

## Meet Our Authors: Michael Rosen

### Washing Up

On Sundays,  
my mum and dad said,  
'Right, we've cooked the dinner,  
you two can wash it up,'  
and then they went off to the front room.

So then we began.  
First there was the row about who  
was to wash and who was to dry.  
My brother said, 'You're too slow at washing,  
I have to hang about waiting for you,'  
so I said,  
'You always wash, it's not fair.'

'Hard cheese,' he says,  
'I'm doing it.'  
So that was that.

'Whoever dries has to stack the dishes,'  
he says,  
so that's me stacking the dishes  
while he's getting the water ready.

Now,  
quite often we used to have mustard  
with our Sunday dinner  
and we didn't have it out of a tube,  
one of us used to make it with the powder  
in an eggcup  
and there was nearly always  
some left over.

Anyway,  
my brother  
he'd be washing up by now  
and he's standing there at the sink  
his hands in the water,  
I'm drying up,  
And suddenly he goes,  
'Quick, quick quick  
come over here  
quick, you'll miss it  
quick, you'll miss it.'  
'What?' I say, 'What?'  
'Quick, quick. In here,

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in the water.'  
I say,  
'What? What?'  
'Give us your hand,' he says  
and he grabs my hand  
then my finger,  
'What?' I say,  
'That,' he says,  
and he pulls my finger under the water  
and stuffs it into the eggcup  
with left-over blobs of old mustard  
stuck to the bottom.  
It's all slimey  
'Oh Horrible.'

I was an idiot to have believed him.

So I go on drying up.

Suddenly  
I feel a little speck of water on my neck.  
I look up at the ceiling.  
Where'd that come from?

I look at my brother  
he's grinning all over his big face.

'Oy, cut that out,'  
He grins again  
sticks his finger under the water  
in the bowl and  
flicks.  
Plip.  
'Oy, that got me right on my face.'  
'Did it? did it? did it?'  
He's well pleased.

So now it's my turn  
I've got the drying up cloth, haven't I?  
And I've been practising for ages  
on the kitchen door handle.  
Now he's got his back to me  
washing up  
and  
out goes the cloth, like a whip, it goes  
right on the –  
'Ow – that hurt. I didn't hurt *you*.'

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Now it's me grinning.

So he goes,  
'All right, let's call it quits.'  
'OK,' I say, 'one-all. Fairy squarey.'

So, I go on drying up.  
What I don't know it that  
he's got the Fairy Liquid bottle under the  
water  
boop boop boop boop boop boop  
it's filling up  
with dirty soapy water  
and next thing it's out of the water  
and he's gone sqeeesh  
and squirted it right in my face.

'Got you in the mush,' he goes.

'Right, that it,' I say,  
'I've had enough.'  
And I go upstairs and get  
this old bicycle cape I've got,  
one of those capes you can wear when you ride a bicycle in the rain.

So I come down in that  
and I say,  
'O K I'm ready for anything you've got now.  
You can't get me now, can you?'

So next thing he's got the little  
washing-up brush  
and it's got little bits of meat fat  
and squashed peas stuck in it  
and he's come up to me  
and he's in, up, under the cape with it  
working it round and round  
under my jumper, and under my chin.

So that makes me really wild  
and I make a grab for anything that'll  
hold water; dip it in the sink  
and fling it at him.

What I don't know is that  
while I went upstairs to get the cape  
he's got a secret weapon ready.

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It's his bicycle pump,  
He's loaded it with the dirty washing-up water  
By sucking it all in.  
He picks it up,  
and it's squirt again.  
All over my hair.

Suddenly the door opens.  
'Have you finished the ...?'  
It's Mum AND Dad.

'Just look at this.  
Look at the pair of them.'

And there's water all over the floor  
all over the table  
and all we've washed up is  
two plates and the mustard pot.

My dad says,  
'You can't be trusted to do anything you're asked,  
can you.'

He always says that.

Mind you, the floor was pretty clean  
After we had mopped it all up.

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