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opening extract from

Marvin Redpost: Alone in His Teacher's House

written by

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published by

Bloomsbury Publishing

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Teacher's Pet



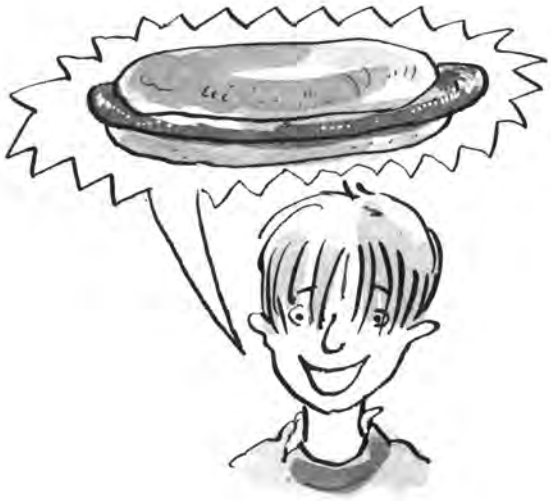
"You will have a substitute teacher tomorrow," Mrs. North told her third-grade class.

"All right!" shouted Nick.

Mrs. North stared at Nick.

Marvin Redpost looked down at his desk and smiled. Nick Tuffle was Marvin's best friend. Marvin had two best friends. His other best friend was Stuart Albright.

"I will be gone for one week," said



Mrs. North. "I won't be back until next Thursday. A week from tomorrow."

"Hot dog!" exclaimed Nick.

Mrs. North glared at Nick. "I will leave detailed instructions for the substitute," she warned. "And if any of you misbehave, I will know about it. That means you, Nick."

"Hey, why pick on me?" asked Nick.

When it was time to go home, Nick



and Stuart gathered around Marvin's desk.

"A substitute for a week!" said Nick, rubbing his hands together. "This is going to be great."

"Let's pretend we're each other," said Stuart. "I'll be Marvin. Marvin, you be Nick. And Nick, you can be me."

"I don't want to be *you*," Nick said to Stuart. "I'll be Marvin, and you be me."

"I don't want to be *you!*" said Stuart.

It made Marvin feel proud that both his friends wanted to be him.

On the other hand, he wasn't sure he wanted either of them to be him.



"Marvin, may I talk to you for a moment?" asked Mrs. North.

"What'd you do?" asked Stuart.

Marvin shrugged. He didn't think he did anything.

And even if he did, what could Mrs. North do about it? She was going away for a week.

He walked to her desk.



"Do you like dogs?" asked Mrs. North.

"Sure," he said.

"I'm going to need someone to take care of Waldo while I'm away," said Mrs. North.

"Waldo?" asked Marvin.

"I was going to put him in a kennel," said Mrs. North. "But he's such an old dog. It would be so much nicer if he could stay home."

Marvin could hardly believe his ears.

"I'll pay you three dollars a day," said Mrs. North. "Times seven days. That's twenty-one dollars. Tell you what. I'll give you a four dollar bonus if there are no problems. Twenty-five dollars."

Marvin nodded his head. He was too shocked to speak.

"Good," said Mrs. North. "You want



to come to my house now and meet Waldo?"

Marvin stared at her. "Okay," he said.

"I'll call your mother," said Mrs. North. "And I've got a few things to finish up. I'll meet you in the parking lot in twenty minutes."



"Okay."

Stuart and Nick were waiting outside for him.

"Did you get in trouble?" asked Nick.

"No," said Marvin, still in shock.

"You want to play soccer?" asked Stuart.

"I can't," said Marvin. "I have to meet



Mrs. North in the parking lot. She's going to drive me in her car."

"*Her car!*" said Nick.

"To her house," said Marvin.

"*Her house!*" said Stuart.

"She's going to pay me to take care of her dog while she's away."

His friends stared at him wide-eyed.

"Three dollars a day. Plus a bonus of four dollars if there are no problems."

"Twenty-five bucks," said Stuart. He was good at math.

"You are *so* lucky," said Nick. "You're the luckiest kid in the whole world."

