**Rhody Gets a Turn to Talk**

Benny and I had spent pretty much the whole day looking for the key. With no luck, of course. I was ready to throw a box out the freaking window. I was that upset. And we didn’t really have that many clues to go off of. With this in mind, we were pretty much on our own. I don’t believe that Levi and Asad found anything. And I also doubt that Jack and David could find much in the way of clues. I was starting to think that this whole situation might have been a scam, and there really was no key missing.

I don’t know for sure if Benny was also starting to feel the same way.

I was pretty serious when I said that I was ready to throw a box out the window. As a matter of fact, that had actually happened to me when I was fifteen. Half of the kids who came to Wakahakai have their tonsils. The other half does not. I happen to fall into the category of the other half. Levi had his tonsils taken out when he was in eighth grade, and I believe that was October of 2005 because he had asked Mackenzie to be his girlfriend a few days after his surgery. A few months later, I ended up getting my tonsils out for the same reason Levi had his out. However, mine was not an emergency, and his was. That’s the only difference. And it hurt like hell. I missed one full week of my freshman year of high school because of how god-awful the pain was. I had my tonsils taken out on a Saturday, and I went back to school two Mondays later.

So, how can I relate getting my tonsils out with throwing a box out the freakin’ window?

Well, it was day six, the absolute *worst* day of my experience. My throat was on fire, and I couldn’t help bawling my eyes out because of how painful it was to swallow. I couldn’t keep anything down, not even ice cream. As a result, this made me mad. I was so mad that I took a small cardboard box with a tub of vanilla ice cream in it, I opened up my bedroom window, and I threw the box out the window. Of course, my cat couldn’t stop staring at me because of what I had done. I was mad at the ice cream because it wasn’t helping me get better. I then looked out the window and realized that the ice cream had spilled over in the box, which landed on its side. The ice cream then spilled over into the grass. At least I was lucky enough not to get the half-melted ice cream on the house.

When I finally had it in me to tell my dad about what had happened in a raspy voice, he didn’t get mad at me. My dad just laughed at me. To this day, my dad and I laugh pretty hard over the incident. Once his live-in fiancé and Jayneley, my older sister, found out about the crazy thing I did, they thought it was hilarious.

I told Benny when we decided to stop looking for the key, and he couldn’t stop laughing. I think the only person in the posse who doesn’t know is nobody. In other words, I told everyone else about what had happened, and they all could not stop laughing. I am forever thankful for my great sense of humor, and I’m glad that Levi, Jack, David, Asad, and Benny also have a great sense of humor.

Sorry if I’m sounding too arrogant, but that story is definitely an ego booster for my humor.

Benny would probably attest to that as well. We couldn’t stop telling each other the goofiest jokes that we could think of while walking in circles around the same area for about thirty times. It was great bonding time I’d say. Once we finished our thirtieth round of walking, it was already nine o’clock at night, and I wasn’t sleepy, especially when I found some ball that was lying on the ground. On our twenty-fifth round, I saw the ball, and I thought that it might have some meaning whatsoever. Benny and I picked it up, examined it, and thought about it for the time being. We were probably going to think about it for the rest of the night.

“Do you think this ball is worth anything?” I asked, once we sat down. I was starting to doubt the relevance of the blue and green high-bounce ball.

“Rhody, we shouldn’t give up now. It could be a clue to the mystery,” Benny replied.

“Suit yourself.”

“Do you think we should study it?”

“Might as well,” Rhody remarked.

“Doesn’t one of Darveda’s henchmen play tennis?” Benny asked.

“That is clearly a golf ball.”

“Well, if you say so. I thought it was a baseball.”

“That’s also possible.”

“I say we should still look over the ball.”

Funny thing is, my sense of sarcasm is the exact same as Benny’s, and Levi’s, for that matter. I really do consider Levi, Benny, and myself to be called the Tremendous Trio because our sense of humor is so similar that we even make ourselves laugh at our own jokes. We like the same music, the same movies, and even the same outdated video games. I have known Benny since he joined “the entourage” or whatever we call our group with Nathaniel Linden, who now lives in Aurora and has been since August of last year. We still keep in touch with him, but he’s obviously not in Valparaiso that often anymore. He’s a pretty funny guy as well.

Benny and I were being pretty sarcastic tonight. We didn’t really want to move forward with the search tonight, but we did anyway. Benny and I both looked over the ball for quite some time, and then I discovered some small lines on the hi-bounce ball. My heart almost stopped. I was very relieved. If my heart stopped, then that would be bad news. At least it only *almost* stopped. Nevertheless, I was so excited that I *thought* my heart almost stopped. If I was going to be excited about what I had found, Benny was most likely going to be excited as well.

“Benny, look what I found!” I shouted, but then I was immediately reminded of something. “But I doubt if it really is a clue.”

“How do you know it’s not a clue?” Benny asked.

“I don’t want to get my hopes up too high.”

“That’s smart.”

“Do you want to get your hopes up too high, Benny?” I questioned.

“No, not really, Rhody,” Benny replied.

“Should we try to make out the letters nonetheless?”

“I thought I was the one who thought this was a good idea.”

“It’s a great idea, Benny.”

“Thank you, Rhody.”

Benny looked at the lines, and he squinted because the writing was ungodly small. I then looked at the lines, and I squinted because the writing was ungodly small. I highly doubt that our eyesight is a perfect 20/20. Benny wears contacts. I wear contacts. There you have it. The only guy whose eyesight is nearly perfect is David’s, and I don’t think his is perfect either. Jack and Asad wear glasses, and Levi used to wear thick-framed glasses, which made him look like a stereotypical nerd. I liked the look, though.

“Let’s look at the writing with a magnifying glass,” he said.

“Can we do it in the morning? I’m sleepy,” I answered.

“We may forget in the morning. Let’s do it now.”

“I don’t think we’re going to forget in the morning.”

“I will probably think only about bacon in the morning,” Benny stated plainly.

“I will probably think about bacon *and* the ball in the morning,” I remarked.

“Well, I am not tired at all.”

“Well, I am.”

“It shouldn’t take that long.”

“Oh, I don’t know.”

My eyes were drooping. I was now really tired. All I wanted to do was go to bed. All Benny wanted to do was have a nice strip or two of bacon for breakfast, along with some hotcakes. I wanted them as well, but I was too tired to even think about that at this hour. I could feel my eyes drooping, and Benny would continue to stare me down until I would have to pinch myself to wake up a little. He was pretty serious about doing research on the golf ball tonight. I, however, was not. Majority rules, though. One person would get his way. The other person would not, and I believed that the odds were not in my favor tonight.

“Rhody?” Benny got my attention.

“What?!” I snapped.

“You fell asleep, didn’t you?”

“I must have.”

“Ready to investigate the tennis ball?” Benny asked me.

“Sure. Why not?” I responded, half-awake.

“I want to get this done as soon as we can.”

“Okay. Sounds like a plan. I’m assuming you’re not tired yet?”

“Nope. Not at all. Are you?”

“Sure. Maybe a little.”

After all but five minutes, I fell asleep, and Benny grew very frustrated. He had his hopes up too high, I believe. He was just hoping to get the so-called “investigation” over with tonight. I could not have cared less. I just cared about getting as much sleep as possible, and my sleep schedule has been messed up since I don’t know when.

Oh well.

“Darn! I wanted to find a clue, but I guess it is too late. My friend is asleep, but maybe I can wake him up,” Benny said to himself.

I think I could hear him saying that out loud to himself. He walked over to me because he apparently wanted to scare me. I knew for a fact that it was not going to work for two reasons. The first reason, I was still half-awake, so I was aware of what was going on around me. The second reason, I am not easily scared. If some random person were to put a Jack-in-the-box by my pillow when I was still sleeping, I would not jump out of bed like a lot of people probably would. Levi, my neighbor and partner in crime, would also not jump out of bed. He would just get pretty mad. I know of that specific prank because he was the victim of the Jack-in-the-box wake-up prank. I was ready for what Benny was about to do to me.

“SURPRISE!” he shouted.

“What’s the surprise?” I asked, not scared at all.

“Let’s look at that ball.”

“Okay.”

“How are you now?” Benny asked me.

“Fine, I think. How long was I asleep for?” I asked because I was actually *very* curious.

“*Maybe* fifteen minutes.”

“Splendid.”

“You looked like you were passed out, though.”

“No doubt.”

I made sure I was awake enough to investigate the ball with Benny. He had definitely asked for it. I found a nearby coffee machine where I could make my own delightful hazelnut coffee so that I could definitely stay awake. I returned with my coffee in hand, and we started investigating, which took us all but fifteen minutes. While Benny was looking at the text with the magnifying glass, I looked at the mysterious ball from another angle.

After all that time investigating….

“Get a load of this!” I shouted at Benny, looking at the text and smiling gleefully.

“What?” Benny asked me.

“We have a clue! Nelson probably picked up this ball and threw it here. It also says, ‘Property of Chickaeki Laie, passed down to children Maila and Kuho.’”

“Is it written in marker?”

“Now that you just mentioned it….I have no idea. It’s purple ink, and it looks like it could be, or some mysterious ink? I don’t know,” I remarked.

“Probably marker,” Benny clarified.

“Let’s take it to Kaloi tomorrow morning because he knows a lot about forensics and mysteries and whatnot.”

“Or we could go with Jack and David because we all know they are going over to Kaloi’s tomorrow. We could show them the ball, and we could all be present when Kaloi does his investigation of the ball.”

“Good idea.”

“Why, thank you.”