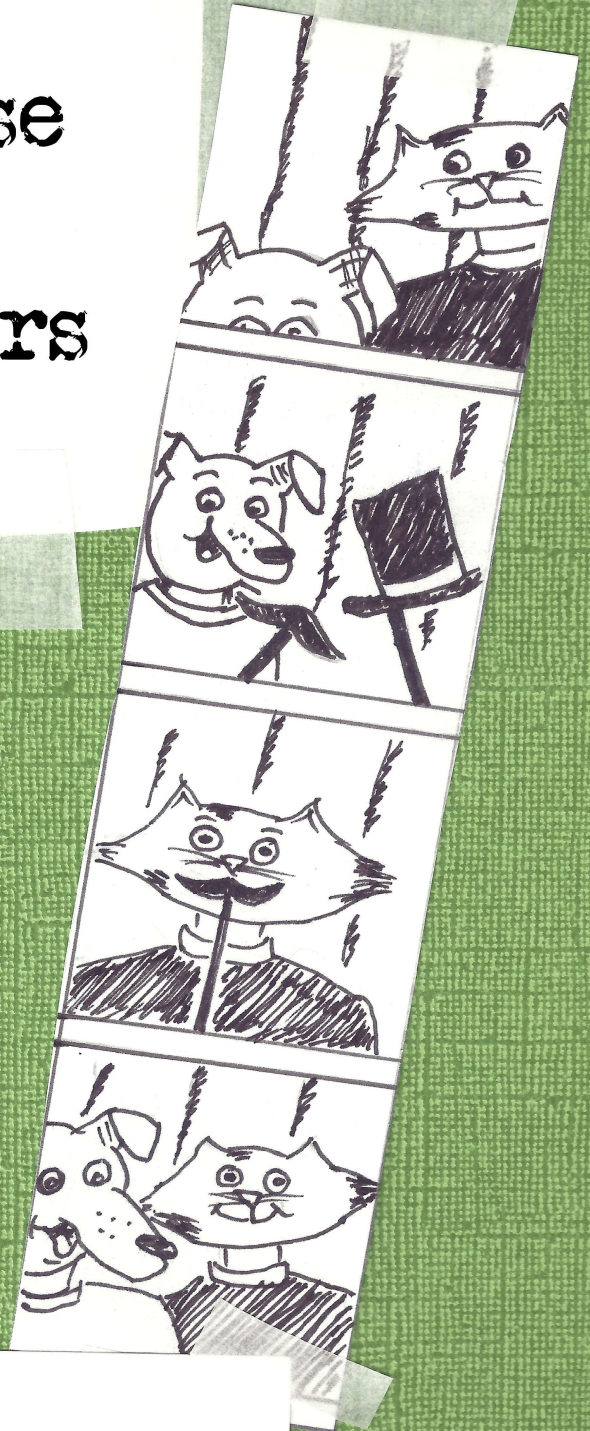


Fetlock Bones
&
The Curious Case
Of The
Budgie Smugglers



By
Trevor Ship

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Fetlock Bones
&
The Curious Case of The Budgie
Smugglers

By

Trevor Ship

Fetlock Bones And The Curious Case Of The Budgie Smugglers.

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Foreword.

Hello you!

This book is dedicated to my wonderful wife who has always had faith in me, even when I have not really had that much faith in myself. Forever and always the love of my life.

I would also like to thank my children, who have always given me an excuse to behave in a childlike manner. Something I intend to always do.

I am massively in the debt of a talented writer called David Court, who selflessly proofread and made some excellent suggestions about where I could improve this book. Thank you for your time and support.

Finally, thank you dear reader. I hope that you enjoy what I have writted here, and that some of it makes you laugh, or think about something slightly differently.

A wide open mind is always better than a wide open mouth.

Love, hugs and kisses

Trev.

(There is a spelling error in this book, if you are eagle eyed enough to spot it, please feel free to keep it to yourself.)

Four Words.

This is four words.

Forward.

Forward? I wouldn't say that. A bit bold maybe.

Eggstraordinary.

It was a day like any other in London Zoo and it had been busy with people coming to look at the animals looking back at them. It had been sunny - there were lots of visitors, lots of dropped ice creams, lots of crying children and lots of poo.

Lots and lots of poo, more poo than you can imagine, and who wants to imagine poo? Anyway, that's enough about the poo, if you want to know more about poo I am afraid that falls somewhat outside the story in this book.

Where was I? Oh yes, a day like any other in the zoo. Except in the aviary, which is where the birds live. Easy to confuse with an apiary, which is where bees live, not apes as you might imagine. You might find that your parents tell you about the birds and the bees at some point, which is all very confusing. Again, I am afraid that falls somewhat outside the story in this book.

What was different in the aviary is that some of the birds were missing. Theft of animals in zoos is a real problem, but when it comes to bird theft it is usually the big hawks and eagles that people want to steal.

No, what was missing was altogether smaller, more colourful and louder. Much, much louder. Budgies, or Budgerigars to give them their full name, the little Australian bird known for liking seed and head-butting things. Several of them were missing and on closer inspection so were a few parrots and cockatoos.

Quickly the keepers started to get worried. Who would want to steal these sorts of birds? Had they gone to the vets for tweetment? Had they flown south for the winter? It is long way to walk after all.

The head of the zoo rang the police, and then rang some of the other zoos in the country to see if anyone had any idea what happened. What had

happened was that all of the major zoos in Britain had lost some of their birds too.

Who was smuggling the budgies out of the zoos? It made no sense, who could figure this out? Why would anyone want that many birds? Had they quacked up? Maybe they were selling the budgies cheep?

The police were as baffled by all of this as the keepers, so who could work out what was going on? This mystery called for the genius dog detective Fetlock Bones, the only one who could crack such a case.

Crack, you see? An egg joke? Oh never mind



A cockatoo. I can't draw budgies you see?

Introductions.

Fetlock Bones was sat in his big faithful old chair in his apartment at 221b Butcher Street.

The chair smelled a bit, but then again so did he - so that was all good. He had received the call from the Yard about the bird thefts and was waiting for his faithful assistant, Dr Hobson.

Bones sat in his chair and pondered, looking thoughtfully out of the window, He liked to do that when he was expecting someone, it made him look clever when they came through the door. He really was a very clever dog indeed who had foiled some of the world's most dastardly criminals and was usually at home in time for tea.

As well as being clever, Bones was very vain. Very vain indeed. Which was why he was waiting in his chair looking out of the window, hoping to look impressive when Hobson came in. Hobson wasn't coming in though, where was she? That cat was always late and Bones was getting bored.

He looked around the room, and idly started to pick his nose. Which was, of course, when Hobson walked through the door.

"Ahh, Bones. Nice to see you" said Hobson, trying not to let on that she had seen Bones with his paw up his nostril.

Bones was so shocked he jumped up in the air and fell to the floor, looking to all of the world like a pile of fur and ears. He got up and brushed himself down dramatically, trying to look like he was awfully put out.

"Hobson, you startled me, I was just working on a theory that I have been considering for some time" said Bones, hoping that his assistant would leave it there.

"It looked to me like you were picking your nose." she smiled.

"To the lay person it would Hobson, it would indeed," said Bones, really hoping that would be an end to it. It wasn't.

"So then, what were you doing?"

"Sorry?"

"What were you doing, Bones?"

"Erm, well. I was -" Bones went quiet for a moment and looked around the room desperately. "- I was wondering if I could use my nostril to store things."

"It made a good home for your finger at least" laughed Hobson.

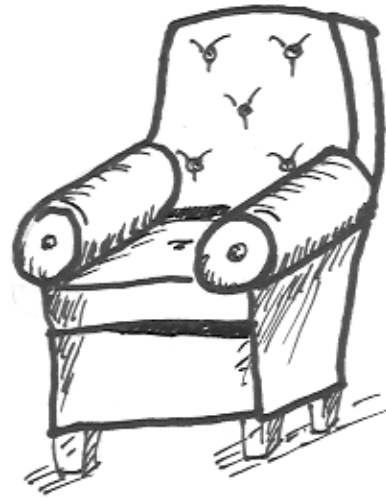
"Enough of this shilly shallying, we must leave!" shouted Bones, and with a swish of his coat he was gone.

"Shall I get your phone and keys for you Fetlock?" sighed Hobson, hurrying behind.

"If you would be so kind."

"You could shove those up your nose as well, if you like." huffed Hobson.

"I heard that!"



Eggscrutiating.

Bones and Hobson arrived at the zoo and once Hobson had paid for the taxi they made their way to the crime scene. As they walked through the gates they saw a big grey looking dog in a police uniform barking orders at the other scared looking police officers. His fur was grey and showed his age. (He would have said it showed his distinction, but people with grey hair always say that, it doesn't mean that it is true).

Bones walked up to him and shook his paw vigorously and they smiled at each other. The officer then saw Hobson and nodded curtly. Hobson knew this police dog well - He was a very good police officer but he didn't like cats. He was careful never to say so of course, but Hobson knew. She didn't like him very much either in all honesty.

"Bones, it's good to see you!" boomed the police dog loudly. He was clearly very used to shouting at people.

"Likewise LeStrange" said Bones, already disentangling his hand from the bone crunching hand shake and heading towards the lines of plastic tape which told everyone very clearly that there had been a crime and the police were here now, so everyone could jolly well calm down and go about their business.

No one had calmed down though, which annoyed LeStrange. He liked to turn up to crimes and for everyone to relax just a little bit, but that wasn't happening this time. This was because everyone knew that the police were utterly clueless. They had nothing to go on, as the zoo toilets had been closed for repair.

Inspector LeStrange was a well-respected police officer, who was quite severe and serious almost all of the time.

Bones walked around the aviary as all of the remaining birds had been moved to another area so they could look around freely. Hobson was pleased about that as well, for as a cat she found birds distracting. She may

have been a Doctor and one of the most highly trained agents that there has ever been, but deep down she was still a cat. If she saw a bird, she'd want to chase it.

Hobson took a deep breath in order to try and not think about chasing birds and then followed LeStrange and Bones into the cage. There was nothing out of the ordinary – it was simply a large cage with no birds in it.



"How many birds are missing?" Asked Bones to no one in particular, but LeStrange seemed to think that the question was aimed at him "19 budgies, 3 macaws and a cockatoo."

Hobson stroked her chin, "Why would anyone want that many birds?"

"Maybe they don't like their neighbours?" chuckled LeStrange.

"That is a possibility, or maybe there is an evil plan afoot" said Holmes.

"An evil plan?" yelped a passing police officer, who very quickly shuffled away under the withering glare of LeStrange.

"Yes!" continued Bones, "A plan, and an evil one to boot."

"Why do you think that it is an evil plan Bones?" asked Hobson as she looked at a long blue and yellow feather, one she brought up to her nose and immediately sneezed. With an allergy to feathers, this is one case that Hobson did not really want to be involved in.

"I worked out that it is an evil plan very simply, Hobson."

"And do you wish to share your workings out with the rest of the group?"

"Oh come on Hobson, you are an intelligent woman, think!"

"Erm, have you found some evidence that points to an evil plan?"

"No."

"Have the police received information that leads you to believe that it is part of an evil plan?"

"No."

"Good grief Bones, so what makes you think that it is an evil plan?"

"Have you ever known anyone steal this many birds for a reason that wasn't evil?"

Hobson sighed and visibly slumped her shoulders and realised it was obviously going to be one of those days. She decided to ignore Bones' meanderings and asked LeStrange if they had any pictures and information regarding the missing birds.

LeStrange looked up. "Yes, we have some photos. I will sort you out some copies in a moment. As for information, now that's a bit more sketchy..."

"Sketches are no good man, we need photos!" said Bones, proving that once again he wasn't really listening.

"As I said, information is a bit more ..erm.. vague. The problem is that all of the budgies appeared to be called Joey, apart from one" continued LeStrange while he sorted through some papers.

"What is that budgie called?" asked Hobson.

"Eric Bumblebottom the third" said LeStrange, blushing. He was a very old-fashioned dog, and he did not like using such words in front of a lady.

"So, am I to presume that there were two other Eric Bumblebottoms before this one?"

"No Doctor Hobson – and that's the odd part. No one remembers any budgies in this zoo that were not called Joey before this one."

"How odd" said Dr Hobson, and meant it.

"Indeed" agreed LeStrange.

Bones was now looking at a bowl of birdseed and sniffing it. He did not look at all pleased with what the smell told him, so he carefully replaced it. The three of them looked around the aviary for any clues as to what may have happened and why anyone would want that many annoyingly chirpy birds.

All three of them heard a shout and looked up. It was a local newspaper reporter who had somehow managed to get into the zoo through the police barricades. Several officers went to grab the reporter, but she ducked quickly and skilfully and then made it all of the way into the aviary, LeStrange was just about to grab her roughly by her collar when Bones stopped him. Bones seemed to be intrigued by this young reporter.

"Who are you, and how did you find out about this case?" snapped Bones, somewhat more angrily than he had really meant to.

The reporter passed him a card, without saying a word that simply said:

"Lavinia LaMont: Reporter for The Dogs Breakfast News"

"I read the Tweets" she said.

Fetlock looked the young pup up and down. She seemed very sure of herself and confident for one so young. She was brushing her hair out of her face and Bones realised that he was staring and he should probably say something.

"Err..." he said, less eloquently than he had intended. At this point Bones absent-mindedly placed the card in his pocket or rather he had *meant* to. What actually happened was that he let go of it and a gust of wind caught it and danced it across the aviary. It finally landed some moments later in a small area of mud, mere moments before one of the officers stood on it pushing it down into the soft brown earth, never to be seen again.

Hobson sighed. As usual she felt it was up to her to move the investigation along.

"Who are you and how did you get in?" she almost shouted, causing the reporter to look at her – now somewhat shocked and certainly slightly less confident - which was exactly the result that Hobson had hoped for.

"I am Lavinia LaMont, and I am a reporter" she answered, trying to look braver than she actually felt.

Hobson bristled, and brushed a whisker with a thoughtful paw. "Well that answers the first part of my question, how did you get in?"

"I, er, well..."

She stopped when she saw a red faced police dog running towards them and shouting.

"I am sorry" panted the police dog. After a few moments to catch his breath he continued "She lied to me, she said that she was related to you Mr

Bones!"

Fetlock spun round, "Good grief, no one in my family is that beautiful" he said, and from the chilly glare he got from Hobson he immediately wished that he hadn't. "I mean, erm." Bones paused for a moment in a vain attempt to gather his thoughts and to give what he was about to say some weight.

In that moment the young reporter stood taller as she had managed to distract one of the greatest living minds in the country. She smiled slightly - her job was going to be easier now that she knew that.

"Let that be an end to it" he said, realising as soon as the words left his mouth that it made no sense. He'd thought that if he'd carried it off with enough conviction he might be able to brush it off.

Hobson wasn't going to let it go and for some reason she was even angrier now than she was before.

"What are you blithering about you canine buffoon?" she yelped at Bones, but he just looked at her with a confused expression. He had absolutely no idea why she was so upset - It was no secret that although he was incredibly intelligent he did not really understand people. Particularly female people. He shrugged and turned away in an attempt to look like he was thinking about something else.

LeStrange seemed to be enjoying the proceedings immensely. In as much respect as he had for Bones and all of the cases that he had helped the police crack, he still always felt a little jealous of Fetlock. He felt a little less jealous when he saw that even someone like Fetlock could act like a complete idiot at times, just like the rest of us. He was trying very hard not to smile – made easier by the fact that as a police officer he had spent years not smiling and had almost forgotten how to do it.

Hobson looked around in disbelief and shook her head and walked out of the aviary in a way that made it very plain that she wanted to be left alone. Even Bones picked up on that this time.

"I am sorry if I upset Doctor Hobson" lied Lavinia, finding it much harder than LeStrange to not smile.

"I am sure that you are, but you must leave this area. It is a crime scene and we need to check for the smallest detail" said Bones, still not looking round. He found that he could talk to her more easily when he couldn't see her face.

"If you are sure that's what you want, Mr Bones."

As she turned to leave, she paused briefly and looked at Bones and seemed to sigh a little before continuing "I may have some information that will help you find the perpetrator, that's all."

LeStrange spoke making the reporter jump - he hadn't said anything to her so far and she had almost forgotten that he was there. When his voiced boomed out like a police siren she could no longer ignore him.

"If you, young lady...". He said young lady in such a way that made Lavinia cringe – she found it patronising and it reminded her of her father. If LeStrange meant to do that, he didn't seem to react and carried on as she shuddered slightly.

"If you know of any information relating to this case, it is your *duty* to tell the police."

"I am aware of that but as a reporter it is my duty to protect my sources." She stopped and looked straight at Fetlock, "If you want to know more, you have my number. Good evening gentlemen."

She swept out, leaving LeStrange and Bones looking confused and a little embarrassed.

"I have to protect my sauces too - I have to keep my ketchup in a locked drawer at the station" said LeStrange.

What's that smell?

Bones and Doctor Hobson were sat in a line of uncomfortable looking plastic chairs, not quite next to each other. Bones looked up, his big, sad brown dog eyes had no effect on his assistant. She was still quite obviously furious, and in no mood to talk about it.

Bones stood up suddenly and walked towards the desk at the front of the waiting room. Behind it sat a very stiff looking female cat. She eyed Bones carefully and then went back to typing meaningfully. She was trying to look nonchalant, as Bones and Hobson being there was quite honestly the most exciting thing that had ever happened in this academic office. Ever. Even more exciting than that day when there had been a power cut.

Bones did not realise that and was slightly concerned that he was losing his touch.

"Excuse me." He said. Nothing.

"Excuse me."

Cough.

"Excuse me."

The receptionist looked up, "You are excused."

"What? No! What do you think that I have done?"

"Well, you are a dog, and you dogs are known for breaking wind."

At this Hobson spurted the tea that she was drinking out through her nose from laughing.

"Ow!" howled Hobson whilst laughing, making it sound quite confusing.

Bones and the receptionist looked at her and decided to carry on as if nothing had happened.

"I haven't broken wind!" said Bones, almost pleadingly.

"What, never?" She said, incredulously.

"Obviously I have sometimes..."

"Ow!" Shouted Hobson again. "That wasn't fair, I had only just stopped laughing from the last one!"

Bones was feeling very uncomfortable at this point and looked around desperately for something to distract the receptionist and Hobson.

"Look, let's start again" said Bones, trying to get the upper ground, and failing.

"Hobson!" hissed Bones at his assistant who was now lying on her side on the chairs convulsing with laughter, "At least *try* to stop laughing at me please."

Hobson looked up with tears in her eyes. Even trying to wipe them away simply made her snigger more. Hobson had never considered herself as someone who sniggered, chuckle maybe, guffaw even but not a sniggerer. It seemed that she had learnt something today after all. She was sniggering, quite a lot. She held a paw across her stomach and waved her other paw at Bones to let him know that she was trying to stop laughing, but she clearly wasn't trying very hard.

Bones sighed - this was clearly going to be a difficult case. Just as Bones was about to give up, the intercom on the receptionists desk lit up green, it was one of the most welcome sights that Fetlock had ever seen as it gave him a chance to move on from his embarrassment, The receptionist leant forward and pushed the button next to the light and spoke into a little microphone.

"Yes Miss Anthrope?"

"Miss Anthrope?" gasped Hobson, looking like she might actually pass out from laughter.

"Hobson!" Hissed Bones again.

"Sorry. *sniffle* I'm sorry, Fetlock. *sniffle*"

Bones looked a bit happier after his assistants apology but he was not at all comfortable with the way that today was going. He wanted to go back to bed and sleep, waking up only when people started treating him with the respect that he felt that he deserved. He straightened his hat which was an action that caused one last peal of laughter from Hobson who immediately apologised again.

"You might look more sorry if you weren't crying from laughing."

"You can go in, Mr Bones." lilted the receptionist. When I say lilted I mean that she said it in almost a sing-song way, not that she was drinking a tropical fruit crush at the time. Just so we're clear on that.

Hobson and Bones had briefly forgotten why they were there as they thanked the receptionist and then went to walk into the office. As Bones passed her, the receptionist briefly touched his hand and said that she was really pleased to meet him. Bones did not know what to say after her embarrassing him. He tried to smile at her, but it looked more like he was in pain.

Hobson saw what had happened and as soon as Bones had gone she looked at the receptionist and smiled. She waited for Bones to go into the office and spoke quietly.

"Sorry, he's a brilliant dog - he just isn't very good around others." Sympathised Hobson.

"I noticed" replied the stiff little cat, sniffing a little.

Hobson shrugged. she seemed to spend a lot of time apologising for Bones, which was a fact that he knew nothing about.

They both walked into a medium sized office with large windows on one wall. The other three walls were covered in a mish-mash of bookcases and cabinets with trophies and certificates in them. Even with the large windows it was quite a dark room, It felt a lot more like a cupboard, but at the front of the office there was a desk. It was a large desk, far too big for the room that it was in, it was very much designed to let people on the one side of the desk know that the person on the other side of it was very important indeed. Sadly this impression was undermined slightly by two things:

1 - The desk was mind-bogglingly messy, it looked like someone had been testing a bomb using pencils, paper and empty cups of coffee.

2 - The person behind the desk, the person that was supposed to be important, had hair that looked like she had received an electric shock. A large one. That would explain why the hair was stuck up, it wouldn't explain the colour though, which was purple. Or the smell in the room, which wasn't any colour. What with it being a smell, and all.



Bones crinkled his face up. As a dog he had a very good sense of smell, and this particular one was particularly strong, it was almost overpowering to him. It made his eyes water. He looked to Hobson who was also clearly struggling. She realised what the problem was instantly and she started to talk to the person behind the desk. Bones nodded to her in thanks.

"Hello, thank you for seeing us. I am Doctor Hobson, and this is..."

"I know who you are" said the purple haired cat behind the desk, blankly.

"Okay. Well thank you for seeing us at such short notice. I am sure that you are a very busy person" lied Hobson. (Working with Bones she had learnt how to flatter people who believe that they are important).

Sometimes the easiest people to get to do what you what you want are people just like that, the trick is that you just have to let them think that *they* thought of it, not you.

"I am, indeed, very busy."

"Could we open a window please?" coughed Bones "It is a bit..."

"Overpowering isn't it?"

"A little" winced Bones.

"Do you know what the smell is?" asked the cat behind the desk, almost like she wasn't really talking to them. She spoke to them in the same way that you talk to your games console when it doesn't do what you think that it should. Yes, we *all* know that you do that.

"No" barked Bones,

"The great Bones cannot discern the smell eh? Not so clever now are you?"

She looked triumphant, in a way that neither Bones or Hobson understood.

"No, I do not know what the smell is, and more importantly why it is...erm..."

"Important?" added Hobson.

"Yes, that will do, important" nodded Bones.

"It *is* important" said the cat.

There was a pause for what seemed like a very long time. The silence was deafening as Hobson and Bones looked at each other.

"Okay I give in, why is it important?" shouted Bones.

"Why is *what* important?"

"The smell."

"What smell?"

"Aaaaargh!" complained Bones, who was feeling a little bit irritated and tetchy.

"The smell in this office?" Added Hobson.

The cat behind the desk shrugged at her.

"The smell that you were just talking about?"

"You are the ones talking about a smell not me."

"Right, okay. Let's forget the smell for a moment" said Hobson, trying a different tack.

"I wish I could forget it" coughed Bones.

"I *have* forgotten it" said the cat behind the desk matter-of-factly.

Hobson and Bones both seethed angrily.

Hobson took a deep breath with the intention of carrying on the introduction, but sadly this meant taking in a deep breath of the smell. Hobson started to cough. Loudly.

The smell in the room was worse than the smell of a teenagers bedroom. It was worse than the smell of old wellies. Amazingly it was *even* worse even than the smell of a jar of Marmite. (I accept that some of you might like the smell of Marmite, but you are wrong. Sorry to tell you like this, but you are. There are voluntary organisations to help you come to terms with this and move on to lead a full and almost normal life.)

Bones went to see if Hobson was alright. Once he was happy that she was as well as could be expected under the aroma, Bones immediately went over to one of the windows and attempted to open the catch. The window frames had been painted over and had clearly not been opened in a very long time.

"Oh, they do not open" said the cat behind the desk. The cat had to speak loudly to be heard over the worrying sound of Hobson retching.

"They will in a moment, even if I have to throw something through one of them" snarled Bones.

The cat looked at Bones seriously after he said that, and picked up one of her trophies that was on a bookcase near him for safekeeping. She stopped for a moment and looked again at Bones like she was wondering if he had meant it, and then rudely pushed him back to get another trophy from lower on another bookcase.

Bones tutted at the cat and went back to the catch on the window. After pushing it for some time there was a crack of paint that echoed around the office like someone slamming a door when they are having a bit of a strop, Bones grunted and the window creaked reluctantly open. It opened in a way

that looked like it had been so long since it had been asked to open that it had forgotten how to.

Bones pushed his nose out and gasped desperately. Once he had caught his breath he went over to Hobson and after putting his arm around her he took her towards the window and for the second time in just this chapter Hobson had tears in her eyes. She breathed slowly - the relief on her face was very clear to see.

While this was going on the purple haired cat had carried on doing whatever it was that she was doing, almost as if they were not there.

"As my colleague started to say, we are Doctor Hobson and Fetlock Bones and thank you very much for seeing us at such short notice" said Bones. At this stage the purple haired cat started to speak but Bones continued to talk over her.

"As you will come to see I do not like being interrupted, so I am just going to keep talking so you can understand why we are here. There have been thefts of song birds from zoos and aviaries all over the country and as you are the leading authority on such matters we hoped that you may be able to help us try and solve this fiendish crime."

At this point Bones stopped for a breath and forgot that he had walked back into the room. The smell hit the back of his throat like someone karate chopping a plank of wood and he started to cough. Hobson was feeling better so she carried on from where Bones had left off and motioned Bones to go back to the window.

"The sorts of birds that have been stolen are parrots, canaries but mostly budgies. Why would anyone steal budgies? Are they rare in some countries and someone is smuggling budgies overseas?" pondered Hobson, out loud.

The purple haired cat began to speak.

"I am indeed Britain's most renowned ornithologist and I do indeed specialise in song birds. Lovely, lovely song birds. My Name is Professor

Joan Anthrope, you may call me Professor, Doctor."

"Professor Doctor? What kind of made up title is that?" interjected Bones from near the safety of the window. He was not making that mistake again.

"Not Professor Doctor, I was saying that the Doctor may call me Professor!"

"Oh, right, I see. Sorry"

Bones felt that he was losing the will to continue this conversation about now. He wanted to be at home in his big leather chair reading a book and drinking tea. Actually, if he was honest with himself he would be happier being almost anywhere else rather than here. Not only was the smell was giving him a blinding headache, but his throat was now sore from coughing. He would have asked for a glass of water but was worried that this would just complicate matters.

"Thank you Professor. Have you any thoughts as to why anyone would to steal these sorts of birds?" asked Hobson. She wanted to leave too now but was always the professional and wanted to get the information that they had come for.

"No."

An answer that gave absolutely no information at all, Hobson wanted to throttle the Professor, but was not absolutely convinced that there was not something wrong with her, so she tried to remain polite. (As hard as that was whilst also trying not to be sick due to the stench filling her nostrils). It was so strong Hobson was starting to believe that she could smell it through her ears.

"How many birds have been stolen?" asked the Professor suddenly.

"It is difficult to be sure, but it is well over a thousand if you add up all the ones stolen over the country" answered Bones, hanging onto the window in

the same way that a child who couldn't swim hangs onto a float in a swimming lesson.

"That is a lot." The Professor then was quiet for a while and seemed to forget that they were even there. Bones and Hobson waited for what they considered a polite amount of time. Bones then looked at his watch and then nodded towards the Professor.

"So, any thoughts about why anyone would want that many songbirds Professor?" asked Hobson, not really expecting an answer that made any sort of sense. Good job really.

"No."

Bones shouted in anguish and looked pointedly out of the window.

"Thank you for your help, Professor." he said as he started to leave the office. "Not that you were any" he mumbled under his breath.

Bones and Hobson were just about to leave when the Professor started to talk again. They missed the first few words she said but they did not want to stop her and have to go through all of that again.

"...And there is a possibility I suppose why someone would want that many songbirds, I read an article about the theory of it recently."

The Professor started digging through a teetering pile of books that looked like someone had been really bad at playing Jenga and yet somehow managed to pull a book out of the middle. The pile wobbled frantically but did not fall over.

"Tasty, tasty songbirds" she muttered to herself quietly. Bones and Hobson looked at each other in shock.

"I'm sorry. Did you just say tasty songbirds?" enquired Bones.

"What? Sorry, no. I said lovely, lovely songbirds."

"I do not think that you did." stated Bones, and he was right. You can tell that, as you can go back up a few lines and read it, which was something that Bones could not do. You are lucky, aren't you? Try it now, I will wait for you to get back.

Back? Good, shall we get on with the rest of the story?

"I definitely did *not* say tasty" said the Professor, who was now looking very uncomfortable. She then found the article that she was looking for.

"Here it is - It is a piece about using birds song as a weapon. Written by the great scientist, Professor Alfie Gray. He's an elephant you know? I suppose that his huge ears help him with this sort of work I suppose" mumbled the Professor.

"A weapon?" squeaked Bones, "I know when Hobson sings it makes me want to leave the room, but that does not make it a weapon!"

Hobson scowled at Bones – something he knew without even turning around.

"Not that sort of weapon, Here have a look."

She passed the book to Bones who looked it over briefly and possibly even understood some of it.

"Could you explain it to me please, as I am not an Ornithologist."

"Hmm, okay. It goes like this. If you could get lots of different songbirds together and massively amplified the sounds it would be enough to shatter glass, break electronics and stun any people nearby" said the Professor.

"Good grief" said Bones.

"You would only need one recorded bird song layered over other copies of the same one surely?" asked Hobson.

"According to this theory that would not work, you would need the sound of lots of different birds at the same time, in order to make all of the different harmonics that you would need. It would have to be a very loud and rich sound."

"And now we are again talking about Bones breaking wind" whispered Hobson to herself.

Bones and Hobson thanked the Professor and left. As they walked past the receptionist, Hobson stopped and looked at her.

"Why did you not warn us about the smell in there?"

The receptionist looked up and smiled a cold and pointless smile. Like someone had painted a smile on a mirror.

"I forgot, I am sorry. I never go in there you see?"

"Why?"

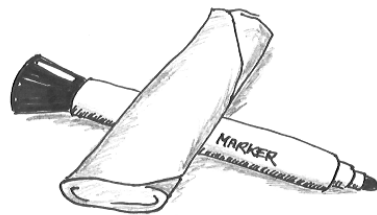
"The smell."

Hobson shook her head and followed Bones through the door.

Looking for a lead.

Our dynamic crime-fighting duo are back at Bones' apartment, located at 221b Butcher Street. After a hard day Bones decided to treat them to a Chinese takeaway. Hobson was tucking noisily into the prawn toast whilst Bones drank some tea and pondered what they had learnt today. Tea helped him to think - he is very British in so many ways.

What had they learnt? Bones picked up a spring roll and walked towards the whiteboard that he kept to write his thoughts on and tried to get them into some sort of order. Best to start at the beginning. He moved to write on the board, pausing only for a moment after trying to write using his spring roll. In order to stop that happening again he ate it. He then had a brief panic that he had actually eaten the marker, but he hadn't so that was alright.



As he scribbled everything that they had learned today, Hobson carried on munching the Chinese banquet on the table in front of her. She loved Chinese food, and she was very appreciative of it after such a trying day. She only stopped now and then when Bones' marker squeaked as he was writing, the noise going right through her. Like nails being dragged down a blackboard or one of your parents favourite singers.

When Bones had finished he stepped back and looked it over.

"Anything that you can think that I have missed, Doctor?"

Hobson quickly read everything on there and shook her head. It is rude to talk with your mouth full - and her mouth was currently very full of beef in a black bean sauce. You do not talk with your mouth full, do you? Try not to, no one wants to see your big flapping mouth full of half chewed food, do they? I am sure that no one reading this would do that sort of thing - you are all too nice.

"You think that it is all there?"

Hobson gave him an enthusiastic thumbs up, inadvertently giving a spring roll up at the same time.

"Good. Good" mused Bones to himself, he was pleased that he had made it up to his assistant - he did not like the feeling that she was angry with him. He could handle the rest of the world being annoyed with him - as it frequently seemed like it was - but not the good Doctor. He needed her to be there with him and on his side.

He sat back down and started to eat. He could relax a little now that he had got things into some sort of order and perspective. It was not going to solve this seemingly intractable crime but it at least made some sort of sense now.

"I think that the Professor has something to hide, if you ask me" said Bones loudly.

"Look, I understand that you did not like her - I thought that she was horrible too, but that doesn't make her a criminal mastermind does it?" replied Hobson, waving a spare rib for emphasis as she spoke.

"Hmm."

"If everyone that you did not like was a criminal, all of the prisons would be full."

Bones laughed and rubbed the fur under his chin thoughtfully.

"She seemed very odd about birds though."

"She is a cat, and a cat in a job where all she does is study birds. I am not surprised that she is a bit odd myself."

"What do you mean by that?" Said Bones.

"We cats are hunters by nature, and one of the things that we hunt is birds. It is just the way that we are."

"I suppose. It does not seem to bother you though, does it?"

"Yes, of course it does. I have the sense to fight it and I control myself, but when I see a flappy bird my first reaction is to catch it. In the same way that when you see a horrible flowery shirt in a shop, you have to buy it."

Bones looked down at his shirt. He was about to complain about what she had said about his taste in shirts, but realised that it was probably a little over the top.

"Birds nest soup, Hobson?"

"Very funny Bones. Very funny."

They ate silently for a few minutes, both lost in thought.

RING!

Both of them jumped out of their chairs.

RING!

Hobson got up and answered the phone and put it on speakerphone so that they could both hear it.

"Hello, Bones residence. How can I help?" said Hobson professionally.

"Good Evening Doctor, it is Inspector LeStrange from the Yard. The Bone Yard. I was just wondering if you had any leads?"

Hobson started sniggering loudly.

"What are you laughing at, Hobson?" enquired LeStrange.

"She is laughing because you are a dog and you asked if we had any leads. She does it every time - just ignore her" sighed Bones.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure" said LeStrange.

Hobson mumbled something through her laughter but they carried on.

"The short answer is no, we have no leads. We were just talking about the Professor of ornithology that we met today, she was very odd" said Bones.

"Mark my words, there is an evil plan at the end of all of this. Have you thought who might be behind it?" asked LeStrange.

Meeting Whiskers.

This seems as good a time as any to talk about Bones' and Hobson's most evil enemy. They have confronted him many times - and his plans are always diabolical - but they have always won through in the end. This has just made him angrier and more determined to succeed and beat his old adversaries.

He is an exceptionally intelligent cat, and is devious at planning crimes. The only problem that he has is that Bones is more intelligent. You know when you are at school and you are secretly pleased that you know an answer before anyone else, and just as you put your hand up the class swot shouts out the answer? That is how this evil villain feels about Fetlock Bones all of the time. He wants nothing more than to destroy Bones and Hobson, and he has a new fiendish plan to try.

His name is Whiskers McPloppy, and that is one of the main reasons that he is so angry. You would be angry if you were called that wouldn't you? Imagine the nicknames that you would be given at school if your surname was "McPloppy"!

Some of you may be thinking "Why doesn't he just change his name?" Well smarty-pants, he was so angry it never occurred to him. That and he isn't real and this is just a story.

See, no one likes a know-it-all, do they?

Whiskers is a very clever and angry Scottish cat, his minion was also a Scottish cat, but not a very clever one. No, not very clever at all. His name is Tabby Shanter and he makes absolutely no sense at all. Even Whiskers does not understand most of what he says, and he has known him since they were both kittens. Tabby is incredibly loyal to Whiskers though and he is the only cat that Whiskers trusts.

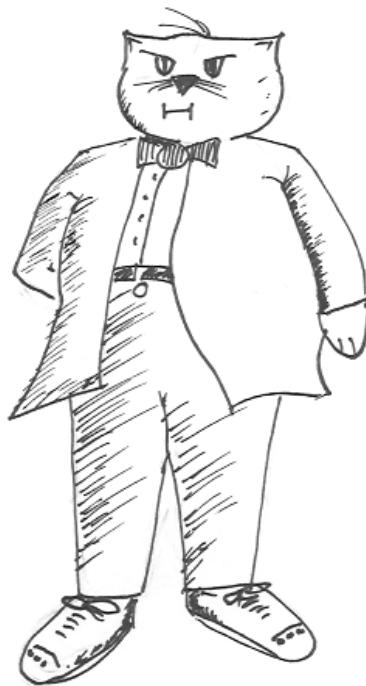
Whiskers has made a lot of money from his crimes and uses it to further his plans to destroy Bones and try to take over the world.

Why do villains always want to do that do you think? I suppose a story about a super villain who just wanted a nice cup of tea and a biscuit wouldn't be a very interesting book, would it?

I want tea and a biscuit now. Where was I? Oh yes, trying to take over the world. Not me. I don't want to take over the world, where would I put it? I have trouble running a bath, how could I run the world?

No, it's Whiskers that wants to take over the world, but not this time. This time his evil plan is about money. Lots and lots of money.

We will meet Whiskers properly later in the book, but I thought that it was about time to tell you about him. Now go on, shoo to the next bit, you're messing up this lovely chapter with your fingers.



Looking for Lavinia.

"Who might be behind it? No idea if I am honest. I was trying to get all of the facts together first. To try and make some sense of it all" said Bones to Inspector LeStrange over the phone.

"And did it? Make sense, I mean?" asked LeStrange.

"None at all. That is where my plan went rather awry I am afraid." pondered Bones, as he stroked his furry chin thoughtfully.

"What are you planning to do next? Have you considered asking the Professor if anyone else had been asking her about using songbirds for any purpose?"

Bones was rather embarrassed to admit that they hadn't – they'd been rather distracted at the time by the smell. Bones and LeStrange agreed that the inspector could get a police officer to go there tomorrow and ask some more questions.

"Do you have any officers who have lost their sense of smell?" asked Hobson through a mouthful of chicken sweet and sour.

"I am not sure to be honest Doctor, but I shall endeavour to find out. Good night, and enjoy your food, the both of you."

Fetlock said goodbye, but Hobson was dumbstruck that LeStrange had figured out that they were eating

"How did he know that we were eating?" she said, this time with a mouthful of rice.

"I have no idea Hobson, no idea at all!" said Bones shaking his head.

Bones was frustrated as he had no idea what to do next. He sat down heavily in his old thinking chair, pulled his legs up underneath himself and

pondered quietly. For a considerable time the only noise was Hobson hungrily finishing off the rest of the Chinese food.

"I know that face Bones. Let's think about this differently" said the Doctor as she cleared up the plates.

Bones pondered that for moment. How could he think about this differently? Then all of a sudden he jumped and went to his coat pocket.

"Argh!" he shouted loudly, causing Hobson to run in from the kitchen.

"What's up? Are you okay?"

"Yes, I am fine. I just took your advice and started to approach the problem from a different angle. I realised that we had met someone today who claimed to have information." answered Bones.

Hobson sighed.

"You mean that journalist?" she said, archly.

"I do mean that journalist. The only problem is that I cannot find her card. I seem to have lost it."

"What a shame" said Hobson, and almost meant it.

"How am I, err I mean we going to find out what she knows now?"

"I will search the internet for her, what was her name again?" asked Hobson as she moved across to the computer and opened a window. Opened a window on the computer, I do not mean that she opened a window with a computer. Do not try that – not unless you want a broken computer, a smashed window and an angry grown up.

"Lavinia Lamont" said Bones a little too quickly, causing Hobson to sigh before typing the name in.

"Nothing at all. Not one person" said the Doctor.

"Ahh, nothing at all?"

"Nothing. That's odd for a reporter, wouldn't you think?"

Bones nodded, deep in thought. It was indeed very odd.

"How about you search the website of the paper that she works for?" said Bones.

"Good plan, which one did she work for? Wasn't it the Dog's Breakfast News?"

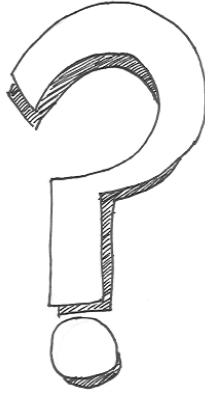
Bones nodded and Hobson typed away, quickly finding the newspapers website. It was the kind of website that instantly gave anyone looking at it a headache and cold sweats. Lots of bright colours and flashing banners, altogether quite nasty. She clicked on the link that said "Our reporters." There was no sign of Lavinia Lamont anywhere.

"She's not on there, Hobson?" said Bones, whilst looking out of the window.

"No she isn't, Bones. What could that mean?"

"It means that you were right about not liking her, and I was wrong. She is probably working for our culprit" said Bones, rubbing his hands together. This was not something that Bones wanted to find out, but at least he could be pleased that they had found something out. What to do next?

What to do indeed?



He's behind you!

Whiskers McPloppy was sat in his spinning chair. It had lots of buttons and controls on it, and the black leather creaked as he repositioned himself. He was a very large cat indeed, and moving was not something that he liked to do very much. He had other people to move things for him.

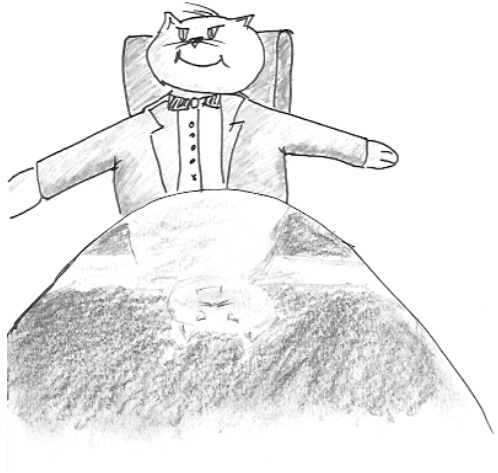
He can and does walk, he just chooses more often than not to stay still. He has been sat here smiling to himself for a while now. Everyone that works for him knows that the sort of smile he has right now is quite a good one, compared to some of his very very bad ones. He was smiling a sinister smile, like someone might do if they saw someone that they don't like fall over and drop their bag of crisps everywhere. Not a nice smile at all.

At this point Tabby Shanter came in and said something incomprehensible in a thick Scottish accent. No one ever seemed to have a clue what he said, but he was smiling as well so that had to be good news. Whiskers nodded to his sidekick, as it seemed the sensible thing to do. It certainly *seemed* to be because as soon as he did it Tabby shouted something else that sounded suspiciously like "Fragrant trousers!" and smiled to himself and went back in the direction that he had approached from.

Whiskers was slightly worried. The last time that Tabby had acted like that he had made a trap out of bits of bent paperclips and netting and had caught a dragonfly. Which he then ate. In front of everyone in the room. Loudly and messily.

The room that Whiskers was sat in was a huge room with banks and banks of computer screens and people in white coats walking around generally looking important and like they deserved to be paid the frankly huge amounts of money that they were being paid. This was Whiskers' control centre - this was where all of his evil plans were worked out. He thought of the plans and then with the help of the people in the white coats they made it a reality.

The lighting in here was quite dark and Whiskers chair was at the end of a large oval black table which looked like it was made out of a highly polished stone. You would not want to stub your toe on one of the legs, that much is for certain.



Tabby came back in and held the door open allowing a young female dog to walk through behind him.

"Ahh Lavinia, how wonderful to see you!" boomed Whiskers so loudly that Lavinia jumped a little.

"Good evening Mr McPloppy." She answered.

"So polite Lavinia, that is what I like about you. You so rarely see that in a young person these days."

Lavinia smiled, the same smile that had so caught Bones off balance. It did not have that effect on Whiskers, but that was always part of the plan. Whiskers knew the sort of dog that Bones was attracted to. He knew lots of things about Bones and it was all kept in a very thick, light brown file. Everyone else in the office was using computers but Whiskers preferred to use paper which was one of many things that he and Bones actually had in common. That was in the file too.

"Thank you Tabby, you may go" said Whiskers and waved in the general direction of Tabby, who waved back and shouted something that sounded a bit like "Macaroni and banana" and then wandered off.

"So Lavinia, please tell me how things went for you today."

Lavinia walked up towards Whiskers and sat at the next chair to him at the table.

"It went very well, I met Bones, Hobson and LeStrange and made contact with them all. Getting in was much easier than I expected, too. As you correctly said it was quite easy to fool the police officer into letting me in."

"Excellent. How did it go with Bones?"

"Okay I think, he barely said anything to me at all."

"Even more excellent."

"Really? I am afraid that I fail to see how." questioned Lavinia.

"You see, my dear, that Bones could not say much to you, that means that he was stunned by your beauty and I am afraid that his one weakness is pretty ladies. Well that and tea. Okay, his two weaknesses are tea and pretty ladies."

"Thank you Mr McPloppy." smiled Lavinia dangerously. (You will learn that some people can smile dangerously as you get older).

"But what good does that do us?"

"The good that it does us is that he will want to contact you, and we can feed him incorrect information and also find out what Bones and Hobson have learnt" said Whiskers.

"Ahh yes, Doctor Hobson did not seem to like me very much at all."

"This gets better and better" said Whiskers happily, laughing to himself and rubbing his hands together.

"What would you like me to do next?"

"Nothing for now. Wait for them to call you. If you hear nothing by tomorrow lunch time, give them a ring and see what you can find out."

"Excellent plan sir. Will that be all?" said Lavinia obsequiously.

Whiskers nodded and Lavinia thanked him for his time and left. Whiskers watched her leave. To be honest, he didn't trust her at all. She would happily sell him out to the highest bidder if she got the chance. This meant two things, firstly that he did not dare tell her of the details of the plan and secondly, that he really liked someone with those attributes.

Whiskers is not like you and I, is he?

Sleep of the just.

It was a new morning.

The sun broke into Fetlock's bedroom through a crack in the curtains, the light dancing around the room, finding places to stop and then moving on quickly when it realised that what it was lighting up was a mess.

In the middle of the room there was a bed; Well, at least something that resembled a bed. It was bed-shaped, but there was an odd shaped large lump on top of it. That odd shaped lump was snoring.

Loudly.

When Bones slept he didn't mess about, that was for sure. He would claim that he slept so heavily to allow his brain to process information subconsciously, but this simply wasn't true. He just was a heavy sleeper. He snored so loudly that he made himself jump, grumbled a bit and then rolled over and pulled the duvet back over his head.

He also was not a very tidy person and in his bedroom this was most obvious. Laundry littered the floor all of the way across. Some of it was clean, some most certainly wasn't. The only way to tell was for Bones to use his amazing sense of smell. Most people have a place for their dirty clothes and a wardrobe or chest of drawers for their clean clothes. Not Bones, he used the floor. Someday it looked like an explosion in a clothes factory, and today was definitely one of those days.

The clock on his bedside table said "10:43am", he had said that the absolute latest time that he and Hobson should get together at the zoo was 9.00am sharp. Hobson knew that meant at least ten o'clock, and that it meant going to his flat to wake him up. She had let herself in and made a cup of tea for Bones.

(As I said earlier Bones loves tea.)

She made herself a cup of coffee, or rather she was going to until she realised that the brown powder in the coffee jar was actually instant gravy. Which would make a very unpleasant cup of coffee, but not as bad as one you might get in a motorway service station. If you have never tasted bad coffee from a service station, you should consider yourself very lucky indeed.

She walked loudly into his bedroom, throwing open the curtains theatrically and shouting "Time to get up!", "Wakey wakey!" and "Oh good grief, get up you lazy twonk!"

Nothing. Apart from more snoring.

Hobson took a moment to look around the room, and immediately wished that she had not done so. She shuddered looking at the clothing on the floor and after a brief moment of panic where she realised that she was stood in a puddle of his pants, she started to try to wake him again.

Still nothing apart from some more protracted grumbling and snoring, sounding for all of the world like a vacuum cleaner that has accidentally sucked up Manchester.

She moved the cup of tea onto his bedside cabinet gently and then leant in to whisper in Bones' ear. Well, she assumed that it was his ear, it was about the right area of the bed. She wanted to be certain that she was not talking to his bottom as it might answer her.

"Bones. If you are not up in the next ten seconds I am going to get a bucket of cold water and throw it over you in your bed." she whispered.

Snore.

"Ten."

Snore. Snuffle.

"Nine."

Snore.

"Eight, I am about to start running the tap..."

Snore.

"Seven."

Snore. Grumble.

"Six. Right, I am going to use the biggest bucket that I can find."

Snore.

"Five."

Snore.

"Four. And I will be filming it and I will put it on the internet later."

Snore.

"Three"

Snore. Scratch.

"Two."

Snore, but this time there was some rolling over going on as well.

"One. Right that's it back in a moment with a bucket."

"That had better be a bucket with tea in it." answered the large lump shape on the bed, grumpily.

"Nice to see that you are as much of a morning person as usual" Hobson looked at her watch. "Yes, it still is morning... just."

"Nice to see you too." mumbled the lump tiredly.

"You can't see me though, can you?"

"I know from the smug tone that it is you, Hobson, and I know what you look like, don't I?" said Bones as he stretched. He lifted himself out of the duvet, slowly and carefully, like a large drawbridge on a castle lifting up. Almost as creakily too.

He reached for the tea and took a mouthful. He made a loud sound of refreshment, a sound not unlike someone slowly letting the air out of a tractor tyre.

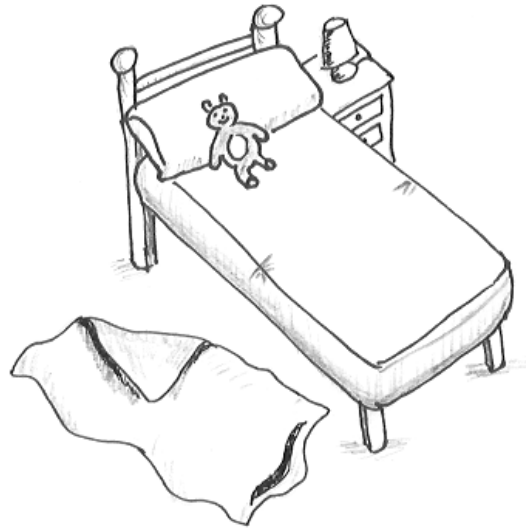
"That is better. Now you are a little less blurry, Doctor Hobson. Thank you for the tea - it helps lubricate my mind."

Hobson shook her head.

Soon afterwards both of them were quickly leaving 221b Butcher Street and heading out with a purpose. Only around two hours late, and after stopping only briefly to sniff out some clean clothes, and to pick up his trusty catapult.

They may arrive late, but they would be looking stylish when they got there, and that's what matters isn't it?

It is, isn't it?



Eggstra points.

Bones and Hobson arrived at the zoo looking a little rushed. They had walked very quickly through Regents Park which was something that neither of them liked to do. It was normally a walk that they would do slowly, to take in the beauty of the sun flickering on the boating lake, the green carpet of grass under their feet giving them time to breathe in and listen to the sound of the leaves on the trees moving in the breeze. Today they were not afforded that luxury.

Bones was admiring his reflection in the closed ticket office window. He seemed pleased with what he was looking at as he straightened his hat and walked through the police cordon confidently.

The two of them walked in to the aviary area and looked around.

Bones sniffed the air.

"What are we missing, Hobson?"

Hobson looked around, it was a large outdoor cage, several trees and feeding areas. The redbrick front of the Blackburn Pavilion exuded Britishness, the clock carrying on registering the time even though there were no members of the public to see it. That is just the British way.

"We are looking at what was stolen, and not why." she answered.

"Precisely, so why could someone want that many songbirds?"

"The only working theory that we have is the oddball one from Professor Anthrope, isn't it?" pondered Hobson.

"Indeed, and as I have often said - Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth" said Bones while looking at the large and elaborate clock in front of the building.

"So you are saying that you think that the birds were stolen to make some sort of device that can use the sound that they make in some way?"

"I said no such thing, I said that it is - at the moment - the only semi-plausible theory that we have. I am not that keen on it as it seems so far-fetched, but when you have eliminated all other possibilities whatever that is left has to be the truth, does it not?"

Bones seemed to be saying this as much to himself as to the Doctor.

"Why would someone want a machine like that? What could they hope to achieve?"

Bones did not answer her at first - he had some ideas but none of them he wanted to share at the moment as they were quite vague.

"How did the thieves gain entry to the zoo and aviary at night?" Asked Bones.

Hobson shook her head and went off to find a police officer to see if they were any nearer to finding that out. She returned a few moments later with Inspector LeStrange looking very tired indeed. They all said their greetings and LeStrange confirmed that they had not been able to find out how someone had got into the zoo at night when it was closed,

"The odd thing is, we know how they got out." added LeStrange scratching his considerably furry forehead.

At first Bones did not seem to take that information in as he was bent over looking at a crack in a flagstone.

"Sorry, did you just say that you know how they got out?" he asked, after a long pause. Not a long paw, that would be different.

"I did. They used one of the goods exits." He answered.

"So how do you know that they did not come in that way as well?"

"We know that, as the shutter in the goods exits are all electric and the switch to open and close it is on the inside of the door" said LeStrange patiently.

"So that means, that at least one person was already waiting for his or her accomplices on the inside."

"Exactly."

"Have you ruled out someone just hiding somewhere when the place was open?" Asked Hobson.

"No Doctor, that is not impossible, but it is unlikely. They would have to have been hidden for a long time."

"How do you know that?" She asked.

"We have a security camera around the corner and it recorded a large lorry leaving that exit at about midnight." answered LeStrange.

"How large a lorry?" asked Bones.

"Erm, about 10 tons I would have said, why?"

"Would it have been lighter if the birds were flying in it?" pondered Bones.

"I am sorry, you have lost me" said LeStrange.

"Nothing really, I was just wondering. If you packed 20 tons of birds into a 10 ton lorry would it be overloaded if you kept them flying?"

"I suppose you would have to stop every few miles to make a noise and keep them flying though." pondered Hobson.

LeStrange looked at the pair of them despairingly.

"Can we focus on the task at hand, do you think?"

Both Hobson and Bones apologised huffily and then went back to looking around. The Doctor walked back outside of the zoo to gather her thoughts. LeStrange and Bones talked through ideas, none of them really coming to much. Just as they were getting frustrated Doctor Hobson returned with a big smile, which stood out in the sun against her calico covered fur.

"What are you looking so happy about, Hobson?" asked Bones.

"I think I know how they got into the zoo, and it is quite amazing." she chirped.

"Please go on." requested LeStrange, who just wanted to know now. He felt like someone who had been trying to do a really hard puzzle, and had tried really not to look at the answers. He could think of nothing else now and was frankly quite tired. He did not like thinking, his brain was usually used to stop the top of his head falling in. I am not saying that he was stupid, just that he preferred not to think. That was for other people, not for him.

Bones, on the other hand was a little annoyed. He liked to be the one doing the big reveal, the one waving hands as he explained matters of great wonder whilst his audience gasped in awe and astonishment.

"This is going to sound crazy, so I am going to start at the end. If we go over there to the other aviary you can see that the netting on this side is stretched and worn." beamed Hobson.

LeStrange nodded. Bones went to speak in order to get back some control, even though he had no idea what Hobson was getting at.

"Why do you think that could be Doctor?" Said LeStrange before Bones could speak.

"I think it was used as a net to catch something, or more accurately...someone."

"What?!?" spluttered Bones.

"I think that the net on the aviary was used as a, well, net." She added.

"To catch what? From where?"

"Not what, who!" said Hobson and pointed over the wall towards Regents Park. At first neither Bones or LeStrange could figure out what she was pointing at. Bones could see the trees, but none were close enough to climb over the wall of the zoo.

"Are you suggesting that they used the trapeze in the park to swing themselves into the aviary?" Asked LeStrange in astonishment.

"Exactly what I had been thinking" bluffed Bones.

"That is what I believe, yes. They used the trapeze to swing themselves over the wall and landed in the safety of the aviary net."

"You're right Doctor, it does sound crazy, but it makes the most sense of anything that I have heard yet. Excellent work" said LeStrange as he went off to investigate further.

Bones looked upset and crestfallen.

"So who would be best at doing something like this? Which villain has something like that?" asked Hobson, knowing that the question was one that Bones knew the answer to.

"Whiskers McPloppy!" He shouted triumphantly.

"Does he have someone that could do this? I did not know that." lied Doctor Hobson. Lying is bad, but sometimes you have to bend the truth to protect the feelings of people that you care about. That was what the good Doctor was doing.

"He does! He has a band of trained acrobat monkeys!" added Bones, smiling again.

Hobson smiled and patted Bones on the back.

"Excellent work Bones, as always."

"Thank you for your help, Doctor. Now we must move on."

Just as they were about to leave Bones phone started to ring. He was momentarily confused, just as he always was when he heard his phone ring as it always took him a moment or two to realise that it *was* his phone.

He got his phone out of his deep coat pocket and the horrible supermarket type music version of Baker Street played on loudly. Bones looked at Hobson slightly embarrassed who simply shrugged back at him.



He pressed the answer button on the screen and placed the device at his ear carefully, in much the same way that you would hold a fish finger to your ear. Bones was not a fan of technology.

"Hello?"

"Is that Fetlock Bones?" asked a woman's voice - one that was clearly trying too hard to be charming.

"It is, and to whom am I speaking?" barked Bones.

"It's me, Fetlock. Lavinia LaMont."

At this point Bones' reaction was totally baffling to Hobson.

He was equally pleased to hear from her to see if they could gain any information, he was also just pleased to hear her voice. Even though he knew she was almost certainly working for Whiskers, he wanted to be wrong. Which was an odd feeling for Fetlock as he normally did not like being wrong at *all*.

"Ahh good to hear from you Lavinia" said Bones, over-emphasising her name and pointing at his phone to make it obvious to Hobson who he was talking to. Hobson rolled her eyes so much she looked a lot like a fruit machine.

She *knew* very well who it was.

Bones continued talking nervously. He was just about to admit that they hadn't been able to find her number when Hobson slapped his arm. Bones stopped talking and looked at Hobson with a surprised expression.

"We don't want her to know that we suspect she is working for Whiskers!" whispered Hobson.

Bones realised that she was correct - as usual - and asked how Lavinia was.

"I am very well thank you Mr Bones, I am just wondering how your investigation is going. I understand that you are very busy and important, but have you made any progress?" simpered Lavinia.

Bones was getting the uncomfortable feeling that she was trying to find out what they knew, which is of course *exactly* what she was doing.

"You know full well, Miss, that we cannot comment on an ongoing investigation" said Bones hoping to sound authoritative.

"I understand that, I just wondered..." Lavinia stopped, and took a deep breath. Bones assumed that she was thinking of what to say next to get information out of him. She actually was trying to build up courage - she felt very bad about what she was doing (which surprised her more than a bit if she was honest). She wasn't used to having feelings, certainly not ones that didn't involve money.

"What about you Lavinia, have you found anything out?" asked Bones.

"Yes, actually." she answered, and then paused for a moment. "I know that Whiskers McPloppy is behind this plan."

"Oh, We know *that*!" said Bones quickly, catching Lavinia by surprise.

"Oh, I see. How did you work that out? Of course, you cannot tell me can you?" she asked, not expecting an answer.

"We are pretty sure we know why he is doing it as well. We just do not know what he plans to do with it."

"I know" whispered the reporter as she stroked her hair. She was about to do something that she was not supposed to do, but she found herself oddly compelled to tell Bones the truth.

"Please go on" said Bones, sensing that something was troubling her.

"I will send you an address to your phone as soon as I can."

"Thank you, what is this address for..."

Before he could say any more, Lavinia had apologised to Bones, sounding almost like she was crying. She'd then quickly hung up.

"How odd" said Bones.

"What?" said Hobson tersely.

"She told me that she would send me an address, then apologised and hung up."

"Okay" said Hobson slowly, thinking to herself.

"That's not the odd bit, the odd bit is that she sounded like she was crying while she said it."

"Ahh, that means it's a trap doesn't it?"

"Probably." answered Bones as his phone beeped and he saw a message containing the address of an empty warehouse on the other side of town.

"Let's go then!" said Hobson excitedly.

"I do worry about you sometimes, Hobson."

Birdhouse in your soul.



The blue lights of the police car flashed loudly and the siren wailed and screamed blindingly. The police were coming - the screech of their tyres could be heard over everything else.

It was lucky that there was no one selling empty cardboard boxes at the side of the road or their stock would have surely been scattered all over the place. Hobson and Bones were passengers in one of the cars, both with very different looks on their faces, Hobson was grinning from ear to ear. She looked like she was laughing as she was very brave and thought that this was all very exciting. Bones on the other hand looked like he might be sick at any moment.

The car squealed to a stop, needlessly harshly outside a solid brick building. It was quite plain and nondescript with nothing at all remotely exciting or unusual looking about it.

It did, however, look like it was quite old and was not in very good condition. It had seen better days and Bones certainly knew how it felt as he staggered out of the car holding his stomach.

"Is this the place?" shouted Hobson excitedly, causing Bones to look at the address on his phone to check.

"Looks like it. I wonder what is so special about here?"

At that moment Lavinia LaMont walked from the darkness around the corner of the building and walked towards Bones and Hobson. Hobson saw her first and started to growl and immediately stood in a fighting stance, Bones wondered what she was doing and then spotted the journalist.

"Oh, hello Lavinia!" he said, seeming to have forgotten what happened up to this point and spoke to her like he was addressing an old friend and not someone who seemed to have set them up. He glanced at Hobson and then he remembered what had happened.

"Hello Fetlock" whimpered Lavinia as she nodded at the Doctor who now seemed unsure what to do. It was obvious that she saw Lavinia as the enemy and her enemy had clearly been crying.

Bones waved his hand behind him at Hobson and the Police officers that it was alright, which quite frankly did nothing to relax Hobson who was ready for a fight and when she was ready for a fight she liked to *have* one.

"What are you doing here? I did not expect to see you, I thought that you would be.. Err, well, that is." Stumbled Bones.

"You thought that I would be running away with the money that I had made from selling you and the Doctor out?"

"That thought had occurred to us, yes." seethed Hobson angrily.

"I am sorry, Doctor. I know that you will not believe that, but I am."

"Why should we believe that? Would you, if things were the other way around?" asked the Doctor just before she was shushed by Bones,

"I understand, which is why I insist that I have to come in with you, if it is a trap I will get caught too." cried Lavinia so loudly that her brown dog eyes sprayed out tears like a broken tap.

Bones could handle most things, but not women crying. He hated that and immediately put his arm around the young journalist and made comforting

noises. Meanwhile the Doctor looked like she might explode, but stood down and nodded at the police officers to do the same. She was still very much prepared for trouble though.

"So, what is the plan then?" demanded Hobson as Bones tried to stop Lavinia from crying - not least as she was soaking his favourite tweed coat.

"I was asked to tell you to go in on your own through the main door" she sniffled.

"So, we need to find another way in" said Bones. Hobson nodded and went off to see if she could see any other way in. She returned a few minutes later looking frustrated.

"There is no other way in" said Hobson. Thinking for a moment she added "We could knock the wall down with a tank!"

"Good plan, apart from one small problem" whispered Bones to Hobson, causing her to gesture to him to explain further.

"We do not *have* a tank."

"I told that we should have got one, special agents and super detectives need a tank" she said angrily.

"We do not need a tank, think how much of a mess we make without one." laughed Bones, and this caused Hobson to smile. Both of them looked at the large green wooden garage doors on the front of the warehouse and then back at each other and then they nodded, They knew what they had to do, stopping only briefly to tell Lavinia to stay there with Inspector LeStrange. Drying off his now damp coat shoulder, they opened the creaky door and looked into the gloom inside the building.

As they looked in, their eyes got used to the darkness and saw...

Nothing. It was a largely empty and cold warehouse.

They walked in slowly and Hobson flashing her torch around the corners and saw nothing apart from some empty paint tins and a bike with only one wheel. As she moved her torch beam over the far wall they could see a small wooden door that looked like it led into a cellar. On the door was a painting of the Grim Reaper, holding his scythe high above his head.

"Looks like we are at Death's door, Hobson!" said Bones grimly. He opened it and walked down the stairs. He then realised that he should have let Hobson go first, as she was braver. And she had the torch.

They walked down the stairs slowly gradually feeling more and more tired and unable to keep their eyes open.

"Gas?" Said Bones as he slowly fell into a heap at the bottom of the stairs.

"Gas." Said Doctor Hobson as she joined him.

Sound advice.

Sound is an amazing thing, you know? Sound is a vibration that moves through air, water and many other things until the drums inside your ear wobble about due to the vibration and your brain turns that wobbling into sounds.

Making sounds is the opposite.. Using your voice passes air over your vocal chords and that gets turned into sound. When you are talking you use your lips, tongue and the inside of your mouth to make noises that other people will hopefully understand.

Although if you mumble a lot no one will understand you.

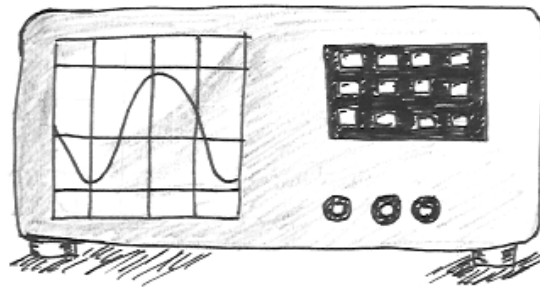
Sound is also an energy, like heat or electricity. Lots of sound can do amazing things. A lady opera singer can sing a constant steady note at what is called the resonant frequency of a wine glass and she can make the glass actually shatter.

That is sort of the thing that device that Whiskers was building was designed to do.

It was going to amplify - or make louder - the very high pitched sounds of song birds and he was going to use clever technology to tune the note to be able to break glass and cut the power in the area that it is used in.

Very, very clever.

Very dangerous and not very nice for the birds, or anyone near to it when it goes off.



A sine of the times. (You may want your science teacher to explain this joke.)

All tied up at the moment.

We join our heroes tied to a wooden chair. Well, tied to a wooden chair each.

Whiskers is a bad person, but that would just be unnecessarily cruel.

The room was dark and there was-a dripping noise.

Bones, shivering with the cold, started to come round first. He looked around and pulled against the rope around him. He went to speak but then realised that he was gagged.

"Mmmph!" he mumbled loudly.

Hobson did not move at all and Bones was really worried about her. It looked like she was breathing gently but she was still out cold.

"MMMPH!"

Still nothing but the dripping noise, which was going to drive him crazy if he had to keep listening to it. That and make him need to go for a wee.

Why had he thought that? Now he needed a wee, like there was nothing else to be concentrating on at the moment. He had to get free! He darted his eyes around the room and saw nothing obvious that would help because the room was quite dark. There was some scaffolding against the shiny wet brick wall on the opposite side and on it lay a screwdriver. If he could get to that, he could *maybe* use it to cut through the rope.

With a loud grunt he tried to jump the chair that he was sat in nearer to the scaffolding. Have you ever tried to do that? It is very hard work, and you do not get very far each time. Please do not try it now though, as you may hurt yourself or break your parents dining chairs. See, I *can* be sensible.

Bones looked around and realised that he had hardly moved the chair at all. He was determined to get himself free as he was now really very concerned about Hobson. He jumped his chair again, grunting as he did so, and the chair made a loud scraping noise. This was going to be slower than a trip to the supermarket.

Bones took a moment to get his breath and with a massive effort he jumped again. This time he got further, but now unfortunately the chair teetered on the two side legs. His stomach churned as he waited for the inevitable fall as the chair seemed to stay on two legs for longer than seemed possible. Then gravity remembered who was in charge and the chair fell heavily down onto its side. Bones yelped through his gag as he had hurt his arm and head quite badly. Lying there, tied to a chair, gag in his mouth, and trapped on a freezing cold wet floor Fetlock found it hard not to think that things were looking pretty bad for them both.

Bones was now facing away from Hobson, who was still unconscious in her chair but was starting to stir. She blinked slowly, trying to bring the room into focus, but the room obviously did not want to be in focus. She blinked and passed out again. After a few moments having some entertaining dreams about being at a nice party with lots of cake she woke again. This time she forced her eyes to open, her head felt thick and she realised that she had been drugged and then started to panic when she realised that she was tied to a chair. It was not even a particularly nice chair and it certainly did not suit the decor of the room. Mind you, the decor of the room was classic castle dungeon - maybe it would work with a lick of paint and some nice carpets.

Looking around slowly and woozily, Hobson realised that the only decor that would suit this room at the moment would be a wetsuit and a nice fire. It was so cold. Her training told her that she was partly cold as she was coming around from the drug that she had been given, but it was still cold. Cold and wet. As a cat those were two of her least favourite things.

She shivered and tried to call out.

"Mmmph!" she said angrily.

At this point Fetlock realised that she was awake behind him and shouted at her. She shouted back and they spent the next few minutes making an assortment of grunting and groaning noises, which would have made anyone outside the room wonder what was going on.

They would probably have assumed that two people were moving a very heavy piece of furniture.

Bones nodded towards the scaffold on the other side of the room, and at first Hobson could not see what he was getting at as she was still really struggling to come round, but soon she realised that she was going to have to focus as Bones was really stuck now.

Screwdriver!

She saw it and grunted excitedly in an attempt to let Bones know that she had seen it. She started to jump her chair across to the scaffolding, whilst being careful not to move the chair onto any sticky out bits of Fetlock. Bones was pleased to see her moving her chair with an ease that he could not manage, which made him less pleased. Hobson is very fit, and trains hard to be the capable agent she is, whereas Bones trains by thinking about things a lot. Clever? Yes, fit? Not so much. Fetlock decided that if they got out of this he would ask Hobson to help him get fitter.

The Doctor made one last lunge and got her chair to the scaffold, hitting it quite harshly in the process and making a loud ringing noise.

"Shush!" Bones tried to say, but ended up sounding more like he had got a puncture. At the same moment they both realised that the screwdriver had been dislodged from its resting place by Hobson chair hitting the scaffold, and it was now rocking backwards and forwards ferociously. It suddenly rolled off the scaffold and dropped, blade down towards Bones head. He yelped and closed his eyes, which is a shame as he did not see the speed with which Hobson threw her leg out to kick the screwdriver away from hitting Bones face, knocking it away causing it to drop harmlessly to his side.

Bones opened one eye and squinted around the room. He was pleased to see that he did not have a screwdriver sticking out of his head and he nodded towards the Doctor. He did not know how that she had saved him, but once again she had. Hobson smiled, which is a difficult thing to do with a gag on.

Why do people call jokes "gags"? Seems strange to me, why would anyone want to feel like that? I like jokes but I do not want my mouth tied shut, although some of the people who have to hear my jokes might disagree, I suppose.

Bones spotted the screwdriver next to his hand and reached for it, picking it up after a stretch and turning it round to use it to cut the rope holding him, it took some time but after a few minutes the first rope frayed apart and his hand was free. Releasing first his other ropes and then the cutting through Doctor Hobson's they both stood up straight and stretched and rubbed where the ropes had held them so tightly.

"Mmmp!" said Bones remembering that he had a gag on.

He took it off.

"Do you think that they tortured us?" asked the Doctor as she rubbed her eyes.

"I don't remember anything like that, do you?"

"No. I remember nothing after passing out in the warehouse."

"I hope that I didn't give away everything that we know. If they rubbed my tummy, I know that I will have done" said Bones.

Hobson looked at him sternly.

"What? I am a dog, I cannot help it."

Hobson sighed. "What about the elephant in the room?"

Bones looked confused but realised that both of them were still suffering from being drugged.

"The elephant in the room that we aren't talking about?" She added.

"You mean me leaving the toilet seat up?" Said Bones, suddenly remembering that he needed to go to the bathroom.

"No, the actual elephant in the room." She yelped.

"Oh, don't mind me" said a deep and sad voice from out of the shadows in the back of the room. "Although it would be lovely if you could at least see yourselves clear to untie me before you make your escape."

They both apologised profusely, and confirmed that the elephant had been in that room a very long time and was the designer of Whisker's fiendish device. Once he had built it, Whiskers did not need him around anymore.

"Are you Professor Alfie Gray?" Said Bones, as much to show off his memory as much as anything else.

"I am." smiled the elephant weakly.

"Professor Anthrope spoke very highly of your work" said Doctor Hobson.

"Did she? Lovely woman, if a little..."

"Yes she is, isn't she?" added Hobson. The Professor nodded slowly.

They freed him as quickly as they could. Just as they were feeling pretty good about the fact that they had freed themselves, the door behind them opened. The pair of them blinked and raised their hands to cover their eyes. In the brightness of the light they could see the shape of a pudgy overweight cat, shaking as it laughed loudly.



"Thank you for saving my henchmen the job of untying you both!" said the pudgy cat loudly.

"Whiskers, I should have known you were behind this. Care to explain yourself?" said Bones dramatically.

"No, not right now. Guards! Bring them through to the resonator room. Let the elephant go, I have no more need for him."

The elephant scientist muttered his thanks to Hobson and Bones as they were all led out roughly.

Bones and Hobson looked at each other and then were rudely pushed out of the door by two burly guard dogs. Bones started to complain about the way that they were being treated when Hobson reminded him to shut up or he'd risk making things worse. Bones shut up. He was a very clever dog, but not a very brave one.

"Can we stop off at a lavatory please? I really need a wee after listening to that dripping noise" asked Bones hopefully.

Resonance.

Bones and Hobson were bundled into a large circular room, one which had a very high ceiling. The walls were brushed metal and there were bright lights in the roof, and oddly the floor was made of glass. At the top of the wall on one side (if a circular room can have a side) there was a very thick looking window with what appeared to be a laboratory behind it.

Our heroes could not help but be impressed with the scale of this room.

"Why is it that you bad guys get all of the cool stuff? I don't even have a good mobile phone." complained Bones.

Whiskers laughed loudly, "You could have joined me years ago, Bones! We bad guys have *soooo* much more fun!"

Hobson rolled her eyes and tutted.

"I see that you do not approve Doctor, which is a shame. I would have hoped that your scientific brain would have been impressed with what we have here." boasted Whiskers.

"Impressed by a room with metal walls? Metal walls are so out of fashion these days, you clearly do not go to Ikea very often." mocked the Doctor.

"Ha ha! I would not take you to Ikea on a weekend, now that would be evil, wouldn't it Doctor?" Said Whiskers.

Bones nodded.

Hobson looked around the room, she had a strange feeling about the room layout, and not in a good way. She looked down and saw that below the glass floor was a very, very long drop.

"I see Doctor that you are starting to work out what is going to happen here" said Whiskers proudly. "I always thought it a shame that you are not

seen as intelligent as you clearly are."

The Doctor looked up at Whiskers with anger in her eyes.

"Ooh, I touched a nerve then did I? How lovely, not only do I get to have you two killed, I get to test my newest toy properly and upset the good Doctor" chuckled Whiskers, "Could this get any better?"

"I do not understand what is going on..." stuttered Bones. He hated admitting that but if it bought them some time to work out a plan he would give it a go.

Whiskers buckled over with laughter, only recovering once he had propped himself up against one of his large bodyguards and wiped his eyes with his other paw.

"It seems that it could get better! The great Bones has *no idea* what is happening!"

"Well, apart from the fact that you have built a machine that you will fill with songbirds and using some amplification method or other you will use the rich and loud sounds as a weapon. Is that about right?" asked Bones, smiling somewhat cockily, given his predicament.

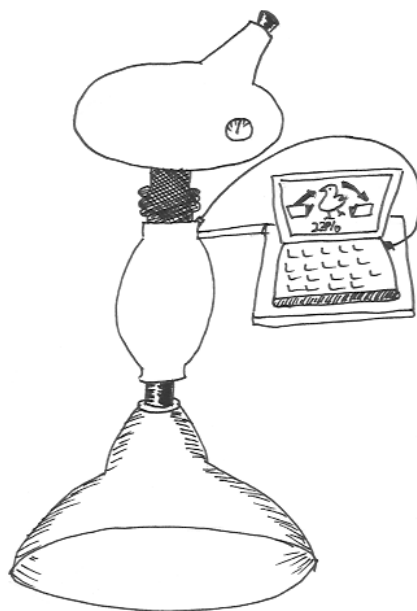
Whiskers suddenly looked like a balloon that had all of the air let out of it.

"And, I presume that you are calling it "The Resonator." Given the fact that this is what this room is called, and that display in that laboratory up there says Resonator testing department." added Bones, for good measure.

Whiskers looked around the room in a mixture of confusion and fury which is not a good mix for most people - and Whiskers is not most people, not by a long way. He walked across the room and pressed a button on the wall, a big shiny red button. Big red buttons do not usually do nice things do they? I have never seen anyone press a big red button and get lots of sweets or a day off school, have you? This big red button opened the ceiling slowly and a large device started to drop through the hole that was now there.

The device looked sort of like a huge trombone with a big brass horn on one end. There were lots of lights and wires on it, and a big round section at the top that looked like a huge metal ball. It came down to about halfway into the room and then a ladder slotted down from it gently towards the floor, stopping just above the ground. It moved carefully, like a ballet dancer delicately moving across the stage.

If you have ever done any ballet you will know that to make it look that easy takes a lot of effort and practice and the same was true of this ladder. Whiskers was nothing if not a perfectionist.



"Bring me the rest of the birds!". Whiskers shouted so loudly that bodyguard next to him jumped before he growled something loudly into his collar. Seconds later a mouse in a white coat walked through the door and gave a box to Whiskers. The box was very large for the mouse to carry, but Whiskers took it off him very easily (growling while he did so) for no other reason than he was angry and not a very nice person.

The mouse backed away into Bones and apologised profusely. Then he realised who he was apologising to, and was slightly star struck.

"F - F - Fetlock Bones?" stuttered the mouse.

"Yes." answered Bones, as bravely and confidently as he could.

"I am so proud to have a chance to meet you, I have followed you since I was little..."

"You still are little!" laughed Whiskers cruelly.

The mouse tried to ignore it, but Bones could see a tear of embarrassment in his eye.

"I am sorry that your boss feels that he has to treat you like that." said Bones sincerely.

Hobson tutted at this, but Bones ignored her.

"Would you like me to sign something for you?" continued Bones.

"Err, I would love that but I do not have anything on me. Let me just go and get my journal, you could sign that" said the mouse excitedly.

"We don't really have time for that, seeing as your boss will surely want to kill Doctor Hobson and myself fairly soon" said Bones.

"He's right again! How do you do it Bones?" laughed Whiskers as he climbed the ladder towards the top of the machine.

"How about that clipboard that you have there, the form that you have on it. Could I sign that maybe?" asked Bones.

The mouse looked confused for a moment before he remembered that he had a clipboard with him. The mouse thrust the clipboard out like he was offering a sandwich to someone who had not eaten in a week.

Bones looked at his bodyguard for a moment, with no reaction.

"Ahem!"

Nothing. Clearly this guard was either not very clever or not paying attention. Or more likely, both.

"Excuse me guard, could you let go of my arm for a moment so that I can autograph this nice young chaps piece of paper?"

The guard looked confused, in the same way that a fridge would look confused if you asked it to fix your bike. The guard then gave out a grunt which Whiskers seemed to understand.

"Let him do it! Where is he going to go?" shouted Whiskers to the guard, who immediately released his grasp on Bones' arm. Bones looked at the guard admonishingly (which had no effect) whilst rubbing his wrist to try and get some feeling back.

"What name would you like on the autograph?" asked Bones, taking the proffered clipboard from the ecstatic mouse.

"My name is Frederick. Erm, Professor Frederick Mouse." he said.

"No relation of Mickey?" joked Bones.

"No, no relation of Mickey Mouse" answered the mouse, looking confused and not realising that it was meant to be a joke. Which was probably for the best, as it was not a very good one was it?

Bones signed the form as the mouse had asked but was very careful to place his name in a small box towards the bottom of the form. He handed it back to the mouse who clutched it tightly to his chest.

"I am sorry for being part of this plan to kill you and everything" said the mouse quickly before scampering out.

"Don't worry. I think that you may just have helped to save us as well" muttered Bones after he had left. He looked up towards Hobson and winked. She had no idea what was going on but sensed that it was not going to end well for them. They both looked up towards Whiskers who had the box in one hand and was pulling birds out of it with a gloved hand before dipping them in some grease.

"Why are you greasing the birds, Whiskers?" asked Bones, who genuinely wanted to know why.

"Because -" grunted Whiskers, "The hole that the birds have to go in is very tight and you have to push them in quite..."

Pop!

Whiskers shouted excitedly. He was relieved to have got the first one in.

"Couldn't you have just made the hole bigger?" questioned Bones.

"In retrospect that would have probably been simpler, yes" answered Whiskers honestly.

"Luckily I had someone else load the resonator, and it is almost ready to fire up" said Whiskers as he slid down the ladder back to the floor. Unfortunately he didn't land as well as he would have liked and dropped heavily onto his bum. He scrambled up but it was too late.

Everyone in the room and the lab were laughing at him.

He shouted angrily and everyone stopped laughing apart from Bones and Hobson.

"You will be pleased to know that the birds are not being hurt in any way, apart from the greasing bit. Which is an unfortunate side effect" said Whiskers angrily.

"What happens now?" Asked Hobson.

"What happens now Doctor is that you and your good friend and genius Fetlock Bones are going to get to see the machine work for the first time" said Whiskers. He said "genius" in the same way that you would say something quite nasty.

"And killing us in the process?"

"Well obviously." Laughed Whiskers nastily and clapping his hands together.

"Well, seeing as we are not going to be able to trouble you anymore, you may as well tell us what your plan is." She said.

Whiskers looked thoughtful for a moment. "I suppose so, but you had better promise to be good heroes and die when you are supposed to though, okay?"

"Promise" said the Doctor with a grin.

"Cross your heart and hope to die?" Sneered Whiskers.

Whiskers smiled at her and walked over towards her. He only dared do this as he knew that she was still being held by his large guard. He wouldn't have gotten so close otherwise, as she would have easily overpowered him. Whiskers had not got to where he was by doing such stupid things.

Although he was about to do something very stupid he was about to make a mistake that very clever people sometimes make - believing that everyone else is stupid because they think that they are not as clever as they are.

He leaned forward as if sharing a secret.

"The resonator as you see above you is only a small prototype. The full size one is ten times more powerful and when it is fired it will shatter glass of any thickness and it will also break any electronic devices within a half mile of it."

"Impressive" nodded Hobson.

"Thank you."

"I suppose you are going to use it to steal diamonds and jewellery from display cases while it also disables the alarms" pondered Bones, almost to himself.

Whiskers spun round looking genuinely shocked. He turned towards Fetlock and started clapping loudly.

"Excellent work Bones, excellent work. That is exactly what I am going to use it for."

"And there is a display at the moment in the biggest museum in London of five of the world's most expensive diamonds" said Doctor Hobson.

It was now Hobson's turn for Whiskers to look surprised at her. He narrowed his eyes and applauded her.

"You see, you two are amazing. It is *almost* a shame that I am going to have to kill you. You are both so brilliant at working things out. It is a pity that you chose the wrong side." he laughed.

"Oh, we did not choose the wrong side, Whiskers, *you* did" said Bones more aggressively than he really meant to.

Whiskers spun round with hate in his eyes and looked directly at Bones.

"It is a shame that the last time that I see you Bones, you have to be sarcastic" spat Whiskers and left the room. Everyone else left the room, the guards pushing Bones and Hobson away from the door and then walking through it and locking it behind them.

Hobson and Bones both looked up towards the lab window and could see Whiskers and the guards walk in.

At the front the mouse Professor was excitedly smiling at Bones before he was pushed out of the way by Whiskers, who then bent over to the microphone so that he could be heard by our heroes.

"I wish that I could stay and see you fall through that glass floor below you and drop over a hundred feet onto the metal spikes below, but you know how it is when you are a busy master of crime? Actually I don't suppose that you do really, and now you never will. You know how I hate a long goodbye Bones, so I shall leave it at that."

Bones sighed heavily in frustration, Hobson looked at him.

"We are going to die this time aren't we?"

Bones said nothing. They could see that there was a kerfuffle in the lab and because no one had turned the microphone off so they could hear Whiskers calling everyone in the room lots of bad words. Lots of bad words that I won't put in here because you shouldn't know them.

Even *I* didn't know some of them, and I am a grown up.

It seemed like he had to be somewhere and no one knew where the keys to his private jet were, but after a moment there was a pleased shout and they were passed to Whiskers who left with his guards.

A red light started to flash on the walls in a way that was not at all relaxing, and a loud siren sounded that was too loud to be pleasant. Hobson and Bones covered their ears, but Bones looked quite content. A look that made Hobson want to punch him.

How could he manage to look so smug when they were about to die?

Bones stood there smiling and seemingly counting silently to himself in his head.

"*IO!*" Shouted a computer voice.

Hobson looked around the room in a panic.

"9"

The computer voice was counting down, and that probably is not good.

"8"

Now Hobson was starting to look really worried.

"7"

"Bones!" She shouted.

"6"

He smiled at her, and put a finger to his lips to signal to her to be quiet, a gesture that only served to make her angrier.

"5"

"Bones, when this counter gets to zero the resonator is going to go off! The glass floor beneath us will shatter and we will fall severe hundred feet onto the spiky metal spikes below!" shouted Hobson.

"4"

Bones nodded, grinning. "Clever, isn't it?"

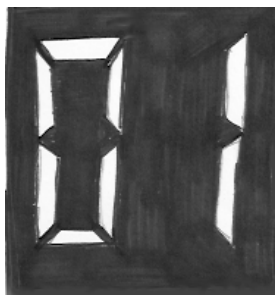
"3"

Hobson put her head in her hands.

"2"

Well this was it. She looked up at Bones for what could be the last time and walked over and hugged him.

Ineggsplicable.



"I!" Shouted the computer voice loudly.

"WAIT!" shouted Bones even more loudly, causing Doctor Hobson who was hugging him with tears in her eyes to jump and fall over.

Professor Mouse pressed a button and the countdown stopped.

"Countdown aborted!" said the computer voice.

"What?" he said quite angrily over the loudspeaker.

"You cannot kill us in this machine" said Bones triumphantly.

"Why ever not?"

"Look at that signature that I gave to you on that clipboard." He said. The mouse looked baffled and then squinted at the piece of paper, pausing only briefly to get his glasses.

"What am I looking at?" He asked, confused.

"My signature in the box on that form that you had on your clipboard. Is that a 1138x form?"

The mouse nodded, and then his face started to change. After a few moments of his face looking like it was melting, he smiled and then started laughing.

"Oh brilliant Fetlock Bones, you truly are as clever as your reputation says" said the mouse applauding, even though no-one else seemed to know what was going on. Particularly Doctor Hobson.

"What is going on?" She said as she got up, pausing only briefly to rub her bottom.

"I saved us. No need to thank me" said Bones annoyingly. "Now open this door and let us out so that we can stop Whiskers' devilish plan."

"What did you do?" asked Hobson

"The form that I signed for the Professor?" said Bones as if he were talking to a child.

"Yes?" sighed Hobson.

"It was a form that closed the entire centre for safety checks, and I signed it. So the test cannot go ahead."

"That makes no sense at all, why would they have to stop if you signed it?"

"Thank red tape and bureaucracy Hobson" said Bones as he swept out of the opening door as the people outside argued what to do.

"It's health and safety gone mad" said Hobson shaking her head as she left in Bones' wake.

You might hear some old people say things like "It's health and safety gone mad." Health and safety is mostly a good thing that means that less people have accidents and get hurt than before. The people who say that it has gone mad mostly believe made up stories that they have read to them from some of the nastier newspapers.

Now it's time for the gallery.

Bones and Hobson made their escape from Whisker's clutches, stopping only briefly to use the bathroom and to call Inspector LeStrange.

They all met up at the gallery where the display of gems was being prepared. There was no sign of Whiskers and his hench people. It is normally henchmen, but in this day and age surely there should be equal opportunities for henchwomen as well?

On the outside of the stone building was a tangle of scaffolding, the metal tubes attached to it looked like a metal spiders web, spreading it's silvery strands and glinting in the sunshine. There were signs everywhere warning people that building work was going on, pictures of hard hats and some builders were part of the way up the building laughing coarsely.

Thankfully one thing that was not on display was a builders bum, no one wants to see that do they?

Bones, Hobson and the police arrived together on the pavement and looked at the building.

"How are they going to get into the building unnoticed?" enquired LeStrange.

"They are going to pretend to be builders and that the resonator is part of the building machinery. Who is going to notice one more machine when the place looks like a building site?" said Hobson before Bones had a chance to say anything.

"That is pretty much exactly what I would have said" huffed Bones, rather unnecessarily everyone else thought.

"The building is currently closed to the public due to the building work, to get ready for the big re-opening ceremony this weekend" said LeStrange.

"Are all of the gems already here then? That does not seem like very good security to me" said Bones, who was sulking a bit.

"Not all of them no, but several of them are. They have to come from all over the world you see." added LeStrange, ignoring Bones and his sulking.

LeStrange looked thoughtful for a moment, "How are we going to know when the resonator has gone off?"

"It will make a very loud noise" said Hobson, or rather that is what she tried to say but part of the way through she was interrupted by the loudest, screechiest noise that anyone had ever heard. Louder and screechier than when your Mum has found that you have been not doing your homework when you said that you would.

WHOOOOOMPH!

The windows on the outside of the gallery all cracked and shattered and glass rained down onto the ground as all the streetlights and sign lights went out in the nearby streets. After such a loud noise there is always a few moments of total silence when everyone picks themselves up off the floor and looks around to see if everyone else was alright.

Bones was dusting his hat off and looking around proudly, in an attempt to look like he hadn't jumped as much as everyone else.

"You will know that the resonator has gone off,as it will sound like that" said Bones smugly, trying to make it sound like he had arranged that as a demonstration.

"That was loud!" shouted Hobson, who still could not hear properly. Several of the police officers nodded when she said that.

"I presume that this means that we got here too late?" Hobson asked.

"No Hobson, we must find a manner of ingress as soon as possible." answered Bones, causing LeStrange to look baffled.

"He means that we have to get into the gallery as soon as possible." whispered Hobson, well she thought she was whispering.

"Well, why doesn't he just say that?" said LeStrange shaking his head. It felt a bit like something had come loose inside his skull.

Before anyone could answer, Hobson was walking strongly and confidently towards the front door simply leaving Bones pontificating about what to do next.

"We could get a helicopter and drop in through a skylight" said Bones to LeStrange who was thinking about how much that would cost.

"Bones!" Said Hobson.

"Or, we could climb the scaffolding" said Bones ignoring the Doctor.

"Bones!" She said again.

"How about we get a tank - I keep telling you that we need a tank."

"Bones!" Shouted Hobson.

"What?" Said Bones angrily, "You are ruining my train of thought about how to get into the gallery."

"Well we could just use the open front door?" said Hobson, sighing while she said it.

"I suppose we could, at a push, do that" said Bones.

"Great. I am so glad that you thought of it,Bones" said Hobson, rolling her eyes.

"Sarcasm is the lowest form of wit" said Bones.

"People who find themselves the butt of a joke often say that" said Hobson as she opened the door and peered inside.



She could see that the all of the internal glass was shattered and the power was off. There was broken glass all over the floor and dust hung in the air, little bits of it dancing in the sunlight through the open windows.

"I like what they have done with the place" said Hobson.

"It is crying out for a makeover isn't it? I think I would have it all knocked down and start again." whispered Bones.

"Why are you whispering?"

"Err, I'm a coward?" answered Bones probably more honestly than he had intended to. "I solve the crimes and you catch the bad guys, remember?"

"Sorry yes, I had forgotten that. Follow me." added Hobson.

The two of them walked slowly through the open hallway. Underneath the broken glass they could see a beautifully shiny tiled floor. The stone walls looked as majestic now as they must have several hundred years ago when the gallery was originally built. On the one side a massive and imposing staircase swept around and upwards towards the first floor.

Why is it called the first floor? Surely the bottom floor is the first floor, but no, that's the ground floor. Confusing. Lots of things in life are confusing, for example why do hot dogs come in tins of eight, but the hot dog rolls come in packs of six? It makes absolutely no sense.

After the stairs there was a much newer addition of a lift. It had shiny metal doors but no lights on because the power had been knocked out by the resonator.

Bones was looking at a board on the wall which was next to the closed up gift shop and cafe. It showed that the gallery that they needed to go to was on the 5th floor.

"We need to be on the 5th floor looking at this. Of course the resonator means that the lifts aren't working, so the stairs it'll have to be." He said.

"Where do these stairs go?" asked Hobson.

"They go up" said Bones, who stole most of his favourite lines from a film called Ghostbusters.

Hobson sighed again and started walking up the stairs, shortly after followed by Bones, who seemed less keen to walk up all of those stairs. A lot less keen.

A Cold, Hard Stair

Some time later...

The stairs were made of a fine cold white stone, probably marble. Not the sort of marble that you left on the kitchen floor that you hear them rattling up the inside of the vacuum cleaner, but the sort of marble that big fancy statues and stairs are made from. On top of that was a thick, soft red carpet, each step held down with a highly polished brass strap.

They were fancy stairs, that much was certain. The fine craftwork that went into making them did not make them any easier to climb however, and Bones was struggling. He pulled himself up onto another landing and bent double, holding himself up with one arm. He gasped loudly and his chest made the same noise that the vacuum cleaner makes with one of your marbles in it.

He looked around to try to catch his breath and to see if he could see what floor that they were on.

"3!???!!" He shouted, well he tried to. What actually happened was that he said the first bit of the word loudly and then broke down into a fit of coughing and wheezing. The noise brought Hobson skipping lightly back down the stairs.

"What's up Bones?" She said, trying to sound like she was not enjoying his discomfort at all. It didn't work.

"Yeah, I am fine. Never been better."

"Never?"

"Well, unless you include every other bit of my life then no, never been better."

"I detect a trace of sarcasm" smiled Doctor Hobson, who was astoundingly fit and had worked very very hard to stay that way. Contrary to what some people will tell you when you are grown up, the only way to be fit is to exercise.

"Only a trace?" coughed Bones. "I meant for there to be lots and lots of sarcasm. So much sarcasm that it would cause a world shortage."

"You need to get fitter, Bones" said Hobson, patting him on his back. Bones did not answer, and I think that we should all be glad for that, don't you? He was not very happy at the moment.

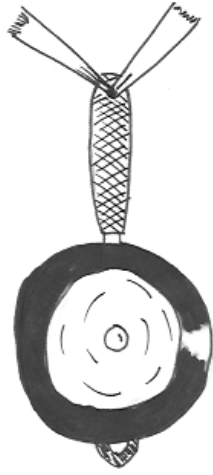
"We only have two more floors to go." chirped Hobson, who was actually now jogging on the spot. Bones was not quite sure if she was doing that to keep warm or to make him feel more dreadful. Either way, it was making him feel worse.

"I do not think that I have ever felt worse than I do right about now" said Bones to himself, before pulling himself upright and letting a gasp of pain escape from his lips.

"Come on, let's keep going." he said, gesturing Hobson to go in front - partly as a gentleman you should always let a lady go first, but mainly as he would only be holding her up. She nodded gratefully and shot off up the stairs.

Bones sighed heavily.

"If I make to the fifth floor alive, without being carried or throwing up I am considering that an achievement. I will want a medal. A medal as big as a frying pan."



What a medal as big as a frying pan might look like. If you could be bothered to make one.

Blues and poos.

Hobson burst through the double doors, throwing them open with a smile on her face. She was ready for a fight and she knew that she was about to get one. Bones on the other hand was nowhere to be seen, although the distant sound of his wheezing could be heard through the doors that were now swinging shut behind her.

She could not help but feel that her entrance would have been more impressive if there was not someone behind her who sounded like a broken vacuum cleaner trying to suck up a bowl of cold porridge.

She looked around the room carefully.

There was broken glass everywhere reflecting the light that shone in through the open roof and scattering it into the air, letting it dance with the floating dust. It was a very large room, full of display cases, none of which now had glass in them after the damage that was done by Whisker's resonator device.

Looking up towards the large hole in the roof Hobson could see the resonator hanging from some scaffolding. Beneath it Whiskers and his henchmen were searching the display cases nearest them desperately and they had not yet spotted that she had entered the room. She took her chance to grab a large gem from the nearest display case, picking it up from its black velvet nest and holding it tightly in her fist.

"Hello boys" she said as loudly and confidently as she could manage.

They all looked up at her in the same way that you do when one an adult catches you doing something that you should not have been doing.

Which of course they were.

Whiskers quickly tried to get the upper hand, and to make it look like he was in control. Which was lying, but that was not the worst thing that he

had done today was it? In for a penny and all that.

"Oh, I have to admit that I am surprised to see you, erm, Doctor."

"You left the word 'alive' out of that sentence didn't you?"

Whiskers nodded and smiled. Hobson noted that his smile somehow seemed worse than his scowl, it was fake and slimier than a surprise sneeze.

"You are correct, but I am sure that we can arrange for that to be corrected right now, if that would help?"

"Was that meant to be a threat?" goaded Hobson.

Whiskers continued to smile, but the twitch in his eyebrow gave away his anger and frustration.

"If you are unfortunately still alive, am I to assume that Bones is still, annoyingly, not dead as well?"

"Well, assuming that the walk up the stairs hasn't killed him, he is very much alive."

"How tiresome, you people can never do what you are supposed to." said Whiskers, shaking his head.

Hobson's trained eye spotted that the two henchmen were making their way towards her from opposite sides as Whiskers tried to keep her attention.

"I would stop your boys Whiskers, if I were you." she said calmly.

"Now why on earth would I want to do that?"

"Is this what you are looking for?" she asked, holding her hand high enough that the bright light flowing in through the open roof glistened on the gem in her hands and sparkled brightly causing the light to dance across the finely cut surface. She was careful not to show too much of it to Whiskers,

as she had no idea of whether it was the one that they were actually looking for.

Whiskers knew that too, but he also knew that he now had to be careful. He also he was no more sure than Hobson whether or not she had the one that he wanted. He raised a hand somewhat dramatically, like a bad actor in a play, but it had the effect that he wanted and both of his men stopped where they stood.

"Now let's not be silly Doctor, just give that to me, and no one has to get hurt. Well no one apart from you, obviously."

"How about I don't?" Smiled Hobson, throwing the gem into the air, and with it still in the air she picked up another from a different case. Whiskers did not see this as he was focussed on the one in the air, and he was even more surprised when she threw the second in the air and promptly caught the first and launched it again, this time picking up a third gem and adding it to her juggling.

Whiskers stood there for a moment, mesmerised by the sight of Hobson juggling with the gems. He then started to clap slowly.

"Well done, using cheap circus tricks to try and distract me. I have worked very hard to get to this point and I am not letting someone use parlour tricks to stop me. Henchmen, go get her!"

Neither of them moved.

"Did you idiots hear me?"

They both looked at him blankly, tears welling in their eyes.

"You should be nicer to your staff." Added Hobson, laughing lightly as she continued to juggle.

"No one asked for your help on dealing with staff issues, did they, Doctor?"

Hobson shrugged, "It just seems like you could use a little help when it comes to talking to people."

"Shut up!" He shouted.

"If I had a handbag, I would be holding it right about now. And probably saying Oooooooh!" laughed Hobson, glad that she was getting to him.

"Will you idiots just grab her?"

Again, they both stayed absolutely still.

"What?"

The henchman on Whisker's left looked at him seriously. "You should not be so rude to us."

"I will talk to you however I want!" bellowed Whiskers, now turning a little purple.

"I told you that you needed some help relating with people." laughed Hobson, enjoying every moment of this.

"You can *definitely* shut up now, Doctor!" howled Whiskers, who was quite clearly losing control of the situation very quickly.

The other henchman spoke, in a much squeakier voice than anyone expected. "We are not idiots!"

Whiskers spun round to the unexpected interruption.

"*What did you squeak?*"

"I said, we are not idiots" said the second henchman, almost in a whisper.

"Look, this may come as a surprise to you two idio... Err, I mean valued members of staff, that I did not employ you for your intellect, as great as I

am sure it is. I employed because you are huge and willing to do exactly what I tell you, without question." sighed Whiskers, who really did not need this kind of thing right now.

"Well maybe we do not want to do that anymore." yelped the first henchman.

"You *idiots* will do what I tell you!"

"We have names..." pouted the second henchman. "I bet that you do not even know them, do you?"

Whiskers looked like while he was in the middle of reading a book, someone had poked him in the ear with a frozen kipper.

"What?"

The first henchman coughed, "Our names, do you know them?"

Whiskers looked around, hoping desperately that someone would say something that he could understand. He looked briefly at Doctor Hobson, still cheerily juggling possibly priceless gems, and that only made him seethe with anger.

Whiskers could only wonder why today was now going so badly for him, it had started so well as well. He put his head in his hands and sighed, and then spoke like he was talking to a small child.

"No, I do not know your names. I do know that I pay you to do what I tell you to do." Whiskers paused for a moment, before speaking again.

"Although I have now completely forgotten what it was that I wanted you two idiots to do."

"You wanted them to grab me." giggled Hobson.

"Thank you for your aide memoire Doctor." He then turned to the first henchman, "Will you idiots just grab her?"

"I'm called Geoff."

Whiskers just stood there with his mouth opening and closing like a broken drawer.

"And I am Dave."

"Hello, Geoff and Dave" smiled Hobson.

Both of them smiled and said hello back to the Doctor.

"NOW THAT WE HAVE ALL BEEN INTRODUCED WOULD ONE OF YOU GRAB HER?" shouted Whiskers.

"Ooh, you made me jump then, I nearly dropped these valuable gems!" said Hobson.

"Yes very funny Doctor, but I will be having the last laugh." shouted Whiskers again, who seemed a little tetchy.

Both of the henchmen lurched towards Hobson, and faster than the blink of an eye she threw one of the gems in either direction.

THADUNK!

THADUNK!

The gems found their target, hitting them both hard on their foreheads and knocking them onto their bums.

The Doctor carried on just juggling with the last gem as Whiskers stood there with his mouth open.

Both of his henchmen were knocked out.

"Your move Whiskers" said the Doctor, a bit cockily, but she felt the shots that she had just taken at the henchmen probably warranted it. At this exact moment the doors behind her were pushed open violently, the swung forwards making Whiskers look up to see what was going on.

What was going on was that Bones had finally got to the top of the stairs, had thrown open the stairs extravagantly and had then realised he was totally out of breath and bent over to catch his breath. Completely forgetting that the doors that he had just pushed open would swing back shut.

THWACK!

"Ow!" Said Bones as he rubbed his head. He really did not need that on top of everything, he needed to look like he was in charge and ready to deal with whatever Whiskers was doing. As he straightened himself up and squinted in pain around the room, he saw that the two henchmen were lying on the floor with red marks flowering on their foreheads and the gems lying next to them.

He then looked across and saw Whiskers looking baffled and then he looked at Hobson and saw her juggling the one gem and quickly realised what she had done.

"Good shot Hobson." He said, as he walked into the room. The Doctor did not answer, she only nodded as she stepped sideways to meet Bones without turning her back on Whiskers.

"Good Evening Whiskers." bowed Bones politely, "Although I suspect that it isn't that good for you is it?"

Whiskers spluttered in fury, making lots of noises, but none of them were actual words.

"I would imagine that this means that you are looking for a specific gem, not just all of them, and you do not know which one it is in all of this mess?" Bones smiled, somewhat smugly.

"That's about right Bones." smiled Hobson back at him.

"I HAVE HAD ABSOLUTELY ENOUGH OF YOU TWO!" Shouted Whiskers and pulled a gun out of his jacket pocket and waved it menacingly at our two heroes.

I am not sure why I said that he waved it menacingly, no one waves a gun in a friendly way do they? A gun is a pretty sure way of letting people know that you do not want to be their friend. Both of our heroes recognised this and stiffened up and stopped smiling quite so much.

"Aah, now I see that I have your attention. Is this not as funny anymore?" yelped Whiskers.

"Oh, it's still funny, just a bit more dangerous." chided Hobson, who was clearly the braver of the two of them. She noted that Bones was bravely trying to hide behind her as she carried on juggling. She had long ago realised that her continued juggling with the gem was distracting Whiskers, and annoying him. Annoyed people do not make good decisions, do they?

Whiskers breathed heavily, while considering what to do next. He moved around back and forth looking for the gem that he was wanted, all of the time keeping the gun pointed at Bones and Hobson.

Suddenly Bones had an idea, and stepped forward alongside the Doctor.

"Whiskers?"

"Hmm?" Said Whiskers without looking at Bones, as he was looking around for the gem.

"I was just wondering if you had looked underneath your resonator?" Said Bones.

"Not yet, why?" Said Whiskers with a confused look on his face.

"Well, all of the biggest signs are on that side of the room. I assume that you want the most expensive, most important gem in the room?"

"Of course. Why would I want anything less?" Sneered Whiskers.

"It is going to be in the bit of the room with the most signs and the biggest alarm isn't it?" Said Bones, getting a little frustrated that Whiskers had not already realised what he was getting at.

"You know what Bones? That is a very good idea, I shall go and have a look. Meanwhile you two can back away to the doors so that I can see what you are doing."

He waved the gun again, this time trying to show them that they should back away. They did. When Whiskers looked away Bones silently got his catapult out of his coat pocket and held behind his back. Hobson saw what he was doing and nodded at him.

"Whiskers! Look in that case to your left." Shouted Bones, trying to get Whiskers to stand where he needed him to without Whiskers realising that. Whiskers looked at him thoughtfully and edged carefully over to the case while keeping his eyes on the two of them.

"Do you think he is in the right place?" Whispered Bones to Hobson, who shook her head and then pointed her head to the left.

"How about that next one to it?" Said Bones.

Whiskers started to move across to it. It seemed as if it suddenly occurred to him that his enemy was helping him.

"Why are you helping me?" he asked.

Bones was irritated that he had tipped Whiskers off that he was planning to do something.

"Erm, we have lost to you, Whiskers, so I thought that I might as well help you find what you are looking for. I like a puzzle and where the gem is located is certainly a puzzle, alright" lied Bones, hoping that it was enough to convince Whiskers.

It was. It can be very easy to bully a bully into doing what you want. Whiskers nodded after hearing Bones admit that he had won.

"Nice to hear that you know that you have lost out to a greater mind in the end Bones. No hard feelings eh?" said Whiskers smugly as he walked across confidently to the next gem case and peered in.

"None at all Whiskers" said Bones. "Can I ask you a question though?"

"Why of course, I would be delighted to explain how my superior brain beat you in the end" said Whiskers without looking up.

"I was just wondering something about your resonator device" said Bones.

"Oh?"

"Well, you have several hundred birds inside that machine when it is armed?"

"Indeed. At the moment there are 440 I believe." -

"Well, I do not want to sound rude, but what happens to all of the poo that they make?"

Whiskers jolted up and looked at Bones directly. "I am a little disappointed that someone as clever as you would want to know about something so, childish."

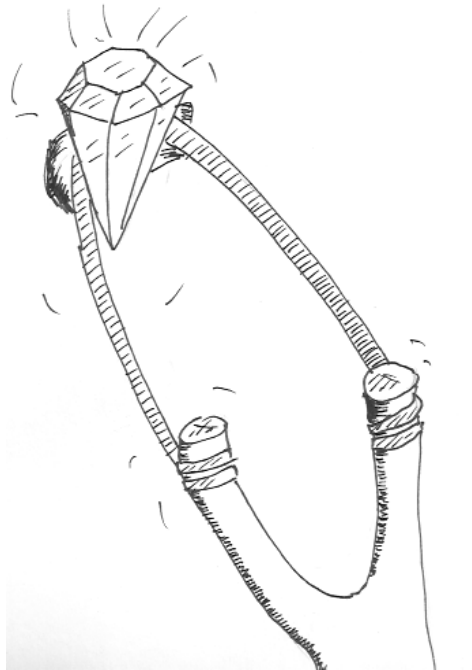
"I am concerned about the welfare of the birds, that is all."

Whiskers went back to looking through the broken glass. "The valve at the bottom of the machine comes off and it comes out there. As I have said, the birds are perfectly safe and looked after."

"You have said that Whiskers, you have said that" said Bones taking his catapult out from behind his back and aiming at the valve on the resonator.

The same resonator that Whiskers was now standing directly beneath.

Bones pulled the elastic of his catapult back as far as it would go, still aiming at the valve. Whiskers looked up at him.



"What are you doing? Have you gone mad, what use is a catapult when I have a gun?" laughed Whiskers cruelly.

"None at all, until you add in quite a large amount of bird poo..." Bones said.

Whiskers looked up and realised where Bones had got him to stand and why, but by now it was too late.

"Now!" Shouted Bones, and Hobson threw the last gem that she had into the pad at the back of the catapult, immediately Bones let go of it,

The elastic twanged back from its stressed position and fired the gem across the room at great speed until it connected with the valve on the bottom of the resonator, immediately breaking it off.

There was a brief moment where nothing seemed to happen.

The gem dropped near Whiskers feet who realised that it was actually the one that he had been looking for the whole time. He was so greedy that he immediately bent over to pick it up, forgetting what was about to happen.

Suddenly there was a noise like a massive cork coming out of a huge wine bottle, followed by a smell so strong that Bones winced. It reminded him of the smell in the Professor's office, and he certainly did not want to be reminded of that.

The white bird poo fell from the resonator and covered Whiskers so heavily that it knocked him off his feet, causing him to fall and to throw the gem to one side in one direction, which Hobson dived and rolled acrobatically to catch. Whisker's gun flew off in the other direction and landed at Bones feet.

Bones couldn't stand guns so kicked it away behind him.

Whiskers was not going to be able to go anywhere as the poo quickly hardened around him, holding him on the floor. Bones took his phone out of his pocket and dialled LeStrange.

"Yes, it's all sorted. Send some back up please to detain Whiskers and his two henchmen. You might need some gloves and air freshener too. Why? Oh, I am not going to spoil the surprise, you will have to wait to see for yourself."

Hobson passed the gem to Bones, "Seems a lot of fuss for that doesn't it?" She said.

"It does, especially as it is a fake" said Bones, matter-of-factly.

"How do you know that?" Gaspd Hobson.

"Simple. When we escaped Whisker's lair I rang the people that run the museum and told them Whiskers plan so they should clear the area for the safety of their staff. At which point the manager mentioned that they had had a fake of the gem made for security, so I asked them to put it in the case." smiled Bones.

Whiskers could obviously hear what Bones had said as he groaned loudly from inside his shell of poo.

"Not been a good day for you Whiskers has it? Sorry old chap. Shall we go get some tea, Hobson?"

"That is the best idea that you have had all day." she laughed.

"You know, I think that it maybe is." chuckled Bones as they left.

That just about wraps that up.

The next day Hobson and Bones were back at the zoo, with a large crowd behind some fences to see the birds back in their natural habitat. Not that the zoo was their natural habitat of course, but it was their home.

All of the birds that Whiskers had stolen for his resonator were in the process of being returned to the places that they had been stolen from, Whiskers had been as good as his word on that at least, all of the birds *had* been looked after.

After being checked over by a vet to make sure that they were all in good health, the only confusion was which birds lived in which zoos, as a lot of budgies look alike to be honest. They are also quite loud birds, so everyone had headaches, and the noise was making Doctor Hobson feel quite tense. She was still a cat after all.

The mayor of London walked up towards the crowd and stood at to the podium that all of the crowd and the TV cameras were pointing at. You would think that the mayor of an important city like London would have dressed up for such an important occasion in front of the world's press, but he looked like he had been dragged through a hedge backwards (**and then forwards again**) before having someone ruffle up his blond hair.

And put a few more sticks in it for good measure.

He stepped forward and spoke in a voice so posh that almost no actual words that made any sense came out. Some people might say that he did this to make people think that he was funny and not actually listen to what he was saying, not me though. Nope, not me,

"I, er, well that is our great. Yes. Great. Yes, our great honour to welcome the incomparable and brilliant crime fighting team that we are so proud to say live in our city" he bumbled.

Hobson looked at Bones and raised an eyebrow, causing Bones to snigger . The cameras all swung round quickly towards him, taking him somewhat by surprise.

The mayor seemed not to have noticed and just carried on talking. "Proud! Hmm, proud, to be able to say that they live in our city." he repeated.

"Ladies and gentleman, please put your hands together. Erm, unless you have glue on your hands, because then they will be stuck together. Hmm, make a note of that someone, no one with glue on their hands should clap."

"Is that a big problem Mayor?" Asked Hobson, "People having glue on their hands I mean."

The mayor waffled a bit more, seemingly ignoring Hobson, until eventually he ended one of his long winded mumbled sentences with the words "Fetlock Bones and Doctor Hobson."

Suddenly lots of people started clapping very loudly, mostly in relief that he had finally stopped talking.

Our duo stood there looking slightly uncomfortable. Neither of them particularly liked the fame that came with their work, but people did seem fascinated by what they did. Neither of them really knew why, but they waved and smiled anyway.

Behind them the curtain opened in front of the cages with all of the returned birds in, including Eric Bumblebottom the Third. He had now achieved international star status and would soon be appearing on talk shows and news programmes the world over. Eventually he would become terrifically rich and be able to go and live in Australia. Odd how things work out really.

So that is the end of this chapter in the life of Fetlock Bones, the great dog detective, and his companion Doctor Hobson. They both looked out at the large crowd and smiled as they people cheered.

"Whiskers is in Police custody, we should be happy with a job well done" said Bones.

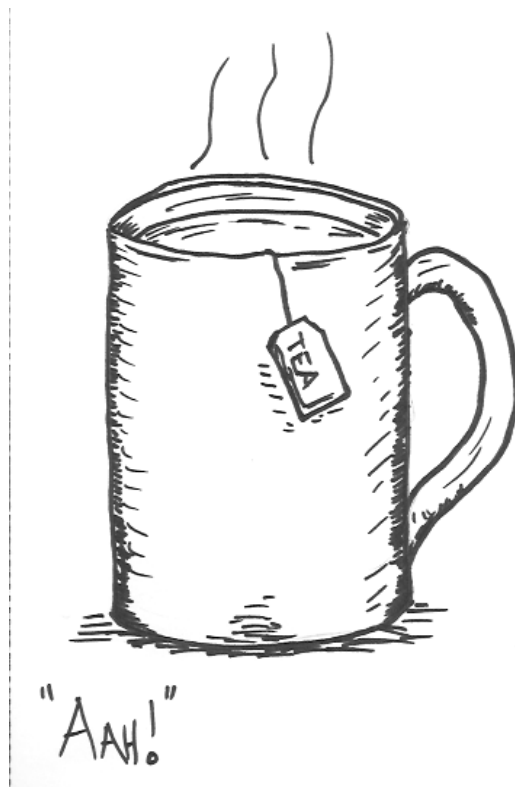
"Yes. Although I suspect that it will not be the last time that we see him." sighed Hobson.

Bones agreed, but just kept on smiling at the audience, who eventually went quiet waiting for the two of them to say something.

They moved awkwardly up to the podium, and Bones tapped the microphone, making a loud bang that made the audience jump.

"Sorry" said Bones. "Is there any tea around here?"

THE END.



About the author.

Hello, my name is Trevor. I am old enough to know better, but luckily old enough that I do not care either.

I am owned by a wife, several children and cats.

I have written comedy for many years, and sometimes said the words myself on stage. I have a proper job as well as doing this writing lark but I am hoping that one day that there will be a way around that.

I do not just write children's books, in fact this is the first one. I hope to get better with each try. I have written some theatre plays for children though.

When I am not writing I am usually to be seen bashing my head repeatedly off my desk trying to make the ideas come out. (This is only partly true, why not try guessing which bit?)

Like Fetlock, I am partially powered by tea.

Thank you for reading this, and I hope that you enjoyed it. I am planning more adventures for Fetlock Bones and Doctor Hobson to have together. I hope that you would like to read them.

About the Arthur.

I do not know anyone called Arthur. Sorry that I cannot be any more help.

Fetlock Bones and Doctor Hobson face their most fiendish case yet. Why would someone want to steal hundreds of exotic birds from zoos all across the country? What could they possibly want with them?

Maybe they were taken by a robber duck?

Bones will soon find the culprit and have them singing like a songbird.

Armed only with a catapult, a large hat, a vegetable spring roll and his amazing powers of deduction, Bones has to work his way through a riotously funny story with more twists and turns than a game of Snakes and Ladders covered in oil.

Why did the chicken cross the road? Now we know the answer, it was to buy a copy of this hilarious children's book, that is too good just for kids.



"I hope that I didn't give away everything that we know, if they rubbed my tummy I will have done." Said Bones.

Hobson looked at him sternly.

"What? I am a dog, I cannot help it."