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An extract from

Fortunately, the Milk..

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'How long has he been?' asked my sister.

'Ages,' I said.

'I thought so,' said my little sister.

We drank orange juice. My sister practised her violin. I suggested that she stop playing her violin, and she did.

My sister made faces at me.

'How long has it been now?' she asked.

'Ages and ages,' I told her.

'What happens if he never comes back?' she asked.

'I suppose we eat the pickles,' I said.

'You can't eat pickles for breakfast,' said my sister. 'And I don't like pickles at any time. What if something awful has happened to him? Mum would blame us.'

'I expect he just ran into one of his friends at the corner shop," I said, "and they got talking and he lost track of time.'

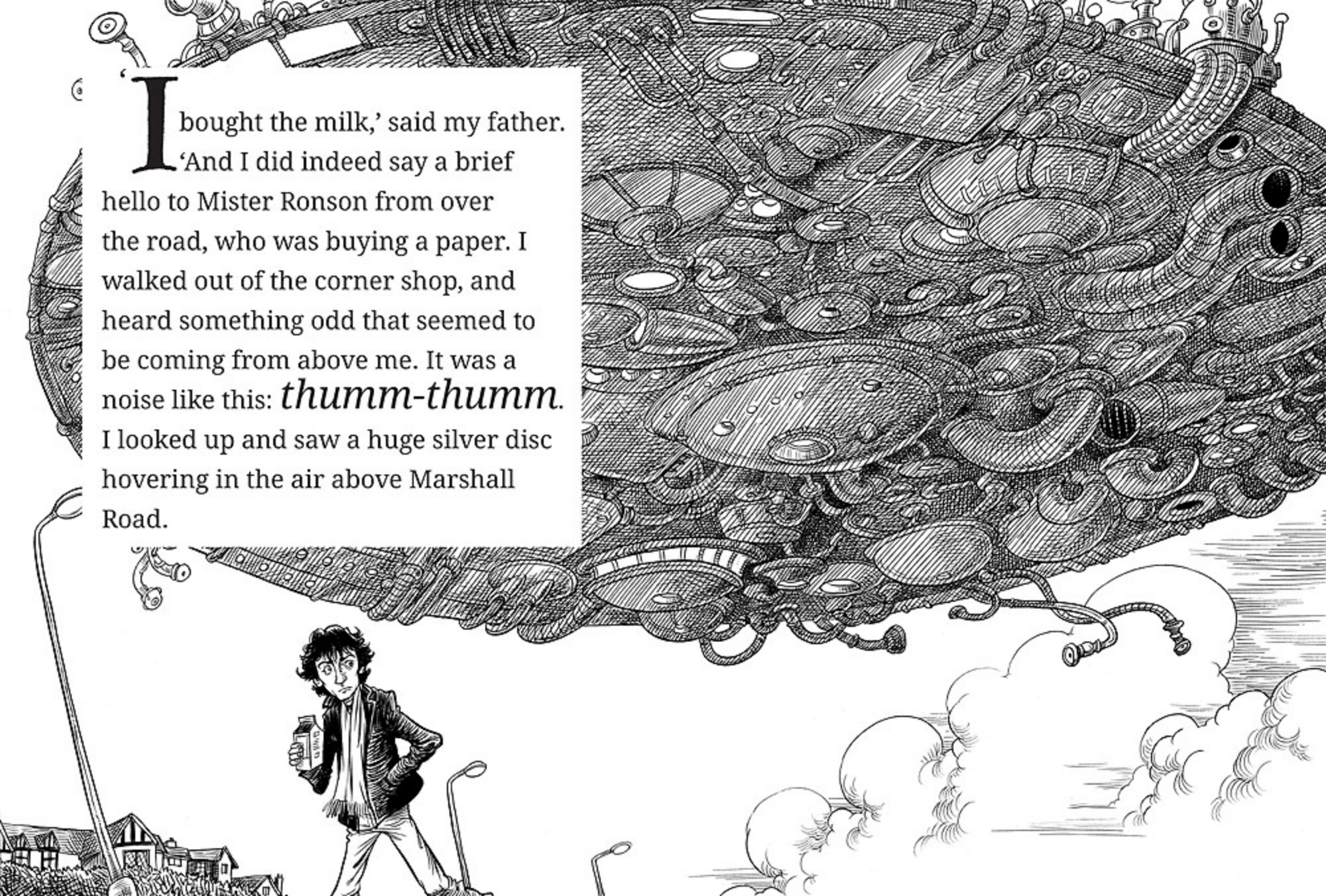
I ate a dry Toastio as an experiment. It was sort of OK, but not as good as in milk.

There was a *thump* and a *bang* at the front door, and my father came in.

'Where have you been all this time?' asked my sister.

'Ah,' said my father. 'Um. Yes. Well, funny you should ask me that.'

'You ran into someone you knew,' I said, 'and you lost track of time.'



'I bought the milk,' said my father. 'And I did indeed say a brief hello to Mister Ronson from over the road, who was buying a paper. I walked out of the corner shop, and heard something odd that seemed to be coming from above me. It was a noise like this: *thumm-thumm*. I looked up and saw a huge silver disc hovering in the air above Marshall Road.

Hullo, I said to myself. *That's not something you see every day.* And then something odd happened.'

'*That* wasn't odd?' I asked.

'Well, something odder,' said my father. 'The odd thing was the beam of light that came out of the disc – a glittery, shimmery beam of light that was visible even in the daylight. And the next thing I knew, I was being sucked up into the disc. Fortunately, I had put the milk into my coat pocket.

The deck of the disc was metal. It was as big as a playing field, or bigger.

"We have come to your planet from a world very far away," said the people in the disc.





I call them “people”, but they were a bit green and rather globby and they looked very grumpy indeed.

“Now, as a representative of your species, we demand that you give us ownership of the whole planet. We are going to remodel it.”

“I jolly well won’t,” I said.

"Then," one of them said, "we will bring all your enemies here and get them to make you miserable until you agree to sign the planet over to us."

I was going to point out to them that I didn't have any enemies when I noticed a large metal door with



on it. I opened the door.

"Don't do that," said a green globby person. "You'll let the space-time continuum in."

But it was too late – I had already pushed open the door. I jumped.

I was falling.



Fortunately, I had kept tight hold of the milk, so when I splashed into the sea I didn't lose it.

"What was that?" said a woman's voice. "A big fish? A mermaid? Or was it a spy?"

I wanted to say that I wasn't any of those things, but my mouth was full of seawater. I felt myself being hauled up on to the deck of a little ship. There were a number of men and a woman on the deck, and they all looked very cross.

