

Octo-Terrorizer!

“Can we have a pet Mum?”

“No.”

“*Please* can we have a pet Mum?”

“No!”

“But all my friends have pets Mum!”

“Pets need looking after. They require care and attention! They’re a full time responsibility! And they cost a small fortune!”

“Pleeeeeeease Mum!”

Little Jennifer Wishbone desperately wanted a pet. She secretly had her eye on a puppy she noticed in the local pet shop window. It was white with large black spots splattered all over its body. It was one of the cutest little puppies she had ever seen.

But to her disappointment, her mother, Deidre, had refused to allow her to *purchase* it.

“Mum, what about a hamster; or gerbil?”

“No!”

“A goldfish?”

“Hmmmmm!”

Deidre Wishbone was becoming fed up with her daughter's constant whining. 'Maybe a goldfish won't be too much of a problem. And it certainly won't cost as much as a dog. Plus, it wouldn't stink the house out like a gerbil,' she mumbled whilst washing up.

It was Saturday and lunchtime was fast approaching.

"Would a goldfish be okay then, Mum?"

"We'll have to wait and ask your father!"

"What time will dad be home Mum?"

"Soon!"

As midday arrived, in plodded Mr Wishbone in his great big clompy work boots. He was a postman finished early on Saturdays.

"Mum said I can have a pet, Dad. We agreed on a goldfish!"

Mr Wishbone was puffing heavily and flung himself onto the sofa in a hairy heap! How fluffy beard tickled a cushion! "You're not having a goldfish Jennifer!"

Jennifer sulked. She whined and moaned and then started the *fake tear treatment*. She always did this when she couldn't get her own way! A stream of water trickled down her cheeks from her eyes and slowly dripped onto the living room carpet.

"Now, now. Stop that!" Mr Wishbone said, exhausted.

“But I so badly want a pet dad. All my friends have a pet and I feel so lonely without one!”

Deidre Wishbone was in the kitchen making a cup of tea for Mr Wishbone and herself.

“There’s no need to cry, Jennifer.”

Jennifer’s fake stream was turning into a raging river and the carpet was becoming a small lake!

“But it’s not fair!”

“Life’s not fair!” Mr Wishbone calmly replied.

“I’d be a good pet keeper. I’d look after my goldfish and feed it and clean the bowl every single week! There’d be no mess or smells I promise Dad!”

Mrs Wishbone popped her head into the lounge. She winked at her husband who immediately winked back.

“You’re not having a goldfish Jennifer, and that’s final!”

Jennifer’s fake crying spree stopped. Her eyes had run out of tears! So, instead she sat cross legged on the floor in front of the television and folded her arms tightly. She always did this when her crying game ended.

“Cheer up, for goodness sake. It’s the weekend!” Mr Wishbone said with a smile on his sleepy face. Deidre Wishbone giggled.

Jennifer sulked on with her back now facing her father.

“You don’t need a goldfish!”

“But I do Dad. I do. I need a pet to look after. It will teach me about responsibility. That’s what Miss Peachbum told us in class yesterday.”

“I agree!”

There was suddenly a confused silence in the living room.

“But you don’t need a goldfish, because I have got you *another* pet instead!”

Jennifer leapt from the carpet and stared at her dad wide-eyed. Her mouth hung open and her tongue poked over her bottom lip!

“Yes, I have a special surprise for you!”

“What type of pet is it Dad?” Jennifer replied. Butterflies were flapping about inside her tummy as she imagined what pet she would soon be the proud owner of!

These thoughts soon raced through her head at tremendous speed:

‘Maybe it’s that puppy! Or a playful kitten? Maybe a guinea pig! That would be difficult to keep clean as they are stinky animals! But I don’t mind, I’ll do it! Or maybe I’m getting a rabbit. A fluffy white rabbit with a pink, twitchy nose! Or (gulp) maybe it’s a long slithery snake in a large tank!’

“You’ll just have to wait until later,” Mr Wishbone replied, with a smile forming on his rubbery lips. It was one of those smiles where each end twinkles like shiny tinsel (if you look close enough)! “Be patient – good things come to those who *wait!*”

So Jennifer waited.

She waited . . .

And waited . . .

And waited!

Two hours rolled by ever so slowly!

Knock, knock, knock!

Deidre Wishbone rushed to the front door in her tangerine coloured slippers. She had a feather duster in her left hand. She was a clean-a-holic! She spring cleaned the house not only in Spring, but in Autumn, Winter and Summer too! There wasn't a speck of dust lingering in the Wishbone household.

"Hello Horace! How are you? Do come in!"

It was Uncle Horace, Jennifer's favourite Uncle. And he was carrying something unusual under his right arm!

"What's in the box?" shouted Jennifer with an excited tingling sensation shooting down *both* her arms and *both* her legs!

"A-ha, " he answered, tapping his wart covered nose slowly. "Wait and see!"

Horace had a thick ginger beard and a fluffy ginger moustache. His hair was short and spikey and coloured like a beautiful carrot!

Jennifer loved his bright orange hair.

"Hello Horace, " Mr Wishbone said excitedly as he charged down the stairs in bare feet! "Why, that box does look interesting!" He winked at Horace and Horace winked right back!

“Let me see! Let me see! What’s hidden inside? What is it? What is it?” screamed Jennifer. She *thought* it might be her pet. In fact she *knew* it must be! But it all seemed so spooky and - strange!

Horace plonked the cardboard box onto the kitchen table. Mrs Wishbone popped the kettle on. Mr Wishbone stared at Jennifer. Jennifer fixed her piercing blue eyes *firmly* on the box. Then she started jumping up and down!

“So, then... shall we open this a bit later? Or wait 'til tomorrow?” Horace said cheekily whilst once again winking to Mr Wishbone!

“No! No! No! Open it now!! Pleeeeeease!!” cried Jennifer. She was becoming extremely impatient as she waved her arms in the air like a big bird!

Mr Wishbone burst into a huge giggle-fit! Horace did too! Deidre just continued to make the tea.

“Go on then, Jennifer. Open up. Your new pet is waiting for you inside!” blurted Mr Wishbone, between laughs!

And Jennifer wasted little time doing so.

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The lid flaps were stuck together with parcel tape! But this was no trouble for Jennifer Wishbone!

Zer-zoooooom!

She whipped off the entire length of tape in a matter of seconds.

“Wow!” screamed Jennifer so loudly that Mrs Wishbone nearly spilled boiling water from the kettle onto her hand! “What *is* it?!”

“Don’t you know?” replied Mr Wishbone. “It’s something extra special. That’s the only one in the *entire world!*”

Jennifer’s mouth gaped open and bubbling and popping sounds formed inside as she stared intently at the *thing* inside the box...

“Go on, take it out. It’s your new pet!” butted in Mrs Wishbone, plonking teabags into the cups.

And what met little Jennifer Wishbone’s eyes was truly remarkable. It fascinated her beyond belief. It also puzzled her more than any school test or telly quiz had ever managed!

“It’s an OCTO-TERRORIZER!” Horace sort of whispered whilst glancing from side to side to make sure nobody unwanted noticed it. “It’s a special pet that never dies and never hides and it never, ever ignores you. And it doesn’t require any cleaning up! All it requires - once in a blue moon - is a battery change.”

Here is what the Octo-Terrorizer looked like as Jennifer slowly removed it from the box:

For those of you who don't know what an Octo-Terrorizer is, I'll briefly explain:

It's royal blue in colour.

It has 8 flippers. (Not hands or feet but flappy flippers than hang loosely from its round body).

Its gender is neither male or female.

It has two square, beady black eyes – one positioned on either side of its body. Sometimes a yellow glow lurks behind each pupil.

It is waterproof.

It DOESN'T require feeding.

Oh yes... and its skin is made from - plastic!

It also requires 2 x AA batteries to make it come *ALIVE!*

But *what* does it do?

Well, you'll have to find out, just like little Jennifer did on that very *special* day . . .

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Later that afternoon, after Jennifer had finished fiddling about with her new pet, Granny Wishbone - and her best friend, Gladys - popped round for a matter and a cheeky sarnie.

“Hello dear!” shrilled Granny Wishbone as she sw Jennifer playing on the living room carpet. “Oh my, haven’t you grown!”

Granny Wishbone always said the same thing *every time* she visited!

Gladys smiled peacefully at Jennifer. It was one of those smudged lipstick smiles that many elderly ladies give. The one that comes with a soft gentle glance and makes you feel all warm and snug.

Jennifer smiled back for a split second but then carried on playing with her *pet!* The Octo-Terrorizer was now *battered-up* and - *alive!*

“What’s that you’re playing with, dear?” Granny Wishbone asked.

“It’s my new pet!” replied Jennifer, desperately hoping it would energise soon and *do* something as promised.

“Come into the kitchen and sit yourself down Doris,” Deidre said.

“You too, Gladys!”

The two old dears hobbled towards the kitchen in their knitted cardigans, thick stockings and with their handbags resting firmly over their shoulders.

Jennifer stared into the beady eyes of the Octo-Terrorizer intensely. She was becoming a tad bored and impatient. Staring at it was all well and good, but it hadn’t even moved!

“Come on! Pleeeeeease! Do something! I am your owner and I *demand* you to wake up and play; *right now!*”

And with that, a small beaming yellow glow lit up behind *both* its square black eyes!

Jennifer’s eyes also lit up like candles as she gawped at her pet. Had it really obeyed her command?

Slowly but surely, one by one, each of its eight flappy flippers began to rock up and down and from side to side. Then, as Jennifer’s eyes became brighter and brighter, every single flipper span round and round in speedy circles! She couldn’t believe what was happening.

“If you have no ears, how could you have heard my command?” she asked the Octo-Terrorizer.

There was no reply.

“AHHHHHHHHHHHHH” screamed Jennifer in shock! Her arms began to wobble like jelly on a rollercoaster! Mrs Wishbone dashed from the kitchen with a large mug of tea in her hand.

“AHHHHHHHHHHHHH” screamed Mrs Wishbone in fright! Her face immediately turned as white as snow! She spilled her entire mug of tea all over her cream, extra-clean carpet!

Doris and Gladys waddled back to the lounge as fast as their aged legs could deliver. Their faces became even more wrinkled and Gladys’ slimy false teeth shot across the living room like a bullet from a gun! Doris began sweating and her face turned **blue!**

The Octo-Terrier had *changed!*

No longer was it a small plastic blob on the carpet! It had - *grown!*

Jennifer, Deidre, Doris and Gladys stood and watched. They were too shocked to move! The four of them were fixed to the spot like scarecrows!

This is what the Octo-Terrier now looked like:

“I am going to eat you all, one by one!” it viciously declared in a robotic voice.. “Starting with the little one and finishing up with the grizzly old wrinklies!”

It didn't have a mouth and the sound appeared to be coming from deep inside its shell of a body.

Being so tall and so frightful and so scary it had just taken control of the Wishbone clan. It had frozen them solid, like jumbo blocks of ice. And it had somehow infected their brains and was... *controlling* them! I

Its glowing yellow eyes were now flashing red! A hissing sound beamed out from its blue body. Its flappy flippers were spinning around at such terrific speed that they were barely visible. But when they briefly were - they appeared as sharp as daggers!

Suddenly, somehow, Jennifer developed enough courage to overcome its controlling powers and blurted, "remove the batteries, Mum! Take them out!"

But Mum was in no fit state to do such a thing! Instead, Deidre Wishbone was vibrating on the spot with a vacant stare in her startled eyes!

Then, as if this experience wasn't terrifying enough, something even scarier happened . . .

The Octo-Terrier began to creep *forwards!* Its lanky, beanpole legs which were attached to inflated rubber rings, trudged over the carpet at snail's pace . . . towards Jennifer!

"Run Jennifer!" shrieked Doris! Her false teeth wobbled loosely as she did so and splatters of saliva fired across the room, landing on the Octo-Terrorizer.

Jennifer managed to find the energy to sprint halfway up the staircase. She moved through the lounge like a cheetah – faster than

her young legs had ever shifted! "Follow me Mum. You too Grandma, and Gladys! Before my *pet* eats you - alive!"

Hurry Gladys! We've gotta shift! Before this monster devours us like baked beans!" wailed Doris.

But how could the Octo-Terrorizer *eat*? It didn't *appear* to have a *mouth*!

* * * *

Gladys waddled towards the foot of the stairs with Doris clutching her bottom in desperation. Their skirts blew up like umbrellas in a storm as they trotted along in fear.

But poor Deidre Wishbone. She was rooted to the spot. Just like a tall plant in a ceramic pot. Her arms were waving frantically, but her legs and feet secured to the carpet.

"Come on Mum, run. Don't let my pet eat you! "

The Octo-Terrorizer had suddenly changed its mind and decided to focus on Mrs Wishbone as she was closest to it! It's razor sharp flappy flippers were whizzing round like crazy and its glowing eyes started to *flash*!

Jennifer expelled a horrific cry. The sort of cry a small child releases when one of their parents is just about to be gobbled up by a huge *thing*.

Doris shuddered.

Gladys blew off!

All of a sudden . . . the sound of a key being inserted into a lock was heard.

Jennifer continued her horrific cry.

The Octo-Terrorizer's face looked extremely mean:

And on Mrs Wishbone's face was the strangest expression ever seen:

"Dad!" cried Jennifer, in relief.

Mr Wishbone and Uncle Horace had popped to the local. They were now home and feeling a bit tipsy!

"Dad! My new *pet* is about to *eat* mum!"

Dad sighed! “Oh well, at least they’ll be no more nagging when I forget to take my boots off at the front door! Or when I leave the toilet seat up!”

Horace giggled. Mr Wishbone giggled too. They were acting like a couple of silly teenagers!

Jennifer set free *another* horrific cry. This time even more horrific. So horrific that Doris, who was almost half way up the stairs, had to cover her ears!

Gladys blew off - again!

Horace’s face turned bluer than blue. Mr Wishbone’s started to, too!

Deidre Wishbone’s feet seemed to be stuck to the carpet - with glue!

Jennifer continued to cry.

Doris’s face turned green!

Gladys closed her eyes! And blew off; what a surprise!

But . . .

But . . .

Then . . .

The strangest of strange noises were heard. It sounded like a slurry droning sound.

The razor sharp flippers of the Octo-Te rrorizer began to slow. Slower and slower and slower they became. Its eyes returned to the black, square, lifeless things they originally were.

JERK!

CLUNK...

SNAP!!

Jennifer's cry ceased.

Doris removed her hands from her ears!

Gladys opened her eyes (and blew off)!

Mrs Wishbone laughed as loud as a hyena! Hysterically, her long right forefinger pointed at the *shrivelling* Octo-Terrorizer in cocky fashion.

The Octor-Terrier now looked like this:

It had returned to *normal!*

Mrs Wishbone regained the feeling in her legs and dances on the leather couch in her slippers!

Mr Wishbone's blue face stared freakishly at his wife and his mouth began to blow bubbles!

Horace's eyeballs wobbled up and down.

Doris and Gladys smiled. It was another of those warm, *everything's going to be okay* smiles that appeared on their wrinkled faces.

Jennifer was speechless. Completely lost for words!

"There'll be no Wishbone eating today!" yelled Mrs Wishbone! "No! Your luck is out Octo-Terrorizer! You don't scare us anymore!" She was pointing at the now motionless, plastic little *pet* and felt extremely brave. "Luckily the batteries we popped in earlier were on their last legs! Almost dead!" she continued, with a smirk on her lips. "But now, they're as dead as a dodo!"

"Well thank goodness for that!" Doris replied whilst in relief, pinching the end of her nose.

Gladys plodded up the stairs to use the toilet!

Mr Wishbone's face slowly but surely returned to its original pinky colour. Horace's did too! His ginger moustache wobbled up and down like a drunken caterpillar.

Little Jennifer didn't know what had happened. Was this all just a weird dream... Were her parents trying to teach her a lesson... Or was the whole bonkers episode *really really* - real?!

"Right, enough of this nonsense!" Mr Wishbone demanded in a strict tone. "This pet has overstayed its welcome!"

And with that, Mr Wishbone tossed Jennifer's pet Octo-Terrorizer back into the cardboard box. "I'll throw this in next-door's skip. They won't mind. Then it'll be gone for good. That's the last time anything odd like *that* comes into our home!"

"I'm sorry about this, " said Horace. "I bought it from Dodgy Dave the dart player on Thursday night down the Salty Sailor. I had no idea it would turn out to be *as evil* as that!"

Mr Wishbone put his arm around his brother. "Never mind. We all *learn*, he replied.

Mrs Wishbone danced into the kitchen to make a pot of tea for everyone. Doris followed. Gladys remained upstairs in the toilet for quite a while...

Jennifer's face was as blank as a sheet of unmarked A4.

"Don't worry Jennifer. Maybe you *can* have that goldfish after all," Mr Wishbone muttered, carrying the box outside.

Jennifer gave her dad one of those disinterested smiles in reply.

Horace shuffled outside too.

Jennifer peered through the net curtains of the living room. She watched in wonder as her dad threw the box casually into the skip. Horace was acting silly pulling funny faces - he was still quite tipsy!

'Goldfishes are safe and easy to look after," pondered Jennifer. "But they can be *boring!* Maybe an Octo-Terrorizer can be tamed, just like a vicious dog or, or a lion for that matter? Hmmmmm . . ."

THE END