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Dirty Bertie: Pong

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Alan MacDonald

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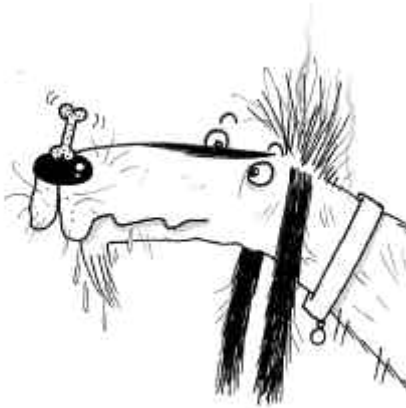
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Dirty Bertie

PONG!



For Thomas Truong ~ D R

For Harry, Jack and Alfie – with whiffy wishes ~ A M



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Dirty Bertie

PONG!



DAVID ROBERTS WRITTEN BY ALAN MACDONALD

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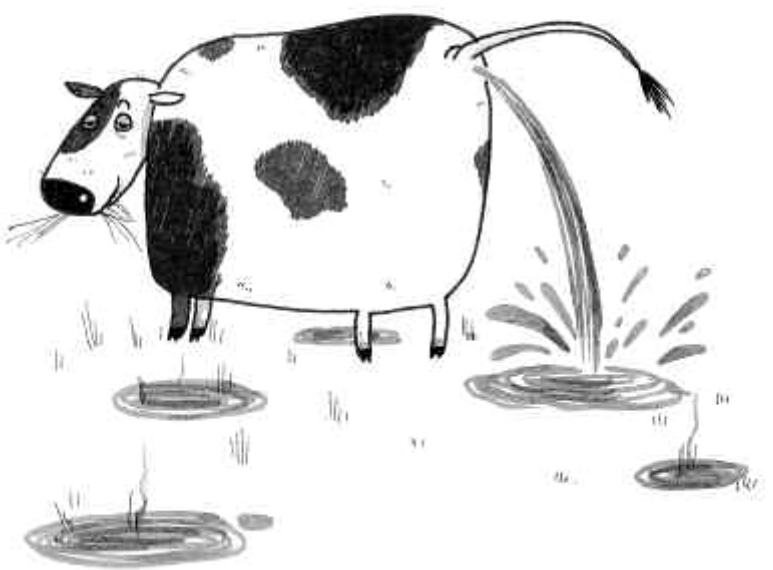
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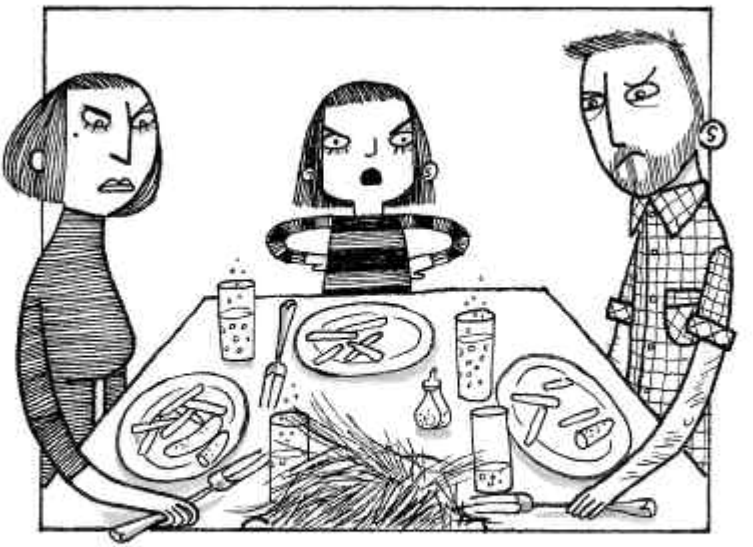
Worms!
Fleas!
Pants!
Burp!
Yuck!
Crackers!
Bogeys!
Mud!
Germs!
Loo!
Fetch!
Fangs!
Kiss!
Ouch!
Snow!
My Joke Book
My Book of Stuff

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PONG!





CHAPTER 1

It was Friday night and Bertie's family were eating supper. Bertie loved Friday nights. The whole weekend lay ahead with nothing to spoil it.

"UGH! What's that terrible smell?" said Dad, wrinkling his nose.

Everyone looked at Bertie. "What? It wasn't me!" said Bertie. "It was Suzy!"

"IT WAS NOT!" cried Suzy, turning pink.

"Well, *something* smells," said Dad, getting up from the table.

Mum sniffed the air. "Pooh! I can smell it too!"

Bertie went on eating his chips. What a lot of fuss over a little pong! Anyone would have thought he'd dropped a stink bomb or something.

Dad was hunting round the room, sniffing like a bloodhound. Suddenly he stopped and pulled a face.

"UGH! IT'S WHIFFER!"

Whiffer looked up from his cushion and lazily scratched his ear.



"EWW! He pongs! He reeks!" cried Suzy, holding her nose.

"Bertie, you'll have to see to him," said Mum.

"ME?" said Bertie. "Why me?"

"Because he's *your* dog!"

"But I can't help it if he smells a bit," said Bertie. "Dogs are meant to smell."

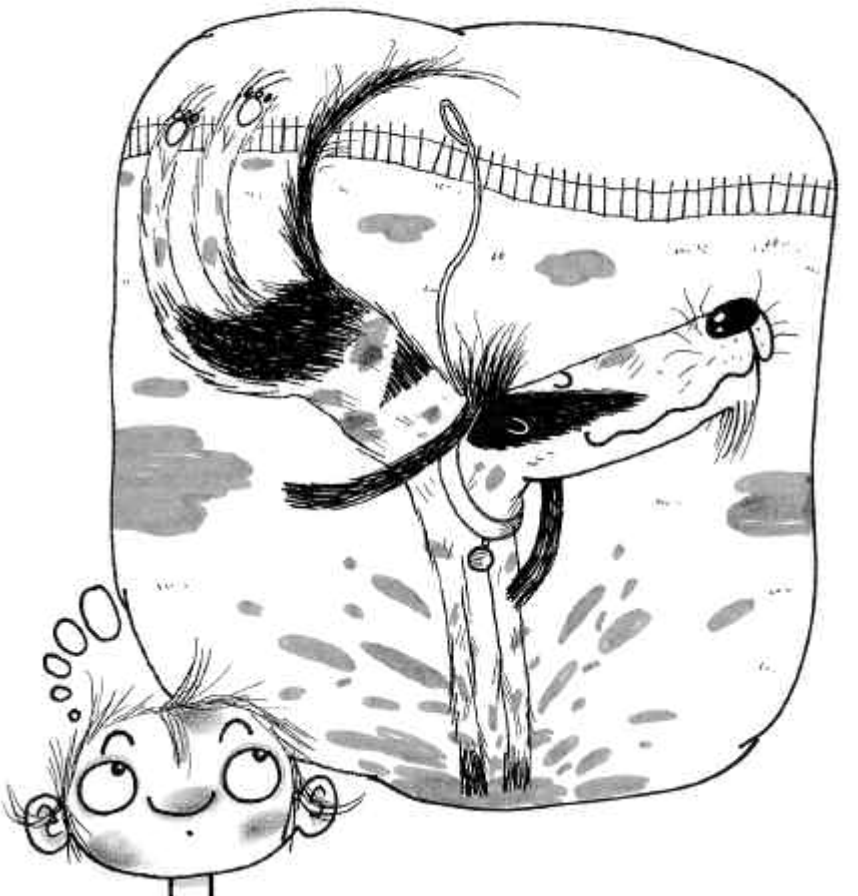
"Not like that," said Dad. "It's put me right off my dinner."

"What's he been doing?" demanded Mum.

"Nothing!" said Bertie. "I just took him to the park for a walk."

This was partly true. Whiffer had zoomed around the park chasing birds and squirrels as usual. It was on the way home that things had started to get messy. They had passed the big cow-field

and Whiffer had got overexcited. He'd squeezed through a hole under the fence, forcing Bertie to let go of his lead. Luckily, there were no cows, only a lot of cowpats. But Whiffer had raced around and come out ponging to high heaven.



"Well, whatever he's been doing, he needs a bath," said Mum.

BATH? Whiffer pricked up his ears.

"But why do I have to do it?" grumbled Bertie.

"Because you won't get any pocket money until you do," said Dad.

Bertie's shoulders sagged. So much for a perfect weekend! Getting Whiffer to take a bath was impossible. He HATED baths! All that rubbing and scrubbing in soapy water! Bertie knew just how he felt. If he had his way, bath-time would be against the law.

"You can do it in the garden," said Mum.

"What's wrong with the bathroom?" asked Bertie.

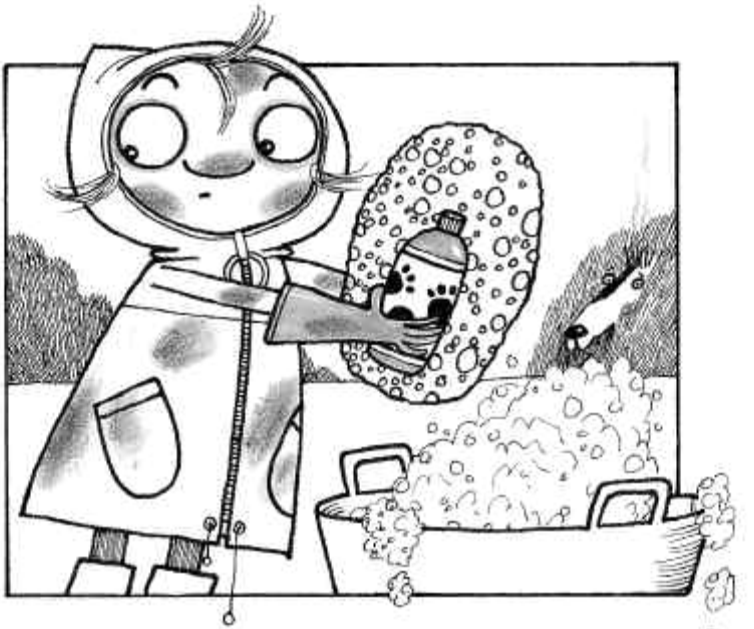
"Oh no!" said Mum grimly. "Not after last time."

Bertie remembered. Last time the bathroom had got a teeny bit messy. He sighed and got down from the table.

"Whiffer! Come on, boy!"

But Whiffer had disappeared. At the mention of the word "bath" he'd slipped upstairs to hide.





CHAPTER 2

Half an hour later, Bertie stood in the front garden, armed with a sponge and a bottle of Paddypaws Dog Shampoo. He wore a waterproof anorak, washing-up gloves and welly boots. When you were bathing Whiffer it was best to be prepared. A plastic bath of soapy water sat on the lawn untouched.

Whiffer was hiding in the bushes, refusing to come out. Bertie had already chased him round the back garden and in and out of the shed. But finally he had him cornered. The front gate was shut and there was no escape.

"Whiffer! Here, boy!" he called, whistling.

Whiffer didn't budge. Bertie dug in his pocket and pulled out his secret weapon – a crunchy dog biscuit.

"Oh, Whiffer! Look what I've got!"

Whiffer's head peeped out above the bush. He loved dog biscuits, especially the crunchy ones. He slunk forward, wagging his tail.

"What's this, eh?" cooed Bertie.





Whiffer hung back. He could see the soapy water and he knew what that meant. On the other hand, he wanted that dog biscuit. He crept closer, his tongue hanging out. Bertie waited till he was in arm's reach.

"GOTCHA!" he cried, grabbing him by the collar.

"WOOF!" yelped Whiffer, trying to escape. Bertie pulled. Whiffer pulled back. One more heave and…

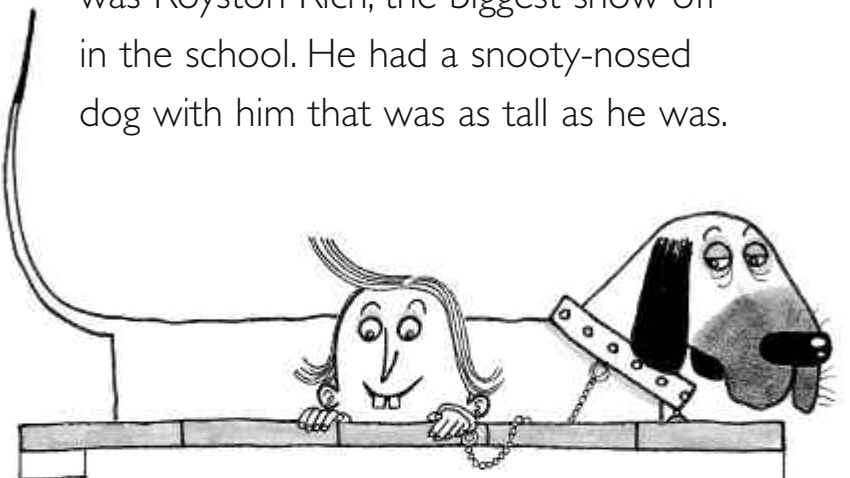
"ARGHHH!" SPLASH!

Bertie lost his grip and tumbled backwards.



"HA HA HA!" jeered a voice. "Having a nice bath, Bertie?"

Bertie wiped his eyes and looked up at a goofy face peering over the wall. It was Royston Rich, the biggest show-off in the school. He had a snooty-nosed dog with him that was as tall as he was.



"What do you want?" scowled Bertie.

"I was just passing," said Royston. "This is Duke, by the way. He's a pedigree Great Dane."

Whiffer trotted over to get a closer look at the newcomer. He growled.

"My dad says pedigree dogs are the best," Royston boasted. "Duke's won hundreds of prizes. I'm entering him in the Pudsley Dog Show."

"Bully for you," yawned Bertie.

"You're just jealous 'cos your dog would come last," sneered Royston. "My dad says to keep Duke away from mongrels."

"Huh, Whiffer's cleverer than your dog," said Bertie.

"Oh yeah?" said Royston. "Duke can do tricks. Give me a dog biscuit."

Bertie reluctantly handed one over.

"Sit, Duke!" said Royston. Duke sat. Royston balanced the biscuit on the dog's nose. Duke didn't move. Whiffer's tongue was hanging out.

"Wait, wait…" said Royston sternly.



"One, two, three … HUP!"

Duke flicked his head, catapulting the biscuit into the air. Suddenly, he leaped high, catching the treat in his mouth.

SNAP!

Whiffer whined pitifully.

"There!" crowed Royston. "What do you think of that?"

Bertie shrugged. "Any dog could do it."

"Yours couldn't!" jeered Royston.

"My dad says Duke's going to win Best in Show – that's the top prize."

"Huh!" scoffed Bertie. "I bet Whiffer could beat him."

Royston stuck out his goofy teeth. "Then why don't you enter him, smarty pants?"

"Who says I won't?" said Bertie.

"Good," said Royston. "See you on Sunday. Your dog will come last. Ha ha!"

Bertie watched as Royston flounced off with Duke, their noses in the air. *What a show-off!* he thought. Well, he would teach him a lesson. How hard could it be to win a dog show? Wait a minute though, did Royston say Sunday? *This* Sunday? That meant he only had one day to turn Whiffer into a prize-winning pooch!