

Bad Frog at Work



Emma Laybourn

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Chapter One

One Friday when Olly got home from school, his Great-Aunt Grindle was looking very cross.

“That frog of yours is a terrible nuisance!” she yelled. Olly’s heart sank.

He and Mum lived in Great-Aunt Grindle’s house, so they tried to keep her happy. Unfortunately he had to leave his pet frog, Mr Splat, at home with Great-Aunt Grindle every day while he went to school.

“What’s wrong?” he asked anxiously. “Has Mr Splat broken something?”

“No!”

“Has he made a mess?”

“No!”

“Then what *has* he done?” asked Olly.

“Nothing!” shouted Great-Aunt Grindle. “Nothing at all!”

“*Nothing?*” said Olly, puzzled.

“Exactly. He’s done nothing at all but sit around the house getting in my way!”

Just then, Mr Splat came bouncing down the corridor. **SPLAT!** **SPLAT! SPLAT!** He leapt straight into Olly’s arms and gave him a wide and wicked grin.

“**BURP,**” he said, and flicked out a long green tongue to lick Olly’s cheek.

“Yes, I missed you too,” said Olly.

“Well, I didn’t!” snapped Great-Aunt Grindle. “I *couldn’t* miss him! Wherever I tried to clean, there he was, sitting doing nothing. I’ve never seen such a lazy frog!”

“Perhaps he’s bored,” said Olly, feeling worried.

“Then find something useful for him to do! That frog has got to earn its keep!”

“How?” asked Olly. “A frog can’t go to work.”

“Oh yes, it can! Frogs eat slugs and snails, don’t they?” declared his aunt. “Your frog could be busy gobbling up all the slugs in my garden, instead of lounging around the house eating sausage rolls.”

Great-Aunt Grindle seemed to forgotten that Mr Splat had once found her missing golden ring. She had been grateful then – but she wasn’t any more. She brandished her broom at him angrily.

Olly thought he had better get Mr Splat out of the way. So he carried him into the garden and put him down on the grass.

“You heard her,” he said. “Slugs and snails.”

“**BURP?**” said Mr Splat.

“Look – there’s a big slug on that lettuce leaf!” said Olly. “Why don’t you eat it?”

Mr Splat flicked out his long green tongue and deftly knocked the slug off the leaf.

“Brilliant!” said Olly. “Now gobble it up. Yum yum.”

Mr Splat gobbled up the slug. He pulled a face.

Then he spat the slug straight out again, onto Olly’s shoe.

“**BURP,**” he said indignantly.

Olly couldn’t really blame his pet. Like Mr Splat, he would prefer a sausage roll to a slimy brown slug any day. So he told Mr Splat,

“You’re very good at catching slugs. If you don’t want to eat them, just leave them for Aunt Grindle. That’ll make her happy!”

“**BURP!**” said Mr Splat, and he hopped away to chase a snail.

“Good frog,” said Olly. He left Mr Splat in the garden, hunting snails and slugs, and went inside to change out of his school uniform.

When he looked out of his bedroom window, he could see Mr Splat leaping round the garden, flicking at slugs with his tongue. There was a little pile of them on the patio.

“Perfect,” said Olly. Great-Aunt Grindle would be very pleased.

He decided to read his book for a while. When he looked out of the window again, the pile of slugs and snails was even bigger.

“Excellent!” said Olly. Mr Splat was really earning his keep. Soon he would have cleared the garden of every single slug and snail. Great-Aunt Grindle would be totally thrilled.

He decided to finish his book. By then it was nearly tea-time, so he ran happily downstairs to help Great-Aunt Grindle make the tea. They were going to have burgers and beans.

He couldn’t wait to show her all the garden pests that Mr Splat had caught. She would be speechless with delight.

But just before he reached the kitchen, he heard a blood-chilling scream.

And then there was a huge and dreadful **CRASH**.

Chapter Two

Olly ran into the kitchen.

Great-Aunt Grindle stood in the middle of the room. Her mouth was wide open and her eyes were bulging with horror. She had just dropped the frying pan on the floor.

Olly looked down. The frying pan was not full of burgers.

It was full of squirming slugs. They started to crawl out and creep around the floor, leaving a hundred twisty trails of slime.

“Oh,” said Olly.

Great-Aunt Grindle said nothing at all. She was indeed speechless, but not with delight.

“**BURP!**” Mr Splat bounced in from the garden and leapt onto the table.

“**BURP!**” he said again, triumphantly, and spat a snail into the teapot. Olly noticed that the teapot was not full of tea. It was full of snails.

He peered into the saucepan. It did not hold baked beans. It held a crowd of centipedes and millipedes and earwigs, all wriggling and writhing inside it. Mr Splat had done his job very well indeed.

But for some reason, Great-Aunt Grindle did not seem to think so. At last she found her voice – and she *shrieked*.

“Get those odious objects out of here!”

“But Great-Aunt Grindle—”

“And that includes your pestilent pet!” Snatching up her broom, she tried to wallop Mr Splat.

“**BURP!**” said Mr Splat reproachfully, as he leapt away. He splatted over the slugs, and jumped out of the door.

Great-Aunt Grindle glared at Olly. “You’ll have no tea until you clear up this horrible mess! And do something about that terrible, useless toad!”

“He’s not a toad—” Olly began to say, but she thrust the broom at him and stamped out.

With a sigh, Olly swept up the slugs. He thought that it was most unfair. His pet wasn’t useless. He had done exactly what Great-Aunt Grindle asked.

But when Olly had told him to leave the slugs and snails for Great-Aunt Grindle, Mr Splat must have thought that she wanted to eat them herself. That was why he had carefully brought them into the kitchen and put them in the pans.

Olly dropped all the slugs and bugs and snails into the washing-up bowl. Then he carried them down the road to the park, where he emptied them out behind a bush.

As he plodded back, he met Mum coming home from work.

“Hallo, Olly!” she said, surprised. “What are you doing with that bowl?”

Olly explained. Mum listened thoughtfully.

“Oh dear,” she said. “But I can see why Great-Aunt Grindle sometimes gets annoyed with Mr Splat. She has to look after him all day.”

“He’s not hard to look after!” protested Olly. “He’s company for her!”

“Most people wouldn’t choose a frog for company,” Mum pointed out. “A frog isn’t like a dog.”

“Mr Splat’s just as clever as a dog,” said Olly.

“But Great-Aunt Grindle might not feel the same way.”

When they got home, Olly scrubbed out the pans before helping Mum cook tea. All the time, he was wondering how he could make Great-Aunt Grindle feel that Mr Splat was as clever and useful as a dog.

Surely there had to be a way...

“Yes! I’ve got it!” Olly cried.

Chapter Three

Mr Splat was just as clever as a dog. So why shouldn't he learn to do the things a dog could do?

He was already very good at jumping up at people – even if he did it with a **SPLAT** and a **BURP** rather than a **THUMP** and a **WOOF**. He just needed to learn a few other doggy tricks.

So, after tea, Olly took Mr Splat into the hall. He put the newspaper on the doormat.

“Fetch the paper!” he said.

Mr Splat looked at him.

“Like this,” said Olly, and he bent down and picked up the paper in his teeth. Then he crawled over to Mr Splat and dropped it. “Now you try.”

“**BURP!**” said Mr Splat. He grabbed the paper in his wide mouth, hopped over to Olly and put it down.

“Excellent!” said Olly. He picked up the paper.

“Urgh!” he said as he quickly dropped it again. Great-Aunt Grindle would not appreciate a soggy, dribbly newspaper.

It wasn't Mr Splat's fault. He couldn't help being rather damp; but Olly would have to think of something else.

He scratched his head. “Perhaps you could take Great-Aunt Grindle for walks in the park,” he said. “Let's try it out. We'll go for a little walk down the corridor.”

He began to walk. “Here, boy,” he said. “Heel!”

Mr Splat hopped after him. It quickly became clear that the frog was not good at walking. He was good at bouncing, leaping, jumping and splatting: but not walking.

And Great-Aunt Grindle would not want to go for a bounce and a splat in the park.

Olly pondered. What else did dogs do?

“I know!” he cried. “Of course! They guard houses. You can be our guard frog!”

“**BURP?**” said Mr Splat.

“If a big bad burglar comes to our house and tries to steal things,” Olly said, “then you have to leap up at him and splat him to the ground. Do you think you can do that?”

“**BURP!**”

“Okay. Let’s give it a go.” Olly went to the front door. “Pretend I’m a burglar, and I’m breaking in to rob the fridge and steal the sausage rolls. You have to jump on me and splat me.”

Olly went outside. Then he opened the front door again and came back in.

As he crept quietly down the corridor, he could see no sign of Mr Splat. Where was the frog? Maybe he hadn’t understood...

Olly tiptoed to the kitchen, opened the door and

SPLAT!!

Something large and damp and green bowled him right over on to his back. He looked up and saw Mr Splat sitting on his chest with a wide and wicked grin.

“Good frog!” said Olly. “That’s exactly right! That *will* impress Great-Aunt Grindle. You can be the world’s first guard frog. Now all we need is a real burglar. Then she’ll see how useful you are!”

Chapter Four

That night, Olly lay awake waiting for a burglar to come.

It was always happening in story books. A burglar would climb in through a window in a stripy shirt and a mask, and be foiled by a brave dog – or sometimes a cat.

But there didn't seem to be any burglars near Olly's house. This was a shame, because Mr Splat was ready for them. When Olly got up in the night to go to the bathroom, Mr Splat splatted him very successfully.

When Mum got up early the next morning to go to work, Olly heard a **SPLAT** and a shriek – so the guard frog had got her too. Quickly Olly jumped out of bed and put his pet into the garden before he could splat Great-Aunt Grindle.

Mr Splat lurked behind the garden gate, waiting for burglars. By the time Olly had finished breakfast, he had splatted the postman and the newspaper girl.

Great-Aunt Grindle was furious. "My letters are all muddy!" she cried. "So is my newspaper! And the postman told me off for having a dangerous frog!"

"He's not dangerous," protested Olly.

"No – he's just *useless*! Take him away!"

Olly picked up Mr Splat and wondered what to do with him.

It was Saturday. Olly had been hoping to play with his school-friend Eric. However, he decided that he had better do useful things with Mr Splat instead. And he had better do them outside, so as not to annoy Great-Aunt Grindle.

So first Olly took out all the rubbish. Mr Splat jumped in the bins to push the rubbish down. Bits of paper and tinfoil flew out of the bins. That was not terribly useful.

Next, Olly mowed the little lawn. Mr Splat jumped in the grass box. Grass went everywhere. That was not terribly useful either.

But then Olly remembered one very useful thing that he could do.

He had promised Great-Aunt Grindle that he would paint her garden fence. There was a pot of green paint and a brush ready in the shed. So Olly fetched them and began to paint.

Although Olly liked painting, there was an awful lot of fence.

“This is going to take forever!” he sighed. “Oh, help!”

“**BURP?**” said Mr Splat. And before Olly could stop him, he had jumped into the paint pot.

Then he jumped out again, dripping with green paint, and leapt at the garden fence.

SPLAT! He left a big, green, froggy shape.

SPLAT! SPLAT! SPLAT! He jumped at the fence again and again. Soon it was covered in big, green, froggy shapes.

“Oh, *help!*” said Olly again, before he realised that this was exactly what Mr Splat was trying to do.

He was doing his best to help Olly with the painting. And the fence actually looked quite interesting, so long as you liked frogs.

But Great-Aunt Grindle would not think it was interesting. She would be furious. Frantically Olly began to paint the spaces between the froggy shapes, before she could come outside and see the fence.

While he was busy painting, a voice called from the gate.

“Olly? Are you coming out to play?”

It was Eric, his friend from school. Eric began to open the gate. Mr Splat’s eyes gleamed.

“Wait!” yelled Olly. “Stop! That’s not a burglar—”

Too late. **SPLAT!**

Mr Splat took a huge, flying leap and bowled Eric over onto the grass. Then he sat on Eric’s chest and grinned a wide and wicked grin.

“Get off,” said Olly sternly.

Mr Splat hopped off, and Eric sat up. He wasn't hurt, just surprised. But when he scrambled to his feet, his face fell.

"Oh, no! My T-shirt! It's brand new!" he wailed. "Mum only gave it to me this morning."

Olly stared at Eric's white T-shirt in dismay. There was a big, green, froggy SPLAT right in the middle of it. He gulped.

"I'd better go home and change," said Eric unhappily. "Mum will go mad!"

"I'll come with you to explain," said Olly. "And I'll bring Mr Splat as proof, so that she knows it's not your fault."

But he felt very gloomy when he gazed at Eric's T-shirt. He was not looking forward to explaining this to Eric's Mum.

Mr Splat had failed as a guard frog. He had failed at slug-eating and paper-fetching and fence-painting. Eric's Mum was not the only person who would go mad at him.

So would Great-Aunt Grindle...

Chapter Five

Since Mr Splat was still covered in paint, Olly put him in a bucket to carry him to Eric's house.

As the two boys walked glumly down the road, they saw Matt from their class.

"Hey," said Matt. "Awesome T-shirt, Eric!"

"Is it?"

"It's cool," said Matt. "It looks a bit like that giant sausage-eating frog monster that came to school!"

"Does it?" said Eric, peering down at his T-shirt.

"Sure. It's great."

Moments later, they met two girls from their class.

"Wow! I like the T-shirt, Eric," Laura said.

"It looks amazing," added Kate. "Where did you get it? Did your Mum design it?"

"No, not this one," said Eric.

"That's a shame. I'd ask her for one like it, if she had," said Laura.

As they walked on, Olly felt puzzled. "Why did they say that about your Mum?"

"My Mum's a clothes designer," answered Eric. "There she is, outside our house. *Hey, Mum!*" he called.

Eric's Mum was carrying a shopping bag. She stopped and stared at him.

"Eric! Your new T-shirt! Whatever happened to it?"

"Sorry. It was my fault," said Olly quickly. "And my pet frog's."

Eric's Mum was still staring. "It's— quite stupendous!"

"Really?" said Eric.

"Come and look in a mirror."

She led them into the house. When Eric looked in the mirror, he exclaimed,

“Hey, that *is* cool. I’ve been splatted by a giant frog monster!”

“Did you say your frog did that?” asked Eric’s Mum.

“Yes. Here he is,” said Olly, holding out his bucket. “He’s called Mr Splat. But watch out – he’s still covered in green paint.”

“**BURP**,” said Mr Splat politely.

“Olly, do you think your frog would mind being covered in a different sort of paint?” asked Eric’s Mum. “The sort of paint that you can use on clothes?”

Mr Splat gave her a wide and wicked grin. “**BURP!**” he said.

“I don’t think he’d mind,” said Olly.

“Good!” she said. “Because I have a plan for Mr Splat...”

Chapter Six

As it turned out, Mr Splat was delighted to be covered in paint of any sort.

He was even more delighted to go **SPLAT** on the white T-shirts that Eric's Mum spread out on the grass for him.

And Eric's Mum was delighted with the froggy shapes he printed on each T-shirt.

She spent the afternoon with Mr Splat, while Olly and Eric played football in the park.

When they returned, the washing line held a row of newly-splatted T-shirts. No two were the same: each had a slightly different froggy shape. On every T-shirt, Eric's Mum had written **SPLAT!**

"Wow," said Eric. "Those are quite something."

"Aren't they great?" his Mum agreed. "Olly, I'd like to ask a favour. Could you lend me Mr Splat two days a week?"

"You want to borrow him?"

"I want to hire him. I'll look after him very carefully," she said.

"What does he eat?"

"Mostly sausage rolls," said Olly.

"Fine. He can rest in our garden pond when he's not printing T-shirts."

Olly looked at the garden pond. Mr Splat was floating in there lazily. He seemed to be perfectly at home.

"Would you like that, Mr Splat?" asked Olly.

"BURP," said Mr Splat.

"All right then," Olly said.

"Good! Here you are," said Eric's Mum, and to Olly's great surprise, she handed him two banknotes.

"Payment for Mr Splat's fine work," she explained. "I'll pay him the same amount twice a week."

So Olly went home with Mr Splat in his bucket and money in his pocket.

Great-Aunt Grindle frowned at him when he came in.

“Your mother and I have only just finished painting that fence!” she scolded. “It was covered in messy splats! Thanks to that useless frog of yours, we’ve had no time to get anything for tea.”

“That’s all right,” said Olly. “I’ll buy us fish and chips.” And he took the money out of his pocket.

“What’s that?” snapped Great-Aunt Grindle.

“Wherever did you get that, Olly?” asked Mum. “Have you got a job?”

“No – but Mr Splat has! Two days a week with Eric’s Mum. So now you won’t have to look after him so much, Aunt Grindle.”

Great-Aunt Grindle looked astounded. “What? That *frog’s* got a *job*?”

“Painting T-shirts. He’s a very clever frog,” said Olly proudly, “and a very useful frog as well.”

“He certainly is,” said Mum. “Isn’t he, Aunt Grindle?”

“Well... I suppose he has his uses after all,” admitted Great-Aunt Grindle. “And I must say that fish and chips would be very nice. I haven’t had them for ages!”

“I’ll go and buy them now,” said Olly. “Fish and chips all round?”

“Yes, please,” said Mum and Great-Aunt Grindle eagerly.

“**BURP!**” said the bucket.

“Oops!” said Olly. “Sorry, Mr Splat. Three lots of fish and chips – and a giant sausage roll!”

The End

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You can find the first two books about Mr Splat, *Bad Frog* and *Bad Frog at School*, along with lots of other free stories at www.megamousebooks.com.