

Penguin



Readers

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a red and yellow striped one-piece swimsuit, is floating on her back in clear blue water. Her arms are outstretched, and her head is tilted back. In the background, a city skyline with several buildings is visible through the water. The title 'THIS SUMMER'S SECRETS' is written in large, bold, dark blue letters across the middle of the image, with the woman's body partially obscuring the word 'SUMMER'S'.

THIS SUMMER'S SECRETS

EMILY BARR

Contents

Note about the story	4
Family tree	5
Before-reading questions	5
Prologue	7
Chapter One – A haunted house	8
Chapter Two – Looking forward	13
Chapter Three – An old burial ground	21
Chapter Four – An emergency	28
Chapter Five – An evening at Cliff House	35
Chapter Six – Visitors from London	42
Chapter Seven – Another buried secret	49
Chapter Eight – The party	57
Chapter Nine – A shocking event	63
Chapter Ten – Two bodies	68
Chapter Eleven – Leaving Cliff House	74
Chapter Twelve – In control of the future	80
During-reading questions	86
After-reading questions	88
Exercises	88
Project work	93
Glossary	93

PROLOGUE

Felicity, 2008

Felicity sat in the **sunshine** beside Jenna, watching their two-year-old daughters playing on the grass. Her own daughter, Clementine, was eight months older than Senara and much bigger. She was blonde and, for Felicity, she had always had a bright orange **aura**. Senara's aura was blue and yellow.

Felicity got up and went into the kitchen. When she came back to the garden with drinks on a **tray**, she looked around.

"Where's Senara?" she asked Jenna, quickly.

When Felicity finally saw little Senara, the world became black and white. She put down the tray and ran towards her.

"No! Stop!" she shouted.

Senara was in the corner of the garden digging a hole by the **camellias**. Felicity knew that Jenna would never forgive her for shouting at her daughter, but she had to stop her. She was scared of what Senara might find under the camellias.

"No, Senara! Naughty! Stop!" she screamed.

Senara turned around, looking shocked and confused. Then she began to cry.

"She's just a *baby*!" Jenna said to Felicity, as she ran to pick up her daughter. "It's all right, my love," Jenna said to Senara. "We're going home, and we'll never come back."

Fourteen years passed before the two women spoke to each other again.

CHAPTER ONE

A haunted house

Senara, 2022

“Here is Cornwall’s most **haunted** house – Cliff House,” Josie said. “It stands empty and troubled on the edge of the **cliff**.”

We were standing on the beach below the cliffs, looking up at the big house. There was no one else on the beach because it was winter, and the wind was very cold. The sky and the sea were grey.

“No one alive knows what this haunted house is **hiding**,” Gareth added. I turned the video camera to him. “Even the family from London who own it, the ones who call people from the village ‘**peasants**’, have stayed away for years.”

The last time the family visited, three summers ago, a girl of about our age had pushed past us on the path to the beach and called us “peasants”. We were all 13 at the time and had never forgotten it.

“Today, we’re going to uncover the secrets of Cliff House,” Gareth continued.

Gareth was Josie’s boyfriend, and we were helping him make this film for one of his **GCSEs**. I was very happy to be behind the camera, instead of appearing in the film. We had brought a **drone**, too, and our plan was to fly it over the gardens of Cliff House and then bring it back to us on the beach.

“Senara,” Gareth called. “What’s the drone going to find, do you think?”

“Zombies – like the walking dead!” I said.

“Ghosts!” Josie said.

“Bodies!” Gareth said. “The whole family has been murdered. Old Mrs Roberts who still lives in the **cottage** did it.”

“Yes, the garden is full of the bones of the Roberts family,” I said, “and the bones of that girl who disappeared – Lucy’s sister.” I had a sudden thought. “Gareth? You’re not putting this bit in your film, are you?”

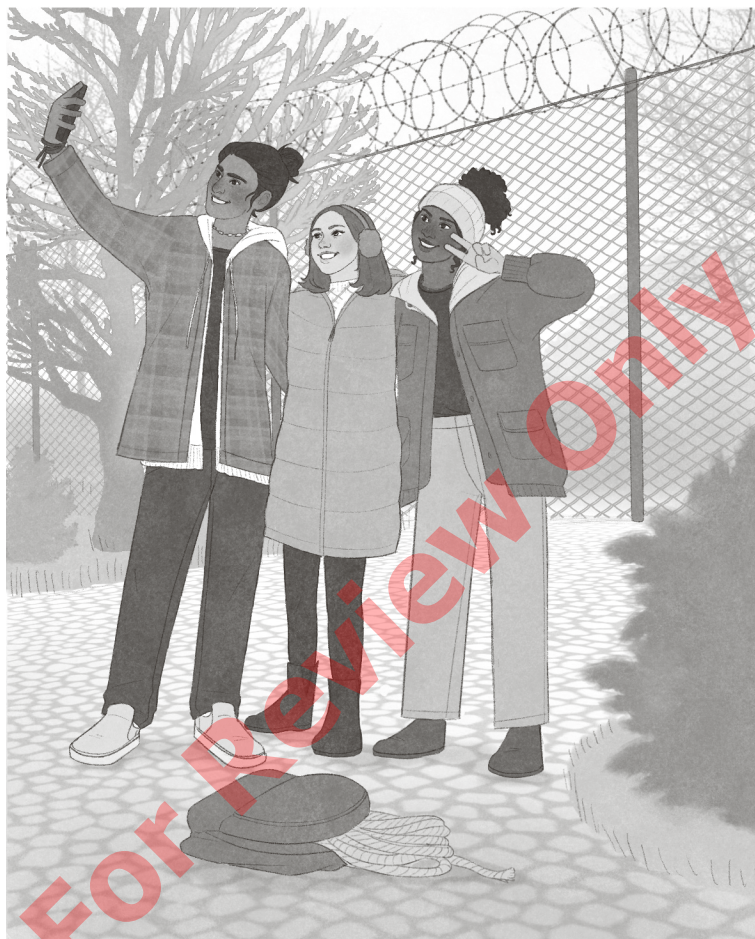
“No,” he said, and laughed as he flew the drone up and up and up.

Then it was gone.

Early the next morning, we hurried back to Cliff House on our bicycles to look for the drone. It had been too dark to look for it last night after it **crashed**. We had to get it back before Mrs Roberts found it. It would be terrible if she heard what we had said about her, and she would probably kill us. She was the crazy old lady who lived in the cottage by the gates and we had always been scared of her.

There was a very high **fence** all around the garden. We used the **rope** that Josie had brought in her rucksack to help us climb over it.

The garden was enormous and well looked after, not wild like we had **expected**. That meant that gardeners came in to work on it, and I hoped that they were not there now.



Gareth got his phone out. “Smile!” he said, and took a photo of us all together.

We walked through the silent, wet garden and then stopped when we saw the big house. “I know this house,” I thought. “I’ve been here before.” But that was impossible.

The house was enormous, with three floors, and four windows on each floor. Behind the house was a swimming pool. I stared at the pool, imagining it in summer, in the sunshine. But I also knew that I *had* seen it. I had been here.

We kept walking, looking for the crashed drone. At last, we found a wild corner of the garden full of **weeds**, where there were two tall camellias, one red and one pink, with dark green leaves. I suddenly noticed something in the weeds under the camellias, so I got on my knees to see if it was our drone. It wasn't, but I dug into the earth with my fingers anyway, pulled it out, then quickly dropped it.

It was a bone.

When Gareth picked it up, I saw that the bone was quite small and thin. Josie began taking photographs of Gareth and the bone, but I just wanted to get away, so I ran as fast as I could across the grass. As I got near Mrs Roberts's cottage, I suddenly saw the drone on the ground, so I quickly ran and picked it up. Then I heard a sound. I looked round and saw a face at the window.

I stared, and the old lady stared back. Should I run or stay?

I quickly texted Josie.

Go now! I've got the drone.
Mrs Roberts saw me.

The old lady opened the window.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

I took a deep breath. My knees were shaking. "Sorry,"

I said. "We were flying this drone from the beach and it crashed into your garden."

"How did you get in?" she asked.

"We used some rope to climb over the fence," I told her.

"Have you damaged the house?"

"No, I promise. We didn't go near the big house," I said.

"Who are the other two?"

"My friends," I replied.

"Who are you?"

"Senara. Are you going to tell anyone that we were here?"

"No," said the old lady. "But I want you to climb in through this window and make me a cup of tea. My hands shake too much. I like my tea with lemon, not milk. And you must stay and talk to me for at least fifteen minutes. You can't imagine how boring it is with no one here."

That was my first visit, but after that I went back every week. By the time spring arrived, Mrs Roberts and I were friends.