

MORT *The* MEEK

AND THE
RAVENS'
REVENGE

CHAPTER FOUR

MORT

THE BRUTE



“You know the saying – you are what you eat?”

“Yeah, I’ve heard that.”

*“If our favourite food is eyeballs, would
that make us ... feathery flying eyeballs?”*

“Stop it. You’re freaking me out.”



One minute he was about to see his best friend executed, and the next ... he was **THE EXECUTIONER**.

Mort sat with his head in his hands. He couldn't believe what he'd just done.

What **HAD** he just done? **WHAT** had he just done? What had he just **DONE**? (It sounded bad, whichever way you looked at it.)

You think he killed his friend? What kind of a sick person are you?

No. **This** is what he did:

With a yell that sounded like the shriek of some inner demon, Mort had picked up the fallen knuckle stick and raised it in the air above Weed's head. Weed had begged and pleaded but Mort had ignored his friend's big, watery, chocolatey, innocent, frightened eyes... Instead he had turned to the crowd and said, "To mark my first act as Royal Executioner, I want to do something really nasty." (Up went the **CHEER NOW** signs.) "I will execute Weed Millet –" (**CHEER NOW**) – "but I need time to think of something despicable. Give me one week and I will

give you a dazzling display, a bogglingly brutal bashing, demonstrating that I am Mort the Most Brutal Brute of Brutalia!”

“Finally a Brute with some imagination! I love it!” the Queen had yelled. “See you in a week, and it had better be good or we’ll be appointing a new Royal Executioner to chop off *your* head!”

So **that’s** what he’d gone and done.

On the one hand it was good news because Weed would live another week. On the other it was bad news, as Mort would have to kill his best friend in seven days’ time. And pretty horribly too.

Mort was obviously joking about being the Most Brutal Brute of Brutalia, but he had to walk the walk now that he’d talked the talk. And, when he’d talked the talk, he’d sounded like a fully signed-up member of the Brutal Brigade.

The trouble was, Mort could never be a fully signed-up member of the Brutal Brigade because he was a fully signed-up member of the Pacifist Society of Brutalia (members: one). Being a pacifist meant he didn’t believe in violence. Na-uh, no way, not even

a quick punch or a finger-crunch. And murder was definitely out.

Mort was such a devoted pacifist that every day he recited a Pacifist Promise. It went as follows:

*I, a member of the Pacifist Society of Brutalia,
promise not to hurt anything.*

(It wasn't very imaginative but keeping it simple made it easier to remember.)

And it wasn't just people he hated hurting. Mort was such a pacifist he struggled to shoo away the fruit flies from his daily ration of rotten potatoes in case he damaged one of their wings. And the only reason he ate rotten potatoes covered with fruit flies at all was because he refused to eat meat. It made home life hard because the rest of his family were definitely not pacifists. They ate whatever they could get their hands on – worms, spiders, rats – and were all pretty violent, as was normal.

Fighting was a Brutalia hobby – the only hobby that wouldn't get you thrown in prison. Mort's younger

twin siblings, Gosh and Gee, regularly ambushed each other with punches to the gut. They tried to make it look like fun, but Mort always refused to play.

That's why his nickname was **Mort the Meek**.



Mort sat with his head in his hands for hours. So many hours, it was the next day. And he was still sitting with his head in his hands when Gosh and Gee entered the room, tangled together in a ball, fists flying.

