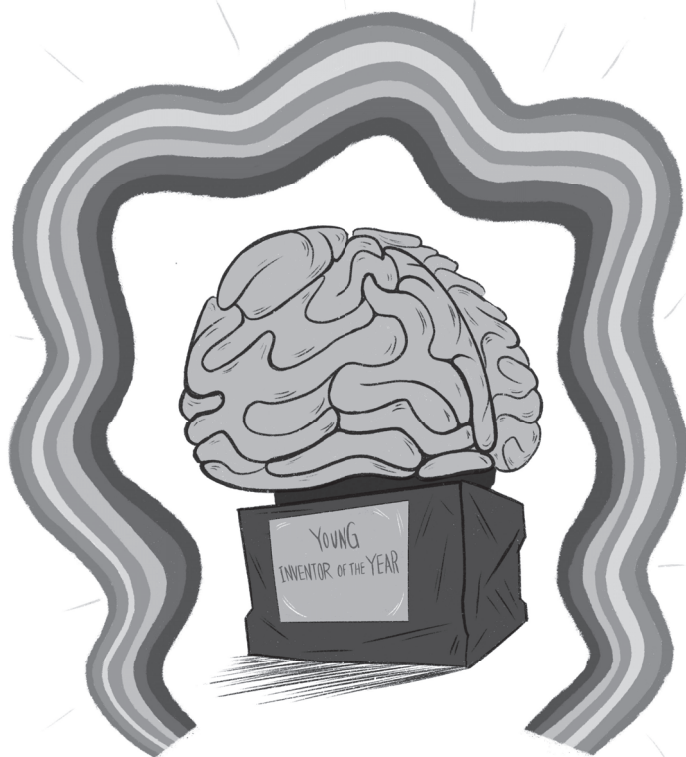# The Brain Trophy

This is the Brain Trophy.

Beautiful, isn't it? There is only **ONE** Brain Trophy in all of existence. Each year, at a special ceremony, it is given to the **BEST** Young Inventor of the Year.

Winning the Brain Trophy is:
1. **Extremely difficult** (even more difficult than jellybean juggling or sneezing with your eyes open).

② Like walking on the moon — only **BETTER**.

③ My dream of ☆ **DREAMS**. ✦ ☆

    You probably can't tell from the picture, but the Brain Trophy is made from the coolest and rarest rock **EVER**: ZIRBOONIUM. You might think that a lump of rock doesn't sound very cool, but you'd be wrong. Wrong and wrong. Double wrong. A DRONG just like my big sister, Nishi. ~~If you've picked up this book, then you're probably not a drong . . . well, I hope you're not. But if you think there is even the tiniest chance that you *might* be a drong you can put down this journal right now and look for something less exciting to read like—~~

    As I'm absolutely sure you're <u>not</u> a DRONG, I can tell you that:

① Zirboonium was found in a meteorite which fell to Earth from space. This means it is **NOT OF THIS WORLD**.

② Nobody really knows where zirboonium is from. This means it is an **UNKNOWN** substance.

    For inventors, **UNKNOWING** is one of the best things in the world. Unknowing gives you tickles in your toes, itches in your britches and makes you feel spine-tingly all over. Unknowing is where inventioning begins. That's why all the ultra-**genius** people of the world decided to turn the zirboonium meteorite into a trophy: THE Brain Trophy.

To enter, contestants have to be between 7–16 years old. The winner is invited to visit the top-secret headquarters of Genius & Extraordinary Inventions Inc (aka GENIE) before going on a special tour to show their mind-boggling, prize-winning invention ALL OVER THE WORLD. Their name is carved on the Brain Trophy with a super-sharp laser pen and they become an inventor legend for all eternity. All the greatest inventor legends are on it; Einstein won it when he was 8 years old (the youngest EVER), Nancy Johnson won when she was 10 and Alexander Graham Bell and Grace Hopper both won when they were 12!

From the moment I was old enough to enter the contest, I've had a space ready for the trophy on my table – right next to my extremely valuable first edition *Inventor's Handbook*, my complete card collection of Genius Inventors through History and my Inventor's Thinking Hat (which I invented myself – obviously).

When I am inventioning, the Brain Trophy is all I can think about. If I close my eyes, I can see my name on it next to all the great **geniuses** of this world and I feel so spingly that I think

I might explode.

(and a few other things . . .)

At first, everyone was really excited about me being an inventor.

'The right invention could make us rich enough to buy a football team,' said Dad. 'It's all a question of probabilities.' (He is a Maths teacher.)

'The right invention could make us rich enough to buy a football team *each*,' said Mum, picking up the phone. 'Hello, Aunty Usha. Yes, I'm quite sure it's not bunions.' (She is a *podiatrist* and Aunty Usha's favourite niece.)

'Thar rit invenshun coo ba me a noo set of teesh,' grinned Dadaji.

'Or the iPhone 100,' said my cousins, Mina and Bina.

'Ice-cream!' said Arjun. He was three.

That was a few years ago.

Now, I think everyone is tired of waiting to become millionaires. Especially Mum and Dad. 'If you spent as much time on your schoolwork as you do inventing, Esha Verma,' says Mum, 'we wouldn't have to keep apologizing to the neighbours about the explosions and the smoke and the weird smells!'

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So much for perseverance.

Nishi thinks I'm wasting my time. 'You don't really think inventors exist now, do you? Everything you could ever invent has already been invented.' Which just shows what her brain is filled with (clue: DRONGNESS).
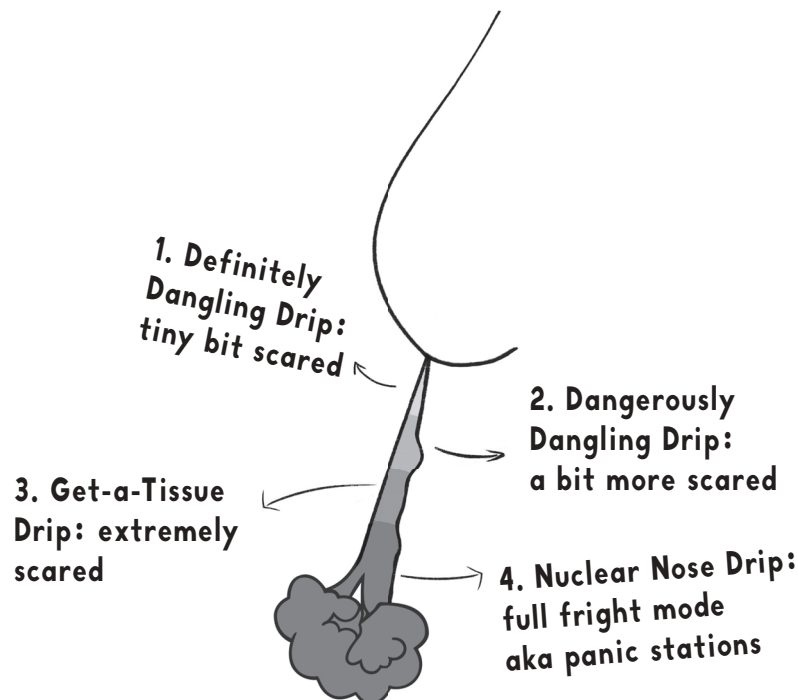
The only person that really understands the importance of inventioning is my apprentice, Broccoli.

What
I *actually*
look like

I guess I should probably tell you about him.

Ten Important Things
You Should Know About Broccoli:

① Broccoli's dad fixes telephone lines and his mum fixes people's teeth. They are both very quiet and sensible. They talk about quiet, sensible things in quiet, sensible voices. They are not like my family. AT ALL.

② Broccoli is *exactly* like his mum and dad.

③ When Broccoli gets scared, he sneezes. He sneezes so often that he has a permanent trail of broccoli-shaped snot dangling from his nose. It looks a bit like this:

1. Definitely Dangling Drip: tiny bit scared

2. Dangerously Dangling Drip: a bit more scared

3. Get-a-Tissue Drip: extremely scared

4. Nuclear Nose Drip: full fright mode aka panic stations

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④ Broccoli's real name is James Bertha Darwin. He is the grandson of the famously fearless fossil hunter, **Brave Bertha**. Unlike his grandmother, Broccoli is not brave *or* fearless.
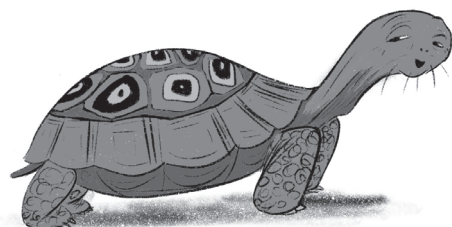
⑤ Broccoli is **boggly** about dinosaurs.

⑥ Last month, Broccoli's grandmother Brave Bertha discovered a fossil of an **UNKNOWN** dinosaur. The Fossil Federation was so excited that they named the dinosaur the Berthasaurus. When Broccoli saw his granny on the front cover of *Dinosaur World*, he burst into tears (the happy kind).

⑦ Broccoli's grandmother sends him the **BEST** presents. Not boring granny presents like tea sets or perfumed tissues. Dangerous, ferocious presents that pᵒp and snap and **EXPLODE** without warning. Broccoli is scared of most things, but he loves his grandmother, so he always keeps what she sends him.

⑧ The ~~evillest, worst~~, most *interesting* present that Broccoli's grandmother ever brought him is Archibald. Archibald is the son of Archimedes, Bertha's own tortoise. Like his pa, Archibald is always ready for adventure.
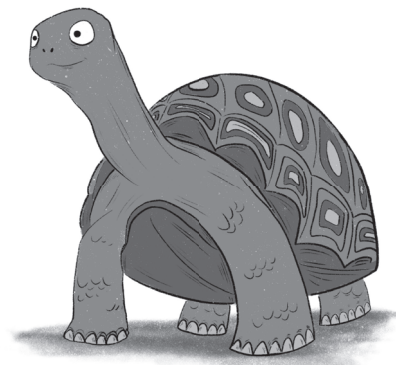
Archimedes

Archibald

What Archibald actually looks like

⑨ The last present that Broccoli got through the post was a Screeching Fizzer Firecracker from somewhere deep in Japan. The Screeching Fizzer Firecracker is so loud that it's banned in twenty countries. Broccoli is so afraid of Archibald accidentally eating/stealing/flying away on it that he always carries it around in his pocket. [It would be helpful to you, the Reader, to remember this for later in the story.]

⑩ Broccoli does not always say very much. This is another reason he is (mostly) a good apprentice.
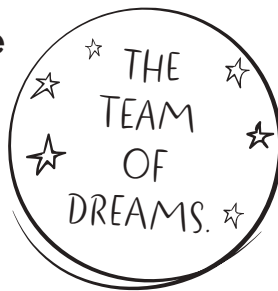
[A note from Broccoli: I don't say very much because I don't usually get the chance.]

You might wonder why a super-duper inventor like me needs a snot-nosed apprentice. The truth is that an apprentice comes in very handy for doing all the things that an inventor is simply too busy to do, like hoovering the

carpet (inventioning is a messy job), buying fizzpops when you're grounded (which is most of the time) and taking notes about **grand ideas** (when your brain is bursting with so much **genius** it's hard to keep track). In fact, apprentices are so useful that I wonder why everybody doesn't have one. Together, we are
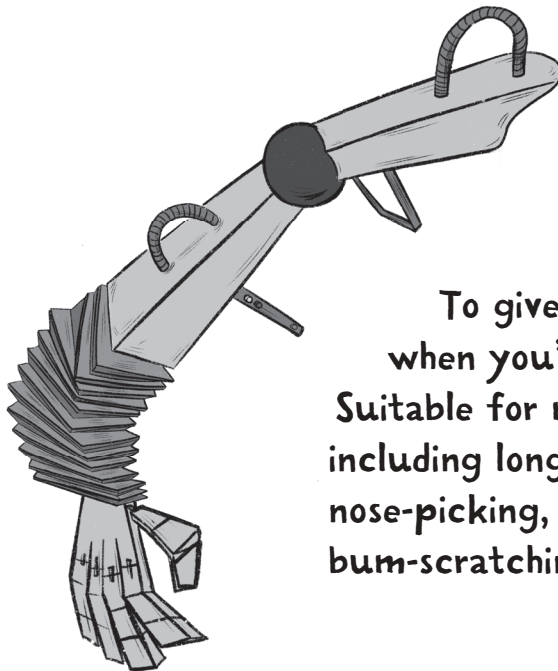
☆ ☆ THE
☆ TEAM
OF
☆ DREAMS. ☆

In the last three years, Broccoli and I have entered a grand total of **three** inventions into the Young Inventor of the Year contest:
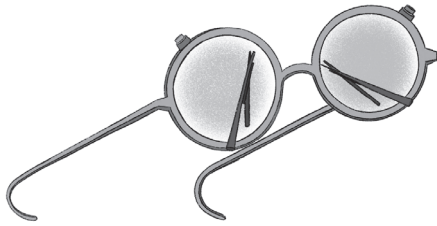
INVENTION 1: THE **EXTEND-A-HAND**

Result: 2nd place.

To give a helping hand for when you're just too busy. Suitable for multiple functions including long-distance throwing, nose-picking, remote-control-lifting, bum-scratching, tortoise-rescuing.

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INVENTION 2: SELF-CLEANING SPECS

Result: 2nd place.

Designed for **ALL** weather conditions, including blizzards, cyclones, hurricanes and sandstorms.

INVENTION 3: INSTA DE-STICKER SPRAY

Result: 2nd place.

Guaranteed to help you out of every sticky situation.

We're the only inventors in the contest's history to have come second place three times in a row. I checked. But not this year. This year I was absolutely 100% certain that we were going to win the Brain Trophy. Because this year we'd invented something to blow the judges' socks off. Something so brilliant that it would make their hair stand on end and their eyeballs pop out of their sockets at the same time.

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This year, we'd invented a

time machine.