

# Tabby McTat



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AXEL SCHEFFLER

Tabby McTat was a busker's cat  
With a miaow that was loud and strong.  
The two of them sang of this and that,  
And people threw coins in the old checked hat,  
And this was their favourite song:

*"Me, you and the old guitar,  
How perfectly, perfectly happy we are.  
MEEE-EW and the old guitar,  
How PURRRR-fectly happy we are."*



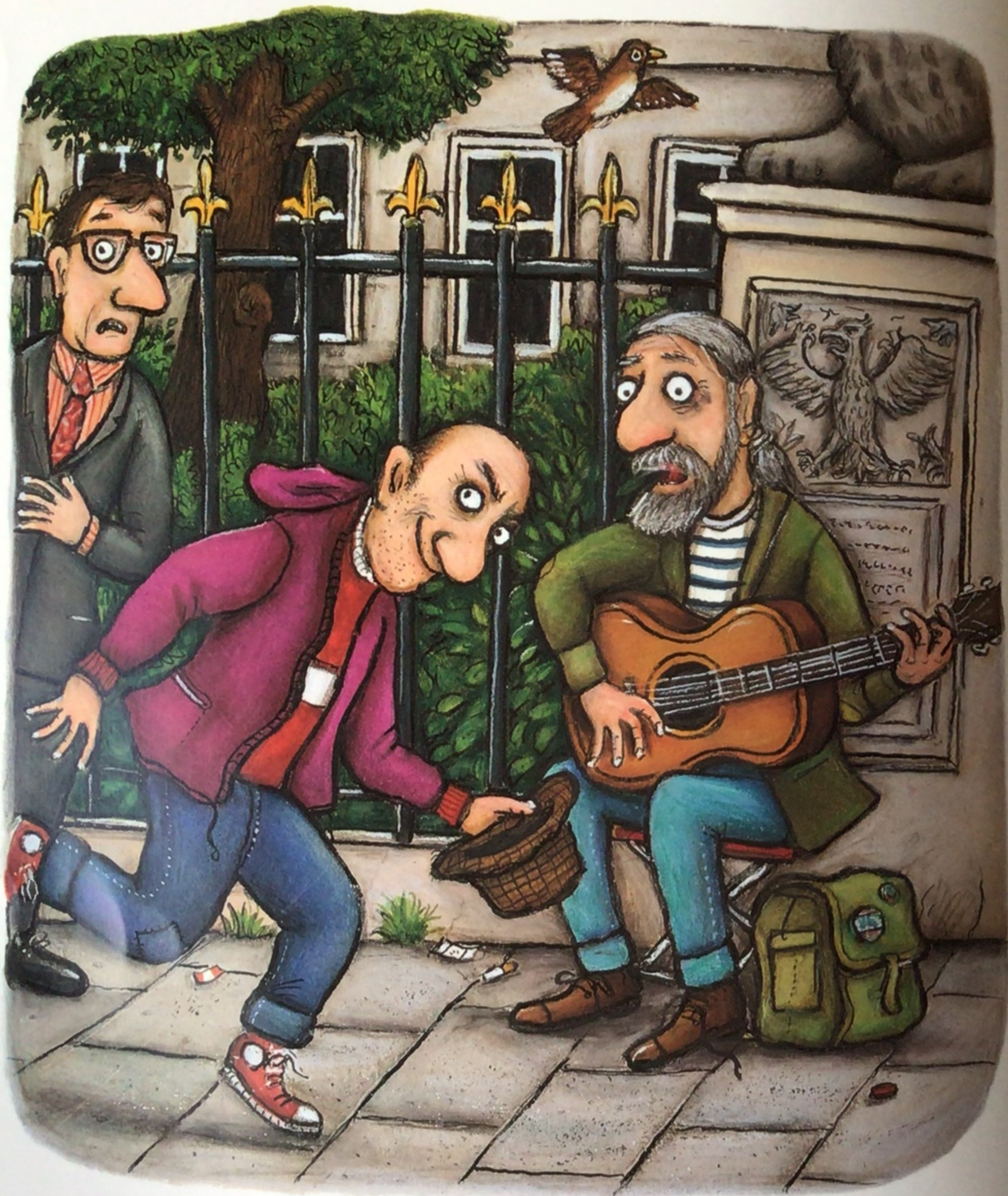
One morning, while Fred ate some bacon and bread,  
McTat took a stroll round the block,



Then stopped – for there on a doorstep sat  
A gorgeously glossy and green-eyed cat.  
She was black with one snowy white sock.



Sock and McTat had a cat-to-cat chat  
And that's how their story began,  
For while they were chatting of this and of that . . .



A thief had his eye on the old checked hat.  
He eyed it. He snatched it. He ran!

The busker gave chase but he tripped on a lace  
And crash! In a flash he was down.



He broke his leg and he banged his head



And he ended up in a hospital bed  
In a faraway part of town.





"Goodbye," McTat said. "I must get back to Fred."



But where had the busker gone?



The sun went down and the sky grew black.  
The stars came out, but he didn't come back.  
McTat lingered on . . . and on.

A week later, Sock took a stroll round the block  
And found her new friend looking thin.  
"He's gone off and left me!" said Tabby McTat.



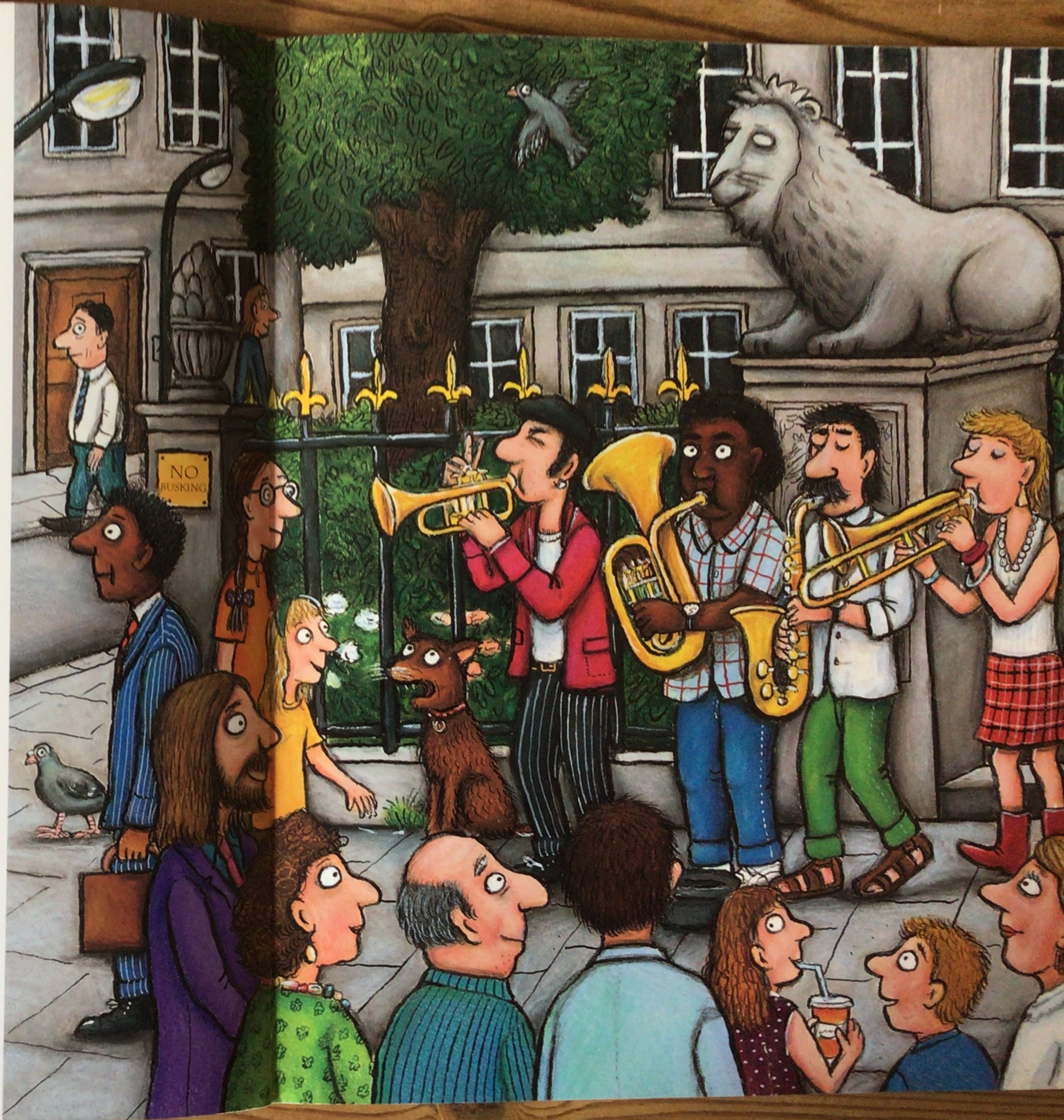
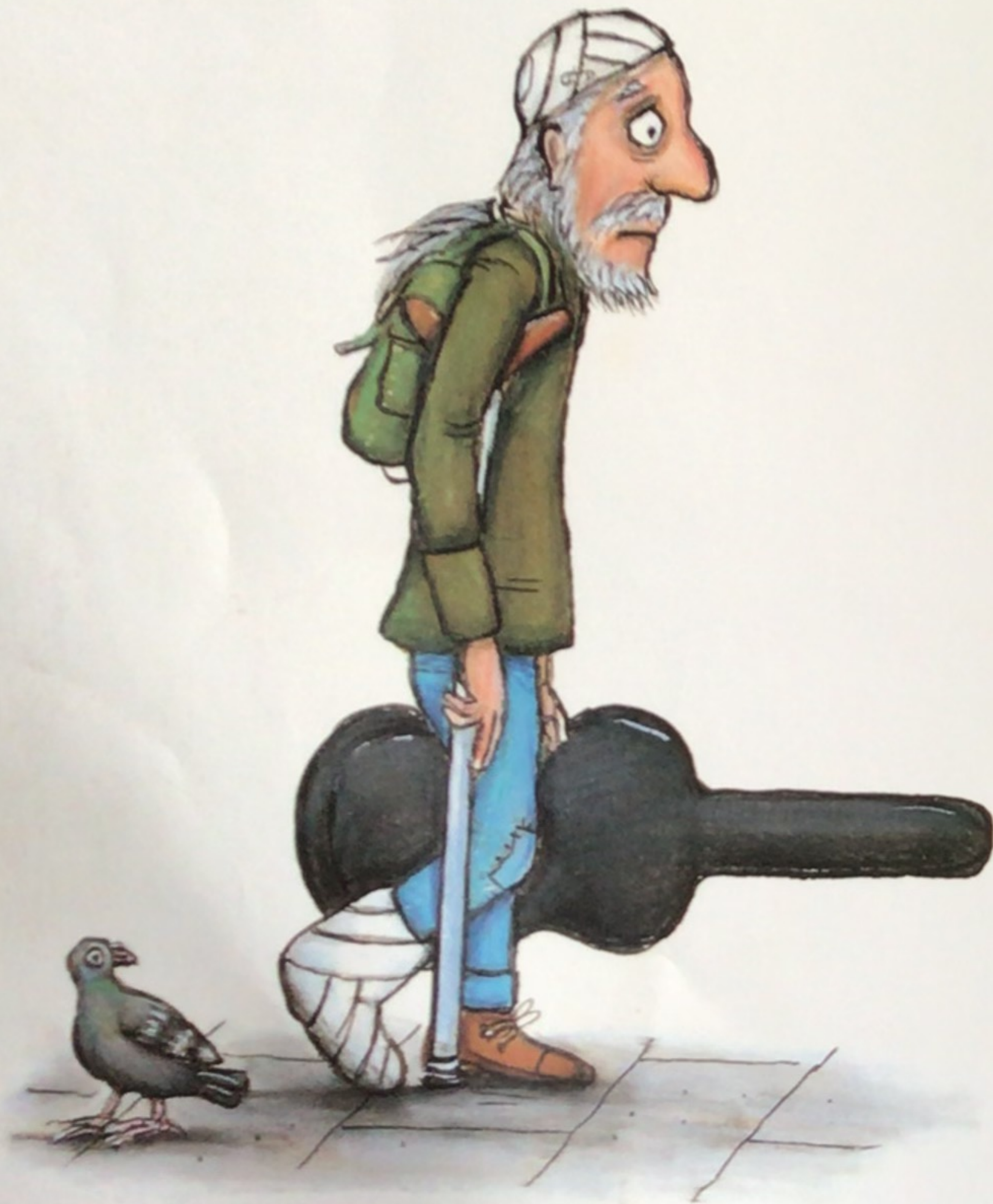
Then Sock said, "My people, Prunella and Pat,  
Would gladly find room for a fine tabby cat."



She was right, and they took McTat in.



Next morning, old Fred left his hospital bed  
And found his way back to the square,  
But a brass band stood where the pair once sat  
And the band played this and the band played that,  
And Fred looked all round for his loud-miaowed cat,  
But Tabby McTat wasn't there!



Now McTat had a wife and a very full life  
With plenty of Things To Do,



Like washing Prunella



and pouncing on Pat,

And giving the pens an occasional bat,



And nibbling this . . .



. . . and nibbling that,



And hiding the car keys under the mat,



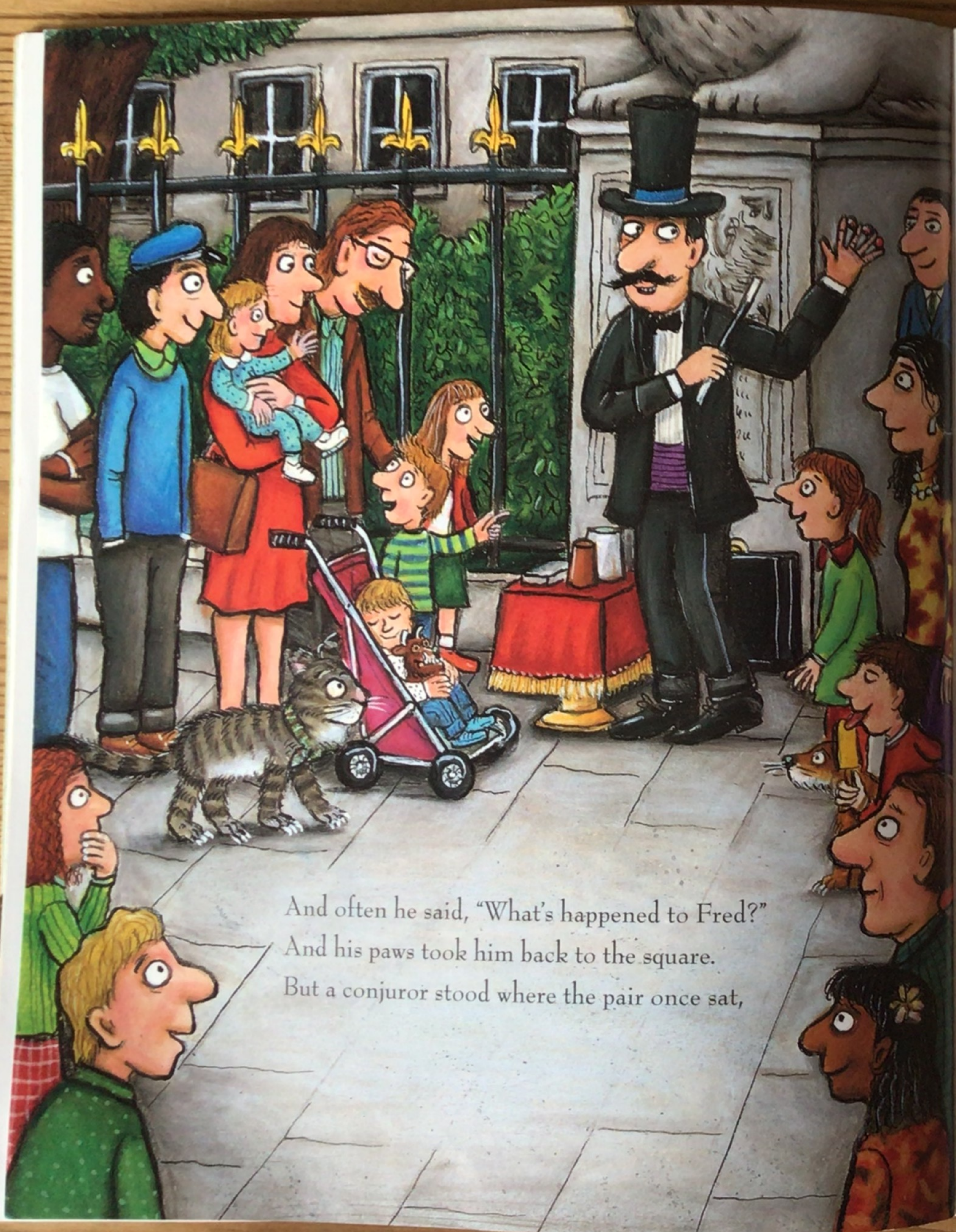
And keeping the newspapers  
nice and flat,

But he dreamed of his friend  
with the old checked hat



And always woke up with a mew.





And often he said, "What's happened to Fred?"  
And his paws took him back to the square.  
But a conjuror stood where the pair once sat,



And he pulled out this . . .

and he pulled out that . . .



And people threw coins in the tall black hat,  
But the busker was never there.



One morning Sock said, "Look under the bed  
And see the three kittens I've had!"



And Soames looked like this,



and Susan like that,



And the littlest kitten, called Samuel Sprat,  
Looked exactly the same as his dad.

The three kittens grew and they learnt how to mew,  
And McTat sometimes sang them his song.

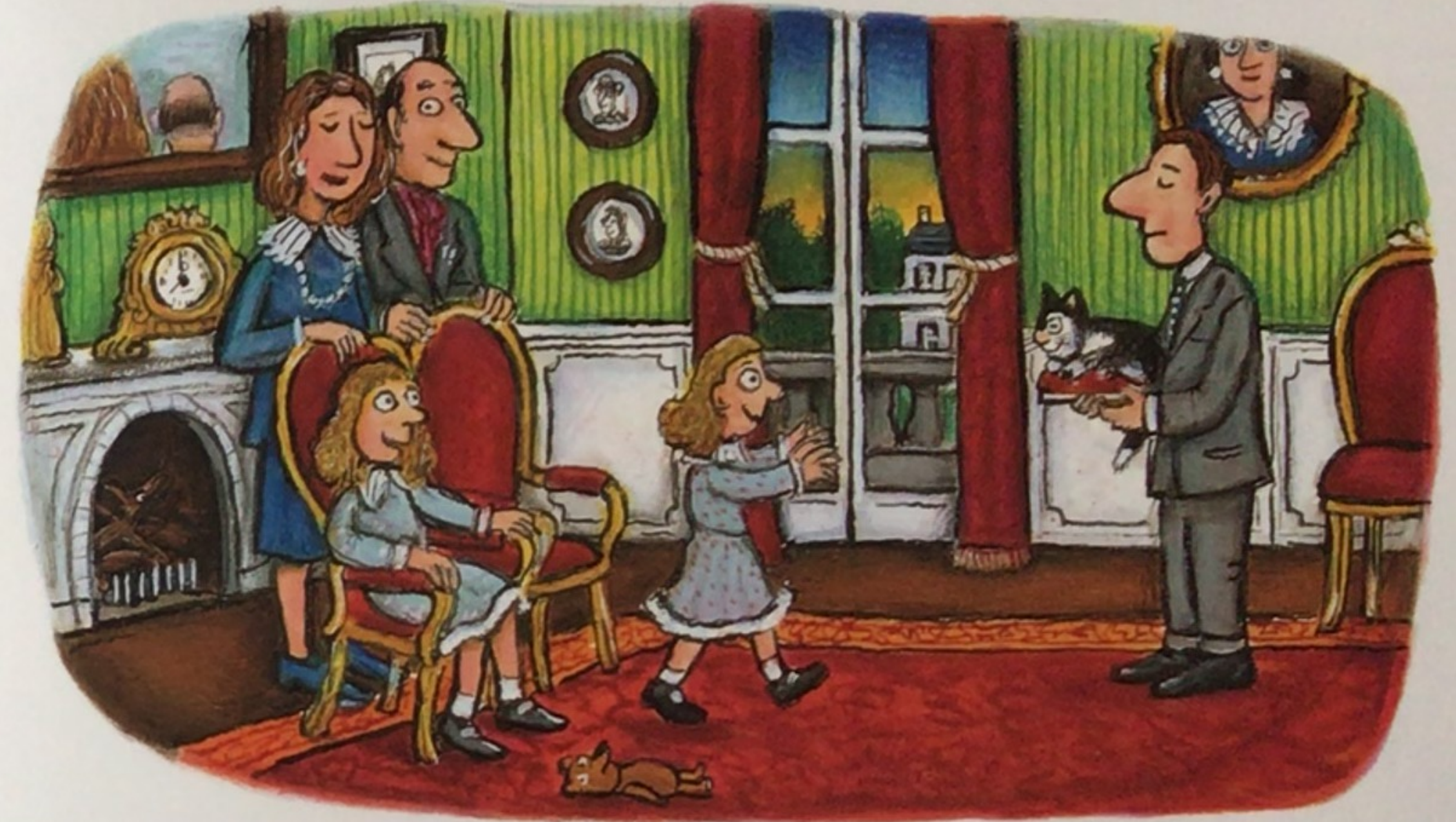


And Samuel Sprat with his tabby-grey fur  
Had a deafening miaow and a very loud purr  
And he simply loved singing along:

*"Me, you and the old guitar,  
How perfectly, perfectly happy we are.  
MEEE-EW and the old guitar,  
How PURRRR-fectly happy we are."*



When Susan and Soames found very good homes  
Their parents were happy and proud.



There was one home like this . . .



and another like that . . .



But nobody wanted poor Samuel Sprat.  
They all said, "His voice is too loud."

Now Tabby McTat was a home-loving cat  
But he couldn't stop dreaming of Fred.



And one day he called for his wife and his son  
And he told them,  
"There's something that has to be done.  
*I must go and find him,*" he said.



So up and down . . .



and all over town . . .



He wandered a whole week long,



For many a morning and afternoon,  
By the light of the sun, and the light of the moon,



Till he heard a familiar song . . .

*"Just me and the old guitar,  
If I had a cat I'd be happier far.  
Just me and the old guitar,  
With my cat I'd be happier far."*



"It's Tabby McTat! It's my long-lost cat!"  
Old Fred was ecstatically glad.

Then the two of them sang  
of this and that,  
And people threw coins  
in the new checked hat . . .



But why did McTat feel sad?



He was missing his wife and his comfortable life  
And the dozens of Things To Do,  
(Like washing Prunella and pouncing on Pat,  
And hiding the car keys under the mat,  
And keeping the newspapers nice and flat,  
And giving the pens an occasional bat.)  
But how could he tell the busker that?



Then out from a shadow sprang Samuel Sprat.  
"Oh please let *ME* be the busker's cat!"  
He said with his deafening mew.





Now Samuel Sprat is the busker's cat  
With a miaow that is loud and strong.  
The two of them sing of this and that  
(Though Samuel sings just a little bit flat),  
And people throw coins in the old checked hat,

And this is their favourite song:

*"Me, you and the old guitar,  
How perfectly, perfectly happy we are.  
MEEE-EW and the old guitar,  
How PURRRR-fectly happy we are."*

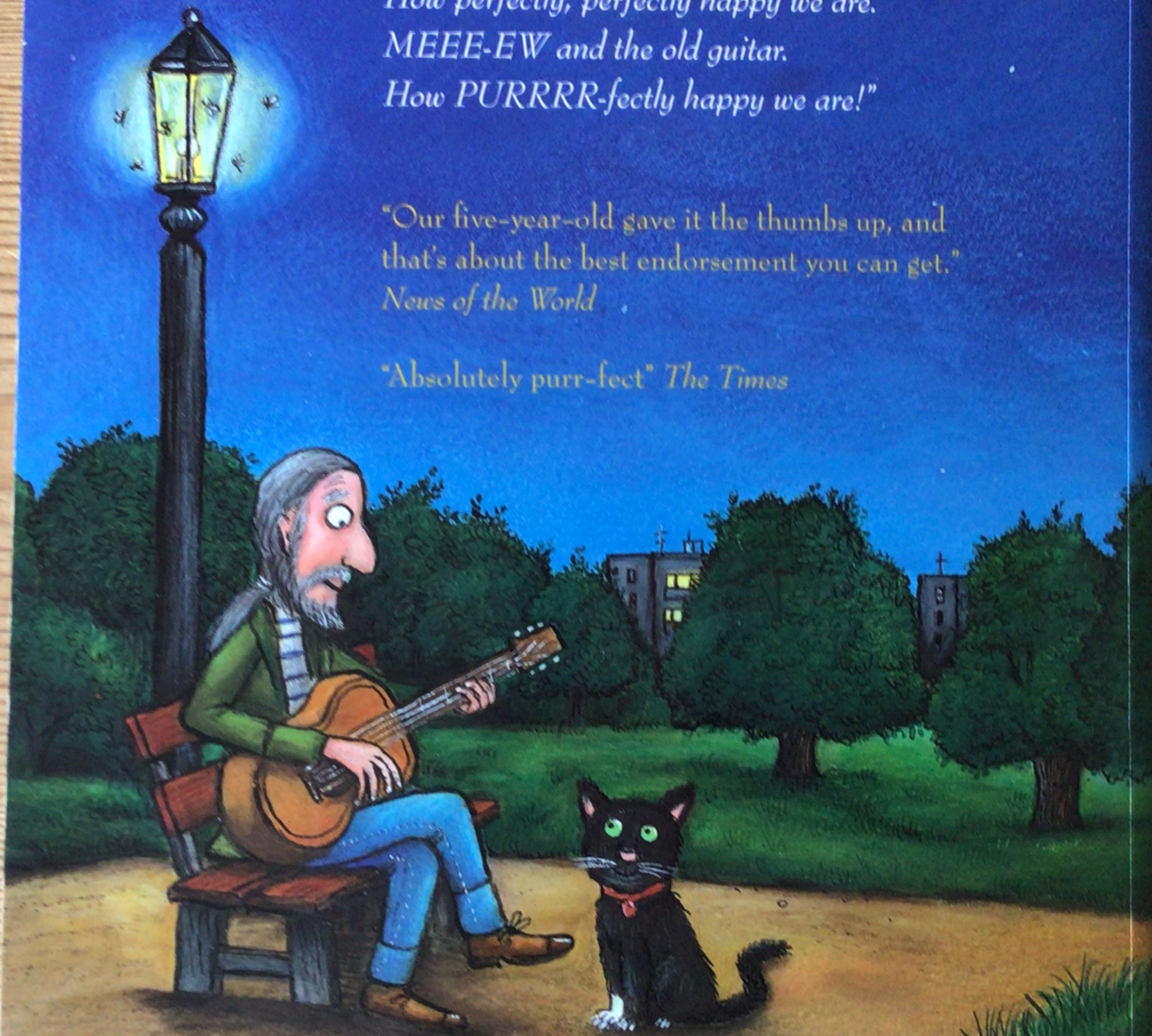




*"Me, you and the old guitar,  
How perfectly, perfectly happy we are.  
MEEE-EW and the old guitar.  
How PURRRR-fectly happy we are!"*

*"Our five-year-old gave it the thumbs up, and  
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News of the World*

*"Absolutely purr-fect" The Times*



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