

# Chapter 1

Things were going pretty well in Limpet's life.

He had written them down in his new notebook of Things That Have Gone (Really) Right.

In his new home of Splottpool, he had made new friends Amelia and Norman, and Norman's pet chicken, Curtis.

Mum's Shop of Impossible Ice Creams was going very well, even with its strange ice creams, like spaghetti ice cream and baked beans ice cream and roast parsnip ice cream.

The evil ice cream shop owner Mr Fluffy had NOT crushed their shop.

Yes, things were going pretty well for Limpet. But they would have been going a lot better if he wasn't dressed as a giant cucumber.

“Why am I dressed as a giant cucumber?” he asked his mum, poking his face through the hole in the costume.

“Because it’ll be a really fun way to let everyone know about our Shop of Impossible Ice Creams,” she said as she carried her suitcase to her car waiting outside their little shop on Splottpool’s seaside promenade. “And also to let people know about our new, super-delicious cucumber ice cream.”



“And why does the cucumber costume smell of onions?” Limpet asked, sniffing dramatically.

“Because I forgot my bag when I went to the

shop so used the cucumber costume to carry onions,” said Mum.

“And why isn’t Eve dressed as a giant vegetable?”

His very evil six-year-old sister was sitting in the car with the window rolled down. She stuck her tongue out at Limpet and carried on chewing her gummy bear.

“Fruit,” she said.

Limpet reached in through the hole at the front of his cucumber costume to pick some onion skin from his mouth. “What?”

“Cucumbers are a fruit,” said Eve.

Limpet did not know that cucumbers were a fruit. He did not know how Eve knew they were a fruit. But he did know that Eve was pure evil for telling him.

“Eve’s not in a costume because she’s allergic to costumes,” said Mum. “Remember that time she dressed as an Oompa-Loompa and actually went orange for a week afterwards?”

Limpet did remember the time Eve went orange for a week. She had looked so silly and was terribly embarrassed.

That had been the best week of Limpet's life.

"Anyway, Eve's coming away with me for a week to see Granny," said Mum.

"Why can't I go to visit Granny instead of wearing an oniony cucumber costume?" asked Limpet.

"Because you have to help your father run the ice cream shop while I'm away."

Limpet's dad popped his head out of the shop door. He didn't live with Limpet and Eve any more, but had offered to stay for the week to spend some time with Limpet and mind the shop. And right now, he was juggling onions.

"Don't worry about me," he said, still juggling, his tongue out as he concentrated. "I know what I'm doing."

He bumped against a machine and ice cream

sprayed down on his shoes. When he bent over to clean it, he banged his face on a tray of sparkly silver sprinkles. They flew everywhere like a glittering snowstorm.

Limpet sighed.

Limpet's mum sighed even louder.

“Dad can't make ice cream, but I've left enough in the shop to last the whole week while we're away. Mushy peas ice cream, fried onion ice cream and, of course, cucumber ice cream. It means everything will be A-OK until I get back.”

“Fine, I get it,” said Limpet, even though those flavours never sounded A-OK to him, no matter how many customers ate them. “But I still don't want to wear this stupid cucumber costume.”

Mum gave him a hug and a kiss on the top of his pointy green head. “You're a great help, thanks. I couldn't run this shop without you.”

Limpet squirmed, though he secretly liked the kiss on his head, even if he was under the

oniony cucumber costume.

Mum closed the boot and got into the driver's seat. Wriggling, she pulled a chocolate flake out from under her bottom.

"Yum!" Eve grabbed the mushy chocolate flake from her and ate it.

Just as Mum was about to drive off, they heard a whistle in the gentle breeze. It was the postwoman cycling up the promenade towards them.

Dad came outside, wiping silver sprinkles from his eyebrows.

"Hey, you in the courgette costume!" the postwoman called to Limpet as she cycled past. "I've something for you."

Without stopping, she threw a small, square envelope towards Limpet, who just about caught it with his green foam hands.

"Thanks," Limpet called after the cycling postwoman. "Oh, and I'm a cucumber!"



The envelope looked important.

## **The Shop of Impossible Ice Creams Splottpool**

Dad took the envelope and pulled a card from it with his sprinkle-covered hands. He read out,

“A JUDGE FROM THE GOLDEN  
SPRINKLES AWARD FOR BEST ICE CREAM  
WILL BE COMING TO YOUR SHOP—”

“What?!” gasped Mum. “The Golden Sprinkles Award is the most prestigious, most important, most powerful award in all of ice cream! If we get the award, it will mean we’re one of the very best ice cream shops around! But if they hate our ice cream and give us a bad review, then it could be the end of our shop for good. We can’t leave. Get out of the car, Eve. We’re staying.”

Eve groaned. So did Limpet.

“No, no, you shouldn’t worry,” said Dad. “It says the judge won’t arrive for – hold on, I squished a lot of sparkly sprinkles on to this card and it’s hard to read, and I forgot my reading glasses – but I’m sure it says two . . .” He peered at the card. “*Weeks*. Yes, two weeks. You’ll be back in plenty of time.”

Mum relaxed a bit. “OK. Phew. If it was in two

days or something, that would be trouble. But two weeks is OK. That will give us plenty of time to make fresh ice creams and win the Golden Sprinkles Award.”

“It will all be no problemo,” Dad said, with a thumbs-up. There were sparkles all over the tops of his thumbs.

“You *need* to be back in plenty of time, Mum,” said Limpet. “We can’t do it on our own.”

“We will be,” she said, giving him another kiss on the top of his cucumber-costume head.

It was time for them to go.

Limpet took one last chance to stick his tongue out at Eve, who was making faces at him from the back of the car, before they drove off.

“Did your mother say to plug in the freezers at night, or unplug them?” asked Limpet’s dad. “I’m only joking! I’m not a total idiot. There’s no need to worry. We’ll have a great time. You and me. Father and son. Team Ice Cream, right?” He licked

the sprinkles from his fingers. “I’ll teach you how to juggle. Everyone should know how to juggle. It’s a vital life skill.”

His dad went back into the little shop. Limpet stayed outside for a moment thinking that it would be fun to juggle and that it would be good to spend a week with his dad. But he also thought about one other thing that was far more important right now:

*I need to get out of this stupid, onion-smelling cucumber costume because I have sweat running down my underpants.*

He would have thought about this some more, but he was interrupted by a shout. It was Amelia and Norman running towards the shop. Amelia was in her Super Troupers outfit, which was covered in so many badges that she rattled as she ran. Norman was carrying Curtis the chicken.

“Fairies!” Norman panted.

“Magic fruit!” Amelia wheezed.

“Cucumber?” asked Norman.

“*Buk-bawk!*” said Curtis the chicken.

“Slow down,” said Limpet. “I don’t understand what you’re saying.”

Norman wiped his sweaty brow with Curtis the chicken before putting her down and getting his breath back.

“Robbery!” he said. “There’s been a robbery at the fairy fort!”