



Spike Learns to say Sorry

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Down in the moss at the foot of the grass embankment at the back of the church lives the Prickle family. There is Father Prickle, a big spiky hedgehog who came to England from Norway when they used his tree-house for a Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square. Mother Prickle, a small brown Suffolk hedgehog. And three children; Jennifer, the youngest and still in nappies, Lucinda, and Spike who is the oldest, and spiky like his dad. Spike's job in the church is to go to the top of the embankment, roll himself into a tight ball, and roll down the slope, picking up the litter as he goes. He enjoys his job, unless some thoughtless person has left chewing gum in the grass, then he tends to get stuck, and Lucinda has to rock him backwards and forwards until he is free, even then he has to take an ant-bath to get clean. Spike really hates chewing gum!!.

Spike's favourite hobby is cycling and whenever he is not litter-picking you will find him cycling around the country lanes looking for tasty berries and talking to the squirrels. Now it may seem funny to think of a bicycling hedgehog, but it's quite safe for Spike to cycle, providing he remembers his father's two golden rules:

Firstly, he must always wear his cycle helmet in case he falls off.

Secondly he must never, ever, go cycling if he has a cold.

The second rule may appear rather strange, but the reason is quite simple, if a spiky hedgehog sneezes then one, or more, of his prickles fall out; and if they were to fall between the spokes of his wheel, or cause a tyre to puncture, then he would almost certainly fall off his bicycle and get hurt.

So last Thursday Spike was not a happy hedgehog. He'd been stuck on a particularly nasty piece of chewing gum when there had been a sudden rainstorm. The chewing gum was so sticky that he'd not been able to roll up into a tight ball, and he had got very, very wet. Now he had a terrible cold and his father would not let him go out on his bike.

"I'd be alldright" moaned Spike, "I'd be vedy vedy careful"

"No" said his father sternly. "It's too risky. the last hedgehog I knew who rode a bike with a cold sneezed and made four cars and three

lorries have punctures, and nearly caused a major accident. No, you must stay home until your cold has gone. So no cycling for you today!"

"Id sure Id be adight... aahTISUE" went spike, as there was a gentle clatter of falling hedgehog prickles.

"Now look at the mess you've made" said his mother, "If you must sneeze please do it in your own bedroom, then you can clear up afterwards".

Spike went off to bed, very miserable and fed up.

Later the rest of the family went out to have tea with Barnabus the church mouse, but they left Spike behind, just in case he sneezed at Barnabus' and accidentally skewered him with a hedgehog prickle.

They hadn't been gone long when the Post-rat arrived and put the mail through the letterbox - there was a letter for Spike. It was an invitation from Spike's friend Henry. He was invited to a cycle ride and picnic with Henry and the Hog cycling team. The Hog cycling team!! They were Spike's heroes. They were a cycle-speedway team with the best super-doooper mountain bikes. But Spike suddenly stopped; he was banned from his bicycle because of his cold. Spike stood still, and a big, wet tear appeared at the corner of his eyes and trickled down his cheek. A chance to meet the Hog cycling team and he couldn't go.

Spike wandered aimlessly around the den, eventually he ended at the back door, where his bicycle was stored. He began to polish it, muttering to himself.

"De hog cycling deam... ohh de hog cycling deam... a dicnic with the hog cycling team"

Spike polished the handlebars, then he sat on the saddle and stared ahead. Spike didn't mean to disobey his father, but somehow from sitting still on the bike he was peddling furiously down the road. He was halfway to the picnic site when he remembered he hadn't got his helmet on. "I'll be alright he thought, I haven't fallen off for at least a month"

Soon he saw some figures ahead, it was the Hog cycling team on their way to the picnic site. Spike couldn't resist it, he put on a special burst of

speed and overtook the whole of the team. He had never peddled so fast in his life! But just as he overtook the leader of the team something dreadful happened - he sneezed. Not a little snuffling type sneeze, but a great big blow your eyeballs out sneeze. The sneeze caused him to wobble and "aarghh" he fell off in the middle of the road, right in from of the hog cycling team. They were quite bewildered, not only had they been overtaken by a madly cycling hedgehog, but he then appeared to explode in front of them, sending hedgehog prickles all over the road. The hog cycling team didn't stand a chance, those that managed to swerve around spike had to run over the prickles, and their tyres exploded, the rest ran straight into Spike who was lying in right in front of them.

It was absolute chaos.

Spike remembered falling off, but nothing else

He woke up in a strange bed. His mother was sitting beside the bed, he was in hospital!

"Oh Spike" she said "we were so worried."

He had a large bump on his head, and several small ones on his nose; big bruises on his back; large bald patches where his prickles had come out, and a bend at the very end of his nose. If he had been an unhappy hedgehog with a cold, he was now a very very unhappy hedgehog. Especially as he found out that he had put the whole of the hog-cycling team in hospital as well!

It had all gone terribly wrong.

Dad came in looking very very big, very very spiky and very very angry!

"Well" he said "What have you got to say for yourself?"

Spike looked mournfully at him and felt ashamed at what he had done, and the worry he had caused. He took a big breath and squealed out - "Sorry, I didn't mean to be naughty."

His father nodded, "It's hard to say sorry isn't it? Especially when you feel so bad for doing something silly."

While Spike was in hospital he sent a little card to every member of the Hog cycling team apologizing for what he had done. He actually got back a signed photograph of them all, but he never got to meet them, and certainly never had a picnic with them.

But all was not lost as Spike learnt that everyone feels better when you admit your mistakes, and was glad he had learnt how to say "Sorry." But he did wish he'd had that picnic too!

From the same author on Feedbacks

Felburgh (2010)

Felburgh is the story of a vicar (Peter) and his life in a new parish; one that he has not chosen and that has not chosen him. The parish is set in seemingly idyllic Suffolk seaside town of Felburgh somewhere between Felixstowe and Aldeburgh. The parish, like most parishes, is only normal on the surface and has underlying tensions and vast social differences. The church itself has a third of a million pounds in the bank, some of the congregation are downright antagonistic and quite a few have interesting pasts. The church has previously seen a rapid succession of vicars, who have been driven out, escaped or just disappeared, this has left a legacy of distrust and discontent. Finally, like the Parish, the vicarage itself also has an interesting history, one which soon impinges on Peter's life and not necessarily for the better. All in all it's a mixture most vicars would run from, but Peter has no choice but to stay as he has nowhere else to go, so can he make a success of it or will history repeat itself once again?

Barnabus Makes Someone Smile (2010)

Barnabus notices a small child who does not seem to smile, ever. However, with a little lesson from a peculiar cat Barnabus learns how to make him smile.

Vignette (2010)

Brian is a vicar on the edge, the edge of suicide that is. He has a number of rural parishes and they all contain farmers who are on the edge, or over the edge, of bankruptcy. It is all out of his control and try as he might he cannot deal with all the pain and angst and it has finally got to him. But he is not allowed to find relief in the comfort of a cold bullet via circumstances that are again out of control. However, as his life spirals downwards there is one chink of light, perhaps, just perhaps it will provide him with a way out.

Barnabus Prepares for Bonfire Night (2010)

Fireworks can be pretty and bonfires can be warming, but to hedgehogs they can be deadly. Barnabus works out a plan to keep the hedgehogs safe, but it is not that simple.

Barnabus and the Lost Spider (2010)

Barnabus, the church mouse, believes that everything in his church is in exactly the right place. Then he opens the boiler room door and finds...

Barnabus and Loadza Mice (2010)

Barnabus is bored, in fact Barnabus is very bored. So he decides to invite a few friends over for a video party, unfortunately ...

Barnabus Trusts a Cat (2010)

Barnabus, the church mouse, doesn't like cats very much and certainly wouldn't normally trust one with his life, but one Christmas...

Barnabus and the Inheritance (2010)

A Barnabus Church Mouse Story.

Barnabus gets a surprise letter telling him he's got an inheritance. What can it be? His mind runs wild, is it money? A Mansion? Perhaps it's a ...

Barnabus and the New Year (2010)

It's New Year's Eve and Barnabus is all alone in his church basement home. Have all his friends gone out and left him? he feels really miserable, and then...

Barnabus and the Winter Supply (2010)

Barnabus has been a diligent Church Mouse, he has stored enough food to feed all the mice in his church for the whole of the winter, but then it starts to rain up North and other mice are in trouble, what should he do?

Alien Gel (2010)

Henry is a perfectly normal person in a perfectly normal world, then he is forced by circumstances to buy a weird hair gel. From then on his life begins to change as the hair gel starts to interfere in its own peculiar way. The question is: can Henry keep it under control?

Barnabus Meets Ratatouee (2010)

It's Christmas Eve and all is well in Barbabus' church, that is until there is a scratch on the door and the appearance of a very hungry Romanian rat. Should they say there is no room, or let him and his companions in?

Wilfred's Heavely Journey (2010)

Wilfred, the churchyard rat, is feeling off-colour and down-hearted, so he decides to go on holiday. He chooses a cruse, but it turns out to be not quite what he expected.

Spike and Mother's Day (2010)

Spike the hedgehog has a problem, a real problem. It's two days before Mother's day and he hasn't got her a present, and even worse has no idea what to get. Can his friends help him or not?

Spike Plays Hedgehog Rugby (2010)

Spike the hedgehog has been made captain of the local hedgehog rugby team, but will his first decision at his first match be a big mistake?

Barnabus needs an Albatross (2010)

The church needs money to repair the church tower and Barnabus and his friends hatch a plan that they hope will give the church the money it needs. Trouble is it all depends on finding a rare and special bird.

Boris the Dancing Beaver (2010)

Boris is a beaver like no other. Forget swimming, forget chopping down trees; Boris loves to dance. But, just what future is there for a dacing beaver? His brothers think he's a nissance, but Boris is sure dancing, somehow, is his future.

Barnabus and Hank the Armadillo (2010)

Barnabus, the church mouse, is looking after his church as normal and has an American guest, Hank the armadillo. However, they do not get on very well until the church boiler begins to throw a fit.

Barnabus and Risk Management (2010)

Barnabus, the church mouse, has to entertain his friend's Aunt. She is a bit of a snob and loves to find fault with the state of Barnabus' church. She discovers a box of soft toys in the wrong place and has a good moan, but Barnabus has an unusual answer; one involving sky-diving!

Sarah has a problem (2010)

Sarah the skunk has a couple of problems; one being her temper. She just can't keep it and when she gets angry those around her get squirted with her special smell liquid. It's not a recipe for keeping friends, so she hasn't any. Then one day...

Arboreal Love (2010)

Can trees feel for human beings as human beings feel for trees? Not everybody thinks so, but one old lady holds a secret: a secret of a love and passion for a tree that knew no bounds. But could this love be infectious?

The Last Assignment (2010)

They are highly trained operatives. They have been specially prepared for any mission. They are kept under tight reign. But there is this special assignment, could it be their last?

Cold (2010)

Jim Tarrent is an ex-army sergeant turned private investigator following his untimely departure from the army. On solving his first case he gains a partner and together they look like they will make a go of his business. However, Jim has a traumatic past that he cannot seem to leave behind and his partner is probably no better off. Then two cases hit them that could change their lives, and their detective agency, for ever.

The Rectory (2010)

Stephen Holmes is the type of person for whom every silver cloud has a black lining. Up to now he has led a fairly uneventful life. Uneventful that is if you forget that everything he touches has a knack of turning to dust or biting back. So much so that after nearly a decade as a bank clerk he has not progressed more than one tiny step up the promotion ladder; so much so that he's really given up on living and thinks of himself as just existing; so much

so that you'd hardly call him a good catch or for that matter any sort of catch. However, a surprise letter offers him the chance to change all that and to begin a new life, nay a new wealthy life. But he knows that every time someone fills up his glass with beer it has a habit of leaking out through unnoticed cracks, so can it all be true, and are there really new horizons ahead?

Lumen in *Let Your Little Light Shine (2010)*

Lumen is a glow worm with attitude. Currently he's fed up with being a glow worm and lured his lights off. But there is a problem, if his light doesn't shine, just where does his energy go?

Book Woman (2010)

Mary is the Manager of a private lending library in the sleepy Suffolk coastal town of Eastburgh. She originally wanted to be a journalist, but following a dreadful accident that she was forced to realign her career aspirations. Mary has a reputation of being rather short with people and fending off chances of friendship, not that she has much chance of friendships as she works full time and cares for her elderly mother.

However, Mary's nicely ordered world of books and home is slowly turned round thanks to an unexpected discovery, a young girl and Mary's changing inner needs.

The Soulmate Agency (2010)

The Soulmate Agency is a dating agency with a difference. Instead of pairing people up they invite groups of people away for a week and run them through a series of exercises to help them get to know one another. However, that is not to say the owner doesn't have a hidden plan of possible matings. But one assorted group, as soon as it arrives, starts to defy the odds...

Trembine Halt (2010)

Trembine Halt is a tiny Cambridgeshire village. Like most small villages the dozen inhabitants have their various foibles, but they have learnt to live together and support one another when necessary, even coping with the odd transitory interloper. However, lurking underneath are emotional hang-ups, hidden relationships, suicides and selfishness. All would remain as it was, except on one snowy day a freight train gets stuck in the village and the addition

of the extra person starts off a train of events that will have long term repercussions.

Nocturnus (2010)

John Smith and Jane Doe (yes that's their real names) are ordinary people living separate lives. He as a peripatetic lecturer and she as a night-time cleaning manager. In the normal course of events their paths would probably never cross. However, some events are far from normal and the two get thrown together to dispose of a corpse.

The question is can they get away with it? Especially as it's not just the police after them.

But the story is more than just a simple tale of misdeed and misdemeanor. Jane leads her nocturnal life for very good reasons (well good to her) and John prefers to travel rather than stay at home for equally valid reasons (well valid to him.) So as their lives are forcibly intertwined are their reasons still valid or are they redundant?

The Face (2010)

Brian is the type of guy who likes to have everything cut and dried and his life on a well-ordered track. He's been in the same teaching job since leaving university and spends every summer holiday house-sitting for his cousin George. However, this summer, after seeing a woman's face in a supermarket, his life starts to change in ways he would never have contemplated. However, there is more to come and his well ordered life starts to spiral way out of control, the problem is that he rather begins to like it that way.

Botanago (2010)

Botanago refers to a mathematical formula, which is invented within a robotics company by an eccentric and irascible middle aged research engineer called Albert, who is not all he seems.

All would be well if they left him alone to think his mathematical thoughts, but in Jeddle Robotics lie people with ambition and downright managerial ruthlessness that Albert detests.

So while he strives to perfect his cherished formula, he must also deal with the rest of his life, and that is nowhere near as easy.

Ruth (2010)

Ruth is a runner with a unique sexual chemistry that combines in almost near perfection with the story-teller; but she says little and wants nothing else. However, as far as he is concerned this is enough, then the unexpected happens and life gets turned on it's head...

Bitter (2010)

Jim Tarrent and Jenn Tarrent are settling down to a new routine in their detective agency following their marriage.

They have the usual mix of cases, but also pick up a case for military intelligence involving two dead service personnel discovered in unusual circumstances while Jim (who still dreams of his army past) plugs away at solving a child hit and run mystery no matter what it costs.

However, both cases lead them into murky territory where simple objectives have morphed into potential scandals that no-one on high wants revealed.

Jims unusual evidence gathering skills and Jenn's organisation lead them further on than anyone else, but perhaps the outcome is not worth the trouble involved.

(Bitter is a sequel to 'Cold')

Sydney takes a stand (2011)

Sydney the frog only has a small muddy puddle as a home and now the council want to take it away - there comes a time when every frog has to make a stand. Unfortunately this time the stand is against a giant digger; can he survive?

Barnabus can Fly! (2011)

Barnabus the church mouse has got himself into a pickle again! He's been teaching the mouslets all about bats, but now he can't find one and his class are beginning to disbelieve him - can there be a solution?

Barnabus and the 'Swerve' (2011)

Barnabus has a lot on his mind; the church want to sell off their ancient pipe organ and he needs to find a way to beat the Red

Rodents at Mouse Volley ball. The answer could lie in something very different...



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