

THE UNBELIEVABLE
BISCUIT
FACTORY

Look out for James Harris's next book,
coming soon!



THE UNBELIEVABLE
**BISCUIT
FACTORY**

(100% definitely not a
SUPER-SECRET SCIENCE LAB
filled with
**orange fluffy
monsters)**

JAMES HARRIS

Illustrated by Loretta Schauer



HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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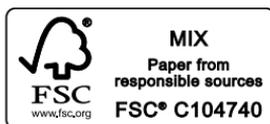
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For Mum



Chapter 1



WOOOOOOO

Normalton

Normalton is a small town in the middle of England. It is known for being totally normal. It is so normal that the concept of 'normal' was named after Normalton, and not the other way round. Normalton is the site of the [Biscuit Factory](#), which is a totally normal biscuit factory that makes totally normal [biscuits](#) like a totally normal biscuit factory would do. It is absolutely, 100% *not* a Super-Secret Science Lab in disguise. Look, we wouldn't have called it 'the Biscuit Factory' if it wasn't a totally normal factory that made totally normal biscuits, would we?

[extracted from *Biccyclopedia*]

There was a big rabbit in the front garden. I say 'big' because it looked big, but that might have been an illusion caused by the massive platform boots it was wearing. They were bright red and shiny, and the heels were yellow and quite built-up, so really it was difficult to properly tell how big it was. It was definitely a rabbit, though, with its furry face and ridiculous taste in footwear. No human would wear boots like that, I thought, as I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes, readying myself for a properly *motto* Saturday.

Because it was Saturday morning, I could hear the *thumpa thumpa thumpa* 'ugh, ow, OH HECKHECKHECKAAA!' of my mum doing her exercise DVD downstairs. And on top of all that there was the shrill, piercing *WOOOOOOO* of the old air-raid siren on top of Carpenter's Hill, which indicated the Biscuit Factory was having some kind of crisis or other. If I'd had to guess, which I didn't, but sometimes guessing can be fun, I would have guessed that today's Biscuit Factory emergency was rabbit-based.

I launched into my morning routine. I don't need to go into huge detail about the routine. You probably have one yourself. I did some water-based sprucing up and got dressed super-quick. And then I reached for my hairbrush.

The bulk of my routine is taken up with hair admin. I have naturally frizzy hair, so I have a heck of a job getting my hair to behave. As I battered my hair with a hairbrush shaped like half a unicorn (it had broken two days ago due to my hair being so unruly), I wandered back to my window. The rabbit was still out there, crouching behind a patch of rhubarb. I idly wondered what it was hiding from, and where it had got those boots. I know I shouldn't have been wondering about the rabbit, or its choice of footwear, because it's not allowed, but I couldn't help it. And then a big black van with 'See Nothing! Say Nothing! Sorted!' written on its side screeched into our street and five Biscuitrons jumped out.

The Biscuitrons work for the Biscuit Factory.

We are not really supposed to talk about the Biscuitrons. We are supposed to ignore them if we see them. In fact, we're not really even allowed to see them, even if we do see them, which we do (or don't), a lot (i.e. never, of course). The same goes for things like big rabbits standing up on two legs.

The Biscuitrons were dressed head-to-toe in light brown overalls, the colour of custard creams. They marched into our front garden and circled the rabbit, as I tugged at a madly disobedient clump of hair.

Then the rabbit got bigger. Or at least it stood up straighter and lifted up its front paws. It looked like it was going to surrender. I didn't see what happened next because one of the Biscuitrons turned and looked up at me. He mimed closing curtains. It was an awkward moment because if I wasn't supposed to be looking at him, how was I supposed to know he wanted me to stop looking at him? It was a puzzle that didn't seem to bother him, because he did another curtain-

closing mime, so I closed the curtains and kept brushing.

Hair tamed, or at least more or less obeying gravity, and all other aspects of my routine completed successfully, I went down for breakfast.

'Heck,' said Mum, every tendon and muscle straining as she attempted to copy what the muscly man on her laptop screen was doing. 'Heck heck heck. Morning, Haddie. Heck.'

She called me Haddie because that is my name. Sometimes I am called Hadz because that is my name, too. Sometimes I am called H-bomb. Actually, I am never called H-bomb but gosh I'd like to be.

'Smoothie?' I asked.

'Rrrrrr, heck!' she said, so I made us both a kale, blueberry and banana puddle. Apparently if you eat food in gloopy liquid form, with miscellaneous bits bobbing about in it, it's super-good for you and you will live for ever. That's what my mum seems to think, although why

she would want to live for ever when every day seems to be so full of pain, I couldn't tell you. Today she was exercising so hard it looked like her whole body was crying. Armpit tears were flying all over the kitchen.

'Oh heck, that feels good,' said Mum, against all the evidence, as the man on the screen told her she was the very best version of herself she could possibly be. I thought that was unlikely but I said nothing as I handed her the smoothie.

'Siren's going,' she said.

'Uh-huh,' I agreed. I didn't mention the rabbitty commotion in the garden because in Normalton we don't talk about that kind of thing.

'You should probably stay in today, do you think?'

'Oh heck, Mum! Band practice!'

'Haddie! What have I told you about language?'

**YOU HAVE 1 NEW NOTIFICATION:
A MESSAGE ABOUT LANGUAGE**

As you have probably noticed, when people get vexed they sometimes use words that they absolutely shouldn't use. In this story, things get vexatious pretty quickly, and they stay vexatious until about five pages from the end, and all the characters have lots to say about the vexations they face, so I have decided to install a language filter on this book. Every time someone (especially an old person) says a word I'm not allowed to say, like 'heck', or 'heck,' or even 'heck', it will come out in this book as 'heck'. Heck, it's working already!

'You've told me all kinds of things about language,' I said. She has. She's an English teacher, so I hear a lot about language every day. She's also a single mum who does ridiculous exercise routines every morning, so I hear a lot of interesting language that I'm not allowed to use. My mum is complicated and no mistake. If my mum was a recipe you'd need to go to five different shops just to get the ingredients.

'Well then,' she said.

There was no arguing with that, because what did it even mean?

And then the siren stopped.

'Sounds like the emergency's over,' I said.
'So . . . band practice?'

'Are you sure you wouldn't rather stay in with me? I've got a new aromatherapy diffuser,' said Mum.

'Wow. Um . . .' I didn't really know what to say about that. Mum doesn't like going out, which is fine, but my feeling is that if I go out and do stuff, and then come back and tell her about all the stuff that I've done, then maybe next time she'll want to come out and do stuff, too.

Mum is a bit weird. She buys too many candles that make the house smell of 'calm' or 'contemplation' or 'cookie dough', and she eats too much broccoli, which makes the house smell of something else altogether.

So yeah, a bit weird.

But when you think about it, it's all kinds of weird out there, in the world. But in here, at home,

it's our kind of weird and that's comforting.

Anyway, at that precise moment I didn't realise exactly how weird things were going to get out there.

Maybe if I had known, I might have stayed inside with Mum and her new aromatherapy diffuser and her veggie toots and her comforting kind of weirdness.

But if I had, the world would have ended.

I'll leave it to you to decide whether I made the right decision.

'I'll see you later, Mum,' I said. And then I went out and saved the world.