

Who's Afraid of The Big Bad Book?



with
HERB
*the Boy
Who
Fell Into
a Book*

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Herb loved storybooks.

Although he wasn't a very good reader, it didn't matter because he could tell a lot from the pictures. Herb liked the scary ones best with pictures of dinosaurs gobbling up other dinosaurs or swooping vampires chasing people who had foolishly decided to go for a midnight stroll without any garlic.

Herb read his books everywhere. This was why many of the pages were stickily stuck together, soggy round the edges and usually had bits of banana, biscuit and the odd pea squashed between the pages.



On this particular night,

Herb's friend Ezzie was staying over.
Earlier, the two of them had been playing
a game, involving a great deal of

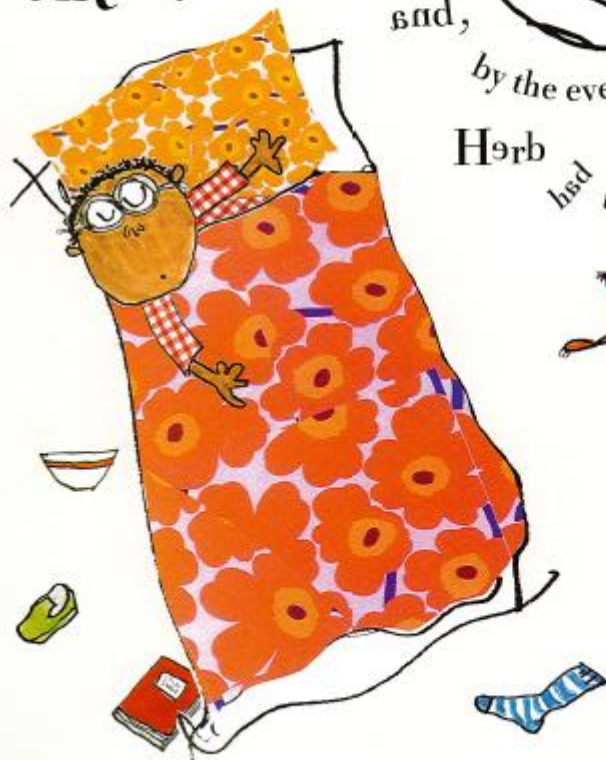
untidying things

and,

by the evening,

Herb

had trouble even finding his bed.



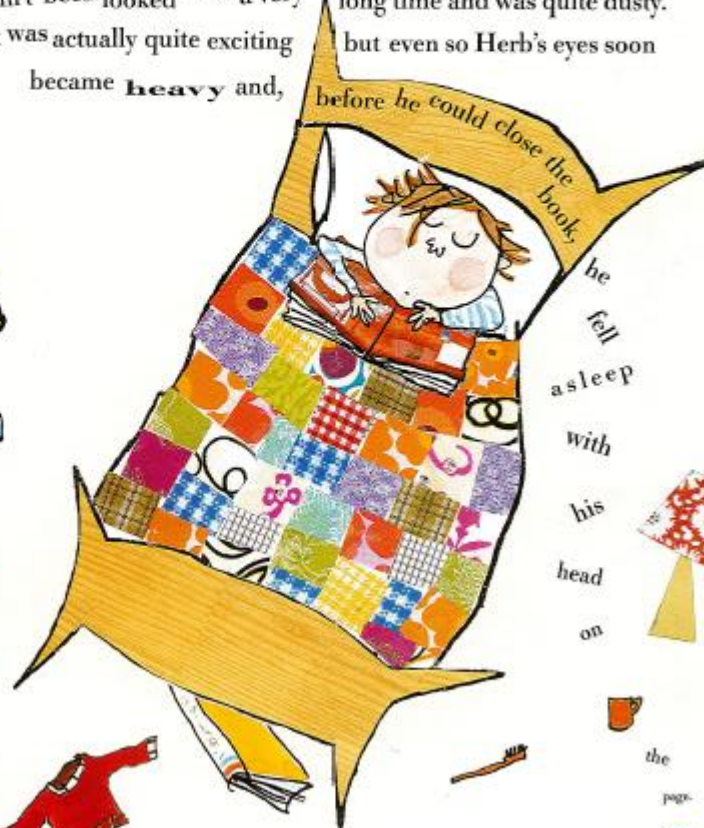
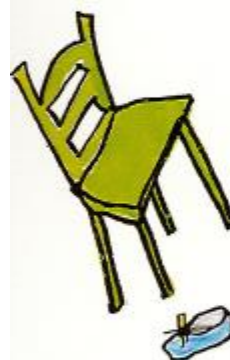
By the time he had, Ezzie was already slightly snoring.
So Herb searched around for a book to amuse him until he
dozed off but the only one he managed to find was

a book of **fairy tales.**

It hadn't been looked at in a very long time and was quite dusty.

It was actually quite exciting but even so Herb's eyes soon
became heavy and, before he could close the book,

he fell asleep
with
his
head
on



the
page.



Herb woke with a start to hear a strange high-pitched shrieking noise. He looked over to see if Ezzie was awake but there was no sign of him at all. Furthermore, his bed had become sort of lumpy and huge, which was funny because Herb had always found his bed to be just right.



**WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HOW DARE YOU BE ON THIS
PAGE? I AM THE STAR AND
I SAY YOU ARE NOT
ALLOWED IN THIS
STORY!**

shrieked the shrieking thing.

'Wuwhere am I?'
stammered Herb.

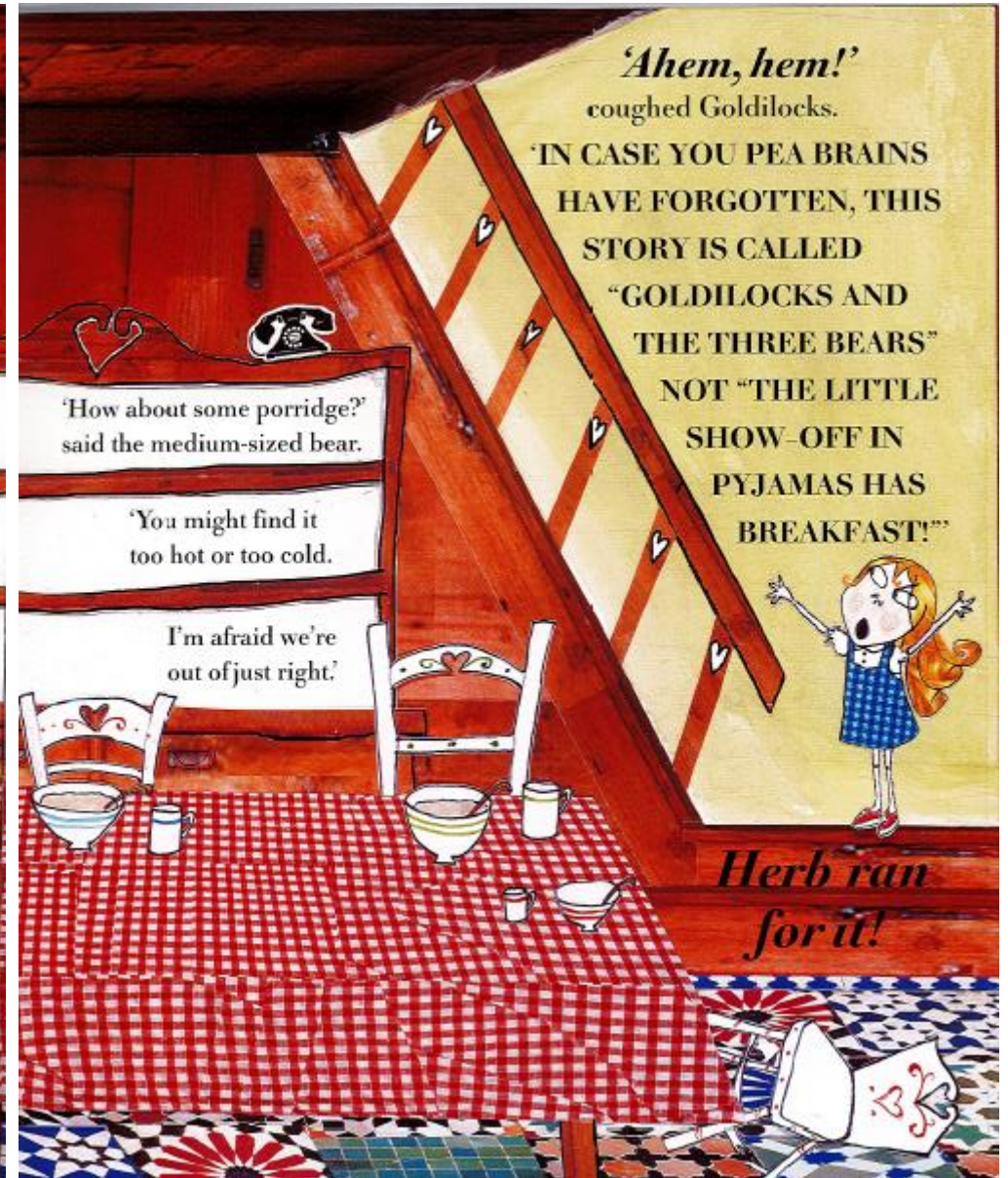
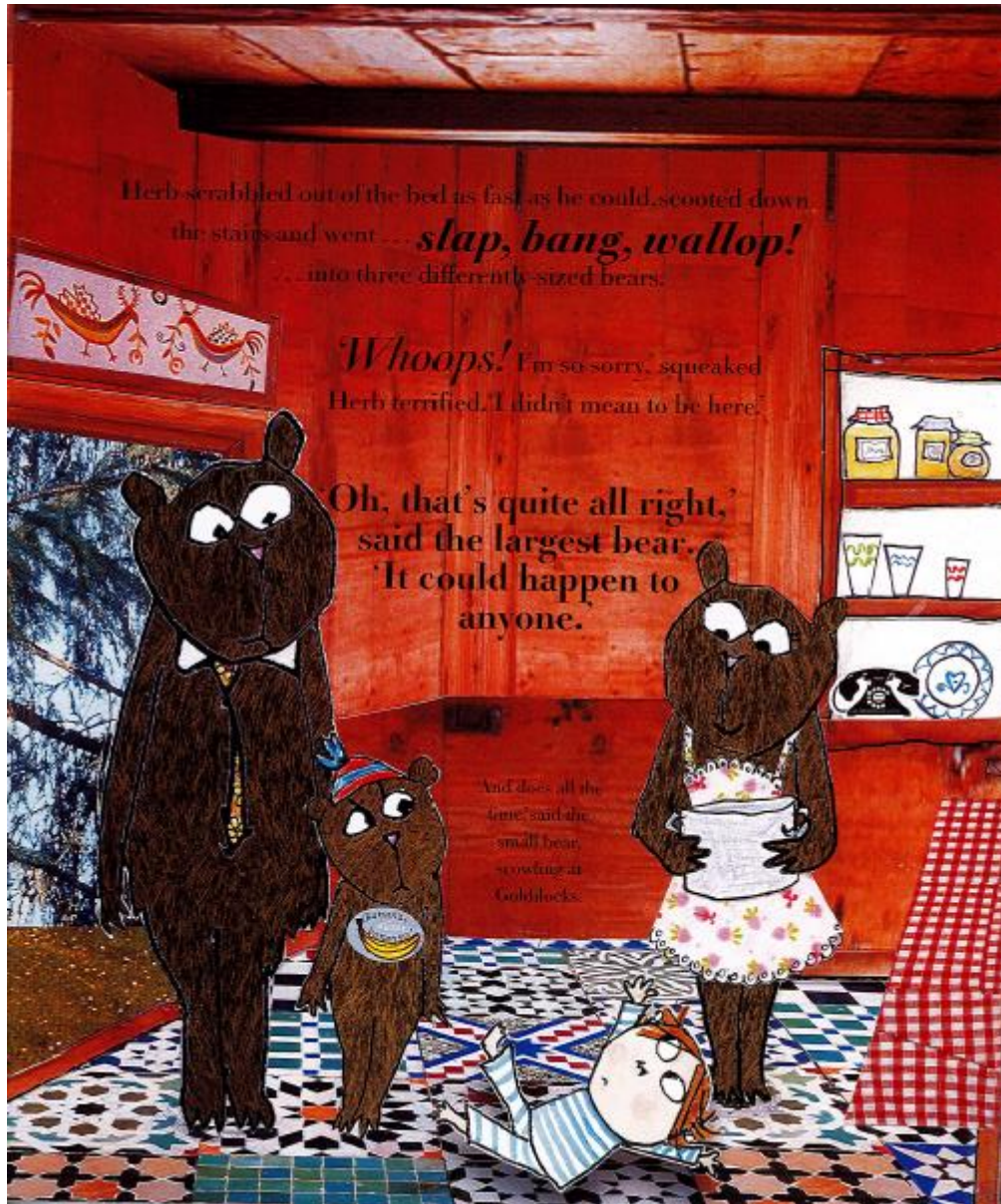
'ON MY PAGE!'
screached the girl.

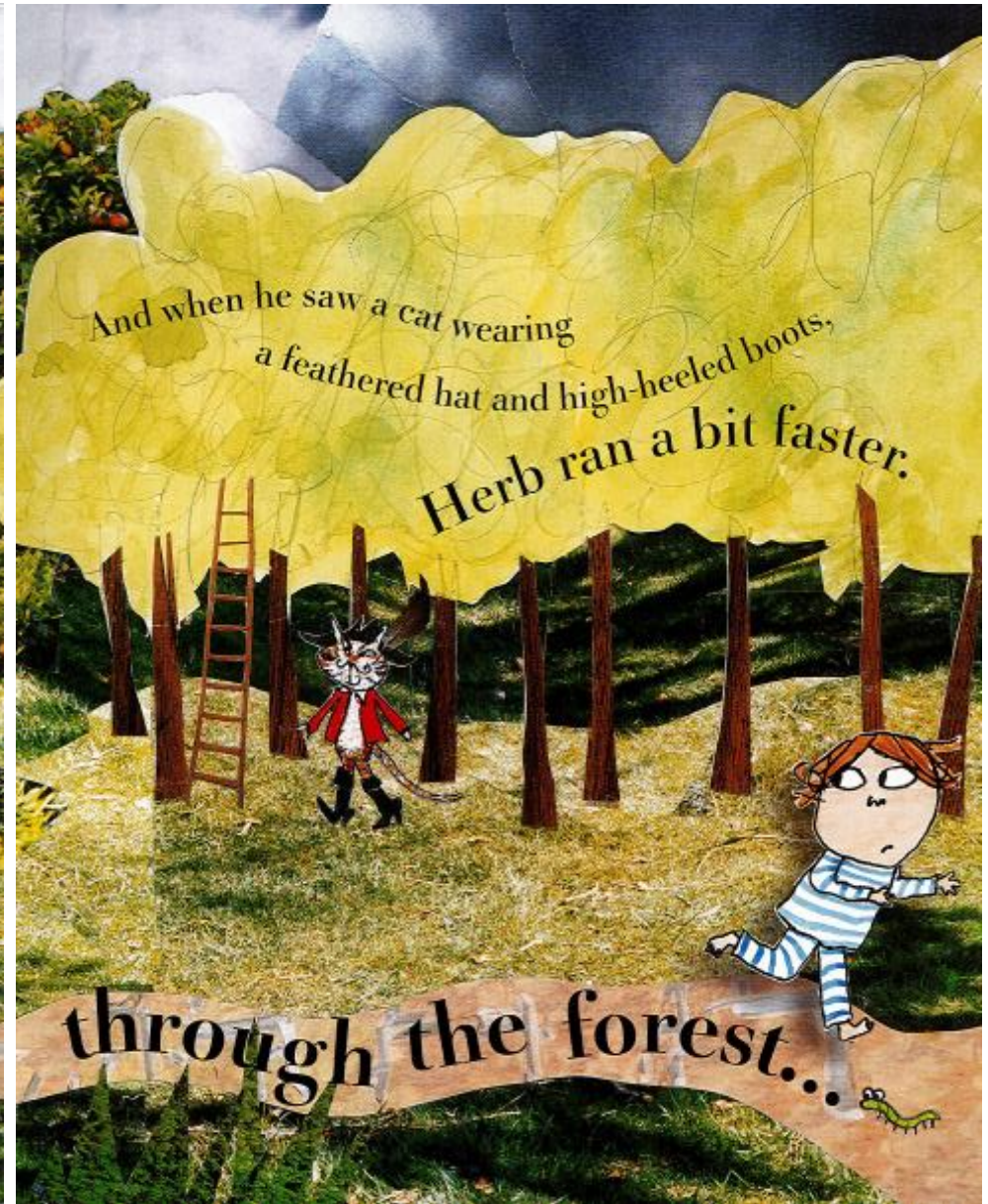
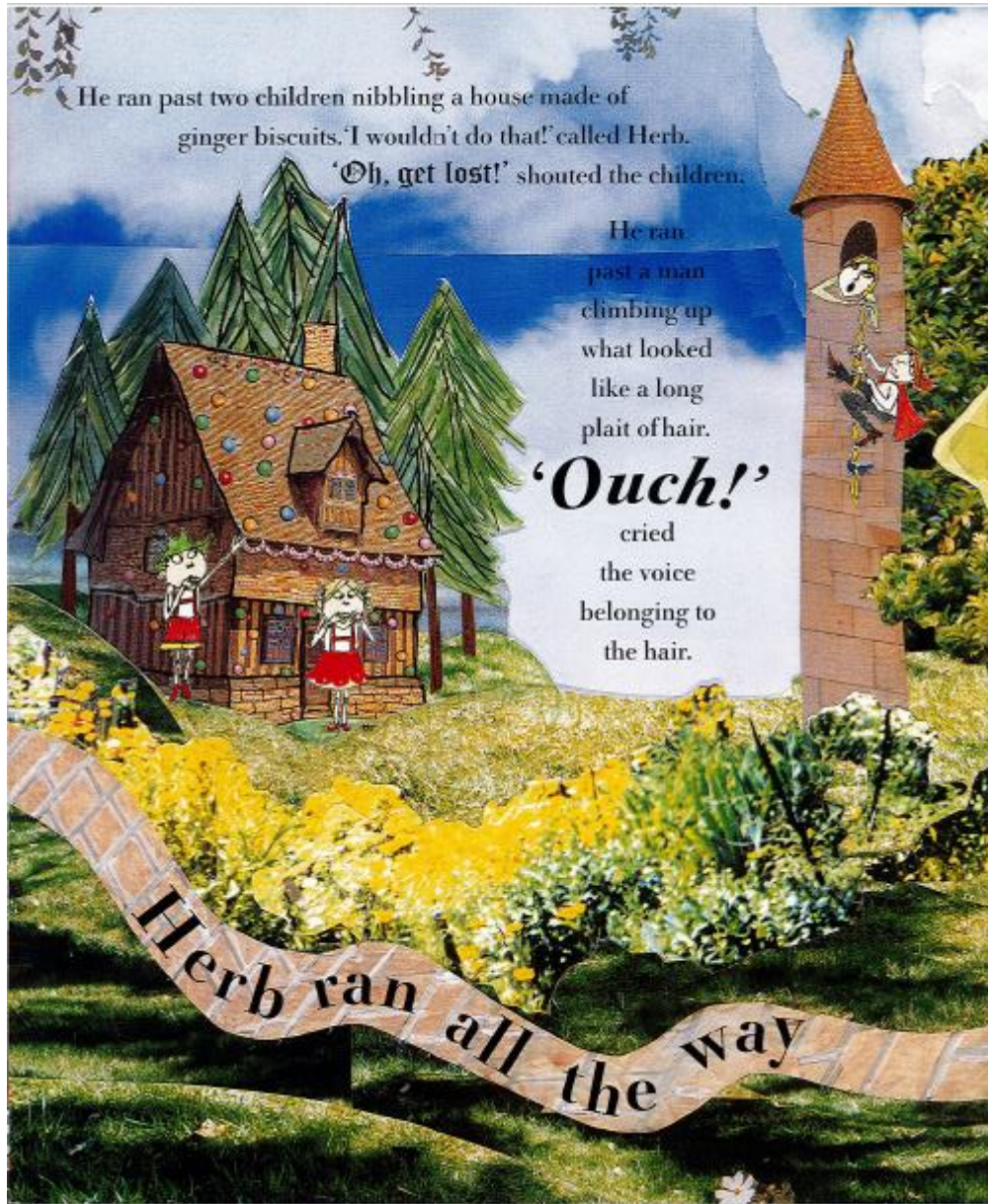
'But who are you?' asked Herb, not sure that he wanted to know. 'I,' said the little girl, somehow managing to raise her voice even higher,

**'I AM GOLDBLOCKS, OF COURSE!
AND THIS IS MY STORY!'**



And that's when it dawned on Herb that he had fallen into the book.





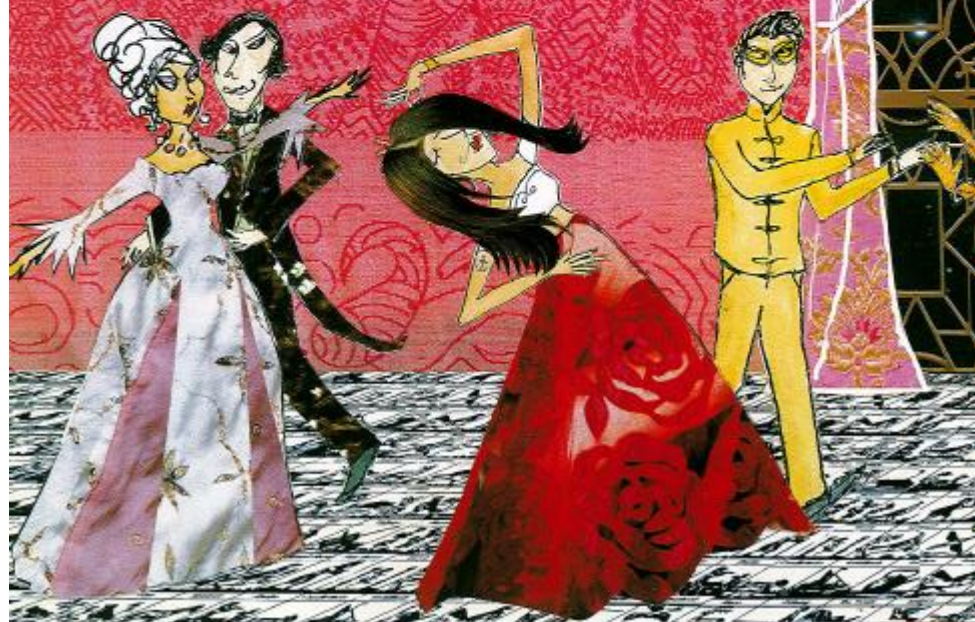
AT LONG LAST,
HE CAME TO AN
ENORMOUS DOOR.
IT WAS DIFFICULT TO
OPEN BECAUSE THE
ILLUSTRATOR HAD
DRAWN THE HANDLE
MUCH TOO HIGH UP
BUT, AFTER THREE
ATTEMPTS AT
JUMPING, HERB
MANAGED TO GRAB IT
AND SLOWLY CREAK
THE DOOR OPEN.



There seemed to be a party going on.

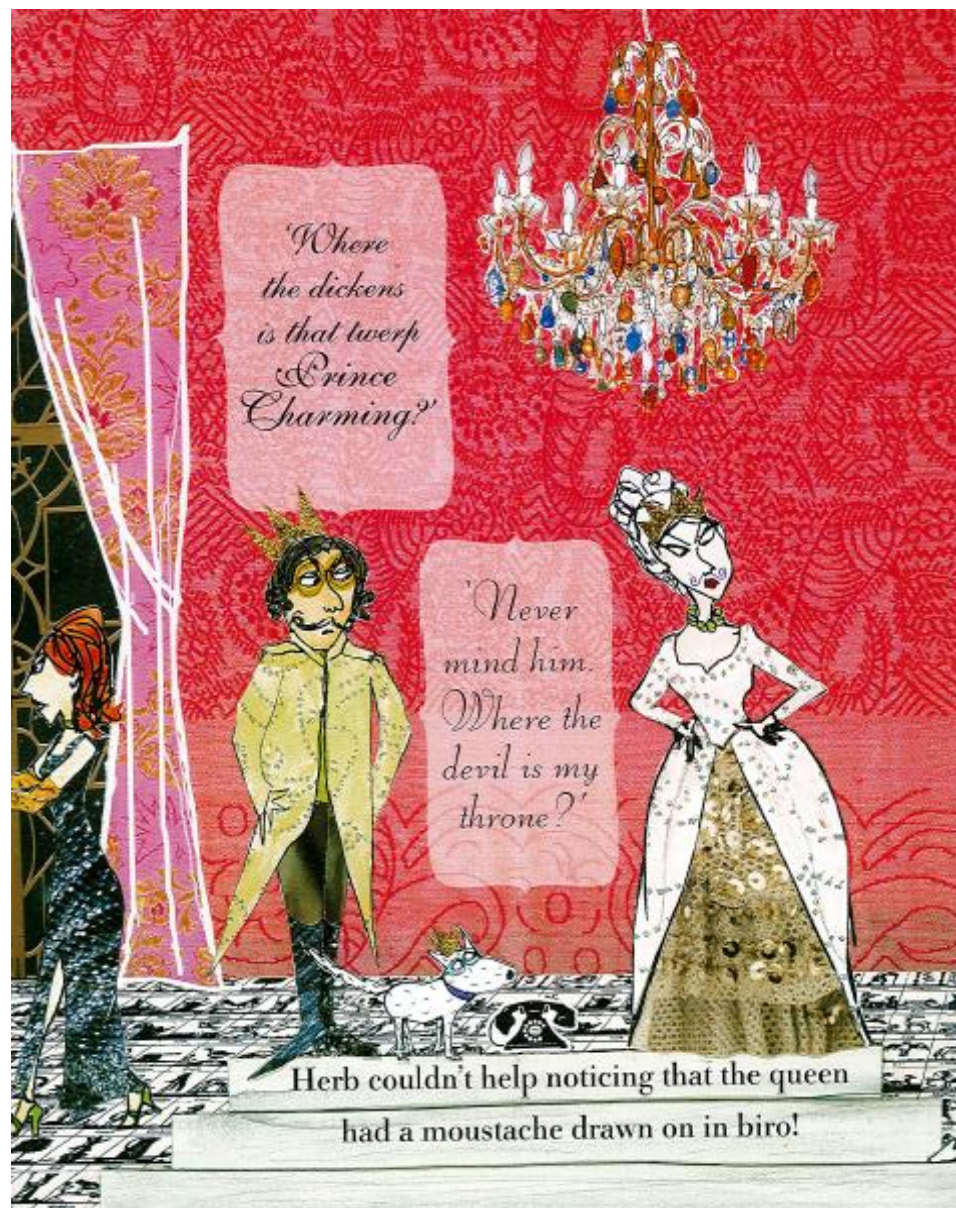


Everyone was dressed up to the nines and dancing in wigs. One by one the dancers noticed Herb and the music ground slowly to a halt. It was so quiet you could hear a pea drop or was it a pin? Well, you could have heard something drop had it not been for the couple in crowns having a furious discussion in loud voices.



'Where the dickens is that twerp Prince Charming?'

'Never mind him. Where the devil is my throne?'



Herb couldn't help noticing that the queen had a moustache drawn on in biro!

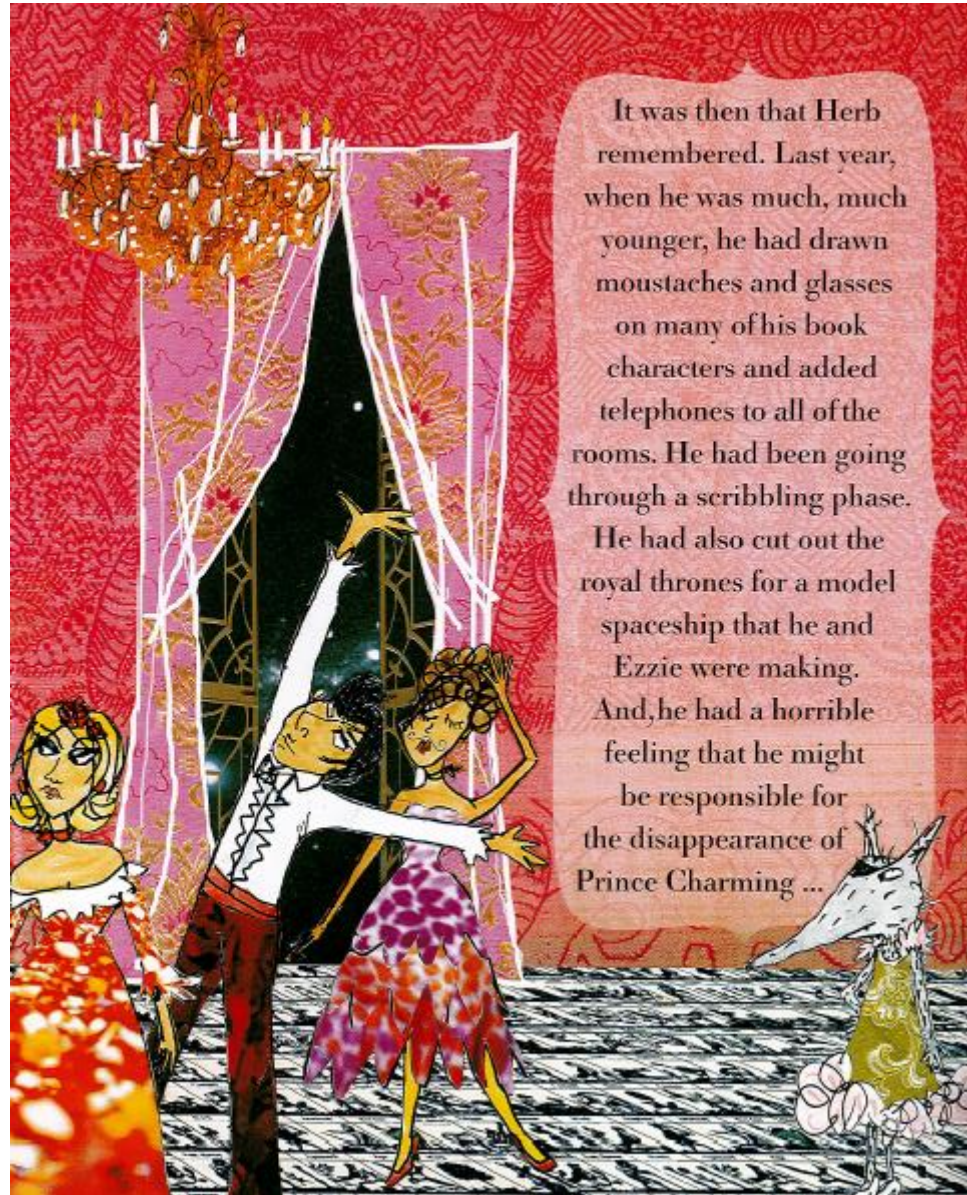
'And who might you be?' demanded the queen. 'This is a private Royal party you know, no one in pyjamas is invited.'

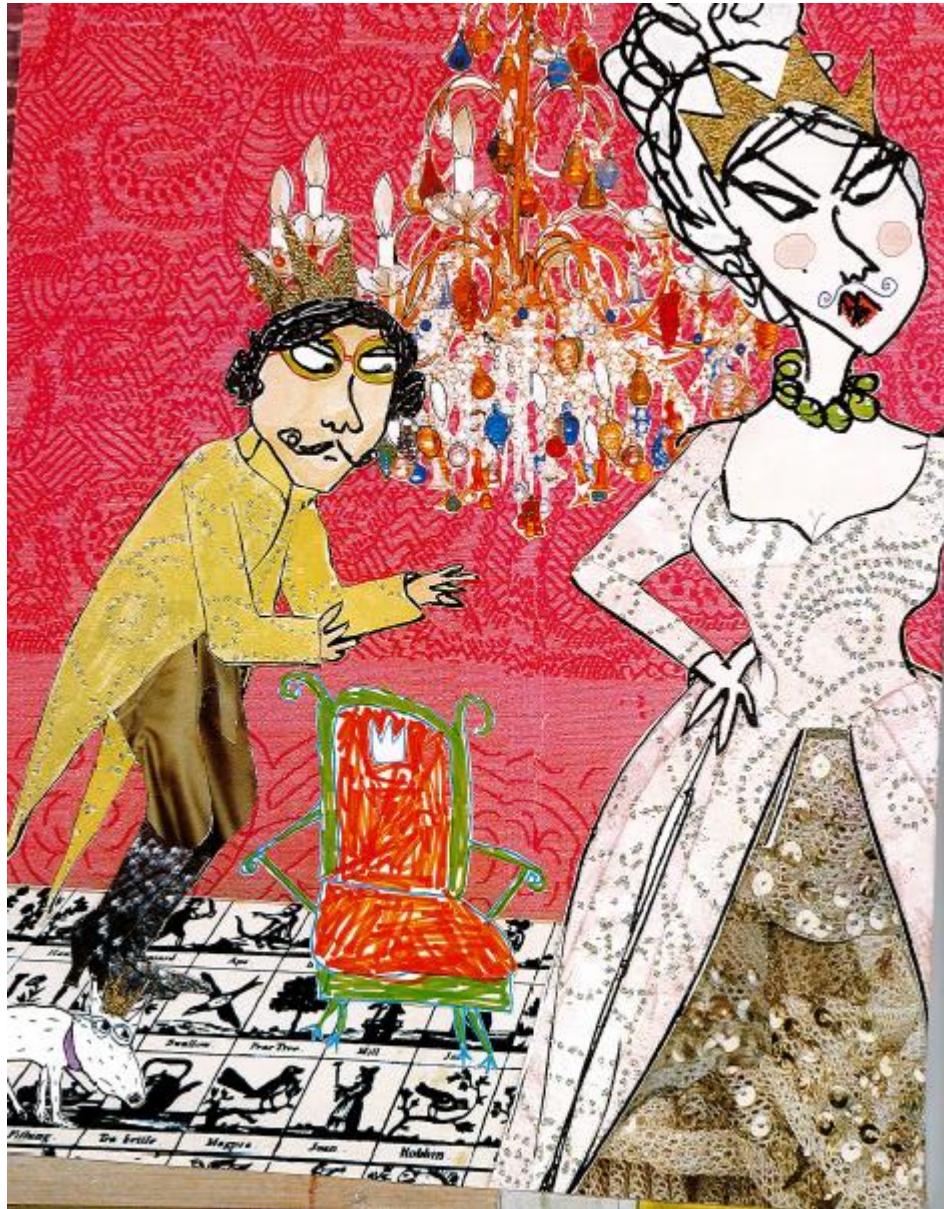
'I'm Herb,' said Herb. 'I own this book.'

'Oh, so you're the doodler who ruined my locks,' she said, pointing at her moustache. 'And where's my throne, you... you scissor-snipper!'



It was then that Herb remembered. Last year, when he was much, much younger, he had drawn moustaches and glasses on many of his book characters and added telephones to all of the rooms. He had been going through a scribbling phase. He had also cut out the royal thrones for a model spaceship that he and Ezzie were making. And, he had a horrible feeling that he might be responsible for the disappearance of Prince Charming ...





As Herb wondered desperately what to do next, he noticed his pencil case lying on the floor; he'd been looking for it for months.

'It's all right, I can draw you a new throne,' he said.

'Make sure it's got lots of twirly bits,' blustered the king.

'And I want it gold, of course,' ordered the queen.

Herb didn't have a gold crayon; it would have to be green.

The queen did not look impressed.

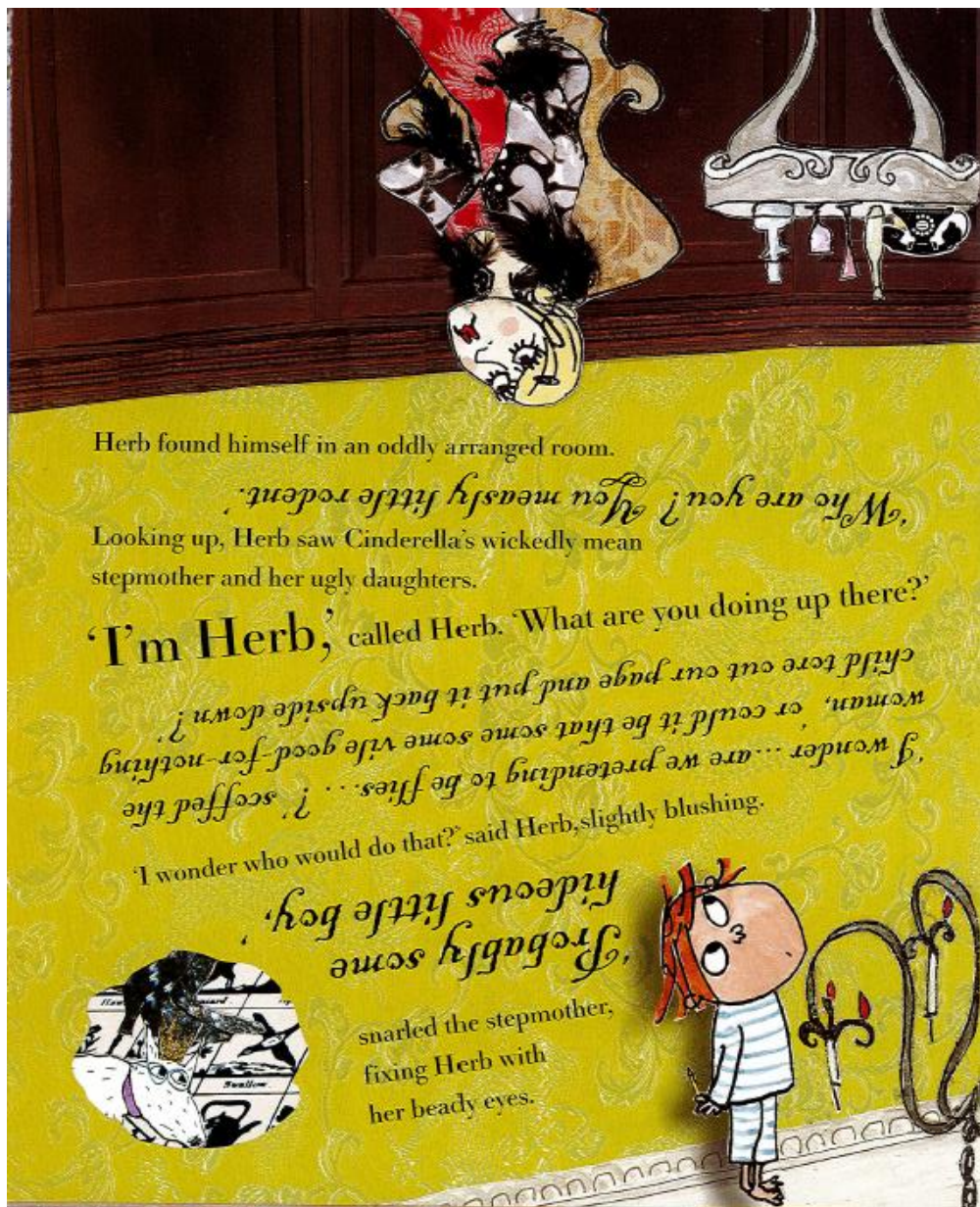
Then, finding the eraser, Herb started to rub away at the queen's moustache.

'Ow, ^{ow}, OW! That really hurts!
Seize him!' she roared.

Herb made a dash for it.

There wasn't time to get to the door but, by snipping a hole in the palace floor, Herb managed to wriggle through onto the next page. He could hear the queen shouting. *Look, he's at it again!*





Herb found himself in an oddly arranged room.

Looking up, Herb saw Cinderella's wickedly mean stepmother and her ugly daughters.

'I'm Herb,' called Herb. 'What are you doing up there?'

'I wonder who would do that?' said Herb, slightly blushing.

Steady some hideous little boy,

sarled the stepmother, fixing Herb with her beady eyes.



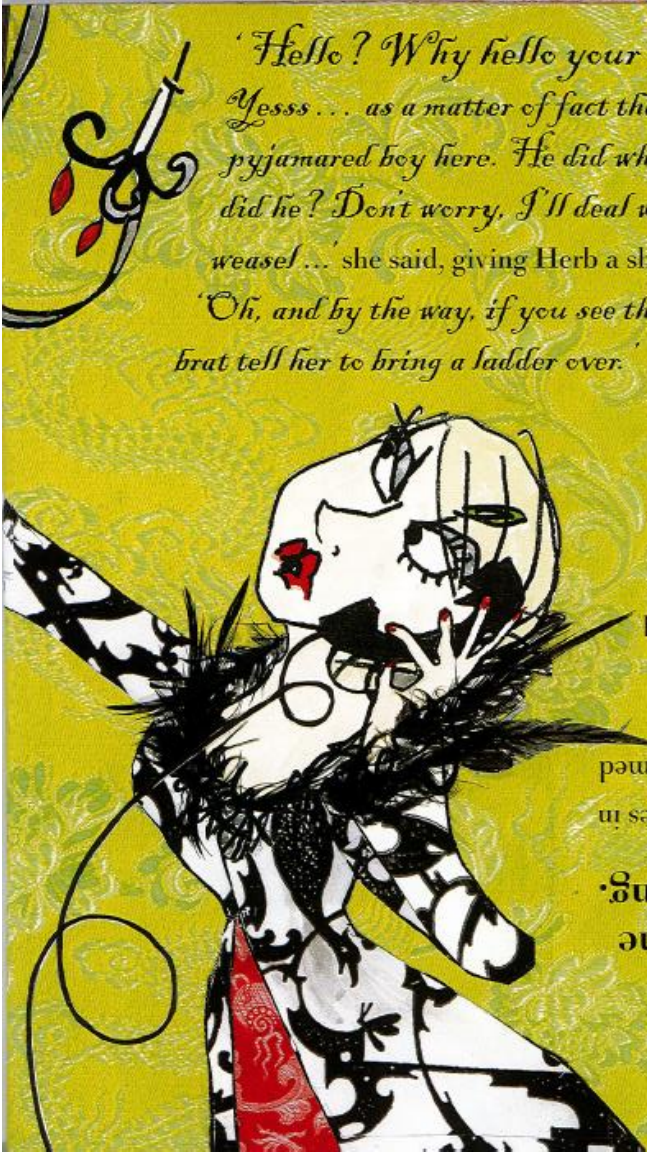
'Now we can't get to the ball and Prince Charming can't fall madly, utterly in love with us. It's so unfair,'

whined the pudgy sister.

'He wouldn't look twice at you,' snapped the skinny one.

'Oh do be quiet,' hissed the stepmother.

'I'm feeling queasy.'



*'Hello? Why hello your majesty...
Yesss... as a matter of fact there is a little
pyjamared boy here. He did what?... Oh he did,
did he? Don't worry, I'll deal with the little
weasel...' she said, giving Herb a shrivelling look.
'Oh, and by the way, if you see that nosy Goldilocks
brat tell her to bring a ladder over.'*

Just then
the telephone
started to ring.
Sucking telephones in
fairy tales had seemed
funny at the time,
but Herb could
see that they could
turn out to be
rather a nuisance.

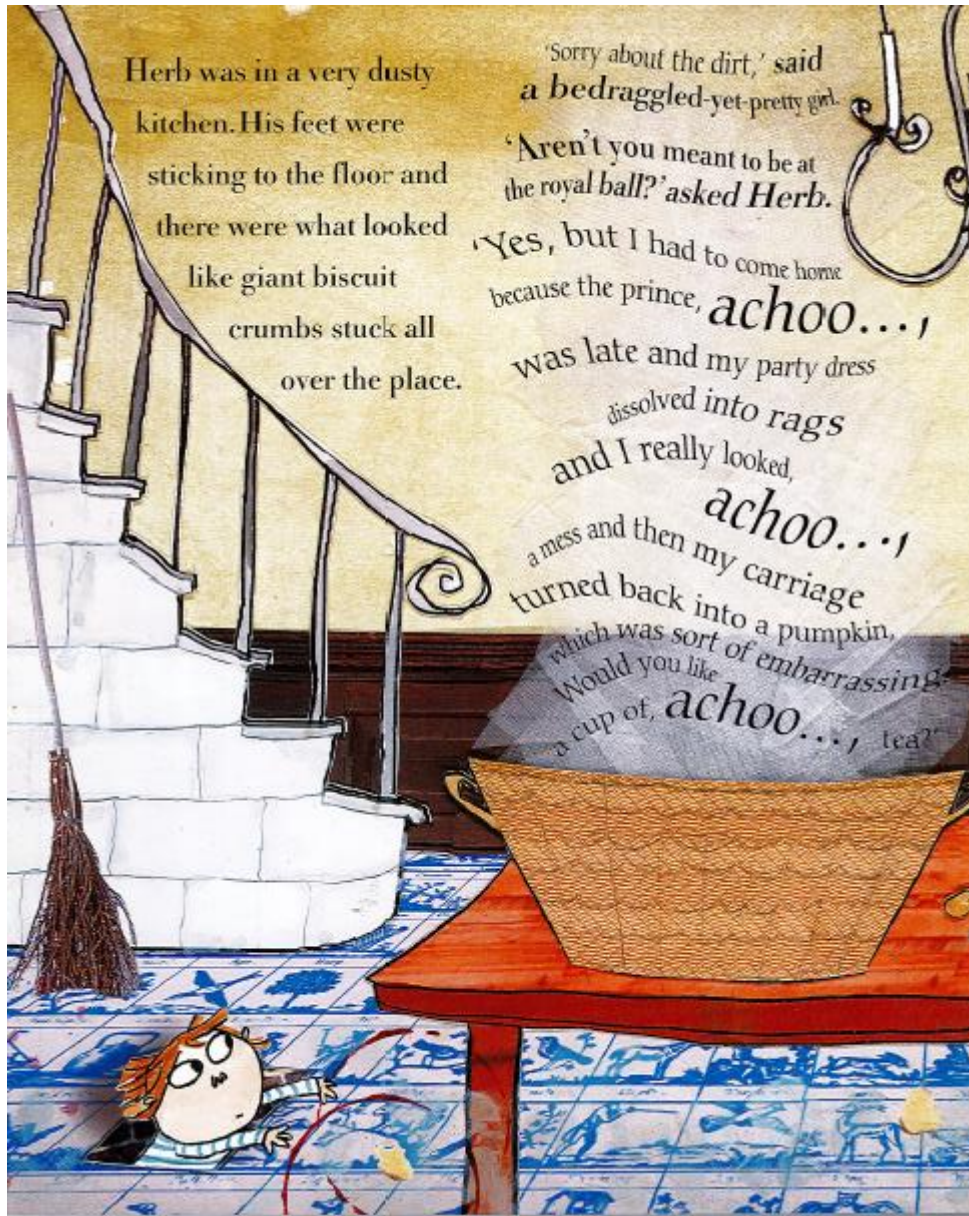
'So this is your doing!'
she screamed, leaping onto her chair.

*'I'm going to make
you wish you'd never
opened a book!'*

Herb speedily drew a
door on the wall, ran through it
and slammed it shut.

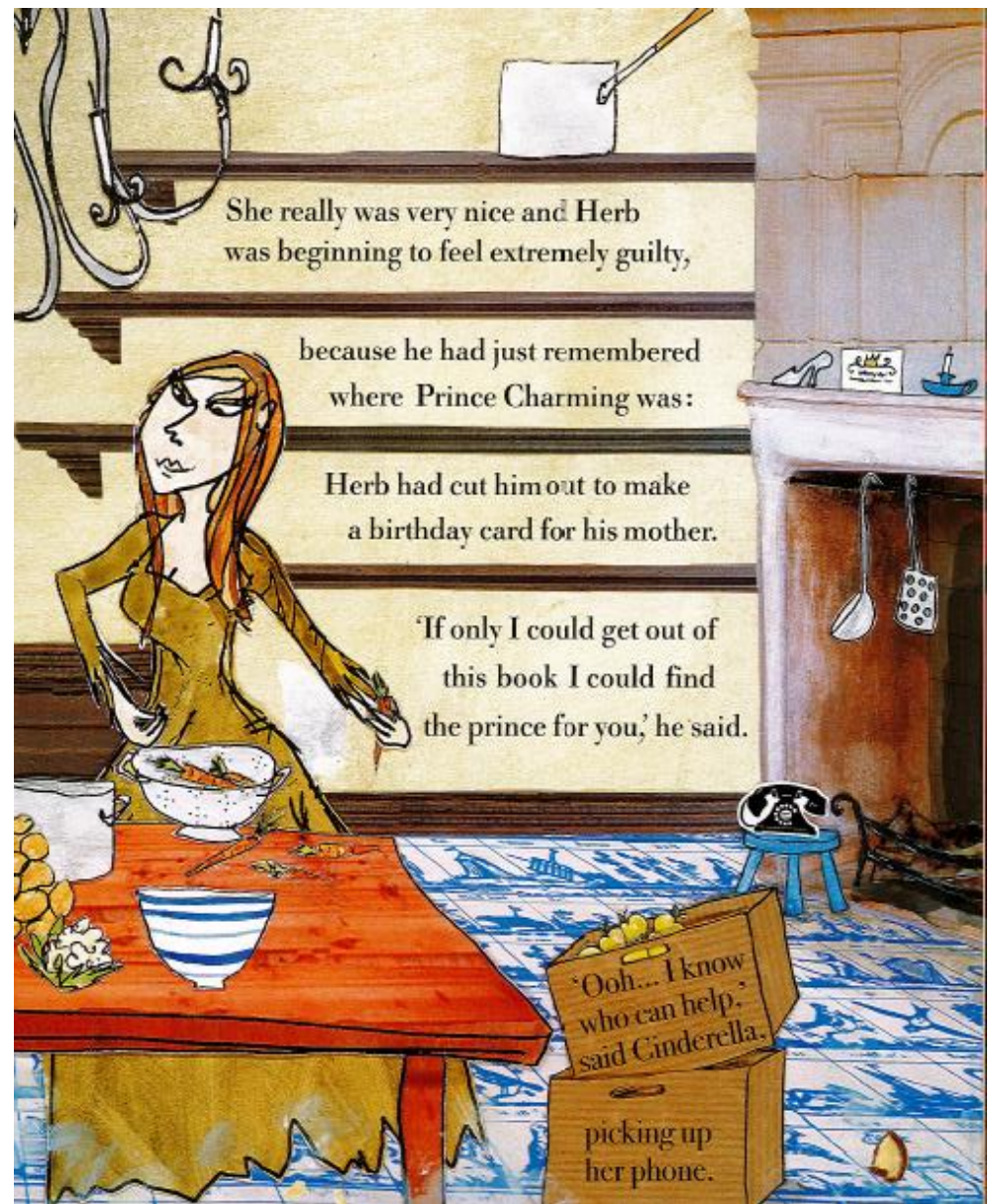
*'Come back here
you little
horror!'*
she screeched.





Herb was in a very dusty kitchen. His feet were sticking to the floor and there were what looked like giant biscuit crumbs stuck all over the place.

'Sorry about the dirt,' said a bedraggled-yet-pretty girl.
'Aren't you meant to be at the royal ball?' asked Herb.
'Yes, but I had to come home because the prince, *achoo...*, was late and my party dress dissolved into rags and I really looked, *achoo...*, a mess and then my carriage turned back into a pumpkin, which was sort of embarrassing. Would you like a cup of, *achoo...*, tea?'



She really was very nice and Herb was beginning to feel extremely guilty,

because he had just remembered where Prince Charming was:

Herb had cut him out to make a birthday card for his mother.

'If only I could get out of this book I could find the prince for you,' he said.

'Ooh... I know who can help,' said Cinderella.

picking up her phone.

'Drat!
Absolutely
maddening!
I was just in the
middle of a spell.
This had better
be important!'

'It's an
emergency!
Absolutely
everybody's
after me.'

*You have to
help me get out
of this book!* yelled Herb.



'Well let me see...

A. Are you my fairy godchild?

No, you are not. I don't do boys; only girls worst luck.

**B. What do you expect when you go about scribbling
and snipping and generally causing mayhem?**

This is no way to treat a book you know!

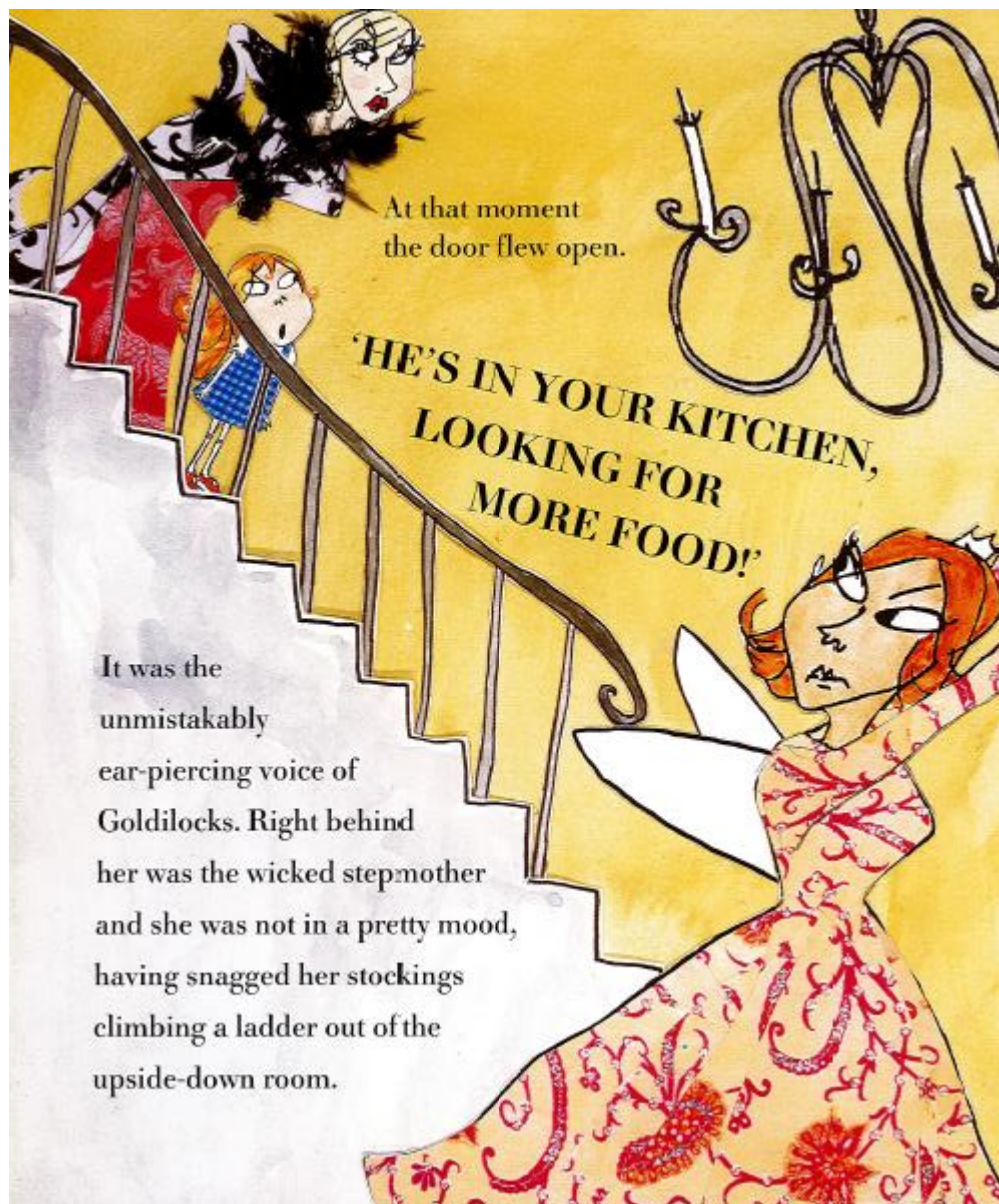
And C...

jumping into other people's stories, really is very rude.'

'But I can't find my
way out,' pleaded Herb,
near his wits' end.

'All right, all right,
keep your pyjamas on.
I suppose I'll have to
come to the rescue as
always. Now where
did I put my wand?'

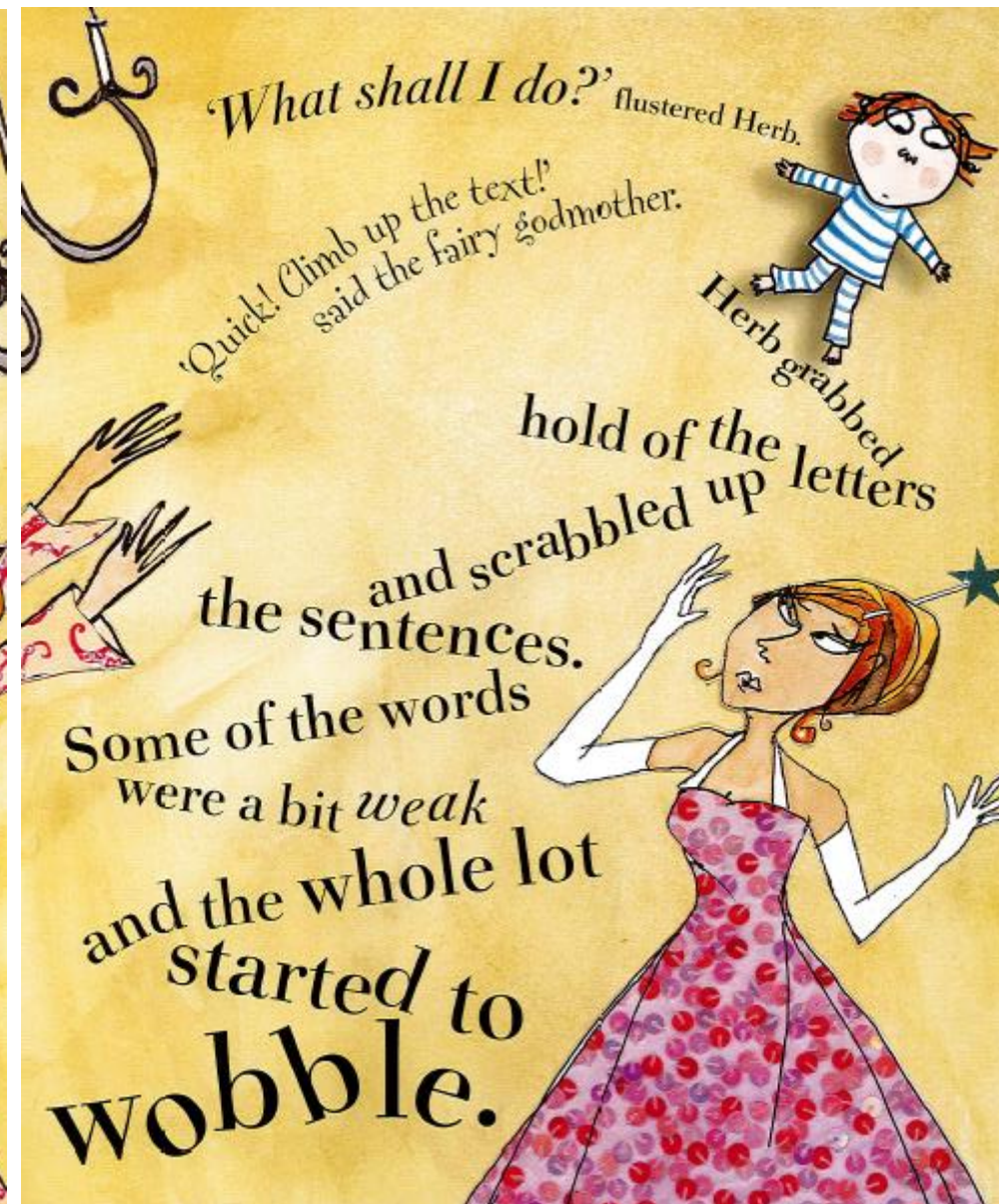




It was the unmistakably ear-piercing voice of Goldilocks. Right behind her was the wicked stepmother and she was not in a pretty mood, having snagged her stockings climbing a ladder out of the upside-down room.

At that moment the door flew open.

**'HE'S IN YOUR KITCHEN,
LOOKING FOR
MORE FOOD!'**

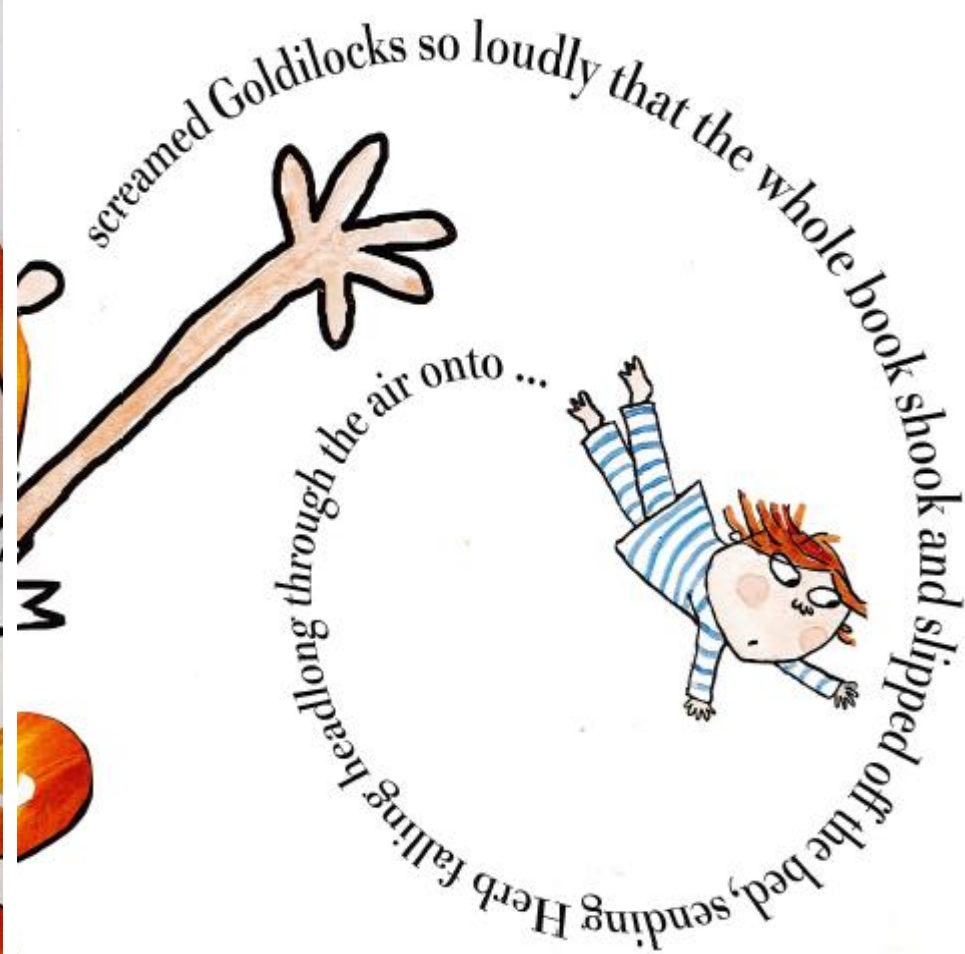


'What shall I do?' flustered Herb.

'Quick! Climb up the text!'
said the fairy godmother.

Herb grabbed
hold of the letters

the sentences.
Some of the words
were a bit *weak*
and the whole lot
started to
wobble.



... his own bedroom floor.

'Wh-what's happening?' squeaked a startled Ezzie, sitting bolt upright in bed. As you can imagine it all took some explaining.

Ezzie and Herb spent the rest of the night putting the storybook back to rights: rubbing out moustaches, cleaning out crumbs and blowing away dust. The bewildered Prince Charming was prised off the birthday card and *həqəɪ-ʒləɪtə* back into the ballroom. His dancing would never quite be the same again due to severe leg creasing.



It was tempting to leave the wicked stepmother's room 'umop-əpɪsdn but Herb resisted. However, he just couldn't help drawing a padlock on the three bears' front door. And Ezzie just couldn't help sticking a wig on Goldilocks. Well, serves her right for being such a meany.



So, the next time Herb opened the book, he saw
a little girl standing outside the three bears' cottage
desperately trying to open the door —



a very cross little girl with mousey brown hair.

