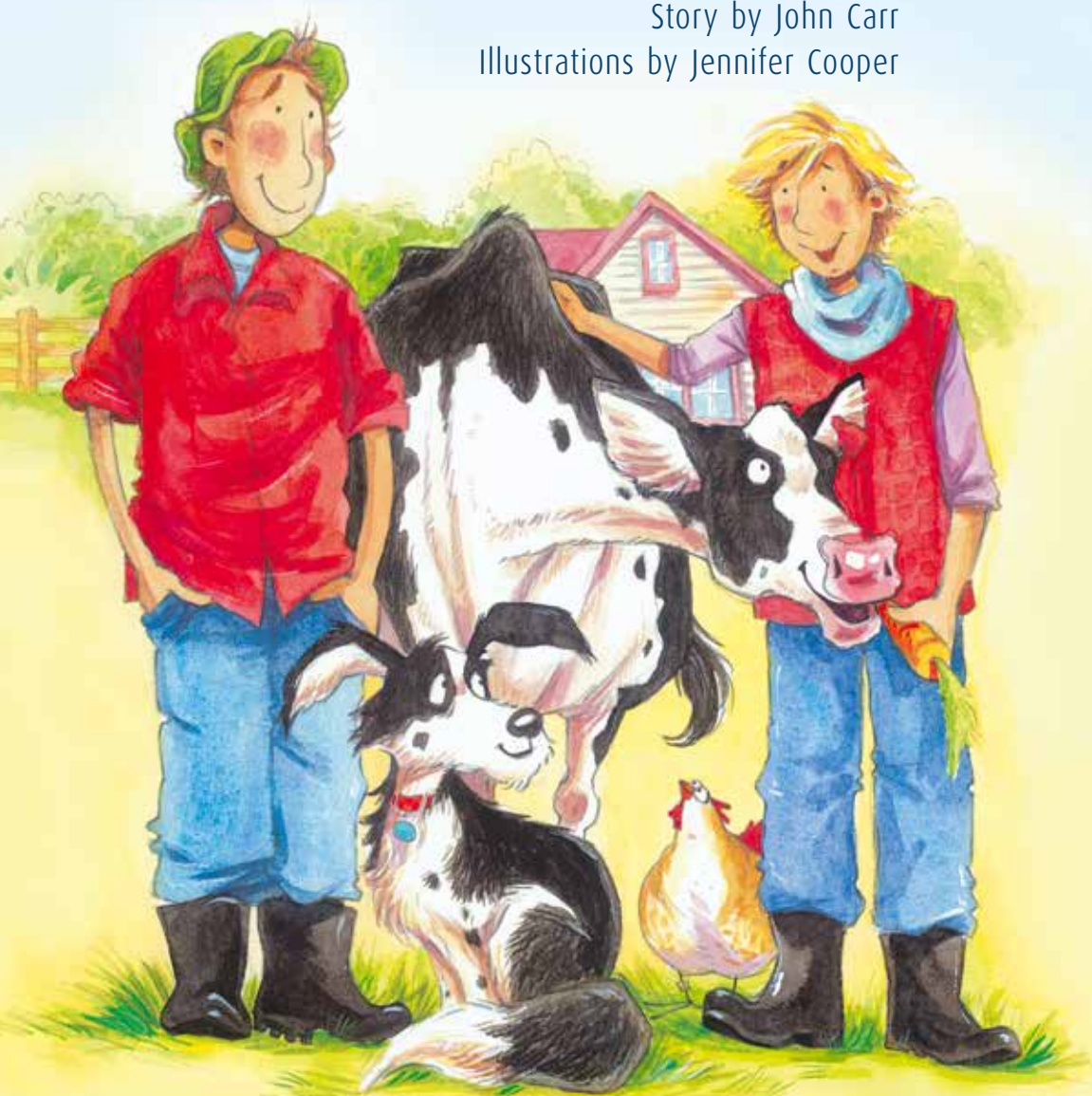


Mrs Wigglesworth Gets the Milk

Story by John Carr

Illustrations by Jennifer Cooper



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Chapter 1

Mr Wigglesworth was weeding his beans when Mrs Wigglesworth stopped the tractor and called to him, "I'm just going in to town to get some milk," she said.

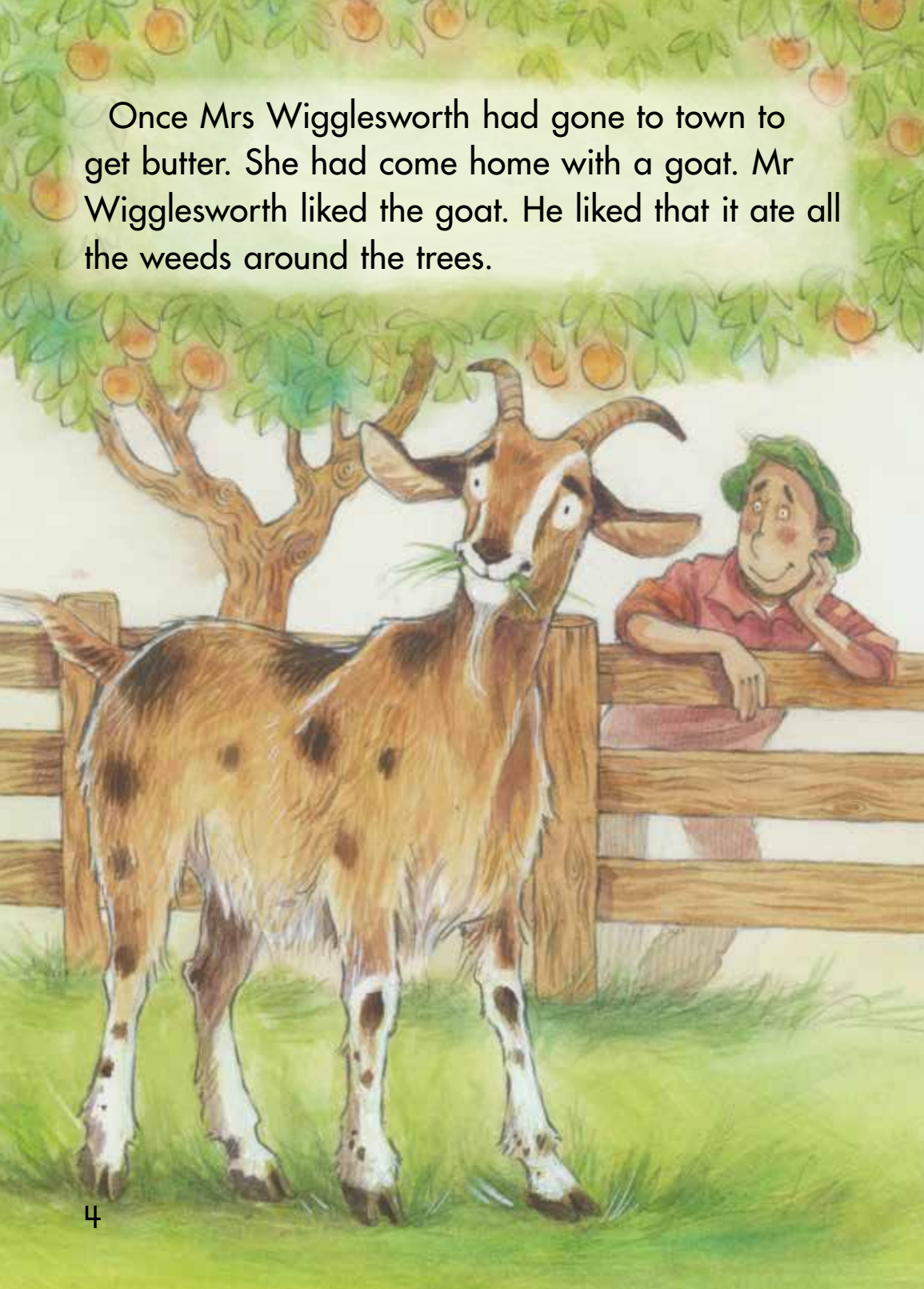
Mr Wigglesworth sighed. He knew what to expect, and it wasn't a bottle of milk.

"Nobody tows a trailer into town to get milk," he thought. "I expect she'll come home with a cow from the SPCA."

Mr Wigglesworth wasn't joking. He knew Mrs Wigglesworth very well. She loved animals as much as he loved plants. Once a week she helped to look after rescued animals at the SPCA. Sometimes, when good homes were hard to find for some of those animals, she brought them home. She never told Mr Wigglesworth about them until they arrived.



Once Mrs Wigglesworth had gone to town to get butter. She had come home with a goat. Mr Wigglesworth liked the goat. He liked that it ate all the weeds around the trees.



Once Mrs Wigglesworth had gone to get eggs. She had come home with ten hens rescued from a battery farm. The hens were still there. Mr Wigglesworth liked the eggs they laid every day as well as the manure for his cabbages.

When birds were eating Mr Wigglesworth's plants, Mrs Wigglesworth went to town to get him a "four-legged scarecrow". She had come home with a cat.

So, when Mrs Wigglesworth came home with a cow on the trailer, Mr Wigglesworth wasn't surprised, even though he pretended to be.

"Her name is Dulcie," said Mrs Wigglesworth as she moved the cow into the paddock. "We have to treat her gently. She's had a tough time."



Chapter 2

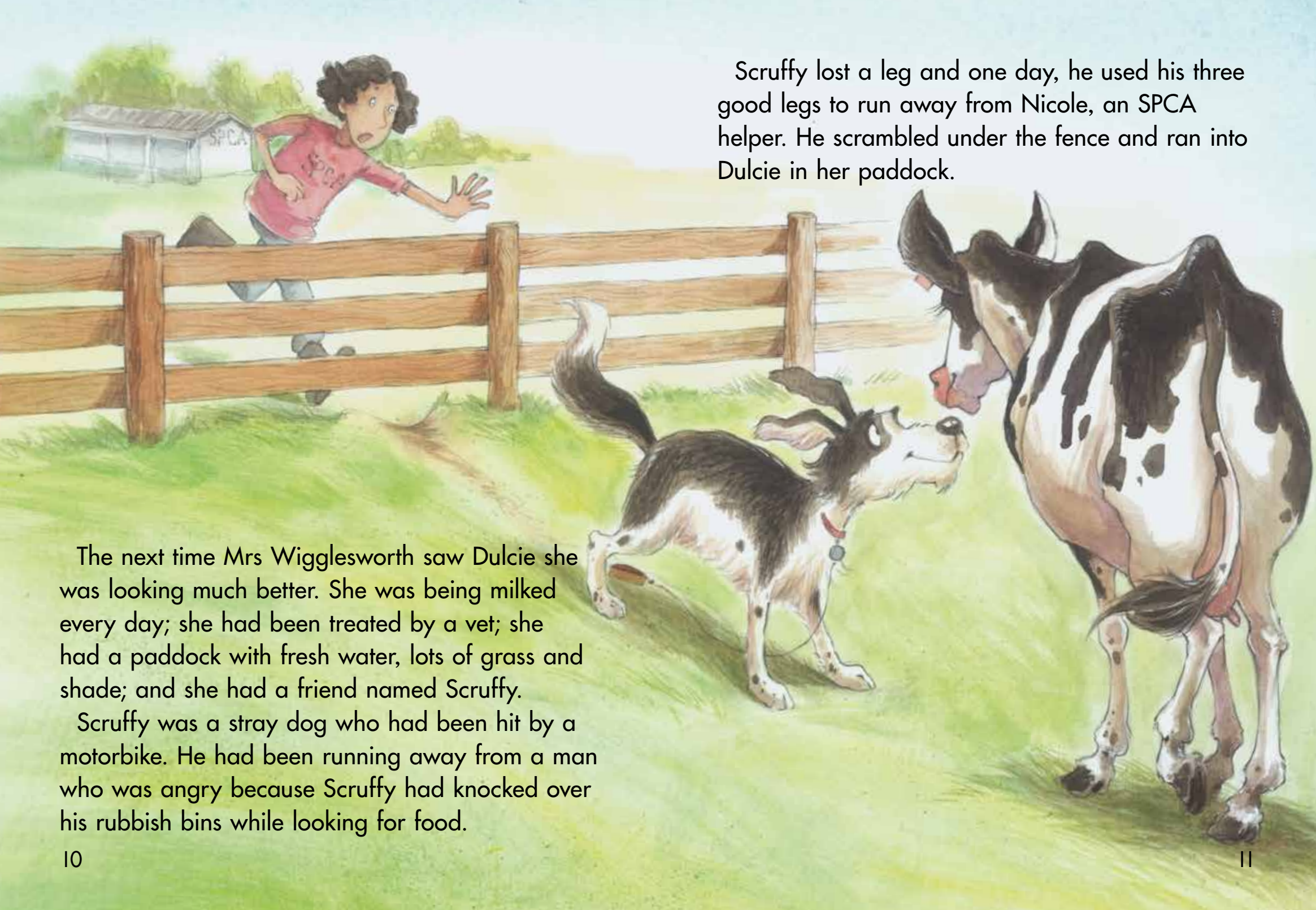
Mrs Wigglesworth knew Dulcie's story because she had been helping out at the SPCA centre the day Dulcie was brought in.

Dulcie had been found mooing sadly, alone and forgotten, on a small farm in the hills. The old man who owned the farm had become sick and couldn't look after his animals anymore. He had moved into town. When his animals were sold, Dulcie had been left behind.

When she arrived at the SPCA centre, Dulcie had lost weight, her legs were sore and she was in pain because she had not been milked for days.



Scruffy lost a leg and one day, he used his three good legs to run away from Nicole, an SPCA helper. He scrambled under the fence and ran into Dulcie in her paddock.

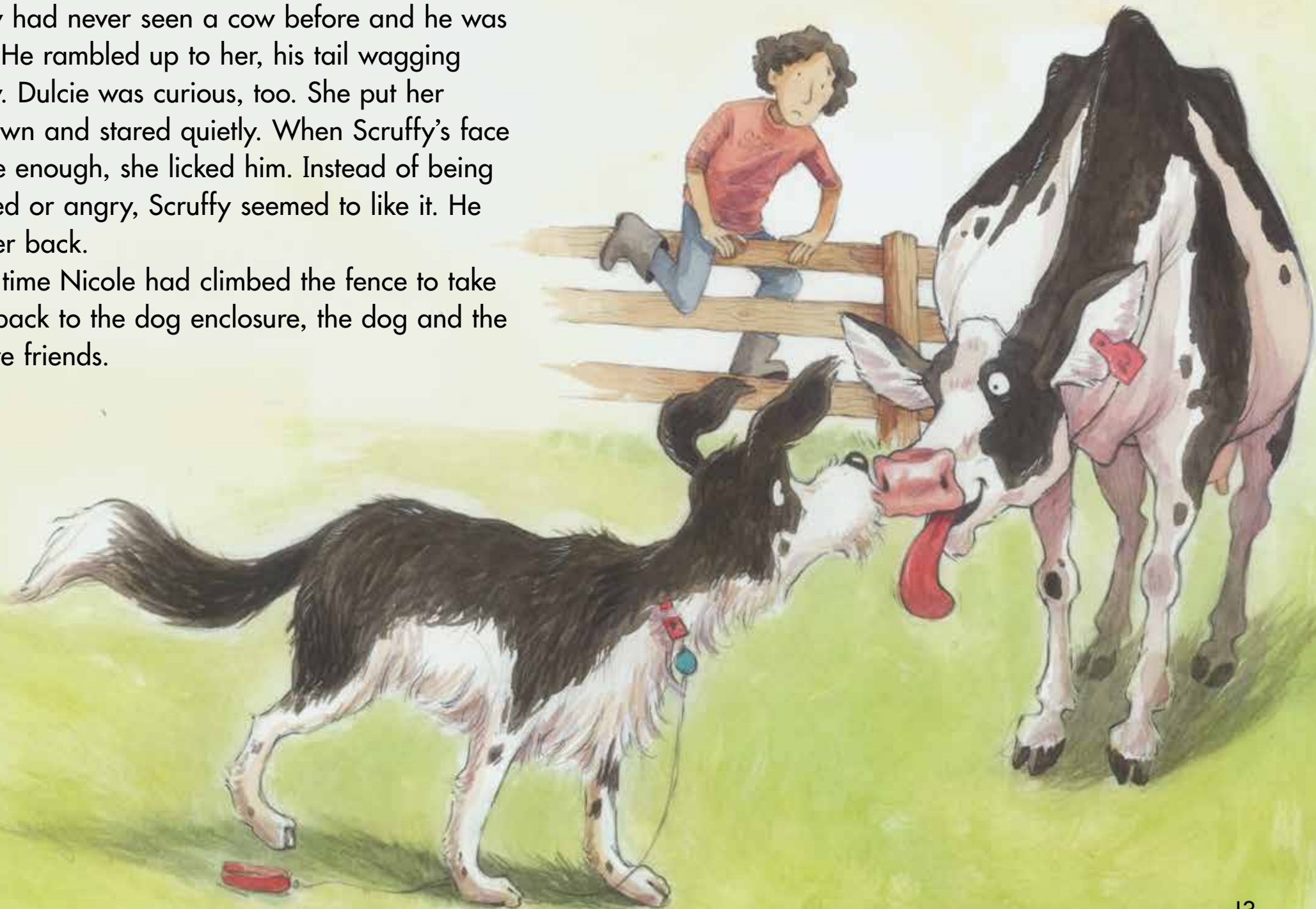


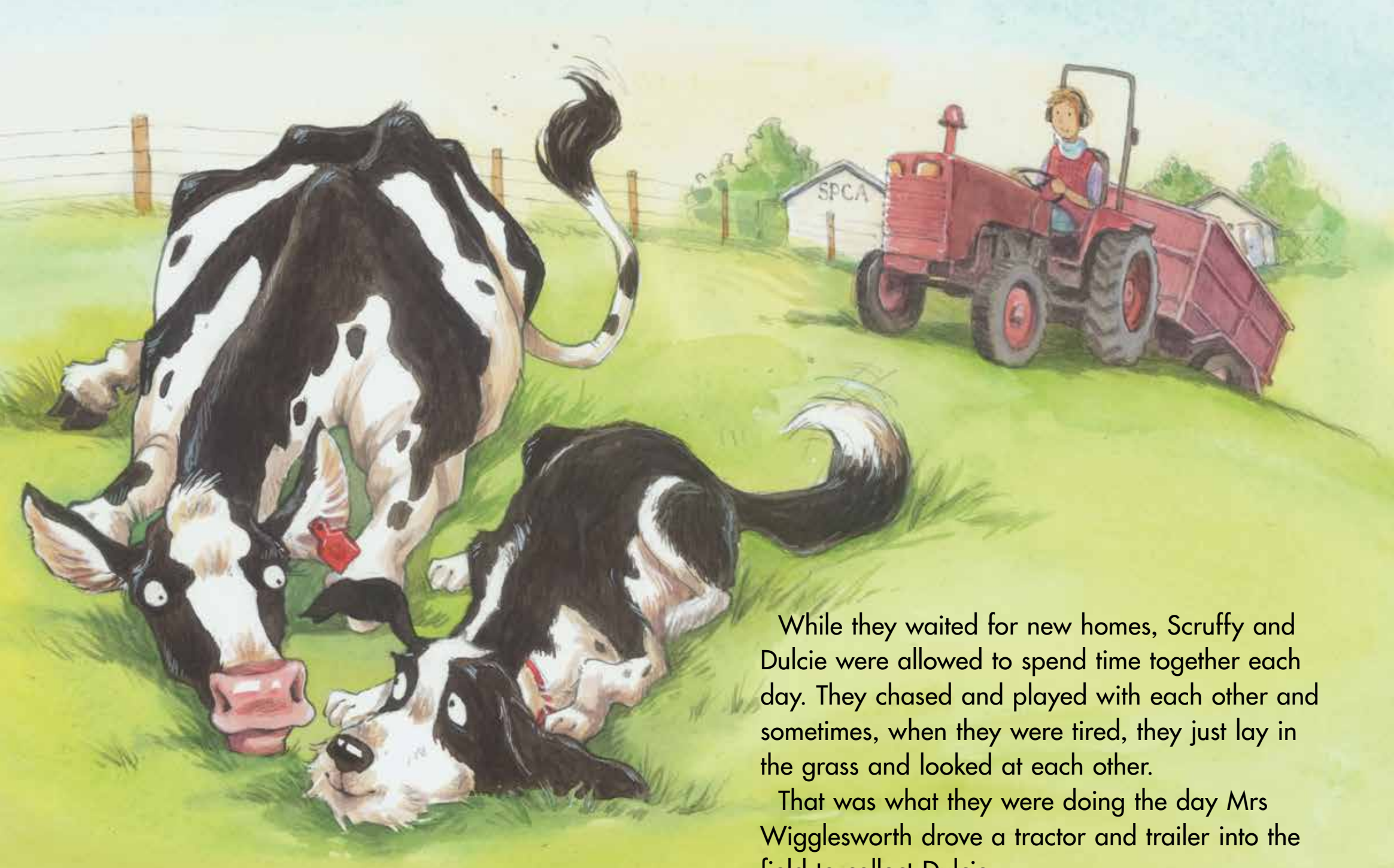
The next time Mrs Wigglesworth saw Dulcie she was looking much better. She was being milked every day; she had been treated by a vet; she had a paddock with fresh water, lots of grass and shade; and she had a friend named Scruffy.

Scruffy was a stray dog who had been hit by a motorbike. He had been running away from a man who was angry because Scruffy had knocked over his rubbish bins while looking for food.

Scruffy had never seen a cow before and he was curious. He rambled up to her, his tail wagging excitedly. Dulcie was curious, too. She put her head down and stared quietly. When Scruffy's face got close enough, she licked him. Instead of being frightened or angry, Scruffy seemed to like it. He licked her back.

By the time Nicole had climbed the fence to take Scruffy back to the dog enclosure, the dog and the cow were friends.





While they waited for new homes, Scruffy and Dulcie were allowed to spend time together each day. They chased and played with each other and sometimes, when they were tired, they just lay in the grass and looked at each other.

That was what they were doing the day Mrs Wigglesworth drove a tractor and trailer into the field to collect Dulcie.

Chapter 3

After a few days, Mrs Wigglesworth became worried. Dulcie didn't seem to be as lively or curious anymore, and she wasn't giving as much milk either.

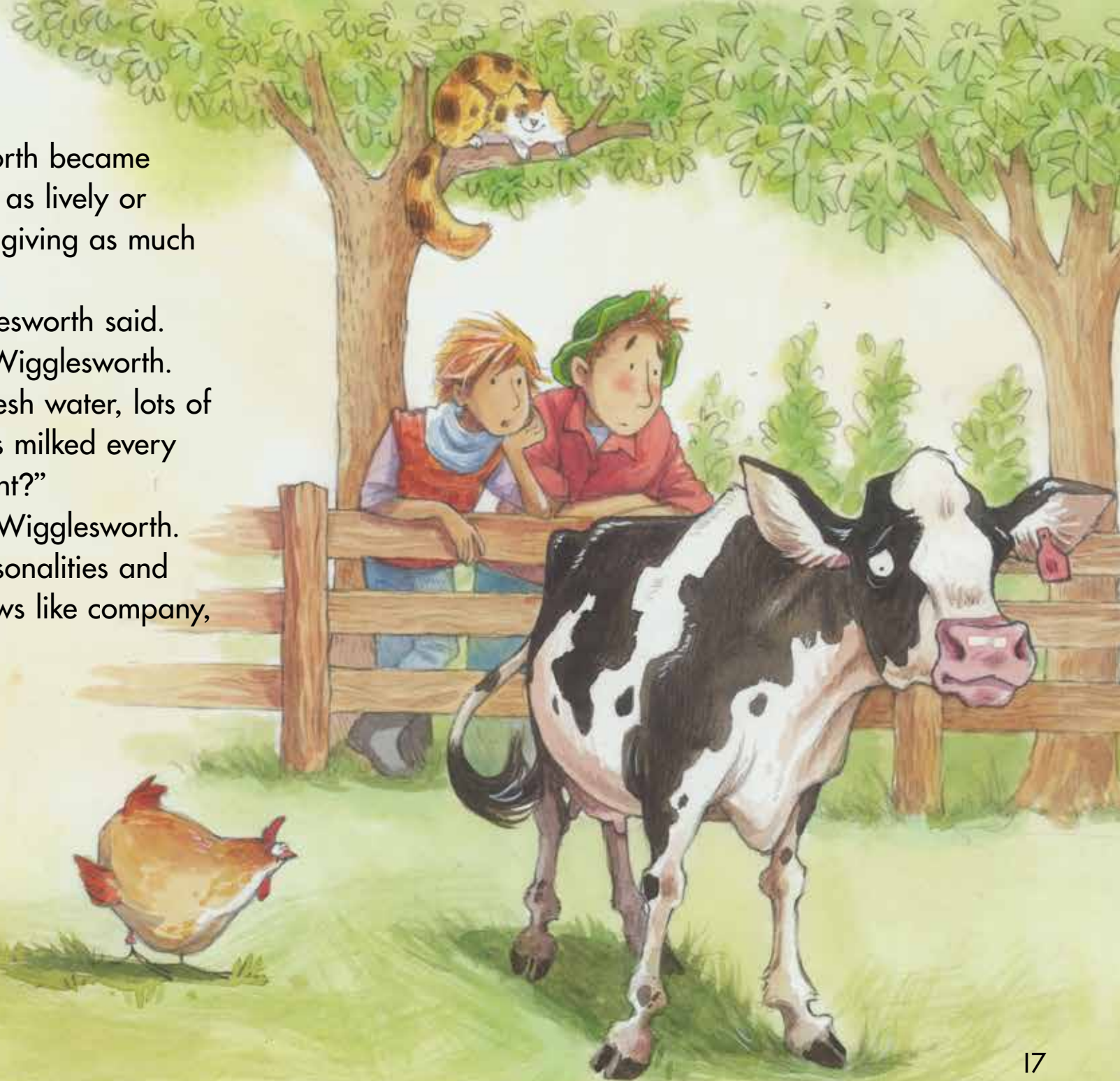
"Dulcie isn't happy," Mrs Wigglesworth said.

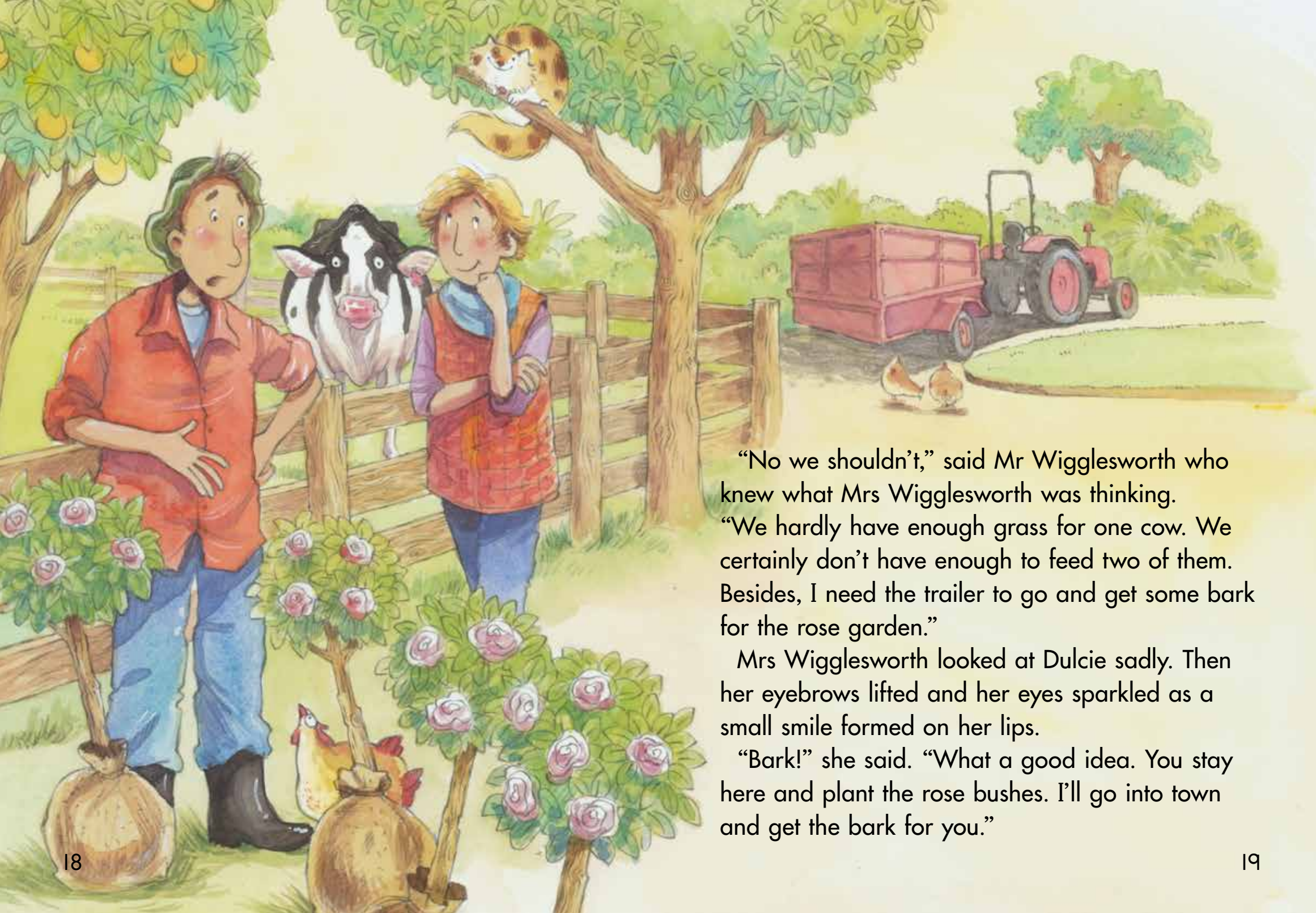
"Well she should be," said Mr Wigglesworth.

"She's got plenty to eat, lots of fresh water, lots of shade from my trees and she gets milked every day. What more could a cow want?"

"Maybe she's lonely," said Mrs Wigglesworth.

"Cows are like us. They have personalities and they like to be around others. Cows like company, maybe we should..."





“No we shouldn’t,” said Mr Wigglesworth who knew what Mrs Wigglesworth was thinking. “We hardly have enough grass for one cow. We certainly don’t have enough to feed two of them. Besides, I need the trailer to go and get some bark for the rose garden.”

Mrs Wigglesworth looked at Dulcie sadly. Then her eyebrows lifted and her eyes sparkled as a small smile formed on her lips.

“Bark!” she said. “What a good idea. You stay here and plant the rose bushes. I’ll go into town and get the bark for you.”

Chapter 4

When Mrs Wigglesworth turned the tractor and trailer into the driveway, Mr Wigglesworth looked up from his rose garden. In the distance he could see what was in the trailer and he was surprised.

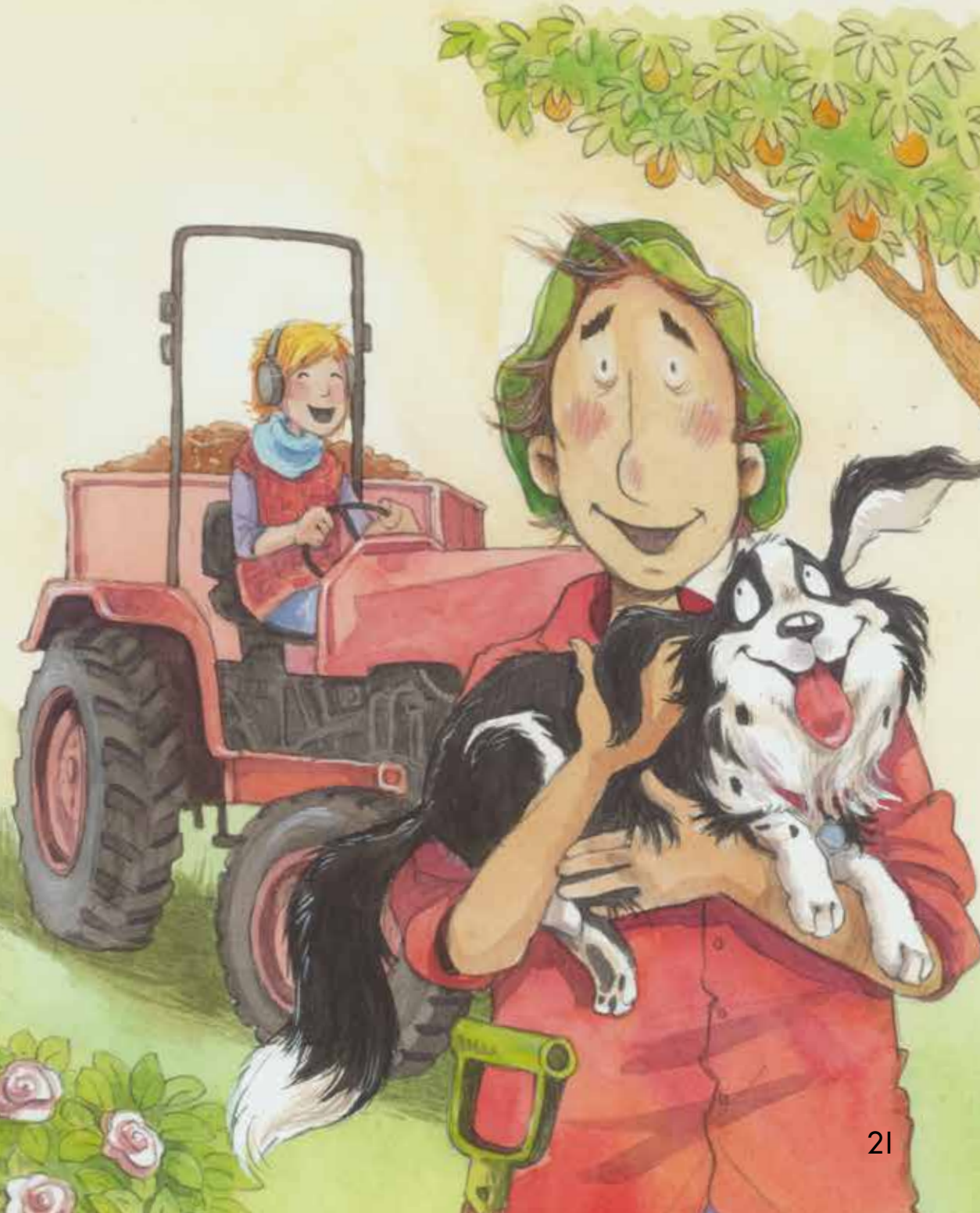
“Bark!” he said. “She really has got me some bark for the garden.”

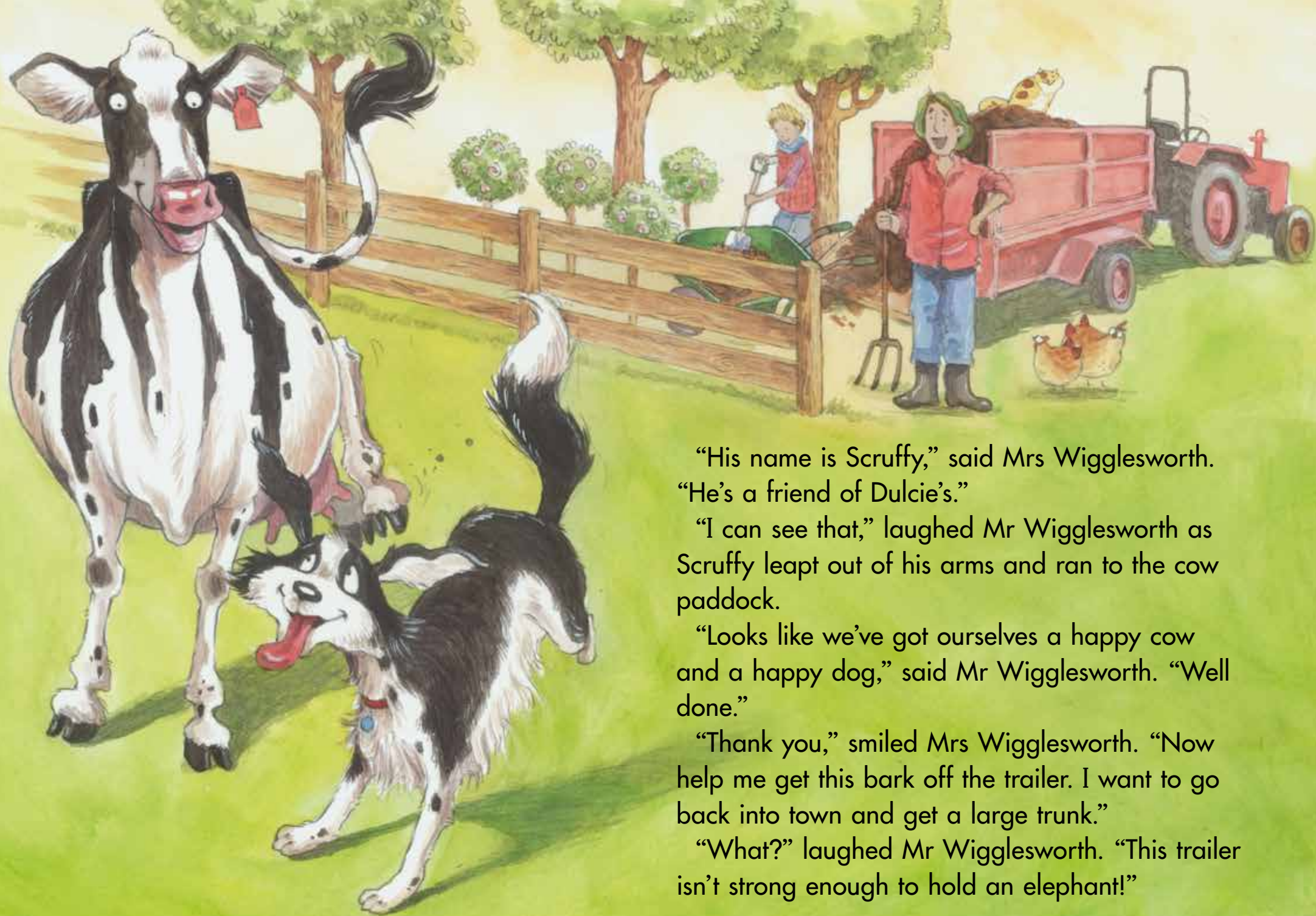
As the tractor got closer, Mr Wigglesworth could see something else on the seat beside her. It was a small, scruffy dog.

“Woof, woof,” it said.

Mrs Wigglesworth stopped the tractor. “I wasn’t sure if you needed tree bark or dog bark,” she laughed, “so I got you both.”

“I thought you would,” laughed Mr Wigglesworth as he lifted the dog off of the tractor.





“His name is Scruffy,” said Mrs Wigglesworth. “He’s a friend of Dulcie’s.”

“I can see that,” laughed Mr Wigglesworth as Scruffy leapt out of his arms and ran to the cow paddock.

“Looks like we’ve got ourselves a happy cow and a happy dog,” said Mr Wigglesworth. “Well done.”

“Thank you,” smiled Mrs Wigglesworth. “Now help me get this bark off the trailer. I want to go back into town and get a large trunk.”

“What?” laughed Mr Wigglesworth. “This trailer isn’t strong enough to hold an elephant!”

Care of Cows

- Cows are grazing animals. They need lots of grass, a good supply of fresh water and shade. A cow can drink 45 litres of water on a normal day!
- Cows need fresh grass from time to time so they are moved to other paddocks. If there is only one paddock, the farmer might divide it with a fence so that the cows eat grass in one section before moving on to longer grass in the other.
- Cows need other cows in their paddock to be happy and feel safe. They are social herd animals and can become upset and feel unsafe if they are on their own.
- When you talk to cows, use a soothing voice.
- You will see cows lying or standing and just chewing, moving their jaws from side to side. This is because cows are ruminant animals. Their stomach has four compartments. They re-chew their feed to digest the fibre in their diet. This is called “chewing the cud”.



Visit kids.spcaeducation.org.nz to learn more about cows