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Opening extract from

The Killer Underpants

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Chapter One

Before we go any further I'd better come clean about my underpants. What I mean is, no one actually died because of them – though there's no telling what would have happened if I'd had to wear them much longer.

I blame my mother. If my mum wasn't such a fanatic about the things you wear next to your skin none of this would have happened. OK, so maybe five weeks is a little long to walk around in a single pair of pants, but I always whip them off at night to give them a shot of oxygen, so what's the big deal? The morning my troubles started I'd just got out of bed and was slotting my trusty old snuggies into place for the day when Mum came in. Well, came in. She flung my door back so hard I almost went out the window.

'Jiggy McCue!' she screeched. 'The state of your underpants!'

'Have you ever heard of knocking?' I said. 'It's that little thing people do with their knuckles



before barging into a kid's bedroom.'

'They're disgusting,' she said. 'They're filthy. They're full of holes.'

'Mother,' I said, 'they're meant to have holes. Holes are what underpants do best. Now was there anything else or did you just come in to have a go at my holey underpants?'

'I came in,' she said, 'because I'm sick to death of shouting myself hoarse for you to get up. But now that I've seen the condition of those articles, I see I'm going to have to reorganise my day. I have some shopping to do!'

'Oh no,' I said. 'Not new underpants. You know I hate new underpants. I've told you before, underpants need time to settle in, make themselves at home, breed a little friendly mould and fungus...'

I stopped. What was the point? She was a parent. Worse than that she was a mother. Mothers don't understand these things. They also don't bother to listen half the time. 'And you're coming with me,' she said, to prove it.

'Whoa there,' I said. 'I don't do shopping, remember? Specially with my mother. It's number 47 in the *Book of Rules for Good Parents* I made for



you and Dad at Christmas.'

'Put something on over those hideous things, they make me feel quite ill,' she said. 'We leave in ten minutes.'

'Wait!' I cried, skidding on my knees to my chest of drawers. I tore a drawer open, started chucking things over my shoulder. 'I have another pair, I know I have, saw them here only last month. Bingo!' I jumped up, shook my other cosy old pair of holey underpants in her face. 'I'll just change into these, then we don't need to go and buy more – right?'

'Yes, you will change into them,' she said. 'Then I'll at least have the comfort of knowing that if you get knocked down by a bus you'll be in *clean* underwear.'

'No, you miss the point,' I said. 'I mean I'll wear these *instead* of buying new ones. I'm saving you money. Why throw it away on new ones when I still have a spare pair? OK, Mum? Deal?'

'No,' she said. 'Get changed. Now. We're going to the market!'

And with those nine simple words my fate was sealed. The worst week of my life was about to begin.

