

# Detective Darcie and the Missing Doughnuts

## By Emilia Catanach

The rooster crowed as the first glimpse of sun peeked over the horizon, casting a warm orange glow over Tiny Town. The dawn chorus grew louder as the birds slowly awoke from their slumber. Cats slunk in the shadows as the streets started to come alive with people going about their day.

In the middle of town, at world famous Baguette's Bakery, Mr Baguette, the baker, was already hard at work preparing a fresh batch of doughnuts, his most sought-after treat. A queue had already started to form outside his shop, with many beady eyes eyeing up the iced glazed doughnuts on show. The sickly sweet sugary smell wafted through the air.

The queue stretched for miles. Everyone was waiting for the doors to open. Suddenly, there was a loud crash. All eyes darted towards the sound as a rickety lorry roared past. But when their heads turned back to the bakery window, all the doughnuts had VANISHED!

Just down the road, Detective Darcie was busy putting her Super Sleuth clothes, hat and gloves on when her phone rang. It was Mr Baguette. He sounded alarmed.

“ARGH!!! HELP! HELP! MY DOUGHNUTS HAVE GONE MISSING!”

Detective Darcie ran out of the house, jumped on her motorbike and sped into town.

When she arrived at Baguette's Bakery she was met by an angry mob demanding to know where the doughnuts had gone. Mr Baguette scratched his head. He looked puzzled. *Hmmmm*, thought the Detective, rubbing her chin. *Suspicious ... very suspicious indeed*. She sniffed the air. There was a hint of something sweet. Cinnamon perhaps. She took out her magnifying glass and, with her twitchy nose in the air, started to follow the trail.

First stop was Mrs Sugarlump's cottage. She was always buying sugar from the bakery to go with her steaming hot tea. Maybe today she'd decided to take the doughnuts too! Yes, it had to be her! Detective Darcie peered through her magnifying glass ... only to find that there wasn't a trail. No doughnut crumbs or grains of sugar could be found!

Next stop was Billy Brown, the town bully. He was always stealing sweets and chocolates from smaller children so was *bound* to be the culprit. Yet, on closer inspection, he too was innocent.

*Drat*, thought Detective Darcie. She peered around her and saw something shimmering on the ground. It was leading to Jemima Jelly's house. *Of course*, she thought. And set off to confront her.

Jemima Jelly was busy in her kitchen making fairy cakes and sprinkling them with every coloured sprinkle imaginable. She was a very messy baker so the sprinkles were EVERYWHERE ... and sparkling in the sunlight. It wasn't the right trail, after all.

Detective Darcie was puzzled. All the usual suspects were innocent! There was only one thing for it – she had to go to speak to the town mascot, a giant life-sized, walking, talking, sugar-coated jelly baby. He knew all the goings on in Tiny Town.

The mascot sat at his usual spot in the park. Detective Darcie sauntered over to him. “I'm having trouble solving the case of the missing doughnuts,” she said. “What do you think I should do?”

The mascot, without turning to look at her, said wisely, “Go back to where it began.”

Detective Darcie was even more confused. What did he mean? Go back to the bakery? But hadn't she already investigated there? However, she did as she was told, jumped on her motorbike again, and sped back into town.

Mr Baguette was serving his last customer for the day when Detective Darcie burst in, feeling confused. She looked around her. Everything looked the same as it had before ... yet different somehow. It was like she was seeing everything through new, fresh eyes. She knew the clues were right under her nose. She just had to find them.

Glancing around, she took a closer look at Mr Baguette. He was waiting to close the shop and looking very sheepish. Something in Detective Darcie's gut told her that things weren't quite as they seemed. She peered at his hair which this morning looked like its typical brown and frizzy mess. But when she looked closer, there was something in it. Something that glistened. She looked at his moustache. It looked sticky. She looked directly into Mr Baguette's eyes. They started to water as if he was about to cry.

“I'm so sorry,” he said, “it was me. I ate the doughnuts. They were so delicious. I couldn't resist. So, while no one was looking, I ate them all. And instead of owning up, I lied and said they'd been stolen.” He burst into tears. Detective Darcie looked at him in surprise. She had blamed Mrs Sugarlump, Billy Brown the town bully, and Jemima Jelly when it was the baker all along. Detective Darcie disappeared into the kitchen and, a few minutes later, returned with a hot mug of cocoa with whipped cream and marshmallows. She passed it to Mr Baguette.

“Lying is not okay. A single lie can hurt many people,” she said, with a warm smile. “But we all make mistakes. What you do now is what counts.”

Mr Baguette felt immense gratitude towards Detective Darcie. She was right, lying was *not* okay, and now he had a chance to make amends.

The following morning, as the rooster crowed and the birds burst into song, quite a crowd was gathering outside Mr Baguette's bakery. Music could be heard blaring from the kitchen and colourful balloons and banners adorned the shop windows. Inside, Mr Baguette was getting ready for opening time. He'd been up all night baking his best recipes for Tiny Town to enjoy.

"Doughnuts are on me," he cried as he opened the doors. Never would Mr Baguette lie again. And never again would Detective Darcie jump to conclusions without having all the facts first!