

Ratburger by David Walliams

Chapter 13: Burt's Burgers

Soon Zoe noticed she was running, but her short little legs were no match for the older, taller kids, who were soon barging past her so they could be first in the queue at the burger van to stuff their faces at lunch.

Zoe shielded Armitage with her hand. She had been knocked to the ground in the school corridor many times before. At last she made it out into the relative safety of the playground. She kept her head down, hoping not to be recognised.

However, there was only one way out of the playground on to the main road. Every day there was the same grimy beaten-up burger van parked outside, which had 'Burt's Burger's' emblazoned across it. Even though the food from the van was horrible, the school dinners were even more nauseating, so most of the kids took the least worst option and queued up outside the van for their lunch.

Burt was as unsavoury as the burgers he served. The self-styled 'chef' always wore the same filthy striped top and grease-encrusted jeans, which he wore low below his giant belly. Over the top hung a bloody overall. The man's hands were always filthy, and his thick mop of hair was always covered in flakes of dandruff the size of Rice Krispies. Even his dandruff had dandruff. The flakes would drop into the deep fat fryer causing it to hiss and spurt whenever he leaned over it. Burt would sniff constantly, like a pig snuffling in mud. No one had ever seen his eyes, as he always wore the same pitch-black, wraparound sunglasses. His false teeth rattled in his mouth as he spoke, causing him to whistle involuntarily. School legend had it that they had once fallen out of his mouth into a bap.

Burt's burger van didn't offer much of a menu:

BURGER IN A BAP 79P

BURGER ONLY 49P

BAP ONLY 39P

And there was no restaurant stars awarded as yet. The food was just about edible if you were absolutely starving. You had to pay an extra 5p for a squirt of ketchup, though it didn't look or taste much like ketchup; it was brown and had little black bits in it. If you complained, Burt would shrug and mutter breathlessly, "It's my own special recipe my dears."