

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. *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
LIGHTHOUSE
INTRUDER

Kereen Getten

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Pushkin Children's

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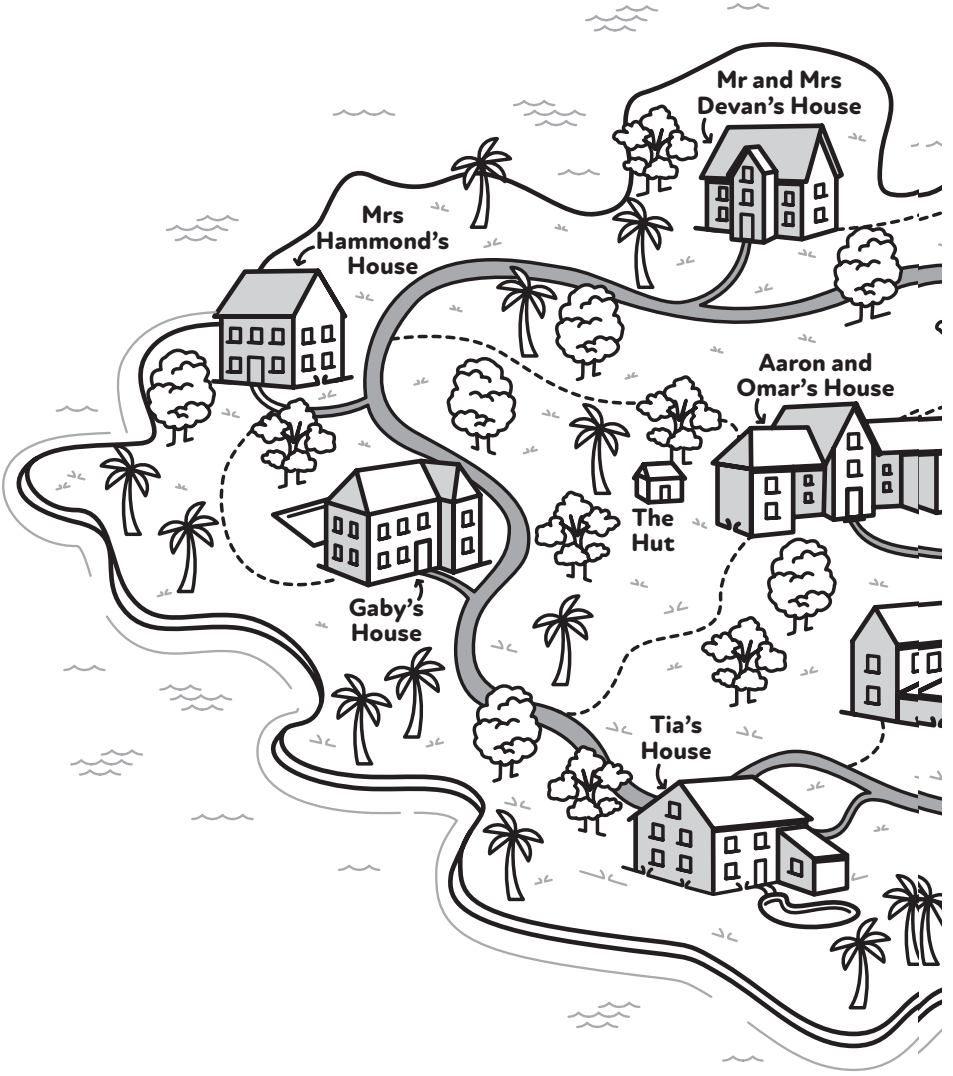
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The
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Mr and Mrs
Devan's House

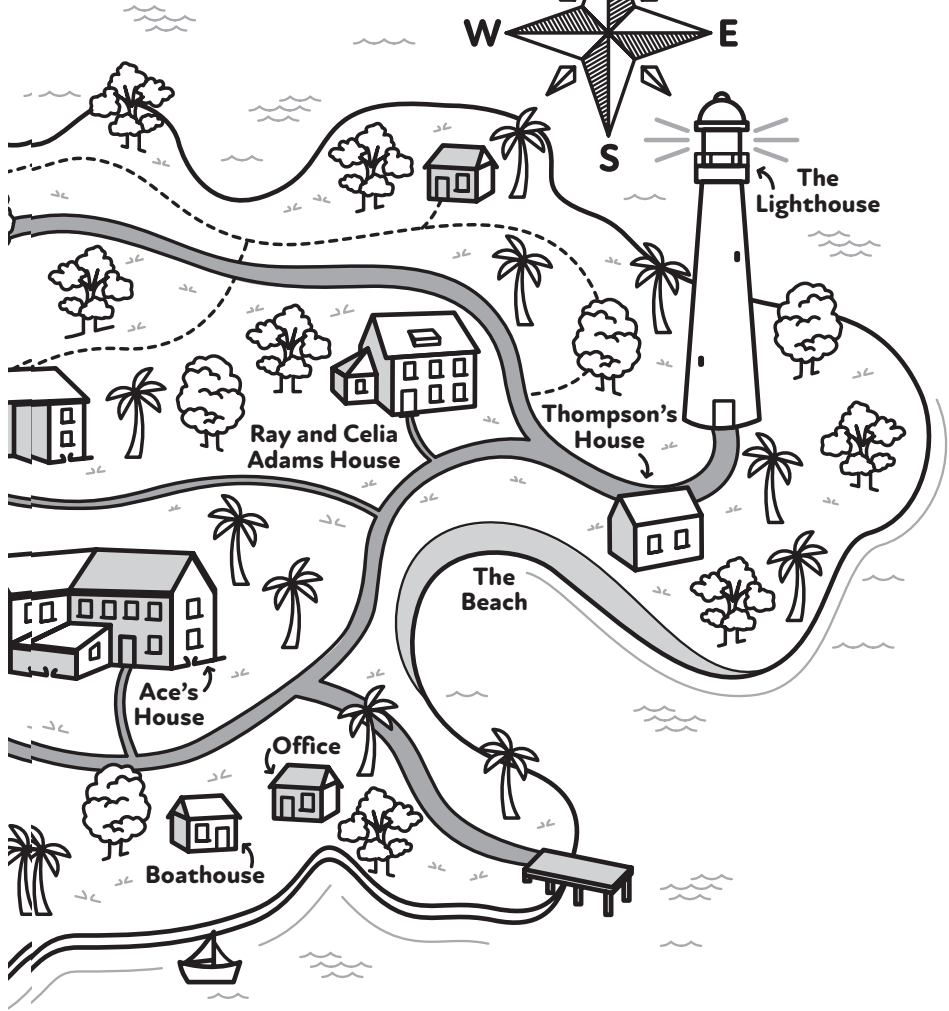
Mrs
Hammond's
House

Aaron and
Omar's House

The
Hut

Gaby's
House

Tia's
House







Chapter 1

Fayson Mayor, the twelve-year-old FBI agent, has been recruited yet again to save the world. It's getting exhausting, as she has only just stopped a major assassination plot against the King of England.

"I'm tired of fixing your mess," Fayson says down the phone to the FBI head of division. "I'm not a robot. I need time to be a normal person, just for a day."

My phone starts to ring for real, and I jump out of my make-believe game and

check the number on the screen. I stare at it in disbelief before putting it to my ear and answering hesitantly.

“Hello?”

“Fayson! You have to come to our holiday house for October half term. It’s on a spooky island!” my twin cousins tell me, through rushed voices. They always talk over each other like it’s a race to see who can speak the fastest.

I haven’t heard from them in at least a year, so I’m shocked they’re calling now.

“Yeah, weird things happen, like ghosts and flashing lights and stuff,” one of them says, while the other makes ghost sounds down the phone for effect.

I try to identify who is speaking, but it’s hard to distinguish between their voices right now. When we were younger, I could just about tell them apart because Aaron was taller and Omar had a dimple. Over the

phone they sound the same, and it's been so long since I've seen them in real life.

I've caught glances of their holiday photos over Mama's shoulder when she stalks their mother's social media page. She mumbles, "I suppose I better say something before dey accuse mi of being jealous," before commenting on their photo, typing *That's nice* with a laughing face that she thinks is a happy face.

"Not that one, Mama," I have to keep correcting her. She will pull a face and say, "But dat one mek me look like me a grimace and I don't want dem to know what I am actually thinking."

Mama and her brother, Uncle Edmond, haven't been close for a while, but I think that maybe it's because he is never in the country and Mama is always working.

Now the twins are on the phone telling me about some island where they have a holiday home. Their father, Uncle Edmond,

is a hot-shot businessman and their mother, Aunty Desiree, is a lawyer. They've always lived rich. They have a big house in the city too, with maids, and used to invite me to stay with them in the holidays, until they started travelling abroad.

Now, out of the blue, they're asking me to come and spend the holidays with them. I'm surprised they still have my number, with all their new rich friends around the world.

"I can't. I don't have a passport," I tell them, because I don't trust them. All they've ever done is play tricks on me.

There's snorting down the phone.

"What she say?" Omar (I think) says from the other end. Aaron repeats what I've said and they both dissolve into hysterical laughter.

"I don't see what's so funny," I snap down the phone. "Not all of us have passports to travel the world!"

“You don’t need a passport,” Aaron says, still snorting. “It’s off Portmore.”

I frown. “In Jamaica?”

“Yes!” they both shout. I still don’t believe or trust them, so I say I’ll think about it, and also I want to get off the phone because I don’t appreciate being laughed at. I have better things to do, like save the world.

“Your mother already said you can go,” Omar says. Which catches me off guard; Mama hasn’t said anything to me.

“I said I’ll think about it,” I snap, and end the call. I collapse on my bed and stare at the ceiling, thinking about what they’ve said. An island that’s not Jamaica but part of Jamaica? It’s probably filled with posh houses with servants and pools, just like the twins’ house in the city. I would feel out of place there. I am so different from all that.

Mama and I live in a small apartment on the top floor of a two-storey building not far

from her work at the hospital. Our apartment faces a busy road, but across from that road is the library, my second home, so things are not that bad.

Mama works long hours and Ms Lee, an old lady from the apartment below, is always here watching me until she gets home.

Sometimes Mama will get home for dinner, sometimes I am woken up to her thanking Ms Lee in a hushed voice. Sometimes there are days when I don't see her at all.

Tonight is one of those evenings when I haven't seen her, but I stay awake by reading one of the books I borrowed from the library, even though I've read it three times already. I turn the light off, so Ms Lee thinks I'm sleeping, and read under the covers using the torch from my phone.

It is well past eleven o'clock when I hear the key in the lock: the familiar sign that

Mama is home. There is a quiet exchange between her and Ms Lee. I feel a surge of excitement to hear her voice. Knowing she is home safe, and her comforting tone, usually send me to sleep.

This time I wait until I hear Ms Lee leave, then I open the door a crack and peer into the living room. As I do, Mama collapses into the green sofa with a sigh, dropping her handbag on the floor and starting to peel off her work shoes.

I pad barefooted into the room, and I am standing in front of her when she opens her eyes. She jumps when she sees me.

“Lawd have mercy!” she cries, with her hand pressed against her chest. “Fayson, what are you doing out here?”

“Mama, yuh tell the twins I must go and spend the October holidays with them?” I ask.

She takes a breath and looks at me. “You don’t want to go?”

I shake my head adamantly. “I don’t have anything in common with dem. They too rich and they play too much tricks on me. I don’t like dem.”

She stifles a smile and gets up, walking over to the open kitchen that is part of the living room.

“Well, first of all, I didn’t tell them anything. They begged their mother to ask me.” Mama switches on the kettle. She mumbles something under her breath about her brother getting someone else to do his work, but I barely catch it and she turns her back on me when she says it.

I look up at her. “Why dem do dat?”

She shrugs, reaching for a cup in the cupboard. “Maybe they miss you.”

I know that’s not true. Not with all their rich friends and travelling the world. If they miss anything about me, it’s throwing spiders in my hair and putting

water in my bed to make me think I've wet myself.

"But why did you tell them yes, when you know I don't like them?"

She laughs. "Fayson, you don't like nobody, and that's the problem."

I pull up a seat at the breakfast bar and lean on it. "Why is that a problem?"

Her smile fades. "Because ever since Lizzy left, you don't talk to nobody. And you need friends."

A picture of Lizzy, my best friend, flickers through my head. We did everything together, until she moved to Kingston with her family. Now it's just me saving the world alone.

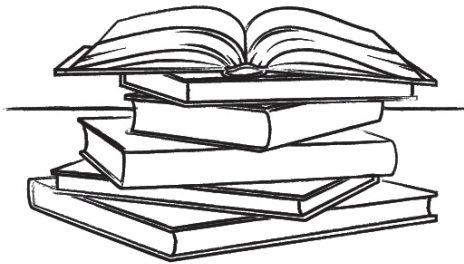
"I have friends," I tell her, and I start to reel off the characters

in my latest book:

Hazley the

detective and her

dog Barnaby, who is



always by her side and may as well be by my side because he feels like my dog too.

It isn't until I mention the robot Herbert that she realizes what I'm talking about, and the hope in her eyes diminishes like I just told her she won a million dollars and then took it away.

She pours herself some camomile tea, because it helps her sleep. "Real friends," she says, glancing up at me, "not pretend ones."

"They're real to me," I say, feeling offended.

She shakes her head. "It's either spend half term with the boys or go to church camp again—if they let you in." Mama throws me a disapproving look.

I lower my eyes, remembering how I asked so many questions at the camp—like where in the sky God was, if they had a map they could show me, and why astronauts haven't found him yet—that they called me

‘disruptive’ and told Mama to come pick me up.

She looks at me gravely. “We lucky to get any of these opportunities, Fayson. You can’t keep sabotaging them, because I don’t have no money to pay somebody to look after you.”

“We can go somewhere,” I suggest. “You and me.”

“I have no money to go nowhere,” she says tiredly.

“Or we can go to the beach and get ice cream?”

“Which part of ‘I don’t have no money’ you not getting?” she snaps.

My heart sinks, and the room becomes heavy with silence.

Mama’s shoulders fall and so does her head. “Look,” she says in a strained voice. “I would love to do all dem things with you, but I need to work. I can’t afford to stop

working, so this is what we have—church camp or your cousins. You need to pick one, or I will pick one for you.”

Through the dim light of the street lamp shining into my room, I lie in my bed thinking hard about what Mama said. I think about how she works long shifts, six days a week, with only one day off and that day is busy with running errands. I think about how I follow her around to the bank and the supermarket, to the doctors and the hair shop, on that one day, because it’s the only time I have with her.

I think about how we stop off at the patty shop and get my favourite coco bread and patty with fruit-punch box juice. Then sit outside on those iron chairs that are not very comfortable and watch people go by under the harsh heat of the afternoon sun.

I think about how quickly that day always goes and how, before I know it, it's nighttime and Mama is getting ready for work again. I think about how tired she suddenly looks when she is ironing her uniform and how much it hurts knowing we won't get this time again for another week.

That's what I hate about church camp. They take us so far into the Blue Mountains that I don't even get that one day with her. I don't see or speak to her for three whole weeks, except for one phone call.

I think about the strict rules the camp has on not contacting home too much, early bedtimes, and annoying group activities that make me want to vomit.

I roll over on to my side and reach for my phone. I dial the last number, knowing Mama only gave me enough credit to call her in an emergency, so I hope this call isn't a waste.

“Yo,” Aaron answers on the other end.
“What time is it?”

“I’ll come,” I tell him. I can hear him rustling around.

“Really?” he says excitedly, and I can just picture all the pranks he’s coming up with in his head right now.

“On one condition...”

“Okay, what is it?”

“You give my mother a job, on your island, for half term.”

There is silence on the other end.

“You hear me?” I demand.

“How am I supposed to give your mother a job?” he asks. “I don’t own the island.”

“Talk to your parents, or your friends’ parents, or whoever. But I’m not coming without her. Got it?”

I hear a sigh down the phone. “Okay,” he says, “I’ll talk to my parents.”

I nod. “Good, then I’ll come.”