

CHAPTER 1

WHO TO TELL

Dan Delion rarely slept in on a Saturday. The early morning sunlight streamed through his bedroom window, coaxing him awake. He rubbed the sleep out of his eyes and stretched his long skinny arms toward the ceiling before bolting out of bed.

It was the last day of May, and it was a perfect day for his favourite hobby, hunting bugs. He jumped into a pair of brown shorts that he grabbed off the floor, and pulled a bright yellow tee shirt over his head. Dan combed his thick spiky blonde hair and dashed downstairs to the kitchen to eat a bowl of cereal. After gulping down his second glass of milk, he pulled on his white socks, tied his high-top running shoes, and ran out the front door, letting it slam shut behind him.



Seedington was a small town in northern Ontario with winding country roads that were lined with thick pine trees. All was quiet, except for the sounds of birds chirping and Dan's running shoes crunching as they hit the gravel road. Once he reached the outskirts of town, he began jogging up a hill toward an abandoned old mansion that was covered with vines of ivy. A cemetery was located in the front yard, and its three tombstones made the mansion especially spooky. Years ago, both the front and back yards boasted beautiful gardens. Over time, the empty mansion became run-down and the grounds were filled with weeds, tall grasses and large overgrown plants and shrubs. Dan thought that this made the mansion grounds an ideal place to hunt for bugs.

It was rumoured that the old mansion was haunted, but Dan, who didn't believe in ghosts, wasn't scared one little bit. He ran up the hill, excited about what new bugs he might discover. He reached down and checked his right pocket, making double sure that he had



his magnifying glass. He seldom left home without it, and, as he soon found out, it was a very good thing that he had it with him today.

Shortly after Dan arrived at the mansion, he stumbled upon the biggest secret of his life. In fact, it was probably the biggest secret in the entire town of Seedington. Maybe even all of Ontario! Dan shook his head in disbelief, and he pinched himself more than once. He tried to run home fast, but his long skinny legs felt like jelly. He finally reached the bottom of the hill, out of breath, and checked his watch. He was surprised to see that it was almost noon. Dan closed his big brown eyes for a moment, trying to remember everything that had happened to him at the mansion. He wasn't sure which one of his three best friends he should tell his secret to first.

Should it be Holly Hocks, who lived next door to him? Or perhaps Foxy Gloves, who was one of his classmates. Or, would it be his very best friend since kindergarten, Johnny Jump-Ups? Dan was both afraid and excited as he ran his hands through his spiky hair, trying



to figure out who would be easiest to find.

Holly Hocks, who was a year older than Dan, loved to shop. She spent every Saturday at the Seedington Mall. Holly was very tall and pretty, and she and Dan had been neighbours their entire lives. Her long thick chestnut hair was parted in the middle, and quite often she tucked it behind her ears. She had a tiny face with rosy pink cheeks and big blue eyes, and she always dressed in the coolest clothes, usually pink from head to toe. Dan did not want to waste time searching through the mall, so he decided against finding Holly.

Johnny Jump-Ups might not be easy to find either. He was always hungry and he loved food. Since it was almost lunchtime, Johnny might be at home, or in any of the town's many restaurants. Johnny's short hair was so dark that it looked purple. Oddly, he had one streak of bright yellow hair that hung over one ear. His eyebrows looked as purple as his hair, and they arched overtop of his small brown eyes. He had a small nose, and huge dimples appeared whenever he smiled. He was the



shortest boy in his class and he was also quite plump. Johnny loved to tell jokes, and he was very charming and friendly.

Suddenly, it dawned on Dan that he was sure to find Foxy Gloves. On a warm, sunny day like today, she'd be selling lemonade from the stand her father built in front of her house on Cedar Street. He smiled as he pictured Foxy, who loved to dress up in her mother's old clothes. She also liked to dress her cute, scruffy-faced dog Madison. Foxy, who was very small, always wore a pair of her mother's long white gloves. She was nearly a full foot shorter than Dan and Holly, who were the two tallest kids in the entire school. Her shiny red curls bounced up and down when she walked, and her fiery green eyes were very bright. Freckles dotted her creamy white skin, especially on top of her small nose. Everyone adored Foxy and Madison, especially Holly, who had been her very best friend for as long as Dan could remember. Foxy Gloves would be the easiest to find, Dan thought.

He started running to Foxy's lemonade stand.



Foxy's

LEMONADE



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