

**My name is Frank Davenport,
just like my dad. And just like
my grandpa. And this is the story
of our Bucket List.**

If Dad had known what would happen by giving me his name, he wouldn't have called me Frank. He would have let my mum have her way and I'd be called something like Tarquin or Marmaduke or Montgomery and then I'd have a name that didn't fit my face. But Mum would have liked that, because she'd be able to introduce me to her new friends at her new tennis club and say, in her new "la-di-da" voice, "Everybody, this is my son, Tarquin." And I'd straighten my blazer and say, "Pleasure's all mine," or something like that.

Luckily for me, Dad got his way and I was named **Frank**. After **him** and **his dad** and **his dad's dad**.

And probably **his dad's dad's dad** too.

I think Dad used to like our family tradition, but when the step-grandmother he'd forgotten to tell me about (because of the Davenport family rift) died, she left behind all her money to Frank John Davenport.

And unluckily for Dad, that isn't his name. His name is Frank *James* Davenport.

I am Frank *John* Davenport.

And because of that, I ended up with £462,000 in a bank account and strict instructions to take care of Grandpa Frank Senior Senior – or **Grandpa Frank**, as I call him (because no one's got time to say "Senior Senior").

Of course, Mum and Dad were really keen to get the cash off me. When they weren't arguing with each other, they were trying to find some loophole in the law, so I'd have to give them the money. They didn't stop going on about it being a huge mistake. But as I see it, there must have been a good reason Grandma Nora left the cash to me and asked *me* to be the one to look after Grandpa Frank. And I'm not the kind of kid who ignores the last request of a dead step-grandmother,

even if I never met her. I'm the kind of kid who takes that kind of instruction seriously. Very seriously.

So this is the story of what I did with all that money. This is the story of our **Bucket List** and the things I've learned along the way. Like old people are actually quite buoyant when dunked in water and true happiness doesn't come with a price tag.

CHAPTER 1

Monkeys are hard to come by

The day I found out about the money from Grandma Nora, Dad had somehow come into a little bit of his own. And, what with it being Friday and the last day before the summer holidays, he picked me up early from school.

There was a class party, but I didn't mind missing it. It was probably going to be a bit lame anyway. I didn't get my yearbook signed but I wasn't too worried about that. I'd only been at St Margaret's a couple of terms, following our most recent move, and the mates I had managed to make weren't really talking to me at that precise moment in time. My dad had sold their dads a

load of knock-off aftershave which had dyed their faces purple. The purple faces were one thing, but it turned out most of the boys in my year had splashed it under their armpits and Tyler Scott had basically bathed in the stuff. He turned up to school looking like an angry Ribena berry, and Tyler Scott is the kind of kid who has the final say regarding who's in and who's out. And I was out.

When Dad turned up at school, I was practising keepy-uppies while the rest of my year were playing a game of football on the yard. Dad said he was keen to spend an afternoon with me, and as that didn't happen often, I was feeling pretty chuffed. I wasn't *too* bothered about sticking around.



“Too smashing a day to be cooped up in there, Frank. The sun is shining, the birds are tweeting. It’s a day for a father to spend time with his favourite son,” he said, ruffling my hair with his fingers.

“Ah, gerroff.” I knocked his hand away even though I didn’t really mind him doing it. “Favourite son? I’m your only son.”

“Well, you should be glad you’re not my second favourite then.” He laughed and plonked his arm on my head like I was some sort of resting post. “Let’s bust you out of here; I’ve signed you out with the bloke on reception.”

“Oi!” I said, ducking out the way as we buzzed ourselves out of the school gate. “Where are we going?”

I was really hoping for a kickabout in the park, but he said, “Going to teach you a little something you won’t be learning in school. A little something about ‘**The Sell**’.” He pulled a wodge of tenners out of his back pocket, held them up to my face and said, “Sniff it. Get a good lungful. Now, tell me, what’s that smell of?”

I breathed in, but before I could answer he smacked me round the chops with the bundle of notes and said,

“What you’re smelling there – and there’s no better smell – is the **smell of success**.”

I wasn’t too sure about that. Smelled a bit funny to me, like the school stock cupboard. But the smell wasn’t really what I was thinking about. I was thinking about *how* my dad had suddenly got to be so flush. Mum was not going to be happy if he was up to his old tricks. She’d been on at him for ages about getting a proper job.

“Where did you get all that from?” I said, trying to keep up with his pace.

“Ask me no questions, son, and I’ll tell you no lies.” He gave me a wink and a big smile when he said that. I grinned back. I couldn’t help myself. It’s just the way my dad is, see. A proper charmer, Mum used to say. There was a time when that wink and smile used to work on her too. Not so much these days though.

Dad folded the notes back into his wallet and stuck it in his coat pocket. “There’s nothing more important in this world than money, Frank, and don’t you forget it.”

“What are you going to do with it?”

“I’m going to invest it.”

“Invest it?” Experience told me that we were not heading off to the bank.

“There’s a job lot of spangly pony toys going for a quid each. I’ll mark them up to a fiver, sell them at the school gates this afternoon. You know, get in on the end-of-term excitement? Just you wait, I’ll change this hundred into a monkey—”

“A monkey? I’ve always wanted a monkey!” I like all animals actually, but monkeys are a particular favourite.

Dad slapped me on the back and laughed. “Nah, Frank, you wally. A monkey is five hundred quid. Not an *actual* monkey. Who’d want an actual monkey?”

Daft question, but I answered anyway. “Er, I think you mean who *wouldn’t* want an actual monkey.”

Dad said, “Not easy to get your hands on primates, son.” Like he’d had a go at it before. Then he said, “You watch and learn, son. I’m going to sell those ‘petite ponies’ outside St Margaret’s, make a packet, and then what I’m going to do is buy your mother something she’d really like. Get back in her good books.”



As it happened, the little spangly ponies weren’t the genuine article. They looked more like little over-worked donkeys, but Dad was right – it was all about “**The Sell**”.

And, boy, can my dad *sell*.

“Basically, son,” he said, putting his arm around me, “you need to make people believe they want what you’ve got. Make them think you’re offering them something they can’t get elsewhere. That it’s a once in a lifetime opportunity that they’d be daft to miss out on.”

I wasn’t sure how colourful toy ponies were a once in a lifetime opportunity, but it turned out Dad was right when he said, “Your words are more powerful than the product, Frank.”



He made those donkeys seem like glittering stallions and he shifted the lot. He was in a top mood after that. I’d probably still have preferred a game of footie in the park to practise my step-overs, but he was all smiles and swagger when we walked into Argos later that day. He told the man that he wanted the best washer-dryer

money could buy and even paid extra to get it delivered immediately.

On the way home, he bought me a bottle of pop from the newsagent's – the kind Mum never lets me have because she says there's no such thing as a blue raspberry. Dad took a swig of his Irn-Bru and said, "Us Davenports are born winners, Frank. You hear what I'm saying?"

I heard what he was saying, but I'd seen enough purple armpits to have my doubts.

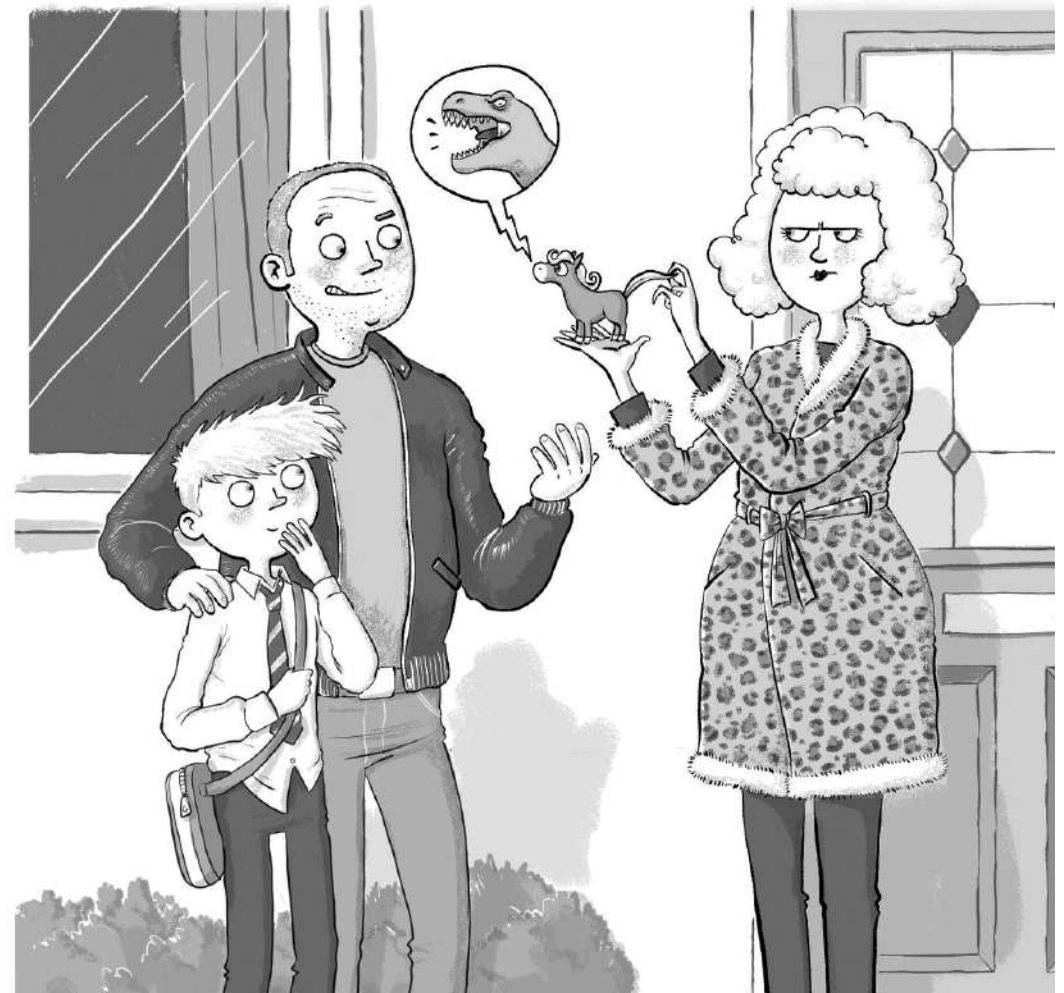
And I was right to be doubtful, because when we got home Mum was standing on the doorstep wearing her leopard-print silk dressing gown over her Grigsby's supermarket uniform, looking beautiful and angry all at once. It didn't take a genius to work out what was wrong with her, because she was holding a small yellow horse in her hand.

Before Dad could speak, Mum held the toy up, lifted its tail and a truly terrifying dinosaur-type roar seemed to come out of its mouth. "The phone has been ringing off the hook, Frank. Susanna Montgomery doubts her little Fiona will get a wink of sleep tonight because

she's so traumatized by this horrifying horse toy you sold her at the school gates."

I couldn't suppress a snigger, but Dad's usually confident smile wavered ever so slightly before he said, "Added bonus, that – audio!"

Mum shot him – and for some reason *me* – a withering look. "What am I going to do with you two?"



“Make us a cuppa?” Dad suggested, which, from the look on Mum’s face, didn’t seem to go down that well.

Her mouth was opening really wide like she was about to shout, but at that moment the delivery van turned up, and her red lips snapped shut. She raised her left eyebrow – the angry one – and said suspiciously, “What’s that?”

Dad’s chest puffed up. “It’s a gift for you, Tanya – a brand-new washer-dryer. Thought you deserved it.”

I thought that might win her over, but for some reason she didn’t seem that delighted.

Her eyes narrowed. “You thought I deserved a washer-dryer? That some kind of joke, Frank?” She hollered over to the men who were lowering it off the back of the delivery lorry. “You can take that back to whatever dodgy place it’s come from.”

Dad said, “It’s come from Argos. It says it right there in two-metre lettering on the side of the truck.”

Which seemed like a reasonable enough answer, but she stepped back into the house and slammed the door.

Dad looked at me with his twinkly eyes and said, “You know what your mother sounds like?” Then he

lifted the tail of his **My Little Dinosaur Donkey** and it did its fearsome roar.

We were both still laughing when Mum opened the door and said, “I heard that,” which shut us up pretty smartish.

Then she said, “You, inside.”

Dad took a step forward, but Mum held up her hand. “Not you – *him*.” Which I took to mean me because I was the only other person there, so I stepped past her.

“You, darling,” she said to Dad, “need to go and sort out your latest mess or I really will roar at you.”

Dad was still in the middle of saying, “Consider it sorted, light of my life,” when she slammed the door again.

Mum did this massive sigh and rolled her eyes. “Honestly! That man!”

My dad isn’t perfect, and Mum has her faults too. I suppose we all do. But even though they argue – *a lot* – they love each other. Dad didn’t need to give Mum household appliances to prove it. It was a shame he didn’t seem to realize that though – it could have saved us all a lot of trouble in the long run.