

Going Solo by Roald Dahl

I was walking across the grass towards the house and was about twenty yards away when I saw a large green snake go gliding straight up the veranda steps of Fuller's house and in through the open front door. The brilliant yellowy-green skin and its great size made me certain it was a green mamba, a creature almost as deadly as the black mamba, and for a few seconds I was so startled and dumbfounded and horrified that I froze to the spot. Then I pulled myself together and ran round to the back of the house shouting, 'Mr. Fuller! Mr. Fuller!'

Mrs. Fuller popped her head out of an upstairs window. 'What on earth's the matter?' she said.

'You've got a large green mamba in your front room!' I shouted. 'I saw it go up the veranda steps and right in through the door!'

'Fred!' Mrs. Fuller shouted, turning round. 'Fred! Come here!'

Freddy Fuller's round red face appeared at the window beside his wife.

'What's up?' he asked.

'There's a green mamba in your living-room!' I shouted.

Without hesitation and without wasting time with more questions, he said to me, 'Stay there. I'm going to lower the children down to you one at a time.' He was completely cool and unruffled. He didn't even raise his voice.

A small girl was lowered down to me by her wrists and I was able to catch her easily by the legs. Then came a small boy. Then Freddy Fuller lowered his wife and I caught her by the waist and put her on the ground. Then came Fuller himself. He hung by his hands from the window-sill and when he let go he landed neatly on his two feet.

We stood in a little group on the grass at the back of the house and I told Fuller exactly what I had seen.

The mother was holding the two children by the hand, one on each side of her. They didn't seem to be particularly alarmed.

'What happens now?' I asked.

'Go down to the road, all of you,' Fuller said. 'I'm off to fetch the snake-man.'