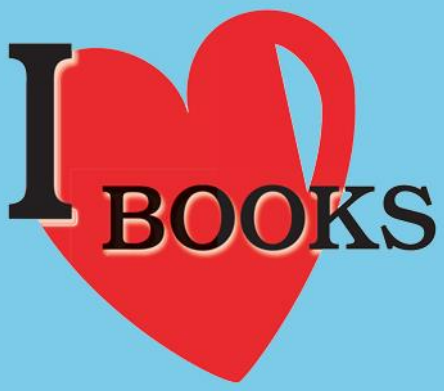


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Opening extract from

Hamish and the Gravity Burp

Written by

Danny Wallace

Illustrated by

Jamie Littler

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To the American . . . welcome from us all!

Danny Wallace

Jamie dedication to come here
– I asked him for this on 17 Jan … it's coming soon!

Jamie Littler

Look out for…

HAMISH AND THE WORLDSTOPPERS

HAMISH AND THE NEVERPEOPLE

HAMISH AND THE TERRIBLE TERRIBLE CHRISTMAS

(eBook only)

First published in Great Britain in 2017 by
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HAMISH AND THE GRAVITY BURP

BY DANNY WALLACE

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMIE LITTLER

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LORD OF THE FRIES

Now delivers to Port Fenland Nuclear Power Station

"Try the fission chips!"

p12. Butcher gets new ladder. The stakes are high!

p23. Free Brain Transplants? But what if you change your mind?

p83. Which of our puns made the year's Top Ten? Sadly, no pun in ten did. :(

BRITAIN'S FOURTH MOST BORING TOWN – AND PROUD OF IT!

Starkley Post

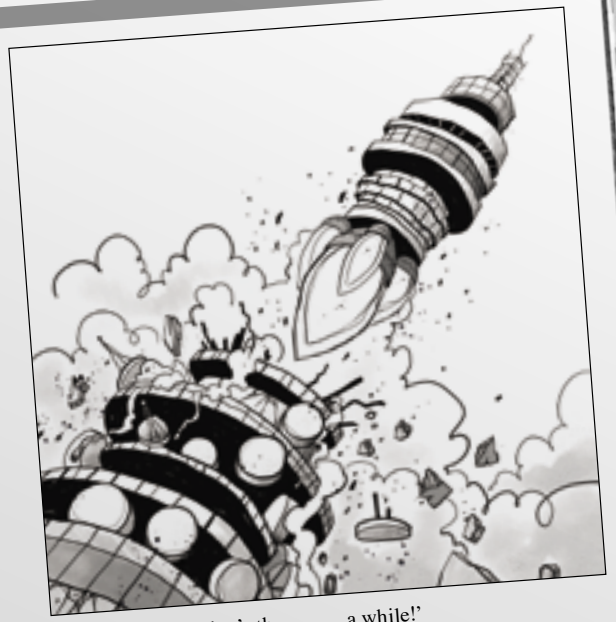
Price: 92p

Wednesday 2017 issue XX vol 12

ANOTHER VICTORY FOR THE PDF!

Starkley kids vanquish Scarmarsh!

'Hurrah for the PDF!' was the general feeling in Starkley today as local heroes the Pause Defence Force fought off another threat to life on Earth!



Evil villain Axel Scarmarsh may have escaped for now – but he won't be back in a hurry thanks to the efforts of Hamish Ellerby and friends.

'I really think that's the very last problem we'll ever have!' said local resident Boppo Rix, as quite without warning he began to float into the air. 'Yes, I can't see anything else happening for a while!'

If anyone knows the current whereabouts of Mr. Rix, please call the local police, as we lost sight of him as he drifted quickly over Frinkley.

QUIZFACE

It's quiz night at the Queen's Leg on Tuesdays. Can you answer this week's big questions?

1. I am a man from history. You know me as Napoleon Boneparte. But who am I?
2. A girl with seven arms walks into a room with two doors. But which one and how?
3. A five letter anagram, but you have to guess the letters. (6)
4. Pick a card, any card. Memorise it. Is it the one I'm thinking of? Yes. Now work out how.

Answers: 1. Napoleon Boneparte. 2. Any door, it's totally up to her. 3. As written. 4. Four of hearts.

STARKLEY TOWN COUNCIL TOURIST GUIDE

Come and see...

Starkley Town Clock!



Are you thinking about seeing Starkley Town Clock? Probably not, so here are reasons you should:

1. It's a great clock if you like clocks
2. Especially if you like completely normal clocks
3. By which we mean completely normal clocks that have nothing out of the ordinary about them at all!

"So if you like normal clocks, and aren't expecting anything unusual about this clock, come and see this clock, which is a normal clock and has nothing at all unusual about it!"™

FIH

inkley Hospital

POLITE NOTICE

RADIO GAGA

Frinkley Hospital would like to apologise for the loss of a nice clear radio signal outside the maternity ward – especially to anyone trying to listen to the Janice Mad show on Starkley FM.

Mind you, we would also like to apologise to anyone who heard the Janice Mad show who would have preferred to have lost their signal.

One thing's for sure – don't blame the babies!



0

Oh!

Oh, it's **YOU!**

I recognise you.

Do you know how?

From your grubby little fingerprints when you first picked up this book.

I knew then and there it was you!

There was the smell too, of course. I don't have to tell you that you have a very *distinct* smell. A very *unusual* aroma. A wonderfully *unique* bouquet.

But, in the interest of politeness, I think it might be best to ignore your incredible stink for now.

Anyway, I bet you're wondering how a simple book could recognise your fingerprints and pick up on your stink, so let me tell you.

Sometimes you might think the thing you're looking at is just a thing that you're looking at.

You might think that thing is normal. That it's completely and utterly ordinary.

But wait – look a little closer, and you might find that it's . . .

Special.

Lots of things are like that. Books. Places. People. Your mum's awful cooking.

Each one has something really special about it. OK, maybe not your mum's cooking.

So, yes, this book may look like it's just a normal, completely and utterly ordinary book.

But it's not.

It's a book written just for you.

That's right. Before you picked it up and flicked through it, none of the words and pictures were here. In fact, the whole book was blank, just waiting for you . . .

Because this book is your ticket into a secret organisation.

And this book knows all about YOU.

It knows that the other day you had cake. It knows your birthday is less than a year away. It knows that secretly you love your mum's cooking.

And this book also knows something terrifying: that the people of Earth face their gravest, grimmest threat yet.

A threat so grave and so grim that if I just came out and told you what it was, your hair would turn white, your teeth would fall out, your legs would turn into apples and you'd marry a cat.

So, in the interests of you not marrying a cat, let me start by telling you what's happening in the small, normal, completely and utterly ordinary town of Starkley. A town you may already be familiar with. One which has had to deal with some very unusual occurrences over the past few months. And the same town in which Hamish Ellerby, a normal, completely and utterly ordinary ten-year-old boy, has just returned home . . .

. . . to find that something absolutely *extraordinary* was happening.



1

Up, Up and Wahey!

Hamish Ellerby burst through the door of his home and was shocked to find his mum and brother lying flat on their backs.

Both of them. Flat on their backs.

Flat on their backs . . . *on the ceiling!*

'Help! We're stuck up here!' Jimmy shouted, looking panicked and confused, because being stuck on the ceiling doesn't happen to big brothers that often. 'Why are we stuck on the ceiling?'

It wasn't just them up there either. There was a bowl of fruit too. Six batteries. And a wind-up meerkat.

A disgusting, bleurghy sound bowled through the small town of Starkley, rattling teacups and dentures in glasses.

UUUUUUUUURRRRRRRRRRRRRRP!

And, as Hamish glanced around the living room of 13 Lovelock Close, more objects were rising up, up, up into the air.

Vases! Cushions! Magazines!

The TV remote! A pencil! Mum's packet of chocolate Mustn'tgrumbles!

All of them gently drifting upwards, spookily lifting off from chairs and coffee tables – that were now starting to slowly rise up themselves.

Pictures and frames left their hooks and scraped their way up the walls.

Every carpet fibre stood to attention and shook.

The TV was just floating in mid-air, straining against the plug in the wall, like a dog pulling at its leash.

'What's going ON?' yelled Mum. 'I can't hang around on the ceiling all day – I've got things to DO!'

This was NOT NORMAL.

Hamish and his dad had been sitting on the grass by the town square when it had started.

Hamish noticed it first: a small chocolate bar had started twitching on the ground beside him. Then a can began to float near a bin. He'd watched a football shoot off into the atmosphere like a firework, then the leaves from trees start to break away and fly straight upwards too. It was amazing. It was beautiful somehow. He could have stayed there all day and watched this weirdness.

It was when he could feel himself getting lighter too that his dad had pulled him towards the safety of home.

'Hamish!' shouted his mum, now splayed out like an upside-down starfish. 'You're rising too!'

WHAT?

Hamish looked at his feet. They weren't on the floor any more. He tried to run, but his feet had nothing to run on and, as his legs spun wildly around like he was swimming in the air, he grabbed onto his dad. The two of them began to float quickly up to the ceiling!

'Oi! Get off!' shouted Jimmy, as Hamish drifted up and lay flat across him. 'I need my space!'

Jimmy was fifteen and always going on about how he needed his space.

'I can't help it!' said Hamish, face to face with him. 'Gravity's gone funny! It's happening all over town!'

Now Hamish's messy mop of hair was getting in Jimmy's nostrils.

'Get your hair out of my face!' yelled Jimmy.

'Get your face out of my hair!' yelled Hamish.

'Aaaachoooo!' sneezed Jimmy, and a long trail of bright yellow snot flew from his nose and missed Hamish by millimetres.

'That was close,' said Hamish, relieved. 'You nearly used me as a hankie!'

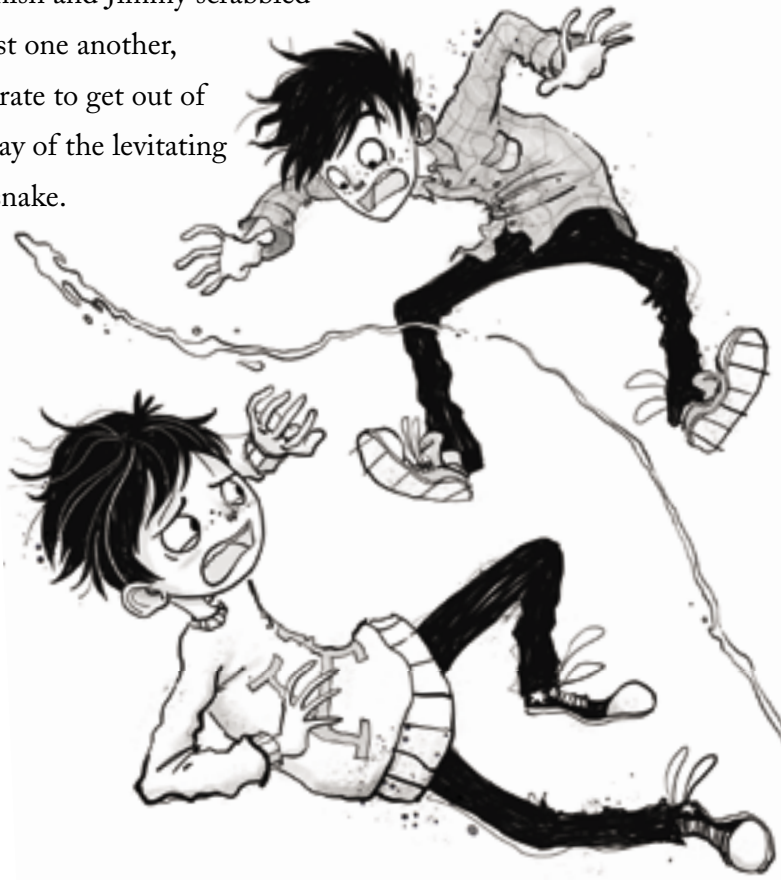
But gravity had plans for that long trail of snot.

As it spun towards the floor, it slooooooowed, stopped, then began to rise, doubling back towards them.

'The snot's coming back!' yelled Jimmy, trying to push Hamish in its way. 'The snot wants revenge!'

It was like a creepy, thin snake, climbing high into the air, getting closer, closer, closer, twirling and turning and sloppy and wet . . .

Hamish and Jimmy scrabbled against one another, desperate to get out of the way of the levitating snot snake.



And then, like there had been a thunderclap no one could hear, the spell was broken.

'Watch out!' yelled Hamish's dad, as all four members of the Ellerby family hung for a second, then came crashing back down to the ground.

Hamish landed in an armchair.

Jimmy landed heavily on top of him.

Mum and Dad bounced off the sofa and onto the floor.

Vases crashed after them. The TV fell and fizzed and cracked. The room rained cushions and magazines and pencils and wind-up meerkats.

And, a second or so later, that long, wet trail of snot slopped itself across Jimmy's hair and face.

'I **SLIMED** myself!' he wailed, horrified.

For a moment more, everything was quiet.

Then the bangs started. Small ones at first.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

'What's that?' said Hamish, worried, creeping closer to his mum for protection. Her hair was pointing in the air, like a mad punk. She'd been using hairspray just before the gravity had changed and now it had set that way.

'Look outside,' said his dad, and Hamish pressed his face up against the window.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Apples that had shot up into the air were now on their way back down, and bouncing off the roofs of Lovelock Close.

BANG! BANG!

BANG BANG BANG!

Anything that hadn't been nailed down had gone up, up, up and was now coming down, down, down. Pine cones. Coke cans. Shoes. Footballs. Bins. Garden chairs. Last night's macaroni pizza.

Hamish watched, wide-eyed, as across the street bicycles crashed to Earth.

Car alarms went off.

A cat landed in a pond.

Mr Ramsface was clinging to the guttering next door and shouting words he really should not be shouting.

'Right!' said Hamish's dad, reaching for the phone. 'This calls for a town meeting.'

And, as phones began to ring all over the place, the people of Starkley crept out of their homes to stare up at the skies, curious and frightened.

Not a single one of them could have known that things were about to get much, much worse.