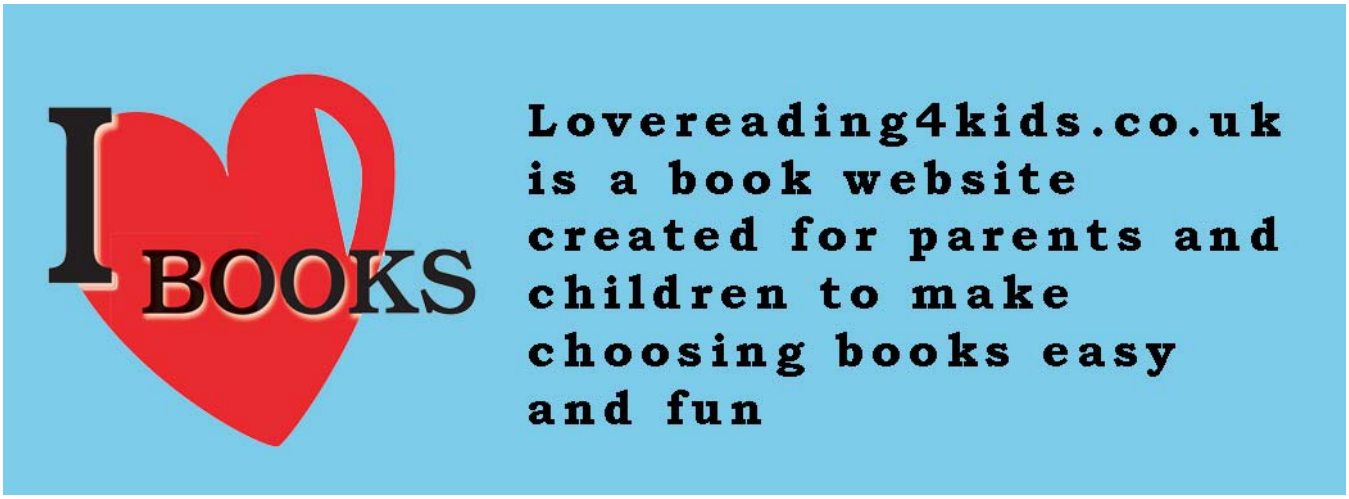


Opening extract from

The Very Royal Holiday

Written by

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Illustrated by

Becka Moor

Published by

Bloomsbury Publishing PLC

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THE VERY ROYAL HOLIDAY



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BLOOMSBURY

LONDON OXFORD NEW YORK NEW DELHI SYDNEY

Bloomsbury Publishing, London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi and Sydney

First published in Great Britain in May 2016 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DP

www.bloomsbury.com

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

ISBN 978 1 4088 6394 7



Printed and bound in Great Britain by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

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To Queen Ellen and Prince Timino ~ C.B.
For Karen and Matt ~ B.M.



The story so far …

BRITLAND BLATHER

KING STEVE DOES SOMETHING SUCCESSFULLY

For the first time in his life, the King of Britland has done something successfully. 'To the astonishment, to be honest, of all of us,' a spokesperson for the Royal Palace declared, 'King Steve has won the Royal Bake Off organised by his brother, Emperor Sam of Americanada.'

King Steve, it is rumoured, is not yet able to colour in drawings wi he lines, but last week he scored a landmark victory against Emperor Sam.

His apple pie was described by Americanadian journalists as 'just awesome', 'totally amazing' and 'super fabulous', which in Britlander might be translated as 'rather good'.

King Steve seems to be on a winning streak these days, since, according to an official statement from the palace, he also managed to button up his shirt without missing any holes this morning.

It is understood that young Prince Pepino and his friends Anna and Holly Burnbright were helpers in the Royal Bake Off, although, as King

Steve was quick to point out, 'I did it all on my own. They just brought me the ingredients. They weren't even there during the final task.' Indeed, the three children had no hand in King Steve's great victory, since they were saving Americanada from an attack by the Easter Princess and her minions at the time.

The three children, it has emerged, were thanked by Emperor Sam with a rather large amount of money, which they are planning to use to go on a Holy Moly Holiday.

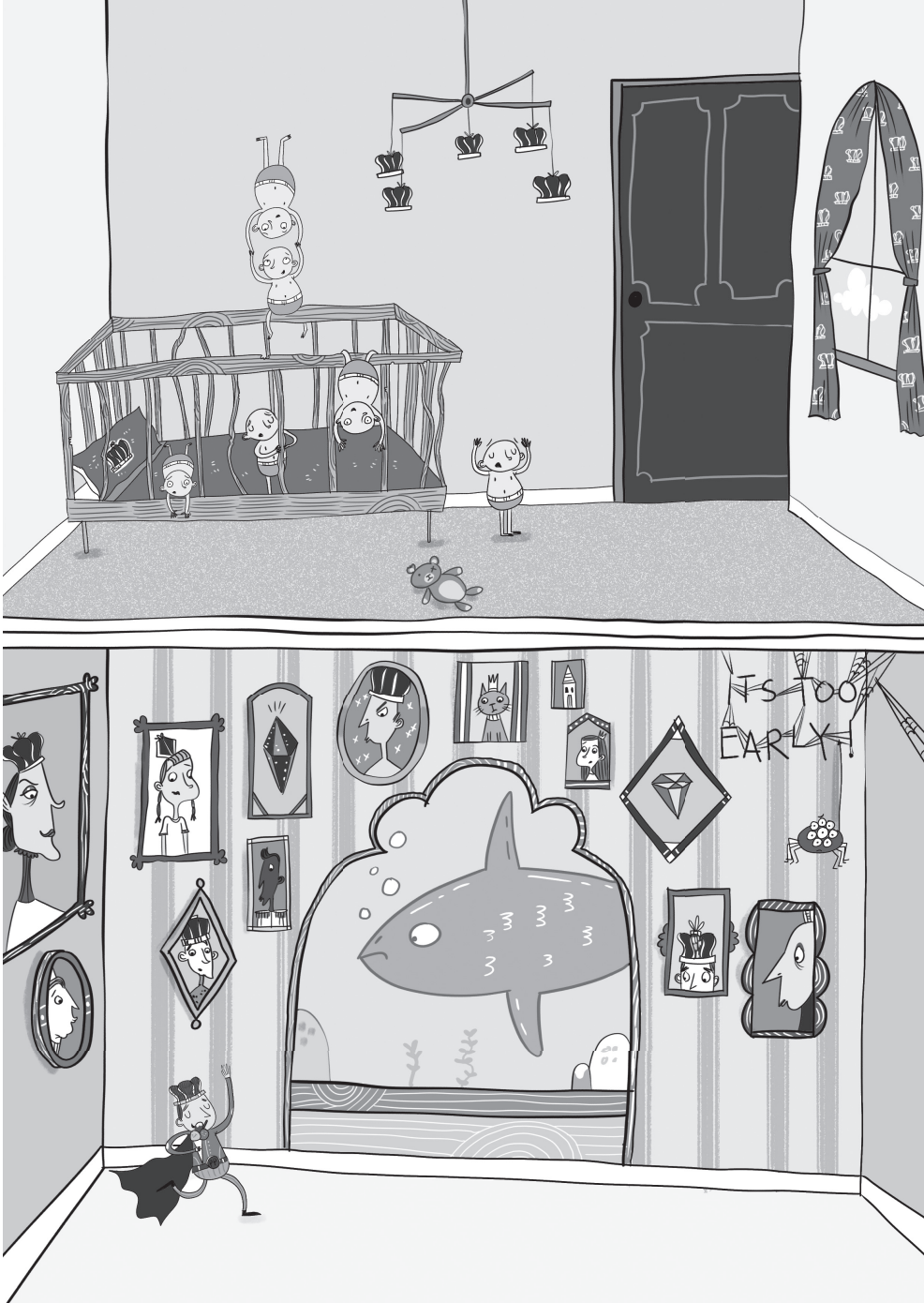
P.P

Chapter One

Prince Pepino had always had everything he wanted in life: chocolate brownies at two in the morning, a private cinema in his bedroom, the right to read thrilling children's books and comics instead of doing his maths homework, and a giant sunfish called Dave. Until recently, he had never needed to *work* to get anything he desired.

But now that he had to *work*, and ***work***, and ***WORK*** to get what he wanted most in the world – tickets to the Holy Moly Holiday with Holly and Anna – he was the happiest prince the Royal Palace of Britland had ever seen.

On the day of the Holy Moly Holiday, he got up at four in the morning, had his cereal-and-milk breakfast ice cream and pirouetted around the castle, waking everyone.


IS TOO
EARLY!

‘Goodbye, Mummy! Goodbye, Daddy! Goodbye, lovely pets! And goodbye, all the Berties! I’ll miss you probably not very much … because I’m going on the coolest holiday in the history of the universe!’

The holiday did indeed sound very cool, and the three children had not stopped thinking about it for one minute since they had spotted the advert for it earlier that summer.

HOLY MOLY HOLIDAY!

This summer, treat yourself to the intergalactic holiday of a lifetime – Not for the faint-hearted or the unadventurous!

DAY 1: Scuba-dive in the molten lava of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano of Islandia!

DAY 2: Learn to play polo on baby-elephant-back in the savannahs of Afrik!

DAY 3: Build a faster-than-light spaceship in Americanada!

DAY 4: Fly the faster-than-light spaceship to Mars, and have Martian cocktails at a local bar!

DAY 5: Back to Earth! Have a rest and celebrate the end of your Holy Moly Holiday in your ...

TEN STAR HOTEL!

With:

* *Taps of hot chocolate, lemonade and chicken soup (unlimited)*
* *Marshmallow pillows (unlimited)*
* *Jacuzzi in every room (the size of an Olympic swimming pool)*
* *TV with three million channels (none of them boring)*
* *And much more ... including a*

BIG, SECRET, SURPRISE GIFT!

Meanwhile, Holly and Anna were saying goodbye to their mum, who was a little bit worried.

'Have a nice trip, my darlings, but don't get turned into stone again, or tumble down a waterfall, or fall off a tightrope, or get trapped in catacombs, or –'

'Don't worry, Mummy,' said Anna, rolling her eyes. 'This time we won't be in danger! It's just a fun holiday!'

Their mum wiped a tear and gave the girls a photograph of their family from when their dad was still with them.

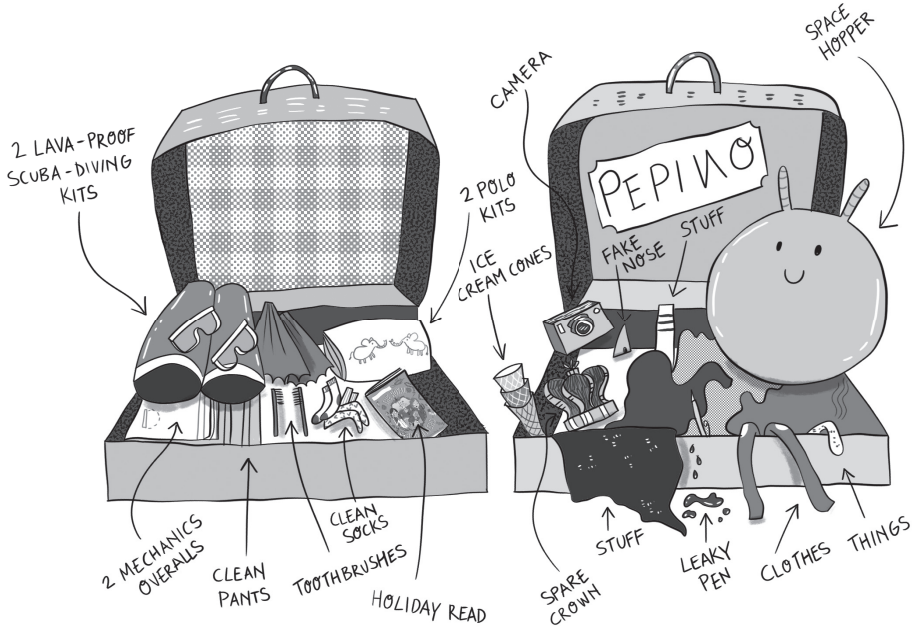


‘Daddy would be so proud of you if he hadn’t been kidnapped by that pelican all those years ago,’ she said.

Then they had a big hug. The girls dragged their suitcase all the way down to Doverport harbour, where they met Pepino, and they took a little boat to the Neitherherenortherelands.

There, the Holy Moly Holiday's special cruise ship was due to leave at midday, to sail to Islandia.

They had packed all the stuff you need for a week-long holiday of that kind. Well, Holly and Anna had.



As they approached the harbour in the Neitherherenortherelands, Pepino exclaimed, 'Look at that huge pink-and-purple-and-glittery cruise ship!'

'It's ours!' Anna marvelled. 'It says *Holy Moly Holiday* in big letters on the side. And it's got *swings* on the top deck!'

'Ah!!!' Pepino screamed. 'I can't wait! I can't wait, I can't wait, I can't wait!'

And he began singing 'Can't wait' to the tune of 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star':

'Can't wait, can't wait, can't wait, can't
Wait, can't wait, can't wait, can't wait.'

They all jumped from the small boat to the pier.

'Pepino,' Anna interrupted, 'you're destroying the inside of my ears.'

'You just don't recognise good music when you hear it,' replied Pepino.

'We do,' said Holly, 'and it's nothing like *yours*. It's a bit more like … well, like … *this*.'

This was the most entrancing, fluid, charming tune they had ever heard, played on a stringed

instrument that sounded like it had been made from enchanted wood and the hair of angels.

As they looked around to see where the music was coming from, the warmest voice in the world whispered, 'You won't have to *wait* for long, Your Majesty. Welcome, dear children, to the utterly mesmerising Holy Moly Holiday.'

Anna, Holly and Pepino gaped. The man who had just spoken was one of the most handsome and lovely people they had ever seen. He had perfectly blond hair like a lemon meringue. He had eyes like violet-flavoured boiled sweets.



And he was playing the song of the clouds and the flowers on his wooden mandolin …

'My name is Pip Hamelin,' said the man, smiling, 'the organiser of the Holy Moly Holiday. You must be Prince Pepino, and the brave Holly and Anna Burnbright. What an honour. Ready to go? You're the last to get on board. We're lifting the anchor in ten minutes, and tomorrow morning

we'll be in Islandia for the first stop of our holiday.'

Holly, Anna and Pepino nodded. All they wanted was to follow this entrancing man. So they followed him into the huge pink-and-purple-and-glittery cruise ship marked *Holy Moly Holiday*, smiling like three happy baboons.