

THE TIME MACHINE NEXT DOOR

REBELLIONS AND SUPER BOOTS



ILLUSTRATED BY
REBECCA
BAGLEY

ISZI LAWRENCE

BLOOMSBURY

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For April and Ben

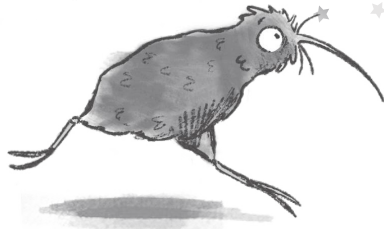
Sunil lives next door to an amazing inventor – Alex.
She has harnessed the power of boredom to slow time down, stop it and put it in reverse. They use her time machine – the Boring Machine – to explore the past. But things don't always go smoothly...

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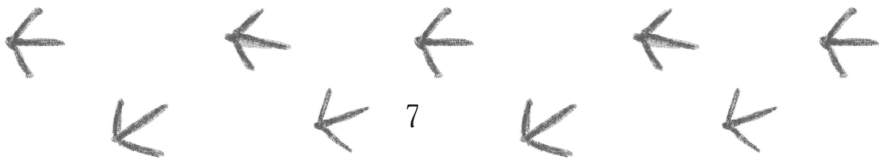
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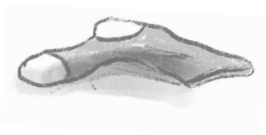




CHAPTER ONE

Sunil wasn't going mad. He knew where he kept it and it **wasn't** there. He only had a couple of hours left before he went round his cousin's house to watch the first day of the test match. India vs South Africa. Without his lucky T-shirt there was a possibility that India would lose.





He **had** to find it.

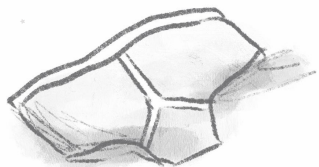
‘Mum?’

Sunil barged into the living room, where his mother was hunched over her laptop.

‘No, you can’t have another snack,’ she said.

‘Do you know where my lucky t-shirt is? The red one with the robot on it,’ Sunil asked.

She wrinkled her nose. ‘You don’t have a red t-shirt with a robot on it.’



‘I wear it for every cricket match!’ he said.

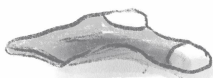


‘Sunil, I see all your clothes when I do laundry. You don’t have one.’

‘I don’t wash it!’ Sunil said. ‘That would clean the luck off.’

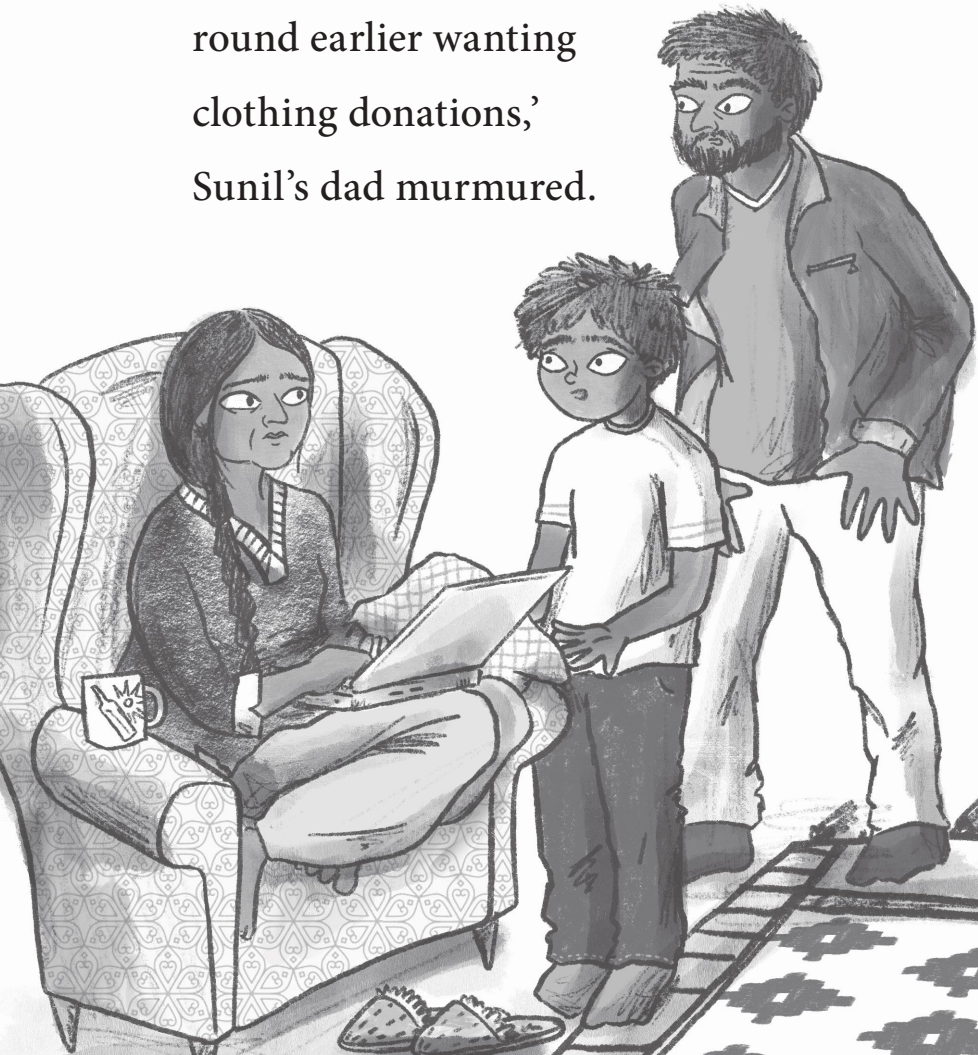
She looked up from her laptop for the first time with an appalled expression on her face. At that moment Sunil’s dad came into the room, patting his trouser pockets.

‘Have you seen my keys?’ he asked.



‘What happened to Sunil’s red T-shirt?’ Sunil’s mum said.

‘Oh yeah. Mr Shaykes came round earlier wanting clothing donations,’ Sunil’s dad murmured.



‘No!’ both Sunil and his mum
exclaimed.

‘Oh, he’s got lots of other ones...’
Sunil’s dad muttered, looking under
the sofa for his keys.

‘It was lucky!’ protested Sunil.
‘I need it to watch cricket!’

‘It was dirty!’ exclaimed his
mother.

‘Mr Shaykes said it was for a
good cause.’ Sunil’s dad shrugged.

‘You gave him my lucky
T-shirt?!’ Sunil felt betrayed.



‘I gave him all sorts of things, including my old jacket. I think I must have left my car keys in it.’ Sunil’s dad held out his hand. ‘Come on, we’ll walk down and ask for them back. I’m sure Mr Shaykes will be obliging.’

There was a man outside Mr Shaykes’s milkshake emporium painting the sign. He was replacing the old pink lettering with neon green.



‘Shayke it up: costumes and milkshakes,’ Sunil read.

‘How exciting!’ Sunil’s dad said, opening the door.

Inside was a **riot** of new colours. It was still the same café, only clothes rails had been put up between the tables. Sunil thought the striped **warping** wallpaper was making his eyes play tricks but, after he rubbed them, he realised the clothes on the rails were slowly moving.

‘Say cheese!’ Mr Shaykes took a picture of them looking at the rotating displays. He came out from behind the counter and showed Sunil’s dad the image on the screen of his camera. ‘I’m making wall art using photos I take of the shop makeover!’

Sunil’s dad nodded politely.

‘I am indebted to you for contributing some clothes for my little start-up. Here, have some milkshakes on the house!’

‘That’s just it, Mr Shaykes,’
Sunil’s dad said. ‘I gave you a jacket
which had my car keys in the
pocket...’

‘Oh dear!’ said Mr Shaykes.
‘Let’s see if I can find it.’

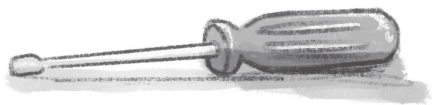
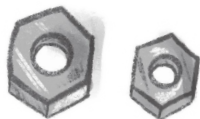
Mr Shaykes handed Sunil and
his dad mauve coloured milkshakes
in warm glasses. Sunil sucked on
the damp paper straw. He wondered
if a decorator had washed his
paintbrush in the milkshake.

Mr Shaykes picked up a touch



screen and selected ‘Costumes of boring losers’.

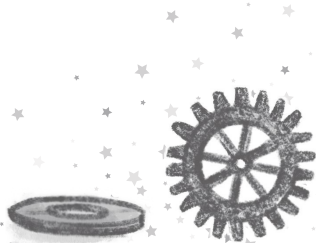
Sunil’s anger dissipated quickly as the clothes rails *whirred* into action. The ceiling lights dimmed and Sunil could hear a great **cranking** sound from the back room. The clothes on the rails began to speed up. Hundreds of different coloured clothes rushed in from the back room before snaking round the shop floor and disappearing through a hatch in



the ceiling. They fluttered past so fast that the papers on the counter blew off, a paint can toppled over and Sunil was hit in the face by the sleeves of the outfits as they *whooshed* past his head. There was another **clunk** and the machine stopped. Sunil felt his hair settle back down as the clothes came to a halt.

‘Wiki!’ Mr Shaykes called.

There was a *peeping* noise from under the counter. A fluffy kiwi





bird the size of a large, mouldy loaf of bread emerged and cocked his head at Sunil.

‘Find that man’s jacket,’ Mr Shaykes said.

The kiwi sniffed at the air with its long thin beak and ran into the clothes racks. Mere seconds later there was a *peeping* sound and they moved towards it.

There was Wiki, sniffing at Sunil’s dad’s jacket, right next to five other jackets in a similar style.

‘Oh, I like those,’ Sunil’s dad said, trying one on.

Sunil caught sight of his red t-shirt hanging high above him. He reached up to grab it but Mr Shaykes had already snatched it from the rail.

‘Please can I have it back? It’s my lucky t-shirt!’ Sunil said hotly.

‘It is a pity. I need all the clothes I can get.’

‘You’ve got plenty!’ Sunil said, pointing at the rails.

‘I mean, I guess I **could** swap it with you,’ Mr Shaykes said. ‘If you asked Alex to get me a few genuine costumes from the past.’

Sunil’s neighbour Alex was an inventor and her most amazing creation was a time machine. Mr Shaykes was always trying to make money out of that fact somehow or other.

Sunil was outraged. ‘That’s not fair!’ he said.

‘What’s not fair?’ asked Sunil’s



★ dad, wandering back over.

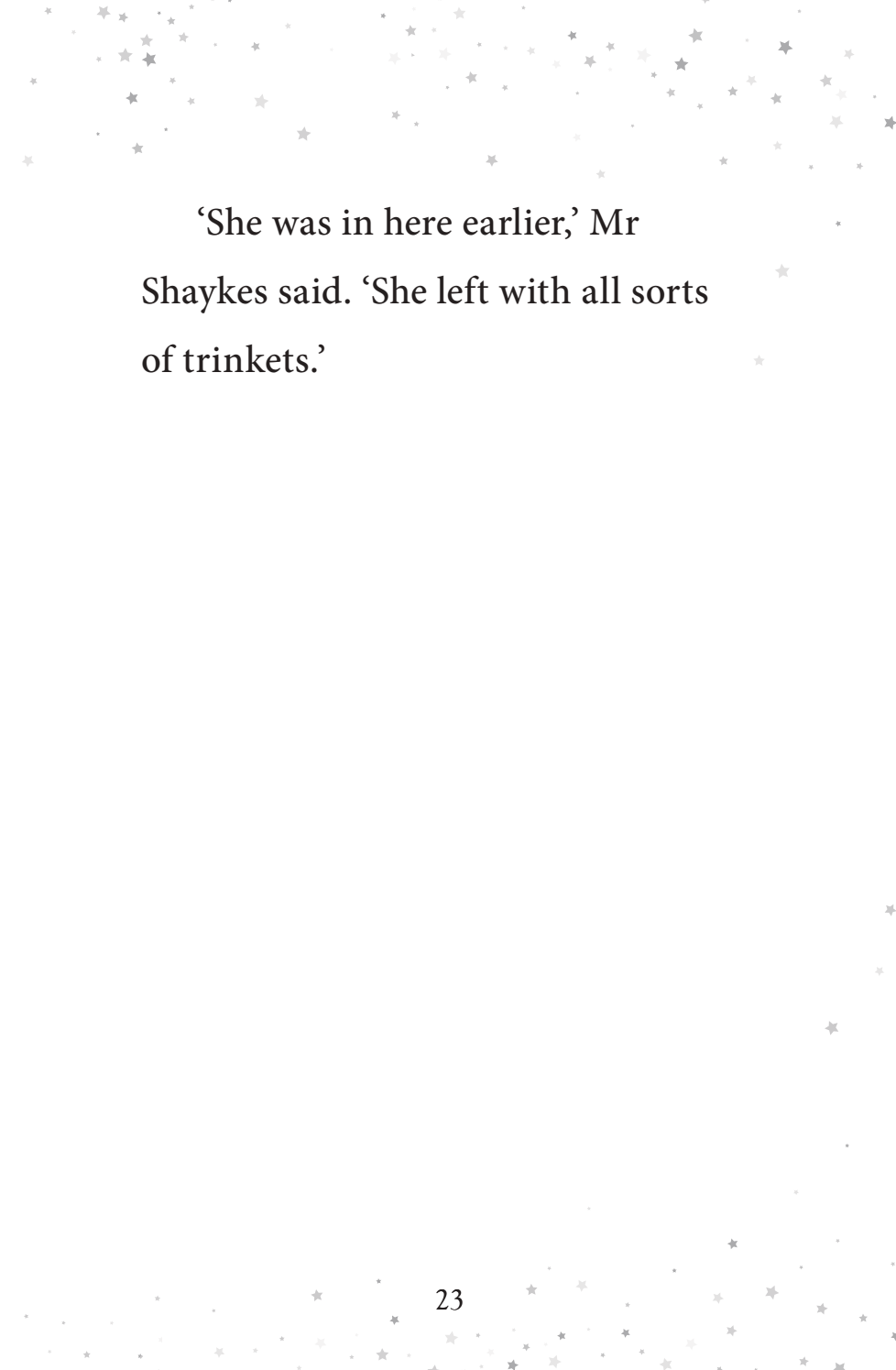
‘Oh, Wiki couldn’t find his t-shirt,’ Mr Shaykes lied, hiding it behind his back.

Wiki *peeped* in confusion and began sniffing around Sunil’s feet.

‘Never mind Sunil,’ Sunil’s dad said.

‘Perhaps your neighbour has it,’ Mr Shaykes said, slyly.

‘Alex?’ Sunil’s dad looked confused.



‘She was in here earlier,’ Mr
Shaykes said. ‘She left with all sorts
of trinkets.’