

## Chapter 1

‘What should you say, Jess?’ said Mum.

I wish she would not do that. I was going to say thank you without her telling me.

‘Thank you, Lil,’ I said. I had to try to seem pleased that old Lil from next door had given me a big dusty old box.

That is just the way it is, when you are a kid. You have to grin from ear to ear and say you are really pleased when you are given stuff you don’t want.

‘I am so happy for you to have it, dear,’ said Lil. ‘It has been in my attic for sixty years.’

I wished it had stayed in Lil’s attic,

but Lil is going to the Golden Years Rest Apartments and she has to get rid of her stuff.

‘Are you going to see what is in the box?’ asked Mum.

‘The door is a bit stuck, so it just needs a small tug,’ said Lil.

I did as she told me. I grabbed the button on the door and yanked. The door fell off in my hand.

Mum was cross with me. ‘Jess, you are so clumsy,’ she snapped.

Lil said, ‘Don’t be upset Jess, your dad can fix that.’

I did not want the grubby old box, and I did not want to bust it, and I did not want to see what was in it, but I had to.

‘Come on, tell me, what is in the box,’ said Mum.

I peeked in. 'It's ... um ... a doll ... I think. And it has strings.'

'Yes, yes,' squealed Lil. 'It is a puppet.'

'A puppet?'



'He is a very, very old,' Lil went on, 'and it is such a sad thing. He has been

locked in that box for so very long. He just needed somebody to play with him. And now that will be you. I am so glad about that darling.'

I had to try to seem pleased, but I did not think I wanted to play with a very, very old puppet. He had big eyes, and clumpy feet. He was a bit creepy really.

'It is a big box,' I said. 'I don't think we can fit it in.'

'Yes, we can,' said Mum. 'You can have it by your bed, and your clock and lamp can sit on top of it. You needed a spot to keep your stuff.'