



Looshkin by Jamie Smart

[Intermediate]



Torn from the pages of the PHOENIX COMIC WEEKLY, Jamie Smart's LOOSHKIN stars a bright blue cat terrorizing its family household, their neighbours, their visiting relatives and any odd-ball expert foolish enough to step through their doors.

One of my favourite catastrophes involves an inspection from perpetually scowling Great Auntie Frank who could easily have stopped her way from a Giles cartoon. All the fun of the fare to follow is laid out with exceptional economy in the three-panel pre-credits prologue:

"Great (rich) Auntie Frank! I'm so glad you could come around for a morning coffee!"

"Hmph! I HEAR you have recently purchased a CAT."

"Well..."

"Well, nothing. You keep it away from us. My prize-winning poodle PRINCESS TRIXIBELL has a very delicate constitution. The slightest fright, and her fur begins to fall out."

Even though nothing has yet happened, it is almost impossible not to start chuckling immediately at the oh-so inevitable which Jamie is smart enough to leave for three *more* pages because anticipation is everything, and instead of dropping a single water balloon on Boris Johnson's head, it would be much, *much* funnier to build up a supply of *two dozen* water balloons, fill them to bursting point then carry them all five storeys further up (and giggling while doing so) before launching the entire barrage down at once. Which is, metaphorically, what happens. "AGAIN! AGAIN!" bellows Looshkin.



Looshkin cannot help himself and *will* not be stopped. He is loud, irrepressible and insatiable. Already bursting with manic energy, you certainly don't want him gobbling down fistfuls of delicious, brightly coloured, sugar-coated cereal. Unfortunately the family calls in an expert called Professor Frumples who is determined to understand their cat by giving Looshkin what he wants. What Looshkin really, *really* wants is fistfuls of delicious, brightly coloured, sugar-coated cereal.



"This is a bad idea. Looshkin doesn't handle sugar very well at all!"

"SILENCE! Who is more likely to know about your cat? You, with your cat? Or me, with my beard? It is ME."

Smart knows exactly what makes kids gurgle with mad-screaming glee and that's fart jokes, toilet references, appalling misbehaviour, unbridled chaos and the most massive collateral damage while raging round shouting stupid strings of silly-sounding syllables! Utterly oblivious and determinedly in denial, Looshkin refuses to take responsibility for his actions or any notice of what you or I would call reality. There's a terrific running gag involving "Dial-A-Pig" because cats clearly have access to mobile phones. Here Looshkin opts for something more esoteric

"Ding Dong! Delivery! Here's that baby shark you ordered."

The delivery guy's holding it, out of water, in his bare hands.

"Looshkin, did you order a SHARK?"

"It's NOT a shark! It's an OTTER!"

"Whatever you think it is, what on earth are you planning to do with it?"

"All the things that otters are KNOWN to love doing!"

In Looshkin's mind that's DODGEMS! THICK MILKSHAKES! DRESSING UP LIKE SANTA CLAUS!

"But it's July!"

"Hey! You can't argue with nature!"

