

PROLOGUE

EVERYDAY SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE IS SAVED BY A SUPERHERO.

Imagine this:

A girl swept away by the current, stranded at sea in a rubber dingy.

SAVED BY A SUPERHERO.

A boy falling headfirst off a garage roof whilst trying to retrieve his frisbee.

SAVED BY A SUPERHERO.

A group of kids playing hide and seek. One is so good at hiding that all the others

give up trying to find him, leaving him stuck halfway down the chimney of his own house.

SAVED BY A SUPERHERO.

A cat stuck in a tree, too afraid to climb back down.

NOT SAVED BY A SUPERHERO.

Superheroes don't have time for such nonsense.

However, a young boy stuck in a tree trying to save his pet cat?

SAVED BY A SUPERHERO.

Not the cat, though. Superheroes have much more important things to be doing, like saving people from burning buildings and,

well, other boys stuck in trees.

A young boy stuck ... Wait ... It's the same tree.

OK, **SAVED BY A SUPERHERO**, but this is the LAST time. And, no, superheroes don't have time to save cats ... Where is that boy going? Don't climb back up there ...! Fine ... get yourself stuck. No one will save you this time.

A young boy stuck in a tree.

NOT **SAVED BY A SUPERHERO**.

Not this time.

Don't feel sorry for him. He had plenty of warning.

Oh great, here come the waterworks ...

That's NOT going to work.

You are not getting saved.

OK, FINE!

SAVED BY A SUPERHERO (as is the stupid cat).

Yes, every day, someone, somewhere, is saved by a superhero (and, sometimes, so is their stupid cat). But who are these superheroes? How did they become 'super' and, perhaps most importantly, how come all superheroes are kids?

Any kid could be a superhero. Your brother, your sister, the kid who sits next to you at school, even your best friend.

Surely not my best friend, you are thinking. We share everything together. *Right?* But it could be them – some kids go through their entire life never even knowing they have a superpower, or keeping it a secret, if they do.

Not all powers are immediately obvious. If one day you can suddenly fly, you are going to notice, but if your power is being able to accurately guess what colour sweet you are going to pick next out of a pick'n'mix bag ... Well, that's not so obvious at all.

How a superhero comes to be is something of a mystery. Tests carried out have concluded it doesn't run in the family, it's not given away on the back of a cereal packet, or

caused by freak accidents with radioactive waste. In fact, it's not caused by radioactive waste at all. So don't go drinking glasses of thick, green, oozy gunk in the hope you will be able to climb up walls, or turn invisible. You will just be very, *very* ill.

Superpowers are not something you gain through practice: throwing yourself repeatedly off a garage roof won't help you fly, let me tell you, and staring at a wall for hours on end won't allow you to suddenly see through it, (although it might make you hallucinate, and that hallucination might involve seeing through the wall, but that is purely your imagination, and not the

emergence of a superpower).

There is a theory, and it's only a theory, that those who desperately wish to become superheroes, become superheroes. If there is nothing your heart desires more, then it will be your destiny.

What kind of powers you get landed with ... well, everyone chalks that up to sheer, dumb luck.

