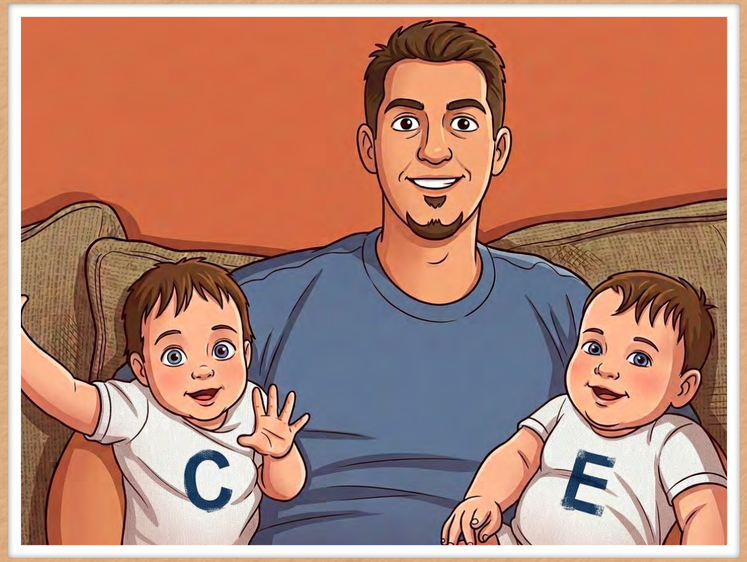


The Mystery of the Mysterious Garden Burglar

by Michael R Lupariello



Dedicated to my twins, Casey & Ethan, who are all grown up now,
but will forever be adorable in my book.

- PROLOGUE -

The Mystery Grows...

Before we begin it's important to note that this is not just another children's book. It's much more than that. It's also meant to be an impactful learning tool. A playful, interactive way to help teach your kids observational skills that will help them develop their attention to details, critical thinking, memory and creativity.

On each page, there will be an illustration that will contain TWO things/objects that are out of place or incorrect. It will be up to your kids to find out "what's wrong with this picture?" And who knows, you might need help as well.

To find the answers, just jump to the last page you'll find them there.

Have fun and we hope you enjoy our book... which is now yours.



- CHAPTER ONE -

That Was Then, This Is Now

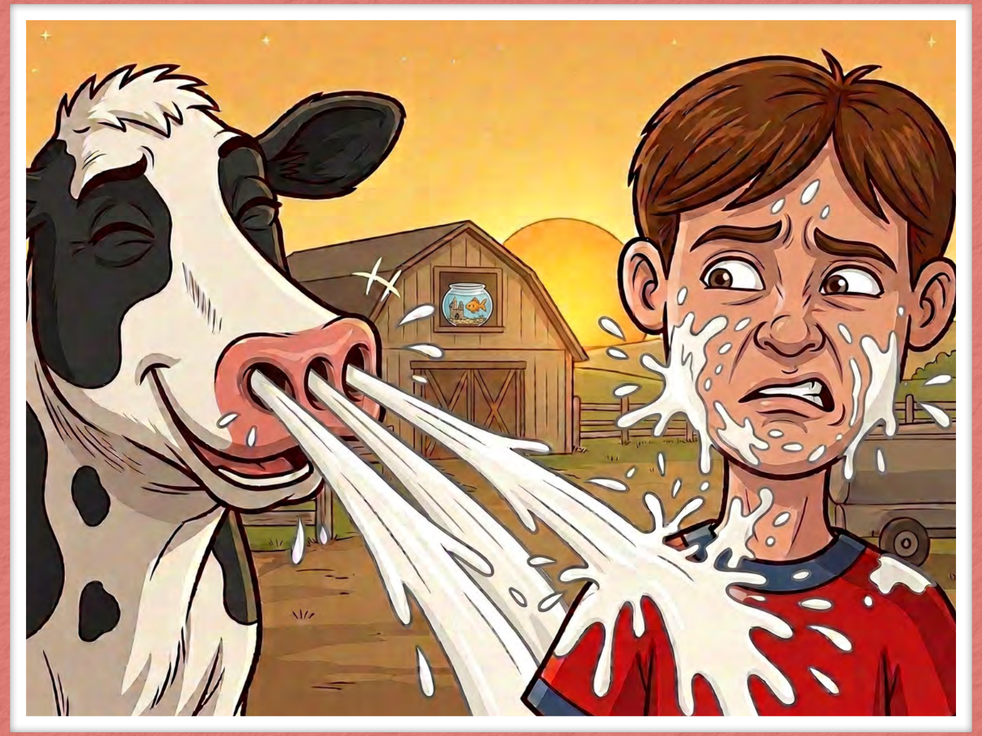
ONCE UPON A TIME... in a land far, far around the corner of town there lived a young boy named Billy Stout. He was a kind little boy who loved to help with chores around the family farm. Billy was very close to his family until one day he became very, very far away from them. (Geographically speaking, of course.)

As legend would have it, Billy had fallen in a river while exploring.

After hours in raging rivers, mucky swamps, gooey moats and scarifying waterfalls, Billy met a giant hairy monster who was really just a man in a costume pretending to be Bigfoot. But his feet really weren't that big.

Luckily, that nice monsterman saved Billy and brought him back home to his family. Lost but never forgotten, Billy was greeted by the warm, loving arms of his Mom & Dad and his new turtle, Snowflake.

Ever since then Billy was living happily ever after...until today.



- CHAPTER TWO -

Rise & Whine

Like every morning before it, Billy awoke to the “COCKA-DOODLE-MOO!” of Charlie, Billy’s “sometimes” favorite barnyard cow.

Charlie is the unwelcome alarm clock on the Stout family farm. Sometimes he would wake up so early and “COCKA-DOODLE-MOO!” even when the wolves were still busy howling at the moon.

Which was quite confusing to the Stout family for sure.

Billy, on the other hand, was not an early bird... or an early cow for that matter. He was a night owl by nature. So every morning, when Charlie would “COCKA-DOODLE-MOO!”, Billy would wake up and yell, “OHHH, NOOO, YOU DIN’T!” And then give Charlie The Cow the stink eye.

Charlie didn’t mind though. He thought it was funny. He would just laugh and laugh until milk squirted out his nose. Billy didn’t think that was funny at all.



- CHAPTER THREE -

Sammy's Really In The Dog House Now

One morning, after he awoke, Billy headed out to the garden to pick the fruits and vegetables. But then he quickly realized something was terribly wrong. The garden had been ravaged. No tomatoes. No potatoes. No carrots or grapes. No watermelon or squash. No egg plants or dates. Someway, somehow, someone, something had stolen all of the vegetables and fruit. But who? But what? But when? But how? After all, Sammy The Dog was sleeping right there the entire night.

Surely he would've, he could've, he should've heard someone or something creeping into the garden last night. – But wait! But look! – Sammy's ears were stuffed full of marshmallows so he couldn't hear. And his teeth were stuck together with gummy worms so he couldn't howl. Someone, something, somebody had somehow... planned the perfect crime.

Lucky for the Stout family, Billy had been studying to be a detective and an archaeologist. So surely he would dig up all the clues and solve this hideous crime!



- CHAPTER FOUR -

You Really Whodunit Now!

Billy grabbed his magnifying glass and kissed his Mom & Dad goodbye. Then he and Snowflake The Turtle, who had the nose of a bloodhound, headed out to track down Whodunit and Whodinnit.

For minutes, for hours, for days, for weeks on end, Billy and Snowflake walked, skipped, hopped, jumped and searched all over the rivers and through the woods, past Grandma's house they would go. Then suddenly, like a wolverine stalking a chihuahua, they could smell they were getting closer and closer.

But wait. This wasn't the trail of the Garden Burglar they were smelling. It was the sweet, scrumptious aroma of chestnuts roasting on an open fire and delicious corndogs nipping at their nose. What's this? What's that?

Out of nowhere, they came upon a gigantic, humongous, gargantuan circus tent sitting in the middle of a field of strawberries. The sight was as beautiful as it was nutritious.



- CHAPTER FIVE -

Doggone It, He's Crazy

Billy and Snowflake stepped toward the entrance of the circus tent, when out jumped a bizarre-looking clown with shoes made of hot dogs and hair made of cotton candy. "Ooochie-Bazookie. Cha-wawk-a-wawka! P-ting!" he screamed in wild gibberish. Billy and Snowflake couldn't understand a word he said. So the clown huffed and he puffed until he blew up a big red balloon and twisted it all around and tied it into knots and handed it to Billy.

Billy couldn't believe his eyes. The clown had made him a red balloon shaped like a wiener dog. The clown winked and then disappeared into the tent. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a squeaky voice whispered, "He's crazy. Let's get out of here." At first, Billy and Snowflake didn't know where the voice came from. Then they looked down and, to their surprise, it was the little-red-balloon-wiener-doggie. "What? Like you've never seen a red-balloon-wiener-doggie who could talk before? C'mon, let's get out of here before Crazy Clown comes back!" With that Billy, Snowflake and the wiener doggie bolted off into the strawberry fields forever.



- CHAPTER SIX -

Hungry For Clues

After nearly three hours, twenty-two minutes and thirteen and a half seconds of running through strawberry fields and a candy cane swamp, Billy, Snowflake and the little red-balloon-wiener-doggie finally stopped, certain they had lost Crazy Clown. “Hello, I’m Billy and this here is Snowflake,” said Billy. “I’m Oscar. Nice to meet you,” he replied. “So what brings you to my neck of the woods?”

“Well, if you must know, we’re in search of someone or something or somebody who somehow stole all our fruits and vegetables,” said Billy. “Do you know anyone who has been really hungry for essential vitamins and minerals lately?” “No,” replied Oscar, “but I do know someone who might know someone or something or somebody who has been really hungry for some essential vitamins and minerals. Follow me.”

With that the three fast new friends made their way out of the woods, over a river, across a swamp, through a meadow, somewhere over a rainbow, and then up a gigantic, humongous, gargantuan hill where Oscar’s friend lives.

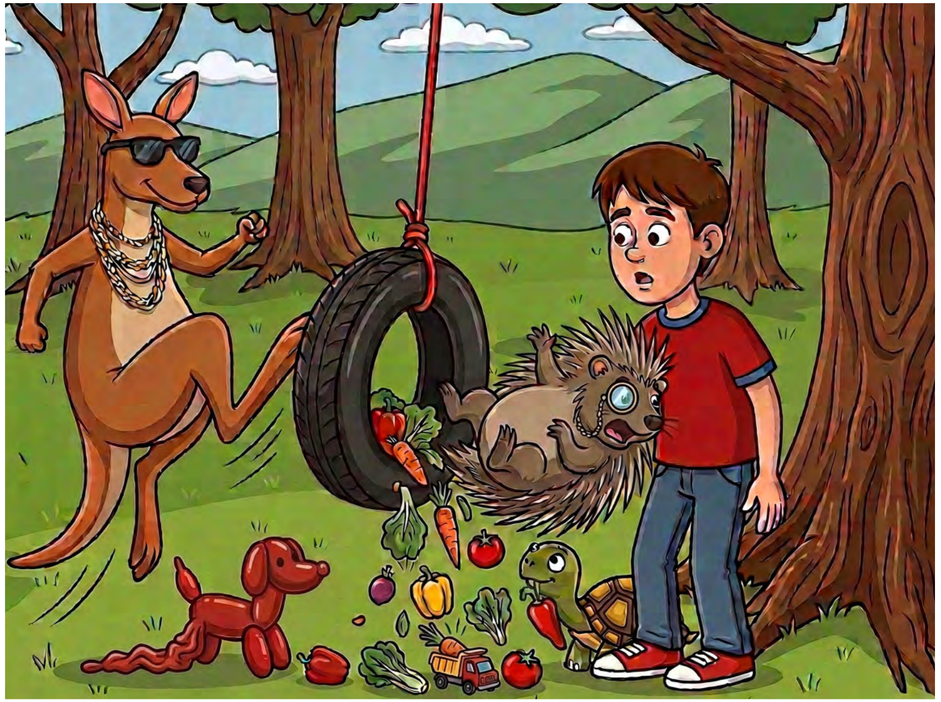


- CHAPTER SEVEN -

A Mighty Prickly Situation

Exhausted, the three friends finally reached the top of the hill. Just a short distance away, they could hear a voice screaming for help. With that they ran to the rescue. There, right before their eyes, was a gigantic, humongous, gargantuan porcupine stuck in a tire swing that was hanging from an oak tree. “Jumpin’-Gee-Hasenfeffer! Stop yer starin’ and get a pushin’!”, yelled Porky The Porcupine.

With that, Billy, Snowflake and Oscar rushed over. “Sheez-Louise, guys. I am just too tired,” said Oscar out of breath. “You’re tired!” snapped Porky, “I’m the one who has been tired up here for the last three weeks. So get pushin’ already!” With that Billy, Snowflake and Oscar begin pushing on Porky’s butt, careful not to get poked by one of Porky’s prickly pointers. Too late. Oscar had accidentally slipped and one of his balloon legs had popped. “BAM! SWOOSH!” With a rush of air, Oscar shot up into the sky only to come fluttering and floating back down onto the ground. “Ouch,” said Oscar. “How did I not see that one coming?”



- CHAPTER EIGHT -

You'll Get A Kick Out Of This

Just then a kangaroo wearing sunglasses and gold chains came hopping up the hill. "Whaaasssuppp? How's it hanging there, porcupine?" joked the kangaroo. Porky is not laughing. And neither is Oscar, who is still foggy from popping his little doggie balloon leg. But suddenly Oscar realizes the kangaroo is the friend he's been looking for.

"Guys! Guys! This is Hip-Hop! My friend I was telling you about!" "Nice to meet you," Billy and Snowflake said. "Hey. Hey. Enough of the lovefest," snapped Porky, "Get me out of here!" "Well, I'd be happy to give you a big ol' kick in the butt" said Hip-Hop. SMACK! BOOM! THWACK! KA-POW! Hip-Hop kicked and kicked but to no avail. Tired and dejected, Hip-Hop sat down to catch his breath. But Oscar jumped up and screamed, "Hip-Hop, you don't stop! Get that porcupine out!"

With that, Hip-Hop hopped up and with one gigantic, humongous, gargantuan kick, Porky The Porcupine flew out of the tire swing and onto the ground just as an entire tire full of vegetables and fruits fell out.



- CHAPTER NINE -

Porky Spills His Guts

"I knew it," exclaimed Billy. "No porcupine could ever get that big and strong without eating lots and lots of fruits and vegetables!" "How did you know it was him, Billy?" said Oscar. "Because I noticed that along with all the marshmallows and all the gummy worms, Porky The Porcupine had left plenty of his prickly pointers in our precious, prickly pear patch. Pretty perceptive, huh, Porky?" said Billy proudly.

"Perfect! Just perfect!" cheered the gang. "So how do you plead, Porky The Porcupine?" "Pretty pathetic," said Porky. Suddenly, at that very moment, the ground began to shake wildly. Was it an earthquake? Could it be a giant gopher? Or a stampeding heard of elephant buffaloes? NOPE. Not at all. It was just Charlie The Cow stomping up the hill. "Well, there you guys are," said Charlie, "Did I miss anything?" "Yeah, EVERYTHING" said the gang. "Ahh, shoot," said Charlie disappointed, "Why didn't you take me? What am I, chopped liver?" "You will be soon," said Billy. With that Charlie The Cow burst out laughing, squirting milk out his nose and onto everyone. But they didn't care. They all laughed too...even Billy.

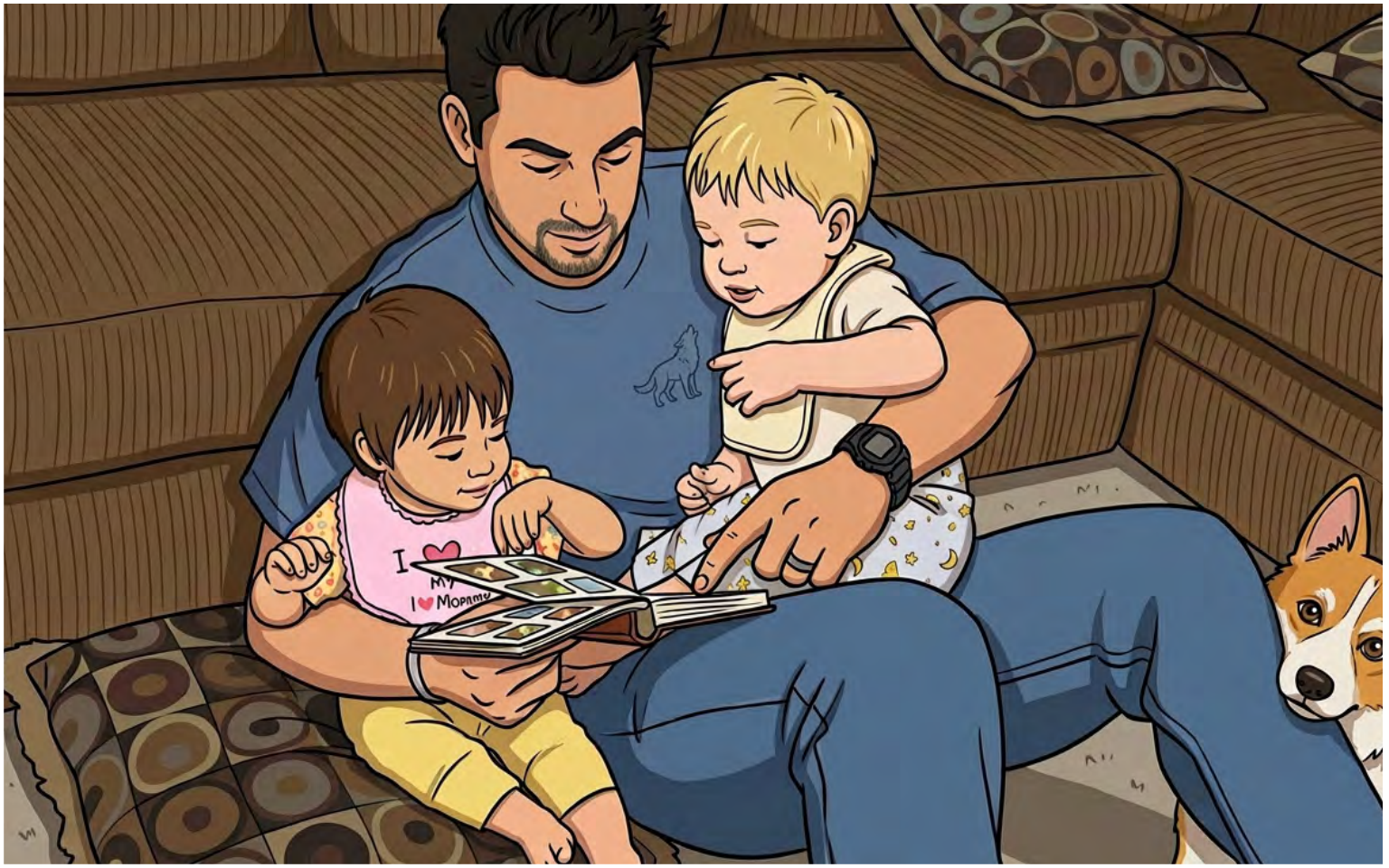


- EPILOGUE -

The Answers To All Your Questions...

PAGE #4 – The woman is missing an earring and the latch to lock the window is on the outside of the house.
PAGE #6 – The cow has three nostrils and there's a gold fish in the barn.
PAGE #8 – There's a pineapple growing in the ground and diamond in the sky.
PAGE #10 – There's a snowman in the grass in the background and an apple in the strawberry field.
PAGE #12 – Billy's shirt is missing blue stripes on his collar and sleeves and Snowflake has a circle-pattern on his shell.
PAGE #14 – Billy is suddenly wearing a backpack and yellow shoes.
PAGE #16 – The Oscar The Balloon Dog is wearing purple pants and Snowflake The Turtle is on a skateboard
PAGE #18 – A small toy truck and Porky The Porcupine is wearing a monocle.
PAGE #20 – The kangaroo has pens in its pocket and the turtle is wearing a hat.
PAGE #22 – Everything is right in Billy's world again.

The End.



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