

Cold, Wet, and Happy – Day 2

But whatever Mr Andrews had meant, it certainly was cold, and the setting sun had turned the horizon a fiery red.

The next morning, all was quiet. Very quiet.

Wil struggled to open his eyes. The first time he tried, he failed. He tried again. This time, he managed to keep them open for a few seconds, and ward off the overwhelming desire to go back to sleep. They were open long enough to see his brother still fast asleep across the room.

Third time lucky. The eyes were definitely open this time. Wil stared up at the ceiling, at the same time pulling the duvet high up to his neck. It certainly was cold, in fact the contrast between the temperature of his face, outside, and the rest of him, wrapped up, was shocking.

Slowly, and subconsciously, Wil became aware of two things which made him think that all was not quite normal that Wednesday morning.

The light in the room seemed different. Most mornings at waking-up time, the room was dull and grey, but this morning it was definitely brighter. Brighter and lighter. And then there was the noise.

There was no noise. On a normal day there would be people outside starting their day, cars struggling up the hill or coasting down it, the dog from next door savaging the postman. But this morning, although those sounds were sort of there, they were more distant, as if the house had been moved far away from them, or each sound was softer and more muffled.

Wil got up and shuddered as the cold hit him. He walked uncertainly to the window and pulled back the curtain. Suddenly he was jerked into life by the excitement of what he saw.

'Freddy, wake up! Wake UP!' he ran and shook his brother.

'Eh? What?', replied Freddy, eyes still tightly shut.

'SNOW! Lying on the ground. Loads of it! Come, look!'

The school day passed unbelievably slowly. Adults do some funny things. They really do, thought Freddy as he worked out yet another impossible fraction (*if seventy-five percent of the ground is covered in snow, what fraction of the ground is covered?*). Impossible maths had been preceded by impossible literacy (*write a story about what you would do in a snowstorm*), and then they had impossible science (*draw a diagram of a snowflake*).

I don't want to be working out, or writing, or drawing snow, I want to be out there, in it, experiencing it. I want a practical lesson, thought Freddy, *but adults just made you do funny things, all the time. Like just when you are wide awake in the evening, they make you go to bed. And when you are fast asleep in the morning, they make you get up. And just when you could do with a nice hamburger with a few lovely fries, they make you eat spinach and broccoli. And when it is perfect weather for being outside, they*

make you stay in. Humph!

But, eventually they were out.

There were already three snowmen on their street, including the biggest one directly outside their house. Some teenagers had obviously built it, and were now attempting to destroy it, leaving the younger onlookers once again wondering why people would do this. Freddy and Wil stood outside the gate and looked down towards Jaz's house.

There, standing in the garden, was Hardy, his hand outstretched to the sky. Then he was gone.

There he was again, hand out. Then he was gone again.

He kept dashing in and out of the house, for no reason.

'What are you doing?', Wil said, when they had slid slipperily down the street.

'Experiment. You wouldn't understand', said Hardy seriously, rushing back into the house.

After a couple more attempts, Jaz appeared at the door looking cold and confused.

'It's not working... I've got a better idea...oh, hi guys!'. He disappeared inside the door again and returned clad in an enormous puffy jacket and clutching his precious, most prized possession. His microscope.

'We're looking at snowflakes but Hardy is too slow to get them inside before they melt!', Jaz said, laughing. A snowball caught him on the back of the neck, sliding miserably into the hood of his jacket.

'Hey! We've got work to do here!'

'Serves you right, I tried to get in as fast as I could', Hardy said, dusting the snow from his hands.

'Sorry. But if we do it out here, the temperature will keep the flakes as snow for long enough for us to see them,' Jaz replied apologetically.

'Wow! That's amazing'. Wil was stunned by what he saw through the lens of the microscope, as two single flakes of snow swam into focus and revealed their beautiful, complicated, star-like patterns.

'And no two flakes are ever exactly the same', Jaz added, his voice quivering with excitement and wonder at what they were seeing. *'Usually symmetrical, and almost always with six-sides'*.

'Wow!' said Wil again, moving aside to let Freddy have a look.

'Wow!' said Freddy. Hardy pushed him aside and put his eye to the viewfinder.

'Wow!' said Hardy.

'Ow!' said Jaz, *'I'm getting cold. I'm going in'*.

They followed Jaz into the warm house, and drank the hot chocolate which was waiting for them. Jaz unfolded a large sheet of paper onto the floor in front of the fire.

'What's that for?' Wil said.

'League table for this season so far. Looks good for us'.

Hardy, Wil and Freddy joined Jaz on the floor and started to analyse the results of their first season.
