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Opening extract from

Brilliant Billy Does His Bit

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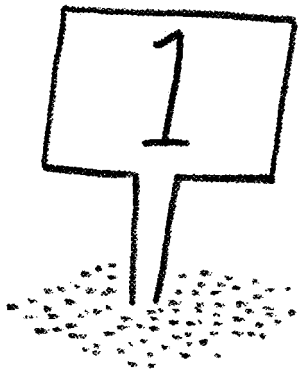
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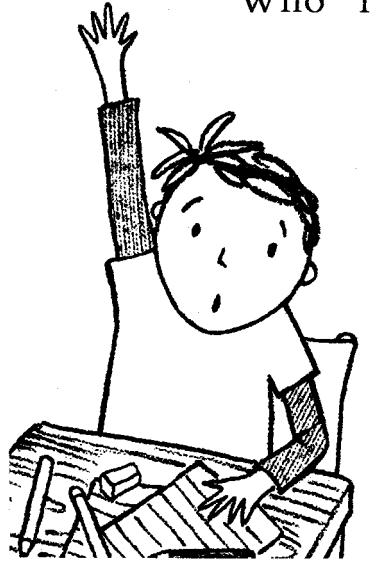
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Chapter One

All week at school, Billy had been learning about the war, and today a man called Mr. Hoe had come in to tell them all about it.

'Who likes sweets?' Mr. Hoe asked.



Sweets! Billy thrust a hand into the air. The last man to come into class had been dressed as Father

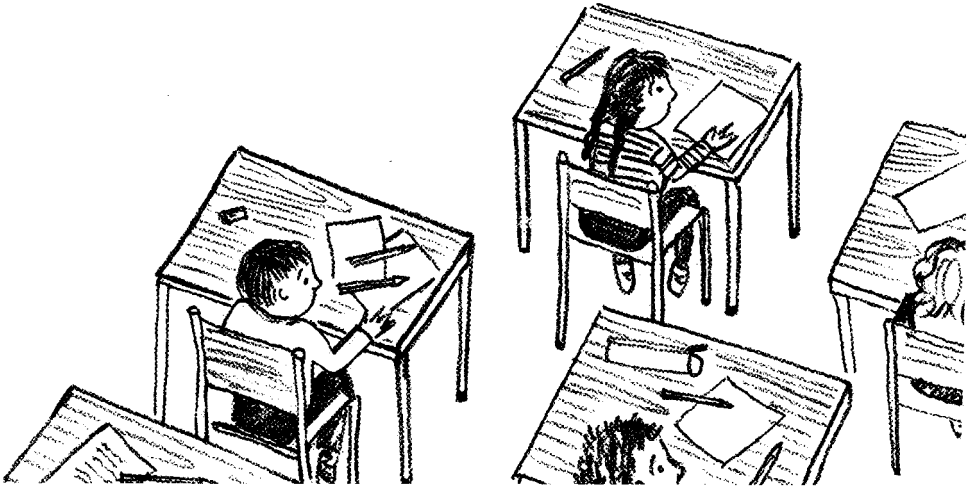
Christmas, and he'd given out chocolate money. But Mr. Hoe was no Father Christmas.

'Sweets are off the menu, I'm afraid. It's fresh vegetables or nothing.' The whole class let out a groan.

'What about fruit?' Billy suggested.

The rest of the class giggled. Billy frowned. Of course sweets were better than fruit, but fruit was fine in an emergency, wasn't it?

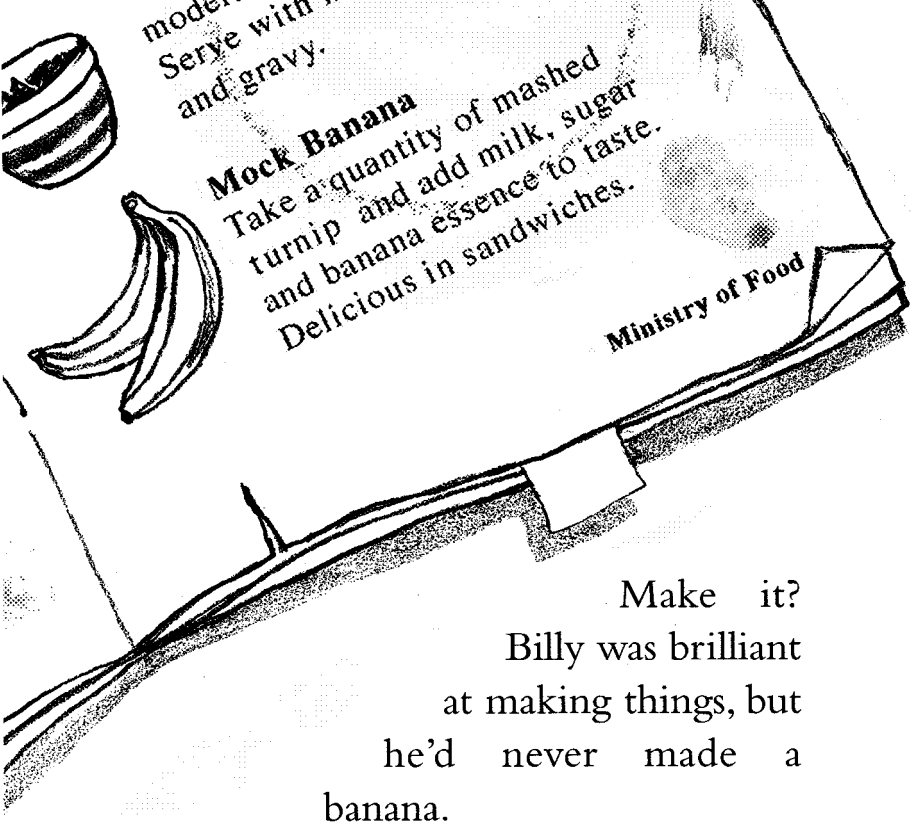
Mr. Hoe smiled at him. 'Something sweet, like a banana?' he suggested, obviously catching



Billy's drift. Billy nodded eagerly. But Mr. Hoe shook his head.

'If you want a banana, you have to make it yourself.'





Make it? Billy was brilliant at making things, but he'd never made a banana.

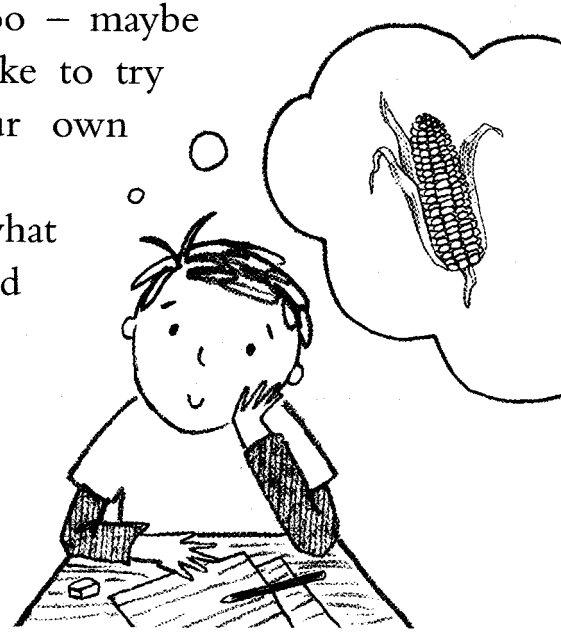
'Mash up some turnips, and add banana essence,' Mr. Hoe told the class. 'Better than the real thing, in my opinion. In fact, I still eat them like that to this day.'

You even had to grow the turnips first, Billy learned. Everyone had to grow their own vegetables when there

was a war on. It was part of 'doing your bit', which meant helping out in any way you could.

'We'll soon all have the chance to do our bit,' said Miss Plum, Billy's teacher. 'I thought we'd hold a wartime street party in the playground. A street party is where people bring their tables and chairs and set them up outside, and everybody brings food and drink to share. Mr. Hoe is going to bring one of his prize turnips from his allotment, and I'd like you children to bring along something, too – maybe you'd even like to try growing your own vegetables.'

That was what Billy would do! He was brilliant at



growing things!

He started planning it all out in his head, when someone asked Mr. Hoe when the war had ended.

What a silly question! The war ended when the soldiers stopped fighting, of course!

So Billy was surprised when Mr. Hoe said that for some people, the war had never ended.

'I think what Mr. Hoe means is that for some people, the war was so horrible they can never forget it,' said Miss Plum.

But Billy wasn't so sure. Perhaps Miss Plum just wanted them to think the war was over. After all, war was all about fighting, and she might be worried it would upset them. It certainly upset Miss Plum. You only had to pinch the person next to you

and she'd shout.

If the war was over, why were they having a street party?

And if the war was over, why was Mr. Hoe still making his own bananas?

