

Leila Chapter 40

It was several weeks later when Leila found herself making her way through the woods towards the house once again.

In truth, even by her standards, she'd not had a good term. She'd regularly been in trouble, mostly small things, but they accumulated and people became wary of her.

But she couldn't help herself!

On her good days she was full of so much energy that it just had to spill out somewhere. Often it spilled out in good ways - she was always keen to answer questions and because she was clever, the teachers loved her for it.

On the worst days though, her head was so full of noise that she could not predict how she might react to people. Everything annoyed her. Nothing went right. She would lash out and proper trouble would be the result. Oh how she hated that headteacher's office, where she might have to spend the whole afternoon on some stupid worksheet!

On better days she wondered whether others had bad days too.

Everyone else seemed so happy, so calm at the right times, and so excited at the right times.

Why couldn't she be like that?

As she approached the house, she could see that something was different. The shack was uncommonly tidy, without the usual cups, plates, bits of wood and cardboard from various projects lying around. It looked like he was getting ready to leave. Or to fight.

She noticed through the window that the picture above the fireplace had gone.

He struggled out through the door with the same bag that he seemed to have been packing for weeks. He was more unshaven than usual and he looked tense. They sat down. He was out of breath. He got up again. He didn't look at her.

'Oh hello. Erm, could you come back a bit later. I'm busy.'

Busy? He's never busy. He's worried, that's what he is. What about?

She looked up at the clouds which were gathering closely into an already-darkening May sky.

'Come back later? It's late already. No problem. I'll come tomorrow. Are you OK?'

He ignored the question, picked up the bag and started to go inside.

'I think you should go, Leila. They're coming. We're in danger. I'm sorry.'

She got up. She saw his back disappear into the house before she left.

It was the last time Leila saw him alive.