

A hot day hullabaloo at Holcombe Public School when the three children get into trouble, again!

It was only two weeks to the Christmas holidays and the weather was getting hot—very hot. Even at the nine o'clock morning assembly the children were sweating, and everyone knew that by lunchtime it would be super duper hot, and there was nothing anyone could do.

And that's just what happened. It was so hot there were no bird or insect sounds and the children couldn't put their hands on anything outside made of metal. Of course the children were sitting or standing in the shade but the trees provided not the faintest breath of air. It seemed the trees could hardly even hold up their branches.

"You know," said Frederick, using his serious scientific voice, "if it gets to 45 degrees children are allowed to go home. That's the rule."

"And we shouldn't be doing any work at school," added Sophie, because it's over 40 degrees now. Mrs Robinson is a monster making us do work—she has even started a new topic! Children in the other classes are allowed to play games!"

This was quite true. Each teacher had a different approach to dealing with the heat. The younger teachers decided to be kind, and feel sorry for the children, and let them play. Other teachers tried to interest the children in stories about the pioneers of the outback who faced far hotter conditions and performed heroically. But the older more sensible teachers knew there was only one solution—make the children work so hard they forget about the heat and so stop complaining. Mrs Robinson, the teacher of the three friends, was one of these more sensible teachers.

At lunchtime the children knew they were certain to die from the heat. Then it got even hotter. Suddenly Frederick had an idea. He walked out into the heat and went straight to the hose tap at the corner of the building. Kneeling down he took off his hat and put his whole head under the water. After his head was soaked, and half his shirt, he walked back to the tree.

"Feels great," he announced proudly, thinking he had invented something. Then he noticed that Sophie and Melissa had already done the same thing. In fact it *was* a sensible thing because the evaporating water would cool the children.

Unfortunately though the three children had started a stampede. Every child in the playground wanted to get wet, as much as possible and as fast as possible. It was a right royal hullabaloo, with some children shouting and pushing, and the grass around the taps turning into mud.

Suddenly the children froze—it was the unmistakable sound of Mr Bean's voice booming out. Mr Bean rarely raised his voice as school principals get listened to a lot more than teachers do, but he did raise his voice this time. The children were told to stop the head wetting and the water fights. Lunchtime ended just a little early that day, and the children lined up, sorry that Mr Bean had spoiled everything.

Of course the fans were already on in the room, as Mrs Robinson wanted the room to be as cool as possible. But, as Frederick well knew, fans do not cool the air, they only cool children. Lady teachers never seemed to understand this but Frederick knew better than to be talking about this sort of thing.

Well, after a while Sophie and Melissa, started to feel a little

cold, actually too cold. You see, as they were the first to think of the head wetting they had the time to really do a thorough job. Their heads were soaking in water and so were their school uniforms. And unlike Frederick their hair was long, so they stayed wetter than he did.

Mrs Robinson wasn't too pleased at all when they put up their hands to say they were freezing, and could they sit outside in the sun. It's a strange thing but teachers always get super upset if anything happens to children's clothes—it's almost as if they were the children's mothers. And it's mostly the lady teachers who seem to get the most angry about this. But let's not tell Frederick this, although being such a smart boy, he probably already knows.

So Sophie and Melissa found themselves sitting on the verandah, soaking up the sun. They started thinking that perhaps—no not perhaps, most definitely—that they were the cleverest children in the whole school. They had had the fun of getting wet, and now they didn't have to do their lessons. And as their clothes dried they were feeling very comfortable indeed.

"You know, Melissa," explained Sophie, "I think when I get into Year Six I could be school captain. And let me explain why. First..."

"What are you two doing out here?" came the voice of their principal, Mr Bean. Of course Mr Bean already knew what the two girls were doing on the verandah, and the girls knew that Mr Bean knew. All children understand that school principals know everything, sometimes even before it happens, and that principals can see under desks and into bags, and that they can hear conversations right across the playground, and even through walls. And worst of all, principals always know every child, and everything about them, *everything*. That's why they become school principals—they really *do* have magic powers.

"Come along with me," ordered Mr Bean. "We need to have a little talk." Mr Bean popped his head into the classroom to tell Mrs Robinson he was taking the children. And he added, "Frederick, I think you need to come too."

Now the last time Melissa was in Mr Bean's office she was with her mother, and they were having lamingtons and pink lemonade. Melissa was quite certain that Mr Bean would not be getting out food and drink this time. And she was right.

The three children thought that Mr Bean was going to talk about the head wetting. But if that were going to happen then why did they have to go to Mr Bean's office? They were just about to get the answer although Frederick was starting to work it out.

Strangely Mr Bean started talking about the children's mothers and fathers. And saying very nice things such as how hard the parents worked, how respected the parents were, and how interested the parents were in Sophie and Melissa and Frederick doing well at school, and how lucky the children were to have parents like that.

Then Mr Bean mentioned all the things which the children had been doing lately, the magic spells, and even other things which the children thought no-one knew about. After that—and this part lasted a long time—came a talk on leadership, responsibility, and having fun the right way. Mr Bean even

included the damaged grass around the taps.

And right at the very end came the worst bit. “Children, I am sure you understand all this and want to put things right. I

certainly would not need to talk to your parents to help you in this, would I?”

“Oh no,” the children mumbled.

“Good—then we understand the situation,” Mr Bean concluded. He sent them straight back to their class and told them to tell Mrs Robinson that they were to get on with their schoolwork.

Although the children went to their desks, and started writing, they had trouble concentrating. They understood only too well what would happen if they did not change. Also, they wondered how Mr Bean had strangely made them feel so awful and ashamed just by saying mostly nice things, just by saying he was ‘disappointed’, and by not getting cranky at all. It must be more of the magic power in school principals.

Well, dear reader, perhaps you are tired of hearing about these three naughty children, who seem to take a long time to learn their lesson. But they know they are on their very last chance. So next story we will read about Sophie’s sister, Samantha, Queen of the Teddy Bears. And we will be hearing good things.