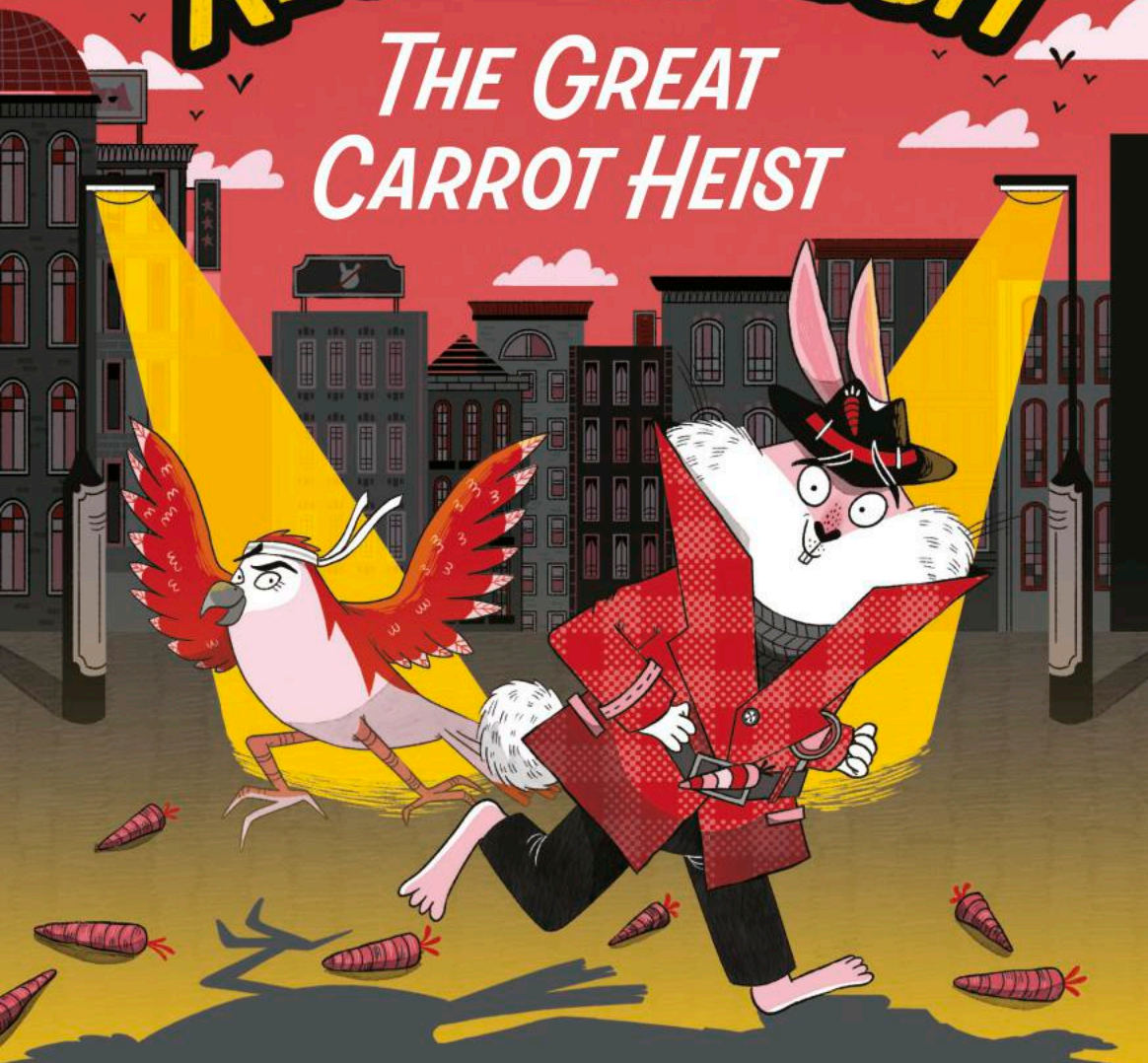


Swapna Reddy

Becka Moor

REGGIE RABBIT

THE GREAT CARROT HEIST



Can one small detective keep the city safe?



REGGIE RABBIT

*THE GREAT
CARROT HEIST*



MEET THE CHARACTERS

REGGIE RABBIT



An aspiring young rabbit detective with a nose for carrots and crime.

PIPSQUARK



The new beak on the block and Reggie's new detective partner.

GRANNY LAVENDER



The oldest of the Rabbit family and the wisest. Also the best knitter.

LETTICE



Reggie's big sister and, in Reggie's opinion, a big annoyance.

REGGIE'S MUM



Runs the family veggie stall and cooks the best carrot hotpot in Little Critter.

REGGIE'S DAD



The second best knitter in the Rabbit family.

DETECTIVE FOX



The greatest detective in Bearburgh.

NANCY



The other greatest detective in Bearburgh.

NORA MASQUE



An aspiring criminal mastermind who dreams of taking over Masque Industries.

GRANDDADDY MASQUE



Head of Masque Industries and will do ANYTHING to be the most powerful (and rich) raccoon in Bearburgh.

MORBID CRAWFORD



Granddaddy Masque's head hench-raven and Head of Security at Masque Industries.

ROCCO



The oldest of the Masque triplets according to Rocco.

RICCI



The smartest of the Masque triplets according to Ricci.

RONNIE



The oldest and the smartest of the Masque triplets according to Ronnie.

In loving memory of Rodney and Beauty—SH
For my brilliant agent, Hannah—BM

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THE GREAT CARROT HEIST



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HIGH IN MASQUE TOWER . . .



HAVE YOU SEEN THE STATE OF THIS?

OUR EVIL EMPIRE IS CRUMBLING AND IT'S ALL DOWN TO THAT DRATTED DETECTIVE FOX.



DRATTED DETECTIVE FOX.

HE'S ALWAYS JUST ONE PAW BEHIND US. WE ONLY JUST SEEM TO GET AWAY.

HE'S TURNING MY FUR GREY WITH ALL THIS STRESS. AND NOW I'VE LOST A LOT OF DOUGH. CAN YOU BELIEVE HE CAUGHT OUR CAT BURGLARS CAT NAPPING?!

THAT'S ENOUGH FROM YOU, MORBID. I DIDN'T ASK FOR A PERSONAL ECHO.




ONLY JUST SEEM TO GET AWAY.



CAT NAPPING!




PERSONAL ECH . . . SORRY, BOSS.




YOU AND YOUR SECURITY
RAVENS NEED TO KEEP A CLOSER
EYE ON THAT DETECTIVE.

GOT IT, BOSS.



AND WHAT ARE YOU LOT
GIGGLING ABOUT? YOU'RE GOING
TO HAVE TO COME UP WITH
SOME CASH NOW.

WELL? WHAT'S THE
PLAN THEN?




I THINK I HAVE AN IDEA,
GRANDDADDY MASQUE. AND
I KNOW JUST HOW MORBID
CAN HELP US.




HE HUH EGH HGH HE.

WHAT WAS THAT?

WAS THAT YOUR
EVIL LAUGH?



WHAT WAS WRONG
WITH IT?



NOTHING. IF YOU WANT TO
SOUND LIKE A CAT COUGHING
UP A FURBALL.

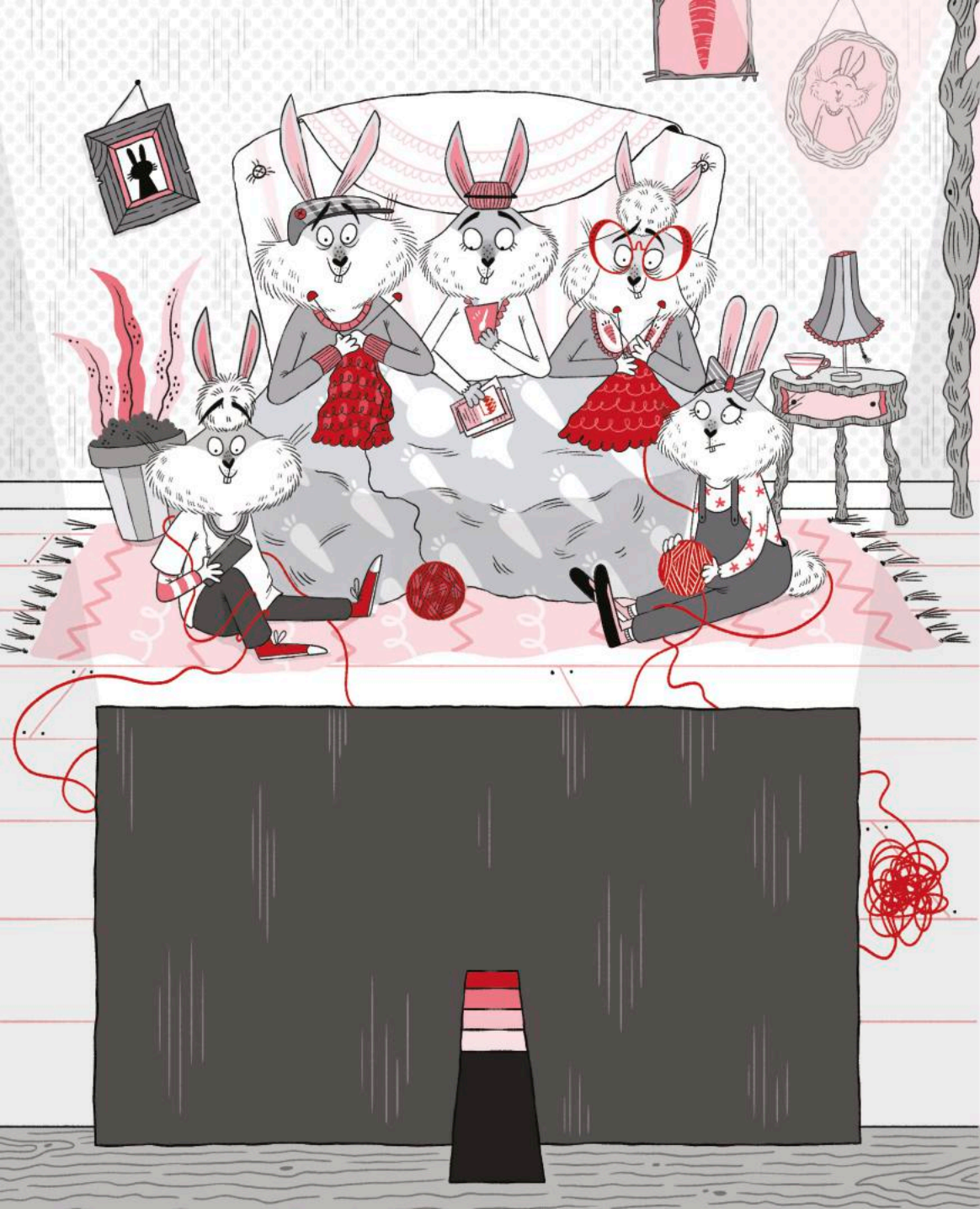
YOU WAIT AND SEE! I'LL BE THE MOST
SUPER SUPER-VILLAIN OF THEM ALL!

HE HUH EGH HGH HE!



NO MORE LIKE THIS:
MWUHAAAAHAHA!

SHUDDUP!





‘Turn it up Lettice,’ Reggie squealed as he rushed past Granny Lavender, dodged the wool from her knitting, and leapt over his big sister towards the telly.

It was his favourite show. The News.

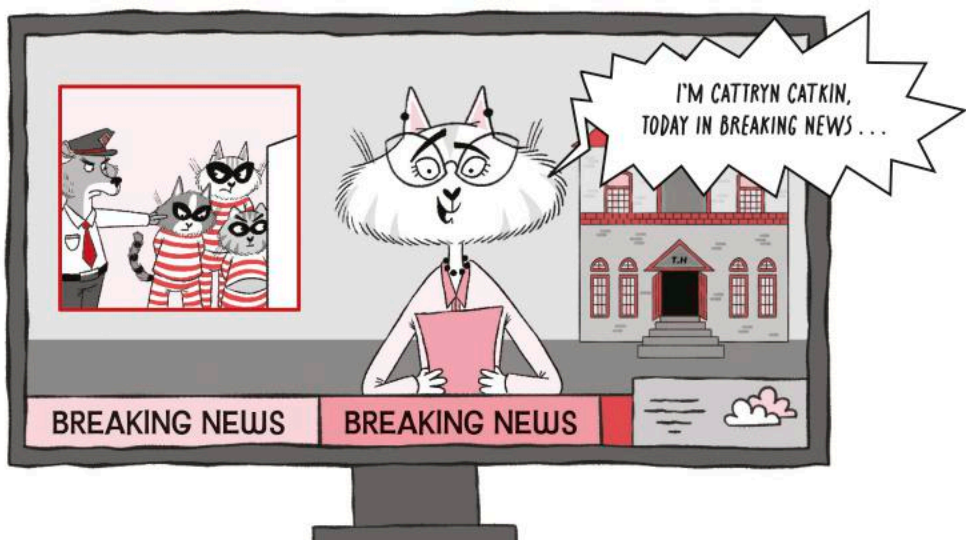
Lettice shot him an annoyed glance and made to switch the channel.

‘Don’t you dare,’ Reggie warned as he snatched the remote from her paws.

‘Careful Reggie,’ said Mum as she came in sorting a stack of receipts from the family’s vegetable stall.

Reggie’s haste towards the telly had left a trail of wool around the living room, as he’d accidentally caught Granny Lavender’s knitting on his back paw. Lettice bundled it up, rolling her eyes at the mess. Reggie hadn’t noticed a thing. His entire attention was held by the News.

Standing in front of the steps of Bearburgh Town Hall, the reporter was giving a rundown of a recent cat burglar bust in town as photos showed arrests of three guilty-looking felines from the previous day.



‘I’m glad we live here in Little Critter,’ Dad said, his nose wrinkled up at the sight of the big city on the screen. ‘Look how grubby Bearburgh City is. You wouldn’t see litter like that in our suburb.’

‘That’s where all this crime starts,’ Mum said disapprovingly. ‘First you’re littering and next you’re cat-burgling a bank.’

The camera panned back to the town hall and the reporter. She looked pointedly at a detective nearby, who shifted awkwardly as the camera zoomed in on him.

Reggie clapped his paws together and grinned.

His hero, Detective Fox, was about to talk live.

‘It’s a big win against crime today,’ Cattryn Catkin said. She turned to Detective Fox. ‘Wouldn’t you agree, Detective?’

‘If you say so,’ he replied.

The reporter's eyebrows furrowed.

'Is *Rabbit Pop Star* on yet?' Dad interrupted.

'Shhhh,' Reggie hushed.

On the TV screen, Detective Fox cleared his throat and loosened his tie. His well-known partner, a bug called Nancy, was perched on his shoulder.

Reggie's grin stretched even wider. He knew every case the pair had ever solved. He'd cut out all the newspaper interviews they had given and put them in a

file labelled 'The Great Detective Fox and his Magnificent Partner'. (He'd had to

shorten it to TGDFAHMP so Leticia didn't crack the code if she ever found the file on his bookshelf.) That would be SO embarrassing!

'The mayor has been praising



your victory against cat burglary all day,' Cattryn Catkin said to Fox. 'She says it's a storming success in stamping out crime in our city. Aren't you convinced?'



'*Our* victory,' Detective Fox corrected. 'I couldn't have done this without my friend and partner, Nancy.' He nodded at the little bug before leaning towards the microphone. 'But it's important to remember that solving one case doesn't stop all crime in Bearburgh.'

'In fact,' Nancy added, 'last night an entire cargo of carrots was stolen from a barge at the docks.'

'He-hemm!'

The detective and the reporter were interrupted as the Mayor of Bearburgh hurried down the steps of Bearburgh Town Hall towards them.



‘More like a full-of-hot-air mayor,’ Reggie muttered.
‘Oi,’ Dad said, jostling Reggie in the side. ‘I like that mayor. She always makes me smile.’

Reggie turned towards his dad, his face screwed up like he’d just sucked a mouldy basil leaf.

‘*Mayor Bear is a fair mayor?*’ Reggie repeated slowly.

‘What does that even mean?’

‘At least the mayor’s jolly,’ Lettice said. ‘That detective is a bit of a dung-beetle downer.’

‘Detective Fox is the greatest detective in the world and he is right,’ Reggie retorted. ‘There’s still a lot of crime in Bearburgh City and we need more detectives to stamp out the problem. That’s why I’m going to be a detective.’ Reggie rose to his feet and threw his chin up. ‘I’ll keep this city safe!’

‘Oh, Reggie,’ said Mum, wringing her paws. ‘It’s far too dangerous! And in that filthy Bearburgh City. I won’t hear of it.’ Her eyes grew wide with fear. ‘Please leave the detective work to the grown-ups, Reggie,’ she begged.

Reggie pinched his mouth shut tight. He knew better than to argue with Mum about this. She was a worrier and it wouldn’t matter what he said about his dream to be

just like Detective Fox, she'd still want him to grow up to work on the family veggie stall and watch *Rabbit Pop Star* every night for the rest of his life.

Dad shrugged at Reggie as if to say he wasn't going to argue with Mum and Reggie's chest felt heavy.

'Why don't you go set the table, Reggie?' Mum said gently.

Reggie got up, fighting to hold back his frustration. But as he left the room, Granny Lavender caught his eye. From her corner, surrounded by her knitting, she gave Reggie a supportive wink.

Granny Lavender's wink lightened the weight in Reggie's chest. She was on his side! As he headed to the dining room, he felt an excited flutter build in his belly. Maybe he could be Reggie Rabbit, Detective one day ... after all, Granny Lavender seemed to think so.

