

*HAPPY ROTTER AND THE SAMEBER OF
CHEEKRETS
FORTNIGHT TWO AT WARTHOGS*

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The story contained within this book is meant to cleverly parody *Harry Potter*, as well as several other works of fiction. It is not meant to copy them outright, nor is that what it is doing. If you appreciate good humor, then the publisher humbly requests that you not sue.

The author acknowledges that the drawing on many sources includes the Chiligrity language, which is from the most excellent children's series *The Mad Misadventures of Emmaline and Rubberbones* by Howard Whitehouse. Sadly, this series is now out of print, but they were lucky enough to happen upon it last summer. (The implication should be that Looney Mooney learned the language by reading the books.) The danger of being sued by the publisher of these chronicles are high. The author is shaking in their shoes.

Chapter One

When Happy Rotter, a small, unpleasant eleven-year-old boy with black hair and glasses, woke, it was not to a pleasant sight.

His ‘friend’ (if you can call her that) Herminey was standing over him, smiling creepily. “Get up!”

“eeeeeeeeeeeeuuuuuuuuuhlemmeesleepin” groaned Happy.

Herminey kicked him. “Get. Up!”

Ever since the tumultuous events of the past week involving the Stilosopher’s Phone, a magical artifact of some importance to Happy’s life story now (I would have chronicled this in *Happy Rotter and the Stilosopher’s Phone* had I not forced Herminey to say exactly what she was thinking, something she didn’t exactly appreciate. Therefore, the book ended... the way it did—faithful readers will remember its rather abrupt and violent conclusion. I apologize), Happy’s life had only seemed to take a turn for the worse.

“Fine, fine!” cried Happy. “I’m getting up! Hope you’re happy.”

His best friend Nor guffawed next to him. His laugh sounded like a pig snorting. “That’s a good one!”

The three children were inside a broom closet in which they all slept after their mining shifts. They mined ivy for the school’s funds (ever-dwindling, never ceasing to run out). Other children mopped the floors or performed sad songs from the headmaster, Rumbledoor’s youth on antiquated instruments or cooked for the entire school or fed the school mascot, Hairy Otter. Happy and his pals mined ivy. Well, his *pal*, singular. Herminey wasn’t his pal.

Happy elbowed Nor. “Oi!”

That earned him his first whipping of the day. You see, Herminey was what was known as an ImPerfect (something Happy learned quite late in the game, after some antics with the Stilosopher’s Phone). When you were an ImPerfect, you were given a snake stuffed animal which transformed into a whip, and if you were especially virtuous in your conduct you could earn a gravel and lard ‘cookie’—Herminey’s favorite. Happy grimaced at the thought of it as he made his way to the mine.

The ivy mines were quite large, a series of dank, cavernous tunnels reaching all the way under the school. Happy was improving at mining and was actually meeting his leaf quota half the time these days, which meant breakfast, lunch and dinner. Or some semblance of it. After Kendal Cook, the child cooking for Warthogs, was expelled the previous evening (owing to an incident involving the tins of corned beef squirreled away in a vacant classroom and some interference from the school poltergeist, OSWALD the LUCKY RABBIT), Happy had no reason to expect any food. His stomach growled ferociously as he picked up his pickaxe, which lay in a heap with Herminey and Nor's pickaxes at the gaping entrance of the mine. As he was gripping the pickaxe, however, he heard a loud hissing noise from beside him.

"*gaspie!*" cried Happy, dropping the pickaxe in fright. "What was that?"

"*ssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss*" came the voice again. "I don't exsspect you to undersstand me... You sssee... I ssspeak only Parssselntongue. Dreadful ssssetback when trying to whip sssstudentsss into sssshape..."

“Who are you?” cried Happy. “I can understand you perfectly!”

“You can ssspeak Parssselongue?” came the voice. A bush to Happy’s right rustled and out emerged a bright green snake. “I am Professor Sssnake, your new sssupervisssor.”

“What you’re speaking, that’s surely English!”

“It’s *Parssselongue!*” protested the new teacher. “And don’t call me Ssshirley.”

Happy groaned. This new teacher was just as bad as Herminey.

“Now, get to working,” said the new professor. “But I’ll be watching you.”

He slithered into the mouth of the cave as Happy, Nor, and Herminey picked up their pickaxes, then turned and looked at them as if to say, “Coming?”

Happy *did* coming.

“Bruh,” whispered Nor to Happy, “who’s the rizzler?”

“The new teach’,” said Happy. “6-7!” He did the 6-7 dance. It was infectious. Soon Nor started doing it, too.

“Cut it out, you two,” hissed Herminey.

“Ssstop it,” Professor Snake seconded.

“Surely you have an appreciation for the arts,” said Happy. “Are you insulting my culture? Surely you aren’t insulting my culture—”

“Don’t call me Shirley,” Professor Snake and Herminey said in unison, glaring at him.

This is going to be a very long day, thought Happy in exasperation.

Happy was able to mine 100 ivy leaves before 11:00. Therefore, he was able to receive breakfast, as Herminey informed him as she went to receive her own at about 9:30.

“From whom?” Happy tried to ask, but Herminey was already gone. Happy tried to follow her out to ask more questions, but Professor Snake stopped him with a loud “Get back to work!”

So it was that Happy met the new Warthogs cook: Kathy Cook.

“Hi there, mister!” she said all friendly-like when he wandered into the kitchen. “Would you like a cookie? oh, no, I forgot I’m not supposed to offer those to non-ImPerfects. Would you like some nice hot gruel, then?”

“Gruel sounds great,” said Happy, and he meant it.

Kathy Cook beamed. “Excellent! Friend, are you a Preventable Death or an Unpreventable Death?” She was too young to be a friender. She was only, like, twelve, or something.

“Unpreventable,” said Happy. “I have an affliction. It’s called osteobro—” He stopped himself. “Ostee-ow-purr-osis.”

“I’ve never heard of that. I’m sorry,” said Kathy Cook. “Would you like to talk some more? Also, did you know that I used to work cleaning Mrs. Solace’s litter box, but got hired here after Kendal Cook died? Rumbledoor had to pay for his grave, because he was a Preventable Death, and I felt really sorry about that, I heard him complaining because Mrs. Solace’s litter box is in his office, and I offered to fill the spot because my grammy taught me all sorts of recipes before she sent me here and my grammy knows everything and I betcha a million dollars my grammy is nicer than your grammy and I betcha a billion dollars that you don’t know what I mean when I say 6-7 because nobody does at this school and I wanna go home and I betcha a trillion dollars you can’t sing my theme song as well as I can because I’m the only one who

knows my theme song except my sweet grammy who I'll betcha a quadrillion dollars is nicer than your ^{gram-}."

Happy didn't hear any more. He had already left.

"Mmm!" he said in anticipatory delight as he opened his mouth to devour the gruel. And devour the gruel he did. He positively shoveled it in. In fact, he didn't even use the small prepackaged spoon he'd been given that he was so naïve he was unaware of the shockingly negative environmental impact it would have. He just tilted his head back and splurged the porridge inside.

"Yummie yum," he said as he headed back to the mines, licking his lips. When he arrived back, Herminey scolded, "What took you so long?"

"I was eating!" protested Happy. "Surely I can eat my hard-earned meal!"

"Don't call me Shirley!" snapped Herminey. She punched him in the face, exactly where she had broken off his cheek in *Happy Rotter and the Stilosopher's Phone*.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA" screamed Happy. The observant and loyal reader will notice

that this

““AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA” contains one less
“A” than before. Happy is growing more
tolerant!

“Aw, grow up!” said Herminey and went
back to mining.

“Very good, Herminey!” Professor Snake
praised her, delighted. “Sssometimes a child
doesss need a good ssspanking. You get a
cookie.”

Herminey gasped in delight. “Yum!” She
accepted the ‘cookie’ from Professor Snake,
who took it out from the pocket of the navy
suit he was wearing. “Here you are.”

Biting into it with great gusto, Herminey
continued mining. “Mmm...” Happy heard
her remark in bliss. “Gravel and lard!”

Happy got back to work. He mined 192
leaves before 3:00, which meant he got lunch—
the first time he’d ever been eligible. He ran to
the kitchen to receive his reward.

He was met with a baffling sight. None
other than Hairy Otter was on the kitchen
counter, placing fresh fish into the waiting
hands of Kathy Cook.

“*gaspie!*” said Happy as he witnessed this exchange. Kathy Cook quickly shooed Hairy Otter away. “Hello, friend,” she said too brightly. “Would you like some lunch?”

“Yes, please,” said Happy, forgetting to ask what was for lunch.

He was handed a delicious slab of concrete. “Aids digestion if you eat it three hours before dinner!” Kathy Cook advertised brightly. “I sprinkled some parmesan on top—a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, you know—have you seen that movie, *Mary Poppins*, I thought it was absolutely fantastic—I saw it with my grammy, who I’ll betcha a million dollars is nicer and sweeter and more cookie baking-er than your grammy, and I’ll bet you a billion dollars you can’t predict the future of the nation like Grammy has, and I’ll bet you a trillion dollars you didn’t predict what she saw when I was there and she looked in her crystal ball for the f...”

Happy was no longer listening. He was busy throwing the slab of concrete upon the floor. “What does she take me for?” he muttered.

“Enjoy your lunch?” Herminey asked him brightly as he returned to the mines.

“It was delightful,” Happy snapped scornfully.

“Oh, you thought so too? That’s fantastic.” Herminey was actually smiling. “She’s loads better than Kendal Cook ever was! And I don’t think she’s secretly in cahoots with OSWALD the LUCKY RABBIT, so there!”

Happy had actually quite enjoyed Kendal Cook’s frenetic nature and thought it had been great fun to spook him when he hadn’t been paying attention, but he didn’t say anything. Surely, Herminey would have rebuked him.

They continued mining. Nor didn’t get a single meal that day.

Mining was a menial job. All the leaves were the same shade of green. Happy hit his pickaxe on the leaves’ stems and they came right off. Over and over again, he did this. It was deathly dull, which was why he and Nor would sometimes play *Distraction*, the hand game, for a brief reprieve (though this almost always earned them a sharp rebuke from Herminey). It was horrible.

Which was why Happy could hear perfectly the horrible scream that issued from the school grounds. A scream that didn’t sound entirely human.

Chapter Two

Happy ran to the source of the noise, letting his pickaxe tumble from his hands.

He found a cat yowling over an old man lying in the grass. It was the same cat he had seen prowling the grounds at times. It was Mrs. Solace, the school custodian, which meant that the old man must be Mr. Flinch, her pet human.

“His cheeks! His cheeks!” yowled Mrs. Solace. “My little dumpling’s beautiful cheeks!”

Happy risked a look at Mr. Flinch’s face, which was down in the grass. His eyes were glassy and vacant.

“His cheeks! Oh, his cheeks!” came Mrs. Solace’s cry again.

Where Mr. Flinch’s cheeks should have been were two gaping holes not unlike the one Happy had on his right cheek.

He heard a voice coming from the otherwise motionless body. A quiet rasp.

“where are my cheeks? where are my cheeks?”

Mrs. Solace sobbed harder. “Oh, Mr. Flinch! Oh!”

“Yo, that’s so sus,” Happy said stiltedly. He backed away.

In the middle of the night, Happy woke with a start. He heard a rattling breathy voice and limping footsteps.

“where are my cheeks?”

Happy held his breath. He knew in an instant that it was Mr. Flinch.

Another voice—Mrs. Solace’s. “My sugar plum, I beg of you, stop this!”

“where are my cheeks?” The man was getting closer to the broom closet. Happy could almost smell his breath—perhaps it was simply his own that he was smelling. It was almost as bad as Herminey’s (Herminey was the queen of bad breath; she’d never brushed her teeth in her life).

“where are my cheeks? where are my cheeks?” The slim door of the broom closet creaked open to reveal Mr. Flinch’s haggard face.

“where are my cheeks? where are my cheeks? where are my cheeks?” He was leaning so close to Happy now that he could smell his breath on his cheek. It smelled like brie. Happy gagged. Mr. Flinch’s eyes were glassy and vacant. His nose had several grass blades inside of it. He was disgusting.

And he was shaking Happy in a horribly violent fashion. *“where are my cheeks!”*

“Let him alone!” came Mrs. Solace’s voice, and with a blow she felled the man. Crouching over him in fright, her breaths began to take on a shuddering quality. “Oh, Mr. Flinch. Oh, my baby.”

“*where are my cheeks?*” Sounds issued from Mr. Flinch that sounded uncannily like weeping, but ended up more like weak screeches. “*where are my cheeks?*”

“Uh... bruh?” asked Happy tentatively. “What’s wrong with you?”

Herminey pinched him in her sleep, issuing another

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA”.

“But really,” Happy said more quietly, “what happened?”

“Mr. Flinch is my pride and joy. My only friend.” Mrs. Solace gave another shuddering sob. “Oh, I’ve lost my sole companion.”

Happy gave her an awkward hug, and she leaned into it. When he pulled away, she said “Thank you. You’re ever so kind.”

Happy blushed. “Do you need help dragging Mr. Flinch away?”

“That would be splendid,” admitted Mrs. Solace.

So Happy and Mrs. Solace each took one arm and dragged Mr. Flinch into Mrs. Solace's new office—the vacant classroom which had previously housed the tins of corned beef, an upgrade from the closet she had previously been given the privilege of occupying, in Rumbledoor's office.

“Thank you again for helping. I'm going to have to keep a very close eye on my little pet from now on.”

Mr. Flinch was at least four feet taller than Mrs. Solace, and that was when she was standing on her hind legs (she was one foot seven inches). “OK.”

“Now, good night, dear.”

“Good night, Mrs. Solace,” Happy reciprocated, and smiled.

He went back to bed for approximately forty-five minutes. Then Herminey woke him up at the crack of dawn. “Get up!”

Happy sighed. “noooooooooo.”

“yeeeeeeeeees,” countered Herminey, and kicked him.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA” screamed Happy. The observant reader will notice that this
“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

AAAAAAAAAAAAA” contains one less “A” than before. Happy is growing more tolerant!

“I had a very restless night last night, OK?” cried Happy when the screaming was done, sitting up straight against Larry.

“Not OK.” Herminey’s mouth was a thin line. “You should have fallen asleep like a log, and *stayed* asleep.”

“Oh, children!” came a voice from the doorway. It was Professor Snake’s. “Are you ready for today’sss work?”

“Yes, yes, yes!” cried Herminey, opening the door and stepping on Nor and Happy’s large, rotund stomachs in the process.

“Very good. Yesss, that’sss what I like to sssee in pupilsss,” came Professor Snake’s voice as Happy and Nor roused themselves and got into their work overalls.

They followed Professor Snake and Herminey, who were conversing about smart-people stuff, to the ivy mine.

“At the end of the day, children,” said Professor Snake when they were poised to begin mining, “I musst go to Rumbledoor’s officce. To report on your behavior. And I know it ssshall be a possssitively glowing one for Herminey.”

“Oh, thank you, sir!” said Herminey, and got to work. Happy had never seen her this, well, happy.

“Asss for you two...” Professor Snake turned his gaze to Happy and Nor. “I ssshall tell him the truth. He tellsss me it’sss sssso comforting to him to know that there’s a sssupervisor on duty for you three, what with the reccent ssstealing of Mrsss. Sssolacce’s dreadful pet human’sss cheeksss.”

“Right then,” said Herminey, not looking away from her mining. Happy got to it as well, for fear of a whipping.

They mined, and they mined, and they mined. Happy’s mind was going mad with boredom. Where was his phone, he wondered, with its comforting TikTok memes, its soothing blue light, its loud, annoying YouTube videos? He sighed as he mined, not paying attention to where he was placing the hand not gripping the pickaxe.

The pickaxe came down not on any stem but on Happy’s hand.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA” screamed Happy.

“I’ll whip you into shape,” threatened Herminey. “Don’t be a baby. Get back to work.”

“You’re such a rizzler!” cried Happy defiantly (there is nothing quite like an injury to put people in a bad mood).

“What did you just say?” Herminey asked, dropping her pickaxe and advancing towards him. “Care to let the whole class have a listen?”

“Herminey’s a rizzler!” said Happy very loudly and even more defiantly.

This earned him a particularly nasty whipping as well as a punch in the face.

“And *don’t*,” Herminey said as she walked away, “ever let me catch you doing that again!”

Happy took this as a challenge: he *could* do it, just so long as he didn’t get caught.

“Very good, Herminey, sssatisfactory work indeed,” Professor Snake complimented. “You get a cookie.”

Herminey gasped. “Really? Do I?!”

Professor Snake gave her beam right back. “Of coursse. Nothing but the besst for my favorite pupil.”

Favorite pupil? Oh, no, thought Happy.

Herminey used a different tactic for eating her ‘cookie’ this time: instead of eating the gravel and lard together, she first licked the lard off the gravel, then chomped up the small, sharp rocks that were left. It nearly made Happy gag just watching her. “Mmm,” she moaned in delight, “gravel and lard!”

Happy made a face and turned to play the Distraction game with Nor. This went unnoticed by Herminey, so loud was her crunching. Professor Snake left soon after he gave Herminey the ‘cookie’, to do his every-other-day report on their progress, and so did not see them play Distraction either. It was great fun until Professor Snake came back and ordered Herminey to “whip them into ssshape”, a demand with which she happily complied.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA” screamed Happy.

“I’ll whip you into shape. I’ll whip you into shape!” cried Herminey, shaking her fist.

“Herminey...” Professor Snake’s voice came from his corner. “I have a pressent for you from Rumbledoor.”

It was a badge of merit which read:
IMPERFECT. BADGE OF MERIT. (Well, what

did you *think* it was going to say? NOME,
ALASKA: THE LAND OF THE ICE & SNOW?)

“There’s real dirt underneath all that gold,”
Professor Snake informed her as she accepted
her prize. She pinned it to her overalls
proudly.

After that Happy continued mining. He *did*
get lunch, even though he did not get
breakfast. Once he was eligible, he left the
mine. Hungrily he advanced to the kitchen.

He was met with a horrific sight. Kathy
Cook’s face was planted down on the stove.

“Kathy!” cried Happy. “Are you a’aight,
bruh?”

Kathy Cook didn’t respond.

“Kathy! What’s wrong with you, bruh?!”

Still no response.

“KATHY!”

No response at all.

Happy inhaled and pulled Kathy Cook’s
face up so he could yell in it. “Bruh, I’m *talkin’*
to you!”

Kathy Cook gave a response this time.

“*where are my cheeks?*”

Happy gasped. Where Kathy Cook’s
cheeks should have been were two. Gaping.
Holes.

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CHEEKRETS

“where are my cheeks?”

“*gaspie!*” said Happy. And so it was that the second attack was discovered.

Chapter Three

“*gaspie!*” said Happy again. He decided it was an exclamation that bore repeating.

There was a hissing behind him. “Looking for sssomething?”

Happy turned around in fright. “Professor Snake!”

“Yesss, it isss I. You have been gone for *too long*, Rotter.”

“Sorry!” cried Happy. “I tried to—”

“A very good thing, then,” said Professor Snake smugly, “that this ssstudent informed me of your whereabouts.” He bowed his head to reveal Codra Foulmouth standing behind him.

“The phone, sir?” came his high, squeaky voice. Happy had to suppress a chortle—it still made him crack up whenever he thought of the boy’s breakdown in front of him last week. “You promised me a phone, sir!” He stamped his foot. “Where’s my phone, sir?”

“There will be no phone for you, sssnivelling ssscum,” said Professor Snake coldly. “Get back to work.”

Codra bowed his head, blushing, and headed away.

“Now.” Professor Snake leveled his gaze to Happy’s. “What punissshment ssshould we adminissster to you?”

“None,” suggested Happy optimistically.

“Don’t be ssoo sstupid,” said Professor Snake. “YOU can... let’sss ssee...”

“No, let’s not!” cried Happy and fled the scene.

“After that boy!” Professor Snake shouted behind him. Happy just kept on running, but he was soon stopped in his tracks.

This wasn’t his own fault. A girl holding a book upside-down in front of her face bumped into him, not watching where she was going.

“Hey!” said Happy. “Watch it!”

“Oh dear,” said the girl. “I’m afraid I’ve turned you against me.” She sighed. Her voice was almost as high as Codra’s. “*Glekk!* That’s a real shame. And who’s that snake behind you? *Porok!*”

“After that boy!” Professor Snake shouted again. He was gaining on a stunned Happy, who had not moved a squick since bumping into the girl.

“Still,” she said as Professor Snake continued charging toward him, “I suppose I should introduce myself. My name is Looney

Mooney.” She held out her hand for Happy to shake. “I’m a first year at Warthogs. I used to be part of the orchestra till yesterday, when I got kicked out, because Rumbledoor called me to explore my greater purpose: harvesting gravel. *Trikk!*”

Professor Snake smacked Happy with his tail. “Who do you think you’re fooling, boy? Come with me.”

Happy made an annoyed noise. “Fine.” He followed Professor Snake out the school doors and back into the mines.

“You’re *back*, are you?” asked Herminey maliciously when she saw his reappearance. “I’ll whip you into shape. I’ll whip you into shape!”

“Yesss, that’sss the ssspirit, Herminey! Let him have it!” Professor Snake cried, egging her on.

She whipped Happy on the cheek several times. The one that wasn’t missing.

Of course, that one fell right out, too. Now gasping would feel even stranger until he got used to it.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA” screamed Happy. The observant reader will notice that this

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAA” contains one less “A”
than before. Happy is growing more tolerant!

Once he was all done screaming, Happy retaliated. “Was this how you took out Kathy Cook’s cheeks, too? And Mr. Flinch’s?”

Herminey gasped. “How *dare* you accuse me of that! I’ll whip you into shape!”

Happy gulped. “*gulpie!* That’s not what I—”

“Bruh?” came Nor’s voice. Herminey immediately lost any interest she had ever had in whipping Happy into shape at present and instead advanced towards him.

Nor was pointing a shaking finger into further in the mines. “What... is *that?*”

Herminey whipped him. “Dunderhead! That’s OSWALD the LUCKY RABBIT!”

And indeed it was OSWALD the LUCKY RABBIT—Happy could see it clearly now.

I, came a letter tumbling out of its wildly moving mouth.

KNOW came next, but painfully slow. W didn’t want to come out, and so had to be spit out.

WHOSE came next. Then BEHIND.
OSWALD didn’t have very good grammar.

“What kinda joke are you trying to pull, mister?!” Herminey shouted. “I’ll whip you into shape!”

Even though he was noncorporeal, he was still scared of Herminey. OSWALD vanished.

If only I could do the same, thought Happy as Herminey turned back towards him and Nor.

After another whipping, they returned to work. Herminey, of course, was commended and given another cookie (“Good work,” Professor Snake had told her. “You are a mosst exsemplary pupil”). They all worked all day—due to the little hiccup that was discovering Kathy Cook’s cheeks being gone, Happy was severely behind on his leaf quota and therefore did not get dinner, or dessert—yes, there was dessert tonight... Mud-lard pudding, a specialty of Kathy Cook’s. And of course Herminey got some, and of course she remarked very loudly about how good it was.

“Mmm,” she said very loudly so Nor and Happy could hear, “this is delicious! If only I could let you have some!” She gave the boys the side-eye and quirked an eyebrow, then grinned maliciously and consumed another spoonful.

“Surely you won’t hog it!” Happy cried.

couldn't help but join in:

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA”. The air was filled with screams. Herminey nodded in satisfaction and went back to her ugly sleep.

“What's Chiligrity?” asked Happy. “Is it some kinda slang? Will you teach me?”

“Oh yesss! *Trikk!*” cried Looney Mooney. “I is much goodingses at Chiligrity, *porok!*”

Happy blinked. “Chat, is this real?”

This once again summoned Herminey. “I NEED MY UGLY SLEEP!” she cried, whipping Happy upon the skull. Happy screamed

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA” and a chunk of the flesh over his brain fell off, quickly covered by his messy hairdo.

“Don't be a crybaby,” said Herminey, and went back to the broom closet. Happy put on his pajamas in the badly lit boys' bathroom (well, it used to be a bathroom. Now...) like he did every night. Then he went right to sleep.

He was awoken in the middle of the night, just like last night. But this time it was to a loud rap on the broom closet door. Cautiously

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA” screamed Happy again.

“*where are my cheeks?*” demanded the two victims of cheek theft standing in the broom closet doorway.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA”

“*shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh*”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA”

“*where are my cheeks?*”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA”

“*shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh*”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA”

“Bruh?” Nor slapped Happy on the thigh jovially as he hastened awake. “What’s wrong with you, bro?” Then he looked up and saw the people standing in the doorway.

“uh...” said Nor. “oh... surely those can’t be...”

Herminey rose slowly, slowly. She opened her mouth slowly, slowly. She spoke. Slowly, slowly.

“DON’T CALL ME SHIRLEY.”

Herminey knew where Kathy Cook hid the knives.

Happy gulped. “*gulpie!*”

“*where are my cheeks?*” asked the two victims from the doorway mournfully. “*where are my cheeks?*”

Happy took Larry off his stand. “I’ll—I’ll fight if I need to, chat!”

He heard a soft clinking as he removed the broom from its stand.

“*gaspie!*” said Happy.

Where the mop had been was a jar full of what looked like pickle brine. Brining in the pickles was what looked an awful lot like cheeks.

“*gaspie!*” said Happy again.

“*my cheeks.*” Mr. Flinch noticed the jar, which Happy had picked up to inspect. “*my cheeks. there are my cheeks.*” He snatched the jar from Happy and cradled it like it was his baby. “*my cheeks.*”

“*gaspie!*” said Kathy Cook, who was behind him. “*my cheeks? my cheeks!*”

“*my cheeks!*” cried Mr. Flinch, holding it high enough to where he thought Kathy Cook couldn’t reach it. He was wrong. Kathy Cook was a very tall girl.

“*my cheeks!*” she cried, cradling the jar as Mr. Flinch had done.

“*gaspie! my cheeks!*” protested Mr. Flinch, but Kathy Cook was taller than him (Mr. Flinch was a very short man) and stood on tiptoe, something he hadn’t thought to do, as she fended him off. “*my cheeks!*” There was a robotic quality to their movements. It was as if they were fighting for their very souls instead of just their cheeks.

Happy soon got to sleep. The voices were quiet enough that he could tune them out and play a game of “Steal a Brainrot” in his head.

And a good thing it was, too, because when Herminey woke him several hours later, it was to the sound of thudding—Mr. Flinch was relentlessly pursuing the younger, spryer Kathy Cook, who was not taunting him like she would have if she’d had her cheeks. (If Happy was being honest, he liked Kathy more this way. It was easier to tolerate her. [It’s important to note that Happy was not a very well-read young man in the slightest.])

“Get up!” she said. “You’ve had your ugly sleep and I’ve had mine. Now it’s time to mine!”

“Surely you can let me sleep in!” muttered Happy as he rose.

“Don’t call me Shirley!!!”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAA” screamed Happy as he was whipped. The observant reader will notice that this

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAA” contains one less “A” than before. Happy is growing more tolerant!

This time it broke off a toe (she’d whipped his foot before he put on his work boots, which weren’t all that sturdy—his toes poked out of them). It felt very strange to no longer have the toe.

“Eh.” He shrugged and walked to work.

“Greetingsss,” said Professor Snake as they entered the mouth of the cave. “Are you ready for work?”

“YES!” cried Herminey excitedly.

“Professor Snake, you’re my favorite teacher!”

Professor Snake smiled as well as a snake could. “And you, Herminey, are my favorite pupil.”

Herminey beamed. Happy and Nor scowled. This wasn’t the first time Professor Snake had said this, but it was worth

reminding them that the entire school was against them.

“What was that all about last night?” hissed Herminey to Happy. “Why did you have that jar?”

Happy blanched. “Surely you were asleep while that happened! I saw your eyes closed!”

“Don’t call me Shirley! And I saw the entire thing.” Her eyes narrowed. “What are you hiding, Happy?”

“N-n-n-nothing!” cried Happy.

“What are you keeping from me... I don’t know, but I’ll find out. *I’ll find out*,” she said loudly.

“No, you won’t, because I’m not keeping anything from you, chat!” cried Happy.

“WHAT WAS THAT?” Herminey thundered. “WAS THAT SLANG?!”

“yes sir!” said Happy cheerily.

“grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr...” Herminey’s face got redder and redder and redder until Happy thought it would turn into a tomato. But it didn’t. She just whipped him.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAA” screamed Happy.

“Surely,” said Herminey wickedly, “it doesn’t hurt that much.”

Happy wanted to punch Herminey in the face. He didn't. Instead he punched Nor in the face.

"Bruh!" cried Nor. "What was that all about?!"

"I'm *mad!*" cried Happy; "I'm *mad* and I need a scapegoat."

"No you don't," said Nor. "Not if it's me."

"Yes I do...n't!" said Happy. "Yes if it's you."

"Bruh, don't be a hater! Don't let the rizzlers win!"

"WHAT WAS THAT" came Herminey's voice from behind them.

"*eeple deeple!*" cried Happy and Nor as one.

Another whipping for Happy, Nor's first of the day.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAA"

"Get back to work!" screamed Herminey and got back to work. Happy and Nor followed suit.

It was a long, grueling day. Nor and Happy watched Herminey leave to get breakfast, then lunch, as their tummies rumbled. Finally, around four o'clock, Happy was allowed

afternoon snack and Herminey was allowed an early dinner. They went together.

Herminey was exceptionally businesslike. She full-on ran towards the kitchen and grabbed a tin of corned beef from the refrigerator, opening it with her very sharp fingernails and shoveling it into her mouth. “Letsh goh,” she told Happy with her mouth full of corned beef.

Happy did not follow. He instead got himself a tin of canned pineapple and was just opening it with the one can opener when he stopped.

He no longer heard Herminey’s loud footsteps through the hallway. But he also didn’t hear the door opening.

He shrugged and ate the canned pineapple.

While he was exiting the kitchen, however, he ran into Looney Mooney, who was just coming in. Her stomach was rumbling like crazy.

“Hello.” Her voice was light and airy as always.

“Er, hi.” Happy stepped away.

Halfway through the corridor, Happy stopped dead. Herminey was lying on the floor unmoving.

She would never slack off like this.
Something was seriously wrong.

“Herminey!” Happy kicked her. “Get up!”

No movement.

“*scoffie!* Come on!” Another kick.

This time, there was a sound from
Herminey. A soft rasp.

“*where are my cheeks? where are my cheeks?*”

“*gaspie!*” said Happy. The cheek thief had
struck again.

Chapter Four

“*gaspie!*” said Happy again. He felt it was an exclamation that bore worth repeating.

“What’s that?” came a whisper from behind him. “Is that a dead body?”

“*gaspie!*” said Happy a third time.

“Hi. We’re the twins, Ronald and Donald.”

“Like Ronald McDonald and Donald Duck?” asked Happy, chuckling a little.

“No. Like Ronald McDonald & Donald Duck. Don’t neglect the ampersand,” they responded.

“OK!” said Happy brightly. “Why?”

“BECAUSE!” they chorused.

“OK!” said Happy.

“Hey, where’re your cheeks?” asked Ronald (or was it Donald?).

“Yeah, where’re your cheeks?” echoed Donald (or was it Ronald?).

“Herminey here punched them out,” explained Happy, gesturing to Herminey, who was still on the ground and still rasping quietly: “*where are my cheeks? where are my cheeks?*”

“Woah. That’s brutal, man.” Donald (or was it Ronald?) thumped Happy on the back.

“Isn’t it, chat?” Happy looked at Herminey worriedly, but there was no response but “*where are my cheeks?*”

“Anyways, whereddaya work, yo?” asked Ronald (or was it Donald?).

“I work in the ivy mines!” proclaimed Happy proudly.

“Woah, respect,” said Ronald (or was it Donald?). “We feed Hairy Otter.”

“Surely he can feed himself—”

“DON’T CALL ME SHIRLEY,” said Ronald and Donald as one.

Happy sighed. “Right, right.” He had known this might happen. He had been Testing them.

“’Tis a most noblyish job indeed,” Donald (or was it Ronald?) informed him. “We feed Hairy Otter only the finest corned beef.”

“So that’s what those tins are for?” Happy said, stunned. “In the empty classroom?”

“Tut, tut, tut!” said Ronald (or was it Donald?). “You just interrupted my brother.”

“I did,” acknowledged Happy. “I’m sorry.” He wasn’t really sorry.

“Apology NOT accepted,” said Donald (or was it Ronald?), smacking Happy on the

cheek. “So what happened to Herminey’s cheeks?”

“I don’t know,” said Happy, shrugging in a way he hoped appeared nonchalant.

“Are you lying to us?” asked Ronald (or was it Donald?).

“Chat, I’m not sus! No cap!”

“How do we *know*?” asked Donald (or was it Ronald?).

“You don’t!” cried Happy. “You really don’t!”

“CORRECT,” said Ronald (or was it Donald?).

“NO, WE DON’T,” agreed Donald (or was it Ronald?).

“Glad to hear you can’t read my mind,” said Happy smugly, and crouched down to Herminey, screaming in her ear: “*Rizzy girl!*”

Herminey’s “*where are my cheeks?*” was ever louder.

“SKIBIDI RIZZ!” screamed Happy, willing to go as far as he needed to prove she was out. “SKIBIDI WHAT? SKIBIDI WHO? SKIBIDI YEAH! 6-7!” He did both the Skibidi dance and the 6-7 dance, and all that happened was that Herminey’s quiet rasp grew gradually louder, until he stopped doing the 6-7 dance.

The reason he stopped doing the 6-7 dance was because Herminey had begun getting up.

“where are my cheeks?” The plaintive question of a lost child. If Happy had known what sorrow was in her voice, he would have been moved to tears (it’s important to note that Happy was not a very well-read young man in the slightest).

Herminey placed a ham-handed hand on Happy’s shoulder. Looked him in the eyes. Her eyes were motionless. Dead.

“where are my cheeks?” She was incredibly insistent. Her grip on Happy’s shoulder grew firmer. *“where are my cheeks?”*

“I don’t know!” screamed Happy into her face. “I’ve never known!”

An icy blast filled the room. “Elsa,” said Ronald (or was it Donald?). “You can’t run from this!” His voice had turned low and pleading. “I tried to save her, but it was too late.”

Happy found himself speaking in a high, tremulous voice. “Anna.”

“where are my cheeks!” cried Herminey, stepping in front of Herminey and shielding him from Ronald (or was it Donald?). She froze to death, cowering in front of him.

“She is lost to us,” said Happy in his normal voice, and fell to the ground in despair. The ice had all melted, but Herminey’s heart... it never would.

“Maybe she should try Hare Krishna,” suggested Donald (or was it Ronald?), in a normal voice.

Ronald (or was it Donald?) guffawed like mad at the joke, fist-bumping Donald (or was it Ronald?). Donald (or was it Ronald?) fist-bumped Ronald (or was it Donald?) back.

“What’s so funny?” asked Happy, confused. “Who’s Hare Krishna?”

“I don’t know,” said Donald (or was it Ronald?), shrugging. “Beats me,” said Ronald (or was it Donald?), shrugging as well. “It’s just a good joke,” Donald (or was it Ronald?) put in.

“*where are my cheeks?*” queried Herminey once again. “*where are my cheeks?*”

Happy flinched. “Your cheeks are... at house number sixty-seven!” he stammered.

“*where are my cheeks!*” cried Herminey, and righted herself from her position in front of Happy, swiveling around. “*where are my cheeks!*”

Happy held up his hands in surrender. Herminey threw him upon the floor.

Happy landed on his hands. His left pinkie finger fell off.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAA” screamed Happy. The observant reader will notice that this “AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAA” contains one less “A” than before. Happy is growing more tolerant!

“Happy, dear?” came a voice from behind a door they were standing near. “Are you all right?”

It was Mrs. Solace, emerging from the classroom.

“Mrs. Solace!” cried Happy. “Herminey’s cheeks have been stolen!”

“Oh, dear,” said Mrs. Solace sympathetically. “Why don’t I store her with the others?”

“Others?” Happy asked quizzically before remembering that Mr. Flinch and Kathy Cook had also had their cheeks stolen. He nodded solemnly in understanding. “All right, then. Do you need any help?”

“Help would be excellent,” said Mrs. Solace, who was straining to pull Herminey by her hair.

Happy dragged Herminey by her legs into the office, which Mrs. Solace had refurbished to suit her needs. There was a squat desk with a name card, as well as a feeding bowl which was currently half-full of tuna. There was also a bathroom (which connected the room with the kitchen) on the right side of the room. On the left was another door, which was half-open. Two voices emitted from it. “*where are my cheeks?*”

“That’s where I’ve had to put them, the poor dears,” sighed Mrs. Solace. “I just can’t figure out how to cure them. I can’t find their cheeks!”

Happy gasped. “*gaspie!*” His mind drifted to a memory of being in the broom closet. Having a *jar of cheeks*. Where had that gone? Oh, yes, Kathy Cook and Mr. Flinch had squirreled it away.

Happy opened the door hesitantly, but Kathy Cook and Mr. Flinch were both lying quietly (save for the occasional rasp of “*where are my cheeks?*”). There was no trace of a jar of cheeks.

Where could it have gone? wondered Happy. Then a song made its way into his head: *Life is fraughtless when you're thoughtless! Life's more painless for the brainless!* Happy stopped wondering and started shoving Herminey into the closet.

When he arrived back at the ivy mine (with the thanks of Mrs. Solace), Professor Snake said nastily, "Rotter... where have you been...?"

"Herminey's cheeks've been stolen," said Happy quickly. "I have an excuse from Mrs. Solace—see?" He uncurled his fist to reveal a crumpled piece of paper. He uncrumpled it to reveal a slip which read: PERMISSION SLIP. It was signed by Mrs. Solace in her tidy cat script.

Professor Snake's eyes narrowed. "Very well, Rotter. But heed my wordsss—you can't get away with thiss forever. I know what you did. Yesssssssssss! *I know what you did!*"

"*eeple deeple!*" cried Happy, and went back to work.

He mined and he mined and he mined. Would the work ever stop?

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAA” screamed Happy in utter boredom.

Nor slugged him. “Bruh. Can’t you see I’m tryna work here?”

“What’s ‘tryna’?” asked Happy.

“It’s a sort of yellow bird that can mimic a people voice,” explained Nor.

Happy gasped in admiration for Nor and his knowing of such a big word. (It’s important to note that Happy was not a very well-read young man in the slightest). Nor nodded, smirking smugly, and said, “Wanna play the 6-7 game?”

“What’s the 6-7 game?!” asked Happy, delighted.

“I dunno,” said Nor, shrugging. “Wanna make it up?”

“Yeah!” cried Happy.

“You boysss get back to work!” came Professor Snake’s voice from the mouth of the cave.

“Yes, Professor!” chorused Happy and Nor, and thrust their pickaxes at the wall in an attempt to simulate the sound of mining ivy, over and over again. They were not being productive. They talked about the 6-7 kid as

they did so. They did not get much work done. They did not get dinner. They got a severe scolding from Professor Snake.

“You two were tricking me, sssneaky children!” Professor Snake accused.

“Yes sir!” confirmed Happy.

“Yes sir!” reciprocated Nor.

“You can go to sssleep tonight,” said Professor Snake, “but don’t expect to be able to if you pull thiss sstunt again.”

“Yes sir!” said Happy in understanding. Once again, Nor reciprocated the sentiment.

In the middle of the night—

Happy woke up. But not because of the cheek victims. No, no, Happy had a very urgent need to pee.

Several jokes can be made about this subject, and I shan’t make them due to their somewhat immature nature.

When Happy emerged from the bush (there were no bathrooms at Warthogs, at least none that had not collapsed due to having a blue whale carcass thrown upon them—it’s a long story), who should he run into at the next bush but Looney Mooney.

“Hello,” she said. She was in a light purple nightgown.

“Hello,” reciprocated Happy, making sure he emphasized the correct syllable. “Do you need a twinkle tinkle, too?” A “twinkle tinkle” was what Happy’s mother had always called a nighttime pee. I said I wouldn’t make pee jokes, not that *Happy* wouldn’t. I make no promises with Happy.

“What’s a twinkle tinkle?” asked Looney Mooney. “Does it have something to do with...” She looked up at the sky. “The *stars? Trikk!*”

Happy looked up at the sky, too. There were too many clouds for him to see anything. “Bruh, that’s sus.”

“Is that the *slang?*” asked Looney Mooney. “Would you teach me some? Pleasingses?”

Happy grinned. “Great idea, Looney Mooney!” Then his grin faded. “But how would we do that and make sure the teachers don’t know?”

“Simple,” said Looney Mooney. “We use the kitchen at night. *Porok!*”

“Great idea!” cried Happy. “Why didn’t I think of that?”

“Because you’re stupid,” stated Looney Mooney. She wasn’t wrong.

“How *dare* you—” cried Happy, red in the face. He thrust his fist towards Looney Mooney’s face, but before it could make contact, something else did: Looney Mooney’s fingers. She was *much* stronger than he was and prevented him from touching her. Then she delivered, with her free hand, a horrible blow to the gut that made Happy double over the instant she removed her fist from his roly-poly stomach.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAA” screamed Happy in pain. The observant reader will notice that this “AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAA” contains one less “A” than before. Happy is growing more tolerant!

It was agony. He found it difficult to concentrate on anything else but the pain. “AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAA” he screamed once more. “AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAA”

“*sigh!*” sighed Looney Mooney. “*sigh, sigh, sighie sigh!* You are too histrionic. *Glekk!*”

“I am *not!*” cried Happy indignantly. This required him to stop screaming, and soon he

realized that it really wasn't hurting as bad as he thought it was.

"Are too."

"Am not!"

"Are too."

"Am not!"

"Are too."

"Am not!"

"*sighie!*" sighed Looney Mooney. "Where is this conversation getting us? Nowhere. Where are we going in life? Nowhere. *Porok...*"

"I think I'm getting somewhere!" Happy opined. I've always wanted to use the word "opined" in a book.

"I don't think so," countered Looney Mooney.

"I think so," recounted Happy, and Looney Mooney scowled. "*Belkh!* Is *recountered* even a word?"

"It is now," said Happy, and that settled the matter.

"I'm bored," he said after approximately two seconds. "This is boring."

"It is indeed," said Looney Mooney carelessly.

Happy nodded. "So. What should we do about it?"

“Want to teach me some slang now? *Porok!*” asked Looney Mooney, but as the words left her lips, she turned to see none other than Codra Foulmouth, with fury in his eyes.

“You’re giving *her* slang lessons and not *me?*” he said in his squeaky voice. Shedding a single tear, he turned to go.

“No! Codra, wait!” cried Happy. “You can learn too, so long as you give a safe place.”

Codra turned back towards Happy with a smile on his face. “Thank you. Oh, thank you.”

“Place?” Happy raised one eyebrow, a trick he had been taught to do by Nor.

“*um...*” Codra thought for a moment, then snapped his fingers. “The kitchen. Since Kathy Cook isn’t there.”

“That’s just what I was thinking,” interjected Looney Mooney.

“Well, it was *my* idea,” responded Codra haughtily.

“But it was *my* idea *first!* *Trikk!*” protested Looney Mooney.

“If you want me to teach you slang, you had better be quiet!” scolded Happy, who was quite unused to being the grown-up in

arguments. Codra and Looney Mooney immediately fell silent and gave very stiff salutes. “Righto, teach,” said Looney Mooney dreamily. “You go. *Trikk!*”

“Who’s Hugo?” asked Happy quizzically.

Looney Mooney sighed. “*sighie*. Never mind.”

“ALWAYS mind!” cried Happy. “Who’s Hugo?”

“Oh, Hugo? He’s my crazy uncle,” said Looney Mooney. “He *really* likes watching the news. Whenever we go to his house he *always* has the news on.”

“I know what you mean,” said Happy—his grandmother (on his mother’s side of course) always had a Mickey Mouse show on for him. “But surely, that doesn’t qualify him as crazy?”

“Don’t call me Shirley!” cried Codra and Looney Mooney at once.

“Come on!” moaned Happy. “OK, second rule of slang class. You can’t say ‘don’t call me Shirley’. Now let’s practice. Surely you don’t have to say it!”

“*mmmmmmmmmmrrrrrrrrr!!!!!!!!!!!!*” cried Codra but kept his mouth shut. Looney

Mooney complained, “This is boring. *Glekk!* Will you teach us some slang now?”

“OK. Yes,” Happy acquiesced. “Slang lessons. *now—*” He opened his arms wide. “*now—*” He spread them wider. “*now—*” They were too far. It began to hurt. He pulled them back to his sides. “*now* we can start slang lessons. Lesson number one: 6-7.”

“What’s 6-7?” asked Looney Mooney.

“Yeah, what’s 6-7?” echoed Codra.

“Sh, sh, I’m getting to that,” Happy said. “So. There’s this TikTok short, see?”

“What’s TikTok?” asked Looney Mooney.

“It’s a video app,” explained Codra. “I learned about it from Kathy Cook. You see, people watch videos endlessly. It’s called *doom scrolling.*”

“OK,” said Looney Mooney. “What’s an app?”

“It’s short for *application,*” explained Codra. “It’s a little square on a phone, and when you tap on it, it opens the thingie. Like TikTok.”

Looney Mooney nodded uncertainly, and Happy cried, “Class, class!”

“Yes, yes!” cried Looney Mooney and Codra, swiveling their heads back to Happy.

Happy beamed. He *loved* being in charge. It was the *best*.

“So, yeah, the TikTok short,” he continued. “There’s this kid, and he gets asked the height of a basketball player. And he says—and this is *really* funny now, he says—” Codra and Looney Mooney leaned in close, elated.

“He goes...” Happy 6-7ed. That’s a verb now. “Like, 6’ 7”!” He laughed uncontrollably and continued 6-7ing.

“I don’t get it,” said Looney Mooney. “Why is it so funny?”

“Beats me,” put in Codra. “I think it’s just funny because it’s funny.”

Happy was laughing so loud he could not hear either of them.

“*sighie!*” went Looney Mooney. “I thought slang would be cooler. How disappointing.”

“*Cooler?!!*” Happy screeched, picking himself up from the ground. “This is as cool as you can get! Now, lesson number two: skibidi. Skibidi toilet is a series of YouTube videos—”

“What’s YouTube?” whispered Looney Mooney to Codra.

“It’s an app too. It has videos.”

“Why not just use TikTok?”

“Because YouTube is for longer videos.”

This made no sense to Looney Mooney. But she nodded dumbly anyways, because how fun is being dumb?!

“Class class!” said Happy again.

“Yes yes!” said Looney Mooney and Codra again, rather carelessly.

“Skibidi Toilet, you see, is about these heads that live in toilets rebelling against these guys with cameras for heads. It’s *really* funny. If you want I can teach you the song.”

“Oh, yes please!” cried Codra and Looney Mooney.

“Repeat after me.” Happy cleared his throat in an effort to sound grown-up. “*Skibidi what?*”

“*Skibidi what?*” echoed Codra and Looney Mooney.

“*Skibidi who?*”

“*Skibidi who?*” they echoed again.

“*Skibidi yeah!*”

“*Skibidi yeah!*” they chorused.

Happy said, “ROTFL!”

“What does that mean?” asked Looney Mooney.

“OK. Slang lesson number three,” began Happy. “Class class!”

“Yes yes!” moaned Codra and Looney Mooney, who were getting sort of tired of the attention-getter.

“ROTFL is texting slang. It is short for—” Happy paused dramatically. “—*rolling on the floor laughing.*”

Instead of laughing about how lazy people with phones must be, a confused Looney Mooney said: “ROTFL!”

Happy collapsed in laughter.

“He’s ROTFL,” whispered Codra to Looney Mooney. She nodded sagely in agreement.

Once Happy had stopped laughing, he said, “Class dismissed! We’ll meet in the kitchen at ten PM tomorrow night.”

“Righto, teach’,” said Looney Mooney. “Now if you’ll excuse me, there’s something I’ve been meaning to get to.” She shoved him out of the way and headed into the school.

“This lesson was so 6-7,” said Codra, 6-7ing just as Happy had taught him.

“Good boy,” said Happy in a condescending tone, patting Codra’s head.

“Hey!” protested Codra.

“We’ll get to that tomorrow,” promised Happy, and headed back to his good old

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broom closet. Once he arrived there and his head hit Larry, he descended into a dreamless slumber.

Chapter Five

Happy woke up... *happy*. For the first time in a month, Happy Rotter was *happy*.

The feeling didn't last long. When he trudged up to the mine, Professor Snake greeted him contemptuously. "Enjoy your ugly sssleep, Rotter?"

"Why yes, I did," said Happy defiantly.

"Are you *aware*, Rotter, that sssaid ugly sssleep was over *fifteen minutesss* after you were sssuppossed to be at this mine?"

"No sir," said Happy.

"EXSSTRA MINING FOR YOU, ROTTER! YOU GET THE NIGHT SSSHIFT TONIGHT!"

"*gulpie!*" gulped Happy gulpily.

"The night shift?" Nor said, coming out from the mouth of the cave. "Brutal, bruh." He slugged Happy to show his sympathy, removing a nontrivial amount of skin from his arm.

It was indeed brutal. Working the night shift, how could Happy ever afford to keep up slang lessons? He inhaled sharply as the single gear in his mind churned.

"So, how long do you think the night shift is? Six or seven hours?" Nor guffawed and 6-

7ed. Happy followed suit somewhat reluctantly.

“Bruh, are you... *sad* to be 6-7ing?” Nor asked, shocked.

“I’m letting down Codra, and I’m letting down Looney Mooney,” said Happy. “I promised to teach them slang tonight. I promised to teach them, *good boy!*”

“OI!” cried an offended Nor. “I’ve been a *baaaaaaaaaaad boy!*” This was a reference to the much-derided (by Nor’s younger sister Ginger) *Despicable Me 3* and its villain (arguably the coolest in the franchise in the author’s humble opinion due to his extensive utilization of cassette tapes as a music outlet), Evil Bratt.

“Yesss, you have,” agreed Professor Snake.

“OI!” Nor said ever louder, becoming quite red in the face as Happy had done on his very first day at Warthogs. “That’s mean!”

“It isss indeed,” acknowledged Professor Snake. “Now, if you want a meal, Weasel, you’ll get mining.”

Nor nodded dumbly and started mining. Happy did as well.

Pretty soon, however, there was a sound. A distant *vroom*.

“*gaspie!*” went Happy, dropping his pickaxe. He knew that sound. And from the look on Nor’s face—he’d dropped his pickaxe and gone ghostly pale—he knew it, too.

They raced to the gates, shoving Professor Snake out of the way—“You’ll pay for thiss!” he called after them as they ran.

Sure enough, in the Warthogs gates was a purple cybertruck.

“MA!” Nor screamed. “MA!”

“Morris, dear?” Mrs. Weasel said quietly—or at least, the boys thought she was being quiet. She was actually shouting. “I’m just dropping off your sister. I just *know* she’ll love it here!” With that, Nor’s mother got back into the car and drove it smoothly out of the gates.

Nor’s jaw slackened, then fell off as it had done in *Happy Rotter and the Stilosopher’s Phone*. He recovered and with trembling hands bent to put it back onto his face. When Ginger heard the *click*, she swiveled her face around from where it had been staring at Codra waiting for her at the entrance. “Nor?” she gasped. “Bother dearest, mayest hither noise be of thine?”

“Yes, Ginny, it’s me,” said Nor. “What the sigma has Mom had you reading lately?”

“Mater hath done me much good, forsooth!; pray tell whyest thou were not trained in the ways of the Bard.”

“Shakespeare again,” moaned Nor.

“*slang!!!!*” Codra’s head shot up straight and his head swiveled wildly around, making his perfectly straight haircut bounce on his head. “*slang!!!!*”

“Who mayest hither lad be?” queried Ginger, gesticulating in Codra’s direction.

“That’s Codra. He’s a rizzler,” said Happy.

“6-7!” said Codra in his high voice, 6-7ing. Happy ROTFLed (that’s also a verb now). He said, “ROTFL!” and rolled on the floor. Codra did the same thing.

Ginger looked at her brother with disgust in her eyes. “Bother dearest, these lads hath lost their mortal sense!”

Nor shrugged. “Yeah, they have. 6-7!” He 6-7ed.

“Thou mayest cease thine most vulgar form of speech,” decreed Ginger.

“Nah.” Nor shrugged again.

“*Thou mayest cease thine most vulgar form of speech,*” decreed Ginger more forcefully (hence the italics).

“*Thou mayest cease thine most vulgar form of speech,*” mocked Nor. “Quit it, sis. No one’s buying it.”

“Thou mayest leave the presence of the most eminent Ginger Weasel,” decreed Ginger. She glared at Nor. Nor glared back. “Bruh,” he said as he stalked away, “that is so not sigma. Let’s go, Happy,” and he linked his arm in Happy’s and dragged him back into the mine.

“Why is your sister being such a rizzly ohio skibidi, chat?” asked Happy. This was met with an unpleasant hissing noise from Professor Snake. “*eeple deeple!*” Happy cried, seeing the anger on both Nor and the Professor’s faces. “What’s wrong with you, bro?” he asked Nor, lowering his voice so Professor Snake couldn’t hear.

“Ginny is a very intuitioned little rizzler,” said Nor, using the word “intuitioned” instead of “impressionable”.

“And?” asked Happy, who did not know what *intuitioned* meant (it’s important to note

that Happy was not a very well-read young man in the slightest).

“Ginny likes to talk like the people in books she reads, or on TV. Ma had her read *Anne of Green Gables* and she was in ‘the depths of despair’ whenever something bad happened...”

“What’s *Anne of Green Gables*?” asked Happy (it’s important to note that Happy was not a very well-read young man in the slightest).

“It’s a book, OK, Happy? So yeah, and Ma’s got her reading the Shakespeare. So she talks like the characters *in* the Shakespeare.”

“What’s Shakespeare?” asked Happy (it’s important to note that Happy was not a very well-read young man in the slightest).

“He’s an old guy, I dunno,” said Nor, shrugging. “From, like, six or seven centuries ago!” He and Happy 6-7ed, then ROTFLed.

“Whatever activity mayest thou be engaged in?” came a voice from the mouth of the cave. “Bother, thou art ever so mad, for forsooth!; behold the wonders of love and its profound effects on the mind.”

“Ginny, you’re a crazy little rizzler, chat,” said Nor, getting up from the floor.

“I have encountered a lass most uncouth!” she proclaimed.

“Oh, really, and who might that be?”

“A most unusual creature of the feline family hast proclaimed her to be nomered: Herminey. She speaks but a single chilling phrase: *where are my cheeks?*”

Just then, Professor Snake emerged from behind her. “Can you ssspeak Parssselntongue?” he asked Ginger hopefully.

“Oh bother, who mayest this reptilian creature be,

he whose ugly tie protrudes from his neck like a viper in the night,

whose eyes seem to pierce to the very core of mine mortal mind?” Ginny queried.

“That’s Professor Snake,” said Nor.

“Yeah, he thinks he speaks Parseltongue. Just go along with it,” added Happy.

“WHAT DID YOU SSSAY ABOUT MY TIE!” thundered Professor Snake. “It’sss the night ssshift for you, too, little Weassel!”

“All right then,” said Ginger placidly, quite out of character.

Professor Snake smiled. “Very good. I will have to ssspeak with Rumbledoor about making you an ImPerfect, my dear.”

My dear? It seemed *everyone* liked *everyone* more than they liked Happy. The emotional damage was more than Happy could take.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAA” he screamed, then said in a stilted voice, “Emotional damage!”

Professor Snake hissed, but his attention was soon diverted by a bright flashlight shining its way into the cave. Codra. Happy ran up to see what was the matter.

“You’re to see Rumbledoor,” said Codra in his high voice. Happy relayed the information to Professor Snake quite loudly, and left. Once they were out of earshot, Codra said, “6-7!” and 6-7ed. Happy smiled.

Happy Rotter, the rumbles rumbled as Happy stood in front of Rumbledoor three minutes and twenty-eight seconds later. You are aware you have been labelled an Unpreventable Death?

“Yes sir,” said Happy glumly, looking at Codra, who was going back down the hallway for who-knows-what-reason.

Very good. Now—are you aware of the cheek thefts?

“scoffie!” scoffed Happy. “Who isn’t?”

That was very impolite, young man. Don't you speak to me in that tone. Now. I have taken the liberty of ordering more cheeks for Warthogs students who may have lost them.

“Where do you get cheeks?” asked a confused Happy.

We ship them from Antarctica. Nevertheless, they will take a long time to arrive, so we must be vigilant till then. We must catch the cheek thief, and find the cheeks. If we do, we can cancel the shipment, and you, Happy, will have to mine less ivy for our funds.

Mining less ivy was a greatly appealing prospect to Happy. He gasped. “*gaspie!* Do you truly mean it?”

Every word, said Rumbledoor. That said... Happy, where were you when Mr. Flinch's cheeks were stolen?

“I, um, I was in the ivy mines, mining, when I heard Mrs. Solace's scream.”

Really? Can anyone trustworthy verify your alibi?

“What's an alibi?”

The rumbles made an odd sound, like a sigh. *Not Nor, not Herminey, and Professor Snake has already told me... never mind... Now,*

Happy, where were you when Kathy Cook's cheeks were stolen?

"Ida know," said Happy (Ida was a great friend of his mother's, a true pal in times thick and thin, and she always seemed to know everything). "I just wandered into the kitchen to get some lunch and... there she was."

What about Herminey's cheeks, Happy? Where were you then?

"I was on my way back from the kitchen when it happened, I think. She went there with me, but she was ahead of me," said Happy.

Are you aware, Rotter, that there have been no cheek thefts beyond those already mentioned?

"No," said Happy, because no one bothered to tell him. No one liked to talk to Happy except Nor, and sometimes Codra, and maybe Mrs. Solace, and Kathy Cook liked to talk to him too much.

Are you aware, Rotter, that in the middle of the night a jar of cheeks was found under the mop you use as a pillow?

"Yes," said Happy.

How? How, Rotter? Answer me! The rumbles were getting ever more commanding.

“Ida know!” cried Happy. “They were just—*there*—one night!”

And why have your cheeks vanished?

“Herminey punched them out.”

Very good, the rumbles ruminated quietly before more loudly rumbling: *You, Happy Rotter, are the prime suspect as to these cheek thefts. The victims? All people you despise. The opportunity? Why, you discovered each of the three bodies. And the motive? Oh, Happy, your cheeks have been punched out. You must have been jealous of everyone else. As to how, exactly, you did this, it staggers the mind, but for now I’m detaining you. Go get Codra so he can slap some handcuffs on your wrists. And quickly. The orchestra is performing “Old Time Rock and Roll (Extended 100-Minute Cut)” this afternoon and I don’t want to miss a second of it, even though they will wait for their dear headmaster’s full attention.*

“No!” cried Happy. “I didn’t do it!”

All the evidence is against you, Happy, the rumbles rumbled angrily. Get.

Happy got.

But what was to greet him in the hallway but Codra Foulmouth’s stiff body.

From his mouth came four fateful words, and I think, dear reader, that you can infer

what words they were, unless you are such a dreadful dunderhead that you are unable to recall events that happened only a few pages ago, in which case I shall provide the words once again. You're welcome.

“where are my cheeks?”

Chapter Six

“*gaspie gaspie gaspie*” cried Happy. “This is bad. This is *very* bad.”

“*where are my cheeks?*” Codra slowly pulled himself up from the dusty floor. “*where are my cheeks?*” His eyes were dull and unseeing. He turned to face Happy. “*where are my cheeks?*”

“Ida know!” Happy nearly screamed out.

“Hey, what’s going on here?” came a voice from further along the corridor. Happy recognized it as Donald’s. Or maybe it was Ronald’s.

“Codra’s cheeks!” Happy cried in dismay and fright. “They’ve been stolen!”

“That’s not good,” came a different voice, the voice of Ronald (or Donald). *But it is good*, thought Happy, because now one more suspect was eliminated and now the “S” god, angered by my choice to pen this tale in American English instead of British English, demands a sacrifice in order to make up for the scarcity of “S”s even though Professor Snake uses too many. The one letter god that we can count on not needing a sacrifice from is the “A” god, which I trust we have adequately appeased. I apologize. She says we can finish the page, though. That’s nice of her.

Oh. So not *too* benevolent after all to let us finish the page, but yeah, okay, that's all of it. Sorry about that. And it's certainly been a pleasure doing business with the "S" god. She says she'll put in a good word for me at the publisher's. Now back to the story!

"What are you doing?" asked Professor Snake, coming up from behind Happy.

"*eeple deeple!*" cried Happy. "I—um—Codra's cheeks, they've been stolen, sir."

"Codra?" Professor Snake looked sad. "How sssad. He wasss sssuch a good sssstudent." He was already regarding Codra as dead.

Happy nodded mutely, pretending to be sad, and it worked.

"Come, Rotter," Professor Snake commanded, tone hardening. "It'sss time for you to work the night ssshift."

As Happy passed the Professor, he noticed that Ginger was behind him. "I thought you had the night shift, too!" said Happy.

"Nay, nay!" said Ginger. "This kindest gentleman hast rid me of mine duty;
and left me free so I may step into a new
role

as ImPerfect, forsooth!; the scoundrels and sinners which plague this prestigious institution

shall cower under mine might! –mayest even mine most erudite bother

tremble under mine all-powerful fist,” explained Ginger. (A translation: *Professor Snake let me off the night shift because I punched Nor’s lights out, behavior worthy of becoming an ImPerfect.*)

“I’m afraid I don’t understand. Could you rephrase that?” said Happy in his Alexa voice (Nor had always done a better Alexa voice than he could, but he tried).

“Thou mayest cease thine most vulgar form of speech,” commanded Ginger.

“Yes sir,” said Happy.

“*Thou mayest cease thine most vulgar form of speech,*” said Ginger more forcefully (hence the italics).

“Surely you won’t have a reaction to this sentence,” said Happy as a test.

Ginger furrowed her brow. “Thou shalt callest me not Shirley.”

“Come along, Ginger,” said Professor Snake. “There iss much to dissscuss with our mossst eminent headmassster.”

It was a grinning Ginger, holding a snake stuffed animal in one hand and a cookie in the other—or, rather, ‘cookie’. It was Herminey’s favorite: gravel and lard.

“Congratulationsss,” said Professor Snake proudly to her. “Herminey’ssss got competition.”

Then Ginger headed back to her broom closet to sleep and Professor Snake advanced toward Happy. “How’ssss it going, Rotter?”

“*scoffie!*” said Happy. “You can’t scare me!”

“I think you’ll find, Rotter, that I can,” said Professor Snake coolly. “Did you know that oncsse you die, a real esstate agent will come and sssell your property if you have no living heirs?”

“*eeple deeple!*” cried Happy—Professor Snake had tapped into his deepest, darkest fear: *real estate agents*.

“The reassson? Becausse you, Rotter, will grow up to be *a real esstate agent*.”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAA” screamed Happy. The observant reader will notice that this “AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAA” contains one less “A” than before. Happy is growing more tolerant!

Once he had finished screaming, Professor Snake informed him of a fact which you likely have already inferred: “Ginger Weassel has sssuccessssfully become an ImPerfect.”

“*scoffie!*” said Happy, trying to act like he didn’t care. (he did. a ten-year-old *girl*—Nor’s little sister, no less—was showing him up.) “So what?”

“Ssso, Rotter, you and your disssgusting little friend will be working the night ssshift *every* night until thiss matter iss sssolved and Herminey’ssss cheeksss are resssored to her!” explained Professor Snake with quiet malice.

That had done it.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAA” screamed Happy and fainted on the spot.

When he awoke, five people were standing over him: a blonde-haired girl, a silver-haired boy, a brown-haired girl and a wizened old man with no hair at all, as well as a blob of black whatever-it-was.

“*gaspie!*” went Happy. It was Herminey, Codra, Kathy Cook, Mr. Flinch and OSWALD the LUCKY RABBIT.

“*where are my cheeks?*” said Herminey.

“*where are my cheeks?*” said Codra.

“*where are my cheeks?*” said Kathy Cook.

“*where are my cheeks?*” said Mr. Flinch.

IN came a word tumbling out of OSWALD’s mouth.

THE came next, then a word Happy had never seen before (and for good reason).

SAMEBER

“What’s a *sameber?*” Happy asked OSWALD quizzically.

OSWALD said nothing, but instead pointed outside the cave, then ran away (leaving a cloud of pure white smog behind him which just sat there like painted cardboard and didn’t move). Then, he stopped and looked at Happy as if to say, “Coming?”

Happy *did* coming.

They arrived soon in a corridor of broom closets just past the kitchen and not quite at Professor McGowan’s office.

OSWALD pointed to one. There were loud noises issuing from it.

Happy took a deep breath, advanced towards the door, and
gave it a *big hug*.

OSWALD smacked his head and mimed knocking.

“No, no,” said Happy. “Violence is *never* the answer.”

There came a squawk from down the hall. “What’s all that noise, children?” A stout, short goose waddled into the broom closet corridor. “Who are you and what are you doing up?” she said, looking at Happy with bleary, squinting eyes.

This must be Professor McGowan, thought Happy and acted accordingly. “I was having a *twinkle tinkle!*” He forgot that *twinkle tinkle* was not a common term in the English language.

“Young man, get back to bed! Unless Professor Snake has you working the night shift, in which case you will trudge back to the mines! *squawk!*” She squawked angrily.

“OK, OK,” said Happy.

NO! came tumbling out of OSWALD’s mouth. The letters hit Professor McGowan on the head and she sank to the ground with a horrible crunching noise.

“Violence is *never* the answer,” said Happy again, like a broken record. OSWALD smacked his head again. IDIOT! rushed out of his mouth and made its way over Happy’s face, where it

then sprouted arrows (under the lines in the “I”s and “T”s) pointing to it.

Happy scowled. “Bruh. That is so not sigma.”

OSWALD frowned disapprovingly, marched toward the door, and strode right through it (OSWALD, as you may remember, is a poltergeist). Happy kicked the door a few times, abandoning his philosophy entirely, and it didn’t budge.

He opened it by way of the doorknob. It wasn’t even locked.

As he opened the door, Happy was hit with a blast of hot, sticky air. In the middle of the cramped room floated (!) four jars—one looked exactly like the one which had been placed under Larry. They were giving off a golden light.

“Pinocchio eats the sugar but won’t take the medicine! Pinocchio eats the sugar but won’t take the medicine! Pinocchio eats the sugar but won’t take the medicine! Pinocchio eats the sugar but won’t take the medicine!” chanted a voice.

Happy recognized the voice instantly.

It is here that I shall reveal who is behind the cheek thefts. If you are reading ahead, I

suggest you go back, so as not to have so horrible a spoiler, but honestly, if you haven't figured it out by now, you're kind of a dunderhead. I mean, she's been at almost every crime scene. She acted really suspicious. She wasn't even in the first book! The only way you couldn't have figured it out was if you weren't paying proper attention, and Happy certainly hasn't been. But now you and Happy will get it all spelled out for you. You will find out who is behind the cheek thefts.

The voice belonged to Looney Mooney.

Chapter Seven

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAA” screamed Happy in terror. Looney Mooney’s eyes were emitting a similar golden light—in fact, it was positively *beaming* out of her eyes. She looked at him, and she looked like a zombie. It was so horrible that Happy had to scream.

The screaming broke Looney Mooney’s concentration. She stopped chanting “Pinocchio eats the sugar but won’t take the medicine” and the light stopped streaming from her eyes. The jars fell from the floor, and she—with her bad sitting posture—seemed to sag, just a little bit.

“Happy! What are you doing here?” she shrieked, taking the jars from the ground and holding them close to her chest.

“Whatcha doin’ here, bruh?” said Happy.

“NOTHING!” said Looney Mooney, too quickly.

“What are those in the jars?” asked Happy.

“Cheeks—er—cherries!”

“Those don’t look a lot like cherries,” observed Happy.

“They’re *skinned* cherries,” explained Looney Mooney, thinking quickly.

“That’s so fire, bruh!” said Happy. “Can I have some?”

“No.”

“Bruh. That is so not sigma. Please?”

“They’re all for me.”

“Go on and eat one, then! See if I care!”

“That,” stated Looney Mooney, “would be impolite.”

“I don’t care—” started Happy, but he was interrupted by a loud bang. The door to Looney Mooney’s broom closet had opened once again.

“How’sss it going?” hissed Professor Snake. “Four cheekretsss ssshould do it, correct?”

“Professor!” cried Happy. “What’s a *cheekretsss*?”

“Exsssellent Parsssel tongue, my boy,” said Professor Snake. “I’d give you a cookie if you were an ImPerfect. You too, Looney Mooney. You truly dessserve one. Opening a sssameber in a broom clossset iss truly a challenge, not to mention the ssstealing of the cheeksss themssselvess.”

“Yeah, you’re *welcome*,” said Looney Mooney bitterly.

“What’s a *sssameber*?” asked Happy. “And what do you mean, stealing the cheeks?”

“I stole the cheeks. *Glekk!*” Looney Mooney spoke again. “It was to create these cheekrets. Once the cheeks have been sealed inside the jars for a few hours with a special brine—*Porok!*—they become *cheekrets*. To properly mature for the summoning ritual, the cheekrets must be prepared in a *sameber*, a golden diamond shape (you need four cheekrets) in a space mostly devoid of people other than yourself.”

“OK,” said Happy.

“Yesss, yesss, continue, Looney Mooney. Get to the part about me,” said Professor Snake impatiently.

“It was Professor Snake who commissioned me to do this. *Trikk!*” said Looney Mooney. “I have the right materials—a fake sword I 3D-printed at home, to get at the cheeks—and I had the right connections to both you and Rumbledoor to frame you.”

“So it was all part of your plan! Bruh, that is so not sigma. Surely, you could have spared me?”

“Don’t call me Ssshirley!” said Professor Snake loudly. Looney Mooney, however, stayed silent—Happy had trained her well.

“Now, the reason why we must make cheekrets? To perform an ancient summoning ritual to whip students into shape. Yes, Happy, I’ve only been *pretending* to like slang all along. *Porok!* In fact, I hate it! And Professor Snake and I both agree that what the school needs most is more discipline. So we’re bringing from a wild and dangerous country somewhere near the Atlantic Ocean a very rare and very dangerous snake, Professor Snake’s ancestor. A *seeyalaytur. Trikk!!*”

“WAIT A—” Happy (and loyal readers) vaguely remembered Nor saying something about a *seeyalaytur* a week or two ago. “Does Nor know about this?”

“No, no,” said Looney Mooney. “He was to be our next victim should the operation fail.”

“But it won’t, yesss, Misss Mooney?” Professor Snake commanded. “Right, right,” said Looney Mooney dismissively, then continued with the summoning ritual: “Pinocchio eats the sugar but won’t take the medicine. Pinocchio eats the sugar but won’t

take the medicine. Pinocchio eats the sugar but won't take the medicine."

A loud hissing began to fill the room. Happy knew he had to do something, anything, as a giant form made of light burst forth from the cheekrets. It looked suspiciously, horrifyingly like a snake.

Happy, in desperation, grabbed one of the cheekrets and threw it against the wall. It did not break—the jar was made of borosilicate, which everyone knows is the least predisposed to break—but what it did break was the sameber, and Looney Mooney's dreams.

And the ground, which split between them. A loud rumble sounded.

What are you up to, Rotter?!

Chapter Eight

“Well,” said Happy, “I’ll miss you, Nor. And Codra. And you too, Herminey. I guess.”

A large black van was standing outside of the gates of Warthogs. Happy had always wanted to find a way out, but not like this.

The driver (who was in a long black cloak) honked the horn of the car loudly, and Happy jumped.

After the sameber had been broken, Mr. Flinch and the others’ cheeks had been restored. Mrs. Solace was “eternally grateful” towards Happy, and her praise made him glow with happiness. Herminey thanked him grudgingly, which was about the best you could hope for (it was Herminey, after all), and Codra ROTFLed when he heard the story in full.

Rumbledoor, however, was not so amused, and he called Kathy Cook and Happy to him. Apparently, Ronald and Donald had snitched on Kathy getting the ingredients from Hairy Otter, which meant she got expelled, and sent to the same classroom Kendal had: The Classroom at the End of the Hall. Happy heard her screams ringing in his ears as he had

tried to complete his night shift after the ordeal.

Happy Rotter, the rumbles rumbled. You have insolently stolen the cheeks of four different students, causing the school to lose an inordinate amount of... well... you know what I mean.

Happy quaked. "I'm sellin'," he muttered.

You have hereby been sentenced to ONE YEAR at the institution known as Prazkaban. I hear it's very pleasant there; the headmaster and I are very good friends. You are to leave tomorrow. Pack your bags, Rotter and I'll see you next year. Now go. Leave! Complete your night shift! Get!

Happy was trembling like mad. How could he think about mining at a time like this?

But he did, and morning came, and so did the black car, and it was time for Happy to go.

He waved his last goodbyes and shed a single tear as he opened the car door. "I'll teach you more slang lessons when I get back!"

"6-7!" called Codra back, then raced to his work again. Even Hairy Otter was there, but no one noticed him.

The car drove away loudly, and so began Happy's all-too-brief stay at Prazkaban.

THE END

Warthogs School Supplies List

HAPPY ROTTER YEAR 2

A pair of mining overalls (make sure they are not too fancy)

A zero-tolerance policy for slang

Several can of corned beef (are for them emergency)

Extra lard (in case the cook has run out)

cast of characters

Happy Rotter: A small, unpleasant eleven-year-old boy, Happy is the protagonist of the series. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Harry

Herminey: Herminey is the angry ImPerfect which Happy and Nor continually avoid, as she whips them whenever they use slang. She has blond hair. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Hermione

Morris Weasel: Happy's best friend, Morris ("Nor") Weasel is a red-haired twelve-year-old boy who loves using slang as well as inventing ridiculous words. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Ron

Codra Foulmouth: Rumbledoor's henchperson, whom Happy once knew only as Aggressive Silver due to his shiny hair. He actually has a soft spot for slang due to his traumatic childhood (his parents never let him on electronics!) Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Malfoy

Looney Mooney: Looney Mooney isn't quite right in the head; her first language was Chiligrity and sometimes interjections from it appear in her dialogue. She has a fondness for slang as well. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Luna

Kathy Cook: Kathy Cook is the replacement for Kendal Cook, who was fired the day before the book begins. She likes talking a lot. She also likes slang. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: None

Ronald: Twins with Donald, Ronald enjoys hamburgers and lying to stupid people. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: None

Donald: Twins with Ronald, Donald enjoys hamburgers and lying to stupid people. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: None

Ginger Weasel: Sister to Nor, red-haired ten-year-old Ginny is an impressionable child who takes on the speech patterns of the characters in the book she reads. This summer, Mrs. Weasel's had her on Shakespeare. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Ginny

Rumbledoor: The menacing headmaster of Warthogs, Rumbledoor is a door that rumbles. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Dumbledore

Professor Snake: The *ssstrict sssupervissor* (as he would say) of the ivy mines, Professor Snake—a literal green snake—believes he speaks in Parseltongue, but is actually just speaking English with elongated 'sss' sounds. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Snape

Professor McGowan: The other teacher at Warthogs, Professor McGowan is a small goose who teaches insolent pupils how to work their jobs. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Professor McGonagall

Hairy Otter: The beloved mascot of Warthogs, Hairy Otter enjoys catching fish in the dirty river. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: None

OSWALD the LUCKY RABBIT: Permitted to appear in the series due to his being in the public domain, OSWALD is Warthogs' resident poltergeist. But is he just there to cause trouble, or something more? Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Peeves

Mrs. Solace: Mrs. Solace is the school custodian, a black cat who can talk. In her spare time, she enjoys playing with her pet human, Mr. Flinch. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Mrs. Norris

Mr. Flinch: Mr. Flinch is Mrs. Solace's pet human. He is dumb in both senses of the word. Parallel in *Harry Potter*: Filch

Now, have a sneak peek at book three in this enchanting series, *Happy Rotter and the Isoner of Prazkaban*, publishing soon...

Chapter One

As the big black car drove away from Warthogs' menacing gates, Happy Rotter, a small, unpleasant eleven-year-old boy with black hair and glasses, looked out the window forlornly.

"*sighie!*" he said, in honor of Looney Mooney. Looney Mooney was his crazy classmate (well, *schoolmate*—there were no classes at Warthogs) who had recently been involved in a crazy summoning ritual involving the stolen cheeks of several members of Warthogs faculty and student body. Happy had helped it fail, but nevertheless, Looney Mooney and Professor Snake (the supervisor of the ivy mines and Looney Mooney's colleague in the debacle) had managed to frame Happy for the heinous crimes they had committed, which had gotten Happy sent to Prazkaban. Happy had no inkling of what Prazkaban might be, except that it was a school, and it was far away, and this big black car was on its way to it.

“Yo, bruh, where can ya hook me up with the rizzlers?” said Happy to test the driver. An entire *hour* of driving, and they had said nothing.

“Be patient, hon,” came a female voice. “We’re almost there.”

“Thanks,” mumbled Happy unintelligibly.

“What was that, hon?”

“THANKS!” bellowed Happy.

“No need to be so loud, hon.”

Happy nodded and shut his trap. The woman was being extraordinarily nice to him—or at least nicer than anyone had been to him in an entire month. You see, for the past month or so, Happy had attended a school called Warthogs, which was horrible, to say the least. There, you didn’t work—you performed tasks of menial labor for the school’s funds (ever-dwindling, never ceasing to run out). Happy had been forced to mine ivy with his best friend Nor Weasel and not-so-best and not-so-friend Herminey until he had been temporarily expelled. He hoped this would not be the case at this school, but expected the opposite.

“Almost there, hon,” came the driver’s voice again. “Just a few more miles.”

How many miles has it been so far? thought Happy crankily. He asked indirectly by saying, “Like, six or seven?” He then 6-7ed.

All the driver did was chuckle. She didn’t say, “I’ll whip you into shape!” She didn’t say, “WHAT WAS THAT?!” And most importantly—

Happy gasped. “*gaspie!* Surely it’s nice at Prazkaban.”

“You have nothing to be afraid of, hon,” came the reply. Happy gave a relieved grin.

The rest of the car ride passed in silence while the engine rumbled merrily away. It seemed like no time at all before the driver announced:

“We’re here, hon. Home sweet home.”

There was a loud, menacing scraping noise that Happy could feel penetrate even to his bones. He gulped. “*gulpie!*”

“You can get out now, hon,” said the driver a bit forcefully after Happy had said “*gulpie!*” about fifty more times.

As he opened the car door, he was met with several stone steps, upon which a large man with excessive burl stood. He had a long, thin silver ponytail and a severe expression, his arms crossed in front of him.

“Yo,” said Happy.

“Do you know who I am, boy?” said the man, voice rumbling like thunder.

“No,” said Happy truthfully.

“I am the headmaster of this delightful institution, Delicious Foulmouth. Rumbledoor’s told me you’ve met my delinquent of a son, Codra?”

Thank you for reading *Happy Rotter and the Sameber of Cheekrets*, a parody of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by JK Rowling. If you enjoyed this book, please pass it on to one of your friends, preferably someone in a position of power so they can spread the seed. Spread the seed, dear reader, spread the seed.

—The Mysterious CEO of Black Cat Press