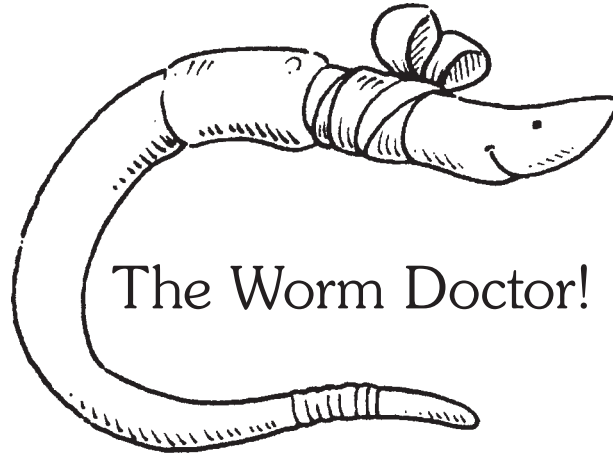


Bernard Bunting



The Spider Spotter!



The Worm Doctor!

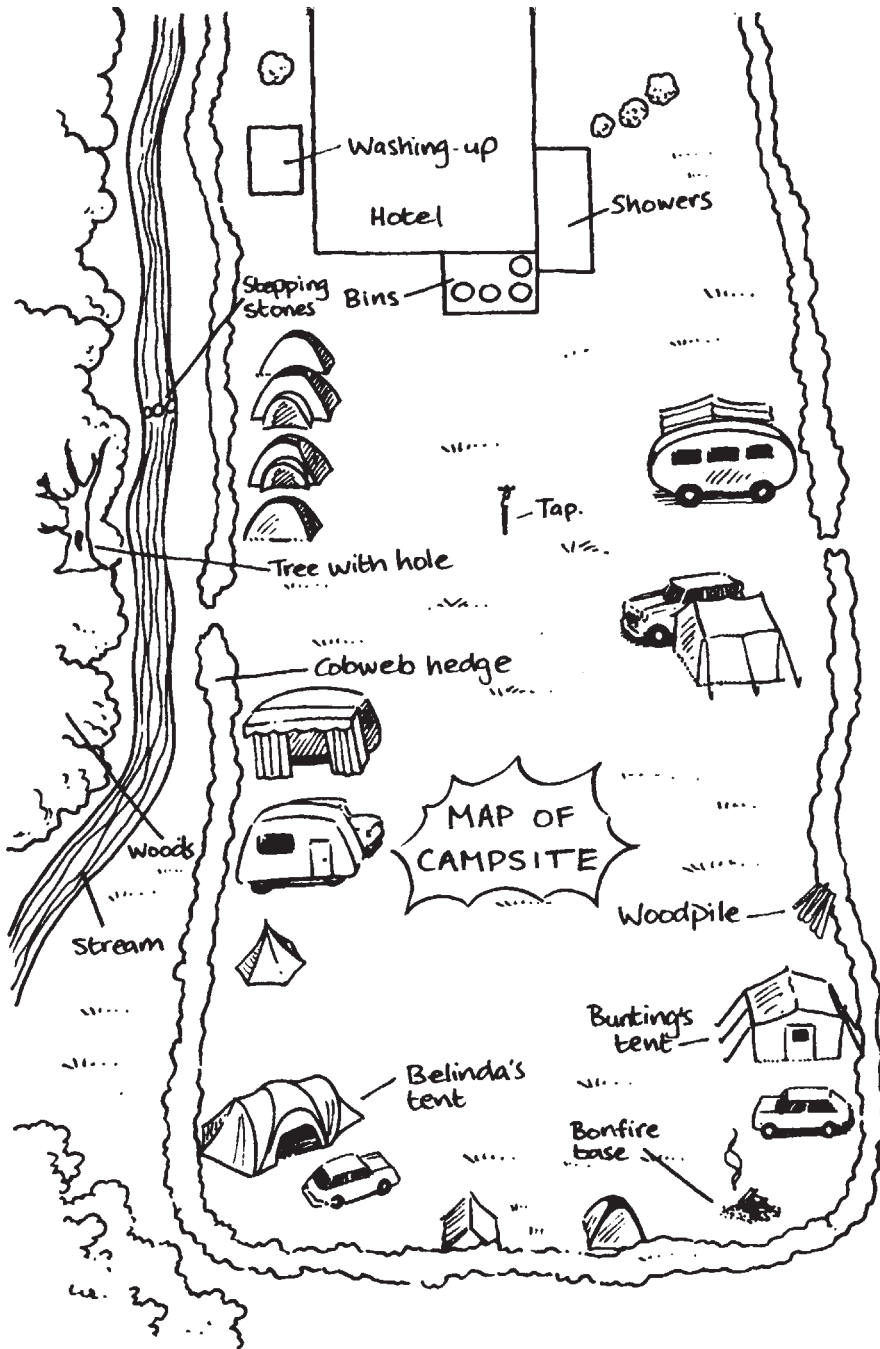
Ro Willoughby

Illustrated by Nick Ward



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Spider facts

- * Some spiders can make as much as 33 metres of silk a day.
- * The red-kneed tarantula spider is bigger than your hand.
- * A baby spider is called a spiderling.
- * The largest spider is called the goliath bird-eating spider.
- * The smallest spider is called the patu marplest spider. It is as big as a full stop.
- * A tarantula can live for 28 years.
- * The water spider builds its home under water.
- * A trapdoor spider lives in a burrow.
- * A female spider usually lays about 100 eggs.



Bernard Bunting was squashed. He was sitting in the back of the car in a space no larger than a football. His feet rested on a sleeping bag. This pushed his knees up so that they nearly hit his chin. The back of his head rested on a box of corn pops. Every time the car stopped quickly, the box shot forward. It nearly cut off his head.



In the middle of the back seat was a large plastic box of food. The tins and boxes inside it all had sharp edges. Bernard could not even rest his arm on the plastic box.

Bernard was very, very fed up.

Worst of all, his sister Babs was sitting in the other corner. She had lots of room. She didn't have to curl up into a ball. She was reading a book. Every few minutes she pulled a face at Bernard.

"Are we nearly there?" Bernard said for the tenth time. "I'm bored!"

His dad said something. Bernard couldn't hear. The car stopped suddenly. The corn pops box shot forward. It hit the back of Bernard's head.



Bernard sighed. Babs was one year older than he was. That made her eight years old. Sometimes she played with Bernard. Sometimes she was nice to him. But sometimes she was horrid. She was always talking. She was only quiet when she was reading or sleeping. And she knew how to tease Bernard.

Bernard groaned. Why did he have to have a sister? Why couldn't he have a brother? Nothing was fair!

Feeling miserable, Bernard watched as a tiny spider crawled along the top of the front seat. Halfway across it stopped. It waved one of its legs. Then it went on – down the side of the seat. It was gone.

“I wonder how that spider got into the car,” Bernard said to himself.

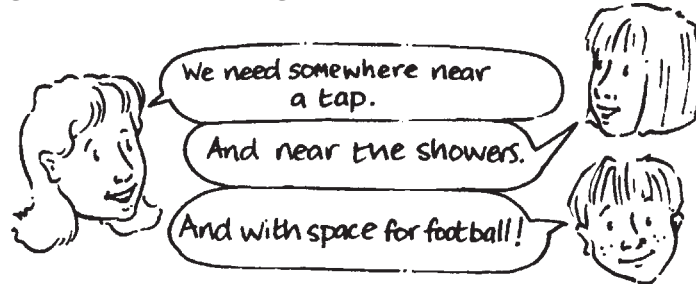
Minutes later the car stopped. Dad switched off the engine. They were outside a hotel called “The Black Swan”.

“Are we staying in a hotel?” Babs called out, excited all of a sudden. She wanted to stay in a hotel.

“No,” Mum said, “the campsite is behind the hotel.”

They drove the car onto the field at the back of the hotel. Dad looked for some flat

ground at the edge of the field.

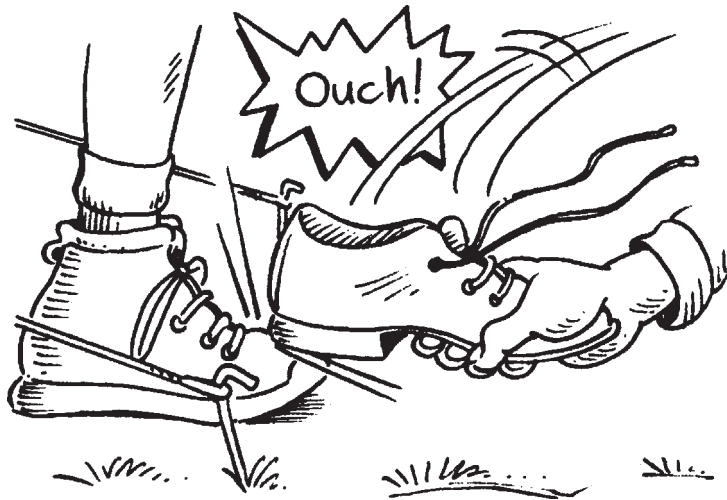


“Come on, Bernard,” Dad called out.
“We’ll soon have the tent up.”

Bernard’s dad was a firefighter. He was good at climbing ladders. He was good at helping people in trouble. But today he was not good at putting up a tent. Everything went wrong.



Bernard got crosser and crosser. The rain came down in long thin lines. He got soaked. Dad couldn't find the mallet. The tent pegs had to be knocked in with the heel of his shoe. That was bad news for the shoe. Dad even hit Bernard's foot. He thought it was a tent peg!



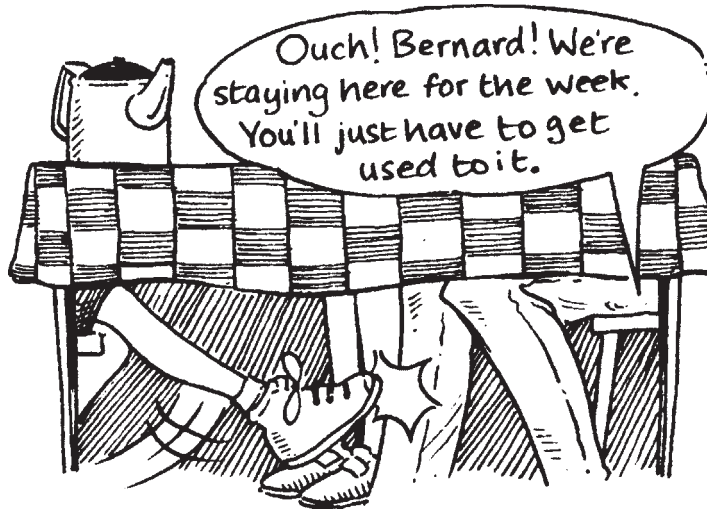
Worst of all, Babs was useless. She found a girl on the campsite who was aged nine.

“Belinda and I are going to play together all week,” she told everyone at teatime. “I won't have to bother with small boys after all!” She stuck her tongue out at Bernard.

It was still raining. So they had to eat their tea in the tent. The thick vegetable soup was too hot. It burnt Bernard's tongue.

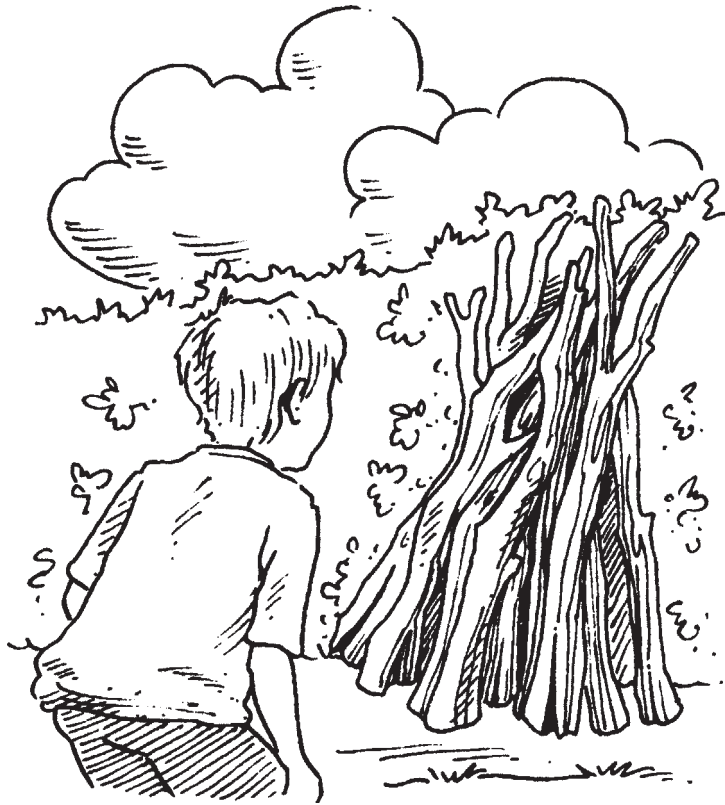
"Can't we go home now?" Bernard suggested.

Babs giggled. Bernard kicked her under the table. But...



Bernard gulped a last mouthful of soup. It was almost cold now. He pulled on his boots and coat. He was going out for a walk. This was going to be the worst holiday ever!





Babs helped them drag the wood to the bottom of the field. Dad rolled up some newspaper. He stuffed it underneath the wood.

“This will help light the fire,” he said.

When they had finished, Bernard went back to where the woodpile had been. The grass under it was a lighter green than the rest of the grass. He took out the spideria.



Bernard took off the top and shook the bottle upside-down, very gently in case any spiders were still alive. Grass and earth came out first. Then out came a few small leaves. Bernard saw a small spider crawl out from under one of these leaves. He ran for the hedge. That made Bernard feel happier.

They're not all dead, he thought.



Staring at the almost empty lemonade bottle, Bernard thought about his holiday. It was the best holiday ever. They had done so many fun things and Babs hadn't been so bad. Jesus really had helped him to get on with her. But then Mum and Dad were always saying that Jesus liked to help when things are difficult. Bernard wanted to thank Jesus for the holiday.

He was so deep in thought that he didn't hear someone creeping up behind him. So...



“Babs!” Bernard yelled.

Babs laughed. Bernard was about to yell at her again when he saw that she was smiling. Not a nasty smile, but a kind one.



Later on, Bernard sat by the bonfire eating a black sausage and a hard potato. It was getting dark but the bonfire made everything glow red and gold. Inside Bernard's pocket was his plastic spider. He slipped his hand inside the pocket to check it was still there. It was. Bernard sighed happily.

"I can take this one home," he said to himself, "and this spider will live for ever."

