

Sid and the Slimeballs

PHIL CUMMINGS

Illustrated by STEPHEN AXELSEN

SIDNEY PECK STOOD in front of the mirror and tried to pull a brush through his wild hair. He screwed up his face as he pulled and tugged. His eyes watered as he gripped the brush with both hands and dragged it through his fuzzy mop. “Why couldn’t I have straight hair?” he moaned.

His mother walked in and offered to help. “Let me do that for you,” she said.

“No,” said Sidney sharply. “You hurt too much.”



“Well hurry up then,” his mother warned, “or you’ll miss the school bus.”

Sidney went on tugging. “I hope I do miss the bus,” he mumbled.

Sidney lived on a farm and caught a bus to school every day.

He hated the bus. It made him feel sick.

It wasn't the bumpy ride along the dirt road through the hills that upset him; it was Mitch Stanley and his mates. They sat at the back of the bus and teased Sidney. It was always the same. As soon as Sidney got on the bus, he would hear Mitch Stanley's booming voice saying things like, “Hey! Here's Sid the Squid.”

Sidney was a lot smaller than Mitch and his mates and he didn't feel as though there was much he could do about it.



As Sidney stood waiting for the bus, he wondered what Mitch had in store for him today. Mitch always found something to tease Sidney about. If it wasn't his size then it was his wild hair or his high-pitched voice. Or his clumsiness—Sidney was a very clumsy person. No matter how hard he tried, he always tripped as he got into the bus. Today, Sidney decided, he wouldn't trip up. He'd get on like anybody else.

As the bus doors squeaked open, Sidney looked at the three steps in front of him. He took a deep breath and concentrated.

He made it up the first step, then the second and was on his way up the third when the toe of his right foot clipped the heel of his left. Sidney fell to the floor with a thump and his bag whacked hard into his back.



Mitch saw it all. He stood up, pointed at Sidney and bellowed, “Here he is, our favourite clown, STUMBLES! Let’s hear it for Stumbles!” Mitch clapped loudly and laughed. So did his mates.

Sidney picked himself up and slumped into the nearest seat. Mitch called to him.



“Hey, Brush Brains! You had a good look at the floor of the bus just then, didn’t you? It’s so dirty, why don’t I grab you by the legs and give it a sweep with your hair! HA HA HA ha ha ha ...” Mitch’s friends laughed along with him.