**AFFADAVIT**

**I, Lilias Rush (team Supervisor) certify that the above team:**

**X completed all work on their book in accordance with the competition rules**

**X completed all work between 8.00am and 8.00pm on the day of writing**

**X included all five random words**

**X Word count 4500 approx**

**Date: 30th August**

**Signed: Lilias Rush**

**To the Organizers**

**A hard copy of this story complete with illustrations and a cover will be sent ASAP. It will be bound.**

**Lilias Rush**

WHERE’S

RORY?

**St Johns Dragons**

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“Nonsense, don’t be silly! It’s not real.”

That was what Rory’s mother had told him.

It couldn’t be real, it was only fake, couldn’t come to life, could it?

Rory just ran when he saw it again.

**CHAPTER 1**

**Excitement in the Morning**

The sound of merry laughing rang throughout the valley. The kookaburras were at it again. Hacking away boisterously as soon as the sun rose. Usually, Rory would have been angry at this unwanted alarm, but today he didn’t care. He had hardly slept anyway. Uncontainable excitement stirred through his body. Today was the big day. The whole town could hardly wait for the event of the year.

Rory, after his six years of the same routine, easily fell into the daily process of hopping out of bed, eating his crispy cornflakes with milk, taking a quick shower, and getting dressed. Today, he wore his best blue shorts and red shirt. The rest of the town would be doing the same.

It wasn’t every day that there was a big town fair and a new shop was opened. For years, the rural Australian town had been hungry for a proper supermarket. Though is wasn’t a huge town, a new modern complex was constantly wanted. And finally, after decades of council meetings, endless petitions and fundraisers, Bottlebrush Markets was opening in grand style. Being the son of the Mayor, Rory was especially excited for the day. His mum, Mayor Mason, would be addressing the large crowd that was expected to attend the event, then cut the ribbon that wold officially open the grand new store. After waiting what seemed like an age while the rest of his family got ready, Rory’s eagerness for the day to start was at its final level. Finally, Rory, his mum, his dad and his pesky little 3-year-old sister piled into the car to drive off. The Mason family home was a rustic affair. A house built on stilts surrounded by stringy grass and scorched shrub, it was located in the centre of the small rural town of Bottlebrush. The rest of the town was buzzing as well, like a hive of bees trapped in a jar. The Mason’s neighbours were also getting into their cars. No one in Bottlebrush was rich, but everyone had decent four-wheel drive cars, in case of an occasional bogging or pothole in the old, **cracked** main road. Rory and his family were all on edge. Rory was daydreaming about all the wonderful things he would see at the fair and opening. His mum had told him there would be balloons, banners, confetti and even a face painting stand. The Mason’s parked, disembarked and prepared for the day’s events.

**CHAPTER 2**

**The Bottlebrush Fair**

With the blue sky and scorching summer sun looking down on Town Bottlebrush, everyone was gathered in delight. The sausage sizzle fire was roaring on, eggs were **cracked** on the grill, Mrs Pettier’s prize-winning lamingtons stacked, the jam contest underway and grand pavlovas for this extra special occasion!

Rory was standing in the middle of the spectacular celebrations with his mother, the mayor. He had never seen such a huge fair in his entire 6 years! And that was a pretty long time according to Rory. This fair had everything, woodworkers showing off their skills to people making animal balloons, and most special to the town, was the grand finale. Where his mother would open the brand new supermarket in the small town of Bottlebrush!

The podium stood outside the supermarket on the platform and a red ribbon hung from two poles on each side. A huge bright banner towered over the stage and read the words ‘Welcome’ in bold letters. Balloons flew around the front, in Rory’s favourite colours, blue and green. The new supermarket’s name glistened in the sunlight, flashing into his blue eyes.

All around him, people walked past, saying hello to Rory and his mother. There were people eating all the **delicious** food that was on offer, kids running around with face paints and an animal farm with the cutest animals Rory had ever seen. Rory asked his mother if he could have an ice cream before she had to go for a speech. Smiling at him, his mother kindly replied yes, and Rory ran off to the ice cream man for his double scoop of raspberry ripple delight! It tasted of rainbows and the sunshine, yummier than ever. His mother stood a few metres away smiling at her child who had forgotten to give his money to the man. She walked a few paces and hurriedly gave the money. Rory smirked towards his mother in delight not realising what had happened.

After his ice cream, Rory got a face paint of a blue racing car on his cheek. He loved the fair, it had everything and Rory didn’t want the day to end. He looked around for more fun things to do.

**CHAPTER 3**

**Chipper**

With all the buzz and all the chaos, Rory wanted to explore. Jumping around and pulling his mother along, he couldn’t help but play with everything he came across. From dresses to toys to books to movies, Rory was wide ‘eyed and looking for fun.

“Mummy! Can I please have that colourful ball? We never have any toys at home. It’s always boring,” complained Rory.

The mayor refused as she knew amount of toys Rory had at home. He was one of the luckiest children in town with a whole collection of the coolest toys.

“Oh, look! It’s time for me to go,” said the Mayor as she rushed off.

She had to talk to someone so she told Rory to go to Chipper the friendly neighbourhood woodworker so he could look after him.

“Hey Rory. Do you want to go explorin’? I heard there were some cool knicks knacks around.”

“Ok, it’s not like there’s anything else we can do in here,” said Rory grumpily.

“Oh, cheer up! I’m sure you’ll find something interesting.”

“I’m hungry, can we go eat something? What about those candy apples? Or those gummy bears? Cake would be nice too!”

“Why don’t you eat somethin’ healthy for once? How ‘bout those tuna sandwiches over there?”

“Eww, no, I hate Tuna. Fine, let’s go look at the toys if I can’t eat anything decent,” if he couldn’t buy any toys, at least he could look at them.

So reluctantly, Chipper followed Rory to the toys section. While he was waiting, he started to feel peckish himself so he went to the banquet. He would only be a minute, right? He started snacking on some tuna sandwiches, a bit of salad and a delicious slice of lamington. Then he heard a scream that sounded like Rory’s. Was that Rory?

“RORY! WHERE ARE YOU? ARE YOU OKAY? ANSWER ME!” screamed Chipper.

Then running across the market, Chipper saw Rory running for his life in tears across the market with the face paint that he got earlier, smudged.

“MUMMY! MUMMY! I SAW IT! IT WAS STARING INTO MY EYES AND IT WAS SOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
SCARY!” Yelled Rory.

“Hush, hush Rory. Go run along, can’t you see I’m busy here,” whispered the Mayor.

“BUT IT WAS TERRIFYING, W-W-WHAT IF IT STEALS MY TOYS? WHAT IF IT STEALS MY FRIENDS?” screamed Rory at the top of his lungs.

“**Nonsense.** Don’t be silly! It’s not real,” said Mayor Mason.

**CHAPTER 4**

**Rory Remembers**

Though no matter what his mother said nothing would ever make him forget, for his first experience with scarecrows was truly unforgettable.

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It was the last day of summer and Rory was having a marvellous time running through the wheat fields. “Be back before dusk” were the last words his mother had spoken to him that morning, as he bolted out the door. He had always loved the wheat fields especially near harvest time, endless plains of golden grains swaying in the wind. To Rory nothing was more entertaining than just running around, finding the perfect spot to lie in the wheat staring up at the bright sky and making shapes out of the clouds. Today, he thought, would be no different. As he ran he daydreamed, then, WHAM, he collided with something. Looking up a face stared back at him, a **cracked** weathered face. It wobbled, then the scarecrow crashed down upon him, its haunting grin seeming to sneer at his misfortune. Terrified, Rory paused for a moment then sprinted far, far away. He ran till he could no longer. Stopping to catch his breath he looked around and tried to orientate himself but he recognized nothing. Realising, at last, that he was lost he felt his heart sink.

Terrible thoughts ran through his head, he would never be found, the scarecrow would find him first. Rory didn’t know what to do, he called out for help till his voice was hoarse and throat throbbed. Dusk was coming soon, surely his mother would send out a search party. Then he heard the **hum** of a tractor, it’s wheels turning over the wheat. A familiar voice rang out. It was Chipper, singing, “Waltzing Matilda, waltz...”

“CHIPPER,” Rory yelled with happiness, “Chipper please take me home, I saw a scarecrow and he was real and moving.”

“Slow down Rory, let’s take you home then you can tell your story.” Chipper spoke calmly.

“It’s real, it’s not just a story.” Rory sounded convinced but his voice was croaky.

“Just sit and drink some water, you sound extremely parched.” Chipper said with authority.

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Looking around he was back at the market, he remembered the scarecrow he had seen in the shop. Fear pulsed through his body. It was just like before - he ran.

**CHAPTER 5**

**Endless Mazes of Shops**

Rory wasn’t sure where he was running; the fright he felt after seeing the scarecrow blinded him. All he wanted to do was run as far away from that scarecrow; to the other side of the world if he could. As Rory ran, his mind whirred like a machine, pumping out thoughts and feelings. He wasn’t sure why he was scared of the scarecrow, but as soon as it fell on top of his body, his heart leapt to his throat and his instincts kicked in.

Rory whizzed around a corner and skidded to a stop. “Uh-Oh” he whispered. He had no idea where he was. The shops which lined the corridor seemed strange and unfamiliar. Only the mannequins in the windows occupied the vast space. Rory turned around and stared back the way he came. It was like an endless maze of winding shops. He couldn’t believe that he took no notice of the route he took. Rory plodded sadly down the corridor, idly glancing at the shops he passed. Most were empty, however others already contained a wide variety of trinkets and other knick knacks. Toys, books, clothes; Rory loved to look at these with his mum. He slowly awakened from his daydream as he stopped in front of an Explorer themed outlet. With his newly learnt reading skills, he spelt out the large print words sewn onto a colourful banner.

“If you find yourself lost, trust your instincts, have courage and move onwards!” Rory read slowly.

His mouth curled in a small smile; sure he was lost, but if he followed the banner’s instructions, he would be okay.
With a deep breath and a boosted motivation, Rory set off again. Confidently, he pushed open a door next to the explorer’s shop and stepped through. He jumped as the heavy door swung shut behind him with a loud bang. A small beam of light peaked out from the little gap between the door and the floor. Without it, the room would probably be plunged into near darkness. Still confident, Rory strode onwards away from the door and hit a hard wall. A burst of pain bloomed on his forehead when he hit the wall. Panic rose in his throat as he ran back to the door. With all his might, he tried to pull it open once more, but it refused to budge. Despair quickly replaced the confidence in him like a thick knot in his stomach. How was he going to get out of this?

**CHAPTER 6**

**The Case of a Missing Boy**

“And so”, the Mayor said,” I would like to thank everyone who came to support the opening of this new supermarket. I am very proud that we have all been able to come together and complete this, and I would especially like to thank Rory- wait, where is Rory?”

The audience started to hush in distress- no one knew where Rory was!

Everyone looked around outside the supermarket for any signs of little Rory. Tables were turned, and so did heads as Chipper tapped his finger on the microphone. The people looked up with worry, but soon calmed down as they heard Chipper’s soothing voice and clear message:

“It is okay everyone, please calm down. We need to look for Rory in an orderly fashion as not to scare him even more. Let’s all split up and start a small search party. Everything will be alright once we think of a plan.”

All of the people stood up and quietly started to think of an idea. They all thought of many different ideas, but no one even thought of looking *inside* the supermarket. They were all too busy to think straight.

Chipper and the Mayor softly chatted away with the police. This was a very serious case, and they needed all the help they could get. Some of the people were told to go into their cars and drive around the town in case Rory ran away, others stayed at the party and searched for him in small groups. Everyone was concerned for the Mayor’s little boy, but all remained peaceful and calm as they focused on the search.

Soon, midday had come, and everybody was hungry. Everyone was too exhausted to continue the search, but Rory was still nowhere to be found. The Mayor wept as she thought of her missing little boy.

“Oh, I hope he’s not in **danger**!” she cried.

Now, nobody knew what to do. The party was silent-no words were said. All was sad, but the people didn’t want to leave. Where had Rory gone? What happened to him?

The Mayor was the saddest of them all. How did she lose her little Rory? Tears sprang from her eyes once again as she remembered him. *Poor Rory*, she though, *where in the world could he be? He must be scared, hungry. It’s all my fault.*

**CHAPTER 7**

**A New Friend**

Rory’s legs quivered with fear as he walked through the darkness. He didn’t know if he would come out alive! He found himself wondering through the darkness with his hands stretched out in front of him. He just wanted his mother to come and save him from the scarecrows. The pitch black storage room scared the small boy. Tears started to pour down his face as he wondered through the dark, not knowing what was around him. Suddenly, Rory’s foot caught underneath something hard. He screamed out in pain as the object stuck into his small foot and he fell onto the cold hard ground. Now bawling, the young child scrambled to get up from the cold ground but he couldn’t find the strength he needed. He was terrified.

Rory wanted to be back in his mother’s arms, but he knew she was busy now. He wanted anyone to come save him. He couldn’t go outside otherwise the scarecrow would get him! He felt something soft rested up against the wall. It reminded him of his favourite toy, maxi, a stuffed dog with floppy ears and gleaming green eyes. In an attempt to feel more comfortable, he pulled the soft object into his arms and curled up with it. A few of his tears rolled down his round cheeks and soaked into the soft object.

“Hello!”

Rory screeched and jumped up from the ground, tripping over the objects on the ground in the process. He felt around the walls, trying to find a light switch or the door handle. Finally, he found a switch and pressed it down then turned around to see who had spoken.

“Is there something wrong?”

At that moment, Rory thought his life was over. His biggest fear standing there, alive and talking to him. A scarecrow. He stood in shock, not really comprehending what was happening. The scarecrow stepped forward, wanted to make sure Rory was okay. He was wearing blue overalls and a red checked flannel, his smile was sewn onto his face as was his nose and button eyes.

“I’m sorry to have frightened you. My name is Sam.” The scarecrow said, moving towards Rory slowly.

Rory finally found the words to speak, “How can you talk? And move? Are you going to steal me away?”

“Your tears appear to have brought me to life, and no I would never do that!”

**CHAPTER 8**

**One True Friend is Better Than a Thousand**

Rory’s friends and family didn’t really understand his fear of scarecrows, but scarecrows were quite terrifying. Scarecrows looked completely lifeless like all the happiness had been drained out of them. They looked like they were straight from a nightmare with their buttons for eyes. Although, this scarecrow looked so approachable and kind-hearted. The scarecrow kneeled down and placed a hand on Rory’s shoulders.

“I trust you, Sam,” Rory smiled while the tears ran down his cheeks. The scarecrow handed Rory a tissue and gave a reassuring smile.

“Where’d you come from?” Sam asked politely, he was the type that always tried to be courteous no matter what the situation was.

“I was just at the supermarket opening Sam, I miss my mummy a lot,” he sighed.

“I’ll help you get back Rory, I’m sure your mother is wondering where you are.” Rory’s chestnut locks fell over his eyes only for the scarecrow to push them back. Rory gave the scarecrow a small nod and took his hand in his. The scarecrow used his strength to pull Rory up. Rory took a close look at Sam, he had tawny straw hair and ebony button eyes. Rory found his denim overalls especially cool.

As they were walking back to the opening Rory realised himself and the scarecrow had a lot in common. Sam wasn’t like Rory’s other friends. He preferred to listen and Rory’s mouth could run forever. Rory appreciated that.

“Sam, you’re coming home with me right?” Rory smiled when looking up at the scarecrow.

“I don’t know if everyone would welcome me like you did, after all, remember how you first reacted Rory?” Sam quietly spoke while awkwardly fidgeting.

“Sure, but I’ve gotten to know you now and you’re like the best person ever!” Rory laughed giving Sam a high-five, “after all, you’ll have me.”

“One true friend is better than a thousand,” Sam beamed down at Rory.

**CHAPTER 9**

 **My Saviour**

Walking through the brand new Bottlebrush Supermarket looking for the young Rory Mason. A feeling of anxiety washed over him as he realised he had reached the last aisle he hadn’t checked, hoping the round faced boy would be in the last isle he turned the corner and was met with an aisle of gardening supplies he slowly walked to the end of the isle closely observing every shadow and tool on the shelves until he reached a door with a sign that read “Staff Only”.

Ignoring the sign, he opened the door to a shrill scream from inside of what he now knew was the storage room scared Chipper enough to slam the door back closed all the commotion had caused the child to begin crying again. Hearing the sobbing begin Chipper opened the door slower and calmly turned on the light, wedged the door open and walked up to a crying Rory.

In the dim light Chipper hadn’t noticed Sam comforting the child when he went to pick him up and felt Sam pulling Rory Back down. Chipper took a step back and saw the scarecrow holding the blue eyed boy surprised he jumped back seeing the moving scare crow he grabbed Rory’s wrist and pulled him out of the cluttered room and ran into an isle at the other end of the store. Looking at his surroundings Chipper saw shelves filled with lollies and chocolate.

 His eyes then snapped onto the tear stained face, of cracked face paint and a down turned mouth, the face that belonged to the innocent Rory Mason. Feeling bad, Chipper grabbed a pack of brightly covered gummy bears, opened them and gave them to the small child. Towering over Rory, Chipper grabbed his hand as he led him to the door to show the gathering crowd that the child was in fact safe and sound. Rory stood still and wouldn’t budge,

“Sammy’s my best friend, he’s the one that saved me not you. I’m not leaving without him.”

**CHAPTER 10**

**The Moment of Truth**

Sammy clung to Rory’s arm, quivering like a leaf in the wind. As they approached the loud chatter of the community at the entrance Sammy hung back as Chipper marched on, ready to show Sammy to the world once again. It wouldn’t be like last time. It couldn’t be; Rory wouldn’t let it. Rory loved Sammy they had become best friends in only the short time they had known each other. While Sammy melted into the shadow Rory continued to tug on his arm, giving him words of encouragement.

“Come on Sammy, hurry up!” Rory whined. “I promise Mummy will love you. And even if some people don’t my Mummy will make them. It’s her job.” He assured.

At that Sammy gave a little smile but behind his eyes portrayed a long lasting sadness and a broken heart that needed time to heal. At that Sammy began to explain. “I used to live here in Chipper’s father’s fields. Every day he used to come and talk to me. He would tell me all of his issues and I would stay there, listening. I watched on as he grew to get taller, and pimplier. He started to have more issues and none of them really mattered, he became self-centered and all his issues were about girls rather than people’s happiness and the wellbeing of the world. All of a sudden he stopped coming to me altogether. In the fields, I stood alone for what felt like an eternity. Then one day he came down the dirt road in his ancient, sputtering bashed up old ute till he reached me and he slowed to a stop. He gazed at me quizzically and with only a glimpse of recognition in his eyes. He grabbed my legs and pulled me from the earth throwing me carelessly into the back of his car. Now it is like he doesn’t even recognize me. When he stared at me all I saw was fear and anger. He looks nothing like the young boy I once knew so well he used to trust me. He had faith in everything and everyone. There was no bad, no evil. Nothing would stop him and nothing was anything but perfect. I don’t want to just be remembered for who I was but just who I am now. I don’t want people to think of me as the scarecrow. I am my own person what I am made out of might be a part of my physical self but that doesn’t and will never determine who I am and how I act.” He finished as a single tear rolled down his hessian cheek. “I will never forget how nice he used to be. Now I just hope the best for him in the future”

“Come on Sammy don’t be sad I love you and even after you left Chippy still had a place in your heart so I am absolutely positively sure that Chippy still loves you too. He might have just forgotten how much you meant to him in the past. You are totally awesome and I think everyone should see that and I think that they will all love you as much as I do” Rory squeaked encouragingly while his face lit up with an ear to ear smile. Slowly Sammy started to smile as well. Not as enthusiastically but still a genuine smile as he started to walk out into the open.

**CHAPTER 11**

**Acceptance**

With his new found confidence and Rory by his side holding his hand as they hurried to get to where Chipper now stood.

“We’ve found him and… he brought a friend!” At this, Chipper gestured for the pair to come forwards. With a little more encouragement they walked onto the podium and into the view of everyone in Bottle Brush. At first there was just silence but then as people began to take in what stood before them. Major Jane Mason took her son aside.

“Who is that?” She asked harshly.

“Mummy that is the scarecrow who saved me when I got lost. He is really nice and now we are the bestest of best friends.” Rory replied jumping up and down, still full of energy from the sweet Chipper had given him. “Can I go back to Sammy the scarecrow now Mummy? Pretty please!” He begged. With a sigh of relief from what she had just been told. After taking a deep breath she strode back up to her place on the podium.

“Attention people of Bottle Brush Town let us all rejoice. My son is found! Let’s all give a cheer for the amazing Sammy! I would like to that everyone who helped us search for Rory and most of all to thank Sammy. As a reward for his efforts he will be the guest of honour at our evening town barbecue and employed to work in the fields from now until he wishes to retires. Hip-hip Hooray!”

And from then on everyone learnt to accept Sammy for what he was and as Rory grew up their connection only grew stronger till they had become like brothers and once it was time for Rory to leave Sammy felt no sadness only joy in anticipation for what was to come for both him and Rory.

*The End*