

Service Station Investigation

By Paper Pals



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Dedication

We would like to thank the staff at St. Mary's, our parents, friends, and the school community for their support. We would also like to thank the school community for their donations and the funds raised for the Kids' Cancer Project.

We hope that this book makes you laugh and smile. We had a lot of fun writing it and hope you have just as much fun reading it. Get well soon!

Parameters

Primary Characters 1: Journalist

Primary Character 2: Robot builder

Non-Human Character: Chameleon

Setting: Service Station

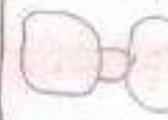
Issue: Family Reunion

5 Random Words in the book: hums, danger, cracked, delicious, nonsense

Word Count: 2433

PottShill Service Station

Cold drinks



Toilet

Welcome

hot food



Chapter 1

The sun shone down on the Potts Hill Service Station. The gum trees flapped in the breeze and the surrounding cattle grazed on the dry grass. It was a quiet day, no one ever really came through or cared about old Potts Hill, but Arnold did. He loved it. Arnold gazed out at Potts Hill, many houses and the Primary School sat at the bottom of the once-volcanic hill. Arnold breathed in the familiar smell of petrol. His family had owned it for many generations, about 150 years, but it wasn't a service station then. It was a farmers' market, for all the travellers. It was in the middle of a paddock, with a truck parking area and some bowsers out the front.



'KABOOM!' Tongues of fire shot up from the roof of the Potts Hill Service Station. Metal edges of the roof flew off in all directions. Plumes of smoke emerged from the windows. Arnold sped away from the service station to safety and called 000.

Finally after five minutes a fire crew, SES and ambulance came to the emergency.

The fire crew controlled the fumes and cleaned up the place. Arnold couldn't think how the explosion started. Perhaps a chemical spill from his robot-building workshop.

"Oh, uh, I uh, live here." Arnold stammered. "My house & robot workshop is in the basement under the service station."

"No worries mate, we can get you in a motel for the night if you'd like," said the fireman. Arnold fumbled around in his pocket, looking for his mobile phone. A piece of folded paper fell out. 'Argh!' It was the invitation for the Armstrong family reunion. Arnold scrunched it up and shoved it back in his pocket.

Chapter 2

Arnold stared at the perfectly made bed inside the room at the old motel down the road. Arnold gazed out of the rusty old window into the open space and wondered what would become of the burnt down service station. Arnold was devastated as he thought of his beloved service station blasting into hundreds of pieces. It was his pride and joy to be able to run the family service station.

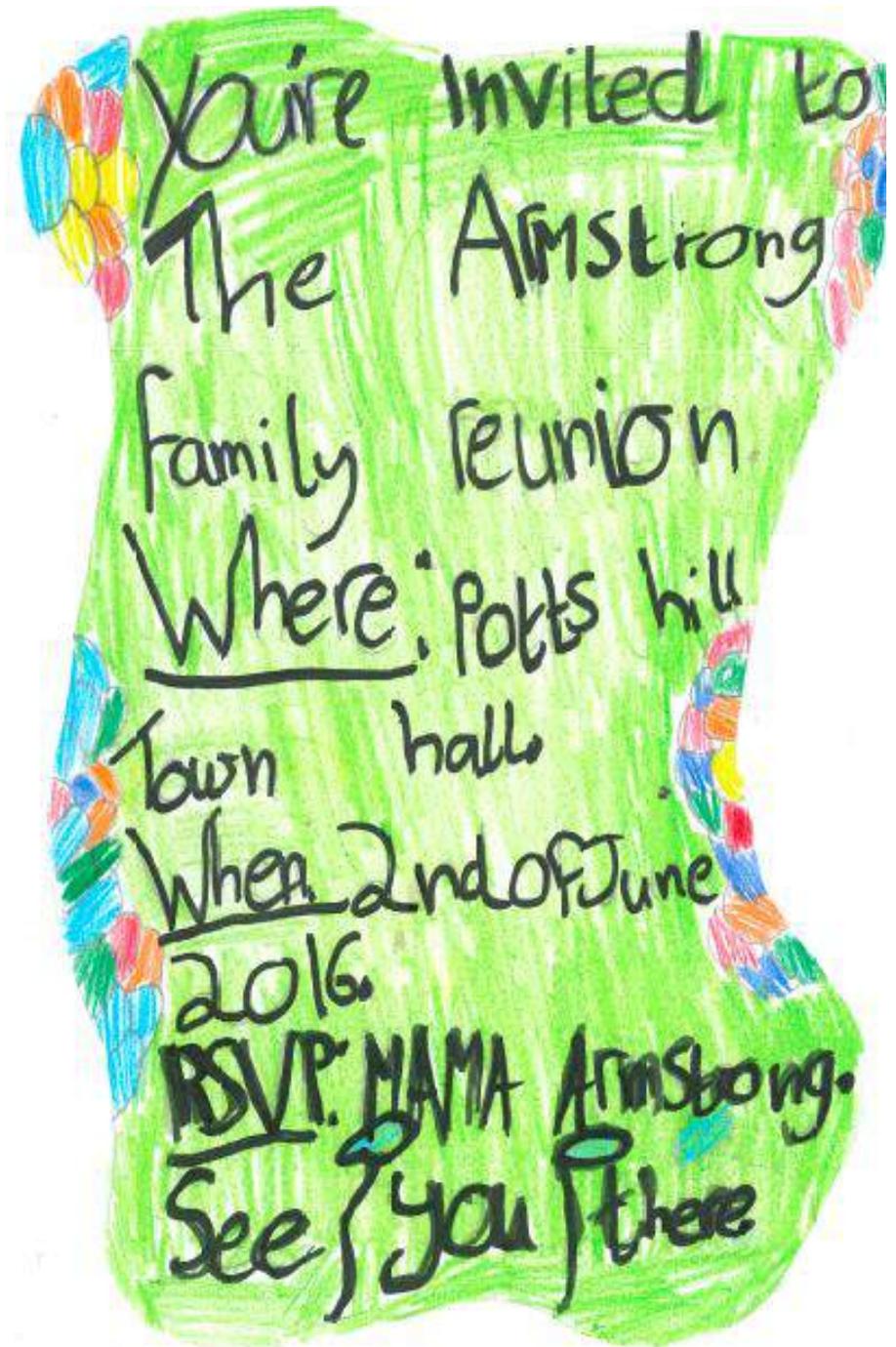


Arnold was a laid back kind of guy who had a relaxed and simple life. His passion was building robots, his family always said he was a robot fanatic but ever since the ‘eyebrow incident’, he had worried that his family didn’t think he was responsible enough to run the family business, and make robots at the same time.



Arnold worried his family would blame him for this incident too. He thought his family blamed him for the ‘eyebrow incident’ and always felt guilty about it. Arnold reached into his pocket to get a tissue and a scrunched up piece of paper fell onto the bed. Arnold picked it up and sighed in despair, it was the family reunion invite.

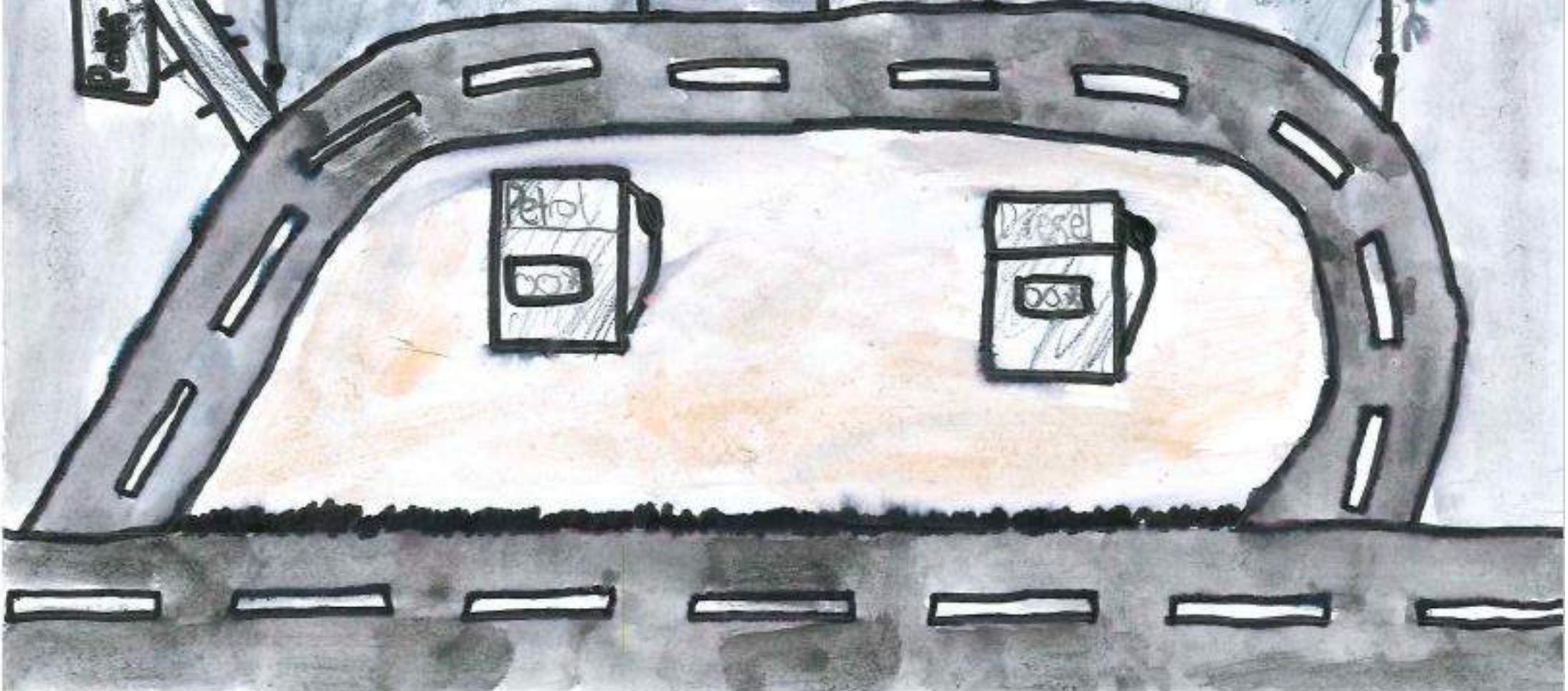
Arnold felt guilty that he had ignored the letter, but it just brought back so many memories, the good and the bad. Like the time he got into a fight with his brother Ben, who ripped his teddy on purpose; or when his sister Molly whacked him on the head with a cricket bat and even that time dad left him home when the rest of the family went on holidays. Even though he had bad memories, there were the good times too. The time he won best robot at the Potts Hill community fair and his family were there cheering him on. The time he and his twin sister stayed up all night building robots together; the times the family shared parties and talks. Arnold realised that he must go to the family reunion and prove to his family that he had nothing to do with the explosion. It's not going to be easy he thought, but he had to prove himself to his family. Arnold couldn't rest so he decided to head back to the service station to see if he could figure out how this explosion happened.



Potts Hill Service Station



Potts Hill Service Station



Chapter 3

The lounge room radio made a crackling sound. Sandy jumped and nearly spilt her Chai Latte all over her new white armchair. She grabbed it out from under the coffee table and turned up the volume.

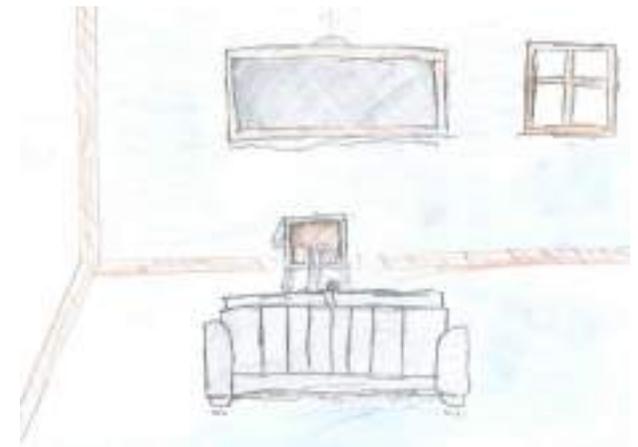
“Hello, what is your emergency?” said a voice from the radio.

“Uh, my service station in Potts Hill has just exploded, and all the surrounding cattle are in danger,” said another worried voice.

“You will have the local SES and CFA with you shortly,” replied the first voice.

As Sandy heard the story of the explosion at Potts Hill she turned to Leon her pet chameleon and said, “Well Leon, it looks like we have some reporting to do.” Sandy locked up her apartment and got in her grey Mini Cooper. It was going to be long trip, but it would be worth investigating.

Sandy whistled as she drove down the highway. She hoped this explosion would be a good story to investigate. Since childhood Sandy had always loved writing, investigating and journaling. She studied journalism at university and got her first job writing food reviews in the local paper. Sandy then moved up the ranks, getting a job as a scene investigative writer. She tucked a strand of her caramel-brown, bob behind her ear and straightened her a-line pencil skirt. Sandy took a left turn down Potts Hill Road. She saw a green sign that said ‘*POTTS HILL*’ and had a look around, eager to find the service station.





Chapter 4

'Screeech' went Sandy's car as she slammed on the brakes, pulling into the dusty scenery of the explosion. She got a massive whiff of disgusting smoke and gas, but yet a fantastic taste of a brilliant report that should surely get her on TV.

'Hmmm,' was the sound the chameleon Leon made as he blended into the background, Leon was perched on Sandy's shoulder as she walked closer towards the scene.

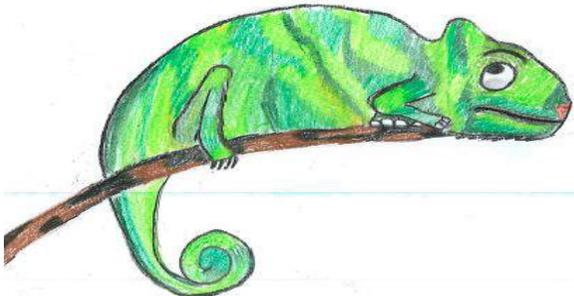
"This is fantastic," Sandy said excitedly. Arnold popped his head around the corner thinking "who would ever say something at such a horrific scene".

"Umm, I mean, what a fantastically bad thing has happened," said Sandy and she backtracked. 'CRUNCH' Arnold stepped on a burnt red hot piece of wood, stirring up black charcoal that swirled around in the wind.

"I have no idea what happened. Wh..... what are you doing?" Arnold asked with a confused face as Sandy stood there in silence with her finger racing around, tapping on the screen of her iPhone.



Sandy barged inside the burnt out building, kicking up charcoal with every step she took. She found a fire- proof door covered by a pile of ashes. "What does this door lead to?" Sandy wondered, thinking this could be her big break.



“Come on, I know I can’t help rebuild this but I can help find out who did it! Do you really think this was just an accident? If you let me check out your basement maybe we can find some clues and who was responsible for this! You want to know who did it, don’t you?”

“Well the door is jammed,” Arnold said. Sandy didn’t listen and she pushed with all her might against the door.

‘BANG!’ Sandy bumped the door and it fell down in a swift move. Both Sandy and Arnold rushed down the stairs that led into the basement.

As she reached the basement Sandy pulled out her Smartphone, “I am at the scene of the explosion at the local Potts Hill service station. I’m on my way down to where we believe the whole explosion happened, the reverberation from the explosion still hums in the air,” Sandy said in a swift calm voice.

“What are you doing!” said Arnold.

“Oh, I didn’t tell you? I’m a journalist.” Sandy replied as she flicked her hair.

“I’m working for a city paper and one day I’m hoping to become a news reader on TV! I’m just waiting for a big break! Who knows it could be this! Who blew up the service station! I can see it now, ‘The Service Station Investigation’!” Sandy looked off into the distance but remembered she was here to investigate. “So, what did you do to start this explosion?”

“**NONSENSE**, so you do think it was me!” Arnold said in a frustrated voice.

“Well, I’m not sure yet. I don’t have all my facts. As she said that, she ran over to the remains of the gas tanks.



“Hang on, this could've started it!” Sandy was busy looking at the gas tank, Arnold walked over to the boiler.

“I don’t remember using this?” he said, as he picked up the glue and looked at it closely-there was no lid!

‘Highly flammable’ the warning read.

“This doesn’t make sense, I don’t use glue on my robots. I don’t even know why I have this,” Arnold wondered.

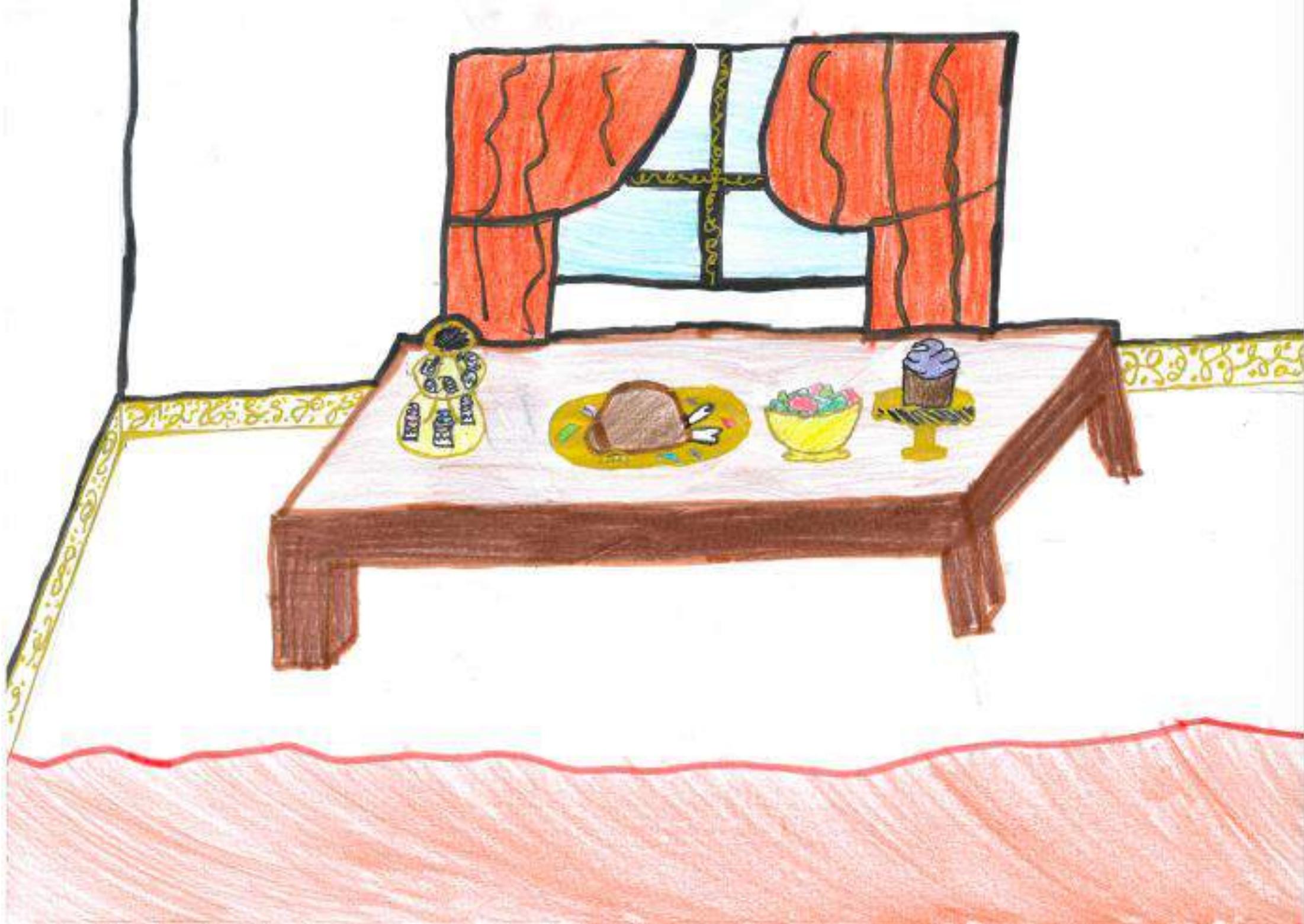
Sandy, sensing a story asked, “Who else has keys to the service station and this basement?”

“Well, I work here by myself but it is my family’s service station. So everyone in my family has a key.”

“That’s it! Someone in your family must have come here. Opened the glue. Fumes travelled up stairs. The gas tank sparked a fire! The service station blew up....but why? Why would they want to blow up the service station? If only we could interview all of your family!”

“Well tomorrow is my family reunion!” Arnold said.





Chapter 5

A rustic old table was standing in a beautiful hall in the town of Potts Hill. The table was piled with **delicious** cakes and roasts. Big, draping curtains covered some of the massive windows lining the elegant walls. Despite all the beauty of the Town Hall, Arnold stood at the entrance staring at the red carpet, dreading the family reunion, wanting it to be over even before it started. However, Sandy was waiting for the story to begin.

“I’ll be back Arnold, there’s a few things I need to check out.” Sandy said.

“Hello, I’m Sandy, one of Arnold’s friends. I’d just like to ask you a few questions. Is that alright with you?” Sandy asked.

“Umm... sure.” replied Alison, Arnold’s twin sister.

“Great let’s get started.” Sandy brought out her iPhone to video the conversation.

Meanwhile, Arnold’s grandpa noticed him standing at the entrance and immediately came over with a look rage on his face.





“How could you do this?” he scowled.

“ I..didn’t..” Arnold stuttered.

“How could you let this happen?” Arnold cut him off.

“I’ve taken care of the old service station for ages!” Arnold was getting angry, he stood on the table and yelled “I understand that you all think this is my fault, but I swear I didn’t do anything to cause the explosion.”

“Please, just trust me. Now can you...” he got interrupted.

“I did it” a voice said.

Heads turned in the direction of the doorway.

“Can you stop interrupting me? Wait. What? Who was that?” Arnold questioned.

“Me” gulped Alison. Alison stepped forward, her stomach churned with guilt.

The whole family gasped and their mum said. “Alison, don’t take the blame for your brother!

“NO! Mum I actually did it” Alison sighed.



Arnold just stood there blankly as many eyes glanced between the siblings.

“I’m sorry I didn’t take the blame for you earlier” sighed Alison.

“How did it happen?” Arnold asked curiously.

“Its was a big accident,” Alison informed “I was trying to stick some fake eyebrows on my face with some glue, the glue label said that it was highly flammable. I accidentally left the glue on the heater. Oh, I am so dumb!”

“No you’re not, you just made a mistake.” Arnold said calmly.

“Yeah, a big one.” Alison admitted.

“That doesn’t matter, we can always rebuild the service station.”

“STOP! screamed Sandy, I KNOW WHO CAUSED THE EXPLOSION!!!.” It was Alison.

“Sandy, Sandy, Sandy! Stop screaming, we already know.” said Arnold trying to calm Sand down.

“What?!? This could’ve been my big break!” Sandy whined.

“Well what about the service station?” Arnold shouted.

“I’ve got an idea that will help us all.” Alison announced excitedly.



Chapter 6

Sandy logged on to her Facebook page and viewed the video of her interview with Alison, which had just hit 150k hits. Alison had come up with a brilliant idea to tell the story of the Armstrong family saga to the world. The hope was to raise money for the rebuilding of the Potts Hill Service Station. Sandy's post read;

Help rebuild the Potts Hill Service Station!

Please view the link below to help build the Potts Hill Service Station. More details at www.sandy'sdailyscoop.com.au

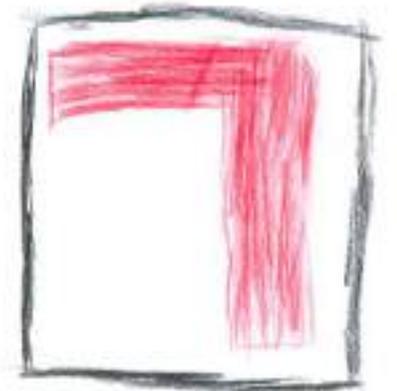
Every view on the video raised \$5.

The outpour from the online community sparked an interest in the Armstrong story. Channel 7 got in contact with Sandy after seeing her post. They knew she was a serious journalist and asked her to interview the Armstrong family, knowing she was connected to their story.

The interview took place in front of the ruined service station, the concrete was **cracked** and the burnt out ashes were still scattered throughout the air.

Sandy squinted as the bright lights shone in her eyes, ready for her big break.

“Sandy Scoop, reporting for Channel 7.” Sandy spoke with a clear and professional voice, “This is a Service Station Investigation...” Alison sobbed as she told the story live in front of the cameras. Sandy shone like a star in their interview. She showed the world she was a serious reporter and achieved her dream of making TV news.



Chapter 7

A few months after the interview, standing in front of the brand-new Potts Hill Service Station, Arnold clutched the giant scissors. It was opening day, the Armstrong family and the online supporters surrounded the petrol station. They looked on with pride, as Arnold cut the ribbon to the entrance.

It was time for Arnold to speak to the crowd. “I’d like to thank everyone for all their support and donations in rebuilding the new Potts Hill Service Station. To Sandy and Alison without you this would’ve never happened.” Arnold paused and cut the ribbon, “Now my friends, enjoy the opening! Free dim sims and potato cakes for all!”

The crowd of families, friends and online supporters erupted into cheers. Leon sat on Sandy’s shoulder, probably cheering too. A new double-storey house had also been built behind the service station, for Sandy and Arnold, who were engaged to be married next year. In the end everything turned out fine. Hopefully, there will be no more explosions in the near future.





POTS ALL
SERVICE
STATION



Service Station Investigation

What happened at Potts Hill Service Station? Can you solve the mystery of the one who caused chaos?



Arnold is a laid back Robot Builder who loves working at his Potts Hill Service Station. When something goes wrong, he pairs up with Sandy, a keen journalist and investigator. Who will get the blame and who will solve the mystery?

