

Akkicus Van Tasticus



The Grandnan

For Pirate Stephen, AD
For my dad. Arrrrr! SMK





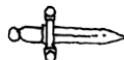
Atticus Van Tasticus



Andrew Daddo



Stephen Michael King



Puffin Books



Magic Harry



Silent Type



Princess

THE CREW



Muscles



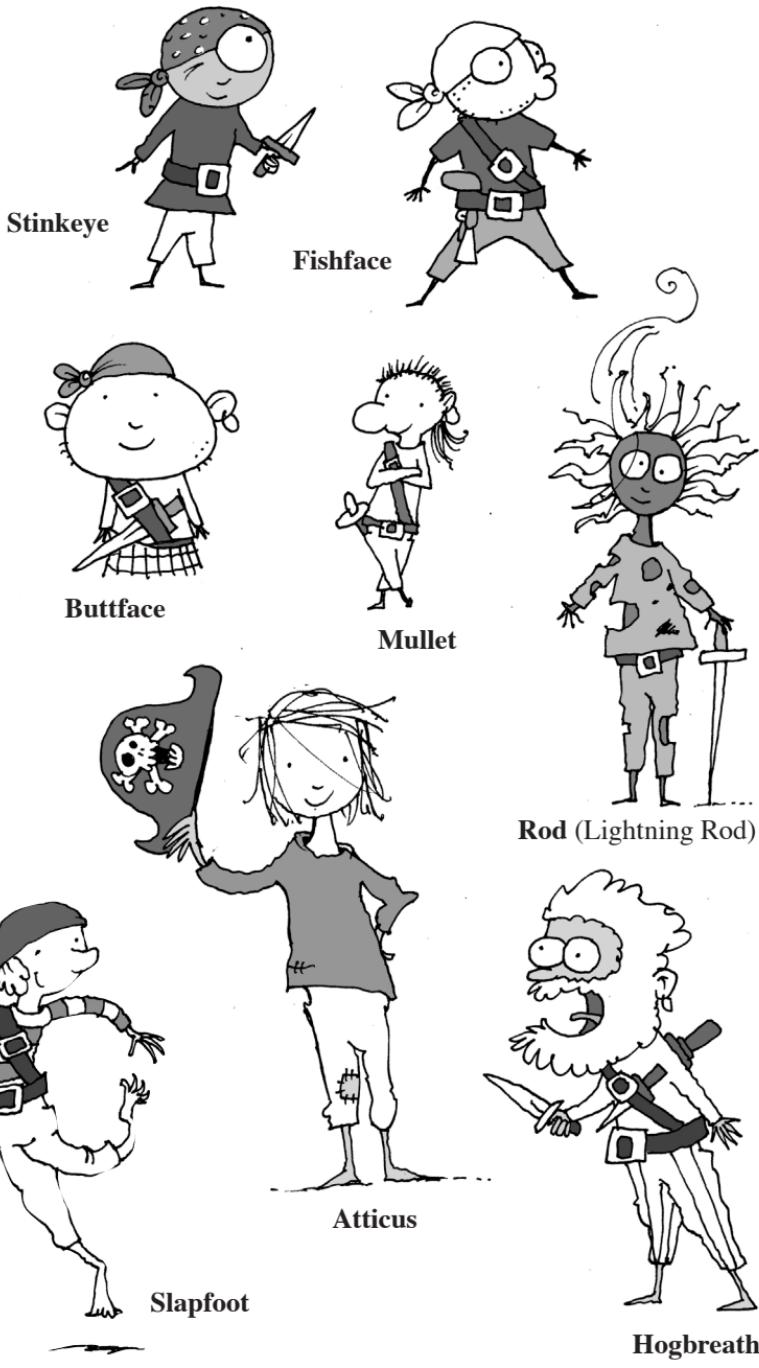
First Mate

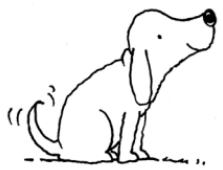


Two Times



Wrong Way Warren!





~~Every single part of this story
is historically correct,
unless it's not.~~



~~This work of non-fiction is
pretty much historically
and factually correct~~

~~Some of this true story
might be made up~~

~~None of this is true~~

~~This is rubbish~~

A story



Yay

Aaaaaa



Prologue

All Legends Start Somewhere



Atticus Van Tasticus was a pretty normal boy, from a fairly normal family, who just happened to have an abnormally wealthy grandnan. As in, she was stuffed with the stuff. 'More money than God,' as the saying goes.



The way his family sucked up to Grandnan Van Tasticus drove Atticus completely bonkers, but he got it.

Whenever she was around, everyone was on their best manners. It was all, ‘Yes, Grandnan. No, Grandnan. Can I’ve a fist full of gold, Grandnan?’ She’d bat her eyes and pucker up, but never opened her purse.

Well, almost never. And the Van Tasticus family had tried everything.

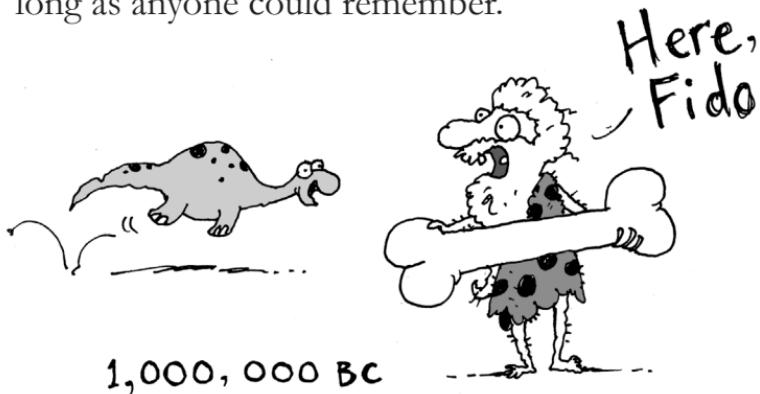


It's not as if she wasn't generous.

Every grandkid got one shot at her riches: it was a family thing, like a tradition. Great-Grandnan Van Tasticus had given her

grandkids the exact same shot, and so had Great-Great-Grandnan Van Tasticus.

And on it had gone for as long as anyone could remember.

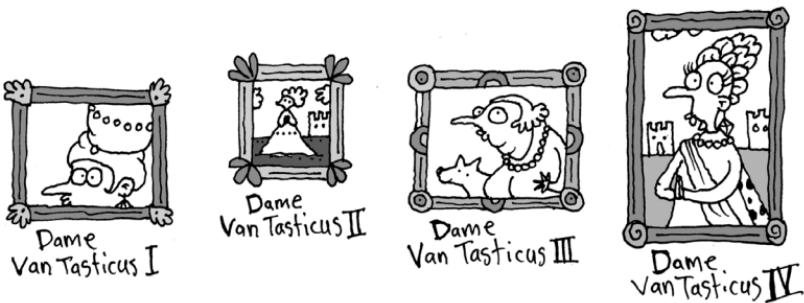


Atticus's dad said it was stupid. 'This is stupid,' he said. 'It's ridiculous. Most kids would rather have a dress-ups costume than some junky old painting that would be worth thousands of dollars after the old painter turned his toes up. Who would let a ten-year-old choose their own destiny?'

The really stupid thing was what he chose on his tenth birthday.



Atticus's mum said it was pathetic. 'This is pathetic,' she said. But only because her nan wasn't rich like Grandnan Van Tasticus and all the Grandnans Van Tasticuses before her.



Mum's nan was from a very different line of grandmas.



Atticus knew his turn to choose was coming, and he had to get it right. His mum and dad reminded him all the time, and he

couldn't stuff it up. The future lushness of his family depended on him, and him alone. He had one shot, and knew Grandnan would say something like, 'Use this to make something of yourself. To make the world a better place. Go forth and prosper. *Do what you wanna do, be what you wanna be – yeah!*'



His brother had blown it badly on his tenth birthday.

His sister hadn't done much better.

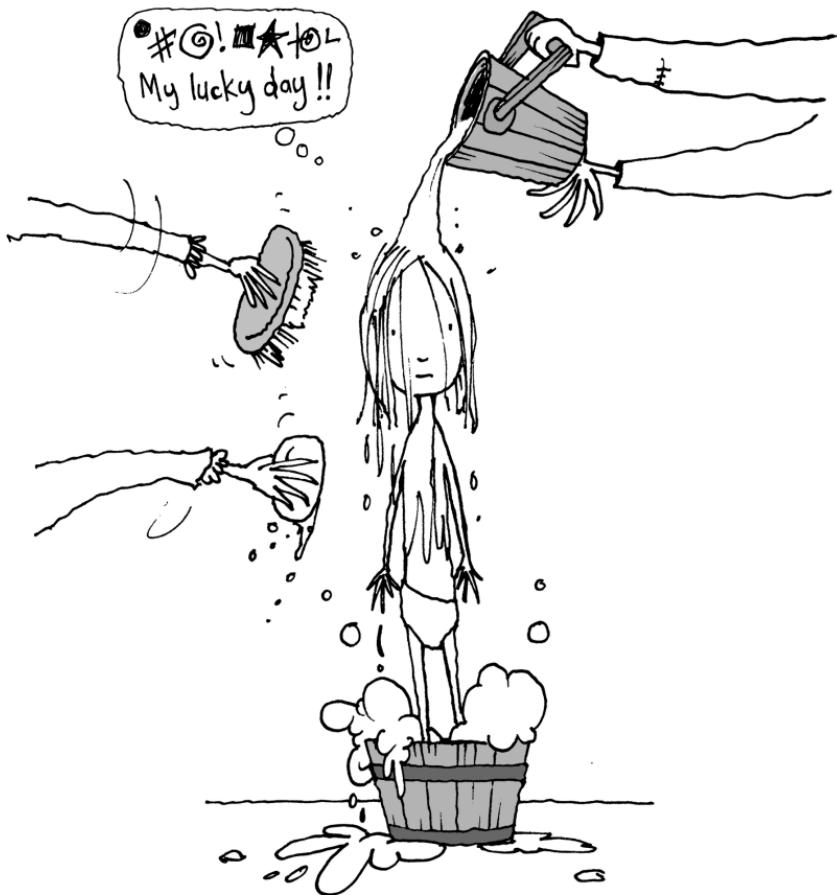
Aunty Agnes was a joke.

Uncle Edward was a fool.

And Dad, well.
The less said about that
the better.

Now it was up to Atticus.





Chapter 1

1750 or So



On the morning of the night before Atticus turned ten, his parents began the very big job of getting him ready.

'You are a grub,' said Mum, practically sanding him with soap.

'And the smell,' said Dad, tipping another bucket of cold water on him.

'Eeewww!' they both shrieked.

Atticus couldn't believe it. He smelt good. He could smell his richness without even trying. It was a good honest smell, like a horse in the rain, or a dog fresh out of a puddle. And the dirt made his skin match the colour of his hair. He thought he was pretty much perfect.



He just wished he was strong enough to wriggle free from the soap.

'Stop wriggling,' said his father.

'You have to be clean and fresh and brilliant, so if you stuff up your choice, you'll get another chance. Don't you see? Stay still so we can help you.'

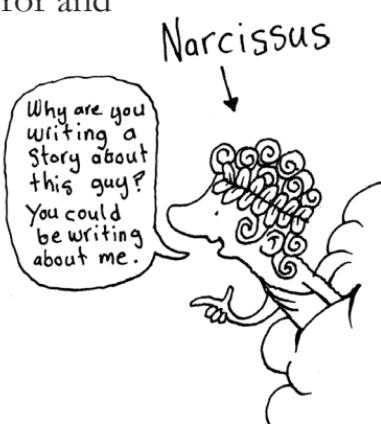
'It doesn't matter what I look like.' Atticus squirmed. 'As Grandnan says, "You get what you get and you don't get upset!"'

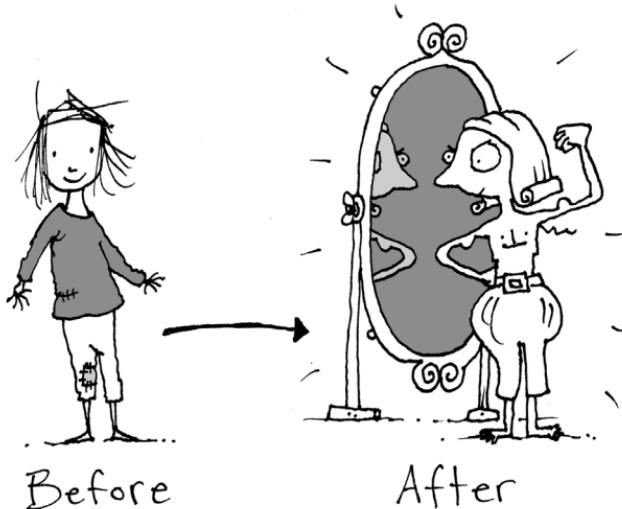
Atticus was scrubbed so clean he felt dirty. Then he was pushed into tights and pulled into a shirt. His hair was scraped across his head and glued down tight, his teeth polished, and his shoes were an ornament to Narcissus, the God of reflection.

He stood in front of the mirror and shuddered at the boy looking back at him.

'Beautiful,' said his mother.

'Superb,' said his father.





Before

After

'Oh, please,' groaned Atticus.

He didn't look like himself at all. Normally what he saw was a handsome young man with a jaw that jutted out like a boulder at the bottom of a granite cliff. Sharp, capable cheeks leading to a ferocious brow to shield his dark eyes and launch the thatch of hair on his head the way an island sprouts palm trees. With his shirt off and pants well hitched, he was on the definitely side of awesome. Best of all, there was a hair under his arm. Just the one. Mum always wanted to pluck it,

but Atticus would say, ‘No, Mother. It’s my hair. You never know when I might need it.’

That Atticus was exactly nothing like the one in the mirror. This Atticus looked like a kid – it was embarrassing.

‘Arrrrrgh,’ he went. ‘If I have to stay like this a second longer than I have to, I’m going to lose my poop.’

‘You look gorgeous, Atty,’ said his mum, licking her hand and using the slobber to stick down some stray hairs. ‘Just how Grandnan would want. In fact, you look so good, I bet if you make a silly choice she’ll give you another go on this most special day of the Van Tasticus family tradition.’

