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Maggie Sparks and the Swimming Pool Sharks

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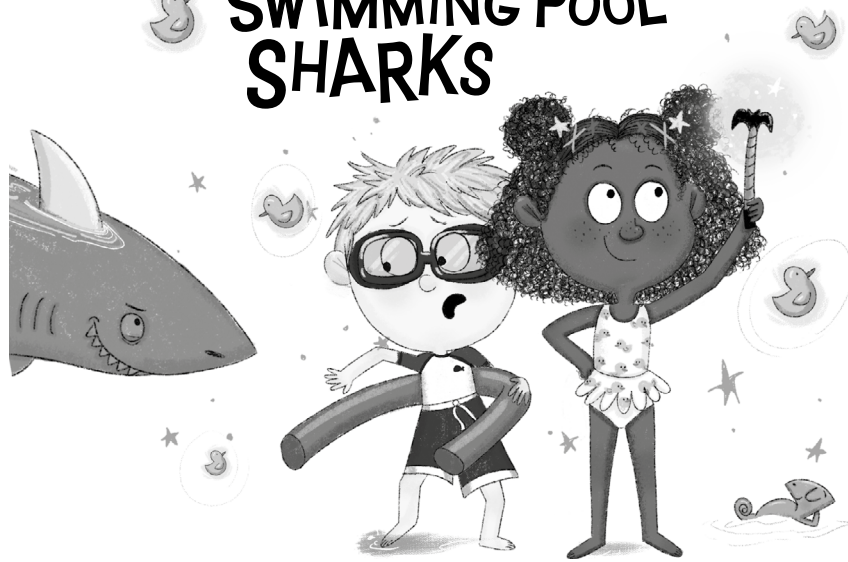
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MAGGIE SPARKS

AND THE SWIMMING POOL SHARKS



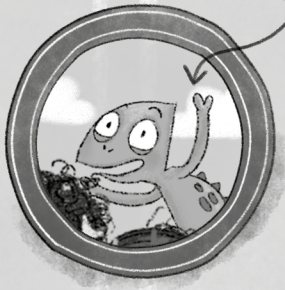
STEVE SMALLMAN
ILLUSTRATED BY
ESTHER HERNANDO

Sweet Cherry



MAGGIE
That's me!

BAT
The coolest chameleon EVER.





ALFIE
Stinky and annoying.

GRANDAD
My favourite wizard in the world!





AUNT CELIA
Posh. Likes weird food.

MUM
Super smart.
Bakes great cookies.

DAD
Writes a lot.
Cannot bake cookies.



ELLA
World's worst cousin!



ARTHUR
My best friend.

Chapter 1

Maggie Sparks was a witch. A small, curly-haired, freckle-faced witch, who was usually full of mischief and fizzing with MAGIC.

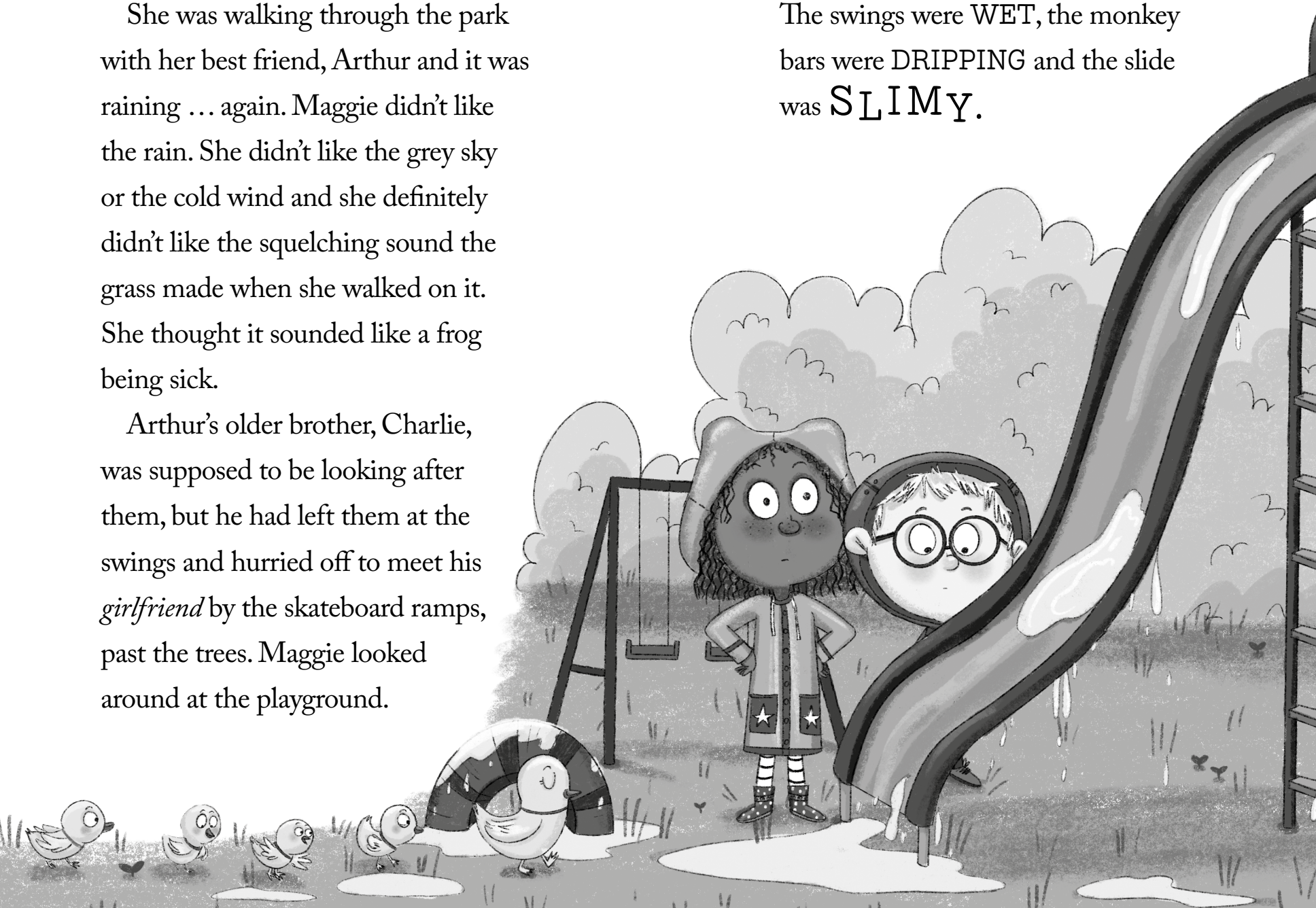
But not today. Today she was mostly soggy.



She was walking through the park with her best friend, Arthur and it was raining … again. Maggie didn't like the rain. She didn't like the grey sky or the cold wind and she definitely didn't like the squelching sound the grass made when she walked on it. She thought it sounded like a frog being sick.

Arthur's older brother, Charlie, was supposed to be looking after them, but he had left them at the swings and hurried off to meet his *girlfriend* by the skateboard ramps, past the trees. Maggie looked around at the playground.

The swings were WET, the monkey bars were DRIPPING and the slide was SLIMY.



‘Urgh, why does it have to rain all the time?’ moaned Maggie. ‘It’s SOOOOOO boring! No wonder Bat decided to stay at home.’

‘Actually,’ said Arthur, ‘rain is very important.’

‘Why?’ asked Maggie.



‘It stops kingfishers getting tummy aches,’ said Arthur.

‘What *are* you talking about?’ said Maggie.

‘Well,’ Arthur went on, ‘if there wasn’t any rain, all the streams and rivers would dry up. Then the fish would have nowhere to live, so they would die. And the dead fish would lie there in the sun and they would go all stinky and green.

But the kingfisher birds would still eat them because they don't like pizza or anything else. Then they would all get tummy aches. So that's why rain is very important.'

'No, it's not!' snapped Maggie, kicking at a puddle. 'Why can't we have snow instead?'

Maggie stopped walking as an idea popped into her head.

'Maybe we *could* have snow,' she said. 'With just a little bit of MAGIC!'

'Oh dear,' sighed Arthur.

Maggie looked around. Apart from a few damp ducks, the park was empty.

She gave her magic wand a wiggle and chanted:

Magic spark
and magic fizzle,
bring us snow
instead of drizzle!



POOF!

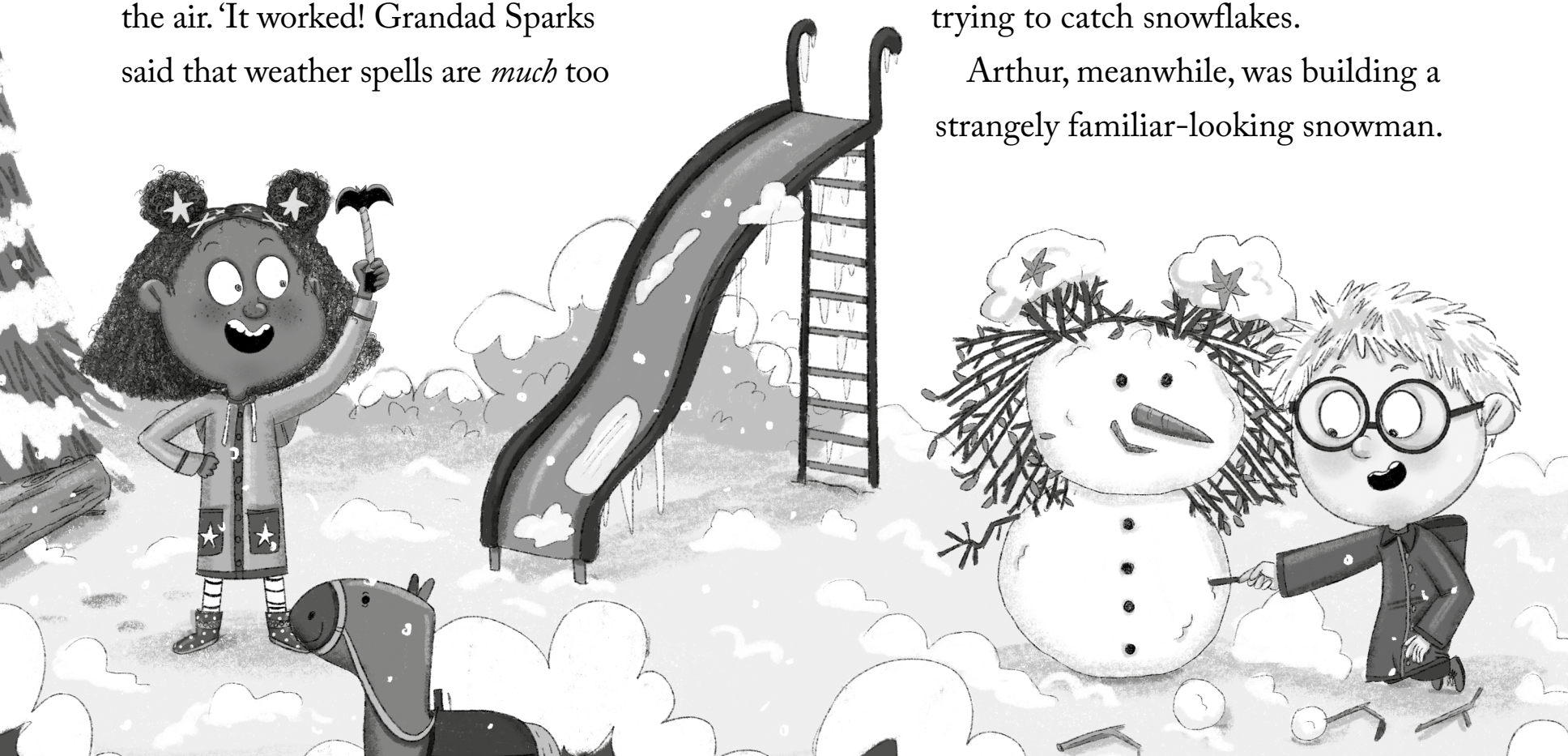
The rain stopped and everything turned white.

'Wow,' said Arthur.

'YES!' shouted Maggie, punching the air. 'It worked! Grandad Sparks said that weather spells are *much* too difficult for little witches. But I did it! I actually did it!'

Maggie slid across the ice on the newly frozen puddles. She made snow angels on the grass and ran around with her tongue sticking out, trying to catch snowflakes.

Arthur, meanwhile, was building a strangely familiar-looking snowman.



Then … SPLOOF. A big fluffy white snowball hit Arthur on the back of his head and knocked him face down into the snow.



'Got you!' giggled Maggie.

Arthur picked himself up, wiped the snow from his glasses and put them back on. 'Hey, look!' he said. 'The fountain has frozen over.'

Maggie's eyes lit up.

'Let's skate on it,' she said, climbing over the low wall and stepping onto the ice.

'Be careful,' said Arthur, 'the ice might not be very thick.'

Maggie took no notice and was soon whizzing around the fountain like an Olympic ice-skating champion. Well, a wobbly Olympic ice-skating champion, in spotty wellies.

Maggie was having a lovely time, but her feet were getting very cold. 'Time for a little welly-warming MAGIC,' she said.

Maggie took out her wand, gave it a wiggle and chanted:

