



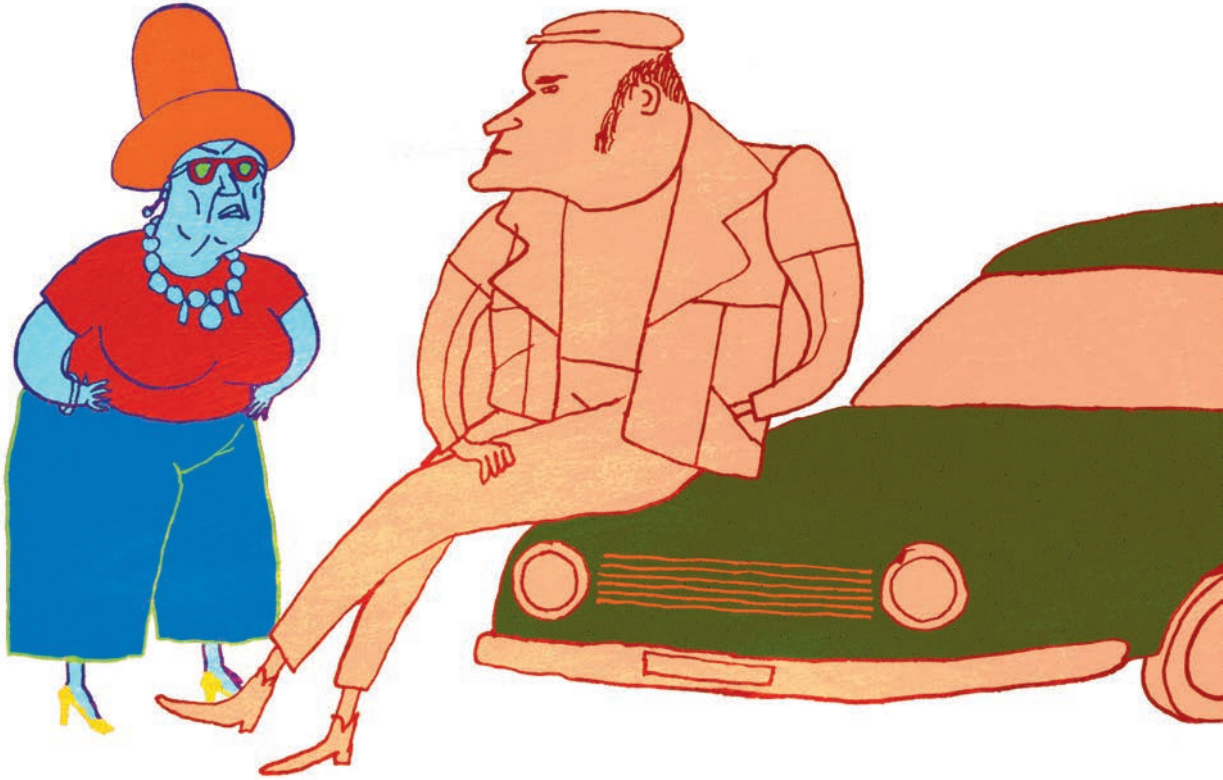
Fly and the zebra

Once upon a time there was a fly with see-through wings and enormous eyes. The fly loved flying and buzzing and enjoyed strolling around on ceilings. But at lunchtime the fly would go for a walk in the garden because walking is good for your health.

Once while on her walk the fly got as far as the road. She knew the Highway Code and that you should only cross the road in a safe place. The fly found a crossing that looked like a zebra because of its white stripes, and looked both ways. No cars were coming. She started to cross. First there was a white stripe. The fly scurried her way over but it still took her a while. After the white stripe there was grey tarmac. The fly was grey as well, so no-one could see she was there. She managed to pitter patter only about twenty centimetres across the tarmac when a car came hurtling towards her. The fly flew up, made a figure-of-eight in the air and landed in the very place where she had taken off. The car had gone by.

As the fly stepped onto the next white stripe, a different car appeared. The driver noticed a teeny-tiny black speck on the whiteness and stopped. The driver, who was wearing a sports cap, got out of his car. He knelt down, propped himself up on his elbows and looked closely at the insect out of one eye.

"Yes, I know," shouted the fly. "Yes I know! It's me, a fly!" She waved a wing at him. "Thanks for stopping!"



"Hello, fly," said the driver. "Great to see you! But why are you walking across the road? Why don't you fly?"

"I'm having a walk," the fly replied, "because it's good for your health. When you're flying you can't walk."

"I see," said the driver and stood up. "Then I shall wait until you get to the other side." He sat on his car bonnet and began to whistle.

The white zebra stripe ended and the fly moved onto tarmac again. Now no-one could see her. Another car came up behind the first and stopped. A lady in a red top climbed out. She approached the first car and stood in front of the man, her hands on her hips.

"Excuse me, but what are you doing?" she asked crossly.

The man stopped whistling and said, "I'm whistling."
„You're whistling? In the middle of the street! Why have you parked on the road?" „I haven't parked anywhere. I'm letting a pedestrian cross the road."

"What pedestrian? There's no-one there."

"Just a sec, just a sec," said the driver, adjusting his cap.

"What do you mean, there's no-one there? Have a closer look!"

The woman went up to the zebra crossing but could not see the fly. "Where's this pedestrian then?" she asked.

The driver also moved closer and studied the ground. "Here!" he said. "Come here!" He pointed to the ground, "Can you see her now?"

The lady leant down with her hands on her knees and eyed the ground closely. She suddenly shrieked and clapped her hand over her mouth. "Oh my word! There IS a pedestrian."



"Did you know, fly," she asked, "that no-one can see you at all on the grey tarmac?"

"Yes, I know," the fly replied. "I can't help being tarmac-coloured."

"You could fly across the road, you have wings."

"You don't fly over pedestrian crossings," replied the fly. "If you did, they wouldn't be pedestrian crossings any more."

"Aren't you scared of being run over?"

"I am indeed."

"Perhaps you could wear a hi-viz?"

"The shops don't sell them in my size."



The lady stood up. More cars had come to a stop behind the first two; there were car horns tooting and drivers getting out.

"What's going on here?" people asked randomly. "Why have you closed the road?"

"The road isn't closed," said sports-cap driver. "We're just letting a pedestrian cross."

"There aren't any pedestrians," replied the new drivers angrily. But just then the fly reached the next white stripe and everyone could see her.

"Oh, there IS a pedestrian!" exclaimed the new drivers in surprise.

"How odd that the fly is walking across the road instead of flying."

"There's nothing odd about it," argued the sports-cap driver.

"Walking is good for your health."

"Walking is good for your health?!" marvelled the drivers, who were used to sitting in their cars. "But we thought it was boring."

"How's about we give it another go?" one man suggested. He went for a little wander around the cars and began to laugh. "Hey, it really is good for your health!" he said. "I'm going to go round again!"

At that, all the drivers began walking around the cars. The fly reached the other side of the road, went home and flew up to the ceiling, buzzing away. She rubbed her legs together and looked behind her through the window. In the street below the drivers were walking round the cars as before and laughing like children. They shook hands with each other and someone exclaimed, "And isn't the fresh air wonderful!"

The Candymonster

Once upon a time there was a candymonster. He was as big as several humans and looked a bit like a crocodile and a bit like a kangaroo, but he was very friendly and could talk like humans do. The candymonster's head was raspberry red, his chest banana yellow, his body chocolate brown and his tail kiwi-fruit green. The candy monster ate nothing but candy. When he roared, a chocolatey-coconut smell spread from his mouth for a distance of several metres.

The candy monster moved into a blue building on a street corner, into a flat neighbouring a dentist. Once, as he was going down the stairs, he met the lady from the third floor on her way up. The lady saw the monster, screamed in terror, ran away and phoned the police. Soon a car with flashing lights pulled up in front of the building. The police rang the candymonster's doorbell. The candymonster opened the door and smiled.

"Hello," he said in a friendly way.

"Hello there," said the police. "What's going on here then?"

The candymonster looked at the stairs. "Nothing," he said.

"So, there's nothing going on here then, is there?" the police replied in annoyance. "The residents have complained that they're afraid to use the stairway."

"Why?"

"Because they're scared of you."

"Oh!" exclaimed the candymonster. "There's really no need to be scared of me. I'm very good-natured."

The police discussed something between themselves. "Well, just watch yourself anyhow!" they said and left.

The candymonster rang the neighbour's doorbell. The neighbour – the dentist – a slender woman with curly hair, opened the door and, startled, clapped her hand to her mouth. "Help!" she whispered on seeing the monster. "Help!"

"Please don't be frightened," said the candymonster, "let's be friends. I'm a candymonster."

"I'm a dentist," whispered the dentist and shook the monster's large, chocolate-coloured paw.

"I never knew monsters could be so friendly," she said. The candymonster blushed so much that his red head turned violet.

"Oh, you're too kind!" he exclaimed. "You really are."

"There's a sweet smell coming from your mouth," said the dentist. "Could you tell me what you eat?"

"Candy, just candy."

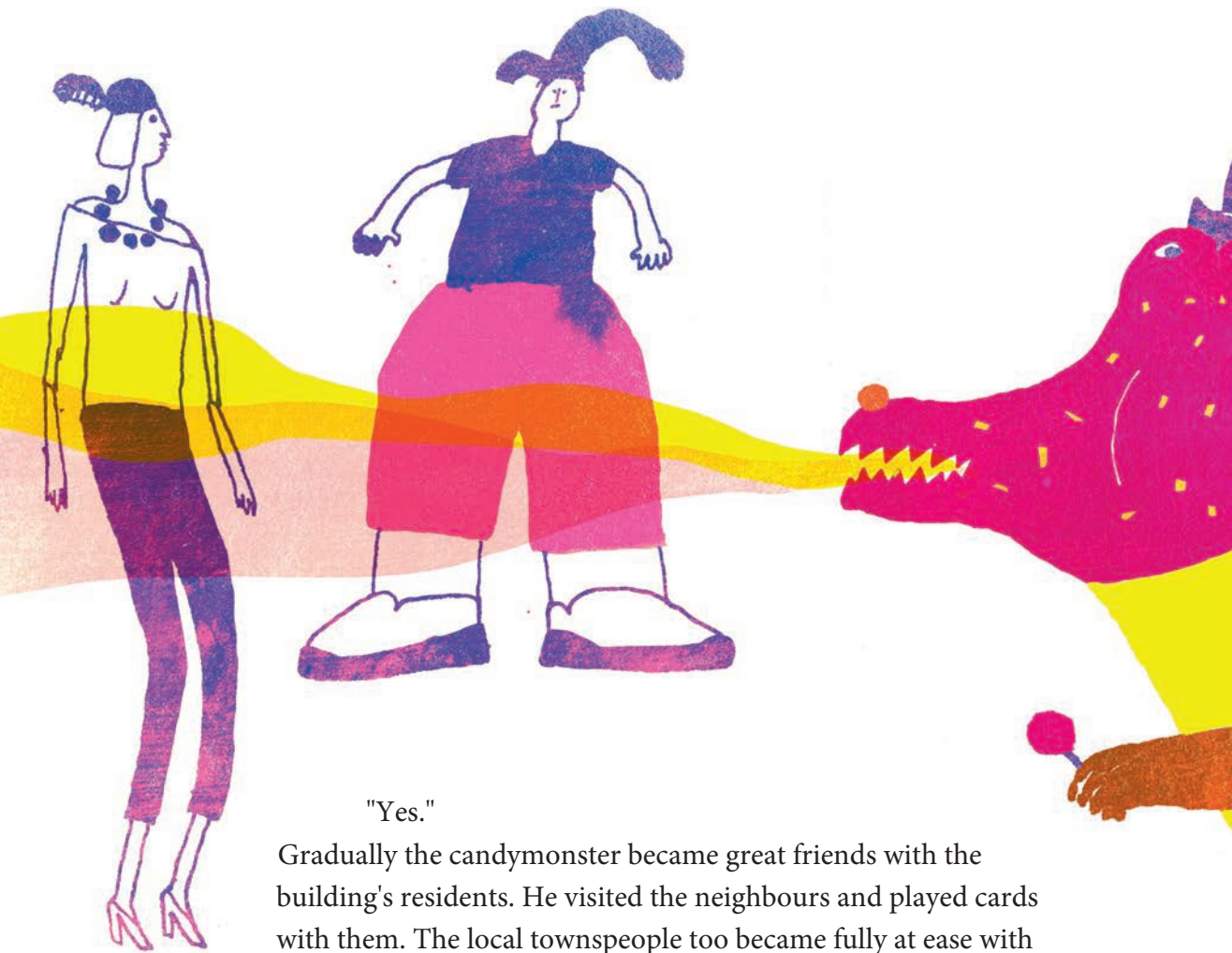
The dentist put on her most serious expression. "If you eat nothing but candy you'll ruin your teeth," she said. "Bacteria will move right on in and start making holes in them. Open your mouth please!"

The candymonster opened his mouth and a chocolatey scent immediately filled the stairway. The dentist put her own head between the large jaws. "Hmm, hmmm," she muttered and took her head back out. "Most odd."

"What's odd?" asked the candymonster.

"Strangely, all your teeth are healthy."

"What, all 132 of them?" the candymonster asked.



"Yes."

Gradually the candymonster became great friends with the building's residents. He visited the neighbours and played cards with them. The local townspeople too became fully at ease with him being around. No-one was scared of him because he was always polite and never roared.

Well, he DID roar once. It was when he was coming out of the candy shop and cut his toe on a lamp-post.

"ROOOOOOOAAAARRRRRR!" roared the candymonster.

The people heard and were startled. A chocolaty, cononutty, banana-ey smell blew out of the candymonster's mouth and clouded the windows of the buildings nearby. When the people smelt the lovely smell, they plucked up courage and gathered round the candymonster.

"He's not really a monster, he's a monster-shaped marshmallow!" someone shouted and the people tried to bite the candymonster.



"Get off!" yelled the candymonster with a sweep of his tail that knocked one man over. "I'm not a marshmallow. I really am a monster. A candymonster!"

"Are you made of chocolate?" the people asked and stroked the brown part of the candymonster's body.

"I'm not made of chocolate!" the candymonster exclaimed.

"We think you are!"

"Well I'm not!" The candymonster tried to get away but the people were crowded round him too tightly.

"So how come you smell like you do?"

"Because I eat loads of candy. Leave me alone!"

Most of the people left the candymonster alone. The stupider ones tried to nibble the scales on his tail because they thought that his tail was made of kiwi-flavoured toffee. Their teeth rasped against the tail scales.

"Aren't your teeth hurting?" the candymonster asked.

"Yes," the stupid people replied, "but you smell so appetising that we can't stop nibbling you."

"You're nibbling my scales."

"Just let us nibble."

The stupid people ruined their teeth and had to go to the dentist's. When one of them bumped into the candymonster on the stairs, he said, "It's your fault that our teeth are ruined!"

The dentist heard him and exclaimed, "It's not the candymonster's fault at all! People's teeth are their own responsibility!"