

**Fame,
Fortune,
and the
Bran Muffins
of
DOOM**

Marty Kelley



Holiday House / New York

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This book is for Kerri, my very own foul girl.

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Chapter 1

The Foul Girl and The Funkee Boyz



I have been trying to develop a glare that will cause people to burst into flames.

I obviously need more practice, because when I glared at Stacy, the foul girl who sits beside me in class, she failed to ignite. Instead, she leaned closer to me and pointed to my secret plan book. “What are you working on?”

“Silence, foul girl,” I commanded. “I have an abundance of work to complete and your **frivolous con-fabulations** serve only to hinder my efforts.”

“Huh?”

I thought I had made myself perfectly clear.



“I am busy,” I explained.

“So, what are you working on?” she asked again.

“He’s probably working on a list of ways that he could be more of a dork,” snorted Mike McAlpine from his desk near the back of the room. “But I’ve got bad news for you, Simon. You couldn’t possibly be more of a dork.”

Mike’s laugh was echoed by his two goons, Evil Ernie and Eviler Ernie.

“Yeah,” said Evil Ernie.

“Yeah,” echoed Eviler Ernie. “There’s no way you could be more of a dork because...uh...because...umm...”

“Because you’re hogging up all the dorkiness in the entire state, Ernie,” said Stacy.

“That’s a good one!” laughed Eviler Ernie. “Oh, no...wait...that’s not a good one, Stacy. I’m not a dork. My grammy says that I’m the coolest kid in my whole family.”

“Aren’t you an only child, Ernie?” Stacy asked.

“Yeah,” mumbled Eviler Ernie. “So what?”

Mike dropped his head to his desk and moaned. “Oh man, Ernie.”

I turned back to my plans just as Mrs. Douglass trudged through the door, clutching her cup of gray, teacher-strength coffee.

“There are 161 days left until I get out of here,” she grumbled. “Now get busy with your work and don’t bother me.”

Mrs. Douglass's daily retirement countdown is followed by a stack of worksheets that she hands out to keep us busy while she drinks coffee and looks through brochures for condominiums in Florida. She never even collects the worksheets. This, of course, leaves us free to entertain ourselves for the entire morning.

I assumed I would be free to work without **further** interruptions.

I assumed incorrectly.

"Simon," Stacy whispered, holding up her magazine. "Look."

I dropped my pencil and turned to her. "What do you want, foul girl? I am attempting to work and your interruptions are proving **acutely vexatious**."

"Did you just make that word up?" she asked.

"Which word do you speak of?" I asked.

"Um...almost all of them," she replied.

"I most certainly did not **fabricate** any of my **lexicon**," I assured her. "Do you never read the dictionary?"

She laughed a silvery laugh, like the tinkling chimes of a far-off ice cream truck. "Read the dictionary?" she asked. "For fun? That's hilarious. You crack me up, Simon. No, I read this."

She held up her magazine and displayed a picture of three boys posing in front of thousands of screaming girls.

"Aren't they dreamy?" she asked.

I inspected the picture more closely, but could see nothing dreamy about them. "I would not say they

were dreamy," I replied. "They look ridiculous in those outfits, and it appears as if their hair has been styled with a lawn mower. Who are those unfortunate fashion victims?"

"Who are they?" Stacy repeated.

Munch looked up from the sticky goo he was eating off the bottom of his sneaker. Munch is one of my associates. His real name is Kevin, but everybody calls him Munch because he will eat anything that he can fit into his mouth.

He leaned forward from his desk behind mine. "Simon, are you serious?" he asked. "My three little sisters know who they are. My three older sisters are all planning to marry them. I think my mom is, too."

"You really don't know who those guys are?" asked Ralph. Ralph is my other close associate. Even though his parents are both doctors, his endless list of allergies, illnesses, and medical conditions has earned him his own private cot in the nurse's office. His spectacular **projectile** vomiting has made him a schoolwide legend. "The waiting room in my parents' office is full of magazines about them. How can you not know who they are?"

"What a dork," laughed Mike McAlpine.

"Yeah," chuckled Evil Ernie.

"Yeah. Even my grammy knows who they are. Now who's hogging up all the dorkiness?" asked Eviler Ernie.

"That would still be you, Ernie," said Stacy. "And,

Simon, these guys just happen to be The Funkee Boyz. You can't tell me you've never heard of The Funkee Boyz."

"In fact," I corrected her, "I can tell you that. I am far too busy with my plans to be bothered learning the name of every ridiculous musical group with poor taste in clothing."

Stacy sighed and began speaking to me as if I were a simple-minded **ignoramus**. "The Funkee Boyz are the most popular musical group in the whole world. And they're super-cute, too. Everybody on the planet knows about them."

"Everybody except Mr. Dork-o-Rama here," sneered Mike.

Munch pulled his finger from his nose and held it toward Mike's face. "Hey, Mike. Does this booger look like Ernie to you?"

"AAAAAHHH!!" screamed Mike, toppling from his chair. "Get that thing away from me!!"

Mrs. Douglass slapped her brochure down and glared at Mike. She was unable to make him burst into flames. Her glare is in need of improvement, as well. "What is the meaning of this, Mr. McAlpine?"

"Munch was going to put a booger on me!" wailed Mike.

Munch licked his finger and held his hands up so Mrs. Douglass could see them. "I have no idea what Mike is talking about, Mrs. Douglass. I've just been sitting here doing my work."

Mrs. Douglass sighed deeply. "If there are any

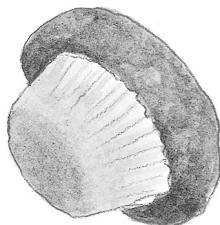
more outbursts, Mr. McAlpine, you'll be taking a trip to Mr. Tappet's office."

Mike quickly sat down and the class was silent.

I continued working on my plan until Mr. Tappet's voice shattered the silence.

Chapter 2

And Now This Brief Message From the Office



"All right. Listen up," barked Mr. Tappet over the intercom. "Mrs. Meredith has some kind of announcement or something she wants to make. So zip your lips and listen up!"

"Um...thank you, Mr. Tappet," squeaked Mrs. Meredith's voice over the speakers. "Is this on? Am I doing this right? Can they hear me?"

There were a few rustling noises and Mr. Tappet said, "Yeah. Just push that button while you talk."

"This one?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"NO!" barked Mr. Tappet.

There was a loud popping noise and the intercom went dead. A few seconds later, it snapped back to life.

"Oh, I see. Thank you," said Mrs. Meredith. "Well, good morning, boys and girls. Isn't it a wonderful day?" There was a long pause, then Mrs. Meredith said, "Why aren't they answering me, Mr. Tappet?"

"The intercom only works one way, Mrs. Meredith. They can hear you. You can't hear them."

"Oh. Yes, of course. How silly of me. How will I know that they are listening?"

"LISTEN UP!" boomed Mr. Tappet. "They're listening."

"Thank you, Mr. Tappet. Well, good morning, boys and girls. Isn't it a wonderful day? I'm sure you're all saying yes, because it is a wonderful day. And to add to the day's wonderfulness, I have an exciting announcement to make. I am organizing the school's first talent show! Isn't that wonderful? Isn't it? Oh, I can't hear you, but I'm sure you are saying it's wonderful.

"This will be a chance for all of you talented little darlings to show off what you can do. Do you sing? Do you dance? Can you do magic? Juggle? Tell jokes? Now you can show off your talent in front of the whole school.

"The talent show will be held on Friday to celebrate Lunch Lady Appreciation Day. I know it's short notice, but I'm sure that you wonderful, talented children will be able to do amazing things! And there are some wonderful prizes for our most talented students. So come to the gym at lunch to sign up your act, and I hope to see you all at the show! Thank you."

"GET BACK TO WORK!" barked Mr. Tappet.

Everyone in our class began yammering excitedly about the talent show. Everyone except me. I flipped to a new page in my secret plan book and began to work on my greatest plan yet.

