

Chapter Nineteen

I started running as soon as I left the shop. The bottle of milk felt heavy in my hands, so I had to hold it like a baby and it made me slow down a bit.

I turned down the street towards the policemen with one eye on my tower block in the distance. I wished I had never left it.

I ran past the policemen. The bored one, the one who yawned, the one who looked like he wanted to go home and have his dinner.

Then, suddenly, there was a shout.

I stopped and turned back in surprise.

Then I wished I had just carried on running.

One of the policemen I had just passed had fallen over. The policemen on either side of him were trying to help him up, but then, as they kneeled down to help him, they fell to the ground too. It was as if they had all suddenly fallen asleep.

Their helmets made a cracking sound as they hit the ground. *Crack, crack, crack.* One after the other.

I remember thinking it looked like a line of dominoes falling over, each one pushing the next one over in a line that was coming towards me.

I didn't know what to do. It's all so strange when you only have a split second to decide. It seems impossible that you are able to think of so many things at once in your head. Part of me thought I should be helping them. Another part thought I would be falling asleep and falling to the ground next, and then another part, the loudest of all, was thinking of Gaia.

Gaia's face, shouting, 'Run!'

That is what I did.

I dropped the milk and it exploded on the ground and I ran away as fast as I could.

I ran into my tower and I ran up the stairs and I didn't stop running even when I reached my corridor. I ran into my flat and slammed the front door behind me, and I only stopped when I was in my bedroom and the door was closed behind me.

I didn't have anywhere left to go.

It took a long time for my breathing to slow down. I don't really know if it was from the running or what I had just seen.

What had happened to those policemen? Why had they passed out like that? And the question I couldn't stop asking myself: had they just fallen asleep or was it something a lot more serious than that?

Had they died?

It was on the news that night.

A group of policemen had been found dead. Close to where the two council workers had been found. Their deaths were also being treated as suspicious.