

## Wisplurkers

### Episode 020. "Matthew, are you ok?"

"Wow," Toby said excitedly. "WOW. What else do you know about these -Wisplurkers?"

"I managed to track three of them to this particular house. I think they are still inside."

Toby stretched his neck to try and see beyond the broken glass in the kitchen door. He'd been inside only that morning and he'd not seen anything, just a lot of old clothes, but he decided against mentioning it to the inspector. What do they look like?"

"Shadows, that whisper and lurk in dark corners" answered Dalrimple.

"These Wisplurkers," asked Matt finding his voice and trying to keep it from shaking. "Are they very dangerous? What do they do?"

"They want our shadows, it's as simple as that. They live in the corners of the rooms or anywhere they can blend in without being seen. When there is light of any kind, a lamp, the sun, even moonlight then they can reappear, just like any shadows. Their food is hoomum shadows. Hoomum is their name for us human beings. Whatever you do never get close enough for them to attach themselves to you, or your shadow -- ."

"Hah! You're having us on," Lloyd couldn't hold back any longer. He exploded with a laugh. "Oh yeah! This is a joke, right? Very funny."

For a long moment the inspector said nothing, then his face creased into a slow smile.

"You've got me there. It was just a joke. A fairytale," then just as suddenly his smile was gone again.

"Now clear off all of you," he pointed towards the street. "I don't want to see you kids back here again, or I'll be round to see your school teachers and your parents. Get me?"

There was no point in arguing, so Kylie, Lloyd and Matt started to walk away. Matt had an odd look on his face. Toby glared at the inspector and was about to say something rude, when he thought better of it. The look on the policeman's face meant business, and he still had his ripped blazer to explain to his mother. Anything worse and it might mean no summer holiday at Disneyworld, Florida. With a sigh, Toby followed his friends to the front and out into the sunny street.

"What a load of cobblers," stated Lloyd idly kicking at a stone with his toe. "Wisplurkers and hoomums. That inspector's a real dork if he thought we'd fall for that."

They all nodded in agreement and strolled in a line that practically took up the width of the pavement.

"I didn't like him," admitted Kylie. "He was creepy."

"Yeah," agreed Lloyd. "A real creep. Thinking he could scare us."

"But, what if there really are Wisplurkers? Just like Inspector Dalrimple said?" To Matt, the very idea of shadow-eating beings, living in dark cobwebby corners, seemed a real possibility.

"Oh Matthew," said his sister despairingly. "Don't be silly. Couldn't you see, it was a story to frighten us off?" Sometimes, Kylie considered, her brother really was a wimp, but of course she would never have told him that to his face.

"Yeah," said Lloyd. "It's 'tell the little kiddies a stupid story and then they'll go away' time. Well, I don't care about this house or the oldies, or anything." He said, "Wisplurkers, huh!" and ended with a loud 'raspberry' sound.

Toby was beginning to think his friends were right after all. He'd have to reconsider a career as a private detective. No-one, not even policemen ever told the truth!

"Lloyd," he boisterously wrapped an arm around his friend's neck and attempted to drag him down to the pavement. This brought loud tuts of disgust, and a mutter of "so childish" from Kylie.

"That new game," said Toby, the day's adventures forgotten. "D'you think your Dad would let us have a go with it now?"

This was more like it. There was far more interesting thing to do.

Lloyd untangled himself and shrugged. "He'll still be at work, so I can't ask. What he doesn't know --."

Toby, although he'd had it all explained that morning when he'd had other things on his mind and wasn't listening, was all ears and wanted to know more about this new computer game. He listened now, as Lloyd described in detail how the game was played and how he'd ruthlessly beaten his older brother Simon. Kylie wasn't all that bothered with *The Granite Warriors*. She preferred web sites about bugs and was still fascinated by Malcolm the beetle sleeping soundly in a pencil case, in Toby's sports bag. It had been transferred there earlier, so as not to get squashed. Once they were in front of Lloyd Wong's computer screen, she'd try and persuade him to forget a silly game, and go to an educational site.

Matt had fallen back behind the other three. He was worried and scared, and suddenly very weary. His legs felt extra heavy, and he dragged his feet along the path. Each step was becoming an effort, as if his clothes were weighed down with rocks. He

stopped for a minute to rest against a low garden wall, and to wipe away the sweat on his forehead. The sun was hot overhead. He was so tired, he simply wanted to close his eyes and go to sleep right there.

Lloyd glanced back, and Kylie looked with concern at her twin.

“Matthew,” she asked peering at his flushed face. “Are you OK?”

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Wisplurkers. By Maggie C.

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