

CHAPTER ONE

WE GO TO AMERICA BY MISTAKE

MIDDY:

To be fair, we did come quietly. As soon as we heard the sirens we knew we were in trouble. There were three police cars in the drop-off zone. Police were jumping out, spreading out, looking for us. Brodie said, ‘What are we going to do?’

I said, ‘You’re the oldest. You’re supposed to be in charge. You supposed to tell us what to do.’

Nathan said that thing you never want to hear Nathan say. He said ‘Leave this to me.’ Then he walked straight out of the front door, right up to one of the police cars and knocked on the driver’s window.

‘Are you the police?’ he said.

The man behind the wheel was wearing a police badge. His car had ‘Police’ written on the side. The siren on its roof was flashing. He said, ‘Yes I am the police.’

‘Great,’ said Nathan, ‘Just who we’re looking for.’

We want to report a robbery. The thief is right here in this hotel. We're going to help you catch him.'

'Son, I know who you are,' said the police officer. 'Get in the car.'

'Shotgun, shotgun,' said Nathan, trying to bags the front passenger seat.

'In the back,' said the officer. 'Don't play wise with me.'

By now me and Brodie were there too. Brodie said 'Excuse me officer, we've come to America by accident. We'd really like to go home now.'

Being honest, so much had happened to us it was



kind of a relief that an actual grown up was taking charge of us. So I just said 'Hi', and climbed in beside the other two.

Nathan said, 'He's right there in that hotel. We'll lead you right to him. You can arrest him and probably get a medal or promotion or something.'

'Thanks,' said the officer, 'but no thanks. I'm running you to the station.'

CHAPTER TWO

AND NOW . . .THE TWO AND ONLY WONDER BROTHERS!

NATHAN:

Captain Jimenez flashed her Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department badge and said she wanted to record our interview for ‘training purposes’. And also just in case we turned out to be a threat to National Security. Middy thought this was a great idea. She said professional magicians often film themselves when training.

I offered to operate the stop start button.

MIDDY:

Captain Jimenez said that we were in trouble. ‘You’re in trouble,’ she said. ‘If you want me to help you, you need to give me the Truth and give it me straight.’

Sadly when she said this she was looking at Nathan. He jumped up, threw out his arms and said to the whole room . . .

'Whoever you are . . .

Whatever you are . . .

Get ready to be astonished

Because we are . . .

THE WONDER BROTHERS!!!!!!'

Captain Jimenez rolled her eyes. 'Son,' she said, 'this is a police investigation, not a circus. Just give us the details. No razzmatazz. Just the facts.'

Saying 'no razzmatazz' to our Nathan is like saying 'no swimming' to Mr Nibbles the goldfish. Razzmatazz is how Nathan moves.

Some people can't see colours. Some can't remember their number bonds. Nathan can't see consequences. He does what he feels like doing. His mum says he's complicated. My mum says he 'can be bouncy'. His teachers call him 'a character'. Basically he's mostly OK but can be a bit of a flapjack sometimes.

'If it's details you're after,' he said, 'you've come to the right people. Officer, we've got more details than you could shake your badge at. We've got details about plumbing, stowaways, brushes with death, magic that will make your skin tingle and the most incredible

robbery in the history of the world. I mean where do we even start?’

‘Let’s start with your names, shall we?’

‘We are the two and only Wonder Brothers. We are . . .’ He stopped. I’d given him The Look. One thing you learn when you’re part of a magic act with someone is how to watch each other really closely. Close enough to tell what the other is thinking. Like mind-reading. Nathan could tell I was thinking, *Nathan. Stop talking.*

So he stopped talking.

Ta-dah!!!

‘The Wonder Brothers,’ I said, ‘is our stage name. Not our real name. We’re not really brothers. For one thing, I’m a girl. We’re cousins. I’m Middy McNulty and he is Nathan Wiley.’

‘And this is Queenie.’ That was Brodie interrupting. ‘Queenie’s a rabbit,’ he said, holding Queenie up so that the officer could see her.

The Captain sat up suddenly. ‘*Are you sure that’s a rabbit?!*’ she gasped. ‘She’s the size of a small child.’

‘She nearly won the Best Oversized Rabbit prize at the Lancashire show last year. Do you need to know her full name? It’s Queen of Tobago.’

‘No. I don’t need the rabbit’s full name. I need to know what three little British kids are doing wandering around Las Vegas, USA, with no adult supervision.’

Nathan said, ‘Like I said, we’re here to report a

theft. Someone stole something from our town and we're not going home until we've found it.'

She licked her pencil, ready to take notes. 'OK, let's have a description of your stolen property.'

I explained that the stolen property wasn't exactly ours. 'It belongs to our whole town. To the whole world, really.'

'Just describe it.'

'It's tall and thin and mostly metal.'

'How tall?'

'Five hundred and eighteen feet and nine inches.'

Captain Jimenez got halfway writing that down before she looked up and said, 'Five hundred and . . . What are you talking about?'

'We're talking about the World-Famous Blackpool Tower.'

'How,' snarled the officer, 'would anyone steal a tower?'

'Magic,' said Nathan.

Captain Jimenez put down her pencil and gave him a bad look.

Nathan said, 'You don't believe me. Maybe you don't believe in magic. Don't worry, you will by the time we tell you what happened to us.'