

SCHOOL SWAP

Chapter 2

It wasn't like looking in a mirror. Your reflection doesn't usually scream.

The class was coming back in from break, but Jay wasn't looking at them; he was looking at his hands. Only they weren't his hands; they were Mr Jones's dry, twiggy hands. He ran them down his clothes. No, not his clothes: Mr Jones's fading, fraying clothes. His brain was the same, though, and it was catching up quickly. He was in Mr Jones's body.

He glanced back down at the face that, until a moment ago, had been his. It had stopped screaming, but it had turned as white as a ghost's bum and was nervously licking its lips.

Jay stretched himself up into his new height. A smile spread under his borrowed moustache. This was going to be fun!

"Sit down, Jay!" The words boomed deeply from his mouth.

"But... but..." squeaked Mr Jones back at him.

"AT ONCE!"

Small Mr Jones slid away to Jay's chair and perched on the edge of it.

"Did he give you a rough time?" Adil whispered. Mr Jones didn't reply.

"Right, class," said Jay. "This lesson we are going to have extra PE."

The class cheered, all except Mr Jones, who stood up and shouted out, "But it's History!"

"DETENTION!" Jay told his body. "You can stay in class and write out ten pages from the dictionary."

Jay was wrong: being the teacher wasn't fun, it was AWESOME!

He could do anything he wanted. No boring old history, but extra football while Droney Jonesey got a taste of detention. Jay smirked every time he spotted his own little disapproving face staring out at the rest of the class playing footy.

But the fun stopped at home time.

Everyone had gone. The only people left were Jay and Mr Jones.

"So, what do we do now, teacher?" asked Mr Jones, standing by his desk.

Jay didn't look at him: he had no idea.

Mr Jones sighed. He picked up his keys and a pile of marking. "I'd better take you home," he said.

"But, Sir," said Jay, "I can't go home looking like you!"



“Not your home!” tutted Mr Jones. “I’ll drop you at mine and then go to yours. If you’re not home, your mum will be worried and call the police.”

Jay knew he should tell Mr Jones that she probably wouldn’t notice, but he was embarrassed to admit it. Anyway, maybe she would be home today.

The drive to Mr Jones’s flat was really weird. There was no way Mr Jones was going to let Jay drive his classic eighties car, but a nine-year-old couldn’t be seen driving either. So Mr Jones tried to disguise himself.

He put on his own coat, even though it swamped him, a hat and some very old mirror shades. Then he sat up on the pile of marking to boost himself high enough to see over the steering wheel. He also had to tie sandwich boxes to his feet so he could reach the pedals.

Mr Jones’s pokey flat was rather like himself and his car: too old, too ordered and too beige. The most interesting thing in it was a photo of an old lady on top of a box-shaped TV. Jay picked it up to have a better look, but Mr Jones jumped up to snatch it straight back.

“Only touch the things you have to,” he growled, putting it down on a desk so that he could write a note.

He then picked up the handset from a phone that was attached with a curly wire to a numbered dial. He started to turn the dial around, making it click like an over-excited dolphin, then handed the receiver and the paper to Jay.



“Read exactly what it says,” he instructed.

Jay put the receiver to his ear. He heard ringing for a moment and then a chirpy voice. “Good afternoon. Sunset Nursing Home.”

“Errrr... this is Samuel Jones,” Jay read. “I’m not feeling very well. Could you tell Alice I won’t be in today?”

“Oh, I’m sorry to...”

But Jay didn’t hear the rest. Mr Jones snatched the receiver and hung up with a ding.

“There’s food in the fridge,” he said, opening the front door. “Just heat it in the microwave. I’ll be back in the morning with a plan to sort out this mess!”

“Who’s Alice, Sir?” Jay asked.

“None of your business,” he snapped, and set off walking towards Jay’s house.