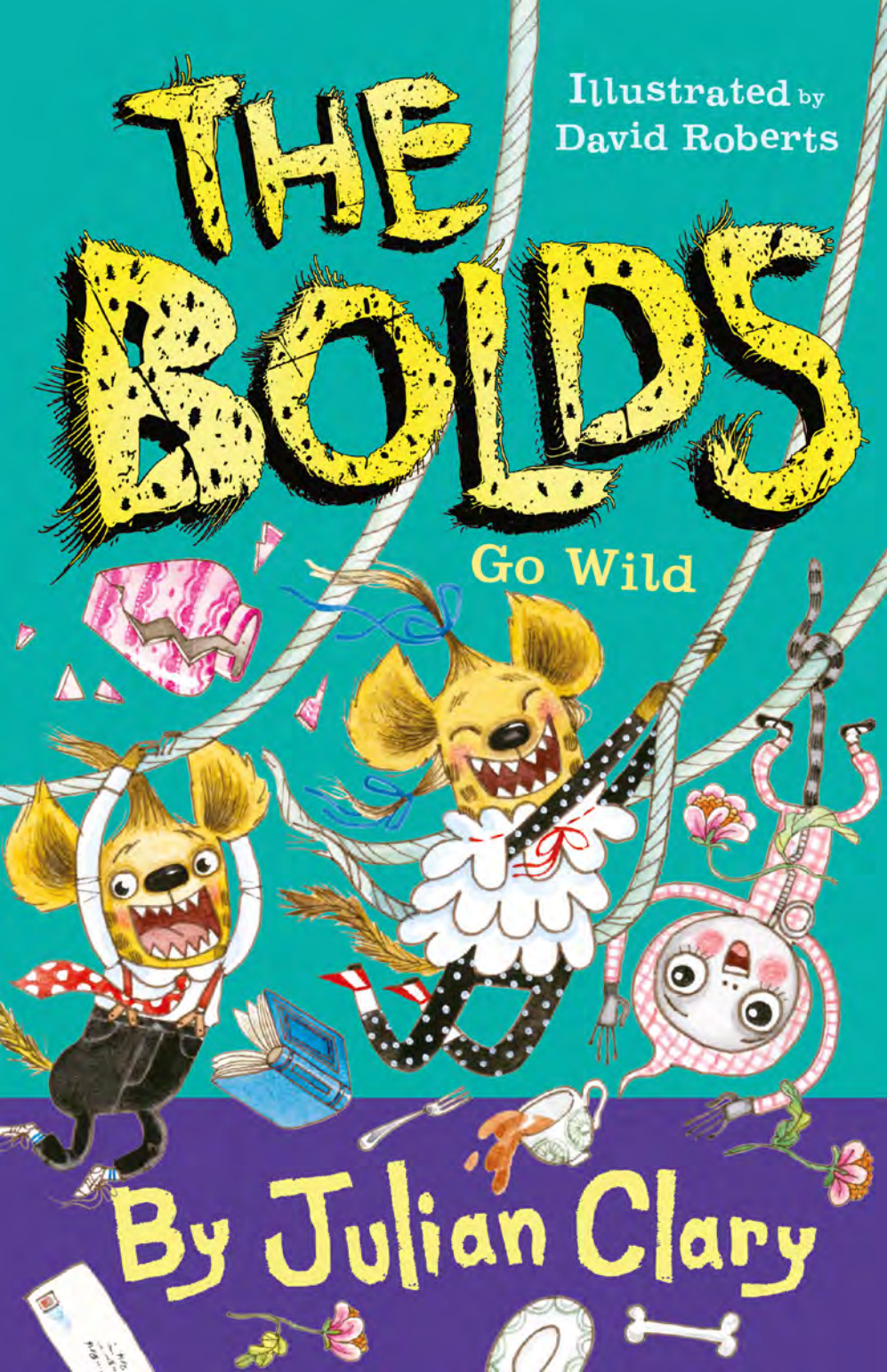
# THE BOLDS

Illustrated by David Roberts

## Go Wild



By Julian Clary




# Go Wild

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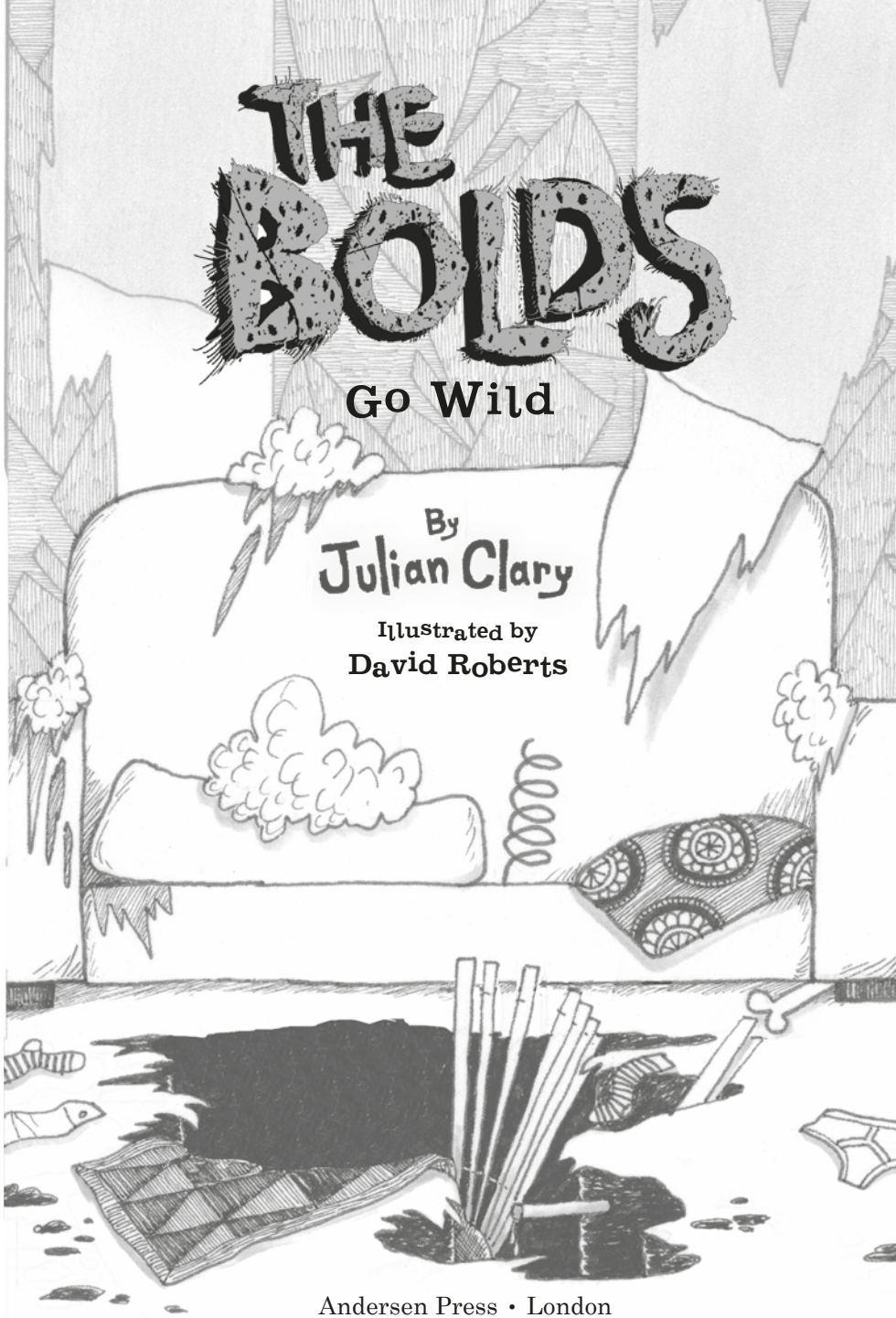
**The Bolds**

**The Bolds to the Rescue**

**The Bolds on Holiday**

**The Bolds in Trouble**

**The Bolds' Great Adventure**
(a World Book Day book)




Andersen Press • London

First published in 2019 by
Andersen Press Limited
20 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 2SA
www.andersenpress.co.uk

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data available.

ISBN 978 1 78344 804 3

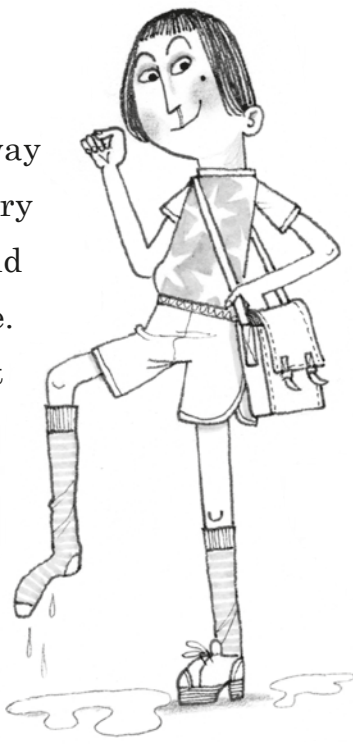
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For Milo



# Chapter 1

Some people think that everything happens for a reason. This makes perfect sense to me. Although sometimes it can take a while for the reason to become clear. You just have to be patient, that's all.



Why did I lose a shoe on the way to school? It was certainly very annoying; my foot got wet and my mother was cross with me. BUT . . . losing the shoe meant I was late for class and so I missed a maths exam. Result! It happened for a reason.

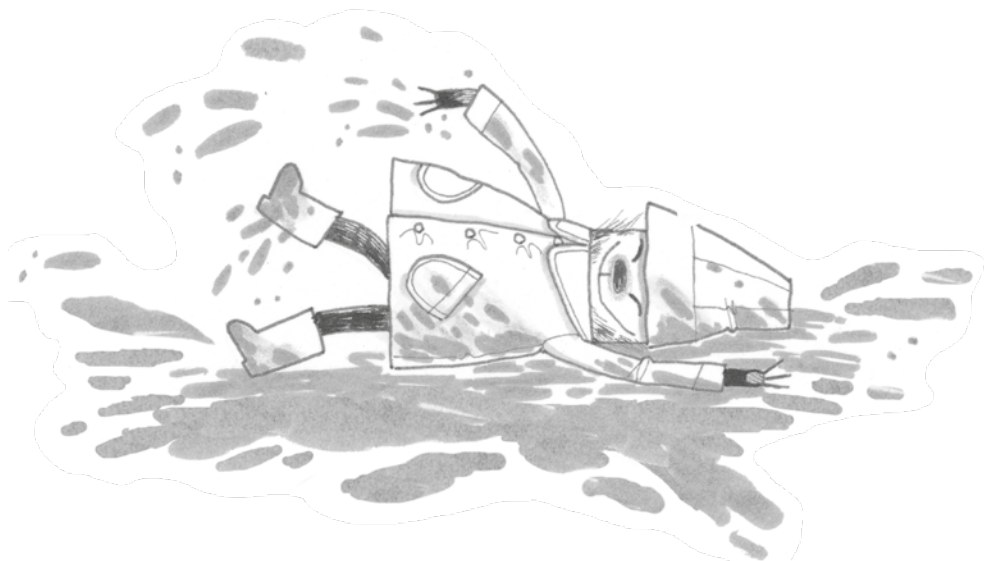
And I once told my best friend that I still slept with a teddy called Mr Pilchard. My friend told the whole class and they all laughed at me. But then I realised the reason for all this upset: it was time to dump my best friend and get myself one who *could* be trusted. So I did.

Now what about the things that happen to the Bolds?

Perhaps you are new to stories about them. I hope not, because that would mean you've been missing out on lots of fun. The Bolds, you see, are a family that strange things happen to – some things good, some not so good – but always for a reason. The good things are wonderful and the not-so-good always make the stories about them very interesting – though I say so myself.



Our story this time begins on a rainy day. Most people on days like that want to stay indoors and avoid getting wet. This isn't the case with the Bolds, though. Dear me, no. They love the rain. Rain means puddles and mud, both of which they are very keen on. Stamping in puddles and making a mess, getting mud in their fur, down their trousers or anywhere else you can think of, is their idea of fun. This is probably because the Bolds family, as you may already know, aren't actually people.



No. They're hyenas. Hyenas living disguised as human beings in a lovely little house in Teddington. In order to keep this unusual fact a secret, they are careful not to do anything too hyena-ish in public: no running around on all fours, no chasing things and eating them, no rubbing their bottoms on bushes.

But laughing wildly and messing about in the rain and mud are hyena traits they can get away with. And they do. People might think them a little odd, but those same people never jump to the conclusion that the family running around and laughing in the rain are hyenas. And for the Bolds it is a little taste of their old life. It satisfies their hyena instincts, so carefully covered up most of the time.

So on this particular day in early April, during a heavy shower, the Bold family (Mr and Mrs Bold, and their twins, Bobby and





Betty) spent a glorious couple of hours in a rather wet Bushy Park. They took with them their fellow hyena Uncle Tony, and Miranda the marmoset monkey, as well as their next-door neighbour Mr McNumpty (who is a grizzly bear, not a hyena, but rather partial to a frolic in the mud nevertheless).



To begin with they just hopped over puddles, laughing and shrieking. But then Bobby landed in a large one (perhaps by mistake, perhaps not) and splashed water all over Betty's skirt.

'Right! Game on!' said a laughing Betty, before jumping in the air and landing with a splat! right in the middle of an even larger,

ominously dark puddle. It turned out this puddle was much deeper than expected. Betty suddenly found herself knee-deep in filthy muddy water. And not only was Bobby drenched from head to foot in thick gravy-like mud, but Mrs Bold was too, as she happened to have been walking just behind Bobby.

Now I don't know about *your* family, but in mine Betty and Bobby would be in big trouble by now. However things are a little different with the Bolds.



'Eek!' said Betty, covering her mouth with her paws in surprise.

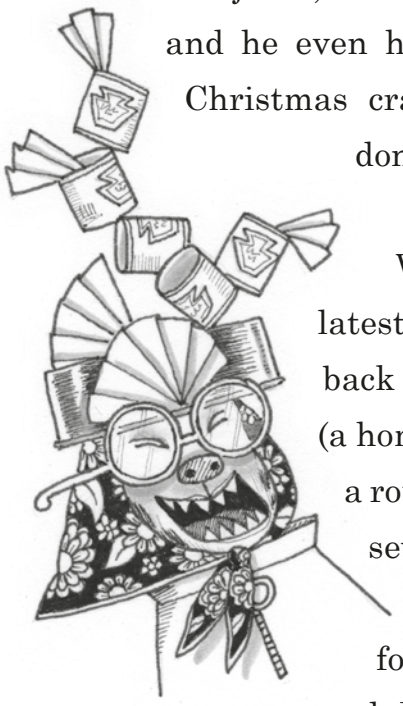
'You've had it now, Sis!' laughed Bobby, jumping in beside his sister, creating a new wave that curled right up and engulfed a squealing Betty's neck.

Mrs Bold, meanwhile, simply inhaled the earthy scent and her nostrils twitched with delight. She gave Mr Bold a sly glance. 'Mmmm!' she said. 'This *so* reminds me of life in Africa during the rainy season. Have a sniff, Fred!' She scooped up a handful of mud and rubbed it over Mr Bold's face.

'Ahhh!' said her husband. 'I know what you mean, Amelia.'



Now, in case you are unaware, Mr Bold loves jokes. Many dads do. But unlike lots of dads' jokes, Mr Bold's are actually funny and he even has a job writing them for Christmas crackers. A pretty cool job, don't you think?



When his wife heard his latest joke she threw her head back with laughter, and her hat (a home-made bonnet made from a round cake tin decorated with several empty tomato soup tins and some cleverly folded napkins) fell into the mud. But before she could pick it up, Uncle Tony (who was bent over on account of his arthritis) grabbed hold of the tin, scooped up some dirty water and, with a hyena howl of mischievous laughter, flung it over his best friend Mr McNumpty.



Nigel McNumpty wasted no time before retaliating: he reached into the depths of the deep puddle, smothering his designer-suit sleeves with muck in the process, and flung a heavy lump of smelly mud at his friend. The mud ball hit Uncle Tony a glancing blow on the shoulder but somehow landed on Mr Bold's face where it slid slowly down to his chest, leaving a gleaming brown trail behind.

Momentarily shocked, Mr Bold then let out a distinctly animal-like cackle.



Mrs Bold was so busy laughing at her husband's joke that she didn't notice Uncle Tony now creeping up behind her with Miranda perched on his shoulder, and the cake tin, full of water, in her little monkey paws. When they were directly behind her, Miranda tipped the tin all over Mrs Bold, and Uncle Tony stood there shaking with laughter.

'Bullseye! Me wetty Missy Boldy!' laughed Miranda.

Well, it was sheer mayhem after that, I can tell you. Luckily no one was out in the park that day, so no humans were there to see the extraordinary sight of a family rolling about in cold muddy puddles, hooting with delight.

After an hour or more of this pandemonium – like a snowball fight with mud that got way out of control – the Bolds pulled themselves together again.



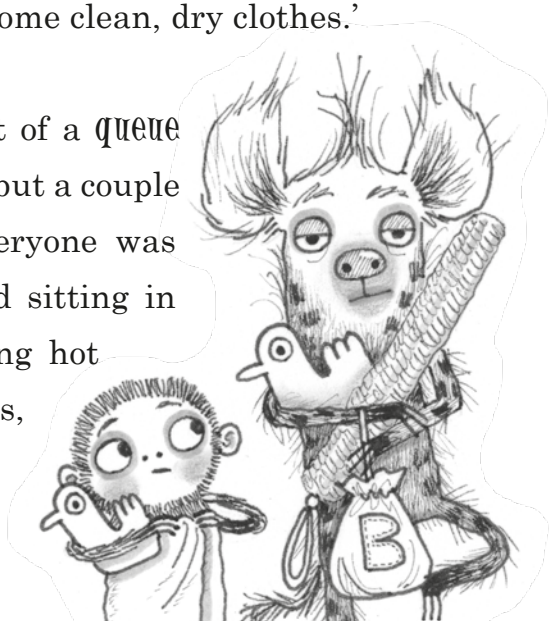


'We'd better stop,' said Mrs Bold breathlessly. 'Before we are seen. Please, Bobby, don't do that in the ferns – it's not at all human-like.'

Exhausted, but exhilarated and very, very happy (hyena happy), they made their way home to 41 Fairfield Road.

'Right,' said Mr Bold with a sigh when they were safely inside the house. 'We'd better all get changed into some clean, dry clothes.'

There was a bit of a queue for the bathroom, but a couple of hours later everyone was clean and dry and sitting in the lounge enjoying hot buttered crumpets,




slices of fruit cake and milky tea. The twins' best friend Minnie, the only human who knew the Bolds' secret, had come round. But being a human she wasn't so keen on wet weather and couldn't understand why her friends had got themselves so muddy like that.



'What goes up when rain comes down?' Mr Bold asked her.

'I know the answer to that,' said Minnie. 'An umbrella!'

'Yes!' Mr Bold said. 'Although we don't own one in this house. Can't think of anything more silly than avoiding the rain. In the Serengeti it only ever rains in the rainy season. So when it does, we animals get very excited. We all get as wet as possible. I remember my mother teaching me and my brothers and sisters how to roll around in the mud. It's good for our skin and keeps mosquitos away.' Mr Bold stared into the distance. 'Ah, yes,' he sighed. 'Happy days.'

But his thoughts of home were suddenly interrupted by an urgent tapping sound.



'What's that?' asked Bobby.

'It's coming from the window!' declared Mrs Bold, pulling back the net curtains to get a closer look. There, on the other side of the window, sat a fairly large, sleek grey bird, his beady eyes staring in through the glass. He gave three quick, impatient taps with his small beak and then sat there expectantly.

'He wants to come in out of the rain,' said Mrs Bold. 'All right, Mr Bird! One moment.'

And she opened the window to let him in.



# Chapter 2

The second the window was open, the bird flew in and perched on top of the television, looking round the room.

'Hello there,' said Uncle Tony, who was just finishing a slice of fruit cake. 'Can I interest you in these crumbs?' He held out his plate in the direction of the bird, who looked at them hungrily.

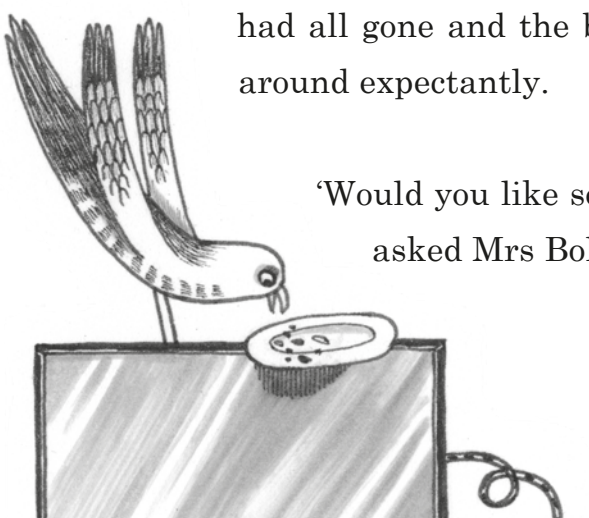
'Thank you,' he said. 'That is most kind. Could someone bring them over here? I've had rather a long flight and my wings are all flapped out.'



Betty jumped up, took the plate from Uncle Tony and rested it on the television next to the bird – who immediately began to eat all the golden crumbs.

'Delicious!' he said with his beak full.

While he ate, the Bolds were able to admire his lovely plumage. It was dark grey on his back, but much lighter over his chest, with stripes of darker feathers from chin to legs. His head was a soft, pale dove-grey and he had a short, yellowish beak that curved downwards, and startled-looking eyes of even brighter yellow with a black centre. Very quickly the crumbs had all gone and the bird looked around expectantly.



'Would you like some more?' asked Mrs Bold.

'Well, I don't suppose you have any caterpillars? Or a grasshopper, do you?'

'Er, I saw some caterpillars on the cabbages in your vegetable patch this morning, Fred,' said Mr McNumpty.

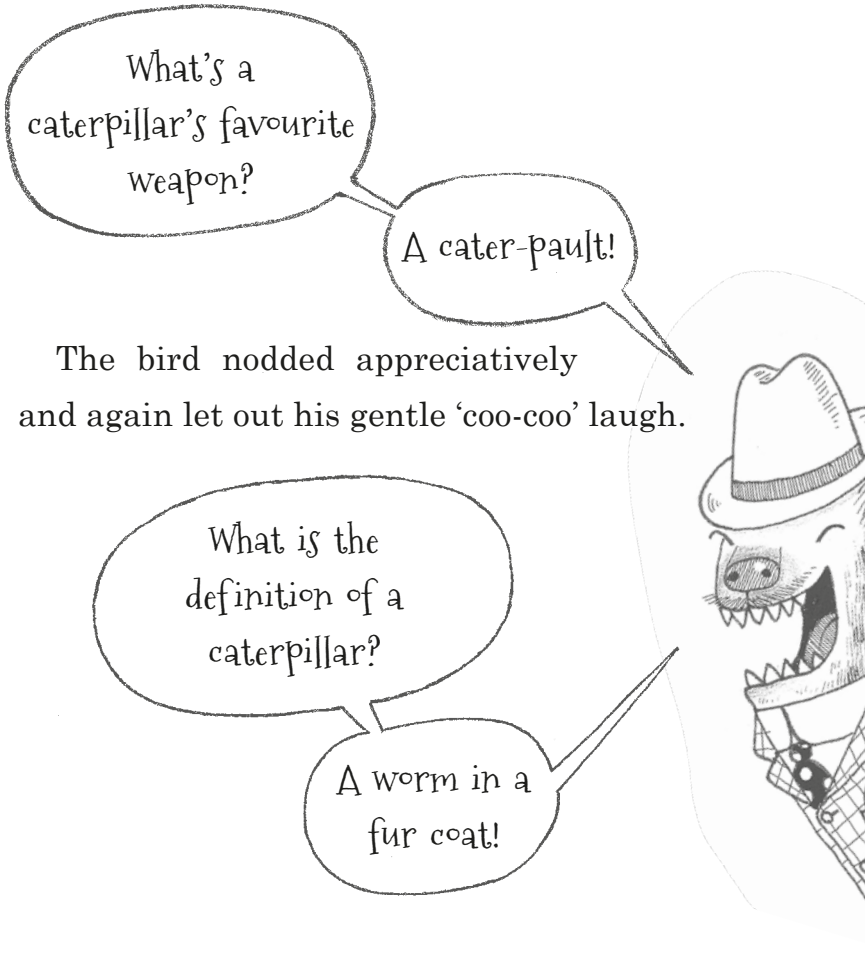
'I'll go and get you some,' offered Betty. She took the plate and went out to the garden.

While she was gone, Mr Bold filled in the silence with some jokes.




It wasn't one of his best jokes, but the hungry bird seemed to appreciate it. The bird's laugh was most unusual, a sort of 'coo, coo, coo!' sound.

Encouraged by his reaction, Mr Bold tried another joke.




The bird nodded appreciatively and again let out his gentle 'coo-coo' laugh.

'Oh, that one is very good,' complimented the bird. 'Your jokes are quite a tonic after my long journey.'

'Have you come far?'

'Three thousand, five hundred and eighty-three miles,' the bird answered nonchalantly, giving his chest feathers a gentle peck with his beak.

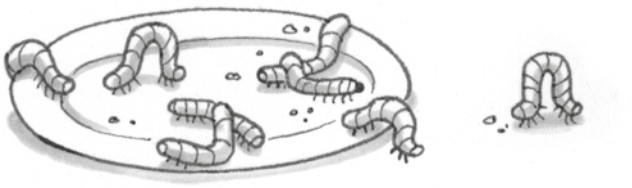
'Wowsers!' said Bobby, impressed. 'No wonder you're so hungry. Did you do it all in one go?'

'Er, no,' said the bird. 'I had a comfort break in Morocco and then I ate so much pasta in Italy I couldn't take off for a week.'

Just then Betty arrived back from the garden with seven or eight green wriggling



caterpillars on a plate. Despite being so tired, the bird flapped his wings with delight.



'Ah, thank you! The crumbs were a very nice starter, but this is my main course!' He deftly picked up the first caterpillar with his beak, tilted his head back slightly, and it was gone. 'Heaven!' he sighed. 'I haven't had one of these tasty fellas since I left England six months ago. My name is Hector, by the way.'

There was an awful lot the Bolds wanted to know. Where had Hector been? Why had he flown back? And why had he tapped on their window?

But they all sat in polite silence while

Hector enjoyed his dinner, which, it has to be said, didn't take long. When the last juicy caterpillar disappeared into his yellow beak he sighed contentedly again. 'Thank you, thank you!' he said. 'You are all very kind. Now would you mind terribly, Fred, if I had a little sleep?'

Fred looked surprised. 'Er, no, of course not. But how do you know my name?'

Hector didn't answer. 'I could perch on the curtain rail, if that's all right with you?' he suggested, yawning and blinking with evident tiredness. He didn't wait for a reply and flew the short distance to the window, settling himself in the corner. 'Perhaps you'd better put some newspaper down on the floor below me?' he added. 'I sometimes do my business in my sleep. Embarrassing really, but that's our cuckoo way.'



'You're a cuckoo?' asked Bobby, looking up at the bird, who ruffled his feathers.

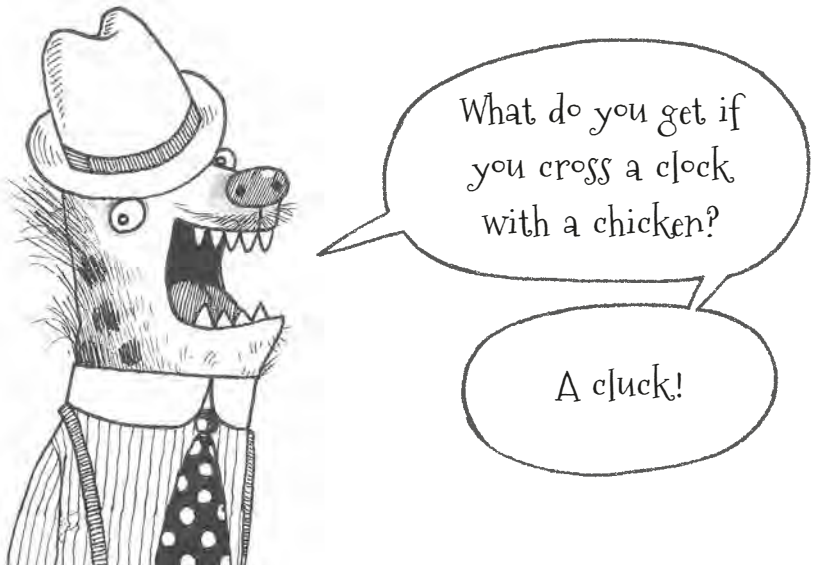
Hector's head drooped as he gave another yawn and his eyes began to close. 'I am, yes. I'll tell you everything when I wake up. I'm really sorry, but I am so, so tired now. I've come to tell Fred something very important. But it will have to wait . . . until . . . morn . . . ing.' Hector's eyes closed altogether and within seconds there was a gentle 'COO-COO-ZZZ' noise.

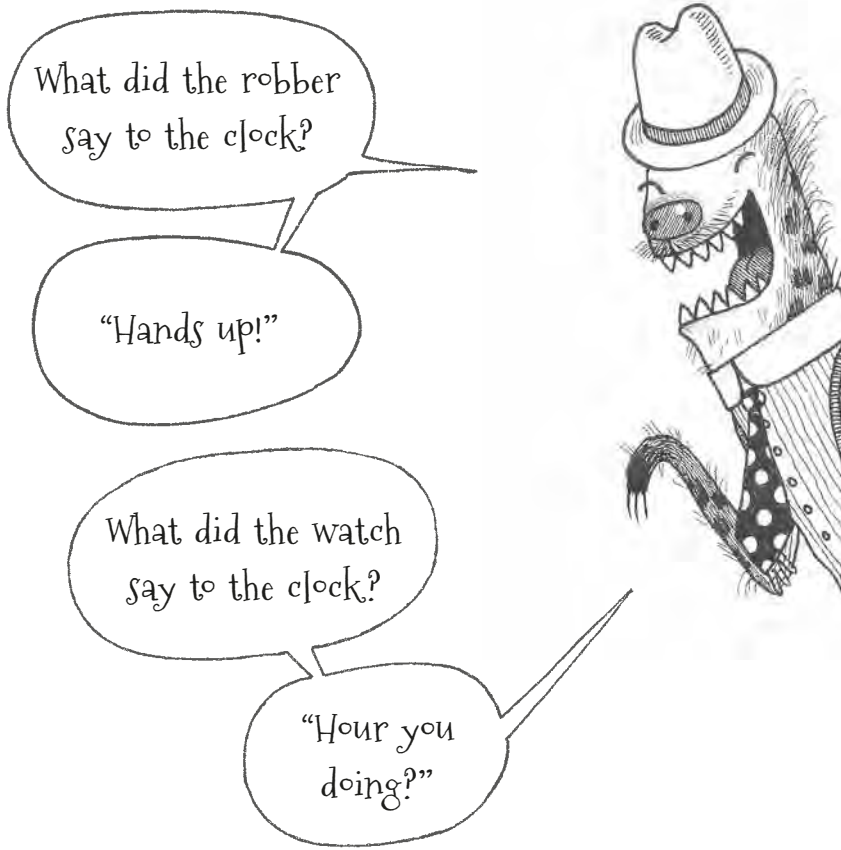
'But . . . !' began Fred.

'Not now,' whispered Mrs Bold. 'He's snoring. No wonder, after that long journey. Let the poor bird have some rest. Let's leave him in peace.' She turned out the lights and signalled for everyone to leave the room. They all crept out in silence.

I don't know about you, but I'm not very good at being patient. If someone told me they had something '**very important**' to tell me and then fell **asleep**, my imagination would be working overtime. Is it good news or bad news? Will it make me happy or cross or sad? I'd have to wake them up somehow.

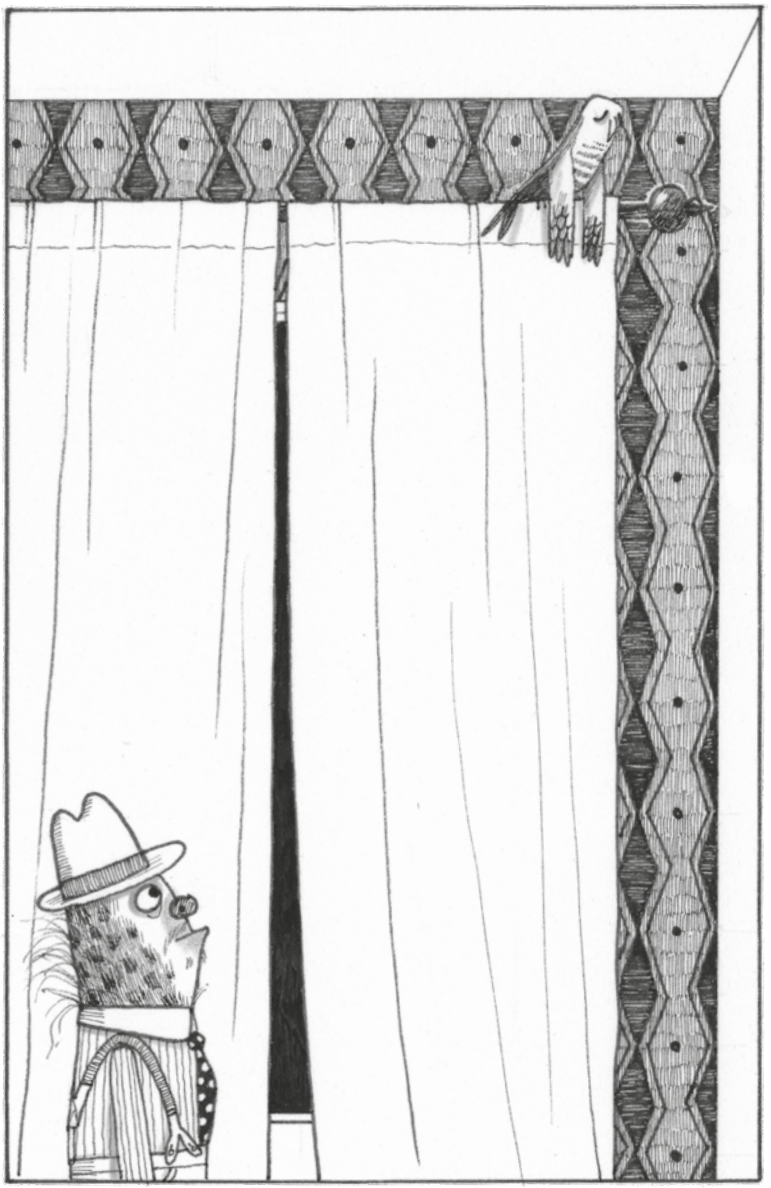
Well, poor Mr Bold felt **exactly** the same. He poked his head round the lounge door several times that evening but Hector was always fast asleep. He tried to pass the time by telling jokes, of course. Telling jokes was always what Fred did in any situation. He found it **relaxing**.




But even so, it was a very **long** evening for Fred as he **waited** and waited.

Eventually Minnie went home, and the twins had their cocoa and their bedtime story.



Then Mr McNumpty went home, and Uncle Tony and Miranda settled down for the night.

'It's nearly half past ten, Fred,' said Mrs Bold to her husband. 'I think Hector is so exhausted he will sleep until tomorrow morning. We will just have to wait.'

'Wait?' said Fred.

'Yes,' replied Amelia.

'But I can't!' said her husband. He tried loudly whispering 'Hector!' but it didn't work.

Hector kept on sleeping.

'How about if I accidentally drop a tin tray outside the lounge door?'

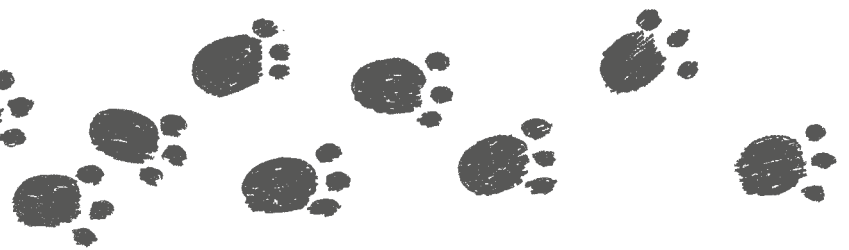
'No,' laughed Mrs Bold. 'I won't hear of it.'

'Or I could have a coughing fit?'

'You haven't got a cough!'

'But I'm desperate to know Hector's news . . . what can it be?'

'You'll find out in the morning, dear. Try and think about something else.'



# Chapter 3

It was a difficult night for Mr Bold. He couldn't get to sleep for hours, wondering about Hector's news. Then he was awake before dawn, washed and dressed and listening outside the lounge door to see if their visitor had woken up. He hadn't. So Fred collected some more caterpillars from the vegetable patch ready for Hector's breakfast. In fact, he tried one himself and rather enjoyed it. So he tried another. Then another, until in the end he had to make a second trip to the garden to replenish the saucer.

Eventually everyone else got up and had



breakfast and they all gathered in the lounge, facing the still-sleeping cuckoo. The twins began to giggle. Mr Bold cleared his throat rather loudly. Then Uncle Tony had one of his wheezing fits and that did the trick. Hector slowly opened one eye, then the other. He yawned and looked around him as if he couldn't quite remember where he was.

'Er, good morning, Hector,' said Mr Bold brightly. 'I hope you slept well?'

'Yes, thank you, I did,' replied Hector sleepily.

'Breakfast?' offered Mrs Bold, holding



up the saucer with about a dozen wriggling caterpillars on it. Hector immediately flew down from the curtain rail to the coffee table and set about eating them. As soon as the last one was finished, Mr Bold could contain himself no longer.

'You said you had come to tell me something important?'

Hector wiped his beak on his chest and nodded. 'Yes. You are Fred Bold? And this is Number 41 Fairfield Road, Teddington, Middlesex, in England?'

'Yes, yes, yes,' said Mr Bold. 'I am and it is. What is the news?'

'Do you have any proof of identity? Passport? Utility bills? Photo ID?'



Mr Bold stood up and looked in the mirror that hung above the fireplace. 'Yes, that's definitely me,' he said confidently.

'Excellent. Then I will begin,' said Hector. 'Listen carefully.'

Everyone's attention was focused on the grey bird sitting on the coffee table.

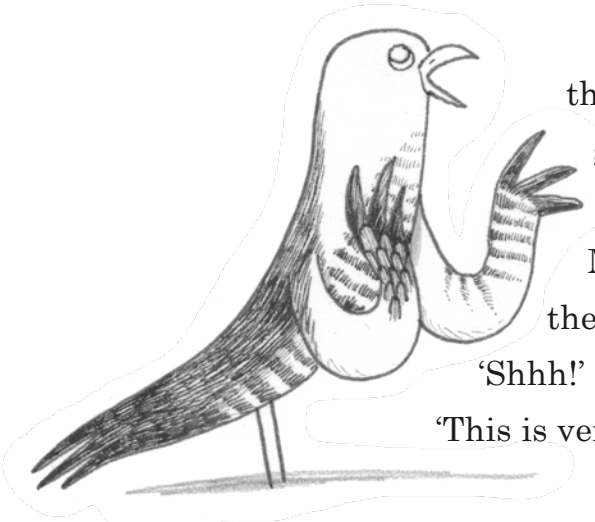




'A little background information is important, I feel,' began Hector, before clearing his throat.

'My name is Hector and I am a cuckoo. Cuckoos are medium-sized, sleek birds, just like me, with soft feathers and long tails to help us steer. We enjoy a cosmopolitan distribution, mostly in tropical places, it's fair to say, as we prefer to live in trees. We eat insects, insect larvae and various other bits and bobs, as well as fruit. Some cuckoos are known as "brood parasites", which means they sneakily lay their eggs in other birds' nests and let them have the bother of raising the hatchlings, but some also raise their own young. It just depends what mood we are in.'

Bobby and Betty let out a simultaneous sigh. This was not as interesting as they had



thought it was going to be.

Mrs Bold gave them a stern look. 'Shhh!' she whispered. 'This is very educational.'

'Cuckoos have always played an interesting role in human culture,' continued Hector. 'Notably in Greek mythology, where you may or may not know they are considered sacred to the goddess Hera. In Japan, cuckoos symbolise unrequited love, while here in Europe, our call heralds the beginning of spring to many. Isn't that interesting?'

Mr Bold couldn't contain his impatience. 'Yes, Hector, yes. But what is the news you have for me?'



'I'm getting to that,' said Hector. 'I am of the migratory variety of cuckoo. I spend April to October here in England and then I fly many miles south to avoid your winter months.'

'Where do you go?' asked Mr McNumpty.

'Africa,' replied Hector.

Suddenly everyone's ears pricked up.

'Africa?' said Mr Bold, a slight tremble in his voice. 'But that is where we come from.'

'I know,' said Hector simply. 'And it is from Africa that I bring your news.'

Fred and Amelia looked at each other, eyes wide with amazement.

'Please continue,' said Fred. 'What is the

important news you have for me?'

Hector cleared his throat again. 'Do you think I might have some water? I'm a little dry, and after such a long time getting here I'm not used to all this talking.'

*You could have fooled me*, thought Mr Bold, but he said nothing. Bobby jumped up and went to the kitchen, returning with a saucer of water for the cuckoo.

'Thank you so much,' said Hector, before taking several long sips. Then he began talking again.

'Africa is the second largest continent in the world, with the second largest population. It covers eleven point seven million square miles in fact, making up twenty per cent of all the land on planet Earth. Africa is surrounded by



bodies of water, including the *Mediterranean Sea* to the north, the *Suez Canal* and the *Red Sea* along the *Sinai Peninsula* to the north-east, the *Atlantic Ocean* to the west and the *Indian Ocean* to the south-east.'

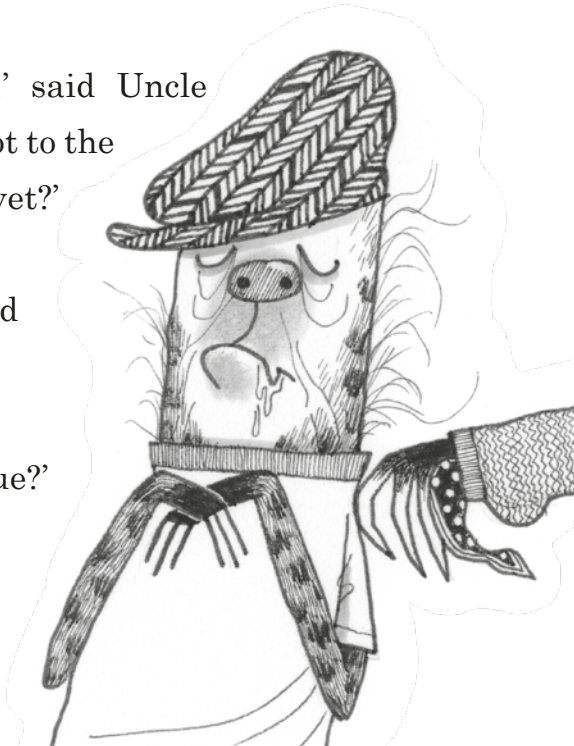
Hector was then interrupted by the sound of snoring.

'*Uncle Tony*,' said Mr McNumpty, giving his friend a nudge. 'Wake up!'

'Oh, er, sorry,' said Uncle Tony. 'Have we got to the important news yet?'

'Afraid not,' said Mr Bold.

'May I continue?' asked Hector.



'Oh, yes please,' said Mrs Bold. 'You mentioned some news?'

'Just getting to that,' said Hector. 'Now, where was I? Ah, yes. The continent is mostly situated in the *northern hemisphere,* but there are still a number of African countries in the *southern hemisphere*.'

The twins began to giggle. 'This is worse than being at school!' said Betty.

'Yes, definitely,' replied Bobby. 'At least we get a packed lunch at school.'

Mrs Bold glared at them, although secretly she quite agreed.

Hector droned on: 'There are many native animals in Africa. Too many to list just now—'



'Quite,' jumped in Mr Bold. 'We don't want to be here all day!'

'Perhaps some of the best-known are the lion, elephant, giraffe, leopard, rhino, cheetah, buffalo, crocodile, hippopotamus and zebra,' continued Hector. 'I have seen all of these animals in my time, I'm pleased to say.'

'What about hyenas?' asked Fred, a little indignantly.

'Yes, hyenas too,' confirmed Hector.

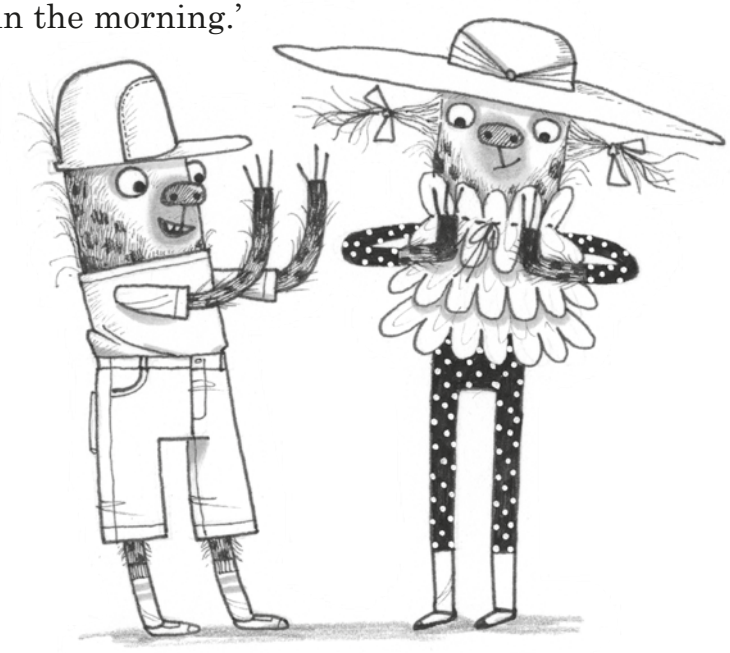
'Now we're getting somewhere,' muttered Mr McNumpty.

Hector cleared his throat again. 'Hyenas are very interesting animals. A bit like a mix-up of a cat and a dog. Hyenas catch their prey using their jaws, then eat very quickly, or sometimes

store their food somewhere secret. They have calloused feet with large, non-retractable, blunt claws, handy for running and turning.'

The twins both looked at their paws during this speech. 'See?' said Bobby to his sister. 'I knew there was a reason we had such big hands!'

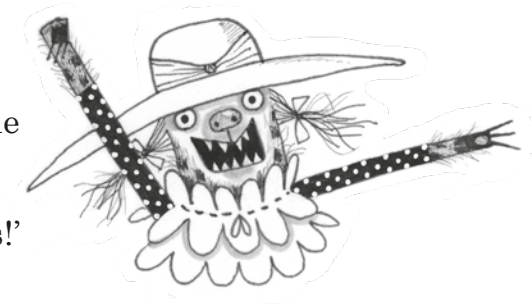
'Hyenas are, generally speaking, nocturnal animals,' continued Hector. 'But sometimes they venture out from their lairs first thing in the morning.'



'Er, we don't do that any more,' pointed out Mrs Bold. 'The neighbours were beginning to talk.'

'Over time hyenas evolved into two distinct types: the almost extinct, lightly built, dog-like hyenas and the more familiar robust, bone-crushing hyenas.'

'That's us!' said Betty, punching the air. 'We are the bone-crushing Bolds!'

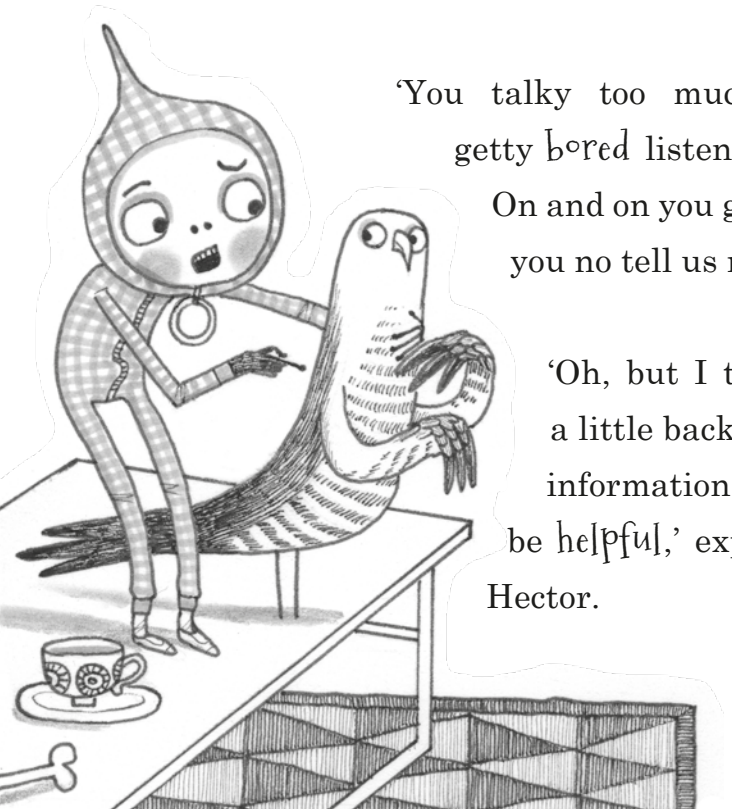


'Hyenas, like cuckoos, often appear in the folklore of human cultures. For example—'

But Mr Bold could take no more. 'Hector, I hate to interrupt you again. But we *are* hyenas. You don't need to tell us all this. We know it already.'

'But I'm just getting into my stride,' said Hector, sounding a little hurt.

Surprisingly it was Miranda – usually shy and retiring – who put a stop to Hector's monologue once and for all. She suddenly leaped out from inside Uncle Tony's T-shirt and landed next to the cuckoo on the coffee table. She placed a gentle hand on Hector's back and spoke quietly to him.



'You talky too much! We getty bored listen to you. On and on you go. Why you no tell us newsy?'

'Oh, but I thought a little background information might be helpful,' explained Hector.

'No. You boring,' said Miranda bluntly.

'I do apologise.' Hector ruffled his feathers. 'When I'm on these long flights I pass the time by reciting as many facts as I can remember from the encyclopaedia.'

'Why you no watch filmy?' asked Miranda.

'I'm the one doing the flying,' said Hector. 'I'm not on an aeroplane. There's no in-flight service!'

'Ohhhhh!' said Miranda. 'Me understandy now. No wonder you so boring.'

'I'll do as you ask,' said Hector, pursing his beak. 'I'll tell you the important news you are all waiting for.'

