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Opening extract from

Timmy Failure
Now Look What You've Done

Written by

Stephen Pastis

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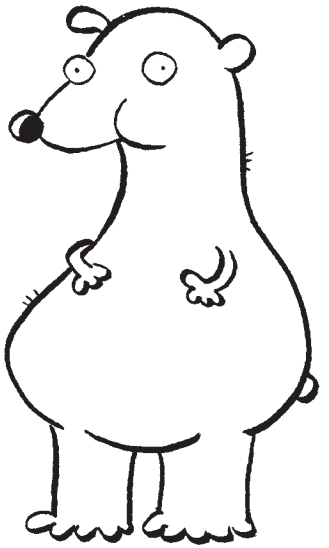
A Prologue That Will Most Likely Make Sense Later

Of all the items that can clog your plumbing, an overweight Arctic mammal is probably the worst.

Because while a good plumber can clear your pipes of a spoon or a hair ball or a bar of soap, it is much harder to remove one of these:



That, you see, is a polar bear.

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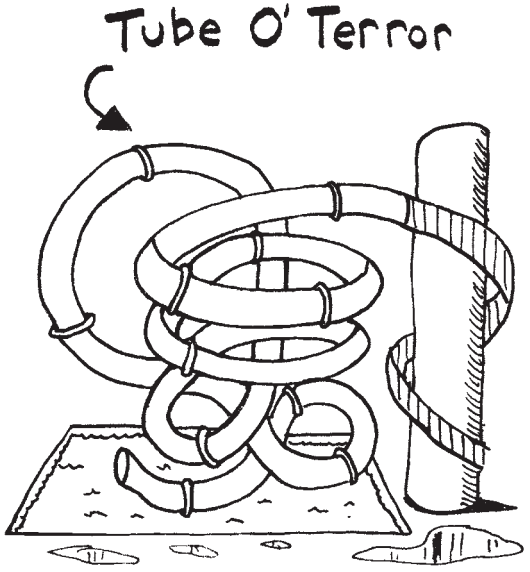
And today he is stuck in a different kind of pipe.

The Tube O' Terror.



The Tube O' Terror is the world's fastest, curviest waterslide.

But it is not fast today.

Because it is clogged.

Clogged by an overeager polar bear who was much too plump to ride.

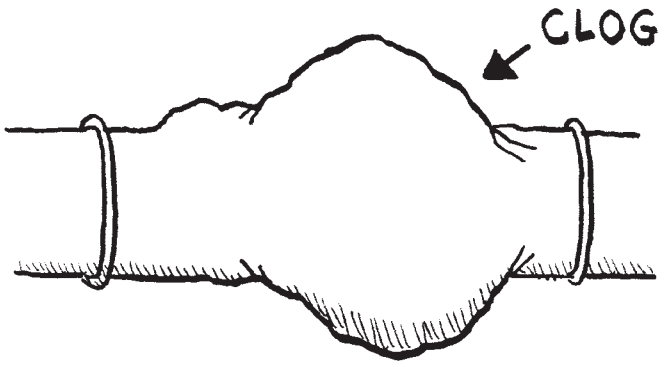
And yet somebody let him.

And that is where the bribery comes in.

Because a polar bear who fails to get his way will charm. And a polar bear who fails to charm will deceive. And a polar bear who fails to deceive will grab a big wad of dollar bills from his pocket and wink.

Because that is how the world works.

And then this will happen.



And if you are a world-class detective who just so happens to be tied to that polar bear and had no choice but to follow him down the slide, you are in trouble.

Deep, unbreathable trouble.

Because the rushing water keeps coming.

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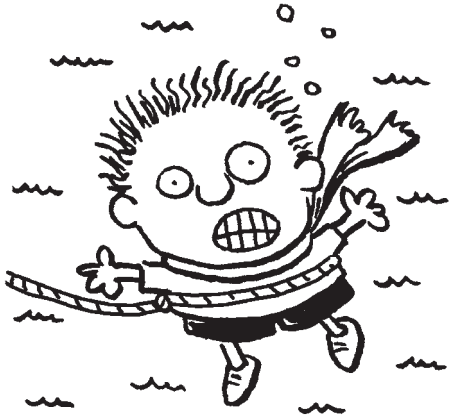
And with the polar bear's big bottom acting as a plug, the water has nowhere to go but back up the tube.

Which is where I am.

Trapped underwater.

And not very happy about it.



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CHAPTER 1

A Head Is a Terrible Thing to Not Have

Carl Kobalinski is not the smartest person in the world.

But try telling that to the woman in the checkered vest.

"Maury's Museum of World Records is now closed," she says. "And you need to go home."

"But look at this thing," I tell her. "It's an outrage."

"What is?" she asks.

"This," I say, pointing directly at the statue.

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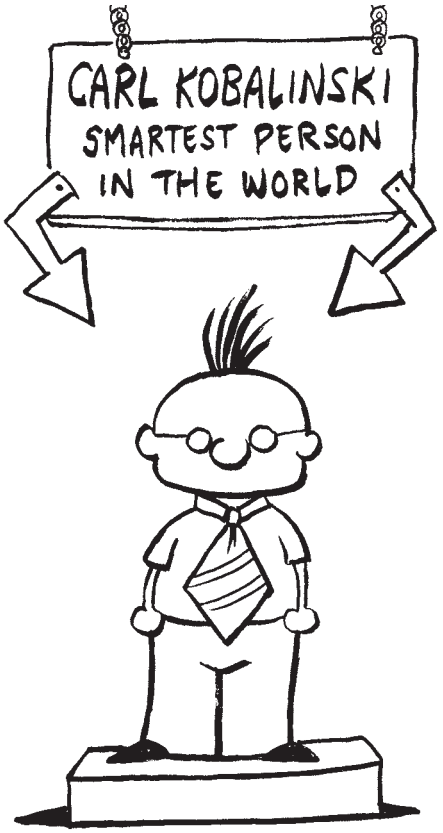


"Kid, I get eight dollars an hour to walk around this museum and make sure no one breaks anything. If you have a problem with what's in it, tell someone else."

"I've got a problem, all right. Lies, lies, and more lies. Everyone knows who the smartest person is."

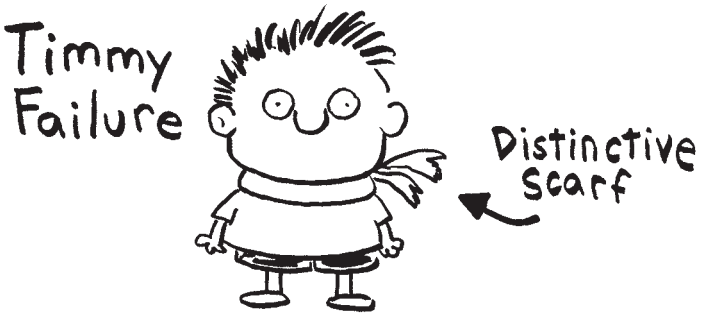
"Wonderful," she mumbles, rubbing her temples.

"It's me," I say.

"Good for you," she says, pushing me toward the exit with one hand. "Now let me show the smartest person in the world how a door works."

I am suddenly tempted to pull rank.

Reveal that I am this guy:



It is a name so recognizable that she would instantly know it as that of the founder, president, and CEO of the greatest detective agency in the town, probably the state. Perhaps the nation.

But I don't pull rank.

I do something smarter.

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I climb Carl Kobalinski and try to yank down his sign.

"What do you think you're doing?" screams the museum woman.

"I'm saving the credibility of your institution!" I retort.

But I'm not.

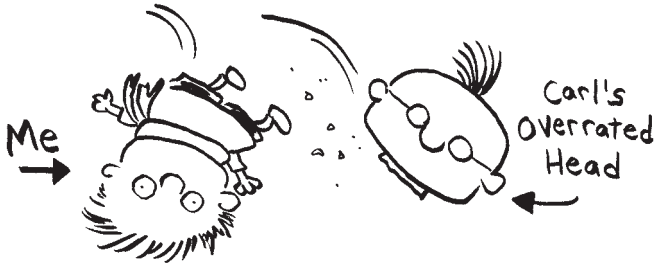
Because I can't reach the sign without jumping. And I am nine feet above the ground.

So I do what only the smartest person in the world would think to do.

I jump.

Only to learn that while Carl may have had a strong brain, his statue does not have a strong neck.

And as I jump, it snaps. Sending both me and Carl's overrated head tumbling.



Straight to the museum floor.

Where I hear another snap.

This one in my leg.

And say the only logical thing I can to the museum woman leaning over me:

"Now look what you've done."

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