Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

Weirdos vs. Bumskulls

Written by

Natasha Desborough

Published by

Catnip Publishing Ltd

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

'Nork-Grabbing Quimboid' is the **BRAND NEW SINGLE** from Camel Toe – AKA Blossom Uxley-Michaels and Petrina-Ola Olsen, inventors of the genre 'punch-the-air-helicopter-your-hair-electro-rock'.

LISTEN TO IT HERE:

PRAISE FOR 'NORK-GRABBING QUIMBOID':

> Get ready to tap those (camel) toes to this beauty. They are the most important thing to happen to music since Hard-Fi.
>
> **GREG JAMES, BBC RADIO 1**

> The most poignant song about nork grabbing that I've ever heard. I was moved to my manly core.
>
> **SHAUN KEAVENY, BBC 6 MUSIC**

> Camel Toe's 'Nork Grabbing Quimboid' latches on and won't let go.
>
> **NEMONE METAXAS BBC 6 MUSIC**

LISTEN TO CAMEL TOE'S DEBUT TRACK, 'PONCERAMA', HERE:

CATNIP BOOKS
Published by Catnip Publishing Ltd
Quality Court
off Chancery Lane
London WC2A 1HR

First published 2014
1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Text © 2014 Natasha Desborough
Illustrations by Vicky Barker

The moral rights of the author and illustrator have been asserted
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the copyright owner.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-84647-182-7

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

www.catnippublishing.co.uk

To: rachel.ferloine@poptasticmanagement.com
Sent: May 29th 04:01:08
From: Blossom Uxley-Michaels
Subj: SCHOOL DISCO

Dear Rachel,

OH. MY. GOD. I literally cannot sleep. The combination of the full moon last night, meeting Josh Raven and the seven drops of Rescue Remedy that I then took to calm myself down have left me on a LEGAL HIGH. It's just gone 4AM and I am off my face with adrenaline-fuelled JOY.

I know it's a strange time to be emailing, but I thought I'd take this opportunity to thank you for getting Josh to perform at Bridge Mount Secondary School. I don't know if you've heard, but right before Josh came on stage, Wazzock (legendary guitarist from rock band Steel Dragon) performed with my band Camel Toe AND sang a song that helped my two best friends Walter and Petrina finally get it on. Having not just one but two such enormous megastars in our humble school blew everyone's minds. It's a shame we're not talking literally, because stupid, dumb slangers Fiona Tittledown and Lucy Perkins were there and if their heads had ACTUALLY been blown up into tiny,

gunky fragments it would have been the most perfect day EVER.

Please pass on my personal thanks to Josh. He really is one of the kindest, most thoughtful men I have ever met and if he wasn't gay then I would definitely view him as husband material. (I'm assuming that he is 100% gay? If he is anything under 99% certain, then please let me know as I think I might be able to turn him. I am very flat-chested, so he wouldn't get intimidated by my norks.)

Many thanks,
Blossom Uxley-Michaels

P.S. I will be looking for a part-time job over the summer, so if you need anyone to tune up guitars or taste-test Josh's packed lunches or lips for poison then please consider me.

To: rachel.ferloine@poptasticmanagement.com
Sent: June 9th 17:19:27
From: Blossom Uxley-Michaels
Subj: Exams

Dear Rachel,

I thought you would like to know that Josh Raven has literally been a lifeline to me in my first full week of GCSE exams. Just before I went into my maths exam I was mucking about with the 'Reverse Music' app on my phone and began listening to Moonlight Stalker (my favourite song in the world) played backwards. Suddenly my ears were filled with the inspiring words 'You can do it. You can do it. I love your baked potato' as clear as day. Wowzoids!!! Slipping a secret message into a song when it's played in reverse is nothing short of pure GENIUS. In terms of sheer braininess Josh is right up there with Albert Einstein, Charles Darwin and a four-year-old boy I once saw on TV who could sing Jingle Bells in fifty-four languages. It really got me through my essay on 'The effects of the Great Depression on the people of the USA'. BUT I have to ask – is 'baked potato':

a) A lady-parts euphemism OR

b) Does Josh simply adore baked potatoes? (In which case he's in luck! I may not be a very good cook, but baked potatoes are my speciality. If he wants to pop round for tea one day then I'd be happy to serve up baked potatoes with cheese and beans. Yum!)

Many thanks,

Blossom Uxley-Michaels

P.S. If 'baked potato' IS a vagina euphemism then

I'm totally cool with that. I might be a feminist, but don't forget I'm in a band called Camel Toe!!! I'm TOTALLY liberal-minded with an awesome sense of humour. 'Baked potato' – hahahahahaha! Brilliant!!!

To: rachel.ferloine@poptasticmanagement.com
Sent: June 15th 10:21:34
From: Blossom Uxley-Michaels
Subj: Dark Times

Dear Rachel,

I'm midway through my last week of exams and feel that I'm on the verge of an anxiety-induced breakdown. Why do I need to know if ions are 'more concentrated in plasma or in urine' anyway? It's not going to help win me the Mercury Music Prize or an Ivor Novello is it? Thank God I've got Josh Raven's two-album back catalogue to help get me through the dark times. And, believe me, those dark times can get very, VERY dark indeed. I'm not saying I would ever want to end it all, but a free preview copy of Josh's new album would really make sure that I didn't do something stupid. Not that I ever would of course. But if I were to feel that the heavy pressure of exams was crushing the life out of me, then a free album would really help me to not

kill myself.

Many thanks,
Blossom Uxley-Michaels

P.S. Is it true that Josh's new album was recorded so that it syncs up exactly with the film Bite Me – Dusky Dark Part 1? Because that would be AMAZING.

To: Blossom Uxley-Michaels
Sent: June 17th 12:09:22
From: rachel.ferloine@poptasticmanagement.com
RE: Dark Times

Dear Blossom,

I hope you have survived your exams without injury. I put a copy of Josh's new album, *Dark Lover of the Night*, in the post a couple of days ago so hopefully you'll have received it by now.

We were also hoping that you, your family and a few friends would be free to attend Glastonbury Festival next weekend (25th June) as Josh Raven's V.I.P. guests. Josh is headlining on the Saturday night and would like to offer this as a personal thank you for the fabulous

welcome that he received at the Bridge Mount school disco.

The tickets are for one night's stay and you'll need to provide your own tent. We'd also suggest bringing wellies in case of wet, muddy weather.

Please let me know if you are able to attend A.S.A.P.

Best wishes,
Rachel Ferloine

Management Assistant
Poptastic Management



P.S. I'm afraid the new album doesn't sync up with the Bite Me film. And there is no secret backward message on 'Moonlight Stalker'. But Josh does like baked potatoes so if he did come to your house one day, I'm sure he would be thrilled to receive your generous hospitality.

To: rachel.ferloine@poptasticmanagement.com
Sent: June 18th 06:01:08
From: Blossom Uxley-Michaels
RE: re: Dark Times

Dear Rachel,

YES PLEASE!!

I would LOVE to come to the festival. I have asked my parents, who are both seasoned Glastonbury festival-goers, and they're good to go. Mum says it'll be a relief to put the memory of her last Glastonbury experience, when she had 'an unsavoury encounter with a man who claimed to be a Goblin king from The Land of Calliwampus', behind her.

Alongside my parents, I will also bring my two best friends Petrina and Walter. Because they are boyfriend and girlfriend now, I will be sleeping in between the two of them to ensure that no sexual activity takes place. Not that this is likely – it would take a highly experienced and talented escapologist to break through the hundreds of poppers and fasteners on the onesie that Petrina wears in bed.

The new album is BRILLIANT by the way. I've listened to it nonstop since it arrived and it's made me love Josh even more than I did already (in a non psycho-obsessive-stalker-type way).

Many thanks,
Blossom Uxley-Michaels

P.S. If there is a spare Gibson ES-335 guitar lying around the office (preferably cherry-red although I'm not really that fussy) then I'd be extremely grateful if you could send it to me, especially if Josh has touched it with his unusually long fingers. (I know for a fact that his fingers are exceptionally long as I measured them on my life-sized Josh Raven cardboard cut-out and they exceed the national average length by half a centimetre.)

WEEK 25
MANCAKE

We stand on the Pyramid Stage, soaking up the adulation that comes in roars from the enormous crowd. Everyone knows that festival audiences are the best and this is no exception.

'Poncerama, Poncerama, Poncerama,' they chant.

We've saved the best till last. The final encore. The pièce de Camel Toe résistance.

As we strike the first familiar chords, the crowd goes CRAZY. Camel Toe is the Saturday night headliner. Josh Raven was merely our warm-up act. I look at the side of the stage, where he stands in the VIP area giving us the thumbs up.

'You are AWESOME,' he mouths at us. 'You've made me five per cent less gay. Best band ever.'

'I know,' I mouth back. I'm not being cocky. It's a plain and simple truth.

Every person in the field knows the words to Poncerama. We are a single voice enriched by a backdrop of magic, history, spirituality and vaginal euphemisms.

'Poncerama oooh, Poncerama ooooh,

It's no wonder that nobody really likes you.'

And, as I strum my mega expensive, cherry-red Gibson ES-335 guitar that glints under the bright stage spotlights, I know

that this is my destiny. Petrina knows it too. She is floating with her keyboard above my head on the MASSIVE hydraulic arm that we had custom made and imported from an Indian sweatshop. It is not gimmicky in any way at all. The arm carries her directly over the audience. Petrina throws mini chocolate eggs and Jelly Babies (which are totally FREE) directly into their mouths (she has a brilliant aim) in an act of kindness and generosity. We are literally feeding the one hundred thousand.

And then, as we play the final chord, there is an eruption of applause. Camel Toe are right now the BIGGEST band in the world.

'GOODNIGHT GLASTONBURY. I LOVE YOU,' I shouted at the top of my voice. I awoke from my dream to find myself in mid-air, star-jumping off of my bed with Cassiopeia, my beloved guitar, slung across my shoulders. I have no idea how it got there, so I must have put it on in my sleep. Suddenly the bright light of my bedside lamp blinded my sleepy eyes.

'Blossom, are you OK?' asked my bleary-looking best friend, who was staying over while her parents were in Norway.

'Is it morning?' I was still half asleep.

Petrina felt around blindly on the floor next to her fold-out bed until she found her glasses. 'It's half past three,' she mumbled, squinting at her phone.

'What were you doing anyway?' she continued. 'Your face is all flushed.'

I sat back down on the bed and felt my burning cheeks.

That was a pretty active dream.

'Oh, you know,' I explained. 'I was just strumming my cherry-red –'

'Well a girl's gotta do what a girl's gotta do,' said Petrina, taking off her glasses again. 'But can't you do it a bit more quietly?'

What?

ARRRGGGHH! She thinks I was gusset typing!

'No . . . noooo,' I continued, now in a bit of a panic. 'I mean I was fantasising about playing myself on The Pyramid Stage in front of a hundred thousand people.'

That sounds even worse.

'I don't care *what* floats your boat,' said Petrina, slumping back on to the fold-out bed. 'But can you please just hurry up so we can go back to sleep? We've both got our last exams in the morning and I want to be firing on all cylinders even if you don't.'

Brilliant. My best friend now thinks I've got a public fuzzbox-flashing fetish. Well that's just GREAT.



I inhaled the scent of the freshly cut grass on the playing field as I stepped out of the stagnant school hall with Walter. It smelt like FREEDOM! Our last exam (History), during which Paulette Dempsey's stomach was rumbling SO loudly that I was tempted to ask if I could re-sit the exam due to digestive distraction, had just finished and the prospect of a long hot summer was the only thing on our minds.

'HEY BLOSSOM,' called an all-too-familiar voice. I turned to see Matthew Ludlow leaning against the brick wall of the hall and trying to look casual, until he realised that one side of his T-shirt was caught on a nail. Had he been waiting for me for all that time?

'Wait up!' Matthew began jogging over, his freshly torn T-shirt billowing out beside him like a lopsided superhero cape. I noticed straight away that his face was relatively free of spots and I wondered if he'd managed to somehow curb his drinking.

'I loved this T-shirt,' he groaned, looking down at the massive rip.

I couldn't help but notice that the side of his torso was quite fit. But I absolutely wasn't perving. I mean, this is Matthew Ludlow we're talking about! He caught me staring and I quickly averted my eyes, not wanting to give the wrong impression. 'Blossom . . . I just wanted to ask –' he began.

Oh God. He's going to ask me out again like he did that time by the school vending machine. Quick, think of an excuse. Fast.

'I can't,' I interrupted. 'I . . . I'm having my tyres changed.'

Matthew looked surprised. 'You have a car? Cool.'

I'm having my tyres changed? I am SO rubbish when I'm put on the spot.

'No . . . erm,' I stammered. 'It's more of a bike.'

'You have a bike?' asked Walter, sounding puzzled. 'Since when?'

Shut UP Walter. Shut up.

'Yeah,' I lied. 'I've been riding bikes since I could support

my own head. And sit up. And pedal. Without stabilisers.'

'I love cycling,' said Matthew. 'We should go out mountain-biking sometime.'

NO WE SHOULD NOT!

'Mine's a BMX.' I was digging myself a hole. A big deep hole, heading directly down into The Cavern Of Lies And DOOM. 'I can do some amazing stunts and . . . flips.'

'Cool, I can't wait to see them.' Matthew was looking at me as if I was standing on top of a golden, glittering pedestal. Through his fringe, Walter was staring at me as if I was utterly bonkers.

'Anyway, I wanted to ask you something,' Matthew continued, running his hand through his short (strawberry-blonde) hair. 'I'd like to become Camel Toe's manager.'

Well I wasn't expecting that.

'I can get you gigs and a bit of publicity. And my dad's company has agreed to sponsor the band. He'll pay for transport and equipment and stuff.'

He bit his lip and began to rock back and forth on his heels with his hands in his pockets.

Matthew's dad is Roy Ludlow, business bigwig and boss of Ludlow's Luxury Loos, a company that specialises in making lavish leather toilets. He is *loaded!* But . . .

'No,' I panicked. 'Walter's going to be our manager.'

Matthew's head dropped. 'Oh, OK,' he said as he backed away. 'I'll see you around.'

'*Will* you be our manager?' I asked Walter hopefully, once Matthew was out of earshot.