

THE TALENT QUEST



Chapter 2

'Phew, thank goodness we were able to solve Neville's riddle rhymes and restore the protocols of the National Anthem,' sighed Aiden.

'Yep, and that poor official was so grateful that we helped to get the games started on time. He didn't lose his job, but it was close!' replied Laleh. 'Where do you think Neville has gone now?'

Laleh and Aiden thought for a few minutes, remembering back to what the numbat had said at the talent show tryouts.

'Well, he must be planning something big if the last stunt is anything to go by,' Aiden stated. 'At least he left

us another clue. Read it again, Laleh.'

'Next check the masts, they won't be flying high. Master my rhymes, so the protocols comply.'

'Hmm, check the masts ... boats have masts! Could he have gone to the harbour? Or flying high, maybe he took a plane?' suggested Aiden.

'Perhaps,' replied Laleh. 'But don't forget that the first puzzle was to do with the Australian National Anthem so I'm thinking this one must have something to do with an official place.'

Laleh pondered the words Neville left in the clue. Check the masts. Boats definitely had masts, but something told her this wasn't quite right as the next line didn't add up. They won't be flying high. 'Boats don't fly in the sky ...' she thought.

Suddenly it came to her. In excitement, she yelled, 'Aiden, what has a mast and flies in the sky?'

'I dunno, a boat-plane?' Aiden laughed.

'It's a FLAG. Think about it, flags are attached to the masts on boats and when they're raised, they fly proudly in the wind,' said Laleh in triumph. 'The closet flagpoles are just down the road at the naval base. Let's go and check them out.'

'Couldn't it be somewhere else though, like Parliament House?' Aiden asked. 'How do we know which official building Neville went to?'

'I just remembered ... I saw on the news last night that the navy base are flying their flags at half-mast today for a special ceremony,' Laleh said, taking off at a run. Neville's rhyme said to check the masts ... so he must be at the naval base!'

Laleh raced down the hill, with Aiden following on his skateboard. They soon arrived at the base and sure enough, standing pride of place at the front of the main building, stood the flagpoles.

'Take a look, Aiden,' exclaimed Laleh. 'The Australian Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag, and the Torres Strait Islander Flag are all half-mast but the other flags

are flying high at the top of their poles.'

'Yep and look at the flags, I'm sure they aren't right. I can't put my finger on it but they don't seem to be how I remember them.' Aiden replied. 'Didn't Neville's clue say something about mastering his rhyme so the protocols apply? Do you think that means he has tampered with them in some way?'

'That would be just like him,' agreed Laleh. 'Let's take a closer look at each one.'

Reaching the base of the poles, Aiden noticed a note.

'Look Laleh, Neville has left us more rhyming riddle clues.'

CLUE 7

*Something isn't right, is there a tear or rip?
Restore dignity and honour, that's my tip.*

CLUE 8

*Let's talk size, large or small?
Should one be bigger? You make the call.*

CLUE 9

*Topsy turvey, which way around?
Solve it fast, and turn that frown upside down.*

CLUE 10

*Emblems here, emblems there.
As long as they're included, can they be anywhere?*

CLUE 11

*Where to find me next ...
Letters and parcels, so much mail.
Catch me quickly, or the posties will fail.*

'You're right Aiden,' said Laleh. 'I think Neville has tampered with the protocols of the three flags. If we solve these riddles, we should be able to work out what has changed and let the authorities at the naval base know.'

'Yikes, we better be quick though Laleh, look at all the journalists gathering in the car park,' yelled Aiden. 'There must be a big press conference happening soon. If they spot the issues with the flags, they're bound to

report it and give Neville the attention he wants.'

'Okay, let's do it!' Laleh replied.

'Go Team AL!' Aiden whooped.

'Team AL?' Laleh questioned, her eyebrows raised.

'Well ...' replied Aiden, with a cheeky grin. 'I figure we need a partnership name, now that we are officially on the case.'

'Agreed,' Laleh laughed. 'But perhaps we can think of something a little more creative.'