

## CHAPTER NINE



Very early the following morning seven spiny shapes emerged from under the front gates of Numbers 5A and 5B. They set off up the road, passing garden after garden from many of which (like 9B) a hedgehog had set out on a journey to the Park, never to return. If only they could succeed today! Henceforth the street would be forever safe for all hedgehogkind!



They passed the factory and the automatic crossing with its little red and green men, and came at last to the spot where Max had seen the great female with the magic wand. Opposite them across the street, the school clock showed six. The hedgehogs concealed themselves in a doorway and settled down to wait.

At a quarter past eight, the lollipop lady arrived. Even the earliest children never appeared before half-past, but she liked to be in good time. She stood stamping her large feet, for it was a crisp morning. She smoothed down her long white coat. She settled her black cap firmly. Then, grasping her staff of office, its circular disc bearing the words 'Caution. Children crossing', she stood at attention at the kerbside, ready for the firstcomers, while the

early rush-hour traffic roared past.

Never, for the rest of her life, did the lollipop lady forget the sight that now met her eyes. Coming along the pavement towards her were seven hedgehogs in single file.

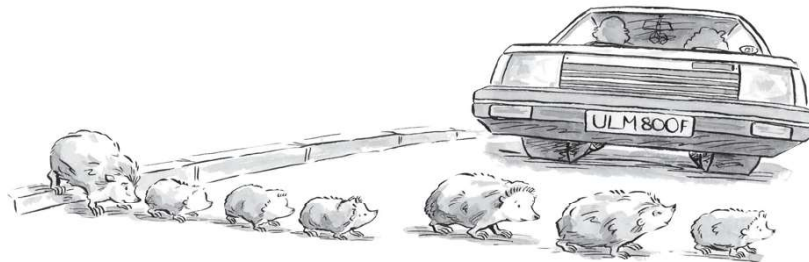
‘Surely you’re not going to school?’ said the lollipop lady when they reached her.

The noise she made meant nothing to Max, but he advanced to the edge of the kerb, his nose pointing eagerly across the street, the others lined up behind him.



‘We wish to go to the Park,’ he said. ‘Kindly stop the traffic.’ The noise he made meant nothing to the lollipop lady, but his intention was as clear as the day. Raising her magic wand on high, the great female strode into the middle of the street and at the sight of her the traffic meekly halted.

Then, before the astonished eyes of those fortunate enough to witness this historic occasion, there walked across the street a slow, solemn dignified procession – of hedgehogs.



At the rear was Uncle B, shepherding before him Peony, Pansy and Petunia. In front of them was Ma. In front of her was Pa. But at the head of the file there marched that pioneer of road safety, Victor Maximilian St George, a name to be remembered

forever by hedgehogs the world over.

‘Tell us the story of the First Crossing, Mummy,’ little hedgehogs would plead at bedtime, and then they would listen, enthralled, to the tale of Max, the hedgehog who became a hodgeheg who became a hero. Always the mothers ended with the same words: ‘... and they all crossed happily ever after!’

**I hope you loved The Hodgeheg by Dick King-Smith as much as I did!!**

**Your task today is to write a book review, which can be used to encourage other children to read The Hodgeheg :-)**

**There is a book review writing frame attached to our class page if you would like to use it to help you.**