

THE BARTON SERIES

BARTON AND THE BIG SURPRISE



BY

DR FAYAD W. ALI

(Ages 8 and over)

BARTON AND THE BIG SURPRISE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STORY	PAGE
(1) THE STRANGE VISIT	9
(2) FRIDAY NIGHT	13
(3) SATURDAY SUNSHINE	22
(4) AS THE WORLD TURNS	27
(5) THE CLOCK STILL TICKS	31
(6) LINKING THE CHAIN	34

AS THE WORLD TURNS

Barton gulped down the last mouthful of orange juice from his glass as he heard the humming sound of Dad's car pulling into the driveway. The young boy remembered his father's request to be at home when he returned, and which was expected to be by around midmorning. He also remembered Dad's preference for him to be alone.

Earlier that morning, Barton had explained this to two of his close friends, Alfredo and Kwame, who had passed by and were seeking his inclusion in their morning activities. Sian, Malaika and Shanna may have even joined them later. Alfredo, though, promised to inform the three girls of the reason for Barton's exclusion. However, all respected their friend's commitment to his father and decided to meet at Alfredo's home instead. Barton's friends were as curious as Barton was, to the reason for his father's strange request and they hoped, though, that he would join them later.

"Being able to join us has everything to do with the reason why your Dad wants you to be at home, when he returns," the thoughtful and practical Kwame had suggested.

Barton had agreed.

Barton opened the front door of the house, to see Dad standing at the side of the car and a young boy retrieving a bag from the trunk.



As the boy held the bag in his hand, both he and Dad headed towards the house. Barton looked at the stranger but did not recognise him as anyone he had seen or met before. At first, he thought it was a man, but as they approached the house, Barton realised that it was a young boy, perhaps around his age.

The good-looking boy looked slightly taller than Barton and was strongly built. His hair was thick and well-groomed and he wore a beautiful and fashionably tailored suit. Barton could hear him talking with Dad, and though he could not hear the words, the boy's clear foreign accent was unmistakable. Barton looked on in surprise and wonder.

This must be someone important and who Dad wants me to meet, thought Barton. This person is likely the reason why Dad wanted me to be alone, to meet with him.

The young boy stopped briefly and looked about at the surroundings of the Sandiford home. He gazed at the trees and pointed, whilst speaking softly to Mr Sandiford.

"I wonder who he is," said Barton to himself, as Dad and the stranger approached the house.

As Barton opened the door for Dad and the guest, the stranger's eyes fell directly on Barton for the first time. He dropped his bag and rushed up to

Barton. Barton had his hand outstretched, but the boy ignored it completely. He threw his arms around Barton and held him in a tight embrace.

“Barton, Barton,” shouted the stranger, “my dear and cherished friend, Barton,” he said in his strong foreign accent.

Barton stood almost motionless and Dad seemed slightly bemused. At the corner of his eyes, Barton could see Mom standing near the doorway and her tear-filled eyes could hold no more and they overflowed. The tears flowed slowly down her cheeks, but she did not turn away from either Barton or the mysterious stranger. Now, instead of the great mystery being solved by Barton, it began only to deepen.

The strange boy temporarily turned away from Barton, loosening his embrace.

“Mrs Sandiford,” he greeted Barton’s mother, as he kissed her gently on the cheek.

Barton watched in surprise, as Mom hugged the strange boy.

Then, once more the boy turned to face Barton and the two shook hands. Still, Barton failed to recognise the stranger, as all four entered the house. They headed for the drawing-room and the two boys sat next to each other. Mom and Dad also sat next to each other and opposite them.

“Barton,” spoke the boy, “don’t you recognise me?”

Barton looked at Mom and Dad, who offered no clues. They only smiled and looked on as the boy fetched a small box from his bag.

“Maybe this will give you a clue, Barton,” he said, as he presented Barton with the gift.

Barton slowly opened the box and gazed at the contents. In it was the most beautiful gold watch he had ever seen. Barton gently touched the face of the watch and took a small piece of folded paper that was placed in the box.



Barton opened it and read,

MY FRIEND BARTON

Both you and I are small today

But one day we'll be men

I hope and wish I'll always say

That Barton is my friend.

Barton's eyes grew wide and words failed him. He looked at Mom and Dad and then at his long lost friend. It had been at least seven long years. Barton hugged his 'little friend' and the tears streamed down both their cheeks. Mom and Dad meanwhile had gotten up and quietly left the room.

