9 - 11 Years
Prose Reading
The Traitor Game by B. R. Collins

Michael and Francis are the inventors of a secret fantasy world called Evgard. When their imaginative world is discovered, Michael immediately blames Francis and gets revenge by exposing Francis' secrets to the school bully Shipley. In this section, MIchael and Shipley are arguing, and Shipley pushes Michael out of a first-floor window.

He didn't remember landing.

But he did. He must have done.

'I'm fine. Really. I'm fine. I'm fine.' He kept saying it, over and over again, because no one seemed to believe him. After a while he started to think, *Maybe I should just shut up and let them work it out for themselves,* but somehow he couldn't stop himself. He tried to stand up. 'Look. I'm fine. Watch. I'm perfectly fine -' but someone laid a restraining hand on his arm and pushed him firmly back into the smashed flower bed.

'Just stay still, Michael. You're going to be all right.'

'I *know*, that's what I said, I'm absolutely -' but Father Markham wasn't listening. Michael raised one arm and waved it around. '*Look*. Everything's fine. I'm fine. I'm really -' A drop of blood rolled back down his wrist and soaked into his shirtcuff. He thought, *Oops. Mum'll go ballistic if I've torn this shirt.*

'All right, Michael, I heard you. Calm down. We're just waiting for the ambulance.'

'I don't need an ambulance. I'm fine…' but no one took any notice. Michael dropped his head back and stared up into the rain. A crowd had gathered; someone was trying to shoo them away. He thought, *This is stupid. I'm perfectly all right.*

He heard the paramedics before he saw them; conferring with Father Markham in low voices, 'Fell out of a window? That one there, on the first floor?' and Father Markham saying, 'The one that's broken, yes…'

But even the paramedics didn't take any notice of him. When they leant over he tried to tell them he was fine, really, he was fine, and they swapped a look that said *Hmm, looks like this one's in shock, he can't stop talking*… He said, 'Look, I'm fine, I don't need an ambulance, I'm fine, I'm just a bit -'

'Ok, make, let's just take you to hospital, get you checked over.' It wasn't like he had a choice. In the end he just gave up and thought, *Stuff it, if they want to waste their time*…