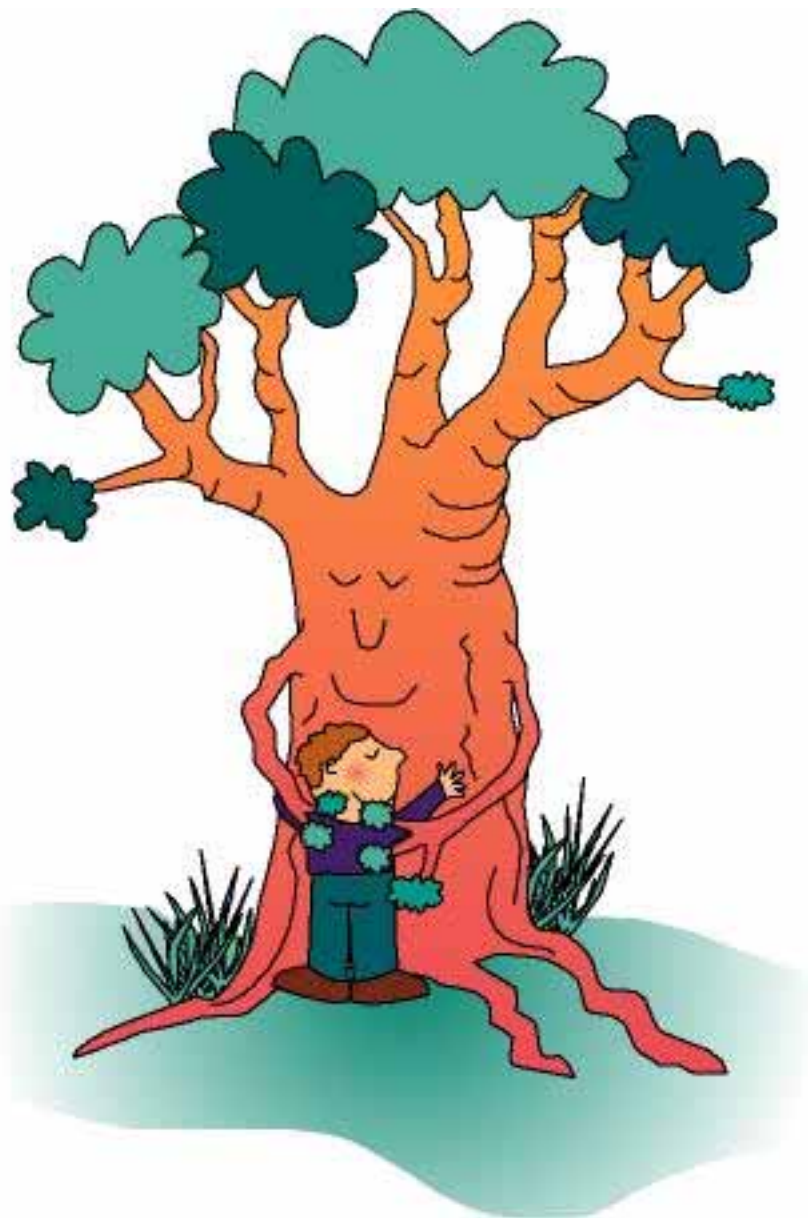


# IMAGINE THAT!

written & illustrated  
by Julie Davey



# ***IMAGINE THAT!***

for  
Leighton and James

## Foreword

By Tracey Courtney [www.tranceformations.com.au](http://www.tranceformations.com.au)

Once again Julie Davey has presented us with a book for children which is both humorous and encouraging.

Julie's aim is to assist children in reaching their full potential, by believing in themselves, building self-confidence and instilling important and positive values, goals and life skills. She has succeeded again using her gift of writing, to touch the imagination and stimulate the mind.

I have been honoured to assist in the editing of both 'A For Attitude' and 'Imagine That!' The messages and insights contained in both will help children (and their parents!), create a more positive future for themselves and others. Both books are a must for all schools and homes.

## Chapter One Knock Knock – Who's there?



Daniel, Meg, Boz and I were squashed together in a clump of bushes, in front of the Nelson's house on Bridge Street.

We had mud (smeared commando style) on our cheeks and foreheads. Mitch was standing on the footpath, wearing a jumper, jeans and five tree branches.

Because he was the youngest, he had to do all the things that nobody else would do.

This time, he had to tie the string to the Nelson's doorknocker to start the game.

So many people in town avoided the Nelsons because they were 'different'.

There were lots of rumours going around about them.

We didn't know which stories to believe – surely they couldn't be **Martians**?

'Who ever said they were Martians?' snorted Boz. 'They're not green', he sneered, 'and they're not special, they're just complete bogons – let's stir 'em up, maybe they'll leave town, good riddance!'

I looked sideways at Boz. He was supposedly a member of our family but he sure didn't act like it. When we were little, someone told us that storks brought the babies to live with families. After hearing that, I wondered whether the stork had got his directions muddled, and dropped him off at the wrong house?

While I was waiting there in the bushes, for the action to begin, I began to imagine how life would be if we had the real brother living with us. The one the stork should've brought us. Then, as if he could read my mind, Boz snapped at me, 'Get with it Jack!'

I got such a fright I jumped and scratched my nose on a pointy bit of twig. Boz snorted, called me 'Jittery Jumping Jack' and began giving us more orders about the game.

The game was 'Knock, Knock' and it was the best fun – as long as you were the one tugging the string, which pulled the door knocker – and not the one who had to keep answering the door.

So Mitch shuffled toward the door, wearing his specially designed camouflage gear (which made him look like a boy covered in leaves), and quietly tied the string onto the knocker to start the game.



Of course Mum would not call it a *game*. Mum would call this a *practical joke*, that was not funny at all, and she would say that practical jokes were very *'impractical'*, because someone usually got hurt. And she would say...well Mum would say lots of things that we never listened to, because that stopped us having fun.

But we liked to think of 'Knock-Knock' as a harmless game that made us all laugh – a lot. Meg giggled and guffawed so hard that she usually snorted and had to be muffled. (*Once she even peed her pants, and since then, when she came on a dangerous mission with us, Daniel made sure she went to the loo before we left the house*).

I think that Mrs Nelson answered that door to the phantom knocker, five times before the string fell off. So, after being bullied once again by Boz, Mitch waddled off up the path, and started to tie the string back onto the knocker. Daniel was in position, ready to muffle Meg's snorts – but there was no need this time.

Just as Mitch was tying the knot, the door opened.

We all froze.

Mitch squealed.

The door closed.

*All that was left on the doormat, was a pile of autumn leaves.*



## Chapter Two Things are not always as they seem.

*Everyone seemed to have a different story about what had just happened.*

Meg reckoned that a warty-nosed witch, who looked a lot like Mrs Nelson, touched Mitch with her wand and made him vanish.

Daniel said he saw a small green person with three eyes, pointing a remote control at Mitch. He blinked, and Mitch was gone.

But Boz said he thought he was *certain* that it was *probably* Mr Nelson in a gorilla suit, who took Mitch.

**'Unless of course it was a real gorilla!'** the others all said at once.

While the others let their imagination get the better of them, I saw what **actually** happened ... As the door opened, Mitch had leaped in fright, landed on his ankle and tumbled forward. Mrs Nelson caught him and took him inside!

Nobody knew what to do. *Should we call the police? Get Mum and Dad to come over? ... Or maybe we could all run away and join the circus!* The last option sounded the best. If we told the police or our parents what we were up to, we would all be grounded *until we were thirty!*

Then Boz wondered if Mitch might be just as happy to stay where he was. After all, he wouldn't have to go to school again. Maybe we could just pretend we hadn't seen him since lunchtime at school, so it couldn't possibly be our fault that he had disappeared.

*I couldn't just sit there, doing nothing while Mitch was in possible danger, so I decided to see what I could do to help.*

On went my imaginary 'Super Jack' suit, complete with cape, goggles and silent creeping shoes. The shoes were a very important part of the whole outfit. Even though the suit was just an idea in my mind, it really helped me to feel brave and clever.

I didn't try to fly when I had the suit on, because I didn't feel **that** confident, but I was amazingly good at sneaking up on people without being heard, (on account of the silent creeping shoes) *and most kids were just a little bit afraid to pick a fight with Super Jack. I think that might have been because the goggles made my lips curl up on either side, giving me a surly look that I didn't normally have.*

So I crept along the side fence in behind the hydrangeas, which gave particularly good cover for a super hero. The suit **changed colour** to match the surroundings, a bit like a chameleon, which made it extra hard to spot me. *Luckily, the cape managed to keep clear of the sort of twigs that would be likely to catch on your regular every day cape, so I made it down to the house very easily.*

Along the side of the house, firewood was stacked up against the wall. Luckily for me, the wood-stack was right under a window, *which just happened* to be open enough for me to squeeze through. I climbed in – very quietly like any responsible super hero, and managed to make it down to the bathroom floor without a hiccup.

I often got hiccups when I was nervous, but drinking backwards out of a glass would usually fix them. It must have been the suit that stopped me having any hiccups at all today.

Now that I was safely inside the Nelson's house, I looked and listened for any clue to help me find Mitch.

I crept up to the half open door and peeked out into the hallway. I could hear a lady's voice, speaking quite calmly but firmly.

*Probably Mrs Nelson.*

Then I sneaked along toward the room where the voice was coming from, and managed to get close enough to listen to the conversation, and to spy into the room through a crack in the door.

There was Mitch, sitting with an ice pack on his ankle, in the Nelson's living room. Mrs Nelson was explaining to him that the so-called 'game'– 'Knock-Knock' was not really a game at all. And that she would call this '*a practical joke*, which was not funny, and that practical jokes were very '*impractical*', because someone usually got hurt.'

'Funny, I think I've heard that somewhere before,' Mitch thought, as he wondered nervously if he was the one who was going to get hurt. But that was just his mind trying to worry him. Deep down, he felt safe. *There was something very special about Mrs Nelson – and her house.*

'Maybe I've already been hurt enough' he thought.

His ankle was really beginning to throb.

***Wow, I could read Mitch's mind! I could hear what he was thinking!***

It could've been the suit, giving me special powers, but it had never happened before. Maybe it was the house!

The house might have been special, but it didn't smell too good. There was a funny odour, (which reminded me of chook poo) in the hallway and I had noticed it in the bathroom as well.

*Then I had a terrible thought.*

I looked down at my silent creeping shoes. Yes it was true. There must've been fertiliser on the garden out the front. **Talk about putting your foot in it!** There wasn't much I could do except apologise, and that would have blown my cover. But, even though I had chook poo all over my silent creeping shoes, there didn't seem to be any on the floor. ***This must be a magical house!***

Apparently we were not the first to play the 'Knock-Knock' trick on the Nelsons.

After hearing the other side of the story, Mitch began to feel truly sorry that he had ever played the trick, and apologised to Mrs Nelson.

He thought about how it would be to come to a strange town and to have no friends. He realised that the people in the town had made up stories about this family without even trying to get to know them.

*'This has been a good day,'* thought Mitch.

He had a feeling that Mrs Nelson liked him, even though he had played a trick on her.

Mrs Nelson asked if he would like to come over some time to play with her son Angus. She explained that he was out fly-fishing with his grandmother right now, and could be home any time, depending on how the fish were biting.

'Cool' said Mitch.

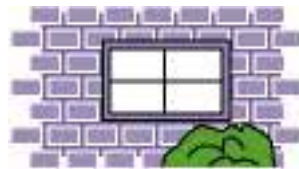
Mitch felt the pain in his ankle, but wanted to be brave, so he kept quiet. Just then, as if she was reading his mind, Mrs Nelson bent down, placed her hands on Mitch's ankle and pressed gently. She closed her eyes and breathed in and out deeply. After a couple of minutes, she opened her eyes, stood up, and stretched.

'Try that, Mitch' said Mrs Nelson.

He hopped up. The pain and swelling had gone.

*Magic hands? Magic house? Magic!*

I crept back to the bathroom, hopped up on the basin and hightailed it out the window. And took the chook poo with me.



### Chapter Three Flying mashed potato

Mitch appeared at the front door of the Nelson's house, just as Boz was announcing that they had better call the police.

They were so pleased to see Mitch, partly because he was a member of the family, but mainly because they were really nervous of what the punishment might be for losing a small boy.

After Boz made Mitch promise he wouldn't tell Mum and Dad what had happened, we all agreed that we would not play 'Knock-Knock' ever again, or at least until next year ... probably.

So we hurried off home for lunch.

Mum met us at the door with her hands on her hips.

'Uh, oh, looks like we're in for it now!' said Mitch. Well, in fact, we weren't in trouble at all. Mum just had her hands on her hips because her back was sore. I suppose we were all feeling guilty, and expected to be in trouble.

**'I just had a call from Mrs Nelson'** said Mum as the family sat down to eat lunch. Suddenly there was silence – except for the sound of Boz's fork falling to his plate, sending a carrot stick into Meg's glass of milk, and a dollop of mashed potato clear across the room to land on my latest cat painting.

Dad thought my cat paintings were so good, that he framed them all, and hung them up in a row in our kitchen. Whenever we had new visitors, Dad would show them my 'cats' and explain how I painted them with the brush held between my teeth.

Sometimes if I was doing my painting when Mum was cooking a roast, it would make my mouth water. Then I'd dribble and it would run down the brush and get mixed with the paint, which was a bit of a pain, but it usually made a very interesting effect. *Or that's what Dad usually said.* He just thought I was so clever to be able to paint like that –

*'Mrs Nelson sounds like a nice person, what a shame the people of this town have to be so silly about new-comers,' said Mum.*

'She has found your library card Mitch, and will be home this afternoon if you'd like to go around there to collect it,' Mum said as she placed the lemon meringue pie in front of Boz, and asked him to be more careful with his cutlery this time.

*Mitch hadn't noticed his card was gone...*

*This was his chance to go back and find out more about the mysterious Nelsons!*

**End of episode 1.**

**See you next time for more of Mitch and Jack's adventures!**



To be posted on [www.aforattitude.com.au](http://www.aforattitude.com.au)

– 28<sup>th</sup> March 2003

## Chapter Four Don't believe everything you read

We turned up at the Nelson's house seventy nine seconds after Mum announced that lunch was over, and that the children could leave the table.

Mitch thought it was a good idea to take me with him, just in case anything went wrong with our visit and someone had to run home for help. *I could run faster than any kid on our block.*

Mitch avoided the doorknocker, and just tapped instead. I hadn't noticed it before, but there was a sign beside the front door that read:

'Harriet Nelson, Phd,  
Reiki Master, Urban Shaman'

*Whatever that meant.*

When Mrs Nelson opened the door, Mitch burst out with the longest sentence I had ever heard before.

*'I hope you don't mind me bringing Jack along, have you finished your lunch? My foot is feeling much better now, thanks for phoning about my library card, is Angus home yet?'*



Mrs Nelson's face broke into a big smile and she welcomed us in.

We walked into the living room where a huge fire was crackling away, warming the whole room. I thought about how much our cat Sooty would like to lie in front of this fire, instead of having to sit up straight to catch the warm air coming out of our heater ducts at home.

Mrs Nelson gave Mitch his library card, which must have slipped out of his pocket earlier in the morning.

'I'm sure Angus would like to meet you both, and I have a feeling that he will be home very soon. Would you like to play a game, while you are waiting for him to get back? We have one that belonged to Mr Nelson's great-great-grandfather' said Mrs Nelson.

'Yes please!' said Mitch eagerly.

Mrs Nelson brought out a board game (which sure did look like it had belonged to someone's great-great grandfather) and said she was going out to the garage to do some arc welding. The box was blue and very plain, except for the name printed in gold right in the middle. It was called '**Imagine That**' and we couldn't wait to see how it worked.

Mitch opened the game and read the rules that were printed on the inside of the lid.

The rules were simple:

1. Never assume anything.
2. Don't believe everything you read.
3. Put things back where you found them.
4. Be home in time for tea.

'That's funny, there is no instruction book' Mitch mumbled to himself.

The game board looked like somebody's living room.

There were no instructions written on the board and no numbers. No squares to move to, or cards to pick up. No properties to buy, reptiles to slide down or steps to climb. No tiles to move, no dice to throw, no nothing - except for this ordinary old picture of an ordinary old living room.

The room in the picture had ordinary old green curtains, ordinary old purple leather chairs, ordinary old red Persian rugs, ordinary old brown bookcases, and an ordinary old green lamp standing in the corner.

The only modern thing in the picture was a computer, but even that was pretty basic.

Mitch looked bored. 'This is a pretty ordinary old game! Maybe I'll read a book while I'm waiting.' he mumbled.

So he walked to the ordinary old bookcase, selected an ordinary old book and went over to sit on the ordinary old purple leather chair – the one beside the roaring fire.

I sat on the floor ... or I should say – on the ordinary old red Persian rug ... on the floor ... in front of the roaring fire!

Mitch suddenly looked up at me – then at the game – and then over to the window – the one draped with ordinary old green curtains, just beside the ordinary old green lamp that was standing in the corner.

**'Great snorting snapping turtles, Jack!'** Mitch exclaimed. **'This is unreal!'**

Mitch checked the books in the ordinary old brown bookcase in the room, against those in the ordinary old brown bookcase in the picture. **'They're all there. Every one! And the really spooky thing is – they are in the same order as the ones in the picture!'** said Mitch excitedly. **'It's like the game is a copy of the room. Imagine keeping everything exactly the same all these years – that's got to be freaky!'**



Ah yes, but there was another possibility. And just as I was thinking that, Mitch realised the same thing. Maybe the Nelsons decorated the room from the picture on the board. Of course!

'Well. There goes that idea. It isn't spooky at all. They must really like this game' he said. **But as Mitch looked back to the board, he suddenly stopped.**

'Look at the fireplace, look at the board!

**The picture keeps changing as the fire burns the wood! Far out, Gertrude!'**

Obviously Mitch was very excited, because he seemed to have forgotten my name, but I didn't mind. *'Gertrude' was far better than the names Boz usually called me.*

We moved a few things around the room, to see whether the board would change. Mitch opened the curtains, while I moved the rug. *And, sure enough, the picture on the board changed to match the room.*

We put the curtains and rug back where we found them, just like the rules of the game had said.

*If it truly was an enchanted board, we weren't going to risk breaking the rules!*

'So if there are no instructions, I wonder what...'

But Mitch didn't finish his sentence, because right at that moment he touched the screen of the computer on the picture, and the computer in the living room started up. We both went to the computer in time to see the words typing across the screen ...

`'Press enter to start the game.'`

Big decision.

Did we want to play? ...

Would we be back in time for tea? ...

As I was wondering these things, another message appeared on the screen ...

`'That, is up to you!'`

*It was like the computer was reading my mind and answering my thoughts.*

I thought about testing it again to see if it was a co-incidence, or whether my questions would be answered. But just then another message marched across the screen...

`'There is no such thing as a co-incidence'`

**WOW!** Mitch seemed to understand me without me telling him what I was thinking. There seemed to be only one way to go. We had to play the game!

### **End of episode 2.**

**See you next time for more of Mitch and Jack's adventures!**

To be posted on [www.aforattitude.com.au](http://www.aforattitude.com.au) – 4th April 2003



## Chapter Five What's that on your shoulder, Bill?

Mitch pressed the 'enter' key.

Nothing happened.

*'That's right, the rules told us not to believe everything we read'* Mitch said as he tried some of the other keys.

Still nothing.

*He sat back in the chair and thought about the problem. 'Which key will get me into the game?'* Mitch asked himself quietly.

Then a message flashed up on the screen ...

*'Fifth from left, top shelf,  
ordinary old brown bookcase'.*

We ran to the bookcase, counted along for the fifth book, and read the title.

It was called **'Consider your options, take control of your life'**.

'Huh, one of those self-help books,' said Mitch, 'maybe it means that we should help ourselves.'

The computer screen fired up again

*'That's right, you do need to help yourselves,  
but think about the book, the clue is in the title!'*

We looked back at the book.

***Of course! Press the 'option' and 'control' keys, that's it!***

Mitch pressed both keys down and we knew at once that the game had begun.

First there was a slow rumble.

**The fire flared and sparks flew out madly.**

**Then there was a flash of really bright light.**

Then as quickly as it came, the light was gone and an old man stood beside us. He grinned at me with his three and a half teeth. Very attractive – not. To show the old man just how clever I was, I grinned back and winked at the same time, while I balanced on just one foot.

‘Have you seen the Captain?’ he asked Mitch.

Poor Mitch was speechless. He had seen me wink before, and I was always balancing on one foot, so I don’t think that stunned him.

*It must have been the old man’s pirate outfit — or the dead parrot on his shoulder.*

The old man looked at me and I winked again, then went over to the bookcase and pointed at a book on the lower shelf. It was called ‘The adventures of Captain Cockatoo’. The old pirate thanked me and tap-tapped me on my head.

‘I really don’t like being tapped on the head’ I thought, but I didn’t like to offend the old fellow.

‘I’m sorry,’ he said, as he turned around and bent down to my level. The old man held out his hand (*the one without the hook*) for me to shake.

‘I’ll make a deal with you’ he said, ‘I won’t tap you on the head if you don’t call me an “old man”. *I’m only three hundred and six, and my name is Bill.*’

## Chapter Six      The enchanted garden

‘The great thing about this is the mind reading’, I thought.

So did Mitch and Bill.

Actually Mitch thought it was ‘cool’ and Bill thought it was ‘jolly good’.

*People sure used to talk funny three hundred years ago.*

Bill asked whether we had been out into the garden. He was sure Mrs Nelson would let us play out there, so Mitch folded the board along the crease and off we went. I turned back to see Bill, but he had disappeared — Captain Cockatoo, parrot and all.

The backyard was like a jungle with tall trees, vines and creepers, and would be a great place for an adventure. We heard a loud splashing sound which we thought must’ve been a fountain in a fishpond, but when we followed a path that lead to the splashing sound, it took us to a ‘bigger than Texas’ waterfall.

‘Funny to have a waterfall in the middle of the town’ said Mitch, **‘when we don’t even have a river!’**

‘Yeah, good point Mitch, but then nothing surprises me about this place,’ I thought, *and Mitch read my mind and sent back the message that he agreed.*

We wandered upstream along the river that fed the waterfall, and after a couple of twists and turns, we came to a **ginormous** willow tree and sat down on a soft grassy spot by the trunk. The branches dangled down to the ground and the leaves tickled our necks as they danced about in the breeze. It was a perfect cubby house.

'I suppose we should have expected something like this' said Mitch, as we stared at the board.

There, instead of the Nelson's living room, was a picture of a 'ginormous' willow tree, just along from a 'bigger than Texas' waterfall. Just upstream of our tree, was a rubber boat. Mitch touched the picture of the boat.

'How about coming for a spin on the river?' asked the rubber boat – which had all of a sudden appeared beside us.

'I'll just pretend I didn't hear that' said Mitch, 'rubber boats don't talk!'



*'Get real, dude' said the rubber boat, 'of course we do, it's just that you've never met a friendly one before. My name is Wobbly-bottom'. 'Come on get in, hurry up there, I'm about to leave! Jogga-logga bing bang, you don't want to miss out do you? Ra, ra, ra.'*

Well, who could argue with that? I wanted to go for a ride, so I jumped in old 'Wobbly-bottom', before Mitch could argue.

He thought we'd better stick together, so he quickly hopped in too, just before Wobbly launched himself, and off we went down the river.

*We forgot all about the game board.*

The water was moving really quickly and it was quite rough. Waves crashed in on us and sloshed around our legs. We flashed past the trees on the riverbank so fast, that they all blurred into one big green smudge – *about the same colour that Mitch's face had just turned.* It was so exciting – *until I remembered the waterfall!*

*'Aaaarrrrggghhh!'* we screamed as Wobbly-bottom hurtled down the steep drop.

Mitch hung on to me with one hand, and the seat of the boat with the other, to save us from falling out. He seemed to have forgotten about being sick. The waterfall went on and on forever, until finally we splashed down to the next level of the river.

By this time we were up to our waists in water, so Mitch bailed the water out with the small bucket that was tied onto the boat.

*'Thank you very much'* said old Wobbly. *'I could have just sneezed it out, but it was nice of you to help.'*

We pulled up to the riverbank and hopped out, thinking we might explore the garden while we dried off.

'You know, we should be able to *'think' ourselves dry, Mitch*' I supposed. 'This is a magical place, where really strange and wonderful things happen, so I reckon anything could be possible here. *Remember how Mum always says that you should be careful about what you wish for, because your thoughts often end up coming true?*'

So Mitch and I sat down on the grassy bank, and closed our eyes to help us concentrate. Mitch had been doing relaxation classes at school, so he suggested the bit about closing our eyes. Then he told me that I had to *imagine that* I was wearing a king's crown on my head. It made me giggle a bit, but I could tell from the way Mitch growled at me, I should be quiet and try to concentrate.

So there we were with pretend crowns on our heads, breathing big deep breaths and imagining tunnels of sparkling white light pouring down from the sky, right into our crowns. *I had to roll over and bury my face in the grass to stop myself from laughing out loud.*

After several minutes and just as many grumbles from Mitch, I was finally able to settle down. Then I began to feel all dreamy and light. Just like a feather.

Mitch had told me that when I got that feeling, it was time to make my wish, and to remember to be very careful with that wish.

**'Think about the consequences'** was what Mum used to say about wishes. Which meant that if you change one thing, it might affect other things that you don't really want to change.

Mitch and I thought that to wish ourselves dry probably wouldn't hurt, so we had a go. We lay there on the grassy bank of the river and thought very deeply about being dry and – of course – it worked!

'Perhaps we had better get back' said Mitch, 'it feels like we have been gone all day'. We jumped up and Mitch looked at his watch.

**'Uh-oh'**

*The time on the watch said half past twenty-six.*

**'Jack, what else did you wish for?'** yelled Mitch.

'Oops' I thought. 'I do remember thinking it would be nice to have more time to explore the jungle. That was just before we met Wobbly-bottom. I wasn't even trying to wish then!'

'Well, maybe Mum was right about being careful with wishes' said Mitch.

**'Imagine how this could affect everyone else in the whole world!'**

'OK, maybe I can reverse it' I supposed.

**'Good luck!'** said Mitch, sounding a little grumpy.

So I sat back down and concentrated... I imagined a picture of a clock with the new time on its face, and then I imagined the hands winding around to the proper time.

I had no idea what the proper time was, but I figured that whoever changed the time in the first place probably had it written down somewhere.

'How's that, Mitch?' I wondered.

'It says two-thirty, but who knows if it's right,' he said as we headed off along a track which we hoped would lead us back to the house.

'I wonder whether we should just wish ourselves straight back to the Nelson's house?' said Mitch as we were struggling through the thick vines across the path.

**'What? And miss out on your next adventure?'** asked a big oak tree beside us.

**End of episode 3.**



**See you next time for more of Mitch and Jack's adventures!**

To be posted on [www.aforattitude.com.au](http://www.aforattitude.com.au) – 11th April 2003

## Chapter Seven      Be home in time for tea.

**'Why do dogs drink out of the toilet?'** asked the tree, *whose name, apparently, was 'Edwood'.*

This was just one of the questions we had to answer for Edwood to let us past along the path. He wasn't a mean tree or anything like that, I just think he was lonely. Almost everyone just 'wished themselves' where they wanted to go in this garden and Edwood didn't get to talk to many people.

We knew that we could also use our magic if we wanted, but it was quite true as Edwood had said, that we would be missing out on *great adventures.*

Luckily, I knew the answer to the dog drinking out of the toilet question, because I knew all about dogs. And cats for that matter. Our cat Sooty was my best friend. We used to sit in the garden together for hours, just the two of us. Some people thought it was a strange friendship. *But we were happy.*

The next question from Edwood was – **'What is the real time?'**

I'm not sure whether Edwood knew about our time mix up. Maybe he did.

He seemed to be a very smart tree. But then again, maybe all trees are smart, and we just haven't bothered to talk to one before.

To answer his question, Mitch told Edwood that it was now twenty to three – somewhere in the world. **'Ha!'** said Edwood, **'I see that I'll have to dig deep and get out my really tricky questions'.**

**'OK. See if you know the answer to this one. Why do people play golf?'** Well, that one had us truly stumped. **'Stumped?'** asked Edwood, **'me too! Ha! Always my favourite joke that one! Well, I suppose you two had better act like a tree and leave! Ha! Another beauty. I'm full of them. Leaves and jokes! You will come back and visit me won't you? I've had such a good time!'**

We agreed that we would come back again, and off we went toward the Nelson's house. I wondered what the real time was.

Mitch looked at his watch.

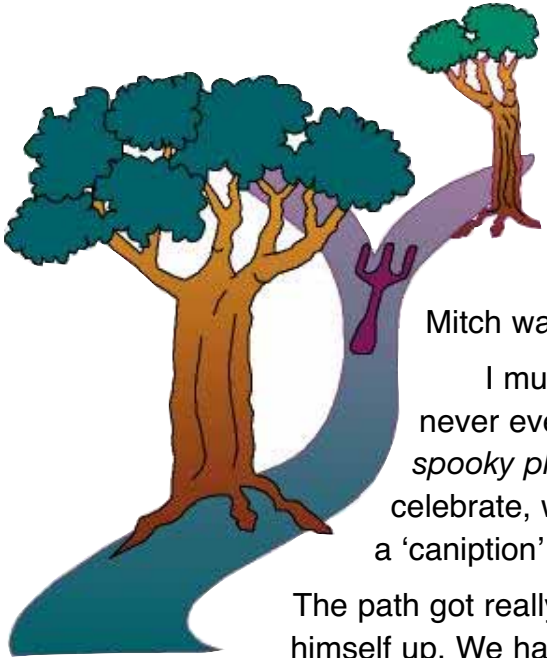
It was six fifteen.

Dinnertime!

**Oops...**

## Chapter Eight Arryhay and Ackjay eetmay Orisbay

We walked along the path until we came to a fork in the road.



'I wonder how that got there? Mitch said, and he picked it up and put it in his pocket.

**'No Mitch, remember Rule No. 3., you'd better put that fork back where you found it'** I said.

**'Jack, you spoke! ... Out loud! ... Wow!'**

Mitch was amazed.

I must admit it surprised me a bit too, because I had never ever spoken before. *This truly was an amazing and spooky place.* Still, even though this was a good reason to celebrate, we knew we had better get home before Mum had a 'caniption' and grounded us.

The path got really steep and Mitch had to hold onto vines to drag himself up. We had just reached some level ground, when we were stopped in our tracks by a huge wild boar.

**'Althay! Owhay oesgay erethay?'** He spoke to us in a funny language which, fortunately, Mitch could understand because he and his friends spoke piglatin at school for fun.

'I didn't know real pigs spoke the language too' thought Mitch. The wild boar which was getting wilder all the time, said in English this time – just so there was no mistake – **'Of course we speak the language, who did you think invented it?'**

Mitch deciphered the boar's first question in piglatin and spoke back to him in his own language. *'Eway areway itchMayay andhay ackJay, onhay ahay ecialspay issionmay otay hetay elsonsNay ousehay. Easeplay etlay usway asspay!'*

I was so proud of Mitch. The boar – which had a tattoo that said 'Orisbay', calmed down and we were allowed to pass without any trouble. *Some people like to pick a fight just to get attention.*

We hurried on toward the Nelson's house, following the track which had many twists and turns. Often we would come to a junction where we would have to choose which way to go. Sometimes Mitch chose and sometimes I did. I found the best way to choose was to use my intuition.



Animals are very intuitive, but many people seem to have lost their ability to listen to their inner voice. Being in this special garden made it even easier to tune into my intuition.

‘Go left, here Mitch’ I would say and we would hang a left turn. *We seemed to be getting closer to the Nelson’s house, but we still had a way to go.*

Mitch wanted to know more about using his intuition, so I told him that the best way I knew was to concentrate on the question in your mind, and then ask for the true answer for you. Once you have an answer, to check that it is not just your mind playing tricks, you close your eyes and ‘feel’ where the answer is coming from.

*If you ‘feel’ that it comes from your head, it is not your intuition, it will be your mind interfering, but if it comes from your ‘solar plexus’, which is just above your belly button, or if it feels right in your heart – then that is the answer that is right for you.*

‘You know Mitch – you’ve heard Dad talk about his ‘gut feeling.’ I reminded him. ‘Nah’, said Mitch, ‘I’ve only ever heard him say he’s “got a crook feeling in his guts after Mum’s curry!’”

Everyone is different. What is right for one person may not necessarily suit someone else, (*like Mum’s curry*). In the case of which path we should take to get back to the Nelson’s house, one way might be better for me than for Mitch, but we wanted to stick together, so we decided to ask for the quickest way home for both of us.

Mitch had a go at choosing direction, using his intuition and it worked really well. Two more turns and we could see the smoke from the Nelson’s fire.

‘Finally’, said Mitch. ‘I was beginning to think we would be in this garden forever! Maybe we can come back sometime and play the game again.’

**‘The game!’** I shouted at Mitch. **‘Where is it?’**

**‘Oh-oh, we’re in trouble big time!’** said Mitch. **‘We’ve broken Rule Number Three!’** The last time I saw the game, was when we were under the big willow down by the river. We had better go back and see if we can find it’.

As we walked along, we could hear a ‘tut-tut’ noise coming from the ferns that lined the path. ‘Who forgot to put things back where they found them?’ they all sang at once.

But when we arrived at the willow, the friendly old tree told us not to worry – we had eventually remembered to come back, and that was great. We hadn’t broken the rule – we had just bent it a little.

He knew that we had left in a bit of a hurry. ‘That old rubber boat is a bit pushy, with all his ‘hurry up, I’m leaving’ type talk. I could see that you were in no position to think clearly, Mitch, once he had Jack on board and was about to take off’.

No harm was done, and there would be no trouble, as long as we returned the game by dinnertime.

**End of episode 4.**

**See you next time for more of Mitch and Jack’s adventures!**

To be posted on [www.aforattitude.com.au](http://www.aforattitude.com.au) – 18th April 2003



## Chapter Nine      Gumboots versus Galoshes

So Mitch picked up the game and we headed along the path that lead to the Nelson's house.

All of a sudden, in the middle of the path *that we had just come along*, was a sign reading:

### **'Detour, steep mountains ahead'**

With an arrow pointing to the right.

*'What is going on here?'* Mitch asked me, *'we didn't see any mountains back there!'*

**As if I knew!** I was getting a bit tired and suggested to Mitch that we just follow the arrow, and hope we could get out of this garden and home for dinner.

*I was thinking about the roast that Mum would be cooking. It was my turn for the toasty-roasty lip-smacking bone tonight and I was worried that one of the others would get it if I didn't make it home until late.*

So we followed the path for about thirty steps, hoping to find another path branching off to the left to take us back to the Nelson's. But there weren't any.

I sat down and started to cry.

*I don't think Mitch had ever seen me cry, but there was a lot that Mitch didn't know about me. For instance, he didn't know anything about 'Super Jack'.*

**'Hey!** I thought to myself, *'Get out 'the suit. That will give you the strength to go on!'*

**And of course it did.**

I jumped up, wearing the imaginary Super Jack suit, with the cape flying out the back – *ready for action.*

I decided that in this case I didn't need the goggles, so I left them back in the special cupboard in my mind where I normally stored the suit. I decided, however, that the silent creeping shoes could come in very handy, in this unknown part of the garden, so I dragged those out as well.

**Oh, pooh!** With all the excitement after our first trip to the Nelson's house, I had forgotten to clean them and had put them away with the fertiliser still stuck to the soles! *So I closed my eyes and imagined them all shiny and clean. Done. Amazing.*

Well, I was feeling much better now, but Mitch was beginning to look a bit tired and sad. I told him to have a rest while I went ahead and looked for a way out of the garden.

Mitch didn't think we should split up, so I sat down with him and waited until he was rested. He fell asleep. I felt like I should be helping, now that I had so much energy, so I crept off down the path to see what I could find.

It was getting dark. A growling sound came from the bushes ahead. *That would've scared the living daylights out of the old Jack, but Super Jack stayed calm.*

I crept into the bushes, calling upon the special power of my silent creeping shoes.

I would be able to sneak around behind the animal and take it by surprise!

**Aha!** I leapt out into the space where the growl had come from. In the middle of the clearing, sat an old woman on a stool, cleaning fish. I reckoned it must have been Angus' grandmother.



Angus' grandmother, and asked if I had read the first rule of the game that said **'Never assume anything'**?

Oh, yes. The rules.

Oh no, what did the willow tree say?

When did we have to have the game back?

**'By dinner time'** said somebody's grandmother.

*Fortunately, I was getting used to having my mind read.*

**'And, by the way, Jack,'** said the old lady, **'I'm nobody's grandmother at all!** Why do people assume that because someone is old, that they must be a grandmother? I'm not even a mother! You can call me **'Mrs Galosha'**; I'm a friend of Mrs Macintosh, who actually is Angus' grandmother.'

**'And what's your last name, Jack?'** asked Mrs Galosha.

**'Gumboots',** I said.

**'Now you're being silly.'** said Mrs Galosha.

'Ah! Now you are only assuming that!' I said.  
'What makes you think it's not my real name?'

'Well,' she said, 'for a start, I've never heard of anyone being called 'Gumboots', before, and secondly, that name is not in the phone book.'

Just then Mitch stumbled along the path, looking more than a bit cranky that I had wandered off. 'Who's this then?' asked Mrs Galosha.

'This is Mitch' I said proudly.

'Whart's his last name? Can't be Gumboots too', said Mrs Galosha, giving a chuckle which made her whole body wobble, 'e looks nuthin' like yer do, nuthin et orl'.

'The family adopted me when I was just eight weeks old. Even though I'm not a blood relative, *I am still part of the family, and we are all called 'Gumboots'!*' I said, in a rather defensive tone.

'Gee, I shouldn't let myself get upset by other people's opinions' I thought to myself, and adjusted my suit.

Mitch asked Mrs Galosha for directions back to the Nelson's house.

'Just go back the way yon came for about thirty five steps, turn right, and it's straight ahead' she said.

'But that path is supposed to be full of huge obstacles' said Mitch.

'Don't forget rule number two, laddie,' said Mrs G. 'for some they might be mountains, for others they are just mole hills.'

'Of course,' Mitch said, '*it's all the way you look at things,*' and he took the game out from under his arm and looked at it. Sure enough, there was a picture of our position in the garden, along with all the paths that lead to and from where we stood. No sign of any problems on that path.

'Why didn't we think of this earlier? We can just keep moving toward the house and the game will show us which path to take... I hope.'

## Chapter Ten      Time flies when you're having fun

It worked!

We followed the path up to the back door of the Nelson's house and Mitch knocked lightly.

Mrs Nelson came to the door and invited us in for a cup of cocoa, but Mitch said that we'd better get on home as our Mum and Dad would be wondering where we were.

We'd have to meet Angus next time.

Mitch handed back the game and thanked Mrs Nelson very much for the use of it.

'You'll have to come again and play it with Angus. He has some wonderful adventures with this game, and he always seems to meet interesting people out there in the garden,' said Mrs Nelson, 'and by the way, Jack, I really like your suit.'

### ***She noticed!***

People often notice a difference about me when I'm wearing 'the suit', but they never usually know why. That Mrs Nelson is certainly very perceptive. *I wondered if she might be able to actually see my suit, or whether she'd heard me thinking about it? Hmm.*

We said 'good-bye' and hurried down the street to our house.

Dad was just leaving for work.

*How strange!*

Dad usually went to work in the morning, came home for lunch, and then went back again for the afternoon. What was he doing going out at – 'What time is it Mitch?' I asked, but Mitch didn't hear me. I couldn't speak anymore, and Mitch couldn't read my thoughts either.

We were back to 'normal'.

Mitch must have been thinking the same thing anyway, because he checked his watch. Well, I should say 'he checked the bit of his arm where his watch used to be.'

'What's going on, Jack?' Mitch asked, but he soon realised that we had left our special powers back at the Nelson's.

We raced inside our house.

The rest of the family were leaving the table as if they had just finished eating.

*'Oh no! Looks like we've missed out on Mum's roast, and I've missed out on the bone!'* I thought sadly.


*I was really hungry.*

But then I looked again at the table. Salad, bread rolls, lemon meringue pie ... *this was what we had for lunch!*

I looked at the clock on the wall.

*It was 12.35!*

Something very odd was going on, but we were too tired to think about anything more than a big snack and an afternoon nap.

We would worry about the  later.

***End of episode 5.***

**See you next time for more of Mitch and Jack's adventures!**

To be posted on [www.aforattitude.com.au](http://www.aforattitude.com.au) – 25<sup>th</sup> April 2003



## Chapter Eleven      Bad luck, Boz

Mitch and I had been asleep for more than an hour before the explosion woke us up.

Boz had been mixing up some chemicals in the garage, following a 'recipe for disaster' he found on the internet.

*If the explosion hadn't woken us up, I'm sure the ambulance would have.*

*I have very sensitive ears.*

The dog across the road from us got so offended by the noise he began to howl. So you see, with all that noise, Mitch and I had no alternative, but to get up.

*Oh yes, and Boz was kicking up quite a fuss also.*

So Boz was carted off to hospital to have his face looked at by the plastic surgeon. *I hoped there would be a psychiatrist there to examine the rest of his head as well.* This wasn't the first time Boz had done something radical and had to go hospital. The nurses in the emergency department all knew him so well that they called him 'Bad luck Boz'.

*We all knew that luck had nothing to do with it.*

It was only ten past two, so Mitch decided that we had plenty of time to go back to the Nelson's, to get his watch.



## Chapter Twelve      Angus

When Mitch knocked, a young boy about Mitch's age answered the Nelson's door.

'Oh you must be Angus,' Mitch said cheerfully.

'Why?' asked the boy.

'Why what?' said Mitch.

'Why must I be Angus?' replied the boy.

'Actually, I suppose you don't necessarily have to be Angus after all, when you come to think of it,' said Mitch, kicking himself.

‘Well, I’m only messing with you guys, I am Angus.’ said the boy, and he invited us in. Mitch explained that he had lost his watch and asked if we could please have a bit of a look around in the garden for it.

‘Great!’ said Angus, ‘I’ll come with you. It might be easier if there are three of us looking. *And we had better take the game with us too,*’

So off we went back into the garden to find the watch.

The last time Mitch remembered seeing his watch was just before the



*‘Did you touch the fork at all, Mitch?’* Angus asked.

‘Well, er, um, I s-o-r-r of picked it up, I suppose, and ... well, er, I did put it in my pocket as a souvenir but Jack reminded me about Rule Number Three and I was going to put it back, but that was when Jack spoke out loud for the first time ever and I was so excited that I must have forgotten all about it!’ Mitch confessed all at once.

Angus could see that he was telling the truth but, as he said, Mitch had broken one of the ‘Rules Of The Game’, whether he meant to or not, and there would be ... ‘Consequences’.

‘I’m really, truly sorry, about this,’ said Mitch, as he took the fork out of his pocket. The fork grumbled about being stuffed in someone’s pocket for three hours, and complained about all the noise at our house, before he demanded to be taken back to his spot on the road.

‘We had better find out about those consequences, I suppose,’ said Mitch – ready to make things right if he could...



## Chapter Thirteen Ed would, if he could.

With the help of Angus’ directions, we went back and Mitch replaced the fork in the road.

Then we had to retrace our steps to look for Mitch’s watch.

‘It should be somewhere between here and where we met Edwood,’ Mitch reckoned.

We checked the entire track, but there was no sign of Mitch’s watch.

‘Maybe it has grown wings and flown away,’ said Angus ‘you know the old saying –“time flies when you’re having fun”.’

*‘But as I remember,’* grumbled Mitch, *‘we weren’t having fun at the time, we were keen to get home for dinner!’*

*'Chill out, Mitch,'* said Angus. *'I was just making a joke – maybe you lost your watch for a reason. Maybe you lost your watch because you took the fork.'*

'O.K.' said Mitch. 'I admit I was out of line to take something that didn't belong to me, but someone has obviously taken my watch, is that fair?'

'Well, maybe someone has taken it, or maybe it is here and we just haven't found it yet' I said, very happy to be talking again, 'You needn't necessarily jump to conclusions.'

'Whatever,' said Mitch, 'I think we could all do with a visit to Edwood for a bit of a laugh.'

*So off we headed to see the funny old oak tree.*

**'What do you think you'll be when you grow up, Mitch?'** asked Edwood.

'Older' said Mitch.

'Good one, Mitch' said Angus, 'and how are you Edwood, my old friend?'

**'Stuck in a rut,'** said Edwood, **'I think I'd like to do some travelling, if I could.'**

'Hey, why don't you come with us?' Angus asked the old tree.

'We are going to the Castle of Consequences. Mitch seems to have lost his watch.'

**'Oh dear, Mitch, don't tell me you broke Rule Number Three?'** asked Edwood.

'Yes, and I think I've learned from it, but Angus says I still need to go to this castle.' Said Mitch quietly.

***'O.K! I'd love to come on a journey with you, if you'll just be patient while I change into something more comfortable for travelling.'*** said old Ed.

The next thing we knew, we were heading off down the track, with an old oak cart rolling and bumping along beside us, asking us riddles.

**'It's great to be out and about'** said Edwood happily. *'I should do this more often. It's funny how you always dream of what you'd like to do, but keep putting it off. Lots of people seem to do that and one day they wake up dead and have missed out completely!'*

We followed the paths that Angus chose and eventually came to the top of a hill overlooking a beautiful valley.

'That's the land of 'Milk and Honey' explained Angus, pointing to a bright green pasture, dotted with sunflowers.

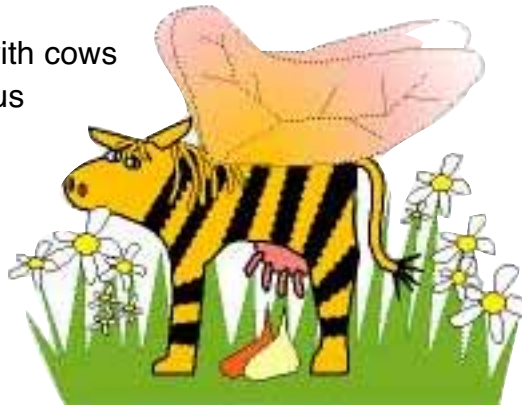
There were many cow shaped animals grazing in the pasture. *I say 'cow shaped' because they looked like cows but they had gold and black stripes. I had never seen striped cows before.*

As we approached the paddock, we could see them more clearly. As well as having stripes, they had huge gossamer wings! *Like bees wings, but so much bigger.*

'It's the **Land of Milk and Honey** – with cows that are bred to give both' explained Angus

'What will they think of next?'  
I snorted.

We looked across the valley to where the pasture met a river.



Further in the distance, stood an eerie looking building on top of a mountain.

*'That's it' said Angus, 'the Castle of Consequences – off we go!'*

**End of episode 6.**

**See you next time for more of Mitch and Jack's adventures!**

To be posted on [www.aforattitude.com.au](http://www.aforattitude.com.au) – 2nd May 2003



## Chapter Fourteen      Nice day for a dip.

*We crossed the paddock, dodging the strange buzzing cows, and their sticky droppings.*

When we came to the river, we found a very rickety bridge with a sign that read –

### **‘This bridge is very safe!’**

*‘Yeah, right’ said Mitch. ‘I might be have had trouble with Rule Number Three, however I know all about Rule Number Two!’*

So Mitch, Angus and I all examined the bridge, under and over, to see whether we should believe the sign. *Then I ‘sort of’ volunteered to test it because I was the lightest.* And I could swim very well. The boards across the bridge were spaced out so that there were gaps between them, and there were rope handrails.

*A strong breeze was blowing the bridge about.*

I crept across very carefully until I got about halfway, where there was a wonky looking piece of wood with a huge split in it. I avoided it, stepping across to the next board along. This one looked much firmer than it really was.

We all heard a big **‘K-E-R-R-R-A-C-K’** as the board gave way under my weight. I leapt in the air with the shock of it, and when I came down there was a big hole beneath me!

*‘Time for “the suit”’* I thought, rather quickly, just before I hit the water.

I swam to the other bank, while the others, still high and dry on their side, were all calling out to me to *‘be careful of the piranhas’* and *‘look out for the crocodiles’* and other helpful messages.

The boys were rolling around on the grassy bank giggling at how funny they thought they were and Edwood’s wheels were spinning in delight.

When I climbed out onto the opposite bank, I looked back to see that Edwood had transformed himself into a boat.

*‘A bit late for that brilliant idea, Edwood!’* I called out to him, laughing.

Angus and Mitch hopped into the ‘Edwood boat’ and rowed across the river. They were almost across to my side when two huge green monsters leaped out of the water behind them, gnashing their chunky yellow teeth at the boys.

*‘Lookout behind you!’* I called to them, but they didn’t need a warning, they flew up to the pointy front end of the Edwood boat and leaped out onto the bank beside me, collapsing on the grass.

*‘Look out for the crocodiles,’* I said, smiling sweetly.

## Chapter Fifteen      King Karma and The Castle of Consequences

‘That was close,’ said Angus calmly when he finally got his breath back. ‘The joke was nearly on us, Mitch.’

‘Yes,’ said Mitch ‘maybe we need to be just as careful with our *jokes* as we are with our wishes.’

‘**Come on you lot**,’ said Edwood, who was now bouncing up and down, in the form of a pogo-stick, ‘**King Karma will be waiting for us**’.

‘Who’s he?’ asked Mitch.

‘**He is the keeper of the Castle of Consequences,**’ Angus said as he got up and headed off toward the castle.

We followed along behind Angus, single file because the garden was really thick in this part. Tall tree ferns bordered the track and formed a canopy above us in some places so that we were in a sort of tunnel.

After we had walked, (and Edwood had bounced), along this trail for about 500 steps (or hops), we came to a clearing at the foot of the mountain.

There was a rocky path that lead up the slope toward the castle, and one look at that told Edwood that he needed to rethink his travelling arrangements. Quick as a flash, he turned himself into a little wooden mountain goat.

‘**I should do this more often**’ said Edwood, as he reached for a mouthful of juniper berries, very pleased with his new shape.

So we all set off to climb up the castle track. It was an easy journey, compared to the river crossing, and we arrived at the castle moat just as the drawbridge was being lowered to let some politicians out.

‘*Hello Angus*’ said the guard on duty, ‘*Who have we here?*’

‘Mitch, Jack and Edwood,’ Angus said as he pointed us out in turn.

‘Very well then, you’d better come along with me, King Karma is waiting for you. We knew you would be here sooner or later. *Have trouble with the bridge did you?*’

‘Just a bit,’ said Angus ‘however we had more trouble with the crocodiles.’

‘Yes, we heard about them,’ said the guard, chuckling as he went across the drawbridge and into the castle.

We followed him down the corridor and into a waiting area.

‘Sit down please,’ said the guard ‘I’ll let the master know you’re here,’ and he walked off clanking in his armour.

The waiting room was quite large, with seats along three walls and large bookcases along two of the other walls. There were magazines on a couple of tables in the centre of the room. It looked a bit like a doctor's waiting room, *except that the magazines were all new.*

Actually these were not like any magazines I had ever seen before. They had names like: 'Gossip Monger Monthly' and 'Litter Bug Bugle'. Edwood picked up a magazine on organic gardening. *And ate it.*

Goats will eat almost anything, you know.

Angus said it was time for Edwood to change into something less destructive and more suited to a library situation. **'Perhaps an owl, or a bookworm?'** suggested Edwood with a chuckle.



Then he turned himself into a spider and sat quietly on Angus' shoulder.

Even though Edwood had fully digested the gardening magazine it reappeared on the table looking 'brand new'.

*Mitch wondered if he would ever be able to do that with a bag of chips.*

In the room there were three doors - two with signs above them.

One sign said – **'Slow Learners'** and the other read – **'Gallery of Monstrous Muckups and Delightful Discoveries.'**

These were very plain doors, painted white, while the third door was quite different; it was decorated to look like our universe. There were planets, moons, a sun and trillions of stars. *There was a three-dimensional look to the door, as if you could see behind each planet.*

Angus said it was O.K. to have a closer look at the door, so I wandered up slowly to get a better view. This painting put my cat pictures to shame, although I knew that Dad would say my work was every bit as good as this. *Good old Dad.*

I was concentrating very closely on the door when it opened.

I jumped four feet in the air.

The guard, who we had met earlier, now stood in the doorway with a big grin on his face. *Something told me he liked his job very much.*

'Come on, Mitch, his lordship will see you now,' the guard said and he held the door open for Mitch to walk through.

*'Would it be O.K. if Jack came with me, p-l-e-a-s-e?'* asked Mitch in a worried voice.

'I suppose it will be OK', said the guard who was starting to sound a bit nicer.

So Mitch and I followed 'Ron Guard'— as the name on his helmet read. The others were quite happy to stay in the waiting room.

Angus was reading about insects and Edwood was licking his lips.

We were led along a red passageway to a door with **'King of the Castle'** written on it. Mitch and I took a deep breath in as Ron knocked lightly on the door.

**'Come in'** said a booming voice.

Mitch walked in first with me, not so 'close on his heels' ...

## Chapter Sixteen

### The Gallery of Monstrous Muckups and Delightful Discoveries

In a **very big** chair in the middle of this **very big** room, sat a **very big** man, *wearing a crown made of the tiniest daisies.*

This just had to be King Karma

– I knew it as soon as he said **'Hello, I'm King Karma.'**

**'Nice to see you both, thanks for coming, and ... I have to tell you Jack, I like "The suit"'** said King Karma.

*I was gobsmacked.*

This was one really wise old King if I had ever met one! He must know everything and see everything.

*Just like Santa.*

**'That's right Jack, I do and I'm very impressed with your suit. I hope you remembered to clean it this time before you put it away,'** he said with a twinkle in his eye.

'Yes,' I said. 'It got a bit muddy in the river, but you probably know about that too.'

**'It's my job to know everything,'** said the King.

Mitch wanted to know what we were talking about, so I promised to fill him in later.

**'Well it was very nice to meet you both and on your way out you are welcome to look around. I'm sure you will find our castle most interesting,'** said the kind old king.

We were a little confused, but none the less, very happy, to have met a real king and to have been let out without getting into trouble!

We wandered off down the corridor, wondering what the visit was all about, when we noticed the walls of the corridor gradually getting larger and **larger** until we were left standing in the middle of the biggest room that I could ever imagine being in.

It had really tall golden ceilings and the softest carpet. I felt like I was floating on air. I looked down at my feet, and imagine that ... *I was floating on air!*

In the middle of the room was a series of nine photos of a ship fighting with an iceberg. By the second photo, we could tell that the iceberg had won.

At one end of the room, there was a little picture theatre, with a few comfy seats. We sat down for a while and watched a film about how to make a film until Mitch said he *couldn't possibly sit in a picture theatre without popcorn*, so he got up and left.

Just then, an usher came in serving popcorn.

It was delicious.

I polished off the popcorn and caught up with Mitch. He was way up the other end of the room. Along the walls were photographs of animals of every description. Most of them I hadn't seen before, even in books.

In some places, there were actual animal heads stuck onto the walls, like the ones you might see on the walls of hunting lodges. I thought it was a very sad thing for an animal to be hung up like that, but Mitch said they were holograms, not really animals at all.

Above each hologram was a sign, hanging from the ceiling by an invisible string, telling us the name of the animal and a warning that read:

**'Please do not touch, I might bite you.'**

'How is this thing going to bite me?' Mitch asked as he reached out to pat a big buffalo type animal.

**'Just like this!'** said the bi-nifer-oser-ous mouth as it crashed down toward Mitch's hand, stopping as its teeth almost touched Mitch's knuckles.

Mitch went as white as a ghost. **'Oh! So sometimes we should believe things we read, this is very confusing!'** Mitch said after he got over the shock of nearly losing his fingers.

'What do you think, Jack?' he asked me, and I gave Mitch a look that I had specially designed for people who do spectacularly dumb things. *No need to say anything. I just gave him 'the look'.*

Obviously the 'bi-nifer-oser-ous' felt that she needed to say something because she made a deep growling noise that got louder and louder until the walls shook.

**'Oops,'** she said, and winked at me *you know it's always important to be discerning and remember to trust your gut feeling. That's how to avoid the confusion.'*

'What sort of an animal are you?' asked Mitch who was still a bit shaky, 'And where did you come from?'

'I am a bi-nifer-oser-ous and my family lived on earth many years ago on the north island of Wombanooney – *long before ice cream was invented*. We used to eat hipposnorters until we ran out of those, and then we ate vegetables (except for the ones we didn't like).

'How did you become extinct?' I asked the bi-nifer-oser-ous.

'The usual way.' she said. 'Change. The world is constantly changing. All living things change. Nothing stays the same. When one thing changes, it alters another thing, sometimes for the better, sometimes not. Maybe bi-nifer-oser-ouses weren't supposed to eat vegetables because we didn't last very long after that.'

*Mitch made a mental note to tell Mum that perhaps he shouldn't eat his veggies because if they can kill a big beast like the bi-nifer-oser-ous, there's no telling what they could do to a child!*

We said 'goodbye' to the bi-nifer-oser-ous and wandered off around the room.

There were many other interesting animals to look at and we were sad that none of them still lived on the earth.

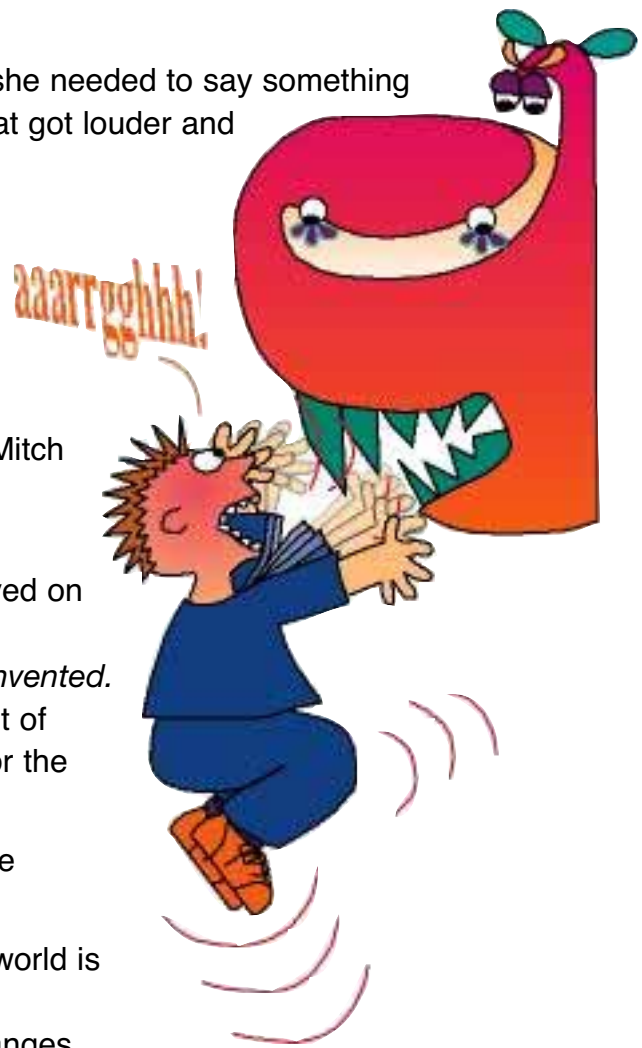
***That is, until we came to the woolly-backed black spider!***

**No kidding, it was bigger than me!** I'm usually pretty brave around spiders, but I knew this one could *have me for breakfast*. Mitch wouldn't even look at it as he went past. He was pretending to be interested in his watch, but I knew he was sweating about the spider.

'Hey Mitch, your watch!' I shouted, leaping about in mid air.

'Where did it come from?' I asked.

'Who knows? I just automatically looked to see what time it was, forgetting that I had lost my watch and there it was on my arm!'



We decided that it was time to get back to the others, so we looked around for a way out. Just as we were wondering which door to take, I felt a tap on my shoulder and glanced sideways to see a big black hairy foot pointing to the last door on the left. I turned right around to face a real-life, actual sized, woolly-backed black spider!

**'Aaaarrrrggghhh!'** I screamed.

And jumped further in the air.

'Terribly sorry to scare you old chap,' the spider said 'I'm here to give directions. *Actually, I can give directions to eight people all at once. That's why I got this job.*

'W-w-where did you come from?' I asked, gulping for air.

'Oh I was just sitting in behind my picture having a bit of a snooze. I had a big breakfast of blackbirds and wasps this morning and really needed to sleep it off.'

I thanked the spider for the directions, and Mitch and I went off toward the last door on the left, which took us back to the room where Angus and Edwood were waiting.

Edwood was reading a magazine on deforestation, which reminded him that he should be getting back home.

'What about the other room we wanted to see?' Mitch asked.

'You know – The Gallery of Monstrous Muckups and Delightful Discoveries?'

'But that's where you've just come from,' said Angus. *'Didn't you make friends with a spider? Wasn't that a delightful discovery?'*

'Yes, I suppose' said Mitch, **but not as good as finding out that veggies are a health hazard!** *(Well, that's what he wanted to believe, anyway).*

'Ah, you've been talking to the bi-nifer-oser-ous, haven't you? I bet she didn't tell you why they **really** died out?' asked Angus.

'W-w-what happened to them, really?' asked Mitch, all wide-eyed.

**'They died,'** said Angus, pausing a while to build the tension, **'because...'**

*And that was all he said before Ron Guard burst into the room and announced that if we wanted to catch the last 'draw-bridge drop', we had better skedaddle or we would have to bunk down with the spooky holograms for the whole night!*



**End of episode 7.**

**See you next time for the final episode of *Imagine That!***

To be posted on [www.aforattitude.com.au](http://www.aforattitude.com.au) – 9th May 2003

## Chapter Seventeen Aha, so that's what happened!

We made it down to the front gate of the castle, just in time to make it across the drawbridge and onto dry land.

Mitch was still waiting to hear about the real reason the bi-nifer-oser-ouses became extinct.

'Oh, yes,' said Angus, they died because ... *they wouldn't eat **all** their veggies.*'  
*Mitch looked more worried now, than he had when he saw the spider.*

Angus knew a short cut down the mountain, so we all followed him to a giant snow covered slippery slide and Edwood turned himself into a toboggan.

**'All aboard'** said our old oak friend.

We all climbed on and took off down the slope. *Mitch decided to enjoy the ride and worry about his diet later.*

We had so much speed up that we became airborne. Edwood sprouted wings and we glided far enough to clear the river. Landing safely on the grassy bank, we all climbed off – *very happy to see that the crocodiles had disappeared.*

Edwood turned himself into a wooden doll for the last part of the journey. It was good to see him having such fun.

We trekked back through the Land of Milk and Honey and up the next hill, continuing back along the tracks we had used before and eventually came to the spot where Edwood lived.



**'That's it for me, folks!'** said Edwood who stood directly on his original spot before turning himself back into the big old oak tree he used to be. **'I've had such a great time. Thanks for taking me with you!'**

We all said our good-byes to Edwood, (which included giving him a hug – I've heard that trees really like that)

Angus led the way home, and stood for no nonsense.

He knew all the tricks this garden could dish out, and we were back at the Nelson's house in no time.

When Mrs Nelson invited us in for cocoa, we accepted – **very gratefully**.

The cocoa was delicious and so were the hamburgers, *brussel sprouts* – (Mitch had six of these), chocolate cookies, cauliflower scones, apple pies, stewed cabbage, peanut butter ice cream and mud cake.

Trekking is very hungry work let me tell you.

Even the veggies tasted good.

So, with our bulging bellies and very tired legs, Mitch and I said 'See ya soon' to Angus and '*Thank-you-very-much-for-the-feast*' to Mrs Nelson and we waddled off home.

**Just in time for tea.**



## Chapter Eighteen Remember Rule Number One?

*Mitch and I were very pleased to be home.*

We had such a great day with the Nelsons and their unusual friends, that I realised '**unusual**' was far more interesting than '**usual**'.

*'Look at all the great adventures we've missed out on by avoiding the Nelsons, Mitch,'* I thought, forgetting that we lost our special powers of reading minds when we left the Nelson's house.

'You're right, Jack' said Mitch.

***Hey! We hadn't lost our powers this time, at all!***

Mitch called it 'mental telepathy' which some people had with each other, or with animals, with which they shared a special bond. We had been through such a lot together during this very long day, (which seemed more like a week) that we had definitely formed a special bond. It felt good.

I felt good.

Tired, but good.

Being good and tired, I went straight to bed.

I was too full to chew on the roasty-toasty bone that Mum had put aside for me. The family couldn't believe it. *Dad was really worried that I might be sick and suggested we get the vet to pay a house visit.*

**Yes – the Vet.**

My full name is ‘Jack-Russell Gumboots’.

I’m a little white dog with **brown** spots.

*I hope you weren’t assuming that I was a little boy.*

If you were, then you missed all the clues I gave you!

As my wise old ‘person’ Dad says  
...**‘there are clues everywhere  
in life, you just need to look  
for them’.**

I’ve even heard him say that ‘to **assume**  
makes an **ass** out of **u** and **me**’. **Ha!**

Mum gets upset when Dad says ass,  
‘cos she reckons it’s swearing, and she  
threatens to make him eat an extra  
helping of her curry!

*I love my Dad.*

I think I might go and get Sooty to put on some extra terrific new cat pose, (like hanging upside down in the fig tree), and I think I might just paint my dad another masterpiece.



Oh, and remember: – **things are not always as they seem,**  
– **don’t believe everything you read,**  
– **put things back where you find them,**  
**and be home in time for tea...(unless it’s curry!)**

*And, if you ever need to use ‘the suit’ – you know where to find it.*

*Love, Jack*