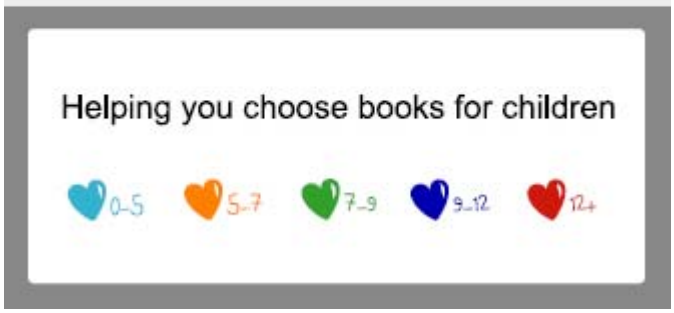
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opening extract from

Bravo Max

written by

D. J. Lucas (AKA Sally Grindley)

published by

Orchard Books

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12th January

Dear D.J.,

It's me again! Are you back from Australia yet? I bet you missed my letters while you were away. I had a great Christmas at Uncle Derek and Pauline's. Their mad dog Scallywag stole some of Gran's Christmas pudding when she wasn't looking. Lucky it wasn't the bit with the money in!



Thank you, thank you, thank you for your postcard and for the signed copy of your new

book – *My Teacher's a Fruitcake*. I've already read it and it's just as funny as *My Teacher's a Nutcase*. I love it when the teacher falls into the sandpit and a dog eats her shoes.

Have you made any New Year's resolutions? I made one. I was going to try not to step on any cracks in the pavement on my way to and from school, but I forgot and trod on one on the very first day! Doh!

Love, Max

P.S. You're still my favourite author.

17th January

Dear D.J.,

I don't think you can be home because you haven't written, but I'm going to keep writing until you write back – so there!

You'll never guess what. You know my Uncle Twinkle Toes Derek and his girlfriend Pauline, well they belong to a theatre club and they're in a play called *Cinderella and the Beanstalk* and Mum and I are going to see it. I bet it'll be amazing because Uncle Derek's in it.

Have you ever written a play? When I told my teacher, Miss Dimmer, that I was going to see a play, she said jolly good because we'll be doing plays in class soon.

Hurry up and write or I'll have to find a new favourite author!

Love, Max

P.S. We've got a football match on Saturday and I'm in the starting team. YIPPEE! Huge Bigbottom was rude about me being in the team but he doesn't scare me. Just let him try!



D.J.LUCAS
30 PENCIL DRIVE, WRITINGDOM, DJ1 0AU

21st January

Dear Max,

We're back. Phew! What a trip! Your two letters were waiting impatiently for me on the doormat, and I'm rushing to answer them because I don't want someone else taking over as your favourite author. Thank goodness you enjoyed My *Teacher's a Fruitcake*, or there might not have been any letters waiting!

We had a wonderful trip, Max. The highlight was walking over Sydney harbour bridge, which is so high it makes your stomach drop into your boots. I tried surfing for the first time, but I spent more time under the water making friends with the local fish than I did on my board. Christopher is a whizz at surfing,

but he has flown to Australia lots of times so he's had plenty of practice. Now I must get down to some serious writing and thread all my research into my new story.

You sound really happy, Max. Well done for getting into the football team. Just you prove Huge Bigbottom wrong.



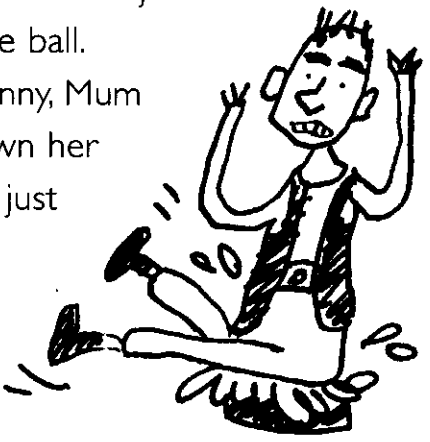
P.S. I haven't written any plays, but one day... I just might.

23rd January

Dear D.J.,

I'm soooooo glad you're back. It seemed like you were away for ever!

Guess what, guess what, GUESS WHAT! Uncle Derek and Pauline have got engaged and they're going to get married this September! And guess what happened. In *Cinderella and the Beanstalk*, Uncle Derek played the giant and Pauline was Cinderella. The best bit was when Uncle Derek sat in the biggest custard pie you've ever seen just before he left for the ball. He was soooooo funny, Mum had tears rolling down her cheeks. She laughed just like she used to before Dad died.



Anyway, right at the end, when Cinderella danced with the prince, giant Uncle Derek pushed the prince out of the way and asked Cinderella – well, Pauline – to marry him. And she said yes. And everybody in the audience cheered like mad. Mum cried again because she was so happy and said if Dad had been there he would have called her a silly daft duck.

Love, Max

P.S. I nearly scored a goal in our football match, and I'm in the team again this week. Huge Bigbottom never passes to me, but Ben does because that's what best friends are for.

This is a picture of Uncle with his big belly being a giant proposing to Pauline. Oh yes it is!



D.J.LUCAS
30 PENCIL DRIVE, WRITINGDOM, DJ1 0AU

27th January

Dear Max,

That's great news about Uncle Derek and Pauline. What a dramatic way to propose to someone. Thank goodness Pauline said yes!

Love D.J.