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Opening extract from

Nadine Dreams of Home

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Chapter 1
Not a Word

Nadine looked round the big classroom. It had more than 30 children in it, but there were no other Goma children. No one else who spoke Nadine's language.

It was real scary, here in Britain. Not scary like when you had to run away from the stink of burning buildings or the sound of shooting. And not scary like when you had to try to hide from the rebel soldiers with your mother and your little brother. But scary in other ways.

There was the noise of London – that was scary. The lorries rattled like troop carriers, and the buses hissed their brakes like rockets skimming across the sky. And when the low planes came into City Airport – Nadine's mother still ducked her head as if they might be about to drop bombs.



And there was another sort of scary, which was just as bad, in its own way. The scary of being on their own, the three of them, in the flats where they lived, as high as kites fly. The three of them without Nadine's father, Fabrice. He had got them out of Goma on the last plane before the rebels took over the airstrip and took Fabrice off with them.

So Nadine, her mother and Prince were on their own without a word of English. Nadine's father had been a teacher, and he spoke good French and English. If only he were here, he would help them in this foreign land.

Nadine came to school every day and tried like mad to understand what people were saying. And sometimes she could pick out a few words. But at night she cried for her father and went to sleep with her face stained with tears.

She dreamed one special dream – that one day she would go to the airport with her mother and brother, and see her father coming through that Arrivals door. Coming to live with them, to make them all together again. After that, everything would be a million times better.

