



Spike Plays Hedgehog Rugby
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"Spike"

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Spike the hedgehog was excited, it was the day of the great rugby match. Spike was captain of the local rugby team, the Rodent Wanderers, and they were due to play the Nacton Nibblers, it would be a great game. The teams came from the local towns and it was always an exciting match.

Now Hedgehog Rugby is not played with a ball. The players have to put on huge leather gloves and line up on the field. When the whistle blows the idea is either to catch one of the opposing team and hold on to them (that's why you need the gloves), or roll up into a ball and speed towards the goal, which is a bale of hay. Usually it gets very muddled and everyone is bumping about and trying to get hold of each other. Every ten minutes the referee blows his whistle and counts how many hedgehogs are stuck in the bales of hay. Each stuck hedgehog scores a goal, and there are five mini games (called bales) each way before half-time is called. Last time the Wanderers played the Nibblers they lost 35 to 34 and Spike was sure that they would win this time (after all they only lost last time because the Nibblers scored a penalty after one of the Wanderers was held back from scoring by a Nibbler hanging onto his tail with their teeth, a strictly forbidden move!)

So Spike was eager for the game to start and was waiting at the church for the bus to come and pick up the team. They were all there, Spike, Arrow, Bur, Pike, Barb, Quill, Spur, Needle, Bristle, Thorn, and Little Point, their youngest and smallest member. No! Wait a minute, Little Point he was nowhere to be seen. Spike rushed up to Quill (the oldest on the team)

"Have you seen Little Point?" He asked

"Nah" said Quill, "I expect he's still doing his litter round, it's autumn you know"

"HAS ANYBODY SEEN LITTLE POINT ?" he shouted, and was met by a chorus of

"No", "Nah", "He's always late",

"Probably got stuck in some chewing gum" yelled another.

Spike didn't know what to do, especially as their bus had come round the corner, and there was still no sign of Little Point.

Just then he saw Prickles, one of the cheerleaders for the Wanderers

"Oh Prickles what should I do, Little Point has not turned up?" He asked.

"Never mind", purred Prickles, "he's only small and he's only a reserve, it won't matter if you don't have him to play today. I'm sure you can beat them you are all so big and strong."

Spike made up his mind "We won't wait" he shouted, "All aboard!"

When they got to the rugby field at Nacton, Spike was amazed to see so many supporters for the Nibblers, all decked out in their horrible yellow and green, but Prickles and her cheerleaders were soon at work waving their blue and white scarves and chanting at the top of their voices "Come on the Wanderers, give 'em the blues, don't score by ones, do it by twos!".

It wasn't long before the game started, and as always it was a hard fought one with lots of wrestling and rolling about. Too much rolling about as Bur was carried off with a severely bent nose and pulled whiskers. Soon after that Spike soon realized something was wrong. After the first bale the score was 3-3, but after the second it was 6-5 to the Nibblers, then 9-7, then 12-9 and at half time it was 15-11. They were steadily losing to the Nibblers and it looked as if the Wanderers were going to have their worst defeat in years. Spike was almost in tears. "Your fault" said Quill sharply, "you should have waited for Little Point. Everybody is important in Hedgehog Rugby, even the smallest reserve."

Spike could see it all slipping away, what would Sir Lancalot the Chairman think? If he lost here he couldn't possibly remain team captain, maybe he wouldn't even be picked for the team anymore.

Just then there was a tremendous noise and a screech. Thorn gave an exited yell, "It's Little Point - the seagulls have brought him by air-mail."

Little Point rushed in "Sorry Skip, I didn't mean to miss the bus"

"Oh am I glad to see you", said Spike "We really need you"

The team all greeted Little Point and worked out some fresh tactics, as Little Point was the freshest of them the team would try to concentrate of holding back the Nibblers, while Little Point was to dash through them and try to stick himself into the goal. He might be small, but he could swerve quicker than anyone else.

It worked like a dream, as soon as the second half started Little Point was rolling down the field towards the goal. By the end of the first bale the score was 15-12, then after the next one 15-13, then 15-14 and then 15 all. The last bale of the game was a hard fought one, the Nibblers had

realised what the Wanderers were up to and as soon as the bale started virtually every Nibbler set out to catch Little Point. By the end of the bale there were little piles of hedgehogs everywhere on the field, but not one single hedgehog in either goal. It was a draw!

But there was no doubt that Little Point was the hog of the match, and he got the special trophy at the end of the game.

On the way home Spike said to Quill, "I've learned an important lesson today, everybody is important, no matter how small or slow they are, we need everybody if we are to work properly as a team"

"Yes" said Quill (who was very wise as he had been the team captain for many years) "I had to learn that lesson too, but you must never forget it; everybody is important and if one person is missed out, we all suffer as we all need each other".

That night as Spike had his after match bath and as the mud was slowly rising to the surface he remembered what Quill had said; 'if one person is missed out we all suffer' how true that was, even if they seemed to be small and unimportant, they were still valuable. He wriggled his toes to check the mud wasn't forming a crust and began to think about next week, then they were due to play the Trimley Tigers, they were top of the league and Spike knew he would need every player to be up to scratch.

"I need them all," he said as his mind started to wander as he began to drift off to sleep. "They are all important; everybody is important, even the smallest."

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 it's own peculiar way. The question is: can Henry keep it under control?

Barnabus Meets Ratatooee (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 Heavenly 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 Learns to say Sorry (2010)

Spike the hedgehog absolutely loves cycling, but his father has given him two basic rules to obey and one day Spike forgets them, it leads him into all sorts of trouble.

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 dancing beaver? His brothers think he's a nuisance, 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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