The Day the School Bell Went Missing

Ali Haroon

Ages 7–9



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A school fair mystery

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A Bell for the Fair



On Saturday, the school courtyard smelled of chalk and fresh bread. Gold paper stars swung from strings. The school fair would open at ten, when Jo rang the little brass handbell.

One Ring for Everyone



Jo had never opened a fair before. She had practiced one clear ring at rehearsal. It was loud enough to reach the cake table and soft enough to keep the pigeons on the roof.

The Empty Stand



At quarter to ten, Jo led Amira and Ben to the wooden stand by the courtyard door.

The sign was still there. It said RING AT TEN.

The bell was gone.

Three Things to Notice



Ben leaned under the stand. Nothing.

Amira looked at the top. A round mark showed where the bell had been. A scrap of gold paper lay beside it.

Jo found two damp tracks on the paving stones.

Which Way?



The tracks went past the stand and into the school. They were wide and straight, with little lines like the grooves on a wheel.

“My bike leaves one narrow track,” Ben said. “These came in a pair.”

“Something on wheels,” said Amira. “Let’s find out what.”

A Star Without a Point



Jo picked up the gold scrap. It looked like the point of a paper star. The back was sticky.

“Could be from any of the stars,” said Ben.

Jo looked up. The stars above them were tied with string. None had tape on the back.

The Art Table



The tracks faded where the floor was dry, so they asked Ms. Vega at the art table about the gold paper.

“I made two gold stars with sticky backs,” she said. “One for the prize box and one for the sign on the blue cart.”

END OF FREE SAMPLE

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