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Opening extract from

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For Jennie Younger – K.P.
For my good friend Julie Harris, with enormous thanks – xx

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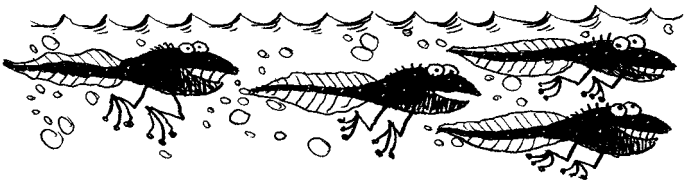








Winnie's Wet Weekend



Plip! Plop! Water drip-dropped down from Winnie's ceiling. **Slosh!** Winnie's wellies waded ankle-deep through the water and **slap-splash!** her broom-mop squelched water into a bucket.

'Oh, soggy blooming sausages!' moaned Winnie. 'We'll have to start building an ark soon, Wilbur!'



'Mrrow,' agreed Wilbur, shivering on a high-up shelf.



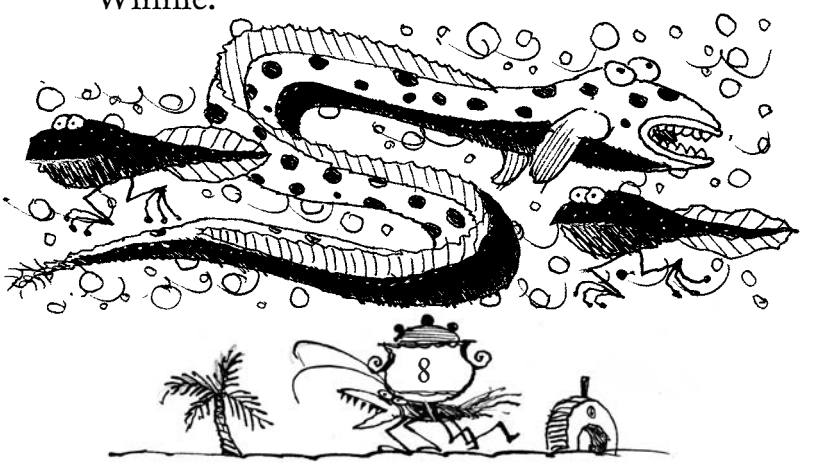


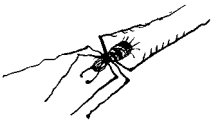
'I hope Jerry can mend our leak soon,' said Winnie. 'Or we'll all get flushed out of the house just like . . .'

Wallop!-clonggggg! went Jerry's mallet on the water tank upstairs, and moments later—**sloossh!**—water came pouring, tumbling down the staircase. It was now up to Winnie's knobbly knees.



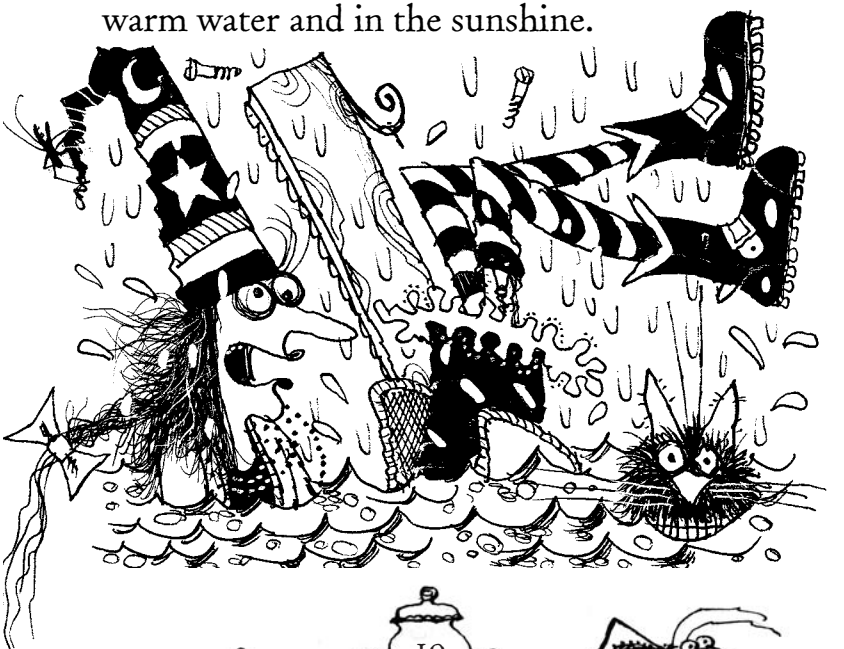
Croak! said a happy frog who was gazing up at Winnie. **Splish-splosh** danced tadpoles like mini dolphins. **Swish-slither** swam an eel towards Winnie.





'Eeek!' Winnie scrambled up to join Wilbur on the shelf. **Creak!** went the shelf because it wasn't built for the weight of witches. 'Well, that's it!' said Winnie, as the shelf tipped them both—**splash!**—into the flood. 'If I'm going to wade in water and shrivel my toes to raisin-wrinkles, I'd rather wade and shrivel in warm water and in the sunshine.



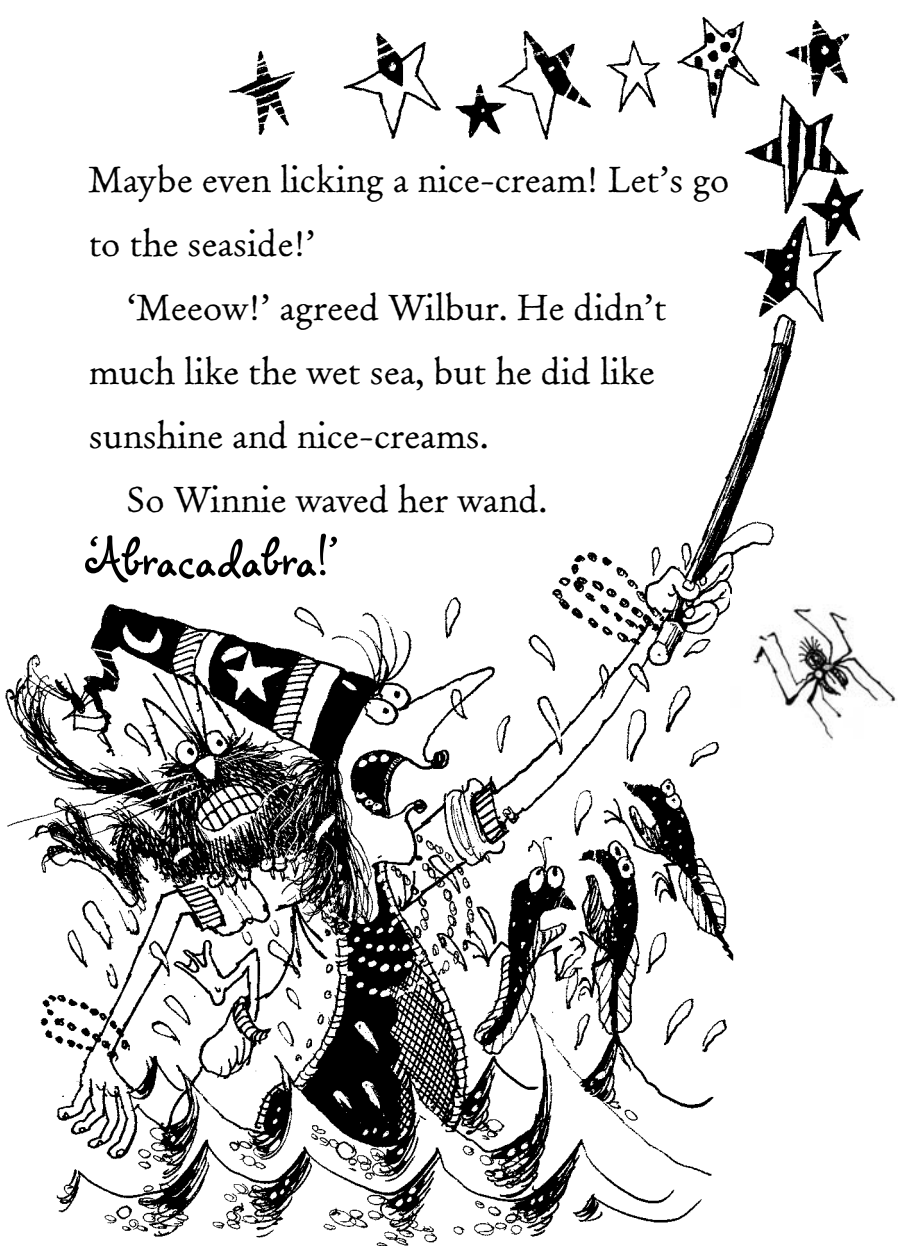


Maybe even licking a nice-cream! Let's go to the seaside!'

'Meeow!' agreed Wilbur. He didn't much like the wet sea, but he did like sunshine and nice-creams.

So Winnie waved her wand.

'Abracadabra!'





And instantly they were at the seaside.

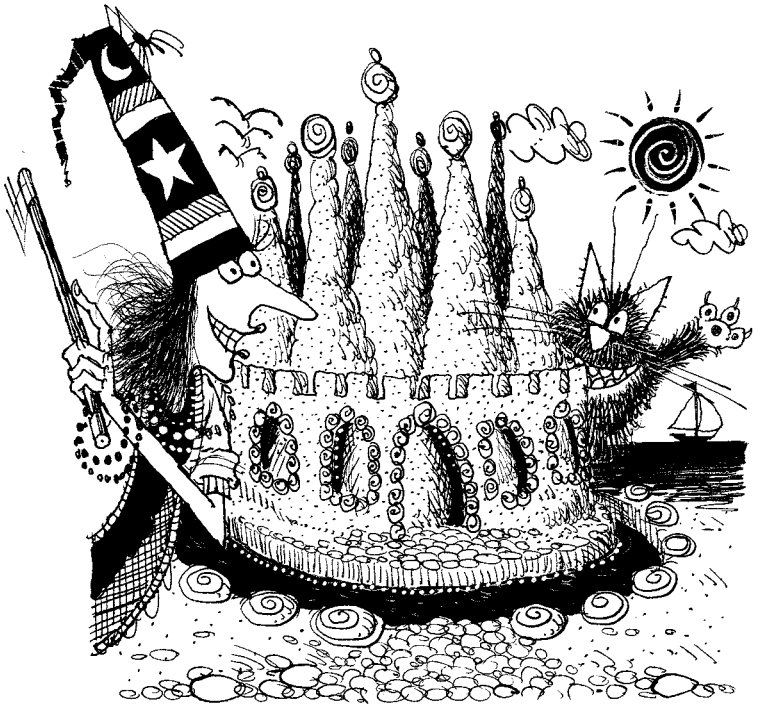
'Ah!' sighed Winnie, kicking off her wellies and tucking her dress into her knickers. 'Just look at that sea sparkling like a beetle's back!'

'Mrrow,' scowled Wilbur.

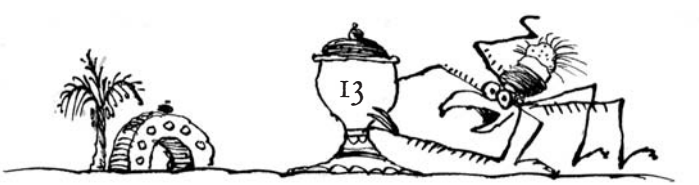
'You're right,' said Winnie. 'I've had enough wetness for today, too. Let's make a sandcastle instead.'

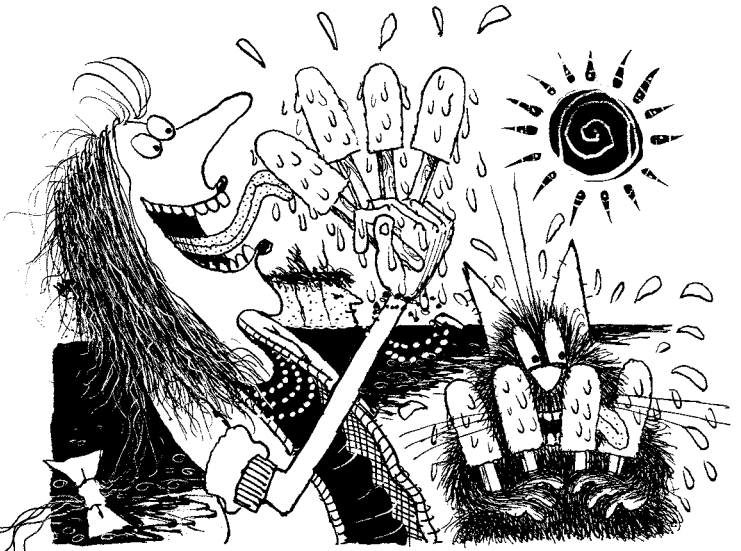






They dug a moat and threw all the sand into the middle to make a big castle mound. Then they shovelled sand into Winnie's hat, and upended it to make turrets. They used Winnie's wand to scrape door and window shapes, and they slapped on shells to make it all look lovely.





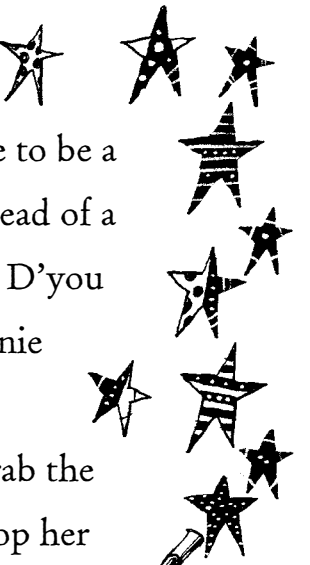
'There! As pretty as a ferret in fairy wings!' said Winnie. 'I reckon we've earned ourselves a lice-lolly!'



They couldn't decide which flavour lice-lollies to choose, so they had four each . . . which meant a lot of fast licking—**slurp slurp!**—and sticky paws. Then they used the lolly sticks to make a drawbridge over the moat.





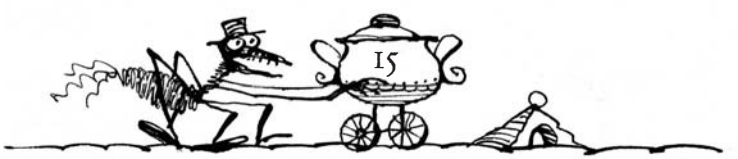


'Ah!' sighed Winnie. 'I'd love to be a princess living in our castle instead of a witch living in a flooded house. D'you know, Wilbur, I think . . .' Winnie picked up her wand.

'Meeeow!' Wilbur leapt to grab the wand from Winnie's hand to stop her from waving it. But he was too late.

'Abracadabra!'







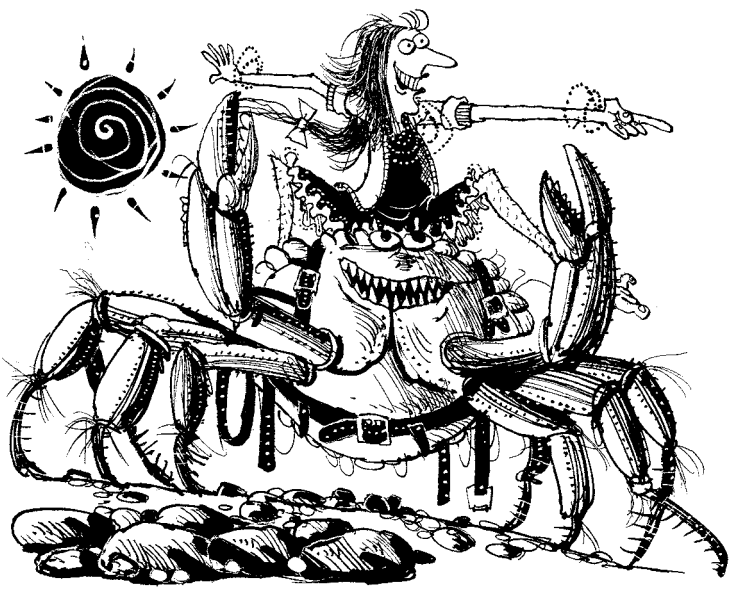
Winnie was a princess. A very very tiny princess, just the right size to fit into their sandcastle.

'Mrrrow!' said Wilbur, trying to catch her as if she was a mouse. But tiny Princess Winnie had picked up her skirts and run over the drawbridge and into the castle before he could stop her.



‘Oh!’ said Winnie as she looked around. ‘Oh, how princessy!’

There were seashell dishes and cups on a table sculpted in the sand. There were seaweed hammocks swinging in the breeze outside. There was a crab neighing in the sand-stable. Winnie flung herself into the saddle. ‘Giddy-up!’ she said.





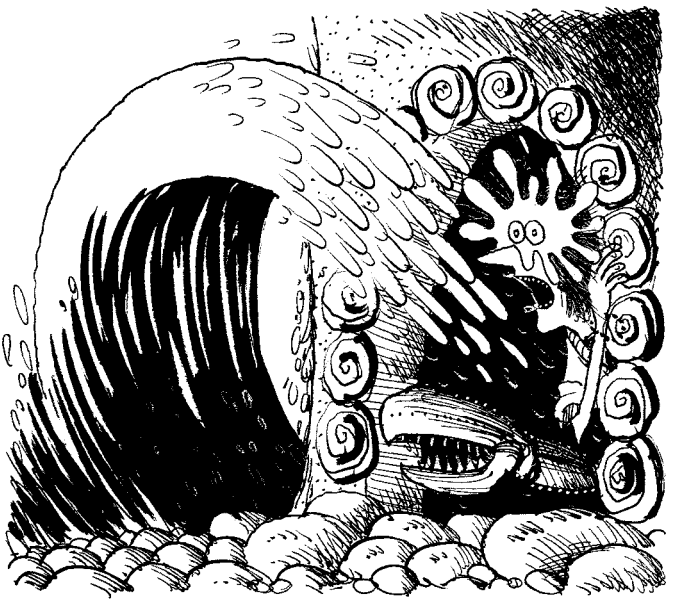
But—**swerve-whoops!** the crab scuttled sideways. 'Eeeeeeerrrrrr,' said Winnie, holding on tight. 'Please stop!'



Plop! Off she fell, then she staggered, all dizzy-dizzy, before, 'Eeeek!' she screamed because there was a huge eye looking through the sand-stable door at her.

'Meeeow!' Wilbur was trying to tell her something urgent.





'What water?' Winnie leaned out of the stable door.



Slop! A wave whacked against the wall of the castle, saltily slapping Winnie in the face.

'Heck in a handkerchief, the blooming tide's coming in!' said Winnie. 'And it's crumbling my walls!'



Wilbur dug, trying to make the moat take water around the castle instead of through it. But the sea is big and powerful, and Winnie's princess castle was small and made of sand.

'Help!' shouted Winnie. 'This castle is collapsing!' The wet walls were sagging and slipping all around her. 'Where's my wand?' wailed Winnie.

