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**Phineas Frecklehopper and the Flumpy Fudge Findout
by
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1. Into the Hedges

Phineas Frecklehopper froze in his tracks. Turning onto Honeycutt Lane, where he lived, was Basil Bumblebluster, with Bob and Ben Bilius.

Phineas didn't know how Basil had become his arch-enemy. He considered himself a normal boy in most respects. But he did have one peculiar hobby, or at least others thought it peculiar. Phineas loved to cook. From pepperoni pizza to pecan pie, if it could be cooked, Phineas would cook it. In fact, he now had in his hand a special recipe that he had copied in his Aunt Rosalee's kitchen, decorating the edges as he heard monks used to do in the Middle Ages. And it was this very treasure that caught Basil's eye.

"Well, if it ain't Phineas Freckleface," smirked Basil.

"Frecklehopper," said Phineas, trying to sound confident.

“What you got in your hand, Freckleface?” smirked Basil, “A love letter? Are you Mommy’s little turtle dove? Coo coo.” And he snatched the paper away from Phineas.

“It’s a recipe! Ha, ha, ha!” laughed Basil. “I hope it’s a recipe for painkillers, ‘cause you’re gonna need ‘em.”

Then Phineas surprised even himself, as he said these remarkable words: “I already need painkillers, Basil Bumblebluster, after looking at your face.”

Phineas then ran with all his might, as Basil and the boys gave chase. Down the block and into the playground, up and down the seesaw and under the slide, out onto Red Possum Road, into Miss May’s yard and over the hedges. Well, not quite over the hedges. He tumbled into the hedges. And what is more odd, he kept tumbling and tumbling.

2. Mr. Pollywog

When Phineas finally stopped tumbling, he peeked out of the hedges. The houses were gone and he was in a thick wood. But the surest sign that he was no longer on Red Possum Road was a little fat man marching along the hedges with a plumed black hat and black boots, a waistcoat embroidered with fresh cut blossoms, and a red velvet cape. Such an outfit may have looked grand as a Halloween costume on Patrick Puddlesby or Bradley Bellwether, but Phineas thought that it looked slightly ridiculous on a person no taller than a foot and a half.

“Good afternoon,” said Phineas.

“And what’s good about it?” asked the little man.

“Well, I . . . I got away from Basil Bumblebluster.”

“Hmm,” he the little man. “Is he a dwarf, too?”

“I..I..” stumbled Phineas. “Are dwarves the biggest creatures here in”

“In Periwinkle,” said the man. “And of course not. Periwinklers are three times the size of dwarves like you, as you must know.”

A horn suddenly sounded deep in the woods. The little man cried out, “Dunderry, Dunderry,” reached up for Phineas’s hand, and led him off in a trot through the woods. They soon reached a neat white house just a bit smaller than Jennifer Jellybean’s tree house.

“You should know,” panted the little man. “I am Pollywog of the Dillydallyer race – short but smart, fat but fierce.” And he leaned in: “That’s the Dillydally motto.”

3. Aunt Minerva

The door of the little house flung open and out stepped a Dillydallyer woman a full head taller than Mr. Pollywog. Indeed, she was so great a Dillydallyer that she could, on tiptoe, pinch Phineas’s cheek, although the effect was such that Phineas was unsure whether she was expressing affection or checking to see if he would make a tasty meal when boiled or roasted. She was twice as stout as Mr. Pollywog, and looked like a balloon ready to float away.

“Meet Aunt Minerva,” Mr. Pollywog mumbled, as if he were a little afraid of her.

Into the house they went, where Aunt Minerva floated into a chair at the table and said the single word, “Pollywog.”

As if the word were a poisoned dart or an evil spell or the final word in a great tragedy, Mr. Pollywog upon hearing it immediately burst into tears.

“Oh, Aunt Minerva, we’ve been tricked,” he wailed.

“YOU’VE been tricked,” said Aunt Minerva, “into letting that ill-bred dwarf, Dunderry, take the title to our land. We’ll be thrown out of the house for sure.” As she pounded the table for

emphasis, her balloon face seemed to further inflate, while the blubbering Pollywog's face shriveled.

"Aunt Minerva," Pollywog pleaded, "We can still fix everything! The Periwinkler Pie Pageant is tomorrow. Dunderry has entered a pie in the contest. The queen grants the winning team a wish. We can win the contest and wish our land back into our own hands."

"Oh Pollywog," said Aunt Minerva. "What team do you have? You can't bake biscuits without breaking a bowl."

Phineas was thinking what a wonderful tongue-twister this sentence would make, and how popular he would be at school if he could learn to say it three times without stopping. And while he was thinking, he blurted something out, not quite knowing how he did it.

"I can," he said.

Aunt Minerva and Mr. Pollywog both looked startled, as if they'd forgotten he was there.

"I can bake biscuits without breaking a bowl," Phineas said. Resisting the temptation to say it two more times, he went on: "In fact, I was walking home with a recipe for the most delicious dessert ever tasted." Remembering his manners, he added: "Ever tasted on the other side of the hedges." But he didn't need to worry, for Aunt Minerva and Mr. Pollywog were dancing and bobbing like two party balloons in a wind tunnel.

4. Journey to the Palace

As the two new friends marched through the woods, Phineas was reminded of something he'd altogether forgotten. Periwinklers were three times the size of dwarves. The landscape itself was beginning to take on a Periwinkler form. Phineas found himself wading in clovers up past his knees, while Mr. Pollywog enjoyed the shade of a forest of three-foot high daisies.

The palace itself looked like a castle that had been blown up way beyond its normal size into a big, bumpy inflatable, with towers and spires protruding from the top, and square chambers and rounded turrets bulging out all over the sides. The palace grounds were covered with Dillydallyers preparing for the Pie and Pastry Parade. Dillydallyer bands marched up and down in their bright red and green and blue uniforms. Groups of animals sized in proportion to the Dillydallyer race pranced about expectantly. Phineas began to think to himself about how all the kids at school would gather wide-eyed as he explained, “The zebras were up to my knees, the rhinos a bit larger and fat as pumpkins, the giraffes so tall they could nibble my chin.”

Phineas’s daydream was interrupted by the queen’s attendant, who emerged from the palace twenty feet tall and dressed even more lavishly than Mr. Pollywog. When he blew a bugle note, everyone cowered as if ten thousand locomotives were rushing across the palace grounds.

“Hear ye! Hear ye!” boomed the attendant. “Her majesty’s Periwinkle Pie and Pastry Contest is about to begin. By invitation of the Queen’s Lord Chancellor, Mr. Dunderry the Dwarf, last year’s champion, shall entertain a challenger. Who dares challenge?”

At this, the Dillydallyers looked back and forth at each other, and Mr. Pollywog poked Phineas in the leg and gestured anxiously.

“Say something,” cried Mr. Pollywog. He frantically leaped to tug on Phineas’s sleeve and found himself off the ground and swinging to and fro with one fist clenched on the sleeve.

The attendant began to turn away when Phineas called out: “I challenge!”

“Hmm,” mused the attendant, “Your entry?”

“My entry? . . . uh . . . Flumpy Fudge Findout.”

“Oohhh,” said the attendant lazily, as if awaiting an explanation.

“It’s fudge baked in a pie shell and full of fruit so it’s all lumpy, and you have to take a bite to find out what kind of fruit you,” said Phineas, eager to impress the attendant so Mr. Pollywog would let go of his sleeve.

“Very well,” sniffed the attendant. “Now meet your challenger.” And out from the palace walls came Dunderry.

If Dunderry were a fair sample, Phineas was glad that dwarves were so scarce into Periwinkle. He was certainly ill-mannered and ill-natured, and probably ill-bred as well. He wore a green tunic over yellow stockings, with a jewel-encrusted belt circling his waist. As he approached Phineas and Mr. Pollywog, he viciously kicked aside a pair of Dillydallyer tigers who had strayed into his path. Mr. Pollywog must have forgotten the “fat but fierce” part of the Dillydallyer motto, because he dropped from Phineas’s sleeve and hid behind his leg.

Dunderry glared into Phineas’s face. “I’ll give you one last chance to quit and go home,” he said. “Or else” Here he snatched up a Dillydallyer picnic bench, shook the little creatures off of it, and snapped it in half. “Now what do you say?”

Phineas was not the bravest boy on Honeycutt Lane, but he generally tried to do the right thing even when he was frightened. And Mr. Pollywog’s shaking body against the back of his leg reminded him of the right thing to do in the present situation.

He stared back into Dunderry’s face with a show of courage and said: “Let’s bake!”

5. The Periwinkler Pie Pageant

The two teams entered the palace, Dunderry in Kitchen # 1 and Phineas in Kitchen # 2. As they passed Kitchen # 1, Phineas saw Dunderry inside with a team of gigantic Periwinklers smoothly at work. Then they entered Kitchen #2 and Phineas’s heart sank. The saucepans were

the size of truck tires, the mixing bowls like washtubs, and the napkins suitable for beach blankets.

“Cheer up,” said Mr. Pollywog. “We’ll get up a Dillydallyer crew in no time.”

“But . . .” said Phineas.

“Tut, tut,” Mr. Pollywog cut him off. “‘Short but smart’ is the first half of the Dillydally motto.” Sure enough, Mr. Pollywog rounded up an ingenious set of carpenters, plumbers, mechanics, inventors, and all manner of Dillydallying whatnots. They set to work in Kitchen #2 with a dazzling array of Dillydallyer ladders, levers, pulleys and pushpins. In a few minutes, the saucepan was on the stove, the mixing bowl on the counter, spoons, whisks, and other implements laid out on the table. There were, however, no cooks among them. Phineas would have to remember Aunt Rosalee’s recipe and direct the action.

Now there is something you should know about Phineas. He couldn’t always remember to take a bath or brush his teeth or do his homework in *every single* subject. But Phineas always remembered a recipe. He looked about the room and muttered, “We’d better start with a Periwinkler egg.” He’d hardly realized that he’d said it out loud, when a pulley squealed, a hinge creaked, the massive refrigerator door opened, a claw pulled out an egg and sent it rolling down a chute and gently onto a balance scale that the Dillydallyer craftsmen had set before Phineas. Phineas made a mark on the frame of the scale. On the corner of the table, he wrote a secret formula (which you will find out about at the end of this book in the “epilogue,” which means a little something extra that comes after the story).

“This is going to be fun,” thought Phineas. And he shouted out the ingredients: “Flour, milk, sugar, butter, vanilla, fruit chunks, chocolate blocks.” The kitchen seemed a windstorm. Blocks of chocolate, bags of sugar, bowls of flour and butter were flying. One unfortunate

Dillydallyer was nearly boiled in the fudge before he was spotted and fished out of the pan. But soon the fudge was poured into the pie shells over the fruit and put into the refrigerator to cool.

6. Contest in the Great Hall

The next day, all were summoned to the Great Hall. At one end of the hall sat the queen, with her lords and ladies on either side, a gathering of giants the likes of which Phineas had never seen even in books. She waved her hand and the haughty attendant spoke: “Dunderry the Dwarf presents to her majesty a Chirping Crow Cobbler.”

Dunderry’s team placed a pie on the table at the center of the hall and stepped back. The pie started to bulge and crack, and a whistling sound was heard inside. Then, as if in a monstrous version of the nursery rhyme, out burst four and twenty blackbirds the size of Canadian geese. They soared and dipped as the court cheered and Dillydallyers ran for cover. Then they roosted on the eaves beneath the ceiling, and the attendant called for order.

“Very amusing, Mr. Dunderry,” he said, trying to sound unimpressed. “Now approach, Phineas the Dwarf.”

Phineas was a little disheartened by the spectacle of Dunderry’s entry, but he stood on tiptoe and placed his pie on the table.

“I’m afraid,” said the attendant, “this poor entry is Flumpy Fudge Findout.”

At this, the queen rose to speak. The courtiers cowered, the attendant shook, and the monstrous blackbirds took to the air and flew out of the hall. For when queen spoke, it was usually to express a ruinous displeasure at someone present.

When everyone was suitably nervous, the queen said severely to the attendant, “Did you say Flumpy Fudge Findout?”

“Yes, your majesty,” said the attendant, visibly shaken. “But it wasn’t my idea.”

She looked at him hard and said, “You’ll regret that bit of intelligence, for you are hereby dismissed from service.”

As two Periwinkler guards rushed in to catch the collapsing attendant and usher him out, the queen announced to the entire crowd in a loud drawl: “I L O V E F U D G E.”

Amidst a rousing cheer, Phineas was declared the winner and the pie was sliced and passed around. The queen poked into hers and discovered two banana chunks. Dunderry ate his piece grudgingly, as if he were half allergic to the strawberry inside.

7. Awards to the Winners

“Stop!” shouted the queen as soon as she was done. Everyone stopped in mid-bite, and none dared tell her that a few smudges of fudge had collected on her cheek. “Time for awards,” she said brusquely. “Pollywog and Phineas the Dwarf, tell us your wishes.”

Mr. Pollywog wished for and got the land that Dunderry had stolen from him and Aunt Minerva. Phineas then stepped forward, and something extraordinary happened. He sobbed. He had not had time lately to consider his feelings very much, but he considered them now, and found that he missed Aunt Rosalee and his family and friends back on Honeycutt Lane.

“I want to go home,” said Phineas.

“Not enough,” snapped the queen. “Wish for more.”

Going home seemed to be everything to Phineas, and at first he could not think of anything else to wish for. Then a very special thought struck him.

“I wish that every time Basil Bumblebluster tries to say something smart-alecky, he chirps like a bird.”

“What kind of bird,” asked the queen.

Phineas was not used to such short questioning, and found himself thinking that if his teacher were as quick with words as the queen, recess could be expanded by at least ten minutes. This is what he was thinking. What he said was, “A turtle dove.”

And with that the queen touched his forehead and sent him tumbling head over heels into an endless back flip. Back past the palace grounds and Aunt Minerva’s and into the hedges, where he continued tumbling for some time.

8. Honeycutt Lane

As he crawled out of the hedges and brushed himself off, there was Basil, flanked by the Bilius boys. Basil put his hands on his hips, and it flashed through Phineas’s mind that perhaps he had simply bumped his head and that Mr. Pollywog and Aunt Minerva and the rest were just shadowy figures in a dream. But then he noticed the strangest look on Basil’s face. He turned a little red, then a little green, then a little purple. Then he pursed his lips and gave a look of utter perplexity, a look such as Humpty Dumpty might have had just before the fall. Neither Phineas Frecklehopper nor Bob Bilius nor Ben Bilius would ever forget what happened next.

“Coo, coo, coo,” said Basil, as gently as any turtle dove. Then he seemed to get hold of himself and made a mean face one last time, but all he said was “coo, coo, coo.” Then he strained his face like never before, his head tilting this way and that, and his Adam’s apple going up and down. Then he said the following remarkable words:

“Here’s your recipe, Phineas.” And he handed over the recipe, the edges of which Phineas had illustrated as carefully as any monk in the Middle Ages.

“Thanks, Basil,” said Phineas. Basil nodded, afraid to talk more than was necessary. And to the amazement of the boys, Phineas skipped off without the slightest fear of Basil.

Basil Bumblebluster, indeed, was never known to bully anyone ever again, and a rumor persists around Honeycutt Lane that he developed an unusual interest in cooking and later moved to the city, where you might see him today, working as a respectable pastry chef.

EPILOGUE: What Phineas Wrote on the Corner of the Table

Have you wondered how Phineas managed to make his Flumpy Fudge Findout in a land where there were no ounces, no cups, no tablespoons, and all the chicken eggs were the size of gumballs or cabbages depending on whether the fowl were of Periwinkle or Dillydally stock?

Here's how he did it. He had once read in a very old cookbook that one egg weighed about two ounces. On the corner of the table in Kitchen # 2, Phineas wrote the following secret formula:

HOME
2 ounces

HERE
1 eggweight

Phineas knew that with this fact he could adjust all the proportions in his recipe to make a perfect Periwinkler pie. Using his formula, he converted the measurements from Aunt Rosalee's recipe into eggweights. Then he measured out his ingredients using the Dillydally balance scale with eggs on the other side.

Here is Aunt Rosalee's recipe, complete with Phineas's decorated margins.

Flumpy Fudge Findout

Ingredients

4 eggs
8 oz. unsweetened chocolate blocks
8 oz. can of evaporated milk
3 cups of sugar
6 oz. butter (1 ½ sticks)
4 tbsp vanilla
8 tbsp flour
fruit (e.g., raspberries, strawberries, bananas)
2 pie shells

Instructions

Bake empty pie shells as instructed on package.
In saucepan, melt butter and chocolate blocks over low fire.
Whisk evaporated milk, egg, sugar, flour, and vanilla, one by one into a mixing bowl.
Add mix to melted butter and chocolate, turn to medium high.
Whisk continuously for 15-20 minutes till your delicious fudge begins to thicken.
Remove from heat and whisk for 6-8 minutes.
Arrange fruit chunks as desired in bottom of baked pie shells.
Cover with fudge until pie shells are full to brim.
Refrigerate and serve tomorrow when firm.

Using the worksheets below in the Pastry Chef Challenge!!!, see if you can use Phineas's formula to convert the Flumpy Fudge Findout and other recipes And cook them with your family and friends! (CHALLENGERS BEWARE: Flumpy Fudge Findout is the most difficult of the challenges, so when cooking time comes, you may want to try the others first.)

Do It Yourself Pastry Chef Challenge!!!

1. Beginning with Phineas’s Formula, show your work as you convert the Flumpy Fudge Findout recipe into Periwinkler proportions.

Phineas’s Formula: 1 eggweight = 2 ounces
 Note: 1 cup = 8 ounces
 1 tbsp = ½ ounce

Item	Initial Measurement	Calculations (Show your work)	Total
Eggs	4 whole	None	4 whole
Pie Shells	2 regular	None	2 regular
Fruit (optional)	3 types chopped	None	3 types chopped
Chocolate Blocks	8 ounces		_____ eggweights
Evaporated Milk	8 ounces		_____ eggweights
Sugar	3 cups		_____ eggweights
Butter	6 ounces		_____ eggweights
Vanilla	4 tbsp		_____ eggweights
Flour	8 tbsp		_____ eggweights

Did you get the same answers as Phineas?

4 eggweights of chocolate blocks	1 eggweight of vanilla
4 eggweights of evaporated milk	2 eggweights of flour
12 eggweights of sugar	2 Periwinkler pie shells
3 eggweights of butter	Fruit chunks on the bottom of the pie shells

2. The Periwinkle queen has asked Phineas to make a peach cobbler using her grandmother's recipe and send it through the hedges with Mr. Pollywog. Help Phineas convert the Periwinkle recipe into a form that he can use in his own kitchen.

PERIWINKLE PEACH COBBLER

Item	Initial Measurement	Calculations (Show your work)	Total
Eggs	1 whole	None	1 whole
Sliced Peaches (fresh or canned)	29-ounce can	None	29-ounce can
Butter	½ eggweight		_____ ounce(s)
Sugar	4 eggweights		_____ cup(s)
Flour (self-rising or pancake flour)	4 eggweights		_____ cup(s)
Vanilla	1/8 eggweight		_____ tablespoon(s)

Using the ingredients in your TOTAL column and the instructions below, rewrite the recipe on a separate sheet. Decorate the edges as you'd imagine monks used to do in the Middle Ages. Share with your parents and enjoy cooking your Periwinkle Peach Cobbler!

Instructions:

Mix all ingredients except the peaches and butter to form a crumbly mixture.

Cover bottom of 1 ½ quart casserole dish with strained peaches.

Sprinkle crumbly mixture over peaches.

Put dabs of butter on top.

Bake uncovered in preheated oven at 375 degrees for 40 minutes or until golden brown.

3. Aunt Minerva fixes Mr. Pollywog Banana Fritters every Saturday morning. She uses Dillydally eggs, not Periwinkle eggs. Convert her recipe and see if Phineas's formula works for tiny Dillydally eggs as well as for giant Periwinkle eggs. (Can you explain why?)

DILLYDALLY BANANA FRITTERS

Item	Initial Measurement	Calculations (Show your work)	Total
Eggs	1 whole	None	1 whole
Bananas	2 chopped	None	2 chopped
Flour (self-rising or pancake flour)	4 eggweights		_____ cup(s)
Butter	1½ eggweight		_____ ounce(s)
Sugar	1 eggweight		_____ cup(s)
Milk	2 eggweights		_____ cup(s)
Vanilla	1/8 eggweight		_____ tablespoon(s)

Using the ingredients in your TOTAL column and the instructions below, rewrite the recipe on a separate sheet. Decorate the edges as you'd imagine monks used to do in the Middle Ages. Share with your parents and enjoy cooking your Dillydally Banana Fritters!

Instructions (makes about 8 fritters):

Mix all ingredients except the bananas.

Stir chopped bananas into mixture. Melt 1/2 ounce of butter in frying pan.

Spoon mixture into hot pan to form small pancake-sized fritters.

Turn the fritters several times if necessary until brown on both sides.

Add more butter to pan between batches.

Serve with or without pancake syrup.