

# I'LL TAKE YOU, TO MRS COLE!



**Nigel Gray · Michael Foreman**

# I'll Take You to Mrs Cole

Text by Nigel Gray



Pictures by Michael Foreman

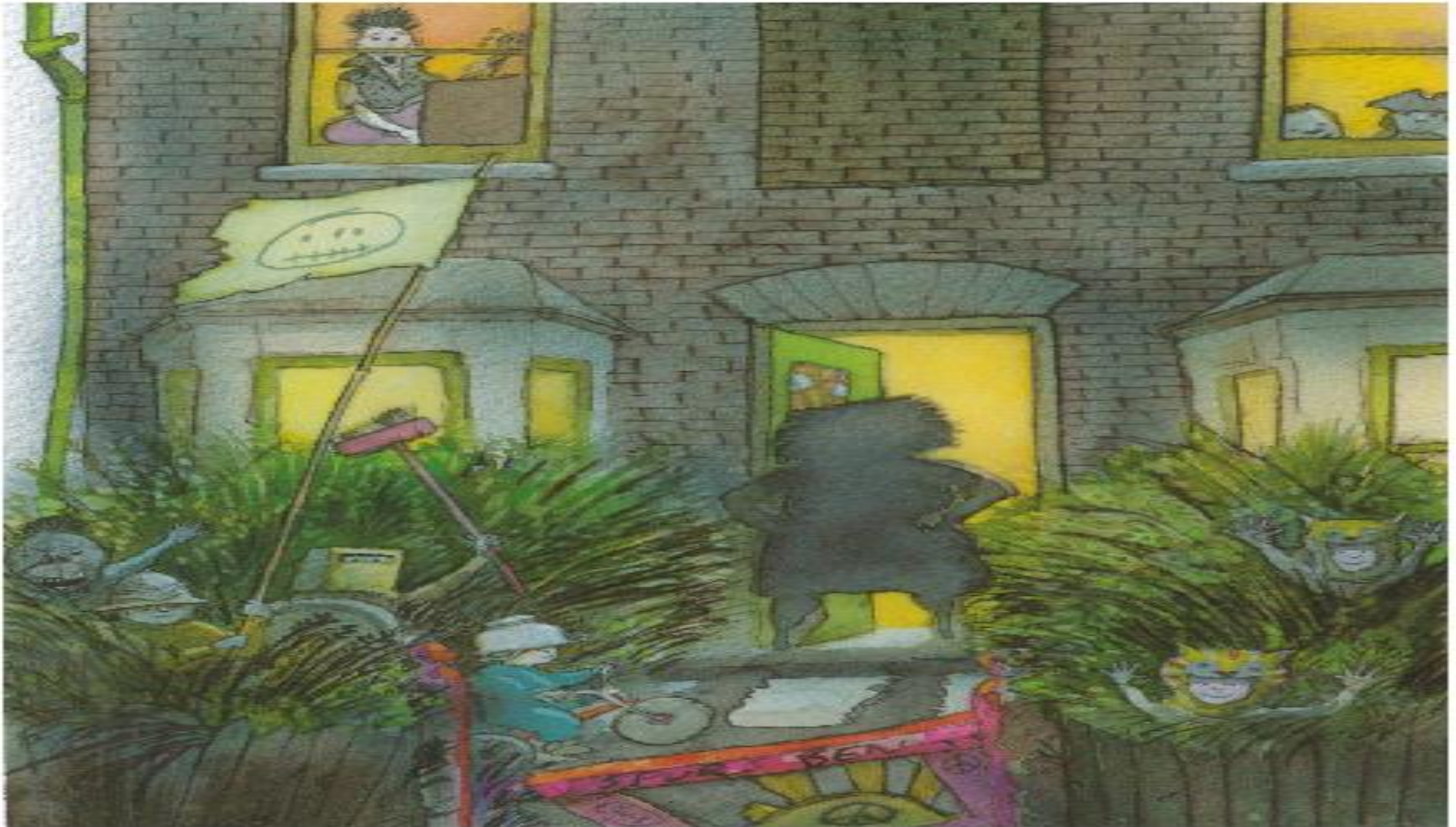


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When my mum came in from work and I hadn't got the table laid, she said,  
"If you can't do what you're told, I'll take you to Mrs Cole."



Mrs Cole lives down the street,  
in a dirty house,  
in a noisy house,  
with lots of kids under her feet.



When my mum came in from work and I'd been playing battleships in the bath and had flooded the floor of the flat, she said,  
"Put on your hat and coat. I'm taking you to Mrs Cole."

I put on my hat and coat and waited outside the door. I wondered what it would be like at Mrs Cole's.



Perhaps her kids had no toys,  
no clothes,  
no telly,  
no treats.

Perhaps she made them do dusting and polishing  
and washing the floor and whipped them when  
they fell asleep.

Perhaps she gave them nothing to eat except  
cabbage and curly kale.





Perhaps she kept them locked in a dark and dismal dungeon with green and slimy walls.

Perhaps she fed them to her favourite pets:  
boa constrictors,  
alligators,  
and piranha fish.



Then my mum told me to take off my coat  
and come back in.

“I’ll let you off this time,” she said,  
“but next time you’re bad, I’ll take you to  
Mrs Cole.”

When my mum came in from work and I'd broken the window with my very bouncy ball, she said, "Put on your hat and coat. I'm taking you to Mrs Cole."

I followed her down the damp dark street. We crossed the road and stood outside Mrs Cole's gate. The lights were on all over the house. There was music playing.

Thump, do-waddy-waddy thump.



I could see Mrs Cole inside the window. She was  
fat and her face was red.

She had a baby in her arm.

She was stirring a wooden spoon in a great big  
pan.

Round and round.

Round and round.

“Perhaps she is going to boil the baby,” I thought.

“Perhaps she makes her children into stew.”

“Alright,” my mum said,  
“I’ll let you off this time. Come on home with  
me. But next time you’re bad I’m taking you  
to Mrs Cole.”

Next day was Saturday. My mum had to go to work.

“Do the washing up,” she said.

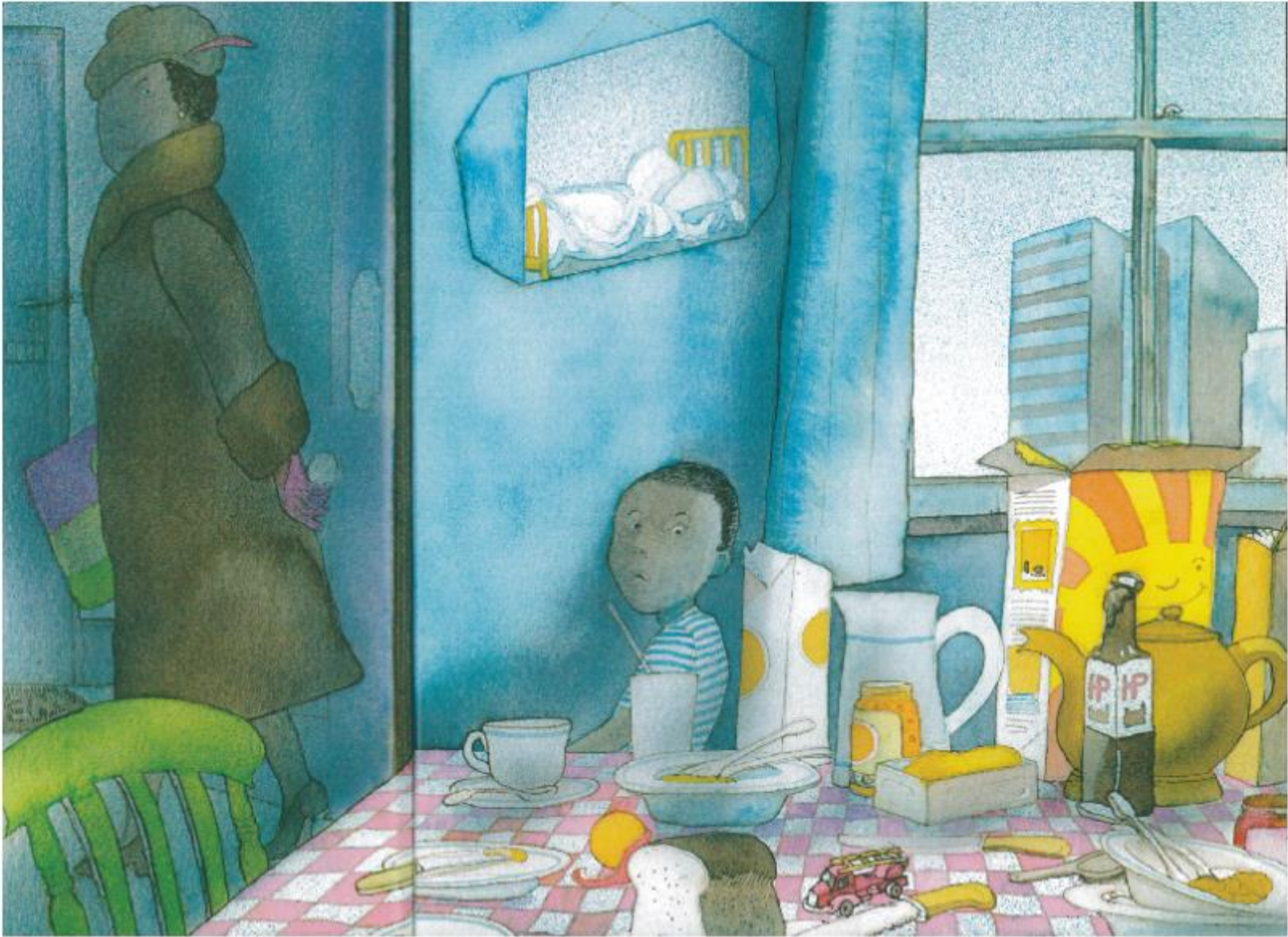
“And make the beds. Then get the shopping. I’ve left a list. And make sure the table’s laid before I get home for dinner. And don’t be doing any more damage or I’ll take you to Mrs Cole.”



After she'd gone the flat was quiet,  
and lonely,  
and cold.

I looked at the dirty breakfast dishes on the  
table.

I looked at the crumpled bedclothes on the  
beds.



I decided to run away.

I went out into the misty morning street.  
People bustled by with shopping bags. No  
one noticed me. A car drove through a  
puddle and splashed dirty water up my legs.  
I crossed the road. I stood outside Mrs  
Cole's house.