

VERBAL HOUSE

ADULTS MODULE 1

THE FIFTEENTH CHARACTER

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CHAPTER ONE

Jobs for Today

Every day lots of different people come to Happy Hills because there are lots of exciting things to do.

Sally Brown works at Happy Hills in her holiday. She is a student and she wants to be a teacher.

'I need the money,' she tells her family, 'and it's an interesting job.' But she is always very tired in the evening.

The workers at Happy Hills arrive early in the morning. They all wear clean green trousers and yellow shirts. They must smile a lot and be nice to all the visitors.

Every morning Mr. Parry puts a list of Jobs for Today in the workers' canteen. Mr. Parry wears different clothes. His shirt is green and his trousers are white, and he wears a red coat with I'm Ken Parry. Can I help you? on his pocket. The visitors call him Ken, but all the workers call him Mr. Parry.

Today Sally arrives at Happy Hills at eight o'clock. On her shirt there is a picture of a smiling face and Have a Happy Day in black and red writing. She goes to the canteen and looks for Mr. Parry's list.

'What job am I doing today?' Sally thinks. 'Am I making tea, or helping in the children's play house?'

But Sally is wrong. The list says, 'Sally Brown - Connie Cat. Break: eleven o'clock.'

'Oh no!' thinks Sally. Nobody likes wearing the costumes. But at Happy Hills the characters are very important. The visitors like to take photos of their children with Cowboy Joe, Charlie Clown, Baby Blue Eyes, Photo Phil, Big John, Connie Cat, Big Apple, Miss Flower, Edward Elephant and all their friends.

Everybody always asks the same questions, 'Are you very hot in your costume?' and 'How do you eat and drink?'

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Edward Elephant has the best job. He has a bag of water under his costume. He can spray the visitors with water. And Photo Phil and Charlie Clown make everybody laugh. But Connie Cat cannot do that. She can only say miaow to the children all day.

Sally looks for her costume. A tall man in a cowboy costume is standing beside her.

'Hullo, Sally,' says the cowboy. 'It's me - William.' William is a student too. He is Sally's friend. 'Which costume are you looking for?'

'Connie Cat. When's your break?'

'Eleven o'clock.'

'Me too.'

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CHAPTER TWO

Here Comes Zapp!

It is nine o'clock. The doors open, but there are not many visitors today. They all have invitations and they show them to Mr. Parry. A very famous man is coming to Happy Hills, so Mr. Parry is very excited.

'Zapp's coming today. He's opening the new Zapp-o-copter,' says William to Sally.

'Stop talking and do some work!' says Mr. Parry.

Zapp is a singer. Sally loves listening to his songs and she has all his CDs. There is a picture of him in her room too.

The Zapp-o-copter is very exciting. People can sit in little helicopters and go up and down very fast. The visitors stand behind a blue rope and wait for Zapp.

'Please stay behind the rope,' says Mr. Parry.

Suddenly there is a noise in the sky. Everybody looks up. 'It's Zapp's helicopter!' says William. The helicopter comes down and Zapp gets out. He smiles at the visitors.

'Oh - he's wonderful!' says a young girl. She gives Zapp a flower. He gives her a big smile and says, 'Thank you!'

Sally is hot and thirsty in her costume. She wants to talk too, but Mr. Parry is watching.

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CHAPTER THREE

Zapp's New Song

Mr. Parry takes the singer to the Zapp-o-copter. Zapp cuts the rope.

'Thank you, Zapp. Now please can you sing for us?' says Mr Parry.

'OK! But the people must help me!' he says. He begins to sing. Everybody knows the song and sings it with him.

'Thank you,' says Zapp. You're all wonderful singers. Now look at this.' He takes a CD out of his pocket. 'This is my new song,' he says.

'Please sing it for us!' say the TV men. But Zapp smiles. 'No, no - you must come to my big concert next Saturday.' He puts the CD in his pocket again.

'Now let's go on the Zapp-o-copter!' says Zapp. He sees a teacher with some children. 'Would they like to come too?' he asks her. 'Of course,' says the teacher. They help the children into the helicopters.

Zapp smiles and smiles. The photographers take lots of pictures. Photo Phil arrives too. He is one of the Happy Hills characters. He takes a photo of the children - and sprays them with water! Everybody laughs.

Zapp is having a wonderful day. He speaks to the TV people. The photographers take photos of him with all the characters. Zapp meets Charlie Clown. Charlie gives him a flower - and the flower sprays him with water. Everybody laughs.

Sally meets Zapp too, and she is very excited. But she cannot talk to him because she is wearing her cat costume and Mr. Parry is watching.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Where's Zapp's Cd?

'Come on, it's eleven o'clock,' says William. 'Let's go to the canteen for our break. We've gotten minutes.'

They sit down in the canteen and take off their heads. Sally is thirsty. Her face is hot and red. William is hot and thirsty too. They have a long drink of cold water. 'That's good!' William says. Then he looks at his watch. 'Ten past eleven,' he says. 'Come on, Sally. Back to work!'

They finish their drinks and put their heads on again.

Suddenly a lot of people come into the canteen.

'What's the matter?' says William.

'Zapp's CD!' says Mr. Parry. 'He can't find it!'

Everybody is unhappy, but Zapp is angry too.

'That CD's important, Parry,' he says. 'You must find it.'

'I'm doing my best, Zapp,' says Mr Parry. 'Don't hit me, please - I'm doing my best!'

A lot of things happen very quickly. The visitors want to go home, but suddenly Mr Parry closes all the doors.

'Nobody can leave,' he says. 'I'm sorry, but Zapp's CD's very important and we must find it.'

Mr Parry makes a telephone call. Very soon four police arrive in a big white police car. They ask a lot of questions.

The police look everywhere for the CD. They read Mr Parry's list of visitors. They count the visitors carefully and look in all their pockets and bags.

There is a lot of noise. People are angry and tired. They want to go home now. And Zapp is speaking very quietly into a little black telephone. Photo Phil goes to him and says, 'Smile, please!'

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'Go away!' says Zapp angrily.

Now the police want to talk to the workers. One stays with the visitors and three police speak to the workers in the canteen. Zapp comes with the police.

'You must find that CD!' says Zapp.

'We're doing our best, Zapp,' say the police.

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CHAPTER FIVE

The Fifteenth Character

Sally waits quietly with the other workers. She looks at Mr Parry's Jobs for Today list and counts the names.

There are twenty-nine names on the list today. Fifteen people are helpers. They wear green trousers and yellow shirts and help the visitors. Fourteen people are characters and wear costumes.

'Wait a minute,' thinks Sally. 'There are fourteen characters on the list. But there are fifteen characters here!'

She reads the list again, very, very carefully. 'Edward Elephant - yes, he's here. Connie Cat - that's me. Cowboy Joe - that's William. Photo Phil - yes, he's here. Big Apple - yes. Sir Laugh-a-Lot and Lady Love-a-Little... Wait a minute, Charlie Clown isn't on the list - but Charlie's here in this room!'

'Excuse me, Mr Parry,' says Sally. 'There are fourteen characters on your list, but there are fifteen in the room now. Charlie Clown isn't on the list, but he's here.'

Mr Parry reads the list and counts the characters. 'You're right, Sally,' he says.

'Take off your heads!' Mr Parry says to the characters.

They take off their heads.

Charlie Clown is a woman.

'Why are you wearing that costume?' asks Mr Parry.

The woman begins to run away, but William stops her.

The police take off her costume - and find a big pocket.

In it they find Zapp's CD. The singer smiles again.

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It is Saturday night. Sally and William are in London because they are going to Zapp's concert. There are lots of excited people and TV photographers outside the hall. Everybody wants to hear Zapp's new song.

'Where are your tickets?' says the man at the door to Sally.

'We haven't got any tickets,' says Sally. The man begins to look angry. Sally smiles and takes something out of her pocket. 'Is this invitation OK? It's from Zapp.'

- THE END -

Hope you have enjoyed the reading!