The Big Toe Robbery



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Chapter 1

A Wonderful Idea



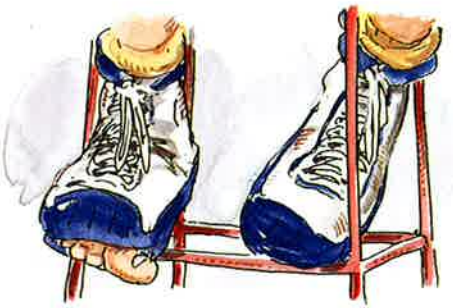
Justin's favourite class was art. His teacher, Ms Winter, said he had talent. But today it was too hot to draw and the afternoon seemed to drag on forever. Ms Winter almost despaired. All the other students had their heads down and were busy drawing, but Justin just sat at his desk. He didn't like this extreme heat. It sapped his energy.

"Justin," implored Ms Winter. "This is not like you! You're usually the first to finish — and you haven't even started!"

"Sorry, Ms Winter," sighed Justin. "It's the heat. I can't think of anything to draw."

"Well, just draw the first thing that comes into your head," snapped Ms Winter. Obviously, the heat was getting to her, too. Usually, she was the most pleasant teacher in the whole school.

Justin wriggled his toes. His big toe was sticking out of his right sock and sneaker. His mother had pleaded with him to let her buy him some new sneakers. But Justin liked these ones, even though they were well past their 'use-by' date.



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The big toe on Justin's right foot was different. It was longer than usual for a big toe but, in the middle, it suddenly bent out to the left. Justin hadn't damaged his toe playing sport and the big toe on his left foot was like other people's big toes. He had just been born with a toe like that.

Suddenly Justin smiled to himself. Well, Ms Winter did say to draw anything.



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Ms Winter glanced over at Justin and immediately felt relieved. At last, the boy was working away furiously. But later, when she wandered up to the back of the classroom and looked over Justin's shoulder, she was taken by surprise. There it was in all its glory: Justin's big toe. Ms Winter wanted to laugh but stopped herself. There was something about the big toe that was — wonderful!

It had a bold outline and, just like Justin's big toe, it was long and curved to the left in the middle. But it was more than just a good likeness. It had a certain something. The big toe drawing seemed to say proudly, "Here I am! This is me! Like me or hate me, I don't care!" But a big toe drawing couldn't say all that! Could it?



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"Justin ... " The other kids in the class stopped working and looked up. "That's ... good. No, it's better than good ... it's amazing!" Ms Winter turned to the rest of the class. "Look, everyone. Justin's done it again!"

The rest of the class left their seats and gathered around Justin's desk. There it was — his big toe. But there was something about it. Something that made people smile, that made people feel good.

The class murmured a mixture of disbelief and congratulations. How did he do it? Becky Squires looked at the big toe drawing. It seemed to dazzle her. She was doing some hard thinking.



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