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opening extract from

What's for Dinner Mr Gum?

written by

Andy Stanton

illustrated by

David Tazzyman

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What's for Dinner, Mr Gum?

by Andy Stanton

Illustrated by David Tazzyman

www.egmont.co.uk

EGMONT

For Andy, Kathy and Ellie
And for Bob, the fattest cat in L.A.

EGMONT
We bring stories to life

What's for Dinner Mr Gum?
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Some of the crazy old townsfolk from Lamonic Bibber

Mrs Lovely

Friday O'Leary

Billy William the Third

Old Granny

Mr Gum

Martin Launderette

Alan Taylor

Polly

Chapter 1

Off to the Seaside!

This is the story of the Battle of Lamonic Bibber, or as it became known, the Dinnertime Wars or, as it didn't become known, *Ghostbusters III*. And know this, my friends – it was a terrible conflict indeed. Like all wars it was full of madness and anger. Like all wars

there were courageous heroes and dastardly villains. Like *practically* all wars there was a dirty little monkey called Philip the Horror.

But I know what you're wondering. You're wondering how the Dinnertime Wars got started in the first place, aren't you?

'How did it all start?' you say.

'Where did it begin?' you ask.

'What do you mean, a monkey?' you enquire.

'Shut up,' I reply. 'Stop bothering me with

all these questions and I will tell you.'

It all started on a Friday. And not only did it start *on* a Friday but it started *with* a Friday – that wonderful old gentleman Friday O'Leary, hero of many an adventure and three times winner of the Lamonic Bibber Women's Underwater Badminton Championship.

And here's a quick word from Friday himself:

‘BREADBIN’

Thanks, Friday.

But hey now, hey now, don’t dream it’s over. This story doesn’t just start with Friday O’Leary. Because along with him were his good friends Polly and Alan Taylor.

Now, Polly was a little girl with the sort of sandy-coloured hair that makes you happy to be alive and the sort of heart-coloured heart which is

so brave it would fight a lion if that lion happened to deserve it. For instance, if he had been trying to rob pencils. Polly was only nine but she was a hero through and through.

And as for Alan Taylor, he was a gingerbread man with electric muscles and he was 16.24cm tall because he'd grown a centimetre since the last book he was in.

'Maybe I'll grow into a real man one day,' he was fond of saying. But that was impossible.

Or *was* it?

Yes.

But never mind. For the most part, Alan Taylor was a jolly little twinkle and girls liked him because he was cute and they could dress him up like a doll and make him do tea parties.

'Oh, you are a darlin' little marshy,' laughed Polly now, bending down to kiss Alan Taylor on his juicy raisin eye. 'An' this is gonna be the best holiday ever!'

'That's right,' laughed Friday O'Leary, throwing his hat up in the air. It landed on a cloud and the cloud laughed so hard it turned into a lovely apple. 'We're off to the seaside and we won't be back for weeks!'

'Hoorays!' said Polly.

'Huzzooof!' said Alan Taylor.

'THE TRUTH IS A LEMON MERINGUE!' yelled Friday, as he sometimes liked to do. 'It's seaside time for us!'

And off they toddled down the friendly road and the sun shone down and the trees were brown and there wasn't a frown in the whole wide world, just Friday, a biscuit and a happy little girl.