



Chapter 4

Evidence

The friends agreed that Miss Higgins had moved extremely fast on her way out of the classroom, but they couldn't quite agree whether the speed at which she had exited was, in fact, beyond normal human capabilities.

"You're imagining it!" argued Freya. "She just ran quickly while we weren't looking."

"No way," countered Benji. "She was like a flash – it was incredible!"

Behind the wall near the school gates, Freya and Benji hung around for over an hour before they finally spotted the first teachers beginning to leave school. Mr Wilstead walked across the car park in his usual brown tweed jacket, carrying a battered briefcase. Already chatting with a hands-free earpiece hooked around his ear, he climbed into his car and drove off without noticing the two pairs of eyes watching him. Mrs Yates trudged past a few minutes later, hunched over and hauling two shopping bags full to the brim with exercise books. She fumbled with her keys for a while, before heaving the bags into the boot and heading out through the gates.

Three more teachers emerged from the main doors and left while the spying children stayed out of sight. Finally, they sighted their quarry: Mr Jay and Miss Higgins both appeared at the main doors. She was no longer wearing her cape; he was carrying a sporty rucksack over his shoulder. Each had a stack of test papers under their arm; the children recognised the reading paper the classes had been given that morning. Freya cocked her head to one side to listen from a distance.

At first, the conversation was a bit of a mumble and it was hard to make anything out. Miss Higgins seemed

to take a moment to survey the car park before turning to Mr Jay. The final fragment of speech came as clear as a whistle:

“I’m on a mission tonight.”

“Me too. Good luck! See you in the morning – let me know how you get on.”

With that, the two teachers headed off to their separate cars and drove away, leaving Freya and Benji staring at one another.

Benji held his tongue for what felt like an age, until he was sure they were far enough away from school. Then he exploded.

“I told you!” he launched into an animated appeal. “A mission! They’re both superheroes; they’re fighting crime or something. There’s definitely something going on!”



Chapter 5

Not Giving Up

The next morning, the friends walked the couple of streets to school together. All the way, they speculated over what they had seen, shared theories and debated possible clues. Freya described another item that she had seen on the news. An old lady had been trapped in a burning building and the firefighters had not been able to reach her. They said it was a miracle that she had escaped and they couldn't understand how she had managed it. Benji said that he had heard a noise and looked out of his bedroom window when it was dark, only to see something whizz past overhead – it had looked smaller and closer than a plane, but bigger

than a bird.

As they spoke, their movements became more animated and their voices rose together until they were even beginning to talk over one another – but they became deflated when Freya reminded Benji that they still had no real proof that these events were connected to their teachers. Determined to gather more evidence and not willing to give up easily, the pair agreed to meet at breaktime in the corridor between their two classrooms.

“I have an idea,” exclaimed Benji, when the time came and the rest of their classes were rushing past them, opening snacks or grabbing coats. “I reckon there’s something about that cupboard that we saw Miss Higgins appearing from. Think about it – none of us are ever allowed inside and that’s where she was when she came out wearing her cape again.”

An hour and a half later, Freya was watching the clock from her seat near the back of Mr Jay’s classroom, trying to ignore the butterflies in her stomach. She chewed absent-mindedly on the end of her pencil and fiddled with a strand of hair as she watched the minutes until lunchtime disappear. Benji had persuaded her that they could hide in a corner of the classroom

between the cloakroom area and the painting shirts, with the intention of staking out the store cupboard. She jumped when the bell rang for lunchtime, and after filing out with the rest of her class, she pushed her way upstream against the barrage of children and into Miss Higgins' classroom to join her friend in his hiding place.

Miss Higgins had been busy collecting books from tables and straightening chairs before eventually settling back down to her desk, seemingly unaware that two pupils remained tucked away in the same room. From their vantage point, the pair could just about see the edge of her desk but also had a perfect view of the store cupboard.

It wasn't long before the stake-out began to feel rather dull. Miss Higgins had taken a sandwich from her bag, and had nibbled on occasional bites while she marked more books. At one point, she stood up and walked over to add some sheets to the display board, before returning to her previous task and finishing her sandwich. Everyone else had probably eaten their lunch too and they were no doubt now enjoying the freedom of the playground. Meanwhile, Freya and Benji were squashed together, listening to their own stomachs rumbling.

The teacher's phone suddenly began to vibrate on the desk, startling Freya and Benji. She picked it up, tapped the screen and put it to her ear.

"Hmmm... uh-huh," she said briskly. She stood up and pushed back her chair, and walked straight towards the cupboard. Freya ducked down behind Benji, who had pulled a scruffy art shirt halfway across his face, as if it would keep him hidden should Miss Higgins turn and face in their direction.

Still listening to her phone, the teacher had one hand on the handle of the cupboard door but paused. "Gotcha. No problem – leave it to me," she said firmly before pocketing the phone and opening the store cupboard. She had been inside for only a few seconds when there was a knock at the classroom door, and in shuffled William, another boy from Benji's class. Miss Higgins popped her head back out of the cupboard.

"Ah, er... Will – of course. I almost forgot you were coming back. I'm glad you did, but..." she trailed off as her eyes wandered across the room and landed on the abnormally busy cloakroom area. "Oh – what are you two doing down there?"

With no plausible answer springing to mind, Benji

stood up, holding a silver and pink cap that clearly didn't belong to him, claiming to have found just what he was looking for. Miss Higgins laughed a little and then spoke.

"William here has come back for a little extra help with the maths work from this morning. Unfortunately, I have something important that I need to do right away. I'm sure these two wouldn't mind helping, William. You're both responsible," she added, "and I won't be long."

Knowing that they were rumbled and their chance had gone, both nodded silently in agreement and all three pupils sat down at a table as Miss Higgins disappeared out of the classroom door once again.



Chapter 6

Another Try

After helping William to simplify his fractions, Freya and Benji had eaten their sandwiches in the dining hall in about ten minutes flat and then had virtually no time at all in the playground. Miss Higgins had returned to the classroom a little while after she had left, looking a bit flustered but very grateful to the pair of them for staying in to help their classmate. William had also been extremely grateful, after Freya had explained the fractions work that he was struggling with, and said that he had finally got the hang of it better than ever.

"We might have missed out on following Miss Higgins or seeing any evidence of what she was up to, but I did actually enjoy helping Will – so at least something good came out of it," Benji admitted. "I wonder where she went in such a hurry, though? I tell you what, I'm not giving up on this yet. Maybe we'll have more luck with Mr Jay tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" Freya gasped. "Oh no, I'm not going through all that 'staking-out' and spying again! Helping Will was great but being wedged in between those coat pegs was not my idea of fun."

"But just imagine if we could catch one of them changing into their costume for a secret mission or flying off out of the window to rescue someone in danger!" Benji was flapping his hands around and bouncing on the spot as the whistle blew and everyone began to file back inside for the afternoon's lessons. "I'll see you later," he called as the pair joined their own classes.

Freya gave a dismissive wave of her hand, barely glancing back over her shoulder as she headed into her class.

"Hi, Freya," said Mr Jay with a smile, catching her by

surprise as he walked into the room with her. "Miss Higgins told me you were a great help at lunchtime. You and Benji working with William to help him with his maths – that's a really cool thing to do. Well done!" With that, he gave her a friendly pat on the back, and as he did she caught sight of a really fancy gadget on his wrist. It was like a watch but more complicated – and it didn't even have the time on it! Just as his wrist passed by the back of her head, the gadget beeped and a voice said, "Target achieved. Mission accomplished."