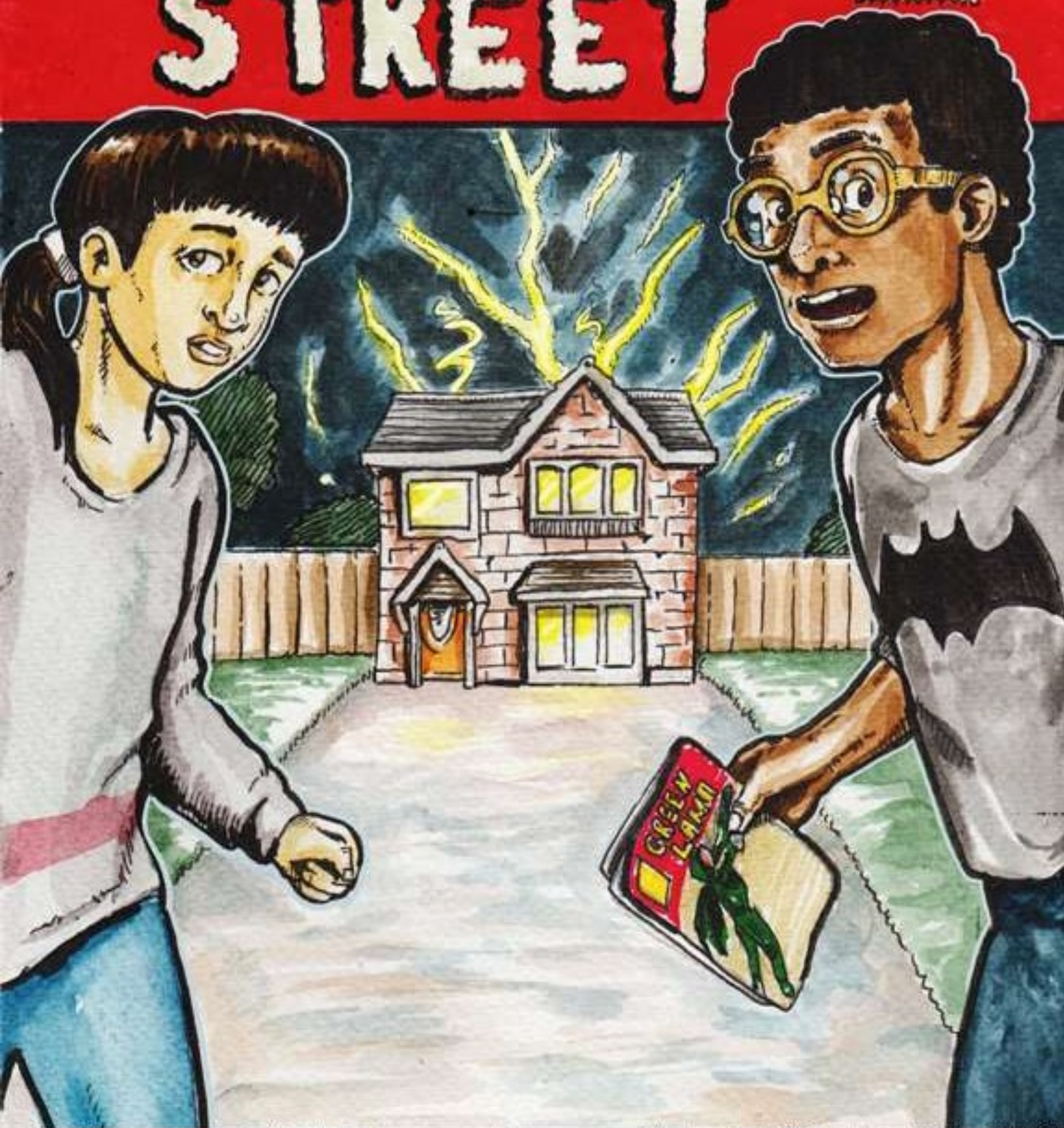


ALIEN STREET

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New Town

Finally, it was the first day of the summer holidays. Six long weeks of no lessons, no teachers and no schoolwork! Every kid in Weston Town was buzzing with excitement, except Lucy. She was in the back of her dad's car, staring out of the window. Her dad was following the removal van in front of them, driving to their new home.

"We are almost there!" her dad said excitedly from the driver's seat.

"I can't wait to see our new home," Lucy's mum said proudly.

She turned to see Lucy sat on the back seat with a sad look on her face. "Don't worry, dear. You are going to love it here."

Lucy didn't want to move. She hated the fact that all her friends were now over 100 miles away. Her family had to move as her dad had been relocated to another office. A new job. A new start is what he kept saying as they were boxing up all their things from the old house.

Her dad looked at Lucy in the rear-view mirror. "Come on, Lucy. Give this place a chance."

"I hate it here. I don't know why we had to move for your stupid new job," Lucy said, staring at her dad in the mirror.

Her mother turned in her seat to face Lucy. "Stop that now. You know this wasn't an easy decision for any of us, but it's the right one."

Lucy used to live in a beautiful converted barn in the country with her parents. Open fields were at the back of their house and her friends all lived in the nearest village. She looked out of the window again. All she could see was row upon row of normal houses. Some had tiny gardens at the front, but all of them had driveways. She would see the occasional park, but these were nothing compared to the fields back at their old house.

"Here we are," her dad said as he turned the car to the left. "Roswell Close."

"Oh, it's perfect. Our new life starts here," Lucy's mum said with a smile.

Lucy stared out at the very *normal*-looking street in the middle of a very *normal-looking* town. "Is this it?" Lucy cried. "We left the country for this?"

Lucy got out of the car and stood in front of Number 8, Roswell Close. She then looked at the houses either side of hers. They looked almost identical to hers. She then spun around to see all the other houses in her new close. Every house looked the same. The biggest difference was that some had painted their garages differently.

They all had a driveway. They all had a potted ornamental tree beside their doors. One or two had a hanging basket by their front windows, but that was it. That was as far as their owner's imagination would go.



She stood to look at the house opposite. A family of garden gnomes stared right back at her. They were all clumped together at the foot of a giant plant pot which contained yet another ornamental tree. It didn't even look real. "Probably a plastic tree to match those hideous gnomes," Lucy said sadly.

"So what do you think, Lucy?" her mum asked with a smile.

"What a dump," sighed Lucy.

"Hey, you can cut that out right now," Lucy's mum said with a stern look. "We don't want to give our neighbours a bad first impression."

"Look around you, Mum. Why did we move from the beautiful countryside to this?" Lucy said, spinning on the spot. "It's a concrete jungle. We are slap bang in the middle of dullsville."

“Have a look inside the house,” her dad suggested. “It’s lovely and much better than our old place.”

“Doubt it,” snorted Lucy.



With a spring in their step, Lucy’s mum and dad walked to the front door of Number 8, Roswell Close. They waved over to Lucy, inviting her over for the grand opening. Her dad pushed the key into the front door lock and turned it. Her mum quickly opened the door and rushed into the house.

“It’s beautiful!” she screamed.

“It’s all ours,” Lucy’s dad said with a smile.

“Great,” Lucy said as she rolled her eyes.

Her dad sidled back towards the front door. “Okay boys,” he said, beckoning to the removal men. “We are ready when you are.”

Like a small army the removal men bailed out of their van and started to bring its contents into the house, darting in and out of the front door like a trail of ants delivering food to their colony.

“Wow. Look at them go,” Lucy’s mum said, clapping her hands together.

“I think it’s best if we stay out of their way and let them get on with the job,” her dad said. “Who is up for some pizza? My treat.”

Lucy’s mum shot her hand into the air. “That sounds like a great idea. Count me in.”

“We will be back in a couple of hours,” Lucy’s dad said to one of the removal men. “We have left stuff out for tea and coffee in the kitchen. Please help yourself.”

Lucy and her parents piled themselves back into the family car on a quest for pizza. Lucy knew her dad was trying his best to make the move as smooth as possible, but it would take more than pizza to fix this. Lucy felt so lonely. It was the first day of the summer holidays and she was already dreading her time at Roswell Close.

Just a very *normal*-looking street in the middle of a very *normal-looking* town. Or so Lucy thought.