



MAN of SNOW

Stuart Farquhar

Man of Snow



Stuart Farquhar

www.stuartfarquhar.co.uk

[@WStuartFarquhar](#)

www.facebook.com/StuartFarquhar.a

Published 2014 by The Imaginary
Friends

email admin@stuartfarquhar.co.uk

Copyright © Stuart Farquhar 2014

The right of Stuart Farquhar to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author.

This eBook is a work of fiction.
Names, characters, places, and incidents are either products of the

author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Cover by Stuart Farquhar
Edited by Phil Scary
Proofread by Leigh Grieve

For Ted, Dave and Chummy Dog
With thanks to Julie for letting me
away early

Man of Snow

Round and round the garden, like a teddy bear ...

Emmet had always longed to see teddy bears going round and round his garden, but they never did. It'd be brilliant to see teddy bears going round and round his garden. Or even to have a garden. He glanced over at Ted, propped up against the tree, just in case he started going round and round anything, but he just sat there keeping watch. Good old Ted. Emmet looked over his shoulder to his bedroom window, where Chummy Dog kept a

careful eye on them. Good old Chummy Dog.

He turned his attention back to the ball of snow he'd been rolling round and round the garden. Well, round and round the edge of the park across the road from his house. It was just about the right size now, the size of a football. He'd love to own a football. Maybe he'd get one this year. Probably not though.

He lifted the snowball, feeling the cold water soak through his woollen gloves, and placed it carefully on top of the other one. There. Satisfied, he walked over to the tree where Ted was guarding the stuff. Good old Ted. He picked up the stuff and went back to the snowballs. First, he took the two pieces of broken glass he'd found in the street – one red, one blue – and pushed them in for eyes. Then he added the mouldy carrot – he'd never get away with using a fresh one – and

made the nose. A curve of stones for a mouth, and the buttons off that shirt that wasn't fit to wear any more in a line down the front. Two fallen branches made for oddly sized arms, and he perched the battered old top hat he'd found in the rubbish heap on top of its head. Finally, he took off his own scarf and wrapped it around his creation's neck. He'd probably get a row for that, but he'd probably get a row anyway.

Emmet took a step back to survey his handiwork. It was a good snowman. A fine one. The best he'd ever seen. He looked at Ted, who looked back approvingly. Chummy Dog approved too, so they were all in agreement. Happily, Emmet gathered up Ted and they went back indoors.

It was already starting to get dark, so he closed the curtain and locked the door. Always lock the door. There'd be no-one else here tonight – Emmet often had the house to himself for days

at a time – and he certainly didn't want any unexpected visitors.

He sat Ted on the other chair to keep him company, then went to the kitchen to make dinner. Then he came back out because there was no food, and climbed into the chair facing Ted. He didn't cry any more when there was nothing to eat. No point. He definitely wasn't crying now and neither was Ted. And his tummy wasn't rumbling either, cos you could get into trouble for having a rumbly tummy.

Emmet picked up the book. It was the only book in the house. He couldn't read it properly because it was a grown-up book, with big words and small writing, but it was still the only book in the house. And he was the only one who ever looked at it. He looked at it every chance he got. Sometimes he got into trouble for looking at it, but never for long cos it kept him quiet. He mostly had to sit upstairs and read it,

or sometimes on the bottom step, but whenever he had the house to himself, he liked to sit in the big chair opposite Ted, close to the candle, and read the book there. If he felt like it, he might read out loud, even though he couldn't really read the words. He knew what some of them were supposed to be, and he had enough imagination to make up the rest. It was a different book every time, which wasn't altogether a bad thing.

There was a thump at the window. Emmet nearly jumped out of his skin. Which he'd always imagined would be a bit messy. When there were thumps at the window, Emmet could imagine all sorts of things. There was another thump. He was afraid to go and look, but he knew what it probably was, and if he didn't go and look he'd only imagine much worse. So he slid down from the chair, ran to the window, stood on tiptoes, pulled the ragged

curtain aside and looked out.

It was always harder to see what was in the dark outside when it was light inside, but he certainly wasn't blowing out the candle. However, he didn't need to look far. The glass was smeared with two patches of snow. Someone had been throwing snowballs. He could guess who. He peered into the darkness, but all he could see was the snowman gazing back from across the road.

Pulling the curtain into place, Emmett climbed back into his chair. Then he climbed down again, fetched Ted, and climbed back up, hugging the bear close to him. Ted would look after him. Good old Ted. And Chummy Dog was still standing guard at the bedroom window. Good old Chummy Dog.

Thump. Thump. Thump crack!
There had been a stone in that one.
Then there was the sound of

sniggering outside. Definitely outside. Close enough to be heard. Emmet suddenly jumped down and ran to the door to make sure it was locked. He rattled the key and it stood firm.

The door rattled back!

Emmet let out a shriek as he jumped back and fell over. There was laughter from outside. Two voices.

He picked himself up, picked Ted up, and crept back to the door to put his ear against it. There was no sound.

Were they gone? He let out a sigh of relief – and the door rattled again. This time he banged his head when he jumped. The thud it made raised more laughter, louder and more hysterical.

Emmet got Ted to rub his head for him, which actually made it worse but was comforting all the same. He really wanted something to eat. Maybe he shouldn't have sacrificed the carrot.

There was the sound of running footsteps. They sounded like they were

running away. Hopefully, Emmet ran back to the window and peered through the crack in the curtain. He daren't open it this time. He could see them now. Big boys. It was always big boys. They were scooping up armfuls of snow. Sighing, but not in relief, Emmet turned his back to the wall and sat down under the window, waiting for the onslaught.

Thud. Thud. Thud thud thuddity thud thud thud. A barrage of snowballs hit the window. Some had stones. He wondered if the glass would break, but it somehow withstood the punishment.

Finally it stopped. Emmet breathed heavily. Not crying. Definitely not crying. Footsteps running into the distance again. Nervously, he turned and poked his head under the curtain.

Thud!

Why did he keep falling for it?

Laughter.

He waited a few agonising minutes

before risking another peek through the crack. They were over beside his snowman. What were they doing to it? They weren't paying attention to him, so he had time to see them more clearly in the moonlight.

He recognised them.

They were the ones who always made fun of him. And were mean to him. They made fun of everyone who was like Emmet, but they were never mean to them. Mean *about* them, yes, but never *to* them. Not in front of them. Only in front of Emmet. Because he was small. Sometimes they stole his hat or tripped him up or even threw stones at him. The stones hurt the most. Even more than the names. People said names hurt more, but that was stupid. Names didn't make you bruise or give you a nosebleed.

Why didn't they pick on someone their own size? But Emmet didn't really want them to pick on anyone,

whatever size they were. He wished they'd just leave him alone. And everyone else too. In fact, he wished someone would pick on *them* for a change. And he didn't even feel bad for thinking that. They were mean and they deserved it.

What were they doing to his snowman?

He ducked as they turned around. Had they seen him? Watching them? They might get angry if they saw him watching them. It might get *worse*. Emmet didn't like it when it got worse. It was always worse when it got worse. Much worse.

For a long time nothing happened. Not even the sniggering. But Emmet didn't dare think they might have gone, because then he'd look outside and they'd come back, or never have really gone at all, and something else would happen. Better to sit and worry that they were still out there, but not look.

And definitely not cry. Crying was for babies. And people who wanted things to get worse.

Thud thud thud.

The door.

Those weren't snowballs. The sound was sharper and didn't go *pffft* at the end. When you were listening as carefully as Emmet was, you heard the *pffft* as the snowball exploded. But that didn't happen. These weren't snowballs.

They were knocks.

Someone was *knocking*.

Thud thud thud.

Emmet's heart pounded in his chest. Thud, thud, thud.

Thud. Thud. THUD.

The knocking was insistent now. He daren't answer. But if he didn't, the knocking would just keep going and keep going and keep going, and that would be unbearable. So he pulled himself to his feet and held Ted's hand

so Ted wouldn't be scared. And together, they tiptoed to the door.

Thud thud thud.

He *really* didn't want to answer, because then it might be worse. But if he *didn't* answer, then it might be *worse* than worse. So, holding Ted in front of him for protection, he wrapped his fingers around the key and turned it.

The door didn't burst open, so he took a massive breath and took hold of the handle. The door still didn't burst open and let horrible things in to kill him horribly, so he let out the breath, took another even bigger one, and pulled the door open.

And screamed.

Framed in the doorway was his snowman.

Now Emmet *was* crying and didn't even care if it made him a baby. There was a snowman knocking on his door and anyone would cry about that and he'd almost managed not to cry for

such a long time so he'd do it now if he wanted to so just shut up, alright?

Then he heard the howls of laughter.

Big boys. They'd moved the snowman to the door just to frighten him. How had they even lifted it? It must weigh as much as an elephant!

Emmet wiped his eyes and his nose and looked up at the figure looming over him. It didn't look as funny as it had earlier. It looked scary now, with its stone leer, spiky hands and especially the malevolent, sparkly eyes, one red, one blue. And it looked much bigger than Emmet remembered. Maybe because he was cowering on the floor and it wasn't.

As he calmed down, he looked more closely, and now he saw what the big boys had been doing to it. They had written something on its forehead with their fingers.

EMET.

They'd spelled it wrong. Emmet

might not be able to read grown-up books but he could spell his own name.

At last, he hauled Ted to his feet and pushed the door shut.

And locked it. Tight.

He was shaking now, even though he knew the snowman hadn't moved by itself. It was probably from letting all the cold air in, and not from being afraid. Yes, that must be it.

He almost wished the snowman *had* come alive. It would sort out big boys. Then *they'd* be babies. Maybe if he wished really hard ...

There was a shuffling noise at the door. They were back! Suddenly Emmet realised that his shaking wasn't from being frightened either. It was from being angry. He ran to the door, unlocked it, threw it open and –

Didn't shout at all because there was no-one there. Not even the snowman. They'd moved it again.

And then a snowball hit him right in

the face. And everything went red because there was a stone in it. There was a big cheer and there was baby crying and there was a strange noise Emmet didn't hear properly because of his own noise but was probably the wind.

He slammed the door and locked it and took out the key and threw it across the room. He hated big boys! He hoped something horrible happened to them and they died of a bad disease and something big fell on them and wild animals attacked them and ate their bones. He went upstairs to the bathroom and washed his face in the murky brown water. He'd probably catch a bad disease before they did. At least then they'd stop being mean to him. All of them.

He went into his bedroom and looked out of the window, hiding behind Chummy Dog. There was no sign of the big boys. Or the snowman.

What had they done with it? The wind howled again. Although the branches of the trees were still.

Emmet pulled the curtains closed. Chummy Dog wouldn't like a snowball being thrown at his window. Emmet turned to leave, then decided to take Chummy Dog with him for extra protection. Chummy Dog *needed* extra protection.

They sat in the chair, all three of them. The wind kept howling outside, and Emmet thought it was a scary noise. Ted was especially scared of it, and Ted wasn't scared of anything. Not even big boys. Then Emmet noticed something else scary. The candle had almost burned out. It was so low it could only last a few more minutes at most. In a sudden panic, he ran to the tiny kitchen to hunt for another. What if it was the last one? Frantically, he raked in the cupboard where they were usually kept. Nothing. He started

hunting through drawers and other cupboards and even the breadbin, but found nothing.

The bedroom! There might be a candle in the other bedroom. He turned and ran through the doorway, but the candle guttered out and he tripped on something and hurt himself. He said a word he'd heard a grown-up saying once and picked himself up. He limped carefully in what he thought was the direction of the chair, bumped into it, and sat down gratefully, hugging Ted and Chummy Dog as close as he could.

The wind was still howling and shrieking, and now he knew the trees *were* moving, cos he could hear them creaking. Normally he'd be glad he was inside, but right now inside was dark and he kept falling over and being sore. He hoped outside was worse, because the big boys were in it. And now there was nothing to do but hug Ted and Chummy Dog and listen to the

wind howling and the trees creaking.

And then there was the other noise. It was the big boys. But they weren't laughing or sniggering or throwing things that went thud. They were screaming. And Emmet didn't like it. He'd wished for something bad to happen to them, but now that he heard those screams, he wished he could take it back. He didn't know what was happening, but it seemed outside was worse after all.

The howling and the screaming went on and on and the creaking got louder and louder. Emmet put Ted and Chummy Dog over his ears to block it out, but he could still hear it. It wasn't nice. It wasn't nice at all. Make it stop! Please, someone, make it stop! He was sorry! The big boys could come and do anything they liked to him, if only they'd stop screaming.

And then they did.

Or maybe they were drowned out,

because there was a loud crack, more creaking and a bang. And then silence. No howling, and no screaming. Something had made it stop.

Emmet didn't move for a very long time. Neither did Ted and Chummy Dog. They all just sat there trying not to be babies. And wondering if it was really over. Maybe the big boys had made all that noise to scare him and were waiting with more snowballs. But eventually, after what felt like hours and probably was, Emmet took Ted and Chummy Dog away from his ears and they all listened together.

Nothing. Not a sound.

After another long time, they all agreed it might be safe to move, so Emmet went and peeped through the crack in the curtain. He could see the snowman, across in the park again, but he couldn't see the tree.

Oh, there it was. On the ground. It had fallen over and hurt itself, and the

snowman was standing next to it.

Almost as if ...

Don't be silly. Wait – there was something else. Something *under* the tree. No! It couldn't be!

Emmet ran to the door, bumping into furniture in the dark. He got there and pulled. Oh, that word again! He'd thrown the key across the room when he'd been angry. How would he ever find it now?

He got down on his hands and knees and felt blindly around on the floor. Ted and Chummy Dog would be doing the same in different parts of the room. He searched and searched and he searched again. It was Chummy Dog who found it in the end, under the chair. He was sitting guarding it when Emmet got over to him. Good old Chummy Dog.

Emmet and Chummy Dog found Ted and went back to the door. They fumbled with the key in the dark, but

eventually they got it unlocked. They all took another of those special deep breaths, then Emmet cautiously opened the door. Nothing horrible happened, so he poked Ted's head around it to check. Still nothing happened, so he poked Emmet's head around it, because Ted couldn't see very well in the dark, and stared into the blackness.

There was the snowman, standing by the fallen tree. They still couldn't properly make out whatever was under the tree, but the shape ...

Certain now that nothing was going to be thrown, Emmet stepped out into the night, still carrying Ted and Chummy Dog. Slowly, with a feeling of dread, they walked across the road and on to the grass. The things under the tree were definitely the right shape. And the wrong shape too. What had he wished for?

Emmet didn't want to go any closer and neither did Ted, but Chummy Dog

said they had to, so they did. Just a few more steps and they were standing by the snowman and the fallen tree, and could see what was under it.

It wasn't big boys. It was two more snowmen. Someone had made snowmen to look like they'd been crushed by the falling tree. Emmet might have laughed out loud with relief if it wasn't so horrid. They'd been made really cleverly, with sculpted faces that screamed in agony. Or perhaps terror. It must have been the big boys. But they couldn't have made the faces so well. And why had they put their own hats and scarves and coats on the snowmen? Not old, torn ones, but good ones. Why would they leave those?

Suddenly Emmet looked around fearfully. Were they still here, waiting for him? But they'd have done something by now, and all he saw was his own snowman, grinning its stony

grin at him. His name was still etched on its forehead. Angrily, he reached up and wiped it off with his hand.

Everything froze that night. The temperature plummeted and in the morning everything was covered in hard, slippery ice. But somehow, the three snowmen had managed to melt, and all that was left were three piles of sodden clothes, some twigs, stones, broken glass and broken buttons, and a mouldy carrot that even the birds wouldn't touch.

And there were no more big boys.