

Chapter 9 An Unpleasant Surprise for Miss Trunchbull

For the next few evenings after school, Matilda secretly practised moving things with her eyes — pens, pencils, books. Soon she could *lift* things, and push and pull them any way that she wanted to.

On Thursday, Miss Trunchbull came to teach the youngest children again. Everybody watched her lift up her large glass of water and look carefully at it. 'I'm glad to see there's nothing in it today,' she said. She looked round at them with an unpleasant smile on her face. 'Today I'm going to see if you can multiply by three. You!' She pointed at a boy called Wilfred. 'Stand up!' Wilfred stood up. 'Give me the answer to this. I have seven apples, seven oranges and seven bananas. How many pieces of fruit do I have? Quickly! Give me the answer!'

'That isn't multiplying,' began Wilfred. 'That's —'

'You stupid boy!' shouted Miss Trunchbull. 'You dirty little snake! That *is* multiplying by three. Doesn't Miss Honey teach you anything? You have three sorts of fruit and each sort has seven pieces. Three sevens are twenty-one, you ugly little spider!'

And she walked across to Wilfred, kicked him out of his chair and caught his feet in her hands.

'Say this after me!' she screamed, 'Seven threes are twenty-one! Seven threes are twenty-one!'

Just then, Nigel jumped up and pointed at the blackboard. 'The chalk!' he shouted. 'Look at the chalk! It's moving — and nobody is holding it!'

Everybody looked at the blackboard. And it was true! A piece of chalk was moving across it.

'It's writing something!' screamed Nigel.

And it was.

Agatha ...

'Who's doing it?' shouted Miss Trunchbull, when she saw her name. She dropped Wilfred on his head.

Agatha, this is Magnus ... the chalk continued to write.

'No!' screamed Miss Trunchbull. 'It can't be Magnus!'

Agatha, give my Jenny back her house...

Miss Honey looked quickly at Matilda. The child was sitting very still and her eyes were bright.

Give Jenny her money...

Miss Trunchbull's face was very white now, and she was making strange noises.

... then go away from here or I will come and get you! I will come and get you, like you got me. I'm watching you, Agatha ...

The chalk stopped writing and fell on the floor. Then Wilfred screamed, 'Miss Trunchbull is on the floor!'

Everyone ran to look. Miss Trunchbull was lying on her back on the floor with her eyes shut.

'Somebody go and get one of the other teachers,' said Miss Honey. Three children ran out of the room.

'My Dad says that cold water is the best way to wake up people who don't want to wake up,' said Nigel. And he took the large glass from the table and lifted it above Miss Trunchbull's head.

Everyone watched as the water went all over her, but Miss Trunchbull didn't move.

Matilda was still sitting at her desk. She had a strange but wonderful feeling inside her. 'I did it!' she thought.

Miss Honey spoke to the children. 'Please go out into the field and play until the next lesson,' she said quickly.

The children began to go past her. As Matilda went past, Miss Honey gave the little girl a big kiss.



Nobody ever saw Miss Trunchbull again after that day. She left the school and she left the village. Two days later, Miss Honey got an important-looking letter. It said: *'Dear Miss Honey, Your father's will has suddenly arrived at our office by post today. Where or who did it come from? We do not know. It is a mystery. But the will says that your father's house is yours. His money is still safely in the bank, and that is also yours. Could you please come to our office as soon as possible?'*

Miss Honey went that same day. Two weeks later, she was living in her father's beautiful old house. Matilda went there every evening after school. At school there was a new Head Teacher, and Matilda was now with the older, cleverer group of children. One evening, a few weeks later, she said, 'It's very strange, Miss Honey. This morning I tried to move something with my eyes, and I couldn't do it. I don't think that I'll ever be able to do it again.'

'Well, I'll never be able to thank you enough,' said Miss Honey. 'You've done so much for me, Matilda.'

One day, Matilda went home and saw a big black car outside. When she went in, her

mother and father were pushing clothes and other things into suitcases.

‘What’s happening, daddy?’ asked Matilda.

‘We’re leaving,’ he said. ‘We’re going to Spain.’

‘I don’t want to go to Spain!’ she cried. ‘I love it here, and I love my school. When are we coming back?’

‘We aren’t,’ said Mr Wormwood.

‘What!’ Matilda turned and ran all the way to Miss Honey’s house. Miss Honey was in the garden.

‘My mummy and daddy and brother are going to Spain, Miss Honey!’ cried Matilda. ‘And daddy says that we’re never coming back!’

Miss Honey did not speak for a minute, then she said, ‘I’m not surprised. Everyone in the village knows that your father buys stolen cars. He paints them a different colour and changes their numbers, then he sells them to people. Now he’s running away to Spain before the police come for him. Someone probably told them about him.’

‘I don’t want to go!’ cried Matilda. ‘I want to live here with you. Can I stay with you? I think mummy and daddy will say yes if I ask them.’

‘Well, yes, but —’ began Miss Honey, smiling.

‘We’ll have to hurry!’ said Matilda. And she pulled Miss Honey after her as she began to run home again.

The Wormwoods were putting suitcases into the car.

‘I don’t want to go to Spain,’ said Matilda. ‘I want to stay here and live with Miss Honey. She says that I can. Please say yes! Please, please!’

‘It was Matilda’s idea, Mr Wormwood,’ said Miss Honey. ‘But I’ll love her and look after her carefully, and I’ll pay for everything. It won’t cost you a penny.’

‘Come on, Harry,’ said Mrs Wormwood. She pushed a suitcase into the car. ‘Say yes! We have enough to worry about without Matilda.’ ‘All right,’ said Mr Wormwood. ‘If she wants to stay, she can stay’

Matilda threw her arms round Miss Honey and kissed her. Then they watched the big black car race off down the road and disappear forever.