Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

Unleashed 2: Mind over Matter

Written by

Ali Sparkes

Published by

Oxford University Press

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP
Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press
in the UK and in certain other countries

© Ali Sparkes 2013

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

First published 2013

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press,
or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,
Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

ISBN: 978-0-19-275607-7

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Printed in Great Britain

Paper used in the production of this book is a natural,
recyclable product made from wood grown in sustainable forests.
The manufacturing process conforms to the environmental
regulations of the country of origin.

1

A tiny avalanche of pebbles tumbled down the cliff face. They rattled musically as they bounced off large chunks of chalk, flint, and clay.

'Go on,' said Gideon, staring up at the ribbed grey curve of the Best Ammonite In The World. 'Keep going. Left and right . . . ge-e-ently . . . '

Luke nodded and held his sightline as if his pale green eyes were lasers boring into the cliff. And, in a manner of speaking, they were. The ammonite, five or six metres up in the crumbly strata, nudged a little to the left.

'Keeeeep it coming,' said Gideon, rubbing his hands through his fluffy blond hair in tense concentration. 'As soon as it's out I'll catch it and bring it down safely . . . Yeeees . . . Just a bit further down. A biiiit furthe—***DOOF*!'**

CRACK! The impact between his shoulder blades was so sudden and so forceful that the air was knocked out of his lungs and he was smacked face down into the gritty foot of the cliff. He was dimly aware that Luke had executed the same manoeuvre and as he scrambled round to see their attacker his brother did likewise, a mirror image to his right.

Both of them were hauled up into a standing position and roughly shaken by one shoulder. Only one man held them but they knew better than to attempt to struggle out of the iron grip.

'Wh-what?' squawked Gideon, trying to sound indignant rather than guilty.

It didn't work.

'Try me!' rumbled the heavy-browed man who had them immobilized. 'Just once more.'

'U-Uncle Jem!' Gideon's eyes skittered around, trying to remind the man that the beach had people on it. *Normal* people. Admittedly, probably only about two dozen sprinkled out along the mile or so of pebbly shore, but still . . . *people*. 'We were just looking at the fossils!'

'You were not just looking,' growled the man, his Scottish accent deepening. Gideon had noticed that it got much more distinct when Jem

was angry or stressed. 'Don't take me for an idiot, Gideon. One more trick like that and you'll be on a helicopter back to Cumbria before you can say *Oh—what happened to my holiday?*'

Gideon gulped. He stared down at his feet in their surfer-dude-style beach sandals and sighed. 'Sorry,' he muttered. Luke said nothing—but he *looked* sorry. At last Jem relaxed his grip on their shoulders.

'What's going on in your heads?' he demanded. He took off his baseball cap, revealing close-cropped dark hair, and adjusted the almost invisible communication device inside it. 'How long have you waited for this week? Luke—you know how much it means to your mum. And yet you try to pull a Cola stunt—for what? A chunk of rock?'

Luke looked very guilty. It *had* been incredibly hard to get a week away from Fenton Lodge, their very exclusive, very private college in Cumbria. The preparations had been intense and incredibly complicated, he and Gideon knew that. It had been months—years even—since he had spent time at home on the Isle of Wight with his mum. She had been so excited and delighted. And so of course they had promised not to . . .

'Well . . . it's not just a rock. It's an ammonite actually,' Gideon couldn't help correcting. 'A really big one. Worth a mint! And . . . I . . . should really . . . just shut up now . . . ' Gideon shoved his hands into his shorts pocket and clamped his blabbery mouth into a tight, safe line. He and Luke had just tried to prise an ammonite out of a high cliff face and safely float the fossil down through the air using telekinetic power. In public. He could see that Jem had a point.

'This whole week is only happening on condition that *nobody* gets the slightest idea that you two are not completely normal, ordinary teenage boys,' Jem went on, putting the cap back on with an angry tug. 'Normal ordinary teenage boys do not move things around with their minds.' He exhaled sharply and shook his head. 'I *told* Control this was a mistake. I think we should end this now.'

He went to press a tiny connector in the cap just above his right ear and opened his mouth to report in to Control. Luke raised his hands in horror and Gideon pleaded, 'No! Jem! Please don't! We're sorry. I promise you we will not do it again. I promise!'

Jem paused and narrowed his dark grey eyes at

them. He regarded them for some time and then let his hand drop. 'It's bad enough that I have to babysit you two for a week and pretend to be your uncle,' he muttered. 'I didn't expect to have to discipline you as well.'

'You won't have to—not again!' said Gideon. 'We'll be good—perfect!'

Jem let a hint of a smile touch his mouth. 'Well—*that* wouldn't be normal and teenage would it?'

Luke grinned, sighing with relief. They'd only been here since yesterday and it would have broken Mum's heart if they'd been whisked back up country less than twenty-four hours later.

'Come on, the others are getting twitchy. Let's go and get some ice cream.' Jem turned round and headed across the beach towards a young couple who were stretched out on some beach mats. He didn't stop at their beach camp though, but just walked on along to the foot of the zigzagging cliff path, where some enterprising Islanders had set up an ice cream kiosk and a burger and hot dog stand.

Gideon glanced at the young couple. The man, fair haired and tanned, was lying flat on his back, sunglasses shading his eyes, soaking up the early summer heat on his bare chest. He appeared to

be asleep, but Gideon and Luke knew better. The woman, slim, dark haired, and pretty, in shorts and a halter-neck bikini top, a wide brimmed hat on her head, was sitting up, apparently reading a paperback. Gideon wanted to say hi, but again, knew better. As they moved on he heard a sigh and saw the woman put a bookmark into the paperback. She knew her morning's beach lounging could be over at any time, especially with Gideon, Luke, and their 'Uncle' Jem on the move.

Jem had bought them some cones already, topped with a mound of fluffy white Island ice cream, each planted with a chocolate flake. They moved to a bench halfway up the cliff path to eat them, gazing back down to the beach with its sprinkling of people, brightly coloured towels, and wind breaks. Two old ladies were in fold-out chairs not far from the ice cream kiosk. The young couple they'd passed were packing up their beach mats and getting ready to go. Several bold swimmers were up to their waists in the chilly June surf. A girl with a dog was exploring one of the outcrops of pale chalky cliff face, digging at it with something and putting her finds in a battered satchel bag hanging over her shoulder. The dog—a wiry little

black thing—ran up and down the slope of the crumbled cliff footings.

'They do find some amazing stuff here,' said Jem after a few minutes of companionable ice cream slurping. 'Last year, after a storm, they uncovered an almost complete brachiosaur skeleton.'

Gideon let out a sigh as he remembered the Best Ammonite In The World. If only he and Luke could have got it down. It was as big as a bike wheel and would have fetched hundreds, he felt sure of it, at one of the fossil shops. He glanced back along the cliff face to where he and Luke had tried *just a little bit* of Cola power. Last night's rain had loosened it off nicely. If they'd had just *one* more minute.

'Forget it, Gideon,' said Jem, as if reading his mind. 'It would have taken at least half an hour to get it out. There would have been a pretty good sized crowd around you by then. Local paper. Isle of Wight TV. International terrorists on their way. You know the drill.'

'Yes—I know!' muttered Gideon. He didn't like being reminded how difficult normal life was for Colas. There were just over a hundred Children Of Limitless Ability. All aged between 13 and 15. All suddenly blessed (or cursed) with some

extraordinary talent when they were 11 or 12. Some, like he and Luke, were telekinetics. Others, like their friend Lisa, could read minds and talk to the spirit world. Some could create illusions, vanish, communicate by telepathy—or heal broken bones, like their friend Mia. One—and one only—could shapeshift. Gideon's best friend, Dax. He was prouder than he could ever express to have the world's only shapeshifter for a best friend. He was also proud of his brother. Luke. The strong and silent one.

It might sound amazing—and it was. But their astonishing powers were also a big problem. Protected and educated by a *very* special government department, the Colas were Britain's most precious assets. They could be incredibly powerful. And also incredibly dangerous. And unfortunately it was more than rumour, beyond the walls of Fenton Lodge estate, that they existed.

Which is why, after months of wrangling, this innocent week-long holiday on the Isle of Wight could only happen with a minimum of *three* SAS-trained government minders in tow. Jem was one of them, posing as their uncle. The couple on the beach were the other two.

On top of that, Gideon and Luke had to have tracker chips in their clothes and shoes. They were transported here by helicopter, directly from the grounds of Fenton Lodge. And even then, only after one of them had made a supreme sacrifice.

One of them had to dye.

Gideon grinned at Luke as he worked his way down the last little finger of cone. 'Suits you,' he chuckled, flicking his brother's black hair. Luke rolled his eyes. When Mrs Dann, one of their teachers at Fenton Lodge, had first presented Gideon with a box of L'Oréal Excellence, with a picture of a raven-haired beauty on it, Gideon had freaked.

'Sorry,' said Mrs Dann, trying not *very* hard not to laugh. 'But identical, blond twins out and about are just too noticeable on a small island. You've got to untwin.'

'But he's got glasses on!' protested Gideon, pointing, unnecessarily, to the specs on Luke's nose. 'That's enough, isn't it?'

Dax had fallen backwards over the sofa, he was laughing so hard. Lisa stepped up to peer at the box, stroking her own long blonde hair and beaming. 'Ooh! It conditions as well as colours,

Gideon. Oh go on . . . *because you're worth it*!'

In the end Luke had taken the box out of his hands and gone upstairs with Mrs Dann to change his hair colour. On his return to the common room an hour later there had been whoops of delight and derision. But not for long. Weirdly, Luke looked quite good with black hair.

'Oooh—Gothic!' Jennifer had said, before vanishing by the fire. A few seconds later Luke had felt her fingers tugging at the fluffy blackness. She squealed with mirth when he flapped his arms around to find her, and reappeared by the fire five seconds later, trying to look innocent.

Girls! thought Gideon as he munched his last bit of cone. His eyes wandered back along the foot of the cliff where that girl with the little dog was now crouching down, digging vigorously at something in the crumbly Wealden clay. She had shoulder length auburn hair which floated in the breeze. Every so often she would impatiently tuck a strand of it back behind her ear. Her shorts and T-shirt were grubby with chalk and clay and she had some kind of ankle boots on—battered brown things with rugged soles. She did not look like a day tripper. Her limbs were lean and golden brown from

regular days outdoors and she seemed entirely at ease with her task. Completely focused even when she was absent-mindedly ruffling her dog's head with one hand.

Gideon decided he fancied her. He nudged Luke and pointed down, waggling his eyebrows for effect. Luke looked and then smiled and moved his hands descriptively.

'Yup,' said Gideon. 'Definitely a bit of a babe. A rock chick. Geddit?'

Luke laughed silently.

And that was when Gideon first noticed the crack at the top of the cliff.

Three seconds later the cliff began to fall.