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opening extract from

Winnie's Big Cackling Book

written by

Laura Owen

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For Jenna Moxley – K.P.
For David Goodhart, with love – xx

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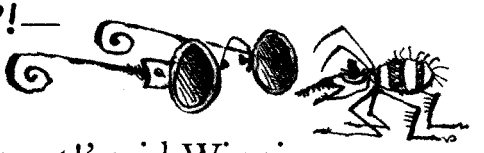
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Winnie's garden was as hot as a cauldron. Wilbur lay under a rhubarb leaf with his legs stretched and his tongue hanging out. Along came Winnie wearing such dark sunglasses that, TRIP!—



'Mrrrow!'

'Whoops! Blooming cat!' said Winnie, rubbing her nose.

'Mrrow-ow-ow!' said Wilbur.

'Well, I'm hot too, you know!' said Winnie.



'I'm a hot cross witch and you're a hot cross cat. We need to cool down.'

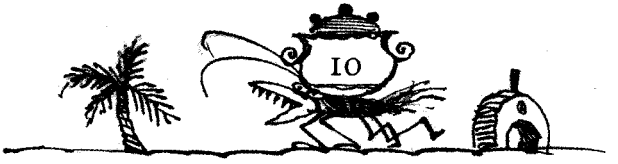
Winnie picked up the watering can and watered her feet.



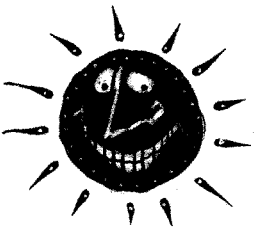
'Oo, that's nice!' she said, wiggling her steaming toes. 'I wish, I wish . . . Oo, I've got an idea!' said Winnie, and she pointed her wand at the watering can. 'Abracadabra!' she shouted.

Instantly, there was a giant watering can up in the sky, spilling down a great showering waterfall of cold water.

'Lovely!' said Winnie, dancing in the shower. 'Come on, Wilbur!' But Wilbur was thrashing his wet tail and scowling at Winnie. 'Whoopsy warts,' said Winnie. 'I forgot that cats don't like water!'




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II



'Abracadabra!'

In another instant the watering can was gone. Winnie stood there, dripping and steaming.

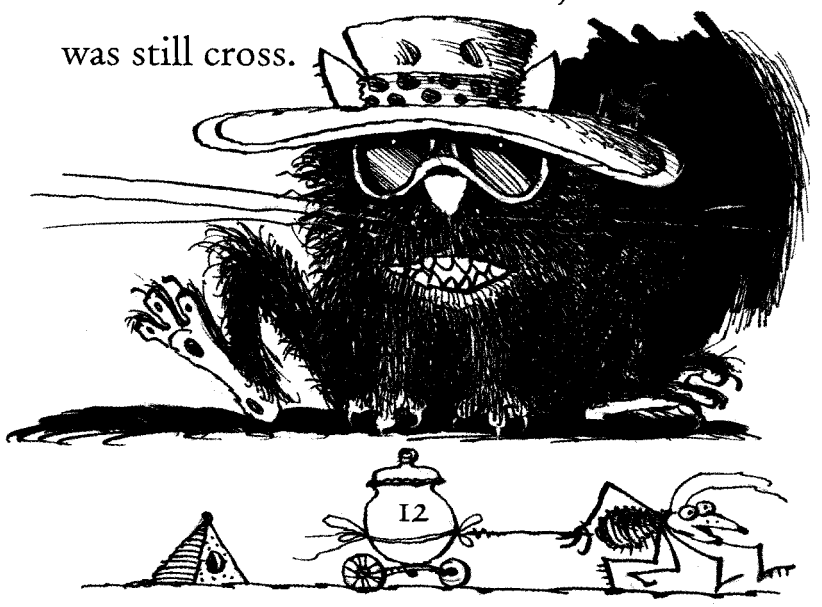
'I'm sorry, Wilbur. Sorry, sorry, sorry. Now, can we be friends again?'

Wilbur closed his eyes.

'I'll magic you a sun hat. I'll magic you some sunglasses!' said Winnie.

'Abracadabra Abracadabra!'

Now Wilbur looked a dude, but he was still cross.



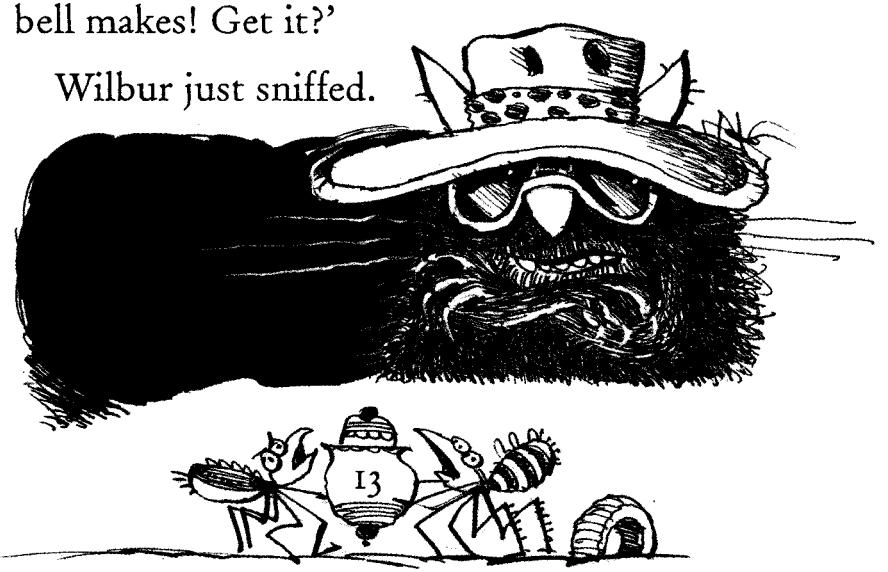


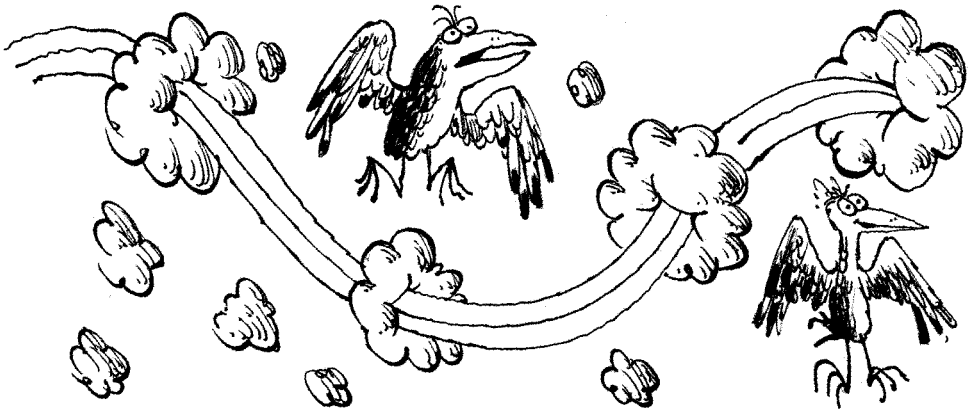
'This'll make you laugh!' said Winnie. 'What's brown and sticky and sounds like a bell?'

Wilbur looked the other way and pretended not to listen.

'Dung!' said Winnie. 'Dung's brown and sticky and "dung" is the sound a big bell makes! Get it?'

Wilbur just sniffed.

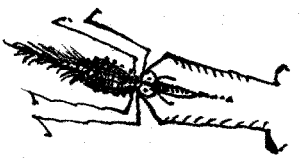




'I'll buy you a present, then. That'll cheer you up,' said Winnie. She got her broom.

'Jump up, Wilbur!'

Wilbur's ears flattened on his head, but he climbed on board.



It was hot, flying.

'Let's go faster to make a breeze,' said Winnie. 'Abracadabra!'

In an instant, Wilbur had to cling on to the broom with every claw. He lay flat and he closed his eyes, his tail whizzing out behind the broom.



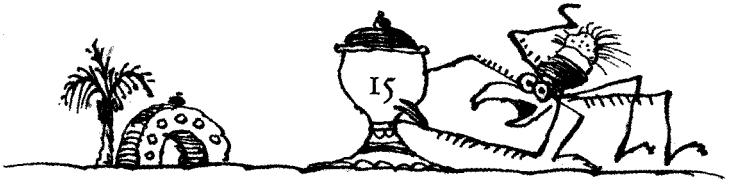


'Wheeeee!' said Winnie. 'This is fun!'

'Mrrrow!' wailed Wilbur.

'Honestly! You just can't please some blooming cats!' said Winnie.

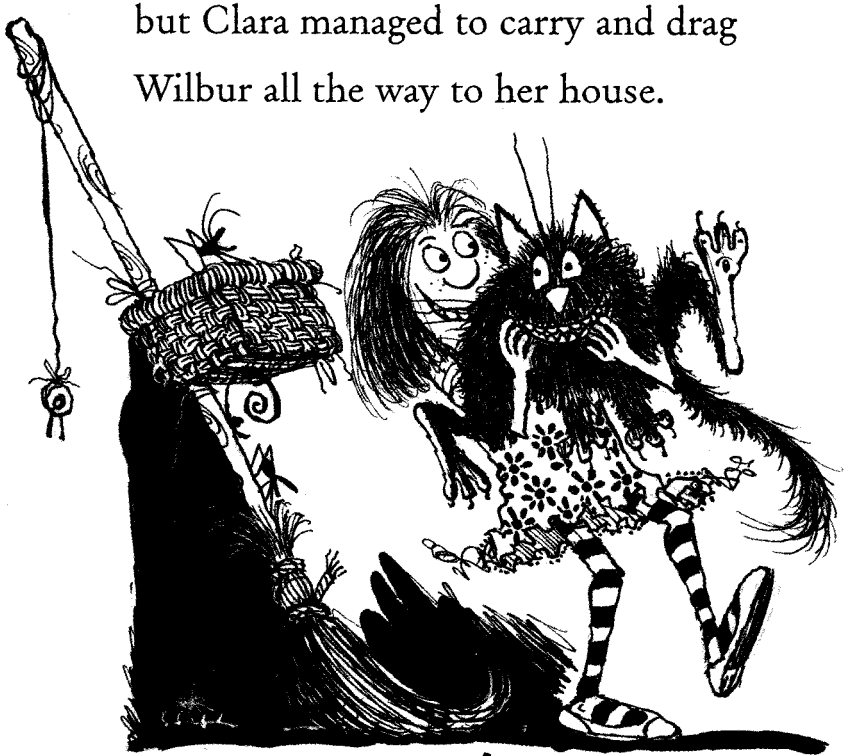
They got to the shops and parked the broom. But, 'Stop!' said Winnie. 'You wait in the broom basket, Wilbur, or you'll spoil your surprise.'





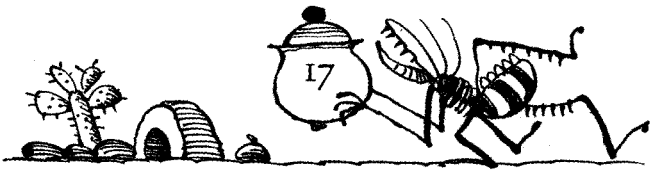
Wilbur was just climbing into the basket when a little girl called Clara noticed him.

'Hello, Pussykins!' said Clara. 'Are you hot, Pussykins? Are you hungry? Come with me!' Clara hauled Wilbur out of the basket. Wilbur was almost as big as Clara, but Clara managed to carry and drag Wilbur all the way to her house.





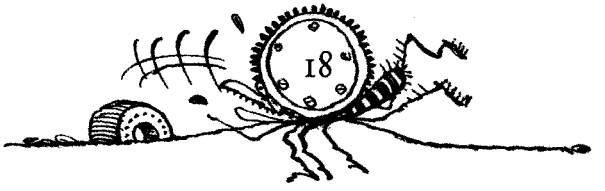
Clara's house was shady and cool. Clara's fridge had cat food in it. Clara's sisters all fussed over Wilbur and told him what a very fine cat he was. Wilbur purred so much that his whiskers sparked. Wilbur was cool. Wilbur was being spoilt. Wilbur was happy.

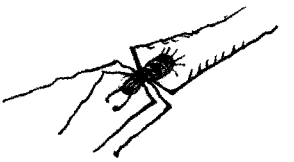




Winnie was feeling happier, too. As she stepped into her favourite shop, a draught of cool smelly air from a drain lifted her hair and her dress and her spirits.

'Ooo!' giggled Winnie. 'This is lovely!'





Winnie looked at toad toasters and mouse mincers and maggot mashers and filth frothers and cockroach crushers and bat broilers before she found what she was after. She took her parcel back outside.

'Here I am, Wilbur!' said Winnie. 'Time to go home.'

