

Amazing Stories for James and Sam

This is a collection of stories that I made up for my two children, James and Sam, to stop them getting bored on long car journeys. They are mostly silly, inspired by whatever we were doing at the time.

All the stories are made up on the spur of the moment. There's no planning before and no changes after. They are just there to pass the time of the day.

I have forgotten some of the first ones I told because I did not write them down (so nobody will ever know the one about the giant or the one about the comet). That's why I decided to put them in a book – now I can easily tell them again, and maybe other children will enjoy hearing them too.

I have also included a few little illustrations. I'm afraid I'm not very good at drawing, but they should give you some idea of how I pictured the stories.

All text and illustrations:

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The Freshest Baker in the World

We thought this one up driving through Birmingham on a journey... can't remember why.

Once upon a time, in a big city not so very far from here, there was a small baker's shop. The rest of the city was full of giant superstores and hypermarkets, so it was very unusual to find small shops like this one.

However, this was a very unusual shop. The baker who owned the shop had magical powers that allowed him to bake the freshest bread in the world. He did not have cakes and loaves on display in the window like other bakers. Whatever his customers asked for, he would disappear out the back and return in just three seconds with whatever it was, freshly baked.

Bread rolls, muffins and chocolate cakes were easy, but the baker could also bake really unusual stuff. Once, a customer came in and asked for twelve pyramid-shaped bagels. "Just a moment!" said the baker, and disappeared out the back. Three seconds later, he returned with twelve fresh pyramid-shaped bagels.

Once a lady came in and asked for a baguette as long as a bus. "Certainly, madam!" said the baker. He disappeared out the back and after just three seconds, the end of a baguette appeared at the doorway. The lady grabbed that end while the baker held the other and together they carefully carried it out into the street.



Now just across the road from the bakers was a large supermarket, which was run by an evil supermarket witch. She hated small shops. She thought everyone should buy everything from huge supermarkets like hers.

One day, she was wondering why her supermarket never sold as much bread and cakes as the supermarkets that her friends worked at. She asked some of her customers where they got their bread from and they told her about the bakers. This made her very angry.

"I must stop people shopping there!" she screeched. So that night, she cast an evil spell on the baker.

The next morning, the baker was in his shop getting ready for the day's business. The first customer came in, a young lady in a red dress, and asked for a square doughnut.

"No problem!" the baker said, and disappeared out the back.

After three seconds, he *did not* come back. After three more seconds, he still had not come back. By this time, the young lady was getting worried. She was a regular customer and had never had to wait more than three seconds before.

Eventually, the baker came back, but looked very puzzled.

"I don't understand it," he said. "I tried making your doughnut, but it was made from wood. So I tried again, and it was still made from wood!". He sadly held up the two wooden square doughnuts.

"Harrumph!" said the young lady in the red dress, and went across to the supermarket to get some boring old round doughnuts.

The supermarket witch had been watching all this from a small window in her supermarket. She cackled and rubbed her hands together with glee.

The next customer came in, a man wearing a stripy hat, and asked for a banana-shaped loaf of banana bread. The baker looked worried, but went out the back. After three seconds, he came back, by now looking quite frightened.

"I don't understand it!" he said, holding a nicely varnished, wooden, banana-shaped loaf of banana bread. "You may as well have it," he said, giving it to the man in the stripy hat.

The man walked out and the baker followed him to the door.

"I don't understand it. I'll have to close the shop."

And he slowly started to turn the "open" sign round so that it showed "closed".

But outside, a passer-by noticed the man carrying the wooden banana bread.

"That's a nice ornament," he said, "Where's it from?"

"From this baker's shop. He's not much of a baker, but his woodworking is pretty good."

So the passer-by went into the shop. The shopkeeper said, "I'm afraid we're closed. I don't do baking any more."

But the passer-by said, "I don't want anything baked. I was wondering if you had a table in the shape of a camel."

The baker thought for a moment, then said, "Let me see what I can do!".

He disappeared out the back, and after just three seconds, he returned with a table shaped like a camel.

"Thank you very much!" said the passer-by. He went back home and told all his friends about the new woodwork shop.

Before long, word of the amazing woodwork shop had spread far and wide, and the baker had a constant stream of customers.

The supermarket witch, who had been very happy now that her bread and cake sales were up, started to notice that her furniture sales were falling. She asked a customer where people were buying their furniture these days.

"Why, from that new woodworker's shop across the road!".

Furious, the witch ran out of her supermarket and into the baker's shop.

"Right," she shouted, "I've had enough of you! I'm going to destroy your equipment once and for all!". She pushed passed the baker and went out the back.

Three seconds went by. Another three seconds went by. Then the baker went out the back to see what had happened to her. To his surprise, there was no sign of the witch. But there was a life-sized, nicely varnished *wooden carving* of a witch.

"Goodness me!" said the baker. "What on earth shall I do with this?"

He carried it outside and left it in front of his shop, and there it stands to this day, showing passers-by that he is the freshest woodworker in the world.



The Sausage Escape

Inspired by Sam's dinner at the soft play centre.

Once upon what can only be described as a time, two sausages were lying on a plate. There was also a jacket potato, a Yorkshire pudding and some peas lying next to them. They had only met each other five minutes ago when the chef put them onto the plate, but already they were good friends.

The peas were using the sausages as springboards to bounce into the Yorkshire pudding, and the jacket potato was telling them silly stories making them all laugh.

Suddenly, a knife and fork appeared from up above, came down and chopped one of the sausages into pieces and took them away.

The other foods on the plate were shocked. Jacket was the first to recover his voice.

"Quick everyone," he said, "we must make a plan to get out of here, otherwise we'll all be taken away, and who knows what will become of us?"

"But what can we do?" said the peas.

"Hmm..." said Jacket. "I know where we'll be safe – in a cave on the beach. We can have fun playing in the sand too."

"But how can we get there?" asked Yorkshire.

"Well," said Jacket, thoughtfully, "how about this: I'm round and so is Sausage, so why don't I be the back wheel, Sausage can be the front wheel, and Yorkshire can go on top of us. The peas can jump into Yorkshire and we'll all be able to roll away."

So, without further ado, they all took up their positions.

"Now ROOOLLLLL!" shouted Jacket, and off they went.

The rolled off the plate and onto the chair, then onto the floor, then over to the door. That's where they found the first obstacle – the door was closed.



"Now what?" asked Sausage.

"We know!" shouted the peas. "Sausage should jump up and down and waggle around, that will tempt the cat over here, because cats love sausages. Then he can hide behind Jacket so the cat can't find him. Then the cat will get bored, go out through the cat flap and we can jump through behind."

Sausage looked a little worried – it sounded dangerous – but he agreed to give it a try. Sure enough, the cat went over to gobble up the dancing sausage, but when he got there, the sausage was nowhere to be seen. The cat soon got bored of looking and wandered outside through the cat flap. The food quickly jumped through and hid behind a bush.

"Fantastic!" said the peas, "but now, how do we get to the beach?"

They all thought for a minute.

"I know," said Sausage, "I can hear some seagulls flying around, and they love Yorkshire puddings. Yorkshire can go and lie on the path over there and wait for a seagull to come down, snatch him up and take him away to the beach to feed her chicks."

Yorkshire didn't like this at all.

"But the seagull will eat me! And how will the rest of you get to the beach?"

"Don't worry, I've worked it all out", said Sausage, reassuringly. "While the seagull is busy trying to fit you in her beak, Jacket and I will jump on her back, and the peas can grab hold of her legs. Then, when she reaches the beach, the peas can tickle her legs and she'll laugh so much she'll drop you. Then the rest of us can jump down."

So Yorkshire agreed to give it a try. Everything went according to plan, and as they tumbled from the seagull and down onto the sandy beach, they thought their troubles were over. Then they noticed all the hungry seagulls and crabs looking for food.

"Quick, someone think of a plan!" shouted the peas.

"I know," said the Yorkshire. "We'll walk along in single file and the peas can climb on top of us as camouflage. Then we'll look like a piece of green seaweed being blown along the beach. Seagulls and crabs don't eat seaweed, so we'll be able to get to the cave in safety."

And that's just what they did. They reached the cave and lived there happily for the rest of the day, until the tide came in and they were all washed away.



The Comfiest Bed In The World

*I thought of this one when James jumped on our bed one morning to wake me up.
James and Sam like imagining how big the huge money bag is.*

Once upon a time, there was an old and uncomfortable bed. It didn't even have a proper mattress, just a hard concrete slab. But it did have a dream. It dreamt of being the comfiest bed in the world.

So one day, it decided the time had come to make its dream real. It went to the local dump, and asked a workman if it could have a look around for an old mattress.

"Be my guest!" said the workman, "it's better than burying them in the ground."

The bed spent all day trying to find a mattress that wasn't covered in broken egg shells or with springs bursting out of the side. Eventually it found one; it wasn't great, but it would do.

The next day, it went into the shopping centre in town. It had a sign saying "10 minutes sleep for 1 pound". Its plan was that people busy doing their shopping would love the chance to relax and have a quick nap instead of rushing round all the shops. It was a good plan - by the end of the day it had a nice little bag full of money.



It did this for the rest of the week, and then went to the mattress shop.

It said to the shopkeeper, "I've got this nice little bag full money, and I'd like to buy a new mattress, a really comfy one. This one I've got at the moment does the job, but it's not great, and I've got a dream: I want to be the comfiest bed in the world!"

The shopkeeper thought hard. "Well, I'm not sure I have the *comfiest* mattress in the world, but I can sell you this one, which is very very soft."

The bed bought it, and the next week it went round local offices and business with a new sign: "Power naps - 30 minutes for £5". It thought all the busy workers would work much better if they took a short break. It was such a tempting offer - especially when people saw the soft new mattress. By the end of the week, it had a *huge* bag of money.

It thought to itself, "This is fun! People love sleeping on me, so I must be very soft and comfy. But I don't think I'm the comfiest bed in the world."

So it went to the big city and sought out the finest mattress maker in the land.

"Listen, I have this *huge* bag of money, *and* I have a dream. I want to be the comfiest bed in the world."

The bedmaker said "No problem! I've been working on a top-secret ultra-comfy mattress for a while now. It's nearly ready, and I think you could be the perfect bed to try it out."

The bed was delighted. The new mattress fitted perfectly and was *extremely* comfy. It went back to the shopping centre and back to the offices and let people sleep on it for free. Soon it was famous - and it really was the comfiest bed in the world.

The Cloud Farmer

James and I were looking at interesting things out of the window on a long car journey. First we saw a strange farm machine on a trailer, then lots of clouds.

Once upon a time, a brother and sister were walking home from the summer fair with their mum. The children each had a balloon, the sort that floats up by itself. The balloons were a bit giddy and not being very careful – they were bouncing around all over the place. Suddenly, they bounced too hard and floated out of the children's hands and up into the sky.

The children were very upset as they watched their balloons float away until they were tiny dots, but their mum said, "Never mind, we can get some more at next year's fair. I'm sure the balloons will keep an eye on you from up in the sky and find other ways to make you happy."

Meanwhile, the balloons floated up and up. They floated a long way from the fair and it started to get cloudy. First they floated through rain clouds and got all wet. Then a strong wind blew them dry, and also blew them a long way away.

Then they floated through some thunder clouds, where they were very nearly struck by lightning. They were very frightened.

Then they floated through clouds full of hail stones, which pitter-pattered all over them like someone playing a drum. They were being hit so much they were afraid they would burst, but they kept on floating and before long came out of the hail clouds.

They found themselves in a warm sky with long white clouds raked in to neat rows. They were feeling relieved, when suddenly – pop! A big round sharp pronged thing came from nowhere and bashed into one of the balloons, bursting it. Its friend watched in shock as the bits of rubber fell down and down until they were too small to see.

It cried out in sadness, which sounded like a rubbery squeak, but someone, or something, heard it.

"What's all this then?" said a voice.

The balloon looked round to see who it was. The voice belonged to a very strange person who appeared to be made out of clouds. He had been pulling the big round sharp pronged thing along on a rope. The balloon was startled, but eventually managed to explain.



"It's that thing you're towing, it bashed into my friend and burst him!"

"Oh dear, I am *very* sorry," said the cloud person. "I'm a cloud farmer, and this is the plough I use to make all the clouds up here neat and tidy. I'm afraid there's nothing I can do to help your friend."

"Then what am I going to do?" asked the balloon, starting to cry again. "I've been blowing around for ages, I'll never be able to find the children I belong to again, and it's too dangerous for balloons up here anyway, and..."

But the cloud farmer interrupted him. "There, there, now, maybe there is something I can do to help you. I've been looking for a helper for a while now, but no one ever seems to come up here. I'm getting old, and there just doesn't seem to be time to get down to the villages and towns and look after the clouds down there. I hardly have time to grow all the snowflakes up at the North Pole for the snow clouds. Maybe you could lend me a hand."

"But how? I'm just a balloon!"

"Well, I know I'm getting old, but I think I still have a little bit of weather magic left."

He reached behind his ear and pulled off some of the cloudiness he was made from. He carefully wrapped it round the balloon and patted it down.

"Now, this may hurt a little bit, but don't worry!" He pulled out a pin from nowhere, stuck it through the cloudiness and popped the balloon.

"Ouch!" said the balloon, but to its surprise, it was still a balloon, but now it was made of the same cloudiness as the cloud farmer.

"Wow! I'm a cloudalloon!" it said, "But what do I do now?"

"Go down to the low levels and see what you can do about those clouds. You won't be able to tidy them all up, but see what you can do to help. Sometimes people need rain, to make their crops grow and keep the rivers and lakes full, sometimes people like it to be dry, so they can go out and play."

So the cloudalloon floated down. It did its best to make sure that the rain fell where it was most wanted, and not where it was not wanted. Sometimes it would make a special effort to clear the clouds away when there was a summer fair or school sports day.

Once, after it had been a cloudalloon for a year and a day, it happened to be working in the village where it had first floated away from the children. It was clearing away the clouds ready for the summer fair. To its surprise, down there were the same children. They were on the way to the fair with their mum. They both just happened to look up into the sky, and saw a funny balloon-shaped cloud, which seemed to shape itself into a face and then wink at them, before floating away. The children smiled, and this year they made sure they held onto their new balloons *very* tightly.

Superveg

Inspired by the salad that James didn't want with his sandwich at a café.

Once upon a time, there was a café that served a little salad with all its meals and sandwiches. This was no good for the children who went there because they all hated salad.

Every morning, the farmer who lived down the road would go into his field and round up the vegetables to send over to the café for the salads. First he would go to the tomato plant, where the tomatoes were usually fast a sleep, and give it a shake.



"Wake up! Wake up! You lazy tomatoes!" he would shout, until enough tomatoes had jumped down to the floor.

Then he would go to the lettuces, all snuggled up in their bed of soil, and tickle them until they jumped up out of the ground and went over to wait with the tomatoes.

Then he would go over to the red onions. They were very shy and usually lay hidden in the ground, but they were easy to spot because their leaves stuck up into the air. So the farmer would pull them out carefully.

Finally, he would go to the cucumbers. They were all very excited, jumping up and down like little dogs. The farmer would count out the number that the café would need, and choose one to be the leader of the group and lead them all safely to the café.

One morning, just as the vegetables were about to set off for the café, a little voice spoke up.

"What about me?"

The farmer looked down and saw a strange new vegetable he had never seen before. It was purple with leaves coming out of the top like tentacles.

"What about you?" he asked.

"Aren't you going to send me to the café too?" asked the new vegetable.

"I can't do that, they only want lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber and red onions. I don't even know what you are!"

"Please let me go! Please, please, please!"

So the farmer let it go.



When the vegetables reached the café, the chef opened the door and let in the lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers and red onions. As the last one went in, he started to close the door.

Then he heard a little voice call up, "What about me?"

"What about you?" asked the chef, looking down at the strange purple thing.

"Aren't you going to put me into the salads?"

"I can't do that," answered the chef, "my customers only want lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber and red onions. I don't even know what you are!"

"*Please* put me in with the salad! Please, please, *please!*"

So the chef decided to give the new vegetable a try.

Not long after, the first customers in the café were waiting for their food. They were a mum, a dad and their son, who had been to the café before and was not looking forward to his salad. The food arrived, but the family were very puzzled by the strange purple vegetable.

"What's this purple thing?" they asked.

"I've no idea," said the waitress, "normally we only serve lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber and red onions."

"Well, we can't eat it, we don't even know what it is!" said the dad.

All this time, the boy had been looking closely at the new vegetable. It looked cool.

"Don't send it back!" he said, "I'll eat it."

He tried it and thought it was delicious. His parents were amazed and asked the waitress to thank the chef for finally finding a vegetable their son would eat. The waitress did so. The next time the chef saw the farmer, he also passed on the news that children seemed to like the new vegetable, and please could he send some more.

So the farmer went into his field to find some more of the strange new vegetable. There were lots.

"I'm going to have to think of a name for it. How about Superveg?"

All the little purple things jumped up and down with delight, shouting "We're superveg! We're superveg!"

Before long, the word spread and soon children all over the country were enjoying superveg with their salads. Next time you go to a café, see if you can find some in your salad.

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