

# WE ALL SCREAM

Every August, a few days before school starts up again, Dana Elementary puts on an ice cream social. The idea is that families come to the school after dinner so us kids can bring our school supplies to our classrooms, find our desks, and meet our teachers. The ice cream is just a bribe.



The good news is that Jack and I are in the same class this year. The bad news is...school itself. I mean, I'm a good student and all, but c'mon. Which would you rather have—school, or endless summer vacation? I thought so!

Anyway, Jack and I took our school supplies to our classroom. Our teacher, Mr. Krug, was there to introduce himself so we wouldn't have stranger danger on the first day of school. We also found our lockers and dumped our stuff inside them.

"I think we're going to like Mr. Krug," said Jack on the way to the gym, where the ice cream was. "Did you notice that he smiles with his eyes?"

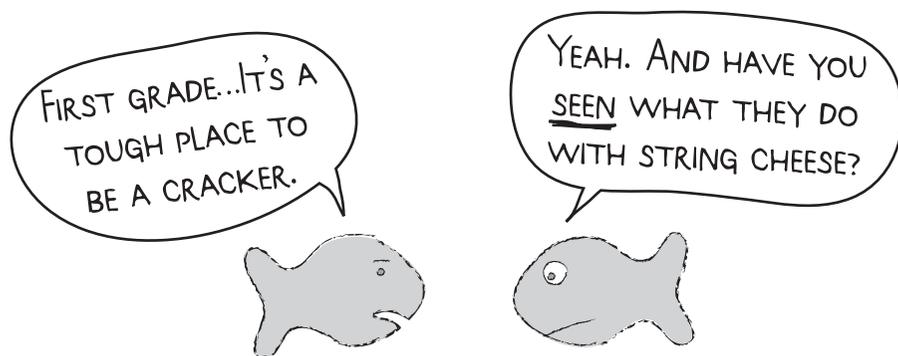
"Uh...no. That's dumb. But I did notice that he keeps a big jar of Jolly Ranchers behind his desk. He must be a rewarder! I love rewarder teachers."

HM. MR. KRUG'S HAIR IS MISSING RIGHT WHERE THE SHOWER SPRAY HITS A PERSON'S HEAD. NOTE TO SELF: CONTINUE SHOWERING AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.



“Remember Mrs. Muñoz, in first grade?” asked Jack. “She gave us a goldfish cracker every time we did anything good, like say please or push in our chair.”

“Yes!” I said. “I spent the entire year in the hallway, throwing kids’ coats onto the floor just so I could hang them up again.”



We found our parents in the rows of chairs in the gym and sat by them. The deal with the ice cream social is that you have to listen to Principal Dobrowski talk before the ice cream part.

“Welcome to a new school year!” he boomed into the microphone. All the parents clapped. My mom stood and whistled. “Blah, blah, blah...” he continued.

Another guy was standing on stage, a little ways away from Mr. Dobrowski. He was sign-languaging everything the principal said. So I looked for Danny and spotted him with his mom a few rows ahead of us. Danny turned around and signaled something to me—a funny two-fingered wave by his head followed by a down motion with the same hand. In return I gave him the universal “What the heck are you talking about?” signal. →

“And before we dig into the ice cream,” Mr. Dobrowski finally said, “allow me to introduce Ms. Munroe, our new art teacher.”



A lady with dark hair and skin the color of turkey gravy stepped forward. She was taller than Mr. Dobrowski, so she adjusted the microphone to make it higher and bonked herself on the chin. The crowd giggled.

“The secret of life...” she paused, “is in art.” Her voice was crunchy but also smooth. It sounded like butter brickle ice cream. “I hope to inspire you to become as passionate about art as I am. So we’re going to start off the year with a contest. The grand prize is a mystery gift and lunch from the take-out restaurant of your choice, my treat.” Now the kids were clapping and whistling.

“What’s wrong with you?” Jack whispered.

All of a sudden, I had begun to feel sick. The weird sensations that were creeping inside me must have been showing on the outside too.

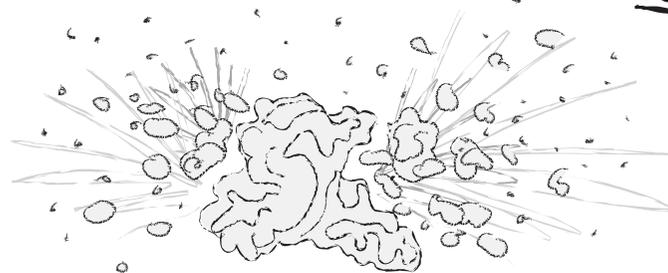


My stomach felt throw-upish and my throat seemed frozen. I couldn’t even answer Jack. I had to step outside for a gulp of air.

And you wanna know what’s so completely unbelievable that my brain might explode now that I’m realizing it?

I didn’t have any ice cream at the ice cream social.

YOU KNOW HOW SOME PEOPLE GET BRAIN FREEZE WHEN THEY EAT ICE CREAM?  
I GET BRAIN EXPLOSION WHEN I DON’T EAT ICE CREAM.



Weird! I’ve heard of the 24-hour flu, but is there such a thing as the 10-minute flu? Or maybe I was feeling strange about the art contest? I don’t know what that was all about. Well, I’m at home now, writing this. I’m OK, but I think I’ll go to bed early. Tomorrow’s the last day of summer vacation, and I want to be able to lounge the day away with a good appetite.