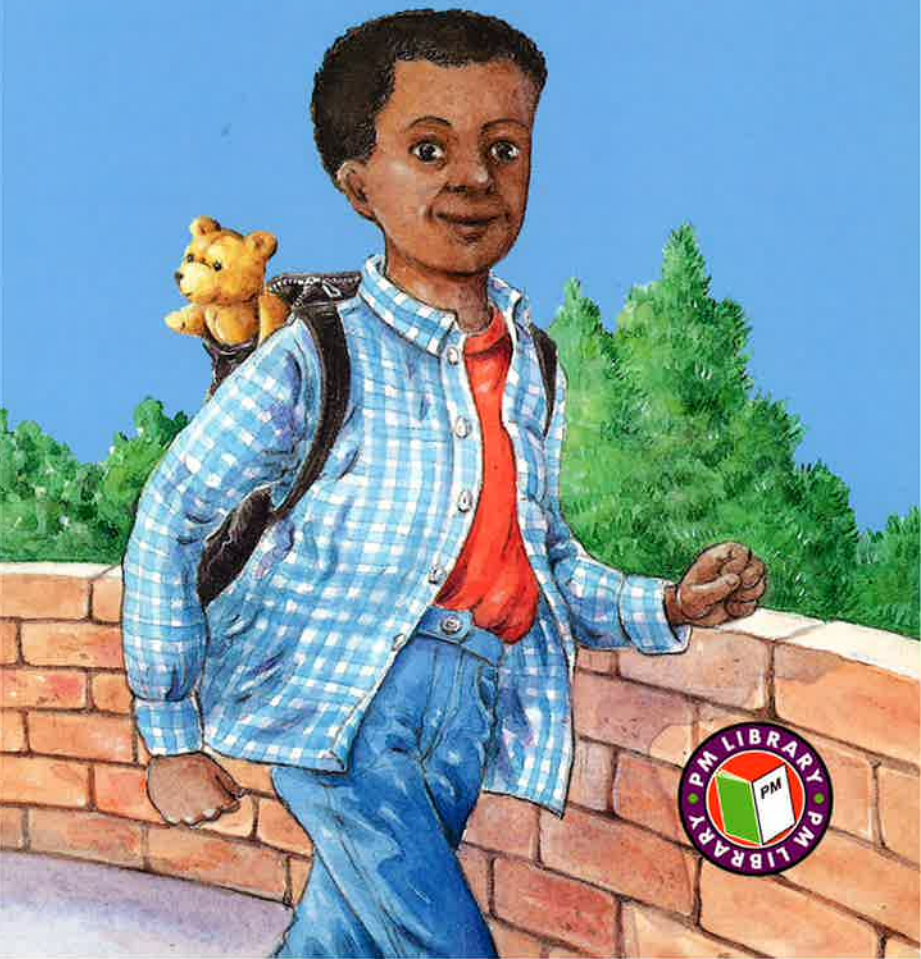
The Bear Collection

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Chapter 1

The Lost Bear



Jim had only twenty-four hours to find all the bears before Grandpa arrived. Many of Jim's antique bears had been part of Grandpa's own collection and he had helped Jim collect more. Grandpa would want to see all the old bears lined up when he came to visit.

The miniature teddy was under Jim's pillow. The English teddy was behind the curtain. The 1920s black bear was in the wardrobe.

But where were the gold plush bear and the handmade German bear? They were the oldest and best in Jim's collection. Grandpa had said that any collector would be proud to own them.

Jim grabbed his bookcase and pulled it forwards. Books tumbled to the floor. But there, under the bottom shelf, was the gold plush bear. Jim gently picked the bear up, placed it with the others and continued his search for Scraps, the German bear.

Jim's toys, half his clothes, his pillow, his bedcovers and his shoes were soon all over the floor. His collections of stamps, books and coins were upturned.



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"What are you doing?" his mother asked, peering around the door. "Have you lost something again?"

Jim sank onto his bed. "I can't find Scraps," he moaned.

"I saw a bear just like him today at the antique shop," Mum said. "I don't suppose it's him?" she joked.

Jim frowned.

"Don't worry!" said Mum. "You've just misplaced him. He's probably somewhere in this mess."

Jim's face felt hot with guilt.





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Chapter 2

The Antique Shop



Jim wasn't supposed to take his bears out of the house, but sometimes he did. He remembered carrying Scraps in his backpack. Maybe poor old Scraps had dropped out!

As Jim crawled under his bed, he thought about the antique shop. As he pulled out his sock drawer, and all his socks fell out, he thought about the antique shop. It would close at five o'clock and it was nearly five now.



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"I'll be back in ten minutes, Mum! I'm going to the shops," he called.

Jim lived across the road from a grocery store, a bookshop, a computer shop, and an antique shop.

Until last year, Mrs Lamb had owned the antique shop. Jim used to help her unpack boxes of dusty books and old plates. He'd loved helping Mrs Lamb polish the old furniture and look for little treasures in the boxes of junk. Mrs Lamb even used to pay him a small amount, and sometimes she had given him an old coin or a book for his collections.