DAN SMITH

THE TERROR OF HILLTOP HOUSE

Illustrated by Chris King

THE TERROR OF HILLTOP HOUSE

Also by Dan Smith:

The Invasion of Crooked Oak

The Beast of Harwood Forest

The Horror of Dunwick Farm

THE TERROR OF HILLTOP HOUSE

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Chris King

Barrington Stoke

This is for you, brave reader!

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CHAPTER 1

A New Mystery

"This is rubbish," Nancy said. She was at the kitchen table, eating Corn Flakes and reading the local newspaper, the *Crooked Oak Chronicle*.

"Is it, darling?" Nancy's mum replied as she stared into her coffee mug.

"Yes," Nancy complained. "The headline is 'Goat Rescued from Roundabout'. That's not news." She closed yesterday's newspaper, leaving it face down on the table. "We need some proper news. Something exciting."

“There’s a storm coming,” her mum said. “Is that exciting enough for you?” She nodded to the TV beside the microwave. It was showing the end of the weather report.

“*Storm Carrie is expected to hit north-east England on Thursday night*,” the weather presenter said. “*The Met Office has issued a red weather warning. That means dangerous weather is likely and you should take action to keep yourself and others safe*.”

“I suppose we’ll lose a few roof tiles,” Nancy’s mum sighed.

But Nancy wasn’t listening to her mum. She was staring at the article on the back page of the newspaper.

This was it.

This was news to get excited about.

Nancy picked up her phone and took a photo of the article. She dumped her cereal bowl in the sink and grabbed her school bag.

"Hey!" Nancy's mum said. "Do you think we have washing-up fairies in this house?"

"Yes," Nancy replied with a smile that made her nose wrinkle. "And they don't want me to be late for school." She gave her mum a quick hug and hurried out of the kitchen.

"Your dad could have given you a lift," Nancy's mum called after her. She hated Nancy riding her bike to school, especially on dark winter mornings like today. And Nancy's dad was the headmaster at Crooked Oak Academy, so Nancy could get a lift with him any time.

"Ugh, no thanks!" Nancy mumbled. She hurried out into the cold morning and slammed the front door behind her.

Nancy tied her auburn hair into a ponytail, unlocked her bike and jumped on. As she raced along Elm Street, all she could think about was the article on the back page of the newspaper. A new mystery.

And Nancy couldn't wait to show her friends.