SINDHU AND JEET'S MISSING STAR MYSTERY

CHITRA SOUNDAR



ILLUSTRATED BY
AMBERIN HUQ

BLOOMSBURY

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To all librarians and teachers,
who instil a love of reading in us.

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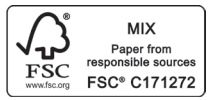
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THE NEW WILL

DING-DONG!

Sindhu put down her copy of *The Handbook for Young Detectives* and sighed. That would be Jeet, the other half of Sindhu and Jeet's Detective Agency. They were both expected to attend a memorial gathering for Mrs Barker, a woman who used to live down the road.

Jeet bounded into Sindhu's room full of inappropriate enthusiasm.

"Good morning, Sindhu."

"I don't want to go," said Sindhu. "I didn't even know Mrs Barker."

"No problem," he replied. "I made a fact sheet about her for you."

Sindhu groaned. "Boring!"



"Not this one," he said. "It starts with a joke."

"*What did Mrs Barker say to the dog when she brought out her specially prepared dog food?*"

"Bone appetit!" guessed Sindhu. "I've read that one before."

"OK, fine, here's another one."

"*What do you call a detective who looks for dogs?*"

Sindhu tapped her pencil on her book. "Hmm, what?"

"Sherlock Bones," said Jeet, giggling.

Sindhu groaned. "Please just dig out the facts about Mrs Barker."

"Here we go," said Jeet and started to read the facts aloud.

1. Mrs Barker was super rich.

2. She lived in a large two-storey house at the end of the street, with big black gates. At the back, there is that legendary mindfulness garden everyone's always going on about.

3. She loved dogs. She loved all sorts of dogs. Big, small, loud, quiet, young, old, abandoned or strays.

4. Mrs Barker wrote a book called Mrs Barker's Cookbook of Dog Treats, which sold over two kazillion copies.

"Hang on a minute," said Sindhu. "Mrs Barker is very rich. That means all her money will now go to someone she loved."

"It will go to someone whether or not she loved them," said Jeet.

"I've just been reading Chapter 7 in my handbook – *Sudden Deaths and Suspicious Windfalls* – and it says in there that relatives always fight over the money left behind."

"Well, according to fact number 5, that's not a problem."

5. She had no kids. Just one nephew – Edwin.

"Right, then Edwin gets everything and there's no one who will fight him over the money," said Sindhu. "Boring!"

"Last fact," said Jeet. "The most delicious fact of all."

6. My mum is going to lay out a spread of biscuits – cream-filled ones, jam-filled ones and butter biscuits too.

"Now I get your totally inappropriate