

## Chapter 1: The vanishing man

"Same, same, same," sighed Harriet to herself. "Every day is utterly the same... Same boring house, same dull school work, same annoying little brother!"

If you had told Harriet a few months ago that a deadly virus would close her school for weeks on end, she wouldn't have minded the idea. I mean, she might even have felt a little excited or at least moderately scared. However, now, in the sixth week of lockdown, she only felt one thing. Boredom...

Harriet went downstairs; she didn't know what she would do when she got there. Maybe she'd eat another piece of the disgusting sourdough her dad had baked and was so proud of, or perhaps she would spend some time annoying her brother Harvey.

"Harriet, come on darling! It's time to go!" called her dad, "You know how important it is to get outside for our daily walk."

"Ok Peter, I'll come out for a walk, but only if we can pop into Dunn's to buy a sausage roll," replied Harriet, who always insisted on calling her dad Peter as it made her feel more 'grown up'.

"Harriet, darling, we can't go to Dunn's. Buying sausage rolls isn't exactly an essential shopping trip now, is it?"

"But Dad! Sorry... I mean, Peter! If we're going out for a walk anyway, surely it's ok..."

"No Harriet!" replied her dad, losing his temper slightly before calming himself, "The government have been very clear about the rules. I'll bake some sausage rolls for you instead."

"That's what I was worried about..." muttered Harriet under her breath.

Half way through their walk, just as Harvey began to really bug Harriet with tales of his latest zoom chat, things took a strange turn. The drizzle and grey sky seemed to mirror Harriet's mood as they turned into Priory Park. Harvey prattled on to himself as they walked ahead of their dad.

"... and then Riad said something so funny that milk came out of his nose. Only I don't know what was so funny because he doesn't know how to unmute himself, so I couldn't hear him!"

"Peter - can you please tell him to stop talking!" Harriet cried, turning back to her father as she spoke. Only he wasn't there. "Peter, where are you?" called Harriet, "Come on Peter, it's not funny... I know you're hiding in that bush!"

She cautiously walked back to the bush, fully expecting her Dad to be waiting to scare her. But he wasn't there; he had completely and utterly vanished. Harriet's stomach was a tight knot. She had wanted anything to shake herself out of her lockdown boredom, but now, she'd give anything to go back to the dull monotony of this morning.

"Harriet, where's dad?" Harvey's voice quivered slightly as he asked the question.

"I don't know, Harvey. But, wherever he is, we'll find him and bring him home."