Birdsong

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For the Aberbachs



Chapter 1

There is music everywhere – if you know how to listen.

I'm walking home and I hear notes in the tap of my feet on the pavement and the fizz of a can of Coke. I can find music in the whoosh of our front door opening and in Mum calling my name. I can fit the notes that I hear together and they build into a symphony. A symphony of sounds that swirl and swish and lift me up like I'm flying. Mostly.

But not when the music is the sound of glass breaking.

Not when it's the sound of metal crumpling.

Not when it's the sound of tyres screeching.

Not when it's the sound of me screaming.



Chapter 2

Seven months ago, everything was fine. Better than fine, I think. It was almost perfect, even if I didn't realise it at the time. I wasn't full of fury and always angry at Mum. She had a job and we owned our house and whenever anything went a bit wrong, I could pick up my flute and play.

When I played, the whole world faded away. I could forget arguments at school or Maths tests covered in red pen or the dog next door barking into the night. Playing the flute was

like magic. I could see the music. It made colours everywhere.

Then the crash happened. And everything changed.

After the crash, I woke up from the operation and all I could see were bandages and needles and black stitches in my skin that looked like teeth.

I tried to lift my water glass but my fingers wouldn't obey.

I tried to button my pyjamas but my fingers wouldn't obey.

I tried to lift my flute but it felt like I'd lost everything.