

Sometimes when I am tucked into my crisp packet,  
I look up at all the cosy windows  
and wonder what it would be like to live with creature comforts.  
To belong to somebody.

To be an actual  
pet.

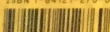
The FUNNY TOUCHING TALE  
of how a pesky street rat  
finds home sweet home.

From the creator of the Clarice Bean books  
and "I will not ever  
**NEVER eat a Tomato**"  
Winner of the Kate Greenaway Medal  
and the Norfolk Children's Book Award

"Lauren Child is so good it's exhilarating"  
THE INDEPENDENT

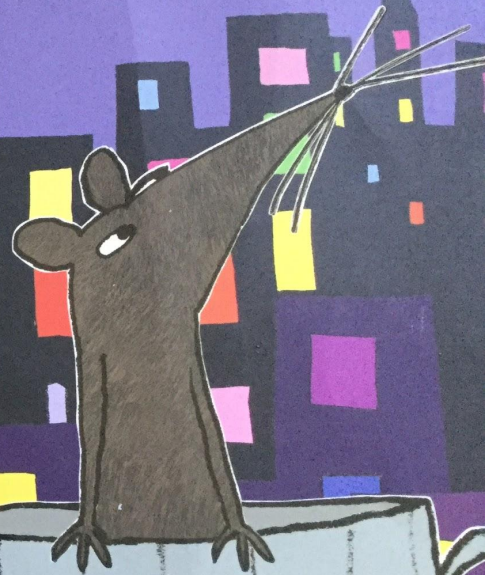
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# that pesky rat



lauren child

Gold Winner of the Smarties Book Prize 2002

Thank you  
Randala  
and Albino



Max



Sam



Lucy



Zaida

This book is for  
the gorgeous Max  
and her little  
dog Louie



Flame



Ata & Cui

with love to Jo and Thomas,  
long-suffering owners of Twinkle,  
the Bette Davis of cats



Twinkle



Louie



Cheeky

Look out for Lauren Child's  
Clarice Bean books  
and the award-winning  
I will not ever  
NEVER  
eat a tomato

and for anyone who  
has ever wished they  
were somebody's pet

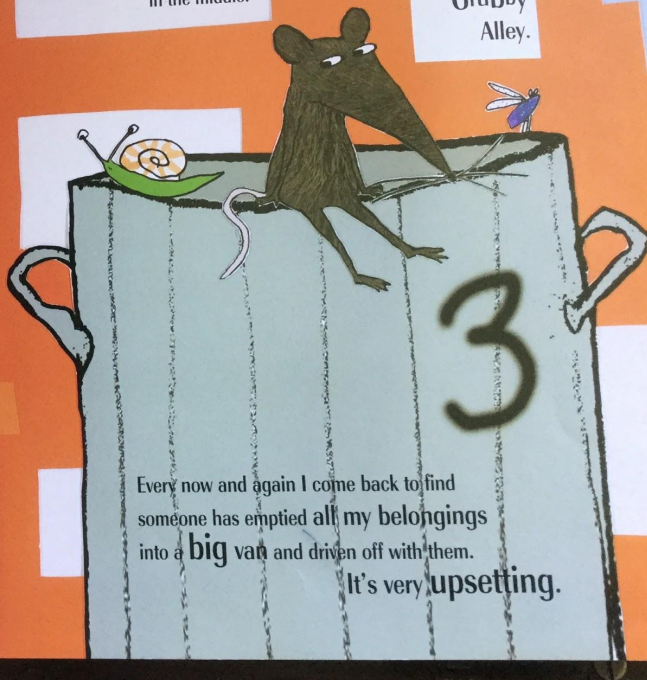
and for fabulous  
Frances and her  
pets Lucy, Sam,  
Ata and Cui

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This is me.  
I'm the one with the pointy  
nose and beady eyes.  
The cutesy one  
in the middle.

I live in  
dustbin  
number 3.  
Grubby  
Alley.



Every now and again I come back to find  
someone has emptied all my belongings  
into a big van and driven off with them.  
It's very upsetting.

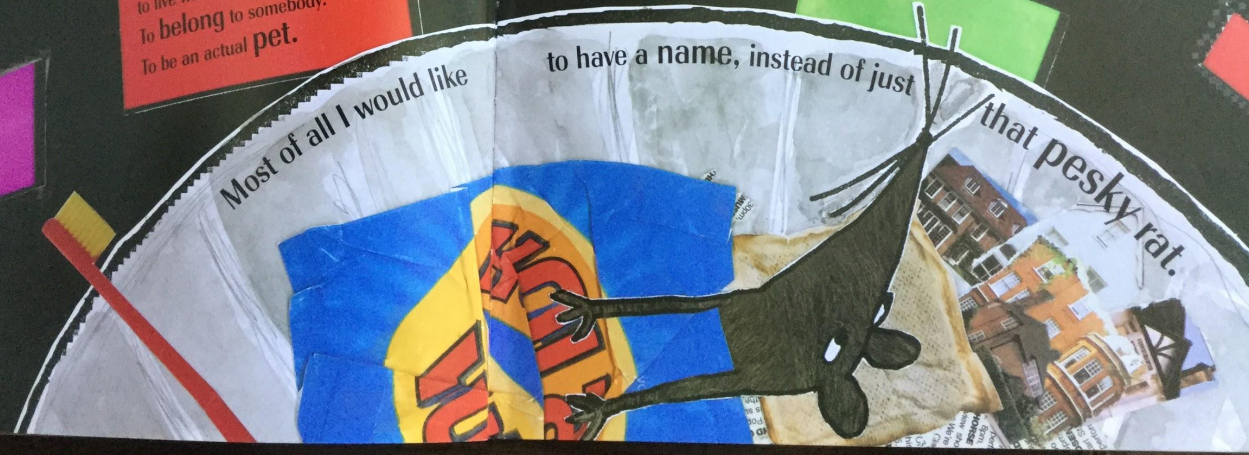
I'm a brown rat, a street rat.  
But people call me that pesky rat.  
I don't know why.  
They say I smell,  
but that's not my fault, it's the dirt.

Sometimes when I am tucked into  
my crisp packet,  
I look up at all the COSY windows  
and wonder what it would be like  
to live with creature comforts.  
To belong to somebody.  
To be an actual pet.

Most of all I would like

to have a name, instead of just

that pesky rat.

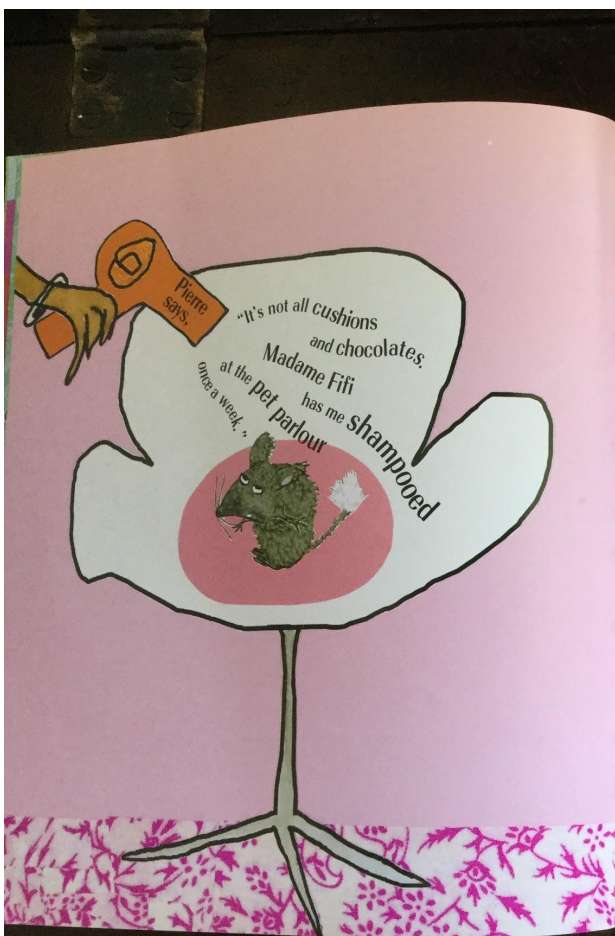


My friend Pierre,  
who is a chinchilla,  
is looked after by a rich lady called Madame Fil.  
He has a very glamorous life.

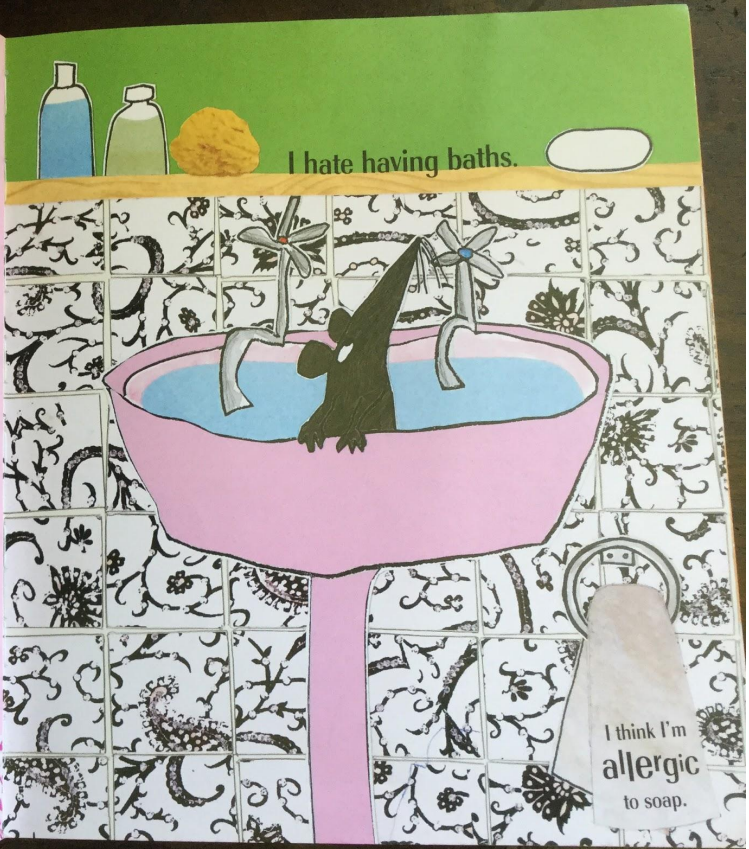
He lives in the lap of luxury.

I say,  
"I would quite like to  
live in a fashionable apartment  
and be fed  
chocolates  
while I sit on a  
feather cushion."





Pierre says  
"It's not all cushions and chocolates, Madame Fifi at the pet parlour has me shampooed once a week."



I hate having baths.

I think I'm allergic to soap.

Then there's this  
Siamese cat  
called Oscar.  
He lives with  
Mr Washington,  
a busy businessman.

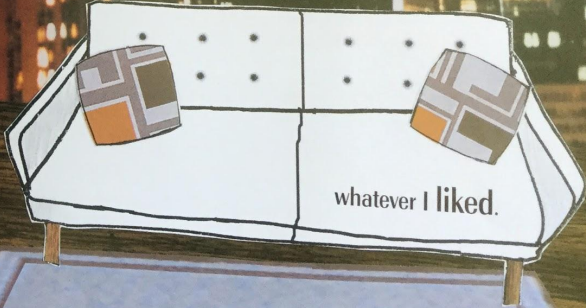


Mr Washington  
is always at work  
so he doesn't have  
time to wash fur  
or be strict.



If I  
lived  
there

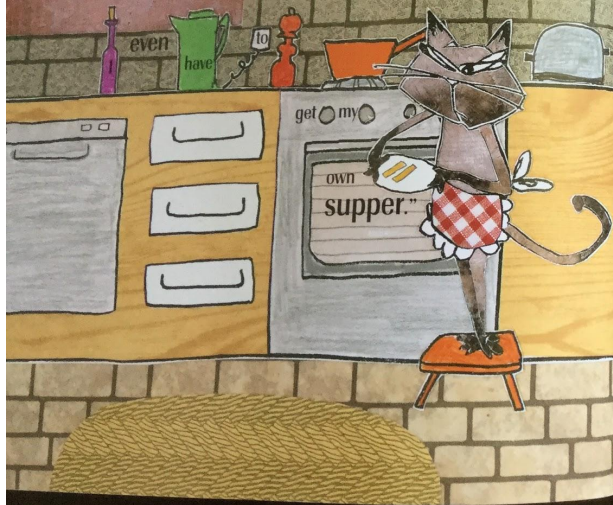
could  
do



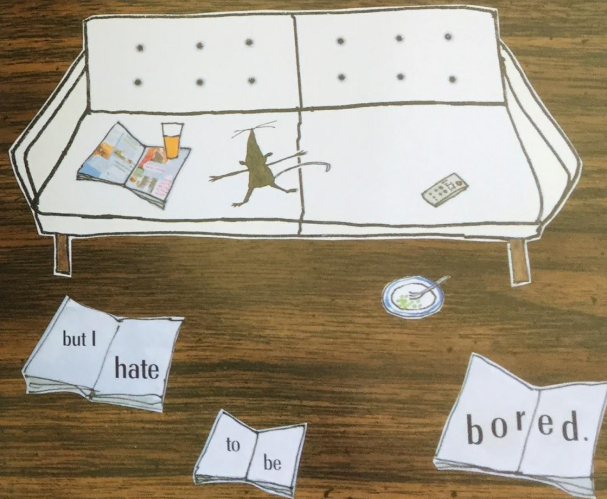
whatever I liked.

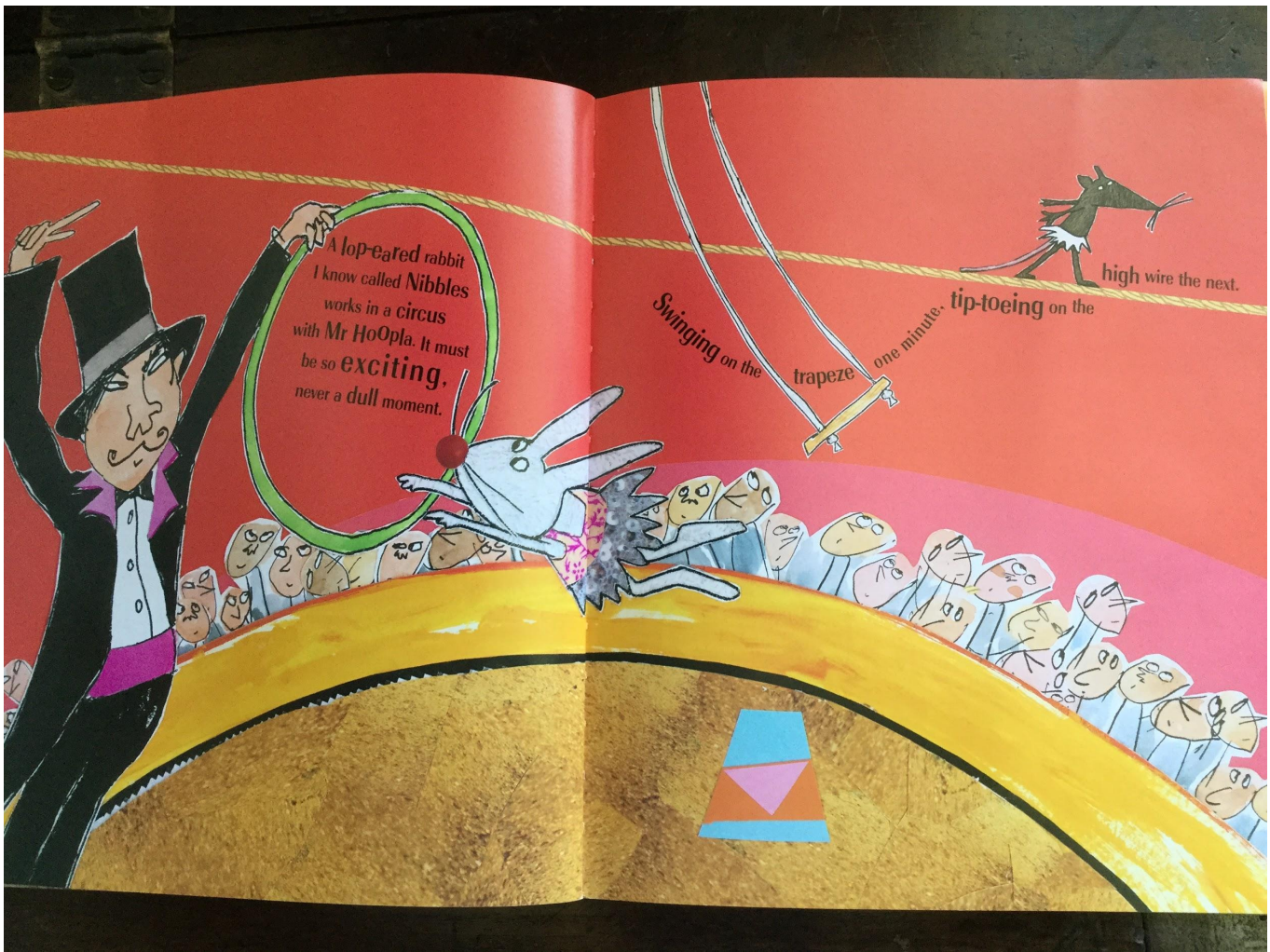


Oscar says,  
"Doing whatever you want can get  
tiring after a while. I sometimes get a bit  
bored watching the same old shows on TV.



I'm quite good in the kitchen

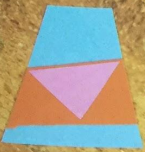




A lop-eared rabbit  
I know called Nibbles  
works in a circus  
with Mr HoOpla. It must  
be so exciting,  
never a dull moment.

Swinging on the  
trapeze  
one minute.

tip-toeing on the  
high wire the next.





Nibbles says, "It is fun hopping through hoops in a tutu.

"It is fun

hopping through hoops in a tutu.

But sometimes

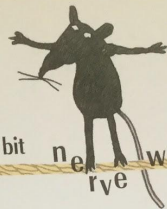
I could do with  
taking  
off



the  
clown's  
nose

and putting my feet up."

Maybe it's all a bit nerve wracking for me.



I think I'd quite like one of those owners  
who do lots of sitting about  
like Miss StClair.

Her Scottie-dog, Andrew, is always sitting by the

fire, having supper on a tray and they spend the evenings doing

Puzzles

together.



Andrew says,

"On the whole I feel

**very well**

looked after.

And

Miss StClair

is good company,

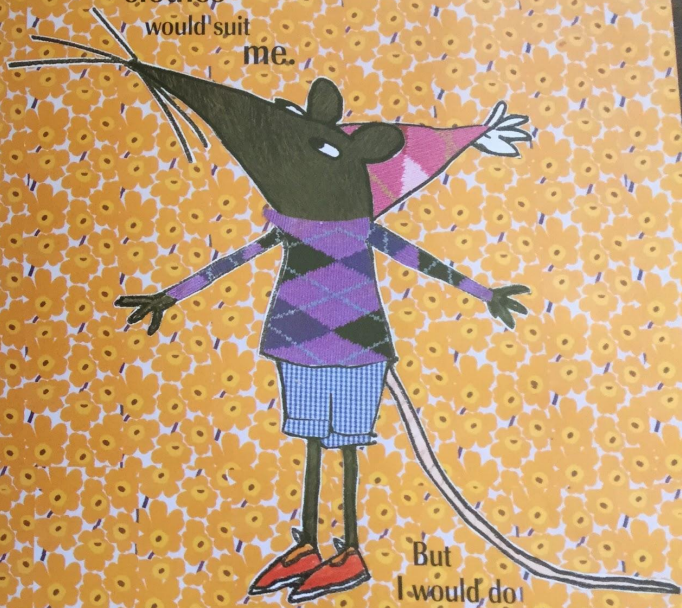
But it's rather

**embarrassing**

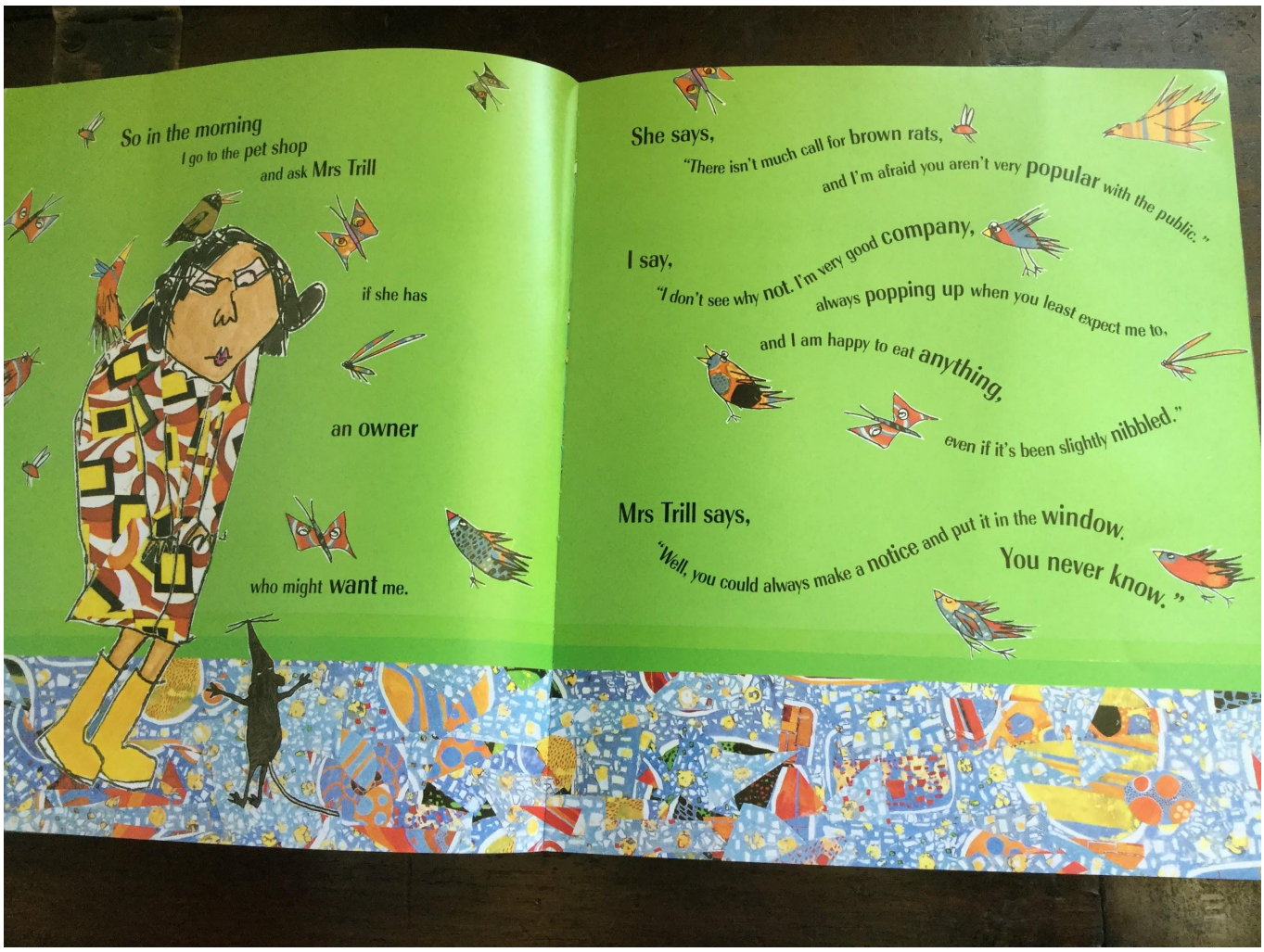
when we go out shopping."



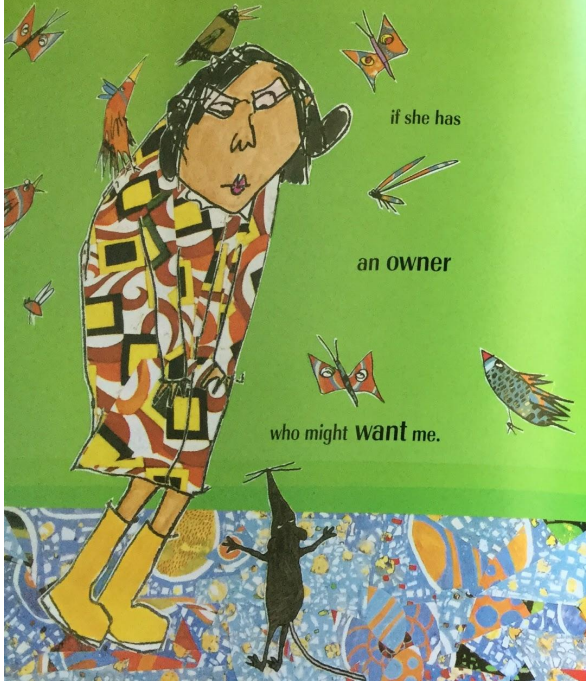
I don't think  
**clothes**  
would suit  
me.



But  
I would do  
**anything** to be  
somebody's **pet.**



So in the morning  
I go to the pet shop  
and ask Mrs Trill



if she has

an owner

who might want me.

She says,

"There isn't much call for brown rats,  
and I'm afraid you aren't very popular with the public."

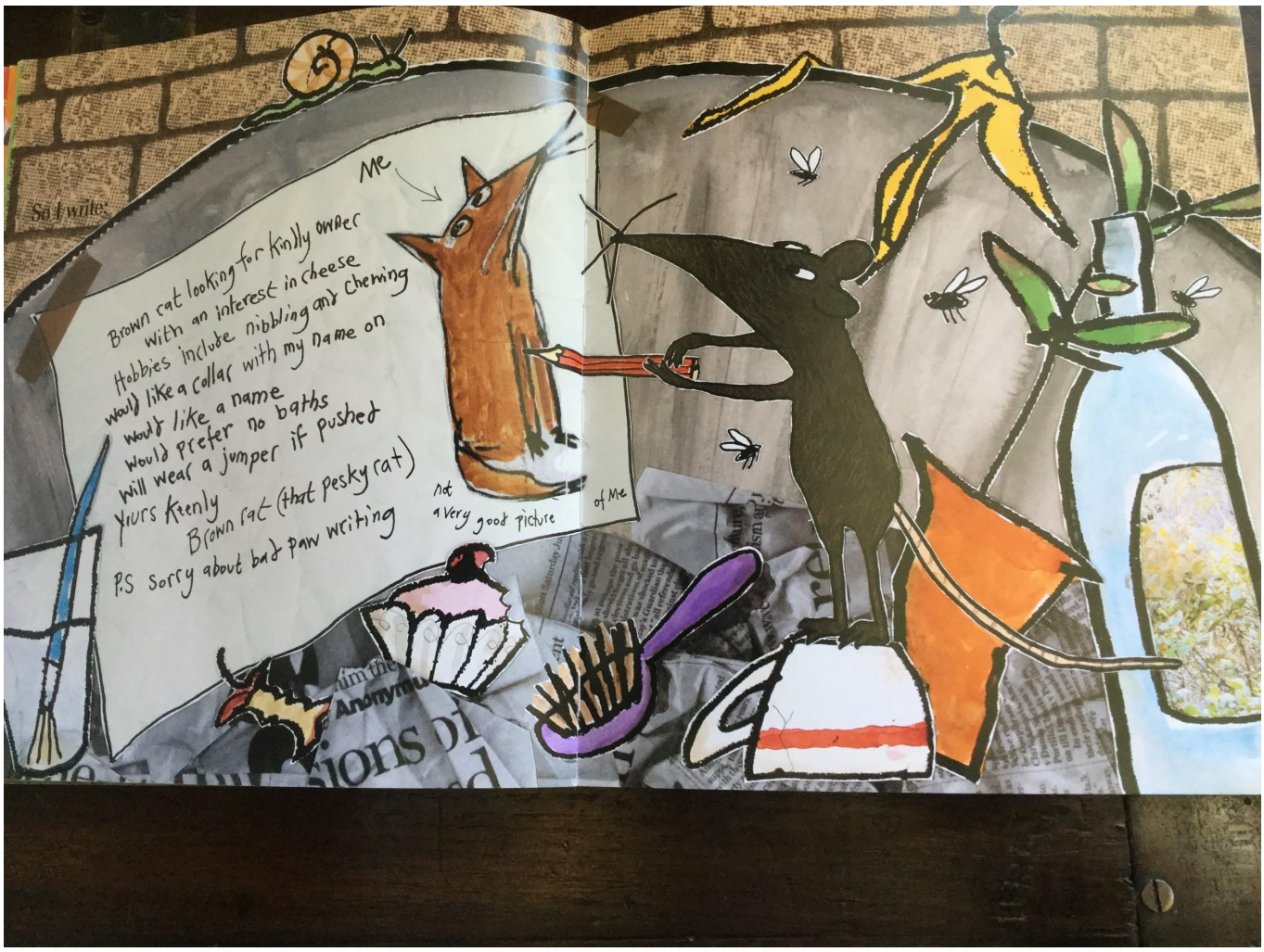
I say,

"I don't see why not. I'm very good company,  
always popping up when you least expect me to,  
and I am happy to eat anything,

even if it's been slightly nibbled."

Mrs Trill says,

"Well, you could always make a notice and put it in the window.  
You never know."



So I write:

Brown cat looking for kindly owner  
with an interest in cheese  
Hobbies include nibbling and chewing  
would like a collar with my name on  
would like a name  
would prefer no baths  
Will wear a jumper if pushed  
Yours Keenly  
Brown rat (that pesky rat)  
P.S sorry about bad paw writing

Me

not

a very good picture

of Me

aim the  
Anonymu

sions of

Then I wait

and

I wait

and

I

wait.

Until ...



... on Tuesday old Mr Fortesque is passing  
and he stops to look at my notice.

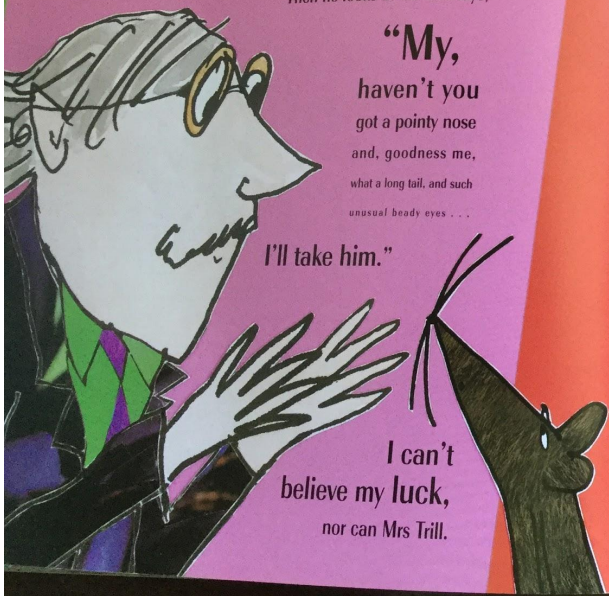
He has to really squint because he  
has such bad eyesight.

Then he looks at me and says,

“My,  
haven’t you  
got a pointy nose  
and, goodness me,  
what a long tail, and such  
unusual beady eyes . . .

I’ll take him.”

I can’t  
believe my luck,  
nor can Mrs Trill.

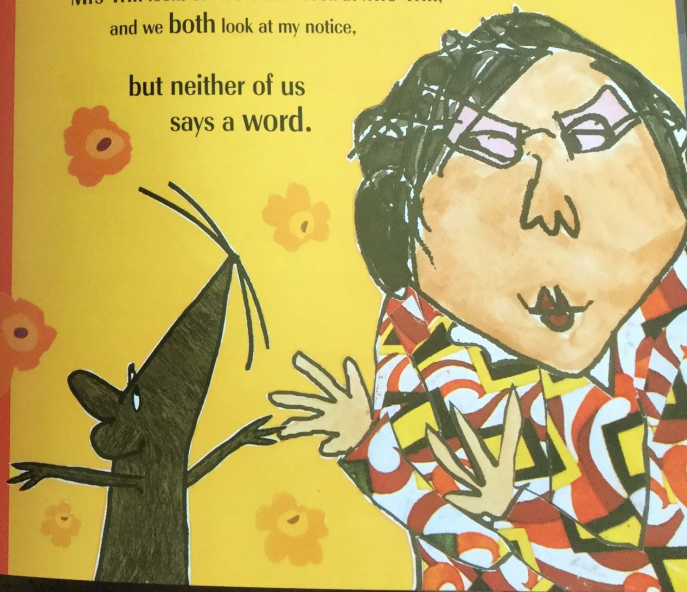


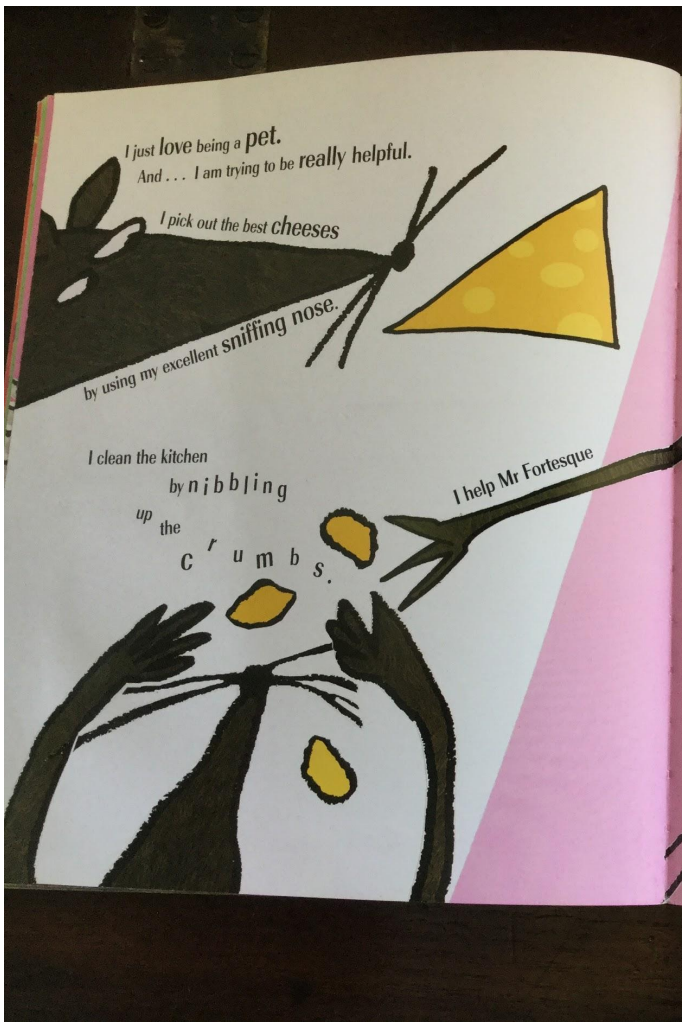
Mrs Trill says,  
“Are you sure?”

And Mr Fortesque says,  
“Oh yes, I’ve been looking for a brown cat  
as nice as this one for ages.”

Mrs Trill looks at me and I look at Mrs Trill,  
and we both look at my notice,

but neither of us  
says a word.



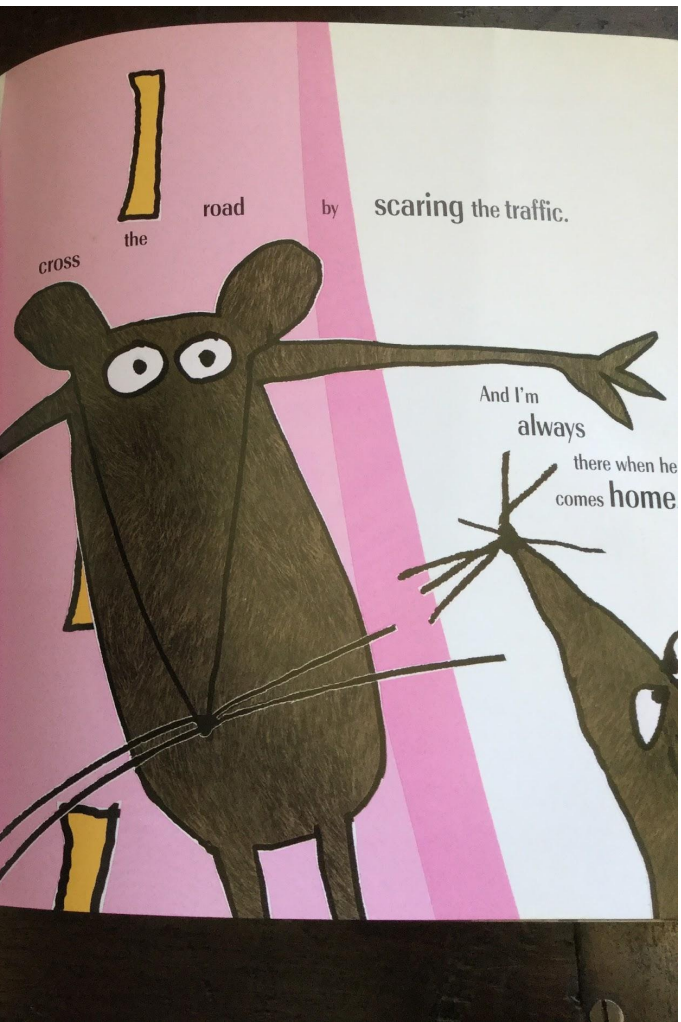


I just love being a **pet**.  
And . . . I am trying to be really helpful.

I pick out the best **cheeses**  
by using my excellent **sniffing nose**.

I clean the kitchen  
by **nibbling**  
up the  
**C r u m b s**.

I help Mr Fortesque



**1**  
cross  
the  
road  
by  
scaring the traffic.

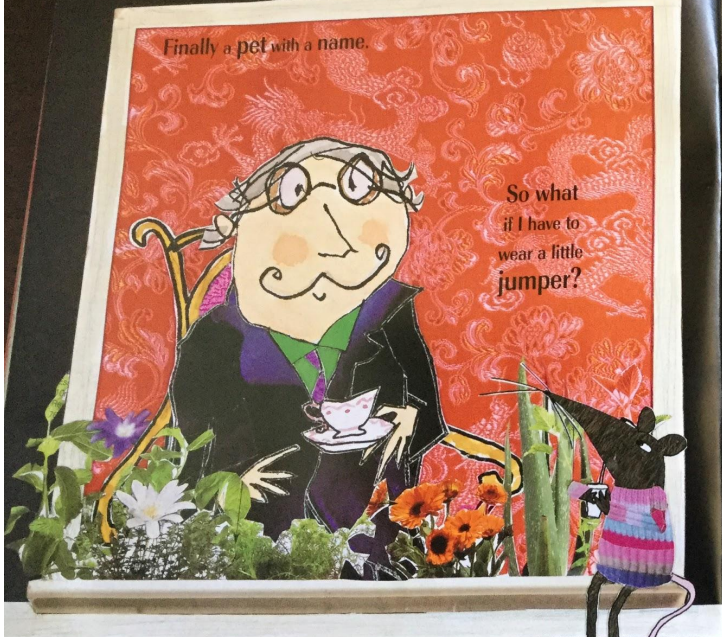
And I'm  
always  
there when he  
comes **home**



So here I am.

Finally a pet with a name.

So what  
if I have to  
wear a little  
jumper?



Mr Fortesque says, "Well, Tiddles, who's a pretty kittycat?"

And I squeak, "I am!"

