

**KEREEN GETTEN** grew up in Jamaica, where she would climb fruit trees in the family garden and eat as much mango, guinep and pear as she could without being caught. She now lives in Birmingham with her family and writes stories about her childhood experiences. Her work has been shortlisted for the Waterstones Children's Book Prize, the Spark Award, the Warwickshire Junior Book Award and the Jhalak Children's & YA Prize. The first book in the Di Island Crew Investigates series, *The Case of the Lighthouse Intruder*, was a Waterstones Book of the Month. *When Life Gives You Mangoes* and *If You Read This* are also available from Pushkin Children's.



Di ISLAND CREW INVESTIGATES

*The*  
**CASE**  
*of the*  
**HAUNTED  
WARDROBE**

**Kereen Getten**

Illustrated by Leah Jacobs-Gordon

Pushkin Children's

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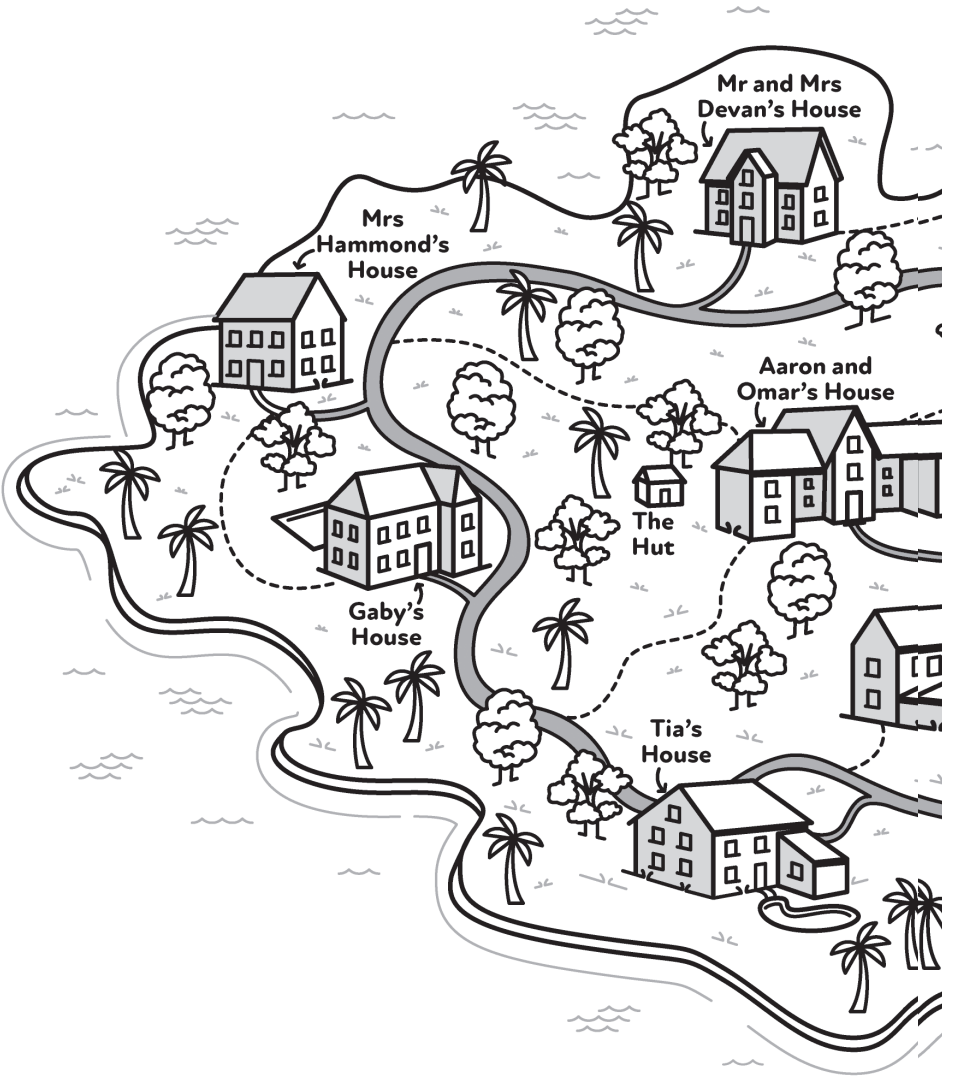
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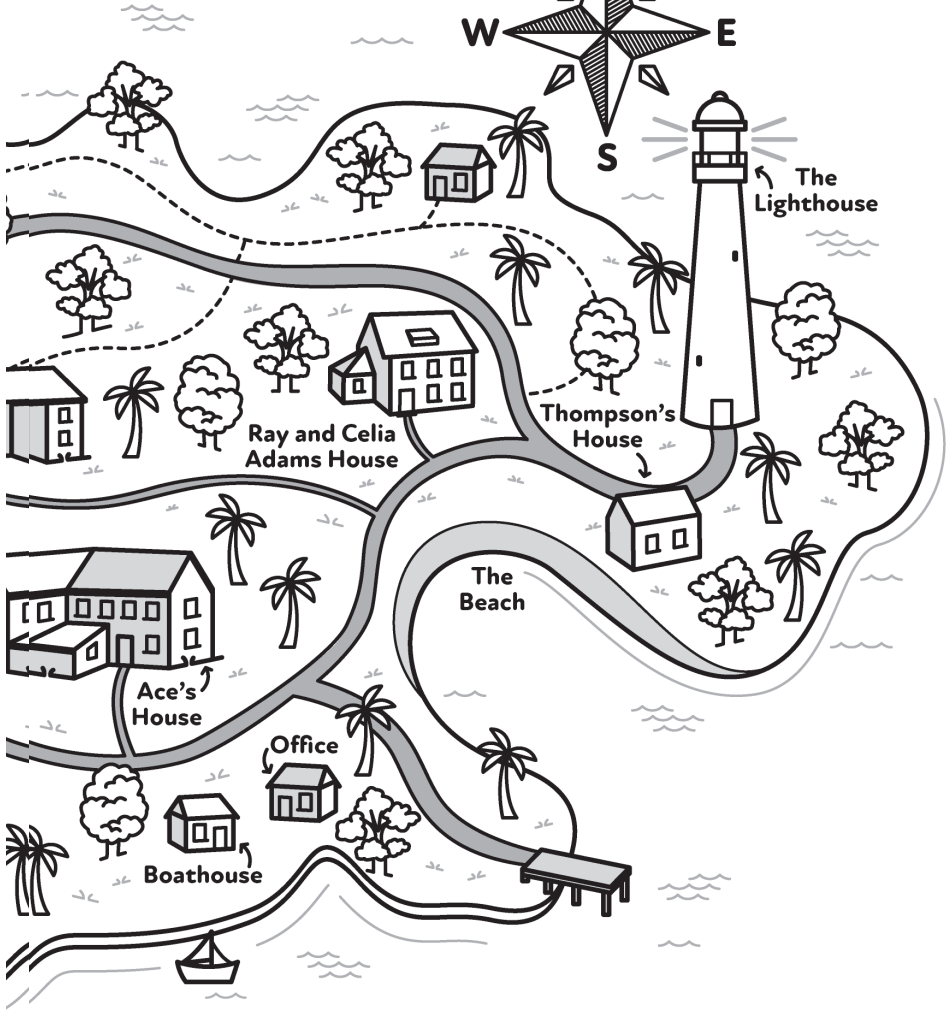
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The  
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## Chapter 1

*Yo, we're going to the island for winter break, my cousin Aaron texted me last week. Mum wants to know if you're coming?*

*Of course I'm coming!* I replied almost immediately.



Going back to Lighthouse Island is all I've been thinking about since I was there last school break. I miss the small island, with its quiet cove and towering lighthouse that

doesn't work. I miss the hut at the end of my cousins' garden, where we meet with the rest of the gang. I miss Elma the housekeeper making delicious treats, and I miss Di Island Crew, our detective gang. Most of all I miss Gaby. She's the one person who made me feel at home on the island, who became my best friend.

Mama has lost her temper with me a few times since Aaron texted, because I can't concentrate on anything else.

"Fayson, I don't want to hear about no island adventure until you finish your homework," she said last time I brought it up. "I'm sick of hearing about 'Island this and island that'."

I fell silent, not wanting to upset her any more, but continued to doodle on my notepad:

*Island Adventures, Here I Come!*

Now the day has arrived, I am filled with excitement to see the island and my friends.

I have waited all morning for my cousins to pick me up, jumping up every time I think I hear a car pull into our car park. Finally they arrive early afternoon, just as Mama and I are sitting down for lunch.

I hear a car horn and jump up from the table, running to the window with a half-eaten corned-beef sandwich in my hand.

“Fayson, finish your lunch,” Mum orders.

I peer out and my heart skips a beat.

“They’re here, Mama!” I cry, stuffing the rest of the sandwich in my mouth.

Mama glares at me. “Finish your lunch.”

I turn to her, exasperated. “But they’ll be waiting for me.”

Mama takes a sip of her sorrel tea. “Waiting won’t kill them,” she says. “Sit.”

I reluctantly pull myself away from the window and slump into the hard chair. I try to stuff the last two sandwiches in my mouth as quickly as I can.

“Fayson, eat it properly,” she snaps.

There is a knock on the door, and I look to Mama. She gets up from the table and walks over to the front door. She opens it and I see Uncle Edmond and Aaron outside.

Mama and Uncle Edmond greet each other with an awkward nod of their heads.

“She’s still eating lunch,” Mama says.

I stuff the last piece of sandwich in my mouth and jump to my feet. “Finished!”

Mama shakes her head. “Go and freshen up.”

I groan, push back the chair and rush to the bathroom down the hall.

When I return, Uncle Edmond and Aaron are standing in the living room.

“You’ve done this place up nice,” Uncle Edmond says, looking around.

Mama is in the kitchen pouring two glasses of water. She brings them through. “I do what I can,” she replies.

Aaron and Uncle Edmond drink their water in silence.

I grab my bag as I enter the living room. “Ready,” I announce, desperate to get Aaron and Uncle Edmond out of our tiny apartment, and away from the heavy silence.

Uncle Edmond gives me a small smile. “Good,” he says with a nod. “Shall we go?”

Outside the apartment, Aaron and I walk ahead of the adults, who follow us without speaking. Uncle Edmond makes a half-hearted attempt at a conversation, but Mama barely offers an answer.

“I like your place,” Aaron says as we head down the steps that lead to the car park. “It’s cosy.”

It’s been a few years since Uncle Edmond or the twins have been to our home. The last time they came, Omar announced that our apartment was the same size as his bathroom and bedroom put together, then proceeded to run through the apartment to make sure.

I narrow my eyes at Aaron.  
He throws his hands up in the air. “What?  
Cosy is good.”

I shake my head. “Just say it’s small,” I tell  
him, as we walk across the car park to their  
familiar black SUV.

“Nope,” Aaron says. “I’m sticking with cosy.”

Uncle Edmond takes my small bag from me  
and puts it in the boot of the car. My cousin  
Omar—Aaron’s twin—sits inside with Aunty  
Desiree, Uncle Edmond’s wife.

I hug Mama tightly.

“Be good,” she whispers in my ear. “Listen  
to your uncle and don’t cause any trouble.” She  
holds me at a distance, looking me over as if  
checking I am dressed and lotioned. “I don’t want  
stories coming back to me about your behaviour,”  
she says, running her palm across my face.

I nod firmly. “I won’t let you down, Mama.”  
I let go of her and slide into the open door of the  
car. Omar acknowledges me with a fist bump.

“Welcome, weirdo,” he says.

I beam with excitement, refusing to let him ruin this day.

“How was school?” Aunty Desiree asks, as I climb in. “Did you do well this term?”

“Yes, I did well, Aunty,” I tell her, even though I have been told off at least three times during school term for daydreaming in class. Aunty Desiree can be so serious about school. Much more serious than Mama.

I roll the window down and wave to Mama, who’s standing in the car park of our apartment block, her arms folded against her chest. Barry, my annoying neighbour who goes to the same school as me, watches from his balcony.

“Dat car too nice for you,” he shouts down at me through his cupped hands. Mama turns to look up at him. Barry flashes her



an innocent smile. “Ms Mayor, what a pretty dress yuh wearing.”

Mama shakes her head, turning back to me just in time to catch me sticking my tongue out at Barry. I sink back into the car seat as she approaches, expecting her to tell me off. She leans into the car window and kisses me on the cheek.

“Stop being so rude,” she says, before stepping back.

Uncle Edmond gets into the front seat, closing his door and winding the window down. “You sure you don’t want to come?” he asks Mama.

She shakes her head, folding her arms again. “That life is not for me.” She glances at me, then shifts from one foot to the other. “But I’ll never say never,” Mama adds. “Fayson seems to enjoy it, so it can’t be too bad over there.”

My eyes widen. Did Mama just say something nice about Lighthouse Island?



“Well, when you’re ready,” Uncle Edmond says. “There’s always a room for you.”

Mama doesn’t reply, just gives him a short nod.

Uncle Edmond rolls his window up, locking the tension inside. He and Aunty Desiree exchange a look between them, and I sink even further into my seat.

During the journey to the boat, I think only of Mama: what she must be feeling now I have gone, and how she is alone in the apartment without me.

The sun has not come out once today. When we reach the boat that will take us to the island, the sea is particularly rough, a sure sign it is about to rain.

As we climb on to the boat, Uncle Edmond shouts, “Is there a storm coming?”, to no one in particular, and the boat captain responds.

“Yep, we’re in for a bumpy ride. Rougher than normal,” he says, squinting out to sea. “Might be coming sooner than we think.”

“Well, I hope it’s after we reach shore,” Uncle Edmond replies.

I clutch my bag to my chest and close my eyes tightly, hoping that we make it to the island before any storm. It would be terrible if we all got swept away and I drowned and never saw Mama again. I feel sick suddenly at the thought. Or maybe my sickness is due to the boat setting off, bouncing over the choppy water.

I grab on to the seat with one hand, gripping my bag with the other. I feel every bump of the waves. The spray of the sea on my face. I try to drown out the roar of the ocean each time we meet a swell, gritting my teeth and silently begging it to be over.