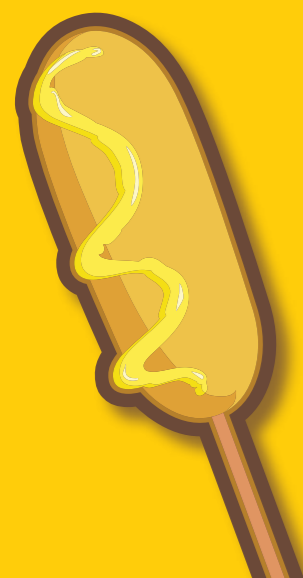




**JOHN BLADEK** has devoted most of his life to pondering the eternal question, "What stinks?" However, constantly holding his nose prevented him from growing up. Despite the nose-pinching he managed to earn a PhD in History so he could put Dr. in front of his name and pretend to be an adult. But he discovered that writing about wicked smells and evil fast food was much more fun.



*Corndogs!  
Sewage!  
Strange Dolls!  
Weird Smells!*

**T**hese perils and more await our hero, **Jake Machet**, as he confronts the evil corndog brainwasher, **J.P. Rumblegut**, and his insidious plot to ruin lunch forever.

**Will he be able to expose Rumblegut and save the town?  
Or will evil – and bad lunch meat – prevail?**



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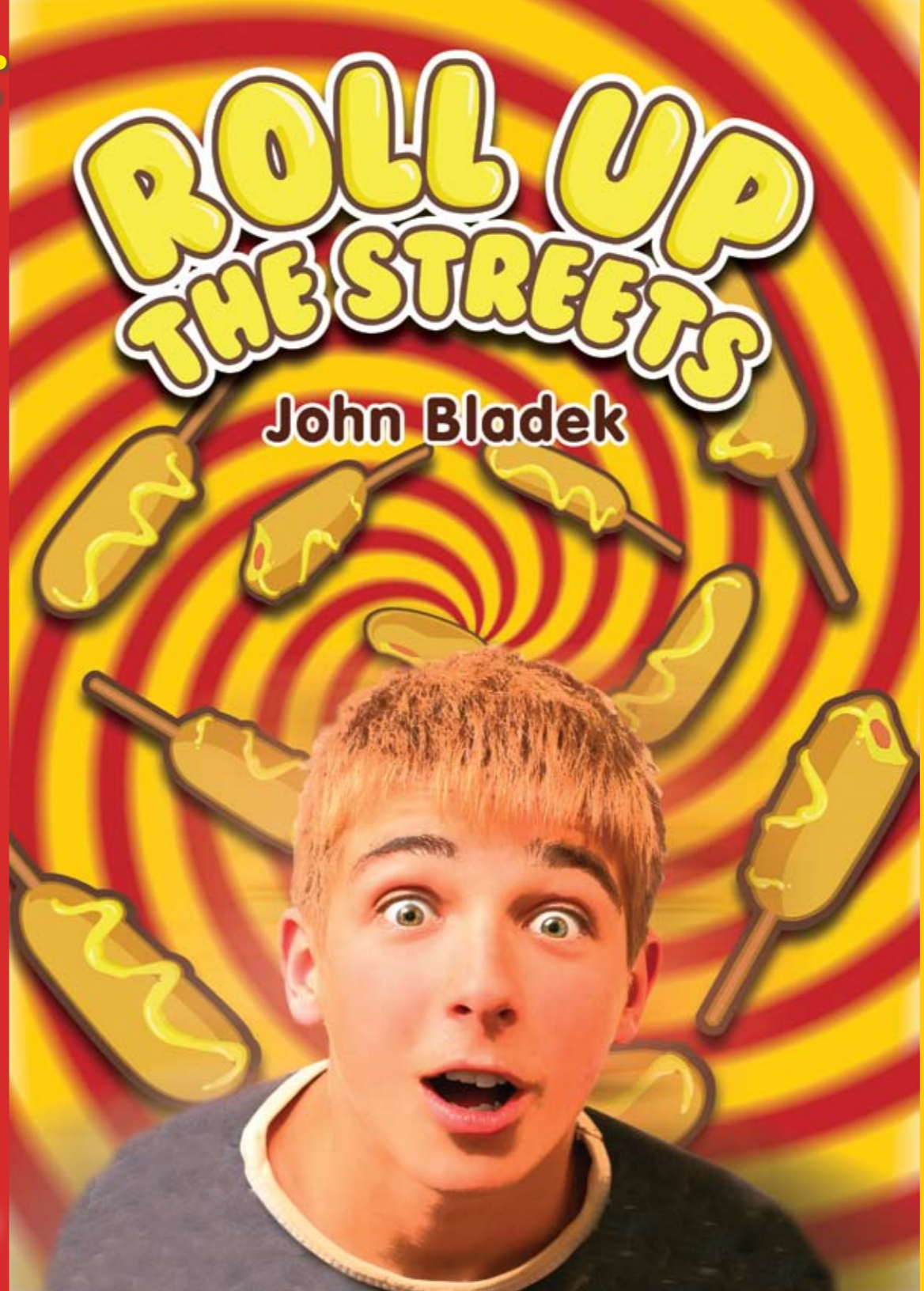


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**ROLL UP THE STREETS** John Bladek

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# ROLL UP THE STREETS

**John Bladek**

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# ROLL UP THE STREETS

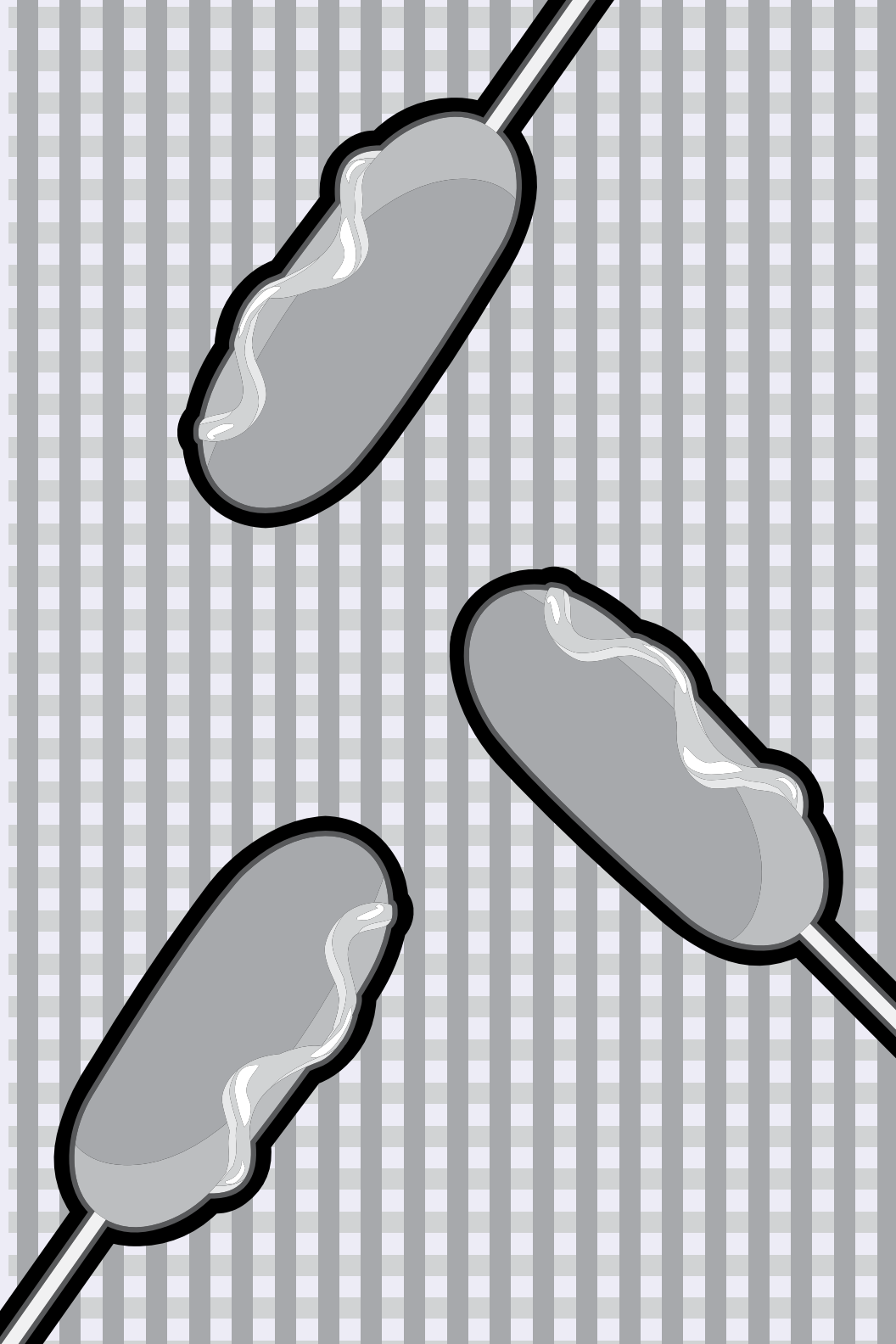
**By John Bladek**

**J**ake Machet, boy complainer, has moved to a lousy little town filled with creeps and an ever-present stink that no one else notices. Plagued by his burning nose and joined by his new friend Sammie, a girl in his class and a veteran of the pig-poop protest movement who can smell the stink too, Jake probes the smelly underbelly of his new home, following the trail of stench straight to the factory of J.P. Rumblegut, corndog and doll maker extraordinaire. Sneaking inside his nemesis' labyrinth Jake uncovers a hideous conspiracy involving sticky streets, sewage, doped-up corndogs, Space Planet Janet dolls, and a mysterious portrait of a beauty queen that won't stop frowning at him. Eventually Jake and Sammie discover the secret behind the brainwashing meat-sticks...a plot to zombify the entire country! Can they stop the conquering stink before it overpowers their noses and their brains, or will Jake and Sammie suffer a fate worse than hot lunch?



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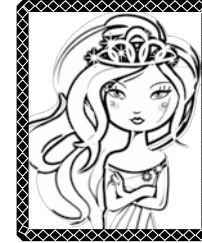




# ROLL UP THE STREETS

By John Bladek

**Kane Miller**  
A DIVISION OF EDC PUBLISHING



To Mom.  
You taught me that making people  
laugh is as good as it gets.  
I wish you were here to see this.  
I know that you would laugh.

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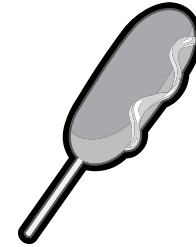
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## Chapter 1

# RIGHT NOW



**P**sst. Psst. Can you hear me? I have to whisper so I don't get caught.

Are you listening?

Okay, now I've got a question for you.

Do you smell anything?

Are you sure? Because where I am it really stinks.

I mean really *stinks!* It smells baaaaaad!

Bad like "pull my finger" bad.

Bad like standing in an elevator and humming while avoiding eye contact bad.

Bad like when you leave a bucket outside for a year, and it rains in it all the time, and it gets all scummy and green and

slimy and sick and gross, and then your mom makes you get out of bed on Saturday morning and empty it out, and you can't resist giving it a big, long sniff from real close up. *That kind of bad.*

What do you mean you don't smell it? Try again!

Are you sure? Because this little town I live in stinks!

And that's just the beginning. It gets worse. Weird things happen here. Things disappear, people disappear. And at night? They roll up the streets.

I know, they say that about every small town.

Well, in this town they really do roll up the streets at night. And that's why it stinks.

And that's why I'm hiding in a broom closet right now, trying to get away from the people who make the stink and roll up the streets, but don't want anybody to know that they do it. That's why I'm on the run from J.P. Rumblegut, the richest man in town, who happens to hate me, and not just because I asked him to pull my finger in an elevator after I'd punched the button for every floor.<sup>1</sup>

Did you hear that? It kind of sounded like knuckles dragging on the floor. Somebody's outside the closet door. I'd better talk more quietly.

I know what you're thinking. Who is this person hiding

---

<sup>1</sup> Okay, this town is so small it only has one elevator, and *it* only has one button (I did push it more than once though), and it goes to the basement really, really slowly. I think the elevator cable is attached to a wheel in a hamster cage.

in a closet in between the mop and the slop-filled bucket, and why is he telling me all these things?

My name is Jake. Jake Machet, and I'm telling you this because my teacher, Ms. Frampton – who doesn't stink – told me I need to get my feelings out so other people know how I feel.<sup>2</sup>

I'll write it down later, because there needs to be a record of the horrible events that led up to this moment so that future generations can learn from our mistakes and make the world a better place.<sup>3</sup>

So anyway, this is the story of how I got into this closet and why J.P. Rumblegut hates me.

And no, he doesn't hate me because of the finger-pulling thing!

There's also other stuff in this story about me.

No, not like a diary!

It's an epic journey. An odyssey, as Ms. Frampton calls it. She encourages us to think of our lives as parts of stories great enough to be told over and over again for thousands of years.

Oh, there is one thing you can do for me that will contribute to this story. Figure out how to get me out of this closet and away from J.P. Rumblegut and his goons, and TELL ME!

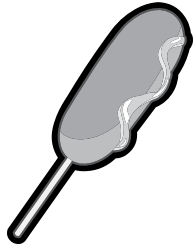
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<sup>2</sup> I know I kinda used the word "feel" twice in one sentence, but I'm in a closet, and it's dark in here. Put the grammar book down and pay attention.

<sup>3</sup> I read that in a history book that Ms. Frampton gave me. It makes this sound important, doesn't it? It's also a homework assignment.

## Chapter 2

# EARLIER THAN NOW



**I** bet you're wondering how I got into this closet. About six months ago, my mom and dad decided to leave the big city we lived in and move to a small town that stinks.

"But Mom," I complained, "all my friends are here, and my baseball team is going to win this year, and I might even get to play once in a while when we're way ahead and they let the benchwarmers in."

"I know, honey," she said. "But there's too much crime, and the streets aren't safe, and the schools are terrible, and it's too expensive, and both your dad and I got better jobs, and your baseball field is just a parking lot with broken glass, and your sister..."

You get the picture. A list of lame excuses for ruining my life. I've never been robbed. The schools can't be *that* bad. I mean, I got good grades. And maybe the streets weren't that safe, but at least they didn't roll them up at night.<sup>1</sup>

Actually, I didn't live in that big a city anyway. Not New York or Chicago or Tokyo big. Just sort of bigger than some, and definitely bigger than this place.

I remember the first time I saw this town. I was looking out the back windows of our car, and I hadn't seen anything for hours except open fields and a few trees. I guess I'd seen my little sister, Haggly Maggie too, but I was trying not to look. She's not that bad. For a sister. I guess. If you like that sort of thing.

Then my nose started twitching. Kind of the way my cat Screwball's nose twitches when I wave a treat in front of him, only he twitches his nose because the treat smells good. That's not why I twitched my nose.

"Eeeeewww! What stinks?" I asked.

"You do," Gaggly Maggie giggled, holding her nose.

Very original.

"I don't smell anything," my dad said, taking a deep breath. "It must be the fresh air. You're just not used to it."

Not used to fresh air? Yeah, right. Back when Gag Me Maggie was really little and wearing diapers, I wasn't used to fresh air. But she's improved her smell enough for me to notice a difference.

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<sup>1</sup> See how I used that to get back to the main story? Clever, right?

I know stink when I smell it.

“Seriously,” I said, “something died right under my nose.”

“You did,” said Originality Maggie, really getting into her role. She’ll get hers.

“I still don’t smell it,” Dad said.

“It could be the industrial plant,” Mom suggested. “But it didn’t smell bad when we interviewed there with that nice Mr. Rumblegut.”

Both my mom and dad got new jobs working at Rumblegut Industries. Dad’s a manager, and Mom’s going to run the factory health clinic. Great for them, if they can stand the smell and don’t care about friends or baseball or...

Anyway.

We drove by a huge building that made me think the town might be big too. But that was it, one giant building and then a bunch of tiny little houses made from matchboxes.

How can they live in those things? The people in this town must be as small as the town is stinky.

Really small.

I started to think about how I was going to rule over a school filled with tiny people. They’d all be under my command – or my foot. I’d be the ruler, the king, and all would tremble before me and my giant size. No six-inch kid is going to pick on me. I’ll be in charge here.

“You’re holding them backwards,” Maggie shrieked, grabbing for her toy binoculars.

I dropped the eyepieces, and everything went back to

normal size. So much for my dreams.

Dad turned off the highway and headed for the huge building.

“Why are we going there?” I asked. “I have to pee.”

“That nice Mr. Rumblegut helped us find a place to live and even offered to get us some new furniture. We have to go there to arrange to have it delivered to the house,” Mom said.

“Do I have to go?”

“You just said you had to pee,” Dad said, snorting. He thinks he’s funny. His laugh sounds like an elephant with a cold.

Naggy Maggie bounced on the seat. “Jakey has to *go-ob*. Jakey has to *go-ob*. Jakey’s gonna pee his pants!”

I was tired of telling her to shut up, so I snatched her doll, Space Planet Janet, by its long blond hair and hung it out the window. I dangled it as close to the road as I could without losing an arm. Janet banged against the car door and rattled in the breeze – cheap things always rattle.

“Mooooommm! Jake’s throwing Janet out the windooooow!”

“Stop teasing your sister,” Mom told me, turning around and pointing like she thought I might be confused about who she was talking to. “One day you’ll be glad she’s your friend. Now don’t act like this in front of Mr. Rumblegut. He was nice enough to give Maggie that doll as a welcome present.”

Anyhoo, as Ms. Frampton likes to say, we pulled into the parking lot and went inside to see this nice Mr. Rumblegut. He looked like a nice enough guy, but he wasn’t plated in gold, or covered with jewels, like I sort of expected the richest

man in town to be. Okay, maybe not covered in jewels, but what about a great big diamond for a nose?

Nice enough, but as Ms. Frampton taught me, you can smile and still be a villain.

“Come on in, folks,” J.P. Rumblegut said, in a weird, squeaky voice. I looked down at Maggie, thinking she’d said something. I’d never heard the Michelin Man talk before. His lips barely moved, so for a second I thought he was talking out of his flabby neck.

“If I haven’t said this already, we are so pleased to have you here, working and living in our fine town,” he squeaked.

We wandered into his huge office, which didn’t stink quite as much as the rest of the town. He probably had a stench filter. The place looked like a throne room, with purple and gold palace doors and a blue carpet laced with gold. Rumblegut sat in a giant antique chair studded with jewels. It seemed to float a couple of feet off the floor. I expected to see the queen sitting next to him having a cup of tea, but it was just him, all by himself. The queen was behind him. On the wall over his head hung a portrait of a tall woman with golden blond hair, dressed like a fairy, all blue and silky with a shiny gold tiara squatting on her head. Covered with diamonds and all sorts of other jewels, she stared down at me like I’d done something wrong and she knew it.<sup>2</sup> Something about her looked familiar, but I couldn’t think of where I’d seen

---

<sup>2</sup> I get that feeling a lot.

her before. Probably some rich movie star that Rumblegut idolized, or maybe it *was* the queen.

Maggie gasped. She loves fairies.

Rumblegut grunted and wobbled down from his throne. A hound dog sitting at his feet, drooling and chewing on a little stick, whined, snorted, and scratched itself as a greeting.<sup>3</sup> Its tongue looked yellow. Did Rumblegut feed his dog gold? I gave him a pat on the head, and he wagged his tail and licked my hand. That’s going to leave a stain.

“Thank you so much, Mr. Rumblegut,” Mom said, almost bowing. Maybe she thought the portrait was the queen too.

“Yes,” Dad echoed. “We’re very happy to be here.”

Speak for yourself.

“Please, call me J.P. And these must be your lovely children.” Squeak, squeak.

He patted me on the head like I was his dog. So I wagged my tail. “What’s your name, young man?” Rumblegut asked, sticking a greasy<sup>4</sup> hand out and staring at me like a late lunch.

“Jake,” I said. I’m not nearly as sarcastic in real life as I am when I’m hiding in a broom closet. In a stinky town. While being chased by an evil man who rolls the streets up at night.

“Jake, my boy, how’d you like a piece of candy?” he asked, reaching for a big bag of gooey sugar.

Candy? He must think I’m six years old! Of course I

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<sup>3</sup> I get that a lot too.

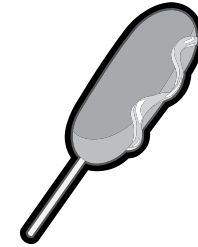
<sup>4</sup> I hope that grease didn’t come from *my hair*.

wanted candy. I just didn't want to look like I wanted it.

"Candy!" Greedy Maggie cried. She held out her hand and even said thank you.

That was when I realized that J.P. Rumblegut was evil. He didn't give me any candy.

## Chapter 3 NOW AGAIN



**I**f you're texting me a way to get out of the closet, save your thumbs.

One of Rumblegut's gorillas stomped on my cell phone and smashed it into a million pieces. It had all my pictures of the streets rolling up on it.<sup>1</sup>

Uh oh. Don't move. I see shadows through the crack under the door. Can shadows be hairy?

This holding still, smashed into the corner of a little closet, is getting old. I feel like I teased somebody, told on myself and then made myself stand in the corner.

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<sup>1</sup> It was actually my mom's phone.