



CHAPTER 1

FRANK'S FRYER

"Why don't you sit down?" Mum said. Everyone knows that when your mum says that, she means *sit down now!*

So that's what I did. I sat down opposite Mum and Dad, crossed my arms and stared at the mark on the kitchen table where I'd put the frying pan down last year and burnt the wood.

"Miss Carter's been on the phone," began Mum. "She said you've been skipping classes."

I gave nothing away. I just kept staring at the burn mark.

“She’s worried about you.”

“You mean she’s worried about my grades,”
I mumbled.

“Of course she is,” snapped Dad. “You’re
spending your maths lessons in the toilets!”

“Actually, I was on the tennis courts,” I replied.
I gave him what I hoped was a smug look. “Extra
PE, you know?”

Dad banged his hands down on the table,
making us all jump. “Is this all some sort of joke
for you? Do you think it’s funny?”

I shrugged. He wouldn’t understand. None of
them would. Sometimes it was just all too much:
the constant reminders that we’re in Year 11
now, the revision sessions and booster lessons
and mock exams. Sometimes the thought of
sitting through another class made my skin itch
and my head pound, and all I could do was find
somewhere quiet, somewhere as far away as
possible from where I was supposed to be.