

TheGoodReadWipe

A Brief History of LIT-TISSUE

By rcheydn

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DISCLAIMER

Obviously this story is fiction.

As far as the author is aware there is no such thing as the serialisation of books on toilet paper rolls.

More's the pity.

And of course Fred Nurk does not exist except in the author's imagination.

Again more's the pity.

Mind you, if anyone would like to make *TheGoodReadWipe* into a hugely successful television series, or if a major film company wants to embark on a project basing a global big screen box office hit on *TheGoodReadWipe* as the storyline, they know where to come.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

rcheydn worked as a journalist for newspapers and magazines throughout Europe, Australia and the Far East for a decade before entering the world of public relations.

For the next twenty-five years he was a senior PRO in the United Kingdom, Australia and, for almost 20 of those years, in Hong Kong.

Then he established his own public relations company in London which is regarded as one of the most dynamic and innovative agencies of its kind.

The Catskinner was his first foray into the political thriller genre.

His second novel was *The Feathers*, a grim story about a serial killer in London.

Crime or political thriller writing are not his exclusive interests. He is also the author of a children's book *Keepers of the Deep*.

TheGoodReadWipe is his latest attempt at glory.

But just in case, rcheydn is now working on his next project.

DEDICATION

For Woorra Binda

- PANIC IN THE HOUSE -

“Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhh!!”

The anguished scream could be heard throughout the house.

His wife shrieked and knocked a pan of simmering pasta off the stove onto the floor, just managing to jump out of the way before the roiling water flew across the room and splashed on the opposite wall, making the cat that was dozing on the chair at the kitchen table spring into the air, its feet pedalling at a frightening rate so that when it landed it took off in a single bound and dived headlong through the flap in the door that led into the passage that ran beside the house to the rear garden.

Almost at the same time his son who was in his bedroom lying on his bed with fifty-five kilo weights balanced in each hand above his head involuntarily lost concentration and one of the bars of steel slipped from his grip and crashed onto the bedspread shattering the plastic case of the DVD that was showing on the portable television on the chest of drawers.

“Shit!” he uttered. “What the...”

He then bounded off the bed and ran into the hallway, colliding with his mother who had come running up the stairs, her face flushed and with a frightened look.

“What’s wrong?” she called. “What happened? Are you alright? Where are you?”

Her son grabbed the handle to the bathroom and yanked it down and pushed the door open. He was about to rush in when he saw his father sitting on the toilet, his trousers around his ankles, the toilet roll in his hands and with an angry look in his eyes.

His mother had also begun to enter the bathroom but when her son stopped in his tracks and started to move backwards out of the room she ran into him and propelled him forward again.

“Who did it?” demanded his father looking from the face of his son to that of his wife and back to his son again.

“Did you?” he asked his wife and stared at her with eyes that looked to be as round as the core of the toilet roll he grasped in his hands and thrust forward.

“What?” she asked. “What are you talking about? I thought you’d had a heart attack or something worse.”

“Who used chapter thirty-three?” her husband asked. “It was here this morning I know because I read thirty-two then. Now it’s gone.”

His son turned and pushed past his mother saying “Jesus father, you’re mad. And please lock the door if you’re going to sit down on the toilet.”

His mother’s eyes followed him as he made his way down the stairs to the kitchen. “What do you mean mad?”

“He’s talking about the toilet roll,” mumbled her son and vanished from sight.

She turned and faced her husband who was still in the seated position, still with the toilet roll held in front of him.

“Chapter thirty-three is gone,” he said softly. “It was the chapter with all of the answers. And now it’s gone. Flushed.”

“You *are* mad,” said his wife. “Who cares for goodness sake? You can always buy another roll.” She closed the bathroom door firmly behind her as she left. “In the meantime I have to clean up the mess in the kitchen and we’ll now have to have the broccoli on toast or something instead of pasta with broccoli that I had planned.”

She was only two steps down when her son appeared at the bottom and called up: "Someone will have to clean up after the cat as well. There's cat shit dripping from the inside of the flap to the passage."

"Oh my god," sighed his mother.

In the bathroom her husband still sat holding the toilet roll in his lap. Staring up at him from the first square of toilet paper were the printed words: "CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR."

CHAPTER ONE

– THE OUTBACK ITCH –

When Fred Nurk first thought of the idea he was convinced he was on to a winner. Unlike other ideas he had come up with in the past he was certain this one would run and run.

The thing was that that was exactly what happened – it did run and run, right down the drain.

Flushed away.

But rather than a negative it was a positive.

It was something he not only expected but something he hoped and prayed would happen. If that was not the result then he would have had another bummer to his credit.

Bummer.

He had smiled at the time.

How appropriate.

Fred first had the idea when he had been on one of his exploring holidays, this time when he had decided to see the real Australia, the Outback, and had gone into the bush.

He had been to Sydney and seen the Opera House and to Perth and joined the sailing set for a day and to Brisbane where he just lounged about in the city's pedestrianised mall in shorts and flip flops and still did not feel out of place or underdressed. He had also been north to the Atherton Tableland and the rain forest and out to a couple of the Barrier Reef islands where the water was so crystal clear you didn't have to don diving gear to see the multicoloured fish grazing a few meters below the surface.

But he had not been to the Outback, that dry part of the continent where cattle stations were the size of townships in England, parts of which were so remote that cattle called brumbies had never seen a man. Or where rain was a rarity and where flocks of kangaroos were so numerous they could change the colour of the landscape from a distance. Locomotives crossed the country from east to west and back again that were so long three or sometimes four engines were needed to haul the vast number of laden carriages behind.

So Fred looked at the map and poked a pin with one eye shut into it, gently guiding it somewhat towards the centre rather than the coast.

Duaringa. What was Duaringa he wondered? But he didn't wonder for long and it was only two days later that he had hired a small sedan and from the Central Queensland city of Rockhampton headed west for a bit over a hundred kilometres until the aptly named Capricorn Highway led him to the small town of Duaringa which had a population of five hundred. Five hundred and one now that he had arrived.

Duaringa was reputed in some circles, though it was not accepted as the official derivation, to have got its name from the aboriginal language used in the area. *Djiaringe* was said to mean *turn oneself around* and no sooner had Fred turned into what was intended as the main street he reckoned he had a clear understanding of what the aborigines must have meant.

He quickly realised also that the town was not blessed with a plethora of businesses. There was a police station and courthouse, an ambulance station, a hotel, post office and newsagents, one primary school, three churches, a sports complex and a library. It was an eclectic mix to say the least.

Reading his guide book Fred saw that it previously had a general store and a butcher shop but both had closed down, and there was also a railway station but apart from the platform it hadn't been used for years.

But what Duaringa did have some claim for was that it was a significant centre for aboriginal peoples and there was a reservation at a place called Bundingo a few hours drive further west. It was home to around a thousand people, a very high proportion of them aged under eighteen. Bundingo too had the reputation for being the most violent indigenous community in Queensland with a hospitalisation rate for assault more than forty times the state average.

Fred was excited at the prospects that lay before him and he did not have to think twice about his next move and three hours later as the sun was disappearing over the horizon he turned off the rutted dirt track masquerading as a road onto a narrower dirt track that was intended to be nothing more than that and soon after pulled up in front of one of the numerous wood sheds he saw dotted around the place. He would soon learn that the sheds were in fact houses shared by aborigine families. He could see no-one but he could make out a flickering light coming from around the corner of the shed where he had parked and he could hear what sounded like laughter as well.

When he walked around the corner with his expensive Leica slung over his shoulder he could not at first believe his eyes. About thirty meters ahead of him was a bed sheet mounted on a wooden frame and black and white images flickered and danced across it. For the life of him he could not recall fully the name of the film that was being projected onto the sheet from a whirring open reel in front and to one side of where he was standing, but he thought it was about an absent minded professor because something in the back of his mind helped him recognise that the lead character was a hugely successful but hardly attractive actor at the time called Fred MacMurray. Maybe it was because of the similarity of their names that he thought of it.

But he didn't dwell on the thought because he noticed almost at once that between him and the sheet was a sea of human backs. There was a mass of people sitting on chairs and benches and on the ground or standing with arms crossed, balancing on one leg with the foot of the other tucked up against the upright knee. There must have been more than a hundred aborigines, out in the open air, watching an American made film being shown on a makeshift screen.

Suddenly the screen went black and there was a flapping as the reel of film rattled around the cylinder. A shout went up and heads turned in his direction. The shouts were followed by just about every one of the people, young and old, in front of him standing as if by a single instruction. They all just stared at him. The flapping of the film did not stop. Round and round it went as two hundred very round white eyes focussed on Fred in the gloom.

"Do you want something?" came a voice from nearby.

Fred saw that it was an old black man who had been running the projector. He still did not stop the film clicking and clicking in monotonous sounds.

"What do you want?" said the man again.

"Um, I just drove in," answered Fred lamely. "I mean I'm on holiday from England. I just came by."

"You came here for a holiday?" replied the old man. "You're mad. What do you want?"

To cut a long explanation short Fred explained his motives and the old man whose name was Benjamin Thompson in turn reported his findings to the crowd that had edged closer. He then casually replaced the reel of film with another one, flicked a switch and again as if by a single hand instruction everyone sat down or stood and watched intently as the whirring started up and images again appeared on the sheet.

Again to cut a long conversation short Benjamin Thompson told Fred he could spend the night in one of the sheds, or houses, but that he would have to leave the next day because the state authorities did not take kindly to strange white visitors from England turning up unannounced in the middle of the night and bedding down among the community, a community that sometimes had a problem with illicit drink and brawling and among whom were a number of nubile young aboriginal girls.

A number of hours later the countryside was quiet. There was not a sound apart from snoring coming from different regions in the shed where Fred was bedded down in his sleeping bag, his Leica tucked down at his feet. He had no option but to leave his car locked with some of his belongings in the trunk but his trusty camera he kept with him at all times because he didn't want to lose the many visual records of his worldly travels.

It was around midnight that he woke with a start and felt a rumbling in his lower regions. It was a deep rumbling and he knew where it came from and why it was there.

Old Benjamin Thompson had been generous and offered him some dried meat on a skewer as they finished watching the movie. Fred thought it was probably kangaroo meat and happily washed it down with a mug of water. It was only after that the old man told him it was not kangaroo but goanna. Goanna is one of a variety of carnivorous reptiles in Australia and he knew now that while they liked to eat meat they certainly did not like to be eaten by inexperienced white men from across the oceans.

Fred bounded out of bed and headed for the door of the shed. Outside he looked around anxiously for where he might rid himself of the rumbling and the internal avalanche he could feel was about to burst free.

In the near distance he saw a shed about six feet tall and about four feet wide. The outdoor toilet. For sure it had to be what the true Aussie called the dunny. In less than a minute he was perched over, not exactly sitting on, a makeshift circular wooden rim over a large drum while his bowels opened and the entire contents of his stomach gushed forth. It was relief he had not experienced the likes of before.

When he was done he looked about him. The only paper was a bunched up roll of newspaper and he used three whole pages to make himself presentable. He then returned to his sleeping bag and with a huge sigh of relief went back to sleep.

The morning saw the sun rise as it always did in east, the golden rays piercing through the gum trees dotted around the reservation and between the wooden houses. It had been a fresh night but the morning was bright gold and warm.

Not at all like Fred's bottom which was hot and red. It resembled a baboon in every way except for the itch. For Fred the itch was unbearable. It made him understand more clearly why a dog will sometimes drag its arse along the grass in such a strange and odd fashion. If he had been alone and there had been a grassy patch somewhere he would consider doing likewise.

Instead he tried to rationalise what had caused the problem and it came to him that it had to be a combination of the goanna and the newspaper he had used in the dunny to scrape

his bottom clean. The pressure of rough newspaper with cheap ink printing on his tender anus had left it raw and burning.

Fred did not know it at the time but it was a blessing. It would be the beginning of something so wonderful and so rewarding that he would happily go back to Bundingo time and time again and sit in the outdoor dunny and wipe his behind with old newspaper and put up with the incredibly irritating itching and burning.

CHAPTER TWO

– A SHED LOAD OF SHITE –

The idea was quite simple really.

Fred was surprised nobody had thought of it before. Oh there were many of a similar kind on offer in many stores. The variety was quite large in fact.

They came in black, red, green, orange, blue, fuchsia and red in transparent tubes, in single units or as a gift pack. There was even a Halloween gift pack. Yet another offered horror-themed toilet paper that *Puts You on the Edge of Your Seat*, a position that Fred considered unwise. One distributor described his array as the sexiest on earth and invited customers to spread the message by alerting their friends. Fred could just see people writing on Twitter or on their Facebook pages alerts along the lines of “*you wouldn’t believe the fantastic deal I have discovered. It’s*”

The ingenuity of the manufacturers did not end there. There was one for millionaires, one with crosswords, others that were monogrammed, one that for some reason glowed in the dark, another that somehow would appeal more to Europeans than anyone else though why that should be so escaped Fred. The one that bothered him the most was that which offered *wit, wisdom and wickedly funny stuff*. But still he could find nothing that seriously challenged his idea.

The first thing he did was run it by some friends in his office. All said he was crazy and that it was a hair-brained idea that would never catch on. So he raised it with others who also advised him to drop it. Finally he asked his girlfriend what she thought. He should probably have approached her first but he had banked on getting the support of others before taking the idea to her and proposing how to proceed to the next and subsequent steps. That would be where the cost element came in.

“You’re joking, right?” she said.

“No,” said Fred as firmly as he could. “I reckon it’s a great idea. Why wouldn’t it work?”

They were in the kitchen of the flat they shared and she was busy making a spicy blended soup to be served with a spinach and tomato salad.

“Because nobody would be interested. Why would they? It’s just not what people do.”

“Of course it is,” said Fred. “Everyone at some time or other has to spend time just sitting.”

“That’s why most people keep a magazine or a newspaper beside them.”

“Yes. So why not a book?”

His girlfriend put the knife down on the bench and wiped her hands on her apron. “Of course a book,” she said.

“Well?”

“I mean a real book.”

“What’s the difference?”

His girlfriend dropped her head and then raised it and looked him straight in the eyes.

“Are you really saying that people would rather read that way than normally?”

Fred stood his ground. “I think so,” he answered. “And there is even a further upside to it.”

With her exasperation rising his girlfriend sighed: “Go on tell me then. What’s the added upside?”

Fred held his breath before answering. This was the crux of his idea. This was the aspect that would make it or break it. If he was wrong with this then his whole idea would be just as his friend and others had told him: A ridiculous waste of time.

Finally he spoke. "Here it is in a nutshell. We print books, novels, on toilet rolls right? People will buy the rolls and when going to the toilet they'll read the stories. They'll be able to select the type of novel they want to read. No more old newspapers or magazines cluttering the floor. Everyone will have exactly the novel they want to read. And of course it'll be cheaper than the actual book. It's simple. It's great."

His girlfriend remained silent so Fred went on with an attempt at levity by way of encouragement: "Just imagine," he said. "You could have *Gone With The Wind*, *The Accident*, *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, *Don't Look Back*, *Bombs Away*, *Goldfinger*."

His girlfriend kept looking at him. She did not smile. She slightly bent one knee and placed her hands on her hips. Fred had seen the manoeuvre many times and knew what was coming. "Haven't you overlooked one important thing," she said. Her eyes had narrowed. "Something that would kill off your idea at the very start?"

"What's that?"

Now she did smile. "Put yourself in the position of sitting on the toilet reading your favourite novel. Great. Then when you come back next time I will have been in there in the meantime. And what have I done?" Her smile widened. "I'll have used some of the paper. I'll have flushed away the bit that you would have been reading the next time you went to the toilet."

She nodded triumphantly. "Well?"

Now Fred smiled at his girlfriend. "Exactly," he said. "That's the added upside. Every time that happens you have to go out and buy more toilet rolls. So you can pick up where you left off. And that means more money. It's brilliant. The more people crap, the more they have to buy. And that means more money for you and me. It's money for old rope, or a shed load of cash for old shite."

Up to this point Fred's life had been what could genuinely be described as absolutely normal. In other words there had been nothing startling or exciting that he could recall or point to and say that it was an event or a happening he would remember fondly, or otherwise, until his dying day.

Normal.

His life had been extraordinarily un-extraordinary.

Born in Hull. Attended the local primary school. Read English literature at Hull University. Supported, and still supporter of, Hull City Football Club. Resident of Hull until the age of nineteen.

Normal.

Even his work experience was ordinary.

When Fred left university with a degree his expectations were reasonably high. He expected that with a degree to his name he could reasonably expect to find a reasonably good job. But reason is not always what it is cracked up to be and Fred quickly realised that his degree was insufficient to guarantee him a job of his choice. Indeed, every choice he made in the first six months of graduating came to nothing. He sent dozens of applications, received many formal rejections, and was ignored by even more. The Hull business world apparently had not learned of Fred's educational achievements and worse seemed not to be that interested in filling in its knowledge gap.

Famous Hullensians there were in the past, including William Wilberforce, Amy Johnson, actors John Alderton and Maureen Lipman, the poet Philip Larkin and of course the former Deputy Prime Minister and now Lord John Prescott. But the name Fred Nurk was not tripping off the tongues of human resource managers in sectors where he sought employment.

Expectation turned to dismay.

And his disposition did not improve when he finally did find work.

“Congratulations,” said his mother and tapped Fred on the shoulder. A mother’s love and encouragement she believed was very important, even if it was directed at semi-failure which is what Fred’s father thought of the job he had finally secured.

“Selling shirts,” he murmured. “Three years at university and thousands of pounds later and you end up selling shirts in Whitefriargate. Congratulations?”

“Praise where praise is due,” admonished his mother. “It’s taken months to get this and whether it’s in Whitefriargate or King Edward Street or Carr Lane it doesn’t matter. It’s work which pays. Everyone needs shirts so it’s a secure job.”

“Everyone needs shirts.” His father was unimpressed. As he walked out of the room he tossed over his shoulder. “What’s wrong with aiming higher at the likes of companies doing what they can for the planet with wind farms, or that place where they’re experimenting with turning waste into energy? They must also need expensive English literature graduates.”

Fred had approached both. Both had ignored him, probably because such companies had little or no need for English literature.

But he stuck with the shirts for three full months before deciding he could not stand it any longer. Standing behind a counter for hours on end. Mind numbing conversations with colleagues who had struggled with elementary education and got their jobs purely, he guessed, because their employer recognised their limited ambition and therefore could count on their undemanding income expectations. And customers who were more concerned with the cost of a shirt than whether it suited them or was of the right quality. It bothered him that their expectations also were limited.

When he made the mistake of commenting on this to another older man in the shirt section of the store the response he got was sharp.

“You’re a bloody snob that’s all,” said the man who had been employed by the store for more than twenty years and had manned the shirt counter for half that time. “You probably think your shit doesn’t stink.”

From that moment on Fred subconsciously counted the days he turned up for work in the morning five days a week. Sixty-seven days later he packed it in.

As he left that evening the other shirt counter attendant called after him: “Good riddance Nurk. Too big for your own shoes you are.”

“Just as well I was in shirts and not shoes then,” Fred shot back.

He resolved there and then to escape from Hull and move south to the capital.

His mother cried and suggested he return home if he did not find what he wanted in the first month, and his father expressed the fervent wish that he would find work commensurate with the amount of money already outlaid on his education and which in addition left a little over to allow him to pay off some of the outstanding loan he had accrued during his three years at the University of Hull.

So in total the farewell he received when he had left the attractively named East Riding of Yorkshire and the dull sounding city of his birth and early life had been anything but friendly or encouraging.

The welcome he received when he landed in London was very different indeed.

The first person he met was the girlfriend who now told him she thought his big plan was ill conceived and stupid.

As he was getting off the train from Hull at King's Cross station he tripped on the bottom step and fell headlong into her, knocking her to the ground and sending her suitcase skidding along the platform. Many apologies later and when they realised they had both come from the north with dreams of success in the big smoke of London, added to the fact that neither had any idea really where they were going to stay, they discussed options over a beer in a nearby pub. This resulted in their joining forces, stayed in separate rooms in a bed and breakfast establishment three blocks away for the following three nights, and then because they found they got on rather well, they tracked down a small one bedroom flat in the same area which they moved into.

Now some months later, both gainfully employed, they were reasonably content with their arrangement. The flat was small but adequate. Their combined incomes permitted them to live a normal if not extravagant lifestyle. And the sex was pleasant.

They had their disagreements of course, but nothing serious. Until now.

"You might think it's clever, a shed load of shite and all that, but don't forget that whatever you decide to do will affect me as well." His girlfriend was not to be put off so easily.

"Well, I'll do it all on my own then," Fred replied. "You won't be affected."

"Don't be ridiculous. Of course I will be. When this grand business plan of yours fails, as I'm sure it will because the idea of printing books on toilet paper is just so silly, you'll get all bitter and twisted and life here will become hell."

"It won't. Because this is going to work. I'll make sure it does."

"And I say it's madness."

"We'll see won't we?"

"Yes we will."

And that was the cold atmospheric end of that.

CHAPTER THREE

– THE BABOON’S BUTT –

There are actually machines that allow you to print anything you want onto toilet paper. Needless to say it was the Chinese, specifically those on the island of Taiwan, who came up with the idea.

“They went one step further than just printing,” Fred explained to his printer friend. “No cart before the horse for them. Well actually it was the cart first, or more precisely part of the cart the seat.”

He went on to explain that the Taiwanese invented a biometric toilet seat but he was unsure exactly, or in detail, what it did.

However, this was followed by some Danish students who designed an auto close toilet seat which they claimed put an end to the age old controversy about men leaving the seat up after use much to the annoyance of the women who followed.

“According to the dictionary biometrics relates to methods for uniquely recognising humans,” he said. “This is based on one, or more than one, intrinsic physical or behavioural trait. As for its application in computer science, which was behind the biometric toilet seat, it is used as a form of what is called *identity access management* and *access control*.”

“Are you going to speak English or what?” said the printer.

“I think this just means that the seat knows when you stand up,” said Fred. “It then triggers something that lowers the seat. Clever eh?”

So, he argued, there was no reason why the next step, admittedly a step sideways and not in advanced science terms, could not be having books printed on rolls of toilet paper.

“Since when did you know anything about science?” his friend enquired.

“I don’t,” Fred answered. “But that isn’t the point. I’m not talking science here.”

“Well, what are you saying then?” asked his friend. “What’s all this talk about biometrics and toilet paper that you want to print on? What’s the connection?”

“Look, forget the biometrics. I’m just interested in the printing aspect.”

“Well?”

Fred shook his head. He thought he had already clearly explained his idea to his friend. Obviously not clearly enough though.

“Ok,” he said calmly. Speaking slowly but without sounding too condescending he continued: “There is lots of toilet paper out there with things printed on it. Mostly pictures and stuff. But I want to print, or publish actually, books on rolls so that when you are taking a crap, or in the case of women having a pee, you have something interesting to read. It’s that simple. See?”

“Gottcha,” his friend said. “Absolutely crazy idea. Forget it. Now what?”

“What do you mean forget it?” Fred demanded. A deep frown furrowed his brow. “I’m not going to forget it. And I don’t care if you do think it’s a crazy idea. I reckon it’d be a hit.”

“You mean a shit.”

“Very funny. Will you help me or not?”

His friend hesitated. “Look,” he said. “Tell me exactly what you need.”

Fred relaxed. "OK. It's the ink that's the main problem. It has to be the right stuff or it'll cause all sorts of trouble. Ordinary ink plays hell with your arse."

"How do you know that?" his friend interjected.

Now it was Fred's turn to hesitate. His friend's eyebrows shot up questioningly.

"I tried it," said Fred finally.

The eyebrows of his friend remained arched.

"I got some toilet paper and stuck it onto some copy paper and printed out some text."

"Using your DeskJet printer at home?"

"Right."

"And?"

Fred grimaced at the thought. "Let's just say the doctor at the clinic originally thought I had been doing things I shouldn't."

His friend took a step backwards and laughed. "What, he thought you had been sticking potatoes or fruit or something up your backside?"

"It was a fungus," Fred tried to explain. "By the time I went to see her I had developed a fungus that itched like shite. Not like shite but like hell."

"Her?" His friend roared with laughter. "You went to see a woman doctor about an itchy arse and she thought you had been shoving items up. Jesus how embarrassing."

Fred dropped his eyes and a flush began to rise from the neck upwards.

"What?" his friend demanded. "What? There's more? What happened?"

Fred could not help but look sheepish. "She had an intern with her," he responded. "A girl who looked like she was still in her teens. Bloody hell."

"And they both bent down and had a good look up your backside. The woman doctor and the young girl. Bloody marvellous. I've got to put this up on Twitter."

"Do and you're dead," threatened Fred.

His friend spent the next few minutes taunting Fred but finally promised not to tell anyone else about the awkward rectum examination.

"OK," he said after a time. "So you want me to try different inks to see what would work? In other words ink that won't make a human's bum look like a baboon and won't cause itching distress?"

"Yes," Fred agreed.

"OK. But I'm not going to spend too much time on it. I think your idea is a non-starter, but I'll give it a go. A bit of a go."

"Thanks," said Fred. "That's all I ask. How long will it take?"

"Give me a week. I have a few things to clear first."

"OK then."

As he was leaving his friend could not resist. "See you baboon butt."

Fred thought it best to ignore him.

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