

# MELVIN MCGEE: ZOMBIE HUNTER



For Nan.

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A CIP catalogue record for this title is available from the  
British Library.

ISBN 978-0-9932000-7-6

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Published by Creative Educational Press Ltd,  
2, The Walled Garden, Grange Park Drive, Biddulph, Staffs, ST8 7TA  
www.thecepress.com  
www.alanpeat.com  
Twitter: @alanpeat  
Facebook: Alan Peat Ltd

Printed by York Publishing Services Ltd,  
64, Hallfield Road, Layerthorpe, York, YO31 7ZQ  
www.yps-publishing.co.uk

## About the author

Mathew Sullivan was born and raised in Stockport. As a young lad, he was obsessed with comics and Lego. Now, as a grown man, he is obsessed with... comics and Lego. And drinking tea.

He is currently learning to play the guitar, and is a demon on a pair of rollerblades.

However, he can't cook for toffee, and his handwriting is pretty atrocious.

In his spare time, Mathew enjoys exercising and going to the gym in a vain attempt to be as strong as the superheroes whom he so admires. No-one has yet mistaken him for the Man of Steel.

Mathew currently lives in Manchester. He has no pets, but he does have a vast, truly precious collection of action figures.





# MELVIN McGeE: ZOMBIE HUNTER

## Part 1: The Outbreak

### Chapter 1: Meet Melvin

Here are a few things that your average ten-year-old boy worries about:

- Their friends finding out that their bedtime is really eight o'clock, when they've told everyone that they're allowed to stay up till eleven.
- Playing computer games too loudly and waking up their best mate's angry dad, who works nights.
- Ripping a hole in their brand new school trousers after their mum **SPECIFICALLY TOLD THEM THAT IF IT HAPPENED AGAIN THEY'D BE SENT BACK TO SCHOOL IN THEIR OLD, ITCHY SHORTS!**

Here are a few things that ten-year-old Melvin McGee worries about:

- Running low on grabble-goo-tipped bolts for his crossbow.
- The fact that there's only one tub of his favourite *Flobby Jenkins Chocotastic Spread* left on the shelf of the abandoned, armoured supermarket where he lives.
- The smell of rotting meat coming from the overturned delivery truck outside, which could well attract the attention of a few of the more inquisitive grabbles.

You see, our friend Melvin McGee is a grabble hunter...and “grabble” is a slightly nicer alternative to the word...

## ZOMBIE.

Now, before we find out how a ten-year-old boy managed to get himself the prestigious (yet fairly hazardous) job of ‘Head Grabble Hunter of the Town of Flinchester’, let me clear up a few zombie misconceptions:



They can move just as fast as they could in their human form, but if they run too fast, or for too long, the joints in their necks (weakened by the disease they carry) will break, and their heads will fall off. How fast zombies are, therefore, depends both on how desperately hungry they are, and how long they can keep their heads together. Literally.



Zombies are quite particular about **how** they eat. Just as some people suck the chocolate from Twix bars before eating the biscuit, many zombies deal with human fingers and toes in a similar way. It's the same

with Crème Eggs and eyeballs, for that matter.



Zombies won't attack you if you smear shoe polish (or 'grabble-goo') on yourself. Chronic zombie indigestion (aka 'grabble gut'), caused by trying to eat toes through tough leather shoes, has led to a serious aversion to the smell. That said, this nasal camouflage won't work if you are cut or bleeding. Zombies can smell a drop of blood from 100 metres, and no amount of shoe polish will put them off *that* delicious aroma.



The contagious grabble disease is carried in their green saliva, so their bite is their most dangerous weapon. However, in moments of severe hunger, zombies have been known to use body parts as projectiles. It is not unheard of for a grabble to pull its own arm off, simply to have something to throw at a potential victim.



A zombie's vocabulary is severely limited. They tend to communicate via grunts, the range of which is limited to four meanings:

- I'm hungry
- Over there/here
- Mine
- One day I'm going to be on X Factor

The last one might seem



odd, but it's a leftover habit from years of reality TV overload.



Finally, **zombies are not dead**. They are just very, very poorly. Unfortunately, this particular strain of illness turns them into mindless, ravenous, brain-munching monsters, and there's not much anyone has been able to do about it so far...

So, how does our mate Melvin fit into all this?

Well, it all started on the day of his tenth birthday.

## Chapter 2: Happy Burpday

That morning, Melvin had been woken early by the sound of a large flock of squawking birds streaking over the roof of his house. Bleary-eyed and fuzzy-headed, he dragged himself from his pillow and looked out of the window just in time to see the tail-end of the feathered foghorns. They were headed away at speed, leaving in their wake a whole street's worth of howling dogs and hissing cats. Had Melvin known why all these animals were so agitated, he might well have dived back into bed and hidden under the covers, permanently. But this rude awakening was swiftly forgotten as the realisation that it was his **birthday** dawned upon him. Leaping from his bed, Melvin scrambled across the landing, banging like a jackhammer on the other bedroom doors as he went.

**“Mum! Dad! Wake up! Jessica, rise and shine-a-light! It's only my flipping birthday isn't it?”**

Having pinballed his way through the house, Melvin reached the bathroom. Grabbing his toothbrush (the blue one with the vibrating bristles that tickled his teeth) and the toothpaste (also blue, but with no tickle factor to speak of) he looked at himself in the mirror.

Melvin was pretty tall for his age. He was what some people describe as ‘lanky’, ‘a beanpole’, or ‘all arms and legs’. He preferred the terms ‘athletic’, ‘lean’, ‘wiry’, or at the very least, ‘svelte’. He had short, messy blond hair, which he worked extremely hard to keep looking stylishly messy all day, using a concoction of waxes, putties and pastes. He had steely grey eyes, a slightly upturned nose,

and a smile that was quirkily crooked. When Melvin smiled, it looked like only half of his face had realised something was funny. However, truth be told, Melvin was a kind-hearted boy who spent most of his days with that crooked smile permanently plastered on his face. And today being his birthday, Melvin's half-smile almost threatened to take over the lazy side of his face too.

One quick wash and rinse later, Melvin was back in his room, throwing on his school uniform whilst still reminding anyone in shouting distance that it was, in fact, his birthday, and that they really should get out of bed, right now. In fact not now, now was too late. Five minutes ago. Yes indeed, the party started five minutes ago. Uniform on, Melvin flung himself down the stairs, shouting like a demented town crier as he went,

*“Come on you lazy lot! You’ve got until the toaster pops to get yourself downstairs! Don’t make me come back up there!”*

As Melvin careered around the corner and burst into the kitchen, he was met by an almighty scream...

**“SURPRISE!”**

If it had been physically possible to do so (and not considerably bad for his health) Melvin would have leaped clean out of his skin. The shock quickly subsided though, as Melvin saw his mum, dad and little sister gathered around the table, still in their pyjamas, with the fetching addition of multi-coloured paper party hats. A huge banner hung from the handle of the freezer door, all the way across the

kitchen, to the cupboards on the other side. It read,

## **HAPPTY BURPday MELBIN!**

Melvin instantly recognised it as the handiwork of his four-year-old sister, Jessica. She stood on a chair, clapping her hands and beaming with pride at her work, equally happy to see ‘Melbin’s’ crooked smile creeping (almost) across his whole face. Her blonde, scruffy hair and light eyes matched his, but her smile was so wide and toothy that when she grinned you could be forgiven for thinking her head was in serious danger of coming unhinged and falling off. Although she couldn’t have been out of bed for more than fifteen minutes, this scruffy little creature had already managed to get toothpaste in her eyebrows and milk in her slippers. Nonetheless, Melvin ran to her, lifted her from her chair and gave her a great big, brotherly hug.

“Happty Burpday Melbin!” Jessica announced as she squeezed Melvin’s neck, slightly tighter than was comfortable.

“Easy there Jessibobs! You’ll wring the young, innocent life out of me; I’ve only just made it to ten years old!” Melvin said as he placed Jessica back onto the chair carefully and smiled up at his mum and dad.

Melvin’s mum was called Jane, and she was the kindest, most thoughtful person Melvin knew. She was one of those rare people who put everyone else before themselves, without even really thinking about it. She was always there to hug Melvin when he was hurt, cheer him when he did well, console him when he was upset, help him when he

was stuck, and most importantly, provide him with sparkling clean, floral-smelling, neatly ironed underpants, every single day of the year, including Christmas. In other words, she was a top mum. Even now, stood there in her crinkled nightie, with her half-flattened, half-stuck up bed-hair, she was still every bit the beautiful, warm and kind-hearted woman that Melvin was proud to call his mum.

Melvin's dad, Martin, on the other hand, had managed to comb his hair and brush his teeth (without getting so much as a **speck** of toothpaste in his eyebrows) and looked every bit as polished and organised as he always did. Melvin quickly put two and two together. This was all his dad's doing. **He** was the one who had got up earlier than anyone, washed and dressed in ninja-stealthy silence, made his way downstairs, hung the banner, and even sorted the slices of toast with the '10' written in jam. Melvin's dad had thought of **everything**, like he always did, and by now Melvin's smile was so wide that, for a moment, you might have mistaken him for his own smiley, scruffy sister. After a large and lingering family hug, the whole McGee clan sat down to eat a delicious (although not really very nutritious) birthday breakfast, featuring cereal bowls filled with equal parts of Choco-Flakes and ice cream. As was his usual morning habit, Martin McGee picked up the daily newspaper. He opened it and flapped the pages a few times, revealing a rather disturbing headline to the rest of the table:

# **DEADLY DISEASE DRIVES DOCTORS DOOLALLY**

## **MYSTERY OUTBREAK CAUSING MADNESS IN MILINGTON**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MELVIN!

