



SEVEN MISSIONS

Computers! A roomful of computers of so many different models and ages. Chris couldn't believe how it had changed since the only other time he had been here. He felt a rush of excitement and an answering twitch in his fingers. Which of these was Uncle Reg's oldest computer? If it was here, would it still have the *Seven Missions* game on it?

Of course there was the strong possibility that Uncle Reg might have got rid of an old computer and an old game like that years ago. Then again, it could be that Uncle Reg had been keeping his old models, creating a kind of museum of computers, saving the early programmes and games. Chris really hoped so. *Seven Missions* was the first computer game he had ever played – the one that had hooked him. It was the one that had convinced him that computers were more than simply useful and sometimes

INSIDE THE GAME

interesting. Chris thought of it now as his initiation into the computer world, a world where, he believed, he would eventually choose a career.

His parents had watched his growing attachment to computers and called it an addiction; they'd insisted he gave time to other interests as well. At first he'd felt resentful but he admitted now that he was glad he had been pushed into outside interests. He'd become a crack swimmer, cleaning up the prizes at the last school swimming sports. He'd found snorkelling a blast and wanted to do more of that – maybe learn to scuba-dive one day.

Most of all, he loved rock climbing. Sometimes he grinned to himself when he thought that his parents' introduction had led to yet another addiction.

His cousin Amy was pretty keen on rock climbing, too, and they'd shared the hobby together. Over the years, Amy had spent a lot of holiday time, and sometimes weekends, at Chris's home. Her mother often had to go away on business and both sets of parents liked to think that, because Amy and Chris were both only children, time spent with each other would create a family-sibling feeling between them. And Chris *did* think of Amy as a sister.

Chris swivelled around slowly, savouring the pleasure this room gave him. He knew Amy didn't