



Prologue

Mitchell Grady has spent the summer enjoying his reign as the current Legend of Sandhurst. The trophy and various other medals and awards sit on the chest of drawers in his bedroom. Wins in four of the eight events — Surfing, Cricket, Athletics and Swimming — were enough to see him finish ahead of his rival, Travis Fisk.

But what would the new year bring? Would Travis return to school now that he'd missed his chance to be Legend of Sandhurst two years in a row? It was Travis who'd been the Legend the year before Mitchell.



Race at the Rock

Now the score is one all.

And what about Travis's father? Would Mr Fisk, famous butcher, and owner of Fisk Meats, still be involved in the Legends' program?

Mitch and his best friends Bryce and Bubba, along with Luci, Becky and Rat had asked the same questions a thousand times during the holidays.

In 24 hours they would know.

Chapter 1

A Tragedy



Bubba and I were sitting on the balcony at his home. The aroma of cooked food was wafting up to us from the barbecue below.

Bubba was one of my best friends at school. He was friendly and funny and didn't have a mean bone in his body. He loved food, and he was good at sport. He might have even won the Legend of Cricket if Travis Fisk hadn't roughed him up during practice. Bubba had been hurt so badly that his parents threatened to take him out of the whole Legend's competition.

'Hey Mitch?'



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‘Bubba?’

‘You reckon Travis will be back this year?’

I shook my head slowly.

‘I know. I know,’ said Bubba, ‘I’ve asked you that a hundred times, but gee, just imagine if he wasn’t. I mean, how good would it be?’

‘I know. But I try not to think about it — I try and think of the downside.’

‘Yeah? Like what?’ asked Bubba.

I hadn’t actually managed to come up with much over the past five weeks.

‘Well, you know, if Travis isn’t there then maybe Mr Fisk isn’t there either,’ I said.

‘Yeeessss.’ Bubba wasn’t convinced.

‘Well, then maybe we don’t get all those barbecues and tents and stalls and stuff.’

Suddenly Bubba was looking worried.

‘You know, Mitch, maybe it’ll be good to see old Travis again.’

‘Bubba? Is that your stomach or your brain talking?’

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There was a shout from below.

‘That must mean dinner, Mitch.’

I looked up from the magazine I was flicking through, but Bubba had gone. When it came to food, no one moved faster.



Although no one ever showed it, it was good being back at school. There was a buzz in the air. There were a few new faces about as we hung around the basketball courts waiting for the bell to go.

Rat hadn't lost any of his shooting form over the holidays and was sinking baskets from out on the three-point line. He'd come across from the Wetherhood school before the Legend of Basketball last year. He was one of the few kids prepared to stand up to Travis. He was small, wiry and tough. But he didn't show off his toughness like Travis. This sort of made him even tougher. Becky and Luci strolled over, and Bryce wasn't far behind.

‘Seen Travis, anyone?’ Bubba asked.



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Head shakes and ‘no’s’ were all he got. ‘Well, I guess that settles it then,’ he smiled.

‘Hardly, Bubba. Do you think Travis would be down here chatting away to us, on the first day back?’ asked Bryce.

Bryce was the brain of the group. He had an answer for everything though he certainly wasn’t a know-all. He wasn’t big on sport; well not playing, but he definitely took an interest in the Legends. He loved planning. He was the only kid I knew who had a laptop, digital camera and a mobile phone. You’d usually see him with one of the three.

‘Hmm. Maybe not.’

‘I can tell you who won’t be coming back this year,’ said Luci quietly.

We all looked at Luci.

‘Mia’s moved over to Ascot College,’ she said.

We’d heard rumours about it, and Luci had just confirmed it.

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‘After what happened last year, it’s probably the best thing, too,’ Bryce said.

The bell rang and we walked towards the hall for first day assembly.

‘Hey, has anyone seen the Legends noticeboard?’ Luci asked.

‘Gee, I hadn’t thought to check. Is there anything up yet?’ I asked.

‘Nothing. Well, not that anyone could see. It’s got a huge black cover over it. Nailed down. They’re hiding something.’

‘I’d say we’re going to find out very soon,’ said Bryce. ‘Look.’

Bryce nodded towards a group of teachers standing near the side door of the hall. Mr Spears, the teacher in charge of Sport and the Legends events last year, had a clipboard in his hand. We all saw the writing on the folder before he quickly covered it up.

‘The Legends! It’s on,’ called Bubba.

‘Bubba, it could be last year’s folder,’ Becky said.



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We piled into the hall.

I thought of my first day at school last year. Nervous and alone.

There were seats set out in the hall. I'm sure they didn't have seats last year. Most of the faces I recognised, but there was no Travis.

Then, as I sat down, Bubba nudged me. Automatically I looked over to the door. A familiar face was lurking just near the entrance.

It was Travis Fisk. He seemed to have grown during the holidays. He acted like he owned the place. He sort of did in a way, with his dad being such a huge force behind the Legends program. His arms were crossed and his broad shoulders were turning slowly, surveying the scene. Slowly, he walked into the hall, found a seat near the back, and slumped down.

'I'm sure many of you have been wondering about the Legends program for this year.' Mrs Waite, the principal of Sandhurst,

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was talking. Except for her voice, the hall was quiet. Even the little kids down near the front must have sensed something important was being said.

‘Indeed, perhaps you were wondering whether the Legends *would* be continuing. Well, I can assure you that there *will* be a Legends program this year.’

Someone let go a ‘yeah’. Then someone else clapped. In a moment the hall had erupted into noise and cheering. Mrs Waite just waited, smiling.

‘Well, I’m pleased to have gladdened the hearts of so many. This year is a special anniversary for our school. Unfortunately, it has links to a tragic accident that occurred at a Legends school camp 70 years ago.’

Whispers raced around the room like a breeze through trees.

‘As some of you may well know, after the accident, the Legends sporting program at Sandhurst ceased for several months.’



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If the hall was quiet before, it was now totally silent. The moment lingered then Mrs Waite coughed and continued.

‘The Legends program was reintroduced at the insistence of the victim’s family and the Legends sporting events have continued to bring enjoyment to generations of Sandhurst students.’

Again, feet shuffled as Mrs Waite paused.

‘This year’s Legend of Sandhurst will be dedicated to the memory of Hughie McLean — the boy who lost his life 70 years ago. In this year of our 70th Anniversary Legend of Sandhurst, two very special gold trophies have been made to mark the occasion.’

Mrs Waite turned to the side door.

‘I am going to ask the sponsors and kind contributors to come forward now. Please stand and show your appreciation for their generosity.’

A line of adults, many of them parents, walked into the hall. The first figure was easily

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recognisable. It was Mr Fisk. He was wearing a cap with *Fisk Meats* on it.

‘You will notice that some of our sponsors are holding little trophies. They are mini-replicas of the final gold trophies and will be presented to the girl and boy legend of each of this year’s events.’

Everyone was straining for a look. Once all the adults were inside, they sat in a row of empty seats at the front.

The rest of the assembly went by but I couldn’t stop thinking about the trophies, the kid who died and what the events might be this year. And I bet I wasn’t the only one.

