BEFORE READING

1 Complete these sentences about the Great Fire of London.

a The fire happens in the year . . .

1 ☑ 1666.   **2** ☐ 1936.   **3** ☐ 1992.

b The fire starts . . .

1 ☒ at a baker's.   **2** ☐ in the street.   **3** ☐ in someone's garden.

c The fire stops . . .

1 ☐ after ten hours.   **2** ☒ after five days.   **3** ☐ after three months.

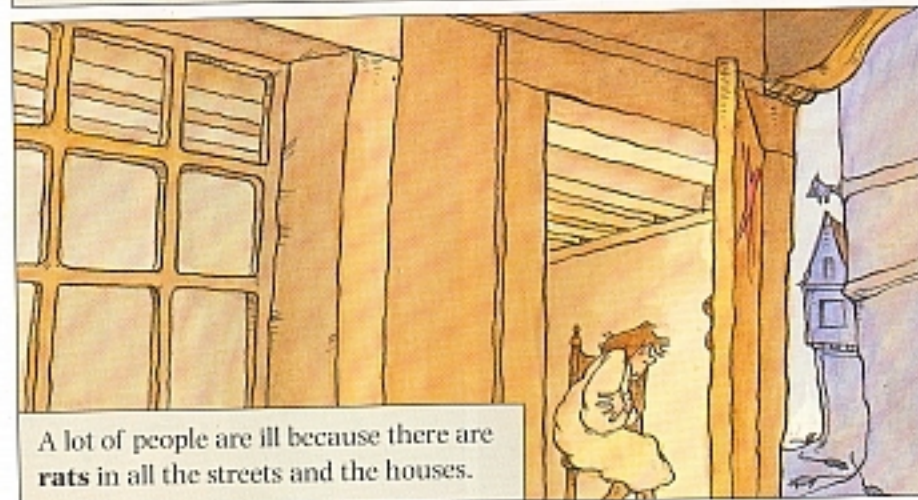**2 Your house is on fire! What three things do you take with you?**

a *Taken water*   **b** *Wet Mohaws*   **c** *Help the persons*

The Great Fire of London

Chapter 1

It is the year 1666. London is an old **city** with lots of **narrow** streets.

A lot of people are ill because there are **rats** in all the streets and the houses.

city (plural **cities**) a big and important town

narrow not very big

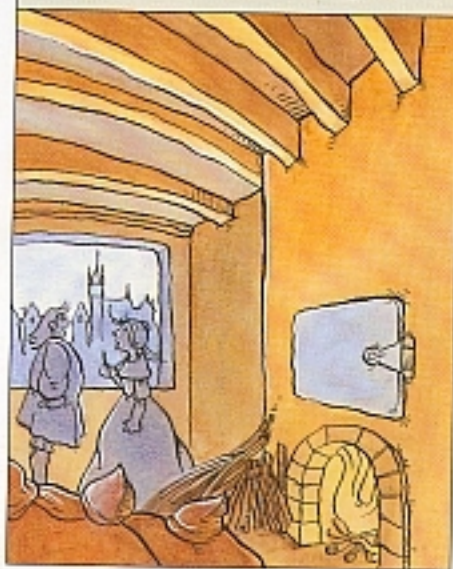**rat** an animal like a big mouse; it is often dirty and can make people ill

One evening, a **baker**, Thomas Farriner, and his daughter, Harriet, are making bread.

Thomas Farriner BAKER TO King Charles II

It is late. 'We must work quickly,' says Thomas. 'We need this bread for the **King** in the morning.'

Just then, Mary, the baker's **maid**, comes in.
'You're late, Mary!' says Thomas.
'Sorry, Mr Farriner,' says Mary.

Thomas, Harriet and Mary make bread for two hours.

Then Mr Farriner's wife, Anne, calls down to them. 'Time for bed, girls,' she says.
'We're just finishing,' says Harriet.

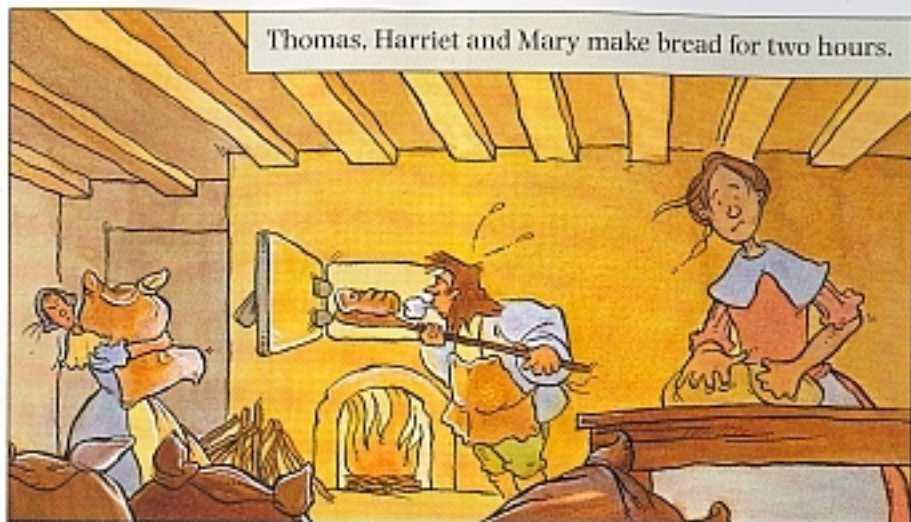Harriet and Mary go up to bed. Thomas takes the bread from the **oven**.

baker a person who makes bread

king the most important man in a country; the king here is Charles II, King of England 1660–1685

maid a woman who works in a rich person's house

oven this is hot and it has a door; you make things to eat in it
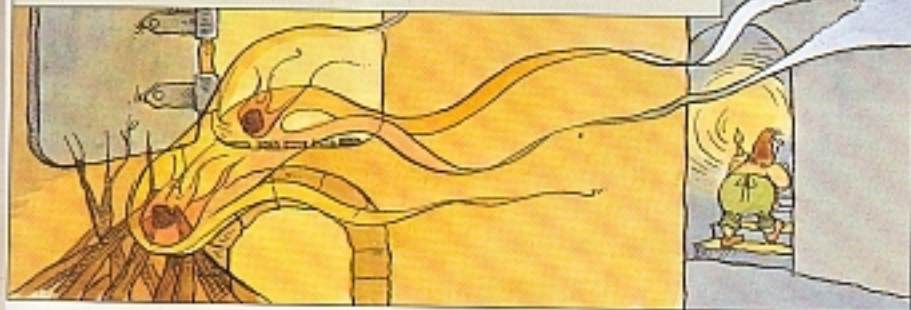
'Good. The **fire** is nearly **out** now,' thinks Thomas.

'Thomas!' calls Anne. 'What are you doing? It's very late.'

Thomas goes up to bed but he doesn't close the oven door.

An hour later the baker's shop is **on fire**.

'**Wake up** girls! Wake up!' **cries** Anne. 'The house is on fire!'

'Quick. Open the window,' says Thomas. 'Let's go up on the **roof**.'

Thomas **jumps** to the house **next door**.

Anne and Harriet **follow** him.

But Mary stays on the roof of the baker's shop. 'Jump over here!' they all cry. 'Jump!' 'I can't,' says Mary. 'I'm afraid.'

fire this is red and hot, and it burns   **out** not burning with no fire   **on fire** when something is on fire, it is red, hot and burning

wake up to stop sleeping   **roof** the top of a building   **next door** next to his house
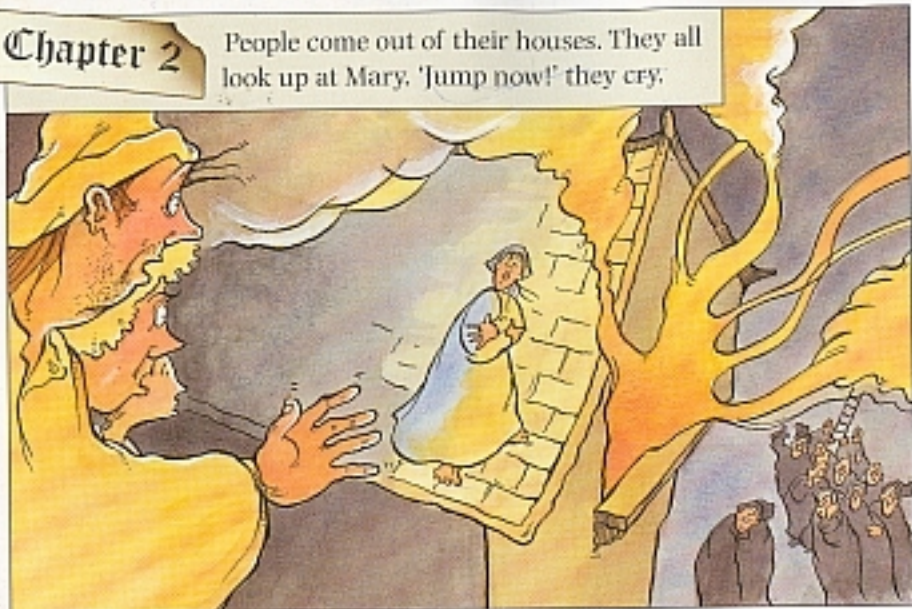
cry to call or say noisily   **jump** to move fast on your legs from one thing to a different thing   **follow** to go after someone

Chapter 2 People come out of their houses. They all look up at Mary. 'Jump now!' they cry.

'I can't!' says Mary. 'Please help me!'

'I'm going back,' says Thomas. 'We can't leave her. Wait here.'

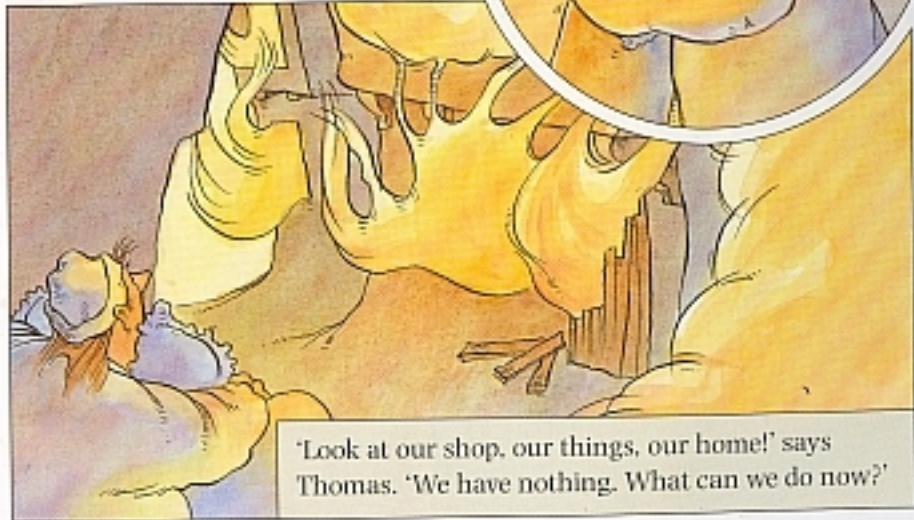'Don't go, Thomas!' cries Anne. 'Look, now this house is on fire, too.'

Just then, someone brings a **ladder**. Thomas, Anne and Harriet quickly **climb** down.

Ten minutes later . . .
'Oh mother,' says Harriet. 'Poor Mary, she's – she's dead.'
'Don't cry, my love,' says her mother.

'Look at our shop, our things, our home!' says Thomas. 'We have nothing. What can we do now?'

ladder you can go up or down tall buildings on this

climb to go up or down using your hands and feet

There is a **strong wind**, and the fire **spreads** quickly to more houses in Pudding **Lane**. 'Where are the **fire-fighters**?' everybody asks.

Just then twenty fire-fighters arrive. They begin to put water on the fire.

'Bring more water!' they cry. 'We need more water now.'

But the fire is **out of control**, and soon all the houses in Pudding Lane are on fire.

The people in the street begin to ask: 'Where is the **Lord Mayor** of London?' 'He's **asleep** in bed,' says an old man. 'We want the Lord Mayor!' cry the people.
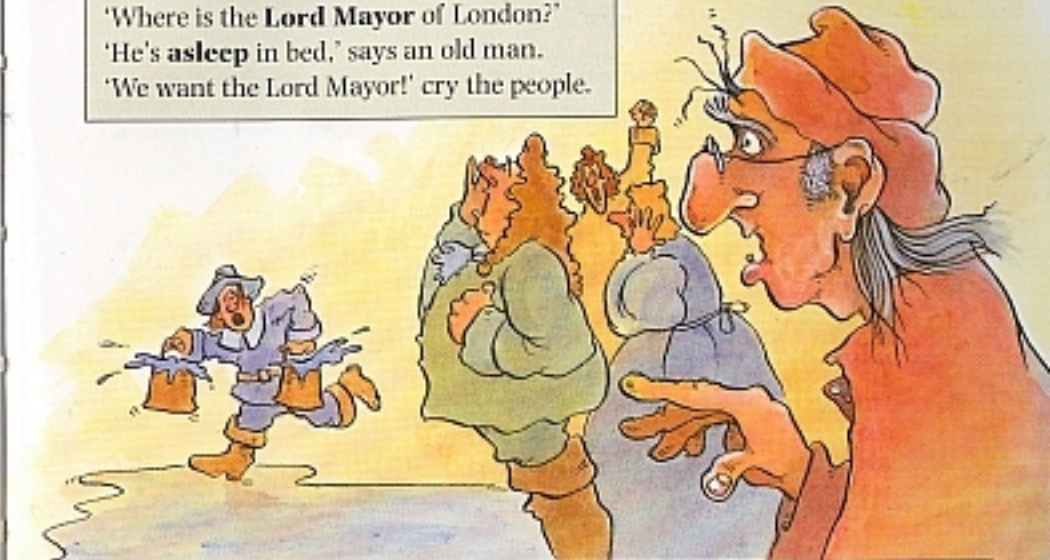
'Go and find the Lord Mayor. He lives in Maiden Lane,' says the **chief** fire-fighter to a boy. 'He must come quickly.'

'What can we do?' asks Anne. 'We can't stay here.' 'Let's go down to the **River Thames**,' cries Thomas. 'Follow me!'

---

strong very fast

wind air that moves

spread to move to other houses

lane a narrow road

fire-fighter a person who stops fires

out of control when you cannot stop something or make it do what you want

Lord Mayor the most important man in London
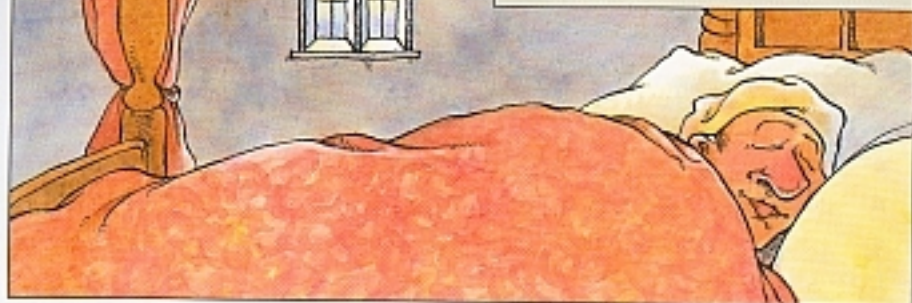
asleep sleeping

chief the most important

river water that moves in a long line

Thames /temz/

Chapter 3

In a different **part** of London, Samuel **Pepys** is asleep in his bed.

Pepys works for the **government**.

At home he writes a **diary** every day.

Pepys has a maid called Jane. At three o'clock in the morning she comes to his room. 'Wake up, **sir**!' she says. 'There's a fire in the city!'

Pepys goes to the window and looks out across London.

'It isn't a big fire,' he says to Jane. 'I'm going back to bed. Good night.'

An hour later, Jane comes back. 'Sir, there are more than three hundred houses on fire!' she cries.

Pepys jumps out of bed. He quickly puts on his **clothes**.

part some, but not all of something

Pepys /piːps/

government the people who work with the king to decide what happens in the country

diary a book where you write about what happens every day

sir you say this when you talk to a rich or important man

clothes people wear these

'I must go to the **Tower** of London,' says Pepys. 'I can see everything from there.'

Near the Tower, Pepys meets his good friend, Richard Moore.

'What's happening?' asks Pepys. 'It's very bad **news**,' says Moore. 'There's a big fire down near the river. Everybody says it's out of control.'
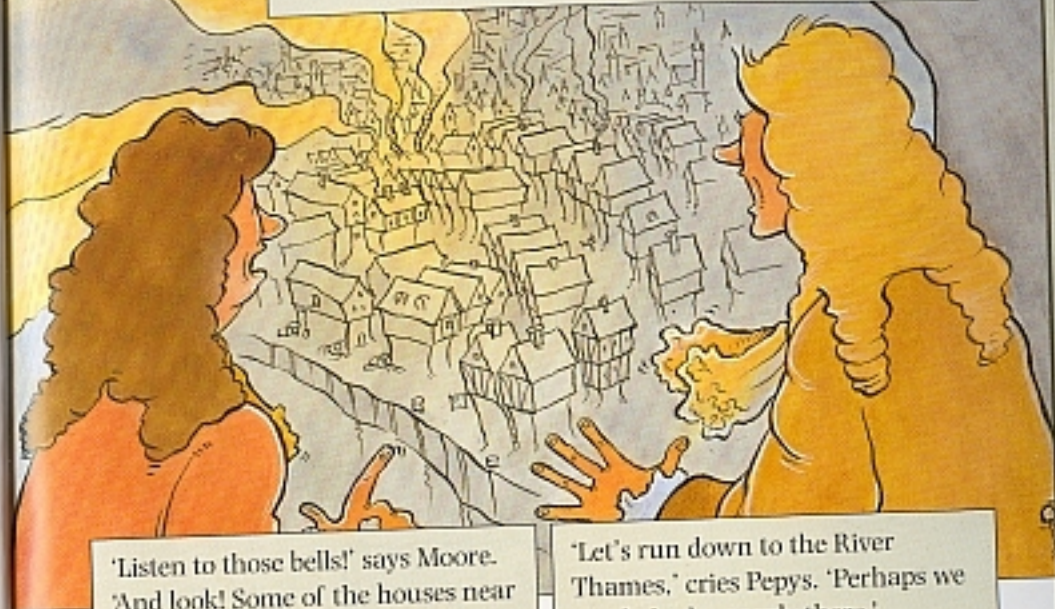
They climb up the hill to the Tower. It is now six o'clock in the morning.

Big **clouds** of smoke are beginning to spread across London. **Bells** are **ringing** from every **church** in the city.

'Listen to those bells!' says Moore. 'And look! Some of the houses near London **Bridge** are now on fire.'

'Let's run down to the River Thames,' cries Pepys. 'Perhaps we can help the people there.'

tower a tall building

news when someone tells you something new

cloud a big white or grey thing in the sky

bell a metal thing that makes a noise when you move it

ring to make a noise like a bell

church Christian people go here to pray

bridge people can go across a river on this

Chapter 4

Pepys and Moore arrive at the river. **Crowds** of people are running down to the river **bank**. The fire is now in the next street.

Families leave their houses with their hands **full**. They are **carrying** their things away from the fire.

Everybody wants a **boat** on the river. 'Over here!' cries a young man to the people in the boats. 'I'm first,' says an old woman.

Three people climb quickly into one of the boats. It is the Farriner family from Pudding Lane.

'It's Thomas Farriner from Pudding Lane,' cries a man in the crowd. 'Tell us about the fire in your baker's shop!' Thomas is **frightened**. 'I . . . I'm not a baker,' he says. 'I have a flower shop in Cat Street.'

The Farriner family leave quickly and go down the river in the boat.

Pepys and Moore walk nearer to the fire. There are clouds of smoke, and thousands of rats are in the streets. They are running from the **burning** houses.

crowd a lot of people together

bank where you can walk next to a river

full with things in them

carry to take

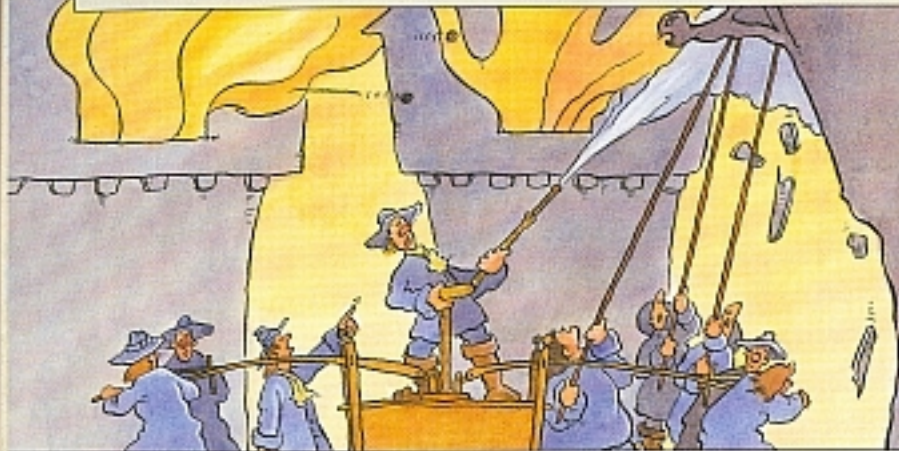**boat** you go across water in this

frightened afraid

burning on fire

Just then, they meet twenty fire-fighters **outside** a burning building. They are putting water on the fire but it is spreading quickly.

'Can you stop the fire?' Pepys asks the chief fire-fighter.
'It's no good,' he answers. 'There's nothing we can do.'
'But you must **blow up** the buildings in front of the fire!' says Pepys. 'Then it can't spread to different parts of the city.'

'But we need to ask Thomas Bludworth, the Lord Mayor,' says the chief fire-fighter.
'Where is he?' asks Pepys.
'Nobody knows,' he answers.

'What can we do?' shouts Moore.
'We must speak to the King.' says Pepys. 'Come on. Let's find a boat. We can go up the river to Whitehall **Palace**. Perhaps we can speak to the King there.'

Pepys and Moore go quickly up the River Thames. It is eleven o'clock in the morning but the sky is black with clouds of smoke.

The wind is stronger, and many streets are now on fire. The houses on London Bridge are burning fast, and people are jumping into the river.

outside in front of

blow up to break into small pieces noisily

palace a big house where a king lives

They arrive at the Palace of Whitehall.
'We're here to see the King,' says Pepys at the front door.

'What's your name?' asks the guard.
'Samuel Pepys.'
'Wait here, sir,' says the **guard**.

A crowd of men is standing outside the door. They are all talking excitedly.
'We must wait for rain,' says one old man.
'No, we must bring more water from the river,' says a young man.

'But we need more fire-fighters to do that!' cries a third man.

'What do you two think?' the young man calls to Pepys and Moore.

Pepys walks over to the crowd of men. 'There is **only** one **solution**,' he says. 'We must blow up the buildings in front of the fire.'

Suddenly, everybody goes quiet. 'Blow up the buildings in front of the fire?' says the young man. He is **surprised**.
'Yes, that's right,' says Pepys.

Just then the guard cries: 'The King wants to see Samuel Pepys.' Now Pepys is surprised.

guard a man who stops people from going into a building

only not more than

solution the answer to a problem

surprised feeling that something very new is suddenly happening

Pepys goes into the King's room. **Your Majesty**, this is Samuel Pepys,' says the guard.

'Good morning, Mr Pepys,' says the King. 'I hear you have news about the fire. Is this true?'
'Yes, Your Majesty,' says Pepys.

'The fire is now out of control, Your Majesty,' says Pepys. 'We must do something very quickly.'
'But what?' asks the King.

'The fire-fighters must blow up the houses in front of the fire,' says Pepys.

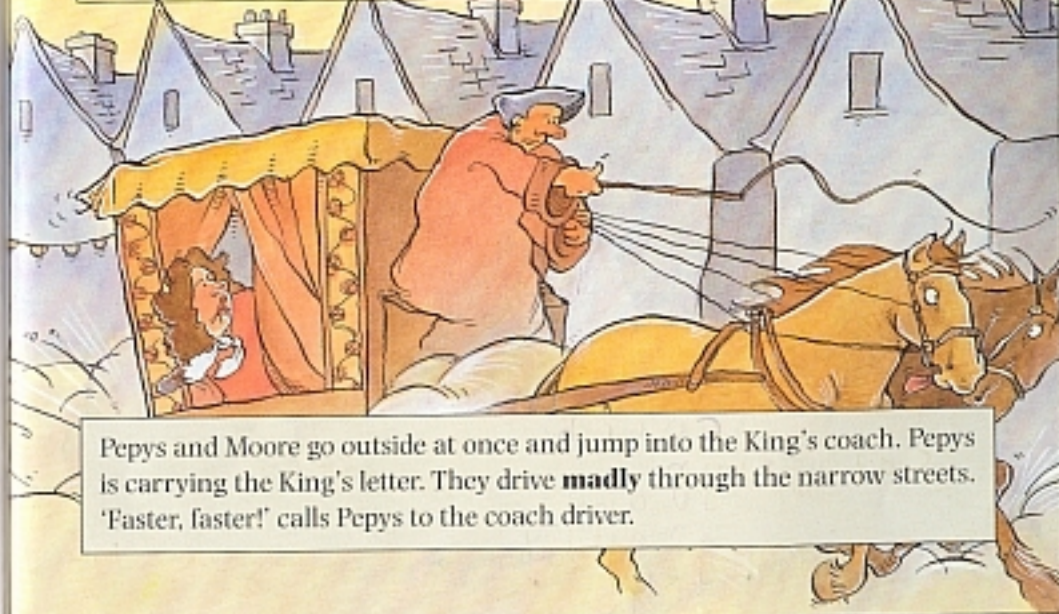'Yes!' cries the King. 'That's the solution! We must blow up the houses. Then the fire can't spread.'

The King writes a **letter**. 'Give this letter to Thomas Bludworth, the Lord Mayor,' he says.

'Nobody can find him,' says Pepys. 'You must find him!' says the King.

'Take one of my **coaches**. Go quickly back to the fire and find the Lord Mayor,' says the King.

Pepys and Moore go outside at once and jump into the King's coach. Pepys is carrying the King's letter. They drive **madly** through the narrow streets. 'Faster, faster!' calls Pepys to the coach driver.

Your Majesty you say this when you talk to a king or a queen

letter a piece of paper with writing on it; you send it to someone   **coach** a kind of car with horses   **madly** quickly and without thinking
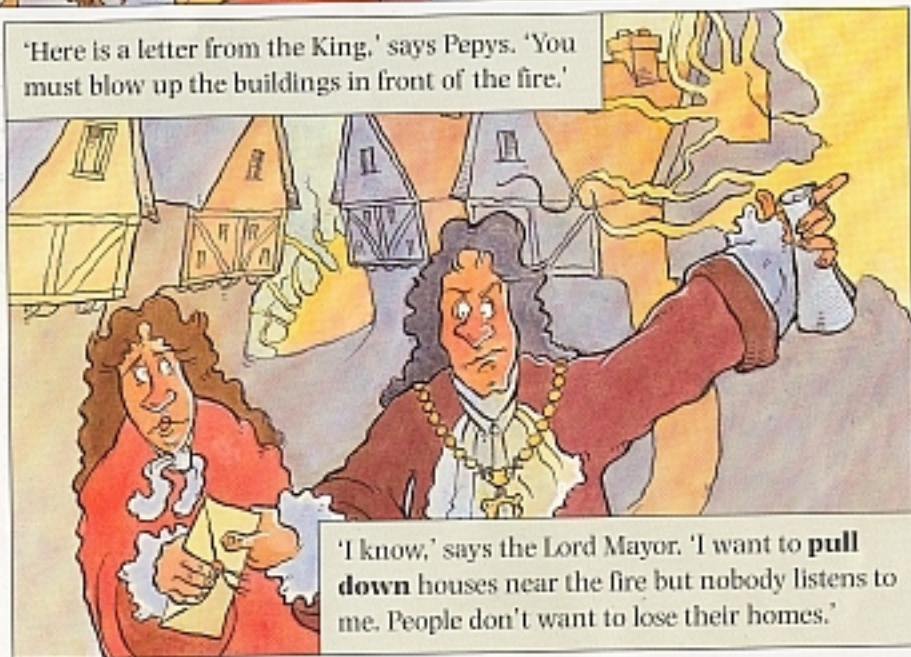
Chapter 6

In the end, Pepys finds the Lord Mayor. 'Ah, here you are!' Pepys cries angrily. 'Everybody is looking for you!'

'Hello, Pepys,' says the Lord Mayor. 'I'm very **tired** – I must sit down.'
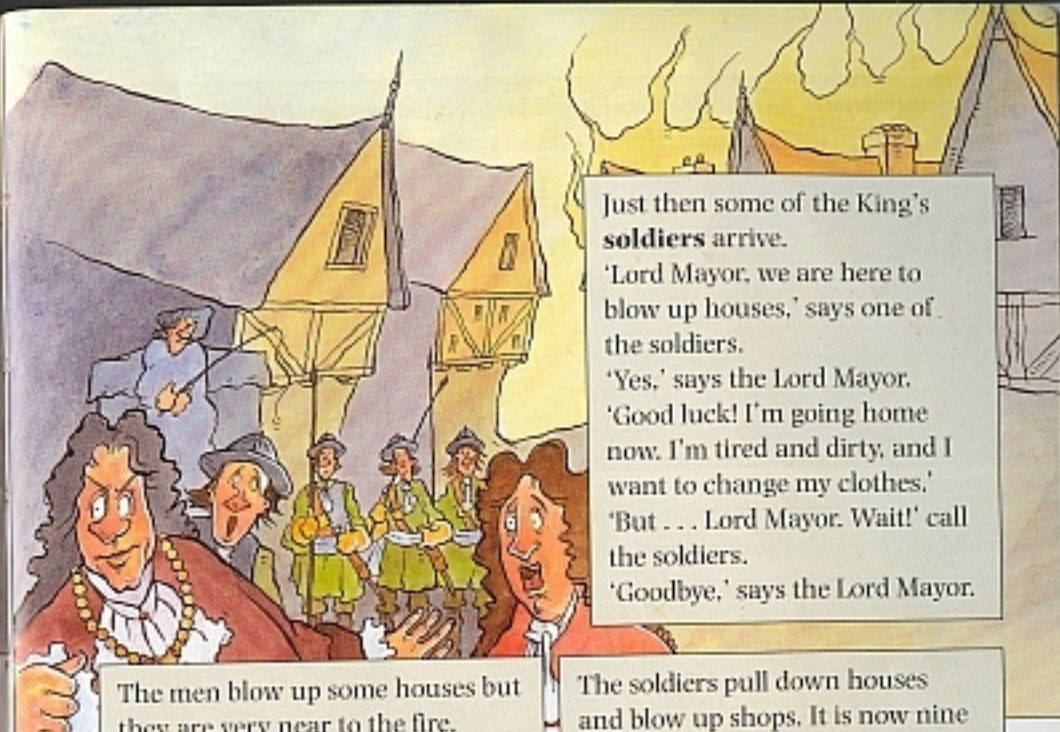
'Here is a letter from the King,' says Pepys. 'You must blow up the buildings in front of the fire.'

'I know,' says the Lord Mayor. 'I want to **pull down** houses near the fire but nobody listens to me. People don't want to lose their homes.'

Just then some of the King's **soldiers** arrive.

'Lord Mayor, we are here to blow up houses,' says one of the soldiers.

'Yes,' says the Lord Mayor. 'Good luck! I'm going home now. I'm tired and dirty, and I want to change my clothes.'

'But . . . Lord Mayor. Wait!' call the soldiers.

'Goodbye,' says the Lord Mayor.

The men blow up some houses but they are very near to the fire. 'It's no good,' says Pepys to the soldiers. 'You must blow up buildings one street away from the fire.'

The soldiers pull down houses and blow up shops. It is now nine o'clock on Sunday evening. Pepys and Moore go home.

tired you feel tired when you need to sit down or sleep

pull down to make a building come down

soldier a person in an army

32

33

For three more days the **Great** Fire of London **burns**. Frightened people and hungry rats run madly through the streets.

The fire spreads to the most important houses and churches in the city. Old St Paul's **Cathedral** burns day and night.

Day after day the fire-fighters . . .

. . . and soldiers work to stop the fire.

On the fourth day the wind changes **direction** and the fire slowly stops. The fire-fighters stand and watch for the first time in days.

Many people come back to look for their houses and shops but they find nothing.

At home Pepys begins to write about the fire in his diary. He knows the government must work a lot to help the people of London.

The Great Fire of London

great very big or important   **burn** to be on fire   **cathedral** a big important church

direction where something is going

Five days later, Pepys and Moore climb up the tower of the last church in the **centre** of London.
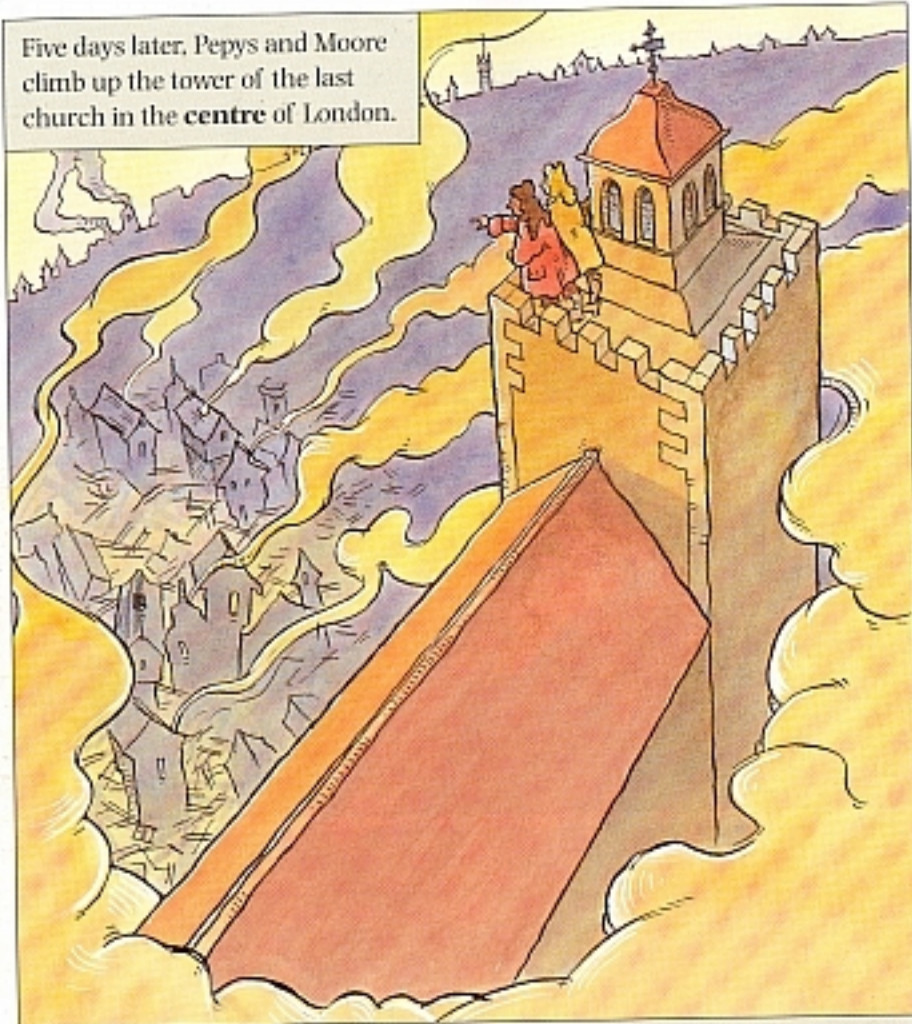
They look over the city.
'What a black day,' says Pepys. 'Over thirteen thousand houses and ninety churches . . . and now there is nothing.'
'Don't feel bad about that,' says Moore. '**Instead** let's remember something important. Only nine people are dead.'

centre the part in the middle   **instead** in the place of something

Fifty years later London is a very different city. There are no more old narrow streets in the city centre, but beautiful **wide** streets instead. And a new St Paul's Cathedral stands not far from the banks of the River Thames. But the most important thing is . . .
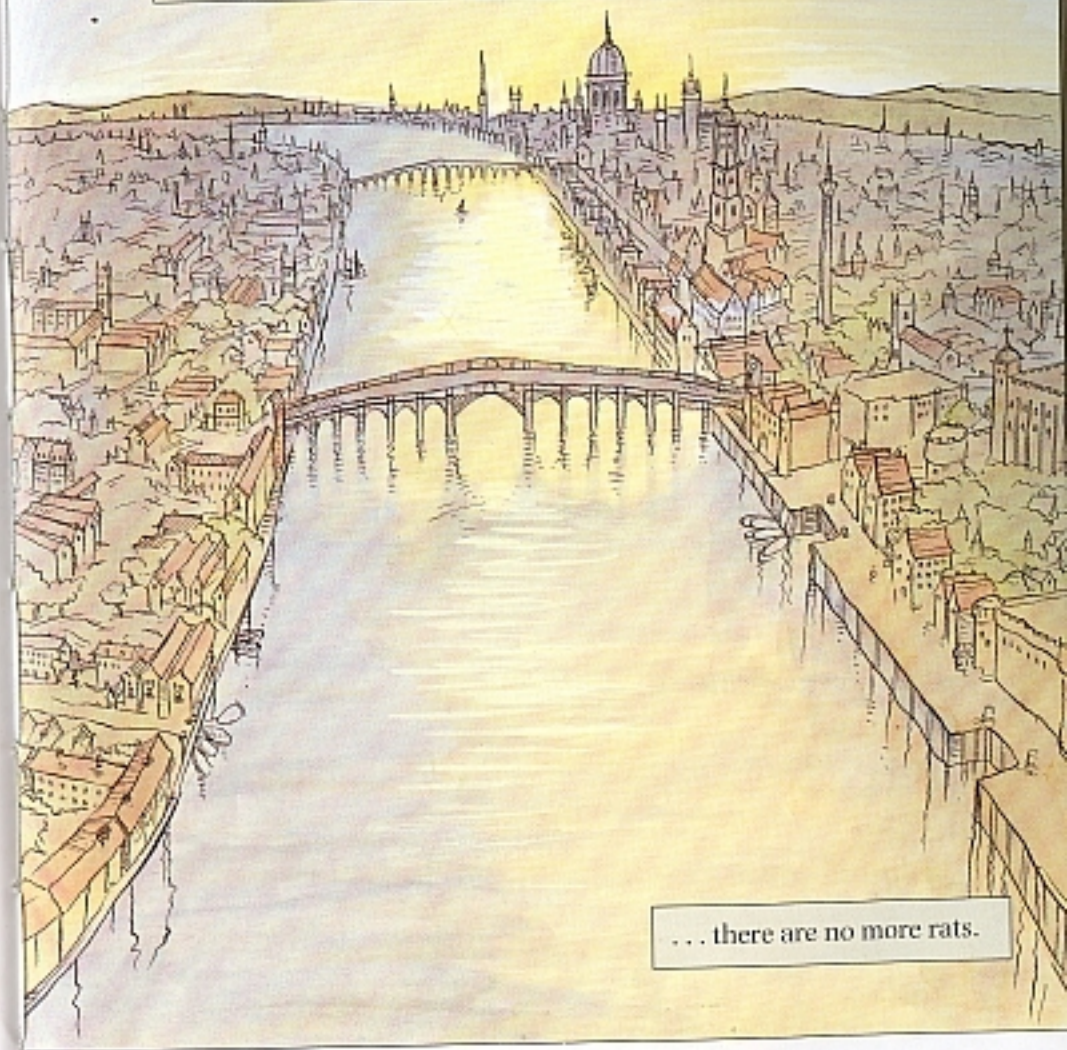
. . . there are no more rats.

wide not narrow