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Yeti Another Bad Thing

The bad things started happening one at a time.

At first I hardly noticed. It was just small stuff like Mum buying the wrong cereal – porridge instead of Coco Pops. Then it was the juice – she accidentally bought bottled water instead. Shortly after that she started reading this weird book about how to stay calm which had exercises in it that she made me help her with. I had to ring this tiny tinkly bell every fifteen seconds or so while she stared at the pips on a strawberry and *stilled her inner self*. Strawberry pips are very calming apparently. But not calming enough; after about a week Mum flung her copy of *101 Ways to Stay Calm* across the room at me and said if I didn't stop playing the tune to Harry Hill's TV show on the tinkly bell, she'd have me adopted. But I didn't believe her: everyone loves that tune.

Still, I went and had a lie-down in my room after that and practised Way to Stay Calm No 89. The book said you should not make negative statements such as *I don't like cheese on toast*; you should practice saying what you *do* like. I tried really hard to do that exercise but it was impossible: what's not to like about cheese on toast?

I held on to the book anyway. I thought maybe it would come in handy if the bad stuff kept happening. And I was right, because the very next day, disaster struck.

I was walking down to art class minding my own business when it happened. A yeti had its hands around my throat and was throttling me. I tried really hard to stay calm by thinking of something positive to say, but you try being positive when someone has their great big sausage fingers wrapped round your neck and see how far you get. Actually, I love sausages so I tried saying *I like sausages* but then I started imagining myself eating The Yeti's fingers. (With beans. And chips.) And that had the reverse effect of making me very, very *un-calm*.

Now, before I go any further I want to apologise here and now to yetis everywhere. They get a bad press and I hate to be the one to add to it, but the fact is I am being bullied by a yeti lookalike. Eddie Lyttle.

Eddie Lyttle is this great big fat bully who wears his hair down the front of his face so you can't see his eyes and goes around terrorising normal people who cut their hair because they actually want to see where they are going. If The Yeti wore glasses, like me, he'd appreciate his eyesight more. Anyway never mind that, back to being strangled.

I was very possibly laughing to myself when the attack happened. And no, I'm not some kind of giggling-freak-weirdo type; I'm a comedian. Well, OK, I'm not a comedian yet, but I'm going to be one when I grow up, like Harry Hill (except maybe not bald). So I need to get in lots of practice and I tell myself jokes all the time. Yetis don't like jokes.

They prefer strangling people. I don't even know where The Yeti came from. A stealth bully, that's him. Which is pretty impressive because he is only fourteen and already he is nearly six foot tall and he's about six foot wide as well, so stealth operations are a big deal for him.

'What you laughing at?' he grunted.

Why do bullies always grunt? Is it something they learn in Bully Club?

Rule one: On no account speak clearly so that your victim might understand you and give you what you want. Grunt at all times to prolong the agony.

It's psychological warfare, that's what it is. I considered telling him that his grunting tactic was probably illegal under the terms of the Geneva Convention. But he was squeezing my neck so tightly that my tonsils were in danger of coming out my nostrils, so a history lesson was really out of the question.

'Agh, lugh, aah monchk, bachk,' I said instead, which translated from the original Chokingese means, 'Lunch money's in bag. Take it.'

The Yeti knew exactly what I was saying. He let go of me, plundered my rucksack, shoved my lunch money into his pocket and trudged off, leaving me late for art.

'You are late,' the teacher said.

Have you noticed how teachers are masters of stating the obvious?

'You are making a habit of this, Philip,' Miss Franks said.

'I'm really sorry, Miss,' I said in what should have been my normal voice, but the words came out in this high-

pitched squeal, like some kind of high-frequency signal intended to search out dolphins and other marine life. My voice is always doing that these days. And that's when the next bad thing happened: Lucy Wells burst out laughing at me.

Girls' hearing must be on the same frequency as dolphins', because they all heard me and joined in laughing too and pretty soon the whole class was having a laugh at my expense, but it was Lucy Wells's laughter that stung. She is this blonde goddess who inhabits my art class. I know that sounds a bit sappy and I don't want you to go thinking I am some kind of saddy love sick muppet, but you should see her: she is perfection.

She has beautiful hair and beautiful teeth and beautiful eyes and beautiful ears and beautiful hands, even her knuckles are beautiful. And even when she is sniggering at you for being late and getting told off, she has a beautiful laugh.

Oh, yeah, and one other thing: she hates me.

My best friend Ang (weird name, I'll explain later) is the only person who knows about Lucy and me. I told him about her one lunchtime after I thought she'd smiled at me. Turned out she was smiling at the guy behind me, who is a year above me.

'Behind you *and* above you?' Ang laughed. 'That could prove tricky.'

'It's a spatial challenge,' I said.

'A spatial challenge for a spatial boy,' Ang said.

'Aww,' I said, 'you're spatial too.' And we both fell about laughing.

Good times.

‘Philip!’ Miss Franks said. ‘Are you listening to me? You look like you’re in a world of your own.’

‘Yes. No. I am,’ I said. I can be very articulate when I try.

‘That’s three weeks in a row,’ Miss Franks went on. ‘I’m sorry, Philip, but I’ll have to give you detention again. It’s policy.’

‘I’m sorry, Miss Franks,’ I said. ‘I got held up.’

‘*Literally*,’ I whispered to Ang as I slid on to a seat beside him.

‘The Yeti?’ he whispered back.

I nodded. ‘He ransacked my rucksack.’

‘He rucksacked your ransack?’

‘No, he sackranked my sugrag.’

‘Your sugrag! The big pervert!’

Then we both burst out laughing and we both ended up with detention. Yet another bad thing.