

THE
DAY
I FELL
INTO A
FAIRYTALE

BEN MILLER

*More magical adventures
from Ben Miller:*

The Night I Met Father Christmas
The Boy Who Made the World Disappear



SIMON & SCHUSTER

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*To my parents, Mick and Marion Miller,
who gave me my love of reading*





Prologue

Suddenly there it was. A fresh mound of earth, the size of a molehill, right in the middle of the common.

Only it wasn't a molehill.

Not that anyone saw it form. It was the dead of night and a storm was raging, so the villagers were all safely tucked up in their beds, with their curtains shut and

their electric blankets on.

But as they slept, the little mound of earth started to grow. And as the wind howled, and the rain lashed, it grew larger and larger. Higher and higher it rose, until it was the size of a haystack.

Lightning crackled in the sky, and thunder rolled out across the valley. The mound of earth began to shake and its peak trembled and quivered, until suddenly a gleaming white enamel flagpole popped out of the top!

Up and up climbed the flagpole, rising out of the ground like a beanstalk in a fairytale. Once it had reached its full height, it paused before it too began to quiver and shake. Because the flagpole was just the beginning.

Cracks crazed their way across the common, as the turf began to warp and

split, and something truly enormous began to emerge.

A roof. A colossal, aluminium roof! Up and up it buckled, pushed by the cinder block walls emerging from the ground beneath it. Earth tumbled away and, like a giant rising from its slumber, an entire building began to rise. Girders popped into place, door frames righted themselves, and sheets of plate glass found their groove. Once everything was in place, the entire structure fell silent.

Still the rain lashed down, washing everything clean.

Then the heavy grey clouds cleared, and a full moon shone bright as a penny. The wind calmed and the rain stopped.

In a nearby field, a cock crowed. It was morning now, and across the valley the pale

dawn sky brightened to blue. Soon, the first rays of sunlight were chasing across the still-sleeping village. And there, at the bottom of the hill, smack dab in the middle of the common, what had started as a mound of earth no bigger than a molehill, was now a brand-new supermarket.

A breeze fluttered, and at the top of the flagpole, a maroon-and-gold flag unfurled. On it was a single word.

Grimm's.



'Still the rain lashed down, washing everything clean.'



Chapter One

Lana was bored. It had finally stopped raining, but she had no one to play with.

Usually her older brother, Harrison, made up the most brilliant games: Knights of the Round Table, for example, or Soldiers and Zombies. But ever since he'd started senior school, Harrison had changed.

He had become Serious. Even though he was on holiday too, all he did was sit in his bedroom and work.

After breakfast, when Lana had knocked to see if he wanted to play in the treehouse, he had closed the door in her face without saying a word.

Now, ten minutes later, she had returned to check if he'd changed his mind, but found a large sign on his door that read:

**VERY IMPORTANT HOMEWORK IN
PROGRESS. DO NOT DISTURB.**

I'm sure that's really aimed at our parents, thought Lana. I bet he's secretly hoping I ask him to play again . . .

This time she decided not to knock, and found

Harrison sitting at his desk, concentrating hard on the books and papers in front of him.

'Didn't you see the sign?' he said, without looking up. 'What do you want?'

'I was just wondering if you'd like to play a game?'

Harrison still didn't look up.

'We can play whatever you want. Boxers. Pirates. Police. I don't mind!'

Harrison sighed and put down his pen. He took off his glasses and pinched the bridge of his nose. It was something Lana had seen their father do and clearly Harrison thought



it made him look grown-up and important.

‘Lana,’ he said. ‘I don’t have time to play games anymore. Do you know what an oxbow lake is?’

Lana didn’t.

‘It’s a special kind of lake that’s formed when a river becomes too twisty. Anyway, I’m busy reading all about them.’

‘Maybe after that?’ she offered.

Harrison frowned. ‘Well, after oxbow lakes I need to learn about Archimedes.’

Lana looked blankly at her brother.

‘He’s from Ancient Greece,’ said Harrison. ‘He’s basically the first scientist.’

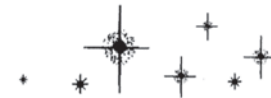
‘Sounds fun,’ Lana said, which it most definitely did not. She tried her best not to look disappointed. It didn’t work.

Harrison’s face softened. A part of him

did miss their adventures. For a start, Lana always threw herself into whatever game they played. There were few police officers so committed to maintaining law and order, and few zombies as determined to destroy human civilisation as his little sister.

‘Sorry,’ he said. ‘We’ll do something soon, I promise.’

But Lana knew that wasn’t true.



It was time for drastic measures. Whenever she really needed cheering up, there was one place Lana loved to go: the dressing table where her mother kept her perfumes. Lana wasn’t really allowed to play with them, but there was something magical about all those

bottles, with their strange names and fancy shapes, that she found them hard to resist. So, she snuck into her parents' bedroom and surveyed the entire collection, examining each one, until her eyes landed on a tall vial made from crimson cut-glass, with the word *Enchantment* printed across the middle in swirling gold letters. She carefully removed the lid and took a deep sniff.

Suddenly her mother's voice rang out very close by. 'Oh, thank goodness! The rain's stopped!'

Lana panicked, fumbling with the lid and accidentally squirted the perfume into her left eye. 'Ow!' she cried, burying her face in the crook of her elbow.

Her mother put her head round the door. She frowned and sniffed the air. 'What's that

smell? Is it perfume?'

'I can't smell anything,' said Lana. She quickly hid the bottle behind her back. Her eye was smarting and a tear rolled down her left cheek.

'Are you okay?' asked her mother in concern.

Then it dawned on Lana: her mother thought she was upset.

'Harrison won't play with me,' she said, quickly making a sad face.

Her mother nodded thoughtfully. 'I know,' she said. 'He's worried about his exams.'

'But why?' asked Lana. 'He's only in his first year of senior school. Exams are AGES away.'

'He just wants to be prepared,' said her mother, with a note of worry in her voice.

‘You know what he’s like.’

‘I miss him.’

‘Oh, Lana. I’m sorry.’ Her mother opened her arms and gave Lana a big cuddle. Lana felt her tears become real. ‘Your brother’s growing up. That’s what happens.’

Now that she had started crying, Lana found she couldn’t stop.

‘Let’s go out and cheer you up,’ said her mother decisively, determined to change her daughter’s mood. ‘Why don’t you come to Grimm’s with me?’

‘Where?’

‘Oh, it’s very exciting,’ said her mother earnestly. ‘Overnight a supermarket seems to have sprung up from nowhere on the common! I saw it on my walk this morning.’

Lana sighed with disappointment. ‘It’s the

school holidays,’ she said. ‘We’re meant to do *fun* things. And supermarkets *aren’t* fun.’

‘Come on,’ replied her mother. ‘I’ll buy you treat.’

Lana’s ears pricked up. ‘What sort of treat? A book?’ She might not be able to have fun adventures with Harrison, but if she could find a new book she could at least read about far-off lands or daring escapes.

‘Yes, if that’s what you want. Now, I’m going downstairs to tell your father that we’re going out. Hopefully, by the time you join me, all my perfumes will be back where they belong.’

Lana tried to look innocent.

‘Including the one you’re hiding behind your back,’ said Lana’s mother with a breezy smile.