

RORY
SPARKES

and the Elephant
in the Room

HUGH
BONNEVILLE

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For JPW

Foreword

Hello, my name's Rory. I'm quite old now. Not really ancient, but, put it this way, I usually grunt for no reason when I get up from an armchair. That sort of old. However, I can still remember quite a lot of my childhood adventures with Guy and Adrian. Then there were my parents, and let's not forget my annoying sister, Clare (actually, let's). Anyway, I thought I'd jot down some of my recollections and share them with you.

I like stories. And the fact that you're either reading this – or listening to it being read aloud – makes me think you like stories too.

I don't know *that* much about anything, but I do know my own story, just like you know yours. Your story is Unique. Like you. Have you noticed that often we get lumped together as all being the Same? Either because we're the same age, or go to the same school, or live in the same town. But you look completely different to that girl you passed on a bicycle yesterday, or the boy you said hello to on the train this morning, even though you're the same age and live in the same neck of the woods.

And the main reason you might recognise them again tomorrow, on that bike, or on that train, is because they are *different* from you. Similar maybe – but definitely different.

That's what this story of me and my friends is

about. How we're all Similar but Different. Individual.

And while this is my story, with lots of it actually having happened to me all those years ago when I was growing up in Brenwell Heath, well, some of it *didn't* happen to me. But that's often what stories are: things that *really* happened that sound SO much better if you add a dollop of this, a spoonful of that and a sprinkling of 'What if ... ?'.

For instance, what happened one summer at primary school when the circus came to town. In my next book I'll reveal the extraordinary spy story that unfolded on my own doorstep. And one day, if you're interested, I could tell you about a half-term trip to Italy involving a mysterious disappearance that no one in the Sparkes family would ever forget.

Right. Let's go ...

London

October 2025

THE SPARKES



J.P. Sparkes



Patricia Sparkes

FAMILY



Clare



Rory

Archie



ALSO



STARRING

