

EVERYONE'S BARKING MAD FOR
KNITBONE PEPPER GHOST DOG

Knitbone Pepper GHOST DOG picked as one of
Mumsnet's Best New Books

"Funny, wonderfully imaginative and
beautifully illustrated, the Knitbone Pepper
books are highly recommended."

The Daily Express

"Funny and tender"

Metro

"An endearingly mad romp: a triumph!"

Debi Gliori

"Sweet ghost animals and
ginger-nut-fuelled adventure...charming"

LoveReading4Kids

"Full of hilarity, warmth and undefeated love"

Middle Grade Strikes Back

"A wonderful novel for young readers"

Inis

"Invite the Pepper family into your life
and enjoy the rollercoaster!"

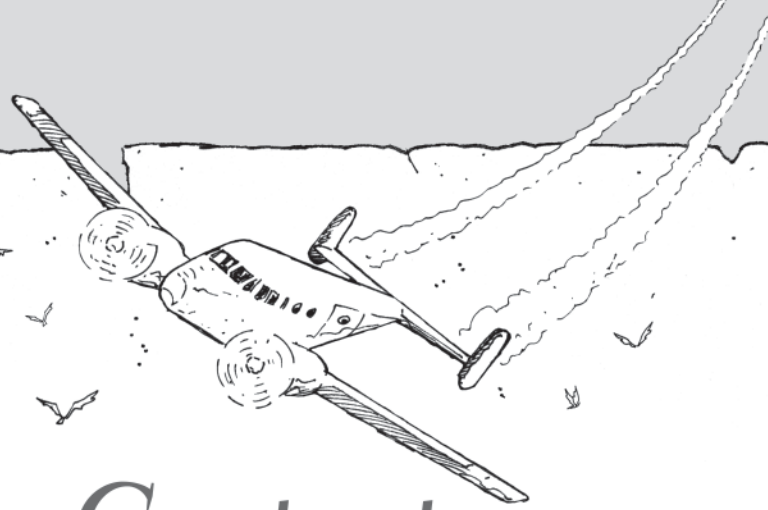
Book Lover Jo



KNITBONE
PEPPER
GHOST DOG

The Silver Phantom

By Claire Barker illustrated by Ross Collins



Contents

1. Dog 'n' Bone	7	8. Lost Love	84
2. Fan-tastic	15	9. Blast From the Past	95
3. TV Times	27	10. Free Spirit	104
4. Hidden Treasure	36	11. Pranks and Pepperwhackers	116
5. Wardrobe	44	12. Survival of the Funniest	125
6. Lights, Camera, Action!	54	13. Party Pooper	136
7. Shell Shock	71	14. Unquiet Spirit	160
		15. Hapless History	168
		16. Wolf	192
		17. We'll Meet Again	199
		18. Plane Sailing	211
		19. Picture Perfect	225



Chapter 1

DOG 'N' BONE

Knitbone Pepper sat in the hallway and stared hard at the telephone. All his instincts told him that important news was on its way to Starcross. He could feel a Big Bark tickling inside him like a sneeze, bursting to get out. He checked his symptoms one more time and did a little sum, just to be sure:

Tingling tail + fizzing whiskers + itching nose
+ twitching ears = 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...

Riiing–riiing! The telephone went off like an alarm clock, rattling the hall table. *Riiing–riiing!* “WOOFWOOFWOOFWOOF!”

Knitbone Pepper liked barking. He liked chasing sticks and being stroked in just the right way; he liked wagging his tail and jumping up at the letter box. In fact Knitbone Pepper was just like any normal dog except for one thing: he was dead. All his friends were dead too, except for his favourite, who was both human and very much alive.

“WINNIE,
IT’S THE PHONE!
IT’S THE PHONE,
WINNIE!”

barked Knitbone,
bouncing joyfully
around the table.

Winnie Pepper
appeared at the top



of the wide staircase. “It’s alright, Knitbone! Good boy – I’m coming!” She hopped onto the banister and whizzed down to the bottom, her plaits flying. At this moment a gaggle of feathery, furry ghosts appeared at the top of the stairs. Known as Beloveds – the spirits of Pepper pets from down the centuries – they waddled, flapped, hopped and bumped down the steps, determined not to miss out on the action.

“Wait for us!” called Martin the hamster. “It might be Roojo or Bertie! What if they are planning on bringing Circus Tombellini back to Starcross for the spring? Roll up, roll up!” he said, somersaulting down the stairs. “There’s nothing more thrilling than having a friendly ghost tiger to stay!”

Gabriel the goose honked as he flapped down the stairway. “What if it’s about more books for the library? A librarian can never have too many books, you know.”



“You already have four thousand and seventy-four library books.”

Valentine the hare loped down to the bottom step and stroked

his ears. “Personally I hope it’s about my whisker curlers.”

“Eez probably Moon, callin’ to say she miss Orlando.” In a single bound the little monkey leaped onto the chandelier, causing the crystal to clatter and tinkle. “One day she might come back, clippy-cloppy hoofs, bells all tinkly.” He gave one big swing and dropped to the floor with a wistful sigh. “I loff that pretty pony.”

At the bottom of the stairs there was a general crush as the ghosts clambered over each other to get close to the receiver.

“Beloveds, please be sensible,” woofed Knitbone sternly. “Can’t you see that Winnie is about to speak? It is probably very important Starcross business.”

Winnie picked up the receiver. “Hello! Starcross Hall,” she trilled, “Winifred Pepper speaking. How may I help you?”

Knitbone looked up adoringly at Winnie, wagging his tail for all he was worth. He knew that using a telephone was very complicated because there were numbers and a lot of noise. *Winnie Pepper is the cleverest girl in all the world, he thought proudly, and I am the luckiest dog because she is my best friend.*

“You’d like to speak to Lord Pepper? Yes, of course,” continued Winnie. “Hold on, I’ll just get him.” Winnie put her hand over the mouthpiece and bellowed down the corridor. “DA-AD! It’s for you!”

Lord Pepper popped his head around the door

of the ballroom. All morning he had been busy alphabetizing his vast collection of hats. He made a point of cataloguing them daily; sometimes by colour, age, or even by the number of stains. It gave him endless joy and he never ever got bored.

“Dad! There’s a woman on the telephone for you!”

Lord Pepper shuffled across the hallway in his slippers, moving at a snail’s pace. He didn’t trust machines, even though this particular telephone had been in the hallway since 1927. He held it up to his ear like a soggy cucumber.

“Yes, this is Lord Hector Merriweather Pepper. To whom am



I speaking? Who? Hattie? I see...oh yes..." He straightened up and his face broke into a wide smile. "Oh, goodness. Well, now you put it like that then it does sound very interesting indeed... Documents? Well, not official documents but... It doesn't matter, you say? Oh, well that's alright then... Haunted? No, don't be silly..."

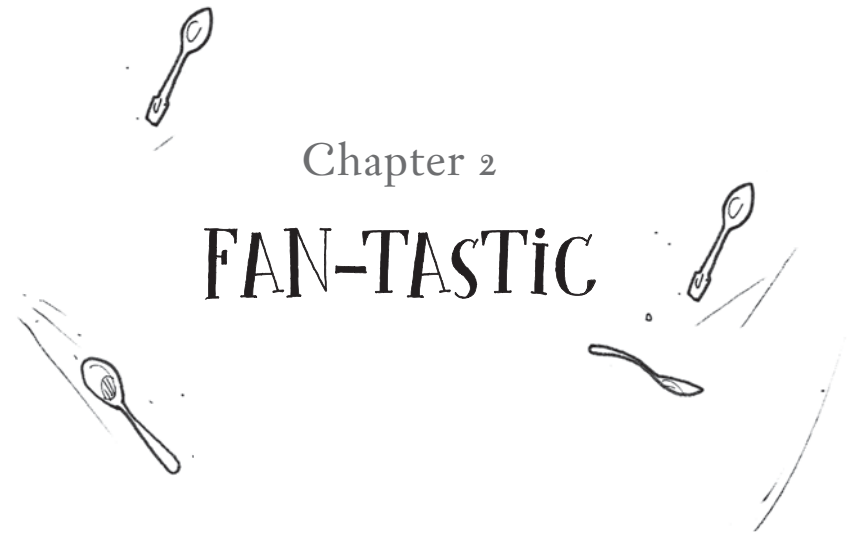
Valentine rolled his eyes. "Hattie? I bet I know what that will be about..."

"Not books, that's for sure." Gabriel honked in disappointment and slipped to the floor.

"Hats of course," sighed Martin, kicking his sword. "It'll be about hats. It's always about hats."

Orlando's bottom lip wobbled and he was about to say something about missing Moon again when Winnie swept him up and put him on her shoulder.

"Come on, everyone," she whispered, heading back up the stairs, "let's go and finish off our game of cards and leave Dad and Hattie to it."



The game was just getting going when the attic door flew open. Winnie's parents burst in, shiny-eyed and rosy-cheeked. "THERE you are, Winnie! We have some very exciting news!" Lady Pepper's eye was drawn to the six hands of cards fanned out neatly on the floor. "Goodness, dear, are you playing cards on your own again?"

Winnie rolled her eyes at the ghosts and they giggled. She'd tried telling her parents about the house ghosts in the past but they didn't want to