

(Part I)

The Rise of the Baker's Dozen

— by Andrew Rausi —

The Rise of the Baker's Dozen

(Part I)

by Andrew Rausi

Compiled by Benjamín Sánchez

Edited by Natalie G Owens



The Rise of the Baker's Dozen
First Edition
Copyright © 2021 by Andrew
Rausi
All rights reserved.
ISBN:978-99957-1-993-7

Prologue
Ingrained Memories

Taste is just my sugar coating,
Your senses know much more.
Our lives are integrated,
Our times are true and pure.

Secret recipes from Grandma,
That out-of-reach jar,
The note that told your fortune,
Our memories stretch so far.

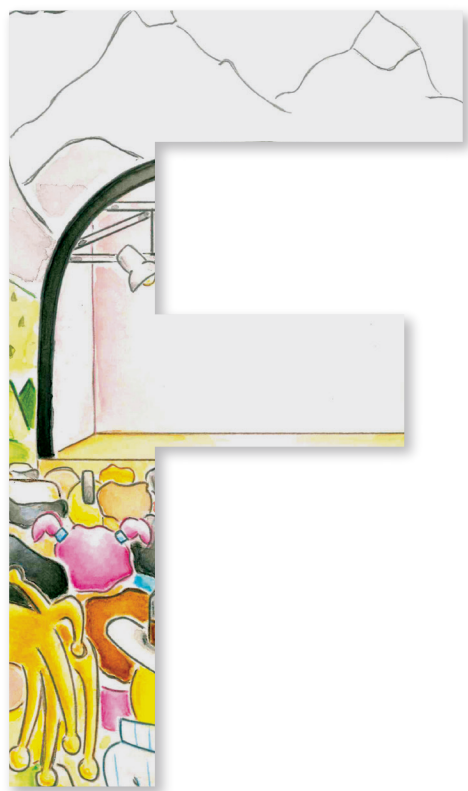
I am at your mercy,
Do with me as you please,
Find your lifelong partner,
Cover me with cheese.

Take me to your parties,
Confide in me when depressed,
Called on by your doctor,
When there's trouble to digest.

And you tell me I'm not alive,
Tell me I'm not real,
When I ingrained a thousand
memories,
That taught you how to feel.

Best friends made from my simple
exchange,
Hard pressed hands scan my
complete range,
Wholehearted love bought with
small change,

I must admit your negligence,
Strikes me as rather strange.



Introduction:

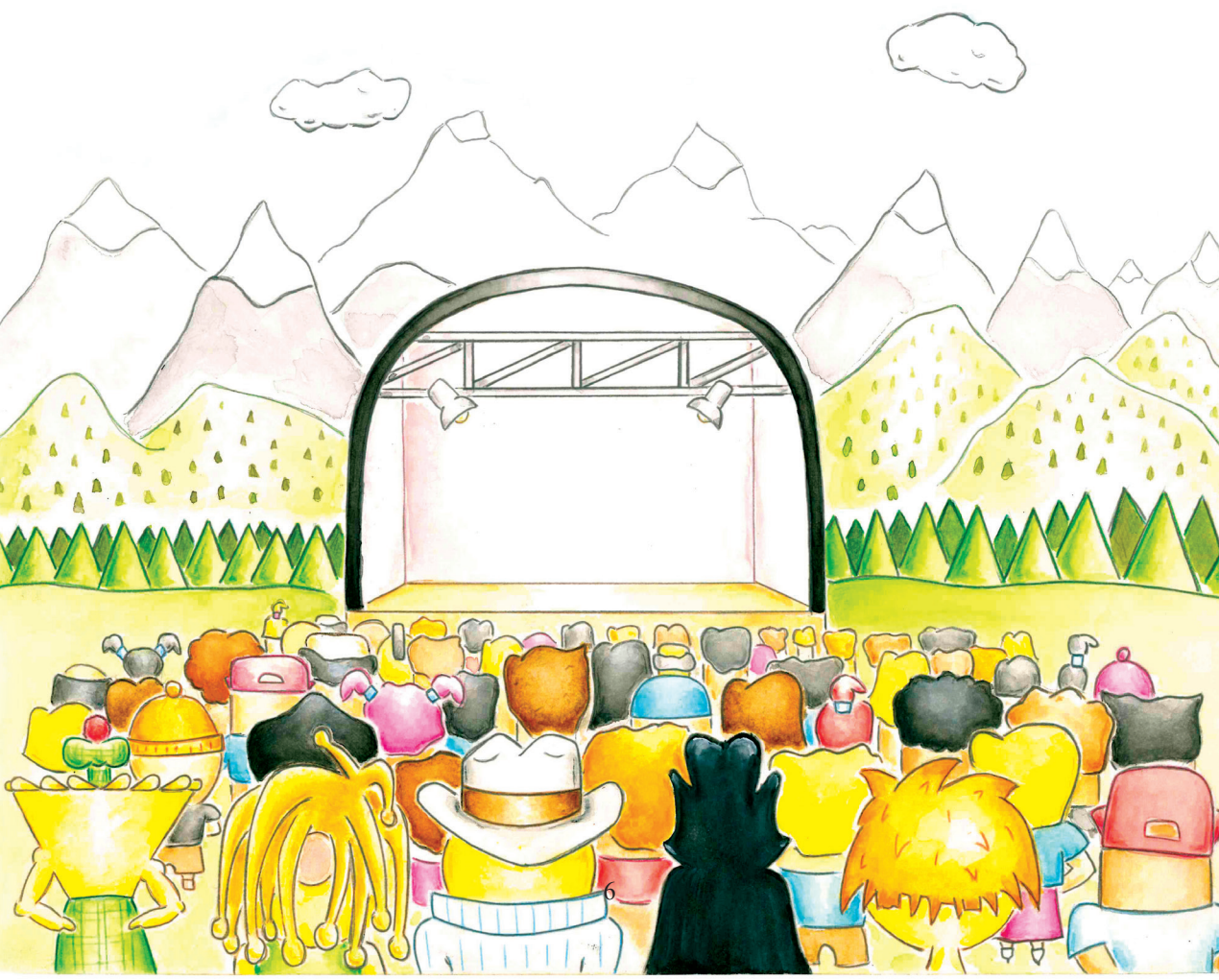
The 233rd Annual
Biscuitville Festival

Introduction

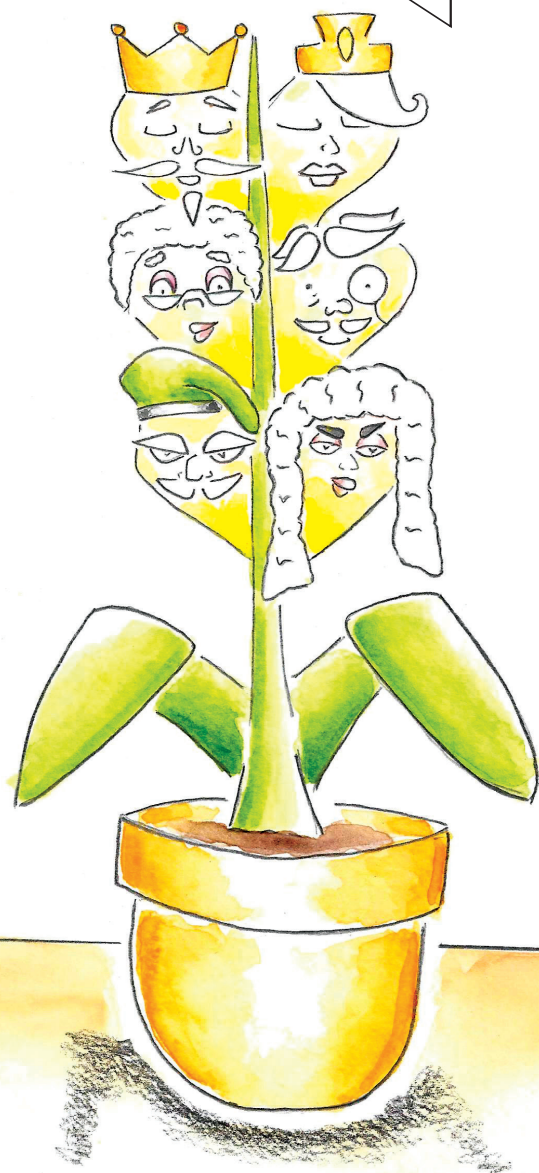


Three years had passed since the arrival of the never-ending Sun. Dougie McShortbread wiped the sweat off his forehead while standing in a crowd, looking at an empty stage. With the Annual Biscuitville festival about to begin, the whole town had gathered in the heat.

From behind the structure, the Grand Kernels of Justice emerged and the six-headed figure made its way to the centre of the stage.



"Let the 233rd Annual
Biscuitville festival commence!"



The huge crowd cheered and celebrated and hugged. The festivities had only just officially started, yet many of the adults were already drunk and in festive spirit.

Dougie was one of the few biscuits who wasn't drinking. Locked within the many bodies, he stood firm, trying to hold ground and remain calm amid the carnage. A biscuit directly in front of him tripped on his own drunkenness. In his hand was a cup full of illuminice-tea. The liquid flew out and splashed on Dougie's face, entering his eyes and soaking his precious clothing.

Dougie fumed. He loomed towards the idiot, about to express his anger when suddenly an arm wrapped round him, halting his advance.

"Don't bother, Dougie," Ringo said, holding him back. "The illuminice-tea has already got him. In that state, he won't understand a thing you say. You'll just make it worse."



The drunken man clumsily got to his feet without giving a word of apology. Dougie growled and stared for a moment, remembering the man's every detail. He then removed his hat and dried his face with it. The smell of the brew made him cringe and heave.

Ringo placed a hand on his shoulder. "Biscuits round here sure ain't what they used to be. At least the town is still as beautiful as always."

Dougie coughed. "Aye, laddie, but with all the changes here, how much longer will she last?"

The relentless Sun shined down over Biscuitville, illuminating every building with an intense brightness. With everyone at the festival, there wasn't a wagon on the roads or a soul on the streets to disturb the scene. The quaint structures and their vibrant colours painted a vivid image, contrasting the colossal mountains in the background.

Dougie inhaled deeply. "The first arrivals here searched for a peaceful life away from the chaos of the city. Back to basics was the desire—the good old simple life. So much for that now."

"Yes, but the first arrivals weren't fighting against a Sun that never sleeps," Reed said, standing next to Ringo. His large fedora hat tipped over his face. "Nothing has been the same since the dawn of the never-ending day."

"Nothing has been the same since the arrival of illuminice-tea," Dougie said.

Ringo scratched his dreadlocks. "Has it really been over three years since we last saw the night sky?"

"1,147 days, to be precise," Coco said, standing the other side of Reed. "And we're still none the wiser as to why."

Dougie shook his head. "Maybe it's just Nature's way."

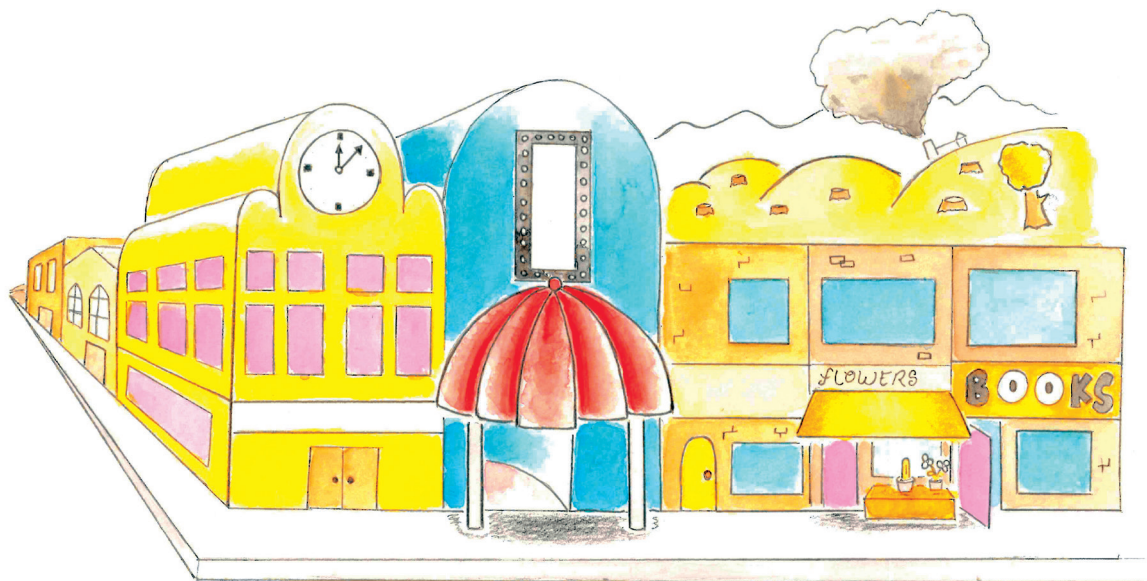
Coco tutted. "Why would she deny herself of such beauty?"



Dougie returned his attention to the Grand Kernels of Justice on stage.

Patricia pushed her reading glasses up her face. "May we thank you all for your hard work and dedication. The year has been prosperous, and the taxes have enabled us to improve the public services. The hospital now has a special wing dedicated to treating those suffering from the incessant Sun. In these times of uncertainty, let us remember the guidance of our forefathers."





Patricia read from a piece of paper. "Biscuits of all varieties spent years constructing this settlement together. The priority was to develop a culture free from inequality or discrimination—a community that works for everyone. The fountain in the centre of the main plaza is a reminder that no matter what colour or race, all biscuits come from the same grain. The water represents Mother Nature, from which all life derives and upon which all life depends. May she forever be honoured with our greatest respect."

"Hurry up!" shouted a voice from the crowd.

"Yeah! Get the real heroes on stage!"

Laughter spread among the audience.



Patricia took a deep breath. "The survival of this town solely depends on the involvement of every citizen. Liberated from the wider world, we can only survive if we work as one. We are secluded from any other civilisation in order to live and prosper in the better company of each other. We are hearty, we are free, we are Biscuitville!"

A mild clap followed.

Dougie huffed. "Such words used to have this populace moved and proud."

"We will now start with the awards," Patricia said. "The business which has generated the highest profits this year will get to choose where the yearly purse is invested."

Faces lit up all around. Now the crowd was involved.

Coco shook her head, flicking her jet black hair. "No prizes for guessing who'll win this year's award."

Ringo shrugged. "Technically, they deserve it, as they did last year."

Dougie's fists clenched. "What they deserve is a jail sentence."

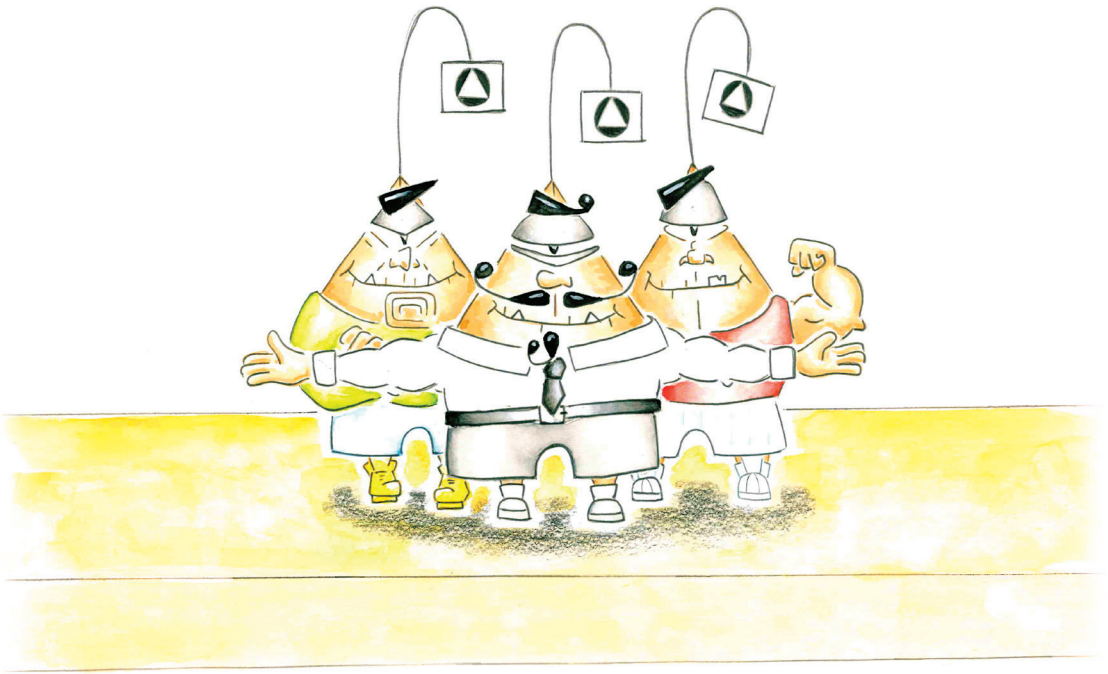
"We know that," Reed said. "Convincing the rest of town is the problem."

A man passed a set of cards to the Grand Kernels of Justice, and Patricia began to announce the year's best providers to the system.

"The top three nominations this year are ... Ted Folly and his corn farm, Wendy Snape and her clothes shop, and finally, The Teabags and their 'illuminice-tea'. Patricia unfolded another envelope. "And the winner is ... The Teabags and illuminice-tea!"

The decision caused an almighty cheer and applause. Dougie covered his head as more drinks went flying through the air with biscuits jumping for joy.

Three pyramid shaped teabags made their way to the centre of the stage.



Le Nag Bag stood slightly in front of his two counterparts, Butter and Bean, his arms stretched wide as he absorbed the immense adoration of the crowd.

"Merci for your support! We are honoured that our tea has delivered so much joy and alleviated le pressures of le everlasting day. We all know how difficult it has been, so we are ecstatic to serve you a beverage that helps you beat le heat!"

Whooping and cheers again erupted. The Grand Kernels of Justice hushed the crowd and passed the Teabags a trophy.

"As the winners of this year's award, you may choose how the yearly purse is invested."

A smile stretched across Le Nag Bag's face and his eye squinted. "We decide to invest le money in le water system. Let's construct more canals and pipelines! This way, our tea factory can produce more tea to keep you revitalised! More tea to keep you working! More tea to make many more dreams come true! And who knows, maybe one day, we will find a solution to le never-ending day and return le night sky!"

Dougie covered his ears as rapturous screams filled the park. Some biscuits cried, many looked to the sky and brought their hands together. Dougie, Ringo, Reed, and Coco remained still. They looked tentatively at each other with faces of concern.

Le Nag Bag coughed deliberately, and the crowd instantly turned silent. "To celebrate our victory, we invite you all to our Tea Bar for a free cup of illuminice-tea! A small sign of our gratitude for your loyalty and passion. Without you, our beverage would be nothing. To le residents of Biscuitville, we salute you! Merci, for making us feel so welcome in this most magnificent municipality!"

Le Nag Bag pointed to everyone in the crowd. Fists pumped the air as biscuits jumped up and down, chanting the Teabag's name.

Dougie's body shook from head to toe. "These Teabags are ridiculous!"

"How dare you say that?!" an unknown biscuit from behind said. "The Teabags saved us all with their illuminice-tea! God knows what would've happened here if it wasn't for them."

Dougie scoffed. "We're in more problems now than we were before!"

Many others circled Dougie like a pack of angry wolves, snarling as they closed in from all sides. "What the hell are you saying, old man?!"

Le Nag Bag calmed everyone from the stage. "Please, allow Dougie to express his opinions. We are always open to receive your honest reviews."

Dougie could hear his teeth grinding as he stared at Le Nag Bag. "Your drink is so addictive, it's got everyone robbing and fighting each other for more! It's ruining our community!"

An angered man pushed Dougie from behind. "We wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for illuminice-tea!"

Dougie huffed. "That's absolute nonsense!" I haven't drunk illuminice-tea for months and I'm fine!"

"You don't look fine to me," said another man in the crowd. "You look like you've totally lost your marbles!"

"You think I'm mad?! Not only is illuminice-tea destroying our society, its production is also causing massive deforestation! Huge sections of the forest are disappearing just to fuel the furnace at the tea factory. If we don't stop soon, all natural life will perish!"

Le Nag Bag laughed and pointed to the trees behind the stage. "Dougie, look at le luscious forest covering le mountains. Does it look like we're destroying all nature?"

"The hills around the factory have already been decimated. Where will you go next for your precious wood? You'll soon chop down every tree! Our future generations will be left with nothing!"

"We need illuminice-tea to survive the never-ending day," a voice shouted. "Losing parts of the forest is a small price to pay."

"Our survival depends on the perserverance of nature and our community, not illuminice-tea!" Dougie said. He then pointed at Le Nag Bag on stage. "Don't trust a word of that slimy weasel! Just look at what illuminice-tea did to Coco!"

Everyone stared in silence at Coco while her head hung.

Le Nag Bag shrugged. "I am sorry for what happened to Coco, but I can't be blamed if she fails to follow le precautions."

"I don't need your pity," Coco said. "I just need this town to be the loving community it once was. We've become so obsessed with our own personal needs that we've forgotten about harmony and respect for nature."

Le Nag Bag raised his hands. "Let's take a vote. Who believes that illuminice-tea is good for le community?"

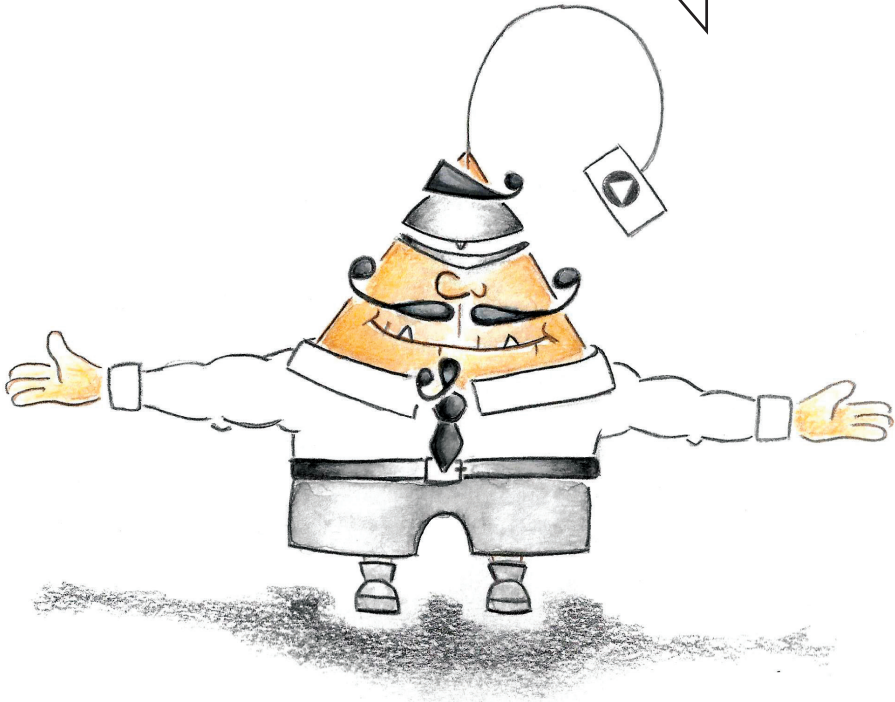
A roar of support immediately came from the audience.

"Who believes that illuminice-tea is more important than some trees in le forest?"

A second round of applause and cheers followed.

A dirty grin covered Le Nag Bag's face.

"Le people have spoken! illuminice-tea will continue to save this town from le relentless Sun! It also appears that Dougie really is losing his marbles! Maybe, he should come to us for help. Whatever le flaw, illuminice-tea has le cure!"



The crowd laughed at Dougie. One man advanced toward him with his fists raised, ready to fight.

"If I ever hear you speaking badly about Teabags again, I'll smash you up!"



Dougie took up a fighting stance, ready to fight back. Coco forced her way between the wannabe fighters with her hands held out in front of her.



"Stop! Is this really the example you wish to set to the children?! Grow up, all of you!"

The aggressor backed away and continued partying and drinking.

Dougie turned to Coco. "How can you be so understanding when it's you who's suffered the most?"

Coco sighed. "An eye for an eye just leaves everybody blind."

Dougie put his hands on his hips. "How can everyone be so foolish?"

Ringo stretched his arms wide.

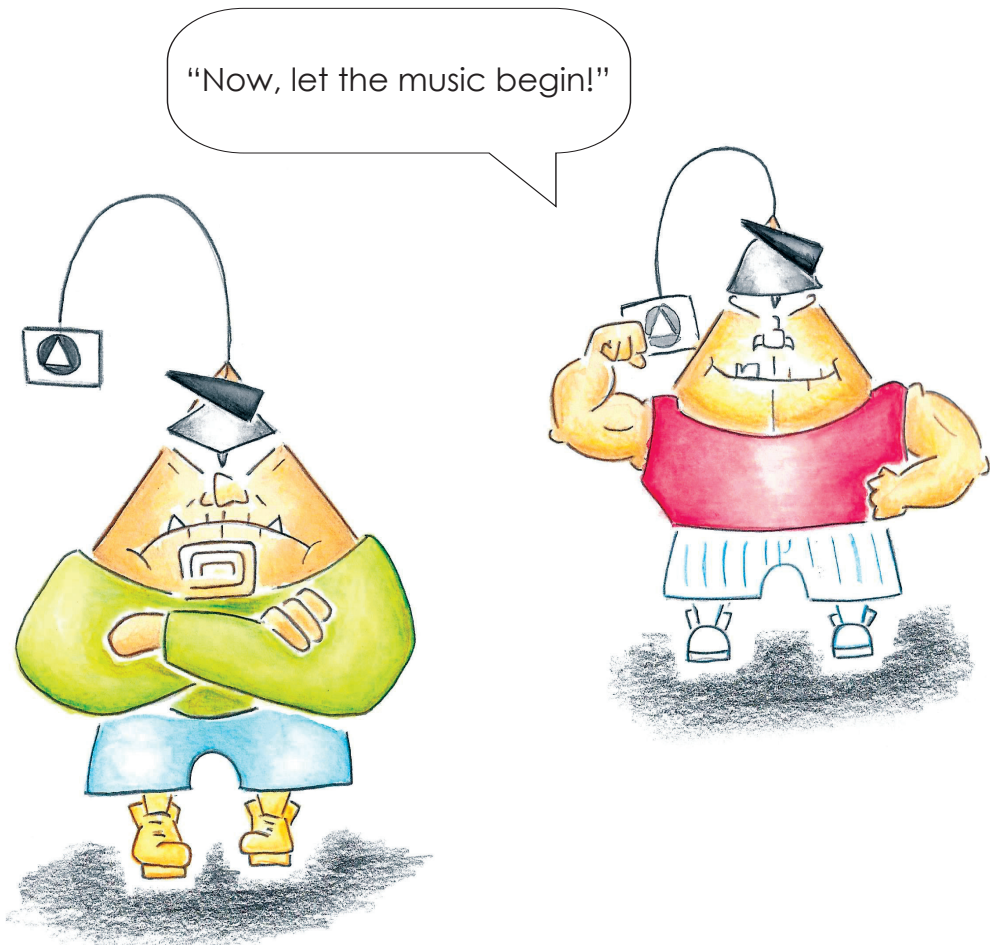
"Don't act so surprised. You were no different before you learned the truth."



On the stage, Bean stepped forward with his arms crossed over his giant belly. "Remember, our tea is much more than a remedy against the burning Sun. We're always here to help you wif any personal problems. All yous have to do is organise a private meeting wif us and let us turn your dreams into reality. Whatever the flaw, illuminice-tea has the cure."

Coco covered her mouth. "If I hear that phrase one more time, I'm gonna to vomit."

Butter was then allowed to speak. He tensed his biceps and chuckled.



The three Teabags linked together, arm in arm, and faced the Sun. The masses continued to praise them as they left.

"Teabags, Teabags, Teabags!"

"We love you!"

Ringo put his hands on his head. "This town is doomed."

Dougie poked him. "It is while we do nothing."

Reed scratched his face nervously. "Everything we've tried has only made the situation worse."

Dougie stomped his foot. "If we give up, we can wave goodbye to our precious town. Our sense of community has already disappeared. Soon, the forests will be gone, too."



A solo rock act took to the stage. His upbeat tune had the whole crowd jumping, wildly throwing their arms in all directions. Tempers flared as body parts clashed, with small fights breaking out. Security removed certain members of the crowd.

Coco sniffled. "That used to be me playing the opening song. No-one fought back then."

Dougie put an arm round her. His heart broke over and over for the poor woman. "How can we make the residents of this town see through the lies?"

Coco leaned her head on Dougie's shoulder. "Exactly one year ago, I learned my lesson, and I'm still coming to terms. We had to pass traumatic experiences to see the truth. Maybe, we'll have to wait for everyone else to have their own distressing experience."

"There's not enough time for that. Unless we do something soon, our hometown will be destroyed. We must find a way to expose the Teabags."

