Snapdragons

Hot Dog

Anne Cottringer
Katherine Walker

Oxford Reading Tree

Snapdragons

What is the story about?

Hot Dog and his two friends Pooch and Mooch are stray dogs who live in the city and who enjoy their lives. Their friend, Mrs Fortini, feeds them meatballs from her restaurant. Then, one day, a stray-dog catcher comes. He is determined to catch the three friends who race everywhere about the city to escape from him. Just when they are exhausted, Hot Dog comes up with a plan. With the help of Mrs Fortini they fool the dog catcher so that he leaves them alone again to enjoy their freedom.

Talk together

Look at the cover and read the title together. Ask, "What do you think these three dogs will get up to in this story?" Look through the book together, focusing on the illustrations to get an idea of what the story will be about.

Read the story

- Encourage your child to read the story aloud to you, and join in with the enjoyment.
- Encourage your child to read with expression, by emphasising where there are exclamation marks, and by raising voice tone for questions.
- Praise your child when he/she notices that something doesn't make sense while reading and corrects him/herself.
- On pages 8–9, help your child follow the lines of swirling sentences.
- Help your child work out longer words if necessary. For example, if your child struggles with 'determined' on page 9, help him/her break the word down into small chunks and then reread the whole word together.
- On page 11, encourage your child to read 'NOW' (in capital letters) with emphasis.
- On page 19, ask your child what he/she thinks 'Desperate times. Desperate measures' means.
- At the end of the story, ask your child, "Why do you think Mrs Fortini set the dogs free again?"

Hot Dog

Story by Anne Cottringer
Pictures by Katherine Walker

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Hot Dog was a city dog. He liked the smells of the city. He liked the noise of the city. He liked the hustle and the bustle.

He was rough. He was tough. He didn't walk around at the end of a lead. Not for him, the daily run in the park. Not for him, the cute little tricks ... Sit up! Shake hands! Roll over!

"I wag my tail for no one!" said Hot Dog to his friends Pooch and Mooch.

"And I wag my tail for no one!" barked Pooch, who wanted to be just like Hot Dog, but was a little too short and little too long.

Mooch just said "Woof!" because he couldn't stop wagging his short stumpy tail. It wagged all the time.

Pooch, Mooch and Hot Dog stuck together. They shared their bones. They kept each other warm. They licked each other's wounds. And they shared Mrs Fortini's meatballs.

Mrs Fortini loved Hot Dog. She loved Pooch. And she loved Mooch. She wanted to make them her pets. But they wouldn't have it. They were free and they wanted to stay that way.

"If this is a dog's life – then it's a dog's life for me!" said Hot Dog.

"Woof!" said Mooch.

"And me!" barked Pooch.

Then something happened which changed everything.

It was a cold, wet winter morning. Mrs Fortini was just putting out a bowl of hot meatballs for her poochy pals. Hot Dog and Mooch were waiting by her back door.

"Poochie, poochie, poo!" called Mrs Fortini.

Suddenly Pooch panted around the corner.

"Stray dog catcher!" he barked. "Run for it!"

"Stray dog catcher?" said Hot Dog. "There isn't any stray dog catcher around here!"

"Oh yes there is!" puffed Pooch. "And here he is!"

A van screeched around the corner. A man with a mean, pointy face jumped out.

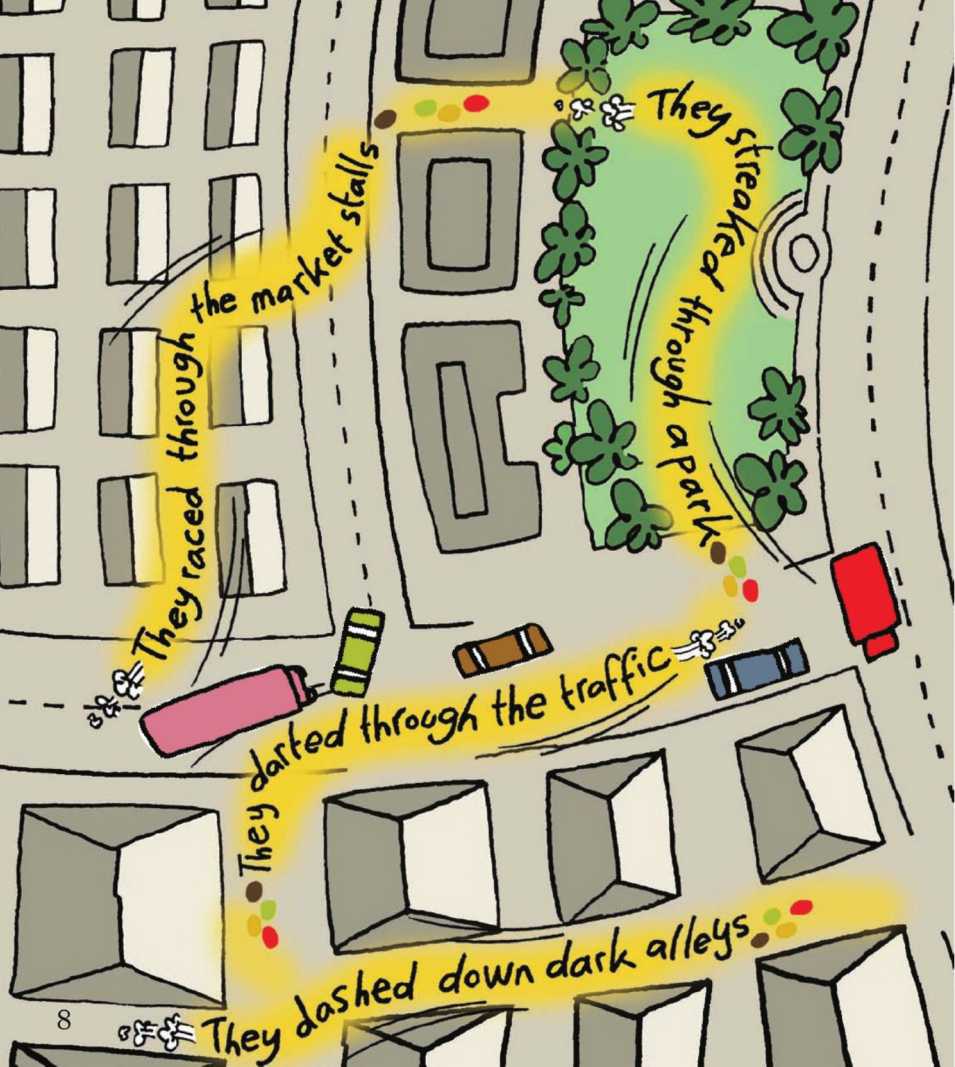
"You mangy mutts! I'll get you scruffy dogs off our streets or my name isn't Mr Snatcher the Stray Dog Catcher!"

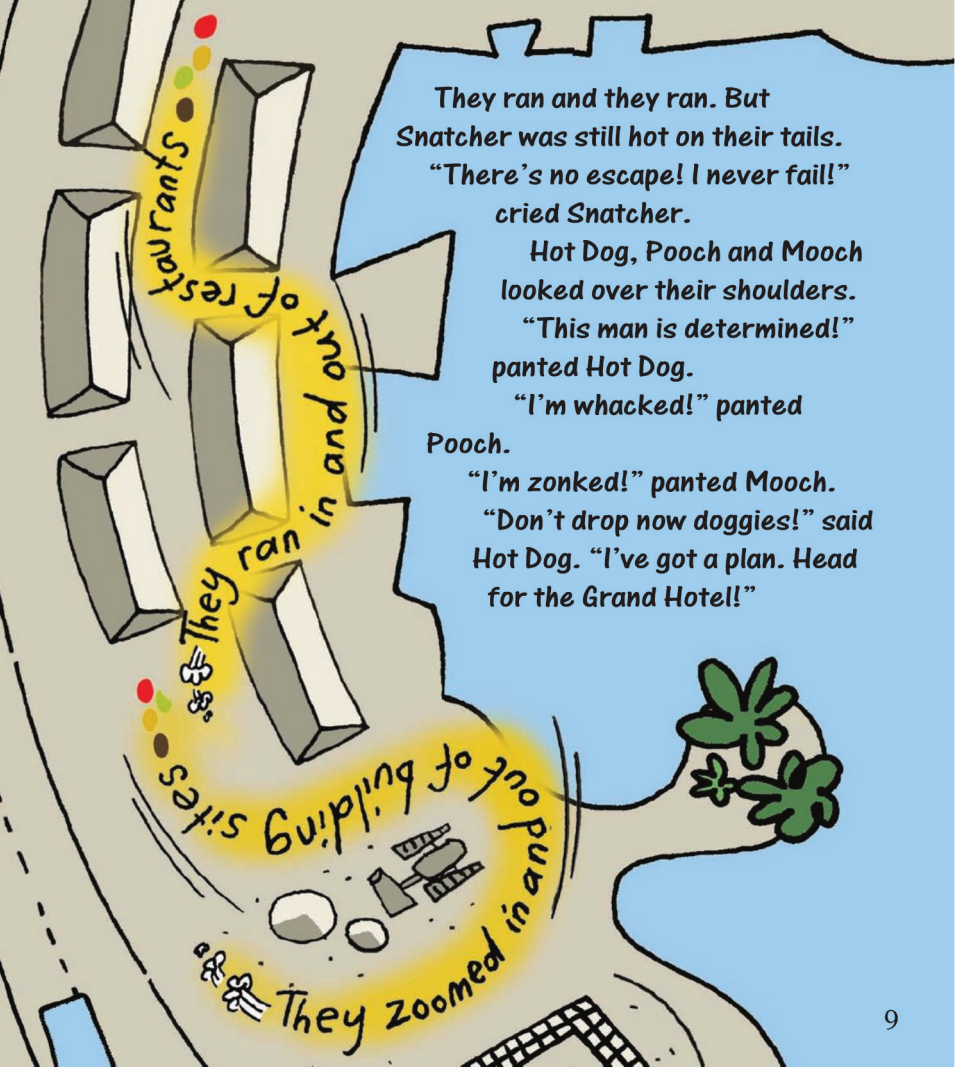
Hot Dog and Pooch and Mooch ran. Snatcher ran after them.

"Run, Hot Dog! Run!" cried Mrs Fortini.

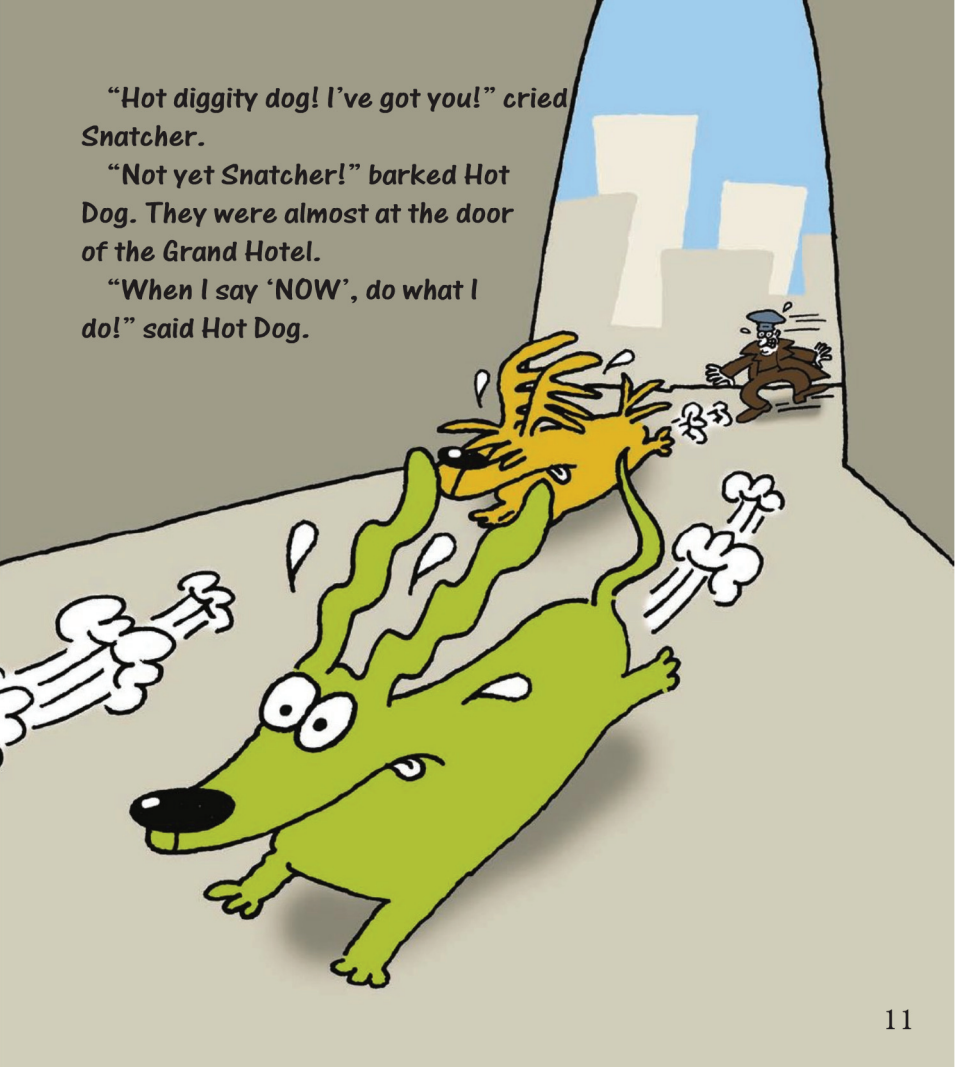
"There is no escape from Mr Snatcher the Stray Dog Catcher!" cried Snatcher.

"That's what he thinks!" barked Hot Dog. "Follow me bow-wows! Let's show this Snatcher a few sights of the city!"


They raced through the market stalls
They streaked through a park
They darted through the traffic
They dashed down dark alleys


They ran and they ran. But Snatcher was still hot on their tails.
"There's no escape! I never fail!" cried Snatcher.
Hot Dog, Pooch and Mooch looked over their shoulders.
"This man is determined!" panted Hot Dog.
"I'm whacked!" panted Pooch.
"I'm zonked!" panted Mooch.
"Don't drop now doggies!" said Hot Dog. "I've got a plan. Head for the Grand Hotel!"
They ran in and out of restaurants
They zoomed in and out of building sites

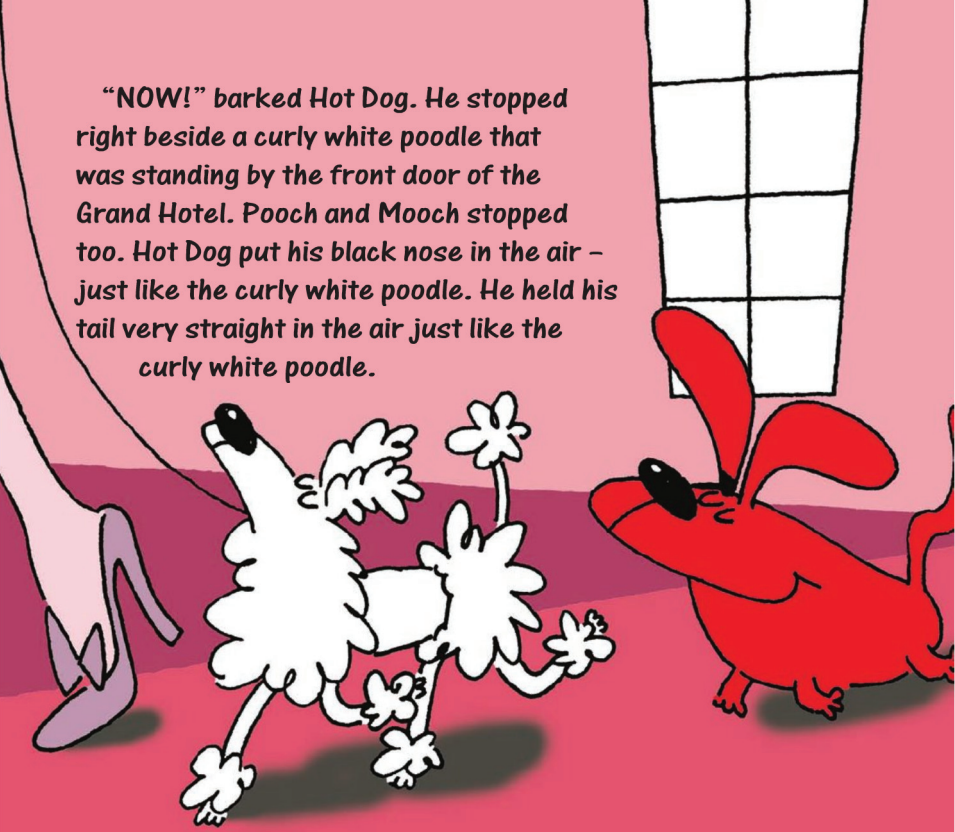
Hot Dog bounded ahead.
Pooch and Mooch pounded behind.
"Slow down!" puffed Pooch.
"Don't stop now! We're almost there!" barked Hot Dog.
But Snatcher was about to pounce.



"Hot diggity dog! I've got you!" cried Snatcher.

"Not yet Snatcher!" barked Hot Dog. They were almost at the door of the Grand Hotel.

"When I say 'NOW', do what I do!" said Hot Dog.



"NOW!" barked Hot Dog. He stopped right beside a curly white poodle that was standing by the front door of the Grand Hotel. Pooch and Mooch stopped too. Hot Dog put his black nose in the air – just like the curly white poodle. He held his tail very straight in the air just like the curly white poodle.

Pooch and Mooch put their black noses in the air. They held their tails very straight in the air. (Well Mooch tried, but his stumpy tail wouldn't go straight up in the air.)

Then they followed the curly white poodle right through the big swinging doors of the Grand Hotel.

Snatcher was just about to follow, when the doorman put out his hand.

"Sorry sir!" said the doorman. "Guests only."

"But! But!..." spluttered Snatcher.

Hot Dog, Pooch and Mooch trotted on. Snatcher stood on the pavement and spluttered some more.

"Just follow me and keep those noses in the air," muttered Hot Dog. They trotted through the hotel lobby, down some stairs, along a hall, up some stairs – until they reached a back door. All around them people stared and leaped out of their way.

Then they trotted right out of the back door and into an alley.

"Phew!" gasped Hot Dog. "That was close!"

"Very close!" puffed Pooch.

"Too close!" huffed Mooch.

"And I don't think we've seen the last of Snatcher!" said Hot Dog.

Hot Dog was right. That wasn't the last of Snatcher. The next day Snatcher chased them around the shops.

And the day after that he chased them around a fairground.

And the next day after that day, he chased them around the museum.

"I'll never give up, you horrible hounds!" he cried.

Hot Dog was getting thinner and thinner. Pooch was getting thinner and thinner. And Mooch's tail had stopped wagging. The only thing that kept them going was Mrs Fortini's meatballs.

"My poor doggies!" she cried.
"Mr Snatcher is a very bad man!"

"If this is a dog's life, then I would rather be a cat!" said Mooch.
"I don't think I can keep running!" said Pooch.

"We can't give up!" said Hot Dog. "If Snatcher catches us, we'll be in dog jail forever! There will be no more steaks from Jack's Grill. No more meatballs from Fortini's restaurant. No more bones from Bob the Butcher."

"We need a plan," said Pooch.

"A really good plan!" said Mooch.

"And I think I've got one," said Hot Dog.

"Look at that dog over there. Why doesn't Snatcher grab that dog?"

"Because its owner has it on a lead," said Pooch.

"Exactly!" said Hot Dog.

"But we don't have an owner. And we don't have leads," said Mooch.

"We can get one!" cried Hot Dog.

"But we don't want one!" yelped Pooch.

"Desperate times need desperate measures!" said Hot Dog.

"What does that mean?" asked Mooch.

"It means we have to make another plan," said Hot Dog. "Now come close and listen to Hot Dog's Desperate Dog Plan, Number One-hundred-and-one."

Their plan was ready. Hot Dog, Pooch and Mooch were just about to tuck into a big bone from Bob the Butcher's dustbin, when ... Snatcher leaped out.

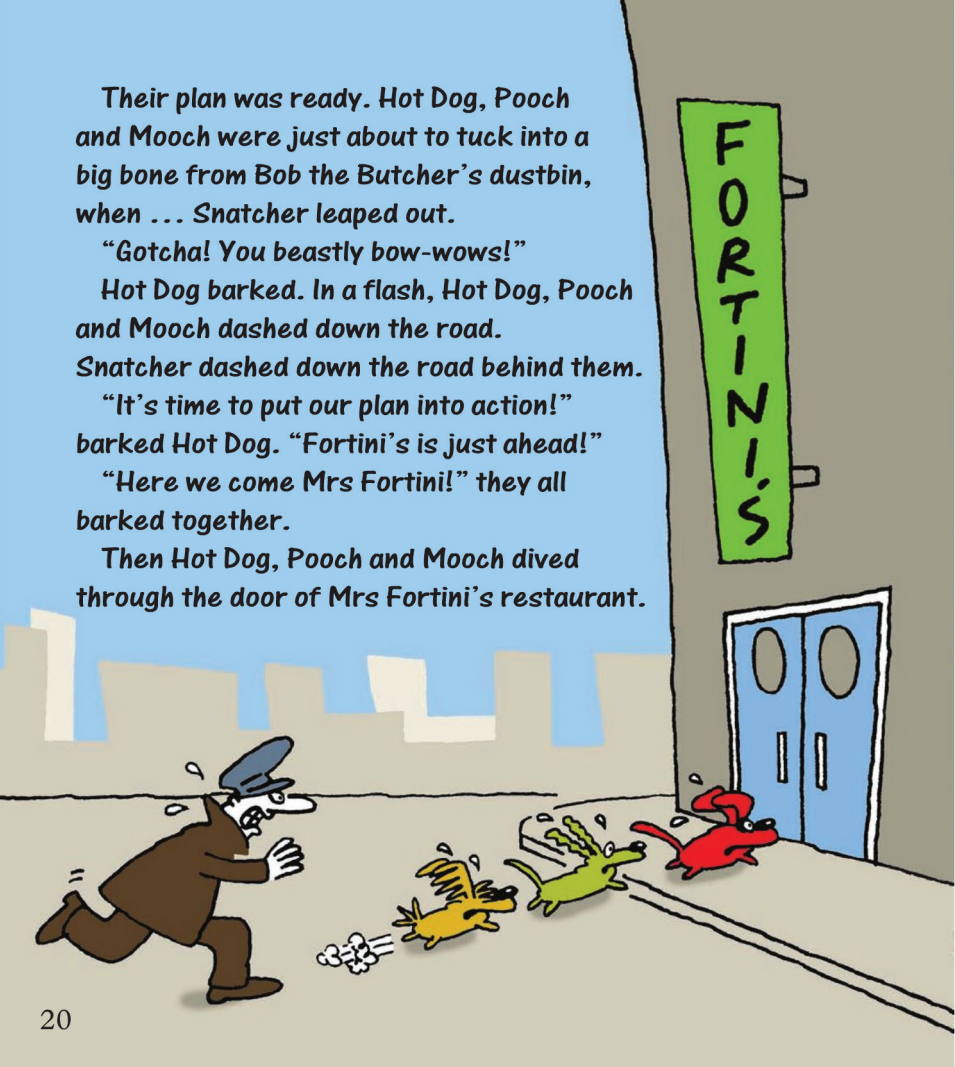
"Gotcha! You beastly bow-wows!"

Hot Dog barked. In a flash, Hot Dog, Pooch and Mooch dashed down the road. Snatcher dashed down the road behind them.

"It's time to put our plan into action!" barked Hot Dog. "Fortini's is just ahead!"

"Here we come Mrs Fortini!" they all barked together.

Then Hot Dog, Pooch and Mooch dived through the door of Mrs Fortini's restaurant.



Moments later they all came out again. Each was at the end of a lead. And the lead was held by Mrs Fortini.

Snatcher skidded to a halt. "What on earth...?" he spluttered.

"Excuse me while I take my little bow-wows for a walk," smiled Mrs Fortini.

Hot Dog, Pooch and Mooch trotted along beside Mrs Fortini. They wagged their tails.

Snatcher's face went red. It twisted up. He foamed at the mouth.

Hot Dog, Pooch and Mooch just kept trotting along at the end of their leads.

"You horrid hounds!" he shouted. Then he jumped in his van and drove away.

Hot Dog, Pooch and Mooch barked. Mrs Fortini laughed and took off the leads.

"Your plan worked Hot Dog! And now I'll let you free again," she said. "Let's just hope that Snatcher doesn't come back."

That night, Mrs Fortini gave Hot Dog, Pooch and Mooch an extra big plate of meatballs.

"Yummy!" said Mooch, still wagging his tail.

"Scrummy!" said Pooch.

"Delicious!" said Hot Dog.

Soon there was not a meatball in sight. Mrs Fortini came to the back door.

"Finished?" she asked.

They licked their chops. They wagged their tails.

"If this is a dog's life, then it's a dog's life for me!" they said to one another, and they trotted off to look for some pudding.

Play a game

Animal alliterations

This game will help your child understand how to use alliteration when writing.

- Look together through the text and find examples of how the author used alliteration to add humour to the story. (page 7 'mangy mutts'; page 16 'horrible hounds'; page 19 'Desperate Dog'; page 21 'horrid hounds')
- Choose some other animals/pets and make up some alliterative descriptions, such as bouncing bunny, crazy cat.

Other ideas

- Take turns to read only the spoken words on each page, using an expressive voice.
- Encourage your child to write a description of where Hot Dog went, using swirled writing.

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Oxford Reading Tree
Snapdragons

Stage 9

Story by Anne Cottringer
Pictures by Katherine Walker

Hot Dog

Hot Dog and his friends are chased by Mr Snatcher the Stray Dog Catcher.

This story practises these words:
but don't door down from his just now one out ran that their them then there

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