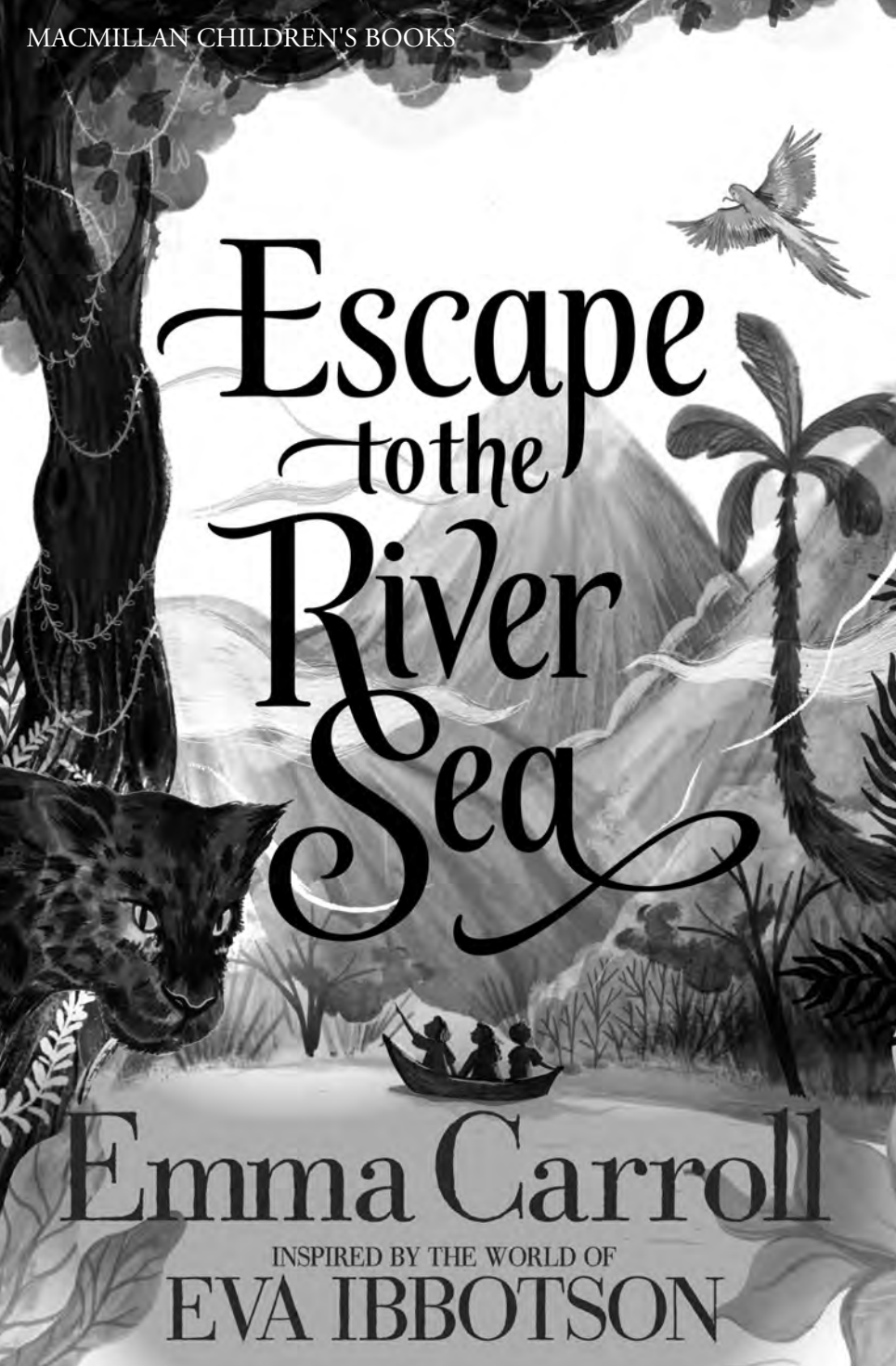
MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS



Escape to the River Sea

Emma Carroll

INSPIRED BY THE WORLD OF

EVA IBBOTSON



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To my dearest dad,
who taught me one pudding is never enough.

Chapter One



Rosa Sweetman hated goodbyes. In her short eleven-year-old life, and though she'd had more than her fair share of them, two had been particularly agonizing. The first, years ago, was when she'd hugged her mother and older sister, Liesel, goodbye on a dark, rain-blown station platform in Vienna. The other, just last month, had been at the gates of Westwood, waving off the twenty schoolgirls who'd shared her bedroom with their late-night gossip through the bleak years of war.

She'd been lucky – all the girls had – to spend the war safe from enemy bombs here at Westwood, the rambling country home of a dimple-chinned Englishman called Sir Clovis, who'd suddenly found himself doing his bit for the war effort by taking in evacuees. Rosa had been the first, rescued from another station platform – this time Euston Station, in London. As fate would have it, Sir Clovis missed his train, and the person supposed to be collecting Rosa was struck down with TB. So, when he'd seen one little girl left behind and the harried volunteers

wondering what to do with her, Sir Clovis offered her a home at Westwood.

The house itself was a vast, ugly brute of a place, draughty and mouldering, with battlements like rows of untidy teeth. There'd been no other children, or animals, here when Rosa arrived, just long, echoing corridors, and too many unused rooms. A few months later, war broke out and when the schoolgirls were evacuated from their city homes, she was very glad: filling Westwood with children certainly improved it.

It hadn't stopped with children. One night, the local zoo was hit by German bombs. Since there were enough hazards during wartime without wild animals roaming the streets, it was decided the creatures must be shot, or evacuated. Within days, Westwood's stables and paddocks, where the previous owner had kept horses, became home to two ostriches, a dozen snakes, five zebras, ten meerkats and a beautiful jaguar named Opal.

Then one calm June day, peace was declared, and everything changed again. There was no longer any reason for the children or zoo animals to be at Westwood. It was safe to go home. Despite the cheering, fireworks and the celebration bonfire up on Westwood Moor, all Rosa could think of was being the only child again, rattling around Westwood all by herself.

Her mother had promised she'd come for her.

'We'll be on the next train out of Vienna, right behind you,' she'd sworn that night at the station.

Yet seven years and a world war later, Rosa was still waiting.

She'd not received so much as a letter in all that time. Sometimes, she felt she was forgetting Vienna because her old life existed only as smells or sounds – apple cake baking, hoofbeats on cobbles. It worried her, too, that her own mother and sister wouldn't recognize her. She'd grown a lot in seven years: longer legs, freckles, hair a darker shade of brown. But Rosa's nature was a hopeful one – that hadn't changed. She told herself to be patient, even if Westwood seemed to be emptying quicker than water from a bathtub.

As it turned out, work repairing the city's zoo took longer than anticipated. It was the following February before the animals finally went home. On the morning the zoo trucks were due to arrive, Rosa awoke to a noise like distant thunder. Out on the landing, the grandfather clock chimed seven, though it always ran ten minutes slow. The rumbling was getting louder. Rosa sat up, listening: the sound was of vehicles coming down the lane.

Throwing off the bedclothes, Rosa grabbed her blouse, cardigan and skirt off the bedroom chair, and stuffed her feet in her shoes. She hadn't expected the zoo this early. She'd hoped to give Opal the jaguar one last breakfast, and running down the stairs, hair uncombed, cardigan unbuttoned, she didn't feel ready to say goodbye.

When the zoo had first arrived, she begged the zookeeper's son, Billy, to let her look after Opal. She'd had a kitten back in Vienna, the same black-brown colour, and the lack of pets here at Westwood was

another thing Rosa had never got used to.

'If you want her to like you, then feed her pilchards,' Billy advised as they watched Opal inspect the corners of the stable that was to be her new home. 'She's not really black, d'you see?' He pointed to the animal's flank, which, when the light caught it, was a rich, rusty brown, the jaguar spots dark splodges in her coat.

Rosa didn't know much about jaguars – and what she did, she'd hastily read about while balanced on a chair in Westwood's library. But it was important to her not to let Billy – or Opal – down. Billy was the one person who *had* written to her regularly during the war, mostly to give advice on his precious jaguar.

Opal's eaten two rabbits and given herself the hiccups . . . Rosa wrote once, to which Billy replied, *Try rubbing her tummy. Or give her warmed milk . . .* She followed his instructions diligently. *It worked! She's purring!*

Writing to Billy made Rosa feel, though they'd only met in person once, as if they were friends. He was older than her, with curly blond hair and dirty fingernails, and – she secretly suspected – enjoyed knowing things that she didn't. Not that Rosa minded: learning about jaguars had been a joy.

Today, though, it was time for another round of goodbyes.

'Careful!'

Rosa skidded to a halt on the landing, narrowly avoiding Westwood's only housemaid, Minnie. The door to the biggest front bedroom was propped open with

Minnie's cleaning box. Her arms were full of fresh bed-linen. Though she had an uncanny knack for looking busy even when she wasn't, today Minnie seemed genuinely rushed off her feet.

'Sorry, Minnie. I was miles away,' Rosa admitted.

'No change there.' Minnie tutted, shouldering past. 'Master wants this room ready for tonight, when I've enough to do already. Oh, and you've missed breakfast, so don't go begging scraps from Mrs Barnes, neither.'

Rosa flushed guiltily. With pilchards in short supply and meat on the ration, she'd often had to pester Westwood's cook for Opal's food, which wasn't the done thing in wartime.

'Who's coming to stay?' Rosa asked.

'Be blowed if I know,' Minnie replied. 'Though it's someone they weren't expecting. It's all been a bit of a rush.'

Out in the lane, a horn beeped.

'The zoo's here!' Rosa cried.

With a shriek, they both ran into the bedroom and straight to the big bay window that overlooked the drive. Coming through the gates, emerging from under the winter trees, the first vehicle appeared. Behind it were more trucks, some large, canvas-covered army-types, others smaller, the size of a grocer's van. The convoy came to a halt at the front of the house where, in olden days, carriages would've turned. There, they were greeted, as all Westwood visitors were, by a bizarre headless statue of Hercules wrestling a snake.

Truck doors opened, voices calling between the vehicles.

'Load the birds and reptiles first. Leave the big animals till last,' ordered a ruddy-faced man who Rosa recognized as Mr Macintyre, the zoo owner and Billy's dad.

The driveway was suddenly swarming with people in overalls, caps, boots and protective gloves. None of them seemed to be Billy. Mr Macintyre unbolted the sides of the trucks. Boxes, wicker crates, ropes and headcollars were unloaded and whisked away.

Minnie gave her apron a quick smooth. 'I'd best go down. That front door won't open itself.'

From the drawing room across the landing came the rustle of newspapers being folded.

'Well, dearest, I believe they're here,' announced Westwood's dimple-chinned owner to his wife, Lady Prue.

Sir Clovis had once been a stage actor: this was still evident in his upright posture and fondness for eye-catching clothes. Though his real name was Finn Taverner, for some inexplicable reason everyone called him Sir Clovis. Like the stodgy dinners and scratchy tweed clothes she'd had to endure at Westwood, there was much about life in England that Rosa didn't understand. And this was despite being half-English herself.

'Righty-ho!' Lady Prue clapped her hands briskly and came out onto the landing. 'Action stations, everyone!'

At the bay window, Rosa was still trying to spot Billy. She couldn't bear it if he wasn't here. She'd been so eager

to see him reunited with Opal. It was the one thing that might take the sting out of saying goodbye.

A boy darted about from behind one of the trucks, so quickly she almost missed him. Then one of the men called out, 'Oi, where's that lad off to?' The boy kept running, before disappearing round the side of the house. Rosa grinned.

It *was* Billy.

The curly blond hair was the giveaway. And the fact he was making a beeline for the stable yard, where the jaguar was kept. Rushing downstairs to join him, Rosa was almost at the back door when a yell from the hallway made her stop.

'OUTER GARMENTS!' boomed Lady Prue, who, despite being as strong as a shire horse, swore by the practicalities of a good tweed coat.

Reluctantly, Rosa went back for hers, a horrid, itchy green thing with leather buttons and a belted waist. There was no point in resisting: no one ever argued with Lady Prue and won.

Outside, though the morning itself was damp and unremarkable, the air crackled with noise. At the front of the house, it was human voices, at the rear, hissing ostriches, chattering meerkats, the stamp and snort of impatient zebras. Rosa ran all the way to the stable yard. She found Billy, his back to her, unbolting Opal's stable door. All over again it hit her that this jaguar she'd got up every morning to feed was going home. Everything was leaving Westwood: everything but her. To her added

frustration, her nose was now tingling in the way it did when she was about to burst into tears. She was grateful Billy hadn't yet realized she was there.

She watched, fascinated, as he opened the door – not cautiously like she did, but pushing it wide open. Moving casually, whistling, he placed a pile of ropes just inside. Something moved in the darkness. A pair of green-gold eyes blinked. A pink mouth opened. Realizing it was Billy, Opal rushed towards him in one fluid movement.

'Hey there, big cat,' Billy murmured as she stood up, paws on his shoulders as if hugging him.

Opal covered his cheeks, his hair, his ears with big, rough licks.

'She's so pleased to see you!' cried Rosa, who was now definitely on the verge of tears.

Billy turned his head, grinning. 'Hullo! I wondered when you'd show up!'

He looked different from how she remembered – taller, older. The jaguar's licking had made his fringe stand on end.

'You've done a fine job, keeping her so tip-top,' Billy remarked.

Rosa blushed with pride. 'Thanks. I loved doing it.'

'It's hard work, though, isn't it?'

'You did give me lots of advice,' she reminded him.

Billy beckoned her into the stable. 'Want to come and say your goodbyes?'

Once inside, Rosa pulled the stable door behind her.

Taking a deep breath, telling herself not to ruin it by crying, she reached towards the jaguar.

'Goodbye, beautiful cat,' she murmured.

Opal sniffed her hand briefly, then yawned. She was more interested in Billy, that was obvious, and though it hurt a little to be cast off so quickly, Rosa was glad. It felt right for them to be together – the cat rubbing her head against Billy's hair, purring like an engine.

'You in there, lad?' a man shouted from the yard. 'Running off like that when there's work to do!'

In the dim light of the stable, Rosa saw the joy draining from Billy's face.

'Yup, I'm here!' he called in reply.

'Then bring her out and stop wasting time!' the man answered.

'That's my pa, on to me as usual.' Billy sighed.

'He sounds a bit fierce,' remarked Rosa.

Billy scowled, suddenly defensive. 'Why, what's yours like?'

'I dunno,' she admitted. All she did know was that he'd left Vienna just after she was born, though no one had ever told her why, or what had happened to him.

Just as Billy went to say something, Mr Macintyre roared: 'GET A MOVE ON!'

It made them jump. Billy grabbed the pile of ropes he'd left by the door.

'What d'you want me to do?' Rosa asked, wanting to help if she could.

'Watch her,' he warned, because Opal's mood had changed.

She was sniffing the air, ears flicking and swivelling. The purring had stopped. The end of her tail thump-thumped against the straw. It wasn't a good sign.

'She's smelled the trucks,' Billy said, not taking his eyes off the cat. 'She's not a good traveller, this one.'

Rosa reckoned it had more to do with Billy's dad's temper, but kept quiet. It wasn't her business any more.

The cat swung away from them and began pacing the stable. With some difficulty, Billy got a rope round Opal's shoulders, murmuring, 'Easy girl, easy now,' which seemed to work. Apart from the tip of her tail, the cat grew still again.

'Phew!' Billy grimaced. 'That was a bit—'

In a sudden leap, Opal lunged for the door. The force knocked Rosa against the wall. Billy yelped, the rope slipping from his hands. The door was shut and bolted – at least, Rosa assumed it was, and she'd been the last person in. She realized now the door was slightly ajar. She hadn't secured the bolt properly. It was enough, Rosa saw in horror, for Opal to push it open, which she did in one swift movement. The cat slipped through the door and was gone.

Out in the yard, Billy's father cursed. They found him, hands on his head, clenching fistfuls of his own hair.

'What are you playing at, lad?' he cried. 'Get after her, quick!'

They were already too late. Fifty yards away at the

paddock fence, Opal crouched, ready to spring.

'Hurry! She's going to—' Rosa cried.

Jump.

In a smooth, fluid arc, Opal was over the fence.

Billy and his father, frantically trying to untangle more ropes, missed it. The ostriches sidestepped crossly, their wings stuck out like elbows. Ignoring them, Opal ran across the grass towards the distant tree-line. Rosa knew she should tell them the direction in which the cat had gone. But she couldn't bring herself to, because it looked so easy, so hopeful, the way Opal had left Westwood behind.

Chapter Two



When he realized, Mr Macintyre exploded.

'You ruddy idiot!' he screamed at Billy. 'Don't you know how much that animal's worth?'

Clearly Billy did because he'd gone very pale.

Mr Macintyre turned to Rosa. 'And what were you doing, standing there like a lemon?'

'I . . . ummm.' She was alarmed by the vein throbbing in his forehead like a very fat earthworm. He was so angry it felt pointless trying to explain.

It was her fault, she knew, for not bolting the door. All this time she'd tried so hard to look after Opal properly, and she'd almost managed it – hadn't Billy told her so? But a moment's slip-up and now she'd ruined everything.

'That jaguar won't last five minutes out there!' Mr Macintyre fumed, waving at the fields beyond Westwood, which were dotted with grazing cows and sheep. 'The second she goes near anyone's livestock they'll shoot her on sight.'

Rosa glanced at Billy, startled: *shoot* her?

Billy wiped an arm across his eyes: he was crying.

'Please stop,' Rosa begged him, feeling totally and utterly miserable.

He did, though only because a small woman with radish-red cheeks was now yelling over the fence.

'There's a creature hiding in the hedge. It's scaring my ewes.' The woman was Mrs Penwick, who rented one of Westwood's farms. 'If it's yours, you'd better claim it fast, before I take my rifle to it.'

Rosa groaned. The animal had to be Opal.

'What did I tell you?' Mr Macintyre cried, head in hands again. 'Not *even* five minutes on the loose, and here we are!'

'Don't shoot her! There's been a misunderstanding!' pleaded Rosa.

There was a click as the yard gate opened.

'A misunderstanding, eh?' remarked Sir Clovis.

Everyone turned to see Westwood's owner striding towards them in his best tweeds and finest brogues. He looked every inch the country gent, despite having never ridden a horse or walked a dog in all the time Rosa had lived here.

'It'll be all right now,' Rosa whispered to Billy.

Sir Clovis was good at fixing tricky situations. There was a charm to him that quickly put other grown-ups at ease. It'd certainly helped at Euston Station all those years ago.

'Perhaps one of you good people could tell me what's going on?' Sir Clovis asked, rubbing his hands like he meant business.

It had an effect on Mr Macintyre, who, at last, managed to explain the situation without raising his voice.

'—so we've got to catch her,' Mr Macintyre finished. 'She's our star attraction, what everyone comes to see. A taste of the Amazon in our humble zoo.'

Sir Clovis gave the zookeeper's shoulder an affable pat.

'We'll find her in no time,' Sir Clovis assured him in his best stage voice that had once filled theatres around the globe. And to Mrs Penwick: 'My sincerest apologies. I can't imagine how this could've happened.'

Rosa stared at the ground.

It was all her fault: she knew it, Billy knew it. Sir Clovis too, she sensed, realized it was her fault. In leaving their animals here, the zoo had trusted him to keep them safe. And the one thing Sir Clovis despised was putting on a bad show. If there'd been a dog here now, he'd have shouted at it, but there wasn't, so he turned on Rosa.

'Well, don't just stand there, child! Let's find this beast!'

While the adults searched the nearby fields and wood, Rosa checked the lane that led from Westwood to the village. Apart from today's zoo trucks, few vehicles ever came down it – the grocer's van on a Tuesday, the postman once a day on his bicycle – so it was the sort of quiet spot Opal might be drawn to.

Rosa insisted Billy come with her. If they found his jaguar together, there was a slim possibility they might come out of this still friends. Billy hadn't spoken a word

to her since Opal had gone. When she thought of how much she'd wanted to see him again – and how thrilled he'd been to see Opal – it made everything worse.

'Ugh, it's a swamp,' groaned Billy, as they set off down the lane.

The zoo's trucks had gouged huge ruts into the mud, spraying the hedges brown on either side. It looked more like a ploughed field than a road.

'Keep your eyes peeled for pawprints,' Rosa said with forced cheerfulness.

In fact, the mud was like soup. It clung to everything. Billy, at least, wore boots with a sensible grip. But Rosa's stout walking shoes – purchased for her at the same time as the awful tweed coat – made a revolting slurping noise with every step.

When they reached the village, Rosa wondered if they should put a card in the post-office window, or knock on doors in the way people did when they'd lost a cat. Or they could ask at the tea shop where Mrs Barnes the cook used to work. The trouble with telling people, though, was it panicked them. There'd been a story once about a zebra escaping London Zoo during the Blitz. It'd taken three days and police marksmen to recapture the animal. The last thing they needed right now was more people with guns.

Anyway, Billy said they should turn back.

'She's not been this way – it's obvious.' He sighed.

'How?' Rosa wanted to know. 'Have you seen any clues? Are you tracking her like you're in the jungle?'

Billy snorted. 'Don't be daft. All I know is she wouldn't want to get her feet wet in the mud.'

Rosa wasn't sure this was true. She'd read that jaguars were strong swimmers and liked water, though it probably wasn't the right time to say so.

'Why would she run away from *me* of all people?' Billy asked, close to tears again.

'She *was* pleased to see you,' Rosa agreed.

Opal had looked even more pleased to be galloping away across the paddock, but she thought it best not to mention that, either.

By the end of the morning, every field, copse, outbuilding and lane local to Westwood had been scoured. But, after the initial sighting under Mrs Penwick's hedge, the jaguar had vanished into thin air. No one knew what to do next. Rosa's eyes were annoyingly prickly again. The search parties, having returned to the stable yard, were fed up and hungry. Sir Clovis's assurances were starting to wear thin.

'I should've known this would happen,' Mr Macintyre muttered through gritted teeth. 'Letting amateurs take care of our animals.'

'We'll keep searching,' Sir Clovis promised. 'All day and night, if we have to.' Though Rosa knew all too well what would happen when the lunch gong sounded. Not even a missing jaguar could keep Sir Clovis from his food.

Mealtimes at Westbrook were legendary: the roast meat, the cream sauces and custard pies, the five-course

suppers, the never-ending cake. Rationing hadn't dented the scope of Mrs Barnes's menus. There'd been much moving of buttons on waistbands by the time the schoolgirl evacuees had gone home.

'You'll see things differently after lunch. I'm sure of it,' Sir Clovis insisted.

'We've no time for *lunch*!' Mr Macintyre's colour was rising again. 'That animal cost money! The lost ticket sales to the zoo *cost money*. It's time we talked compensation. A chap like you, with this big house, should be able to put his hand in his pocket.'

For the first time, Sir Clovis looked nervous.

In reality, there was little spare money at Westwood. The roof leaked and there was mould around the window frames. You only had to glimpse the west wing of the house to see it was pretty much falling down. There'd been talk, recently, of selling off some of the farmland to raise extra funds, which had led to a flurry of letters arriving. Rosa, who kept an eagle eye on such things, noticed some of these – bizarrely – bore a Brazilian postmark.

'There must be somewhere we haven't looked yet!' Rosa pleaded.

Mr Macintyre shook his head. 'I've not got time for this. You'll be hearing from me, Clovis – in writing. Official, like.'

Yelling at his zoo staff to load the remaining animals into the trucks, he stormed out of the yard. There was a second when a bewildered Billy caught Rosa's eye. She would've done anything, right then, to make things better.

'I'm sorry,' she said, for the hundredth time.

But even to her own ears the words sounded hollow: what could possibly make up for losing a jaguar?

She watched, lump in throat, as Billy disappeared round the corner. This wasn't the sort of goodbye for which she'd been bracing herself: this was ten times worse.

From the front of the house came the sound of raised voices again, the crunch of feet – and hooves – on gravel, the thudding of tailgates being raised as the trucks made ready to leave.

Moments later, as predicted, the lunch gong sounded.

'I'm not hungry,' Rosa said when Sir Clovis tried to hurry her indoors.

For once, instead of insisting she eat lunch, he seemed to understand, and asked her to take a message to Westwood's chauffeur. 'Tell Jarvis to ready the motor car. Our guest is arriving on the two o'clock train.'

After the agony of watching the zoo trucks depart, Rosa set off down the drive to the gatehouse where old Mr Jarvis lived. He'd been at Westwood ever since the time there *were* grand gates to open and shut, and visitors arrived unannounced in carriages, rather than simply telephoning ahead. Unlike Minnie, Rosa also got the sense he quite liked her.

Feeling wretched, she barely gave much thought to who the person coming on the train might be. Generally, Westwood wasn't the sort of house you visited for fun: the grim look of the place was enough to put most people off.

In all the years she'd lived here, Rosa had rarely seen any visitors come and go. Sir Clovis and Lady Prue tended to keep themselves to themselves, and though they'd always been kind to Rosa and the schoolgirls, they weren't the types for hugging, or offering comforting chats. Still, the fact Minnie had cleaned what was probably the best bedroom in the house suggested someone important was coming to stay.

When Rosa arrived at the gatehouse, Mr Jarvis already knew about Opal. He opened the door with an almost-amused look on his face.

'What's all this nonsense, then, letting a big cat escape?' he asked, taking in her filthy socks and shoes.

Mr Jarvis often teased her affectionately, and she didn't mind at jot. But today it was the last straw. Rosa's chin wobbled. A big fat tear slid down her cheek.

'I didn't mean to let her go.' She sniffed.

'Here, now, don't you go upsetting yourself.' Mr Jarvis softened. 'Big cat like that, shut up in a stable. Was bound to happen sooner or later.'

'She did look incredible, running away,' admitted Rosa. 'I think maybe she didn't want to go back to the zoo.'

'Hmmm.' Mr Jarvis rubbed his jaw. 'Can't blame her, can you? Bet she'd rather take her chances up on Westwood Moor.'

'Westwood Moor?' Rosa hadn't considered this.

The moor lay about two miles from the estate. It was a desolate, windswept place, strewn with peat bogs, rocks and rust-coloured bracken. As a rule, Rosa didn't go there.

No one did, unless it was for a celebratory bonfire: it was too bleak and blustery for walking.

'Won't they search up there?' Rosa asked.

The idea amused Mr Jarvis. 'Ha! It'll be like looking for a needle in a haystack, that will.'

In her mind's eye, Rosa pictured Opal slinking away across the field, all sleek fur and muscle. Maybe, with a bit of luck and cunning, and if no one took a shot at her, she *could* survive in the wild. Rosa decided she'd write to Billy and tell him what Mr Jarvis had suggested, in the hope it might cheer him up.

'You're not here to talk jaguars, though, are you?' Mr Jarvis reminded her.

'Oh no, sorry.' Rosa rubbed her face dry. 'I've a message.'

She told him about leaving now to meet the two o'clock train.

'Ah! She's arriving earlier, then,' he said cryptically.

'Who is it?' Rosa asked.

'The lady coming from Europe.'

All the blood drained from Rosa's head. She swayed slightly.

'*Europe?*' she croaked. 'A lady? What's her name?'

'Well now, I didn't catch that part, what with my hearing not always being sharp.'

Hadn't Minnie told her that the visitor was someone they weren't expecting?

A warm, solid feeling filled Rosa's chest. She knew. She just *knew*. Who else would be coming here from Europe?

On a day when everything else had gone wrong, she felt as if her luck was changing. This visitor *had* to be her mother. Or her sister, Liesel. Finally, they were coming for her as they'd promised all those years ago. She'd no longer have to struggle to remember a long-ago goodbye. Her family would be here, hugging her hello. It was almost too much to be real. She just hoped she didn't die of excitement before two o'clock.

About the Author

Once told by poet Ted Hughes her writing was 'dangerous', it took Emma Carroll twenty years of English teaching and a life-changing cancer diagnosis to feel brave enough to give her dream of being an author a try.

Nowadays, she's a bestselling author and the 'Queen of Historical Fiction' (BookTrust). She has been nominated for and the winner of numerous national, regional and schools awards – including the Books Are My Bag Readers' Award, Branford Boase, CILIP Carnegie Medal, Young Quills, Teach Primary and the Waterstones Book Prize. Emma is one of very few authors to have been Waterstones Book of the Month twice.

Emma's home is in the Somerset hills with her husband and two terriers. She still can't believe her luck that she gets to write dangerous books for a living.

About Eva Ibbotson

Eva Ibbotson was born in Vienna, but, when the Nazis came to power, her family fled to England and she was sent to boarding school. She became a writer while bringing up her four children, and her bestselling novels, including *The Secret of Platform 13*, *The Star of Kazan* and *The Dragonfly Pool* have been published around the world.

Journey to the River Sea won the Nestlé Gold Medal and was shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal, the Whitbread Children's Book of the Year (now the Costa) and the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize.

Eva died peacefully in October 2010 at the age of eighty-five.