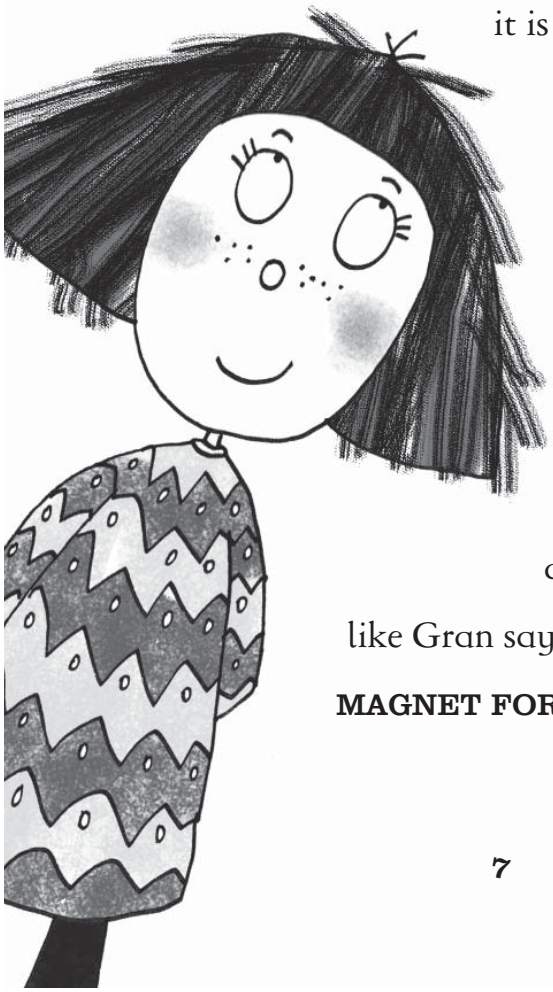
My name is not actually Penny Dreadful. It is Penelope Jones.

The "Dreadful" bit is my dad's **JOKE**. I know it is a joke because every time he says it he laughs like a honking goose. But I do not see the funny side. Plus it is not even true that I am dreadful. It is like Gran says, i.e. that I am a **MAGNET FOR DISASTER**.



Mum says if Gran kept a better eye on me in the first place instead of on *Oven Gloves* in the two o'clock at Haydock then I might not be quite so magnetic. But Gran says if Mum wasn't so busy answering phones for Dr. Cement, who is her boss and who has bulgy eyes like hard-boiled eggs (which is why everyone calls him Dr. Bugeye), and Dad wasn't so busy solving crises at the council, then they would be able to solve some crises at 73 Rollins Road, i.e. our house. So you see it is completely not my fault.

But the magnetism is extra-especially annoying when you are trying to **TURN OVER A NEW LEAF**, i.e. not be dreadful **AT ALL**, because it makes it very impossible indeed.

What happens is that me and Gran, and Gran's cat Barry, and my big sister Daisy (who is very irritating), are watching *Animal SOS*, which is a TV series where animals are always nearly dying but then they don't and it is **MIRACULOUS**.



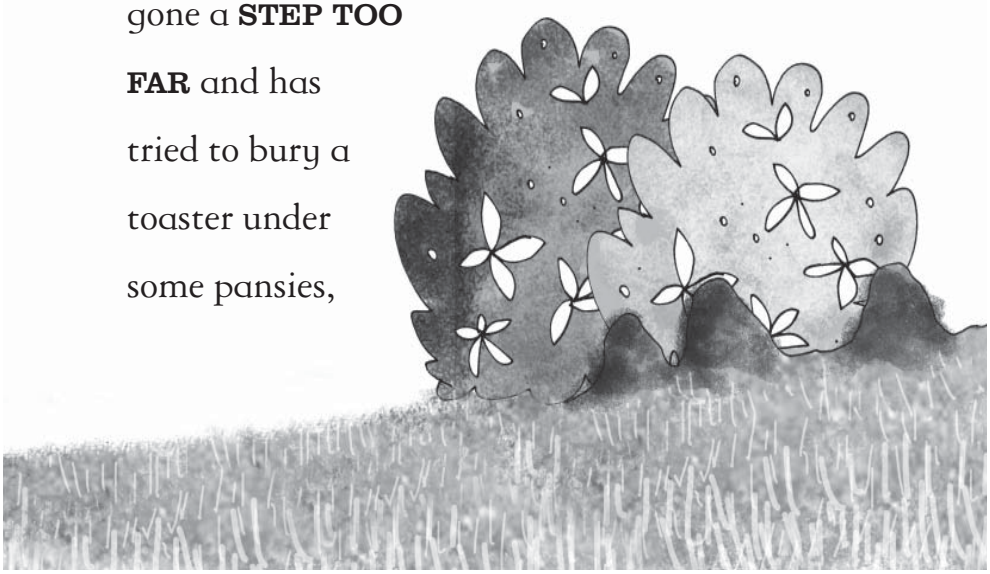
And this week it is all about a dog called Colin who is an **UTTER MENACE** because he is mostly digging holes and burying things in them, e.g.:

1. A pair of red pants

2. A model of Optimus Prime, leader of the Autobots

C. An egg whisk

Only this time he has gone a **STEP TOO FAR** and has tried to bury a toaster under some pansies,



only the toaster is still plugged in and he gets an electric shock which makes his hair stand on end like Hugo Brush's, who is in Year Six and who is called "Toilet Brush" (only Mr. Schumann, who is our headmaster, says it is not very **TOLERANT** to call people names, but it was Hugo who started it so that is a complete **CONUNDRUM**).

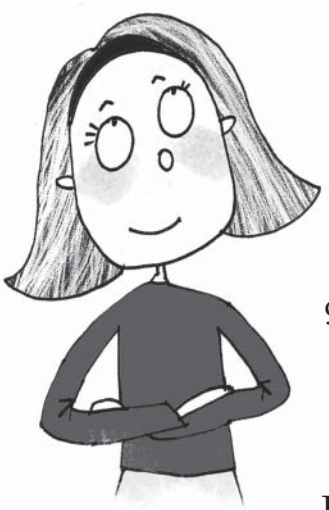


Anyway, Colin is almost nearly dead and his owner Mrs. McDoon is doing weeping in a red coat, and we are all on the **EDGE OF OUR SEATS** (except Barry who is eating a digestive, even though Mum has told Gran it is **CAT BISCUITS AND CAT BISCUITS ONLY**), when the vet gives Colin a special injection and he **MIRACULOUSLY** doesn't die but sits up and licks a computer. And Griff Hunt, who is the presenter, says he hopes



Colin has learned his lesson, and Mrs. McDoon says he has and he will definitely **TURN OVER A NEW LEAF**. Although this is possibly not true because Colin is looking very much like he wants to bury the computer under the floor. But Griff Hunt ignores this and says Colin is **INSPIRING**, which **IS** true because then we are all very **INSPIRED**, i.e. Gran says she is **TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF** and is not going to let Barry eat digestives any more,





and Daisy says **SHE** is **TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF** and is going to say only Nice Things to people from now on, even to Lucy B. Finnegan, who is normally her best friend (only this week Lucy is best friends with Philippa Rigby-Homerton who has a TV in her bedroom and Mum says no, Daisy cannot have one, not **EVEN** over her dead body).

And I think I would also like to **TURN OVER A NEW LEAF** and it would be quite good not to be shouted at, so I say I am absolutely **NOT** going to be **DREADFUL** any more.

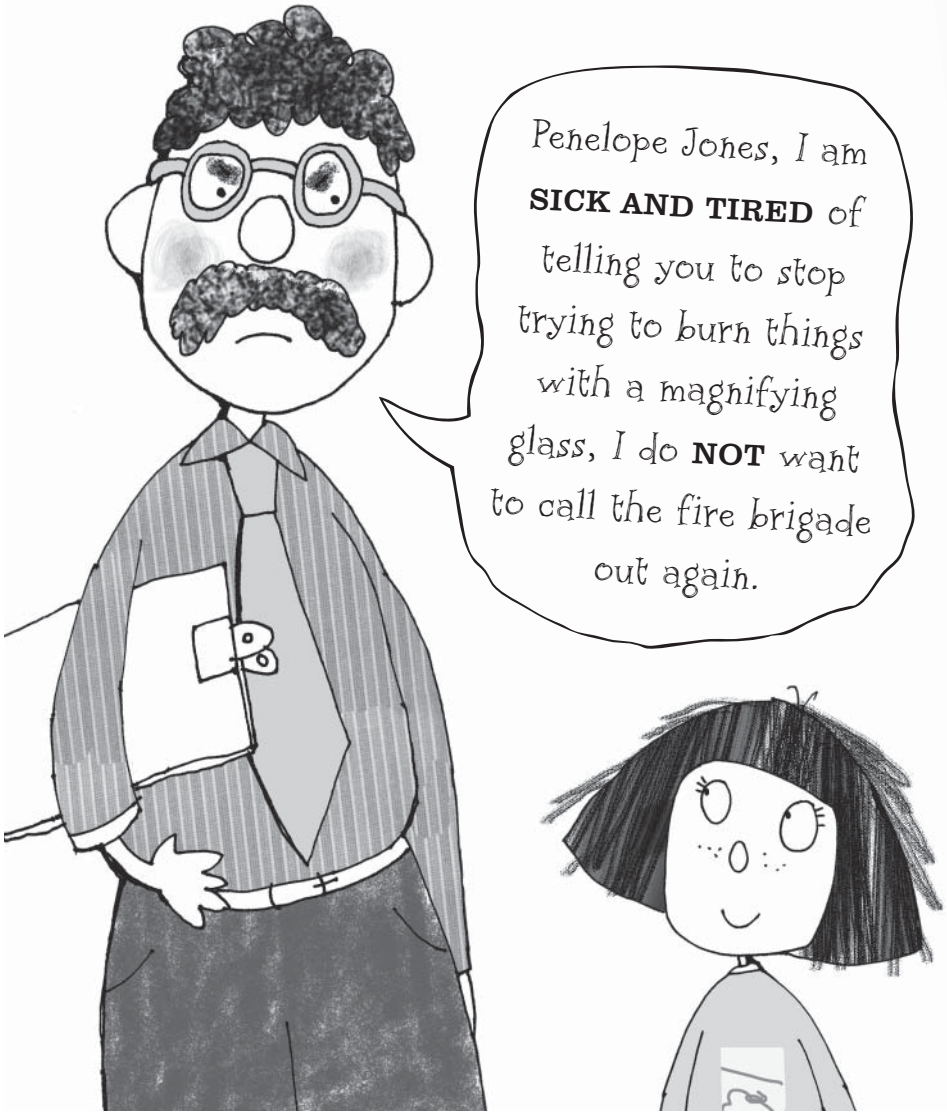
Only Daisy says,



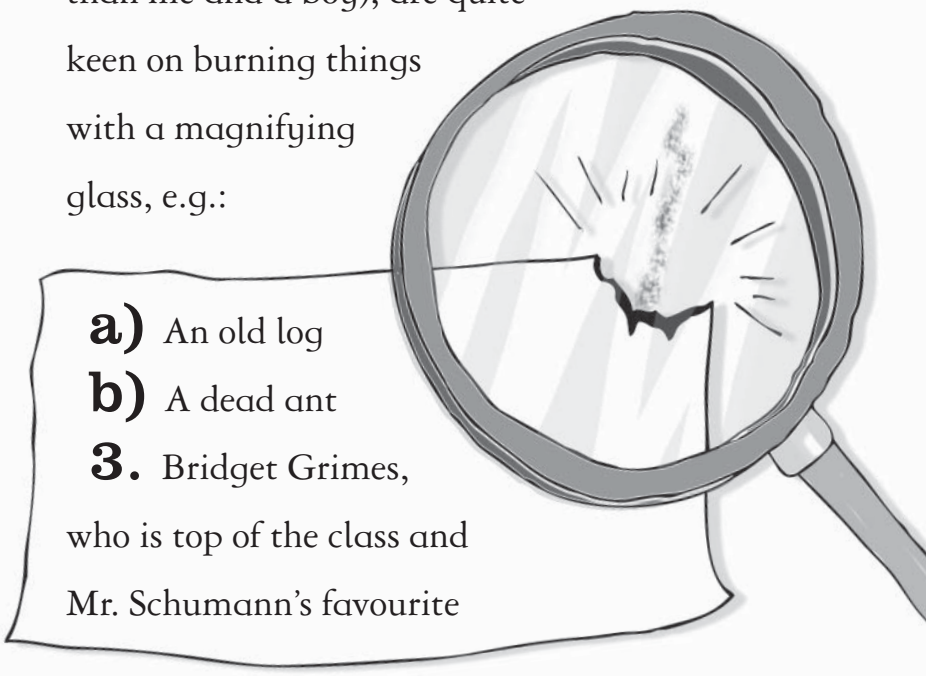
But Gran says Daisy's leaf has turned back over already because that was not a Nice Thing, so it is one point to me.



And on Friday it is clear Mr. Schumann has also watched *Animal SOS* because usually he is **SICK AND TIRED** of a lot of things, especially me, e.g.,



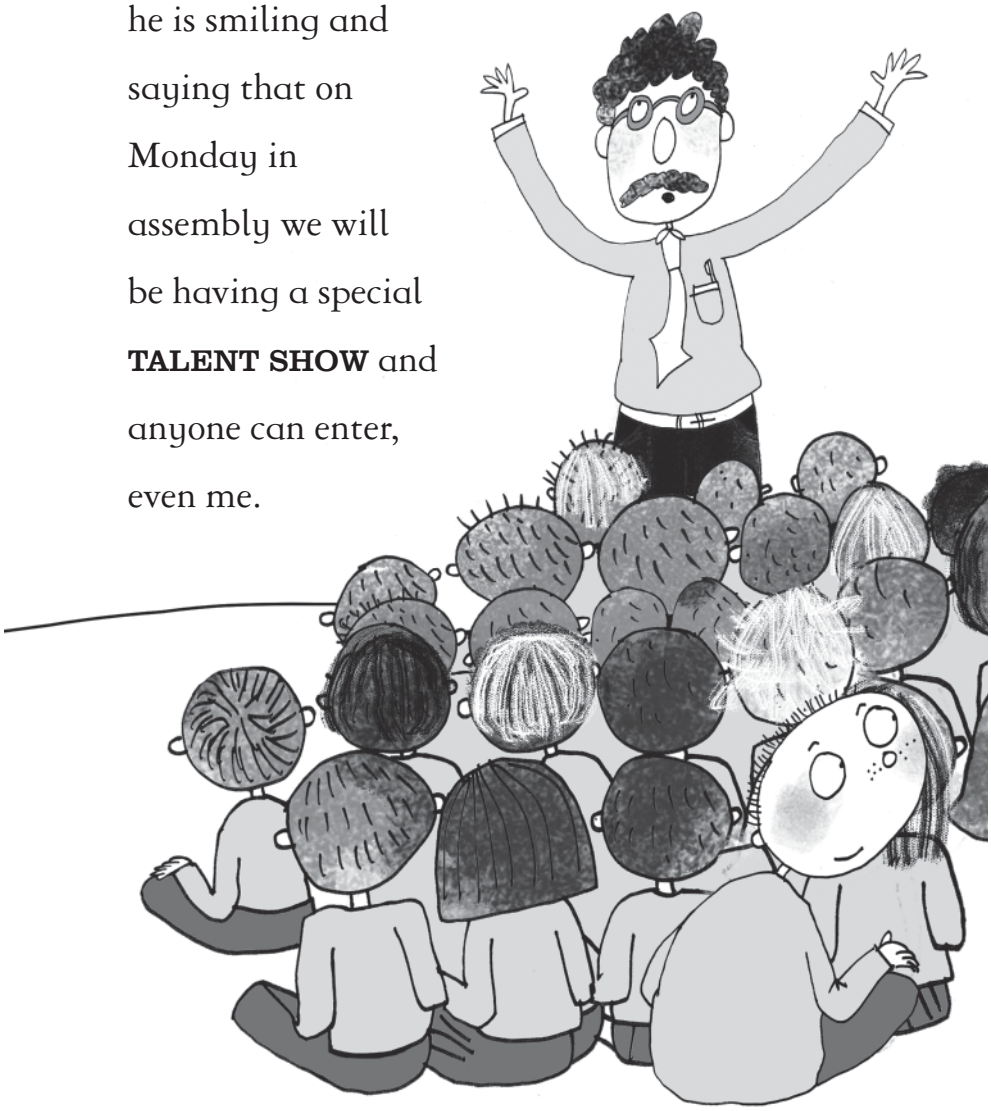
Because me and Cosmo Moon Webster, who is my best friend (even though he is a week older than me and a boy), are quite keen on burning things with a magnifying glass, e.g.:



a) An old log
b) A dead ant
3. Bridget Grimes, who is top of the class and Mr. Schumann's favourite

Only today in assembly Mr. Schumann is surprisingly not being **SICK AND TIRED** of me showing Cosmo a gold pirate coin I found

outside the post office (only Cosmo says it is not a pirate coin, it is a chocolate sovereign), he is smiling and saying that on Monday in assembly we will be having a special **TALENT SHOW** and anyone can enter, even me.



Which is good because normally I am not allowed onstage because of the time I was Little Lord Jesus in our nativity and did realistic crying, only Bridget Grimes did not think my crying was realistic, she thought it was annoying because no one could hear her sing "Away in a Manger" and so **SHE** started crying, which Mr. Schumann **DID** think was realistic, and also annoying, and also **MY FAULT**.

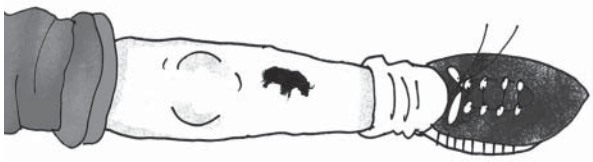


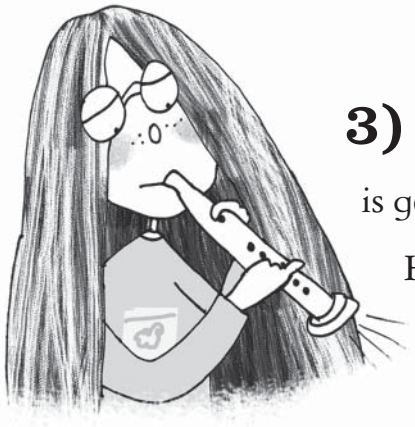
Anyway, it is completely clear that Mr. Schumann has **TURNED OVER A NEW LEAF**. And I am very **INSPIRED** by this and so is everyone in our class, because when we get back from assembly everyone is shouting like **MAD** about what talents they are going to do in the show, e.g.:



a) Luke Bruce is going to make a poodle out of balloons.

b) Alexander Pringle, who is mostly eating jam sandwiches when he should **NOT** be eating jam sandwiches, is going to show everyone the mole on his leg, which is in the shape of a gnu.





3) Bridget Grimes

is going to play "If I Had A Hammer" on her recorder, and she has not **ONCE** got a note wrong.

d. Cosmo Moon Webster

is going to do a sun dance, because his mum Sunflower (whose real name is Barbara) is not very keen on talent shows because they are **COMMERCIAL** and **COMPETITIVE**, but she **IS** very keen on sun dances.





v) Henry Potts, who is Cosmo's mortal enemy, says he is going to do a rain dance which will **OBLITERATE** Cosmo's sun dance.

6) Cosmo says he is going to do a lightning dance, which will **OBLITERATE** Henry's rain dance.

Miss Patterson, who is our teacher, and who is tall and thin like a beanpole, says it would be better if they saved their energy for dancing **NOT** arguing, and also that a mole is not a talent and that Alexander Pringle will have to think of



something better, and so he says he is going play "If I Had A Hammer" on his recorder. Only Bridget Grimes says that is **COPYING** and starts crying that he is going to win the prize of a million pounds and it is **NOT FAIR**. Only Miss Patterson says the prize is **NOT** a million pounds, it is a raffia owl and the **JOY** of knowing you have won.

