

GILBERT

by ERIC GURNEY



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PRENTICE-HALL INC., ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J.



Gilbert was an orphan.

He was adopted by a mother cat.



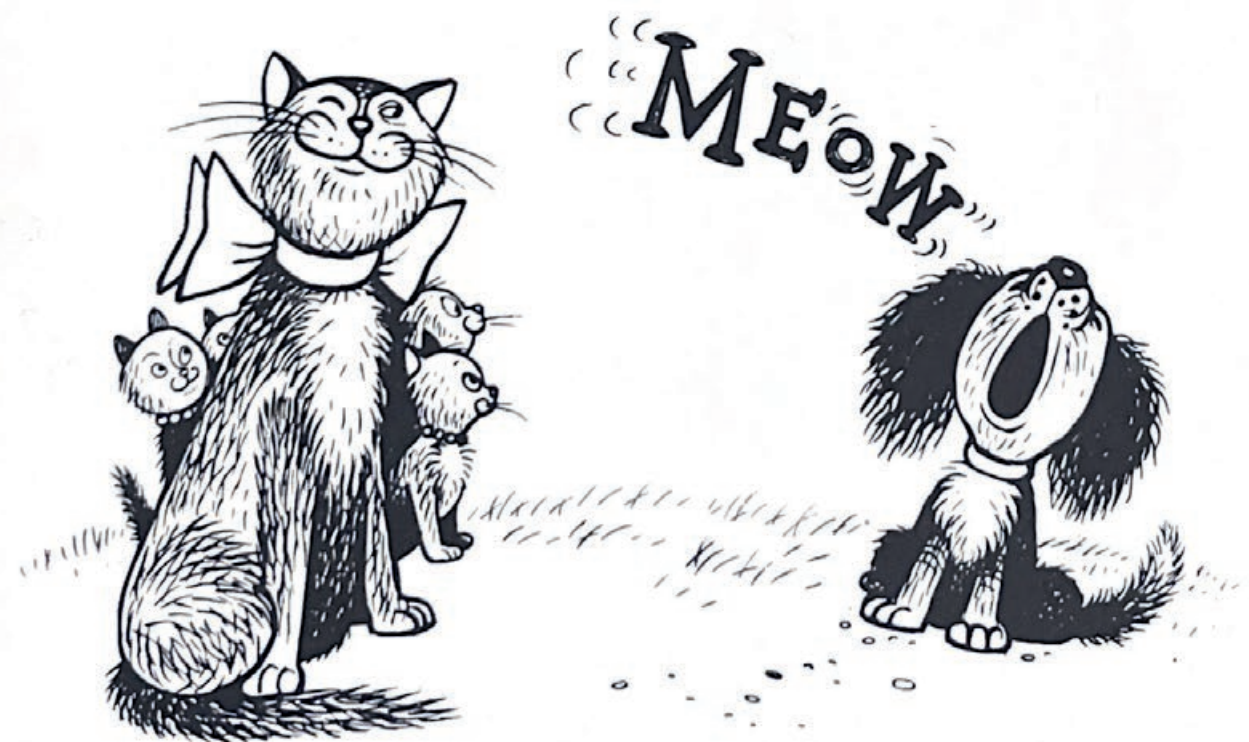
All the other dogs in the neighborhood liked to
chase cats . . .



But not Gilbert. He thought he was a cat.



Since he lived with a cat family, Gilbert never learned to bark. Instead he made a whining kind of noise that sounded like "Meeow."



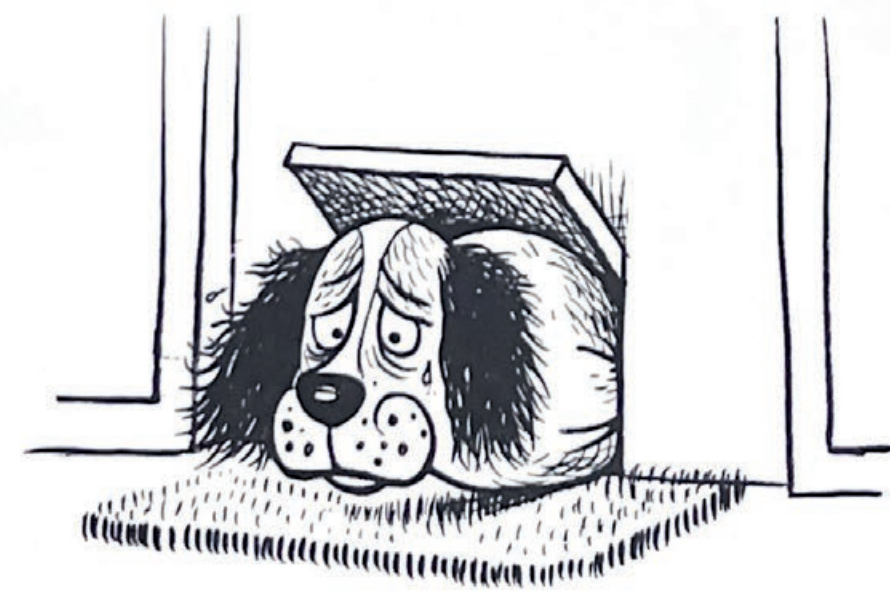
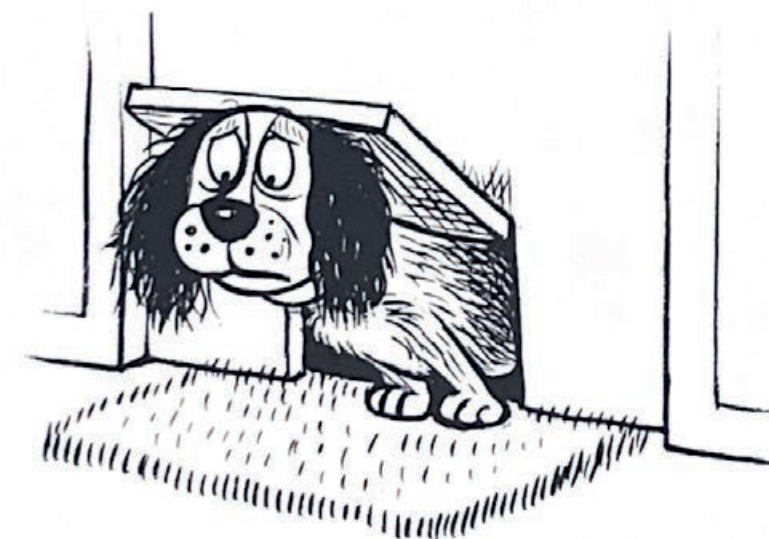
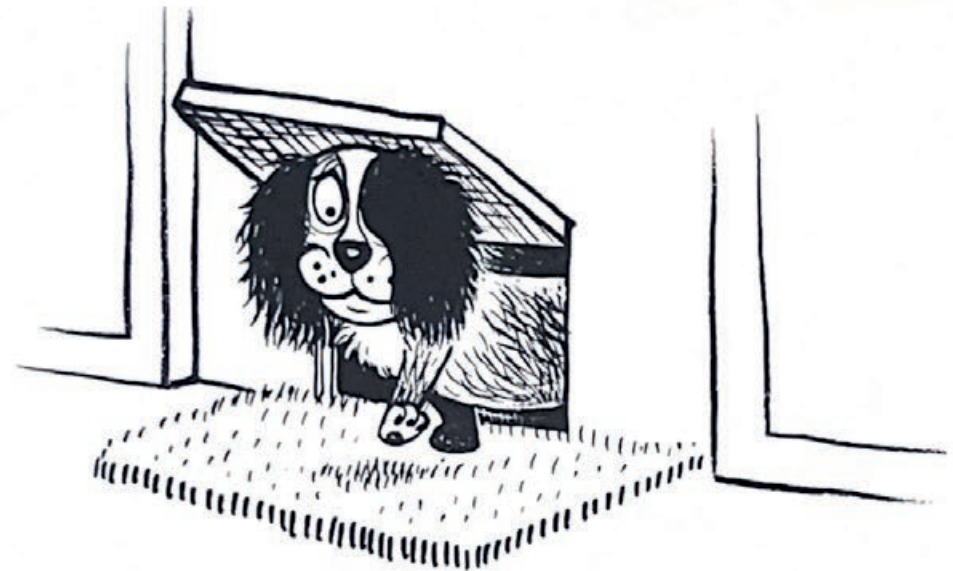
When the other dogs heard Gilbert, they laughed and hooted. They were very mean to him.



The meanest of all was a neighborhood bully named Ivan. He was big and tough. Nothing in the world scared Ivan, except thunder.



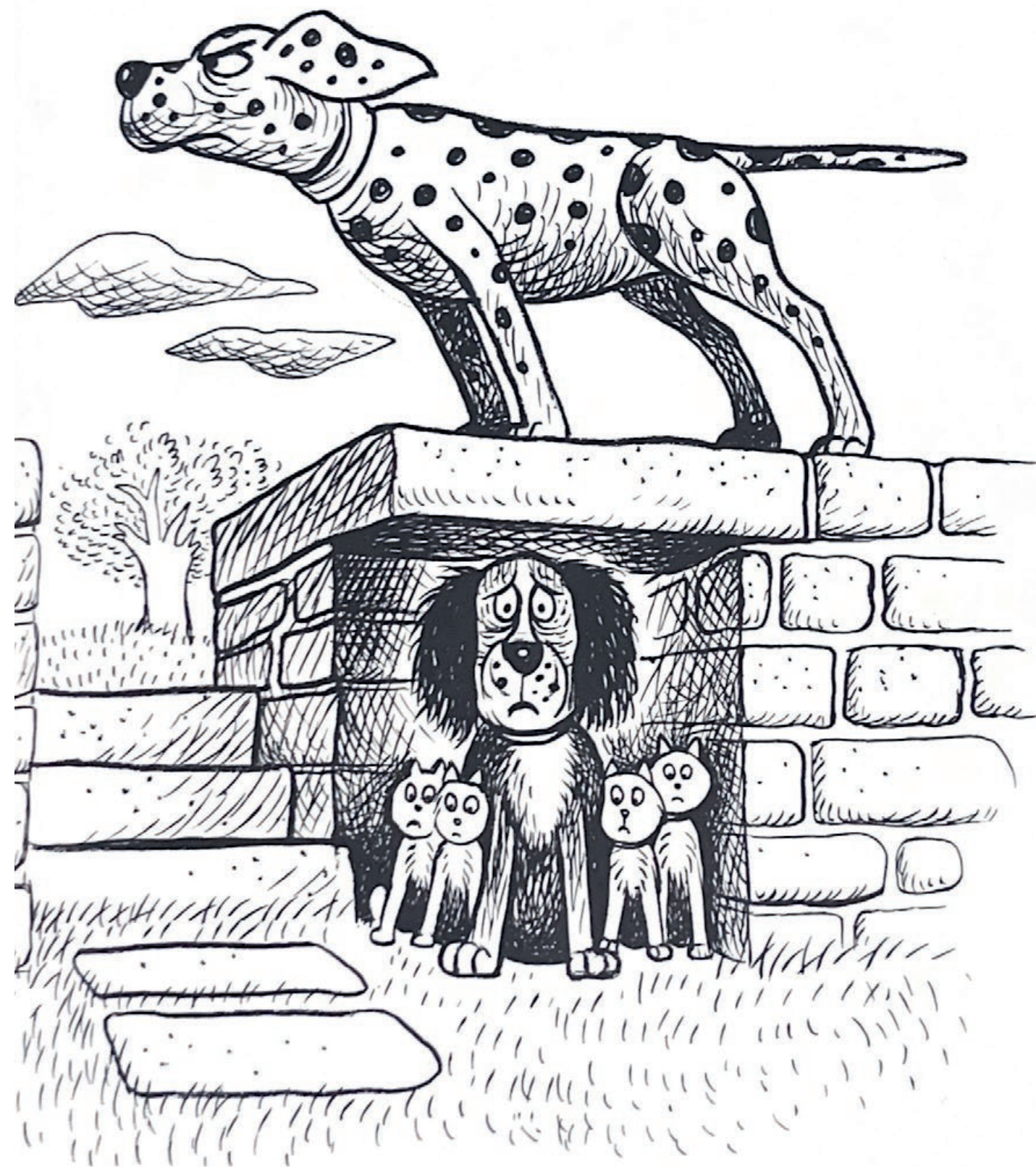
Soon Gilbert grew bigger . . .
and bigger . . .
and bigger.



One day, his master put up a new sign. He wanted Gilbert to be a watchdog, guarding the property and protecting the cats.



But Gilbert didn't feel like a watchdog. He didn't even feel like a plain, ordinary dog.



As time passed, Gilbert grew morose. His morale sank very low, and he lost interest in things. Even in cat games.



The cats began to spurn him.



“Okay, so nobody’s perfect,” he would say. But way deep down Gilbert felt very insecure.



He lost his appetite . . .



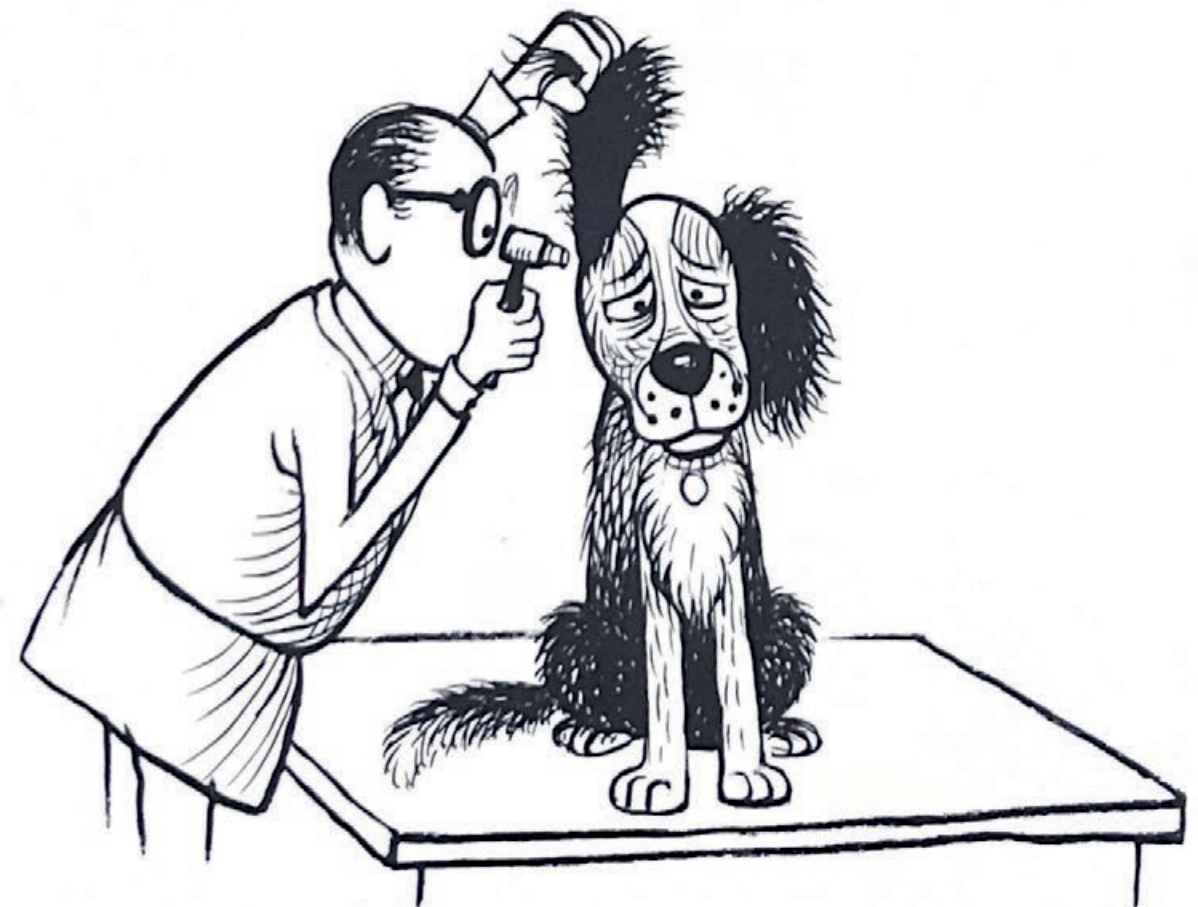
He wouldn't wag his tail when his master gave him a friendly pat . . .



He couldn't even sleep at night, for dreaming of Ivan.



Gilbert's master took him to the vet, who gave him a thorough going over. He said that Gilbert was a bit run down and gave him some vitamins.



But Gilbert didn't like vitamins.



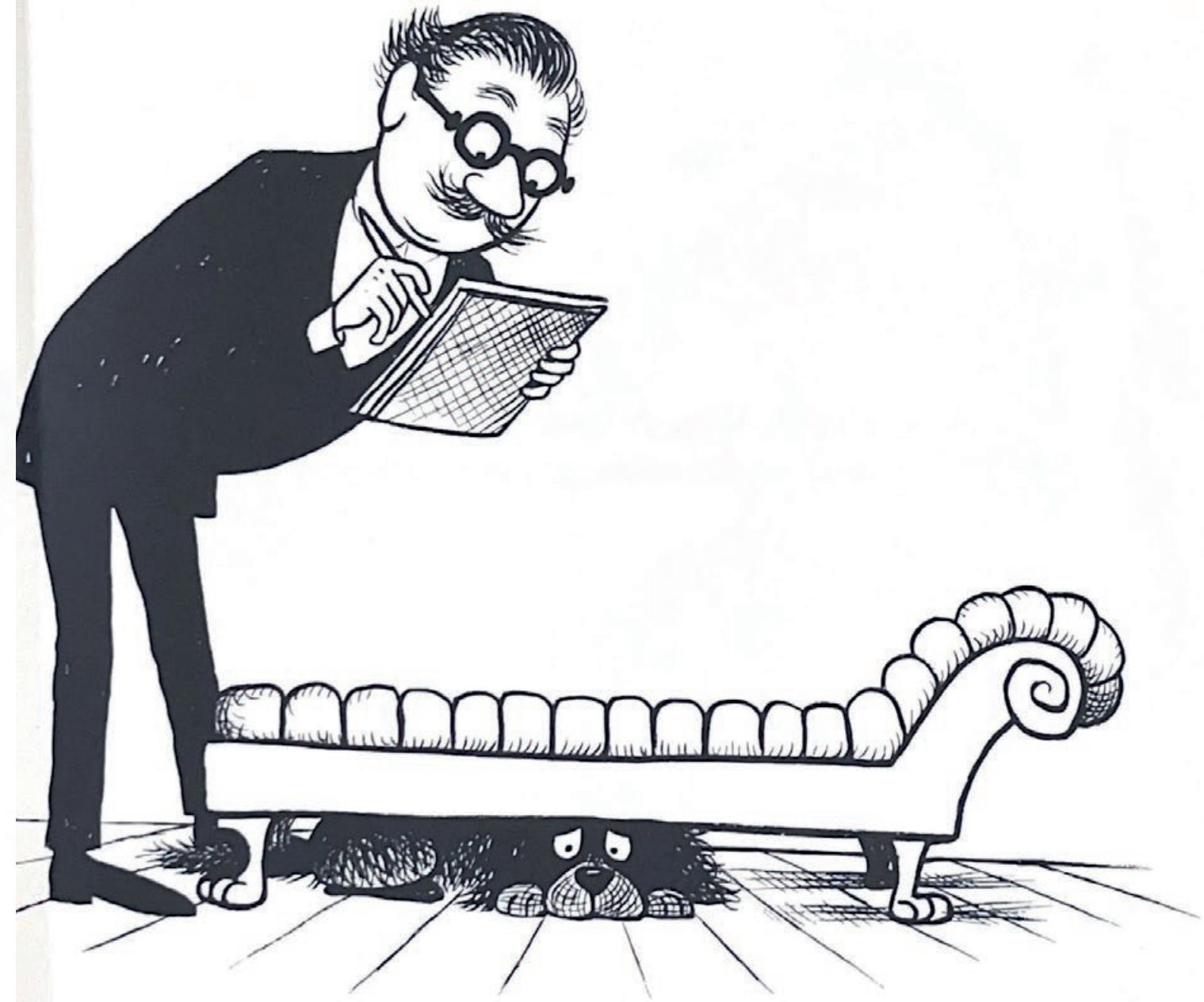
Since the pills didn't seem to help, Gilbert's master decided that his troubles might be mental.



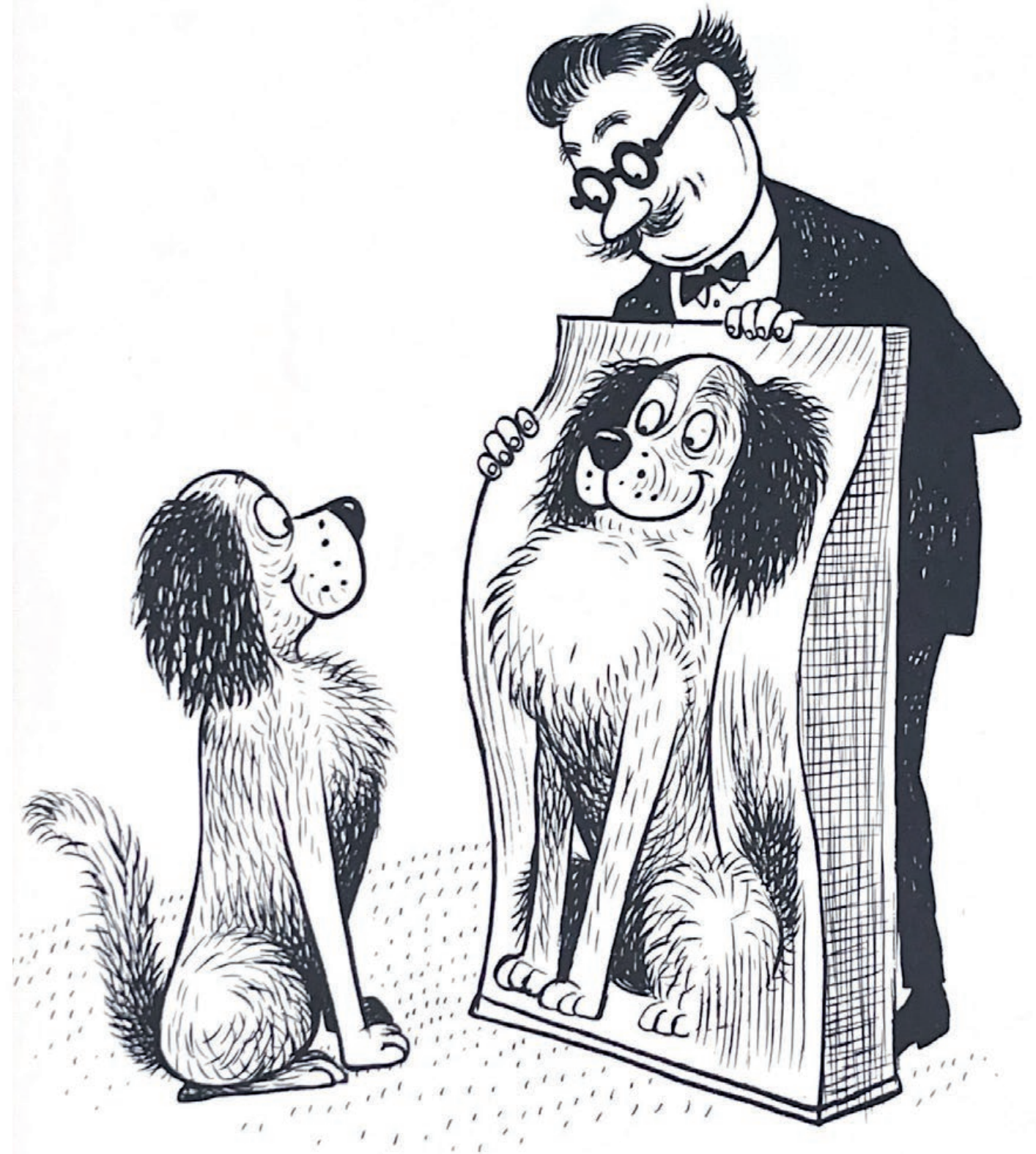
So he sent him to a doctor who had done wonders
for other maladjusted dogs.



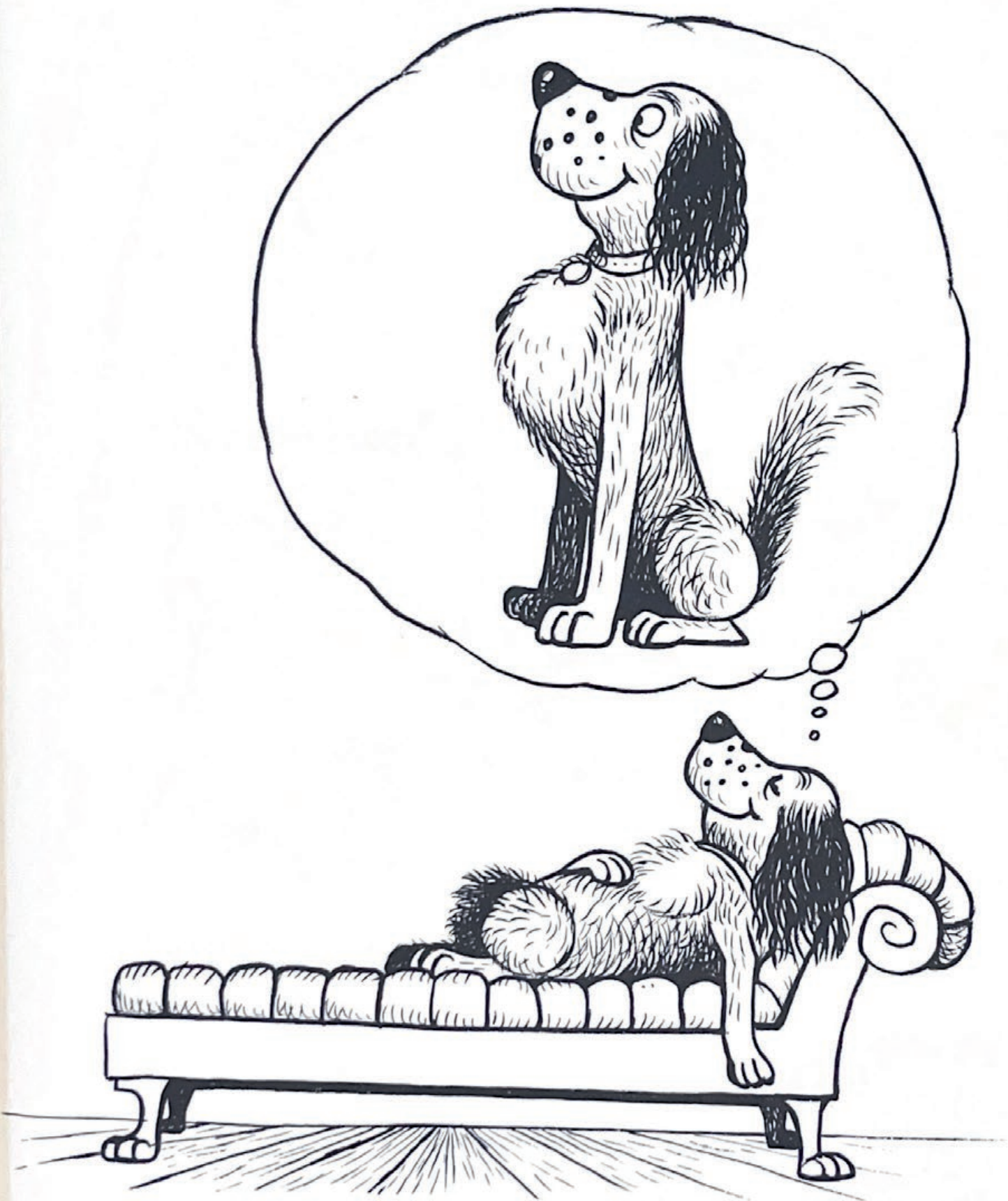
The doctor worked with Gilbert for a long time
(three 50-minute sessions each week).



Little by little he built up Gilbert's confidence,
and helped him to develop a new self-image.



He encouraged Gilbert to think of himself as the brave, fearless, magnificent dog he was. And Gilbert did.



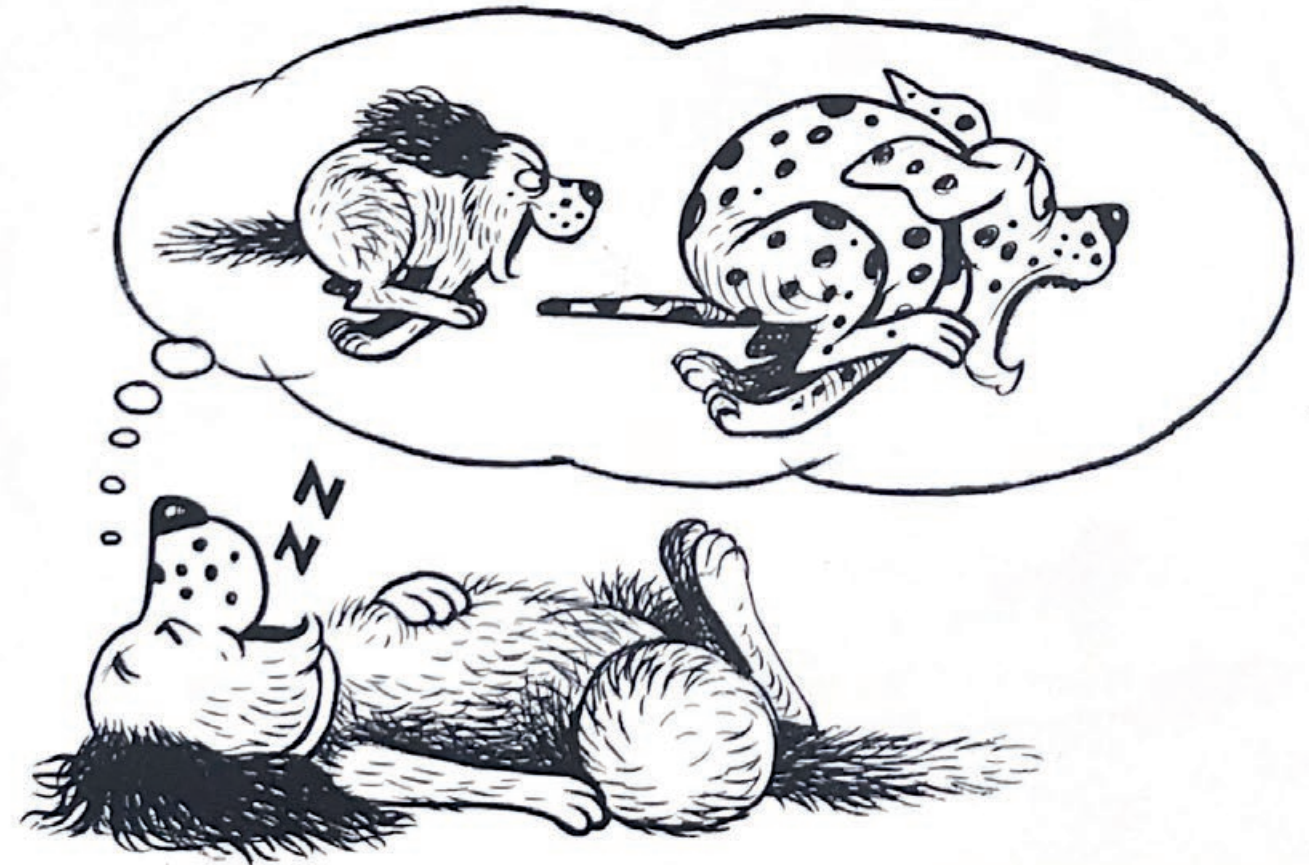
Soon Gilbert's appetite returned . . .



He showed all kinds of pleasure when his master patted him . . .



He even slept like a log, because now he was always chasing Ivan.





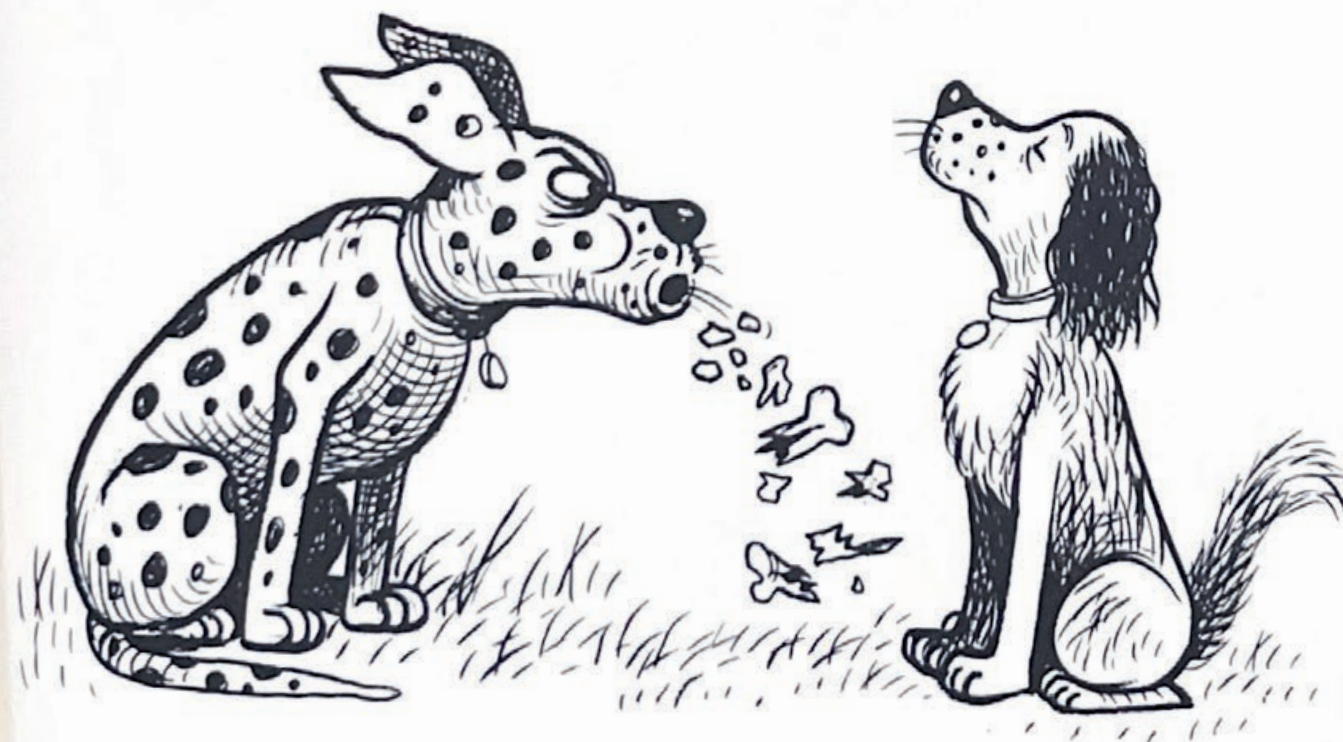
Then one day, Gilbert's big chance came along. He was sitting alone on the lawn when Ivan suddenly came charging toward him!



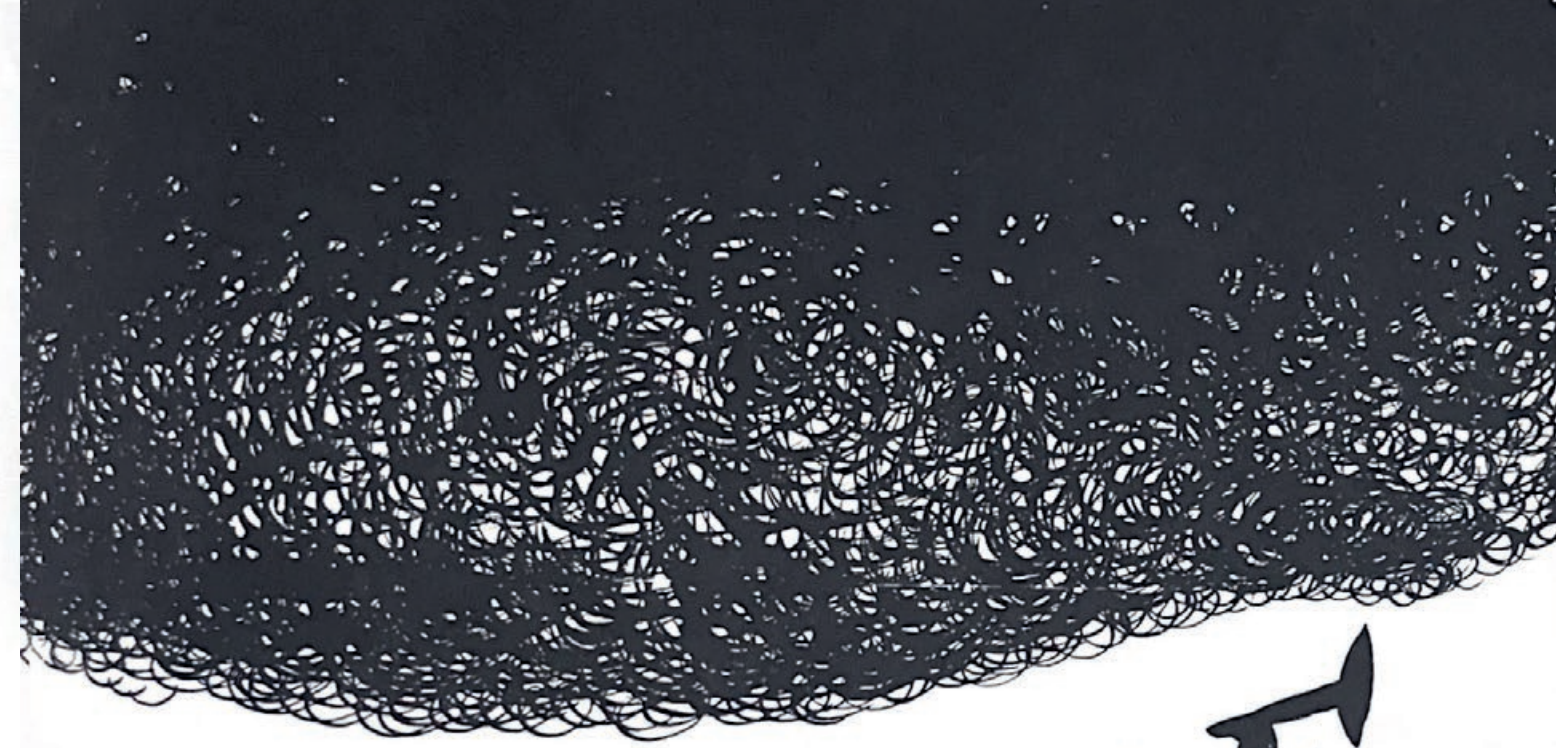
Gilbert was nervous. But instead of running he stood his ground and thought of what Dr. Schnauzer had said.



Ivan tried to scare Gilbert by showing off his sharp teeth. But Gilbert stood his ground.



Meanwhile, a summer storm had been gathering in the sky, but neither dog noticed.



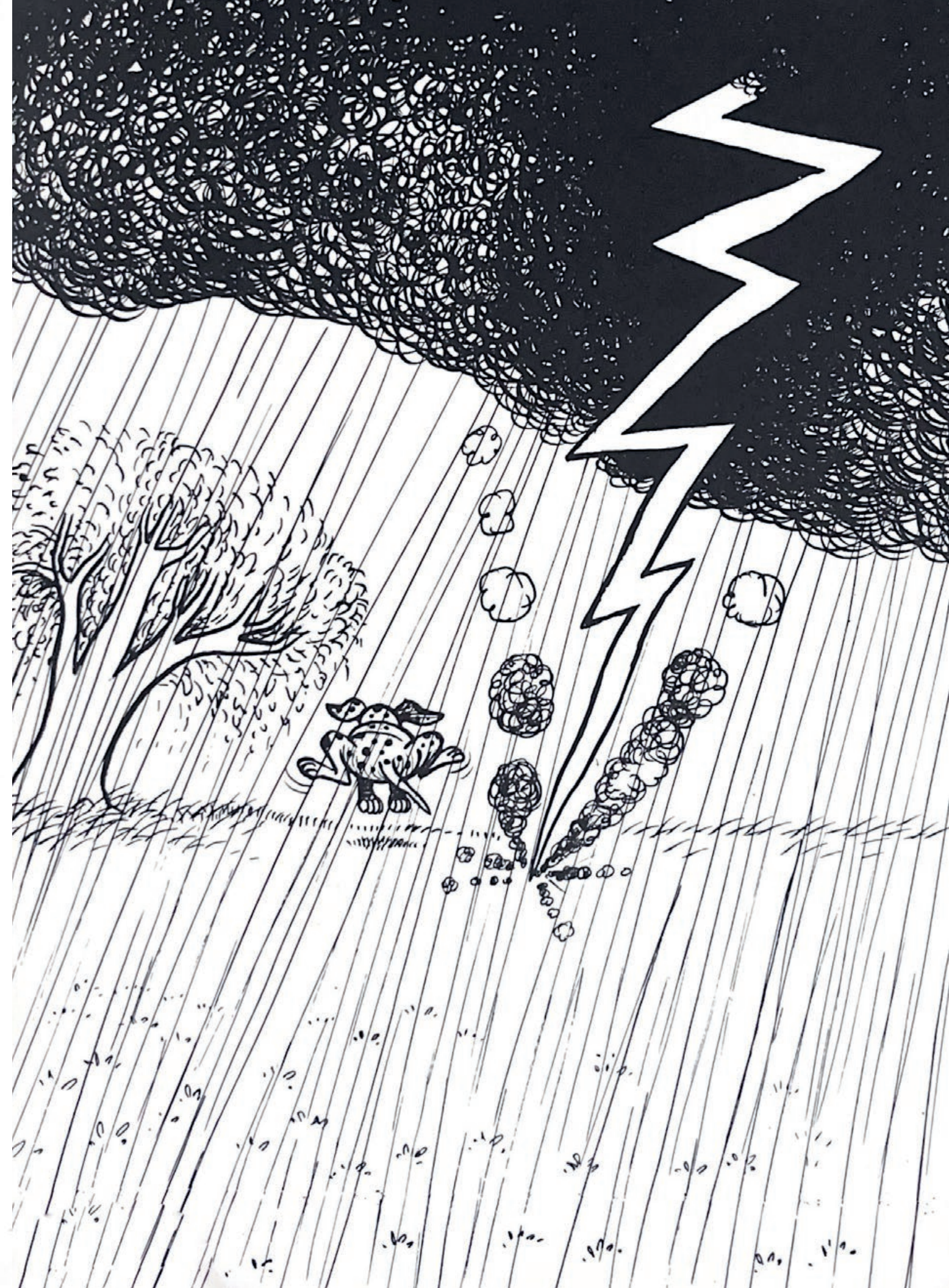
Now it was Gilbert's turn. He took a deep, deep
breath . . .





And barked a real dog bark—and at that very same moment there came a terrible, crashing clap of thunder!

Ivan was so terrified by Gilbert's thunderous bark that he streaked home and hid under the bed. And he never bothered Gilbert or the cats again.



Gilbert felt like a full-fledged dog at last, and even the cats were proud of him . . .
Which all goes to prove that a little encouragement, plus a bit of luck, goes a long, long way.
(Especially if you're a maladjusted dog.)



**BEWARE
OF THE FEARLE²²
DOG**

