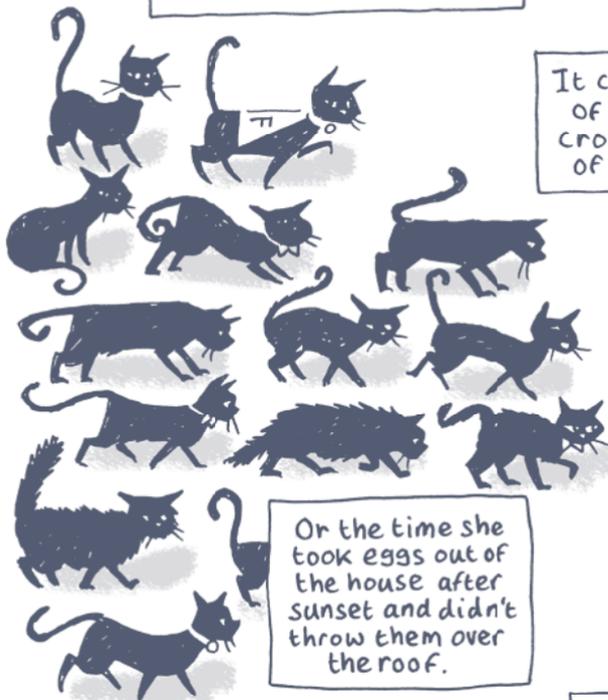


Strange things happen  
around Glistler  
Butterworth.



It could be because  
of the time she  
crossed a parade  
of black cats.

Or the time she  
took eggs out of  
the house after  
sunset and didn't  
throw them over  
the roof.



Or it could be because  
her top teeth  
came in first when  
she was a baby.

Glistler has  
always lived in  
Chilblain Hall, the  
family home  
that changes  
quicker than  
the seasons.



It was Autumn and the leaves were falling from the trees like rust-coloured rain. Halloween was approaching and Glister's dad was busy.

Can you take over? Make me a couple more six-footers to be getting on with while I rummage around the loft for the tree.



Look Sharpish, there's less than two months to go.

Glister's dad was obsessed with Christmas. He'd finished his shopping mid-summer. In fact, he'd get so far ahead that he often forgot where he'd hidden the presents and had to buy a whole new batch.

Wow!



The following year's Easter egg hunt always turned up some fantastic surprises.



Her father's preparations started earlier every year and his plans became more elaborate.

That'll be the wassailers coming to rehearse. Can you put the kettle on for them, please?

KNOCK  
KNOCK

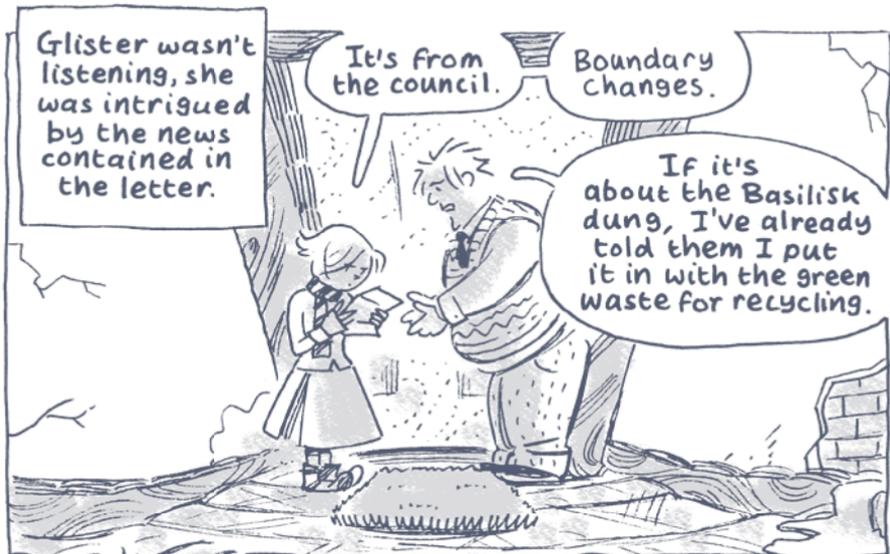


The fuss and fuff meant Christmas had long since been drained of any joy or excitement. For Glistler, it was a chore.



Not that it ever stopped her father from telling her...

Come on, love, I'm doing this all for you.





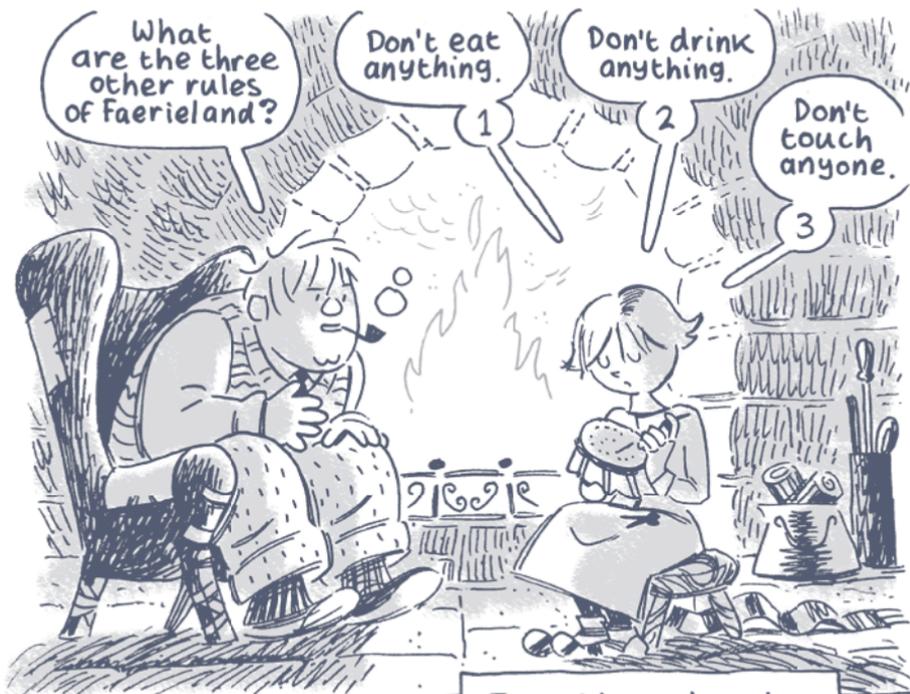
It's a public service. We don't want any ramblers accidentally crossing the border into Faerie, do we?

DANGER

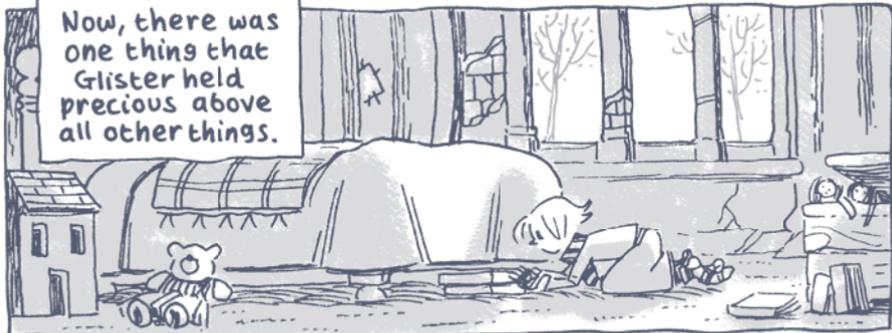
Later on, Glistar and her dad had the talk that they had had many times before.

What's the most important rule of Faerieland?

Don't go there.



Now, there was one thing that Glister held precious above all other things.

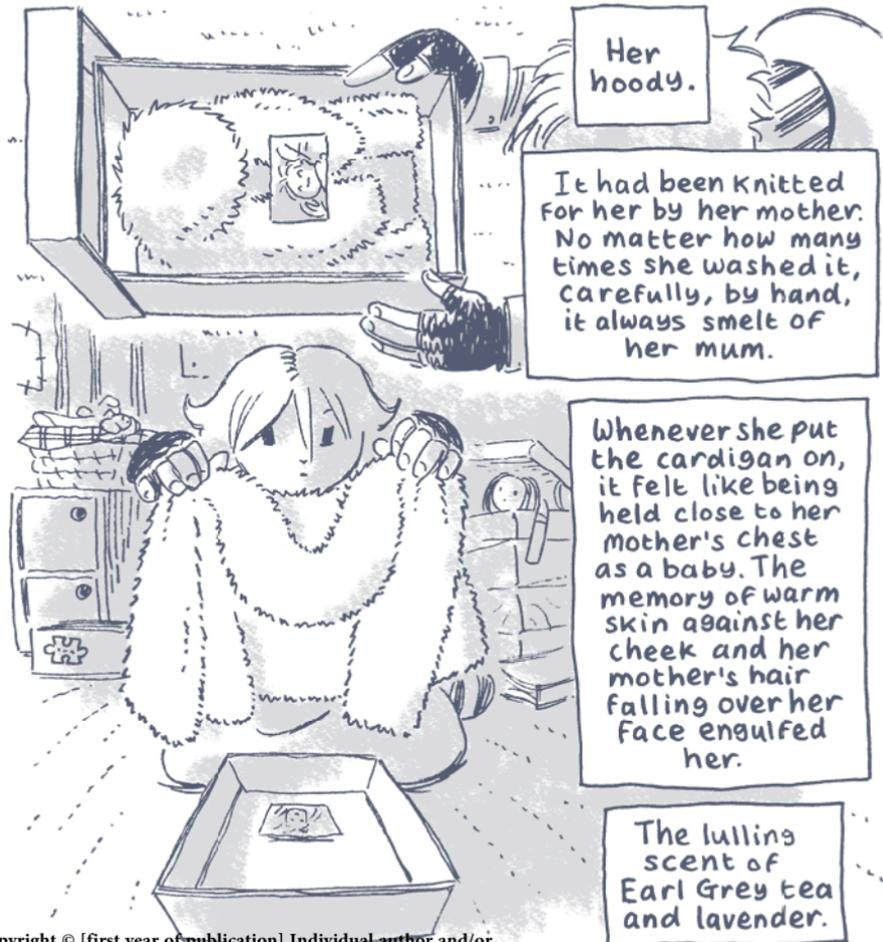


Her hoody.

It had been knitted for her by her mother. No matter how many times she washed it, carefully, by hand, it always smelt of her mum.

Whenever she put the cardigan on, it felt like being held close to her mother's chest as a baby. The memory of warm skin against her cheek and her mother's hair falling over her face engulfed her.

The lulling scent of Earl Grey tea and lavender.



It was clear that Glisters's mother had knitted something of herself into the garment because, although it had been made for a baby, it always fitted Glisters as she grew.

Glisters knew why her father tried to make each Christmas more magical than the last. It was because he could never give her the one present she truly wished for.



Her mum.