That Looks Useful

Agent Dali: Hello there! Welcome to Stories by the Sea. Young art detectives from Beechcroft Primary wrote stories inspired by this mural which is called Pipe Dreams. Take it away, agents!

(Very loud techno music through a speaker)

BOT: Excuse me...excuse me....hey you!

SQUIRREL: Sorry what was that?

BOT: Your speaker. It's too loud.

SQUIRREL: I didn't realise. I'll turn it down.

(music gets quieter)

SQUIRREL: Better?

BOT: Thanks. That's quite an impressive speaker you've got tied to this tree.

SQUIRREL: Just because I'm a squirrel doesn't mean I can't enjoy good music.

BOT: Fair enough.

SQUIRREL: Don't think I've seen you around here before.

BOT: Oh, I've been here a while now. You probably haven't seen me because I... like to keep myself to myself. And I have a lot of different disguises...um.... I mean clothes.

SQUIRREL: Right.

BOT: Are you hungry?

SQUIRREL: A bit, why?

BOT: There's a McDonalds round the corner. Want to come?

SQUIRREL: Yeah, why not?

JEFF: Order number 2709

BOT: That's us!

SQUIRREL: Looks delicious! Thanks Jeff.

JEFF: No problem Sandy. Hey, you!

BOT: Who me?

JEFF: Get out! You're barred!

BOT: I'm leaving! I'm leaving.

SQUIRREL: What was that? Why are you barred?

BOT: Oh, it was stupid. I just took one of their chairs.

SQUIRREL: Why?

BOT: It looked useful.

SQUIRREL: You can't go around taking chairs.

BOT: I can do anything.

SQUIRREL: Well, thanks for the nuggets but I must be getting back to my tree.

BOT: I'll give you a hand.

(extending arm noises)

SQUIRREL: What are you doing? Put me down! I don't like it!

BOT: Just giving you a lift back to your treehouse with my extending arm. I thought you'd like it.

SQUIRREL: Well I didn't. I'm a squirrel. I can climb trees by myself, thanks. Hey, let go of that!

BOT: But it looks useful.

SQUIRREL: You can't take that! That's my sound system!

(sounds of heavy metal footsteps)

SQUIRREL: I can't believe it. I've been robbed by a robot!

BOT: Look what I got! Feels like I won the jackpot!

AMY: Oh you're back.

BOT: What have you found Amy?

AMY: I'm sitting on it. They call it a swing.

BOT: What's it for?

AMY: Not sure. It just goes backwards and forwards.

BOT: Humans are weird.

AMY: Extremely weird. Half the stuff they make isn't even useful.

BOT: Some of it is though. This thing here makes really loud noises.

AMY: That's cool. Leave it over there with the other stuff. We have to get going.

BOT: What's the plan?

AMY: I've heard there's an abandoned hospital nearby. I bet we'll find loads of cool stuff there.

BOT: Sounds good. Let's go.

(Techno music, then the airy sound of a large abandoned hospital. Bot and Amy's voice are echoey.)

AMY: Told you, there's tons of useful stuff in here. Look at all these tubes!

BOT: These glass jars look useful too.

AMY: Look! Beds on wheels!

BOT: Give me a push!

AMY: Bot, we don't have time to muck about.

BOT: You're no fun, Amy.

AMY: I am!

*B*OT: You're not!

AMY: You're getting on my nerves. Stop it.

BOT: Fine.

AMY: I'll go upstairs, see if there's anything useful here. You search in there.

BOT: Accident and emergency…sounds promising.

(Techno music)

SQUIRREL: And he ripped my sound system off my tree and made off with it!

JAY: No way!

SQUIRREL: Yes way. And Jeff the Badger was telling me loads more stuff has gone missing recently.

JAY: Like what?

SQUIRREL: Like his best deep fat fryer.

JAY: No way, his chips won't taste the same now.

SQUIRREL: I know.

JAY: And you think it's these robots?

SQUIRREL: Has to be. There's not been any humans here for ages now.

JAY: True. But how are we going to defeat them? You said they were massive with extendable arms and we're just a squirrel and a woodland bird.

SQUIRREL: But you can fly, Jay! And I'm small and fast. We might not be big but we can be sneaky and outsmart them.

JAY: We have to give it a go. We can't let them walk in and crash our city.

SQUIRREL: The one I met was heading for the abandoned hospital. I think we should go there and see what's happening.

JAY: Lead the way!

(techno music then back to the airy abandoned hospital and the echoey voices)

BOT: Amy? Amy? Ah there you are. Look at this! You put them together and it makes this massive spark!

AMY: Nice work, Bot. And I found all these metal poles in a cupboard marked crutches.

BOT: I think we've got enough.

AMY: I think so too. Enough to crash this city, take down the towers…

BOT: the houses

AMY: the stadium

BOT: the lot!

(squeaking wheel sound)

BOT: What's that noise?

AMY: I dunno. It isn't me.

BOT: Look! That green curtain thing is moving.

AMY: You're imagining things.

BOT: I'm not, look.

(squeaking wheel noise)

AMY: You're right! Who's doing that?

(*sound of a curtain being suddenly pulled back)*

BOT: It's you!

SQUIRREL: Jay! Now!

(sounds of electrocution)

BOT & AMY: Ahhhhhh!

(sounds of robots collapsing)

JAY: We did it!

SQUIRREL: They asked for it!

JAY: The city is ours again!

SQUIRREL: Let's go tell Jeff the good news!

The Wall of Faces

(Door opens and closes. A small radio is playing techno music quietly in the background)

Anna: That you Trevor?

Trevor: Yeah, where you at?

Anna: In here, just putting my face on.

Trevor: Funny, I was just about to take mine off. It's been pinching me like crazy.

Anna: I hate it when that happens.

Trevor: Yeah, you got to have a face that fits.

Anna: Absolutely. Right, how do I look?

Trevor: 100% like a robot.

Anna: That's the main thing, eh?

Trevor: Where you off to then?

Anna: I'm meeting up with Emily. We're going shopping. Need a few bits.

Trevor: Can you get me some more engine oil? It might loosen my metal face up a bit. Make it less pinchy.

Anna: Crikey, Trevor, your face looks really sore!

Trevor: It is a bit, yeah.

Anna: Let me see what I can get for you while I'm out.

Trevor: Thanks! See you later.

Anna: Bye!

Trevor: Keep that face on nice and tight, mind! You don't want it slipping and giving you away.

Anna: Don't worry, I'll be careful.

(sounds of traffic)

Emily: Anna, over here!

Anna: Hi, Emily. You ok?

Emily: I'm sweating like mad under this metal costume. I ran like two kilometers to get here.

Anna: Why did you run?

Emily: I panicked. Saw a Blue Light Robot and didn't want to be caught with these.

(bag rustles)

Anna: Cheese and pickle sandwiches?

Emily: They're a dead giveaway I'm not a robot.

Anna: Why did you bring them?

Emily: I get so hungry wearing this heavy metal costume all the time. I have to bring a snack or I feel faint.

Anna: Fair enough, but you're right, it's risky. Right, we going in then?

Emily: Yeah.

(sounds of a complicated secret knock.)

Anna: I don't know how you remember that secret knock, it's so complicated.

Emily: It's from the middle eight of Paranoid Android by Radiohead.

Anna: Oh, I did wonder.

(A creak as the door opens)

Emily: We're in. Hello June.

June: Hello there! Nice to see you.

Anna: What you doing without your face on, June?

June: We're safe enough here. Only humans who know about this place.

Anna: Still a bit risky, June.

June: I'll take my chances.

Anna: Right, I need some engine oil please, also some chilli noodles and some strawberry jam.

June: Right you are.

Emily: And I'll take some more sliced cheddar and a large tub of margarine please. Oh, and a jar of pickle.

June: You do love pickle!

Emily: You don't mind if I eat a sandwich while I'm here, do you June? I'm ravenous!

June: Be my guest!

(sound of bag rustling)

Anna: June, do you have any faces, by any chance?

June: No, sorry, I haven't.

Anna: Ah, pity. Trevor's face is really pinching him badly. He needs a new one.

June: For that you'd need to go to the wall.

Anna: Really? It's miles away, isn't it?

June: It is, but you've no choice these days. All the other face shops have gone out of business.

Emily: How is she supposed to find it, June? None of us have ever been to the wall.

June: I'll draw you a map. Keep it secret, mind. You don't want the robots finding out where you're going.

Anna: Definitely not.

June: It's too far to walk. You got a car?

Anna: No.

June: Then get one.

Anna: Right, yeah.

June: Do you need anything else?

Emily: No thanks June. You good, Anna?

Anna: I think so. Thanks, June.

John: Take care.

(sound of door opening again, then traffic)

Anna: Get a car, she says. It's not that easy!

Emily: I know, but sounds like you don't have much choice. You know I'll help you if I can, don't you?

Anna: Thanks Emily.

Emily: No problem, Anna.

(techno music)

Trevor: Steal a car?

Anna: What other choice do we have?

Trevor: I'll just make some adjustments to my face and make do.

Anna: It's no good, Trevor. We have to face it.

Trevor: I guess so.

Anna: You need a new face. And for that we have to go to the wall.

Trevor: I don't like it.

Anna: Neither do I, but we have to be brave. At least June gave us this map to help guide us.

Trevor: The Wall of Faces. Sounds terrifying.

Anna: Emily said she'd come with us.

Emily: That's kind of her.

Anna: Three minds are better than two.

Trevor: Let's go tonight, before I change my mind.

Anna: I'll let her know.

(night time traffic sounds)

Emily: What about that one?

Trevor: Looks a bit old and rusty. I don't think it would make it to the Wall of Faces.

Emily: Fair enough. This one?

Anna: The steering wheel is triple locked.

Emily: Oh yeah. This one?

Trevor: Um, yeah, why not. You keep watch, I'll force the door open.

(sounds of metal forcing, then a door unlocking)

Anna: Quick, get in.

(sounds of cables, buzzing then the engine starts)

Emily: Where did you learn to hot wire cars, Anna?

Anna: I'll tell you another time. Got the map, Trevor?

Trevor: Yep.

Anna: Then let's go!

(sounds of a very fast car revving away)

Emily: Crikey, look at it!

Anna: You can barely see the sky, the wall is so high!

Trevor: Let's not hang about. Get out and get investigating.

Emily: Are you looking for any type of face in particular, Trevor?

Trevor: Anything, so long as it fits properly!

Emily: Ok, ok, let's see what we can find.

(sound of walking over metal, like at a tip)

Anna: What about this one?

Trevor: Still a bit small. And it's starting to rust, look.

Anna: Oh yeah.

Emily: I've found a couple for you to try.

Trevor: Pass me the bronze one. Ooh, no, far too heavy.

Emily: Ok, how about this one. It's stainless steel I think.

Trevor: Yeah, that's a lot better. Good spot, Emily.

(sounds of sirens, helicopters)

Anna: Get down!

Emily: Do you think they followed the car?

Anna: No idea. I drove in the shadows as much as possible. And I parked in the tunnel. They can't spot it from the air.

Emily: Just keep really still. This is supposed to be a robot graveyard. Any movement will look really suspicious.

Trevor: I'm so sorry about this. It's all my fault.

Anna: You can't help needing a new face, Trevor.

Trevor: I suppose.

Emily: Keep completely still!

(more sounds of helicopters, sirens, then they fade)

Trevor: Have they gone?

Emily: Just wait a bit longer. It could be a trap.

(sounds of nightime, tension)

Anna: I think it's safe to move.

Trevor: Straight back to the car everyone.

(sounds of walking on metal, then running, then a car engine starting)

Emily: Do you think things will ever change?

Anna: I dunno. Be nice not to have to pretend to be a robot, through, wouldn't it?

Trevor: Yeah. If we didn't have to hide, the first thing I'd do is go to the beach. I used to love swimming.

Emily: I'd go to a cafe and order the biggest sandwich they have. With fries on the side.

Anna: I'd go dancing. In a light swishy dress.

Emily: I miss wearing comfortable clothes.

Trevor: So do I.

(sirens in the distance)

Emily: Put your foot down Anna!

Sounds of a powerful car revving away

TV Tornado

(Sounds of a storm, then and a TV playing a waltz in the background)

Jimmy: That wind sounds dangerous.

Emma: Just a regular storm, Jimmy. Nothing to worry about.

George: I dunno, Emma. It sounds much stronger than usual.

Emma: Stop talking rubbish. I want to watch Strictly.

Jimmy: It's not your TV, Emma.

Emma: It's not your either, Jimmy. We took it from that house on the corner, remember.

George: I still don't think that was a good idea.

Emma: They had three TVs, George, and we had none. Anyway, if anyone asks, we say we were just borrowing it. To watch the Strictly final.

George: I dunno.

(stronger wind and storm sounds. TV interference noise)

Emma: What? No! Why isn't the TV working?

Jimmy: It'll be the storm blowing the aerial about.

Emma: But I need to know what score that waltz will get.

(more sounds of storm, smashing glass, creaking, cracking)

George: I think we've got bigger worries than that. Look at that crack right across the wall!

Jimmy: That isn't good. We should take cover in the basement.

Emma: What's the point of borrowing a TV if you can't even watch it?

Jimmy: Come on, Emma!

Emma: I don't care. I'm taking the TV with me.

(sounds of footsteps descending, storm continues)

Emma: This is boring. This is the most boring basement I've ever been in.

Jimmy: Well there's certainly no TV signal down here.

George: We could play I spy?

Jimmy: Yes. That will take our minds of things. You go first, George.

George: I spy with my little eye, something beginning with L.

Jimmy: Logs?

George: No

Emma: Litter?

George: No

Jimmy: Low ceiling?

George: Close.

Emma: Leak!

George: Yes!

Jimmy: The basement ceiling is leaking? That isn't a good sign.

(sounds of tornado, house being pulled apart)

George: I spy the sky!

Emma: Where's the house gone?

Jimmy: It's a tornado! Hold on tight to something heavy.

Emma: The TV! Grab the TV!

(sounds of whirling, fast winds, yelling)

George: Oh my gosh we're miles up!

Jimmy: I can see for miles.

Emma: It's like swimming in the air. It's amazing!

George: But how will we ever get down?

Jimmy: The tornado will drop us eventually.

George: Drop us?

Jimmy: Yeah. Hopefully over something soft.

George: Hopefully?

Emma: I think we're …falling!

(sounds of yelling. Then sounds of three splashes and a thud. Underwater sounds for a bit then they surface)

Jimmy: Told you George. The tornado's dropped us on something soft.

George: Yeah, the sea. Miles from anywhere!

Emma: Did you see the coral reef when you went underwater? It was so beautiful.

George: I wasn't looking. I was just screwing up my eyes and hoping for the best.

Emma: And we're not miles from anywhere, George. Look, a beach. Swim for it.

(swimming sounds, then a beach bar, waltz music in the background)

Jimmy: That sign says Welcome to Rio!

George: We've been blown all the way to Brazil?

Emma: Don't complain, George. It's beautiful.

Jimmy: Where's that music coming from?

Emma: I don't believe it!

George: What?

Emma: Over at that beach cafe. They've got our TV.

George: For the last time, it's not our TV Emma.

Emma: And they're watching Strictly! What are the chances!

George: There she goes.

Jimmy: I've never known anyone so obsessed with a dance competition.

George: Me neither. We'd better follow her.

Jimmy: George.

George: Yes.

Jimmy: Do you speak any Portuguese?

George: No, why?

Jimmy: Because I don't think we're going home any time soon.

George: That's true. Tornados aren't like Easyjet. It's not like we can book a return flight.

Jimmy: And I didn't have my passport in my pocket when we were swept up.

George: Nor me. I don't expect Emma did either.

Emma: George! Jimmy! Come try this Brazilian lemonade! It's amazing!

George: Ah well, it could be worse.

(The sound of the waltz gets louder)

Agent Dali: You've been listening to Stories by the Sea. Remember, there's nine listening stations in this sound walk. Where might you go next?