

Chapter 6

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When Ruskin got downstairs he found his mum kneeling by the front door, her nose pressed to the letterbox.

'What *are* you doing?' Ruskin asked.

'I can smell the drain,' Wendy said. 'First a smashed window, now this. Polly-wolly-doodle-all-the-day.'

Just outside Ruskin's house was a huge drain. The cover to the drain was made of metal and it wobbled from side to side. Every time it wobbled it went Ka-clunk!

In hot weather the smell from the sewer rose up and escaped through the wobbling drain-cover.

'Please get up, Mum,' Ruskin said. 'I've got to go to school.'

When Ruskin opened the door he found Dr Flowers outside, standing on the drain and sniffing.

'TISHOO!' Dr Flowers exploded.

Dr Flowers's nose was bright red and his eyes were watering. All summer long he sneezed and coughed and scratched his eyes.

His pockets were stuffed full of handkerchiefs and he pulled one out now as he stared at Ruskin and Wendy.

'Hay-fever,' Dr Flowers said, blowing his nose. 'The only flowers on the street belong to . . . TISHOO!' He sneezed again. 'To Mr Lace.' Dr Flowers looked over at Mr Lace's window boxes full of marigolds. 'And I can't ask him to . . . TISHOO! To get rid of them. They're so

... TISHOO! Beautiful. TISHOO! TISHOO!

Dr Flowers pulled another handkerchief from his pocket and blew his nose again.

'I see another one of your windows has been smashed by Elvis,' Dr Flowers observed, sniffing to ward off yet another sneeze.

'We haven't got many windows left,' Wendy told him.

'Mrs Walnut had her ... TISHOO! Her shop window ... TISHOO! Broken! TISHOO!'

'When?' Ruskin asked.

'Last night,' Dr Flowers replied, rubbing his eyes. 'Elvis was sleepwalking again. I heard the ball ... TISHOO! Bouncing! TISHOO! But by the time I got into the street it was too late. The window had already been smashed. Poor ... TISHOO! Poor Mrs Walnut.'

'Oh, polly-wolly-doodle-all-the-day,' Wendy remarked.

'Someone should stop Elvis,' Ruskin said. 'He's a menace.'

'Who would dare stop him?' Dr Flowers asked. Then, 'TISHOO!'

'I don't know,' Ruskin replied. 'Some hero, I suppose.'

'Talking of heroes,' Dr Flowers said, 'I hear your school's choosing the hero for the - TISHOO! - school play today.'

'That's right,' Ruskin said. 'And I want to play the part.'

'Well ... TISHOO! You've got competition.'

'Why?' Ruskin asked. 'Who else wants the part?'

'Elvis Cave, of course,' Dr Flowers answered. 'TISHOO!'

