



It is mind-bogglingly **P**eculiar that
Sometimes you ^{think} you want things,
but when you get them you don't!
I haven't a **C**lue how it happens

but it is **make-me**

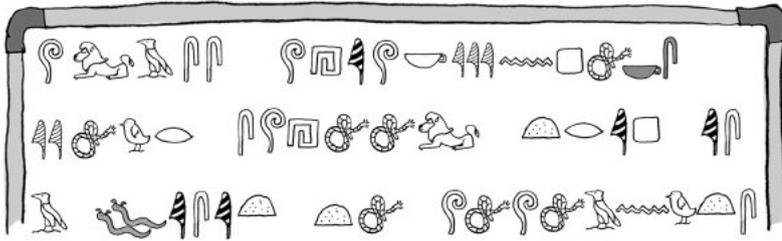


Especially as I've **w**ished for oodles
of **CHOCOLATE**... and for the
half-term **HOLIDAY** to not be **b**oring!
But as Gran always says...

**BE CAREFUL
WHAT YOU WISH FOR!**

Minnie Piper

A top secret message!



Mr Impey, my whiz teacher, is jumping up and down in his Wednesday-blue tracksuit because he's zingily excited about this top secret message he's doodled on the board. It's written in artistically ancient letters called *hieroglyphs* and they're almost like a secret code. And, being an undercover puzzler, I'm desperate to try and read what they say because they spell where we're going on our school trip!

That's if Class Chickenpox can finally fill our jar with marbles. We win one every time we're good, and lose one when we're not, and when the Terrible T's, Trevor and Tiffany, are in your class it's a bit like patting your head and rubbing your tummy whilst singing the alphabet backwards in French.



It's taken for ever, but miraculously we've almost done it and we just have two more marbles to collect. If we can win them by the end of school tomorrow we'll be going on our trip this Friday, which is the last day before half-term!

I'm guessing we'll be visiting the History Museum because it's packed with squillions of Egyptian things and *ANCIENT EGYPT* is our new project. The only trouble is my best friend, Frankie, is flying off to a wedding in Italy and it'll be a boring trip without her.



"You're so lucky," I whisper to Frankie. "I bet we're going to the History Museum and whilst you're nibbling on pizza in Italy I'll be stuck with Trevor and dinosaurs."

"But I'll be stuck with Nero," laughs Frankie, "and there's NOTHING worse than that!"

And I cannot agree because Frankie's brother is dreamily cool, but I would never tell Frankie so I go back to Mr Impey's message and think the ancient Egyptians were fascinatingly clever because when they stopped ruling, and the Romans took over, nobody else could read their writing. It took hundreds of years and millions of brain cells

Minnie Piper

to finally decipher...



So far I have decoded CLASS CHICKENPOX YOUR SCHOOL TRIP IS A VISIT TO ... and I'm sure it's going to be THE HISTORY MUSEUM so I go to the letter T, but most peculiarly I'm not right.

"That's odd," I whisper to Frankie. "I don't think it's the History Museum after all. It's somewhere beginning with C."

"Maybe it's Cleopatra's Museum?"

"I've never heard of that," I tell her.

"Nor me!" she giggles. "But maybe it's in another town and you have to go by bus."

And she could be right because Cleopatra is

definitely something to do with Egypt so I look up the next letter in the secret message, but it's not L, it's O. Followed by C, another O and A!

"It spells COCOA!" gasps Frankie, deciphering with me. "Quick, Minnie, it might say..."

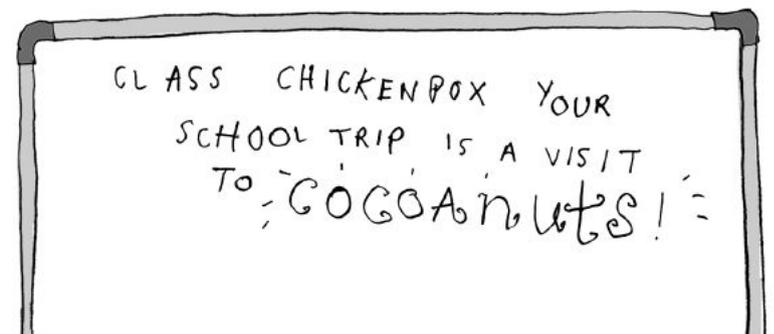
"It can't!" I squeal!

But just in case I frantically check the remaining letters and they all appear as if by magic. I wave my arms and bounce up and down and Trevor hollers, "Minnie Piper's got ants in 'er pants!"

"Haven't!" I tell him. "I've cracked the secret message!"

"Fantastic!" grins Mr Impey. "Come and write it on the board please, Minnie."

Trevor pings me with an elastic band, but I'm so excited that I jump up and completely ignore him and sweetly scribble...



Minnie Piper



"**Cocoanuts** is nuts about cocoa!" shouts Frankie.

And we've all heard the advert a zillion times, and I've always wanted to go for a visit and can barely believe that in two days' time I'll be nibbling my way round their chocolate factory!

"THE **Cocoanuts**?!"

ask Delilah and Tallulah. And they

ask at exactly identical times because they're exactly identical look-alike twins.

"THE **Cocoanuts**,"

agrees Mr Impey. "But first you must win one more marble. Minnie's just won one for cracking the message, but you still need another to fill your jar. And of course, you mustn't lose any either."

Everybody stares at Trevor, who's the naughtiest boy on the whole of the planet.

"Don't worry," says Mr Impey. "I'm sure Trevor will behave for the next two days. And to start him off, he can hand out these letters for your parents' permission that I'll need back tomorrow."



Trevor takes them and, on his politest behaviour, passes them round.

"I don't need one!" grumbles Frankie sulkily. "I won't be here on Friday."

"All the more chocolates for us then!" snorts Trevor, whose manners have already slipped to his socks.

I glare at him, but I can't shout back as I don't want to lose us a marble. So I cross my fingers and mumble a wish that he loses his voice before he loses us our trip. And irritatingly Tiffany hears me and crosses her fingers, too, and I'm just scribbling copycat when the bell goes and it's time to go home.

