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Opening extract from

The Abominators and My Amazing Panty Wanty Woos

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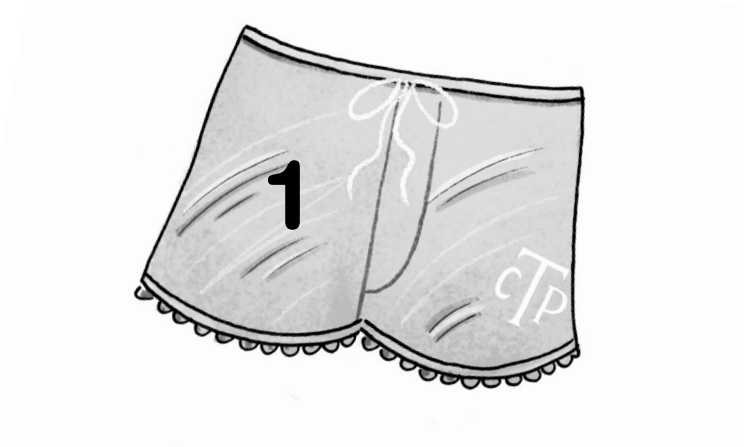
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It was break time at Grimely East Primary School, on a warm summer's day. The sun was shining. End of term and the long summer holidays were just a few weeks away. Happy in the sunshine, children ran, skipped and hopped across the playground.

But three children had no time for such foolish matters as running, skipping or hopping. They had more important things to think about.

They were members of the Abominators, the naughtiest children in Year 5.

"What's going on?" said the first. He had large, round ears, a twitchy nose and a pointed chin. These mousey features were why he was known as Cheesy. Although he looked very well behaved, with his neatly ironed shirt and his round glasses, Cheesy loved causing trouble. When he was only five he filled the school drinking fountain with worms.

"Dunno," said the second. This was Boogster, the smallest of the three, given his nickname because he could flick a bogey from one end of the classroom to the other. His other major skills were skateboarding and breakdancing. Boogster made up for being small by causing mayhem at every opportunity, like the time he hid a bucket of frogspawn in the staffroom. Which soon turned into five hundred tiny, leaping frogs.

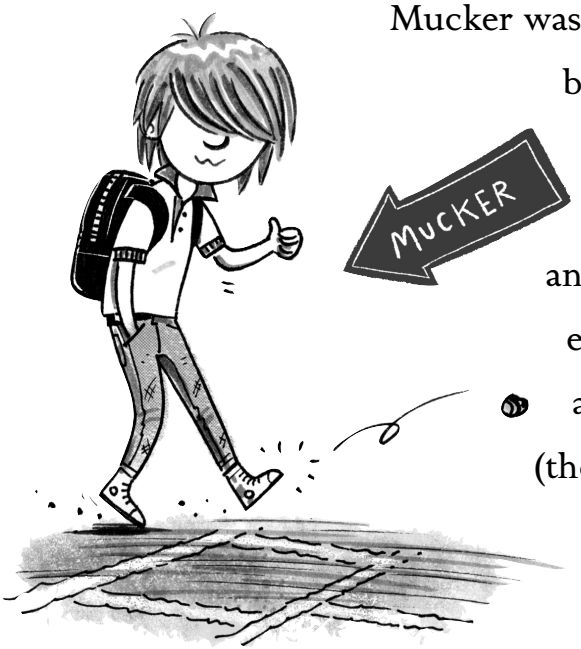
"I'm bored. Where's Mucker got to?" complained the third, a tall, scowling girl. The fastest runner in the gang, she liked – mainly to annoy her mum – to be known as Bob. Leaning against the bike shed with her hands in her pockets, she looked exactly like a boy apart from the long pigtail hanging down her back.



Bob earned her place in the Abominators by stink-bombing the entire school one parents' evening.

"Here he is!" said Cheesy.

Mucker, called this because he liked to muck around, made his way across the playground. He strolled casually with his hands in his pockets, kicking a stone in front of him.



Mucker was the leader, not because he was the biggest and strongest and could beat everybody at arm-wrestling (though he was, and he

could). And not because he had the loudest voice (though he did). He was the leader because, like all great leaders, he was the one with the best ideas.

It was Mucker who thought of filling the toilets with strawberry jelly.

It was Mucker who thought of hiding the gerbil in the school piano.

And it was Mucker who switched two serving trays one very memorable lunch time, so the dinner lady served sausage and ice cream … followed by apple pie and mashed potato.

Mucker, Cheesy, Bob and Boogster (otherwise known as the Abominators) were officially Grimely East Primary's most mischievous pupils. Their antics made the teachers say things like:



The gang were always getting into trouble. Even their form teacher Miss Jeffries, who was absolutely the nicest teacher in the school, got fed up with them.

"Can't you just concentrate and try to *learn* something?" she would say.

And they would try. Really. For about one

minute. But then Mucker would make a loud farting noise, or Cheesy would think of a rude joke, or Boogster would flick his bogey across the room and it would land on Miss Jeffries's head … and then they were in trouble. Again.

Mucker reached the rest of the gang, giving the stone a final kick, which sent it flying over the roof of the bike shed. The others watched in admiration.

"What are we doing?" asked Boogster.

"How should I know?" said Mucker. "Anyone got any ideas?"

"How about putting fake dog poo in the girls' changing room?" suggested Boogster.

"We done that last week," Mucker yawned.

"What about hiding the teacher's kettle?" said Cheesy.

"We can't do that, you numpty," said Bob. "They're still in there with it, aren't they? They're

eating their Bourbon biscuits and custard creams and talking about what was on telly last night."

"Well, we could always do it later," Cheesy muttered.

"I know," said Bob, more gently this time, as she could see she'd offended Cheesy. "It's a good plan. But how about thinking big this time? Let's do a Major Operation!"

"We haven't done a Major Operation in a while," nodded Mucker, his eyes narrowing in thought, "not since we turned the lunch hall into a skating rink."

"Yeah," said Cheesy, wistfully, "who'd have thought we could make the floor so slippery with just a few bottles of vegetable oil. That was genius!"

"Pity Mr Nutter slipped and broke his leg," said Boogster.

"And his arm," remembered Cheesy.

"And his collarbone," added Mucker.

"He wasn't very happy, was he?" said Boogster.

"So what'll we do this time?" said Bob. "Come on, Mucker, you're the one with the ideas!"

"Major Operations are far too important to discuss in the open," said Mucker importantly, looking from left to right as if they might be being spied on. "They're probably watching us on CCTV, lip-reading us or something. Let's go to HQ."

Important gang discussions and meetings were always held at the Abominators' Top-Secret Gang Headquarters, otherwise known as the school storeroom. None of the teachers went there because it was dusty and cobwebby, full of old, discarded, forgotten and broken things that

that nobody needed. It was the gang's favourite place for:

mischief planning
burping competitions
homework copying
arm-wrestling competitions
eating smuggled-in crisps

They'd even done some graffiti on the wall. Boogster had written:

ABOMINATORS WOZ HERE

But he wrote it in pencil – in case they might need to rub it out for security reasons.

"Race you!" shouted Bob. "Last one there's a gibbering gibbon!"

The gang ran round the back of the school,

through a side door and down a corridor. But when they got to the storeroom it was – for the first time ever – not empty.

There were three people in the room.

The first person was the school secretary, Mrs Magpie, looking annoyed because she was getting covered in cobwebs. She was rummaging through an ancient cardboard box labelled "SECOND-HAND SCHOOL UNIFORM".

The second person was a tall man with the longest beard they had ever seen in their lives.

And the third person was a boy of their age. He was skinny, with blond hair neatly combed in a centre parting. And he was wearing a pair of bright pink silk pants with a gold embroidered crest on them.

"Children! Out of here *immediately*! This room is out of bounds!" trilled Mrs Magpie, waving a school polo shirt.


If you will excuse me, I would like some privacy please. I'm in nothing but my Panty Wanty Woos!
B3
A
S.H.
B
3
SPARE
OLD
SPARE UNIFORM
lost property

"If you will *excuse* me," added the boy, in the poshest voice the Abominators had ever heard, "I would like some privacy, please. I'm in nothing but my panty wanty woos!"

The Abominators left the storeroom.

They walked out into the playground.

They sat down by the football goals.

Never, in their lives, had they been lost for words. Until now.

*

For a long time they sat in silence, trying to make sense of what they had just seen. At last Mucker spoke.

"That was … strange!"

The others nodded.

"Weird!" added Cheesy.

"Do you think he'll be in our class?" Bob wondered.

"Hope not." Cheesy shook his head. "Did

you see his girls' pants? Who wears pants like that? And *what* did he call them?"

"He called them his 'Panty wanty woos' . . . " said Mucker solemnly. Then he smiled, then he grinned, and then he gave a great big snort. Soon they were all laughing. They laughed and laughed and laughed, so hard their ribs hurt.

"Panty wanty woos!" repeated Boogster in wonder. "Would you believe it? Prancing about in girls' pants. What a dimmock!"