



DIGBY O'DAY

In the Fast Lane



Stirley Hughes & Clara Vulliamy



In the Fast Lane



This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or, if real, are used fictitiously.

Text copyright © 2013 by Shirley Hughes

Illustrations copyright © 2013 by Clara Vulliamy

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in an information retrieval system in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, taping, and recording, without prior written permission from the publisher.

First U.S. edition 2014

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 2013955663

ISBN 978-0-7636-7369-7

LEO 19 18 17 16 15 14

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Heshan, Guangdong, China

This book was typeset in Bodoni Antiqua.

The illustrations were done in pencil, ink, and digital collage.

Candlewick Press

99 Dover Street

Somerville, Massachusetts 02144

visit us at www.candlewick.com



In the Fast Lane

Shirley Hughes

illustrated by

Clara Vulliamy



CANDLEWICK PRESS



Contents



Chapter One 1



Chapter Two 23



Chapter Three 37



Chapter Four 49



Chapter Five 59



Chapter Six 73



Chapter Seven 81

And some fun extras at the back!



INTRODUCING DIGBY O'DAY

Digby O'Day is always ready for adventure, and he never says no to a challenge. He's the free-wheeling, car-racing hero of our story, so we caught up with him at home to see if he would answer a few questions for us. . . .

Hello, Digby! First, an easy question. What is your favorite color?

Hello. Favorite color? That would be red, like my car.

And what's your favorite biscuit?

I like a custard cream, but Percy prefers a Jammie Dodger.

What is your most precious possession?

My car!

Oh, of course! Can you describe your perfect day out for us?

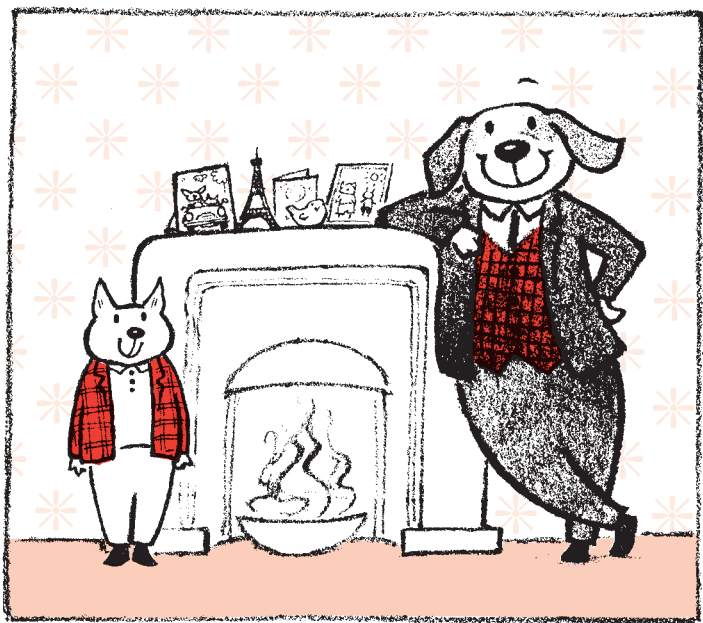
A day out motoring with my friend Percy. We'd pack a picnic and head for the seaside.

Sounds lovely! What is your most extravagant purchase?

Once I bought fifty-four bow ties! They were on sale, though.

And now tell us about your ideal evening.

Well, I think it would have to be sitting by the fire with Percy. We'd be watching a cooking show on television, and we'd have our supper on a tray.



What's your most embarrassing moment?

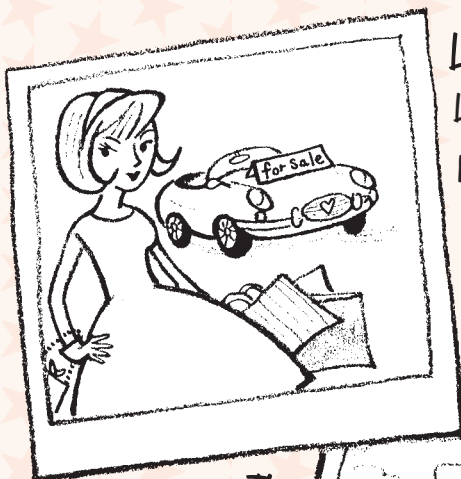
Oh, dear, I'm not sure I want to tell you. Well, if I must, it would be the time my next-door neighbor Lou Ella saw me doing my morning exercises in my underpants.

Whoops! And finally, tell us a joke.

*What do you get if you cross a dog and a daisy?
A cauliflower!
(A collie-flower—get it?)*

Ha! Wonderful—thank you, Digby, for telling us a bit about yourself, and about your friend Percy, too!

AND INTRODUCING THE REST OF THE GANG



Lou Ella

Likes:

pink

fast cars

ice-cream sundaes

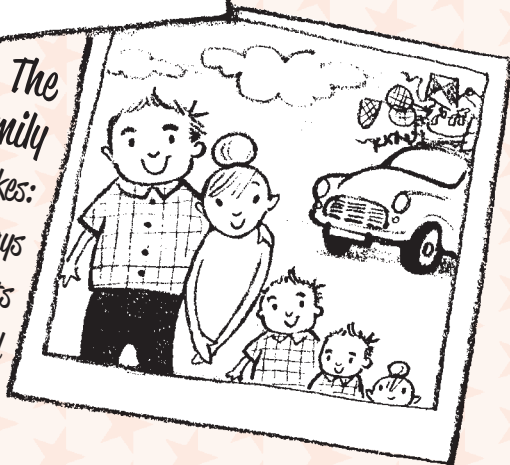
The
friendly family

Likes:

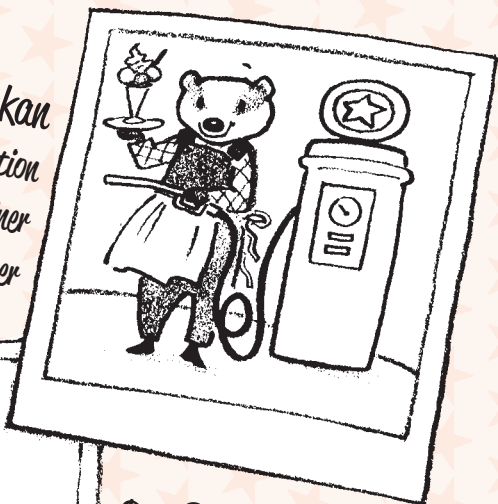
holidays

sweets

giving a helping hand



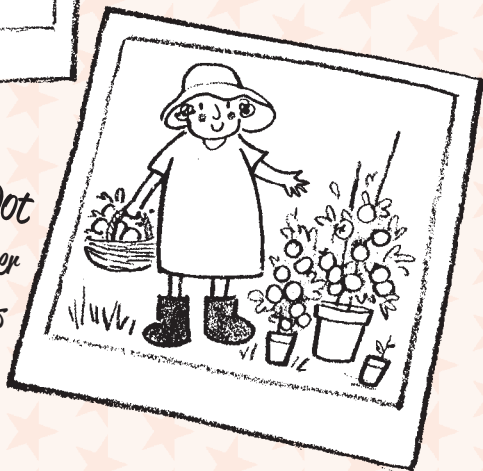
*Ron Barrakan
Owns the petrol station
and diner
Don's brother*



*Don Barrakan
Owns the car-repair shop
Ron's brother*



*Auntie Dot
Busy with her
tomato plants
Friendly Dad's aunt*





DIDSWORTH



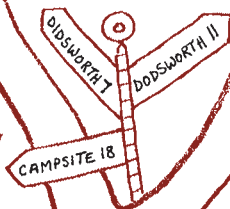
PICKWICK FARM



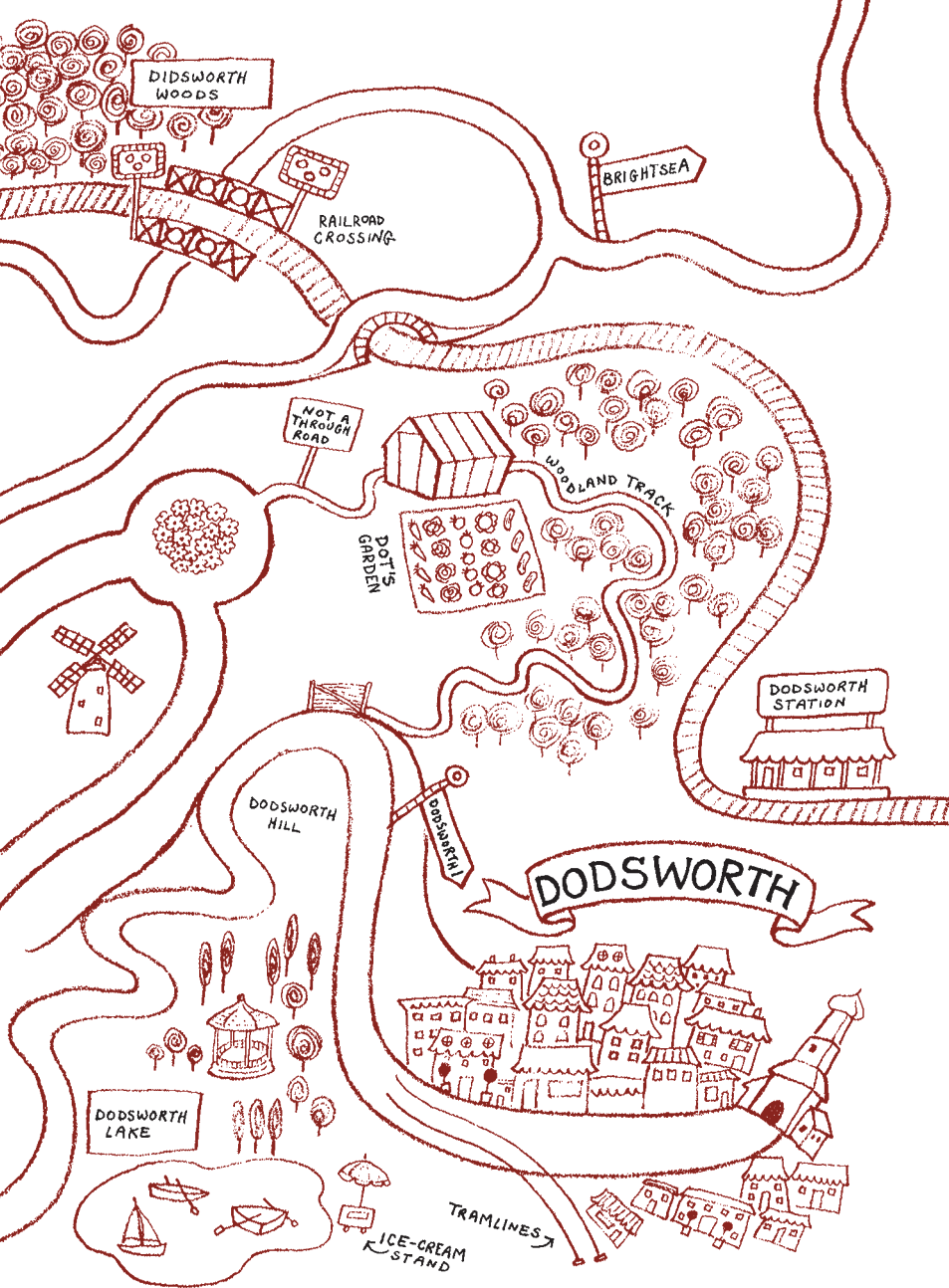
CAR-REPAIR SHOP

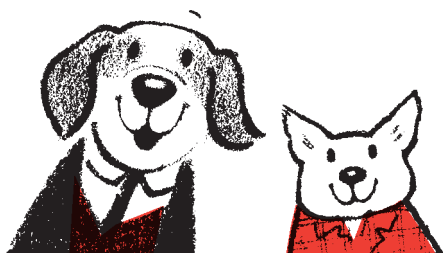


PETROL STATION AND DINER



DIGBY'S WORLD

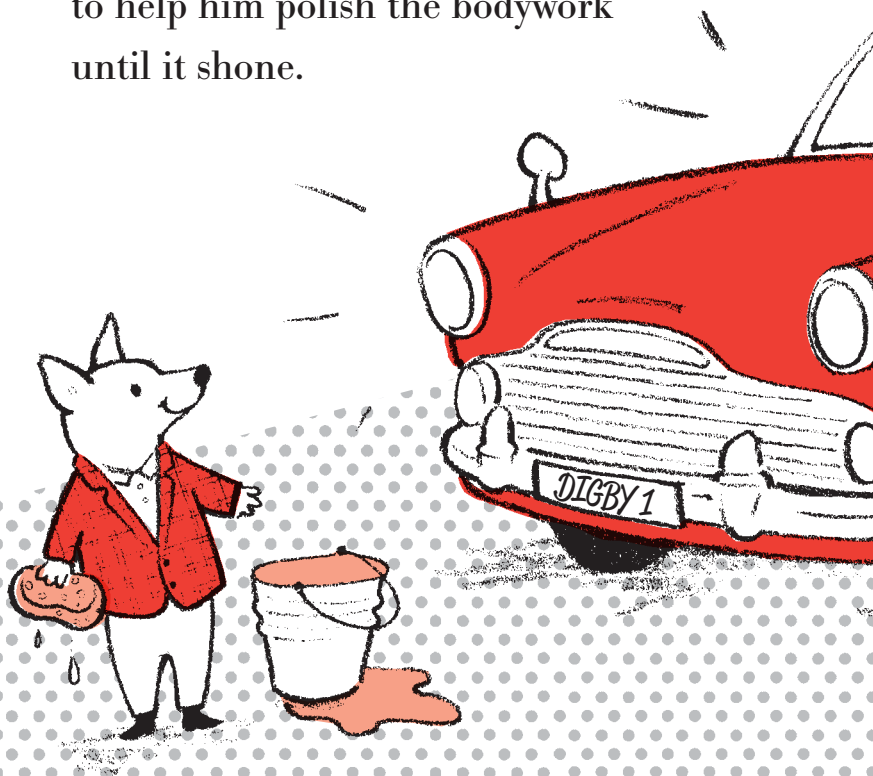


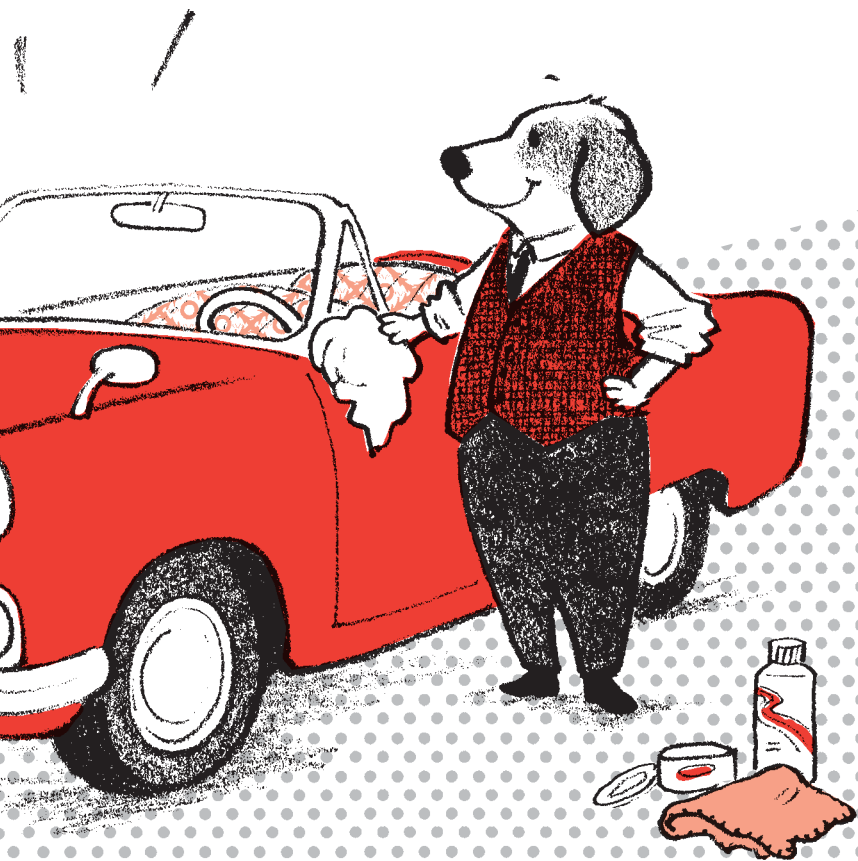


Chapter One



Digby O'Day loved his car and took great care of it. The car was not new, but it was a very clean machine. His friend Percy often came over to help him polish the bodywork until it shone.

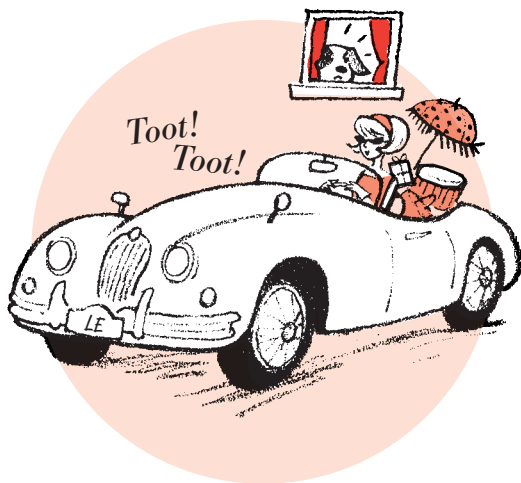


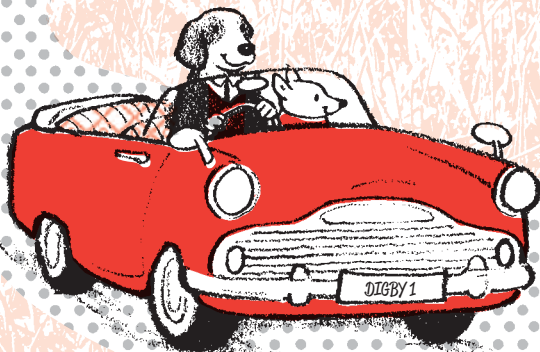




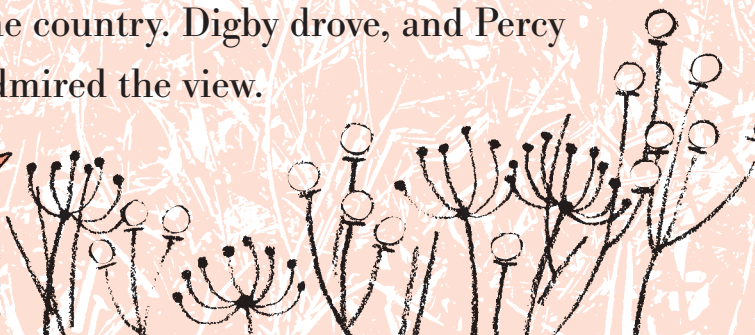
DIGBY O'DAY

Digby's neighbor Lou Ella bought a new car every year, always a very expensive one. It annoyed Digby a lot when she drove past his house and tooted her horn.





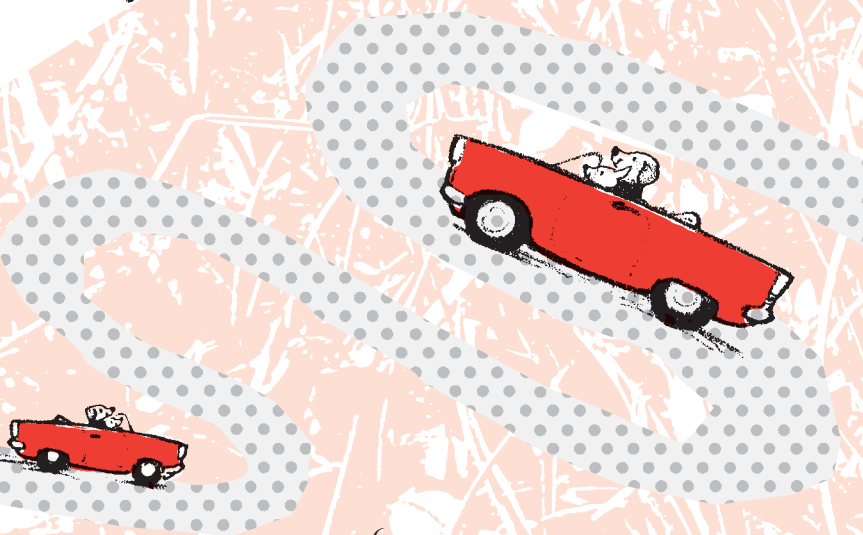
Digby often took Percy for a day in the country. Digby drove, and Percy admired the view.



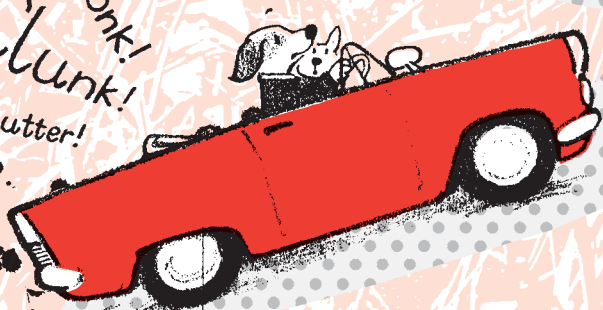


DIGBY O'DAY

One day they took a road that led
up a steep hill with hairpin bends.
Halfway up, the car started to
make funny noises.



Thwunk!
Clunk!
Splutter!

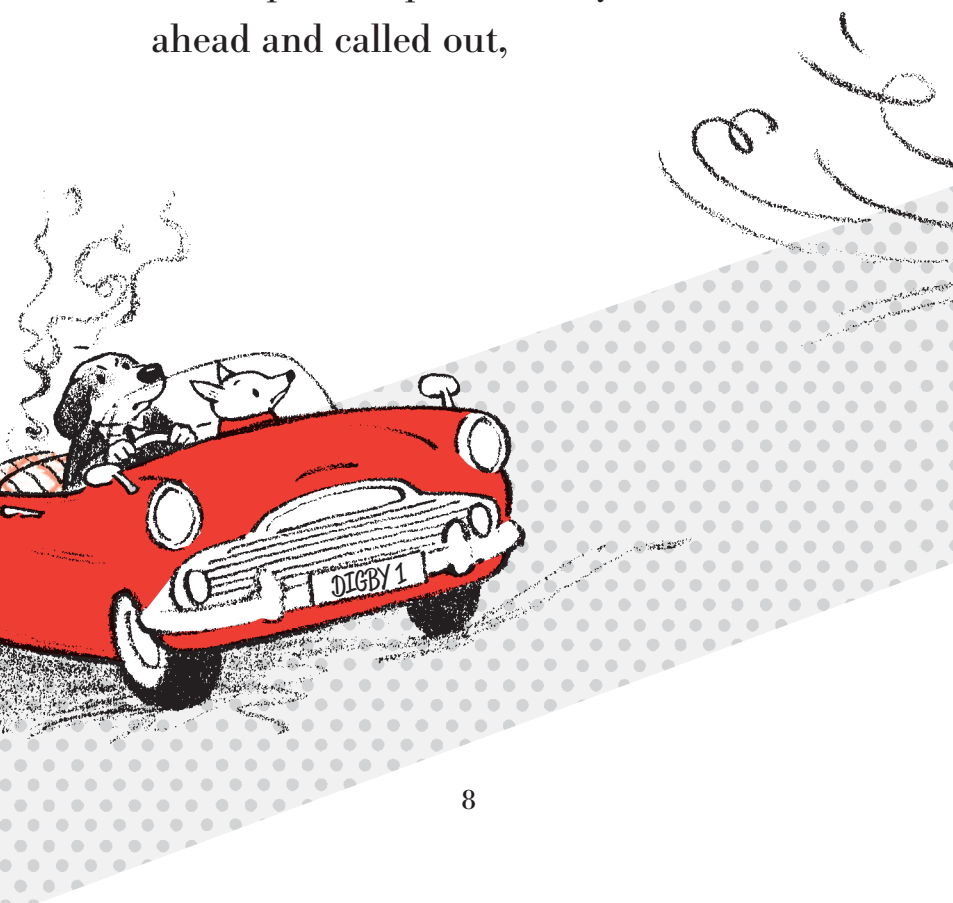


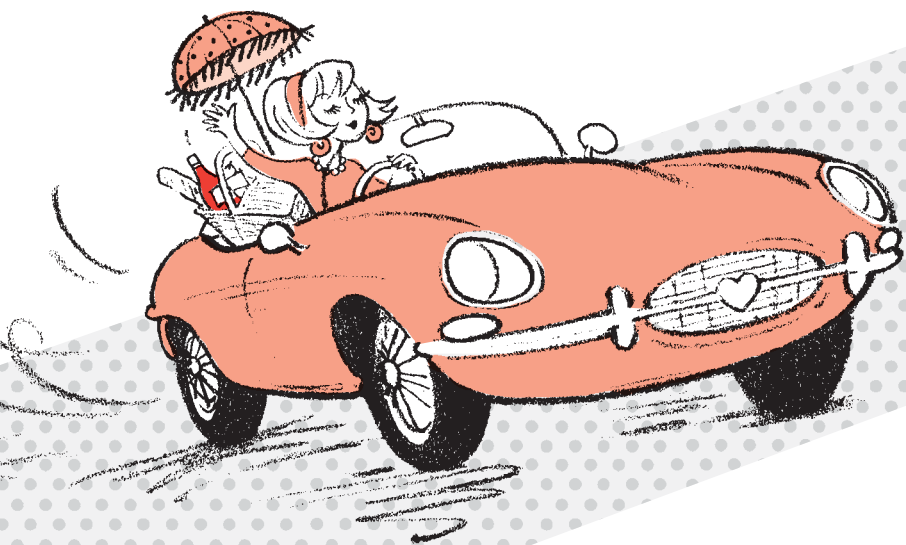


DIGBY O'DAY

Just then, who should drive past them but Lou Ella, in her brand-new pink convertible.

She pulled up a little way ahead and called out,





“You seem to be in trouble! Sorry
I can’t help. It’s just that I know
nothing about engines—silly old me!”

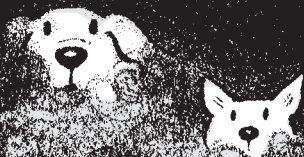
Then she waved and drove on.



DIGBY O'DAY



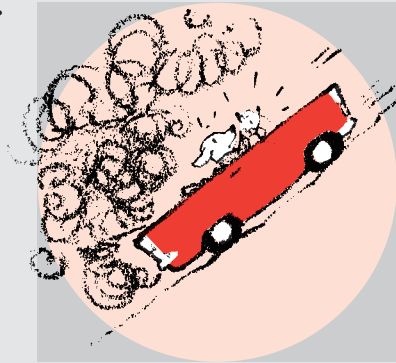
Black smoke was now coming out
of the back of Digby's car. Then it
began to slide slowly backward.





Digby put on the brake, but the car wouldn't stop.

"We're going the wrong way!" said Percy.



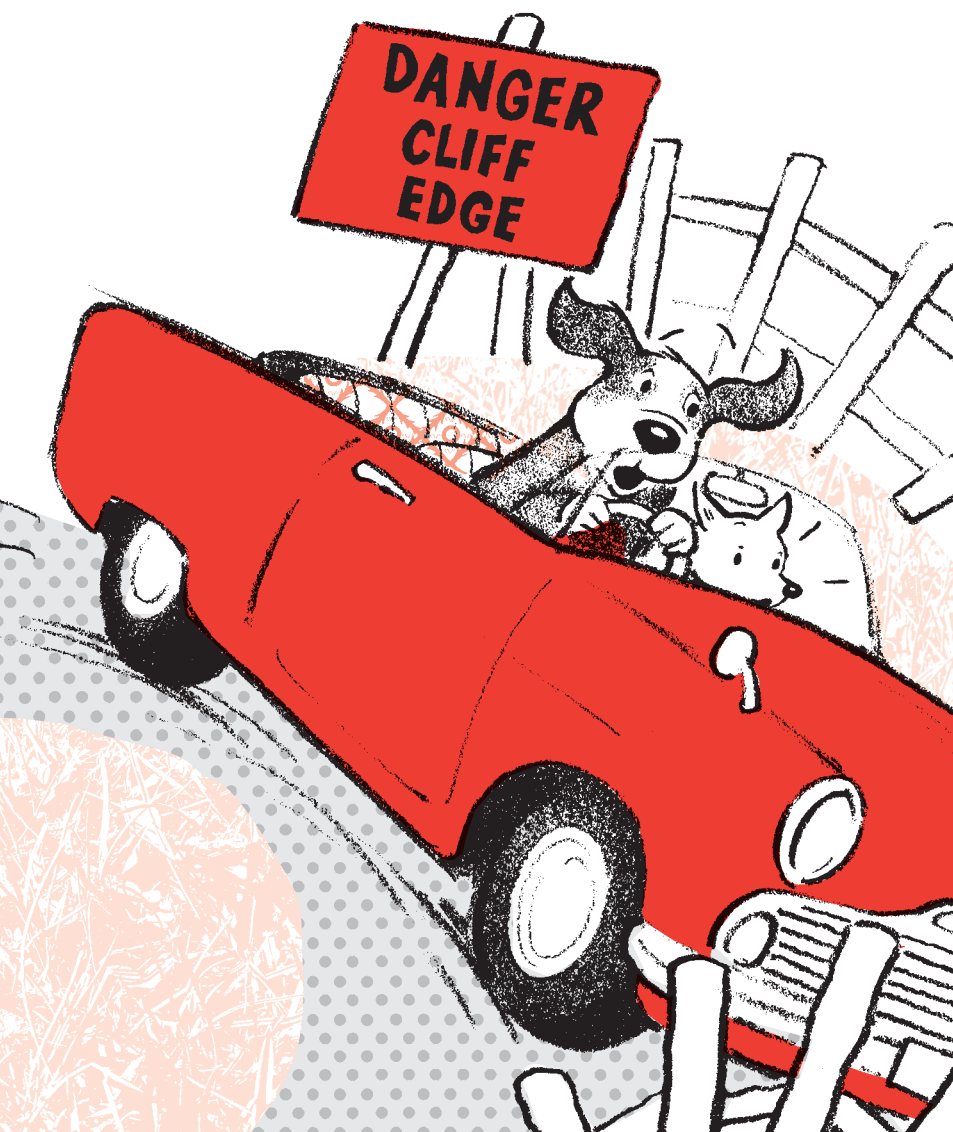
"Yes, I can see that," replied Digby rather crossly. He was busy trying to steer backward. The car slid faster and faster, then spun around, and they found themselves facing down the hill.



DIGBY O'DAY

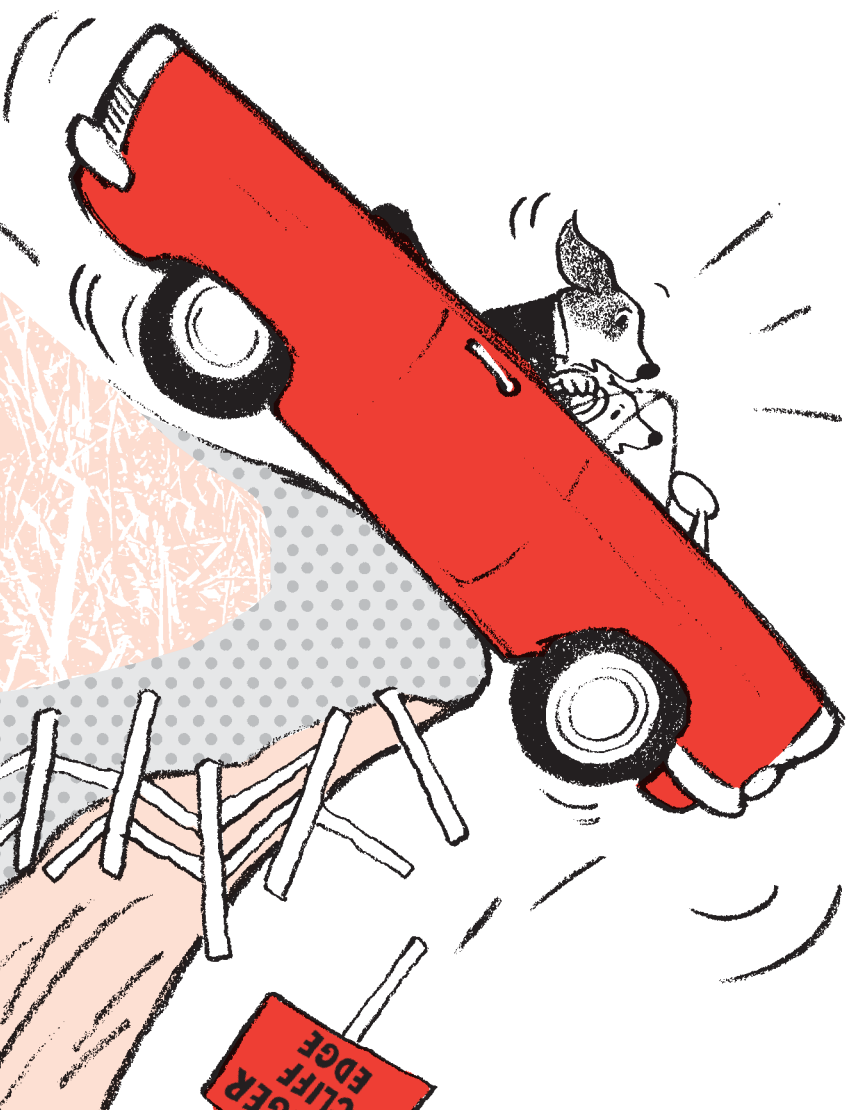
The car sped on, reaching a bend
where there was a steep cliff. They
careened off the road, broke through
the railing, and went right to
the edge, where . . .





The background of the page is a dense, textured field of orange and yellow grass. In the lower-left corner, there are several stylized white flowers with black outlines. In the lower-right corner, a grey fence with white posts runs diagonally across the frame. A small red ladybug with black spots is visible near the bottom center, just above the fence line. The text "Oh, phew!" is written in a large, black, cursive font, and "the car stopped." is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font below it.

*Oh,
phew!*
the car stopped.





DIGBY O'DAY

They were halfway over a sheer drop. Percy looked down, then covered his eyes.



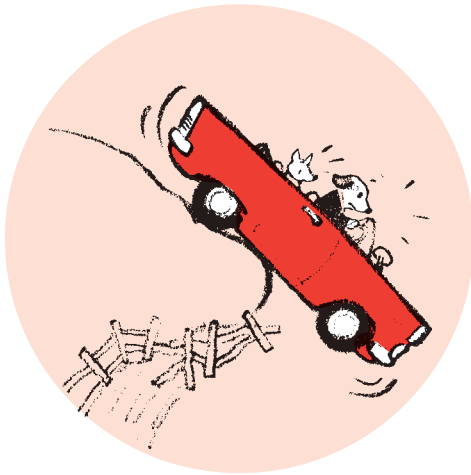
“We’d better get out,” said Digby. But when they tried to move, the car wobbled.

“It might help if you could climb over into the backseat, Percy,” said Digby.



Percy did, but he wasn't heavy enough to make much difference.

Digby didn't dare get out of the car to push it back onto the road, because every time he tried to open the door, the car slipped a little farther over the edge.





DIGBY O'DAY

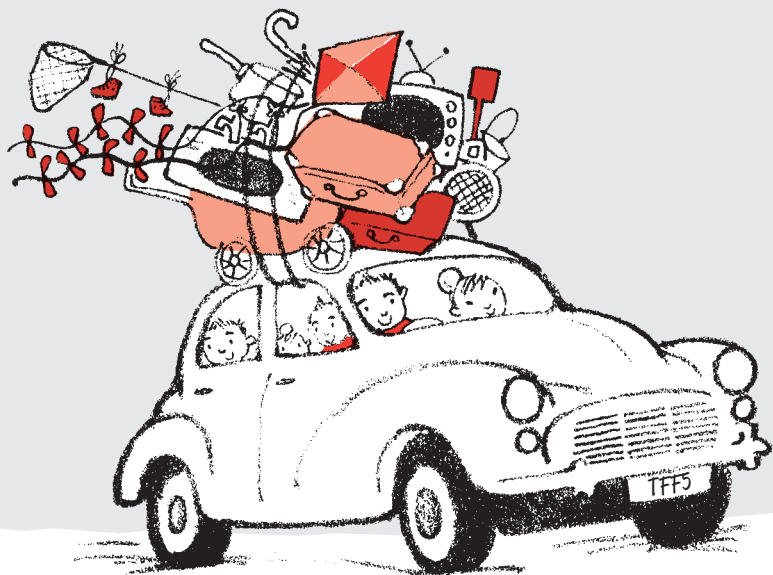
They both sat there for a long time.
“I’m hungry,” said Percy. “I wish
we’d brought a picnic.”



Digby was hungry, too, but he tried
to be brave.



At last a car came around the bend
and stopped.

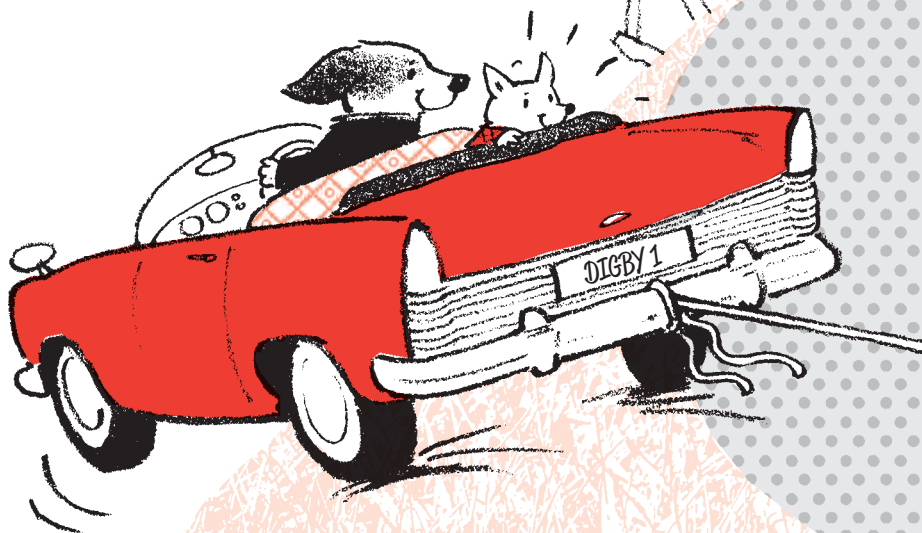


It was a friendly family—Mum,
Dad, and three little ones in the back.





DIGBY O'DAY



Dad hopped out at once to help. He tied a rope to the back of Digby's car, and the whole family heaved and lugged until slowly, slowly, they managed to pull it back onto the road.



All the little ones cheered.
“You are a true gentleman,” said
Digby, shaking Dad’s hand as they
said good-bye.



DIGBY O'DAY

It was a long walk home.

Lou Ella was standing at her gate as they trudged up the road.

“Oh, dear, have you had a breakdown?” she said. “It’s really time you got a new car, Digby.”

Digby didn’t answer. He and Percy just walked into the house and closed the door.



Digby O'Day in the Fast Lane

Shirley Hughes

illus. by Clara Vulliamy

"The first in a witty and beautifully designed series for emerging readers. . . . Vulliamy's crisp, lively images . . . deserve to be savored." – *The Sunday Times* (London)

Buy online from
an indie bookstore



Buy on amazon.com

BARNES & NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS

BUY NOW



CANDLEWICK PRESS
www.candlewick.com