

Stig of the Dump

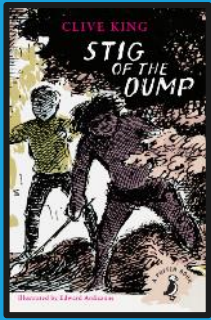
Chapter 2: Digging with Stig (Part One)

Written by Clive King and illustrated by Edward Ardizzone
Read by Tony Robinson



Puffin Schools





Puffin Book of the Week

Stig of the Dump



Reading...

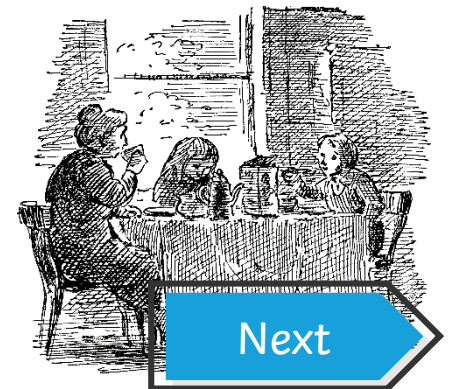
IT WAS a fine autumn morning and the grass was very wet with dew outside. Barney pushed his breakfast down as fast as he could manage.

‘What do you want to do today?’ his Grandmother asked as she drank her coffee. ‘I have to go in to Sevenoaks this morning. Do you want to come?’

Barney’s heart sank. Go in to Sevenoaks? Well it was all right if you had nothing else to do. But he had to go and see Stig.

‘No thank you, Granny,’ he said. ‘I don’t think I want to go in to Sevenoaks.’

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Reading...

‘You’ll be quite happy just messing about here?’ asked his Grandmother.
‘Yes thank you. I just want to mess about. With – with Stig.’
‘Oh, I see,’ Granny smiled. ‘With your friend Stig. Well, Mrs Pratt will be here all the morning, so if you like you can stay with her. And with Stig, of course.’

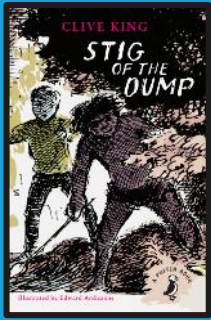
Lou said she would like to go in to the town as she wasn’t particularly interested in playing with Stig. Barney knew from the way she said it that she still thought Stig was only a pretend-friend. But that was all right. If she didn’t want to meet Stig, she needn’t.

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Reading...

'Can I go out now?' he asked.

'All right,' said Granny. 'Put your boots on!' she called after him as he shot through the door. Barney's feet made dark prints in the dew as he headed across the lawn towards the chalk pit. Then he stopped, and stood still in the middle of the lawn. Suppose he didn't find Stig after all?

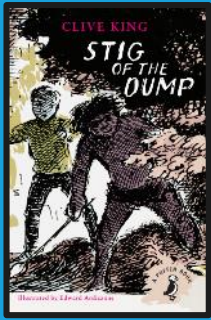
The sun was bright. Yellow leaves fluttered down from the elm tree on to the grass. A robin puffed its breast on a rose tree and squeaked at him. Barney suddenly wasn't sure that he believed in Stig himself. It wasn't a Stiggish day, like yesterday when he had fallen down the pit.

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Reading...

He had fallen, hadn't he? He felt the bump on the back of his head. Yes, that was real enough. He'd fallen and bumped his head. And then what? Funny things did happen when you bumped your head. Perhaps you only saw Stigs when you fell and bumped your head. He didn't think he wanted to fall over the cliff again on purpose and bump his head again.

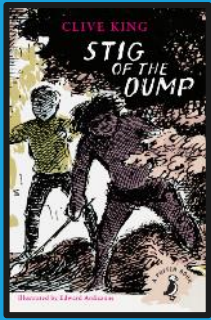
Was Stig a person you could just go and play with like the children at the end of the road at home? He had to find out, but he didn't want to go to the chalk pit and find – nothing!

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Reading...

He stood with his hands in his pockets in the middle of the lawn, his fingers playing with something hard in the left-hand pocket of his jeans.

He remembered something, and pulled out the thing he had in his hand. Of course – the flint! He looked at it glinting in the sunlight, like a black diamond with its chipped pattern. He'd seen Stig make it! There was no mistake about that. Of course Stig was real!

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Reading...

He set off again at a run, climbed the fence into the paddock, and waded through the long wet grass the other side. The copse round the edge of the chalk pit looked dark beyond the sunlit grass.

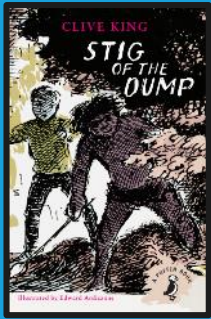
In the middle of the paddock he found himself slowing down and stopping again. Something at the back of his mind was telling him that he'd seen pictures of chipped flints in books, and real ones in museums, and that they were made thousands of years ago by rough people who weren't alive any longer. People found them and put them in cases with notices on them.

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Reading...

Perhaps he'd just found this one. And imagined everything else.

And supposing he hadn't imagined Stig, was he the sort of person who liked people coming to play? Well, he told himself, all he really wanted to do was to look at the place where he had fallen over yesterday. Have another look down the dump. There was that bicycle, anyway.

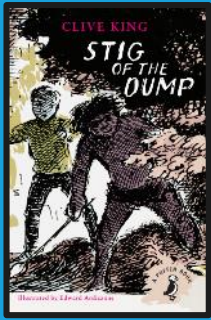
He walked to the edge of the paddock. A clump of brown grass jumped up from under his feet and bounced away towards a bramble patch, showing a white tail and two long ears.

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Reading...

Barney's heart bumped, but it was only a rabbit. He ran after it, but it had disappeared in the thick of the undergrowth.

Feeling bolder, he climbed over the fence and went carefully towards the edge of the pit, making sure this time that he kept near a big tree that seemed to be well anchored to the side, and peeped over.

He could see the patch of raw earth and white chalk where the ground had given way under him, the dangling creepers lower down, and a scatter of broken chalk at the bottom.

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Reading...

He craned over to see the hole he had made in the roof of the den. There was a pile of branches and rubbish against the foot of the cliff, but no gaping hole. Not a sign of a hole, of a roof, of a den – of a Stig. He listened. A blackbird turning over dry leaves in search of worms was making a noise much too big for itself. But apart from that the pit was silent and empty.

Barney walked away from the edge of the pit and climbed over the fence into the sunshine of the paddock, thinking hard.

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Reading...

He looked at the stone in his hand, he felt the bump on his head. He had seen the raw patch where the ground had given way. He remembered crashing through a sort of roof and leaving a big gaping hole. And yet there wasn't a hole. So he couldn't have made one.

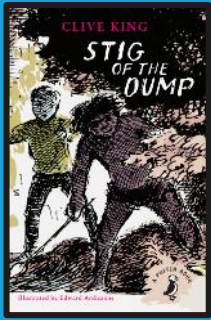
But he must have landed somewhere. And he had that clear picture in his head of looking up through a hole at the side of the cliff and the clouds passing over the sky.

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Reading...

And suddenly, as he stood in the middle of the paddock, he gave a big jump as the answer came to him like getting a sum right. If there wasn't a hole it was because somebody had mended it! Stig wasn't the sort of person to leave a large hole in his roof for long. Not his friend Stig!

All at once everything fitted together – yesterday's adventure on that Stiggish sort of afternoon, the bump on his head, the flint, and this bright autumn morning when he was going to visit his friend Stig.

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Reading...

And he was quite clear in his head now what he was going to do and how he was going to do it. He set off running, back to the garden. Presents for Stig! When you visited people this time of year you always brought something from the garden: tomatoes you couldn't bottle or apples you hadn't room to store.

He looked round the big old apple tree for windfalls. There were some big ones, difficult to manage without a basket, but he stuffed them into his shirt, making sure there weren't any wasps in them first. What else? He saw a line of carrots – his favourite fruit!

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Reading...

He was allowed to pull up carrots, they were good for his teeth, so he heaved up a few good-sized ones and rubbed the earth off with his fingers. Then he had an idea and ran to the tool-shed where he found a ball of garden string. It was all right just to borrow it.

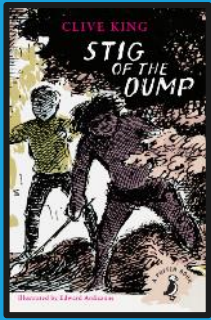
Back he ran again, across the garden, over the fence, across the paddock, over into the copse, and through the brambles and dead leaves to the edge of the pit. He sat himself comfortably on the trunk of the tree that curved out over the pit like the neck of a camel, and looked carefully again at what he could see.

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Reading...

There was the broken edge of the cliff, there were the trailing creepers, there at the bottom were the scattered lumps of chalk that had come down with him. And now that he was really looking at it he could see a piece of new linoleum – well, not exactly new, nothing in the dump was new, but it looked as if it had been put there not long ago because it wasn't covered with moss like things that had been there for a long time.

And he could see, at one side of this pile of branches and things that was Stig's lean-to roof, a faint path in the bottom of the pit that led to the front of the den.

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Reading...

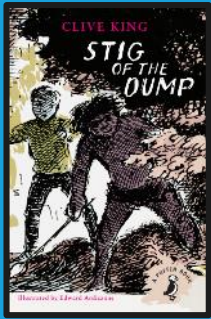
He found the end of the ball of string and tied the bunch of carrots to it. Then he began to pay out the string, with the carrots dangling on the end, towards the bottom of the pit. He hoped it was long enough. There always seems to be miles of string in a ball, but it dwindled and dwindled as he lowered the carrots down, until he was afraid that it wouldn't reach the bottom. Bother! A cobble, a regular spider's-nest of tangled string, appeared and he had to stop to uncobble it.

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Reading...

At last, with a few feet in hand, the carrots were swinging on a level with Stig's front door. Barney's seat was not quite above it, so he had to get the carrots swinging to and fro, all that way beneath him, until they were actually knocking at the door like five pink fingers. Barney was bubbling so much with laughter inside him at the trick he was playing on Stig that he forgot to be dizzy.

'Stig!' he called down the pit. 'Morning, Stig! I'm knocking at your front door!' And suddenly, out from the stack of branches appeared the tousled head of Stig, and stayed there wagging to and fro, following the swinging carrots like a cat watching a pendulum.

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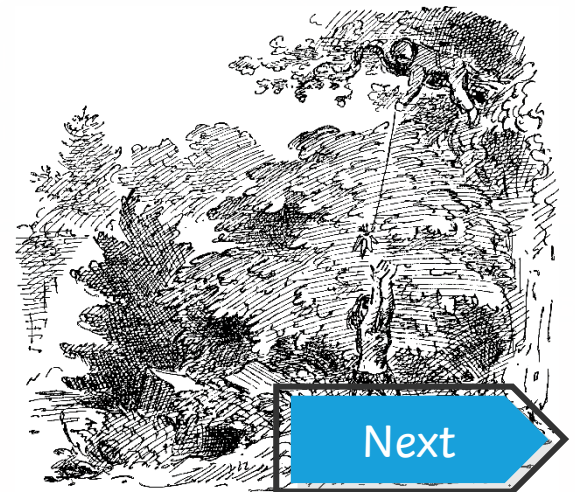
Stig of the Dump



Reading...

Barney nearly fell off the tree with laughing. 'Hallo Stig!' he called. 'Good morning! I'm Barney, you remember? How are you?'

Stig looked up, and for a moment Barney felt quite frightened at the ferocious scowl on his face, and was glad to be high up out of his reach. Should he have played a trick on Stig? Perhaps he didn't have what the grown-ups called a Sense of Humour. Did Stigs have sense of humours?



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Reading...

But when Stig made out who it was sitting above him his face suddenly changed, his big white teeth showed in a broad grin, he waved both his arms over his head, and he jumped about in the bottom of the pit to show how pleased he was.

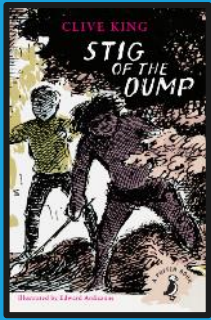
'Have a carrot, Stig!' called Barney. 'For you,' he said, pointing to Stig. 'To eat,' he added. 'Good for your teeth!' he said, making biting movements. Stig leapt at the carrots as they swung past, caught them, looked at them closely, smelt them, then put one in his mouth and crunched it.

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Reading...

He looked up at Barney, smiling with his mouth full, to show that he liked his present, then made signs which clearly meant that Barney was to come down.

‘Well, I’m not going to jump this time,’ said Barney. ‘And this string’s too thin to climb down. Going round!’ he said, making circling movements with his arms. He got off his perch and walked the long way round the top of the pit to the shallow end where he had got out the night before.

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End



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Now that you have read the first part of Chapter 2,
how would you finish this sentence?



During the first part of chapter two, Barney
spends the day...

Dream Big Question



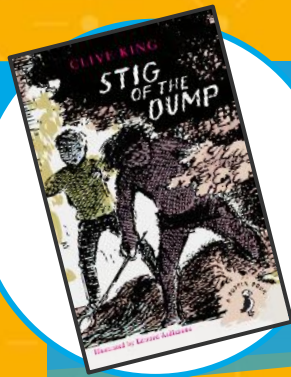
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Dream Big Question

If you could dream of a perfect day, what would you be doing?
Who would you be with?



Finish



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