

Three go to the seaside



Chapter One Corrany Cove

'I think we're almost there. I can see the sea!'

Sophie looked up from her book and leaned in towards the window. The countryside was rushing by in a blur of dazzling green and yellow. Her younger sister, Harriet, had her face pressed up against the glass. She was pointing to a break in the trees – and the sparkling blue ocean beyond.

'Do you see it?' she asked excitedly.

Sophie smiled and nodded. 'Yes, it shines so bright in the sunlight, doesn't it?'

There was a grunt from the seat next to her. Scott was tapping the buttons on his handheld, his face screwed up with concentration. 'I'm sure it's nothing special,' he muttered. 'Wish I'd stayed at home – can't believe we've been packed off to stay with Grandma, the wrinkly old dinosaur.'

'Scott!' gasped Sophie, giving him a shove. 'Don't be rude. We haven't seen her for ages.'

Harriet was giggling to herself. 'Wrinkly old dinosaur. Scott, you're so funny.'
 'I wasn't trying to be funny,' he said with a scowl. For a second his screen lit up as another alien mother ship was blasted into a gazillion pieces.
 'There! Gotcha!'

'Well done. So now can you switch that annoying thing off?' Sophie tried to grab the handheld but Scott jerked away, holding it out of reach.

'Get off. I still have three lives left.'

Sophie tutted. 'I hope you're not going to be playing computer games all holiday.'

'He is,' grinned Harriet, settling back into her seat. 'I saw him packing extra batteries.'

'Oh Scott.'

'What? Well, you've always got your nose in a book. What's the difference?'

'The difference is, I might actually learn something.'

'I learn stuff. Like how to blow things up.' He pushed a button, tilting the screen so Sophie could see the colourful explosions.

'Well very impressive, I don't say.' She snapped her book closed and banged it down onto the table.

'Ooh, touchy.' Scott flashed her a triumphant smile. He loved teasing his older sister. She was so easy to wind up.

'I wish you'd just act your age,' said Sophie, taking her glasses off to clean them. 'Mum thought it would make a change for once, to get out of the city.'

Harriet clapped her hands together eagerly. 'I'll get to play football on the beach. That'll be cool.'

'*I'll get to play football on the beach,*' mimicked Scott in a teasing voice.

'Oh shut up!' she snapped back.

'Sorry – *Harriet!*'

'Don't call me that! I don't like it. It's Harry – remember!'

'Oh yeah, I forgot. You're just one of the boys, aren't you? Don't worry – no one's gonna mistake you for a girl. A scarecrow perhaps – with your ripped jeans and hair all sticking up.'

'Enough!' Sophie pushed her glasses back onto her nose. 'Can we just, for once, act like civilised human beings? You know, without any arguments?'

'Well tell him, he's the problem!' said Harriet, sticking out her tongue.

Scott returned the gesture. Then gave a cry of despair when his handheld lit up with a loud 'boom!'. 'Oh no! I don't believe it. I just got blown up!'

The two girls shared a quiet look of satisfaction.

Outside, the green of the countryside had given way to white-fronted cottages and narrow, winding lanes. A voice crackled into life over the train's intercom. 'We will shortly be arriving at Corransy Cove. Corransy Cove is our last station stop. Please remember to take all your personal belongings with you.'

'Looks like we're here,' smiled Sophie.

'Humph. Nothing like the city, is it?' said Scott, watching the single, tiny platform slide into view.

'I want to see Grandma!' said Harriet, bobbing up and down in her chair. 'Anyone see her?'

'She'll be somewhere, I'm sure,' said Sophie. 'Come on, let's go.'

Scott pulled down their luggage from the overhead rack, then together they joined the other passengers spilling off the train.

The children had no difficulty in spotting Grandma Jess. She was standing at the end of the platform – the passengers from the train surging around her to get through the gates. Soon, they were the only ones left on the platform.

Waving her hand through the air, Grandma Jess hurried towards them. Her blue eyes were twinkling, almost mischievously, beneath the brim of her woollen hat.

'Hello!' she said, opening out her arms. Harriet raced forwards and gave her grandmother a hug.

'Harriet! Gosh, how you've shot up. You were only up to my knee when I last saw you.'

'It's Harry,' said Harriet, her face nestled in her grandma's coat. 'I don't do girly things anymore.'

'Ah, a tom boy I see.' The old woman cupped Harriet's face in her hands. 'Gosh, you remind me so much of myself at your age. And, look – is that my Sophie?'

'It is,' said the eldest, beaming broadly.

'Oh, Sophie. You look a picture – come here!'

Sophie rushed forward and joined Harriet in hugging their grandmother. 'I've really missed you, Grandma,' she said.

'Me too, dear. Me too.'

When they finally broke apart, Grandma's eyes came to rest on Scott. The boy was keeping his distance, kicking the heels of his trainers into the platform gravel.

'That one's a right royal pain,' declared Harriet, folding her arms.

'He didn't want to come,' added Sophie, glaring at him through her glasses.

'Is that so,' smiled Grandma. 'I'm sure he's just shy. How are you, Scott? The man of the house now. I hope you're looking after your mum and sisters?'

'Yeah, sure...' mumbled Scott.

'Good. Good. Well, I bet you children are famished. Shall we get back for some tea and scones? I baked them just this morning.'

'Ooh yes!' giggled Harriet. 'Then can we go to the beach? I want to go swimming.'

'Of course, dear. Plenty of time for that. You coming, Scott?'

'Yeah...' Scott trailed after them as they made their way towards the car park. He was already missing home.

'I bet the old dinosaur doesn't even have a telly,' he said to himself, grumpily. 'This is gonna be the longest two weeks of my entire life...'

Chapter Two

Down on the beach

Grandma Jess lived on the outskirts of the town. The car – which spluttered and coughed its way along the narrow lanes – took them up through a series of wooded hills, to finally bring them out on the cliff tops overlooking the sea. Harriet leaned forward in her chair, craning her neck to get a better view of her grandma's home. It was the first time she had ever visited Grandma Jess, and she had no idea what to expect.

The house, perched on a narrow outcropping of land, looked just like a cottage from a fairytale. It had a white picket fence, a neat garden of brightly-coloured flowers, and a winding path of stepping stones that led right up to its front door.

'It's lovely!' said Harriet.

'And look at that view!' gasped Sophie. 'Come on, Harry!' As the car came to a halt, the two girls quickly unfastened their seatbelts and threw open the doors. Giggling with excitement, they raced over to the edge of the cliff – bordered by a wire fence. Peering over the side, they watched as the surging, white-flecked waves crashed against the rocks below. The salty wind tousled playfully with their hair, carrying with it the cries of the seagulls circling overhead.

'I wish we could just stay here forever,' said Harriet. 'It's perfect.'

'Me too!' said Sophie. 'Beats the view from back home – don't you think?'

'Oi! You two!' shouted Scott. 'You gonna gawp all day or you gonna help?' He was over by the car, unloading the luggage.

Harriet gave a sigh. 'I think I spoke too soon.'

Sophie jerked a thumb in her brother's direction. 'I suppose we'd better go and help him.'

Together, the girls walked back to the car. Scott looked up as they approached.

'Glad you could make it,' he said.

Sophie lifted up her bag. 'You should take a look at the view. It's amazing.'

'Yeah? See anything interesting?' asked Scott, standing on tiptoe to see over her shoulder. 'Like a television? Or maybe a cinema?'

'Not exactly,' grinned Harriet. 'Much better than that.'

Grandma appeared at the garden gate, a ring of keys jangling in her hands. 'Front door is open now. You can take your bags inside.'

Scott lifted the last of the luggage from the boot of the car. 'Yes, boss.' He swung it closed, wincing as it gave a teeth-jarring screech.

'Ooh yes – must look at that sometime,' said Grandma Jess. 'Perhaps some oil might do the trick.'

'A scrapyard more like,' said Scott under his breath. Harriet heard him and laughed – but quickly stifled it when she caught Sophie's glare.

'Did I miss something?' asked Grandma, looking to each of the children.

'Oh it's nothing,' said Sophie quickly. 'Just Scott being Scott.'

'Oh good,' she said, her face creasing into a smile. 'Well, let's get inside and warm up a bit, shall we? That wind can carry quite a chill with it – even when the sun's out.'

'Good idea!' said Sophie, purposely bumping into Scott as she walked past.

'Oi! What was that for?' he glowered, rubbing his shoulder.

'For you being you, block-head.'

Once inside, Grandma showed the children to their rooms. Sophie was the oldest so got a room to herself, but Scott and Harriet had to share a box room at the back of the house.

'Do I have to share with him?' Harriet protested, eyeing the bunk bed suspiciously.

'I'm afraid so,' said Grandma.

'Hey, what about in here?' Scott pointed to a closed door across the landing. 'Can't I sleep in there?' He walked over and took hold of the door handle.

'Ooh, no dear!' said Grandma quickly. 'Please, stay away from that room.'

Scott took a step back. 'Why? What's in there?'

'Oh... well... nothing, really,' the old woman stammered. 'Just odds and ends.'

Rubbish that no one else wants. Best you stay out – just to be on the safe side, dear.’

‘Yeah, okay,’ said Scott hesitantly. ‘I’ll stay out.’

‘Good. Now let’s go and get some afternoon tea.’

Grandma led Harriet down the creaky staircase. Scott followed, casting a suspicious glance back towards the closed door. If there was one thing Scott didn’t like, it was mysteries. There had to be something behind that closed door – and whatever it was, he was determined to get to the bottom of it. After all, what else was there to do in Corraney Cove?

‘Collecting whelks, dear,’ said Grandma with a sweet smile.

Sophie almost choked on her cup of tea. ‘You want us to do what?’

The children were sitting around the kitchen table, finishing off their scones. Grandma was by the window, looking out towards the cliffs.

‘I thought I’d cook you some of my whelk fritters for supper. They’re a speciality in these parts.’

‘What’s a whelk exactly?’ asked Scott with a frown. ‘Sounds like a goblin or something.’

Grandma turned and gave him a smile. ‘They’re a type of shellfish. You can find them down on the beach, in the rock pools at the foot of the cliffs. I thought you’d like to have a little adventure – and go down there, looking for them.’

‘Sounds like fun!’ said Harriet, jumping to her feet.

‘Take one of these each.’ Grandma opened a cupboard and took out three small fishing nets. She handed one to each of the children. Scott stared at his like it was a dirty sock.

‘You want us to go fishing in rock pools?’ he asked, wrinkling his nose.

‘Come on,’ said Sophie. ‘It will be fun. You can find all kinds of exciting things in rock pools. Like starfish and sea slugs.’

Scott’s eyes lit up with interest. ‘Did you say slugs?’ Images were suddenly popping into his head – of slimy slugs hidden under Harriet’s pillow. That would be a sure-fire way of getting a bedroom all to himself... ‘Yeah, okay. I’m in!’

Nets in hand, the children followed the steep, gravel path that led down to the beach. It brought them out onto a narrow stretch of sand, covered in boulders and stringy fingers of seaweed. Where the sea was lapping up over the rocks and sand, natural pools had formed.

‘Come on, let’s start here,’ said Harriet, hurrying over to the nearest one.

‘Wait up,’ said Sophie, brandishing a small guidebook from her pocket.

'Grandma gave me this. It's got pictures of all the things we might find – so we know what we're looking for. Scott – you coming to help?'

Scott had clambered up onto a boulder, his hand held over his eyes to shelter them from the bright sun. He was looking down the coast, towards the crowded beach of holidaymakers – and the wooden pier, with its flashing lights and music.

'That's where I'm going,' said Scott. 'Looks much more fun than fishing for winkies.'

'Whelks,' corrected Sophie.

'Yeah, whelks – whatever. See you later – and good luck!'

Tossing his net onto the sand, Scott hurried off down the beach.

'Wait!' shouted Harriet. 'What about Grandma? You said you'd help!'

'Oh, best let him go,' said Sophie. She flicked open the guidebook and began studying the pictures. 'I'm sure we can find plenty of these whelks with just the two of us. Right, let's get started...'

Chapter Three

Odds and ends

When Scott got back to the cottage, the girls were already serving up the whelk fritters. He was surprised to find that the brown-coloured pancakes smelled and looked great – and he was famished.

'Is there one of those for me?' he asked.

'Well I suppose,' said Sophie, putting the plates onto the table. 'Not that you helped at all.'

Scott shrugged and dropped into the nearest chair. 'Sorry, I couldn't resist checking out the pier. They have an arcade – some great machines. I got the top score on Astro Warriors. It was brilliant.'

'Sounds like you've certainly worked up an appetite,' grinned Grandma, removing her apron. 'Shall we get stuck in then, before they get cold?'

After dinner, the children were playing cards in the front room, when Grandma appeared at the door holding a cardboard box.

'What's that?' asked Scott, who was already bored, having lost every single hand.

'Come through and see,' said Grandma with a wink.

The children followed her through into the back room. On a low table beneath the window, there was a series of boxes – each one brimming over

with dusty-looking objects.

'It's just old rubbish,' said Scott, failing to hide his disappointment. 'I thought it was going to be a game.'

Grandma placed the box she was carrying down onto the table. 'Well, actually you're right on both counts, Scott.'

'I am?' He scratched his head.

'Yes, these are some old things from my attic. Just odds and ends that I have collected over the years, and a few that have been left to me by my grandmother and great aunt.'

'That's old!' gasped Scott – trying hard to imagine anyone older than his grandmother. 'Ouch!' He felt Sophie's elbow in his side.

'Don't be rude,' she whispered.

'It's alright,' grinned Grandma. 'Yes, some of these things are very old. Which is why I could do with some help sorting them. There's a jumble sale in the town hall tomorrow morning and I want to take as much as I can. But some of the really old things I think I should keep, don't you?'

Harriet had already started rummaging in a box. She pulled out a white dress, with a wide frilly collar. 'Who would want to wear this?' she said, holding it up against her t-shirt and jeans.

'And look at this,' said Sophie, holding up a stripy, long-legged swimsuit. 'Fancy wearing this down the beach, Scott?'

He pulled a face. 'No way!'

'People used to,' said Grandma. 'Some of those clothes date back nearly a hundred years – when my great grandmother was alive.'

'Like these, too?' Harriet was sorting through a stack of photographs – brown and crumpled with age. 'The people look really funny in them. Didn't anyone know how to smile back then?'

Grandma laughed. 'Could you hold a smile for five minutes? That's how long it took to have your photograph taken.'

'Really?' gasped Harriet. 'Scott's always taking pictures on his phone. Imagine if you had to wait that long, Scott!'

'It's silly,' he said. 'I'd hate to live in the past. No computer games. Could you imagine?'

Sophie raised an eyebrow. 'Er... yes, I could – and I think that sounds rather good, don't you?'

Scott stuck out his tongue.

'Come on,' said Grandma, tapping him on the shoulder. 'Help me sort through these boxes and let's see what else we can find.'

Chapter Four

A magic eye

Scott was stood at the bedroom window, squinting in the bright sunlight. 'She's getting in the car,' he reported. 'Yes, the engine's on – she's going.'

Harriet was sat, poised on the edge of her bed. 'Good. Shall we take a look? She'll never know.'

'Yes, come on!' Scott led the way across the landing – halting outside the mysterious closed door.

'Well, this is it,' he said, rubbing his hands together. 'The moment of truth.'

'Hey, what are you doing?'

The voice made the children jump. They spun round to see Sophie at the top of the stairs, glaring at them over her glasses.

'We're just going to take a peek inside,' said Harriet. 'That's all.'

'But Grandma said it was out of bounds,' said Sophie, crossing her arms. 'We don't know what's in there – and whatever it is, I'm sure it is better off on the other side of that door.'

'But don't you want to know what it is?' asked Scott, almost squirming with suspense. 'It's got to be important if she wants to keep it hidden.'

Sophie opened her mouth to argue – but faltered, lost for words. Scott saw it as a sure sign that he'd won.

'Come on,' he urged. 'Grandma's gone to the jumble sale – she won't be back for hours.'

'Please,' begged Harriet. She was jumping up and down on the spot, making the floorboards squeak and the pictures rattle.

'Well, I'm really not sure...'

Scott placed his hand on the doorknob and began to twist it. He glanced over at Sophie. 'You don't have to look if you don't want to.'

With a cry of exasperation, Sophie marched over to stand by the door. 'Okay, you win – just a quick look and that's it.' She pointed a finger under Scott's nose. 'But we don't touch anything, okay?'

'Sure,' said Scott.

He pushed open the door...

The room was small and dark – the only light coming from a gap in the heavy velvet curtains. Scott entered first, the floorboards giving a long and spooky-sounding creak as he stepped gingerly forwards. Harriet followed next, with Sophie at her side.

Sadly, there was disappointment all around. There wasn't much in the room

other than a few faded pictures hanging on the walls, and an old wooden trunk resting underneath a table.

'What's so special about this?' asked Scott. He walked over to the window and drew back the curtains. The movement sent clouds of dust spiralling through the air.

'Ugh! This won't do my asthma any good,' he said, covering his nose.

'I wonder what's in here?' Harriet was crouched down next to the trunk.

'I thought we were just looking,' said Sophie, who had chosen to stay by the door – just in case.

'Opening a trunk still counts as looking, doesn't it?' said Scott.

Sophie waved a finger through the air. 'Actually it counts as touching – and I thought we agreed that –'

'Oops! Too late,' grinned Harriet, pushing open the lid of the trunk. She leaned over and peered inside. 'Wow, look at these!'

Scott and Sophie hurried over to see what had been revealed.

'More junk!' said Scott with a sigh. All he could see was a random clutter of objects – just like the ones in the boxes that Grandma had made him sort through. 'I was hoping for gold – or something interesting at least.'

'Who's to say these aren't worth a fortune,' said Sophie. She freed a small box from the tangle of objects. Flipping open the lid, she gave a tiny gasp of surprise. 'Oh, look at this – how beautiful.' She carefully lifted a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles from out of the box.

'Let's see,' said Scott, snatching them from her hand.

'Hey!'

'How do I look?' He pushed them onto his nose and spun round on the spot. 'Do they suit me?'

'You look like an idiot,' said Harriet. 'Same as always.' She fished out a pearly white seashell and held it up to the light. 'This is pretty.'

'Oh my...' Scott had stopped and was staring at one of the pictures on the wall.

'What is it?' asked Sophie. She followed his gaze to the picture. It was a black and white photograph of a child flying a kite on the beach. Nothing out of the ordinary.

'You're not going to believe this...' Scott had turned to look at another picture. 'This is amazing.'

'What?' snapped Sophie in frustration. 'They're just pictures.'

'No they're not.' Scott lifted off the spectacles and handed them to Sophie. She grabbed them with a look of annoyance.

'This better not be another one of your games.'

'Try them and see.'

Sophie removed her own glasses and replaced them with the ones from the trunk. Apart from giving the room a strange yellow tint, she couldn't see anything special or amazing...

Wait. What was that? She moved closer to one of the photographs. For a moment she thought it had been... moving. A trick of the light perhaps... No – it was moving. The child in the picture was running along the beach – and her kite was streaming out behind her, making dives and pirouettes in the gusty wind.

'It can't be.'

Sophie turned and looked at another picture. It was moving too – the sailing boat bobbing up and down on the waves. Tugging off the glasses, she rubbed her eyes. When she focused on the picture again, everything was still – the sail boat frozen on the motionless waves.

'The glasses... they make the pictures come alive,' gasped Sophie. 'That's... well... that's...'

'Impossible?' offered Scott.

'No, magic.' added Harriet. 'All these things are magic.' She was holding the seashell to her ear.

'Why, what's the shell do?' asked Sophie.

'Try it.'

Sophie took the shell and turned it over in her hands, inspecting its smooth, polished surface. She remembered the stories she had heard as a child – that if you held a shell to your ear you could hear the sea.

'Go on,' insisted Scott. 'What does it do?'

Sophie put the funnelled end to her ear. At first, she could only hear the sound of her own breathing, and the soft murmur of the wind outside the window. But then she began to hear the music. It was as if all the sounds of the seaside had been captured inside the shell, and then played together, like the instruments of an orchestra – the drums were the waves, crashing against the cliffside rocks, the pebbles were the castanets, clicking and clattering together as they rolled in the waves... and the choir was the seagulls, calling to one another on the warm currents of sea air.

'Magic,' said Harriet, nodding her head. 'Great, isn't it?'

Sophie leaned away from the shell, looking at it in disbelief. 'It must be a trick or something.'

'It's no trick,' grinned Scott, grabbing the spectacles. 'Come on, let's take your camera down to the beach and try these out – before Grandma gets back. I want to make some of my own moving pictures!'

'But what about the rest of this stuff?' asked Harriet, looking inside the trunk.

'It'll still be here when we get back,' laughed Scott. 'Now you coming? Last one to the beach is a... a... winkle in a rock pool!'

'It's a whelk,' corrected Sophie.

'Yeah – one of them too! Come on!'

Pushing and shoving each other, the three children raced from the cottage – Scott clutching the magic spectacles in his hands.

'This is going to be so much fun,' he hooted. 'This holiday's just got a whole lot better...'

Chapter Five

A step back in time

'Let me see that one again!' Harriet snatched the photo that Scott was holding and held it up in front of the spectacles. A moment ago it had been an ordinary photograph – a picture of some children kicking a football along the beach. But now it had a life of its own – the children in the image were racing towards the camera, kicking up clouds of sand as they tackled each other for the ball.

'I still can't believe it,' she said. 'They all move!'

'There's plenty more,' grinned Scott. He held up the packet of photographs that had been developed.

'Let's see what else is in the trunk,' said Sophie, opening the front door to the cottage. 'We still have time to look before Grandma gets home.'

'Hang on,' laughed Scott. 'I thought you were the one who told us not to touch anything in that room. You were the one who...'

'Yes, yes – okay you made your point,' said Sophie. 'But I just want to see what other amazing things are in there. I mean – don't you?'

'Of course!' grinned Scott. 'Grandma has an eye for the weird and wonderful, that's for sure. Lead the way.'

Back in the room, the children began rummaging through the trunk. Their initial excitement began to wane when they discovered that most of it was full of musty old clothes. One item did catch Scott's eye, however. He pushed the heavy clothing aside and reached in to tug it free.

'What did you find?' asked Sophie, blowing a strand of hair from her eyes.

'Anything good?'

'Not sure.' The object he lifted out was an hour glass – filled with fine particles of sand. It looked just like the type of sand timer their mum used at breakfast – to make sure their eggs were cooked just right.

'Humph. Doesn't look very exciting,' said Harriet. 'I thought there would be better things in here.'

Scott turned the hourglass over and watched as the sands slowly sifted through the narrow funnel, moving from one glass bulb to the other. 'You're right,' he said with a sigh. 'Just another waste of...'

'...time'. The last word hung in the air as the room started to spin, getting faster and faster until it was just a spiralling kaleidoscope of colour. Then, all of a sudden there was a bright, blinding flash... Scott stumbled dizzily, his stomach turning somersaults. Dropping to his knees, he gave a cry of surprise, when he felt something coarse and wet squelching around his legs.

It was sand.

The room had gone – vanished. There were no walls, no ceiling, no floor...

He was on a beach – under a bright blue, cloudless sky. Waves were gently lapping on the shore, arranging and rearranging the patterns of seaweed lying on the sand.

'It can't be...' He looked down at the hour glass, still clutched in his hands. 'I must be dreaming...'

A scuffling sound made him look up. It was Sophie and Harriet, picking their way between the moss-covered boulders. They looked sick, pale and equally bewildered.

'What happened?' asked Scott, struggling to his feet.

'I don't know,' said Sophie. She stopped and gazed up at the tall, sheer-sided cliffs. 'One moment we were in the room and now we're... not.'

Harriet tugged on her sleeve. 'I think those cliffs are the same ones where Grandma lives.'

'Do you think so?' Sophie looked around. 'Yes, this does look sort of familiar... but different too. If that makes sense.'

'It's the same beach I think,' said Scott. 'Hang on – let me get a better view. Up here.'

He clambered up the nearest boulder and, covering his eyes with the palm of his hand, looked down the coastline towards the beach. It was an action that brought a momentary feeling of *déjà vu* to the three children.

'That's exactly where you stood before,' said Harriet. 'Do you remember? When we came here looking for whelks – and you climbed the rock. That exact same rock.'

'It's just the same,' said Sophie.

'No it isn't,' said Scott. 'I think you should come up here and take a look for yourselves.'

Harriet and Sophie pulled themselves up onto the mossy boulder. Scott helped them to stand, then together they turned to look down the coast.

'Oh my!' gasped Sophie. 'It's all changed – it's all so different...'

'Where are we?' asked Harriet nervously.

'I think I know what happened...' said Scott, looking at the hourglass with a thoughtful expression. 'When I turned over the sand, I was thinking about one of those old photographs – the really old ones that Grandma had.'

'So...?' asked Sophie.

'Well, look at the people on the beach – they're dressed just the same as the people in the photograph. Don't you see?'

'Gosh – you don't mean?'

'Yes,' said Scott. 'We've travelled back in time!'

Chapter Six

To the future...

Scott gestured to the girls to stand closer. 'Are you ready?' he asked.

'Oh, do we have to go back?' asked Harriet, spooning ice cream into her mouth. 'I want to see the magic show again. It was fun.'

'We can always come back,' said Sophie, closing up her parasol. 'All we have to do is think ourselves back here and it will happen.'

'Yeah, I suppose...'

Scott raised the hourglass and began to tilt it over.

'Wait!' Sophie put out her hand, stopping Scott in mid-turn. 'I just had a thought.'

'What?' asked Scott, impatiently. 'I hope it's quick, because I want to get out of this ridiculous outfit. It makes me itch.'

'Well I was thinking about what you said – before – when we first came. You thought about one of Grandma's old photographs when you turned the hourglass, and suddenly we travelled here didn't we?'

'Yeah,' said Scott, scratching behind an ear. 'I don't get your point.'

'You don't?' she laughed. 'The hourglass takes us to the moment in time that

we are thinking about – right?’

‘Yeah,’ said Scott. ‘So I’m thinking about that stuffy, dusty room at Grandma’s right now. That okay for you? We’ll be home in no time.’

‘No, that’s my point,’ said Sophie. ‘We can go anywhere – anywhere in time we want. You just need to picture it in your mind when you turn the hourglass.’

Scott raised an eyebrow. ‘So, you mean we could go back to prehistoric times – and meet a really old dinosaur, just like Grandma Jess?’

Sophie stamped her foot angrily. ‘No that’s not what I meant.’

Harriet eyes suddenly widened. ‘The future! We could go to the future!’

‘Yes!’ said Sophie, nodding her head vigorously. ‘We could think ourselves forward in time. Imagine what we might see – in the Corraney Cove of the future.’

A grin was slowly spreading across Scott’s face. His mind was beginning to race with exciting images. ‘I can imagine it... for sure!’

‘Then let’s go!’ said Sophie. ‘We could just take a look – nothing wrong with that.’

Scott laughed. ‘I suppose a look wouldn’t hurt. We could take Grandma back a souvenir from the past and the future. Then she might forgive us for going into that room.’

‘That’s a wonderful idea!’ giggled Harriet. ‘Scott, that was almost thoughtful of you.’

Sophie was staring at him over her the rim of her glasses. ‘Unless I’m mistaken, I do believe Scott is starting to enjoy this holiday. Am I right?’

Scott stuck out his tongue. ‘Maybe,’ he said, with a wink. ‘Now, can we go back to Grandma’s first? No way I’m going to the future looking like this.’

‘Good idea,’ said Harriet. ‘I can’t wait to get out of this dress. I wonder what people will be wearing in the future?’

‘Well, we’re about to find out,’ said Sophie. ‘Come on, Scott – what are you waiting for?’

The children huddled together as Scott turned the hourglass over. The sands slowly sifted through the narrow funnel, moving from one glass bulb to the other. As the final grain of sand dropped – there was a bright flash...

... and the children were gone.