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Chapter 1

Spring Fever

Yes! No! Maybe? What! Hello.

The whole squeak-mantling mess began on a day so innocent, a day so sweet and pure, a day so splendid, superb and smagnificent it could only be the first day of Spring. Ah, Spring!

Or as it is called in France, 'Le Boing'. It is a brilliant season, definitely in the top five.

And what a freshial, special Spring morning it was in the town of Lamonic Bibber, my friends! The sun was shining, the birds were playing Quidditch in the treetops and the ground was sort of just laying there letting people walk all over it. It was a glorious, give-me-morious, start-of-the-storious sort of a Spring morning. And as you can imagine with your tiny little

brains, everyone was looking forward to it like a rascal.

'I'm looking forward to it like a rascal,' said Jonathan Ripples, the fattest man in town. 'I think I'll celebrate by eating not one, not two, but eight hot cross buns.'

'I'm looking forward to it like a rascal,' said Martin Launderette, who ran the launderette. 'I think I'll celebrate by spitting on not one, not two, but all eight of Jonathan Ripples' hot cross buns.'



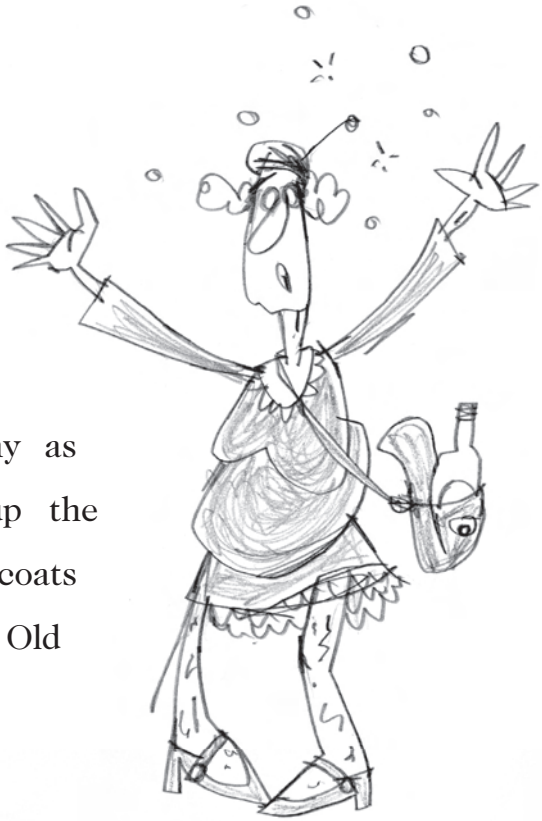
'I'm looking forward to it like a rascal,' said a little girl called Peter. 'I think I'll read my favourite children's book – "**Biffy the Worm Gets Arrested for Accidentally Murdering Everyone in Canada**". It's unputdownable!'

But just as everyone was about to settle down into their beautiful Spring mornings of eating, spitting and reading, a terrible shrieking was heard. It was Old Granny, the oldest woman in Lamonic Bibber. She was running up the high street and

are back!'

she was shrieking at the top of her voice.

'The Old Ways are back!' cried Old Granny as she hinged it up the street, her petticoats all a-billow. 'The Old Ways are back!'



‘Oh, dear,’ said Jonathan Ripples, shaking his big fat head big fat sadly. ‘She’s been at the sherry again.’

‘LIES!’ protested Old Granny, taking a quick sip of sherry from the bottle she always kept hidden in her handbag. ‘I never touch the stuff! But listen! The Old Ways are back, I tell you!’

Well, by now quite a large crowd had gathered, and amongst them were two heroes you may know quite well. One was Friday O’Leary, a

marvellous old fellow who knew the secrets of time and space. And the other was Polly, the happiest nine-year-old you could ever hope to meet. She was brave and true, like a how-do-you-do and she had everything she needed in life – a face, a couple of elbows and a pocket full of felt-tip pens. And hardly any of them had even run out.

'THE TRUTH IS A LEMON MERINGUE!' shouted Friday O'Leary, as he sometimes liked

to do. ‘What’s all this then?’

‘Shh,’ said Polly. ‘Old Granny’s ’bout to speak.’

The townsfolk fell silent as Old Granny regarded them with a mysterious gaze. Then she fell asleep. Then she woke up and regarded them with another mysterious gaze. Then she fell asleep again.

‘Told you she was drunk,’ whispered Jonathan Ripples.

‘LIES!’ cried Old Granny, her eyes flying open into her most mysterious gaze yet. ‘Now, here is my incredible news. The Old Ways have come back from before the days of Science! Ancient spirits have awoken! Strange wisps and fancies are amongst us! ’Tis the truth, ’tis the truth, ’tis the truth I tell, now come with me and I will show you well!’

‘Ooooh,’ went the little girl called Peter.

‘Aaaah,’ went Jonathan Ripples.

‘CHIRP!’ went Crazy Barry Fungus, who thought he was a chaffinch.

‘The Old Ways are back!’ cried the crowd – and they all set off after Old Granny, chanting for all they were worth.



‘What does you reckons, Frides?’ said Polly. ‘Shall we follow them?’

'I think we'd better,' replied Friday, stroking his toes thoughtfully. 'They all seem to have gone a bit mad, and that is what is called "Spring Fever". Or as it is known in France, "Les Crazies de la Brains de la Boing-Boing."'