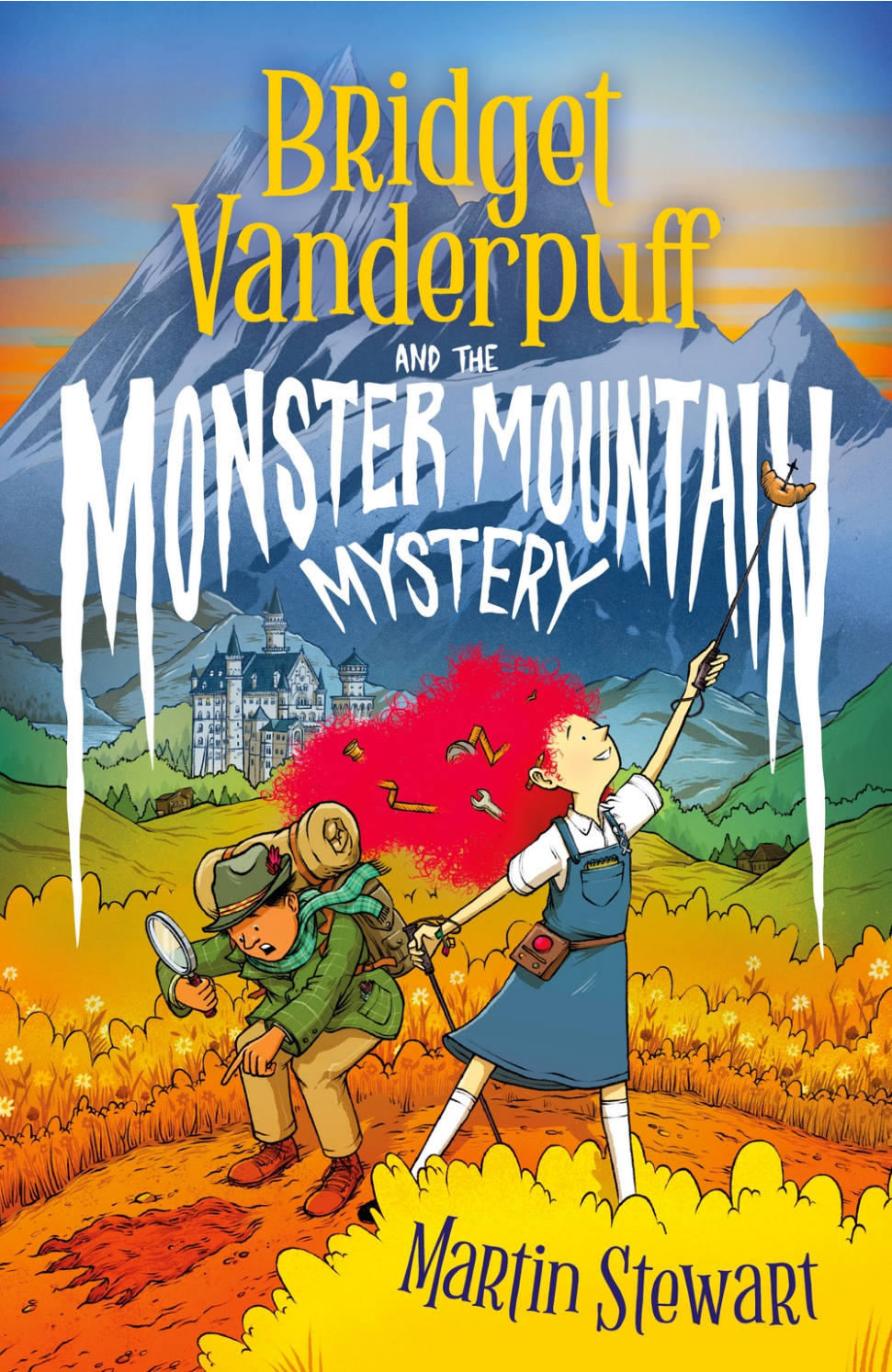
Bridget Vanderpuff
AND THE
MONSTER MOUNTAIN
MYSTERY
Martin Stewart

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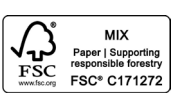

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1

Yodelocomotive

bandits ✳ bakes ✳ buzz

Bridget tightened her grip on Pascal's foot.

'*Aaaargh*!' screamed the elf, arms flailing over the ravine as the *Alpine Arrow* hurtled towards the tunnel.

'It's all right!' grunted Bridget. 'I've got you!'

Another explosion shook the carriage.

'*Briiiiiiiddgeeeeeet*!'

'Hurry!' shouted Tom, helping her heave.

'Nearly… there…' Bridget managed through gritted teeth.

'*Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaargh*!' screamed Pascal.

With a shrill, yodelling whistle, the grand old train shot into the tunnel – and the cabbage-sized

sphere that was Pascal le Fleur flew into Bridget's arms.

All three – Bridget, boy and Butters – landed on Mr Vanderpuff.

'Oh, thank heavens!' shrieked the great baker, hat squashed askew. 'That was too close!'

Bridget scanned the destruction.

The smashed windows.

The broken bunk beds.

And the gigantic bogey-bomb-blast through which Pascal had tumbled as he bit into a Pistachio Pi-Pie[1].

'Just *look*,' she said, hair whipping like a tower of flame, 'at this mess!'

Tunnel-light flickered on Mr Vanderpuff's soot-streaked face.

'Now, Bridget,' he panted, 'I know the League of Meanies has blown a hole in the side of our carriage—'

'*And* spattered us with bogies,' added Bridget.

[1] Bogey-bombs were a new, destructive *and* disgusting favourite of Meanies in the field: multiple Meanies massed their mucus into a single sticky splodge, then packed it into an explosive shell.

'—and now your instinct will be to—'

'Run off and leap headlong into the fray?' said Bridget, grinning.

'Exactly!' cried Mr Vanderpuff, gripping his hat.

The *Arrow* – rocking, rolling, racing at a hundred miles an hour – burst into the daylight with a blast of chilly mountain air. A scene of alpine splendour blurred past: green hills specked with cattle, cottages and sparkling sapphire waters.

Bridget slipped into her Sookosocks – and strode towards the hole in the wall.

'You can't go *outside*!' gasped Pascal, as she reached into her hair. 'Even for *you* that's—'

'He's right!' howled Tom. 'Carina Fairfoul is a *bandit* – she's dangerous!'

Bridget narrowed her eyes.

'So's my baking,' she said.

And jumped.

The wind struck her like a fist, tumbling her along the thundering train.

'Oh, no you don't!' she cried, stretching out her hands as the final carriage shot past.

The Suction Cupcakes grabbed hold.

‘Gotcha!’ yelled Bridget, thudding on to the rear platform with her Sookosocks[2].

She opened the door with her elbow, then slipped inside.

Rows of terrified passengers turned towards her, their faces stretched with fright.

Bridget cleared her throat.

‘Ladies and gentlemen,’ she said, smiling as she moved through the carriage, ‘please excuse the interruption while I best this beastly bandit by means of abominable baking.’

The passengers burst into applause.

‘*Grazie mille*!’ shouted a man with a thick moustache.

‘*Danke*!’ cried a woman wearing a feathered hat.

‘Would you open the door for me, please?’ Bridget asked the saucer-eyed lady at the end of the carriage. ‘I’d do it myself, only I’m holding

[2] One of Bridget’s own inventions, Sookosocks are rubbery socks covered in a strong, waterproof adhesive, allowing the wearer to stick fast to, for example, the Eiffel Tower, or a helter-skelter greased by a crazed Meanie mistress.

two of the world's stickiest cakes[3].'

Hand shaking like a full-speed mixer, the lady turned the handle.

'Thank you,' said Bridget, stepping back into the wind.

The door slammed behind her.

Bridget cupcaked on to the rickety railing, eyes fixed on the gap between the carriages.

Close to, the track – flashing under her feet – was dizzyingly fast.

If my Paraskirt opened now, she thought, *I'd end up in the middle of the Mediterranean.*

She skipped across and peered into the dining car.

Plush velvet seats. Tables of silver-trimmed teak. Chandeliers rattling like chiming bells.

And Carina Fairfoul – bandit, thief, legend of the Meanie movement – tipping trolleyfuls of glistening cakes into a swinging swag sack.

'*There* you are!' breathed Bridget.

[3] Suction frosting is *extraordinarily* sticky – once, during *It Didn't Look This High from the Ground* (the Belle-on-Sea climbing parade), Bridget dangled an entire bake shop display from a single cupcake.

'Ha*ha*!' snarled Fairfoul, picking her nose and examining her thumbnail. 'These were going to be *such* a TREAT for those pathetic passen*gers*! Too bad silly little Brid*get* isn't here to SAVE THEM!'

She wiped her bogey on the nearest seat.

'Typical Meanies!' sighed Bridget, burying the rewrapped cupcakes in her hair.

She counted to three – then kicked open the door.

'End of the line, Meanie!' she yelled, hands on her hips.

Fairfoul's painted eyebrows snapped skywards – then a smile, slick as oil, spread over her face.

'Bridget *Van*derPUFF!' she growled, her long teeth specked with cabbage and lipstick. 'Or should I say… *Bax*TER?'

Bridget rolled her eyes.

'Are you Meanies *still* singing that old tune?'

'Bridget Baxter,' leered Fairfoul, 'the *most errant* of Childs. I thought I *blew* up *your* cabin with BOGIES?'

'You did.' Bridget shrugged. 'Pascal was very nearly spread Butter. But I caught him – and now I'm going to catch *you*!'

The train thundered round a bend, tumbling them against the wall. 'You'd best get your STINKY nose out of our *business*, gal,' growled Fairfoul, 'before it gets *tweaked*!'

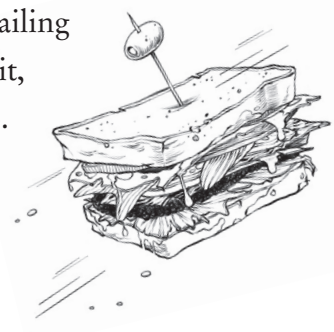
'Tweak this!' yelled Bridget, launching a tin from her utility belt.

A bolt of golden sun struck the tin as it *popped* – and sent a cloud of fluffy Scream Cream towards Fairfoul's raised brows.

'That'll teach you to—' Bridget began as the Meanie dived… and caught the cream in an enormous jar. '*Oh*.'

The Scream Cream's shriek fell to a whisper. Fairfoul tossed it aside.

'*That's* what I think of your wailing dairy, CHILD!' cackled the bandit, producing a paper-wrapped lump. 'Now munch *this*!'



An enormous, stinking, fish-filled sandwich hit Bridget square in the face.

'Mmmmmpppppphhhh!' she cried, her voice muffled by hunks of horseradish herring.

'De*licious*, eh?' snarled Fairfoul.

Bridget heaved at the crusts then, as though peeling an octopus from her face, *pulled* herself free with a 'Mmmppffffaaaaaaaaarrrrghh!'

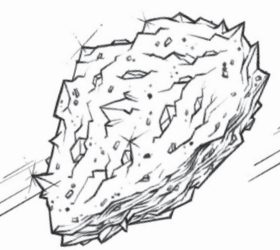
The sandwich hit the carpet with a *squelch*.

'That,' she said, 'was *disgusting*.'

Fairfoul cracked her knuckles.

'Poor little *Errant* Child,' she sneered. 'What are you going to do about it?'

'I've got some ideas,' said Bridget, reaching into her hair.



'Do your *worst*!' spat Fairfoul.

'*My* worst?' Bridget smiled. 'That's the best worst there is.'

And she threw the razor bun. It *zinged* through the chain of a chandelier, which dropped towards Fairfoul's astonished face.

'Gah!' cried the Meanie, drawing her salmon sword as Bridget ran. 'Running AWAY, *child*? Patty Acrid said you were a for*mid*able foe!'

'I'm just keeping you on your toes,' said Bridget, scrambling on to the carriage roof as the fishy blade clattered at her heels.

The wind struck her, hard and cold, as the sky opened overhead.

Fairfoul grabbed at Bridget's ankles, shrieking and slashing, as the train rattled and rocked.

'Oh, I've got you now, wretch!' shouted the bandit. 'You've nowhere left to go!'

'Wrong!' said Bridget.

And stepped off the roof.

Fairfoul blinked.

'I did it!' she cried. '*I* bested the beastly Bridget *Bax*ter! Now we can – *WHAT*?'

Bridget, standing horizontally on the side of the train, gave her a wave.

'Sookosocks,' she said, hair billowing behind her. 'Super *sticky* Sookosocks, to be precise.'

Then she ran along the carriages, windows opening like clam shells in her wake, as the passengers cheered.

The gaping ruin of her exploded cabin loomed up ahead.

'Bridget!' yelled Mr Vanderpuff as she bounded over the hole. 'What on *earth* are you doing?'

'Stretching my legs!' cried Bridget, landing gracefully on the other side.

She leaned in.

'Don't worry—'

A *slash* of scaly steel.

'I won't be a minute—'

Swipe!

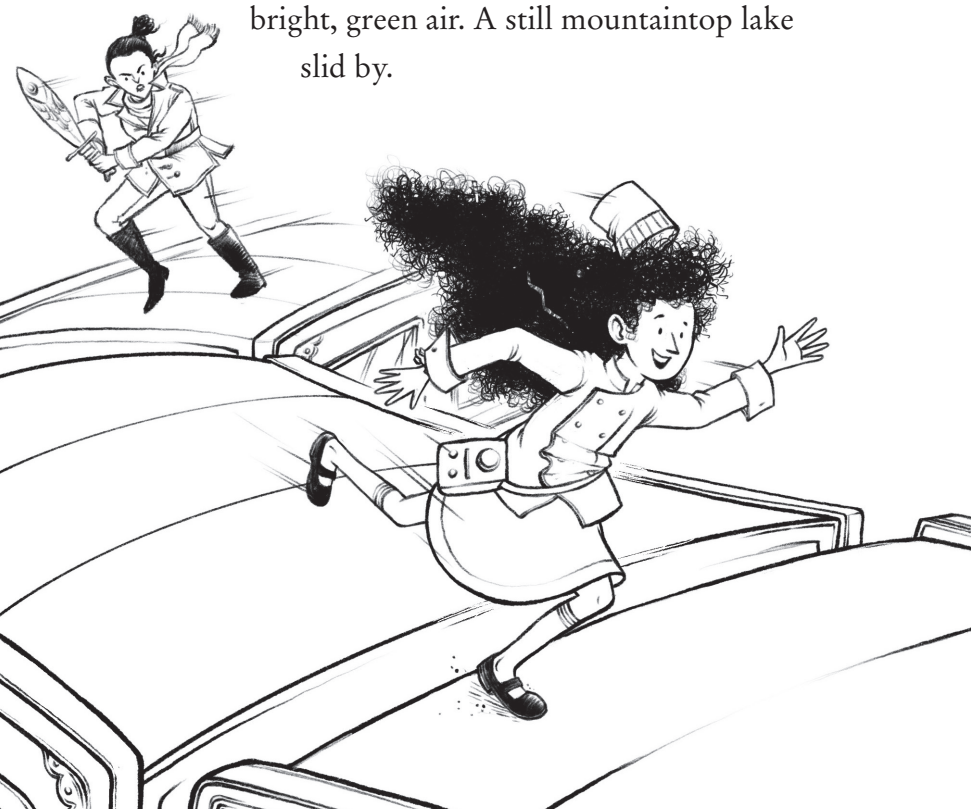
'Just need to—'

Thrust!

'Clip someone's ticket!'

'Be tho careful!' wailed Pascal, his mouth bursting with Wacamacarons.

Bridget sprinted forwards, lungs filling with bright, green air. A still mountaintop lake slid by.



What a beautiful day, she thought, as the salmon sword swung at her back.

'Curse you, *wretch*!' howled Fairfoul. 'I'm going to—'

Bridget had reached the end of the foremost carriage, and was leaping across to the engine itself.

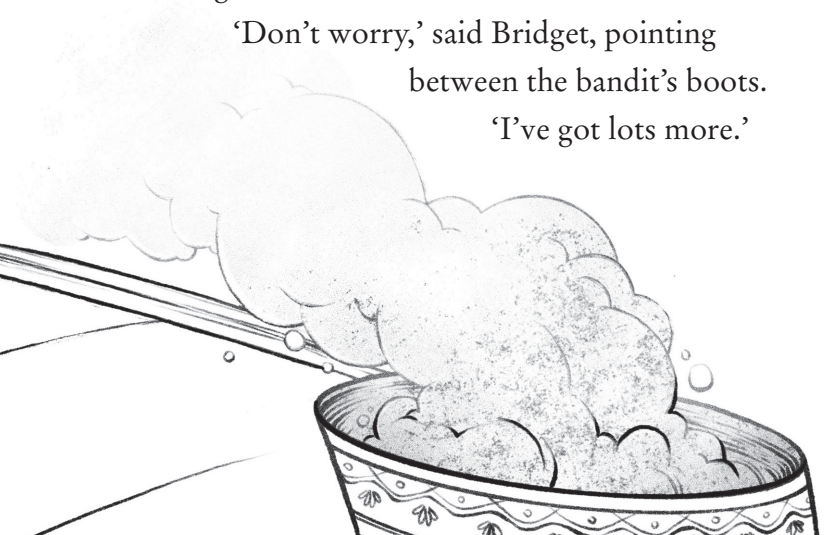
'Looks like you've run out of train, *Bax*TER!' cackled the Meanie, picking up pace. 'There's nowhere else to go – you're all *mine*!'

She stomped over the coal and on to the cab's roof as Bridget moved to the engine's chuffing chimney.

Fairfoul raised her fishy blade.

'Is this *it*?' she yelled into the wind. 'Noisy cream, sticky shoes and running *away*?' She curled her lip. 'I expected more from the "*GREAT*" Bridget!'

'Don't worry,' said Bridget, pointing between the bandit's boots. 'I've got lots more.'



Fairfoul glanced down.

'A Suction Cupcake?' she said. 'Am I supposed to be scared?'

'Yes,' grinned Bridget. 'The Suction Cupcake's sitting in a puddle of—'

BOOM!

The Jellymite spun the bandit into a somersault, the Suction Cupcake *SShhcclllurping* on to her back as she screamed over Bridget's head.

'Can she stick the landing?' yelled Bridget, as Fairfoul fixed fast to the face of the *Alpine Arrow*. 'She can! It's a perfect ten!'

'You little WITCH!' screamed the Meanie, wriggling on the engine's nose like an upturned turtle. 'We're not done *yet*! I'm GOING to—'

A bug hit her in the teeth.

'I'd keep your mouth closed if I were you,' chuckled Bridget, polishing the Spinning Spoons badge on her lapel. 'There's still a few hours until we reach Butterälp!'

'Curse you, Van*der*PUFF!' spluttered Fairfoul, as more bugs spattered her lips.

'Have fun!' called Bridget, climbing back into the carriage.

The passengers erupted in applause.

'Well, *done*, my dear,' said Mr Vanderpuff. 'Another *brilliant* rescue!'

'Best one yet, I'd say!' added Tom, face already sticky with celebratory sugar.

Pascal scrambled on to Bridget's shoulder and tugged his moustache.

'Where's Fairfoul?' he whispered.

'Oh, don't worry,' said Bridget, kissing his cheek, 'I told her to buzz off!'