

Phil Barnes

My Teacher's A
SPY!

AUSTIN MACAULEY
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Chapter 1

Memories of Christmas were fading fast, presents, Christmas dinner and the family together seemed to be becoming a thing of the past already. Though it had not snowed yet and by the look of the early morning sky was threatening to do so at any time, it was still bitterly cold and upon seeing your breath in the air made it feel colder. Chloe walked to school with her mum whilst her younger brother Archie lagged behind praying for snow, Chloe didn't usually walk with her mum and brother to school but today was the start of a new term and her mum liked to take them on day one.

With the holidays over and a new school term about to begin, Chloe was excited to be able to see her friends and exchange gossip whilst comparing Christmas presents. She had spoken to Jessica and Kelly during the holidays but nothing beat getting back together, she had known them since day one of school and now they were in Year 6, 11 years old and would be moving up to Senior School in September.

"Come on Archie," called Mum for about the dozenth time already, "we'll be late at this rate." Chloe shook her head wondering how her and Archie were related, they were nothing alike and never agreed on anything but he did make her laugh, in fact he made

everyone laugh, *he was contagious* she thought and smiled whilst he caught up.

“Right, now let’s get a move on,” said Mum.

“Will it snow today?” asked Archie.

“Looks very likely,” Mum replied, the grin on Archie’s face spread from ear to ear and he started to list all the things he would do in the snow before the day was out. Chloe was not bothered about the snow, she felt she was too old to be running around in the snow, making snowmen and sledging.

Getting back to normal school life was appealing after the laziness of Christmas, Chloe hated being sat around doing nothing, her brain was always on the go and she had an active imagination. They reached the school gates with a couple of minutes to spare and upon reaching the gate Jessica, Kelly and Andrew were waiting for her, Andrew was the fourth friend in their gang, he wasn’t like other boys, he was not bothered about football but instead loved to write and like the three girls had a very vivid imagination.

Archie ran off as soon as they were through the gate before mum had a chance to kiss him goodbye, Chloe said her goodbyes and joined her friends, *let the gossiping commence* she thought as Jessica turned to the group, “I’ve heard a rumour that we have a new teacher in school,” she started.

“Really,” said Kelly.

“It’s true,” Andrew added, “I saw a new car in the teachers’ car park this morning, a black golf.”

“You and cars,” said Chloe, “doesn’t mean we have a new teacher, could be an old teacher with a new car.” Before anyone could answer the bell sounded to indicate the start of the new day, “We will see,” said Andrew, “we will see...”

Chapter 2

As the friends made their way in to class the school was buzzing as children exchanged gossip, compared Christmas presents and laughed with friends they had not seen for a couple of weeks. The register was completed quickly and the class began to settle in for the new school term but before they had got ready for the first lesson of the day Miss Edwards addressed the class.

“Class,” she began, “I know we normally have assembly on a Friday but today there are some important announcements, so if you could follow me quietly to the hall for morning assembly.” Everyone rose from their seats, Chloe looked at Andrew who wore a smug grin on his face as if to say I told you so, she smiled back thinking *Andrew is nosier and gossips more than anyone I’ve ever met.*

They made their way to the hall as all the classes in school did and took their seats on the benches at the back, being in Year 6 had this one advantage in assembly but being slightly higher up than the rest of the school meant not only greater comfort but you also got noticed easily, which they had found out a few times and had been told off for talking during assembly. Chloe remembered easier days when they would talk and laugh during assembly whilst enjoying the cover of being hidden

amongst Years 3, 4 and 5 sat crossed legged on the floor, she sighed and squigged up closer to Jessica.

Once everyone was seated quietly in the hall the Deputy Head Teacher Mrs Poole came up on to the slightly raised stage area and spoke.

“Good morning everyone.”

“Good morning, Mrs Poole,” came the reply.

“I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas but I trust you are ready for the new term ahead.”

A few mumblings and some nodding of heads broke out amongst the children.

“Get on with it,” Andrew whispered trying to look almost ventriloquist like, not moving his lips, a few children suppressed giggles at this and then Mrs Poole continued.

“I have two important announcements to make,” at this Chloe and her friends sat forward, interested.

“Firstly, Mr Jones will not be with us for six to eight weeks, he had a small accident over Christmas and will need some rest.”

Again, mumblings broke out amongst the children as they tried to guess what had happened or make up their own funny versions to amuse each other.

“When you have quite finished,” said Mrs Poole a bit louder, a hush came over the children and Mrs Poole continued, “so I would like to welcome Mr Gunning, who will be taking over whilst Mr Jones is recovering.”

At that Mr Gunning walked in to the hall and on to the stage, he was tall, blond and seemed full of confidence, “Please welcome Mr Gunning and give him every courtesy you give all the teachers,” Mrs Poole finished as she stepped aside.

“Well, good morning,” Mr Gunning said grinning whilst all the while scanning everyone in the hall.

Chapter 3

A deathly silence had filled the hall as all the children stared at Mr Gunning, he was very handsome with deep blue eyes that seemed to penetrate right through you and make you feel vulnerable but at the same time trusting like you could tell him all your secrets without regret.

After a long pause Mr Gunning spoke, "I am looking forward to meeting and working with everyone during my short time here." Again he looked around as if he were scanning the room and taking in every piece of information, a couple of girls from Year 6 blushed when his eyes fell on them, even a teacher from Year 3, Miss Mills, went red and looked embarrassed when he finished scanning and stopped at her.

The short assembly finished with Mrs Poole again welcoming Mr Gunning and dismissing the children from the hall, upon leaving the hall the noise level began to rise as the children started to talk about Mr Gunning and began to form their opinions of him.

Girls from Year 6 giggled and talked about how fit Mr Gunning was, other children talked about what he meant with meeting everyone, does that mean he will take lessons or join in was a regular question asked.

Teachers hushed their pupils and led them back to class, Chloe nudged Kelly, "What do you think?" she whispered.

"Oh, he's very good looking," Kelly replied.

"Not that," Chloe hissed.

"Oh," Kelly responded going slightly red.

"I mean, do you think something funny is going on?" Chloe whispered.

"I do," Andrew interrupted, "he looks like an actor to me," he finished not bothering to lower his voice, "Andrew," Miss Edwards called, "hush now." Andrew nodded in obedience and turned to the girls with a sheepish grin on his face.

"Well, whatever he's here for let's make a point of finding out," Chloe said quietly not daring to anger Miss Edwards, Jessica nodded and added, "I agree, he does remind me of an actor."

"We'll keep an eye on him," Andrew added and they entered their classroom, found their seats and agreed to talk again later.

First lesson was shorter than normal due to the hastily called assembly and before they knew it they were going out for break, the gang got together on the playground and began to discuss the morning's events.

"I think an actor is right," Andrew started. "Perhaps he is here for some research."

"But why not tell us?" Kelly asked.

"Good point," Jessica added.

"To stay undercover and get the best results," Andrew uttered quickly.

"Makes sense," Chloe said absently whilst thinking.

"You have an answer for everything," Kelly said to Andrew who stood looking pleased with himself, *not for the first time today* Chloe thought. "You know ... " Chloe

started, “smugness is quite an ugly trait.” at this Andrew sagged, the girls laughed, Andrew puffed out his cheeks “whatever,” he said and they all laughed again ...

Chapter 4

The rest of the day passed without incident but the talk of the school was still Mr Gunning and stories of how Mr Jones had been in an accident, as with all gossip Mr Jones had done everything from falling off Mount Everest to being attacked by a shark whilst scuba diving. Chloe had heard enough stories for a lifetime but had to laugh at some and considering how simple the explanation probably was made them all the more entertaining.

Andrew was absolutely sure he was right as usual and that Mr Gunning was an actor researching a role with the school agreeing to help, he told the girls he intended to get some answers and would begin poking around after school.

“What are you going to do?” asked Jessica as they left the classroom.

“I think I will start with his car,” Andrew said.

“Why?” asked Kelly.

“A car can tell you a lot about a person,” Andrew began, “and as I only got a glimpse this morning I will need to get a better look.”

“Well, don’t be too obvious,” said Chloe, and then she quickly added, “do you need some look outs?”

“That would be wise,” Andrew replied and they made their way to the teachers’ car park. They found the car and waited, Andrew carefully approached and gave it a once over, he peered in the window, the car was neat and tidy, perfectly maintained and spotless inside and out.

Very nice Andrew thought as he went towards the driver’s window to investigate further, with his face almost pressed against the glass he peered in, after what seemed an age he stood up with a confused look and turned to the girls.

“What is it?” Chloe whispered loudly but before she got an answer Kelly started to whistle, this was the signal and Andrew darted over to them.

They stood quietly on the field next to the car park and Kelly joined them trying to remain inconspicuous and not look at the car or Mr Gunning who was approaching it rapidly. They watched him click the fob and the car sprang to life, he opened the door, jumped in, adjusted the mirrors and started the engine, they watched carefully trying not to get noticed and then off he went quickly and smoothly out of the school gate.

“That’s some car,” Andrew said rapidly as if he had been holding his breath the whole time.

“What do you mean?” Jessica asked.

“I have never seen so many dials on the dashboard before, must be really new, I think I will search the internet later but it’s way more advanced than I have ever seen.”

“Well, you’re the expert,” Chloe said, “text me later if you find out anything interesting,” she added as they started to leave school.

“I’m not sure if he is an actor now,” Andrew said as he trotted behind the three girls.

“I think you’re right,” replied Chloe, “so who is he then and what is he doing here ...?” she added looking round at her friends, they all shrugged but each was determined to find out.

Chapter 5

The following morning at school Chloe found her friends waiting at the school gate whispering, “What is it?” Chloe asked as she joined them.

“I was just saying, I’ve never seen anything like that car before, I looked over countless pages on the internet last night, this car is so new, like yesterday new,” Andrew said quietly.

“I was wondering why you didn’t text me,” Chloe said in return

“Sorry, not a lot to say really,” Andrew replied whilst shrugging.

“So what now?” Jessica asked looking at her friends in turn.

“I want another look at that car,” Andrew said and he started to walk towards the teachers’ car park.

“Hold on,” Kelly called behind him, “you’ll need back up,” she added.

They quickly made their way round to the car park, as expected Mr Gunning’s car was parked up neatly, Andrew approached but then stopped dead in his tracks, the three girls had not expected this and walked straight into the back of Andrew and they all stumbled forward. “What the...” Chloe began but she noticed Andrew’s confused face, he looked like he was multiplying the

largest sum ever invented and was struggling to come up with an answer.

“What’s wrong?” Jessica asked.

“But ...” was all Andrew uttered and an Andrew lost for words was something the girls had never seen before.

“But what?” Chloe asked.

“But how...?” was all he could say in reply.

“I don’t get it,” Kelly said impatiently. “But what, but how, what is he going on about?” she added, the girls stared at the car and then back at Andrew but could not understand his confusion.

Suddenly Andrew came back to life, “That’s not possible,” he said.

“What?” all three girls said together in equal frustration.

“Look at the number plate,” he urged and pointed at the car’s yellow number plate but to the girls there was nothing wrong and they turned to Andrew with puzzled looks.

“Yesterday the number plate was BG12 THE and now its GB21 HET, number plates don’t change, that’s against the law,” Andrew said hurriedly as he shook his head,

“Oh,” said Chloe, “I never noticed that.”

“No one looks at the number plate,” Andrew said “but it’s the most important part, it tells you important information.”

“This is getting weird ...” Jessica said.

“Let’s get going before we are noticed,” added Kelly as she looked around.

They made their way round to class, the bell sounded and children began to filter in to school, “This is strange,” whispered Chloe “a car with changing number plates, Mr Jones suddenly off sick, Mr Gunning taking

over out of the blue ...” she continued, the others nodded in agreement.

“He is definitely up to something and we need to know what,” Jessica whispered back. They got to class and found their seats ready for the day ahead but determined to uncover the truth about Mr Gunning...