

14 Mercury Man

One day Billy and Mickey were walking down to the newsagents at the corner of Bridge Street to get their comics.

"I'm a bit fed up of the Beany," said Billy.

"And I'm a bit fed up of the Dando," said Mickey.

"Let's see what else they've got," said Billy.

"Yeah, OK," said Mickey.

Billy and Mickey walked into the shop and as soon as they looked at the shelves of comics they both stopped dead. Their eyes opened wide and their mouths dropped open. Right in the middle of all the comics was a large colourful sign. It said: 'New out today, the most exciting comic of all time! 'Mercury Man. Follow the adventures of the Mighty, the Magnificent, the Marvelous, the Majestic Mercury Man, as he uses his amazing powers to save the universe from the evil Doctor Slime.'

And on the sign was a brilliant life-size picture of Mercury Man himself.

"Cor!" said Billy.

"Wow!" said Mickey, and in no time at all they were both dawdling along Bridge Street reading the very first pages of Mercury Man issue one. They sat together in the living room in Billy's house for the next two hours in complete silence.

They read every word and carefully studied every picture in the comic.

Eventually, when they had both finished and had stared at the front cover for about ten minutes, Billy said:

"Wow! That's the best, the greatest, the most mega-fantastic thing I have ever read!"

"Yeah," said Mickey, "Mercury Man is the bestest ever!"

Every week Billy and Mickey bought the next issue of Mercury Man. Every week they sat in Billy's house in silence until they had finished the whole comic. Soon everyone at Dripton Primary School was buying Mercury Man and it was all that anyone could talk about.

Billy dreamed about being Mercury Man. He had Mercury Man posters in his bedroom. He had Mercury Man transfers on his schoolbooks. He and Mickey had Mercury Man tee shirts that they wore every weekend. There was no doubt about it, all the children in Dripton thought that Mercury Man was the greatest!

"I wish we could meet the real Mercury Man," said Billy to Mickey one day, as they were walking back from the newsagents with the latest copy."

"Cor, yeah!" said Mickey, as he looked up into the sky just to make sure that Mercury Man wasn't about to swoop down in front of them.

They both settled down to read, and they both turned to page five at exactly the same time. Then at exactly the same time they both let out a little yell because, on page five, it said, 'Meet Mercury Man in person! Yes Mercury Man is coming to a town near you. Come along and meet him in person.' There was a long list of places that Mercury Man was visiting, Billy and Mickey quickly started to read it. Suddenly they both jumped up at the same time.

"Yes yes yes!" shouted Billy, "Mercury Man is coming to ... to ... to...."

"To Driptown." finished Mickey in awe.

They both stood in silence, and then they read the next few lines.

'All Mercury Man fans must be wearing a Mercury Man uniform in order to be let in to meet Mercury Man. Suits can be obtained by sending £12.50 to Mercury Man, PO Box 321, London, delivery within seven days.'

Without saying a word Mickey disappeared out of the house and sprinted home and Billy dashed into the dining room looking for Mum. You can imagine what happened can't you.

Billy asked: "Can I have a Mercury Man suit Mum?"

Billy pleaded: "Please Mum! Please mum! I really need a Mercury Man suit.

Everyone else will have one!"

Billy whined: "Mum, Mum, Mum, I need a Mercury Man suit!"

Billy begged: "I'll do anything Mum, anything. Please please please let me have a Mercury Man suit!"

And eventually Mum said: "Oh yes, alright!"

Billy filled in the order form and Mum wrote the cheque. In no time at all he was posting the letter in the post box at the top of the road.

The next week was the half term holiday. Mum had to work and Billy's big sister spent every day out with her friends. So Billy was at home on his own most of the time.

He rang Mickey, "Can you come round?"

"No, I've got to wait in for my Mercury Man suit," replied Mickey, "So have you."

Billy waited all day Monday. He sat in the front room and kept very quiet just to make sure that he would hear the doorbell if the deliveryman came.

He waited all day Tuesday. He kept looking out of the window every time he heard a car coming near.

He waited all day Wednesday, but somehow all this waiting was getting harder and harder. In the morning he nearly forgot and started to go to the shop for some sweets. Then in the afternoon he started kicking his football around in the garden. But then he suddenly remembered and went dashing back into the house, just in case the deliveryman came.

By Thursday Billy was getting very bored with all this waiting. He kept forgetting all about it. He went up in his bedroom and put his music on loud. He nipped up to the shop for some sweets, and he kicked his football around in the back garden for a whole hour in the afternoon. He had completely forgotten about waiting for his delivery.

On Friday Billy bounced out of bed. First he went down to the football ground to buy a ticket for that Saturday's game. Then he called in to see Gran and Grandpa who always gave him one pound fifty and a piece of chocolate cake. He bought a hot dog from Panto the Italian hot dog seller. Then he spent an hour in the computer game shop trying to decide what he wanted for Christmas. Billy got home in the middle of the afternoon, but no sooner had he sat down than there was a furious knocking on the door. He opened it and was nearly knocked to the ground as Mickey threw himself into the house shouting:

"Watch out for MERCURY MAN!"

Billy blinked; he couldn't believe it, Mickey was wearing his Mercury Man suit. "Why aren't you wearing yours?" shouted Mickey as he jumped off the fourth step with a great whooshing sound.

Suddenly a small card on the floor by the door caught Billy's eye. He picked it up and read it. It said: 'Mercury Man called today but was sorry that you were not at home. He will call again on Monday the fifteenth of November.'

Billy stared at the card. He couldn't believe it. He wouldn't get his Mercury Man suit until Monday the fifteenth, and Mercury Man was coming to Driptown on Saturday the thirteenth.

Mickey shot past Billy shouting, "I'm off to Lenny's to see if his Mercury Man suit arrived, see you later Billy!" and with that Mickey disappeared off along Bridge Street like a streak of lightning.

Billy just couldn't believe it! He'd forgotten. Not forgotten about something silly or trivial, but he'd actually forgotten about something really, really, really important. He'd forgotten about waiting for his Mercury Man suit to be delivered. He was speechless. He sat in the living room and the tears rolled off of the end of his nose.

When Mum came home Billy was in his room curled up under his duvet. Mum went in to see him.

"Are you alright, Billy?" she asked.

"No!" said Billy with a lot of sniffing. "No, I forgot! I forgot to wait in and I missed my Mercury Man suit and now it won't come until after Mercury Man has been to Driptown. So I won't get to see him!"

"Oh, that's terrible," said Mum, "I didn't think you'd forget something as important as that."

Billy sobbed.

"Well," said Mum, "on my way home I called in to see Peter's Mum and while I was there his Mercury Man suit was delivered."

Billy sobbed even louder.

"And I mentioned to the delivery man that you had ordered a suit that should be delivered today."

Billy sobbed even louder.

“And he told me that there was no answer when he came round, so...”

Billy stopped crying. He sprang out of his bed. He looked at his Mum, “Did you?” he asked.

“Well yes, I did Billy!” she replied as she took a package from behind her back and handed it to Billy.

Billy could hardly believe his eyes, “Yes! Yes! Yes!” he shouted, as he jumped around the room. “Thank you Mum! Thank you Mum! You’re a genius! Thank you!”

The great day came. Billy and Mickey walked into town together in their Mercury Man suits. There were hundreds of boys and a few girls as well, all wearing their suits and heading for the Town Hall. Billy and Mickey were so excited they were almost speechless! They all went in and everyone in the town heard the excited roar of 400 children as Mercury Man made his entrance. He flew down from the roof in a cloud of smoke with sparks flying from his boots. It was a brilliant afternoon and Billy and Mickey cheered and shouted and laughed until their voices had almost disappeared!

“Did you have a good time?” asked Mum, as she came up to say good night to Billy.

“Oh yes!” said Billy, “Mercury Man is the best! But if it hadn’t been for you Mum I would have missed it.”

“Well,” said Mum, “maybe next time you’ll be more careful to keep watch won’t you.”

“Oh yes,” he said with a yawn, “next time I’ll keep watch all the time.”

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