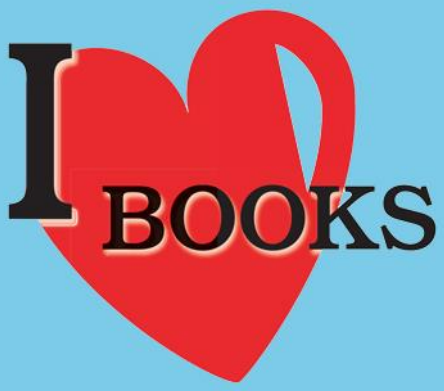

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Opening extract from

My Embarrassing Dad's Gone Viral

Written by

Ben Davis

Illustrated by

Mike Lowery

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FIVE REASONS WHY YOU'LL LOVE THIS BOOK . . .

Perfect for anyone who likes funny stories.
So that's everyone!

Perfect for anyone who has an embarrassing parent.
Again, I think that's everyone!

Perfect for anyone who laughs at funny
clips on YouTube.
Yup, everyone!

Perfect for anyone who likes watching
really rubbish survival programmes.
Isn't that everyone?

Perfect . . . well, it's just perfect really.
There's nothing more to be said!

HERE'S A TASTE OF THE LAUGHTER TO COME . . .

DAD HUFFS OUT THROUGH HIS NOSE, THEN GOES UP ON HIS TIPTOES AND ROARS LIKE A BEAR. I TRY TO RUN BUT HE WRAPS HIS ARMS AROUND ME AND PICKS ME UP.

DAD: THIS IS THE BEAR HUG. It will incapacitate your enemy and leave them dazed!

ME: Aaargh!

DAD: Raaaaaaaaaarrrr!

ME: I can't breathe!

DAD: Feel the power of the bear!

I START TURNING BLUE AND BLACKING OUT SO DAD PUTS ME DOWN.

DAD: Now you try.

ME: (Gasping for breath) Yeah, right!

DAD: DO IT!

ME: Fine!

I GRAB HIM. MY HANDS BARELY MEET ON THE OTHER SIDE.

DAD: PUNY!

DAD PICKS ME UP ABOVE HIS HEAD AND SPINS ME AROUND. PART OF ME IS KIND OF THRILLED, BECAUSE IT REMINDS ME OF BEING A LITTLE KID, BUT ANOTHER PART OF ME THINKS HE'S GONE FULL BLOWN SHINING AND IS ABOUT TO SMASH ME UP A TREE. I WRIGGLE FREE AND SCRAMBLE AWAY FROM HIM.

ME: Will you just leave me alone? I don't want to be a bear!

DAD BREATHES DEEPLY AND NODS.

DAD: OK, son. But this is not the last time I will try to teach you the ways of combat.

ME: Whatever.

DAD WALKS AWAY INTO THE WOODS AND I STAND THERE, TRYING TO GET MY BREATH BACK. I AM ABOUT TO TURN THE CAMERA OFF, WHEN A SUDDEN CRY OF 'UNEXPECTED BEAR ATTACK!' NEARLY MAKES ME HAVE A CARDIAC ARREST AND DAD BURSTS OUT OF THE WOODS, SCOOPS ME UP IN HIS ARMS, AND SCREAMS 'THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE!'

I watched the video back on the laptop. It was so ridiculous, there was no way I could publish it. Imagine what people like Marshall would say at school after they watched me being chucked around a forest by my mad, beardy dad. No, back to the drawing board. I would try again tomorrow.

I was about to press delete, but I stopped. Maybe I was being too hasty. Maybe this video could act as a cry for help? A kind of, 'I need to find my mum because look at what I have to put up with' thing? I didn't want to get Dad in trouble, but enough was enough.

I went backwards and forwards all through the editing process. Even as I stared at the loading screen, I still didn't know if it was a good idea.

Come on, do you want your mum back or not? I thought. You owe it to Mary to do something.

I took a deep breath and pressed upload.

For Dougie

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MY EMBARRASSING DAD'S GONE VIRAL!

BY THE BRILLIANTLY FUNNY

BEN DAVIS

ILLUSTRATED BY

MIKE LOWERY

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

REC

00:14:54

00:00

THE LONGEST VIDEO I'VE EVER RECORDED

Camera on?

Yes.

Mic levels OK?

Test. TEST.

Yep, they're fine.

Right. This is going to be the longest video I've ever recorded, so you guys better make yourselves comfortable. I'm serious. Your bums are going to be numb by the end of this.

The thing is, a lot of people have been saying stuff about my family. Some of it's true, some of it isn't. It's time to set the record straight.

The first time I realized things had gone wrong was when Mum disappeared.

No, I don't mean she was vanished into thin air by a magician, or she was

kidnapped, or anything mad like that. It's just one day, I came home from school and she wasn't there. To begin with, I just thought she'd gone to a friend's house and got held up or something, but the later it got, the more worried I became.

Her mobile number was written on a pad next to the phone. I called it, but it went straight to her voicemail. Then, I called Dad at work. He was out, showing a couple around a house. That was his job, you understand, he doesn't just go around showing people houses. That would be stupid.

Anyway, he answered and was all, 'What do you mean, your mum's not there? Maybe she's gone to the shops, or something?'

When I told him that her car was still on the drive, he went quiet. See, this was back when Dad was normal. Before he became the person you all know today.

Yeah, I know it's hard to believe, but he wasn't always like that. He was clean, polite, watched TV, and shaved every single day.

Mad, isn't it?

Anyway, I heard him excuse himself from the house-hunting couple and walk away. His voice went all quiet. 'Now, Nelson,' he goes, because that's my real name. I'm named after a bloke called Nelson Mandela. My parents were mad keen on him back in the olden days. 'Nelson,'

he says, ‘I want you to go upstairs and check if her clothes are still in the wardrobe.’

I didn’t get it, to be honest. Why would her clothes be missing? I mean she was forever moaning about how she couldn’t afford nice ones any more, but that was hardly good enough reason to throw them all out, was it?

I clomped upstairs into Mum and Dad’s room. The wardrobe was open. Her clothes were all gone.

When I told Dad this, he made this really sad sighing sound and said, ‘I’ll be home as soon as I can, son.’

After that, nothing was ever the same again.

That felt like a proper dramatic moment, so if you want to pause me and go and have a wee or something, now would be a good time.