

Would Someone Please Answer the Parrot!

Written by BERYL YOUNG

Illustrated by JASON DOLL



To Neve and Misha—B. Y.

For Gabrielle—J.D.

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Uncle Bill arrived at the Gibson's door straight off the ship. He was carrying a cage that held a grey parrot with a bright red tail. "Bought this fella from a breeder in Rotterdam. On the way back me mates taught Guapo a few words," said Uncle Bill. "Gimme four!" Uncle Bill palmed Guapo's raised toes. Then he put Guapo back in the cage, ate a huge supper, burped loudly and left on the next ship for Zanzibar.

Guapo was the first pet the family ever had.

"Say something," said Zoe.

"Bombs away!" squawked Guapo, and he pooped on the floor of the cage.

Zoe and her twin brother Zack almost cracked up.

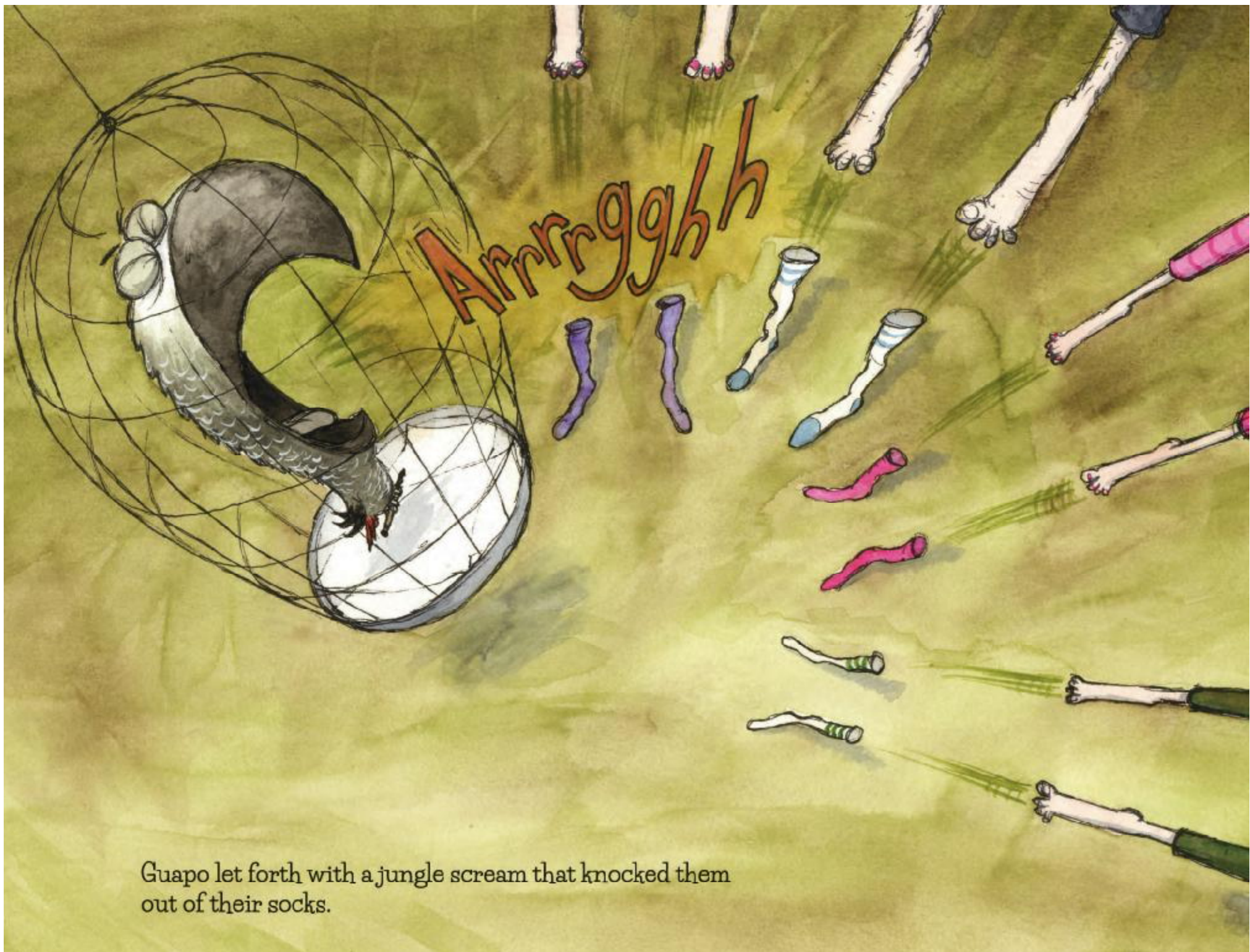
"Disgusting!" said Mom.

"I'm not cleaning up that mess," said Dad.


"Lemme outta here," screeched Guapo.

Dad said, "There's NO way that bird gets out of the cage."



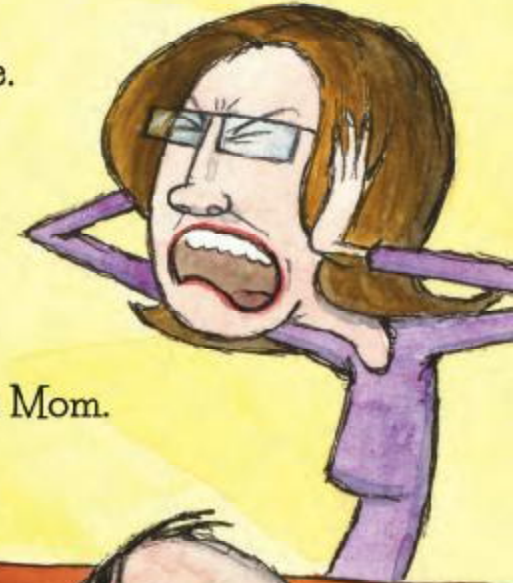


Guapo let forth with a jungle scream that knocked them out of their socks.



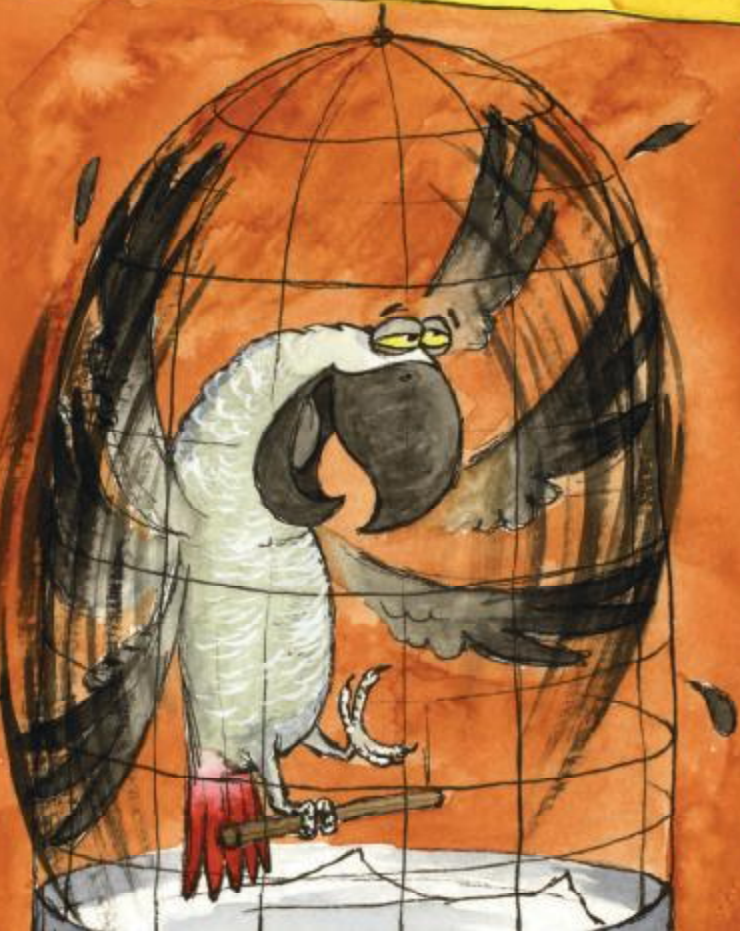
Guapo gave a piercing whistle. "Whilitt."

It was so loud it shattered the mirror over the fireplace.
"Stop that racket!" said Mom.

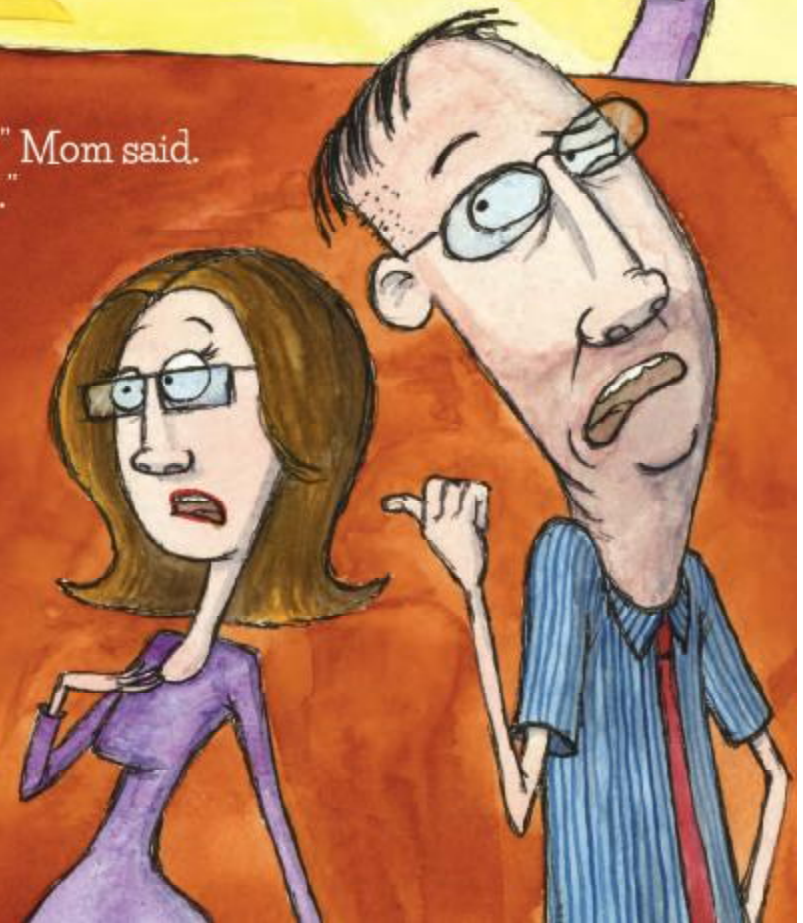


"Hi there, sweet stuff."

Guapo was excited and flapped his wings at Mom.



"I don't believe I heard that," Mom said.
Dad said, "This is too much."



"Too much.
Too much," imitated Guapo.

Then he made his jungle scream again. "Arrrrgghh."
"That bird has to go," Dad said.
"Bye, big boy," Guapo screeched.



Then he burped
just like Uncle Bill.



The family soon learned that Guapo could imitate anything. First it was the phone.



Ringg



Ringg



Dad jumped out of the shower soaking wet to answer, but, of course, no one was on the line. "That bird has to go," steamed Dad. "But where?" asked Mom. "I know," said Zoe. "Let's put his cage on the front porch."



Arrp



Arrp



Grrr

In just one minute on the porch
Guapo learned to bark and growl
exactly like the dog next door.

Two minutes later Guapo learned to imitate
the lawnmower down the street.

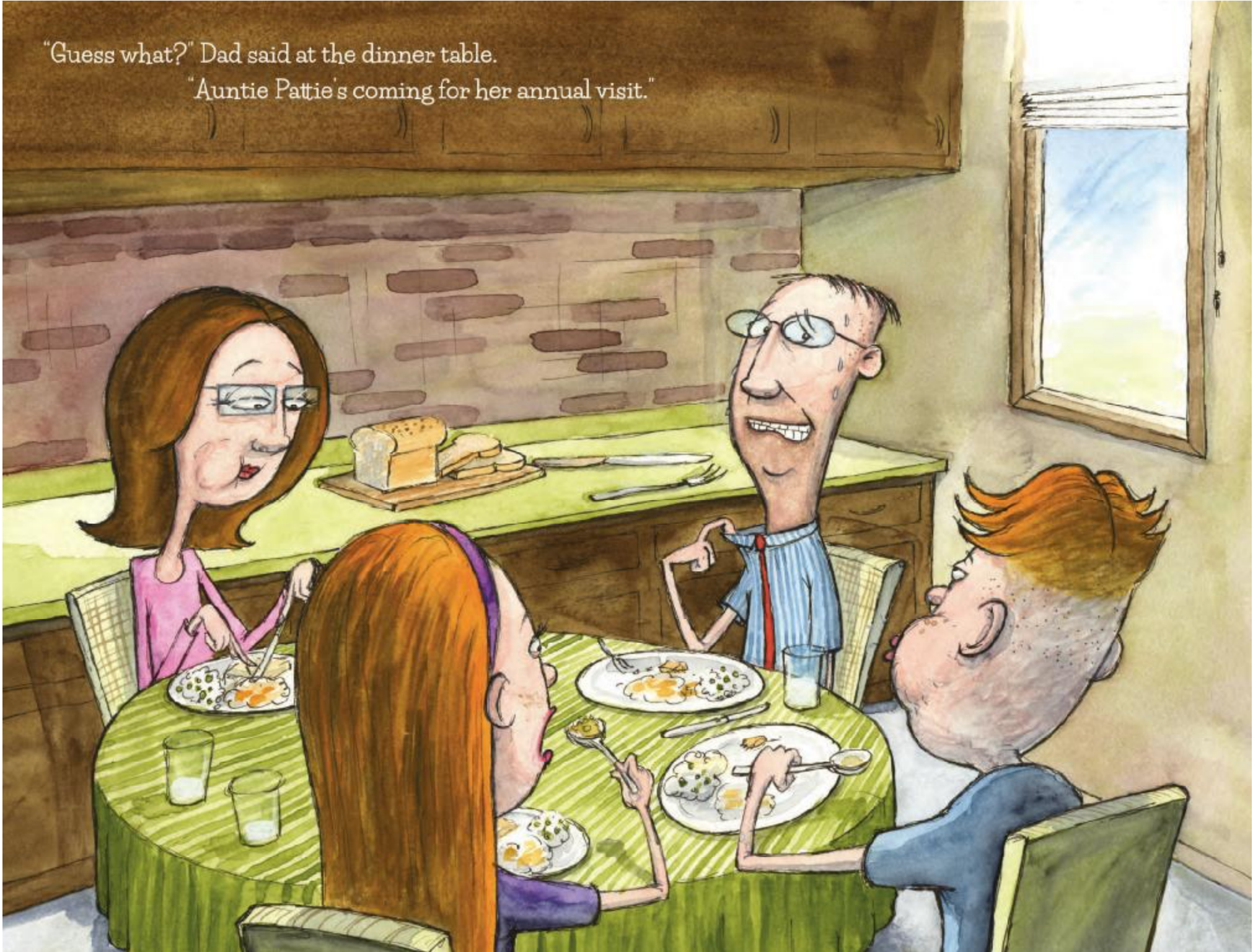
“Whhirrrr-rr.”

Three minutes later he learned to imitate car
alarms and fire sirens.

They had to bring Guapo inside.



"Guess what?" Dad said at the dinner table.
"Auntie Pattie's coming for her annual visit."



"Oh, no," moaned Zack. "She always brings me icky marzipan."
"She always brings me yucky hair elastics," said Zoe.
Mom said, "She can be a bit bossy at times."
"I know," groaned Dad, "and she stays waaay too long."



When Auntie Pattie arrived she gave Zack a marzipan bar and Zoe a bag of hair elastics.
"Aren't you going to thank me? I'd hoped you children had acquired more manners since last year.
Now go and wash your hands before lunch."
The phone rang. "Ringg..... Ringg."

"Hurry up, children. Get the phone!" ordered Auntie Pattie.



"It's just Guapo," the twins said together. "Come and meet him."
Guapo let out a wolf whistle. "Hi there, sweet stuff!"

Auntie Pattie threw up her hands.
"What an appalling creature!"



Arrrghh

Whilitt

Arrp

Grrr

Rringg

Burp

Whhrrr-rr

Eeep



Chaachaachaa



Guapo got so excited he made all his noises.
"What's the last one?" asked Zoe.
"The microwave," answered Zack.



That afternoon Zack fed the marzipan to Guapo, and Zoe hid the hair elastics under the paper at the bottom of his cage.







The next day when Auntie Pattie was having her toast and special oolong tea for breakfast, Guapo made the microwave beep sixteen times, the telephone ring thirteen times and followed up with eight big burps. Then he squawked quite clearly, **"Bombs away!"**

Auntie Pattie asked, "What's he saying that for?"

"You don't want to know," said Dad.

"More tea, Auntie Pattie?" said Zoe and Zack.