

Penguin



Readers

BOY IN THE TOWER

POLLY HO-YEN



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CHAPTER ONE

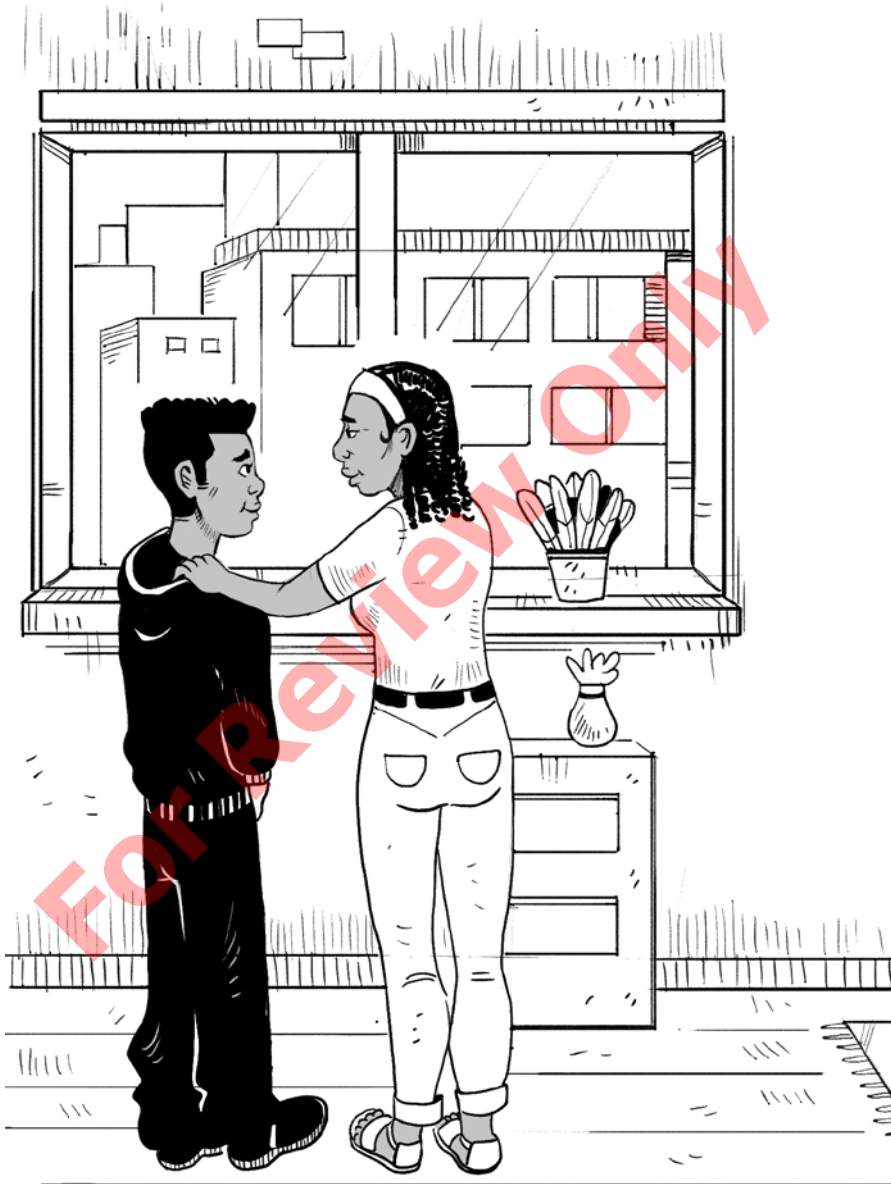
Ade's tower

I always loved my flat in the **tower block**. I could look down, and I could see everything in our part of London. I could see people, cars, shops and my school. I could also see planes in the sky.

My flat was **safe** in my tower because there were lots of **floors** under it! And I could see my friend Gaia's flat, too, because it was in a tower near mine. Gaia and I each lived on the seventeenth floor of our towers in Camberwell, our part of London.

Mum and I often looked out of the window together. Mum has a beautiful, kind face, and she is funny. She gave me my name. I know all mums give names to their babies, but she gave me a new name. At school, there was another boy with my name, Adeola, and she said, "You can be Ade." She told everyone, "This is Ade – you say Add-ee."

I liked school because my teacher, Miss Faraway,

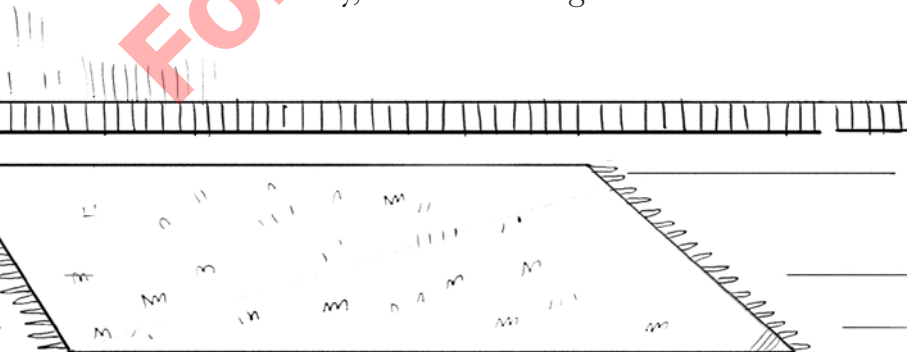


was very nice. Sometimes, I didn't listen very well, and some of the other teachers got angry with me. But Miss Farraway always helped me.

The best thing about school was Gaia. She helped me, too, and sometimes I helped her. Sometimes, the other girls laughed at her because she was different from them. She thought a lot about things, and she loved the sun and the rain. She liked growing things, too.

One day, we planted sunflower seeds. I chose my seed, and I planted it in a cup. Then I wrote my name on the cup. Gaia held her seed in her hand and said something to it.

A girl near Gaia laughed and shouted, "Miss Farraway, Gaia is talking to her seed!"



Then everybody in the class laughed loudly. Gaia quickly put her seed in her cup, and she looked down at the table.

Later, I heard two girls talking in the playground. “Did you do it?” one girl said.

“Yes, I did. I went back to the classroom, and I threw Gaia’s seed away,” the other girl said. “She can talk to her cup, but nothing will grow in it now.”

They laughed. “Gaia is stupid!” the first girl said.

I was angry, but I didn’t want to speak to them or hit them. I went back to the classroom. Quickly, I got the seed out of my cup. Then I found Gaia’s cup, and I planted my seed in it.

A lot of the other children’s seeds didn’t grow into sunflowers. But Gaia’s seed grew very tall.

I drew a picture of Gaia’s sunflower in my scrapbook.



CHAPTER TWO

Buildings fall

Then things changed. I came home from school one day and Mum wasn't at work. Bits of her face were red and other bits of it were black and blue. She looked very frightened, and I wanted to ask, "What happened, Mum? Did someone hit you?" But I couldn't say anything, and Mum never said anything about it. She cried and cried.

Mum didn't get better, and she wasn't happy again. She stopped going out of the flat, and she lay on her bed all day. After that, I **looked after** both of us.

At first, I used Mum's money to buy food. Then Mum gave me her bank card, and she said, "You must learn the number and get money for us from the cash machine outside the bank."

I didn't tell Gaia about Mum, but she knew. One day, she said to me, "Why doesn't your mum see a doctor?"