

THE DODO MADE ME DO IT

Illustrated by
**SHEENA
DEMPSEY**



JO SIMMONS

BLOOMSBURY

THE DODO MADE ME DO IT

Illustrated by
**SHEENA
DEMPSEY**



JO SIMMONS

BLOOMSBURY
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

LONDON OXFORD NEW YORK NEW DELHI SYDNEY



Chapter 1

SCOTLAND



‘Woo-hoo!’ yelled Danny’s mum, as they drove past the huge blue sign by the motorway. ‘Only another four hours and we’ll be at Granny’s!’

Danny, sitting in the back of the car, narrowed his big blue eyes and stared at the dull, rolling scenery as it sped by. There was no ‘woo-hoo’ from him. Not even a quiet ‘yay’! He wasn’t happy. It was the start of the summer holidays and he had to spend all six weeks of it with his Granny Flora. This was a problem for four key reasons:

1. Granny Flora did crosswords all the time and was obsessed with porridge
2. It rained a lot in Kinoussie
3. There was nothing to do and nothing ever happened, *ever*
4. The people in Kinoussie were all weird

‘Come on, love,’ said Danny’s mum. ‘I know you don’t want to go, but Dad and I have to work again this summer. Dad is off at sea, and Old Hodge Podge says I can’t have the time off.’

Danny’s dad wasn’t a sailor. He was a trumpet player in a band on a cruise ship that pattered around the Mediterranean. Summer was his busiest time.

Danny’s mum didn’t work for Old Hodge Podge either. At least, that wasn’t his name. He was really called Ken Hodgson of Hodgson’s Hanging Baskets. Mum worked as

a gardener for him. Summer was her busiest time too.

So, for as long as Danny could remember, he went to Kinoussie in the summer, to stay with Granny Flora. Holiday guides called Kinoussie ‘A quaint and remote jewel, untouched by time, on Scotland’s stunning west coast’. To Danny, it was a total fun-desert, populated by weirdies and oldies and oldie wierdies. With midges.

‘Untouched by time’ was about right though. Granny didn’t even have Wi-Fi.

‘Perhaps you could meet up with Susie?’ said Danny’s mum.

Danny groaned and slapped his forehead.

‘You say that every year!’ he protested. ‘Just because Susie is the only other ten-year-old living within three billion miles of Granny’s house doesn’t mean we’re friends!’

Danny hardly knew Susie. He'd met her once last year. While his mum and her mum and Granny Flora had tea, Susie had sat in the corner, buried in a science book. She barely spoke to him.

'I know she's a bit science-mad and bookish,' said Danny's mum, 'but she'd be someone to run around with, unlike Granny, who prefers to ...'

'Do the crossword!' exploded Danny. 'And when she's not doing the crossword she's driving Mrs McWhatsername to her hospital appointments or taking someone's chicken to the vet.'

'She's a pillar of the community!' Danny's mum laughed. 'Always ready to help her neighbours. They all look after each other in the village. They share everything. No secrets in Kinoussie!'

Danny went back to staring out of the

window. A depressed-looking horse stood motionless in a wet field. He knew how it felt. He reached for his backpack and pulled out a copy of his favourite comic – *Zac Hanaway, Space Runaway*. Zac was a boy who had escaped from his prison planet and now raced around the galaxy, having adventures with his two trusty companions, Chips the Robot and a beautiful talking hawk called Zena. Danny wanted to have adventures like Zac. He wanted to *be* Zac: cool, brave and free to journey through space and time, seeking out adventures and new lands. Not Scotland though. He'd give that a miss.

'I bet Zac Hanaway's never been to Kinoussie,' muttered Danny as he flicked through the comic. 'He'd last about five minutes, then leave because it's so boring!'

'Next year!' said Danny's mum, glancing at him in the mirror again. 'I *absolutely*

promise that next year we will go somewhere different. Look, I grew up here and I loved it, and Granny grew up here and loved it too. In fact, she never left. Lived here all her life.'

Danny said nothing. The thought of living in Kinoussie all your life left him speechless.



‘It is beautiful, isn’t it? There’s tons of space, and the beach at Cloutie Bay is so close, and there’s wildlife ...’

‘Midges,’ muttered Danny.

‘Anyway,’ his mum added, ‘I’ve packed the cool box with taramasalata this year, since Granny can’t get it in the Spar.’

Danny looked at the cool box by his feet and imagined the pots of pink, fishy spread in there. Yum. At least he had that. How he loved taramasalata. Great with crackers. Or pitta.

‘You can make this work, Danny!’ said his mum. ‘There is fun to be had up here. You just have to make it happen!’

Chapter 2

ADVENTURE?

Tap, tap, tap, tap. Gunfire. Bullets. No! Spears. Tiny ice javelins, hurled by deadly assassin snow hamsters, wearing charm-woven armour. Use your shield, Danny! Quick, use your ...!

‘Waarrgghh!’ Danny sat up in bed, blinking. Just a dream. There were no assassin snow hamsters. It was just the Scottish rain beating against his bedroom window. He pulled back the curtains, made from cream fabric with tiny roses, chosen a lifetime ago by his mum when this was her room. Outside, her car was gone. She was already driving home.

Granny Flora’s farmhouse was squat and square, and Danny’s room was on the side, its window looking down over the single-storey

outbuilding that was built alongside. Beyond, there was the old stone barn, standing empty as usual, and Danny could just make out Granny's friend Roddy Aye feeding the chickens in a fenced coop further off, oblivious to the summer downpour.

'Rain and Roddy and nothing else,' Danny muttered. 'Typical.'

Danny thought of his best friend, Cal, who always went on great holidays. Last year, he went to Australia for three weeks. At Easter, he did a city break in Paris. This summer, he was in the USA. What was he up to now? Eating a giant hamburger? Tracking grizzly bears in the mountains? Riding a moose and wearing full cowboy outfit? Did they have moose (or mooses or meece) in the USA? Who knew. All Danny knew was that he was in Kinoussie again. Excitement factor: zero. Possibility of excitement occurring: also zero.

As Danny dressed, he made the same wish he always made when he arrived at his granny's house for the summer: that something exciting might happen. But what? What was even possible here in Kinoussie? A helicopter piloted by kittens landing in the farmyard? A crack appearing in the fabric of time, just to the left of Granny's chicken coop? Roddy Aye saying no for once (all Roddy ever said was 'aye')?

'Has anything exciting ever happened here?' Danny asked his granny when he got downstairs. She was sitting at the kitchen table, working on a crossword, several pencils stuck into her messy bun of thick grey hair. The muggy, oaty scent of porridge filled the air.

'Exciting?' she asked, like she hadn't tried the word out for some decades.

'Yes, you know – an adventure, fun, something a bit woo!' said Danny.

Granny Flora put her crossword down and stuck her pencil in her hair, creating an Aztec-style headdress of HBs.

‘Roddy, has anything exciting happened here?’ she shouted over her shoulder.

Danny hadn’t spotted Roddy, sitting in the chimney nook by the fire, knitting quietly.

‘Aye!’ he said, in an ‘of course’ kind of way.

‘Ah yes!’ said Granny. ‘There was that time old Murdo McMurdo was snowed in for six days and lived on cat food and turnips. About ten years ago, wasn’t it, Roddy?’

‘Aye,’ said Roddy, nodding.

Danny frowned and fidgeted, tucking his long legs under him on the chair.

‘What about a proper exciting event, that actually happened, you know, not just getting snowed in or a goat escaping or someone buying the wrong kind of jam by mistake,’ Danny said. ‘What about when you were a

child? Did you get up to mischief or have adventures?’

‘Let me see,’ said Granny Flora.

She thought for ages. Danny was about to give up when she grabbed a pencil from her hair and held it upright like an exclamation mark.

‘Ha!’ she said. ‘The lighthouse! That’s right! I’d forgotten, but now I remember. One night my brother Jamie broke into the old lighthouse just away down the coast from here.’

‘And?’ asked Danny.

‘We lit it!’ said Granny Flora, her blue eyes twinkling.

‘You were there too?’

‘I brought the matches!’ she said. ‘It was just an oil lamp, easy enough to light. The beam stretched for miles. Quite beautiful really. Do you remember, Roddy?’

‘Aye,’ said Roddy, nodding eagerly.

‘That was the first and only time I ever saw that lighthouse lit. It was closed just before I was born. No need for it now, but there had been a shipwreck on the tiny island in Cloutie Bay. That’s why they put it there in the first place.’

Danny spluttered and sprayed a mouthful of milk across the tablecloth.

‘A what what? Did I hear you right, Granny? A *shipwreck*? Here? In Kinoussie? Tell me more!’

‘There’s not much to tell,’ said Granny Flora. ‘It was a Dutch ship, I believe, blown off course by a huge storm and then dashed on the rocks! No survivors. It was a very long time ago. Now, how about some porridge?’

By the time Danny had forced down a small bowl of porridge it had stopped raining. By the time he had finished brushing his teeth,

he had made a plan. A plan for A&E: Adventure & Excitement! The A&E plan went like this:

1. Go down to Cloutie Bay and get on to the island. (Not sure how, detail to follow)
2. Discover ancient treasure scattered there from the shipwreck
3. Sell it and make lots of ££s
4. Buy a train ticket home and surprise Mum
5. Then book a really fab holiday with all the money. Somewhere hot, where they don't eat porridge. Somewhere even better than where Cal goes, so he's jealous

It was a brilliant, simple plan spoiled only by the sound of a knock on the door and a girl's voice calling out hello. Danny peeped downstairs.

Susie! The science-nut, book-mad girl from the village was chatting to Granny Flora in the hall. She had grown a bit since he first met her last summer. Her dead-straight hair was cut in a cool bob now, with a super-sharp fringe, and she was wearing a pair of round glasses.

‘Susie’s here!’ said Granny Flora.

Susie’s small, intense eyes followed Danny as he ran downstairs.

‘I was just going out,’ he told her. ‘Coming?’

Danny ran across Granny’s big front yard, splashing through puddles, and on to the path to Clotie Bay. Despite carrying a backpack filled with books and magazines, Susie soon caught up with him, and the children slowed to a walking pace.

‘My mum told me to come and say hello ...’ Susie said. ‘She thinks it will be good for me to hang out with someone.’

‘Aren’t there other children near here?’

Danny asked. ‘Friends?’

‘Have you seen the people in Kinoussie, Danny?’ Susie laughed. ‘Not young! So why are you up here again, then?’

‘My mum has to work all summer, and my dad, so ...’

‘My mum works all the time too,’ said Susie. ‘During the week she’s the ticket inspector on the Fort Plover to Isle of Bladda ferry, on Saturdays she covers for Donald in the Spar, while he does his part-time sheep maintenance course, and in the summer on Sundays she mows the grass at Scotland’s smallest campsite, in the village.’

‘I don’t want to do lots of jobs like Mum though, when I grow up,’ Susie went on. ‘I want to be a scientist. Perhaps a zoologist, or maybe a palaeoecologist.’

‘A palaeo-say-what-now?’ asked Danny.

‘It’s someone who examines interactions

between different organisms or between different organisms and the environment,' she said, eyes sparkling. 'What do you want to do when you grow up?'

Danny thought about this for a second and realised he'd never thought about it before. He wanted to be Zac Hanaway, definitely, but a real job? Being a grown-up? No idea!

'Dunno,' muttered Danny. 'Something exciting with lots of money, probably!'

The children had arrived at Cloutie Bay. The clouds had thinned and the sun was peeping out, sparkling on the water. Danny paused on the soft white sand at the top of the beach. Thick wet seaweed clung to the rocks at the water's edge, glistening in a rainbow of mustard, red and wine-gum green. Tiny birds darted between the silver birch trees edging the shore. Danny breathed in – the salty air tingled in his

nose. Like his mum had said, it *was* really beautiful here. Criminally boring, but really beautiful.

He pointed to a small, rocky island just offshore.

‘See that island?’ he said to Susie. ‘I’m going out to it.’

‘How?’ Susie asked. ‘It’s cut off by water and you don’t have a boat.’

But Danny wasn’t listening. He ran to the shore and then waded towards the island in his wellies. He had only got a short way out by the time water started lapping over the top of them.

‘Maybe at low tide I could make it,’ he said, after plodding back to Susie.

‘Low tide is in ...’ she checked her watch. ‘Approximately two hours and twelve minutes, but even at low tide that island is still cut off.’



Susie was right. The island was always cut off. Danny knew that. He just didn't *want* to know that he knew that. It didn't fit with having an adventure, and having an adventure was his number-one top priority.

'Did you know there was a shipwreck there?' said Danny. 'Granny Flora just told me.'

'The Dutch ship? It was just a small vessel, with only a handful of crew, on its way back from the Indian Ocean,' said Susie. 'The wreckage will have been washed away by now.'

With that, she pulled a science magazine out of her backpack, sat down on the sand and started to read.

Washed away by now, chuntered Danny in his head. *What rubbish!* He wasn't having that. That island was littered with exciting shipwreck goodies – rubies as big as your fist, swords, golden plates and silver cups – he knew it, *and* he knew that he was going to find

it all. He just hadn't worked out how yet ...

'Why don't you swim out there?' Susie suggested, not looking up from her reading.

Danny's shoulders tensed. He couldn't swim. But he wasn't going to tell Susie that ...

'I need a boat,' he said. 'So I can bring back all the swag.'

'Impossible,' she said, still not looking up from her science mag. 'There is a no-lending-boats-to-outsiders rule in Kinoussie. It's been in place for centuries. No one would even consider lending a boat to you, Danny. You're not from round here.'

'But my mum was brought up in Kinoussie!' he protested.

'Not good enough,' Susie replied. 'Forget it. I could borrow a boat, but *you* will never be able to.'

Danny poked at the sand with a stick. He might have quite liked to poke Susie too; pop

her know-it-all bubble. Her endless logic was making his dream of exciting shipwrecked treasure and adventure slip through his fingers like barely set jelly. He sighed. Next to him, Susie closed her magazine neatly on her lap. The two children stared out to sea silently.

‘Shall we go home?’ Danny asked. ‘I can show you some of my Zac Hanaway comics if you like. Have you heard of Zac Hanaway?’

Susie shrugged. ‘I tend to read non-fiction.’

‘Hmm,’ said Danny. He had a feeling she might say that.

Then he glanced at Susie’s magazine lying in her lap. There was a picture of a huge full moon on the cover and the headline read: ‘Spring Tides Explained – We explore the science behind these super-low tides.’

He pointed at it with his stick. ‘Look!’

‘Oh yes,’ said Susie. ‘Well, a spring tide is just a very, very low tide, caused by the Sun,

Moon and Earth all lining up.’

‘When’s the next one?’ Danny asked.

Susie ran her finger down a chart in the magazine.

‘At 10 p.m. on the 29th,’ she said.

‘That’s today!!’ said Danny, his eyes wide.
‘Tonight! No way! This is amazing!’

‘Yes, well, this kind of tidal event is certainly fascinating ...’

‘No! Don’t you see?’ Danny interrupted. ‘A really low tide is great for just one reason.’

Susie looked up from the magazine.

‘What?’ she asked.

‘It means that I will be able to walk out to that island!’ said Danny. ‘To shipwreck island! At last, an adventure. Woo-hoo! Bring! It! On!’

Then Danny gave Susie an excited slap on the shoulder and ran off to lob pebbles into the sea.

Chapter 3

WEE JIMMIE

When the children arrived back at Granny Flora's, there was a white van parked in the yard. On the side, it said: *Wee Jimmie's Odd Jobs*.

A tall, broad man with a green woolly hat and dirty white overalls was talking to Granny Flora. They were pointing up at the roof of the farmhouse.

'That's Wee Jimmie,' Susie whispered.

'He's not wee, he's huge!' said Danny.

'I know. He's the new handyman. Arrived up here about six months ago from Glasgow,' she said.

'Wow, he actually chose to come and live here. Why?' Danny said.

'He says he was looking for the simple life,

away from the big city. Just him and his little dog, Shirley,’ said Susie. ‘What’s wrong with that? Anyway, he’s a good handyman. Everyone loves him.’

Danny stared at the gigantic man. He had small eyes with an intense, slightly angry look about them. Why would anyone leave a bustling city like Glasgow to live in a tiny, quiet, remote village? It didn’t make sense to Danny.

‘Why don’t you go and say hello,’ said Susie. ‘Don’t be scared now ... I know he’s massive! Oh and *make sure you have a look at his hands!*’

The letters WWZD – standing for What Would Zac Do? – flashed across Danny’s brain. How his favourite comic hero would act in any given situation was always a useful guide.

‘I’ll do better than that,’ he said, jutting out his chin. ‘I’ll shake Wee Jimmie’s hand.’

Danny ran over to his granny. The two grown-ups were discussing the gutters as Wee Jimmie positioned a huge ladder against the side of the house. Inside the van, a tiny chihuahua stood on the dashboard, yip-yapping at Danny.

‘I’m really grateful for this, Jimmie,’ Granny Flora was saying. ‘I can’t have Roddy going up there, he’s too wobbly at his age. Now, can I get you anything? Tea? Porridge?’

‘Hello!’ said Danny.

‘Ah, this is my grandson, Danny, here for the holidays,’ Granny Flora said.

‘Pleased to meet you,’ said Danny, thrusting out his hand.

Wee Jimmie’s vast, meaty paw closed completely around Danny’s tiny, pale hand, like a blue whale swallowing krill. Danny noticed the word LOVE tattooed across the knuckles.



‘Pleased to meet you, fella,’ said Wee Jimmie. ‘I hope you’re not going to cause trouble for your granny now.’

He stepped a bit closer to Danny, but reached past him to rap against the van windscreen.

‘Quiet, Shirley!’ he shouted.

The tiny dog stopped yapping and hopped down on to the driver’s seat, looking sulky.

Danny was only half listening. He was focusing on Wee Jimmie’s left hand and clearly saw that across the knuckles the word HAT was tattooed in crisp blue ink.

‘LOVE and HAT? What the flapjacks does that mean?’ Danny asked Susie, when the pair were inside, munching biscuits around the kitchen table, listening to the scraping sound of Wee Jimmie clearing the gutters.

‘Well, my personal theory is that he meant to have the word HATE tattooed on to his hand, as it’s the opposite of LOVE, but something happened and the tattoo was never finished,’ said Susie.

‘LOVE and HATE,’ said Danny. ‘That makes sense. If it was me, I’d have

PORRIDGE, which is for hate, and TARAMASALATA, which is for love.'

Susie wrinkled her nose. 'You'd never fit all those letters on,' she said.

'I wonder why Wee Jimmie never got his tattoo finished?' said Danny.

Susie shrugged.

'Of course, we don't know that it was the word HATE he wanted,' she said. 'It could have been something else.'

'Aye!' laughed Roddy from his corner.

Danny and Susie both nearly jumped out of their seats.

'Crumbs, Roddy,' Danny gasped. 'Didn't see you there!'

'Aye,' said Roddy.

'What do you think about Wee Jimmie?' Danny asked. 'Everyone says he's a nice bloke. Would he want the word HATE on his hand?'

‘Aye,’ said Roddy, sounding a bit uncertain.

‘Maybe the word was meant to be THAT not HATE,’ said Susie.

‘Or HATS?’ said Danny.

‘Aye,’ said Roddy, shaking his head in a ‘don’t be ridiculous’ kind of way.

‘I know, how about WHAT? Or HATO or HATU or, er, CHAT?’ Danny suggested.

‘LOVE and CHAT,’ laughed Susie. ‘Yeah, who doesn’t like love and chat?’

Danny giggled, then asked, ‘Is it HATI?’

‘HATI?’ laughed Susie. ‘What’s HATI?’

‘Isn’t that his dog’s name?’ said Danny.

‘SHIRLEY!!’ said Susie. ‘His dog’s called Shirley, not Hati!’

The two children began laughing uncontrollably now, with Susie muttering ‘Hati’ between fits of giggles, and it was at this moment that Danny became aware of an

almost unbelievable fact. Things were actually happening on the first day at his granny's house! He had wished for some kind of adventure, for stuff to happen, and now it was. A new handyman with HATE possibly tattooed on to his hand had moved into the area – new! Danny was (whisper it) actually getting along with Susie – new! And, double triple joy, there was an island littered with shipwrecked treasure to be explored, this very evening when the tide would be super low. New! New! New! It wasn't quite Zac Hanaway's space adventures, but it wasn't bad either.

BLOOMSBURY CHILDREN'S BOOKS
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK

BLOOMSBURY, BLOOMSBURY CHILDREN'S BOOKS and the Diana logo
are trademarks of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in Great Britain in 2018 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

Text copyright © Jo Simmons, 2018
Illustrations copyright © Sheena Dempsey, 2018

Jo Simmons has asserted her right under the Copyright, Designs
and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as Author of this work

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or
transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including
photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system,
without prior permission in writing from the publishers

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: PB: 978-1-4088-7777-7; eBook: 978-1-4088-7778-4

Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk

To find out more about our authors and books visit www.bloomsbury.com
and sign up for our newsletters