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Opening extract from

Cartoon Kid

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Published by

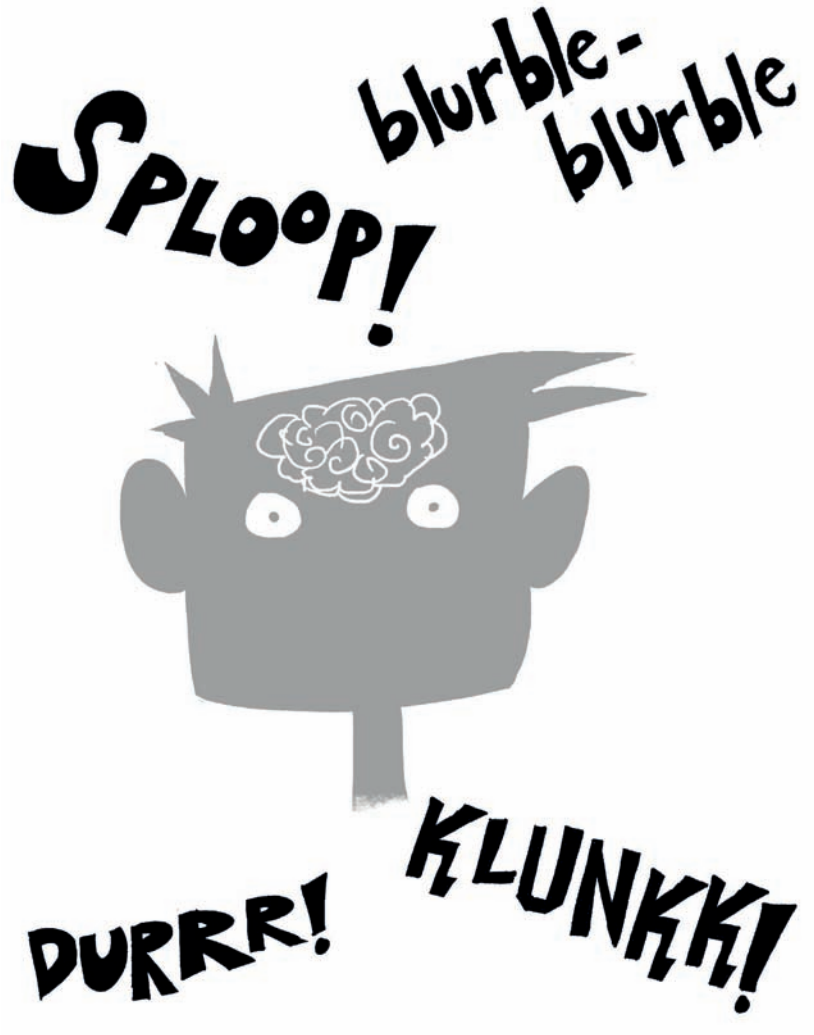
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This is the noise my brain makes when it can't think:



Now it was the first day back at school and the first day in my new class and the first day with my new teacher. What a lot of firsts. And my new teacher had just asked me a question. WHY ME? Why couldn't he ask someone else? It was a really, really, REALLY difficult question too. First day in class with all these people listening and I don't even know half of them, and my new teacher has to ask me a REALLY difficult question.

That's NOT FAIR!

And do you know what Mr Horrible Hairy Face Teacher asked me? I will tell you.



How am I supposed to know THAT?! And my brain was doing that stupid durrrrrrrr sploop blurble klunkkk thing because everyone was looking at me. And my eyeballs probably rolled up inside my head because that is what it felt like and then . . .

I fell off my chair.

BANG-KERRASH!

And everyone laughed. Mr Nasty Horrible Big Nose Hairy Face came across and helped me up and asked if I was all right. So I said yes and got back on my chair. Then he asked if I knew who I was yet and



I said of course I did. Casper. Casper Jenkinson.

Mr Horrible Hairy Face said he had never taught anyone called Casper before. I very, VERY nearly told him that I had never had a teacher called Mr Horrible Hairy Face before. But I didn't, because I am NOT stupid. (Except when my brain goes



Anyhow, I think everyone's brain was doing something like mine because my new teacher pointed to the girl sitting opposite me and asked her what her name was and she just stared at him. He had to ask her again and you'll never guess what she said.

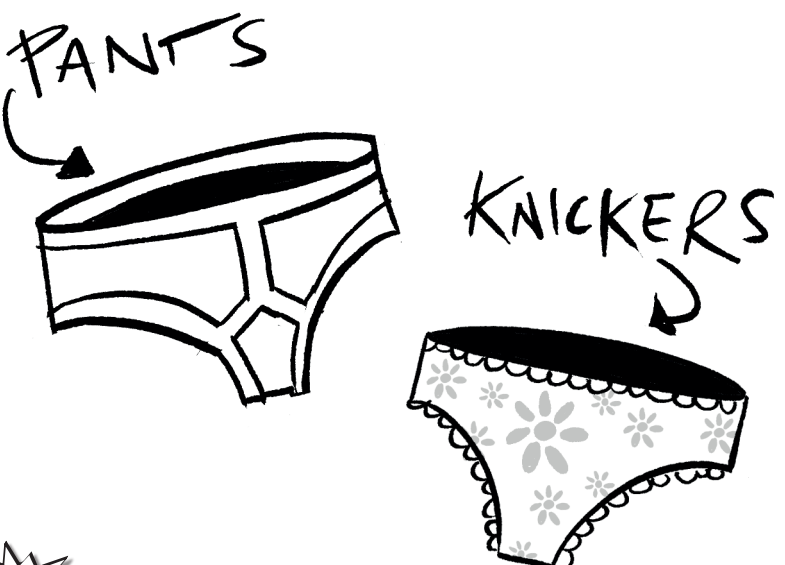


That's not a name. It's a date! At least she didn't fall off her chair like Mr Stupido (ME)!

Mr Horrible Hairy Face didn't laugh. He just smiled and asked her if that was when her birthday was and you know what? IT WAS! That Mr Horrible Hairy Face was pretty clever to work that one out. She went as red as a bowl of tomato soup and said it *was* her birthday and her name was Mia.

Mia has got curly hair that wiggles all over

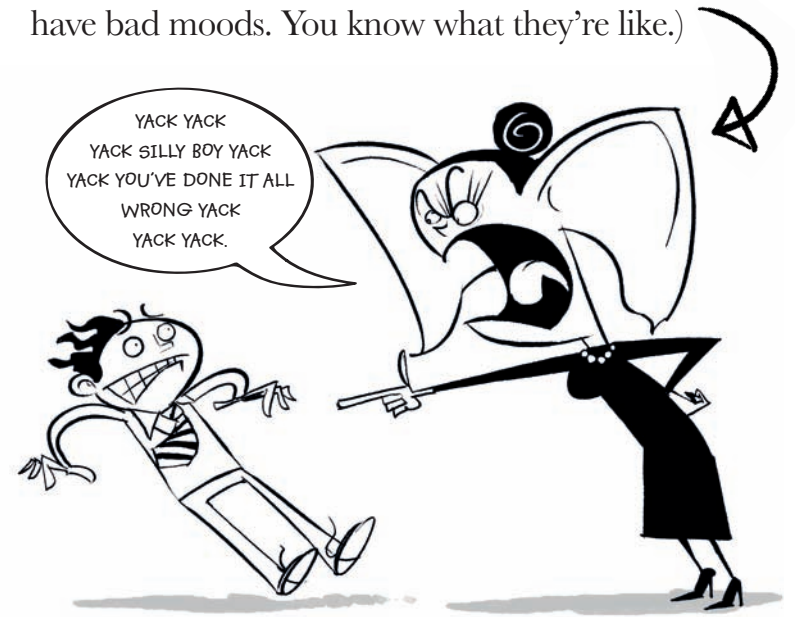
her head and a turned-up nose and some freckles. She smells of soap so I guess she's got one of those mums that are always saying things like 'Don't forget to wash your hands before you go out'. Don't forget to brush your face and wash your teeth and wear clean underpants and all that rubbish. Except girls don't wear underpants, they have knickers. (Snigger snigger.)



My mum never says anything like that to me. I guess that's why I don't smell of soap.

After that we all said our names and birthdays and Mr Horrible Hairy Face smiled and showed his teeth a lot. He's got an awful lot of teeth and I think he likes flashing them about. Anyway, it turned out he wasn't called Mr Horrible Hairy Face at all, his name was Mr Butternut. (But I think I might still call him Mr Horrible Hairy Face sometimes, like when he's in a BAD MOOD. I know he has bad moods

sometimes, and so do you, because all teachers have bad moods. You know what they're like.)



Well, Mr Butternut looked at us all for a long time and we all looked back at him with big, round eyes. Then he went over to the old armchair in the corner of the classroom and sat down. You can tell it's old because the stuffing is coming out of one arm. I think the

class hamster got hungry and ate it.

My friend Pete's got a hamster called Betty. She's always escaping and eating the carpet and cushions. I've got a chameleon called Colin. He's very exotic and changes colour but he doesn't eat the furniture, only insects.





Mr Horrible Hairy Face told us to come and sit around him, so we did. Then he told us to sit closer, so we shuffled together, and he said we still weren't close enough. Well! If I got any closer to Mia I would have been sitting

on her lap and I was NOT going to get as close as THAT.



Mr Butternut leaned forward. He bent down to us and he spoke very softly like this:

'This is your first day with me and I can see that there is something amazing about you. You may not know this but all of you are hiding a BIG SECRET. I am the only person who knows what your secret is and this is what I know. You are all . . .'




WHAM-BAM-
Jelly-AND-Jam!
SUPERHEROES!
CAPES
SOCK
R
COOL


TOGETHER WE WILL FIGHT INJUSTICE AND SAVE THE WORLD FROM RICE PUDDING AND OTHER HORRIBLE THINGS!!