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I reading

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opening extract from

The Utterly Complete Clarice Bean Collection

- Utterly Me, Clarice Bean
- Clarice Bean Spells Trouble
- Clarice Bean, Don't Look Now

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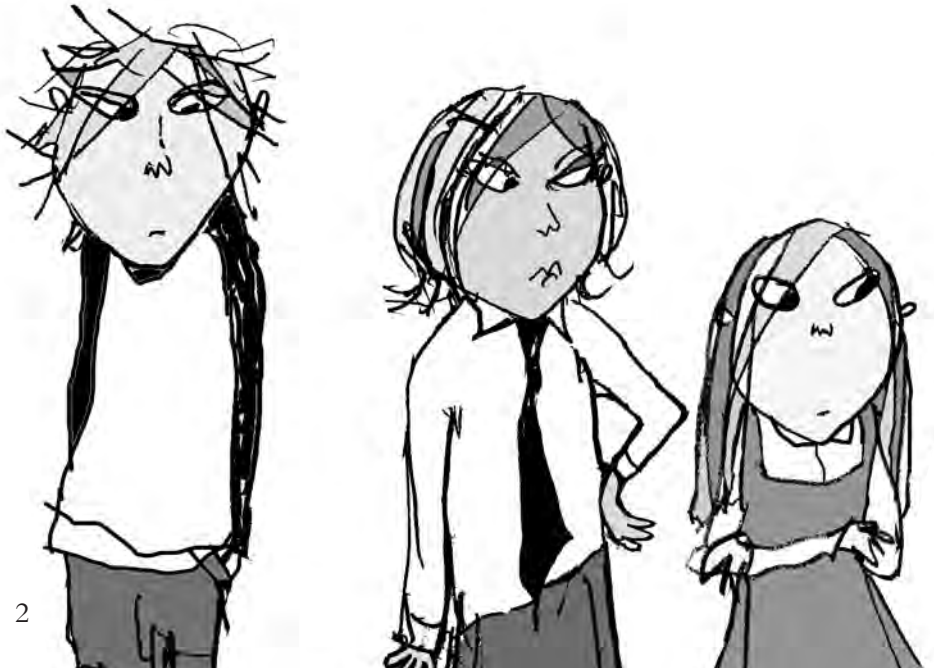
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Friday

This is me, Clarice Bean.

I am not an only child, but I sometimes wish I was.
My family is six people, which is sometimes too many.
Not always, just sometimes.
Mainly my dad is mostly in an office answering the phone and going, "I can't talk now, I'm up to my ears in it."



Mum is always gribbling about pants on the floor and shoes on the sofa.
She says, "This house doesn't clean itself you know.
Who do you think does everything around here?
Mr Nobody?
I don't get paid to pick up your smelly socks!
If I did I'd be a rich woman." etc etc non-non-stop.
I am the third oldest and I think it would have been a good idea if I was the youngest too.
I am not quite sure why my mum and dad wanted to have more children after me.
They don't need another one and it's a shame because he is spoiling it for everyone else.
He is called Minal Cricket and he tends to be utterly a nuisance.
He is non-stop whining and causing other people to get themselves in trouble.





You might think
it would be a
relief to come to school,
but if you do,
then obviously you don't know
some of the people in my class.
Naming no names,
i.e. Grace Grapello,
what a show-off.

Sometimes I stare boredly into space,
thinking utterly of
nothing.

This makes Mrs Wilberton very irritated.
I get on her nerves.
I know this because she is always telling me I do.
To be honest, Mrs Wilberton is not my favourite person on the planet of Earth.
Unfortunately, I am from Earth and she is my teacher.
Mrs Wilberton says I have got utterly not a speck of concentration.
I am trying to prove her wrong about this by trying to remember to concentrate.
I think about it all the time. I am so desperately trying not to not concentrate and I say to myself, 'Don't drift off like you did yesterday.'
And then I start thinking about how I drifted off yesterday and how I was thinking I must listen to Mrs Wilberton and all the things she is telling me.

And then I am wondering,

how does all this stuff she is telling me fit into my head?

And then I am wondering *if I should have a clear out of the stuff I don't need anymore –*

you know,
like when my dad cleared out the attic,
except we all decided
we needed
everything
and he just had to put it all back again.

But maybe valuable space is being taken up in my head
with not the important things and

that
is why
I can't
c o n c e n t r a t e

because all my concentration space
has been used up
on things like,

'Elbows off the table',

and,

'Don't pinch your brother',

and

pointless
not needed
things
which
don't matter.


"CLARICE BEAN!
Will
you
please
come
back
down
to
Earth this instant!"
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It's Mrs Wilberton.

You
can
tell
by
her
honking
goose
voice.



She says,

"Clarice Bean,
you are utterly lacking in the
concentration department.
A common housefly has got
more ability to apply itself!"

And I want to say,

"You are utterly lacking in the
manners department, Mrs Wilberton,
and a rhinoceros has got more
politeness than you."