SUIT UP. STEP UP.
IT'S TIME TO BECOME A HERO!

MARV



AND THE

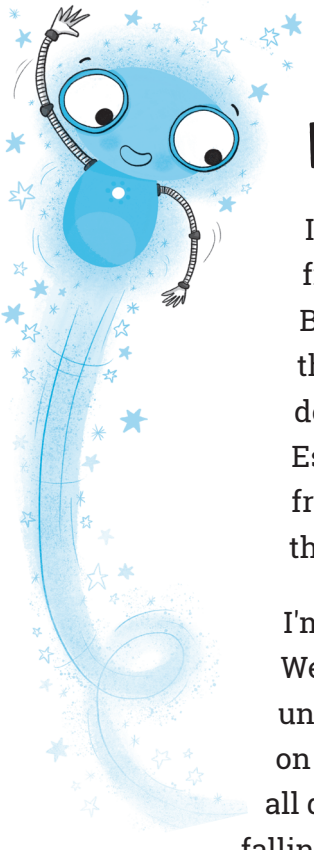
BLIZZARD ZONE

WRITTEN BY
ALEX FALASE-KOYA

PICTURES BY
PAULA BOWLES



AND THE BLIZZARD ZONE



DEAR READER,

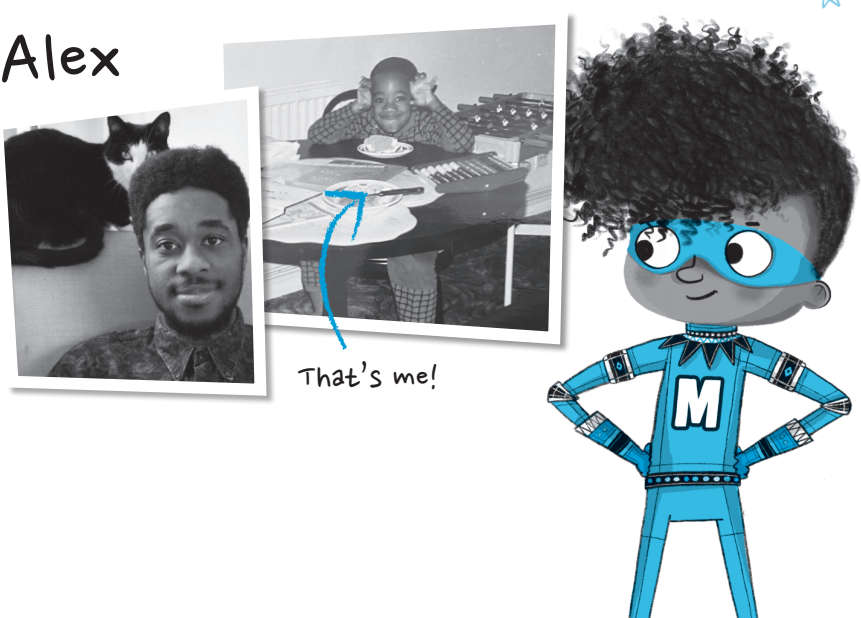
In this story, Marvin and his friends are ice skating at the Blizzard Zone. Ice skating is one of the most exciting things you can do, but it can also be a bit scary. Especially if, like Marvin's best friend Joe, you've not been out on the ice before.

I'm pretty bad at ice skating. Well, 'pretty bad' might be an understatement; every time I get on the ice my legs slip and slide in all directions, and I always end up falling painfully onto my bum at least a few times. However, I still go to ice rinks.

I even still have fun at ice rinks. I guess you're wondering how. The answer to this great mystery is simple. It's because I always go to ice rinks with my friends. Friends have the great superpower to make things fun!

Sometimes it's easy to forget about this superpower. You might be too embarrassed or shy to join in or so eager to show off on the ice that you speed off and leave your friends behind, but you might be speeding away from all the fun too.

Marvin learns in this book, not to take the superpower of friendship for granted, and I hope that's something you can take away from it too.



For my cats Akira and Simone – A.F-K

For SUPER YOU, the completely marvellous reader – P.B

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MARV

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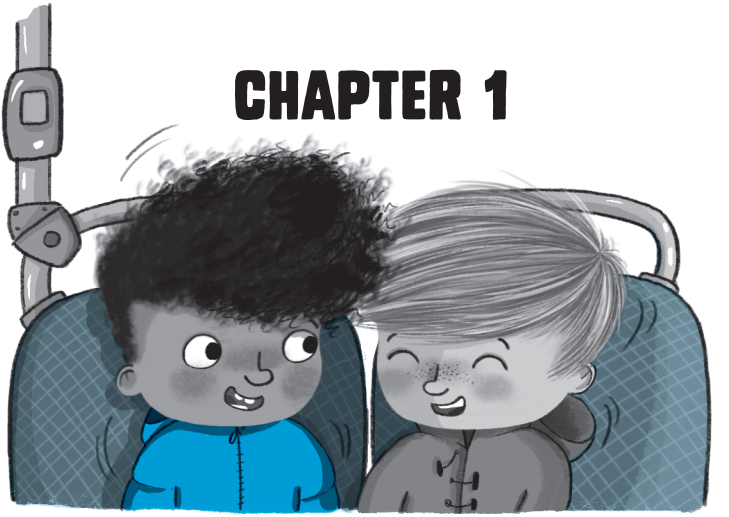


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CHAPTER 1



Marvin and his best friend, Joe, couldn't sit still. The bus swayed around street corners and its engine made the seats rumble, but that wasn't the only reason they were fidgeting. Marvin and Joe were super excited because they were on their way to the Blizzard Zone!

Marvin had seen an advert for the ice rink in Grandad's newspaper and had asked if they could go. Grandad had said yes, but they'd have to wait until the school holidays, and so here they were, on the first day of the holidays, on their way to the best ice rink in



the country! Grandad sat behind Marvin and Joe, playing a word game on his phone.

'So, what're you most excited for at the ice rink?' Joe nudged Marvin as he asked the question.

Marvin gave it some careful thought.

'Just . . . everything!'

Joe nodded, thinking hard. 'For me it's got to be the light show.'



Marvin thought back to the advert showing a huge number of lights shooting out in different directions on to the ice rink, in every colour of the rainbow.

'That will be really fun, but—'

'OK, maybe the music will be your favourite,' Joe interrupted.

Marvin shook his head. 'I don't think that's what I'm most excited for. I think I'm just excited to get out on the ice!'

This wasn't the first time Marvin had gone ice skating. He'd been a couple of times before and it had been a lot of fun.

'Ice skating?' Joe said, as though he hadn't even considered they'd be skating. 'Oh, yeah, we're going to be

ice skating.' His face suddenly got all screwed up and serious. This would be Joe's first trip to an ice rink.

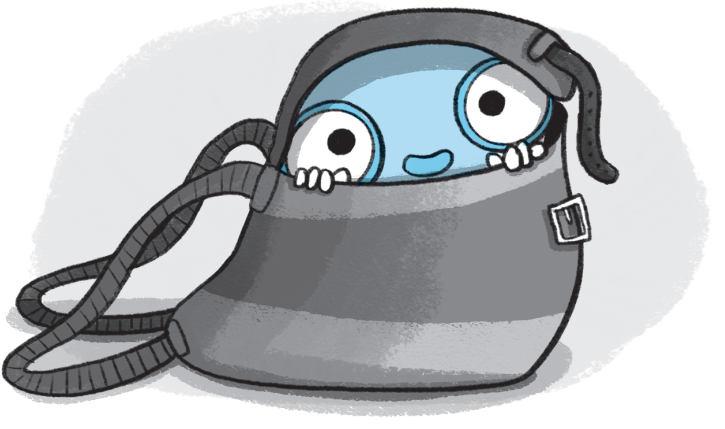
'Don't worry. It's not as hard as you think,' Marvin said.

'But what if I fall?' Joe said in a small voice.

'The first time I went skating I used a big plastic penguin to lean on and help keep my balance, but after that I just took a chance. Falling down and looking silly is all part of the fun!' Marvin mimed falling over in his seat and Joe laughed.

'Yeah, I guess that *is* part of the fun,' Joe said with a smile. They were best friends—who cared if Joe looked a little silly in front of his best friend.

Suddenly Marvin heard the sound of a faint high-pitched beeping coming from his bag. He ducked down, almost putting his whole head into the backpack. A small silvery face met his.



It was Pixel, Marvin's robot sidekick. Marvin also had a super-suit which transformed him into a superhero called Marv. He took the super-suit and Pixel everywhere with him, 'just in case', as his grandad would say, but it was important to keep Pixel and his superhero identity hidden. Grandad was the only person who knew Marvin's superhero identity.

‘I apologize for beeping. A sudden increase of excitement levels in my circuitry has temporarily broken my beeping functionality,’ Pixel said.

‘That’s OK,’ Marvin whispered.

‘I believe you could help me fix the problem by taking me out onto the ice,’ Pixel said. ‘What’s the human word? Please? Could you please take me ice skating?’

Marvin grinned at Pixel but before he could answer, Joe was hopping up and down in his seat again. ‘Marvin! We forgot to even mention the hot dogs! Are you going to have onions on yours?’

‘Pixel, I have to go, we’ll talk about it later,’ Marvin whispered.

Pixel bleeped disappointedly and slid back down into the backpack.

A couple of minutes later the bus slowly rumbled to a stop.

'Come on, we're here,' Marvin's grandad said, getting to his feet.

'Thank you, driver!' Marvin and Joe called out in unison as they hopped off the bus.



A cold breeze whistled past. Marvin and Joe zipped up their winter jackets. Ahead, covered in bright lights, was the ice rink. Marvin's face lit up.

'It's finally the school holidays,' Marvin said, quietly at first. It hadn't really sunk in until right now. 'It's the holidays!' Marvin said, louder this time.

'Whoop!' Joe cheered.



'Yes, it is indeed the holidays, now let's go get your skates and enjoy it,' Grandad said, giving them a wink. They headed to reception to grab some skates and then found somewhere to sit and put them on, while Grandad joined the queue for hot chocolate.



Joe was having a little bit of trouble putting on his skates, so Marvin helped him. He was concentrating so hard that it took him a while to realize that someone was calling his name.

'Hey, Marvin!'

Marvin turned to look and a smile sprung onto his face. It was Eva, from his class. She was smiling too.



'I didn't know you and Joe were going to be here,' she said.

'I didn't know you were going be here either,' Marvin said.

'Aww, look at how cute your little friends are, Eva,' a tall girl said, walking over to Eva and slinging an arm around her shoulders. Marvin's cheeks felt hot. He wasn't *that* little. Marvin looked up at the tall girl. Something about her was familiar. Marvin looked at Eva, then back at the older girl and then it hit him—they must be sisters! Behind Eva's big sister were a couple of her friends. They were all wearing ice skates. None of them had the usual plain white skates you borrowed from the ice rink. These

were much cooler. Eva's sister's skates were blue with lightning bolts across the sides. Marvin guessed they must be really good at skating.

'This is my sister Ally, please just ignore her.' Eva rolled her eyes.

'Do you three need some help getting onto the ice?' Ally asked.





‘No, why would you say that?’ Marvin frowned.

‘Well . . .’ Ally nodded to Joe.

Joe was trying to stand up on his skates but as soon as he got up he wobbled a bit and then fell back down onto his seat.



Eva wasn't doing much better. She had put her skates on the wrong feet.

'Are you sure? I don't fancy your chances out there!' Ally said, laughing.

'We can skate just fine without any help,' Marvin snapped.

'Suit yourself.' Ally shrugged and turned to her friends. 'Come on, let's go. We're not wanted here. Probably for the best anyway, they're too slow to skate with us, and they'll be too scared to try out any of our tricks.'

Too scared? Marvin's eyebrows lifted. Did she really think he was too scared to skate with them? How could that be? Marvin was a superhero after all. He had defeated villains, chased down

dinosaurs, and fought robot sharks. If only they knew what he was capable of. Everyone knew Marv the superhero was brave, but they didn't seem to see Marvin, the boy behind the super-suit. In their eyes, Marvin was just a little kid.

Marvin didn't like that. He had to prove them wrong.