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Opening extract from
**The World of Norm:
May Contain Nuts**

Written by
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Please print off and read at your leisure.



To Max, Ollie and Noah.
Without me – none of you would have been possible.

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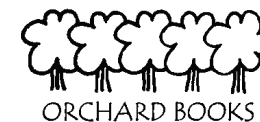
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THE WORLD OF NORM



CHAPTER 1

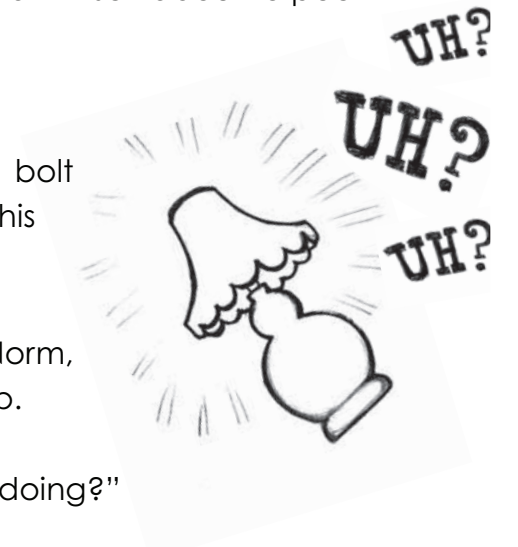
Norm knew it was going to be one of those days when he woke up and found himself about to pee in his dad's wardrobe.

"Whoa! Stop Norman!" yelled Norm's dad, sitting bolt upright and switching on his bedside light.

"Uh? What?" mumbled Norm, his voice still thick with sleep.

"What do you think you're doing?"

"Having a pee?" said Norm, like this was the most stupid question in the entire history of stupid questions.



"Not in my wardrobe you're not!" said Norm's dad.

"That's from Ikea that is", added Norm's mum, like it was somehow OK to pee in a wardrobe that wasn't.

Norm was confused. The last thing he knew he'd been on the verge of becoming the youngest ever World Mountain Biking Champion, when he'd suddenly had to slam on his brakes to avoid hitting a tree. Now here he was having to slam on a completely different kind of brakes in order to avoid a completely different kind of accident. What was going on? And what were his parents doing sleeping in the bathroom anyway?



"Toilet's moved," said Norm, hopping from one foot to the other, something which at the age of three was considered socially acceptable, but which at the age of nearly thirteen, most definitely wasn't.

"What?" said Norm's dad.

"Toilet's moved," said Norm, a bit louder.

But Norm's dad had heard what Norm said. He just couldn't quite believe what Norm had said.

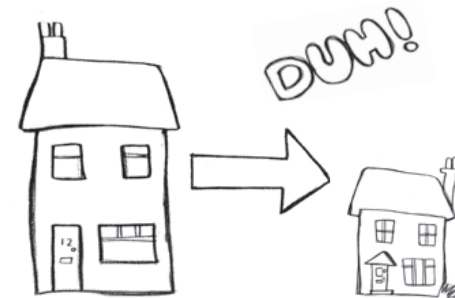
"No, Norman. It's not the toilet that's moved! It's us that's moved!"

"Forgot," said Norm.

Norm's dad looked at his eldest son. "Are you serious?"

"Yeah," said Norm, like this was the second most stupid question in the entire history of stupid questions.

"You forgot we moved house?"



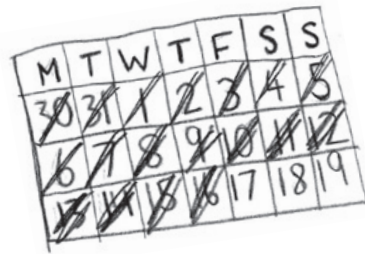
"Yeah," said Norm.

"How can you forget we moved house?" said Norm's dad, increasingly incredulous.

"Just did," shrugged Norm, increasingly close to wetting himself.

"But we moved over three months ago, Norman!" said Norm's dad.

"Three months, two weeks and five days ago, to be precise," said Norm's mum, like she hadn't even had to think about it.



Norm's dad sighed wearily and looked at his watch. It was 2 o'clock in the morning.

"Look, Norman. You just can't go round peeing in other peoples' wardrobes and that's all there is to it!"

"I didn't," said Norm.

"No, but you were about to!"

Norm's dad was right. Norm had been about to pee in the wardrobe, but he'd managed to stop himself just in time.

Typical, thought Norm. Being blamed for something he hadn't actually done.

Norm considered arguing the point, but by now his bladder felt like it was the size of a space hopper. If he didn't pee soon he was going to explode. Then he'd really be in trouble!



"Go on. Clear off," said Norm's dad.

Norm didn't need telling twice and began waddling towards the door like a pregnant penguin.

"Oh, and Norman?"



"Yeah?" said Norm without bothering to stop.

"The toilet's at the end of the corridor. You can't miss it."

Norm didn't reply. He knew that if he didn't get to the toilet in the next ten seconds there was a very good chance that he would miss it!

CHAPTER 2

Norm tried every trick he knew to get back to sleep. The trouble was, Norm only knew one trick – counting sheep jumping over a gate – and it just wasn't working. For a start he'd made the gate much too high. There was no way any sheep was going to be able to clear it. Not without some kind of springboard or mini trampoline, anyway. In the end there was a big pile-up of sheep, all milling about like...well, sheep, basically. It was so annoying. And the more Norm thought about it the less sleepy he got. And the less sleepy Norm got the less chance there was of carrying on the dream where he'd left off. Was he destined to become World Mountain Biking Champion or not?



Norm was desperate to find out.

Norm tried to guess what time it was. The last time he'd looked it had been 2.30. That seemed like ages ago. But it was hard to tell. It was still pitch black outside. A couple of cars had driven up and down the street and some random guy had wandered past, singing tunelessly at the top of his voice. Norm opened one eye to check. The red digits of the digital clock glowed, suspended in the dark.



2:33_{AM}

Norm couldn't believe it. Three minutes? Was that really all it had been since he'd last looked? Three measly minutes? A hundred and eighty stupid seconds? A twentieth of a flipping hour? No way, thought Norm. That can't be right. The clock must be faulty. The battery must have run out. The world must have stopped turning. There had to be a

rational explanation. It couldn't possibly have been only three minutes! But it was. He was never ever going to get back to sleep at this rate!

It didn't help that Norm could hear his dad, snoring away like a constipated rhinoceros. Not that Norm had ever actually heard a constipated rhinoceros – but he imagined that's what one would have sounded like. He'd never noticed how loud it was before. Before they'd moved house, that is. Their old house had been solid and sound proof. There could literally have been a constipated rhinoceros in their old house and Norm wouldn't have heard it. But in this house, with its tiny rooms and paper-thin walls, you could virtually hear fingernails growing.



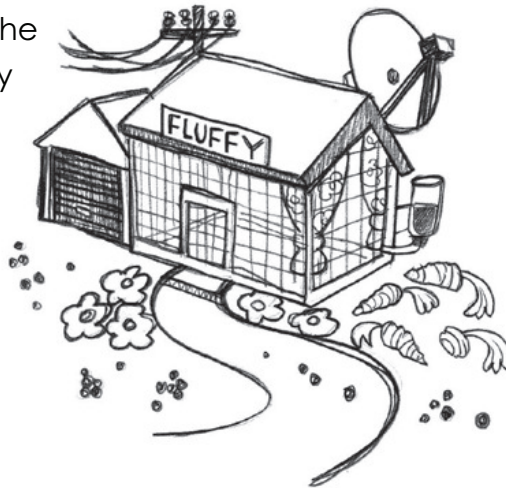
Norm tried putting his pillow over his head but it didn't make the slightest bit of difference. It was an incredible racket. It wouldn't have been so bad,



but his mum and dad's room wasn't even next to Norm's! How come his mum could sleep through it and yet Norm couldn't? How come his stupid little brothers could sleep through it and yet Norm couldn't? It was just so unfair, thought Norm. But then so was everything these days.

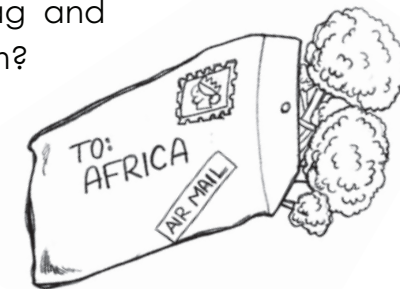
Like being blamed for peeing in his dad's wardrobe for instance. Or rather, not peeing in his dad's wardrobe. How unfair was that? It wasn't Norm's fault they'd moved was it? It would never have happened in their old house. In their old house he'd never once woken up to find himself about to pee in anything other than a toilet. In their old house Norm would have been back to sleep ages ago!

The more Norm thought about it, the more wound up he got. Why on earth did they have to go and move in the first place? Who in their right minds would leave a nice big house for a glorified rabbit hutch? Well, not exactly



big. It wasn't like it was massive or anything. But compared to this place their old house was like Buckingham flipping Palace! It just didn't make sense to Norm.

And yes, Norm knew there were homeless people out there who'd give anything to have a roof over their heads and that he shouldn't be so ungrateful and all that stuff. His mum and dad didn't need to tell him that. Just like they didn't need to keep banging on about starving children in Africa every time he left a bit of broccoli, but they still did. If they were that bothered why didn't they just bung it in a jiffy bag and send it to them?



And how was Norm ever supposed to become World Mountain Biking Champion eating flipping broccoli anyway?

By now, Norm was oozing anger. The air around him practically crackled, as if he was some kind of