

Leila Chapter 1

The heat was unusually oppressive that September morning.

Climate change, they said on the News. Not everyone believed them, but it was beginning to look like they were right. When was the last time it had snowed in the winter? When was the last time it had been this hot for this long in late summer? Almost never in England, where we had got used to mild summers, and winters which varied between the dull and the bitter.

So maybe climate change was a thing, and whatever the politicians said, something needed to be done about it.

All around the village, people did the right thing. They invested time sorting out glass from plastic, paper from cardboard, making little piles before bin day. You'd get dirty looks, or worse, from the bin men if you got yours wrong. People were actually nervous! There were now four different bins. Paper and card. Food waste. Other recyclables. And glass, split into brown, green or clear. Get it right, or they won't collect it.

It was the same at the school, whose lo-rise buildings brooded beside the main road out of the village. Seemingly endless rows of coloured bins which everyone was supposed to understand. Leila didn't understand, and didn't really care. There were bins for batteries, old pens, crisp packets, plus the usual recycling ones. There was a bin for used cosmetics! Which they were not allowed in school anyway! No kid could wear make-up, and most of the teachers looked as if they didn't bother. Who would bring in used packets of that stuff?

Stupid, thought Leila as she trudged alone and late through the gates, her bag bursting with books she wouldn't ever read, and PE kit she didn't intend to ever wear.