



Source: Suzanne Goldenberg, 'Pentagon admits plan for Baghdad has failed', *Guardian*, *Washington Post*, AFP in *Sydney Morning Herald online*, 21/10/06.

Tags: [animals](#), [magic](#), [travel](#)

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I'm going to tell you about Dumdy. Dumdy was an ordinary Earth child who liked to draw. He liked to draw animals. Dogs were a speciality, as were sharks, whales, smaller fish, birds, squirrels, snakes, meerkats, giraffes and lions. Everyone agreed Dumdy was very good at drawing.

One day something terrible happened. Dumdy's parents were eaten by a rhinoceros. This was bad enough but what was worse was that Dumdy had to go and live with his Aunt, the evil Woobcrackle. She forced Dumdy to do all manner of difficult jobs—chopping the wood, fixing the broken tiles on the roof, mending the fences out in the fields and tidying up his room. If Dumdy did not do these things fast enough or well enough he would be forced to eat dog poo. Dumdy's other task was to look after Aunt Woobcrackle's pet monster, Fred. Fred was quite small, as monsters go, about the size of a chipmunk. Fred was very excitable and would often run away.

On one of these runaway days, while out looking for Fred, Dumdy came upon a witch. This witch turned Dumdy into a green alien with bulging eyes on long stalks and more head than body. Not only did this make Dumdy very similar to Fred but he also got very smart with it. Now Dumdy had a plan.

Hidden away at the back of Woobcrackle's shed was a big tube of Superglue. Dumdy squeezed that tube all over the ground near his Aunt's house and then he waited behind a tree. Soon Aunt Woobcrackle came out of the house to go on one of her occasional evening walks. A few steps from her door and shloop, shloop, she was stuck fast.

'Help! Help!' she screamed but no one came to help the evil Woobcrackle.

Five days later and she was dead.

Dumdy was also good at drawing houses and machines, robots and rockets. His rockets were particularly detailed in design and choice of materials. One rocket was so well-drawn that no sooner had Dumdy specified yellow cardboard for the wings, than it was ready for its maiden voyage. Dumdy, still in the form of a chipmunk-sized green alien with bulging eyes, entered the rocket and strapped himself in. He pulled the first lever he saw.

10, 9, 8, 7, 6...the tension was excruciating...5, 4, 3, 2, 1, blast-off! The rocket was in the air and Dumdy found

himself in outer space.

There was a porthole just off to the right. Dumdy looked out and saw another rocket off in the distance. Dumdy flew off to see if anyone was in the other rocket. Oh yes, there was a girl inside the other rocket.

'Hi' said Dumdy.

'Hello' said the girl.

'Do you want to come back to my house on Earth?' asked Dumdy.

'Okay' replied the girl who had pink skin and was dressed entirely in pink too.

They became firm friends.

Dumdy was also good at drawing babies. These babies had spiky hair, wore blindfolds with holes cut out for the eyes like a young Zoro might wear and were armed with lazer guns.

Back on Earth, Dumdy and Zadorf—that was the pink girl's name—had become the best of friends. Even though they spent a lot of time together, it was impossible that they could spend every second of every day together.

And so, one day when they were apart Dumdy got a bad feeling about Zadorf. Dumdy was so worried about Zadorf that he immediately got on a horse and set off to find her. It took just 20 minutes to track her down, but when he did, he could see that indeed, Zadorf had got herself into a bad situation. Zadorf was being held captive by five gun-wielding, spiky-haired, masked babies.

'Goo goo gar gar', threatened the babies in unison.

'Goo goo to you too', Dumdy retorted.

Astonished by his facility with their language, the babies were caught off guard. Dumdy seized the opportunity to grab Zadorf, pulling her up onto his horse—a fine chestnut mare—and riding off in a volley of lazer-beams.

Dumdy could also draw the many species of dinosaur.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from the illustrated stories of Oskar Backent, now aged eight, with the assistance of Rara.*