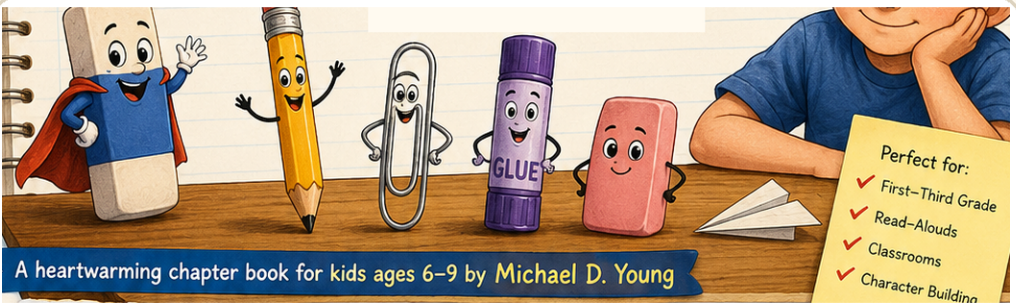


THE ADVENTURES OF MR. E

A Tale of Mystery



A brave eraser. A strange new desk. A mystery bigger
than the classroom.

CHAPTER ONE PREVIEW

MICHAEL D. YOUNG



CHAPTER ONE

The mystery begins at the next desk.

A third-grader's desk is a great place to live. Just ask my friends. There's Jacki Blue right over there. Even though she's a number 2 pencil, I think she's number one. Then there's Captain Clip, who actually likes to get bent out of shape. That's what paperclips are supposed to do. But don't let that fool you. He's as nice as they come...even if he's a bit loud.

And then there's Priscilla Glue. We've been stuck together since first grade. Well, we were only literally stuck together for a whole three-day weekend back then. At first, I freaked out, but then I realized that being stuck with her wasn't so bad.

But best of all, there's our kid. Eli is the coolest, nicest, smartest third-grader in the whole world. How do I know? Well for one, there's his desk, where I live. He's had all the same supplies since the first day of first grade. He always picks us up from off the floor when he drops us, never shoves us in the bottom of his backpack, and never, never sticks one of us up his nose. You might think that's funny, but just think if that happened to you. How would you like to stick your head into a cave full of boogers? Right? Right.

It's too bad not all kids are as nice as Eli. There's this other kid, Josh, who sits next to Eli at school and is always making fun of him. His parents always buy him new school supplies, because the old stuff never lasts long. I'm pretty glad I don't live over there. But you know what? This is the story of how Josh and Eli became friends, and how me and

my friends made both desks safe for everyone. Don't believe me?

Just listen to this.

It was the first day of first grade, and me and my friends were waking up from our long hibernation inside Eli's backpack. I rubbed the dust out my eyes when Jacki Blue, my favorite #2 pencil, came running over. "Mr. E, Mr. E! Something strange is going on at our neighbor's desk! I saw it with my own eyes!"

I yawned and walked over to the edge of the desk so I could get a better look. There sat Josh, a big kid with shaggy black hair and a bunch of freckles on his face. He had another No. 2 pencil and was scribbling all over a piece of paper.

"Oh, I can't look!" Jacki wailed. "If Josh keeps using his pencil like that, he'll be dull by lunchtime."

I watched Josh until he stopped scribbling and then folded the paper a few times until it looked like a triangle. He set the folded paper in his desk and started tapping on the edge of the desk with his pencil.

Just then, Captain Clip marched up, a small scrap of paper held up to his eye like a telescope. "What's this? Trouble on the horizon? I shall rally the troops at once!"

I held out a hand to stop him before he could run off. "Hold on there, Clippy. We don't know what we're dealing with here. Maybe we should think this through."

The paperclip straightened himself up. "That's Captain Clip to you, mister. I've seen scribbling of this sort before! It's bound to be trouble. We should assemble a scouting party at once."

By this time, a whole bunch of the other supplies had gathered around, all looking at me. Now, I'm not sure when I got made the leader of the desk, but I guess I have been with Eli the longest. I sighed. Nobody would be able to settle down until we did something. "All right. Who wants to go?"

Captain Clip saluted, while Jackie Blue and Priscilla, a glue stick, jumped up and down together, raising their arms. Most of the supplies shied away, stepping back into the darker parts of the desk.

"All of you, come with me," I said. "And Captain, bring your friends. As soon as the lunch bell rings, we need to be ready."

I could hardly wait for lunch, but we didn't have much choice. I got especially nervous after Eli used me to erase some math problems and I got a good look at Josh's desk. School had just started, and already Josh had scribbled dark marks into his desk. He'd already bitten the eraser off the back of one of his pencils, and the glue was lying under his desk with the lid off.

I know that might not sound bad to you, but for me, it was like the worst haunted house you've ever seen. The second I got back into the desk, I ran around, screaming.

"Calm down, man!" Captain Clip cried. "You're scaring everyone."

It took me a whole minute to calm down, and only because Jacki Blue helped me. "We can't go over there! It's awful! He'll eat us or stick us up his nose."

Captain Clip crossed his arms, tapping his metal foot. "Then we'll think of it as a rescue mission. There is no reason to lose our heads about this."

He did have a point. Maybe we could help get some of those supplies out of there. I'm not the bravest eraser in the drawer, but I like to help when I can.

"Why don't the two of us go?" I asked Captain Clip. "We can see what's over there and then bring others if it's safe, okay?"

The Captain saluted as the bell for lunch rang. His clip cadets lined up, linking themselves to each other to create a bridge. When they were done, the Captain tossed the entire bridge to the other desk.

"Are you sure about this?" Jacki Blue asked. "You know, you could probably let the Captain take care of it."

I knew I could have, but something about that didn't feel right. "Yeah, I know. But it's what Eli would do. I want him to be proud of me."

Jacki laughed. "But he's at lunch recess. He won't even know what you did."

"Well, I guess not. But I want to think that if he did know, he would be proud."

The Captain waved for me to follow him. "Come now, little eraser. Recess will not last forever."

I stayed only a few steps behind the Captain, balancing myself on the paperclips. I felt kind of bad stepping on them.

"Don't worry about them, Mr. E. They've been trained to hold together, no matter what. They won't—"

The Captain stopped as we saw movement coming from Josh's desk. A piece of lined paper rose up, and I could see it had pencil marks scribbled all over it. While we watched, the paper folded itself over and over until it looked like a sword.

"Uh, Captain?"

The Captain stopped and held up his own sword. “Stand firm, Mr. E! I know this isn’t scissors, but it should still be enough to beat paper.”

The paper jumped up and sliced the bridge of paperclips, which broke. I tried to run back, but there wasn’t time. Both the Captain and I tumbled toward the floor.

KEEP READING

THE MYSTERY IS JUST GETTING STARTED.

Mr. E has taken the first step. Now the real trouble begins.



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