

Chapter 1

Escape from bed

‘It’s happening again, Mum,’ Marvin shouted.

There was no reply.

Marvin was going to be late for school and it was all because of Grandad. Grandad and his mad¹ gadgets.²

Marvin looked up at the clock on his bedroom wall. The clock was one of Grandad’s mad gadgets. It didn’t say ‘Quarter past eight’ which was the real time. It said ‘Quarter Past Shower Time’ because Marvin usually had his shower at eight o’clock. Marvin shouted again.

‘Mum. Can you help me? I can’t get out of bed.’

Still no reply from downstairs. Marvin slowly counted to ten and then screamed as loudly as he could, ‘HELLO. CAN ANYBODY HEAR ME?’

Nobody could. Grandad was making too much noise in the garage. He always made a lot of noise when he was making his gadgets.

Marvin’s bed was another of Grandad’s mad gadgets. Every morning at eight o’clock, the bed woke up and tidied the blankets so Marvin didn’t have to. The problem was that today Marvin woke up at quarter past eight, so the bed tried to tidy him up³ too.

The blanket on the bed didn’t want to let him go, so he couldn’t move his arms and legs. He was like a banana, waiting for someone to come and eat him or like toothpaste in a tube, waiting for someone to push him out.

‘Am I more like a banana or toothpaste?’ he thought.

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Marvin could not decide which, but he knew that this was a very important question.

He closed his eyes. 'Maybe I'm more like a banana in a toothpaste tube or perhaps toothpaste in a banana skin. Mmm, banana toothpaste—'

'Marvin, get up. It's time for school.'

Mum's loud voice ended Marvin's daydreams about fruit toothpaste. She was calling him from the kitchen.

'But Mum ...' he shouted.

She didn't hear him. The clock now said 'Quarter Past Breakfast Time' and Marvin decided to try again to get out of bed.

'One, two, three, pull,' said Marvin, as he tried to pull his arms out from under the blanket. But the blanket did not let him go.

'One, two, three, push,' said Marvin, as he tried to push the blanket away with his feet. But the blanket still did not let him go.

He couldn't do it. The bed was stronger than he was.

'I think I'll go back to sleep,' thought Marvin. 'It's better than going to school.'

Marvin didn't really like school at the moment. Tyson was at school and he was a big bully⁴. And Tyson liked to bully Marvin more than anyone else at school. Yes, it was better if he stayed in bed. He closed his eyes.

'Marvin, you're going to be late for school.'

Mum's voice was loud and angry. Marvin heard her coming upstairs. Then his bedroom door opened and she was standing in front of him.

'Get up now, Marvin!'

'I can't,' cried Marvin. 'The bed woke up at eight o'clock

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and tidied the blankets. I was still sleeping, so it tidied me too! Now I can't get out.'

'Oh Marvin. Not again.'

Mum quickly started to pull at the blankets. She could not move them.

'Let my son go,' she shouted at the blankets. 'You can stay in bed all day but he can't. He's got to go to school.'

'Talking to them won't help, Mum,' said Marvin quietly. 'You have to turn them off at the wall.'

Mum pushed a button next to Marvin's bed. As soon as she did this, the blankets let Marvin go.



'Thanks, Mum,' said Marvin. 'I thought I was never going to escape.'

'Why didn't you shout for help?'

'I did. Nobody heard me.'

'Sorry, love,' said Mum. 'I can't hear anything downstairs. Your grandad is making things in the garage again and the noise is terrible.'

'It's always noisy now that Grandad is living with us,' replied Marvin, just as the clock changed to 'Walk To School Time'.

Marvin looked out of his bedroom window. He could see Grandad working in his garage. He was pulling the front off Mum's old TV! Marvin watched with his mouth open as Grandad started to hit the TV with his big hammer. Pieces of glass and old TV were flying all around the garage.



‘He’s trying to help us, Marvin. You know that,’ said Mum, as Marvin moved quickly away from the window. ‘It’s just that ... well ... it’s just that the gadgets aren’t always very good, are they? Like your bed—’

‘Which stops me from getting up,’ Marvin finished her sentence.

‘Or the clock—’ Mum continued.

‘Which can’t tell the time,’ Marvin said.

‘Or the singing shower—’

‘Which has a terrible voice.’

‘Or the toilet—’

‘Which talks to you all the time.’

Soon Marvin and his mum were laughing.

‘Life is more fun now that Grandad is living here,’ said Marvin.

‘That’s true,’ said his mum. ‘Oh, and Marvin ...’

‘Yes, Mum.’

‘Stop reading in bed. That’s why you woke up late this morning.’

‘How did you know?’ asked Marvin.

‘Mums know everything,’ his mum replied. ‘And you were still wearing your glasses when you woke up.’ She smiled at him. ‘Now, get ready for school or you really will be late.’

‘Can I wear my new trainers⁵?’ Marvin asked.

‘If you promise⁶ to look after them.’

‘Thanks, Mum,’ smiled Marvin, who felt that the day was better already.

But as he left his bedroom that morning, wearing his new trainers, he didn’t see that the clock was now saying ‘DANGER TIME!’

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