Lord Fake Strikes Again!

The evil mastermind of fake medicines has returned. Will Team Safe Meds be able to stop him?
TEAM SAFE MEDS

ISAAC
Wants to be a scientist, just like his mum. A skilled basketball player (with a secret passion for knitting). Annie’s friend since kindergarten.

ANNE
Our heroine. Helps people to be safe around medicines. Enjoys biking, TV games, reading, running, climbing, singing, knitting, and a good curry. Family: mum, dad, older brother. Best friend: Mac, her pet hummingbird.

AISHA
Hamad’s twin sister. Elite gymnast. Her dad says she has “a heart of gold, and a will of steel.” Plays the piano and speaks five languages.

MAC
Short for “Mach One.” A hummingbird. Fast flyer. Favourite hobby: inventing cool moves to knock out bad guys (should he meet one), such as “The Fearful Flutter” and “The Dive of Death.”

HAMAD
Regional Rubik’s cube champion since he was four. Enjoys outdoors activities (if they’re on TV). Wishes he was a bit taller.

LORD FAKE
STARTED HIS CAREER WHEN HE WAS FIVE, BY SELLING FAKE CANDY (CHERRY STONES IN MUD BALLS). HAS SINCE MADE A FORTUNE BY SELLING FAKE MEDICINES. HIS MEDICINES HAVE POISONED 12,395,344 PEOPLE (AND COUNTING). BAD BREATH. SHOE SIZE: 55. KEEPS A PET CROCODILE — STEPHEN — DISGUISED AS A SQUIRREL.

THE BAD PILLS
POSSIBLY THE LARGEST SQUIRREL IN THE WORLD. GOOD SWIMMER, BIG TEETH. FAVOURITE ICE CREAM FLAVOUR: ZEBRA SWIRL.

BAD GUYS, BAD NEWS, BAD MEDICINE. THIS CREW WILL COOK UP (AND SELL) THE FOULEST FAKE MEDICINE TO MAKE A BUCK.
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ANNIE AND MAC IN:
LORD FAKE
STRIKES AGAIN
Here's the medicine.

The medicine isn't working.

Perhaps we have to give her more.

She isn't getting any better.

We need to take her to the doctor.

Your daughter will be fine. But she needs to stay in the hospital for a few days.

Will she need more of her medicine?

This medicine isn't real. Where did you get it?

At the market. It looks real to me.

Oh yes, they're good at making it look real.

Who?

The Pirates
The medicine pirates make fake medicines. The fakes can contain anything, even poison! Thousands of people are hurt by fake medicines every year. Some even die!

The pirates sell the fakes in markets and on the internet.

Sometimes they even sneak them into hospitals and pharmacies!

Come on, Mac! It's time for Team Safe Meds!

Let's go!

Hey - over here!

Look at all these cheap medicines.

Cheap and dirty.

Where did you get these?

From a truck. The nice man said they are really good.

Okay, so this is where the dad bought the fake medicine for his daughter.

Yup. Keep an eye out for medicine stalls, team.

The fake medicines are hurting people. We have to do something.

Come on, Hamad!

Wait up, guys.
Fancy hat. Expensive coat.

Nice man, eh? What did he look like?

Oh, and he had a really big squirrel in the passenger seat.

Lord who?

Squirrel! It must be Lord Fake, who's behind all this.

Yeah! I can't wait to give his head a good pokking!

I know he deserves it, but it wouldn't do any good.

But I've been working on my new move...

The Super Speedy Beak of Revenge!

Lord Fake! The duke of dirty drugs. We have to move fast, Mac.

You're so cute when he's angry. But I say we just teach them about the dangers of fake medicines.

Yeah, I'll do the Super Speedy Beak of Revenge on anyone who buys a fake medicine. That will scare them straight.

Very nice, Mac. But then another crook will sell the fake medicines. The best way to help people is teaching them how to avoid the fakes.

Come on, let's go!
Meanwhile, in Lord Fake's office

What is this? Why are sales going down?

But why? Why?

Dunno, boss. People just don't want to buy your fake meds anymore.

They are so cheap. So good! For me, I mean.

They think they can outsmart me, eh? Gather the gang! Let's go and pay these do-gooders a visit, shall we?

Oh I see! Hey boss, look at that!
Man, that was a lot of flyers.

All right, we've told everyone in the city! That should do the trick.

See you tomorrow in school!

And questions! People really had no idea that their medicines could be fakes.

Uh-oh. Don't look Annie, but...

GET THEM!

Where do you think you're going, sweetie?

You can run but you can't hide.

Annie, in here.

Did we lose them?

I think so. Phew, that was close!

What is this place, anyway?

Let's have a look.

Oh dear.

Well, well, well. Welcome to my little money-making factory. Would you like a tour?

So many pills... Do you know how many people you are hurting with your fake medicines?

Well, I don't really care. But do you know how much money I'm making?
Money? Sick people are buying your fake medicines to get better!

Yes, isn’t it funny?

I do NOT like this guy’s sense of humour.

But if you keep telling people not to buy them, I won’t make any more money. And that’s not funny at all.

I have a plan...

Okay, we give up. Can I just ask you a question?

How many fake pills are in this silo behind us?

Well, that sounds about enough.

14,456,799 pills.

Enough for what?

Hit the switch, Mac!

Don’t eat that, Stephen. You’ll be sick.

I’m afraid I need to shut you two up. For good.
Now this is my idea of fun! Say hello to my little Super Speedy Beak of Revenge!

Good job, Mac! The crooks are out for the count!

I’ll be back. Oh yes, I’ll be back.

Maybe so, but then everyone will know how to avoid your fake medicines.

Police

THE END

WORK ON YOUR
FAKE-MEDS
SPOTTING SKILLS

Ka-Smack

How do you avoid fake medicines? Here are a few tips.

There are some medicines that you can only buy if a doctor has given you a “prescription”. A prescription is a permission for you to buy the medicine from the pharmacy. Real pharmacies will never sell a prescription medicine unless a doctor has told them to. But fake pharmacies will give you any fake medicine as long as you pay them!

Be careful if you buy medicines on the internet! Fake internet pharmacies often have no real street address on their webpage, only phone numbers or email. You can tell it’s a fake pharmacy if it sells prescription medicines without prescriptions.

Does the medicine package look like it’s been opened? Are the colours weak or the text misspelled? Beware! Real medicines have strong, clean packaging with clear text and colours. Also remember to check the expiry date!
The evil lord fake has hidden his fake medicines throughout the entire comic. Help Annie and Mac find all the fake medicines and clean up lord fake’s act! Each page has a fake medicine hidden on it!

Don't use the medicine if it looks, smells or tastes strange. Watch out for cracked or smudged pills!

Never buy medicines from market stalls. Medicines in market stalls are often fakes.

Ask a pharmacist or a doctor if the medicine is real.

Lord fake and stephen both need a bit of colour. And while you’re at it: lord fake would also like a fake beard, and stephen a big cone of zebra swirl ice cream.

Colour me!
Lord fake is even falsifying his own photos. Can you spot all 20 differences between these two images?

Spot the difference!

Help Mac! Mac is having a weird dream (too much pineapple juice before bedtime). Help him find Annie, Lord fake and Stephen the crocodile so he can wake up!

Spot the difference!
Hi guys, Annie here. Welcome to my house! Today we’re going to have a chat about medicines safety.

Medicines safety, you say? That sounds interesting and cool! And important. And complicated!

Yes, medicines safety is cool and important. But it’s not that complicated. Let me show you a few basics.

Let’s imagine that my house is a human body.

This is the bottom floor. Here we have the stomach and the intestines and stuff.
That’s Dad over there. He can be the liver. You’re doing great, Dad. Keep up the good work!

Huh?

And this is Kim, my big brother. Let’s say he’s the kidneys.

Move! I can’t see the TV!

This is the upstairs. Here we have stuff like the lungs.

Sorry. Carry on.

He’s got teenage issues.

And you already know Mac. He can be the brain.

Now, let’s imagine that our body gets ill. It’s got a cold.

The nose is running, we’re coughing. And we’ve got a fever. We’re too hot, we need to cool down!

Let’s say that the water in the kitchen is too hot. We have to turn down the heat.

So, what do we do? We take medicine. This football can be a medicine that lowers a fever.

Let’s use it to turn down the heat.

She can be the heart of the body.

Annie! I’m in the shower!
The medicine comes in through the mouth. Then it needs to go down into the stomach and the intestines before it can get to work.

There’s a switch downstairs that turns off the hot water. Let’s use the medicine to hit it!

But the medicine didn’t just lower the fever.

Your stupid ball knocked over my drink! And I missed the high score.

What’s the meaning of this, Annie?

It made other things happen as well. Look at what it did to the kidneys and the liver.

This is a ‘side effect’. It’s when a medicine does something that you don’t want it to do.

Don’t worry, Mum! I’m just showing what a side effect is.

And what do you do when you get a side effect?

Call the plumber!

Interesting answer, Mum! But with a side effect you tell the doctor, or someone at the pharmacy.

Here are a few examples of side effects:

Stomach ache
Diarrhoea
Dry mouth
Headache
Itchy skin

And maybe the medicine doesn’t just turn off the heater for the water downstairs.
All medicines can have side effects. Often, they are harmless and you don’t mind them.

But in rare cases they can be dangerous. That’s why we always tell the doctor or pharmacist. Okay?

Medicines can be very helpful, but they can also cause side effects. And when you get a side effect, tell the doctor or the pharmacist.

And now you know a couple of cool medicines safety basics!

Thanks for stopping by. Come back soon!

Hey Annie!
Want to see my new move?
I call it “The Wing of Wrath”!

Not now, Mac.
I’m listening to the new Take & Tell song*.

*Take & Tell is a campaign toolkit developed by UMC, encouraging a safer use of medicines. The campaign has several catchy songs, all available at www.takeandtell.org

We need help taking Annie & Mac around the world. Please contact us if you’d like to help out:
info@who-umc.org  www.who-umc.org

This comic is produced by Uppsala Monitoring Centre (UMC). UMC is a non-profit foundation (we do not sell things to make money). We do research and keep an eye on how medicines are used. By working with different teams around the world, we help people make good and safe decisions about which medicines to use, and how to use them. And we have been doing this for more than 40 years. Our goal is a world where everyone – patients, doctors, nurses, pharmacists – make wise decisions in their use of medicines. This comic is the first in a series that will explore and explain important medicines safety issues. We hope you enjoy it!
COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

WHO IS THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN IN THE LAB COAT?

AND WHAT IS THE MICROMIZER™ (THE NEW AND COMPLETELY SAFE VERSION THAT DOESN’T BOIL YOUR BRAIN)?

READ ON AS ANNIE AND MAC TAKE ON ONE OF THE GREATEST THREATS TO MANKIND!