

## The Big Idea – Day 6

‘I don’t believe it!’ Hardy whispered in astonishment, ‘what on earth is HE doing there?’

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‘It can’t be...but it is!’, stuttered Freddy, ‘how did he get in?’ ‘I don’t know, but we’ve got to get him out!’ replied Hardy. ‘How many of them are there?’ added Michael. ‘I think it is HIM, plus three, maybe four more...’ ‘We could take them I think’, Michael added quickly. ‘What do you mean, take them?’ whispered Hardy. ‘Well, you remember what he’s like, a total coward if you confront him. Let’s march right up to him and tell him to get lost!’ said Michael. ‘But what are they doing in there?’ ‘It looks like they’re working’. They crawled out backwards from the hedge where they were lying, brushed themselves down, and made their way carefully to the entrance to the clearing where the shed stood. The banging and laughing from within continued. ‘Oi, you, who are you?’ shouted Hardy from a safe distance. The banging and clattering and laughing continued. They ventured a bit further forward, about five metres from the doorway. ‘Oi, who are you?’, repeated Hardy, his voice strong on top but wavering underneath. The banging stopped. The laughing faded away.

The door opened. Slowly. Standing there, just outside the doorway, flanked on either side by his ridiculous schoolfriends, was Barry. Holding a hammer. Smiling stupidly at them. ‘What are you doing here, and why are you in OUR shed?’ said Freddy, no longer afraid of Barry or his cronies. He stepped forward confidently. ‘Well, we...’ started Barry. Unseen to the others in their focus on the confrontation in hand, Jimi had arrived at the house and had strolled down to the garden to see how they were getting on. To their surprise, he now stepped forward from behind the others. ‘Bazza Baby! What’re you doin’ here, man?’ ‘You know Barry?’ said Hardy. ‘Jizza my man!’ said Barry, stepping forward and enveloping Lil’ Jimi in a huge bear hug. ‘Bazza’, groaned Jimi, under the weight of the embrace. ‘Jizza...’ said Barry, ‘how’s it going?’ ‘Good, good, just hangin’ with my good friends here. Who’re this lot?’ ‘Oh, I hardly know them, but they do as I say. Get lost boys!’ The jackals slunk away from the shed as Barry and Jimi walked up to the doorway. ‘See I heard my good friend here talking about the shed in the playground. I just thought I’d come to check it out.’ Freddy winced. ‘You’re no friend of mine’, he said, with a hint of menace in his voice.

‘Or mine’, squeaked Wil from the background. Michael remained silent, but the scowl on his face and his downturned mouth told Barry what he thought. ‘Look, I’m sorry. I spend all my days with these fools...’ he motioned over towards the jackals who had slipped out of the garden, ‘and when I heard you’d found a drum kit, I just thought I wanted to help, right. I’ll go if you want me to’. ‘Yeh, just go, will you’, said Hardy, ‘how did you get in, anyway?’ ‘There’s a hole in the fence down there. I’m going. Hope you like what we’ve done. Bye!’ Jimi turned to the rest with a disgusted look on his face. ‘You can’t just send him away. He’s a friend of mine.’ Turning to Barry he said, ‘Bazza, can you still play?’ ‘It’s been a while,’ said Barry, ‘but let’s see!’ Barry walked cautiously over to the pile of rubbish that he and the jackals had cleared from the shed and started picking around, searching for something. After a few minutes, he emerged with two thin tree branches, each about fifty centimetres long. He pulled off some of the external little twigs as they walked towards the front door. ‘That’s amazing!’ said Freddy as they walked through the doorway. ‘We thought we’d just try to help!’ replied Barry, his voice sounding relieved that they were inviting him in. Although still a mess, the interior of the shed was recognisable as, well, the interior of a shed. There was a floor, a bit muddy and grimy, but definitely a floor. There were walls. Four of them. Standing more or less upright. There was a roof, made of corrugated metal of some sort. There was a small hole in the roof. With a bird’s nest partially sealing it. And at the far end, where Jimi had hit his knee, and where Barry and his friends had cleared away most of the clutter... ..was a raised part.

A stage. With the drum kit, taking pride of place, in the centre. Barry marched over to the kit, carrying his two bits of tree. Jimi smiled slightly, closed his eyes so that only the very centre of his pupils were visible, and nodded his head, as if appreciating something. Although nothing had yet happened. Barry bent over the kit, as if examining something. He tutted a couple of times. He shook his head. He grasped one of the drum stands, and bent it slightly. He tried to turn one of the knobs below the snare drum. It was stiff. He muttered something under his breath. He sat on the drum stool. It collapsed. Hardy laughed. Freddy kicked him. Barry got up, rearranged the stool so that it would support his weight, and lifted his sticks high up in the air. There was a boom. And a crash. And a splash. And a hiss. And a rumble. And a slap. And a tap. And then two booms, close together. Followed by a single slap. Boom?boom?slap. Then there was a boom?boom slap?slap. Repeated. Then, a boom?boom slap?slap hiss. Boom?boom slap?slap hiss. Then, tapping. Lots of it. Fast tapping.

Tap?tap?tap?tap, tap?tap?tap?tap. The tapping didn't stop, it gathered pace, it was incessant, as Barry made the drum kit sing. As the tapping intensified, it was accompanied by some boom?booms. Ta?ta?boom?boom, ta?ta?boom?boom...then some splashes. Splash! Barry's face became redder as the activity intensified. Freddy, Wil and Michael stood there, mouths agape. Jaws dropping. Jimi continued to nod his head slightly, in time with the drumming now. Ta?ta?boom?boom, ta?ta?boom?boom, SPLASH! Ta?ta?boom?boom, ta?ta?boom?boom, SPLASH! Rumble rumble rumble... Ta?ta?boom?boom, ta?ta?boom?boom, SPLASH! As Barry worked his way round the kit, Freddy found himself not just tapping his foot, but almost involuntarily dancing on the spot where he was standing. Ta?ta?boom?boom, ta?ta?boom?boom, splash...CRASH! Ta?ta?boom?boom, ta?ta?boom?burgggh! Ta?ta?burghh, ta?ta?burghh, pluff! Barry laughed, as the perished drum skins tattered under the assault of his sticks. He came down from the stage. 'Not bad', he said, smiling, 'a bit of work on them, some new skins, it'll be cool!' 'Cool, man', said Jimi. 'Yeh, cool!' said Wil. 'That was great', said Michael.

Freddy said nothing. But his big idea was getting bigger by the minute.

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