

The ICE-CREAM Villain

Chapter 2

For the next two days, Natasha Wolfhound sold her ice creams from the roof of her van with her fishing rod. The day after that, when everyone piled out of school, they saw her halfway up the outside of the sports hall. Her equipment had been fixed to the brick wall and she was using a series of huge rubber bands to pass ice cream down and take money up.

"Maybe it's not a fishing tournament she's entering," said Guy. "Maybe it's a climbing contest."

The next day, Natasha was on top of the school flagpole and Guy's climbing idea seemed to make sense. Her equipment had been taped to the pole and she was using a series of ropes to send her produce down and collect her payments.

The day after that, she served her ice creams while tightrope walking across ropes she'd set up between the roofs of the main school building and the sports hall. This time she used baskets to deliver the ice creams and get the cash.



"This is getting weirder and weirder," said Guy. "First fishing, then climbing and now tightrope walking."

On Saturday afternoon, Guy and Tara went shopping with Guy's mum in the local retail park. They pushed the trolley around the supermarket in a slightly crazed fashion, almost knocking over several displays and narrowly avoiding a fierce guy with tattoos who was deciding which type of veggie burgers he wanted for supper that night.

When Guy's mum had paid and they'd helped her load everything into the car, she said she just wanted to pop to the DIY store to get some paint.

"Do you want to come with me?" she asked.

"Nah," said Guy, "we'll wait by the car."

His mum nodded and headed off.

Tara and Guy leant back against the car and started discussing who had been their worst ever teacher.

"Miss Jones was more interested in her plants than us," said Tara.

"Mr Drayton shouted too much," countered Guy. "A couple of times I thought he was actually going to explode and..."

But Tara suddenly zoned out of the conversation.

"What?" asked Guy. "Is talking about Mr Drayton freaking you out?"

Tara shook her head and pointed. Over a line of bushes at the far side of the car park stood a small, disused field. Through the bushes you could see streaks of blue and white.

"I think that's Natasha Wolfhound's van," said Tara. "What's she doing here?"

Crouching down and moving across the car park like two spies, Tara and Guy made it to the bushes.

Tara was right.

It was Natasha's van.

It was parked at the edge of the field.

But she wasn't in the van or even on its roof.

Natasha had placed a series of six-foot cardboard cut-outs on the ground. They stood upright like a collection of soldiers. She'd drawn the same face on each one: the face of a man with a moustache and very thin eyebrows. It reminded Tara of someone, but she couldn't think whom.

Natasha was creeping round the field.

Every so often, she let out a loud, angry scream and snatched at the top of one of the cut-outs' heads. When she'd done this she moved on to another cardboard figure and did the same.

Tara and Guy watched these movements with a sense of bewilderment.

"Climbing up walls and flag poles is strange," said Tara, "but attacking cardboard figures who have no way of defending themselves is crazy."

"What should we do?" asked Guy as Natasha gave a blood-curdling shriek and grabbed the top of another cardboard character's head.

"There's no point in doing anything until we know what she's up to," said Tara. "She must have some sort of plan. We need to find out what it is."

At that second they heard a different kind of shout. This was the kind of shout that included the words, "WHO IS THAT OVER THERE AND WHY ARE YOU SPYING ON ME?"

Natasha stopped snatching at the heads of the forlorn cardboard men and started haring across the field, determined to discover who was behind the bushes.

Tara and Guy took one look at each other and ran.