



THE LITTLE DETECTIVES

Minor Mysteries & Big Fun!



A Complete Collection of 20 Family Stories

Minor mysteries, silly robot bleep-bloops, and big fun on Maple Street!

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The Case of the Missing Cupcakes



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Trail of crumbs across the kitchen floor
- Small fuzzy grey fur on the windowsill
- Frosting on whiskers under the apple tree

Rudy and Daisy were the best detectives on Maple Street. Rudy had a magnifying glass. Daisy had a notebook. Together, they could solve anything!

One sunny morning, Mrs. Patel ran up to them looking worried.

"Help!" she cried. "I baked twelve cupcakes for the school fair, and now three are missing!"

"Don't worry," said Daisy, opening her notebook. "We're on the case!"

Rudy got down on his hands and knees with his magnifying glass. "Aha!" he said. "Look — crumbs! And they lead across the kitchen floor."

Daisy followed the crumbs. They went past the table, around the chair, and stopped right by the open window.

"A clue!" said Daisy. She pointed to something small and fuzzy caught on the windowsill. "Grey fur!"

Rudy looked outside. There, sitting under the apple tree with frosting on his whiskers, was Mrs. Patel's cat, Pickles.

"Mystery solved!" laughed Rudy. "Pickles is our cupcake thief."

Mrs. Patel giggled. "That naughty cat! Thank you, detectives."

She gave Rudy and Daisy a cupcake each as a reward — and one for Pickles too, since he looked so pleased with himself.

"Another case closed," said Daisy, snapping her notebook shut.

And the two friends munched their cupcakes in the sunshine, ready for their next big adventure.

— The End —

The Case of the Spooky Attic Noise



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Thump... thump... THUMP sound coming from upstairs
- Cobwebs and dust behind old wooden boxes
- Two shiny eyes blinking in the dark

It was a rainy afternoon when Rudy and Daisy heard it.

Thump... thump... THUMP.

"What was that?" whispered Daisy, gripping her notebook tight.

The sound was coming from the attic of Mrs Rose's old house next door. Mrs Rose stood at the bottom of the stairs, looking nervous.

"I've heard that thumping for three nights," she said. "I'm too scared to look!"

Rudy pulled out his magnifying glass and stood up tall. "Never fear! Rudy and Daisy are here."

Up the creaky stairs they went. Creak... creak... creak.

The attic was dark and dusty. Cobwebs hung from the ceiling like spooky curtains.

THUMP!

Daisy jumped. "It came from over there — behind those boxes!"

Rudy shone his flashlight. Two shiny eyes blinked back at them in the dark.

"A monster!" gasped Daisy.

But Rudy leaned closer and started to smile. "It's not a monster, Daisy. Look!"

Out from behind the boxes waddled a plump little bird — a pigeon! It had flown in through a broken window and couldn't find its way out. Every time it flapped against a box, it made a big THUMP.

"You poor thing," said Daisy gently.

Rudy opened the attic window wide. The pigeon flapped its wings, cooed a happy coo, and flew off into the grey sky.

Mrs Rose was so relieved she made them hot cocoa with extra marshmallows.

"You two are the bravest detectives I know," she said.

Daisy grinned and wrote in her notebook: Case closed. No monsters — just one lost pigeon.

— The End —

The Great Sausage Disaster



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Rudy landing face-first in a bucket of ketchup
- A greedy seagull stealing Daisy's detective pencil
- Trail of sausages disappearing behind the ice cream truck

Rudy and Daisy were having the WORST day of detecting ever.

It all started when Mr. Wobble, who ran the sausage stand in the park, waved his arms and shouted, "DETECTIVES! Someone keeps stealing my sausages, and I want ANSWERS!"

"We're on it!" said Rudy — and immediately tripped over his own shoelace and landed face-first in a bucket of ketchup.

SPLAT.

"Very professional," said Daisy, trying not to laugh.

Rudy stood up. He looked like a giant tomato. "It's a disguise," he said proudly.

Daisy opened her notebook to write clues, but a seagull swooped down and stole her pencil.

"HEY! That's evidence!" she yelled, chasing after it. She ran in a big circle, tripped over Rudy, and they both tumbled into a pile of leaves.

"This is going great," said Rudy, spitting out a leaf.

Just then — they saw it. A trail of sausages disappearing behind the ice cream truck.

"Follow those sausages!" cried Daisy.

They tiptoed sneakily. Well, Daisy tiptoed. Rudy knocked over three trash cans, honked a bicycle horn with his elbow, and sat on a whoopee cushion someone had left on a bench.

PBBBBTHHH!

"Wasn't me," said Rudy.

Behind the truck, they finally caught the thief red-handed — er, red-pawed.

It was a scruffy little dog with a sausage in his mouth, a sausage on his head, and a very guilty look on his face.

"Woof," said the dog, as if to say sorry.

Rudy and Daisy burst out laughing. Even Mr. Wobble, who had come running, couldn't stay grumpy.

"Oh, all right," Mr. Wobble chuckled. "The little guy can have ONE sausage. But that's it!"

The dog wagged his tail so hard he fell over.

"Case closed," said Daisy, wiping ketchup off Rudy's nose. "Now let's go home before you fall in anything else."

Rudy took one step... and landed right back in the ketchup bucket.

SPLAT.

— The End —

Rudy, Daisy, and the World's Most Useless Robot



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Cardboard box labelled: YOUR NEW DETECTIVE HELPER!
- Footprints leading around the pond (which were Bonk's own feet!)
- A tiny raccoon pulling a garden gnome under the porch

One morning, a big cardboard box appeared on Rudy and Daisy's doorstep. On the side, in wobbly letters, it said: YOUR NEW DETECTIVE HELPER!

"A robot sidekick!" cheered Rudy. "Now we'll solve cases twice as fast!"

They opened the box. Out clanked a small, rusty robot with one googly eye and a plunger for a hand.

"Beep boop," said the robot. "I AM BONK. I AM HERE TO HELP."

"Excellent!" said Daisy. "Bonk, can you find us a clue?"

Bonk whirred, spun in a circle, and handed her... a sock.

"That's not a clue," said Daisy. "That's a sock."

"YOU ARE WELCOME," said Bonk.

Just then, their neighbour Miss Plum rushed over. "Detectives! My garden gnome has vanished! Can you help?"

"Of course!" said Rudy. "Bonk, search the garden!"

Bonk zoomed off at top speed — straight into a bush.

CRUNCH.

"NO GNOME IN HERE," Bonk announced from inside the bush. "ONLY BUSH. VERY GREEN. TEN OUT OF TEN."

Daisy sighed and started looking for real clues. She found little footprints in the mud leading around the pond.

"Bonk, follow these footprints!" she said.

Bonk looked down. "THOSE ARE MY FOOTPRINTS."

"...You're right. Never mind."

Rudy searched behind the flowerpots. Bonk tried to help by watering everything — including Rudy.

"Bonk! I'm not a plant!" spluttered Rudy.

"ARE YOU SURE?" asked Bonk. "YOU ARE VERY LEAFY TODAY."

Finally, Daisy spotted something. A little tail poking out from under the porch. She peeked underneath — and there was the garden gnome, being dragged along by a very determined raccoon who thought it made an excellent pillow.

"Found it!" Daisy laughed.

The raccoon gave up the gnome and waddled off grumpily. Miss Plum was thrilled and gave everyone cookies. She even gave one to Bonk.

Bonk did not have a mouth. He put the cookie on top of his head.

"DELICIOUS," said Bonk.

Rudy grinned. "You know, Bonk, you're the worst detective helper ever."

"THANK YOU," beeped Bonk proudly. "I TRY MY BEST."

And honestly? They wouldn't have traded him for anything.

— The End —

Bonk Bakes a Cake



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Literal cups dropped straight into the mixing bowl
- Flour flying everywhere until the kitchen looks like a snowstorm
- A wonky shoe-shaped cake with frosting everywhere

It was Daisy's birthday, and Rudy had a wonderful idea.

"Let's bake her a surprise cake!" he whispered to Bonk.

"I AM AN EXCELLENT BAKER," said Bonk. "PROBABLY."

This was not true. But Rudy didn't know that yet.

They found a recipe. It said: Add two cups of flour.

"Two cups of flour, coming up!" said Rudy.

Bonk grabbed two actual cups — the drinking kind — and dropped them straight into the bowl. CLUNK CLUNK.

"Bonk, no! Not the cups themselves!"

"YOU SAID TWO CUPS," said Bonk. "I AM FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS PERFECTLY."

Next, the recipe said: Beat three eggs.

Before Rudy could stop him, Bonk pointed a googly eye at the eggs and said sternly, "YOU ARE BAD EGGS. SHAME ON YOU."

"That's not — you don't tell them off, Bonk! You crack them!"

"THIS IS VERY CONFUSING," said Bonk.

Somehow, they got the batter into the oven. While it baked, Bonk decided to "help" by cleaning up. He tried to sweep the floor with his plunger hand and instead flung flour all over the ceiling.

POOF.

Rudy looked up. The whole kitchen was white. Bonk was white. A very confused fly was also white.

"IT IS SNOWING INDOORS," Bonk observed. "HOW LOVELY."

DING! The cake was ready.

Rudy pulled it out. It was... not great. It was flat on one side, tall on the other, and shaped a bit like a shoe.

"It looks terrible," Rudy groaned.

"IT LOOKS BEAUTIFUL," said Bonk. "LIKE ME."

They covered it in frosting (Bonk ate half the frosting, even though he still had no mouth — nobody knows where it went) and stuck a candle on top.

Just then, Daisy walked in. She saw the flour everywhere, the shoe-shaped cake, and Bonk covered head to toe in white powder.

There was a long pause.

Then Daisy burst out laughing so hard she had to sit down.

"This," she gasped, "is the BEST birthday surprise ever!"

They all shared the wonky cake. And you know what? It was actually delicious.

"SEE?" said Bonk proudly. "I TOLD YOU I WAS AN EXCELLENT BAKER."

Rudy and Daisy just smiled. Because sometimes, a wonky shoe-cake made by your silly robot friend is the best cake of all.

— The End —

Bonk Goes to the Beach



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Sand crunching inside Bonk's mechanical gears
- A wobbling jellyfish crowned king of the sandcastle
- Bonk sinking straight to the ocean floor like an anchor

It was the hottest day of summer, so Rudy, Daisy, and Bonk headed to the seaside.

"I LOVE THE BEACH," announced Bonk, clanking across the sand. "SO SANDY. SO CRUNCHY UNDERFOOT. WAIT. THAT IS ME. I HAVE SAND IN MY GEARS."

"Maybe don't roll around in it, then," said Daisy.

"TOO LATE," said Bonk, who was already rolling around in it.

First, they built a sandcastle. Rudy made the towers. Daisy dug the moat. Bonk was in charge of decorating.

"BEHOLD MY MASTERPIECE," said Bonk.

He had decorated the castle with seaweed, a crab, and one very surprised jellyfish.

"Bonk, put the jellyfish back in the sea!" said Rudy.

"BUT HE IS THE KING OF THE CASTLE," said Bonk.

"He's WOBBLING. And he looks upset."

They gently returned the jellyfish to the water. It gave a little wobble of thanks and floated away.

Next, it was time to swim. Rudy and Daisy splashed happily in the waves.

"COME ON IN, BONK!" called Daisy.

"I AM NOT SURE ROBOTS CAN SWIM," said Bonk, dipping one toe in. "LET ME CHECK."

He took one step and immediately sank straight to the bottom. GLUG GLUG GLUG.

"BONK!" cried Rudy.

Two bubbles floated up. Then, from underwater, a muffled voice said: "I HAVE CONFIRMED IT. ROBOTS CANNOT SWIM. GOOD TO KNOW."

Rudy and Daisy hauled him out. Seawater poured from Bonk's ears, and a small fish flopped out of his plunger hand.

"I MADE A FRIEND," said Bonk. They put the fish back too.

After that, Bonk stayed safely on his beach towel. But he wasn't useless — oh no. When the sun got too hot, Bonk spun his arms around super fast and became a fan.

"WHIRRRR," went Bonk, blowing a lovely cool breeze.

"Bonk," said Daisy happily, licking her ice cream, "you're the best beach umbrella ever."

"THANK YOU," said Bonk. "IT IS MY GREATEST TALENT. ALONG WITH BAKING. AND SINKING."

As the sun set, the three friends sat together watching the waves.

"Best beach day ever," said Rudy.

"AGREED," said Bonk. Then he paused. "...I STILL HAVE A CRAB IN MY LEG."

"BONK!"

— The End —

Bonk Enters the Talent Show



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Layla juggling three oranges perfectly on stage
- Bonk wobbling dramatically under bright stage lights
- Slices of golden toast boing-ing into the audience like a buttery cannon

The whole town was buzzing! The Maple Street Talent Show was tonight, and everyone wanted to win the shiny golden trophy.

Rudy and Daisy weren't performing — they were just there to watch. But Bonk had signed up. He'd even filled in the form himself.

Under Name of Act, he had written: BONK. THE GREATEST.

Under What Will You Do?, he had written: YOU WILL SEE.

"That's a bit mysterious," said Daisy. "Bonk, what IS your talent?"

"IT IS A SURPRISE," said Bonk. "EVEN TO ME."

That did not sound good.

Their new friend Layla was performing too. She could juggle THREE oranges at once, which everyone agreed was very impressive.

"Good luck, Bonk," said Layla kindly. "What are you going to do up there?"

"I HAVE MANY TALENTS," said Bonk. "BAKING. SINKING. BEING LEAFY. IT IS HARD TO CHOOSE."

The show began. A boy played the trumpet (mostly the wrong notes). A girl did a magic trick (the rabbit ran away). Layla juggled her oranges perfectly and got a huge round of applause.

Then it was Bonk's turn.

He clanked onto the stage. The whole town went quiet. Bonk stood under the bright lights, one googly eye blinking.

"I WILL NOW PERFORM," he announced, "MY GREATEST TALENT."

Everyone leaned forward.

Bonk spun his arms. He whirled. He beeped. He wobbled dramatically...

...and a single slice of toast popped out of the top of his head.

BOING.

There was a long silence.

"TA-DA," said Bonk. "I AM ALSO A TOASTER. I DID NOT KNOW THIS UNTIL JUST NOW."

For a second, nobody said anything.

Then Layla started to giggle. Then Daisy. Then Rudy. Then the whole town was laughing and clapping and cheering, louder than for anyone else all night!

"MORE TOAST!" someone shouted.

BOING. BOING. BOING. Bonk fired toast into the crowd like a very buttery cannon. Layla caught a piece and took a bite.

"Needs jam," she said, "but honestly? Delicious."

When the judges announced the winner, they gave the golden trophy to Layla for her amazing juggling. She truly deserved it.

But they gave Bonk a special new prize they invented on the spot: the Most Surprising Act Ever award — a small trophy shaped like a piece of toast.

Bonk was so proud he beeped for a full minute.

"I HAVE ACHIEVED MY DREAM," he said. "WHICH I ONLY STARTED HAVING FIVE MINUTES AGO."

Layla, Rudy, and Daisy all shared toast together while Bonk took a bow. And another bow. And about eleven more bows.

"Bonk," laughed Rudy, "you might be the silliest robot in the whole world."

"THANK YOU," said Bonk, firing one last piece of toast into the sky. "IT IS MY GREATEST TALENT OF ALL."

— The End —

Bonk Goes Camping



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Chewed up tent building manual (Bonk ate step 2!)
- A dunked smoking robot arm in the water bucket
- A tiny hedgehog curling up beside warm Bonk

Rudy, Daisy, and Bonk packed up their tent, their marshmallows, and their sleeping bags, and headed off to Whispering Woods for a night under the stars.

"CAMPING," announced Bonk. "AT LAST, I WILL BECOME ONE WITH NATURE."

"Please don't become one with nature," said Daisy. "Last time you became one with the beach and we found a crab in your leg for a week."

First, they set up the tent. Rudy held the poles. Daisy hammered the pegs. Bonk was in charge of holding the instructions.

"STEP ONE," Bonk read aloud. "INSERT POLE A INTO SLOT B."

"Got it," said Rudy.

"STEP TWO," said Bonk. "I HAVE EATEN THE INSTRUCTIONS."

"You WHAT?"

"I THOUGHT THEY WERE A SNACK," said Bonk. "THEY WERE NOT. VERY CHEWY. ZERO STARS."

Somehow, they got the tent up anyway (it leaned a bit, like everything Bonk helped with).

Next, it was time for a campfire. Rudy carefully lit it, and soon it was crackling warmly.

"Marshmallow time!" cheered Daisy, popping one on a stick.

Bonk wanted to roast a marshmallow too. He put one on a stick, held it over the fire... and then leaned in wayyy too close.

"BONK, YOUR ARM'S ON FIRE!" yelled Rudy.

"I KNOW," said Bonk calmly. "IT IS TOASTY. VERY COZY. OH. OH NO."

They quickly dunked Bonk's arm in the water bucket. HISSSS. A little cloud of steam went up.

"WELL," said Bonk, "I HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING TODAY. I AM FLAMMABLE. GOOD TO KNOW."

That night, they snuggled into their sleeping bags and looked up at the stars.

Hoooo. Hoooo.

"What was that?" whispered Daisy.

"AN OWL," said Bonk wisely. "OR A GHOST. OR MY STOMACH. I AM NOT SURE. I DO NOT HAVE A STOMACH."

Just then, they heard rustling outside the tent. Something was sniffing around their food!

The two detectives sprang into action. Rudy grabbed his flashlight. Daisy grabbed her notebook. They peeked out of the tent...

...and there was a fluffy little hedgehog, munching on a leftover marshmallow, looking extremely pleased with himself.

"Aww," whispered Daisy. "Mystery solved. It's just a hungry hedgehog."

"HELLO, TINY SPIKY FRIEND," said Bonk. "WELCOME TO OUR CAMP."

The hedgehog gave a happy little sniff and curled up right next to warm, toasty Bonk (who, being slightly cooked, made an excellent hot-water bottle).

And so the three friends — and one small snoozing hedgehog — fell fast asleep under the twinkling stars.

Well. Two friends fell asleep. Bonk stayed up all night.

"SOMEONE HAS TO GUARD THE MARSHMALLOWS," he whispered proudly.

By morning, he had eaten all the marshmallows.

"BONK!"

The Mystery of the Humming Garden



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- A low buzzy humming sound drifting from sunflower leaves
- Bonk getting his head stuck between sunflowers
- A tiny wooden bee hotel full of snoozing, humming bumblebees

It was a quiet evening on Maple Street when old Mr. Finch came hurrying up the path, waving his cane.

"Detectives! My prize petunias — they're humming! All night long! I haven't slept a wink!"

Rudy grabbed his magnifying glass. Daisy grabbed her notebook. Bonk grabbed a garden gnome, just in case it needed rescuing again.

"THIS IS NOW A BONK CASE TOO," Bonk announced. "I AM VERY GOOD AT HUMMING. LISTEN." He hummed. It sounded like a kettle being strangled.

"That's not helping," said Daisy, though she was smiling.

They crept into the garden as the sun went down. Sure enough — a low, buzzy hmmmmmmm drifted up from the flower beds.

Rudy knelt by the petunias with his magnifying glass. "No clues here. Just dirt and a very confused snail."

Daisy followed the sound past the tomato plants, around the birdbath, and stopped at a cluster of tall yellow sunflowers. "It's louder over here!"

Bonk marched straight into the sunflowers to investigate and got his head stuck between two of them. "I AM ONE WITH THE FLOWERS," he reported. "THIS IS FINE. THIS IS NOT A PROBLEM."

"Bonk, hold still," said Rudy, tugging him free with a pop.

That's when Daisy spotted it — tucked deep in the sunflower leaves, a fuzzy grey lump, quivering gently.

"A clue!" she whispered.

Bonk leaned in his one googly eye for a closer look. "IT IS... A BEE HOTEL," he announced. "FULL OF BEES. THEY ARE HAVING A PARTY. A HUMMING PARTY."

Sure enough, dozens of fat, happy bumblebees were snoozing inside a little wooden bee house that had been hanging, forgotten, in the sunflowers all summer — humming softly together as they slept.

"Mystery solved!" said Rudy. "Your garden's got its very own humming choir, Mr. Finch."

Mr. Finch chuckled with relief. "Well, I never! All this time I thought it was ghosts."

"IT COULD STILL BE GHOSTS," said Bonk helpfully. "HUMMING GHOSTS. WHO ARE ALSO BEES."

"Let's not tell him that part," Daisy whispered to Rudy.

Mr. Finch was so pleased he invited them all in for lemonade. Bonk, who still did not have a mouth, poured his straight into the plunger and declared it "DELICIOUS, PROBABLY."

That night, as they walked home under the first stars, they could still hear the faint, happy hum drifting from the garden behind them.

"Best case yet," said Daisy.

"AGREED," said Bonk. Then, very quietly, he began to hum along. It still sounded like a strangled kettle. Nobody minded one bit.

— The End —

Bonk Goes to School



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Bonk bowing so low his googly eye touched the floor
- Toast being-ing across the classroom onto Theo's desk
- A trail of toast crumbs leading to the reading corner beanbag

It was Show and Tell day at Maple Street Elementary, and Rudy had a brilliant idea.

"I'm bringing Bonk!" he announced at breakfast.

"I AM NOT A SHOW," said Bonk. "I AM A DETECTIVE. BUT I WILL ALSO ACCEPT BEING A TELL."

Daisy packed her notebook, just in case. "Something tells me we're going to need it."

At school, the class gathered in a circle. A boy named Theo showed off a rock shaped like a potato. A girl named Priya brought her pet hamster. Then it was Rudy's turn.

"This is Bonk," said Rudy proudly. "He's our robot detective friend."

Bonk rolled forward and bowed so low his googly eye nearly touched the floor. "GREETINGS, SMALL HUMANS. I HAVE ONE EYE, ONE PLUNGER HAND, AND NO MOUTH. ANY QUESTIONS?"

Twenty hands shot up at once.

"Can you fly?" asked one boy.

"NO," said Bonk. "I HAVE TRIED. I FELL IN A HEDGE."

"Can you swim?" asked a girl.

"ABSOLUTELY NOT," said Bonk. "I SANK LIKE A ROCK. THE FISH WERE VERY POLITE ABOUT IT."

"What CAN you do?" asked Priya.

Bonk thought about this very seriously. Then he spun his arms and — BOING — a slice of toast popped out of the top of his head, landing perfectly on Theo's desk.

The whole class erupted into cheers. Even the teacher, Mrs. Okafor, clapped.

"More toast!" shouted half the class.

BOING. BOING. BOING. Toast rained gently across the classroom. Priya's hamster caught a crumb and looked extremely pleased with life.

Just then, Priya gasped. "Wait — where's Nibbles?!"

Her hamster cage sat open and empty. Panic rippled through the room.

"DETECTIVES, ASSEMBLE," said Bonk solemnly.

Rudy grabbed his magnifying glass. Daisy grabbed her notebook. They searched under desks, behind the bookshelf, and inside Theo's lunchbox (no hamster, but Theo was very embarrassed about the lunchbox situation).

Bonk sniffed the air, even though he did not technically have a nose. "I DETECT... TOAST CRUMBS. LEADING TO THE READING CORNER."

Sure enough, tucked snugly inside the classroom's beanbag chair, was Nibbles the hamster, cheeks stuffed with toast, snoozing happily.

"Found her!" cheered Daisy.

Priya scooped up her hamster with relief. "Thank you, detectives! And thank you, Bonk, for the delicious emergency."

"IT WAS NOT AN EMERGENCY," said Bonk. "IT WAS BRUNCH."

Mrs. Okafor gave Rudy, Daisy, and Bonk a special certificate that said BEST SHOW AND TELL EVER, which Bonk immediately balanced on his head next to a leftover piece of toast.

"Best school day ever," said Rudy, as the bell rang for home time.

"AGREED," said Bonk, waddling proudly out the door. "I HAVE LEARNED MANY THINGS TODAY. I CANNOT FLY. I CANNOT SWIM. BUT I CAN MAKE TWENTY CHILDREN VERY HAPPY WITH TOAST."

"That's a pretty good talent to have," said Daisy, smiling.

"THE BEST TALENT," said Bonk. "PROBABLY."

— The End —

Bonk Goes to a Party



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Bonk getting stuck headfirst in the bouncy castle wall
- Pinning a donkey tail onto sausage vendor Mr. Wobble
- All 8 birthday candles blown out with frosting flying everywhere

Layla was turning eight, and she was throwing the biggest party Maple Street had ever seen. There would be balloons, a bouncy castle, and — most importantly — cake.

"You're all invited," Layla told Rudy and Daisy. "Bonk too. But maybe... keep him away from the cake this time?"

"I MAKE NO PROMISES," said Bonk.

On the big day, Bonk arrived wearing a party hat balanced on his googly eye, which meant he could only see the inside of the hat.

"BONK, YOU CAN'T SEE," said Rudy.

"I CAN SEE PARTY HAT," said Bonk. "IT IS VERY FESTIVE IN HERE."

They fixed his hat, and the party began. First up: the bouncy castle. Bonk clanked up the ramp, took one enormous bounce, and got stuck headfirst in the wall of it, legs wiggling in the air.

"SOMEONE HELP," came his muffled voice. "I HAVE BECOME PART OF THE CASTLE."

Rudy and Daisy hauled him out, and Bonk declared the bouncy castle "AN EXCELLENT OPPONENT. IT WON."

Next was pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey. Blindfolded and spun around three times, Bonk marched confidently in the wrong direction entirely and pinned the tail onto Mr. Wobble, who happened to be walking by with a tray of sausage rolls.

"Bonk!" laughed Daisy. "That's not the donkey!"

"HE HAS A TAIL NOW," said Bonk. "MY WORK HERE IS DONE."

Mr. Wobble took it very well, all things considered, though he did wear the tail for the rest of the afternoon.

Then came the moment everyone had been dreading: cake time. Layla's cake was enormous, with eight candles glowing on top. Bonk leaned in very close to admire it.

"SO MANY LITTLE FIRES," he said dreamily. "SO WARM. SO —"

"BONK, DON'T—" started Rudy.

Too late. Bonk gave one happy wiggle, and WHOOSH — all eight candles blew out at once, along with a fair bit of frosting, which flew directly onto Bonk's face.

There was a stunned silence. Then Layla started to giggle. Then everyone did.

"I HAVE MADE A WISH TOO," Bonk announced, frosting dripping off his chin. "I WISHED FOR MORE CAKE."

"That's not how it works," said Daisy, "but happy birthday wish anyway, Layla."

Layla laughed so hard she nearly fell in the cake herself. "Bonk, you just gave me the best party story ever."

For the rest of the afternoon, Bonk became the party's biggest hit — kids lined up to have him "accidentally" blow bubbles at them with his plunger hand, and he handed out slices of cake with great ceremony, most of which ended up on his own head for safekeeping.

As the sun set and the balloons began to droop, Layla hugged them all goodbye.

"Best birthday ever," she said. "Thanks for coming, you three."

"THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME," said Bonk solemnly, still wearing a party hat, three balloons, and a fair amount of frosting. "I HAVE HAD A WONDERFUL TIME. I ALSO ATE A CANDLE. IT WAS NOT AS TASTY AS I HOPED."

"BONK!"

— The End —

Bonk Gets Lost



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- A loud voice calling: I HAVE MISPLACED MY FRIENDS. ALSO MYSELF.
- Bonk wearing seven stacked hats at the market fountain
- A robot balloon animal named 'Bonk Two'

It was market day on Maple Street, and the square was packed with stalls, balloons, and the smell of fresh bread.

"Stay close, Bonk," said Daisy, weaving through the crowd. "It's easy to get lost in here."

"I DO NOT GET LOST," said Bonk. "I HAVE AN EXCELLENT SENSE OF DIRECTION."

He did not have an excellent sense of direction.

Rudy stopped to look at a stall selling shiny marbles. When he turned back around, one googly-eyed robot was nowhere to be seen.

"Bonk?" called Daisy. "Bonk!"

Silence. Well — not silence, exactly. Somewhere in the crowd, faintly, they could hear a familiar voice.

"HELLO? IS ANYONE THERE? I HAVE MISPLACED MY FRIENDS. ALSO MYSELF."

"Detective mode," said Rudy, pulling out his magnifying glass. "Let's find him."

They followed the sound of clanking through the crowd, past the flower stall, past the bread stall, past a very startled goat that someone was, for some reason, selling honey next to. But every time they got close, the voice moved further away.

"OH NO," Bonk's voice echoed. "I HAVE WALKED INTO A TENT."

"WAIT. THIS TENT IS FULL OF HATS."

"I AM NOW WEARING SEVEN HATS."

"THE HAT MAN IS NOT HAPPY ABOUT THIS."

Daisy giggled despite herself. "At least he's having fun."

They finally spotted a small crowd gathered near the fountain, all pointing and laughing. In the middle stood Bonk, wearing seven hats stacked on top of each other, holding a balloon animal that was somehow shaped like himself.

"BONK!" cried Rudy, relieved.

"RUDY! DAISY! I FOUND YOU!" said Bonk happily.

"We found YOU," said Daisy. "You got lost."

"I DID NOT GET LOST," said Bonk. "I WENT ON A SOLO ADVENTURE. IT INCLUDED HATS. AND A BALLOON VERSION OF MYSELF. HIS NAME IS BONK TWO."

"Buddy, you were gone for twenty minutes and you were crying for help," said Rudy.

"THAT WAS A STRATEGIC CALL FOR ASSISTANCE," said Bonk. "NOT CRYING. ROBOTS DO NOT CRY. I DO NOT HAVE TEAR DUCTS. I ALSO DO NOT HAVE A FACE. IT WAS A VERY DIFFICULT TWENTY MINUTES."

The hat stall owner came hurrying over, laughing, and gently collected six of the seven hats back. "Keep the top one," he said kindly. "Looks better on you than it ever did on my shelf."

Bonk beeped with delight and refused to take it off for the rest of the day.

On the walk home, Daisy took Bonk's plunger hand — just to be safe.

"How about next time," she said, "you hold on to one of us, so you don't wander off?"

"AN EXCELLENT PLAN," said Bonk. "I WILL ALSO KEEP BONK TWO. FOR EMERGENCIES."

Bonk Two, the balloon, bobbed along cheerfully behind them all the way home, and nobody got lost again — though Bonk did insist, twice, that HE was actually leading THEM.

He was not.

— The End —

Bonk and the Snow Day



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Bonk frozen to the doorframe after checking out the snow at night
- Rolling into a snow-Bonk the size of a small car
- Shooting down the sledding hill like a cannonball into hot cocoa

Maple Street woke up buried in snow. Rudy pressed his nose to the window, thrilled. Daisy was already lacing up her boots. Bonk was stuck to the doorframe.

"WHY AM I STUCK," said Bonk.

"You're frozen to the door," said Daisy. "You went outside in the middle of the night again, didn't you?"

"I WANTED TO SEE THE SNOW UP CLOSE," admitted Bonk. "IT IS VERY CLOSE NOW."

They pried him loose with a creeeak and a pop, and out they went into the sparkling white street.

First: a snowman. Rudy rolled the base. Daisy rolled the middle. Bonk rolled himself, by accident, straight down the hill.

"BONK IS NOW A SNOWBALL," he called cheerfully from somewhere near the bottom, gathering more snow with every roll. "BONK IS GETTING BIGGER."

By the time he stopped — with a soft whumpf into Mrs. Patel's hedge — he was roughly the size of a small car.

"That's not a snowman," said Rudy, staring. "That's a snow-Bonk."

"IT IS AN UPGRADE," said Bonk, muffled, from somewhere deep inside the snowball. "SEND HELP."

AND HOT COCOA."

They dug him out, plunger hand first, and gave the leftover snow a carrot nose and two pebble eyes anyway. Bonk stood proudly beside it, both of them roughly the same shape.

"WE ARE TWINS," said Bonk.

Next came the sledding hill, where half the neighbourhood had already gathered. Rudy and Daisy zoomed down on their sled, whooping. Bonk, lacking a sled, simply sat down at the top and let physics do the rest.

"WHEEEEEEEEEEE—"

He shot down the hill like a cannonball, spun three times, launched off a bump, and landed directly in the hot cocoa stand at the bottom, upside down, legs waving.

"I HAVE ARRIVED," he announced from inside the stand. "COCOA FOR EVERYONE. IT IS ON ME. LITERALLY. I AM COVERED IN IT."

The cocoa seller, an older man named Mr. Grey, laughed so hard he had to sit down. He gave everyone free cups anyway, including one poured directly into Bonk's plunger hand.

As the sun set pink and gold over the snowy street, Rudy, Daisy, and their very sticky, very cocoa-covered robot friend trudged home, leaving three sets of footprints — two normal, and one that looked suspiciously like a robot had rolled most of the way.

"Best snow day ever," said Daisy.

"AGREED," said Bonk. "THOUGH I WOULD LIKE TO FILE A COMPLAINT. GRAVITY IS VERY AGGRESSIVE."

— The End —

The Case of the Vanishing Bicycle



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Wobbly bicycle tire tracks leading down the library path
- Orange fur caught on the metal bike rack
- Buster the dog dragging the bike two blocks by its pedal

Theo came running up to Rudy and Daisy's front step, out of breath and near tears.

"My bike!" he gasped. "I left it right outside the library, and now it's gone!"

"Don't worry," said Daisy, already flipping open her notebook. "We're on it."

"I AM ALSO ON IT," said Bonk. "METAPHORICALLY. I DO NOT FIT ON A BICYCLE."

At the library, Rudy examined the ground with his magnifying glass. "Tire tracks," he said. "Leading away down the path — but look, they're wobbly. Whoever rode off wasn't very good at it."

Daisy crouched by the bike rack. "And look — a bit of orange fur, caught on the metal."

"A CAT," declared Bonk confidently.

"A cat can't ride a bicycle, Bonk," said Rudy.

"YOU DO NOT KNOW MY LIFE," said Bonk. "I ONCE SAW A PIGEON DRIVE A GOLF CART. IT DID NOT END WELL FOR THE GOLF CART."

They followed the wobbly tracks down the path, past the pond, and into the park — where they found the bicycle, safe and sound, leaning against a tree. Standing next to it, looking extremely guilty, was a large orange dog with a leash still dangling from his collar.

"Buster!" said Theo. "That's my neighbour's dog!"

It turned out Buster had slipped his leash, spotted the shiny bicycle, and — in trying to sniff it — had accidentally knocked it over and dragged it along by the pedal for two whole blocks, wobbly tracks and all.

"Mystery solved," said Daisy, patting Buster's head. "Runaway dog, not runaway thief."

Buster's owner came jogging up, apologizing over and over, and gave Theo a bag of dog treats as a peace offering — "for the trouble, and also because Buster insists."

"CASE CLOSED," announced Bonk. Then he paused, staring at the treats. "ARE THOSE FOR HUMANS TOO."

"No, Bonk."

"WORTH ASKING," said Bonk.

Theo hopped on his bike, good as new, and gave Rudy and Daisy a huge grin. "Best detectives on Maple Street."

"AND BEST DETECTIVE ROBOT," Bonk added.

"You didn't really solve anything," said Rudy gently.

"I PROVIDED MORAL SUPPORT," said Bonk. "AND ONE ACCUSATION AGAINST A CAT THAT TURNED OUT TO BE WRONG. THIS IS STILL DETECTIVE WORK."

Buster gave an enthusiastic bark of agreement, knocked over a trash can, and everyone decided it was probably time to go home.

— The End —

Bonk Learns to Dance



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Sparks fizzling out of Bonk's robot ears during twirling
- Shuffling inside an actual cardboard box for the box step
- The entire class doing 'The Box' dance around the hall

Maple Street's community hall was holding a dance class, and Daisy had signed everyone up before Rudy or Bonk had any say in the matter.

"Dancing?" said Rudy. "I have two left feet."

"I HAVE NO FEET," said Bonk. "I HAVE WHEELS. THIS WILL BE EASY."

It was not easy.

The instructor, a cheerful woman named Ms. Ortega, clapped her hands. "Everyone, follow my lead! Step, step, twirl!"

Rudy stepped on his own shoe and nearly fell over. Daisy twirled beautifully. Bonk rolled forward, rolled backward, and spun in a circle so fast his party hat from three chapters ago (which he still hadn't taken off) flew across the room and landed on Ms. Ortega's head.

"THIS IS GOING WELL," Bonk reported, still spinning.

"Bonk, you have to actually stop at some point," said Daisy, catching him by the arm.

"STOPPING WAS NOT PART OF MY PLAN," said Bonk, wobbling to a halt. Several sparks fizzled out of his ear. "I HAVE OVERHEATED MY DANCE ENGINE."

Undeterred, Bonk tried the next move — the box step. He interpreted this very literally, found an actual cardboard box in the supply closet, and stood inside it, shuffling side to side.

"I AM DOING THE BOX STEP," he announced. "I AM ALSO THE BOX."

By now half the class had stopped dancing entirely, just to watch Bonk. Ms. Ortega, to her credit, did not miss a beat.

"You know," she said, "that's actually rather good rhythm."

Buoyed by this, Bonk shuffled his cardboard box across the floor in perfect time with the music, and soon the whole class was clapping along, cheering him on as he box-stepped a full lap around the hall.

By the end of class, everyone had learned the steps — everyone except Bonk, who had instead invented an entirely new dance called "The Box," which several kids immediately begged to learn.

"I HAVE NOT LEARNED TO DANCE," Bonk reflected on the walk home. "I HAVE INVENTED A NEW DANCE INSTEAD. THIS IS BETTER."

"It really might be," admitted Rudy, still rubbing his stepped-on toes.

Daisy just laughed and did a little twirl under the streetlights, Bonk shuffling along beside her in his box, perfectly, gloriously off-beat.

— The End —

The Mystery of the Midnight Library



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Flump of picture books falling onto beanbag chairs at 1:00 AM
- Unblinking robot eyes watching from behind the returns desk
- Mr. Biscuit the library cat batting pages open to read pictures

The town library had a mystery of its own: every morning, librarian Mrs. Alcott arrived to find books scattered across the floor — never damaged, just moved, as if someone had been reading through the night.

"I lock up myself," she told Rudy and Daisy, baffled. "There's no way anyone gets in!"

"We'll get to the bottom of it," said Daisy. "Tonight."

That night, the three detectives hid behind the returns desk with a flashlight, a notebook, and a thermos of cocoa for courage.

"I AM VERY GOOD AT STAKEOUTS," whispered Bonk. "I HAVE NOT BLINKED IN NINE MINUTES."

"You don't have eyelids, Bonk."

"THIS IS TRUE. IT HELPS."

Midnight came and went. The library creaked and settled the way old buildings do. Then, just after one o'clock, they heard it — a soft rustle, and the unmistakable flump of a book falling open on the floor.

They crept out with the flashlight and swept the beam across the shelves.

Nothing.

Another flump. This time from the picture book section.

Daisy tiptoed closer, notebook ready — and then burst out laughing, clapping a hand over her mouth to stay quiet.

There, nestled between two beanbag chairs, was the library's own tabby cat, Mr. Biscuit, who was supposedly just there to keep the mice away. He had knocked a book off the shelf, batted it open with one determined paw, and appeared to be — very seriously — looking at the pictures.

"HE IS READING," whispered Bonk, awestruck. "A LITERATE CAT."

"He's probably just chasing the moving pages," Rudy whispered back. "But it does look exactly like reading."

Mr. Biscuit gave them an unbothered blink, stretched, and knocked another book off the shelf just to prove his point.

The next morning, Mrs. Alcott laughed until she cried when they told her. "Mr. Biscuit! Of course. I should have known."

From then on, the library kept one low shelf of picture books just for him, and every morning a new one would be found open on the floor — Mr. Biscuit's very own bedtime story, night after night.

"Case closed," said Daisy, writing Midnight reader: one very dramatic cat in her notebook.

"I WOULD LIKE TO ADOPT HIM," said Bonk.

"You can't adopt the library cat, Bonk."

"I WILL VISIT OFTEN," Bonk decided instead, which, as it turned out, he absolutely did — usually with a slice of toast balanced on his head, "for Mr. Biscuit," though somehow it was always gone by the time anyone checked.

— The End —

Bonk's Grand Science Experiment



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Cardboard mountain with a toaster embedded inside
- Toast popping BOING followed by a foamy red lava eruption
- Theo's rocket launching early directly into the judges' snack table

The Maple Street Science Fair was one week away, and Bonk had Big Plans.

"I WILL BUILD," he announced, "A VOLCANO."

"A classic," said Rudy approvingly.

"A VOLCANO THAT IS ALSO A TOASTER."

"That's... a lot more ambitious," said Daisy.

Undeterred, Bonk got to work in the garage, clanking and whirring behind a curtain he'd rigged up out of a bedsheet, occasionally shouting things like "DO NOT LOOK YET" and "IT IS ALMOST READY" and, once, worryingly, "THAT WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO SMOKE."

By the day of the fair, Bonk's table stood proudly between Priya's model of the solar system and Theo's baking-soda rocket. A large cardboard mountain sat under a sheet, humming faintly.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Bonk announced to the gathering crowd, sounding very pleased with himself. "BEHOLD."

He pulled off the sheet with a flourish. Underneath was, indeed, a cardboard volcano, painted red and orange, with two slices of bread sticking cheerfully out of the top.

"Bonk," whispered Rudy, "why does your volcano have a toaster stuck in it?"

"IT IS NOT STUCK IN IT," said Bonk. "IT IS ONE WITH IT. WATCH."

He pressed a button on the side. There was a rumble. Then a fizz. Then, right on cue, the toast popped up with a cheerful BOING — followed immediately by a very large, very foamy stream of fake lava erupting out from underneath it, right over the top of the crowd.

Everyone shrieked and laughed and scattered as red foam rained gently down over three rows of science fair tables.

"IT WORKS," Bonk cried triumphantly, foam dripping from his googly eye. "BREAKFAST AND GEOLOGY, TOGETHER AT LAST."

Priya's solar system got a light dusting of lava foam. Theo's rocket, still on the launchpad, got hit directly and, to everyone's surprise, actually launched early, sailing gently across the gym and landing in the judges' snack table.

There was a very long pause.

Then the head judge, Mr. Alavi, wiped a bit of foam off his glasses, looked at the chaos around him, and started to laugh.

"Most memorable experiment we've ever had," he announced. "By a landslide. Or should I say — a lava-slide."

Bonk did not win first prize (that went, deservedly, to Priya's solar system, which had working lights). But he did win a brand-new ribbon the judges made up on the spot: Most Explosive Use of Breakfast.

"I HAVE ACHIEVED SCIENCE," said Bonk, holding his ribbon proudly, still faintly smoking. "AND ALSO TOAST."

"Both at once," said Daisy, picking foam out of her hair. "Somehow, only you."

— The End —

The Case of the Copycat Detective



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Loosened bolts on every street sign along Maple Street
- Small wheel tracks from a red wagon carrying a treasure map
- Barnaby Bloom interrogating a lamppost 3 streets away

A new sign appeared in the window of the old shoe shop on Maple Street: BARNABY BLOOM, WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE. Underneath, in smaller letters: Rudy and Daisy Need Not Apply.

"Rude," said Daisy, reading it twice.

Barnaby Bloom turned out to be a boy from two streets over, with a deerstalker hat, a plastic magnifying glass, and an enormous amount of confidence.

"I hear you two solve the little cases," he said, looking down his nose at them. "Missing gnomes. Lost hamsters. I solve REAL mysteries."

"WE SOLVED A HUMMING GARDEN," said Bonk, offended on their behalf. "IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT. THERE WERE BEES."

"Cute," said Barnaby, and walked off swinging his plastic magnifying glass.

That afternoon, the real mystery arrived: someone had swapped every single street sign on Maple Street overnight. Oak Lane pointed toward the park. The park sign pointed toward the bakery. Nobody could find anything.

"This is MY case," announced Barnaby, arriving at a dead sprint. "Stand back, amateurs."

He examined the signs upside down, declared with great confidence that the culprit was "clearly a ghost with a screwdriver," and then got lost trying to find his own house, which was only two streets away.

Rudy knelt down by the base of one sign. "Look — the bolts aren't broken, they're loosened. Somebody did this carefully. And on purpose."

Daisy spotted little wheel marks in the dirt, small and paired, going from sign to sign. "Not a ghost. Something on wheels."

"OR SOMEONE," said Bonk, pointing dramatically. "LOOK."

Trundling around the corner came a little red wagon, being pulled by two determined kids from the youngest class at school, giggling wildly, a screwdriver and a stack of "improved" signs rattling in the back.

"We were making a treasure map!" explained one, not even slightly sorry. "The signs made it too easy."

It turned out they'd spent the whole night "fixing" the signs to make their secret treasure hunt more exciting, with absolutely no idea it would send the entire street into chaos.

Rudy and Daisy helped the two kids put every sign back exactly where it belonged, while Bonk supervised by holding the screwdriver very seriously and occasionally shouting "TIGHTER" for no particular reason.

Barnaby Bloom, meanwhile, was still three streets away, confidently interrogating a lamppost.

"Mystery solved," said Daisy, snapping her notebook shut. "No ghosts. Just two very enthusiastic treasure hunters."

The two kids were so impressed they asked to be Rudy and Daisy's junior detectives on the spot — a promotion Barnaby Bloom, wherever he currently was, had not yet managed to earn.

"WE HAVE A DETECTIVE AGENCY NOW," said Bonk proudly. "IT HAS FOUR MEMBERS. FIVE IF YOU COUNT BONK TWO, WHO SADLY POPPED LAST TUESDAY."

"We're still sorry about Bonk Two," said Daisy gently.

"HE KNEW THE RISKS," said Bonk. "HE WAS A BALLOON."

— The End —

Bonk Goes Fishing



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- Bonk shouting politely into the water for fish to form an orderly line
- Enormous SPLOOSH dive straight into the pond with rod in hand
- A waterlogged old rubber boot full of pond weed

Grampy, who lived at the end of Maple Street, invited Rudy and Daisy fishing at the old pond — and, somewhat nervously, Bonk too.

"Now, fishing," said Grampy, handing out rods, "is all about patience. Sit quietly. Wait for a nibble."

"I AM VERY PATIENT," said Bonk, who had already cast his line three times, gotten it stuck in a tree twice, and was currently untangling it from his own head.

They settled onto the bank in the morning sun. Rudy and Daisy cast their lines and waited quietly, the way you're supposed to. Bonk stared intensely at his bobber, unblinking, for exactly forty seconds before losing his patience entirely.

"NOTHING IS HAPPENING," he announced. "I WILL SPEED THIS UP."

He leaned over the water and shouted, very politely, "EXCUSE ME, FISH. WE WOULD LIKE TO CATCH YOU NOW. PLEASE FORM AN ORDERLY LINE."

Unsurprisingly, this did not work. Every fish in the pond scattered in the opposite direction.

"Bonk, you're supposed to be quiet," whispered Daisy, trying not to laugh.

"THE FISH AND I HAVE DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION STYLES," said Bonk, sitting back down.

"THIS IS FINE. I WILL WAIT."

He waited four whole minutes — a personal record — before his bobber suddenly yanked underwater.

"I HAVE A BITE!" Bonk shrieked, leaping to his feet. "I HAVE A BITE I HAVE A BITE I HAVE A—"

He reeled with all his robotic might. The rod bent nearly in half. Whatever was on the other end was big, and it was strong, and it pulled Bonk clean off the bank and straight into the pond with an enormous SPLOOSH.

"BONK CANNOT SWIM," Grampy reminded everyone, alarmed, already reaching for a life ring.

But a moment later, Bonk's head popped back up, spluttering, still gripping the rod with both hands, triumphant. "I HAVE NOT LET GO," he announced. "THIS IS A MATTER OF HONOR."

Rudy and Daisy grabbed the rod and helped haul him — and whatever he'd caught — back onto the bank. Out flopped, not a fish, but an old, waterlogged rubber boot, thick with pond weed.

There was a pause.

"IT IS THE BIGGEST CATCH OF THE DAY," Bonk declared, holding the boot aloft like a trophy, seawater — well, pondwater — streaming off him in every direction.

Grampy laughed so hard he had to sit down on his tackle box. "Well, I'll be. Forty years fishing this pond, and that boot's the best catch anyone's ever shown me."

They never did catch a real fish that day. But they roasted marshmallows on the bank as the sun went down, Bonk's boot trophy propped proudly beside him, drying out in the evening breeze.

"Best fishing trip ever," said Rudy.

"AGREED," said Bonk. "THOUGH NEXT TIME, I WOULD LIKE TO CATCH SOMETHING WITH A FACE."

— The End —

Bonk and the Big Storm



CLUES FOUND IN THIS CASE:

- High-pitched meowing coming from the old oak tree during the storm
- Bonk climbing up wet bark with rain sizzling off his metal joints
- A tiny black kitten sleeping happily on top of Bonk the robot cat bed

Dark clouds rolled over Maple Street all afternoon, and by dinnertime the sky had turned an ominous shade of purple-grey.

"BIG STORM COMING," Bonk announced, pressing his googly eye to the window. "I CAN FEEL IT IN MY GEARS."

"You can feel weather?" asked Rudy.

"NO," admitted Bonk. "I SAW IT ON THE WEATHER CHANNEL. BUT IT SOUNDED MORE IMPRESSIVE MY WAY."

The storm hit hard just after dark — thunder rolling, rain hammering the windows, wind rattling every shutter on the street. And then, with one enormous CRACK of lightning, the power went out entirely.

"OH NO," came Bonk's voice in the pitch black. "I HAVE GONE BLIND. WAIT. NO. THAT IS JUST THE DARK."

Daisy found candles. Rudy found flashlights. Bonk found the fridge, purely by walking into it face-first.

"THIS IS FINE," he reported, rubbing his dented eye. "EVERYTHING IS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN."

Just as they settled onto the couch with their candles and flashlights, they heard it — a frightened, high-pitched mewing from somewhere outside, barely audible over the wind.

"Someone's out there!" said Daisy, already reaching for her raincoat.

They ventured out into the storm, flashlight beams cutting through the driving rain, and followed the mewing to the base of the old oak tree on the corner — where, clinging to a low branch, soaked and shivering, was a small black kitten too scared to climb down.

"I'VE GOT THIS," announced Bonk, and before anyone could stop him, he clambered up the tree with a clank, clank, clank, rain sizzling faintly off his warm metal joints.

He reached the branch, scooped the kitten gently into his plunger hand, and began climbing back down — only for his foot to slip on the wet bark.

"UH OH," said Bonk, and tumbled the rest of the way, landing with a THUD flat on his back in the mud, kitten held safely above him the entire way down, not a hair out of place.

"You did it!" cried Rudy, splashing over.

"OF COURSE I DID," said Bonk, lying in a puddle, extremely pleased with himself. "I AM A PROFESSIONAL."

They rushed the shivering kitten home, dried her off by candlelight, and wrapped her in one of Daisy's old sweaters. She fell asleep almost instantly, curled up in a warm little ball — right on top of Bonk, who had lain very still on the floor for over an hour, terrified of waking her.

"I CANNOT MOVE," Bonk whispered. "I AM A CAT BED NOW. THIS IS MY LIFE."

By morning, the storm had passed, the power flickered back on, and sunlight streamed through the windows. The kitten — whom Daisy named Storm, naturally — stretched, yawned, and headbutted Bonk's googly eye affectionately.

"SHE LIKES ME," said Bonk, delighted, still lying perfectly still on the floor. "I HAVE NOT MOVED SINCE LAST NIGHT AND IT WAS WORTH EVERY MINUTE."

Rudy and Daisy exchanged a smile as Storm curled back up on her new favorite pillow — a slightly dented, extremely patient robot who wouldn't have traded the spot for anything.

— The End —