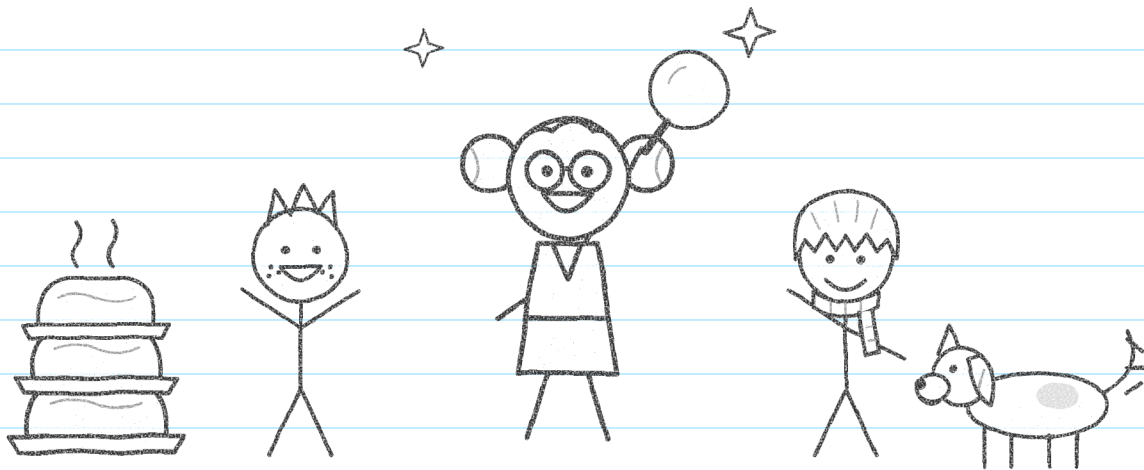


color me in!

THE CASE OF THE MISSING MEATLOAF



A DETECTIVE NOTEBOOK TO TRACE, WRITE + DRAW

This diary belongs to: _____

MONDAY

Dear Notebook, my name is Pippa Crumble, and I am a detective. Okay, a detective in training, but I own a magnifying glass, so it counts. Today something terrible happened at Willowbrook Middle School. Every Friday, Mrs. Dollop makes her famous meatloaf, and every Monday she serves the leftovers. This morning she opened the big fridge, and the whole tray was gone. Not one crumb was left. Mrs. Dollop dropped her ladle. My best friend Dex dropped his spoon. A kid in the back screamed like a teakettle. So I climbed onto my chair and announced that I would take the case. Everybody stared at me. Then Dex said, "She is serious, you guys." So now I have to be serious. A real detective needs clues, suspects, and snacks. Dex already ate the snacks. Tomorrow, the hunt begins.



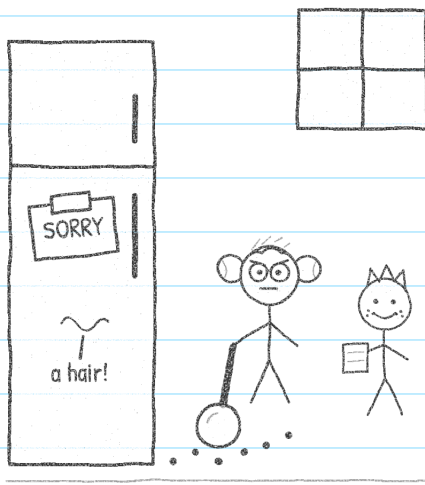
YOUR TURN: What would you do if your lunch disappeared?

If my lunch disappeared, I would

WORD WIZARD

announced announced announced

announced (verb): said something out loud to everyone.

TUESDAY

Dear Notebook, today I searched the scene of the crime. Mrs. Dollop let me into the kitchen as long as I wore a hairnet. Detectives do not usually wear hairnets, but I was brave about it. I found three pieces of evidence. Number one: a trail of crumbs leading to the back window. Number two: a sticky note on the fridge that said SORRY in

wobbly letters. Number three: one long brown hair stuck to the fridge door. Dex said the hair could belong to anybody, including him. I put everything into tiny plastic bags, like on TV. Then I followed the crumbs with my magnifying glass. They went out the window, around the flagpole, and straight back in through the window of Room 12. Room 12 is where the class hamster lives. I gasped. Dex gasped too, then asked what we were gasping about.

YOUR TURN: What clue would you look for first, and why?

The first clue I would look for is

WORD WIZARD

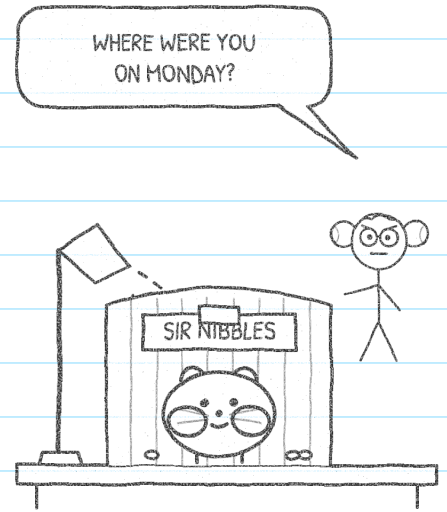
evidence evidence evidence

evidence (noun): clues that help show what happened.

WEDNESDAY

Dear Notebook, today I questioned my first suspect. His name is Sir Nibbles, and he is a very round hamster. I pointed a desk lamp at his cage, just like real detectives do. "Where were you on Monday morning?" I asked. Sir Nibbles stuffed a sunflower seed into his cheek. "Answer the question," I said. He stuffed in two more seeds.

He was clearly hiding something, maybe in his cheeks. Then Dex did some math. A meatloaf weighs about five pounds, and Sir Nibbles weighs about as much as a muffin. No hamster could carry a whole tray out a window. I hate it when Dex is right. I was crossing Sir Nibbles off my list when the door creaked open. Principal Grimsby stood there with his giant mustache. He looked at me. He looked at the lamp. He looked at the hamster. "My office," he said. "Now."



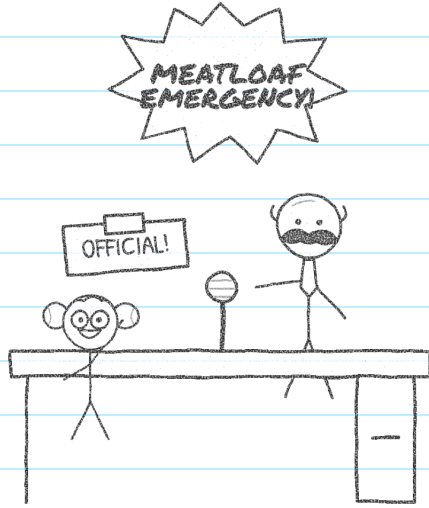
YOUR TURN: Why was Sir Nibbles a silly suspect?

Sir Nibbles could not do it because

WORD WIZARD

suspect suspect suspect

suspect (noun): someone who might have done the crime.

THURSDAY

Dear Notebook, I thought I was in big trouble. Principal Grimsby sat behind his desk and stroked his mustache for a very long time. Then he whispered, "Pippa, that meatloaf is my favorite food in the whole world." It turns out he eats two slices every Monday and saves a third one for the drive home. He has been sad all week. He

said I could keep investigating, as long as I stopped questioning rodents. Then he gave me a paper badge that said Official School Detective. I have never been so proud of a piece of paper. But then he did something I did not expect. He grabbed the microphone and told the whole school that we were having a Meatloaf Emergency. Whoever solved the case would win the Golden Spatula. Uh oh. Now every single kid at Willowbrook wants to be a detective.

YOUR TURN: What prize would you want for solving a case?

If I solved a case, I would want

WORD WIZARD

official official official

official (adjective): approved by the person in charge.

FRIDAY

Dear Notebook, today was a disaster. Overnight, everyone became a detective. Kids were sneaking around with magnifying glasses, paper badges, and their parents' sunglasses. By lunch, nobody trusted anybody. The fourth graders blamed the fifth graders. The fifth graders blamed the soccer team. Somebody started



a rumor that a Meatloaf Monster lives in the air vents and only comes out when it smells ketchup. Three first graders taped a sign on the vent that said PLEASE GO AWAY. Then the worst rumor of all started. People said Mrs. Dollop ate the meatloaf herself. When I walked into the cafeteria, she was stirring the soup very slowly, and her eyes looked shiny. I felt terrible. I wanted to find the meatloaf, not hurt the nicest lunch lady in the world. Dex patted my shoulder and said, "Then we had better solve this fast."

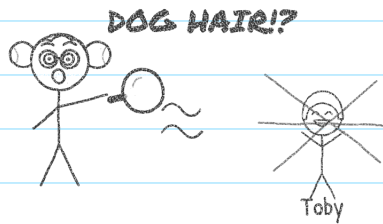
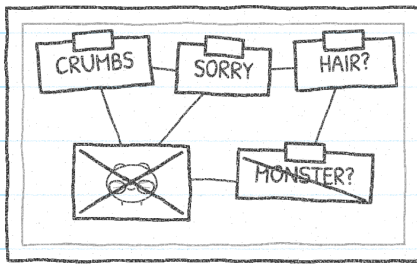
YOUR TURN: How could Pippa stop the rumor about Mrs. Dollop?

To stop the rumor, Pippa could

WORD WIZARD

rumor rumor rumor

rumor (noun): a story that spreads but may not be true.

SATURDAY

Dear Notebook, today I built an evidence board in my bedroom. I taped my clues to the wall and connected them with yarn, like a real detective. My little brother Toby walked in and asked why I was making a giant spiderweb. I told him to leave, so he stayed. Then I looked at the brown hair under my magnifying glass again.

Something was strange about it. It was too thick and too wiggly to be human hair. So I went next door and asked Mrs. Pepper if I could borrow one hair from her dog, Biscuit. She looked at me funny, but she said yes. I put the two hairs side by side to compare them. They matched almost perfectly. My heart started pounding. This was not a hamster, a monster, or a lunch lady. There is a dog in this case. And somehow, that dog has been sneaking into my school.

YOUR TURN: What would you put on your evidence board?

On my evidence board, I would put

WORD WIZARD

compare compare compare

compare (verb): see how two things are alike.

SUNDAY

Dear Notebook, today Dex and I planned a stakeout. Mrs. Dollop is baking a brand new meatloaf tomorrow, and Principal Grimsby said we can use it as bait. Every stakeout needs a disguise, so we made fake mustaches out of brown felt. Mine is curly. Dex's is so long it keeps dipping into his cereal. We practiced walking like grown-ups in the hallway, and my mom asked if we were feeling okay. Tomorrow, we hide and wait. Whoever comes for that meatloaf is in for a big surprise.



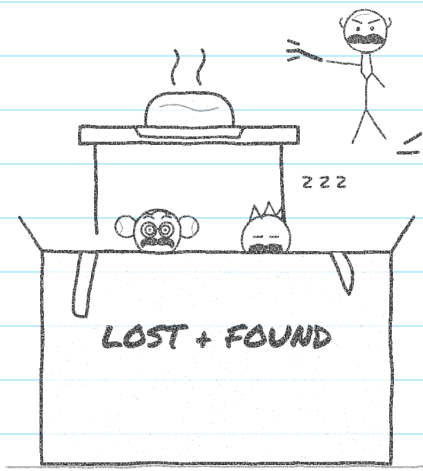
YOUR TURN: What would your disguise look like?

DRAW IT: your best detective disguise

WORD WIZARD

disguise disguise disguise

disguise (noun): clothes that hide who you really are.

MONDAY AGAIN

Dear Notebook, the stakeout started at seven in the morning. Dex and I squeezed into the giant lost-and-found box in the corner of the kitchen, wearing our mustaches. It smelled like old gym socks and one very old banana. We peeked through a hole and watched the fresh meatloaf cooling on the counter. For an hour, nothing happened. Dex fell asleep and snored into my ear. Then we heard footsteps. Very quiet, very sneaky footsteps. A tall shadow tiptoed toward the counter holding a fork. I burst out of the box and shouted, "Freeze!" It was Principal Grimsby, with a bite of meatloaf halfway to his mouth. "I was just testing it," he mumbled, "for safety." Very suspicious. But while we were all arguing, nobody was watching the window.

YOUR TURN: Where would you hide for a stakeout?
For a stakeout, I would hide

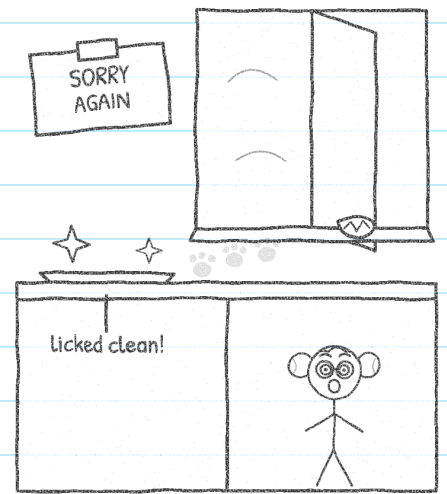
WORD WIZARD

suspicious suspicious suspicious

suspicious (adjective): seeming a little bit wrong.

TUESDAY

Dear Notebook, this morning the meatloaf vanished again. Gone! Even with two detectives and one principal guarding it. While we argued about Principal Grimsby's fork, someone slipped right through the window. The tray was licked so clean it sparkled. Next to it was another sticky note. This one said SORRY AGAIN in the same wobbly letters. On the windowsill there were muddy pawprints, plus one small sneaker print. A dog and a kid, working together! Mrs. Dollop sat down on a milk crate and said, "Well, at least somebody loves my cooking." Principal Grimsby looked like he might cry into his mustache. I studied the sneaker print. It had a zigzag pattern and a hole in the toe. Tomorrow at lunch, I will check every sneaker in the whole school if I have to.

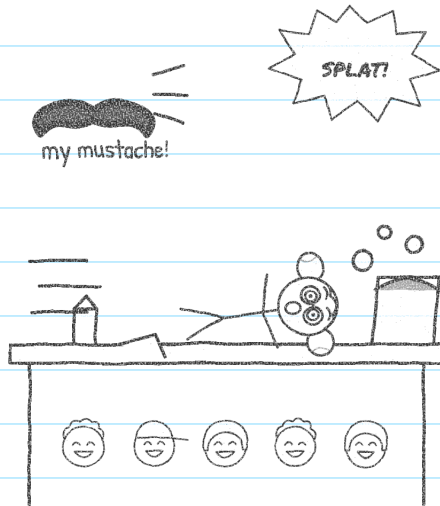


YOUR TURN: Who do you think is taking the meatloaf?
I think the meatloaf thief is

WORD WIZARD

vanished vanished vanished

vanished (verb): disappeared all of a sudden.

WEDNESDAY

Dear Notebook, today was the most embarrassing day of my entire life. At lunch, I was crawling under the tables checking sneakers when I saw it: a shadow at the kitchen window. I jumped up and sprinted across the cafeteria. Unfortunately, somebody had just dropped a whole tray of chocolate pudding. My feet hit the pudding, and I slid. I slid

past the fourth graders. I slid past the soccer team. I slid down the whole long table, knocking over eleven milks, and landed face first in the pudding bucket. My mustache flew off and stuck to Principal Grimsby's tie. The cafeteria went silent. Then everyone started clapping. I wiped my glasses just in time to see a shaggy-haired kid in zigzag sneakers running behind the gym. It was Bart, the new kid.

YOUR TURN: Write about a time you felt embarrassed.

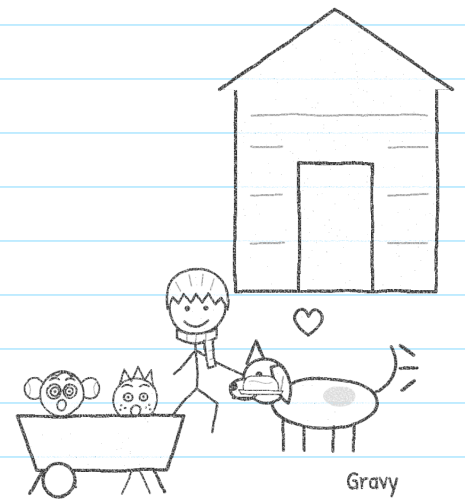
One time I felt embarrassed when

WORD WIZARD

embarrassing embarrassing embarrassing
embarrassing (adjective): making you feel silly.

THURSDAY

Dear Notebook, after school, Dex and I followed Bart behind the gym to the old garden shed. We hid behind a wheelbarrow and peeked. Bart opened his backpack and pulled out a napkin full of meatloaf. Then a skinny brown dog with one floppy ear crawled out from under the shed, wagging so hard his whole body wiggled. Bart



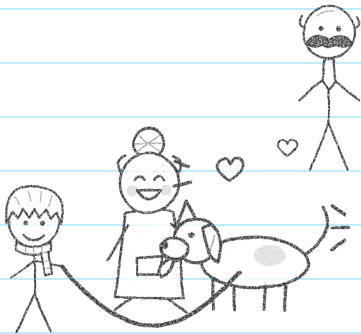
fed him piece by piece. I stepped out. Bart froze. Then he confessed everything. He moved here last month and did not know anybody. The only one who was always happy to see him was this hungry stray dog. He named him Gravy. Bart knew taking the meatloaf was wrong, so he left the sorry notes. He just did not know what else to do. I put away my magnifying glass. This was not a villain. This was a kid who needed a friend.

YOUR TURN: How could you help a new kid feel welcome?
To help a new kid, I would

WORD WIZARD

confessed confessed confessed

confessed (verb): told the truth about doing wrong.

FRIDAY

Welcome home, Gravy!

Dear Notebook, this morning Bart, Dex, and I walked into the kitchen together. Gravy came too, on a leash made from my old jump rope. Bart's hands were shaking, but he looked right at Mrs. Dollop and apologized. He told her the whole story. I thought she might be upset. Instead, she knelt down, and Gravy licked her whole face.

"Nobody has ever loved my meatloaf this much," she laughed. Principal Grimsby cleared his throat and said a dog cannot live behind the gym. Everyone got quiet. Then Mrs. Dollop said she has a big backyard and has always wanted a dog. Gravy is going home with her today! Bart gets to visit every weekend, and he will help her in the kitchen after school. I have never seen a happier lunch lady, principal, or dog.

YOUR TURN: Why do you think Mrs. Dollop was not angry?
Mrs. Dollop was not angry because

WORD WIZARD

apologized apologized apologized
apologized (verb): said sorry for something you did.

SATURDAY

Dear Notebook, today Principal Grimsby held a special ceremony in the gym. He said the Meatloaf Emergency was finally over. Then he handed me the Golden Spatula. Everybody cheered, even the fourth graders. I held it up high. Then I did something I had planned all night. I called Dex and Bart up on stage and said we solved the case together, so the spatula belongs to the whole team. Mrs. Dollop brought Gravy, who was wearing a tiny paper badge. Here is what I learned. A good detective does not only find out who did it. A good detective finds out why. Bart is the newest member of our detective club, and Gravy is our mascot. Case closed. Well, almost. Principal Grimsby just told me his mustache comb is missing.



YOUR TURN: What mystery should Pippa solve next?
Pippa's next mystery should be

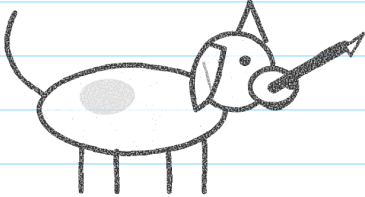
WORD WIZARD

mascot mascot mascot

mascot (noun): an animal that stands for a team.

THE END (OR IS IT?)

**YOUR TURN,
DETECTIVE!**



grab a pencil!

Dear Notebook, I finished my whole case book! Now it is your turn to be the detective and the author. Write about a missing snack, a sneaky pet, or a mystery at your school. Every good story starts with one line, so let us go.

YOUR TURN: Write your own case below.

DRAW IT: your own detective badge

Author: _____ Date: _____