

THE PERSONALITY POTION

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Illustrated by John Eastwood



PACIFIC
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The Empty Seat

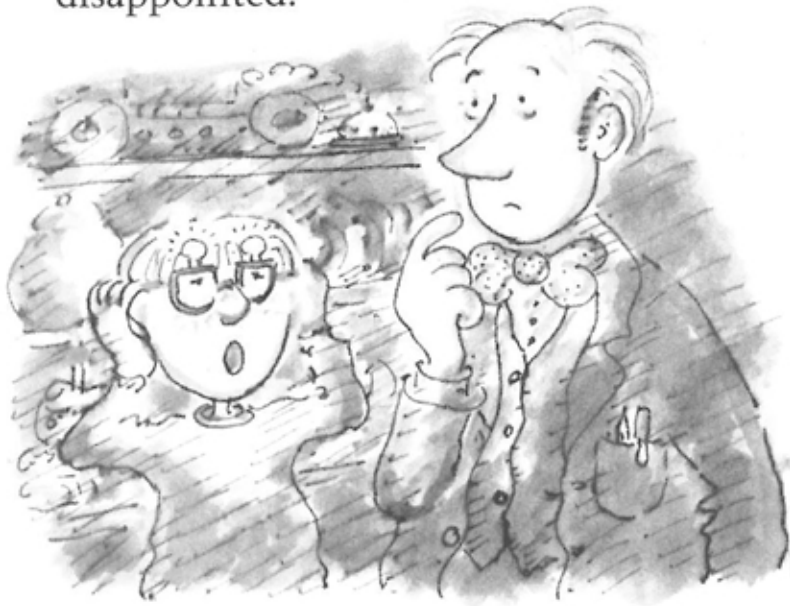
The next day got off to a bad start. The school bus was crowded. His best friend, Sparrow, waved to him, but the seat next to him was taken. The only empty seat was next to the dreaded Duncan Lomax.



Lomax was a year ahead, and Martin always kept out of his way. He'd seen Lomax pick on younger kids in the playground. He made them give him their lunches.

If they argued, Lomax followed them around until they were too scared not to give up their lunches.

Martin turned on the Glow Glasses.
“All I can see are two blobs of light.
They hurt my eyes,” he said,
disappointed.



“I know,” said Uncle Hal. “They still
need a little fine-tuning.”

He turned the lamp back on and
started to take his invention apart.

“So, how was school today?”

“Terrible,” said Martin.

“Usual terrible, or something new?”

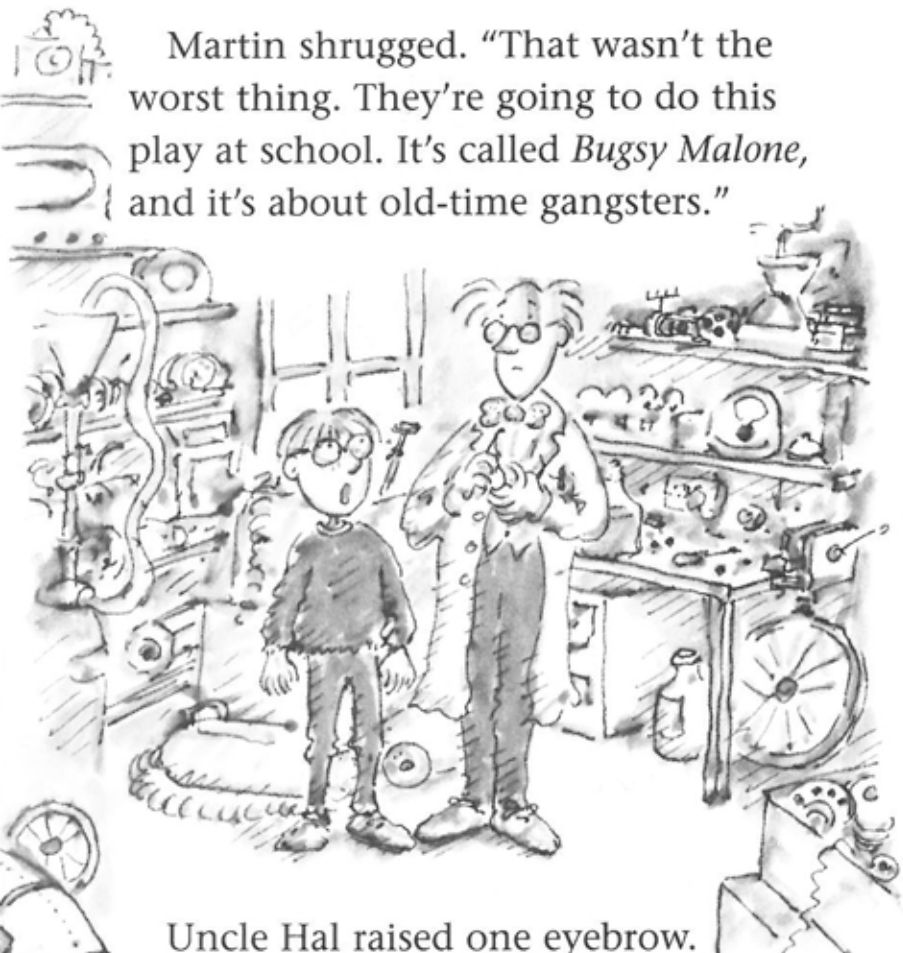
“There’s this kid named Lomax. He
picked on me on the bus today. He’s
about ten times my size. He grabbed
my backpack and stole my candy bar.”

“He sounds like a regular crook.”

“Yep. And you know what I did?
With the whole bus watching, I sat
there like an idiot and did nothing.”

“I’d say that is sensible. Never take
on a bully ten times your size for the
sake of a candy bar. After all, when did
a candy bar ever fight for you?”





Martin shrugged. "That wasn't the worst thing. They're going to do this play at school. It's called *Bugsy Malone*, and it's about old-time gangsters."

Uncle Hal raised one eyebrow. "So what's so bad about this play?"

"Nothing, it's great. I'd like to be in it. I really want to be Bugsy, but I can't."

"Why not?"



"I won't be able to make it through the audition. I'll be so nervous I'll open my mouth and nothing will come out. No one's going to pick me to play Bugsy Malone."

Uncle Hal looked at Martin.

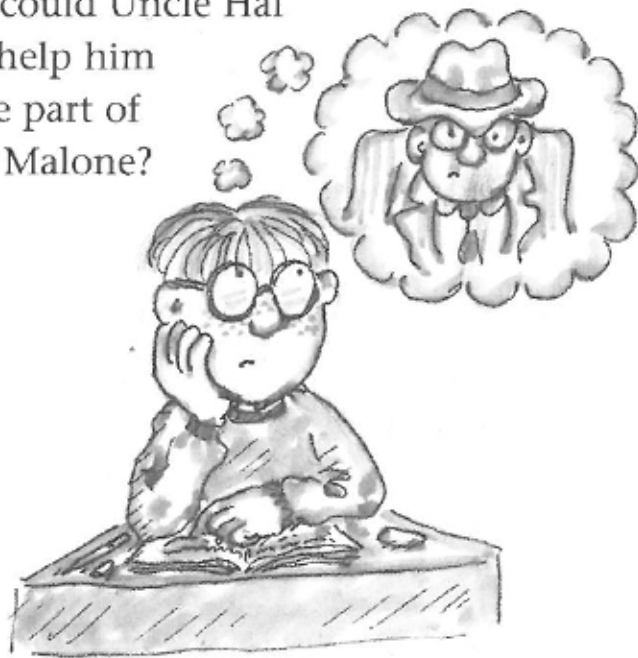
"You really don't think you can get the part?"

Martin sadly shook his head.

"Well, come and see me on Sunday. It'll take some work, but I might be able to help."

Uncle Hal wouldn't say anything else. He just tapped his nose and said, "Sunday."

Martin thought about it all week.
What could Uncle Hal
do to help him
get the part of
Bugsy Malone?



Early on Sunday morning he rang
Uncle Hal's doorbell. Uncle Hal led
Martin into the garage.

"Ready?" he asked. Martin nodded.
He didn't have any idea what was
going to happen.

Uncle Hal picked up two test tubes.
In one was some inky-green liquid. In
the other was some white powder.



He carefully poured a little from
each test tube into a bottle.

"What is it?" whispered Martin.

"Something I've been working on all
week. I call it my Personality Potion."

"Personality Potion?" Martin's eyes
widened. "What's that?"

"It brings out all the hidden talents
that no one knows are inside you.
You'll see."

Uncle Hal mixed the potion in the
bottle. It foamed and fizzed.





THE PERSONALITY POTION

Martin reads a lot, and he loves to pretend he's a fearless detective. In real life, though, he's tormented by Lomax the bully and can only dream about standing up for himself. Then along comes Uncle Hal and his magic potion. Will it turn Martin into the bravest kid in school?



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