Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Opening extract from

Ruby Rogers: Party Pooper

Written by

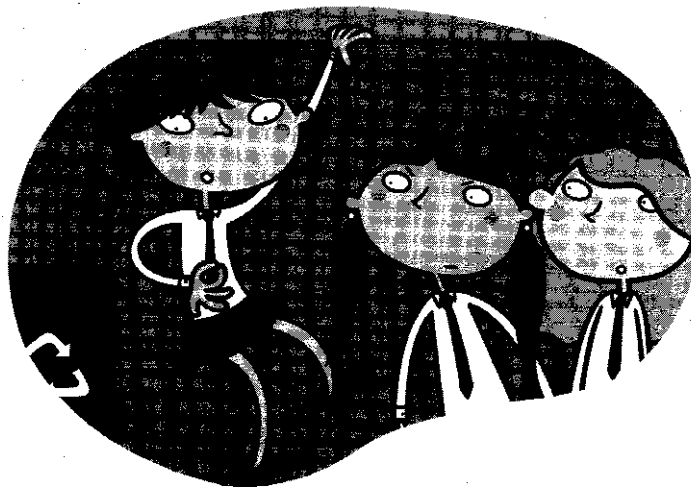
Sue Limb

Published by

Bloomsbury

All text is copyright of the author

Please print off and read at your leisure.



CHAPTER 1

Ruby! Stop it!

THEY CORNERED me at break. I knew Yasmin had something on her mind because she hadn't been as giggly as usual. In fact, when I'd come back from the loo in the middle of history, I'd seen her whispering with Hannah. They were cooking up something.

I'd tried to avoid them by imagining I was a monkey (what else?) and swinging along the fence at the edge of the schoolyard. I did a few monkey hoots, scratched my head and beat my chest like a gorilla. But a whole gang of chimpanzees – real

ones – couldn't put Yasmin off once she gets an idea in her head.

'Ruby! Listen!' She and Hannah came running up just as I reached the far corner of the fence, by the recycling bins. 'We've had a brilliant idea!'

'OOooh – oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh!' I cried, sticking out my lower lip and examining my fleas.

'Ruby! Stop it a minute!' Yasmin's eyes flared slightly. Her eyebrows plunged down towards her nose in a stressy frown. I couldn't ignore these warning signs. Yasmin was going to get in a strop if I didn't stop monkeying around.

'OK,' I said, transforming myself instantly into a gangster instead. 'Whassup? Give me da low-down, Big Yas.'

'I am *so* not big!' snapped Yasmin.

'Sorry,' I said. 'Diamond Lil, then.'

'Never mind all that gangster stuff!' said Yasmin. 'Just listen to our idea! We could have a sleepover on Midsummer's Night! We could celebrate with bonfires and singing and dancing and stuff to drive away the evil spirits! And we could sit up all night and watch the sun come up!'

We've been doing the Celts in history and I think Yasmin had got a bit carried away with it all. I knew it would be a mistake to argue.

'OK,' I said. 'Count me in.'

'Of course we're counting you in, Ruby!' Yasmin grinned. 'Because the sleepover's going to be at your house!'

'Yes!' said Hannah. 'I've never slept up in your tree house. Oh please, Ruby! It'll be brilliant!'

A sick feeling spread through my tum. My tree house is special. Not everybody climbs a rope ladder every time they go to bed. There's room up there for one, maybe two, but three would be too much of a squash. I didn't want Hannah up there. I knew she would flick her long hair about and make my eyes sting.

'I'd really love to,' I lied, 'but my mum will say no.'

'No, she won't!' yelled Yasmin. She was in a wild mood. Maybe an evil spirit was already egging her on. 'Your mum's lovely! She'll say yes! She won't mind!'

'Midsummer's Day is at the weekend,' said Hannah, 'so everyone can have a lie in next morning. And we won't make a noise or anything.'

'So we're going to have bonfires and singing and dancing in total silence, then?' I asked in a sarcastic voice.

'Ruby! Stop it!' snapped Yasmin. 'Anyway, it's

your turn to have a sleepover! I've had a sleepover, Hannah's had a sleepover, Froggo had a sleepover at Hallowe'en – now it's your turn.'

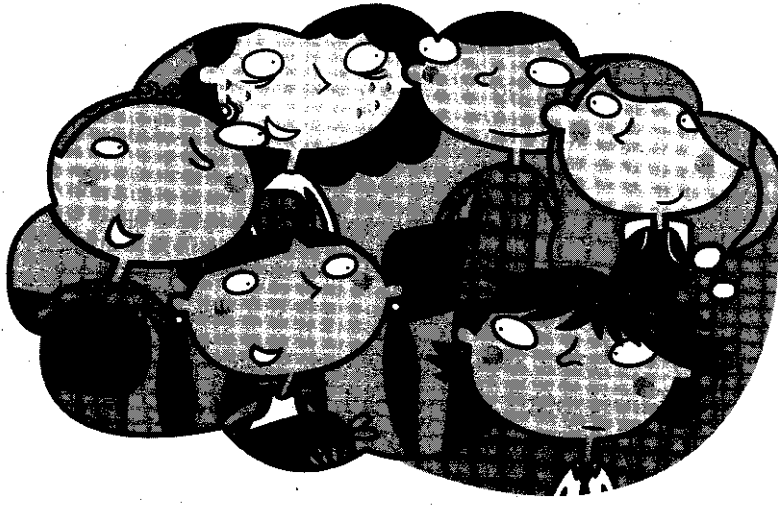
'But you stayed at my place last week,' I argued feebly.

'That wasn't a sleepover!' hissed Yasmin. 'A sleepover is a party, right? With loads of people and games and stuff.' I could just imagine what Mum's face would look like when I mentioned all this. She would turn to stone.

Basically, Mum's always tired and sensible. It's not what you'd call a brilliant combination. She's out delivering babies all day, so when she comes home she's shattered. Also, she hates all that evil spirits stuff. How were we going to smuggle an all-singing, all-dancing, bonfire-burning, evil-spirit-scaring Midsummer's Night of Celtic Madness past her? We were hardly going to be able to disguise it as a Fairies and Princesses Makeover Party.

'OK, I'll ask her,' I said. I couldn't get out of it. They were right, it was my turn. I'd enjoyed brilliant sleepovers at Yasmin's and Hannah's and Froggo's and Lauren's.

'Great,' said Yasmin. 'We should invite Froggo and Max, and Alice and Emily and Grace and Danny and Charlie.'



'And Lauren,' I said. 'That was a great sleepover at Lauren's.' Lauren lives on a farm and we'd had a whole attic to ourselves, and Lauren's mum and dad didn't mind how much noise we made because they were far away in another part of the house.

'Where is Lauren today?' said Yasmin. 'I hope she hasn't got chicken pox – or duck pox!' She laughed.

'Or mad cow disease!' Hannah giggled.

'Or pig flu!' Yasmin did a kind of cough that was a bit like a pig snorting, and she and Hannah laughed so hard they almost choked. I smiled, but

I wasn't quite so amused. There's always a little bit of tension between Yasmin and Lauren. They get on fine, really, but I think Yasmin's jealous, sometimes, because I love going to Lauren's farm so much.

Just then the bell rang, so we had to go back to our classroom. Yasmin and Hannah were making noises of ill animals: a lion with a sore throat, a cockerel being sick, that sort of thing. I suppose it was funny, but I wasn't really in the mood.

I love sleepovers in other people's houses, but it's different when you're in charge of everything. Would my mum and dad say yes in the first place? And if they did, where could everybody sleep? Already I was in a stress about it, and the idea was only five minutes old. I wasn't looking forward to going home tonight and breaking the dreadful news. I knew my mum would go mental.