

The Kerfuffles



Written and Illustrated by

Maria Crocker

Copyright © 2016-2021 Maria Crocker

All rights reserved

The characters and events portrayed in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

No part of this book may be reproduced, or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without express written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9945417-4-1

Cover Design by Maria Crocker

Edited by Neal Crocker

Dedicated to my parents

Francesco and Viola



Contents



Two Peas In A Pod	7
The Wish	43
The Double Chin	67
The Genie	93
Aunty May and Uncle Harold Arrive	117
Doctor Petunia	155
You're Fired!	181
The Blue Plate	215
The Beach	249
Genie In A Bottle	283
The Fake Head	303
The Suit	327
Dad's Body Double	347
Lights, Camera, Action!	369

Celia Caboodle	397
Who's That?	419
Let's Play Doubles!	457



Chapter 1

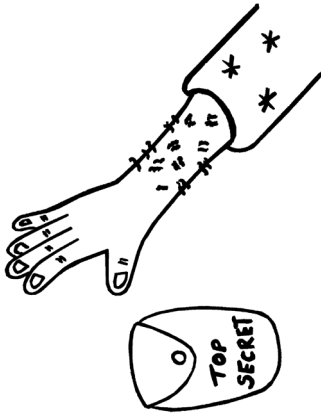
Two Peas In A Pod



"It's about time..." whispered Dad.

Peering out from under the covers, his puffy eyes scanned the dark room. At long last, it was safe to jump out of bed.

Dad's shiny head immediately popped up. Today, even the tip of his nose felt numb. Tiny little icicles were probably suspended from each of his long curly nasal hairs. He was sure of it.



In an instant, he flung out his arm. His hand hovered just above the floorboards, in search of his secret magnifying glass.

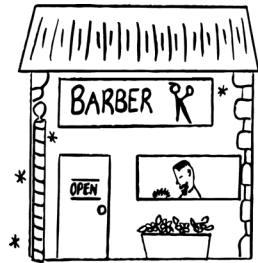
“Bingo!” within seconds he grabbed it between his frozen fingertips before plunging his hand back under the covers to defrost.

“Worst hair-cut in history...” Dad sighed.

He rubbed the prickly patches on his clammy scalp. The previous night, he had made a rash decision. One which he now regretted.

Enormously.

The flashing red and white sign in front of the Retro Barber Store had been so hypnotizing. And after six whole weeks of having to wear a beanie to cover his hideous pink hairdo, he finally decided it was time to make a drastic change.

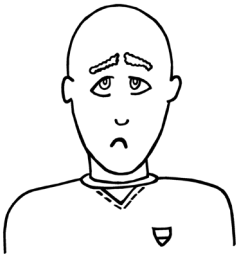




Weirdly, his hair had hardly grown AT ALL since the dinner party. So, he had been left with no other option but to shave it off.

Or, so he thought.

However, he probably should have thought it through.

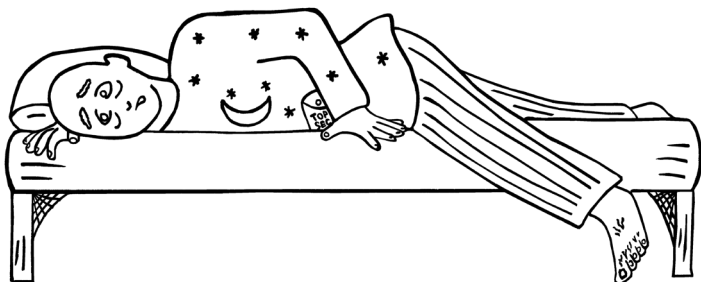


As soon as it was whisked off by the eager teenage Apprentice, it immediately dawned on him that he looked identical to someone he knew.

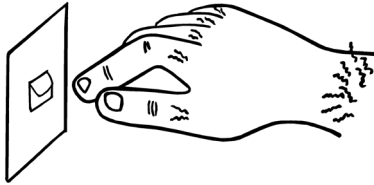
Someone he despised.

GRENVILLE.

Dad leapt out of bed and headed straight towards the mirror. Well, in reality, it was barely a leap but rather a slow shuffle. Only after an awkward roll off the sunken mattress which, as usual, ended with a thud.



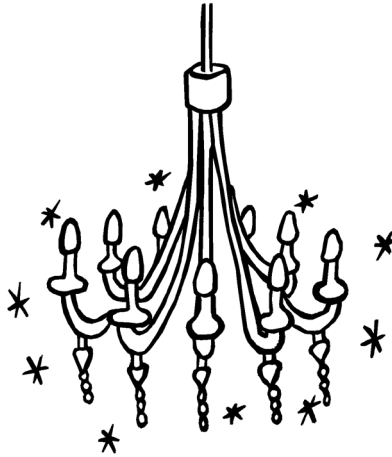
For some odd reason, his stiff neck and aching back always felt worse in the mornings. His creaky body now made weird noises that even surprised HIM.



Fumbling across the peeling wallpaper, he soon found the lump he was desperately searching for. His thick sausage fingers were barely able to function so early in the morning.

Today, he could hardly even manage to flick the stubborn light switch on.

Within seconds, the dazzling light from the old brass chandelier lit up the room. Dad's eyes almost hurt.



He squinted.

He hadn't yet adjusted to any form of light, let alone a chandelier covered with so many bulbs it could light up a sports field.

A little rub will do the trick, he quickly decided. He lifted the palms of his hands up towards his face. And rubbed vigorously. Unfortunately, his saggy skin now looked even worse than before. Funnily enough, his under-eye bags resembled two used tea bags after being excessively squeezed by Aunty May.



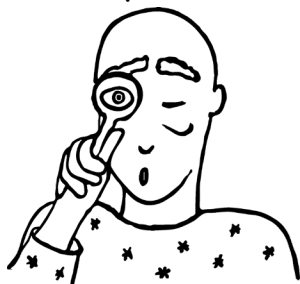
Not only wrinkly, but extra lumpy.

Dad squinted in the mirror.



With one eye partially open, he pulled the tiny magnifying glass out of the little leather pouch and held it up in the bright light.

This morning, there were hardly any hair follicles visible on his bare scalp at all. Apart from the uneven patches of prickly bits overlooked by young apprentice Pete.



Dad moaned.

Yep, he looked just like Grenville.

Almost identical.

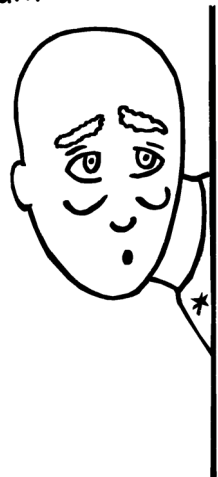
He grabbed his work clothes from the rickety old cupboard nearby. He would have to shower downstairs and leave straight away. He definitely didn't want his family to think he was copying Grenville's hairstyle. Or, even worse, he didn't want to risk bumping into Grenville himself out in the front yard.



He started to tiptoe through the dark hallway. His big hairy toes weren't as graceful as he had hoped, making the old floorboards squeak each and every step of the way.

Dad soon stopped.

He stretched his stiff neck around the corner. It clicked weirdly. Just as expected, he could see dim light radiating from the laptop. As usual, Mum was tapping away on the keyboard in the Dining Room. Always the first one up each morning, she usually sat in the same position facing the window.



He smiled for a split second, exposing his two front teeth.



Amusingly, Mum always looked like a mad professor. Her crazy hair extra wild, her back hunched and her face screwed up. Silently giggling while making weird contorted facial expressions as she typed.

Dad rolled his eyes. He continued to tip toe towards the staircase. Luckily, Mum was so engrossed in what she was doing, she was easy to pass undetected.

Before long, he was making his way down the creaky steps, feeling almost relieved.

Then, he paused.

He was positive he could hear footsteps shuffling about in the Games Room below.

Unbelievably, the front door squeaked open.

Dad held his breath.

The real Cat Burglar?

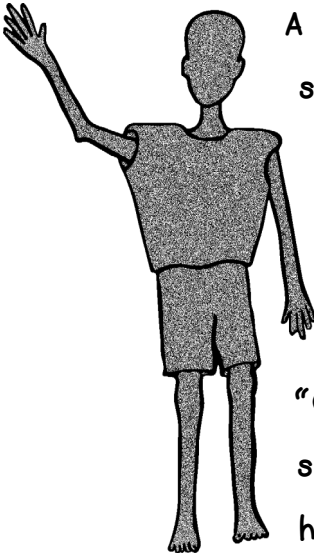
He quickened his steps, reaching the bottom of the staircase in record time. The door immediately slammed shut in front of him. Then, from the corner of his eye, he sensed someone else behind him.

Dad spun around on the dry, cracked heels of his feet. Almost losing his balance.



He could soon see the outline of a figure standing in the darkness.

He shuddered.



A grotesque shaped shadow instantly moved towards him. A long spindly arm lifting in mid-air.

“Cat Burglar!” Dad screamed at the top of his lungs.

Dad’s shaky hands flung up in the air, his clothes falling into a heap onto his feet.

Within seconds the downstairs light turned on.

“Calm down, mate!”

Grenville suddenly appeared in front of him, rubbing his puffy eyes as he yawned.



Then, noticing Dad's newly shaven scalp, Grenville burst out laughing.

“What are YOU doing here?” Dad could

barely speak. Weirdly his vocal cords refused to function. They had shrivelled away,

trembling with fright.



“I just wanted to use the bathroom,”

Grenville answered, his swollen eyes now focused solely on Dad's shiny head.



“Do you always break into my house to use the bathroom?” Dad squeaked. He just couldn’t believe the audacity of this man.

Who even does that?

Grenville’s laughing stopped as abruptly as it started.

“Break into houses? I’m not a burglar, William. I would like to remind you that I wasn’t the one arrested recently,” Grenville then started to laugh, wheezing in and out as tiny tears started to trickle down his puffy cheeks.

Dad grunted.

It was the longest and deepest grunt he could manage, considering his vocal cords were temporarily out of action.

“Well, HOW did you get in?” Dad’s voice was now amusingly high pitched.

“Get in? I slept here all night,” Grenville stretched out his arm to try to touch the freshly cut follicles in front of him.

“Don’t touch!” Dad took a step backwards, even more shocked to hear Grenville had been in his house for the entire night.

“SLEPT here? Where?” Dad shook his shiny head about in jerky movements, dumbfounded by the whole situation.

“Down here in the Games Room, beside your pool table. Lizzy and I brought our sleeping bags over. And, yes, we were quite comfortable. Thank you for asking,” Grenville teased.

Dad’s jaw dropped.



“By the way, William, I have a bone to pick with you. You didn’t even tell me you bought yourself a pool table. I would have loved a game,” Grenville turned his head, glancing back at the table behind him.

He grimaced.

With the light now on, Grenville soon noticed that the dusty pool table was covered in webs. And what little critters were lurking about in the darkness of its deep pockets, Grenville soon wondered.

He shuddered, not wanting to think about it for a second longer.

Mum suddenly appeared at the top of the staircase.

“Good morning, Grenville,” however Mum was staring directly at Dad.

“Morning, Sylvia,” Grenville answered from where he stood.



Mum looked confused.

“I’m here, Sylvia. That’s your husband you’re talking to,” Grenville smirked as he wandered out of the doorway into full view.

“Who? Where?” Mum immediately did a double take, now noticing Grenville standing beside Dad.

“Bill? Um, I thought YOU were Grenville!” Mum stood in shock as she stared at her hairless husband.

Then, she burst out laughing.



Her squeal penetrated through every room downstairs.

Dad rolled his eyes.

“Sylvia, I really have to apologise. I think I may have scared William earlier...”

Grenville looked over at Mum, now smiling widely.

“You THINK?” Dad’s eyes widened as he eyeballed his neighbour, the arteries in his neck throbbing angrily.

Mum frowned.

“I told you last night that Lizzy and Grenville were staying downstairs. Their water main burst while you were out buying milk. And obviously having your head shaved...” Mum giggled as she stared at them both.



The resemblance was uncanny.

“No, you didn’t tell me,” Dad pouted, his nostrils flaring unattractively.

“Well, you did have your head hidden under the bed covers all night. You probably couldn’t hear a thing I said,” Mum shook her head.

“By the way, Sylvia, Lizzy just left to check on our gargoyle...” Grenville added cheekily, “she’ll be back in a jiffy.”



Dad's nostrils suddenly doubled in size. He huffed and puffed, wobbling his head about just like a toy Bobblehead. Now looking utterly ridiculous.

Mum ignored him.

"Lovely, I'll get breakfast started. I have such a busy day, so many appointments. I really wish there were TWO of me sometimes," Mum stopped, soon realizing what had just come out of her mouth.

She stared at the replicas in front of her.

"Be careful what you wish for, Sylvia," Grenville called out, tilting his neck towards Dad.

Mum giggled even louder.

“By the way, Sylvia, what time are Harold and May flying in today?” Grenville asked, giving Dad a sideways glance.

“What?” Dad’s wobbly noggin spun towards Grenville.

Grenville cringed. He looked up at Mum, who was now holding her finger up against her lips.

“Shh,” Mum whispered, her eyes widening.

She then lowered her arm, placing both hands on her hips.



"I was going to tell you, Bill. But I wasn't really sure how you would take the news," Mum suddenly looked irritated.

"TODAY? They're coming back TODAY?" Dad's vocal cords miraculously worked again.

"Yes, they're flying in this morning," Mum squeezed her lips together, causing fresh wrinkles to form around her mouth.

"They've only been gone for six weeks. Six weeks and two days to be exact. Why would they need another holiday?" Dad was perspiring heavily, his head no longer cold, but now rather lukewarm.

He rubbed the tip of his nose.

The icicles hanging from his nasal hairs would have definitely melted away by now. He was sure of it.

“Good morning, kids,” Grenville cheerfully waved at his students as they appeared at the top of the staircase.

Still half asleep, neither realized their teacher was even standing downstairs.

“What’s all that racket?” Drake yelled moodily.



He had been using Uncle Harold’s sayings ever since their relatives had left.



“Mum, I think I’m seeing double,” Cindy rubbed her tired eyes as she stared down the staircase.

“No, that’s just your father. He wants to look like Mr Border now...” Mum answered flatly.

“Dad’s bald?” Drake laughed.

“Mr Border is HERE?” Cindy cringed.

The last person she wanted to see as soon as she woke up, was her school teacher. How gross!

Mum nodded, still staring at the doubles downstairs.

“So weird!” Drake yelled.

“I’m going back to bed,” Cindy mumbled, unimpressed by the whole situation.

Shuffling her feet, she turned to leave the staircase. Living next door to their teacher was even worse than she could EVER have imagined.

“Mum, why did Mr Border break into our house?” Drake ran his fingers through his messy hair, frowning at the two identical men standing at the bottom of the staircase.

“He didn’t,” Mum giggled.

Drake didn’t hear her.

He had an awful feeling that Mr Border was really there to collect his overdue homework. Breaking into houses to steal homework? Even HE thought that was a bit extreme. Why did Mr Border have to move in next door?

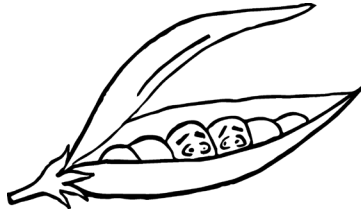
It was so unfair!

Mumbling under his breath, Drake turned to leave the staircase. He hung his head, thinking about his tattered homework book which still lay hidden in his bedroom, under a layer of moist smelly socks.



Mum sighed, soon following the twins back to their rooms.

Dad and Grenville were left at the bottom of the staircase, looking like two peas in a pod.



“Let me guess, is that an Apprentice Pete hair cut?” Grenville asked, scratching his unshaven chin.

“What? How did you know THAT?” Dad was absolutely shocked.

“You’ve got a lot to learn, mate, especially if you would like to up-keep a style like this,” Grenville smiled, patting his look-a-like on his back.

“Time to get ready for work or we’ll both be late,” Grenville added, soon disappearing down the dark dingy hallway.

I'm definitely not your mate, Dad wanted to shout.

Instead, Dad sighed. He would have to use the shower upstairs after all. He bent over to grab his creased work clothes which were still covering his feet. Suddenly his knees clicked and his back cracked.



“Burst water main...” Dad muttered to himself as he started to tackle the steep staircase, “I don’t believe it for a second.”

“I heard that!” Grenville’s voice trailed along the hallway towards him.

Dad stopped. He scratched his freshly shaven head. Then shrugging his shoulders, he continued to climb the wooden steps. His creaky knees and the creaky floorboards harmonized together as he made his way up.

Almost in tune.



A little grin soon crept across his lips.

He started to whistle a few little notes, even awkwardly clicking his tongue to the beat. It was music to his ears.

“By the way, William, my secret to a good shine is moisturiser!” Grenville’s distant voice meandered along the maze of corridors.

Dad, however, didn’t hear a thing.

