

'For anyone thinking of becoming a Scout, go for it,
come and join the big adventure.' BEAR GRYLLS

A large, stylized compass rose graphic is positioned behind the title text. It has a yellow center with a black star-like design, and a black outer ring with white tick marks. The compass rose is partially obscured by the text and the background image.

SURVIVAL SQUAD

OUT OF BOUNDS

JONATHAN ROCK

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A Tiger Patrol's Diary

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Also by Jonathan Rock

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About the Book

There's a reason they're known as the Survival Squad . . .

The Tiger Patrol are on an expedition out on the wild and desolate moors when a new member runs off. Soon they're all in trouble - they're completely lost, and they have no way of contacting anyone for help . . .

This is where their training kicks in - are they prepared to survive outdoors?

**A MESSAGE FROM
BEAR GRYLLS,
CHIEF SCOUT**



Tiger Patrol is a team of intrepid Scouts who look out for each other no matter what challenge they face.

They've made a promise to do their best and this means picking up skills like navigation, planning, fire lighting and first aid. From moors and woodlands to river rapids, Tiger Patrol is willing to give anything a go - as long as they stay safe.

Scouting is full of great adventures, but you'll only make the most of them if you give everything you've got. You'll need to be alert, committed, trust your friends and never be too proud to ask for help.

Maybe you're already a Scout. If so - be inspired by Tiger Patrol. If you're thinking about joining, then go for it. I did, and I've never looked back.

Are you up for the challenge?

Bear



SURVIVAL SQUAD

OUT OF BOUNDS



JONATHAN ROCK

RHCP DIGITAL

CHAPTER 1

JAY WATSON LOOKED on nervously as Lee rattled the temporary wire fencing that surrounded the building site.

'I reckon we can get in,' Lee said, glancing up and down the street. He wiped his hands on his faded red T-shirt, leaving a streak of dirt. 'Go on, Jay. There's no one around. Climb over and see if you can get the gate open from inside.'

'Yeah, go on, Jay,' Vicky urged him. 'You can do it, no trouble.'

Jay looked at the sign on the fence. 'There are guard dogs,' he said.

Vicky laughed. 'It always says that but I've never seen any.'

Jay sneaked a look at his watch, although he didn't really need to. It was starting to get dark. He should have been home an hour ago.

'What are you waiting for?' asked Sean, Lee's mate.

'You're scared, aren't you?' Vicky taunted him, her face sneering in contempt. 'It's not just the dogs. You think someone's going to see you. You think you'll get in trouble.'

'No,' said Jay. 'It's not that.' He turned away from them, kicking the stones on the ground. He didn't want them to see that he was scared.

'What, then?' Lee demanded. 'I saw you looking at your watch. Is your mum going to tell you off for being late?'

'You're going to secondary school soon,' said Sean, 'with all of us. You can't let your mum tell you what to do all the time.'

The rest of the gang were older than Jay. When he started at the new school Lee would be in Year Nine and the others in Year Eight. He'd been flattered when they'd let him start to hang out with them, earlier in the holidays. But now he wasn't so sure.

'Well?' asked Lee unpleasantly.

Jay looked up to see his blue eyes staring hard at him. He hesitated.

'Forget it,' Lee said. He grabbed the fence and started to climb. 'Go home, saddo.'

Jay flushed. 'OK, then,' he said, grabbing Lee's leg. 'I'll do it. Get off.'

He was halfway up the fence when he heard laughter further down the street and saw two dark-haired boys and a girl with a blond ponytail walking towards them. They looked as if they were having fun, and Jay couldn't help wishing he was with them instead of with Lee and his gang.

'Hey, you lot!' Sean yelled suddenly. 'What's so funny? Are you laughing at us?'

The other kids glanced over at them, and then carried on walking.

'What's up with you, then?' called Vicky, leaping onto her bike and chasing after them. She jumped the kerb and skidded to a halt, blocking their way. 'My friend asked you a question - don't you know it's rude not to answer questions?'

Lee grinned at Sean. 'Come on, this should be good.'

They ran across the road, laughing. 'Is she your girlfriend, then?' Sean said to the taller of the two boys.

'Yeah, come on,' said Vicky to the blonde girl, who was starting to look scared. 'Which one of them's your boyfriend? Tell us, and you can go.'

Jay jumped down from the fence. It was mean, what they were doing. Those kids had just been minding their own business. He knew he should tell the others to leave them alone, but right now he was just glad that they seemed to

have forgotten about him. Maybe this would be a good time to get away. His bike was leaning against the wall of a nearby house and he started walking towards it, but suddenly one of the boys raised his voice.

'Just leave us alone, OK? We haven't done anything to you. Let us past.'

Jay saw Lee step forward, about to throw a punch, but the smaller of the two boys put out a hand and pushed him away. The shove caught Lee off balance and he stepped backwards and crashed into Vicky, who yelled and let her bike fall to the ground. The blond girl shrieked as one of the pedals caught her leg, and suddenly everyone was shouting - and one voice was shouting louder than any of the others.

'Jasper Watson! What on earth do you think you're doing?'

Jay's heart sank as he heard the familiar voice call out to him. It was his mum.

She was standing on the pavement on the other side of the street, glaring at him, with her hands on her hips and her face flushed with anger. She'd been cooking and an apron covered her tight jeans and sweater.

The rest of the gang turned away from their three victims and stared at her. The trio seized their chance and walked off quickly.

'Go on, *Jasper*,' called Vicky. 'Go home with Mummy.'

'It's past your bedtime, *Jasper*,' Lee shouted as Jay's mum crossed the road, and Jay groaned inwardly when he saw the slippers on her feet. She took hold of his arm.

'I've got to get my bike, Mum,' he muttered, pulling away.

'Yeah, don't forget your bike, Jay,' called Lee. 'You'd better take it home and clean it.'

'I think you might have got some dust on the handlebars,' Sean jeered.

Jay heard their laughter echoing behind him and his face burned with embarrassment. It was the worst thing that had ever happened to him.

'I thought I told you to stay away from that lot,' his mum said angrily as she hurried him along the pavement.

'They're my friends.'

'Some friends! They're bullies. I saw what was going on. Why didn't you stop them?'

'I—'

'I've had enough, Jay. Honest, I have. You've been late home every night this week - and now this. I've a good mind to take the plug off that Xbox. It'd serve you right.'

'You can't!'

'Oh, I *can*,' Jay's mum retorted. 'And that's exactly what I'll do if I ever see you hanging around with them again.'

They'd reached the house. Before his mum could say any more Jay pushed his bike through the passage at the side and hung it up in the shed. Then he went straight up to his room and slammed the door behind him, his heart thumping. He heard his dad's voice calling to him half-heartedly, but he knew he wouldn't come up. The football was on the TV, and nothing would tear his dad away from that. He switched on the Xbox and started up *Galactic Explorer*. He'd spent most of the summer holiday playing the game and now he was almost on the final level. He forgot all about his mum and dad and Lee and his mates as he punched coordinates into his ship's computer and navigated through a maze of star systems to the far side of the galaxy . . .

'Jay! Come down here.'

His mum's voice hardly registered. He'd done well and had reached the trickiest part of this level. This was where he'd always failed before and he was determined not to mess it up this time. He fought off missiles from the alien ship that was playing hide-and-seek with him behind the moons of a gas giant planet. Huge plumes of fire kept

erupting from the surface below him, and he pushed his ship to the limit as he dodged between them. This was it! He was nearly there—

His bedroom door opened. 'Jasper, get downstairs right now. Me and your dad want to talk to you. Switch that thing off.'

Jay's eyes flicked away from the screen just long enough for an alien photon torpedo to catch him by surprise. His ship exploded spectacularly. He groaned. 'I'd nearly done it, Mum. You made me mess it up.'

His mum pulled the plug out of the socket. 'Downstairs, now,' she said grimly, and Jay knew better than to argue with her when she was in this mood. Reluctantly he followed her down to the living room. On the TV the match had reached half time. His dad hurriedly picked up the remote control and switched it off.

'Right,' said Jay's mum. 'It's time you had a proper activity to do when you're not at school. No more hanging around on street corners. No more coming home late.'

'He wasn't that late,' his dad said. 'You worry too much.'

Jay's mum shot her husband an angry glance. 'You didn't see his so-called friends,' she told him.

'Well, maybe he could try football again. You might be better now you're a bit older,' he said to Jay.

'I'm no good at football, Dad,' Jay replied. 'You know I'm not.'

His dad had been keen for him to play. He'd made him join a Sunday league side, and Jay had spent a whole miserable season shivering on the touchline as a substitute while his dad argued with the coach.

'Not football,' said his mum. 'I think I've found the answer. Look here.'

Jay saw that she had the laptop open on the table. 'What?' he said. Then he saw the screen. '*Scouts?* Mum, you can't be serious.'

'It looks great to me,' she commented. 'Look at all the things you can do: rock climbing, kayaking, snow sports. And you'd *definitely* meet people. Look at all these activity badges you can collect. There's even one for computers.'

'It's just sad, Mum. Why would I want to collect badges? And I already know about computers, don't I? Maybe you should join.'

'Well, maybe I will,' she answered. 'It says here that they need parents to help.'

'Mum!'

'Now you listen to me,' his mum went on firmly. 'You don't have to join straight away. They say you can try it out for a few weeks first, so that's what you're going to do.'

Jay's dad was looking over his shoulder at the list of activities on the computer screen. 'Your mum's right - this looks like fun. You give it a go, Jay. And if it doesn't work out, I can always ring that football coach again and see if he'll have you back.'

Jay knew when he was beaten. 'Can I go now?'

He walked upstairs miserably. He could just imagine what Lee, Sean and Vicky would say if they ever found out he was going to Scouts. But they weren't going to be friends with him now anyway. Not after what had happened earlier. His face felt hot just thinking about it. And when he started secondary school they'd all be there, waiting for him. It was better not to think about any of it. He plugged in the games console again and waited for it to start up. At least he could conquer the galaxy. This time he was going to make it all the way to Level Nine.

CHAPTER 2

WHEN CONNOR SUTCLIFF went downstairs, his dad was waiting in the hallway, looking at his watch.

‘You don’t want to be late,’ Dr Sutcliff said. ‘It’s your big night, right? Your first meeting as Patrol Leader.’

Connor’s dad was a GP at the busy local health centre, but he was also a helper at the Sixth Matfield Scout Troop, a job he took very seriously.

‘It’s OK, Dad,’ said Connor, trying not to let on how nervous he felt. ‘We always get there before everyone else anyway.’

‘Of course we do. If I’m going to help, I’m going to do it properly.’ Dr Sutcliff grinned. ‘We have to *be prepared*, don’t we?!’

Connor groaned. ‘You won’t make jokes like that in front of my friends, will you?’ he said, heading for the door. Connor was tall for his age, and people often said he looked like his dad. It was true that they both had the same fair hair and blue eyes, but he definitely didn’t share his dad’s terrible sense of humour.

‘Wait, there’s something I want to give you before we go. Here . . .’

Connor took the small, battered cardboard box that his dad had handed him. He opened it, then looked up. ‘But . . . it’s your penknife,’ he stammered, looking down at the old white Swiss Army knife.

‘Right.’ His dad smiled. ‘I had it when I was in the Scouts. And it was your grandpa’s before that. He gave it to me when *I* became a Patrol Leader. So now it’s your turn.

Go on, what are you waiting for? Put it in your pocket! It's yours. You can bring it to show your friends, but now we'd better get a move on, or we really *will* be late.'

Connor's mum and his big sister, Ellie, appeared in the living-room doorway.

'Are you sure you don't want to come, Ellie?' asked Dr Sutcliff with a grin.

'No thanks, Dad,' said Ellie. Connor looked at his sister curiously. Her blond hair seemed to have acquired a crimson streak since tea time. 'Me and Mum are going to watch a DVD. It'll be nice and peaceful without Connor in the house.'

'I think you should use the time to add some more streaks to your hair - then you'd look like a—'

'Connor!' said his mum. She turned to her daughter. 'Ellie, it's his first night as Patrol Leader. You might wish him luck.'

Ellie pulled a face and disappeared.

'I'm sure you'll do really well, love,' Connor's mum said, giving him a hug. 'Look at that - I reckon you're as tall as I am now.' She stood back, smiling at him, her grey eyes warm. 'Off you go. Your dad's waiting.'

As he got into the car, Connor's nerves returned. It was almost as bad as when he'd first started secondary school. He didn't feel ready to be a Patrol Leader yet. He was only thirteen - well, thirteen and a half. Mike and Danny, the previous Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader, were both fourteen so they'd moved up to Explorer Scouts this year. Connor was sure it had been his dad's idea to make him Patrol Leader. He'd accidentally overheard him talking about it to Rick, the Scout Leader of the 6th Matfield Troop, the day before Rick had announced his decision.

When he'd first started at Beavers, Connor hadn't minded his dad being around. It had been fun. But now it seemed like his dad wanted him to do all the things *he'd*

done when he was a Scout, only ten times as well. And Connor wasn't sure that was possible.

When they arrived at Scout HQ, Julie, the Assistant Leader, was pinning photos to the notice board near the entrance. 'Hi, Connor, take a look at these. There's some good ones of you and your mates on the crag.' She turned to Connor's dad. 'Come on, Chris. Rick wants a word. They'll be here soon and we've got a few new kids starting tonight.'

'You didn't get that sun tan in Wales with us,' laughed Connor's dad as the two of them went inside.

'No,' agreed Julie. 'I've been climbing in Arizona.' She was small and wiry, a natural rock climber.

Connor looked at the photos. The summer camp in Wales had been brilliant, and the day they'd spent climbing had been the best of all. He'd been on indoor climbing walls before, but in Wales they'd climbed on rocks high above the valley, with glimpses of the distant sea. It had been amazing. There he was in the photo, reaching up with one hand for an impossibly tiny hold. He remembered the jolt of fear he'd felt when he thought he was about to fall, and the reassuring voice of Mike, the Tigers' previous Patrol Leader, who'd been standing at the foot of the crag feeding out the rope. Then the rush of elation as his fingertips gripped the rock securely and his foot found a solid ledge. There was another picture of him standing at the top, punching the air. He wanted to get his Outdoor Challenge badge this year, and at least one more. He smiled to himself, fingering the knife in his pocket. It would be cool to have more badges than his dad.

'Hi, Connor,' said a quiet voice behind him. 'Are they pictures of the camp?'

Connor turned and saw Toby. The small dark-haired boy was the new Assistant Patrol Leader of the Tigers and, just as importantly, he was Connor's friend. Connor hadn't seen him since the camping trip.

'Yeah, look,' Connor replied. 'There's Tiger Patrol on top of Pen-y-Fan. Thanks to your navigation!'

Toby grinned. 'Mike would have got us there in the end,' he said. 'It's quite easy to go wrong in the mist.'

'Yes, but you were the one who noticed.' Connor was very glad that Toby was going to be his assistant. Some people thought he was a bit weird, but Connor knew better. Toby's brains had got Tiger Patrol out of trouble on more than one occasion. 'What did you do for the rest of the holidays?' he asked.

'I've been working. I've been helping my mum with her accounts.' Toby's mum had a shop in town, selling dress material.

Connor stared at him. 'What, you've spent your summer holiday doing maths? Now I *know* you're crazy!'

'I'm not, you know,' Toby said, his green eyes glinting. 'I like maths. And besides, Mum paid me. I saved up and bought this.' He rolled up his sleeve. 'It's an altimeter watch,' he explained as more people began to arrive. 'And not just that, it's a compass too, and a barometer. It could measure the height all the way up to the summit of Everest!'

'Well, I don't suppose we'll be going there with Tiger Patrol,' laughed Connor, admiring the watch. 'Look, there are some new Scouts here. Who do you think will be in the Tigers?'

They gazed around the room with interest. They knew most of the faces, but there were four newcomers, including a stocky, pale boy in an oversized sweatshirt with a sulky expression, and a small dark girl with straight black hair and large brown eyes, who was standing a little apart from everyone else. The girl saw them looking, and turned away as the voice of Rick, the Scout Leader, cut through the excited chatter:

'OK, now, everyone, settle down. We need to get started —'