

Usual John

by Sho Botham

His tiredness hurt so much it kept him awake. But he knew he had to keep going. He had to keep walking on the underside of the clouds.

John was a solid honest individual. He could be relied upon to be there for friends and family. He wore, well cut, plain clothes in unexciting colours and laced up leather shoes.

Every now and again, in his head, John dreamt of doing something amazing. Something completely out of character. Until recently, he didn't know what amazing might look like. He'd thought through the silly clothing ideas, the open toed sandals look and even the possibility of growing a beard. None of these ideas seemed, to John, to be sufficiently amazing.

One morning, John woke up in his unexciting bed. Sleep was something John was good at. He never had to struggle to get to sleep. He never had to work on how he slept. He just did it. And for his whole life until the day things changed, John's sleeping patterns could be described as, normal. But then things changed. John woke up with excitement in his heart, bubbling over like a friendly witch's cauldron. John had never felt feelings like this before. He sprang out of bed and looked forward to the day with anticipation. For John, this was very out of character. He wasn't sure what this meant or what to do about it.

Looking out of the bedroom window, John thought he saw something or someone perhaps, white and fluffy floating around outside in the garden. Usually, John would stay and take his time getting dressed in his plain clothes and neatly tying his leather shoes before going to see who was at the front door. But today, barefooted John galloped to the front door in his pyjamas. He didn't care. He was too keen to find out who was coming to visit him.

John looked all around him but there were no visitors. Sitting down on the front step, he looked beyond the garden gate and took in all that surrounded him near and far. He looked up to the bright blue sky with its puffy white clouds drifting sensually by as if seducing him with their smooth performance. And that's when he knew what he had to do. He had to join the white puffy clouds in the blue sky above. He had to abandon his plain clothes and leather shoes. He was going to be amazing.

It was as if John had been waiting for this day, all of his life. Somehow, he knew how to reach up towards the white fluffy clouds and wait for them to lift him up and turn him upside down so he could walk on the underside of the clouds, barefooted and wearing his pyjamas. Usual John was not fond of being upside down but now that he was amazing, he loved it. He loved the feeling of being upside down walking on the underside of the clouds in the bright blue sky. He had no idea why he didn't fall to earth. He didn't worry about it. He was enjoying being amazing.

John could see farther than he'd ever seen before. Usual John was familiar with the streets close by and the pond at the local park where he sometimes fed the ducks. But being amazing and walking on the underside of the clouds gave John the ability to see for miles and miles and miles.

John's amazingness made him fearless. He was upside down walking on the underside of clouds and he felt brilliant. He felt amazing. But John's amazingness had made him behave out of character. Usual John would have had a plan about how to get down from the clouds. But amazing John hadn't thought about that at all. He just went for it.

Time passed and John kept walking on the underside of the clouds. The amazingness of doing this began to tarnish a little when he realised that the clouds were drifting away and it was becoming harder for him to reach the next cloud and the next cloud. Usual John would have been to bed and slept his normal night of sleep but amazing John didn't know how to sleep when he was walking on the underside of the clouds. He just kept going. Then the weather changed. The clouds lost their sensual drifting and became tight and angry - crying many tears of rage. Amazing John didn't like being beaten by these tears of rage but he couldn't stop. He didn't know how to stop. He missed many nights of sleep continuing his walking on the underside of the clouds until the day, the clouds went away.

Usual John awakened in his unexciting bed with an unusual feeling of not having slept at all well. This was not what he was used to. Usual John felt the hurt of his tiredness and couldn't understand why everything was upside down.