

Extract 2

‘Just once more – please!’ said Charlotte.

‘I’ll tell you what I’ll do,’ said Templeton. ‘I know where there’s a package of soap flakes in the woodshed. It has writing on it. I’ll bring you a piece of the package.’

He climbed the rope that hung on the wall and disappeared through a hole in the ceiling. When he came back he had a strip of blue-and-white cardboard in his teeth.

‘There!’ he said, triumphantly. ‘How’s that?’

Charlotte read the words. ‘With New Radiant Action.’

‘What does it mean?’ asked Charlotte, who had never used any soap flakes in her life.

‘How should I know?’ said Templeton. ‘You asked for words and I brought them. I suppose the next thing you’ll want me to fetch is a dictionary.’

Together they studied the soap ad. ‘With new radiant action,’ repeated Charlotte, slowly. ‘Wilbur!’ she called.

Wilbur, who was asleep in the straw, jumped up.

‘Run around!’ commanded Charlotte. ‘I want to see you in action, to see if you are radiant.’

Wilbur raced to the end of his yard.

‘Now back again, faster!’ said Charlotte.

Wilbur galloped back. His skin shone. His tail had a fine, tight curl in it.

‘Jump into the air!’ cried Charlotte.

Wilbur jumped as high as he could.

‘Keep your knees straight and touch the ground with your ears!’ called Charlotte.

Wilbur obeyed.

‘Do a back flip with a half twist in it!’ cried Charlotte.

Wilbur went over backwards, writhing and twisting as he went.

‘O.K., Wilbur,’ said Charlotte. ‘You can go back to sleep. O.K., Templeton, the soap ad. will do, I guess. I’m not sure Wilbur’s action is exactly radiant, but it’s interesting.’

‘Actually,’ said Wilbur, ‘I *feel* radiant.’