

"D-A-D!" screamed Ping.
"YOU RUINED IT FOR ME!"



"What was the problem?" he asked.

"Did it need **more cheese?**"



BELINDA BRAG

The mother who couldn't
stop bragging





BELINDA BRAG

BELLE WAS A LITTLE GIRL with a big problem.

Her **mother**.

Belinda saw her daughter, Belle, as a miniature version of her. Belinda would do the little girl's hair in a **huge** do like hers, dress her up in a bright pink dress just like

hers and even put a string of pearls on her, just like hers.

Poor Belle ended up looking like mini-Mum.

In fact, if you looked at the pair, with Belinda standing a few paces behind Belle, you might think they were identical.*



The problem was that Belle didn't want to be like her mother. She wanted to be **herself**. As soon as her mother's back was turned, she shook down her hair, pulled off her pearls and whipped off her dress to reveal a T-shirt and denim shorts underneath.

Now that Belle **looked** like herself, Belle felt like herself.



* **WALLYFACT:** This is something I invented called "perspective".

Despite being sent to the *poshest* girls' school in the country, **LADY HAUGHTY'S SCHOOL FOR YOUNG LADIES**, Belle loved doing things like:



Standing in puddles



Making mud pies



Climbing trees



Running through tall grass



Digging for worms



Playing conkers



Chasing pigeons



Skimming stones



Rolling down *hills*



Being dragged through a **HEDGE** backwards

Every afternoon when Belle trudged out of **HAUGHTY'S SCHOOL**, she would go bright red with embarrassment at seeing what her mother had on that day:

A **fake fur coat** in the height of summer...

Sparkly diamond earrings with gems so big and heavy her earlobes dropped down to her bottom...

Designer sunglasses spotted with rubies...



A **ballgown** with a train as long as a football pitch...

A **mock crocodile-skin handbag** over her wrist that was so large you could fit an actual crocodile in it...

Oh, Mum, no! thought the girl.

As she paced nearer and nearer to the school gates, Belle could hear her mother holding court with all the other parents waiting for their *little princesses*. Belinda would **brag** and **brag** and **brag**. Each day of the week she would make up some fresh **nonsense**.

"I took my Belle out of Sports Day because I didn't feel it was fair on all your girls. I am sorry to say my Belle would win **every single race!**"

she boasted one Monday.

"**M-U-M!**" bawled Belle, desperate for her to stop, going as red as a **tomato**.



'My Belle is only twelve, but all the teachers say she is a genius. She could go straight to university, but it just wouldn't be fair on the students there - she would show them all up!'

Belinda boasted on Tuesday.

"NOOOO! STOP!" pleaded her daughter, going as red as a post box.



'In the school pantomime, I know they wanted my Belle to play every single role. But I said to the Drama mistress, 'No! Please, please, please give the other much less talented children a chance!'

was Wednesday's boast.

"PLEASE, MUM, NO!"

'Of course, my Belle can speak a hundred languages. She can even speak languages that haven't been invented yet.'

This was on Thursday.

"MUM! THIS IS SOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO EMBARRASSING!" Belle was now going as red as a red ant. But Belinda had saved the worst until last. Step forward,

Friday...



'It's not easy for my Belle being by far the most beautiful girl in the school. Everyone says she gets it from her mother, but that's not for me to say! But she does. I am so desperately sad that all your little girls are such monsters. Have you ever thought of sending them to school with paper bags over their heads? It might help them feel better! Poor hideous little wretches!'

"ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!" exclaimed Belle. Her face was now as bright red as a London bus.

So far, so bad.

Until, one day, a girl arrived at HAUGHTY'S SCHOOL with a mother even worse than Belinda.

Yes, the impossible became true.

The mother's name was Camilla Crow, and she never, ever, ever stopped crowing about her daughter, Carol. It was strange, as Carol was the most gormless girl you could ever meet. She never spoke, unless in grunts.

"HUH?"

Carol seemed content to spend the entire day either picking her nose or scratching her bottom.

PICK!

SCRATCH!



That was as thrilling as life got for Carol. But, but, BUT, if you listened to her mother, then oh my goodness! This nose-picking, bottom-scratching, little grunter was a **LIVING LEGEND!**

According to Camilla, her daughter, Carol, had:
Been an Olympic **gold-medal-winning** gymnast when she was still a baby...

Made the record books as the youngest **bestselling author**, who published an autobiography at the age of four called *Little Me, Big Dreams...*

Single-handedly saved the Amazonian rainforest by releasing a charity single called 'Wee on a Tree (If It's on Fire)'...

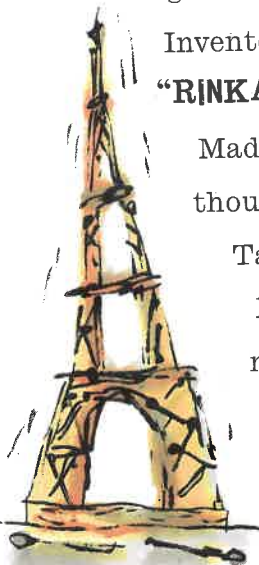
Built her own rocket and **ZOOMED** to Mars, but forgot to take any pictures while she was there...

Invented a new kind of fruit that she called the "**RINKADINKYDODDLEBERRY**"...

Made **world peace** a reality at last, though sadly for only one minute...

Taught her goldfish to play **SCRABBLE...**

Made a model of the Eiffel Tower out of matchsticks, which was exactly the same height as the real Eiffel Tower...



Learned to **juggle** seventeen gerbils at once...*
Invented the **FLOP-FLIP**, a revolutionary new flip-flop that **FLOPS** before it **FLIPS**...

Translated all the Harry Potter books into Chinese, and then back again into English... Won **first prize** in a bottom-scratching competition...

Only the last one seemed likely. Still, that didn't stop Camilla Crow crowing at the school gates every afternoon about her Carol.

Belle felt sorry for Carol. Carol's mother was even worse than hers.

It soon became a

WAR OF THE MOTHERS

Carol Crow's crowing enraged Belinda Brag.

The pair became locked in a battle – a battle to outdo one another with boasts about their daughters.

One afternoon, as the girls were all pouring out of the school, things turned **UGLY**...



* **WALLYFACT:** The world record for juggling gerbils is held by the Russian Igor Igorski. Igor once juggled nineteen gerbils at once. But as he has three arms many gerbil jugglers consider this an unfair advantage.

It all started when Belinda began with, "On the school trip to the zoo, my Belle saved her entire class from being eaten by a hungry crocodile. Fortunately, my daughter distracted the beast by reciting some poetry. In ancient Greek."

Camilla was **NOT** to be outdone. She fired back with, "That's **nothing**. Just the other day, a grizzly bear burst into the playground. Luckily my Carol **wrestled** it to the ground with one hand just before it could take a bite out of the headmistress."

All their two daughters could do was stop and stare at the **HORROR** that was unfolding.

"Your Carol couldn't wrestle a grizzly bear!" sneered Belinda.

"Why ever not?" snapped Camilla.

"Because your gormless girl is far too busy picking her nose and scratching her - and I hate to say this, as I am a lady of class and distinction - her behind region!"

"I think she means you," muttered Belle to Carol.

"How dare you?" exclaimed Camilla. "My Carol has never scratched her bottom in her entire life!"

"**HUH!**" grunted Carol, which Belle took to mean: "Yes, I have, you muppet!"

All that vile little thing does is go from picking her nose to

scratching her... ahem... **bottom!**"

"All right! I admit it! But at least my Carol uses different hands for each task! Unlike your disgusting little daughter who uses the same one! **DISGUSTING!**"

"Ouch!" hissed Belle to Carol. "That was a low blow from your mum. True, though."

"**HUH!**" agreed the gormless girl.

The two mothers were now nose job to nose job.



"Come on!" said Belle.

"We'd better drag our mothers away before a brawl breaks out!"

Carol shrugged. "**HUH!**"

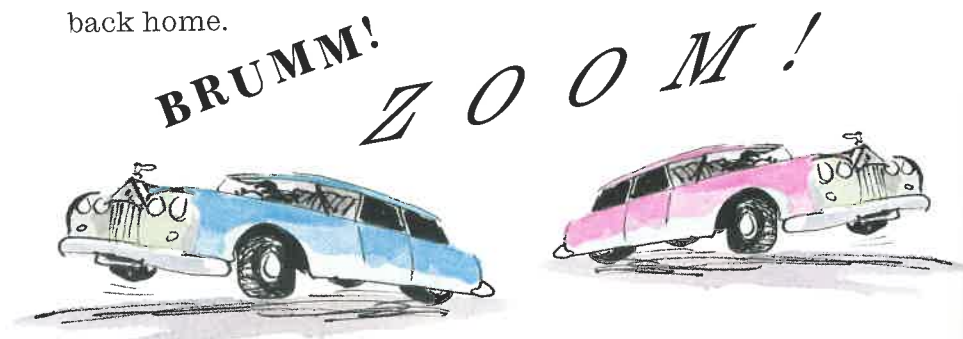
So Belle grabbed her mum's hand. "Come along now, Mother!"

And Carol grabbed her mum's arm. "**HUH!**"

THE WORLD'S WORST PARENTS

Then they dragged them off in opposite directions towards their Rolls-Royces. The Brag family had an electric-blue Rolls-Royce. But the Crow family had an even more revolting one in shocking pink.*

Then the two mothers raced each other along the roads back home.



Once at their respective country houses, Belinda and Camilla could seethe in peace. And seethe they did. They seethed all afternoon. They seethed all evening. And they seethed through the night. By the morning they were seething more than ever. Bad luck that it was the HAUGHTY'S SCHOOL Sports Day, a once-yearly occasion when all the parents spent an afternoon cheering on their daughters in running races and the like. Of course, winning meant infinitely more to the parents than it did to the girls.

* **WALLYFACT:** The worst colour for any car is BOTTOM-BURP BROWN.

LADY HAUGHTY'S SCHOOL FOR YOUNG LADIES SPORTS DAY

The first event of the afternoon was the hurdles.

Belinda Brag and Camilla Crow bustled into their places at the finish line. Treating Sports Day like a fashion parade, Belinda was in a lime-green dress, and Camilla in a luminous yellow one. Seething more than ever, the pair lowered their sunglasses to shoot each other evil stares.

Meanwhile, their daughters took their places at the start line with the other more eager-looking girls. Belle couldn't give a stuff about winning. She knew she wasn't the fastest or the strongest, and didn't mind one bit. The girl was good at other things, like standing in puddles.

"You can win this, Belle!" called out Belinda.

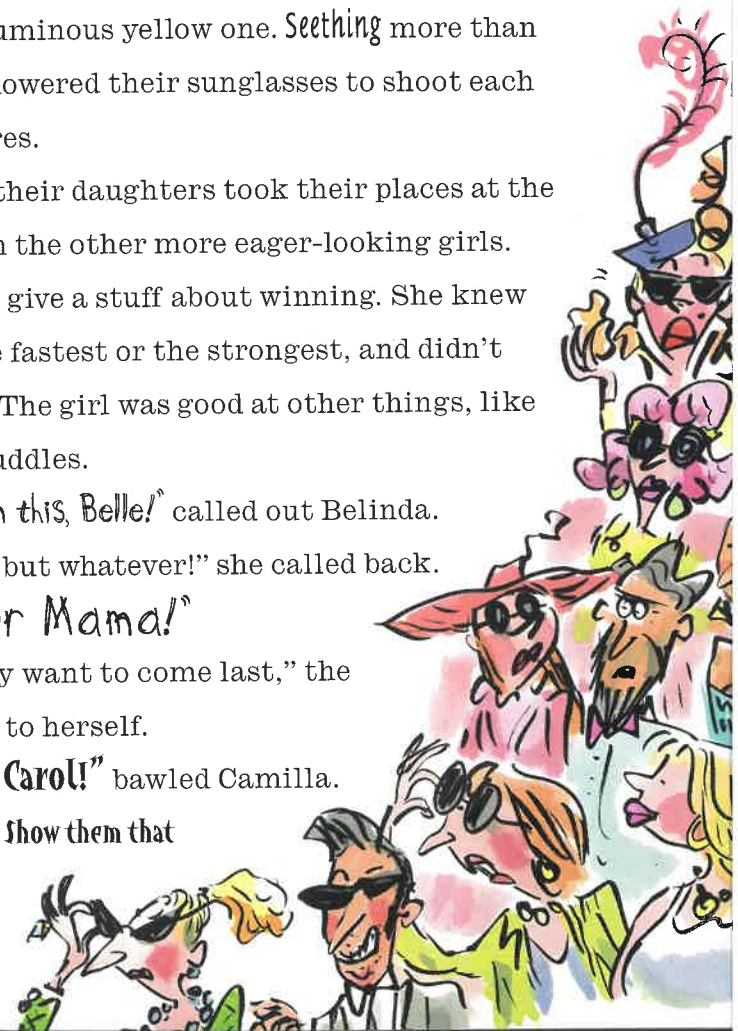
"No, I can't, but whatever!" she called back.

"Do it for Mama!"

"Now I really want to come last," the girl muttered to herself.

"Beat them, Carol!" bawled Camilla.

"Beat them all! Show them that



you are the best of the best! They must bow before the might and majesty of Miss Carol Crow!"

"HUH?" grunted Carol, who was actually facing the wrong way.

BANG! went the starting pistol.

As all the other girls raced off, Belle and Carol were immediately joint last. Neither picked up enough speed to leap over the first hurdle, so...

CLUNK! CLUNK!

...they just knocked them over instead.

And the next one.

CLUNK! CLUNK!

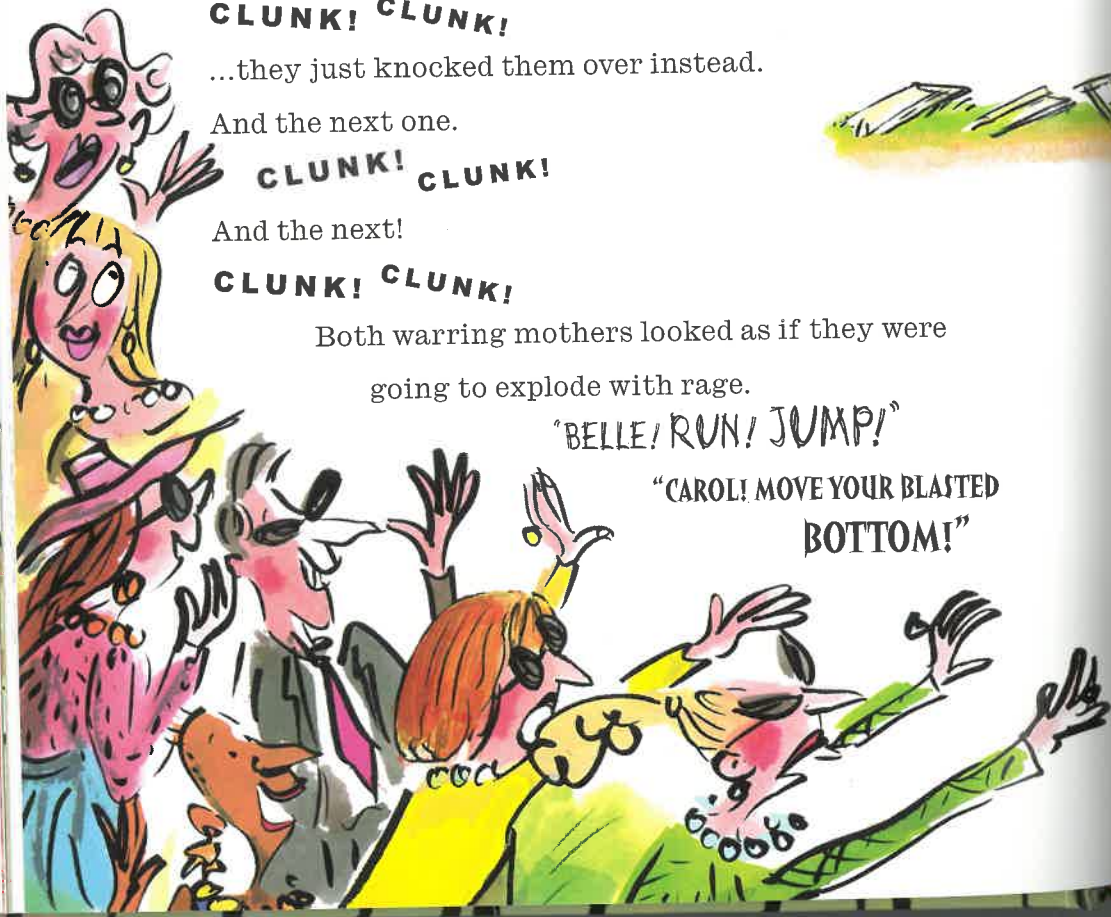
And the next!

CLUNK! CLUNK!

Both warring mothers looked as if they were going to explode with rage.

"BELLE! RUN! JUMP!"

"CAROL! MOVE YOUR BLASTED BOTTOM!"



But neither girl did. In fact, Belle became distracted by something on the ground.

"LOOK!" she exclaimed. "A WORM!"

She picked up the wiggly-waggly thing,

before waving it under Carol's nose.

"HUH!" said Carol, which Belle took to mean "I like your worm". The girl then picked her nose and wiped the bogey on a hurdle.

"YOUR BELLE IS RUINING IT FOR MY CAROL WITH HER REVOLTING WORM!"

bellowed Camilla.

"YOUR CAROL IS DISTRACTING MY BELLE BY PICKING A PARTICULARLY LARGE BOOGER!"

bawled Belinda.

"WELL, YOU WOULD KNOW ALL ABOUT BIG BOOGERS BECAUSE YOU LOOK LIKE ONE!"

Camilla had a point.

Belinda's dress was bogey green.



"I'VE HAD QUITE ENOUGH OF YOU, BELINDA BRAG!"

**"AND I'VE HAD QUITE ENOUGH
OF YOU, CAMILLA CROW!"**

With that, Belinda Brag stomped over to the pole vault and seized one of the long poles.

Meanwhile, Camilla snatched a javelin. In no time, the pair were locked in a deadly duel.

"TAKE THAT!" snarled Belinda, swooshing her pole.

"TAKE THIS!" snapped Camilla, swishing her javelin.

CLANK! CLINK! CLANK! went the weapons, as they bashed together.

Belinda yanked up her pole, hitting some of the other parents on their heads as she did so.

CLONK! DONK! BONK!

"OUCH!"

"OW!"

"OWEE!"



Meanwhile, wrenching back her javelin, Camilla managed to whack all the others.

THWACK! THWUCK! THWOCK!

"ARGH!"

"OOWW!"

"URGH!"

Soon, all the posh parents were arming themselves to join in the fight. Everything on the sports field became a weapon. Shotputs. Discuses. Even sand from the long jump was thrown in faces. At one point, the **HAUGHTY'S SCHOOL** headmistress herself, Miss Prunella Prim, was hoisted up by some of the mothers and used as a battering ram against a cowering huddle of fathers.

"HELP!"



The school Sports Day had descended into a gladiator battle. It was posh parent against posh parent.

And they fought DIRTY.

There was:

hair-pulling

arm-pinching

leg-scratching

finger-bending

nose-yanking

eye-poking

toe-stamping

ear-flicking

head-locking

elbow-tickling

even
BOTTOM-BITING!

"URGH!"

"ARGH!"

"OW!"

BOOM!

POW!

KERUNCH!

Soon the playing field was a swirling mass of gruesome grown-ups. The girls all stared open-mouthed in shock as their parents bashed and bawled at each other.

"YOUR DAUGHTER HAS A WONKY FRINGE!"

"YOUR DAUGHTER LOOKS LIKE A GUINEA PIG!"

"YOUR DAUGHTER STINKS OF TURNIPS!"

Still holding the worm, Belle shouted over the din, "GIRLS! WHO THINKS OUR MUMS AND DADS ARE A BUNCH OF FRUITCAKES?"

The girls all cheered in agreement. "HURRAH!"

None cheered louder than sisters Sophie and Anna, whose mother was yanking the nostril hair of one of the fathers.

"ARGH!"

"SO, WHO FANCIES BUNKING OFF SPORTS DAY AND BEING DRAGGED THROUGH A HEDGE BACKWARDS INSTEAD?"

called out Belle.

This was the girl's second-favourite thing. After standing in a puddle, of course.



THE WORLD'S WORST PARENTS

"YES!" cried all the girls, except Carol. Carol grunted, "KUH!" which Belle took to mean "yes".

In no time, the girls were having a whale of a time. Laughing, joking, climbing trees, skipping through the fields and making up games. And, best of all, picking their noses and scratching their bottoms to their hearts' content. Preferably with the same hand.



The girls were being happy being themselves,
while their parents made absolute
fools of themselves.

BARRY BOVVER

The dad who was not
the brightest spark

TINY BRAIN

HUGE MUSCLES

HAIRY ARMS

