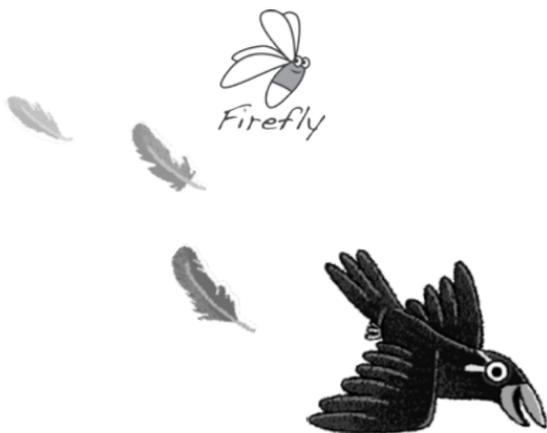


MAJOR and MYNAH

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The Mystery Begins

It all started with the mystery of two missing things.

The first thing to vanish was a silver mountain bike belonging to our neighbour, Mrs Moore.

‘I only left it on the driveway for a minute or two,’ she yelled over the garden fence. ‘When I went back out it’d gone. Stolen!’

Mum shook her head in sympathy and promised we would keep our eyes peeled.

How do you peel eyes?

Then Mum discovered Luke’s swimming trunks had disappeared from our washing line!

‘I hope this isn’t one of your jokes, Callie,’ she said, frowning at me.

Maybe she was remembering the time I hid Luke’s school tie in the freezer because he scoffed all the chocolate ice cream. But it wasn’t me who took his trunks, and I think Dad was way too busy sawing wood in his workshop to have had time to play a joke.

‘Maybe it was a werewolf? Or a ghost?’ I suggested.

Mum rolled her eyes at me.

‘Or they flew off?’

‘There’s no wind!’ said Mum.

Which was true. I was eating breakfast in the garden because it was so hot.

Mum huffed and puffed and said everyone was going to be late unless she found them IMMEDIATELY. Luke burst into tears because he’s five and that’s what

he does when things go wrong. Also, he was desperate to go on his swimming playdate with Kieran.

Straight away I knew this would be an interesting case for SPUD to solve. SPUD is made up of me and Grace (my BFF) and it stands for Super Perceptive Undercover Detectives. We chose perceptive because it's one of our teacher Mrs Manning's favourite words and it describes someone who is good at seeing things. Detectives have to be very clever at spotting things other people don't see.

The SPUD crew already had a meeting planned for later today anyway. We're inventing a code using our torches so we can communicate from our bedroom windows. We need it because we're not allowed to use our mobile phones at home. They're only for EXTREME

EMERGENCIAS, to keep us safe and if we get lost (which would be difficult in our village because it's so small and we know all the roads off by heart).

My belly moaned and I felt a teeny bit sick as I looked at my cereal. I knew why. Before I could meet Grace, Mum and I had to drop off Luke and then go to the hospital.

To collect the ear things.

I really, really didn't want to.

I'd taken so long to eat my cereal it'd gone soggy. As I spooned it out of the milk, a bird swooped down and landed on the table next to me. I jumped up in fright because it wasn't the sort of thing you expected to happen when you were eating your Rice Krispies. The bird was bigger than a robin but smaller than a crow, and it was black with yellow stripes

on its head. It looked straight at me and went chirp! How cute was that?

‘Hello.’ I felt a bit silly because I was talking to a wild bird that had no idea what I was saying. The bird was straggly and looked like it hadn’t eaten for ages. It stared at me with brown watery eyes, then stared at my bowl, and stared back at me again.

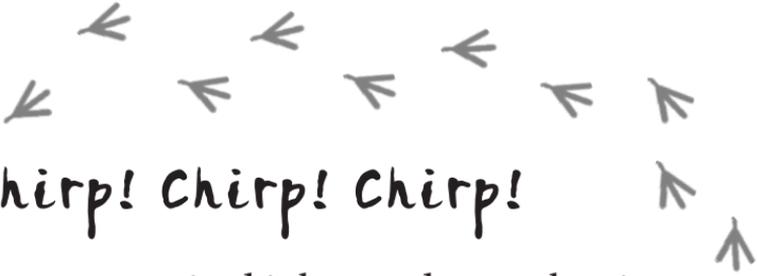
Chirp!

I pushed my bowl of soggy cereal towards it. ‘Have some breakfast.’

Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!

The bird jumped on to the edge of my bowl and dipped its orange beak into it. It slurped the milk and gobbled up the Rice Krispies.





Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!

It was so excited it hopped onto the rim of the bowl but then it slipped and fell in. Milk splashed all over the table as the bird flapped wildly. At first I laughed because it looked so funny but then I realised it was scared so I fished it out. It shook itself and its feathers stuck out like a spooked cat's fur.

'You're safe now,' I said.

Chirp!

The bird pushed its head into my hand and let me stroke it. I've never done that before! Its head was soft and warm.

Luke whooshed into the garden pretending to be a space rocket. He was wearing his gruesome green "I'm An

Alien!” pants. The bird took one look and flew away.

‘You scared the bird!’ I snapped, but Luke ignored me.

‘I’m going to wear my alien pants for swimming!’ he announced to the whole world.

Then Mum shouted it was TIME TO GO, and my belly went into mad washing-machine tumbling all over again.

