Helping your children choose books they will love

I ♥ reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

The Lost Twin

Written by

Sophie Cleverly

Published by

HarperCollins Children's Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

First published in Great Britain by HarperCollins *Children's Books* 2015
HarperCollins *Children's Books* is a division of HarperCollins*Publishers* Ltd,
HarperCollins *Publishers*
1 London Bridge Street
London SE1 9GF
The HarperCollins *Children's Books* website address is
www.harpercollins.co.uk

Scarlet and Ivy : The Lost Twin
Text copyright © Sophie Cleverly, 2015
Illustration copyright © Manuel Šumberac, 2015

Sophie Cleverly asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

978-0-00-758918-0

Printed and bound in England by
Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

Conditions of Sale
This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior written consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC™ C007454
FSC
www.fsc.org

FSC™ is a non-profit international organisation established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified to assure consumers that they come from forests that are managed to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations, and other controlled sources.

Find out more about HarperCollins and the environment at
www.harpercollins.co.uk/green



Chapter One

This is the story of how I became my sister.

I got the letter on September the first. I remember that because it was the day after our thirteenth birthday. *My* thirteenth birthday. The first one I wouldn't share with my twin sister, Scarlet.

I woke up and made my way down the winding stairs of my aunt Phoebe's house, breathing in the smell of bacon cooking as I went. The early morning sun was already warming the air. It could have been a good day.

As I emerged from the shadow of the stairs and into the sunlit hallway, I noticed it. An envelope lying on the stone floor.

For a moment I thought it might be a belated birthday card – the only card I'd had that year was from my aunt, and looking at the single, lonely name written at the top had hurt more than I could say – but as I picked the envelope up it felt more like a letter.

Scarlet had always liked to send me secret messages, but she sealed her letters so haphazardly that you could probably have opened hers just by breathing on them. This one was closed tightly and sealed with wax. I turned it over and saw that it was addressed to my aunt. *I ought to open it*, I thought. Aunt Phoebe didn't object to me reading her post. In fact, it was usually necessary; she just let it pile up in the hallway if I didn't.

I went into the kitchen and sat down on one of the rickety chairs. I took a closer look at the seal on the envelope – it was black, with a raised imprint of a bird on top of an oak tree. The words 'Rookwood School' were stamped underneath in dark-coloured ink.

Rookwood School. Scarlet's school. Why were they writing to Aunt Phoebe?

I slid a butter knife from the drawer along the envelope.

Mrs Phoebe Gregory
Blackbird Cottage
Bramley Hollow

30th August, 1935

Dear Mrs Gregory,

As you are the guardian of Ivy Grey, I am writing to inform you that in light of recent unfortunate circumstances a place has become available at our school, and your niece will take it. Her parents have fully paid the fees and she is due to start as soon as possible. A teacher will be sent to collect her and the details will be explained upon her arrival.

Regards,
Edgar Bartholomew (Headmaster)

I threw the letter down as if it had singed my fingers. Could they really be referring to my sister's death as 'unfortunate circumstances'?

I sat and stared at it, questions racing through my head. For some reason, Rookwood School wanted me – the twin who wasn't good enough. Surely there were hundreds of other girls they could give the place to. Why me?

It was then that I noticed that the smell of bacon cooking had turned into the smell of bacon burning. I jumped up

and ran to the iron stove, waving the smoke away from my face. It was too late; the bacon was already cremated.

Aunt Phoebe must have wandered off somewhere in the middle of cooking. This was a common occurrence. I glanced out of the kitchen window and spotted her sitting on the bench in the garden, her hands folded neatly in her lap and a faraway expression on her face. Aunt Phoebe's husband had died in the Great War, leaving behind only a study full of books and a small pension for my aunt. She hadn't been quite the same since.

I grabbed the letter and went outside. My aunt didn't look around even though my footsteps crunching on the gravel betrayed my presence. She was watching the goldfish in the pond. Little ripples curled as they bobbed to the surface and then darted away, their golden scales glinting in the sun.

"Aunt Phoebe?"

"Oh, Ivy," she replied, blinking up at me, and then returning her gaze to the water. "I didn't see you there, dear."

"You got a letter from—" I started, but my aunt interrupted, seemingly unaware that I had spoken.

"Scarlet loved the fish, didn't she? I remember when you were little, she used to kneel by the pond and make faces at her reflection. She always said that it was like another twin, only even wetter than you."

I gave a weak smile. *Typical Scarlet*. She made fun of

everyone, and me the most, but I never thought anything of it. Or tried not to, anyway.

Scarlet and I were mirror twins. Before we were born, our mother thought she was having only one baby, but then I arrived – a slightly smaller and weaker version of my sister, but a perfect mirror image. Our birthmarks were the same but on opposite sides. I was left-handed while Scarlet was right-handed. Aunt Phoebe's husband, Doctor Gregory, had once told me that our hearts might be reversed too. I was like Scarlet's reflection come to life.

I sat beside Aunt Phoebe on the bench. It wasn't surprising that my aunt's thoughts were of Scarlet. She had always been everyone's favourite, bold and brash and outgoing. I was just Ivy. *Shy, clingy Ivy*. I could have been Scarlet's reflection, but I might as well have been her shadow.

"Oh goodness, I am sorry," Aunt Phoebe said. "I was just reminded of her."

"I understand," I said.

But I didn't. I didn't understand why Scarlet had died. I didn't understand how someone so full to the brim with life could be gone. I didn't understand why God, if he was up there, would give me a twin only to take her away again.

Or that somehow the world was still carrying on.

"You got a letter," I repeated, waving it at her.

Aunt Phoebe looked up. "Oh? What does it say?"

"They want me to go to Rookwood. To take Scarlet's place."

Her eyes widened considerably. "Well, gosh." She paused. "That's quite an honour. It's a prestigious school, isn't it?"

Rookwood School. Barely a few months ago, just before the summer had begun, Scarlet had died there. A sudden fever, they said, flu or pneumonia; something that couldn't have been predicted or prevented. My stepmother casually told me these explanations as I sobbed, as if they meant nothing, when half of my world had just been torn away.

I never wanted to go to that place. Not now, *not ever*.

I looked up at my aunt, her gentle face framed by greying hazel curls. "And your father has already agreed to it?"

I sighed. It was just like him to agree such a thing without telling me. "According to the letter. It says the fees have been paid in full."

"Well, then it's decided, my dear," said Aunt Phoebe.

I didn't reply.

"I'll leave you to think about it," she said brightly, patting me on the leg. Then she wandered off down the garden path, past the privy and the vegetable patch, and began pulling weeds. She started to sing quietly to herself, already a world away.

I felt helpless, like I was being slowly dragged towards Rookwood, a place only seen in my imagination, but

nonetheless it filled me with terror.

Maybe it will be a good thing, I tried to tell myself. *A new start, new friends*. Any *friends*. After all, Scarlet had always said she wished that I could join her there. I would be closer to her there, somehow, wouldn't I?

Without warning, I started to cry and hastily wiped the tears from my cheeks. Who was I kidding? The last place on earth I wanted to go was the place where Scarlet had... Just thinking about it made my head pound.

I threw the stupid letter on to the grass.

Aunt Phoebe looked up, clutching a handful of straggly dandelions. I put my head in my hands and heard her walking back towards me down the gravel path.

"Oh, Scarlet," she said, looking over me with blank eyes. "I'm sure you'll be all right going to this school. I'll miss you terribly, of course, but you *will* be fine on your own, won't you?"

She didn't even notice her mistake.

I didn't think I would *ever* be fine on my own.



Chapter Two

It was a bright day that followed, one of those where it feels so hot and hazy that you can't believe the summer is coming to an end. I was lying flat on my back on the stone edge of the pond, reading a tattered copy of *Jane Eyre* and trying my best to forget about my impending Rookwood fate.

Sometimes I would look into the water just to see my green-tinged reflection staring back at me. It was almost enough to pretend Scarlet was right there with me.

Almost.

"Ivy!" My aunt's voice rang out from the back door.

I sat up so quickly I almost dropped the book in the pond.

"Ivy!" she called again, despite the fact that I was looking straight at her. She was wringing the ends of her apron in her pale hands.

"Yes?" I answered.

"You've got a... visitor. It's a teacher from the school."

So soon? I wasn't ready for this now. But then, maybe I never would be. I cautiously walked back to the cottage, curling my toes over the hard stones.

"A lady," she added, before gently pushing me into the kitchen.

The *lady* was tall and skinny, and wore a long dress that looked several sizes too large. It was black and covered with pockets. Her face was sharp and pointed, and her brown hair was pulled into a tight bun that made it look like she had a row of clothes pegs on the back of her head, pinching her skin tighter. It was not a particularly pleasant face to look at, especially given that she was fixing me with the expression of someone who has just chewed a rotten wasp.

"Ivy Grey?" she said.

"Yes?" I replied, stunned.

"Yes *Miss*. I trust that you have received our letter?"

"Yes, Miss." I nodded carefully, and watched as she stalked around the kitchen table. She ran a finger along the

surface, then scrutinised it in a most unladylike manner. "Good. Then you will accompany me to the school."

I blinked. "Right now?"

The woman lowered her eyebrows and folded her bony arms. "Yes, right now. It is the beginning of the term. Therefore, you are supposed to be at school."

I turned around, and saw my aunt standing there, wide-eyed.

"Aunt Phoebe?" I said, giving her a pleading look.

"Excuse us a moment," she said to the teacher, gently pulling me back into the hallway. "Oh, my dear," she said quietly. "She does seem strict, but it is a very good school, and they're bound to be rather, um..."

"But Aunt Phoebe..." I whispered, "I-I thought there'd be more time." Truth be told, I was a bit worried about my aunt being all alone too. "And what about you?" I asked.

My aunt smiled vacantly. "I'll get along just fine."

I peered back through the door at the horrible sharp woman, who was tapping her foot and glaring at me with squinty eyes.

"I haven't got all day," she said, haughtily. "Go and get your things." She gestured upstairs, the contents of her pockets jangling as she moved.

Scarlet would have stamped on that tapping foot. But me – well, I did as I was told.

I climbed the stairs with a shudder. Everything about that ghastly woman in the kitchen made me nervous.

My bedroom was through a little doorway off the landing, built for someone a great deal smaller than me. It had a low-beamed ceiling and a window with warped panes of glass. When I came to stay at Aunt Phoebe's house, it had seemed so lonely at first; obvious that there was no room for a twin. But it had grown to feel like home, and I was sad to be leaving it.

I reached under the bed to find my blue carpet bag. I filled it with my few possessions – a comb, toiletries, metal hair-curling clips, stationery and ink, some books, the half string of tiny pearls that I had inherited from our mother, Emmeline. She had died shortly after giving birth to Scarlet and I, so we never knew her. Maybe if she had been there to look after us, Scarlet would still be alive now.

I threw in my underclothes and my best dress – all of which bore the strong scent of lavender from Aunt Phoebe's drawer liners – even though I knew that I would be required to wear a uniform at Rookwood School. I took out my ballet clothes, the cream leotard and skirt, and the black set too. I wrapped the soft pink shoes in tissue paper before packing them. They were almost new, and I prayed they would last a few months at least.

It had taken no time at all to pack the contents of my life.

Now the little room looked bare and sad. As I laced up my leather shoes I stared at the floorboards, trying to convince myself everything was going to be all right.

You'll be fine. There's nothing to be afraid of. It's only a school.

I shut my eyes and took a deep, shaky breath. And then I traipsed back downstairs with my bag.

"Are you ready to go?" Aunt Phoebe asked. "I'm sure Mrs... Miss, I'm sorry, what did you say your name was?"

"Miss Fox," snapped the woman.

"I-I'm sure Miss Fox will look after you," Aunt Phoebe said, without raising her gaze to meet my eyes. She placed a hand on my shoulder, reassuringly. "I'll see you soon, Ivy, my dear," she added, planting a kiss on my forehead.

"I hope so," I said, managing a smile. "I'll write."

Miss Fox's foot began tapping even faster. "We haven't got time for niceties. The driver is waiting."

I winced and clutched hold of my bag more tightly, then I followed Miss Fox into the lane, where the bright sunshine hit my eyes.

"Goodbye, darling," said my aunt.

"Goodbye," I mouthed back. And before I knew it, I was being bundled into the back of an expensive-looking motor car.

The smell of leather seats and the smoke from the driver's

cigar hit my nose instantly.

"Sit up," snapped Miss Fox, as she climbed into the front.

"I'm sorry, miss?"

She turned and looked at me as if I were a sick sheep. "Sit up straight when you're in my vehicle. And kindly avoid touching the seats."

I folded my hands in my lap and began to ask, "How long will it take to—"

"Quiet!" she interrupted. "All this senseless chatter is giving me a headache."

The engine chugged into life as I leant back and tried to take some deep breaths, but the fumes made me cough. Miss Fox tutted loudly.

All I could see of the driver was a flat tweed cap and the grey hair on the back of his neck. He said nothing, simply nodded and pulled away.

I peered out of the back window, and saw Aunt Phoebe standing on the doorstep. She gave me a sad wave. I watched her shrink as we drove, fading into the sunlight that streamed through the trees.

I turned around, and saw my eyes reflected in the driver's mirror. They were brimming with tears.