



Entry Level 3 Literacy

Wheelbarrow Boy

'Wheelbarrow Boy!' Mary shouted, 'That's what we'll call you!
Wheelbarrow Boy!'

I was a bit disappointed. It's not a great name for a superhero. Iron Man is a good name. Spider-Man is brilliant! Even The Incredible Hulk has a nice ring to it and he's a big green guy who wears ripped, purple trousers that are three sizes too small!

I suppose the name's not the most important thing. It's what you can do to help people, isn't it?

I found out about my strange ability when I was doing a gardening project in school. We had to clear up this old lady's garden. She was always complaining about the 'bloody noise' and all of us 'young hoodlums, traipsing through her garden', completely forgetting about the fact that we were digging her garden for her for free!

Miss Smitherman, the teacher, told us to clear up the bricks and old rubbish lying around double quick before 'old Mrs Crackpot', as I called her, started complaining again.

No one could be bothered. All that bending down and picking stuff up is not the kind of thing teenagers are into these days. In fact, as my mother always says, 'They're not interested in

anything that doesn't involve a controller and a bloomin' computer screen! Lazy bloody lot!

I was just thinking about that as my eyelids, which felt like lead weights, started to close: wouldn't it be funny if there was a computer game where you could do things and they would happen in real life?

I started to doze off. Stupid gardening, I thought.

I had the weirdest dream.

I dreamt that I was playing a computer game. The characters were the other kids in my gardening group: Tom, Julie, Fizz and Mary. I could control them to go around and pick stuff up and fill the wheelbarrow, which didn't need anyone to push it. In fact, it was like, rocket propelled! Up and down the ramp to the skip it went, full to the brim every time, and in a flash the garden was cleared. Just then I woke up from my snooze: if only my life was like a computer game, I thought. Now I know why people say you should be careful what you wish for.

As I woke up I noticed everyone else looking a bit bemused, as if no one knew what was going on. Nothing new there, you might think, but somehow this was different, as if something weird had happened.

'Where's all the rubbish?' said Tom.

'I don't know!' replied Lucy, 'one minute it was there the next it was all in the skip!'

'That is well strange!' said Fizz.

'Miss, it's all finished! All our work Miss, it's all finished!'

'Yes, I can see that Julie,' said Miss Smitherman, who looked most confused of all.

'Miss, Miss, can we go home now Miss?' asked Julie hopefully, to some gleeful cackling.

'How did this happen?' said Miss Smitherman, completely flummoxed.

I, on the other hand, knew exactly what had happened. I had done it. My dream, somehow, it was true! I had controlled everyone and the wheelbarrow just like a computer game. I had amazing powers: I was a superhero!

Of course, no one believed me. After I told Mary the truth on the way home after school, she asked me sarcastically, 'What are you going to do next Wheelbarrow Boy?' I stopped, thought for a minute, looked to the skies and said, 'Whenever there is gardening to be done and no one can be bothered to do it, I'll be there, 'cos I am Wheelbarrow Boy!'

Mary laughed, 'You're nuts!' she said.

'Coming down the park after school?' shouted Fizz from across the road.

'Yeah, I'll be there.' I said.

'Sweet!' answered Fizz, fading into the distance.

Name _____ Date _____

QUESTIONS

1. Answer these questions in sentences.

- a) At the beginning of the story, why is the boy disappointed?

- b) What do we find out about the old lady?

- c) What is the teacher's name?

- d) What are the names of the other students in the gardening group?

- e) How do the students feel about gardening?

- f) What does the boy's mother say about teenagers?

- g) What was the strange thing that happened?

- h) What does the boy think happened?

- i) What does Mary think when he tells her the truth?

- j) Can you think of another name for the story?

Name _____ Date _____

QUESTIONS

2. Look up these words and write down their meanings:

hoodlums	traipsing	dozing	cackling	flummoxed
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3. A picture from a story is called an illustration. Draw a picture of something from the story.

4. Use the following words to write a sentence.

confetti	burglar	font	tripod	viewpoint
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5. Do you have a funny idea for a superhero? Draw a picture of your superhero (or supervillain) and describe him or her using adjectives like, tall, strong, green, intelligent or evil.