



THEY GATHERED IN the lounge after breakfast. Mr Hepworth had fixed a large map of the coast to the wall. He pointed. 'Here's Whitby, where we are. And here,' he slid his finger northward along the coastline, 'is Staithes, where the coach will drop us this morning. Staithes used to be an important fishing port like Whitby, and there are still a few fishermen there, but it is a quiet village now. Captain Cook worked in a shop at Staithes when he was very young – before he decided to be a sailor.'

'Will we be going in the shop, Sir?'

'No, Neil Atkinson, we will not. Unfortunately, it was washed away by the sea a long time ago. However, if we are very lucky we might see a ghost.'

There were gasps and exclamations at this. 'Captain Cook's ghost, Sir?' asked James Garside. The teacher shook his head, smiling. 'No, James. Not Captain Cook's. A young girl's. There's a dangerous cliff at Staithes, a crumbling cliff, and the story goes that when this girl was walking under it one day, a chunk of rock fell and decapitated her. Who knows what decapitated means? Yes, Steven Jackson?'

'Sir, knocked her cap off, Sir.'

'No. Michelle Webster?'

'Squashed her, Sir?'

'Closer, but not right. 'Ellie-May Sunderland?'

'Sir, knocked her head off, Sir.'

'Correct.' He leaned forward, peering at the girl through narrowed eyes. 'Are you all right, Ellie-May – you look a bit pasty?'

'Yes, Sir.'

'Sure?'

'Yes, Sir.'

'Right. Well, there's a bridge over a creek at Staithes, and that's where the headless ghost has been seen. We'll be having a look round the village, then walking along the clifftop path to Runswick Bay. That's here.' He jabbed at the map again. A boy raised his hand.

'What is it, Robert Field?'

'How far is it, Sir?'

The teacher shrugged, smiling. 'A few miles. We'll find somewhere to eat our packed lunches on the way, and the coach will be waiting at Runswick to bring us back here. Right – it's a lovely sunny morning, so let's get started.'

Lisa saved Fliss a seat on the coach. As they roared along the coast road she said, 'We stayed awake ever so late in our room last night, talking. Telling jokes and that. It was brilliant.'

'You were all asleep before midnight, though,' said Fliss.

'How d'you know?'

'I passed your door at midnight. There wasn't a sound.'

'What were you doing, passing our door at midnight?'

'I went to the toilet. Or at least I think I did.'

'How d'you mean, you think you did – don't you know?'

Fliss pulled a face. 'No. It's all mixed up with this horrible dream I had.'

'What was it about, your dream?'

Fliss told her friend about the strange noises that had seemed to come from the linen cupboard, the number thirteen on the door, the footsteps she thought she'd heard later. 'It all seemed so real, Lisa. But then this morning I looked, and of course there was no number on the door and the sun was shining and everybody was shouting and messing about on the landing, and it

didn't seem real any more. D'you know what I mean?'

Lisa nodded. 'Sure. It was all a dream – you didn't go to the toilet and you weren't outside our door at midnight so you don't know what time we went to sleep, right?'

'Right. Except –'

'Except what, Fliss? What is it?'

'After the toilet, I dreamed I washed my hands, right? And it was one of those spurty taps where the water comes all at once and goes everywhere. Some went on the floor. Quite a lot, in fact. There didn't seem to be anything to mop it up with, and anyway I was too scared to hang about so I left it.'

Lisa shrugged. 'Dream water in a dream bathroom. So what?'

Fliss looked at her friend. 'It was still there this morning,' she said.