

Another Fine Mess 002

Norman Jorgensen

ISBN: 9781 9210645 5

PUBLICATION DATE: 2007

Synopsis

Best friends Michael Hardy and Woody Decker are on a mission to date Gerri and Gina, the two hottest chicks at Chard Valley Junior High, but everything conspires against them. At the town's agricultural show a police car catches alight, Sideshow Alley burns down, and Michael, through no efforts of his own, becomes a reluctant town hero. All his troubles should be over, and girls flocking to his side, when he wins a Citizen Bravery Award — but his life continues to spiral out of control and straight down the toilet. Or, in Michael's case, into the sewerage works. In a town populated with odd characters, total losers and the most deluded fools imaginable, Michael and Woody still manage to stand out and make their readers feel superior. No one can possibly be that unlucky. Can they?

In the funniest novel to hit the bookshelves in years, a wildly chaotic ride full of side-splitting disasters, Michael Hardy fancies himself as a world famous spy novelist having created a fictional character, the uber-cool and dangerous Dirk Fleming, Junior MI6 Agent. Unlike his hapless author, the fearless Dirk Fleming can do no wrong as he saves the world from weapons of mass destruction, escapes from the clutches of the notorious KGB and wins the admiration of Antonia Ford, the sexiest spy in MI6. All Michael needs to do now is find a publisher as deluded as he is ...

A Fine Mess! was published in 2004 and originally written with reluctant readers in mind; the sequel, *Another Fine Mess 002*, has taken on a life of its own and reaches a much wider readership.

Biographical Notes

Norman Jorgensen once lived in the town on which he based Chard Valley (name changed to protect the innocent!). The imaginary characters that inhabit Chard Valley were largely inspired by his friends from his own teenage days. He insists Michael Hardy is only loosely based on himself, though everyone who knows him just smiles politely and continues to disbelieve him since he is nearly as awkward as his hero.



Norman grew up in various country towns around Western Australia with his parents and three younger brothers, who all loved telling stories, building hill trolleys, tree houses and forts, creating dangerous and deadly contraptions and generally causing their mother a great deal of worry. Many of Michael and Woody's escapades, especially the perilous ones, have their origins in the chaotic imaginations and inventions of the Jorgensen boys.

Norman now lives in a hundred-year-old house in Perth with his partner, Jan, a school librarian, who, fortunately, has a much stronger grip on reality than he does. They live surrounded by books, old movies, travel brochures and enormous mosquitoes and are visited occasionally by those few remaining friends still willing to take the chance of appearing in print as the imaginary, and psychologically challenged, citizens of Chard Valley.

Study Notes

- Look at the cover. The design is similar to a movie poster or a DVD cover. Why do you think the designer chose this style? If you were the designer what would you have done?
- List the three worst disasters, in your opinion, involving Michael and Woody. Write about the worst disaster you may have caused. Feel free to use your imagination to take poetic licence with the events and make your story more dramatic.
- Michael Hardy's fictional spy Dirk Fleming is the sort of person he would like to be – clever, athletic, super cool, expert with spy gadgets and with the razor-sharp vision needed to fly a Harrier Jet Fighter. Invent your own hero. List their qualities. Describe their appearance. Explain how they would make their mark on the world, the environment, the town or even just the school.
- Michael's first date with Gerri goes horribly wrong when he spills red cordial all over her clothes. Write a scene of the dialogue you would expect to hear if a similar thing happened to you.
- Michael is the assistant editor of Skool Daze, the Chard Valley High School newspaper. Design and create the front page of a newspaper for your school.
- Michael and Woody dread wearing the Bright Sparks uniform as it is so not cool. Design a new uniform for them which would appeal to teenagers and that you would not mind having to wear if you were forced to join the group.