Some
Sunny
Day

Books by Adam Baron

BOY UNDERWATER

YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS

THIS WONDERFUL THING

SOME SUNNY DAY

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So many people, doing so many crucial jobs,
helped our children through lockdown.
Thanks to all of you.

This book, however, is for the teachers.

CHAPTER ONE

Here's something you won't believe. Not that long ago, I, Cymbeline Igloo, made two completely new BEST friends.

Why should you be surprised? This is lockdown we're talking about. No one was supposed to go near anyone else – let alone make friends with them. And my mum was totally paranoid – at least at the start.

'Social distancing' was like her catchphrase. If someone was walking towards us, she'd shout out 'STOP!' and 'WAIT THERE!' If people didn't hear, or just ignored her, we'd literally have to turn round and go the other way. Once, it took us half an hour to get to our corner shop! It was like being in a maze.

Another time there were people coming from both

directions – and neither were shifting over! I thought Mum would drag me into the road – but a bus was coming. So do you know what she did? Did she just walk past? Press us back as far as we could go?

No.

She told me to climb a tree!

She did! And she came after me. People pointed up at us like we were nuts, especially when she started shouting, 'TWO METRES! TWO METRES!' like some weird, enormous parrot. And the humiliation did NOT end there. We were up the tree for ages because joggers kept going by, and people in the flats opposite came onto their balconies and started filming us. We only escaped after one jogger was so surprised to see us up there that he tripped over a paving stone and went flying!

'Sorry!' Mum said (from the tree) as he was hobbling away.

As for my current two best friends, Mum wouldn't let me near them.

'It's not allowed,' she insisted, after we'd been in lockdown for what seemed like FOR EVER (about two weeks). I'd asked if I could see Lance. 'You can't meet up with anyone outside your own family.'

'But I don't want to meet up with him.'

‘Then what do you want?’

‘Are we allowed in Greenwich Park?’

‘Of course.’

‘And is Lance?’

‘Yes. As long as . . .’

‘Two metres. I know, I know. “So-cial dist-an-cing”. So, what if you don’t arrange with Lance’s mum to meet in the park, but you tell her we’ll be there? Then she could just HAPPEN to be there too. And if I HAPPEN to kick my football, then Lance, who would HAPPEN to be two metres away, could HAPPEN to kick it back!’

I was desperate for this to happen because I wanted to see how Lance was getting on with the lockdown football challenge that Mr Ashe (our teacher, and our football coach) had set us. But Mum wasn’t having it. She said we could chat on Zoom instead, but it was rubbish. Lance just grunted ‘All right?’ and I grunted ‘All right?’ and that was it. We couldn’t play anything. We couldn’t do kick-ups. We couldn’t do any Lego and there wasn’t even any football to talk about because all the leagues were shut.

‘I wonder what Jackie Chapman’s doing now,’ Lance said.

Jackie Chapman is the captain of Charlton Athletic Football Club, and our absolute HERO. I've got a club shirt that's signed by all the players, which Jackie Chapman ACTUALLY SENT ME. It's got my name on the back and when I thought burglars had nicked it last year, I nearly fainted. When I took it into school for Show and Tell, Mrs Stebbings came in for a look. She's our Chief Dinner Lady and loves Charlton EVEN MORE than Lance and I do. She stared at it like an angel had dropped it out of heaven.

'I don't know,' I said. 'But I know what Jackie Chapman's not doing.'

'What's that?'

'Hiding in trees,' I said. 'With his mum.'

We hung up after that because there was nothing else to say.

Our mums agreed that we should try again a few days later, and this time they both made us our favourite smoothie. That was pretty cool actually – until we tried to do a 'Cheers'. Lance went to touch his glass against his screen and he dropped it all over the keyboard. The last thing I saw was red goo running down the camera before the picture froze, went juddery, and then turned completely black.

‘Let’s try Veronique,’ Mum said.

Veronique is my other best friend – but Zooming her was a disaster. First, we could hardly find a time to do it because Veronique was doing Zoom violin lessons and Zoom piano lessons. She was doing a Zoom orchestra too, and even Zoom fencing – though how you can whack someone with a sword online I have no idea. When we finally did manage to set up the call, it was actually fine – until Veronique started chatting about school.

‘It’s great,’ she said. ‘Isn’t it?’

‘Not being there? You bet.’

‘No! Working online. Though not for everyone, of course. Imagine what it’s like being Semira.’

I squinted. ‘Semira?’

‘You know! The *new* girl. As soon as she joined, we all got sent home. It must be really weird for her.’

‘I suppose,’ I said.

‘Though for me, this is fabulous. I get so much more done!’

‘You actually finish everything Mr Ashe puts on the online classroom?’

‘That only takes half an hour. Then I do all the fun stuff. You know – BrainSqueeze Maths?’

'Er . . .'

'And Science-Solvers? IQ-English? That's great. You don't just get to read books – you get to write essays! They can be as long as you want!'

'*What*?' said Mum, from behind me.

Which was when Mum found out about all the 'enhancement activities' that Mr Ashe was putting up, and which she didn't exactly know about before because I may have, *accidentally,* deleted some of his emails from her iPad.

'Same time next week?' Veronique beamed.

'Er . . .'

'Fabulous!' Mum said. 'I'll send a link to your mum.'

I tried to shut our laptop but Mum grabbed hold of my hand.

'BrainSqueeze Maths,' she said. 'That does sound fun, doesn't it, Cymbeline Igloo? And two whole weeks to catch up on! Better get started, hadn't you?'

I sighed and did it, and thought about lockdown, and how Mum had said it was probably going to last for MONTHS. I was completely sure that WITHOUT friends, or Charlton, or Mrs Stebbings to talk to about Charlton, and WITH BrainSqueeze Maths, it was going

to be the most excruciatingly BORING time that I'd ever had in my whole life.

But I was wrong.

Because of Wansa.

Though when I first laid eyes on Wansa, I was

FURIOUS.

CHAPTER TWO

It all started on a Sunday.

I know that because we normally have pancakes on Sunday mornings and I was SO looking forward to them. When I came downstairs to the kitchen however, I got a shock.

The Weetabix were out on the table.

'Mum!' I said.

'What?'

I sighed. Mum was rooting around in the cupboard below the sink. I put my hand on her back. 'I know all the days seem the same at the moment,' I said, trying not to sound too annoyed. 'But it's SUNday.'

'So?'

‘Er, flat things? Used for the delivery of chocolate spread to my stomach?’

‘Ah.’ Mum stood up and plonked a bottle of bleach on the counter. ‘Sorry. I haven’t got any flour.’

‘What? So, no pancakes? This, after you made me eat fish fingers last night WITH NO TOMATO KETCHUP?’

‘Well, I’m sorry. It’s the shops. They’ve run out of things. Because of Covid. We saw it on the news last night, remember?’

I did remember. Mum watched the news all the time, looking for the numbers of people who had Covid, and how fast it was spreading. ‘Yes, but . . .’

‘Anyway, I’m too busy.’

‘On Sunday? In *lockdown*?! What can you possibly be doing?’

‘Cleaning!’ Mum said.

With that, Mum pulled on a pair of squeaky yellow gloves and knelt down to scrub the floor. I frowned. I couldn’t see anything wrong with the floor. It looked like a . . . floor. Mum didn’t rest until it looked more like an ice rink, though, while I spooned the last of the chocolate spread onto some Weetabix and tried to ignore the smell of bleach.

The kitchen cupboards were next. They seemed fine to me too, but I watched as Mum REALLY went at them, her nose wrinkling up as she did these fast little circles with the sponge. She even unscrewed the handles to clean underneath them – and she did the drawers too. And not just the outsides! I stared as she got the contents out – knives and forks, plates and pans all piled up on the counter.

'What's the point?' I asked, after finishing my second Weetabix. 'Cupboards are normally shut!'

But Mum didn't listen. And she even made me help! On a SUNDAY! I nearly phoned the police. While she cleaned the insides of the cupboards, I had to sort everything out, ready to be put back in. Quite a lot of the stuff was old, though, like chipped mugs that we didn't use, or pans with wobbly handles. Mum squinted at them, then knelt up straighter.

'Right then,' she said.

Which meant, apparently, that we were going to have a 'Clear Out'. Mum was SO excited, which I couldn't get my head round. I'm excited when I *get* things, not when I chuck them away. Was it her way of dealing with what we were going through?

And it wasn't just lockdown, actually, that *she* was

going through. Mum got engaged last year – to Stephan. He moved in next door with his daughters, Ellen and Mabel, and he and Mum were supposed to be getting married soon. There was only one problem. Stephan went back to New Zealand with his daughters just before lockdown began. Now – thanks to Covid-19 – he couldn't get back.

At first I wasn't sure about him. My dad had come back into our lives when Stephan and Mum first met. Like most kids, I suppose, I wanted my mum and dad to get back together – or for nothing to happen, for Mum and I to go on being like we were. Just her and me. Mum told me that she wasn't getting back with Dad, though, and then I got to know Stephan. And he was great. I also came to appreciate my soon-to-be stepsisters, in spite of the fact that Ellen was a bit jealous of me and Mabel drew unicorn horns on all my Charlton posters. I was looking forward to it all, though not as much as Mum was, of course.

She was clearly missing Stephan, but did that explain this odd desire to clean things and chuck stuff out? I didn't know, and rather than try to understand The Strange Ways of Adults, I went through to the living room to hit our Seated Optimal Flop-out

Activator (S.O.F.A.) for some well-deserved TV-ME time. But Mum called me straight back through! I growled and stomped back, remembering a conversation I'd had with Lance, before lockdown began.

'Thing is,' Lance had said. 'You can't let parents make it seem like helping is normal.'

'Like something we actually should be doing?'

'Exactly! If you help once, without complaining, they'll just get you to help again!'

'Will they? That's terrible. So, you've got to complain about it *every* time?'

'Absolutely! When my dad says, 'Lance, can you clear the table please?' I say, 'But I cleared the table yesterday!'

'What if you didn't clear the table yesterday?'

'I never admit that! He doesn't remember. I still complain, and when the drying up needs doing, he stares at it. He still wants me to do it but, if I've complained properly before, he just shakes his head and does it himself. Do you see?'

I did see, and I put on my TOTALLY NOT HAPPY face, getting ready to go to PEAK COMPLAIN as I marched back through to Mum. But Mum was smiling at me, her eyes moist like she might start crying.

‘Cym,’ she said, in a voice that was about right for talking to a toddler. ‘Look what I found!’

Mum was back on the floor, kneeling next to a big cardboard box. It already had quite a few pans in, as well as lots of plastic plates that she’d bunched up with rubber bands.

‘Won’t Mabel need those?’ I asked.

Mum shook her head. ‘She’s old enough for real ones now. But I don’t mean those. Look at this!’

Mum reached into the box, and I laughed. She was holding a two-handled beaker – with Thomas the Tank Engine on the front! I used to LOVE Thomas the Tank Engine. I’d had a plate as well, not to mention about a million books and a whole train track. Thomas the Tank Engine was my whole world and now I never even thought about him. It was weird, and after Mum dropped the beaker back into the box, I whipped it out again and put it back in the cupboard without her seeing. Then I had a thought.

‘This “Clear Out”,’ I said.

‘What about it?’

‘You’re JUST doing the kitchen, right?’

‘Oh no,’ Mum said. ‘With all this time on our hands? I’m going to . . .’

But I did NOT listen. I sprinted back into the living room and flung myself against the toy cupboard.

'You're not touching it!' I shouted.

Mum came through, the yellow gloves making her look VERY menacing. 'What? Half that stuff, you never play with any more.'

'I do!'

'All right,' Mum insisted. 'Tell me what's in there.'

'Games,' I said. 'And . . . toys.'

'What toys?'

'It doesn't matter! They're my toys. And you're not clearing them out!'

Mum held her yellow hands up. 'What about books, then?'

'YOU ARE NOT TOUCHING MY CHARLTON ANNUALS. I'LL TELL MRS STEBBINGS!'

'Of course not. But what about picture books?'

I thought about it. '*Where the Wild Things Are* stays.'

'Deal,' Mum said. 'What else?'

We kept about half in the end (because of Mabel) including *The Pencil*, *The Mousehole Cat*, *The Gruffalo*, *Alfie* and *Mack and the Big Truck*. When we came across a big Winnie the Pooh book, Mum couldn't resist reading some of the poems.

'You're so like Pooh,' Mum said.

'Me? I don't even like honey.'

'If Pooh was obsessed with chocolate spread.'

'Rubbish. Anyway, I'm glad I'm not *him*.'

I pointed down to that poem about James James, Whatsit Whatsit, who lost his mum when he was three. My mum smiled quickly and put the book in the 'Keep' pile.

She did the cupboard under the stairs after that – and did that toddler voice again. She'd found the seat I used to have to sit on, on the loo.

'You used to look so cute on that!'

'What? Doing a poo?'

Mum said yes, actually, I did. Apparently, my 'little legs' used to stick out and wiggle. I sighed, and we did the shed. We carried the boxes out to the street where Mum squirted them with Dettol. She made a sign – *Covid-free. Please Take!* – and looked pleased with herself, while I just stared down at all the junk we'd cleared out. I was puzzled to realise that none of it seemed like ours any more.

It was just *stuff*.

'Right,' I said. 'Can you make some pancakes *now*?'

'I told you, we've no flour.'

'Make them without, then.'

'Not possible.'

'Well, can't you go and buy some more?'

'I've told you, the shops have run out. Anyway, we're not finished.'

'Aren't we?' I frowned. 'What else is there to do?'

'Well.' Mum narrowed her eyes. 'I thought . . .'

'You thought what?'

'That we might just have a teensy, weensy go at . . .

'Your bedroom?'

'No.'

'Then . . . ?'

'Not *my* bedroom . . .'

'WHAT?!'

I was back inside and up the stairs like a SHOT. I shoved my door shut behind me and barricaded it with a chair.

'Cym?' She was right behind the door. The Yellow-Handed Clear-Out Fiend.

'You're not coming in!' I screamed.

'But Cym . . .'

'ENTRY REFUSED!'

'Cymbeline! You don't even know what I'm . . .'

'You're NOT having my Subbuteo!'

'I don't want it.'

'OR my Match Attax.'

'Those card things? That get everywhere? If you insist. But what about all those plastic medals you get just for going to birthday parties at that football place? And those cardboard trains? You made them in Reception. They're lovely and everything but . . .'

'They're staying!'

'But . . .'

'EAR MALFUNCTION! EAR MALFUNCTION!'

'Okay. Okay! You'll take it all to university with you, I get it. But how about . . . ?'

'What?'

'Clothes?' Mum said.

I hesitated, and Mum sensed it.

'Your drawers are stuffed, Cym. You've really grown in the last six months. And Mabel's not going to want any of your old pants, is she?'

I wasn't sure about that, because Mabel REALLY likes me. But what did I care about clothes? This clear-out thing was obviously making Mum happy. It was so much better for her than staring at the news and getting anxious. So I pulled the chair back from the door and opened it a bit.

'ONLY clothes?'

I peered through the crack, and saw Mum nod. 'Yes.'

'Promise?'

'Absolutely.'

'Say it, then.'

Mum frowned. 'What?'

'Promise.'

'Oh. Okay. I, Janice Igloo, do solemnly swear . . .'

'Wait!' I said. 'Get your phone out so we can record it.'

Mum raised her eyes, but did, hereby promising not to take anything other than clothes out of my bedroom, so help her God.

'Don't you want to do it with me?' she asked, after I'd let her in.

'Pants-sorting? Nah,' I said. 'Have all the fun you want. GO for it.'

And I left her there, figuring that yes, all this extreme cleaning and clearing out must be her way of coping with being stuck at home all the time, and the worry about catching Covid-19. I went downstairs to FINALLY hit the Seated Optimal Flop-out Activator (S.O.F.A.) for some well-deserved TV-ME time.

Which, as I found out THE VERY NEXT MORNING, was a

MASSIVE MISTAKE.