ELIEMENT



and the

Passage to Glenmorgan

Bertie Stephens

Published by the Clean Planet Foundation



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Published in the United Kingdom by the Clean Planet Foundation.
cleanplanet.com/foundation
Clean Planet Foundation CIC. UK Company Number: 13670829.

ISBN: 979-8-245-61931-6

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London, England. 131RN.

For the Clean Planet Team

~

In loving memory of Grandpa Bickerton
The original 'Upcycle Michael'

Books in the Ellie Ment series

Ellie Ment and the Material Matter

Ellie Ment and the Passage to Glenmorgan



Ellie Ment and the Material Matter received the top honour at the Moonbeam Children's Book Awards.

The Moonbeam Awards celebrate outstanding storytelling for young readers and are the oldest and most recognised national awards platform in America devoted entirely to children's literature.

CONTENTS

Where we left Ellie Ment... 9
Three Weeks Later... 15
Chapter One 23
Chapter Two 43
Chapter Three 63
Chapter Four 75
Chapter Five 95
Chapter Six 107
Chapter Seven 121
Chapter Eight 131
Chapter Nine 155
Chapter Ten 169
Chapter Eleven 181
Chapter Twelve 197
Chapter Thirteen 209
Chapter Fourteen 221
Chapter Fifteen 237
Chapter Sixteen 255
Chapter Seventeen 265
Chapter Eighteen 281
Chapter Nineteen 301
Chapter Twenty 325
Chapter Twenty One 337
Chapter Twenty Two 347
Chapter Twenty Three 349
Book Three The Start... 371


HARSIF COURT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover Art: Nenai Kuma
Chapter Art: Milena Vieira

Book Two exists because Book One found its readers. Thousands upon thousands of young people – just like Luke and Jameson – read Ellie's story, talked about it, challenged it, and carried it forward. That collective energy is what helped turn a sequel from a plan into a necessity.

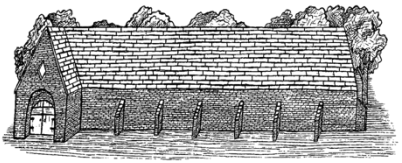
At the centre of that belief is the wider Clean Planet Group: my co-founders, team, advisors and investors who back big ideas in the real world every day, and who still find the encouragement to support a children's book series about curiosity, science and uncomfortable truths. Your support – practical, financial and moral – made it possible for this story to grow.

My thanks again to the HAPSIE comic writers and artists, whose work continues to imagine better futures with humour, warmth and hope.

And of course to Lil and Vicky, who once more transformed my words into something far sharper, clearer and kinder.

And finally, to Mum, Dad and Barney for their continued support – and to my wonderful wife, Steph, for the patience, the belief, and the steady encouragement, and for holding everything else together while another Ellie Ment adventure took shape in the early hours of the morning, just as Oskar was starting school and beginning to shape his own journey of curiosity.

Where we left Ellie Ment...



The Ending of Book One

…Professor Fialova walked Ellie Ment, Michael Upperton and Stefon Back through to the vestibule, where Mrs Totterwell was standing at the doors that led into the Tithe Barn.

At this point, Professor Fialova stopped. "What's through these doors, well, I just…I just hope you're all ready for it." She gave a nod to Mrs Totterwell.

Mrs Totterwell pushed open both large barn doors.

There were no desks, no chairs. They had been moved to the side.

There were no dividers, they had been taken away.

Instead.

Piles. No, mountains.

Hundreds. No, thousands.

Of letters.

Endless letters and envelopes.

In stacks reaching upwards high towards the wooden beams of the barn. Of all different colours. Stretching back throughout the Tithe Barn in each and every direction. Heaps upon mounds of hand scrawled notes. Stacks upon batches of…replies!

Three sets of wide eyes on legs walked into the Tithe Barn, weaving through the endless masses of letters. Every now and then you'd see a reused letter on Upperton stationery, but beyond that it was a boundless mishmash of homemade leaflets and papers.

Michael bent down and picked one up. It simply read, "I'm in. Sincerely, Adah." And then her address scrawled underneath.

Stefon lifted another. "Show me what to do? Gabby." This time with her address stamped neatly below.

Ellie opened it and read out loud. "What can we do to make proper change? Hamish and Rufus!"

She took a step back and stood by Michael's side as Stefon walked around picking up more and more letters, opening them, reading them.

"Ellie, what does this mean?" Michael asked.

"Kids," replied Ellie. "It means there are kids everywhere that are like us, Michael. That want change. Like us. Yes. Kids. Whizzle-whumping kids," she added with a smile to her best friend. He returned it.

Ellie turned to Professor Fialova. "Professor Fialova, I do need to ask. Were you at the school that night? Did you help burn it down too?"

"No," replied Professor Fialova, simply.

"Oh." Ellie felt a wave of relief rush over her.

"But I also didn't do anything to stop it, Ellie. So does that make it any better?" Professor Fialova added, posing her ethical dilemma back to Ellie.

Ellie didn't have the answer, but did have a second burning question. She held up her wrists to show the Elemental Bracers.

"Whenever anyone has seen me with these, they…they seem to recognise the Elemental Bracers."

"Yes," Professor Fialova replied.

"Why?"

"They're Dr Higton's."

"The geography head?" Ellie responded, taken aback. "Then…then why do I have them? Doesn't Dr Higton need them?"

"For that, you'll have to ask Dr Higton directly," said Professor Fialova.

"But how? Dr Higton's missing."

"So you'd better go and find them!" prompted Professor Fialova with a pointed look and a tap on Ellie's shoulder.

Ellie had one thought repeating over and over in her mind: *Things are about to get very interesting indeed.*

"PROFESSOR FIALOVA!" came a cry from the door.

Everyone turned.

"Lucas," Professor Fialova said calmly. "Lucas, thank you for delivering my message. But I—"

"It's the birds," Lucas interrupted her.

"What about the birds?" asked Professor Fialova.

"They've stopped chirping, and they're…they're on the ground. They won't fly. Maybe they *can't* fly."

"How do you mean?" said Mrs Totterwell.

"I don't know. It might be to do with the sky," Lucas continued.

"What's wrong with the sky?" asked Ellie, very confused.

"It's green," Lucas said slowly. "It's neon green!"

Ellie looked at Michael, who turned to Stefon. Professor Fialova and Mrs Totterwell shared a confused look. And then they all rushed out of the large doors of the Tithe Barn, through the vestibule, to the outside.

Sure enough, it was no longer snowing. The birds were sitting silently on the ground around the Tithe Barn, and the sky, the sky was a vibrant, neon green.

It was green above the burned remains of Hapsie School.

Bright green above the Tithe Barn, and all the way down the forest road, past Stego-hole.

It was green over Ellie's house, over the river, over the cobbled streets of the post office.

The neon green could be seen over the old railway too, above the Old Glove Factory.

But.

And just because we found ourselves there, anyway.

Not everyone had noticed the green sky just yet.

Deep down an old rusting freight elevator shaft.

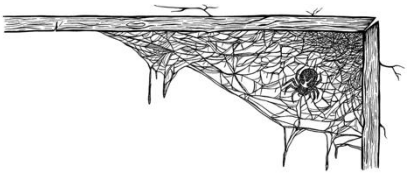
Inside a large atrium.

Along a metal gangway or two.

Inside a room the size of your average classroom, lined entirely with silver metal plates across the walls, floors and ceiling, a beam of explosive, pale blue light burst out from two wrists. The force blasting the owner backwards across the room, landing with a hard thud on the metal floor behind them. Snacks blown into the air.

Dazed and confused, they looked up, where a man smiled and his gruff voice simply said, “Finally. Very well done, Kami.”

Three Weeks Later...



Claudia's Leap

The sky was green.

Not that sort of eerie tinge of green you could have seen during a winter's fog. That had been the case yesterday. Yesterday was a normal sort of day in Hapsie. Today it was vibrant green. Neon green.

An 'oh no someone exploded a whole bucket of processed mushy peas into the sky' green.

And yet, when eleven-year-old Claudia awoke, slowly opened her eyes from her nap and looked out through a small gap in the curtains where the sun streamed into her farmhouse, she simply yawned and rolled over back to sleep.

The fact was that the skies had been on and off like this for three weeks now. Some days it rained, some not, but often now in Hapsie, nature stood as still as the sky. Which glowed.

But then five police cars rushed up the drive of Apple Tree Farm. Ten uniformed officers forced their way into Claudia's farmhouse, and one farmer was bundled away down the long drive.

Well, Claudia *did* sit up then. This was new.

She jumped out of the third storey window, and fell towards the hard tarmac ground below.

It's probably safe to assume Claudia wasn't expecting to fall three storeys down, no. Nor did the house spider that watched from the corner of the room. For as long as Claudia could remember, a good chunk of the ivy-covered walls of the farmhouse had been hidden by large wooden barrels, piled up high reaching Claudia's window. On many a night Claudia would hurdle out of her room through an open window (a bit like Ellie did, I suppose!) and expertly scramble down the barrels to go exploring. If you had a working torch and happened to be roaming the fields of Apple Tree Farm at night, you would likely have bumped into Claudia out and about in the farmlands. Not doing science, but instead playing in the trees, jumping over puddles, looking for mice or something else tasty to eat.

> (Oh, yes, sorry! One thing I should probably mention before we go on, and something that's probably quite important for this next bit: Claudia is a cat.
>
> Apologies. I should have led with that.
>
> Claudia was a grey, long-haired, yellow eyed, with a raspy tongue…cat.
>
> Okay, back to it!)

So, Claudia fell.

Today there were no barrels outside her window. Unbeknown to Claudia, they had been removed as she slept.

Cats are of course known for their agility and ability

to land on their feet. But Claudia, at eleven, was not a young cat, and three storeys high was quite the height, and tarmac had always been very hard.

So, what was the fate of Claudia?

Well, that's a very interesting question to ask.

Very interesting indeed.

And like many questions in life, the answer is based on how and when you can observe the event unfold.

Let's for a moment imagine we're the house spider, tucked up in the far corner of Claudia's room in our web, watching her (like we did) leave the room to go explore, by day or night. We've not got much else to do, we've been waiting for a fly to land on our web, that's pretty much our entire check-list for the day. So we're waiting, watching.

We saw Claudia exit, we saw Claudia begin to fall. Beyond that, we don't know what has happened. For us, as the house spider, there were two eventualities here that could have unfolded.

First, Claudia fell to the ground, landed with a light, furry 'puff' on the tarmac, shook herself, and sauntered off into the green-lit fields.

Second, the age of Claudia, the height she fell, and the hardness of the tarmac below was simply too much for Claudia. She landed with an unpleasant splat, and a trip to the vet was needed quite quickly.

So what happened to Claudia?

Which reality was true?

Well, for us, as the house spider, right there, right then, both events have happened. Weird, right? At that point in time, as Claudia fell through the air, Claudia was both perfectly okay, and also perfectly *not* okay. Until the house

spider could see the outcome for herself, Claudia existed in two very different states at exactly the same time. Both 'great', and also 'not so great'!

You see, that's the thing about life. Many times, it boils down to how (and when) you decide to look around you. The exact same event on the exact same day can have one person leave with a smile, yet others leave in tears.

Did you support the sports team in red who just beat the team wearing blue? Well, in your world, in your reality, you've left the sports ground happy. You won! Congrats! But think about the world for those who liked the blue team. As they travel home, their day, their reality, is completely different. You lost! How sad! The same event but a totally different evening ahead of them.

So maybe the next time you're upset, the next time you're struggling to smile, all you need to do is take a deep breath, and work out who could have seen that same event, the same situation that's made you down, as a slightly happier day, and go grab a little of that for yourself.

Hmm. Lovely of course, but that didn't help us with Claudia. In the example above, we find out the end result. We know the score. But our house spider? Well, she's less knowledgeable. In the world of our house spider at that moment, she was both happy and sad, relieved and concerned, for right then, as Claudia fell, everything was possible. Claudia was both okay *and* in trouble. Every potential reality was true. And that – believe it or not – is the backbone of Quantum Physics.

Two different states, both real, both possible, both happening…until one is finally observed.

Worth remembering.

And as it happened, this is exactly where Ellie Ment, our eleven-year-old science whizz, found herself on the same day as Claudia's fall. Wednesday 1st January, a brand new year, with a week and a half left of the Christmas holidays.

Sitting alone in her bedroom, Ellie realised that many different realities stretched ahead of her.

A reality where she hadn't been given a bond of Elemental Bracers by her favourite Science teacher, Professor Fialova.

One where she couldn't summon the elements of the periodic table from her body to use for her own science.

A future where she hadn't been introduced to a secret science society called the Material Matter, a worldwide group of the brightest minds who were seeking to tackle the world's most pressing environmental problems.

A world where Ellie hadn't uncovered an ethical dilemma inside this secret club that ultimately had her removed from it as quickly as she had joined, and left her wondering whether their actions were truly good after all.

A life where thousands of young people around the country hadn't responded to her and Michael's letters for help about the microplastics she had discovered in the water streams.

And of course, there would be the reality where all of the above did happen, as it had, and with that Ellie would have a choice: a chance to pick her own future, or at least choose where it should go next.

A decision? Barely.

We all knew where this was going.

Ellie was inquisitive by nature.

Ellie was an eleven-year-old scientist — once self-proclaimed, now difficult to dispute — who had a point to prove.

And that, at least as far as Ellie was concerned, was that.

(Oh, yes, yes, we can't end the chapter there, right? I know what you're wondering, screaming: 'SO WHAT DID HAPPEN TO CLAUDIA?'

Well, there was one person who could have observed what happened to Claudia as she landed, one person who could have seen what reality unfolded. Someone observing from outside of the house. Someone who could see her land. Someone who on any other day, at that exact time would have been tending to the apple orchard just to the right of Claudia's window.

The farmer. Claudia's caretaker.
Ms Tamsin Penham.

But regrettably, Ms Penham had just been carted away by ten police officers. Arrested under suspicion of turning the Hapsie skies green. And her only son? Well, her boy named Lucas was out littering somewhere, once again. As always. Oh, Lucas (Penham)

Litter, will you just stop that!

So, to answer your question, I can't tell you, at least not right now. Nobody saw it. And therefore, right then, Claudia remained both perfectly okay and also perfectly *not* okay.

Interesting, right?)