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Winnie Goes Batty

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Big Top Winnie

'Coo, look at that!' said Winnie, giving Wilbur a nudge. 'Ooo, look at that man pretending to be a wheel! Look at that lady standing on a horse! He hee, look at the clowns! They look as silly as a hippopotamus in pigtails!'



The circus had come to the village, and everyone was there. Winnie had never seen anything like it before.



'Look, look, Wilbur!' said Winnie, flicking candyfloss in his face. 'Ha ha,



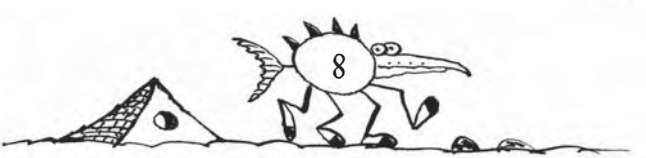


see that little dog stealing the sausages!'

Then suddenly, 'Ahhh!' The whole crowd sighed, and went quiet because they were seeing something beautiful.

'Oh!' said Winnie. 'Oo, just look at that! That's as blooming lovely as a butterfly ballet, that is!' Because a lady in a sparkly bathing costume was walking high up along a rope. The lady used an umbrella to help her balance. She threw sparkly sprinkles that winked and blinked as they fell down on to the crowd. 'Coo!' said Winnie. Everyone in the crowd clapped and cheered. Winnie looked around at their faces, wide open and smiling. The sparkly lady bowed, and everybody cheered.







'Hooray!' they shouted. 'Bravo!'
They whistled and they whooped
and they clapped.







'Ooo, Wilbur,' said Winnie. 'I'd love it if people felt like that about me!'

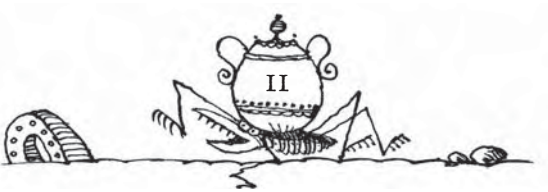
As Winnie and Wilbur walked home, Winnie tried walking along the lines in the pavement, her arms out like an aeroplane. **Wibble-wobble, step-step.**

'See?' said Winnie. 'I'm good at this!'

Then she tried walking along a garden wall. **Wibble-wobble step-whoops!** Winnie tried to balance herself by waving one leg and two arms around. 'I'll do it along the washing line!' she told Wilbur. 'Just like that lady!'

But by the time they got home Winnie didn't just want to walk a tightrope. She wanted to put on a whole circus of her own.





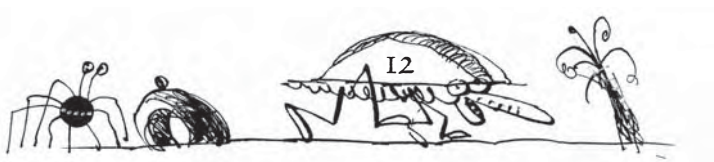


'There's no point without people to see. I'll do it for the little ordinaries,' she said. 'They can cheer me and clap and say, "Ahh! Isn't she beeeeutiful!"'

'Mrrow!' said Wilbur, who didn't think that was very likely. But,



'Abracadabra!' went Winnie, and instantly poor Wilbur was in sparkly pants. 'You're my assistant,' said Winnie. 'Do a twirl!' **Twiddle-splat.** 'Try to be dignified,' said Winnie.





'Woof-he-hee!' laughed Scruff, looking through the fence from next door.

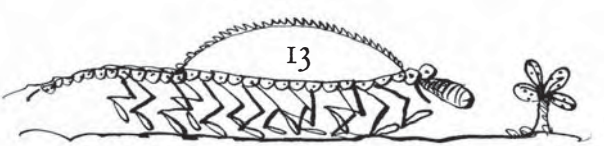
'You can be my other assistant!' said Winnie. 'Abracadabra!'

And there was Scruff in a little sparkly waistcoat and a silly hat.



'Meeow-he-hee!'

Leap! Hiss! Pounce! Yap! They were soon chasing around the garden.





'Jerry!' called Winnie. 'Can you build me a tent, please?'

'If that's what you want, missus,' said Jerry, and he set to work.

Crash! Bang! Rip! Stitch! Heave-hup!

It wasn't long before a strange kind of big top had been made from a couple of trees, Winnie's curtains, and the tassels from her best underwear.

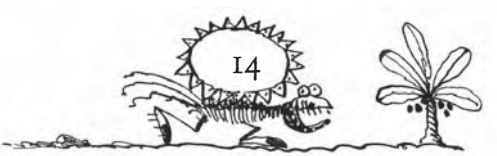


'Abracadabra!'

It had bunting and balloons and all sorts.

'Right!' said Winnie. 'Now we need to get the little ordinaries along to see my Show Of Beauty. I'll just ring Mrs Parmar.'





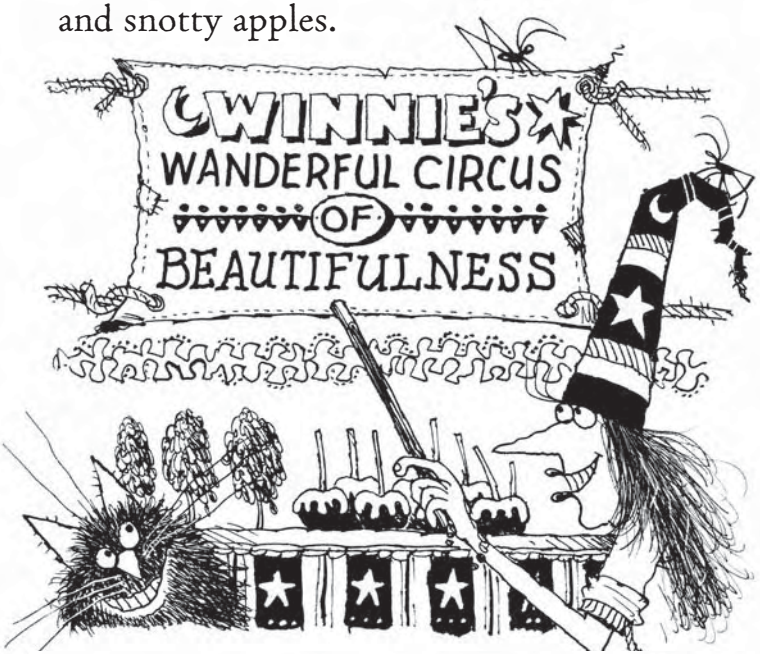


With the children on their way, Winnie made a few finishing touches to her big top. 'Abracadabra!'

There was a sign for 'Winnie's Wanderful Circus Of Beautifulness!'

'Abracadabra!'

There was a stall selling candy moss and snotty apples.





Then the little ordinaries came marching up the path.

'Ooo!' they said when they saw the big top.

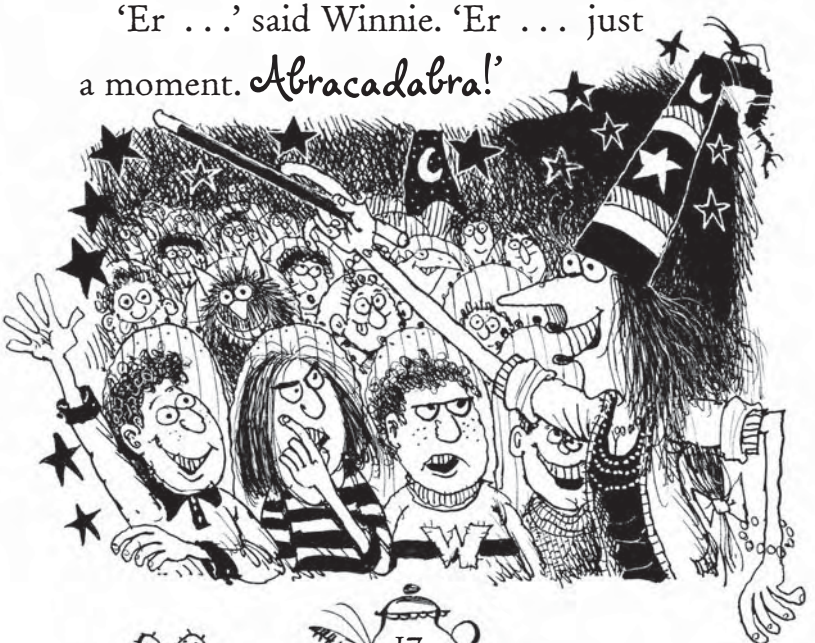


'Urgh!' they said when they saw the food.

Then the little ordinaries sat ready.

'Where's the show?' they said.

'Er . . .' said Winnie. 'Er . . . just a moment. Abracadabra!'





And there was Winnie in the sparkliest outfit a circus had ever seen. **Zing!** glittered the sequins. **Twang!** went the elastic where it was a bit too tight.

'When's it going to start?' shouted the little ordinaries.

'I just need some music, please, Jerry,' said Winnie.

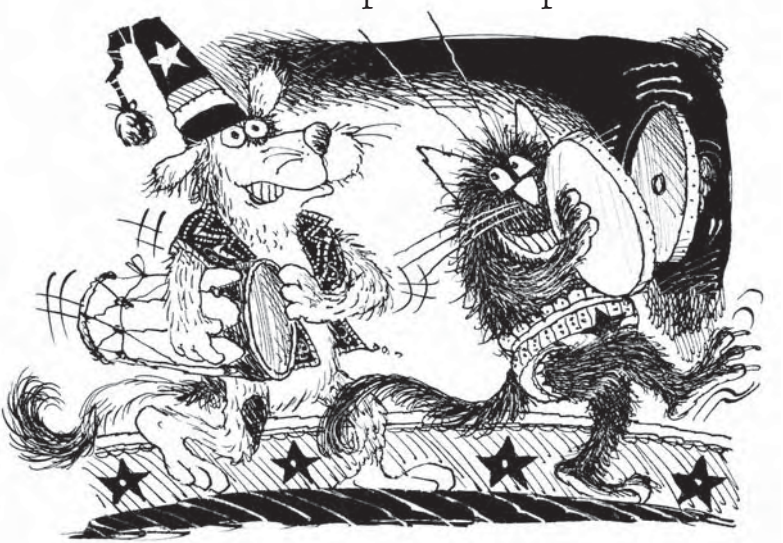


'What?' said Jerry. 'You never said nuffink about music!'

'Boo!' went the little ordinaries.

'DO something!' said Winnie, at the bottom of the ladder. So,—

'Um ti-ti, rum ti-ti,' sang Jerry. While Scruff dug-dug-dug at a drum to make a drum-roll noise and **crash!** went Wilbur with a couple of saucepan lids.











'Here I go!' said Winnie. She climbed up to the top of the ladder, then **wibble** stepped one toe onto the washing line. **Wobble.** Two feet . . . **Splat!** Winnie fell head-first, onto her nose.

'Ha ha ha!' went the little ordinaries.

'Ouch!' said Winnie, sitting up and rubbing her bright red nose.

'He hee hee!' went the little ordinaries. 'More! More!'

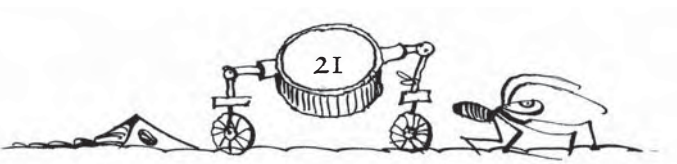
'Er . . . I'll do aerobatic broom riding,' said Winnie. 'More music please, Jerry!'

'Tiddle-diddle-diddle . . . !'



Crash! Boom!

Winnie rose up on her broom. The little ordinaries had seen her flying before. Winnie went left. Winnie went right.



'Boring!' shouted the little ordinaries.

Winnie went up, then down.

'Boo!' shouted the little ordinaries.

'Watch this, then!' said Winnie. And **wibble-wobble-wibble** she carefully knelt on the broom as it flew. Then **wobble-wibble,** up onto one foot, and **wibble-wobble,** two feet. Up-up. Winnie stood up. Arms out, she rode the broomstick like a scarecrow on a surfboard.



'Ta-daa!' went Jerry.

'Ah!' gasped the crowd.

'Is it beeeutiful?' shouted Winnie.

'Meeeeooww!' went Wilbur.



But it was too late.





Splat! went Winnie into the side of the tent, tangling like a fly in a spider's web, upside-down and high above the crowd.

'Help!' shouted Winnie.

'He hee! Ha haa!' laughed the little ordinaries. 'Winnie's so funny!'



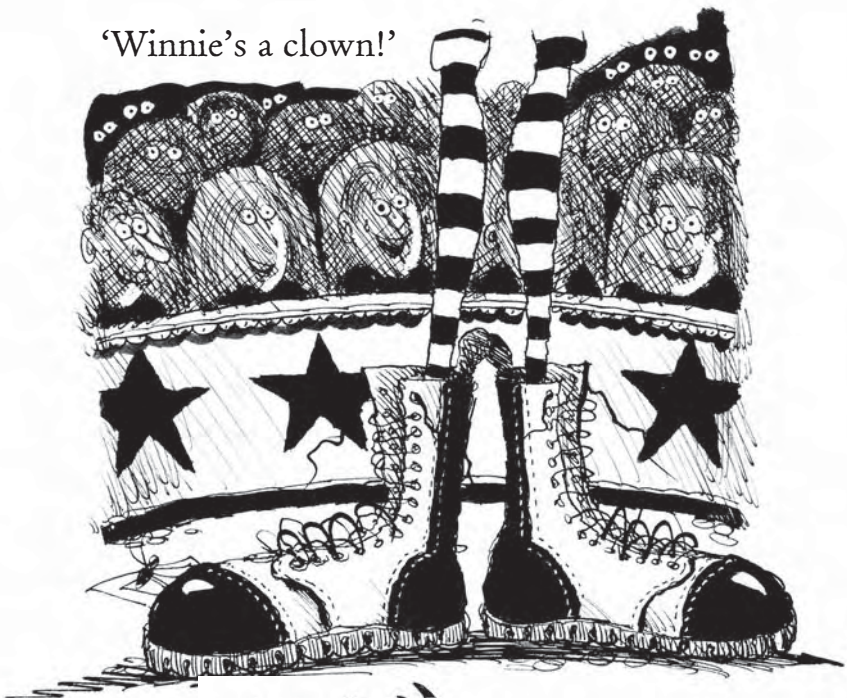




Jerry stepped forward and lifted Winnie down, although her sequinned slippers stayed up in the roof.

'You'll have to wear my shoes now, missus!' said Jerry, so Winnie put on Jerry's shoes. They were enormous.

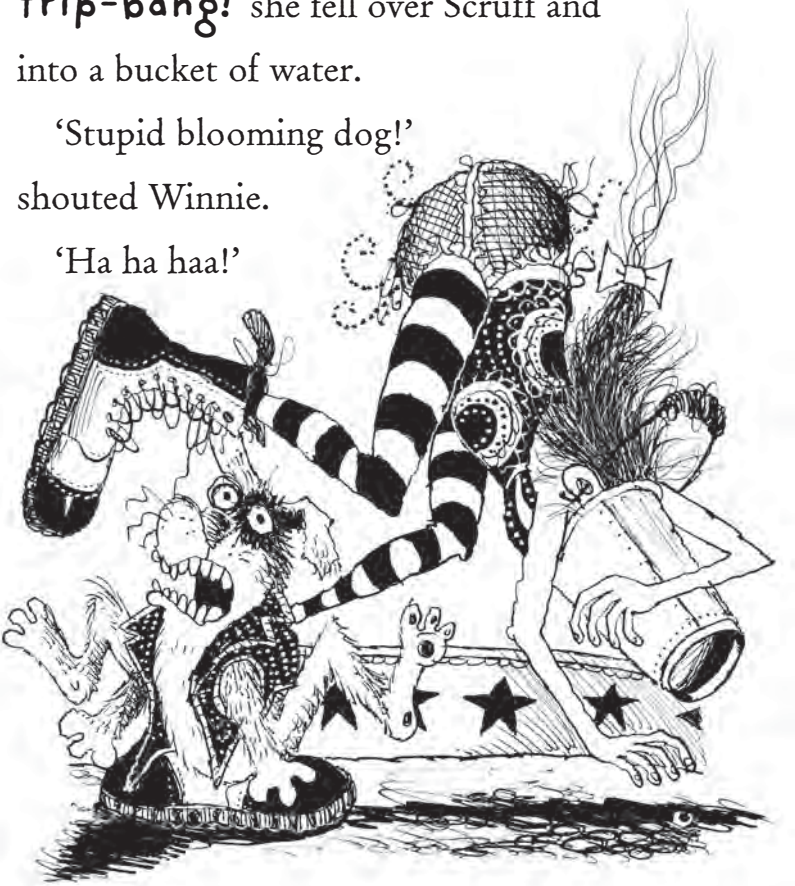
'Ha ha!' went the little ordinaries. 'Winnie's a clown!'



'What?' said Winnie. But with her red nose and the big shoes, she did look like a clown. And as soon as she tried to walk **trip-bang!** she fell over Scruff and into a bucket of water.

'Stupid blooming dog!' shouted Winnie.

'Ha ha haa!'





Winnie picked up another bucket of water and began to run after Scruff, and Wilbur chased after Winnie, and Jerry chased after Wilbur.

'Hooray!' shouted the crowd as Scruff and Winnie and Wilbur and Jerry fell **bump-bump-bump-bump!** into the sawdust.

Winnie sat up. She heard cheering and clapping and love.

'They blooming like us now that we're silly!' she said. 'Come on, Wilbur! Chase me up the ladder!' So off they went, chasing and falling and pushing and being daft.

'He hee, ho, ha!'

'Thank you, Winnie!' said Mrs Parmar.





'You were so funny, Winnie!' said the little ordinaries. 'We love you!'

'Really truly?' said Winnie. And she got out a huge spotty hankie and blew her nose on it. **Snort!** 'Who needs beauty when you can laugh, eh, Wilbur?'





