

## Chapter two



**W**e had assembly first thing, so we all made our way to the big hall. It was kind of fun, waving at people I hadn't seen over the holidays. Everyone was chatting and laughing. The girls were hugging each other, and the boys were pretending to think that was gross. Then the principal, Mrs Kingston, stepped on

to the stage, and everyone stood quietly.

‘Bet this is going to be totally boring,’ whispered Alice with a big sigh. ‘What do you think, Meg?’

I didn’t reply. Mrs Kingston was *really* strict about talking in assembly. Why was Alice whispering? Did she want to get in trouble on the very first morning?

As usual, Alice was right, though. There was about twenty minutes of boring stuff, and then, at last, Mrs Kingston said something interesting.

‘This year, we’ve decided to try something new,’ she began. ‘There’s a very large range of abilities in your English classes, so we have decided to divide you up based on the results of your Christmas exams. This means that, for English lessons only, you will no longer be taught in your usual class groups, but in the new ones, which are on the lists at the back of the room.’

Everyone immediately turned to look, but turned back again just as quickly when Mrs Kingston let out a sudden loud cry.

‘PATIENCE!’ she shouted, so loudly that almost everyone, including me, jumped. ‘You can all see the lists on your way out, and *not* before then.’

Mrs Kingston went on with loads more boring stuff after that, but I couldn’t pay any attention. I love English and had done really well in my Christmas exam, but I couldn’t remember how Alice or any of my other friends had done. If they had done well we could all be together for English, which would be totally great. I was too afraid to ask them though, as Mrs Kingston was wearing her very cross face. There was no way I was doing anything that might make her shout at me in front of everyone.

At last Mrs Kingston showed signs of winding

up, and we were allowed to walk very slowly towards the back of the hall. There was a bit of pushing and shoving as everyone tried to find their name. Louise got there first and reported back.

‘I’m with Kellie,’ she said. ‘Grace is on her own again, and Alice and Megan are together.’

I turned to Alice and we jumped up and down and hugged each other.

This was so great! Now I was going to be with Alice for English and Home Ec, and I had Kellie in all of my other classes.

This was going to be a totally fun term – I just knew it.