

# THE GIANT INSIDE

Written and Illustrated by Christopher Francis  
Teacher's Guide by Nicole Hamel and Holly Moniz

## Chapter One: Was it Worth It?

Alex Thomas looked at the clock on the wall.

Seven minutes.

Little beads of sweat slipped down his forehead.

“What have I done? What have I done?” He sat in his sixth-grade social studies class, waiting for Mrs. Oxford to dismiss everyone into the unstructured, battlefield known as ‘lunch.’ “This is it. It’s over. My pathetic little life is over.”

Alex went to Timpleville Public school, a kindergarten to grade eight school, with a ginormous cafeteria. The classes took turns using the common space to eat, before venturing outside onto the playground. For some reason there was usually only one or two teachers supervising the hungry and wild children as they lined up to buy food, or scamper to get a good table.

Alex normally enjoyed lunch. It was a chance to escape from the mundane boring rambles dished out by his robot-like teachers. But not this time. Not since his bone-head move a couple days earlier.

“You okay?” Henry Greenfield sat in front of him in class that morning. His massive body hid Alex from the teacher’s judging and condescending eyes. The boy was a giant, nearly six and a half feet tall. His big orange puffy hair stood out like a pumpkin in the snow.

“No, I’m not okay. I’m finished,” I replied.

When Henry arrived at Timpleville Public School for the first time that year, the students couldn’t help but stare.

He was different.



But like most things that seem out of the ordinary, he eventually faded into the crowd.

But, somehow Alex didn’t see him like everyone else.

For the most part, Alex felt threatened by Henry - not because he was big, not because he dressed like a gigantic purple circus clown - it was because Henry Greenfield was a nice guy. He smiled. He was polite. Plus, he

happened to have an extremely cute step-sister.

But, somehow Alex had convinced himself on the first day of school that he needed to be cool that year, and he figured Henry was going to get in the way of that goal. Alex needed to make friends - mainly because his ex-friend, Finley moved away to Boston.

Alex figured if he picked on Henry, he could impress people.

People like Rudy Jerqson.

Rudy had spent the first few days of school ‘coaching’ Alex on how to be popular.

How to be cool.

How to be mean to Henry.

But Alex quickly saw through the guy’s selfish and egocentric ways.

Four minutes left.

“Okay class,” Mrs. Oxford began. “Like this sample I have on the board, you need to create your own food chain,

showing the passage of energy from the top, all the way to the bottom.” She pointed at a Lynx, chasing after a little white rabbit.

One row over, the slimeball, Rudy leaned back in his chair. He picked off bits of his eraser and tossed them into some girl’s curly tangles. He chuckled to himself and looked over to Alex. “That Lynx looks a lot like Dermite.”

Alex turned up his lip. “Shut your face.”

Rudy pointed to the food chain picture on the board. “And Alex is the frightened little white rabbit who will be dead, really soon.”

“I said, shut your face.”

“Whatever dude, I’m not the one who’s about to get dunked in the boy’s toilets.”

Rudy was right. Alex hated to admit it, but it was the truth.

By listening to the ‘slimeball’ on the first day, Alex had managed to learn:

- 1.) How to be cool
- 2.) How to pick on the ‘weak’
- 3.) How to tease kids who were different, (people like Henry Greenfield)

But in the process, Alex managed to turn the big orange-haired ‘nice-guy’ into a target. And as a result, the school’s meanest bully found a new person to torment on the first day of school - a new person to pick on and harass.

And that bully was named, Dermite.

Damian Dermite - an eighth grader who had an eye for the weak. He was like a lion, hunting a herd of wild caribou.

“What do I do?” Alex whispered to Rudy. “Should I tell a teacher?”

Rudy leaned back in his chair and laughed. “No buddy, you gotta face the music.”

Alex looked at the time again.

Three minutes and twenty five seconds left.

“Please get out your agendas. You’re going to need to research a food chain tonight for homework.” Mrs. Oxford’s high-heeled shoes tapped about at the front of the class.

Alex ducked down in his desk.

“Don’t worry about him,” Henry said. “Damian won’t touch you. Not after what you did.”

Alex shook his head. “I highly doubt that. I’m done for. I threw pizza at the guy. What idiot in their right mind would throw pizza at a grade eight monster who looked like he could be fifteen years old?”

Henry checked the front of the room again and then turned back to Alex. “I’ll help you man. I’ll stick up for you.”

Alex’s stomach twisted. He knew Henry meant well, but the kid was a giant teddy bear. One small gust of wind, and he’d blow over. Besides, Damian already had his way with Henry the other day. He tossed him around like he was a rubber chicken.

“Thanks,” Alex replied. He opened up his agenda and scribbled the word ‘food chain’ on the page.

Rudy was right. Somehow in the emotional rollercoaster ride he had been on, Alex had failed to prep himself for Damian.

A vengeful and angry Damian

The bullheaded monster was mean, viscous, and very strong. He was so strong that the year before he ripped a shrub out of the school learning garden and tossed it at a group of grade nine skateboarders because they looked at him funny. But the fact that he was strong wasn’t the biggest problem. The problem was Damian Dermite was likely more angry than he had ever been before. To be more specific, he was likely furious with Alex for several reasons:

- 1.) Embarrassing Damian in front of the school.
  - 2.) Making Damian look bad in front of his gang of thugs.
  - 3.) Helping Henry escape while impressing his cute step-sister, Daisy Darlington.
  - 4.) Pointing out the dirty snot-monsters that were crawling out of Damian’s dirty nose.
- Alex wished he could take it all back.

Sort of.

He at least wished he had come up with a smarter plan. Throwing pizza at a bully was pretty much the same as jumping out of an airplane without a parachute – there was no chance of survival. Getting suspended for a day just prolonged the inevitable. It was certain that, in about forty-five seconds, the lunch bell would ring, Alex would be dismissed from class and sent out to face the wrath of Damian Dermite.

“Was it worth it, dude?” Rudy asked.

Good question.

Was it worth stepping in and stopping Damian from picking on Henry Greenfield?

Alex was convinced it *was* worth it.

But despite all the positive points, Alex’s mind just couldn’t escape it. “What am I going to do?” he mumbled to himself.

Alex looked at the clock again.

Ten seconds til the bell.

Nine.

Eight.

Seven.

Six.

Five.

Four.

Three.

Two.

One.