

The Unforgiving Teacher

Based on the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant told by Jesus

The sun shone. It was half-past two on a perfect summer's afternoon. But Mr Branston was flustered. He was running late.

Mr Branston herded the Skeggesby Primary School cricket team and Miss Amir (the Year 5 teacher) unceremoniously into the back of the minibus. He leapt into the driver's seat, turned the key in the ignition and whizzed into reverse... **crunch!**

Ms Jenkins, the headteacher, heard the smash and rushed out from the school to see what had happened. Ms Jenkins opened the door of the now-stationary minibus and peered inside. 'Is everyone alright?!' she asked. Miss Amir and the children looked a little shaken but, thanks to their seatbelts, no one was injured. Then she turned to Mr

Branston. He was staring in disbelief into his wing mirror.

'Oh, Ms Jenkins!' He exclaimed, 'I am so sorry. Your new car. Your brand new car. And the school minibus. It was an accident. Please forgive me. I'll pay for all the damage... I am so sorry!'

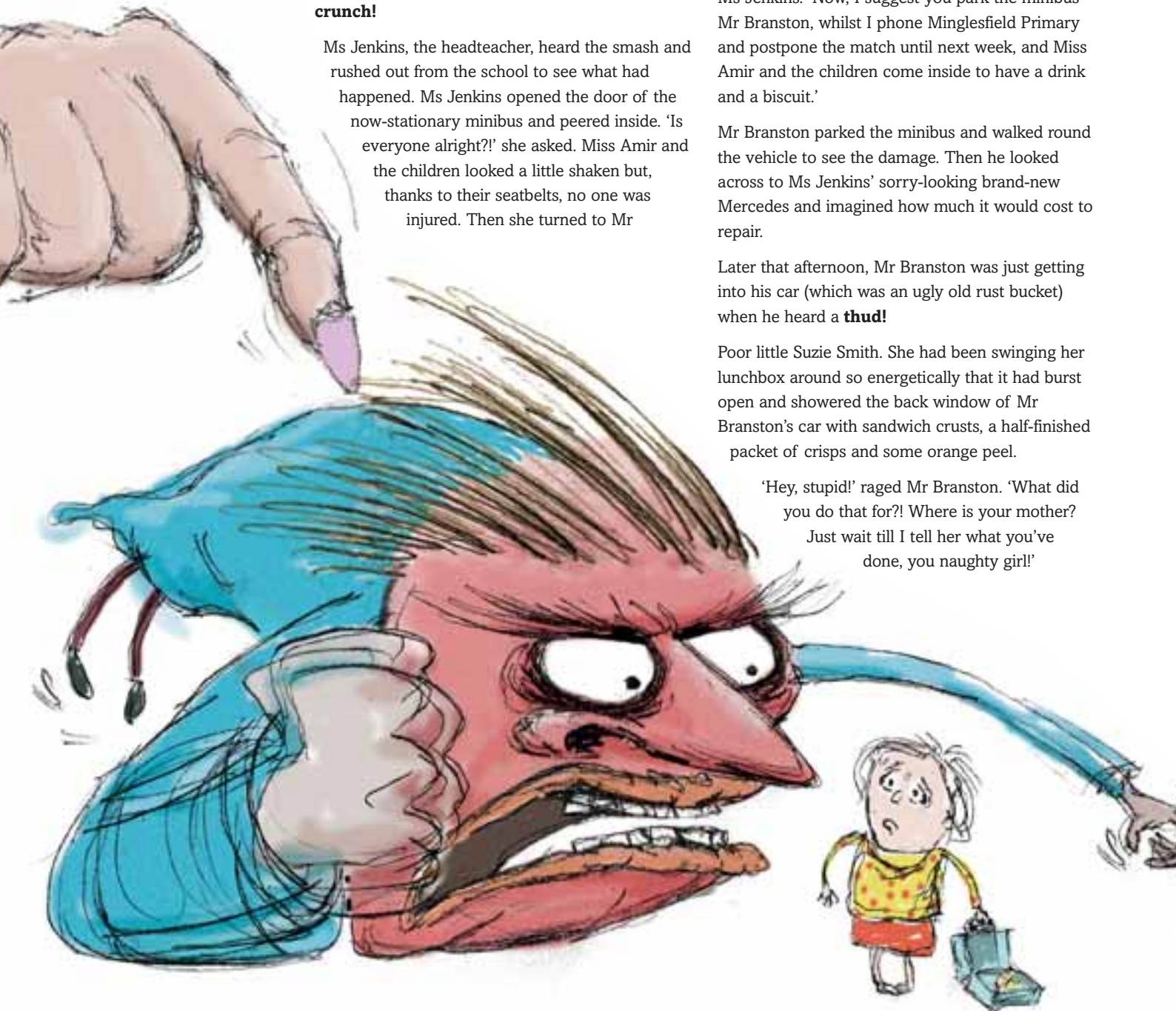
'Well, thank goodness no one was hurt,' reassured Ms Jenkins. 'Now, I suggest you park the minibus Mr Branston, whilst I phone Minglesfield Primary and postpone the match until next week, and Miss Amir and the children come inside to have a drink and a biscuit.'

Mr Branston parked the minibus and walked round the vehicle to see the damage. Then he looked across to Ms Jenkins' sorry-looking brand-new Mercedes and imagined how much it would cost to repair.

Later that afternoon, Mr Branston was just getting into his car (which was an ugly old rust bucket) when he heard a **thud!**

Poor little Suzie Smith. She had been swinging her lunchbox around so energetically that it had burst open and showered the back window of Mr Branston's car with sandwich crusts, a half-finished packet of crisps and some orange peel.

'Hey, stupid!' raged Mr Branston. 'What did you do that for?! Where is your mother? Just wait till I tell her what you've done, you naughty girl!'



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Suzie – rooted to the spot in fear – quivered as tears trickled down her freckly cheeks. ‘It was an accident!’ she sobbed, ‘Mr Branston, I didn’t mean to... I’m sorry, I won’t do it again... it was an accident. Really it was.’

Mr Branston’s face turned purple as he yelled, ‘Well, accident or not, I’ll make sure you pay every last penny for my car to be cleaned from your own pocket money you... you... vandal!’

Just then, the front door of the school flew open and out swept Ms Jenkins. ‘Mr Branston,’ she barked, ‘I need to see you in my office right away!’ Mr Branston trudged towards the building.

Then Ms Jenkins turned to Suzie. ‘Don’t worry about this mess,’ she said, stooping to pick up the remains of Suzie’s lunch, ‘I saw exactly what happened. I know it was an accident and I know that you’re sorry. Now, let’s sort this out with your Mummy.’

Once Ms Jenkins had explained everything to Suzie’s mother she returned to her office to confront Mr Branston.

‘What did you think you were doing, shouting at Suzie Smith like that? In all my years I have never witnessed such nonsense. Let me remind you that less than an hour ago you begged me to forgive you for an accident which will cost hundreds of pounds to put right. And then you have the cheek to expect little Suzie... from Reception class... to pay to clean your car – which, I might add, always looks filthy and horrible! In the light of these events, I would very much like to take you up on your earlier offer to pay for the damage to my car and the school minibus *in full*. I shall expect payment to be made by the end of this week. Have I made myself clear?’

‘Perfectly,’ muttered Mr Branston.

‘Oh, by-the-way,’ continued Ms Jenkins, ‘I shall also be making a full report to the school governors about this matter. I am sure they will be every bit as disappointed by your behaviour as I have been.’

■ Rupert Kaye

