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SWITCH: Frog Freak Out !

Written by

Ali Sparkes

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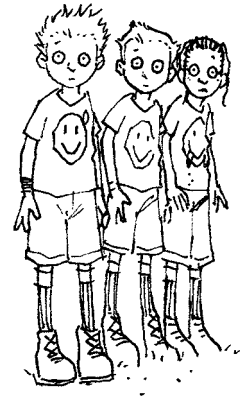
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SWITCH





Frog Freak Out!

Ali Sparkes



illustrated by
Ross Collins

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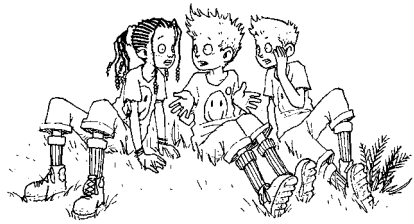
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With grateful thanks to John Buckley, fabulous amphibian* and reptile guru, and ARC, without whom this book might be full of embarrassing errors.

For Maisy, Lewis and Rosie

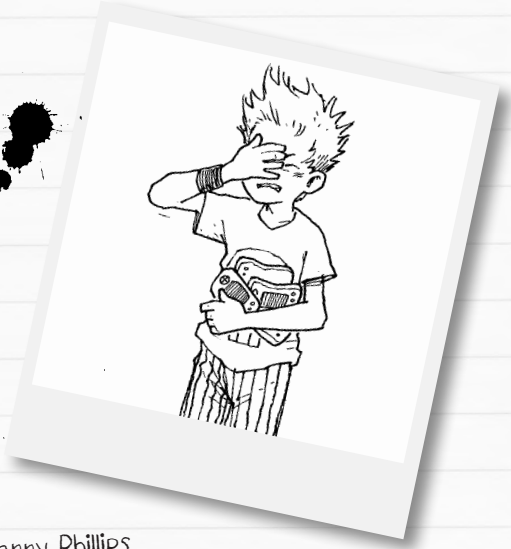


(*And no, I don't mean John Buckley is a fabulous amphibian)

Danny and Josh and Charlie

Josh and Danny might be twins but they're NOT the same! Josh loves newts, frogs and toads. Danny can't stand them and would much prefer to be abseiling than admiring amphibians. Their new friend, Charlie, thinks frogs are AWESOME but will she feel the same once she's been SWITCHed into one?



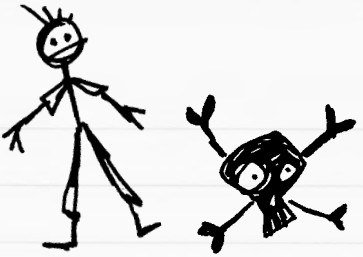


Danny

- FULL NAME: Danny Phillips
- AGE: 8 years
- HEIGHT: Taller than Josh
- FAVOURITE THING: Skateboarding
- WORST THING: Creepy-crawlies and tidying
- AMBITION: To be a stunt man







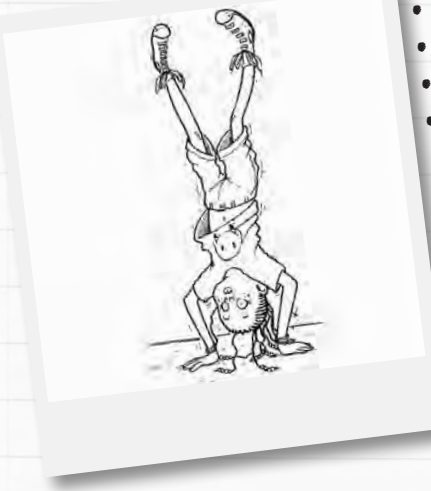
Josh

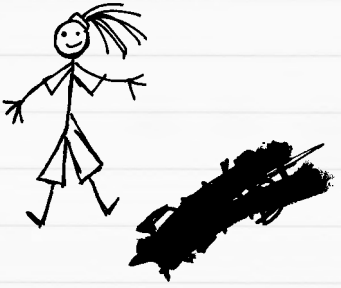
- FULL NAME: Josh Phillips
- AGE: 8 years
- HEIGHT: Taller than Danny
- FAVOURITE THING: Collecting insects
- WORST THING: Skateboarding
- AMBITION: To be an entomologist



Charlie

- FULL NAME: Charlie Isobel Wexford
- AGE: 8
- HEIGHT: Perfect
- FAVOURITE THING: Bungee jumping
- WORST THING: Sitting still
- AMBITION: To eat mint choc chip ice cream in space





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Soggy Horror

'It's raining sideways,' said Danny. 'In fact, I'm fairly sure it's just started raining *up*.' He slammed the cabin door behind him and thumped down heavily on the bed next to Josh.

'It'll probably stop soon,' sighed Josh, who was peering at a book in the dim light. The energy-saving bulbs in the cabin were orangey and not very bright.

'You said that yesterday,' grumbled Danny. 'And the day before.'

'Well, I'm not a weather forecaster!' said Josh. 'I don't know! I'm just trying to be cheerful.'

'Just trying to be cheerful,' mimicked Danny in a silly high voice. He kicked a bucket which was collecting some drips from the ceiling. 'Why did I ever say yes to this stupid summer camp?'

'It was the abseiling,' said Josh, still reading. 'And the canoeing. And the den building and the tree climbing.'

Danny folded his arms and huffed. There had been *some* fun—bits of it—in between the rain. The abseil was great; even Josh had had a go although he'd looked as white as a sheet in his ropes and safety helmet as he stepped off the ten metre high platform. The canoeing had been good too. But both these things had been cut short when the rain and wind got so bad the instructors couldn't actually *see* the kids any more.

Since then there had been indoor stuff going on. To start with, loads of them had been playing handheld computer games for a few hours in the big canvas tepee, and that was a brilliant laugh . . . right up until Sergeant Major had stomped in and confiscated them all.

'Didn't you read the rules?' he bellowed as the rain drummed loudly above them. 'Nobody should have brought any computer games or mobile phones or gadgets with them! This is Outdoor Action Camp—not Suction Your Eyeballs



To A Beeping Screen Camp. Here—read some pamphlets on how to light a campfire instead.'

His name was Steve, but every kid there called him Sergeant Major because he was so shouty. There was a rumour that he'd been a prison guard in his last job. He had a jaw like a breezeblock and tiny dark eyes that glittered malevolently at any kid who didn't instantly do as they were told. Several had been refused puddings and treats by Steve for misbehaving (Danny on day one!) and the man shouted so loudly whenever he was angry that the rooks in a nearby clump of trees would scatter into the sky, cawing with terror.

'Oooooh! LOOK!' Josh suddenly threw down his book and shot across the floor of the cabin to scoop something up in his hands.

'Whaaa-aat?' asked Danny, anxiously, and Callum and Sayid sat up on their bunks to see what was going on.

'What a beauty!' murmured Josh, staring into his cupped palms.

Danny stepped back a bit. He knew where this was going. 'What have you got now, you freaky little bug boffin?' he asked.

'A nursery web spider!' said Josh and opened out his palms gleefully. A large yellowy-brown spider sat there, its front four legs clumped together in pairs so it looked as if it might have only six. Its abdomen was long and pointed. It started to scuttle up Josh's arm.

'Eeeeeeeugh!' Danny shuddered. He hated creepy-crawlies. Even though he'd been one—quite a few times.

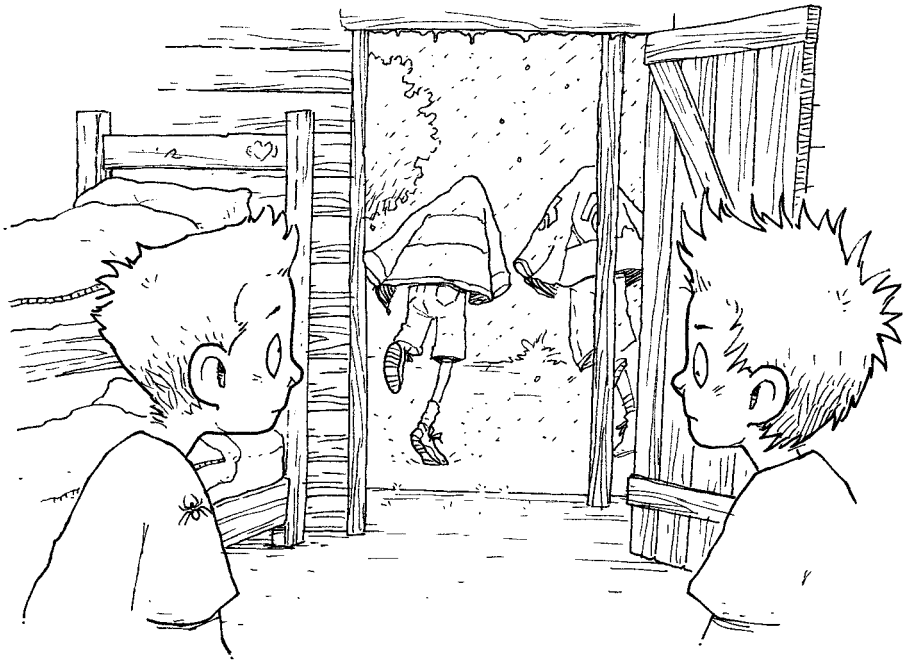
'Ah come on—she's gorgeous,' said Josh, and Sayid came to have a look, squinting through his spectacles. So did Callum, although he kept his

distance and held his Marvel comic annual across his chest.

'Gorgeous?' Danny stared at his brother. Sometimes he had difficulty believing that they really were related—but being identical twins proved they must be. 'Josh . . . you need to get out more!'



Sayid and Callum soon lost interest and wandered out of the cabin, holding their raincoats over their heads, to see what was for lunch.



'I'm amazed you're still such a baby about these things,' said Josh as the nursery web spider reached his shoulder. 'You've *been* one!'

'Yes . . . and I've also nearly been eaten alive by one too, remember?'

Josh had to admit this was true. Over the last few weeks he and his brother had been turned

into spiders, flies, grasshoppers, ants, daddy-long-legs and even great diving beetles. And nearly every time something had tried to eat them. While Danny was a fly he'd been captured by a female spider and wrapped up in silk—a tasty snack for later on. He was half a second away from being injected with gut-pulverizing venom when he was rescued.

'I wouldn't mind being SWITCH sprayed and turned into one of these, though, for just a few minutes,' said Josh. 'They're amazing hunters. They don't use webs—they just hide under a leaf and POUNCE!' He shook his spidery shoulder at Danny and Danny squeaked and jumped back. He might be super brave while dangling over the edge of a high building on a rope or turning upside down through the water in a canoe . . . but he just couldn't STAND creepy-crawlies.

'I thought you said you NEVER wanted to be SWITCHed again,' said Danny. 'You said you never even wanted to SEE Petty Potts over the fence. Mum thought you were really rude when you ignored Petty in the Post Office last week.'

'Yeah, well,' said Josh, gently putting the spider back down into the corner where it vanished into a crack in the floorboards. 'Mum doesn't know that our sweet old neighbour is actually a mad genius scientist who's turned us into creepy-crawlies with her SWITCH spray quite a few times now.'

'True,' agreed Danny. 'She'd probably have her arrested if she did.'

'Still . . . ' said Josh, ' . . . at least we're safe from Petty Potts and her sneaky experiments. We're miles away in the middle of nowhere.'

'Yep.' Danny grinned. 'No chance of that mad granny catching up with us here! Shall we go and find out what's for lunch then?'

'OK,' said Josh. They grabbed their waterproofs and opened the door.

And SCREAMED.

Standing in the dripping doorway of the log cabin was Petty Potts.

