

3 Shadow Play

It had been a lovely sunny day, and Emma was walking home with her friend Jenny. The sun was behind them, low in the sky, and the trees looked golden in the late afternoon light. Suddenly they saw a shadow coming, and turned to see Alex quickly creeping up behind them across the grass.

"Drat," he said. "I was trying to sneak up to you and give you a fright. Did you hear me coming? I was trying really hard not to make too much noise."

"No," laughed Jenny, "we didn't hear you. But if you want to sneak up on people, you shouldn't have the sun behind you. We saw your shadow – look how long it is!"

"Oh, yeah, I forgot about that," groaned Alex.

Tom, who was walking along casually about 30 metres behind, shouted "I didn't! That's why I bet you that you couldn't surprise them. And I was right – now you owe me an ice-cream."

"I don't know why it's so long," moaned Alex. "I always thought your shadow was the same size as you."

"Of course it isn't," laughed Jenny. "It depends on where the sun is. But it's always attached to you, unless you're Peter Pan – remember when Wendy had to sew his shadow back on?" (Their class had gone to see the play earlier in the year.)

"I don't think that's right," Emma commented, and then she jumped in the air. "See?"

"No, I don't," Tom complained, but then he said, "Oh, I see what you mean," as she did it again.

"You couldn't really sew a shadow back on, though, could you?" persisted Jenny. "I mean, it isn't anything really, is it? Just a bit of black that follows you around – you can't pick it up like Wendy did. It looked like they used a bit of black cloth to me." And she laughed as much as any of them, as she bent down and pretended to roll her shadow up.

"Hey, you did it!" shouted Alex. "It's gone!" They all laughed again because, sure enough, Jenny's shadow had disappeared as a cloud went over the sun. "But

I've got to disappear, too. My mum's expecting me – we're going to that Indonesian shadow play that's on at the hall tonight."

They all realised that it was starting to get cooler and the sun would soon disappear altogether, so they hurried off down the road towards their homes.