

Chapter 4

‘What are you doing there?’

I struggled to wake up. Somebody was talking to me. Was it Miss Pomfritt? No, this sounded like a man.

‘Who are you?’ he demanded.

The man was standing in the doorway with his hands on his hips. He looked very angry.

‘Holly Hill,’ I mumbled, still thinking I might be dreaming.

‘Holly Hill?’ The man frowned. ‘What are you doing here?’

I sat up on the side of the bed and rubbed my eyes.

‘I am a new girl.’

‘But I sent you a letter. I told you not to come.’

‘The snail ate the mail,’ I told him.

The man frowned again. ‘Do you think this is a joke?’ he asked. ‘There’s no school here, so you had better go home.’

‘But Miss Pomfritt enrolled me in the school.’

‘Well Miss Pomfritt died. She died right where you are now. In that bed.’

I leaped to my feet and looked at the bed.

‘I was sleeping where she died?’

‘That’s not going to harm you. She’s not there now. She’s been cold in her grave for six weeks.’

‘So do you run the school now?’

The man snorted. ‘Not me. I’m just the gardener. Nobody runs a school here. The school died long before Miss Pomfritt did.’