

In the early morning three little friends; Sandy, Mandy and Bill, were walking along the road on their way to school. Their parents were some way behind them and as they walked along the street they noticed that the windows of one of the shops were painted over with white paint. A poster hung over one of the panes of glass. The three stopped in front.

"What does it say?" Asked Bill. Mandy looked hard at the notice then read out slowly:

"Opening shortly:  
The greatest toy shop on earth-  
Tinkersome Toys for troublesome tots."

"Cor, the greatest Toy shop on earth," said Sandy "fancy having that on our way to school."

"Yes" said Bill " but I shouldn't think it'll make any difference to us, our parents are far too mean to buy us anything. Still, we can look."

For the next week not very much happened. Each morning and evening that they walked past nothing seemed to change, but the windows were still painted over so they couldn't see inside. Once or twice they saw workmen going in and out with bits of wood or pots of paint. There was a builder's lorry outside most days but they never ever saw inside. If they did see a door opening as they went passed they'd deliberately slow down to try and peek in. But each time, something or someone was blocking the view.

"I don't think it will ever open." Bill said, every morning. "Yes it will" Mandy rebuked "just be patient."

It was a week later that they went passed and saw that the windows were being cleaned and the usual large burly workman was up on a ladder. They watched as he took down the sign that said 'opening shortly', then he turned it round.

The three stopped and wouldn't be moved.

"Come on you three, you'll be late for school." said Bill's Mother. But it made no difference, they wouldn't move until they'd seen the writing on the other side;

The Greatest Toy Shop  
On Earth  
Opens Today

"What does it say?" asked Sandy.

"It says that they're opening today."

"Really? Wow."

"Now will you come on you three?"

"Can we go there on our way home Mum?"

"If you come along now, yes. But we won't buy anything." "Oh." the children exchanged looks.

The day went very slowly, all of them were itching to get out and off to the shop.

At lunchtime Bill found the others; "I'm going to get my Mummy to buy me everything."

"Don't be silly, she won't." said Sandy "She's too mean." added Mandy.

"Oh yes she will, you just wait and see. "

At last the final bell of school went and all three of them rushed through the school gate to the cluster of waiting Mums.

"Can we go Mum?"

"Of course we can" said Bill's Mummy "but we're not buying anything." she added.

"Parents" muttered Mandy "I wouldn't give you tuppence for any of them."

"Sorry dear, what did you say?"

"Nothing."

When they got to the shop it was festooned with bright coloured bunting and flapping triangular flags and tangles of paper streamers.

Welcome to our grand  
Party opening  
Special offers and discounts  
For all ages

"Cor Mum you can get money off" said Bill, his ability to read suddenly taking a turn for the better "you can **save** some money".

As they went inside the shop they were greeted by an elderly gentleman. He was dressed in a long tunic that was made of hundreds of bright colours, he had a long wispy beard and a huge nose. On his feet were multicoloured carpet slippers which had a smiling face on each of them, the left one faced the right and the right one faced the left. The man's fingers were huge, so long that as he stood with them by his sides his fingertips were level with his knees. His hair, which was bright red was so long that he had curled it around his head like a hat with the wispy ends sticking out of the back as if to allow the rain to run off it. Resting against him was a long shepherds crook. He was very tall and very thin.

"A feindishly friendilly afternoon, fun, frolics and a fantabulously feastingy time."

He bent down and placed a badge carefully upon the sweater of each one of them, his long fingers delicately making sure that the pins didn't hurt.

"Badges bring bags of bubbledy bubbles and boxes of burbles and bawbles and bangles and giggles and gum."

Bill looked up at him and then down at the slippers, he stood back slightly in surprise when the face on the left hand slipper winked at him.

He looked up at the old man

"Why do you talk like that?"

"Talk like a tottering troublesome train, tutting on tracks, telling of toys.- 'cos I'm mad."

Then he started to dance around in a circle singing out a little verse;

"It's not bad to be mad  
If it's fun that you bring  
In fact it's the bestys to be  
There's no joy in a toy

If no laugh and a half  
Is around for the childys to see.  
So buy all my toys  
All you gillies and boys  
They're the bestys you've seen since your birth  
It won't cost you lots  
Buying toys for the tots  
In the greatest toy shop on earth."

As he danced he raised his feet and his crook danced with him, all on it's own. His hair spiralled up above him and wriggled around like a snake, then settled back into it's original shape as he stopped. A moment later the back pointy bit stretched over his head and scratched his nose.

"There are four floorys for you to fathom, find, filchy, and fooch. The fourth is the finest and has all the food and it's free. Have funning finding fabulous frolics."

They walked on into the shop, Bill still concentrating hard on the slippers.

"I'm not sure about this place" said his Mum "it seems a bit odd to me."

"Oh come on Mum it's great."

"Well we'll see how we get on."

Around them the shelves were piled with countless boxes of toys. There was every different type they had ever come across and lots that they had only seen on the television. "Can I buy this Mum?" repeated Bill again and again.

"No dear" was her automatic response.

"How much pocket money have I got?" He chimed.

"I'm not sure dear, we'll have to look in your money box when we get home."

They came to the back of the shop, there were two tall glass doors and through it they could see the stairwell. There was a sign in front of the glass saying;

Ground Floor- General and slightly boring toys  
1st Floor- Slightly less boring toys  
2nd Floor- Good exciting toys  
3rd Floor- Scintillatingly smashing toys  
4th Floor- No Admittance.

"Mum?" asked Sandy "I thought he said there were four floors.

"He did, why do you ask?"

"Well that sign says that there are five."

"Well perhaps he can't count. Shall we go upstairs?"

"Oh yes, let's go to the top floor and work down." they were walking through the doorway.

"But there's no staircase." Said Mandy's mother.

As if out of nowhere the old man appeared.

"No-one has to climb anything in this, the greatest toy shop on Earth."

"Well how do we get upstairs then?"

"Simplistication itself, you don't."

"What? Well if we can't get upstairs why do you have a sign saying that we can?" Mum sounded a little cross.

"You can't go uppey stairs I bring the floorys down to you."

"What?"

"Which wonderful floory would you like?"

"The third floor please."

"Rightyoey, third floory coming down."

He reached above him, his long arms and fingers stretching way up to the next floor and pulled hard. The building seemed to grumble and then the floor started to move downwards until it was level with them, twice more he did the same until they were standing at the level they wanted to be.

"What's your name?" asked Bill.

"My names the nicest newest unknown nibble you'll hear, a noun that nimbles and niggles at niggling nits."

"Yes but what is it?"

"Wonderymagiculator."

"What?"

"Wonderymagiculator, that's my name, my surlyname anyway, my first name's Pullypendaciouslyplop."

"What?"

"My name is Pullypendaciouslyplop Wonderymagiculator but most of my friends call me Mr Wonder." With that he again started to dance his little jig, his crook dancing alongside him again;

"To my friends I'm Mr Wonder  
That's the name I travel under.  
They can't pronounce my proper name  
But any name is much same-  
So call me fat or old or smelly  
Say my brains are in my wellie.  
But even if your words are true  
Remember I'll have worse for you.

"Oh.... Mr wonder." said Bill "that's a nice name, I think I'll use that." He was looking hard at the old man's slippers. The right one stuck its tongue out at him. The other children had already entered the third floor but Bill stared at the slipper and then poked his own tongue out in reply. The slipper smiled sardonically and then poked it's tongue out again, even further this time. Bill looked determined, he fastened his thumbs inside his cheeks, his first fingers against his temples, wagging them he stuck out his tongue and said "nah nah ne nah na". The slipper giggled.

Bill looked up at Mr Wonder.

"Where did you get your slippers?"

"Fourth Floor." the old man cheerily replied.

"Come on Bill." his Mother called. He trailed off in the direction of the voice.

"Did you see his slippers? They were really great."

"No I didn't" his Mother replied "I'm sure they were."

The third floor was exciting. The toys were all made of sweets, but they weren't

ordinary sweets, as you eat them they replaced themselves. There was Lollipop Lego, Liqourice rope ladders, Duplo dimplelicks, milk chocolate Meccano and row upon row of different coloured Dolly delights. They had a marvellous time, eating and playing and then eating and eating. It was when they got to the end of the floor that they came across the only toy that wasn't a sweet. It was a pair of slippers just like the ones that the old man wore. Bill looked at them.

"They're on the wrong floor."

"What do you mean?" asked his mother.

"Mr magical... Mr Pelyp.... Mr Magicalicul..... Mr Wonder said that they'd be on the next floor. Will you buy them for me Mum?"

"No dear I can't afford them."

"How much are they?"

"I'll look" and with that she bent down and pulled the price tag round so that she could see it,

"absolutely free to anyone who can make us smile. Well" she added "what an extraordinary thing."

"I can make them smile, I can. You watch."

With that Bill contorted his face into the ugliest thing he could make and blew a long slow raspberry at them. The slippers tried very hard not to smile but in the end first the left one started, then the other and when they caught each other's eyes they just burst out giggling.

"I did it,, I did it, they're mine, they're mine."

He picked them up and clutched them to him.

"Well done dear" said his Mother with some mixed feelings about owning these magical slippers.

"We'd better go, come on children."

There was a chorus of groaning but in the end Bill's Mother won and they all trooped to the stairwell. Mr Wonder was waiting for them.

"Leaving so soony? "

"Yes I'm afraid so." said Mandy "She's making us."

"Don't grumble at going, it's me that should groan but the sooner you're gone, the sooner you're home and the sooner you'll all return, ha ha."

"Mr Wonder?" said Bill as the old man pulled the floors back up 'til they were at street level again.

"You remembered my name. Queries and questions from quizzlings?"

"Can I keep these slippers? They did say on them that they were free to anyone who could make them smile and I made them giggle." he said proudly.

"Giggly grouch, you giggled them, goody goody greatly and gulp. You shall hamper them home in a hurry of ha's, I'm happy as hillocks of hay." he wrapped them in a large paper bag and gave them back to Bill. Once again he danced around, slapping the soles of his slippers together;

"Off you go and don't be slack  
Bring your mums and small friends back  
Wear your warmest brightest grin  
Whenever next you wander in  
And I'll be here with toys and plunder,

The ever wonderful Mr Wonder."

As they reached the front of the shop Bill noticed two rather unkempt looking men whispering to each other in a conspiratorial way.

"Midnight then." one of them said to the other in a deep, gruff, growling voice.

"Yeah, midnight, the place is a walkover, no security at all. Like taking sweets from a baby."

"You bring the van to the back, I'll smash through the front door an' we'll have the whole lot away."

It was then that they noticed Bill listening.

"ere you" shouted one of them. "Come 'ere, we'll 'ave you 'til the jobs done."

Realising that all was not well, Bill started to run outside the shop where his Mother and friends were but it was too late. The loudest one of the two had grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and was running down the road with him, the other one following closely behind. Bill's mother screamed "Stop those men, they've got my son." but no-one was fast enough to catch them or even see which of the many little back lanes they took. Bill was a captive of the most evil, wicked, cunning and smelly desperado's known to the toy world. Still clinging to his little parcel he was slung into the back of their van and they drove him away to their secret hideout.

When it eventually stopped moving the back doors were flung open. Framed by the bright lights behind the figure and confused by the time he'd spent in darkness, all that Bill could see was the outline of the largest, biggest, strongest man he'd ever seen. A huge hand reached in and Bill was unceremoniously pulled out. The man held him by the scruff of his neck.

"Don't worry little fella, just a few hours an' the job'll be done, then you can go back to mum an' we'll say no more about it."

"Who's that you're talking to?" This was another gruff voice coming from the inside of the building.

"It's just a kid what overheard us talkin'. We've brought 'im back 'til the job's done then 'e can go."

"Oh no you bleedin' don't. You snuff 'im right now."

"Snuff 'im, a kid? I'm not snuffin' a kid."

"Well if you won't, then I will." The man was walking towards them with a large iron bar in his hand. Bill's eyes were adjusting to the light and he could make out the features of the man holding him. To Bill, he seemed hundreds of feet tall, his chest was huge and his rolled up sleeves showed off his muscles which were as big as footballs. He was dressed in an old, scruffy sleeveless jacket and he hadn't shaved. From the corner of his mouth a match, which he was chewing was revolved manically around.

"No-one touches the kid." He said.

"Where's arfur?"

"I'm 'ere boss."

"Arfur, do 'im in."

"What me? Oh I dunno."

"No-one touches the kid." The man holding Bill shouted.

"Listen you stupid muscle bound creep, 'e's seen your face an' my face, 'e knows where we hide out an' 'e's got to go. Now just get on with it an' don't give me grief." With that he started to move towards them again, iron bar held above his head.

"You wanna touch the boy, you has to get past me." With that Bill felt himself being picked up and put back in the van. The doors closed and he stood up and, on tip toes peered through the window. He heard the nasty one;

"Nah listen Fumper, I'm the boss an' what I say goes, we do 'im in." With that he rushed towards the big burly man, Bill could see the iron bar come sweeping down towards the big man's head, but a hand shot up and grabbed it, it was the big man, Fumper's hand, he caught the bar and brought it down, slowly twisting it around the other man's neck as he did so, until it formed a loose collar.

"Well while I'm bigger than you, I'm the boss an' no-one touches the boy." As he spoke he lifted the man up with one hand by his belt and carried him across to the back of the room. By now Bill had made out that they were in a barn and Fumper opened a stable and threw the man inside. Then he shut the door and locked it.

"You wanna 'ave a go Arfur?"

"Er no Fumper I, I don't."

"Right, get the kid out an' put 'im in the other stable then we'd better make our plans."

Clutching his parcel Bill was placed in another stable and the door locked behind him. It was dark and cold. Bill was frightened. He sat for while thinking about what he should do, but then he remembered his parcel and, opening it, got out the slippers. They were both looking at him. "Looks like trouble." said one of them.

"What?" said Bill.

"He said it looks like trouble." said the other one.

"Yes but you can speak."

"Of course we can speak, we can do anything."

"Can you get me out of here?"

"Well almost anything. But don't worry we'll look after you, you won't come to any harm with us here. You'd better put us on."

Bill could hear the two men scheming and planning outside, they were talking in hushed tones and he couldn't make out the details. Then the door opened and Fumper came in. "Don't worry about the Pimple, 'e gets upset but he won't harm you."

"Thank you." Said Bill

"Waffor?" Asked the man.

"For saving my life."

"'s all right. You 'ungry?"

"Yes I am." Bill said quietly

"I'll get you some grub." Fumper left and came back with a plate of steaming hot stew.

"'s not as good as yer muvver makes I'll bet, but Arfur's not such a bad cook.

Won't 'urt yer anyroad."

"Thank you."

Fumper sat down opposite Bill.

"I s'pose you've got a Mum 'ave you?"

"Yes I have. Have you?"

"Yeah. Somewhere, but I don't see her now, she doesn't want to know me since I went inside."

"Inside where?"

"In the nick, prison."

"Oh." Bill paused "What did you go to prison for?"

"Ah 's a long story, but I didn' do it."

"Didn't do what?"

"What they said I done. I didn't do it."

"Well why did you go to prison?"

"You know how it is. Blood's thicker than water"

"No, what do you mean?"

"I went in the nick 'cos I was too stupid to tell the truth. They did me for stealing, but it wasn't right. I didn't do it. I never stole nothing then."

"Why did you start stealing?"

"When I came out no-one would gimme a job. Couldn't earn no money an' all the boys in the nick 'ad taught me how to take it, so I did."

"But it's wrong."

"Yeah, well I didn' fink so then. I jus' didn't have any choice."

"What was it they said you did?"

"House breaking, bit of burglary."

"Why didn't you tell them who did do it?"

"I didn't want them to know."

"Why not?"

"You want to know a lot."

"Sorry."

"Nah, 's alright. My brother done it. When we were kids we never split on each uvver and it didn't seem right to start."

"Is that why you don't see your mother anymore?"

"Yeah. She won't want to know a jail bird like me."

"Has she said that?"

"What?"

"That she doesn't want to know you."

"No. But she won't."

"My Mum says that it doesn't matter what I do, I'll always be her son and she'll always want to know me."

There was silence.

"Mr Fumper?"

"Yeah?"

"Why don't you find your mother and tell her the truth?"

"Yeah, well maybe I should." he thought for a while then added; "Nah, she doesn't wanna know. Doesn't wanna know me at all." He sniffed.

"Do you miss her?"

"Nah, don't fink about her much." He got up and walked towards the door "you get some sleep we'll be off in a couple of hours" he got to the door and stopped,

then turning watched as Bill curled up in the straw. He came back across and knelt down next to him.

"Does your Mum tell you stories at night?"

"Yes."

"Always?"

"Yes."

"My Mum used to an all, I s'pose you won't sleep if you don't get a story."

"I will but it'll take longer."

Fumper rose a slightly sad look about his shoulders.

"Oh well, never mind." Bill noticed the droop in the figure.

"I don't think I could tonight though. I think I'll be awake all night." Fumper came back to the side of the bed.

"Shall I tell you a story?"

"Yes please."

Fumper sat on the edge of the bed. He told Bill a story about prisoners escaping from prison, they went to Africa to lie low but got involved helping tribes of starving people. As he listened Bill found his eyes getting heavier, they were flickering shut just as the story came to an end with the prisoners welcomed back by a forgiving world. Then as Fumper crept out Bill heard him say under his breath.

"Now I fink of it she did used to read me stories and I s'pose I do miss her, she's me Mum."

Bill was awakened by the sound of his slippers talking to each other;

"You wake him up" said one

"No you do it" said the other. The argument was just getting heated when Bill's eyes opened.

"It's your job"

"Oh no it's not, Mr Wonder always got you to do that sort of thing."

"Well he may have done but he's not here now so I say it's your turn"

"We don't take it in turns"

"Well we should and we're going to start." They both noticed Bill stirring, he was stretching and rubbing his eyes.

"Is it morning?" asked Bill.

"No but we could hear them packing their van." Bill stood up and walked around the little stable, his eyes now used to the dark. Then the door opened.

"Come on little fella. Time to go." Bill picked up his slippers and followed Fumper to the van. Again he was put in the back.

"I'm sorry son but I can't 'ave you callin' out when we get there." he put a gag around Bill's mouth.

"I've told Arfur to drive slowly." The door shut and a few seconds later the van moved off.

It didn't take long to get back to the toy shop and they drew up quietly outside.

The doors of the van were opened quickly and Fumper's great big hand came in and pulled Bill out.

"Come on." Bill went round to the back of the shop with the man. With a single blow of Fumper's fist the door burst open. He pulled a torch from his pocket and

shone it in front of them both. Walking quickly past all of the toys on the ground floor he made straight for the place at the end of the shop where the staircase should have been. He stopped and looked at the empty hall.

"ow d'you get up there?"

"Mr Wonder."

"Who?"

"Mr Wonderymagicator, he comes along and pulls the next floor down for you.

"Where is 'e then this Wonder fella."

"Wonder is whiling away." The lights flashed on and there, was the Magical Mr Wonder. His bright coat and gleaming eyes.

"Somebody whispered my name?"

"Yeah it was me. I want to go upstairs." Said Fumper.

"Something you've seen stretches the heart strings and snatches and sparks with surprise? Pulls and pushes and pumps you upstairs. Was there a particular toy you were planning to obtain?"

"Yeah, all of them."

"I've found the man who wants the lot  
So much money has he got  
Everything my small shop stocks  
From nee nah cars to coloured socks"

He danced and twirled around in front of them both, his hair spiraling several feet above him, his crook jumping at his side. As he stopped he reached up to the next floor and pulled it down, then the next one, and the next and then the next. Soon they were at the top floor.

"But Mr Wonder?" asked Bill

"Yes Bill?"

"The top floor is no admittance."

"Ah well it's goody good good that you queried and questioned.

Four is the floor full of the funniest fun, the fastest and freakiest fads." He led the way into the section, in front of them was a large notice;

No Admittance  
Danger to unauthorised people

"What's the danger then?" Asked Fumper.

"Well Mister Fumper, security is not what it used to be and little Bill here, is my friend, like all the children, so you'll have to let him go.... Go with me..... Now."

"You what?" So saying, Fumper's fist shot forward, Bill let out a cry

"Mr Wonder." But Mr Wonder had disappeared.

"Oh " Grunted Fumper, and looked around. "Come on let's get on with it."

"You tried to hit Mr Wonder." Bill backed away from Fumper.

"Don't be frightened." Fumper's voice was less confident than usual. "You don't think I'd hit you do you?"

"Well if you trid to hit an old man what's to stop you hitting a boy?"

Mr Fumper looked at his shoes.

"Cos I say I wouldn't."

"My mum says that everybody's allowed to make mistakes as long as they admit them."

"Yeah?"

"Was it a mistake that you tried to hit Mr Wonder?"

"You mum says some funny things." He looked at Bill and added "It was a mistake. I didn't mean to hit him."

"We'd better get on with it." replied Bill.

They started to walk around the shop floor, Fumper, paying very special attention to everything. There were big plastic animals scattered everywhere, it seemed to him like an imitation zoo but without the bars. There was nothing he could take, all of the animals were too big.

"Let's go down to the next floor." said Fumper

"But we can't, not without Mr Wonder."

"Oh, well you call him then."

"Only if you promise not to hurt him."

"Only if I.....?" He stared at Bill. "Yeah, alright I promise."

"I'm behind you." They both turned and there he was, Mr Wonder.

"Now if you'll just deliver the boy to me?"

"No. Take us down to the next floor."

"Oh dear dear and dia depression, deliver the boy to me."

"I said no."

"Well I'm sorry you seemed such a nice man."

"Yeah, and just what are you going to do about it?"

"Slippery slippers slither and slide  
Takey Bill where he can hide  
Show him only unto me  
A place where no-one else can see"

One of the slippers immediately hopped off Bill's foot and flew up through the air and covered Fumper's eyes. Fumper lost his grip on Bill as he tried to fight the slipper off and the other slipper took off with Bill still in it, racing to the centre of the circle of animals, Bill's unslipped foot trailing behind him. In front of them was a huge open mouthed whale, they dived inside. Bill's eyes were firmly shut and shut they were going to stay.

They stopped streaking through the air and came to a gentle halt. Bill screwed his eyes up tighter. The prospect of blubbery whale guts making him try to hold his breath as well. The sounds from all around him though, made him want to open them. This didn't sound like a digestion system at work. No belches, burps, rumbling tummies and worse. It just didn't have the feeling of the stomach of a whale, It was more like a, well, an ice cream parlour. Bill slowly opened his eyes.

Waiters with silver trays and long thin moustaches were serving tall glasses full of different flavours of ice cream to empty tables. Bill sat down looking a little dazed.

A waiter approached their table.

"Whata your fancy." He had a strong Italian accent. As Bill sat his slipper got off his foot and sat on the table next to him, it looked around a couple of times then smiled as the other slipper sat down next to him.

"Where were you?" said one.

"Oh I had to go to the bank." said the other

"Where's the bank?" asked Bill

"It's inside the Aligator."

"Eeeuurrr" said Bill. "Imagine getting into the mouth of an aligator."

The waiter was getting impatient

"Howa can I maka living if alla you do isa gossip? Now whata your fancy?"

"What do you have?"

"We hava Vermina Vanilla, anda Mouse Minta chip, anda Chocolata Chihuahua, Strawberry Stork, Rassberry of Rabbit, anda de pride ofa de house we hava Elephanta lime witha Monkey mustard sauce." The slippers looked at each other.

"Elephant lime" said one.

"Chocolate chihuahua" said the other."

"You can't eat an elephant." said Bill "It's disgusting."

"Hey?" said one "why not?"

"They're animals." said Bill

"Oha I see, the little man he a thinks thata the animals are in the ice a cream.

Well I haf to admit thata the elephant woulda make a fine dish, but notta today."

The slipper to Bill's left chipped in "The animals are the ones who invented the flavour."

"Oh, oh, I see. I'll have Mint Chip please."

"Hey Alfredo, onea Minta chip, onea Chocolata Chihuahua and an Elephanta lime witha the Monkey Mustard sauce."

"Coming up Vincenzo."

Over on the other side of the room a man in another waiter's outfit bent low beneath the counter. He threw over his shoulder and across the counter three tall glasses full of different ice creams. Flying through the air the ice cream became dislodged from the glasses and then, as the glasses landed in front of them, caught up and slipped into the top. The glasses then raced around the table until they were in front of a different consumer, then again and again until they finally had it right. They all started to eat.

Outside Mr Wonder was standing in front of Fumper.

"Where's he gone?" asked Fumper.

"Safe and sound  
He's gone to ground  
He'll not be found  
By man nor Hound"

"I don't trust you, you'd better not hurt him, if you harm one hair on his head I'll

string you up 'til your shripneys shrivel."

"You care for the boy?" There was a note of surprise in Mr Wonder's voice.

"I didn't say that," Fumper snapped, puffing up his chest then added more quietly

"E's a good kid." Then his voice rose into his most fearsome again

"So don't you hurt him, you 'ear me?"

"Yes yes, he'll be fine as fine can be."

"But where is 'e?"

"I have a feeling that you wouldn't believe me if I told you. Now I think the officers of the law would like a chat."

"Oh no you don't." Fumper looked around and, seeing a door frame full of policemen started to run in the opposite direction. Four burly officers gave chase, one of them raising a gun and levelling it at the figure of Fumper.

"Stop or I fire." He shouted.

Deep in the whale Ice cream parlour Bill and his friends were still eating. The shot was heard by the three connoisseurs.

"What was that?" asked Bill.

"It sounded like a gun."

"A gun?" Bill was horrified "quick, get me out of here."

He leapt up and started to run towards the door of the room.

"You can't leave without us." said the slippers.

"Well come on then."

"No we might get hurt."

"That's Fumper they're firing at."

"No it'll be Mr Wonder being fired at."

"No Fumper wouldn't do that, he said he wouldn't hurt him."

"You believe him?"

"Of course I do, and anyway aren't you worried about Mr Wonder?"

"No he can take care of himself."

Outside the shots were raining thick and fast at Fumper. So far he'd managed to dodge them all. Mr Wonder, horrified by policemen shooting in his shop moved to get in front of Fumper but, being behind one of the animals, was unseen by the policeman, who raising his gun level with Fumper's head, couldn't miss. The shot rang out but whistled into the air and implanted itself in the ceiling, the Policeman was sprawled on the floor and Bill was next to him.

"What d'you do that for you stupid brat?"

"You were going to shoot Mr Fumper."

Mr Wonder rushed over to Fumper and pushed him very hard through the window. Fumper yelled as he fell, spiralling down towards the ground, certain squidgy death awaiting him. As he got level with the second floor window his life started to flash before his eyes, the childhood games of cowboys and indians, the guns and lasoos, how his brother used to always get him around the waist just like the rope that was around his waist now. The one that was slowing him up until his rate of descent was slowed to a standstill. Looking down at his own waist Fumper saw a long string of something coiled around him. His feet gently touched the pavement below and he looked up, startled to see the beaming face

of Mr Wonder, his hair now racing upwards and then coiling around above his head and settling into it's usual position.

"Well I'll be ....."

"Run" called Mr Wonderymagulator.

Fumper ran into the shadows of the night.

In the cells at the local Police Station Bill's Mother was arguing with a Policeman.

"He's not capable I tell you, he was kidnapped, taken from me by these men."

"Madam I'm sorry but the charge remains, there's nothing I can do, your son was caught in league with this man, actually assisting him to escape. He'll get a fair trial."

"What do you mean a fair trial? He can't go for trial, he's just a boy, he hasn't done anything."

"Aiding and abetting madame, that's the charge. I suggest you get a solicitor. Now if you don't mind I'm very busy."

Bill's Mum left calling out to Bill as he was led away.

"Don't worry Bill I'll get you out."

As he had been seen by so clearly by so many people Fumper decided that he should lay low somewhere far away, grow a beard and perhaps take on a disguise. It took several weeks for him to feel confident enough to step outside into the fresh air and show his face again. When he eventually did so he had planned to a robbery but as he got up to the shop entrance he stopped.

"The twinges and troubles of tackling the task are tearing at tissues that take on the role of the robber who runs?"

Fumper turned, there was Mr Wonder.

"I owe you."

"Owe me? Never never, nothing is needed by Mr Wonder."

"Well I fink I do."

"You were about to break in, can I watch, perhaps help?"

"I've changed me mind."

"Conscience cripples the caper, criminal capitulation creeping kindly in."

"You what?"

"Shall we walk?"

"Why not."

They walked off into the night talking as they went.

"How's the boy?"

"Ah Bill, well it's a funny thing that you raise the matter of the charming child known as Bill. That was the reason for my visit."

"Oh?"

"Yes, the saddest thing is that the boy and his slippers were arrested." Fumper stopped in his tracks.

"Arrested, what for?"

"Aiding and abetting."

"Abbeting who?"

"You."

"Oh." Fumper was silent for a moment.

"He appears in court tomorrow, it's a long way of course, but we could make it if we tried."

"Why would we want to go there?"

"I think you know why."

"You mean, ..... turn myself in."

"Well I wouldn't wish to waste a wonderful opportunity to leave the law languishing alone in the absence of lies."

"What?"

"Yes, you could. .... turn yourself in."

"We'd better get going."

"M'lud, the case the crown brings before you is that of Bill a youth who portrays himself as full of innocence and sweet morals, but be not fooled, this boy is a key member of one of the most heinous gangs of toynickers in the land. The crown will show beyond all doubt that he not only masterminded the entire raid and apparent kidnap but also assisted the other members of the gang to make their escape. Prison is the only thing that could allow him true repentance of his evil doings and a chance to find the straight and narrow."

The judge sat, long wig and gowns drooping around his droopy figure.

"Boy?" he asked coldly "How do you plead, guilty or vewy guilty?"

"I didn't do it." called Bill.

"He's innocent." yelled his Mother.

"Wemove that woman, silence in court. Am I wight in assuming that you wish to enter a defence against this charge?"

"Yes, I didn't do it."

"Will the council for the defence please make himself known."

"Er, um that's me er, me lud."

"Speak up man I can't hear you." Boomed the judge.

"Er I er, said that I am the council for the defence, er me lud."

"Oh, not you again, are there no decent lawyers in this town? The last case you defended, ended in the pwosecution begging that you to be appointed to their side, you're completely incompetent."

"But cheap me lud."

"Vewy well, carry on."

"The defence in this, er trial will attempt to show that....."

by the end of his second paragraph the jury were asleep.

Eventually they were woken up by the judge snoring who, four hours later had his hammer in the air.

"Master Bill you have been found guilty by this court and it is now my duty to pass sentence, before I do however I would like to remind you of a few things that you ought to know." With that he pulled off his wig and stood up. His bald head shining in the bright courtroom lights.

"I'm sometimes known as nasty Jim  
Who gives out sentences at whim,  
Long years of gwuesome pwison stretches  
To evil men and childish wetches

Such as you.  
In fact I think that I should say  
The awful truth to you today,  
My hard earned, evil reputation  
Is all a lawyers imagination  
It's just not twue.  
If truth be told then shiver and shake  
Let your bones and heartbeat quake  
For over the years I've really hardened  
No cwiminal is ever pardoned  
I'm far, far worse.  
The punishment you'll suffer son,  
For all the evil that you've done  
Involves the gwimest situation,-  
Complete and dark incarceration;  
Jail's your curse."

The judge sat down again and replaced his wig. Raising his hammer he cleared his throat and said.

"Bill you have been found guilty of the most wicked involvement in a planned and dastardly cwime and I ..."

"Your honour." A voice from the back of the courtroom stopped the judge.

What is the meaning of this, this is the bit I enjoy, how dare you interwupt?"

"I have a person you should hear from."

"This better be good. Appwoach the bench."

"Mr Wonder." called out Bill.

Mr Wonder and Fumper walked towards the judge.

"Your honour, I bring before you a person who can testify to the innocence of this boy. I bring you, the thief himself."

There was a gasp around the courtroom.

"What?" roared the judge "You pwopose spoiling my fun, never I'll see this boy wot in jail."

"No m'lud, you'll hear the Mister Fumper speak."

"Will I?" said the judge quietly "oh alright then, But it better be good.

Anyone who spoils my fun  
Once the sentencing's begun  
Has got a lot to answer for  
It better be good or I'll use the law  
To lock you up."

"Yes m'lud."

An hour later the judge was ready to pronounce sentence.

"I'm going to have my fill of fun  
The worst, for you is yet to come  
The sentence gives me joyous tears

You're to serve one hundred years."

He shrieked with joy at the sentence.

"No." Called Bill "You can't he hasn't done anything."

"Don't worry Bill, it's better this way, don't worry about me." Said Fumper.

Bill started to cry.

"But Mr Wonder, do something." he pleaded.

"Come on Bill." said Mr Wonder and led him out of the court room.

"Bill. You're free." called his delighted mother as they emerged into the outside world. Bill was still sobbing.

"Yes." he said rather quietly.

"What's the matter Bill, you look sad."

"I am sad."

"But why?"

"The judge locked up Mr Fumper. Sent him to prison forever and ever." Bill's Mummy looked at Mr Wonder.

"It's true I'm afraid, locked in a cell for a long long time."

"But that's marvellous he's a thief. It's what he deserves."

"Do you think so Bill?"

"No, he saved my life, one of the gang was going to do me in and he stopped them. Anyway he only became bad because he was protecting someone else. There's a reason why he did the things he did. He's never actually done anything wrong."

"But what he did was wrong Bill."

"Yes but there's a reason, people did things to him."

Bill's mother pulled his head towards her comfortable bosom. There was a sighing sound in her voice.

"I know. You're right Bill. There's always a reason."

"You know he's not a bad man don't you Mr Wonder?"

"A bad man wouldn't have come back to testify, yes Bill, I do know."

"Well if you know why can't we help him?"

"We can, and we will. Now why don't we go back to the shop and have some fun?"

Up on the fourth floor of the shop Bill's slippers took over;

"What would you like to do Bill?" They chorused.

"What is there to do?"

The slippers both hopped off his feet and started dancing.

"This is the floor where the dreams you adore

Come true in your mind and in fact

In this little space things can take place

'Cos in here a whole world has been packed.

You can drive a big steam train or fly in a jet plane

Or race round a track in a car,

There are knights in old castles and bright coloured parcels

You can even have lunch on a star.

You can pilot a rocket or fill up your pocket

With red bags of chocolates and sweets  
You can meet jungle Jim in a swamp near Dahim  
Or just play with your friends off the streets.  
There's a rhino and tiger near a river called Eiger  
There's a monkey who calls himself Mick  
And a big climbing frame that is never the same  
It becomes any shape that you pick.  
There's a small motor bike, of the type that you like,  
There's a prison with dungeons and chains  
There's a horse you can ride on the beach at low tide  
And a charming collection of cranes.  
Then if you think of what flavour you'd drink  
If you could have any you chose,  
Think how it would taste, -like nectar or paste-  
Then, as you tickle your nose,  
Your ears will both twitch at a staggering pitch  
You'll see a great cloud of white steam  
And the world will revolve and start to dissolve  
And you'll be inside your dream.  
So think when I wink of your favourite drink,  
Then, start to tickle your nose,  
There'll be none left to waste as you sample the taste-  
'Cos you'll have the flavour you chose"

Then, winking at each other the slippers dived down and back onto Bill's feet. Bill Sat in a large armchair and closed his eyes thinking hard. Strawberries mixed with vanilla ice cream and chocolate, all spread on a thick Swiss roll with hundreds and thousands on top.

'It would taste yummmmy and glue your teeth together for hours' he thought. His hand automatically went up to his nose and started to scratch it. Then he felt his ears starting to move, just a little at first but slowly more and more until they were violently swinging backwards and forwards. The world around him started to revolve, and then to dissolve in a cloud of steam.

When he opened his eyes it was as though he was sitting in a cloud, his feet were not visible and puffing up and around his legs were the plumes of white fluffiness that he would normally expect to look up at. Deep blue skies were surrounding him and some way off he could just make out the figure of a tall man dressed in white, with a long goaty beard walking towards him.

"I say?" called the tall thin voice.

"I say. Have you come from, well, down there?"

"Yes I think I have." Said Bill looking down over the edge of the cloud.

"Oh, well you're a bit young but never mind." He was getting quite close now.

"I've got the tools with me, but I don't suppose you know how to use them. I'll stay shall I?"

"Thank you." He handed Bill a cardboard box. Bill took it and opening the lid, peered inside.

"What do I do with it?" asked Bill.

"Well you sort of take it out and knead it a bit, you know, like dough and then throw it up in the air. You can do all sorts of other things as well, but simplest is always best." He paused "just make what you feel like really."

Bill was emptying the contents out, some plasticine, some blunt knives, some small pieces of foliage and some paints.

"I don't know what they're for, I suppose you colour things in with them. Can't say as I've ever bothered but you might try." the old man said.

"Have you ever done this?"

"Well I had a go once, wasn't very successful as I remember, lot of fighting and things. Too many apparently valuable things for silly people to squabble over."

"Is that what you do?"

"What?"

"Make worlds."

"Everybody makes worlds."

"What do you mean?"

"My dear boy, are you slow? The world is only as big as your circle."

"What circle?"

"The circle of friends and family around you."

"How many worlds have you made?"

"Only the one. Thoroughly disenchanting it was but I'm sure you'll do better than I did." He looked at what Bill was doing, "That's it."

Bill was kneading the plasticine into an oblong shape.

"Perhaps a few curves wouldn't go amiss. Don't want things falling off do we?"

"No." Bill thumped at the corners of the shape.

"What do I do now?"

"Well, what do you want on it? What sort of things do you like?"

"Ginger beer."

"I do too."

"But how do I make Ginger beer?"

"Just lick your finger and wipe it across the plasticine and think hard about the taste of Ginger beer. Wipe it wherever you want the ginger beer to be." Bill licked and wiped, the plasticine changed colour wherever he wiped and became moist.

"Look, it's changing."

"Yes well I told you. Now what else do you want?"

"Some animals."

"Animals, they're more complicated, take some more plasticine and then mould it into a little lump, stick it onto the ball whilst thinking of the sort of animal you'd like."

Bill followed the instructions, the shape seemed to form itself into a teddy bear. He did more of them, each one different. Then he made other things, sticking them onto the ball and thinking of all things he'd like to have and know.

"What do I do now?"

"You've finished have you?"

"Yes I have."

"Right well the next bit's real fun. You spin it whilst throwing it in the air." Bill

concentrated hard, spinning and throwing at the same time. As it rose into the air it started to bulge and flex and change shape and then to grow and grow until it was massive and way up in the sky above them. Trees and animals popped into life everywhere, oceans formed and it carried on growing and coming to life.

"Took me six days to do that much. Even then it was a disaster, most depressing experience of my life, never again. You know by the time I'd finished I was so tired I had to have a day off. By the time I came back it was too late, couldn't do anything more about it. All out of control and going its own way."

"Did you make the world?"

"The one that you know, well I may have had a hand in it."

"my teacher says you're called God"

"Why do they say that?"

"Well you made the world."

"We're all gods. We all make the world that we live in and we can all change it."

"How?"

"Just by being what we want the world to be, then the world that's all around has a chance to change into what we want."

"What was wrong with the world that you made?"

Everything."

"But that's the world that I come from."

"Yes, well I'm sorry, really very sorry about that, I've admitted it was a mistake, we all make them I'm afraid."

"No, I mean I think it's a wonderful place."

"Do you?" a look of surprise on his face "why's that?"

"Well my mum's there, and I've got two sisters, they're a bit of a pain sometimes but they're alright really. And the trees and fields are lovely."

"Ah, trees" a distant dreamy look came across his eyes "they were an accident I'm afraid, they were supposed to be a variation on a root vegetable but I'd been to a wedding the day before and I left them planted upside down whilst going off for a snooze. Quite the happiest accident. And the fields, they were intended to be cream cakes, which are my favourite, I was dreaming about licking them, unfortunately I forgot that I'd changed myself into a cow the day before, just to see how it felt, still I suppose the cows have a nice time." The world that Bill had made had stopped flexing and expanding.

"Do you want to visit it?"

"Can we?"

"Oh yes that's half the fun."

"I'd love to."

"Come on then" The old man took Bill's hand, flexed his knees and jumped. They both soared through the air and up into the sky, still holding hands. Bill's eyes were firmly shut as they landed knee deep in ginger beer on a coast made of marzipan surrounded by tree like things that were made of liquorice.

"Wow" said Bill "you mean I made this."

"Yes you did, it's rather good I have to admit, now where are those animal things you made?" They walked out of the ginger beer and towards the forest. Above them a cloudless blue sky was decorated with birthday cards.

"All I could think of was clouds" said the old man "yours look much more interesting. Tell me, do they rain?"

"Yes, but not water. They rain peanuts."

"But what happens when there's fog?"

"It's made of peanut butter. The snow is made of ice cream, peanut flavoured and the houses are made of chocolate spread.

"Marvellous, why didn't I think of that?" They carried on walking. There was a sudden crunching noise from behind them

"What was that?" Asked Bill.

"What was what?" The crunching sound happened again.

"That." said Bill. They both turned, before them was a pair of feet, about the same height a bus. They were brown and furry. They both slowly looked up the creature, fear niggling inside them.

"I think it's that animal I was so keen to see." It seemed as tall as a large hill.

"A bit of a problem with the scale I think." Said the old man.

"I did the same thing as I remember but mine all died, not enough food, or was it an ice age? What do yours live on?"

"Well nothing, I don't think." The brown mountain shaped animal bent down and held out his hand.

"On the other hand" said the old man "I think it might be wisest to make a" the hand was moving around them "hasty retreat" they both started to run as fast as they could. They crashed and tripped through the liquorice but the long arm followed them and scooped them up. They were whizzed up to the same height as the huge head.

"Oh dear."

"What now?" asked Bill.

"Well I'm not sure if we have much choice in the matter."

They were level with the mouth of the creature. "I think we've just found out what it lives on, er, unfortunately."

The jaws opened revealing a large dark cave that hid behind sharp knife sized teeth. They both shut their eyes.

"Cuddle."

"I beg your pardon" said the old man.

"Cuddle" this time it was a roar. The old man blocked his ears at the power of the blast

"Yes yes I heard you the first time, no need to shout."

"Oh I remember now" said Bill "when I made him I was thinking about cuddling my teddy bear. He lives on cuddles, just like my teddy at home."

"Oh," a look of relief on the old man's face "thank heavens for that, perhaps I should say thank home, mine, or by the sound of it, yours or, or whatever." The giant teddy bear squeezed them both gently to his enormous chest.

In the deep dark fur Bill's eyes closed. When he opened them he was back in arm chair in the shop, next to the animals on the top floor. He rubbed his eyes. His warm smiley slippers were on his feet. Mr Wonder stood before him.

"Well Bill did you have a nice snooze?"

"Yes I did. I had a very strange dream though." Bill looked up at the magical man.

"Mr Wonder?"

"Yes Bill?"

"In my dream I think I met god."

"Did you Bill?"

"Yes and he seemed very depressed about the world. He said that we all make the world we live in."

"Well he may have been right."

"Do you believe in God Mr Wonder?"

"I do Bill. I do."

"What are we going to do about Mr Fumper?" There was a sad look in his eye as he asked.

"We're going to make the world the sort of place we want to live in. I've got a plan Bill, now listen carefully."

As he spoke the old man's long hair uncoiled itself from around his head and fell beneath him, forming a seat which he sat on.

"This is what we'll do."

Mr Wonder worked for some weeks, as always he worked in a little room, there was a small notice on the door.

The Wonder Workshop  
Toys to Tickle the Tots

He was stitching and hammering, banging and sewing until he at last appeared outside and collected Bill.

There was no moon, it was totaly dark and Bill was frightened. The hand that was holding his own gave him some comfort but he was still frightened, heart chasing the blood around his body.

"You know what to do?" the voice of Mr Wonder hissed quietly in the night.

"Yes I think so."

"Right well off you go." Mr wonder's hair uncoiled itself from around his head and formed a long staircase up to the small barred window above them, then the crook he always carried bent itself into the shape of a step ladder and stood next to the figure of the magician. Bill slowly walked up the steps and then onto the ladder made of hair. Up, up up he climbed slowly making his way to the dim light in the wall. He got to the bars and clinging to them peered through. There was Mr Fumper, asleep on the thin mattress in the bare cell.

"Mr Fumper." Called Bill quietly. There was no response, he hissed the name again.

"Mr Fumper." This time the large frame of the man turned and rubbed his eyes

"Mr Fumper, it's me, Bill."

"Bill, what're you doin' 'ere."

"Mr Wonder brought me, put these on." Bill threw in a large pair of slippers similar to his own. Mr Fumper slipped off his boots and pulled on the slippers.

"And put this in your pocket." Bill threw in a small wooden model.

"Its made of wonderwood."

Fumper slipped it into his pocket.

"Wait for the wonderful woodpecker to arrive and deal with the bars and then climb up onto the ledge, you'll be collected."

"You what?"

"Wait for the woodpecker to arrive and then climb up, you'll be collected."

"Oh" there was a note of disbelief in Fumpers voice "alright."

Fumper sat down again looking stunned he rubbed his eyes in wonder. He shook his head, rolled under his blanket and tried to get back to sleep.

It was the sound of pecking that woke him. He looked up and could just make out the shape of a bird in the window gnawing at the base of one of the bars. One by one it pecked almost through each of them. Then with a great laugh the bird leaned backwards and flew off. Fumper pulled back the bedclothes and looking at his slippers glanced across to the window ledge. Suddenly he was being sucked up into the air, feet first and up to the level of the window. He tugged at each of the bars. There was a look of disbelief in his eyes as they each came away in his hands. Resting them on the window ledge he crawled through and looked down, it was hundreds of feet. He closed his eyes quickly and firmly.

"Come on, come on. We haven't got all night." Fumper opened his eyes. A large black raven was perched next to him.

"You can't carry me, I'm much too heavy."

"Just let me be the judge of that, now if you can do better on your own go ahead but I let me tell you I'm capable of the most extraordinary things."

Fumper realised that he had little choice. He climbed onto the bird's back. The bird swayed for a moment and then hopped off, its great wings beating furiously at the air as they fell like a pair of intimate stones downwards, hurtling towards the concrete below. Beating faster and faster the ground raced towards them. The bird seemed slightly worried. They got to within feet of the the ground before they both felt the lifting effect of the downdraught beneath the wings and their fall, at first flattened out and then turned into a swoop. They flew around the excersize yard a few times until they had built up sufficient height for them to be able to waft over the perimeter fence of the jail and off into the night. They flew fast and straight occasionally diverting over any houses with a full washing line.

"Why do you do that?"

"Do what?" said the Raven.

"Go over every house with a washing line."

"I don't, only the full ones. It's just my way of having fun."

"You mean it was you?"

"Me? Doing what?"

"Making all that mess over my Mother's washing."

"Well it may have been but it could have been any of my family."

"Oh." Fumper paused "must be fun."

Some time later they landed by a quay side.

"Have you got the model boat?" said the bird.

"Yes I have" said Fumper.

"Take it out and put it on the water, It'll take you anywhere you want." The bird laughed again and then flew off. Fumper took out the model boat and put it on

the water. It immediately grew into a large long sailing boat with two masts and a steering wheel with wooden spokes. Nothing surprised him any more and he started to unfasten the ropes, ready for the off.

"John?" The voice came from behind him, he knew it at once and swung around on his heel.

"What are you doing here?"

"I just wanted you to know some things."

"What fings? How did you get 'ere."

"These" she was pointing at her feet, she was wearing the same slippers as

Fumper "I wanted you to know Some things that I should have told you when you were young" .

"Mr Wonder" he said under his breath. "My name's Fumper now. What fings?"

"It's John to me, it's always been John and it always will be."

"What do you want?" There was a note of anger in Fumper's voice.

"Just to tell you that it was worry and fear that made me send you away. Mr Wonder and Bill told me everything."

"Everything? What do you mean?"

"They explained. About the reasons. I know it wasn't you. But that's not what I wanted to say."

"What did you want to say?"

"That it doesn't make any difference."

"Yeah, that's what I thought you'd never want to know me again." He carried on unfastening the ropes from the boat.

"No, that's not what I mean. What I mean is that knowing why those things happened didn't make any difference. You see you were wrong, I always wanted to see you, even when I believed that you'd done something wrong I , well, I think all mothers feel that way about their children. You were wrong to run away. There was no need."

John Fumper stopped untying the boat and turned to face his mother. His large, solid frame drooped as his great bear like arms opened and he and his mother hugged each other. She thought she felt a sob running through her son.

"You're still my son John."

"Yeah."

"You'd better get going." They moved slightly away from each other.

"You alright?"

"Of course I am. I've got my son back. You'd beter go."

Fumper moved towards the boat. His mother called after him.

"Mr Wonder asked me to tell you to stay away for two years, then you'll be able to come back if you want, he thinks that by then everything will be alright."

"But how?"

"I don't know but he said to have faith in the great Wondery....something, and all will be well."

"How's Bill?"

"Bill's fine, Oh I nearly forgot, he wanted to come but when I said he couldn't he told me to give you this." She handed him a note.

"Now go quickly and read it on your way. I'll see you in a couple of years."

John Fumper climbed on board, unfurled the sails and, standing on the deck

looking back at his mother sailed off into the night.

In a small clearing near a forest in the middle of Africa a small village of mud huts had grown up around the work and efforts of the legendary figure of Mr Stumper. The man had been shipwrecked on the coast two seasons before and had arrived with nothing. He'd quickly set to work clearing a small patch of forest, at first with no tools at all, tearing out the stumps of trees with his hands. That was how he'd got his name. Local people soon joined in and very quickly the tiny village had formed. Missionaries had heard of his work and, with the great man's permission, had set up a hospital, a school and a church.

The second crop was now well on its way to successful harvesting. On this night after a day spent in the fields and an evening in the hospital he was sitting in his hut when the door opened and the doctor came in.

"How long have you been here John?"

"Two years I think Doctor."

"You've made remarkable progress. The author of all of this."

"I only started it. Other people did the work."

"But it was the vision you had of the world you wanted to build that they followed."

"They did the work doc'."

"Yes, they did." The doctor turned away. "We all build the world we want about us. They built their's and built yours."

The doctor walked to the door.

"Haven't you something you should read?"

"Read? I don't read much doc'"

"Well you should. Especialy notes given by special friends."

"I haven't got a note."

"I'm sure you have."

"What are you talking about? I've got nothing to ....." Fumper paused.

"I have got a note. A note from Bill." He got up and made his way to his hanging rail.

"How did you know?" Fumper was fishing in the pocket of the jacket he'd arrived in all those months ago.

Behind him the doctor's robes were slowly swirling about him, they came to rest in bright colours, his hair spiraling above and then settling around his head, his stethoscope stiffening into a crook that danced at his side.

"It's in the left pocket."

Fumper pulled the piece of paper from the left pocket, turned and stopped in shock.

"Mr Wonder."

"The very same."

Fumper sat down."

"How.....?"

"Never mind that now."

Fumper opened the He opened the note. The writing was young and barely legible.

Dear Fumper,

Mr Wonder told me that you'd probably forget to read this, something about all of the excitement being too much but he said that I should write it anyway and that he'd make sure that you read it at about the right time.

He said I should write what I felt and what I wanted to say and not to waste words.

I wanted you to remember the story you told me that night when we first met. It was a great story and my mum says that the best stories always come true.

Love

Bill

P.S I already miss you.

Fumper looked up at Mr Wonder.

“Shall we go home?”

“Yeah. Yeah, I think we should.”