

HAPPY TOWN MUST BE DESTROYED

James Harris

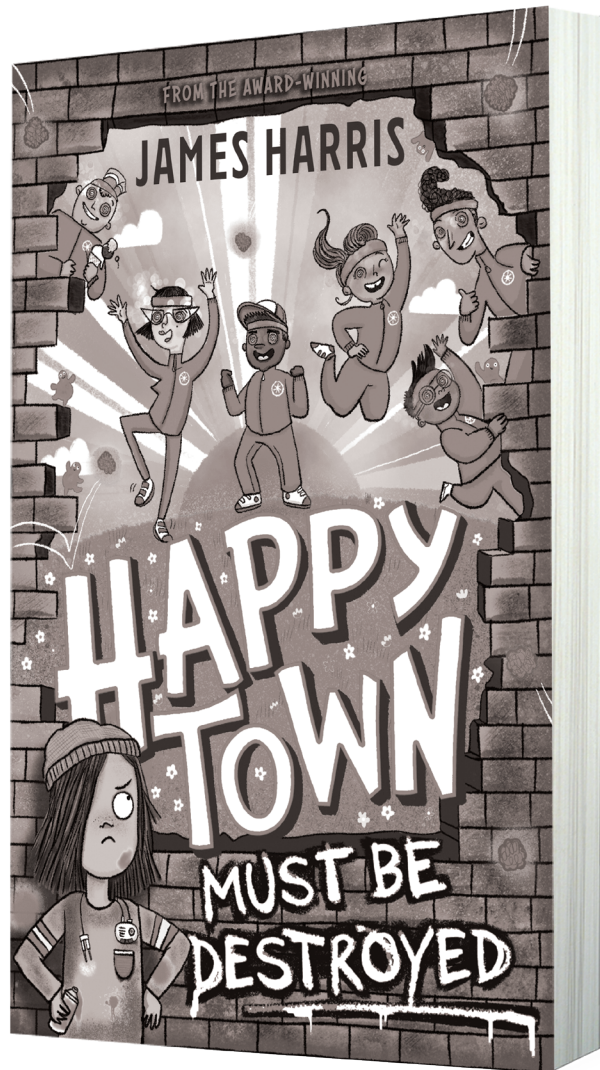
From the award-winning writer of *The Unbelievable Biscuit Factory*

EXTRACTS AND NOTES
FOR KS2 TEACHERS
& LIBRARIANS

Suitable for: Ages 9–11



About the Book



For fans of *My Brother is a Superhero* and *The Demon Headmaster* comes an outrageously funny story of brain control, friends, enemies and saving the world, even if you don't really want to.

Leeza's parents are ordinary. Unfit, grumpy, a bit embarrassing. Totally normal, right?

Until today. Today they are jogging. Eating salads *and enjoying them*. Smiling all the time. They're happy. Really, really happy. Who could complain about that?

Leeza, that's who.

Because it looks like someone's brainwashing everyone in town. Who's going to save the world? Oh no! It looks like it might have to be Leeza.

OK then. Let's do this. You coming?

Activity 1 – Creating comedy

Chapter 1



HELLO SUNSHINE

'Cookie dough, caramel and cabbage,' said Ishy.

'Shut up, Ishy,' I said.


'OK. Coffee, cod and carrot,' said Ishy.

'Shush! What's the blue one again?' I said.

'It's still bubblegum,' said the ice-cream man.

'Like it was when I told you five minutes ago.'

I had been standing at the hatch of the Daddy Cool ice-cream van trying to decide which three flavours of ice cream to have for around ten minutes. Ishy was being helpful by listing various combinations for me, and the ice-cream man was being helpful by not shouting at me to



hurry up and choose because there was a queue behind me, even though his eyes were clearly telling me that I should hurry up and choose because there was a queue behind me.


In fairness to me, there were twenty flavours of ice cream listed on the board, and if I was picking three of them to go on my wifflewaffle sugar cone, then that would mean there were potentially, ooh, let me work it out . . . *20 times 3 times the square root of . . .*

There were potentially a gazillion different combinations.

Yes, I am good at maths. Thank you for noticing.

I was pretty sure I wanted pistachio, but would that go better with salted caramel or honeycomb crunch? And then what would be the topper? Bubblegum? I thought not but then again maybe?

I sighed and turned to the next person in the queue. It was Charlotte Actually, a girl from my year. Charlotte was tall, and blonde, and strong,



with piercing eyes and an easy smile. Wherever she was, and whatever she was doing, she always looked *right*, like she was the perfect person to be *there*, doing *that*.

'You go,' I said. 'I need some time to . . .'

'Triple chocolate on plain cornet, with sprinkles, nutty crumble, no sauce, thank you,' said Charlotte to the ice-cream man. 'And could you do it quickly, please; my dance class starts in ten minutes. Thank you.'

Charlotte was a girl who knew what she wanted. She was the perfect ice-cream customer. But how could she be so sure?

There are a gazillion combinations, Charlotte, I said to myself, and all but one of them are not the best combination.

Perhaps she was not as good at maths as I am.

I mooched away from the ice-cream van and sat on a nearby moss-covered wall. Ishy bounded up, licking the remnants of his second ice cream of the day from around his mouth.



'Cookie dough, cauliflower and chorizo,'
he said.

'You're not helping,' I said.

'Judging by the queue, you've got ten minutes
to decide before the van goes. Do you reckon I
can hop along the length of this wall, backwards?'
he added, because he is a total goof.

As Ischy teetered and tottered on the wall, I
watched the people of Owt queueing for ice
cream in the bright, golden sunshine of a
summer's early evening. None of them looked
worried or confused, they just looked as though
knowing exactly what ice cream you want is the
easiest thing in the world. I shook my head and
said 'weird' because they *are* weird and then I
pushed my two-pronged infrared schnozzdongle
up my nose.

Activity 1 – Creating comedy

In this extract, the author uses lots of different devices to make the book funny, including absurd ideas, exaggeration, funny noises, silly names and contradiction.

How many examples of each device can you find in the extract?

1. Contradiction


2. Absurdity

3. Funny noises

4. Silly names

5. Exaggeration

In Chapter 1 Leeza is trying to choose the best combination of ice cream flavours. Can you think of three weird and wonderful ice cream flavours?



Activity 2 – Emotions

It started the next morning, when Mum decided to do some exercise.

Yeah, exactly.

'Tell your mum this isn't getting the clothes dry,' said Dad, who was sitting on the stairs as I came down.

I was not expecting to see this. Someone had cleared all the clothes off the exercise bike in the hall and put my mum on it. I mean, you'd think the most likely person to have done that would be my mum but that's because you don't know my mum very well.

And Mum smiled, the white of her teeth contrasting wildly with the shiny reddish-purple her face had gone and the lime green of the small bubble of snot she appeared to be blowing out of her left nostril. Her face was so colourful it



resembled a sweaty rainbow.

'I have never felt better,' she said. 'I can feel them dolphins flowing!'

'Will you tell her, Leeza? She's knocked all the clothes off it. One minute she's going out the back to fill the bird feeder, and next thing she's back in the house pedalling like a maniac. She won't stop.'

'Five k!' said Mum, still smiling.


And she stopped.

'Well, thank goodness for . . .'

And Mum leapt off the bike, red-faced and panting, and jogged past me and out of the front door.

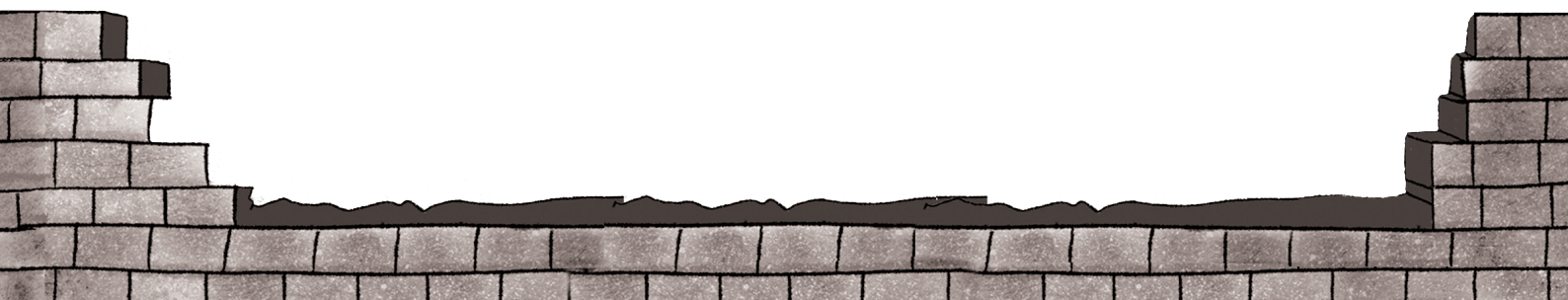
'Time me,' she shouted. And off she went down the path.

'I knew this would happen when she signed up to Mumsnet,' said Dad glumly. He patted his belly. 'This does not bode well. I foresee salads.' He put his head in his hands. 'Dinner should never be any more than one quarter green,' he sighed. 'It's not natural.'



Fifteen minutes later Mum jogged back into the house, huffing and puffing and grinning like a loon.

'Hoo! Wow, feel them dolphins,' she said.
'What's my time?'



Activity 2 – Emotions

Leeza notices something is wrong when everyone becomes really happy.

Discussion questions:

- If you could be happy all the time, would you want to be?
- Why is it important to experience a full range of emotions?
- How many types of emotions can you list?



Activity 3 – Writing comedy

Now you've seen how the author makes his writing funny using absurd ideas, exaggeration, funny noises, silly names and contradiction, can you think of how you could make five normal things funny e.g. eating your breakfast or walking your dog?

NORMAL EVENT	HOW YOU COULD MAKE IT FUNNY