



Once I'd made the decision to tell the others, I could hardly wait to share the secret. Suddenly I couldn't believe I'd kept it to myself for almost a whole week. They were going to love Flicker!

But at school the next day it was precisely thirty seconds before I realised I had a huge problem. We weren't allowed bags in the classroom, and there was no way Miss Logan would let me get away with wearing my hoodie inside. Besides, even though Flicker still fitted in my pocket, it wouldn't be much good if he started getting fidgety in there.

In the end I left him in my rucksack in the changing room. I hung it on a hook right at the back and put my PE kit in front as a feeble disguise. I stuffed some lettuce through the zip, whispered some reassuring words to the little dragon and crossed my fingers he'd be OK till break time.

In class I kept trying to get Ted, Kat and Kai on their own so I could whisper the excit-

ing news. But we'd been assigned our groups and I was stuck with 'Lions', while they all sat across the room in 'Giraffes'. There was also the problem of Liam's beady little eyes that seemed to follow me everywhere, so I couldn't check on Flicker at break. He was even loitering in the hall at lunch when usually he'd be first outside with the football.

'Meet me under the trees,' I hissed to the others as I shovelled in the last of my lunch and cleared my tray.

'But I haven't even started my third sandwich,' Ted said.

'What's the rush?' asked Kat.

'I've got something to show you,' I whispered. 'Something important.'

'Well, go on, show us,' Kai said.

'Not here,' I said. 'Nosy eyes are watching.'

'I don't think eyes can be nosy,' Ted said through a mouthful of crisps.

I ignored him and used some impressive eyebrow acrobatics to try to signal to where Liam was sitting, but by the look on Kat's face I don't think it was working.

'You're being weird again,' Kai told me.

'That's what I'm trying to tell you about,' I said.

They all looked at each other and then stuffed the remains of their lunches back into their boxes. Apart from Ted who just stuffed his into his mouth.

'Come on, then,' Kat said. 'It's about time you told us what's going on.'

While the rest of them headed down to the end of the field, I ducked into the changing room. A quick peek inside the rucksack showed me that Flicker was curled up fast asleep, his little head resting on his tail. I scooped my bag up and raced down to the trees.

'Well, then?' Kai asked. 'Spill the beans. What's the great secret that's had you acting all weird lately?'

As I got my breath back I noticed Ted staring at my rucksack. It was bulging and part of it seemed to be moving about of its own accord.

'Er, Tomas, what's in there?' he asked, backing away slightly.

And so I told them.

And of course they didn't believe me. I mean, would you? I told them the whole story from start to finish and, dramatic storyteller that I am, I didn't intend showing them Flicker till I'd completely finished.

'Right, good one!' Kai laughed.

'Your stories get better and better,' said Kat, smiling. 'You should write that one down, Miss Logan would love it. But seriously, Tomas, what's really going on?'

Here was my big moment. I paused, savouring the deliciousness of knowing that any second I was going to see That Look on their faces. The look that said, 'I just cannot believe what my eyes are showing me.' And

‘Wow, Tomas, you are like the coolest human on earth.’

I opened my rucksack and reached in. All three of them began to lean towards me.

But just as they were about to finally see Flicker for themselves a voice said:

‘What’ve you got there?’

We all spun round. It was Liam. And his beady eyes were fixed on my rucksack.

‘Nothing,’ I said quickly, gently keeping hold of Flicker and hoping he would sense the danger and keep perfectly still. He didn’t; he actually sneezed and let out a spark that was red hot on my fingers. I winced but forced myself to laugh it off. Kat, Kai and Ted were looking bemused. I’d have to fill them in later. I turned and hurried back across the field. All I knew was that I had to get Flicker away from Liam’s prying eyes.

But the little dragon had obviously had enough of being cooped up and was now struggling to get free. My rucksack lurched from side to side as he wriggled desperately inside. I clamped my hand over the moving bulge, trying to ignore the strange looks some of my classmates were giving me as I hurried past them. All I could hope was that he hadn’t done a poo in there, and, if he had, that it wasn’t about to explode.

