

Chapter 1

A holiday in Cornwall

‘Emily! Come downstairs, please. We need to leave soon.’

Emily jumped off her bed and ran down the stairs. Her mother was waiting for her.

‘Slow down, Emily!’ her mother said, laughing. ‘We want to go to the train station, not to the hospital!’

Emily and her family were on holiday in a seaside village in Cornwall. Emily’s friend Ava was travelling down to join them. Emily and her mother were driving to the station to meet her.

‘I don’t want to be late, Mum,’ said Emily.

‘We aren’t late. It only takes ten minutes to drive to the station.’

‘I know, I know. I’m just so excited to see Ava.’

‘You’ve only been apart for a week!’

‘But she’s my best friend,’ said Emily. She was quiet for a second, and then she added, ‘Thanks for letting her come down and stay with us, Mum.’

‘That’s okay, love,’ replied her mother. ‘You know your dad and I are very fond of Ava. We’re happy that she can join us here on our holiday. I’m sure Ava’s more excited than you. You know how she can be!’

‘What do you mean?’ asked Emily.

‘Well, how many times has Ava texted you this morning?’

‘Oh … um … a few,’ said Emily with a smile.

Just then Emily’s phone made a buzzing noise. It was another text from Ava. They both laughed.

‘All I’m saying is have fun, but please don’t do anything silly. I want your dad to have a restful holiday,’ said her mother.

‘I know, Mum. I promise we won’t do anything silly,’ said Emily.

As they drove to the station, Emily sat quietly and looked

out of the window. The countryside was beautiful in Cornwall. Emily and her family lived in the city. Her father was a doctor and worked very long hours. The family didn't go on holiday very often. Emily loved everything about this holiday. The holiday house, the village, the sea. She especially liked the beach. And now that Ava was coming to join her, it was going to be even better. The two girls met when they were eight years old. They did everything together.

The car pulled into the station car park.

'One more thing,' said her mother. 'Can you both be kind to your brother, please?'

'But Mum, I'm not unkind. Ben is a pain *all* the time!' said Emily.

'Now, Emily, you need to remember that Ben hasn't been happy at school this year. Things aren't easy for him at the moment. And he hasn't got a friend here with him. He's going to feel a little left out.'

'Okay, Mum, we'll be kind,' muttered Emily.

Emily and her mother walked onto the station platform. The train had just arrived, and lots of people were getting off it.

'Emily!' Ava ran through the crowd and gave Emily a big hug. 'Oh, it's so good to see you.'

Emily hugged her friend back. Ava had arrived! Arm in arm, the girls walked to the car. They sat in the back together.

'Oh, I'm so excited to be here,' said Ava. 'Thank you so much for having me, Mrs Griffin. I can't wait to explore the village, and go to the beach. I hear you can surf here. Can we have a go at surfing? Is there anything to do at night? I hope it doesn't rain too much!'

They pulled out of the station car park. Emily saw her mother looking at her in the rear-view mirror. They smiled at each other.

This is what Mum was talking about, thought Emily. But

that's why Ava's my best friend. She makes everything so much fun!

The next morning the girls woke up early. It was a sunny day.

'Perfect beach weather!' cried Emily.

'Let's have some breakfast. I'm starving!' said Ava.

An hour later, the girls walked down to the beach.

'Oh, look,' cried Ava. 'The sea!'

The girls walked onto the sand, took off their shoes and ran into the water.

'Ooh, it's colder than I thought it was going to be,' said Ava.

'It's not bad once you get in,' said Emily. 'It's still early. It's better to swim later, when the sun is hotter. Let's explore over there. There are some great rock pools.'

The girls climbed over the rocks and started hunting for crabs in the pools.

'These are so cool,' said Ava, holding up a crab and waving it at her friend. 'Hello, Emily!'

Emily smiled at her friend. She looked around and noticed a boy sitting on some rocks nearby. He was staring out to sea.

Ava noticed him too. Before Emily could stop her, Ava had walked over to him.

'Hi there,' Ava said to the boy.

The boy looked up, surprised. 'Oh, hi,' he replied.

'It's beautiful here, isn't it?' said Ava.

'Er – yes, yes it is,' said the boy.

Ava didn't wait for an invitation. She sat beside him.

'I'm Ava, and this is my friend Emily.'

Emily smiled, feeling a little shy. She joined Ava on the rock.

'Hi, I'm Lucas,' he said.

'Do you live here?' asked Ava.

'No, I'm just here on holiday,' said Lucas.

'Yes, we are too,' Emily joined in. 'My family arrived a week ago. Ava joined us yesterday.'



They chatted for a while. The girls discovered that Lucas was sixteen, a year older than them. Ava was excited to learn that he could surf. Lucas shared some ideas on how to learn.

‘Are you here with your family?’ asked Emily

‘Sort of,’ replied Lucas.

‘A “sort-of” family?’ laughed Ava. ‘What kind of family is that?’

‘Oh, I just mean that I’m with my uncle and cousin.’

‘Not your parents, then?’ asked Ava.

‘No,’ replied Lucas. ‘Not my parents.’

‘Do you live with your uncle?’ asked Ava.

‘I should probably go now,’ said Lucas, standing up.

Ava jumped up too. ‘We can walk back with you,’ she said.

Ava, Emily and Lucas walked along the beach. They chatted about school and the things they liked to do outside of school.

As they walked to the road, a car stopped. The man in the car pressed the horn. Lucas looked up and stopped talking. The car horn sounded again. The man waved at Lucas. He looked angry.

‘I should go now,’ muttered Lucas. ‘See you.’

Without looking at them, he walked towards the car.

‘Oh! Okay, bye,’ called Emily.

‘Bye, Lucas,’ called Ava. Then she added, ‘We’ll be here tomorrow, at midday. We’ll go for a swim if it’s still sunny.’

Emily looked at her crossly. ‘Why did you say that?’

‘Oh, I don’t know,’ replied Ava, smiling. ‘He seems really nice. He likes talking to you and he looks like he needs a friend. And I think you like him too!’

‘Oh, Ava, I don’t!’ cried Emily, blushing.

The girls walked home. Ava was telling Emily a story, but Emily wasn’t really listening

That was strange, thought Emily. Lucas seemed so friendly but he changed when he saw that car. He looked a little scared. I wonder if that was his uncle. He didn’t look very friendly.