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S.W.I.T.C.H. 8:
Chameleon Chaos

Written by
Ali Sparkes

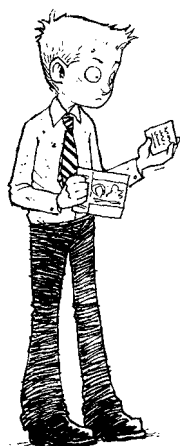
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SWITCH



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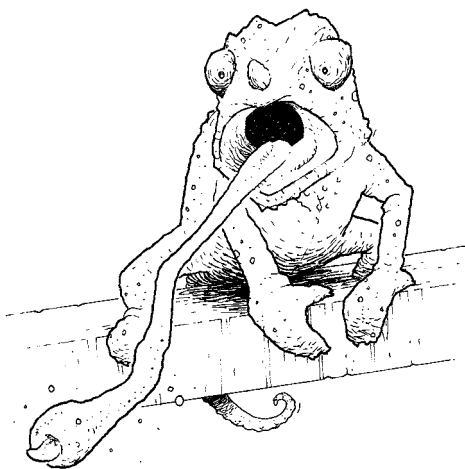
Alligator Action





Chameleon Chaos

Ali Sparkes



illustrated by
Ross Collins

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recyclable product made from wood grown in sustainable forests.
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regulations of the country of origin.

Photograph on page 127: Thanks to Tiny Drury, cool chameleon.



For Olivia and Macie

With grateful thanks to
John Buckley and Tony Gent of
Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
for their hot-blooded guidance on
SWITCH's cold-blooded reptile heroes.

Danny and Josh and Petty

Josh and Danny might be twins but they're NOT the same. Josh loves getting his hands dirty and learning about nature. Danny thinks Josh is a nerd. Skateboarding and climbing are way cooler! And their next-door neighbour, Petty, is only interested in one thing . . . her top secret SWITCH potion.



Danny

- FULL NAME: Danny Phillips
- AGE: 8 years
- HEIGHT: Taller than Josh
- FAVOURITE THING: Skateboarding
- WORST THING: Creepy-crawlies and tidying
- AMBITION: To be a stunt man





Josh

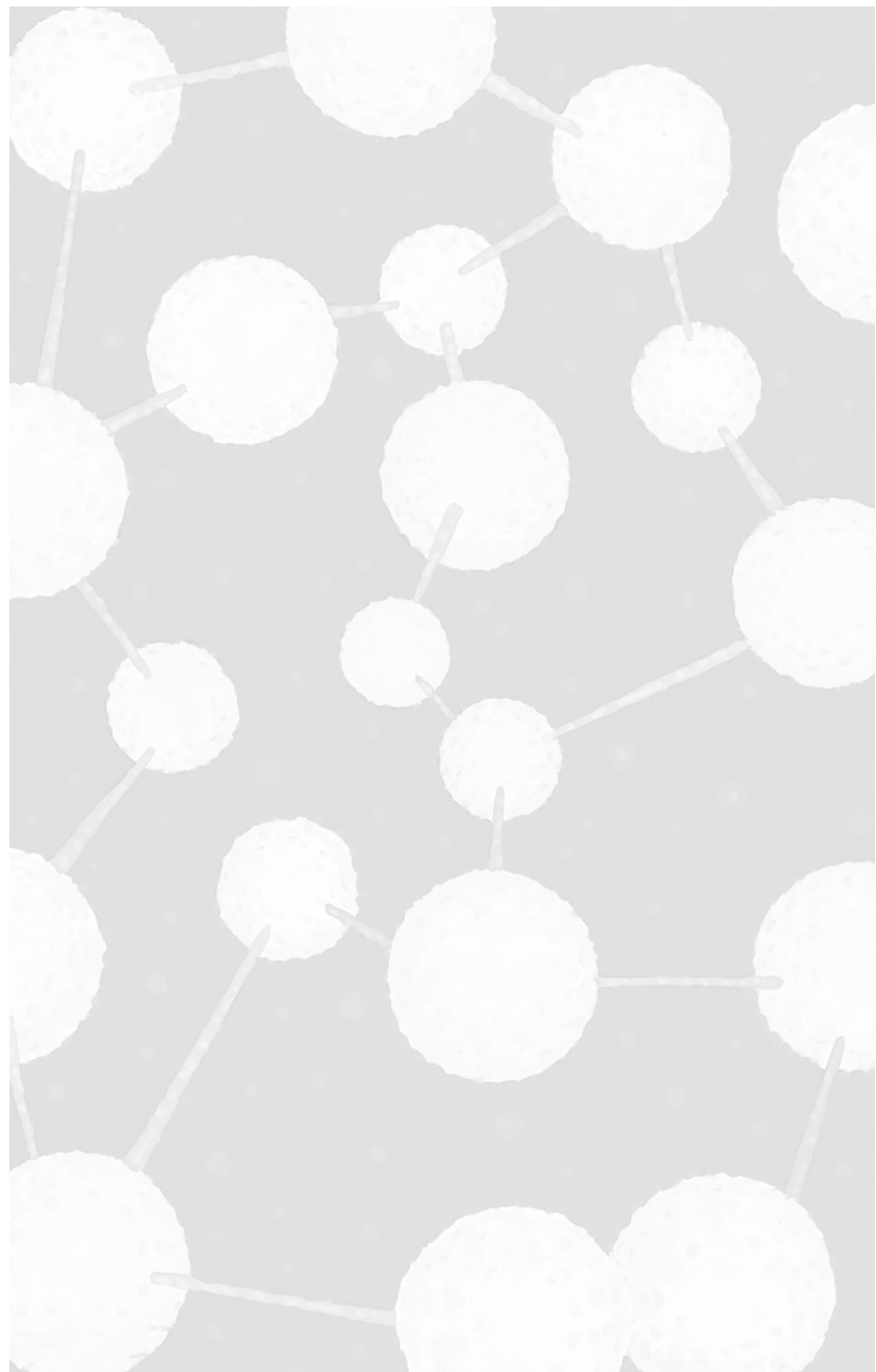
- FULL NAME: Josh Phillips
- AGE: 8 years
- HEIGHT: Taller than Danny
- FAVOURITE THING: Collecting insects
- WORST THING: Skateboarding
- AMBITION: To be an entomologist



Petty



- FULL NAME: Petty Hortense Potts
- AGE: None of your business
- HEIGHT: Head and shoulders above every other scientist
- FAVOURITE THING: SWITCHING Josh & Danny
- WORST THING: Evil ex-friend Victor Crouch
- AMBITION: Adoration and recognition as the world's (and for the government to say sorry!)



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Framed

As he hung by his feet from the bars, Josh reflected that this was not a good day.

His school shoes were laced firmly to the bridge of the climbing frame. The laces would probably snap if he relaxed his feet out of their rigid hook-shape and slid off the metal rung—but this could only lead to another problem. There was a metre of drop below him and it was a soft landing. A soft, *muddy* landing.

A week of rain had turned the whole playground into a swamp. The caretaker had even put cones and orange tape up around the climbing frame to stop anyone getting onto it. When Josh finally staggered into class like a mud monster the teachers would be in no doubt that he'd broken the rules and gone onto the

climbing frame. He'd be in a lot of trouble, even though it wasn't his fault.

He had tried to swing himself up, grab the bars and get an arm through one so he could untie his feet with his spare hand—but he couldn't manage it. He just wasn't good at being upside down—and the longer he hung here the more his head threatened to explode. He felt as if his eyeballs were getting bigger with every passing minute.

No. On balance, this was not a good day. Josh really needed some help. He really needed Danny, his twin brother. But as everyone had now gone back into class, it didn't look as though anyone would be coming by soon.

His feet were beginning to shake horribly now, with the effort of staying sharply bent like right-angled hooks. Josh called 'Help!' a few times. Nobody came. It really looked as if he was going to end the afternoon looking like a hippo.

He wrapped his arms around his head and bunched up his eyes. He was going to have to drop and snap the laces. His feet just couldn't stay like this . . .

'Josh? What on earth are you doing, you peculiar child?'

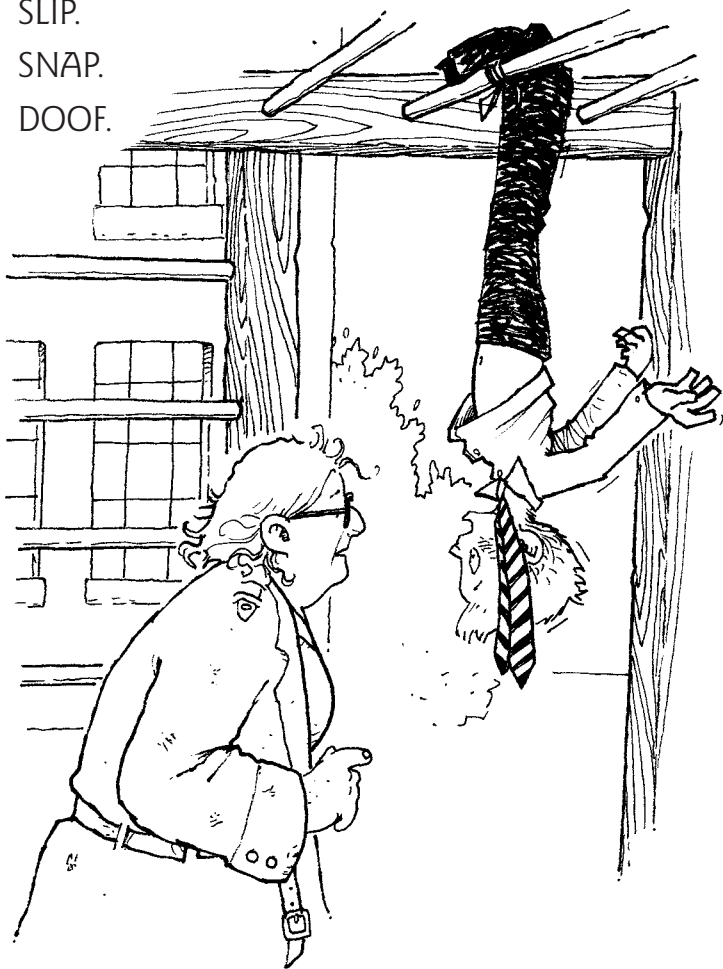
'Gah!' grunted Josh. His eyes pinged open again and he saw the bristly upside-down chin of Petty Potts twenty centimetres from his face.

'Getmyleeegs!' he gurgled. 'Quiiick! I'm going to—gah!'

SLIP.

SNAP.

DOOF.



Josh found himself on the ground, gasping and gurgling as his blood-filled brain spun and his vision wavered. On the bright side, he seemed to have avoided the worst of the mud. He realized Petty Potts had grabbed him just as his laces snapped. This had converted his fall from a straight drop to a sudden slither. His trousers were a bit muddy but there were only a couple of splodges on his school shirt.

Petty crouched down, peering at him through her thick-lensed spectacles, and scratched her wiry thatch of grey hair. 'Are you in training for the Olympics?' she enquired.

'No!' huffed Josh, carefully getting up on to his elbows. His head swooshed about as the blood in it started to get back to other locations in his body. 'Not unless there's a medal for getting stupidly in the way of even stupider school bullies. I'd probably get gold for that!'

'Oh dear,' Petty said, helping him to his feet. 'Who was it?'

Josh shook his head and screwed up his eyes again.

‘Well, you don’t have to worry about snitching to me, do you?’ Petty said. ‘I’m not your teacher. I’m just your kindly next-door neighbour.’

‘Kindly?’ spluttered Josh. He could think of a lot of words which would describe Petty Potts—grumpy, eccentric, genius, amazing, barmy, and dangerous were the first ones that came to mind. But she *had* just saved him from a bath of sticky brown goo and a severe telling off back in class.

He sighed. ‘Billy Sutter and Jason Bilk,’ he muttered.

‘Aaaah,’ Petty said, as if she had a clue who he was talking about.

‘They were just about to commit mass anticide,’ Josh explained. ‘They were heading for my ant farm that I set up for the class—with a bottle of boiling hot water! They were going to boil two hundred and fifty-four defenceless ants alive! I had to throw my lunch at them to stop them.’

‘Aaaah,’ Petty said again, but more sympathetically this time. She knew that Josh was nuts about creepy-crawlies—and all kinds of wildlife. She also knew that he would feel extra

sensitive about protecting the ants, because not that long ago, she'd turned him into one. 'And for this act of mercy you were tied upside down to the climbing frame.'

'Only after the swirly,' Josh sighed. His short blond hair was still a bit wet from the flushing and smelt of toilet cleaner. 'And the wedgy.' He tugged self-consciously at his trousers and felt the material give a bit.

'Want me to SWITCH them into ants so you can stamp on them?' Petty offered.

Josh looked at her, his head on one side and his eyes narrowed. It was a good thing she didn't know who Billy Sutter and Jason Bilk were because he wouldn't put it past her to SWITCH them. Petty might look like a nice old lady but she was actually a brilliant scientist with a secret underground laboratory beneath her garden shed, where she worked on her SWITCH project. Over the summer, since he and Danny had first stumbled upon her secret, Petty had recruited them to help her—whether they liked it or not. Back then they knew nothing about Petty's SWITCH sprays.