

Born to be B.A.D

As the velvety red curtain drew away, a small, 10 year old boy stood on the stage. He wore a crisp black suit, a smart bowtie and a flashy top hat. In his gloved right hand a sleek wand lay. The audience quieted as the boy, Billy. A. Dalgaard, picked up a pack of shiny cards and started to shuffle. That was the moment when the audience's sky high opinions of him shattered. Billy had dropped the cards! His parents could be heard sighing from backstage, as their hopeless child's cheeks turned a bright fuchsia. "Er, um, ah, ta da?" He hopefully added. The audience jeered and mocked. When he was not able to take any more, Billy ran backstage, tripping over his pants. This was almost as bad as what had happened last week. His rabbit, that he had strategically placed in his black top hat, had escaped and run away, but not before she deposited a chocolate coloured "gift" on his head. It was clearly NOT chocolate, and it was far too visible on Billy's sandy blond hair to be mistaken for something else.

Billy's parents were Madame and Monsieur Dalgaard, famous magicians who toured the world with their children. Billy's brother, Samuel, was as gifted as his parents and the obvious favourite, while Billy was like his initials, B.A.D. So after years of card tricks gone wrong, bunnies not appearing and all of Billy's other failures, his parents made a difficult decision.

So, one blustery Thursday evening they announced, " Billy, you are a total failure and a terrible magician. On Saturday you will have your last performance then move to Clareville Clown School in Wellington.". The 12 year old boy was dismayed, and cried enough to fill the Nile.

Later that night though Billy wondered something - what was so bad about clown school? He typed furiously on his computer, until he found a group chat from children attending the school. They seemed friendly and fun. From the comments the school also sounded wonderful, with all sorts of interesting classes like the art of tripping over everything you see (Billy felt he was going to be good at that one), DIY clown make-up, a beginner's guide to falling off your bike (he probably could go to advanced for that one) and even practise scenarios for fake poo. Perhaps it wouldn't be so bad. "In fact," Billy thought, "it sounds like all the things I'm good at and enjoy - and normally get yelled at for."

On Saturday afternoon Billy prepared for his last show, half tempted to purposely muck-up. The curtain lifted, he raised his chin, then started his sure-to-be terrible show. "Abracadabra!" Billy announced in a monotonous voice, while he lifted his hat ready for the rabbit to not appear. "Amazing, spectacular, truly wonderful!" the audience cried out.

He turned his head to his hat in surprise. He took a breath. He opened an eye. He gasped! There, perched on the brim of Billy's hat, was a colourful, slightly bamboozled, live iguana. Billy had done a different kind of magic!

A few moments later backstage, listening to the still thunderous applause, Billy dragged his mind back to the present. He realised his parents wouldn't force him to go to clown school. Now he was in the best place of all... a place of choice.