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opening extract from

Glister: The House Hunt

written by

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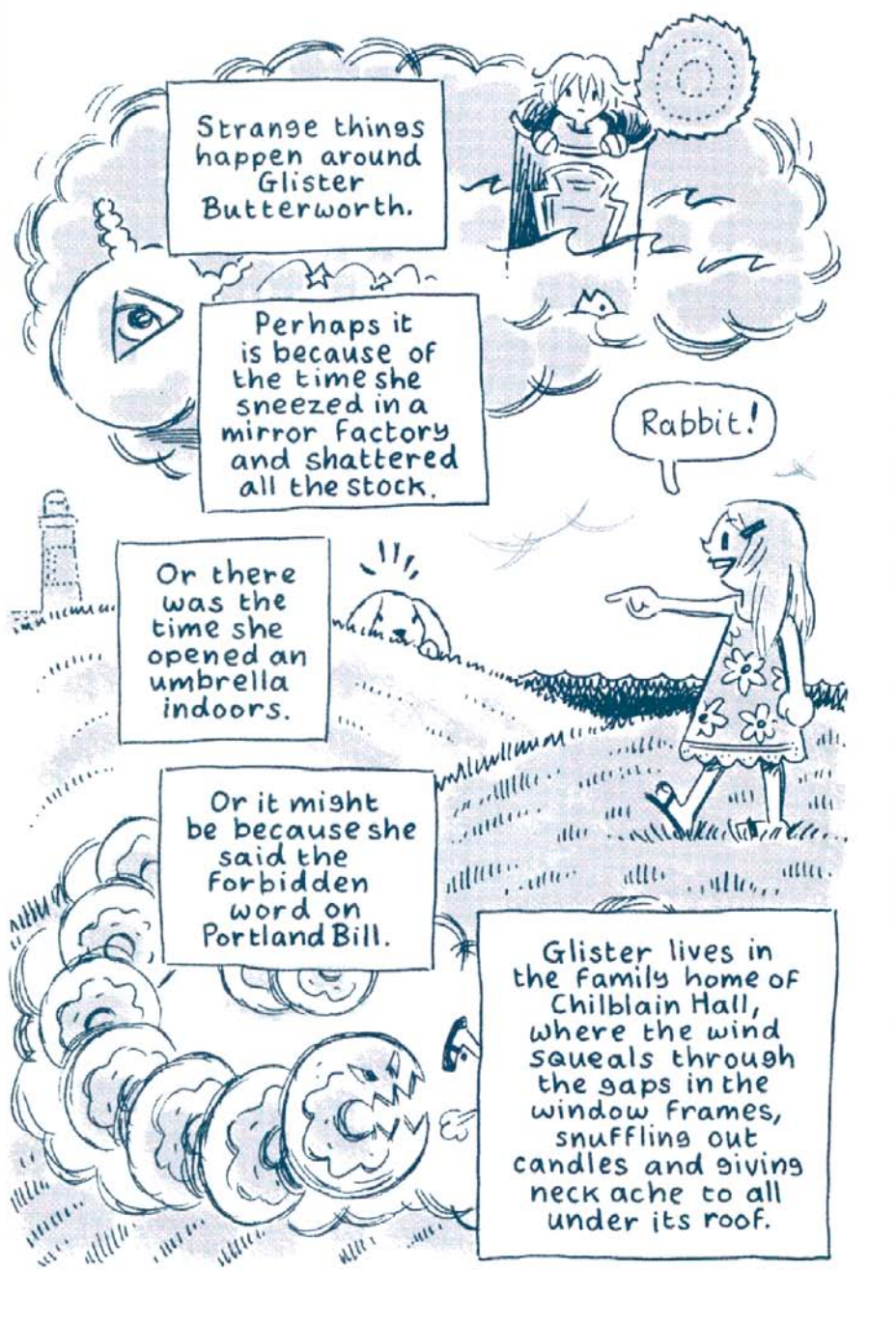
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Strange things
happen around
Glistar
Butterworth.

Perhaps it
is because of
the time she
sneezed in a
mirror factory
and shattered
all the stock.

Rabbit!

Or there
was the
time she
opened an
umbrella
indoors.

Or it might
be because she
said the
forbidden
word on
Portland Bill.

Glistar lives in
the family home of
Chilblain Hall,
where the wind
squeals through
the gaps in the
window frames,
snuffling out
candles and giving
neck ache to all
under its roof.

Chilblain is no ordinary home. It has a magical sparkle which is missing from a typical two-bedroom semi-detached with off-road parking and en suite bathroom.

No, Chilblain has never been comfortable in its own skin, like a chameleon spinning through the colour wheel or a peacock rearranging its feathers.



New wings appear overnight, stay for a week, then disappear again. Ballrooms come and go. The Egypt Room appeared after tea in 1805 and found it so to its liking that it has stayed ever since.

Grottos hide
behind pantry
doors; coral
and Flint in
place of tins
of baked beans.

Art Nouveau
beauties alight
on the walls,
crowding around
the caryatids
by the fireplace
before continuing
their mysterious
flight to other
lands.

LET THERE BE LIGHT



A Masonic Temple
took up residence
in the wine cellar
and a gaggle of
Judges and Chiefs
of Police drank
themselves to the
floor.

One time Glisten retired to bed only to find her room replaced by a picture house playing a Cary Grant marathon through the night.

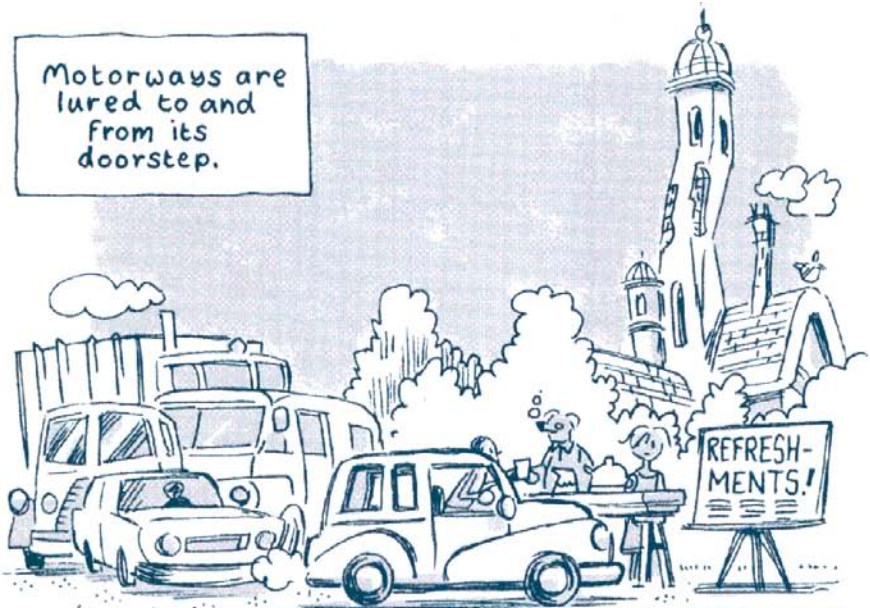


The moat circles, leaves and comes back.

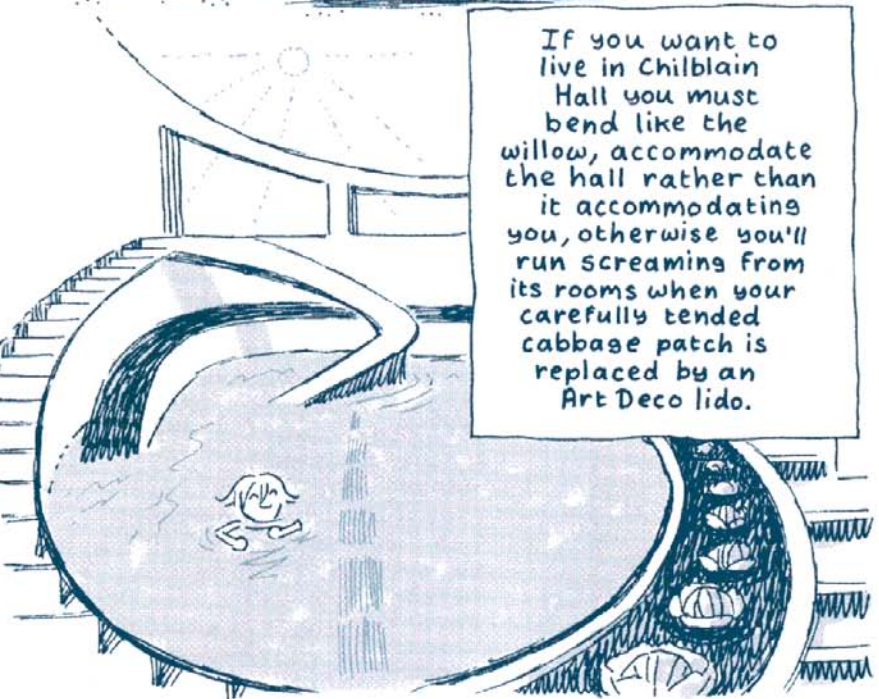
Once the hall even drifted out to sea before being towed back to dry land.



Motorways are
lured to and
from its
doorstep.



If you want to
live in Chilblain
Hall you must
bend like the
willow, accommodate
the hall rather than
it accommodating
you, otherwise you'll
run screaming from
its rooms when your
carefully tended
cabbage patch is
replaced by an
Art Deco lido.



And so it was one day that Glisters's village, Gravehunter Moss, was entered in the Bonny Village (TM) competition. The winner of the grand prize would be officially twinned with Versailles, France.



Glisters happened to know Gravehunter Moss was already twinned with villages in Lilliput, Cimmeria, Cockaigne, Shangri-La, Lyonesse, Skull Island and Borsetshire, but not being able to fit them on the village sign and not wishing to be too show-offy, it remained uncelebrated.

The village was frantic with window washing, flower planting and lawn cutting.

Mrs Poppleton, we clearly laid down in the guidelines that you absolutely must cut north to south, not east to west.

This is Mr Leonard Swarkstone, the Lord Lieutenant of Whixleyshire and head of the Gravehunger Moss Bonny Village task force.

So, Miss Butterworth, I presume. Perhaps you could give me the tour?

My pleasure.

Mr Swarkstone was terribly efficient but of a tidy mind.



It being her home,
and its peculiarities being
unremarkable to her, she
lead the dignitary around
the hall.



my
word!

Not afore ye
feed me palm
w' King's silver.

Oh, pay
him no
mind.

It's only the
Toll Troll. He puts on
the Olde Worlde airs
for visitors and the
postman but he's
quite friendly,
really.



King's silver?
The smallest I've got
is a guinea, will it
give change from
a guinea?

Oh, don't
you worry. He'll
make do with a
milk bottle top.

See.

Thank
ee.

That rather set
the tone for the
rest of the tour.

Hmm.