

Lemonfizz Media  
PO Box 499  
Elwood, Victoria 3184  
www.lemonfizzmedia.com

Scholastic Australia Pty Limited  
PO Box 579  
Gosford, NSW 2250  
ABN 11 000 614 577  
www.scholastic.com.au

Part of the Scholastic Group  
Sydney • Auckland • New York • Toronto • London • Mexico City •  
New Delhi • Hong Kong • Buenos Aires • Puerto Rico

Published by Lemonfizz Media and Scholastic Australia in 2012.  
Text, design and illustrations copyright © Lemonfizz Media 2012.  
Cover design and Illustrations by Dyani Stagg of Merchantwise.

A CIP record for this title is available from the National Library of Australia.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted  
in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying,  
recording, storage in an information retrieval system, or otherwise, without the prior  
written permission of the publisher, unless specifically permitted under the  
Australian Copyright Act 1968 as amended.

Printed in Australia by McPherson's Printing Group

It is our policy, in association with McPherson's Printing Group, to use papers  
that are renewable and made efficiently from wood grown in sustainable forests, so  
as to minimise the environmental footprint.



# SECRET SAFARI



SUSANNAH MCFARLANE





# Chapter 1

THE NAME OF THE BABY LEOPARD,  
TANDI, WAS SUGGESTED BY  
KATE MALCOLM, KM12

It was lunchtime and Emma Jacks was standing underneath the netball goal. Waiting alone, she was getting flustered. Where was everybody? Hadn't she agreed with Hannah, Elle and Isi that they would meet here to practise shooting goals before netball practice started?

Emma watched as other kids ran past and around her, the noise of the school yard getting louder and louder as kids left their classrooms and came out on to the oval to play, to talk, to shout. Scanning all over the oval, she looked for her friends. She was sure she would see them rushing up to her

any minute, Hannah looking serious and apologetic, Isi laughing about why they got delayed and Elle smiling. They were her best friends, her besties, and they did nearly everything together. Their latest project was netball: they were all determined to get into the school netball A-team, the St Cree Primary Wildcats, and they had promised each other that they would practise every chance they could. That's why Emma was there and that's why Hannah, Isi and Elle should have been there. But they weren't. Emma didn't know whether to feel worried, cross or sad, so she felt a little of all three. *They must come soon*, she thought. *Where could they be?*

'What's up, Emma?' said a not completely friendly voice. 'Got no friends?'

Aaaaarrgghh, it was Nema, Emma's former bestie and now class mean girl. Why did she always turn up when something was going wrong?

'I'm fine, Nema,' replied Emma. 'Just waiting for Han, Is and Elle. We're going to shoot goals before practice.'

'Don't think so,' said Nema.

*How would you know?* thought Emma. *You don't know my friends!* But instead she said, 'They'll be here any moment.'

'Don't think so,' repeated Nema. 'I just saw them all talking with Laila and they didn't look as if they were about to go anywhere.'

Laila was the new girl. Actually, she was one of two new girls, and while Emma hadn't really had much to do with the other girl, Eve, she'd had plenty to do with Laila, too much. Laila had started the week before, just two weeks before the end of term, which was a little strange. No one knew why and Laila didn't seem to want to talk about it. What she did seem to want to talk about was everyone else, mainly behind their backs. She seemed to be able to find something to laugh at about everyone: Elle's glasses, Hannah's braces, Isi's rather messy handwriting and Emma's goal-shooting style. Emma had never noticed it before but apparently, according to Laila anyway, she did this funny flick

of her non-shooting hand when she was shooting.

'Have you noticed Emma's left hand when she shoots?' she'd asked Nema one day. 'It's weird! No wonder she's not very good!'

Nema laughed but Elle, who had overheard Laila, interrupted, sticking up for her friend. 'Em's the best goal shooter in the school.'

'I'd hate to see the worst,' scoffed Laila.

And that was how Laila seemed to be with everyone. Well, not quite everyone. She was nice to Nema, of all people. It was like Laila and Nema had known each other for ages, which was strange because they didn't live near each other.

'Laila is really good at netball,' continued Nema.

Emma wasn't really paying attention. She was still trying to spot her friends.

'I told you,' Nema said. 'She's with Isi, Hannah and Elle. They must've forgotten about netball.' And then with her trademark hair flick and cold smile she added, 'They must have forgotten about you.'

'What would you know, Nema?' replied Emma.

'I probably just got the plan wrong. Actually, I did, we were all supposed to meet after school.'

But Emma hadn't got the plan wrong. Emma didn't get plans wrong, she had much too much training to do that. When Emma Jacks wasn't ten-year-old schoolgirl and confused friend of Elle, Hannah and Isi, she was Special Agent EJ12, field agent in the code-cracking division and Shining Star Spy of the Year of the **SHINE** Agency.



Emma had been on many successful missions and was responsible for putting some of *SHADOW*'s cleverest agents into **SHINE** detention, foiling their evil schemes. Isi had also recently joined **SHINE** and together they had gone on a mission. It was IJ's first and EJ had been proud to help her friend. It was on that mission they had discovered Nema had also joined a secret agency but not **SHINE**, *SHADOW*, the bad one. Emma wasn't that surprised Nema

had joined **SHADOW** but she was surprised to see her back at school after she had been captured by **SHINE**. Did A1 have a plan she didn't know about? There certainly seemed to be a lot of changes in plan going on at the moment.

Emma liked plans and she liked people to stick to them. She liked to be organised and she liked to know what was going on. And when she didn't know what was going on, she could get a bit flustered and upset. She would start to doubt herself and the things she thought she was certain about. Just like now on the oval. She knew that they were all supposed to meet at the goals to practise. But was Nema right? Had her friends forgotten about her?

The bell went. As Emma headed back to class her three friends rushed up to her.

'Em, where were you?!' Isi shouted out before Emma had time to say anything.

'Where was I?'

'Why didn't you come?' said Elle.

'I did come,' said Emma. 'Where were you guys?'

'We were there!'

'No, I was there,' said Emma.

'We were,' said Isi, looking a little confused. 'Weren't we?' she said, looking at Han who was looking at Emma.

'Emma,' Hannah began, her voice calm, 'why didn't you come to the oval?'

'Because I was at the netball goal,' replied Emma, slightly exasperatedly. 'Because we were supposed to be practising.'

'That's tomorrow,' said Hannah.

'No, it's today,' said Emma. 'At least, it was supposed to be.'

'Oh, I get it,' cried Isi. 'Em, didn't you hear the new plan?'

'The new plan?' asked Emma.

'Ms Black changed the practice time and told Laila to tell everyone.'

'She didn't tell me,' said Emma.

'Oh, maybe she just forgot,' said Hannah. 'It doesn't matter, Em,' she went on, linking her arm

through Emma's. 'We can do it tomorrow. I'm sure it was just a mix-up.'

'Suppose so,' said Emma, trying to look a little brighter but it was still bugging her. Why would Laila tell everyone but her about the change and why didn't Nema say anything? Were they in on it together? Why were they upsetting Emma's plans?

And then Laila walked past. 'Hi, Is, hi, Han, hi, Elle. See you at practice,' she shouted. And then, 'Oh, hi, Irma.'

'It's Emma,' said Emma.

'Oh, right,' laughed Laila. 'Whatever.'

'So, Is,' said Emma, 'are we still sure it was just a mistake? And,' she whispered to her bestie and spy buddy, 'she's pretty chummy with Nema.'

'Come on, girls, the bell has gone!' called a teacher. 'Laila and Nema, may I see you for a moment please?'

That was Ms Black, the new substitute teacher, who filled in when other teachers were away. She had been watching Nema and Laila. Emma also

noticed Ms Tenga watching Ms Black talk to Nema and Laila. Things were getting complicated. Plans seemed to be always changing and nothing was as it seemed. Emma didn't like it, it made her flustered and less confident. She would be pleased when this term was over. She was looking forward to just being at home, blobbing around.

Just as Emma was putting her phone back in her locker for class, her phone went.

**Ting! Ting!**

It was a text message from her mum. That was weird too, her mum never texted her at school. *What is it today?* thought Emma as she opened the message.

YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT.  
I'VE WON A COMPETITION.  
A FAMILY TRIP TO AFRICA!  
LEAVING FIRST DAY OF HOLIDAYS. 😊

*Gee whizz, lemonfizz! So much for blobbing at home. That's another plan out the window,* thought Emma but she had to admit that this change of plan was pretty exciting. Emma's family never won anything and now, out of the blue, they had won a holiday. They were going to Africa with all those amazing animals. How lucky!

But luck hadn't had anything to do with it.

The title 'Chapter 2' is centered on the page. The word 'Chapter' is in a large, bold, black font, and the number '2' is also in a large, bold, black font. A small black dot is positioned between the two words. Behind the text is a decorative graphic consisting of a central circle with a grid pattern, surrounded by several overlapping, semi-transparent circles of varying shades of gray, creating a flower-like or sunburst effect.

In the car going to school the next morning on the last day of school, the only topic of conversation was the Africa trip.

'So, tell me again, Mum,' said Bob. 'How did you win?'

'I told you,' said his mum smiling happily. 'I just entered a competition at the local shops and I won!'

'What was the competition?' asked Emma.

'It was a "Light up your Life" competition. You had to think of your dream holiday and then write a two-line advertising tag line for it.'

'Oh, really, and where did you enter the

competition, Mum?’ asked Emma.

‘Oh, just one of the local shops,’ replied Mum.

Emma was suspicious now. ‘Which one?’

‘Hmm, I can’t remember.’

Her mum didn’t forget things. Now Emma was really suspicious.

‘The local light shop, I think,’ replied Mum.

‘Oh, I get it,’ said Bob. ‘Light shop, “Light up your Life!”’

Bob thought he got it but he didn’t really. Emma, however, did. The local light shop was no ordinary shop. It was an access point to the **SHINE** Agency HQ. If Mum had won a competition from the light shop, it would be no accident.

Emma’s mum had been a **SHINE** agent but was now retired, at least semi-retired. She sometimes helped Emma on her missions, just as her mum, GM80, had helped her, but mostly she worked and looked after the family. Emma reckoned her mum had one of the best jobs in the world—she was a vet. She worked at the local vet surgery and was

particularly good at working with cats. Emma’s mum loved cats. It was no surprise that she would pick Africa, with all those animals, as a dream holiday. Even so, Emma was still suspicious.

‘So what was your entry, Mum?’ she asked.

“See the light in Africa—It’s as easy as *epesi!*” *Epesi* means “light” in Swahili.’

*That’s awful*, thought Emma. *There was no way it would win a real competition.*

‘Mum, that’s really bad,’ said Emma.

‘Really? I was rather proud of it. *Epesi*—easy, get it?’

‘We get it, Mum, but Emma’s right, for once,’ said Bob. ‘It’s really bad.’

‘Well, they liked it,’ said her mum, looking a little hurt. ‘They said it shone out above the others.’ Emma’s mum looked at her.

That was it, **SHINE** was definitely involved but why were they organising it with her mum and why did **SHINE** want the whole family in Africa? Did **SHINE** not think Emma was good enough to do

whatever the mission was by herself?

'Here we are,' said Mum, pulling up outside the school. 'Enjoy your last day and, Emma, good luck with the netball trials. Just have fun and do your best.'

*Right,* thought Emma. *What if that wasn't good enough? And worse, what if Laila and Nema made the team and she didn't?*



The final practice was at lunchtime. The girls had been split into teams for a practice game. Emma, Hannah, Elle and Isi were all on the same team. Laila and Nema were on the other one. Nema was goalkeeper and Emma was goal shooter. Whenever Nema thought the teachers weren't looking she gave Emma a shove. When Emma was going for goal, Nema scratched her with her nail just before she shot.

'Hey,' said Emma. 'You can't do that!'

'You can if you don't get caught,' sneered Nema.

'And it's certainly stopping you getting any goals.'

Not that Laila was getting many down the other end. Whenever she got the ball, she refused to pass to the other shooter, even if that girl was in a better position. She would try to score from nearly outside the circle and it hardly ever went in. Han was against her in goal defence and once she saw that Laila wasn't going to pass, she played brilliantly and stopped her from getting any closer.

Now the ball was back at the centre with Elle. She stepped out and passed backwards to Hannah, who threw it straight on to Isi in wing defence while Elle sprinted down towards goal. Isi passed back to Elle, who was now looking for Emma. Emma found her space and called for the ball. She caught it and then Nema pushed her over.

Ms Tenga blew her whistle. 'Penalty pass or shot,' she shouted. 'Stand out of play, Nema!'

Emma was pretty far from the goal. She could take the shot but the new girl, Eve, was closer. Then again, if she got the shot from so far back, she would

look good. What to do?

Ms Tenga blew her whistle. 'Play!'

Emma looked like she was going to try to score then she bounced the ball to Eve, who netted it easily.

'Way to go, Eve, great pass, Em,' shouted Elle. 'Let's go!'

The game went on. Emma shot some goals but Nema kept blocking, stepping on her toes, making it hard. The final whistle blew and Emma was disappointed. She didn't think she had shown what she could do; Nema hadn't let her.

Later, on the bus home from school, Emma and her friends talked about the game.

'How about Nema,' said Isi. 'She should have been sent off.'

'I could hardly get a goal,' said Emma. 'What if Ms Tenga thinks I'm hopeless?'

'She won't. She's seen you shoot heaps of goals,' said Hannah.

'And she must have seen what Nema was

doing,' said Isi.

'Don't worry, Em, my mum says the right people get rewarded,' said Hannah. 'And I think it's true.'

'I hope so, but nothing seems to be going to plan at the moment,' said Emma. 'Anyway,' she said, brightening up, 'you guys had a great game. You'll all be in the A-team for sure.'

'So will you, Em,' said Isi. 'And hey, you're off to Africa tomorrow, that should take your mind off netball—and Nema!'

Hannah sighed. 'I can't believe you are going to Africa tomorrow. I'm so jealous.'

'And your mum really won the trip from a light shop?' asked Isi.

'Yes,' said Emma. 'Weird, huh?'

'Very,' said Isi, smiling.

'You're so lucky,' said Elle. 'I hope I will be, too. I'm in the finals of the athletics competition over the holidays, the Shining Stars of Track and Field. I really hope I win at least one race.'

Emma and Isi looked at each other again. 'So

do I,' they both said at the same time. And then they both laughed.

The bus arrived at Emma's stop. The girls jumped up and hugged goodbye. As she walked to her house, Emma thought about the strange things that had happened at school, about Laila and Nema. Was it all somehow connected with **SHINE**? Was this unexpected trip actually part of a plan? EJ thought she might pack her **SHINE** CHARM bracelet just in case. Emma was learning to expect the unexpected.



The Jacks family were up early the next morning. Bob had been hard to wake and grunted a lot but that wasn't really any different to most mornings. They took a taxi out to the airport and checked in their baggage. Emma's dad had insisted they get there early and they now had nearly three hours before they would board their plane. What would they do?

Piinngg!

It was a **SHINE** mission alert. Emma took out her phone.

**DING DONG!**

*What's that?* wondered Emma, as she turned and saw her mum checking her own phone. They both looked around to check if the boys had noticed but they were far too busy in the duty-free shop looking at computer games.

'Darling,' said Emma's mum to her dad. 'Em and I are going to look at the shops over the other side. We might be a while,' she said, winking at Emma. 'But let's go to the toilet first, Em.'

Emma knew exactly what her mum was thinking.

'Good idea, Mum,' she said. 'Which one?'

'The one with the light globe sign next to it,' said her mum. 'Over here.'

They walked into the toilets and made their way down the row of cubicles. They were nearly at the end and Emma's mum was still close behind her.

'Please tell me we are not both going in the same toilet,' Emma mumbled to her mum.

'Don't be ridiculous,' Mum replied quietly. 'I always take the second from the end on the right, the one next to you.'

*That's a relief,* thought Emma. It was embarrassing enough starting a mission on the toilet without your mum sitting there too!

Emma went into the last cubicle on the right and closed and locked the door behind her. She sat on the seat and looked under the toilet roll holder. Sure enough, there was a small socket, the perfect size for Emma's **SHINE**-issue phone. She connected her phone and waited.

Her phone screen flashed.

And then, as Emma gripped the seat, it spun around and she was on the other side of the wall sitting on the toilet seat at what looked like an

underground train station. There was a beep and then her mum, also sitting on the toilet seat, spun around too. EJ's screen flashed again.

SBT ARRIVING 30 SECONDS.  
DESTINATION SHINE HQ.

WELCOME BACK EJ!2!  
HOLD ON!