

Jack's Great Search

An easy reader for ages 5 to 8 by **Robyn Opie**

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Chapter 1 – Hobbies

‘Tomorrow we will be talking about hobbies,’ Ms Davis said. ‘I want you all to bring your hobby to school. I would like you to show the class your hobby and talk about it.’

‘Like what, Ms Davis?’ Jack asked his teacher.

‘Some of you might collect things, like stamps or coins or shells or sports cards. You don’t have to bring the whole collection to school, just a small part of it.’ Ms Davis smiled and clapped her hands. ‘Now off you go.’

Jack picked up his schoolbag and headed for home. He felt terrible. He didn’t collect anything. What was he going to take to school to show the class and talk about?

He started to run. He had to get a hobby. Fast!

But what?

What sort of things did people collect? Jack wondered. What were the things Ms Davis had said? He thought hard, which wasn’t easy while he was running.

He was almost home when he remembered that his grandpa collected stamps.

Perfect, Jack thought. I’ll collect stamps.

Chapter 2 – Stamps

When Jack got home, he raced in the back door. Then he ran through the kitchen, along the hall and into his father’s study.

‘Whoa!’ his father called out. ‘Where’s the fire?’

Jack made odd sounds that were a mixture of puffing and giggling.

‘Dad, do you have any stamps?’ he spluttered.

‘Sure.’ His father opened the top drawer of his desk. ‘How many do you

need?’

‘All of them,’ Jack said impatiently.

Jack’s father raised his eyebrows. ‘I’m surprised you know that many people to write to.’

‘The stamps aren’t for letters,’ explained Jack. ‘I’m making a stamp collection. Like Grandpa.’

Jack’s father passed the stamps to Jack and smiled. ‘Perhaps you can ask Grandpa to help you.’

‘I don’t have time,’ said Jack, stuffing the stamps in his pocket. ‘I have to take my stamp collection to school tomorrow.’

‘I see.’

‘Do you have something I can put them in, Dad?’

‘Well maybe.’ Jack’s father looked in the desk drawer again. ‘Let’s see. What about this?’ He handed Jack a notebook.

‘Thanks Dad!’ Jack called. He clutched the notebook and ran to his bedroom.

Jack found a tube of glue in his desk drawer. He pulled the stamps from his pocket. Then he folded back a page of the notebook and arranged the stamps on the page. He was careful to make sure the stamps were very neat and evenly spaced.

When he had finished Jack looked at the notebook sadly. It wasn’t much of a stamp book. It wasn’t much of a collection. Jack really needed something better to show the class and talk about. He needed to find a better hobby.

But what?

He thought hard.

He remembered that his Aunty Gabby collected coins. Perfect, Jack thought. I’ll collect coins.

Chapter 3 – Coins

Jack returned to his father's study.

'Dad, do you have any coins?' Jack asked.

Jack's father raised his eyebrows. 'What for? To buy more stamps?'

Jack shook his head. 'No, I don't want to buy anything. I'm making a coin collection. Just like Aunty Gabby.'

'What happened to the stamp collection?'

'It's okay.' Jack lowered his head and stared at his shoes. 'I just think coin collecting is a better hobby.'

Jack's father reached into his trouser pocket. He pulled out some coins and handed them to Jack.

Jack looked at the coins. 'Do you have any more, Dad?'

'No, Jack.' His father shook his head. 'That's it.'

Jack ran to his bedroom. He opened his moneybox and emptied the contents onto the bed. He added up the coins. He had ten.

Jack looked at the coins sadly. It wasn't much of a coin collection. He needed something better to show the class and talk about. He needed to find a better hobby.

But what?

He thought hard.

He remembered that his cousin Lena collected rocks. Perfect, Jack thought. I'll collect rocks.

Chapter 4 – Rocks

Jack ran through the house and out the back door.

The back garden was covered with lawn. A gravel path led from the back door to the clothesline. Jack followed the gravel path. He looked at the trees and

small shrubs near the fence. He looked at his mother's neat flowerbed.

He began to search the flowerbed for rocks. He scraped the bark mulch away. His mother did a good job looking after the flowerbed. The soil was free of weeds and rocks!

Next, Jack looked under the trees. He found an empty snail shell and a small, dirty rock. He went back to the clothesline and scooped up a handful of gravel.

Jack ran inside the house and dropped the rocks onto his bed. He looked at the rocks sadly. It wasn't much of a rock collection. He needed something better to show the class and talk about. He needed to find a better hobby. But what?

Jack's stomach grumbled loudly. Collecting was hungry work, he thought.

Jack ran to the kitchen and looked in the cupboards for something to eat. He saw three boxes of cereal. He didn't want to eat cereal – not at four o'clock in the afternoon. But he remembered that in each box there was a sports card.

Perfect, Jack thought. I'll collect sports cards.

Chapter 5 – Sports Cards

Jack grabbed the boxes of cereal and ran to his bedroom. He sat on his bed and poked around in the cereal, but he couldn't find the cards.

He raced back to the kitchen and found a big bowl. Then he ran back to his bedroom. He poured some cereal into the bowl. A card fell out. Jack plucked the card from the Rice Puffs.

He poured cereal from the other boxes into the bowl and plucked out the cards. Some of the Wheat Crisps and Honey Flakes fell onto his bed. His bed would be crunchy to sleep in, but he didn't care.

Jack placed the three cards onto his bed. He looked at the sports cards sadly. It wasn't much of a sports card collection. He needed something better to

show the class and talk about. He needed to find a better hobby.

But what?

He thought hard.

He remembered that his neighbour, Petra, collected bugs. Perfect, Jack thought. I'll collect bugs.

Chapter 6 – Bugs

Jack ran out of his bedroom. He ran through the house and out the back door.

Crawling around on his hands and knees, Jack searched the lawn for bugs – big, black bugs, huge, hairy bugs, and squirmy, slimy bugs.

Jack searched under the trees, around the shrubs and in the flowerbed. He scraped the bark mulch away. He moved the gravel around. He checked the fence for spider webs.

But all he found were ants.

Jack looked at the ants sadly. It wasn't much of a bug collection. He needed something better to show the class and talk about. He needed to find a better hobby. But what?

Jack slumped down on the lawn. He couldn't think of anything. He would be the only person in the class without something to show and talk about. He would be the only person in his class without a hobby.

Jack walked back into the house dejectedly. He threw himself onto his bed.

He wouldn't go to school, he decided. He couldn't face his class.

Chapter 7 – Jack's Collections

When Jack was feeling sad the only thing that made him feel better was drawing.

He got out his pencils and a big sheet of paper.

The first thing Jack drew was a stamp collection. Then he drew a coin

collection and a rock collection. Next, he drew a sports card collection and a bug collection. They were big, wonderful collections. They were the best collections in the world.

Jack wished the collections were real and not just drawings. Then he could show the class and talk about them.

I could pretend the drawings are of my real collections, Jack thought. I could say my real collections are too big and too good to take to school. If they were too big, I couldn't carry them. And they might get stolen or break.

So Jack took the drawings to school.

* * *

Jack stood at the front of the classroom and held up his drawings, one by one.

He took a deep breath. 'These drawings are of my stamp collection and my coin collection and my rock collection and my sports card collection and my bug collection.'

Jack paused to take another breath. He was about to say they were the best collections in the world. He was about to say they were too big and too good to bring to school.

But before he could say one word, Ms Davis said, 'What wonderful drawings, Jack. Drawing is a great hobby. One day you might be a famous artist.'

Jack stood in front of the class while everyone *oohed* and *aahed* over his drawings.

'What cool drawings!' said Franko.

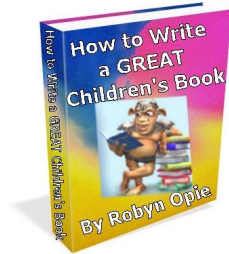
'I wish I could draw like that,' cried Kate.

'I wish my stamp collection looked like that,' said Sita.

Jack was thrilled. His drawings were more popular than Mike's worm collection. And they were pretty terrific worms.

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