

Name: Anisha Mistry (I do have a middle name but it's too embarrassing so I am

NOT writing it here)

Age: 10 years, 3 months and 10 days

(at time of writing this)

Lives with: Mum, Dad, and my mischievous Granny Jas

School: Birmingham South-West Aspire

Junior Middle High Academy School

(longest school name ever!)

Favourite Subject: Science

Best friend: Milo Moon

Ambitions: To meet a real life astronaut

To invent a cure for meanness

To be the first kid in space



For teachers everywhere. For everything you do.

SERENA

For my nephew, Arthur, Best Actor in a Musical/Comedy

Golden Globe Winner 2046

EMMA

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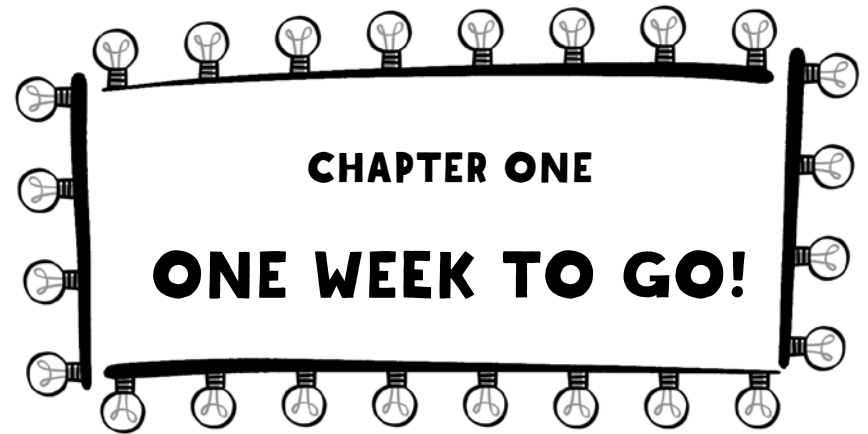
ANISHA

ACCIDENTAL DETECTIVE



SERENA PATEL
Illustrated by **Emma McCann**





I know something is up the moment I hear the special assembly music coming from the hall.

Mr Graft only puts on that song "**Reach for the Stars**" when something special is happening.

And when we file into the hall that Friday afternoon, I know straight away this is not your average assembly. For a start Miss Jive and Mr Notes, the drama and music teachers, are sitting onstage looking very happy. The big TV screen is on behind them and it says **One Week To Go!**

I turn around and nudge Milo, who is behind me in the line. "One week till what?"

"Maybe they're giving us an extra week off?"

Milo replies. "That would be **cool**!"

"Unlikely, Milo, plus why would Miss Jive and Mr Notes need to be onstage for that?"

"True, but I hope it's something good. We could do with some excitement," Milo says.

My tummy turns. I'm not big on excitement – the last time anything exciting happened in school was when Milo and I got accused of **flooding** the whole place with foam! We all sit down and I look around the hall. It's only our year group in here. What does that mean? We wait as Mr Graft walks to the front of the hall. He looks weird, nervous even.

"Settle down, children. Right, good afternoon, everyone. You might be wondering why we are all here. Well, we have the most **thrilling** news and I hope you will be as happy as we are about this amazing opportunity for our school. I'm going to hand over to Miss Jive and she will tell you all about it."

Miss Jive stands up and smooths her skirt. She steps forward and smiles at us all. "Well, I suppose I should start at the beginning. Our school has been selected to take part in a competition."



A ripple of whispers and murmurs runs through the hall. Miss Jive clears her throat. "We are one of four schools in the Birmingham area specially selected to take part. Each school has one week to cast, rehearse and put on a musical production." Miss Jive pauses for our reaction. We all look around at each other. Some of the kids seem really **enthusiastic** about the idea – there's already **chatter** about costumes and wondering what the play will be about. One week doesn't sound like very long to do all that, though! And a **musical**?! My first thought is I hope I don't have to sing!

Miss Jive seems to have read my mind. "I know some of you might wonder if it's possible to put on a play in a week, but never fear, we have a plan! We were given a choice of musicals to pick from a hat and this is what we got." She points excitedly to the big screen, which has now changed to show a picture of a man. I recognize him!

"That's Einstein!" I shout out, forgetting we're

supposed to raise our hand.

Miss Jive chuckles. "I thought you would know who this is, Anisha. Yes, you're right. It is indeed Albert Einstein, inventor, scientist and mathematician."



Beena Bhatt, who is unfortunately sitting just a little way in front of me, raises her hand. "Urgh, miss, are we doing a play about maths?"

Miss Jive shakes her head. "No, Beena, maths was just a part of who Einstein was. The musical is actually a lot of fun, showing him in a different light – as a husband, a musician, even a sailor! And did you know his wife Mileva actually helped him a lot with his discoveries? There are some great songs,

too. I thought perhaps you might want to play your trumpet?"

Beena goes pink in the face. "Well, I stopped my lessons because I was getting a bit **bored** with it. Too many other interesting things to do, you know how it is."

Miss Jive frowns. "Oh, well that's a shame. You're the only trumpet player we have and I was thinking you'd make a great solo..."

Beena practically **jumps** up, apparently changing her mind completely. "I'll do it!" she shouts. "I mean, if you have no one else and to be honest you need me to make this play cool. Is there another



leading part apart from smelly old Einstein? I'd make a great leading lady." She smiles **sweetly**.

Miss Jive looks over at Mr Notes, who rolls his eyes and smiles.

"Well, Beena, I'm not sure we should be referring to Einstein as **old** or **smelly**, but, yes, there is the part of his wife, Mileva," Mr Graft replies.

"I'll do it!" Beena shouts out again.

Miss Jive frowns. "Well, I'm afraid it's not as simple as that. All the acting parts have to be **auditioned** for. Which brings me nicely to the scripts! I'll start passing them back – take one and pass on the pile, everyone."

Beena humphs and sits back down. One of her minions, Layla, leans over to her and whispers, "You've totally got that part, Beena. No one else is as good as you." Beena sits up straighter, pleased with herself.

I look over at Mindy and Manny, who are sitting behind us. Mindy looks deep in thought and Manny

is examining something sticky on his finger – I don't want to know what it is.

When the scripts reach me, I take one and pass the rest to Milo. The script is stapled at the top and the front page says **Einstein – not just a scientist!**

Miss Jive signals for us to listen again. "Now, I realize not everyone will want to audition, but I would like you all to read the script over the weekend and get familiar with it. We will need to work together as a **team**, Year Six.

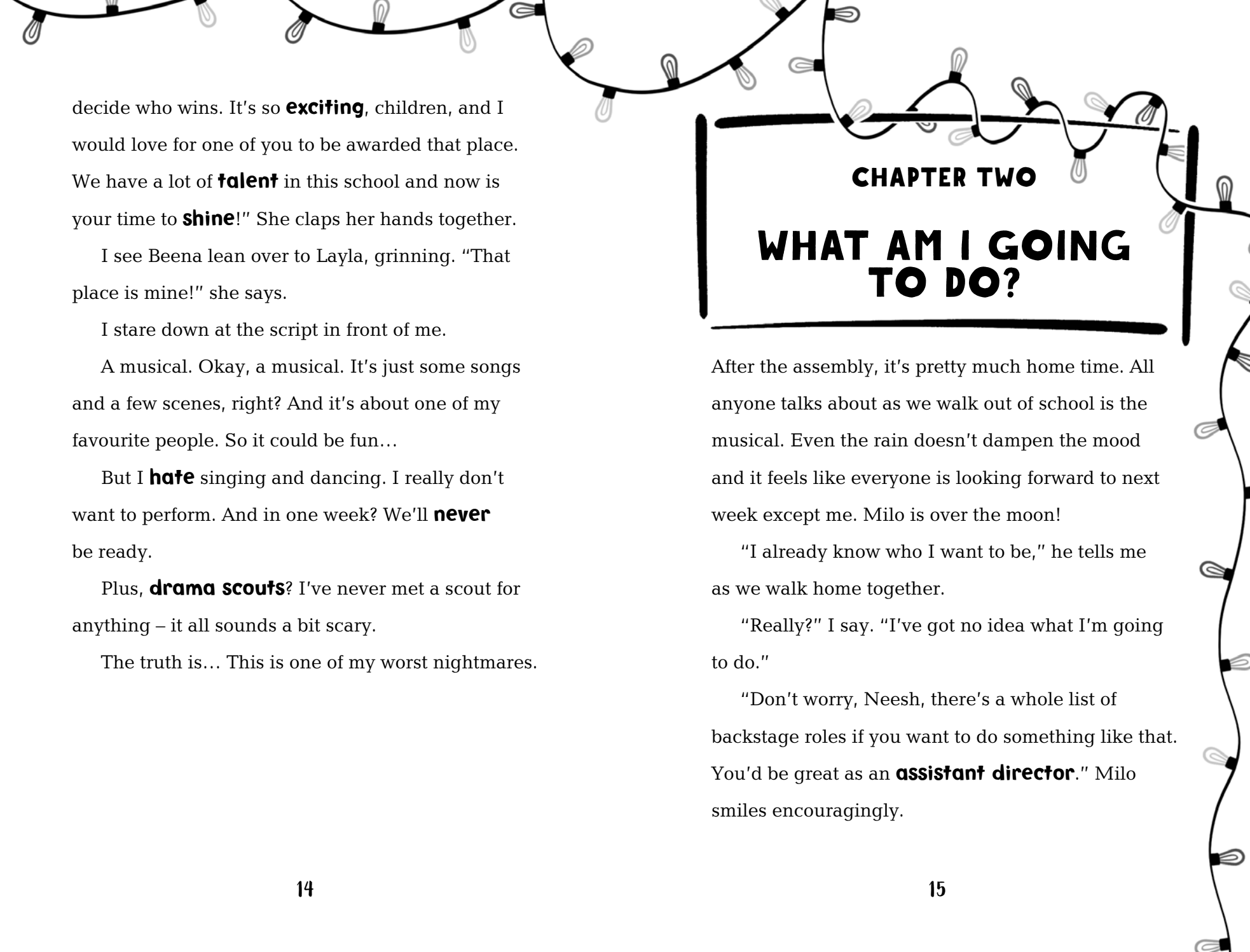


This is a huge project and we only have a week to pull it off. I will need actors, singers, dancers, musicians, scenery and prop makers, make-up artists and backstage help. There will be a role for everyone. Our school has never had this opportunity before, so we want to give it our best shot, don't we? And to help that, all other lessons are cancelled this week. You will be working on the play and only on the play!"

Everyone cheers at that last part.

"What do we win?" someone shouts out.

Miss Jive beams. "Well, it's a really fantastic prize. We would win a huge trophy for our school and one lucky person who displays special talent will win a place on the exclusive summer-school programme at **Dreams Dance and Drama Academy**, the big performing arts school in the city. They have had quite a few of their students go on to work in the West End and even on the telly!" Miss Jive is almost **giddy** now. "The academy will be sending a talent scout to each school's performance and he or she will



decide who wins. It's so **exciting**, children, and I would love for one of you to be awarded that place. We have a lot of **talent** in this school and now is your time to **shine**!" She claps her hands together.

I see Beena lean over to Layla, grinning. "That place is mine!" she says.

I stare down at the script in front of me.

A musical. Okay, a musical. It's just some songs and a few scenes, right? And it's about one of my favourite people. So it could be fun...

But I **hate** singing and dancing. I really don't want to perform. And in one week? We'll **never** be ready.

Plus, **drama scouts**? I've never met a scout for anything – it all sounds a bit scary.

The truth is... This is one of my worst nightmares.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

After the assembly, it's pretty much home time. All anyone talks about as we walk out of school is the musical. Even the rain doesn't dampen the mood and it feels like everyone is looking forward to next week except me. Milo is over the moon!

"I already know who I want to be," he tells me as we walk home together.

"Really?" I say. "I've got no idea what I'm going to do."

"Don't worry, Neesh, there's a whole list of backstage roles if you want to do something like that. You'd be great as an **assistant director**." Milo smiles encouragingly.