

I'm Harvey Small. But you know that already. Don't you?

I'm the one who was always bad news. Even Mum thought so. That's why she packed me off to Madame Bogbrush's School for Gifted Giants. And I spent the whole term wobbling around on stilts, hoping my classmates wouldn't stomp me into a sandwich!

Then my luck changed.

You see, I'm the one who realised the new spellings teacher, Mistress Ring, was really the evil Ring Mistress from the Unspeakable Circus. She stole Norma Enormous, the school's top clomper, stomper

*and* dancer. So I raced through the swamp with my best friend Walloping to save her. Or I tried to. Until I got stuck in a sink pit and Walloping had to save ME.

Now everyone knows I'm not a giant. But it's okay. Madame Bogbrush thinks I'm a hero for helping Norma, so she's let me stay at school.

Oh, and I'm also the *Chosen One*. At least, that's what the school's Fortune Teller in the Cellar says. Everyone thinks this is BRILLIANT ... apart from me.

I thought being bad news was tough.

It turns out being good news is tougher.

*Much* tougher.

# Chapter one

## Grave Danger!

**I**t was a normal day at Madame Bogbrush's School for Gifted Giants.

- The swamp was stinking.
- The giants were stomping.
- And Lumbering Turnip ...

“... Help! I'm in grave danger!” snivelled Lumbering Turnip.

Lumbering Turnip was in grave danger.

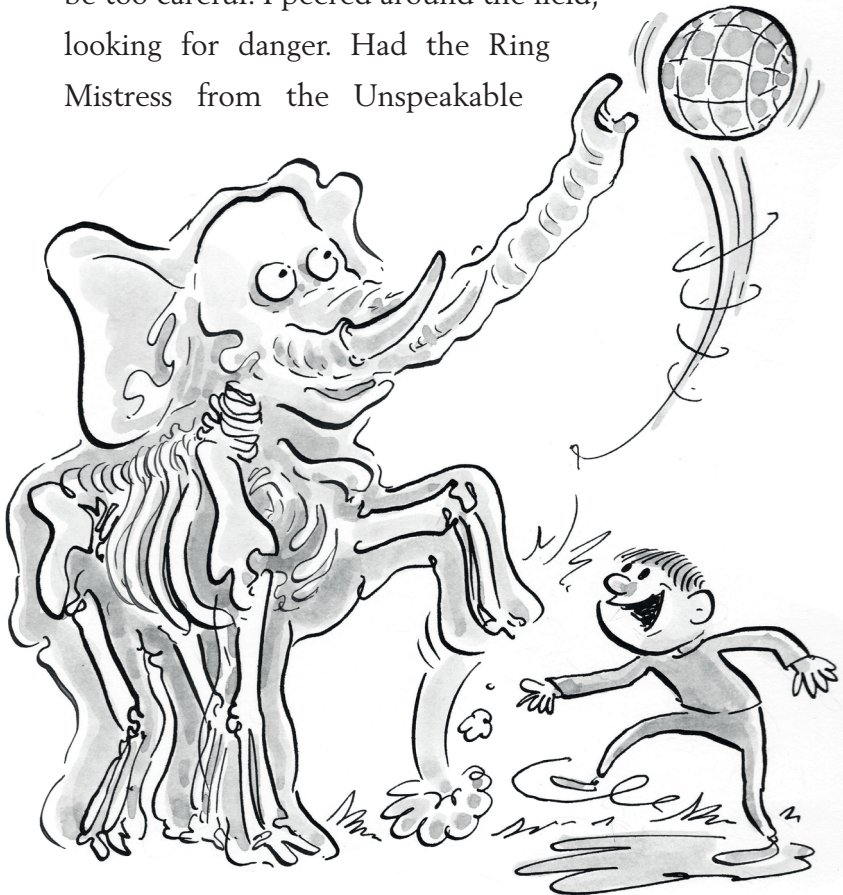
My giant classmate charged across the school field towards me. His face was covered in snot and worry.

I jumped away from Twinkle the skelephant, even

though my undead elephant friend and I were THREE kicks away from a new keepie-uppie record. (Those records were much easier to beat now I wasn't stuck on stilts.)

"*Ruroogha!*" trumpeted Twinkle, flapping her ears.

"Sorry Twinkle," I said. But we couldn't be too careful. I peered around the field, looking for danger. Had the Ring Mistress from the Unspeakable



Circus escaped the Vampire Mountains? (That's where the swamp spat her out last term.) Were zombie lions, or other equally unspeakable circus performers, on the loose?

Had she come back to get us?

"It's my Grunting Theory homework!" moaned Lumbering. "I haven't done it! Madame Bogbrush will stomp me into a sandwich if I don't finish it today! You're the Chosen One, Harvey Small. You have to help me!"

Ah.

This.

Again.

Since the Fortune Teller in the Cellar called me the Chosen One, my classmates are *always* in grave danger. Especially when they haven't done their homework. It turns out I'm not very good at pounding and clobbering, but I'm really good at writing about it.

"You leaves my best friend alone!" said Walloping Toenail, stomping over the field and wagging one of his sausage-sized fingers at Lumbering. "Harvey isn't chosen to do your homework and you knows it!"

Walloping was right.

I just wish I knew what I was chosen for.

What if it was something I'm no good at? Like multiplying fractions.

What if I let everyone down?

What if I let Mum and Dad down? They weren't back together, and I was okay with that. Honest. But they *were* different. Now, when they talked about me on the phone, they didn't argue. Mum didn't sigh or do one of her angry whispers I wasn't supposed to hear. She SMILED. And giggled. Whenever I went anywhere in the school holidays with either of them, they'd introduce me as the Chosen One, and they'd go on and on and on about the fortune teller's prediction to all their friends.

That should make me happy, right?

So why does it feel like there's a small spikey monster living in my tummy blowing raspberries at me?

***DING!***

***DANG!***

***DUNG!***

Dinnertime.

For a moment, the deafening, brain-boggling school

bells clanged louder than my worry. I patted Twinkle's bony back and grabbed Lumbering's homework. "Come on, Lumbering," I said. "I'll help you."

\*

Things should have been good.

"Things is so good!" said Walloping, smacking his lips and tucking into one of his favourite swampfish and bogweed sandwiches.

But ever since the Ring Mistress promised something truly unspeakable would happen to me, I've struggled to sleep.

I knew the swamp spat her out.

I knew the Vampire Mountains were a long way from our school, here in the middle of the Stinking Sinking Swamp.

That didn't stop me jumping at every noise. Which meant I jumped all the time as Walloping and the other giants *bashed*, *crashed*, *stomped* and *clattered* everywhere.

"Why does you looks so worried?" said Walloping, scratching his head.

"Yeah," said Norma Enormous. "You should be like me. I'm the best at not worrying." She thudded me on

the back so hard my head dunked in a bowl of algae broth. Giant food hadn't improved.

"Oops," said Norma, as I wiped algae from my eyes. "But really Harvey, the Ring Mistress is miles away. She wouldn't be daft enough to steal me again. Not unless she wants Madame Bogbrush to stomp on her."

Our skyscraper-tall Headteacher still *clickety clackety clacked* around the school in meat-pounding high heels. Heels that could flatten us in seconds.

*BANG!*

And here she was now.

The dining hall door flew open with such force soup splashed out the bowls. The giants jumped to their feet.

Except, it wasn't Madame Bogbrush.

A green light filled the doorway.

We blinked.

Walloping covered his eyes.

The light moved silently towards us, getting bigger and brighter.

It took the shape of two bodies – about the size of grown-up Smalls.

Two *skeleton* bodies.





Each skeleton had a flesh-like green glow flickering over its bones.

One had a wide smile.

The other had an oversized tear stuck halfway down its cheek.

Were they ...?

Could they be ...?

**“Unspeakable zombie clowns!”** roared every giant in the hall.

I froze.

The unspeakable zombie clowns weren't as terrifying as the description in Walloping's *Big Book for Explorers*.

They were EVEN SCARIER!