

Code Cracking

Story by George Ivanoff

Illustrations by Francesca Ficorilli



PM

Contents

Chapter 1	Op Shop Treasure	5
Chapter 2	Book Repairs	9
Chapter 3	What's in a Name?	15
Chapter 4	The Caesar Shift	20
Chapter 5	Camp	25
Chapter 6	History Lesson	31
Chapter 7	Old Books	34
Chapter 8	Back to the Op Shop	44
Chapter 9	Hot Chocolate and Codes	50

Chapter 1

Op Shop Treasure

“Oh, wow!” breathed Eddie. “Would you look at that!”

“What?” asked Gemma, hands on hips. “It’s just a book, and it looks like it’s about to fall apart.”

“It’s old!” said Eddie. “I love old books.” He gently picked up the battered book and held it in his hands. “But it’s more than that. It’s a book about William Shakespeare’s plays.”

“Oh!” Suddenly Gemma seemed more interested.

William Shakespeare was a famous writer who wrote many well-known plays, like *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and lived a long time ago in England. Eddie thought it might have been in the 1600s ... or maybe the 1500s. He wasn’t sure.





Eddie and Gemma were best friends. They were both eleven and in Year 6 at Mayview School. They both had brown hair, although Gemma's was cut in a bob and Eddie's was really short. They were both the same height – average. Gemma wore glasses and Eddie had braces on his teeth.

Eddie and Gemma were also both members of the Theatre Club at school. They had gone to visit their local second-hand charity shop to look for anything that might be useful for their club. It seemed like a good way to spend their Saturday morning while Eddie's dad did the weekly shopping at the supermarket. The two friends were after anything

that could be used as props and costumes – toy swords, fancy dress, funny hats ... whatever!

So far, they hadn't found anything useful, so Eddie had dragged Gemma over to the book section. He loved reading and he was always searching for new books to add to his ever-growing collection. Although, in this case, it was *old* books. And the book he was now holding was very old indeed. It had a hard cover and was bound in dark-red cloth, with the title in gold lettering. The title was faded and half scratched off, but it was still readable.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

The Theatrical World of William Shakespeare

Eddie carefully started to lift the cover, but the spine almost fell off. He quickly closed it up again.

"It might fall apart if I open it," said Eddie, worry creasing his brow.

"It's a book!" said Gemma. "It's no good unless you can open it up and read it."

"Yeah, I know," said Eddie, frowning. "Maybe I'll buy it and then look at it carefully when I get home."

"How much is it?" asked Gemma.

Eddie turned the book over in his hands, but couldn't find a price. He shrugged and carefully took it up to the front counter.

The elderly lady took the book from him and examined it. Eddie winced as she turned it over and looked inside the cover. He was certain the book would fall apart if she wasn't careful, and it didn't look like she was being careful.

"That's odd," she finally said. "It doesn't seem to have a price on it, and it's not in very good condition, is it? We don't normally put books that look like they're about to fall apart out on the shelves." She huffed. "You can have it for a dollar, if you want."

Eddie nodded and handed over the money.

Chapter 2

Book Repairs

Eddie placed the ancient-looking book on his desk, then he and Gemma stared at it.

“All the World’s a Stage,” read Gemma. Then she finished off the famous quote, “And all the men and women merely players.”

“It’s from *As You Like It*, isn’t it,” said Eddie. “I went to see that play with my parents when it was at the local theatre.”

“I missed it,” said Gemma. “It was all sold out by the time my parents got around to booking.” She sighed. “Anyway ... are you going to open the book now?”

Eddie carefully reached out and lifted the cover. It came off in his hands and he gasped. “Oh, no!”

Eddie put the front cover on the desk next to the rest of the book. The spine had also fallen off, revealing the loose string that was meant to be holding all the pages together.

Gemma pointed to the handwritten note at the top right-hand corner of the front page.

This book belongs to E H (36).

Shall I compare this book to a summer’s day?



“I wonder what that means,” said Gemma.

“I think it means that someone really loved this book,” said Eddie. “It’s a line from one of Shakespeare’s love poems, but it’s been changed. Instead of ‘Shall I compare *thee* to a summer’s day?’ it says ‘Shall I compare *this book* to a summer’s day?’”

“That’s weird,” said Gemma.

Eddie was still staring at the book. “I’m going to have to fix the book before I can read it,” he said.

“Are you sure it’s worth it?” asked Gemma.

“You could just read it like it is.”

“But then it would fall apart,” said Eddie.

“So what?” asked Gemma with a shrug. “Then after you’ve read it, you can throw it out. I mean, it only cost one dollar.”

“It’s not the money,” said Eddie as he examined the book carefully. “There’s something about this book. It ...” He hesitated. “It’s special.” He pointed at the writing. “It meant a lot to someone, so ... I want to take care of it.”