



Horrid Henry: The Facts Behind the Fiction

Many of my stories are inspired by real life situations. Here are just a few!

Horrid Henry's Underpants: Someone told me a very funny story about trying to get rid of terrible underpants and I knew I had to write a Horrid Henry about it.

Horrid Henry and the Secret Club: Our family spent a holiday reading lots of "Secret Sevens" and "Famous Fives" so my head was buzzing with passwords and secret clubs.... Moody Margaret's password, "nunga" was one of my son's favourite nonsense words.

Horrid Henry Tricks the Tooth Fairy: My son Joshua was born in August, so he was one of the youngest in his class, and was upset when everyone was losing teeth but him. Then, when he finally did start losing teeth, he kept trying to trick the tooth fairy and see if he could catch her arriving.

Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quick: My son was always wanting to have jumble sales, so I asked myself what Horrid Henry would want to sell at his jumble sale. Obvious answer--Peter!

Horrid Henry and the Comfy Black Chair: My niece and nephew own a comfy black chair, and their house rule was that whoever got the comfy black chair got to control the TV remote control. I knew that Henry and Peter had to have a comfy black chair as well.

Horrid Henry and the Mummy's Curse: I got the idea for Mummy's curse because we Americans call our mothers "mommy" and when I lived in England as a child I thought it was hilarious that British children called their mothers "mummy", which to me was like calling them "werewolf" or "dracula".

Horrid Henry and the Demon Dinner Lady: I was collecting funny stories about dinner ladies when a friend told me about a dinner lady at her daughter's primary school who used to snatch food from the kids. The demon dinner lady was born on the spot.

Horrid Henry's Revenge: The bit where Henry leaves Peter stuck up a tree at midnight is based on a true story. Believe it or not, that boy grew up to be a teacher!

Horrid Henry's Car Journey: My brother told me loads of funny stories about terrible family car journeys which I used in this book. When I was a child we all used to fight over who got a window seat as there were three of us and no one wanted to sit in the middle.

Horrid Henry Meets the Queen: I read a newspaper article about a three year old boy bursting into tears when Prince Charles arrived at his nursery by helicopter and sobbing that he wanted Prince Charles to go away. I immediately thought, 'what would Henry do if the Queen came to his school...

Horrid Henry and the Mega-Mean Time Machine: My sister reminded me that we used to love playing time machines whenever we had a big cardboard box to play in.

Horrid Henry's Author Visit: The idea came to me, not surprisingly, while I was in the middle of doing a talk at a literary festival. I particularly enjoyed writing the ridiculous lyrics for the Happy Nappy song, and should mention that Miranda Richardson, who reads the stories so brilliantly on CD, was a big help with the rhymes and also helped me solve the ending. We did this having supper together at the Wolseley in London and got a number of puzzled looks from other diners as we fell about laughing.

Horrid Henry's Rainy Day: My playwright friend Tim Fountain was teasing me one evening about what stories I would write if Horrid Henry ever grew up and said, "What about Horrid Henry's Living Will?" Saying the word "will" triggered the story.

Horrid Henry Robs the Bank: It seems that everyone plays board games, and everyone cheats at board games. I collected a few favourite cheating strategies, and wrote the story.

Horrid Henry's Newspaper: I always loved making newspapers when I was a child, and my son enjoyed it as well, so I asked myself what Henry would do if he wrote a newspaper...