

**PAUL JENNINGS**

*the*  
**FANTASTIC & AMAZING**

# **GIZMO**

**ALL FOUR BOOKS IN ONE!**

**THE GIZMO**

**THE GIZMO AGAIN**

**COME BACK GIZMO**

**SINK THE GIZMO**

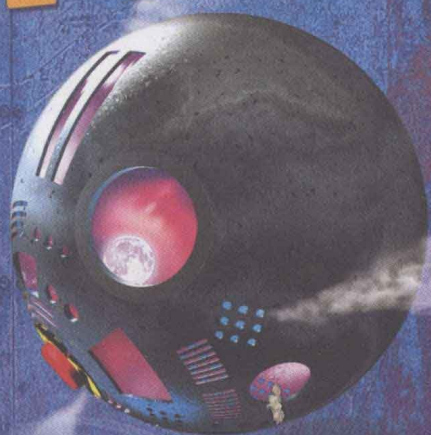


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# GIZMO

常州大学图书馆  
藏书章



With illustrations by Bob Lea

Puffin Books



# *The* **GIZMO**

Stephen's bra is starting to slip.  
His pantyhose are sagging.  
His knickers keep falling down.  
Oh, the shame of it.

He stole a gizmo – and now  
it's paying him back.

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bite off more than they can chew.



I have never stolen anything before. That's why I am not feeling so good. I think I am going to be sick all over the stall. I look at the electric gizmos all laid out for people to buy. What if I spew up just as I am taking something? What if I vomit right when I lean over the counter?

Everyone at the market will look. The

police will grab me. They will tell my father. It will be in the papers. Everyone will know about the boy who was sick when he was trying to nick.

‘Go on,’ says Floggit. ‘Don’t be a wimp.’ He is standing there in his stolen leather jacket. And stolen jeans. He is pointing at one of the gizmos. ‘Quick, knock it off,’ he says.

Why did I agree to this? Why, why, why?

‘You promised,’ says Floggit. He holds up the spanner that he stole from the lady on the tool stall. ‘You promised to nick something if I did.’

I did promise, too. But I was just showing off. Pretending to be tough. What an idiot.

I don’t want to take anything. But I promised. And Floggit will tell the kids at school that I wimped out. Broke my word. I couldn’t let that happen. No way.

I swallow and try to hold down my dinner. I look at the little man who owns the stall. He is sort of strange. Like a man from

another world. There is something not quite right about him. His eyes are wrong. When he blinks you can see through them as if they are windows. It seems to be raining inside his head. He looks as if he could snap his fingers and turn me into a worm. I am scared of him and I am scared of Floggit. I am too scared to steal something. And too scared not to. What will I do?

The little man bends down to tie up his shoe. It is almost as if he is daring me to take something. Behind him I see a sign that says **THIEVES WILL BE PUNISHED.**

‘Quick,’ whispers Floggit. ‘This is your chance. Go, go, go.’

It is now or never. I close my eyes and grab something from the counter. I don’t even know what it is. I turn and run. I scamper off like a terrified rabbit.

I hear Floggit’s breath and pounding feet as he runs behind me. I run and run until my heart hurts so much I have to stop. I collapse



into a heap behind the hot-dog stall.

I wait for the screams and shouts. I wait for someone to yell, 'Stop, thief.' But no one does.

'Whoo-ee,' yells Floggit. 'You did it. You finally grew up.' He pats me on the back. 'What a hero,' he says.

Floggit grins at me. He is glad that I have done what he has done. He is glad that I am a thief like him. We both look at the gizmo which I still hold tight in my hand. It is shaped like a ball with little coloured windows in it. When I look in the windows I can see that it is raining inside. The ball is made of steel and has a button saying ON. But there is no button saying OFF. I have never seen anything that looks like this before. To be honest, it gives me the creeps.

I do not feel like a hero. I am a thief. Two minutes ago I was a normal boy. Just a kid who owned a pet mouse. And a broken bike. With the best mum and dad in the world.

And now I am a thief. I have stolen something. And I don't even know what it is.

I feel like a worm. A worm of toothpaste that has been squeezed out of the tube and can't get back in.

'What did you get?' says Floggit. He stares at my stolen loot. 'That belongs to me,' he says. 'I get to keep it for teaching you how to flog.'

'You can have it,' I say sadly. 'I don't want it.'

'Push the ON button,' says Floggit. He does not seem quite so keen to take the gizmo now. Maybe he is scared of it.

'We don't know what it does,' I say.

'Yeah,' says Floggit. 'You'd better go back and pinch the instructions.'

A shadow falls over us. We both look up. A security guard is staring down. He wears a blue uniform. He is looking straight at us. 'Hey, you two . . .' he says.

Quick as a flash, Floggit jumps up and

throws the stolen spanner onto my lap. 'Here's your spanner back,' he says to me in a loud voice.

He bends down and whispers in my ear, 'Meet me at the pool.' Then he turns and runs for his life.

'Come back,' I yell. 'Don't leave me.'

Floggit looks back over his shoulder. Just for a second. 'Suffer,' is all he says. Then he vanishes around the corner.

I am left alone. With the loot. And the security guard. And a very guilty look on my face.



The security guard stares at Floggit as he disappears into the crowd. Then he smiles at me. ‘The market is closing,’ he says. ‘It’s time for you to go.’

‘Thanks,’ I mumble. I stand up and start to walk towards the gate. The gizmo and the stolen spanner seem to burn into my hands. I don’t want them. I never wanted them. I feel terrible.

I do not like being a thief. I want to go back to being like before. If only I could turn the clock back. If only I could go back and unsteal the gizmo. But I can’t.

Suddenly a good idea flashes into my brain.

Why didn't I think of it before? I will give the gizmo and the spanner back. I will return them to the stalls and no one will know the difference. I will not be a thief any more. I am so happy that I start to smile. It is as if I have just thrown up a bad meal and feel well again.

I jog over to the tool stall. The lady is putting all of her goods into the back of a car. 'Is this yours?' I say in a trembling voice.

The lady glances at the spanner and then gives me a funny look. 'So there it is,' she says. 'I wondered where that was. I thought someone must have stolen it. Thanks.' She takes the spanner out of my hand. I go red in the face and stumble off. She thinks that I stole it. I can tell that from the tone of her voice.

Now for the gizmo. I will give it back to the man with eyes like windows. Then everything will be back to normal. I will be happy again.

I hurry over to his stall. But it is not there.

The home-made cake stall is there. And the leather belt stall is there. But there is no space between them. The gizmo stall was in the middle. But now there is no middle.

‘Where’s the gizmo stall?’ I say to the belt man.

‘What gizmo stall?’ he says, looking at the strange object in my hand. ‘There’s no gizmo stall at this market.’

He looks at me as if I am a bit crazy. And to tell the truth, I start to feel as if I am. There was a gizmo stall there but it is gone. There is not even an empty space where it was.

I turn and head out of the gate. I keep my eyes open for the little man but there is no sign of him. Not a trace.

Now what will I do? I feel sad again. Mean. I am still a thief. And I can’t take the gizmo home. Dad will ask me where I got it from. I will have to make up some story. Then I will be a liar as well.

There is only one thing I can do. I can’t

give the gizmo back because the little man has disappeared. So I will throw it away.

I pull it out of my pocket and toss it over a fence into someone's front garden. Then I head for home.

I still feel guilty. But at least I am rid of the gizmo.

Or am I?

Something is in my pocket. Something made of steel. It is the gizmo. It is back in my pocket even though I threw it away. What is going on here? Am I going nuts? Or what?

I threw it over the fence. I know I did. And now it is back in my pocket. It won't go away. I wish I had never seen the rotten thing.

Okay. Let's see what is going on.

I put the gizmo on the footpath and watch it. Nothing happens. It just stays there. 'Goodbye,' I say. 'Goodbye for good.' I start to back away along the footpath. I don't take my eyes off the gizmo. And it doesn't move.

Finally I reach a corner. I turn and run

like crazy. I go like the wind. I am the fastest runner in the whole school and if anyone can get away from the gizmo it is me. I pelt up the road and along to the railway bridge. When I reach the bridge I stop and pat my pocket.

The gizmo is back inside.



# 3

The gizmo is like a guilty conscience. You can't get rid of it. Just when you think everything is all right – there it is again making you feel bad.

I stand on the bridge and look down onto the tracks. A train is coming. A goods train pulling carriages filled with coal.

I take out the gizmo and hold it out over the tracks. The train roars by way below. 'Goodbye,' I say. I let the gizmo drop. It spins down and down and falls into an open coal carriage.

Straight away I start to feel better. Now I can go home and forget about one of the