

FROM THE AUTHOR OF
THE GOLDFISH BOY

LISA
THOMPSON

THE
MYSTERY
OF THE
FOREVER
WEEKEND

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For Amy B



CHAPTER ONE

There are three things about school that stress me out.

Number one is maths. I can't do it and most of it is pretty pointless anyway. For example: when will I ever need to work out the area of a triangle in real life? As far as I'm concerned, it's a complete waste of time. Maths lessons are the worst. Especially when our teacher, Mr Davy, fires mental arithmetic questions at us to keep our brains "maths fit". Last week we were all quietly working through a sheet of fractions when he suddenly shouted:

"Cory Turner! Seven minus five, plus eight and then multiplied by twelve. What's the answer?"

I looked up at him and my cheeks began to burn. What did he say? Seven minus five? Well, that was two. But then in my head all I could see was

the number two surrounded by a jumble of other numbers fluttering around like butterflies. I couldn't get a hold of them to work out the next bit.

Mr Davy frowned. "Come on, Cory. You should be able to do this one. This is basic stuff."

I swallowed. Opened my mouth, closed it again, then opened it as I plucked a number from my brain. "Ninety-nine?" I said.

Mr Davy sighed. "Anyone else?" No one volunteered so he began to do the sum on the whiteboard while we watched. Then he turned and faced the class.

"You've got to practise your maths, 7A. As you know, it's the midterm maths exam soon. You're in the bottom set of your year. If you do badly in this exam then who knows where you'll end up. There is no bottom-bottom."

Someone snorted but Mr Davy just sighed again and looked incredibly disappointed.

The second thing that stresses me out is a daytime television game show called *Déjà Vu*. You're probably wondering why on earth a TV show has made my list. Let me explain.

"Déjà vu" is a French saying that means "already seen". You've probably experienced it before. There you are, pouring some cereal into a bowl for your

breakfast and, for a split second, you feel like you've done it before. I don't mean you feel like you did it the day before – I mean it feels like you have lived the moment already. It's an actual, real-life phenomenon. People call it having “*déjà vu*” and that's what the TV game show is all about. On the show, the contestants watch a few seconds of film and then they watch the same piece again and decide if the second version is an exact copy of the first or if it's been changed. It's kind of like playing “spot the difference”, I guess. And if it turns out that the clip is exactly the same the second time round, that's when the audience shout out:

“NOW *THAT'S DÉJÀ VU!*”

I hate that catchphrase. I hear it every single day as it's shouted at me in the school corridors, across the playground and in the canteen. And the reason it's shouted at me is because my dad is Dennis Turner, the presenter of *Déjà Vu*. Having a parent who's the presenter of a rubbish TV game show that barely anyone watches any more is no fun, I can tell you. It's embarrassing. Especially when I have to be seen in public with him...

*

I was lying on my bed with my maths book open, ready to do some revision for the looming exam. Our old Jack Russell, Bingo, was sound asleep on my bed. We'd rescued him five years ago. His previous owner had died, and she apparently used to play bingo a lot – that's how he got his name. He was quite old when he came to live with us and his reddish-brown fur has faded, as if he's been sitting in the sun for too long. You can see milky-coloured circles in his eyes in some lights, and Mum says that his sight isn't as good as it was. He never used to be allowed upstairs, but the older he becomes the more he gets away with – including sleeping on my bed.

Mum knocked on my door and walked in without waiting for an answer. I quickly turned my maths book over so that she couldn't see my crossings-out or the comments that Mr Davy had made in red pen.

"Hello, Mr Bingo," said Mum. Bingo rolled on to his back and she tickled his tummy.

"You'd better start getting ready, Cory," said Mum. "We've got to leave soon."

I frowned. We were going somewhere? Mum spotted my reaction.

"Dad's opening that new supermarket, remember?"

I groaned. I'd completely forgotten! Because he

was a TV “celebrity”, Dad did stuff like this now and then so he could earn a bit of extra money. But I’m not sure where that extra money ended up. We still had lots of things at home that needed fixing including a washing machine that wouldn’t spin and a car that dripped oil on to our driveway and made a loud popping noise whenever we went out in it. Fortunately, this time I was busy so they’d have to go without me.

“I can’t come,” I said. “I’m leaving in fifteen minutes.”

Rowan was my best friend and his mum worked as a physiotherapist for our local football team. She got two free tickets for all their home games and Rowan always asked me to go with him. Boxwick Wanderers weren’t the best, but this afternoon they were playing in the semi-final of a cup match.

Mum frowned. “You know how we support each other in this family, Cory, and Dad really wants us to be there. You did say you’d come.”

She was right. I had. But I had also told Rowan I’d go to the match with him. And he really wouldn’t be happy if I let him down this late in the day. He’d been a bit funny with me lately, as if I was getting on his nerves or something.

Mum was waiting for an answer.

“But it’s the semi-final, Mum!”

“I’m sorry, Cory. I’m sure Rowan can find someone else to go with,” said Mum. She checked her watch. “Right. You’ve got an hour. Have a shower and give your hair a brush. OK?”

I dropped my head on to my arm. Going to events with Dad was excruciating.

I picked up my phone. How was I going to tell Rowan? He had definitely been avoiding me at school lately. I’d also noticed that when anyone yelled “Now *that’s* déjà vu!” at me, he’d laugh. He never used to do that.

I decided a little lie wouldn’t hurt.

Hi Rowan. Can’t make football. Feel sick.

Sorry. Cory.

Rowan immediately replied.

What?! But it’s the CUP!

I sent back a sad face emoji.

I hated lying but I didn’t want to draw attention to Dad’s job any more than I had to. And I was sure that

if I'd told him the truth – “Sorry but I've got to go and watch my dad make a fool of himself. Again.” – he just wouldn't understand.

I looked in the mirror on my wardrobe door and scraped my fingers through my hair. My phone beeped.

Forget it. I'll ask Will. He won't let me down.

I sighed. And there we have it: the third thing on my list that makes me dread going to school each day.

A boy called Will Higgs.