

Mark jogged across the white sand, his feet thudding gently on the beach. Pretzel, the longhaired dachshund, by his feet. He was chocolate and cream and also loved surfing.

After a few hours, Mark and Pretzel trudged contentedly up the beach. Pretzel stopped abruptly and let out a growl.

“What is it, Pretzel?” asked Mark, concerned.

Just as abruptly, Pretzel’s ears went down and he continued up the beach as though nothing had happened.

That Sunday Pretzel behaved differently. Normally he was delighted when Mark’s friend Prue came over, but today he was reserved and uninterested.

“Is Pretzel okay today?” said Prue.

“He’s been a bit weird since this morning.” Mark replied.

“Let’s take him to the Purple Cafe!” suggested Prue.

Pretzel glanced up, bored.

Prue and Mark sighed sadly.

Mark took Pretzel down to the beach again. They sat in the sand in silence, not knowing quite what else to do. Eventually they stood up to leave, and Mark stepped on Pretzel’s tail. As Pretzel yelped, a shadow *whooshed* out.

It materialised in front of them, taking the form of a tall, foreboding, black, shadow-like silhouette. It was hazy, 2D, shifting and zipping like an old telly.

The sun hid behind the sudden grey clouds. The wind picked up, blowing sand into Mark and Pretzel’s eyes.

Pretzel yapped fearlessly while Mark stood frozen in fear. Mark panicked, and with his eyes shut tightly, he kicked sand at it. Amazingly, it shrunk, making a blood-curdling noise like the water draining from a bath. Then it disappeared altogether.

Mark shivered. That monster had been gnawing away at Pretzel’s soul! The sun came out and the wind stopped. Eyes wide they trudged back up the beach, the only sign that anything out of the ordinary happened was the footprints on the sand.