



## CHAPTER 1

# SWEET LITTLE LIES

They say you can't fool all of the people all of the time. But I can. And I do.

Me and Kim, my best friend, walk home together every afternoon after school. Well, just to here, to the railway bridge. Then she goes her way. I go mine.

“See you tomorrow, Kim,” I say, reminding her about the homework.

“See you, Ella!”

With a wave, I head towards the smart tree-lined avenue, looking like I might go into any one of

the big posh houses at any second. I turn and wave. Kim waves back, and I walk on, school bag on my shoulder, long ponytail swishing.

I've been lying all my life. And I get away with it. Why tell the truth when you can fib? Anyway, that's what people would rather hear. They wouldn't *really* want to know the truth. So I keep the truth locked inside of me, and wrap a cloak of lies around myself every time I set foot outside my door.

I sneak one last look over my shoulder. Kim's gone. So I cross the road. Run down the entry between two big houses. Then I keep running. Eventually, I come out by the shops, then I cross the common towards the flats.

No one knows I tell lies. Not even the person these untruths are about — my mum. To my friends, my mum is a smart businesswoman. “Yes, she's a qualified freelance accountant,” I tell them. “She's up to her eyes in work. She has so many clients.”