

I turned over in bed and shook the pillow again. The pillow was hard and lumpy and the duvet was thin and lumpy. The mattress was chilly with damp. I was freezing cold.

The clock on the living-room mantelpiece had struck eleven a while ago, but I couldn't sleep. Since Anna had told me the story of Sophia Fane, I couldn't stop thinking about her, locked up in here, grieving for the baby who was stolen from her while she slept.

There was a hideous moaning, whistling sound coming from behind the wall opposite the bed. It had freaked me out so much earlier that I'd made Anna come and listen to it.

"It's just the wind in the chimney," she said. "There would have been a fireplace there, you see, before the house was turned into flats. The fireplace was blocked up but the chimney's still there behind the plasterboard." It didn't sound like wind in the chimney. It sounded like a pack of ghosts, howling in the walls. It was the most horrible sound I'd ever heard.

I turned over again and thumped the pillow. The ghosts in the chimney howled even louder.

As if this room wasn't uncomfortable enough already, when I took out my things to get ready for bed, I realised I'd forgotten to pack any pyjamas. Anna insisted on lending me a nightdress. I didn't know nightdresses still existed. I thought they'd died with the Victorians. It was made of white cotton and came down to my ankles, with buttons at the front and a high frilly collar. It felt really weird to wear, and it smelled weird too. A strange, old-fashioned smell.

A high metallic strike made me jump. But it was only the living-room clock. It struck twelve, and the last stroke faded away.

And as it faded away, the wind stopped whistling in the chimney. The water stopped gurgling in the pipes. The breeze stopped rustling in the trees.

I had never known such silence. It was as though the world was holding its breath.

I realised I was holding my breath too. I forced myself to breathe.

The howling in the chimney started again: a terrible, desolate, lonely, wailing sound. I covered my ears with my hands.

Tap, tap, tap.

I screamed. Something was rapping on the window.

I burrowed down into the bed and pulled the duvet over my head, whimpering with terror.

The wailing grew louder. Skeletal fingers knocked on the glass. Tap, tap, tap.

My teeth were chattering and I shivered uncontrollably. I thought I might die of fright. I wanted to run but I couldn't move.

Tap, tap, tap.

I made myself breathe. It was just a tree branch, tapping against the window, I told myself. There must be a tree outside the window.

I couldn't just lie there whimpering all night. I had to be brave. I had to go and see.

I forced myself to get out of bed and walk across the pitch-black room. I held my breath and pulled the curtains open.

A girl in a white nightdress was staring in at me. A girl with long dark hair and a desperate look in her eyes.

I shrieked and jumped back, my blood pumping, my heart racing.

Then I realised. It was my reflection. It was just the nightdress that had scared me. I wasn't used to seeing myself in a nightdress.

I forced myself to look again. My reflection looked back at me.

Except ... it didn't look *exactly* like me. And it didn't look like a reflection.

Don't be stupid, I told myself. Of course it's your reflection.

From somewhere outside the house came a whirring sound. And then another clock started to strike, with a deep, resonant sound that lingered in the air.

That was strange. I had heard the living-room

clock strike every hour this evening, but I was sure I hadn't heard that other clock before.

The clock continued to strike. And my reflection raised its hand.

*What?*

I hadn't raised my hand. Had I?

Then the hand...

No. It couldn't have done.

I was stone cold. Goose pimples prickled all over my body.

I must be going mad, I told myself. I must be hallucinating.

Because I was sure the hand had *beckoned* to me.

Had I just beckoned without knowing it? Was that possible?

Ice-cold with dread, I raised my arm.

The girl in the window didn't raise hers. She just stared at me with a pleading look in her eyes. As I lowered my arm, flooded with terror, she reached hers towards me and beckoned again.

"Help me," she mouthed.

I screamed, yanked the curtains back together and ran from the room. There was no way I was going back in there. No way I was staying in this flat. I would wake Anna and make her take me back to London, back to my own home, right now, this minute.

As I ran through the doorway, I had the weirdest sensation. For a moment, I felt as though I ceased to exist. It was as though my body had dissolved into thin air.

Then, as the door slammed shut behind me, the sensation faded and I felt solid and whole again. It must have been some sort of fainting fit, I thought, only without the toppling-over part.

But something was different. My clothes felt different. I looked down.

*What the...?*

Instead of Anna's nightdress, I was wearing a long brown apron over a long grey dress and black boots. There was a tightness around my ribcage, as though I had some sort of corset underneath the dress.

What on *earth* was going on? Was it a dream? But I hadn't fallen asleep. Had I?

I needed to wake Anna. I had my hand on her bedroom-door handle when suddenly I stopped and stared.

All the doors in the flat were modern and white, with cheap-looking handles in a dull-coloured metal.

But this was a door of polished wood, elaborately carved and panelled, and instead of a cheap chrome handle, my hand was clutched around a sphere of shining brass.

Still clutching the doorknob, I looked up and down the corridor.

Everything was different.

The doors were all of carved and polished wood, with gleaming brass doorknobs. The walls were no longer a dirty cream colour, but a lovely deep blue. Instead of the nasty brown carpet, I was standing on a beautiful patterned rug that ran right along the middle of the corridor. Around the edges of the

rug, polished floorboards gleamed in the light of flickering wall lamps.

I was trying to take this in when Anna's bedroom door was flung violently open, knocking me into the opposite wall. A thin, tight-faced, middle-aged woman wearing a long grey dress marched out of the room. Her eye lit on me and she frowned.

"Are you the new housemaid?" she asked in a strong French accent. "What are you doing up here? Did Mrs Hardwick send you?"

I stared at her, speechless. She tutted. "Another brainless idiot," she said, shaking her head. "Where does she find such hopeless girls? Get back to the kitchen. Polly is on fires tonight."

I didn't move. I *couldn't* move. The woman gave me a shove in the small of my back, propelling me down the corridor.

"Get along with you, girl. This is no time to stand around dreaming."

Head spinning, I walked away from her down the corridor.

I pinched my arm as hard as I could.

It hurt.

But I already knew it would. Because this didn't feel one bit like any dream I'd ever had. Was I having some kind of crazy hallucination? Or had I gone completely mad?