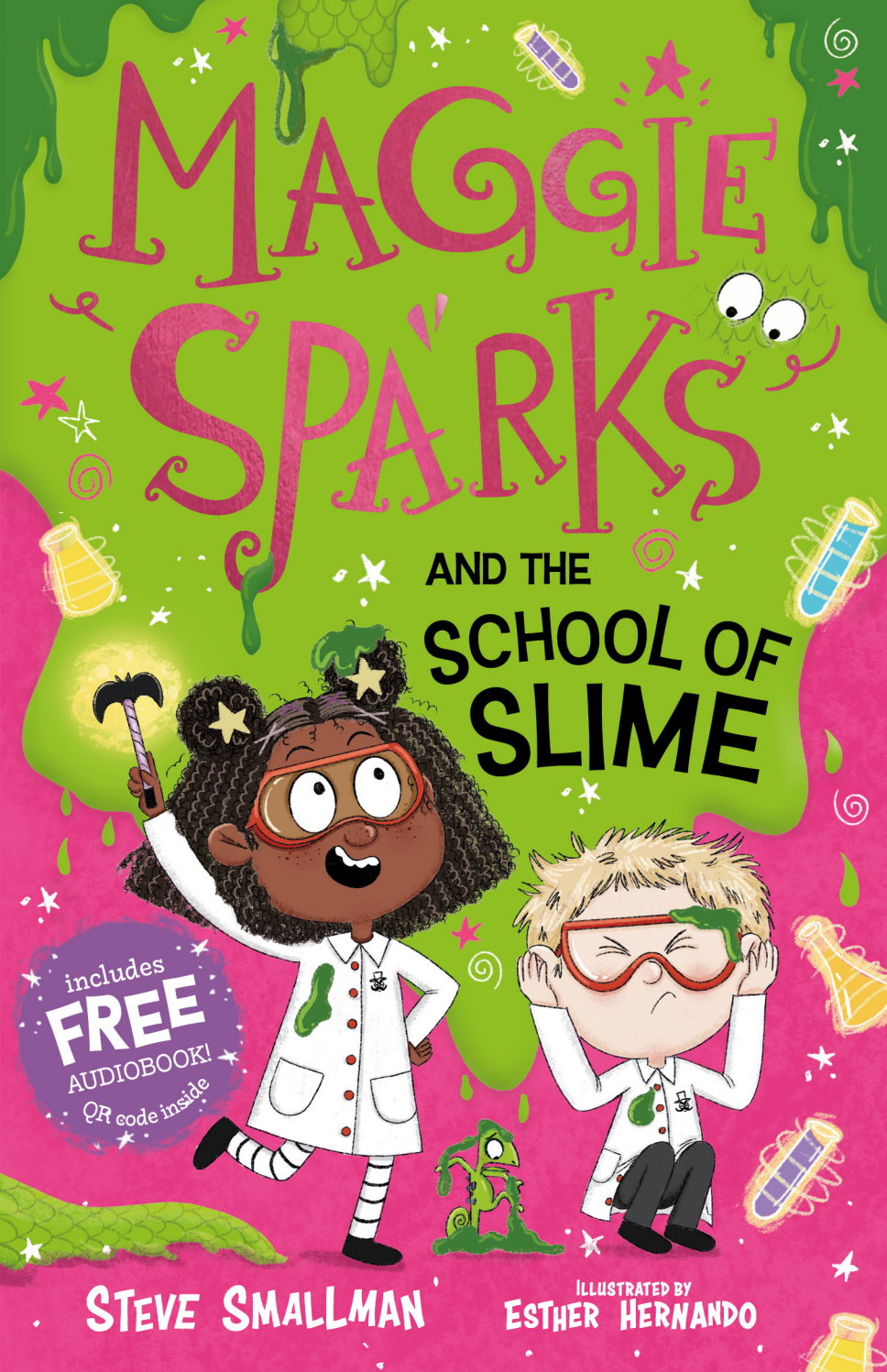
MAGGIE SPARKS

AND THE SCHOOL OF SLIME



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MAGGIE
SPARKS

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Maggie Sparks and the School of Slime

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Sweet Cherry

MAGGIE
That's me!

BAT
The coolest chameleon EVER.

MUM
Super smart.
Bakes great cookies.

DAD
Writes a lot.
Cannot bake cookies.

ALFIE
Stinky and annoying.

GRANDAD
My favourite wizard in the world!

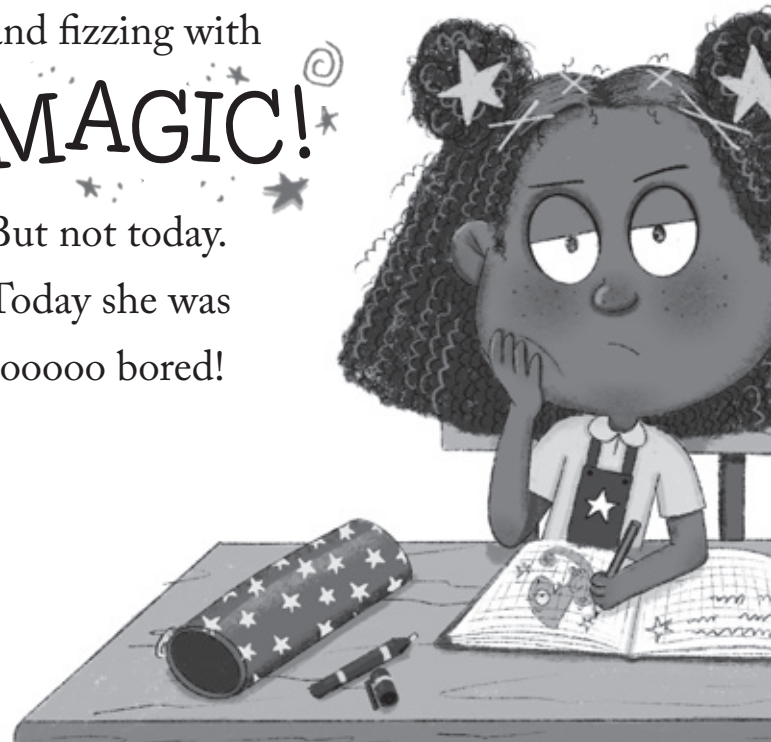
ARTHUR
My best friend.

Chapter 1

Maggie Sparks was a witch. A small, curly-haired, freckle-faced witch, who was usually full of mischief and fizzing with

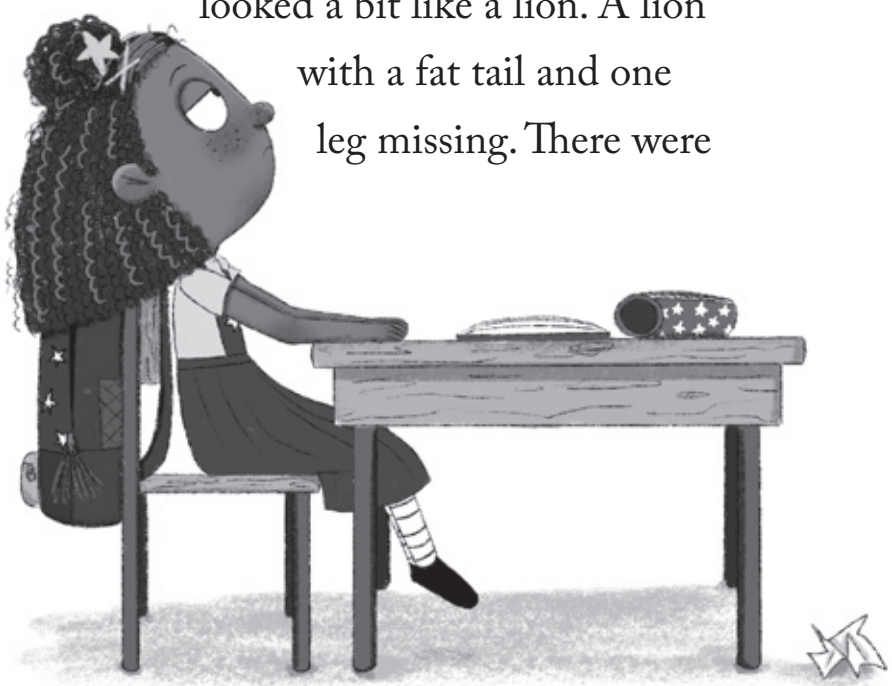
MAGIC!

But not today. Today she was sooooo bored!



It was Friday afternoon. Maggie was at school, in the middle of a history lesson. Mrs Staples was talking about kings or queens or the Ancient Romans or something.

Maggie was leaning back in her chair, looking up at a large greeny-brown, slimy stain on the ceiling. If she screwed her eyes up, the stain looked a bit like a lion. A lion with a fat tail and one leg missing. There were



another two stains that looked like slimy brown fried eggs. Maggie was wondering whether fat-tailed lions liked to eat slimy brown fried eggs, when Mrs Staples interrupted her.

'Maggie,' she said. 'What do you think?'

'Definitely extra-slimy brown fried eggs!' said Maggie without thinking. Everybody laughed.

'The question was "What did the Ancient Romans wear on their feet?". The answer is not "extra-slimy brown fried eggs". Pay attention, please. Stop staring at the ceiling.'

Mrs Staples looked up to where Maggie was staring. 'Oh goodness,' she said, a little too loudly. 'That stain is getting bigger by the day. The whole school is falling to bits!'

'And I keep hearing noises!' said Aadash. 'They're coming from behind the walls.'

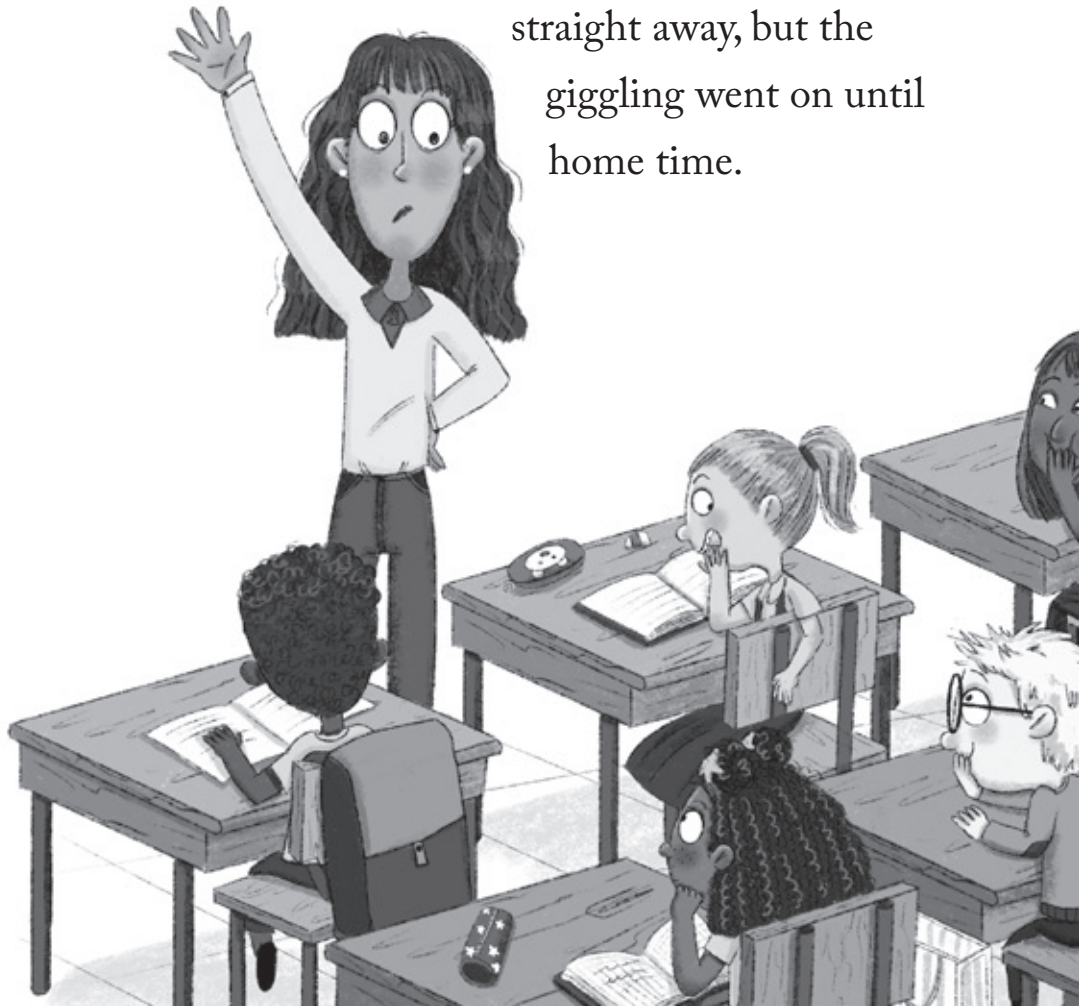
'That is just the pipes,' said Mrs Staples, realising that she had sent the class into a panic.

'There are funny smells too,' said Alma.

'That is because we had bean casserole at lunchtime,' said Maggie.

'My grandad smokes a pipe and makes funny smells too,' said Matthew.

Mrs Staples sighed and put her hand up – the signal for everyone to stop talking. They stopped talking straight away, but the giggling went on until home time.



Maggie walked home from school with Arthur, her best friend. Arthur always had a worried-looking face, but now he looked even more worried than usual.

'What's up, Arthur?' asked Maggie. 'You look like you've found a hedgehog in your pants!'

'Do you really think the school is falling down?' asked Arthur.

'I hope so!' said Maggie. 'Then we wouldn't have to go.'

Arthur looked very close to a panic attack. 'But Maggie!' he cried. 'School is very important. If there's no school, just think what would happen to my telescope!'

'What are you talking about, Arthur?' said Maggie.

'Well,' Arthur began, 'we have to go to school to learn how to be a grown-up. I want to be an astronaut when I grow up. If I haven't been to school, I will be a very bad astronaut. I could end up on the wrong planet by mistake. Then the aliens who live there will think I've come to invade their planet. They will start an intergalactic war. They will send spaceships with laser cannons and vaporise my bedroom. And what do I keep in my bedroom?'

'Your telescope?' said Maggie.

'YES!' cried Arthur. 'So that would get vaporised too. That's why we HAVE to go to school!'

'Don't worry, Arthur,' said Maggie. 'I'm sure our school will be fine.'

But it wasn't.

‘Look!’ cried Arthur’s big brother, Charlie, when they got to school on Monday morning. ‘The school gates are closed.’

A big crowd was gathered outside. The children were chatting excitedly. The mums, dads and carers, however, did not look excited – just confused and grumpy.

The headteacher, Mrs Sitstil, was trying to get everyone’s attention. ‘I’m afraid the school has been closed!’ she shouted. ‘A team of building experts came in this morning. They discovered … subsidence!’

Maggie gasped. Her eyes grew wide and her mouth dropped open. Arthur looked like he might faint.

'Subsidence can be VERY dangerous,' Mrs Sitstil continued. 'The school will have to stay closed until it can be fixed. I'm sorry for the trouble, but can you please take your children back home. We'll be in touch as soon as other arrangements are made.'

Then Mrs Sitstil quickly ducked back through the gates and locked them behind her.

Maggie headed back home with Arthur and Charlie. She was hopping up and down with excitement.

'I can't believe they found some Spy Duns!' she cried. 'I bet the Spy Duns were making those funny noises and smells, and … YUCK! Those brown stains on the ceiling were probably Spy Duns slime.'

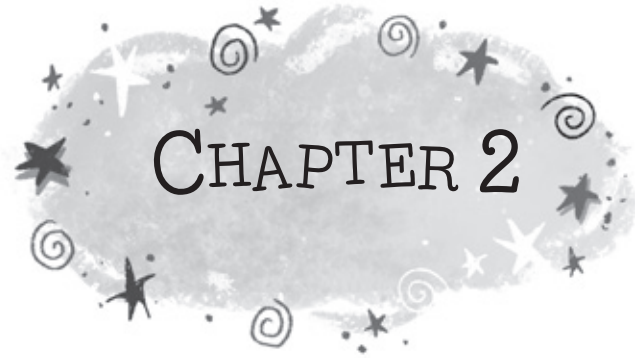
Arthur looked at Maggie as if she had gone completely bonkers.

'Maggie, what do you think subsidence is exactly?' he asked.

'Well, I don't know *exactly* because I've never seen one. Mrs Sitstil said they are very dangerous. They make funny smells and strange noises and slimy stains on the ceiling. I expect they have big teeth. They must be quite skinny too, to be able to hide behind the walls and in the ceiling, and–'

'Maggie,' Arthur interrupted, 'it's SUBSIDENCE not "some Spy Duns"! I read about it in my *Big Book of Buildings*. Subsidence is when the ground under a building starts to sink. It can make the building fall down. That's why it's dangerous. It's not monsters living in the school!'

Maggie looked at Arthur and laughed. 'Oh, Arthur!' she said. 'You have the strangest ideas.' Then she skipped down the path, towards her front door, to tell her mum the good news.



Chapter 2

Maggie was at home, in her second day of online video classes, when a letter arrived from her school.

'Oh look,' said Mum. 'The school has decided to split the classes up. They are sending a few children to each of the other schools nearby, until the building is safe again.'

'But, Mum, will I still be at the same school as Arthur?' Maggie asked.