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opening extract from

Snow Dog

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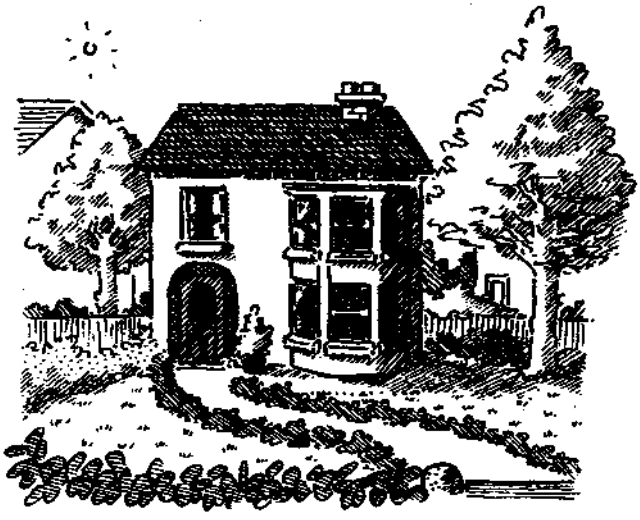
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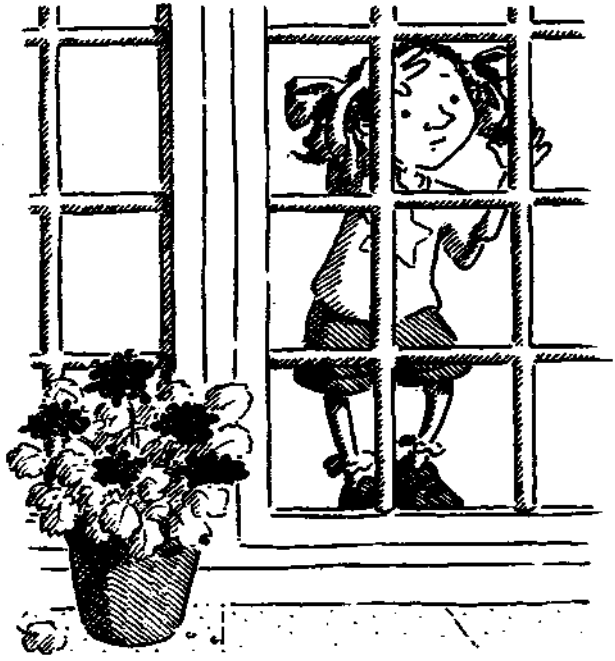
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Chapter One
Grandad's Idea



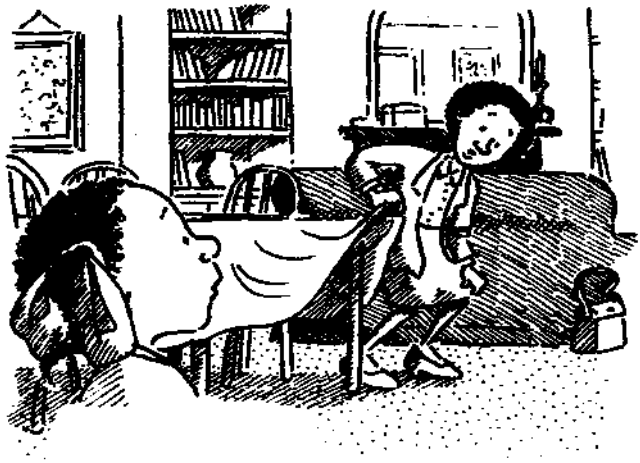
Nicky lived with her mum and her dad in a beautiful house with lots of rooms. The house had a big garden at the front and an even bigger garden at the back. But Nicky was miserable.



She didn't mind not having any brothers or sisters, but there was one thing she wanted more than anything else in the world.

"Mum, *please* can I have a dog?"

"You must be joking, sweet pea," sniffed Nicky's mum as she hunted for her handbag.



"Why not?"

"Because a dog would make a mess of our carpets," said Nicky's mum, as she searched in her handbag for her front door keys.

"We could make a kennel for it in our back garden," Nicky tried.



"In the garden?" Nicky's mum was horrified. "Where it could dig up my tulips and my pansies and my roses? Are you crazy? I don't think so, poppet."

And Mum rushed off to work.

"Dad, can I have a dog *please*?" Nicky pleaded, as Dad came downstairs.



"I'm afraid not, precious."

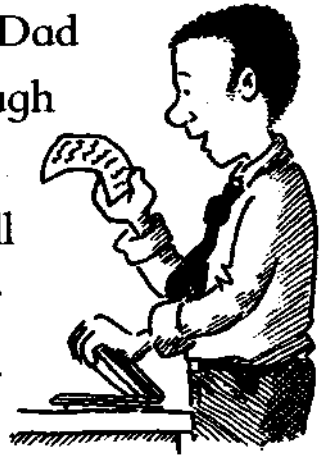
"But why not?" Nicky was trying not to cry.

"Because, my apple dumpling, your mum and I work during the day and you're at school, so who would look after it?" said Dad.



"I would when I got home from school," Nicky replied eagerly.

"No, honey muffin. Dogs need to be exercised regularly – through rain or shine, snow or hail. You're too young to take a dog for regular walks and your mum and I are too busy. It just wouldn't work." Dad rummaged through the notes and letters on the hall table looking for the shopping list. "Ah, there it is!"



Dad tucked the list into his shirt pocket.

"Couldn't we try, just for a while?" Nicky pleaded.

"No, angel lips. I'm sorry, but no." And Dad headed out of the door to do the shopping.





Tears started to stream down Nicky's face. Grandad, who had been watching everything from the living room, came out into the hall holding the biggest hankie she had ever seen. Grandad's hankie was almost the size of a tablecloth!

