

# JAMIE MCFLAIR

VS THE  
ULTIMATE BRAIN HACK

ILLUSTRATED BY  
DAVIDE  
ORTU

LUKE & SEAN  
FRANKS THORNE



# CHAPTER 1

## THE ROFLCOPTER

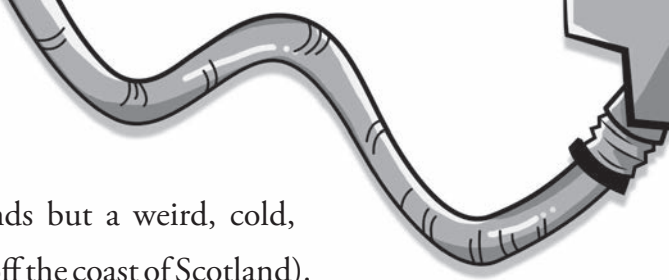
It was 11 a.m. on a cold February morning when Barry Bigtime's alarm began to screech. Once upon a time, Barry would have woken up in a luxurious four-poster bed but now he was crammed into the back of a small helicopter with his undesirable roommates, Slottapuss and Flobster. The helicopter brimmed with sad smells. As Barry opened his eyes, Flobster's ghastly face was only inches away from his own. He sat up with a start. If you've ever been annoyed at sharing a bedroom with a brother or sister, Barry Bigtime could assure you things could be **MUCH WORSE**. You could be sleeping alongside a six-foot rodent with human limbs and a half-man, half-lobster who smelt as bad as he looked.

Only three months ago, Barry had been one of the most influential and affluent men not only in the

world of music, but in the whole world of humans. He'd wake up in his beautiful mansion where fresh, deep-fried penguin wings would be served to him by one of his many household staff, fuelling him for a day of dominating the music industry.

Barry's life came crashing down around him when he created a boyband (in his Boyband Generator) that turned into a **MONSTER AT A MUSIC FESTIVAL**. Barry had been on the run with his two henchthings ever since. The whole sordid affair is documented in a book called *Jamie McFlair vs The Boyband Generator*. It really is a **WILD** tale.

As Barry struggled to sit up, he locked eyes with a photograph of Jamie McFlair that he'd torn out of a newspaper and nailed to a dartboard. Her smiling face was peppered with tiny holes. In Barry's mind, his niece had been solely responsible for the downfall of his music empire. It was her fault that he now had to live in a helicopter with rat-people and lobster-men. It was her fault he'd had to spend the last month hiding from Detective Lansdown on a deserted island (which, we hasten to add, wasn't one of those tropical



deserted islands but a weird, cold, blustery one off the coast of Scotland).

It was her fault that Barry Bigtime had lost . . . well, essentially everything. **‘She will pay!’** Barry snarled. With no more darts to hand, he picked up a shrivelled easy-peeler orange and hurled it at the dartboard. It jammed on to a dart and sprayed a sleeping Slottapuss with orange goo.

Slottapuss’s long, rat-like muzzle crinkled. He shuffled under the blanket he’d fashioned out of papers covered with Barry’s crazy drawings and mad plans. **‘GET UP, YOU TWO. TODAY IS THE DAY,’** Barry shouted with unnecessary volume. He switched the lights on (they weren’t really lights but four torches gaffer-taped together). The beams shone directly into Flobster’s eyes. His antennae twitched with shock, his long human arms waggled and his under-the-sea claws clicked as he writhed in the nest he’d made out of newspaper.

Barry was already on his feet and whipped away Slottapuss’s blanket of plans. The former showbiz





kingpin shuffled awkwardly to the front of the helicopter and spread the papers over the cockpit.

As well as being a musical genius, Barry was also an **ACTUAL GENIUS**. Some would say he was also an evil



genius. A tri-genius, if you will. His Boyband Generator could infuse superstar talent into human brains. You might think that Barry created this to make some great music, but, while some of his creations did make some toe-tapping tunes, the *real* reason Barry built the Boyband Generator was for fame, fortune and, most importantly, **POWER.**

With all of that now in the past and in the papers, Barry had been frantically designing a new machine. One that made the Boyband Generator look like one of those old phones that only had one game.

Barry's crazed eyes studied the plans one last time.

'DID YOU GET THE BIRTHDAY CARD LIKE I ASKED?' he yelled.

'Yes,' grumbled Slottapuss. 'I got it when I bought those oranges and almost scared the lady half to death, remember?'

The island they'd been hiding on was completely deserted, apart from one village that felt like it had been frozen sixty years in the past. The islanders hadn't discovered the internet, 5G, or even national



newspapers, so nobody knew who Barry was. Which was ideal, because his face was **PLASTERED ON THE FRONT OF HIS HELICOPTER.**

‘Are there any oranges left?’ asked Flobster. ‘I’m starving.’

‘You can eat when I’ve got the funds I need to build our **new machine,**’ barked Barry. ‘And all the other delights that our plan requires . . .’ *What a plan this is*, he thought. If this new machine design worked, Barry could become more powerful than ever. It would make him rich again. It would restore his besmirched name. Best of all, it would also **DEAL WITH THAT BRAT, JAMIE MCFLAIR.**



## CHAPTER 2

# THE ORDER OF MEGACLEESE

‘So to be clear, we definitely weren’t invited to the party?’ said Slottapuss from the pilot’s seat.

‘Of course not. Gregorius Megacleese is one of the most powerful men in the **ENTIRE** world. There is just one invitation and it’s mine!’

Barry held the invitation aloft and read aloud. “‘To Barry Bigtime”. See, that’s all it says, just Barry there, look. **Just Me.** Ahem. “As a member of the Order of Megacleese, you are cordially invited, along with other order members, to celebrate my fiftieth birthday at my private island estate. Do RSVP by 8 August . . . Gregorius. PS Free food and drink.””

‘Just so I’m clear . . . **What is the Order of Megacleese, again?**’ asked Flobster. The lobster-man was stroking his dangly antennae with the

smooth side of his lobster claws. His apron was covered with mysterious juices.

Barry rolled his eyes. ‘How many times do I need to go over this with you two schmucks? You know what it is! We formed it at Billy Clarkson’s sixtieth birthday party at my chateau, after Gerry Fredericks won the limbo. It’s an exclusive order of the richest and most powerful people in the world. They’ll all be at Gregorius’s birthday party. A perfect time for me to acquire the resources I need to build my new machine . . .’

Flobster and Slottapuss both nodded, silently begging their **HIDEOUS BRAINS** to absorb every word to avoid a future scolding.

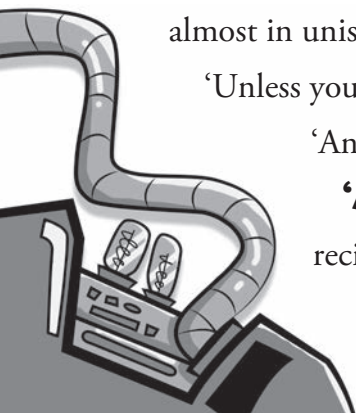
‘And what is your most important task?’ said Barry.

‘Hold our position,’ said Slottapuss and Flobster almost in unison but not quite.

‘Unless you send us the signal,’ added Flobster.

‘And what’s the signal?’ asked Barry.

‘**A poop and a fan emoji,**’  
recited Slottapuss.





‘Precisely,’ said Barry.

‘And you’re sure this Gregorius isn’t a sneaky, telltale snitch?’ asked Slottapuss. ‘He’s definitely not going to call Detective Lansdown as soon as he sees you?’

‘Gregorius and I have been friends for many years. I got him out of a few sticky situations back in our youth. Plus, *The Big Time*’s TV ratings made Gregorius the most successful head of the Hun TV network of all time,’ said Barry. ‘Besides, the Order is a sacred bond of finance and friendship. **Nobody is going to snitch.**’

Slottapuss highly doubted the loyalty of a club that was formed during limbo-victory jubilation, but he didn’t dare share that with anyone.

‘I see the island,’ yelled Slottapuss and, sure enough, Gregorius’s private island estate came into view.

‘I see the house!’ exclaimed Flobster.

‘It’s even bigger than yours, boss!’ added Slottapuss.

‘Well, technically it’s not his any more because—’

**‘SILENCE, GROTSACKS,’** shouted Barry, half annoyed at the hollering and half annoyed at the

fact that Gregorius's house was bigger than his lovely old chateau, with its lovely gardens, marshmallow room and private pizza restau— Nope, these thoughts were unhelpful. If Barry was going to secure these resources, he needed to focus and put on the performance of a lifetime.

'Be careful parking the roflicopter, Slotty. Don't scratch anyone else's aircraft,' Barry said nervously as they lowered into Gregorius's helicopter parking zone . . . Nervousness was a very new brain sensation for Barry. He didn't like it one bit. *The last time I felt like this was when I would arrive at school and Big Lobber and his crew would spot me and—*

This memory was thankfully interrupted as Slottapuss brought the roflicopter down with a slightly uncomfortable jolt. But to be fair, Slottapuss had done some solid helicoptering throughout, **SO WELL DONE HIM.** Barry stepped out into the brisk breeze, filling his lungs with delicious fresh air. He spruced himself up in the reflection of the helicopter glass and turned to Slottapuss and Flobster.



‘How do I look?’ he asked.

The two beasts looked at each other. They would never say it, but we will. **BARRY WAS A**

**SHAMBLES.** His once shiny, action-

figure skin was now pink and

blotchy. His once gleaming

eyes were dull and tired.

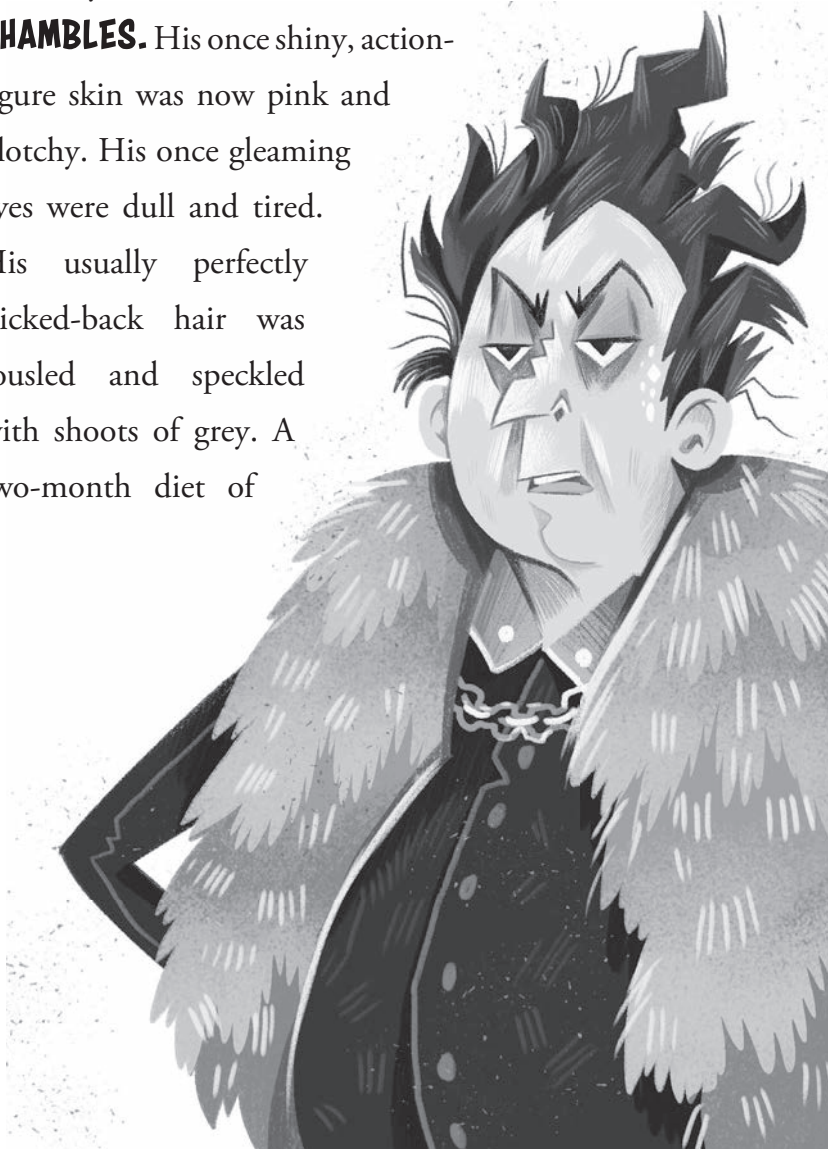
His usually perfectly

slicked-back hair was

tousled and speckled

with shoots of grey. A

two-month diet of



eating weird, remote-island takeaways had made his belly bulbous and his jowls saggy. His polar bear fur coat still looked on point, though.

‘Yeah, you look great, boss.’

**‘Yeah, that look is fire,’** came the desperate replies.

‘Brilliant. Now remember. Hold your positions, unless I give you the signal,’ said Barry. ‘When we leave this island, Barry Bigtime will be back with a vengeance.’