

**M**y name is Nate the Great.

I am a detective.

I work alone.

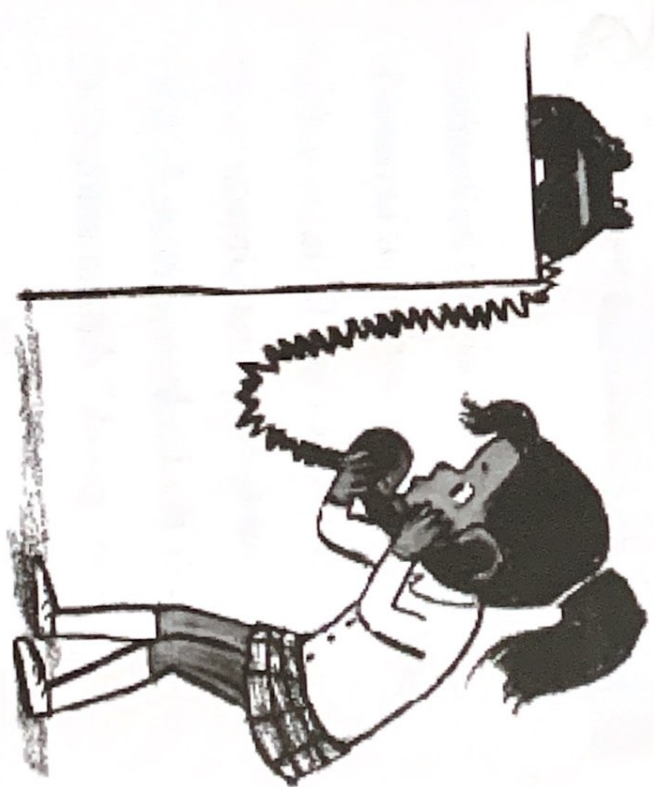
Let me tell you about my last case:

I had just eaten breakfast.

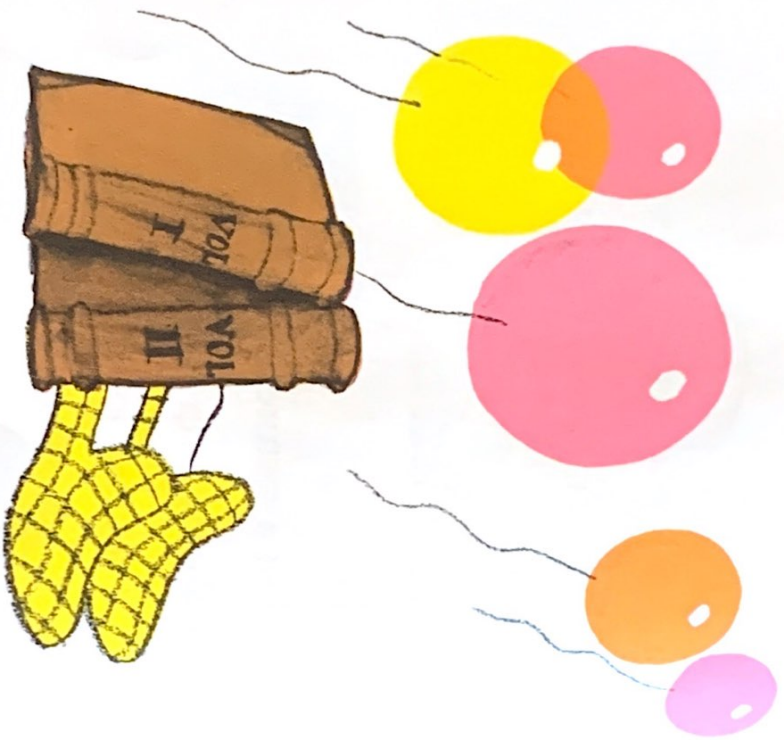
It was a good breakfast.



Pancakes, juice, pancakes, milk,  
and pancakes.  
I like pancakes.  
The telephone rang.  
I hoped it was a call to look for  
lost diamonds or pearls  
or a million dollars.  
It was Annie.



Annie lives down the street.  
I knew that Annie did not have  
diamonds or pearls  
or a million dollars  
to lose.  
“I lost a picture,” she said.  
“Can you help me find it?”  
“Of course,” I said.



"I have found lost balloons,  
books, slippers, chickens,  
Even a lost goldfish.  
Now I, Nate the Great,  
will find a lost picture."  
"Oh, good," Annie said.



"When can you come over?"  
"I will be over  
in five minutes," I said.  
"Stay right where you are.  
Don't touch anything.  
DON'T MOVE!"

"My foot itches," Annie said.

"Scratch it," I said.

I put on my detective suit.

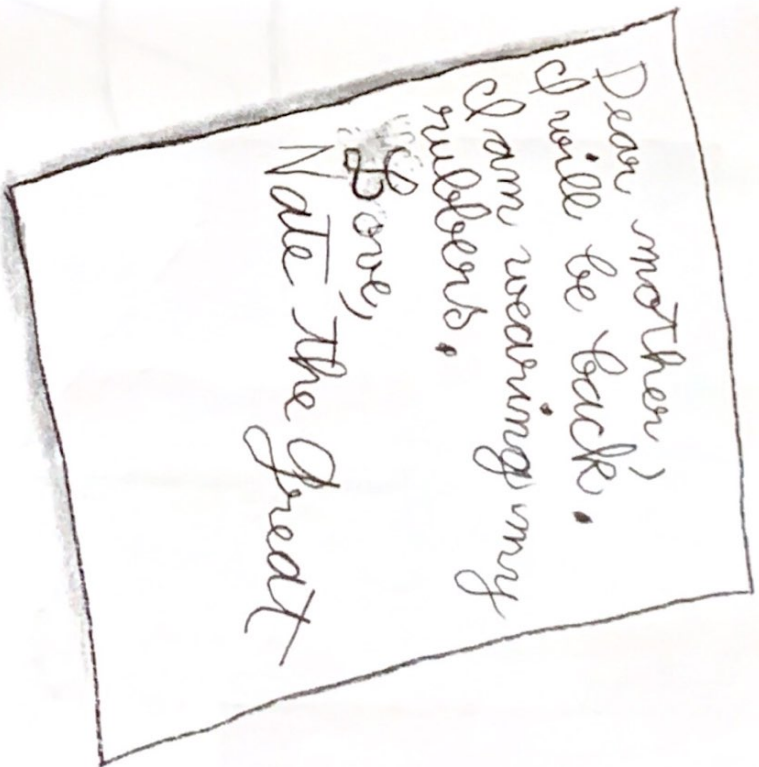
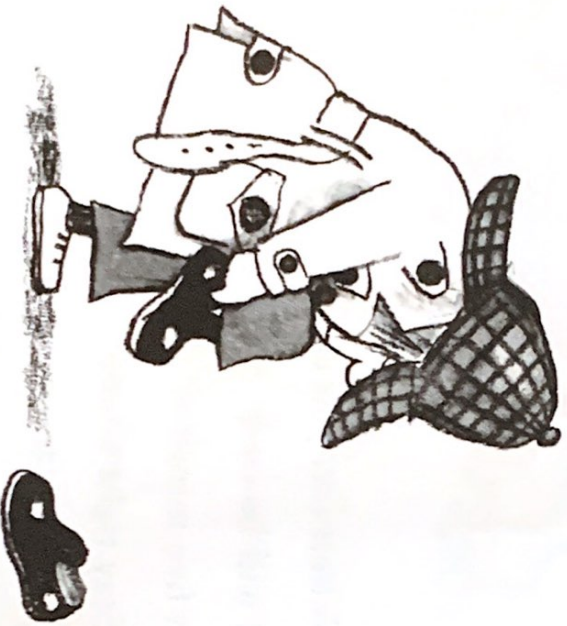
I took my notebook and pencil.

I left a note for my mother.

I always leave a note

for my mother

when I am on a case.

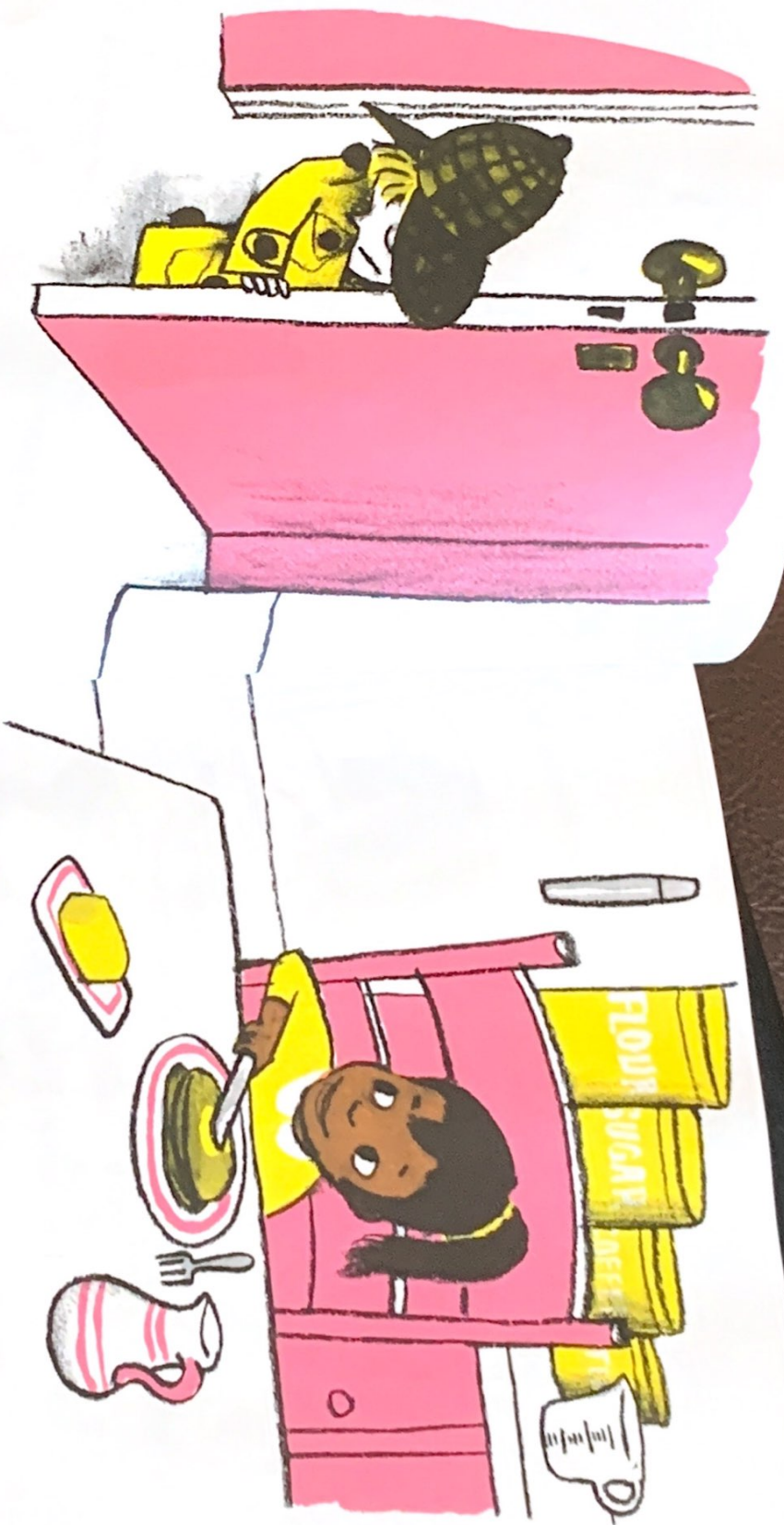


I went to Annie's house.

Annie has brown hair  
and brown eyes.

And she smiles a lot.

I would like Annie  
if I liked girls.



She was eating breakfast.

Pancakes.

"I like pancakes," I said.

It was a good breakfast.

"Tell me about your picture,"  
I said.

"I painted a picture  
of my dog, Fang," Annie said.  
"I put it on my desk to dry.  
Then it was gone.  
It happened yesterday."

"You should have called me yesterday,"

I said, "while the trail was hot. I hate cool trails.

Now, where would a picture go?"

"I don't know," Annie said.

"That's why I called you.

Are you sure you're a detective?"

"Sure, I'm sure. I will find the picture of Fang," I said.

"Tell me. Does this house have any trapdoors or secret passages?"

"No," Annie said.

"No trapdoors or secret passages?"

I said. "This will be

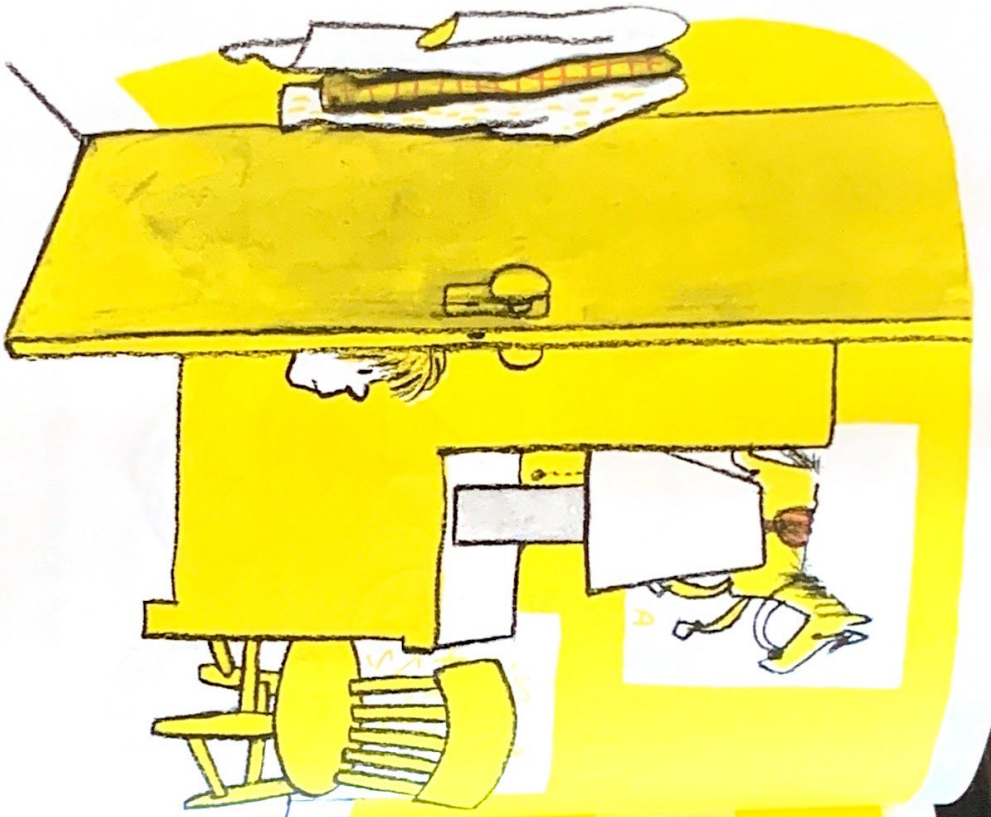


a very dull case."

"I have a door that squeaks,"

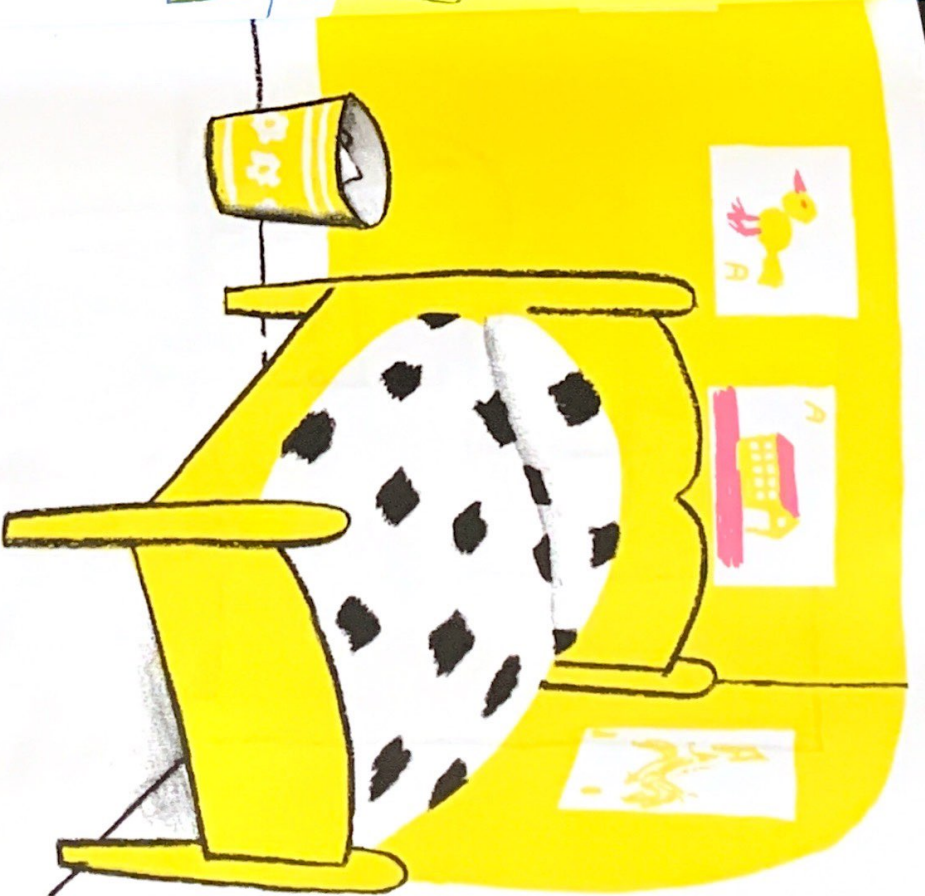
Annie said.

"Have it fixed," I said.



“Now show me your room.”  
We went to Annie’s room.  
It was big. It had yellow walls,  
a yellow bed, a yellow chair,

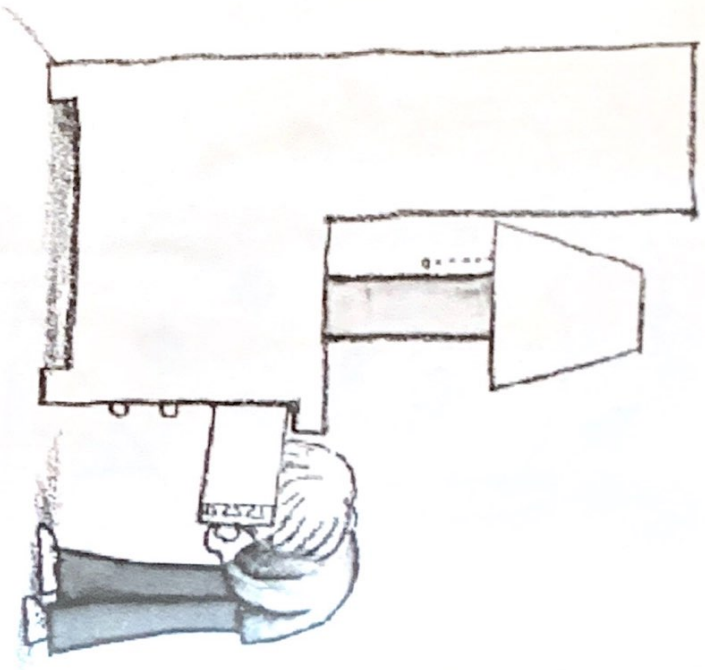
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and a yellow desk.  
I, Nate the Great,  
was sure of one thing.  
Annie liked yellow.

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I searched the room.  
I looked on the desk.  
And under the desk.  
And in the desk.  
No picture.



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I looked on the bed.  
And under the bed.  
And in the bed.  
The bed was comfortable.  
I looked in the wastebasket.  
I found a picture of a dog.



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"Is this it?" I asked.

"No," Annie said.

"My picture of Fang is yellow."

"I should have known," I said.



"Now tell me. Who has seen  
your picture?"

"My friend Rosamond has seen it,  
and my brother Harry. And Fang.

But Fang doesn't count. He's a dog!"  
"Everybody and everything counts,"

I said. "I, Nate the Great, say  
that everything counts.

Tell me about Fang.

Is he a big dog?"

"Very big," Annie said.

"Does he have big teeth?" I asked.

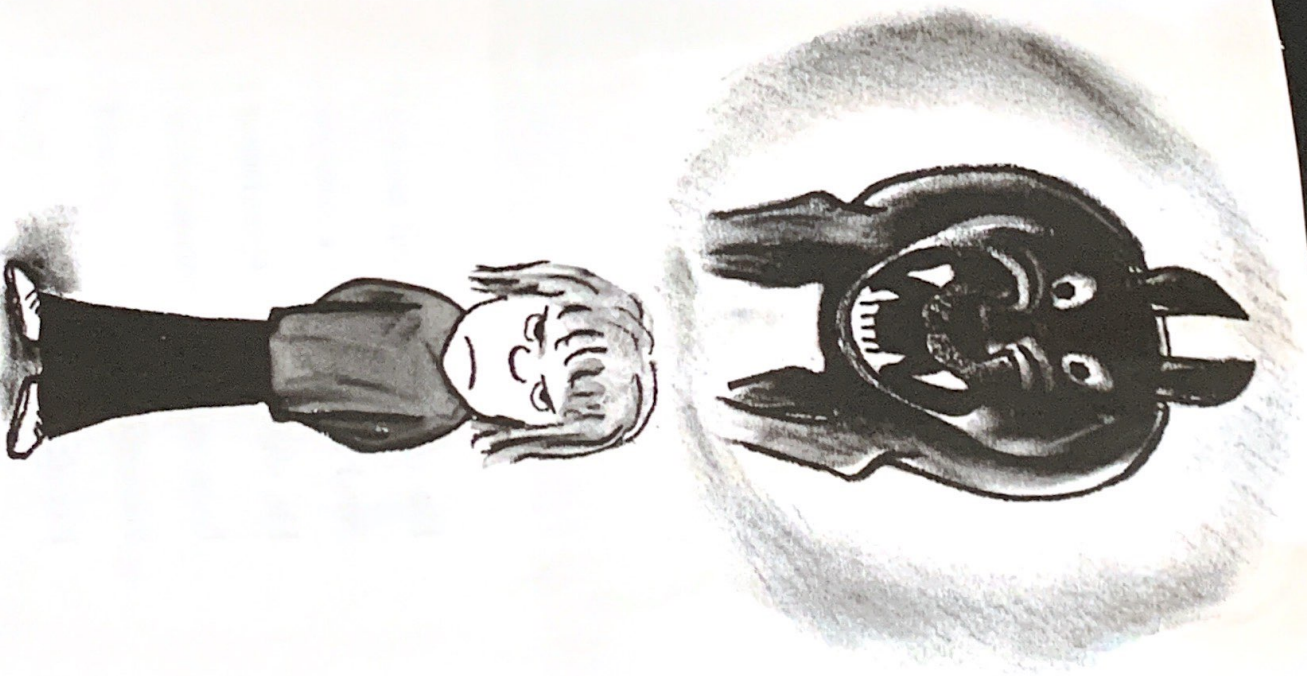
"Very big," Annie said.

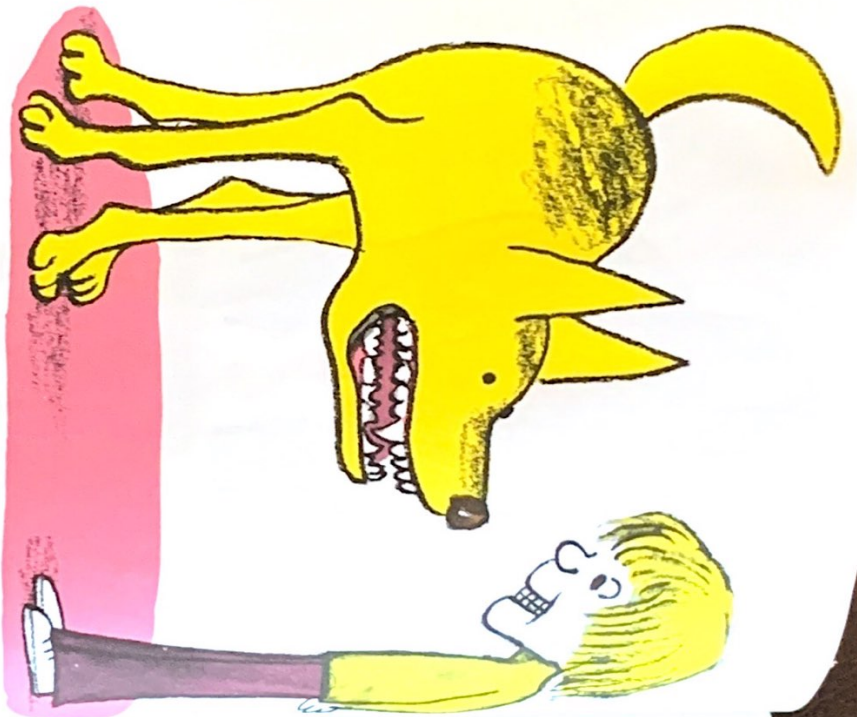
"Does he bite people?"

"No," Annie said. "Will this  
help the case?"

"No," I said. "But it might help me.  
Show me Fang."

Annie took me out to the yard.  
Fang was there.





He was big, all right.  
And he had big teeth.  
He showed them to me.  
I showed him mine.  
He sniffed me.  
I sniffed him back.

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And we were friends.  
I watched Fang run.  
I watched him eat.  
I watched him bury a bone.  
“Hmm,” I said. “Watch Fang  
bury that bone.”

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He buries very well.  
He could bury other things.  
Like a picture."

"Why would he bury  
a picture?" Annie asked.

"Maybe he didn't like it,"  
I said. "Maybe it wasn't  
a good picture of him."

"I never thought of that,"  
Annie said.

"I, Nate the Great,  
think of everything.  
Tell me. Does Fang ever  
leave this yard?"

"Only on a leash," Annie said.  
"I see," I said.





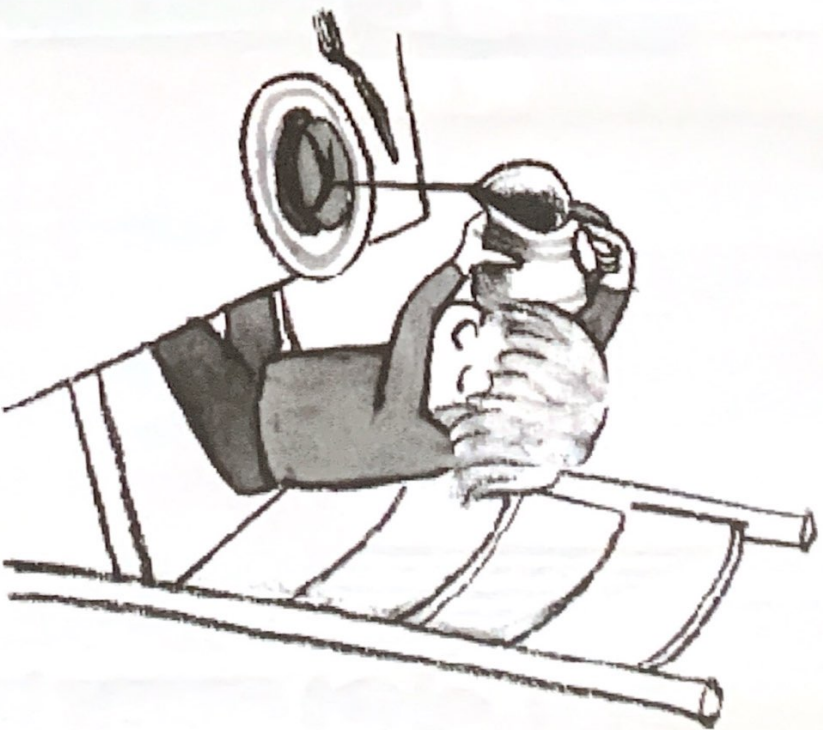
"Then the only place  
he could bury the picture  
is in the yard.

Come. We will dig in the yard."  
Annie and I dug for two hours.  
We found rocks, worms,  
bones, and ants.  
But no picture.



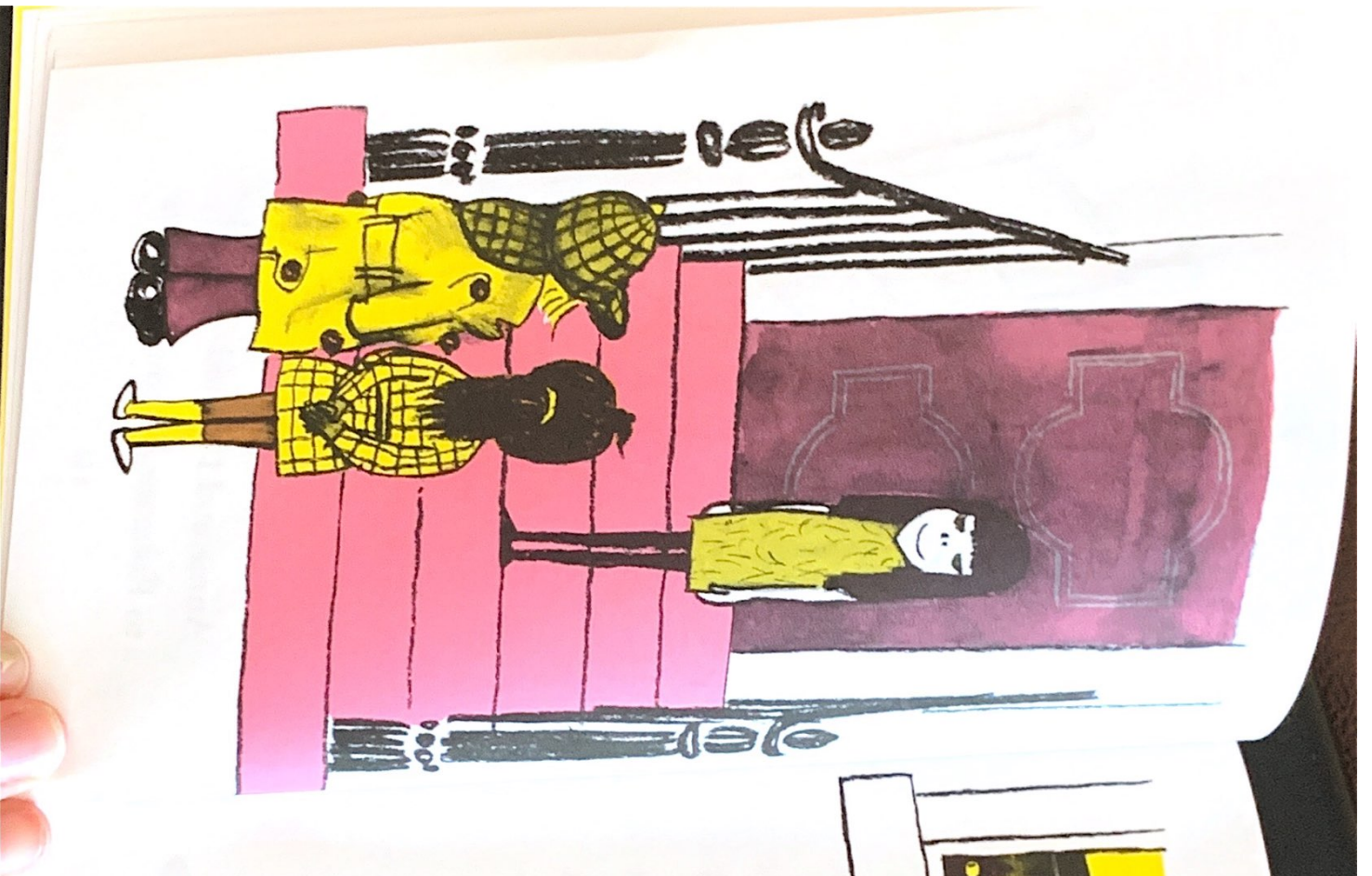
At last I stood up.  
I, Nate the Great,  
had something to say.  
“I am hungry.”  
“Would you like  
some more pancakes?” Annie asked.  
I could tell that  
Annie was a smart girl.  
I hate to eat on the job.  
But I must keep up my strength.  
We sat in the kitchen.  
Cold pancakes are almost as good  
as hot pancakes.  
“Now, on with the case,” I said.  
“Next we will talk  
to your friend Rosamond.”

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Annie and I walked  
to Rosamond's house.

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Rosamond had black hair  
and green eyes.  
And cat hair all over her.  
“I am Nate the Great,” I said.  
“I am a detective.”  
“A detective?” said Rosamond.  
“A real, live detective?”

"Touch me," I said.

"Prove you are

a detective," said Rosamond.

"Find something.

Find my lost cat."

"I am on a case," I said.

"I am on a big case."

"My lost cat is big,"

Rosamond said.

"His name is Super Hex.

I have four cats.



They are all named Hex."

I could tell that

Rosamond was a strange girl.

"Here are my other cats," she said.

"Big Hex, Little Hex,

and Plain Hex."

The cats had black hair

and green eyes.

And long claws.

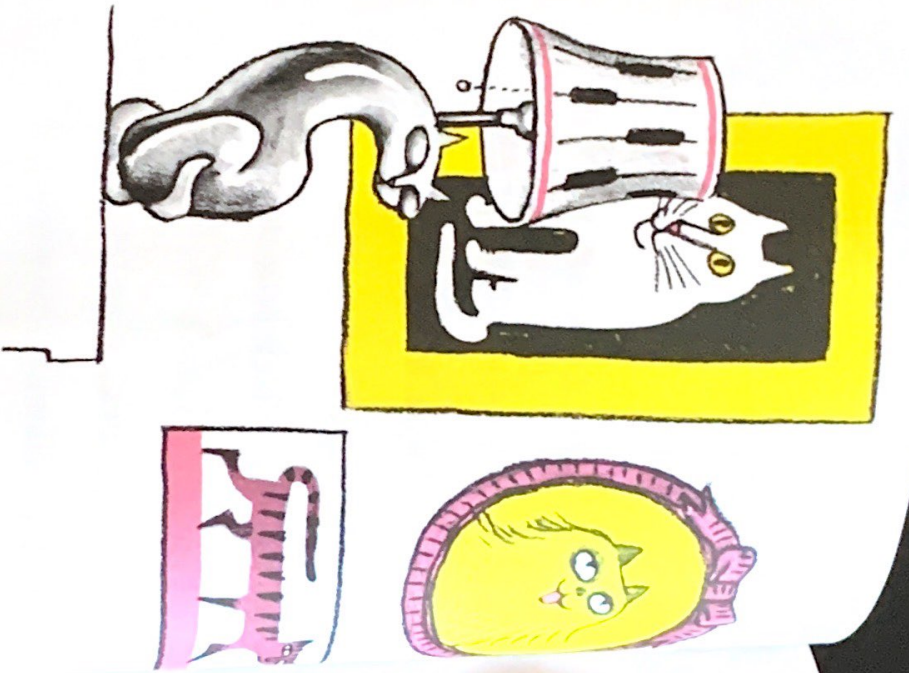
Very long claws.

We went into Rosamond's house.

I looked around.







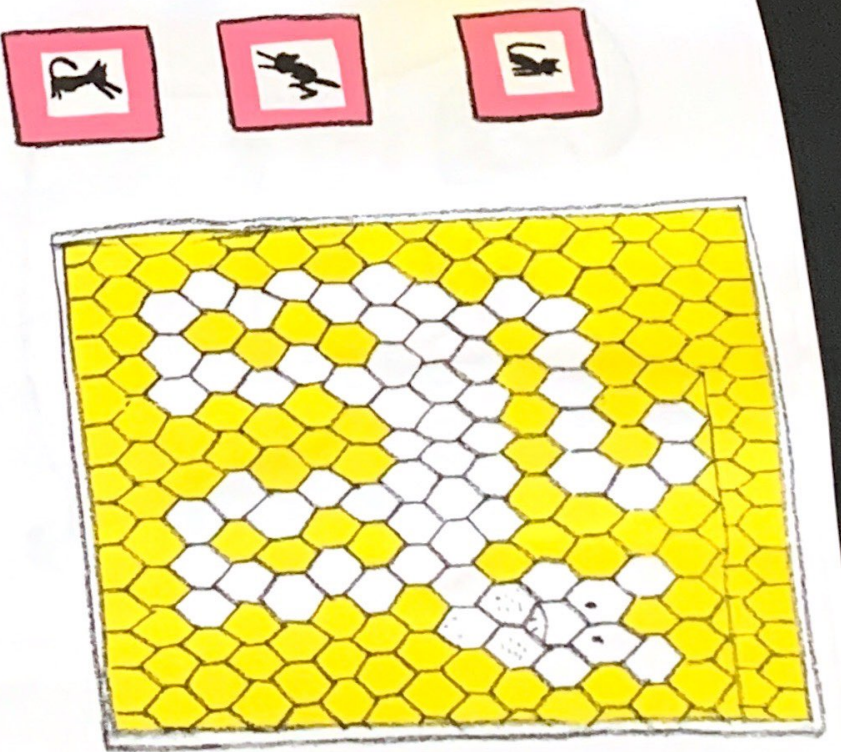
There were pictures everywhere.

Pictures of cats.

Sitting cats. Standing cats.

Cats in color

and in black and white.



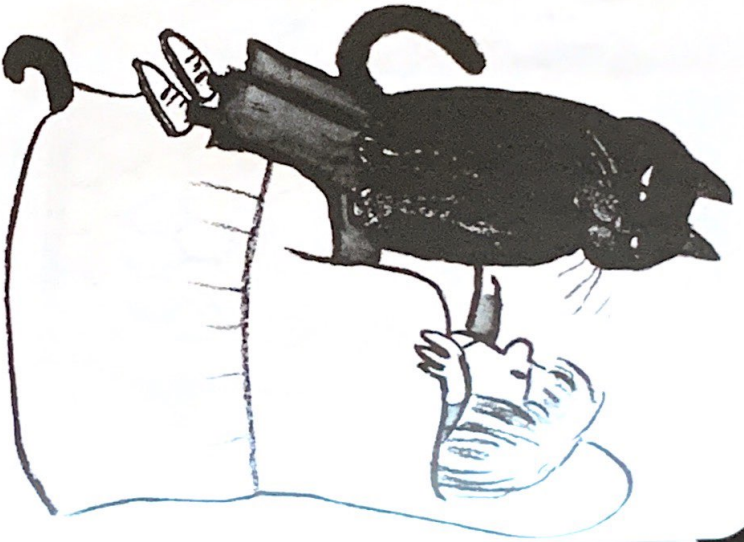
We sat down.

Little Hex jumped onto Annie's lap.

Plain Hex jumped

onto Rosamond's lap.

Big Hex jumped onto my lap.



I did not like Big Hex.

Big Hex did not like me.

"Time to go," I said.

"We just got here," Annie said.

She liked Little Hex.

"Time to go," I said again.

I stood up.  
I tripped over something.  
It was long and black.  
It was a cat's tail.  
"MEOW!"  
"Super Hex!" Rosamond cried.







Annie and I left.  
It was a hard thing to do.  
I could smell pancakes  
in Rosamond's kitchen.

“Rosamond did not take  
the picture of your dog,” I said.  
“Rosamond only likes cats.  
And pancakes.  
Now where is  
your brother Harry?”





I met Annie's brother.

He was small.

He was covered with red paint.

"Me paint," he said.

"Me paint you."

"Good," I said. "No one has ever

Painted a picture of me,  
Nate the Great."  
Harry took his paintbrush.  
It was covered with red paint.  
All at once I was covered  
with red paint.

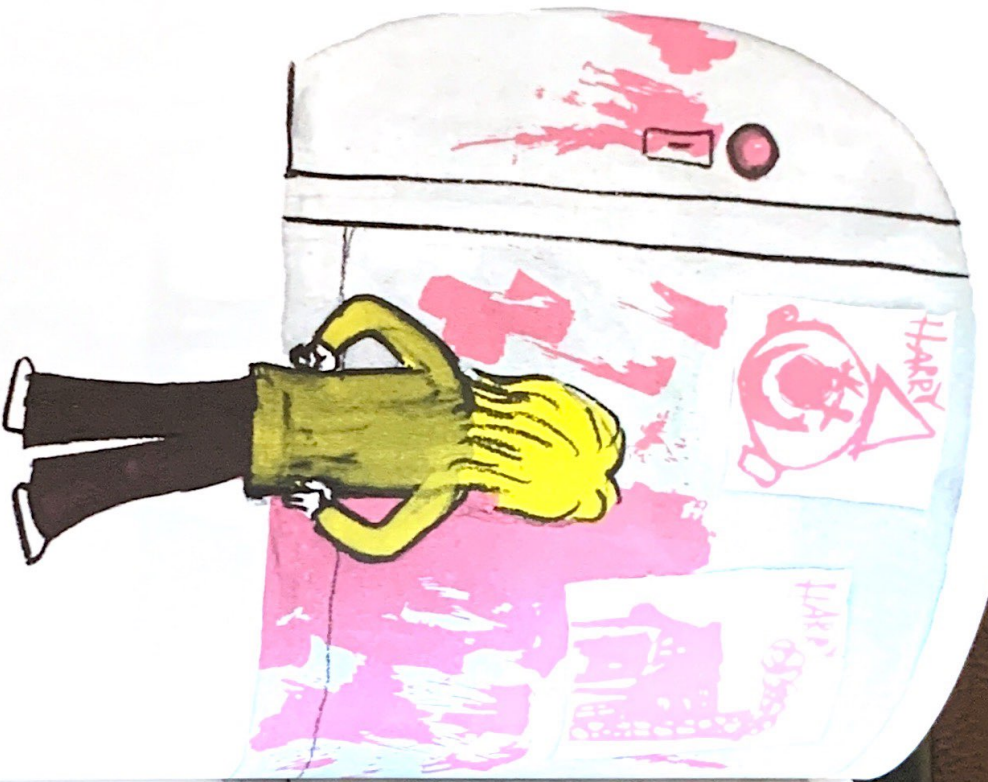




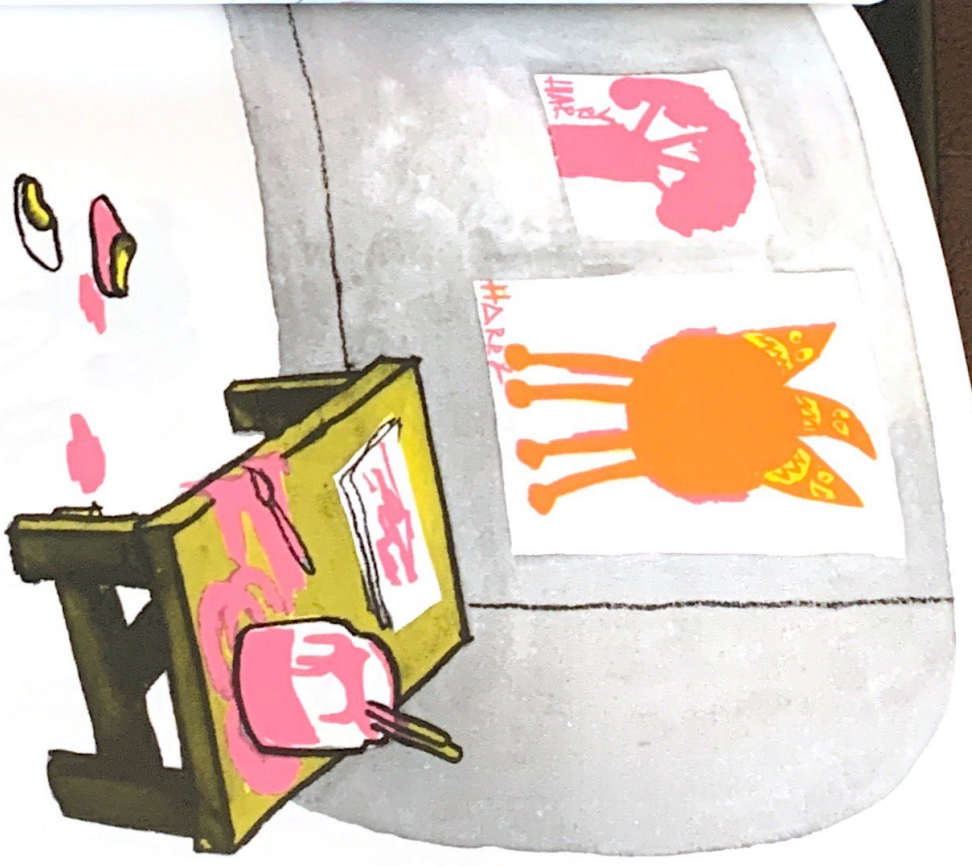
"He painted you," Annie said.  
"He painted you."  
Then she laughed.



I, Nate the Great, did not laugh.  
I was on a case.  
I had a job to do.  
I looked around the room.



Harry had painted a clown,  
a house, a tree, and a monster  
with three heads.  
He had also painted



part of the wall,  
one slipper,  
and a doorknob.  
“He does very good work,” I said.

"But where is my picture?"  
Annie asked.

"That is a good question," I said.  
"All I need is a good answer."  
Where was the picture of Fang?  
I could not find it.  
Fang did not have it.  
Rosamond did not have it.



Harry did not have it.  
Or did he?

All at once I knew  
I had found the lost picture.  
I said, "I, Nate the Great,  
have found your picture."  
"You have?" Annie said. "Where?"

