NO.1 BOY DETECTIVE

Serious Graffiti



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For Max and Tom Scott and their mum and dad, with much love

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Chapter 1



You probably know my name. I'm Damian Drooth, Supersleuth and Ace Detective. I've solved loads of crimes but let me tell you about one that happened at our school. It was dead exciting. The head teacher couldn't solve it. The police couldn't solve it. But in the end, I solved it.

I first learned of the crime during our maths lesson last Thursday when the head, Mr Spratt, came marching into our classroom. I could tell straight away he was in a real temper. When he's like that, he peers over his glasses – and he was peering over them now.

'I have something serious to tell



you all,' he said to the class. 'Someone has sprayed paint on the walls of the boys' lavatories. This graffiti is quite disgraceful as the decorators have only just finished painting. Now it will have to be done again.'

He peered over the top of his glasses,

fixing everybody with his beady black eyes.

'I want the person responsible to come to my office before the end of school tomorrow or…' we waited to hear the terrible news, '…or the whole school will be punished.'



A gasp rippled round the room.

'That's not fair, sir,' Winston said (very bravely, I thought). 'We didn't do it.'

'Fair or not,' said Mr Spratt, 'somebody must know who did do it. It's up to you to come and tell me.' And with that, he swept out of the room.

We were all stunned. We sat there feeling dead depressed, wondering how he would punish us. Would he stop all football matches for the next year? Would he make us come to school on Saturdays? Would he make us write a million essays?

Our teacher, Mr Grimethorpe, (who suffers from stress) looked very worried.

'Terrible news. Terrible news,' he said, shaking his head.

That's when Tod stood up and said, 'Don't worry, Mr Grimethorpe. We'll



soon find out who did it.'

Mr Grimethorpe sighed. 'And how will you do that, Tod?'

'We've got Damian. It won't take him long to track down this criminal.' The eyes of the whole class were on me.

'That depends,' I said mysteriously. 'I'll have to check out the crime scene, look for clues – that sort of stuff. It could take ages.'

The kids started to ask all kinds of questions – 'Where will you look first?' 'How do you know a clue when you see it?' 'What if the criminal's dangerous?'

They went on and on until Mr Grimethorpe clapped his hands for quiet.

After that, our class spent ages discussing graffiti – which was dead good as it meant we weren't doing any maths. But, just as it was getting interesting, Mr Grimethorpe decided we ought to get on with our work.

I wasn't keen on maths. 'If you like, I'll go and take a look at the crime scene now,' I said.

'Not until you've finished your sums,

Damian.'

'But I need to look for clues as soon as possible.'

Mr Grimethorpe gave me a funny look and his cheeks went pink. 'It can wait, Damian. Get on with your work.'

I didn't think this was a good idea. All this time, the crime scene was going cold?* I was determined to go and examine the graffiti.

I put my head down on the desk, pretending to write. Two minutes later, I stood up, hopping from one foot to the other and waving my hand in the air until Mr Grimethorpe saw me.

'What is it, Damian?'

'I need to go to the toilet, sir,' I said.

Mr Grimethorpe frowned. 'You're making it up,' he said.

I was shocked. 'Honest. I can't wait. I'm desperate.'

** This is a term detectives use and means that the longer a crime scene is left, the more likely that clues will disappear 'cos people trample all over them. That's why detectives have to move fast.*



He didn't look pleased. 'Oh very well. But don't be long.'

'I won't,' I said, heading for the door. Before I opened it, I turned.

'Can Winston come with me? I… I'm not feeling very well.'