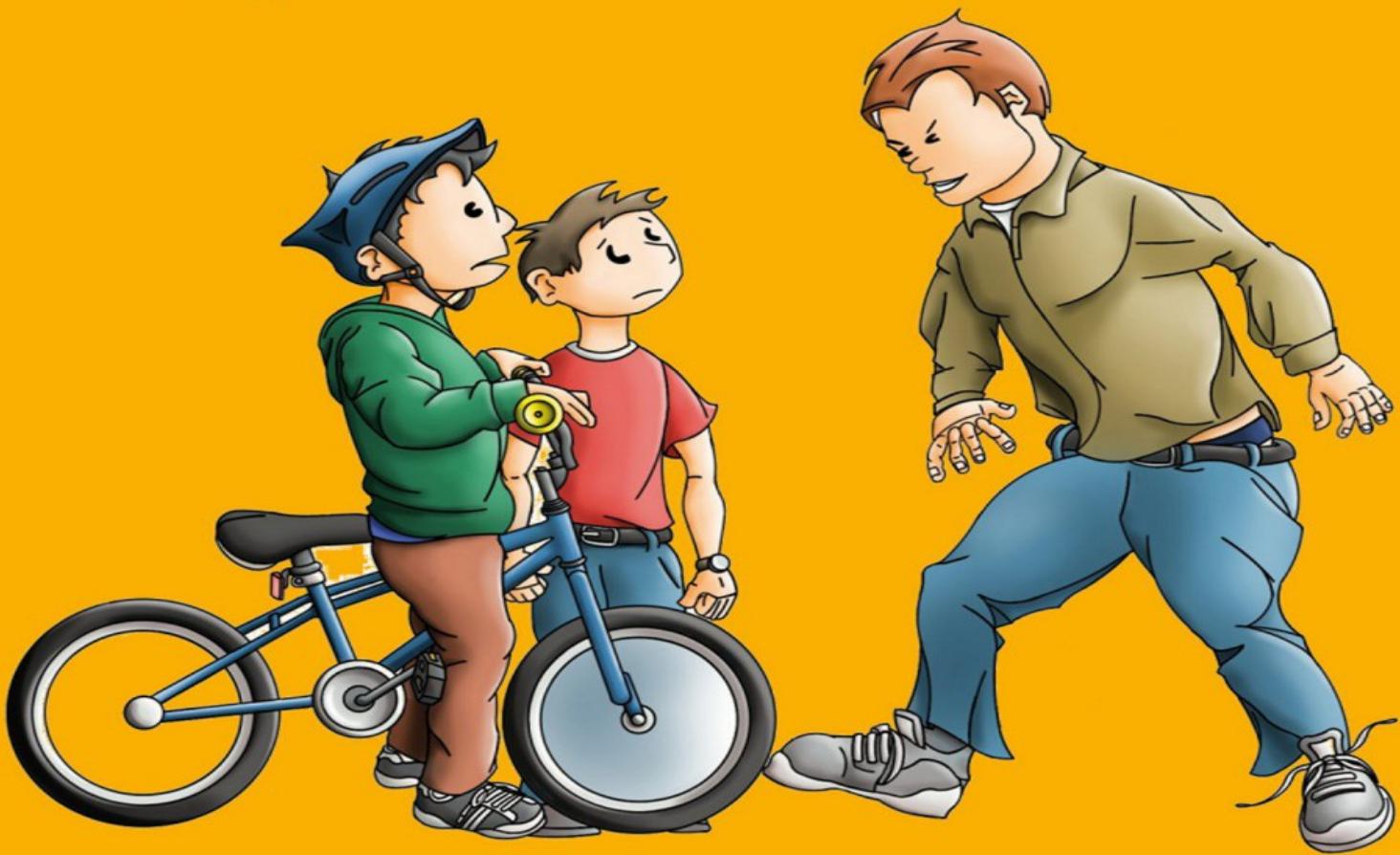


# BILLY GETS BULLIED

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**Billy Gets Bullied**

**Billy Growing Up Series:  
Bullying**

**James Minter**

**Helen Rushworth – Illustrator**

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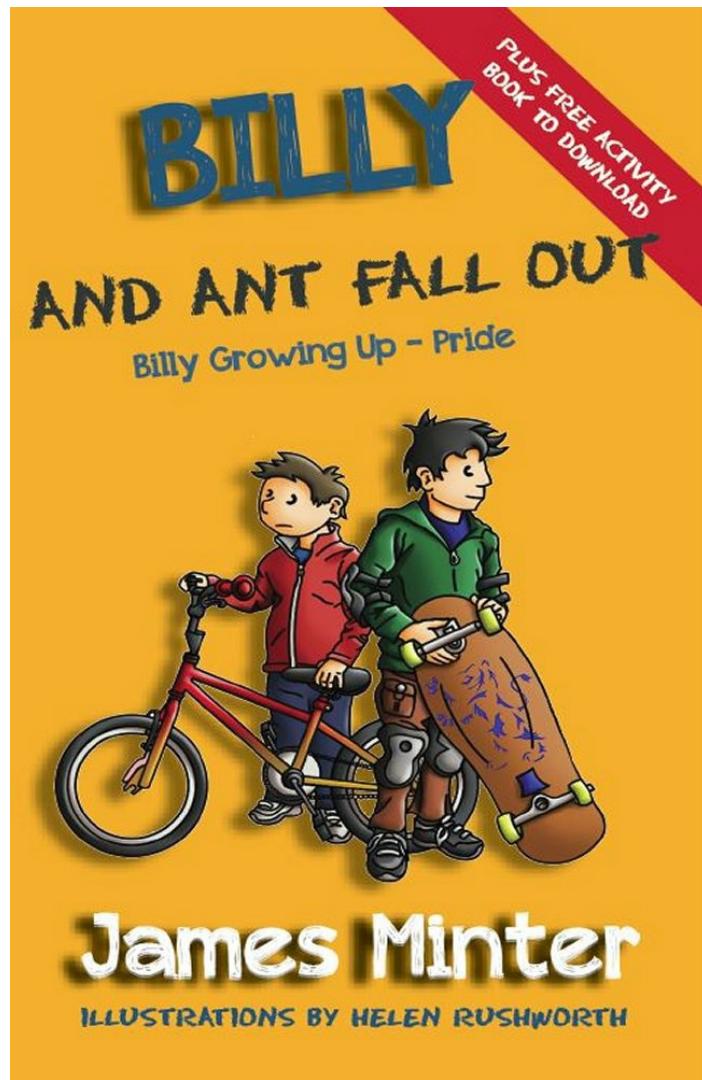
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*DEDICATION: To those who think bullying and aggression are the way to go  
through life; you are so wrong.*

>>>>>

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“Billy And Ant Fall Out”  
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## 1 - Ten, Ten, Ten

"Do you know what, Jacko? I'm going to be ten years old, on the tenth day of the tenth month. That's got to be magical." Billy clapped his

hands in excitement. Jacko, Billy's loving golden retriever dog, lay on the floor beside his bed and licked his paw.

"Ten, ten, ten, Jacko!" Billy repeated.

Billy often spoke to his dog about his feelings and thoughts.

"And it's only seven days until my birthday!"

Jacko didn't seem to share Billy's excitement and continued to lick his paw.

"To turn ten is special; it will never happen again ... ever." Billy ruffled the dog's fur. "Are you listening?"

Jacko looked up at Billy and licked his hand as if to say, *I hear every word.*

"Do you know what, Jacko? I can count to over a thousand and spell marmalade."

The golden retriever didn't look impressed.

"I've learned so much, and can do all sorts of things, and I'm only nine. What's it going to be like when I get to ten?"

That reminded Billy of his best friend, Ant.

"Hey, Jacko, you know Ant?"

Upon hearing Ant's name, Jacko wagged his tail.

"He can't spell London. I can. Everyone but everyone knows that London has two 'ons' and no 'nos'. Even Ant's little sister Max knows that, and she's only eight!"

Billy rubbed Jacko's ears. "I hope Max can make it to my party. Mum said she won't count her as one of my six friends, which I'm really pleased about. It feels hard choosing who to invite to your party; somebody always gets left out."

Thoughts of his party got Billy wondering about birthday presents.

"I hope that Mum and Dad buy me a big bike so I can ride even faster than I already do. The trouble is that when other people buy you things, they often don't get it right. Not because they don't try or care, but more because I'm not exactly sure what I want. To see something on TV or the Internet and actually hold it in your hands, are completely different things."

The dog gave a low woof.

"I upset Mum last year when I suggested Grandad could give me

money. She says I should be grateful for whatever I get. Mum is right, but Grandad never knows what to buy me. I reckon being nearly ten is old enough to ask for money, don't you?"

Jacko lifted his head and grasped Billy's pyjama bottoms with his teeth, and then pulled.

Billy looked down at him. "You're easy to buy for—a big bone and you're happy for hours. And, you know, asking for money doesn't seem so bad. Come to think of it; Grandad will be pleased. He doesn't like toy shops or department stores much."

Busy tugging on Billy's pyjamas, Jacko didn't listen. He wanted to go outside.

"We'll walk later, Jacko," Billy said, tugging back until Jacko let go. The dog slumped down and rested his head between his paws. He looked sad.

Billy felt bad and jumped out of bed, "Come on, then, Jacko; let's go for a walk now!"



## 2 - The Day Of Billy's Birthday

Finally, the Saturday of Billy's birthday arrived. His alarm woke him at seven o'clock. He didn't want to miss the postman and give Jacko a chance to eat any of his cards.

The clink-clank sound of the letterbox rattled up the stairs. Billy threw his *Transformers* duvet to the floor, grabbed his red-and-white stripy dressing gown, and jumped into his slippers. He made a running, stumbling descent down the stairs.

Unhurt and full of excitement, Billy rugby-tackled Jacko, who'd raced down the hall toward the letterbox. A six-stone golden retriever, travelling at full speed, took some serious holding back. Billy, now ten

years old, managed to find the extra strength to match his double-digit age.

He restrained the dog before anything got sniffed, chewed, slobbered on, or swung violently in a frenzied act of destruction. Instead of getting annoyed, Jacko turned and gave Billy a good licking, followed by a beating from his excited wagging tail.

Billy shuffled through the post. When he saw his name, he picked out an envelope.

"Look, Jacko, this is mine! The one marked 'Master W Field.'"

Billy's real name was William, but everyone called him Billy. Although his dad's name was Walter, and they shared the same initial, the sender had addressed the envelope to 'Master W Field', and not 'Mr W Field'.

"I bet the card's come from Grandad." Billy said.

Although his grandad lived only two streets away and near to Ant, he had posted it. He knew it felt exciting to receive letters by post, and that's what made him so special.

Billy found three more envelopes addressed to him; one had just "Billy" scribbled across it in big blue felt-tip marker. *That must be from Ant, but he never gets up this early, even on a school day. He must have asked his dad to deliver it on his way to work,* Billy thought.

He laid the four unopened cards on the breakfast table before he sorted and stacked them in order. The top one he would open first, saving the best for last. Grandad always chose great cards, and being Billy's only grandfather, that made his card doubly special. On top lay Ant's card. He always wrote a joke inside, and this time proved no different.

"What goes up but never comes down, Jacko?" Billy read it aloud.

Billy tossed the card to one side, "Everyone knows that. It's your age!"

The next two cards in the pile had come from Billy's twin aunts.

"Look at these two, Jacko. My aunts might be twins, but they were born on different days and in different months! Auntie May was born on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, just before midnight, and Auntie June was born thirty minutes later on the first day of June. How crazy is that? It's

almost as crazy as me turning ten, on the tenth day of the tenth month!" Billy leapt around repeating the number over and over in disbelief that he had finally reached his double-digit birthday.

When Billy sat back down, he fished out a gift voucher from each of his aunt's envelopes. "Mum says it's because they live in Devon and it costs too much to send a present from there. But Mum thinks that's a cop-out."

"Why don't they just send one card and one gift voucher? It would work out a lot cheaper."

Jacko rested his head on Billy's lap and sniffed at the cards.

"Can you smell cats?" He brought the cards nearer to Jacko's nose. "My aunts share their house with fourteen cats, at the last count."

Billy poured milk over his Rice Krispies, then picked up his grandad's card and held it toward the light, hoping to get a hint of the contents. *Money, money, money, please let it be money*, went through his mind.

He took a spoonful of cereal, milk dribbled down his chin. With a quick wipe of his dressing gown sleeve it had gone. Dressing gowns were designed for such emergencies.

He grabbed the breadknife and, holding the blade away from him, he inched it along the envelope's seal. Billy didn't want to damage the money inside. When he peered into the slit, he could make out a cartoon drawing. Curious, he pulled out the card. It had a picture of a boy on a bicycle, wobbling along a potholed track. Expectation travelled down his spine.

When the card split apart, no money fell out. "Oh, Jacko." His heart sank. "I knew it."

Confused and disappointed, he dropped the card and ran to his bedroom. He had felt so sure his grandad had understood how important it was to him to get money. His eyes sprang an unexpected leak.

Jacko took up the chase. He beat Billy to the bottom of the stairs and raced for the top. Four legs being better than two, he arrived first. The dog sat, tongue lolling, waiting for his slow-coach companion to catch up.

When Billy's face levelled with Jacko's, the dog tried to lick him, but Billy moved him aside gently. Then he went into his bedroom and threw himself onto his bed. Jacko slunk after him and waited until he'd settled, before he climbed up beside him. A sandpaper tongue swished across Billy's cheek.

"You won't let me down." Billy ruffled the dog's ears before Jacko slipped his head between his paws and let out a soft moan.

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"Happy birthday, Billy!" his mum called from somewhere in the house. She peered around his bedroom door. "Why the long face?" Billy's mum creased her brow. "You've waited for today for ages. What happened?" The bed dipped when she sat on it.

Billy rolled over and buried his face in the pillow.

Billy's mum stroked his hair. "Billy," she said, lowering her voice. "Talk to me."

"Grandad," he whispered. Then he pressed his face into the pillow.

Jacko sneezed, as dogs often do for no apparent reason. Both Billy and his mum jumped. Billy stretched his arm out to smooth the dog's fur but said nothing.

"What about Grandad? What's he done?" Mum asked.

"No money."

"What do you mean no money?"

"It'll be some stupid present like usual. I asked him for money."

"Billy, you can't make demands on him. People give presents because they want to, not because you asked. You don't know what he's got for you. It'll be a surprise." She sounded cheery as she tried to lift his spirits. "You know you like surprises. What about—"

"Mum," Billy said. "It's because he's old. He has no idea of what kids want." Once more, he buried his face in the pillow. The hollow feeling in his stomach remained.

"Be that as it may, you'd better buck up, young man. You have guests arriving for your party in a few hours." Billy's mum tried to lift him into a sitting position, but Billy clung to his pillow. Jacko jumped off the bed in anticipation.

"Okay, Jacko, I'm coming," Billy's mum said as she stroked the

dog's head. "Now, Billy, you've got to shower, dress, and get yourself downstairs as quickly as you can. And no more Mr Grumpy!"



### 3 - The Magic Of A Birthday Party

"It's three o'clock." No sooner had Billy spoken than the doorbell rang, followed by three hard raps of the knocker.

"Okay, keep your hair on," Billy mumbled to himself, as he and Jacko reached the door together.

"Hi, mate. I should have known it was you," Billy said to Ant when he opened the door.

Ant gave Jacko a stroke as he passed. Max stood close behind him. When she saw Jacko, she got down on her knees to give him a hug. The dog licked her face.

"Oi, I've had a wash today, thanks." Max wiped her cheek with her sleeve.

Soon, the house pulsated with the sound of six boys, one girl, and a dog having fun. Blind-man's-buff proved popular, as did musical chairs. With Jacko as the donkey, sticking the tail on the donkey took on a new twist. Blindfolded, with one arm behind their backs, each

child took turns to Sellotape a cardboard tail onto the boisterous dog that had little understanding of, or regard for, the game's rules.

"Okay, listen up." Billy's mum clapped her hands to get their attention. "If you go into the next room—" She raised her voice to compete with the noise. "Boys, hush, now. We have our entertainer, The Great Magisco!" She threw open her arms like theatre curtains unfolding. "The Great Magisco will perform tricks the likes of which you've never seen before!" The drama in her voice got the children's attention.

\*\*\*\*\*

The boys settled on the floor in the living room. The room's curtains were already shut, so when Billy's mum turned off the table lamp, it went completely dark. The boys whistled and hooted.

In the dark the music began, low and haunting at first, then louder. As it reached a crescendo, the lights came on and, as if by magic, The Great Magisco appeared.

It was Billy's grandad, wearing a top hat from the charity shop and a green plastic cape he used to keep the rain off while fishing. He stood twirling a black walking stick for added effect.

Billy's grandad bowed deeply and with such force that his hat toppled forward. Quick as a flash, he caught it. He held out both hat and stick to his assistant, who stood alongside him. Max, now in a pink tutu covered in sequins, sparkled when she moved.

The music faded. The Great Magisco spoke:

*I hope you're here in good cheer,  
To see and wonder at sights to behold,  
Magic is serious, magic is fun,  
But most of all...*

Grandad paused for dramatic effect.

*It has to be done with no disbelievers,  
I'm told.*

He raised his finger and pointed at Billy and his friends. "Do you all believe in magic?"

Each boy nodded; except Tom, who laughed.

"I see we have a doubter. Would you like me to turn you into a frog, boy?" The Great Magisco spoke in a deep rumble.

Tom stopped laughing while the others roared.

"Shush, and we'll begin." The Great Magisco waved his hands over the boy's heads. He beckoned to his assistant Max, who passed him a pack of playing cards. He shuffled them once, then twice, and once more for good luck. He made large, elaborate gestures as he did. The boys looked on, silent and unblinking.

After shaping the cards into a fan, The Great Magisco offered the pack to each boy in turn. "Pick one card only," he said.

"Now, don't show your card to me or anyone else. Take a look for yourself and then sit on it." The great Magisco's voice sounded ferocious, almost a growl. Billy had never heard his grandad speak like this, nor had Jacko, who wandered up to Max looking for reassurance.

She tried to shove him away. "I'm busy, silly." She spoke in a whisper. "It's okay; it's only Grandad, you old softy."

The Great Magisco passed the remaining cards to his sequinned assistant. As he did, Jacko pushed his nose between Max's hands and the approaching pack of cards. The whole lot landed on the carpet, making the boys roar with laughter.

"You've spoiled it now," Max told Jacko. He looked at her with his large, soulful brown eyes. "Go on, shoo," she said gently.

Billy half-rose from his seated position to call the dog. For some reason, his mum had come to stand behind him. Jacko ignored them both. On his feet, Billy patted his knees to get the dog to come. "Sit, Jacko!" The dog groaned as he collapsed on the floor. Billy squatted beside him.

The Great Magisco made a knot in a piece of rope. Then, holding the rope by one end, he shook it, and the knot vanished. Everyone gasped and clapped. Then he made a coin disappear, only for it to reappear behind Ant's ear. More gasps and claps came from the boys.

"Now, for my last trick," said The Great Magisco.

As the lights dimmed, Max rolled a newspaper into a long, thin tube. Billy's mum turned the lights up again while Max tipped the tube every which way so that all could see it was empty.

She passed it to The Great Magisco, who twirled it around and swished his cape for added drama.

"Abracadabra, see them fly. Watch the balls take to the sky!" And then, bringing the tube to his mouth, The Great Magisco made a mighty huff. Two ping-pong balls shot to the far side of the room.

One bounced off a picture frame, and Ant caught it. The other dropped down behind the sofa. Hot on its trail, Jacko squeezed into an impossible gap. True to his breed, he sniffed and snorted in the dust until he retrieved it.

As everyone clapped, The Great Magisco took Max's hand, and they both bowed.

"That's all, except for singing "Happy Birthday" to Billy." Grandad smiled at him. "Maybe we should stand up to sing."

All the boys stood.

With the lights on, Tom noticed something on the floor. "Hey, what's that?" Tom pointed behind Billy. "There behind you, Billy, on the floor."

"Yeah, yeah, good one. I'm not falling for that old trick," Billy said, but he could not help taking a sneak peek.

He made a vacuum with his mouth, sucking all the air out of the room. "Wow!" he exclaimed. His playing card had gone, and a twenty-pound note lay where he had been squatting.

"Grandad, look!" He waved the money over his head. "Your magic worked! My card's gone, but see what I've got." Billy ran to his grandad and clasped both arms around him. He held on with great force, making Grandad rock back and forth.

"Steady on, or you'll push me over. I'm not as young as I used to be." Grandad hugged him back. "Isn't that what you wanted?"

"You're the best grandad ever. Thanks."

"Now, don't lose it. Put it up in your bedroom, safe away from

Jacko." Grandad fluffed Billy's hair.

On hearing his name, Jacko appeared with a mouthful of red-and-black-striped sock (the one Billy had lost months before), a pile of fluff, and the missing ping-pong ball. Jacko looked proud of himself, expecting praise, but Billy had gone.

Billy had received his first ever twenty-pound note, for his tenth birthday, on the tenth day of the tenth month, from his only grandad! Excited, he ran up the stairs two at a time, heading for his bedroom. Billy needed to make sure that no one could mistake the note for anyone else's money. He wrote his name on it in black ink: 'BILLY' followed by '10 10 10'.



## 4 - Billy And Ant At The Park

"Now, be careful, Billy; keep off the main road and remember to walk over the crossing. Traffic moves too fast close to the park; you'd think they'd put speed bumps in ..." His mum's voice trailed away when Billy and Ant sped off.

Once inside the park gates, and every time the coast looked clear, the boys practised wheelies.

"This bike's awesome!" Billy felt delighted with his main birthday present. He let out a "Yahoo ...!" as they sped across the park.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Oi, Field. I hear you had a birthday party. Why didn't you invite me?" someone shouted.

Billy stopped dead in his tracks.

"Ant, come here, quick." He covered his mouth with his hand so only Ant could hear. "That's Tom's older brother Eddy, isn't it?"

Ant peered across at the three lads standing next to the swings. "Looks like him, but I've no idea who he's with. I don't think we should go any nearer," Ant said.

"Didn't you hear me?" Eddy growled, walking toward them, and his mates tagged along behind. "I *said* you had a birthday party and you didn't invite me. I think that's a bit rude." His pace quickened.

"He only invited people from our class. Your brother Tom came," Ant called back.

"I ain't talking to you, titch," Eddy said, poking Ant in the chest. "It's birthday boy here I've got a problem with."

He glared at Billy, his jaw hardened. "My brother says you got twenty quid from your magician grandad. Well, I like magic, only I ain't got a grandad 'cos he's dead. I think you should give me that twenty quid to show that you're sorry for my loss."

Eddy pressed his face up against Billy's. His breath smelled of mint gum and cigarettes. Billy pulled back. His new bike shifted off balance, and he nearly dropped it.

"Oi, mind my trainers with that heap." Eddy kicked the tyre. "Now see what you've done! You've put a big black mark right across the front of my trainers." Eddy lifted his foot to show them.

Billy's stomach catapulted, and a lump formed in his throat. His heart beat faster with fear. He had never liked Eddy, and now, he liked him even less.

"But *you* did that. You just kicked my tyre!" Billy spoke without thinking.

"You calling me a liar?" Eddy's face reddened, and he turned to his gang for support. "Did you hear him?"

They all nodded in agreement.

"What you gonna do about it, Eddy?" the tallest one asked.

"I think I need to teach him a lesson in manners, a hard lesson," Eddy snarled. "It's not nice to go around calling people liars." While he spoke, he poked Billy's arm. "Didn't your mum teach you nothin'?" You've got a mum, haven't you? Oh, that's right, she's that Deputy Head Teacher at our stupid school. A right old moaner she is; always barking at us." Eddy pretended to be Billy's mum. "Do this, don't do that," he said in a comical, high-pitched voice. "Doesn't she drive you crazy at home?" Eddy laughed, as did his friends.

"I saw you kick the tyre," Ant said, pulling himself up to his full height. "Billy didn't do anything."

Eddy spun around. "When I want your opinion, I'll ask for it." He gave Ant a death glare. "My gripe's with him—" He jabbed Billy's arm. "—not you, unless you want a slap as well."

Ant held Eddy's stare for a moment before dropping his eyes. He stepped back a pace and focused on a spot on the ground. He felt terrified and wanted to turn invisible.

"I'll tell you what, Billy Field, if you get on your bike NOW and ride back to your house to get that twenty quid for me, I'll forget all about this, and you won't get hurt."

Eddy didn't wait for an answer. He looked at his watch. "Be at the bottom of your road in fifteen minutes. Go on, get out of here! What are you waiting for? The clock's ticking—tic toc, tic toc." Eddy swung at Billy, trying to slap him around the back of the head. He missed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Billy and Ant rode away so fast that their pedals blurred. The sound of mocking laughter followed them.

"What are we gonna do, Billy?" Ant puffed. They kept up their fast pace.

"I've got no choice. When we get back to my place, don't say anything to my mum or dad, and especially not to Grandad if you see him."

"But you can't say nothing! What if your mum asks what you've done with the money?"

They pulled up outside Billy's house. "Just follow my lead," Billy said.

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"That was quick, boys. Nothing wrong, is there? You haven't got a puncture or anything like that?" Billy's mum looked at each of them in turn.

"No, nothing, Mum. I just forgot something, that's all. We'll be off again in a minute." Billy passed straight through the kitchen, trailed by Ant. Jacko joined the procession.

The boys made their way to Billy's bedroom, and he collected the twenty-pound note from his wooden pencil case where he had hidden it. Then Billy crammed it into his pocket, and he and Ant marched straight back downstairs, through the kitchen, and out through the back door.

Jacko followed behind, hoping they would take him with them.

"Sorry, Jacko." Billy stopped to give him a rub. While bent down, he whispered in his ear, "I bet you could scare off those bullies."

He stroked Jacko one more time. As he did, a tear trickled into the corner of his eye. The thought of giving up his twenty-pound note hit him hard.

"You all right, Billy? You look like you're crying," his mum noticed.

Billy could not speak; his throat had closed over. He pulled the door

shut.

"Billy!" she yelled, calling him back.

"No, 'course not," he said as he approached her. Upset, he had to squeeze the words out, "One of Jacko's hairs jabbed me in the eye." Billy rubbed at it, trying to hide his tears.

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As Billy and Ant approached the end of the road Billy saw the group of older boys waiting.

"There they are." Billy pointed toward the gang. Being smaller, Ant couldn't see over the cars until they drew closer.

"Oh, yeah, I see him now. What we gonna do?" Ant's eyes widened; he looked to Billy for guidance.

Different ideas galloped through Billy's mind before he settled on a plan.

"You stop before we reach them and turn your bike around for a quick getaway. I'll pedal on, fling the twenty-pound note at Eddy, then keep going as fast as I can. If we split up, they won't be able to chase us both."

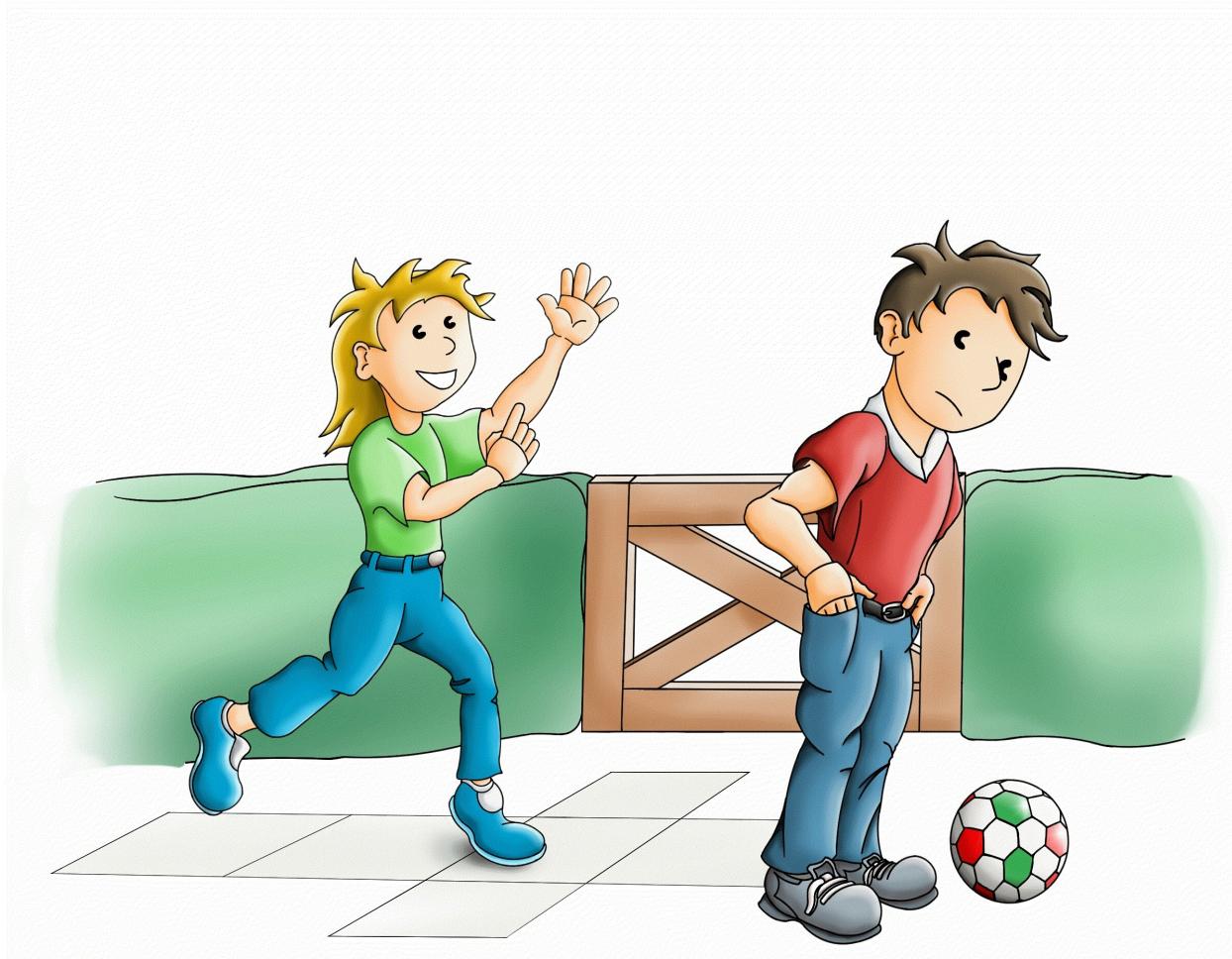
Billy looked at Ant to make sure he understood. Ant returned his glance.

"Then go straight home, and we'll meet up as soon as we can," Billy said.

Billy screwed up his courage and drew alongside the boys. He hit his brakes hard, which screeched in response. A dust cloud hovered around his back tyre for a few moments before fading away. He halted for a split second, just long enough to throw the money at Eddy. Desperate to avoid capture, he pushed hard on his pedals. Then, watching for any flailing arms, hands, or feet, he ducked past the other boys to make good his escape.

Billy pushed so hard that his foot slipped off the pedal, and the bike lurched to one side. He hit the ground with a thump; tears pricked his eyes. While he lay in a heap, Eddy and his gang moved toward him. Billy ignored the jabbing pain from his shin and scrambled back onto his birthday bike.

"You haven't seen the last of me, Billy boy." Gruffness filled Eddy's voice. "Run, scaredy-cat, but don't forget, I know where you live!" Eddy's words followed Billy as he made his getaway.



## 5 - Ant Tells Max

Ant reached his house unscathed. Max was playing in the garden.

"Where's Billy?" she asked. "I thought you two were going on a bike ride? I saw his new bike parked in the garage at the party. I want a yellow one. That's the colour of the sun, all bright and cheery. Colours should be cheerful, and yellow makes you happy."

She stopped talking to catch her breath. "Are you happy?" She looked into Ant's face when he walked past. "You don't look happy. I'm happy. Why aren't all people happy? What's to be sad about?" She skipped down the path.

"Max, just shut up. His bike's blue. So what?"

Max shrugged. "I only said that yellow's like the sun. Anyway, don't shout at me. It's not nice to shout. I've done nothing wrong."

"Sorry, sis, it's just that Billy and I had a bit of trouble at the park."

"What? Who with?" Max stopped smiling.

"Tom's brother Eddy."

"What? Old stupid Eddy?"

"Shush! Don't let anyone hear you say that." Ant looked around to make sure no one had heard. "He stole Billy's twenty-pound note; the one his grandad magicked."

"Why?"

"Cos Billy never invited him to his party. Eddy got really mad because he likes magic."

"Well, his sister Katie, she's in my class and always calls him stupid. Apparently, he smokes around the back of the bike sheds, and everyone knows smoking's stupid. So he must be stupid too." Max continued with her game of hopscotch.

"Are you good friends with Katie?"

"She's my ..." Max counted on her fingers. "... number-six best friend. No, wait, me and Sally fell out when she told Miss I cheated in spelling. I didn't cheat; it just happened that I had "danger" written on my hand from when I'd learnt words for the test. So, Katie's my ... one, two, three, four, five best friend."

"Fifth, not five," said Ant.

"That's what I said." Max held up her hand with all her fingers pointing upward. "See, it's five."

"Fine, five. Will you see Katie soon?"

"I've got swimming club tomorrow, and she's usually there." Max came to a halt. "Why?"

"We need a plan to get Billy's money back before his grandad finds out it got stolen."

"Well," Max said, continuing her jumping. "Katie told me that on Tuesday after school, her, Tom, and Eddy are all going to town to shop for school stuff. Their mum's taking them. Maybe you and Billy

could learn to be pickpockets like in *Oliver Twist*. You could bump into Eddy when he's with his mum and steal it back." She beamed.

Ant looked at her. Though not sure her plan would work, he didn't have a better one. *We need help*, he thought.



## 6 - Max Has Another Plan

Max had another idea and soon arrived at Billy's grandad's front door.

"Ah, my magic helper! I wondered who was knocking." Billy's grandad tousled Max's hair.

"Please, Billy's grandad, I need to tell you something." Max looked around to check that no one could listen to them.

"Well, don't just stand there. Come on in. Only for a few minutes, mind; I'm off to Billy's house for tea. We'll probably have leftovers from the party, curly sandwiches and stale cake. My daughter seems to think I'm a dustbin. It's true I hate waste. As my father would say,

"Waste not, want not." We had none of this recycling stuff in my day. Nobody ever left anything! Most of the time, we didn't have enough food to go around, never mind waste it."

He sat in his large armchair while Max sat opposite him on the sofa. "So, what's so important, young lady?" Grandad asked.

Max built herself up, preparing to do what she knew she had to do. It wouldn't be easy; the bubbling in her stomach told her so.

"Billy doesn't know I'm here, nor does Ant." She covered her mouth with her hand, fearful of being overheard. "But I have a plan to get the money back."

"Hold on, a plan? Money back? What are you talking about, young lady?" Grandad face looked like he'd sucked on a lemon .

"You know Eddy, Tom's older brother, and Katie, his sister, who's in my class, well, he, that's Eddy, not Tom, of course—"

"No, of course." Grandad bent forward.

Max didn't think that Billy's grandad had understood, so she said, "Eddy stole the twenty pounds you magicked for Billy. And I have a plan to get it back." She looked at him as if to say, *isn't it obvious?*

Grandad scratched his head. "Am I hearing you right? Did you say that Billy had his present stolen by this Eddy boy?"

"Yes." Max saw a flash of disappointment in Grandad's eyes.

He shook his head in disbelief. "What's the world coming to?"

"Eddy's fourteen, almost fifteen, and he goes to Elliott's school, where Billy's mum is the head teacher." Max said.

"Deputy Head Teacher," Grandad said. "Does Billy's mum know about Eddy? And does she know you're here?"

"My mum knows I'm here, but I told her I'd come about magic. She doesn't know about the lost money. No one does."

"Lost or stolen? There's a big difference." Grandad rubbed his chin. "Did Billy lose it, and Eddy find it?"

"Not according to Ant," Max said. "He told me that Eddy stole it when they went to the park." She looked to see if Grandad understood. "So, I suggested they pickpocket Eddy on Tuesday after

school when he's in town with Katie and Tom buying their school uniforms. Well, I'm not sure what they're buying, actually, but his mum will be there. Then I thought of your magic, so that's why I'm here." Max flopped back on the sofa, relieved to have completed her story.

"Hmm, magic, you say ..." Grandad wiped his hand around the back of his neck. "What, exactly, is your plan?"

Max's excitement showed in the twinkling of her eyes. "Well, Ant said Eddy took the money since he didn't get invited to the party, and 'cos he missed your magic show." Max stopped talking to rummage around in her pocket before she pulled out a folded sheet of paper. "Here." She smoothed the sketch and held it up. "It's not finished yet, but it won't take long. I need to do a bit more colouring." She waved it about.

"Hold still. What is it?" Grandad looked more confused than ever. "Tell me your story to the finish."

Max held out the drawing. "I've only done it from memory, but it's a twenty-pound note. Look, there's the two and there's the nothing." Her finger darted between the two figures.

"It's a zero, not nothing," Grandad said helpfully.

Now Max looked confused.

"Oh, it doesn't matter," Grandad said. "So, you're suggesting that we take your twenty-pound note and swap it for the real thing?"

"Yes, by using your magic! Like you made the playing card turn into money at the party. That way, Billy gets his money back, and Eddy—"

"—Ends up with a drawing. You don't expect him to think it's an actual twenty-pound note, do you?"

"No, 'course not. It's to teach him a lesson," Max said.

"And this will happen on Tuesday, you say?"

"Yeah. I'll see Katie tomorrow."

"Not Tuesday?" Grandad's confused look returned.

"At swimming. It's always swimming club on Monday." Max

wondered why he couldn't follow her.

Grandad shook his head and scratched his chin some more.

"Billy's grandad, you need to concentrate." Max waited for the lines on his forehead to smooth before continuing. "At swimming, I'll ask Katie if I can go shopping with her and her mum on Tuesday. You come to town, too. The uniform shop is in the shopping centre." Max spoke slowly, "I'll meet you under the clock; you know the big one where all those soldiers march around swinging their arms." Her face lit up at the thought. "Then I'll come and find you."

"Yes, I know the clock; I've taken Billy there many times. Then what?" He looked at her expectantly.

"We'll find Eddy, and then you make the money jump out of his pocket or something." She shrugged. "I don't know. You're the one who does magic!"

"I need to give your plan more thought, but I'll certainly meet you under the clock. I'm afraid now I have to get ready to go to tea."

Grandad stood. He held out his hand to help Max to her feet.

Max slipped down from the sofa. "Don't say anything to Billy. Promise!" She looked directly at Billy's Grandad. "Ant says Billy's really upset and it wasn't his fault. It was stupid Eddy's."

"I wonder how stupid Eddy actually is," Grandad said. He opened the door for Max. "Bye, dear. We'll sort this out." He waved to her. "Straight home, now. See you Tuesday in the shopping centre at four o'clock."

\*\*\*\*\*

When Billy awoke on Monday morning, his mum was in her study surrounded by piles of paper and didn't want anyone to disturb her. Billy sat at the kitchen table and played with his cereal, stirring it around the bowl. His eyes felt puffy from a night of crying. Fed up, he moved all the cereal to one side and took a spoonful of sugary milk. Then he pushed at the cereal again with his spoon. Jacko sat and watched.

"It's not fair," Billy said while Jacko licked his hand. "You wait. When I'm older, I'll get my own back." The full-length body strokes

Billy gave Jacko came more out of frustration than love. "What can I do?"

Jacko yawned.

"Sorry, Jacks, am I boring you?" Sarcasm got lost on the dog. "You sure you've got no ideas? And don't say tell Mum or Dad. I can't, 'cos if I do, Grandad'll find out." Billy fought hard to hold back fresh tears. "I hate Eddy."

\*\*\*\*\*

Ant's face appeared at the kitchen window, his jacket collar pulled up against the morning chill. He tapped on the glass. "Come on; it's blinking freezing out here," Ant mouthed through the window.

"It's unlocked." Billy's voice sounded like a feeble old man's.

Ant let himself in and started speaking straight away. "I've thought about what Max said. You know, about becoming pickpockets. I tried it on her and got a sweet. She never felt a thing." Ant stood as tall as he could. "It's all about distraction."

A smile lit up Ant's face. "Go on, stand up." He pushed on Billy's shoulder. "I'll show you. Come on." Ant had created his own drawing of a twenty-pound note. He passed it to Billy. "Put that in your pocket."

Billy stood by the kitchen table, and Ant walked toward him, acting all cool. He banged into his friend's shoulder. "Oh, sorry, mate."

Ant used the distraction and fumbled around, trying to get his fingers into Billy's trouser pocket. Jacko had other ideas and pushed between them, defending his master. Both boys fell about laughing.

Billy stopped giggling and dropped his head. "What the flip was that about? If you do that to Eddy Jost, you won't laugh for long. Any other ideas?"

"Not really, but Max said Tom, Katie, and Eddy would be in town tomorrow after school with their mum. Max will go to see the clock with Katie. You know, the one with the soldiers." Ant waited for a response.

"So?" Billy could hardly bring himself to speak.

"If we go, we can tell Eddy's mum what he's done, and she'll get it back for us."

Billy curled his top lip.

Ant sounded desperate to help his best friend, "I know it's not great, and maybe she won't believe us, but I'm not sure we've got any other choice." He put a hand on Billy's shoulder. "Sorry, mate."



## 7 - The Great Magisco

“Come on, Mum. I’m not a kid. I’ve seen that clock loads of times. Those stupid soldiers marching about … Do I have to?” Eddy protested as he pushed open the large glass doors to the shopping centre.

“You’re not the only person in this family. Katie and Tom want to see it, and Max too, I imagine. We need to hurry, or we’ll miss it striking the hour.”

Eddy pushed Tom and mocked, “Baby brother wants to see the soldiers.”

"Hey, enough of that. You always used to beg me to take you to see it." Eddy's mum glared at him.

"Yeah, when I was five, maybe; I'll be fifteen next month."

"Well, you're still my baby." Eddy's mum grabbed his cheek.  
"Coochie coo."

"Oi, get off." Eddy jerked his head away.

"We're going to get something to eat after seeing the clock," his mum said, thinking food would win him over. "I guess you're not too grown up to eat with us?"

"No thanks. I'm meeting my mates. We're off for a burger." Eddy hooked his fingers into the waistband of his jeans, pulling them up just enough to cover his boxer shorts.

"Oh, okay. So, where did you get the money from?" His mum asked.

Eddie shuffled his feet, dropped his gaze, and focused on the floor. The clock came into view, and several people had gathered underneath it. Eddy's gang stood off to one side, looking like they had no interest.

"Well?" His mum asked again.

Eddy mumbled back as though he had a mouthful of mashed potato, saying something about a paper round before mooching off.

\*\*\*\*\*

Max spotted Billy's grandad. "Billy's grandad!" she called, and her eyes widened. "I'm here!" She ran ahead of the group and reached him just as the clock struck four.

At each strike, from a door in the clock face, carved wooden figures dressed in red tunics, black trousers, and boots moved forward to present arms. The intricate mechanism whirred and chattered while soldier followed soldier, moving around an elaborate track before disappearing for another hour.

Katie's mum, Katie, and Tom came to stand by Max. "This is Billy's grandad," Max said. "He does magic."

"I know Tom here." Grandad shook Tom's hand. "This young man

said he didn't believe in magic. But I think he's changed his mind."

He smiled at Tom.

Tom returned his smile.

"Max said she was meeting you here." Katie's mum looked to Grandad for confirmation.

"She's my assistant." Grandad put his arm around Max's shoulder.  
"We've an important magic trick to perform."

Max beamed up at Billy's grandad.

"We're going to get something to drink first," Max said. She had her eye on Eddy, who stood several feet away, talking to his gang.

"Quick, we need to go—this way." She pulled on Grandad's jacket.  
"Bye, Katie!"

Grandad said goodbye to the others as Max dragged him away.

No one saw Ant and Billy arrive with Jacko on a lead.

\*\*\*\*\*

Max signalled to Billy's Grandad to bend down. She put her mouth close to his ear. "I heard them say they're going to get a burger. We need to catch them up." Still holding Grandad's jacket, she led the way.

Eddy and his mates were close to the burger bar entrance by the time Max and Grandad got close.

"Which one's Eddy?" Grandad peered at the group of teenage boys.

"Him! The one with his jeans hanging down." Max pointed in the direction of Eddy.

"He needs a belt by the look of it."

"Don't be silly, Billy's Grandad, that's the fashion."

"Well, not for me it's not. Trousers should be worn at the waist," Grandad said.

"Come on, quick; they're going in." Max went first. They joined the queue behind the lads, standing close enough to hear what they said.

Too busy messing about, the lads didn't notice Max and Billy's Grandad.

"It's your treat, Eddy, since you nicked the money," one of his gang said.

"I didn't exactly nick it, he sort of gave it to me," Eddy said. All the boys laughed.

"Yeah. Otherwise, you'd have given him a beating." More laughter followed.

"So, where's this famous twenty-pound note?" another of the lads asked.

Max stood on her tiptoes. "Hope he shows it," she whispered, trying to see.

Grandad shushed her. "He'll hear you."

Eddy slapped his thigh over his jeans pocket.

Without warning, Max reached up and tapped Eddy's arm. He whirled around, looking first at Billy's grandad and then at her.

"What?" Eddy grunted.

"You said you like magic," Max said.

"Who wants to know?" Eddy's eyes darted between the pair.

Grandad took over the conversation. "I've heard you got upset about not having an invite to Billy Field's birthday party."

"What are you going on about?" Eddy looked them up and down before turning back to his mates.

Grandad tapped his shoulder. "What my assistant and I are trying to say is that we understand you like magic, so we're here to do a trick for you." Grandad remained calm, even though Eddy appeared menacing.

Eddy looked back at him. "Are you serious?" He turned to his gang. "This bloke's off his rocker." They all sniggered.

The queue moved forward. Soon, they would have to order and pay for their meals. Max tugged at Grandad's jacket. "Go on, do it now, or it'll be too late."

"So, Eddy," Grandad said.

Eddy turned, once more, to face them.

"You've a twenty-pound note, I understand."

"Who told you? Mind your own business." Eddy jerked his head around to see who might be listening. His leg shook.

"Would you like another one ... for free?" Grandad asked.

"What? You'd give me twenty quid for nothing? You're joking me." An easy grin spread over Eddy's face.

"No, not at all. It's magic." Grandad sounded very matter of fact.

"If I say yes, will you go away?" Eddy laughed along with his mates.

"Sure, the trick won't take long. All I need is your twenty-pound note first." Grandad looked into Eddy's eyes. "You do trust me, don't you?"

"What, an old bloke like you?" Eddy stared back but seemed unsure of what might happen. "Here." He dug into his pocket to retrieve the crumpled note. "Let's see what you can do with that. I want it back, mind you."

Max slipped her hand-drawn note to Billy's grandad, and he slid it up his sleeve. Then, taking the real note from Eddy, Grandad held it up for all to see.

"My, the Queen wouldn't be happy to see what you've done to her money." Billy's grandad used slow, deliberate movements and proceeded to smooth out the note before holding it over his head.

The queue grew restless. Shouts of, "Come on, move up," and "I'm hungry," followed.

Unmoved, Grandad—as The Great Magisco—pivoted left and right, showing off the note to anyone who cared to look. The word *Billy* and *10, 10, 10* were clearly visible. As part of the act, he made the growling noise that came from deep in his chest.

He whispered to Max, "When I say *now*, grab my hand, and we'll make a dash for it."

Max smiled and nodded.

"Abracadabra," Billy's grandad said, waving his hands and making exaggerated movements. "On the head of my mother, let this note

turn into another!" Grandad pushed his hands upward and outward.

He let Max's drawing fly. It rose into the air above Eddy's head. All eyes turned to watch it.

"Now!" Grandad grabbed Max's outstretched hand and fled. He held her tight as they ran for the exit.

Once outside, they sprinted toward the clock.

"I'm a fast runner," Max said. Next to her, Billy's grandad puffed and panted. Max asked him, "Are you okay?"

"We're ... nearly ... there." Grandad breathed heavily. "There's the clock." He looked about. "Can you see Katie's mum anywhere?" He stopped to scan the nearby shops and restaurants, but she seemed nowhere in sight.

"Come on, Billy's grandad; look who's over there." Max pointed to two police officers gazing into a shop window. "It's PC Wright! He's often on our street." She clapped her hands in glee. "He always talks to me." Max ran toward the policemen.

Grandad slowed to a stop. Propped up against a wall, he held his chest. He struggled for breath, beads of perspiration formed on his brow, and he felt unwell.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Look, there he is! Hey, old man!" Eddy's shout alerted Grandad to his approach, but with each stride Eddy's jeans slipped down delaying his arrival.

"So, what's this, then?" Eddy shoved Max's drawing in Grandad's face. "You thought you could swindle me?" He bounced on his toes like a boxer warming up. "Me, Eddy Jost? Don't you know who I am?" He jabbed his fist into the air, missing Grandad's face by a few inches. "No one messes with me! No one! Do you hear me?"

Eddy poked Grandad's chest. "Give me my money, and we'll call it quits. Otherwise ...!" Spittle flowed from his lips when he spoke, and his eyebrows knotted together. To make sure Grandad got the message, he followed up with a series of air jabs.

Eyes facing straight ahead, Grandad never blinked. He watched

Eddy's antics with a mixture of sorrow and amusement. Sorrow, as Eddy was young, and such behaviour would get him into trouble in the years to come; and amusement because, with each bounce, Eddy's trousers slipped even further down.

Out of the corner of his eye, Grandad saw Max leading the two burly police officers over.

Grandad's silence and lack of retaliation frustrated Eddy even more.

"Don't mess with me," Eddy said, their faces almost touching. "Give me my money now!" The veins on his forehead stood out. Then, losing control, he pulled back his arm. Eddy held his clenched fist at shoulder height.

Before Eddy could release a punch, PC Wright, with the skill of a champion wrestler, slipped his hand into the crook shape made by Eddy's arm. The police officer followed through and pinned Eddy's head against the wall, pulled his arms back behind him, and stretched his legs wide.

"Get off me!" Unaware it was a police officer, Eddy wriggled to break loose. The ratcheting sound of closing handcuffs ended his struggle.

"I have to caution you," PC Wright said. "You do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence. Do you understand?" The police officer waited for Eddy to speak. "And while you're at it, get your mum to buy you a belt to keep your trousers up, or I'll add indecent exposure to the charges."

\*\*\*\*\*

The sound of sirens penetrated the shopping centre. Billy and Ant heard them, as did everyone else in the area.

"Let's take a look," Ant said, leading the way. He set off in the direction of the commotion, and then jumped onto a bench seat to get a better view. "Hey, look, it's your grandad!"

Billy took off at top speed. Jacko pulled hard on his lead until Billy lost his grip. The dog vanished into the crowd.

“Grandad!” Billy got stuck behind a line of people all jostling to get a better view. “I’m here!” Billy’s heart thumped in his chest. He pushed with all his might to force his way to the front, but a police officer stopped him. “It’s my grandad! Please, let me see him.” Billy blinked back his fear.

“Is this your sister?” The policeman held Max’s hand.

“Yes, I mean no. Not really.” Confused, Billy just wanted to reach his grandad. “She’s my mate’s sister.” Billy glanced at Max. “What are you doing here?”

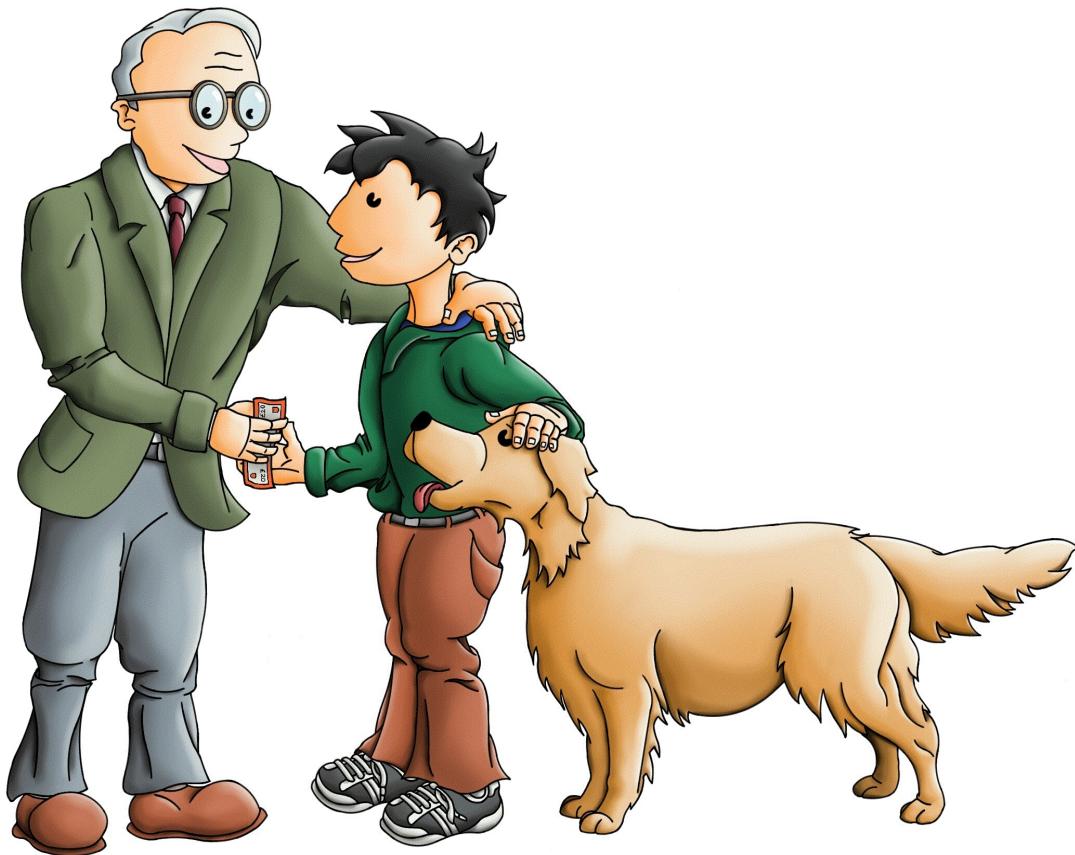
“We got your twenty pounds back from Eddy.” She couldn’t get the words out fast enough. “And PC Wright arrested him.” She pointed toward a handcuffed Eddy. Tom, Katie, and their mum stood beyond him.

A paramedic tried to examine Grandad, but Jacko grabbed the red blanket in which she had wrapped him.

“It’s okay, boy, she’s a friend,” Billy said reassuringly.

The dog looked unconvinced and bared his teeth at the paramedic just in case.

Grandad looked pale and overwhelmed. Everything had moved so fast, but at least he had managed to get Billy’s money back.



## 8 - The Wrong Twenty-Pound Note

"Billy, why didn't you tell us?" his mum asked when they all arrived home safely. "I know Eddy Jost only too well. He's always in trouble at school; we've excluded him several times."

Billy looked down at his hands, happy the whole thing was over but guilty that he hadn't told his parents about his trouble. At least Grandad knew he hadn't lied about losing the money.

"As for The Great Magisco." Billy's mum turned to Grandad. "What if he'd punched you or something? You're too old for stunts like that. But thanks all the same, Dad." She gave her father a hug.

Billy's mum then looked to Max, who sat at the table tucking into a bowl of her favourite ice cream. "We have Max here to thank; she

saved the day."

Between spoonfuls, Max grinned up at them.

"Oh, Billy, before I forget—" Grandad opened his wallet and removed a brand-new crisp twenty-pound note, taken from a cashpoint. "—here's your twenty pounds. Now, take it straight up to your bedroom and put it away safely."

"Thanks, Grandad." Billy wrapped his arms around him. "And thanks, Max! I'll do it right now." He ran out of the room, heading for the stairs. Before he reached them, he let out a cry of pain. "Grandad!" Billy's stomach clenched like a vice. He ran back to where everyone stood.

"It's not mine!" He held out the note. The others moved in to get a closer look.

"What do you mean it's not yours?" his mum asked.

"See, here." Billy pointed at the note. "My name's missing. I wrote "BILLY 10 10 10" in black ink on the Queen's neck, just under her chin."

Billy's elation evaporated, and a sense of despair returned. No longer standing upright, he rounded his shoulders and slouched off toward his bedroom. He wanted to be alone.

"Billy, come here, please." Grandad's voice sounded calm. "I need to tell you something."

"What?" Billy didn't even bother to turn around.

"Listen to your Grandad, Billy," his mum said. "I'm sure there's a good explanation."

Billy stood in front of Grandad, his eyes cast to the ground. He didn't want to hear any explanation; he just wanted *his* twenty-pound note back.

"Eddy Jost is a bad lad." Grandad shifted his gaze to Billy's mum, who nodded in agreement. "He's in real trouble for what he's done, and the police want to take him to juvenile court. To do that, they need to ask you and Ant some questions about what happened in the park. Is that clear?" Grandad waited for a response.

Billy muttered something and nothing—little more than a few grunts.

"Speak up, Billy. Grandad can't hear so well," his Mum said.

"Yes. Can I go now?" Billy turned to leave.

Grandad caught hold of his arm. "Not yet. I haven't finished. As well as asking you questions, I need to make a statement—that's what the police call it—about what happened. And since the whole thing revolves around your twenty-pound note, they've kept it."

"What, *my* twenty-pound note? Why?" Billy stared at him, his eyes as round as saucers.

"Because it's important; it's evidence," Grandad said.

"Will they take fingerprints and put it under one of the machines with a blue light to see if they match Eddy's?" The idea raced away with Billy. "Will they have to take my fingerprints? And Ant's?" He inspected his hands, trying to remember which one he'd used to hold the note. "What about my writing?" He looked at his mum, and then back to Grandad. "You know, because I wrote on it. Will I get in trouble with the Queen?"

"Hey, slow down, Sherlock Holmes." Grandad looked glad to hear him asking questions.

"Yeah, but what about Jacko? He could have touched it!" Jacko was sat by Billy. "Will they want his paw prints?" Grandad and Billy looked down at the dog. Jacko raised a paw.

"See, he knows." Billy took Jacko's paw.

"You're a rascal," Grandad said, glancing at Billy's mum. "I see my favourite grandson is back."

"Does that mean my note's gone forever?" Billy sighed heavily.

"Only until Eddy's been to court, but it might take a while. So, in the meantime, I've given you a new one." Grandad beamed. "You know it doesn't matter about it not being the actual note. What's important is that you've got the money to spend as you want. Eddy will have to pay for what he's done. Bullying, stealing, and threatening behaviour can't be allowed. Let's hope he's learned a lesson."

Grandad took hold of Billy's shoulders. "Come on, Billy lad, smile. It's not as bad as all that." He tickled Billy's ribs.

Billy squirmed and couldn't stop a laugh escaping. He wriggled to

get away. Jacko joined in the fun, barking enthusiastically.

Desperately, Billy wanted *his* twenty-pound note to remind him of his once-in-a-lifetime tenth birthday on the tenth day of the tenth month. He felt pleased he could count on his family and friends in times of trouble. And he still had Grandad's twenty pounds to spend on a special birthday present.

**THE END**

## What Children Can Learn From **'Billy Gets Bullied'**

These days, bullying is a big problem for children. Bullies look confident and strong; that is why they seem intimidating. They cannot let their guard down because that would make them look weak, and would reduce their power and sense of control. So, they keep behaving as if they are very important people, while inside, they are just like everyone else. They are, in fact, acting the part of someone confident and strong; acting as if they have power over others. And, of course, they surround themselves with people like them—just in case they need reinforcements! That's the power of bullies—they are not often on their own. Simply standing your ground and confronting them often makes things even worse because they have to defend their position to save face, and the only way they know how to do that is by doing more of what they are already doing. One way for you to deal with bullies is speaking out and reaching out to someone you trust. You might not be able to rid the world of bullies, but you can do something about how you deal with them.

In this story, Billy, like any other child, is looking forward to a big birthday. However, the local bullies hear he's been given a twenty-pound note and challenge him to hand it over. Billy realises he cannot fight the gang, and so has to agree to their demands. At first, Billy does not dare tell a grown-up, as he feels guilty about losing his birthday money. So, he and his friend Ant, try to hatch a plan on their own to get it back. But it's not until Max, Ant's sister, hears about the problem that she realises an adult needs to get involved. She feels that Grandad, who did the party magic and gave Billy the money in the first place, is the ideal person to confide in. Confident he'll know what to do, Max thinks up a plan, and Grandad helps her. The bullies don't realise what's happening until it's too late. Grandad recovers the twenty-pound note, leaving the bullies to be dealt with by the authorities.

As Billy learned, the best way to deal with bullies is to reach out and ask for help from people you trust, and who have more experience—in this case, his Grandad. Billy learns that to overcome bullying, you have to have a strategy and get help. If you put up a fight, it just brings more difficulties, and might even place you in danger.

Notice also, in the story, that Billy felt guilty about having lost the twenty-pound note to the bullies, which made him nervous about confessing what had happened. When his mum asked him if he was okay, he had to lie to her, as he felt frightened to tell her the truth. When Bullies make you feel nervous, anxious, or scared, it gives them more ammunition to try to control you. If Billy could have confided in his mum or grandad straight away, he would have been able to get the help he needed and, perhaps, resolve the problem much sooner.

It takes courage to deal with difficult situations. Courage comes from within you; it is knowing that you deserve to be respected and treated fairly.

*If you're horrible to me, I'm going to write a song about it, and you won't like it. That's how I operate. —Taylor Swift*

*Courage is fire, and bullying is smoke. —Benjamin Disraeli*

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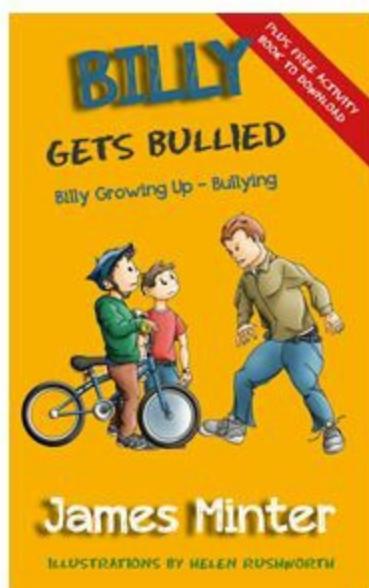
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## Activity Book

(with answers)



# Book Review

If you found this book helpful, leaving a review on Goodreads.com or other book related websites would be appreciated by me and others who have yet to read it.



Read On For A Taster  
Of  
Billy And Ant Fall Out  
Billy Growing Up Series:  
Friendship and False Pride

James Minter

Helen Rushworth – Illustrator  
[www.billygrowingup.com](http://www.billygrowingup.com)



## 1 - BILLY AND ANT FALL OUT

"Have you seen this?" Billy pointed at the skateboard magazine while his dog Jacko licked his paw. "It's awesome. It's got go-faster wheels with extra-special bearings. It'll go really fast."

Billy rubbed Jacko's head, "Shall I get you one? I've seen loads of dogs on YouTube riding skateboards. I'm sure you can do it; you're a clever boy." He hugged Jacko around the neck. "Yes, you are." Billy

buried his face in the dog's soft golden fur.

Then Billy stood. "Come on, boy. Up." He patted himself on the chest. "Come on, right up."

Jacko stood on his hind legs and rested his front paws on Billy's shoulders.

"See, I said you were clever."

The back door latch clicked, and both Billy and Jacko turned to see who'd come. Ant, Billy's best friend, walked in.

"What are you two doing?" Ant said. "Practicing ballroom dancing? D'you know why dogs don't make good dancers? Because they've got two left feet!" Ant laughed.

Billy made a cheesy-grin face; Jacko stayed where he was.

"Anyway, who's the girl out of you two?" Ant said.

"You're the only girl around here," Billy said, swinging a playful punch at Ant's arm.

Jacko dropped to the ground and woofed. Ant hit Billy back, and Jacko woofed again.

"Shush, Jacks; we're only messing." Billy knelt beside him. "Me and Ant are best mates." He looked toward Ant, who stood staring at the magazine. "Aren't we?"

"What? Sorry mate. Have you seen this skateboard? It's well nice. I'd love one like that." Ant picked up the magazine and hugged it, off in a dream world where he skateboarded like a professional.

"Yeah, but look at the price." Billy brought his friend back to reality. "It'll take two birthdays and a Christmas to save for it."

Longingly, they both looked at the picture. Billy dreamed of the day he might own one.

"We'll get one. You'll see." Ant sounded sure, but they had no idea if or when it might happen.

Billy turned to Ant. "I know, let's promise that whoever gets a board first lets the other have a go."

They held out their crooked little fingers and hooked them together. "I promise," they said in unison.

Billy looked down at Jacko as the dog pushed his way in between them. "But I don't think you'll be riding a board for a while, and at that price, neither will I."

Jacko only panted as Billy closed the magazine.

Billy looked to Ant for inspiration, "So, what are we doing today?"

"Fancy a bike ride?" Ant said.

"Yeah, maybe, but not down the park." Billy cringed at the thought of running into the bully who had stolen his twenty-pound note a few weeks ago.

"Why not? Eddy won't be there."

"No, but his gang will. I don't want to risk it right now—let's give it a while longer." Billy's stomach churned. "Mum reckons Eddy'll get sent to a youth detention centre for bullying us and stealing my birthday money."

"So, where to, then?" Ant shoved his hands deep into his jacket pockets. "Before we go anywhere, I need to go home for some gloves." Ant made a loud "Brrr," and shivered all over.

Billy scoffed, "What do you need gloves for? It's like midsummer out there, you big baby!"

"It's November, actually, and my mum says I've got bad circulation in my hands and feet. They get really cold." Ant held up his hands. "See, they're all blotchy red and blue already."

"Oh, diddums, you got freezing fingees and tootsies?" Billy sneered. "Let me have a look." He walked toward his friend.

"No, you're not being nice. It's not my fault, and anyway, they hurt when they get cold." With a step back, Ant folded his arms and buried his hands beneath his armpits.

"You're such a baby." Billy mocked. "How are you going to cycle like that? You won't even be able to reach the handlebars. I'll have to go without you if your fingees are too cold."

"Why are you being so nasty?" Ant sounded confused. He looked at his hand again, just to make sure.

"I'm not; you just need to grow up. All that 'my mum says' stuff is

really babyish."

"Yeah, well, you can go for a bike ride by yourself, Billy Field." Ant's anger crackled in his chest. "You can be so mean." Ant turned and headed for the back door, but Jacko got there before him. "Sorry, Jacks, I've got to go." Gently, he moved the dog aside. "Not sure when I'll see you again." Ant stroked the dog one more time. The click of the latch confirmed that he had left.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" Billy shouted after him. He knelt beside Jacko. "Who needs him, anyway? Come on, boy. Let's go walkies."

\*\*\*\*\*

"I hadn't expected to see you back so soon." Ant's mum stood hanging out the washing when Ant rode into the garden. "Where's Billy? I thought you two would be out on your bikes."

Ant rode past his mum, stopping at the garden shed, and said nothing.

"Ant ... Anthony, come here, now!"

Ant meandered across the garden; his hands plunged into his pockets. "What?"

"Don't what me. I was talking to you. What do you have to say for yourself?" His mum's face had lost its usual smile.

"Nothing." He dropped his head and kicked a stone between his feet.

"I asked you a question, and I expect an answer." She brought her eyes level with his.

"Hi, Mum. Hi, Ant." Maxine, Ant's younger sister, said as she skipped up the garden. "What are you doing, Ant? I thought you were going to Billy's." She skipped on by.

"Not now, Max dear," called her mum, but Max had already gone out of earshot. Ant started to wander off, too.

"Not so fast, young man. You've not answered my question." His mum folded her arms across her chest.

"It's nothing, Mum, really."

She stood her ground. "Well, if it's nothing, you won't mind telling me."

"Billy," Ant mumbled into his socks.

"What about Billy?"

"He called me a baby and said I needed to grow up." Ant shifted his weight from foot to foot.

"That's not like him. You two are best friends."

"We were." Ant's eyes sprang an unexpected leak.

"What have you done to upset him?" His mum looked stern.

"Why is it always my fault? Even when Max does something wrong, I get the blame. It's not fair." Ant let out a loud sigh.

"Look, no one's blaming you for anything. I'm just trying to find out what happened between you and Billy."

"It's because I said I needed gloves."

"Gloves?" She looked quizzical. "What's wrong with needing gloves?"

"My hands get cold."

"Of course they do; you've got poor circulation."

"That's what I told him." Ant shoved his hands deeper into his pockets.

"And that's why you two fell out?" His mum shook her head.

"He's ten now and thinks I should be more grown up like him. I can't help when my birthday is." Tears rolled down Ant's cheek.

"Here." She put her arms around him. "You're my big boy. Now, no more of this. Anyway, you've got Max to play with."

"Yeah, but she's a girl." While he spoke, he spun on one foot and wandered off toward the front gate, dragging his toes along the stone garden path. He walked past Max, who had just finished visiting their rabbit, Cinders.

"What's wrong with him, Mum?" Max smiled up at her.

"Oh, he just wants to be grown up," their mum said.

I HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS FREE CHAPTER. READ  
[BILLY AND ANT FALL OUT](#) TO FIND OUT WHAT  
HAPPENS NEXT ...

# For Parents, Teachers, And Guardians: About The 'Billy Growing Up' series

Billy and his friends are children entering young adulthood, trying to make sense of the world around them. Like all children, they are confronted by a complex, diverse, fast-changing, exciting world full of opportunities, contradictions, and dangers through which they must navigate on their way to becoming responsible adults.

What underlies their journey are the values they gain through their experiences. In early childhood, children acquire their values by watching the behaviour of their parents. From around eight years old onwards, children are driven by exploration, and seeking independence; they are more outward looking. It is at this age they begin to think for themselves, and are capable of putting their own meaning to feelings, and the events and experiences they live through. They are developing their own identity.

The Billy Books series supports an initiative championing Values-based Education, (VbE) founded by Dr Neil Hawkes\*. The VbE objective is to influence a child's capacity to succeed in life by encouraging them to adopt positive values that will serve them during their early lives, and sustain them throughout their adulthood. Building on the VbE objective, each Billy book uses the power of traditional storytelling to contrast negative behaviours with positive outcomes to illustrate, guide, and shape a child's understanding of the importance of values.

This series of books help parents, guardians and teachers to deal with the issues that challenge children who are coming of age. Dealt with in a gentle way through storytelling, children begin to understand the challenges they face, and the importance of introducing positive values into their everyday lives. Setting the issues in a meaningful context helps a child to see things from a different perspective. These books act as icebreakers, allowing easier communication between parents, or other significant adults, and children when it comes to

discussing difficult subjects. They are suitable for KS2, PSHE classes. There are eight books are in the series. Suggestions for other topics to be dealt with in this way are always welcome. To this end, contact the author by email: [james@jamesminter.com](mailto:james@jamesminter.com).

\*Values-Based Education, (VbE) is a programme being adopted in schools to inspire adults and pupils to embrace and live positive human values. In English schools, there is now a Government requirement to teach British values. More information can be found at: [www.valuesbasededucation.com/](http://www.valuesbasededucation.com/)

## **Billy Gets Bullied**

Bullies appear confident and strong. That is why they are scary and intimidating. Billy loses his birthday present, a twenty-pound note, to the school bully. With the help of a grown-up, he manages to get it back and the bully gets what he deserves.

## **Billy And Ant Fall Out**

False pride can make you feel so important that you would rather do something wrong than admit you have made a mistake. In this story, Billy says something nasty to his best friend Ant and they row. Ant goes away and makes a new friend, leaving Billy feeling angry and abandoned. His pride will not let him apologise to his best friend until things get out of hand.

## **Billy Is Nasty To Ant**

Jealousy only really hurts the person who feels it. It is useful to help children accept other people's successes without them feeling vulnerable. When Ant wins a school prize, Billy can't stop himself saying horrible things. Rather than being pleased for Ant, he is envious and wishes he had won instead.

## **Billy And Ant Lie**

Lying is very common. It's wrong, but it's common. Lies are told for a number of different reasons, but one of the most frequent is to avoid trouble. While cycling to school, Billy and Ant mess around and lie about getting a flat tyre to cover up their lateness. The arrival of the police at school regarding a serious crime committed earlier that day means their lie puts them in a very difficult position.

## **Billy Helps Max**

Stealing is taking something without permission or payment. Children may steal for a dare, or because they want something and have no money, or as a way of getting attention. Stealing shows a lack of self-control. Max sees some go-faster stripes for her bike. She has to have them, but her birthday is ages away. She eventually gives in to temptation.

## **Billy Saves The Day**

Children need belief in themselves and their abilities, but having an inflated ego can be detrimental. Lack of self-belief holds them back, but overpraising leads to unrealistic expectations. Billy fails to audition for the lead role in the school play, as he is convinced he is not good enough.

## **Billy Wants It All**

The value of money is one of the most important subjects for children to learn and carry with them into adulthood, yet it is one of the least-taught subjects. Billy and Ant want skateboards, but soon realise a reasonable one will cost a significant amount of money. How will they get the amount they need?

## **Billy Knows A Secret**

You keep secrets for a reason. It is usually to protect yourself or someone else. This story explores the issues of secret-keeping by Billy and Ant, and the consequences that arise. For children, the importance of finding a responsible adult with whom they can confide and share their concerns is a significant life lesson.

## **Multiple Formats**

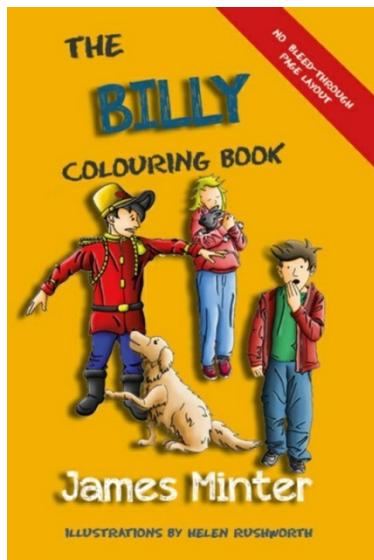
Each of the Billy books is available as a **paperback**, as a **hardback**

including coloured pictures, as eBooks and in audio-book format.



## **Colouring book**

The Billy Colouring book is perfect for any budding artist to express themselves with fun and inspiring designs. Based on the Billy Series, it is filled with fan-favourite characters and has something for every Billy, Ant, Max and Jacko fan.



## **The Billy Growing Up Collections – Volumes 1 and 2**

For those readers who cannot wait for the next book in the series, books 1, 2, 3, and 4 are combined into a single work – The Billy Collection, Volume 1, whilst books 5, 6, 7, and 8 make up Volume 2.

The collections are still eligible for the free activity books. Find them at [www.billygrowingup.com](http://www.billygrowingup.com)



# About The Author

I am a dad of two grown children and a stepfather to three more. I started writing five years ago with books designed to appeal to the inner child in adults - very English humour. My daughter Louise, reminded me of the bedtime stories I told her and suggested I write them down for others to enjoy. I haven't yet, but instead, I wrote this eight-book series for 7 to 9-year-old boys and girls. They are traditional stories dealing with negative behaviours with positive outcomes.

Although the main characters, Billy and his friends, are made up, Billy's dog, Jacko, is based on our much-loved family pet, which, with our second dog Malibu, caused havoc and mayhem to the delight of my children and consternation of me.

Prior to writing, I was a college lecturer and later worked in the computer industry, at a time before smartphones and tablets, when computers were powered by steam and stood as high as a bus.

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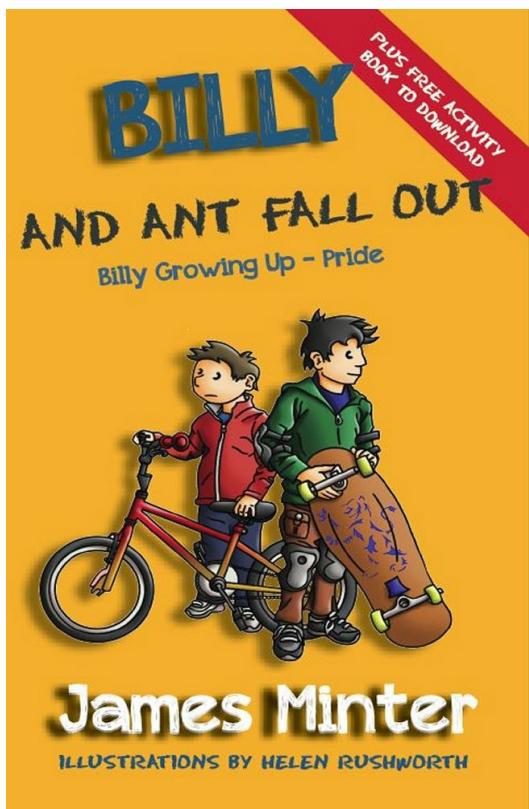
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**Don't forget to [tap here](#) to get another book in  
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“Billy And Ant Fall Out”  
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