Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

opening extract from

Jiggy McCue: Nudie Dudie

written by

Michael Lawrence

published by

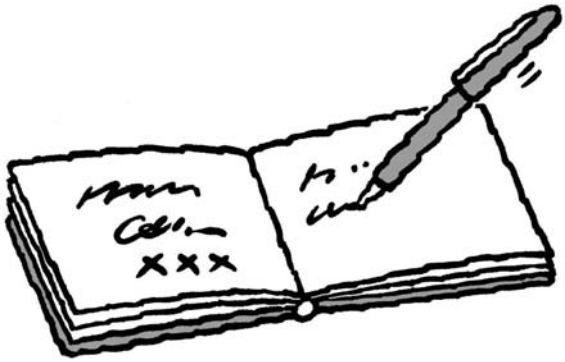
Hachette Children's Books

All text is copyright of the author and / or the illustrator

please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Chapter one



Did you ever have a dream where there are people all around you and suddenly you're naked? I mean without a thing on. Totally starkers. Just you, no one else. Well count yourself lucky it was only a dream. Imagine if it happened in real life. Like it did to me.

It started the day Tony Baloney came to my school. Tony Baloney isn't his real

name. I can't tell you his real name because he's quite famous. He's an actor in this TV soap about…

No, better not tell you that either, or you might guess who I'm talking about. Tony Baloney, under his real name, used to go to Ranting Lane School. He's the only ex-Ranting Laner who ever made a name for himself, even though it's the name of someone who speaks words written by other people and moves the way other people tell him. Think about it. There you are, a fully-evolved humanicus beingus, with the ability to walk, speak, hum, scratch and cut your own toenails, and you get famous for doing as you're told. And for this job, for being a flesh-and-blood dummy, you get paid a fortune, get your picture

in the papers, and get asked to visit your old school to tell the kids that money and fame aren't all they're cracked up to be, which means that on top of everything else you're a bad liar.

And guess what. Guess whose mother is such a big drooling fan that she tells her only son that if I ever want to eat or wear an ironed shirt again I have to get the prat's autograph in my father's Help the Aged autograph book.

So there I am, lunch break, the great Jiggy McCue, waiting with all these girls at the bottom of the steps from the main building, while Tone Balone stands at the top signing little books and scraps of paper. The Star has hair that looks like it came out of a box marked Bozo Hair, and a tan that has to



have started life in a tin labelled Boot Polish, and teeth that obviously glow in the dark and startle moths. 'It's great to see you,' he says to every fan one after the other, and as they go he says: 'Keep watching the show!'

At the top of the steps, as close as she can get to Baloney without tearing his shirt off and chewing his chest hair (probably fake), is Miss Weeks our Deputy Head. She's all shy and girly, fingers twitching like they'll fall off if they don't touch him soon. I'm the only boy. The only male. And anyone who didn't know the real reason I'm there would think that I too am a fan of this git. It wouldn't have been so bad if Pete and Angie had been there. We could have made a big joke of all this. But



they wouldn't come, even when I offered them money. So much for solidarity.

Miss Weeks saw me, and smiled, as if to say, 'So you're a fan too!' and I wanted to melt into the tarmac. But then someone came out of the building and said Miss W was wanted on the phone, and she excused herself and went in. Now it was just me and the adoring fans. I looked around for some sort of distraction, anything, not fussy, and saw someone standing next to me who hadn't been there a minute earlier.

This wasn't a Ranting Lane pupil. She was a grown-up, and she had this short spiky hair and short spiky nose. She wore jeans that turned to rags just below the knee, and a T-shirt that



screamed SAY NO, without saying what to. She stared up the steps at the Big Soap Star with this strange mixed expression, like she wanted to bury an adoring bread knife in his heart. She must have felt my eyes on her, because she glanced my way. The look in her eyes made me jump. They were so dark, yet bright too. If witches were real, I thought, this one would be chief cauldron-stirrer.

I cleared my throat. 'Fan?' I asked.

Instead of answering my friendly question she de-glanced and shoved through the girls to the top of the steps. Tony Baloney was surprised to find an adult suddenly at the head of the queue, but he said, 'Hi,' like he said to everyone, 'I'm Tony Baloney, and you are…?'



'Your number two fan,' she tells him. 'Ophelia.'

For a sec there's panic in TB's eyes. But then he realises that Ophelia is her name, not a wish.

'Great to see you, Ophelia,' he says. 'Er…number two fan?'

'Seeing you in the flesh,' she replies, 'I know that you are your number one fan.'

Tony Baloney smiles, but it's a wobbly sort of smile. 'Do you have something for me to sign?'

'No,' she says. 'I brought you a present.'

'A present?'

She handed him a blue oblong box. 'You didn't acknowledge the other things I sent you,' she says. 'So when I



heard you were coming to Ranting Lane I thought I'd put this in your hands personally. That way I'd *know* you received it.'

There was something about the word 'know', the way she said it, that made the fans on the steps stop talking and a frown appear on Tony Baloney's brow.

'You've sent other things?'

'A black silk shirt, embroidered slippers, an electric fan,' Ophelia says.

'Electric fan?'

'It was a joke. A fan from a fan?'

'Oh yes. Ha-ha. Very good.'

'You don't remember getting it, do you?' Ophelia says. 'Or the other things.'

'Of course I do,' says Tony Baloney.



'But I receive an awful lot of things from fans…'

'Well now you have another thing,' she says, with a voice so icy you'd think we'd been swallowed up by a sudden iceberg.

T-Bal opens the blue oblong box. He blinks. Then he stares at what he sees, like he's having trouble believing his eyes.

'It's a pen,' Ophelia explains.

'Excellent,' Tony says. 'Thank you. I'll treasure it.'

'You're not supposed to treasure it,' the spiky fan snaps. 'You're supposed to write with it.' She sounds very angry.

'I will,' says Tone, giving her the sparkly old Baloney smile. 'As soon as my present pen runs out.'



'Oh, *sure* you will,' Ophelia says, spinning round and pushing her way down the steps. She walks quickly across the playground to the gates.

Just before Tony B closes the blue oblong box and drops it in his jacket pocket I think I hear him mutter, 'Cheap rubbish,' but I could be wrong about that. He turns the brilliant Baloney teeth on the next fan, a smaller one, who offers him the back of an envelope. Half way through dashing off his moniker he stops. 'Damn. My pen's dried.' He frowns around. 'Anyone happen to have a…?' But then his frown clears. 'Oh, but I have a spare, don't I?'

And at the very moment he reaches into his pocket for the blue oblong box



he's just been given, this stupendously stupid idea trampolines into my feeble excuse for a mind. *Lend him your pen. Mum'll love to think this wally used your pen to write his crummy name for her!*

I sprang into action. 'Use mine, use mine!'

Tony Baloney's hand freezes in his pocket and comes out empty. 'OK. Thanks.' He reaches down, over the heads of the fans, and takes my pen – just as the bell for the end of lunch break goes.

The fans on the steps started to get agitated right away. When the school bell goes it means GET TO CLASS AT ONCE, not GET TO CLASS AS SOON AS YOU'VE GOT SOME BIG-HEAD'S AUTOGRAPH. Tony Baloney wasn't

bothered that the bell had gone. He carried on writing at his usual speed, one soapy signature after another, with my pen. As soon as he finished each one, the fan snatched it off him and ran to class. I would have gone too – not run though, running isn't cool – but he had my pen and I couldn't take it back after lending it to him.

The minutes clunked by. The playground had gone absolutely silent. Two more girlie fans to go, but these were bigger girls, who could probably stand up to the teachers. They took their time, chatting with Tony like they were thinking of kidnapping him and feeding him Turkish Delight till the ransom cheque arrived.

But at last they went and it was my

turn. I was about to hand over the Help the Aged autograph book when the Big Baloney reached into his pocket and took out the blue oblong box.

'Here,' he said. 'Present for you.'

He seemed to have forgotten that I'd seen Spiky give it to him a short while before.

'No, it's OK,' I said. 'Really.'

'I insist,' he said, shoving the box in my hand like it was something he'd just fished out of the toilet. 'Now I must run.' He winked at me. 'I can't believe I came back to this dump voluntarily. Don't quote me!'

He didn't run, but he didn't hang about either. He was down the steps and across the playground in a flash, climbing into his sporty red car in the



teacher's car park. I stood at the top of the steps watching him go and wondering how, after all that, I'd failed to do what my mother had sent me there for.

Get the stiff's autograph.

I was about to enter the building with a weary sigh when the doors flew back and Miss Weeks leapt into my arms. She seemed quite startled about this. The farewell cuddle she'd been looking forward to hadn't been with me. She looked so disappointed to see the Star's exhaust fumes rising into the distance that you could have mistaken her face for an apple crumble.

But Miss Weeks was lucky. She might have missed a smooch with a smoothie, but she wasn't going to get a



rollicking from her mother for not getting his autograph. In a minute she'd turn around and march back to normal life without any other big deals jumping into her path and spitting at her. Unlike me, she wasn't hours away from the most embarrassing pair of days of her life.

