

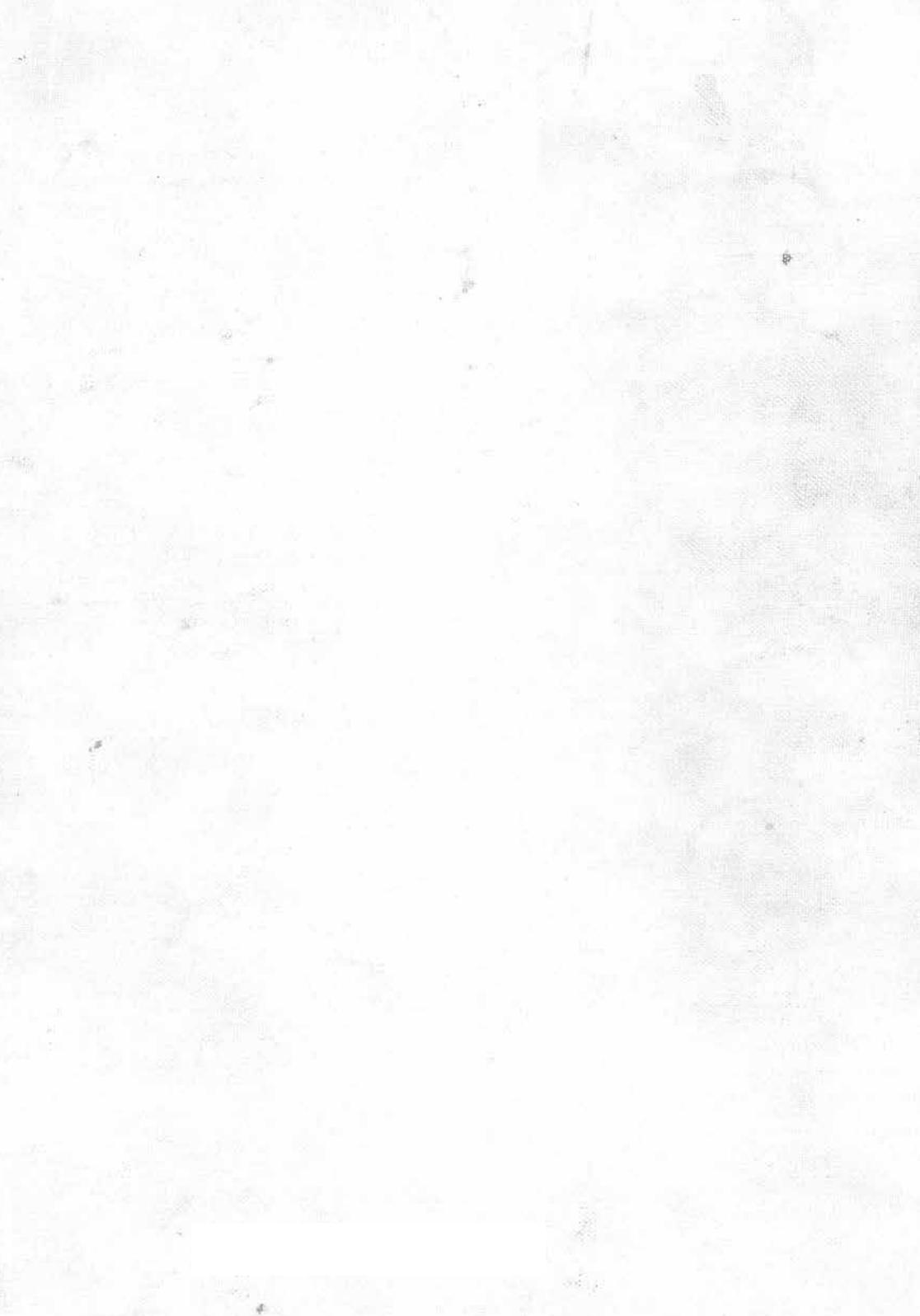
THE **NOTHING**
to see **HERE**
HOTEL

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NOT ALL OLD LADIES ARE NICE

Let's talk about *grandmas* ...

In storybooks, grandmas or grannies or nannies are *sweet* and *short* dumplings of fun that give you extra pocket money when your mum and dad aren't looking, and need to be rescued from the occasional big bad wolf.

BUT ... this isn't a storybook. This is really-real life, and *my grandma* isn't anything like that. My granny would terrify the big bad wolf. She'd beat him to a pulp. She'd gulp him down, chewing and slobbering as she did so, and belch out his bones before breakfast.

Oh ... I should probably tell you ...

My granny is a **TROLL**.

A mean one.

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Phew! Now I've told you the truth about my granny, the rest of what I'm about to tell you won't sound quite so bonkers.

My name is Frankie by the way . . . Frankie Banister. Hello!

I know you're probably already thinking that I've had my brains scrambled or I'm loop-de-loop crazy – a troll for a granny?! But we've only just started: keep reading and I'll explain everything, I swear. You'll begin to believe me in no time . . . my granny really is a hulking, stinky great troll, and not a single word of what I'm about to tell you is a lie.

Go on, just a few more pages . . .

Ready?

Here we go . . .

MY GRANNY THE TROLL

About a hundred years ago, back in the olden days when people wore tall hats and everything was in black and white, my great-great-great-grandad, Abraham Banister, went for his usual morning walk along the beach and *KAPOW!* he changed the history of our family FOREVER.

Right out at the far end of the seafront, near the rocks, my gramps spotted something strange. Something **VERY** strange and **VERY** large.

According to my dad, Grandad Abraham was a collector of rare plants and animals. He used to travel the world, searching for weird and exotic things ... so what he spotted on that black-and-white morning must have made his curly moustache twistier than EVER.

Abe spotted a troll girl (a trollette) doing her laundry in the open mouth of a huge sewer pipe and having a good old sing-song to herself.

You guessed it: that troll girl was my great-great-great-granny, Regurgita Glump, and before anyone could scream, 'NO! WAIT, ABE! SHE'S HIDEOUS!' the two of them fell madly in love, ran off and got married in a proper slobberchopsy troll ceremony down in the sewers under Brighton high street.

DON'T PANIC! The rest of the story isn't all gross and lovey-docious, I promise.

Fast-forward a hundred years and here I am: Frankie Banister, the newest member of the bunch. You can imagine our family tree is a crazy one. It's dotted with trolls and humans and harpies, with the occasional witch and puddle-nymph thrown into the mix. My uncle Stodger is a bogrunt!

Dad is what's known as a halfling, and Mum is completely human, so that makes me a quarterling, I suppose. I know that I'm one thirty-sixth troll.

You probably wouldn't notice I wasn't fully human at first glance. My hair is always messy and it hides my pointy ears most of the time, so the only thing that really gives it away is the colour of my eyes. Just like Dad and all my other relatives going back up the family tree to Granny Regurgita, mine are copper-coloured, like shiny pennies. It's the first sign of having troll blood.

Anyway, I really want to tell you all about where I live.

One hundred years after my great-great-great-

grandparents built it, my family still live and work in **The Nothing To See Here Hotel**. It's the best secret holiday destination for magical creatures in the whole of England. You weren't expecting that, were you?

Poor old Grandad Abraham popped his clogs years and years before I was even born, but Granny Regurgita is still about. Trolls live *hundreds* of years longer than people.

My granny calls herself the manager of the hotel, but she hardly ever leaves her bed, so me, Mum and Dad do all the hard work. Every day we run around like human bumper cars, trying to keep a bunch of magical creatures from wrecking the place. Weird is normal to the Banister family.

Are you starting to believe me? Ha! I thought you *might* ...

I could spend hours and hours telling you about the hotel and describing what it looks like, but you'd probably get super bored and throw this book across your bedroom, screaming, 'I HATE FRANKIE BANISTER!' so here's a map instead.



Maps are WAY more fun and you'll find out loads more later in the story.

I know what you're thinking ...

How can the hotel be that much of a secret if it's so **MASSIVE**? Anyone with half a brain would spot something strange going on in seconds if they walked past. But that's where a little bit of **trollmagic** comes in ... You see, the front of the hotel looks just like any other you might find by the seaside and that's the only part that human eyes can see so no one suspects a thing! The rest of the hotel is enchanted by Granny Regurgita and is completely invisible.

The only time there's ever a clue that a huge, magical hotel is standing in plain sight at the end of Brighton seafront is when a seagull flies into one of the invisible towers. It's pretty funny. If someone was looking hard enough, they might spot a seagull

come swooping over the town, heading for the sea, and **WALLOP!** The poor bird stops in mid-air, then squawks off in a whirl of feathers, looking more confused than a T-Rex in a tutu.

But no one ever notices. All the people that come and go along the seafront are way too busy buying ice creams and splashing about to pay any attention to surprised seagulls. That's how the hotel has managed to stay secret ever since Abe and Regurgita opened it all those years ago.

We also use a couple of crafty tricks to stop any human tourists from wandering in by mistake. First of all, the visible part of the hotel is always kept shabby and old-looking. The windows NEVER get washed and the outside hasn't had a lick of paint since the place was first built.

Then there's a spell on the front steps that fills the noses of any non-magical person who stands on them with their most hated smell in the world. It's brilliant! Let's imagine that the smell of dog poo is the worst thing you can imagine. If you put even one little toe on our front steps, your nostrils would

instantly be full of the strongest stink of it. Ha! Humans soon think twice before ringing our doorbell.

As if that wasn't enough, Mum and Dad's final trick is to pretend to be angry guests of the hotel. They call the local newspapers once a week and rant about how horrible and dirty the rooms are, or how disgusting the food is, and put rubbish reviews up online.

Dad is so proud of all our 'ZERO STAR' reviews that he frames them – they're all hanging above the reception desk.

So ... here we are on page 14. You've read this far so by now you must believe me. You're probably thinking that to be a human kid living in an invisible hotel with magical creatures must be BRILLIANT, and I suppose I can see why. Things can be downright crazy around here, which is fun, but it's not ALL fairy wishes and sparkly crowns and stuff.

Don't get me wrong. I love my weird home and being part troll is pretty great, but it's easy to forget all of that when you've been helping Mum clean up



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after Mr Vernon, the Stink Demon, has been to stay for the weekend ...

Anyway, I'm getting sidetracked. The REALLY exciting stuff started on the night of the HUGE storm.

I was climbing the 399 steps to Granny Regurgita's tower bedroom, and things at the hotel were about to get interesting ...