

Praise for

SCARLET and IVY

“This is one of the best books I have ever read. It was exciting, funny, warm and mysterious.” **Lily, aged 9**

“The whole book was brilliant... after the first paragraph it was as though Ivy was my best friend.” **Ciara, aged 10**

“This book is full of excitement and adventure – a masterpiece!” **Jennifer, aged 9**

“This is a page-turning mystery adventure with puzzles that keep you guessing.” **Felicity, aged 11**

“A brilliant and exciting book.” **Evie, aged 8**

“The story shone with excitement, secrets and bonds of friendship... If I had to mark this book out of 10, I would give it 11!” **Sidney, aged 11**

SOPHIE CLEVERLY was born in Bath in 1989. She wrote her first story at the age of four, though it used no punctuation and was essentially one long sentence. Thankfully, things have improved somewhat since then, and she has earned a BA in Creative Writing and an MA in Writing for Young People from Bath Spa University.

Now working as a full-time writer, Sophie lives with her husband in Wiltshire, where she has a house full of books and a garden full of crows.

Books by Sophie Cleverly

The Scarlet and Ivy series in reading order

THE LOST TWIN

THE WHISPERS IN THE WALLS

THE DANCE IN THE DARK

THE LIGHTS UNDER THE LAKE

SCARLET and IVY

The Lights
Under the Lake

SOPHIE CLEVERLY



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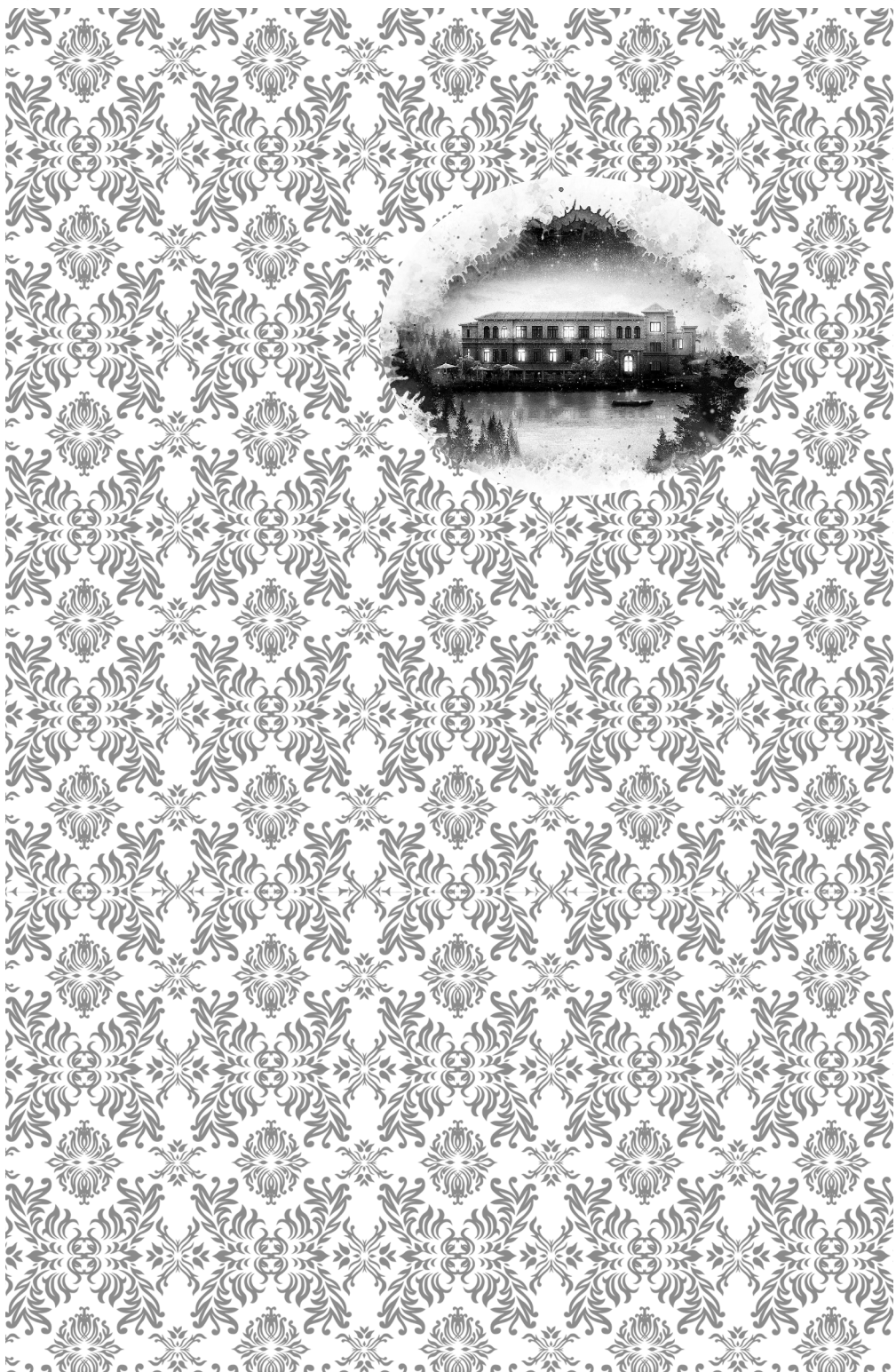
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For Lizzie – thank you for believing in Scarlet and Ivy



Chapter One

Ivy

Scarlet and I were a team that couldn't be broken. She was my twin; my reflection in the mirror; the other side of the same coin. As long as we were together, there was nothing we couldn't face. That was what we'd promised each other. We could do anything.

But this wasn't *quite* what I'd had in mind.

"Hold still!" yelled Ariadne. "Just one more minute!"

I looked at Scarlet in horror. By my estimation, we had less than a minute before Miss Bowler arrived and we were

all in hideous trouble, and about ten seconds before I lost my balance and plunged straight into the water.

Scarlet was staring back at me, the expression frozen on her face. “I hate you, Ariadne,” she said, twisting her mouth without moving her eyes.

Ariadne had received a camera from her father as a present during the Easter holidays, and it was her new obsession. It was small, black and silver, with knobs and dials that clicked and whirred. And right at that moment we were being subjected to it.

“It’s going to look *magical!*” she shouted from the other side of the pool.

I was wobbling. I tried very hard not to think about the chilly water just inches from my toes, and even harder not to think about what I was wearing.

This was Ariadne’s brilliant idea: Scarlet and I were to dress as water nymphs and pose on the diving boards of Rookwood School’s horrible outdoor pool. She had made us costumes out of old swimsuits and ballet tutus, with streamers of blue and green, and chalked streaks of colour on our faces. She’d scattered flowers in the water around us. I was certain that we looked quite ridiculous.

She wanted us both to do an *arabesque*, the ballet move where you stand on tiptoe with your arms outstretched and one leg up behind you, in a mirror image of each other. And

now she was on the far side of the pool, bobbing up and down with the camera as she tried to get the perfect angle.

“Who agreed to this, again?” I whispered to Scarlet.

The diving boards were cold and slippery, even in the morning sun. Lessons were about to start, and Miss Bowler was *not* going to be happy if her first swimming session of the day was disrupted by two failed water nymphs tumbling into the deep end.

“Ariadneeee!” Scarlet wailed as her leg started to give.

“There. Got it!” Ariadne exclaimed finally. “You can stop now!”

“Oh, thank goodness,” I said, lowering my raised leg gently to the ground and slowly backing off the board. I could feel my muscles twitching. Scarlet just sat down with a thump, making her board thrum with vibrations.

Our best friend wandered over to us. She was clutching her camera and grinning, seemingly oblivious to our close brush with peril. “I think this will be my best photograph yet. Daddy will be so pleased.” She’d been learning how to develop her pictures in the new darkroom and sending them to her father in the post. Apparently he was proudly displaying them on the walls of Flitworth Manor.

“Never make me do that again,” said Scarlet. Ariadne just blinked at her happily.

“GIRLS!” came a sudden booming voice.

“Uh-oh.” The colour drained from our friend’s face.

The huge figure of Miss Bowler came striding past the changing rooms towards us, her whistle swinging back and forth round her neck. “What do you think you’re doing? Is this some sort of *art*?” She bellowed the word as if it were something terrible and offensive.

“I... um...” Ariadne stammered, holding the camera out in front of herself as if it would protect her.

Miss Bowler glared at us furiously. “You should all be in lessons. My class is about to start and the pool is full of GREENERY!”

“I’ll clear it up, Miss!” Ariadne squeaked. She ran and grabbed a net that was leaning against the wall and began trying to sweep the flowers from the water. The camera bounced on its leather strap as she moved.

The swimming instructor turned her glare to my twin. “I expect better from you, Ivy.”

“I’m Scarlet,” said Scarlet.

Miss Bowler went red. “I don’t care who you are! Clean up this mess and get inside! And for goodness’ sake, put your uniforms back on!”

I looked down at myself sheepishly. Ariadne had made a brave effort with her costumes, and she was certainly a good seamstress, but she wasn’t exactly at the level of our Aunt Sara.

I hoped Miss Bowler had finished her shouting, but evidently she hadn't. "Flitworth, if I see you messing around with that infernal gadget during lesson time again, I will take it off you! Do you understand?"

Ariadne dropped a sopping pile of flowers at her feet. "Yes, Miss! I'll put it away, Miss!"

Miss Bowler's face contorted with disgust. "Children," she muttered with distaste. "I've a good mind to make you swim la—" She cut herself off, and looked over her shoulder, some of the tomato red draining from her cheeks. I wondered if she was remembering our new headmistress Mrs Knight's aversion to punishments, or perhaps old Headmaster Bartholomew and the girl who had once drowned at his hands in the school lake. Either way, she seemed to change her mind. "Just get inside," she said finally, before stomping away.

I looked back at Ariadne, expecting her to be upset. She loved that camera, and hated being told off. But her worried expression had changed to an excited grin. She waved the camera at us. "I can't wait to see how this one turns out!"

Rookwood School was trying its best to return to normality. Or at least, what passed for normality at a place where there really was at least one actual skeleton in the cupboard.

Last term, girls had left the school in droves, their parents

afraid it was unsafe. And they were right, it turned out – our terrifying headmistress Miss Fox had stopped at nothing in trying to destroy the reputation of Rookwood School, but we'd finally thwarted her.

So Rookwood was a safe place once again, but that didn't mean everyone had come back. Some had enrolled at other schools for good, their parents horrified by the spate of poisonings and anonymous threats. Violet, former arch-enemy of Scarlet, had been taken away by her guardian, and nobody had heard from her since. Not even Rose, who Violet had rescued from the asylum and brought to Rookwood. Rose had been allowed to stay while efforts were made to find out where she came from.

Things were now as normal as they could be. Lessons, porridge and stew, detentions for Scarlet; all under the now slightly more watchful eye of Mrs Knight. And now, I supposed, under the lens of Ariadne's camera.

The next day began, as they tended to do, with an assembly.

We were shuffling into the hall when Mrs Knight breezed past us, clutching a piece of paper.

"Looks like an announcement," said Scarlet, craning her neck to see over the first formers.

"Oooh," said Ariadne. "I hope it's a good one. Perhaps they're going to improve the school dinners." I was amazed

that she had managed to keep up her appetite after being poisoned by the stew last term.

“Maybe they’re cancelling all the lessons. Or firing all the teachers and letting us run the school,” my twin suggested, her face suddenly hopeful.

I laughed and took a seat in our row, praying the announcement would actually be about something good, and not another one of the ‘unfortunate incidents’ that Rookwood was becoming famous for.

But as Mrs Knight took to the stage, I could see a twinkle of excitement in her eyes. “Good morning, girls,” she called cheerfully.

“Good morning, Mrs Knight,” we chorused back. The chorus wasn’t quite as loud as it had been before we’d lost so many students.

“Before we go on to the hymns this morning, I have an announcement to make!” she said. “And I think this is one you’ll all enjoy.”

Scarlet nudged me. “*Firing all the teachers,*” she mouthed.

“We could all do with a fresh start after last term,” Mrs Knight continued. I felt that was a bit of an understatement. “And so I have prepared a special treat: a school trip!”

A ripple of excited murmurs spread across the hall. Mrs Knight held out her hands to quieten everyone down, looking unusually pleased with herself.

“Now, girls, this will be a great opportunity to show some Rookwood School spirit. We will be staying at a wonderful lakeside hotel for a week of nature activities and working together.”

Scarlet and Ariadne were grinning, but I felt a tiny shiver down my spine. I wasn’t sure I wanted to go near another lake.

“Parents have already been notified by letter so they can give permission and pay the fees.” She smiled down at her notes. “There will also be a notice in the local paper. We want to show just how great our school can be.”

Hmm. I could see what she was up to. She was putting her brave face back on, and hoping that this would rescue the school’s reputation. I wasn’t sure it would be enough. The murderous and swindling headteachers of the past had done too much damage, surely?

Miss Bowler strutted on to the stage. “I don’t want any dilly-dalliers on this trip, so you need to sign up on the sheet, or you won’t be getting a place!”

Already everyone was whispering to each other in excitement. “We have to go,” Scarlet said in my ear. “A whole week away from Rookwood! No lessons!”

“It sounds good,” I muttered back.

“Oh, I do hope Daddy will let me go,” said Ariadne.

I shuffled awkwardly in my seat. That was a point. If our

parents had to agree that we could go, *and* agree to pay the money... did we have any chance?

Mrs Knight continued: “Erm, right, yes, myself and Miss Bowler will be leading the trip, and there will be additional supervision from some of the elder prefects. Safety will be of the utmost importance, and we want everyone on their best behaviour.”

My twin’s expression was as mischievous as ever. “Easy,” she whispered. “What could possibly go wrong?”