

Early★Reader

The Big Custard Disaster

When Hildip Primary's cook,
Mrs Higgins, has to leave for a few
days, she warns the school that she
will quit if she comes back to a messy
kitchen! Can they keep it clean?

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Illustrated by
Darshika Varma

'The Big Custard Disaster'

An original concept by Heather Pindar

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Chapter 1

- Monday -

The lunch hall at Hilddip Primary School is one of the quietest in the whole country.

Usually, the children and teachers love chatting and being noisy whenever they can.

But at lunchtime they only want to eat, because they love Mrs Higgins's food more than anything.

So when their head teacher, Mrs Standforth, wanted everyone to listen, she only had to tap her glass gently with a spoon. She didn't try to stop the children and teachers from eating of course. She talked over the sound of the hundreds of small chomping and slurping noises in the hall.



“I have something very serious to say. Our wonderful cook, Mrs Higgins, has to go away for a few days. She will be back on Friday afternoon. So that means our lunches on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday will not be cooked by Mrs Higgins.”

Everyone stared.

“Yes, yes, I know this is upsetting news. We will all just have to be brave and help each other through this.” Everyone nodded sadly and tried to look brave. “We have a cover cook coming to make the lunches. His name is Mr Chump.”

At that moment, Mrs Higgins stomped across the hall and stood next to Mrs Standforth.



She folded her arms. She looked around at the teachers and children without smiling. She spoke slowly and clearly. “If anyone, **anyone**, makes a mess of my kitchen, I’ll quit. If even one spoon is out of place when I get back, I’ll walk out, and I’ll never cook another lunch for Hilldip School.”

The chomping and slurping noises stopped. The children gasped. The teachers looked at each other and slowly shook their heads.



Chapter 2

- Tuesday -

The cover cook, Mr Chump, missed his bus and arrived late on his first morning.

He soon cheered up when he walked into the kitchen. Everything sparkled and gleamed. Every pan, spoon and bowl stood neatly in its place.

“Perfect!” said Mr Chump to himself. “I can try out all sorts of meals in this kitchen.”