



Digi-tales:

A collection of fables
for the digital age



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Helping children and families to have happier and healthier digital lives



vodafone

In partnership with:

NSPCC

FirstNews
NEWS KIDS CAN TRUST

Foreword

In today's digital age, the online world has become an integral part of our lives, offering endless opportunities for learning, creativity, and connection. However, navigating the online world safely can be challenging, especially for children and young people. This book is a unique collection of fables written by young people, sharing their imaginative stories and practical tips on how they stay happy and safe online. There are also helpful top tips from the NSPCC included within this book, as well as information on the Online Safety resources available for those wanting to find out more.

The book is the result of a nationwide creative writing competition, launched by Vodafone in partnership with the UK's only newspaper for young people, First News, inviting readers to write new fables for the digital age. There were hundreds of brilliantly authored entries, and the six winning stories were chosen by an expert panel including authors, illustrators, and representatives from Vodafone, First News, the NSPCC and their Voice of Online Youth, and Andersen Press.



Fables have always been a memorable way to teach important lessons, and these stories are no exception. Each tale is designed to make readers think about the outcomes of different online situations and how to build positive digital habits. From dealing with screentime limits to understanding the importance of privacy and knowing who to ask for help, these fables offer helpful insights for both children and parents.

We hope this book will be a valuable resource for families, providing advice and support for leading happier, healthier digital lives. With regularly updated articles and expert advice, you can also find more resources and support at www.vodafone.co.uk/digitalparenting.

Thank you for joining us on this journey to make the online world a safer and more enjoyable place for everyone.



Nicki Lyons

Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer,
Vodafone UK



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Meet the Judges

The six winning stories were chosen by an expert panel, including authors, illustrators, and representatives from Vodafone, First News, the NSPCC and their Voice of Online Youth, and Andersen Press.

The judges praised the creativity and thoughtfulness of the young writers. Jeanne Willis shared, “I was really impressed by the use of traditional picture book structure in many of the stories. It’s much harder to write a short, precise story with a great concept than people imagine and to have mastered this at such a young age shows great promise.” Karen Squillino echoed this sentiment, saying, “The stories all clearly demonstrated a high level of ability to create fables that are relevant and relatable in the modern world. All the entries told stories that really support keeping children safe online.”

Katie Tilleke Irvin highlighted the importance of the competition, saying, “The overall calibre of entries in this competition was exceptionally high, with each story offering a unique and engaging take on the theme of online safety. It was a pleasure to read them all, as they not only entertained but also delivered strong, relevant messages that are crucial for young readers today.”

Joseph Coelho added, “The young people have shown wonderful maturity and depth of thought whilst dealing with these difficult subjects.”

Nicki Lyons summarised her experience, saying, “Judging this competition has been incredibly rewarding. It’s been amazing to see the creativity and insight shown by the young writers. Their perspective is invaluable in creating a safer online world for everyone and it’s imperative that young people’s views remain part of the broader online safety conversation. By empowering them to share their thoughts and experiences, we can better understand their needs and can work together to call for a digital environment where they can thrive.”





Nicki Lyons, Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer, Vodafone UK

In her role at Vodafone UK, Nicki is responsible for external communications, government and regulatory affairs, and sustainable business, as well as Vodafone UK's everyone.connected, online safety and digital parenting programmes.



Katie Tilleke Irvin, CEO, First News

As CEO of First News, Katie is dedicated to providing clear, impartial, and engaging news for children to help them understand the complex world around them. She is a passionate advocate for children's literacy and media education and as a mother of two girls, aged 9 and 12, Katie understands the importance of nurturing curiosity and critical thinking in young minds.



Sue Cheung, Illustrator

Author and illustrator, renowned for creating books for young people of all ages. With a background as an Art Director of an ad agency in London, she now lives on the south coast and has published 13 books, done over 100 scuba dives, plays guitar badly, can do headstands on demand and has a cat that watches TV.



Paul Black, Andersen Press

PR and Brand Director at independent publisher Andersen Press, who has worked with teams at Vodafone and First News to bring together the authors and illustrators for this project. Paul looks after the media, events and partnerships for Andersen Press.



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Jeanne Willis, Author

Award-winning children's author and scriptwriter, with over 400 titles written for children. Best known for her humorous, deep and meaningful picture books and wicked end twists, as well as several cautionary tales, including a series about online safety.



Joseph Coelho, British poet, author and Children's Laureate

Best-selling, multi-award-winning children's playwright and author of over 45 books, including *The Boy Lost in The Maze* which received international acclaim won the 2024 Carnegie Medal for writing. Former Waterstone's Children's Laureate (2022 – 2024).



Karen Squillino, Local Services Director, NSPCC

With over 30 years' experience in child protection and safeguarding, Karen is responsible for the delivery of evidence-based services to babies, children and families across the UK and leading the UK's most far-reaching school-based abuse awareness programme: 'Speak out Stay safe.'



The Voice of Online Youth (via NSPCC)

The Voice of Online Youth are a group of 14 young people aged 14-17 from across the UK who are helping shape the NSPCC's strategic direction in online safety. The Voice of Online Youth inform and guide the NSPCC's work to ensure children's voices and experiences are heard to create a safe, positive experience online.

Meet the Authors



Penny, 9
The Open Window

"I enjoy reading and writing stories. This competition gave me the idea for a fun story with the chance to win prizes for myself and for my school."



Alexa, 9
The Very Lazy Vampire

"I wanted to take part in the competition because I love writing stories. I was inspired by talks given at the Hay Festival by Cressida Cowell, Sophia Henn and Liz Pichon. I would love to be an author when I grow up."



Hawa, 10
The Smart Fox and the Naughty Mouse

"My teacher encouraged me to enter this competition as I enjoy writing in my spare time. When I saw that it was for online safety, I was keen to develop a story with a moral to highlight the importance of staying safe online."



Avery, 11
The Lamb and the Lasso

"I wanted to take part in this competition because I love gaming. It can be great fun and super exciting, but I have experienced being a little addicted to gaining experience points or getting to the next level and felt the disappointment of losing out on possible achievements. Like most children, I can find it hard to switch off my device and that can make me a little irritable at times! I wrote this because I wanted to help other children like me understand that devices are not the only things in the world that matter and to explore the effects they may have on them."



Catarina, 12
Pig Date Gone Wrong

"I decided to join the competition because writing a fable seemed like a fun idea. Giving names to the characters and apps was also very fun."



Oprah, 14
BEE SAFE!

"I wanted to join because I felt online safety is extremely important for children to learn about in a fun and interesting way!"





The Open Window

Penny, aged 9

There are 3 things you need to know about spiders.

Number 1 – they are big and hairy and ugly

Number 2 – they can be quite the trickster because they pretend to be nice but they want to trap innocent creatures and eat them

Number 3 – they do this by making a sticky shiny pretty web that looks like a lacy hammock

That was how a spider almost tricked a little moth called Molly.

Deep inside the wood was a tiny house in a tiny tree where Molly lived with her mummy. She was very young and did not know anything about the world outside.

One day she looked out of the window and saw a beautiful sparkly thing covered in dew drops that were shining in the sun light. The window was open and she wanted to go outside and find out what the thing was. It was drawing her towards it.

She fluttered out through the open window and hovered above the shiny lights.

Then a voice whispered “Hello little moth. Would you like to come in and rest your wings?”

Molly looked down and saw who was talking. He was quite big and furry. He seemed friendly though because he was smiling at her when he said “I have some lovely nectar tea.”

Molly was quite convinced it would be fine for her to go inside his lovely glimmering home. She flew down and her wings were nearly touching it. Then she heard her mummy shouting at her.

“No! Don’t do that Molly. It isn’t safe. He is a big evil spider lurking and trying to eat you. He is not as nice as you think.”

Molly felt frightened and flew home with her wings flapping like mad. She went back in through the window to her mummy and they had a big hug. Molly was safe!

Then her mummy slammed the window shut with a gigantic BANG!!!

That is what we call parental controls. Parents always know best how to keep you safe, and protect you from danger on the web.

Judges’ comments

Nicki Lyons: “I really enjoyed reading this story. It does a great job engaging readers right from the get-go, using a clever metaphor and a clear message to illustrate how online encounters may not always be what they seem. It shines a light on the important role parents and trusted adults can play in helping young people to navigate the online world safely.”

Joseph Coelho: “The Open Window brilliantly uses a metaphor to speak about the internet and “the web” in a very clever and simple way. The writer does a superb job of drawing us straight into the story with an enigmatic opening line “There are 3 things you need to know about spiders.” An excellent piece of storytelling.”





The Very Lazy Vampire

Alexa, aged 9

Hundreds of centuries ago in the time of vampires there lived a very lazy vampire whose name was Leopold. He was known as Leopold the lazy.

One afternoon he was eating his favourite blood biscuits and texting his friends. He ate and he ate, he texted and he texted until he ran out of blood biscuits! So he shouted from his coffin demanding that his mum make him a batch of **blood biscuits**. His mum replied “No darling, this time you can make them yourself.” “**Urgh!**” he stamps his foot.

After that his brain whispered to him “why don’t you order a batch online?” “Great idea brain. I’ll get my phone. Oh, I got a reply from Mike. He wants a batch of blood biscuits too.”

Leopold looked up the famous blood biscuit website and saw the price “no way am I buying those! They’re £40.”

There was a website underneath. A company he’d never heard of. “That’s a much better price, only £2.50 a batch.”

He ordered two batches, one for himself and one for Mike. They arrived 2 hours later.

“What, a jar?, it should be a tray. Wait a second, there are sprinkles on the blood biscuits.” He ate and he ate, he texted and he texted.

He started to feel a bit strange. He felt his blood go down to his feet then up to his head. Leopold sprinted to the kitchen. The look on his mum’s face when she saw him was very worrying.

“Leo, you’ve got ears!” “Of course I have mum” “but you’ve grown dog ears!” Leo put his hands to his head and felt the furry, floppy ears.

He felt his blood rush to his hands. He looked down and saw them change to paws.

“I’m turning into a dog!” he howled. “There must have been something in those biscuits I ordered online!”

“You ordered biscuits instead of making them? You’re so lazy, Leopold.”

Leopold was about to say that he was not lazy but all that came out was a woof. He ran up stairs as fast as he could. He cried in his coffin for about 30 minutes and then he realised Mike would be angry as he would look like a dog too.

He went back downstairs the next morning and apologised to his mum and dad. They accepted but he was grounded for a week. They said he was allowed to say sorry to Mike.

He was worried what Mike would say but when Leopold went over to Mike’s house to apologise, Mike understood! He had listened to their school online safety class whilst Leopold wasn’t paying attention.

Leopold had put his family, his friend and himself in danger; he had learned his lesson: he was never lazy again.

Leopold started to help around the house, listen in classes and was now known as Leopold the improved version. He never ate another blood biscuit for his whole afterlife!



Judges’ comments

Jeanne Willis: “The Very Lazy Vampire’ made me laugh out loud. A great character, original plot and good end twist and hilarious end line.”

Sue Cheung: “The author showed great creativity and humour in getting this story across, highlighting how our actions may put others in difficult positions, as well as ourselves.”

NSPCC’s Voice of Online Youth: “We loved the unique setting of the story; it was very entertaining. It also focused on shopping online, which isn’t talked about as often.”



The Smart Fox and the Naughty Mouse

Hawa, aged 10

There once was a fox and a laptop-loving mouse,
Who lived in a beautiful, but very tiny house.
The mouse loved to play on his device,
and the Fox thought that playing outside was nice.
Mouse with a tablet bright upon his lap,
He's tapping away fighting the urge to nap.
He scrolls through games with a flick and a swipe,
chasing after cheese, oh what a hype!
With pixelated friends he takes to the skies,
In a world of adventure, where imagination flies.
With a click and a swipe, he's lost in his zone,
but then a pesky pop - up interrupts with a groan."
Click here for a bonus " it flashed on the screen,
So curious, he tapped it, his eyes green and keen.
But oh what a blunder! With a whir and a crash,
the game disappeared, just like a wild flash.
His heart sank like quick sand, his joy turned to dread,
"No more quests or adventures!" he thought, hanging his head.
With no game to revive him he sighed in dismay,

“What to do now?” he wondered, as the night turned gray.
But then on the screen, a blaring surprise-
His password appeared; “That’s not me, it’s lies!”
A moment of panic, a blink of the eye,
The device now belonged to the hacker, oh my!
Suddenly the soft winds blew,
The clever fox appeared, so bright and true.
With nimble paws, he fixed the mess,
Bright screen glowing, no more distress.
He trotted to mouse, with a grin so wide,
“Here’s a treasure for you, come take it with pride!
“But mouse glared on, eyes full of doubt,
“I’ve changed my mind, I no longer want it out.”
Fox raised an eyebrow, he could see Mouse was scared,
“What’s wrong with the tablet?” Fox showed he cared.
Then he told Fox the thought that sprang to his mind,
“Maybe I’ll explore outside, see what else I can find!”
So he put down his tablet, his frown turned to cheer,
With new worlds to discover, his adventure was near.
In life’s little puzzles, through highs and through lows,
Finding adventure in nature, is where joy truly grows.

Judges’ comments

Katie Tilleke Irvin: “The tale creatively addresses the importance of online safety, illustrating the consequences of clicking on suspicious links and the value of being cautious. The mouse’s shift from digital obsession to appreciating the outdoors delivers a positive message about balance. With its rhythmic rhyme and vivid imagery, this piece not only entertains but also imparts an important lesson, making it both fun and educational.”

Sue Cheung: “The poem format was clever and had me gripped from the start. I think the message in the last line encapsulated it all, ‘Finding adventure in nature, is where joy truly grows.’”





The Lamb and the Lasso

Avery, aged 11

Tom the Lamb was twizzling his hooves on the console controller as he fought furiously to round up humans in his favourite game 'Human Round Up.' He was about to earn a special 'Lamb Lasso' which would give him an advantage in the next stages. Suddenly, Tom's thirty minute timer started up, signalling that his game time was over for the day.

Just as he was about to switch off, a message appeared on the screen: 'Are you sure you want to quit now? Your progress will not be saved and your reward will not be available.' Tom paused and sighed, then ended the game.

In the farmyard the next morning, Tom joined his friends around the feeding trough. Sam the Calf and Timmy the Goat were already discussing the game.

'The Lamb Lasso is epic! It has infinite loops and you can round up loads of humans!' Timmy exclaimed excitedly.

'Yeah. You can basically beat the game with it,' enthused Sam. 'I'm already on level two hundred!'

They both turned to Tom.

'Have you got it, bro?' they asked in unison.

Tom gulped down his half eaten blueberry muffin. He felt left out.

‘No. I timed out before I got it yesterday,’ he answered in a small voice.

‘Dude! You need to keep playing into the night. The more you play, the better the rewards.’

That night, Tom’s thirty minute timer kicked in just before he earned the lasso. But this time was different. This time, he continued playing. He sneaked his device up to bed and played for another hour.

9 pm - he got the lasso.

10 pm - he earned a Bronze Lasso.

11 pm - he earned the Silver Lasso.

12 midnight - he earned the rare, Golden Thread Lasso... and then his battery ran out.

Content, Tom settled down. But he couldn’t sleep - his brain was thinking about the game and planning what to do next. Eventually, he drifted off. But Tom had a horrible nightmare. Instead of lassoing the humans, the humans were lassoing him!

In what seemed like no time at all, Tom was woken by the sound of his daily cockerel clock. He groggily slumped down to breakfast to see Ma Sheep had put Grass Hoop cereal out. Tom pushed it out of the way shouting, ‘I WANTED BLUEBELL PORRIDGE!’ before bursting into tears.

Ma Sheep enveloped him in her warm, embracing wool until he finished sobbing. Eventually, Tom explained everything - the game, the lasso, the late night and the nightmare. To his surprise his mum did not seem upset and explained that mistakes happen and we learn from them. She told Tom about the ‘Golden Hour’: the importance of switching off devices an hour before bed so you get lots of rest and don’t become grouchy.

Although it was hard, Tom learned not to be tempted by game rewards. His parents gave him extra time to complete levels in the day and Tom learned that the ‘Golden Hour’ gave him a peaceful night’s sleep.

Judges’ comments

Joseph Coelho: “What struck me with this story was its subtle theme of peer pressure and how we can be goaded into making bad choices just to keep up with our peers. Tom soon learns that swapping sleep for screen time is not a great idea and we see how it has affected his mood. This is a lovely tale about acting in the best way to serve our health and realistically demonstrates how hard making the right choice can sometimes be, but lets us know that in the end it is always worth it.”

NSPCC’s Voice of Online Youth: “This story conveyed an important, clear, and relatable message about managing time online and brought to life the peer pressure around gaming and its impact on sleep, which affects many kids.”



Pig Date Gone Wrong

Catarina, aged 12

“We’re here!”, said the first pig. “Finally!”, said the second. “Let’s start building!”, said the third pig.

The three little pigs had just moved to a neighbourhood with no wolves, after barely escaping the Big Bad Wolf and his blows. The middle pig, having learnt his lesson, built his house out of bricks like his brother. A house of sticks was more vulnerable to fall over, and he didn’t want to risk it again.

But the youngest pig wanted to be an influencer, so he thought, “I won’t waste my time making a silly brick house. There aren’t any wolves here. If I build my house out of straw, I’ll have more time to post on social media.” And so he did. In ten minutes, the house was done, and the pig inside it was happily scrolling on InstaOink. He took a picture of his new house and wrote “Just moved to a wolf-free area!”, then posted it.

Almost immediately, he got a friend request from the prettiest girl pig he had ever seen. Her name was Charming Piggy! He couldn’t believe that was true! He texted her on InstaOink, giving his WhatsMud information to her. One word led to another and, after three days, they were very close friends.

“How about a date?”, suggested the pig, feeling brave. Charming Piggy accepted at

once, and the pig gave her his address, explaining in detail how to find the neighbourhood.

The next day, the pig took a shower (something pigs rarely do!) and was in his house waiting for Charming Piggy when he spotted a wolf! But not any wolf, the Big Bad Wolf! And he was coming straight towards his house.

“AAAAHHHHHHH!”, screamed the pig. He knew his straw house would not hold up against the wolf’s blow. He burst out of his house and ran. He ran all the way to his brother’s house. Finding the house empty and unable to go inside, he ran further to the oldest pig’s house. He burst inside and bolted the door, barely locking the wolf out.

“What happened?”, asked one of his brothers, looking up from his cup of tea.

“THE WOLF! He’s here!”, answered the breathless pig.

“What? That is not possible. He would never find our secret address!”, mumbled the other brother, still munching on his biscuit.

At that moment the pig realised what he had done. Charming Piggy was the wolf!

He learnt his lesson: Never share your personal data online! You can never be sure who is on the other side.”

Judges' comments

Karen Squillino: “Using a well-known story as the frame for this fable was clever. The story was well written and humorous with a very strong message about personal safety online.”

Katie Tilleke Irvin: “The story highlights the importance of privacy and caution when sharing personal information online, offering a humorous yet valuable lesson for young readers.”

Jeanne Willis: “‘Pig Date Gone Wrong’ was full of humour, a great plot and end twist and a clear message about not sharing personal data online.”





Illustration by Sue Cheung

BEE SAFE!

Oprah, aged 14

There was once a flower garden named Sunny Meadows, where the skies were blue, and the bees buzzed in harmony. One of those bees was a curious young bee, named Bella.

She was full of excitement and loved adventures. Her favourite adventures were always in The Grand Hive.

Inside, there was a magnificent structure, with glowing cells that connected all the bugs in Sunny Meadows. It was known as The Great Network, where all the bugs could share stories, trade pollen, and make new friends!

It was Bella's favourite spot. She would buzz up every day, and browse through the sweet honeycomb cells to learn about all the fields and flowers. But she especially loved learning about the Animal Kingdom.

One vibrant afternoon, whilst browsing each of the cells, a new message glowed especially brightly. It read "Meet me at the big oak tree for a treasure of nectar!" Bella was curious, as it was from a bug she had never seen in the Animal Kingdom.

But, she was so excited by the idea of treasure! So she polished her wings, and was

ready to fly to the oak tree, when a wise old bee named Oliver flew beside her.

“Where are you off to in such a rush, Bella?” Oliver asked, his wings flapping rapidly.

“I saw a message about free nectar on The Network! A new bug told me to meet at the oak tree!” Bella replied, with a glint of joy sparkling in her eyes.

Oliver’s wings fluttered with concern. “Well, young one. Do you know who sent that message? If this is a new bug, then maybe it isn’t who you think it is.”

Bella paused, her mind full of wonder and confusion. “But this is such an exciting adventure! What if the treasure is real?”

Oliver fluttered closely, eyeing her kindly. “Then you should learn that not everything on The Network can be trusted. Just because someone says they have treasure, it doesn’t mean that it’s true, or safe to find out! You need to be careful with the bugs in Sunny Meadows.”

Bella was still puzzled. “But how can I tell? I want adventures and new friends!”

Oliver smiled at her. “That’s lovely, but you should be cautious! Before you go to meet anyone, always check with a parent or trusted bee. And never go alone! If you’re careful you can still explore and learn without putting yourself in danger.”

Bella pondered for a moment. “Hmm, you’re right Oliver. I trusted way too quickly! Next time, I will talk to my hive mates before doing anything.”

“Great choice Bella,” Oliver exclaimed with joy. “Sunny Meadows is full of radiant flowers and amazing creatures! But to stay safe, you should be wise with who you trust.”

From that day on, Bella still loved to explore Sunny Meadows, but because of Oliver’s advice, she stayed cautious about who she trusted on The Network! She always checked with her parents before meeting anyone new.



Judges’ comments

Joseph Coelho: “I loved the world building in this story especially the bee version of the internet with its cells and information on the animal kingdom, I thought this was a very clever story device. I was so pleased to see that a wise old bee gave Bella the advice she needed to stay safe.”

Paul Black: “I loved the physicality of a ‘real’ online social media place and bringing it into the physical is a real stroke of creativity.”

The Monster Who Scared Himself Silly

Jeanne Willis

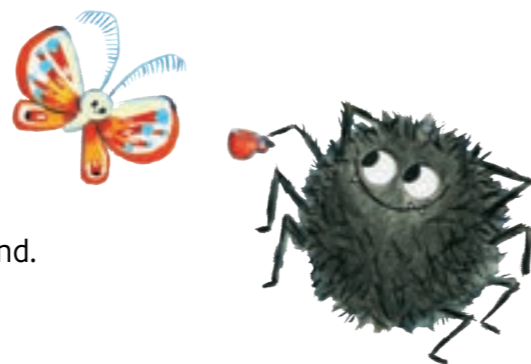
Written by renowned children's author Jeanne Willis, "The Monster Who Scared Himself Silly" is the final story within the Digi-tales collection, building on the six imaginative fables crafted by the competition winners. This story weaves together the creativity and unique ideas of the young authors, combining the important online safety lessons throughout the book into one gripping final tale.



The Monster Who Scared Himself Silly

Jeanne Willis

A monster discovered this book in a wood,
He read every story and thought they were good.
'Prize-winning fables by children?' he said,
'I usually eat them with thick, buttered bread,
But maybe I shouldn't! Their writing is nice!
And I'm very impressed with their safety advice.'
The spidery tale was the first that he read,
It scared him so much, he hid under the bed
But he learnt (like the moth) he should listen to mum
To stay safer online, so no spiders would come.
The one about vampires filled him with glee,
'Lazy old Leopold's rather like me!
Laughed the monster, 'I like a blood biscuit or four.
Will I buy them online? I'm not sure anymore!
For the story explained it was not very wise
To trust sellers online who told terrible lies
And, if the price seemed too good to be true,
The product was bad - he was glad that he knew,
And only bought biscuits from sites that were sound.
(Unlike Leo, who found he'd turned into a hound!)
Monster was silly sometimes, like the mouse
In the third safety story. He stayed in his house



And he played on his laptop, but during the game
He was hacked by a wizard who gave a false name
And held him to ransom, and made him confess
To his ID and password and stole his address.
'If only I'd known about clickbait!' he said,
'And had friends like the fox in the fable I read,
But now I know better! Although I'm annoyed,
That tale has taught me the things to avoid.'
The monster read on - he was licking his lips
In the tale of the lamb, 'I could eat him with chips!
He said, 'Maybe with peas and a slice of lasso,
And some gravy, in case it's too stringy to chew.'
But the plot was such fun, he forgot about food
The 'Lamb Lasso' game put him straight in the mood
To play 'Rounding Up Humans' all night without sleep,
He played it so much, he lost count of the sheep
And exhausted and grumpy, like Tom in the fable
He yelled at his mum, half-asleep at the table.
She read him the rest of the story and said,
'Darling, you need to go up to your bed,
Sleep, play outside, eat your dinner and shower,
No gaming at bedtime - enjoy Golden Hour!
The monster decided to follow that rule,
No longer sleepy, he skipped off to school.
He exercised daily and feeling divine,



Decided to find a new girlfriend online.
If only he'd read the fifth fable before!
Which warned of the possible danger in store.
He found who he thought was a wonderful mate
And he went on a date, but discovered too late
She wasn't the sweet lady monster he'd seen...
It was a werewolf and man, he was mean!
The monster escaped by the skin of his teeth
He ran for his life through the forest and heath
He ran to his room, and he shivered and shook
And read the last tale in the Vodafone book.
He was gripped by the story of Bella the Bee,
Where the meadow was buzzing in harmony
Until Bella adventured too far from the hive.
'I hope,' said the monster, 'That she will survive.'
But on the Great Network (or so she was told)
There was sweet nectar treasure, in liquid gold!
The message said it could be found in a tree
And the new bug who sent it said it was for free.
Bella fell for the trick! Yes, the evil bug lied,
He was hoping to trap her when she flew inside,
But at the last minute she swerved- Luckily,
She was saved by advice from a wise older bee.
The monster had finished the stories, he smiled,
And said, 'I was foolish and feckless and wild
On the web, but since reading this wonderful book,



I'm much smarter and wiser than maybe I look.
I'm as bright as a button, as sharp as can be,
I've bossed it! The internet cannot hurt me.'
If only he'd known that things grow, and they change
Like mushrooms in darkness, all secret and strange
And it becomes harder to tell what is true,
And what is not real, and Who's really Who.
For example, he scared himself silly last week
Watching video news clips- he heard a man speak
About capturing monsters to banish to Mars,
With footage of creatures like him behind bars!
He burst into tears, he believed every word,
'Mama! 'he sobbed, ' I have seen and I've heard
The most horrible things, we must go on the run!
'Let me see what you saw.' she said, hugging her son.
She watched and she said, 'There is no need to cry,
It is nonsense, fake news and it's made by AI!
It looks very scary and real, I agree
If you're ever in doubt, then ask daddy or me,
No one will catch you and ship you to Mars!
And they fell asleep peacefully, under the stars.
Remember this tale and the moral, which shows
That the internet's great if you keep on your toes.
So, always play safe, unlike Monster and friends
And your online life-stories will have happy ends!



NSPCC

The NSPCC's Top Tips for Staying Safe Online

It's not always easy to know what's safe online and what's not. Our tips can help you with life online and to know what to do if things go wrong.

- 1. Think before you share:** The internet can be a great place to share things with our friends and family. But remember once you post, send or share something online, other people can screenshot and share it with others. Make sure you always share things which are safe and kind.
- 2. Don't share personal details:** Keep things like your address, phone number, full name, school and date of birth private, and check what people can see in your privacy settings. Remember that people can use small clues like a school logo in a photo to find out a lot about you.
- 3. Use your privacy settings:** Lots of apps and games allow you to control who can see you and contact you. Check you have these settings in place, and they are working for you.
- 4. Don't accept unknown friend requests:** Only accept friend requests from people that you know offline like your friends and family. If you get a request or message from someone you don't know then talk to a trusted adult like a parent or teacher.

- 5. Follow age restrictions:** Games, apps and TV shows all have age restrictions which help keep you safe from content which might not be appropriate. Talk to a trusted adult to make sure the ones you use are age-appropriate for you.
- 6. Watch out for scams:** Online accounts and posts aren't always as they seem and sometimes are trying to trick us to get personal information, money or images. If something sounds too good to be true, then it usually is. No one online should be pressuring you to share personal information or images.
- 7. Remember seeing isn't always believing:** People don't always show what their lives are really like on social media. Photos can be staged, airbrushed or filtered. And people only show the parts they want others to see.
- 8. Take a break when you need to:** Being online can be great but spending too long can mean we don't get enough sleep or have time for homework, to see friends and family or enjoy mealtimes. Set reminders in the app or on your device to help you take regular breaks.
- 9. Get help if you see something upsetting:** Sometimes people might post things online that you find upsetting or disturbing. If you've seen something you're worried about, you don't have to cope alone. You can report it to the platform and talk to a trusted adult.
- 10. Get advice from Childline:** You can visit our online advice hub (www.childline.org.uk/online-safety) or speak with a counsellor about anything that is worrying you online or offline. You can contact Childline on **0800 11 11**.

Helping you to Stay Safe Online

Being online is a vital part of everyday life and everyone deserves to enjoy this in a safe and happy way, exploring the opportunities and benefits it has to offer. With 15 years of experience in the field of online safety, Vodafone UK is committed to supporting families in building healthy digital habits through the products it offers and its extensive range of free resources.

Through its partnership with NSPCC, the UK's leading children's charity, Vodafone prioritises bringing young people's voices to the forefront of the online safety conversation and works closely with them to create relevant tools and resources to help families navigate the everchanging online world.

You can visit Vodafone's Digital Parenting website to access tools and resources, including:

- **Phone Safety toolkit:** In collaboration with the NSPCC, Vodafone has developed an online safety toolkit. This toolkit includes guidance, tips, and advice created with input from children, parents, and experts. It aims to support families in having open conversations about online safety and provides practical tools to help children stay safe online.

- **Parental Controls toolkit:** Created in partnership with online safety experts Digital Awareness UK, Vodafone offers one of the UK's largest parental controls and safety settings resources to help parents manage their children's online activities. Digital Parenting Pro provides helpful information about what parental controls and safety settings are available across the most popular apps, games and devices. Whether you'd like to manage screen time limits, filter out harmful content or simply understand what the latest app or game is all about, Vodafone's online safety experts have gathered all the facts for you.
- **Support and Helplines:** For additional support, NSPCC's Childline (www.childline.org.uk or **0800 1111**) is available for children to speak to a counsellor if they feel unsafe online. Childline offers a confidential helpline and online chat service, providing a safe space for children to seek help and advice. Parents/adults can reach out to the NSPCC Helpline (**0808 800 5000**, help@NSPCC.org.uk or search for 'NSPCC Helpline' online) for advice if they have a concern.
- For more information and access to these resources, and many others, visit the Digital Parenting website at www.vodafone.co.uk/digitalparenting.



Meet the Illustrators



Fiona Lumbers

Fiona Lumbers has drawn on anything and everything from an early age and always insisted she would be an artist when she grew up. Fiona moved to London in 2000 to study for an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art. A combination of her obsession with picture books and the arrival of her first son led her down the path of illustration and she hasn't looked back since. Nothing makes her happier than splashing watercolours and inks and conjuring up new characters - often influenced by the exploits of her two sons.



Sue Cheung

Sue Cheung was born in the Midlands and spent her early years clowning about and busily scribbling and drawing. At the age of 16 she seized her chance to become an artist by winning a scholarship to the London College of Fashion. Later, Sue went into advertising and worked her way up to Art Director. She now freelances as a designer from her home in Bournemouth, where she writes and illustrates children's books. She also writes under the name of Sue Pickford.



Paddy Donnelly

Paddy Donnelly is an Irish illustrator with a background in graphic design and app development who is thrilled to be making a living drawing dinosaurs – his 5 year old self is very happy about this. Paddy's books have won the Sainsbury's Children's Book Award, the White Ravens Book Award, the Judge's Special Award at the Children's Books Ireland Book Awards and the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Award, and his work has also been longlisted for a YOTO Carnegie Medal for Illustration. Paddy lives in Belgium with his family.



Thank you for joining us on this journey to make the online world a safer and more enjoyable place for everyone.

- **About Vodafone UK:** Vodafone UK is a technology communications company that connects people, businesses and devices to help our customers benefit from digital innovation. We believe connectivity is essential, and everyone should have access to the opportunities it provides. Being online is a vital part of everyday life and everyone deserves to enjoy this in a safe and happy way, exploring the exciting opportunities and benefiting from everything the internet has to offer. As the Nation's Network we want to help our customers stay safe online and build healthy digital habits through the products we offer and the free resources we make available.
- **About NSPCC:** We exist to keep children safe. Everything we do puts children first – their voices, their experiences, their needs. We support young people through Childline and a range of specialised services. Making sure they always have someone to turn to. We work to prevent abuse from ever happening, and we're here to help children recover so that it doesn't shape their future. We've been protecting children for over 140 years. And as long as children need us, we'll be here.
- **About First News:** First News is the leading, independent news source tailored specifically for children. Our award-winning team of journalists have been delivering comprehensive, age-appropriate, and impartial coverage of both local and global issues to a readership of over 2.5 million, at home and at school, since 2006. Our content, available in print and online, takes the fear out of sensationalised world events and equips children with the knowledge to learn, debate, and think critically about the world they're growing up in.

