

The Fearless Four. Adventure No: 7

The Adventure at 'Glayg Gleyeglag'. (For obvious reasons, this last bit is written in code).

Once upon a time.... (Well, it's a bit of an old-fashioned way of starting a story but it still works quite nicely).

Once upon a time there was a family whose last name was Fearless. There was a Mr. and Mrs. Fearless; Lily, aged 13; her 12 year old brother called Bloodblade; and the twins Emily and Twinblade who were both aged 9. And a dog, Jackely.

You may wonder why the boys have such unusual names. The answer is simple: Mr. and Mrs. Fearless were not very good at thinking up names. I mean, look at Lily and Emily. Not in the forefront of fashionable names, are they? As for the boys' names, well, at the christening of Bloodblade, the vicar asked Mr. and Mrs. Fearless what the baby was going to be called. And Mrs. F. said 'Wilfred' while Mr. F. said 'Kevin'. Actually, they mumbled the names because they were a bit ashamed of their name picking ability. The vicar was half deaf and somewhat eccentric and entered the name 'Bloodblade' in the registry of names. Later, the lady who cleaned the church said that he had cut himself while shaving that morning. As for Twinblade, he was given that name by his father. When he was born, Mrs. F. wanted to have another go with the name 'Wilfred' but Mr. F. got quite angry about that, cut himself with his new shaver and decided that was a good augury. And so Twinblade was given his unusual name. Quite a coincidence, don't you think?

(Editor: Excuse me, can we get on with the story, please?).

O.K. O.K. One morning, the kids were doing their math homework round the kitchen table. Silence reigned. Except for a few sighs. Mr. and Mrs. F. had gone off, as they did every year, in their motor yacht, to the Mediterranean. They would park it just outside Beaulieu sur Mer and go for cocktails at their friend, David Niven's, house on Cap Ferrat. David gave very jolly cocktail parties and invited all kinds of celebrities like the big cowboy fellow, John Pain (the one who always says to the baddies in his films "My name's Pain. John Pain, and pain is what you're gonna get if you don't behave"), the swashbuckling Beryl Flynn, some younger guys like Brad Pott (known as 'pudding face' to his friends), Twiggo Smorgasbord (generally known as 'poker-face') and a whole bevy of young starlets with dazzling teeth, including the very cute and fluffy Cutesie de Chic. Every body loved her because she was so, um, cute. But her vocabulary was limited. Most of the time she used only three words: 'wow', 'rully' and 'coowull'. As in 'Wow! Really cool!'

(Editor: Excuse me, are we going to start the story, or not?).

When their parents went off in their motor yacht, the kids were left in the charge of Miss Schnutzenfuffen, a sort of governess. Mis Schnutzenfuffen was thin and grey and wore big glasses on the end of her nose and was very severe. Every now and then, however,

the romance in her soul led her out into the garden to look at the clouds, the flowers and the birds. She was out doing that right now. Round the kitchen table, silence still reigned. Then the kids all sighed together.

Lily put down her pencil and said, 'Bother!'

Bloodblade put down his pencil and said, 'Yikes!'

Emily stopped sucking her pencil and groaned.

Twinblade banged down his pencil and said, 'Yu-yu-yu-yu. Yuk!' (Twinblade pretends he has a stutter, to get more attention).

Bloodblade rubbed his forehead and said, 'Let's stop doing this horrible math and go off somewhere. What do you say, Lily?' Lily thought for a moment and then said,

'Yes, let's. But we must get some supplies to take with us, in case we're out for a long while'.

'What about Miss Schnutzenfuffen?' asked Emily. 'And Mr. Million?' Mr. Million was their big, scary math teacher with bushy eyebrows that waggled at you when he was angry – which was most of the time. Mr. Million had scared more math into kids than he had taught it.

'Oh, fiddle de dee,' said Bloodblade, 'It's time we had a break. Come on, let's get going!' So off they went to get supplies: orange drinks, grissini, chocolate bars, camembert, plasters and jelly babies.

They crept through the back garden so as not to be seen by Miss Schnutzenfuffen. They could hear her communing with the birds saying 'tweet, tweet' to them. They walked quite a bit and then ate a few jelly babies.

'Let's go down to the beach,' said Lily, 'And see if we can find a boat'. So they did and they did. It was an old rowing boat with one oar. They all jumped in, including Jackely, and pushed off into the ocean. Twinblade said 'I'll ro-ro-ro-row'.

Lily said, 'If you row with only one oar the boat just goes round and round',

'Ru-ru-ru-rubbish', said Twinblade. 'I bet you one of my newts that I can get us out to sea in no time'.

'Alright', said Lily, 'But don't say I didn't warn you'. Twinblade heaved on the oar and heaved and heaved and the boat went round in circles. The other children looked out to sea.

'Bother and bother', said Twinblade.

'Told you so', said Lily, 'You owe me a newt'.

'O.K. O.K.', said Twinblade. He thought for a bit. 'I've got another idea', he said. The other children looked interested. Usually when Twinblade had 'another idea', disaster quickly followed.

'I'll do it like a gondolier'. He said. He stood at the back of the boat, took the oar in both hands, plunged it down, gripping it firmly. The boat swung about, leaving Twinblade, his legs wagging in the air, hanging on to the oar which gradually toppled over.

Twinblade went into the water with a loud splash and a shriek. The others pulled him out. Emily tried to dry him with her handkerchief. Jackely the dog tried to lick him dry. Lily interrupted this demonstration of affection by shouting, 'Look over there! There's an island!' They all forgot about wet Twinblade.

'If we all paddle hard, we could get there in no time. Wouldn't that be fun?' said Bloodblade, 'An exploration trip!'

Meanwhile, back at the house, Miss Schnutzenfuffen walked into the kitchen saying, 'How beautifuls today, children the clouds are,' and found there was nobody there to share her admiration of the heavens. She hopped about the house looking for them and shouting, 'Childrens! Childrens!'. Eventually she realized the children were gone. She dashed to the phone and stabbed it several times.

'Hallo! Hallo!' she cried. Then a gruff voice at the other end said, 'Million speaking'. 'Oh, thanks heavens it is you, Herr Million. Here is Schnutzenfuffen,' she said relieved.

'Yes. Well? And my name is Mr. Million, not Herr.'

'Of course, sir. Yes. Yes.'

'Well? What is the reason for this interruption?'

'The childrens. The childrens are gone!'

'So?'

'But, don't you seeing? They were in the middle of their homework math!'

'What!'

'Yes! All gones. Mit dog. Sorry. With dog.'

'Are you telling me, Miss Schnutzenfuffen, that those brats have gone off in the middle of their math homework?' And have not finished it?'

'Yes. Yes. Precisely!'

'By Heaven! How dare they?' He stopped. Miss Schnutzenfuffen could hear him growling to himself. Then he said, 'We shall bring them back and punish them! I am coming over right now and we will pick up their trail!'

'Yes. Yes. Gut!' said Miss Schnutzenfuffen, but Mr. Million had already left.

Hardly had she put down the phone before he arrived, red in face, his bushy eyebrows waggling furiously and his muscles bulging (Mr. Million's hobby was weight-lifting). They ran about the garden, puffing, but soon gave up.

'To the beach!' cried Mr. Million, and off they raced again. When they arrived, almost breathless, they were rewarded by tracks in the sand showing where the children had pushed the rowing boat out into the water.

'Ah ha!' shouted Mr. Million in triumph, 'Now we are getting somewhere!' He looked about. Further down the beach there was a lonely motor-boat bobbing on the tide.

'We shall take that!, he cried.

'Ooh', said Miss Schnutzenfuffen. Stealing boats was not normal behaviour for governesses.

'Stop dithering!', shouted Mr. Million. 'Jump in!' Miss Schnutzenfuffen gathered her skirts about her, paddled delicately through a small wave and stepped gingerly into the motor-boat. The engine started with a roar. 'Oh, Mutti', groaned Miss Schnutzenfuffen. She wished she was back with her nice, kind mother and father in their little country village, far away from math teachers, disappearing children and stealing motor-boats. The boat snarled off in a long curve, leaving a wide and impressive wake.

'Look there!' shouted Mr. Million. 'An island! That's where we'll catch 'em. Then I'll give 'em what for!' Miss Schnutzenfuffen did not know what 'what for' was, but she was certain it was not going to be very nice.

In the rowing boat, the kids – two on each side - paddled furiously with their hands and

chewed jelly babies. Slowly they closed on the island. Jackely barked excitedly. It began to rain but nobody cared. An exploration trip was what all of them liked doing best. The boat reached the beach and they all jumped out and ran for the trees as the rain was now coming down very hard.

‘Super!’ cried Bloodblade. ‘We made it!’ They shook the rain off and peered about. ‘We’d better split up’, said Lily. ‘The twins can go and explore – but not too far away - while the rest of us get a fire going at the edge of the trees. Jackely. You go with the twins’.

The twins and the obedient dog raced off down the beach (funny how dogs are always obedient when *they* want to do what *you* want them to do). There was not much to be seen except sand and rain. They ran a bit more until they reached the edge of some more trees. It was then that they saw two footprints.

‘Gosh!’ said Twinblade, ‘Foot-prints!’

‘They’re not ours are they?’ asked Emily.

‘Course not!’ said Twinblade. ‘They’re too big. Let’s follow them. Come on!’

The twins slowly followed the foot prints through the trees, out into an open space and up a rise.

‘Wow! Look at that’, said Twinblade. ‘A sort of village’. A few dark huts could be seen, grouped around a small square. ‘Wonder who lives there?’ said Emily.

‘We do’, said an unpleasant voice behind them. The twins froze and turned round slowly.

‘Oh, gosh’, said Emily.

‘Eek’, said Twinblade.

Standing there were three big, tall, nasty-looking men, dressed entirely in black, with black hats, and huge black umbrellas held over their heads.

To be continued.....