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Prologue

Miss Charlotte is an old lady who doesn't do anything like other people. In *The New Teacher* she gets her pupils to use spaghetti as a ruler, in *The Mysterious Librarian* she arranges books by colour, and in *The New Football Coach* she teaches young footballers how to lose.

There are many people who think that Miss Charlotte must be totally bonkers because she talks aloud to Gertrude, her rock. But children in loads of schools, towns and countries who have got to know Miss Charlotte now chat to their toothbrushes or tell their secrets to a pebble.

*A Funny Sort
of Minister*

Chapter 1

Time to Be Reunited with Gertrude

With a pounding heart, Miss Charlotte studied the train timetable in the central station. “In two hours and fifty-four minutes. At last!” she sighed, putting down her elephant-skin travel bag.

In two hours and fifty-four minutes she would be boarding a train that would take her to Saint-Anatole. And in Saint-Anatole she would be reunited with Leo, Marie... and Gertrude! Miss Charlotte knew that Leo and Marie were taking good care of her precious Gertrude, but, after giving it

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a lot of thought, she had come to the decision it was time for her to be reunited with her great friend.



With a spring in her step, the old lady walked towards the ticket window, leaving behind her travel bag. Right in the middle of the busy train station! Miss Charlotte could be a bit of a scatterbrain sometimes...

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That very moment, a few streets away, a loud noise made a number of passers-by jump into the air. A car tyre had burst. And not just any old car tyre! It was the rear tyre of the limousine belonging to the Prime Minister, Roger Rarejoy.

The Prime Minister's driver immediately got out to check the damage. His aide got on his mobile to order a new limo, while his body-guard stepped out to make sure no one would bother the Honourable Roger Rarejoy.

The Prime Minister had been in the middle of going over a speech he was going to give to the APWTTAVVI (Association of People Who Think They Are Very, Very Important) at the Coliseum later that day. It was a unique occasion, a historic moment. Before an audience of a thousand people, and with nine television cameras and sixteen radio microphones pointing at him, he was going to reveal the key policy of his election manifesto: a new educational programme for children.

Roger Rarejoy had got to the second paragraph of the third page, a key passage that would turn the lives of all the children in the country upside down. It said that breaks would be abolished, that children would even have to go to school on Saturdays and that the summer holiday would be reduced to two weeks per year. Instead of playing football in the park, camping, cycling or swimming in swimming pools and lakes, the children would spend nearly the entire summer in the classroom.

Before he had finished reading this paragraph, his aide Simon Surenough informed him that all the roads were blocked because of a massive strike by truck drivers. If the Prime Minister wanted to get to Saint-Mealymouth by ten past ten for the opening of a new biological onion farm, his only option was to take the train. And quickly!

Ten minutes later the Prime Minister, with his aide and bodyguard, arrived at the station, all

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out of breath. While Simon Surenough ran off to get the tickets, a lady asked the Prime Minister for his autograph. Roger Rarejoy put down his old elephant-skin travel bag in which he kept all his important documents. It had been a gift from his favourite Auntie Josephine, and he never left home without it.

While Roger Rarejoy was speaking to his admirer, other people recognized him too, and in the blink of an eye a big crowd had formed around him. At that moment Miss Charlotte saw the Prime Minister's bag and picked it up, thinking it was hers. She hugged it and said, gently stroking the elephant skin:

“My poor little baby! I thought I had lost you.”

To celebrate being reunited with her bag, Miss Charlotte decided to treat herself to a big bowl of noodle soup at the station restaurant. She was already on her way when Roger Rarejoy discovered that... his bag had



moved. It was no longer at his feet but right in the middle of the hall!

The Prime Minister ran over to pick it up. Without losing a second, he opened it and let out a cry of horror.

Miss Charlotte was about to sit down at her table when she realized something was not right: her bag was too heavy. So she opened it to check.



“Great grasshoppers’ bottoms! This bag is full of stuff!” Miss Charlotte cried out.

That was indeed remarkable and highly unusual, seeing as Miss Charlotte was in the habit of stuffing her travel bag with... nothing at all! That is how it seemed, at least. But on her travels Miss Charlotte had collected lots of memories that were extremely precious to her, invisible though they were.

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Miss Charlotte rummaged around in the bag until she came across a leather-bound diary carrying the initials: P.M.



P.M.? Miss Charlotte wondered who this unknown individual whose bag she had inadvertently picked up might be. Could he be called Paul Michaud? Pamphilius Mirabilius? Philip Macadamia? She opened the agenda and discovered the address of this mysterious P.M. It was 8 Deluxe Street.

How convenient! Miss Charlotte had crossed that street on her way to the station. With a bit of luck she could return the bag to

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P.M., get her own back and still make her train. She would have to skip her noodle soup, though.

“Poor little pumpkin! We’ll have to make it up to you later,” she said, patting her tummy, which was so hungry it was making loud engine noises.



IF YOU LIKED THIS STORY, WHY DON'T YOU TRY ANOTHER OF MISS CHARLOTTE'S ADVENTURES?



"She's bonkers!"

Miss Charlotte, the new teacher, is not like the others: she wears a large hat and a crumpled dress that make her look like a scarecrow, and she talks to a rock. The children think she is crazy at first, but soon realize she makes school more fun, getting them to measure the room with cooked spaghetti in maths class, telling fascinating stories about a gorilla and even taking the pupils on at football.

The first book in Dominique Demers's popular series, *The New Teacher* - brilliantly illustrated by Tony Ross - is an entertaining, imaginative and inspiring book that will make you wish you had a teacher just like Miss Charlotte.

OR, IF YOU HAVE READ *THE NEW TEACHER*,
PERHAPS YOU COULD TRY THIS ONE?



"That beanpole of a woman!"

When the mysterious and eccentric Miss Charlotte arrives in the village of Saint-Anatole to take over the tiny library, the locals are surprised to find out that she does things differently. Wearing a long blue dress and a giant hat, she takes her books out for a walk in a wheelbarrow and shows the children that reading can be fun and useful. Sometimes she is so caught up in the magic of the stories she shares with her audience that she forgets all sense of reality - so much so that one day she loses consciousness and the children must find a way to bring her back.

The second in Dominique Demers's popular series, *The Mysterious Librarian*, brilliantly illustrated by Tony Ross, is a wonderful story about the magical and inspiring power of books.

IF YOU'VE READ THE FIRST TWO BOOKS IN THE SERIES, THERE'S ONLY ONE LEFT!



"Let's just say I had not expected her to be that different."

Miss Charlotte - the new coach of a children's football team - has some odd methods to prepare them for the big match, including talking to the ball and drinking a special potion, smalalamiam. Also, she teaches them how to lose! And to have fun. Incredibly, it seems to work - but will their hopes of victory be dashed when their star player decides to join the other team?

The third in Dominique Demers's popular series, *The New Football Coach*, brilliantly illustrated by Tony Ross, is a marvellous tale about believing in yourself and beating the odds.

