"But what about us?"

"Were we born then?"

the children cried.



"Not quite," said Mrs Gaskitt.

"We had the house to ourselves."



"Yes." Mr Gaskitt smiled.

"It was delightful."

(Gloria punched him.)

"I mean boring."

(And Gus hit him

with a pillow.)

Boring!
Boring!
Boring!



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Meanwhile, Horace was outside

sitting on the garden wall

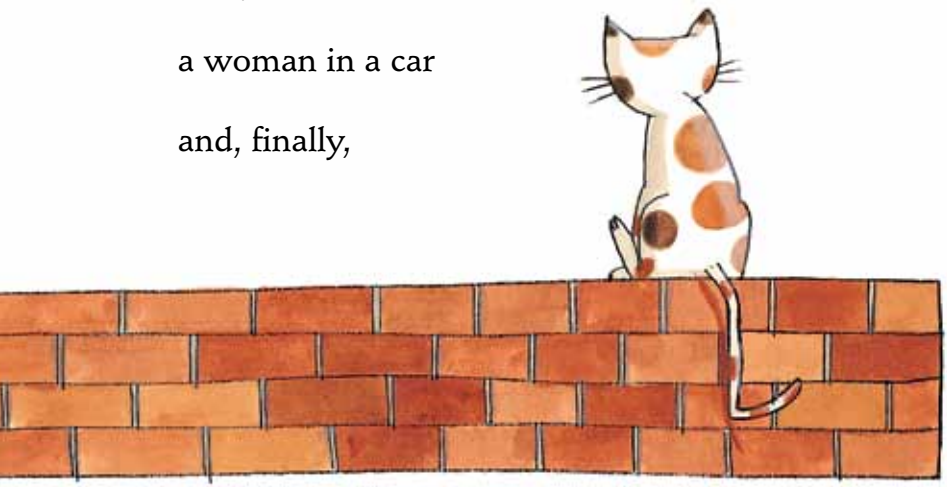
watching the world go by.

He saw a boy on a bike,

a boy on a skateboard,

a woman in a car

and, finally,



on the other side of the road,

a man absolutely *whizzing* along

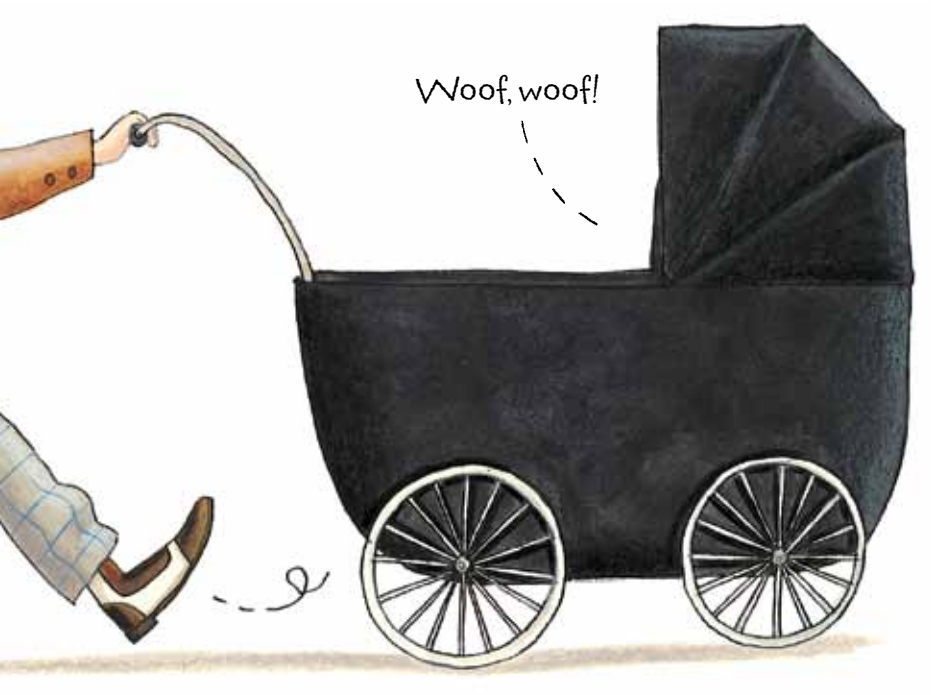
with a really old pram.

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And the strange thing was,

which Horace noticed,

the strange thing was, the pram ...



was barking.

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Chapter Two
Fried Egg and Pineapple

The next morning

everybody got up.

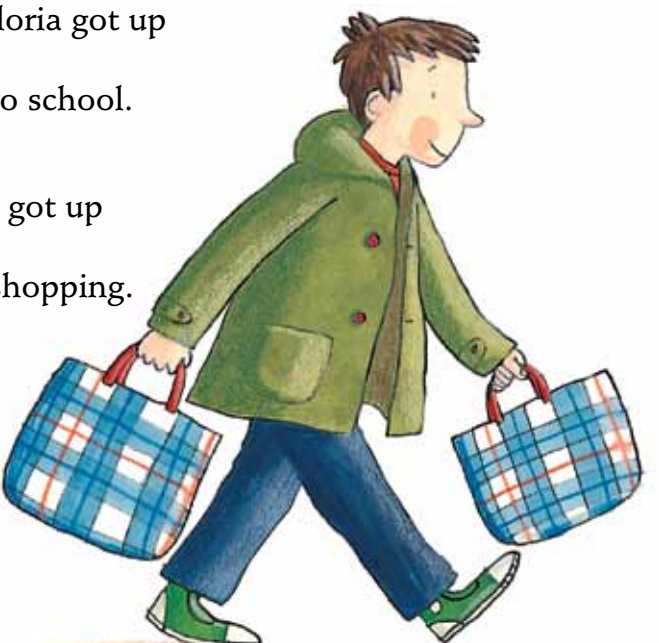


Gus and Gloria got up

and went to school.

Mr Gaskitt got up

and went shopping.



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Mrs Gaskitt got up, got the paper,

got the post,

got a cup of tea

and a *cream doughnut* …

and went back to bed.



Meanwhile, Horace was out on the wall again

hoping to see and hear that

mysterious pram.

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Well, Horace never saw

the pram that time,

but Mr Gaskitt did.



He was in his car at the school crossing

and there it was, the same as before,

with the same man just *whizzing* along.

But not barking, though. Oh, no!

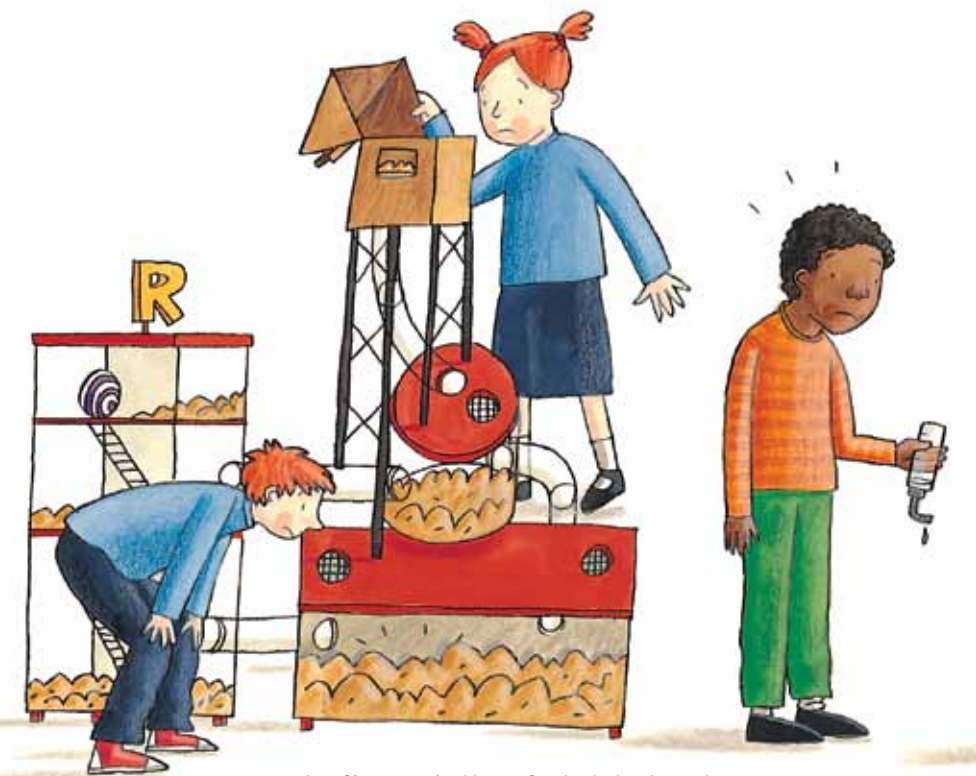
It was more like … squeaking,

Mr Gaskitt thought.



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When Gus and Gloria got to school
they found that something
dreadful had happened.
Randolph – clever, lovable Randolph –
the class rat, had ("Squeak, squeak!") …
disappeared.



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Oh yes, and Mrs Fritter,

while trying to find him,

had fallen out of a window.



The children, of course,

were terribly upset.

"Poor Randolph!" they cried.

"Poor Randolph!"

"Poor Randolph!"



Oh yes,

and poor

Mrs Fritter.

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By this time Mr Gaskitt was in the supermarket filling his trolley.





Horace was visiting a friend who *seemed* to be out.

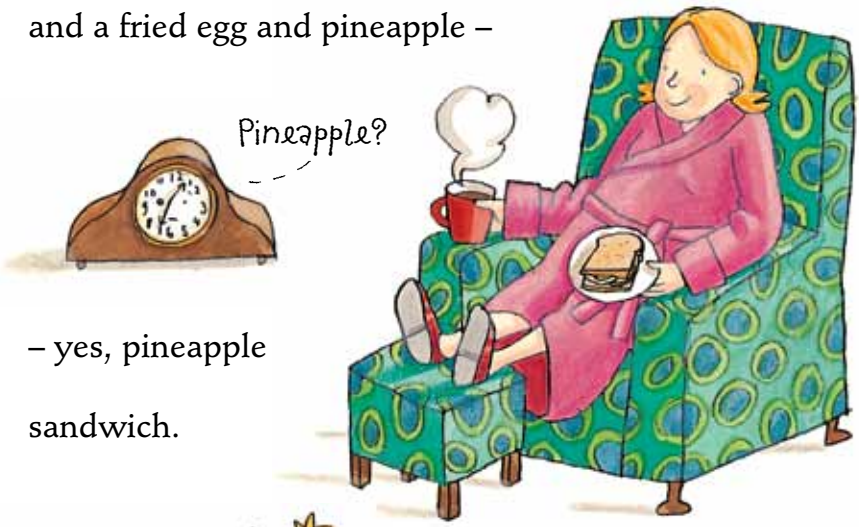
Mrs Gaskitt was also out …

of bed.



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She was downstairs now in the sitting-room watching TV, with a mug of hot chocolate and a fried egg and pineapple –



– yes, pineapple sandwich.

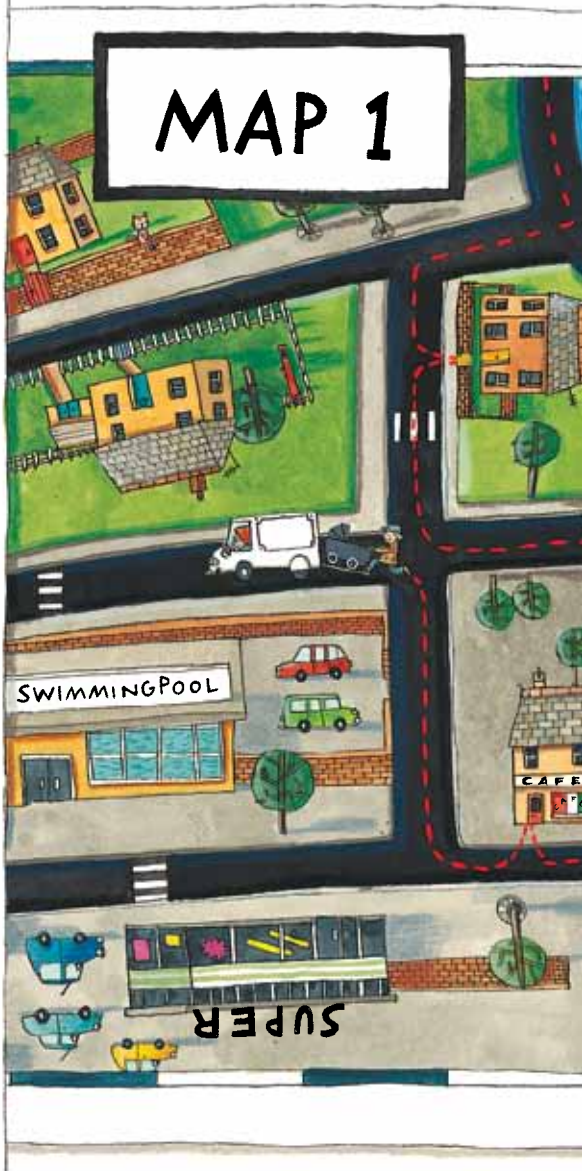
Meanwhile, somewhere not very far away, that pram was …

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…still whizzing along.

So, let's follow the pram, shall we? Here's a useful map. It shows where the pram has been so far this morning and where it's going.

Hm ... and here's a big white van with a ramp. Now the pram is being pushed into the van.



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Ha-ha!

What's going on here?

And look!

There's Horace on a wall again, outside his friend's house.

Horace is a smart cat. Well, *Horace* thinks he is. He's thinking now that if he sits here for a while, his friend will show up … or something *interesting* might happen.

It probably will.

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