

'None of your beeswax, Mr Holloway,' Mr Gaydon snaps.

Del shrugs and continues writing.

'And I wanted to give you this, Apple,' Mr Gaydon says. He hands me a flyer with the words *POETRY COMPETITION* splattered across it in neon yellow. 'Each school can submit one poem. It's a national award and I once had a student who won a bronze medal. I'm hoping for a medal this year too. Maybe a gold. And I was also hoping you'd let me send in one of yours.' Mr Gaydon is not a shy or easily embarrassed person, but his neck is pink.

My own face flushes. Teachers never pick me for anything except cleaning-up duties.

'Could we choose the poem together? Or maybe I could write a new one,' I say. I think things in my life will be different now. I want to write about how different they are.

Mr Gaydon smiles. 'Of course. Brilliant. Yes, Apple, you should write a brand new one especially for the competition. I can help you edit it.'

Del isn't meant to be listening, but when Mr Gaydon goes back to his desk, he nudges me. 'Boffin,' he says. He isn't being mean or jealous. He is grinning because he is happy for me.

**#WEARETHEPOETS**