

## Chapter 1

‘My name is Mister Short.’

Some of the kids giggled.

Liv stuck up her hand. ‘Is that your real name?’ she asked.

‘Yes, why wouldn’t it be?’

‘Well, it’s just that you are the tallest man I have ever seen.’

‘And you kids are very small. I have been teaching in high school, where they are much bigger than you, but I will try my best not to step on you.’

The kids giggled again.

‘So as I said, my name is Mister Short, but if you want to, you can call me Rory.’

A ripple of alarm went around the room. We are not allowed to call our teachers by their own names.

‘I will be your teacher this year, and I can tell you, things are going to be different.’

Things were different from the second he walked in to the room. The way he was dressed was different for a start. The shorts he had on were worn out, and there was a little rip in the back of them. Sometimes when he bent down you could see his red Batman underpants.

‘How will things be different?’ asked Liv. ‘Will we do different things?’

‘Yes, very different.’

‘Will we still do maths?’ asked Ben.

‘Yes, lots of maths.’

Ben was pleased about that. He likes

maths.

‘Will we do spelling?’ asked Jess. She hates spelling. She is terrible at spelling.

‘A bit, but just for fun.’

Jess frowned. ‘How can spelling be fun?’ she mumbled.

‘Will we do singing?’ asked Zac.

‘Singing? Well I can’t sing. I sound like a fog horn, but you can sing if you want to.’

‘Will we do sport?’ asked Jack.

‘Sport? Do you have to do that?’

‘Yes,’ said Jack. ‘Sport is good.’

‘Well then, you can be the sport teacher.’

‘Experiments?’ asked Ben.

‘Yes. Heaps and heaps of them. And history. There will be lots of that.’



‘We did history in Grade 2,’ said Liv.  
‘So we don’t need to do that again.’

Our teacher snorted. 'You have never seen history like this. Hardly anybody has. This will be amazing history. Astounding, astonishing, shocking history. We will do things that you cannot think of. This will be history that blows your socks off. It will nearly blow you apart into little fragments of DNA.

'What's DNA?' whispered Zac.

You will be a different person when I have finished with history,' went on Rory Short. 'Oh yes, this year is going to be very different for you kids.'

Rory Short was right. Things were going to be different this year. Things were going to be terrible this year. You see, I know Rory Short. I have known him all my life.

Rory Short is brainy. Very brainy. He

invents things. He has ideas that nobody has ever had before. He is fun. But sometimes he does not think about what will happen.

My dad thinks Rory is rash, foolish, reckless and mad. 'How can he be a teacher?' Dad asks. 'They should not let him near a school. He should be locked up.'

My dad should know. You see, Rory Short is my uncle.