



Praise for *Solving Crimes* is NOT My Superpower

"EPIC. It's got a fantastic cast of characters and the writing is so funny my jaw hurt from laughing and smiling. Literally.

We'll all be talking about this book!"

Rashmi Sirdeshpande, author of *Good News*

"I want more!!! Give me more Lessor!"

Claire Powell, author of *Marty Moose*

"Witty, wacky and full of warmth and humour...
bright and bold storytelling."

Davina Tijani, author of *The Nkara Chronicles*

"Joyously silly yet a really touching story about
finding your own kind of special."

J. P. Rose, author of *Birdie*

"A brilliantly imaginative adventure."

Sophie Cameron, author of *Away With Words*

"A giggle a minute, with brilliantly rib-tickling illustrations."

Rachel Morrisroe, author of *Supersausage to the Rescue*


"A sharp and sparky adventure packed full of humour
and fantastic characters, this series has everything you
could want. A delight from start to finish!"

Dave Rudden, author of *Knights of the Borrowed Dark*



To Tessa McWatt,
Tim Atkins and
Helena Blakemore

- N.L.



To Mum, Ruby
and Stella

- S.S.

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SOLVING CRIMES IS NOT MY SUPERPOWER



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LITTLE TIGER

LONDON

WELCOME TO
WALSHAM



IN THE BEGINNING...

In a time before smartphones, when children had only sticks and a rock to play with, when black and white were the only two colours invented, explorer Valkro Strapp settled in the town of Walsham. He brought with him an ancient treasure, found in the mystical caves of Magaluf.

Soon after his arrival eighty years ago, the inhabitants of Walsham started noticing changes. It began with small, magical events, like plants blossoming whenever Ms Dorris walked through

her garden, or Mr David's nose growing longer whenever he told the truth. (Or so he said.)




Since the treasure came to town, the sun shone brighter all year round.

Walsham was blessed with eternal summer, while the rest of the country stayed as wet and cold as a dog's nose.

More people started


noticing that they had extraordinary abilities: some were given the strength to lift mountains, others the power to leap across oceans. Others gained very unextraordinary abilities, like the power to make a cow fall over. Or the power of making sandals and socks look cool.






As time passed, most of the inhabitants gradually discovered a unique gift, a power, early on, sometimes as young as nursery age. (These days, the children of Walsham generally develop “super” powers by the time they finish primary school.)



When Valkro took his treasure with him on an exploratory tour of Grimsby, the inhabitants of that town also began showing signs of superpowers. But, from the moment he left Walsham, terrible things started to happen there. (Much more terrifying and dreadful than the invention of Crocs.)



When Valkro Strapp came home, he was devastated to find his beloved town in disarray, but fortunately it didn't take long for Walsham to recover once the intrepid explorer and his treasure had returned. So, he stayed in Walsham.



Weeks turned into months. Months turned into more months and then years.



As Valkro got older, the powerful magic from his treasure protected him like a lucky charm. He never got ill, never ran out of toilet paper, never banged his toe on the table leg, and he was always finding five-pound notes in his back pocket.

Valkro lived to be ninety years old, and on his eighty-ninth birthday he hid his prized possession somewhere in Walsham itself. Somewhere nobody would find it, in the hope that it would never leave town again. It was the only way to keep Walsham safe, sunny and sizzling with superpowers.

And as to the whereabouts of this mysterious treasure? Well, as no one knows what it looks like, it has never been found. Let's hope it stays that way – who knows what would happen if it fell into the wrong hands...?



THURSDAY



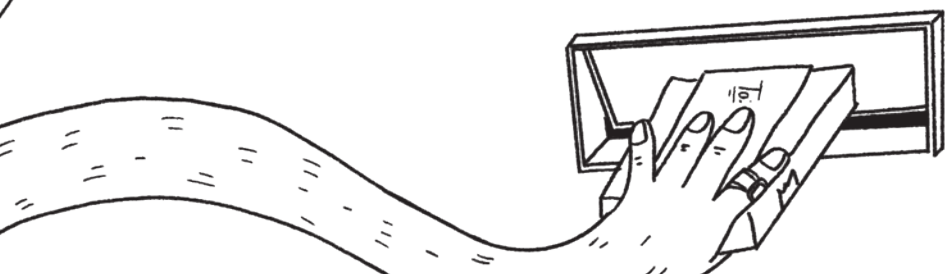
**JUST BEFORE EVERYTHING
WENT WRONG**





Most towns have a mail person who goes door to door, putting mail through the letter box. It must take ages strolling from one house to another, to another. Then you have to start on a new street and do it all again.

Here in Walsham, the postal worker has **EIGHT ARMS** that stretch as far as he wants. He delivers the post to eight houses at a time, although he doesn't have complete control over all his arms.



Sometimes he gets a hand stuck in our neighbour's letter box, drops letters or has a giggle attack when a dog licks his fingers. But it's still *much* quicker than a mail carrier with only two arms.

Me and my mum are eating breakfast. She has her bowl of fresh fruit and a glass of water, and I'm munching down my crunchy cereal. I barely look up when I see the postie's long, rubbery arm snaking past the kitchen window (he's dropped a load of letters in the front garden and on the car bonnet). Mum's dressed for work in her long cape and thick boots, and she's trying not to spill anything on her newly washed costume. The doorbell rings, right on cue.

"Yes, yes, bring it in!"

Mum calls.



After wiggling through the letter box, the postal worker's stretchy arm, carrying a shiny gold envelope, weaves along the corridor. His hand feels its way round the kitchen door and hovers towards Mum. He accidentally **PRODS** her face with the envelope a few times before she manages to grab it.

"Yes, thank you, Gary!" she says.



The hand gives her a thumbs up, before snaking back to the front door, knocking over a milk carton on the way out.

Mum tears open the gold envelope and reads her IPA missions for the day. I roll my eyes as she pushes her empty bowl away. She stands up slowly, hands on hips, chest out, in her

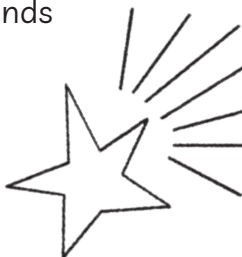
SIGNATURE SUPERHERO POSE.

“Mum, you’re doing it again,” I tell her.

Mum clocks how she’s standing and straightens up. “Oh, sorry, Sara! I don’t even realise I’m doing it.” She comes round and gives me a kiss on the top of my head.

Mum and Dad are part of the **IPA** (Incredible Protection Agency), so they’re basically superheroes for the whole country. People from other areas tried moving to Walsham to get powers, but the town wasn’t big enough. Part of the IPA agreement is that our heroes **FIGHT CRIME** everywhere, so other places let us be.

Only people with helpful superpowers can



join the IPA, as long as they're brave enough.

Mum can **CONTROL THE WIND** – she uses it to

fly around and put out forest fires.

She's great for flying kites but not so great around birthday candles.

Dad has **SUPER STRENGTH** – his

leg muscles mean he can jump

from here to the next village in just one leap.

Even though criminals are terrified of him, really he is a big, soft teddy bear. He once slammed on the brakes of the car, nearly causing a major accident, when a butterfly flew across the road.

“Where is your father?” Mum says, checking her watch. His hot oats and protein bars are untouched in front of his chair.

“I think he's having trouble with his **NEMESIS**,”

I say.





She purses her lips and we both shake our heads. The problem with being part of the IPA is that every superhero needs a nemesis.

Dad's used to be some villain called **CHESTNUT THE CONKERER**, but after the IPA defeated him, he turned his life around and got heavily into pottery. I think Dad became bored without having a villain to beef with, and then **THE WARDEN** showed up. He's our local traffic warden and his name is Norman – he's actually very friendly. He gave my dad a ticket once, and Dad started rolling around on the floor, screaming, "Noooooo!" and crying in pain. They've been **MORTAL ENEMIES** since that fateful day. Shout out Norman.

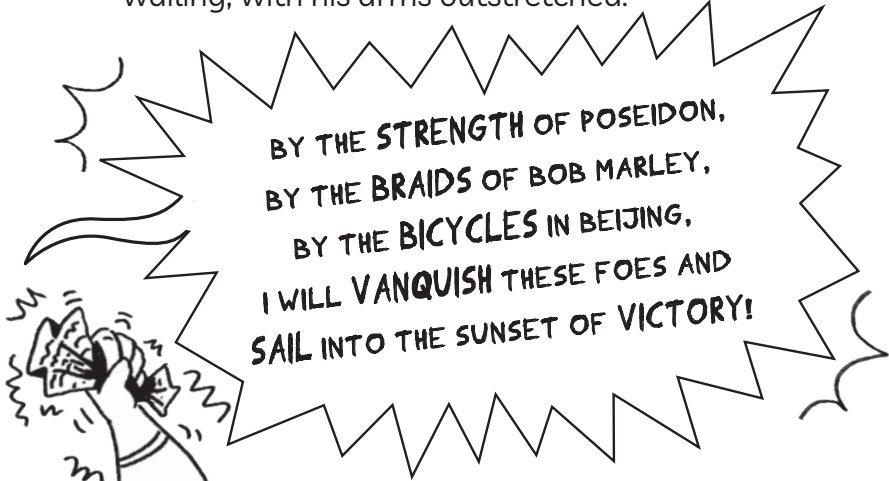
"You want a lift to school?" Mum asks.

"No, thanks. It's a nice day as usual – I'm just gonna walk it."

I hate it when she "gives me a lift". She legit carries me in her arms as we fly over the town. It's so embarrassing. I usually ask her to land behind a tree at the end of the road and put me

down where the other kids won't see.

On the way out of the house, Dad is losing it because of another parking ticket. Norman is nowhere to be seen but Dad is on one knee, wailing, with his arms outstretched.



BY THE STRENGTH OF POSEIDON,
BY THE BRAIDS OF BOB MARLEY,
BY THE BICYCLES IN BEIJING,
I WILL VANQUISH THESE FOES AND
SAIL INTO THE SUNSET OF VICTORY!

Sometimes my dad can be a little dramatic. Mum says he's just sensitive.

"Bye, Dad!" I call out.

He puts his arms down and stops screaming to say, "Bye, munchkin. Have a great day at school. And remember: the only **TRUE** powers are..."

"...a loving heart, a helping hand and the courage to do what's right."

He says that every day. It used to be cool but now it just feels a bit cringey.

You see, I don't actually have a superpower. Which is odd for a ten-year-old who lives in Walsham. I'm already in the last few weeks of Year Five, and pretty much everyone in my class at Walsham Primary has already discovered theirs. I'm sure they all think there's something wrong with me and I don't blame them. It's weird.

I'm trying to do little things to discover what my gift is. I thought it might be cooking but I can't even make cereal without burning it. Maybe burning cornflakes is my power? No, Sara, that's silly. Maybe it's **SILLINESS!**

I puff my cheeks out and tickle myself under the chin like a goat.

"Sara, are you OK? Why are you doing that to your face?" Mum calls out of the window.



DEFINITELY silly
but NOT super...

"I was just checking something!" I call back.

OK, silliness is not my superpower. Even though I do feel rather silly right now.

On the way to school, I pass by the nail salon and see Yasmine inside. She has the power to see **VISIONS OF THE PAST**. (It's cool because she never has to google anything.)

Our mayor has **MULTICOLOURED FARTS**.

Seriously, a puff of colourful smoke appears every time he lets one rip.

Hey, I didn't say they were all amazing powers! Most people have pretty pointless ones. I know an old lady who can **LEVITATE SQUIRRELS** – only waist-high – and she loves going to the park to feed them. Her husband's power is **COOKING PASTA IN HIS MOUTH**. Mum doesn't enjoy going to theirs for dinner.



But why???

Georgie and Javier are already waiting by the school gates. Georgie is wearing her full football kit and doing kick-ups. She's way more athletic than I am. Georgie can do all the tricks – round-the-world, flick-ups, balancing the ball on her head, and that's not even her superpower.

Georgie's special ability is that she can **SMELL FEAR**. Oh, and she's my best friend in the whole world. She's brave and funny, and extremely loyal. Georgie's been there for me since our first day of school.

Just in case it wasn't clear, Georgie lives and breathes football. Her parents are both football managers. They don't say goodbye in the morning, they just shake hands and shout, "Good game out there," and when she got chickenpox in Reception they blamed the ref.



And then there's Javier. He's good at spelling. I think that's his superpower?

"That's not my power," Javier says, and I realise I've been thinking out loud. He puffs out his chest slightly.

"MY POWER IS—"

"Javier, don't be insensitive."

Georgie cuts him off quickly.

"Right. Sorry, Sara," he mumbles sheepishly, looking down at the ground.

It's so annoying that everyone has a special gift except me. I've always wanted a cool power, something that would get me into the IPA like my parents.





Sometimes I dream of having my own nemesis. Not Norman the traffic warden (he's too nice) but maybe someone like Margaret Chow, who's the class know-it-all and one of the popular girls in our year. Her special gift is ***SENSING DOGS' EMOTIONS***, which is not exactly nemesis-worthy. But it's still a power.

I groan out loud.

"Your time will come." Georgie puts her arm round my shoulder as we walk through the school gates.

"Jeez, I hope you're right."

At this point, I'd settle for something less cool, like the janitor who can draw ***PERFECT CIRCLES***, or Judy in the year above us who has ***MUSICAL HICCUPS***.

"And besides, powers or no powers, we think you're a ***COMPLETE BOSS***."

Javier nods in agreement.

"Thanks, guys." They always have my back.

I have their backs too, for example, by helping in

history, which is our first lesson of the day.

“Do you think Henry the Eighth and Henry the Hoover were related?” Georgie asks as we head to class.

“No,” I reply. “I do not.”

“But they’re both called Henry. And they both have ‘the’ as their middle name,” she says.

Javier starts nodding, then looks at me and starts shaking his head.

“Oh, Georgie...” How do I put this? “You’re a genius when it comes to football,” I finish.

“Thanks.” She smiles. “That reminds me: the final is only four days away,” she says, clapping her hands excitedly. “We’re gonna smash Ramsdale to smithereens! They won’t know what hit ‘em.”

Me and Javier grin at each other. Ramsdale is the only other school in Walsham. Even though the kids there have powers too, we never lose to them. Georgie only mentions the final, like, every day but her excitement levels are infectious. I don’t



play football but even I'm excited about it.

"What makes you so sure it'll be that easy?" Javier asks, before blushing bright red like a sun-dried tomato. He's different to the kids in our class, but in a good way. Georgie once made him laugh so hard a baked bean shot out of his nose and straight into his shirt pocket. He's been hanging with us ever since.

"Oh, I didn't say it would be easy!" Georgie shakes her head. "I just said we're gonna smash 'em."

We all duck out of the way to avoid two students **FLOATING** along the corridor ceiling.

Georgie continues. "Walsham Primary hasn't lost a game in years, not since that mysterious trophy turned up."

Javier rolls his eyes and I smile. She's been obsessed with this idea since we were in Reception.

"As long as we've got that trophy, we can—"

She stops in her tracks and gasps.





The trophy cabinet has been broken in to:
there are bits of glass everywhere.

Only one trophy has been taken. But it's the
most important one.

