

10 Origami

It was the middle of the summer holiday and Billy was wondering what to do. He'd played his trumpet. He'd practiced his juggling. He'd ridden his bike. He'd played football with Mickey. He'd even re-read all of his Mick Muscle fan club magazines from cover to cover, and he couldn't think of another thing to do. Billy wandered into the living room, sat next to his Mum and uttered the inevitable, and dreaded, words; "I'm bored!"

"Play your trumpet," said Mum.

"Done it!" he replied.

"Do some juggling then."

"Done that too," he said.

"Go for a bike ride then."

"Just got back from one," he sighed.

Mum and Billy went through a great long list of things, but he had done, or didn't want to do, all of them.

"I've done everything," he said, "and now I'm bored."

Mum sighed and glanced at the calendar out of the corner of her eye.

"Oh no!" she thought, "three and a half weeks of summer holiday to go!"

Mum could feel a rising sense of desperation deep inside her when suddenly she had what she thought was a brain wave.

"Billy, why don't you learn origami?"

"Ori who?" said Billy, "what's that?"

"It's an ancient Chinese way of making models out of paper," said Mum. "You'll like it. I'm sure there are lots of books about it in the Library."

Billy pulled on his trainers and set off for the library straight away. He whispered, "Origami, origami, origami," to himself all the way, just so he wouldn't forget!

He went in the library and Mrs. Husher, the librarian, was about to say: "Your book on juggling has arrived Billy."

But Billy said: "Have you got any books on Oily-gum-tree?"

Mrs. Husher thought for a while as she always did when Billy came into the Library.

"I think you mean origami, Billy. Is that right?" she asked.

"Yeah, that's what I said, Oily-gum-tree!" replied Billy.

Mrs. Husher showed Billy about ten books. He took five of them out and hurried back home.

He started with: 'A Beginners Guide to Origami.' Chapter One: 'How to make a duck.' He got a large sheet of paper and began folding. He folded here, he folded there, he folded folded everywhere, and eventually ended up with a very crumpled and grubby piece of paper that looked a bit like a cross between a dead hedgehog and a toilet roll. He screwed up the paper, dropped it on the floor and started again.

Two hours later, Mum came in. Billy was sitting at the table in the dining room and all around him, nearly up to his waist, was a pile of crumpled and screwed up pieces of paper.

"Billy!?" said Mum.

"Grrrrr!" he replied.

"Shall I help you?" asked Mum.

"No, I can do it," he replied through clenched teeth. And then, in a rather condescending voice he said, "It's difficult you know Mum, very difficult."

Billy tried and tried all that day. Every time Mum offered to help Billy would growl or grunt or stamp his feet and mutter something under his breath like, "Stupid oily-gum-tree! It's this book, the instructions are all wrong!"

Billy wouldn't listen to his Mum's offers of help. He was determined to do it himself. But as usual, the harder he tried the worse his models seemed to get. He made a horse that looked like a crashed car, a dog that looked more like a snake that had been run over by a lorry, and a flying bird that looked like an aeroplane with only one wing and no tail. By teatime the wheelie bin was full to the brim with screwed up paper and Billy was more than a little annoyed. Mum was beginning to wonder whether her good idea had been a good idea at all.

Billy stomped up stairs on his way to bed muttering, "Stupid book, those instructions are all wrong! It's impossible! It's stupid!"

He went to sleep vowing that he would never fold another piece of paper again and that he would take the books back to the Library first thing in the morning.

That evening Mum sat down at the table and looked at the Origami book. She took a piece of paper and, ten minutes later; there was a beautiful model of a duck, just like the one in the picture, sitting on the table. Then a horse and a dog, a flying bird, a person standing up, and finally a beautiful tree. Mum left them on the table and went to bed.

When Billy came downstairs the next morning he could hardly believe his eyes. "Wow!" he said to himself, "who could have done these?"

Then he realised there was only one person who could have done them, it must have been...it must have been Mum!

"Are you going to try some more origami today?" asked Mum over breakfast.

"Err, yeah, yeah," stuttered Billy, "do, do, do you think, do you think, do you think you could help me?"

Mum and Billy sat at the table all morning folding and tucking. Billy's first duck didn't look much different from the cross between the dead hedgehog and the toilet roll. But the second one looked a bit better, and the third even better, and the fourth, well that was something else! It looked just like the one in the picture in the book.

"Wow!" said Billy, "Wow! Thanks Mum!"

Very soon the room was full of beautiful origami models, all of them made by Billy and Mum together. In fact Billy's Mum got very, very good at origami, so good that later that year she started the Driptown Origami Club where Billy and his Mum have got very famous for their joint ventures. There's even been an exhibition of their origami models at Driptown Town Hall.

Whenever they do their origami though, Billy and Mum always do it together. They've never known why, but for some reason it always seems easier that way!

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