

STORIES FROM WILD LAND

Barry Eats An Apple

It was a cold evening at the top of Mount Hump, a colossal two feet tall mountain towering over the Plains Of Phlergen deep in the wilderness of Wild Land. Mr. Jim Fish trod carefully in his heavy steel toe capped boots, as not to slip and tumble down a fall that would no doubt be the end of him.

Above him, hovering on jets of flame from his rocket pack, Barry Munkfish carefully examined the nearby area, searching for his target. As he thoughtfully looked out in one direction, his right arm was outstretched and pointing in another. The fish's head that doubled as Barry's right hand fed him even more information, though it took him a little time to make sense of the distorted view that returned to him through the fish's strange bulbous eyes. Once, before he had truly mastered his fishy powers, he had tried to eat something that through the fish's eyes seemed like a nice tasty lollipop. As he sank his teeth into it however, it turned out that the object was actually a twelve foot long toppled tree, covered with festering fungus and crunchy little insects. As the squirming little critters made their way through his digestive system, he had promised himself he would truly master his fishy abilities before doing anything as stupid as that ever again. A brick he thought was a cake, a hairy poo he thought was a coconut, and a rather annoyed looking turtle he thought was a mushroom later, he decided he should have stuck to his promise. He was not one to stay faithful to his promises, even those to himself.

Things were different now. He was a lot older for a start. He had matured in more ways than he could have ever imagined in the three days since then. Why just yesterday he was flying around minding his own business and had passed on the opportunity to swoop down on a crying child and slap the little brat's face off. True, just a few seconds later he had changed his mind and gone back to do just that, but at least he had thought about it. The child's behaviour was just too gammy, and he could not possibly turn down dishing out some serious wildness to counteract such gammyness. No kid was allowed to cry in the presence of Barry Munkfish. That was one of the very few promises to himself he had so far managed to keep. Urgh. Crying children.

'Anything yet?' asked Mr. Jim from below him.

'Nothing yet old friend,' he replied, before catching a glimpse of something silhouetted against the horizon. 'No wait. Maybe that way.'

Across the plains they raced. Barry propelled through the air at awesome speed by his rocket pack, and Mr. Jim just able to keep up by standing upright on his rear fins and sprinting with all of his energy. Barry smiled as he heard Mr. Jim belting out the song *Hurdy Gurdy Mushroom Man* at the top of his lungs, a song which Mr. Jim believed gave him even more speed when running flat out.

Within a mere three days, they had reached their target. Arguably the two wildest characters in the land stood silent on the ground and looked up, studying it carefully.

'Is it what I have been looking for, Mr. Jim?' asked Barry.

'I believe so.'

'You can't see any mould, or large crunchy insects, or otters with pea-shooters?'

'No Barry,' Mr. Jim assured him. 'Just a tree, covered in small, round, green fruit.'

'At last,' Barry cackled, and ignited his jet pack. He carefully-yet-wildly propelled himself up amongst the branches, and delicately picked some of the fruit with his thin skeletal hand. 'I've waited a long time for this,' he admitted, and rammed the fruit into his mouth.

Mr. Jim watched and waited eagerly for his friend's opinion, though the twisted, uncomfortable look on Barry's face got him a little worried. 'Well?' he asked.

'Urgh,' Barry responded, and spat out the contents of his mouth down onto the ground far below.

Barry didn't like apples.