



‘WHAT ON EARTH’S going on here?’ The landing light came on, and there stood Mrs Evans, unfamiliar in a quilted dressing-gown and no make-up. She saw Ellie-May on the floor and hurried forward, dropping on one knee beside her.

‘She was – we were –’ Fliss floundered, seeking words which might make their story credible, while the teacher lifted Ellie-May’s head on to her lap and checked with hands and eyes for damage. Mrs Marriott appeared in a beige nightie, followed closely by Mr Hepworth in maroon pyjamas. The door of room

ten opened and Marie’s sleepy face peered out.

‘Marie Nero!’ snapped Mr Hepworth. ‘Get back into bed – now!’ The door closed. He looked at Ellie-May, sobbing in Mrs Evans’ arms, then at Gary, then at Fliss. ‘What’s all this about, Felicity Morgan – what’s happened to Ellie-May?’

‘Sir, she came up again. To go in the cupboard, only it’s not a cupboard. Look.’ She pointed, and then her heart sank. There was no number on the door. ‘There was a number, Sir. We all saw it. Thirteen. And Ellie-May opened it and it opened inwards, and inside –’ She stopped. There was disbelief in the teacher’s eyes, and the hard glint of anger. She dashed across to the door, twisted the knob and pushed.

It was locked. She pulled, but the door didn’t move. She turned, pointing. ‘Look at Ellie-May’s neck, Sir!’

‘Yes, look at it,’ said Mrs Evans, grimly. She tilted the girl’s head to one side and lifted the hair. Ellie-May’s neck was bruised and scratched.

‘She was fighting, Miss – fighting to get in the room. We had to stop her, Miss.’

‘That’s enough!’ Mrs Evans glared at Fliss. ‘If Ellie-May came up here of her own accord, then she was obviously walking in her sleep. It’s quite common among young people, and all you had to do was come down and tell me or one of the other teachers. Instead, it seems to me that you woke her in a sud-

den, violent way and she panicked, as anybody would. You've been silly and irresponsible, and there's to be no more of it. Go to your beds, and in the morning I'll want to know what you, Gary Bazzard, and you, David Trotter, were doing up here on the girls' landing in the middle of the night.'

Ellie-May was helped to her feet and taken away, supported by Mrs Marriott on one side and Mrs Evans on the other. Gary and Trot followed a grim-faced Mr Hepworth downstairs, and Fliss and Lisa were left gazing at each other, nonplussed.

'What can we do?' whispered Lisa, almost crying. 'Nobody believes us.'

Fliss sighed and shook her head. 'I don't know, Lisa. I'm too tired and

fed up and scared to think. We'll talk in the morning.'

She crept into bed, and jumped when Marie's voice came out of the darkness. 'What happened?'

Fliss sighed. 'Nothing, Marie. Nothing much, anyway. I'll tell you tomorrow, OK?'

'Promise?'

'Promise.'

'OK.'

She expected to lie awake till dawn, but she didn't. She had just time to wonder in a muzzy way what she was going to tell Marie, before sleep rolled in like a black tide and bore her away.