

“ There is nothing more deceptive
than an obvious fact. ”

*Sherlock Holmes,
in The Boscombe Valley Mystery*

‘ A library is thought in cold storage. ’

Herbert Samuel (British politician, 1870 – 1963)

– so is a book, so enjoy thawing out the thoughts herein!



Never Odd or Even
by John Townsend

Published by Ransom Publishing Ltd.
Radley House, 8 St. Cross Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 9HX, UK
www.ransom.co.uk

ISBN 978 178127 102 5
First published in 2013

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NEVER
ODD
OR EVEN

John Townsend



BIO LEG SLOT

LOST BOG LIE

GET OIL SLOB

SOLO GIBLET

OBLIGE LOTS

BOGIES TOLL

LET BOILS GO

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12

100

≈



f r i n d a y

Can you keep a secret? I've never revealed the hidden truth before, but now I'm about to tell someone. You.

First of all, here's a clue about who I am – I'm at that special age: 12.

12 is one of my favourite numbers in the whole universe. In fact, it's my perfect number. 12 isn't just the sum of 10 (the base of our whole



amazing number system) and 2 (the only even prime number in the cosmos) but it's the first number with 1, 2, 3 and 4 as factors. I reckon that's so cool.

But it's not just numbers that are magic. Letters are my thing, too. People think I'm weird because I spend a lot of my time watching Countdown, playing Scrabble or doing Sudoku. They say that's really odd when you're 12. But I don't care. I always say I'm never odd or even.

You'll soon find out what I mean.



I don't know when it started. Probably as soon as I could talk. It's something inside my brain and that's all there is to it. If you don't like it, you just have to leave me alone.

That's what Mr Adam says. He reckons I'm a puzzle – which is cool because puzzles are my best thing of all. He said to me, 'Eliot, how can you solve a Rubik's Cube in seconds but never work out how to listen properly? You are an enigma!'

I, ENIGMA? IMAGINE!

I love anagrams like that. Anyway, I told Mr Adam I don't need to listen all the time because I just seem to know lots of stuff. He's



my form teacher, but he didn't understand because I spoke backwards.

That's something else I do.



The thing is, if I weren't good at puzzles, the police would never have solved the crime.

I actually sorted it out for them. Mr Adam said it showed that my odd brain shouldn't be seen as a problem but a **POUR IN POTTY**. (That's an anagram for **OPPORTUNITY**.)

He said I should write down what happened in a blog, to see if anyone else can solve the



crime before I reveal a few hidden secrets. See if you can spot the clues and solve the biggest mystery that struck our school in the history of the world.

I'm going to tell you exactly what happened on the day a **BURGLAR STRUCK (GRUB CART LURKS)**.

You see, I just can't help doing anagrams. That annoys a lot of people. Maybe I'm annoying you with my word puzzles – but I'll try hard not to upset you too much. **I PROMISE. (IRIS POEM** – oops, sorry.)

Before I tell you all about how I solved a crime for the police, I'm going to give you a



puzzle to solve. It was Mr Adam who got me started. He once said to our class, '**MADAM I'M ADAM**' and I knew what he meant straight away.

So in a few seconds I replied with '**WAS IT ELIOT'S TOILET I SAW?**'. How cool is that? That's the puzzle for you to solve. Get it?

Mr Adam had to explain to everyone else what *palindromes* are (which I immediately made into **PROMISE LAND, RANDOM SPIEL** or **ROMP IN DALES**).

I just love words and numbers that are the same backwards or forwards. That's why I've called my blog **NEVER ODD OR EVEN**.



(Or if you prefer anagrams: **REDDEN OVER OVEN, DODO NEVER NEVER, OVER END OVER END.**) Sometimes I even talk in anagrams just for fun.

So now you know my special hobby, here's my secret fact sheet. I call it Eliot's stuff.

Favourite band

ABBA

Favourite car

**A TOYOTA
(RACECAR)**

Favourite machine

ROTAVATOR

Favourite invention

RADAR



Favourite time of day **NOON** (or **12.21**)

Best friends

ROBERT TREBOR

A LAD NAMED E. MANDALA

EVIL OLIVE

HANNAH (She's the only real person
in the list)

Favourite place (in Alaska)

KANAKANAK

Favourite year

2002



Favourite date

21.11.12

Favourite word

AIBOHPHOBIA (fear of palindromes!)



I like to think a lot. After all, there's lots to think about when you're 12.

Each night before I go to sleep, I work out sums in my head and try to answer some big questions. Before I get on to my story, I'll give you my latest five big questions. I don't have all the answers yet.

1. What colour is Friday?



2. In how many ways could you be friends with your enemy?
3. What if the number 12 had never been invented?
4. What's the biggest number in the universe – if I add on 12?
5. Do geese see God? (This one is extra cool – but can you see why?)



464
144



Eliot's 5 science questions to keep me awake at night:

1. Where does the light go when you switch it off?
2. What are shadows made of?
3. Why is the Sun usually yellow? (Come to think of it, why are dusters yellow as well?)
4. Does the Sun make a noise? (Even if there's no one near enough to hear it.)
5. If you travel faster than light and shine a torch ahead of you:



a) would you see yourself coming back?

b) would the torch beam be travelling faster than light?

c) if you went through a black hole, would your torch still work, or would you need new batteries? (Maybe cadmium batteries, as cadmium has the atomic number 48 – a special Eliot Number!)

