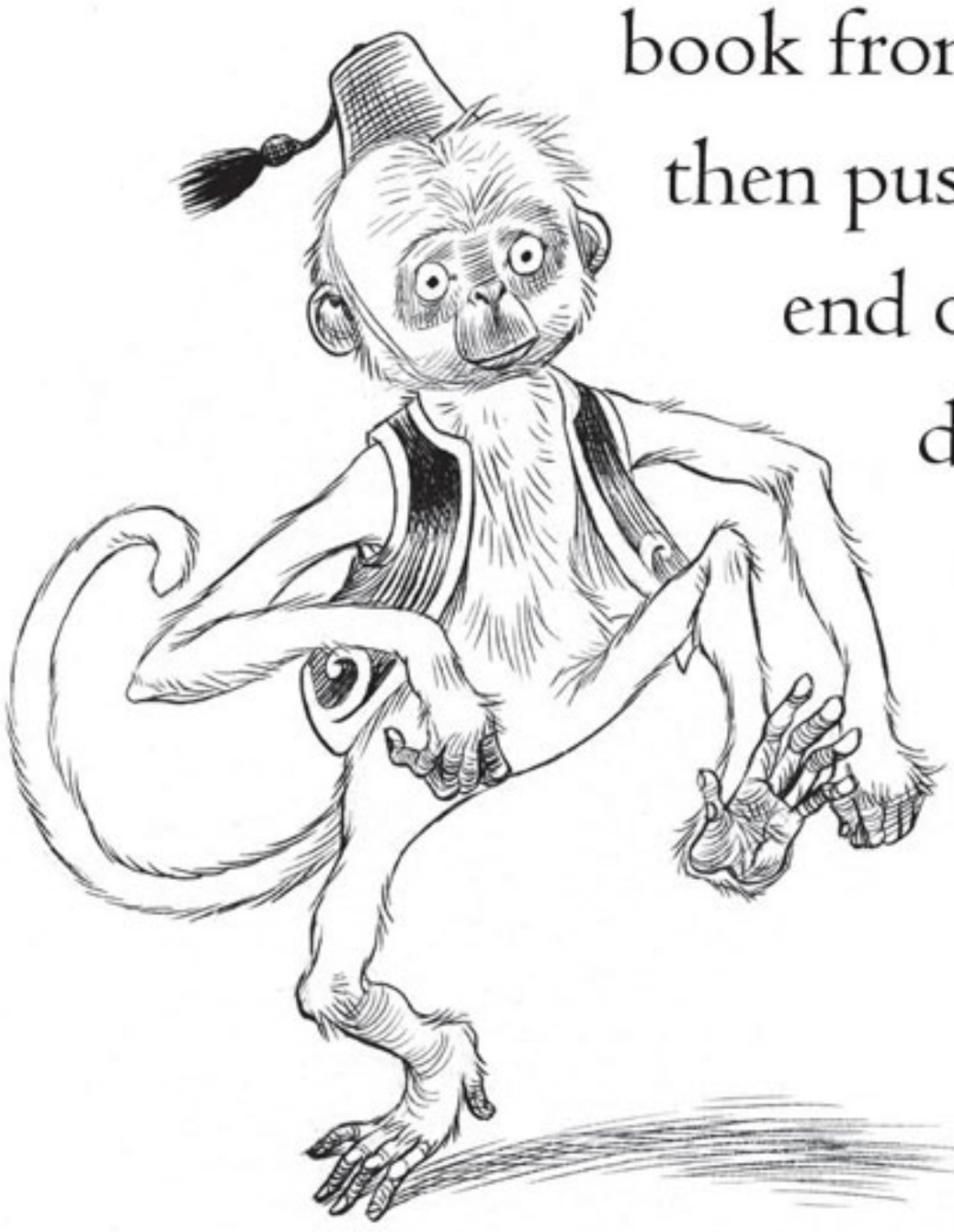
Christmas at Ghastly-Gorm Hall was usually a quiet affair. The bells of the little church of Gormless St Hilda's were rung and the local shepherds gathered for the ancient ceremony of the washing of the socks while the inhabitants of the little hamlet of Gormless exchanged gifts of stockings containing small oranges and lumps of coal.

Ada wanted to finish her father's book before he returned. It was a very exciting story written in verse, called *The Pilgrimage of Harolde the Kid*, about the travels of a young goat. Ada had just got to the part where Harolde climbs the Alps to nibble

THE PILGRIMAGE OF HAROLDE THE KID

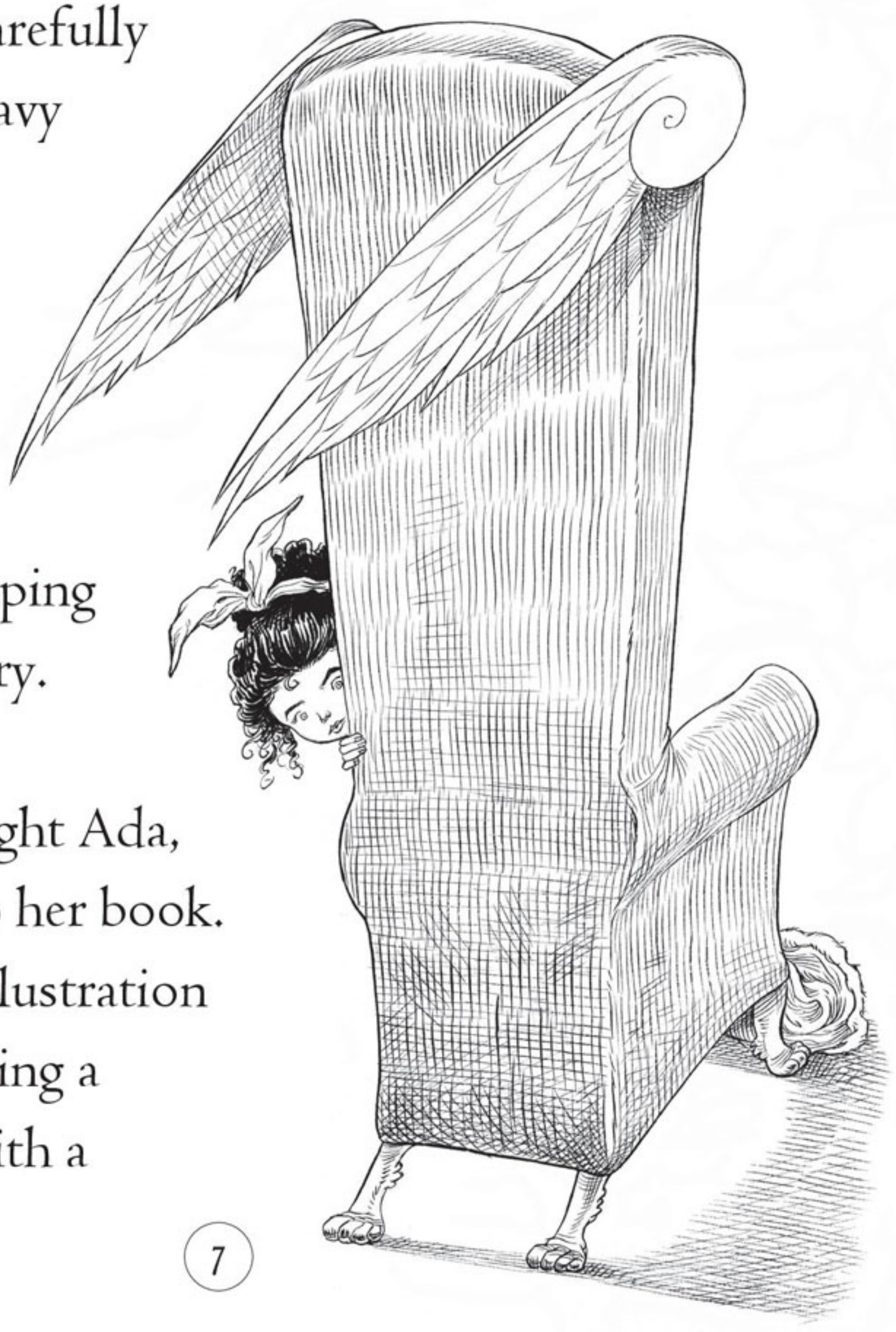
mountain moss when she heard the squeak of little brass wheels. Looking up from the book, Ada saw a ladder moving past Hairy Hadrian and towards Big-Eared Augustus.

A small monkey in an even smaller hat was gliding past the bookshelves, holding on to the ladder with one hand and pulling himself along with the other. As Ada watched, the monkey brought the ladder to a halt and carefully selected a book from the top-most shelf. It then pushed the ladder on to the end of the bookcase, scampered down the rungs and hurried out of the door.



How curious, thought Ada. She was about to return to *The Pilgrimage of Harolde the Kid* when she

caught sight of a movement out of the corner of her eye. Ada peered around the wing of her wing-back chair. A second monkey was pushing a second ladder along the bookcase just behind her. Ada watched as the monkey, who had a three-volume survey of Ireland under his arm, came to a stop and carefully replaced the heavy books on the shelf, one after the other, before sliding down the ladder and skipping out of the library. Curiouser and curiouser, thought Ada, and returned to her book. There was an illustration of Harolde having a conversation with a



wild-looking mountain goat with curly horns. She smiled – this was just the sort of book she liked. After all, thought Ada, what's the use of a book without pictures or conversations? It was what one of her governesses had told her. Ada couldn't remember which one.*

COGWHEEL FOOT NOTE

*In fact Jane Ear, Ada's third governess, had overheard a former pupil called Charlie Dodgson saying this as he drew a comic strip in the margin of his mathematics book, and liked to repeat it as if it was her own idea.

Ada had been taught by seven governesses . . .

LUCY BORGIA WAS ADA'S CURRENT GOVERNESS AND WAS ON A MOONLIT TOUR OF WHITBY WITH LORD SYDNEY WHIMSY.

MORAG MACBEE WAS NOW HEADMISTRESS OF THE EDINBURGH ACADEMY FOR YOUNG LADIES OF QUALITY.

HEBE POPPINS WAS MARRIED TO A CHIMNEY SWEEP AND HAD A DAUGHTER CALLED MARY.

JANE EAR WAS RUNNING A SMALL SCHOOL IN YORKSHIRE.

NANNY DARLING WAS GUARDING THE CRÈCHE AT THE KENSINGTON GARDENS NURSERY.

BECKY BLUNT WAS THE SPORTS MISTRESS AT ROTTENDEAN SCHOOL IN THE FASHIONABLE SEASIDE RESORT OF BRIGHTON.

MARIANNE DELACROIX HAD A TALENTED SON CALLED EUGENE.

Ada turned the page and continued reading.

From lofty crag oft tipped with misty fog,

To lowland vale steeped deep in bog,

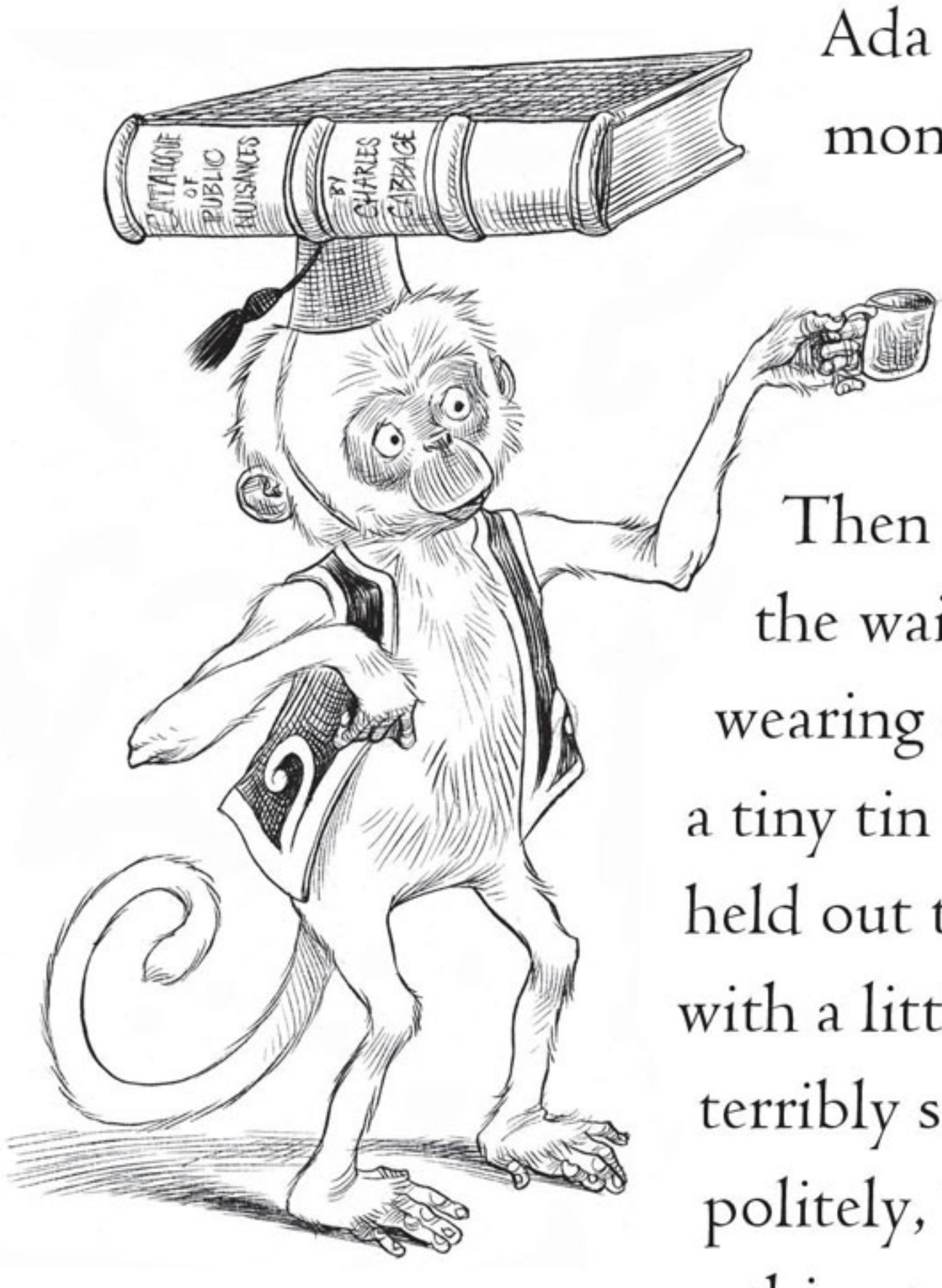
Harolde his vertiginous pilgrimage did make,

Stopping only for tea and cake.

'Baa!' quoth he, and 'Bleat!' he blew,

For these were the only words he knew . . .

Just then, a third monkey walked past Ada's chair clutching a book almost as large as itself. 'Catalogue of Public Nuisances' it said in gold letters on the spine, 'by Charles Cabbage'. When Ada caught the monkey's eye, it stopped and looked a little awkward. Then it reached into the waistcoat it was wearing and took out a tiny tin cup which it held out towards Ada with a little shake. 'I'm terribly sorry,' said Ada politely, 'but I don't have anything to give you.'



The monkey shrugged, put the cup away and tipped its little hat before walking on, balancing the book rather elegantly on its head.