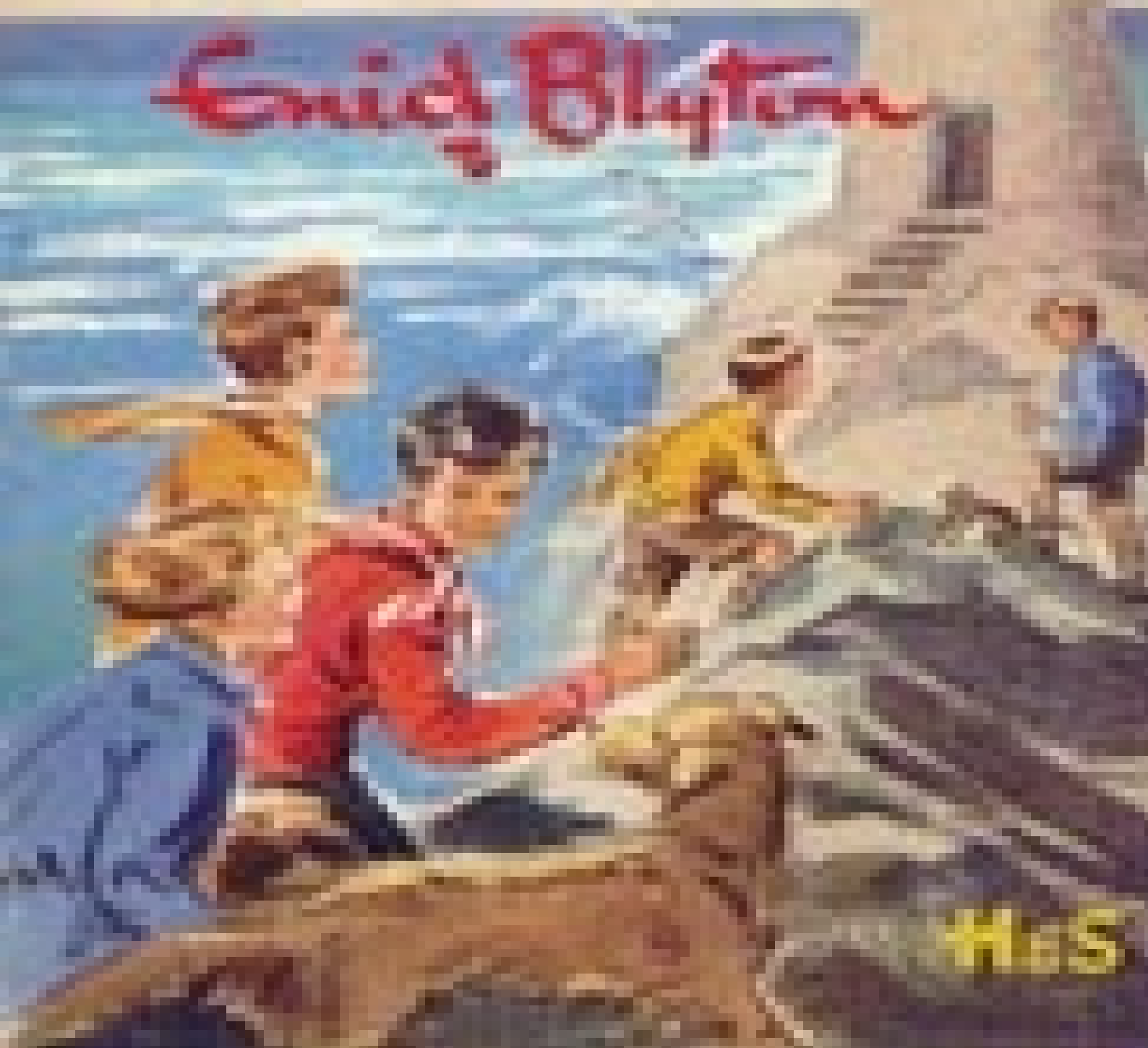


FIVE GO TO DEMON'S ROCKS

Guy Blayton



W&S

Chapter One

THREE VISITORS ARRIVE

Fanny! shouted Mr Kirrin, running up the stairs with a letter in his hand. FANNY! Where are you?

Here, dear, here, helping Joan with the dusting, said Mrs Kirrin, appearing out of a bedroom. Dont shout like that. Im not deaf, you know. Whats the matter?

Ive a letter here from that old friend of mine, Professor Hayling, said Mr Kirrin. You remember him, dont you?

Do you mean the man who came here to stay a few years ago, and kept forgetting to come in for meals? said Mrs Kirrin, flicking some dust off her husbands coat.

Fanny, dont flick at me like that, said Mr Kirrin, crossly. Anyone would think I was covered in dust. Listen - hes coming to stay today for a week - instead of next week.

Mrs Kirrin stared at her husband in horror. But he cant do that! she said. George is coming home today - and her three cousins with her, to stay. You know that!

Oh - Id forgotten, said Mr Kirrin. Well, ring up and tell George to stay where she is - we cant have them while Professor Hayling is here. I shall want to be quite undisturbed - he and I have to confer about some new invention of his. Dont look like that, my dear - this may be very very important.

Well, its important to the Five that their plans shouldnt be spoilt, said Mrs Kirrin. After all, George only went to stay with Dick, Julian and Anne because you had some urgent papers to write, and you didnt want to be disturbed - and you knew today was the day they were due home. Quentin, you must ring up your Professor friend and say he cant come.

Very well, my dear, very well, said Mr Kirrin. But he wont like it. He wont like it at all! He went off to his study to use the telephone, and Mrs Kirrin hurried up the stairs to get ready the rooms for the four cousins.

Anne can sleep with George as usual, she said to Joan. And the two boys can sleep in the guest-room.

It will be nice to have all the Five back again, said Joan, pushing the carpet-sweeper up and down the landing. I miss them - and you should see the cakes I made yesterday, maam - two whole tins full!

Youre too good to those children, Joan, said Mrs Kirrin. No wonder theyre so fond of you. Now, well, oh dear - theres Mr Kirrin calling me again. All right, dear, Im coming, Im coming!

She ran downstairs to the hall, and into the study. Mr Kirrin was standing there, holding the telephone receiver. What shall I do? he almost shouted. Professor Hayling has left and is already on his way here. I cant stop him coming. And hes bringing his son with him, so there are two of them.

His son! Well, really! said Mrs Kirrin. There isnt room for them here, with the four cousins as well, Quentin. You know that.

Well, ring up George and tell her not to come back for a week, but to stay with her cousins, said Mr Kirrin, crossly. Theres no reason why they should ALL come here.

But, Quentin, you know perfectly well that Georges aunt and uncle are shutting up the house today, and going on a cruise somewhere, said Mrs Kirrin. Oh dear, oh dear! Well, Ill ring up George, and try to stop them all coming!

So once more the telephone was used, and Mrs Kirrin tried anxiously to get in touch with George. For a long time nobody answered, and then at last a voice came. Hallo - whos there?

Mrs Kirrin here - may I speak to George, please?

Oh - Im sorry - all the Five have already left, on their bicycles, said the voice. And the house is empty except for me. Im a neighbour come in to lock everything up. Im so sorry I cant get George for you.

Oh - thank you. Never mind! said Mrs Kirrin and put back the receiver. She gave a heavy sigh. NOW WHAT what was to be done? Professor Hayling and his son were on their way to Kirrin Cottage - and so were the Five - and none of them could be stopped. What a household it would be!

Quentin, she said, going into the study where her husband was tidying up enormous piles of papers. Quentin, listen - George and all the others are on their way here. And HOW I am going to put everyone up. I do - not - know. It looks as if somebody will have

to sleep in Timmys kennel, and Ive a good mind to make a bed up for you in the coal-house!

Im busy, said Mr Kirrin, hardly listening. Ive all these papers to get in order before Professor Hayling comes. And by the way, my dear, will you PLEASE tell the children to be quiet while the Professor is here - hes rather short-tempered, and...

Quentin, Im beginning to feel rather short-tempered too, said Mrs Kirrin. And if... She stopped very suddenly and gazed through the study window in horror. Then she pointed her finger at it. Look! Whats that at the window?

Her husband turned and stared in amazement. It looks like a monkey! he said. Where on earth did it come from?

A voice called down the stairs. It was Joan. Maam! Theres a car at the door - I think its the masters visitors - a man and a boy!

Mrs Kirrin was still staring in astonishment at the monkey, who was now scratching at the window-pane, chattering in a funny little prattle. He pressed his nose to the glass, just like a child.

DONT tell me that your friend owns a monkey - and has brought him to stay too! groaned poor Mrs Kirrin. Slie jumped as a loud bang came from the front door, and went to open it.

Yes - there stood Professor Hayling, the man who had so often forgotten to come in for meals when h

had stayed at Kirrin Cottage years before. And by him was a boy of about nine, with a face a little like that of the monkey now on his shoulder!

The professor strode in, calling to the chauffeur behind. Bring the luggage in, man. Hallo, Mrs Kirrin, nice to see you again. Wheres your husband? My word, Ive some interesting news to tell him. Ah, Quentin, there you are! Got your papers all ready for me?

My dear old friend! said Mr Kirrin, shaking hands warmly. Fine to see you! So glad you could come.

This is Tinker, my son, said Professor Hayling, clapping the boy on the back, and almost knocking him over. I always forget what his real name is - we call him Tinker because hes always tinkering with cars - mad on them, you know! Shake hands, Tinker. Wheres Mischief?

Poor Mrs Kirrin hadnt been able to get in a word. The Professor was now in the hall, still talking. The monkey had leapt off the boys shoulder, and was on the hall-stand, swinging on a hat-peg.

Really, its like a circus! thought poor Mrs Kirrin. And the rooms not prepared yet - and what about lunch? Oh my goodness - and all the cousins coming as well. What is that monkey doing now? Making faces at himself in the hall mirror!

Somehow or other the visitors were pushed into the living-room, and they sat down. Mr Kirrin was so anxious to discuss some mighty problems with the Professor that he actually fetched a great sheaf of papers and immediately spread them over the table.

Not in here, dear - in your study please, said Mrs Kirrin, firmly. Joan! Will you take the bags up to the guest-room. And make up a bed there on the couch for the little boy? There wont be room anywhere else.

What about the monkey! asked Joan, eyeing it warily. Is he to have a bed too?

He sleeps with me, said Tinker, in an astonishingly loud voice, and leapt suddenly up the stairs, making a most extraordinary purring noise as he went. Mrs Kirrin stared after him in amazement.

Is he in pain, or something? she said.

No, no - hes just being a car, said his father. I told you he was mad about cars. He cant help pretending to be one now and again.

Im a car, a Jaguar car! yelled Tinker, from the top of the stairs. Cant you hear my engine! R-R-R-R-F R-R! Hey, Mischief come and have a ride!

The little monkey scampered up the stairs and leapt on to the boys shoulder, chattering in its funny little voice. The Jaguar car then apparently made a tour of all the bedrooms, occasionally giving a very loud honk.

Does your boy always behave like that? asked Mr Kirrin, amazed. How do you manage to do any work?

Oh, I have a soundproof workroom in my garden, said the Professor. I hope your workroom is

soundproof, too?

No, it isn't, said poor Mr Kirrin, still hearing the car upstairs. What a boy! How could anyone bear him for more than two minutes? And to think he had come to STAY!

He shut the study door after the Professor - but no door could shut out the sound of the small boy honking upstairs!

Poor Mrs Kirrin was eyeing all the luggage brought in. Why hadn't the Professor gone to a hotel? What was life going to be like, with the Five here, and the Professor, and a small boy who apparently thought he was some kind of car all the time. To say nothing of a monkey called Mischief! And WHERE were they all going to sleep?

Chapter Two

A LITTLE EXCITEMENT

George and her three cousins were already on their way back to Kirrin. They cycled along the lanes with Timmy, Georges dog, loping easily beside them.

Wont it be fun to be at Kirrin Cottage again! said Anne. Its so lovely to look out of a window and see Kirrin Bay, blue as the sky! I vote we go over to the Island for a picnic!

Youll like to have your own kennel again, wont you, Timmy? said George, and Timmy gave her ankle a quick lick, and barked.

Its always so peaceful at Kirrin Cottage, said Dick. And your mothers so kind and jolly, George, I hope we shant upset Uncle Quentin with our talk and fun.

I dont think Father has any very important work on hand, said George. Anyway, hell only have you for a week - its a pity that Professor friend of his is coming in a weeks time, or you could have stayed longer.

Well, a week is quite a nice long time, said Julian. Hallo - theres our first glimpse of Kirrin Bay, look - as blue as ever!

They were all glad to see the little blue bay, and to catch sight of Kirrin Island lying there peacefully in the sun. Youre lucky, George, to have an island all of your own, said Anne. One that is really and truly yours!

Yes, I am lucky! said George. I was never so pleased in all my life as the day Mother gave it to me. It belonged to our family for years, of course - and now its mine! Well go over there tomorrow!

At last they came to the end of their journey. I can see the chimneys of Kirrin Cottage! said Julian, standing up on the pedals of his bicycle. And the kitchen fire is going - I can see smoke. The dinner must be cooking!

I can smell it! said Dick, sniffing. I think its sausages.

Ass, said the other three together, and laughed. They rode up to the back gate, and leapt off their bicycles. They put them into the shed, and George gave a shout!

Mother! Were HOME! Where are you?

She had hardly finished yelling when Anne suddenly clutched her arm.

George - whats that? Look! Peeping out of the window there!

They all looked - and George shouted in astonishment: Its a monkey! A MONKEY! No, Timmy. No -

come back! TIMMY!

But Timmy too had seen the quaint little face peering out of the window, and had shot off to investigate. Was it a small dog? Or a queer sort of cat? Anyway, whatever it was, he was going to chase it away! He barked at the top of his voice as he galloped indoors, and almost knocked over a small boy there. The monkey, terrified, at once leapt on to the picture-rail that ran round the room.

You leave my monkey alone, you big bully you! cried a furious voice; and through the open door George saw a small boy give Timmy a sharp smack. She raced indoors, and gave the small boy a smack as sharp as the one he had given Timmy! Then she glared at him angrily.

What are you doing here? How DARE you hit my dog? Its a good thing he didnt eat you up. And what that creature doing up there?

The little monkey was terrified. It sat clinging to the picture-rail, trembling, making a piteous chattering noise. Julian came in just as Joan and cook arrived from upstairs.

Whats all this? she said. Youll have your father racing out of his study in a minute, George. Stop barking at the little monkey, Timmy, for goodness sake! And stop crying, Tinker, and take your monkey away before Timmy eats him.

Im NOT crying, said Tinker fiercely, rubbing his eyes. Come here, Mischief. I wont let that dog hurt you! Ill - Ill...

You take your monkey away, old son, said Julian gently, thinking that the small boy was very brave to imagine he could fight old Timmy. Run along.

Tinker made a clicking sound and the monkey dropped at once on to his shoulder, and nuzzled there. It put its tiny arms round the boys neck, and made a little choking noise.

Oh - poor little mite - its crying! said Anne. I didnt know monkeys could cry. Timmy, dont frighten it again, please dont. You mustnt bully tiny things.

Timmy never bullies anything! said George at once, frowning at Anne. But after all, what do you expect him to do when he comes home and finds a strange boy and a monkey here. Who are you, boy?

I shant tell you, said Tinker, and marched out of the room, the monkey still whimpering into his neck.

Joan - who on earth is he? asked Dick. And what is he doing here?

I thought you wouldnt like it, said Joan. Its that Professor friend of your fathers, George - the one who was coming to stay next week. He telephoned this morning to say he was coming this week instead - and bringing his boy as well! He didnt say anything about a monkey, though!

Are they staging here? said George, in horror. How can Mother let them - she knew we were all coming today! How mean of her, how...

Be quiet, George, said Julian. Let Joan go on.

Well, they arrived before anything could be done to stop them, said Joan. And now your father is shut up in his study with Professor Hayling - the boys father - and your mother and I are at our wits end to know where to put you all. The boy and his father - and I suppose the monkey too - are sharing the guest-room.

But thats where Julian and Dick were going to sleep! said George, losing her temper again. Ill go and tell Mother that boy cant stay, Ill...

Dont be an ass, George, said Julian. Well manage somehow. We cant go back home because our house will be all shut up now.

You could sleep up in the loft, said Joan, sounding rather doubtful. But its very dusty and terribly draughty. I could put a couple of mattresses up there for you.

All right, said Julian. Well make do up in the loft. Thanks, Joan. Wheres Aunt Fanny? Does she mind all this?

Well - shes a bit rushed, said Joan. But you know what your aunt is - always so kind, never thinks of herself. That Professor Hayling! Just walked into the house as if he owned it, bringing luggage and that most peculiar little boy - and a monkey! Though the monkey seems a nice enough little thing. It came and watched me wash up, and bless me if it didnt try to dry the plates for me!

The kitchen door swung open and Georges mother came in. Hallo, dears! she said smiling. I thought I heard Timmy barking. Dear Timmy - wait till you see the monkey!

Hes seen him already, said George, scowling. Mother, how could you take people in when you knew we were coming home today?

Thats enough, George, said Julian, who saw how worried his aunt looked. Aunt Fanny, we wont be ANY trouble! Well keep out of the house as much as we can, well do the shopping for you, well go across to Kirrin Island and keep out of your way, well...

Youre kind, Julian, said his aunt, and smiled at him. Things will be rather difficult - especially as Professor Hayling never can remember to come to meals in time, and you know what your uncle is! He could forget breakfast, dinner and supper for a whole year, and then wonder why he felt hungry!

That made everyone laugh. Julian slipped his arm round his aunt and gave her a hug. Well sleep in the loft, he said, and enjoy it, too. The girls will help with the housework, and Dick and I will do the odd jobs. Youve no idea how fine I look with an apron round my waist, and a broom in my hand!

Even George smiled at the idea of Julian wearing an apron. Then Timmy went suddenly to the half-open door and barked. He could smell that monkey again. He heard a high chattering noise, and pushed the door open at once. What! Was that monkey calling him rude names?

He saw the little creature sitting on the top of the rail at the foot of the stairs. It saw Timmy, and danced up and down, sounding as if it were laughing. Timmy raced to the rail and leapt up, barking fiercely.

The study door flew open and out marched not one angry Professor, but two!

~~WHAT'S ALL THIS NOISE? CAN'T WE HAVE A MOMENT'S PEACE?~~ _____

Oh dear! said Mrs Kirrin, foreseeing this kind of thing happening twenty times a day, now that Timmy and the others were here. She shushed the two angry men.

Now, now - Timmy just isn't used to the monkey yet. Go back, please, and shut the door. I'll see you aren't disturbed again!

WOOF-WOOF! shouted Timmy, using his very loudest bark, and Professor Hayling shot back into the study at top speed!

Any more rudeness from Timmy and I'll have him sent away! roared Mr Kirrin, and he too disappeared.

WELL! said George, her face red with anger. What does he mean by that, Mother? If Timmy goes, I go too! Oh look at that monkey - he's sitting on top of the grandfather clock now! He ought to be sent away, horrid little mischievous thing - not old Timmy!

Chapter Three

MISCHIEF, TINKER - AND TIMMY!

Julian and Dick set to work to take a couple of old mattresses up to the loft, and some rugs and a couple of cushions for pillows. It was rather draughty! But what else was to be done? It was still too cold to sleep outside in a tent.

George was very sulky. That scowl will grow on your face, George, if you arent careful, said Dick. Cheer up, for goodness sake. Its worse for your mother than it is for any of us. Shes going to be very busy this week.

She certainly was! Meals for nine people, five of them very hungry children, were not easy to provide. Joan did an enormous amount of cooking, the girls helped with the housework, and the boys cycled out to Kirrin village in the mornings to do the shopping.

Why cant that boy Tinker help? demanded George, on the second day they were at home. What on earth does he think hes doing now? Look at him out in the garden rushing all round, making a frightful noise. Tinker, shut up! Youll disturb your father and mine.

You shut up yourself! called back Tinker, rudely. Cant you see Im a Bentley car, with a very powerful engine? And see how well it stops when I put on the brakes - no jerk at all! And hear the horn - marvellous!

He gave a remarkably good imitation of a powerful car-horn. At once the study window shot up and two very angry men shouted together:

TINKER! What do you think youre doing, making that noise? Youve been told to be QUIET!

Tinker began to explain about the Bentley, but as this didnt seem to satisfy either of the angry men, he offered to be a little minicar. You see, it goes like this, said Tinker, beginning to move off, making a low purring noise, and it...

But the window was slammed shut, so the little minicar drove itself into the kitchen, and said it was very hungry, could it have a bun?

I dont feed cars, said Joan. I have no petrol. Go away.

The minicar purred out of the kitchen on its two legs, and went to look for passengers. Mischief the monkey scampered up, and ran up Tinkers body to his shoulder.

Youre my passenger, said Tinker, and Mischief held on to his hair as he drove all round the garden at top speed, honking every now and again, but very quietly indeed.

Hes a funny child, said Joan to Mrs Kirrin, when she came into the kitchen. Not bad really - him and his cars! Ive never seen a child so mad on them in my life! One of these days hell turn into one!

~~It began to rain next day and Tinker couldnt go out. He nearly drove everyone mad, rushing about all over the house hooting, and purring like a car engine.~~

Now look, Joan said to him, when for the twentieth time he drove himself all round her kitchen. I don't care if you're a Morris Minor, or an Austin, or a Consul, or even a Rolls - you just keep out of my kitchen! It's a funny thing to think that a fine car like a Rolls can steal a bun out of my tin - it ought to be ashamed of itself!

Well, if I can't get petrol, I've got to get something to run on, haven't I? demanded Tinker. Look at Mischief - he's helping himself to apples in the larder, but you don't say anything to him!

Oh lands sakes, is that creature in the larder again? cried poor Joan, rushing across the kitchen. Who left it open, I'd like to know?

Timmy did, said Tinker.

You little fibber! said Joan, as she shooed Mischief out of the larder. Timmy would never do a thing like that. He's as honest as the day, not like that little thief of a monkey of yours!

Don't you like him? said Tinker, sorrowfully. He likes you.

Joan glanced across at the tiny monkey. He sat huddled in a corner, his arms over his face, looking very small and sad. One small brown eye peeped out at Joan.

You're a humbug, you are! said Joan. Looking as if you're the unhappiest monkey in the world, when at the time you're thinking what mischief to do next. Here - come and get this biscuit, you rascal - and don't you dare to go near Timmy this morning. He's very very angry with you.

What did Mischief do to Timmy? asked Tinker, surprised.

He went to Timmy's dish and stole one of the bones there, said Joan. Timmy growled like a roll of thunder! I really thought he would bite off the monkey's tail. My word, you should have seen Mischief skedaddle!

Mischief had now crept up cautiously to Joan, eyeing the biscuit she held. He had had one or two slaps from her for stealing, and he was rather wary of her quick right hand.

Here you are - take the biscuit, for goodness sake, said Joan. And don't look such a little misery, or I might suddenly find myself giving you another biscuit. Hallo - where's he gone?

The monkey had snatched the biscuit with one of his tiny paws, and had scampered away to the door. It was shut, so Tinker opened it for him. At once Timmy came in. He had been lying outside the door sniffing the good smell of soup cooking on the stove.

Mischief leapt to the top of a chair-back and made a strange little whinnying sound - rather apologetic and sad. Timmy stood still and pricked up his ears. He understood animal language very well!

Mischief still held the biscuit. He leapt down to the seat of the chair - and then, to Joan's enormous

surprise, he held out the biscuit to Timmy! He chattered in a very small voice, and Timmy listened gravely. Then the big dog took the biscuit gently, threw it up into the air, chewed it once, and swallowed it!

Well, did you ever see anything like that before! said Joan, marvelling. For all the world as if Mischief was apologizing to Timmy for stealing his bone - and offering him his biscuit to make up! Well, whatever will George say when she hears!

Timmy licked his lips to see if any biscuit crumbs were left, and then put his big head forward, and gave the monkey a sudden lick on the tip of his funny little nose.

Timmys saying thank you! cried Tinker, in delight. Now theyll be friends - you see if they wont!

Joan was astonished and pleased. Well, well - to think of that monkey being clever enough to present Timmy with a biscuit that he very much wanted to eat himself! He wasnt a bad little thing! She went upstairs to find George and tell her.

But George didnt believe her. Timmy would never take a biscuit from that silly little monkey! she said. Never! You made all that up, Joan, just because youre getting fond of Mischief. You wait till he runs off with your toasting-fork again!

All the same, George went down with Joan, curious to see if the two animals were becoming friendly and she saw a very strange sight indeed!

Mischief was on Timmys back, and Timmy was solemnly trotting round the kitchen, giving him a ride! The monkey was chattering in delight, and Tinker was shouting in glee.

Go faster, Tim, go faster! Youre a very fine horse! Youd easily win the Derby! Go on gallop!

I dont want Timmy to give rides to the monkey, said George. Stop it, Timmy! You look silly.

The monkey suddenly leaned forward and hugged Timmy round the neck. Then he slid off and looked at George as if to say, All right! I wont make your dog look silly!

Timmy knew that George was cross and he went to lie down on the rug. At once Mischief came sidling across to him, and settled himself between Timmys big front paws, cuddling there without fear. Timmy bent his big head and licked him very gently.

Tears came suddenly to Joans eyes. That Timmy! He was just about the nicest dog in the whole world!

See that! she said to George. Big-hearted and kind that dog of yours is! Dont you scold him now for being great enough to make friends with a little creature who stole his bone!

Im not going to scold him! said George, astonished and proud. Hes a marvel - the best dog in the Kingdom! Arent you, Timmy darling?

And she went over to Timmy and stroked his big soft head. He whined lovingly and licked her, looking up as if to say, Well, everythings all right now - were all friends!

Tinker had been watching from a corner of the kitchen, saying nothing. He was rather afraid of George and her quick temper. He was delighted when he saw her go over and pat Timmy, without even disturbing the monkey. In his joy he began to honk like a lorry, and startled everyone so much that they yelled at him.

Stop it, Tinker!

Be quiet, you little nuisance!

Woof! That was from Timmy.

You'll have Mr Kirrin in here if you honk like that, said Joan. Can't you be something quiet for a change - a bicycle, for instance?

Tinker thought that was quite a good idea. He ran round the kitchen and out into the hall, making a hissing noise like the sound of a bicycle's wheels on the road. Then he decided to make a noise like a bicycle bell, and produced a very loud ringing noise indeed! It was so like the ringing of a bell that Mrs Kirrin ran out of the living-room, thinking there was someone at the front door!

Then the study door flew open and out came Mr Kirrin and Tinker's father. Poor Tinker was caught and his father shook him so hard that two pencils shot out of his pocket and rolled over the floor.

Tinker began to yell - and how he could yell! George came out of the kitchen to see what was happening, and Dick, Julian and Anne raced down the stairs. Joan rushed out into the hall, too, and almost sent Mr Kirrin flying.

Then George did a very silly thing. She began to laugh - and when George laughed properly, her laugh was wonderful to hear! But neither Mr Kirrin nor Professor Hayling thought it wonderful - they merely thought it rude! George was laughing at them - and that wouldn't do at all!

This is absolutely the last straw! shouted Mr Kirrin, his face red with rage. First this boy ringing bells all over the place - and George encouraging him by laughing! I won't have it! Don't you know that very important work is going on here, in Kirrin Cottage - work that may bring great benefits to the world! Fanny, send these children away somewhere. I won't have them in the house, disturbing us when we are doing such important work. Do you hear? SEND THEM AWAY! And that's my LAST word!

And he and the Professor stalked back to the study and banged the door. WELL! Now what was to be done?

Chapter Four

TINKER HAS A WONDERFUL IDEA

Mrs Kirrin had appeared during the row, and sighed when she heard her husband shouting. Oh dear dear - these scientists who liked to do wonderful things for the world - and yet often made their own families unhappy! She smiled at Georges angry face, and took her arm.

Come into the living-room, dear, and bring the others with you. Well have to decide what can be done. Your father really is doing wonderful work, you know - and I must say that Tinker and Mischief and Timmy dont help very much! All right, all right, George - I know it isnt Timmys fault - but he does have a very loud bark, you know!

She took the five children and Timmy into the living room. The monkey, scared at the shouting had gone into hiding and was nowhere to be seen. Mrs Kirrin called to Joan.

Joan - come and help us to discuss whats to be done. This kind of thing cant go on.

They all sat down, looking rather solemn. Timmy flopped down under the table, and put his nose on his paws. Where was that little monkey who had given him his biscuit?

The discussion began. George spoke first, most indignantly.

Mother, this is our home. Why do we have to go away just because Father wants this scientist friend stay with him? I have to do holiday homework, and I dont make a row every time Father bangs a door when Im studying. But if I so much as...

That will do, George, said her mother. You ought to understand your father better than you seem to. You are both exactly the same - impatient, short-tempered, bangers-of-doors, and yet both so kind to me. Now - lets see if we can find a way out.

I only wish we could stay at my home, said Julian, feeling awkward. But its all shut up now that my parents have gone away.

Cant we take tents over to Kirrin Island? said George. Yes, Mother, yes - I know what youre going to say - its only the beginning of April, and its far too cold and all the rest of it, and...

The forecast for the weather is very bad, said her mother. Rain, rain, nothing but rain. You cant possibly go and camp in the pouring rain - and row to and fro getting drenched each day - Id have you all in bed with bronchitis before three days had gone - and then what should we do!

All right, Mother - have you any good suggestions? said George, still cross.

Hey - whats that monkey doing? said Dick, suddenly. Stop him!

Hes only poking the fire, said Tinker. He thinks its cold in here.

Well, what next! said Joan, and took the poker firmly from the monkey's little paw. Do you want to see the house on fire, you - you little...

Monkey! finished Dick, with a grin. I must say that Mischief is always up to mischief! Can't keep your eye off him for a moment!

Well, now - if we can't go to Kirrin Island, or back home, or stay here - where can we go? said Julian, looking serious. Hotels are too expensive - and which of our friends would like to have five of us to stay, plus a wicked little monkey and a big dog with an enormous appetite?

There was a silence. What a problem! Then suddenly Tinker spoke up.

I know where we could go - and we'd jolly well have some fun, too! he said.

Oh - and where is this wonderful place? asked George disbelievingly.

Well - I was thinking of my lighthouse, said Tinker most surprisingly. And then, as no one said anything, but merely stared at him in astonishment, he nodded at them. I said my lighthouse - don't you know what a lighthouse is?

Don't be silly, please, said Dick. This is not time for jokes.

It's not a joke, said Tinker, indignantly. It's perfectly true. You ask my father.

But Tinker dear - you can't possibly own a lighthouse, said Mrs Kirrin, smiling.

Well, I do, said Tinker, quite fiercely. You see, my father had some very special work to do, that couldn't be done on land - so he bought an old empty lighthouse, and did his work there. I went to stay with him - my, it was grand there, with the wind and the waves crashing about all the time.

But - surely he didn't give it to you, did he? said Julian, disbelievingly.

Yes, he did. Why shouldn't he, if I wanted it badly? demanded Tinker. He didn't want it any more, and nobody would buy it - and I wanted it terribly, so he gave it to me on my last birthday. And it's mine, tell you.

Well, I'm blessed! said Julian. Here's old George owning an island given to her by her mother - and Tinker owning a lighthouse given to him by his father! I wish my parents would present me with a volcano, or something really thrilling!

George's eyes shone as she looked at the surprising Tinker. A lighthouse - of your very own! Where is it?

About ten miles along this coast to the west, said Tinker. It's not an awfully big one, you know - but it's smashing! The old lamp is still there, but it's not used now.

Why not? asked Dick.

Well, because a big new lighthouse was built farther along the coast, in a better position for warning

ships, explained Tinker. Thats how it was this old one was put up for sale. It was fine for my father to work in. ~~Nobody ever disturbed him there - though he did get very angry with the sea-gulls~~ sometimes. He said they mewed like great cats all the time, and made him feel he ought to put out milk for them.

This made everyone burst into loud laughter, and Tinker sat beaming round proudly. How clever he must be to make these children laugh like that - yes, and even Joan and Mrs Kirrin too! He broke into their laughter by banging on the table.

You do believe me now, dont you? he said. Its quite true that the lighthouse is mine. You ask my father. Do lets all go and stay in it till our two fathers have finished their work. We could take Timmy and Mischief too - theres plenty of room.

This proposal was so astonishing that no one answered for a few moments. Then George gave him a friendly dig in the chest.

Ill come! Fancy living in a lighthouse! I bet the girls at school wont believe that!

Aunt Fanny! May we go? said Anne, her eyes shining too.

Well - I dont know, said her aunt. It really is a most extraordinary idea. I shall have to discuss it with your uncle, and with Tinkers father too.

My father will say yes, I know he will! said Tinker. We left some stores there - and some blankets - I say, wouldnt it be grand to run a lighthouse ourselves!

The idea certainly appealed to all the Five - even Timmy thumped his tail on the floor as if he had understood every word. He probably had - he never missed anything that was going on!

Ive a map that shows where my lighthouse is, said Tinker, scrabbling in one of his pockets. Its rather crumpled and dirty because Ive looked at it so often. Look - heres a map of the coastline - and just there - built on rocks is my lighthouse. Its marked by a round dot, look!

Everyone pored over the grubby map. Nobody had the least doubt but that this was the answer to all their problems! Dick stared at the excited Tinker. How lucky he was to own a lighthouse! Dick had never before met a lighthouse owner - and to think it should be this funny little Tinker!

The rocks that the lighthouse is built on used to wreck many ships, said Tinker. Wreckers used to work along that coast, you know - they would shine a light as if to guide ships along the coast, and make them go on the rocks. Crash! Theyd be broken to pieces, and everyone drowned - and the wreckers would wait till the ship was washed up on the shore, and then take everything they could from her.

The wicked wretches! said Dick, horrified.

Theres a Wreckers Cave there, too, where the wreckers stored the things they stole from the wrecked ships, said Tinker. I havent been very far into it - Im too scared to. They do say theres an old wrecker or two there still.

Oh nonsense! said Mrs Kirrin, laughing. Thats probably just a tale to keep children away from

dangerous caves and rocks. Well, dears - I really dont see any reason why you shouldnt go to Tinkers lighthouse, if his father agrees.

Mother! THANK YOU! cried George and gave her mother a hug that made her gasp. I sap - living in an old lighthouse - its too good to be true! I shall take my binoculars and keep watch for ships!

Well, Julian had better take his record-player as well, said Mrs Kirrin. If its stormy weather, it may be a bit duller than you think, mewed up in a lonely lighthouse!

It will be MARVELLOUS! cried Tinker, and he suddenly became a racing-car, tearing round the room at top speed, making a most extraordinary noise. Timmy barked and Mischief began to chatter loudly.

Sh! said Mrs Kirrin. Youll make your father cross, Tinker, and that will be the end of your fine idea. Switch your engine off, please, and sit down quietly! Ill talk to your father as soon as I can!

Chapter Five

TINKERS LIGHTHOUSE

Mrs Kirrin thought that she might as well go immediately to the study, and see if her husband and Professor Hayling could talk about the children going away to this lighthouse of Tinkers. Could it really be true? She knocked discreetly at the closed door.

She could hear voices inside the room, but nobody called Come in! She knocked again.

What is it now! shouted Mr Kirrin. If its you, George, go away and keep away. And if its Tinker, tell him to go to the garage and park himself there. I suppose its he who has been making all that row this morning!

Mrs Kirrin smiled to herself. Well, well - if all scientists were like her husband and Professor Hayling it was a wonder they were ever calm enough to get any work done!

She went away. Perhaps she could bring up the subject of the lighthouse at dinner-time. What a relief it would be to have a peaceful house for a few days!

She went into the kitchen to find Joan. The monkey was there, helping her! He had slipped away from Tinker and gone to see if there were any tit-bits about. Joan was talking away to him as she rolled out pastry.

See, I roll it like this - and like that - and I pick off a tiny bit for you! And she gave Mischief a snipp for himself. He was very pleased, and leapt on Joans shoulder. He lifted a piece of her hair and whispered in her ear. Joan pretended to understand.

Yes, Mischief. If youre good Ill give you another tit-bit in a minute. Now get off my shoulder, and stop whispering. It tickles!

Well, Joan - I never thought to see you rolling pastry with a monkey on your shoulder! said Mrs Kirrin. Joan, what do you think about this lighthouse idea? I havent been able to get into the study yet. Mr Kirrin thought I was Tinker, and told me to go and park myself in the garage!

And a very good idea too, said Joan, rolling her pastry vigorously. Isnt that Tinker out in the hall now - sounds like a car of some sort! Well, maam, Id say that if the lighthouse is habitable, why shouldnt the Five go there, with Tinker and the monkey? Theyd enjoy themselves all right, and Timmy would look after them. Sort of thing that they love - rushing off to a lighthouse! Ugh! Nasty lonely place, with waves crashing round and a wind fit to blow your head off!

Yes, but do you think theyd be all right all alone there, Joan! said Mrs Kirrin.

Well, Julian and Dick are old enough to look after the others - though I must say I wouldnt like the job of being in charge of that Tinker, said Joan. All I hope is that he doesnt imagine hes an aeroplane all

of a sudden, and take off from the top of the lighthouse!

Mrs Kirrin laughed. Don't say that to him! she said. His idea of being a car is bad enough. Well, Joan, feel very mean sending George and the others away immediately they come here - but with two excitable scientists in the house, I don't see that there's anything else to do. Look out for that monkey - he's found your bag of raisins!

Oh you little Mischief! said Joan, and made a grab at the monkey. He shot off to the top of a cupboard with the bag of raisins firmly held in one paw. He made a tiny chattering noise, as if he were scolding Joan.

You come down with those raisins! said Joan, advancing to the cupboard. Else I'll tie you to a chair with that long tail of yours. You little monkey!

Mischief said something in his funny little voice that sounded rather cheeky. Then he put his paw into the paper bag and took out a raisin. But he didn't eat it - he threw it straight at Joan! It hit her on the cheek, and she stared at Mischief in astonishment.

What! You'd pelt me with my own raisins! Well, that I will NOT have! She went to the sink and filled a cup with water, while Mischief pelted both her and Mrs Kirrin with raisin after raisin! He danced about on the top of the cupboard, screeching loudly in glee!

A bowl on the top of the cupboard fell off as the monkey danced about, and crashed to the ground. The noise scared him, and, with a flying leap, he shot off the cupboard and landed on the top of the half-open door. He pelted the two women from there, making the most extraordinary noises.

The study door was flung open, and out came Mr Kirrin, followed by the Professor. What was that crash? What's happening here? How can we w...

It was most unfortunate that Joan should have thrown the cup of water at Mischief at that moment. He sat there on the top of the door - and the water fell all over him, splashed over the top of the door - and down on to Mr Kirrin's head as he pushed the door open!

Joan was horrified. She disappeared into the scullery at once, not knowing whether to laugh or to make her apologies.

Mr Kirrin was astounded to find himself dripping wet. He stared angrily up at Mischief absolutely certain that it was the monkey who had emptied the water over him.

By this time the Five had come out of the living-room, wondering what the noise was. It's old Mischief, said Tinker. Throwing water, I should think!

Well, actually, I threw the water, began Joan apologetically, peeping out of the scullery, because...

YOU threw it? said Mr Kirrin, amazed. What is happening in this house? Things have come to a pretty pass if you start flinging water at people, Joan. You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Are you mad?

Listen, Quentin, said his wife. Nobody's mad at present, but pretty soon we all shall be, if this sort of thing goes on! Quentin, are you LISTENING? I've something important to say to you - and to you too

Professor.

The Professor remembered his manners. He gave a slight bow to Mrs Kirrin. Please go on, he said politely, and then flinched as a raisin hit him squarely on the head. Mischief had found one on the floor, and had taken a pot-shot at the Professor. Dick looked at the monkey admiringly - he really was a very good shot!

Whats that little fathead of a monkey throwing! said Mr Kirrin, fiercely, and at once knew when a raisin hit him smartly on the nose. Get rid of him! Put him in the dustbin! Why have I to put up with monkeys that throw things and boys that chug about the house like cars gone mad? I tell you Fanny, I will NOT have it!

Mrs Kirrin looked at him very sternly. Listen Quentin, I have something to say. LISTEN! Tinker says his father gave him a lighthouse for his own, and he suggests that he and all the others should leave here and go and stay in the lighthouse. Quentin, are you listening?

A lighthouse! Are you mad? What, that little monkey of a boy says he owns a lighthouse? And you believed him? said Mr Kirrin, amazed.

Tinkers quite right, as it happens, said Professor Hayling. I bought a lighthouse to work in when I wanted to get right away from everywhere and concentrate - and when Id finished, I couldnt sell it - so as Tinker pestered me for it, I gave it to him. But not to live in!

A lighthouse to work in! said Mr Kirrin, thinking what a truly marvellous idea this was. Ill buy it from you! Ill...

No, Quentin, you wont do anything of the sort, said his wife, firmly. Will you PLEASE listen to me, both of you. Professor Hayling, is the lighthouse fit for these five to stay in - and if so, they want to know if they can go there until you two have finished your work here. Theyre a nuisance to you - and to be quite honest, youre a nuisance to them!

Fanny! said her husband, astonished and angry.

Father, listen. Well all get out of your way as soon as possible, if youll say we can go to Tinkers lighthouse, said George, planting herself firmly in front of her father. Say one word - YES - thats all we want.

YES! shouted Mr Kirrin, suddenly tired of all the argument, and longing to get back to his papers with the Professor. YES! Go to the lighthouse - go to the Tower of London - go and live at the Zoo, if you like! The monkeys will welcome that mischievous little creature, sitting grinning up there on the cupboard! But go SOMEWHERE!

Oh thank you, Father! said George, joyfully. Well go off to the lighthouse as soon as we can. HURRAY! THREE CH...

But before she could continue, the study door shut with a bang behind the two exasperated men. George bent down, took Timmys two front legs, and proceeded to dance all round the living-room with him, shouting HURRAY! THREE CHEERS! over and over again.

Mrs Kirrin sat down suddenly in a chair, and began to laugh. Joan laughed too. If we dont laugh, we shall cry! she said. What a hullabaloo! Well, its a good thing theyll soon be off, maam. That loft is much too draughty for the boys, you know. Look at poor Julian - hes got such a stiff neck he can hardly turn it this morning.

Who cares? said Julian. Well soon be off again together, all the Five - and two more to keep us company. It will be quite an adventure!

An adventure? said Tinker, surprised. But you cant have adventures in a lighthouse - its out on the rocks, all by itself, as lonely as can be! There arent any adventures to be found there!

Ah - you wait and see, Tinker! You dont know the Five! If theres any adventure about, theyre bound to be right in the middle of it!

Chapter Six

MAKING PLANS

It was very exciting making plans to go to the lighthouse. Tinker told them all about it, time and time again. Its very tall - and theres an iron stairway - a spiral one, going from the bottom up to the top. And at the top is a little room for the lamp that used to flash to warn ships away.

It sounds smashing, said George. What about Timmy, though? Can he climb up a spiral stairway?

Well, he can live down at the bottom, cant he, if its too difficult for him to climb up? said Tinker. Mischief can climb it easily - he simply races up!

If Timmy has to live at the bottom, I shall live there with him, said George.

Why not wait and see the lighthouse before you arrange the sleeping places? said Julian, giving Tinker a friendly punch. Now first we must find out exactly where it is - and the way to get there. Its a pity Tinker cant turn into a real car - he could run us there in no time!

Tinker at once imagined himself to be a large van, taking the Five and all their luggage along the road. He raced round the room, making his usual car noise, and hooting so loudly that he made everyone jump. Julian caught him as he raced round the table and sat him down firmly.

Any more of that and we leave you behind, he said. Now - wheres that map of yours - lets have a look at it - and then well get Aunt Fannys big map of the coast, and track down the road to your lighthouse.

Soon Tinker and the Five were studying a large-scale map of the coast, Mischief sitting on Dicks shoulder and tickling his neck.

See - thats the way to go, said Julian. It really wouldnt be far by sea - look, round the coast here, cut across this bay, round the headland - and just there are the rocks on which the old lighthouse stands. But by road its a very long way.

Better go by car, though, said Dick. Weve a good bit of luggage to take - not only our clothes, but crockery and things like that. And food.

There are still some stores there, said Tinker, eagerly. Dad left some when we went away from the lighthouse.

Theyll probably have gone bad, said Julian.

Well - dont take too much, said Tinker. Its a pretty rough way over the rocks to the lighthouse - there isnt a road that runs right up to it, you know. We shall have to carry everything ourselves, once we get to the place. We can always get fresh food if we want it - the village isnt all that far away - but there are some days when you cant even leave the lighthouse! You see the waves splash house-high over the rocks when theres a rough wind. Wed have to get across by boat if the tides in - the rocks are covered

then!

This sounds too exciting for words! said Dick, his eyes shining. What do you think about it, Anne? You havent said a word!

Well - I do feel just a bit scared! said Anne. It sounds so lonely. I do hope no ships will be wrecked on those awful rocks while were there!

Tinker said there was a fine new lighthouse farther along the coast, said Julian. Its light will keep every ship away from that wicked stretch of rocks. Look, Anne, you would like to come, wouldnt you? If not, Aunt Fanny wouldnt mind just you staying here - youre a little mouse, you wouldnt bother Uncle Quentin or the Professor at all!

I shouldnt DREAM of not coming with you, said Anne, indignantly. Julian - you dont think there are still wreckers about do you? I should hate that.

They belong to years gone by, said Julian. Cheer up, Anne - this is just a little visit were going to pay to Tinkers seaside house! He is kindly taking in visitors this spring!

Well, lets get on with our plans, said Dick. We go there by car - er, what was that you just said, Tinker?

I said Ill drive you, if you like, said Tinker. I could dr...

You havent a driving licence, so dont talk nonsense, said George, crossly.

I know I havent - but all the same I can drive! said Tinker. Ive driven my fathers car round and round our garden, see? And...

Oh do shut up, said Dick. You and your pretend cars! Julian, when shall we go to his lighthouse?

Well, why not tomorrow morning? said Julian. Im sure everyone would be glad if we left as soon as possible! Its hard on Aunt Fanny and Joan to have so many here. Well see about a car and someone to drive us, and then well pack and make our getaway!

Hurray said George in delight, and pounded on the table, making Mischief leap up to the top of a bookcase in fright. Oh, sorry, Mischief - did I scare you? Timmy tell him Im sorry, I didnt mean it. He probably understands your doggy language.

Timmy looked up at Mischief, gave two little whines and a comforting wuff. Mischief listened with his head on one side, and then leapt down, landing neatly on Timmys back.

Thanks for giving him my message, Tim, said George, and everyone laughed. Good old Timmy! He wagged his long tail and put his head on Georges knee, looking up at her beseechingly.

All right old thing - I understand your language, whether you talk with your voice or your eyes, said George, patting him. You want a walk, dont you?

Woof! said Timmy joyfully, and tore to the door.

Lets walk down to the garage and see if they have a car or a van to hire out to us, said Julian. Well have to have a driver too, because someone has to take back the car. Come on, Timmy-dog!

They all set off to the garage in the village. The rain held off for a while, and the sun came out, making Kirrin Bay sparkle and shine.

I wish we could have gone to stay on my island, said George. But it really is too damp to camp out. Anyway, a lighthouse will be nice for a change!

The man at the garage listened to Julians tale of wanting a car to go to the lighthouse. Its the old lighthouse at Demons Rocks, not the new one at High Cliffs, he said. Were going to stay there.

Stay at a lighthouse! said the man. This isnt a joke is it!

No. It happens to belong to one of us, said Julian. We have a few things to take there, of course, and we hoped youd have a car and a driver tomorrow for us. Wed let you know somehow when we are ready to come back from the lighthouse, and you can send the same car for us then.

Right, said the man. And youre staying at Kirrin Cottage now, you say? Oh - your uncle is Mr Kirrin? Well, I know Master George here, of course - but I wasnt certain who you were. Some queer people order cars, you know!

George was pleased to be called Master George. It was nice to be thought a boy. She dug her hands deep down in the pockets of her jeans.

Wed better take a few rugs and cushions, said Julian. And some sweaters and wind-cheaters. I cant imagine its very warm in the lighthouse.

Theres an oil-heater there, said Tinker. I think it was for the lighthouse lamp when it was in use. We can use that for warmth, if were cold.

What sort of stores did you and your father leave there? asked Dick. Wed better order some foodstuff at the grocers - and some ginger-beer or something - and take it all in the car.

Well - theres plenty of tinned food, I think, said Tinker, trying to remember. We left it there in case my father wanted to come back at any time and work again in peace and quiet.

Hm. Its a pity he didnt fix up with Uncle Quentin to have him there with him, said Julian. Then everyone would have been happy!

They went to the grocers and Anne tried her best to order what she thought they would need, outside tinned food. Sugar - butter - eggs - oh dear - help me, George. How much shall I order?

Dont forget we can go shopping in Demons Rocks village, said Tinker. Only its a bit of a nuisance if theres windy weather - the path over the rocks isnt very safe then. We might have to stay in the lighthouse for a day or two without leaving it. Even a boat might be too risky.

It sounds thrilling! said George, picturing them all marooned by fierce storms, waiting to be rescued from peril and starvation! Get some biscuits, Anne. And bars of chocolate. And lots of ginger-beer.

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