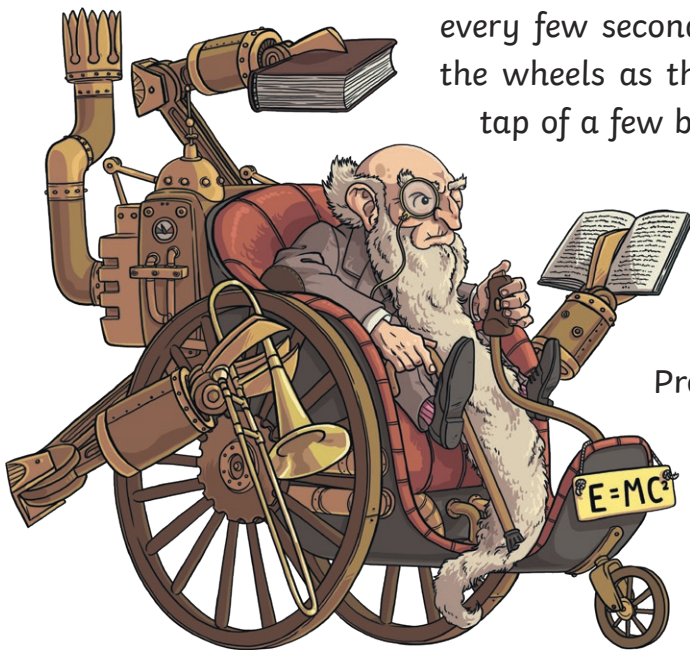# Professor Devereux

Professor Devereux was, and had always been, the live-in family tutor. He had held this position longer than anyone knew. Apparently, he had taught Grandmother everything she knew and had been an old man even then.

Professor Devereux's lessons took place in the manor's enormous library on the second floor. As far as Percy knew, the old man only left his private chambers in the west wing to teach Percy and Daisy. He had a long, white beard and was older than the bricks and mortar of Poll Manor. There were many rumours and myths about Professor Devereux. If you were to believe them all, as Percy did, then Professor Devereux was born in the time of King Arthur, was an expert in swordsmanship, invented the trombone and could read the periodic table in fourteen different languages. Whether or not this was true, what *was* true was that Professor Devereux was strict on timings and school was about to begin.

As Percy was dragged into the library, Professor Devereux's parchment face met his and Percy noticed that his beard was flecked with crumbs. Professor Devereux was the only member of the household who enjoyed Father's cooking and, judging by the smell of his breath, he seemed to have polished off the last of Father's lunchtime concoction of pilchard soup and nettle scones.

Professor Devereux used a wheelchair but Percy was not sure if it could still be called that. The professor had added so many new and amazing features that it had become an invention all of its own. It seemed to be powered by steam, due to the vertical pipes that gave off a white cloud every few seconds. The professor also never touched the wheels as the chair moved on its own after the tap of a few buttons.

"Master Percival," he said, each word a croak. "You are late."

"Sorry, Professor."

Professor Devereux scowled at him and clicked his tongue. "Apologies don't unsqueeze the oranges, young master. Take your seat. We must begin our lesson."