

Sneak  Peek

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Book Two of Buckley School Books

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Chapter One

Liar, Liar

Brian buckled a leather strap around Tyler's arm and turned on the lie detector. The audience at Buckley Elementary School Parents Day assembly watched in silence as Brian's machine monitored Tyler's heartbeat. A long strip of paper

emerged from the lie detector.

Brian pretended to examine marks on the paper. “If you lie, you will be shocked.” Actually, the machine would only buzz loudly, but Brian thought his threat sounded cool. For Brian, the whole point of this project was to show kids he could be cool—and to prove that he was more than just “Brian the Brain.”

“Are you friends with everyone in this class?” Brian asked Tyler.

“I guess so.” Tyler pretended to be afraid of the lie detector. It was good acting. Tyler, who was easily the most popular boy in the sixth grade, was hugely confident.

“Did you email me about our science homework?” Brian asked.

“Who didn’t? You’re the only person who understands Cellular Biology.”

“He means thank you,” Stefi called out from the audience.

Brian looked at her thoughtfully. Stefi, the class writer, was admired by everyone except Tyler. Perhaps asking a question about her would cause Tyler to set off the lie detector buzzer.

“Tyler, you and Stefi argue all the time, but actually, you like her, don’t you?”

Tyler blushed. “I—well, not—”



BUZZ!

“OUCH!” Tyler yelled.

Brian was stunned. Tyler was so surprised at the unexpected sound of the lie detector buzzer that it appeared he really was being shocked. Now what?

“Ha-ha! Tyler likes Stefi,” a girl teased, setting off giggles among the sixth-graders in the audience.

“Liar, liar!” a boy shouted.

“I’ll get you for this,” Tyler muttered as he scowled at Brian.

Mr. Hoker started to stand up, but Brian’s best friend, Kyle, whispered something in the teacher’s ear. It was enough to keep Hoker in his seat.

Brian removed the strap from Tyler’s arm. “Thank you, Tyler. Connor, it’s your turn.”

Tyler took a seat in the front row of the audience.

Connor, whose dream was to become a Major League Baseball star, stood and put on his Yankees cap. Connor’s back was to the audience, so no one saw him wink. No one noticed Brian’s quick nod in response. Connor sat in the chair beside the lie detector.

Brian adjusted the lie detector strap to fit Connor’s arm. “I know a lot about people because my mom is a psychiatrist. I think you have something to hide.” Brian turned the dial labeled “Jolt” to full strength. “If you tell a lie, you may

not survive.”

Connor gulped.

“Again,” Brian whispered without moving his lips.

Connor gulped again, louder.

There was a sharp gasp from the audience.

“Have you trained our class parrot to talk?” Brian asked sternly.

“Yes.”

“Did you ever skip homework to watch a Yankees game?”

Connor glanced at his parents. “Uh...no.”

BUZZ!

“OUCH!” Connor’s whole body shook as if electricity were racing through it.

“You’re hurting him!” Tyler yelled from the audience. “Turn it off!”

Smoke poured from Connor’s head. Actually, the smoke came from a device Brian had placed in Connor’s cap, but no one else knew that.

Connor slumped in the chair. His legs kicked and then fell still. His arms fell limp. His chin dropped to his chest. His eyelids fluttered and closed.

“You killed him!” Tyler ran to the front of the room and shoved Brian aside. He grabbed Connor’s hand and frantically searched for a pulse.



“Doctor coming through!” Brian’s little sister, Isa, yelled as their mother rushed to help. Hoker followed.

Dr. Ferguson pushed Tyler away. She felt for Connor’s pulse and checked that he was breathing.

“Connor, open your eyes and show everyone you’re not hurt.” She turned to face Brian. “BRIAN ALEXANDER REYNOLDS FERGUSON THE THIRD, WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?”

Brian was stunned by his mother’s furious expression. He looked away guiltily and scanned the audience. Why did everyone look angry? Couldn’t they tell this was supposed to be a joke?

So much for showing he could be cool. Brian had proven once again that he just didn’t understand other people.

Connor sat up in the chair. “I’m sorry, Dr. Ferguson. I didn’t know I was such a good actor.”

Tyler’s voice shook with anger. “You helped Brian play a joke?”

“Well, you wouldn’t even listen to his idea when he asked you...”

“Some friend!” Tyler ranted, waving both fists in the air. “You planned this to make me look like an idiot!”

“I did not!” Connor protested. “How was I supposed to know you would practically give me a funeral?”

The sixth graders laughed at Tyler for the second time



that morning. Tyler growled at them and turned to an easy target—Brian. “So your real name is Brian Alexander Reynolds Ferguson?”

“The third,” Brian admitted.

People in the audience were no longer angry. They were painfully aware that Brian felt totally humiliated.

Dr. Ferguson looked apologetic. Brian knew she had not meant to say his full name in public. She hadn’t even picked it. His dad had his heart set on naming him, ugh—Brian Alexander Reynolds Ferguson III, after his great-grandfather and great-great grandfather. For a certified genius, sometimes his father wasn’t very smart.

If only Brian had been named for his mother’s side of the family!

The entire class burst into laughter.

Brian hung his head. He dreaded what was coming next. Brian the Brain was nothing compared to what the kids would call him now.

“Your initials spell BARE,” Tyler sneered. “Forget Brian the Brain. From now on, we’ll call you Barfy!”