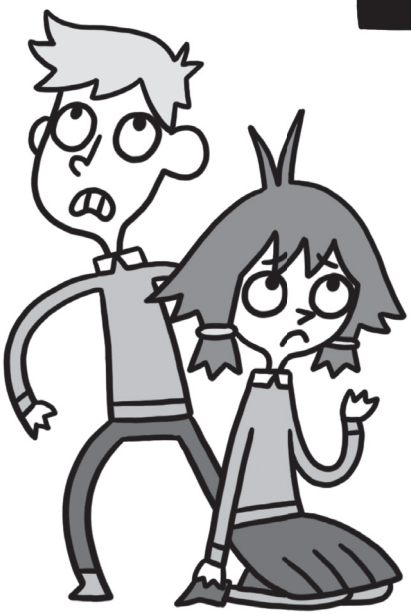
There's a Beast in the Basement!

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nosy crow

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For Albie x



There's Something Down There!

You know when someone says, "Just ignore me!" or "Pretend I'm not here!" and you obviously CAN'T do either of those things. And you ESPECIALLY CAN'T when it's your HEAD TEACHER and he's CONSTANTLY coming into your classroom and looking in

all the cupboards or CRAWLING ALONG THE CORRIDOR or doing loads of

SILENT CRYING.

Well, that all happened to US at our school, and it's how we knew that something



was going on.

We all knew that Mr Graves must be LOOKING FOR SOMETHING but it was when Gary Petrie's DAD said that he

saw something SHINY in the SCHOOL BASEMENT that EVERYTHING CHANGED.

And it was when we sent CHEESE AND ONION down to the basement on a



wearing a CAMERA that everything CHANGED AGAIN.

And NONE of us could BELIEVE what we saw when we watched the FOOTAGE.

Maisie said that we should forget ALL ABOUT IT and NEVER go near the basement again.

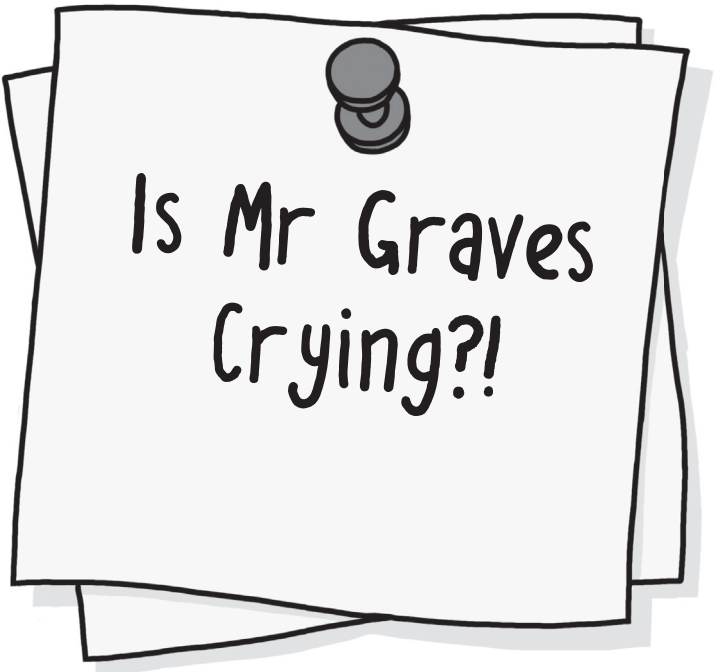


But then we heard WAILING and SCREECHING when we were in class and Jodi said that ACTION WAS NEEDED.

And that's when things got SERIOUS.

And very, VERY smelly.





One day when we were in class, our head teacher, Mr Graves, rushed into our classroom and said, "Just ignore me!", and then he started opening ALL the cupboards REALLY FAST and looking inside.

That's when our teacher, Miss Jones, asked

Mr Graves if he was OK, and he nodded and said that he was, even though he definitely wasn't acting like he was OK and he was EMPTYING everything out of the cupboards and on to the floor.

That's when Jodi leaned over the table and whispered, "What's he looking for?"

I just shrugged, because it was obvious he

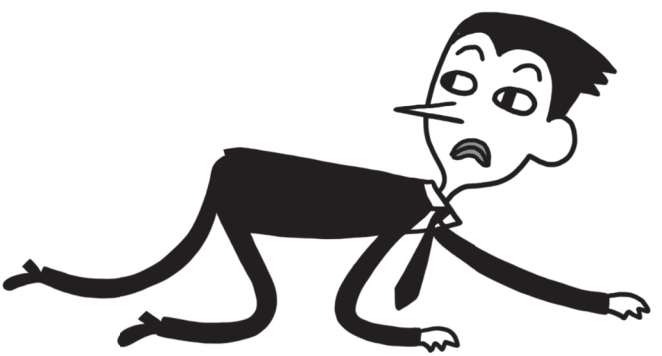


was looking for something but I had



what it could be.

Then at break we saw Mr Graves CRAWLING along the corridor, and when he saw us he just crawled REALLY FAST into his office and shut the door behind him.





None of us knew what to do because it's really hard to know WHAT to do when your head teacher starts crawling along the ground like a baby. So we didn't do anything.

But then at assembly the next morning Mr Graves started doing

SILENT CRYING

while he was telling us about the NEW SCHOOL DINNERS MENU.

At first I thought maybe he was crying because the DINNER LADIES had made a new, worse SHEPHERD'S PIE (because the

shepherd's pie at our school is disgusting!).

But they hadn't. And the new menu sounded quite



actually, so it didn't make any sense that Mr Graves was crying about it.

We all sat there STARING at Mr Graves as he talked about the VEGAN SAUSAGES with TEARS running down his face.

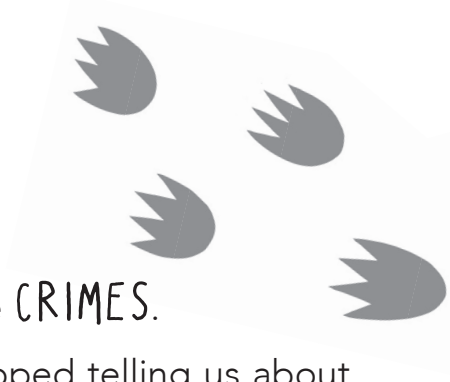
The teachers were looking at each other all confused, so it was obvious that they didn't know what was going on either.

That's when Zach said, "Should we do something? Should we get the nurse?"

But Jodi said, "SHHHHH!", and then she leaned forward and NARROWED her eyes and STARED at Mr Graves. And we knew that she was trying to READ HIS THOUGHTS because Jodi says that she wants to be the type of POLICE OFFICER who can



and make criminals tell her EVERYTHING



so she can solve all the CRIMES.

Then Mr Graves stopped telling us about the VEGAN SAUSAGES and started telling us that the GRASS in the playground was getting cut on Friday and that's when he REALLY started crying and SNIFFING loads.

Zach said that maybe Mr Graves was crying because he had

EXTREME HAY FEVER

that made him cry even when he was only TALKING about grass.

But then Jodi looked at Zach and said, "Zach, that's ridiculous."

And Zach said, "Is it?"

And Jodi said, "Yes."

And Zach said, "IS IT?"

And Jodi said, "YES."

But before Zach could say "IS IT?" again, Mr Graves ran off the stage!