

Leila Chapter C

Leila is very specific about her teachers isn't she?

She knows what she likes, and she definitely knows what she doesn't like.

She seems to be the sort of person who reacts very well to some and not so well to others. When she describes the troubles she has at school, she seems to suggest that it is partly to do with the people running the classes. Are you like that? Do you work well with everyone?

If you do, well done.

But if you say you do, I'm not so sure I believe you!

I mean, we all respond differently to the various people who pass through our lives, and we're not going to react in the same way to all of them.

Think of the people who teach you. Be careful, because if you are reading this in school, you may be close to some of them. Look around you, and perhaps cover this page with your hand or whistle an innocent tune as you read. No-one will suspect anything!

Be careful of the spying kind!

These teachers are probably looking over your shoulder right now, checking on what you are reading. They are always there, with an evil little glint in their beady eye, making sure you are *doing the right thing*. Making sure you are *on task* as they call it. They are the kind of teacher who will spend longer checking up on you than checking that what they are teaching you is at all interesting. They bore you close to tears droning on at the front of the classroom, and then wonder why you are twanging your ruler or trying to read this book from safely under the table! Well, of course you've got to do *something* just to stay awake. Just don't get up out of your seat - they will come down on you *like a ton of bricks!*

That is such a dated simile! A ton of bricks? There are loads of crazy old sayings like that! The teacher might *bite your ear off* for something! Or give you a *hard time*.

Leila doesn't do similes.

She also has a problem with the over-prepared ones. Over-prepared? How is that possible? Preparation is good! But this is the teacher who has five Powerpoint presentations on the go, and fifteen beautifully trimmed worksheets, all for just one short lesson on prepositions. It's all too much!

Come on teacher, it's your job! Tell me what a preposition is, give me a couple of examples, and then let me get on with it. I'll show you what I know.

Leila can't deal with fifteen worksheets.

I always used to secretly think that the over-prepared teacher was actually preparing the lesson for themselves! Why else would they have all that stuff on their computer? Maybe they didn't actually know what a preposition was themselves? Surely that is not possible?

You'd be surprised.

Then you have the hard nut. The disciplinarian. The one who thinks they've got *behaviour management* sorted out. In the old days they were the ones who stalked the corridors in their black capes and hats, scaring the wits out of young children. The modern version is no less scary, and everyone sits there wondering who is next in line for a public humiliation or a lecture. No-one can learn anything if they're scared. And what kind of person wants to scare young children?

Quite a few actually.

Leila's response to the hard nuts is to fight. That is not good.

Last but not least, the comedian.

I remember Mr Croker at our all-boys school. He thought he was down with the kids, with his braces and his *Simpsons* tie. He tried to teach us English Literature, and would giggle at all the bawdy references in *The Canterbury Tales*. He would tell us unfunny jokes, and squawk like a frog in imitation of his own surname. And, without fail, if you did something good, he would exclaim, 'Excrement! Well done!' We laughed the first time maybe, but only that once. And every time he left the room he used to say, 'Goodbye! All the breast!' As if that was funny? Not even the first time.

No, no and no.

They might have a great sense of humour. That is good. But a laugh-a-minute one-liner merchant? I don't think so. They belong on the stage.

Not in your school.

Leila doesn't laugh at the comedians.

What we do know is that she has an image of a favourite teacher, and she is starting to think Duke would have been it. She seems to think that she would learn from him.

Learning that would come from cooperation, from compassion.

Let's hope they can continue their strange little partnership.

And learn from each other.