

# Miss von der Stropp's Fizz Bang Sweet Shop



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# MISS VON DER STROPP'S FIZZ BANG SWEET SHOP



Written by: Andrew Corcoran

For my Joey

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## Chapter 1 – FUMIGATE MY WENDRILLS!

Emilie von der Stropp owned the most fantastic sweet shop on Hyperbole Street. It wasn't any old sweet shop. There you could buy many strange and wonderful sweets made from strange and exotic ingredients; Double Trouble Gum, Madagascan Twirley Whirlies, Huffy Puffin Toffee, The Gob Hopper, The Wimple Tickler, Sludge Fudge and the wondrous Fizz Bang. The Fizz Bang is a sweet so amazing that it would make your knee caps jump, straighten your hair (or curl it if you had straight hair) and make your teeth gently hum with satisfaction. This was known as the Fizz Bang Tang and could last all day if you got a really good one.

'Good morning, dearie!' Mrs Sprockittt greeted Miss von der Stropp.

Emilie nodded and smiled as she finished unlocking the front door to the Fizz Bang Sweet Shop. Carefully, she slipped her key into her back pack and rested it on her lap as she wheeled Gordon up the ramp into her shop. Gordon was the name that Emilie had given to the wheelchair she'd had for the last three years. The name was suggested by her niece, Credenza, not long after Emilie's accident when Credenza was nine years old. Credenza would race around her aunt's back yard in the wheelchair, screaming, 'Go,

Gordon, Go!' at the top of her voice, racing her school friends on their bicycles.

Credenza normally came to stay with Emilie for a week or two during the summer holidays but this time it was going to be a much longer stay and Credenza had moved to Growhope Middle School and become the new kid all over again.

Since opening her sweet shop five years ago, Miss von der Stropp still had a struggling little business. Her shop was bright and colourful with a wooden counter with glass jars full of sweets on the wall behind where children could see the sweets and colours they wanted, and make their choice. Mrs Sprockittt was always there to help and offer advice. The shop only had a few small wooden tables and rickety old chairs for customers to sit on and was always busy at lunch time and just after school but was very quiet the rest of the time, especially during the school holidays and when the children were in class.

'Now, dearie, I'll put the kettle on and we can have a nice cup of tea ready for when we open up,' said Mrs Sprockittt.

'Thank you. That would be lovely. When we've opened the shop I'm ready for some groating and splunting. I had a wonderful idea when I was eating my breakfast this morning.'

Local children loved the Fizz Bang Sweet Shop and visited nearly every day after school. Some even came to help Miss von der Stropp on a Saturday morning for what she called groating and splunting (because of the strange noises made by the steam-driven, sweet making machinery) – her mysterious process for making a new batch of sweets. This was a closely guarded secret, known only to Miss von der Stropp.

‘Something is missing from my recipe for The Wimple Tickler,’ said Emilie.

‘What do you think that could be?’ asked Mrs Sprockitt.

‘I don’t know but I’m pretty sure it needs to taste a little more . . . yellow!’

‘Yellow?’

Emilie was inspired when she created new sweets. However, she was a little unorthodox and experimented with all sorts of different combinations before she hit just the right taste. She was also one of those people who thought in colours because she said it’s better for people to feel to help them to understand, not just read or hear someone describe something like a bicycle, a song or a tractor.

‘Yes, with the slightest hint of orange.’ Emilie glided off into her kitchen with a furrowed brow and pursed lips, clearly very deep in thought.

Mrs Sprockitt started to get the shop ready for the first customers of the day. Even though there was a slight chill in the air this damp September morning, she wedged open the door to let in the fresh air. Carefully, she took the trays of sweets from the big refrigerator in the back of the shop and began to lay them out on the counter. Customers could see the sweets through the big front window of the Fizz Bang Sweet Shop and would also catch the aroma of Emilie's groating and splunting that would create wonderful new sweets for their delight. Children would come to the shop to buy their old favourites and explore the new sweets that Emilie proudly created from the organic ingredients she brought from local shops and at the weekly Farmer's Market in Artherton.

'Morning, Mrs Sprockitt. A Grumble of Huffy Puffin Toffee and a Nibble of Sludge Fudge please,' said Wainwright Walsh.

'Yes and a Nibble of Fizz Bangs for me please,' chimed in Saadia Safal.

Mrs Sprockitt served the customers with whatever sweets they wanted, in three portion sizes: Just a Nibble (a taster for the curious), Got a Grumble (something more to stop those tummy growls we all get in between meals), and the Oh My! (for only the greediest of children).

'When's Credenza getting here? Isn't she a bit late?'

asked Wainwright.

'Soon,' shouted Miss von der Stropp from the kitchen. 'She likes a little longer in bed at the weekend. Anyway, since you're here, try this.' She thrust a small piece of grease-proof paper into his hand. 'Go on, it won't bite you!'

'I know, but it looks so peculiar,' said Wainwright nervously. Miss von der Stropp often asked Wainwright to test her new sweets and flavours and, in the past, Wainwright had experienced some strange side effects when testing Miss von der Stropp's experimental sweets.

'It won't turn my tongue green for a week again, will it?'

'No, perfectly safe. Tell me how it tastes,' said Miss von der Stropp.

Wainwright sniffed the sweet that looked like a small blue pineapple, and turned it around to look at it from all angles.

'Come on, Wainwright. Don't take all day. Try the sweet and we can go down to the Sports Club,' said Saadia.

'It twitched!' shouted Wainwright.

'It's just settling. Fresh out of the oven, you know,' Miss von der Stropp replied.

They all watched excitedly as Wainwright bit into the strange little blue pineapple. As he chewed, his eyes grew wide and he started to smile and relax as the sweet gently

dissolved on his tongue. Then his left eye began to twitch, like he was winking at someone across the street.



‘What are you lot up to?’ said Credenza as she crept up behind Saadia.

‘Wainwright is testing your aunt’s latest concoction,’ replied Saadia.

‘How’s it going? He hasn’t started giggling uncontrollably yet I see.’

‘FUMIGATE MY WENDRILLS!’ squealed Wainwright after a while. ‘It’s like a big orange dolphin has just slapped my tongue with its tail.’

‘Is that good or bad, dearie?’ asked Mrs Sprockitt.

‘Maybe I need to add more turmeric. I was going for yellow. Didn’t you taste the yellow?’ pressed Miss von der Stropp.

'No, it was orange all right. Got any toast?' asked Wainwright.

White toast, lightly buttered, with a cup of Mrs Sprockitt's dandelion tea was just what Wainwright needed to relax his tongue and taste buds after testing a new sweet for Miss von der Stropp.

'So where have you two been?' Credenza asked Saadia and Wainwright. 'I've been looking for you everywhere since I moved back into Aunt Emilie's last week.'

'We've had a lot to do with my mum and dad going back to visit relatives in Bangladesh last week. Iqbal, you know him, my eldest brother who lives over in Artherton, is staying at our place while mum and dad are away. How's your mum?'

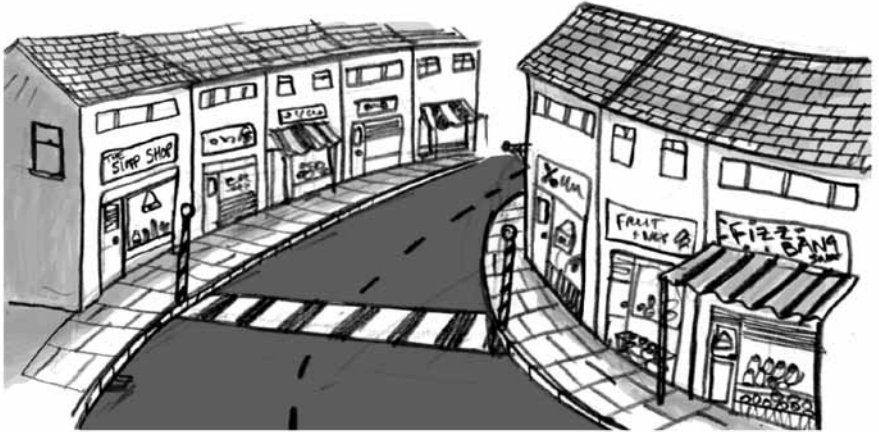
'She's not so good. She's back in hospital and we haven't heard from dad for years so I'm staying with Aunt Emilie for a few months while mum gets better at Uncle Rupert and Aunt Janie's place by the seaside.'

'It's great to have you back,' said Wainwright, now fully restored after toast and tea.

'Yeah, Wainwright really needs help with his maths and you're the only one he'll listen to!' joked Saadia.

'Hey, I can listen!' protested Wainwright. 'Credenza just explains it so that I can understand. Anyway, how would you get on if I didn't help you with computers?'

'He's right,' agreed Saadia. 'Last week, somehow my computer starting telling me everything in Russian! I didn't know what to do but Wainwright fixed it.'



Miss von der Stropp returned from the kitchen at the sound of Credenza's voice. 'Lovely to see you up and about at last, lazy bones.'

'Sorry, auntie. I was really, really tired.'

'I'm sure staying up all hours playing computer games didn't help.'

'Look, I've said I'm sorry about that but I had to finish that game. You're the same when you have a good book to read!' replied Credenza.

'All right now,' said Mrs Sprockittt calming the situation. 'Who would like more dandelion tea before we all get on with some groating and splunting?'

Realising she'd forgotten to tell her aunt, Credenza spluttered: 'Saadia, Wainwright and I are all going to the Sports Club for cross country practice today. Mr Ratchitt said we must do all of our training if we're not going to make fools of ourselves at the Regional Schools Championship this year.'

'But you promised to help out in the shop today,' said Emilie.

'We can manage, dearie. Let Credenza go and have some fun with her friends.'

'But how are we going to cope with that big order for Peppercorn's Department Store?'

'We can come back and help after practice,' offered Saadia but Credenza and Wainwright were out of the door and rushing to the Sports Club.

'Thank you for offering, Saadia, but it's not your responsibility,' replied Emilie. 'Go and have fun with your friends.'

Just then a group of boys on their way to football practice came into the shop and were greeted in a flurry of frilly apron and waving arms by Mrs Sprockitt who hadn't quite finished putting all of the sweets in the display case. The Double Trouble Gum, Gob Hoppers, and Fizz Bangs sold so quickly that Miss von der Stropp had to hurry back into the kitchen to make some more before the lunch time crowd

came in at around midday.

After the rush, Mrs Sprockittt sat down with Emilie for a relaxing drink and a chat.

‘Don’t be too hard on, Credenza, dearie. She needs to settle in and make some friends if she’s going to fit in and be happy at school.’

‘I know,’ replied Emilie. ‘It’s just been so hard lately with the shop not doing so well, and I’m worried about Credenza’s mum too. After all, Antoinette might be Credenza’s mum but she’s also my big sister.’

‘Everything will be all right,’ Mrs Sprockittt assured Emilie. ‘She’ll be right as rain in a few months time.’

Emilie was worried because she’d heard stories of how Credenza had been bullied at Littlehope Junior School. Credenza was very good at her studies but wasn’t very confident with making friends. The other children in Credenza’s old class had teased her about the colour of her skin. Credenza didn’t understand this and it made her feel different for all the wrong reasons. She felt that she didn’t fit in anywhere at school so put extra effort into her school work.

Walking down Hyperbole Street on the way to the Sports Club, Credenza, Saadia, Wainwright and Rufus Chen chatted away about school, grown ups and computer games.

‘Why isn’t there a shop selling computer games in

Growhope?' wondered Wainwright. 'There must be loads of kids around here wanting new games.'

'No time for that now,' said Saadia. 'Come on, you two, I'll race you to the Sports Club!'

'You're on!' said Credenza, Rufus and Wainwright as they took off in hot pursuit.