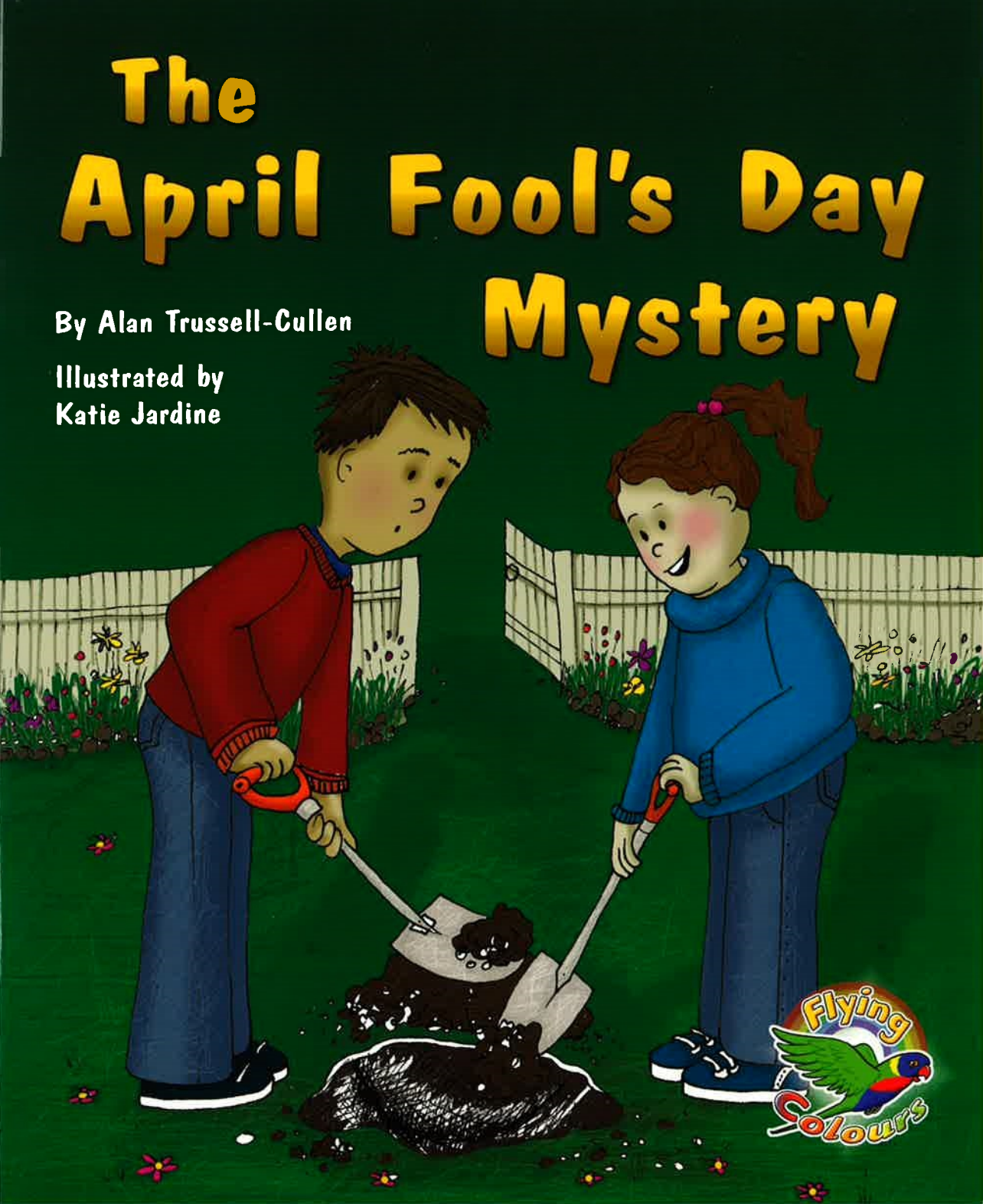
The April Fool's Day Mystery

By Alan Trussell-Cullen

Illustrated by Katie Jardine





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April Fool's Day

In some countries, people play practical jokes on others on the first day of April. Anyone who is silly enough to let themselves be tricked is called an 'April Fool'. The best April Fool's jokes are those where everyone laughs – including the victim!

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Chapter 1

The Mysterious Hole



It was breakfast time and Trudi's mum and dad were reading the newspaper. Her brother Brent was finishing his breakfast slowly and reading a book at the same time. Suddenly Trudi came running in.

"There's a great big hole in the new lawn!" she blurted.

Trudi's family had only just moved into their house on a new housing estate. The estate was once an old farm, but now there were new houses going up all around.

Their house used to be the old farm house. It was a bit rundown when they bought it, but they had painted it and planted a new lawn out the back.

Trudi waited for someone to say something, but no one even bothered to look up.

"It's a deep hole, right in the middle of the lawn," she insisted.

"Of course," said Dad, without taking his eyes off the newspaper.

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Mum looked up and smiled.

"Maybe a spaceship took a wrong turn and crashed into our new lawn," she said.

"Or maybe a rather silly burglar tried to break into our house by digging a tunnel underneath," said Dad.



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"What's the matter with you all this morning?" asked Trudi.

Brent looked up from his book and grinned.

"We know what day it is," he said.

"What do you mean?" said Trudi.

"April the first. April Fool's Day. Every year you try to trick us all with some kind of crazy story."

"But I'm not trying to trick you," she said. "Come and have a look and then you'll believe me."

"Oh all right," said Mum.

They all followed Trudi outside. Sure enough, there in the middle of the new lawn was a hole with a pile of dirt beside it.

"It *is* a hole," said Mum.

"I told you," said Trudi.

Dad was looking at his watch.

"I don't have time to fill it in now, Trudi," he said. "I'll be late for work. The school bus doesn't come for another 20 minutes, so you and Brent can fill it in. The spades are in the shed."

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Trudi and Brent were not pleased.

"Gee, thanks, Dad," they said.

Trudi and Brent shovelled the dirt back into the hole, and that should have been the end of the story.

But it wasn't, because the next morning there was another hole in the middle of the lawn. Only this time it was even bigger!

Trudi and Brent had to fill it in again.



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Chapter 2

The Trap Is Set!




The next morning the same thing happened – the hole was back again!

"This is weird!" exclaimed Brent.

"This is a mystery," declared Trudi. "Our April Fool's Day Mystery, and we have to solve it."

"But how?" said Brent.

"Simple," said Trudi. "We'll set a trap for whoever is doing this."

"Yeah, right," Brent sniggered.

Trudi held up a ball of string. "We always leave the gate to the backyard open. That's how our mysterious visitor gets in."

"So?" said Brent, as he watched Trudi tie one end of the string to the open gate, and the other end to the shed.

"Whoever comes through that gate in the middle of the night will walk into the string and pull the gate shut," said Trudi.

"So how will that help us?" asked Brent. "We'll be fast asleep."

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