



The golden envelope sparkled under the fluorescent lights.

‘But glitter’s banned!’ Nathan pointed at the trail of shimmering glitter marking the envelope’s path from corridor to classroom.

‘Glitter is banned,’ said Nathan, scurrying for a broom.

‘We don’t have a teacher,’ Holly reminded him. ‘So nothing’s banned.’

‘Nothing’s banned, awesome!’ Pete slammed his head face-first into a computer keyboard. ‘Steele, yell out if the screen explodes!’

I shook my head at my best mate's request. It was nine o'clock Wednesday morning. If Mr Brown was teaching he would've had control. But Brownie nicked off last term. So the only control we had was the *control button* Pete's tongue was firmly pressed against. The screen flickered black and blue as the computer fizzled.

The rest of Grade Six B crowded around the golden envelope.

'I'll tell the office.' Nathan marched towards the door. Suddenly he froze, pointing through the window and into the corridor. 'Did anyone order a life-size jack-in-the-box?'

An energetic man bobbed up and down. He shot us a double thumbs-up before pointing excitedly at the mysterious delivery.

Pete looked up, the question mark key

pressed into his forehead. ‘Who’s he?’

I studied our visitor. His golden jacket looked like it had exhausted the world’s supply of glitter. A black tie, covered in golden dollar signs, hung over his crisp white shirt. With styled black hair, sparkling teeth and deep dimples, this bloke was more perfect than Nathan’s last spelling test.

The manicured man caught Pete’s eye. ‘Open the envelope!’

Pete peeled the exclamation mark key from his cheek and held it in front of his face.

‘Hurry up!’ called the man. ‘Two minutes ’til the cameras roll!’

The class eyed Pete as he unfolded a golden piece of paper.

‘What is it?’ snapped Weasel.

‘Probably an entry form for *Biggest Loser*,’

sneered Radley. ‘Pete will win. He’s the biggest loser ever!’

‘Incorrect!’ called the well-dressed weirdo. ‘That’s one lifeline you’ve lost.’

Pete read from the letter. ‘You’ve seen him on *Disaster Chef* and *Big Bother*.’

Our guest wasn’t satisfied. ‘Louder and give it some oomph!’ He pumped his fists as he spoke.

‘Channel Six’s host with the most!’ cheered Pete. ‘The Hero of the Hot Seat! The King of Cash! Count your lucky stars because today a star will be teaching you to count! Mr Jackpot ... come on down!’

Grinning like the winner of a mega-showcase, the Crazy Relief Teacher burst through the door as if he’d been sucking on happy gas since birth.

His arms swung like windmills.

His legs kicked like a line-dancer.

His hair remained perfectly still.

Sprinting laps of the classroom, Mr Jackpot slapped every hand within a three metre radius. The hyperactive host skidded in front of the bookstand, stood legs apart and formed guns with his hands. ‘Pow, pow, pow!’ He fired across the classroom.

‘His brain’s spun up bankrupt,’ I whispered.

‘Definitely a few cents short of top-dollar,’ added Nathan.

Pete agreed with our judgements. ‘I’d say his brain was voted out a long time ago.’

Taking cover behind two tables, Holly army-rolled towards us. She successfully dodged Mr Jackpot’s imaginary gun fire.

‘Get rid of him!’ urged Pete. ‘Elbow-drop

him from the top-locker, it worked on Ms Heavyweight!’

Holly wasn’t interested. ‘This guy hosts TV shows: gameshows! He gives away truckloads of cash for a living!’

‘C’mon, dance!’ Mr Jackpot dragged students into a conga-line. He kicked his legs and wiggled his hips.

‘He’d be out first round in *So You Think You Can Prance*. No one would dance with him,’ said Pete.

Nathan crouched behind a chair, tapping away on his iPad. ‘Holly’s right. It says here Mr Jackpot’s given away over six million dollars in cash. And —.’

Nathan paused. His eyes widened.

‘And?!’ we asked together.

‘Mr Jackpot’s been linked to a new show

called *Stash of Cash*. The host will travel around Australia and give a share of his “stash of cash” to unsuspecting but deserving people.’

Pete leapt to his feet, barged his way into the front of the conga-line and danced like a madman.

Mr Jackpot struggled free from Pete’s vice-like grip, moonwalked in front of the whiteboard then spun to face the class. ‘Welcome to today’s episode of Grade Six B at Outback P. My job is to give away gifts. And the greatest gift of all is an education.’

‘What about money?’ yelled Pete, ‘Money’s an awesome gift!’

‘It certainly is. Money can be used for many things.’ Mr Jackpot pulled a wad of hundred dollar notes from his pocket and fanned his face.

My misled mates giggled like school girls. They were mistaken. Mr Jackpot was here to teach, not give away cash. Anyone who believed otherwise needed their buzzers checked.