NO.1 BOY DETECTIVE

The Mega Quiz

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To Fred, for whom this book was written, and his sister, Isabel, another avid reader

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Chapter 1

My name is Drooth. Damian Drooth, boy detective and all-round genius. Inspector Crockitt, the head of the local police, is amazed at my crime-busting skills.

For instance, last week I solved a really difficult case. It started like this: on Saturday morning, I was in the library borrowing a book about my hero, Sherlock Holmes. I'd chosen one called *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and was walking out of the library when I noticed a poster on the wall. This is what it said:

Do you have a brilliant brain?
Are you between 10 and 12 years old?

WIN A WEEKEND IN
DISNEYLAND PARIS

Enter our Mega Quiz
Teams of 4
Entrance fee: £10 each
Fill in the form below and post back

Interesting, I thought. So I picked up a form and called a meeting of my trainee detectives. This gang was made up of Tod and his sister Lavender (who was only six but quite bright for her age), Harry (who was not brilliant but was taller than any of us) and Winston (who was great at karate).

That afternoon, they all came to the hut at the bottom of my garden.

'What now, Damian?' asked Tod. 'Have you spotted another crime?'

I didn't answer. I stood on a stool so everybody could see me, like Mr Spratt, our headmaster, when he stands on the stage in assembly.

I spoke in my loudest voice. 'How would you like to go to Disneyland Paris?'

Their mouths fell open with shock. Then I explained about the Mega Quiz.

'It's simple,' I said. 'We know loads of stuff, so we'll win, easy.'

Harry looked worried. 'I don't know much,' he said. 'Can't Lavender go instead of me?'

'No. She's only six,' I told him. 'Don't worry, we've got two weeks before the quiz. We'll go down to the library to

study. I bet Miss Travis will be pleased to see us.'

'She wasn't pleased the last time we went,' said Harry.

'That was because we took Curly with us,' I said. 'She's not keen on dogs, especially in the library.'

I noticed Tod was frowning. 'Studying is a good idea,' he said. 'But how do we get the money for the entrance fees? Ten pounds each is forty pounds.'

Tod was good at maths so I guessed that he was right.

'I got ten pounds for my birthday,' said Winston. 'We can use that.'

'I've got thwee pounds in my piggy bank,' said Lavender, 'and there's a pound coin in my purthe.'

Things were looking up.

'How about you, Harry?' I asked. 'Have you got any money?'

'Only what I'm saving for my bike. I can't spend that.'

I didn't see why not. 'You mean you don't want to go to Disneyland Paris with us?'

He pulled a funny face and sighed. 'I do but…'

'So how much have you saved?'

'Twelve pounds.'

'We still need … er …' I said.

Then Smarty Pants Tod butted in. 'Fourteen pounds,' he said, obviously wanting everybody to know that he was the All-Time Maths Genius.

After that, we sat in the shed trying to work out how to get fourteen pounds.

It was Lavender who spoke up. 'We could do jobths,' she said.

‘What kind of jobs?’ I asked.

‘Wathing cars, gardening, taking dogths for walkths.’

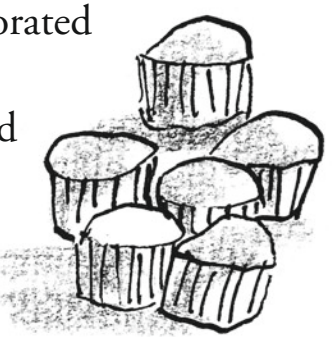
Sometimes Lavender comes up with excellent ideas.

‘Good thinking,’ I said. ‘We’ll soon earn fourteen pounds. Let’s do it.’

Chapter 2

The gang went home and I walked back up the garden and into the kitchen which was filled with the fantastic smell of baking. Mum has her own business, Home Cooking Unlimited. She's really good – especially her chocolate gateau, which is *AWESOME!*

That afternoon, there were some cupcakes on the table, just out of the oven and waiting to be decorated. I had an idea. If I decorated them, Mum would be really pleased and would probably pay me. I'd never done it before but I'd watched her do it plenty of times. How hard could it be to squeeze butter icing out of a piping bag? Easy-peasy!



First, I got the butter and icing sugar. But the butter was rock hard from the fridge and, when I tried to mix the two together, the icing sugar puffed up like white smoke. I coughed. I choked. So I ate one of the cupcakes to soothe my throat – even though I prefer chocolate cakes myself.

Then a brilliant idea popped into my head. If I mixed cocoa powder with the butter icing, I could make it chocolate flavoured. I grabbed a chair and climbed up to reach the top shelf of the cupboard where Mum kept the tin of cocoa. But the chair wasn't very steady. It wobbled. The tin flew out of my hand and the cocoa went everywhere. Some went over me but most went on the kitchen floor.

Not to worry! I scooped it up with a spoon and mixed it with the butter icing. There were a few black bits in it

and I had to pick out a dead fly – but I didn't think anyone would notice. Anyway, the mixture had turned brown – so that was good. Once I'd spooned it into the piping bag, I squeezed it over the cupcakes – which wasn't easy owing to some little lumps, which might have been the butter, I suppose.