



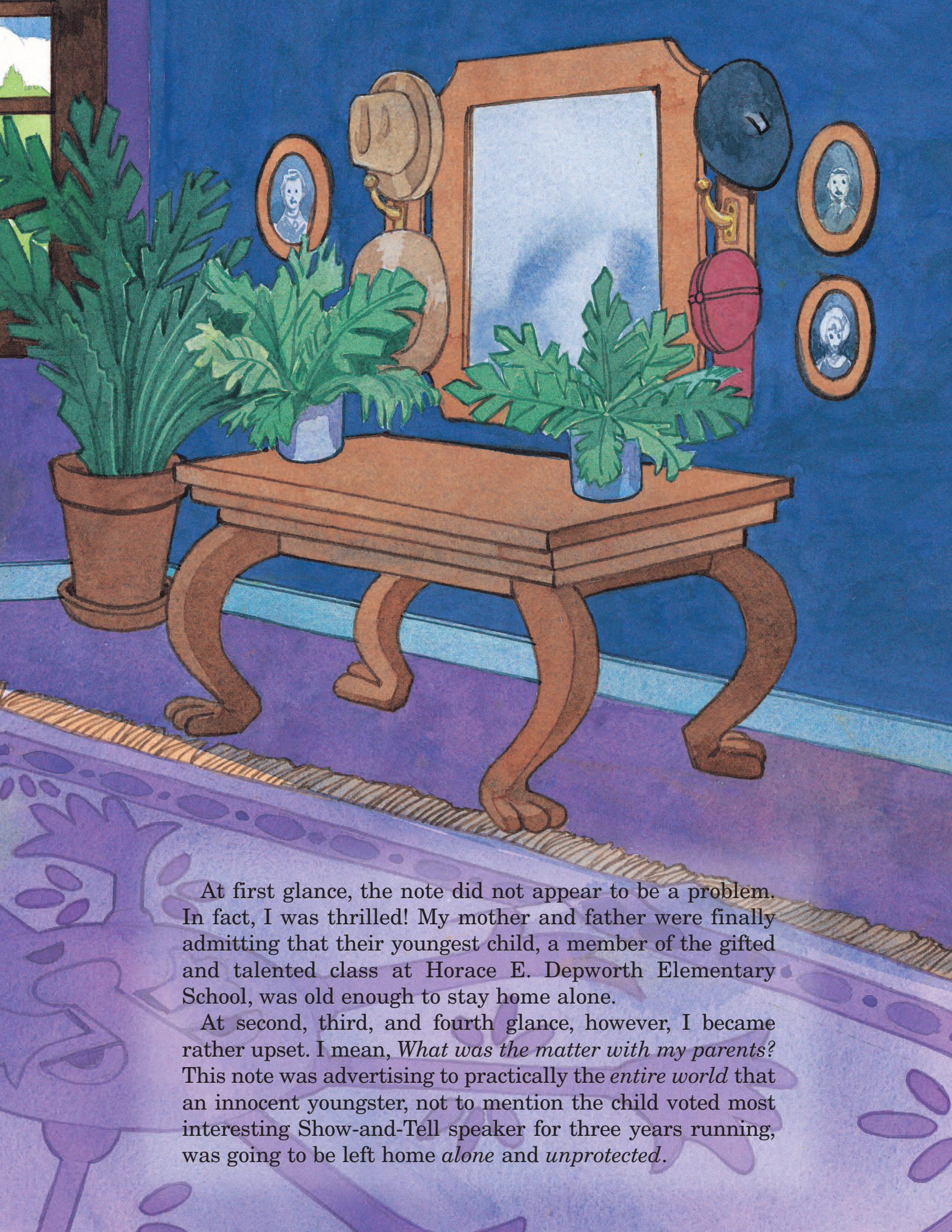
My Brother Dan's Delicious

Sometimes, when you're eight and a half, life throws you an unexpected curve. In my case, it happened just last night. I went to my best friend Dave's house for supper, and his mother served one of her weird casseroles. It looked to me like things were moving underneath the crust, so I didn't eat much. I left his house at seven o'clock, walked three blocks to my house, and that's where all the trouble started. When I reached our front door, I found a note.

*Dear Joey,
Your father and I went across the street to have a cup of coffee with the Dicksons. Dan is at the movies with a friend, but he will be home soon.*

*Love,
Mom*





At first glance, the note did not appear to be a problem. In fact, I was thrilled! My mother and father were finally admitting that their youngest child, a member of the gifted and talented class at Horace E. Depworth Elementary School, was old enough to stay home alone.

At second, third, and fourth glance, however, I became rather upset. I mean, *What was the matter with my parents?* This note was advertising to practically the *entire world* that an innocent youngster, not to mention the child voted most interesting Show-and-Tell speaker for three years running, was going to be left home *alone* and *unprotected*.



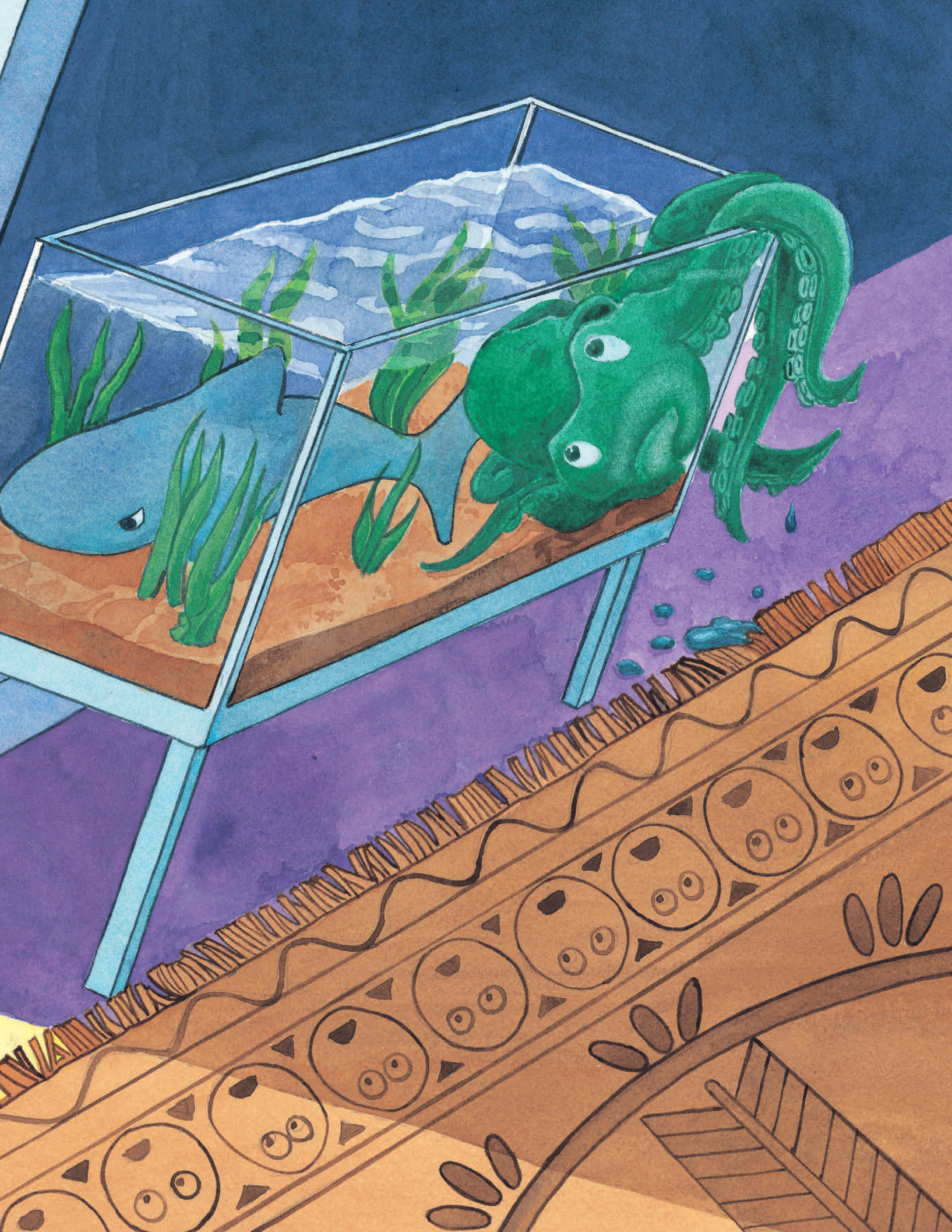


Now everyone knows that monsters, especially those with a taste for pan-fried boys, are waiting for just this kind of opportunity to come along.

Of course, I'm too old to believe in them anymore, but if I *did* still believe in monsters, you can be sure I'd know just how to handle this type of situation.



The first step, of course, is to get inside the house, where your movements cannot be easily tracked. The second step is to identify the likely hiding places of these villainous creatures if, in fact, they are already inside the house. The third and most important step in dealing with monsters, however, is to *distract* them.





For example, if I felt that a monster was watching me at this very moment, thinking perhaps about a fantastic dinner featuring Joseph A. Demorett II as the main course, I would simply alert him to the existence of my older, larger, *tastier* brother Dan!

There are times when sacrifice is the only way. I would miss him, but he *does* have the bigger bedroom.

Perhaps, for the benefit of those who still give in to that occasional moment of “monster fear,” I should begin a demonstration.