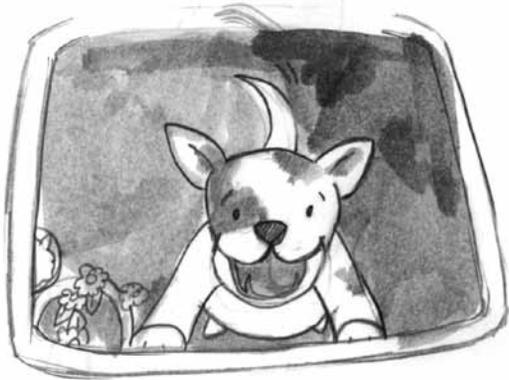


## Chapter One

# Pop's Water Truck



I wake with a fright to the sound of Patches barking madly outside my window. I pull the curtains back, open the window and look outside. Sure enough, Patches is right under my window looking up at me. I smile down at him and say, 'Okay, okay. I will take you for a walk.' He wags his tail at me as if to say, 'Hurry up Annie. I have been waiting forever.'

I live with my parents in a caravan in a place called Useless Loop and I just love it. My grandparents and their youngest children — my aunt and uncles — live next to us on the bottom terrace. It may seem a bit strange to some people but my aunty and two of my uncles are only a couple of years older than me. I don't know how this has worked out, but I am really happy that it has because they are not only my relatives but they are great friends and fun to be around.

There are only about ten other kids in Useless Loop my age and we are all friends. During the holidays we do everything together. We go swimming at the beach. We go fishing off the

jetty and collecting shells. We do lots of things!

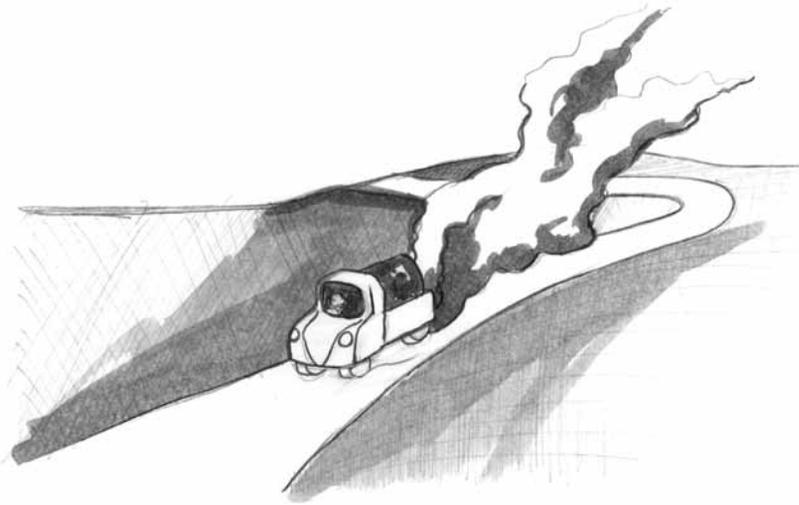
But today I have a plan. Today I am going to visit my granddad who is in charge of carting the water that we all use for drinking and cooking. It is a lovely warm sunny day and best of all it is school holidays, so I can do what I want.

'Come on boy, let's go see Pop.'

'Woof,' replies Patches.

We walk up the caravan park terraces, looking at everything that is going on. Seagulls swoop in searching for scraps of food. Lizards scurry here and there on lizard business. Patches tries to chase a few but they always get away by running under rocks.

In the distance I can see dust on the



road out of town. That means Pop is on his way back with a load of water. You can always tell when Pop is coming because of the cloud of dust pushed up by his truck.

We wait as Pop pulls in and swings the big hose over the top of the tank.

'Hello there little one, how are you today?' asks Pop.

'Good, Pop. We brought you an apple.'

'I am always pleased to see you Bub, but I am especially pleased to see you when you have brought a snack for me.'

Pop releases a lever that pumps the water from the truck into the big water tank. As the water is pumping we sit and eat our apples.

'I'm thinking of going to the beach today, Pop,' I say.



Pop looks at the sky and then at the sea and says, 'I don't think you should. The sea looks a bit rough and the wind is getting up. Besides, your mum and dad will need your help to prepare.'

'Prepare for what?' I ask.

'The cyclone,' Pop replies. 'A cyclone is coming.'

## Chapter Two

# Preparing for the Cyclone

Well, Pop was right! Yesterday afternoon the wind started blowing and has not stopped blowing since. I have never been in a cyclone before. In fact, I'm not even sure what a cyclone really is.

'A cyclone is like a very big storm,' Dad explains. 'There is plenty of rain



and the wind can blow hundreds of kilometres per hour and do lots and lots of damage.'

'Oh, that sounds scary, Dad!' I say.

Dad smiles. 'It can be a bit scary, but we need to think of it as an adventure and be prepared. For a start, I will go and pick up the scraper.'

'Why?' I ask.

'Because I am going to tie the caravan to it. The cyclone that's coming is pretty big — big enough to overturn a caravan. I need to tie it to something so heavy it can't move. I guarantee the caravan won't blow away if it is tied to the scraper.'

'That's for sure, Dad!'

'Come on Annie, you can help me pick up any loose things like toys, brooms and bikes,' Mum says. 'We need to put everything away so the wind doesn't blow it into our caravan or anyone else's. After that, we need to tape up the windows.'

'Why?' I ask.

'The glass may break in the cyclone,' explains Mum. 'It depends



on how strong the winds are, but it's safer if we tape them. That way even if they do get broken they won't shatter into small pieces. The tape will hold them together. We need to leave the windows open a bit too, so that the pressure inside the caravan will be same as it is outside.'

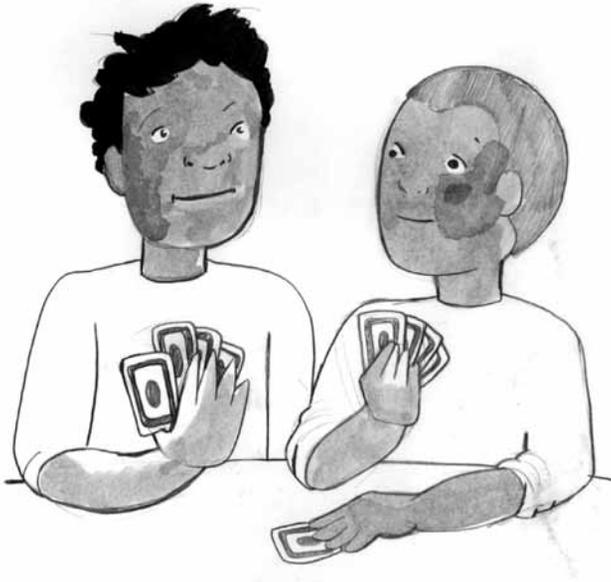
Wow, this is an adventure — scary but exciting!

While Dad is gone I walk over to Nan's caravan to see if they are preparing for the cyclone as well. As I step through the door I can hear Nan in the kitchen of the caravan, and I see my aunty – Joyce - and two uncles – Neville and Malcolm – playing cards at the table in the annexe.

Nan pops her head out of the caravan and calls, 'Hey sweetie, have you come for a visit'?

'I'm waiting for Dad to come back with the Scraper and thought I would come and see what you were doing' I reply.

'Well,' Nan says, 'I was just trying to get those lazy bones,' she gestures to my aunt and uncles, 'to start cleaning up around here.'



I look over to where Joyce, Neville and Malcolm are playing cards and say, 'Come on then, I will help you until Dad gets back.'

As we are finishing the cleaning around Nan's caravan, I hear Dad call out, 'Do you want to help me tie down the caravan, Annie? All you have to

do is catch the rope when I throw it to you.' I race back home to help.

In the end I have to catch three ropes. Each of the ropes is tied to a plastic covered chain that Dad drags across the caravan and then ties securely to the scraper. There is no way our caravan is going to blow away!