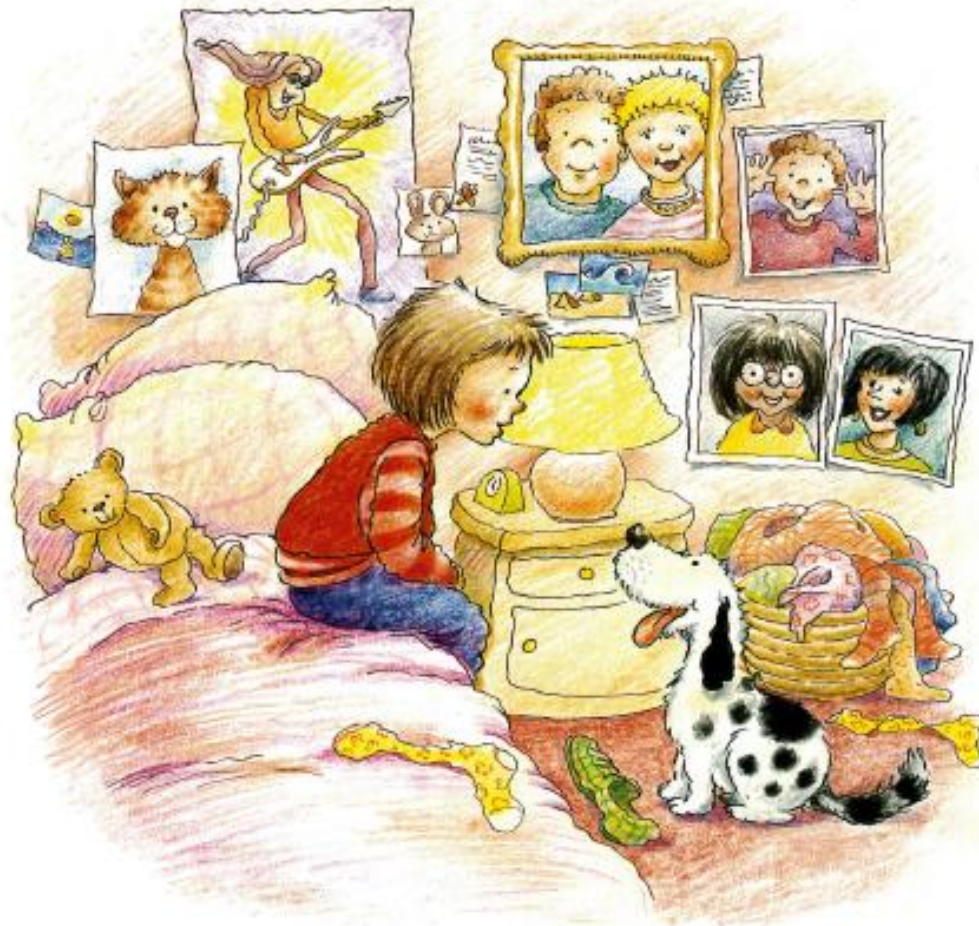


"INTERESTING, FUNNY, BRILLIANT AND FANTASTIC." BOOKS FOR KEEPS

# The HUGE BAG of WORRIES





Jenny had always been happy. She had lovely parents, a great brother (well, most of the time...), she had a best friend at school and she liked her teacher. And then, of course, there was Loftus.

But recently she had been getting gloomier and gloomier.  
It wasn't just one thing; it was everything.

She worried  
that Loftus had fleas



and that her best friend  
was going away.



She worried that she was getting bad marks at school and she thought she heard someone whispering about her in the playground...

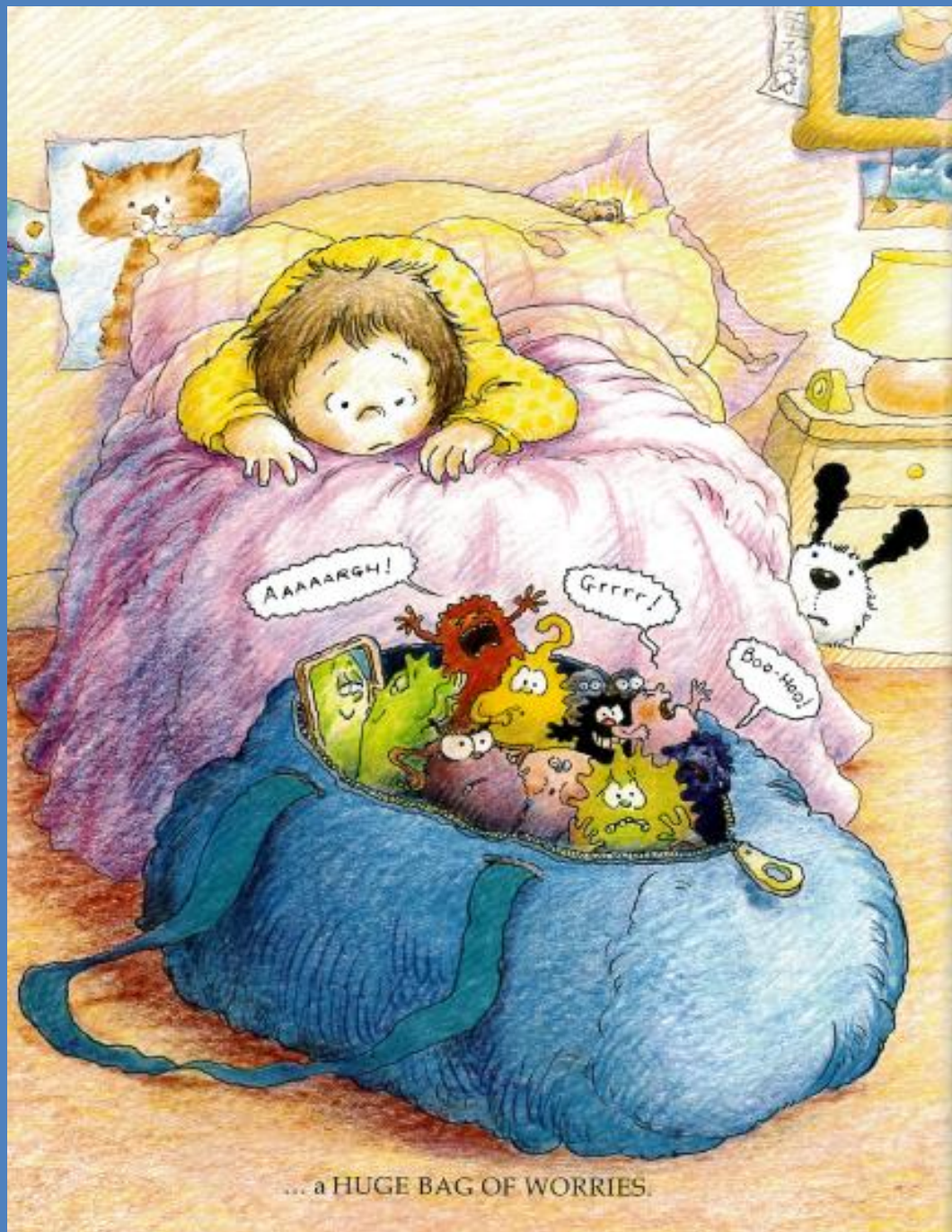
she worried when her mum and dad had an argument...



she even worried about wars and bombs...



until one day she woke to find...



... a HUGE BAG OF WORRIES.

The bag followed her everywhere...

to school,

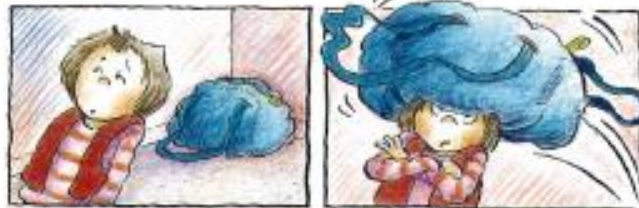


to the toilet,



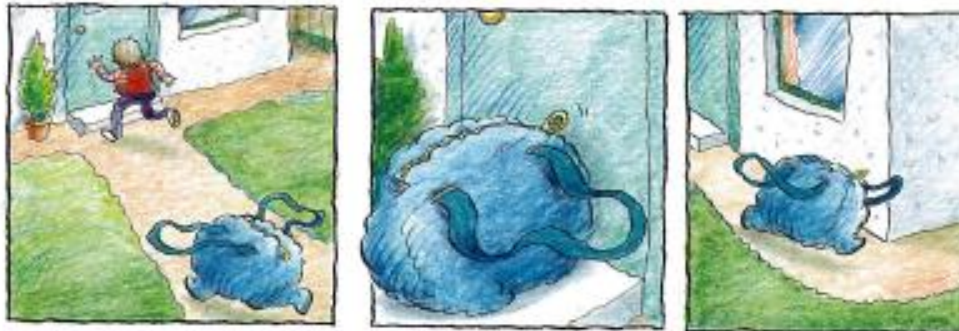
and it stuck by her even  
when she was watching TV.

She tried ignoring it...  
but it didn't work.

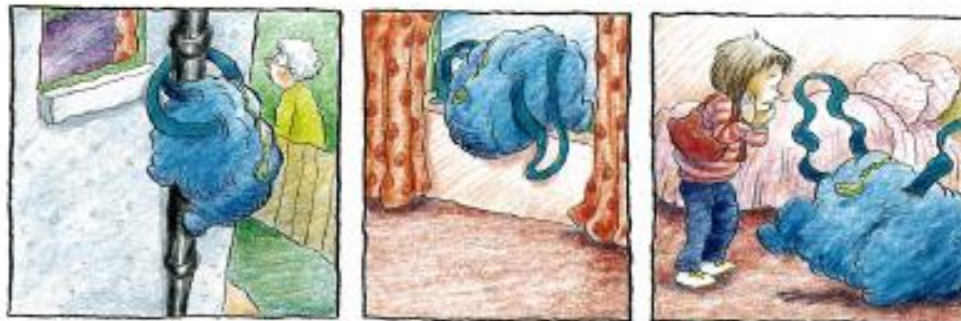


She tried throwing it away...

but it always came back.



She tried to lock it out,



but when she got back to her bedroom, there it was, waiting for her.

It was like a horrible shadow she couldn't get rid of.

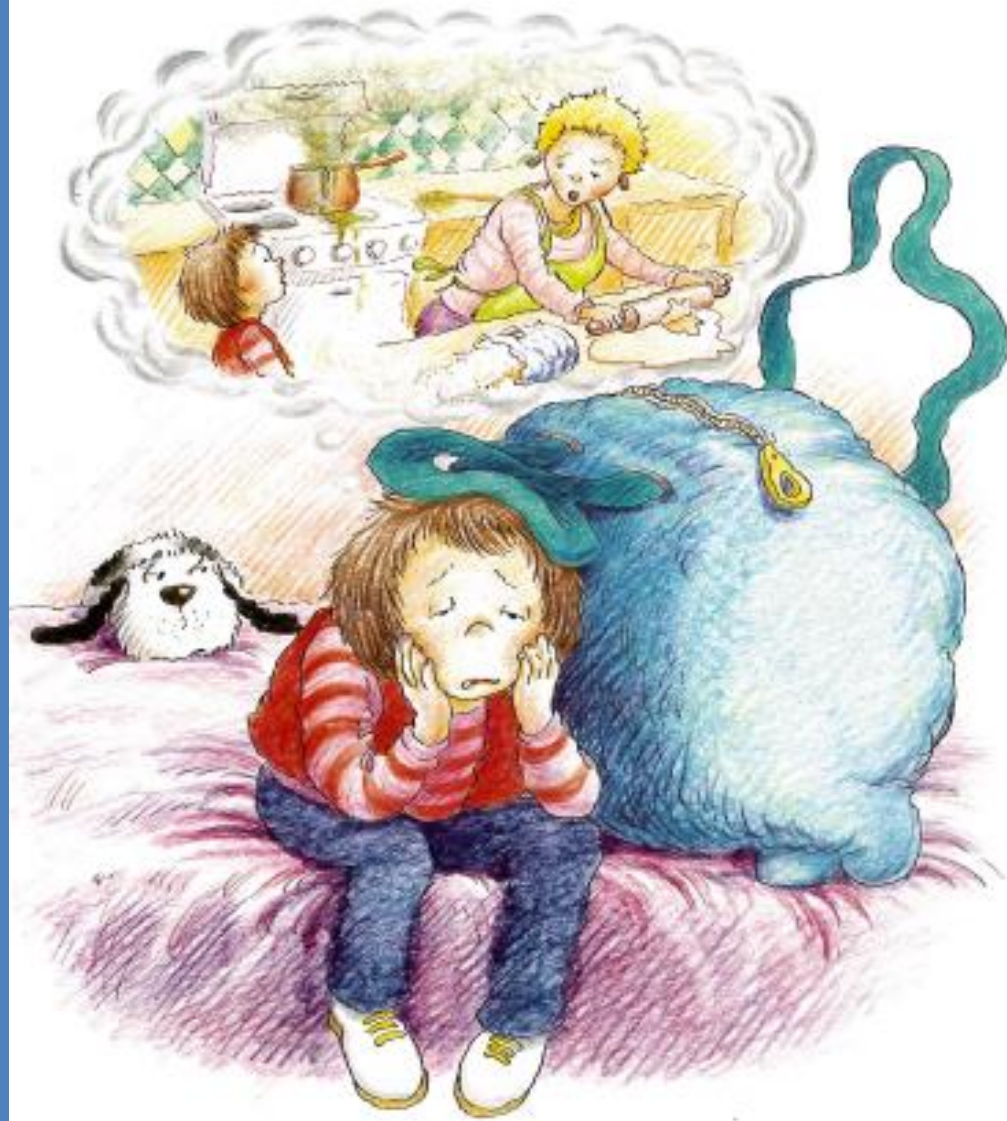


What could she do?

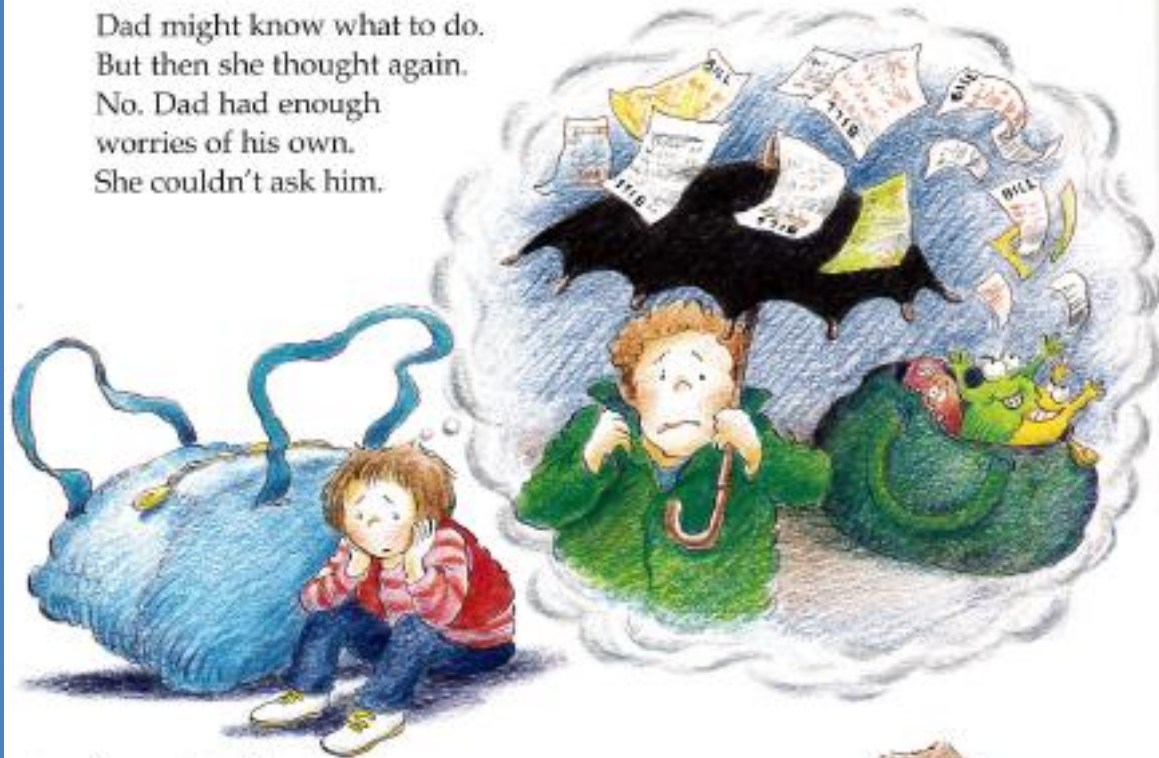


She asked her brother for help. But he was busy with his computer game, and all he said was: "I don't know what you are talking about. *I don't have any worries.*"

Mum would probably say: "You've got no worries that I can see. You're a lucky girl. You've got your health, your friends, your family - what more do you want?" So she decided not to tell her.



Dad might know what to do.  
But then she thought again.  
No. Dad had enough  
worries of his own.  
She couldn't ask him.



Every day things got worse.



and bigger.



She couldn't sleep because it kept tossing and turning beside her all night.

To make matters worse, the bag dragged around her feet so much when she was walking to school that she was late and the teacher was cross.



Jenny couldn't tell her what had happened, and anyway she knew what she would say: "You've got too many worries! In future, leave that bag at home!"



When Jenny told her best friend about the bag, she suggested that Jenny locked it up in a cupboard and tried not to think about it. "That's what I do," she said.



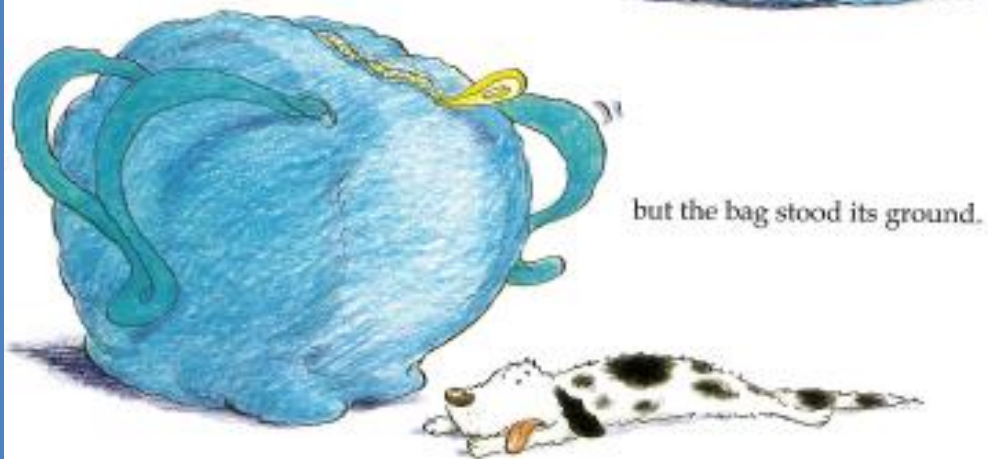
But it just didn't work.



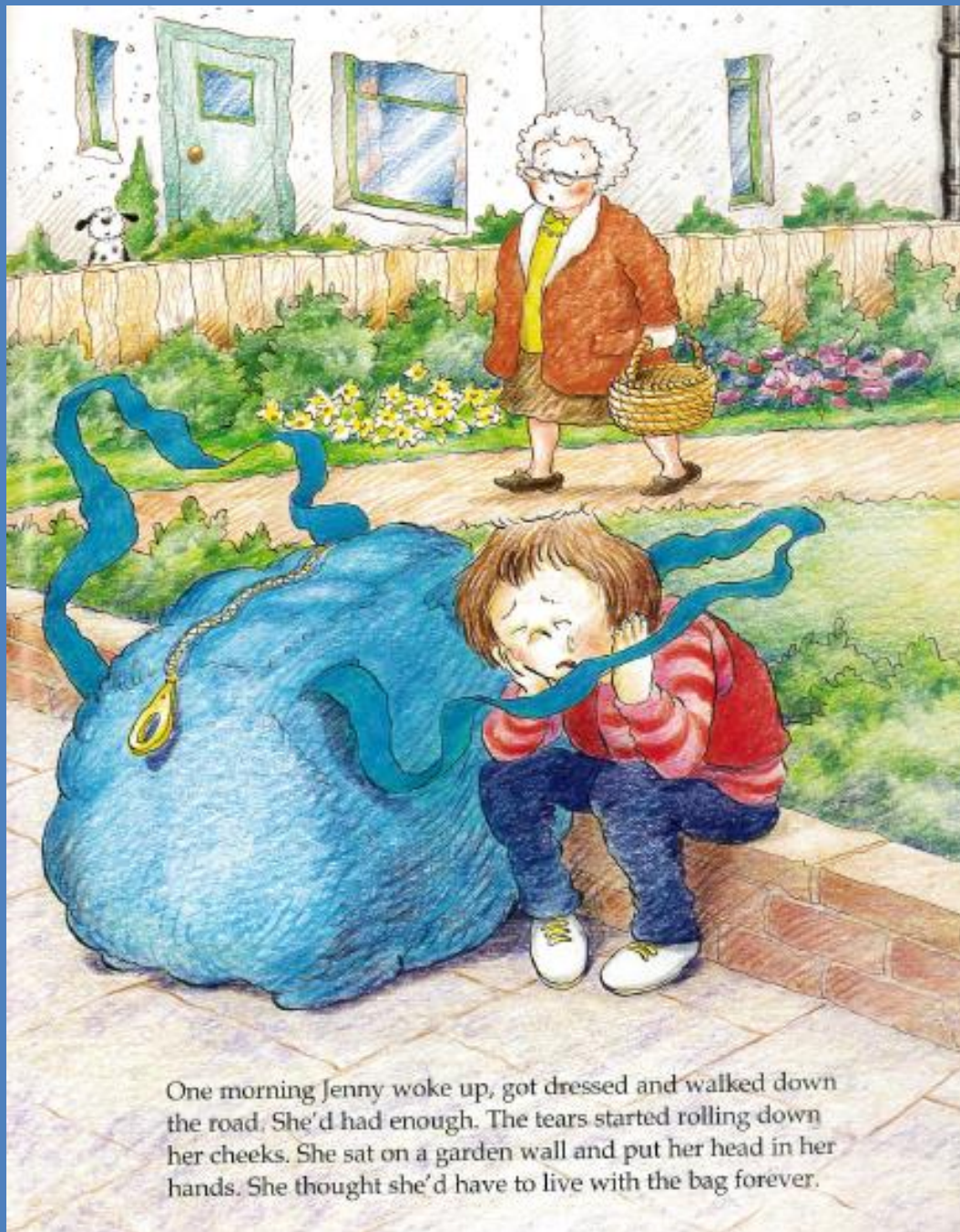
Even Loftus couldn't help.



He tried his best and barked like mad,

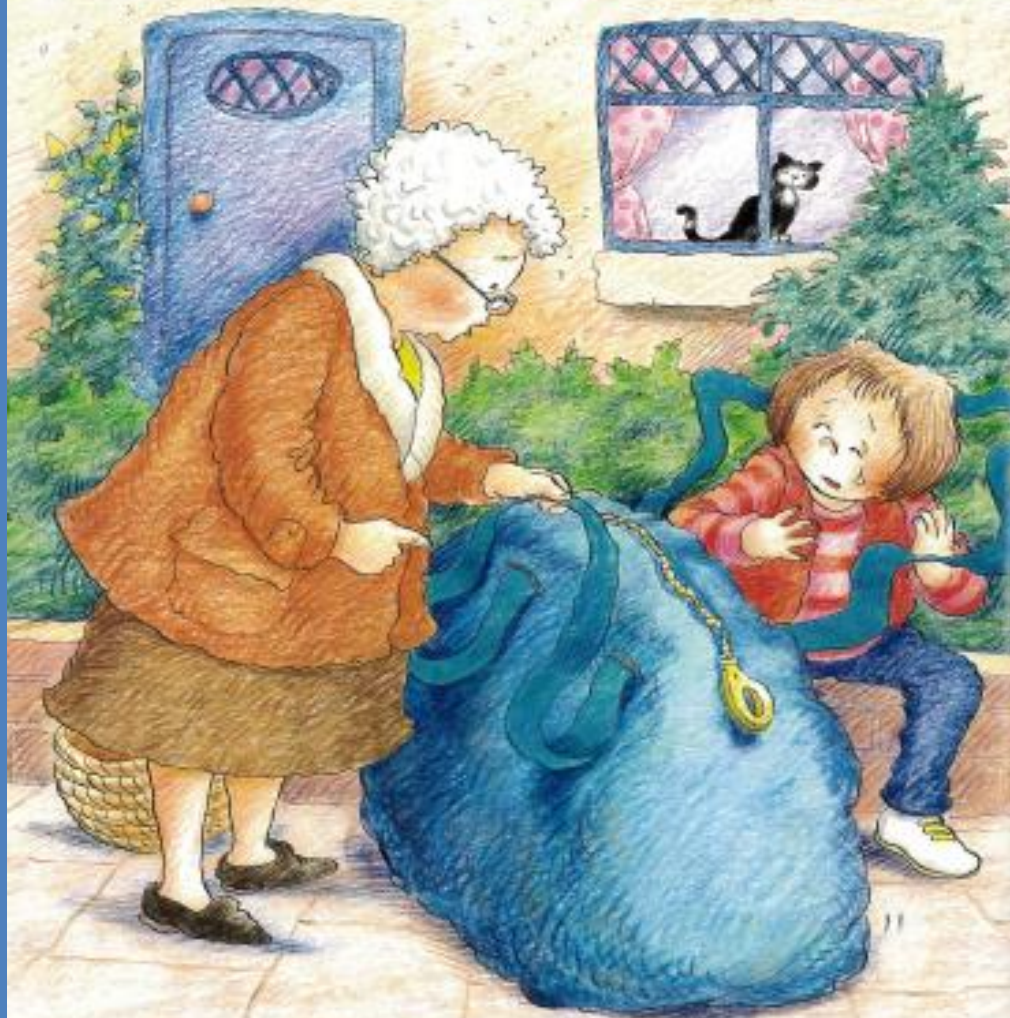


but the bag stood its ground.



One morning Jenny woke up, got dressed and walked down the road. She'd had enough. The tears started rolling down her cheeks. She sat on a garden wall and put her head in her hands. She thought she'd have to live with the bag forever.

Then she heard a voice and, looking up, she saw the kindly face of the old lady who lived next door.



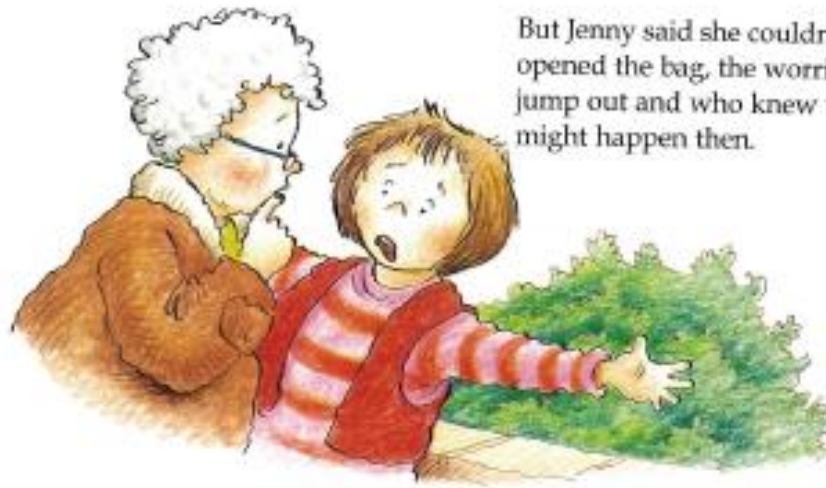
"Goodness!" said the old lady. "What on earth is that HUGE bag of worries?"

Through her tears, Jenny explained how it had followed her for weeks, and got bigger and bigger, and just wouldn't go away.



"Now let's just open it up and see what's inside," said the old lady.





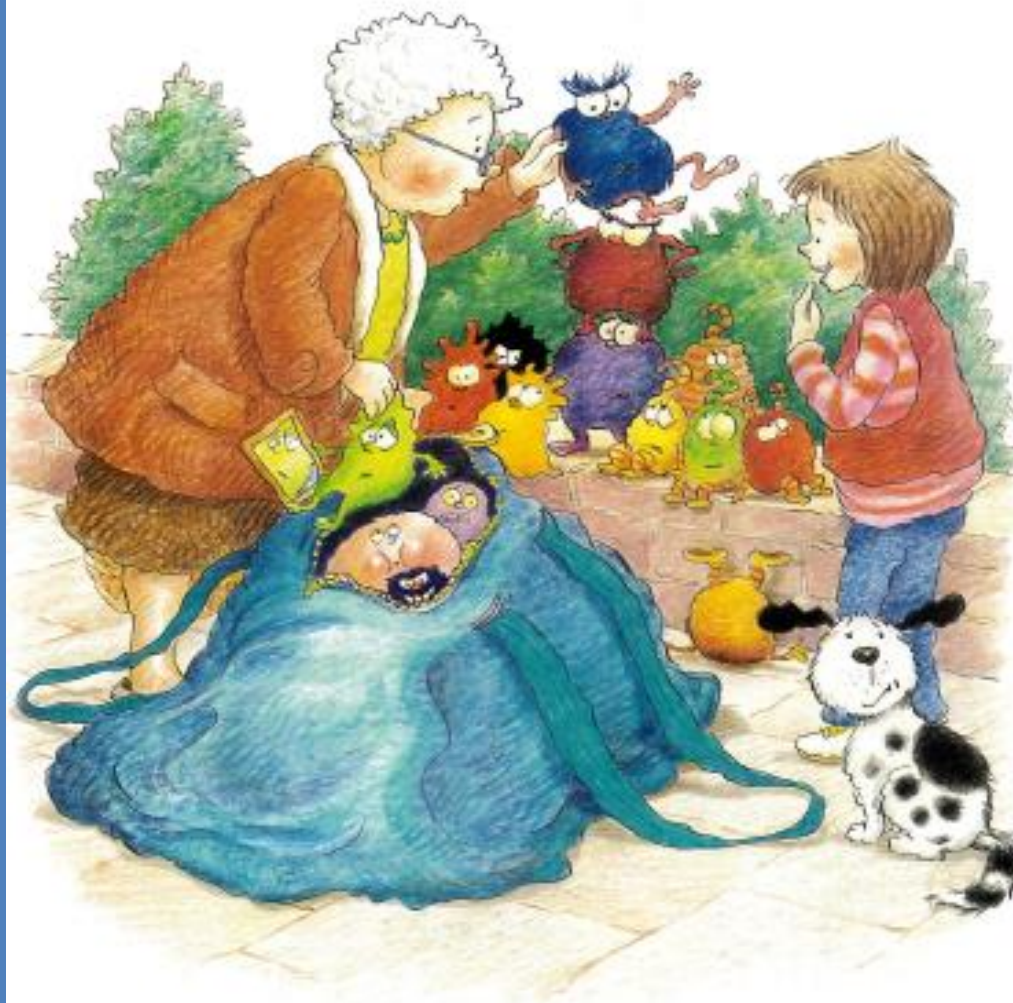
But Jenny said she couldn't. If she opened the bag, the worries might jump out and who knew what might happen then.

"Nonsense," said the old lady firmly. "There's nothing a worry hates more than being seen. If you have any worries, however small, the secret is to let them out slowly, one by one, and show them to someone else. They'll soon go away."



So Jenny opened the bag.

The old lady sorted the worries into groups.

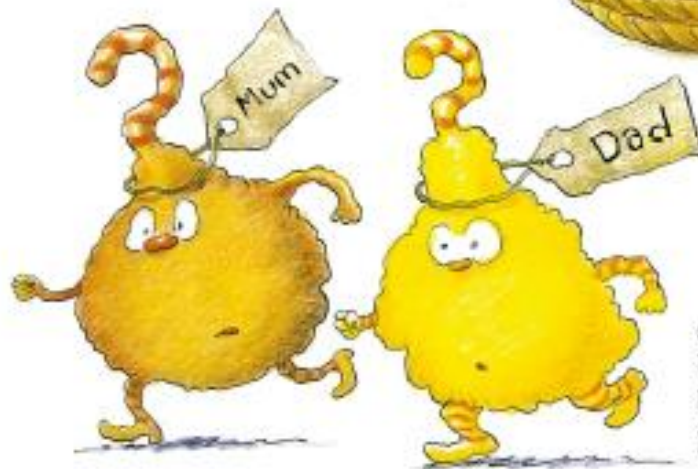


Jenny was astonished to see how small they looked when they were out in the open.

Half the worries disappeared because lots of worries just hate the light of day.

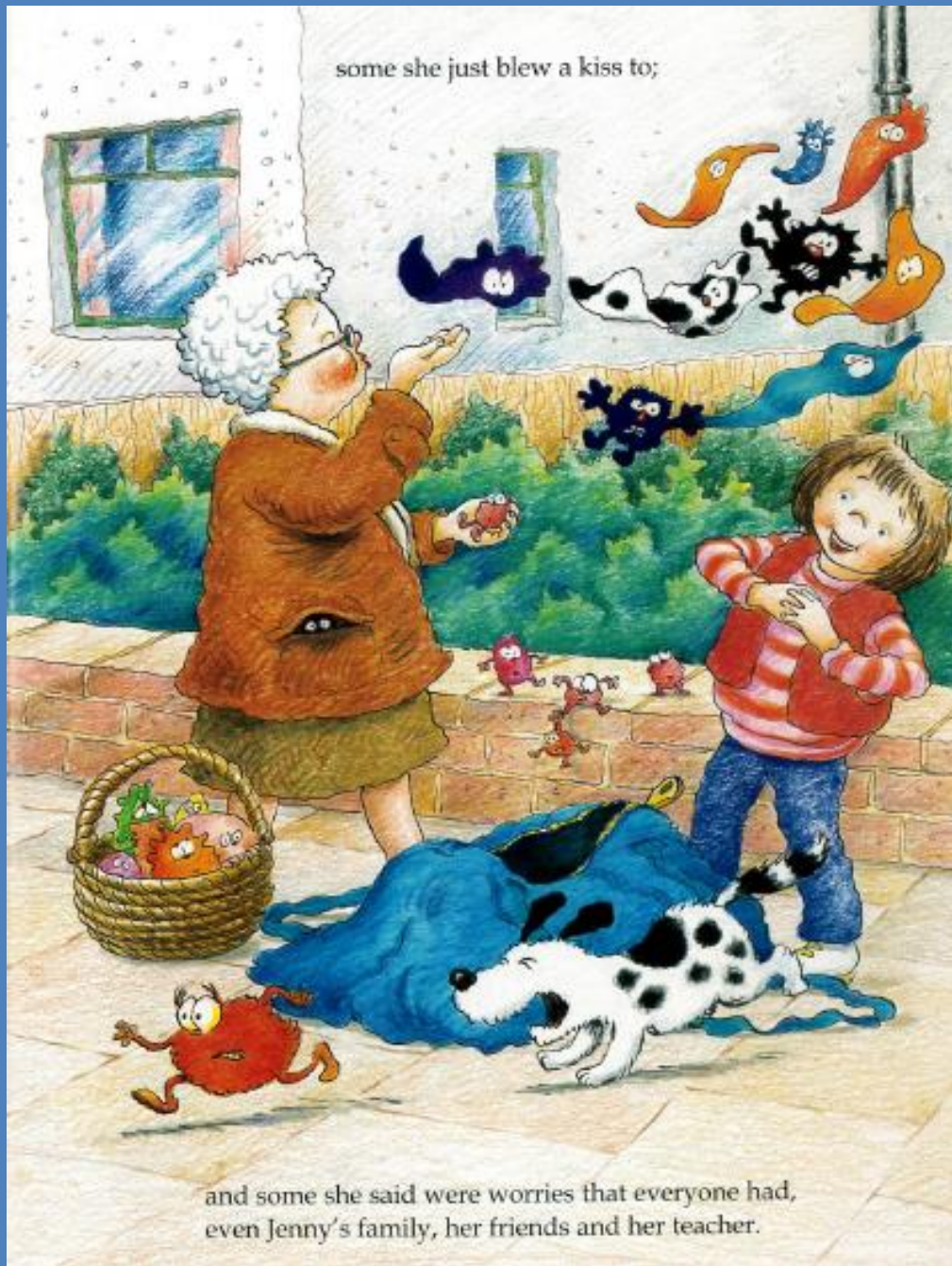


As for the rest, the old lady put some in her shopping basket to deal with herself;



some she sent packing because she said they belonged to other people;

some she just blew a kiss to;



and some she said were worries that everyone had,  
even Jenny's family, her friends and her teacher.

And as for the bag...

