

## **OOMPH!**

by Steve Bowkett.

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PROFESSOR TOM TAYLOR was an inventor.

Once he invented a book that read to itself.

Once he invented an apple that tasted of any fruit you liked.

Once he invented a wristwatch that reminded you when to do things, and told you off if you didn't do them well enough.

And yesterday he invented a new drink called Oomph!

Oomph was blue and fizzy and looked a bit unusual.

"Hmm, tastes rather like lemonade," Professor Taylor said. After that, he cleaned the whole house in two minutes flat. Because, you see, Oomph was what Professor Taylor called a pickme-up. It gave you more energy—it let you do things a little bit faster than usual.

At least, that was the idea.

Unfortunately, Professor Taylor put too much zest and much too much zip and whiz into his first batch of Oomph.

Not only that, but he managed to spill some too...

One drop fell on to a bee that was buzzing through the room at the time. It went shooting away like a bullet, bouncing off the walls and ceiling, whisking through cobwebs, dive-bombing the cat. Then it attacked the vase of flowers and drank down all the nectar in a flash!

Crash! Tinkle! went the window as the bee smashed through and vanished into the distance.

"Wow," said Professor Taylor, "that's powerful stuff!"

He gave a little smile... But the smile sagged as he noticed the family's new kitten (it was named Caboodle) licking some of the spilled Oomph.

Instantly Caboodle's fur went whoosh! and stood on end, her whiskers stuck out—boing!—like bristles and her tail spun round like helicopter blades.

She suddenly moved at super-speed, running around the walls, swinging on

the lampshade, clinging to the ceiling like a spider. Caboodle's eyes were wide and her ears were pinned back. She wore a big mad smile and seemed to be enjoying herself.

"I'm going on a mouse safari," she told Professor Taylor, although all he heard was 'Meow me-me-prreow-meeeeooowww!'

And Caboodle was gone.

"Goodness gracious," Professor Taylor started to say. Then Caboodle was back with a fruit basket containing twenty-three rather surprised looking mice (Professor Taylor let them all escape later).

"Gosh, I'm tired out," Caboodle said. She curled up on the chair and slept for three whole seconds before zooming away again to play in the garden.

"Well," said Professor Taylor. "Well, well, well..." And he gave a sly little chuckle, because he'd just had an idea.

He looked at the Oomph that was left in the glass he'd knocked over. He thought about it. He thought about it again. Then he picked up the glass and drank some Oomph down.

Nothing much happened and Professor Taylor was ever so faintly disappointed.

"Oh dear," he sighed, "I was hoping that at least I'd feel a bit more lively." Then suddenly, "Aaaahhh! Wheeeee!"

He exploded into action. His hair and eyebrows went crinkle and grew very long. He seemed to burst with energy.

"Right, let's get to it then!" he said so quickly that it sounded like 'Rn!' And he was off.

He tidied the garage and shed, did all the washing up, cleaned the car, mowed the lawn, ironed all the clothes, cooked the tea, read three books, wrote fifteen letters, played with the cat, did some exercises, decorated the spare bedroom, went for a bike ride and then clipped his nails—all in five minutes.

Meanwhile Tom Taylor's wife Tanya Taylor had been out shopping. Wearily she pushed open the creaky garden gate and dragged herself up the path.

"Oh," she said, "I'm so tired. All I want to do is..."

Without any warning a whirlwind zoomed out of the house, tidied up some fallen leaves, took Mrs Taylor's shopping bags from her, disappeared back into the house, reappeared dressed in some smart dancing clothes and said, "There`s

nothing left to do here darling so let's PARTY-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y!!"

Mrs Taylor started to shake her head and say "No," but Professor Taylor popped some drops of Oomph into her mouth. And—

She showered and dressed in ten seconds. Then they hit the town.

They went shopping.

They ate a Chinese meal very quickly.

They saw the sights.

They went to a night club and danced and danced and danced until dawn.

Then they ran home and whirled into their sparkling clean lounge and—then—slowed—down—and—slumped—into—the—armchairs...

"That was really good fun," Professor Taylor said heavily. "We must do it again—some—timezzzzz..."

And he was asleep.

"Yes dear..." Mrs Taylor was dozing off too.

"But not until this afternoon, eh?"