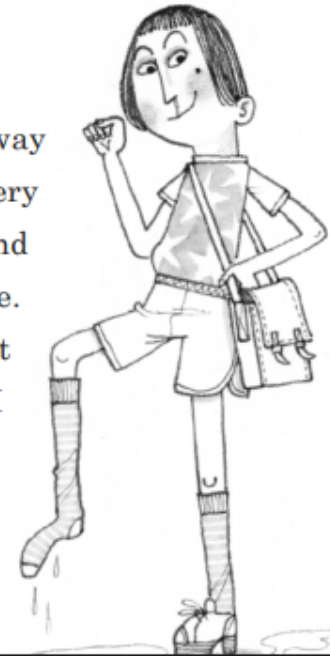


Chapter

1

Some people think that everything happens for a reason. This makes perfect sense to me. Although sometimes it can take a while for the reason to become clear. You just have to be patient, that's all.

Why did I lose a shoe on the way to school? It was certainly very annoying; my foot got wet and my mother was cross with me. BUT . . . losing the shoe meant I was late for class and so I missed a maths exam. Result! It happened for a reason.




And I once told my best friend that I still slept with a teddy called Mr Pilchard. My friend told the whole class and they all laughed at me. But then I realised the reason for all this upset: it was time to dump my best friend and get myself one who *could* be trusted. So I did.

Now what about the things that happen to the Bolds?

Perhaps you are new to stories about them. I hope not, because that would mean you've been missing out on lots of fun. The Bolds, you see, are a family that strange things happen to – some things good, some not so good – but always for a reason. The good things are wonderful and the not-so-good always make the stories about them very interesting – though I say so myself.

Our story this time begins on a rainy day. Most people on days like that want to stay indoors and avoid getting wet. This isn't the case with the Bolds, though. Dear me, no. They love the rain. Rain means puddles and mud, both of which they are very keen on. Stamping in puddles and making a mess, getting mud in their fur, down their trousers or anywhere else you can think of, is their idea of fun. This is probably because the Bolds family, as you may already know, aren't actually people.





No. They're hyenas. Hyenas living *disguised* as human beings in a lovely little house in Teddington. In order to keep this unusual fact a secret, they are careful not to do anything too *hyena-ish* in public: no running around on all fours, no chasing things and eating them, no rubbing their *bottoms* on bushes.

But laughing *wildly* and messing about in the rain and mud are hyena traits they can get away with. And they do. People might think them a little *odd*, but those same people never jump to the conclusion that the family running around and laughing in the rain are *hyenas*. And for the Bolds it is a little taste of their old life. It satisfies their *hyena instincts*, so carefully covered up most of the time.

So on this particular day in early April, during a heavy shower, the Bold family (Mr and Mrs Bold, and their twins, Bobby and



Betty) spent a *glorious* couple of hours in a rather wet Bushy Park. They took with them their fellow hyena Uncle Tony, and Miranda the marmoset monkey, as

well as their next-door neighbour Mr McNumpty (who is a grizzly bear, *not a hyena*, but rather partial to a frolic in the mud nevertheless).



To begin with they just hopped over puddles, *laughing* and shrieking. But then Bobby landed in a large one (perhaps by mistake, perhaps not) and splashed water all over Betty's skirt.

'Right! Game on!' said a laughing Betty, before jumping in the air and landing with a *splat!* right in the middle of an even larger,

ominously dark puddle. It turned out this puddle was much deeper than expected. Betty suddenly found herself knee-deep in filthy muddy water. And not only was Bobby drenched from head to foot in thick gravy-like mud, but Mrs Bold was too, as she happened to have been walking just behind Bobby.

Now I don't know about *your* family, but in mine Betty and Bobby would be in big trouble by now. However things are a little different with the Bolds.



'Eek!' said Betty, covering her mouth with her paws in surprise.

'You've had it now, Sis!' laughed Bobby,

jumping in beside his sister, creating a new wave that curled right up and engulfed a squealing Betty's neck.

Mrs Bold, meanwhile, simply inhaled the earthy scent and her nostrils twitched with delight. She gave Mr Bold a sly glance. 'Mmmm!' she said. 'This so reminds me of life in Africa during the rainy season. Have a sniff, Fred!' She scooped up a handful of mud and rubbed it over Mr Bold's face.

'Ahhh!' said her husband. 'I know what you mean, Amelia.'

