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The Dynamite Dudes and The Buzzkiller

The Dynamite Dudes – Alex, Nikk and Proffen – attend the world’s best school with the world’s best head teacher and their lives are really quite enjoyable. One day when they arrive at school, the head teacher announces that he’s going on a long holiday with his husband. But the dudes need not worry! The head teacher has hired an incredibly talented substitute named Lars-Rune Simonsen. It doesn’t take long after Lars-Rune arrives before strange things start happening at the school. The teachers behave weirdly, almost like robots. The children stop laughing and playing during recess. The Dynamite Dudes even notice an 8-year-old who’s reading *The Financial Times*! Something is very wrong.

The dudes decide to take the matter into their own hands, but that turns out to be easier said than done. Because who is following them through the streets of town? What’s really going on at school? And what happens when one of the brothers disappears without a trace?

With the help of an old map of the underground tunnel system under the town, the chemistry kit they got for Christmas and Nikk’s large online following, the Dynamite Dudes unravel a plot bigger and more dangerous than they could ever imagine.

The Dynamite Dudes and The Buzzkiller is the first book in a funny and totally crazy series. The book is easy to read and illustrated throughout, perfect for readers of the Treehouse series by Andy Griffiths.

Alexander Istad & Espen Meling Sele

Alexander Istad (b.1978) has a bachelor in film art from The Surrey Institute of Art and Design in Farnham, and is also a photographer. *The Dynamite Dudes* and *the Buzzkiller* is his debut novel.



Espen Meling Sele (b.1992) is an illustrator with experience from marketing and film production.

Summary of *The Dynamite Dudes and the Buzzkiller*

Alex, Nikk and Proffen lives in a strange little village on the west-cost of Norway, called Ålesund. The city is real and can be found on any map, but the stories and situations the boys are put through are more spectacular and fantastic than anything you can imagine, and I know you have a good imagination.

The boys are a close-knit crew and best friends. Proffen is the youngest and has the mind of a genius. He always wears an incredible vest with tons of pockets. The pockets store everything you could possibly need on an average day: Whoopee-cushion, shovels, compass, binoculars, and backup-chocolate.

Nikk is quite different to the two others. Girls in his class say that he is hotter than tamale. This might be why he has such a huge internet following. He conserves his energy for pressing situations, but then he can kick in an extra gear, which makes him cleverer than someone real clever and faster than an elephant going downhill on a skateboard.

Alex is the instigator and has a great overview. He is fabulous at delegating and problem-solving. The story is told through his eyes. They all live together with their mom, who can sew and knit anything under the moon, and their dad, whose job it is to clean up bird-poo at the town hall.

One Christmas morning the boys all jumped out of bed to get a glimpse of what was waiting for them under the Christmas tree. In Norway parents like to torture their kids by making them wait all day to open packages, against all common sense and children's wishes. However, the boys have other plans: They break the rules and wake up early to open the presents while their parents are still asleep. There is one extraordinary gift in particular that makes the boys's hearts stop. A chemistry set! They can't wait to start experimenting, and end up waking everybody up with a big explosion.

The boys become quite good at creative ways to solve complicated problems with the chemistry set. They are thrown out of the house for making too much of a mess. They go out and shoot Nikk out of a canon and he ends up at the top of the schoolgrounds flagpole. The school cheer him on and even the principal is laughing.

One day, at assembly, their head teacher declares that he will go on a long vacation with his husband. He says that they need not to worry, as he has found a perfect replacement, Lars-Rune Simonsen. The boys are not keen on the idea, because they go to the best school with the coolest head teacher. But, since they like him so much, they won't deny him some time off. He has been trying to adopt a kid for a long time, but the process has fallen through, time after time.

Soon after Lars-Rune starts, the boys notice a change at school. While they go about the day as usual, with loud bangs, fun and experiments, the teachers are not as fun and playful anymore. When the boys play tricks on teachers, they receive frowns in return, instead of the usual laughter. Recess seems to be oddly shorter as well. When the school kitchen starts serving vegetables and takes chocolate milk off the menu. They have a pop-quiz and are even marked down for bad handwriting! Freaked out, the boys skip class and go down to their hang out spot. A torn piece of paper comes flying in the wind and sticks to Alex leg. They follow clues and discover the rest of a strange map that reveals an unknown tunnel system under the city.

With the help of Nikk's internet following, they manage to find their way through a hidden door and down to a strange new world. They even see through a one-way mirror and see a hidden figure working on a strange machine. They make a noise, get noticed and run.

After another strange day at school, the boys continue to investigate, and go back to the tunnels. This time they are followed by an odd city guide without realizing it. They find a way into the teachers's lounge at school and see a strange sight: The teachers are not drinking coffee or talking to each other, and we all know how much they like to do both of those things. They seem to be plugged in to the power outlets. The boys panic and leave.

The schoolyard is now dead silent. People are just glaring into nothingness. Nikk is filming everyone to gather proof that something is off. When they look back at the footage, they can see the city guide coming out of the same door through which they came out of the tunnel. They realize that they probably have been followed. Who is this person? They try to find out more about her, but end up being chased by her instead. They escape narrowly.

More and more kids get sent to the substitute head teacher's office. They go in as a lively bunch, but all come back as broken, tired old people. At the end of the day Proffen goes missing, and Alex and Nikk are horrified and hysterical. They stay up all night looking for him.

While looking at the map, the city guide turns up, snatches it from them and a new chase ensues. The city guide reveals that she has been looking for this map and its secret to become a better city guide than her father, who is a famous city guide. She has a black belt and one stripe in Ålesund knowledge, but her father has two stripes. The thought of using the map to create a new underground experience has driven her to madness.

The boys snatch back the map, and there's another intense chase. There are explosions and smoke grenades, and in the end the boys stumble through a new door, down to another part of the tunnels that they have not yet explored. With more explosions they find a way into a dungeon. They find Proffen tied down and an evil man extracting all the joy and laughter out of him. He gets zombified. The evil man turns, and we see that it's their substitute head teacher! In Lars-Runes mind, he is doing Ålesund a favor, trying to get rid of all the children's noise and laughter. He has been on a mission all along.

Alex and Nikk are spotted but escape before the evil sub gets a hold of them. Outside, the crazy-black-belted-city-guide-woman is lurking, and the boys must set up a final trap, to get her out of the way. The boys rush back to the dungeon, to free Proffen. They call their parents, and they immediately believe their unbelievable story and come to the rescue. The boys get caught and tied up by the monster of a substitute head teacher. Luckily their parents show up in time. The father commands the birds, that he normally cleans up after, to pick on the sub's head and poo everywhere to distract him. Their mom knits a huge net, while running towards the sub and they secure him in the net, free the boys, including Proffen, and all the real teachers, who they find behind bars in the dungeon. The teachers have actually been replaced by proper robots.

The sub breaks free from the net, and there is an ultra-epic and super-explosive stand-off between him and Alex. The sub professes that he only did what he did to save Ålesund from what he believes to be the real monsters: Noisy kids. He thinks himself to be the hero in this story. Alex uses this information against him and links up to Nikk's vlog and gets help to attack the sub with an outrageous wall of noise from children around the globe. The boys evacuate the dungeon and Alex leaves explosives everywhere to crush the big buzzkilling-machine. He leaves a bit too much and ends up blowing up their entire school. This is how they get known as the Dynamite Dudes. (Don't worry, in the next book they will build the world's tallest building as a replacement.)

What happens next is almost too good to be true, but of course it is true. All the bottled-up joy and laughter and noise and fun is freed from the machine, and spreads through the air like a virus. Everybody finds their laughter again and the city is brought to a standstill of joy.

Even the monstrous sub catches the bug! His laughter rejuvenates him. There is a Norwegian saying that "Laughter is the best medicine, and it will make you younger and childlike." The sub laughs so

much, and feel so much joy, that there is no longer just a feeling of being childlike, you can see him shrinking and quickly becoming a little bundle of pure joy. Where the sub was standing before, we can now see a little child laughing and smiling on the floor.

At this moment, the police show up. The real head teacher also returns from his holiday, wondering what has happened. Did he not leave his school at this exact spot? Where has it gone? The police ask the head teacher if he would consider adopting the child Lars-Rune, as he doesn't have any parents now to take care of him. The King and Queen of Norway show up together with other Ålesund dignitaries. They present the boys with a huge trophy for being awesome and the boys go straight into planning for the rebuilding of the school.

Should it be an astronaut-school? A chocolate-school? A circus? A mix of everything?

The answer is obvious: yes, yes, yes and yes.

The Dynamite Dudes and the Buzzkiller by Alexander Istad

English sample translation by Lise Lærdal Bryn

Page numbers correspond to pages in PDF.

p. 5

Everything in this book is completely true

.... except for what isn't true.

The stunts are performed by professionally drawn characters.

DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME

Seriously, just ask your mum or dad or whoever looks after you, it can be **REALLY DANGEROUS**.

p. 6

Chapter 1

My name is Alex, and I am 12 years old.

p. 7

I am big brother to Nikk and Proffen.

p. 8

You will now hear the story of why me and my brothers are called *The Dynamite Dudes*, and how our school was blown into smithereens.

p. 9

You're probably wondering whether we were to blame, for everything that went wrong. Read on, and you'll find out.

p. 10

We live in a little town in Sunnmøre county in Western Norway called Ålesund.

p. 11

This is a real place with real people, but sometimes it feels like we only exist in a book. But all of this really did happen.

p. 12

Proffen is the youngest, and smarter even than a proper professor.

He's so smart you can tell just by looking at him.

p. 13

He always wears a vest with lots of pockets, in which he can fit all sorts. Matchsticks, screwdriver, encyclopaedia, magnifying glass, emergency chocolate, and other things that may come in handy.

p. 14

Nikk is the middle child, and he's pretty different from me and Proffen.

The girls in his class say he's really cute, and that's probably why he has so many followers on his vlog.

p. 15

He also has this turbo mode which is pretty gobsmacking to witness when he uses it.

He often saves up his energy and then he'll suddenly switch on turbo mode, but he only does that when he absolutely has to.

This turbo mode makes him razor-sharp (in his thinker) and faster than a grown elephant on a skateboard rolling downhill.

p. 16

I should probably say something about myself too, as this is the first time we're meeting.

p. 17

My very favourite activity is hanging out with my brothers, because we always find something fun to get up to.

p. 18

When we're not out and about, I like watching films. The films I like the most are the ones about the future. Sometimes they're full of adventures, magic and telekinesis.

p.19

I've spent a long time working on the whole telekinesis thing myself. In this one film I saw, they could move things with just their thoughts, or sort of summon things, just by concentrating really hard. I also want to be able to do that.

I've tried it at home, and it hasn't worked yet, but maybe I'll be able to manage it someday?

p. 20

We live in a house with our mum and dad.

p. 22

In the olden days, there was a mountain in the middle of town. This was the mountain where all the birds lived.

When they blew up the mountain to make room for the new town hall, the birds no longer knew where to roost, so they kept coming to the same place, to poop and make their nests. The problem was they pooped everywhere, all the time.

p. 24

One day the mayor got a huge, white, gross glob in the middle of his head, and was horrified.

Another woman came to work one day with a puffin nest in her hat.

p. 25

Don't get me wrong, puffins are cool, but a shrieking nest with eight chicks and a mama bird feeding them, can come to be a bit much in an open office landscape.

Something had to be done.

p. 26

Dad was hired to chase the birds away and clean up all the poop.

p. 27

He has had this job for quite a while now, and you can tell by his face. He's got big dark circles under his eyes and chronic fatigue syndrome. That means he is very, very tired.

p. 28

Mum's job is to use her samurai skills to sew intricate dresses, mini-skirts and potholders.

p. 29

People travel from far and wide to seek her help.

p. 31

She can sew pretty much anything in the blink of an eye. One day I saw her make herself a dress on the way from the sofa to the front door. She was off to a party and wanted to look pretty.

p. 32

This is our family, and now you'll get to hear about how it all began.

p. 34

Chapter 2

This story happens to begin on the big present day (a.k.a Christmas Eve).

A very special present changed our lives forever.

p. 35

I woke up at the crack of dawn and ran into the living room.

“Come and see what’s under the Christmas tree,” I shouted to my brothers.

p. 36

They both started and rushed into the living room.

They looked at each other.

Their eyes lit up.

p. 37

There was an unprecedented number of presents under the tree.

p. 38

“Should we wait for Mum and Dad, or should we just go ahead and unwrap everything?” said Nikk.

Proffen and I looked at each other. “What if we just sneak a look at what’s inside? And then we’ll just wrap everything up again, and then act like nothing,” I said.

p. 39

Mum and Dad were still asleep, so I couldn’t see a problem with this.

p. 40

“Let’s do it!” said Proffen. “The rule is that you have to wait until Christmas Eve to open presents. But it’s the morning of, right? A few hours difference won’t matter.”

p. 41

Mum and Dad can be a bit short on cash sometimes, so we were used to not always getting everything we wanted. We agreed that opening the presents now would be like a dress rehearsal. No matter what we got, we'd say "This is just what I wanted".

p. 42

We unwrapped pogo sticks, pairs of socks, a remote-controlled car, sweets, and lots of other fun things.

p. 43

In the end, there was only one gift left. "Who's that from?" asked Proffen.

I read the card. "From Santa," I said.

"SANTA?! WE LOVE THAT GUY!" chorused Nikk and Proffen.

p. 44

We ripped off the wrapping paper, and Santa's gift turned out to be a real life chemistry set. "This was at the top of my wish list!" I said.

p. 46

We had made a phenomenal mess, but we were able to re-wrap everything before Mum and Dad woke up. Well, nearly everything.

"Surely we don't have to wrap up this one, too?" said Nikk.

p. 47

"It said it was from Santa Claus, so that's not really got anything to do with our parents," I answered.

We all agreed that we didn't have to re-wrap the chemistry set. Then we brought it into our room.

p. 48

A few hours later, Mum and Dad woke from a series of small bangs. We were well into using our new chemistry set, and now it was Proffen's turn to take charge.

"Hold the pipette like this, then put it in here, and remember, only a single drop," he said. Unfortunately, Nikk put in too much and it made such a big bang a picture fell from the wall.

p. 50

Mum stumbled into our room, still in pyjamas and one foot slipped. She was shrugging on her robe as she looked around.

"What's making that awful racket?" she said, her eyes half-open.

p. 51

"Nothing!" Proffen answered innocently. I tried hiding the chemistry set behind my back, and blamed the bin man.

"Surely the bin man doesn't come by Christmas morning?" Mum said in an exasperated voice with a knowing smile.

"Have you opened the presents early again this year?" she asked, even though she knew the answer.

p. 52

Mum went out into the living room. The presents that had been re-wrapped probably didn't look as neat as before. We had been caught.

p. 53

Proffen held out the chemistry set.

"This one wasn't from you, it was from Santa," he said. "We just wanted to play a little before you got up. We're sorry."

We had long since discovered that as long as Proffen spoke for us, Mum and Dad wouldn't be too cross. He would just give them these big puppy-dog eyes, and all was forgiven. They couldn't make themselves be angry with us, as long as he was in front and said he was sorry.

p. 54

“Fine,” said Mum. “Since you’ve been given a chemistry set, I’m sure you can dream up something clever to wake up your dad. Concoct something that’ll get him out of bed, and maybe he’ll help me with breakfast.”

p. 56

We woke our dad with a chemical reaction that was described near the beginning of the instruction manual. It was in the “Use what’s in your kitchen” chapter. Right next to another chapter titled “Cheddar can blow up too”.

We dropped some sweets into a bottle of soda and shook it all up.

p. 57

The fizzy drink reacted quickly.

It bubbled over and the jet hit both the ceiling and Dad, who woke up to a lovely shower of fizzy rain.

Proffen quickly leaned into the shower and apologised, his eyes big and round.

Dad laughed so hard his stomach shook. Then he grabbed the bottle, and turned it on us.

He shook it extra hard, to make sure he got out every drop.

And that’s how we got our dad out of bed.

p. 58

Mum and Dad busied themselves with tea lights, the posh tablecloth and delicious food.

At the breakfast table, I practised my *move things with my thoughts* trick, without success. I practised until my face turned red.

Nikk and Proffen saw what I was attempting, but only made fun of me.

p. 59

“Go on then, you big mind-reading wizard-magician. Move the Christmas ham into my gob, let’s see it!” said Proffen with a grin.

I didn’t take the bait, because I knew that one beautiful day, I’d make it happen.

p. 60

Chapter 3

In the days following Christmas we spent loads of time on the chemistry set. We read the instruction manual from cover to cover, and studied all the recipes very thoroughly. The things that made a bang were most fun of all, but there were lots of other things to learn, too.

p. 61

Some of the reactions foamed.

Some bubbled.

p. 62

Some sparked.

Others started small, dangerous fires.

p. 63

Some made all the flowers on the windowsill wither.

A very special one made all the dogs in town come running.

Some made the neighbours cranky.

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The Dynamite Dudes and The Buzzkiller
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p. 64

And some made such a big bang we were afraid someone would ring the police.

p. 65

Nikk was our guinea pig, and usually ended up with flaming hair, smoke coming out of his trouser legs and scorched eyebrows. In no time he had holes in all his clothes, but luckily Mum could patch them up.

p. 66

By the new year, we knew our chemistry set back to front. Our house was a total tip after all the experiments we'd attempted. "Time to go outside," said Dad. "You can't keep on with this inside the house."

Obedient boys that we were, we went outside.

p. 67

"I have an idea," I said. "The town cannons aren't in use anymore. Should we stroll over there and borrow them?"

p. 68

Eons ago, before even my father was born, they used the cannons to alert the citizens in the case of fires, but now they were simply for display.

p. 69

Since the whole town caught fire a century ago, they invented a better warning system. Maybe they decided to switch to phones or the internet?

p. 70

First we tried stuffing Nikk into a cannon, and searched for tips in the chemistry set's instruction manual. There had to be something in there on how to make someone fly, we thought. Funnily enough, we couldn't find anything, so we had to improvise. Luckily Proffen had brought some cod oil in his vest, so we were able to grease up Nick good and proper, so we could push him far down into the barrel. Cod oil is super healthy, and also perfect for making things extra slippery. Unfortunately it smells terrible, but we remembered that too late.

p. 71

Nikk was in place in the cannon and gave us a thumbs up.

We lit the fuse, and covered our ears.

p. 72

The bang was insanely loud.

Impressive colours, bangs and gunpowder shot up above Nikk's head and we laughed so hard our abs hurt.

Nikk had moved forward about five inches.

p. 73

His shoes were scorched, and he looked a little shorter than before, but we were very pleased with the experiment.

"Next time we'll just put in more of everything," Proffen said. And that is exactly what we did.

p. 74

We had heard that the dad of one of our mates had been on holiday in Sweden and had bought a big chest full of firecrackers, so we decided to go for a visit.

Our mate had gone on about this chest for ages, so we were very curious.

p. 75

The firecrackers were locked up, and on the chest was a note that said:

“Explosives! Keep away from children!”

We acted like this didn't apply to us, and broke into the chest and BORROWED everything in it. We replaced it with some soil and a note that said “sorry” in Swedish.

Of course we know it's wrong to steal, and forbidden and illegal and all that, but since firecrackers are outlawed in Norway, we reasoned that we were actually helping the police by confiscating the illegal goods.

p. 76

On the first day of school after the holidays, our pockets were full of firecrackers.

In our first break, we dug a launch ramp and placed a large pipe in the middle of the pit. Nikk volunteered himself, again. He liked the thought of being a human cannonball.

p. 77

“I'm going to fly as high as the flagpole,” he said.

“Ready?” I asked.

“Ready,” said Nikk.

p. 78

We put all the firecrackers under a big pillow, inside the pipe. Nikk positioned himself on top of it, grinned, and gave us two thumbs up.

p. 80

I lit the fuse, and with a bang he was in the air.

“Free as a bird!” he yowled.

p. 81

Nikk flew in a perfect arc towards the flagpole.

He yelled so loudly everyone turned around to see what was happening. The bang was one thing, but a flying Nikk, soaring towards the flagpole, while he sang and flapped his arms, was really something out of the ordinary.

p. 82

He actually did reach the very top, and grabbed the flagpole.

“Look at me, I’m a flag!!! Shouldn’t someone sing the national anthem now,” he shouted down.

p. 83

The whole school laughed their heads off, even the teachers and our head teacher.

Some of the kids in the playground gathered around him, sang, clapped, and laughed. They were completely onboard with all the madness, and copied Nikk, who dangled above them.

p. 84

“Has anyone considered how I’m meant to get down from here?” Nikk shouted when everyone had calmed down.

Luckily, Proffen was quick on his feet as always.

“I’ll help you down, bro, just give me a sec,” he shouted back.

p. 85

Next moment, I saw the head teacher headed towards us, and quickly fumbled to hide the matches. He knew of course that it was us who'd done it.

p. 86

Chapter 4

Luckily, we had the world's best head teacher.

He gave us extra break time on Fridays, chocolate milk on Tuesdays, and a little prize to everyone who had less than five errors on spelling tests. (We were only given three words to spell.) He was well-dressed, and always wore fun socks, in all the colours of the rainbow. He loved having lots of colour all around him.

p. 87

The playground had several walls painted green, pink, burgundy and violet, often on the same wall. There were lots of beautiful pictures on the walls, too, which made the school a bright and cheerful place, where everyone wanted to be and learn.

Our head teacher has said that it can inspire children to be happy and creative.

p. 89

“We’re having an assembly,” said the head teacher. He looked at me, and not at Proffen, who was busy helping Nikk down from the tall flagpole. “You have to meet in front of the school, as we’ll soon be giving a very important announcement.”

p. 90

All the students gathered in the playground. Nikk looked a little tired, but we helped him stand up straight.

Next to the head teacher stood a tall figure.

p. 91

He had long hair pinned up like a cinnamon roll on his head, a warm smile, and seemed friendly.

His clothes were probably all bought at the coolest shop in town, a cool guy.

“This is Lars-Rune Simonsen,” said the head. “He will be my substitute for a while.”

p 92.

Everyone gasped. Our head had never been away from school before. Not even to go to the dentist.

Our head teacher and his husband had been trying to adopt a child. It had taken a very long time, and now they were exhausted. “We need a holiday,” said the head teacher. “And luckily, I’ve been able to get hold of Lars-Rune Simonsen, who will be your head teacher while I’m away.”

p 93.

Everyone knew that our head teacher wanted children, and that this was hard, so we wished him and his husband a fantastic holiday.

p. 94

The substitute straightened and smiled at us with his bright white teeth.

“I’m really looking forward to getting to know all of you,” he said, and kept smiling.

The head teacher clapped the substitute on the shoulders and said: “You’re in the best possible hands. Your new substitute has a very long list of excellent references, so he’ll be one of the best things since ... since ... video games and salsa, combined,” the head teacher continued, “so please give him a very warm welcome. I give you the official principal key chain. It will open all doors for you.”

p. 95

The substitute seemed a bit nervous, but that might not have been that surprising. After all, he was about to substitute for the world’s best head teacher.

“This is a wonderful group of kids. You’ll have a great time,” said the head teacher, and clapped the substitute’s shoulders again. “I envision a fabulous success.”

p. 96

“Yes, it’ll be brilliant!” the substitute said and looked at the head. “When you come back, all the children will be sweet and serene as newborn babies.”

p. 97

Our head teacher picked up his suitcases and sat himself in a waiting taxi. All the students waved as he drove off.

The substitute started trying to fill the vacancy right away.

He told us about himself, but I just saw his mouth moving, without hearing anything. I already missed our head teacher.

p. 98

After the morning assembly was over, we returned to our classrooms.

I sat down at my desk and practised my telekinesis trick. I tried to move the pencil on the tabletop, just by staring hard at it. After a while I got bored and kicked the table leg in mild annoyance. I jumped when I saw the pencil move. For a second, I'd felt like I had superpowers.

p. 99

It was a short-lived joy.

When I also felt a pain in my leg, I understood what had happened.

Towards the end of the lesson, the new substitute entered the room. He shut the door and said:

p. 100

“Is everyone looking forward to the spelling test today?”

Of course we were. We’d get prizes.

“YES!” we chorused, the whole class.

“Wow, what engagement! I love it. Keep it up!” he continued, before nodding at the teacher with a smile, and then went to the back of the room to supervise.

p. 101

We started chatting excitedly amongst ourselves, and the class prefect got up to collect the prize bowl from the cabinet.

“Where are you going?” said the substitute. He was no longer smiling.

“Collecting the prizes, of course,” said the prefect, “like I always do.”

“Not so fast!” said the substitute. “We’ll be sitting a bit longer than usual today, I’m afraid. You’re having a maths quiz too, so we won’t have time for prizes.”

There were loud protests, but we were firmly told to settle down, be quiet and start our tests.

Something had changed, which was no more than could be expected, really, since we had, after all, had the world's best head teacher.

Had we really been given a really boring sub, who followed the rules and wanted us to learn things in a proper way?