



CHAPTER ONE

A Different Kind of Treat

One morning, Buddy noticed a stack of notebooks in his classroom. They were on a shelf near the book baskets. In second grade, they used a lot of notebooks. One for math. And one for science. But these notebooks just had their names on them. Nothing more.

Buddy looked at Joey, his best friend. "Where did these come from?" he asked.

Bea walked over to join them. She always stuck her nose in whatever Buddy was doing. She tried to pick up the whole stack. "Oof!" she said. "These guys are heavy. What are they for?"



Buddy shrugged.

“You mean, it’s a *mystery*?” said Bea. She waggled her eyebrows, like she was trying to look mysterious. But to Buddy, she just looked goofy.

“A *Whirligigs* mystery,” said Joey.

Whirligigs was the name of their class. Because whirligigs were maple seeds. And their teacher’s name was Ms. Maple.

Ms. Maple overheard them. “No mystery,” she said. “Those are your writers’ notebooks. I got them out since we’re about to start working in them. And to celebrate, I’ve planned a surprise.” She smiled. Mysteriously!

“Is it cake?” asked Bea.

“No,” said Ms. Maple.

“Pizza?” asked Buddy.

Ms. Maple shook her head. “Not food,” she said. “It’s a different kind of treat.”

All the Whirligigs crowded around.

“We’re going to have an *author visit!*” said Ms. Maple.

Oh. Buddy drooped. That was disappointing.

“What’s an author visit?” asked Bea.

“We had one last year,” said Joey.

“Yeah,” said Bea. “But I didn’t go to this school last year. Remember?”

“It’s when an author comes to our school,” said Buddy. “And we have to go to the auditorium to see them. Last year we were supposed to sit in front ‘cause we’re still short. But we got there late. So the big kids had already taken our seats. And we had to sit in back. None of us could see anything. At all!”

“Oh dear,” said Ms. Maple. “I’m sorry that happened to you.”

“And we had a whole bunch of questions for the author,” said Buddy. “Cause we’d read every book of hers. I waved my hand like crazy, but she couldn’t see me. She never called on any of us!”

Bea made a sour face. Like sucking on a lemon. “Author visits sound *terrible*,” she said.

“Well,” said Ms. Maple. “That one doesn’t sound like it was the best experience.”

“It doesn’t sound like a *treat*,” said Bea. “You know what would be a treat? Cake. Like I suggested.”

“Or pizza,” said Malik.

“Or both!” said Omar.

“Whirligigs,” said Ms. Maple. The class quieted. They liked their name. And they liked to hear Ms. Maple say it. “I’ve already scheduled our author visit. For later in the week.”

Everyone groaned.

“But,” said Ms. Maple, “I think this one will be a lot more fun.” She waved them over to the rug. She held up some books she had there.

“Picture books?” said Malik. “Those are for kindergarteners!”

“Oh no,” said Ms. Maple. “Picture books can be quite sophisticated. We’ll be reading lots this year. Has anyone read these?”

No one had.

Tamar read the author’s name on the covers. “Roxy Fox.” She made a face. “That doesn’t even sound like a real name. Is it a *pen name*?” Tamar knew everything about books. Her dad was a librarian. But Buddy knew about pen names, too. They were made-up names for authors. That sometimes authors used for their books.

“Actually,” said Ms. Maple, “Roxy Fox is her real name. And she’s a friend of mine. We’ve planned a cozy visit. Here in our classroom, not the big auditorium.”



“Just us Whirligigs?” asked Kaveh.

“Just us Whirligigs.” Ms. Maple lined up the books. “Before she visits, we’ll come up with questions to ask. And observations.”

“All her books look different,” said Marisol.

“Ah,” said Ms. Maple. “And why do you think that is?”

“Ooh! Ooh!” said Tamar. “I know! Because all the *illustrators* are different!”

“Exactly,” said Ms. Maple. “Roxy’s an author. Not an *illustrator*. Some authors do both. But Roxy has a different *illustrator* for each book.”

Ms. Maple opened the first book and started to read.

Buddy sat up straighter. He wanted to listen carefully. So he could come up with a good question. Maybe, this time, the author would call on him.

And Buddy wanted to have the best question of all.