Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

Dumb Chocolate Eyes

Written by

Kevin Brooks

Illustrated by

Emma Shoard

Published by

Barrington Stoke Ltd

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

First published in 2015 in Great Britain by
Barrington Stoke Ltd
18 Walker Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7LP

www.barringtonstoke.co.uk

This story first appeared in a different form in *Thirteen* (Orchard Books, 2005)

Text © 2005 Kevin Brooks
Illustrations © 2015 Emma Shoard

The moral right of Kevin Brooks and Emma Shoard to be identified as the author and illustrator of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in any part in any form without the written permission of the publisher

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library upon request

ISBN: 978-1-78112-451-2

Printed in China by Leo

CHAPTER 1
ONE OF THOSE THINGS

I never really liked Pete Cassidy.

I spent a lot of time with him, and I suppose you could say we were friends. But I don't think we ever meant that much to each other. It was a friendship based on convenience more than anything else. We lived in the same village, we went to the same school, we both turned 15 at the start of last summer ...

But that was about as far as it went.

I mean, we did stuff together, and sometimes we talked about things, but there was never anything more to it than that. In fact, when I look back on it now, I don't think we ever really *knew* each other at all. It was just one of those things, you know?

Pete would say to me, "You wanna come round my place?"

And I'd say, "Yeah ..."

It wasn't supposed to mean anything.

CHAPTER 2
A PERFECT MIXTURE

It's hard to describe Cassidy as anything more than average. He was average height, average size, with an average-looking face. His eyes were a bit on the weird side – kind of loose and lazy and chocolate brown. But apart from that, there wasn't anything out of the ordinary about him.

His home, on the other hand, was out of this world.

It was a bungalow, for one thing. I could never understand that. I mean, what's the point of a house with only one floor? What's *that* all about? And, for another thing, all the rooms were low and dark, and they were all connected, like a maze of tunnels ... and there were *loads* of them. It was ridiculous. It must have been like living in a rabbit warren.

Whenever I went there, I could never work out where anything was. In fact, I got lost once or twice ... coming back from

the bathroom usually. That was kind of embarrassing.

"Just off to the toilet," I'd say. "Back in a minute."

Only I wouldn't be back in a minute, I'd be back in about half an hour. And then Cassidy would give me a funny look. Like, 'What the hell have you been doing?' And I wouldn't know what to say, so I'd just grin like a fool and pretend that everything was OK.

I don't suppose it would have mattered so much if we'd been better friends. I would have just told him that I'd got lost. Then he would have laughed and called me an idiot, and I would have said it was his fault for having such a stupid house ... and everything would have been OK.

The good thing was, whenever I went round to Cassidy's place we spent most of our time in the garden, so I didn't have to worry too much about getting lost in his house. All I had to worry about was getting lost in his garden.

His garden was *huge*.

I mean, the first time I saw it, I couldn't believe it. Up until then, the only gardens I'd ever seen were all pretty much the same. They all had a patch of lawn at the back of the house, a few flower beds, maybe a couple of bushes. But Cassidy's garden was something else.

Cassidy's garden was a rambling wilderness that seemed to go on for ever. It had acres of land, dozens of sheds and outbuildings, fields of wild grass and weeds,

trees, broken walls, bits of old statues, ponds, greenhouses ... there was even an empty swimming pool, hidden away at the bottom of the garden. It was all cracked and flaky and dead-eyed blue.



It was that kind of place.

A perfect mixture of paradise and hell.

