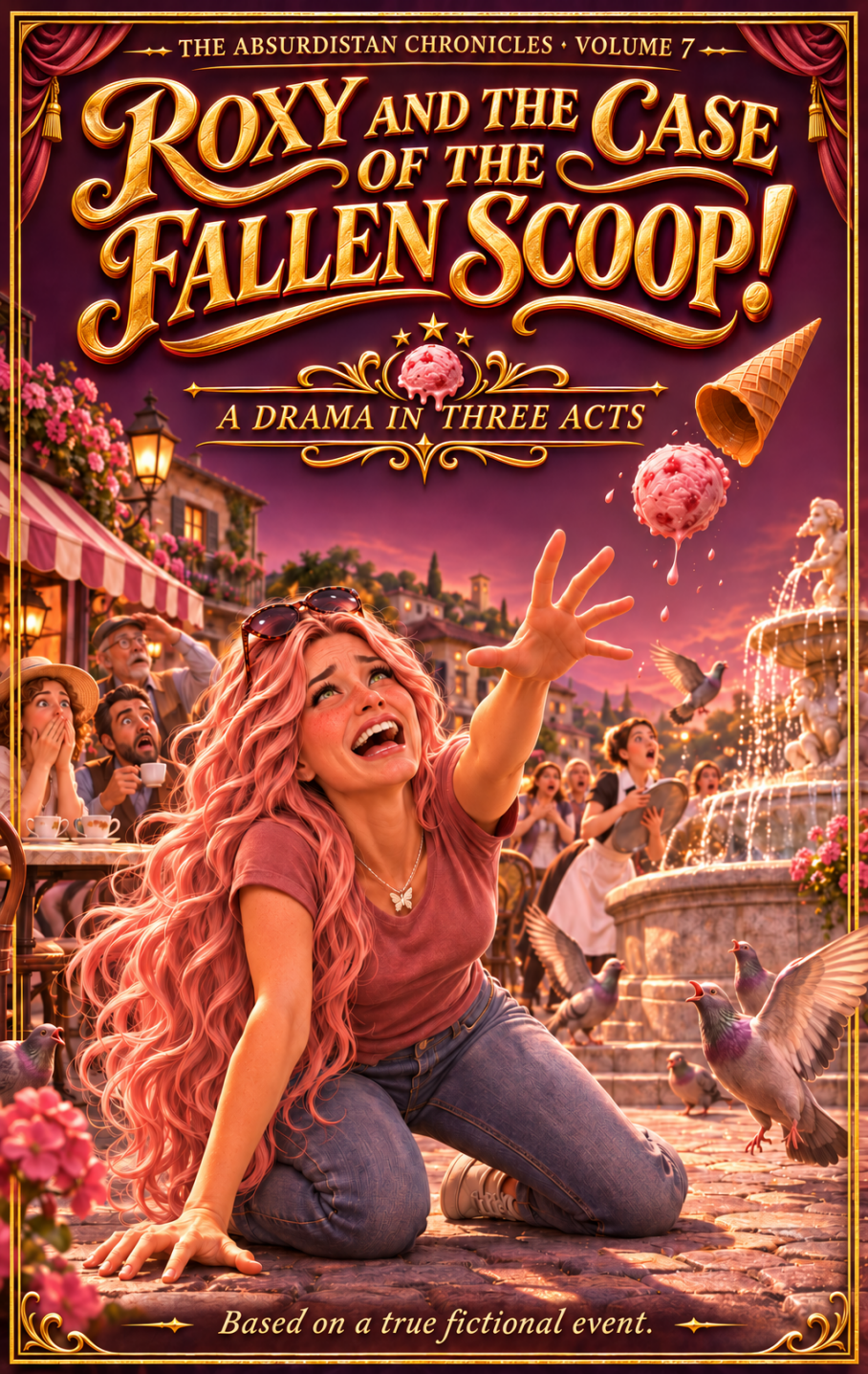
THE ABSURDISTAN CHRONICLES · VOLUME 7

ROXY AND THE CASE OF THE FALLEN SCOOP!

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS



Based on a true fictional event.

Roxy and the Case of the Fallen Scoop!

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS

For every place that is supposedly just around the corner.

A story from Goldhain and the neighbouring possibilities.

Based on a true fictional event.

Overture - Strawberry



It was the most beautiful scoop of strawberry ice cream that summer.

Round, rosy and perfectly balanced, it sat enthroned on a crisp cone. Tiny pieces of fruit gleamed in its surface. A drop had just begun to melt at the edge, slowly enough to look delicious and quickly enough to remind Roxy that happiness was meant to be enjoyed.

She stepped out of the ice-cream parlour and onto Goldhain's market square. Her long pastel-pink waves fell over her shoulders, her sunglasses rested on top of her head, and her butterfly necklace sparkled. She held the ice cream in one hand. The other she raised against the sun.

An accordion was playing by the fountain. Cups clinked on the cafe terraces. A pigeon strode across the cobbles with brisk dignity.

Roxy regarded the scoop.

"You are perfect," she said.

A breath of wind passed over the square.

The scoop tilted by one millimetre.

No one but Roxy understood at once that the world had just lost its innocence.

I. Act One - The Tilt

Roxy corrected the cone to the left. The scoop tilted to the right.

She corrected to the right. The scoop paused as if considering a sensible solution, then continued forwards.

"No," Roxy said calmly.

A child by the fountain looked over at her. The accordion player drew out one long note. The pigeon stopped.



Roxy lowered the cone to settle its centre of gravity. But between the ice cream and the cone lay a second, tiny curve: a barely visible pedestal of melted strawberry, smooth as glass. The large scoop was no longer resting. It was merely waiting.

Roxy held out her free hand. She could have caught the scoop if time and gravity had been open to negotiation. In Goldhain, many things were. Gravity was not among them.

The scoop came loose.

For one moment, it hovered in front of Roxy. A pink planet without an orbit. A small, perfect universe that had decided to abandon its place.

In that moment, Roxy saw everything that might have been. The first spoonful, though she owned no spoon. The careful bite at the edge. The little piece of cone at the end where melted strawberry would have gathered. An entire future passed before her, cool, sweet and devastatingly brief.

She put her left foot forwards. The cone in her hand remained astonishingly upright. Her free hand formed a cup. It was a good movement, quick and determined. Under other circumstances, it would have been enough.

But the scoop had already left the region in which hope and hand-eye coordination worked together.

"Please," said Roxy.

The scoop fell.

II. The Long Fall

Several witnesses later claimed that the fall had lasted at least ten seconds.

In fact, it lasted fewer than two. Tragedies, however, keep their own time.

Roxy reached forwards. Her fingertips missed the ice cream by the width of a cone crumb. A waiter on the cafe terrace lowered his tray. An elderly lady covered her mouth with one hand. The child by the fountain dropped a sugar sprinkle.

The pigeon flapped into the air despite being in no danger. This produced a second gust of wind whose later significance would become the subject of serious debate.

The scoop revolved once around its own axis. Roxy saw the tiny strawberry pieces, the light side, the dark side and, finally, the little dent it had acquired when it was placed on the cone in the shop.

Then it struck the cobbles.

The sound was barely audible. A soft plop.

The accordion player stopped in the middle of a bar.

A pink patch remained on the ground. Beside it lay a single piece of fruit. The cone in Roxy's hand was empty.

She looked down.

"Oh," she said.

It was the quietest word in the entire square.

III. The First Witnesses

People formed a circle.

Not out of curiosity, as they later stressed, but out of sympathy and because the route to the cafe happened to pass that way. The waiter brought a napkin. The child placed the lost sugar sprinkle beside it. The elderly lady offered Roxy half the biscuit from her saucer.



Roxy knelt before the patch. She was still holding the empty cone upright.

"Shall I fetch you another one?" asked the waiter.

Roxy looked at him. "You do not replace something before you understand it."

The waiter nodded, although he had no idea what needed to be understood.

Jen crossed the square, stopped at the edge of the circle and surveyed the scene. "What happened?"

The child pointed at the pigeon.

The pigeon pointed at nothing. It preened one wing and appeared entirely free of remorse.

"We need statements," said Jen.

"We need a moment," said Roxy.

Everyone fell silent. Even the fountain seemed to splash more quietly.

Roxy placed the napkin beside the patch, not on top of it. Then she stood and drew a deep breath.

The waiter put a chair behind her. Roxy did not sit. The elderly lady took back the biscuit, wrapped it carefully and declared that it would remain available. The child searched the ground for more sprinkles and found two, which were laid beside the napkin like flowers.

A tourist tried to take a photograph. Mira, who had just reached the square, stepped wordlessly in front of his camera. He lowered it at once. Some moments were documented. Others asked permission first.

Roxy looked at the people in the circle. No one was laughing. That made matters both easier and far more solemn than they needed to be.

"Act One," she said. "Over."

IV. The Speech

Roxy did not make a long speech. Only a necessary one.

She spoke of impermanence, cone stability and the duty never to take a scoop for granted simply because the ice-cream parlour was still open. She reminded everyone that every ice cream travelled a dangerous road between freezer and first bite.

The accordion player began a quiet melody. The waiter set down his tray. Even the owner of the ice-cream parlour stepped outside to listen.

"This scoop," said Roxy, "was with me for only forty-seven seconds. But it was a very good scoop."

The child sniffed. His father handed him a napkin.

"It smelled of real strawberries. It was exactly the right colour. And it fell before I could taste even one bite."

That was the sentence that changed the mood. Sympathy became outrage.

"Not one bite?" asked the elderly lady.

Roxy shook her head.

A murmur moved through the crowd.

Jen drew out a small notebook. "Then this is no longer a mishap. This is a case."

Roxy looked towards the pigeon.

The pigeon took two steps backwards.

"Before we accuse anyone," Jen said, "we secure the scene."

She pulled a length of blue yarn from her pocket and stretched it between two chairs. The cordoned-off area was just under a metre across. People now had to make a three-step detour, which they accepted with remarkable seriousness.

The waiter placed an upturned glass over the single piece of fruit. The owner brought out an ice pack but did not put it on the patch, because Leyla warned that this might alter its original shape.

Within minutes, the melted scoop had acquired more protection than many of Goldhain's historic buildings.

V. Act Two - The Mourning

News travelled quickly.

Ruby arrived with cinnamon rolls for those waiting. Mira brought her camera, though she photographed not the patch but the wind direction in the flags above the square. Leyla placed a small spirit level beside the cone. Nika checked the past hour's weather data on her phone.

Roxy sat on the rim of the fountain. The empty cone lay on a napkin beside her.

"I'm sorry," Ruby said, offering her a roll.

"Thank you." Roxy took it but did not eat. It felt too soon to accept another round pastry.

Mira sat beside her. "Would you like me to delete the pictures?"

"What pictures?"

"The ones of you outside the shop. With the scoop."

Roxy thought for a moment, then shook her head. "No. It was happy then."

Mira did not put an arm around her; Roxy's hair already occupied enough room. She simply sat beside her.

In the square, the others examined the wind, the cobbles and the cone. For an ordinary accident, it was an exceptionally thorough act of mourning.

VI. The Suspects

Jen conducted the questioning.

First came the wind. Nika reported that a westerly gust of eleven kilometres per hour had been recorded at the time of the fall. Strong enough for hair, weak for scoops.

Next came the pigeon. It was assigned the name Witness A, because Jen maintained its innocence until evidence said otherwise. The child claimed that Witness A had flapped its wings shortly before the fall. Mira produced a photograph: the pigeon had indeed flapped, but only after the scoop had come loose.

"Alibi," said Jen.

The pigeon pecked at a crumb and declined to comment further.

The third suspect was the paving. Leyla measured a two-degree incline. "Unattractive, but not causal," she ruled.

The fourth was the sun. Nika calculated the rate of melting. The ice cream should have remained safe for another four minutes.

The cone maker was questioned as well. She explained the manufacturing process, the usual thickness of the walls and the precise angle of the opening. Ruby sampled a comparison cone

and confirmed that it was crisp. Jen noted this down, although crispness had no discernible effect on the fall.

Mira displayed her photographs in chronological order. In the first, Roxy was still standing in the doorway. In the second, the scoop was leaning slightly forwards. In the third, the wind could be seen in Roxy's hair, but the cone itself remained straight.

"You didn't spill it," said Mira.

Roxy had not realised she blamed herself until the words lifted the blame away.

At last, Jen placed the cone on the table.

Everyone looked at it.

"The final vessel," she said.

Roxy ran a finger along the rim. "It did what it could."

Leyla raised the spirit level. "We shall establish that."

VII. The Reconstruction

The owner supplied three test scoops: vanilla, chocolate and a neutral potato ball from the kitchen, which did not melt and which no one wished to eat.

The fall was reconstructed in the square. Roxy stood in the same place. Mira marked the position of her shoes. Nika measured the wind. Leyla held the spirit level against the cone.

The potato ball stayed put.

So did the vanilla.

The chocolate scoop tilted slightly but was rescued into a cup in time. It later went to the child who had already contributed a sprinkle.

For a fourth trial, Lin placed a small wooden wedge beneath the cone. The potato did not roll. Then she put a marble underneath it. The potato shot sideways at once and struck Jen's shoe.

Everyone looked at the marble.

"The principle," Lin said, "is conclusive."

Roxy picked up the potato ball. It now had a flat side and smelled of nothing. "That was very brave of it."

Ruby took it away for soup. In Goldhain, even evidence was spared from waste whenever possible.

"The cone is stable," said Leyla.

Jen peered into the empty interior. A small round impression clung to the bottom.

"What was underneath?"

The owner frowned. "Nothing, normally."

Together, they went inside the ice-cream parlour. The scoop was lying behind the counter. Beside it sat a tiny tasting ball, the kind sometimes placed on a cone for a sample.

The owner went pale. "I put the large scoop on top of it."

Two scoops. One visible, one concealed.

A foundation made of ice cream.

VIII. The Expert Report

Leyla drafted the report with great care.

The upper scoop had been correctly formed. The cone was structurally sound. The wind had accelerated the event but had not caused it. The decisive factor was the small tasting ball between cone and main scoop, which had acted like a ball bearing.

"A classic case of inadequate structural engineering," said Leyla.

"And excessive roundness," added Lin, who had meanwhile arrived with a small model.

The owner apologised. "I wanted to give you something extra."

Roxy looked at her. The woman was genuinely distressed. Behind her, fresh cones waited, clean and empty.

"The extra was kind," said Roxy. "It was only in a dangerous location."

She considered the small tasting ball, now resting in a chilled dish for evidential purposes. It was not guilty. It had merely found itself, at the wrong time, beneath too great a

responsibility.

Jen closed the notebook. "Case solved."

Several people in the square applauded. The pigeon flapped onto the rim of the fountain and received its exoneration with dignified indifference.

Roxy breathed out. Grief was easier when it came with an explanation.

IX. Act Three - A New Beginning

The owner prepared a new ice cream.

This time, there was no cone. She chose a deep glass dish with a broad base. Into it she placed three scoops: strawberry, vanilla and chocolate. None rested on another. Each had a place of its own, with a wafer at the edge that was required to support nothing.

Roxy watched every movement.

"Would you like sauce?" asked the owner.

"Only if it is structurally safe."

Leyla inspected the dish. "Approved."

The strawberry scoop sat at the top, but deep enough in the glass to be beyond the reach of even a gust. Roxy accepted the dish in both hands.

The people in the square formed another circle. This time, not out of concern but anticipation. The accordion player began a more hopeful tune.

Roxy raised the spoon.

Before tasting, however, she looked towards the small pink patch on the cobbles. The sun had almost dried it.

"For the first one," she said.

Then she took the first spoonful.

The spoon broke through the smooth surface with a quiet crack. Underneath, the ice cream was softer, as though the scoop had kept its composure only on the outside. Roxy let it melt on her tongue for a moment. No haste, no wind and no inquisitive gravity could take that part back now.

The owner stood in the doorway, unconsciously holding her breath. When Roxy smiled, she visibly relaxed. Not because a dish of ice cream could undo an accident, but because sometimes making amends looked exactly like this: three scoops, a deep rim and the willingness to wait for the first spoonful.

X. The Taste

The ice cream tasted of strawberries.

Not of loss, not of gravity and not of a public inquiry. Simply of strawberries, cool and sweet, with tiny pieces of fruit.

Roxy closed her eyes. The square waited.

"Good?" asked the child.

She opened her eyes. "Very good."

A cheer broke out. It was disproportionate but sincere. The waiter raised his tray. Ruby distributed the remaining cinnamon rolls. Jen wrote closed beneath her notes.

Roxy ate slowly. The second spoonful was vanilla, the third chocolate, the fourth strawberry again. Every scoop remained in the dish. The deep rim fulfilled its duty with quiet reliability.

The pigeon came closer. It stood beside the table and eyed the empty wafer at the edge of the dish.

"You were innocent," Roxy told it.

The pigeon tilted its head.

Roxy broke off a small piece of wafer and placed it on the cobbles.

The pigeon ate it.

Reconciliation proved surprisingly crisp.

XI. The Memorial

The next morning, a small sign stood in the square.

It was not official. Jen had cut it from cardboard, Mira had drawn a tiny scoop on it, and Leyla had propped it perfectly straight against a flowerpot. It read: A strawberry scoop fell here. It was investigated.

Roxy laughed so hard that she had to hold on to the fountain.

People stopped, read the sign and told one another their versions of the story. In one, the scoop had fallen from the church tower. In another, the pigeon had saved it in a dramatic dive. The truth - two scoops stacked on top of each other - was almost as strange and therefore prevailed.

The ice-cream parlour introduced a new sundae: the "Roxy." Three scoops, deep rim, wafer on the side. Part of the price went towards the maintenance of the market-square paving, although no one knew what maintenance it required.

The mayor insisted on a short inauguration. He unveiled the sundae even though it had been plainly visible on the counter, and spoke about

safe routes to enjoyment. Leyla was officially commissioned to test the tables in the square for inclines. Two were indeed crooked, though in the harmless direction.

The pigeon appeared during the speech and perched on the little sign. Jen interpreted this as the exonerated party's approval. Nika conducted no further questioning.

Roxy did not order another one straight away. Great events needed distance.

But she photographed the sign and kept the empty cone in a small box.

Not out of grief.

Out of respect for structural engineering.

XII. The New Rule

One week later, Roxy was sitting outside the ice-cream parlour again.

Before her stood a dish containing two scoops. She had personally insisted that they be placed side by side. The owner had nodded without asking questions.

The child from the fountain passed by and pointed at the dish. "Aren't you afraid they'll fall again?"

Roxy considered this. "A little."

"Then why do you eat ice cream?"

"Because otherwise it only gets cold."

The child appeared to find this answer reasonable.

The drama had not taught Roxy to fear scoops. It had taught her not to postpone the first spoonful. It had taught her that a deep rim was not a sign of cowardice. And it had taught her

that pigeons made poor witnesses but excellent wafer companions.

A small handwritten rule now hung above the table: After ice cream comes more ice cream.

Roxy drew her spoon across the strawberry scoop and took a large bite.

The wind lifted her hair.

The ice cream stayed.

Finale - Three Scoops

By the end of the summer, all Goldhain knew the story.

They did not tell it because a scoop of ice cream had fallen. That happened every day. They told it because Roxy had turned two seconds of gravity into a complete three-act drama, with witnesses, an expert report, reconciliation and a better sundae dish.

Roxy sat outside the cafe with three scoops safely below the rim. The pigeon waited beside an empty wafer. By the fountain, the accordion played the same melody as on the first day, this time all the way to the end.

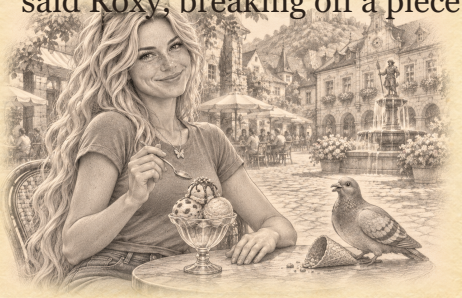
Roxy raised her spoon. "Act One," she said, and took strawberry.

"Act Two." Vanilla.

"Act Three." Chocolate.

The pigeon pecked the wafer.

"Encore," said Roxy, breaking off a piece for it.



No scoop fell. No one made a speech. The audience consisted only of a bird, a waiter and two people at the next table who knew nothing about the whole affair.

It was a perfectly uneventful afternoon.

A gust of wind rose. Napkins lifted, leaves rustled, and the awning of the ice-cream parlour creaked. Instinctively, Roxy put one hand on the dish. The three scoops did not move. The broad base stood firm, the deep rim held, and the wafer lay safely on the table.

She took her hand away again.

Perhaps trust was nothing more than knowing where the rim was.

Roxy loved it.