

THE FABLED  
FOURTH  
GRADERS  
OF AESOP  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL



Candace  
Fleming



YEARLING



# THE PRINCIPAL STRUGGLES

THE SOON-TO-BE FOURTH GRADERS AT Aesop Elementary School had a reputation for being—

“Precocious,” said their former first-grade teacher, Ms. Bucky. She ground her teeth.

“High-energy,” added their second-grade teacher, Mrs. Chen. The muscle beneath her jaw twitched.

“Robust,” agreed their third-grade teacher, Mr. Frost. He patted his now all-white hair.

“Humph!” snorted Bertha Bunz, the lunchroom monitor. “Those kids are just plain naughty.” Because she wasn’t a teacher, Mrs. Bunz felt free to speak the truth.

Mrs. Bunz was right. So *special* were the incoming fourth graders that no teacher dared set foot in what would soon be their classroom.

“Not for love or money,” shivered Ms. Bucky.

“Not for all the tea in China,” shuddered Mrs. Chen.

“Ye gods, no!” yelled Mr. Frost.

## The Fabled Fourth Graders

It was the last day of summer vacation, and Mrs. Struggles, Aesop Elementary's principal, was at her wits' end. "School starts tomorrow, and I still don't have a fourth-grade teacher," she moaned. "What am I going to do?"

"Have you placed a want ad?" suggested Ms. Bucky.

"Spoken with the superintendent?" suggested Mrs. Chen.

"Talked with the school board?" suggested Mr. Frost.

"Humph!" Mrs. Bunz snorted again. "Call a zookeeper!"

Mrs. Struggles ignored the remark. Defeated, she shuffled into her office and flopped into her chair. *If Aesop Elementary were bigger*, she thought, *I would have separated the troublemakers long ago*. But the school was small—only one classroom per grade level—so the kids had to stay together. Rubbing her throbbing temples, she sighed, "How I wish a teacher would walk through that door."

At that precise moment, a breeze blew through the principal's office. It rustled the papers on her desk, rattled her window blinds, and flung open the door to



## THE PRINCIPAL STRUGGLES

reveal a tall, dark man wearing a pith helmet and clutching a copy of the morning's want ads.

"I am Mr. Jupiter," he said. "I have come about the teaching job."

Mrs. Struggles rubbed her eyes. Was this a dream? she wondered.

But no, Mr. Jupiter was still there.

"You *are* looking for a fourth-grader teacher, aren't you?" he asked.

Mrs. Struggles nodded, her spirits suddenly soaring. Waving Mr. Jupiter into a seat, she said, "Tell me a bit about yourself."

"Where to begin?" he replied. "My first job was as an assistant dog groomer aboard King Bernard's yacht, the SS *Pooch*, anchored off the Dalmatian coast. After receiving my degree in nanothermal economics from Dummer University, I led an expedition in search of the dodo bird. Later, I conducted the Timbuktu Philharmonic Orchestra, worked as a translator for Bigfoot, became the first man to ski down Mount Everest, collected mummified cats in Egypt, and discovered the lost city of Atlantis." He smiled. "Among other things."

**The fourth-grade students at Aesop Elementary  
have a reputation for being . . .**

**“Rambunctious.”**

**“Precocious.”**

**“Special.”**

Take Calvin Tallywong. He wants to go back to kindergarten, but . . . he should be careful what he wishes for! When Calvin actually gets the chance, he's forced to do the squirrel dance and wear a yellow school bus name tag. How will he ever escape?

And then there's Amisha Spelwadi, who can spell *wildebeest*, no problemo. She's sure she'll ace her spelling test, but . . . she shouldn't count her chickens before they're hatched! Suddenly, Amisha is given a *really* tricky word.

Luckily, these students and their classmates, like Ham Samitch (who loves to eat) and Victoria Sovaine (who loves herself), have a globetrotting, dinosaur-digging, Mayan-ceremonial-robe-wearing teacher named Mr. Jupiter to guide them.

So put on your wackiest outfit for Picture Day, help yourself to some yak and cheese, and get ready to read some hilarious modern-day fables, complete with morals. Who knows what you might learn?

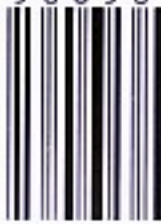
[www.randomhouse.com/kids](http://www.randomhouse.com/kids)

**US \$6.50 /\$7.50 CAN**

ISBN 978-0-440-42229-7



5 0 6 5 0



**YEARLING**

A Yearling Book  
New York  
RL: 5.0  
7-11

Cover photograph © 2007 by Michael Frost  
COVER PRINTED IN THE USA