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from the production of *Superjohn*,
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For the children, families and healthcare workers
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In a cozy flat in North London lives a very special family.
If you were skating on a star and you squinted really hard
you might just be able to see them in the distance, playing
space-rockets in their front room.

But it wasn't always like that....



Star is nine and she knows everything about the sun and planets and more about science than most of her teachers. John, her little brother, is no ordinary five year old either. If you ask him (or his Mum), his real name is SUPERJOHN - the fastest, bravest, boldest superhero in the world.

POW! WHAM! CRASH!

But even superheroes hit trouble sometimes. Superjohn's powers are running low and he needs to get his hands on something that'll make him strong again. He's fighting for the biggest prize now, the brightest star ever -

THE ORB OF INVINCIBILITY!

But every time SUPERJOHN thinks he's got hold of it, the orb just slips away.

Ahh!

He falls with a *FLASH! BANG! CRASH!*

Just across the corridor, Star's been waiting for Mum. They're going to have a girly night, get chips, and do their nails. Even though she hates the bleachy smell at the hospital she loves the big window; the sky's so huge it feels like you're swimming in the stars. When Mum tells her she'll have to stay overnight on the ward with John again, tears sting Star's eyes. She never gets any time alone with Mum anymore.



"Your brother's not doing well," says Mum. "He's shivery and his throat's all sore. He's going to need to stay in hospital for a while this time."

"I thought he was supposed to be better by now," snaps Star.

"Me too love...so, we're going to have to be really brave, use all our superpowers too-"

"We haven't got superpowers," says Star. "No one in this family does!"

The next morning John's still in bed, looking pale. Mum keeps feeding him sweets.

Star wishes they could go home until - in comes Betty, their favourite nurse, singing and dancing up a storm.

“A WHOP BAP A LU LA – A WHOP BAM BOOM!”

Betty's got the biggest smile and the wobbliest bottom you've ever seen, and when she sings it's like being tickled and you forget where you are. Betty takes John's blood, but he doesn't mind because he gets a massive star sticker for being brave.

“I'm going to get the orb!” says John.

“What's that?” Star wishes she could have one too.

“The brightest star ever,” says John, while Mum sticks the sticker on his pyjama top. “No, I'm the brightest Star,” his sister grabs the sweets and shoves one in her mouth.

“Star!” Mum gives her a stern look.

Star knows that was a warning but shoves another handful of sweets in anyway.

“That's enough,” Mum puts the packet back in her bag.

Star crunches on the sweets. “When can I go home?”

“Soon, but first you can help look for a bone marrow match for John,” Betty peels off her plastic gloves.

“A match? Is that like a football match?” asks John.

Betty smiles, “It's a blood test, and a tissue test, to see if anyone in your family can give you some of their bone marrow.”

“Yuk!” says Star, but her little brother's grinning. “I'm not having an operation or anything, not for that little squirt.”

John's smile fades. “Mum, can't you just do the tests?”

“Of course I will, but Star could be a better match,” says Mum.

That night...

BOING! BOING! BOING! a bright red football bounces past John's bed.

John creeps out of bed to the window. But instead of seeing only stars, there's a boy, a bit older than John, floating in the night sky!

“On the head,” says the boy.

“But how?” asks John.

“Try touching the window, just here.”

John puts his hand against the glass and it melts, like it's made of water.

“WOW!” John throws the ball..

The boy kicks it back.

WHOOOOOOOOOOOSH!

“Is that a football or a planet?” asks John.

“You what?”

John kicks the ball again.

BA-DOING!



“Looks like Mars. Aren’t you freezing?”

The football boy laughs. “Why don’t you come over and see for yourself?”

John shakes his head.

“Dare you,” says the boy.

As John leans against the window the glass completely melts away. Now he’s floating in the night sky too, and he doesn’t feel tired anymore, or at all cold.

“I’m Dogby,” says the boy.

“Superjohn.” Floating and flying, speeding through the sky, they kick and pass the football. Dogby is the best player ever.

When he scores you can hear the roar of a huge crowd.

YEAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOAL!

Superjohn whips round to see how far the ball went, but when he turns back there’s no one there. “Dogby? Dogby, don’t mess about – Dogby?!!!!”

But Superjohn’s not floating anymore. He’s falling. Fast.

That same night, in an empty hospital room where Star has hidden out, she hears footsteps and voices; must be Mum and Betty. Star dives under the covers and wipes her eyes.

Mum whispers to Betty, "Star's a perfect match for John. I just wish..."

"Poor girl is frightened", says Betty, "It's a lot to take in. Let's go and see what we can do."

Mum strokes Star's hair and Betty hums a gentle tune. Star wishes they could stay just like this.

"Imagine this," says Mum, "inside your body it's like...a magic field of flowers, and they're beautiful, healthy and strong."

"All the doctors want to do is pick a few," says Betty, " 'cause your flowers are really special...and give them to John."

"What d'you think?" asks Mum.

Star sits up. "I'm scared."

Mum hugs Star and kisses her forehead, "Me too darling, but Betty says it's very simple and it could really make John better."

Betty nods.

"Will I get sick too?" Star asks.

"No love," says Mum.

"But - will I lose my hair?"

Betty shakes her head.

"You'll still be the same, bright, shining Star. You can even meet another person who has donated bone marrow if you like", says Betty.

"What d'you think?" asks Mum

Star nods. Mum and Star stay cuddling for five whole minutes, which Star loves.



THUD! THUD! THUD!

John's head hurts, and tears stream down his face. He has fallen into a murky world full of lumps and bumps.

"Superheroes don't cry," says a willowy woman, with the palest skin and the darkest hair you've ever seen.

"I'm not a superhero," he says.

"You could have fooled me, "tackling the most dangerous supervillains on your own." She leans over to wipe his eyes but he flinches at her long white fingers and red-claw nails.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Haema, Queen of Bloodbone. "

"And you've seen me fighting supervillains?!" John stares at the woman, "I can't get the orb, though. I'm not strong enough."

"Nonsense," Haema sweeps her arms in the air, and all of a sudden John's up on his feet. "You're superfast."

"Am I?" His arms rise like giant wings.

"And superstrong," He jolts with energy. "You never fail. You're SUPERJOHN!"

And in a **FLASH!**

"The orb!" Superjohn flies towards it, but every time he gets close it inches away, just out of reach.

"Will be yours... But you'll have to listen VERY carefully and do EVERYTHING I say."

"I will....I swear."

"There's a beautiful field of flowers. Well, they look beautiful but really they're poisonous. And if you don't get rid of them all, Bloodbone, my home, will crumble to dust."

"I'll do anything."

"Destroy those flowers. Trample them, rip them down! But whatever you do, do not breathe in their deadly scent."



BOING! BOING! BOING!

“Dogby!” shouts Superjohn.

“He’s been itching for you to join us,” says Haema.

“Really?”

Dogby nods.

“Dogby, show Superjohn the path to the freshly grown field.”

Dogby nods again.

“But remember, he must go in alone. This is a SUPERJOHN-only mission.”

The next day, Star is lying in bed, in hospital, all woozy. She remembers what Mum and Betty said about donating bone marrow to John.

“Imagine this - inside your body it’s like... like a magic field of flowers...”

Star blinks a few times, and the next thing she knows, a field of gorgeous flowers has sprouted up all around her! The field is bright and warm as honey sunshine. Dancing with joy, she picks some flowers and threads them through her hair.

There’s a voice singing in the distance, smooth as velvet.

“Take a load off
Let your hair down,
Not a care now –
Just be still.”



Suddenly very sleepy, Star lies down amongst the sweet, sweet-smelling flowers. She can’t keep her eyes open.

Meanwhile, Superjohn and Dogby find the very same field—Poisonous flowers! If Superjohn destroys these, finally he’ll get that orb! He covers his nose and mouth and yanks flowers from the ground, until he’s pulled, ripped up or stamped on them all. Then he sees Star, with flowers in her hair. He snatches them away and she wakes up. “Oi! What are you doing?”

But Superjohn is under Haema’s spell, nothing can stop him winning the orb now.

“Stop it!” Star stands up, eyes filled with tears. “You’ve messed everything up! Just like you always do. Those flowers were mine. They were supposed to make you better. Now it’s never going to work.”

She glances at the flowers she’s still holding, and makes a run for it. But Superjohn’s not listening, he’s destroyed the field! Now he’s going to get his prize, from Haema. Dogby sits among the ruined flowers and cries. He remembers his field of flowers and the tears keep coming. “Haema can’t help you. There is no prize. Just a big pack of lies.”



"It's taking a little while for his body to accept the new marrow," says Betty. Tears trickle down Star's face. "Because I messed it up."

"No, love, you've done everything you can."

"I haven't – he didn't want my flowers – in the field, he-"

Betty puts a cool hand on Star's forehead. "You're a bit hot, love, come and sit down while I fetch your Mum."

Back in the hospital Star's still clutching a handful of thirsty flowers, and feeling pretty bad about fighting with John. Betty pokes her head round the door, "Hello, love. Are you all right? You look a bit pale."

Star can see her brother through the window, all weak and skinny. "I've got to see John."

"He's asleep at the moment, but you can wave at him when he wakes up."

"Will you give him these?" Star offers Betty the flowers.

Betty shakes her head. "I'm sorry love, I can't. We've got to be really careful just now, in case of germs."

"Is he going to be all right?" asks Star.



Star's waiting for Mum, when.

WHHHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOSH!

A boy floats past the window on a planet. He's got the saddest eyes you've ever seen. Star would love to fly away too.

"Can I?" she asks.

"You'll need your own space helmet," says the boy.

Star unzips her backpack and puts it on her head. The boy smiles, but his eyes still look sad.

As Star touches the window, to her surprise, it melts. She feels weightless, like she's on the moon. They play space rockets together until they're out of breath.

Star takes her backpack off her head and floats on it. "I'm Star.

"Dogby."

"Really? Your Dad gave me this." She shows him the star sticker on her backpack. "Told me bone marrow donors are brave."

Dogby shrugs. "I haven't seen him in ages."

"How come?"

Dogby doesn't say anything but Star can tell he's upset.

"I'm sorry. "

"It's not your fault. It's Haema who tricked me," says Dogby.

"Who's Haema?" asks Star.

Dogby scowls, "The Queen of Bloodbone. She forced me to destroy my field of flowers, and promised me that stupid orb."

"The brightest star?" Star scrambles to her feet.

Dogby nods. "It doesn't exist. It's just lies."

"Oh, no! My little brother, John, thinks that's the only thing that'll make him strong again."

Dogby's eyes fill with tears. "Haema told us both that the flowers were poisonous."

Star plucks out a flower from her hair. She sniffs it. "Look, they're not poisonous to me." She thrusts the flower under Dogby's nose. "Or you. But maybe they're poisonous to her!"

"D'you think?" says Dogby, his eyes brightening.

Star nods. "Can you take me to Bloodbone?"



After running half way round Bloodbone, Superjohn's panting like a crazy puppy. "Haema... I'm ready for my prize now! I did what you said."

"Nearly, but not quite." Haema yawns.

"What d'you mean? I totalled those flowers."

Haema smiles, "You were amazing, but your sister got in the way. When she threw that tantrum the orb... vanished."

A fire rises in Superjohn's chest, "I want my prize. I need that orb!"

Haema sighs, "Calm down, all you have to do is find another child and bring them to me."

"What?!"

"They'll destroy their field of flowers, and you can grab the orb."

"But – what if-"

"Now – be Superfast, and Superstrong."

"I never fail; I'm Superjohn!" Superjohn puffs up his chest - he thinks he doesn't need anybody's help now.

"Bring me a child, and the orb will be yours."

Meanwhile...

Dogby leads Star through the crumbly slopes of Bloodbone.

"How d'you know which way to go?" asks Star.

"I've been here loads of times," he replies. "What are we going to do when we find Haema?"

"I'm not sure... but we've got the flower." Star follows Dogby along a jagged path. The cracks in the murky earth widen as they walk deeper into Bloodbone.

"Watch out - JUMP!"

They reach a steep ridge, and Superjohn appears just above them. "John!"

They scramble up to meet him but he keeps his head down and doesn't answer.

"Where are you going?" asks Dogby.

"I'm on a mission."

"Wait ," says Star. "You have to listen!"

"And soon I'll be able to fight anything..."

"That's what Haema wants you to think," says Dogby.

But Superjohn keeps marching on.

“She’s not your friend John. Listen to Dogby.”

“There is no orb. Haema’s tricked us both.”

Superjohn freezes and stares at Dogby. “What?”

Star takes the flower out of her backpack. John goes to grab it, but Dogby gets between him and Star.

Star sniffs the flower, “Look, it’s not poisonous.” She passes it to Dogby who smells it too. “They were my flowers. They would have made you better.”

“But Haema said-”

“She was lying,” says Dogby, handing the flower to John, “It’s safe.”

John sniffs the flower and it smells SUPERSWEET.



“I hope you’re not going to disappoint me!” says Haema swishing her cloak, like an angry bird.

“No,” says Superjohn, “I’ve brought you a child, just like you asked.”

“Let me see,” says Haema.

“First, I want my orb.”

“That wasn’t the deal!” Haema whips around and sees Star. “You?!”

Dogby ducks behind the other side of Haema just in time.

“Quick, Star, use your superpowers!” says John.

“I haven’t got any,” Star trembles as Haema approaches.

“Yes you do,” says Superjohn, “You just have to believe in them.”

Star’s face goes bright red with concentration. She holds out her Star sticker and zaps Haema with a brave, golden light.

Haema wobbles, but bats back the light with her enormous cloak.

Dogby throws his football at Haema with full force, WHOOSH!

She stumbles towards them like angry bull.

“We have to work together,” whispers Star.

Working together, Superjohn, Dogby and Star form a three-headed supermonster, towering above Haema. Haema spits and stumbles. Part of the monster reaches for the flower from her backpack, and passes it to another part, who puffs up his cheeks and-

PFFF!

The pollen from the flower hits Haema right in the face. At that moment a yellow field of flowers sprouts from the ground covering Bloodbone. Haema's eyes widen, and she lets out an almighty sneeze, but Superjohn keeps blowing the magical pollen into her face until she's sneezed herself to dust.



Superjohn, Dogby and Star are floating, breathless and smiling, in the night sky. Dogby clutches his football close.

“We should get back,” says Star.

“Yeah,” says Superjohn.

Dogby doesn't say anything.

Star gives Dogby a quick kiss on the cheek then jumps through the melting window.

Dogby throws Superjohn his football and Superjohn starts to cry; he doesn't know what to say now either. He jumps through the watery window and ends up in bed. Dogby waves at him, and Superjohn waves back, but by the time Superjohn has blinked, Dogby's kicking an invisible football into the night sky.

Superjohn sits up in bed. Star is sitting right beside him. Star waves at her little brother and he waves back. He doesn't need the orb, he's got his big sister to help make him strong again. She's better than the orb, she is the brightest Star there is.

In a cozy flat in North London lives a very special family. If you were skating on a star and you squinted really hard you might just be able to see them, in the distance, playing space rockets in their front room. That's Star, that's Mum, and that little one in the middle, that's SUPERJOHN.



THE END

The background is a solid teal color. It features several white stars of varying sizes and orientations scattered across the page. There are also large, semi-transparent white circles of various sizes, some overlapping the edges of the page. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

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