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opening extract from

The Great Hamster Massacre

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Katie Davies

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THE GREAT HAMSTER MASSACRE

Katie Davies

Illustrated by Hannah Shaw

SIMON AND SCHUSTER

A big thank you to my Mum and Dad, and my husband, Alan, and my agent, Clare Conville, for all their help.

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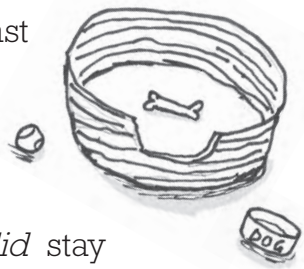
CHAPTER 1

What A Massacre Is

This is a story about me, and Tom, and our Investigation into the Hamster Massacre. I'm supposed to be writing my What-I-Did-In-The-Summer-Holidays Story for school, but I'm going to write this story first because you should always write a Real Investigation up straight away. That's what my friend Suzanne says. And Suzanne knows everything about Real Investigations. Mum said she didn't think my teacher would like the story of my real summer holidays, and how the Hamster Massacre happened.

She said, 'Anna (that's my name), *some* nice things must have happened this holidays and if you can't remember any, you can make some nice things up, and put them in your summer holiday report instead.'

Mum doesn't think it matters if my holiday report isn't exactly true, but Graham Roberts got in trouble last time when he put that he spent the whole holiday in the dog-basket. His dog had died, so maybe he *did* stay in the dog-basket all holiday, but Mrs Peters said he must have come out to eat and go to the toilet and things like that, and Joe-down-the-road told Tom he saw Graham at Cubs. And you can't be in a dog basket *there*.



Tom is my little brother. I've got another brother too, and a sister, but they're older than me and Tom and they don't really care about hamsters much, so they're not in this story. Tom is four years younger than me, except for a little while every year after he has his birthday, and before I have mine, when he is only *three* years younger. But most of the time he's four years younger, so it's best to say that.

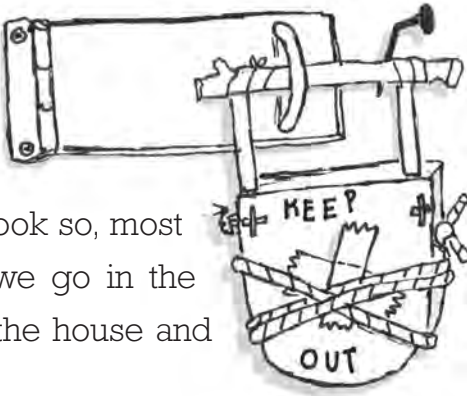
Anyway, me and Tom are not supposed to talk about the hamsters and what happened to them anymore because it's best to try to forget about it all, and stop exaggerating, and making it worse than it actually was, and all that. But we couldn't do that anyway because massacres can't really get any worse than they are. That is the point of them.

This is what it says about massacres in my dictionary…

massacre [mass-a-ker] ✦ *noun*
a general slaughter of persons or animals:
'the massacre of millions during the war'

The dictionary in Suzanne's house said you could have another kind of massacre. It said…

massacre [mass-a-ker] ✦ *informal*
a bad defeat, especially in sport: 'England was massacred 5-0 by France in the semi-final'

But the Hamster Massacre was not that kind of massacre. The Hamster Massacre was definitely a *formal* kind of massacre.

I will keep the story of the Hamster Massacre in the shed with the worms, and the wasp trap, and the pictures that we traced from Joe-down-the-road's Mum's book. Me and Suzanne have made a lock for the shed door, and we've got a new password. We are the only ones allowed in the shed, except when we let Tom in, but he gets bored when we are making the locks and deciding on the passwords and stuff, and he is too little for the pictures from Joe's Mum's book so, most of the time, when we go in the shed, Tom goes in the house and has a biscuit.