

Stop the Earth I want to get off!

Álvaro Magalhães
Ilustração de Carlos J. Campos



Stupid Crisis!

Picasso was shivering when he woke up in the middle of the morning on his cushion. It was the peak of winter and the heating was still off. It wasn't broken, that's for sure, because no one had been called to fix it.

So the only logical answer was money, or the lack of it.

There wasn't enough money to pay the electricity bill.

He went to the kitchen and in his bowl there were only a few biscuits which tasted like soap. They were soap biscuits, not salmon biscuits as advertised. His litter box hadn't been cleaned in a week. What was wrong in his house?

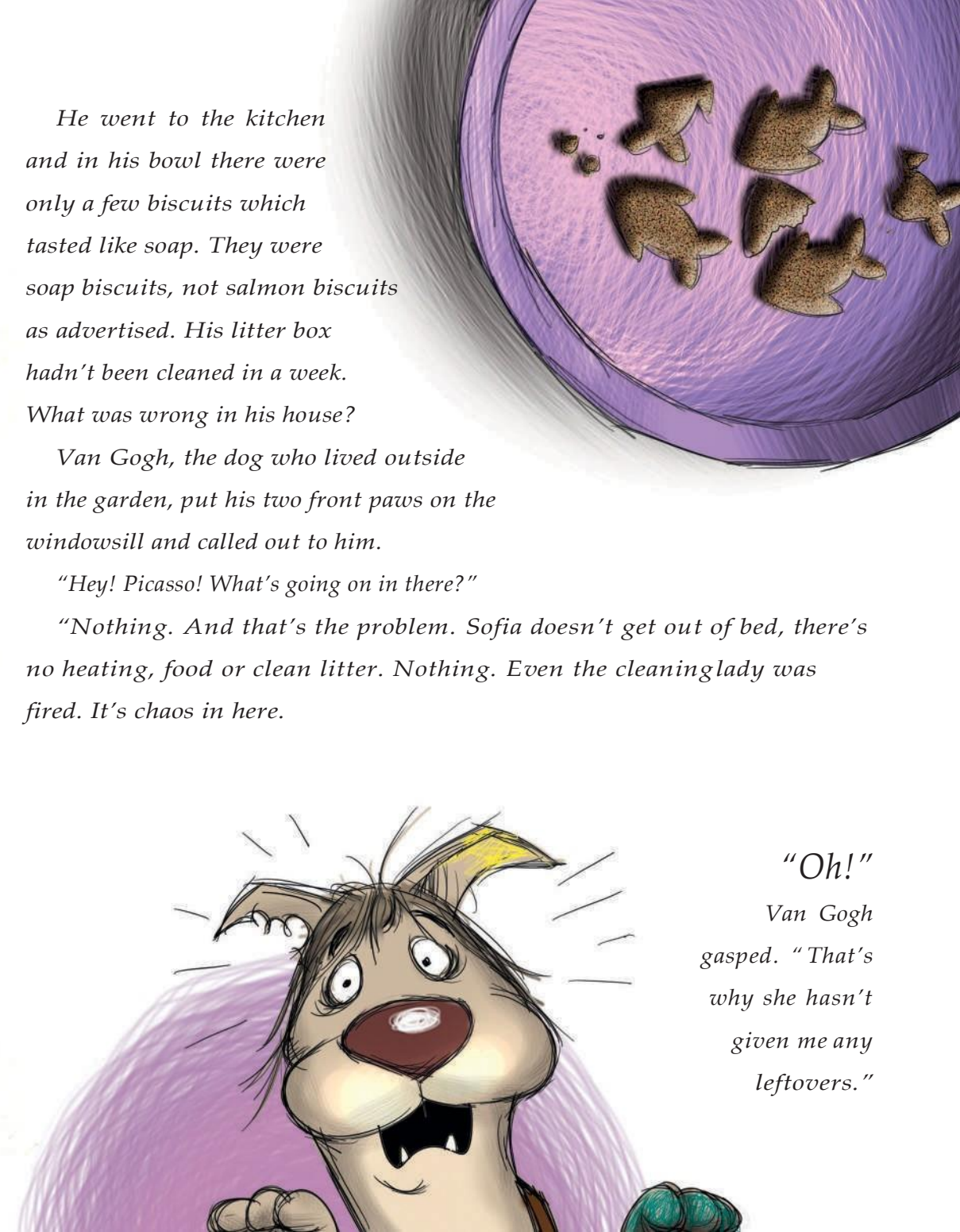
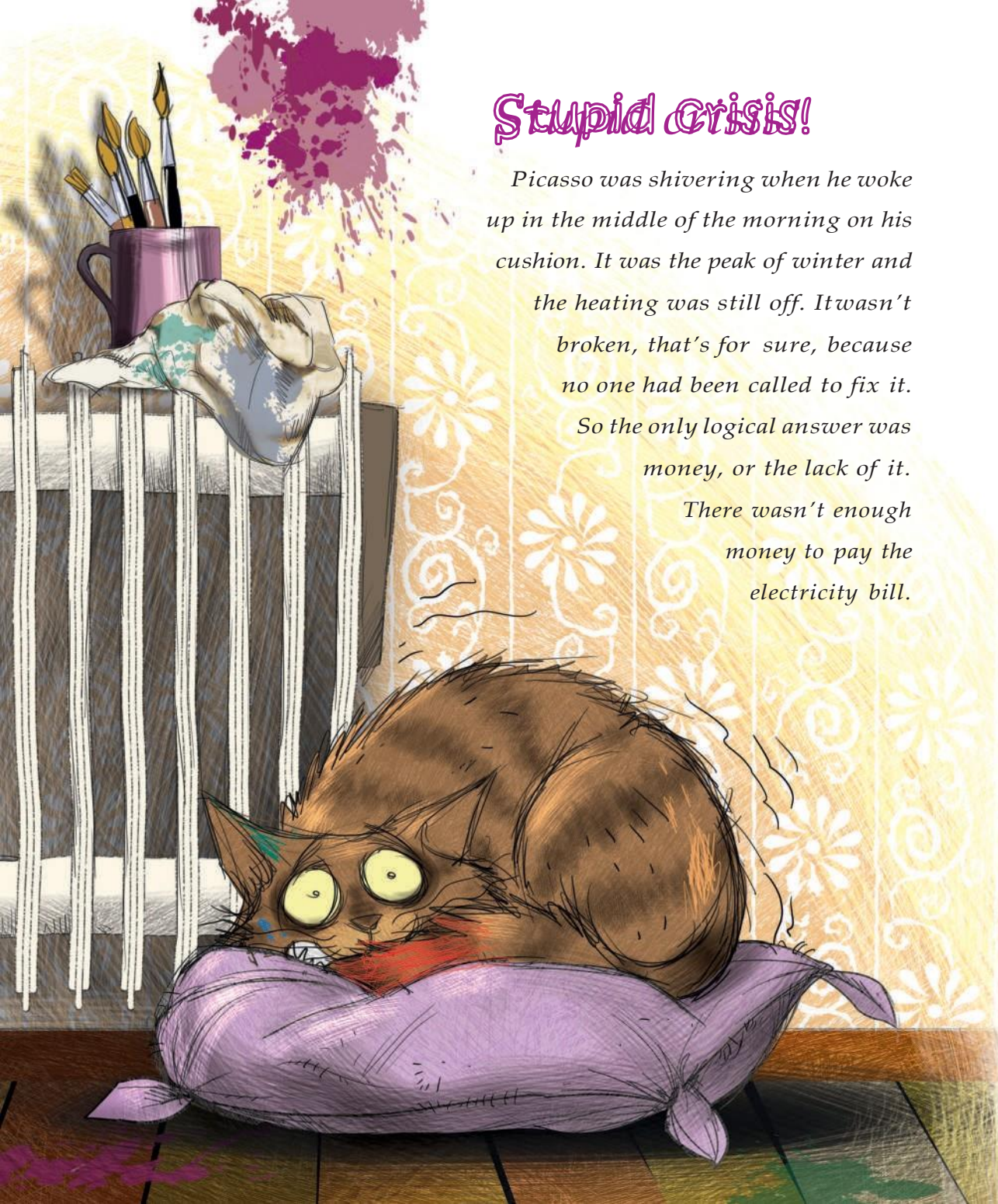
Van Gogh, the dog who lived outside in the garden, put his two front paws on the windowsill and called out to him.

"Hey! Picasso! What's going on in there?"

"Nothing. And that's the problem. Sofia doesn't get out of bed, there's no heating, food or clean litter. Nothing. Even the cleaning lady was fired. It's chaos in here.

"Oh!"

Van Gogh gasped. "That's why she hasn't given me any leftovers."





"There is nothing to leave since there are no meals to begin with." Picasso informed him. "She is living on toast and tea. She doesn't get out of bed, which is the only warm place in the house. She either has flu and she's going to fill the house of germs, or she is depressed again.

"What is that?" Van Gogh asked.

"It's a condition two-paws get sometimes: great sadness."

"Ah!"

"Or it's the crisis" Picasso continued. "Everyone talks about it nonstop."

"What is "crisis"?"

"That's a word they use to refer to when there is a crisis."

"Ok, then. But what is a "crisis"?"

Picasso thought for a moment.

"I think it's the name given to things when they go bad. Or it's somebody's name. Either way it's all its fault. I just hope never to be face to face with it."



"Me too." Van Gogh added with an angry stare.

A car stopped on the driveway.

"It must be Sofia's boyfriend." Picasso concluded. "When she is like this, she always calls him."

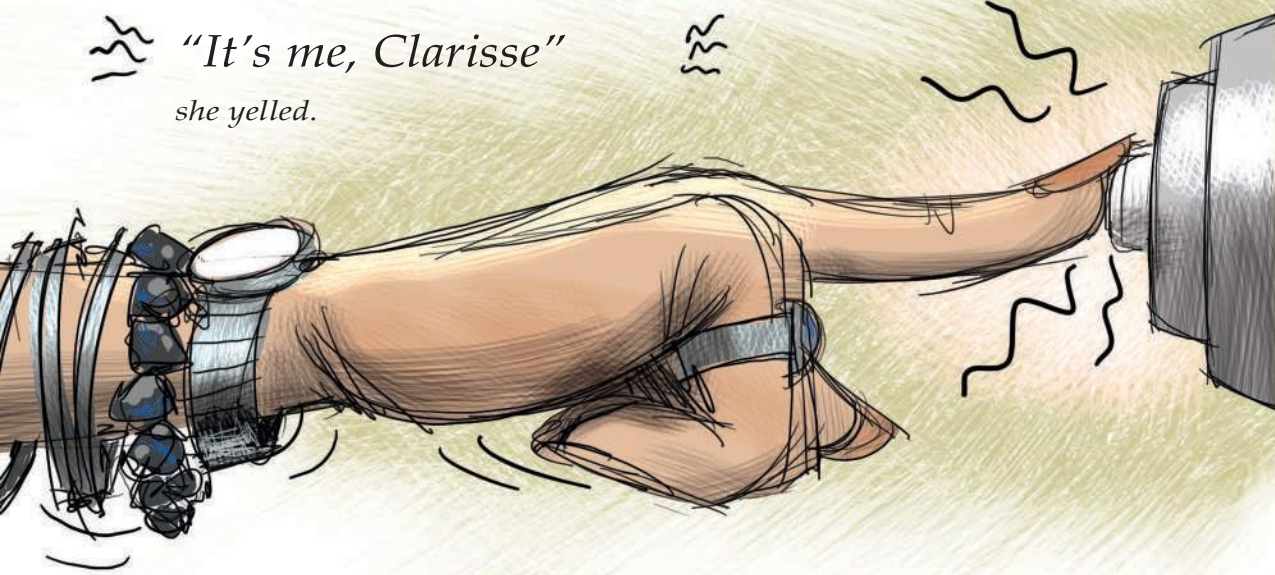
"Maybe he will give us proper food" Van Gogh said wagging his tail. "Forget it. He only gives us orders: don't do this, don't do that, don't miaow, don't jump..."

He's like a lion tamer. "



But it wasn't Sofia's boyfriend. It was Clarisse, from the gallery representing Sofia. She came to pick a painting up for a contest. She knocked on the door and clapped both at the same time. She was in a hurry.

"It's me, Clarisse"
she yelled.



However, Sofia, who was shut up in her bedroom, couldn't hear her. Picasso pricked his hears up.

"Did you hear what she said?" he asked.

"I don't understand two-paws'" answered Van Gogh.

"She said: 'It's me, Crisis!'"
Picasso explained.

Sofia got up, wrapped in a robe, opened the door.

"The one that went in, Crisis, is she the one to blame for all this?" Van Gogh asked.



Picasso nodded and he continued:

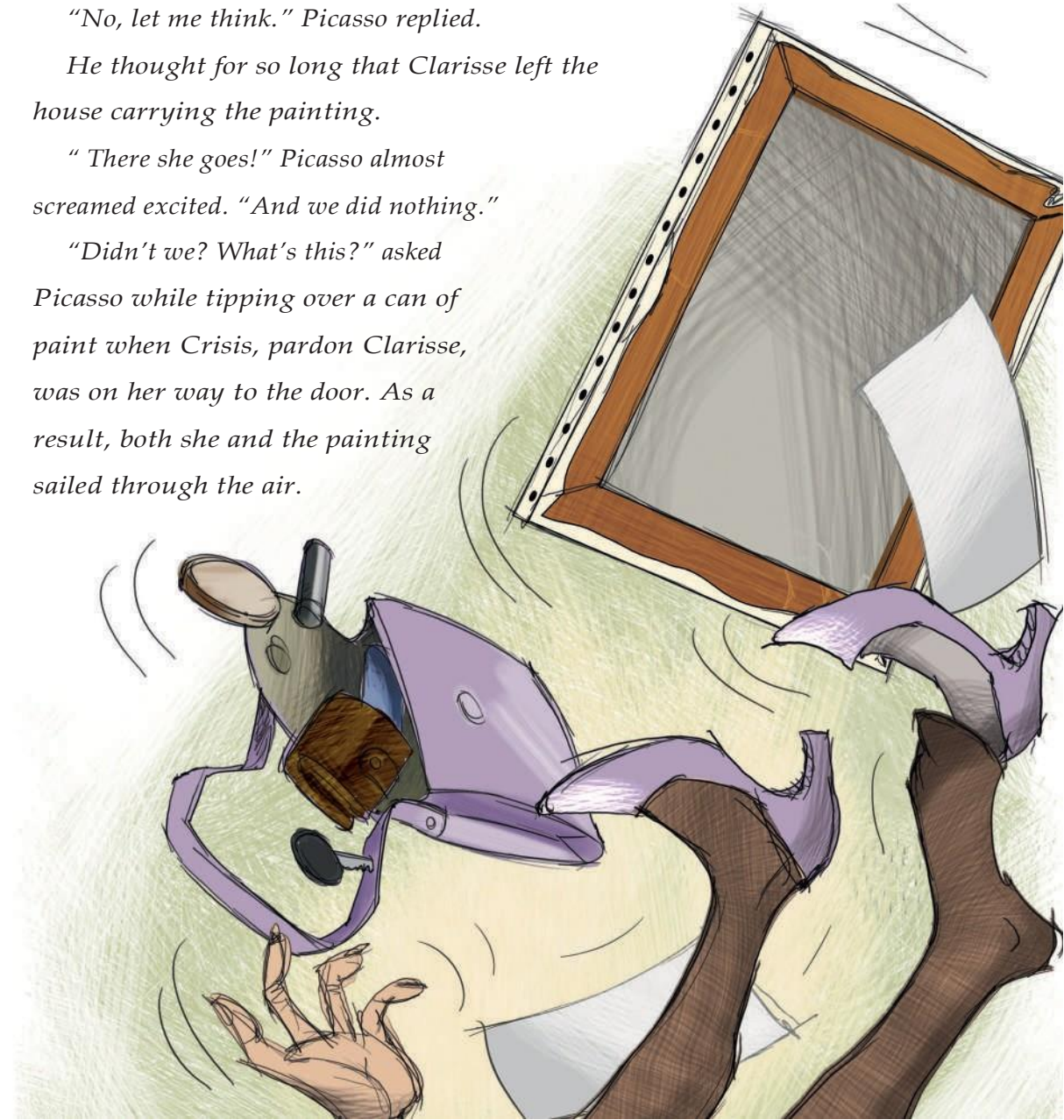
"Let's throw her out. You open the door and I'll bite her leg. Good plan, isn't it?"

"No, let me think." Picasso replied.

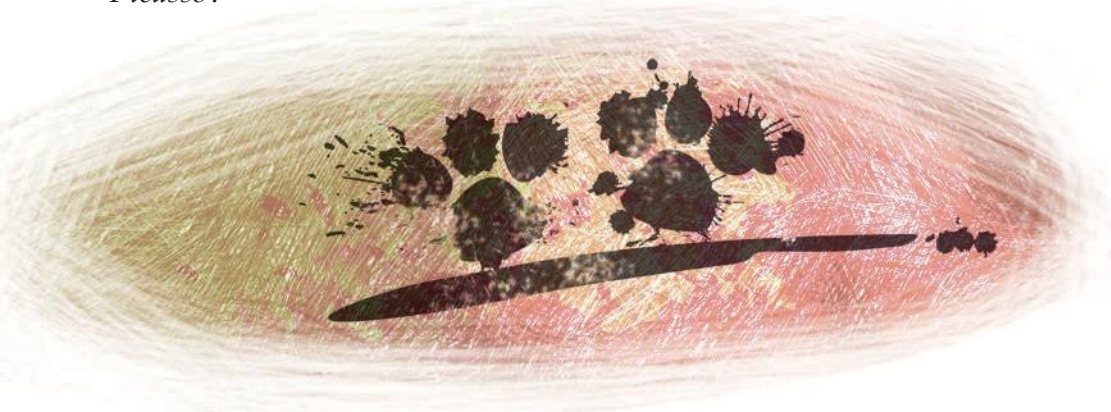
He thought for so long that Clarisse left the house carrying the painting.

"There she goes!" Picasso almost screamed excited. "And we did nothing."

"Didn't we? What's this?" asked Picasso while tipping over a can of paint when Crisis, pardon Clarisse, was on her way to the door. As a result, both she and the painting sailed through the air.



“At least she won’t take the better us” Picasso said before running into the house. Jumping onto the windowsill, he pu his paws on the painting and left two smears and a line. Let’s say, in his own way, he had painted it too. And wasn’t he named after a famous painter? Wasn’t he Picasso?



Van Gogh ran and hid in his doghouse. Only when Crisis, pardon, Clarisse, stood up and left limping with the painting he decided to come outside.



“Do you think we got rid of her for good?” he asked poking his head out of the doghouse door.

“I don’t know” Picasso said. “We’ll have to wait and see if things get better. And they have to or I won’t take it. I look as if I’m strong but I have my weaknesses.

