



Chapter 1

Gran

Everyone said that Tom was sensible.

His hair was sensible.

His shoes were sensible.

His shirt and tie were sensible.

Even his underpants were sensible.

His Gran, on the other hand, was completely bonkers.

"Wheeeeh! Coming through!"

Several schoolboys scattered as a figure on a skateboard clattered towards them. The black skateboard was edged with orange flames. The wheels, the latest aluminium *fast-tracks*, shot sparks onto the pavement. Painted on the top of the board was a vase of flowers.

Planted firmly on the board were two small feet in brown lace-up shoes. From the shoes sprouted two spindly legs wrapped in folds of grey, wrinkled tights. Two bony knees pointed outwards at such an angle that it seemed impossible the skater stayed on the board at all. The figure wore a green woollen coat which flapped open in the wind to reveal a purple, knitted cardigan and a grey skirt. Over one arm dangled a blue, zipped handbag. Clumps of grey hair escaped wildly from under a pink crash helmet.



There was a screech of wheels and the skateboard came careering towards them again. The rider pushed a tiny foot down on the back of the board. She slid the other foot forward. The skateboard flipped up in the air, high above where the boys were sitting. They scrambled for cover, Ben falling back into the prickly, purple bush

that he had climbed out of only moments before. Tom glanced up as the old lady sailed over his head.

He wished he hadn't.

"Oh, Gran!" he spluttered.

There were bits of your gran that you didn't want to see.

"Hello boys," said the rider, taking off her helmet.

"Hello, Gran," mumbled Tom.

"What are you lot up to, then?"

"Nothing much," said Tom, looking around anxiously. He was sure that his whole class from school were going to appear around the corner any moment. It wasn't

fair. No one else had to put up with this sort of thing.

"Anyway, can't stay here all day gossiping. I've got shopping to do."

Tom gave a sigh of relief.

The old lady tipped up the board and spun it on her hand. She let it fall forward, where it did a somersault and landed on the pavement. Swinging her handbag back over her arm, she hopped onto the board and disappeared in the direction of the vegetable shop.

"Your gran's a nutcase!" said Ben, climbing out of the shrubbery picking bits of hedge from his school jumper.

"She ought to be locked up," added Vijay.



"I know," said Tom, shuffling his feet awkwardly on the pavement.

"Why can't she just knit jumpers and stroke the cat like other old ladies?" said Ben.

"Leave her alone," said Jess. "She's alright, your gran."

"She's not alright. She's completely bonkers," muttered Tom.

Why did his gran have to turn up and embarrass him all the time? Other boys' grans watched the television, or bought you sweets, or ruffled your hair and said how big you'd grown. Why couldn't his gran be like that?

"Come on, look, the library's open," said Tom, glad for the chance to change the subject. "There's a book I'm looking for. I want to see if it's in."

