

"I slipped, didn't I"? Marge opens her eyes and gingerly rubs her hip. "What about the cat? I feel unwell."

"It ran next door. But you didn't slip, I pulled you up in the herb garden."

"Now look here, sport" — Marge closes her eyes, suddenly wondering whether there is any point. She can smell crushed anise and sage around her; what happened, she tells herself, is immaterial. She hasn't the time to dwell on it.

Grasping a sprinkler, she stands gingerly and makes a vague gesture. "I'm no longer going to hare after you all the time; I'm too old. Climb trees or stamp on the herb garden as you please. It's neither here nor there. I'm going up to my room for a piece of bread and a cup of tea, with lots of sugar." Unenthusiastically pushing aside the laundry basket, she hobbles indoors. After a short pause, Neil quietly follows her.

