

GIANNA POLLERO



illustrated by  
*Sarah HORNE*

Piccadilly  
PRESS

## CHAPTER TWO

# Monsters LOVE Cakes

Grace flung open the bright yellow door to her family's bakery, Cake Hunters, a good forty-five minutes after she should have been home. The smell of fresh bread, sweet pastries and rich coffee enveloped her, like a big hug, the moment she stepped inside.

Danni had taken charge of the bakery after the sisters' parents had gone missing on a particularly dangerous monster-hunt two years before. Danni was a naturally brilliant pastry chef and she soon had the little bakery bursting at the seams – not only with every cake, biscuit, tart and pie

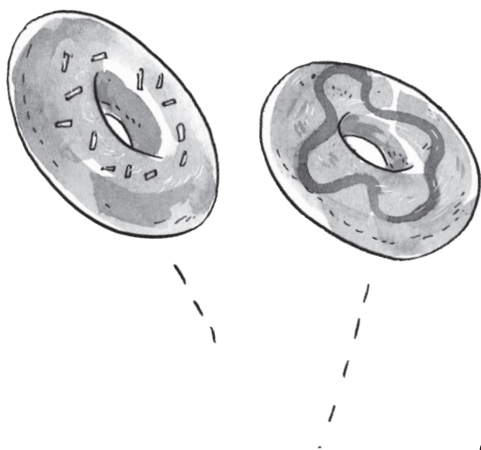




# CAKE HUNTERS







imaginable, but also with customers. There was often a queue of eager croissant-eaters snaking out of the door first thing in the morning.

Luckily, Danni's baking genius also included the ability to make some very special cakes and treats. Ones containing a lot more baking powder than normal cakes. Ones that exploded monsters.

It had been the girls' grandad, Jim Hunter, who had found out about baking powder's monster-destroying properties, quite by accident, when a Pie Pincher made its way into the bakery one day back in the 1950s. With no equipment to hand, he had grabbed the nearest things and chucked them at the monster. One particularly well-aimed throw sent an unsellable scone with too much baking powder in it directly into the monster's mouth – and exploded him on the spot. Jim realised he'd made a ground-breaking discovery.

In the two years since their parents went missing, Grace and Danni had added their own research to their mum's and had built up an impressive list of almost every monster's favourite cake. Danni was kept busy with the bakery, which meant that Grace was left to get on with what she did best. Monster-hunting.

Grace sped past a customer who was closing the lid on an enormous cake box containing a mountainous chocolate cake. A glimpse inside, as she whizzed past, revealed a shiny glaze of icing and shards of dark, milk and white chocolate poking out of the surface of the cake like the tops of icebergs. The sticky sweetness filled Grace's nostrils as she rushed past.

'This is what I need to show you!' she said, waving a colourful piece of paper as she passed Danni, who was standing behind the bakery's counter.

Grace plonked herself into one of the comfy chairs in the seating area at the back of the bakery

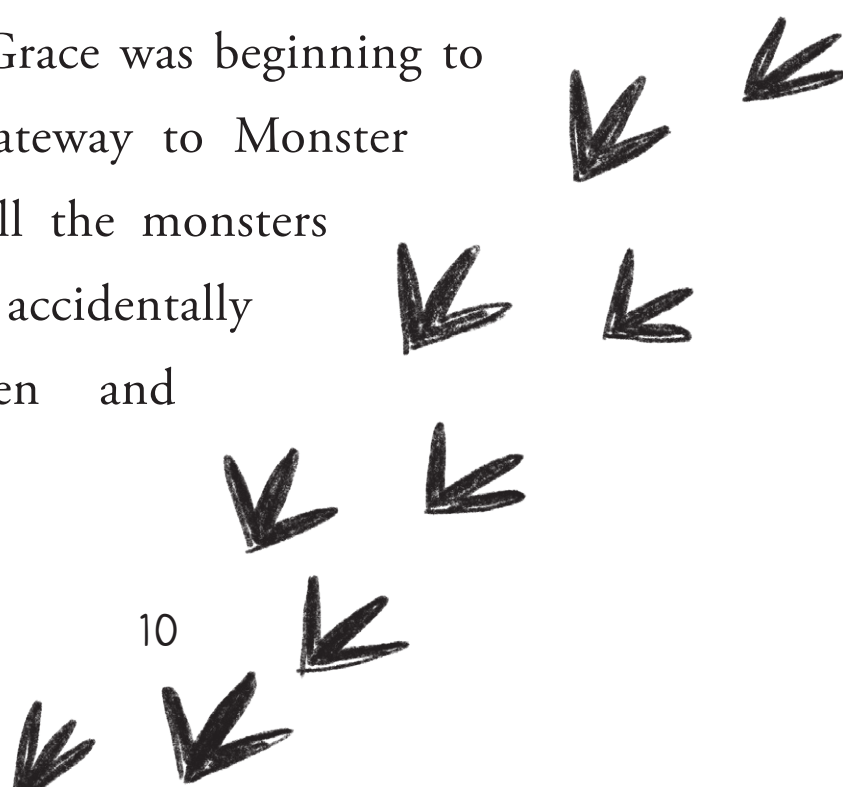
and put the piece of paper down on the table in front of her.

Within seconds, Danni had joined her. She put a bowl of leftover cookie dough in front of Grace.

‘You’re right, that is interesting!’ said Danni, wiping her hands on her apron and sitting down.

‘Jack in Reception drew it,’ said Grace. ‘Another monster, Danni! There seem to be so many more than usual.’

All the little kids at school came to tell Grace about the monsters that had been bothering them. And she had heard about a lot in the last week or two: Sock Stealers, Homework Takers, Bath Dwellers, Mess Makers . . . There had been so many, Grace was beginning to worry that a gateway to Monster World, where all the monsters came from, had accidentally been left open and unguarded.



‘And this is one of the very worst sorts,’ said Danni. ‘Yikes, it’s UGLY!’

The scrawly crayon drawing showed a revolting, fat, mouldy-green monster with one big yellow eye in the middle of its head. A wide grin was spread across its huge face. It was a cyclops. The type of monster that Grace and Danni hated the most.

‘Jack said his name is Mr Harris,’ said Grace.

Danni frowned. ‘Strange name for a monster. Where did he see him?’

‘Riding a bike past his house last week, and then again this morning before school,’ replied Grace. ‘I can’t believe there’s a cyclops in town. I *HATE* cyclopes.’

‘You mean cyclopes,’ Danni corrected her.

‘Sy-cloh-peeze,’ Grace repeated, rolling her eyes but smiling. ‘Cyclopes or cyclopes, they are all revolting and need exploding. And apparently this one STINKS too.’

‘What of?’ asked Danni.

‘The worst poo you can imagine, and a bit like mouldy cheese,’ said Grace, repeating what Jack had told her.

Danni wrinkled her nose. ‘Charming. How did Jack know his name?’

She handed a bowl of leftover cookie dough to Grace. ‘He heard him say it when he saw him riding the bike. He said he was shouting for people to move because Mr Harris, VIP, was coming through.’

Danni raised her eyebrows. ‘Interesting. I’m sure I’ve read that cyclopes are full of themselves.’

‘They’d be full of exploding powder if I got my hands on them,’ said Grace, standing up. ‘In fact, I’m tracking this one down right now! Don’t move, Mr Harris, I’m coming to get you.’



## CHAPTER THREE

# Deadly Doughnuts

She ran up the stairs two at a time and burst into the tiny study at the top of the bakery. The attic room may have been small but it was Grace's monster-hunting headquarters. Endless books and her parents' research journals lined the walls and balanced precariously on the mantelpiece of the old iron fireplace. For generations, hunting monsters had been her family's purpose. Skills, equipment and knowledge had been handed down for hundreds of years. Above the fire hung a collection of family portraits, with a painting of her grandad, Jim, in the middle. He had been photographed

holding a glass jar with a very grumpy-looking leprechaun inside. Jim had a net over one shoulder and a wide grin on his face. The leprechaun wore a green hat and was picking its nose.

Grace strode straight over to the computer in the middle of the cramped room and hit the 'on' button.

'Right then, Mr Harris, let's find out a bit more about you,' Grace said as she pulled Jack's drawing from her pocket. She typed in his name then fed the sketch into a slot on the machine. Within seconds, a 3D version of Jack's picture came up on the screen, bringing Mr Harris very much to life. The cyclops's outline revolved slowly, showing off all his disgusting features.

'Holy moly,' said Grace. She hadn't realised from Jack's drawing how big this one-eyed monster actually was. The information claimed he was 2 metres tall and weighed 275 pounds.



‘That’s more than a baby elephant,’ Grace whispered.

Although this particular cyclops was rather flabby, Grace could still see the shape of powerful muscles under his droopy, green-tinged skin. His gullet was enormous, a bit like a frog’s, which made him even more repulsive. The bones of his spine ran in a line down the middle of his wide back, and some tufts of wiry black hair sprouted from beneath his shoulders.

Grace scanned the information on the Monster Scanner.

## MONSTER

**Name:** Mr Harris

**Type:** Cyclops

**Age:** Approximately 352

**Height:** 2 metres

**Weight:** 275 lbs

**Strengths:** 12 detected: power, sense of smell,

body mass, confidence, keeping promises, Snakes and Ladders, fighting skills, eyesight, ability to hypnotise, memory, Frisbee and chess.

**Weaknesses:** 1 detected: iced doughnuts

**Likes:** Iced doughnuts, being important, politics, eating people who annoy him, board games, jokes, riding bicycles, *Britain's Got Talent*.

**Dislikes:** Rude humans, too many humans, avocados, his grandfather, Neville Harris.

**Best form of destruction:** Iced doughnuts, baking powder, sharp object to centre of eye.

**Notes:** Has a tendency to eat people with little or no warning.

## **SCORING:**

**Friendship:** 0

**Size:** 87

**Courage:** 74

**Kindness:** 0



**Intelligence:** 71 (please note, this is above average for this breed of monster)

**Loyalty:** 0

**Violence:** 99

**Danger:** 100

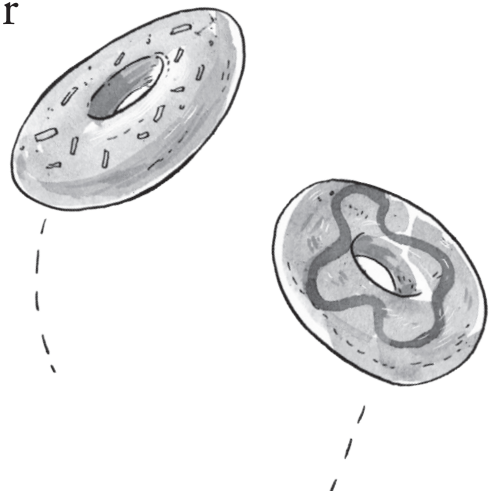
**Type:** Rare (mainly due to unusual intelligence for a cyclops)

‘Brilliant,’ said Grace sarcastically. ‘If you were a Top Trump, Mr Harris, I’d be playing your danger skills.’

She read further down the page. What she really wanted to know was where to find the revolting creature. Next to the word ‘Location’ on the screen was an egg timer. The Monster Scanner was having to work hard to find Mr Harris’s whereabouts.

‘Come on,’ whispered Grace. It never usually took more than three or four seconds.

Just as she was about



to go and get a cup of tea, the Monster Scanner beeped loudly and the egg timer disappeared.

Location: Houses of Parliament, London

‘That can’t be good . . .’ Grace’s breath caught in her throat as she pressed the ‘print’ button. She had to go and find Mr Harris!