

The Big Idea – Day 1

Bang! 'Wah!'

Bang! 'Wooh!'

Bang! 'Arghh!'

Freddy and Wil walked down the long garden after school on Monday.

Bang! 'Wooh!'

Bang! 'Wah!'

Bang! 'Urghh!'

Freddy and Wil pushed through the gap in the overgrown hedge at the end of the garden. The noise was louder now, almost shaking the air.

Bang! 'Woogoooh!'

Bang! 'Waagaahh!'

Bang! 'Splurrghh!'

Hardy was sitting in a clearing at the end of his garden, close to the tree where they had spent that cold April night, with a huge hammer in his hand, and pieces of shattered wood all around him.

'What are you doing?', said Freddy, grabbing Wil's arm to stop him saying anything. The normal feelings of impending laughter when Hardy was on one of his missions were rising up inside him.

'I'm building something', said Hardy, not looking up, but raising the hammer high above his head again and bringing it down on one of the timbers.

Bang! 'Oowaagghhh!' he yelled.

'What are you building, then?', said Wil, walking over to Hardy, who had put the hammer down and was sitting leaning back, his hands supporting his weight on the ground behind him. He seemed to be surveying the chaos around him.

'It's for him', he said, motioning over towards the hedgerow to his left. Wil and Freddy looked over to see Jimi, lying in a huge pile of grass or straw, guitar in hand. A single blade of grass was sticking out of his mouth. He chewed at it idly.

'Hey man, and...man!' said Jimi nonchalantly, waving vaguely in the direction of Wil and Freddy, *'he's building me a house!'*

'He can't put you in a house...man!' said Wil, looking back at Hardy.

'You can't put him...in a house...down here!' said Freddy, picking up Hardy's hammer and tapping at a piece of the shattered timber.

'I just can't stand that constant guitar-playing!' cried Hardy, covering his ears, even though for the moment Jimi was not strumming anything on his guitar.

'I'm only hangin' out and goin' with the flow', smiled Jimi, turning again to the guitar, and strumming a rich major chord which resonated deliciously around the enclosed garden clearing, *'don't put me down'*. He strummed a deeply sad minor chord and turned his eyes to the ground.

'Give me some help, here', said Hardy, *'Mum says we can use this, but we might need to do it up a bit'*. Hardy led them towards another gap in the tall hedge, leading to yet another secret corner of the garden.

'I'm good at BIY!' said Wil, taking the hammer from his brother.

'It's DIY, and you know it', said Freddy.

'NO! Bash it yourself! That's what I do!' said Wil, pretending to bash at Freddy.

'Destroy it yourself', sang Jimi, strumming.

They stooped low and went through the gap in the hedge.

'What a mess!' said Wil.

'I know, it needs a lot of work', replied Hardy.

'Cool!' said Jimi.

'It's perfect!' said Freddy.

Their eyes were met by a wreck, a ruin, the remains of a rusty relic which had seen much, much better days. It had once been a large, solid garden shed, but a tattered hole in the roof, and a door hanging off its hinges gave away the clues to its current demise.

'She says it's ours, if we want it!' said Hardy.

'It's perfect!' said Freddy again, *'perfect'*, he repeated.

'For what, just for Jimi?' said Wil, looking rather sadly at Jimi, envisaging the poor deluded guitarist sitting there, water dripping through the roof from a freezing sky, holes in his fingerless gloves, strumming pitifully away at an old broken guitar...

'NO, for all of us!' said Freddy, 'we do it up, we kit it out, we play in it, we hang out, we can do our team meetings here, we can...we can...and yes, Jimi can play!'

'What, like our shed, our base, our den?'

'Exactly, Bro! This can be our team HQ!'

Hardy and Wil looked at each other doubtfully, and then at the shed, doubly doubtfully. Looking back through the hedge at Hardy's pile of splintered wood, with a triple dose of doubt, Wil said,

'How can we possibly repair it?'

'The only way we can do it, is to start now, and not stop until we've done it!' said Freddy, advancing to the door of the shed. He pulled gingerly at the door handle.

To his surprise, the handle pulled easily, right off in his hand. To his greater surprise, the door itself also pulled towards him, right off its hinges. It flopped onto the damp grass with a heavy *flump* noise. Little droplets of water splattered out from all around it.

'OK, there's plenty to do', admitted Freddy, peering into the dark space beyond the door, *'come and have a look'.*

The weather, the worst in June since records had begun, was closing in that Monday afternoon. A storm was probably on the way, because the skies had become a deep grey colour, and the wind had started to move the tops of the tall trees. More than a rustling, but less than a whistling, but nevertheless, the day was approaching an early close, and an eerie darkness was beginning to fall.

'Are you sure we want to go in now?' said Wil.

'Sure, let's just take a look', said Freddy.

'It looks haunted to me', said Wil.

'Don't be silly!' said Freddy, leaning on the door frame and peering further inside.

'If there's something strange,

In your neighbourhood,

Who you gonna call?

Ghostbusters!

sang Jimi, strumming away on the guitar.

'Hey it's not haunted, right, it's an old shed!' said Freddy, stepping one pace back and looking round at

the others.

Just then, there was a frantic rustling sound from inside the shed, and a small object shot out of the door and beneath their feet. At the same time, a distant but heavy rumble of thunder shook the ground.

'Er... OK...perhaps we'd better wait til tomorrow'.
