

Randa looks at her watch. 'Okay, enough chat. We only have forty-five minutes to go, so let's spread the word.'

We run over to each of the groups, and it's like we've just turned off the slowmo. Now they're all rushing around, washing their cars at double speed. Everyone's still scared of Mr Humble's monster truck though.

'Let's do it, prefects,' I say.

'Can't we just drive it straight into a swimming pool?' Zain says.

Randa grabs a sponge. 'Come on, boys, hurry up and get to it.'

'Yes, Miss!' Zain says. Randa stabs him with her eyes and we both grab some buckets, running across the oval to fill them up. There's a lot more shouting from the other groups, and there are kids scrubbing away at their cars.

I come back with my bucket and we're joined by Bilal and a few other Year Sixers. Bilal flexes his muscles. 'Thought you might need the extra help.'

'What about your car? Don't you care about finishing first?' I say.

Bilal smiles, showing off his braces. 'I can't eat lollies anyway, they'll get stuck.'

I climb up on the tyre to reach the roof and start to scrub hard at the dirt. Groups are clapping and cheering each other on. It feels like we're at the athletics carnival.

A few kids are running back and forth with their buckets to the taps. Zain zigzags past them, without dropping any water. 'Focus on the tyres,' he says. 'They look like a giant chocolate donut.'

'Stop making me hungry,' I say, as I jump down from the tyre to look at all the work we've still got to go. Zain's right, the wheels are making me have flashbacks to the cake stall. Just then Britney from 6L taps me on the shoulder.

'Finished!'

Ally and I follow her to Miss Yang's tiny pink car. It's sparkling clean.

'Can we have the lollies now?' she asks.

'I'll bring them tomorrow,' Ally says.

'Okay, cool.' Britney grabs her sponge. 'Do you guys need any help?'

As more groups finish washing their cars they come to join us, attacking Mr Humble's four-wheel drive with sponges and cloths. Zain and a few other boys dump their buckets of water over the roof. There's a cry from Randa, who's on the other side.

Randa comes around the car rubbing her eyes. 'Is this another accident?'

'I didn't see you there,' Zain says, dropping his empty bucket guiltily. 'Sorry . . .'

Randa doesn't stick around to hear anything else. She stomps off to find a towel.

Zain stands next to me. 'I didn't mean it, honest.'

'The water will help her cool down,' I say.

Zain gently kicks one of the tyres. 'This is like trying to wash a hippo.'

'Is that something you did back in Ghana?' I ask with a smile.

'No, but my parents took me to a hippo sanctuary in Ghana, so I saw some up close,' Zain says. 'They have jaws that could make a soccer ball look like popcorn.'

Mr Humble walks over with the camera to take a few shots of us working. Everyone's posing in front of their clean cars. Their shirts and uniforms are soaked but they're all giggling and pumped up. Mr Humble stops in front of his car and whistles loudly. 'You've conquered my beast.'

'Yeah it was a pushover. It only took a whole class of kids to do it,' Ally says.

'How about a photo, prefects?' Mr Humble aims the camera at us.

Zain calls Randa over for the photo and she stands to the other side of me. 'I'm still not talking to you.'

'But you just did,' Zain says.

'Thanks to you, I look like a drowned rat.' Randa touches her hijab.

'Come on, we're all wet here,' Zain says. 'Stop sooking about it.'

Randa spots a nearby bucket with some leftover water. She grabs it and throws the water at him.

Zain yelps as the water hits his face. His eyeballs almost pop out of his skull.

Randa drops the bucket. 'Okay, now we look the same.'