Pratt's Bottom is an actual village in Kent.

I have used the name in this story,
but I have also used poetic licence.

So if anyone knows the village,
and if it isn't quite how I describe it,
my apologies.

However I would like to send my good wishes,
and my admiration, to anyone
who has chosen to live there.

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I am Ray's Imaginary Friend



BRIAN MOSES

Illustrated by BETHAN WELBY

Scallywag Press Ltd
LONDON

For children who have
an imaginary friend.

For those who remember having
an imaginary friend.

For those who would have liked to have had
an imaginary friend.

And for my editor Janice Thomson, who had
two *imaginary friends.*



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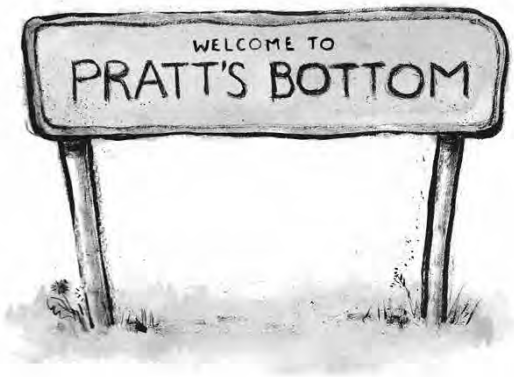
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CHAPTER 1

Who?

Bottoms
Who on earth
starts a book with the word
bottoms?

You're thinking,
this can't be relevant,
surely this author is just after
a quick laugh?

But I'm not.
We talk bottoms a lot
because we live
in a village called
Pratt's Bottom.

But who was Pratt,
and why did a village
want to celebrate his bottom
in this way?

I don't know yet,

but I'll find out.
I've only just come
to the village,
but I'm asking myself,
why make a decision
to live in somewhere called
Pratt's Bottom?

More Bottoms
Everybody has a bottom,
but it seems that
there are lots of places
named after bottoms
in Britain.

As well as Pratt
and his bottom,
there's Scratchy Bottom,
Galloping Bottom,
Slap Bottom,
Winter Bottom,
Strawberry Bottom,
Velvet Bottom,
Bramble Bottom,
Loose Bottom
Boggy Bottom

Widgen's Bottom
and even Six Mile Bottom!

I've seen small boys
laugh uncontrollably
whenever any of these
get mentioned.

They make me laugh too
and they make Ray laugh
when we talk about them.

But hey, who's Ray,
and who am I?

Stick with me
and I'll tell you.

Ray
Ray is eight years old.

He lives in a village,
on a quiet country lane,
with sheep in the field
behind his house,
with a stream not far away

where he can paddle
and play.

Each day he attends
the village school,
the sort of school
that's small,
where everyone knows
everyone else.

He walks to school
with his friend Jilly
from next door.

They've grown up together,
played together,
had fun together
at playgroups and in playgrounds.

Ray is happy,
his life is good,

until one day
he overhears his parents talking
about moving away.

