

Castle Cock-Up

By Steven de la Salle

Castle Cock-Up sits on a grassy mound

(Way above the ground).

And when it's drawbridge raises

Listen for the sound...

This is a true titchy tale based in a 16th century English castle. Please feel free to read on if you're *re-moatley* interested in learning what took place.

The castle was owned by Lord Ivor Komplaint of a Faroese decent. He occupied it in the late 20th century - and during the Spring and Summer months he often let *outrooms* to many fascinated (and often slightly crazy) tourists.

Little Arthur Bonk, nicknamed Bonky, was head zap-boy, and always on hand: a little metal buzzer was strapped to his left palm. **BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZZZZ, BUZZZZZ, BUZZZZZ** it buzzed. The regular buzzing - caused by Lord Komplaint - often made Arthur Bonk feel faint. But at least it alerted him to potential problems and enquiries that required addressing...

1.

It was a sunny Spring morning. There was no rain, no wind and certainly no fog warning.

'Oh how wonderful those fluffy clouds fill the bluest sky that my little eye has ever set focus on,' delighted Lord Ivor Komplaint as he yanked open his bedroom curtains.

Lord Komplaint only had one eye. His right. The other *left* him one terrible Tuesday in the mid-1970s when a rather unfortuante event took place - which caused great havoc to his long face:

It all happened in a small village inn, called Noburpin - and from what I have read, his eye was knocked out rather painfully by a tip-less pool cue. He did try and *sue*, but I'm not sure how *true* the whole story actually is and I believe a lady called Cheryl was the culprit.

'Four new guests are due to arrive today! Hip hop hooray!' shrilled the well-spoken voice of Lord Komplaint as he hopped up and down on the spot. 'I must make sure Bonky is prepared!

BUZZZZZ

BUZZZZZ

'A-r-g-h-h-h! O-o-o-o-w-w-w-w-c-c-c-c-h-h-h-h! Y-y-y-i-i-e-e-k-k-s-s-s! I-t-'s t-h-a-t b-o-n-k-e-r-s b-u-z-z-e-r b-u-z-z-i-n-g a-g-a-i-i-i-n!' Bonky wailed.

And with that, off he dashed - up the stoney, toe-chilling stairway towards the Cock-Up Orders Office!

2.

'Why, Lord, you buzzed,' said Arthur Bonk eagerly, his left hand still vibrating frantically. Old Arthur Bonk was a short round man. No taller than five foot one with the most *yellow* gums you could ever imagine.

'Yes, of course I buzzed. Four guests are due today. Can you organise with Ms McBosom, that all rooms are sparkling from top to bottom? Oh, by the way - please **BRUSH** your teeth okay? Take that wretched stink away!'

Custard Crazy was Bonky. Eight tins per day he'd slurp his way through. Ambrosia too!

'I'm terribly sorry, your Lordship. I'll also pop in a peppermint.'

'Also, go tell Gangly Graham to prepare this evening's menu. I want nothing but the very best for our guests!'

Gangly Graham was an experimental cook. Self-taught from a great book, called: Unusual meals - from Grass Snakes to Eels! He always wore traditional chef whites - be it day or night. In fact, he was never seen without his toque and apron. But he did possess the grubbiest fingernails in Europe. Brown and green - the grottiest nails *ever* seen.

'I'll be on to it immediately,' replied Bonk. And, with that, off he dashed!

3.

'Oh daddy, what a magnificent castle!' beamed a small girl called Prunella Pong.

'Oh yes, it's most outstanding. Built in the 16th century; the time of Henry VIII's reign, I do believe!'

A fat boy with bright red spots that looked like smarties splodged all over his chubby face came plodding behind the slender father. 'Dad, will they serve chips for tea?'

'Maybe Peter,' replied the dad. 'But you must try eating more healthy food. It'll put you in a much better mood!'

'Look at that mucky water in the moat!' gasped the big bottomed, ginger haired mother. 'It's as dark and dirty as a pint of bitter!'

'Can we go and swim in the moat?' cheered Prunella Pong.

'No you cannot! But... oh... what does *that* say?' went on the mother enthusiastically.

A wonky, wooden signpost that stood on the edge of the moat read:

"WHISTLE FOR ENTRY AND CLAP YOUR HANDS.

MAKE SURE YOU DO BOTH AS LOUD AS YOU CAN!"

'How bizarre!' mumbled the skinny father.

'Very peculiar,' added the ginger mother.

And without further ado - Peter Pong began. And it wasn't very long before the whole family joined in.

'Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear! I hear, I hear!' groaned Arthur Bonk, gritting his chipped teeth. 'We have out-of-tuners; *again!*'

CLAP, WHISTLE!

WHISTLE, CLAP!

'Stop that! Stop that!' grumbled old Bonk, yanking a long wooden, cob-webbed covered lever that squealed and screeched as he did so.

EEK - OOBA

EEK - OOBA

EEE - YUDDA

YUDDA

YUDDA!

'Oh my!'

'Fabulous!'

'What a strange sound!'

'I hope they **do** serve chips...'

The Pong family stared as the ancient, worm-ridden drawbridge jerked and jolted and moaned and groaned as it slowly but surely lowered.

PLONK!

'Welcome to Castle Cock-Up! Please do step in over,' shouted Arthur Bonk from the castle entrance at the top of his well-spoken voice. He shouted so loudly that his head wobbled from side to side like a big jelly.

'Is it safe, love?' asked the big bottomed mum to the father.

'I should think so, angel. A few cracks and splits and sharp-edged holes won't cause any harm.'

'Do you have any luggage with you?' asked Bonk, this time in a much quieter tone.

'No, we're only staying one night. We always prefer to travel light!' declared the beanpole father.

'Do you have any chips?' asked the bulgy-bellied boy.

'Ermmm, I'm not sure. Maybe we do, I'll see what cook is knocking up for you.'

In they went - waddling across the the *slightly* damaged drawbridge at the speed of parcel delivery.

4.

'Marvellous Ms McBosom!' chirped Arthur Bonk. 'Fantastic! This room is now completely sneeze-proof! The dust has diminished!'

'Well I'm not quite finished,' replied Ms McBosom. And what a sight the middle-aged maid was. As plump as a dumpling with the most podgy nose one could ever witness. Just like a mouldy plum it sat in the centre of her face, miserably. 'I hope the guest who sleeps in here comes to bed with a sore head, because I swear a mouse just shot under the bed!'

'Oh no! We must catch the rude rodent. Well, umm, I'll leave the mouse up to you. I shall be opening the bar at half past two.'

BUZZ

BUZZ

BUZZZZZ

Once again Bonky vibrated on the spot in manic-like fashion. 'I'm being *zapped* again. I'd better see what the Lordship wants *this* time...' And off he hurried, up the windy stairway towards the Cock-Up Orders Office, shaking like a leaf in a gale.

5.

'Bonk! Oh Bonk. We have a precarious problem!' fumed Ivor Komplaint in a terrible tantrum. Small puffs of grey smoke shot out the end of his hairy nostrils as he did so.

W-h-a-t i-s i-t, y-o-u-r L-o-r-d-s-h-i-p?' replied the old fellow.

'That ghastly Graham. He's been *at it* again. When will he *ever* learn? Last time we had half a dozen bottoms burn!

'O-h d-e-r-r-r-d-e-a-r!'

'I'll string him up!'

W-e-r-r-r-w-e-l-l...'

'I'll fire him!'

'But you do-do-do quite admire him...'

'Yes, he does make the most sensational blueberry scones. But that's not the point.'

'What are we to do?' confused Arthur Bonk proudly, with marvellously minty breath.

'Can Ms McBosom cook?'

'I, erm.... think she's a little busy, but I could...'

'This putrid patch!' moaned Ivor Komplaint, removing its elasticated strap from the back of his head. 'It's revolting. I must wash it one day.' Little clumps of yellowy-brown fluff were attached to the underside. And the smell was stupendous: a combination of ear wax, rotting nappies, doggie poop and mouldy cheese.

'I don't know wheye you bother with that,' said Bonk, in deep thought. '*Eye* have no idea why you don't just leave it off!'

'I *see* what you mean, Bonk - but I have to look presentable for the guests! Now, be off - go and advise Ms McBosom of her new duty before you feel the end of my boot! Oh why did Gangly Graham have to get as sloshed as a newt - TODAY?!

6.

'Hello!' said the boney father to the flustered servant. 'May we have a table for lunch?'

'Um, yes, that should be fine,' replied Arthur Bonk.

'What time does the Cock-Up tour begin?' asked the wobbly bottomed mother.

'Half past one.'

:I hope it's fun!' shrilled the young girl.

'Can I have chips?' asked the fat spotty boy with watery lips. 'A great big plate would be great!'

'I'm afraid that there's been a change of plan. The menu...'

'Oh wonderful! How unusual! How unique! I'd love to try wild leaf mash and sparrow beak,' said the mother as her eyes scanned the pinned-up menu in the castle lobby.

'It sounds delightful! And for afters - a bowl of Cock-Up crumble!' delighted the dad.

'Cock-Up crumble will make your tummy rumble!' thought Old Bonk with a cheeky smile on his crusty lips. 'I'm afraid the menu has been changed! You see, the kitchen has been re-arranged and we have a few teething troubles.'

'CHIPS. CHIPS. CHIPS!' cheered Peter Pong.

'You could gobble up chips all day long,' tutted the ginger haired mother.

'I am sure cook could rustle up chips. They should be no bother at all.'

'Chips for all!' thrilled Peter, patting his belly triumphantly.

'So, chips all round is it, sir? Madam? And by the way, did you settle into your rooms okay?'

'Hip hip hooray!' squealed Peter Pong!

'Yes, although...!' Arthur Bonk's cheeks turned as red as a pair of raspberries and his shoulders shuddered. 'There was a strange shuffling noise beneath my bed. But maybe it was all in my head...' replied Mr Pong.

I-I-I w-o-n-'t b-e l-o-n-g, I-I-I'l-l f-e-t-c-h y-o-u-r l-u-n-c-h,' stuttered Bonk, this time without the hand buzz ignition. Away he dashed again, towards the Cock-Up kitchen!

7.

'Tckle-de-picke-de-poo

Come out

Come out will you!

PLOP!

'Ha ha ha

Into the pot

I think I will -

PLOP the lot!

'Ms McBossom, what *are* you doing? There may be trouble brewing!'

'Chill out! Relax! Come and have a drink!'

'No, no, we must stop and think!'

'Bonk - I love your custard gums

Smile as we prepare tums...'

'Ms McBossom, put the bottle down -at once! And what are you cooking on the hob?'

'I'm making a special, healthy treat:

Lots of veg but **ZERO** meat!

A famous family recipe,

Served with chips and celery!'

"The guests *all* want chips. A great big plate for the chunky boy. And where oh where is Gangly Graham? Is he still giddy? "

'I think he's out the back sleeping in the shade!'

'Why didn't he stick to *lemonade!*'

CRASH!

THUMP!

Creeeeek!

'Oh gosh!'

'Oh my!'

'Why, oh why, oh why is this gangly, good-for-nothing *cook* of mine snoozing on the stairway? Get up! Get up you drunken goat, before I throw you in the moat!'

'Are you okay, your Lordship?' asked Bonk, while Ms McBossom continued to *plonk* away.

No, I am certainly not OKAY!!! Just *what* is happening today? Oh my neck. It feels all out of joint.'

:Your Lordship, lunch is being taken care of. The guests are seated in the dining hall. We're preparing a plate of chips for them all.'

'Great! Hoorah! Whoopee do da! I'll go in and entertain them while they wait! And I hope Graham sobers up before... it's too late!'

8.

I twist my ears

Poke out my tongue

Popping sounds inside my gums,

Pop pop pop pop

Tick Tock Tick

It's my crazy party trick!' enthused Ivor Komplaint to the gobsmacked - and hungry - guests in the Cock-Up dining hall.

'Why do you only have one eye?' quizzed the tubby boy with a grin.

'I have one eye, because I used to cry and cry. I was a sad young lad you see... Look what crying did to me!'

'You're pulling my leg?' giggled the girl.

'Do you want to see my fantastic trick - or not? I love showing it to every guest, it *always* puts their minds at rest!'

:How long will the chips be?' grumbled the lardy boy, impatiently.

'Two and a half inches!' thrilled Ivor. 'They *used* to be shorter. But we buy contemporaries now. And don't panic, they'll be here soon. Good things come to those who wait. Better sometimes never than late!'

'AAAAAAAAHHH! AAAHHH! AAAHHH!'

'Get down from the chair... dad!'

'Help! Help! Telephone the rodent police!'

'There's another one!'

'AAAAAAHHH!'

'Calm down, sir. Have no fear. There lives but one mouse in here.'

'AAHHH!'

'Where are my chips? My tummy's twonking.'

'AAHHH!'

'Dear lady, step down from your chair. Sir, what has happened to your once gelled hair?'

The skinny man was hysterical as he stood upon the seat of his dining chair. And his hair was up on end - standing to attention!

'Stay calm. Take a deep breath. Don't panic or scream. Gosh, it's the *biggest...* RAT I have seen!'

'AAAAAAHHH!'

The ginger haired mum was wobbling like a jelly on a bouncy castle. Prunella and Peter Pong giggled gratefully at the sight.

'I cannot telephone 999; rodent attack is *not* a crime!'

'Get rid of them!'

'I'll fetch my super Tail-Sting Spray; that'll chase the beasts away!'

9.

A bright yellow bottle with a squeeze handle and sky blue nozzle stood alone at the far end of the Cock-Up kitchen worktop. A huge white label attached to its side read, in blood red ink:

TAIL STING SPRAY

MAKE THOSE RODENTS PAY!

CLOSE EYES AND MOUTH

STAND WELL AWAY.

SQUEEZE WITH EASE

AIM AT THE TAIL

THEN TURN AND RUN...

WITHOUT FAIL!

'This will do just the trick! I'll blast them away in a tickety-tick!' chuffed Lord Komplaint, yanking the bottle.

'The chips are almost done. And, here we go, the famous McBossom recipe! It'll dish out smiles, wait and see! It's also healthy,' chuffed the stand-in cook. 'And Bonk - pass that celery to me. I feel like a cheeky crunch-crunch session!'

'This cannot be happening! What a nutty day. Bonk, come and help with the tail tormenting.'

And with that, off the old boy dashed, following his Lordship like a lemming.

10.

'Mr Pong, you'll be quite safe. Mrs Pong, lose the startled face! Stand back, stand back - stand well away - I have the deadly tail-sting spray!'

The pair were still standing on their chairs and Prunella and Peter Pong were on their hands and knees trying to catch the *beasts!* 'I saw *three!*' thrilled Prunella.

'I saw six! And what's more... I smell chips!'

Then - without further warning...

With a ch-ch-ch and a pshh-pshh-pshh, Lord Ivor Komplaint began to *spray!*

'Quick! Mind out! Get out the way! I've stung their tails with this *dangerous* spray!' shrieked his Lordship at the top of his voice. 'I'd run, run, run if I were you; there's no knowing what these pests will *do...* Follow me fast, not too slow, Santa failed, ho-ho-ho!'

Prunella and Peter's bottoms moved faster than they had probably ever moved. The slim dad and the wobbly bottomed mum followed, albeit a touch slower.

'After the blast you *always* have to shift - extra-fast!'

There was an ear-aching sound that went **YEEEEEEAK!**

Next, a shrill, painful drawn-out **SQUEEEEEEEEEEEAK!**

YEEEEEEAK

SQUEEEEEEEEEEEAK!

YEEEEEEAK

SQUEEEEEEEEEEEAK!

'I think I got a couple!' delighted Lord Komplaint, hopping up and down on the overgrown Cock-Up lawn. 'Their tails were blasted I am...'

'Lunch is ready,' interrupted Bonk.

CLINK

CLANK

CLONK!

'Oh dear, oh dear, what *has* happened? I really *fear*...'

'Chips! Yummy!'

'What is *that*, darling?'

'Are they *all* gone?'

'FEED ME! FEED ME!'

'Oh gosh, it's...'

'Feed me too! Just chips will do!' said Peter, cheekily.

'FEED ME! FEED ME!'

'If I were you I'd run!' shouted Ivor Komplaint, seriously.

'Gangly Graham's *awake*. And he's in that **ghastly** state, again!' panicked the plum-nosed McBosom.

'Run! Quick! Go, go, go!'

'Oh no...'

'What's going on? And what about lunch and the Cock-Up tour?' confused the skinny dad with a trifle head.

'FEED ME! FEED ME! I'm coming for *youuuuuu!*'

'AHHHHH'

GULP!

'Run! Run! Run! He's in sleep-strangling mode!'

* * * *

The drunken cook, still half-asleep, stumbled clumsily onto the Cock-Up lawn - arms outstretched like a Zombie with the grubiest fingernails pointing towards... porky Peter Pong!

'FEED ME! FEED ME!

I like chubby boys,

When their bones crunch

The strangest noise

Makes my wet lips water more,

Let the meat down my throat... *pour!*

'He's a stupid sleep-strangler, butt he won't *really* eat you. Still, though, run, run, run, run, run away... do visit again - *another* day!' sighed Lord Komplaint.

The slimline dad and wobbly bottomed mum, followed by a silent Prunella and squeaky-bum Peter hurried across the rotten drawbridge as fast as their jittery legs would carry them.

'Oh dear. What a shame. Oh well, I mustn't complain,' tutted Bonk. 'Shall I see to Graham, your Lordship?'

'Yes. Take him to his bed. And give him *something* for his head.'

'Why don't you indulge in some of my special family recipe, your Lordship,' offered Ms McBossom, eagerly.

'Well... Ummm... Errrrrrrm... Yes, very well. And what *on earth* is that *awful* smell? It stinks just like a blocked up drain, and, oh dear, I think it's going to rain...'

THE END

