

GRUNT

SCAREDY?
MONSTERS?

THE MONSTER WHO WOULDN'T EAT HIS VEGETABLES



Michael Salmon

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WHO WOULDN'T EAT HIS VEGETABLES



Written and illustrated by Michael Salmon



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The most important thing in Grunt's life was his train set. He was going to be an engine driver when he grew up.

Grunt was very excited when his father took him to town on the train. As soon as he got home, he relived each moment — on his own railway.

Grunt collected every engine model he could find. He had all the special equipment, such as signal boxes, tunnels, level crossings, water towers and turntables.



Grunt laid the railway track all round the house.
His parents didn't mind.
They were delighted that their son
had such an interesting hobby.

Grunt cut little tunnels through the doors
and the lounge furniture.
He sawed the legs off the fish tank stand,
so that his passengers could have a sea-side view.

When Bert the dog and Jake the cat
got in the way, Grunt blew the whistle.

'Grunt! Stop the train. Dinner's ready!'
his mother called from the kitchen.
'Please take off your cap and sit up.'



Grunt didn't like dinner-time.
'Yuk! Not vegetables *again!*' he moaned,
when Mrs Grunt served the food.
'They're good for you,' she said,
as she spooned heaps of potato, carrots,
peas and spinach onto his plate.

'Eat them all up!' said Mr Grunt sternly.

Grunt hated vegetables.
He didn't understand why
those soft, mushy things
had ever been invented.
He was happy to eat cakes, cookies,
ice cream and candy for every meal.
But his parents had other ideas.



While they weren't looking,
Grunt loaded his knife with peas,
and quickly shunted them under the table-cloth.
Then he leant on them — *squelch*.

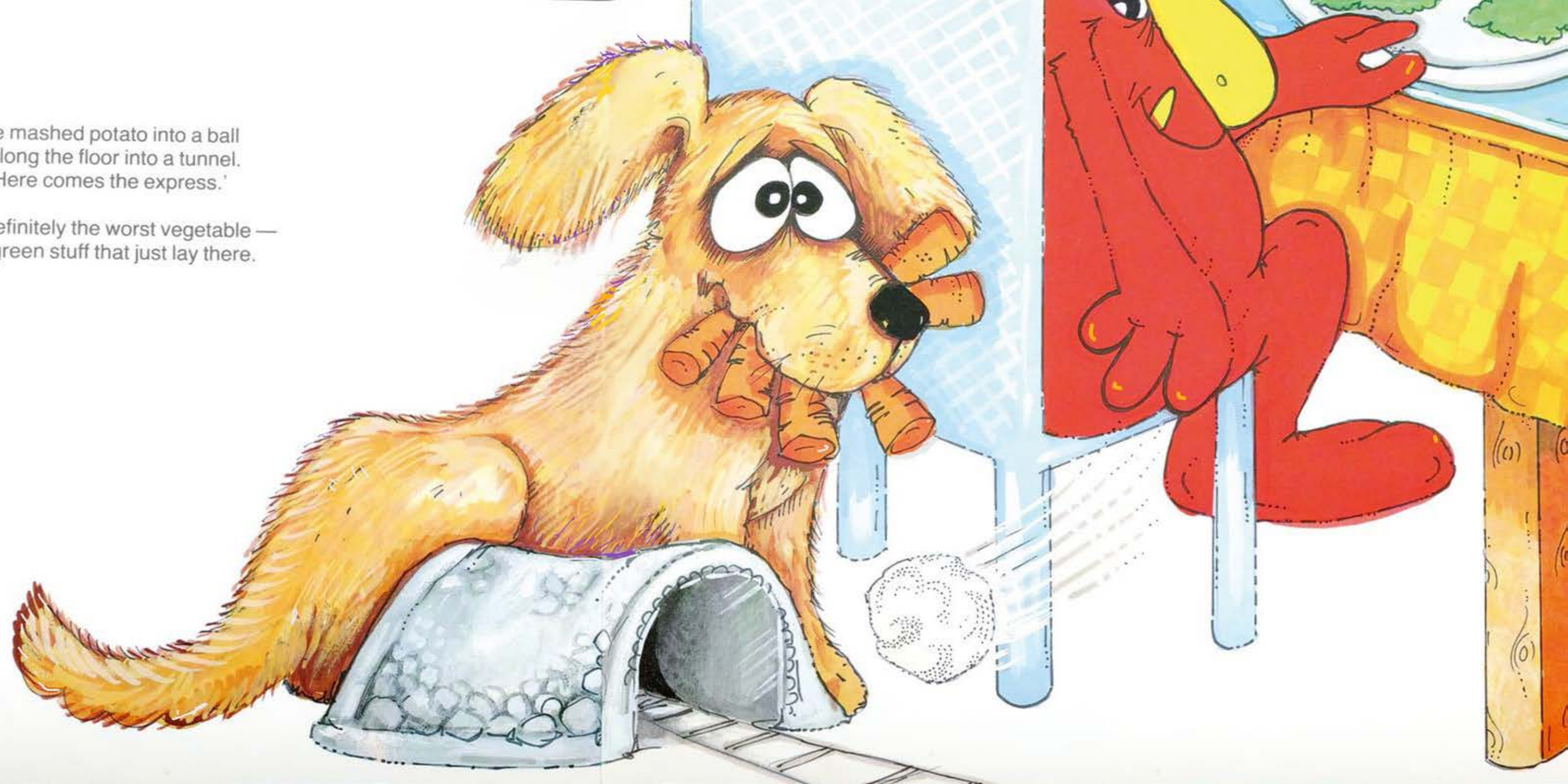
Nobody noticed.

His parents were still talking,
so Grunt slid the carrots off his plate.
Bert was sitting next to his chair.
'Here comes the train, into the station,'
whispered Grunt.
'Choo, choo, choo!'
And he shoved the carrots into Bert's mouth.



Grunt rolled the mashed potato into a ball and bowled it along the floor into a tunnel. 'Whoo, whoo! Here comes the express.'

Spinach was definitely the worst vegetable — squishy, limp, green stuff that just lay there.



Grunt scooped it up and flicked it
over his shoulder towards the pot plant.
But the soggy, green mess
hit Jake the cat in the face.

'Miaow!'

The startled cat ran out of the room.

'Look, Dear, he's eaten all his vegetables!'
said Mrs Grunt, with a smile.

Unfortunately for Grunt,
Mr Grunt saw the trail of spinach on the floor.



Grunt was sent to his bedroom in disgrace. 'I warned you! This time you're not allowed to play trains for a whole week!' said his father, as he closed the door.

Grunt opened his album and looked at his train photographs. There were pictures of all the trains he had ever ridden on. He dreamt he was the engine driver of an old steam train. The engineer shovelled the coal as they puffed into the station.

Grunt's mother was worried. 'It's unlike a young monster not to eat his vegetables. He won't grow.'



Mr Grunt agreed.
'We'll take him to the doctor.
Perhaps he'll know what to do.'

The Doctor examined Grunt carefully.
He looked down his throat,
and asked him to say: 'Aaaah!'
'Choo, choo!' said Grunt dreamily.

The Doctor shook his head.
'It's a serious case of Train Fever,' he said,
and he gave Mrs Grunt some pills for her son.



The pills made Grunt very hungry.
His mother tried to disguise the vegetables.
She baked him a brussel sprout cake,
with his favourite chocolate icing,
and made him a bean-and-caramel milkshake.

Grunt wasn't fooled.

Mrs Grunt even built a special railway bridge
to the table.
But when Grunt's special dinner arrived by train,
the carriages left still filled with vegetables.



Grunt's parents were desperate.
Nothing they could do
would make him eat vegetables.

At last Mr Grunt had an idea
that he was sure would work.
He whispered his plan to Mrs Grunt.

Grunt knew something was up.

His mother spent all afternoon cooking busily.
Grunt peeped around the kitchen door,
and smelt vegetables *again*.
'Won't they ever learn?' he wondered.

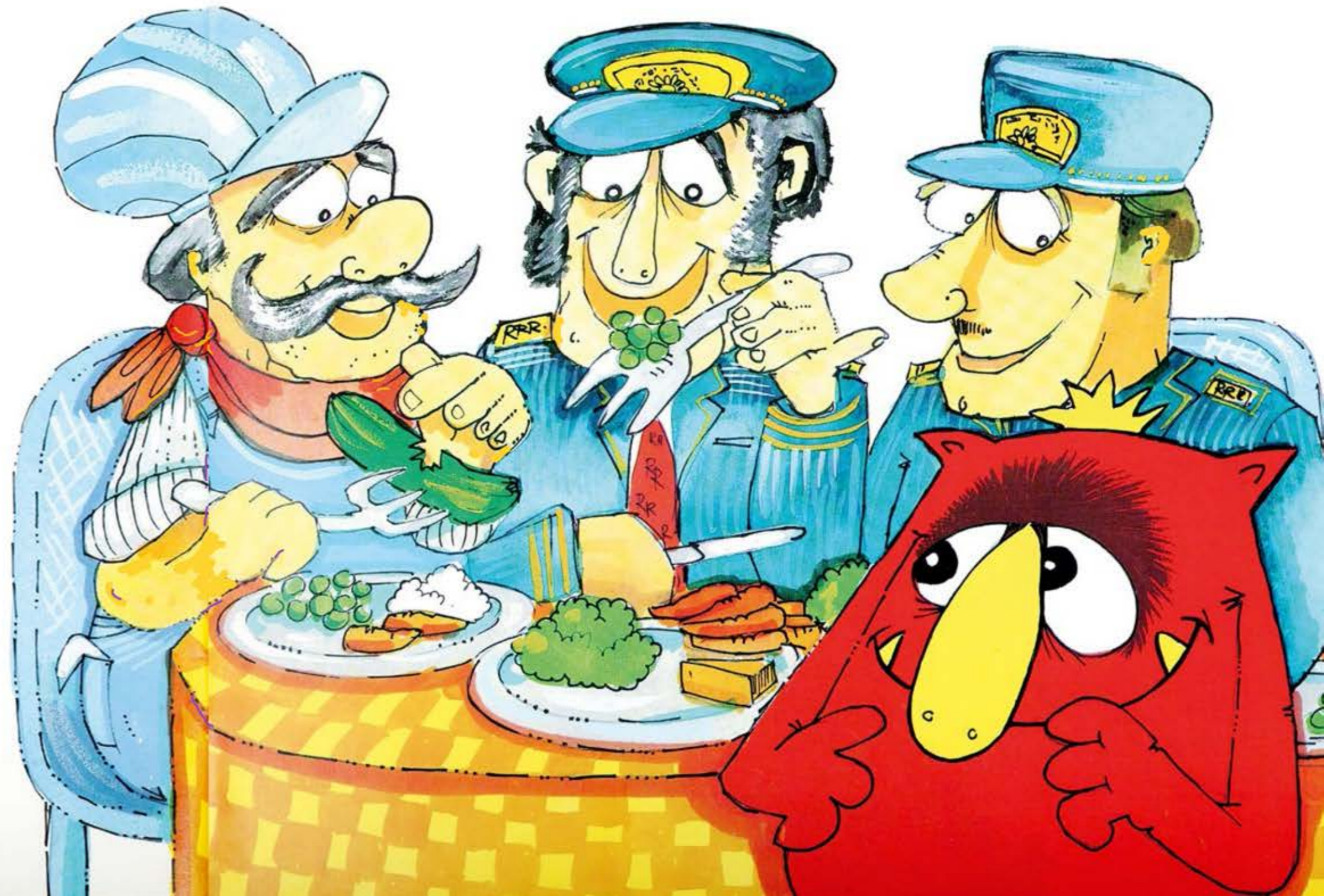
When his mother finally called him for dinner,
as usual, Grunt heard voices in the dining-room.
He opened the door,
and got the biggest surprise of his life.



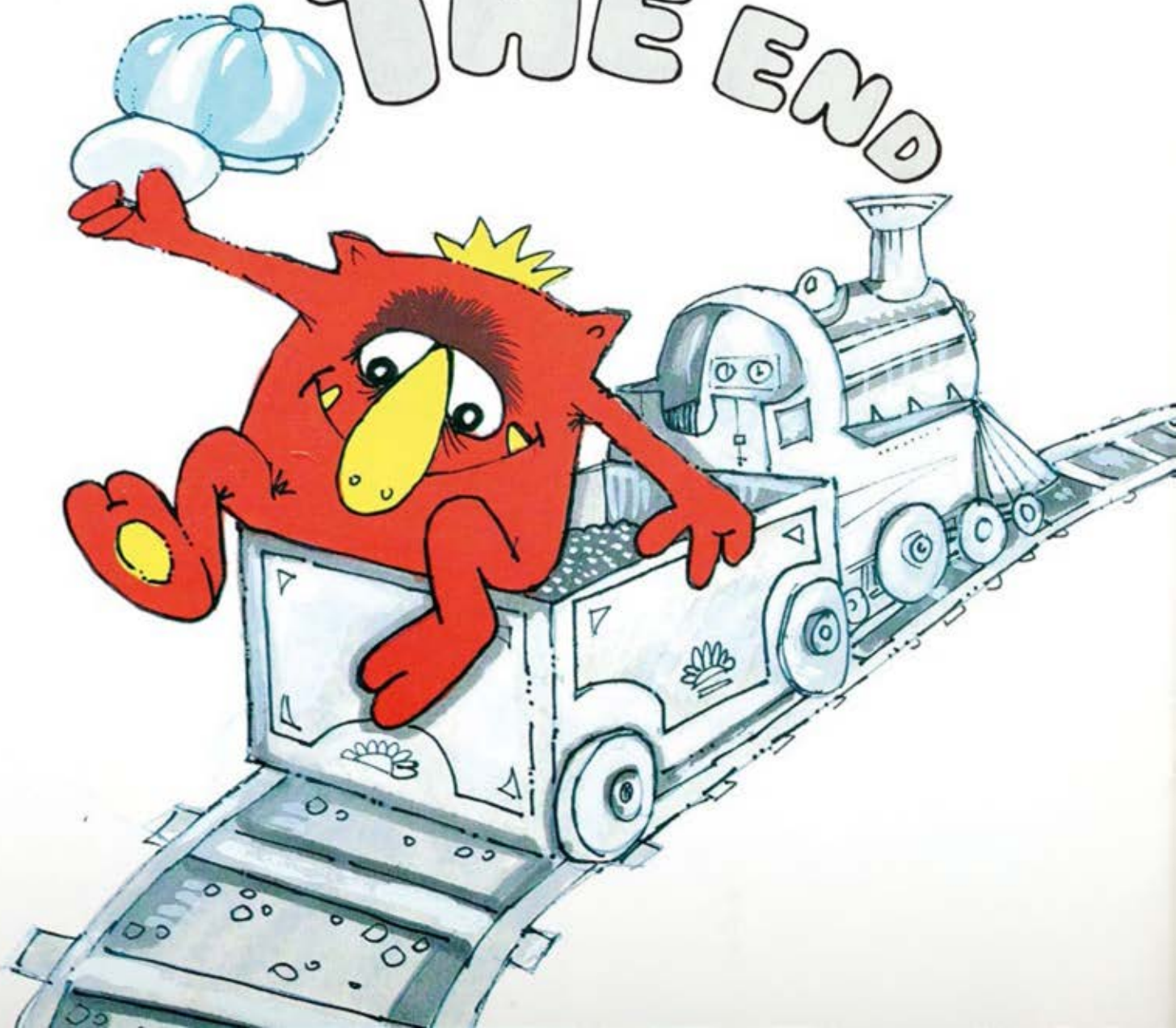
There, sitting up at the table,
eating plates of vegetables, were:
the Engine Driver,
the Conductor,
and the Station Master
from his local railway.

'Railwaymen always eat their vegetables,'
said the Engine Driver, as he chewed a zucchini.
'Come and sit down here, with us.'

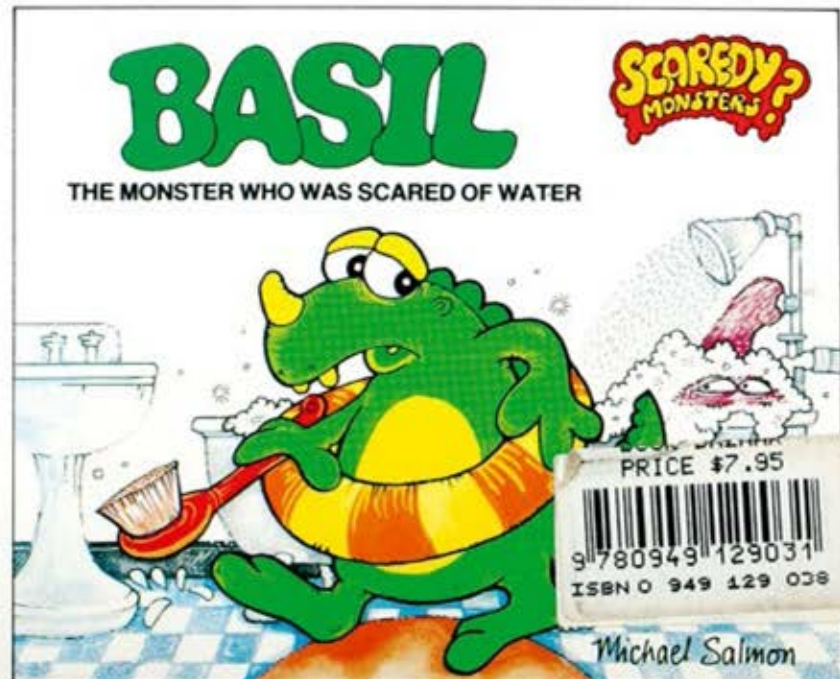
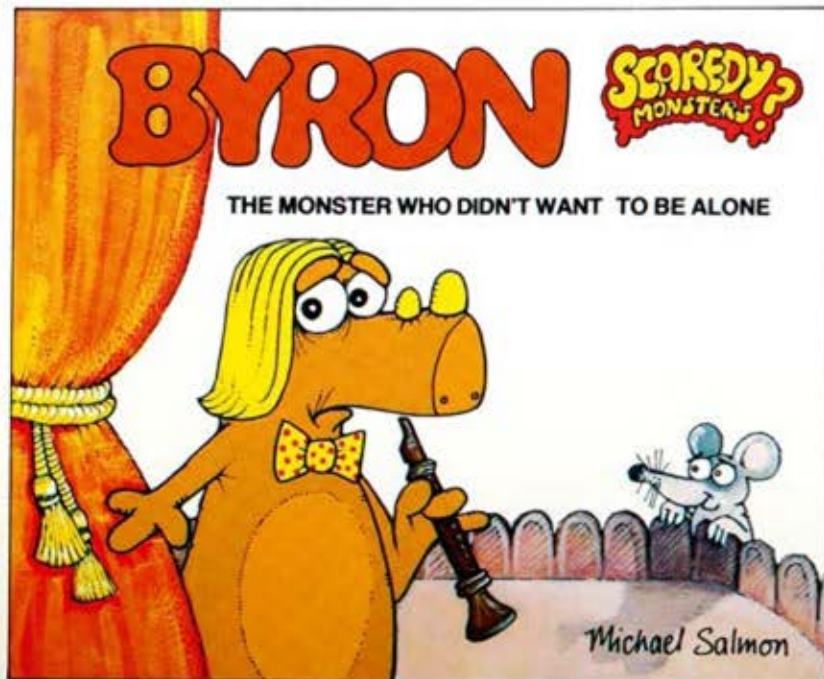
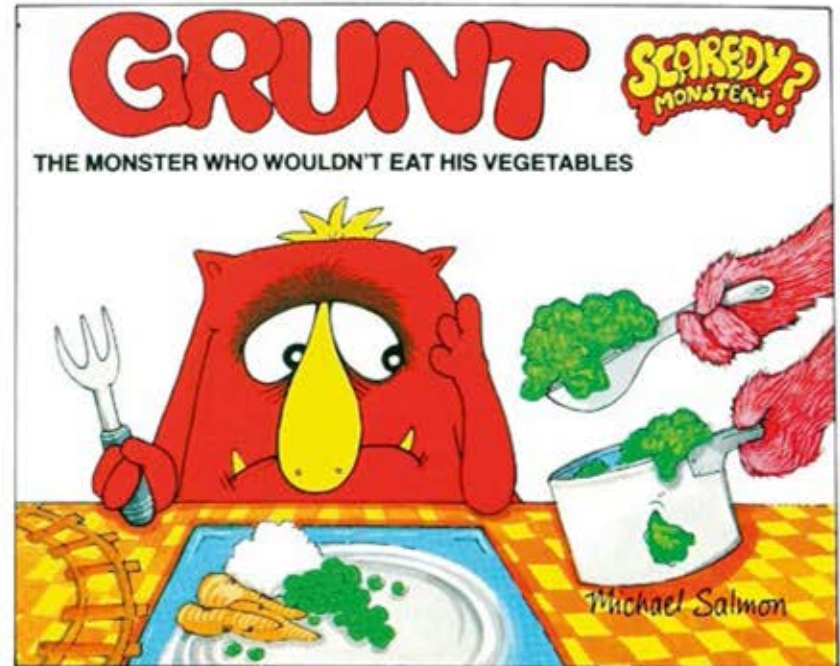
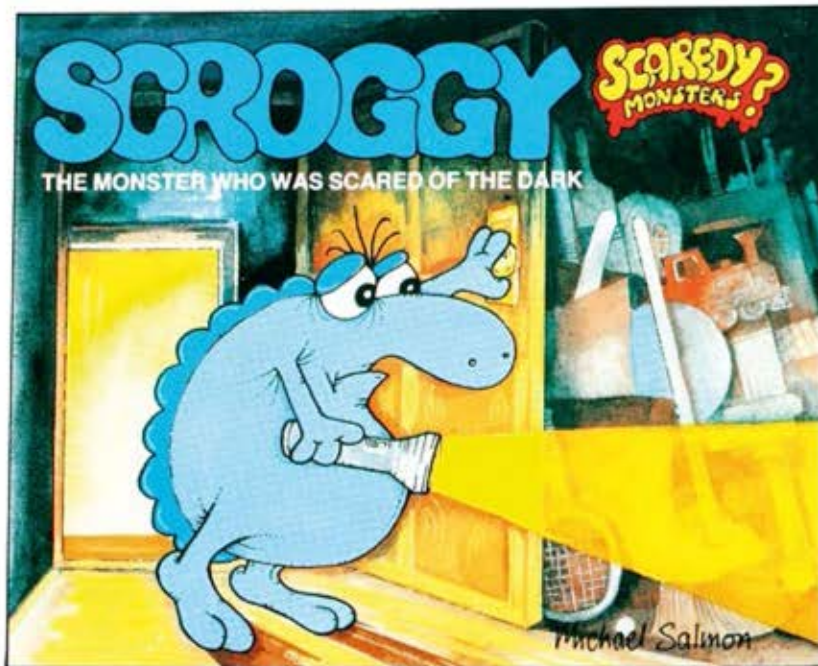
For the first time ever,
Grunt ate all his dinner!



THE END



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