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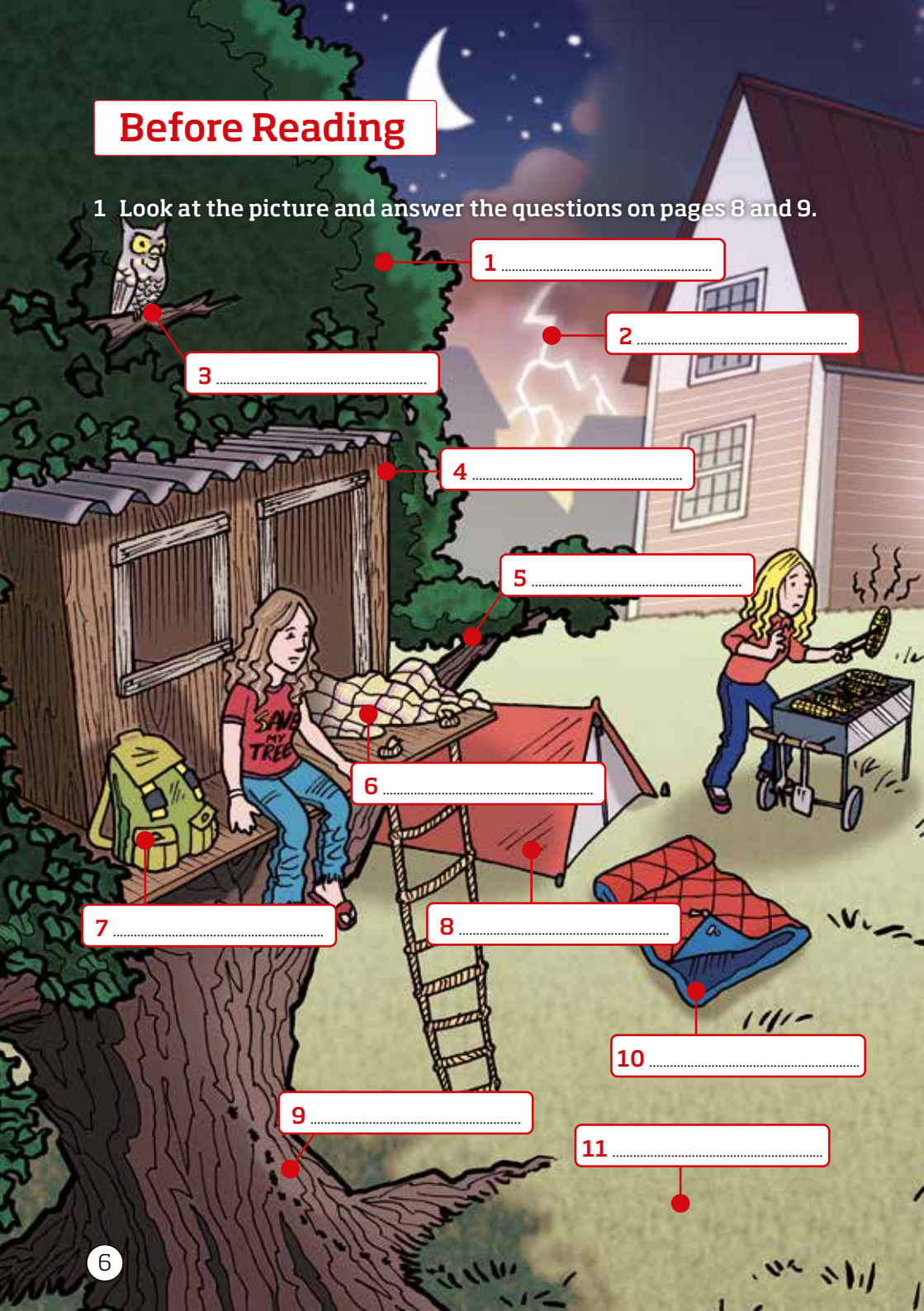
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**Hi, I'm Holly.
In this book, I try
to save something. What is it?
Look through the pages
and find out.**



Before Reading

1 Look at the picture and answer the questions on pages 8 and 9.



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2

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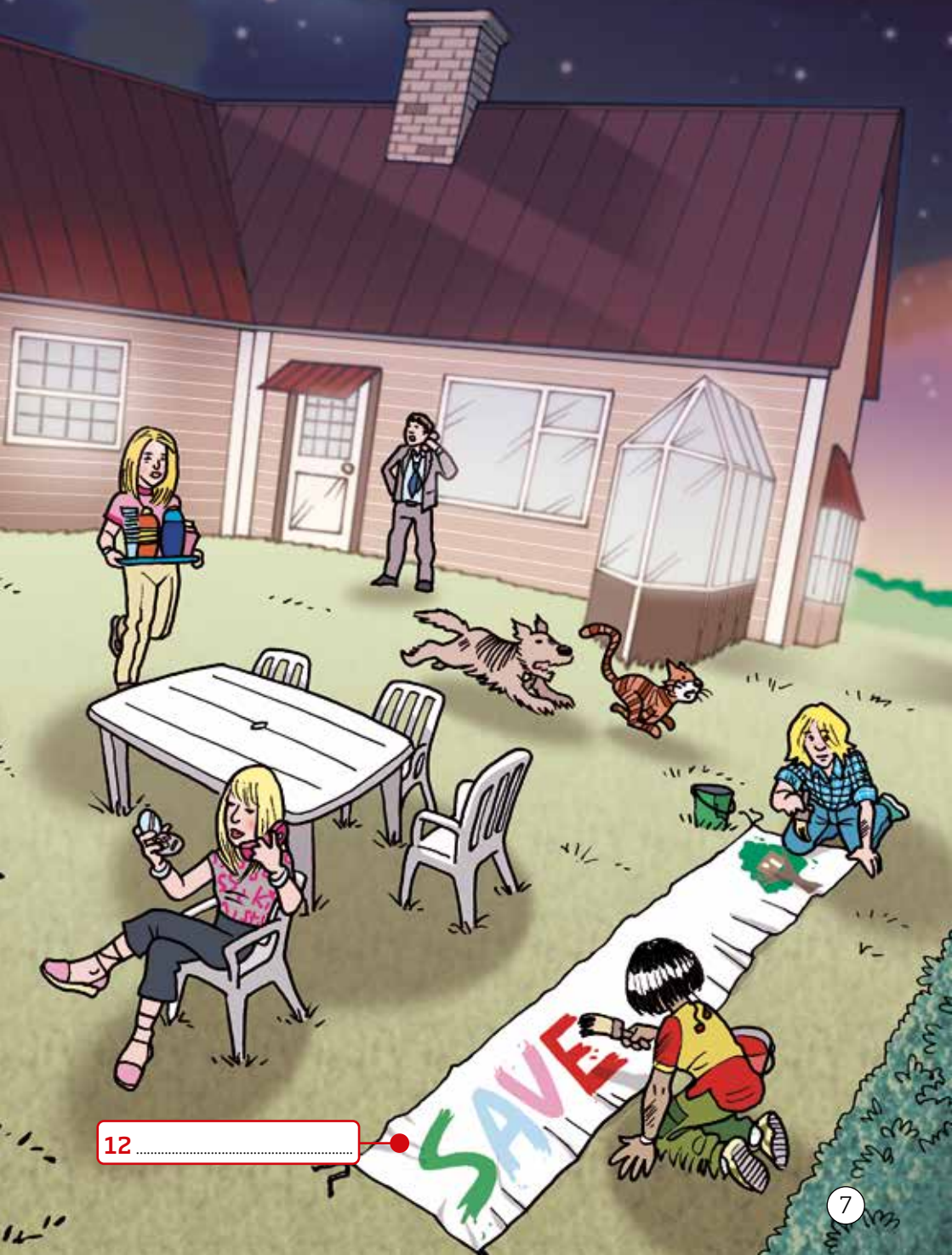
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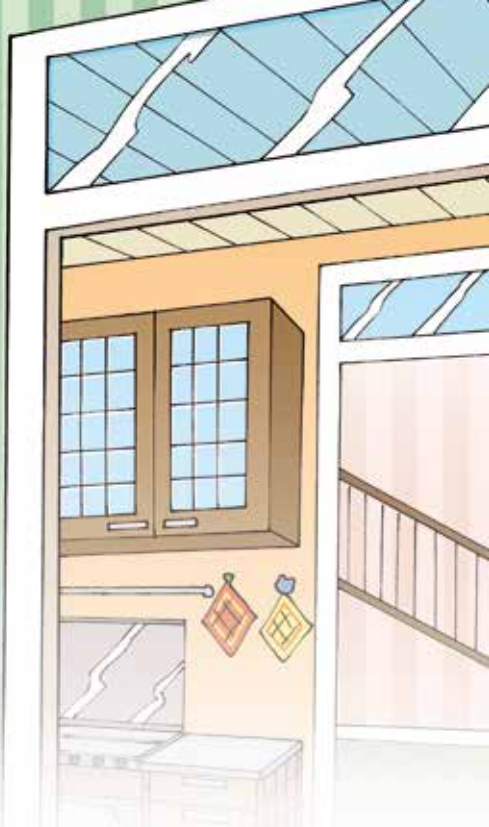
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9

11







 'That is so unfair!'
Holly angrily threw down her napkin • and jumped up from the table.
'Sit down and finish your dinner,' her mother said.
'No way!' • said Holly. Her face was red, her eyes flashing.
'Don't talk to your mother like that,' said her father.
He was angry, too.
Her sister Sophie looked down at her plate and smiled a secret little smile.
Holly walked towards the door.
Her father stood up.
'Where are you going?' he asked.
Holly looked back from the open door.
'I'm leaving.'
'What do you mean, *leaving*?'
'I'm not staying here another minute. I'm leaving home!'
And with that, Holly walked quickly out of the conservatory • and noisily shut the door behind her.

‘Come back in here!’ her father shouted. But Holly didn’t come back. They heard her footsteps banging up the stairs.

‘This is ridiculous!’ he said loudly.

Holly’s father was very red in the face.

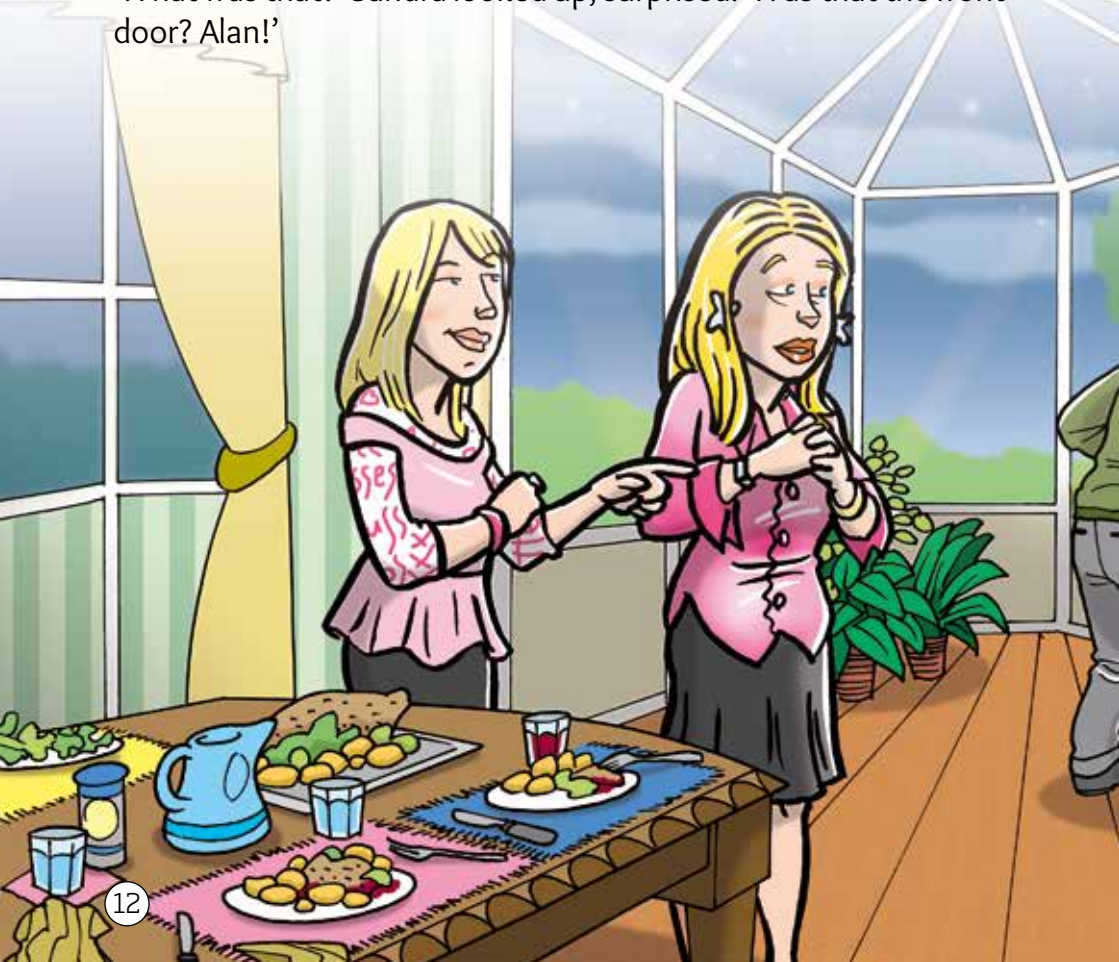
‘She’s only thirteen years old!’ he said, picking up his knife and fork.

‘You know what she’s like,’ Sophie said, playing with her long blond hair. ‘She’s just protesting. She always has to protest about something.’

‘Leaving home!’ her father said, shaking his head. ‘Don’t worry, Alan,’ Holly’s mother Sandra said. ‘Holly isn’t going anywhere.’

And then they heard a door slam.

‘What was that?’ Sandra looked up, surprised. ‘Was that the front door? Alan!’



All three stood up. Alan rushed to the door, but Sophie stopped him. 'Relax, Dad,' she said. 'Look.'

Sophie pointed to the window. They saw Holly walking across the grass to the old oak tree at the end of the garden. She was carrying a rucksack. Her dog Eco was running along beside her. 'What on earth is that girl doing?' her father asked. His face was only pink now, but he was still very annoyed.

Holly stopped at the bottom of the tree. She looked back at the house, picked up Eco, then waved at her family.



It all started four hours earlier. It was a Friday afternoon in July, the last day of term. The school holidays were starting. Six weeks of freedom! Holly was walking home with Grace in the hot sun. Holly loved sunny days, but they also made her feel nervous. She always thought, *Is this just a nice day, or is it global warming?* But today, she was happy and laughing, and full of plans for the holidays, like going to the seaside, hanging out in the park, going to the cinema, and just lying in bed in the morning, doing nothing. But when they were walking across the green, Holly saw a sign.



‘Hey, look at this,’ said Holly. Grace read the sign.

25 NEW HOUSES

Building to start 12 August

‘That’s awful’,’ said Grace. She didn’t really think it was awful, but she knew Holly did, and she didn’t want to annoy her friend.

‘It’s worse than awful,’ said Holly. ‘It’s terrible. It’s a disaster!’

Holly looked around her.

‘This is happening all the time. They’re going to fill up every piece of land with these stupid new homes. Then what are we going to do? We need trees and plants to make oxygen. Where are the birds and animals going to go? We need Nature!’



When Holly got home, her mother was putting away the shopping. There were supermarket bags all over the table and on the floor. Her dog Eco was sleeping under the table.

‘Did you have a nice day, honey?’ her mother asked. Holly’s mother was pretty, and Holly looked like her. But Holly didn’t think so. She didn’t like her mother’s nice clothes and make-up. She preferred her T-shirts and patched jeans.

Holly threw herself down on a chair and explained about the new houses. Then she looked at the shopping bags.

‘Look at all that plastic!’

And then she studied her mother’s shopping. Holly always checked that the vegetables were organic (she never ate meat) and the coffee and chocolate were Fair Trade.



Holly was examining a tub of yoghurt when Sophie walked in.
'Hi!'

'Hi,' said their mother.

Holly looked up but didn't say anything. Her sister really annoyed her. The world was in danger, but all Sophie ever thought about were new clothes, new earrings, and new boyfriends.

'What do you think, Mum?' Sophie asked. Her mother sniffed the air.

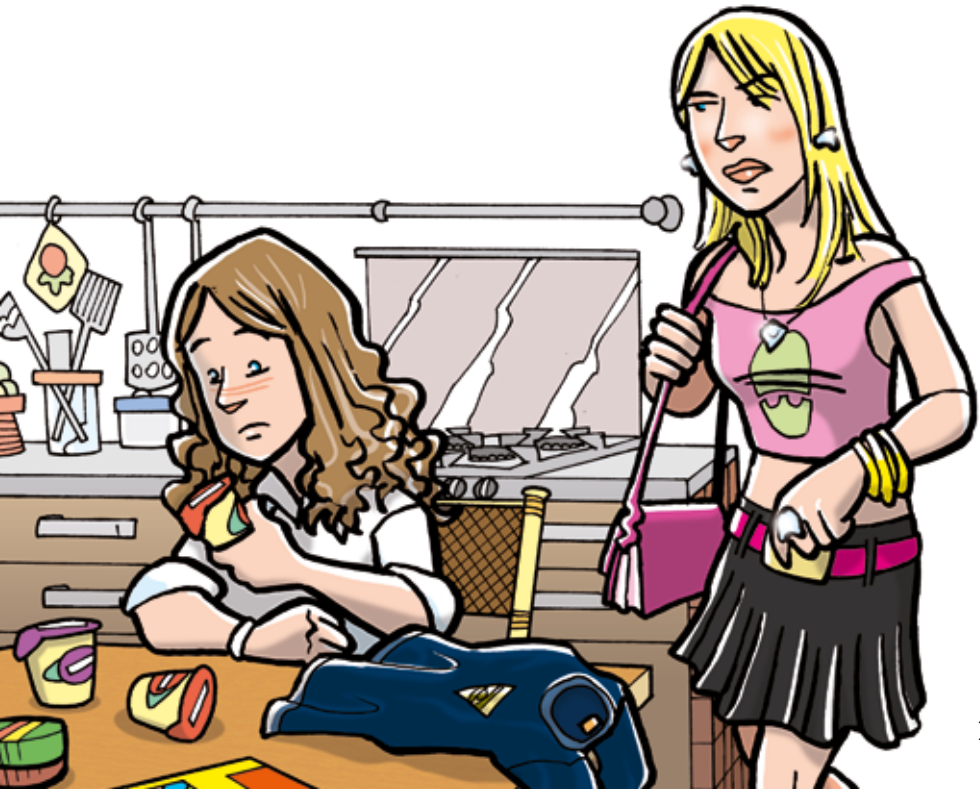
'Is that a new perfume? It's lovely,' she said.


'It smells like old socks,' said Holly. Then she picked up a chicken.

'Hey, this isn't organic. Do you know what they do to these chickens?'

'Oh, get a life', Holly,' said Sophie. 'You don't even eat chicken. Think about something else for a change.'

'This is important!' said Holly. 'Not like your stupid perfume!'



 Later, at dinner, with the cooked chicken on the table, Holly was talking about cars. In fact, she was talking about the two cars her parents had. Her mother's small one for driving around town, and her father's huge four-wheel drive. She hated her father's car. It used too much petrol. It made too much noise. And it caused too much pollution.

'You have to change it, Dad,' Holly said. 'It's destroying the environment.'

'You don't complain when Dad gives you a lift,' said Sophie. Holly gave her sister a horrible look.

'Actually,' said her father, 'I am thinking of changing my car.'

'Really?' asked Holly.

'Yes,' he said. 'I'm tired of commuting to work every day. I spoke to my manager last week, and he said I can work from home if I want to.'

'That's great,' said Holly.

Her father looked quickly at his wife, then decided to continue.

'That means I'm going to need an office.'

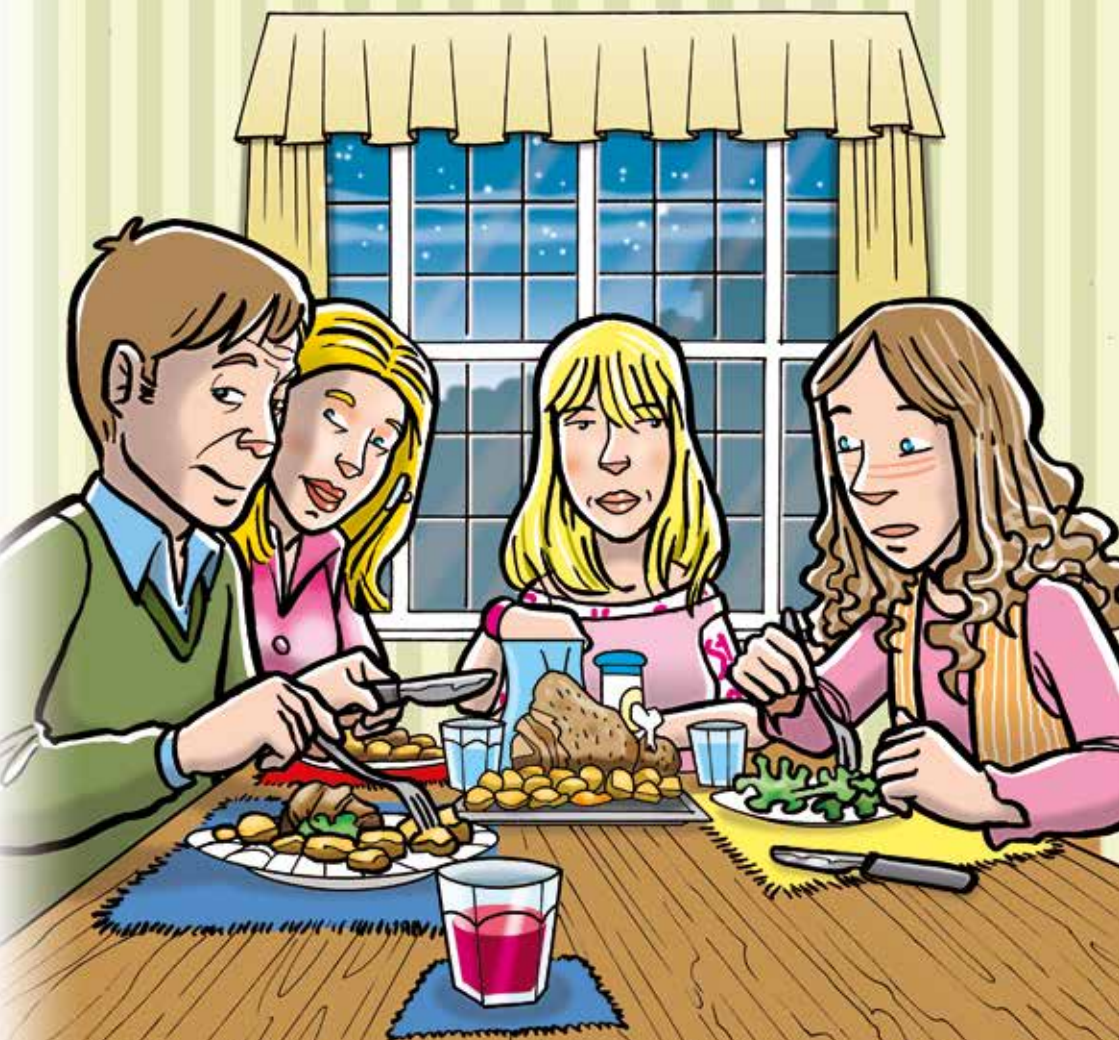
'Which room are you going to use?' asked Holly.

'Erm, well, I need a lot of space... so I'm going to build one.'

'Build one? Where?'

For a moment, her father looked nervous.

Then he said, 'At the end of the garden.'



Holly was confused.

'What do you mean, at the end of the garden?'

'At the bottom of the garden,' her father repeated, but it didn't make things any clearer to his daughter.

'But where at the bottom of the garden? On the lawn?'

'No.'

'Then where? There's the old oak tree...'

Holly didn't finish her sentence. Her face turned white with anger.

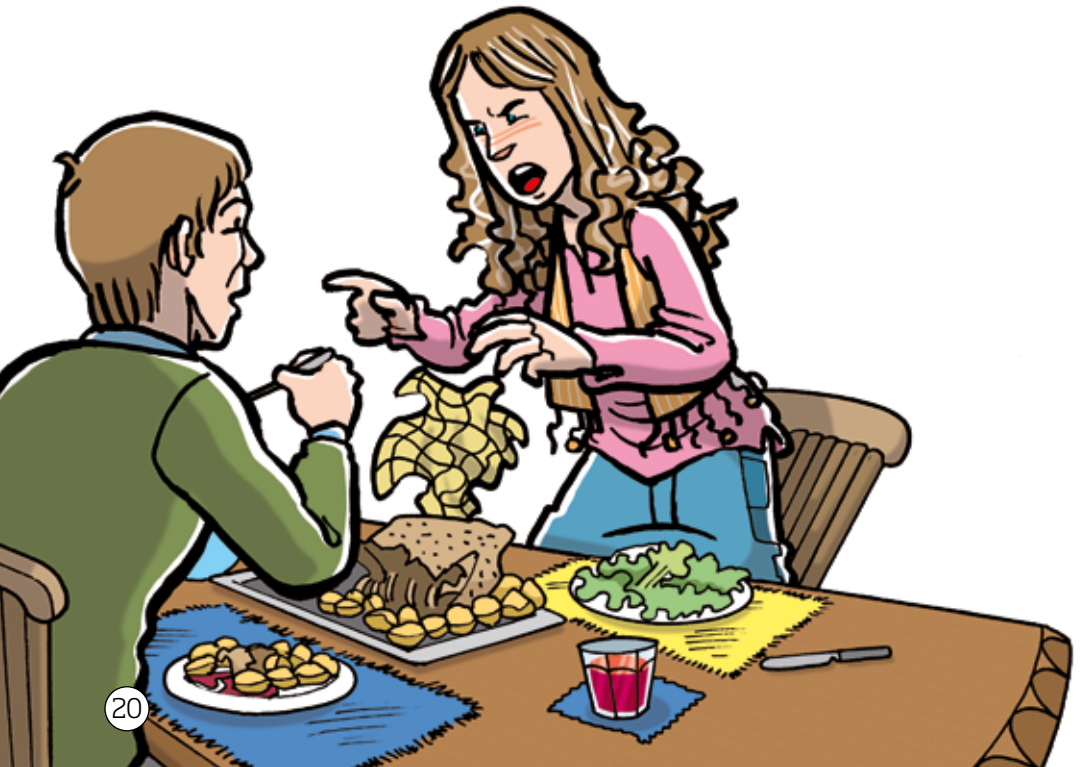
'Dad, you must be joking.'

Holly's mother said, 'That tree's very old, Holly. And your father can have his new office there. It's perfect.'

'You're going to cut down my tree for a stupid office?'

'It's just a stupid tree,' Sophie added, not very helpfully.

'That is so unfair!' Holly said, jumping up. Then she walked to the door and said, 'I'm leaving home!', and slammed the door shut behind her.





Holly ran up to her room. Her dog Eco woke up and ran after her, wagging his tail happily.

Holly was so upset. She couldn't believe this was happening. The old oak tree!

She emptied her school rucksack onto the bed. And with tears in her eyes, she filled it up with clothes, her MP3 player, and her favourite books.

Holly walked quickly down the stairs towards the front door. But then she stopped. She couldn't leave home. She had nowhere to go. And she didn't want to leave Eco. What could she do? They were going to cut down her tree!

Then she had an idea. She turned round, walked through the kitchen, and out into the garden.

Holly stopped under the old oak tree. The sun was sinking now, and the tree was huge and dark against the sky. She turned back to the house, picked up Eco, and waved goodbye. Then she climbed up the rope ladder and disappeared among the leaves and branches. A few moments later, she pulled up the rope ladder... and she was safe.

She looked inside her old tree house. It was her favourite place in the world, her secret place. There were holes in its roof, and there were old birds' nests in the corners. But there was a little chair, some broken toys, and some blankets.

Eco was very excited. It was his first time in the tree house, and he barked and wagged his tail. Holly cuddled him, then she sat down at the door and looked out at the garden and the sky.

She could see the lights inside her house.

She could see the moon and the stars.

She could hear a bird singing. There was only one bird. It sounded very lonely.

Suddenly she felt very strange.

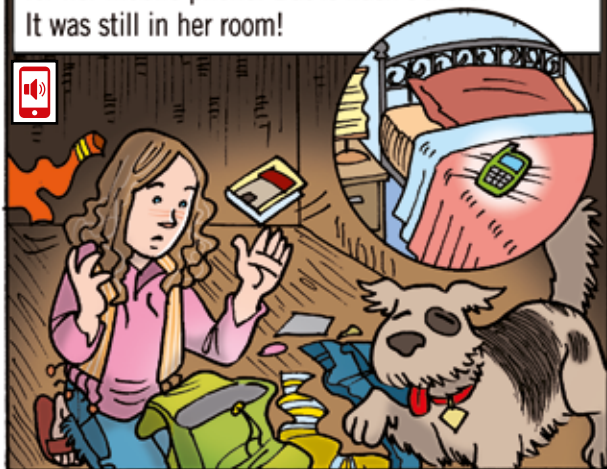
Now she was in the tree house, Holly didn't know what to do.

Eco sat down next to her. He didn't seem very happy either.

Holly looked at the blankets. It was time to make her bed.



Holly decided to ring Grace. She looked everywhere for her mobile phone. But it wasn't there. It was still in her room!



Then she felt cold and hungry. She remembered her dinner. It was still on the table!



Then she saw a light in the garden.



Are you all right, darling?

I'm fine.

Please come down and go to bed.

Are you going to cut down the tree?

We have to, darling. For your Dad's work.

Then no way. I'm staying here!

It was difficult to sleep. The blankets didn't smell very nice and the floor was hard.



She listened to her MP3 and finally fell asleep.



Then Eco had a nightmare ...



An owl hooted outside the window ...



And at five o'clock, the birds started singing. Hundreds of them!




Holly felt more tired in the morning than when she went to bed at night!

After Reading

Vocabulary

1 What does Holly take to the tree house on the first night? Tick (✓).



2  You are going to stay in the tree house for a week. You can only take five things. What are you going to take? In pairs, discuss and make a list. Tell the class and give reasons for your choices.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

3 Complete the adjectives from the story. Then match the synonyms.

a a_f_l

1 f_r_i_us

b w_ir_

2 st_p_d

c a_gr_

3 b_a_ti_u_

d rid_cu_o_s

4 st_an_e

e pr_t_y

5 te_r_b_e