

## CHAPTER ONE

# *A Grimm Start*

The day my penis fell off was probably the worst day of my life so far. I say probably because I can't imagine anything as bad ever happening again. Being only thirteen, though, I can't be sure of what might occur in the future.

It started off like any normal day. My penis was sticking out of my pajamas the way it always did when I woke up in the morning. And when I went to the toilet it was fine. It signed my name perfectly. So, as you can imagine, *it* falling off was the last thing I expected.

Of course, with my rotten luck it had to fall off in the worst place and at the worst possible time - at school, in the showers, after morning gym. With Hector Scragg on the rampage flicking everybody's bum and our evil sports master Mr Grimm patrolling the change rooms, the whole episode could hardly have been any more embarrassing than it actually turned out to be.

Things would have been really bad if it hadn't been for my best mate Biggsy. His real name is Bernard Biggs. Sometimes you never know how good a mate can be until you face a personal crisis like having your penis fall off. Biggsy was great and I can honestly say that he is the only mate that I would ever let...well; actually I better not go there. But you know what I mean.

However, I am getting ahead of myself so I should just start at the beginning. Like I said I woke up and went straight to the bathroom where I did the usual signing

of my name - J.O.F.F.A. I was becoming quite expert and only left a few drops on the seat. One day I hope to be able to sign my full name Jeffrey James Maguire in one go.

I remember giving it a good shake. 'Shake it and leave it.' my Dad always says, whatever that means. So I knew there was nothing wrong with it in the morning unless I shook it too hard and loosened it or something, but I don't think so.

After that I sat down for some breakfast cereal with three spoons of sugar and milk. My Dad reckons all that sugar will make my eyes spin. It hasn't yet because I check in the mirror every morning. Anyway, the point is I still felt fine after breakfast and had plenty of energy because Biggsy and I ran all the way down to the bus stop.

Biggsy always drops by in the morning and we walk together. Sometimes if he is early we play a bit of soccer kicking stones down the drains in the gutters of the road. On *this* day we were a bit late so we ran. Everything seemed fine. I was wearing jocks rather than boxer shorts so there was no excess jiggling or anything like that.

When we got on the bus, we sat near the back a couple of seats behind Sophie Ruffolo and Jade Mizzi. They are gorgeous and I'll admit I have been in love with Sophie R since fourth grade. One day I'm going to ask her out. *One day*. Biggsy says I won't but I will...maybe. Sitting on the bus watching Sophie R, dreaming, wishing and thinking heaps of stuff some of which I wouldn't even tell Biggsy, I knew there was nothing wrong with me before school started.

'Hurry up you lot we haven't got all day.' growled Mr Grimm as we sat huddled in the cold change rooms. He had organized a game of soccer for our class, eight a side. There were fifteen of us so he had decided he would play.

'I'll be on Scragg's side.' Mr Grimm announced as he led us on to the playing field.

Biggsy looked at me in wide-eyed disbelief. I knew exactly what he was thinking. Great! Not only did we have to contend with Scragg's rough-house bullying which for some reason Mr Grimm never spotted but we now had to deal with the Grim Reaper himself. There was no doubt about it, Grimm was a real looney. You could tell by looking at him that he was a nutter.

He marched onto the pitch erect as a Guardsman carrying the ball with his chest puffed out and wearing the full outfit of the England soccer team. By the way he carried on you'd have reckoned he was walking on to Wembley Stadium. He looked around as if he was in front of a packed crowd in the stands and on the terraces. All he could really see was a dog hunting around the rubbish bin between the shelter-sheds on the other side of the ground.

'Right then.' Grimm said as he clapped his hands and placed the ball regally upon the dot in the centre circle, 'We'll be England and you lot can be Australia.'

Us lot were waved away dismissively to our positions.

'Biggs you play centre half and Maguire you can go in goal...and try to stop a few this week will you lad. We don't want another slaughter do we?'

Actually that was exactly what he wanted. I kicked the ground disconsolately a few times on my way back to defend the goals. Why did I always have to be the goalkeeper? I never got to play up forward. There was at least some consolation. I was relatively safe from the likes of Scragg and Grimm while in goal.

Mr Grimm blew his whistle and kicked off. He had the peculiar habit of commentating as he played.

'Charlton kicks off and passes to Hurst...Come on Scragg. Give it back Scragg. Come on boy...Yes Hurst back to Charlton as England goes forward.'

Talk about living in the past. Hadn't he heard of any modern day players? The Scragg pass was not all that good and the ball fell a little behind Mr Grimm which he gathered with a stomping back-foot tackle that sent little Jimmy Xavier spinning sideways.

'Foul! Sir...' protested little Jimmy to Mr Grimm's unheeding ears as he hopped about clutching his foot.

'Referee waves play on as Charlton takes it forward. Can he go all the way?'

The luckless McArdle twins, Trevor and Travis, were bulldozed aside as Grimm charged into the penalty box. Before I knew it he was only ten yards away and winding his tree trunk leg back to shoot. I raised one hand above my head as I ran for cover. The ball sailed comfortably past me and through for a goal.

'Charlton scores. En-ger-land ONE Australia NIL.' roared Grimm as he punched the air with both arms in self-congratulation. He turned and glared at me 'Go on Maguire. Get the ball. No time wasting lad, alright?'

I retrieved the ball that had disappeared down an embankment behind the goal and come to rest against the fence by the road. The game resumed with more of the same. Grimm got his usual hat-trick and Hector Scragg buffeted and clawed his way to a goal in such a brutal manner that he left scratch marks across poor old Biggsy's stomach.

'Hurst too strong scores again for England though he should have laid off to Charlton. Bit greedy there son.' said Grimm with considerable disapproval as he jogged back to the middle of the ground. 'En-ger-land FOUR Australia NIL' he announced triumphantly beaming at the rest of his England side who had been sent into defence. They were bored out of their heads and were watching with their arms folded.

When Mr Grimm and Hector Scragg came charging forward once more, Biggsy attempted to tackle Scragg but was easily pushed aside. The trouble was that Scragg, who was quite a clumsy oaf, stumbled and lost his balance. I had come off the goal line to gather the ball and suddenly Scragg the useless, came crashing down on top of me. We lay there in a tangle of arms and legs. Laughter echoed about the field. Mr Grimm gave a sharp blast on his whistle that had so far hung derelict around his neck.

‘Penalty to England.’ he announced emphatically. ‘And you...’ he added pointing to the change rooms and glaring at Biggsy, who hadn’t actually done anything, ‘off!’

‘You’re dead Maguire.’ hissed Scragg through his clenched teeth as we untangled ourselves. ‘You too Biggs.’ he added for good measure as he saw Biggsy turning to leave the field.

‘Charlton to take it.’ said Mr Grimm as he carefully set the ball on the penalty spot. He glared at Scragg who had gingerly got to his feet. ‘Out of the way lad. No one allowed in the area when the penalty shot is being taken. You know that.’

Grimm turned his steely gaze to me. ‘Right Maguire. No moving until the ball is kicked. Understand?’

I nodded as Grimm moved back behind the ball, his beady black eyes darting all over as he sized up where to place the shot.

‘Charlton shoots.’ he announced loudly. The ball was struck low and hard and before I could move it cannoned straight into my you know where and you know whats.

I fell back onto my back clutching at my groin and lay with my knees drawn into my stomach as both sides erupted with loud guffaws of laughter.

‘Charlton scores from the rebound!’ roared Mr Grimm as he toed the ball through the goals. ‘His fourth. En-ger-land FIVE Australia NIL. Remember lads, always be ready for the rebound.’ he intoned solemnly. ‘Somebody help Maguire up.’ he added without a glance in my direction.

He then blew three piercing peeps on his whistle and pointed with both arms to the change rooms. ‘Full time. England wins.’

I rolled slowly onto my side with tears in my eyes and a searing pain in my groin with everybody looking down at me.

‘No I’m okay.’ I whispered hoarsely and as sarcastically as I could while I struggled to my feet. The others hurried ahead glad to be finished for the morning, finally free of Grimm’s harassment. I tottered slowly behind them.

Biggsy was already changed by the time the first of us straggled into the change rooms. He had, like me through my late arrival, avoided Scragg’s usual wedgie assault whenever Mr Grimm’s back was turned. Not that Grimm particularly cared one way or the other.

I can tell you, trying to get out of your sports gear is no easy feat when you are doubled up in pain having just been hit in the groin by a cannonball. Mr Grimm rolled his eyes and clicked his tongue impatiently.

‘Come on Maguire. Anyone would think you’d never been hit by a ball before. Hopeless lad, hopeless.’

The truth was I never had, not down there anyway.

‘Help him with his jumper Biggs. Two minutes Maguire. The rest of you out.’ called Grimm with another blast of the whistle. He looked at me one more time and shook his head slowly. ‘Pathetic, Maguire, absolutely pathetic.’

Apart from the pain, everything appeared fine as I leaned against the wall of the shower. I turned the taps on savoring the hot water as it splashed over my body and reached for the soap. Just as I went to rub some soap over myself a strange nauseating feeling came over me. It was like when you have food poisoning, a sort of sick draining feeling, washing in a cold wave over and through your whole body. What made me look down I'll never know. What I saw made me scream. My penis had fallen off. Not just the hanging loose type off, but completely off.

## CHAPTER TWO

# *Losing it*

Biggsy, who was standing at the change room door, said my scream could be heard all around the school. He said everybody froze and that even Mr Grimm looked momentarily alarmed. Thankfully Biggsy was first in.

‘Are you okay Joffa?’ I heard him call.

For the moment I was unable to utter a sound. I was simply dumbstruck as I looked at my penis lying on the shower floor with the droplets of water splashing around it. My hands were clasped over where my penis had previously been all my life. In my fright I felt faint and slumped against the shower door.

‘Joffa. Joffa...Are you there?’ Biggsy was whispering.

I heard the thunderous echo of feet and doors banging as the rest of the class crowded behind Mr Grimm to see what the problem was. Grimm pounded on the door and I felt the vibrations through my shoulder.

‘What the hell is going on Maguire?’ he demanded.

I was still in a state of shock. I knew if I didn’t say something Grimm or somebody would come climbing over the top of the shower door and discover my awful secret.

‘Spider, Sir.’ I squeaked.

‘A blooming spider. That’s it is it lad? You scream blue bloody murder over a little blooming spider. Pathetic, Maguire, absolutely dead set pathetic.’ uttered Grimm in his usual uncaring tone.

‘Yes Sir, sorry Sir.’ I mumbled apologetically.

‘One minute Maguire. Hurry it up lad.’ Grimm commanded before adding, ‘Off to your next class you lot.’

A brief sigh of relief escaped my lips as I stared down at my penis as it lolled from side to side on the shower floor, shifting slightly on the ground from the cascading water. My mind was racing. What was I going to do?

I slowly took my hands away from my groin and peeped down at where my penis had been. It did look strange I can tell you. Everything else seemed in order which was a huge bonus given the circumstances. As for where my penis had been it was a completely clean break and didn’t look too bad at all. Still I much preferred to have my penis on than off.

The change rooms were silent.

‘Biggsy!’ I whispered hoarsely ‘Are you there?’

‘Yeah, Joffa. What’s up?’

It was more a case of what was down than what was up, I thought as I looked at my poor unattached penis on the ground. I wondered if it had feelings or whether it felt tickled by the water falling upon it.

‘I’ve got to show you something.’ I replied seriously.

‘No way,’ replied Biggsy defensively ‘I hate spiders.’

‘It wasn’t a spider.’ I stated.

‘What? Worse than a spider? Are you crazy? No way.’ replied Biggsy emphatically.

‘Yeah, much worse but not creepy crawly worse.’ I explained as I tried to rationalize my situation. ‘Come on Biggsy I really need your help. And you’ve got to promise not to laugh.’

‘Laugh.’ said Biggsy with a hint of confusion, ‘Why would I laugh?’

‘Just don’t, okay?’

‘Okay.’

Satisfied as much as I could be and knowing that my best mate was the only person in the whole wide world who I could trust, I turned the shower off and cautiously opened the door and stood starkers before Biggsy.

‘What?’ said Biggsy looking blankly at me and shrugging his shoulders.

I said nothing and pointed at my groin. Biggsy’s jaw almost dropped to the floor. He was clearly as flabbergasted as I had been. He staggered back, gasping and clutching for the wooden bench behind him which he promptly sat on.

‘Wh...wha...what happened to your Richard?’ he stammered.

‘It fell off.’ I said in rather matter-of-fact fashion. It is surprising just how quickly you can adjust to such setbacks. I was feeling quite calm despite the unexpected calamity.

‘H...ho...how?’

‘I don’t know.’ I yelled impatiently, losing my cool immediately. I was starting to feel a little stressed by the fact I no longer had a penis. ‘It just did okay. Quick, hand me my towel.’

Biggsy handed me my towel mechanically while looking past me to the floor.

‘So where is it?’

‘Where’s what?’ I answered without understanding the implications of the question.

‘Your Richard! Where’s your Richard?’

Another sickening feeling ran through me as I looked down. My penis had disappeared. It had slithered off into the gutter that ran through all the shower

cubicles. I dashed madly from shower recess to shower recess, kicking the doors open violently in the hope I would find it. It was gone. My penis had disappeared.

At times like this it is okay for boys to cry. So I did.

‘What am I going to do?’ I blubbered as Biggsy patted my back, with marked discomfort.

‘Don’t worry, mate. It’ll be alright.’ he soothed.

‘Alright! Alright!’ I shouted ‘My Richard has just fallen off and been washed down a drainpipe. That is NOT alright.’

Just as I was giving poor Biggsy a burst, Mr Grimm returned in a right rage.

‘MAGUIRE. BIGGS. Outside the pair of you.’ he ranted. Spying my state of undress he snorted wildly, throwing my clothes at me. I tried to catch them as best I could while clutching the towel around my waist as I attempted to conceal my embarrassment.

‘You’ve had long enough. Get to your next class now.’ He turned on his heel and glared at Biggsy who was vacantly staring into the showers. ‘Lost something have we Biggs?’

‘Ahhh. Me, Sir? No Sir?’ replied Biggsy.

‘Well then get a move on lad. NOW!’

Biggsy hurried out the door and I followed dressing on the run as I stuffed my shirt into my pants. Satisfied, Mr Grimm stalked off toward the staff room.

‘I can’t go to Math’s now.’ I hissed at Biggsy as we made our way automatically toward our next class. ‘I’ve got to find my you know what.’

‘Well you can’t wag and Grimm will see you for sure while you are hunting around out here. And what are you going to say, ‘Oh sorry Sir, my penis fell off in the

shower and I was just looking for it. Sir, could you possibly please call the police. I'd be most grateful. Thank you very much Sir' ...I don't think so.'

'Well it did.' I muttered.

'Grimm would go spare if you told him that.'

'It's the truth.'

'We'll have to look for it after school.' reasoned Biggsy. 'Come on.'

We slipped into Mrs Thomas' Math class a few minutes late mumbling our apologies as we made our way to our desk. Mrs Thomas seemed hardly to notice as she launched into her usual class *entrée*. Standing at the front of the four rows of desks every morning she beat out a cracking metronomic count upon the desk tops with her metre long blackboard ruler.

*The theorem of Pythagoras states...THAT*

**WHACK!**

*In any right angled triangle*

*The square of the hypotenuse*

*Is equal to the sum of the square*

*Of the other two sides*

**WHACK!** And on it went.

Today my mind was elsewhere and so too, regrettably, was my penis. I stared out the window toward the change rooms considering all the possibilities. Perhaps it would just grow back. Maybe it was just like losing a first tooth or when a drop-tail lizard loses its tail. Maybe I had nothing to worry about. Just maybe these things would be true but what if it didn't grow back? What then? Would I have to use the girls' toilets for the rest of my life?

Actually that wasn't a problem I had thought of until then. I decided not to drink anything or go to the toilet until I had a better idea as to how the old waterworks operated while my penis was disconnected. And what would Mum and Dad say? I was going to have to tell them eventually.

These morose thoughts were lightened occasionally by thoughts of getting into the *Guinness Book of Records* or selling my story to *A Current Affair* or something. A schoolboy without a penis was surely newsworthy. But did I really want to be a national celebrity because of this mishap? Would that be the sort of stardom that Sophie R might go for? It was thoughts like these that I was thinking when Mrs Thomas' ruler crashed down upon my desk.

**WHACK!**

I nearly jumped out of my skin, which under the circumstances wouldn't have surprised me in the least.

'And so Mister Maguire if  $x$  is two and  $y$  is seven the answer would be?'

Given my current situation you must know I had other things on my mind. And my answer was quite understandable even though Mrs Thomas didn't see it that way.

'No penis' I answered absently.

There was a stunned silence then a titter from my classmates followed by a predictable explosion from Mrs Thomas.

'No penis.' she repeated incredulously. 'No penis' she said again as if still comprehending the ridiculousness of my response before shrieking, 'Out! Out! Out! You crass creature. Up to the principal's office immediately. Come along.'

Mrs Thomas who was usually quite a reasonable person as far as teachers went, grabbed me by the arm and hauled me up to Mr Goode's office. Sophie R

smiled as I passed her in what would have been a moment for great celebration on any other day in my life. I sat forlornly on the bench outside of Mr Goode's office as Mrs Thomas outlined her complaint to him.

'Mmmm. Yes I see. Very good Mrs Thomas, leave him with me. I'll deal with him immediately.' Mrs Thomas glowered at me as she bristled past on her way back to the classroom.

'Come in Maguire.' said Mr Goode gravely. Mr Goode was actually not a bad sort of bloke generally but you never could tell with these teachers. Happy one day, crazy the next. You just never knew which kid had been in before you and set them off on a bender.

I stood nervously in front of Mr Goode's desk as he rose to his full height. He was tall and skinny and wore a very nice suit, always with a colorful bow tie. Today he was wearing a purple one with tiny white dots. He walked around the desk and stood before me with his hands clasped behind his back.

'No penis, eh Maguire.' he chuckled.

'Yes Sir.' I responded.

'I've heard of some wrong answers but that one pretty much takes the cake. What were you thinking?' he mused.

'Dunno, Sir.' I replied looking down wistfully at the flatter than usual front of my pants.

'Of course,' added Mr Goode leaning close into my face 'if you had no penis you'd be in all sorts of trouble wouldn't you Maguire? More trouble than I could cause you I should think.'

He laughed loudly. It was all very well for him to laugh, he wasn't the one without a penis. I bet he had never had to suffer the humiliation of having his washed down a drain. He wouldn't be anywhere near as cheerful if he had.

'Still, I've got to punish you or else poor old Mrs Thomas will never let me rest. Tell you what Maguire. You can help the plumber. He's due any minute. Apparently some sort of blockage over at the boys change rooms. Water everywhere, according to Mr Grimm. I suspect a tennis ball or something.'

'Yes Sir.' I answered. Well this was news to me. Could it be that the blockage was my penis? I was relieved by the thought that I might recover it after all. But every up side has a down side. What if the plumber found it first? I suppose that wasn't as embarrassing as someone like Scragg finding it first. What if it was irreparably damaged? The thought of never having a penis again sent a cold chill down my spine.

I left the office with Mr Goode repeating 'No penis' over and over and chuckling as he closed the door behind me.

### CHAPTER THREE

# *The Plumber*

I can tell you my heart was literally in my mouth as I dashed to the change rooms. You can imagine the sinking feeling I got when Grimm walked out of the rooms shaking his miserable bull like head.

‘What do you want Maguire?’ he snapped.

‘Me, Sir? Nothing, Sir? Mr Goode sent me over to help the plumber, Sir.’

‘Did he just.’ he snarled placing his face with his fetid breath close to mine.

‘Think it was funny did you?’

‘Think what, Sir?’ I said as I tried to recoil from his horrible bad breath.

‘You and Biggs. Think it was funny to block the drain did you?’ he said with menace.

‘No Sir. I mean we didn’t Sir.’ I stammered.

‘Don’t think I don’t know Maguire, with both of you dawdling in there after sport. Mark my words Sonny Jim when we unclog it and find what you put down there then you’re both for it. Understand?’

‘Yes Sir.’ I gulped as he shoved me aside forcefully with a jabbing finger and strode off into the distance.

Mr Grimm was guessing, of course. Biggsy and I had not blocked the drain, well, certainly not deliberately. When it came down to tin tacks it would be me who got the blame. It was my penis after all that would be fished out by the plumber. And now, thanks to Grimm, I had a whole new terrible image in my brain. I could see it clearly, a full assembly with Grimm holding my penis up for everybody to see,

dangling it and jiggling it cruelly as he asked the owner to step forward. And all eyes would eventually turn to me. I'd rather die than suffer such a public humiliation.

I felt a sudden twinge in my groin area. I was consumed by a sudden need to relieve myself. I squirmed and pressed my knees together, twisting my body and rolling my eyes.

'You right are you mate?' asked a happy yet unfamiliar voice. I looked up from my contorted doubled up stance and straightened my posture abruptly.

'Oh yes Sir. I'm fine thanks.' A look of doubt etched itself over the cheery face before me. The man looked at me kindly, the brief hesitancy in his face quickly washed away by a broad smile as he extended his hand in greeting.

'I'm Ted. Ted the plumber.' he winked. 'And you must be the hired help Mr Goode promised me.'

'Yes Sir.' I replied as Ted's large cracked fingers squeezed the life out of my hand.

Ted was a thick set man with a receding hairline. In fact he had one of those Bozo the clown haircuts, bald in the middle with bright copper curls on each side of his skull, a flat nose and full lips. He wore faded and multi stained blue overalls.

'Just call me Ted.' he said. 'I'm not a teacher you know. What's your name mate?'

'Jeffrey, Sir...ahhhh Ted.' I quickly corrected. 'But my friends call me Joffa.'

Ted laughed heartily. 'Good name that. I knew a Joffa once. A bloody good bloke, too. Well come on then, let's have a look shall we? See what we're up against.'

I followed Ted into the change rooms, my urge to go having been subdued by his presence. He splashed through the ankle deep water that had formed a pool at the lower drain end of the shower recess. A look of strange contentment seemed to sit on

Ted's face as he surveyed the scene. He hummed quietly to himself as he splashed about, forcing waves of water into the walls, oblivious to the rippling wash back as it spilled over the change room floor. He folded his arms and leaned forward inspecting the grill that covered the exit drainpipe in the end shower recess, nodding with some satisfaction.

'Mr Goode tells me the showers were working fine an hour ago.' he turned and looked at me. 'Has anybody else used them since then?'

'No Sir...um Ted. There's only been one sports class so far this morning and me and Biggsy were last in the showers.'

'Were you?' Ted's bushy eyebrows arched up. 'And you didn't drop anything down the drain did you Joffa?'

I could feel my cheeks burning red as I hastened my reply. 'No, Sir. Nothing....Ted, I mean.'

Ted looked at me for what seemed an eternity before laughing.

'Ah well if anything went down the drain this end it can't have been too big given the size of the exit drain. Still only has to be a wee thing sometimes. If the drain was a bit clogged whatever went down might just act as a bit of a plug or a stopper.' He scratched his head thoughtfully. 'But if the showers weren't used after you were in them Joffa the water that's overflowed must have come from somewhere else. So we had better get the plans from the office and have a bit of a squiz, eh.'

I nodded and followed Ted up to the office. Mr Grimm was jogging past with the next gym class and he glared at me with abject disapproval. Ms Yelvington, the office lady, pulled the plans from an archaic map drawer and rolled it into a tight cylinder before passing them to Ted who immediately handed them to me. I felt quite important as I followed him from the office.

On our return to the change rooms we stopped outside as Ted took the plans from me and unraveled them holding the large bending sheet at either end.

‘Now where’s north?’ he asked.

I pointed vaguely in an easterly direction. Ted cocked his head to one side as he inspected the plans and then turned a quarter turn to the left of where I was pointing.

‘Okay, that’s about it.’ he mumbled to himself as he knelt on the ground and spread the plans on the asphalt. ‘Get us a few stones will you Joffa?’ he asked as he threw his keys upon one corner of the plans that had lifted in the slight breeze that had blown up. I hurried off and rummaged about the litter filled garden nearby where I found a couple of broken brick ends.’

‘Perfect.’ said Ted approvingly as he placed them on the other corners while keeping his fingers pressed upon the lower edge of the plans. I watched transfixed by the series of dotted and full blue and black inked lines that fanned across the slightly yellowed page.

‘Yep, just as I thought.’ announced Ted in a rather pleased voice. ‘See here Joffa.’ My eyes followed the path traced by his finger. ‘This pipe here,’ he said tapping his finger on one of the ink lines ‘connects to the main school building so the water could have come from anywhere in there. Still means the blockage is here though. And then we’ve got three run-off pipes see?’ I nodded half understanding as I followed his finger again. He was like a general going into battle as he pored over the plans.

‘Now,’ he continued ‘one pipe goes that way to that side street. And the other two shoot off diagonally into each corner of the oval down back and into the street that runs by there.’ He stood up appearing very pleased with himself. ‘It’s a nice easy

job Joffa. All we have to do is unblock the blockage and everything should be sweet. No major dramas. Just knock out whatever's down there and everything should just wash clean away into the storm water drains.'

'Everything!' I gulped. Ted nodded. 'And then what happens?' I asked in a croaky voice.

Ted looked a little confused by my line of questioning. 'Well I reckon it all flushes into the ocean at some point or down to a sewerage farm somewhere.'

'A sewerage farm!' I blurted. The thought of my penis bobbing around in an ocean of poo left me feeling a little queasy, I must say. The thought of it as fish food was no more comforting.

Ted was looking a bit bemused by my reaction. He shrugged. 'Anyway, first things first. Let's see if we can fish out whatever's down there before we get too carried away.' he said as he turned to walk to his truck which was parked close by in the teachers' car park.

Carried away was just what I didn't want to happen. I was starting to fear that my penis would be lost forever and that I would become known as the boy without a penis.

When Ted returned, my eyes nearly popped out of my head. 'What's that?' I cried.

He smiled broadly. 'It's good isn't it?' he said proudly. 'Made it myself. A very handy little contraption this.'

His handy little contraption was a long length of wire with a sharpened end and two equally lethal looking wire hooks bending back off it.

'Just feed this down the pipe until we hit the blocked area. Give it a few twists and *voila* we grab the culprit like a stuck pig. Like a sausage on a skewer.'

‘NO!’ I yelled. ‘No don’t do that.’

‘You are a strange one Joffa. Anyone would think it was you down there.’ He shook his head in a slightly bewildered fashion as I searched around in my mind for an argument to sway him. I didn’t fancy having my penis stabbed like some barbecued sausage, that was for sure. Ted was dead right even though he didn’t know it. It was *me* down there. A very important piece of me, too, I might add.

‘No. Don’t do that. I mean what if it’s a little animal or something?’ I argued desperately.

‘It would be a well drowned little animal by now.’ reasoned Ted. ‘Joffa this will save a lot of unnecessary work if we get it with this first up.’ He waved the wire and my eyes fixed on the harpoon-like ends.

‘Please don’t.’ I whimpered slightly. ‘What if it’s a frog? We have frogs you know and they’re an endangered species. We wouldn’t want to kill one.’ I argued in manic desperation.

I could see Ted’s face changing into a reddish hue as he puffed his cheeks out. He stared at me suspiciously and then relented with a sigh. ‘Alright Joffa we’ll try to flush it out with the pressure hose. Mind you this thing could knock an elephant over on high so you’re frog won’t stand much chance if it gets to that.’

A frog might not but it least I felt a little more relaxed about my penis surviving in tact even if a little bruised from any battering by a high-pressured water hose as opposed to being speared by a harpoon.

‘What if the hose doesn’t work?’ I asked Ted as he fixed his pressure hose to the water tank and generator in his truck.

‘Frog or no frog, Joffa we’ll try the wire and if that doesn’t work we’ll use the tungsten drill.’

‘Drill!’ I gulped.

Ted smiled. ‘Yep It’s my favorite that one. A tungsten tipped wire drill. It just corkscrews its way down the pipe and bores through whatever is causing the blockage. It’s a boomer.’

‘Bores through!’ I repeated clutching inadvertently at my penis-less groin.

‘Right through?’ I croaked.

Ted nodded. ‘What’s up Joffa? You look like you’ve seen a ghost mate.’

‘Oh nothing.’ I shook my head jumping a little as Ted started up the generator. The hose began to unwind from its housing as Ted walked with the nozzle into the change rooms. I followed and watched as he removed the grill from the drainpipe and turned it on. Water shot out in a spearing jet as Ted opened the nozzle and the spray from the wall showered down upon us before he began to feed the hose into the pipe.

My heart was racing as I watched the water washing back around the drain entrance. Ted grimaced and sniffed as he pushed the hose deeper twisting and jiggling it as he did so. And then there was a belching sucking gurgle and bubbles popped and burst in a noisy display around Ted’s hose holding hands. The water in the shower recesses suddenly began to recede.

‘Got it.’ grinned Ted. He withdrew the hose as the water began pouring back into the hole.

I realized suddenly that my penis was probably tumbling at an equal rate of knots through one of the exit pipes underground.

‘Ted!’ I shouted as images of my penis floating out to sea or bobbing helplessly about the sewerage farm crowded into my mind. ‘Where did you say the storm water drain is?’

‘I didn’t.’ he replied surprised at my sudden animation.

‘Quick. You’ve got to tell me.’ I urged ‘It’s a matter of life or death.’

‘Life or death?’ he repeated disbelievingly. ‘It’s down that corner somewhere in the street.’ he informed me pointing down to the sports field.

‘Gotta go.’ I blurted.

As I bolted full tilt down to the soccer field, I passed Mr. Grimm and his other class as they were making their way back to the rooms.

‘Where do you think you’re going Maguire?’ called Grimm as I ran past him.

‘Nowhere, Sir.’ I yelled breathlessly as I motored on.

‘Stop Maguire!’ he roared.

‘Can’t Sir.’ I replied continuing on my way disappearing down the embankment and making for the back fence. I was aware of Grimm shouting behind me and suspected he was after me but I dared not stop. I vaulted over the back fence in a single easy movement and ran on to the corner where both streets intersected.

The water from the unblocked pipes was already streaming down the gutter and the two separate rivers flooded into the large drain hole in the roadside gutter. I guarded the opening, glancing up one street then the other, desperately looking for any sign of my penis. What if it was stuck again? What would I do? I was also aware of Grimm yelling my name as he clambered over the fence. If he got me now I was for it and any chance of recovering my precious part would be hopelessly lost.

I can tell you it will be something very special that occurs to create the same sense of euphoria I felt at the moment I saw my penis squirt free of the drain up the road.

‘Maguire!’ Grimm thundered as I sprinted away from his evil clutches. I stooped low hesitating only momentarily to gather my penis, which didn’t look at all well. It was looking very pale and was very cold, a little scuffed and limp too. I

slipped it into my pocket and sped off again just as Grimm closed in. When I was safely up the road I chanced a glance behind me. Grimm had given up and was blowing hard, bent double with his hands upon his knees.

I must have been running pretty fast as I actually passed Doctor Wong who was pedaling to work on his bicycle. A bit of an odd ball was Doctor Wong but my Mum swore the ancient Chinese remedies he incorporated into his medical practice were outstanding.

Nevertheless, the sight of Doctor Wong reminded me of what I needed to do. As I calmed down and took a second look at my poor detached penis I began to feel quite ill. It had been off for over an hour now and I thought I'd better think about getting it back on somehow. It was morning recess so I decided to wag school and go to the doctor's. It was an emergency after all.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# *Lost again!*

Once safely away from the school I began to think more about the events of the morning so far. Thinking on it did not thrill me greatly either. For a start, Hector Scragg had threatened to get me, then my penis had fallen off and been washed down a drain. Then I had been dragged up to the principal's office for saying 'no penis' in Math's. I had refused to stop when our sports teacher, Mr Grimm, had demanded it. And now I was wagging school. I could see a dark pay day looming.

For the moment though I couldn't afford to worry about Scragg, Grimm or the truancy officer. If I got back to school at lunchtime with my penis back on, hopefully, no one would really notice that I'd been gone. I tried to soothe my jangled nerves with such thoughts as I walked up to the Doctor's surgery. I could see Doctor Wong's bike leaning sparkling against the outside wall with all the cycling paraphernalia still attached, bell, pump, water bottle, hand brakes and daggy tassels hanging from the ends of the handlebar grips.

As I pushed the door open I heard the school bell sound in the distance, followed quickly by the babbling of freed souls. The urge to go to the loo was creeping up on me again as well as a rumbling hunger in my stomach.

'Could I see the Doctor please?' I asked the receptionist in the neat blue and white pin striped blouse.

She glanced down at me impassively. 'Have you been here before?'

I nodded.

‘Name?’

‘Jeffrey James Maguire.’ I replied as she began to flip through a drawer of files pulling one free and placing it on the desk.

‘Doctor Wong, Doctor Jones or Doctor Smith?’ she asked.

‘Smith.’ I replied not wanting to risk being experimented on by Doctor Wong.

The receptionist’s brow creased a little as she examined the appointment schedule.

‘All the Doctor’s are booked up until the afternoon. Can you come back after school?’ she said obviously having noticed my school uniform.

In hindsight I should have answered ‘no’ to this question. I should have simply placed my detached penis on the reception desk and said plainly, ‘No. I can’t. It’s an emergency.’ Instead I simply said, ‘Okay.’

‘Good.’ smiled the receptionist. ‘Three thirty with Doctor Smith. See you then Jeffrey.’

I meekly slid out the door and stood outside with my mind swimming. What was I going to do for the rest of the afternoon? I wondered, too, if I should try another doctor but figured by the time I got anywhere else I may just as well have waited. Anyway I wasn’t feeling too bad. Not great mind but apart from that and an increasing need to empty my bladder, I felt moderately okay, which was surprising given my lack of a penis.

I decided to head over to the supermarket and kill some time. Biggsy would probably be wondering how I was doing. Our History class would just be starting and then it was lunchtime. I decided I would slip back into the schoolyard then and let Biggsy know what was happening and that I had, at least, found my penis.

You would think a kid would be pretty safe in a supermarket wouldn't you? You wouldn't think anything too bad could happen to you in a supermarket. My penis was carefully wrapped in my handkerchief in my pants pocket so I thought it safe enough. Mum always insisted I have a clean handkerchief, as you never know when you might need one. How right she was.

Anyway so here I am, killing time in the supermarket. I had been through the mouth watering confectionary section and had emerged into the flour, sugars and cake mix section. This little kid is wandering up and down unattended, sticking his fingers in just about every item within arms reach. I don't know where his mother was. So I am watching this kid as he reaches for the self-raising flour and it was as clear as day that he would drag it down on top of his silly head. I thought 'Hell's Bells. If he grabs that one, flour will go everywhere.'

'Hang on.' I called reaching out just a fraction too late. He looked at me and then up at the bag of flour and pulled. I could swear it was deliberate. Not only did that bag fall but the two either side of it as well. The contents exploded in a white mushroom cloud that spread in a fine billowing radius from the point of detonation. The little kid disappeared leaving me alone in the powdery mist. My nose began to twitch.

I thought seriously about running, except for the fact that as I turned to leave one of the shelf stackers appeared and gave me a withering look.

'Think you're funny do you?' she said accusingly.

'It wasn't me.' I replied defensively, looking about for the little kid who had suddenly vanished.

She shook her head in disgust. A peeved expression was stamped firmly on her face.

‘I’ll get a bucket.’ she said through gritted teeth.

My nose was starting to twitch horribly. I rubbed it and squashed it with my knuckles, trying to relieve the urge to sneeze. The girl returned with a mop and bucket with suds overflowing. She sloshed the mop into the warm detergent filled water. I could smell the disinfectant. The sound of the water slopping about brought on a sudden urge to pee. I had been hanging on all morning. Then my nose started to itch dreadfully. I could feel a gigantic sneeze coming on. Without thinking I ripped my handkerchief from my pocket and raised it quickly to my nose.

‘Ahhhhh-choooo!’ I exploded. I watched wide-eyed over the top of the handkerchief as my penis was sent tumbling through the air from its previous place of concealment, straight into the bucket. I gasped and the girl turned and glared at me scornfully. I did a double take when she jammed the mop back into the bucket and swished it around. I groaned as I watched.

‘Oh shut up will you?’ she said with considerable agitation as she lifted the mop and slammed it into the pasty slippery goo that had formed on the floor. I did not think this was the right time to tell her it would have been a better idea to sweep up the powder. I was actually frozen with dread as I watched my penis emerge from the frothy depths entangled in the filthy grey strands of the mop. At least it was warm, I thought. And maybe the disinfectant would kill off any germs contracted from the drains.

The girl swung the mop with a lusty stroke. My penis rocketed up the aisle. It went slithering along like an ice hockey puck and cannoned against the bottom of the shelving before spinning back to the centre of the aisle.

‘Nooooo!’ I cried as I lurched after it, slipping and stumbling. I fell to my hands and knees and went scrambling desperately after my penis. The little kid re-emerged and seeing my penis twirling on the floor near his feet gave it a kick.

‘Nooooo!’ I bawled again as I watched it slide through the doorway of the storage area.

This was a disaster. My penis went whirling into the back area stacked high with boxes, tins and cartons of all shapes. I ran to the doorway, scowling at the little kid, as I peered past the OFF LIMITS, STAFF ONLY sign. I scanned the store room in a mad panic trying to locate my penis. Then I saw it. There it was resting limply against a wooden pallet stacked with toilet rolls. All I had to do was dash in and grab it, an easy operation, really.

As I gathered my nerve, a truck began backing up to the loading bay dock with its lights flashing and its reverse signal beeping loudly. A man clattered around the corner with a pallet mover and thrust its two steel prongs under the pallet with a rattling clunk.

‘Aaagh!’ I squealed as my penis wobbled and was dragged back with the pallet. It was stuck fast, hooked on by a splinter of wood. Worse still, as the man pushed the pallet over the metal platform onto the truck, my penis wobbled loose and fell to the ground outside.

I turned quickly to run outside and retrieve it only to be greeted by an awesome sight.

‘Jeffrey Maguire, what are you doing out of school?’ boomed the large frame of Ms Petra Peterson our music teacher. She was twenty stone at least and wore floral tent sized dresses. I might well have asked the same question of her but the answer hung on her ample dimpled arm. A shopping basket was loaded to overflowing with

packets of lollies. The old dear could not even wait to get to the check out and was munching on a chunk of chocolate-coated honeycomb. She was always leaving midway through classes to load up from her secret stash of sweets at school.

‘Well?’ squawked Ms Peterson as I stood staring in disbelief at the sudden appearance of her massive form before me.

‘Ms Peterson, you don’t understand.’ I began to explain before being cut off abruptly.

‘I understand that you should be at school young man, not cavorting around a supermarket squandering your education. Come along.’ With that she seized my right ear lobe and began marching me toward the check out. The girl with the mop looked very pleased as I was pushed down the aisle and the little kid poked his tongue out.

‘I think a bout of lunchtime detention would do you the world of good.’ declared Ms Peterson as she escorted me back to school. All I could do was look wistfully back at the supermarket where my penis lay abandoned, hoping that no truck squashed it.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# *Detention*

Mr Goode was shaking his head with apparent disappointment as I stood before him for the second time that day.

‘This has not been one of your best days, has it Maguire?’ he intoned. I could hardly disagree with that. It was the worst day of my life so far.

‘No Sir.’ I murmured glumly.

‘Mr Grimm is not at all happy. He says you ignored his instructions to stop when you had decided, for whatever reason, to leave the school grounds. Is that true Maguire?’ He placed an accusing hmhhh on the end as if daring me to deny it.

Mr Goode appeared to be sliding into one of those psychotic episodes that all teachers seemed to have in reserve. He opened his desk drawer and laid a short leather strap on the table. I can tell you that if you don’t need to go to the toilet, the sight of that weapon quickly brings on the urge. I was terrified and was starting to really need to go now.

‘Cat got your tongue, Maguire?’ he said evenly with a hint of menace as he picked up the strap and slapped it into the palm of his other hand.

‘No, Sir.’ I stammered. I was shaking I knew. And I knew he knew. He seemed to be enjoying my discomfort which just shows that even the ones, teachers that is, that you think are okay are really just sadists at heart.

‘Tell me Maguire what need did you have to disobey Mr Grimm and leave the school grounds without a permission slip?’

‘I’d lost something Sir.’ I said as bravely as I could. He smiled.

‘Really. Like what, Maguire? Your penis perhaps?’ he laughed loudly, emitting one of those choking snorting pig like laughs as he remembered our earlier conversation. ‘And let me guess. You thought it would turn up in the supermarket.’

He continued chortling for some time. He almost had it right. I was pale with fear and anger but at least he laid the strap back on the desk.

‘I’ve strapped boys for less, I must say Maguire. But you seem a decent enough young fellow. I don’t remember seeing you up here before today. Lunch-time detention for you, Maguire and I want five hundred lines from you too.’

‘Yes Sir.’ I sighed with palpable relief.

‘I MUST NEVER LEAVE THE SCHOOL GROUNDS WITHOUT PERMISSION.’ he announced, ‘Got it?’

‘Yes Sir.’

‘Good. I’ll have your lunch brought to you in the detention room. Now be off with you and let this be a lesson to you. You will give the lines to Mr Grimm and apologize when you do so for your disobedience.’

‘Yes Sir.’ I said with some disappointment having hoped that Mr. Grimm had somehow dropped out of the equation.

The detention room was situated in the same wing of the school as the staff room, directly opposite the library and on the corner of the building. With its large windows you were on open view to everybody in the schoolyard, including the likes of Hector Scragg.

Scragg, with his pair of stooges in tow, Dilbert and Young, stopped outside and made it quite apparent that he was reserving some rather unpleasant treatment for me later in the day. He was jumping up and down and when I chanced to look up he ran his finger across his throat and mouthed what appeared to be ‘You’re dead,

maggot.’ Or it may have been ‘I’m not finished with you yet.’ Either way you get the picture.

Grimm, too, passed the room and scowled at me, his heavy frowning uni-brow looking positively peeved. Fortunately he was in the company of the library teacher Mrs Anderson and refrained from entering the room.

I sighed and set my pen to the paper provided and began scratching out the five hundred lines. There was no way I would get them finished in an hour. I was also feeling in a particularly uncomfortable state. I crossed my legs under the desk trying to stave off the monumental urge to take a leak that had built up within me. To make matters worse, my stomach was rumbling and belching thunderously with hunger.

As luck would have it, Mr Goode had detailed Biggsy to bring me my lunch. I can’t tell you how relieved I was when he slipped through the door with my lunch box which was actually a plastic takeaway food tray. My mum was totally into recycling.

‘Are you okay Joffa?’ he asked as he slid my lunch toward me.

‘No.’ I replied tearfully. ‘You’ve got to help me Biggsy. I’ve lost my doodle.’

Biggsy looked at me strangely as if I was delirious or something. ‘I know. I was with you Joffa.’

‘No, no, no. You don’t understand, Biggsy.’ I replied hastily trying to bring Biggsy up to speed. ‘I got it out of the drain but I lost it again, at the supermarket.’

‘At the supermarket.’ he repeated somewhat reflectively, ‘How?’

‘It doesn’t matter how. What matters is I need you to get it back.’ I urged feverishly.

A look of real doubt came over Biggsy’s face ‘Gee. I dunno mate. I wanna help but...’ he wrinkled his nose in obvious disgust. ‘I don’t know if I can touch your doodle.’ Now I must say I didn’t blame Biggsy for not wanting to touch someone

else's penis. In fact the thought is a total gross out. However, when you are that someone else, that certain someone without a penis, then such considerations are hard to accept.

'You've got to. You're my best mate Biggsy.' I pleaded. Biggsy was shuffling his feet and clearly troubled by what to do. He was umming and ahing a good deal.

'Look Biggsy, you don't even have to touch it. You can use your handkerchief.' I argued.

'You reckon?' he said doubtfully.

'Sure.' I enthused taking my own handkerchief out and draping it over my open hand to show him. 'You just use it like a glove, see. When you've got it just flip the ends over and it will be wrapped up perfectly. You try.'

Biggsy pulled out his handkerchief. It was stiff and crackled as he pulled it open revealing streaks of dry yellow snot. Without a penis as I was, this sight nearly made me sick. The thought of my penis being wrapped in a snotty piece of cloth turned my stomach completely.

'You better take mine.' I gasped offering my relatively clean snot rag.

'Okay.' he conceded taking my own and returning his to the germ pit of a pocket it had sprung from. 'Where is it then?' To hear these words was like having the weight of the world lifted off my shoulders.

'It fell down near the loading dock at the back of the supermarket. Outside.' I explained. 'You better hurry though Biggsy before some truck flattens it.' We both winced in mutual discomfort though mine was a bit more heartfelt.

'What will I carry it in?' asked Biggsy quite reasonably. 'I can't just stuff it in my pocket. Can I?'

I had before but what with the state of Biggsy's handkerchief I thought he better not. I spied the plastic container masquerading as my lunch box and quickly emptied the contents onto the desk.

'Here take this.'

With five hundred lines to write combined with an excruciating need to become whole again I was anxious for Biggsy to get going post haste. Yet he was standing with his feet firmly anchored to the detention room floor.

'You know,' he began slowly 'I've been thinking.'

I can tell you I was not really in the mood to hear Biggsy's sudden thought for the day but there was nothing for me to do but listen.

'What?' I said impatiently fiddling with my pen and taking a bite from one of my peanut butter sandwiches.

'How long has your Richard been off now Joffa?'

'Dunno.' I said as I licked the crunchy paste from the roof of my mouth.

'About two and a half hours.'

Biggsy looked quite concerned. He wore the kind of look you direct at somebody, I imagine, who has just been bitten by the most venomous snake in the world in the middle of a jungle far removed from civilization with no prospect of medical treatment close at hand. The sort of look a doctor would have when they tell somebody they have only twenty-four hours to live. It was the sort of look that those looking at it know immediately something awful is about to befall them. You would think that having your penis fall off was grave enough but what Biggsy said next just sent a cold shiver through my entire being.

‘I don’t want to worry you Joffa,’ he began most considerately, ‘it’s just that I read somewhere that a severed human limb can only go forty-five minutes before it needs to be sewed back on again or else it begins to die.’

I looked at him in mute horror.

‘I’m sorry Joffa. I shouldn’t have said anything. Maybe the penis is different. I mean it’s not really a limb just a dangly thing really.’ he offered by way of consolation.

But what if it wasn’t? What if my penis was officially dead? Dead and beyond reattachment! What then? As I groped with the awful prospects of becoming Mr Doodleless for the rest of my life, Biggsy began to back out of the room.

‘Hang tight Joffa. I’ll go to the supermarket and check it out.’ he said. ‘Don’t worry I’ll be back soon.’

I was sick with worry. I nodded goodbye and lay my head down upon my arms to try and rest my weary mind.

The wait for Biggsy’s return was agonizingly slow. I watched the hands on the clock crawl tortoise like around its face while all the time looking to the horizon of the school fence hoping Biggsy would return triumphant. Occasionally my hand moved automatically completing a line or two. I MUST NEVER LEAVE THE SCHOOL GROUNDS WITHOUT PERMISSION. I had hardly completed a page. Mr Goode, and Grimm particularly, would go ballistic when they saw how little I had done. I put my head down again and scribbled maniacally, pressing hard until the page began to curl. I leaned back and sighed deeply just as Mr Goode appeared at the door as the hands on the clock ticked over the hour.

‘Finished?’ he asked.

‘Not quite, Sir.’ I replied as I gathered the sheets in front of me carefully placing the solitary completed page visibly on top and giving them to Mr Goode who stood somewhat impatiently with his right hand outstretched. He gave the top sheet a cursory glance and then dropped the whole lot into the rubbish bin by the door.

‘Off you go Maguire.’ he muttered somewhat vaguely.

‘What about Mr Grimm, Sir?’ I inquired remembering I had been told to apologize to him.

‘Oh, never mind that Maguire. Off you go and I don’t want to see you again today or in the future.’ he added sternly.

‘Yes Sir. You won’t Sir. Thank you Sir.’ I gushed as I beat a hasty exit from my confinement. You just couldn’t tell with some of these teachers. They swung like pendulums.

I was still desperate to know how Biggsy had gone with finding my penis. As the bell to end lunchtime sounded my heart sank. There was no sign of Biggsy anywhere. I trudged off glumly toward the locker room to get my books for the next class, a double period of science.

## CHAPTER SIX

# *Exposed*

I was feeling quite woozy as I leaned against the lockers waiting to enter the classroom for my science class. Mrs Pertwee was a crabby red-nosed battle-axe who must have been teaching for several centuries. Even my mum reckoned she looked like she had been pickled...whatever that meant. Science with her was boring as bat...well to be polite, as boring as watching paint dry. In fact she would probably think that was a pretty good experiment, recording how long it actually took for paint to dry. She was always late which was a pain as it meant an unchecked reign of terror by Hector Scragg. Today was no exception.

‘Thought you’d got away did ya Maguire?’ he sneered as he grabbed my jumper and twisted it pushing me back into the lockers. ‘I should dack you right here Maguire. In front of everybody.’

I knew I was shaking and going whiter than white. I said nothing and my silence only agitated him more. Then I saw Mrs Pertwee dawdling up the corridor and sighed with relief as Scragg spied her from the corner of his eye. He pushed me hard into the lockers again, almost spitting in my face.

‘After school, Maguire. You’re dead.’

I’d like to say that ordinarily that threat and the thought of being publicly dacked would terrify me beyond comprehension. Being penis-less, a public dacking was about the most humiliating thing that could possibly happen to me. But today I

had bigger worries As Scragg stalked off I looked at the ceiling closing my eyes and wondered where on earth Biggsy had gotten to.

Mrs Pertwee beetled past clucking, ‘Move it you bold brazen little articles. Let’s get started shall we?’

I dropped into line behind Chester Fields, a gangly unhealthy looking kid with an irritating cough, and began to shuffle forward when I suddenly felt a dig in the ribs from behind. I whirled around thinking Scragg was at it again and was much relieved to see Biggsy’s smiling face.

‘Got it.’ he crowed pulling the lid up on the plastic container and revealing my crumpled muddied handkerchief in which lay my precious penis. It didn’t look at all well and had filthy brown water streaked all over it and, worst of all, it was squashed flat with a ripple-soled imprint.

‘What happened to it?’ I squeaked in a hoarse whisper.

‘Sorry.’ shrugged Biggsy, ‘It was lying in a puddle. I think one of the truckies stood on it. Nothing I could do about it Joffa.’

We had stopped as the rest of the class had entered the room and Mrs Pertwee was craning her chicken like neck toward the door.

‘Whatever that is Bernard Biggs, put it away now or I shall have to confiscate it.’ said Mrs Pertwee in a shrill and slightly peeved voice. Biggsy stuffed the container with my penis under his jumper. The thought of my penis being confiscated was enough to have us both hurrying to our seats.

‘Now class.’ began Mrs Pertwee. A longwinded explanation about nuclear fission gradually unwound in Mrs Pertwee’s dull monotonous delivery. It sounded like it might be quite interesting for the faintest second but when you have lost your

penis, when you are busting to go to the toilet as well as being under threat of a public dacking, atom bombs and the like lose their appeal rather rapidly.

‘What are we going to do with it Biggsy?’ I was not very comfortable with my penis’s current housing arrangement. I was also very worried about it shriveling up and dying and being without it for the rest of my life.

‘Don’t worry. I’ve got an idea.’ Biggsy replied with a confidence that belied my own anxious state. ‘I’ve seen documentaries on the telly and they say that all you have to do is keep any severed limbs and stuff as cool as you can.’

‘Yes. But it has been hours and that container is hardly the coolest place for it.’ I said in a panicked voice.

‘I know. I know. But it has been lying in cold water and...’ he nodded toward the refrigerator set against the back wall behind us in which all manner of dissected creepy crawlies and other various scientific experiments were kept, ‘...we can put it in there until after school.’

‘Brilliant.’ I exclaimed joyfully as Mrs Pertwee prattled on.

Fortunately Mrs Pertwee had set up some sort of experiment with potassium, Bunsen burners and test tubes and was about to demonstrate the outcome to us all.

‘Come along everybody.’ commanded Mrs Pertwee, ‘I want you all to see this.’ There was a general clatter of chairs and movement as we all got up to crowd around the front bench. I looked about in the most unassuming manner possible to check that all eyes were to the front and then opened the door of the refrigerator just wide enough to slip the container into the cool cavern within. My penis would be safe there.

I must say I was feeling quite relieved although the cold air from the fridge only increased the urge to go. I was busting but there was nothing to do but hang on.

Other than that I was feeling confident about preserving my penis and getting it to the doctor. Biggsy was a genius. His plan was brilliant. At least so I thought.

Halfway through the lesson Mrs Pertwee changed tack. With the experiment completed she had decided to talk about frogs and the dissection of sheep's eyeballs. What the two had in common other than being soft and slimy I had no idea. I did know that the mention of one or the other was the signal for a bit of scalpel work. My stomach turned. This was the least favorite aspect of science, the carving up of sheep's eyeballs.

'Molly dear. Could you please fetch one of the sheep eyes from the fridge. They're in the plastic containers.'

I looked at Biggsy and Biggsy looked at me. We both looked at the ring-letted Molly Grunwald as she bounced past us to the fridge. You can imagine just how nervous I was as she opened the door and grabbed the first plastic container she saw, the one that just happened to store my penis. Biggsy and I must have looked totally gob-smacked because Molly, who is generally a shy type, gave us one of those 'Durr. What are you looking at?' looks. She gave a sniff and with a toss of her head flicked her golden locks back and opened the lid to check the contents.

Molly took a half step and then froze letting out a piercing scream. She flung her arms back in horror and then promptly fainted, collapsing behind Biggsy's chair. The container fell to the floor and the lid popped off and went sliding under the tables while my handkerchief wrapped penis spilled to the floor by Molly's side.

I stared in horror at my penis lying on the floor. Biggsy elbowed me painfully in the side.

'Pick it up. Quick.' he urged, nodding down at my penis. I leaned down, grabbed it and stuffed it roughly into my pocket just as Mrs Pertwee came bustling up.

‘Heaven’s above girl. Are you alright?’

She knelt by Molly’s side, holding one hand and patting the side of Molly’s face as we all stood jammed around our stricken classmate. My heart was thumping loudly as Molly began to stir. What would she say?

‘Back, back. All of you get back and give her some air.’ demanded Mrs Pertwee. We shuffled noisily back. Biggsy and I both tried to look as inconspicuous as possible.

‘It was horrible.’ murmured Molly as her eyelids fluttered open.

‘Nonsense.’ responded Mrs Pertwee who was one of those dismissive no fuss sorts who could never see a problem even when it was staring them in the face. ‘It’s only an eyeball, girl. We’ve cut them up a hundred times before. Nothing to get so worked up about.’

‘It wasn’t.’ stammered Molly. ‘It was a p...a p...a pe...’

Try as she might Molly couldn’t bring her self to say penis. Penis, penis, penis! You see it is quite easy but then I guess it is easier if you have one such as I do. Well technically I didn’t at that very moment but you know what I mean. Mrs Pertwee, though, was having none of that. She hated hesitation in any of our answers and Molly’s response was no exception, not that I minded.

‘It was a sheep’s eye.’ said Mrs Pertwee sternly. ‘An ordinary wool covered quadruped’s eyeball. You’ve seen one, you’ve seen them all’

Molly shook her head but said no more as she was assisted to the sick bay for a rest by two of her friends.

‘Well then.’ Mrs Pertwee clapped her hands together. ‘Perhaps we shall bypass eyes for today and move on to something else. Back to your seats and open your text books at chapter thirteen...The chicken or the egg.’

She looked down at the empty container and then at Biggsy.

‘Find the contents of that and return it to the refrigerator please Bernard.’ she instructed as she made her way to the front of the classroom checking books as she passed. Perhaps my luck was beginning to change. Biggsy collected the empty container and slipped it under my desk where I secretly slid my penis back into it.

The remainder of science was uneventful and when the bell sounded I heaved a huge sigh of relief. I could get to the doctor’s at long last. By now I was positively bursting at the seams and squirming around trying to ward off the unrelenting urge to pee. Once out of the classroom I turned for the school gate.

‘You coming?’ I called to Biggsy.

‘Yeah. Hang on. I’ve just got to grab my bag.’ he called.

In my haste I had not bothered with mine. As it happened this delay was crucial to what happened next. When Biggsy returned, we set off at a jog to the gate only to find the way barred by Hector Scragg’s Neanderthal presence.

‘Think you’d got out of it did you Maguire?’ he sneered. His two spotty cronies Dilbert and Young were leering at me from behind his stocky frame. ‘Public dacking coming up, Maguire. Ready?’

I wasn’t, of course. You can never really be ready for a public dacking. It is, after all, the most embarrassing form of public humiliation. And let me tell you it is a thousand times worse when you realize the world is going to discover that you don’t have a penis. Biggsy, who was always thinking, quietly took the container with my penis from my trembling hands. Scragg glared at him as he advanced on me.

‘You’ll get yours too Biggs.’ he threatened.

Scragg clutched my shorts at the hips as I froze in terror and rage. With one wrenching tug he pulled my shorts and boxer shorts as one down to my knees and

then stepped back triumphantly to inspect his handiwork. Through all my pain and humiliation I could see a look of confusion immediately form on Hector Scragg's stupid face.

'Wh...where's y...y...your...you know?' he spluttered unable to spit the word from his mouth. Dilbert and Young gazed with equal alarm at my barren groin. Events suddenly took an unexpected turn. I, of course, was struggling to see any way out of my predicament and was absolutely busting to go when Biggsy piped up brightly.

'Oh. It's in here Scragg.' he said with supreme confidence as he took the lid off the container and showed it to Scragg.

Scragg leaned forward and looked in the container. An indescribable look of horror swept over his face as he viewed my detached and flattened penis. His jaw dropped open and he staggered back slightly before emitting a gurgling scream of revulsion.

Whether it was Scragg's reaction or whether I just couldn't hold on any longer I couldn't tell you but I finally let go of my resistance. Suddenly I felt a relieving draining sensation from my emptying bladder. As I stood before the gaping Scragg I smiled. Streams of yellow pee came shooting out of my ears and nostrils. It felt odd, disgusting even, but even so I began to laugh uncontrollably.

Scragg screamed again. 'Oh. Gawd. I'm going to be sick.' he said as his face went ashen. He doubled up holding his stomach and turned and charged between Dilbert and Young who were looking equally green about the gills. They ran dry retching from the schoolyard and the crowd behind me erupted with laughter.

They weren't laughing at me though. With my back to them they had seen nothing but the urine spouting from my ears. They were laughing at Scragg, cheering

and sharing my unexpected victory. And in the excitement of the moment I leaned forward on one foot with my arms outstretched in statue fountain mode.

‘Great trick, Joffa.’ someone called.

‘How’d you do it?’ said another as I hitched up my pants. I saw Sophie R looking at me with a mixture of admiration and disgust.

‘No time. Gotta go.’ intervened Biggsy as he pulled me away from my schoolmates who were beginning to crowd around extending their hearty and exultant congratulations. We set off at a mad run for the doctors.

‘That was a masterstroke Biggsy.’ I finally said between breaths as we ran. ‘How’d you think of that. I would never have shown Scragg my penis.’

‘Well,’ began Biggsy breathlessly, ‘I figured if Molly Grunwald fainted when she saw it, then maybe it would have the same effect on Scragg.’

I have already stated what a great mate Biggsy is, one of the world’s greatest thinkers. Then he stepped wide of me as we ran.

‘Careful. You’re dripping on me.’

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# *Reunited*

Waiting in a doctor's surgery is never a pleasant experience. At least today I had Biggsy with me for moral support. You can't help wondering what is wrong with everybody else and then your skin starts to crawl as you think about the diseases other patients might have and whether they are contagious or not. And there is always at least one little snotty nosed kid who wipes their hands all over the furniture and the outdated magazines.

'I wish they'd hurry up.' uttered Biggsy impatiently. He was looking decidedly squeamish on account of the old man coughing and wheezing next to him.

'They're never on time.' I replied as I wiped my dripping ears with the sleeve of my school jumper. I tapped my fingers nervously on the lid of the plastic container on my knees. Finally Doctor Smith appeared. He was wearing a blue and white checked shirt under a fawn waistcoat with dark brown pleated pants and very shiny black brogues. I watched as he fumbled about at the counter inspecting the files. After what seemed an eternity, he looked up.

'Jeffrey Maguire...' I rose and he smiled motioning me to move past him toward his room, 'Come through Jeffrey.'

I nodded and walked timidly past him.

'Take a seat, please Jeffrey.' he said kindly.

I sat down and he did likewise, swiveling in his chair to face me.

‘Now what problem have you brought to us today Jeffrey? How can I help you?’ he inquired with a smile.

How could he help me? Where should I start?

‘Well,’ I began hesitantly, aware that my face was turning a bright crimson, ‘the thing is...well the thing is my penis has fallen off!’ I blurted with tears streaming from my eyes. I was trying to be brave but the fact is the pressure of the whole day had just about overwhelmed me.

‘Oh. I hardly think anything that serious could have happened to you.’ soothed Doctor Smith as he leaned forward and took the container from me. ‘And what do we have in here Jeffrey?’

‘It’s my penis.’ I replied in a choked voice. Doctor Smith gave me one of those totally disbelieving looks adults give you when they think you are wasting their time.

‘Your penis.’ he repeated gravely. I nodded as he removed the lid. A look of extreme surprise and a little bit of horror enveloped Doctor Smith’s grey face.

‘Good Lord!’ he exclaimed as he fell backwards from his chair onto the floor in shock. The container went flying and so did my penis, landing with a slap in the middle of the room.

‘Careful.’ I whimpered in mild admonishment as I stood to gather my detached penis.

Doctor Smith was on his hands and knees behind the tipped over chair looking at me in a most perplexed way.

‘How long has it been off for?’ he asked as he got to his feet and straightened the chair.

‘Since this morning. About 10 o’clock I suppose.’ I replied.

‘Mmmm. Nearly six hours.’ he shook his head ruefully. ‘You should have come to us sooner Jeffrey. Take off your shorts and hop up on the bench so I can have a look at what we have going on down there.’

I could answer that quite plainly. I had nothing going on down there at all. Doctor Smith smoothed his clothes and picked up a pair of surgical tongs. He carefully picked up my penis from the container where I had returned it and held it aloft turning it this way and that, inspecting it very closely. I blushed deeply with embarrassment.

‘A bit flat.’ he observed before adding with a slightly revolted look upon his face, ‘It’s very dirty.’

‘It fell down a drain.’ I replied lamely.

He continued to examine my penis closely before setting it aside in a silver tray on a silver trolley. He took a light and bent forward.

‘Spread your legs a little please Jeffrey.’

It is an awfully uncomfortable feeling to have a doctor peer into the spot where your penis had been. Doctor Smith was making very intellectual ‘I see’ kind of noises.

‘Extraordinary.’ he muttered as if I wasn’t there. I leaned back on the palms of my hands and tried to look unconcerned at the ceiling. I thought that if I whistled it might relax me but my throat was dry and my lips just would not come together.

Doctor Smith straightened with a serious look upon his face as he walked to his desk. He pressed a button on the telephone intercom unit on his desk.

‘Miss White...could you please call Doctor Jones, Doctor Wong and Nurse Thatcher into my surgery. It’s an emergency.’

Emergency! I gulped in panic. That was exactly the word I did not want to hear. Having your penis fall off was serious I knew. I didn't know of anyone else who had ever suffered such a catastrophe. At least no one had ever admitted such a thing to me. In fact, I had never heard of it ever happening to anyone before.

I glanced at the door as I heard footsteps hurrying down the hall. The door was suddenly flung open and Doctors Jones and Wong appeared accompanied by Nurse Thatcher, a hard faced and sour biddy with purple horn rimmed spectacles. Doctor Smith nodded a greeting and with a sweep of his hand directed them to where I sat with my legs dangling and parted over the doctor's inspection bench.

'A detached penis. Six hours ago.' he announced clinically as his three comrades formed a semi-circle around me.

'Good Grief!' exclaimed Doctor Jones.

'Holy Mao Zedong!' gasped Doctor Wong.

'Disgusting!' uttered Nurse Thatcher in a scolding tone. 'Look how dirty it is. We must keep our willy clean, Jeffrey.'

I must admit to being very confused by Nurse Thatcher's comments. It wasn't like my penis was always that dirty. The truth was it had never been that dirty. And it was hardly my fault that it had fallen off in the first place. I was feeling quite insulted.

'It fell down a drain.' I said defensively not wishing to get into an argument while my penis was still off.

'And what is that awful smell.' shrilled Nurse Thatcher turning up her nose entirely oblivious to my rising anger.

'It's detergent. It fell into a cleaning bucket at the supermarket. It's been mopped, kicked, run over, stepped on and gone swimming in a puddle. And none of it was my fault.' I said through gritted teeth as I tried to control my temper.

‘If anyone is to blame for anything, it’s Mr Grimm.’ I added defiantly knowing that my audience probably had no idea of who I was talking about.

‘I see. And how is this Mr Grimm fellow responsible?’ asked Doctor Smith.

‘He kicked a soccer ball into me. And then the next thing I know I haven’t got a penis.’ I wailed plaintively as tears dribbled down my cheeks.

‘There, there, Jeffrey. Don’t cry and...don’t worry. We’ll do the best we can.’

Naturally I hoped that ‘the best they can’ meant they would get my penis back on immediately. But I had a gnawing suspicion that things might be as bad as I first feared. Doctor Smith looked graver still. Doctor Jones wore a distinct look of befuddlement. Doctor Wong nodded thoughtfully. Nurse Thatcher continued to look appalled. They all continued to stare at my recently cleared groin region.

‘So Doctors...’ began Doctor Smith with a nervous cough. ‘Do we think it salvageable?’

A cloud of doubt seemed to hover over Doctor Jones as he stood peering, first at my penis and then at my groin.

‘Six hours is a long time. It does seem to be in remarkable condition though. A little flat and a little bruised perhaps but in good condition nevertheless.’ said Doctor Jones as he poked my penis with some sort of metal exploratory tool. ‘Micro surgery may still work. The combination of cold waters and disinfectant may have preserved the soft tissue and limited nerve damage. Still it would be a long and tricky operation.’

On hearing this I nearly fainted. The room seemed to be spinning. I clutched the edge of the bench to steady myself. I had never had any kind of surgery before. I would naturally take the micro surgery but what if it never worked properly after that? What if I was left with just a dangly bit hanging uselessly between my legs and forced to urinate from my nostrils and ears for the rest of my life? True, the kids at school

thought it was pretty funny but they didn't know the full story and thought it a clever trick. The after effects weren't exactly appealing either as it left a pretty rotten taste in your throat, believe me.

As I grappled with these worries, the voice of Doctor Wong jolted me from my reverie.

'One moment, please.' began Doctor Wong. 'I do not think micro surgery will be necessary.'

At this point I breathed a huge sigh of relief. Doctor Wong continued.

'I have read of this. It is a most rare occurrence. Trauma induces a reaction in the groin that leads to the rejection of the penis through detachment. But it is not a severance. A unique biological shutdown occurs in which all veins, arteries, nerve and tissue ends simply fuse down breaking cleanly with the body. All we need do is plug it back into the groin and the penis will reattach in seconds as snug as a bug in a rug.'

Doctor Wong looked at me with a beaming smile. 'Your body misses your penis as much as you do Jeffrey. It will be glad to have it back.'

'I see.' said Doctor Smith. 'However, Doctor Wong, I can't see how the penis can possibly be plugged in. I mean, look at it. It's as flat as a pancake.'

Doctor Jones nodded and Nurse Thatcher snorted in agreement. She sounded as if she was happy for my penis not to be plugged in.

'One moment please.' said Doctor Wong as he excused himself from the room. A look of bewilderment was obvious on each and every face in the room, including mine. Doctor Wong was gone only a minute. He returned with a broad Cheshire cat grin and waving a bicycle pump excitedly.

'Doctor, what on earth do you propose to do with that?' asked Doctor Smith in a highly bemused tone.

‘One moment please.’ replied Doctor Wong as he attached a valve to the end of the bicycle pump before laying it down on the trolley. He snapped a pair of rubber gloves on his hands and picked up my penis from the bowl cradling it gently in his left hand. Then with his right he took the pump and gently eased the valve into my deflated member. He stood balancing the two carefully and then turned to Doctor Smith.

‘If you would be so kind Doctor.’ he said nodding at the other end of the pump.

‘Yes. Yes, of course Doctor Wong.’ gushed an awestruck Doctor Smith as he jumped to his colleague’s assistance.

‘Five or six good pumps should do it I suspect.’ estimated Doctor Wong.

Doctor Smith drew the pump back and forth gently and a gasp of amazement passed everybody’s lips as my penis swelled to its right size in Doctor Wong’s hand.

‘Perhaps another couple Doctor.’ added Doctor Wong thoughtfully. ‘It doesn’t hurt to have it a little bigger than normal. I imagine we’ll lose some air at the point of connection so a little extra won’t hurt.’

As I watched my penis expand I felt strangely proud of its newfound size, even if it was only temporary. The moment of truth had arrived. My penis was about to be reattached. I looked at the ceiling and shut my eyes.

‘Ready, Jeffrey?’ asked Doctor Wong quietly.

I nodded my heart pounding as I clutched the bench top. I felt the cold touch of my detached penis against my groin, a faint tingle followed by a soft ‘plop’ as it plugged into place. Apart from a slight tickling it felt as if my penis had never been missing. Needless to say I was elated. I looked down and sure enough there it was hanging in place perfectly...still slightly puffy and misshapen but nonetheless.

‘Yesssss!’ I exclaimed joyfully punching the air with relief.

‘Thank you, thank you, Doctor Wong.’ I gushed ecstatically.

Doctor Wong stepped back and beamed with delight at me. Doctor Smith clapped his hands rapturously.

‘Well done Doctor, a brilliant effort.’

‘Yes Doctor Wong, a superb job.’ added Doctor Jones slapping his colleague enthusiastically on the back. Only Nurse Thatcher looked unhappy. It seemed there was a permanent scowl on her wrinkled face. Still I didn’t care much about that. I was overjoyed and jumped from the bench to pull up my shorts eager to share the news with Biggsy.

‘Now hold on young fellow.’ interjected Doctor Smith. ‘Take it easy this week. No sport and definitely no soccer, do you understand, Jeffrey?’

‘Yes Doctor Smith I understand. It won’t fall off again will it?’

Doctor Smith looked at Doctor Wong, who answered ‘I do not think so Jeffrey but perhaps come by next week so we can check that it has reattached correctly. It looks fine though.’

Biggsy jumped up as soon as he saw me emerge. I ran into the waiting room and punched the air victoriously.

‘Yesssss!’ I cried excitedly ‘It’s on again Biggsy.’

‘Brilliant Joffa.’ shouted Biggsy as he hugged me in celebration. We danced a spritely jig and then let go of one another blushing as we did.

‘Yeah well...er...we better get home then Biggsy.’ I said sheepishly.

‘Yeah right.’ replied Biggsy as we edged out of the surgery under the gaze of the other patients. I ran to the bus stop to catch the late bus home. It didn’t matter that I was late or that I had left my bag at school. My penis was back.

The Day My Penis Fell Off: The Astonishing Tale of J. J. Maguire.

And that is about all there is to tell about the day my penis fell off.

# ***EPILOGUE***

I did go back a week later to see Doctor Wong. He told me everything was one hundred per cent okay again but I already knew that the day both Sophie R and Jade M smiled at me on the bus. I still haven't asked Sophie R out. Biggsy reckons I am chicken but I'm not. It's just that if they are both smiling at me, how can I ask one out without upsetting the other?

Mr. Grimm is still a nightmare. We are stuck with him for the term of our natural school life. Hector Scragg is a laughing stock. Nobody takes him seriously any more. He spends most of his days skulking down the back of the school sports field with Dilbert and Young avoiding the jibes of the other students. He is now called the Prince of Barf.

Molly Grunwald doesn't say anything in class any more and walks around with a strange look on her face. I think she is okay, though I'm not sure.

All the teachers are the same, a totally unfathomable lot, most of them. And Biggsy, well Biggsy is still the best mate a kid without a penis could ever have.

Oh yeah, and my dream?

Jeffrey James Mag.....I'm getting close.

# ***IMPORTANT***

**THE PUBLISHER STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT YOU READ  
THE FOLLOWING ADVICE**

**Should you ever be faced with a situation where your penis has fallen off  
it is recommended that you take the following steps.**

- 1 DO NOT PANIC**
- 2 RETRIEVE YOUR PENIS**
- 3 SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION**
- 4 TELL NOBODY EXCEPT MAYBE YOUR BEST FRIEND**
- 5 DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REATTACH YOUR PENIS WITHOUT  
PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL HELP**