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opening extract from

Bob and Barry's Lunar Adventures: The Disappearing Moon

written by

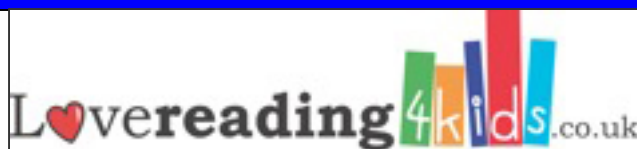
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CHAPTER ONE



“Come on,” said Bob, the Man on the Moon, to his best-ever friend, Barry the six-legged dog. “Let’s get a wriggle on! The clocks a-ticking!”

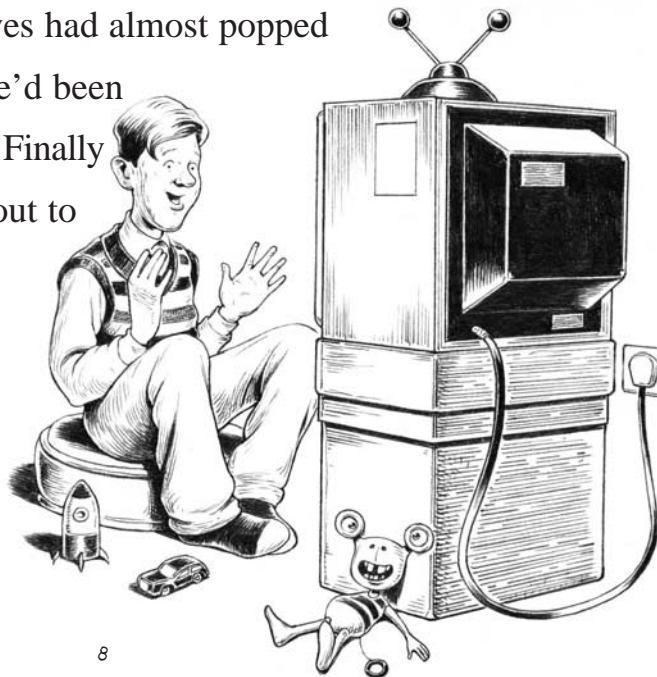
As usual, Bob had been hard at work all day, looking after the Moon – clearing up space litter, entertaining visitors, sweeping out craters and checking for aliens. Though of course, Bob, like any other sensible person, knows that there are no such things as aliens.

For once Bob was keen to leave work early and so had slightly shortened his Moon-themed variety show. Luckily, the space tourists didn’t really mind missing his famous space chimp

impressions as they too were eager to get back to Earth quick-sharp. It was going to be a special night. The STUPENDOUS ALACAZAMO was coming to town!!

Across the globe, the Stupendous Alacazamo was the most famous magician ever to sport a top hat and cape. Bob had only been seven when he'd first watched him on TV. With a single wave of his wand, Alacazamo miraculously transformed an ordinary free-range chicken into a mighty African elephant. Bob's eyes had almost popped

out of his head. He'd been hooked ever since. Finally tonight he was about to see Alacazamo's spectacular live show. He was so excited he could hardly fly his rocket straight.



Having landed back at the Lunar Hill launch-pad, Bob quickly popped into his changing cubicle. In a super-fast flash, he shoved on his Earth clothes and cycled home as quickly as his legs would take him. It wasn't until later that he realised he hadn't on put his vest.

At home, after a speedy wash and brush-up, he wolfed down some fish-paste sandwiches and selected his favourite mesmerising swirl badge to wear.

"Perfect!" he beamed.

Bob then dug out the precious tickets that were hidden in an old biscuit tin between the sheets in the airing cupboard. He'd saved for months to buy them and had even sold his third-best tank top to raise some extra money.

"Nights out don't come cheap, Barry," he said. "Especially if you fancy getting a souvenir T-shirt or a choc-ice."



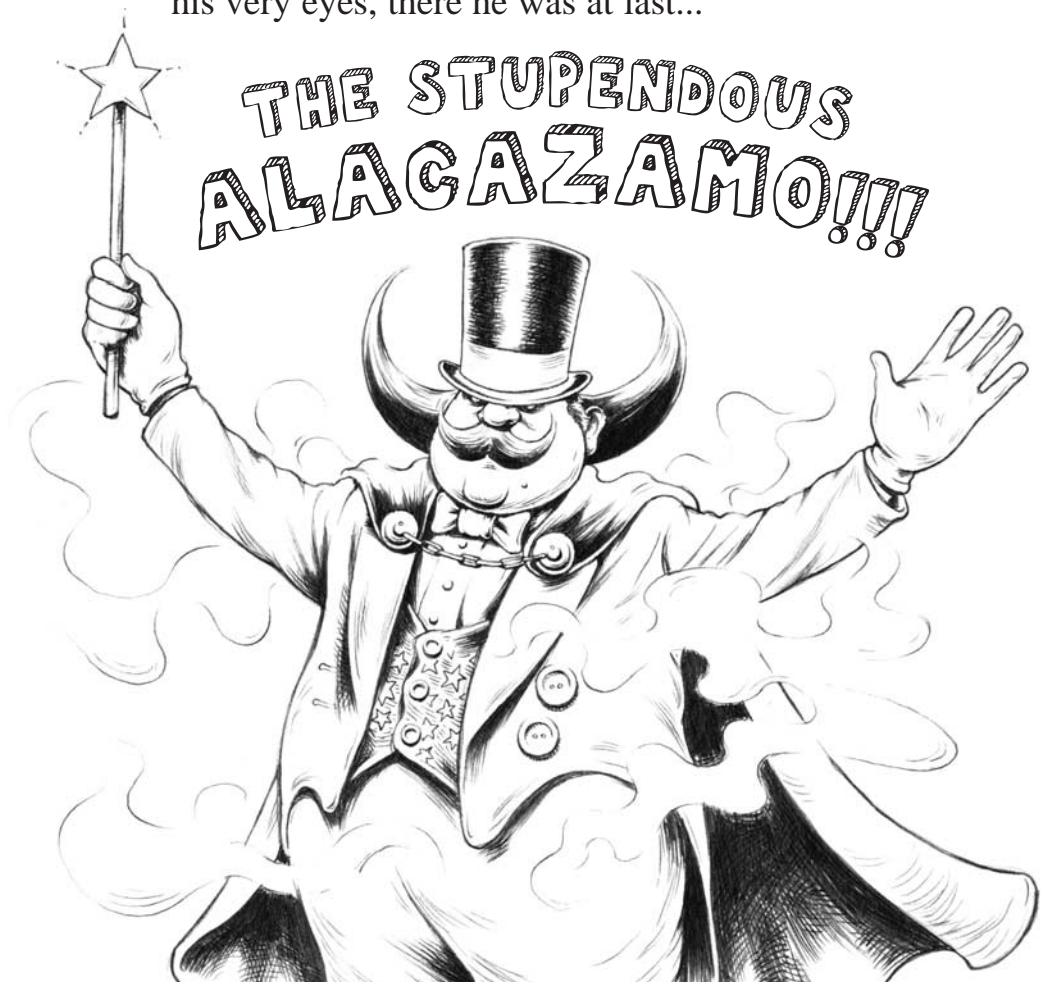
It was almost time to set off. All Bob had to do was find his autograph book and set his trusty old video to record the football.

The streets outside were buzzing. It seemed as if the whole town was off to see the show. The Moon shone brightly overhead as Bob and Barry set off down the road. As the Glitterball Theatre came into view, butterflies began to swirl around Bob's tummy. His legs wobbled as he walked through the theatre's grand, pillared entrance and into the beautiful auditorium.

He and Barry were the first to take their seats, but soon the theatre filled up around them. Then, at eight o'clock, the lights dimmed. A huge cheer filled the auditorium before it was replaced by an electric hush. In the darkness a thousand eyes could just make out the heavy, velvet curtains swishing open. Bob's heart was racing. Suddenly, a tremendous bang and a flash of lightning made the whole audience jump. A hundred spotlights

cut through the darkness and revealed a cloud of smoke swirling around the stage. The audience "OOOHED!" and "AAAHED!" as the silhouette of a caped figure began to emerge through the haze.

For Bob it was a dream come true. In front of his very eyes, there he was at last...



CHAPTER TWO

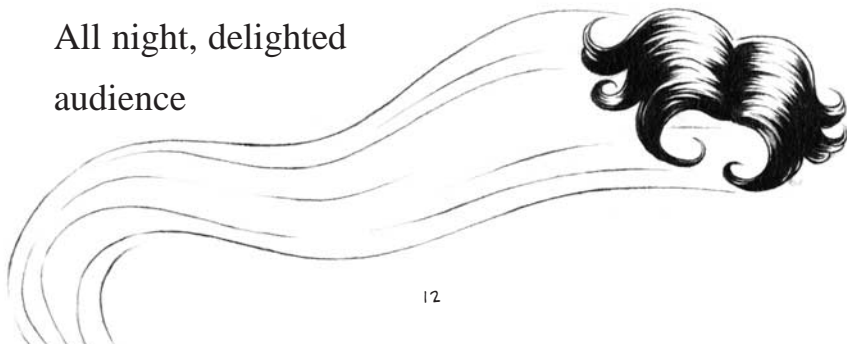


“UNBELIEVABLE!” shouted Cornelius Trolley.

“ASTOUNDING!” agreed Harriet Song.

“MAGIC!” cheered Bob.

From the very first zap of his wand, the Stupendous Alacazamo had his fans spellbound. The show had rope tricks and card tricks and cup tricks. It had jaw-dropping escapology and mind-blowing levitation. It whizz-popped and shimmered and snap-cracked and glimmered. All night, delighted audience



members helped out with the wizardry. Superstar footballer Archibald Chumley was hypnotised into thinking he was a helicopter. The Reverend Pips' toupee was brought to life and it glided round the theatre like a bald eagle. And to the horror of the watching children, tyrant headmaster Clement Twit was cloned.

Later, as the Stupendous Alacazamo began to saw Edna Kipperbeard in two, the chap next to Bob started to look awfully queasy. He'd turned green and could only watch the show through one eye.

“She'll be fine!” whispered Bob. “He's only mucked this trick up once before, when he was practising on a custard slice!”

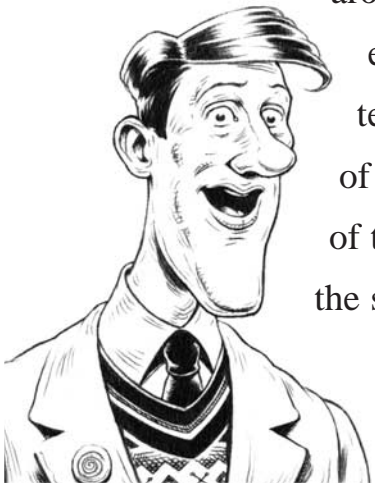


Sure enough, Edna Kipperbeard sprang from the stage in one piece and without a trace of glue or sticky tape on her.

And so the show went on. By ten-thirty the Stupendous Alacazamo had one more chunk of wonder up his sleeve.

“For my Grand Finale,” he announced, “I shall perform a feat of magic the like of which has never been attempted before. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PREPARE TO BE AMAZED AS I, THE STUPENDOUS ALACAZAMO, DISAPPEAR THE MOON!!!!”

The smile dropped from Bob’s face. All around, gasps could be heard as everything went black. A few tense moments passed until, out of the gloom, a massive projection of the golden Moon flashed up onto the stage backdrop. Everybody struggled to adjust to its





brightness, but when they did they were utterly amazed. The Stupendous Alacazamo was flying, high above the audience, swooping and soaring like the

Reverend Pips' toupee. Then, he turned in the air and jettied towards the Moon projection with the speed of a superhero. Faster and faster he flew... until... KABOOM!... he was lost in a flash of blinding light. The audience screamed as the Moon projection vanished under a smoky darkness. Silence fell upon the theatre. Then, a booming voice startled everyone.

“PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, BEHOLD MY GENIUS! LEAVE NOW AND LOOK TO THE SKIES! MY WORK HERE IS DONE. I BID YOU GOOD NIGHT!”

With that, the lights came up and the magician was nowhere to be seen. Everyone rushed outside. Owls were hooting and the stars were twinkling in the clear night sky. Everything was normal – apart from one thing.

“UNBELIEVABLE!” shouted Gilbert Giblet.
“ASTOUNDING!” cried Matilda Boilankle.
“MAGIC!” cheered Horace Hockney-Fudge.



Only Bob and Barry stood quietly amongst all the applause. As they looked upwards their eyes met a strange emptiness in the sky. Their beloved Moon was nowhere to be seen. It had completely and utterly disappeared.