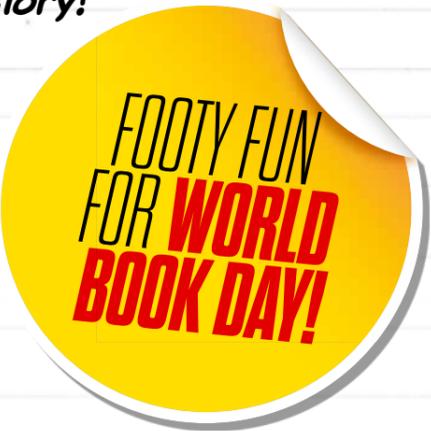


Get into reading with MOTD mag's new serial story!

# MISTER MANIAC

part one



**T**his," said Frecklington High School headmistress Mrs Ramshackle to a packed assembly hall of fidgety-fingered schoolchildren, "is Mister Maniac."

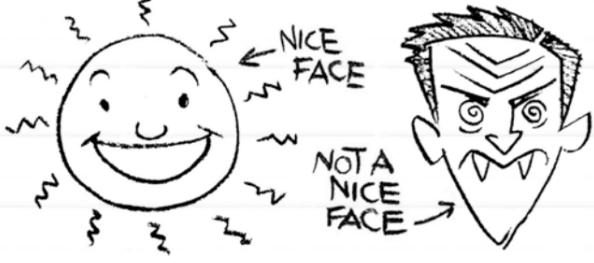
Jimmy Sweep, one of Year 7's most notorious fidgeters, shifted his weight nervously from one bum cheek to the other in the vague hope of achieving a smidgeon of comfort, and dug his best friend Charlie Burrows in the ribs with a jagged elbow.

"Mister Maniac? Funny name for a PE teacher, don't you think?" said Jimmy.

Charlie reacted the same way he always did to one of Jimmy's assembly interruptions - by ignoring him completely. The alternative would be the fate-worse-than-death that was a Tuesday afternoon in deputy headteacher Mr Sternquiver's isolation room.

He'd learned the hard way that that was not a fun alternative to the training session he'd been forced to miss with his beloved school football team.

But he had to agree with Jimmy - there was certainly something peculiar about the new PE teacher who'd been transferred, under mysterious circumstances, from nearby Sharp Edged Academy.



For starters, his face was not a nice face. Some people - nice people - have warm, open faces, with round, happy features and shimmering smiles.

Not Mister Maniac. His eyes were deeply sunken, like a pair of whirling oil wells, into a forehead so furrowed it seemed to jut out at a menacing point where the thin, wiry eyebrows met at the bottom.

His hair was thin and grey like a rodent, his tracksuit scuffed and threadbare, and all that was visible of his smile were a couple of gnarled gnashers, blunted to a point, flashing ominously from within his cavernous gob.

So you can understand why Charlie, as captain of the Year 7 football team, was worried when he heard the news that Mister Maniac was to take over as their new manager with immediate effect.

You can also understand why he was more sympathetic than usual to another one of his friend Jimmy's hair-brained schemes.

"Let's spy on him," said Jimmy.

"Jim-my..." Charlie gave him the look. "Don't look at me like that, Charlie. It's a simple job - we case his locker, check for any unusual activity, then go on our merry way." "I don't like it, Jim." "What's the worst that could happen?"

Charlie knew the worst that could happen. It was The Three Shuns, and he lived in fear of them, each one more than the next - DetenShun, SuspenShun and ExpulShun. He shivered at the thought of them, but for some reason held his tongue.

And before he knew it there he was, skipping Tuesday registration and staking out the locker of the menacing Mister Maniac - in only his second day on the job.

For what seemed like an age, the pair of amateur private detectives crouched at the end of the long row of lockers outside the staff room and witnessed, precisely, nothing.



But then it happened. Sure enough, Mister Maniac scampered into view, appearing, or so it seemed to Charlie, to exhibit a rather hunched back that had not been immediately apparent in yesterday's assembly.

Mister Maniac approached what must have been his locker, popped the key in the lock and jangled it open.

Suddenly, Charlie could hear very clearly Jimmy's breathing start to quicken and glanced down to notice his own skin covered in goosebumps.

Just then, Mister Maniac swung around, seemingly to check the coast was clear. The boys' hearts juddered to a halt. They gulped. They sweated. And prayed.

But Mister Maniac hadn't seen them. Instead, he threw open the locker door and there, glinting in a stream of morning sun that had gushed in from a hallway window, was a huge stash of what looked very much like tools of destruction: drills, hammers, chisels, saws, files - the lot.

The kit of a madman bent on evil deeds? That must have been what Charlie and Jimmy were thinking, as they turned immediately and sprinted for the sanctuary of their 7B classroom, straining every muscle within their bodies so as not to let out the screams their stomachs were desperate to release.



To be continued next week...



**TIME TO GET EVIL**

Got an evil character you want to introduce to Frecklington High School? Send a sketch or description to [shout@motdmag.com](mailto:shout@motdmag.com) and you could win a prize!

MOTD supports World Book Day. Head to [worldbookday.com](http://worldbookday.com) for more!

**NOW YOU CONTROL THE PLOT!**

Who should they tell about the tools? Tell us at [motdmag.com](http://motdmag.com) - and learn more about Mister Maniac!

MR STERNQUIVER

MRS RAMSHACKLE