



CHAPTER 1

Dummie the Mummy

The most amazing things happened to Angus Gust. He took trips to the North Pole in a submarine, he won the lottery, he was the first ten-year old to be allowed to travel to Mars and he became world famous for being able to play the recorder with his toes. That wasn't all, he could talk to things too. If he said, "Knife, why don't you cut the bread properly?" the knife would reply, "Because I don't want to cut right now. I'm not feeling that sharp today." That was a good joke coming from a knife and Angus split his sides laughing. Another time he had a row with a door which wouldn't close and with a sock which had hidden from him.

All in all, Angus was simply the most special child

in the entire world. Well, in his own imagination, he was.

Angus' real life was terribly normal. That was because he lived in Polderdam. Polderdam was the most boring village in the country. And probably in the whole world. Nothing ever happened to people who lived in Polderdam.



Angus lived with his father Nick in an old house outside the village. To be honest, he looked as normal as the rest of the children in Polderdam. He had normal brown hair, blue eyes and his nose wasn't flat, nor was his chin pointy or anything. Yes, his face was covered in freckles, but other children in his class had freckles too. He wasn't particularly good or particularly bad at anything and he wasn't cool either. And he didn't hate anybody, only a couple of girls in his class. And Miss Frick too, of course. But everyone hated her.

Every day Angus just went to school and got normal grades. Then he went home again and just did normal things, like watching TV and playing games. Or he cooked. He had to, because sometimes his father was too busy. Angus couldn't cook, so usually he just fried six eggs and he and his father ate them with bread.



Nick Gust was an artist and painted paintings which nobody bought. His whole shed was full of them. But it also meant he was always home and so Nick and Angus could do everything together. They looked after each other (Nick looked after Angus a bit more than the other way round) and they had lots of fun together. Nick rarely got angry, only at his paintings. He swore at them and said things like, “Ugly cottypot!” It was a swearword he had specially invented, because Angus and his father did not allow swearing in the house. He had also invented “Whumpy dumpman” and he

used that for all other things. When he shouted “Ugly cottypot!” it meant his painting had gone wrong. Then he’d wave his paintbrushes angrily and wipe more paint on his trousers than on the canvas. He would get furious about it, but Angus couldn’t help finding it funny.

“Do you think it’s any fun being a painter?” Nick would roar when this happened.

“Then you should do something else!” Angus would laugh.

“No! I can’t do anything else!” Nick would shout.

And then Angus would say that his father couldn’t paint either, and that he’d be better off framing his trousers, because they looked like a painting too by now.



Angus could say that kind of thing to his father. Angus could say anything he wanted to his father, because he didn't have anyone else. Until Dummy turned up at their house, at least.

A little while ago, Angus had also invented his own swearword. At first it was "Poopy dingle" but after a day he had changed it to "Blasting cackdingle". That sounded angrier.

Nick had roared with laughter. "You've got a good imagination, son," he'd chuckled.

"I've got it from you," Angus had said.

And that's how things were between Angus and Nick. Despite the fact that they lived in a boring village, they had a good time, just the two of them. They both thought so. Although, Nick had recently said that perhaps it wasn't such a good thing that Angus never played with other children.

"I've got you, though," Angus had replied. "And my imagination. And our house with all our talking things and all of their stories."

"I still think it would be good if you played with other children," Nick said.

"I'm doing alright, aren't I?" Angus asked.

"Sure, you're doing alright," his father replied quickly.

"Well then," Angus said.

After that they hadn't mentioned it again. They were happy with just the two of them. And Angus had never expected that to change.

Until Dummie arrived.



On that strange evening, Angus and his father were sitting at the table. Nick had cooked and they were eating macaroni and broccoli. Nick put broccoli in everything because broccoli has lots of vitamins, he said.

There was a storm blowing outside.

“The clouds are having an argument,” Angus said, with his mouth full. “**BIL HENNAH IL SHIFFA.**”

“Slafsa saliki?” his father wanted to know.

Angus burst out laughing. “**BIL HENNAH IL SHIFFA**” is Egyptian for enjoy your food. Mr Scribble taught us that. I told you about the schools’ competition about Egypt, didn’t I? That’s in a couple of month’s time. And now we have to learn about Egypt every day.”

“Shouldn’t you be learning maths?” Nick asked.

“We do, in between,” Angus said. “But I think the competition is more important to Mr Scribble. He took all the maps down off the wall. And now there are all kinds of posters in the classroom, of pyramids and stuff like that. Of a golden mask from one of those dead pharaohs.”

“Tutankhamun,” Nick said.

“Yes, that one.” Angus took another mouthful of food. “Can we go on holiday to Egypt?”

“If I sell a few paintings,” his father said.

This meant no. Nick had once inherited some money and it had allowed them to buy food and paint. But they had to scrimp and save, and they never went on holiday.

“It’s not as expensive as you think,” Angus said. “You only need swimming trunks. Then we’ll go and feed the crocodiles in the Nile. And climb the pyramids. And

then we'll visit the graves. And then we'll discover a secret burial chamber, where no one has been before, and it will have ten of those coffins in it."

"Sarcophagi," his father said.

"Yes, those. And we'll find the treasure and we'll be rich."

"And then one of those mummies will take revenge on us," Nick chuckled. "You won't catch me there. We'll just stay here in our own home. No money and no cares. But we have each other."

"MAASHI," Angus said. "That's Egyptian for OK."

They had finished. Nick went to the shed to wash his brushes and Angus cleared the table. Then he went upstairs.

That is where Angus saw him.

At first he didn't notice him. He went into his bedroom and smelled something disgusting. Angus immediately thought back to a month previously, when he had smelled something like that and there had been a mouse rotting in the attic. Now it smelled like an entire family of mice were rotting. Angus giggled, his father would have to go up into the attic again. Nick hated the attic, it hit him on the head every ten seconds with its broad beams. Last time he had shouted "Whumpy dumpman!" at least ten times, and after that a real swearword too.

Angus decided immediately to tell his father a bit later, picked up a book and threw back his duvet. He jumped out of his skin. He was too shocked to even shout. He recoiled in horror. There was something

in his bed. Or someone. Or rather something than someone. He shook his head but it didn't make any difference. He squeezed his eyes shut, but when he opened them again, the thing was still lying there. It looked just like the thing on one of the posters in his classroom. That was a mummy. A mummy was lying in his bed. A mummy?!

Angus just stood there for at least thirty seconds. Then he slapped his forehead. Dad, he thought. He'd fallen for it again. His father had pulled a practical joke on him. Nick had already put a scarecrow on the toilet once. That was a joke too. Angus had peed his pants in fright and his father had split his sides laughing. That might sound mean, but a week earlier, Angus had been the one to scare his father. He had painted himself green, and he had jumped into his father's studio beeping like an alien, almost giving Nick a heart attack. At least, that was what he said.

So now his father had made a fake mummy as punishment. Well, he had done a good job, with tattered old bits of bandage. And the smell was also very convincing. Stink bombs perhaps. Angus chuckled and decided to drag the thing to his father's bed. Or no, he'd put it in the car. That would be a good joke!

He approached the bed smiling to himself.

"GRAAGH, WHRAAG," the mummy groaned.

Angus nearly fell backwards in surprise. Blasting cackdingle! The thing could make a noise! It moved! It... it got up!

Angus didn't wait any longer, but flew out of the

room, slammed the door and leaned against it. His heart was racing. That wasn't a doll! The mummy was alive! He had seen it with his own eyes. Hadn't he? Hey? Was he going mad?

He opened the door and cautiously peered through the chink. He wasn't going mad. The mummy swung both of his legs out of the bed, sat on the edge and looked out of the window. It was open a little. That's how he got in, Angus realised in a flash.

The mummy obviously hadn't seen Angus. He



stood up and began to nose around. He picked up a pen from Angus' desk, held it up to his head and dropped it again, he did the same with a few books, a notebook and a pair of socks. Meanwhile he babbled away, "ГЕЛЕИТСА" and "ГОТЕР" and words like that. Then he picked up Angus' radio. He turned a dial and all of a sudden loud music blared out. The mummy was terrified. He dropped the radio and dived under Angus' bed. Normally Angus would have roared with laughter, but no sound came out of his mouth.

After a while, the mummy crawled out from under the bed again and tiptoed towards the radio. He bent down, listened and all of a sudden gave the radio a big whack. "СИРАР!" he hissed. The music stopped immediately. The mummy said something else foreign, maybe it was "hooray" or "I won" or something like that. Next he walked to Angus' wardrobe and began to make a big mess of all the clothes. When he'd finished, he started trampolining on the bed, jumping from the pillow onto the duvet and back again.

Angus had had enough. He wasn't going to wait until the mummy had destroyed his entire bedroom, he had to fetch his father!

He closed the door and ran downstairs.

Nick was sitting in his red armchair in front of the television with his eyes closed. He often had a nap there. He did this every evening and Angus wasn't allowed to speak to him for half an hour, unless the house was on fire. If there was a mummy in the house, it was probably alright too.

“Dad! Dad!” a flustered Angus shouted, shaking Nick by the shoulder.

“Quiet, I’m sleeping,” Nick said with his eyes closed.

“Dad! There’s a— There’s a—” Angus faltered. Should he just say that there was a mummy in his bedroom that stank of dead mice and had whacked his radio?

“Is there a fire?” his father asked.

“No. But—”

“Well, out with it then!” his father said impatiently. And when Angus remained silent, “Just tell me what it is!”

“Alright. There’s someone in my bedroom. A mum—”

“What? A burglar?” Nick jumped up, suddenly wide awake, and rushed to the door.

“Stop! Wait a minute, Dad. It’s not a burglar.”

“A tramp who’s broken in then? Stay here. I’ll get that tramp—”

“Dad! It’s not a tramp either!” Angus cried. “There’s a mummy in my bedroom!”

His father stood stock still. “What kind of a mummy?” he asked foolishly.

“You know, the kind made of loads of bandages with a dead person inside!”

“Whumpy dumpman!” Nick tapped the side of his forehead with his finger. “You won’t get me to fall for that one. Son, give up on the jokes. You’ll give me another heart attack.”

“I’m not lying! There’s a mummy upstairs! Don’t you believe me?”

“No!” Nick said.

“But it’s really true! We have to do something!”