BAD DAD

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BOOGIE BEAR

David Walliams

BAD DAD

Illustrated by Tony Ross

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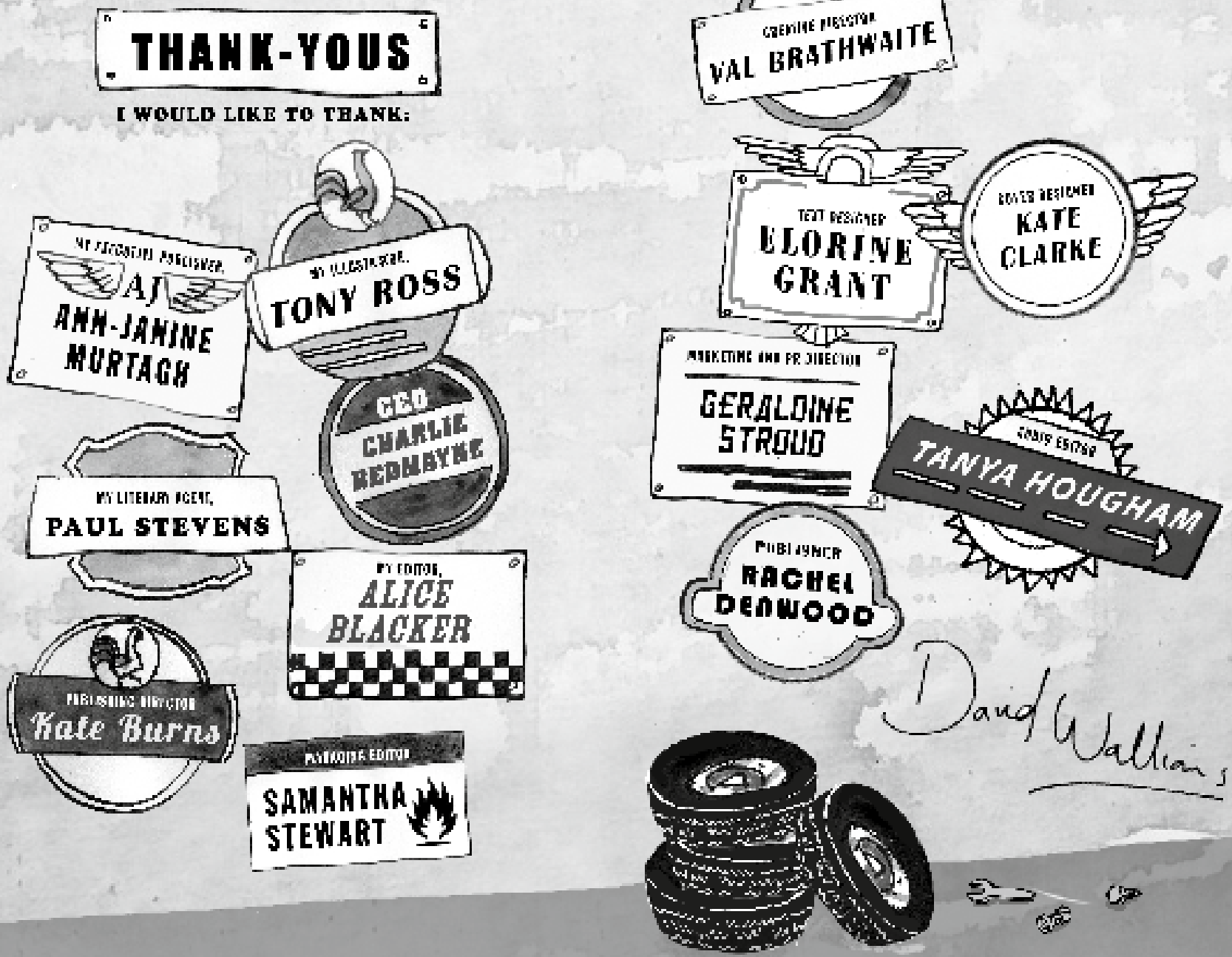
FOR THE LOVE
OF MY LIFE,
ALFRED
WITH LOVE,
PAPA x

THANK-YOUS

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK:



Dads come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. There are fat ones and thin ones, tall ones and short ones. There are young ones and old ones, clever ones and stupid ones.

There are silly ones and serious ones, loud ones and quiet ones.

Of course there are good dads, and bad dads.

This is the story of a dad and his son.

Frank
is the son.

Dad is the dad.
His name is
Gilbert.

This is Rita,
Frank's mum.

Auntie Flip is Dad's aunt.
She babysits Frank sometimes.

Mr Big is a surprisingly small crime boss. Whatever time of day it is, he wears silk pyjamas and a dressing gown, with velvet slippers monogrammed “Mr B”.

Mr Big has two henchmen, Fingers and Thumbs.

Fingers is so called for his long, thin fingers, perfect for picking pockets.

Thumbs has enormous thumbs that he uses to inflict terrible pain on Mr Big’s enemies.

Will and Bear
are Thumbs's fearsome nephews.

Chang is
Mr Big's
sinister butler.

Reverend Judith is a vicar.

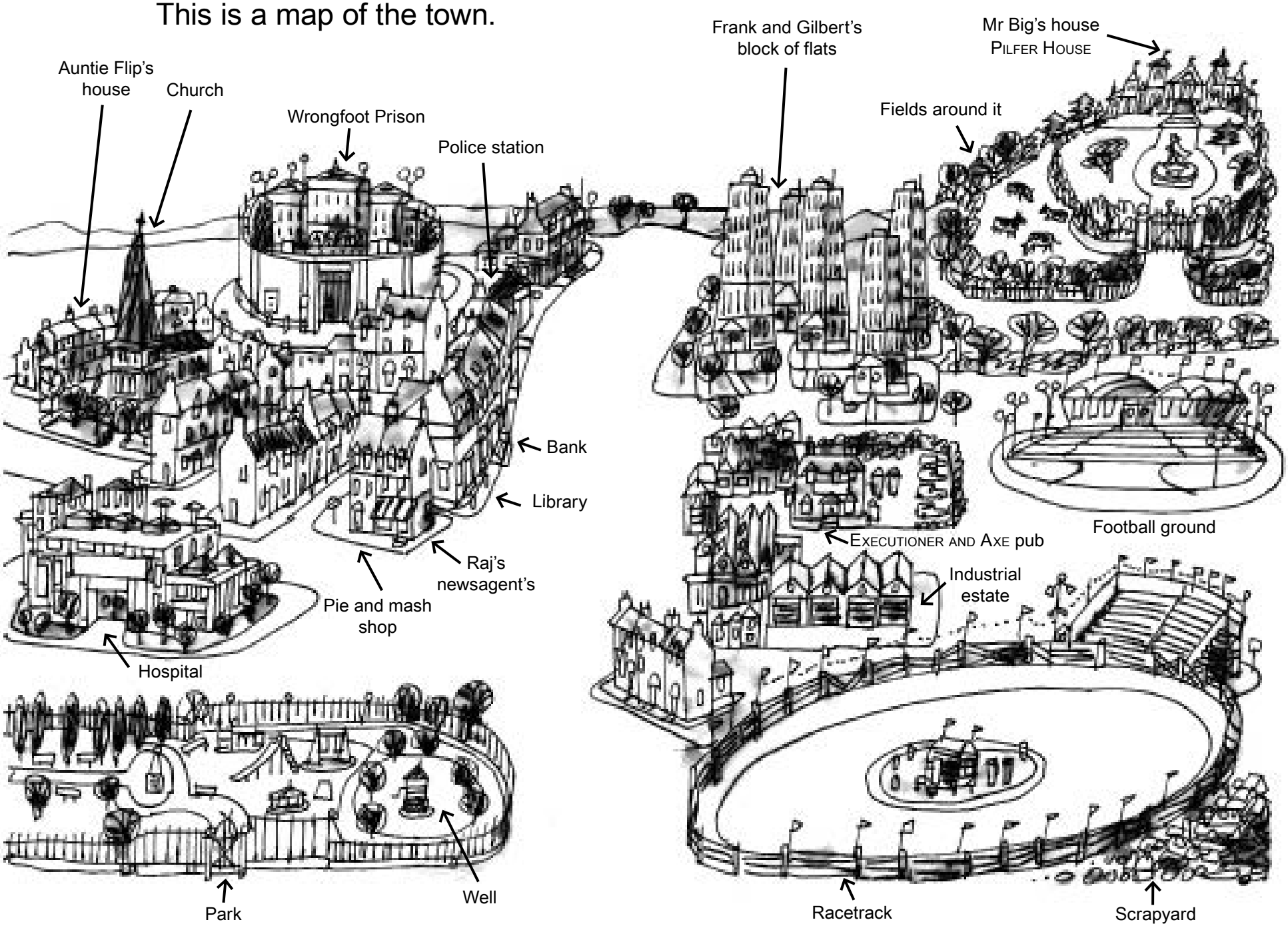
Sergeant Scoff is the local policeman.

Judge Pillar is well known for having a heart of stone.

Mr Swivel is a one-eyed prison guard.

Raj is a newsagent.

This is a map of the town.



CHAPTER

ROAR!

ROAR! went Dad's car as it sped round the dirt track. Frank's father was a banger racer. It was a dangerous sport. Cars would *smash* into each other…

BANG!

WALLOP!

CRUNCH!

…as they zoomed round and round.

Dad raced an old Mini that he had souped up himself. He had painted a Union Jack on the car, and named her "Queenie" after a lady he admired, Her Majesty the Queen. The car became as famous in racing circles as Dad. Queenie's engine made an unmistakable sound like a lion.

ROAR!

Dad was King of the Track. He was the greatest banger racer the town had ever seen. People came from all over the country to watch him race. Nobody won more times than him. Week after week, month after month, year after year, Dad would lift the trophies above his head as the crowds cheered and **shouted** his name.

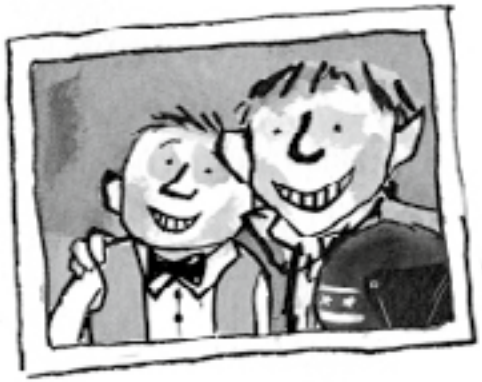
"GILBERT THE GREAT!
GILBERT THE GREAT!
GILBERT THE GREAT!
GILBERT THE GREAT!"

Lifewasgolden.

Because Dad was a local hero, everyone wanted to know him. Whenever he took his son out for pie and mash, the owner of the shop would give them double helpings and then wouldn't let them pay a penny. If Frank was walking down the street with his father, people in cars would beep their horns…

BEEP! BEEP!

…and smile and wave. The boy always felt a burst of pride whenever that happened. Frank even got marked up on a test by his Maths teacher after the man got a photo taken with his father at parents' evening.



No one was a bigger fan of Dad than his own son.

The boy worshipped his father. He was a hero to him. Frank longed to be just like his dad one day, a champion race-car driver. His dream was to one day drive Queenie.

As you might expect, father and son looked alike. Both were short and round, with sticky-out ears. The boy looked like someone had put his dad into a shrinking machine. Of all the children at his school, Frank knew he was never going to be the tallest or the handsomest or the **strongest** or the cleverest or the funniest. But he had seen the magic and wonder his father could create with his skill and courage on the racetrack. More than anything, he wanted to taste that.

As for Dad, he forbade his son from watching him race. A night would start with twenty cars speeding round the track, and by the end there would be just one car still standing. Drivers often got badly injured in the pile-ups, and sometimes spectators did too if the cars crashed into the stands.

"It's dangerous, mate," said Dad. Gilbert always called his son "mate". They were father and son, but best friends too.

"But, Dad…" the boy would plead as his father tucked him up in bed.

"No 'buts', mate. I don't want you to see me get hurt."

"But you're the best! You'll never get hurt!"

"I said 'no buts'. Now come on, be a good boy.

Give us a huggle* and go to sleep."

Dad would always plant a kiss on his son's forehead before he went out to race for the night. As for Frank, he would close his eyes and pretend to be asleep. However, as soon as he heard the door close, he would creep out of bed and crawl down the hallway to the front door so as not to alert his mum. The woman would always shut herself in her bedroom and speak in hushed tones on the telephone whenever her husband was out of the house. Still dressed in his pyjamas, the boy would run all the way to the racetrack.

Just outside the stadium was a huge tower of rusty old cars that had been smashed up in previous races. Frank would climb to the top of the pile. There he had the best view of the race. The boy would sit cross-legged on the roof of the highest car, and watch all the bangers speed by. Every time his father's Mini, Queenie, zoomed past, *roaring* as she went, the boy would cheer.

* A huggle was what the pair called their special embrace. It was halfway between a hug and a cuddle, hence the name.

Dad had no idea his son was up there. The man barred his son from watching him race because he feared the worst might happen.

One night it did.