



CHAPTER 1

THE VISIT

“No one’s making you come,” I said, looking at my girlfriend’s moody face.

“But it’s every Sunday, Lucas!” Kay moaned. “And what’s the point? She doesn’t know you. She doesn’t even know what planet she’s on!”

That was true. My great gran, Granny-May, as I’d always called her even though her name was Mabel, thought she was a little kid again. A five-year-old rather than almost ninety. But I still liked to visit her now and then.

I tried to explain to Kay. “OK, so she’s old and her head is all mixed up. But she still likes visitors.”

I stood in Kay’s doorway, waiting for her to make up her mind. We’d been seeing each other for four months now. And even though she was sometimes a bit moody, I liked her — a lot!

She flashed those beautiful eyes at me, trying to get her own way. “Lucas, I hate that care home, it’s boring and full of smelly old people.”

“You’ll be old and smelly one day,” I said, then winked. “Actually...”

She dived on me, prodding, poking, her long black hair swishing. “Cheek! I don’t smell!”

“Only of roses!” I told her, laughing, liking the feel of her hands all over me. Even though some of those jabs hurt. Fending her off, I said, “Anyway, I’m going to see my great gran. Come if you want.”





CHAPTER 2

CHESTER

Alice sat bolt upright. Her left side had gone numb and she felt stiff. She couldn't figure out why she was on her bedroom floor but then everything came flooding back. Her assignment, the storm, and Chester!

"Chester!" she called out as she stood up.
"Chester, are you still here?"

She ran round her room looking for any signs of the black cat.

"Alice, is everything OK?" her mum called out to her from the other bedroom.





CHAPTER 1

THE QUEENS

“Don’t tell me you want to make friends with the Queens,” said Jess.

She grabbed a handful of crisps and shoved them into her mouth.

Mia shrugged. “I’m just curious,” she said.

She wasn’t just curious about the Queens. She was obsessed. There was Lauren, a tall girl with long, blonde hair and a fake smile. There was Savannah, who dyed her hair black and looked like she should be hanging around in a graveyard somewhere. And there was Gabriella, who wore a loose jumper.

“You’re wasting your time,” said Jess.

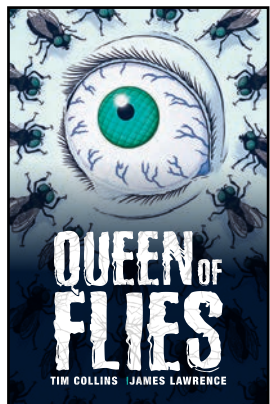
She tipped her head back and poured the last of the crisps into her mouth. Salty fragments tumbled down onto her jumper.

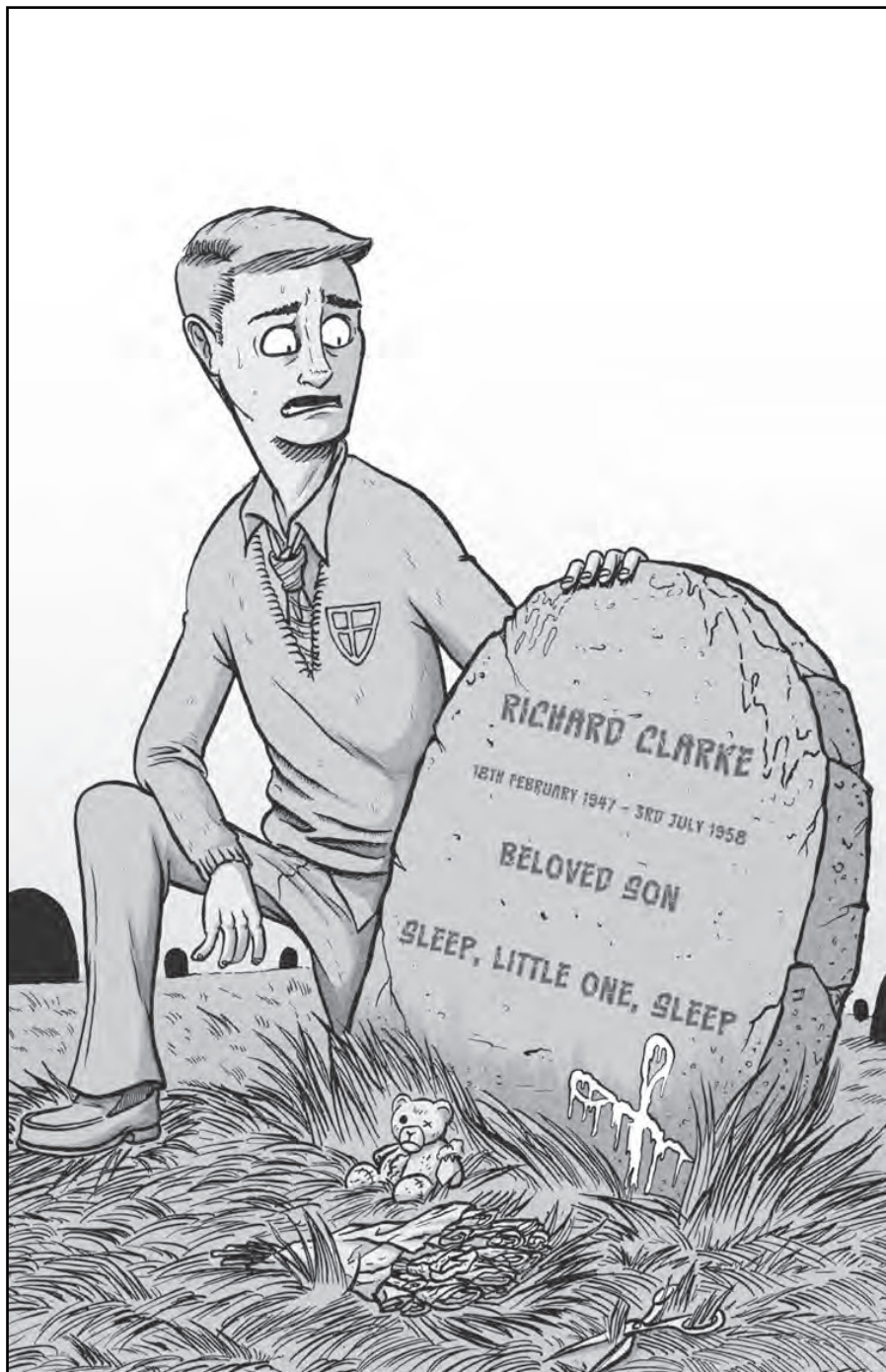
“They’ll never talk to you,” said Jess through a mouthful of greasy crisps.

Mia wondered why Jess was so certain. Maybe she was just afraid of losing her as a friend.

When she’d joined the school two months ago, the seat next to Jess had been one of only four free ones. A broad grin had spread across her face when Mia had chosen it.

But Jess didn’t need to worry. Mia didn’t want to join the Queens, she just wanted to talk to them and get a closer look. She thought she’d seen something the day before. It was something impossible. Something she couldn’t have seen. Yet she was sure of it.





Man was near? What if he was right here?
He could have been waiting here all along,
next to the grave of one of his victims.

What had he said? Turn away and run? Don't
even glance?

I told myself to grow up. Of course there wasn't
a ghost in the graveyard with me. There were no
ghosts anywhere. They didn't exist.

I forced myself to look around. In the far corner
of the graveyard a gardener was clipping long
grass with shears. Next to him was an apple tree.
Some of the fruit had fallen down and broken
apart on the ground.

No scissors. No ghosts. Just my stupid imagination.

I needed to go home. It was time to write up my
Scissor Man project and hand it in. It was getting
under my skin.





CHAPTER 1

OAKWOOD PARK

No air. Can't breathe. Can't move. Something heavy, weighing her down. Crushing her. Filling her eyes, mouth, nose. Darkness. A smell...

"Trina! Trina, wake up!"

Trina couldn't speak for a few moments after waking, she was too busy taking in deep breaths of wonderful, wonderful air. Her mum was kneeling by the bed, holding her hand the way she used to when Trina was tiny.

"Nightmare?" her mum asked, and Trina managed to nod. "The same one?"

"Yes," Trina said when she could talk again. "The same one." It had been four nights now. Every time she fell asleep she found herself trapped, buried alive, in a state of total terror.

She sat up in bed, knocking something to the floor. It was a pink felt rabbit with a purple bow around its neck. "Is that Betsy Bunny?" she said in amazement, recognising a childhood toy that she hadn't seen for years.

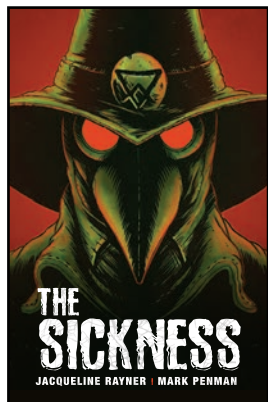
Her mum smiled sheepishly. "I got her out of the loft. Cuddling up with Betsy always helped you when you had bad dreams."

"Yeah, when I was five!" Trina rolled her eyes in disbelief. "I'm *fifteen*, Mum!"

"Sorry, darling," said her mum. "I'll put her back."

"No. Don't bother. I'll do it later."

But as soon as her mum had gone, Trina picked up the toy and held it tight. The nightmares had made her feel like a small child again, weak and





Noah squinted into the darkness. He could make out figures moving between the tree trunks. They began to run in the direction he was heading. Their laughter was high-pitched and excited. He couldn't see anyone's face.

Noah could feel his legs trembling, but he couldn't stop following the fairies deep into the trees. The ground became steeper as they dipped down, down, down. Noah didn't know how far they'd gone or what they were heading for. He kept thinking of his sketchbook lying in the grass by the cottage. Of his aunt finding it after she'd told him not to leave the house. Would they think he'd fallen from the cliffs?

The fairies called Noah's name again, pulling him from his thoughts. The air was thick with magic. It tightened its hold on him. Noah was powerless. All he could do was follow.

He brushed past nettles and thorny branches, deeper and deeper, downwards into the darkness.

