

Save the Planet! – Day 5

Sitting on the step, one rucksack and one long black case beside him, Hardy's cousin. Baseball cap perched on his head, tipped to one side.

'Yo H!' he cried, 'Long time no see, how's it going?'

'See...' muttered Hardy, 'annoying!'

Hardy went and pushed against the heavy front door to his house. The door, made of solid oak, creaked satisfyingly as he pushed against it, and it swung open on its rusty hinges. Creaking and squeaking. The boys followed Hardy through the door, followed by Jimi, struggling behind with his cases.

Hardy's house was something else.

Across the park from where the others lived, Hardy's house was at the end of a long lane, lined with mature trees. As the lane approached the house, it widened out into a grassy area and a gravel driveway. Both the drive and the lawn had seen better days, but the house itself was strangely beautiful in an imposing sort of way.

The sort of house that would look good on a dark night, with the moon outlining the chimneys, and a couple of bats flitting around above it, thought Freddy, as they entered the big hallway.

Compared to their own house, Hardy's place was like a mansion. Wil and Freddy came here quite often, but it never felt like somewhere you wanted to stay very long. Hardy's Mum and Dad were rarely at home, and Hardy himself usually seemed pleased to be somewhere else. The big difference between Hardy's place and their own, was the noise. Back in Lancaster Road the houses were close together, there were always people around, noises from cars running up and down the road, children playing, music in the distance.

But not at Hardy's house, in the country, far from anywhere. There was nothing to hear. Mostly, all you could hear, was silence.

But the hallway was impressive.

As they entered, Freddy looked down at the polished wooden floors, and just resisted the temptation to take a flying power slide across them. Looking up, the ceiling seemed miles high, but that was just because in this part of the house it was double the height, so that the hallway roof went right to the top of the house. The first floor rooms were arranged around this entrance hall, with a little balcony in front of them. Hardy's mother appeared briefly at the balcony, waved and smiled sweetly at him, then disappeared into one of the rooms.

Twang!

Freddy looked round to see Jimi, sitting on a step at the other end of the hall, holding a guitar, which he had removed from its long black case. He pulled on a couple of the strings, which made a high-pitched twanging sound.

'Wow! Cool!' said Michael, walking over and sitting on the step next to Jimi. Wil joined them, sitting to the other side of Jimi. He looked admiringly at the neck of the guitar, beautiful polished brown wood, with gold metal fittings holding the strings.

'That was rubbish!' said Hardy dismissively, 'it sounds like you're playing a rubber band!'

Jimi looked at his cousin and shook his head. 'Just wait, man', he said.

'Annoying', muttered Hardy.

'Can I have a go?' said Wil, taking hold of the guitar.

'Sure,' said Jimi, 'just hold it, OK? Don't play it, right'

'OK', said Wil, looking in awe at the amazing instrument in front of him. In addition to the engraved neck, the body of the guitar was a deep burgundy colour, with flecks of silver and gold in the paintwork. The strings caught the light coming in through the big hallway windows. The guitar seemed alive with light, and with possibilities.

Jimi helped Wil sling the strap round his neck, and helped him position the guitar properly across his body.

Wil stood up, legs slightly apart, the guitar neck pointing away from him, his right hand ready to strike.

'You look ridiculous!' said Hardy.

'You look amazing!' said Michael.

'Can I have a go?' said Freddy

'Sure, man', said Jimi.

'Pah!' said Hardy.

Each one in turn posed with the guitar, except Hardy, who marched impatiently around waiting for them to finish.

After each of them had had a go, Jimi strapped the guitar back on, and plugged a thick red cable into the socket on the instrument.

'So how come, you're called Jimi, anyway?' said Michael, a sense of admiration evident in his voice as he asked the question.

'Well, I didn't really want to be called Jimi', said Jimmy in reply, 'I wanted to be called Jimmy, or perhaps...'

'You are called Jimi!' exclaimed Wil,

'No, I meant I wanted to be called Jimmy!' said Jimi, smiling, 'Or Keith?'

'You wanted to be called Keith? That's so uncool, Jimi's much better, or...er...Jimmy?'

'Or Slash', said Jimi.

'Slash, Keith, Jimi or Jimmy? What are you talking about?' said Wil.

'Guitar heroes', said Hardy miserably from the other side of the hall, *'he always brings his guitar with him'*. He walked off to one of the rooms leading off the hall.

'So, can you actually play anything?' said Wil.

Deaaanggggghhhh! said Jimi.

Wil looked at Jimi as the hallway resonated to the sound of that one note. Pictures on the walls shook. Glass in the windows rattled. A small cat jumped down off one of the chairs and scuttled out of the room, scowling and mewling in the direction of Jimi, as if it had seen all this before. Michael clapped.

'Wow!' he said.

'Wow!' said Wil.

Deaaanggggghhhh! said Jimi.

Amazing! thought Freddy.

Deang-duh-dang, deang-duh-duh-danggggghhh! said Jimi, standing now, and shaking the neck of his guitar to make the last note ring out even more, reverberating around the huge empty space.

'Jimmy with a Y!' he said triumphantly, *'his most famous song!'*

'Wow!' said Wil and Michael, in unison, almost singing.

'And Keith with a K!' Jimi bent slightly over his guitar, looking for the right strings, turned one of the knobs on the guitar body slightly, then struck one of the most famous chords in history,

'Dung-dung, da-da-daaa, duh-da-daaagh!'

'Wow!' said Wil.

'I can't get no satisfaction', said Michael.

'I've got an idea', said Freddy.
