

A Big Bite at Night



Kate grabs the boy's hand and pulls him off the porch. 'Come on! It is guava day!' she yells, as if she has a **megaphone**. 'Slow down, Kate!' the boy calls. 'My legs are too short!' But Kate just grins big and pulls with all her **oomph**.





They are not yet at the best tree when the boy stops. 'Kate! Look!' He points up at a fat guava on a branch. It has a big bite in it, teeth marks and all!

'This is **catastrophic!**' Kate gasps. She squints like a spy. 'Who bit that guava?'

'That bug did it!' the boy yells. He points at a fat green bug as it munches a leaf. 'Look how keen it is to eat!' Kate folds her arms. 'That bug has a mouth as wee as an **aphid**. It can chomp all day and all night and not make a bite that big.' 'But it may chomp fast!' says the boy. 'No,' says Kate. 'Next!'





'Or an elf did it!' the boy grins. 'A keen little elf with big teeth!' 'There is no such thing as an elf,' says Kate. The boy frowns. Then he spots a long green bug on a branch and points at it. 'That bug did it! I rest my case!' 'That bug eats grass,' says Kate. 'Grass. Can a wee bug that munches grass chomp a hole that big in a guava? That takes real **oomph**. No. Next!'

Then the boy spots a big bird as it pecks the dirt. 'That bird did it! One peck with that beak, bang, a big hole!' But Kate is up in the tree, on the hunt for clues. 'The guava is way up here,' she calls down with a grin. 'Can that bird fly?' The bird just pecks the dirt. Kate smirks. 'What next? An **elephant?**'





The sun sets, and the sky turns pink. 'Can we go home?' the boy asks. 'We can get guava at the shop.'

Then Kate has an **epiphany**. She spins round with her fists up. 'Wait! No beast we have seen can make a bite that big. What if the biter just comes out at night?' The boy turns pale. 'Night?'

Kate stands with a sheet under her arm and a look that says: we will do this.

'**Phase** one, we camp by the tree,' she tells him. '**Phase** two, we spy. **Phase** three, we grab it!' The boy sits outside with his arms crossed. 'I hope it comes fast. I will nod off very soon.' 'Then nap, but peek out now and then,' says Kate, and she marches into the dark.





The yard looks so odd at night. Kate sweeps her torch up and down the bark, and the boy grips her arm and steps on her heels. 'What if the biter is a **phantom?**' he says low. 'It is not a **phantom!**' Kate hisses. A branch creaks in the wind, and they gasp. They check the tree, twig by twig. No biter.

They creep into the tent.

'Phase two,' Kate says low.

She peeks out into the dark.

'It will come. I can tell.' 'All I

can tell is that I wish I was

in my bed,' the boy says

low. He grips his flashlight

hard. Then, flap. Flap. Flap.

A thing is out there. A thing

with wings! Kate grabs his

arm. 'It is here!'





They poke out from the tent and look up. There, on a branch, hangs a dark beast with wide wings. It hangs by its feet, and it bites into a guava. Drip, drip! 'It did not stop at one!' the boy gasps. 'It just eats and eats!' 'This is **phenomenal,**' Kate says low. 'We found it. But what is that thing?'

'It is little,' the boy says
low. 'It has fur and wings.'
Kate points with a grand
grin. 'Just one beast looks
like that. It is a bat!' 'A bat!
Phew!' the boy gasps. 'That
is why it just comes out at
night!' 'Not a bug,' says
Kate. 'Not a bird. Not an
elf, and not a **phantom**. A
bat!' 'Stop,' says the boy.
'Do not list them all!'





Up in the tree, Bat hangs
with a belly as round and full
as the moon. It blinks up at
that moon, glad as can be.
Not a bug. Not a bird. Not an
elf. Just one bat that thinks
guava is a **phenomenal** feast.
And in fact, Bat has good
taste! Down the path, the little
home glows in the moonlight.
Inside, the spies sleep, and
dream up the next big quest.



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Kina and her brother spot something strange in the guava tree: a huge bite taken clean out of the ripest fruit, teeth marks and all. Bugs, birds, even a grasshopper get blamed, but none of them could explain it. So who, or what, is really behind the mysterious guava bite? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 1: ph as in phone), this book practices words like 'phase', 'oomph', 'catastrophic', 'elephant', 'pew'.

Phonics Focus: <ph>

aphid, catastrophic, elephant, epiphany, megaphone, oomph, phantom, phase, phenomenal, pew

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