



SUPER Goofballs

#5

Doomed in
Dreamland

Can
the Super
Goofballs
defeat
Dr.
Killdream?

written and illustrated by

Peter Hannan

creator of *CatDog*

SUPER GOOFBALLS #5

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peter hannan**

 HarperCollins e-books

This book is dedicated to Kathleen, Meg, and Mike . . .
and to their dreams, daydreams, and hopes and dreams.

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CHAPTER 1

TO DREAM THE IMPOSSIBLY BAD DREAM

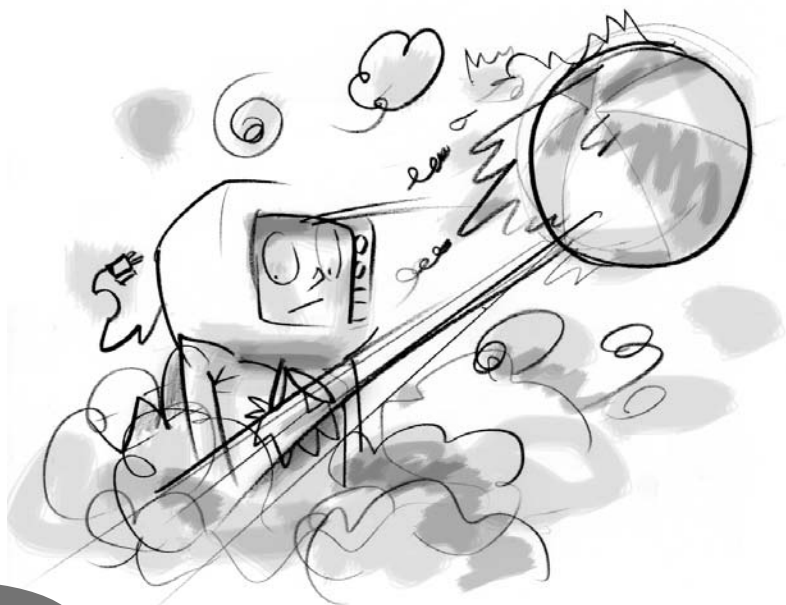
I don't know about you, but I hate being attacked by hideous pig-dragons.

"Back, pig-dragons, back!" I yelled. More like screamed.



But then I realized that the horrible weirdness I was experiencing was just a very bizarre, very terrifying, very insane nightmare. I guess I should have known that any time you're in your living room, minding your own business, and flaming balls of garbage are getting hacked at you from a bottomless pit of pig-dragons who look suspiciously like your goofball roommates, you can be reasonably sure it's a bad dream.

The only problem was that when I pinched myself and woke up, *the nightmare continued*. A blazing beach ball whooshed by my head, courtesy of Super Vacation Man, or at least the pig-dragon version of him, and then I noticed a pink, scaly, curlicue tail



wrapping itself around my waist and twelve forked tongues—also on fire—snapping and licking about my ankles. Maybe I only *thought* I was awake.

I pounded on the side of my Amazing Techno Dude Deluxe Multi-Functional Monitor Helmet, but I could still see the horrible visions. I raised the screen and slapped my face again and again, harder and harder, but it apparently had no effect—except throbbing face pain—because a flaming diaper, loaded with plenty of ammo, whizzed by, missing me by 3.2 micrometers. Drat that Impossibly Tough Two-Headed Infant Pig-Dragon! Drat him, I mean *them*, I mean *it*! This nightmare—or daymare or whatever it was—was not going away!

Fire-breathing pig-dragon versions of all the Goofballs—Blunder Mutt, Super Vacation Man, Mighty Tightly Whitey, the Terrifyin' Tubesock Lad, SuperSass CuteGirl, the Impossibly Tough Two-Headed Infant (Biff and Smiff), Wonder Boulder, T-TeX3000, and Pooky the Paranormal Parakeet—squealed and squirmed up out of the pit. Next came pig-dragon Granny (the Bodacious Backwards Woman), and Scoodlyboot, who, when not a pig-dragon, is the most beautiful dog in the world. The

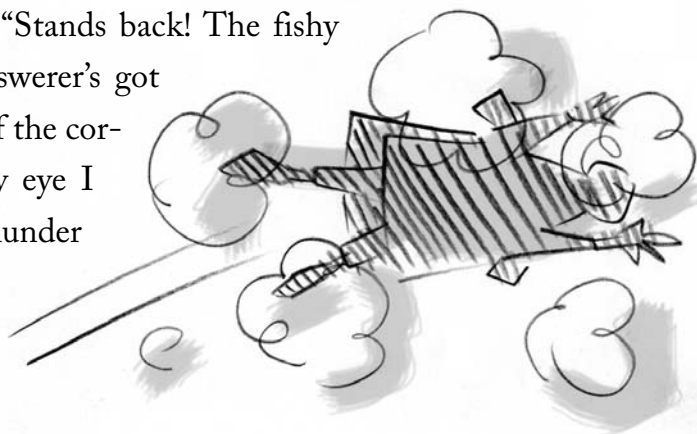
last pig-dragon to emerge was our neighbor the Invisible Superbad Blue-Fanged Ferret. He was thrashing away on his guitar, providing a loud and bloodcurdling musical sound track that made the whole thing seem like some crazy horror movie. But unfortunately this was no movie.

CHAPTER 2

please, No . . . Not Death by pig-Dragon

I was pretty sure this was the end of me. I couldn't even begin to imagine how any superhero, much less a young one like me, could deal with thirteen ferocious pig-dragons at the same time. I shot a glance at the phone, thinking maybe I'd call a defending-yourself-against-fire-breathing-pig-dragons-who-look-like-your-roommates hotline or something, but there was no time. Strangely enough, though, when I looked at the phone . . . it rang.

And before it finished its first ring, I heard a familiar voice: "Stand back! The fishy phone answerer's got it!" Out of the corner of my eye I saw a Blunder



Mutt-shaped blur fly by in the direction of the phone. But it didn't stop at the phone. It flew right past it and through an open window.

I dived for the phone myself and shrieked, "House of Super Goofballs, Amazing Techno Dude shrieking!"



CHAPTER 3

AMAZING TECHNO NUT

“Ouch! My ear!” howled the familiar voice of Mayor What’s-His-Name. “What’s up, dude? . . . You sound a little tense.”

“Tense?” I cried. “I’m about to be *past* tense! I’m being attacked by an angry mob of fire-breathing pig-dragon roommates!”

“You superheroes have such super imaginations,” said the mayor.

“It’s not my imagination,” I replied.

“It’s real!”

But then I turned around and the pig-dragons were



gone. In their place were the actual Goofballs and Granny, and they all appeared normal. Well, as normal as this particular group of weirdos *could* appear.

They were staring at me.

“What happened?” I said. “A second ago you were all pig-dragons!”

They were still staring at me.

“Why are you looking at me like you think I’ve lost my mind?” I asked.



"Hmmm . . . let me think," said Biff.

"I guess it's because we're pretty sure you've lost your mind," said Smiff.

"Like, *really* sure," said SuperSass.

"*Absolutely* sure," said the rest of the Goofballs.

It's hard to hear that kind of thing from Goofballs. I looked around the room. The bottomless pit from which the pig-dragons had been hurling their fireballs was gone. No flames, no smoke, no hole in the floor, no nothing.

Blunder Mutt was peering at me through the window with a worried look on his face. He was covered with thorns from the bush he had landed in.

"Me thinking you needs profeshible help," he said, circling the air near his ear with his index finger.

"Stop doing that," I said.

Blunder, trying to be obedient, stopped doing that *exact* thing and instead circled *both* his ears with *both* his index fingers.

Then I noticed a distant voice yelling, "Hey! Over



here!” and I thought that now I was *hearing* things, but then I remembered that What’s-His-Name was still on the phone.

“Listen, Mayor,” I said, “I was having a really good dream and then, all of a sudden, it turned on me. Everything went bad and freaky and scary. And then I woke up, but the bad-freaky-scariness continued. And then it was gone.”

“Big deal,” said the mayor. “That’s been happening to me all week.”

CHAPTER 4

When Good Dreams Turn Bad

“**L**ast night I dreamed I was sitting through a horribly boring eight-hour speech,” he said. “Wow,” I said, “that *is* a nightmare.”

“No,” he said, “that was the *good* part. The nightmare was that the speaker started throwing candy at me.”

“*That* sounds like the *good* part,” I said.

“*Exploding* candy,” he said. “And just before the



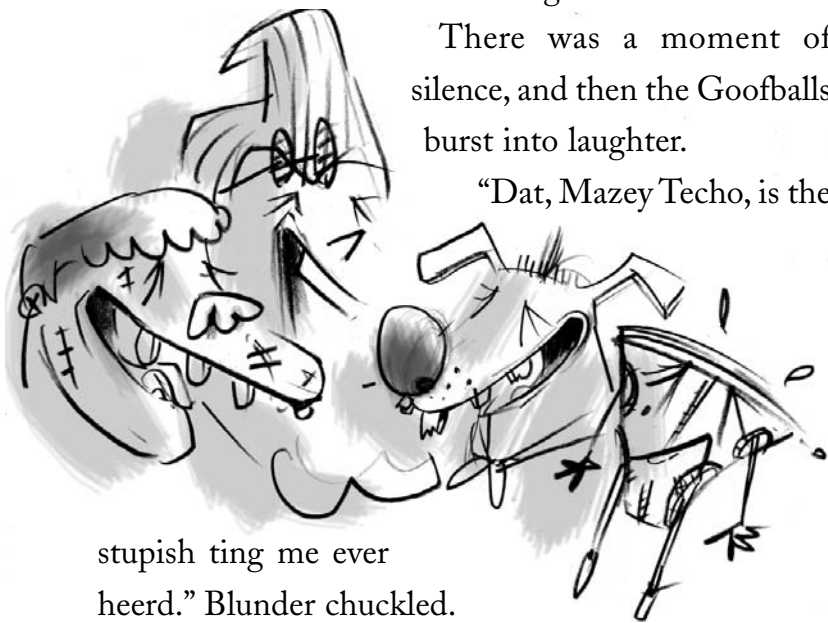
deadly candy started blowing up in my face, I heard a scary laugh and then a whispery, echoey, weirder-than-weird voice saying, ‘Open your brain and say ahh . . .!’”

That sounded awfully familiar.

“Come to think of it,” I said, “I think I heard that same voice just before the pig-dragons arrived. It seems like someone is controlling our dreams.”

There was a moment of silence, and then the Goofballs burst into laughter.

“Dat, Mazey Techo, is the



stupish ting me ever heard.” Blunder chuckled.

“Afraid Mutt right,” said Wonder Boulder. “What you say impossible. If me dream of rolling, gathering no moss, writing a novel, running for president, it *my* brain deciding all that, not somebody else’s.”

“Quite right,” said Mighty Tightly Whitey. “No one can tell you what to bloomin’ *dream*.”

“I wouldn’t be too sure about that,” said Pooky the Paranormal Parakeet. “There’s an old legend in the paranormal community. I’d always thought it was just an urban myth, but apparently it’s all too real. Amazing Techno Dude, your dreams have been invaded by a superevil supervillain . . . the dastardly, the creepy, the all-around pain in the brain Dr. Killdream.”

There was another moment of silence. Then, this time everybody *screamed*.



CHAPTER 5

OFF the chart

“Okay, everybody,” I said, printing out the current Slimy Sleazeball Superchart from the printer in my Amazing Techno Dude Deluxe Multi-Functional Monitor Helmet. “Let’s all calm down for a minute. Look . . . he couldn’t be *that* evil if he’s not even on the superchart.”

Just to make sure, I printed two more charts. “Look at this,” I said. “He’s not on the *Not-Quite-So-Slimy Sleazeball Superchart* or—look—even the *Hardly-Slimy-at-All Mediocre Chart*. This Kill-dream guy is a third-rate nuisance at best. I mean, worst.”

CHAPTER 6

What Pooky Knew

Pooky perched on the edge of a muffin that someone had left on the floor. She told us everything she knew about this Dr. Killdream character while pecking away at her chair.

“Dr. Killdream would never show up on any of your charts,” she said. “He’s a much more under-the-radar sort of villain. He works only in the realm of dreams. Having no dreams of his own, he invades those of others, twisting them into nightmares. He delights in the *destruction* of dreams.



And that voice . . .”

Pooky puffed up her feathers and a superserious look came over her face.

“It’s low and breathy,” she said, “a slow, terrifying whisper that echoes in the dreamer’s head—not loud and crazy like some other evil supervillains’.”

“Like dat stinkish bug lady, yes?” said Blunder Mutt.

“Yes,” said Pooky.

“And that Grumpy guy I thinked was a parrot, yes?”

“Yes again,” said Pooky again.

“And those horrible kitsy cats from space, yes?”

“Yes!” said Pooky. “Now *please* stop yessing and let me finish!”

“Yessy yes!” said Blunder.

“I knew you were going to say that,” said Pooky. “Okay. The point is, Killdream is so evil, he doesn’t *need* to scream and yell and try so hard. Plus, he has a supercreepy catchphrase.”

She leaned in toward us, and we leaned in toward her.

“The . . . only . . . *good* . . . dream . . . is . . . a . . . *dead* . . . dream,” she whispered.



CHAPTER 7

KICK-FLIPPING YOUR LID

Just then, Super Vacation Man, who had curled up in his kiddie pool and fallen asleep, jumped up with his eyes closed, hopped on his skateboard, and took off.

“Gonna ride the ramp to the—*whoosh, flip, zowee*—moon! Or maybe Malibu!” he hollered. “Kick-flip! Kick-fakey! Ollie, baby! Grind it!”

None of us understood SVM’s skateboard lingo, but he was obviously sleep boarding. From the smile on his face, it was clear he was dreaming a good dream. He zipped around the room, up



a wall, and across the ceiling, having the time of his life.

Suddenly, SVM's happy look went away. His eyes were still closed, but his mouth twisted into an expression of horror.



"No fakie! No grindy!" he screamed. "Toxic half-pipe, baby! I'm—*skid, roll, kablam*—kick-flippin' out!"

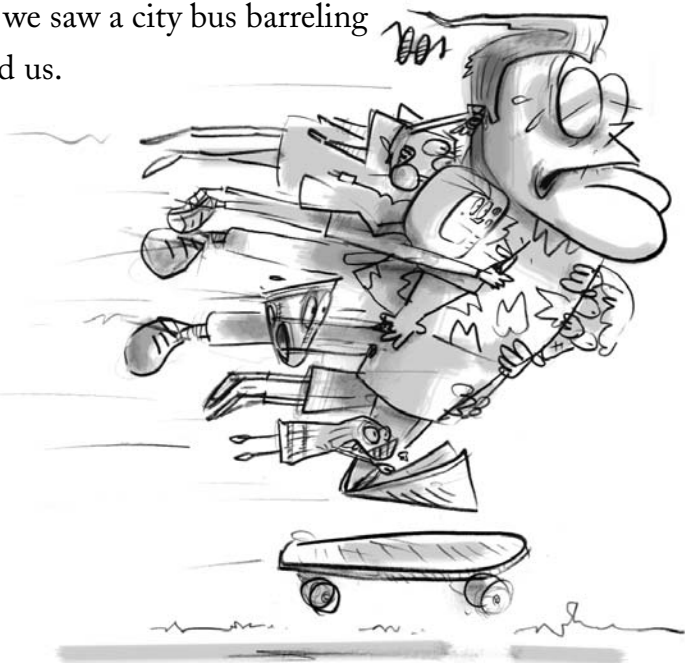
He made a reckless, screeching 360-degree spin—more like 720 degrees—and shot across the room like a demon, slamming through the living room wall at about a

hundred miles an hour and into the street . . . and then he *really* got going.

CHAPTER 8

time travel troubles

We all ran after him. We leaped onto his back to try to tackle him and wake him up, but his superstrength was too great. We were all hanging on and speeding down Thirteenth Street—on the *wrong side* of the street—when we saw a city bus barreling toward us.



Granny screamed, “Pothole cosmic!”—and *kablammo!*

Hitting cosmic potholes is the Bodacious Backwards Woman’s preferred method of time travel—she considers wormholes to be vastly overrated—but in any case, time travel is something that she was a whole lot better at in her younger days. It has become very unreliable. So, at that moment, hitting a cosmic pothole *could* have been a good thing, except, unfortunately, we went *forward* in time, just *slightly*, and the bus that had been a *block* away was now a *foot* away.

“AHHHHHH!” we all screamed.

“Ahhhhh!” screamed the passengers on the bus.

But just in the nick of time Granny swerved—“AHHHHHHH!”—into *another* cosmic pothole and we all ended up back in time five minutes, back in the living room with SVM still asleep in his pool.

I grabbed SVM’s skateboard and hid it behind the couch, just as he jumped up again and leaped onto the spot where he *thought* his skateboard was. This time, instead of flying through the wall, he just slipped on a little rug, slammed onto the floor on his super behind, and woke up.

“I was riding along, happy as can be,” said Super

Vacation Man, “which, when I think I’m on vacation, is very—*zippety, doo-dah*—happy, when I heard a creepy whispery, echoey voice: ‘The . . . only . . . *good* . . . dream . . . is . . . a . . . *dead* . . . dream . . . dream . . . dream.’”

“That’s it! Official Super Goofball Meeting right *now*!” I said.

The loudest scream I have ever heard rang out. It sounded like baboon, a chicken, and a newborn baby rolled into one: “*Ahhhh-eeeeeee-owwwwwww-i-yi-yi-yi!*”

It was Blunder Mutt.

“Blunder,” I said, “what is it? What *is* it?!”

“Me starving,” he said.



CHAPTER 9

POP GOES THE GOOFBALL

“**A**ll right, Goofballs,” I said, “we’ll meet while we eat.”

Granny popped up a batch of her special cheese-and-pickled-pepper popcorn and served in her special way: She flung kernel after kernel backwards over her shoulder at us and we tried to catch them in our mouths. Most of the kernels and cheese-and-pickled-pepper chunks missed our mouths and bounced off our faces.

“*Oops, oops!* Me hate that creepy Killdream creeping into dreams!” said the Frankenstein Punster, while diving for popcorn. “Creepers, what a creep! He creeping me out! He full of creep! *Oops, ouch!*”

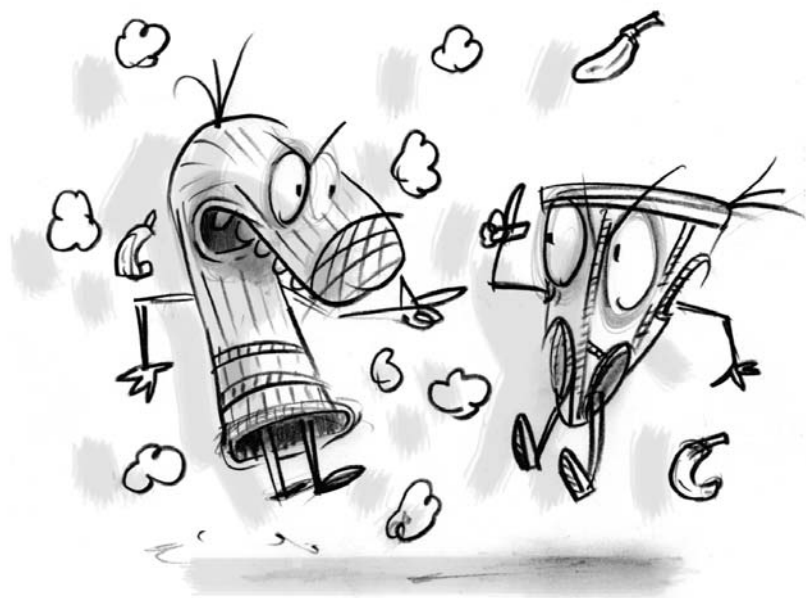
“And, like, how do you—*oops, oops*—fight someone who isn’t even, like, cool enough to come out into

the—oops, ouch, my *eye*—open?” said SuperSass.

“*Oops*—it’s loik battlin’ a banshee, boyo!” said the Terrifyin’ Tubesock Lad, a kernel bouncing off his head.

“Speak bloomin’ English, cousin!” said Mighty Tightly. “*Oops!*”

“A banshee is a female Irish ghost,” he replied. “*Oops*, ouch!”



“Hmm, let’s see . . . ” replied Mighty. “This Dr. Killdream bloke is not female, not Irish, and not a ghost. Otherwise, you’re right on target. Oops, ouch, *crunch*—I got one!”

"I said *loik* a banshee, *loik*!"

"Like, I've got a chunk of cheese stuck in my throat," said SuperSass, "and a pickled pepper in my eye."

Then Blunder leaped down to the floor to retrieve the popcorn and pickled peppers and cheese that had bounced off everyone's faces. He used his tongue like an anteater's: "*Slurp, crunch, slurp, crunch, slurp, crunch, slurp, crunch, slurp, crunch, yum!*"



"That's it! No more!" I said. "I don't want to hear one more crunch, ouch, or oops! In fact, I don't want to hear a peep out of anyone except Pooky!"

CHAPTER 10

unfathomable

“**p**eep,” said Pooky.

Blunder fell down laughing. He rolled across the floor toward the basement stairs. Having grown tired of Blunder always crashing through the basement door, I had replaced it the day before with a solid titanium one. Blunder slammed into it with a splat and then slid to the floor in a heap. But he kept laughing.

“Sorry, Amazing Techno Dude,” Pooky continued, “I couldn’t resist. What you need right now is a nap.”

“Now, just a minute,” I said. “I might be a little cranky, but it’s only because my house is swarming with lunatics. You’re *not* the boss of me—as a matter of fact, I’m the boss of *you*—and I am *not* taking a nap.”

"Take it easy, boss. I'm not talking about a plain old nap," she said. "More like deep sleep. More like *super-deep* sleep. *Bottom-of-the-ocean* deep. You have to take the battle to where Dr. Killdream lives, and he lives deep in Dreamland. All the way down in Subconscious Sub-basement 86."

"Subconscious Sub-basement 86? I have no clue how to even get there," I said.

"That's where I come in," said Pooky. "My Super-Unfathomable-Mesmerizing Powers are like a fast-acting snooze bomb. You'll be asleep *fast*, deep down in Sub-basement 86. Are you ready?"

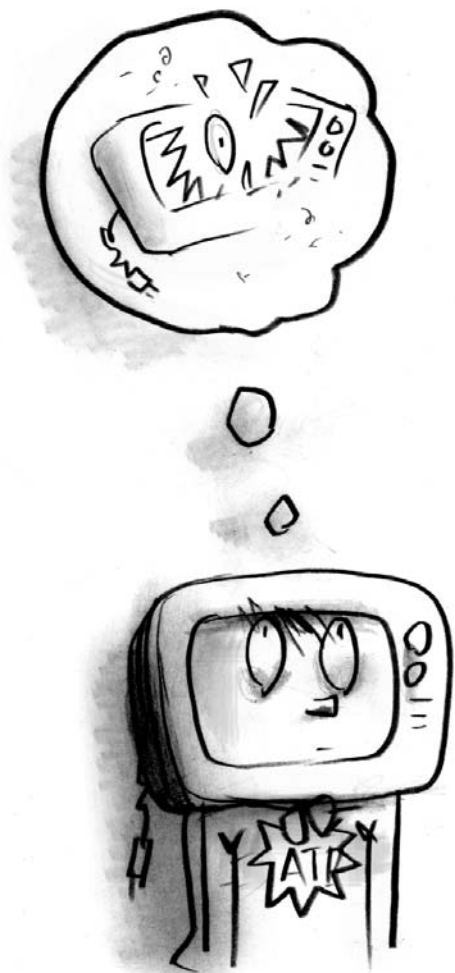
"Not really," I said. "Wanna come along? I am still looking for a sidekick."

"Hmm," Pooky replied, "I guess theoretically if I can get Super Mind-Meld working *simultaneously* with Super-Unfathomable Mesmerization, we could descend into bottomless sleep *together* and just might experience the same dream and land in Subconscious Sub-basement 86 at the same time. But we'll have to watch out—our minds could get permanently melded and we'd wake up sharing one brain. Though we could luck out and both get *mine*."

“Really funny,” I said. “I guess that’s just a chance we’ll have to take.”

“Plus,” she said, “our heads might explode.”

“Oh,” I said.





CHAPTER 11

DEEP-DREAM DIVING

pooky told me to sit back and relax. “I have to work myself into a super-Unfathomable Frenzy,” she said. “When I turn toward you, *do not look away*. I’m going to need a total eye and brain lock.”

She turned and marched around the edge of the countertop, her shoulders hunched, her wingtips balled into fists, and her swirling eyeballs glowing. She did several laps, breathing like a tiny bull through the holes in her beak. With every step, her strength and concentration

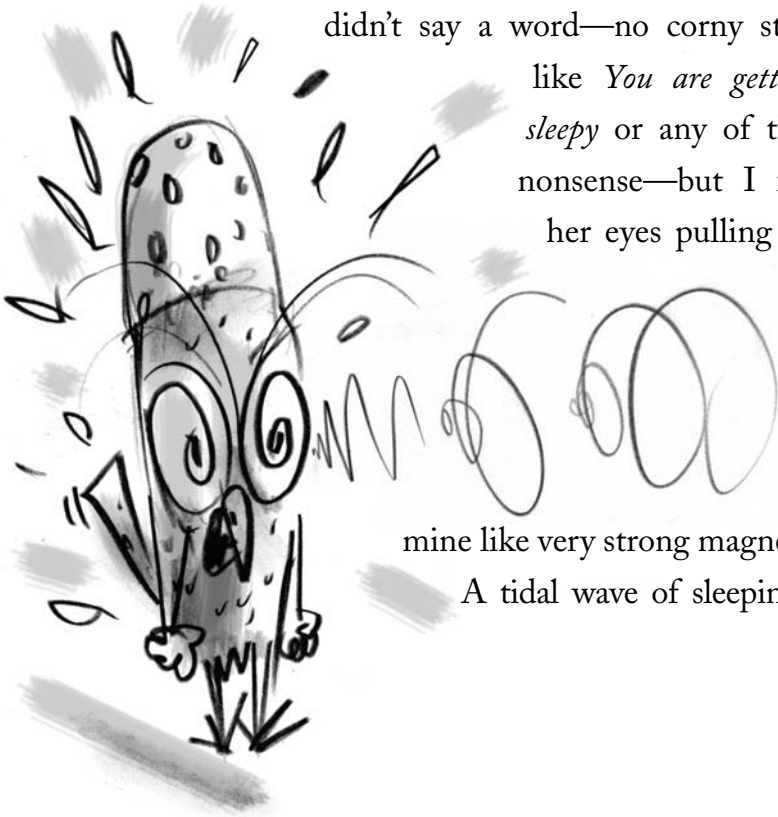


grew stronger. She started to look very un-Pooky-like—wilder, weirder, *possessed*.

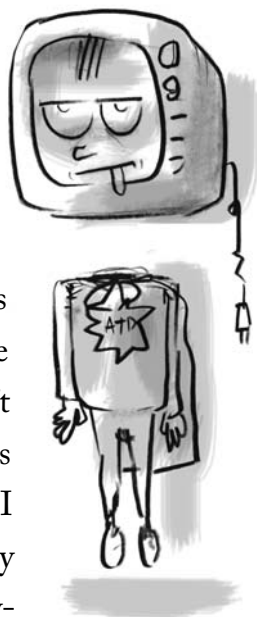
Finally, she took one last quick turn at the far corner of the counter and her eyes flashed. She has pretty weird eyes under normal circumstances, but this was something else altogether. I wanted to look away, but I didn't, and suddenly her eyes were locked onto mine. She

didn't say a word—no corny stuff like *You are getting sleepy* or any of that nonsense—but I felt her eyes pulling on

mine like very strong magnets. A tidal wave of sleepiness



rolled over me. I could even *see* the sleepiness surrounding me and rolling *through* me. My head was invaded by numbness and then it felt like it was floating above my shoulders. My eyeballs rolled backwards, and I could see the inside of my head—something I won't even try to describe. Then my eyeballs rolled toward the front again, and I reconnected with Pooky's eyes. They went around and around like this, every-



thing flickering like an old-time movie, until everything went black.

The good news is my head didn't explode.

A strong wind blew up from under me, and I heard the faint music of a distant amusement park. Colorful lights streaked by like Christmas trees speeding on a freeway at night. I realized that Pooky was right next to me. We were falling and falling through some kind of tunnel.



Then the tunnel became a fun house. Sometimes fun houses are more scary than fun, but not this one. This was *pure* fun. We tumbled through an amazing series of chutes and slides. I had never experienced a dream this fun. I was smiling the kind of gigantic grin that usually hurts after a while, but it didn't this time. French fries and onion rings swam through the air toward me and leaped into my mouth. My favorite Super-Chew Choco-Chunk Crusty-Crunch Cookies, the kind that Granny makes, were floating along with me and I was able to reach out and grab them and any other delicious junk I could imagine. Escorted by four beautiful mermaids, I floated, flipped, and splashed down milk-shake rapids, over junk-food falls, and into a thick sea of chocolate pudding. I ate so much I should have gotten sick—turn-green-lose-your-lunch sick—but I didn't.

I looked over at Pooky, and *her* particular favorites—still-wiggling-worm and centipede sundaes, june-bug burgers, and spider-and-fresh-caught-fly slurpies—were all there for the slurping, and she sucked them up like a happy vacuum cleaner.



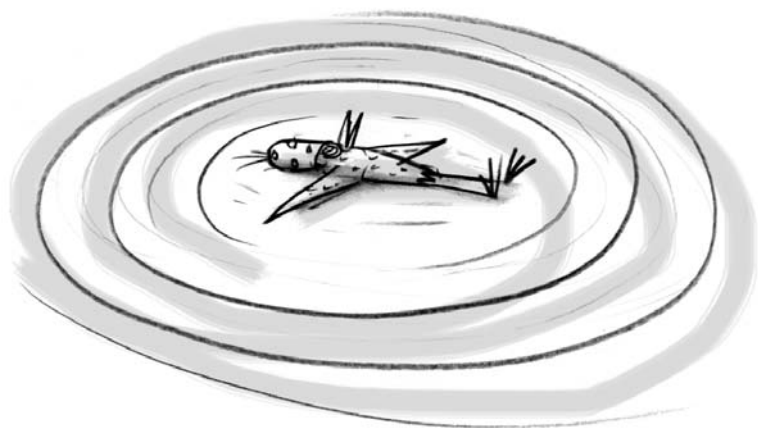
CHAPTER 12

Reality check

Back in the kitchen lair, the rest of the Goofballs were watching us, amazed. Apparently, I was sitting perfectly still but balancing on one leg of the chair and rotating slowly, my tongue hanging out. Pooky was lying on the kitchen counter on



her back—wings and feet straight out—and just barely turning, like a slow, feathery clock. The Goofballs could see from our ridiculously oversized smiles that we were experiencing something good.



CHAPTER 13

Gizmo Heaven

And it *was* good. Right when I thought I'd reached my limit in terms of deliciously disgusting food items, the passing landscape became stocked with every super expensive superhero electronic item in the world—all the things from the Super Sharper Image catalog that I always wished I had the money to buy—from automatic flippenzappers to high-speed solar-powered digital frappinating whizmetrons. Recalling it now, I have absolutely no idea what any of these gadgets do, but in the dream I *did* know—and, believe me, they were cool.

Pooky saw superfancy jet-powered turbans, hypno-gizmos, telepathic telephones, and everything else that a paranormal parakeet would find miraculous and mind-blowing.

Suddenly, the Goofballs were also in the dream. And, oddly enough, I liked them more than I ever had. I could see only the good in them. They had none of their annoying qualities. They weren't bickering or screaming or crashing through walls or falling down stairs.

I discussed Shakespeare with Blunder Mutt over a game of chess. "So, Blunder," I said, "or should I call you Professor Mutt? Perhaps you could recite something?"



“A bit o’ the bard?” he said. “Why, certainly: ‘To be, or not to be . . .’”

But of course it was just a dream. Back in the kitchen lair, I was talking in my sleep and the Shakespeare was coming out of *my* mouth.

The real Blunder was listening to me with all the other Goofballs. He didn’t really understand the concept of talking in one’s sleep, so when I said “*To be, or not to be: that is the question . . .*”

He said, “No, Amazey Techo, dat definally *not* the question. If you say dere’s *two bees*, den dere’s *two bees* and *dat’s dat*—end of disgustion. And two bees isn’t too bad. Even two hunnerd bees isn’t *too* bad ’less dere killer bees. Dat’s bad and dere’s *no* question. But I gotta question: How the heck you balances on da chair like dat?”



CHAPTER 14

TO BLUNDER OR NOT TO BLUNDER

Back in the dream, Blunder was still reciting Shakespeare and just finishing up:
“To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there’s the rub,” he said.

I couldn’t believe that Blunder Mutt was quoting *Hamlet*, and quoting lines that actually had to do with sleeping and dreaming. Incredible. What a dog. No longer unbearably idiotic, Blunder was now, shockingly, an interesting guy to talk to.

All the Goofballs were better than usual. Super-Sass wasn’t selfish, SVM wasn’t complaining constantly about wanting to be on vacation, Mighty Tightly Whitey and Tubesock weren’t fighting, and—get this—Granny was speaking *forwards*. They were all the best possible versions of themselves. The

experience was so amazing that I laughed out loud.

“Ha-ha! Dr. Killdream is *definitely not* real. My dreams are my own—and they are *good!*”

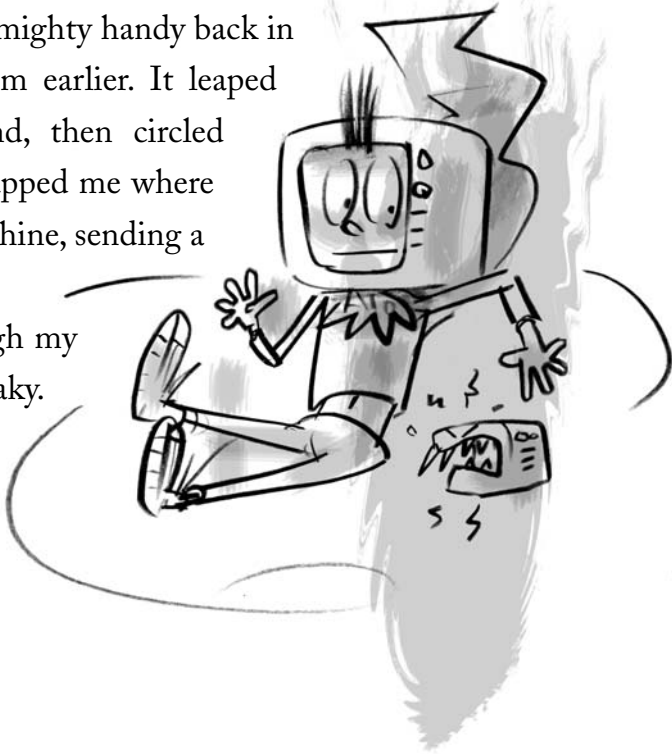
Too good, I guess.

CHAPTER 15

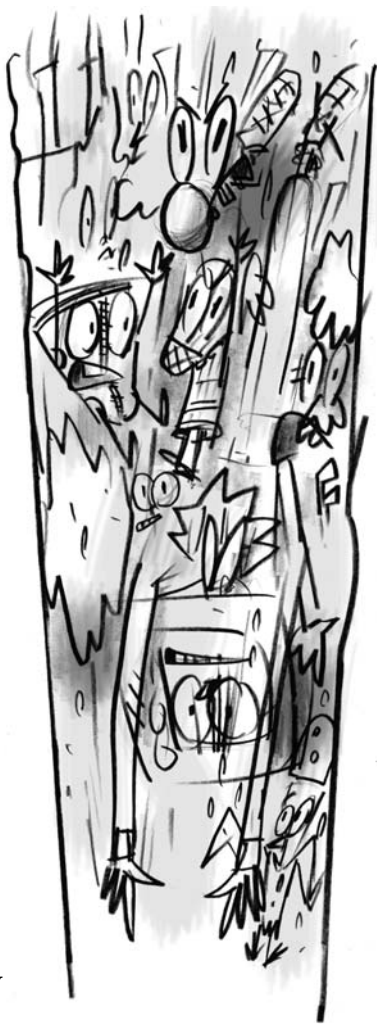
DREAMS DIE HARD, REALLY HARD

Just then, the dream went sour. One of the amazing little gadgets I'd picked up on the way down turned on me. It happened to be an electronic baby-stench neutralizer, an item that would have come in mighty handy back in the living room earlier. It leaped from my hand, then circled around and zapped me where the sun don't shine, sending a painful shock pulsing through my body. Very freaky.

And then the Goofballs suddenly



became the absolute *worst* versions of themselves. All the problems we had as roommates—the overcrowded house, the too few bathrooms, the huge mess that they were all always making—instantly kicked into gear. Before I knew it, we were sliding together through a crowded chute, crammed in there with garbage and dirty laundry; the roommates arguing, fighting, and just plain being their incredibly annoying selves. The chute got smaller and smaller until we slowed to a stop and were totally stuck. Man, was *that* uncomfortable. Somebody's foot was jammed in my stomach, and something—I think the butt of a certain mutt—was jammed right through my screen and in my face. We



were quickly running out of air, and the remaining oxygen was really quite unbreathable. I was shocked at just how terrible the Goofballs looked and smelled close up and personal. The chute got tighter and tighter until it exploded into pieces, sending Granny and the Goofballs flying into the distance.

It was good to get out of there, yet bad, because now Pooky and I were free-falling. Bizarre sights, sounds, and neon numbers flew by—46, 47, 48, 49, 50—we fell faster and faster, flipping out of control . . . and then we crashed. Hard.



CHAPTER 16

TWO IN THE HAND IS WORTHLESS

Ouch. We heard a high-pitched *ding* and then a voice that sounded like a very cheesy TV announcer: “Welcome to Subconscious Sub-basement 86. On behalf of the Dreamland Chamber of Commerce, I wish you and your psyche an extremely enjoyable visit. Have a nice day!”

That seemed unlikely. We had crash-landed onto a gigantic outstretched hand and were surrounded by a ring of fire. It looked like the waiting room of a doctor’s office, except that it was, you know, a giant flaming hand.

A soothing female voice came out of nowhere: “The doctor will see you now.”

“Excuse me, lady receptionist person, wherever you



are,” I replied. “We don’t have an appointment—and we don’t really need to see a doctor anyway. I feel fine. How ’bout you, Pook?”

“Never felt better,” Pooky said, making a muscle with her wing. “Fit as a fiddle.”

“See?” I said. “So if it’s all the same to you, we’ll be leaving now.” We looked around for a door to leave by, but apparently huge-burning-hand waiting rooms don’t have doors.

Then through the fire and smoke we saw a gigantic, terrible face. Its eyes, nose, and mouth didn't seem to be anchored in one place—they floated around, fading in and out, forming a variety of faces, like it was trying to figure out which horrible version of itself it wanted to be.

I guess it finally decided, because the pieces came together, and I got my first look at the appalling, the dastardly, the dream-destroying Dr. Killdream.

There was something strangely familiar about his horrific face—or, rather, the individual *parts* of his horrific face. Then it dawned on me. He had the facial features of certain evil supervillains I had battled in the past: the bulging eyes of Queen Smellina the Shrieking Stinkbug of Stench; the grotesque deep-frowning mouth of Mondo Grumpo; the horrifying, clattering,



ATD's version
of Dr. Killdream

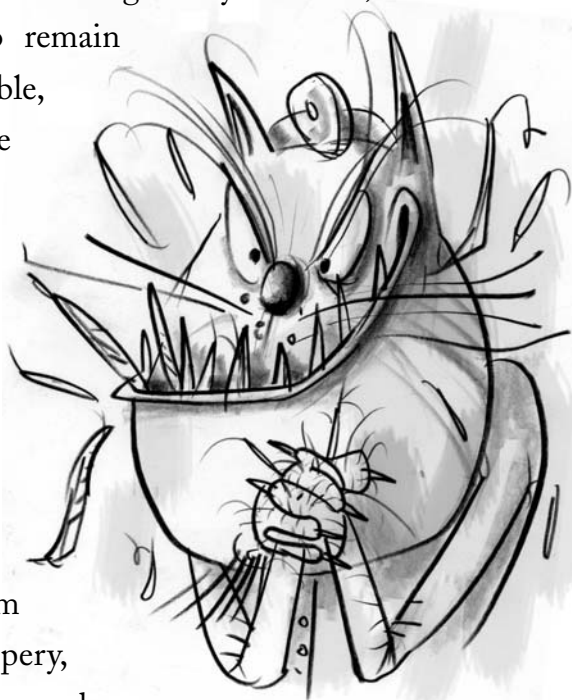
razor-sharp teeth of Commander Cockroachia—all things horrible rolled up into one horrible face. What on earth was going on?

“ATD,” Pooky said, “since it’s your nightmare, Killdream appears to you as a combination of the things *you* fear—in this case, all the psycho-criminal masterminds that have ever tormented you.”

“Of course, I see something totally different,” she continued, trying to remain calm. “I see the terrible, grinning face of the most vicious, disgusting, bird-hungry house cat ever. His mouth is overflowing with feathers.”

I wondered what Killdream’s real face looked like.

Then Dr. Killdream spoke in that whispery, echoey voice. Whispery and echoey . . . but unbelievably powerful.



Pooky's version
of Dr. Killdream

“Okay,” he said, “I’ve got a full day and night of appointments, so, you first, *Amazing Techno Dud*—relax . . . lax . . . lax . . . lax . . .”

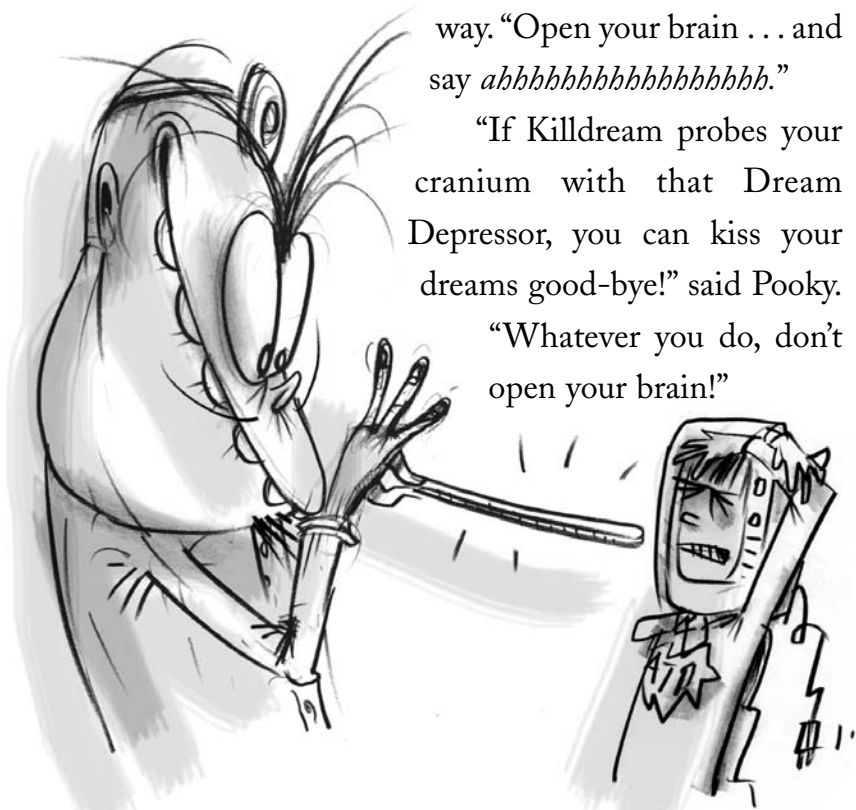
A giant hand appeared through the smoke, holding some kind of giant, stainless-steel tongue depressor—you know, the thing that looks like a Popsicle stick that doctors use to hold down your tongue and look down your throat? But this gleaming instrument wasn’t for depressing tongues.

“The only good dream is a dead dream . . . dream . . . dream,” he cackled in his weird, whispery

way. “Open your brain . . . and say *abbbbbbbbbbbbbbbbbbbbbb*.”

“If Killdream probes your cranium with that Dream Depressor, you can kiss your dreams good-bye!” said Pooky.

“Whatever you do, don’t open your brain!”



I didn't even know what opening my brain *meant*. I closed my eyes and held on tight to the top of my head, hoping to keep it from swinging open like the lid of a jack-in-the-box.

And then I felt something prying at my fingers. It was the Dream Depressor. My head started spinning, I felt dizzy and sick, and I screamed louder than I've ever screamed before.

CHAPTER 17

HA-HA . . . very unfunny

I was still screaming when I woke up in the kitchen lair. And I was still spinning. I spun around on the chair leg, making six full revolutions before the leg snapped and I crashed onto the linoleum.

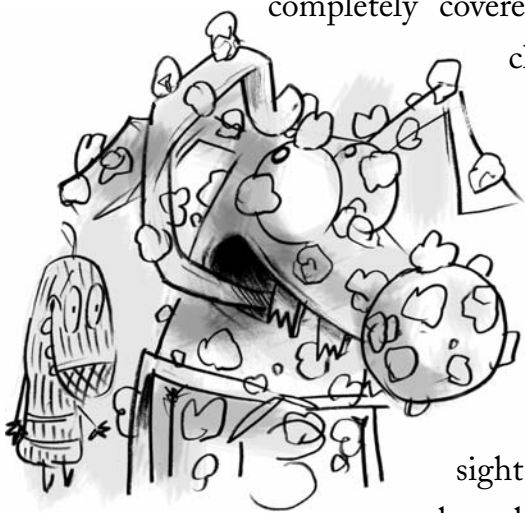


When I came to, all the Goofballs were laughing like complete idiots.

“What’s so funny?” I asked. “You wouldn’t believe the nightmare we just had! Dr. Killdream was horrible! All of *you* were horrible, too!”

I looked at them laughing at this very unfunny situation and realized they were all *still* horrible—that they’d always *been* horrible. Blunder Mutt’s nose was completely covered with chunks of

cheese-and-pickled-pepper popcorn and he was sticking out his tongue, feeling around, trying to eat them. It was a disgusting sight. Normally I might have laughed, but at that



moment it didn’t strike me as funny at all. The Impossibly Tough Two-Headed Infant had blind-folded Wonder Boulder with an old diaper, and now the giant rock was chasing the twins around the room and breaking lots of new holes in the walls in the

process. How one blindfolds a rock that doesn't have any eyes to begin with I'll never know, but for some reason, Biff and Smiff thought the sight of Wonder Boulder destroying 1313 Thirteenth Street—which we had just *rebuilt*—was just incredibly amusing.

Pooky was bugging me, too. We had just shared this terrifying experience, and even *she* was laughing. She had no sympathy at all! Worst of all, Granny was also being incredibly annoying. “Funny call I what *that's* now!” she said over and over.

Looking around, I realized I was sick and tired of all of them. The combination of the close encounter with Dr. Killdream and the worsening living situation was tough to take. I flashed back to getting smooshed with all those Goofballs in that chute, and I had an overwhelming desire to be alone.

“We have to stick together, ATD,” Pooky said as I headed toward the door.

“Forget it, Pooky,” I said. “I can't think of anyone I'd like to be stuck together with *less!*”

I walked out the front door without saying good-bye or waving or anything.



CHAPTER 18

Miniature Electromagnetic Scanner-Eraser

When I go off by myself, I usually start to daydream. Good, reasonable thoughts come into my head, and whatever has been bothering me suddenly doesn't seem so bad. But not this time. I couldn't think of anything but the Goofballs, and the more I thought about them, the more *over* them I felt.

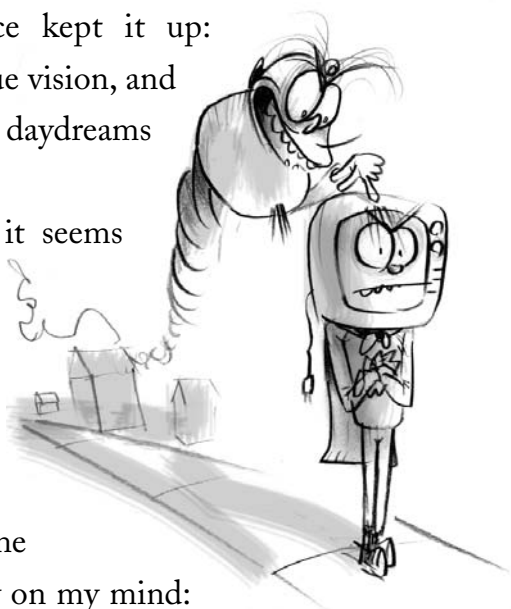
I found myself thinking that my life would be a lot simpler and less irritating if I worked alone. Dealing with these ridiculous roommates was becoming a chore *and* a bore. I needed a change! And I started to daydream about somehow getting *rid* of the Goofballs.

Wait a minute, I thought. That's a horrible daydream.

But then I heard a voice whispering in my head,
“No, way! That’s a wonderfully *evil* daydream!”

The whispering voice kept it up:
“You, sir, are a man of true vision, and
it’s time to turn your evil daydreams
into evil reality!”

Now, thinking back, it seems
impossible, but I loved
the sound of that evil
voice. I whispered
along with it until it
became my own true
voice. Suddenly, I had one
thing and one thing only on my mind:
I wanted to turn bad.



“Being a superhero’s not so
hot,” I hissed. “Supervillains
are *much* more mysterious
and interesting! And vil-
lains only have *themselves*
to think about! Non-
jerks are such *chumps*!
Well, you know what?
It’s time to dump the

chumps! That's what *I'm* talking about!"

But how would I go about getting rid of all the Goofballs?

"C'mon, c'mon, *c'mon!*" I snarled.

"You're supposed to be so clever with all those technological whatchama-hoozers!

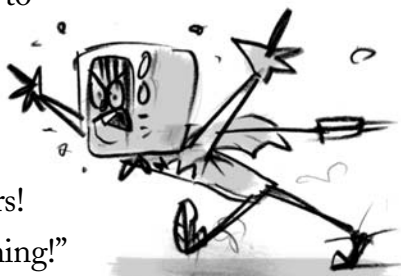
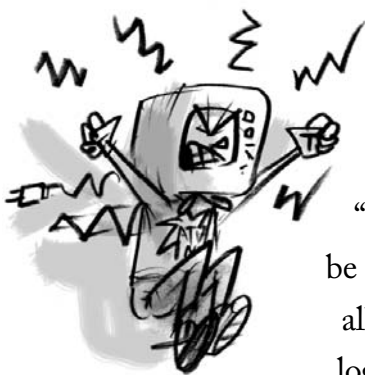
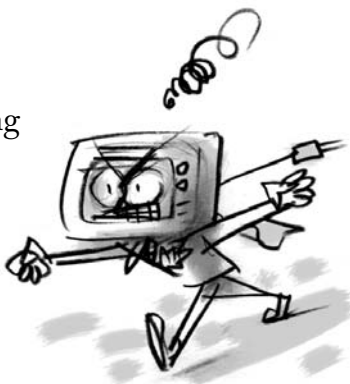
Come up with something!"

And then I

remembered. The answer

was right in my helmet. I had been working on a new techno-weapon that now I could try out on Granny and the Goofballs. It was called the Amazing Techno Dude Miniature Electromagnetic Scanner-Eraser. The

concept was to scan the body



of a bad guy (or in this case, a good guy), and as he's scanned, each molecule in his body is replaced by digital code, so when the scan is complete, the digitized version is the *only* version. The original idea was to scan and download villains directly into jail, without relying on the *unreliable* Sergeant Bub McButt to



cuff and drag them away. But what if I scanned, digitized, and downloaded all these annoying room-mates and sent them into a secure cyberspace holding tank where they couldn't bother me for a while? Or maybe *forever*.



Yes! I *loved* these new evil thoughts! Maybe I should try an evil *laugh*! Why not? I sucked in more air than I'd ever sucked in before—and

then I blew out my evil gaskets: “BOO-HA-HA-HA-HA!” Now *that* felt good. It echoed through Gritty City. Earsplitting! Dangerous! I’d finally broken the chains of goodness that had bound me up and kept me down so long! “BOO-HA-HA-HA-HA! HA-HA! HA-HA-HA! HA!”



CHAPTER 19

That Little Old Evildoer, Me

My throat was extremely sore from all that boo-ha-ha-ing, but it was well worth it, let me tell you. Night had fallen and I was standing in front of Gritty City City Hall. It looked so different to me now. I don't know why, but I hated it. The brick, the mortar, the walls, the windows—it all just made my blood boil. I thought about breaking in.

“What are you waiting for?!” I whispered to myself impatiently. “Pay that stinking Mayor What’s-His-Name a visit! You know you’re tired of him, too!”

And I was. I *was* sick *and* tired of him. That silly mustache alone was enough to make me scream boo-ha-ha for a *week*! Now that I was evil, the mayor was my enemy! Along with all the other non-jerk chumps! “BOO-HA-HA-HA!”

ha-ha! "BOO-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!"



that some stupid roommate had left in the middle of the floor. It was one the mayor had awarded me recently.

“You know what, What’s-His-Name?” I hissed. “Since you love trophies so much, why don’t you marry one—or at least *live* in one!”

The mayor still didn’t wake up when I stuffed him into the trophy with all my might. Now *that* was kind of irritating. It would have been nice for *somebody* to experience my new exquisitely evil evilness and not sleep through the whole thing! *Grrrrr*. In my exasperation, I dumped the rest of Granny’s popcorn on top of him.

“BOO-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!”



CHAPTER 20

The power of the pook

I walked into the living room, ready to take care of Granny and the Goofballs.

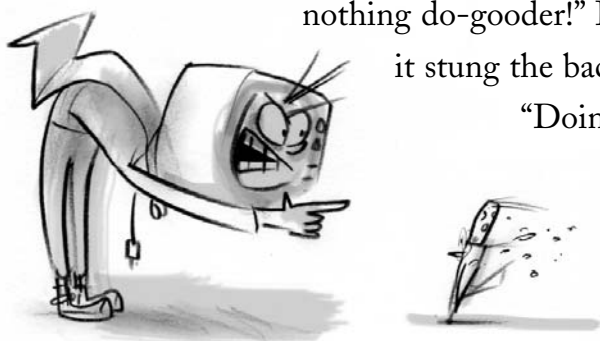
Pooky the Paranormal Parakeet was waiting for me. Darn her. I hated her and her pain-in-the-cranium paranormal powers.

I raised an eyebrow and growled like a wild animal. I have no idea why I growled, but I did. I was doing a lot of things I don't usually do.

"Amazing Techno Dude," she said, "I know what you're up to and I don't like it one bit."

"I knew you were gonna say that, you good-for-nothing do-gooder!" I hissed so loudly it stung the back of my throat.

"Doing good is what we're *supposed* to



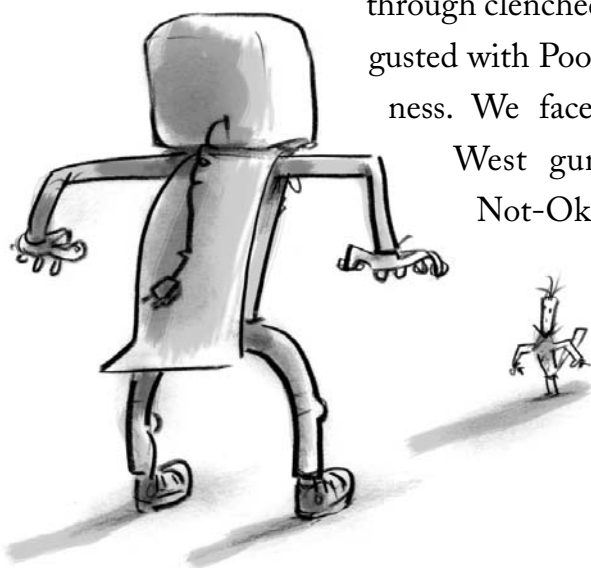
be doing, Amazing Techno Dude!”

“Not anymore, my fine, feathered, I-always-do-what-I’m-*supposed*-to-do freak! I’m sick and tired of goodness *and* Goofballs! I hate the things I used to love . . . and love the things I used to hate! So, step aside, sister, ’cause I’m heck-bound for badness!”

“But can’t you see, Amazing Techno Dude,” she said, “you’re not yourself?”

“Oh, yes, I am,” I said. “I’m more myself than ever, and I’m seeing my enemies clearly for the first time! Since you already know what I’m going to say, I think I’ll stop wasting my evil breath, except to tell you that I’ve changed my name to the Atrocious Techno *Demon*! BOO-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!”

We stared at each other. I was out of breath from that last outburst. I was seething and breathing through clenched teeth. I was disgusted with Pooky and her goodness. We faced off like Wild West gunslingers at the Not-Okay-at-All Corral.





I squinted and she
squinted back.

I sneered and
she sneered back.

I growled and
she growled back.

It was time
to try out the Miniature Electromagnetic Scanner-
Eraser. It's very important in a showdown situation to
not reveal your strategy too early. This, of course, is a
particular problem when your opponent can read your
mind. I tried to block her out by thinking about
something completely different, and the thing that
came to me was chocolate pudding. Actually, I
thought about *swimming* in chocolate pudding . . .
with four beautiful mermaids. It was from that other
dream. Sometimes when you try not to think of
something, the weirdest thing pops into your head.

I tried to stop thinking about pudding and mer-
maids, while reaching for the Scanner-Eraser, which
was in my pocket. But, as you may know, one of the
hardest things to do is to *not* think of something once
you've already started thinking about it. Plus, using
the Scanner-Eraser is more complicated than flipping

a switch. It takes lots of concentration, and my brain was getting all messed up.

Then I noticed that Pooky's eyes were swirling like never before. Circles were expanding out of her sock-

ets like colorful smoke rings. She hitched one of her tiny shoulders up sharply. Then the

other. Her head nodded

from side to side. It

was like she was

dancing to

some strange,

slow, jerky music

that only she

could hear.



All of a sudden, I felt something funny in my brain. It was like something

or *someone* was pushing

on one side of it. The

pressure increased until—

holy hopping cerebellum—

it felt like my entire brain did

a flip. Then it felt like it did a

flop. And another flip. And a flippety-flop.



It was Pooky. She was wrestling with my mind.



Every time she jerked her shoulder, my brain flopped around inside my head like a fish on a beach.

I tried to push back against her by thinking defensively—jerking my head and shoulders up and down and back and forth—and I was having some effect on her, but I was completely outmatched. I was evil, but not in a particularly telekinetic way.

Plus my head was starting to hurt.

I pushed harder. I was gritting my teeth and growling like a weight lifter trying to lift way too much. I strained and groaned and sweated and groaned some more. If my brain had a back, that back was breaking.

Then I took a deep breath and exploded with a push to end all pushes. I felt Pooky fall away, like I had flipped *her* brain.

“Take *that*, you paranormal pip-squeak! BOO-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!”

But I hadn’t flipped her brain, not even close. You know how when you’re wrestling and you push hard

against the other guy and you think you're winning, but in reality, he just *let* you push him? Then he sort of moves to one side and your push goes past him and you're just falling, and all of a sudden you're on your face and then your back and



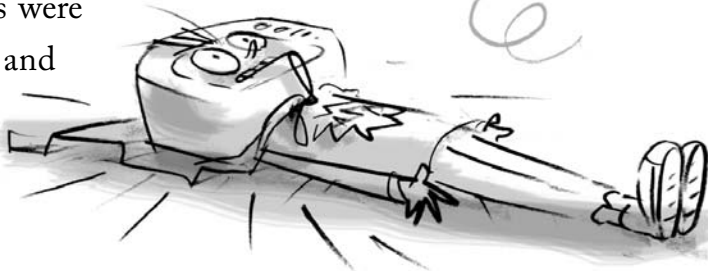
he's on top of you and the gym teacher is yelling "Pin!"? That never happened to you? Well, you're lucky. But, anyway, that's what Pooky did to me . . . or my brain, at least. PIN!



"Boo-ha-*whaaaaa*?" I cried weakly. Pooky had me where she wanted me.

"Listen and listen good, ATD," she said. "Dr. Killdream is controlling your dreams, your day-dreams, and even your hopes and dreams."

That was crazy. My beautiful evil dreams were mine and



mine alone. I snarled at her and tried to argue, but everything I said came out wrong.

What I tried to say: “You will pay for this, Pooky! The Atrocious Techno Demon will exact his beastly revenge!”

What I actually said: “Pooky, I’m sorry.”

You see, having your brain flipped is like having someone change your mind, your entire way of thinking—by force. You end up doing and saying the exact opposite of what you intended.

I tried to say: “Pooky, I hate you!”

But it came out: “Pooky, I wanna date you!”

Pooky blushed.

Just so you know, I really did *not* want to date Pooky.

I was getting very frustrated. I got serious: “Don’t even *try* to stand in the way of my evil brilliance, or I will pulverize you into a puny pile of parakeet paste!”

But it came out: “I love rainbows and lollipops.”

This was getting ridiculous. Pooky smiled.

“I think you’ve returned to your nice self,” she said.

“A little *too* nice, wouldn’t you say?” I said.

“Maybe you’re right,” she said. She raised an eyebrow and gave one shoulder a quick shrug, and I felt my brain resetttle. Instantly I felt more like myself.

CHAPTER 21

Going in Again

Now that I was back to normal I apologized to Pooky for trying to erase her . . . and for the parakeet-paste remark.

“No problem,” she said. “But we need to go back into Dreamland.”

“Back to Subconscious Sub-basement 86.”

“Exactly,” she said. “*This* time we’ve gotta chase Killdream out of your head.”

Suddenly I felt Pooky’s eyes pulling on mine again like magnets. That same wave of sleepiness washed over and through me. My head went numb, my eyeballs rolled back and around toward the front again, everything flickered like an old-time movie, and we again descended into my deepest darkest dreamscape.

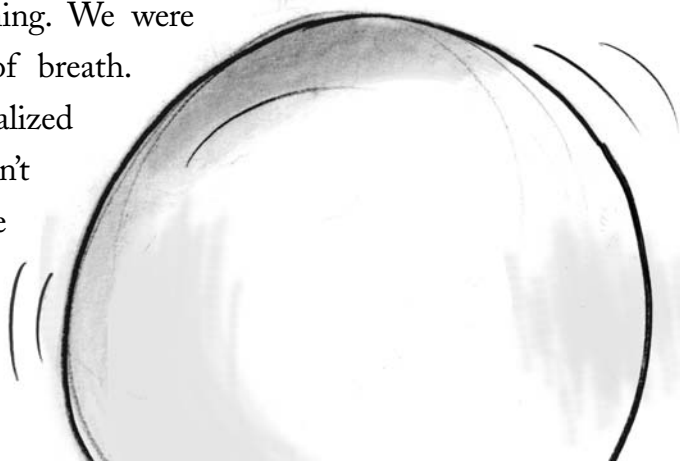
This time we skipped the whole good-dream



nonsense and dropped directly into Sub-basement 86. We landed with a splat onto a huge white ball. It started rotating, and we had to run to avoid falling off. This was hard because the ball was slippery. It was like a small, wet planet rotating and floating in a purple-red void. The planet stopped rotating, so we stopped running. We were totally out of breath.



Then we realized the planet wasn't a planet. We



were standing on the pupil of a huge eyeball. “Welcome . . . welcome . . . welcome,” came the horrible, whispery voice of Dr. Killdream.

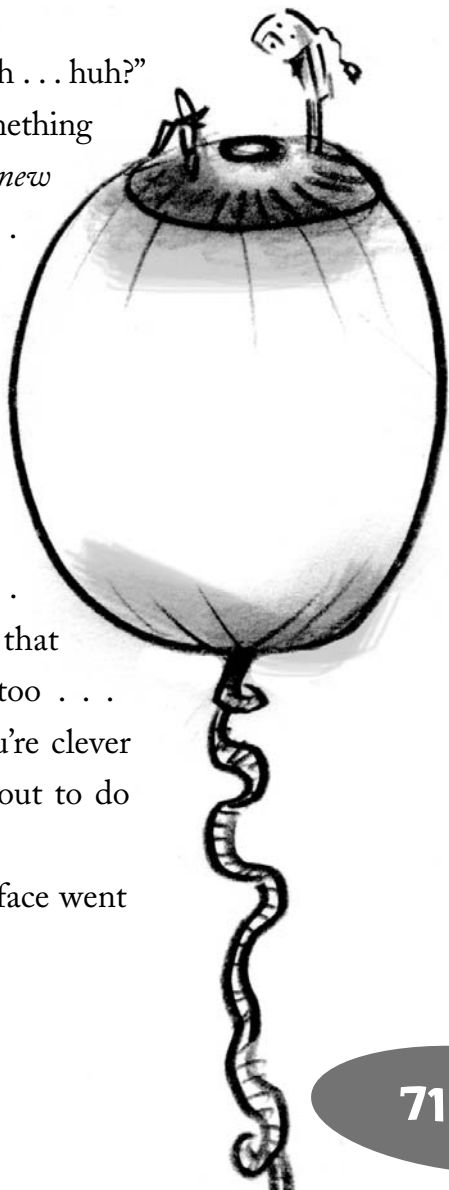
It was Dr. Killdream’s eyeball! It was connected by a ropelike optic nerve to his head and body, which floated in the void below.

“Pretty freaky, huh . . . huh . . . huh?” he said. “I whipped up something special for you, since I *knew* you’d be back . . . back . . . back.”

“Well, I knew you’d *say* we’d be back,” said Pooky. “I mean, back . . . back . . . back.”

“Very clever, imitating my voice like that . . . that . . . that,” he said. “And making that little prediction, too . . . too . . . too . . . but I wonder if you’re clever enough to see what I’m about to do to you . . . you . . . you.”

The feathers of Pooky’s face went white.



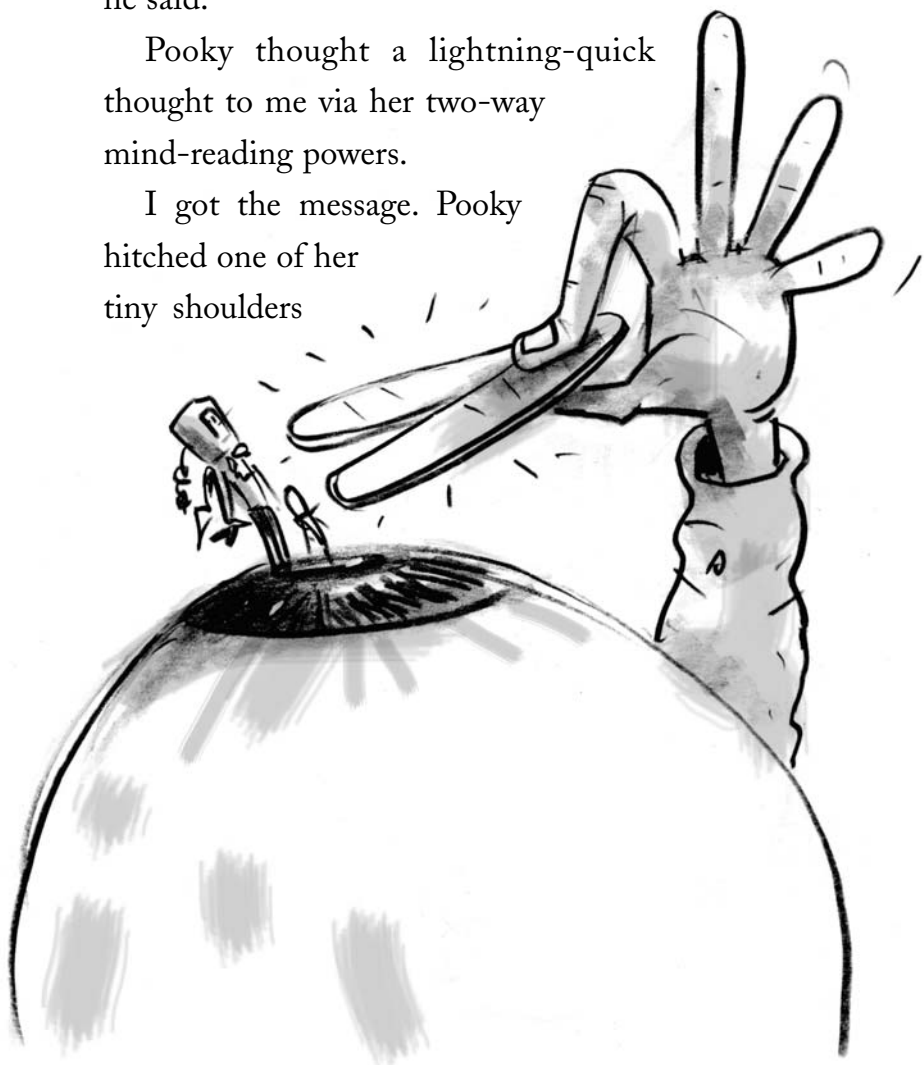
“Did I mention that the only *good* dream is a *dead* dream . . . dream . . . dream?” Killdream whispered.

His arm came up over the side of his huge eyeball. He was holding two Dream Depressors and aiming them right at us.

“Open your brains and say ahhhhh,” he said.

Pooky thought a lightning-quick thought to me via her two-way mind-reading powers.

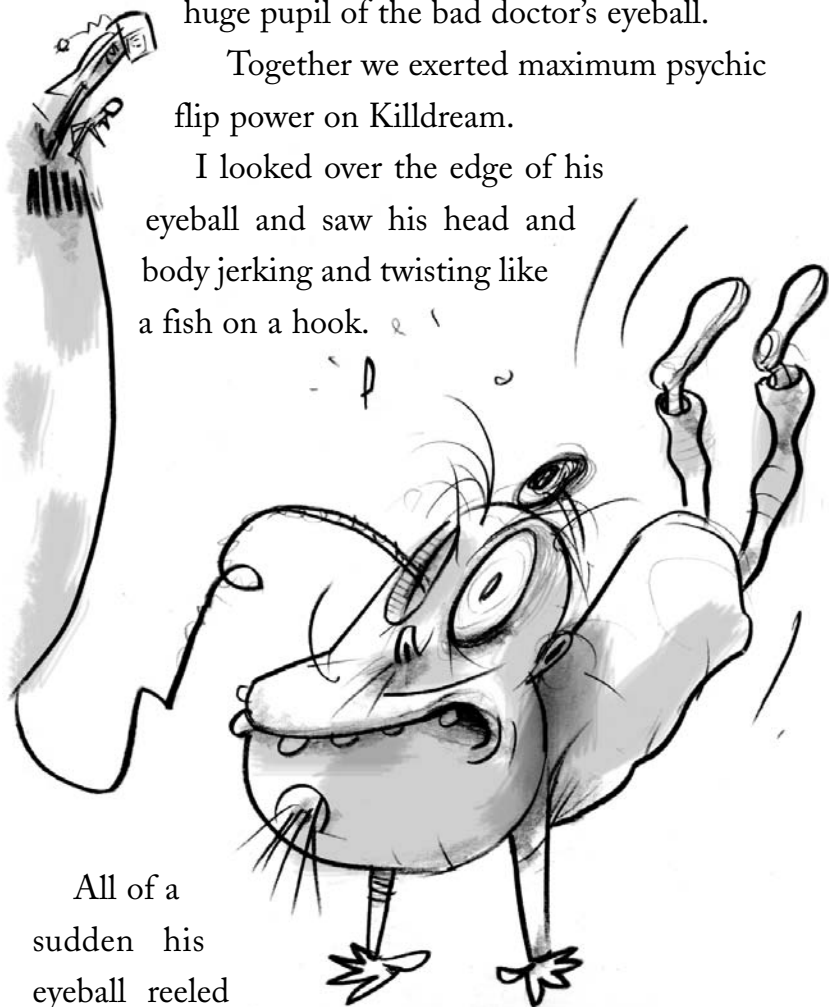
I got the message. Pooky hitched one of her tiny shoulders



up and I hitched one of mine. We both stared into the huge pupil of the bad doctor's eyeball.

Together we exerted maximum psychic flip power on Killdream.

I looked over the edge of his eyeball and saw his head and body jerking and twisting like a fish on a hook.



All of a sudden his eyeball reeled

itself back into its socket, like a cord rewinding into a vacuum cleaner, leaving us floating in midair. He got a funny look on his huge multi-faced face. He'd

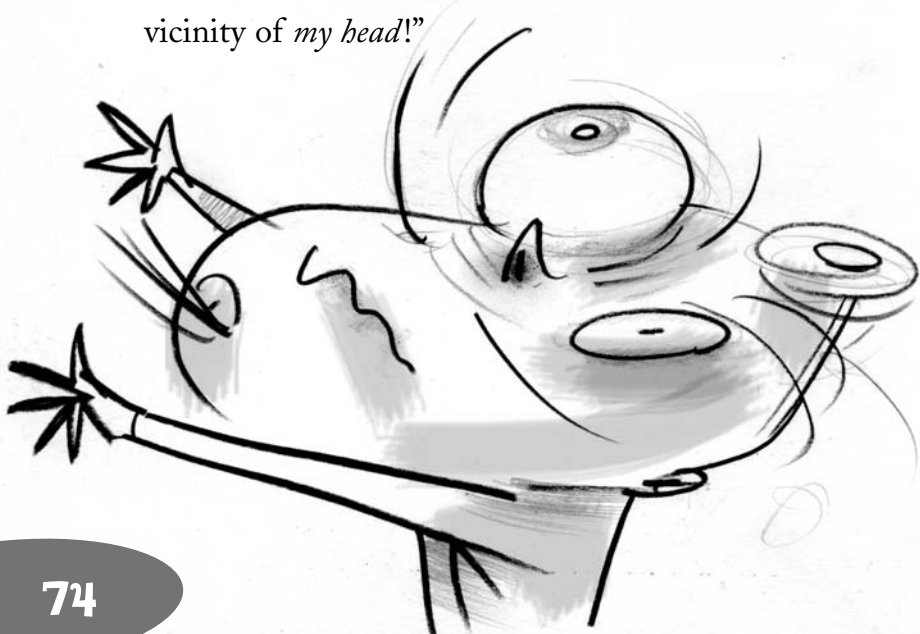


clearly been thrown off balance. In fact, his entire brain had flipped inside his head.

“*Argghhh!*” he shouted. He was going through some kind of internal struggle. “I must tell you . . . I really do like you both *so much!* Wha? Where did *that* come from? I’ve certainly never uttered a sappy sentence like *that* before!”

Killdream was discombobulated.

“I sense some sort of crude brain-flipping activity in the vicinity. I sense it’s in the vicinity of *my head!*”



Killdream attempted to lunge at us, but instead lunged *backwards*. He did six quick backwards somersaults in the air and then flipped and flopped and shot off in reverse—like he'd been blown out of a cannon.



As he disappeared over the dreamscape horizon, he whispered, “Now you’ve done it! You’ve gone and sprained my eyeball. Well, guess what? Now you are my number one *priority*—you and dim-witted doofballs! I will destroy every last dream, daydream, and hope and dream that any of you have ever had, and I will not rest until I do! And, speaking of rest, I never *get* any because I’m always so busy destroying an entire planet full of people’s dippy dreams! So you and all the Goofballs will be reprogrammed to be official members of the Dr. Killdream Superbad Dream Team—a worldwide franchise dedicated to the wholesale destruction of dreams! Now I think it’s time to do a little dream hopping. First stop: Blunder Mutt. BOO-HA-HA-HA!”

“Wow,” said Pooky. “He stole your laugh.”

“Yeah, what a jerk,” I said.

“And he sure was able to say an awful lot in the time it took him to disappear over that horizon,” said Pooky.

“Yeah, well,” I said, “it is a *dream* after all.”

We were floating in space, totally wiped out. That kind of genius-level brain gymnastics can really take its toll. We had kicked Killdream out of my dream . . . but he was on his way to Blunderland.

CHAPTER 22

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BLUNDER

Blunder Mutt, snoozing away in his sleeping bag on the living room floor, was dreaming of flying maraschino-cherry monkeys. And these were not regular old flying maraschino-cherry monkeys. These were the singing and dancing kind. They had really high voices and huge smiles on their faces, and they were kicking their tiny legs high and



singing a song in praise of the greatest superhero in the history of superheroes.

Funny thing though, they sounded a lot like

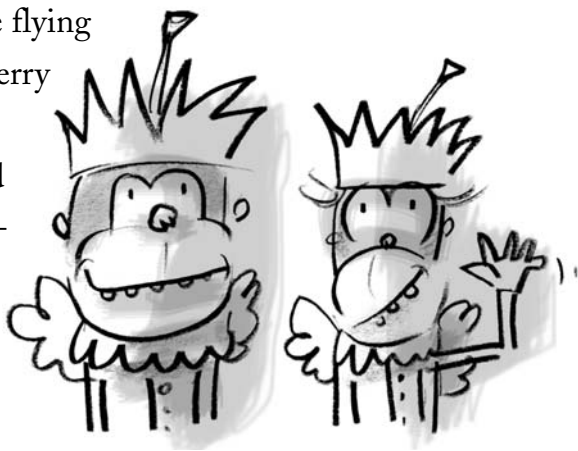


the mutt they were singing about:

*Hail, hail, O Blundee,
Great pup of wondee,
Genius so brave . . .
You . . . he be save!*

*He be so smartish . . .
Smell good, not fartish . . .
Genius so true . . .
He be save you!*

As you've probably already guessed, Blunder was having a pretty good dream. If flying maraschino-cherry monkeys aren't *your* idea of a good dream, bear in mind that we're talking about Blunder Mutt here. He was feeling the respect of a group of his all-time favorite imaginary fruit mammals. The king and queen of all the flying maraschino-cherry monkeys were there, too, and they were hosting a banquet



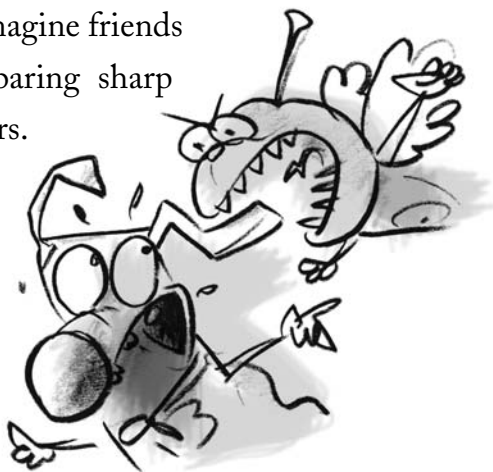
in Blunder's honor. Ahh . . . imagine the splendor.

But when Killdream blew through, Blunder's dream went bad, like a forgotten yogurt left in a locker over spring break. The cherry monkeys that Blunder had dreamed up suddenly turned on him.

Forget for a moment that we're talking about cherry monkeys here and imagine friends of *yours* all of a sudden baring sharp teeth and biting your ears.

And although Blunder's head region is quite numb, the ends of his ears are far enough from his brain to have plenty of feeling.

In fact, they are the most sensitive part of his body, in or out of dreams.



"I-yi-yi-yi-yip-yip-yippety-yippety-yyyoyowwww!" screamed Blunder. But before he even finished screaming, he found himself spread-eagled in the waiting room of a strange doctor's office, in the middle of a huge hand—that's right, surrounded by a ring of fire. And he heard the same female voice that I'd heard.

"The doctor will see you now."

Blunder was confused.

"I cornfused," he said. "This not my normal veterinary-ary's office. Plus, I goed to him recentishly, so I not due-ish for no shots or flea dips or de-worming ordealers right now, thank you berry moosh."

But of course, this particular doctor was not interested in fleas or worms.

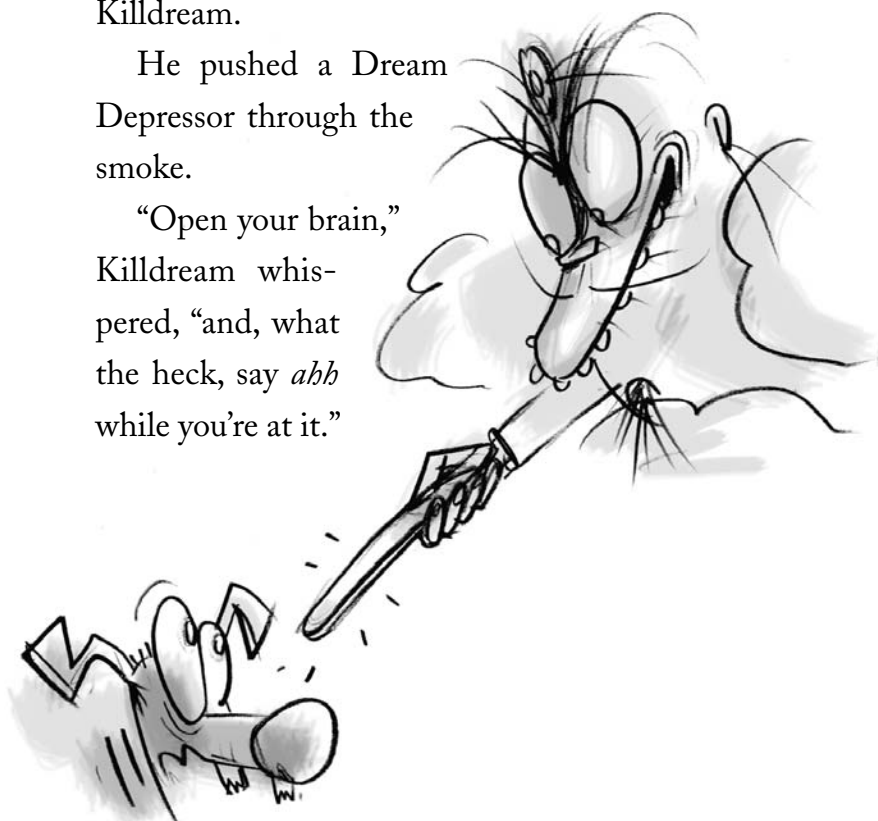
"The only good dream . . . is a dead dream . . . dream . . . dream," he said.

"I even *more* cornfused now," said Blunder.

"Maybe this will clear your head a bit," whispered Killdream.

He pushed a Dream Depressor through the smoke.

"Open your brain," Killdream whispered, "and, what the heck, say *ahh* while you're at it."



CHAPTER 23

rainout

Next, Dr. Killdream hopped from Blunder's dreamscape into Super Vacation Man's. SVM was, of course, dreaming about being on vacation, and he was incredibly happy that he was finally having one. He was just strolling on the beach, sipping a lemonade, thinking about all the fun summery stuff he had planned—about as superhappy as a superguy could be—and then . . .

Torrential rains came and ruined Super Vacation Man's vacation. But worse than that, it was hot, sizzling rain that stung his face. He stumbled barefoot on a beach of boiling quicksand, pursued by an army of killer beach umbrellas and flip-flops. Seagulls and clams joined in the chase. Super Vacation Man's ultimate dream had turned into his

worst nightmare. And all the while, he heard that horrible whispery Dr. Killdream laughing and laughing at his misfortune.



CHAPTER 24

killdreaming of you

Killdream hopped from SVM's dream to Wonder Boulder's, to SuperSass's, and so on. There isn't enough room in this book to tell the whole story of exactly how Dr. Killdream began twisting and trampling the dreams of the Goofballs. But, believe me, it was not pleasant.

Pooky and I woke up floating in midair in the living room. We hung there for a second before we crashed to the floor.

The house was full of crying, screaming, shrieking, flailing Goofballs—all experiencing the most hideous nightmares. Killdream was well on the way to rendering their dreams deader than doornails and making them part of his Superbad Dream Team.

CHAPTER 25

pathetic punster

The Frankenstein Punster shook his fists and howled in his sleep. He kept asking the same riddle and not remembering the punch line.

“WHY DUMB POKER PLAYER BUY TOILET?” he said with a look of total anguish on his face.

“Why, Punster, why?” Pooky said, trying to make contact.

But it was no use; the Punster couldn’t come up with the answer and was clearly distressed. This was a joke teller’s worst nightmare. He just kept asking the riddle over and over like a fritzed-out computer. He was sounding more and more desperate.

“WHY DUMB POKER PLAYER BUY TOILET? WHY DUMB POKER PLAYER BUY TOILET?”

“C’mom, Punster, c’mom . . . you can do it!” I cried.

But he couldn’t, and he kept repeating “*WHY DUMB POKER PLAYER BUY TOILET?*” until Pooky and I just couldn’t watch him suffer like that anymore.

“*Because he thought a flush beat a full house!*” we screamed. “You get it, Punster, you get it?!”



The Frankenstein Punster paused, and for a second I thought he'd actually heard us. But then he said, "WHY DUMB POKER PLAYER BUY TOILET!?"

"*Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!*" we screamed.

What a nightmare. What a *bunch* of nightmares! Every single Goofball was suffering in his or her own way. Something had to be done.

CHAPTER 26

prepare to Meld

pooky and I went to work. We dragged all the Goofballs into the kitchen lair, then we constructed a little gizmo we called the patented

ATD/Pooky Telepathic Dream and Nightmare

Transmitter. Not a super-catchy name, but we weren't going to market it, we were just going to use it. I built special helmets and put one on every roommate. The Goofballs looked like some kind of strange, miserable, sleeping, high-tech football team. The helmets were connected by a series of cables, which merged into one big cable



that ran through Pooky's helmet and then into mine.

Now that we were linked, Pooky could meld our minds and utilize her Super-Unfathomable-Mesmerization technique, so we'd all descend into the same bottomless sleep together and experience the same dream at the same time. And together we would battle Dr. Killdream in Subconscious Sub-basement 86.

"We'll have to watch out, though . . ." said Pooky.

"I know, I know," I said, "our minds might get permanently melded into one mind. Let's hope it's not Blunder's."

"Plus—" she said.

"I know, I know," I said, "our heads might explode. Let's hope that they don't."

We had no choice. It was a risk we had to take. This was Granny and the Goofballs after all.

CHAPTER 27

WE ALL GO DOWN TOGETHER

I flipped the switch on the ATD/Pooky Telepathic Dream and Nightmare Transmitter, which turned on with a crackle, buzz, and hum. Sparks flew from all the connections. Flames danced along every cable. I looked around at the sleeping Goofballs and saw their eyes spiraling like Pooky's.

And then everything went black. And silent. Back to Subconscious Sub-basement 86.

The silence was broken by Pooky's voice: "Killdream, come out, wherever you are . . . are . . . are!"

At first I thought Pooky was imitating



Killdream again, just to taunt him, but her voice had gone all echoey for another reason. She was speaking through a microphone hooked up to a huge sound system. Where she got it I have no idea. It was a dream.

Speaking of which, I suddenly noticed we were in a wrestling ring in a huge wrestling arena, surrounded by bleachers filled with thousands of screaming fans. I thought the mind wrestling we'd done earlier was weird, but this took the cake. We were the main attractions in a wilder, crazier version of the kind of wrestling you see on TV, where everybody dresses up in ridiculous costumes and screams and yells and jumps around and pulls hair and throws chairs and acts like raving lunatics. There's a rumor going around that *some* of that TV wrestling might *perhaps* be fake, but this nightmare was totally real.



CHAPTER 28

The subconscious sub-basement Memorial Arena

So there we all were, except, maybe I forgot to mention, it wasn't actually *us*, it was our *brains*, and our brains were wearing wrestling outfits. Our wrestling names were on our brains' "chest":

Pooky's brain: the Paranormal Pile Driver.

Wonder Boulder's brain: the Gray Matter Smatterer.

The Frankenstein Punster's brain: 2 Tons of Pun.

SuperSass's brain: the Teenyboppin' Headbopper.

Blunder Mutt's brain: the Lamebrainiac.

Then it seems like whoever it is who works in the costume department of the Subconscious Sub-basement Memorial Arena gave up on thinking of cool wrestling names. The rest of our costumes said: Super



Vacation Man's *Brain*, The Bodacious Backwards Woman's *Brain*, T-TeX3000's *Brain*, Mighty Tightly Whitey's *Brain*, The Impossibly Tough Two-Headed Infant's *Brain*, etc., etc.'s *Brain*.

Anyway, despite these very excellent wrestling personas, I have never seen a more pathetic bunch of brains. The Goofballs had all just been through traumatic nightmares, courtesy of Killdream, and their brains were cowering in a corner of the ring, shivering in fear.

Just then we looked up and saw Dr. Killdream floating down from the rafters. He had a fistful of Dream Depressors. He, too, was dressed like a wrestler.

His face was an ever-changing swirl of images.



What we saw in Killdream's face was different for each of us, but we were all being shown previews of the deaths of our personal dreams.

At first, Mighty Tightly Whitey saw himself hanging on

a clothesline in the summer, basking in sun-dried freshness . . . and then that turned bad and he saw himself at the bottom of a heap of filthy laundry, suffocating in crusty crud too disgusting for words, but I'll try a few words: nauseating, vomit-inspiring, upchuck-o-licious. I guess those'll do.



'Terrifyin' Tubesock Lad saw himself on the foot of the greatest soccer player in the world, just about to kick the winning goal in the World Cup and then—wha?—he found himself on the floor of a junior high locker room, drowning in a filthy cesspool of swirling fungus.

SuperSass CuteGirl saw herself being crowned Saggiest, Cutest, Girliest Girl in Sassy-Cute-Girl History, and then—*bam*—having the title taken away because . . . well, because, like, that evil Killdream was in charge, that's why!

The Impossibly Tough Two-Headed Infant saw himself/themselves finally growing up, being toilet trained, growing taller than the average two-month old, and then—*bam*—crawling back into their momma's belly for an eternal pregnancy. Their poor momma.



Wonder Boulder saw himself being sculpted by Michelangelo, but instead got pulverized and made into a concrete sidewalk.

T-TeX3000 saw himself returning to his own time but arrived just in time to go extinct.

Scoodlyboot saw Blunder's love . . . turning back into Blunder's hate.

Granny saw her grandson's happiness . . . turning into our current situation.

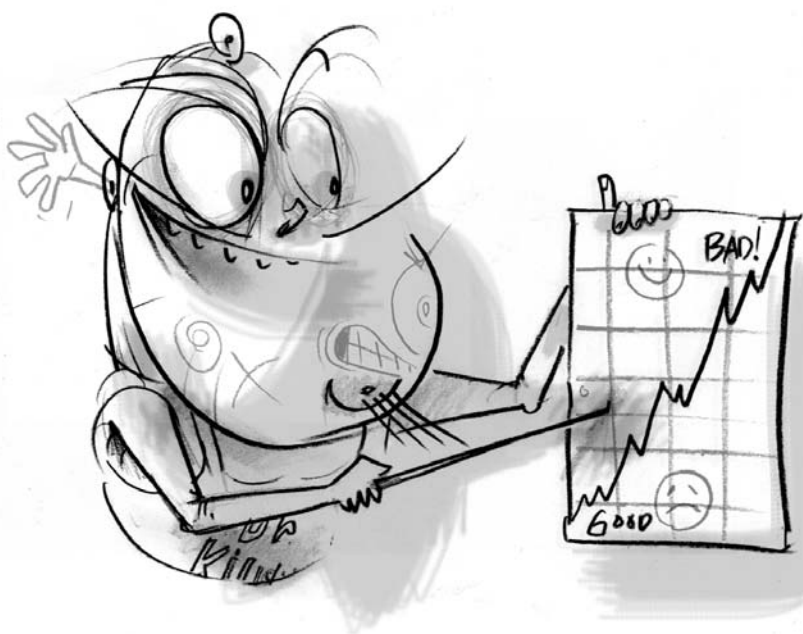


CHAPTER 29

Bad IS BUSTing out All over

Dr. Killdream whispered in his famous whisper, “First, I’d like to thank you for this opportunity. In all my delightfully dreadful dream-killing days and nights I have never found myself in such a dreamy situation. Dude, I am so very grateful to you for gathering all the Super Goofball brains together in one place. Gosh, it really simplifies things for me and I truly appreciate it. After my previous prep work, you’re all poised to have your sweetest dreams plucked and permanently replaced by your worst nightmares. As I explained earlier, you’ll all become card-carrying members of my exclusive Superbad Dream Team and, as such, will assist me in trampling the dreams of all humans and most other animals for, let me see . . . oh, yeah, all eternity. So, the

good news is that business is booming in the being-bad industry. Thanks to my wonderfully horrible hard work, dream demolition is up ten percent, dashed hopes are through the roof, and heartbreaking disappointments are at an all-time high. In short, this is a very, very good time to be me. Speaking of time . . . anybody know what time it is?"



CHAPTER 30

Get Ready to Rumble?

“**A**s a matter of fact, I do,” said Pooky.
“Oh, that’s right,” he replied. “You know *everything*. Then you know it’s time for all of you to open your brains and say *abbb*.”

“Think again, Dr. Killdream,” she said. “It’s actually time to *get ready to rumble . . . rumble . . . rumble!*”

The crowd went wild.

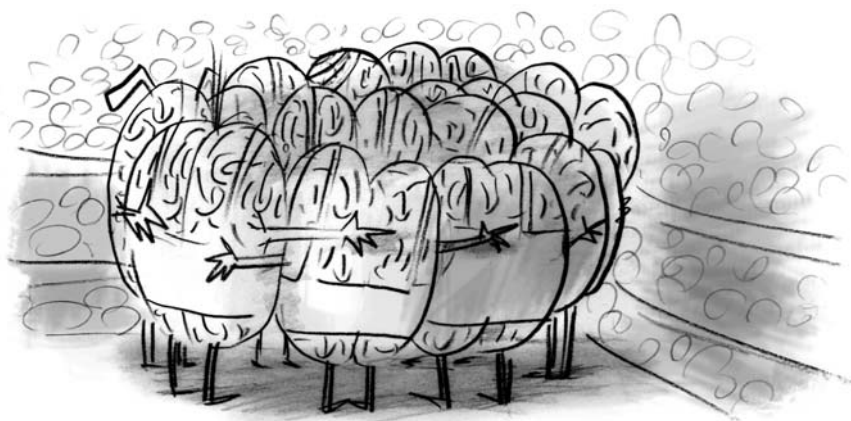
“Okay, birdy,” said Killdream, “but you can just forget about that whole brain-flipping nonsense. I buckled my brain in with a brain belt I had specially made down in the bad-dream factory and it’s one hundred percent guaranteed unflippable.”





Pooky's face fell. Hoo boy . . . there went *that* plan.

I quickly gathered all the scared-stiff Goofball brains into a huddle. Of course, they were worthless.



I needed more time to think. I took the microphone from Pooky's brain and gave it into Blunder Mutt's brain.

"Okay, Blunder's brain," I said, "how about you introduce the big wrestling match?"

"Okee," he said nervously. "Laddies and ginger-mans . . . welcome to the wrestlinating place, called . . . me don't know . . ."

The crowd booed.

"That's okay, Blunder's brain. You take your time.
In fact, talk *slower*."

"Okee. In dis corner, weighing . . . um . . . me have
no idea . . . 'cause . . . um . . . the human brainy 'posed
to weigh three pounds or so . . . but who know how
much stuffs weigh in dreamin'
world? I mean, brainses could
be a thousands pounds or
jest a teeny ounces . . ."

"Get to the point,
Lamebrainiac!" said
Killdream.



"The pointy is, I
terrified!" whimpered
Blunder's brain.

"Yes," said
Super Vacation
Man's brain.

"We're all scared out of our—*buzz, dzzzit, crackle*—
minds, if that's even *possible* for brains!"

"Booooooooooooo!" howled the
crowd.



They wanted action. One goonish-looking guy stood up and yelled, “C’mon! Cut the chitchat! We paid our money—well, *dream* money, anyway—and we wanna see wild, weird, sweaty brains beat each other batty in the ring!”



They started to chant, saying “wrastle” instead of “wrestle.”

“Wrastle, brains, wrastle! Wrastle, brains, wrastle!”

Did I mention this was a *weird* dream?

“Wrastle, brains, wrastle!”

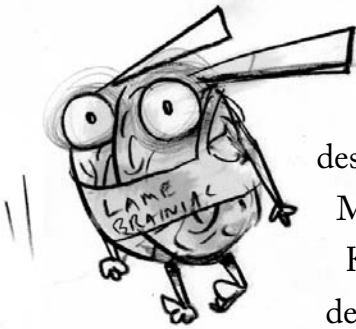
Dr. Killdream lowered himself slowly into the ring.

“Wrastle, brains, wrastle!”

“Seems like the riffraff wants *wrastling*,” he whispered very, very loudly, “so . . . let the rumble begin . . . begin . . . begin!”

Dr. Killdream stepped toward us, twirling his Dream Depressors like batons.

Meanwhile, I’d been trying to think up a plan, but

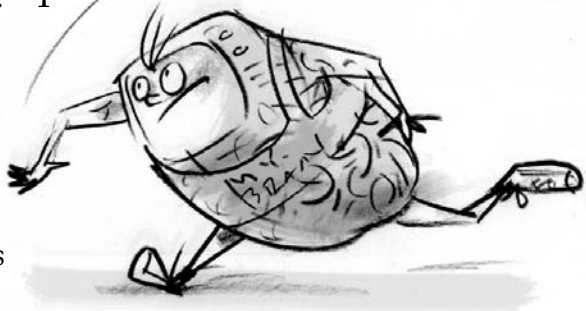


I hadn't come up with much.

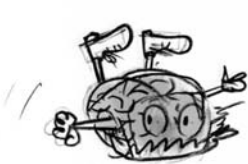
So I tried something desperate. I picked up Blunder Mutt's brain and chucked it at Killdream. Okay, I was *really* desperate.

"Take *that!*" I cried.

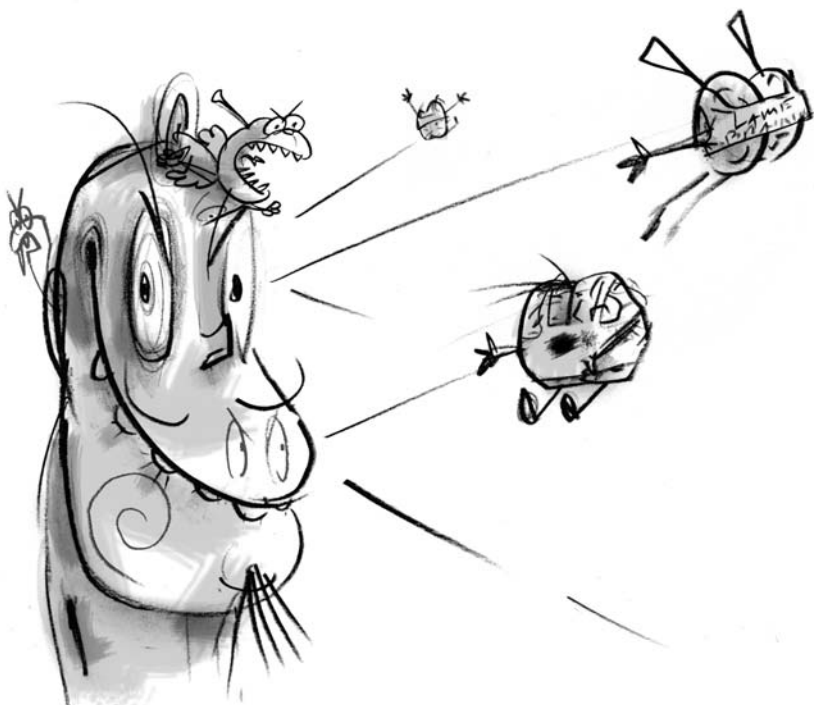
"Hey, why the heck's you *throwin'* me?!" cried Blunder's brain.



I heaved more and more Goofball brains at Killdream, and the crowd went wild!



But the brains bounced right off. They didn't bother Killdream at all! They ricocheted around like a bunch of pink, wrinkled basketballs. Some flew out of



the ring entirely and the spectators just tapped them back into play.

“Wrastle, brains, wrestle!”

CHAPTER 31

What the Heck channel is this?

Back in the living room, I was asleep on the floor and—although I don't completely understand the physics of it—the entire dream was being displayed on my monitor-helmet screen. So, when Sergeant Bub McButt walked into the house, searching for Mayor What's-His-Name, who had mysteriously disappeared from his office, he stared at what was playing on my monitor and thought it was some strange, experimental TV show.

He craved a TV-watching snack, so he went to the kitchen lair and found a certain large cup-shaped trophy full of popcorn.

"Those superheroes I've never met are sure super-dumb. Not only is this the superweirdest popcorn I've ever seen," he said, trying to lift the trophy, "but they

must have popped it in some sort of superheavy oil. Hmm . . . it's superdelish, though."

He almost got a hernia pushing the trophy into the living room.

He offered some popcorn to all the Goofballs lying around with sparking, buzzing helmets on, but none of them responded because their brains were, of course, bouncing around a wrestling arena, participants in the very event that McButt was watching on my screen.

McButt took his shoes off, put his feet up, munched, and cheered along with the raving fanatics in the stands . . . in the dream.

"This is one weird show," he said. "Almost dream-like." And then he nodded off.



CHAPTER 32

Big Heap o' Helplessness

Meanwhile, all the Goofball brains had landed in a heap in a corner of the ring, on top of Pooky and me. Wonder Boulder's brain (aka the Gray Matter Splatterer), slammed right onto my brain's toe. *Ouch!* The brains had seemed light as feathers when they were bouncing off



Killdream, but I guess the weight of objects fluctuates a bit in Subconscious Sub-basement 86.

Killdream grinned and fanned the glistening Dream Depressors in his hands, like a knife thrower preparing to take aim. Each depressor was personalized with one of our names. Wrestling-wise, he was moving in to perform his twelve-part finishing move. With twelve quick flicks of his wrist, he would dash all of our dreams forever.



He turned slowly and looked us over, trying to decide who would be his first target. I wasn't surprised when he focused on Pooky. He was pretty mad at her.

Especially after that sprained eyeball and everything.

He smiled, raised an eyebrow, and squinted, taking



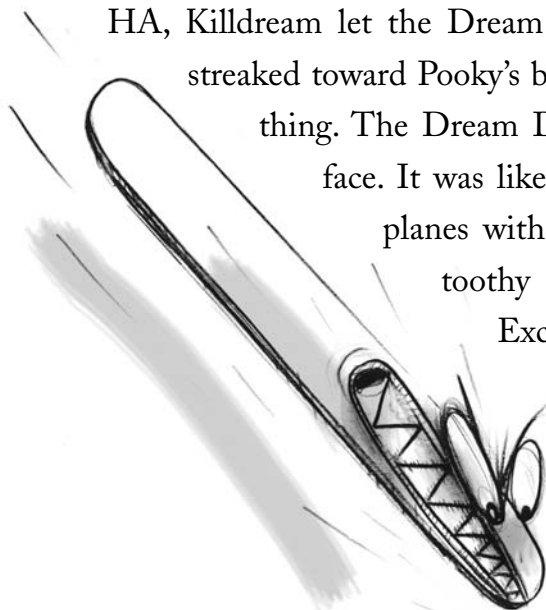
aim at the small purple bird brain. I'm not calling Pooky a *birdbrain*—you know, someone who's not that smart or is all confused or something—I just mean Killdream was aiming at her actual *brain*, which was purple and normally located in the head of a *bird*.

And then, with a huge, whispery BOO-HA-HA-HA, Killdream let the Dream Depressor fly. As it

streaked toward Pooky's brain, I noticed something. The Dream Depressor had a little face. It was like one of those fighter planes with eyes and a snarling, toothy frown painted on it.

Except this face wasn't painted on, it was real. And where there's a face, there's usually a brain.

I quickly thought something to Pooky, and together we hitched our brain shoulders, twitched our brain eyebrows, and instantly flipped the tiny brain of that airborne depressor. It screeched to a dead stop in midair, then turned around in a flash and shot off in the other direction toward Killdream. Unfortunately,



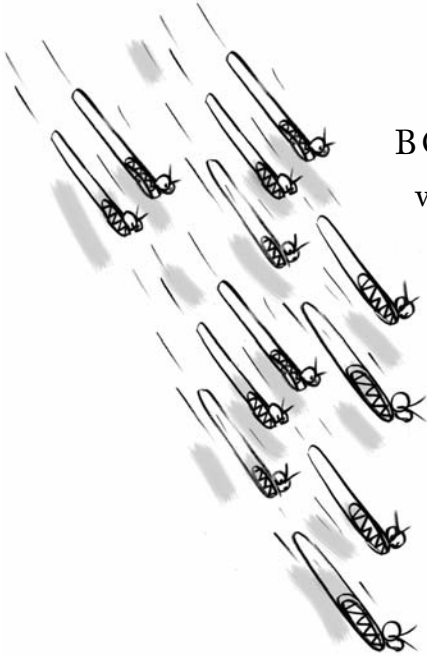
he expertly caught it in his hand.

“Nice work,” he said. “But try flipping the brains of all of these at once! BOO-HA-HA-HA!”

He pulled back his arm, poised to hurl all twelve Dream Depressors. There was no way that Pooky’s brain and my brain could respond fast enough to prevent every single one of them from reaching its target.

Why not just use the Amazing Techno Dude Handheld Remote to pause the depressors in midair? you might ask. Well, unfortunately, the remote had been smashed to smithereens in a recent alien invasion, and, to tell you the truth, I had gotten sick and tired of rebuilding the darn thing all the time, so I hadn’t. But wait . . . since this was a *dream*, I could just *dream up* a remote! Aren’t dreams wonderful? So I did and the remote appeared right in front of me, but when I reached for it, it *bit* me! Left some huge teeth marks in my brain hand! Aren’t dreams *horrible*?! I dreamed that it was smashed to smithereens again, and it was.





Dr. Killdream laughed—
BOO-HA-HA-HA!—and
with one swift motion, he
hurled all twelve Dream
Depressors right at us!

Yikes! We needed
help from the Goofball
brains—but they were too
terrified to move. I thought
to myself *If I could just give
them a pep talk—one of those
rah-rah-you-can-do-it kinds
of speeches to bolster their courage—maybe I could get those
scaredy-brains into gear. But that kind of persuasive speech
is tricky and takes time . . . and there is no time!*

Pooky's brain smiled. She'd heard me thinking and she thought something back: "Did I happen to mention that with my turban's hyper-speed function I can crank up my Two-way Mind-reading powers to four hundred times their normal speed?"

"No," I thought back to her, "I'm pretty sure you didn't happen to mention that."

I thought a pep talk to Pooky's brain and she thought the same pep talk to the roommate brains—



at hyperspeed. To get the full effect, you'd have to read the following speech twice in exactly one thirteenth of a second, so you can just forget about the *full* effect. For a *partial* effect, merely try reading it faster than you ever thought humanly possible:

“Awww . . . look at the poor Goofball brains—brain teeth chattering, brain knees knocking, brain lips quivering. I’m here to tell you that I feel your brain pain. What you need is a nice, relaxing brain

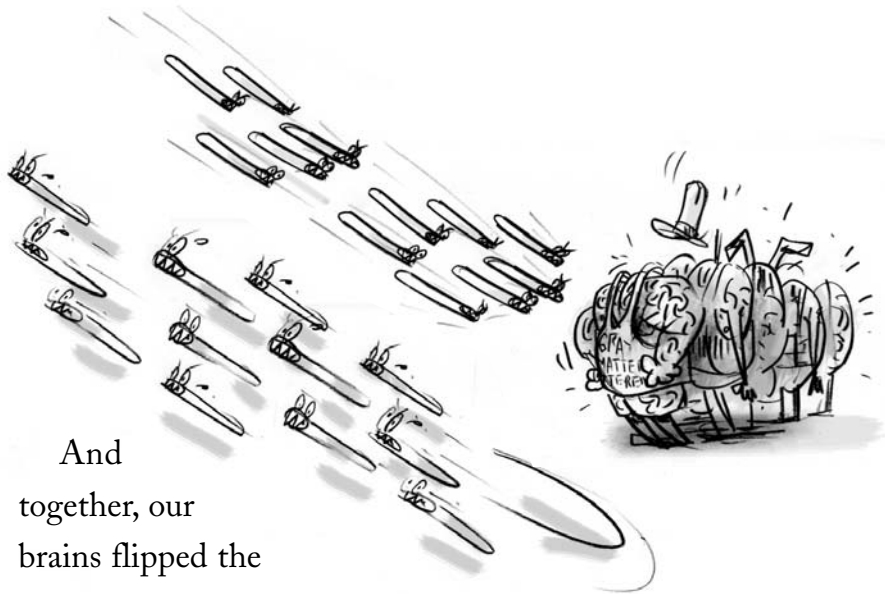
break—some time to kick back and recharge the old brain batteries. You deserve it, you really do. But you know what? HELLO—WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT! TWELVE TERRIBLE DREAM DEPRESSORS ARE BEARING DOWN ON US *AS WE SPEAK!* SO LISTEN UP, GOOFBALL BRAINS: GET OFF YOUR BRAIN BEHINDS AND HELP US BEFORE OUR DREAMS, DAY-DREAMS, AND HOPES AND DREAMS GO DOWN THE BRAIN DRAIN FOREVER!”



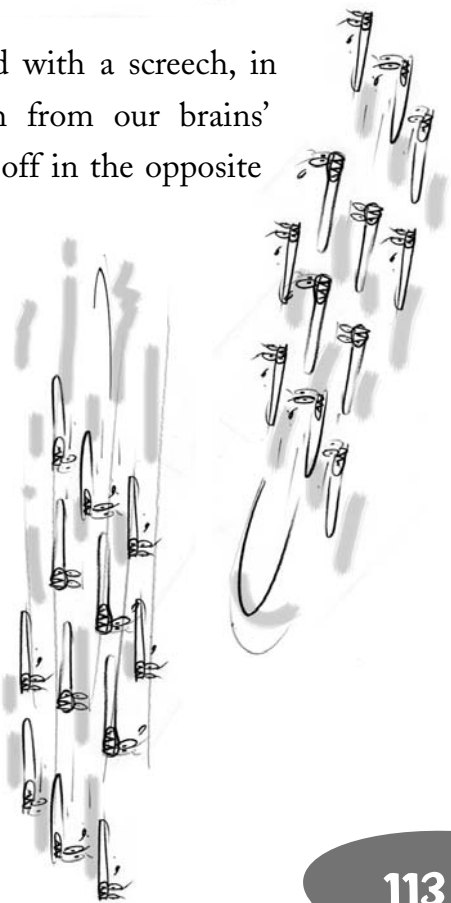
The Goofball brains leaped to their feet. Every last one of them—from the Paranormal Pile Driver to the Gray Matter Smatterer to 2 Tons of Pun to the

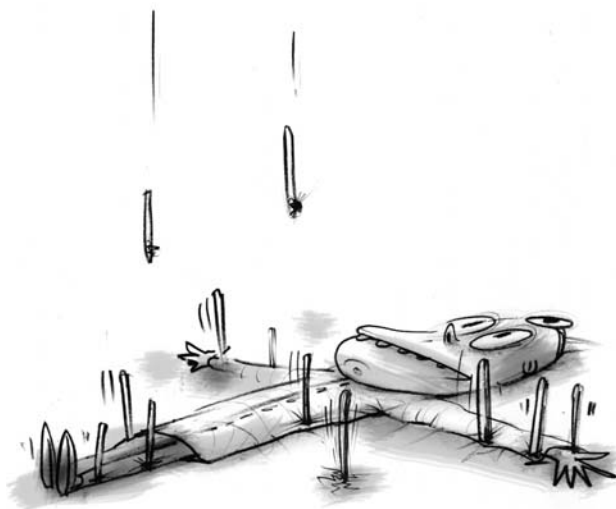
Teenyboppin' Headbopper to the Lamebrainiac to all of those whose brain names ended with *Brain*—hitched their shoulders and jerked from side to side, like they were dancing to music that only they could hear.





And
together, our
brains flipped the
brains of every last Dream
Depressor. They all stopped with a screech, in
midair, about half an inch from our brains'
chests. The depressors shot off in the opposite
direction, just missing
Killdream. They soared
over the crowd, took a
sharp turn straight up,
hesitated for a second,
looped over backwards,
and then plunged straight
down. And then—*thwit*,
thwit, *thwit*, *thwit*—they
pinned Dr. Killdream to
the mat.





The crowd went bananas. Actually, they were already bananas, but they went way *more* bananas.

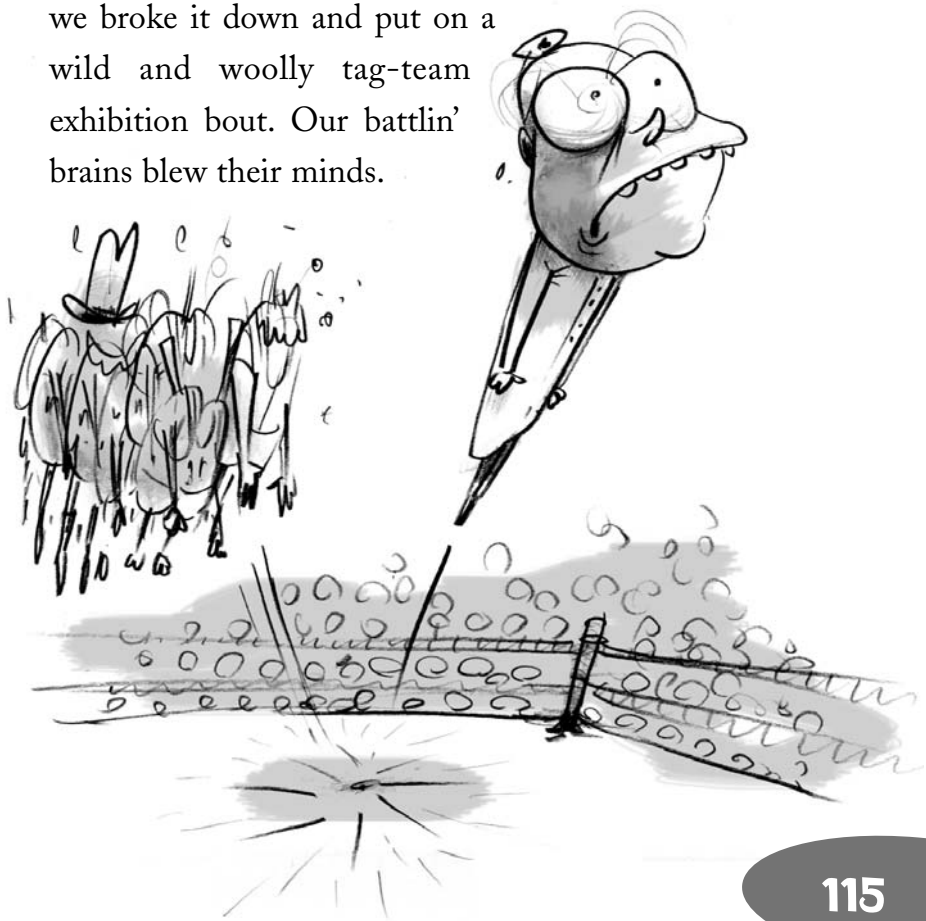
The Goofball brains flexed their brain muscles, striking lots of ridiculous bodybuilding poses for the fans. Our brains were all feeling a lot better about themselves—like the roughest, toughest grapplers on the entire dream brain wrestling circuit. Our fears had vanished and our long nightmare was finally turning into a good dream.

And there was no room for Killdream in a dream like that. We yanked the Dream Depressors out of the mat and lifted him over our heads. We had never actually discussed what a Super Goofball finishing move would be, but somehow it just came naturally.

We threw Dr. Killdream downward as hard as we could onto the mat. He bounced up over our heads,

out over the crowd (now screaming with the kind of hysteria that only down and dirty brain wrestling can inspire), and Killdream flew right out of our dreams, hopefully forever.

The fans were now so out of their minds with excitement that we decided to give them a little wrestling demonstration. First, we formed a Super Goofball Brain pyramid. Pooky, of course, was on top, and she got a standing ovation from the crowd. Then we broke it down and put on a wild and woolly tag-team exhibition bout. Our battlin' brains blew their minds.



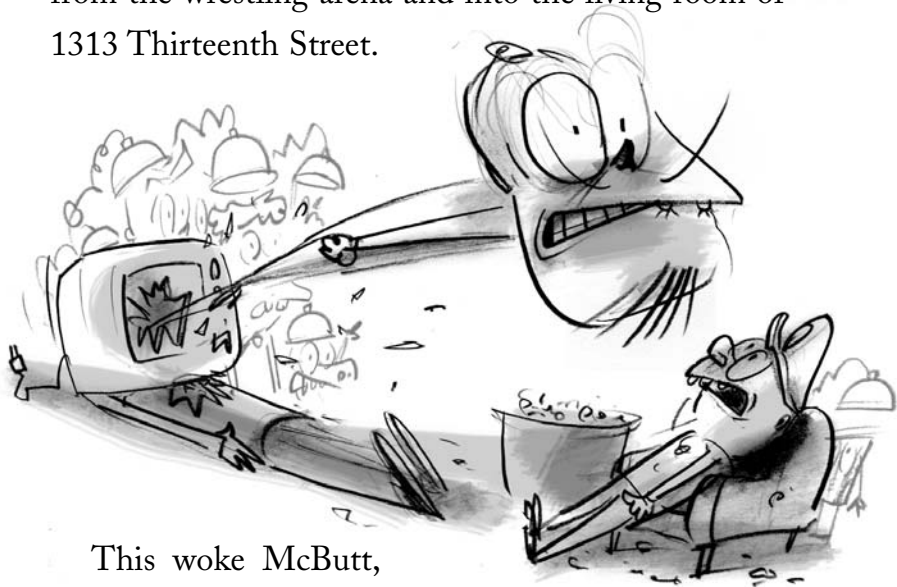
CHAPTER 33

Wow, 3-D!

Meanwhile, Sergeant Bub McButt was sleeping soundly on our living room couch, having a dream of his own. It was the one he always has: He is a superhero called the Blasting McButtster and he has powers that can't be described in detail in a high-class publication such as this. But, anyway, he was saving the world. The bad guy was getting away and McButt was just about to blast off after him using the high-voltage gas-powered blast-o-rama jet propulsion that the Blasting McButtster is so famous for. He was determined to catch that bad guy and be awarded a bunch of medals and trophies, because the reason McButt pretends not to know us is that he is very, very, very jealous.

Just as McButt was bearing down on the bad guy,

Killdream crashed through my monitor screen, direct from the wrestling arena and into the living room of 1313 Thirteenth Street.



This woke McButt, who took one look at the fractured Killdream coming toward him and thought the show he'd been watching had suddenly gone 3-D.

"AHHHHH!" he screamed.

Dr. Killdream landed in Super Vacation Man's kiddie pool with a splash, a gurgle, and a cough.

CHAPTER 34

Getting Real

This woke Mayor What's-His-Name, who popped his head up out of the popcorn like a rabbit coming out of its hole or somebody coming out of a birthday cake or—well, like something silly coming out of something silly.

Which caused McButt to scream again: “AHHHHH *again!*” he screamed.

The mayor, who had been dreaming sweet dreams of sleeping during long, boring meetings, also screamed. “No, have mercy, I beg you! Please allow me to keep dreaming sweet dreams of sleeping!”



This woke the rest of us.

We rubbed our eyes and looked around. We saw Killdream for the sad little fellow that he was in the light of day. He cowered in the kiddie pool—shrunk, prune, and powerless.



“Exactly what kind of doctor *are* you, anyway?” I asked.



“Not any kind of doctor.” He sniffled. “I just thought Dr. Killdream sounded slightly cooler than my *real* name.”

“Why?” I said. “What’s your real name?”

“My real name is C. P. Wilbur Toady.”

“That not so bad,” said Wonder Boulder.

“What’s the C. P. stand for?” asked SuperSass.

“Like, how bad could it be?”

“It stands for Cow Pie,” said Toady.

“Hmmm,” said Biff.

"Pretty bad," said Smiff.

"Name bad very, very, very a that's," said the Bodacious Backwards Woman.

"I cornfused though, doctor who not ackshly doctor," said Blunder Mutt. "Why the hecks you decided to be *bad*?"

I thought about how *I* had gone bad. "I guess sometimes people just forget what their dreams are," I said.

"Sometimes I forget what my name are, what my friends's nameses are, what my job are, what town I lives in, where my house be, which ways my pants go on, which way up, and what color snow is good to eat," said Blunder, "but I never forgets my dreams."

"That's the thing," said Killdream—or Toady or Cow Pie or whatever you want to call him. "I have no dreams."

Granny, always one to seek out the good in everybody, said, "Dream a had *ever* you haven't, back think, Toady Wilbur Pie Cow Mr., awww?"



Toady looked up, thought for a moment, and said wistfully, “Well . . . come to think of it, I *did* have a dream . . . many years ago . . . but somehow I forgot about it when I decided to become the creepiest superbad slime bucket in slime bucket history, dedicated to destroying the dreams of everyone in this world and all other worlds, real or imagined, forever.”

“Well,” said T-TeX3000, flicking his electrically charged blue tongue, “you certainly were *ambitious* anyway.”

“Mr. Toady,” I said, “what was that *original* dream?”

He thought for a while. “You know . . . at one time . . . I wanted to be a roadie for a rock and roll band,” he said.

CHAPTER 35

on the road

That was all the Goofballs needed to hear. *They* shared a dream to be *in* a rock and roll band. Blunder called the Invisible Superbad Blue-Fanged Ferret, who instantly appeared, already tuning his guitar. They decided to go on tour immediately and told Toady to load their equipment into the Backwardsmobile, which he did . . . happily.

I made a deal with him: “If you promise to never go back to your superevil Dr. Killdream ways, we promise never to tell anyone what C. P. stands for.”

“Deal,” he said.

“Horray for Toady . . . Super Roady,” we cheered, peeling out backwards down Thirteenth Street.

The mayor called after us: “How long will you be gone? Where do you want your huge new batch of



trophies to be delivered? How can I get in touch with you?!”

“You call we’ll, us call don’t!” cried the Bodacious Backwards Woman.

Although we were happier to be together than

we'd been in a long, long time, we started arguing before we got to the end of the block. Sure, we were sharing a dream, but let's get serious, these are Super Goofballs we're talking about.

Afterward

I was speeding along backwards in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night. Everyone had drifted off except Pooky and she hopped onto the dashboard.

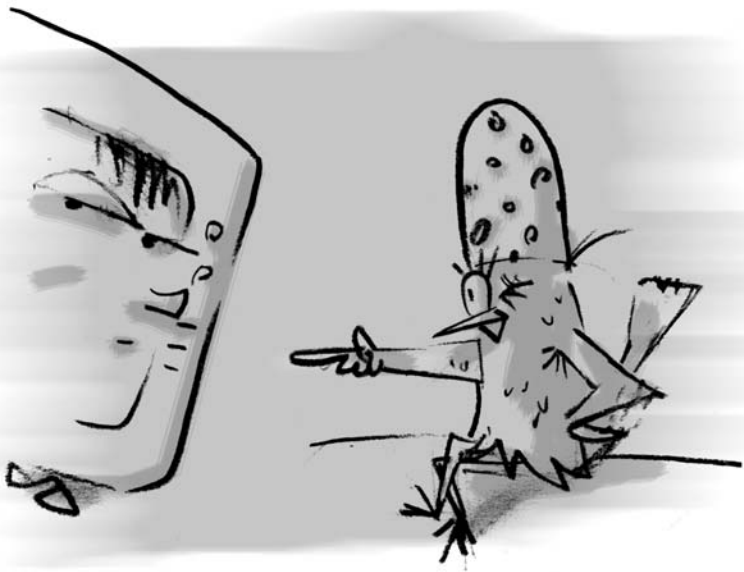
“You know, ATD,” she said, “I think being your sidekick might be a bad idea.”

“Really?” I said. “I thought we made a pretty good team.”

“Well,” she said, “now that I know you want to *date* me, I predict it would make our working relationship a bit *uncomfortable*.”

Talk about delusions of grandeur.

“No offense, Pookster, but you’re a two-inch bird with terrible worm breath,” I said. “Believe me, I do *not* want to date you.”



“Sure, sure,” she replied, “I knew you’d say that.”

About the Author

Peter Hannan is an artist, writer, producer, and professional goofball. He is six feet one inch tall in his bare feet, eight feet three inches tall in his special shoes, and several miles high in his supershoes. He is shockingly handsome. People have been known to faint when they see him. He is the creator of the animated TV series *CatDog*, which is based on a true story. His writing, illustrations, and single-panel cartoons have appeared in lots of newspapers, magazines, and books. He lives in sunny California with his perfect wife and kids.

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Creepoids!

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Typography by Joel Tippie

Cover art © 2007 by Peter Hannan

Cover design by Joel Tippie

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Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader March 2009
ISBN 978-0-06-185568-9

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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