



TWO FREE  
STORIES BY  
ALAN STOTT



Orlando



Channing



Tyrone



Beyonsay

# THOSE KIDS NEXT DOOR!



Sylvester



Arthur



Ma



Margaret

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# CITY ECHO

## *The voice of the people*

PROBLEM FAMILIES. COUNCIL MUST ACT  
FAST. PROTESTS OUTSIDE TOWN HALL.

There were protests today over the way the council has handled certain problem families in the city. Hundreds of protestors travelled into the city centre with home-made placards to show the council that more should be done to tackle the problem.

### **NOISY NEIGHBOURS**

The huge crowd of people vented their anger for most of the day outside the Town Hall. Many had come in early to try to discuss the situation with councillors as they arrived for the council meeting. They were protesting about noisy neighbours, nosy neighbours, damage to property, bullying and name-calling.

Many councillors avoided the protestors by sneaking into the back entrance of the Council House.

## RESIGN

There were shouts of ‘Sort it out or resign!’ ‘Get a grip!’ ‘End this fiasco!’ ‘Protect innocent citizens.’ ‘Down with nuisances!’ ‘We don’t like problem families.’ ‘Get this sorted, *now!*’ ‘We don’t like troublemakers.’



The shouting and protesting continued non-stop throughout the day until the Lord Mayor, Mrs Dulcie Tones, came out onto the balcony overlooking the square and addressed the people. She told them that the council was taking the matter very seriously and were working on a plan to sort it out.

## CRACKDOWN

‘There will be a crackdown,’ she told the crowd. ‘We are not going to take this lying down. We are working hard and doing everything in our power to eradicate this scourge. Trouble-makers *will* be

brought to justice.' Most of the crowd began to cheer and clap and there were shouts of 'About time too!'

'I'll believe it when I see it,' said Mrs Mona Lotte. Her friend, Florence Mildew said, 'There's too much of this sort of trouble nowadays. I just hope the crackdown works.'

REPORTER VERITY RUSSELL



## EggstrOrdinary Pigeons

**I**'m fed up with those pigeons, Ava,' Florence Mildew declared. She was leaning on the fence talking to Mrs Grumpold. They had been neighbours and friends for thirty-two years. 'They have recently started to sit on my bedroom windowsill above my front door.'

She pushed her scarf up.

**UNDERNEATH THE SCARF, SHE HAD LOADS OF HAIR CURLERS.**

Ava could not remember a time when Florence did *not* wear those curlers. It was as if she was always getting ready for some important date and had to have

her hair looking marvellous. But she never went anywhere important!

‘They keep pooing and it drops down on the floor outside my front door.’ She pushed her scarf up once more. ‘I slipped in that poo yesterday and nearly fell over and did myself a nasty,’ she said indignantly. ‘There are six pigeons all in a line. I don’t know why they sit there all day pooing.’

Orlando and Sylvester Shufflett were on the other side of the fence with their brother Tyrone, and sister Channing. They were playing cricket. Channing loved cricket but Sylvester was the best batsman. Orlando overheard the conversation and **HISSED** at his brothers and sister. ‘Shh! Listen. She is talking about somebody pooing!’

They all laughed and sat down by the fence listening.

‘Are you feeding them, Flo?’ Mrs Grumpold asked. ‘Because that will encourage them. You know that.’

‘Of course I’m not feeding them. Do I look *that* stupid?’ she said crossly, pushing up her scarf again.

Ava Grumpold studied her friend thinking, *Yes, you do look that stupid!* but decided not to say it.

‘Well they must have a reason for sitting there. They are not having choir practice are they?’ she said laughing.

‘It’s not a laughing matter, Ava. They could poo on me when I go out!’

The three boys *giggled*. ‘The poo would get stuck in her curlers,’ Orlando blurted and little Tyrone thought it was *very* funny.

‘I’m frightened in case I leave the house and they all poo *together!*’ This made both of the ladies laugh and the Shufflett children were now hysterical.

‘They sit facing the road, then, when they want a poo, they turn around and dangle their bums over the edge and down it plops! On *my* path!’ Florence looked dismayed and did not know whether to laugh or cry.

Ava HOOTED like an owl and was laughing wildly now and, in the next door garden, Orlando was having a great time. ‘Plopping poos,’ he said. ‘They are poo plopping pigeons having a proper poo plopping festival.’ They all laughed loudly.

‘It’s a Poo Fest,’ said Sylvester and they all joined in. ‘Poo Fest, Poo Fest.’

‘What am I going to do, Ava?’ Florence asked looking exasperated.

‘Have you tried opening your window and scaring them away?’

‘Yes, and they keep coming back.’

Orlando whispered loudly behind his hand, ‘She’s only got to stand near the window and stare at them to scare them!’ He pulled a face and they laughed. ‘She would make a good scarecrow!’

‘Do you think I should ring the council and see if they can do anything about them, Ava?’ Mrs Mildew asked despairingly.

‘Well, it’s either that or put your umbrella up every time you leave the house!’ Ava suggested with another giggle.

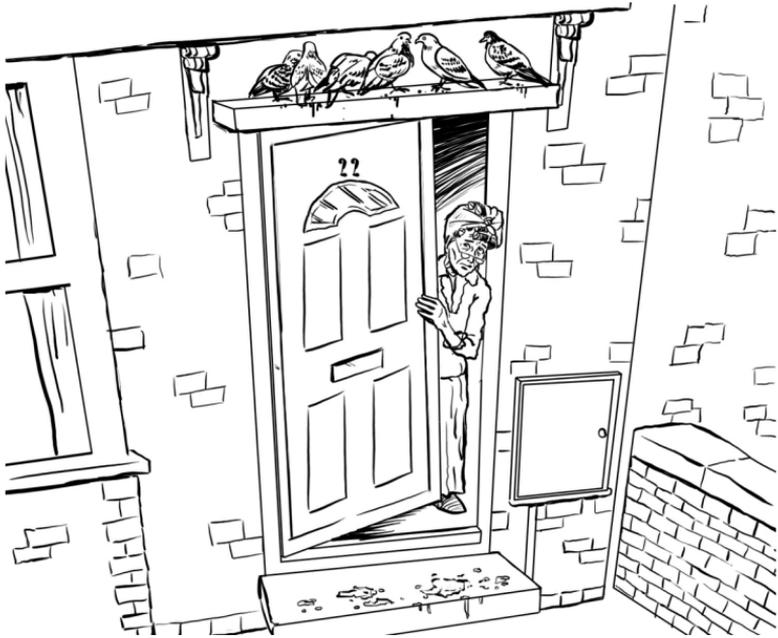
Ma called them in for lunch and RELUCTANTLY they went in.

Afterwards, Orlando and Sylvester went for a walk to the park. As they went past Mrs Mildew’s house, she appeared on the doorstep, nervously looking upwards. ‘Hey, lads, would you be kind and go to the shop for

me and I'll give you fifty pence?' she called.

'Yes,' they answered together. 'What do you want?'

'I need some eggs and a loaf of bread.'



They walked down the path to the front door staring up at the windowsill, hoping not to get POOED on. The six pigeons sat looking down at them. Carefully, Orlando took the money and a bag from Mrs Mildew and they ran back up the path just in time to miss **TWO PLOPS!**

\*

On the way back from the shop, they began talking about the pigeons. ‘Why don’t we scare them off for her?’ Orlando suggested. ‘It’s a real shame. She is so fed up with them.’

‘That’s a good idea, but *how?*’ Sylvester queried.

‘I’m not sure. Maybe we could make loud noises.’

‘Or use a stick to knock them off,’ Sylvester offered.

‘It would need to be a very long stick!’ Orlando pointed out.

They arrived back at Mrs Mildew’s house and stood halfway down the path, looking up at the pigeons. The pigeons **stared** back at them.

‘Why don’t we throw stones at them?’ Sylvester said, and picked up a whopper from the garden.

‘No, don’t be silly! You might break the window if you miss!’

‘I won’t miss. I’m a good thrower.’

‘OK, so you will *injure* the pigeon. That’s *not* a good idea, Sylvester. We need something soft that will scare them, but won’t hurt them or break the window.’ He began to look around for something suitable.

Sylvester had the answer and was beginning to open the box of eggs, **GRINNING**.

Orlando turned and saw what he was doing. 'Great idea!' he shouted and Sylvester launched the first egg.

It **SPLATTED** harmlessly on the wall by the side of the sill and the pigeons looked down at them smugly.

'Bad luck, Sylvie,' he murmured, knowing that would wind him up.

'*Sylvester!*' yelled Sylvester **LAUNCHING** the second egg. It soared between two pigeons and smashed against the window. One pigeon turned around and dropped a plop as if to say 'is that your best shot?'

Orlando encouraged him to greater accuracy. 'Go on, you can do this,' he said.

Sylvester gave the next egg his full concentration taking deliberate aim. But it **smashed** against the sill that the pigeons were sitting on. 'Aargh!' he screamed in frustration, 'missed again!'

He threw two more eggs, but they both crashed against the window and drizzled down as a gooey mess! 'Aargh!' he screamed again in frustration.

He carefully picked up the last egg, calmed himself

and took a deep breath.

*'This time, I'll get you!'* he yelled in anger and hurled the egg at the two pigeons in the middle. It hit one of the pigeons full on the chest and shattered. They all flapped up and away into the sky. Sylvester made a high fist and pulled it down to his chin powerfully.

**'Yes-s-s-s-s!'**

'Great shot, Sylvester!' Orlando yelled and slapped him on the back.

There were no pigeons on the windowsill now, so they knocked the door confidently, and Mrs Mildew opened it anxiously, looking upwards.

'Don't worry, Mrs Mildew, we got rid of the pigeons for you. They won't poo on you again,' Orlando said jubilantly.

'How do you know?' she asked. 'What did you do?'

'Come out and have a look,' Orlando announced proudly. 'They are *gone*.' He beckoned for her to come out.

'It's OK. It's safe now,' he said reassuringly.

Slowly and hesitantly Florence Mildew came out of her front door and looked up to see that all the pigeons were, in fact, gone. A nervy smile began to appear on her face, but when she saw the mess all over her window, and the wall, and the windowsill she put her hand to her mouth. ‘What have you done with my eggs?!’ she exclaimed.

The boys looked at each other, dropped the bag with the bread and ran.

Later that day, Mrs Mildew called at the house of **THOSE KIDS NEXT DOOR** to have a word with the children’s mother.

**I**n the city the Shufflett family had been crowded into small houses for as long as they could each remember.

So, when they arrived at Budleigh Cottage, in the middle of nowhere, with its five bedrooms, massive garden, pond, woods and no moaning neighbours, they could not believe their luck.

But, it is no surprise that when trying to choose bedrooms, these pranksters could not discuss sensibly and calmly which room would be best for each of them and they manage to cause total mayhem...



Beat It!  
It's Mine!

**I**t was chaos in the Shufflett house. Everyone – except Ma and baby Beyonsay – was **shouting**, **arguing**, carrying toys and games, trying to stick up posters, and moving bedding and pillows from one room to another. They bumped into each other in doorways and on the landing, then argued and shouted some more!

Channing began moving her stuff into one of the rooms, only for Orlando to move it out and put it into another. ‘*Orlando!*’ she screamed, ‘Put that back, it’s mine and I’m having *that room!*’

‘No, you’re not. Beat it! It’s mine!’ he yelled back.

‘No it isn’t,’ Channing insisted. ‘I saw it first, so it’s *mine!* You were downstairs sorting through your box

of toys.'

While the twins were having this argument, Sylvester took the chance to move *his* toys into the room instead.

'You can get those out of there!' roared Orlando when he saw what Sylvester was doing. 'That's *my* room!'

'It's *mine!*' Channing boomed.

Tyrone appeared on the landing carrying his Teddy bear. 'Which room is mine? I want to put Teddy to bed. He's getting really tired.'

Everyone stopped to look at him, stared for several seconds in TOTAL SILENCE, and then carried on shouting at each other.

Tyrone quietly went back downstairs to join Ma and Beyonsay in the kitchen.

'Look!' shouted Orlando. '*I'm the eldest so I get to pick first.*'

'Only by seven minutes,' Channing yelled back. 'That's got *nothing* to do with this. You always say the same thing when you want your own way.'

'Yeah, always the same excuse,' said Sylvester,

joining in.

‘What’s it got to do with you, Silly?’ Orlando said in his best mocking voice. ‘Silly’ was one of three nicknames he had for Sylvester.

‘My name’s Sylvester *not* Silly!’ Sylvester shouted back.

‘*Silly! Silly! Silly!*’ said Orlando, knowing it would wind him up even more.

‘It’s *not* Silly,’ countered Sylvester and he launched himself at Orlando. The two of them fell to the floor and began wrestling on the landing.

Channing seized the opportunity, stepped over the two writhing bodies and carried her things back into the room. ‘Stupid boys!’ she murmured.

In the kitchen Ma had finished preparing lunch. She could hear the noise coming from upstairs but had decided to ignore it. **SHE WAS IN CHARGE.** She knew exactly who was going where.

A loud **BUMP** forced her to abandon the kitchen.

‘Right! Orlando, Channing, Sylvester, get down here *now!* Your lunch is ready!’

Nothing happened. The silence was broken by the

sound of the two wrestlers, writhing and grunting and hanging over the top step of the staircase. They were perilously close to rolling down it.

‘I don’t want to have to count to three!’ Ma shouted, using her best Sergeant Major voice.

‘One...’

The fight broke up immediately.

‘Two...’

The two boys flew downstairs.

‘Three.’

And into the kitchen, with Channing right behind them.

‘Orlando, sit there,’ ordered Ma, pointing at a seat at the end of the table. She was in no mood for any answering back. ‘Channing you go there and Sylvester, sit there. I don’t want to hear a sound from *any* of you. *Understand?!*’ She had that look in her eye again.

Lunch was beans-on-toast, fruit juice and yoghurt. Nobody dared speak. They ate silently as Ma fed baby Beyonsay.

Soon they had finished their food and Ma said, ‘Channing, wash the dishes. Orlando, wipe them dry

and Sylvester, put them away in the cupboard above the breakfast bar. Are we all clear on that?’

‘Yes, Ma,’ they answered in unison.

‘Good. When you’re done, come upstairs. I’ll be waiting in the first room that you come to.’

‘Yes, Ma.’

Five minutes later they piled upstairs. The first room was a big room and Ma was sitting on one of the beds. ‘I’ve already decided which will be your rooms. Aren’t I kind?’ she said. ‘*This* will be Sylvester and Tyrone’s room. You can see that it’s nice and big and Raj has separated the two bunk beds into single beds. What do you think, lads?’

‘I love it,’ Tyrone answered. ‘Can I bring my toys in here now, Mum?’

‘No, not yet. What about you, Sylvester? You’re very quiet. Do *you* like this room?’

‘Yes, Mum,’ he said walking across the room. ‘I love this big window. I can look out over the fields from here. It’s a great view.’

‘Two satisfied customers,’ said Ma, clapping her

hands together.

They moved on to the next room. This was the one Channing and Orlando had been arguing about. ‘Now this room will be...’

She paused, just like they do on the television programmes, looking from one to the other. She counted to **TEN** in her head, dragging out the tension until the twins looked like they were going to **BURST**.

They all looked at her in anticipation.

‘Will be...’

More silence. Channing was sure she could hear a clock ticking somewhere.

‘...Orlando’s.’

Orlando punched the air. ‘Yessssss!’ he shouted. ‘Thanks, Ma.’ He looked at Channing and smirked. He had got his own way again! Channing pulled a **sulky face**.

‘*Because,*’ Ma continued, ‘he is the *eldest* by seven minutes.’

‘Ugh!’ muttered Channing, folding her arms angrily.

Orlando was absolutely made up. ‘Fantastic!’ he shouted, grinning from ear to ear. He looked like he

was going to do a somersault.

Ma quickly led the way to the next room. 'This will be *your* room, Channing,' she said.

Channing was about to complain how dreadfully **UNFAIR** this was:

How *she* never gets to choose;

How Orlando gets *his* own way all the time;

How *he's* a boy and *she's* a girl;

How *girls* always have to do as they're told but *boys* can do what they want,

How *boys* always get their own way,

When Ma said, 'Look, Channing, this room has got its own bathroom. You can have a bath in peace without anyone banging on the door.'

TOTAL SILENCE!

Everyone froze, spellbound.

Suddenly they all rushed to the bathroom to take a look. There was not only a bath in there, but a shower as well. Channing was *mesmerised* and the others could only stare in disbelief.

Orlando could not decide whether he had been out-smarted or cheated. He was thinking *this is unfair!*

He wanted to **WHINGE** and **MOAN** at Ma, but realised that he had not noticed the bathroom in the bedroom. He had missed it and it was his own fault. He chewed on his tongue and decided to say nothing – at least he had the room he wanted. It was the room he had been fighting for and it was the biggest. *Do I really need my own bathroom?* All in all he was happy, although a little miffed that he had not got *his* own bathroom.

‘It’s called an *en-suite* (pronounced *on-sweet*),’ Ma pointed out.

‘An on sweet,’ Sylvester repeated. ‘What’s it got to do with sweets?’ But no one was listening to him because Ma was on the move again. She led the way to her own bedroom, ‘And this is my room,’ she announced, ‘with baby Beyonsay for the time being. When she gets too big for her cot, she can move into the little room, next to the family bathroom. That’s the one for you boys, OK?’

‘A family bathroom?’ shrieked Sylvester and everyone raced along the landing. With much grunting, pushing and shoving of arms and legs, Orlando fell into

the room first. **It was massive.** There was a bath *and* a separate shower, a sink and *two* toilets.

‘*Two* bogs!’ Orlando yelled, fascinated. ‘*Two* bogs!’ he repeated for emphasis.

‘We’ve got *two* toilets,’ Tyrone said to his Teddy bear and Channing began to smile.

‘No you haven’t,’ said Ma.

‘No,’ grinned Channing, ‘you haven’t got *two* loos because that’s not a loo,’ she laughed, pointing to the smaller one. ‘There’s no seat!’

‘Oh yeah,’ said Sylvester, looking dumbfounded.

‘It’s a bidet (pronounced beeday),’ said Ma, as she turned to leave.

‘What’s a beeday, Ma?’ Sylvester called out to her.

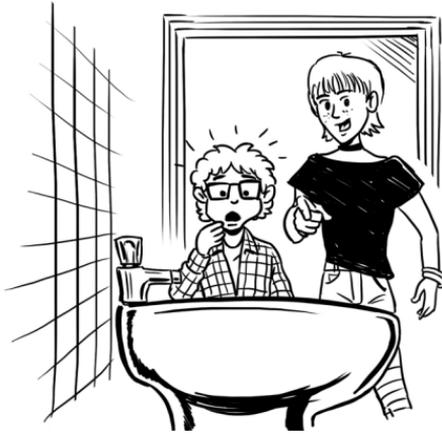
‘Don’t worry about it now,’ she called back. ‘I’ll explain later.’

‘What’s a beeday, Orlando?’ he asked again.

‘Not a clue,’ Orlando replied and set off after Ma, followed by Tyrone.

‘What’s a beeday, Channing,’ he persisted.

‘It’s where you wash your bum!’ she replied and left too.



Sylvester stood looking at the bidet, open-mouthed for several seconds, **DISBELIEVINGLY**, until he lost interest and joined the others to check out the final bedroom that was to become Beyonsay's when she gets bigger.

**AT THE PREVIOUS HOUSE THE THREE BOYS SHARED ONE BEDROOM.** and Channing's room was so small that there was only room for her bed. Her clothes had to be kept in a wardrobe on the landing.

This house was a dream house. **A MANSION.** It was enormous, with rooms everywhere! What a fantastic time they had unpacking and sorting their rooms. This was going to be a great house to live in.

Ma took a few moments to watch the children

sorting out their bedrooms. Everyone was happy and she, too, had an en-suite. She had never seen so many bathrooms in one house!

After a very **blissful** two hours, Ma called them all down for tea and, as they gathered around the table, Channing asked, 'Has anyone seen a school around here?'

'I haven't,' Sylvester answered. 'Have you, Orlando?'

'Can't say I have,' he replied, grinning, 'but, then again, I haven't been looking. It's not number one on my list of places to visit around here.'

'No school!' Tyrone said to Teddy. 'There's no school around here!'

'Brilliant!' said a very pleased Orlando. 'This place gets better all the time.'

'I *want* to go to school!' Channing announced petulantly.

'You *would*,' snapped Orlando cantankerously.

'Ma, tell them there is a school here. There *is* a school around here, isn't there?' Channing enquired.

'Well, I'm not sure,' said Ma, 'but don't worry, the

school board man is visiting us tomorrow at ten o'clock to explain everything. Apparently, it's all different here in the countryside.'

## *About the Author*

Alan Stott went to school in Birmingham where he was the smallest kid in his year group but still managed to play in goal for the school football team for five years! He wanted to play in midfield but at the trials he never had the chance. So, he put his hand up for goalie – the only position left!

He studied at Bishop Lonsdale College, Derby, and Nottingham University to become a teacher with a B Ed degree.

He taught in Derby then Solihull, followed by a post in an inner city Birmingham school. He then went into industry for a few years to see what the rest of the world did for a living.

Because he badly missed teaching he returned as a supply teacher. Since then he has taught in Sutton Coldfield as Head of Maths and PE in a middle school where he helped to introduce 'Football in the Community' with Ron Wylie of Aston Villa FC.

He became acting Deputy Head Teacher.

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