

Contents

For Heather Garth Primary School, A.S.
For everyone at William Westley Primary, from R.M.

First published in 2014 by Fat Fox Books Ltd.

Fox's Den
Wickets, Frittenden Road
Staplehurst, Kent TN12 0DH
www.fatfoxbooks.com

ISBN: 978-0992872830

Fat Fox and associated logos are trademarks and/or
registered trademarks of Fat Fox Books Ltd.

Text copyright © Andy Seed 2014

Illustrations copyright © Richard Morgan 2014

The right of Andy Seed to be identified as the author
and Richard Morgan to be identified as the illustrator
of this work has been asserted.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

All rights reserved.

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd.

1	A cucumber on the head	1
2	The Bogblocker surprise	8
3	Granny's adventure	17
4	Stairlift to heaven	27
5	The Twince	33
6	Prank explosion	42
7	Trouble at school	50
8	Chinny down	60
9	The theory	73
10	The experiment	83
11	An eventful sleepover	88
12	The terrible truth	91
13	The ultimate prank	100
14	Ouch!	112
15	Windpipe salad	127
16	More please	137
17	Oliver vs Frankenstein	156
18	Hair-raising finale	173
19	Venus tells tales	181
20	Searching for cheese	191
21	Star of tomorrow?	206
22	A deadly pill	225



1 A cucumber on the head

Soapy Thompson woke up with a cucumber on his head. It was large and green and still attached to the bush. He blinked a few times and wondered why his bedroom was so bright and why the ceiling was made of glass. And the walls.

Soapy sat up and rubbed his eyes. There was a family of woodlice in his hair and his left cheek was encrusted with grotty bits of compost. He was in the greenhouse. Why? How? He couldn't remember going to sleep in the greenhouse. It was a rubbish place to snooze he decided, flicking a slug off his chin.

Then he worked it out.

Sleepwalking.

He hadn't done it for a while, but for most of his eleven years Soapy had, for some reason, moved around during the night without waking

up. It started when he was a baby – it was sleepcrawling then, of course. Usually when he sleepwalked, his dad heard him bumping around and put him back to bed, but he'd never actually gone out of the house before. It could be worse. At least he didn't sleep-run or sleep-dance.

Soapy crossed the wet grass of the lawn and went back indoors to find his mum scurrying about in the kitchen. He gave her a fright when he opened the door.

"Pugh! What on earth are you doing? And where have you been in your pyjamas? I thought you were still in bed!"

Soapy hated being called Pugh, even though it was his real name. When he started junior school everyone called him Poo. Then when they got bored with that, the annoying kids called him 'Phew' Thompson and wafted their hands when they walked past. He much preferred Soapy, the nickname his granny had given him when he once forgot to rinse his hair after a shampoo.

"I, er, just had a look at the cucumbers in the greenhouse – they're doing well." He didn't want to mention the sleepwalking, Mum would only make a huge fuss, like she did about everything.

In fact, if there was a Great Britain Fuss Team, she would be captain. Or manager.

Soapy's mum narrowed her eyes at him. "Are you telling me the truth? You've never shown any interest in gardening before."

"The cucumbers really are amazing, Mum. Go and look for yourself." He knew he couldn't get away with a lie. Mum was a lawyer and she knew all about cons and trickery.

"If I wasn't dashing off to work, I'd get to the bottom of this – I'm sure you're up to something." He tried to look innocent, knowing that she would disappear to her office any moment. She was always working was Soapy's mum, and always in a hurry.

Why don't adults play more? thought Soapy.
It's much more fun.

Soapy's mum took a slurp of coffee and grabbed her laptop and coat. "Remember, wholemeal toast without jam and some natural yoghurt with two kinds of fruit. And don't use a sharp knife – get Ivette to cut it. And don't be late for school. Bye."

She scurried out of the door.

Jam? Why does she mention jam? thought Soapy. *We don't have any in the house. Or anything else that tastes nice.* He stopped and decided the



way he was treated was very unfair. He needed to do something about it.

Ivette walked into the kitchen while Soapy searched the food cupboards for something better than wholemeal toast. She was an au pair from Spain, a student who the family employed to do housework. When she first came, Soapy thought his dad was calling her an ‘old pear’ which didn’t make a lot of sense as she was quite young and had no stalk.

“Still trying to find a tasty breakfast, Soapy?” she said. “Face it. You’ve no chance.”

“What are you going to have?”

“Some Cracky Pops, which I bought myself, and maybe a piece of chocolate.” She took a large bar of Dairy Lush from her bag and waved it in front of Soapy. “I’ll sell you some if you like.”

“Hey, aren’t you supposed to look after me, not taunt me?”

She smiled. “No, I’m supposed to clean the house. And here, that’s a full time job.”

It was true, the house was very large – in what magazines would call ‘an exclusive development of luxury homes’ (or something equally daft). It was on the edge of town, near the countryside on a

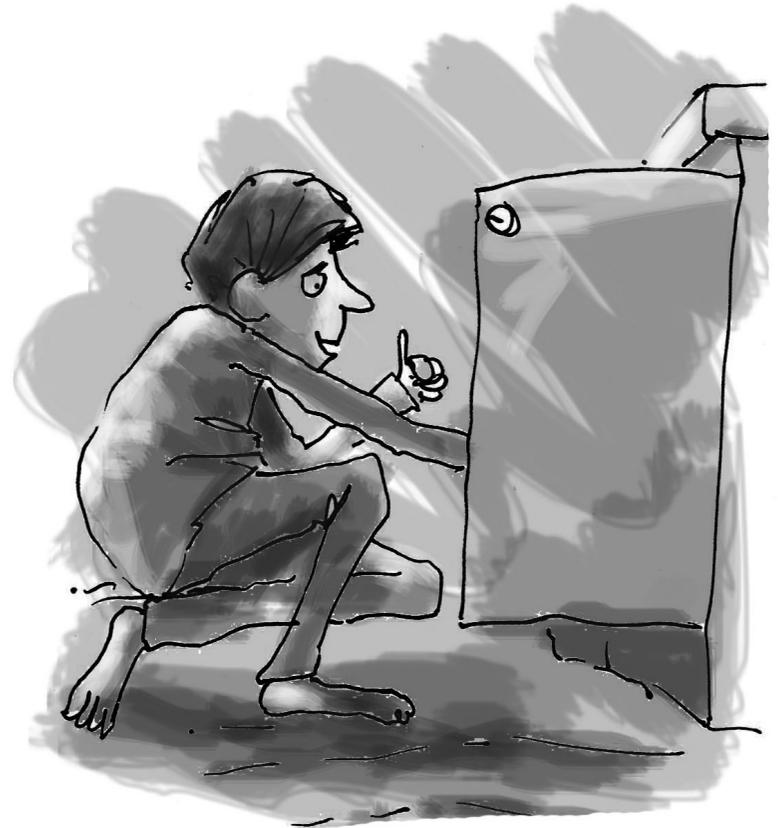
boring road called 'The Cloisters'. Several rooms contained weird bits of sculpture which Soapy wasn't allowed to touch. His mum said they were 'original abstract artwork' but quite a few of them looked like dead Teletubbies.

Nor was Soapy allowed to touch the expensive coffee machine in the kitchen or the huge Media Sphere in the living room or the designer chairs in the dining room or the snooker table in the games room.

Soapy thought that the house was boring and that being an only child was boring too. Ivette was all right really and his dad could be good fun, even if he did spend every weekday at the restaurant he owned in town and all weekend at the golf club. Golf, now that was *really* boring.

In the end he ate a banana for breakfast and, after Ivette had gone upstairs and he was ready for school, he had one last poke through the cupboards before he saw something that gave him an idea, a sneaky idea. But it would have to wait until the weekend.

NOTE: Teletubbies are characters from a babies' television show who make silly noises and have big fat tummies.



2

The Bogblocker Surprise

On Saturday morning Soapy snuck into the upstairs loo with a box of cling film shoved under his jumper. He locked the door without a sound and lifted the toilet seat. Like everything in his house, the loo was sparkly clean. Taking great care, he pulled a long sheet of cling film from the roll and tried to tear it away using the cutter. It slid off the little plastic teeth and crumpled up.

“Stupid stuff,” he murmured. “Cling when I say, not now.”

After four more goes Soapy found the right angle and pulled away a sheet of transparent plastic. He put down the box and with great care placed the film across the top of the toilet bowl, stretching it tight and then securing it to the edges. Quietly he lowered the heavy wooden seat and stood up to admire his handiwork.

The Bogblocker Surprise. A classic prank.

He closed his eyes and tried to imagine someone innocently coming in to use the loo. Would it work? Maybe at night, or if someone was in a hurry. He looked at it and gave a dirty giggle, which was interrupted by a voice from somewhere nearby.

“Ivette! Are you in your room?”

Mum, coming up the stairs! Soapy’s heart leapt in his chest and he hurled himself down onto his knees and pulled up the seat, ripping away the cling film and scrunching it into his pocket before grabbing the box and ramming it into the cupboard under the washbasin.



The footsteps grew louder then stopped outside the toilet door. Soapy froze.

“Ivette, are you in there?”

“Er, no it’s me,” said Soapy. “I don’t know where she is.”

“Well, make sure you don’t leave any horrible smells or nasty, er, marks. And open the window and use the air freshener.”

“Okay, Mum.”

Soapy waited for his mother’s footsteps to retreat downstairs before he relaxed and picked up the cling film from the cupboard. He sighed and wished he lived in a house where he could actually play pranks.

Soapy adored pranks. He talked about them, read about them and thought about them all the time. His dreams were full of stink bombs, rubber snakes, itching powder, plastic doo-doo and fake vomit. He longed to be a prankster. He dreamt of being someone full of tricks and practical jokes who could fool his friends and deftly prank his parents. He knew lots of pranks but, well, he’d never actually dared to do one.

Soapy once thought about playing a prank on Ivette but changed his mind. What would happen

if he spilt something on the white carpet? Or knocked over one of Mum’s Chinese vases? She’d probably take him to court and have him locked up. It wasn’t worth it.

So Soapy just imagined the pranks he would like to play if he was a little braver – not so humid, as a school report once called him. Or was it timid? He always got those words mixed up.

On Sunday Soapy lay on his beef dreaming of new practical jokes. It was actually his bed he was lying on but Soapy called it a beef because of his crazy mobile phone. His dad had been on a business trip abroad somewhere and come back with a present. It was supposed to be a smartphone but actually it was a stupidphone, some kind of cheapo version of a proper expensive one.

The phone was okay for calls, as long as the person’s number didn’t have a nine in it, but the ringtone was stuck on ‘clucking chicken’ and, worst of all, the predictive text was out of control. Whenever Soapy tried to key in a word of more than two letters, the phone made a random guess and refused to change it. So when Soapy texted ‘bed’, the phone said ‘beef’. It called a friend a fried



egg, a mobile a monocle and Dad a Dartboard.

Soapy became so used to this that he started using these words instead of the real ones. So he called Wednesday werewolf, school Scarborough and homework hooligan. Here's what a typical text exchange with a friend looked like:

Soapy: Done any prangs today?

Friend: You mean like a car crash? No I don't drive, Soapy. I'm ll.

Soapy: I meat p r a n k s - it's this stumpy monocle.

Friend: Oh yeah, forgot. You mean stupid mobile?

Soapy: Yeti

Friend: Haha. Did a couple of pranks. Put a grape in my sister's shoe and some bubblewrap under the doormat.

Soapy: Did it worm?

Friend: My sister put peanut butter in my shoe for revenge so the grape one backfired.

Soapy: Gross peanut butler trick. Whack about the doodah?

Friend: The doormat was ace! Mum came back from the shops and it went off big time. She thought the cat was ripping up her exercise ball again.

Soapy: Coolant.

Soapy sat up as an idea came to him. If he couldn't prank inside then what about outside? He trundled down the stairs and outside into the garden only to find his mum tying fabric around the trunks of the cherry trees.

She glanced up at him.

"Before you ask it's to prevent bruises when you're playing out here."

"But I never play in the garden in case I bend one of your sweet peas. I could go to the park instead, though."

"Certainly not! There are all sorts of vile germs there and it's full of people wearing Wayne Looney shirts. Anyway, the corners of the swing seats are not rounded enough – I've checked them." It was pointless arguing so he decided to do some annoying instead.

"Mum, can I have a cat?"

She put down the string to make sure he could see her scowl.

"No, they're frightful creatures. They scratch the furniture, spew up hairballs and drag dead birds through the house. Imagine the shock if



I came home from a hard day in court and sat on a mangled thristle?"

"But, Granny's cat didn't do any of those things."

"I wish you would call her Grandma. But anyway, Grandma's cat had a much nastier habit, you know that."

Soapy pretended he didn't.

"What habit, Mum?"

"You know perfectly well – it... made smells!"

"You mean fish breath?"

"No, I mean those horrid bottom coughs."

"But that was because she fed it sardines mixed with humous."

"No cats."

"Well, can we have a camel then?"

"Now you're trying to annoy me."

"Mum, would I do that?"

"Yes, but at least you've reminded me that we need to go to your grandma's in a couple of hours – and remember, you're staying there for the night."

It was at Granny's that the trouble began.



NOTE: 'Thristle' is an old and slightly nutty name for a thrush (a song bird).

3 Granny's adventure

Soapy had forgotten all about going to Granny's. He did remember that it was all something to do with these Italian people who'd been over to visit Dad's restaurant. They had come round to the house a few weeks ago and brought some gifts for the family including wine and an enormous blue-veined Gorgonzola, which Dad had given to Granny.

Cheese was a problem in the Thompson household because Soapy was allergic to it. Cheese made Soapy go strange colours and caused his eyes to bulge. Not a little bit of bulging – right out on stalks.

He once asked Dad how they found out that he was allergic to cheese.



NOTE: 'Gorgonzola' is a triple pony Italian blue cheese.