

On my second Friday in a row off school, after Rain and I have raided the library and watched two animated films and three episodes of *Doctor Who*, we stroll down to the seafront. Seagulls nip at old plastic bottles left behind on the beach. A man with a metal detector scours the sand for treasures. It's drizzling as usual.

'Jenny's getting wet. Do you think she could get pneumonia?' Rain asks.

'No,' I say.

The man with the metal detector fingers the sand then pops something into his pocket.

'What about bronchitis?' Rain asks.

'Jenny's fine,' I say. Every few hours Rain thinks of a new ailment for Jenny. Sometimes she gets so worked up, it's a struggle to stop her calling an ambulance.

'Did you know that in Victorian times, one in three children died before they reached five years old?' Rain asks.

'I didn't know that,' I say.

'It's true. I read about it in one of the library books. What do you think it is nowadays? One in ten?'

I sigh. Sometimes being Rain's babysitter is tiring. 'I think I can say with one hundred per cent certainty that Jenny is not at risk of catching anything life-threatening.' I don't add that being plastic makes it impossible.