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Opening extract from

Two Words

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Chapter 1

Home work

“Two words,” she said. “That’s all it takes to tell a story.

Car crash.

Tidal wave.

Terrorist bomb.

Think about it. With just two words you can make a picture that explodes in your head."

I was gazing out of the window.

"Did you hear me, Matt?" she asked me.

It was our English teacher, Miss Cleever. She's always coming up with stuff like this. Ideas to make us *think*. *Get our brains*

switched on. She says she wants to get our minds *working*. *Engaged* she calls it.

"What ... like a toilet, Miss?" Jake asked. She ignored him.

"I want you to think about the power of words. I'll give you some more examples.

Weeping woman.

Missing child."

And then she gave her Killer Blow.



"Home work."

"But Miss!" Jake was waving his arm in the air.

"Yes, Jake, I know you're doing your great hike this weekend. You don't have to write anything. I'm just giving you something to think about. You'll both need to keep your minds busy, Matt and Jake, while you're trudging over the hills."

We had to come up with the two saddest words we could think of. That was our home work.

The bell went. There was the screech of thirty chairs being pushed back, and the drumming of thirty pairs of feet running for the door. Over the noise of escaping kids she was still able to shout, “First thing Monday morning I want to know what your two saddest words are.”

Jake started right away. But Jake’s version of ‘sad’ was not the same as Miss Cleever’s.

“Bad breath,” he said.

"Big bum," I replied.

"Saggy boobs."

"Spotty face."