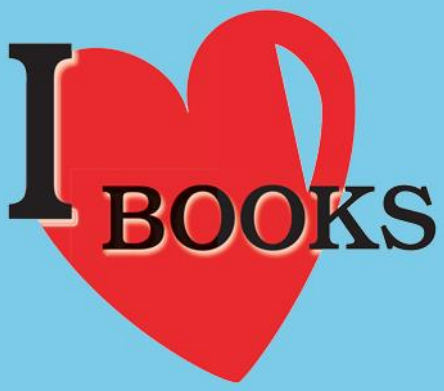


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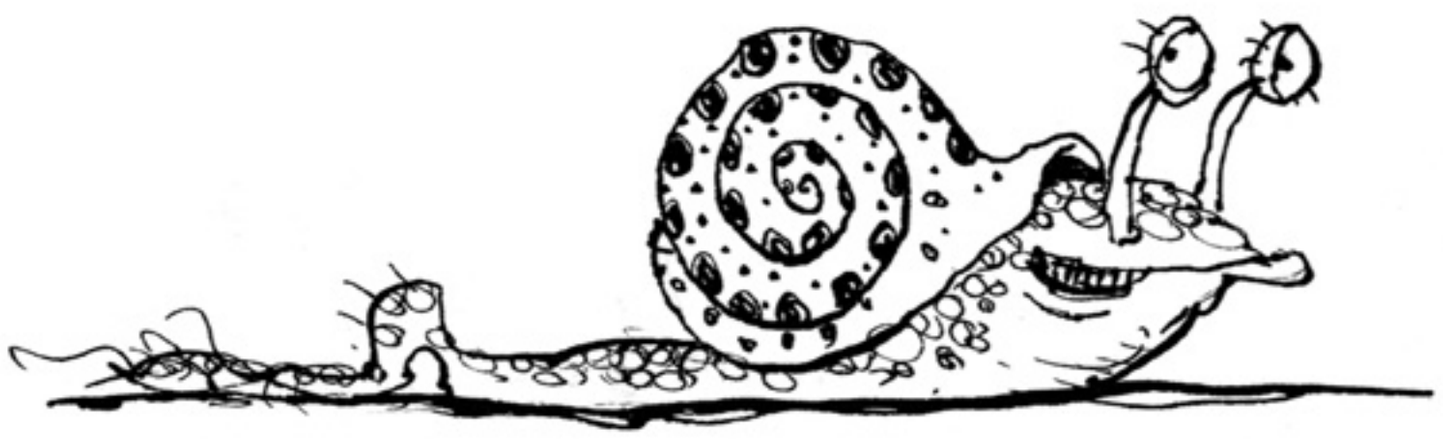
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Broomstick

ALERT



'I'm bored!' said Winnie. 'I'm as bored as a snail is bored with the view inside its shell. I'm as bored as my toes are with the smell inside my socks. I'm as bored as . . .'

'Mrrow!' said Wilbur, and he put his paws over his ears.

'Am I being boring, Wilbur?' said Winnie.

'Mrrow!' said Wilbur crossly.

'What do people do to stop being bored?





Let's go down to the village and look in the library,' said Winnie.

The library was full of bookshelves, and full of people reading books.

'Look at them!' whispered Winnie. One person was laughing. Another looked frightened. 'How do books do that to people?' asked Winnie. She took a book from a shelf and looked at the black words on a white page that she couldn't read.

Those marks didn't make her cry or laugh or feel anything. Winnie turned the book the other way up, but it didn't make any difference. Wilbur was lying on the carpet with a book open in front of him and he was cat-laughing.

'Mrow-ha-ha!'

'I want to know what's funny!' said Winnie. 'I'm blooming well going back to that school!'

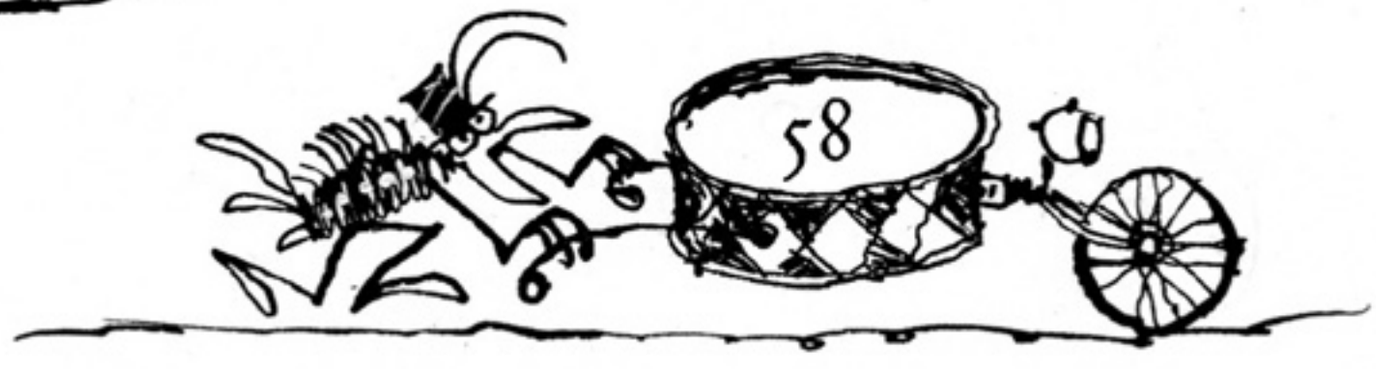




Winnie was in luck.

'Look at that, Wilbur! There's a whole flock of witches going to school today! And girls with plaits and stripy stockings and bears with suitcases and wizards with zigzags on their foreheads and . . . oh . . . almost everything except little ordinaries. They're as odd as a bag of ugly bug pick-n-mix. Come on, Wilbur, we'll fit in with the others today!'







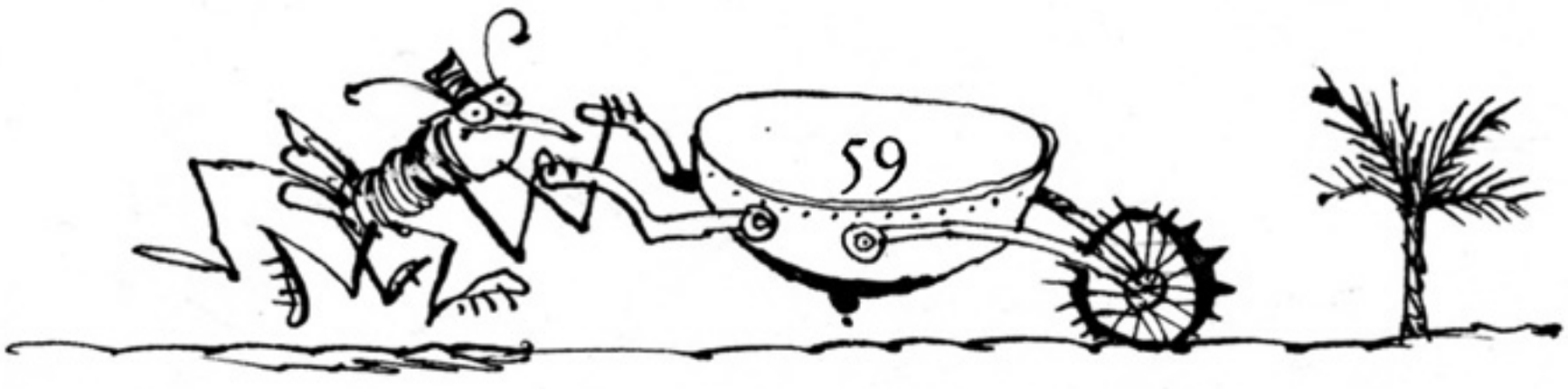
'Who are you?' asked one small witch in stripy tights.

'I'm Winnie the Witch,' said Winnie.

'So am I!' said the small one.

'Eh?' Winnie stood still and puzzled.

'How does that work, then?'



But Wilbur caught her cardigan in a claw and hurried her into the classroom.

The teacher, in a red cloak with a hood, was taking the register.

'Captain Teachum?'

'Here.'

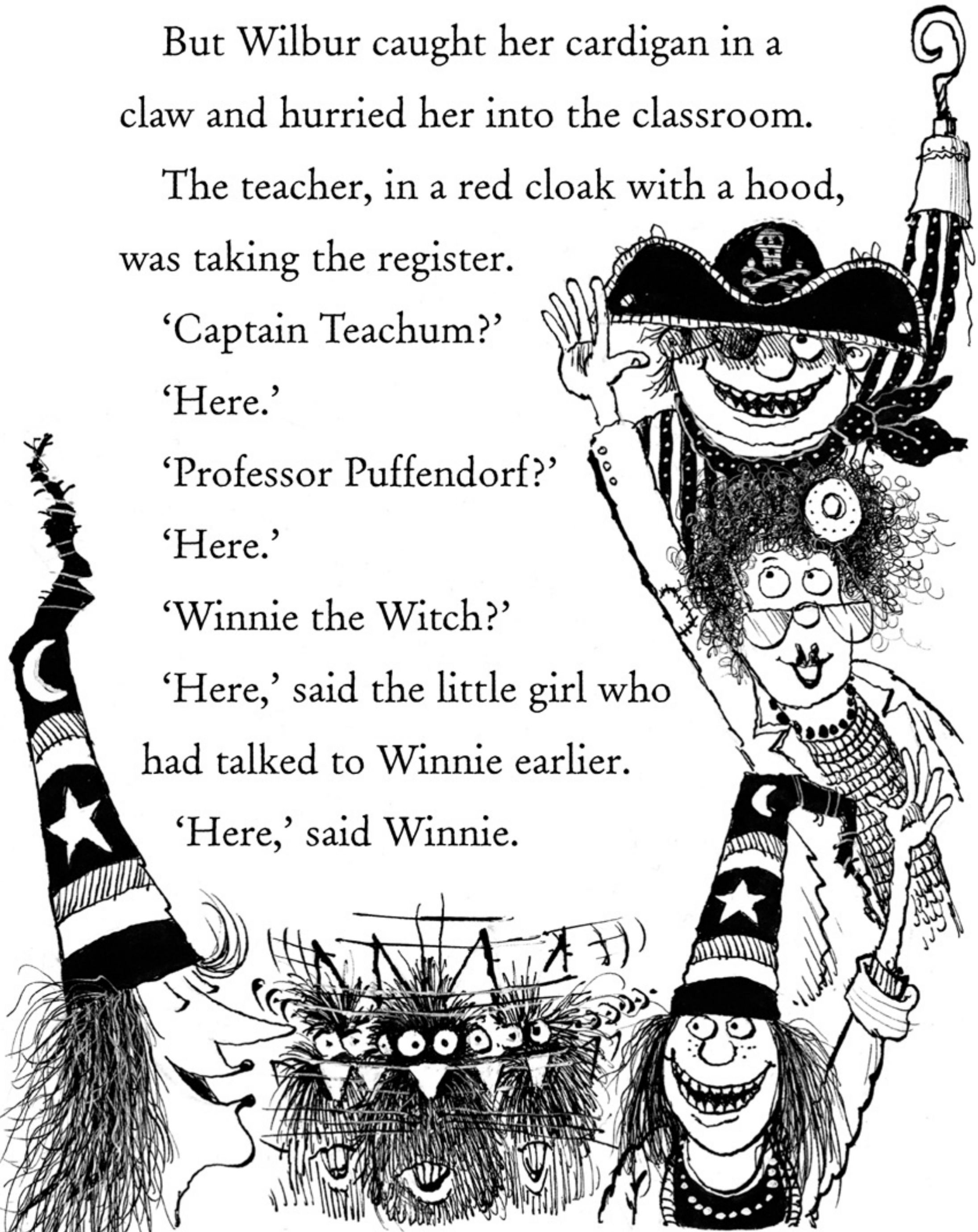
'Professor Puffendorf?'

'Here.'

'Winnie the Witch?'

'Here,' said the little girl who had talked to Winnie earlier.

'Here,' said Winnie.



'Who are you?' asked the teacher, glaring at Winnie. 'And what is that cat doing in my classroom? We don't allow witches in school!'

'But—!' began Winnie, looking around at lots of witches. But the teacher was pointing at the door.

'Out!' said the teacher. So Winnie and Wilbur went out of the classroom . . .

