



Chapter 13 The Truth?

Freya wasn't sure whether to expect an explanation or a telling-off. She chewed her lip as she walked, feeling very small. Benji was equally quiet and reflective, and he kept his eyes on the floor as he followed Mr Jay into school.

Inside, the two teachers, dressed in the same costumes they had worn to school a few days earlier, sat opposite the children at a table in an empty classroom. The distant buzz of the summer fair was just about audible.

"We're dressed in our outfits because we thought

it would make a great attraction for the younger children at the fair," Mr Jay began. "Once everything was running smoothly, we nipped off to get changed to make a bit of an entrance."

"But, I saw when you left," spluttered Benji. "You were rushing away. Like the other times. We've been following you – we wanted to find out the truth!"

"It's true, we probably have some explaining to do," replied Mr Jay after a long pause.

"But, perhaps you two had better go first," added Miss Higgins. "Where did all this suspicion come from?"

Benji paused for a moment, then took a deep breath of his own and finally let all of the events spill out of his mouth. Freya occasionally chimed in with a little detail or extra information but mostly struggled to get a word in at all. Both teachers sat patiently and listened.

At the end, they looked at each other and smiled before beginning to explain. Miss Higgins had been working with another school down the road – this was no secret – and she had frequently been called away to help with situations there. Mr Jay had been called

out during lunchtime to help supervise the swimming class walking back from the local pool and, on another occasion, a problem with the gardening club when someone had been hurt.

“But we saw you wearing your cape and boots after school, Miss!” Benji reminded his teacher.

“I only threw this silly cape on because I was cold in the classroom when everyone had left. The boots are much warmer than my sandals too. Then I realised I was late for a staff meeting and had to dash quickly! You know, you really shouldn’t have been spying like that.”

“What about being ‘on a mission’, Sir, when you came out of school, or when we saw your quick outfit change in the toilets at lunchtime?” countered Freya.

“My, you have been busy investigating, haven’t you?” replied Mr Jay. “We both meant we were simply on a mission to get through the whole pile of reading papers that needed marking, nothing more. As for changing outfits, I’m not sure what you saw but I think I was only getting into my sports kit to teach P.E. with the year 1s and 2s.”

It seemed that the teachers had an explanation for every supposedly suspicious activity that the children thought they had seen. Even Mr Jay’s gadget was just his sports watch that counted how many steps he walked in a day, until it announced that he had achieved his target of 10,000.

Freya and Benji glanced at one another before turning their attention to their shoes. It was hard to tell which of their faces was the reddest.



Chapter 14

Real Superpowers

“So, you’re really not superheroes?” asked Benji dejectedly, after having time to take it all in.

“Well, perhaps not in the way you two are imagining,” Miss Higgins began, sensing his displeasure. “We are teachers. Maybe that’s rather like being superheroes anyway.”

“What d’you mean?” asked Freya half-heartedly, raising an eyebrow.

“You see, perhaps teachers have more superpowers than

you realise! We don’t just help you to learn – although the power of learning is a rather good one. We have powers like spreading kindness, building confidence and sparking imaginations. Those are pretty cool powers to possess, you know,” Miss Higgins went on.

“More than that,” Mr Jay joined in. “You didn’t even realise, but we have been passing those powers on to you, too.”

“Huh?” Benji responded with a jerk of his shoulders.

As Mr Jay confessed, it turned out that the two teachers had realised a little while ago that the children were acting suspiciously themselves and soon understood what they thought and what they were trying to do. Instead of revealing that they knew, the teachers used the opportunity to their advantage. Miss Higgins had shown them how good it felt to have kindly helped their classmate, William, with his learning; Mr Jay had helped them to build their confidence and manners by deliberately choosing them to show the local councillors around school.

“And the money you left behind earlier – that wasn’t an accident either?” realised Benji.

“No,” said Miss Higgins. “You’ve shown what good citizens you are, even without the kind of superpowers that you were imagining. Being a hero is not just about flying or being invisible. Not all heroes wear costumes and capes. Maybe all teachers are superheroes in a different way – and maybe all children can be, too.”

Benji and Freya both liked that thought. They smiled at each other and apologised to the teachers for all of their antics. Both teachers were more than happy with the apology and said that they were equally happy at how much the superheroes topic had sparked the children’s imaginations.

All four of them thought that it was about time they returned to the summer fair to relieve Mr Wilstead of his duties on Splat the Rat and make sure everyone was enjoying themselves while raising lots of money for a good cause at the same time. Plenty of children were delighted to see the return of the superheroes in their costumes so that they could pose for photos and get more high fives.

What No One Noticed

“I guess I was wrong after all,” Benji admitted to Freya in between serving customers.

“Well, kind of,” she replied. “Perhaps Miss Higgins is right. Maybe all teachers are superheroes of a different kind – and maybe all children can be, too. It’s just that the superpowers are different from what you see in a comic book or movie.”

“I suppose,” said Benji, his chin a little higher and even the hint of a smile forming on his lips.

“We might not be able to fly or become invisible,” Freya continued. “But we have the power to spread kindness, like when we were friendly and polite to the visitors, or to build confidence in other people like William.”

“And the power of sparking imaginations!” Benji chimed.

“Well, you definitely have that!” agreed his friend.

As another customer swung the rounders bat and missed the rat shooting out from the bottom of the pipe, Mr Wilstead left the children to return to his

other duties. None of the children noticed as he put his hand to his earpiece and listened for a few seconds, then quietly whispered an instruction.

No one saw him catch the eye of Mr Jay, or the two teachers nod at each other in silent understanding. Mr Jay gave a similar silent signal to Miss Higgins and the two teachers disappeared into the staging area.

No one noticed the two teachers in costume emerge straight out of another exit at the back. And no one noticed as, quicker than the blink of an eye, the two teachers flew straight up into the air between the trees at the back of the field and soared away overhead to another dangerous situation that required the assistance of two secret superheroes.

No one except Benji that is, who spun around just in time to catch what he thought was a blurry glimpse of yellow and blue whizzing past in the sky.

“Did you see that?” he gasped.

“What?” replied Freya.

Benji paused. “Oh, nothing,” he said. “Maybe it was just my imagination again.”

