

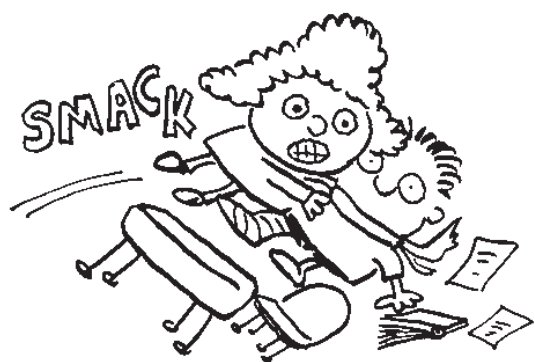
No. 2

# TIMMY FAILURE

NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE



STEPHAN PASTIS





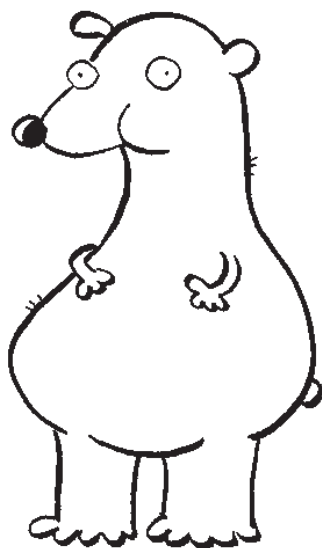
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## A Prologue That Will Most Likely Make Sense Later

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Of all the items that can clog your plumbing, an overweight Arctic mammal is probably the worst.

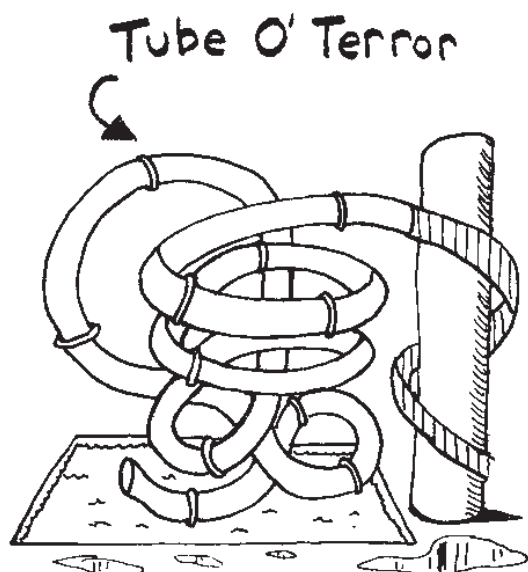
Because while a good plumber can clear your pipes of a spoon or a hair ball or a bar of soap, it is much harder to remove one of these:



That, you see, is a polar bear.

And today he is stuck in a different kind of pipe.

The Tube O' Terror.



The Tube O' Terror is the world's fastest, curviest waterslide.

But it is not fast today.

Because it is clogged.

Clogged by an overeager polar bear who was much too plump to ride.

And yet somebody let him.

And that is where the bribery comes in.

Because a polar bear who fails to get his way will charm. And a polar bear who fails to charm will deceive. And a polar bear who fails to deceive will grab a big wad of dollar bills from his pocket and wink.

Because that is how the world works.

And then this will happen.



And if you are a world-class detective who just so happens to be tied to that polar bear and had no choice but to follow him down the slide, you are in trouble.

Deep, unbreathable trouble.

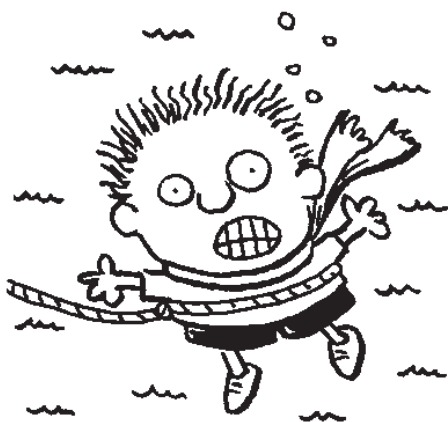
Because the rushing water keeps coming.

And with the polar bear's big bottom acting as a plug, the water has nowhere to go but back up the tube.

Which is where I am.

Trapped underwater.

And not very happy about it.









# CHAPTER

## I

### A Head Is a Terrible Thing to Not Have

Carl Kobalinski is not the smartest person in the world.

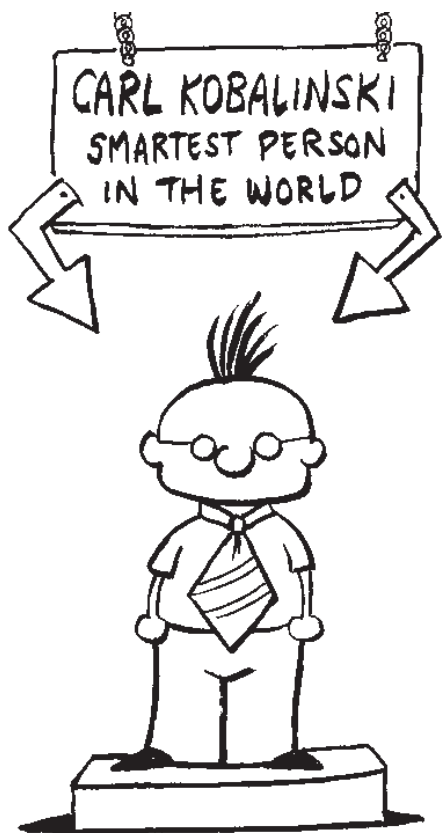
But try telling that to the woman in the checkered vest.

“Maury’s Museum of World Records is now closed,” she says. “And you need to go home.”

“But look at this thing,” I tell her. “It’s an outrage.”

“What is?” she asks.

“*This*,” I say, pointing directly at the statue.



“Kid, I get eight dollars an hour to walk around this museum and make sure no one breaks anything. If you have a problem with what’s in it, tell someone else.”

“I’ve got a problem, all right. Lies, lies, and more lies. Everyone knows who the smartest person is.”

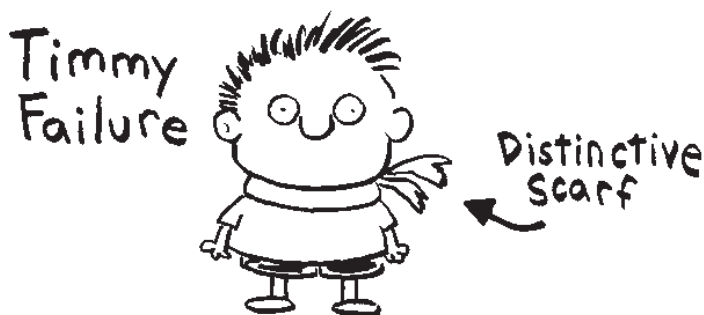
“Wonderful,” she mumbles, rubbing her temples.

“It’s me,” I say.

“Good for you,” she says, pushing me toward the exit with one hand. “Now let me show the smartest person in the world how a door works.”

I am suddenly tempted to pull rank.

Reveal that I am this guy:

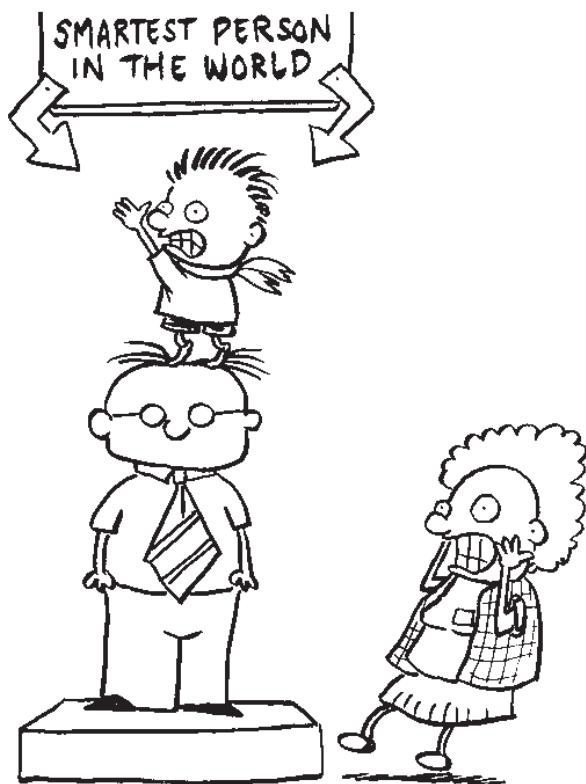


It is a name so recognizable that she would instantly know it as that of the founder, president, and CEO of the greatest detective agency in the town, probably the state. Perhaps the nation.

But I don’t pull rank.

I do something smarter.

I climb Carl Kobalinski and try to yank down his sign.



“What do you think you’re doing?” screams the museum woman.

“I’m saving the credibility of your institution!” I retort.

But I’m not.

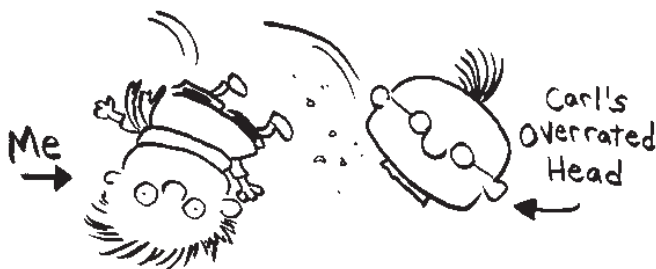
Because I can't reach the sign without jumping. And I am nine feet above the ground.

So I do what only the smartest person in the world would think to do.

I jump.

Only to learn that while Carl may have had a strong brain, his statue does not have a strong neck.

And as I jump, it snaps. Sending both me and Carl's overrated head tumbling.



Straight to the museum floor

Where I hear another snap.

This one in my leg.

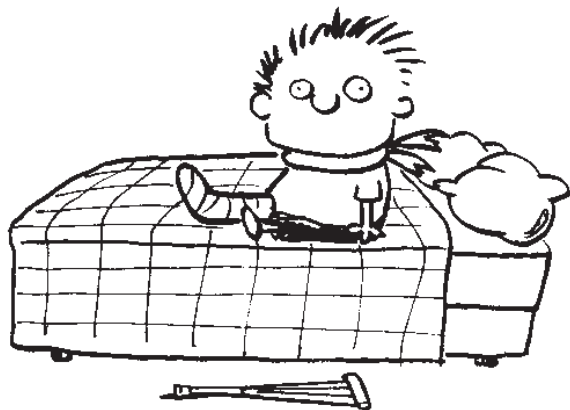
And say the only logical thing I can to the museum woman leaning over me:

“Now look what you’ve done.”

# CHAPTER 2

## The Cast That Limits Me

When you're lying in bed with a broken right leg, you can either cry or write your memoirs.

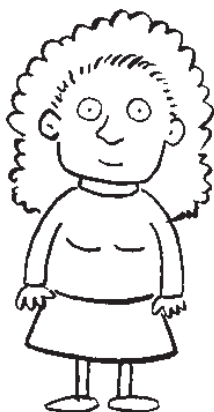


And Timmy Failure doesn't cry.  
So here are my memoirs:

I was born.  
I exhibited greatness.  
I founded an empire.

And that empire was achieved despite the many obstacles around me.

Such as Obstacle No. 1.



That's my mother.

She's a kind enough person. But she has her weaknesses.

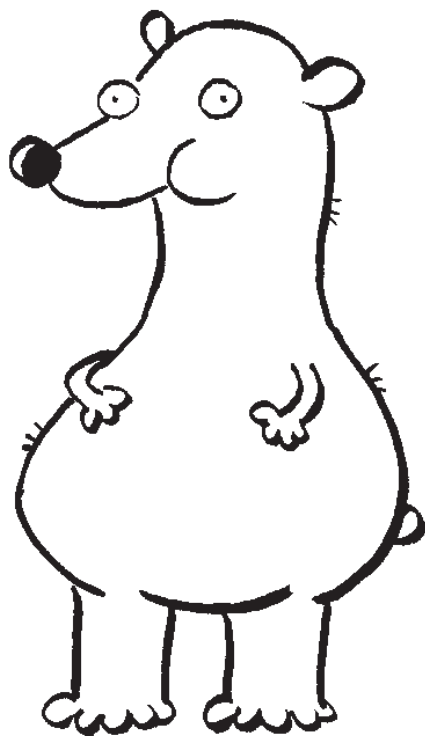
Like insisting I attend this place:





Now, school is fine for those who need it  
But for those touched by greatness, it is a  
debilitating nuisance.

Then there's Obstacle No. 2.



His name is Total. He is a fifteen-hundred  
pound polar bear.

He was raised in the Arctic. But his home melted like an ice cube in the sun. And he wandered 3,000 or so miles to my house.

So I gave him a job.

And for the first six months, he was the most reliable polar bear I've ever employed.

Then he revealed his true colors.

It was a betrayal so profound that I do not wish to discuss it.

So let me just say this.

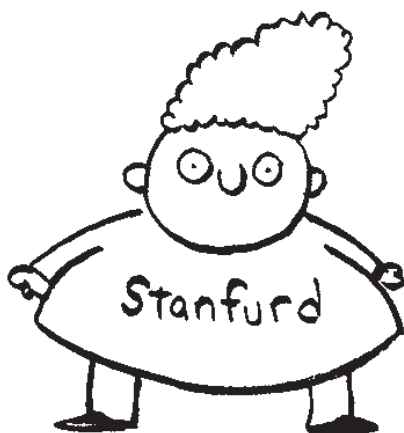
If a polar bear ever works very hard for you in the first six months of employment, keep this one thing in mind:

IT IS A RUSE.

Do NOT make him a partner at your detective agency.

Do NOT agree to change the name of the agency from "Failure, Inc." to "Total Failure, Inc."

And, hey, while I'm issuing warnings, do NOT model your life after the person who is Obstacle No. 3.



His name is Rollo Tookus. He is my best friend. And he is boring.

Boring because all he cares about is grades.  
So that's all the description he gets.

And I will fill the space he otherwise would have gotten in these memoirs with a drawing of my face.

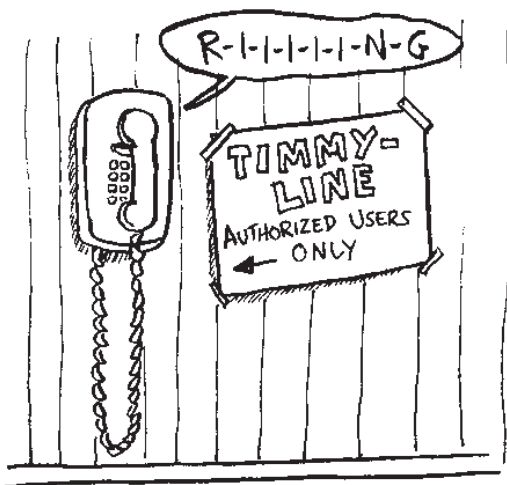


# CHAPTER 3

## Drags Like Butter

When you are one of the world's high-profile detectives, you can expect your fair share of high-profile cases

And the one I get this morning on the Timmyline is about as high profile as it gets

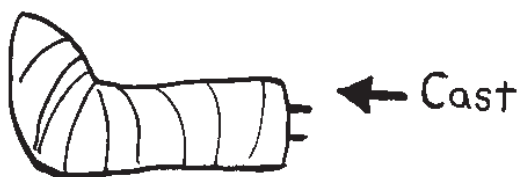


The call is from a classmate. Nunzio Benedici.

And he is missing something precious.  
“I can’t find Spooney Spoon,” he says  
“Don’t panic,” I tell him. “I’ll be there in  
twenty.”

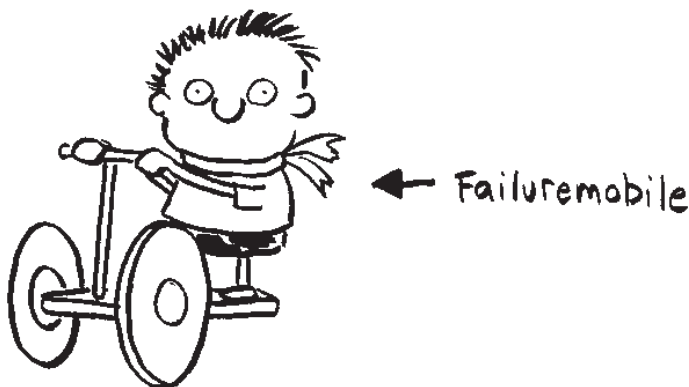
And I don’t necessarily mean minutes. It  
could be hours.

Because of this thing I’ve had on my leg  
the past couple weeks.



Which means I can’t walk fast.

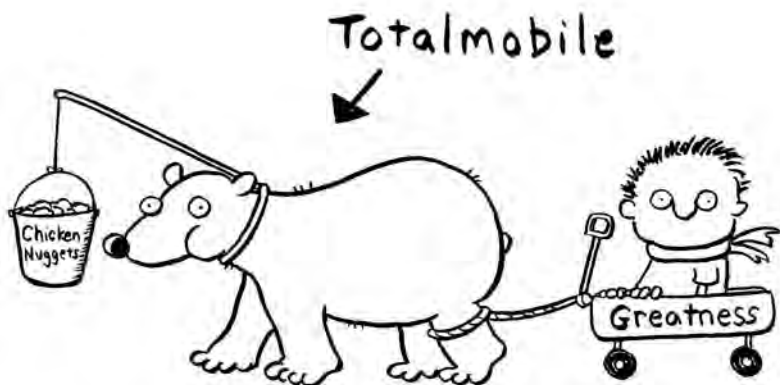
Now, that wouldn’t have been a problem  
when I had the Failuremobile.



That was a Segway I borrowed from my mother.

But then my mother sold it.

So then I had the Totalmobile.



That was a wagon pulled by my business partner.

But then my mother sold it (the wagon, not the business partner).

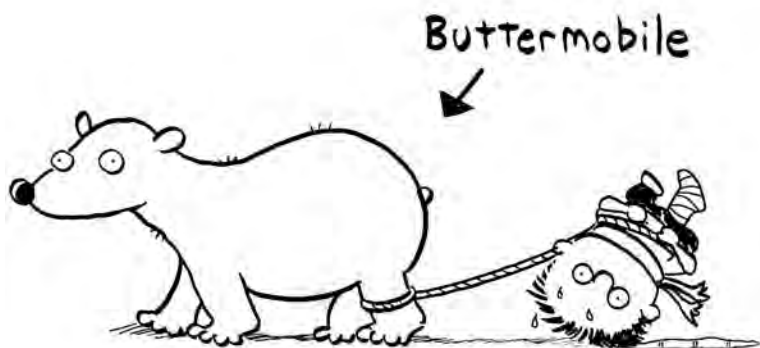
So now I just let my business partner drag me through the streets on a rope.

Which may seem difficult

But it's not.

Because I coat myself in butter.

So now I have the Buttermobile.





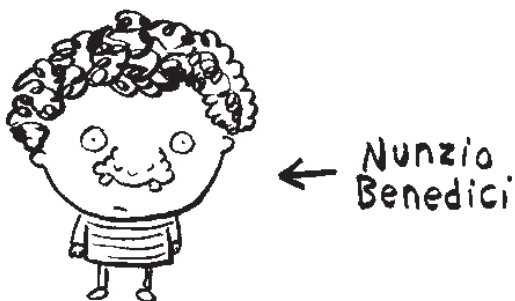
# CHAPTER

## 4

### Veni, Vidi, Benedici

(I Came. I Saw. I Ran Into Nunzio Benedici.)

As if I need to tell you, Nunzio Benedici is the kid in my class who can shove the most eraser tips in his nose.



And Spooney Spoon is the spoon he uses to eat his applesauce.



Don't ask me why there's a dog's head on it. I don't know.

And I won't ask.

Because if there's one thing you learn in this business, it's that clients have their secrets. Each more shameful than the last.

So when I arrive at his house, I stick to the basics.

"Prepare for a three-month investigation," I tell him. "And perhaps some international travel."

"International travel?" he replies.

Naive clients. The bane of a detective's existence.

"Spoon Larceny 101, kid. When a spoon goes missing, the first thing they do is ship it over the border."

"I didn't know," he says.

"There's a lot you don't know," I tell him. "That's what you pay me for."

"How much will it be?" he asks.

"Four dollars a day. Plus expenses."

"Expenses?" he asks as he reaches into his pocket for change.

But as he does, he sneezes.

And I am hit by a hundred eraser tips.

“Dry-cleaning my scarf,” I say. “Your first expense.”



# CHAPTER 5

## I Know Why the Caged Bird Doesn't Sing

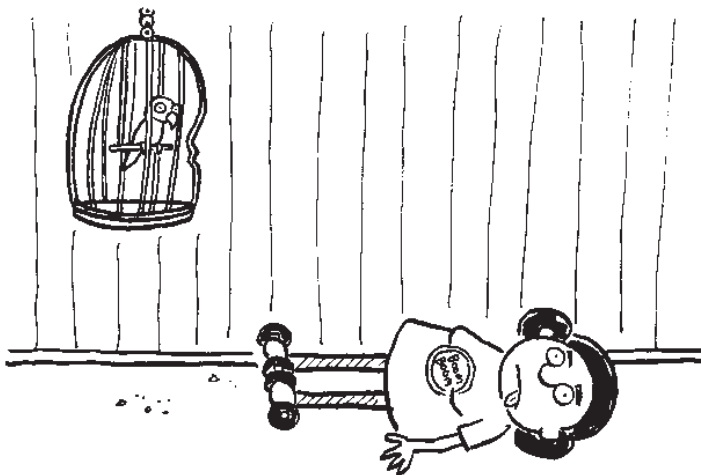
Eraser tips are not the only menace in my life these days.

There is also my great-aunt.

Who right now seems far from great.

I say that because she has attached wheels to her shoes and run into the birdcage.

And now she's unconscious.



I'd help her, but it's the second time today.  
And fourth time this week.

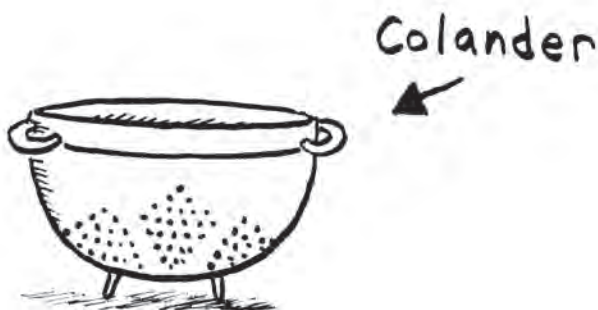
Which is something I know because I live  
with her.

I suppose I should explain.

My mother, my polar bear, and I used to  
live in an apartment. But my mother lost her  
job.

So we had to move in with my mother's  
aunt Colander.

A colander is the thing you use to drain  
spaghetti.

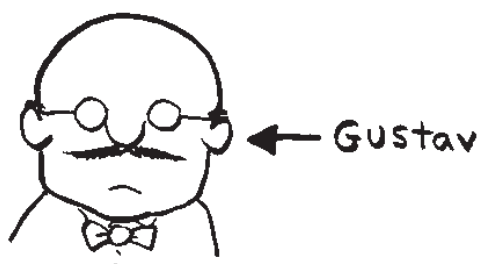


I'm not sure how she got that name.

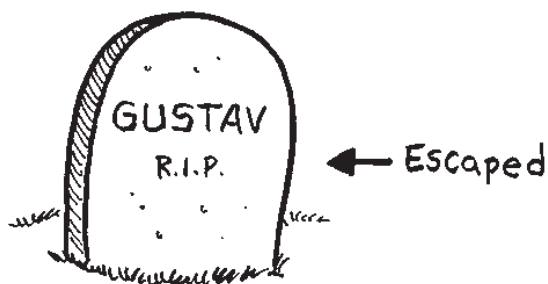
Perhaps it is because she has holes in her  
head through which her brain cells escape.



All I know for sure is that she once had a husband, Great-Uncle Gustav.

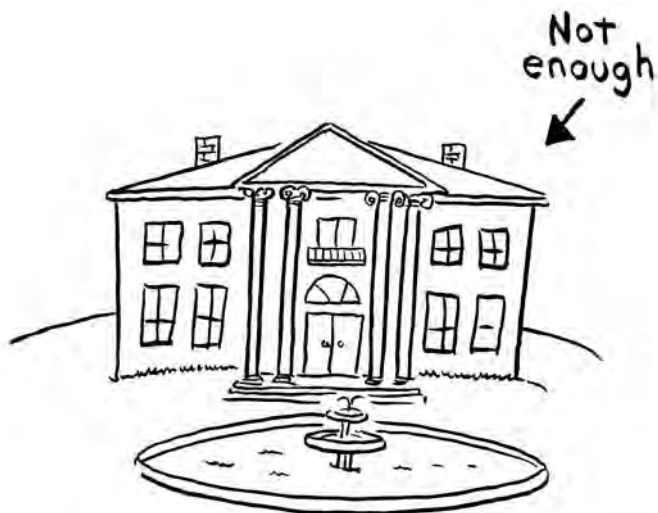


But then he died. Possibly to escape Great-Aunt Colander.



But Gustav was rich. And when he died, he left my mother's aunt with a big mansion in the big-mansion-filled town of Santa Marinara.

Now, that should be enough for any great-aunt. But it's not.



Because Great-Aunt Colander believes she has not yet made her contribution to the civilized world.

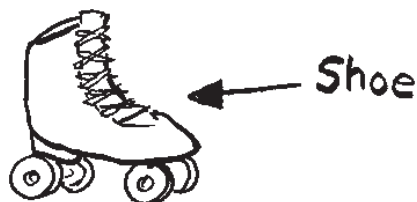
That, she believes, is this:



The Boom Boom Shoewheel is a set of two wheels that you attach to each of your shoes.

It is not a roller skate.

The difference, as Great-Aunt Colander will explain to you for the better part of an afternoon, is that a roller skate *already comes with a shoe*.



The Boom Boom Shoewheel does not.



That is apparently too subtle a distinction for sporting-goods stores, all of whom refuse to carry this dangerous product and refuse to take any more phone calls from Great-Aunt Colander.



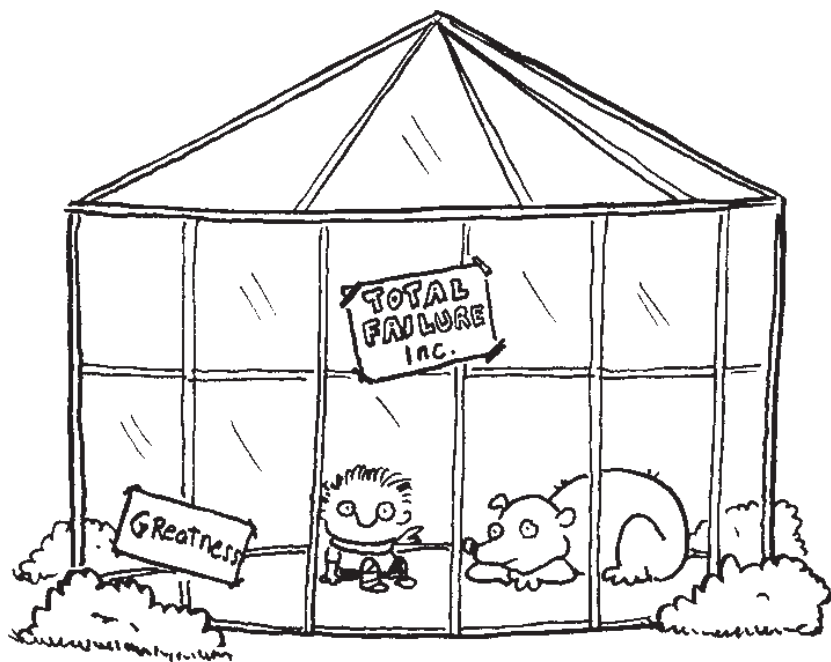
I only wish *I* could get away from her that easily.

But I can't.

So the best I can do is enjoy some of the perks that come with a mansion.

Like the fact that my detective agency is now housed in its largest office to date

My great-aunt's solarium.

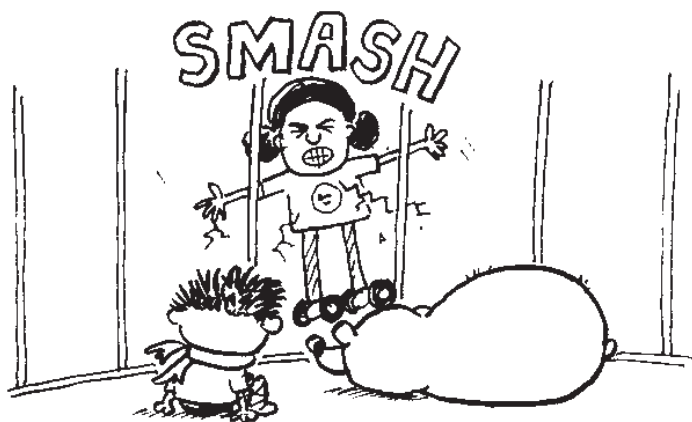


It's spacious. It has great views. And the glass offers protection.

Against the wind.

The bees.

And the occasional flying aunt



# Timmy Failure: Now Look What You've Done

Stephan Pastis

"Pastis (*Pearls before Swine*) has a knack for comic timing, and the interplay between cartoon, text, and the absurdities of the story should continue to attract readers who wish they could shake their fists at the world with such inept panache." – *Booklist*

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