



Chapter one – The Name Game

The call to the naming ceremony came at midnight. G-Mamma had squeezed her way through the fireplace tunnel between her Spylab and Janey Brown's bedroom, and was looming over the bed like Mummy Christmas in her scarlet and white Spysuit, complete with floppy hat.

“Come on, Blonde,” she barked, sergeant-major-like.

“Important stuff going on next door.”

Janey sat up abruptly. “G-Mamma, be quiet! Mum will ... oh.”

Even after a few days it still amazed her that her quiet, unassuming mum now knew that she was really Gina Bellarina, Superspy, married to Boz Brilliance Brown, also Superspy, and mother of Jane Blonde, Sensational Spylet. There was no need for

her SPI:KE to tone down her noisy instructions. Her mum had probably told her to get Janey in the first place.

“So what’s going on?” she said as she swung her long, lean legs out of the bed. “What’s a naming ceremony?”

“You’ll see,” was all G-Mamma would say, before she dropped to her knees and prised her way through to the Spylab next door.

Janey pulled on her dressing gown and followed her - only when she stood up at the end of the tunnel, she discovered that the room she was in was no longer G-Mamma’s Spylab. In the corner where G-Mamma’s make-up bench had stood there was now a large bed, and next to it an expanse of desk covered in maps, architectural drawings, and all sorts of doodles in her father’s handwriting. Lined up along the edge of the bed were her mother, her father, and the newest member of the family, James, in shorts and a tee-shirt. Her friends Alfie Halliday and his mum were leaning on a nearby

computer bench, Wowed up in their finest spysuits, and loitering near the SPIral Staircase were two more spies: spylet Titian Ambition and her mother, Magenta, glowing in their matching red lycra suits. Everyone looked solemn, but not in the usual way that meant some dire disaster was about to befall the universe. More like people going into church, thought Janey.

She was the only one in pyjamas. G-Mamma gesticulated towards the shower cubicle with her eyebrows, and Janey guessed instantly what she was to do. Stepping into the Wower, she instructed the spy shower to work its magic, and in mere moments she emerged into her SPI:KE’s Spylab – or what used to be G-Mamma’s Spylab – in her stretchy silver suit, hair tumbling bright and blonde from a top-knot, and her face framed in slender Ultra-gogs.

“We’re all ready then,” said Boz Brown. “We let you sleep in a bit, Janey, after ...”

“... after I zapped myself in the stomach with a world-numbing Lazy Beam,” said Janey. It was true; she did still drop off more quickly than she ever used to, sleeping more soundly than she ever had. At least her dreams had stopped being filled with horrid black visions: strange squid-like shapes with murderous tentacles; blinding, stupefying yellow light; the dark, tragic eyes of the chimpanzee, Twelve.

She looked over at her new little brother and found herself once more looking into those dark eyes. Less tragic now, of course, now he'd found a family who cared for him, but still deeply, deeply sad. Janey felt like rushing over to give him a hug, but now Gina was taking his hand and drawing him to his feet, and together they were walking towards the middle of the room.

Boz-in-the-body-of-Abe waved his hands to draw the other SPIs in around them, and Janey linked hands with Magenta and G-Mamma, surprised at the seriousness of her father's expression.

“We're welcoming a new member to our team,” said Boz quietly, gazing straight into James's furrowed little face. The boy looked extremely worried. No wonder, thought Janey, considering what he'd been through.

“We thought we'd do something special for James,” said Janey's mum, smoothing down her bronze lycra suit self-consciously. “He's a special boy, after all.”

“No kidding,” muttered Alfie, round to Janey's left, and she felt his mother give him a shove. Rolling his eyes, he motioned that he was buttoning his lip.

But it was the truth, after all. Until James had come into contact with Boz's Rapid Evolution, or R-Evolution machine, he'd been quite happy sitting in a cage, conversing in sign language with the other chimps, especially his sister. Now his new sister was a girl. And a spylet ...

Boz scratched at a patch of hair on his arm, then lay his hand on James' head. "James, we want you to know that you are part of our family, and part of our team. We will always be here for you. You are a spylet now, and we would like to give you your spylet name and spylet identity."

"Do you have to wet his head like a baby at a christening?" blurted Tish, open and direct as ever.

"Sort of," said Boz with a grin. "Only we'll do it in the Wower."

And with that the circle of SPIs opened, forming a corridor. Boz led James over to the spy shower, the mirrored surface showing the solemn, handsome face and tall figure of Janey's father, and the slightly bowed figure of James, dark-haired, dark-eyed, serious.

He walked along quietly until Boz reached over to open the door, and then suddenly he started to struggle, pulling his hand out of Boz's grasp, trying to flee.

"Dad, he's frightened," called Janey. "Last time he went in a machine he got changed into a different body, not just a Spysuit."

"Of ... of course," said Boz, loosening his grip on James's hand. The boy pulled free and ran over to Janey.

"It's all right," said Janey softly, smoothing down his hair. "Look, I just did it, and I'm still me, just in a Spysuit. It won't hurt." She held up her little finger. "Pinky promise."

James watched her for a moment, then raised his pinky to link with hers. They pulled once, twice, sealing the promise, then Janey pushed him gently towards the Wower. With one backward glance in her direction, James took a deep breath and stepped inside. "Wow him," said Janey as the door closed, as he was unable to speak himself.

It only took a minute, or maybe less, before she heard a tapping at the Wower door. She pulled it open, and out stepped a more confident young man with his shoulders back, smiling broadly.

He wore a brilliant white spy-suit with black slashes across the legs and sleeves and shoulders, rather like zebra stripes, and black-rimmed Ultra-gogs the same colour as his glittering eyes and hair. James looked around a little shyly, then stuck both thumbs out in front of him like flag-poles.

Janey laughed. “You like that, then? You look great.”

Boz put his hands on her shoulders. “He looks great, because he is great. Spies and spylets, may I introduce to you our newest member: Spylet Jimmy Sable.”

“Sable the able!” yelled G-Mamma, with every indication that she was thinking up a rap on the spot. “Oh yes indeedy! Able and sable, that’s our boy, and with us he’ll have loads of joy ...”

Tish looked confused. “What’s ‘sable’?”

“Black, like his hair,” Alfie told her. How he knew that, Janey couldn’t imagine – but then she noticed that he’d whipped of

his PERSPIRE hat and looked it up on the computer. He really liked to know the facts first, whenever possible.

Spylet Jimmy Sable looked down at his suit, as proudly as Janey had the first time she had transformed into Jane Blonde. She held her hand out to him and he shook it solemnly. “Welcome, Agent Sable,” she said.

And then everyone took his hand in turn, making him feel special, making sure he felt wanted. His smile got bigger and bigger as he went down the line, and then Janey’s mum turned around with an enormous cake lit with candles that looked like tiny sticks of Spynamite, and everyone in the room applauded.

After that it was just like a birthday party. Not that Janey had been to many, or even had many of her own. She felt quite envious, in a way, but when she saw how completely happy James looked, the feeling disappeared in a flash. Instead of brooding, she chatted to Tish, played computer games with Alfie, and ate handfuls of cake

once she'd managed to distract G-Mamma with a toss-the-jelly-bean-into-your-mouth competition. G-Mamma won easily, then complained that the sugar was hurting her teeth.

All too soon, the party was over. Slivers of pink light were peeking through the blinds. Morning. "Time to De-Wow, I think," said Boz with a yawn.

"I'll go last, as my bedroom's closest," offered Janey, but her father pointed to the bed in the corner.

"Not any more. I'm taking this room, and James is downstairs," he said. "That way you and your mum can still have your space next-door without us boys getting in the way."

Janey stared at him and then at G-Mamma. It did sound like a good idea, but ... "What about G-Mamma?"

"I've been re-housed." G-Mamma managed to sound only a tiny bit frosty, but Janey could see that she wasn't terribly happy about it.

Alfie giggled. "Well, it's not really a house ..."

"It's only temporary," said Boz quickly. "G-Mamma's got a new Spylab in the garage at the back of the garden."

"That's righty almighty." G-Mamma smiled brightly, making the best of things. "All the latest gadgetry, in my own little granny flat. I mean, erk, in my G-Mammy flat. It's lovely. Drop by," she finished with a toss of her pink-tipped blonde curls, before flouncing off down the SPIral staircase.

Hmm, thought Janey. Her father next door, along with her new brother and even newer spylet. Her mother desperate to start spying again, to remember in the tiniest detail what it was she used to do. And G-Mamma 're-housed' in the garage.

It was going to be a very interesting summer.