



**READ THE 1ST CHAPTER**



# Has Anyone Seen Archie Ebbs?

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*For Lucy and Sam*



# 1

It's five past three on Monday afternoon. The summer term is only a week old and my life is so totally brilliant I want to chop it up and use it as a pizza topping.

Me, Josh, Amir and Caitlin (aka Top Table Productions) have just uploaded our latest masterpiece, *The Revenge of the Fruit* (Episode Six: *The Phantom Lettuce*) to our YouTube channel; Clint's made chocolate brownies for tea; and my joke about the man with a seagull on his head is going viral in the playground.

I'm Archie by the way, Archie Ebbs, the good-looking one standing at the front of the class.

'Thank you, Archie, that was really interesting,' says Mr Blott. 'So how about some questions for our Star of the Week?'

Chelsey has her hand up. 'Whose idea was it?'

Every Monday one of the class gets to be the Star of the Week. And you have to do a PowerPoint on something you feel 'really passionate' about.

Most of them are pretty boring. I mean, once you've heard one talk about gymnastics or guinea pigs with anger-management issues you've heard them all. But my subject is quite literally awesome.

'I'm not sure,' I say. 'I think we all came up with the idea at the same time.'

'No, we didn't. It was me,' calls Josh. 'Don't you remember? We were round Caitlin's house filming Episode Two: *The Tomatoes Strike Back*.'

'No way,' says Amir. 'I invented the whole idea of Awesomeopolis in computer club.'

Awesomeopolis is the awesome online city we've been building together since the beginning of Year Five.

'Well, who designed it?' says Jayden.

'It was definitely a group effort,' I say. 'Caitlin wanted the football stadium, Amir installed the streetlights, Josh designed a multiplex cinema with its own rocket launcher and I built the 24-hour Candy Floss and Pizza Bar.'

'So it was a collaborative effort then,' says Mr Blott. 'I'm pleased to hear it, Archie.'

Before we go any further, I should definitely introduce you to the best teacher in the universe: Mr Blott is a complete legend. He's got cool hair,

he hardly ever shouts, and last term he guided the Parkside football team to the semi-finals of the District Schools' Cup. He's a great teacher too. I'd never really understood about 'place value' until he got the whole class dancing to his favourite Beyoncé song. After that, I don't think I'll ever forget that whenever you're multiplying, the digits move to the left (to the left).

'Oi, Ebbo. Got a question for you.'

The boy straining to punch a hole in the ceiling is another Parkside legend – but not in a good way. In fact, he's spent so long sitting outside Mrs Goodall's office that there's a permanent crater the shape of Callum Critchlow's butt in the chair.

'Yes, all right, Callum,' says Mr Blott. 'And well done for putting your hand up. But I hope it's a sensible question this time.'

Callum nods, but his toothy smile is a bit of a giveaway. 'Ebbo says that Awesomewhatdoyoucallit has got everything you could ever wish for. So where are the toilets then? And why is there no dog poo in the park?'

'I don't know,' I say, grabbing the opportunity to tell another joke. 'But it's funny you should say that, Callum, because I'm going to wash my hair

with poo tonight. I've been washing it with *shampoo* for years. Just think how good it's going to look when I use the real thing!

'Oh no,' groans Chelsey. 'Not *another* one of Archie Ebbs' jokes.'

But at least it shuts Callum up for two minutes. Because practically everyone else is roaring with laughter – even Mr Blott has a smile on his face. And I wish it could go on forever. Like I said, my life is so good I could eat it.

'That seems like an appropriate time to finish,' says Mr Blott, running his hand through his spiky hair. 'Now I know it seems a long way off. But before you go, guys, I want to remind you about the Leavers' party.'

A cheer goes round the room. Mr Blott has the *best parties ever*. Last year they had a chocolate fountain and laser show, plus Mr Blott filmed the whole class doing a wicked lip-sync video of that song from *The Greatest Showman*.

Mr Blott claps his hands and waits for silence. 'Because if you really want that inflatable assault course and the massive water fight...'

Practically everyone in the class shouts, 'We do!'  
'...you're going to have to raise a bit of extra



money. And I'm not talking about the bank of mum and dad here. I want you to come up with some ingenious fundraising ideas of your own.'

Practically everyone in the class has an ingenious/silly suggestion:

'What about a sponsored game of Fortnite?' (Josh.)

'Penalty shoot-out – 20p a shot. Winner gets half the money; the rest goes towards the assault course.' (Caitlin – captain of the football team and the best player in the school by a mile.)

'Gymnastics display!' (The combined members of the school gymnastics club.)

'Cake sale.' (Zak, Jayden and the new girl with the name I can't remember.)

'I could do an auction of jokes.' (Guess who? Yeah, me, of course.)

'I could go down the seafront and win some money on the slot machines.' (Callum Critchlow – who else?)

'Yes, some interesting suggestions there,' says Mr Blott, looking quite relieved when the bell goes. 'Well done, guys. You've worked hard today. Let's hope you're all in the green zone and ready to learn tomorrow.'