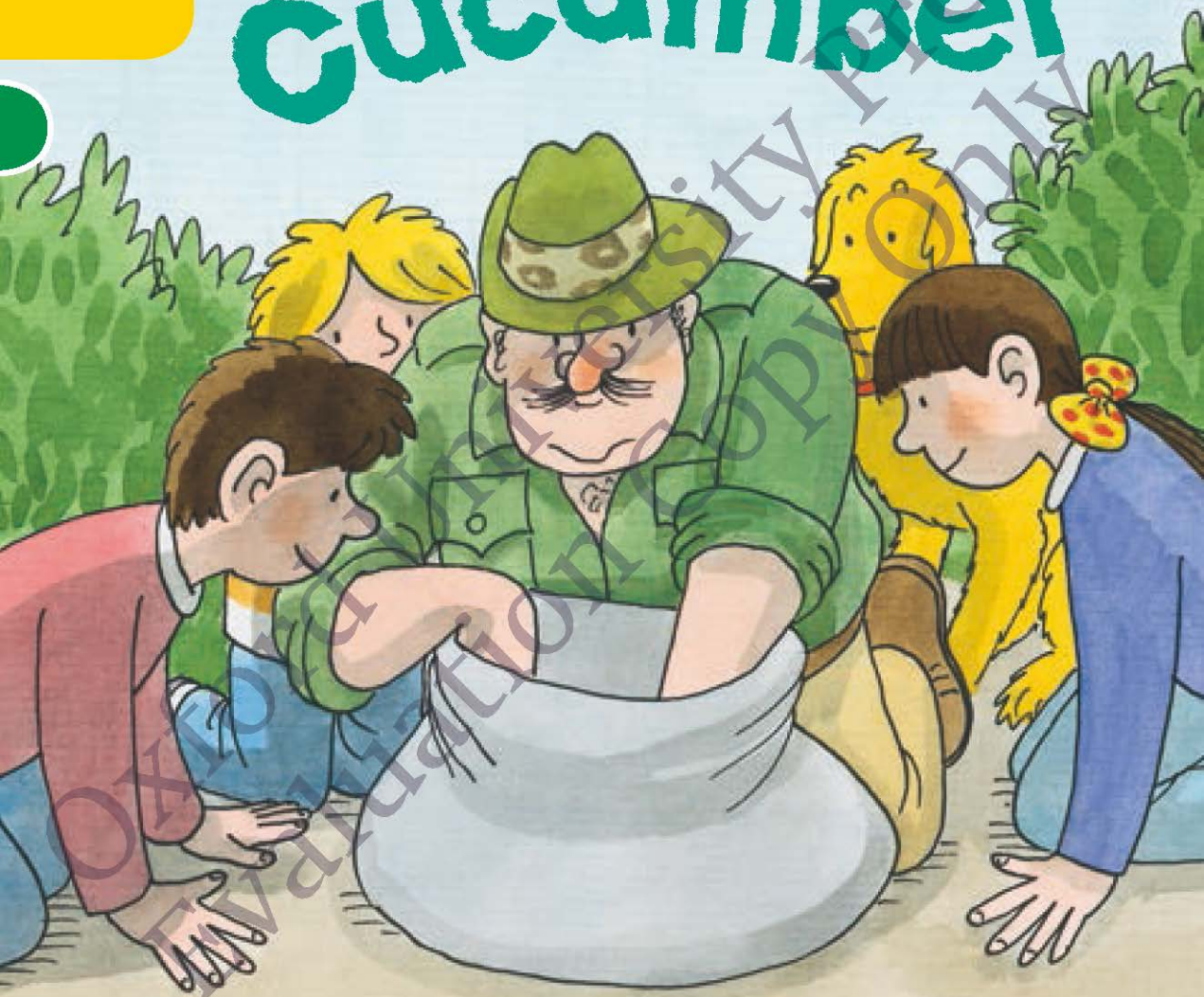


A Pet Called Cucumber





Written by Roderick Hunt and Annemarie Young
Illustrated by Nick Schon, based on the original characters
created by Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta

BEFORE READING

Talk together

- Read the title together. Can your child break *Cucumber* into syllables?
- Read pages 4–5. Ask: *What sort of pet do you think Cucumber will be?*
- Look through the book and talk about the pictures.

About the words in this book

- Your child should be able to sound out and blend some words, which may include:
don't I'm time house
day came make here
very put out letter
- Some words may be more challenging. Encourage or model blending, then read the words below to your child if necessary.

oh Mrs looked
called asked
beautiful gorilla



DURING READING

Enjoy the story together.
If your child needs support to read the story:

- Remind your child to sound out and blend unfamiliar words from left to right.
- Look for compound words, where two words create a bigger word, e.g. *moonlight*.
- If a word is still too tricky, simply say the whole word for your child.
- Re-read sentences to focus on their meaning where necessary.



See the inside back cover
for more ideas.



A letter came from Uncle Max.
He had sent some photographs.



Mum read the letter out.
“I am off exploring again.
Please look after my little pet.”



“What kind of pet?” said Dad.
Mum read on: “She’s called Cucumber,
and she will be easy to feed.”



"I think it's a kitten,"
said Biff.

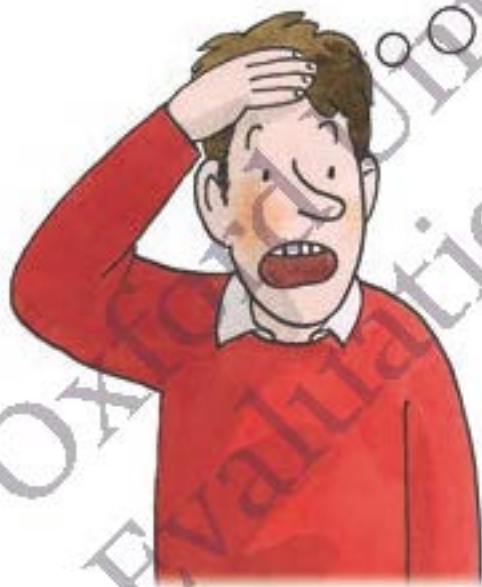


"I think it's a
gerbil," said Chip.





"No, it'll be a puppy,"
said Kipper.



"I bet she's a gorilla,"
groaned Dad.



Just then, Uncle Max arrived.
He came in a jeep full of stuff.
“Did you get my letter?” he called.



He told Dad to carry a tank and
he asked Mum to carry a box.
“I will bring my little pet,” he said.



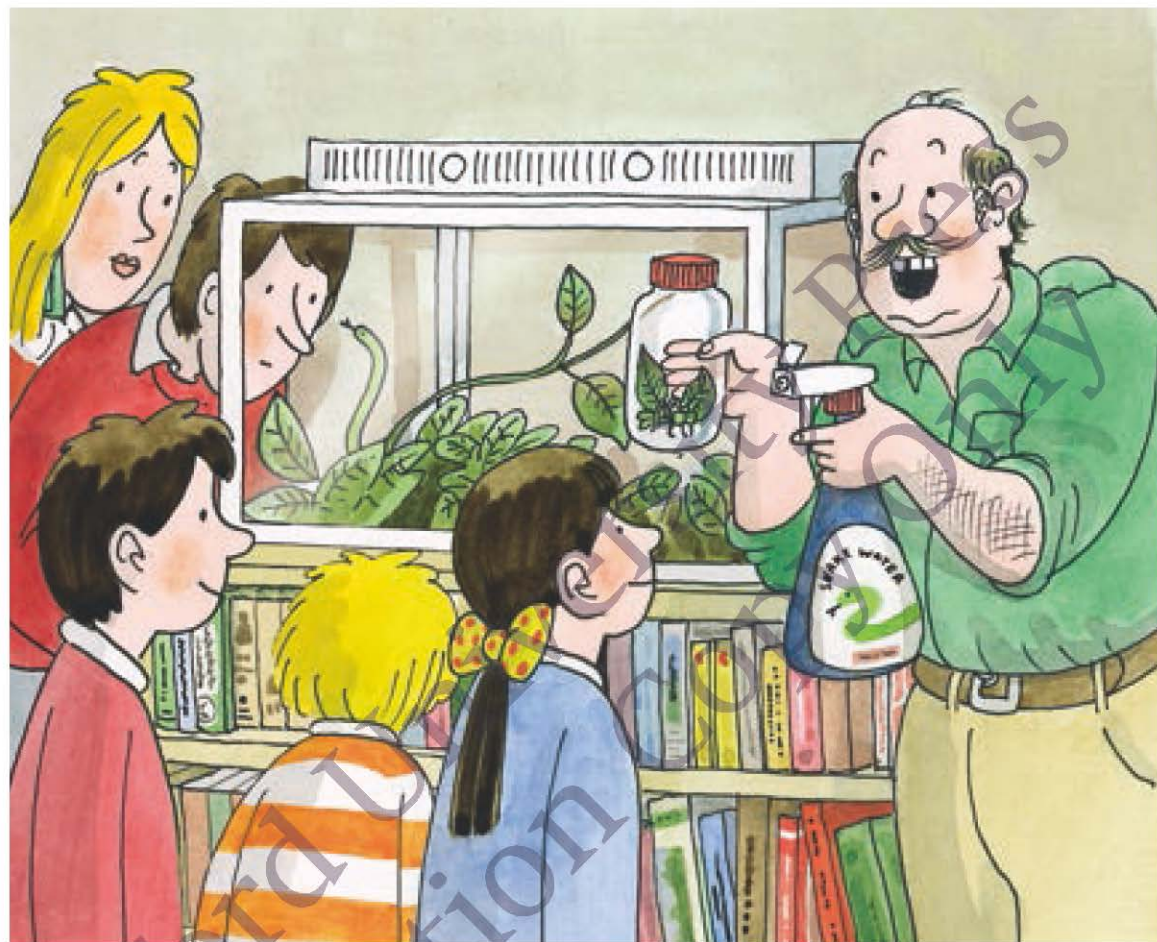
“Here she is,” said Uncle Max.
He put the bag down gently.



“Meet Cucumber,” he said.

“A snake!” said Dad. “I knew it!”

“At least it’s not a gorilla,” said Biff.



“She eats crickets, flies and worms,”
said Uncle Max. “Don’t let her escape.
Oh, and spray her tank with water.”



"Goodbye," he called. "I'll be back in a few weeks' time."

"Oh no!" groaned Dad.



They all looked at Cucumber.
“Now what do we do?” asked Mum.



Anneena had come to play.

“What a beautiful snake,” she said.

“We’ve got a garter snake at home.”



“She’s quite harmless,” said Anneena.
“But don’t handle her too much at
first. Let her settle in.”



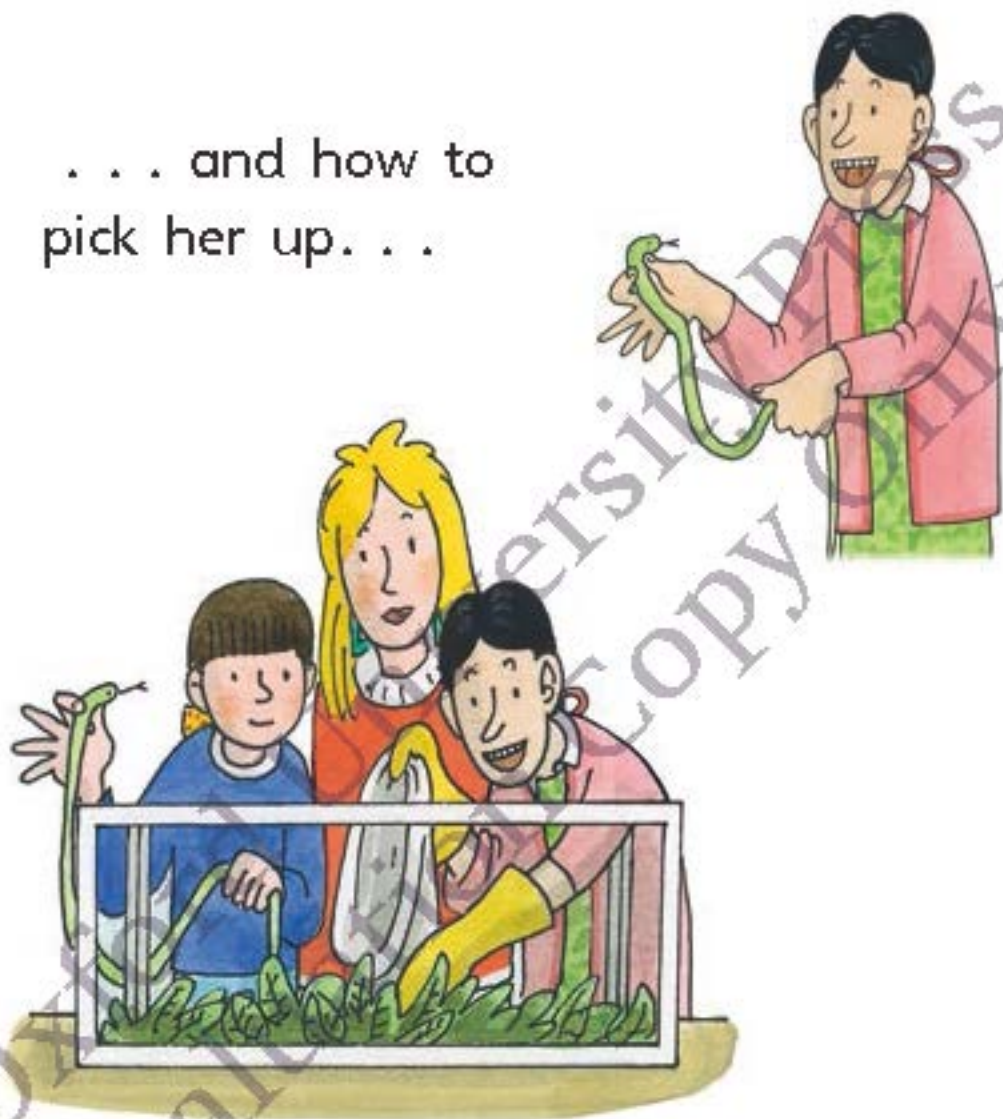
“I’m not sure I like snakes,” said Mum.
“What a shame,” said Anneena. “They
make very good pets.”

Every day,
Anneena came
to help look
after Cucumber.



She told them
how to feed
her. . .

. . . and how to
pick her up. . .



. . . and how to clean out her tank.



In the end, Mum held Cucumber.
She began to like the snake.
“I’m not afraid of her now,” she said.



Biff and Dad were not sure.

"I like snakes," said Dad, "but not in my house!"



Mrs May let the children bring the two snakes to school.



Anneena gave a talk to the class.
“Snakes are amazing creatures.”



A message came from Uncle Max.
“I won’t be back for a year,” he said.
“Why don’t you keep Cucumber?”



“I’m not sure we want to,” said Biff.
“But I have a good idea!”



They gave Cucumber to Anneena.
“Have a real cucumber in return!”
she said.

AFTER READING

- Talk about Uncle Max. Ask: *Do you think he would be good fun? Where do you think he might visit next?*
- Talk about what you have discovered about snakes from the story. Ask: *Do you think snakes make good pets? Why?*
- Talk about the end of the story. Ask: *What does Anneena give to Mum? Why?*

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How to get in touch:

web www.oxfordprimary.co.uk

e-mail schools.enquiries.uk@oup.com

tel. +44 (0) 1336 452610

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