

# The Kerfuffles



Written and Illustrated by

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Dedicated to Neal



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# Chapter 1

## Gummy Grins



“Where are my teeth?”  
shrieked Aunty May.

Cindy giggled.

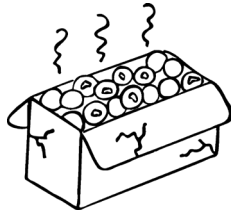
This morning, Aunty May looked hilarious. Her wrinkly lips had constricted in size and were barely visible. Her bright sparkly lipstick was missing. As were her teeth. And her freshly dyed hairdo was lopsided, obviously squashed by her pillow during the night.

Strangely, without her false teeth in, her croaky words blended together to produce sounds that could easily be mistaken for one of Uncle Harold's loud yawns.

Or, then again, for a frog.

Earlier this morning, Cindy hadn't really understood why Aunty May had been screaming so hysterically. She had just presumed her Aunt had encountered yet another bug. But on entering Aunty May's bedroom, which she normally avoided at all costs, it became clear as crystal. Judging by the shape of Aunty May's shrunken jaw, it was obvious that her chompers had gone walkabout.





Cindy crouched forward and peered inside another cardboard box.

The smelliest one.

Jam packed with Aunty May's homemade lotions, each glass jar was labelled with scrawny handwriting. Overflowing with her slimey green goo, which today smelt even grosser than usual, Cindy had a niggling feeling that something wasn't quite right. On closer inspection, she soon noticed that furry mould had formed within most of the jars.

Fluffy white lumps, combined with the homemade green gunk, had formed a substance Cindy knew was capable of stinking out the entire neighbourhood.



Holding her nose, Cindy leant in a little closer.

Be brave, she urged herself.

It was putrid.

But, just as expected, there were no false teeth in sight.



“They’re not in here either, Aunty May,”  
Cindy tried to look disappointed, as she  
released the tight grip on her nostrils.

“I NEED my teeth, Mindicindy! You know  
I can’t start the morning without my  
prunes on toast!” Aunty May’s head  
turned abruptly to the side as she  
squatted on the dusty floorboards beside  
the double bed.

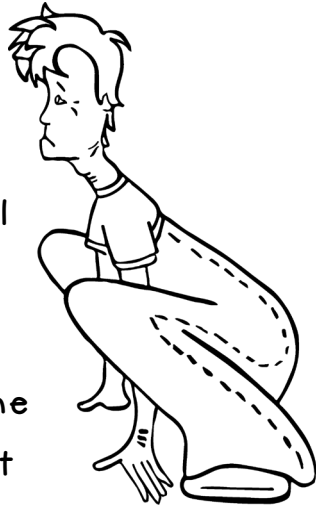


Cindy still couldn’t understand a word her  
Aunt uttered.

In that awkward position, Aunty May  
looked as though she was preparing to  
hop.

Cindy grinned.

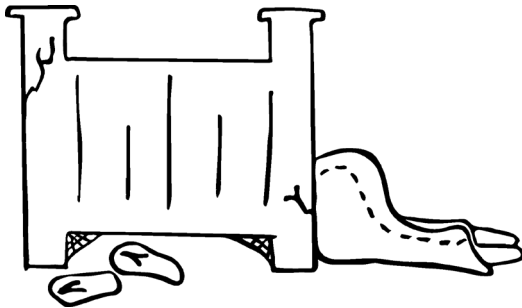
Aunty May seemed to be morphing into a real frog before her very eyes. With her knees bent, she positioned the palms of her hands flat against floor. Her wrinkly arms glistened with lumpy green ointment. Although, that really wasn't unusual. But today, Aunty May's green hairdo completed her amphibian look to perfection. It was a recent mishap, after she had attempted to dye her hair from blue to blonde.



Cindy burst out laughing. She just couldn't help herself.

Luckily, Aunty May couldn't hear a thing.

Barely able to see without her glasses, Aunty May shook her green head in frustration. Crawling about on the floorboards, she mumbled under her breath. Then, without warning, her lime green head disappeared under the bed.



"Aunty May, would you like me to help you?" Cindy wondered how her Aunt was even flexible enough to squeeze herself under there.

No response.

Cindy tapped her toes, waiting impatiently for her Aunt to reappear. She really had better things to do with her time on a Saturday morning.

Aunty May searched every nook and cranny. Eventually, her green head popped out. She immediately stood up. Then, grabbing onto the old furniture beside her, her bony fingers slid along the dressing table in search of her missing veneers. Knocking anything over that dared to stand in her way.

Cindy found it amusing that only a couple of months earlier, Aunty May couldn't understand a word SHE had said when she first she wore her plate. And today, the roles were reversed. Cindy quickly turned her head, trying to hide another big grin. Thankfully, from the corner of her eye, she could see Aunty May distracted yet again. Now roughly shuffling delicate trinkets about. Weirdly, without even breaking a thing.

At long last, it was the day Cindy had been waiting for. Her relatives were moving out. FINALLY. She had been marking it on her calendar for weeks. Unfortunately, there was a problem. A rather big problem. It was the location of her Aunt and Uncle's new house.

It was directly NEXT DOOR.

Never in a million years, had she imagined that her house would be sandwiched between her school teacher on one side, and her annoying relatives on the other. She squeezed her eyes tightly and moaned. It really couldn't get any worse.

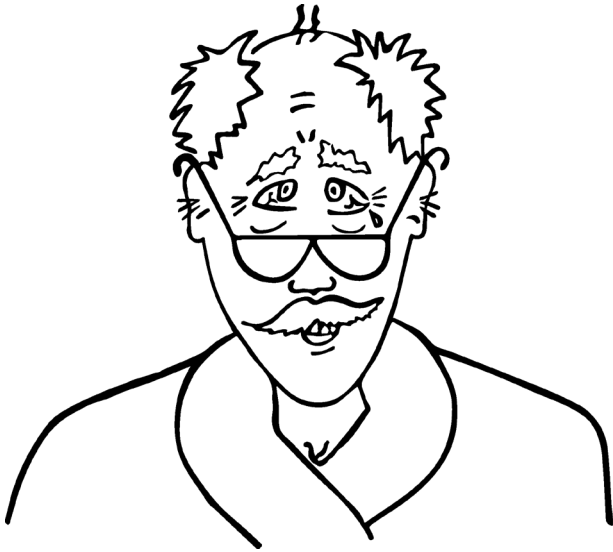
"Harold!" Aunt May unexpectedly yelled at the top of her voice.

Cindy was jolted from her daydream. Or rather, her nightmare.

"Harold!" Aunt May's deafening voice echoed throughout the small bedroom.



Cindy rolled her eyes, still unable to understand a word. Although, she knew there was usually only one person Aunty May ever searched for.



“What’s all that racket?” Uncle Harold appeared in the doorway, rubbing his watery eyes.

He usually NEVER came when he was called.

Ever.

“I’ve lost my teeth!” shouted Aunty May, bits of saliva spraying past her wrinkly lips.

Cindy frowned as she glanced over at Uncle Harold. He looked terrible. He had been suffering from hay fever for weeks. Stubbornly refusing to take any antihistamine Mum offered him. His bulgy eyes seemed to grow puffier by the day. And today they resembled two big pink marshmallows.

“I don’t understand a word you’re saying!” Uncle Harold huffed.

Then, his mouth opened wide as he prepared to eject the loudest sneeze in history from his quivering lips.

“Achoo!”

Aunty May jumped.

Like a frog.

Cindy watched in horror as a set of false teeth flew through the air, landing on the spongy mattress in front of her.



“Oh, no! My teeth!” shouted Uncle Harold, now covering HIS empty mouth with his hands.

Aunty May froze.

Her jaw instantly dropped, revealing her bare gums.

Cindy couldn't understand a word Uncle Harold uttered, but she had a fair idea that it had something to do with the objects he just spat out.

"Speak clearly, Harold!" Aunty May snorted, her shoulders jiggling about as she started to laugh at her toothless husband.

Uncle Harold and Cindy stared at each other, then over at the bed.

Cindy cringed. Repulsed by the yellow set of false teeth which now lay sprawled across the bed. They looked hideous, almost fluorescent against the burgundy velvet bedspread.

Then, it clicked.

Cindy's eyes widened.

"Aunty May, I think I just found your teeth!" Cindy shouted.

Aunty May's laughing fit immediately stopped.

"My teeth? Where?" her green head spun around.

"On the bed!" Cindy knew that there was only one person in this house who wore stained yellow false teeth.

Aunty May squealed.

“Harold, you’ve been wearing MY teeth all along!” Aunty May was now furious.

Uncle Harold suddenly looked pale. He didn’t know what his wife was talking about, but he had an inkling.

“I think I need to sit down,” Uncle Harold gently lowered himself onto the very edge of the bed, as far from the stained false teeth as possible. Shaking his head, he tried to comprehend how this could have happened.

Cindy started to smile. She couldn’t understand either of her relatives now that they were BOTH toothless.

“Where are MY teeth, then?” Uncle Harold looked almost faint.

He sat hunched over. His head buried in the palms of his big hands.

Cindy almost felt sorry for him.

At that very moment, quick footsteps in the hallway squeaked towards them. Things were just about to get a little more interesting, thought Cindy. She glanced over at the old wooden door.

Within seconds, Drake burst into the room.

“Dad STILL doesn’t know you’re moving next door!” Drake blurted out.



Uncle Harold looked up from his hands and unexpectedly grinned.

Aunty May smiled wickedly.



Holding an empty cardboard box, Drake scanned the uncomfortably quiet room.

“We have bigger problems than Dad,”  
Cindy muttered.

Drake soon froze, catching sight of his relative's gummy grins. Then, from the corner of his eye, the hideous yellow objects on the bed.

He knew exactly what they were.



Drake squealed.

"You sound just like Mr Border!" Cindy laughed at her twin's ridiculous reaction.



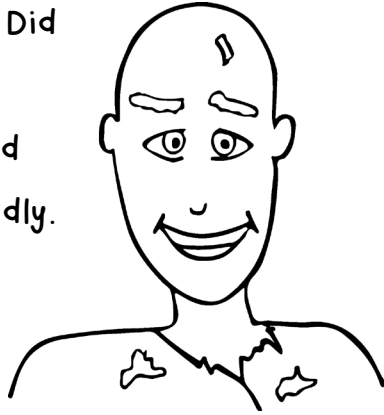
Aunty May and Uncle Harold joined in.  
Both laughed loudly. Their mouths wide.  
Their grins identical.

At that very moment, Dad appeared in the  
doorway.

Dad never came to this part of the house.

Ever.

“What happened? Did you see another spider?” Dad stood there smiling weirdly.



Lately Dad had been acting even stranger than usual, thought Cindy. If that was even possible. Grinning from ear to ear, he held onto a tiny plastic fan. His teeth had become quite the common occurrence lately. On average, he had been smiling about 3.2 times a day. Which was a lot for Dad. Coincidentally, it was ever since he found out that Aunty May and Uncle Harold were moving out.

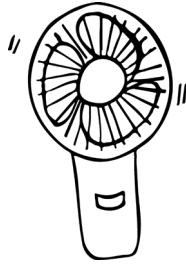
“I just found this nifty little gadget in the garage. It works, too. You can take it with you, Harold. A gift from me,” Dad glanced around the room.

His weird smile remained plastered across his face.

Cindy watched as Dad flicked the mini fan on and held it up to his chin. Made of cheap foam and plastic, Mum had bought it from the local Discount Store during Summer. Barely producing enough of a breeze to even make Dad’s nostril hairs sway, he didn’t seem concerned in the least by the lack of airflow.

Drake and Cindy grinned.

Dad soon turned off the noisy little gadget and stared at the grinning elderly couple in the room. He scratched his chin. There was definitely something different about them this morning, he soon thought. Although, he couldn't quite pin point it.



Then, he knew.

Dad instantly screwed up his face.

"May, your hair's GREEN!" Dad just couldn't believe it.

"No, it's NOT!" Aunty May answered, deeply offended.

“Yes, it is! Your hair matches your arms...” Dad added cheekily.

Strangely, Dad understood Aunty May clearly.

Aunty May grunted.

Uncle Harold swung his head around, as though noticing his wife’s hair for the first time.

“You look like a lizard!” Uncle Harold laughed hysterically.

Aunty May heard that.

“How rude of you, Harold. My hair is not green. It’s blonde...”

This time, Dad laughed.

“You’re definitely not blonde, May,” Dad couldn’t take his eyes off her lopsided green hairdo. It looked terrible.

Then, he caught sight of something on the bed.

His laughing immediately stopped.

“Cynthia, how many times has Mum told you not to leave your plate laying around. It’ll get squashed. I’ll be having a word to your mother about this,” Dad sat the tiny fan down on the dressing table, shaking his head in disappointment.

Wide eyed, Cindy stared back.



“But, Dad...” were the only words that managed to escape her lips.

“Sylvia!” Dad spun around, abruptly leaving the room.

Aunty May and Uncle Harold suddenly looked confused.

“Who’s Cynthia?” Uncle Harold mumbled.

“Must be the dog,” Aunty May shrugged her shoulders, barely interested.

Drake burst out laughing. This time he understood every word his relatives had just said.

Did they even have a dog, Uncle Harold soon wondered, as he glanced around the small room. He couldn't remember ever seeing one before.

"Grab your plate, Cindy. Or it might get squashed..." Drake continued to laugh as he made himself comfortable on the edge of the bed beside Uncle Harold.

Cindy frowned. Drake loved watching her get into trouble, especially for things she DIDN'T even do.

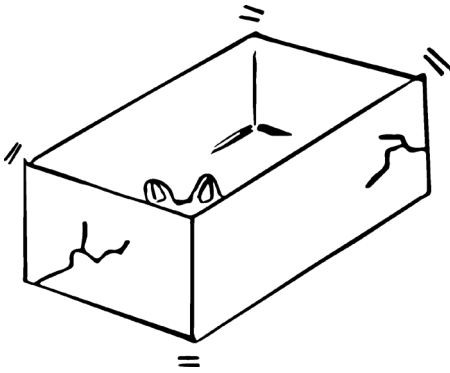
"Is this true? Did YOU eat your breakfast on our bed? This room will be infested with ants before you know it," Aunty May squinted at the bedspread.

Strangely, she still couldn't see a breakfast plate from where she stood.

Soon, Uncle Harold's loud sneezing made them all jump.

Once again.

Cindy immediately noticed the empty box beside Uncle Harold's feet move. And she knew exactly who was responsible. Just as expected, little Muggy had curled herself up inside. Uncle Harold's sneezes were now a combination of his cat allergy AND hay fever. Not a good combination, thought Cindy.



"I think I hear Mum calling me," Cindy lied.

She quickly picked up the box and its furry contents and left the room.

Moving Day.

It really couldn't have come any sooner...