



PROLOGUE

THE NIGHT IT ALL BEGAN

The sun disappeared behind the pointed silhouettes of the rooftops of Whiffington Town, like a hungry black dog swallowing a ball of flames.

A thick, eerie darkness fell like no other night Whiffington had ever known. The moon itself barely had enough courage to peek round the clouds, as though it knew that tonight something strange was going to happen.

Mothers and fathers throughout Whiffington tucked their children into bed, unaware that this would be the last bedtime story, the last goodnight kiss, the last time they'd switch off the light.

THE CREAKERS

Midnight.
One o'clock.
Two o'clock.
Three o'clock.

CREAK . . .

A strange noise broke the silence. It came from inside one of the houses. With the whole town fast asleep, who could possibly have made that sound?

Or perhaps not *who* but *WHAT*?

. . . CREAK!

There it was again. This time from another house.

Creak!

Creeaak!

CRREEEAAAAAK!

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The sound of creaky wooden floorboards echoed around the hallways of every home in Whiffington.

Something was inside.

Something was **creaking** about.

Something not human.

There were no screams. There were no nightmares. The children slept peacefully, wonderfully unaware that the world around them had changed. It had all happened silently, as if by some strange sort of dark magic, and they wouldn't know anything about it until they woke up the next morning, on the day it all began . . .



CHAPTER ONE THE DAY IT ALL BEGAN

Let's start on the day it all began.
L On the day it all began, Lucy Dungston woke up.

Right. Well, that's a start, but it's not very exciting, is it? Let's try again.

On the day it all began, Lucy Dungston woke up to a rather unusual sound . . .

OK, that's a little better. Let's see what happens next . . .

It was the sound of the alarm clock ringing in her mum's bedroom.

Well, it's got a bit boring again, hasn't it? Let's try that bit one more time . . .

It was the sound of the alarm clock ringing in her mum's bedroom because Lucy's mum wasn't there to switch it off. You see, Lucy was about to find out that while she was asleep in the night her mum had disappeared . . .

OH. MY. GOSH!

Imagine waking up to find that your mum had disappeared in the night! It gives me the creepy tingles every time I tell this story. I bet you're thinking, 'This is going to be the best scary story ever. I can't wait to read it and tell all my friends that I'm really brave because I wasn't even one bit scared.

Even though you were totally scared all the way through.

Well, this is only just the beginning. Wait until you read what happens later when the Creakers come out.

Let me know if you get scared . . . because I am!

Back on the day it all began, Lucy climbed out of bed, slipped on her fluffy blue dressing-gown and walked across her creaky floorboards, which were warm from the morning sunlight creeping in through the curtains.

Would you like to know what Lucy looked like?