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Chapter 2

Summer of Love

I've been awake since sunrise
But the sun hasn't risen

How can it be foggy in July?

Maybe it's not fog, it's the mists coming in from the moors. Oooohhhhhh. The moors, the mysterious dark moors of *Wuthering Heights*. Out of the mist an enormous dog will come lolloping along with fangs and lit up eyes. Followed by a brutishly handsome boy. Heathcliff. His master. And the dog's master will hurl aside the Dobbins' protests and come charging up the stairs into my room. All moody in a big coat

and galoshes. Underneath you will be able to see boy hair cascading out of his shirt.

And he will say harshly, "Get up, Lullah, I've come to get you. Leave your squirrel bed behind, lass, and come and prance around like a barm pot with me on the moors. Come on, you can sing your song."

"Heathcliff, it's me, dancin' around the moors again. I've cum a tap, tap, tappin' at your window pane. Oooooh!"

Then he…

Oh no hang on a minute, there isn't a dog in *Wuthering Heights* is there? Well at least not with lit up eyes. I've got it mixed up with *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. It's more like The Owl of the Baskervilles round here. There was hooting going on all night.

I don't remember that being mentioned in the extensively illustrated Dother Hall brochure.

I got my brochure out again:

Heckmondwhite has its own 'zany' cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Oooh, that sounds good. I'd better get dressed and have a look round Heckmondwhite and check out its 'zany' atmosphere. I only saw the village green last night. The high street and Boots must be further on.

I looked in the mirror. Yes, there I am. It's me again. This northern light certainly makes my eyes look green. Not just a bit light brown like some people have and say they are green.

Is that a good thing?

I've got the same colouring as my mum – very dark hair. She says it's from the Irish side. I asked her which side my knees were from and she said, "the circus side," which she thought was hilarious.

Why am I on this course heading for the West End? I didn't really think I would get on it. To be perfectly honest, I've only been in a couple of school plays. The last one was my own special version of *Alice In Wonderland* and I cast myself as a playing card. So if there are any standing-around-stiffly parts going, I'll be in like a ferret up a trouser leg.

What I must remember, to keep myself cheerful, is that this could be my Summer of Love.

Even though it is foggy.

So far this summer, all that's happened is that one of Connor's goofy mates (commonly known as the Idiot Boy) put his hand on my bottom at the bus stop.

When I asked him what he was doing he said, "Keep your hair on, love, I was resting my kitbag, that's all."

But he wasn't. I know a hand when I feel one on my bottom.

What it does mean is that I have got something that sticks out enough to rest something on.

I started singing to myself. I couldn't help it, even though I am a lanky girl with nobbly knees and pimples instead of breasts, I am at the beginning of a big adventure! I am becoming me!!!

I flung open my window and started singing, "Fame!!! I'm gonna live for ever, I'm going to learn how to fly…"

I've put my hair in a ponytail and I've got mascara

on. What can I do about being so pale? I know, I can pop into Boots, because they are open on Sundays, and see if they do any 'cheeky' products.

Coming out of the door, Dibdobs said, "I think the sun's trying to get out."

I smiled at her and said, "Top of the morning to you!"

It seems to be brightening up. The fog has cleared so now you can see the sheep, and over there, some sheep and a pig. No sign of people, unless they are crouching down behind the sheep.

I'll go to the top of the lane and explore the village before I go to the high street.

Two rough-looking, dark-haired lads were by the bus stop, arguing about something. One of them got the other round the neck, yelling, "Take that back, tha great garyboy."

And the other one kicked him in the shin and then took off, shouting back, "Come and get me, tha manky pillock, I'll brain you!"

It's charming being in the country.

I wonder if one of them is that Cain boy. Who

would call a person Cain? Wasn't he the boy in the Bible that killed his own brother?

Cain. You might as well call him 'Rottenhead' and have done with it.



OK, well here I am at the village green and there's the village hall next to the pub, and then on this side is the grocer's store, church and bus stop. I suppose the road to the main shopping bit is the one that goes off round the back of the pub.

The pub is called 'The Blind Pig'. It's got a sign with a pig on it. The piggy has dark glasses on and a walking stick in its trotter. Must be an olde Yorkshire story about a pig that saved the village single-handedly from the Vikings, even though it was blind.

Actually, it wouldn't be single-handedly, it would be single-trotter-dly.

I have always been good at English, even if I say it myself. Which I have to because I haven't spoken to anyone except myself for about two years.

You can't count the Dobbins.

As I turned down the lane to the shops, a girl about my age came out of The Blind Pig. She had a mass of curly hair and a cute sticky-up nose.

She smiled at me and said, "Hello, do you live here?"

I smiled back and said, "No, I'm Tallulah and I've come to Yorkshire by mistake."

She laughed and crinkled her nose up. She had a very gurgling hiccupping sort of laugh. She said, "My name's Vaisey and I'm going to the performing arts summer school at Dother Hall."

Hooray! Someone else on the planet besides Brown Owls and basin-headed people. Vaisey was staying at The Blind Pig because her bed wasn't ready at the school.

I said, "Did you come with anyone, or do you know people there?"

She shook her hair. "Not yet, but I think it's going to be great, don't you? I feel a touch of the tap dancing coming on, I am so excited. The landlord of the pub says that they call it 'Dither Hall' in the

village and that it's all scarves and tambourines up there."

I said, "Um… who's the landlord? Is he a bit of a—"

At which point, a big, red-faced man in tweed breeches came out and looked at us.

"Oh… I see, another of you. Are you breeding?"

He shouted back into the pub, "Ruby, I said this would 'appen. The 'artists' are breeding already, there'll be bloody hundreds of them by tomorrow. All miming their way to the bus stop."

He went off in the direction of the village hall, laughing like a rusty goose.

A girl of about ten popped her head out of the pub door to look at us. She had pigtails and gap teeth and freckles, and a sweet little face.

She said in a broad accent, "Ullo, I'm Ruby. Who are you?"

I said, "I'm Tallulah."

Ruby laughed and laughed and then said, "That's a mad name. I think I'll just call tha Loobylullah for short."

I laughed as well. I felt sort of nice that she had made up a special name for me. I said to them both, "I was going to go to the shops. Do you fancy coming?"

Vaisey said, "Yes, that would be cool, let's go. Which way is it?"

I said, "It must be down this road because I know there is only the village green thing here."

Ruby was just looking at us.

I said, "Are you not coming?"

She said, "No, I'll leave it."

"See you later then."

Ruby said, "Yep."

Me and Vaisey set off down the road and passed the back of The Blind Pig and its outbuildings.

Then we came to a line of cottages and a barn.

Vaisey said, "Which do you like best: cappuccino or hot chocolate? I think I will have hot chocolate…"

And that's when we saw the sheep. Fields of them, stretching as far as the eye could see.

Oh no, of course I am exaggerating, there was a

sign as well and it said:



We were back at The Blind Pig two minutes later and Ruby was sitting on the wall eating a bag of crisps.

She said, "Did you not go to the shops?"

We shook our heads.

Ruby said quite kindly, "Have you two ever bin in the country before?"

We shook our heads.

Ruby said, "The woolly things are sheep. See thee later, I'm off to the pie-eating contest, my dad's in it."

Vaisey and me decided to make the best of things by looking round what there was of the village. I'll give you a thumbnail sketch of the high spots.

The post office. What we could see through the window: stamps, ten 'amusing' birthday cards, sellotape.

The village shop. Pies, milk, teabags, paint and a selection of boiled sweets.

I won't bother you with the low spots.

As we passed, we could hear loud cheering and heckling from the village hall. It was decorated with a banner that said: '**Pie eating**'.

A loud voice bellowed from inside. It sounded like Ruby. "Come on, Dad, get it down you! Only twenty to go!!!"

I looked at Vaisey. She said, "Do you want to see my room?"



The pub smelt all beery when we went in. It didn't have what you would call a 'cosmopolitan atmosphere'. It had a darts board and skittles atmosphere. It looked like one of those pubs that you see in scary old films.

You know, when two lost travellers are on the moors. Suddenly a thunderstorm breaks. They are soaking and the lightning is crackling across the sky. Then they hear something terrible howling. And as they walk on, the howling gets nearer. A flash of lightning illuminates a slathering monstrous dog with fangs. And they start running, and the beast

starts running, and one falls over and then… Heavens to Betsy, they see lights! And hear a piano. The welcoming lights of an old inn. The sign creaks backwards and forwards in the howling wind. A flash of lightning illuminates the sign.

It reads, 'The Blind Pig'.

Anyway, that is what The Blind Pig was like. I was glad the landlord was out eating pies.

There were pictures of the landlord all over the walls. Mostly with dead things that he had shot. Foxes, stags, deer. Chickens. A cow. Surely he hadn't shot a cow? In each one he was standing with his shotgun and his foot on whatever poor thing he had shot. There was even one of him with one foot on a pie. Underneath it said:

Ted Barraclough, Champion Pie-Eater:
22 steak and kidney and 4 pork.

We went up the steep stairs to Vaisey's room. It had dark oak beams and slanting wooden floors, it

was so old. Yorkshire people seem obsessed with wood. There is very little city loft-living style around here. Where are all the shiny surfaces?

Vaisey prattled about her family as we looked through her things. Two brothers and a sister. Blah blah. Dogs, two budgies, both called Joey. Blah. Ordinary every-day legs. She told me she could sing and dance a bit and that she had played Titania in *Midsummer Night's Dream* and her mum had made her costume.

I just looked at her as the edges of our planets drew away from each other.

Her mum had made her costume?

I said, "Your dad doesn't go to work on a bike that has a handy basket, does he?"

She blinked at me in amazement. "Yes, how on earth did you know that?"

I shrugged carelessly and went to look moodily out of the window. Perhaps you could see Grimbottom from here. Sadly I forgot to duck so struck my head on the low beam.

Then Vaisey asked about me and my family. I was a bit evasive.

I said, "Oh you know, they both, um… they go away a lot." Even Vaisey couldn't think of anything normal to say about that. Then I said quickly, "Vaisey, have you got a boyfriend?"

She went bright red. And twitched her nose, like a mop-haired bunny.

Then she got up from the bed and went to the window, put her hand to her forehead and whispered, "Aahhh, *l'amour, l'amour, pour quoi? C'est une* mystery."

I said to her, "Um… did you just say in French, love, love, for why, it's a mystery?"

She shook her curls and laughed sadly.

"It was a line from a piece we did last term at school. I was a suicidal nun."

Gosh.

I didn't think I'd mention my playing-card experience just yet.

"So does that mean you've been dumped by a boy?"

And Vaisey said, "No, it means it's a mystery because I haven't snogged a boy – yet."

Vaisey and I have decided that we will try and have a joint Summer of Love.

Just then I heard Mr Barraclough coming in shouting "Pie! Pie! Pie!" Time to go home for tea.

Dibdobs has been face painting with the boys. She was a butterfly. It was quite a scary sight. Then the twins came in.

Not as scary as the basin-headed owls.

After tea – yes, it was local pies, Harold couldn't believe his luck – the Dobbins thought a game of Cluedo might be fun, but I said, "I think I should get to bed early for my first day at college."

Harold said, "At quarter to six?"

I think even they thought that quarter to six was early by anybody's standards.

I gave my artistic laugh and also threw in some quirky language for good measure. "Lawks-a-mercy, no! I'm going to have a long bath and…"

I looked shyly down. Which is pretty impressive to have done artistic laugh, quirky language and shyness all in the space of ten seconds. Anyway, I looked shyly down, and then shyly up, because the lunatic owl brothers were lying on the floor

looking up at me, blinking and sucking on their dodies.

I said, "I need to prepare myself. You know, limber up… my artistic… muscles. Soak up the atmosphere, maybe read *Jane Eyre*. Anyway, have a lovely evening guessing who bludgeoned who to death."

I left Dibdobs stuffing the insane brothers into their nightshirts. They didn't even take their dodies out when she pulled their owl heads through.



I've painted my nails a midnight blue colour and I think I will wear mostly black tomorrow. To blend in. It will be funny not wearing a uniform to go to school. And to wear a bit of make-up.

I stayed for ages in the bath. Some of the girls at my school at home were really 'mature' for their age. Kate and Siobhan had bras. And a few of them were getting hair under their arms.

If you don't get bosomy bits by a certain age does that mean you won't ever get them? I read in one of

the magazines that handling them makes them grow.

Maybe I will try rubbing mine about a bit with the soap. To encourage them.

Half an hour later.

My arms are killing me.

Even if my lady chest bits don't grow I am going to have strong arms. If there is a trapeze class I will be very good at it.

Also I will have very clean lady chest bits.

When I came out of the bathroom the twins were staring at me from the hall. Sucking on their dodies. They're not tall enough to look through the keyhole of the bathroom door, are they? They couldn't have seen me making my lady chest bits grow, could they?

I went off to my room.

I could chart my progress.

Maybe do a bit of measuring.

You know, legs: 8ft high. Lady chest bits: one inch each.

I wonder if I can find another word for my non-chest bits…?

Norkers?

Ping-pong balls in a string bag?

Honkers?

Corkers?

Actually, I quite like corkers. Well, I would if I actually had any corkers.

But I am in fact corker-less.

I went into my squirrel room and was just looking for a book to read when the door creaked open and revealed the twins. Sucking and looking. I don't know why they like to look at me so much. Just looking and sucking. I looked back at them and then Dibdobs came bustling in and said, "Boys, there you are! What do you say at nightie-night time to Tallulah?"

Sam said, "Bogie."

Dibdobs went a bit red and she said, "No, that's a silly word, isn't it? We say 'Night night, Tallulah'. You boys say it now. Night night, Tallulah…"

The boys just stared, then Max said, "Ug oo."

And turned and went off.

Dibdobs said, "Yes, that's right, but say 'Ug oo, Tallulah'."

Sam said, "Ug oo."

And Dibdobs said, "Tallulah."

And Sam said, "Bogie."

Dibdobs ushered him out. "Silly, silly word. Don't say it any more. Let's have a little story. Shall we read about *Thomas the Tank Engine*?"

"Bogie."

I'm reading *Jane Eyre* tonight for that Yorkshire grimness. I've got up to the bit when Jane goes back to see Mr Rochester, and the hall is burnt to smithereens and he is blind.

Yarooo!

And it is probably raining and foggy.