

THE  
LIGHT THIEVES  
SEARCH FOR THE  
**BLACK  
MIRROR**

"A WILDLY ENTERTAINING RIDE RIPPED FROM  
TOMORROW'S HEADLINES."

Eoin Colfer

When a young boy and his friends unwittingly  
uncover a massive hoax while a tech-billionaire  
hoodwinks people into believing that only he can  
save the world – *who do you trust?*

To Jo and Bobbie  
(and Mushka – the very best bestfriend)

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HELENA DUGGAN





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# THE STORY SO FAR

1. THREE YEARS AGO AN EARTHQUAKE SHOOK THE WORLD LEAVING A BLACK MARK ON THE SUN. PEOPLE BELIEVE THE WORLD HAS SHIFTED OFF ITS AXIS.



2. HOWARD HANSOM BUILDS THE TIPPING POINT ENCOURAGING VOLUNTEERS TO MOVE THERE. WITH ENOUGH WEIGHT IN THAT LOCATION THE WORLD WILL SHIFT BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL AXIS. EVERYONE WILL BE SAVED.



3. GRIAN'S SISTER SOLAS RUNS AWAY TO THE TIPPING POINT. GRANDAD GOES TO FIND HER.



4. MYSTERIOUS FIGURES IN BLACK CLOAKS SEARCH GRIAN'S HOUSE. HE FLEES TO JEFFREY'S HOUSE.



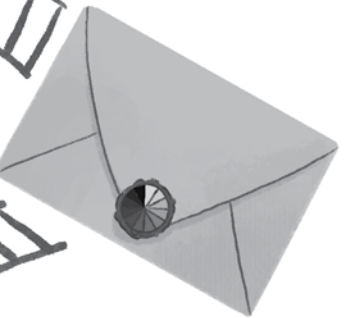
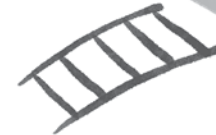
5. HIDING IN THE WILDE FOREST THE BOYS MEET SHELL. SHE SAYS THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURES ARE PROCTORS. THEY BRING TROUBLE. THE THREE KIDS TRACK GRANDAD.



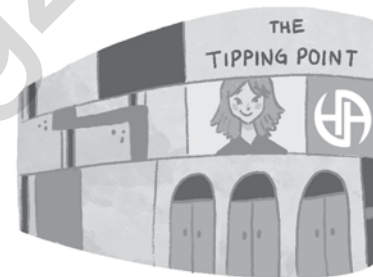
7. THEY SEE A MAN IN A LONG COAT LEAVING A NOTE ON A DERELICT PLATFORM.



6. WITH PROCTORS CHASING THEM THEY DISCOVER AN UNDERGROUND POSTAL RAILWAY AND FOLLOW IT.



8. AFTER SEEING SOLAS ON A BILLBOARD EXCLAIMING SHE LOVES THE TIPPING POINT THE KIDS BREAK IN THERE TO FIND HER.



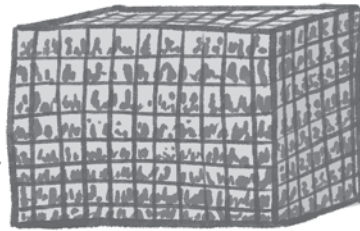
9. THEY ARE DISCOVERED BY HOWARD HANSOM. HE TELLS THEM THE MAN IN THE LONG COAT IS HEAD OF THE PROCTORS – A GROUP TRYING TO STOP HANSOM'S PLANS TO SAVE THE WORLD. HANSOM NEEDS THEIR HELP TO FIND HIM. HE PUTS THEM UP IN A HOTEL.



10. THEY DISCOVER THE HEAD OF THE PROCTORS ATTACKING HANSOM. THE CHILDREN SAVE HANSOM AND THE MAN IS TAKEN AWAY.



11. THE KIDS DISCOVER SOLAS AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS LOCKED IN CAGES UNDER THE TIPPING POINT.



12. ON CCTV THEY SEE GRANDAD AND THE MAN IN THE LONG COAT LOCKED IN A ROOM. GRANDAD SAYS THE MAN IS VERMILION. A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF COLOUR TRYING TO STOP HANSOM BECAUSE HE IS LYING ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON.

13. HANSOM THROWS A PARTY TO THANK THE KIDS FOR SAVING HIS LIFE. THE KIDS ARE HEROES. BUT THEY KNOW THEY'RE BEING SET UP.



14. THE KIDS RESCUE SOLAS AND SOME OF THE VOLUNTEERS WITH THE HELP OF SHELLI'S ANIMAL FRIENDS.



15. GRIAN SAVES GRANDAD AND VERMILION. THERE'S A HUGE EXPLOSION. SHELLI IS CAPTURED BY HANSOM.



19. GRIAN DISCOVERS THAT HIS DAD IS TAKING ANOTHER LETTER FROM THE WHITE ROSE TO THE COUNCIL OF COLOUR.



20. THE BLACK MARK ON THE SUN GETS BIGGER – THE WORLD DARKER. GRIAN AND HIS FRIENDS MUST SAVE THE WORLD FROM HANSOM'S PLOT TO STEAL THE SUN.



18. GRIAN RESCUES SHELLI. ON THE WAY BACK TO THE WILDE FOREST GRIAN FINDS A LETTER IN THE BAG. IT'S FROM THE WHITE ROSE, WHO SAYS THE SUN IS BEING STOLEN AND SETS OUT A WAY TO SAVE IT.

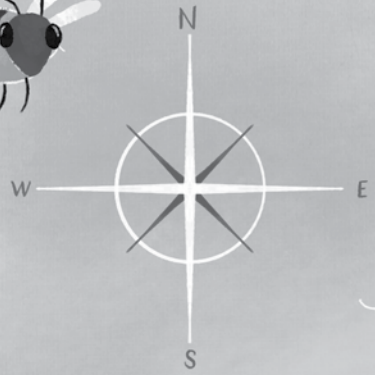


17. HANSOM ADMITS HE IS BEHIND WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE SUN BUT SAYS THE WORLD WILL BLAME GRIAN FOR THE DESTRUCTION. HE DISAPPEARS ON THE HYPERLOOP. KIDNAPPING GRANDAD.



16. GRIAN TELLS GRANDAD HE SUSPECTS HANSOM OF SETTING THEM UP. GRANDAD GIVES GRIAN A SMALL HESSIAN BAG, TELLING HIM TO TAKE IT TO THE COUNCIL OF COLOUR.





# MAP OF BABBAGE





## CHAPTER 1 DOOMED

“I am standing here a good distance back from the city, Mike,” the woman said, speaking to the man in the brightly lit TV studio. “As you can see, fire and police officers are everywhere. No one is allowed in or out of the smart city. The Tipping Point was always a no-go area to everyone except those who selflessly volunteered to live here, but tonight, since what some are reporting as an explosion, security is even tighter and reporters are only allowed to stand outside these barriers behind me.

“The scene is eerily similar to those witnessed in Quantum, the capital city of Babbage, hours and days after the earthquake that rocked our world three years ago and left a black mark on our sun. I’ll never forget the

devastation I witnessed that day, the day that infamously became known as the Tilt.”

The news reporter was shaking as she held the large microphone to her quivering lips. Her eyes were glassy as if she had been crying. Behind her, sirens raged, lights flashed and fires could be seen blazing in the distance.

“Though tonight, Mike, feels worse than three years ago. This time we know the black mark that appeared on the sun is a sign the earthquake tilted our planet into a precarious position. We know if this current unstable position is not fixed, the earth will, in the not-too-distant future, fly off into outer space and combust. We also know the Tipping Point and its creator – tech entrepreneur Howard Hansom – were our only chance of survival.”

The reporter paused for a moment.

“I remember exactly where I was and how ecstatic I felt, after all the fear and hopelessness, the day Howard Hansom announced he had discovered how to save the planet. I remember the relief when he revealed plans to build his smart city, the Tipping Point, in the exact geographical location where if enough weight were applied, the world would tilt back into its correct position and save us all. And then I couldn’t believe it when he declared he would create enough weight by paying people to move to his utopian city, full of his latest technologies, and effectively give ordinary people the holiday of a

lifetime while turning them into real-life superheroes. It was the stuff of dreams, Mike; it was the storyline of a blockbuster movie.

“And now...now Howard Hansom, our hero, is missing presumed dead, and the Tipping Point – well, some say it can be rebuilt, that there may still be hope, while others say...they say we are doomed.”

The man in the studio shook his head.

“And all the volunteers living in the Tipping Point – can you give any update on their situation, to family and friends currently watching this broadcast at home, Susie?” he asked after a few moments.

“No, Mike, we’re not being told much. Hopefully we will be briefed soon. I have managed to interview a few people who were given special access to attend the earlier celebrations in the city tonight, prior to the explosion, but none were actual Tipping Point volunteers. No survivors have been found yet, but no bodies have been reported or recovered yet either...”

The woman looked away from the camera for a moment. Her eyes were watery when she looked back.

“And this deliberate destruction of the Tipping Point was carried out by children, Susie – am I understanding that correctly?” the man said a few moments later.

“Yes, Mike,” the woman replied, as firefighters rushed past her. “That is correct. Grian Woods, Jeffrey Slight and



a Wilde girl who we believe goes by the name Shelli – the very same children, who only moments before the explosion, were celebrated as heroes all over our screens for saving the life of Howard Hansom himself.

“Police don’t think the children were acting alone though. They are believed to be members of a group called the Proctors, who have been trying to sabotage Howard Hansom and the Tipping Point since his plans to save the planet first came to light. The Proctors are a group of radical Tilt deniers who believe the planet hasn’t shifted on its axis and that the earthquake was a hoax...”

“Huh – what an elaborate hoax that would be!” The man in the studio snorted, as the TV screen cut to pictures of Grian, and his friends Shelli and Jeffrey onstage earlier that night in the Tipping Point auditorium.

Grian huffed angrily and switched off Bob, his Hansom watch.

The news report was all lies.



## CHAPTER 2

### OUR SECRET

The treehouse Grian sat in belonged to the Wilde community, who had taken in him, Shelli and Jeffrey when they fled the Tipping Point earlier that night. The Wilde lived simply in the forest, in tune with the rhythms of nature. They didn’t trust technology and, unlike almost everybody else in the world, they had never fallen for Howard Hansom’s lies. Most people in Babbage thought the Wilde were weird.

Grian lay back on his beanbag, frustrated.

He wasn’t just angry at the news report, he was angry with himself for daring to turn on his watch again. Because, unlike only a few days before, now he knew the truth: Bob wasn’t his friend, and Howard Hansom and his technologies could not be trusted.