



Book One:

The Very Tall Teacher

Douglas Evans



He also wrote *The Elevator Family*, *Classroom at the End of the Hall*, and *MVP: Magellan Voyage Project*.

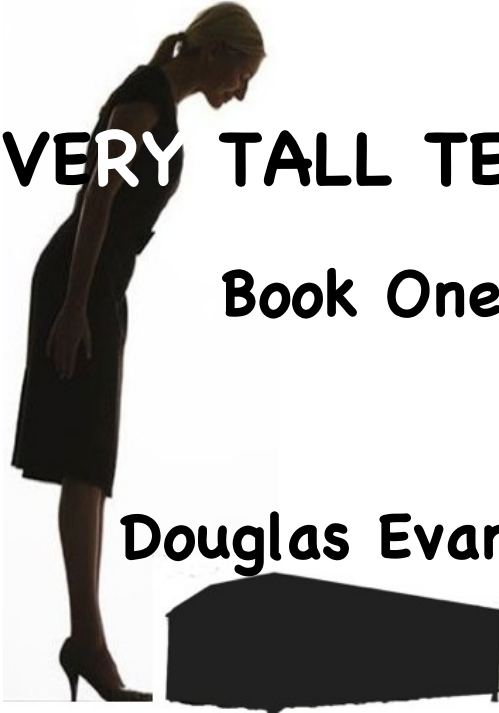


The Very Tall Teacher

THE VERY TALL TEACHER

Book One

Douglas Evans



WT Melon
www.wtmelon.com

"good stories; good tunes"

For the Teachers; tall and short

Copyright © 2012 Douglas Evans
All rights reserved.
ISBN: 0615757758
ISBN-13: 978-0615757758

Chapters

1. Miss Biggy	9
2. Lessons	13
3. Recess	17
4. The First Week	21
5. The Boys-in-Back	25
6. Science	29
7. Rain and Slime	35
8. A Solution	39
9. A Swivel Chair	43

**You might enjoy these other titles
by Douglas Evans:**

<i>Apple Island, or the Truth About Teachers</i>	<i>Front Street</i>
<i>The Elevator Family</i>	<i>Delacorte</i>
<i>The Elevator Family Hits the Road</i>	<i>WT Melon</i>
<i>The Elevator Family Takes a Hike</i>	<i>WT Melon</i>
<i>The Classroom at the End of the Hall</i>	<i>Front Street</i>
<i>Math Rash and Other Classroom Tales</i>	<i>Front Street</i>
<i>Mouth Moths, More Classroom Tales</i>	<i>Front Street</i>
<i>MVP: Magellan Voyage Project</i>	<i>Front Street</i>

The Very Tall Teacher





WT Melon
www.wtmelon.com

"good stories; good tunes"

1. Miss Biggy

Thump!

The Portable shook.

Thump! Thump!

Something huge and heavy was coming toward our classroom.

Thump! Shake! Thump!

I tilted my head back. The overhead lights swung, and cracks appeared where the ceiling met the walls.

“The roof is rising,” I said from my desk in front.

“It’s coming off,” said Tim behind me.

“Something’s lifting it,” said Brett in the back.

Our shoebox-shaped classroom, known as the Portable, stood on the edge of the playground. Twelve second-graders moved out here when the classes in the main school building grew too big. Now, we “Portable kids” watched as the roof, like a giant lunchbox lid, swung open. We peered into the blue sky. A robin flew by, and a leaf fluttered into the room.

Seconds later, something oval and enormous, something blinking and smiling blocked the view.

“*Humongous*,” I said.

“A gigantic giant,” said Ginger.

“An extra, extra, extra, extra, *extra* large woman!” said Colin from the back row.

“It’s like watching a 3-D movie, only she’s real,” said Justin beside him.

“*Humongous*,” I repeated.

Two blue eyes, the size of beach balls, stared down at us. Cords of brown hair drooped onto the classroom floor. Two jumbo lips parted, and out came a squawk.

“HELLO!”

I covered my ears.

Eyebrows, longer than jump ropes, rose up the woman’s forehead. This time she spoke in a whisper. “I’m so sorry, class. From now on, I’ll use my softest voice. For you see, from now on I will be your teacher.”

Next two fingers the size of teenagers lowered into the room. They held a large white card that landed on the whiteboard tray. The

card covered the entire whiteboard. Printed on it was a name:

MISS BIGGYPEDAGOG

“My name is hard to say, so you may call me Miss Biggy,” the woman said.

No one moved. No one said a thing. Finally, I found my voice and shouted, “How tall are you?”

The tall teacher smiled. “Please tell me your name first,” she said.

“Jenny!...Jennifer!...Jenny!”

“Pleased to meet you, Jenny. But there’s no need for you to talk loudly either. For you see, my ears are large and can hear the smallest sounds.”

Miss Biggy turned her head to show us an ear larger than a bathtub.

“I’m one hundred eleven feet, and three inches tall,” she said. “That’s taller than the treetops. At the moment, I’m kneeling on the grass, so it’s easier to talk with you.”

My class raced to the windows. Now we saw the rest of our tall teacher. She wore a white blouse, a long gray skirt, and brown shoes. By her side sat a large canvas bag.

“Where do you come from, Miss Biggy?” asked Nora.

The tall teacher rested her elbows on the top of the classroom wall. “My home is called the Highlands, and I’ve traveled far over the high seas to get here,” she said. “At Highland Elementary School upper grades really mean

upper grades, and Highland High School, well, that's very, very high."

We laughed. Our new teacher was big, but no longer scary. She seemed kind, even a bit nervous about beginning her new teaching job.

But although this teacher was from a far-off land, and twenty times taller than any other teacher in the school, she started the in day the same way.

"Take your seats, class," she said. "We have lots of schoolwork to do."

2. Lessons

What would our new whopper of a teacher do next?

First, Miss Biggy took attendance to learn our names. “Arman, Jenny, Drew, Madeline, Tim, Gabby, Pearl, Ginger, Nora, Brett, Colin, and Justin.”

Next, she lowered her hand into the Portable and said, “Time for reading.”

With thumb and forefinger, she plucked a reading book off the teacher’s desk. Around her neck on yellow yarn hung a magnifying glass. She held the lens close to the book.

“Here’s a story I know well,” she said. “*Jack and the Beanstalk*. Jenny, will you begin?”

I opened my reading book and read, “Once a poor boy named Jack traded his white cow for some beans!”

Miss Biggy called on others to read about

Jack, the beanstalk, and the giant. When the story was over, she tried returning the book to the desktop, but it fell on the floor.

“Miss Biggy, why do giants say *fe, fi, fo, fum?*” I asked.

“I have no idea, Jenny,” she said. “Maybe it stands for *feet and fingers forever fumbling*. That’s what mine have been doing ever since I came to this school.”

Miss Biggy aimed her magnifying lens at the lesson book on the teacher’s desk. “Let’s do some math,” she said. “I see you’ve been learning how to borrow into the hundred’s place.”

Nora, in the third row, raised her hand. “Miss Biggy, I don’t understand that borrowing stuff,” she said. “I never know when to cross out and subtract or when to just subtract.”

I looked from the tall teacher to the whiteboard. Considering the size of her hands, how was she going to show Nora how to do a math problem?

Miss Biggy’s head disappeared. Moments later, she lowered another card onto the whiteboard tray. On it was written:

345

-176

“I have a pack of these 3 by 5-yard cards in my canvas bag,” she said. “Now I need a pointer.”

Again, the teacher vanished. This time she returned holding the flagpole from the front of

The Very Tall Teacher

the school. Carefully, she plucked off the American flag. Gripping the pole by the end, she pointed the tip at the subtraction problem.

“You see, Nora, you must borrow from the tens place,” she explained.

Tap, tap, tap went the flagpole tip on the card. It made a perfect pointer.

I was the first to finish the math work. I raised my hand and waved it back and forth to make sure the tall teacher spotted it.

“Let me check your paper, Jenny,” Miss Biggy said.

The teachers licked the end of a finger and pressed it upon my desktop. The math sheet stuck to it like a postage stamp. She raised the paper to the top of the classroom wall. There she had attached a large sheet of plywood that would serve as her desk.

Miss Biggy pulled a pencil the size of a tetherball pole from her canvas bag. She checked the math answers through her magnifying lens and said, “Very good, Jenny. All correct.”

When the math paper returned to my desktop, a gold star the size of a pizza covered the entire sheet.



3. Recess

At ten o'clock, the playground bell rang. Without a classroom ceiling, I heard it loud and clear.

"Recesstime, class," Miss Biggy announced.

We charged out the Portable's door. As I stepped onto the playground, I saw that our tall teacher was now standing, and we had run between her legs.

Miss Biggy cast a shadow over the slide, swings, and climbing structure. She towered over the main school building. The gym came only to her knees. She held a silver whistle the size of a trashcan.

"Miss Biggy!" Nora called from the foursquare court. "Our red ball went onto the roof."

"No problem," the tall teacher said, and she flicked the ball off the school as if shooting

a marble.

"Miss Biggy," I called from the swing set. "The swing chains are all twisted."

With two fingers, Miss Biggy reached down and untangled the chains. "Just like untying a knot in my shoelace," she said.

Next, our tall teacher placed the whistle between her lips and—TWEET! —let out a blast that might have been heard on every playground in California.

"Justin, Bret, and Colin, stop chasing Gabby!" she said.

The boys, however, kept running after the girl. So Miss Biggy lowered her hand in front of them, and the chase ended instantly.

Meanwhile, Pearl stood on the corner of the playground. A jump rope dangled from her hands.

"What's the matter, Pearl?" Miss Biggy asked.

"Jumping rope is impossible," Pearl said. "Whenever I twirl, I forget to jump. Whenever I jump, I forget to twirl."

"Here, let me show you how it's done."

Around the school grounds ran a thick cable perched on wooden stakes. With a single tug, Miss Biggy yanked the cable off the supports. Holding the two ends, she found it the perfect length for a jump rope.

"Now watch, Pearl," she said. "Stand back everybody."

The tall teacher twirled the cable upward.

The Very Tall Teacher

A stiff wind whipped through the playground as it whirled over her head. When the cable smacked the asphalt, she hopped.

Perhaps to Miss Biggy this seemed like smooth rope skipping. But below, the playground bounced like the top of a drum. Anyone not holding onto a bar or pole toppled over.

Hop, twirl, hop, twirl went the tall teacher.

I hugged a tetherball pole. "Stop, Miss Biggy," I shouted. "Stop!"

Finally, our teacher halted. She looked down at her students sprawled on the asphalt. "Oh, dear, sometimes I forget my own size," she said. "Is everyone all right?"

At that moment, the school's earthquake alarm sounded. From the doors of the main school building streamed rows of classes.

Mr. Mussy, the school principal, raced out the office door. He was a short man with a bald head. "Keep calm, everyone," he called through a bullhorn. "The earthquake has ended."

For the first time, the principal noticed Miss Biggy. His gaze ran from her shoes, to her knees, up her arms, and to her head that blocked the sun. He pointed his bullhorn skyward.

"You must be the new teacher, Annapurna Biggypedagog," he said. "Central Office said you were tall, but I had no idea. Welcome to our school. You just experienced your first California earthquake."

Miss Biggy dropped the cable in her hand. "Mr. Mussy, I caused that shaking," she said. "I was showing Pearl how to skip rope."

The principal lowered his megaphone. "Jumping rope? All that shaking was just a teacher jumping rope?"

Miss Biggy shrugged her huge shoulders.

Mr. Mussy ran a hand over his shiny head. "From now on, Miss Biggypedagog, please watch your step." Again he looked Miss Biggy up and down. "In short, having a very tall teacher at this school is something we're not used to."

"I'll try my best to fit in," said the teacher.

"See that you do," said the principal. "Central Office said that you are an outstanding teacher. I only hope you don't stand out too much."

As we marched back into the Portable, Miss Biggy looked down me. "My first meeting with the principal didn't go well, did it, Jenny?" she said.

"*Fe, fi, fo, fum,*" I said. "Feet and fingers forever fumbling."

4. The First Week

Each school day started the same.

First, the Portable trembled as our tall teacher approached. Next, we heard, “Good morning, class. Time to open up the classroom.” Then we watched the ceiling open before Miss Biggy’s smiling face filled the sky.

Reading and math always came first. Miss Biggy continued writing numbers and words on her large cards. But her giant pencil proved too clumsy to mark our worksheets.

To solve the problem, she said, “When you finish your work, raise your hand, and I’ll lower mine. Climb onto my fingers with your papers, and I’ll lift you onto my desk. That way I can help you mark your own answers.”

I never worked faster on math in my life. As soon as I was finished, my hand went up, and Miss Biggy’s hand came down. I climbed

onto her pointer finger, and she raised me onto her wall-top desk. I sat cross-legged, as we checked my math together.

“More math please, Miss Biggy?” I begged, as she lowered me back to the floor. “I want lots of spelling and phonics work, too!

At lunchtime, unable to fit into the teachers’ room, Miss Biggy ate alone on the softball field. She used the backstop as a seat.

On Friday, as soon as I was done eating in the gym, I joined her. I watched her take a king-size jelly sandwich, a mammoth apple, and two cookies the size of hula-hoops from her canvas bag.

“My Uncle Everest in the Highlands sends me food and teacher supplies,” she told me. “I e-mail him every day. However, in my high-tech country, e-mail stands for *enormous mail*. Unfortunately, Uncle Everest disapproved when I left home to teach in California. He said people of our size are not welcomed outside the Highlands. I hope to prove him wrong.”

As she talked, a gob of grape jelly oozed from her sandwich. It plopped me on the head.

“Ewwwww,” I said.

Miss Biggy dabbed my hair with a napkin the size of a tablecloth. “How careless of me, Jenny,” she said. “Run inside and wash up before the bees find you.”

That afternoon, although the roof was open, inside the Portable was hot. To provide

The Very Tall Teacher

us shade, Miss Biggy wore a wide straw hat. She also folded a huge piece of paper into a fan and waved it over our desks.

Finally, near the end of the day, she said, "Enough work for the week, class. Come outside, and I'll read you a story."

I was the first one out the door. Miss Biggy was sitting on the backstop with a big book on her lap. I ran up to her right shoe and climbed onto the soft leather tops. I noticed a label that read: **Size XXXXXXXXXXXXL**. The other second-graders followed me, and we sat quietly to hear the story.

"This is a tall tale about *Paul Bunyon*," said our tall teacher. "He was a lumberjack who was as tall as the trees he cut down."

As Miss Biggy read, Bret began shinnying up her leg. When he reached her knee he called out, "Come on up!"

Hearing no objection, I started scaling Miss Biggy's white knee socks. My classmates were right behind me. Soon all dozen "Portable kids" were sitting upon her knee.

"*Paul Bunyan dug Lake Michigan as a drinking hole for his blue ox, Babe*," our tall teacher read, and she raised her leg up and down as if we were riding on waves.

"*Yeoweee!*" I shouted. This was better than any ride at the county fair.

At three o'clock, Miss Biggy closed her book, and a cool breeze over us.

"I see the buses coming to take you home,"

she said. “Now careful getting down. I’ll stick my feet out, so you can slide to the ground.”

One after another we zipped down our teacher’s leg. I went last. The ride started slowly as I slid down Miss Biggy’s cotton skirt. But when I reached her socks—*Yeoweee!*—I zoomed. I landed on her leather shoe tops and slid all the way to the toe.

“Have a good weekend,” Miss Biggy said, as we paraded to the Portable to get our backpacks.

For once, no one hurried to the buses. Already we were looking forward to Monday and school again with our very tall teacher.

5. The Boys-in-Back

Justin, Bret, and Colin sat in the back row of the Portable. The three Boys-In-Back, as I called them, were the school troublemakers. No doubt they were put in the Portable, because no other second-grade teacher in the school wanted them. No doubt they would soon begin testing our new teacher, no matter how tall she was.

Monday morning Miss Biggy placed a card on the whiteboard tray. It listed the week's spelling words. As she pointed to the top word with her flagpole pointer, Justin burped loudly. Bret coughed, and Colin sneezed in a fake sort of way.

"Here they go," I said. "The Boys-in-Back are at it again."

Overhead, Miss Biggy frowned. "That's

enough you three,” she said.

But Justin only snapped his finger. Bret snapped his gum, and Colin snapped the rings on his paper binder.

Miss Biggy’s knuckles whiten as she gripped the top of the classroom wall. “Stop that noise, boys.”

The back row was silent for one minute before Justin whistled through his fingers. Bret whistled through his teeth, while Colin whistled into a pen top.

Our tall teacher wore a frightening scowl. Her eyes were wide and her lips tight. I’d seen this look on the faces of other teachers, but never on a face as big as a billboard.

“Stop it!” Miss Biggy said a little louder.

Still the boys ignored her. Justin raised his desktop and released it. CRACK! Bret cracked his knuckles, and Colin cracked two pencils in two.

That did it. Miss Biggy banged the top of the Portable with her palms. She leaned forward and went, “SHHHHHHHHHH!”

Paper twirled off the desktops. Artwork fluttered on the walls. The windows rattled, and the door burst open.

In the back row, the three boys exchanged high-fives. Victory! One more teacher had blown her top.

After lunch, I joined Miss Biggy at the backstop. She was staring at a giant hard-boiled egg in her hand. I climbed onto her right

shoe.

“What’s wrong, Miss Biggy?” I asked.

Miss Biggy dabbed her eyes with a napkin. “I’m ashamed that I lost my temper at Justin, Bret, and Colin,” she said. “But I never imagined students could be so rude.”

“They’ve had plenty of practice,” I said. “In kindergarten and first grade the teachers lost their cool all the time.”

Miss Biggy sighed. “And what did the other teachers do?” she asked. “How did they get the boys to behave?”

“They didn’t,” I said. “Despite tons missed recesses, detentions, and suspensions, they remained annoying month after month.”

Miss Biggy began peeling her egg. I climbed into a piece of eggshell that fell on her shoe.

“Yes, the Boys-in-Back are good at being bad,” I said, rocking back and forth.

“There’s so much about teaching I still need to learn, Jenny,” Miss Biggy said. “Maybe my Uncle Everest was right. Maybe I’m not cut out to be a teacher here in California.”



6. Science

The next morning, Miss Biggy announced, "Today, we're going on a field trip. I'm taking you to the reservoir to hunt for insects. Now, everyone, step out the door."

In single file we trooped from the Portable. Once through the door, however, I found myself not on the playground, but inside a long white room with waxy walls. Six square windows were cut out along each side.

"It looks like we're inside a milk carton," I said.

"Smells like a milk carton, too," said Nora.

Miss Biggy peered through a slot in the roof. "You *are* inside a milk carton," she said. "One of mine. Now, go stand by a window and hold on."

I raced to one of the cutout squares and clung to the edges.

"Upsy-daisy," Miss Biggy said, and the

floor began to pitch and sway.

Out the window, I saw the Portable drop from view. Treetops passed in a blur. A squirrel ran along a telephone wire.

“Miss Biggy’s carrying us!” Madeline said.

“We’re in a flying classroom,” said Gabby.

I reached out and touched Miss Biggy’s fingers. “She’s holding us out front like a birthday cake,” I said.

The reservoir was two miles from the school. But with her giant strides, our tall teacher covered the distance in two minutes. She set the milk carton down in a meadow.

“Come on out, class,” she called. “You can hunt for insects in the field. But stay away from the water!”

The reservoir was a round body of water held in place by a concrete dam. While we looked for bugs, Miss Biggy sat on the dam. Some of us hunted for pill bugs under rocks and others chased butterflies. I caught grasshoppers that were hopping through the grass.

Suddenly SPLASH!

“Hey! The water’s deep!” Justin shouted. “Hey! It’s over my head!”

Justin had fallen into the reservoir. He was kicking and slapping the water.

I saw Miss Biggy cup her hands. With one swoop, she scooped Justin out of the water. She placed him on the grass and knelt beside him.

The Very Tall Teacher

“Are you all right, Justin?” she asked.

“I was trying to catch a water strider,” the boy said.

“Didn’t I warn you to stay away from the water?”

Justin sat up. “I just wanted that water bug.”

“Well, we need to get you some dry clothes,” said Miss Biggy. “OK, everyone, return to the Flying Classroom.”

Back in the Portable, our tall teacher said, “Before we look at the bugs you collected, I’ll show you an insect that Uncle Everest sent me from the Highlands.”

Miss Biggy placed a cricket the size of a kindergartner on the teacher’s desk. Using her pointer, she explained, “On this insect, it’s easy to spot the three body parts. Here are the head, thorax, and abdomen.”

The cricket rolled its black marble eyes. Its antennae thrashed back and forth a foot from where I sat.

“*Humongous*,” I said. “I hope it’s been fed.”

“Don’t worry, Jenny,” Miss Biggy said. “I have a firm grip on this insect.”

As she spoke, the cricket kicked. It sprang from the teacher’s fingers and shot across the room.

“Duck!” I shouted.

“Hit the floor!” cried Tim.

The cricket sailed inches above our heads.

It bounced off the window and leaped toward the whiteboard.

We all dropped under our desks. Miss Biggy's fingers pinched the air, chasing the cricket around the room. It was the worst moment for Principal Mussy to walk through the door. He stepped backward as the giant insect shot past his face.

"Miss Biggypedagog! What's going on in here?" he said.

Miss Biggy snatched the cricket off Drew's desk and dropped it into her canvas bag. "We were doing science, Mr. Mussy," she said. "Things got out of hand.

The principal rubbed his bald head. "Miss Biggypedagog, student safety is of top importance at our school. On top of this, Justin's mother is very upset about your carelessness at the reservoir."

Miss Biggy drummed her fingers on the top of the Portable wall.

"The other teachers have also been complaining about you," Mr. Mussy went on. "They slip on the pencil shavings you drop on the sidewalk. They trip on the footprints you leave in the lawn, and your giant eraser crumbs make a giant mess. To top things off, Miss Biggypedagog, the huge hand lens you left in the sun this morning nearly set the school on fire!"

"I'll be more careful," said my teacher. "I'll keep my head down and eyes to the ground."

The Very Tall Teacher

I crawled from under my desk with a terrible thought. Considering the rope jumping problem, the field trip accident, and the cricket disaster, Miss Biggy's teaching job was in trouble.



7. Rain and Slime

In late October the rain began. On rainy days, Miss Biggy held a yellow beach umbrella over the Portable to keep us dry. How thrilling it was to look up into the yellow dome, especially when our tall teacher spun the handle.

During rainy recesses, we remained inside with the ceiling closed. Miss Biggy, wearing a red poncho, sat on the baseball backstop, drinking tea.

“Poor, Miss Biggy,” I said, during one rainy day recess. “She’s all alone out there, wet and cold.”

“The other teachers sit in the teachers’ room, warm and dry,” said Tim. “The other teachers don’t even talk to her.”

“I hope the rain doesn’t make her tea weak,” said Ginger.

When the recess bell rang, Miss Biggy

reopened the roof and raised her umbrella.

“Let’s write some Highland haikus,” she said.

As she spoke, she held a finger to her nose, and *ACHOOOOOOOOOOO!* Her sneeze sounded like a jet plane taking off.

“Excuse me. I must have caught a cold,” she said.

“I’ll bring a bed sheet from home that you can use as a handkerchief?” said Pearl.

“That’s very thoughtful,” the teacher said. “But I have my own tissues.”

ACHOOOOOOOOOOO! she went again. *ACHOOOOOOOOOOO!*

The next day was Halloween. That afternoon Miss Biggy said, “Come outside, class. I have a treat for you, and this is no trick.”

We shot out the door. In the middle of the softball diamond stood a pumpkin as big as my house.

Our tall teacher pulled a knife from her canvas bag. “We don’t make jack-o’-lanterns in the Highlands,” she said. “But with your help, I’ll try to carve one.”

“First, you cut a hole in the top,” I said.

“Then you scoop out the guts,” said Nora.

After slicing a circle from the pumpkin’s top, Miss Biggy clawed out the juicy innards with her fingers. She dumped the pile of gook on the grass. Each pumpkin seed was as big as

a surfboard.

“Cut two triangle eyes, Miss Biggy,” said Arman.

“And a triangle nose,” said Drew.

“Don’t forget to slice a wide mouth with missing teeth,” added Pearl.

Soon a forty-foot tall jack-o’-lantern was grinning at us.

“Now we have a special place for our Halloween party,” said Miss Biggy. “Go put on your costumes.”

I ran into the Portable and put on my fairy outfit. When I returned to the softball field, our tall teacher was wearing a gray robe and a gray crown. Her arm was raised holding a gray torch.

“You’re the Statue of Liberty!” I shouted.

“Right you are, Jenny,” said Miss Biggy. “Now climb into the pumpkin and lets begin the party.”

All dozen “Portable kids” scrambled through the jack-o’-lantern’s mouth and sat in a circle on the soft pumpkin floor. The smell was wonderful. I looked up and saw Miss Biggy’s face.

ACHOOOOOOOOOOO! she went, sending the pumpkin rocking back and forth.

“*Yeoweee!*” I shouted.

First, we bobbed for apples and played Pin the Tail on the Monster. Then Miss Biggy lowered doughnuts and cups of cider down to us for treats.

While we ate, the three Boys-in-Back ran outside. They gathered handfuls of pumpkin guts from the pile and climbed up to the jack 'o lantern's nose. From there they began tossing the orange gunk at us. Slime flew everywhere. One juicy glob whacked me on the head.

Miss Biggy waved her torch. "Justin, Colin, Bret! Stop it!" she scolded. "Go straight to the office! Stop it before someone gets hurt!"

As usual the three boys ignored her. While Bret and Justin gathered more pumpkin glop to toss, Colin climbed to the top of hill and slid down on a giant pumpkin seed.

"Stop! Stop!" said Miss Biggy. Then—*ACHOOOOOOOOOOO!* The jack 'o lantern rocked so hard that everyone inside toppled over.

That's when I saw Mr. Mussy standing outside the pumpkin's mouth.

"Miss Biggypedagog!" he called out crossly. "Miss Biggypedagog!"

"We were having a party in a pumpkin shell," said the teacher. "But things didn't turn out very well."

"Miss Biggypedagog, I need to talk with you in my office...I mean outside my office right after school," said the principal. "In short, I feel you're too tall to be teaching at this school. With your height you can't control your class."

I saw our tall teacher above us. Her gray crown had slipped over her forehead, and a giant tear was running down her cheek.

8. A Solution

The next morning, Miss Biggy's face looked pale and her outsized lips weren't smiling.

Almost at once, the Boys-in-Back started to cough, sneeze, and hiccup in a fake sort of way. Miss Biggy said nothing, but her knuckles turned white against the top of the Portable.

After lunch I joined our teacher at the backstop. She was eating a giant taco.

"What's up, Miss Biggy? You look down," I said. "Is it about something Mr. Mussy said yesterday?"

Miss Biggy nodded. "Oh, I do enjoy teaching at this school, Jenny. But I must find a way to manage those three boys. If not, I won't be here after winter break. But what can I do? Punishing them does no good."

I dodged a large piece of cheese that had fallen from the tremendous taco. "Yes, they

enjoy being noticed," I said. "They enjoy the attention they get from being bad. They even brag about getting into trouble."

For the first time Miss Biggy's eyes brightened. She thought a moment before saying, "That's very true. Everyone at this school knows them, because of their poor behavior. Jenny, you have given me an idea."

All afternoon, Justin made squeaking sounds with his hand in his armpit. Bret squeaked a rubber mouse, and Colin slid his chair back and forth on the tile floor. *Squeak! Squeak! Squeak!*

Still Miss Biggy ignored them.

What could her plan be? I wondered. Some new sort of punishment? She better do something soon before the noise brings Mr. Mussy in here.

Finally, minutes until the afternoon bell rang, Miss Biggy said, "It's almost time to go home class. Now I need some helpers."

To my amazement, the tall teacher reached into the room. She plucked Justin straight out of his chair.

"Upsy-daisy!" she said.

Justin sailed into the air. His arms and legs flailed like a caught bug. "Hey! Put me down!" he yelled. "Hey! I didn't do anything! I'm telling my mother. Put me down."

Miss Biggy brought the boy up to her eye level. She placed him on her outstretched palm. "Now, Justin," she said. "Out here at the

The Very Tall Teacher

Portable, I often miss spotting the buses when they arrive each afternoon. I want you to be our bus lookout.”

Justin peered over the school. “Hey! What a view! I can see the whole town. Hey! I can see a bus coming right now.”

Miss Biggy slid the boy into her shirt pocket. “Well done,” she said.

Again the tall teacher bent over. This time she picked up Bret.

“Upsy-daisy!” she said, raising the second boy. She dropped him in her pocket next to Justin.

“And Bret, you’ll be our second bus lookout.”

Bret waved to the kids in the Portable. “Look at me, everyone! Hello down there! Look at me! Look at me!”

Next, Miss Biggy picked up Colin and placed him alongside Justin and Bret. “And Colin you will also help,” she said.

“Sure thing, Miss Biggy,” said Colin. “This is the coolest class duty ever!”

“Now, boys,” Miss Biggy said. “This job is important. You must keep alert and announce the bus arrivals loud and clear. I want only responsible students up here. I need helpers who know how to behave.”

“You bet. That’s us, Miss Biggy. We’ll do the job,” the boys said as one.

From my desk, the three boys looked like little dolls peering out of Miss Biggy’s shirt

pocket. Out the window, I saw Mr. Mussy standing by the office door. He looked up and waved.

"The buses are here!" Justin announced. His voice sailed over the school.

"Buses one, two, and three have arrived," shouted Brett.

"Yo! The buses!" yelled Collin.

I turned in my seat. "Miss Biggy did it," I said to my classmates. "I don't think we'll have any more trouble with the Boys-in-Back."

9. A Swivel Chair

Thump!

The Portable shook.

Thump! Thump!

“Sh! Here she comes,” said the Boys-in-Back.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

“Good morning, class.” Miss Biggy called out. “Time to open up the classroom.”

The roof opened, but before our tall teacher appeared, Principal Mussy called over the intercom, “Miss Biggypedagog, may I see you in my office, um, I mean outside my office.”

I saw Miss Biggy kneel by the office door. Mr. Mussy stood in the doorway and began talking. This time, with the ceiling gone, I heard every word he said.

“In short, Miss Biggypedagog, yesterday afternoon those three troublemakers in your class were acting like young gentlemen,” he

began.

“Yes, Justin, Bret, and Colin were a big help,” said Miss Biggy.

“And this morning on the playground they also made no trouble.”

“I expect them to act that way all day long,” our teacher said.

“Outstanding!” said Mr. Mussy. “No other teacher has gotten them to behave this way. I’d shake your hand if I could.”

Miss Biggy turned toward the Portable and gave me a canoe-sized smile.

“Our custodian also told me that you stayed late yesterday and cleaned up the school grounds,” the principal went on. “It hasn’t looked this tidy since the first day of school.”

“Some blowing and waving of my hand did the job,” Miss Biggy said.

Mr. Mussy nodded. “In short, Annapurna, I said your size was a problem at this school. Now I see how your size can come in handy.”

“Everyone has a part to play,” said Miss Biggy. “No matter how small or tall they are.”

“Annapurna, I know that you never received a proper welcome at this school,” the principal said. “So, in short, the staff has bought you a welcome gift.”

As he spoke, a flatbed truck pulled into the school parking lot. On the back stood a super-sized swivel chair. The truck stopped by the Portable, and a crane placed the chair on the lawn beside Miss Biggy’s canvas bag. It had a

The Very Tall Teacher

cushioned seat and wheels on its legs.

"Humongous," I said.

"No more grass stains on your knees, Miss Biggy," said Tim.

Miss Biggy sat in the chair and spun a full circle. "Now I feel like a true teacher," she said.

"In addition, Annapurna, during winter break we will build a ten-story extension onto our teachers' room," said Mr. Mussy. "From then on you can eat lunch with the rest of the staff."

"That would be grand."

"We will also get you a proper pointer stick, so you can return our flagpole to the front of the school," the principal said.

My classmates and I piled from the Portable. One by one we scrambled onto Miss Biggy's shoe. From there we climbed up her knee socks and into her giant lap. What a remarkable sight we "Portable kids" must have been! Every teacher and student in the school was watching us.

I looked up and said, "Your Uncle Everest should see you now, Miss Biggy."

Our very tall teacher looked down and gave me a big Miss Biggy wink.