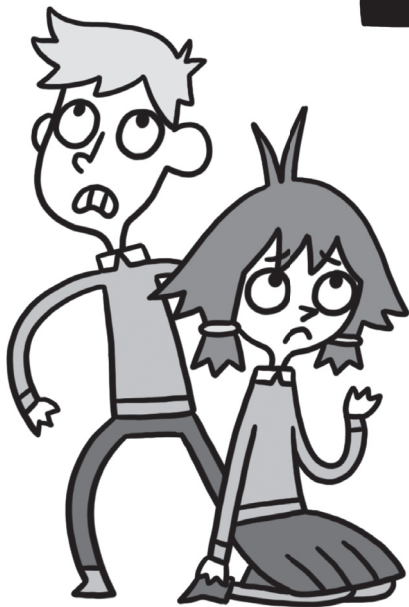


THERE'S A BEAST IN THE BASEMENT!

PAMELA
BUTCHART



*nosy
crow*



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For Albie x





You know when someone says, "Just ignore me!" or "Pretend I'm not here!" and you obviously **CAN'T** do either of those things. And you **ESPECIALLY CAN'T** when it's your **HEAD TEACHER** and he's **CONSTANTLY** coming into your classroom and looking in



all the cupboards or CRAWLING ALONG
THE CORRIDOR or doing loads of

SILENT CRYING.

Well, that all happened to US at our school, and it's how we knew that something



was going on.

We all knew that Mr Graves must be
LOOKING FOR SOMETHING but it
was when Gary Petrie's DAD said that he

saw something SHINY in the SCHOOL BASEMENT that EVERYTHING CHANGED.

And it was when we sent CHEESE AND ONION down to the basement on a

★ — SECRET MISSION — ★
★ — SECRET MISSION — ★

wearing a CAMERA that everything CHANGED AGAIN.

And NONE of us could BELIEVE what we saw when we watched the FOOTAGE.

Maisie said that we should forget ALL ABOUT IT and NEVER go near the basement again.

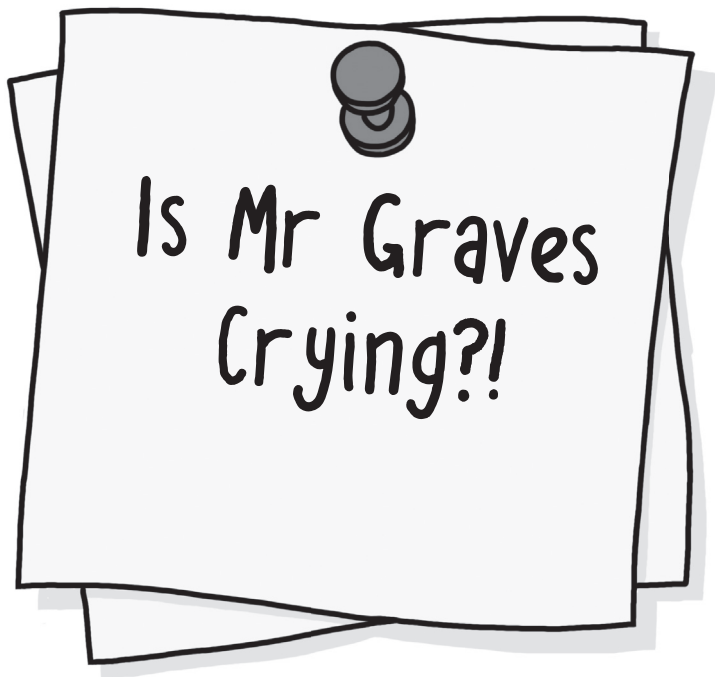


But then we heard **WAILING** and
SCREECHING when we were in class and
Jodi said that **ACTION WAS NEEDED**.

And that's when things got **SERIOUS**.

And very, **VERY** smelly.





One day when we were in class, our head teacher, Mr Graves, rushed into our classroom and said, "Just ignore me!", and then he started opening **ALL** the cupboards **REALLY FAST** and looking inside.

That's when our teacher, Miss Jones, asked

Mr Graves if he was OK, and he nodded and said that he was, even though he definitely wasn't acting like he was OK and he was **EMPTYING** everything out of the cupboards and on to the floor.

That's when Jodi leaned over the table and whispered, "What's he looking for?"

I just shrugged, because it was obvious he



was looking for something but I had



what it could be.

Then at break we saw Mr Graves **CRAWLING** along the corridor, and when he saw us he just crawled **REALLY FAST** into his office and shut the door behind him.





None of us knew what to do because it's really hard to know **WHAT** to do when your head teacher starts crawling along the ground like a baby. So we didn't do anything.

But then at assembly the next morning Mr Graves started doing

SILENT CRYING

while he was telling us about the **NEW SCHOOL DINNERS MENU**.

At first I thought maybe he was crying because the **DINNER LADIES** had made a new, worse **SHEPHERD'S PIE** (because the

shepherd's pie at our school is disgusting!).

But they hadn't. And the new menu sounded quite



actually, so it didn't make any sense that Mr Graves was crying about it.

We all sat there **STARING** at Mr Graves as he talked about the **VEGAN SAUSAGES** with **TEARS** running down his face.

The teachers were looking at each other all confused, so it was obvious that they didn't know what was going on either.

That's when Zach said, "Should we do something? Should we get the nurse?"

But Jodi said, "SHHHHH!", and then she leaned forward and **NARROWED** her eyes and **STARED** at Mr Graves. And we knew that she was trying to **READ HIS THOUGHTS** because Jodi says that she wants to be the type of **POLICE OFFICER** who can

A hand-drawn graphic featuring four stars arranged in a square pattern. Lines connect the stars to form a square frame. The text "GET INSIDE" is written in the top half of the frame, and "PEOPLE'S HEADS" is written in the bottom half. The phrase "PEOPLE'S HEADS" is underlined with two parallel lines.

GET INSIDE
PEOPLE'S HEADS

and make criminals tell her **EVERYTHING**



so she can solve all the **CRIMES**.

Then Mr Graves stopped telling us about the **VEGAN SAUSAGES** and started telling us that the **GRASS** in the playground was getting cut on Friday and that's when he **REALLY** started crying and **SNIFFING** loads.

Zach said that maybe Mr Graves was crying because he had

EXTREME HAY FEVER

that made him cry even when he was only **TALKING** about grass.

But then Jodi looked at Zach and said,
"Zach, that's ridiculous."

And Zach said, "Is it?"

And Jodi said, "Yes."

And Zach said, "IS IT?"

And Jodi said, "YES."

But before Zach could say "IS IT?" again,
Mr Graves ran off the stage!