

Illness Strikes - Day 5

Except from Hardy.

He just coughed.

Actually he coughed his way into hospital.

'Maybe he shouldn't have played?', said Wil as they gathered on the top landing on Wednesday morning.

'Same old Hardy...always faking!', sang Clara.

'You can't fake your way into hospital', Freddy added, *'although I must admit, he didn't really look that ill.'*

'And he kept a clean sheet!', said Wil.

They all looked at each other as to say *'And that's what matters'*, although no-one actually said it.

'Shall we go to visit him?'

'Well, it's World Book Day tomorrow, what are you going as?', Freddy reminded them, picking up the scrap of paper he had brought back from school with him on Tuesday afternoon.

World Book Day 2007

This is the 10th Anniversary Year of World Book Day. It's aim is to encourage children to explore the pleasures of books and reading by providing them with a book of their own.

On Thursday 1st March, please dress as your favourite book character.

No footballers, superheroes, no cartoon characters, no animals, no footballers, no film stars.

AND ABSOLUTELY NO FOOTBALLERS – THEY ARE NOT BOOK CHARACTERS

p.s. please do not dress as a footballer

'Does that mean I can't go in my Arsenal kit?', said Wil hopefully.

'What do you think?'

'Hmmmph!'

'So what are you going as?', Freddy repeated.

'See if you can guess!', Clara said, disappearing into the other room.

'OK, I'll go and change too!', said Wil, heading off up the stairs.

Freddy had turned off the lights to test out his own costume, which featured a pair of wire-rimmed glasses, a dark cloak which his Mum had cut out of an old sheet, a small mark on his forehead, and a magic-makin' shape-shiftin' goblin-goblin' mischief-mendin' portkey-powerin' little stick.

A what?

Actually, it was a small light sabre he had got one Christmas, but as one of many Hardy Potters who would gather at school for the day, he was determined to have the best wand. He waved it around in the darkness, whispering spells to himself.

Clara appeared at the top of the stairs. She had borrowed a grey wig, had drawn some frown lines on her face, and was wearing a knitted shawl around her shoulders. The clothes were dark.

As Clara saw Freddy through the darkness, she smiled.

As Freddy saw Clara through the darkness he recoiled as he saw the single white tooth jutting awkwardly out of her mouth. It was almost luminous through the gloom.

'Brilliant!'

'Thanks, what's Wil going as?'

There was a clumping sound at the top of the stairs. Clara and Freddy looked up.

Clump, clump, clump.

Wil had on the most enormous pair of boots, and was wearing a boilersuit – the kind you see workmen or mechanics wearing. He had plastered his face with white powder, so that he looked a deathly pale colour. Through his neck he had inserted a bolt. He clumped down the stairs, as Freddy switched the lights back on.

'How did you do THAT?' said Clara, examining the bolt carefully from both sides.

'Two bolts!' laughed Wil, as if they had believed the bolt went right through his neck.

The phone rang. Frankenstein, Hardy, and Nanny McPhee all sprinted over to pick it up. With a deft shoulder charge, Frank just managed to edge Hardy out at the last minute. Nanny caught her shawl on the edge of the door and ended up in a heap on the floor. Her tooth flew out of her mouth. Wil picked up the phone.

'Ugh!', said a quiet voice on the other end.

'Ugh to you too,' said Wil, who had been told never to talk to strangers on the phone.

'I mean, erggghh', said the voice again.

'Oh it's you. We'll be coming over tomorrow after World Book Day. Keep warm!'

'...er...OK...I'll...t-t-t-try', said Hardy weakly.

Later in the day Michael, who went to a different school, came over wearing his full Reading football kit.

'You can't wear that – it's football kit!', said Clara obviously.

'I'm making a statement.'

'A WHAT?'

'I'm making a statement to say that Reading should be in the quarter-finals of the FA Cup'.

'But they let in three goals in six minutes, that's...erm...', Wil counted his fingers momentarily, '...erm...two goals per minute'.

'Yes, but I was late watching the match, so I'm not counting the first ten minutes'.

'Oh, OK. Be like that'.

'Anyway, I'm going as Roy of the Rovers, he's in a book...!'

'Roy of the WHAT?' said Clara.

'The greatest footballer who ever lived', said Michael.
