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# The Luckiest Girl in the World

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The text is recorded in full.

 These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the passages  
 linked to the listening activities.



CHAPTER ONE

## I hate being me

**R**emind me again,' says my best friend Richie. 'Why are we spending Saturday morning painting views of Paris on huge pieces of cardboard? Especially when they are showing all eight Harry Potter films at the Liverpool One Theatre?'

'*Paris in Spring*,' I say as I look out of the classroom window at the school playing fields. The rugby players still haven't come out onto the pitch. Where are they? I thought practice started ten minutes ago. '*Paris in Spring* is the theme for our high school prom. We volunteered to help with decorations, remember?'

'So your sudden interest in art has got nothing to do with a certain rugby player?' he says.

'I don't know what you're talking about.'

'Come on, Lola. You were lucky to get a grade C in Art last year. You said, and I quote, "Going to the dentist is more fun than painting". And you're a bigger Harry Potter fan than I am.'

'Stop complaining and paint, Richie.'

'So it's got absolutely nothing to do with the fact that the art classroom has a perfect view of the school playing fields? Where Matt is practicing rugby for tomorrow's match.'

I look up just in time to see Matt run onto the pitch. His hair is blonder than usual in the sunshine. The colour of sand on a Caribbean beach.

'Extracurricular activities, Richie,' I say. I cross my fingers and hope I sound convincing. 'It will look good on our university application form.'

'We don't even apply to university for another three years!'

'I'm happy to help the school however I can. That's all there is to it.'

'So you don't fancy<sup>1</sup> Matt? You don't want him to ask you to go to the prom with him?'

'Matt who?'

'You know. The guy whose name you wrote in little hearts in your diary.'

'You read my diary?!'

How could he! Richie's supposed to be my best friend!

'No, I didn't. But I knew it! You do fancy Matt!'

'We need more red paint,' I say, getting up. My face is redder than the paint I need.

'You know, guys like Matt don't even know people like you and me exist,' Richie says when I get back. He offers me a bar of

1. fancy: to like somebody romantically.

chocolate. My favourite. Richie always knows what I need. And now I need chocolate.

I look out of the window and see Nadine running from the edge of the fields towards Matt. She looks even slimmer, and prettier, than usual in her little cheerleading dress. She gives Matt a huge smile that shows every one of her perfect white teeth.

I hate Nadine. I hate cheerleaders.

I finish the chocolate in a few bites, and I instantly regret eating it. But who cares? Richie's right. Matt doesn't even know I exist.

Being invisible never bothered me before now. I'm proud, and happy to be an honest, hardworking, invisible Hufflepuff.<sup>2</sup> I'm not the star of the show and I'm ok with that. Actually, I hate being the centre of attention, and I'm happy to be part of the furniture. I'm part of the furniture, like the lamp in the corner of your living room. You never notice me, but I'm there.

Everyone definitely notices Matt. He's taller than all the other boys in school, and has perfect large shoulders, which is why he's a great rugby player. Richie thinks that Matt and his friends are Slytherins. I disagree. He's a Gryffindor, no question.

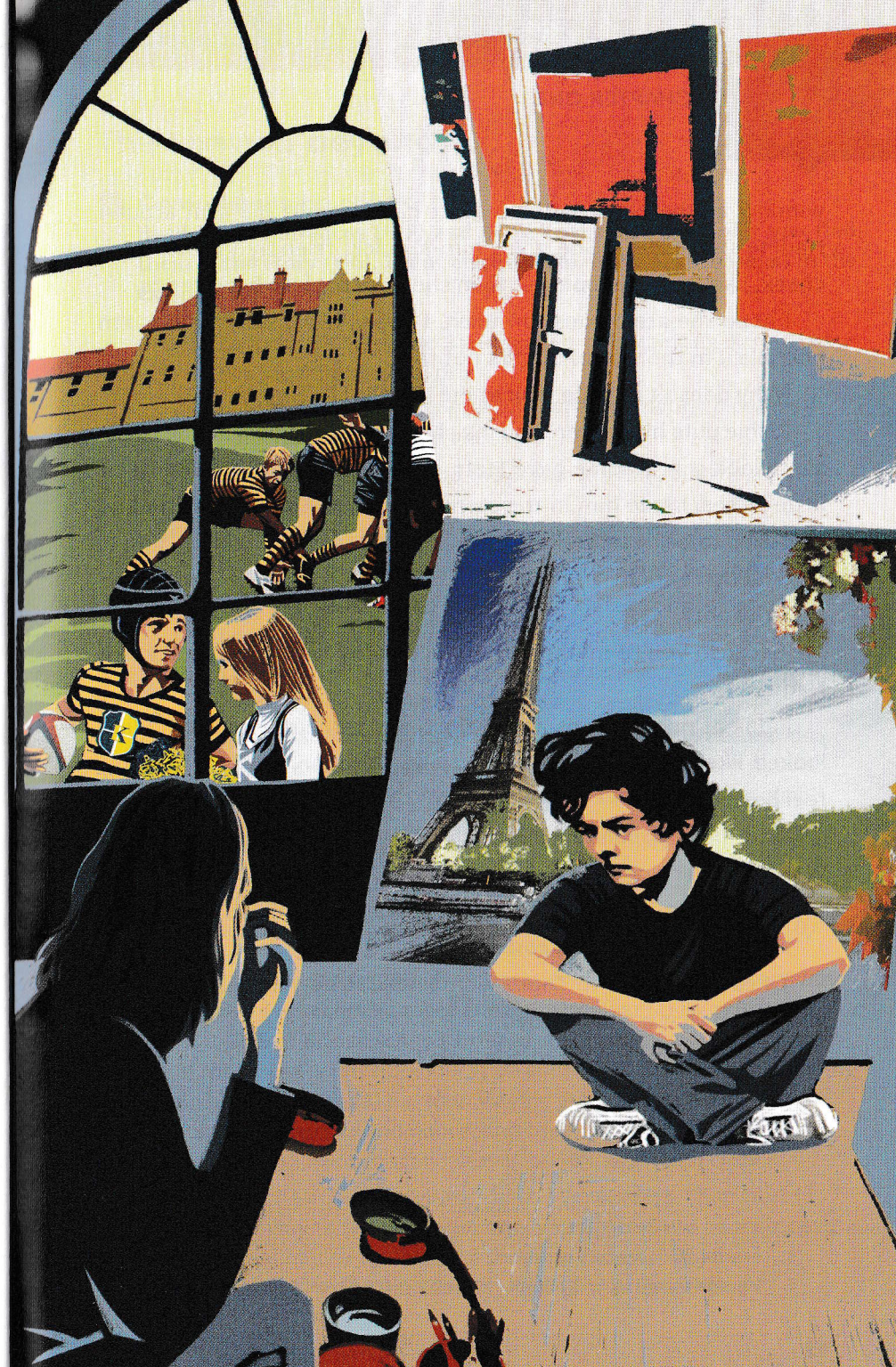
'So, Lola. Are you going to this stupid prom?' Richie says as he carefully paints an April Paris sky. 'Because I'm still available. You know. If you want to go with the funniest, hottest,<sup>3</sup> most intelligent guy in school.'

I forgot to tell you, Richie's the class clown. The funny guy that makes everyone laugh.

I smile, instantly feeling better, but then I look out of the

2. **Hufflepuff**: one of the four school houses at Hogwarts in the Harry Potter books, by J.K. Rowling. The others are: Gryffindor, Slytherin and Ravenclaw. (See activity on page 15).

3. **hottest**: (here) a slang word for "good looking".





window at the playing fields. Matt has just put his arm around Nadine's shoulders. She gives him a quick, friendly kiss on each cheek, like Italian people do, then she goes back to her friends.

I hope she ate onions for lunch. I know, I know. I'm mean. I'm horrible. I'm the worst. But it's not fair.

'Why doesn't anyone look at me like that?'

Richie puts his arm around my shoulders. He gives me the exact same look that Nadine gave Matt, and covers my cheek in lots of little kisses. I stab him in the stomach with my paintbrush and he pretends to be heartbroken.<sup>4</sup>

'You don't count,'<sup>5</sup> I laugh.

'Why not?'

'Because you're my best friend. Oh, why can't I be pretty like Nadine?'

I look at my old jeans and T-shirt, and remember what Nadine looked like in her cheerleading dress. Surprise, surprise! I don't feel better.

'And more popular? I need to find a way to be more popular. What do you think?'

'I think that you're perfect just the way you are,' he says.

Just then the solution comes to me.

'Of course! That's it! That's what I need to do! Matt likes popular girls. Then that's what I'll be.'

'What are you talking about, Lola?'

'You'll see.'

4. **heartbroken** : very sad and upset.

5. **you don't count** : (here) you are not considered to have the same value.

## The text and beyond

### 1 Comprehension check

Read these sentences (A-F) and number them in the order you find them in the story (1-6). Then rewrite them in the past tense, as in the example (0).

- O  1 Lola and Richie spend Saturday morning painting pictures of Paris for their school prom.  
*Lola and Richie spent Saturday morning painting pictures of Paris for their school prom.*
- A  Richie asks Lola to go to the prom with him, but she thinks that he is joking.
- B  Richie doesn't believe Lola. He knows that she likes Matt. He tells her that popular kids like Matt don't know kids like them exist.
- C  Lola believes that the only way for Matt to notice her is to become as popular as Nadine.
- D  Lola watches Nadine, a popular cheerleader, talk to Matt. She instantly feels worse.
- E  Lola tells Richie that she wants to help with the decorations because she wants to help the school. But really she likes a rugby player called Matt and she wants to watch him play.
- F  Lola has an idea. She knows what to do to get Matt's attention!

### 2 Cheerleading in the UK

Circle the correct option. There is an example at the beginning (0).

For years cheerleading (0) is was considered an American sport, but cheerleading is becoming more and more popular (1) *in/at* Britain. In 2010, 37% of British schools offered cheerleading as (2) *some/part* of (3) *their/they're* physical education sports options. But cheerleading is much, much more (4) *for/than* waving pom poms. Cheerleading combines gymnastics and dance, and cheerleaders (5) *must/can* be strong, flexible, dedicated and very good (6) *in/at* team work.

The Ascension Eagles are Britain's best cheerleaders. They started in 1996 as a way to (7) *inspire/impress* young people to be their best, keep (8) *away/out* of trouble, and promote fitness. They (9) *performed/acted* at the 2012 Olympic Games in London.