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Opening extract from

# The Ghastly McNastys: Fright in the Night

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Illustrated by

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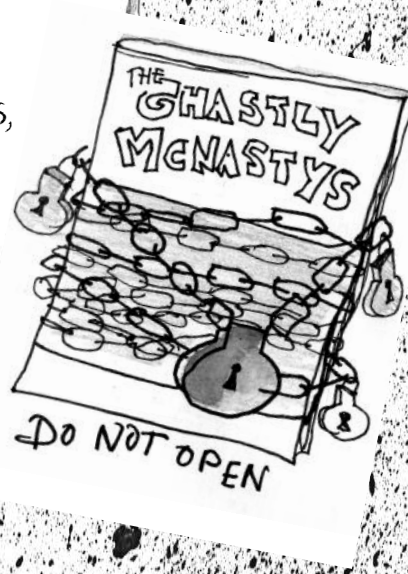
# WARNING!

Please keep this book shut at all times, even when you are reading it.

PARTICULARLY WHEN YOU ARE READING IT.

If you dare to ignore this advice do not be surprised if the McNastys jump out from the pages and give you fleas, nits and nightmares.

The McNastys may try to escape from the pages, and if they do things could turn VERY NASTY indeed.

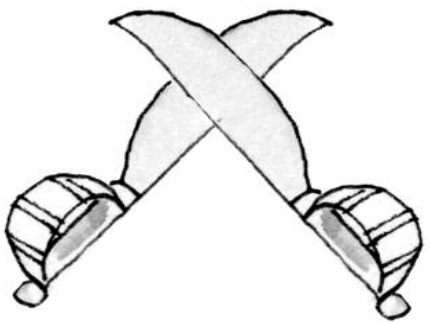


~~Chapter 342~~




(Do not be utterly ridiculous. You cannot begin a book with Chapter 342 as this would be very confusing for everyone and like starting the alphabet with N or eating fish and chips and strawberry ice cream for breakfast.)



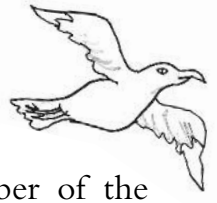


# Chapter 1




Jamie Fried-Trout, the cabin boy, was standing high up in the crow's nest on the mast of the fishing trawler, *The Good Hope*. He had been chosen as lookout

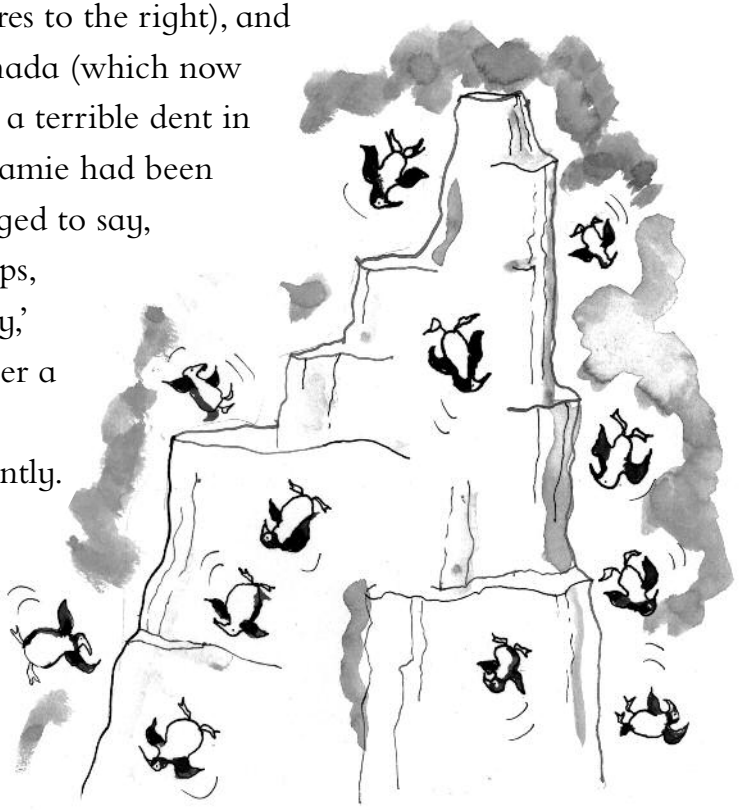




because he was the only member of the crew who was fit enough to climb up to the crow's nest. But he was not an ideal choice because he suffered from terrible seasickness and was always too busy shouting, 'Oops, sorry,' to all those he was being sick over on the deck below to notice anything on the horizon.




Since Jamie had been lookout, *The Good Hope* had sailed into the world's biggest iceberg (which immediately melted in shock causing sea levels to rise dangerously), Australia (which had shifted several hundred metres to the right), and Canada (which now had a terrible dent in it). Jamie had been obliged to say, 'Oops, sorry,' rather a lot recently.

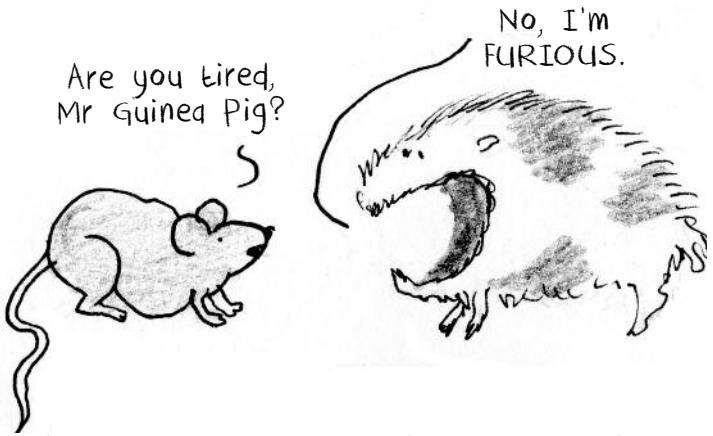


Worst of all had been the giant squid, which had got completely tied up in knots in its own tentacles after *The Good Hope* ran into it.



Jamie had apologised profusely and promised that he would never eat calamari again (not even when it is grilled with garlic, lemon juice and olive oil which is scrumptious). But the giant squid was in no mood for apologies and when it eventually untied itself, it waved its tentacles like a fist at Jamie and swum away with revenge so clearly glinting in its eye that Jamie knew he would have felt infinitely safer if his parents had never met.

How he longed to be back on dry land, preferably in Little Snoring with his cousin Trevor Augustus Trout, otherwise known as Tat, and Tat's best friend, Hetty. Hetty was the cleverest girl in the world and would surely know how to cure seasickness and placate vengeful squid. She knew everything. Well, almost everything, as she did not know




that guinea pigs yawn to show anger or that fleas can survive for over a year without eating, or where Captain Syd's lost treasure was buried in Little Snoring.

But she and Tat were working on finding the treasure with the help of the treasure map, which had been found in the ancient Little Snoring Castle. Jamie was going to help them.

Jamie knew that it was essential that they found the treasure as soon as possible because Tat had told him that, as usual, the Trout family fortunes were in a very unfortunate state. Every time Mrs Trout tried to make ends meet, the ends wriggled further apart like over-excitable worms. Mrs Trout had taken on an extra part-time job in the local tearooms, and Mr Trout was trying to invent things to add to his meagre earnings as Little Snoring's lighthouse keeper. So far he had invented the wheel, electricity, ice cream and luminous paint



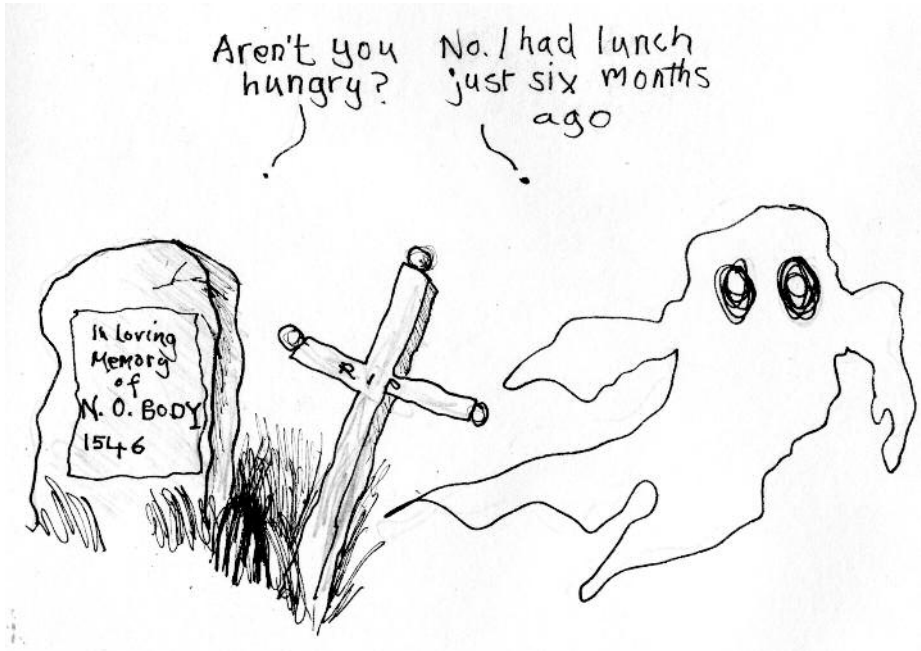
and had been very disappointed to discover that somebody had got there first and invented all of them before him.

He was now working on a top-secret new invention. Tat had told Jamie he thought it had something to do with glue.

The ship had been due to arrive in Little Snoring a few days before, and was already late due to bad weather. Jamie was worried they might not arrive in Little Snoring in time for the annual Fancy Dress Junior Disco. Jamie already had his costume made and hidden under his bunk in his cabin. He was planning to go as the vengeful ghost of Captain Syd. He hoped to scare everyone witless.

But before they reached Little Snoring, he was hopeful that he might yet redeem himself with the crew of *The Good Hope*.

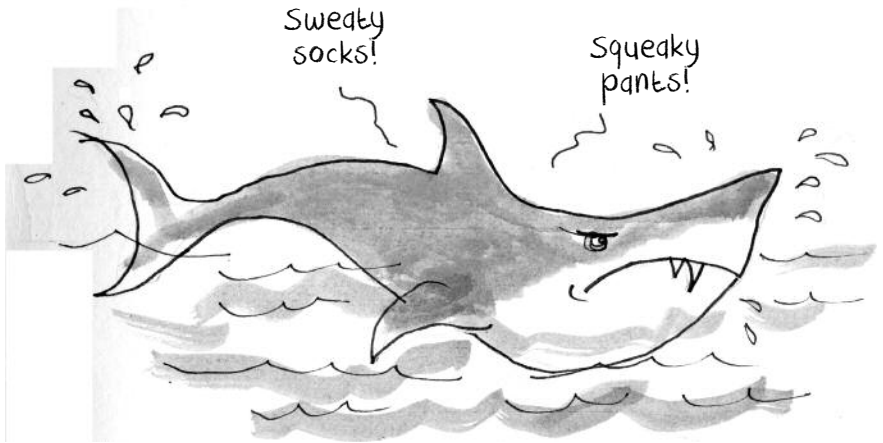





So when he heard a strange noise coming from somewhere out at sea he tried to forget his queasy tummy and be as alert as possible.

He put the telescope to his eye and saw a shark zigzagging its way across the ocean towards the ship. The shark appeared to be in some distress, but the really odd thing was

the noise coming from it. Jamie listened hard. There was no doubt, he could hear it quite clearly.



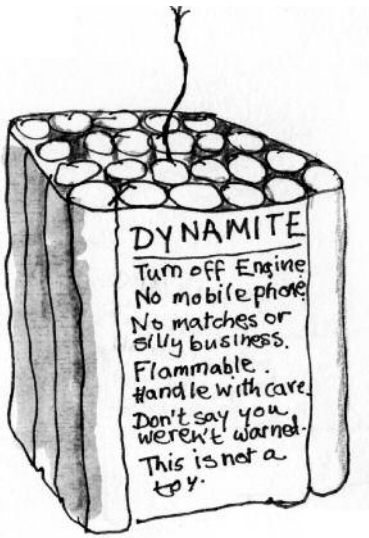

This was no ordinary shark – it was a talking shark. It was also hiccupping very loudly.






'Talking, hiccupping shark, ahoy!' shouted Jamie, and the Captain of the trawler was so surprised that Jamie had spotted anything at all that she put the brakes on rather too hard and the boat skidded so sharply to the left that everyone fell over except Jamie, who was clinging to the mast very tightly.

The whole crew counted to ten, because in the hold they had a small cargo of dynamite that they were transporting for use in the Greater Snoring quarry, which was run by the trawler skipper's brother. But there was no explosion and



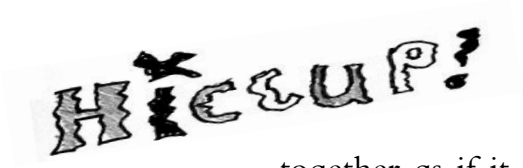
everyone heaved a sigh of relief. Jamie clambered down the mast and joined the Captain and the rest of the crew, who were rubbing their squashed noses and staring over the side of the boat at the shark. There, a strange sight met their eyes.




# Chapter 2

(Two is too 2 good, and twice as good as 1 which is often very naughty and has to glued to the pages to make it stay there.)

Sharks are very hard to catch (not that *The Good Hope* ever tried as it was a specialist fishing vessel and only ever caught fish fingers). But the shark they were looking at kept rising vertically up out of the sea




and putting its flippers together as if it was begging to be let aboard. What's more, it was quite clearly talking. Every time it opened its mouth the words 'Sweaty socks!' and 'Squeaky pants!' could be heard. Its hiccups were getting worse too, and its eyes more desperate.

'Bring out the nets,' shouted the Captain. It was not often that she felt sorry for a shark, but this one was clearly in terrible distress and needed help.

The sailors threw the net into the water, the shark jumped into it, and everyone hauled it up over the side of the boat and onto the deck, where it fell with a bump.

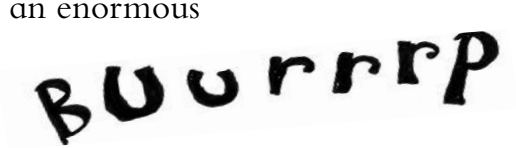
'Ouch!' said two voices inside the shark. The shark nodded desperately towards the






Captain's knife, which was secured in her belt. Reluctantly, the Captain took out her knife, ready to cut down the middle of the shark's belly. She looked into the shark's eyes. The shark nodded again.

'Wait!' shouted Jamie. He remembered that when he had terrible hiccups or a stomach ache he would sometimes feel better if his mum rubbed his back very hard. He ran over to the shark, motioned to the other sailors to help him turn it on its front and began to rub and pat the shark's back. The shark's hiccupping grew louder, and Jamie patted harder. Then all of a sudden it gave an enormous



(louder than a 10,000 ton meteor hitting the Earth), opened its mouth very wide and two strange, smelly, misshapen creatures slithered out onto the deck.



'Sweaty socks,' groaned one.

'Squeaky pants,' moaned the other.

The pong coming from the creatures was unbearable: like bad drains mixed with maggoty fish and your big brother's smelly socks that have been left in a corner of the bedroom since the Easter before last.

'Poor shark!' said the Captain. 'It must have accidentally swallowed these repulsive, repellent sea monsters.'

The two revolting creatures gave a shriek of anger and rose to their feet.

'I'm not repulsive. I am Captain Gruesome, and millions of people across the world consider me extraordinarily attractive, except I haven't met any of them yet,' said one, snatching the Captain's knife and waving it threateningly.

'How dare you call me repellent! I'm Captain Grisly. I'm proud that so many admire me and declare that I am as handsome as a wombat, as cunning as a




crocodile and as ferocious as a Tasmanian devil.'

'And as smelly as a skunk,' remarked the trawler Captain, which was brave, but rather foolish, as Captain Gruesome advanced towards her so threateningly that even the sun took fright and hid behind a cloud.

