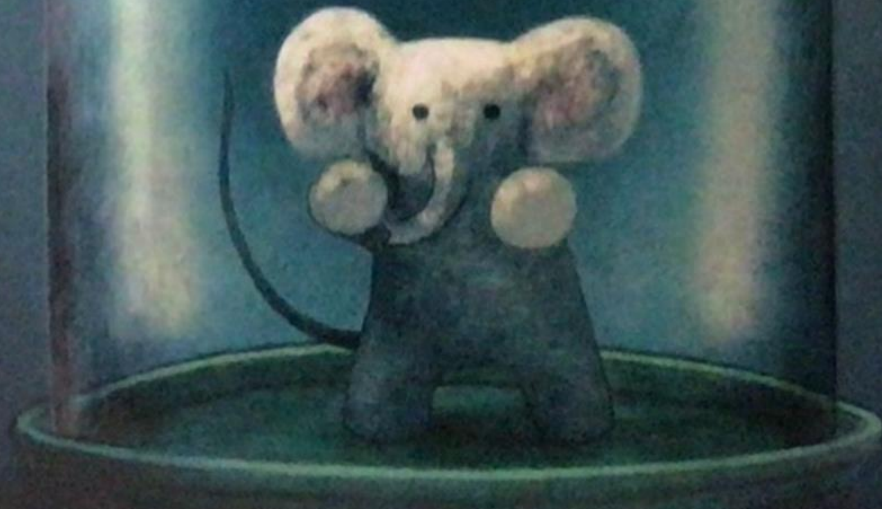


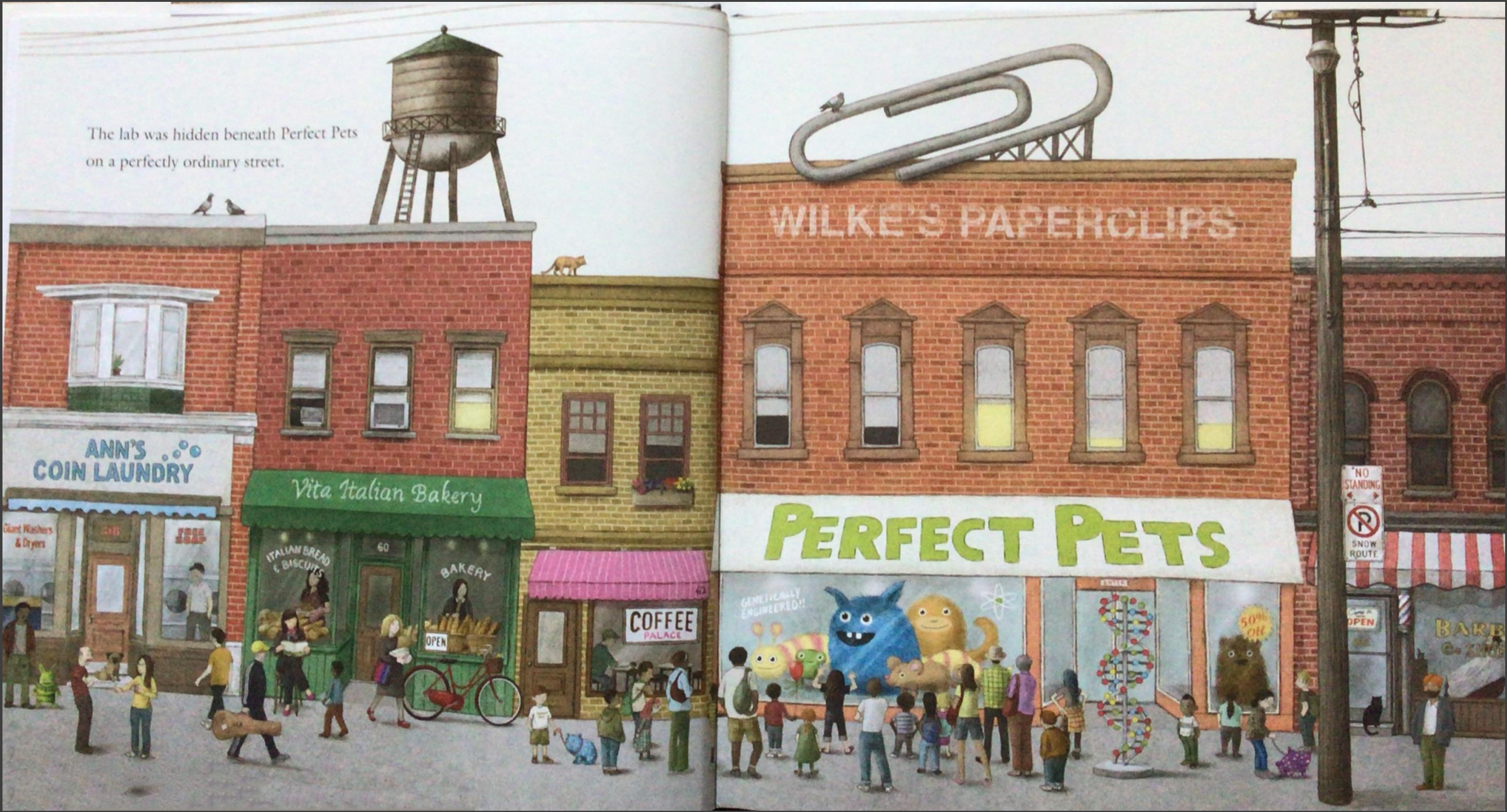
THE  
BARNABUS  
PROJECT



**B**arnabus lived in a secret lab.  
He was half mouse and half elephant,  
and he had lived in the lab as long as he could remember.



The lab was hidden beneath Perfect Pets  
on a perfectly ordinary street.



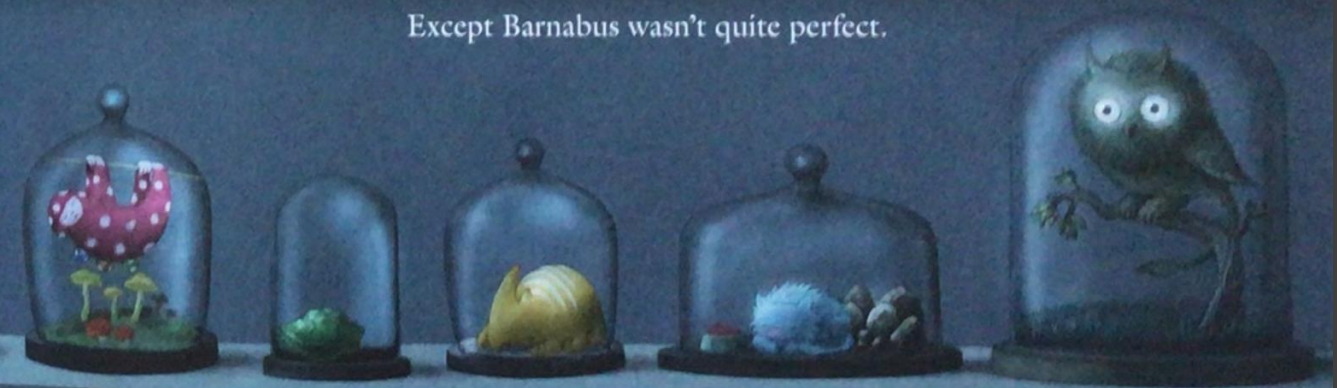


It was deep underground,  
where no one would  
ever find it.

The lab was where they made Perfect Pets.



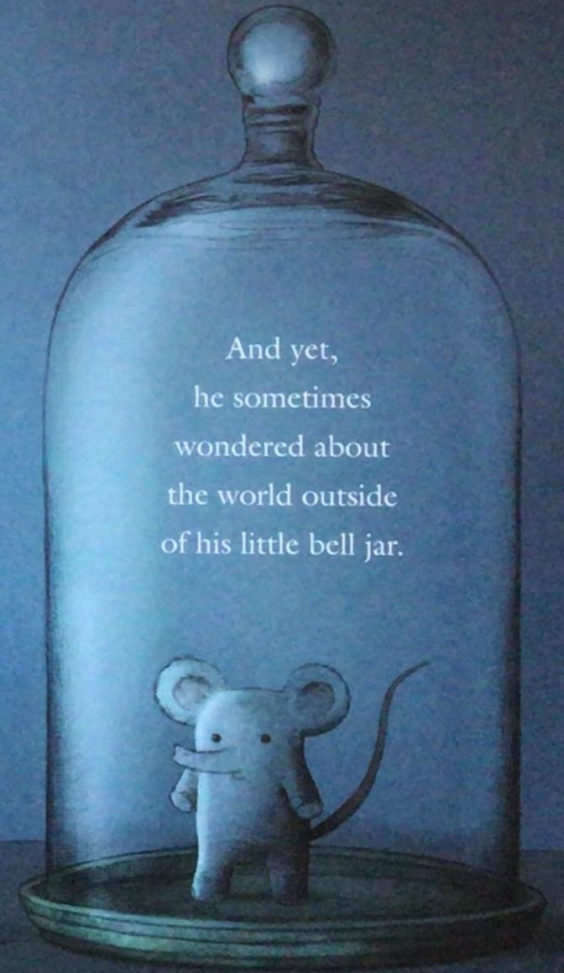
Except Barnabus wasn't quite perfect.




He had been put in a part of the lab called Failed Projects.

His home was rather small, but that  
just meant it was easier to keep tidy.

The Green Rubber Suits always  
fed Barnabus his favourite food,  
which was cheese and peanuts.



And yet,  
he sometimes  
wondered about  
the world outside  
of his little bell jar.

A detailed illustration of a city at night. The sky is dark blue with a large, bright full moon on the left and numerous small white stars. The city buildings are dark with many windows glowing with yellow light. A prominent sign with the word 'HOTEL' in red letters is visible on a building. In the foreground, there is a body of water with a boat and a large tree on the right side.

It was Pip the cockroach  
who told them stories  
about the world above.

Stories about a sparkling silver lake,  
green trees and mountains that reached  
all the way to the sky, lit with their own stars.

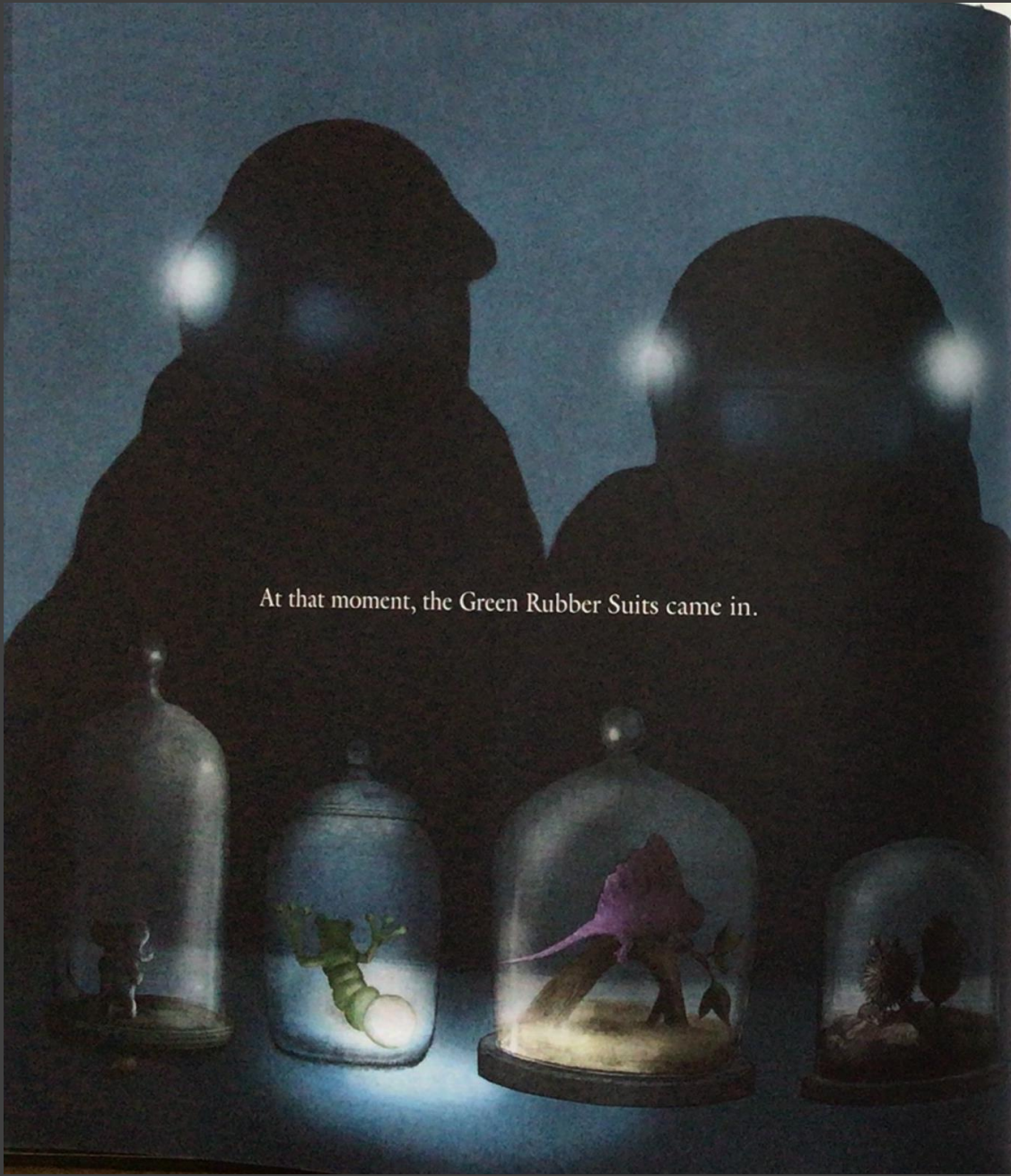


“Maybe someday I’ll sit on the grass  
and look at the stars,” said Barnabus.

And when he closed his eyes, he almost could.

“Impossible,” said Pip.

“Nothing is impossible,” said Barnabus.  
But secretly he worried his friend might be right.



At that moment, the Green Rubber Suits came in.

They turned on the lights and  
checked each bell jar one by one.

They made strange noises  
to each other.

They peered  
and they poked.

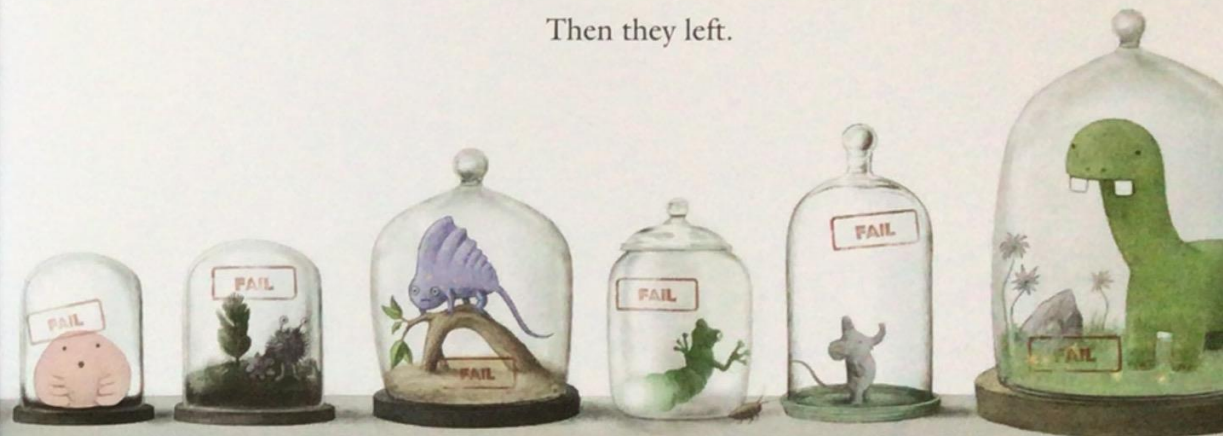
They pecked  
and they prodded.



They put red stamps on all the jars.

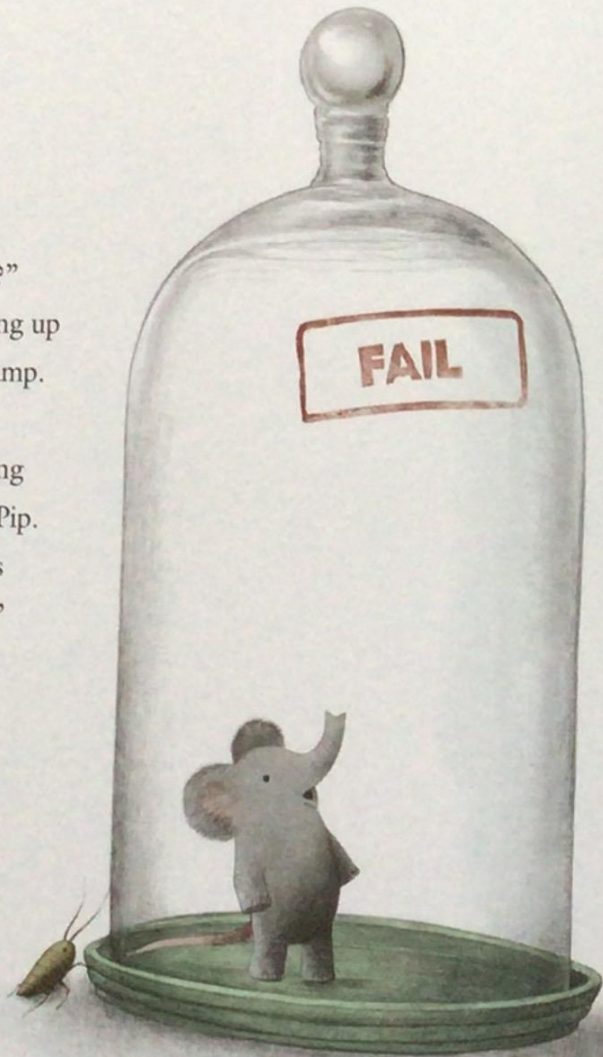


Then they left.



“What does it mean?”  
said Barnabus, looking up  
at the strange red stamp.

“It means you’re going  
to be recycled,” said Pip.  
“That’s what happens  
to all Failed Projects.”



“You’ll be fluffier afterwards,”  
offered Pip kindly.

“And you’ll be cuter,  
and your eyes will  
probably be bigger.”



“I like having small eyes,” said Barnabus,  
although he wasn’t even sure any more.

Barnabus slumped in his jar.

He wasn't fluffy enough, and his eyes were beady,  
but he liked himself just the way he was.

And what if, after he was recycled, peanuts  
and cheese were no longer his favourite foods?

What if his friends didn't recognise him after?

What if he no longer cared about green trees  
and mountains lit with their own stars?



“We need to escape!” said Barnabus suddenly.  
The other Failed Projects gasped, but then they cheered.  
“Impossible,” said Pip.

“Nothing is impossible,” said Barnabus.  
He took a step back...





... and he kicked as hard as he could.



He charged at the glass.



But the bell jar was much stronger than he was.



Finally, Barnabus made a sad sound with his trunk.



A tiny crack appeared!