

### Chapter 3

#### Waverley

"A haiku," said Wompy, "is a kind of poem. It comes from Japan, but nowadays people all over the world write haiku. Here's a real Japanese one, just to give you the idea:

Plum trees in blossom  
a young woman sits alone  
reading a letter.

"That one has seventeen syllables. A haiku must have no more than seventeen syllables. That makes it short enough to say in a single breath.

"But that's just the form of a haiku. That's not what a haiku *is*. A haiku comes out of really noticing something around us. You just have to be open and aware. Then a haiku will write itself." Here Wompy stomped his foot loudly.

"You could think of it like beachcombing. When you go beachcombing, you wander along the shore of the loch, and from time to time you notice something. You stop to pick it up and look at it. It catches your eye because it's beautiful or unusual.

"It's the same with haiku. You simply need to attend to things, notice what you see and feel in a moment. Then get it down in just a few words. Anyone can do it." (Clomp!) "Someone said a good haiku should be as simple as porridge."

"Porridge isn't simple," said Beth. "It's quite difficult. You have to get the temperature just right and add just the right amount of salt."

"Or honey," added Grampa.

"I see what you mean," said Wompy, and paused a moment, thinking. "And I suppose haiku are difficult too. Simple in one way, difficult in another.

"There has to be something about what you notice, and also something about how you notice it. You have to notice with your heart as well as your eyes. Then the words must be true to what you see and to how you feel about it." (Clomp!)

"But I still say that anyone can do it. You'll see when you start writing some."

"I can do it!" cried Tosh enthusiastically. "How about this? -

In Wompy's garden  
Baby Brother's icecream  
all over the place."

Wompy laughed. "Well, you're getting the idea."

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"But, Mr Wompy, what about a story?" said Beth. "We can't go without a story. Could we have one about Waverley Bear?"

Stories about Waverly Bear were one of Wompy's specialities. She was called Waverley after the station in Edinburgh where she was found when she first arrived from Russia. She was a very astute bear. She was always getting brilliant ideas and solving problems.

All the bearns wanted to be like Waverley. "What an astute bear!" they would say whenever one of them had a good idea.

"Well, just a short one," said Wompy. "Then you and your Grampa must get on with planning the contest.

"This is a true story about my good friend Waverley Bear:

Not so long ago, but longer than any of you bearns remember, Waverley Bear visited Bearloch. By then she was already famous for her inventions.

Her most celebrated invention at that time was Scotch pancakes. It was Waverley Bear who invented Scotch pancakes, so that bears would have something to put their honey on, and not have to put their paws in the jar. With this invention Waverley prevented no end of sticky paws and sticky bears.

When I heard about Waverley Bear, I wrote to ask her if she would invent something to help me with my stories, and it was she who invented the grandfather clock I have downstairs in the library. As you know, it's not an ordinary clock. The hands go backwards and they go at four times the speed of an ordinary clock. I use it when I need to think myself far back in time for one of my stories.

Waverley herself brought it here to give it to me. That was how she got to visit Bearloch.

She was always very curious and interested in everything. That was often how she got her ideas. "Ooooooh!," she would say, in her squeaky voice, when something caught her attention. Then she would take off her glasses while she thought about it. If she got an idea she would say "Aaah! Well, well! Aaaaah!"

She had several good ideas in Bearloch, but the best one was when she invented glof.

While I was showing her round the place, I took her to the sand dunes out near the entrance to the loch - where the glof course is now. She'd never seen sand dunes before.

There was a strong wind and sand was blowing in my eyes, but Waverley was all right with her spectacles on. "Ooooh!," she said, leaving her specs on this time. But she had a dreamy look in her eyes.

"So what do you do here?" she said.

"Not a lot. Sometimes children play hide-and-seek, hiding behind the tussocks and the hillocks."

"But there's so much potential." And she set off running excitedly up and down the dunes, letting out squeaks of "Oooh!" from time to time. She was quite short and I often lost sight of her, but then I would see a paw raised to feel the wind or hear a little cry of "eleventh" or "seventeenth" from behind some big tuft of sea grass.

"Aaah!" she was saying when she finally rejoined me. "Well, well. You can play a much better game here than hide-and-seek. There will have to be eighteen holes, scattered around the dunes. The players - two playing at a time - will sit in little wheeled carts attached to big kites. With one paw they steer the kites. With the other they hold a big club for whacking a ball until they get it into a hole. First to complete the course wins."

"It sounds difficult," I said.

"But exciting. Of course, it can only be played on a very windy day like today. And players will have to wear goggles."

Waverley never played it herself or even saw it played. She wrote us a copy of the rules and set off back to Edinburgh. I sometimes wonder what she'd make of the mayhem that a game of glof actually is. All that tangling up of kites and collisions of carts. All the scrabbling around in the windswept sand in search of the balls and even the holes. Players whacking each other instead of the balls.

But that's how Bairloch came to be known as the home of glof.