



Ben was eight. He lived with his mum, dad and little sister Tasha, who was six. Tasha was a big fan of her brother, and followed him everywhere in awe. Ben liked rice, Ben liked sweets, Ben liked cheese pie.

He was small for his age but he thought he was big in other ways. At school Ben was bullied by the terrible twins, Jack and Dave. They would tease him because of his speech impediment but he didn't tell his mum and dad because he didn't want them to worry.

"They have enough on their hands already" said a piece of paper Ben had handed to his friend Tom.

The lazy autumn afternoon sun beat softly yet Ben was still cold. He pulled his jacket over his shoulders preparing for the journey to Nanny's, and he dug his hands deep into his pockets. Quickly he started walking down the gravel drive, hoping that his parents wouldn't notice he was gone. Glancing up the hill he saw the mansion. To most people it looked abandoned and neglected but Ben knew better: