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

Billionaire Boy

Written by

David Walliams

Published by

HarperCollins Children's Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

1

Meet Joe Spud

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have a million pounds?

Or a billion?

How about a trillion?

Or even a gazillion?

Meet Joe Spud.



Joe didn't *have* to imagine what it would be like to have loads and loads and loads of money. He was only twelve, but he was ridiculously, preposterously rich.

Joe had everything he could ever want.

- 100-inch plasma widescreen flat-screen high-definition TV in every room in the house ✓
- 500 pairs of Nike trainers ✓
- A grand-prix race track in the back garden ✓
- A robot dog from Japan ✓
- A golf buggy with the number plate 'SPUD 2' to drive around the grounds of his house ✓
- A waterslide which went from his

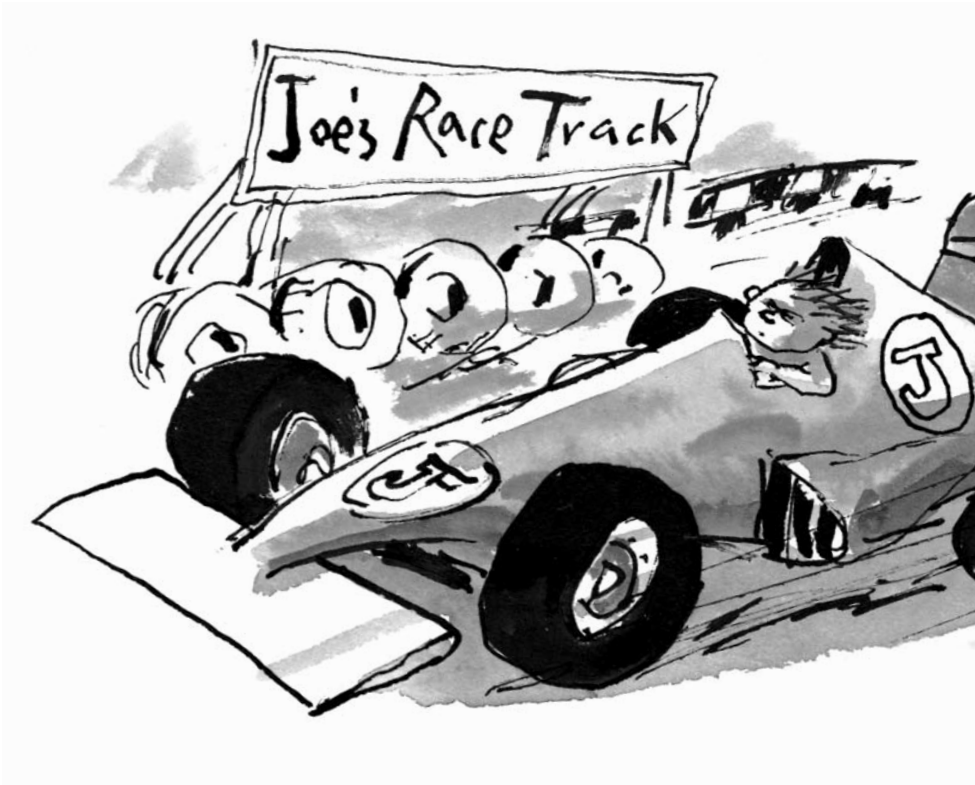
bedroom into an indoor Olympic-sized swimming pool ✔

- Every computer game in the world ✔
- 3-D IMAX cinema in the basement ✔
- A crocodile ✔
- 24-hour personal masseuse ✔
- Underground 10-lane bowling alley ✔
- Snooker table ✔
- Popcorn dispenser ✔
- Skateboard park ✔
- Another crocodile ✔
- £100,000 a week pocket money ✔
- A rollercoaster in the back garden ✔
- A professional recording studio in the attic ✔
- Personalised football coaching from the England team ✔
- A real-life shark in a tank ✔

In short, Joe was one horribly spoilt kid. He went to a ridiculously posh school. He flew on private planes whenever he went on holiday. Once, he even had Disneyworld closed for the day, just so he wouldn't have to queue for any rides.

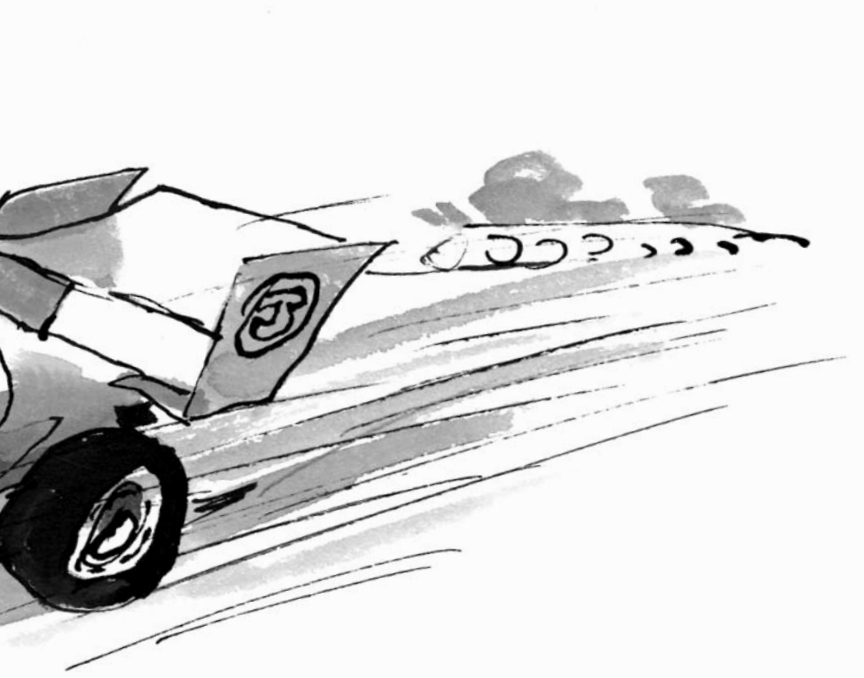
Here's Joe. Speeding around his own private racetrack in his own Formula One racing car.

Some very rich children have miniature



versions of cars specially built for them. Joe wasn't one of those children. Joe needed his Formula One car made a bit *bigger*. He was quite fat, you see. Well, you would be, wouldn't you? If you could buy all the chocolate in the world.

You will have noticed that Joe is on his own in that picture. To tell the truth, speeding around a racetrack isn't that much fun when you are on



your own, even if you do have a squillion pounds. You really need someone to race against. The problem was Joe didn't have any friends. Not one.

- Friends 

Now, driving a Formula One car and unwrapping a king-size Mars Bar are two things you shouldn't try and do at the same time. But it had been a few moments since Joe had last eaten and he was hungry. As he entered the chicane, he tore open the wrapper with his teeth and took a bite of the delicious chocolate-coated nougat and caramel. Unfortunately, Joe only had one hand on the steering wheel, and as the wheels of the car hit the verge, he lost control.

The multi-million-pound Formula One car careered off the track, span around, and hit a tree.

SSSSSSSSCCCCCCCC
CCCCCCCCRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEECC
CCCCCCCCCCHHHHH
HHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The tree was unharmed. But the car was a write-off. Joe squeezed himself out of the cockpit. Luckily Joe wasn't hurt, but he was a little dazed, and he tottered back to the house.

"Dad, I crashed the car," said Joe as he entered the palatial living room.

Mr Spud was short and fat, just like his son. Hairier in a lot of places too, apart from his head – which was bald and shiny. Joe's dad was sitting on a hundred-seater crocodile skin sofa and didn't look up from reading that day's copy of the *Sun*.

"Don't worry Joe," he said. "I'll buy you another one."

Joe slumped down on the sofa next to his dad.

"Oh, happy birthday, by the way, Joe." Mr Spud handed an envelope to his son, without taking his eyes off the girl on Page 3.

Joe opened the envelope eagerly. How much money was he going to receive this year? The card, which read 'Happy 12th Birthday Son', was quickly discarded in favour of the cheque inside.

Joe could barely disguise his disappointment. "One million pounds?" he scoffed. "Is that all?"

"What's the matter, son?" Mr Spud put down his newspaper for a moment.

"You gave me a million *last* year," whined Joe. "When I turned eleven. Surely I should get more now I'm twelve?"

Mr Spud reached into the pocket of his shiny grey designer suit and pulled out his

chequebook. His suit was horrible, and horribly expensive. "I'm so sorry son," he said. "Let's make it two million."

Now, it's important you realise that Mr Spud had not always been this rich.

Not so long ago the Spud family had lived a very humble life. From the age of sixteen, Mr Spud worked in a vast loo-roll factory on the outskirts of town. Mr Spud's job at the factory was *sooooo* boring. He had to roll the paper around the cardboard inner tube.

Roll after roll.

Day after day.

Year after year.

Decade after decade.



This he did, over and over again, until nearly all his hope had gone. He would stand all day by the conveyor belt with hundreds of other bored workers, repeating the same mind-numbing task.

Every time the paper was rolled onto one cardboard tube, the whole thing started again. And every loo roll was the same. Because the family was so poor, Mr Spud used to make birthday and Christmas presents for his son from the loo roll inner tubes. Mr Spud never had enough money to buy Joe all the latest toys, but would make him something like a loo-roll racing car, or a loo-roll fort complete with dozens of loo-roll soldiers. Most of them got broken and ended up in the bin. Joe did manage to save a sad looking little loo-roll space rocket, though he wasn't sure why.

The only good thing about working in a factory was that Mr Spud had lots of time to daydream. One day he had a daydream that was to revolutionise bottom wiping forever.

Why not invent a loo roll that is moist on one side and dry on the other? he thought, as he



rolled paper around his thousandth roll of the day. Mr Spud kept his idea top-secret and toiled for hours locked in the bathroom of their little council flat getting his new double-sided loo roll exactly right.

When Mr Spud finally launched 'Freshbum', it was an instant phenomenon. Mr Spud sold a

billion rolls around the world every day. And every time a roll was sold, he made 10p. It all added up to an awful lot of money, as this simple maths equation shows.

10p x 1,000,000,000 rolls x 365 days a year = a lot of wonga.

Joe Spud was only eight at the time 'Freshbum' was launched, and his life was turned upside down in a heartbeat. First, Joe's mum and dad split up. It turned out that for many years Joe's mum Carol had been having a torrid affair with Joe's Cub Scout leader, Alan. She took a ten billion pound divorce settlement; Alan swapped his canoe for a gigantic yacht. Last anyone had heard, Carol and Alan were sailing off the coast of Dubai, pouring vintage champagne on their Crunchy Nut Cornflakes every morning. Joe's

dad seemed to get over the split quickly and began going on dates with an endless parade of Page 3 girls.

Soon father and son moved out of their poky council flat and into an enormous stately home. Mr Spud named it 'Freshbum Towers'.

The house was so large it was visible from outer space. It took five minutes just to motor up the drive. Hundreds of newly-planted, hopeful little trees lined the mile-long gravel track. The house had seven kitchens, twelve sitting rooms, forty-seven bedrooms and eighty-nine bathrooms.

Even the bathrooms had en-suite bathrooms. And some of those en-suite bathrooms had en-en-suite bathrooms.

Despite living there for a few years, Joe had probably only ever explored around a quarter of the main house. In the endless grounds were tennis courts, a boating lake, a helipad and even

a 100m ski-slope complete with mountains of fake snow. All the taps, door handles and even toilet seats were solid gold. The carpets were made from mink fur, he and his dad drank orange squash from priceless antique medieval goblets, and for a while they had a butler called Otis who was also an orang-utan. But he had to be given the sack.

"Can I have a *proper* present as well, Dad?" said Joe, as he put the cheque in his trouser pocket. "I mean, I've got loads of money already."

"Tell me what you want, son, and I'll get one of my assistants to buy it," said Mr Spud. "Some solid gold sunglasses? I've got a pair. You can't see out of 'em but they are very expensive."

Joe yawned.

"Your own speedboat?" ventured Mr Spud.

Joe rolled his eyes. "I've got two of those. Remember?"

"Sorry, son. How about a quarter of a million pounds, worth of WHSmith vouchers?"

"Boring! Boring! Boring!" Joe stamped his feet in frustration. Here was a boy with high-class problems.

Mr Spud looked forlorn. He wasn't sure there was anything left in the world that he could buy his only child. "Then what, son?"

Joe suddenly had a thought. He pictured himself going round the racetrack all on his own, racing against himself. "Well, there is something I really want…" he said, tentatively.

"Name it, son," said Mr Spud.

"A friend."

2

Bum Boy

"Bum boy," said Joe.

"*Bum Boy*?" spluttered Mr Spud. "What else do they call you at school, son?"

"The Bog Roll Kid..."

Mr Spud shook his head in disbelief. He had sent his son to the most expensive school in England. St Cuthbert's School for Boys. The fees were £200,000 a term and all the boys had to wear Elizabethan ruffs and tights. Here is a picture of Joe in his school uniform. He looks a bit silly, doesn't he?

So the last thing that Mr Spud expected was



that his son would get bullied. Bullying was something that happened to poor people. But the truth was that Joe had been picked on ever since he started at the school. The posh kids hated him,

because his dad had made his money out of loo rolls. They said that was 'awfully vulgar'.

"Bottom Billionaire, The Bum-Wipe Heir, Master Plop-Paper," continued Joe. "And that's just the teachers."

Most of the boys at Joe's school were Princes, or at least Dukes or Earls. Their families had made their fortunes from owning lots of land. That made them 'old money'. Joe had quickly come to learn that money was only worth having if it was old. New money from selling loo rolls didn't count.

The posh boys at St Cuthbert's had names like Nathaniel Septimus Ernest Bertram Lysander Tybalt Zacharias Edmund Alexander Humphrey Percy Quentin Tristan Augustus Bartholomew Tarquin Imogen Sebastian Theodore Clarence Smythe.

That was just one boy.

The subjects were all ridiculously posh too. This was Joe's school timetable:

Monday

Latin
Straw Hat wearing
Royal studies
The study of etiquette
Show-jumping
Ballroom dancing
Debating Society ('This house believes that it is vulgar to do up the bottom button on your waistcoat')
Scone eating
Bow-tie tying
Punting
Polo (the sport with horses and sticks, not the mint)

Tuesday

Ancient Greek

Croquet

Pheasant shooting

Being beastly to servants class

Mandolin level 3

History of Tweed

Nose in the air hour



Learning to step over the homeless person as you leave the opera

Finding your way out of a maze

Wednesday

Fox-hunting
Flower arranging
Conversing about the weather
History of cricket
History of the brogue
Playing Stately Home Top Trumps
Reading *Harper's Bazaar*
Ballet appreciation class
Top-hat polishing
Fencing (the one with swords, not selling stolen goods)

Thursday

Antique furniture appreciation hour
Range Rover tyre changing class
Discussion of whose daddy is the richest

Competition to see who is best friends with Prince Harry

Learning to talk posh

Rowing club

Debating Society ('This house believes that muffins are best toasted')

Chess

The study of coats of arms

A lecture on how to talk loudly in restaurants

Friday

Poetry reading (Medieval English)

History of wearing corduroy

Topiary class



Classical sculpture appreciation class
Spotting yourself in the party pages of *Tatler* hour
Duck hunting
Billiards
Classical music appreciation afternoon
Dinner party discussion topic class (e.g. how the working classes smell)

However, the main reason why Joe hated going to St Cuthbert's wasn't the silly subjects. It was the fact that everyone at the school looked down on him. They thought that someone whose papa made their money from bog rolls was just too, too frightfully common.

"I want to go to a different school, Dad," said Joe.

"No problem. I can afford to send you to the poshest schools in the world. I heard about this

place in Switzerland. You ski in the morning and then—"

"No," said Joe. "How about I go to the local comp?"

"*What*?" said Mr Spud.

"I might make a friend there," said Joe. He'd seen the kids milling around the school gates when he was being chauffeured to St Cuthbert's. They all looked like they were having such a great time – chatting, playing games, swapping cards. To Joe, it all looked so fabulously *normal*.

"Yes, but the local comp..." said Mr Spud, incredulously. "Are you *sure*?"

"Yes," replied Joe, defiantly.

"I could build you a school in the back garden if you like?" offered Mr Spud.

"No. I want to go to a normal school. With normal kids. I want to make a *friend*, Dad. I

don't have a single friend at St Cuthbert's."

"But you can't go to a normal school. You are a billionaire, boy. All the kids will either bully you or want to be friends with you just because you are rich. It'll be a nightmare for you."

"Well, then I won't tell anyone who I am. I'll just be Joe. And maybe, just maybe, I'll make a friend, or even two…"

Mr Spud thought for a moment, and then relented. "If that's what you really want, Joe, then OK, you can go to a normal school."

Joe was so excited he bumjumped* along the sofa nearer to his dad to give him a cuddle.

"Don't crease the suit, boy," said Mr Spud.

[*Bumjumping (verb) *bum-jump-ing*. To move places while sitting using only your bottom to power you, thus meaning you do not have to get up. Much favoured by the overweight.]

"Sorry Dad," said Joe, bumjumping back a little. He cleared his throat. "Um… I love you, Dad."

'Yes, son, ditto, ditto," said Mr Spud, as he rose to his feet. "Well, have a good birthday, mate."

"Aren't we going to do something together tonight?" said Joe, trying to hide his disappointment. When he was younger, Joe's dad would always take him to the local burger restaurant as a birthday treat. They couldn't afford the burgers, so they would just order the chips, and eat them with some ham and pickle sandwiches that Mr Spud would smuggle in under his hat.

"I can't son, sorry. I've got a date with this beautiful girl tonight," said Mr Spud, indicating Page 3 of the *Sun*.

Joe looked at the page. There was a photograph of a woman whose clothes seemed

to have fallen off. Her hair was dyed white blonde and she had so much make-up on it was difficult to tell if she was pretty or not. Underneath the image it read, 'Sapphire, 19, from Bradford. Likes shopping, hates thinking. '

"Don't you think Sapphire's a little young for you, Dad?" asked Joe.

"It's only a twenty-seven-year age gap," replied Mr Spud in an instant.

Joe wasn't convinced. "Well, where are you taking this Sapphire?"

"A nightclub."

"A *nightclub*?" asked Joe.

"Yes," said Mr Spud, in an offended tone. "I am not too old to go to a nightclub!" As he spoke he opened a box and pulled out what looked like a hamster that had been flattened by a mallet and put it on his head.

"What on earth is that, Dad?"



"What's what, Joe?" replied Dad with mock innocence, as he adjusted the contraption to cover his bald dome.

"That thing on your head."

"Ooh, this. It's a toupee, boy! Only ten grand each. I bought a blonde one, a brown one, a ginger one, and an afro for special occasions. It makes me look twenty years younger, don't you think?"

Joe didn't like to lie. The toupee didn't make his dad look younger – instead, it made him look like a man who was trying to balance a dead rodent on his head. Therefore, Joe chose a non-committal, "Mmm."

"Right. Well, have a good night," Joe added, picking up the remote. It looked like it would be just him and the 100-inch TV again.

"There's some caviar in the fridge for your tea, son," said Mr Spud as he headed for the door.

"What's caviar?"

"It's fish eggs, son."

"Eurgh…" Joe didn't even like normal eggs much. Eggs laid by a fish sounded really revolting.

"Yeah, I had some on toast for me breakfast. It's absolutely disgusting, but it is very expensive so we should start eating it."

"Can't we just have bangers and mash or fish

and chips or Shepherd's Pie or something, Dad?"

"Mmm, I used to love Shepherd's Pie, son…" Mr Spud drooled a little, as if imagining the taste of Shepherd's Pie.

"Well then…?"

Mr Spud shook his head impatiently. "No no no, we are rich son! We have to eat all this posh stuff now like proper rich people do. See you later!" The door slammed behind him and moments later Joe heard the deafening roar of his father's lime-green Lamborghini speeding off into the night.

Joe was disappointed to be on his own again, but he still couldn't suppress a small smile as he turned on the TV. He was going to go to an ordinary school again and be an ordinary boy. And maybe, *just maybe*, make a friend.

The question was, how long could Joe keep the fact that he was a billionaire a secret…?