



Henry Potty and the Pet Rock

An Unauthorized Harry Potter Parody

VALERIE ESTELLE FRANKEL

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To all those in need of healing through the joy of laughter. I sure hope it helps.

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Introduction:

That Little Chapter Before the Prologue

Author's Note: The characters in this story are trained professionals. They have a great deal of experience at flying on vacuum cleaners, creating hot dogs by magical means, or scheming to achieve eternal life and total world domination. Please, do not try these things at home.

Supplementary Note: Adults, don't worry. This book is rated G and perfectly suitable for children of all ages. Children, don't worry. If your parents try to sneak the book away so that they can read it themselves, you can always hide it under the floorboards of a haunted, abandoned mansion with rhinoceros guards in pink polka-dot bathing suits to prevent anyone from taking it. Or failing that, it's small enough to go under your pillow.

Supplementary Supplement: This book has been translated from American English into British English. From there it was translated into English English, and then went through a brief stint in Swedish, just for a change of pace. After that, it was translated back into American English with possible lapses, and currently exists as the original draft that you hold in your hands.

Supplement to the Supplementary Supplement: This is a work of fiction. However, all characters are probably disturbingly similar to characters you've seen in other places. Try not to be alarmed. After all, even serious characters need a vacation.

PS: Let's get on with the story already, shall we?

Prologue:

That Little Chapter After the Introduction

but Before the Beginning of the Story

The world is full of miracles. When you buy a cinema hot dog and it's actually flexible, that is a miracle. When you tell the telemarketer that you're not interested, and he says, oh, okay, sorry to bother you, that's a miracle. When you get a letter in the mailbox saying you may have won a new car, that's just junk mail, we don't care about that right now.

On the steps of number 23232323.32 Privy drive, Somewhere in England, (land of Shakespeare, British accents, and saying crisps when you mean chips) a baby left in an asparagus crate on a doorstep screamed and screamed. His survival was another such miracle, given how many people wanted him dead. Or at least severely hurt. The asparagus seller probably would have settled for getting his crate back, since all of his little asparaguses were currently rolling about helplessly on the floor. But the incredibly evil bad guy planning to take over the world definitely wanted him dead. It was in his job description.

And so, this miracle baby lay in his asparagus box, wailing at an unjust world that really didn't care all that much. His speech, composed of such eloquent words as "Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!" meant, in baby talk, "What do you mean I have to wait ten years before I'm the star of this book? I'm here, the readers are reading! I want fame, I want fortune, I want to see my lawyer, I want my own brand of breakfast cereal, I want..."

Fortunately for everyone concerned, ten years flew by in the space of a few lines, as the book propelled forwards to chapter one. Since he was the hero of the novel, the author couldn't drop an anvil on the whiny brat, much as she wanted to.

Chapter 1: A PILE OF LETTERS

In a house so ordinary that it fairly screamed not to be noticed, from the beige carpet that went with

everything (including stains) to the Beware of Rabid Hamster sign that kept out the salesmen, there lived a family. It was a perfectly ordinary family, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Dorky, their son, Dumpy, and their gallant yet ill-treated household slave.

Oh, Henry Potty preferred calling himself a freedom-inhibited individual, but the name didn't change the situation as much as he'd hoped. Even subscribing to Menial Drudges United Newsletter did little to relieve his suffering. Still, Henry smiled through the abuse as Dumpy Dorky tried to pull his ears off and experimented on Henry with his sinister mold growing kit. For Henry knew that he was special. You see, he had...*a destiny*.

Henry had known this ever since he stumbled across the note that had been left beside his basket. All of the best heroes have been abandoned in baskets, starting with Breadbasket Fred, who went on to start a national chain of French fry restaurants. In any case, the letter caught Henry's attention thanks to the six-inch letters on top that said, "Never, under any circumstances allow Henry Potty to read this letter." His cousin had left it in Henry's room, less from a sense of destiny and more from the fact that he still hadn't learned to read. He was only twelve, after all.

The letter read, "Destiny has marked this boy for greatness. Bring him up so he doesn't get a stuffed head. Oh, and make sure he wears clean socks. I can't abide foot fungus. Signed, a Mysterious Elusive Benefactor who

"Like?"

"Me."

"You? You're less attractive than leftover gruel at Thanksgiving."

"Oh, that reminds me. I want a snack," Dumpy said. "It's been five minutes since I had breakfast."

"Of course, my little love-pudding," Pilluffa said. Henry knew she called him that for his shape rather than his sweetness. Pilluffa's long, pointy nose would've marked her as the evil stepmother type of woman, even if her stringy hair and green skin hadn't given her away. Henry's nicknaming her Aunt Pill completed the image. "Why don't I order the slave...er, your cousin, to fix you a nice cup of lard with a plate of double-stuffed cream buns and you can show me all the Q minuses on your report card."

Henry shuddered. Bread and water weren't so bad, considering. At least he knew that the source of Dumpy's quarrelsome mood was his being woken up really *really* early in the morning. It had barely been eleven AM when Henry had "accidentally" dropped the cast iron stove on the floor.

"Oh, Henry, I expect Dumpy wants some candy bars too," said Aunt Pilluffa.

Henry struggled to do the two chores at once, yet found it impossible. The candy bars were in the kitchen, while the lard was in the pantry and Henry just couldn't see a way to be in two places at once. At least, not and still be breathing.

&#"And I know you're occupied with shampooing the hamster and giving us pedicures and so forth, but take a moment to throw all these letters away. All two hundred-fifty-six of them clutter up the place and I can never have anyone to tea."

Pilluffa never had anyone to tea anyway, since even her dearest friends knew that she was the villainess of the book and refused to associate with her. Still, she could hope. Pilluffa plunged her sharp, evil stepmotherish fingernails in a bit deeper. "It could be fan letters."

"I doubt it," Henry sighed. "There isn't even a hint of a breeze coming out of them." Still, he picked up the top letter from the pile. At least someone out there wanted to hear from him. If he wrote back, at least he could include his recently updated Henry Potty Newsletter.

He opened the letter.

Dear Henry,

You probably haven't figured this out, but your frequent use of magic identifies you as a gizzard! If you are half as talented as you say you are, we would be happy to welcome you to our school. While you are researching the doubtless equally exemplary schools in England, you may want to consider sunny California for your student needs. Our school of Chickenfeet Academy looms over a beautiful trash-free beach, only minutes from the nearest strip malls, fast food joints, and of course, Hollywood. Some slanderous citizens have named us a fourth-rate school. This is entirely untrue! In fact, we feel proud to rank ourselves among the grandest third-rate schools of the nation. Word of your fame has reached us, even halfway across the world. Well, perhaps a third across the world. The Atlantic is a small ocean, as oceans go. Unless you compute by time zones, in which case it's the same as Hong Kong, just in the opposite direction...where was I? Oh, yes.

Please let us know if you're interested in being our first student ever to graduate.

Yours truly,

Professor Bumbling Bore

"It sounds interesting," Henry said.

"You'd be gone all year?" his aunt wondered.

"Yep."

"Hmm, this sounds like a good program."

Menial Drudges United had been campaigning for years and was slowly accumulating rights. In a few years, they might even rebel against mucking out stables. In the meantime, they were demanding shovels.

So much authority in the hands (or rather, shovels) of slaves was quite frightening for the innocent, hard working common folk who had throttled them all those years. So now that the opportunity had come to be rid of their household laborer, Henry's family jumped at the chance. Well, his aunt and uncle jumped. Dumpy Dorky needed several schoolmates heaving his excess flab before he could so much as stand.

Within the week, Henry's bags were packed and he was ready to go. His relatives herded him to the plane. "But I've never left England before!"

"Shut up, we're giving you your freedom."

"Yes, those Americans will bring you up right."

His aunt and uncle bid him an emotional goodbye, even refraining from throwing garbage at him. Dumpy showed no such restraint.

His fairy godmother was there to meet him when he got off the plane. "Hello, my dear, I'm your fairy godmother. And I shall give you a gown and a magic pumpkin coach, and everything that you need to go to the ball!" She wore a fluffy pink taffeta gown and rosy high-heeled shoes that raised her heels so far off the ground that Henry was amazed she could walk. Henry noticed that the woman was surrounded by singing birds, mice, and four off-key hedgehogs.

"I have a fairy godmother?"

"Everyone needs a godmother or godfather. Get serious!"

"Well, thank you for your offer, but I'm not going to a ball. I'm going to Chickenfeet Academy."

"Oh!" The woman flicked her wand, changing into pink army camouflage with tall, rosy combat boots. "Then let's hit those back to school sales!"

"Aw, why do I have to go shopping?"

"It's to bore the readers, so they'll be more impressed when something actually happens later in the book," his fairy godmother said.

"Why don't we just skip that section?"

Henry left the store carrying all the things that he would need in the following year, including a cauldron, as well as a hot-drun, several gizzard bathrobes in a variety of tasteful colors with color-matched socks and hair ribbons, a small set of scales, the snake that the scales came off, several grapefruit, and a small elephant.

"Wait, you forgot your wand!" his godmother protested, scurrying to catch up after all the pages her fairy godson had skipped.

Henry left the store carrying all the things that he would need in the following year, including a cauldron, a hot-drun, several gizzard bathrobes in a variety of tasteful colors with color-matched socks and hair ribbons, a small set of scales, the snake that the scales came off, several grapefruit, a small elephant, and a magic wand.

"Not like that," his godmother scolded. "The wand, at least, you're buying properly."

She led him to *The Wand Guys*, and pushed him inside. "Henry Potty," murmured a tall, attractive woman with rosy cheeks and an umbrella. She held a tape measure up to his ear and let the other end fall to the floor. "Not an ideal charge for nannies. Doesn't put his socks away."

"Aren't you in the wrong book, dear?" Henry's godmother asked.

"You haven't advertised for a nanny?"

"Dear me, no! Henry's going off to Chickenfeet Academy."

"I'm sorry to have troubled you, then."

"Oh, no, not at all. I have to go meet Sleeping Beauty in a few pages anyway," the godmother said.

The mysterious nanny raised her umbrella and flew off with it, soaring higher and higher into the sky. After a few moments came a screech of dismay and the twang of overstretched telephone wires. Henry's fairy godmother turned her attention to Henry, who was busy counting the dots in the ceiling and trying to find patterns in them, despite the fact that the ceiling was solid black.

"Henry! Wake up. You need to get a wand."

"Really? Most people say I need to get a life. I suppose a wand would be easier."

Henry's godmother sighed. "All right. Now, stand on one foot, put the other leg behind your head, and hold your arms out in front of you. Then shut your eyes. Oh, and try to wiggle your ears."

Henry did as he was told. "So this will help you figure out what kind of wand to get me?" He heard a faint humming sound. Perhaps it was a burst of magic delving into his soul to find him the perfect wand to treasure for the rest of his life.

Actually, it was the record button on his fairy godmother's video camera. "No, this is for my submission to America's Funniest Fairygodchildren," she said.

"But what about my wand?" Henry asked, still trying to wiggle his ears.

"Oh. Here." She pulled the closest wand off a shelf and tossed it to Henry, who jumped and caught it in his mouth while still maintaining his awkward position. "Good boy!" his godmother said. "Goodness, I could make twice as much money if I submitted this to America's Funniest Pets as well. Here, have a treat!" She tossed him a piece of candy and he opened his mouth wide to catch it, letting the wand drop in the process. The wand landed on his one supporting foot and he hopped about in pain, the chocolate bar still clenched in his teeth.

His godmother kept the camera rolling. "Gee, this'll make me a million. Maybe I could even go on that island show and make some real money."

Finally, Henry realized that he had his wand now, and didn't need to keep hopping with his other leg squashed behind his head just to entertain his fairy godmother and millions of Americans with nothing better to watch on TV. So he stopped.

Henry's fairy godmother sighed in disappointment and turned her camera off. "Guess there's nothing more to see." Bigfoot flew by the store window, riding on a UFO, but neither of the humans noticed. "Well, be good, Henry, and have fun in school," his godmother said.

"Wait! Don't I get wishes or blessings or anything?"

"Hmm, that's a good idea. At least it might keep you out of trouble." The fairy bopped Henry on the head with her wand.

"What did you do?" he asked.

"I hit you on the head with my wand. My goodness, couldn't you tell?"

"No, I mean, what did it accomplish?"

"It was fun." She bopped him a second time. "And that one's to bang some sense out of you." Immediately a small trickle of pennies cascaded from Henry's ears as Henry groaned. Being hit with a wand was bearable, but his godmother's pun was not.

"All right, fine, I'll give you your present." She waved her wand in an arc over Henry's head. Immediately, a brilliant light flooded down from above, blinding Henry and forcing him to squint.

"Could you turn that down?" he asked.

"Certainly." The light swiveled downwards to glare even closer to Henry's watering eyes.

"No, I mean turn down the intensity." Immediately, the brightest part of the light shot even closer to Henry and he covered his eyes in desperation. "Turn it off!" he howled.

"Of course, of course, no need to holler. Well, at least you seem a little brighter now. If we keep this up, you might even pass a few of your classes." The light thankfully dimmed.

"But what does the light do?" Henry asked.

"It's your conscience, Henry. When it glows like that, it means you've done a good deed. I just wish crickets weren't becoming an endangered species. This will send my electricity bill through the roof. Well? Aren't you going to say thank you?"

Henry grimaced. He wasn't that grateful for an enormous spotlight, and a conscience interested him even less. "Fairy Godmother? I was hoping for something a bit more substantial." Henry rubbed his fingers together in the universal sign for money.

His fairy godmother reached into her pink purse and retrieved a lint-covered lollipop. "Everything all right now? Good," she said and she vanished, not before smearing his forehead with a big, moist kiss, nearly taking the skin off in its intensity.

Then she popped back in. "Nearly forgot! Just remember; always let your conscience be your guide. Oh, and wear clean underwear." Then she popped out, leaving an aroma of lavender laundry soap and the bright tinkle of artificial music lingering in the air.

"Right," Henry said. "Conscience, how do I get to the train station?"

Blazing gold letters appeared in the sky before him. "What do I look like, the yellow pages? I'm only around to pick on you when you screw up, and heap guilt onto already bad situations. Now go call information and find someone who cares. And get a haircut."

"What good will cutting one of my hairs do?"

A large number of golden asterisks, exclamation points, and so forth implied that his conscience was busy spewing dirty words. "And another thing," the letters added. "It's not the Chickenfeet train, it's the Chickenfeet trainer."

Two exhausting hours of scurrying and begging for directions from anyone who looked remotely gizzardly later, Henry found himself at the trainer station. Asking for directions hadn't been so terribly embarrassing; he had just asked the wrong people. Gizzards could easily be identified under normal circumstances, since they were the ones wearing bathrobes and dunce caps. However, today was the insane asylum's monthly trip to the zoo, and they were all taking the train.

After Henry asked the fifth straitjacketed individual if he knew where Henry could take a giant sneaker to get to a castle called Chickenfeet that was full of gizzards, the white-clad attendants began to watch him with more than polite interest. After two of them started measuring him for his straightjacket size, Henry decided it would be a good idea to sprint in the opposite direction. Unfortunately, he became tangled with a rather large marching band that was going in the completely wrong direction, and after seeing his magic wand, all seventy-six trombone players decided he must be their conductor. Weary and bruised from being jabbed by all the trombones as the metal pieces (which are actually called slides, aren't you glad you learned something today?) had banged into him, Henry finally arrived at the Chickenfeet trainer.

It was a giant tennis shoe, in day-glow orange fierce enough to blind a bat. The Chickenfeet Trainer stood

several stories high, with purple laces and puffy glitter stickers all over it in a rainbow of colors. The effect was rather like popping one's eyes into a blender, putting it on extra-high, and then reaching in between the still-twirling blades to pop the eyeballs back into one's head. (Please don't try this. It's very bad for the blenders. In fact, the blender companies have already written forty-three letters of complaint. Be nice to blenders. Blenders are our friends.)

Henry hurried up to the old woman who stood beside the trainer taking tickets. "Are you the conductor?"

"No, young man. I'm just the old woman who lives in this shoe. I don't know what I'm going to do with all you children. Do you have a ticket?"

"Yeah, I guess." Henry vaguely remembered his fairy godmother giving him a ticket. Unfortunately, it was nowhere in sight. "Would you take this instead?" Henry asked, offering the lint-covered lollipop. But the woman was no longer paying attention to Henry's words. Instead, she stared at his forehead, her eyes widening until they were big as spotlights. "What's *that* on your forehead?"

"Huh?"

"That's a magic birthmark, isn't it?"

"I have a birthmark?"

"Go on board, please. Don't let me stop you, oh no. More than my life is worth to stop someone with an unsightly mark bestowed on him by destiny."

A bit puzzled at the obsequious shoe owner, Henry hurried on board, taking a moment to glance in the mirror in the train's bathroom. Gobs of bright red lipstick plastered his forehead in a wiggly horizontal shape, rather like a snake trying to tap dance.

After spending hours trying to chip, scrape, and scrub the red goop from his face, Henry returned to his seat. Time to brighten up his trip by indulging in some overpriced goodies. At the exact moment he thought that, the candy cart coincidentally rolled around, pushed by a witch in a purple-spotted bathrobe with a little white apron on top.

"Whatcha want?" she asked, chomping her gum like a waitress in a truck stop.

"What've you got?" Henry asked.

"Let's see, Sarm bars, Sernicks, Popsie roll toots, polilops, and tot parps.

"Those names sound awfully familiar," Henry said, staring at the colorful wrappings as he tried to discern what they contained. The cart displayed all sorts of other fascinating things as well. Spinach and jellybean sandwiches, prune nuggets, beef 'n' cheese ice cream, and plenty of other snacks that Henry couldn't envision eating, even if he were starving. The insoles of his tennis shoes looked far more palatable.

"Oh, yeah, they are. We just scrambled the names of the candies to make them sound more original."

"Well, I don't know..."

"Would you prefer many-flavored bugs or chocolate hogs? We got those, too."

"Er, that's all right. I think I'll try the MM&s. I have no idea what that name unscrambles to."

The candy cart witch rolled her eyes as she served Henry his snack. "Looks like you'll fit right in with the rest of the new students."

Chapter 2: OF RATS AND GIZZARDS

Waiting on the Chickenfeet platform to greet them was Higgle. He was large and rather hairy. Completely

hairy, in fact. Brownish fur that smelled suspiciously of gumdrops and sarm bars ballooned out from him in a perfect sphere, concealing everything but his face and the giant white tennis shoes that stuck out the bottom.

He had round, googly eyes that jiggled as he leaped back to avoid being trampled as the Chickenfeet Trainer came to a halt. And finally, Higgle wore a giant set of TV antennae so that he'd be sure to be spotted and

recognized. Besides, they were wonderful for lulling his pet rabbit, The Destroyer, into a state of calm. In short, Higgle looked like a giant fuzzy weepie.

Chickenfeet Academy towered above the students. Well, actually, it would be more accurate to say that the Academy bounced, jiggled, and more or less threatened to tumble down on their heads. The Chicken Feet themselves stretched hundreds of feet into the sky, as they pranced about in front of the trembling students. The Chicken Feet kicked, minced, tiptoed, and even got in a bit of Irish step dance before a bathrobed teacher ordered them to stop. The castle sat above them, bouncing in the wind as the Chicken Feet cavorted. Henry swallowed hard. He could already feel his stomach revolting at the thought of living in such a seasick, jolting place. Besides, from the smell of them, the feet hadn't been washed in quite a long while.

"Fherfunger legerakl" said Higgle.

"What?" asked a number of the students as they stood there in multicolored bathrobes. Several of them had already formed the instant friendships that would last for a lifetime. Others just wanted their mommies to come rescue them from the weird gizzards.

"He said, 'New students this way,'" said the resident ghost who had the assignment of following Higgle

around and translating his incomprehensible accent for the benefit of the incoming students.

They all paraded into Chickenfeet. Standing in the doorway to greet them was Bumbling Bore, the principal of the school. He wore hot pink surfer shorts, a t-shirt that was daringly cut to reveal his lack of muscles, and a pair of sunglasses with little palm trees on the sides. His glaring green button said, "Just 6 years, 3 months, and 202 days left till retirement." The principal's long white beard trailed on the ground, collecting candy wrappers and dog droppings.

"That's Bumbling Bore," Henry heard someone whisper. "The only gizzard Lord Revolting fears." An ominous rumble of thunder rumbled ominously somewhere off in the distance.

"Why's that?" someone asked.

"He has Lord Revolting's credit card numbers." The thunder rumbled again, this time sounding more like the ca-ching of a cash register.

"Why do you say gizzard?" Henry asked. Had he come to the wrong school? Could he get a refund?

"It's a new age California thing." The speaker smoothed back his spiky purple hair to reveal eight earrings per ear with hands displaying fourteen different shades of nail polish. His robe was tie-dyed in a rainbow of colors. "I should know; I'm from around here."

"Oh, all right, then."

"You know, there's lots of other cool California stuff," the colorful student said, determined to welcome the English visitor with proper courtesy. His friends smirked.

"You're not going to tape a Kick Me sign to my back, are you?" Henry asked. "We have that one in England, too."

"What? Oh, of course not. But walking around with a sign saying, 'Laugh At Me, I'm From Far Away' will make everyone accept you."

"And ask people for swirlies," a tiny girl with two brown braids added. "You'll love swirlies."

"Or, or hunting fried chickens," another boy added. "They live around here, see, and you just have to hold a bag open and call—"

"Welcome to Chickenfeet," Bumbling Bore interrupted from his podium. "All of you new students have an exciting year in store for you, filled with—" Here he was interrupted by loud snores as the entire school's new class tumbled to the ground fast asleep. To put it simply, Bumbling Bore was duller than an in flight magazine on *Air Sweden*.

When Bumbling Bore had finished his speech, being careful to start over from the very beginning whenever an untimely snore interrupted him, dinner was long over. In the interests of having the students awake enough to be assigned to dorms, he let another teacher take over the rest of orientation.

"We do dorm selection here by a totally fair and arbitrary process," said Millie McGonk, as the students piled

into the Sort-of Room. Millie McGonk was tall and stately, with a long nose and four green eyes (she wore spectacles). She also had blue fur, owing to a magical experiment a few years before when she had tried to turn herself into a cat and ended up as a blue, fuzzy monster with googly eyes and an insatiable hunger for cookies. Newly obsessed with cookies in every size, shape, and color, Miss McGonk let her magical studies slide and only continued teaching at the request of Bumbling Bore, who thought it made his school seem more equal opportunity, as it proved that he would hire people no matter what their color, or length of fur.

"We have four fine dormitories here," Miss McGonk said. "The Heroes' Dorm, The Dummies' Dorm, The Scumballs' Dorm, and the Leftovers' Dorm. Each of these housing facilities waits eagerly to welcome you. Very soon, our volunteers will bring in the Sorting Rat. Just hold out your finger and let the rat bite it. In that moment, before all the pain sets in, you'll hear a voice in your head and know which dorm you should be in. Then we'll start our tour of campus, beginning with the cookie shelf in the kitchen and continuing on to the infirmary and the band-aid cabinet. Also, I'd like to introduce Mr. Filth. He's our resident spy and tattletale. If he sees anyone doing anything he's suspicious of, it's his job to alert the authorities."

"And I will," Filth promised. "Alert is my middle name." He was a three-foot tall, rat-faced man, wearing a trench coat, deerstalker hat, bandolier full of variously sized magnifying glasses, and Agatha Christie style high heels. Tucked under his arm was his Crime Fighting kit: a butterfly net, police whistle, a fake mustache for disguises, and a stack of Solve-it-Yourself mysteries (recommended for ages 6-8).

Miss McGonk motioned to two students in the corner. Both of them pulled on heavy gloves that were covered in numerous scratches and bite marks. They left the room, and then returned a moment later, lugging between them a gray rat that must have weighed about fifty pounds. They set it reverentially on the floor, and then scurried away before it could bite them. The sharp-toothed, corpulent rat stood on the floor, belly dragging unsupported by the spindly legs. It gnashed its teeth and craned its neck for a victim.

"Don't crowd, everyone will have a turn," the teacher called. "Don't get too close to him or you'll make him nervous."

Henry watched as each student held out his or her finger to the rat, and then shrieked in agony as it bit. Each of them screamed out a dorm name, which Miss McGonk diligently wrote on her pad. Finally, it was Henry's turn. "Um, thanks, but I've decided to go back to England. I won't need a dorm."

"Don't be ridiculous," the teacher said. "Your relatives sent a note saying that they never want to see you again for as long as you live, until summer. Then they'll welcome you with open arms and you can spend three months trying to catch up on a year's chores. Now hold out your finger."

Turning away and shuddering, Henry extended his finger towards the slobbering rat. He felt the jaws clamp down on his helpless digit, then spit it out with a choking sound. Just as Henry's eyes bugged out in agony, he heard a soft, whispering voice say, "Dummies' Dorm."

Okay, Henry thought. I may be in pain but I'm not stupid enough to spend all year in the Dummies' Dorm. "What was the first one again?" he asked Miss McGonk as she stood, clipboard waiting.

"The Heroes' Dorm."

"Yes, that's it, exactly. That's the one I'm in."

"Ah, good." The teacher made a small note on the clipboard. "Now let's go visit the infirmary. But first, I need

cookies! Must have cookies!" Abandoning her dignified walk, she bolted for the kitchen as fast as she could run, with all of her students scurrying behind her.

By the time they reached the Heroes' Dorm, Henry was fainting from hunger, thanks to missing dinner. Miss McGonk had eaten all the cookies, so he hadn't even had a snack. Luckily, his aunt and uncle had sent him a care package of instant gruel. The children walked up to the painting that hid the entrance to the dorm. A portrait of a lady, plump enough to spill out of her picture frame on all sides, blocked the passageway, stinking of mothballs. Henry stood in front of the picture and recited the password. "The fat lady sings."

"What? You think I'm fat! How dare you! And no, I certainly won't sing. Be gone, wretched boy."

Higgle mumbled to her for a few moments until finally the pacified Viking portrait allowed the children to enter.

Most of the students ended up in the Heroes' Dorm. According to Higgle, this generally happened, which was why they won the official Good Guy Award every single year. At least, that's what Henry thought he had said. As Henry settled in and unpacked his hundreds of fan posters, muscle tone calendars and autographed toilet tissue, two children his own age appeared at the door.

One had shocking red hair that probably saved him a great deal of expense on flashlight batteries. His vacant grin indicated that most of his contributions to group projects would be suggestions on breaking for lunch. He wore a purple sweater that said in big, hot pink letters, "My mother couldn't afford to go somewhere exotic, so she just made me this dumb sweater by hand." A little label on the collar said "Loving Touches."

Something about the girl beside him indicated that she was, in fact, a girl. She seemed to have inherited her companion's intelligence as well as her own, judging by the ruler, protractor, calculator, compass, digital thermometer, and pair of extra socks protruding from her top right-hand pocket protector (all geniuses know how important extra socks are).

"Are you fans?" Henry asked. "You're a bit early; I mean, I won't be famous and popular until the book's end. But if you'd like to see the room where I actually stayed during my days here at Chickenfeet, I could—"

"Huh? We're your roommates," the boy said.

Henry felt his dreams of fame and adoring girls ripping his bathrobe to pieces for souvenirs vanishing away like the last little bit of lollipop when you've gotten tired of the whole stick thing and just bite the last bit of candy off in one big chomp. "Do you even know who I am?"

"Henry Potty, son of Lames and Jelly Potty," the girl said. "You're spending the year here in California because your relatives got tired of having you pick up after them. By doing every single bit of work until they could no longer manage for themselves, you were propelling them into an idyllic life where they would become overdependent on you and no longer even manage to tweeze their nose hairs unassisted. Either that or they know you're an arrogant little snot obsessed with your nonexistent fans and they wanted to dump you as soon as possible. You want to study transformation, conjuration, and recycling while you're here at the Academy. Oh, and you want to be discovered by Hollywood."

"How did you know all that?" Henry asked.

"My name's Horrendous Gangrene. I know everything."

"Besides, everyone knows you're on the gizzer-net," the boy added.

"How many fingers am I holding up behind my back?" Henry challenged Horrendous.

"Eight."

"That's amazing!" Henry said, failing to notice the mirror that hung on the wall behind him. "Just remember, the important thing is that I'm the legendary hero of the book."

"Hey, that's super, man," the boy said. Henry didn't bother asking his name, since he figured the readers already had a general idea who he was, even if the book called him "the boy."

"So the boys are gizzards here at Chickenfeet," Henry observed with his usual brilliance. "What are the girls called?"

"Well, for the majority of the time, I prefer to identify myself as a magically-enabled individual," Horrendous said.

"You're a which?"

"Exactly."

"Exactly what?"

"No, exactly which."

"Which what?" Henry felt his melted brains beginning to dribble out his ears.

"No, just which."

"Which?"

"Yes. You're finally getting it."

"I am? Getting what?"

"Not what. Which."

"Argh!!!"

After hours of circling about until Henry felt incredibly dizzy, he managed to conclude that Horrendous, along with all the other females at the school, were in fact whiches. Apparently, witches with traditional spelling were known for doing some nasty spelling indeed, such as constructing houses out of sweet-smelling gingerbread, then forcing greedy little potential thieves to keep eating until they were sick. New age whiches tried original and radical approaches, such as forcing people to attend self-empowerment seminars until their brains went numb, then feeding them mysterious vegan dinners. The Which Committee had just gotten around to updating all their stationery and memo pads, and even put out their first issue of *Which's Which* magazine.

They'd beaten the where?-wolves by two weeks.

"So you're a gizzard, right?" Henry asked the boy, desperately hoping for a return to normalcy.

"Yes. I'm Really Wimpy."

"You shouldn't say things like that about yourself."

"Why not? That's my name, Really Wimpy." Apparently, he had just enough gumption to not wait any longer for the book to introduce him without his preempting the issue. "And this is my pet rock, Flaky," added the boy now known as Really Wimpy. Flaky was round, gray, good-sized, and to all appearances, a perfectly normal example of his species.

"What do you do with a pet rock?"

"Oh, we have wonderful conversations."

Henry decided not to comment. "Once I had a pet goldfish, but my parents' trusted friend, Lord Revolting, betrayed us and murderously flushed it down a toilet."

Horrendous gasped. "That's terrible!"

"You mustn't say that name!" Really Wimpy protested at the same time.

"Why?"

"It's a nickname he made up to scare people."

"Hush!" Horrendous said. "We're not supposed to find that out until book 2. No one knows what Lord Revolting's real name is."

"Why?" Henry asked.

"Because he won't tell us."

"Did he really murder your goldfish?" Really Wimpy asked.

Henry nodded. "But I'll always remember what he looked like, because he had three extra hairs in his right eyebrow. You don't forget a thing like that. One day I'll find him, and go up to him and say—"

"Hello, my name is Henry Potty, you killed my goldfish, prepare to die?" Horrendous guessed.

"Well, I was going to say, 'You're really mean!' But I guess your idea is good, too," Henry said gallantly. The blinding light from up above glowed briefly, as if knowing that he had only been good to impress his new friends.

Henry's acquaintances didn't offer to stay long, since they apparently had better things to do than admire Henry's collection of Henry Potty Original Kindergarten Clay Shapes. Horrendous mumbled, "I need to go

wash my hair or my laundry; I forget which." Really Wimpy gazed after her with wide, tearful eyes, obviously wishing that he had thought of such an airtight excuse.

Ominous music burst ominously through the air as Lord Revolting strode ominously into the room, smelling like week-old catfish. He was tall, dark, and incredibly ugly, with green makeup slathered over his skin to increase his evil appearance. The Halloween costume that he wore had once been a wicked witch's dress, at least a wicked witch who was forty-seven and into her second husband and fifth pregnancy. Yards of extra black fabric hung off him like moldy curtains. All forms of trash coated the dress, from cream-filled cupcake wrappers to disposable diapers.

"Revolting!" Henry gasped, too startled to speak coherently, let alone come up with a witty and memorable speech that brain-cell-deprived fantasy fans could quote for decades afterwards, for lack of anything better to contribute to society.

"Don't say that name!" Really Wimpy shrieked.

Henry turned to see his new friend cowering in the corner. "Oh. Okay, I won't say it. What should I call him, then?"

"You know who."

"No, I don't know. That's why I asked."

"No, call him you know who."

"But what if he doesn't know? I mean, I don't want to spend hours explaining it all to him if he's too ignorant to grasp—"

"Excuse me," Lord Revolting interrupted. "But I came here to do some general terrifying and threatening, not to listen to you two babble. Do you realize I had to crawl up the fire escape, near those dumpsters in the alley? I fell four times. You certainly keep this place locked up. But I have triumphed, nonetheless!" He drew himself up proudly, and then realized he'd been caught in bad lighting. He swiftly moved two feet to the left, where a dramatic shaft of moonlight hit the floor, and resumed his haughty pose.

"Why have you come?" Henry asked.

"Why, to spoil the book for you, of course. That's the most evil thing that I could possibly do. I may as well tell you now that I'm the one behind all of the malevolent schemes in the book. I doubt you'd figure that one out, anyway. At the book's end, I will appear and maliciously taunt you again. Not to mention trying to kill you. That said, enjoy your school year. Isappear-day!" And Lord Revolting disappeared.

"Phew, he's gone," Henry said.

A disembodied voice floated out of the air. "Not completely, Henry. I'll be watching you." A few final bars of creepy music sounded.

Really Wimpy shuddered. "He's worse than my mom!"

Henry wandered around his new school, taking time to find out where the closest hairdresser was to class and how to cheat the candy machines on each floor. Higgle was giving tours, but Henry didn't feel like translating his long speeches. Rumor had it that Bumbling Bore had once conducted all the tours, until parents complained about their children falling into the lake and drowning before they could wake up.

The Chickenfeet library was managed by an elderly goat whose most famous contribution to literature involved eating the world's largest collection of eighteenth century knitting almanacs. Not to mention all of the digests. After she polished off the school's card catalogue for dessert, a universal motion appointed her chief librarian. No one else had a clue how the books were sorted, without all the little cards to guide them. Now Gallicia goat grazed greedily on the glorious gorges of Great Books, grinning as only a grizzled goat could grin.

Henry walked into the library, hoping for something classical and inspiring with a maximum of one word per page. He headed for the picture book section, but stopped, arrested by the sight of a gleaming book entitled *Defeating Lord Revolting for Lamebrains*. Just as he reached for it, he skidded to a sudden halt. "You!"

Lord Revolting jumped at Henry's dramatically vague exclamation, and dropped the book through which he'd been thumbing. Henry frantically scanned the wall until he saw the expected square case. Its large letters read, "In case of evil gizzards, break glass." Henry picked up the tiny hammer beside the case and shattered the thin barrier between him and the object he sought.

It was a squirt gun, with icy water guaranteed to melt any which or gizzard into a bubbling puddle of green goop. Henry snatched the water pistol and took careful aim. "Fancy destroying the bad guy this early in the book," he thought to himself, with a well-deserved grin of triumph. Unfortunately, his smug thoughts took up just enough time for Lord Revolting to metamorphosize into a wooden bat, and smash his way out the window. Henry dropped the squirt gun on the floor, and did his best not to break into a long, loud tantrum. So close, yet not close enough.

Lord Revolting's book lay open on the floor on the other side of the room, face down. Henry hurried over to it. Printed in dripping red letters on the black cover were the words, *Truly Evil Spells for Idiots*. Henry picked it up, careful to hold the book open where Lord Revolting had been reading. Perhaps the evil gizzard's research would indicate what he was planning.

Henry stared at the page in question for a very long time. Then he actually read it. It said, "Spell to live forever and become the most powerful evil gizzard in existence." A faint stink of garbage rose from the pages. It smelled anything but roselike.

The page said:

(Well, actually, it didn't say anything; Henry had to read it.)

Spell to live forever and become the most powerful evil gizzard in existence:

In order to live forever and become the most powerful evil gizzard in existence, follow these steps.

Fill your veins with unicorn blood to cause yourself to live forever.

Mix the following in a bowl:

Two magical hot dogs

A used postage stamp

Toilet paper (pink, preferably unused)

One handful of magical mushrooms

The powdered remains of a runaway pet rock

Drink your newly created potion of evil power.

Warning: No refunds.

Henry dropped the book as if it had burned him. (Well, actually, it had. It doesn't pay to go around handling evil books, after all.) He had to tell his friends. Maybe together they could figure out what Lord Revolting planned to do.

After a long consultation with Horrendous Gangrene and Really Wimpy, the three children decided that they needed to stop Lord Revolting. After a few more hours of debate, they decided to look for the items that Revolting wanted, in order to keep him from getting them. Henry immediately voted to hide all the toilet paper in the school. "That way, Lord Revolting won't find any," he explained.

"Well, yes, but hiding all the toilet paper in Chickenfeet still might not be the best idea," Horrendous said. She didn't explain why, since she figured any child over the age of three could figure it out. Henry's blank stare indicated that he didn't have a clue. Horrendous didn't bother filling him in. "Maybe you should just stand wherever there's pink toilet paper and yell for help if Lord Revolting tries to enter the room."

The boys' bathroom was all out of pink toilet paper, so Henry stationed himself directly outside the girls' bathroom, ignoring the girls' insults and pummeling as they entered. Apparently, they thought he was rather odd for standing there. Then someone in a long, black bathrobe hurried past, sticking foully of garbage.

Henry wanted to follow him in, but the terrifying smells of perfume and hairspray stopped him before he could open the door. So he resolved to wait and catch the person when he left. If it was Revolting, he would make him relinquish any pink toilet paper he had with him.

Henry waited a few minutes, then a few more. At last, half an hour had passed. How long could Lord Revolting take? Just because he was a thoroughly evil villain who could flush goldfish without a second thought shouldn't mean that he didn't use the bathroom like any normal person.

"Aha!" Henry jumped ten feet into the air as Mr. Filth tackled him from behind with the aid of a stepladder. "Get to class," the sneaky little man snarled silkily. "You shouldn't be here, not unless you've had a gender-change operation and you're now Harriet Potty. Remember, I always enforce the rules. Law enforcement is my middle name."

Henry shamefacedly left the area, falling into step with a short little girl just leaving the bathroom. She had two brown pigtails, thirty-seven red freckles, and one round nose that seemed to take up half her face. Her black gizzard bathrobe appeared far too big for her, and she stumbled as she walked up the hall beside him.

"Who're you?" he asked.

"I'm Miffie. Miffie Muffet. Everyone around here learns to respect me very quickly."

Henry had to smile. "You sure are little, Miffie Muffet. You don't look that intimidating to me."

"Some call me Miffie the Terrible."

"And what do the rest call you?" Henry asked.

"M&M," Miffie muttered.

"Okay, now I'm really curious. Why would anyone call you Miffie the Terrible?"

"I beat up wimpy little first years like you."

Henry burst into laughter.

A few minutes later, Henry trudged over to the infirmary.

"Hell-o," a bubbly, blonde nurse chirped. "What seems to be the trouble?"

"What do you think?" Henry asked in a stuffy, barely recognizable voice. "I have a wangd up by ngose."

End of Free Sample



About the Author

Valerie Estelle Frankel was born at an early age. Since then, she's taught most grades, from kindergarten through high school, and survived with most of her limbs intact. She now teaches creative writing for all ages, and composition for San Jose State University. Her many short stories have appeared in over seventy magazines and anthologies including *Legends of the Pendragon*, *Rosebud Magazine*, and *The Oklahoma Review*. While an undergrad, she became the Editor in Charge of Magical Kingdoms for *The Sneeze*, a disreputable UC Davis humor publication. She then became the youngest person ever to receive a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from San Jose State University, where she was recently promoted to an office down the hall from the women's bathroom, rather than in it. She enjoys paper napkin collecting, punning, and ridiculous costuming in what little remains of her spare time, and reads a novel every day, just for fun. Many of her short stories lurk on her website, along with writing tips, contests, giveaways, and an interactive fantasy

Henry Potty and the Pet Rock

kingdom especially for kids. Readers who long to waste their valuable time can play Chickenfeet Academy Games, check out the Henry Potty paperback book, and cavort with flying pigs for hours at www.HarryPotterParody.com.



About the Book

Henry Potty and the Pet Rock is now out in paperback! Published through Wingspan Press, it can be ordered from your favorite bookstore as a softback book, ISBN 1-59594-088-X. Learn more on www.HarryPotterParody.com.

