

## EVERYBODY HAS A JAR

Everybody has a jar. You know the type of jar I mean. It used to be a jam jar or a peanut butter jar or a pickle jar, but now it is one of those jars that you use to store stuff. *Stuff*. You know, little bits and pieces. Those things that you think you might need someday, even though you have no idea what you might need them *for*. Yes, now you're getting it. One of *those* jars.

My troubles started when I found a small plastic object on the floor in my bedroom. I was not quite sure what it was, but it looked as if it might be the cover of something. I'll take a little break from the story here to show you a picture of the small plastic object.



I know, I know. It's not the most interesting picture. Well, it was not the most interesting object. I thought it must have fallen off something in my bedroom, and even though I had no idea why I might need it (or even what it was), I thought I ought to keep it. After all, I reasoned, if it had fallen off something of mine, I just might need it someday. Needless to say, I decided to put it in my jar. That way, once

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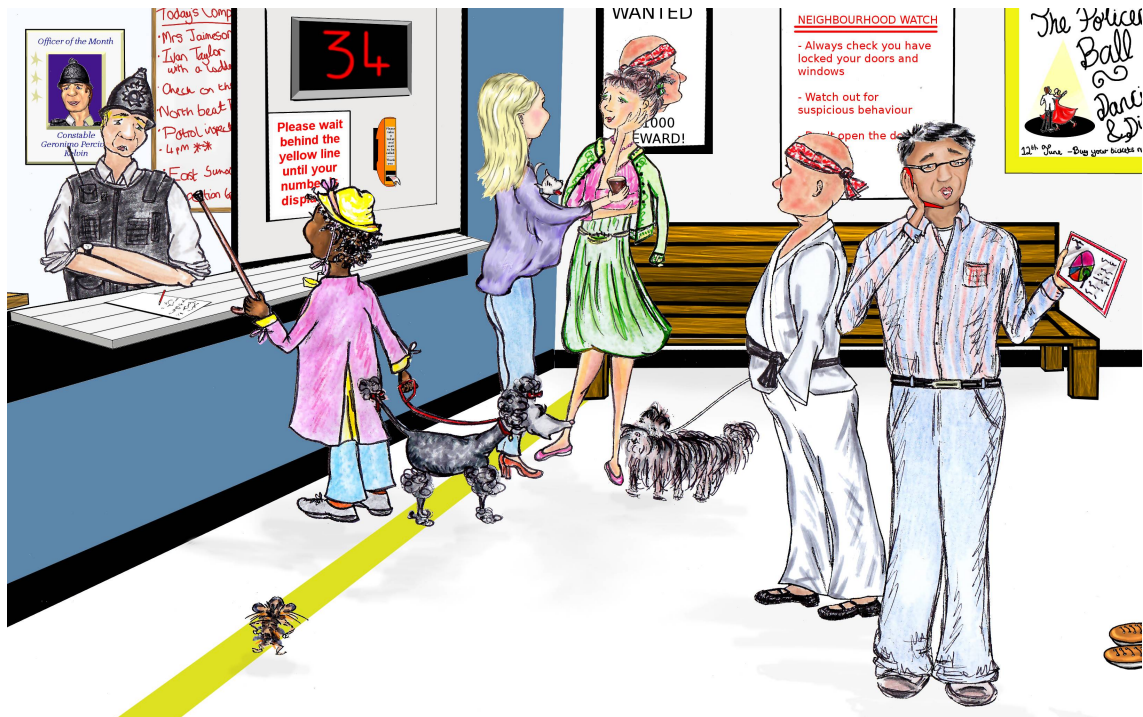
I figured out what it was, I would know just where to find it and would be able to get it out of my jar and put it to use.

Well, I would have put my object into my jar right away, were it not for a very big problem concerning my jar. The problem was that when I went to look for my jar, it was not in its usual place on the small table at the entrance to my box.



It was missing. It had vanished. Disappeared. That is to say, it was completely and utterly gone. Obviously, I was very upset. My jar had been completely and utterly full of stuff. There was over a year's worth of stuff in there. And now I had lost all of it. What if I needed it someday? Can you imagine? Well, if you imagined that I must have been very upset to find that my jar was missing, and I know that you probably did, then you were right. I *was* very upset that my jar was missing. I was very upset indeed.

I was sure that I had not moved my jar from its usual spot - and I knew that it could not have gone anywhere by itself - so I was left with one inescapable conclusion: my jar had been stolen. That, dear readers, is how I ended up going to the police station to report a crime.



When I arrived at the police station, there was a long queue of people waiting to speak to the policeman standing behind a big desk by the entrance. I thought to myself that perhaps the thief who had stolen my jar had stolen all their jars as well. I could see why a thief would steal as many jars as possible. Even I did not know how to put the stuff in my jar to use, and it was *my* jar, but if the same thief had stolen ten people's jars, then he or she would have all their stuff as well as mine. If he had stolen enough people's jars, the thief would have lots and lots of stuff - enough stuff to actually be useful. If you had enough stuff, you might be able to find a way to make something useful out of it. If you had an enormous amount of stuff, you would almost certainly be able to find a use for some of it. The more I thought about it, the more it all made sense. I was not here to report one crime. I had uncovered the jar

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thief's entire crime spree. I needed to act quickly. If the thief was not stopped, soon no one would have a jar.

By the time I reached the front of the queue, I was in a complete and utter panic. You have to understand that although I am usually a cool, calm and collected hamster, it is not every day that I discover and report a crime spree. That's why, when the policeman asked me how he could help me, I might not have been as clear as a hamster should be when speaking to a policeman about a very serious matter.



"Well, you know how everybody has a jar..." I said.

"A jar?" interrupted the policeman.

"You know, a jar. It might once have been a jam jar or a peanut butter jar or a pickle jar, but now it is one of those jars that you use to store stuff. Everybody has one -



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or rather they used to, until they were all stolen. The jars, that is." I could hardly get the words out quickly enough.

"Slow down, slow down, little gerbil. Now, tell me, what exactly is the problem?" asked the policeman, in a very gentle tone.

I must say again, dear readers, that I was not quite myself. Can you believe that I took no notice at all of the fact that the policeman had mistaken me for a gerbil? Well, I was extremely out of sorts on account of my panic about the crime spree. I could not waste a moment of the policeman's time explaining that I was a hamster and not a gerbil. Instead, I had to try and make him understand what I had figured out about the crime spree.

"It's the jars. They are all missing. The jars that everybody has, but now they don't, because of the crime spree."

"So you would like to report a missing jar?"

"Well, I need to report my missing jar, which was actually stolen, as far as I can tell, along with everyone else's. If you don't catch the jar thief soon, no one will have a jar, and usually everybody has a jar."

"You will need to describe the jars so that we can try and find them."

"Well my jar was full of stuff. You know exactly the kind of stuff I mean. You've got to know. I mean, everybody has a jar. Just think of the stuff in your jar and you'll get the idea, unless your jar has been stolen too. Oh, no! A policeman's jar stolen! And all those other people I saw in that queue when I arrived... weren't they reporting stolen jars too? All those stolen jars! This is really a terrible crime spree that needs to be stopped now!"

Well, what happened next was absolutely unbelievable. Even as I write this blog post, I cannot quite believe that it happened.

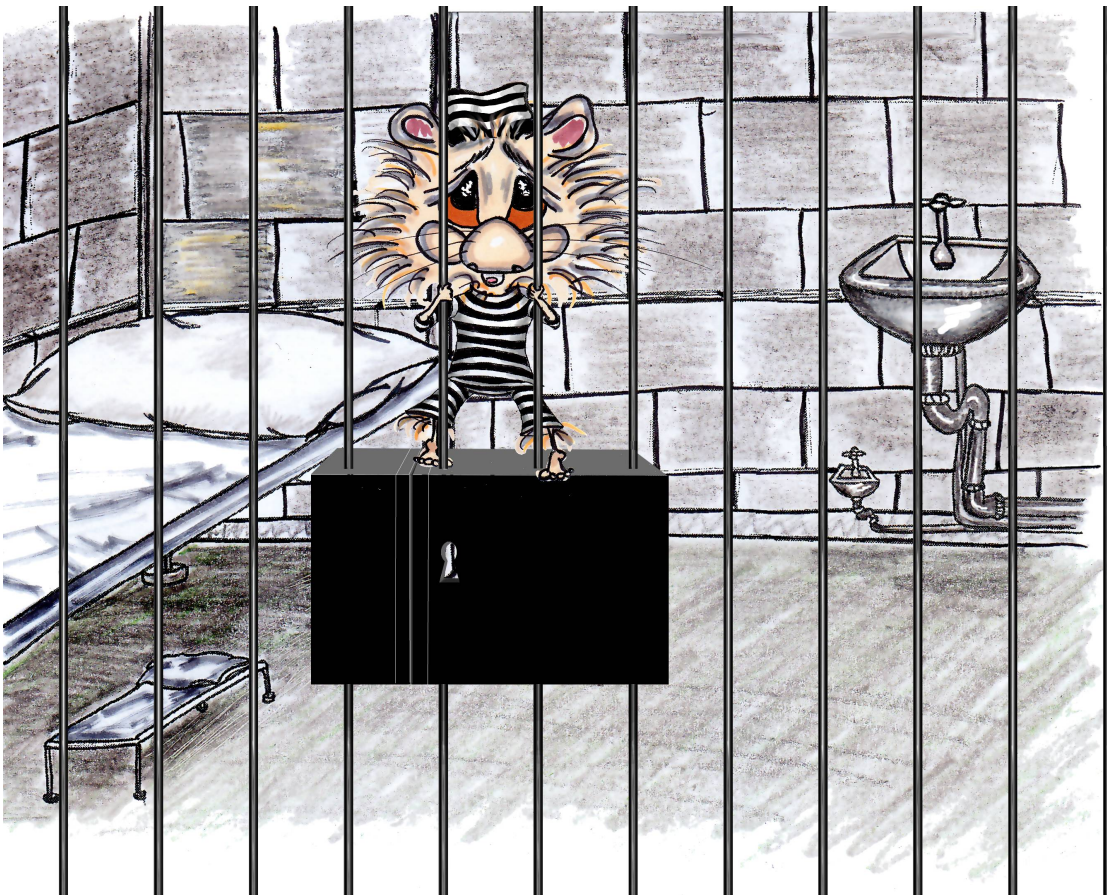
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The policeman said, "Wasting police time is a very serious crime. Now, what is your name?"

At last, a question to which I had a clear answer. "Harrison Hamster I," I replied.

"Well, Harrison Hamster I," said the policeman, "I am Police Constable Allan, and I am placing you under arrest for wasting my time. You have the right to remain silent, and I, for one, certainly hope that you do."

That, dear readers, was how I ended up behind bars.



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Getting locked up in a holding cell in the police station is bad. It is especially bad when all you had wanted to do at the police station was report a crime and help to end a crime spree. However, my experience at the police station has taught me that just when things seem very, very bad, it is always possible that they can get worse.

From my cell, I tried explaining to Police Constable Allan about all the missing jars. I tried to tell him that I was an innocent hamster who wanted nothing more than to catch the jar thief. I even offered to post a notice offering a reward for information about the jar thief on my blog.

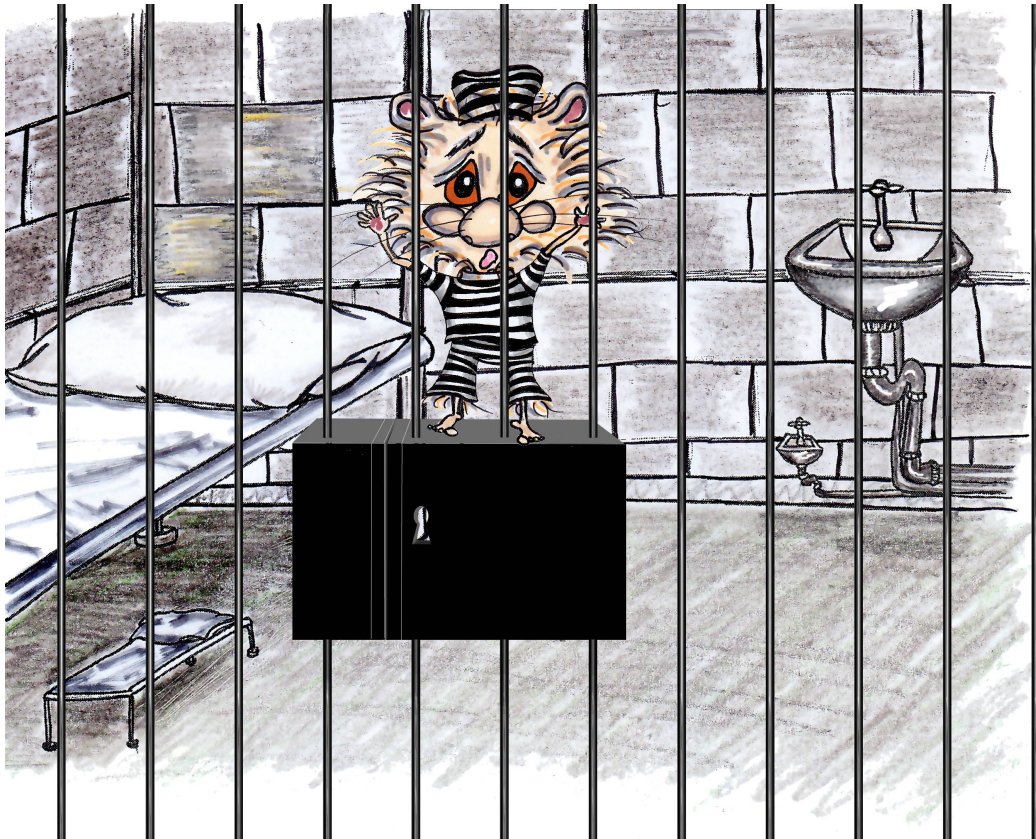
I talked so much that my cellmate (who smelled a bit like *Great-Aunt Hildegard* after she has eaten a steaming plate of boiled cabbage) put his hands over his ears, but no matter what I said, Police Constable Allan would not listen to me.



Suddenly I heard the sound of a very loud doorbell. Police Constable Allan left his post guarding my cell and went to open the door.

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"Please, please come back here!" I shouted to him from my cell.



It was then that I heard a familiar voice coming from the entrance to the police station.

"Is that the voice of Harrison Hamster I?" asked the familiar voice.

"Do you know that strange little gerbil I just arrested?" asked Police Constable Allan's voice.

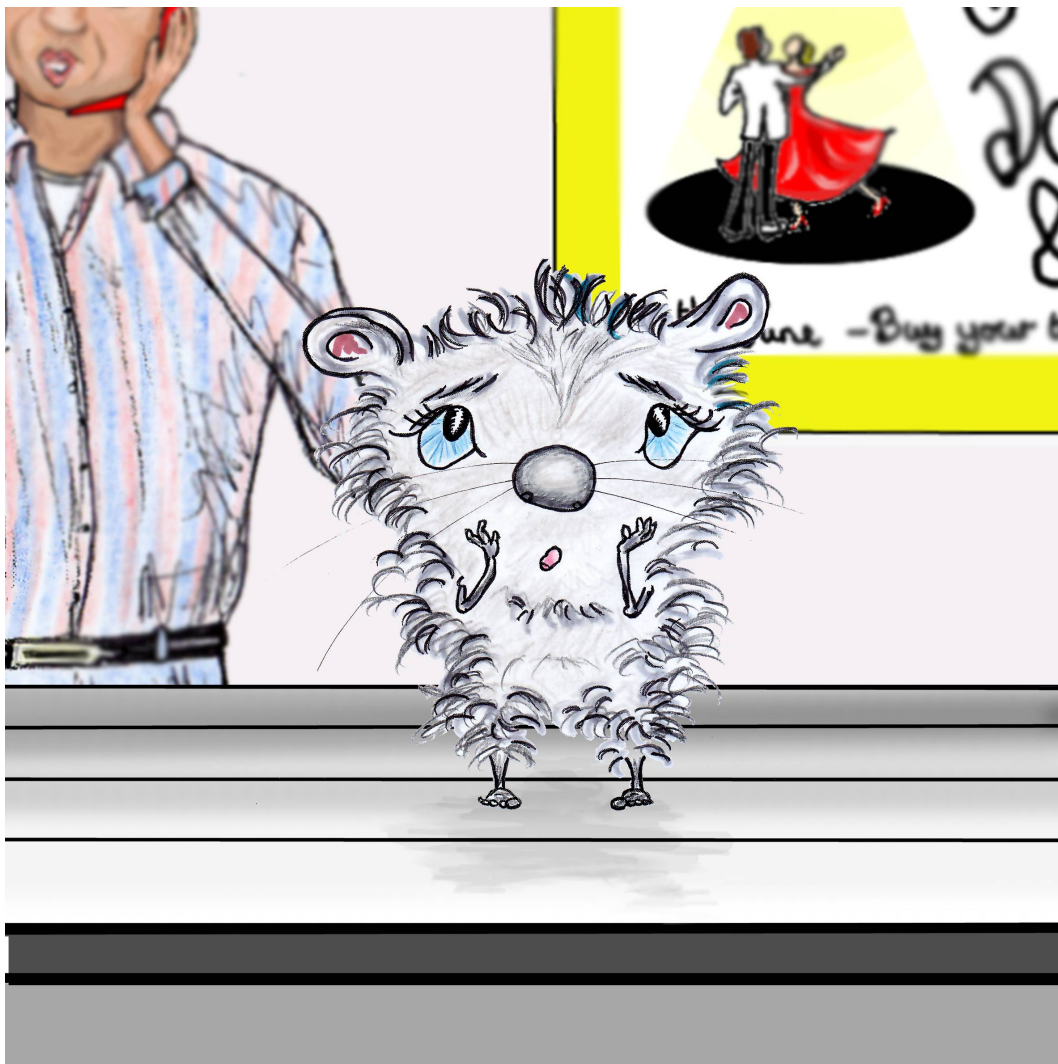
Well, that was how my dear friend Kimster found out that I had been arrested. In just a few moments, Kimster would see me like this, locked up behind bars, and there was absolutely nothing I could do about it. She would think I was a criminal. She



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would not want to be my friend any more. I had always hoped that someday Kimster would be my girlfriend. I took my head in my hands and started to cry. I was sure that I had lost Kimster forever. Well, now you can see what I meant before: just when things seem very, very bad, it is always possible that they can get worse.

"I certainly hope you have not mistaken Harrison for a gerbil. He gets very upset by that, being that he is a hamster, you know," said Kimster.



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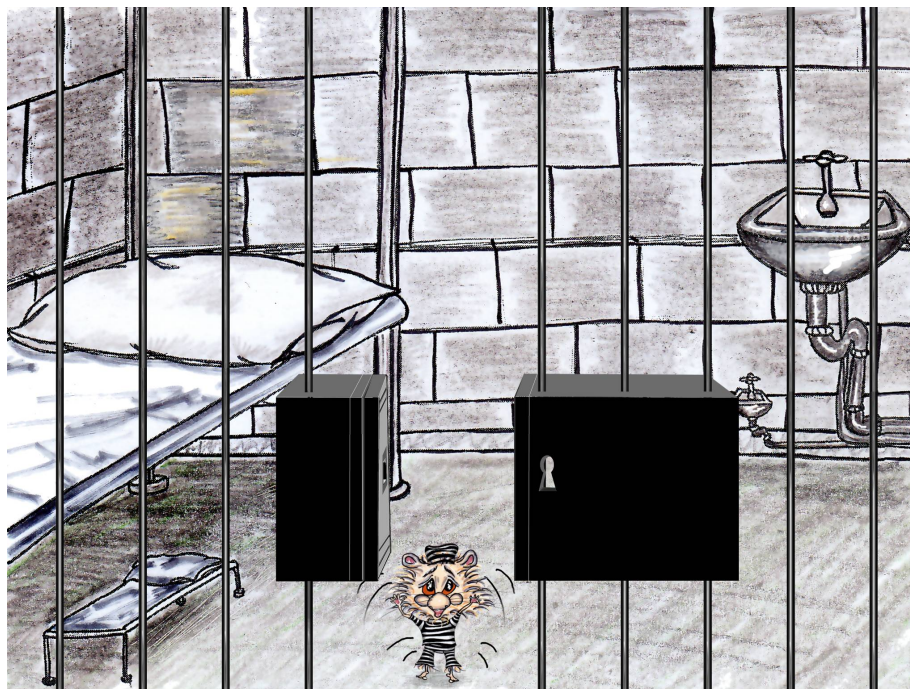
"I think that the matter of whether he is a gerbil or a hamster is the least of your friend's problems right now," said Police Constable Allan.

"What do mean? Why did you arrest Harrison?" asked Kimster.

"He came here this morning and waited in a long queue of people to speak to me. When it was finally his turn, he started rambling on about a crime spree. He said something about a missing jar, but he couldn't even tell me what was in the jar. He seemed to think that I ought to already know. I've never heard anything like it before. Anyway, he wasted a lot of my time, and it is a crime to waste police time, so I arrested him."

"This is all my fault!" cried Kimster.

I did not hear the rest of Kimster's conversation with Police Constable Allan, but a few minutes later, I heard footsteps heading in the direction of my cell. Police Constable Allan appeared and unlocked the door to my cell.



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Just as I was about to walk out towards freedom, he put Kimster inside the cell and locked the door again.



Kimster ran towards me, her arms outstretched. As we hugged, she explained to me that she had just been arrested for theft and wasting police time. Then she pointed to Police Constable Allan and said, "He has your jar."

Well, I did mention earlier in this blog post that just when things seem very, very bad, it is always possible that they can get worse.

I should explain at this point that before setting off for the police station, I had sent Kimster an e-mail to let her know that I was going there to report the theft of my jar and might be late meeting her for lunch. What Kimster told me when we sat

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down together in our cell was that she had come over to the police station as soon as she had read my message, because she had wanted to stop me from telling the police that my jar had been stolen.

She said, "Harrison, if your jar was stolen, that would make me a thief. Maybe I deserve to be behind bars!"

I said, "Don't be silly, Kimster. You could not possibly be a thief."



Kimster said, "Well, I was the one who took your jar. When I was visiting you last week, on my way out of your box, I spotted a picture hook in your jar. I had a nail at home, but I needed a picture hook to go with it, to hang a framed photo on the wall. I borrowed your jar and took it home with me. I didn't think you'd mind if I used the picture hook. You could not have used it, anyway. You didn't have a nail in your jar, and I had a nail and could put it to good use. I was going to give you back your jar

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with all your other stuff over lunch today. I never meant to steal your jar, but now I am behind bars and you probably think that I am a thief. I bet you don't even like this photo."

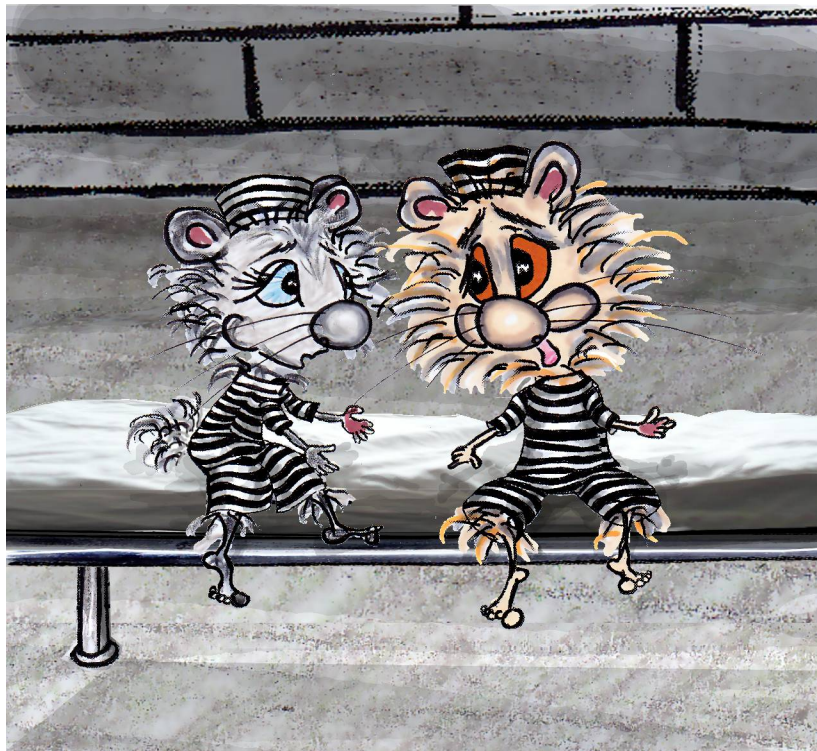
Kimster held out a photo to me. It was a photo of us, taken on the day that Kimster turned blue. Even though things had been very, very bad and had got even worse, I could not help but smile. As I have said in an earlier blog post, two blue hamsters are just funny.



"Kimster, there is no way I could not like that photo, just as there is no way you could be a thief, and there is no way either of us would waste police time - not on purpose, at least," I said.

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"There's one thing I don't understand, Harrison," said Kimster. "What was Police Constable Allan talking about when he said that you were rambling on about a crime spree?"



"Well, there was a long queue of people at the police station. I was convinced that they all must have been there, like me, to report stolen jars, and that led me to think that I had discovered a crime spree. I guess I was a bit upset about my missing jar and I might have got things a bit out of proportion."

"A bit out of proportion?" Kimster giggled. "Harrison, I think you got things way out of proportion!"

Just then a booming voice said, "What do we have here, Constable?"

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Police Constable Allan said, "Well, Chief Superintendent Collins, I'm pleased to say that I have arrested these two gerbils for wasting police time. The little grey one is also a thief. She stole this jar."



Chief Superintendent Collins looked at my jar. He said, "Constable, this jar does not contain anything worth stealing. I think you might have got this one wrong."

At that point, I had to chime in. I said, "Of course he's got it wrong, Chief Superintendent. Kimster is not a thief. She is innocent. This is all a big misunderstanding. Please could you release her."

"Did you say 'Kimster'?" asked Chief Superintendent Collins, as he turned towards our cell. He looked hard at me and rubbed his eyes. "You're the blogger Harrison Hamster I!" he said triumphantly.

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"The one and only," I said. "Delighted to meet you, Chief Superintendent Collins."



"Harrison, the honour is all mine. I am your biggest fan! And the lovely Kimster is here with you! Truly an honour! Now tell me, what are you two doing in this holding cell?"

"Well, you know how everybody has a jar... " I said.

"You mean a jar such as the one Police Constable Allan is holding?" interrupted Chief Superintendent Collins.

"Yes, this whole problem started with that exact jar, which is actually my jar, which Kimster borrowed and most definitely did not steal. I thought my jar had been stolen, and then I was in the queue waiting to speak to Police Constable Allan about my jar





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and thought I had discovered a crime spree, but I might have got things a bit out of proportion," I said.

"Harrison actually got things *way* out of proportion," interjected Kimster.

"I'm not sure I understand exactly what has happened, but I think we might just forget about this whole matter," said Chief Superintendent Collins. He took the key to the cell from Police Constable Allan and unlocked the door. Kimster and I stepped out, happy to be free again.

"Don't forget your jar," said Police Constable Allen, looking pleased to hand it over to me.

"But Chief Superintendent Collins, I would like to properly explain what happened," I protested.

Chief Superintendent Collins laughed and said, "Harrison, why don't you write about it on your blog? I am already looking forward to reading all about it."

With that, Kimster and I finally left the police station. Things had finally got better.

The blog post has two morals. I have already mentioned the first one a few times, but it bears repeating: when things seem very, very bad, it is always possible that they can get worse. Don't dwell on that too much, though. Instead, if you are feeling worried, bear in mind the second moral of this blog post: things can always get better.

Bye for now!

Harrison Hamster I  
17th June 2012

*This blog post is dedicated to my biggest fan, Chief Superintendent Collins.*