

Arianna Bones and the Fabulous Five—Stop Thief!
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It was rainy that day in the city of Munchberg. Cold and rainy. It was the kind of weather that gets into your bones and makes you want to eat a nice, hot meal. My name is Bones—Arianna Bones. My friend Marcus Muscle and I came to Munchberg last month for some fun and adventure. We knew that it is important to grow, feel good and perform at our best, and it seemed like Munchberg was just the place to learn how to do that. Now, everyone in town knows that I came here to try out being a detective. But when I walked into the Milk Monsieur, I was looking for a meal, not a mystery. The last thing I expected was a mystery about a missing meal...but that was just what I got.

The Milk Monsieur is a fine French restaurant, known for its calm, relaxing atmosphere, but today, things were anything but calm. As soon as he saw me walk in, Pierre—the head chef—ran right up to me.

“Sacre Bleu! We’ve been robbed!” he said. “All of our American cheese is missing, and we cannot even find the owner of our restaurant. Mademoiselle Arianna, you must come and save us from this American cheese-stealing madman!”

Intrigued, I asked him to show me the scene of the crime.

The kitchen of the Milk Monsieur was filled with the aroma of cheese. There were wheels of cheese, slices of cheese, hunks of cheese and chunks of cheese...but no American cheese! There were also gallons of milk, cartons of yogurt and many flavors of ice cream! But still, no American cheese anywhere, and Chef Pierre was quite upset indeed!

“How can this be? We have no enemies! All we want is for people to eat from the Milk Group to have strong bones and teeth. How are we supposed to do that without American cheese?”

Considering how hungry I was, the loss of the American cheese felt almost as tragic to me as it did to Chef Pierre. I was just about to start looking for clues when my cell phone rang. It was my friend Marcus.

“Arianna? Hi, it’s Marcus. I’m at the Meatery, and we’ve been robbed. Do you think you could come down here and have a look around, maybe see if you can find any clues?”

Two restaurants robbed in one day? Now that’s pretty strange. Marcus was trying to sound calm, but I could tell he was nervous, so I told him I would be right there. Then, I told chef Pierre about it, and he decided he wanted to come too.

A few minutes later, we arrived at the Munchberg Meatery. The maitre d’ of the Meatery was a big fellow with a big smile. He always wore a big cowboy hat, and even though I was new in town, he always recognized me and flashed me that big smile of his. Today was different, however.

“Hello, Arianna,” he said somberly. “They are expecting you in the kitchen. Please go on in.”

The kitchen of the Munchberg Meatery was filled with all the Meat Group foods you would expect. There were dried beans and peas, bowls of almonds, eggs, and lots and lots of meat. There was chicken, steak and peanut butter. There was turkey, pork, fish, and shrimp! There was also one very upset chef—my good friend Marcus. Marcus had only been working in the restaurant for a few days. He was not about to lose his job because of some missing food.

“Arianna, Arianna!” he said excitedly, “I’m so glad you’re here—we’ve been robbed!” I looked around the kitchen, but everything seemed to be in place.

“What’s missing?” I asked. “You seem to have every kind of protein imaginable here.”

“Are you joking? Can’t you see? All the hamburger is gone! Who would do such a thing?”

I couldn’t think of anyone offhand. As anyone that has ever eaten a hamburger by itself will tell you—it’s pretty boring.

“I can’t imagine.” I said. “Do you have any suspects in mind?”

“The protein in a hamburger helps build strong muscles and helps you grow. Everyone wants that.”

Well, that was true, but I knew I needed to narrow down the list of suspects to something less than “everyone.” I started to look for clues. Just then, my cell phone rang, and the voice on the other end sounded pretty upset.

“Arianna, Arianna, we need your help down at Vegetable Valley. We’ve been robbed!”

Three restaurant robberies? Now, I haven’t been a detective for long—just long enough to know that there’s no such thing as a coincidence. This was a big clue, and I needed to have a look. I told Marcus what had happened, and he grabbed his jacket.

“I’m going with you,” he said. “Business is slow anyway, and your adventure seems more exciting than mine!”

“Me too,” said Chef Pierre.

The scene at Vegetable Valley was the same. An agitated maitre d’ led us into a kitchen where we found an even more agitated chef. The kitchen was piled high with Vegetable Group foods of all sorts. Cucumbers, pumpkins, nine different kinds of lettuce, snow peas, squash, carrots...and so much more. I looked around to see what was missing, but as far as I could see, they had a whole farm in there.

“What was stolen?” I asked.

“Can’t you tell?” the chef replied, very upset. “All the tomatoes are gone! Who would do such a thing?”

Thinking back to the first (and last) time I had ordered plain, raw tomatoes from their menu, I couldn’t think of anyone.

“Perhaps someone who wants to see in the dark and to have healthy skin,” I said with a smile.

“Oh, everyone wants that,” she responded.

I contemplated the great health benefits of eating tomatoes for a moment, but then, something else started to occur to me. “Tomatoes,” I thought. “Hamburger, American cheese and now, tomatoes. Tomatoes and American cheese...” It was all beginning to make sense...

“Well, I should have a look around for clues,” I said. “Has the owner of the restaurant been told about the theft?”

“Actually, no one has seen the owner for a couple of days,” the veggie chef told me.

Marcus perked up at this. “That’s a funny coincidence—the owner of the Meatery is missing too.” Coincidence. There was that word again. And just as I was thinking that, my cell phone rang...again.

“Arianna, it’s Chef Freddie down at the Fruit Factory....”

“Let me guess—you’ve been robbed,” I said.

“Yes, but how did...”

“And what’s missing?”

“All our watermelons are gone. But how did...?”

“Have you contacted the owner of the restaurant?” I asked.

“Actually, I haven’t seen her at all today.”

“I’ll be right there.”

Marcus, the other two chefs and I found the kitchen at the Fruit Factory exactly as one would expect. Fruit everywhere—mangoes and kiwis, apples and oranges, cantaloupe, lemons—but no watermelons. And, just as the chef began telling us about the way eating foods from the Fruit Group can help heal cuts faster, my phone rang again. The voice on the other end was polite, but upset.

“I hate to bother you, Arianna, but we need your help down here at Great Grains.”

“Don’t tell me—some food has disappeared and the owner of your restaurant is nowhere to be found.”

“Well, the reason I called you is because some of our hamburger buns have been missing since this morning. But no, the owner has been here all day. In fact, the owners of the other four restaurants in town are here too. They’re all together in the back room, and they haven’t come out for hours.”

Eureka! That was all I needed to hear.

“I know what’s happened,” I said to the four chefs. “Follow me!”

As soon as we arrived at Great Grains, we met the head chef. “I know where your hamburger buns went,” I told him. “Take us to your back room.”

We walked past barrels of rice, bags of macaroni and teetering stacks of crackers, straight for the door to the back room. Once there, I stopped the group. “All of the missing food items are behind this door, and so are the people who took them. But they aren’t thieves.”

“How can you say that? They stole food right out of the kitchens!” said one of the chefs.

“You cannot steal what’s already yours,” I said. With that, I flung the door open and sure enough, there they were—all five restaurant owners, eating cheeseburgers and delicious watermelon!

“What is the meaning of this?” Chef Pierre asked—a little annoyed.

The owner of Great Grains put down his cheeseburger and stepped forward.

"I can explain," he said. "You see, at my restaurant, we just serve foods from the Grain Group. We're proud of this, because grains are a great source of energy. Then one day, we realized that there's no point having energy if you can't build the muscles that use the energy."

The owner of the Munchberg Meatery continued where his colleague left off. "And we at the Meatery realized that strong muscles have to be supported by strong bones."

"And strong, active people need to be able to heal quickly if they get hurt," offered the owner of the Fruit Factory.

"And everyone needs good night vision and healthy skin," continued the owner of Vegetable Valley.

"Not to mention the fact that a hamburger tastes much better with cheese!" I added.

"And a bun!" chimed Marcus.

Everyone laughed, and the first owner went on. "Exactly. So, we all got together and decided to open a new restaurant. We borrowed some food from our kitchens. We've been experimenting with combining foods from the different food groups, to make a better tasting, more balanced menu. That way, our customers will enjoy their food more, and they will also be getting the nutrients they need to grow, feel good and perform at their best. Of course, we're just at the beginning, and we're going to need more help to find all the foods we need. But for right now, all we need is a name for our new restaurant."

"What about—*The Fabulous Five*?" I offered.

The owners looked at one another, and all agreed. "Perfect!" said the owner of Vegetable Valley.

"Great. So, it looks like everything's settled, and we've got all the food we need right here—now...who brought the milk?"