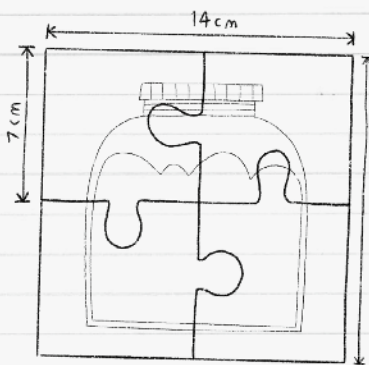


SLUGS  
INVADE  
THE  
jam  
Factory

CHRISSIE  
SAINS

ILLUSTRATED BY  
JENNY  
TAYLOR

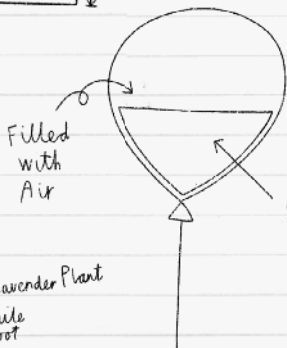
# My Newest JAM Inventions



Jam Jigsaw

Need MORE ideas!!

Picture of jam jar that you can actually EAT



Needs to be thin

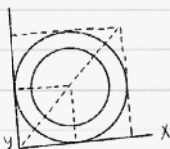
- Use jam rolling pin.

Coconut Jam Blend

can't be too STICKY!

IMPORTANT

MUST FLOAT



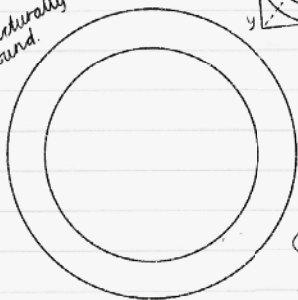
Relaxing Lavender Jam



Increase sugar content to make plate more structurally sound.

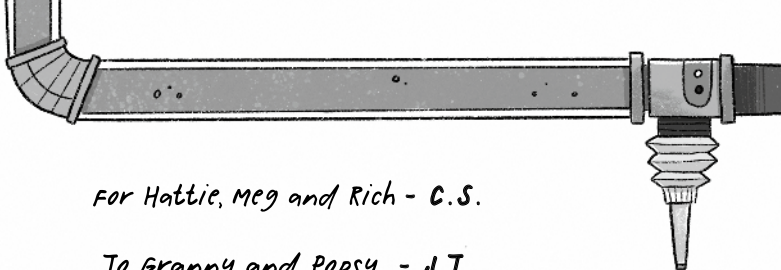
Jam Party

Plates



Potential Flavours

- Strawberry
- Watermelon
- Blackberries



*For Hattie, Meg and Rich - C.S.*

*To Granny and Popsy - J.T.*

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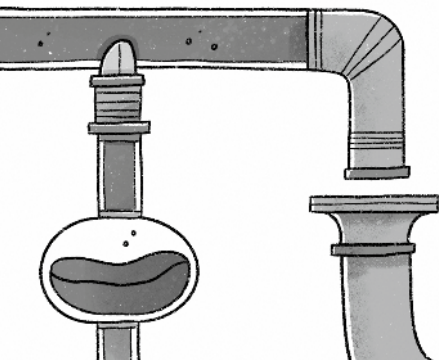
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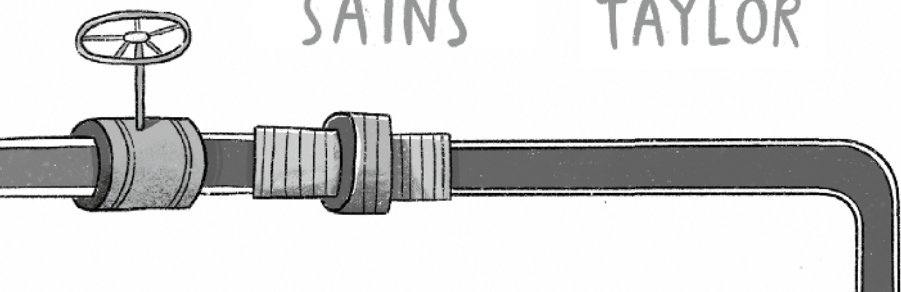




SLUGS  
INVADE  
THE **jam**  
Factory

CHRISSIE  
SAINS

ILLUSTRATED BY  
JENNY  
TAYLOR





McLAYS JAM  
- WINNER OF THE BEST JAM -





## CHAPTER ONE

Chief Inventor, Scooter McLay, stood outside the main entrance of McLay's jam factory. He looked from left to right, his eyes alert, his body tense. Slowly and carefully, he lay a plate of jam sandwiches on the ground. He searched the darkness outside, his gaze resting for a moment on a shadowy hawthorn bush to the side of the path.

Had something moved over there?

He watched a moment longer then shook his head. It was probably just a gust of wind.

He backed up into the safety of the factory, pressed the large, round *Door Lock* button and breathed a sigh of relief as the steel security door shut and the bolts clicked reassuringly into place.

“I really hope this plan works.” He squinted out through a spyhole in the door as a jam tart hovered in the air by his shoulder.

“Me too, Scooter.” A very tiny and very round alien peered over the pastry rim of the jam tart as she crossed her fingers nervously.

The alien was called Fizzbee.

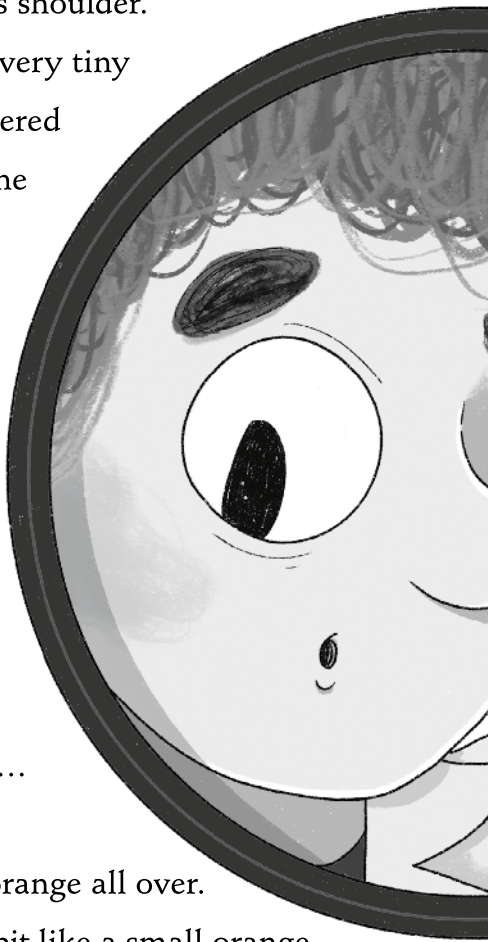
Just like Scooter, Fizzbee was an inventor.

Just like Scooter, Fizzbee loved jam.

And she was orange ... just like Scooter’s hair.

Except Fizzbee was orange all over.

In fact, she looked a bit like a small orange ping-pong ball, but with two little arms and




legs, two big eyes that took up half of her face and two antennae that she could use to make things fly. Most of the time she flew around in a jam tart beside Scooter's shoulder.

Most importantly, Fizzbee was Scooter's best friend in all the world.

"It is ... *quite* a good plan." She gave him a reassuring pat on the ear. "Fizzbee is ... ummm ... *sure* that it will work." She crossed both arms and legs, smiled sheepishly, then crossed her antennae.

"It won't." Scooter turned in surprise to see Daffy Dodgy leaning on the trunk of a banana tree behind him, studying her fingernails oh-so-casually.





“Believe me, those slippery little suckers are *organized*. That’s why they always attack at night when the factory is closed.” Daffy glanced at the letterbox, which was nailed shut, and gave the hammer in her pocket a sage pat. “Giving them a jam sandwich is just completely—”

“**Squeak!**” Daffy’s pet guinea pig, Boris, finished her sentence with a roll of his eyes.

“Exactly, Boris!” Daffy agreed, her *Head of Security* badge gleaming proudly on her brown velour tracksuit. “I couldn’t have said it better myself.”

“**Squeak, squeak.**” Boris glared witheringly at Scooter, before wriggling his bum uncomfortably in his hazmat suit.



This was the only way that Boris was allowed to enter the jam factory, following an incident involving an unidentified guinea pig poo found floating in the banana jam just last week. Boris and Daffy had sworn that it was absolutely nothing to do with them, but Scooter wasn't taking any chances when it came to factory hygiene.



Scooter turned back to the spyhole, his eyes locking on the plate of jam sandwiches outside.

There was no movement. No sound. Nothing.

What if Daffy was right? What if this plan wasn't going to work?

Except ... *it had to.*

Because – and this was a first for Scooter – *he was running out of ideas.*

He stood back from the door, turned towards his beloved factory and let out a long sigh.



When Scooter had decided to grow fruit and vegetables inside his jam factory, his only thought had been to make the jam as tasty as possible. After all, everyone knows that the best jam comes from the freshest fruit. But of course, in Scooter's typical way, he hadn't just grown some fruit.

Oh no.

Scooter had turned the entire factory into a tropical glasshouse. Or, as Scooter called it, a tropical jam-making paradise! And over the last few months, it had become so much *more* than

that. Especially since Scooter's friend, Cat

Pincher, had been helping them. Cat

loved growing plants as much as Scooter

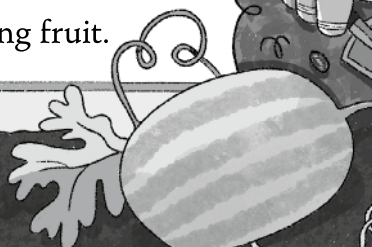
and Fizzbee loved inventing jam. Under

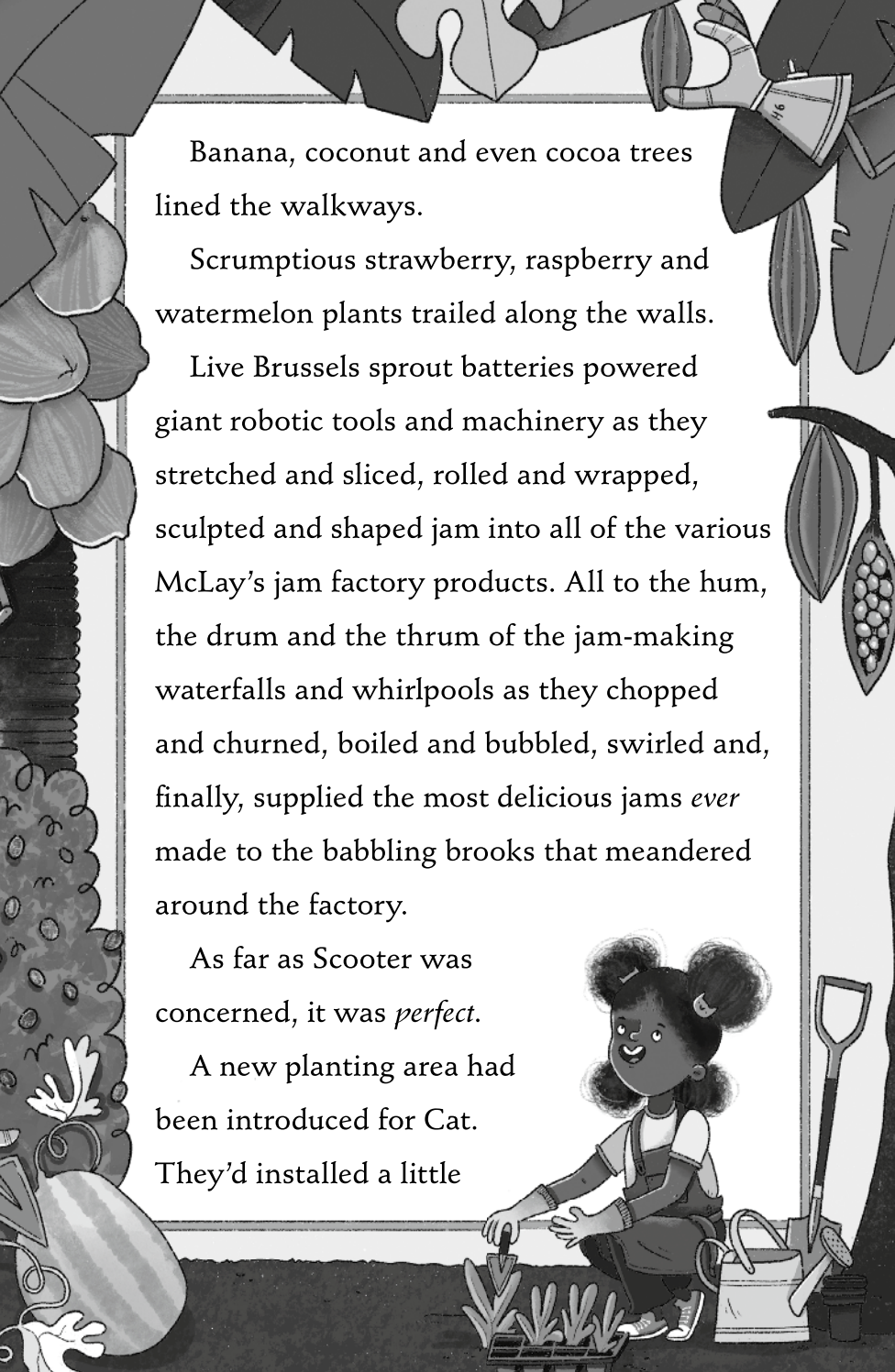
Cat's care, the plants had flourished and

grown, and the tropical house was now

bursting at the seams with all sorts of

luscious, juicy, mouth-watering fruit.





Banana, coconut and even cocoa trees lined the walkways.

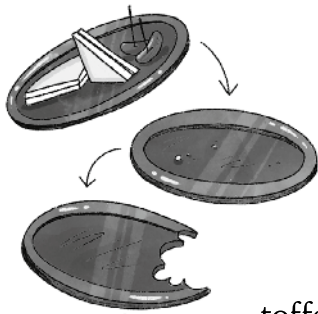
Scrumptious strawberry, raspberry and watermelon plants trailed along the walls.

Live Brussels sprout batteries powered giant robotic tools and machinery as they stretched and sliced, rolled and wrapped, sculpted and shaped jam into all of the various McLay's jam factory products. All to the hum, the drum and the thrum of the jam-making waterfalls and whirlpools as they chopped and churned, boiled and bubbled, swirled and, finally, supplied the most delicious jams *ever* made to the babbling brooks that meandered around the factory.

As far as Scooter was concerned, it was *perfect*.

A new planting area had been introduced for Cat. They'd installed a little

greenhouse, a potting shed, even a compost chute! And right beside it was Scooter and Fizzbee's testing area where they could work on their new jam inventions.



Watermelon Wonder Jam Party plates – use as a plate to hold a jam sandwich and some mini sausages (and maybe some cheese puffs), then crack it like toffee and eat it for your pudding.

#### Crackerjack Coconut Jam

Balloons – experience the miracle of edible floating jam balloons!



Jam Jigsaws – put the jigsaw pieces together to create a picture of a jam jar you can actually eat!



Relaxing Lavender Jam – sit back and unwind with a dollop on your toast!



But there was a problem.

Apparently, Scooter, Fizzbee and Cat weren't the only ones who loved the tropical house. The dense air and lush vegetation had attracted a cold-blooded enemy...

## **SLUGS.**


Every single day, Scooter, Fizzbee and Cat scoured the factory for traces of slug slime that led them straight to a fresh batch of slugs who had slithered their way inside. Somehow, despite the bulletproof glass, the alarm and the lasers, the slugs kept slinking in. They'd broken in through the vents, the letterbox, even the sewage pipes!



Scooter had to admit, as unlikely as Daffy's suggestion sounded, the slugs did seem a bit ... well *organized*. But that was impossible, wasn't it? Slugs weren't clever enough to be organized. Were they?


Scooter glanced towards the New Inventions Testing Area, where some of his slug defence ideas were listed on a whiteboard.






He sighed. Scooter had never encountered a problem that he couldn't find a solution to. After all, he had a head full of ideas and inventions. They whizzed and whooshed, zipped and sparked around inside his brain with so much enthusiasm that Scooter's halo of bright orange hair stuck out from his head like the beams of a light bulb.

There was a reason for this.



It was all to do with the day that Scooter was born.

The day that newborn Scooter took eight whole minutes to take his first breath.



In those eight long minutes, as he hung between life and death, his brain had somehow developed *hyper-creativity*.

There were other side effects too.

Scooter had cerebral palsy, a condition which, for Scooter, meant that the muscles on the left side of his body were a little stiff

and he had to wear an uncomfortable splint to stop his left foot from dragging. But that didn't worry Scooter. It made life a little harder sometimes, but it was a part of him, just like his dogged determination and his brilliant ideas.

Except, for a few weeks now, Scooter had noticed that his ideas felt less whizzy and whoosshy, less zippy and sparky and more ... well, more of a ... squidgey *pffft*.

It was very odd. Not to mention inconvenient. It was the start of the school holidays and Scooter had planned to catch up with all of the jobs that needed doing around the factory. He had a to-do list as long as a bog



roll and now, with this whole slug problem, ideas were something that he could really do with *more* of, not *less*.

“Hey, Scoot!” Cat Pincher swung down from a rope bridge above his head. She was always swinging down from somewhere unexpectedly. “What’s with the jam sandwich outside the front door?” She somersaulted off the rope bridge and landed on her mismatched socks and trainers beside him as Fizzbee circled her head gleefully.

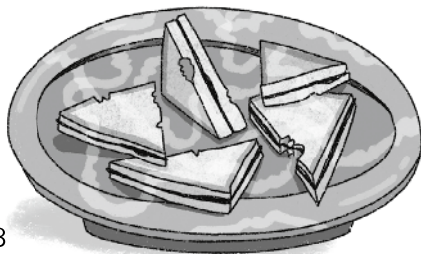
“He’s trying to make friends with the slugs.” Daffy shook her head as she picked up Boris, popped him into a baby carrier on her front and joined them by the front door. “I mean, whoever made friends with a *slug*?” She shuddered.



“It’s a better idea than screaming and running away every time you see one,” Cat retorted.

“Not much, though!” Daffy snapped. “I mean, Scooter’s ideas haven’t exactly been top notch recently.” She glanced towards a wall covered in newspaper cuttings and awards that Scooter had received for his incredible jam flavours and inventions, then met Scooter’s eyes. “Let’s face it, they’re not up to your usual standard.” She shrugged before turning back to Cat. “And anyway, I do not scream and run away every time I see a slug!”

“Look!” Fizzbee squealed as she pointed through the spyhole. “The sandwiches, they have been nibbled! Scooter’s plan is working!” Everyone crowded around for a peek. Fizzbee was right. The sandwiches had a couple of tiny bites taken out of them and the plate was covered in slug slime.



“Do you *really* think that means the plan’s working?” Scooter stared at the plate suspiciously. “I wonder why they haven’t eaten all of them.”

“ARRRRRGGGGGHHHHHHH!” Daffy began hopping from one foot to the other, her arms flapping overhead as three slugs dropped down from a pipe above on a string of slime. “Get away! Get away!” she wailed as she dived to the floor. “No, Scooter. I do *not* think the plan has worked!” she called over her shoulder as she crawled to the safety of a cocoa tree. “You need to come up with a proper plan next time. And that means one that’s actually some GOOD!”

