

THE CURSE OF THE VON KRUMPELSTEINS AND OTHER HORRORS: CONTENTS OF VOLUME I

John Morressy

In these times When Trilogies Rule the Earth, John Morressy has kindly done us the favor of synopsisizing volume one. Once you finish, you'll be able to fake your way through any cocktail party conversation or editorial meeting. Just remember to smile and nod a lot.

CHAPTER ONE: IN WHICH our hero, with his ragtag band of outcasts, misfits, undesirables, bums, and loafers, sets out on the quest for the Magic Thing, despite the chilling prophecy of the Flat Man. A cloaked figure is seen on the road to Castle Krumpelstein, bearing what appears to be a large lump of tofu. The meeting between Mme. Brissard and the infamous Contessa Di Pravity ends in tragedy following an interminable discussion of free will. Norman reveals the truth about the missing biscuits. A brief history of the chin, with suggestions for its use.

Chapter Two: In which a mysterious stranger arrives in Doyle's Furnace, Ohio, and reveals the six secrets of instant hair loss. Ricardo and his sister outwit the Slattery twins, save the orphanage, and get Mrs. Zapinski to the Sorcerer's Institute just in time for George's

transformation. Inside tips on forging Uncle Harry's signature, building a handy low-cost particle accelerator, investing in successful children, and turning that dank root cellar into useful attic space, all for under ten dollars or the amount on Line 44a, whichever is less.

Chapter Three: In which Sherman Tank, former Agent C21 of SLUSH, is recalled to service when a TX2D-71B/3(a) manned by renegade acronymists penetrates BAMNORDOPSIMFAT security and threatens the meeting of WESNADSUBLIFDIPCOM ministers at CAPCOMSAC HQ, bringing the world to the brink of tears. The little lost kitten is found under Mrs. Tureen's porch. Mafouz delights the sultan with tales of The Magic Eraser and wins freedom for himself and Selima, fairest flower of Zonguldak (Pop. 36,874) in time for this once-in-a-lifetime vacation in the Islets of Langerhans, with suggestions on what to pack and whom to leave behind. The twelve Murphys return to life, having lost all interest in the ukulele. A simple five-minute quiz will help you determine which of your neighbors are dangerous sociopaths and which are harmless loonies.

Chapter Four: In which our hero is born, thanks to a generous grant from the Ringling Brothers' Foundation. Scenes from his early life, including the adventure of the seventh teddy bear, the enigma of the laughing uncle, and the story of Eleanor the purple crayon lady. Pjmq, Grand Wooxxo of Glippiland, disappears on the third day of the Festival of Tiny Plastic Spoons, and the Soft People are suspected of plotting mischief. After a pursuit spanning three continents, D. D. "Spats" Larsen is rendered helpless by Anita de Groin, Special Operative of the Women's Defense League. Timmy and Tommy go undercover and stay there, to everyone's relief.

Chapter Five: In which Teddy begins school, unaware that he alone holds the key to the secret of the Whistling Futon, and that the Wet Men are already on his trail. In a carefully planned move, Edna reveals the Nine Laws of Spontaneity. Desmond confronts the problem of those unsightly yellow patches on the lawn while our hero prepares a delicious meal for twelve for under two hundred dollars, including wine and all gratuities. All major credit cards are accepted and quickly earn the respect of their neighbors.

Chapter Six: In which Kate recounts the legend of the Gumbley girls and their magic hair dryer and reveals the Sevenfold Way of Flossing. An excerpt from Chapter LXXVI of High Wind in the Gabardines, a thrilling tale of adventure, romance, and gastric discomfort aboard a British cruise ship in the Napoleonic era, with a colorful insert map showing all duty-free ports. With the help of the pookah, Irma discovers the missing

biscuits and clears Norman from suspicion, to the chagrin of Larsen's henchmen. Jean-Pierre delivers a lengthy paper on the nature of reality before leaving to inform Prince Wolfgang of his bootmaker's treachery. Maude arrives at the State School for the Plain, where she wins the coveted award for Most Astonishing Potholder.

Chapter Seven: In which little Grumbeletta encounters Prince Wolfgang and dances the dance of the disoriented milkmaids. He is enchanted by her grace and beauty, but when his comrades taunt him about chasing milkmaids, he rides into the forest, laughing callously. Little Grumbeletta does an exhausting series of fouettes and expires. The Omadhaun of Space escapes the neutron storm, dodges an unfriendly asteroid, and lands safely on Witherworld, where the entire crew cheerfully undergoes a sex change. Off the Irish coast, Harry and Oliver confront the Spanish fleet in the climactic battle of the war. On the French coast, the light gleams and is gone. So is Walter.

Chapter Eight: In which our hero meets his match and is not impressed. Little Grumbeletta appears to Prince Wolfgang in a dream, accompanied by the spirits of angry shepherdesses who suffer severe lower back pain from attempting to do the dance of the disoriented milkmaids without proper training. Terence subjects them to a long analysis of the bond market. The school bully kidnaps the faculty on the eve of Open School Day and demands as ransom twelve useful tips on window treatments. A mysterious telegram arrives. Little Tim loses it, but it is recovered with the aid of Mitzi Pizzicato, plucky second violinist of the Histrionic Philharmonic. A thing of beauty is a joy for thirty days, with no obligation to purchase. Lamont reveals his true identity to Paula, who then reveals her true identity to Morton, who has no true identity and complains bitterly to Edna, who runs off with Walter, who has just returned.

Chapter Nine: In which the Nose Fiend of Dusseldorf is brought to bay by Inspector Flimme of the Sureti after a breathless chase through the sewers of Paris and a deadly game of Hide-the-Monkey in the upper levels of the Eiffel Tower. Jane returns home after an eleven years' absence to find the dishes, and Michael, lying unwashed in the sink. The spirit of a pharmacist appears to Betty and Bobby and reveals the way to the enchanted car wash. They find themselves in the Kingdom of the Fubbies, where they learn the importance of brewer's yeast in a healthy diet, and little else. Morton discovers his true identity and puts it back untouched.

Chapter Ten: In which Belle Bottom, sweetheart of the fleet, rejects the advances of Ensign Benson and enters a nunnery, where she records a hit

single. Pjmq reappears. About to reveal the reason for his disappearance, he disappears before he can speak. Unable to sleep, hunt, or button his doublet, Prince Wolfgang slips from his castle disguised as a portmanteau and makes his way to America, concealing in his lining the family recipe for low-calorie tofu Black Forest cake, known as the Curse of the Von Krumpelsteins. With the aid of their Swiss Army toothpick, Pierce and Lance overcome their guards and escape from the alien spaceship with convincing proof of Fermat's last theorem. The Hardy Boys meet the Gibson Girls. Together they organize a musical to raise funds for the new gym. Jim absconds with the funds and three of the Gibson Girls, but they get no farther than Doyle's Furnace, Ohio, before there is a falling out in which Nellie Gibson sprains her wrist. As a result, her sisters marry identical twins named Donald.

Chapter Eleven: In which beautiful Magda Spilova, penniless but proud, arrives at Ellis Island on a cold February morning in 1903 to begin a saga of four generations of tiresome people, a tale of greed, wealth, and haute couture soon to be an endless mini-series. Jim comes out of the closet to watch. Ernestine goes in, turning the cramped, gloomy space into a cheerful mother-in-law apartment for under ninety-nine dollars (utilities and mother-in-law not included). Tragically mistaking Custer's last stand for Fermat's last theorem, Pierce is lanced and Lance is pierced. Jean shares her ten exciting uses for sun-dried sherbet and an examination of its role in gaining, losing, and lifting weight. Maude, now an internationally famous designer of celebrity potholders, gives it all up to become a medical missionary to the golfers of Palm Springs.

Chapter Twelve: In which Cleophas Wohoon, pampered darling of the Old Confederacy, rejects the honorable love of Dewey Lee and dedicates her life to fainting. Cindi and Luke capture a serial jaywalker and despite the obstructionist plotting of the McGrungy brothers, discover the true purpose of Steve. Larry Church and Tom Perdue uncover startling new information about Marcel Proust's addiction to cross-country tea dunking.

Chapter Thirteen: In which a mysterious aloe plant appears in Doyle's Furnace, Ohio, and passes itself off as three of the Slattery twins. Startling revelations about the people down the street and their inner tube collection. Unknown to our hero, Prince Wolfgang returns to the pencil factory and makes a series of long-distance calls to European tofu suppliers. Under interrogation, Colonel Asaki confesses to freeloading.

Chapter Fourteen: In which the curse of the Von Krumpelsteins is accidentally unleashed by Ramjet Singh and turns out to be a blessing in

disguise as Aunt Martha. The genuine will is found in Uncle Harry's trunk, along with the missing aerialist's costume. Magda rejects the advances of Prince Wolfgang. Possible origins of the unpleasant odor in Lord Henry's orangery are examined and immediately discarded. The art show is a smashing success; Floyd wins the scholarship, but turns it down in order to marry Hester, who loves Florian. But Florian loves Lorraine, who loves this easy recipe for a delicious fudge cake that you can make in just three minutes with nothing but salt, flour, and loss of appetite.

Chapter Fifteen: In which Desirie and Arnold are reunited and discover the secret of true love, which they will make available to readers who send in a stamped, self-addressed envelope crammed with used twenties. Various Murphys marry, emigrate to Australia, dye their ham appear on afternoon television to discuss their intimate problems with strangers, go mad, run for local office, and study the techniques of successful cartooning. Pjmq reappears once again; he is demoted to Assistant Woxxo and as he is being given a severe warning against further disappearances, disappears. Dennis loses his memory, but Alastair finds it before his mother returns with the disgusting Mister Turlopp, and the evening is an unexpected success. Gifford faints upon hearing the name of his new neighbor. Despite Marshal Logan's order, the boys from the Circle B ride into Tombstone and find the Slattery twins waiting. To everyone's astonishment, Mr. Lummison decides to paint his garage.

Chapter Sixteen: In which, despite a crick in his neck, a flea in his ear, a lump in his throat, and butterflies in his stomach, our hero confronts a dog in the manger, a pig in a blanket, a bird in the hand, a fly in the ointment, a bat in the belfry, the head of a pin, a hair of the dog, the eye of a needle, a nose for news, the teeth of the storm, a chest of drawers, the heart of the matter, the arm of the law, the hand of fate, a leg of the journey, the shank of the evening, the foot of the bed, the butt of the joke, a knock at the door, the voice of the people, the song of the lark, the top of the morning, the middle of the road, the side of the angels, the back of me hand, the bottom of the barrel, a piece of the action, a night at the opera, a day at the races, a weekend in the country, the height of the ridiculous, the depth of despair, a wall of silence, a table of contents, the chair of the committee, a bed of roses, a window of opportunity, a bag of tricks, a box on the ear, a train of thought, the ship of state, the man of the hour, the news of the day, the book of the month, the woman of the year, the crime of the century, Jack in the pulpit and Johnny on the Spot. He girds his loins, squares his shoulders, and with a smile on his lips, a glint in his eye, his feet on the ground, his head in the clouds, his back to the wall, a song in his heart and a spring in his step, puts his nose to the grindstone and

lets George do it.

Chapter Seventeen: In which the wicked are punished and the good rewarded, not without many complaints in triplicate on Form 664D/2 filed at this office no later than closing time on August 31. Rain falls on the parched soil, the snows of winter melt, the song of the lark is heard in the land, and rivers run to the sea, causing floods in low-lying areas and dense early morning fog along the Interstate. In a stirring speech from the gallows, Gaspard reveals the simple phrase that will unlock your hidden psychic powers, avoid costly furnace repairs, and end unsightly mustache droop. Heroes come marching home to a grateful nation. Missing heirs and wealthy uncles turn up unexpectedly at the crucial hour. Lovers are united. Enemies are reconciled. Neighbors drop in for coffee and delicious cinnamon buns made from Claudia's secret recipe. The Curse of the Von Krumpelsteins is lifted at last, revealing twelve exciting window treatments missing since Open School Day. Children are reconciled to weeping parents who had hoped to be rid of them. Drab living rooms are redecorated at a cost to fit every budget. The Magic Thing is returned to its rightful home, humans and gnomes join hands in friendship, and the Tooth Fairy is crowned. Sinners repent, criminals confess, poor posture is corrected, ancient wrongs are righted, lost reputations are restored, and leaking roofs are repaired. Healthful low-calorie tofu Black Forest cake is now available to all, thanks to a miraculous new form of cookware developed for use on uninhabitable planets. Ships survive the storm and come safely into port; Albert's teeth are whiter than ever; airliners land with a spunky flight attendant at the controls; trains pull into the station amid cheering crowds, the Omadhaun of Space returns to Earth packed with tasteful gifts for the waiting crowds, the roses bloom once more in Mrs. Humbleton's garden, and storm windows open at the touch of a finger, making them easier to clean than Uncle Henry. Rex escapes from the pound and arrives at Timothy's bedside, restoring the child's will to whine.

Yet significant questions remain unanswered. Will our hero accept the challenge of Glenda of the Three Thumbs and join the quest for the Other Magic Thing, or will he finish school, marry Ida, and manage the family convenience store? Is Ralph really Sir Charles's long-lost grandmother? Can Emily ever forgive Rudolph's indiscretion with the gladioli? Will Tiffany and Dawn make the cheerleader squad? And what about Eugene and the thumbtacks? Can the little food processor survive the onslaught of the nutmegs? Will they love you in June as they do in May? Is commercial real estate the investment opportunity of the decade? Does it really suit your active lifestyle? How did the murderer escape from the locked billiard

room of the Slumbottom mansion six years before the crime was committed? Are you getting enough fiber, exercise, attention, and quality time with your budgies? Will Jack and Reggie lead the relief column to the lost oasis of Sidi-el-Shabbi in time to save Raul and Abdul? Will old Ad Burful's rainmaking machine save the crops? Is there intelligent life downtown? Should you see your doctor, or is it only gas?

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Administrivia:

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